Data Collection Webinar

# Q&A

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##

## Data Collection

* How do we account for multiple stores within one storefront?

Please note that total no. of businesses in the study area and total no. of storefronts in the study area are each individual required data points. If you have multiple businesses within a single storefront, count all businesses toward the former indicator (total no. of businesses) and count one storefront toward the latter (total no. of storefronts).

* How do we deal with rating storefront signage in a community where sandwich boards, awnings and outdoor displays are forbidden by local regulations?

Please rate ‘Fail/NA’ per qualitative assessment rubric. However, in your diagnostic of the regulatory environment, we advise a closer assessment of the rules and codes that prohibit the use of these key storefront elements.

* Could you define the retail and office category for the SF requirement in Physical Environment? Example - are the following retail or office — massage place, theater, bank?

We advise Plan Facilitators to refer to the town/municipality’s zoning ordinance for a local definition of uses. If unavailable, our guidance on the sample uses listed above are as follows: Massage place - medical office, Bank - office. Size of theaters or other large entertainment uses are not required for reporting but will be useful to your assessment of anchors/destinations.

* Are these grades/assessments an overall average for the district or block by block?

Qualitative Physical Environment Grades are intended to reflect a district-wide average score. The guide offers guidance on how to grade when a district is "mixed". For example, an A grade for sidewalks would apply to a district where 75% or more of the sidewalks in the district are well-maintained. A C grade would be a district where 25% or more of the sidewalks are in bad shape.

* My project's study area is quite large, and I expect that conditions, traffic, etc. will vary throughout the study area. How should I handle that?

Please report an average RRP Grade for the entirety of the study area as part of the required qualitative assessment. It is expected that these grades will be further substantiated in the Diagnostic presentations by Plan Facilitators with additional analyses, insights and observations that reflect the nuances of various locations/sections of the study area. Plan Facilitators should ensure that additional information collected through their own discretionary methods and processes will be integrated into the Diagnostic section of each final Rapid Recovery Plan and will be used to inform the unique Project Recommendations that emerge through this process.

* In multi-community plans, will we have a submission portal for each of the communities? By multi-community plan, for example, I mean that one application and plan for Lexington, Bedford and Arlington. I am assuming that we have to submit data separately for each of the 3 communities even though they are part of a multi-community planning process. Correct?

That is correct.

* Just to confirm: we can utilize multiple data sources for a better view of some stats? Or does the reporting require that we indicate just one date source (for some categories)? (ie those buttons aren’t multiple choice, right?)

Yes. When reporting your data source, please select ‘Other’ and list all relevant data sources.

* What about potential projects that will improve sidewalk conditions etc.? Do we account for it? How?

For reporting, please provide grades for sidewalks in its current condition. It is expected that these grades will be further substantiated in the Diagnostic presentations by Plan Facilitators with additional analyses, insights and observations that reflect the nuances of various the study area, including any potential projects and plans. Plan Facilitators should ensure that this additional information is integrated into the Diagnostic section of each final Rapid Recovery Plan and used toward informing final Project Recommendations.

* Many Planned Facilitators may be working remotely or have health concerns about going on site during COVID, how do you recommend we coordinate this section of our work with our communities?

If the Plan Facilitator and Community are in agreement, you are welcome to design a planning effort that relies more heavily on remote engagement. At minimum, we expect Plan Facilitators to conduct a single site visit, which is codified in the Plan Facilitator contract agreement. That site visit must comply with COVID social distancing requirements. A site visit can be conducted outdoors to maintain social distancing. Primary data collection (i.e. no. of businesses and storefronts) is also an outdoor data gathering activity. Stakeholder meetings can be held via a variety of video conferencing tools to limit in person interaction.

##

## Study Area

* Can you let us know which communities have changed/reduced their project areas so we don't have to have awkward conversations with them?

The Community Agreement is structured so that every community is given the opportunity to review the study area with the Plan Facilitator and determine whether it reflects the guidelines outlined in the Webinar Trainings and Orientations for both Plan Facilitators and Communities. Study areas should be concentrated areas of commercial and retail activity and should not include significant areas of non-commercial, non-retail uses. In addition, a study area must be contiguous. If the Study Area does not meet this criteria it is incumbent upon the Plan Facilitator and Community to refine the study area to meet this criteria.

* Will we be provided the study areas that our communities submitted?

The study area maps, and the application submissions were sent to each community's respective plan facilitator on 2/24. Please contact Charles Sanderson if you need this information again.

## Project Management

* Will there be a forum where PFs can share alternative data sources and best practices for collection?

We are currently beta-testing a Slack channel for Plan Facilitators to communicate and share resources, insights and experiences through the length of the program. If you would like to be included in the beta testing group, please reach out to Charles Sanderson / MDI/LRRP Program Assistant Coordinator.

* Is the Community Agreement supposed to proxy as a Project Charter for this planning process? If not, is there any aversion to the use of Project Charters to help our communities keep the high-level scope of work and deliverables in the forefront over the duration of this planning effort?

The Community Agreement is intended to serve as a tool to discuss the scope of work, deliverables, and responsibilities for all parties.

* I haven't seen the contract so I apologize if this info is in it--can we engage via stipend/ honoraria community leaders to assist with outreach and engagement?

There is no dedicated budget for community leaders to assist with outreach and engagement.

## Project Resources

* Did I miss the website address? Please provide.

https://www.mass.gov/info-details/local-rapid-recovery-program-lrrp#rapid-recovery-consultants-

* Has this guide been sent out to all consultants?

Yes, the guide was previously emailed to Plan Facilitators on March 12. It has also been uploaded to the project website - available [here.](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/local-rapid-recovery-program-lrrp#rapid-recovery-consultants-)

* Page 8 of the guide - there is a duplicate of “Total No. of Storefronts”. Is one supposed to be vacant storefronts?

Please refer to the most updated guide that has been uploaded to the project website - available [here.](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/local-rapid-recovery-program-lrrp#rapid-recovery-consultants-)

* Are the "Baseline Data Spreadsheets" available online? We haven't seen them come through our channels yet.

Yes, a template spreadsheets will be uploaded to the project website - available [here](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/local-rapid-recovery-program-lrrp#rapid-recovery-consultants-). In the meantime- contact Charles Sanderson for a copy.

* For the request of pedestrian counts and bicyclist counts, do you have any standard methodology for data collection for these.

Pedestrian and bike counts are NOT required data points for reporting to the Commonwealth. If you wish to conduct this analysis, please feel free to refer to the following resources:

**Gehl Institute** <https://gehlinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/pedestrian-cyclist-count.pdf>

**“How to Study Public Life” Jan Gehl, 2013.**

* Does DHCD have a photo release form that we can use to get permission for photos of businesses and individuals?

A photo release form is not necessary since the Rapid Recovery Plans will not be used for commercial purposes. However, please make sure to send images which were taken by you or your team so that your submission of the image entails the right to use the image in subsequent public documents.