



Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

**Uptown
Foxborough, MA**



Acknowledgments



Foxborough Chamber of Commerce

Foxborough Common Business Collaborative



Town of Foxborough, MA

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Marketing and Web Presence

GOMAN+YORK
ADVISORY SERVICES

Building and Facade Program



Parking Management District

This plan has been made possible through technical assistance provided by the Baker-Polito Administration's Local Rapid Recovery Planning program.



The Local Rapid Recovery Planning (RRP) program is a key part of the Baker-Polito Administration's Partnerships for Recovery Plan, the strategy established to help communities stabilize and grow the Massachusetts economy as a result of the economic impacts brought on by COVID-19. The plan invests \$774 million in efforts to get people back to work, support small businesses, foster innovation, revitalize downtowns, and keep people in stable housing.

In addition to the planning program, recovery efforts include a Small Business Relief Program administered by the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation. This program, which concluded in May 2021, provided more than \$687.2 million to over 15,000 businesses across the Commonwealth, with a focus on businesses located in Gateway Cities, among demographic priorities, or operating in sectors most impacted by the pandemic. Cities, towns, and non-profit entities are using Regional Pilot Project Grant Program funding for recovery solutions that seek to activate vacant storefronts, support regional supply chain resiliency, and create small business support networks. To promote recovery in the tourism industry and support the ongoing My Local MA marketing initiative encouraging residents to support their local economies by shopping, dining and staying local, another \$1.6 million in grants were awarded through the new Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant Pilot Program. Through April 2021, MassDOT's Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program has invested \$26.4 million in municipal Shared Streets projects to support public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce.

In support of the overall recovery strategy, the Administration made \$9.5 million in awards for 125 communities to create Local Rapid Recovery Plans, through the MA Downtown Initiative Program. These plans address the impacts of COVID-19 on local downtowns and small businesses by partnering with Plan Facilitators and Subject Matter Experts to pursue locally-driven, actionable strategies.

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The Planning Team would also like to thank the following individuals for participating as key stakeholders throughout the planning process:

ORGANIZATIONS / BUSINESSES

Foxborough Common Business Collaborative

Foxborough Economic Development Committee

INDIVIDUALS

F. Jay Barrows
MA House of Representatives
Barrows Insurance

Leah B. Gibson, Chairwoman, Board of Selectmen

Heather Harding, Chair, Board of Recreation

Michael Webber, Foxborough Cable Access

Cindi Haddad-Drew, Cindi's Diamond and Jewelry Gallery
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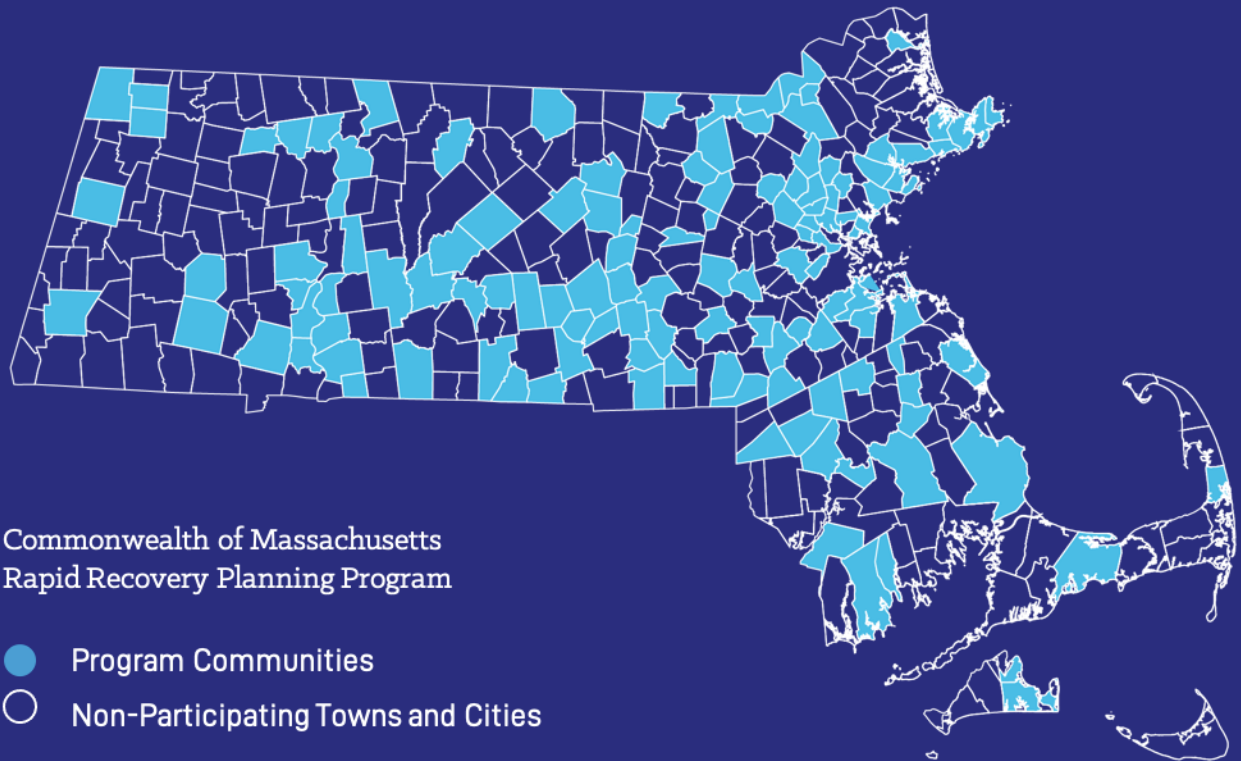
Appendices

