

Moving  
Together

15



# Health Impact Assessment and the Quequechan River Rail Trail

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**massDOT**  
Massachusetts Department of Transportation



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# Change!

## Policy, Systems, Environments



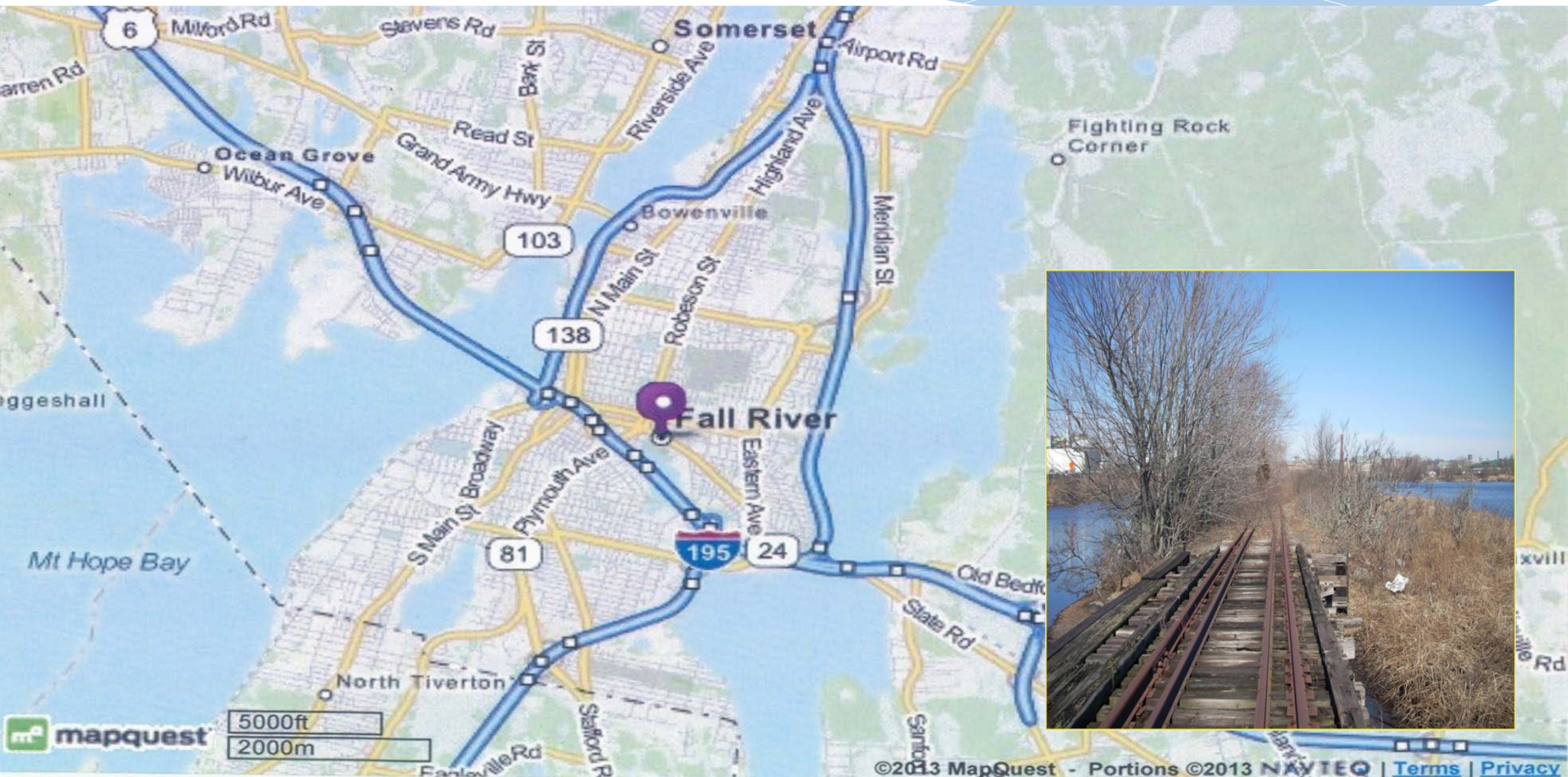
- \* Response to the childhood obesity crisis in the United States
- \* Population approach- You *are* WHAT you eat, and you *are* WHERE you live.
- \* Improve policy, systems and environments to increase access to healthy food and resources for active living.

