



Trail Etiquette



Introduction

Massachusetts' shared-use path network is 1,000+ miles and growing, with over 50% of Massachusetts residents living within 10 miles of an existing trail. With new public spaces come new users, devices, and needs.

This creates conflicts on a constrained space.

MassBike created this resource guide to navigate these issues so everyone feels welcome and safe on our shared trails!

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Summary



Identify the problem
Implement the solution
Measure the outcome

- *Post trail etiquette signage (that includes language about ebikes) at trail entrances & intersections*
- *Advocate and participate in Safe Routes To School programming*
- *Paint recommended speeds on asphalt*
- *Host school events like bike buses or educational group rides to teach about bike safety/road safety*



Pain Points & Opportunities

New and unfamiliar devices and forms of micromobility have created safety concerns, especially around speed limits and trail etiquette.

- **Micromobility has skyrocketed**
- **Bike Boom has increased overall ridership**
- **40+ miles of SUP added in 2025**

The MassDOT Special Commission on Micromobility is in the process of defining further language for Class 3 e-bikes, e-scooters, and other forms of micromobility and should have a full report by the end of 2025.





Legislation

As of August 10, 2022, the e-bike definition language was signed into law as amendments to the Transportation Bond Bill (H.5151) to include Class 1 and Class 2 definitions for e-bikes.

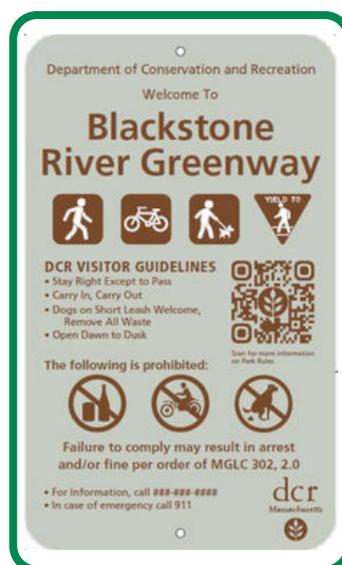
CLASS 1: Bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches 20 mph, with an electric motor of 750 watts or less.

CLASS 2: Bicycle equipped with a throttle-actuated motor that ceases to provide assistance when the e-bike reaches 20 mph, with an electric motor of 750 watts or less.

Rail Trail Posted Signs

- Legibility
 - Able to read sign while biking past
 - Reiterate information in other media (website, trail map, etc)
 - Age-inclusive & reading level of 5th-7th grade literacy
 - Translations made available
- QR codes
 - Not age-inclusive
 - Can't be used while in motion
 - Better for context sign or translation services
- Tone
 - Use words like "Allowed"
 - 'Class 1 & 2 eBikes Allowed'
 - Avoid using "Prohibited" when possible.
 - 'Class 3 eBike Prohibited'

Examples: Rules & Etiquette



Trail Sign Template

Key Elements to age-friendly, legible signage:

- Bare Minimum Content
- High Contrast
- Non-Reflective
- Minimum Font Size: 2"
- Large Type
- At Eye level
- Icons & Text
- Minimum Size: 18" x 24"

Name of Rail Trail

Trail Etiquette

Class of eBikes allowed

On-leash pets only

No littering: carry-in, carry-out

Keep right, except to pass

Give audible warning when passing

Be alert of your surroundings

website name

Speed Limit Signs

General Speed Limit signs:

White signs are enforceable

Yellow is a recommendation

MA law allows municipalities to set their own speed limits on rail trails, if it goes through a public process. To date, none have done so. Here are some possible examples for what future signage could look like.

Note: It is legally possible to have two different speed limits for different times of day or days of the week, like a School Zone or “25 mph unless posted” signs.



DCR Ashuwillticook Rail Trail in Adams, MA



Source unknown



Carriage Road in Acadia National Park, Maine

Caution Signs

Yellow signs are cautionary, not legal speed limits.



Minuteman Bikeway



Passing Etiquette Examples



MinuteMan Bikeway



Cascade Club



Cochituate Rail Trail

Informational Examples



Cochituate Rail Trail



Blackstone Greenway Visitor Center

Bike ABCs ABC Quick Check before you ride

Air:

Inflate to the pressure listed. Use a pump with a gauge. Check for damage or wear.