- A. Potential Funding Spreadsheet
- B. Compendium of Best Practices
- C. Subject Matter Expert Materials
- D. Public Workshop Presentation
- E. Supporting Research and Studies

125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

- 52 Small Communities
- 51 Medium Communities
- 16 Large Communities
- 6 Extra Large Communities

Mass Downtown Initiative distributed nearly \$10 million across 125 communities throughout the Commonwealth to assess impacts from COVID-19 and develop actionable, project-based recovery plans tailored to the unique economic challenges in downtowns, town centers, and commercial districts.



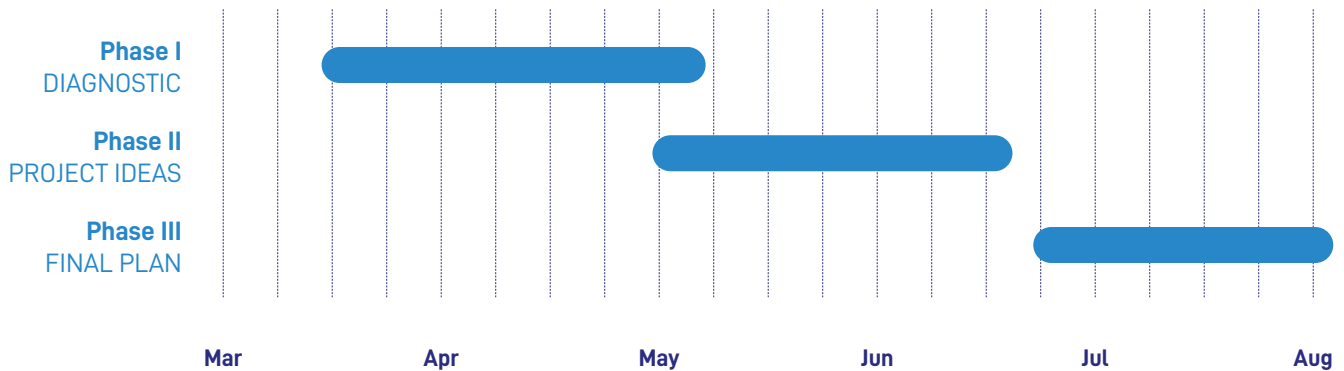
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

The Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program is intended to provide every municipality in Massachusetts the opportunity to develop actionable, project-based recovery plans tailored to the unique economic challenges and COVID-19 related impacts to downtowns, town centers, and commercial areas across the commonwealth.

The program provided technical assistance through Plan Facilitators assigned to each community applicant (e.g., city, town, or nonprofit entity) and Subject Matter Experts who supported the development of ideas for project recommendations and shared knowledge through best practice webinars and individual consultations.

Communities and Plan Facilitators were partnered through the program to assess COVID-19 impacts, convene community partners to solicit project ideas and provide feedback, and develop project recommendations. The following plan summarizes key findings from the diagnostic phase of the program and includes a range of priority project recommendations for the community.

Each Rapid Recovery Plan was developed across three phases between February-August 2021. Phase 1 - Diagnostic, Phase 2- Project Recommendations, Phase 3 - Plan.



In Phase 1: Diagnostic, Plan Facilitators utilized the Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework that was adapted from the award-winning Commercial DNA approach as published by the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) in "Preparing a Commercial District Diagnostic", and authored by Larisa Ortiz, Managing Director, Streetsense (RRP Program Advisor).

The framework was designed to ensure methodical diagnosis of challenges and opportunities in each community, and to identify strategies and projects that aligned with the interests and priorities of each community. The framework looks at four areas of analysis: Physical Environment, Business Environment, Market Information, and Administrative Capacity - each equipped with guiding questions to direct research conducted by Plan Facilitators.

Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework



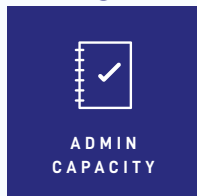
Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?