# CHALLENGES

Fall River's population  
88,897

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>Fall River</b>
Median Household Income (07-11)	\$65,981	\$34,789
Persons Living Below Poverty Line (07-11)	10.7%	21.4%
Unemployment	6.7%	12%
Smoking Rates	16.1%	26%
High School Completion Rate - Adults	88.9%	68%

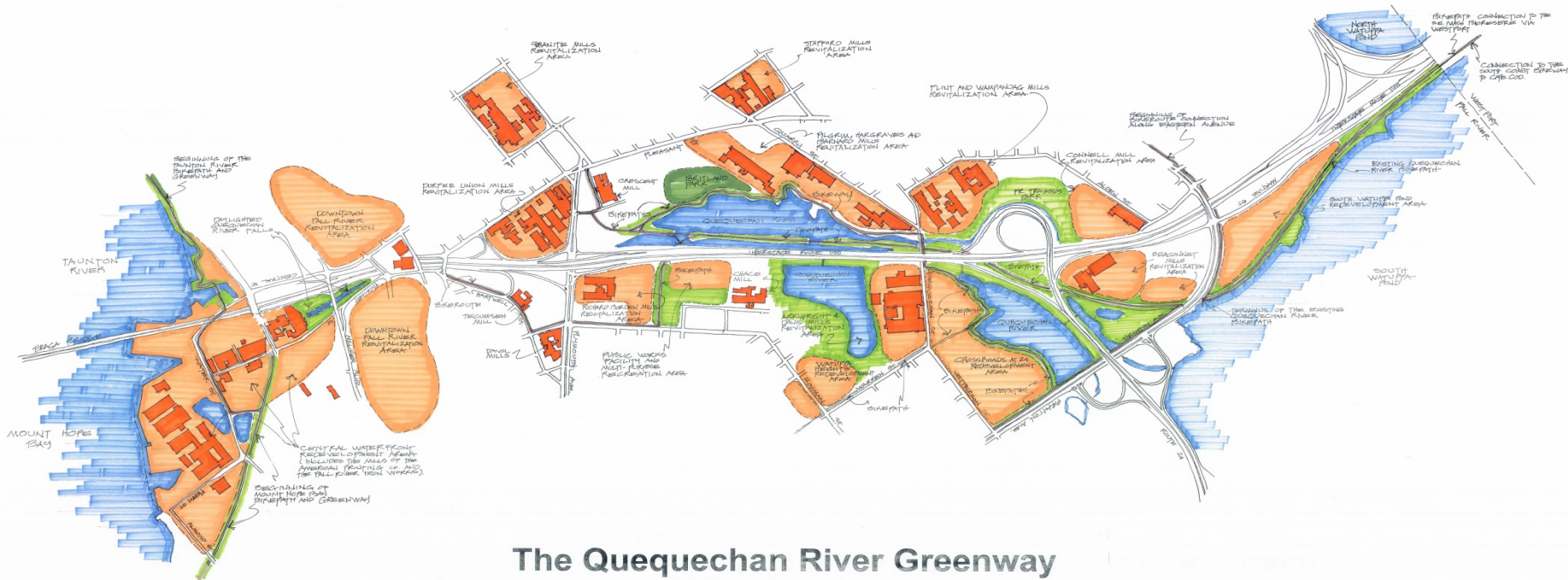
# Access and Connectivity “the asphalt necklace”





# Start with a Vision

## Open Space and Recreation Plan 2010



**The Quequechan River Greenway**  
Fall River, Massachusetts  
A plan for bike/pedestrian paths, greenways, and economic development.

Prepared for the City of Fall River and Mass in Motion  
Prepared by Alfred J. Lima, July, 2010. Scale: 1 inch = 400' feet

# Alfred J Lima Quequechan River Rail Trail

# Health Impact Assessment

- \* Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a means of assessing the health impacts of policies, plans and projects in diverse economic sectors using quantitative, qualitative and participatory techniques.
- \* HIA helps decision-makers make choices about alternatives and improvements to prevent disease/injury and to actively promote health.
- \* Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being not merely the absence of disease and infirmity.