Brakes:

Inspect pads for wear, Check if the pad is rubbing the tire. Check if you can fit a finger under the break levers when they squeeze all the way.

Chain & Crank:

Check that the chain is free of rust and gunk. Tug crank away from the bike; if it's loose, tighten the bolt.

Dynamic Feedback Signs

A few of these are currently being used on trails in Massachusetts.

Brochure for signs

These signs are commonly seen around school zones but can also be used on Shared Use Paths.

The feedback signs can be programmed to have smiley face when the rider is going at reasonable speeds and frowning face when rider is going too fast.



THE IQ SERIES OF RADAR SPEED SIGNS

The IQ Series is our full-featured Radar Speed Sign that includes a full-matrix display, speed triggered messages, and beacon outputs, along with traffic data collection.

The IQ900 features bright 9" (22.9 cm) characters that can be seen from up to 450 ft (137.2 m) away and help increase driver awareness of their speed on neighborhood streets.

Speed can kill. A pedestrian is 82 percent more likely to be fatally injured if hit by a vehicle traveling 40 MPH (64 KPH) vs a vehicle traveling 20 MPH (32 KPH). Speeding drivers are almost three times more likely to be involved in fatal or serious-injury crashes. Radar Speed Signs have been proven, in multiple third-party studies*, to be highly effective at reducing average vehicle speeds and slowing speeding drivers, creating safer roadways and communities.

FEATURES

Full Matrix Display

Full matrix displays allow the vehicle speed to be displayed in conjunction with speed-triggered messages such as "SLOW DOWN" or "TOO FAST."

Traffic Data Collection

Stores up to 9 months of traffic and speed data. TC-Speed Connect™ Data Collection and Reporting Software is included with the sign, providing free local data collection for the life of the sign.

Stealth Mode

The radar can remain active without the sign displaying any message. Speed data will be collected on the controller. This is great for before and after studies to prove the effectiveness of the sign at slowing speeding drivers.

100% MUTCD Compliant

Amber LEDs are used to meet the Federal Highway Administration Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Multi-color LED's and strobes that are not MUTCD compliant are not utilized.

Ruggedized Electronics

Built tougher than other systems on the market. Polycarbonate high-impact, non-glare display cover is vandal resistant. The enclosure is a metal and weather-proof sealed NEMA 3R rated enclosure.

Made in the USA

TrafficAlm® Radar Speed Signs are manufactured in the USA in an ISO 9001:2015 certified facility, meeting and exceeding industry and state testing requirements. TrafficAlm® signs are unmatched in durability, brightness, accuracy and ease of installation and use. Build America/Buy America Compliant.

*Call for speed studies

RELEASED: 2023/01/17

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iq900 TRAFFICALM

SPECIFICATIONS

- DISPLAY**
Full matrix electronic Light Emitting Diode (LED) display
Speed display features 9" (22.9 cm) high electronic numbers, will display MPH or KPH, Minimum 5 MPH (8 KPH) in 1 MPH/1.6 KPH increments, Maximum 99 MPH/159.3 KPH
Speed triggered messages: "SLOW DOWN" or "TOO FAST" in 3" (7.6 cm) high electronic characters, two-line display for text, Highway Gothic font
LEDs: Amber (590 nanometers) in color, 100,000-hour life, 30° viewing angle, AllInGaP technology
Brightness: 23,000 candelas per square meter, Auto dimming
Legibility distance: 450 ft (137.2 m)
YOUR SPEED Legend: 3" (7.6cm) Highway Gothic font
Front face sheating: 3M™ Diamond Grade™ high visibility prismatic retro-reflective sheating
YOUR SPEED Sign Color: Yellow, Fluorescent Yellow-Green, Fluorescent Orange, or White
- RADAR SENSOR**
Doppler Radar
K-Band (24.15 GHz), license-free (FCC part 15 compliant)
Radar detection range up to 1000 ft, (304.8 m) depending upon vehicle size, speed of approach, and configuration
- CONSTRUCTION**
Outside dimensions 18" w x 24" h x 1 1/2" d (45.7 cm x 61 cm x 4.8 cm)
Weight: 10 lbs (4.5 kg)
Aluminum metal enclosure, powder coated green
High impact polycarbonate face
NEMA 3R Rated Cabinet
- COMMUNICATION**
RS-232 and Bluetooth Class 1 or 2 adapters (capabilities: V1.0, V1.2, V2.0, V2.1 + Enhanced Data Rate, EDR)
- POWER**
Solar/Battery kits or AC power supply sold separately
Power requirements: 12VDC, low standby, average day at 0.5 watts, night at 1.5 watts
Voltage requirements: 9VDC-30VDC
- ENVIRONMENTAL**
-40°F to +155°F operating range (-40°C to +74°C)
- WARRANTY**
3 year limited warranty +1 year on batteries