How conducive is the physical environment to meeting the needs and expectations of both businesses and customers?



What are the impacts of COVID-19 on businesses in the Study Area? How well does the business mix meet the needs of various customer groups?



Who are the key stewards of the Study Area? Are they adequately staffed and resourced to support implementation of projects? Are the regulatory, zoning, and permitting processes an impediment to business activity?

Following the diagnostic in Phase 1, Plan Facilitators, in close coordination with communities, developed and refined a set of recommendations that address priority challenges and opportunities. These project recommendations are organized in clear and concise rubrics created specially for the Rapid Recovery Plan Program. Project recommendations are rooted in a set of essential and comprehensive improvements across six categories: Public Realm, Private Realm, Revenue and Sales, Administrative Capacity, Tenant Mix, Cultural/Arts & Others.



Public Realm



Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Revenue & Sales



Admin Capacity



Cultural/Arts



Other

2.0 Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Keeping 'Uptown' at the center of it all

The Town of Foxborough is approximately 20 miles both south Metro Boston and north of Providence, RI. Located on Rte. 140, just west of Rte. 95 and North of Rte. 495, with a railroad spur linked to the North-East Corridor, it has been said the Town is the 'Center of New England'. And that may be true in more ways than the Town's geographic location; Foxborough is also home to the World Champion New England Patriots Football Team.

Gillette Stadium and Patriot Place is located four miles north of the Foxborough Common, and is a significant attraction in the community, functioning as village within the larger town. It is source of employment and generator of local business revenue and creates significant traffic congestion throughout Foxborough Center on game days. While outside this study's Project Area, the role of the stadium in the community and relationship to the central business district should not be overlooked.

First settled in 1704, the town is organized in a traditional, colonial New England fashion, around a central green. As the Town grew, the green space likely decreased as the roadway encircling the green increased in size to accommodate traffic moving through town on what was to become Rte. 140. Over time the green, or Town Common evolved as the 'hub' of the wheel, with Rte. 140 aligned north to south through the Common, and other roads radiating outward from the Common in North-East, South-East, North-West and South-West directions.

Historically the very first churches, businesses and houses fronted on the Common. Later build-out and development was then established along the 'spokes' of the roadways that radiate outward from the center 'hub' of the Common. As vehicular traffic levels increased over time, the Common became somewhat isolated from daily commerce as the outlying radial streets were home to many closely spaced, densely walkable and diverse businesses. These radial streets are narrower, thus easier for pedestrians to cross, and offer curbside parking in front of the businesses. As businesses in the downtown prospered parking and traffic congestion became more of a challenge and most infrastructure improvements favored vehicle movements, not pedestrians. As the downtown became more auto centric, the relatively tight development pattern and perceived parking challenges lead to a loss of business, with the core of the downtown area experiencing some decline over the years as suburban development in outlying areas seemingly offered greater convenience with easy and fast in-out access.

The Common and surrounding district was re-branded Foxborough's 'Uptown' in 2017 to define and re-invent the Central Business District. The historic Common has hosted events, concerts, festivals and in recent years the farmer's market. These events draw the public to the green, and bring people to the Uptown area, but that activity to a degree is event and location specific and does not necessarily correspond to increase commerce for the businesses lining the radiating streets. When events on the Common are not underway, the vibrancy and commerce in the Uptown Area slows.

However, several projects are now under construction and are starting to re-frame how the Uptown area is perceived and when on-line will be elevating the level of daily activity and enhance Uptown attractions. The re-opening of the Marilyn Rodman Performing Arts Center and new Shovel Town Brewery are in the process of transforming the North -West corner of Uptown. New businesses coming in and re-lining Central Street are added destinations in the South-East quadrant, and several large housing projects are anticipated to being construction in 2022 which will infuse residents into the walkable core of the Uptown area.

In order build on these ventures and develop a plan for long-term recovery and resiliency for the Uptown area, a vision needs to be established that is broad-based, with an emphasis on the restoration of the balance that historically existed between the attraction of events on the Common itself and the areas of commerce on the surrounding edges and radiating streets that converge at the common.

Creating safe and convenient crosswalks, decreasing crossing distances and slowing traffic are key steps to continuing to establish the Uptown as an inviting area to visit, walk, shop and do business. During this LRRP planning process, discussion often focused on investment and the re-establishment of the walkable Central Business District, featuring an array of goods and services linked with interconnected crosswalks and sidewalks and more organized and evident parking. Investment in the Public realm often incentivizes renewal and infill development from the private sector and there remains good opportunities for private investment in the Uptown.

Discovering Foxborough's 'Un-Common' became an organizing concept guiding this work, with the approach of looking at the edges beyond the central green Common and creating initiatives to build back and expand commerce and reinvigorate the Uptown Area. This Study proposes several diverse projects derived from past plans, data collected during the Diagnostic Phase of this work, as well as from stakeholder interviews, Foxborough Common Business Collaborative meetings, Town Staff and input from the business community and general public.