# Factors Responsible for Population Health



Health status is determined by:

Genetics: 20–30%

Health care: 10%

Social, environmental conditions, and behavior: 60–70%

*Health Affairs, 2002*

# HIA: Increase the consideration of health and equity in decision making

## Goals of Human Impact Partners

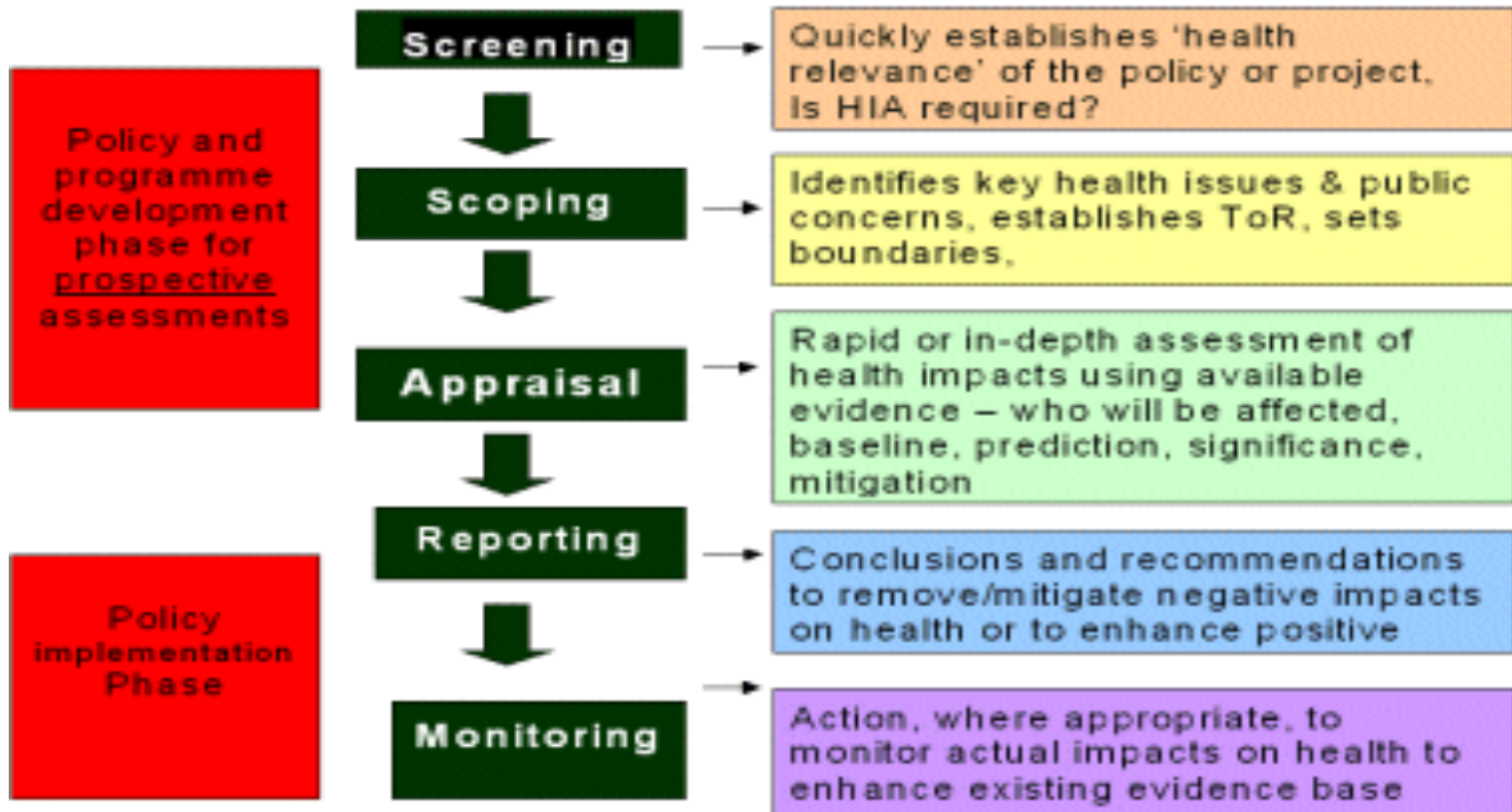
- \* Equity and Justice
- \* Democracy & Transparency
- \* Elevating Community Voices
- \* Sustainability
- \* Improving Health
- \* Reducing Health Disparities