DETAILS

TC-SPEED CONNECT™ CONFIGURATION AND TRAFFIC DATA COLLECTION SOFTWARE

Local configuration, scheduling and data reports
License Free
App for Android and Microsoft Store
System Health Data: battery voltage, internal temperature, ambient light lux, display function status
Speed Data: data stamp, time stamp, vehicle count, minimum speed, maximum speed, 10 speed bins, average speed, 25th percentile speed, 50th percentile speed, 95th percentile speed
Schedule can be programmed up to 1 year in advance

Part #	Reflective Sheeting Color
M75-iQ900-B-0001	White
M75-iQ900-B-0002	Fluorescent Yellow-Green
M75-iQ900-B-0003	Fluorescent Orange
M75-iQ900-B-0004	Yellow

*100% MUTCD Compliant

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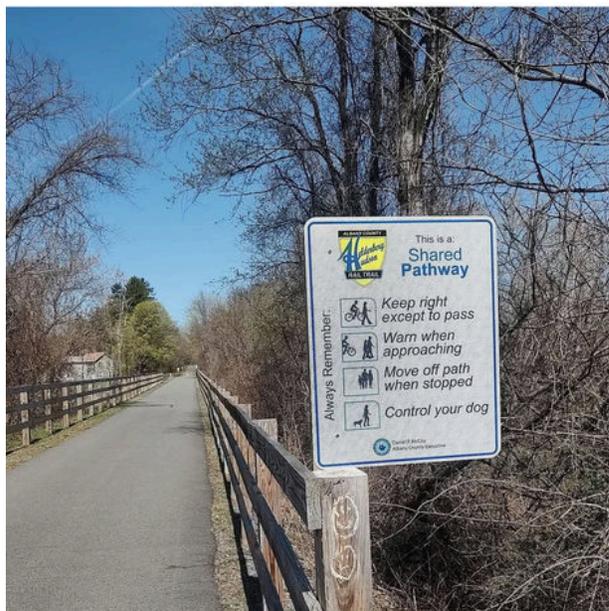
Print & Digital Outreach

If your entity has a social media presences or does physical mailings, consider sharing resources your trail uses through those avenues.



cityoflenexa Celebrate National Trails Day (June 7) by keeping Lenexa's trails clean. Lenexa is home to 45 miles of scenic trails — let's work together to protect... more

June 7



countyexecdanmccoy We've installed new trail etiquette signs along the Albany County Helderberg-Hudson Rail Trail to help everyone walk, run, and ride safely... more

May 14

Example Graphics



Trail

Etiquette

help make sure
everyone can enjoy
our trails!



Use safe speeds, stay to the right, pass on the left.

Announce your intentions to pass by ringing a bell or simply starting with "hello." Plan for the unpredictable movement of others.

Stay on the trail.

Please respect property owners who have welcomed us, no short cuts. Don't stop on the trail. Step off for breaks.

Teach your kids and pets.

Keep them close and pick up waste. For pets, please follow trail rules and local leash laws.

Be alert. It's better to be safe than right.

Trail crossings are not always obvious to other road users. Be aware of your surroundings; if using headphones, keep volume low or use only one ear bud.

Know and follow the rules.

