RECREATION: SITE DESIGN IMPROVEMENTS FOR PEDESTRIANS & STORMWATER REDUCTION

LOCATIONS:

- Coastal Communities
- Freshwater
- Shorelands
- Tidal Waters
- Surface Waters
- Flood Zones
- Inland Communities
- Groundwater Resources
- Projected Sea-Level Rise Impacted Areas
- Entire Community
- Coastal Zone Designated Communities
- Locally Designated Areas and Districts

REGULATION OPTIONS:

1. Site Design Improvements*

* Denotes current section

COMMUNITY GOAL REGULATIONS:

- Open Space Protection
- Flood Protection
- Drinking Water Protection
- Environmental Protection
- Stormwater Management
- Water Quality Protection
- Infrastructure Protection
- Economic Development
- Recreation Options
- Transportation Enhancement
- Historic and Cultural Preservation
- Community Design & Aesthetics
- Community Equity

WHY ADOPT THESE REGULATIONS?

- Improve pedestrian and bicycle site design for enhanced recreational and transportation options.
- Improve community resiliency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

Recreation is a key element to leading a long, healthy, and happy lifestyle. Oftentimes when planning for recreational resources in a community the first things that come to mind are fields, parks, gyms, and other infrastructure of the like. However, planning and developing a community that prioritizes human-centered travel options provides dignity for pedestrians and allows for active lifestyles less reliant on vehicular transportation, thereby also reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The following regulations focus on two recreation related areas: improved pedestrian and bicycle site design, and stormwater management site design. Creating better standards for pedestrian travel with more efficient and safe routes not only improve public transportation networks but also encourage people to walk or bike more often.[1]People living in areas with sidewalks are more likely to be more active than those living

[1] https://sustainablecitycode.org/brief/street-connectivity-minimums-2/

in areas without sidewalks.[2] When creating plans with coastal hazards and climate impacts in mind, communities can create multi-beneficial recreational opportunities. Potential exists to create designs which protect water supply, balance development and maintain natural spaces, reduce flooding potential, and create equitable transportation networks. Ultimately, multi-modal or alternative forms of transportation can be crucial elements in a community's recreation planning.

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[2] https://sustainablecitycode.org/brief/increasing-pedestrian-mobility-on-internal-and-private-roads-2/

REGULATION LANGUAGE

MODEL LANGUAGE	NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS
1. Construct sidewalks at a minimum of 5 feet in width for ease of use and passing by pedestrians of all abilities. Encourage street trees and sidewalk buffers with on street parking or landscaped strips.	This allows adequate passing space, space for people who use mobility devices, and considers pedestrians in street design. Landscaped buffers can also mitigate stormwater runoff.
2. Open space: Require walkable open space within ¼ mile of residential development. Communities may also require that an easement or accessway be provided to any existing trail networks and sidewalks, and that to the most reasonable extent practicable commercial lots shall be interconnected to residential land uses.	Requiring walkable open space can protect natural landscapes, as well as create areas for recreation in residential zones. Designing recreational spaces in floodplains can also be a better alternative to development.
3. Complete streets: Set minimum levels of connectivity and bike parking to reduce sidewalk clutter and automobile travel, and increase bike trips. Connectivity levels can be set and managed through development requirements using “block length” or “connectivity index” approaches, setting maximum block distances from city center or setting minimum connectivity levels between roadways and nodes. These requirements can also be included in subdivision regulation requirements.	This prioritizes muti-modal transportation and creates more walkable communities designed for pedestrians. It also decreases congestion and traffic, and studies have demonstrated decreases in sick days and increases in life expectancy from bicycle usage. Communities should also prioritize making connections to existing street and transportation networks.
4. Bicycle Parking Minimums: Ensure there is a sufficient amount of bicycle parking depending on land use. Residential land uses should be required to have a majority of parking be designated as long-term parking, whereas other land uses may have more short-term parking. a. Standards for commercial and industrial uses shall be calculated based on spaces per square foot. Examples of parking allotment standards per square foot by land use are	Prioritizing parking spaces and infrastructure for automobiles makes us continually dependent on cars for transportation, increasing pollution and creating traffic. Creating safe spaces for bike storage can encourage alternative transportation.

demonstrated in the table below, which can be adapted to individual community needs.

