TRAFFIC GARDENS 101



What is a Traffic Garden?

A traffic garden is a space designed with a mini street network and simplified traffic features, completely free of cars. Traffic gardens can be created as painted layouts applied on hard surfaces or designed as small-scale streets with asphalt and curbs to resemble real roads. You can find them in schoolyards, parks, parking lots, and many other public and neighborhood spaces.

Did You Know?
There are over 320 traffic gardens in North America and over 1,800 around the world!

Benefits of Traffic Gardens

Whether on wheels or on foot, traffic gardens offer a safe, hands-on space for kids and other learners to practice road skills and learn safety best practices through active fun. Traffic gardens benefit children as well as the whole community. They offer many benefits including:

- **Building confidence and independence**
- **Providing access to safe practice spaces**
- **Integrating into STEM-related classes**
- **Creating gathering spaces for community building**
- **Inspiring conversations about safer street design**



Why Kids Love Traffic Gardens

Children love traffic gardens because they blend fun, adventure, and learning in a small space designed just for them. These small worlds spark their imagination, inviting playful exploration while teaching real-world skills. Every child, regardless of ability, can experience success, achievement, and joy in a space that reflects the streets they'll one day navigate on their own.

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Traffic Gardens in the Community



In community spaces like parks, traffic gardens take on an informal, playground-like role, offering families a place for outdoor activities. Local organizations, such as biking groups, scout troops, or summer camps, can also use these spaces for:

- **Programs or events**
- **Hubs for community engagement**
- **Revitalization projects of underused areas or abandoned courts**
- **Safe, active destinations for family outings**

Why Educators Love Traffic Gardens

PE teachers and program providers value traffic gardens for their ready-made, structured spaces that reduce setup time and make it easier to organize students for outdoor lessons and activities. With realistic streets and clear markings, they offer a more authentic experience compared to do-it-yourself kits, thus enhancing the instructional effectiveness. Traffic gardens cater to students of a range of skill levels by providing various routes and challenges within the same space. This allows for different levels of achievement, from those mastering a full circuit of the traffic garden to those advancing to trail and on-street riding.



Contact your local outreach coordinator to learn more: www.mass.gov/info-details/safe-routes-to-school-outreach-coordinators

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