# Transforming the places & policies people need to live healthy lives

## **HIA Procedure**

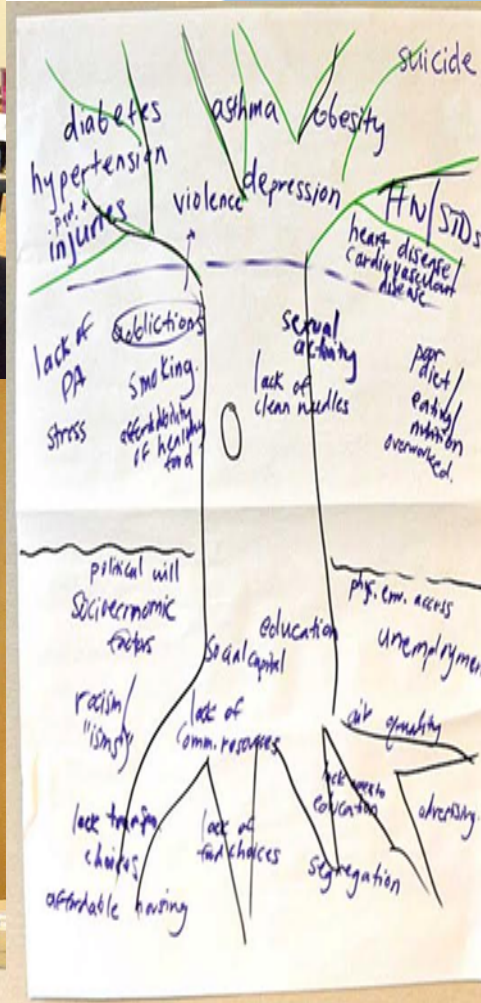


# Gather Stakeholders

City Administration  
Health Department  
DPH  
MPHA  
YMCA  
HEALTH FIRST  
Neighborhood Assoc.  
Green Futures  
Bike Fall River



# Elevating local voices





# Potential Health Impacts

- \* Physical activity
- \* Health disparities
- \* Public safety
- \* Crime
- \* Air quality
- \* Economic development
- \* Social cohesion and social capital



# Scoping and Assessment



## DATA COLLECTION

- \* Health status, Educational attainment, Poverty rate
- \* Congestion and active transportation
- \* Air quality
- \* Recreation facilities
- \* Traffic accidents
- \* Crime rate

# Recommendations to maximize health benefits

## **Design and Engineering:**

- \* High visibility signage, traffic calming elements at crossings.
- \* Trail lighting in non-daylight hours
- \* Underpass lighting at all times

# Recommendations to maximize health benefits

## **Trail Use and Maintenance:**

- \* Safety Campaigns
- \* Trail education to encourage potential new users
- \* Promote Trail to Neighborhood Associations, schools, civic, advocacy and non-profit groups
- \* Advance social and civic engagement opportunities within new community space

# Recommendations to maximize health benefits

- \* **Include long-term maintenance plans**
  - \* Include city departments, community groups and volunteers to:
    - \* Conduct regular clean-ups
    - \* Initiate a Youth Stewardship program.



# CONCLUSIONS

## The QRRT can impact health by

- \* Increasing opportunities for physical activity, thus helping to prevent obesity and reduce the risk of many chronic diseases.
- \* Reducing health disparities in the densely populated, low income neighborhoods the trail runs through.
- \* Creating a safe area for recreation and active transportation .
- \* Improving public safety by reducing collisions.
- \* Reducing real and perceived crime through the recommendations of HIA.
- \* Modestly improve air quality.
- \* Reconnecting neighborhoods and building social cohesion.

# New considerations as the QRRT nears completion in spring '16

- \* Streetscapes change: Walmart complex on Quequechan Street may require a new traffic study.
- \* Budget for DCM staffing to manage maintenance on all trails.
- \* Bicycle Policing of the QRRT
- \* DPH Mass in Motion 1422 a new tool for promoting walkability

# Construction is underway, completion expected in spring, 2016



- \* Many thanks to:
- \* Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Gateway City Park Program
- \* Massachusetts Department of Transportation



Map Source: Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs



FIGURE 3: RECREATIONAL & OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Quequechan River Bike Path - Phase 2  
Fall River, Massachusetts  
January 5, 2012

SCALE: 0 0.05 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 Miles



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Hand-drawn map by Alfred J. Lima; Photos by Dr. David Weed