Land Use	Example	Minimum Standard	Short Term	Long Term
Residential	Multifamily, co-op housing	1 per bed	25%	75%
Restaurants	Sit down	1 per 500 sqft.	75%	25%
Retail/ Commercial	Grocery, hardware, garden supply, auto repair, office, shopping center	1 per 1,500 sqft.	75%	25%
Institutional	Schools, day care facilities	1 per 2,000 sqft	75%	25%
Light Industrial	Business parks	1 per 2,500 sqft	25%	75%
Industrial	Hospital, manufacturing, warehouse	1 per 7,500 sqft.	25%	75%

b. Minimum allotments: All nonresidential land uses shall provide a minimum allotment of two bicycle parking spaces per site.

WHERE DO THESE REGULATIONS GO?

The regulation language offered in this model is intended to be incorporated into a town or city's zoning ordinance within existing parking and street design requirements or can alternatively be included in site plan and subdivision requirements for sidewalks, parking and street design.

HOW TO ADOPT THESE REGULATIONS:

The planning board is responsible for preparing and, in towns, holding public hearings on proposals to adopt or revise the zoning ordinance. RSA 674:1 outlines the duties of the planning board. RSA 674:1, V states that the Planning Board "may, from time to time, recommend to the local legislative body amendments of the zoning ordinance…."

In towns, a zoning ordinance or revision of the ordinance must then be adopted by ballot vote at Town Meeting

In cities and town council towns where the municipal charter determines how a zoning ordinance is to be adopted or revised, a public hearing is still required for all zoning ordinances and amendments

More information about the process of adopting regulations is available in the Adopting Regulations section of this guide.

SUGGESTED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION AND RESOURCES TO COMPLEMENT THESE REGULATIONS:

Recommendation	Type	Details
Zoning Map with base zoning districts	Maps/GIS Data	Find in local Zoning Ordinance.
Parcel Map	Maps/GIS Data	Find via Municipal Tax Maps.
NH Department of Transportation	Funding and Design Review	Able to provide some funding for projects and may require review if changes are proposed with access to state roadways.
Zoning Administrator	Personnel	Interprets and administers the regulation.
Public Works Director/Road Agent	Personnel	Provide input regarding design and maintenance cost.
Recreation Commission	Volunteers	Advise and inform decision making
Conservation Commission	Volunteers	Advise and inform decision making.
Planning Board	Volunteers	Approves/denies applications

HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO OTHER TOPICS?

References to the Master Plan: The need/desire to improve the strength local transportation and recreation goals, improve social connection with community, and increase economic development enhancement.

Communities might also consider enhancing their stormwater management site design regulations (See Stormwater Management: Site Design Requirements). This can reduce the potential for excess impervious surfaces to protect against flooding scenarios and preserve landscape. There are many other regulations a community can adopt to improve stormwater management, but one example is to implement a parking maximum ordinance with the following guidelines:

- Limit impervious coverage to prevent stormwater runoff, underutilized space, and encourage alternative transportation.
- Parking lots and excess impervious surfaces, including sidewalks, should be minimized in flood zones. Alternatively, pervious pavement or other materials allowing for infiltration of water may protect against flooding in areas where traditionally impervious surfaces are needed.
- Communities should also review their definitions of impervious surfaces to ensure there is no conflicting language within their regulations.

WHO HAS ADOPTED THESE REGULATIONS?

The following represent municipalities within New Hampshire to increase site design requirements:

- Dover, NH Complete Streets
- Portsmouth, NH Complete Streets Program
- Seabrook, NH Site Review Parking Maximums

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

- FHWA Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks Guide — Alta Planning + Design (altago.com)
- APA Smart Codes: Complete Streets Model
- Sustainable Development Code Bicycle Parking Minimums
- Davis, CA. Bicycle Parking City Code

- Nashua RPC: Access Management
- Sustainable Development Code Street Connectivity Minimums
- Sustainable Code Framework and Community Audit
- Smart Policies for a Changing Climate