New trail users need time to learn best practices, be a friendly example. If required, buy a trail pass; funds help maintain and build new trails.

Have fun and make the trail experience positive for all users.

The happier we all are, the more people will use trails.



[Wisconsin Bike Fed](http://WisconsinBikeFed.org)

Example Graphics



Paths are for Everyone

**STAY RIGHT,
PASS LEFT**

Call "on our left" or ring a bell.



GO A SAFE SPEED

10-20 MPH when others are present and
20 MPH MAX when clear.



SHARE THE PATH

Don't use more than your half
of the path.



@MassBike **MassBike** MassBike.org

E-bikes and Micromobility

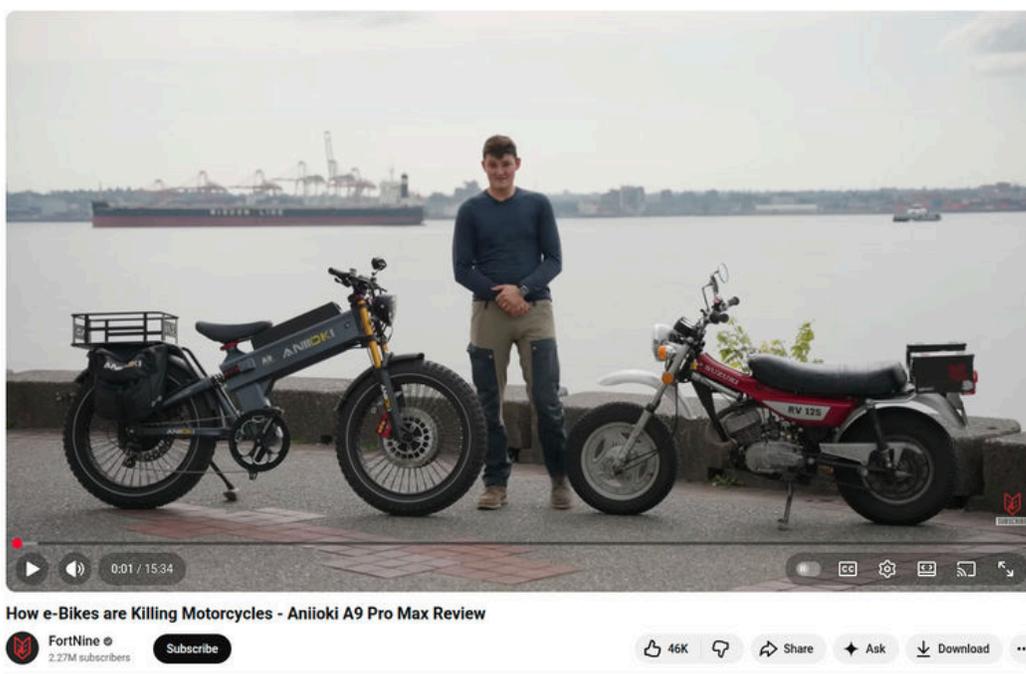
The MassDOT Special Commission on Micromobility recognizes a need for identifying and classification of micromobility vehicles such as e-bikes, scooters, and e-mopeds. Pending in 2026, Massachusetts will have clear guidance on what device is what.

Here are resources available for education.

[PeopleForBikes and the League of American Bicyclists](#)
[Learn about the world of electric bikes by PeopleforBikes](#)
[Mass.gov Moped operation requirements](#)
[Electric Bikes vy City of Carlsbad](#)

People for Bikes wrote a 3-part series on the topic from a bike industry point of view.

1. [The E-Bike Problem is an E-Moto Problem](#) (9/18/25)
2. [The Hidden Dangers of Illegal e-Motos](#) (9/26/25)
3. [Solutions to the E-Moto Problem](#) (10/9/25)



Motorcyclist provides a critical comparison on the difference between e-bikes (class 3) and motorcycles or lack thereof.

[FortNine](#)

Micromobility & Kids

Active Transformation: Youth Cyclists and E-Bikes by Bike East Bay

What Parents Should Know about E-Bikes & E-Scooters

E-bikes are gaining popularity with teens and pre-teens as they offer independence, allow longer trips and the ability to cruise up steep hills. Hauling heavy books and equipment is a lot easier too. More kids on bikes means fewer cars on the road – a benefit for all!



No matter what type of e-device your child is riding, a parent or another experienced adult cyclist is advised to **ride with their child** to teach rules of the road and safe riding skills.

➤ If your child cannot maintain control, rides unpredictably, or has trouble handling the device in various conditions, they are not ready for an e-bike or e-scooter.



E-bikes As of 2023, no law prohibits minors from riding Class 1 or 2 e-bikes which have maximum assist speeds of 20 mph. To operate a class 3 e-bike, which can provide assisted speeds of up to 28 mph, **riders must be at least 16**, although a driver's license is not required.

- Sidewalk riding is not permitted in most places, and in most cases, is less safe than riding in the bike lane.
- The speed limit on multi-use trails is 15 mph.
- E-bikes are heavy and harder to maneuver; it takes longer to stop at higher speeds.
- Beware: many e-bikes can be easily modified after purchase to go faster than 20 mph. Tech-savvy kids may be riding at unsafe speeds for their experience levels.

Under age 17: Helmets required for **all** bikes, e-bikes, scooters, skateboards, & skates. Adults must wear helmets on Class 3 e-bikes.

E-scooters CA law **requires a driver's license** for e-scooters; children younger than 16 cannot legally ride e-scooters.

- E-scooters can't be ridden on sidewalks or multi-use trails.
- Riding tandem, with a buddy, is not allowed.
- The speed limit for scooters in bike lanes is 15 mph.
- E-scooter riders must follow all the same rules of the road as drivers.

Street Smarts, Contra Costa Transportation Authority

	 Pedal Bike	 Class 1	 Class 2	 Class 3
Pedal assist		●	●	●
Throttle			●	
Max speed	Speed limit	20 mph	20 mph	28 mph
Minimum age	None	None	None	16
Driver's license	No	No	No	No
Helmet required	Under 18	Under 18	Under 18	All ages
Helmet recommended	All ages	All ages	All ages	All ages
Allowed on sidewalks	No	No	No	No
Allowed on trails	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Carlsbad, CA

This currently does not apply to Massachusetts; in 2026 we hope to have a similar resource.

Education & Classes

Emphasizing bike riding safety and skills for adults and students can create a safer environment for bike riders.

Safe Routes To Schools (SRTS) is a MassDOT program which provides biking education in elementary and high schools and builds biking infrastructures to public schools so that kids can bike to school.

Work directly with MassBike to schedule classes for your community!

Smart Cycling is a Bike League national program with on-line and in-person cycling events.

Parents and educators can use **Traffic Gardens** as a hands-on approach to teaching safe biking principles.

Bike Buses are started by community members and there are several operating in Massachusetts. These programs encourage students to bike to school with a safe and supervised group.

Recommendations



Paint recommended speeds on asphalt



Post trail etiquette signage (that includes language about ebikes) at trail entrances & intersections



Advocate and participate in Safe Routes To School programming



Host school events like bike buses or educational group rides to teach about bike safety/road safety

- Identify the problem
- Implement the solution
- Measure the outcome

Additional Resources

Here are additional resources regarding trail etiquette, signage, and other resources for cycling programs.

Federal Highways:

[Framework for Considering Motorized Use on Nonmotorized Trails and Pedestrian Walkways](#)

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center:

[Brief Micromobility Typology](#)

[Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center.org](#)

Esplanade Association:

[Model Cities Trail Design and Safety Report: Planning for Enhanced Shared Path Experiences](#)

[Article from Seattle Bike Blog Headphone PSA](#)

[NACTO Urban Street Design Guide](#)

[E-bike Battery Recycling Guide](#)

[Rails to Trails Signage and Surface Markings](#)

[Rails to Trails Share the Trail Video Series](#)

[League of Michigan Bicyclists E-Bike Etiquette and Trail Access](#)

Contact

Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition

**50 Milk Street, 16th Floor
Boston MA 02109**

**Call and leave a message:
617-542-2453 (BIKE)**

**Email:
bikeinfo@massbike.org**