To Ensure that Foxborough has a strong post COVID 19 recovery and continues to move toward greater economic resiliency, the following recommendations have been developed.

- 1. Re-Invent and Organize Central Street Parking Lot**
- 2. Create Administrative Capacity for Uptown Foxborough Marketing**
- 3. Create a Parking District Management Plan**
- 4. Develop Uptown Collaborative Marketing Portal / Web Based Marketing**
- 5. Conduct Arts and Culture Opportunity and Needs Assessment**
- 6. Create Public Art Installations - 2D Murals**
- 7. Create Public Art Installations - 3D Art**
- 8. Implement Storefront Revitalization and Building Facade Improvements**
- 9. Establish Uptown Foxborough as a Regional Mountain Bike Hub**
- 10. Establish Safety and Walkability Improvements**
- 11. Create Pocket Parks and Related Site Improvements**

Refer to the following page for a map of the Study Area



A map of the Foxborough study area

3.0 Diagnostic

Key Findings

Introduction

This Section summarizes data collected and creates a framework for recommendations based in input received during the planning process. Foxborough was unique through the first and second waves of the Pandemic, with no permanent or temporary business closures reported due to COVID-19. However, nearly 70% of the businesses participating in the study reported reduced hours and /or reduced operating capacity, resulting in economic loss. Securing reliable staffing continues to be a challenge even in the 4th quarter of 2021 and in many cases days and/or hours of business operation remain reduced.

It is important to note that construction material costs and other uncertainties during 2020 stalled several projects planned to start in Uptown. While outside the study area, the initial 'Fan Ban' and subsequent dramatic reduction in spectators headed to events at Gillette Stadium dramatically reduced traffic passing through the central business district and negatively impacted local businesses, including those in the Uptown area.

While the COVID 19 virus continues to both surge and ebb, Foxborough residents have found ways to re-discover normal routines and activity on the Common and commerce in the Uptown area is being re-established. It is important that this study generates key project recommendations that will bring regular and sustained foot traffic to Uptown and support local businesses. Increased business revenues will directly and positively impact the small business owners and employees.



The Town's customer base is middle class

The community is predominantly white, with approximately 28% of the population between the ages of 19 and 54. The average educational attainment of 78% of the Town-wide population includes some college education and Foxborough's median income ranks eighty-fifth out of the Commonwealth's three hundred Cities and Towns. The median income in the Study Area is \$88,247.00, which is approximately \$6,000.00 greater than the Town's median income.

The Town's customer base is middle class, with diverse interests, equivalent to the business offerings in the Uptown area. The business district has been characterized as still a 'one-stop-shopping' experience where you can walk to the post office, library, and pharmacy and along the way get your hair cut, buy insurance, get a coffee, pick up a new battery for your car, eat lunch and join the Marines.

Specialty businesses such as Cindi's Diamond and Jewelry Gallery attracts customers from across New England, and nearby Gillette Stadium brings local and national visitors into the community on a regular basis. Several new and recently rehabilitated restaurants continue to increase in popularity and increasingly draw more people to the Uptown.

DEMOGRAPHICS	STUDY AREA	TOWN WIDE
Population	240	18,356
At Least Some College	71%	78%
Median Income	\$88,247	\$82,328
Age (0 - 18)	26%	26%
Age (19 - 54)	28%	25%
Age (55 - 84)	27%	30%
Race (Non-White)	48%	48%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census Data



Public perceptions about the existing physical environment

The consultant team examined the condition and inventoried features of the public realm during the diagnostic phase of the project. Refer to the table at lower right which depicts the study areas cumulative score of each element examined during the field survey. The Towns sidewalks ranked highest, followed closely by good quality roadbeds, crosswalks and signage. Elements more closely related to the pedestrian experience such as lighting and street trees & benches were inconsistent enough to result in failing cumulative scores for the Uptown area.

In a similar manner the private realm was examined and inventoried as well in a diagnostic process, with 'B' or average scores assigned to element such as Windows, Signage, Façades and Lighting on the buildings in Uptown. The lack of awnings and outdoor display/outdoor dining space throughout the Uptown area was uniform, resulting in failing cumulative scores for those elements as seen in the second table.

In addition to the field work, the Business Survey results received expressed similar concerns, with the following three items identified as areas of dissatisfaction with need for improvement.

- Condition of Private Building, Storefront and Signs
- Proximity to Complementary Businesses and Users
- Access for Customers and Employees suggesting walkability improvements, and changes in public parking availability, management, or policies.

During the study the Town initiated two pilot projects, both designed to slow and better organize the 2-3 lanes of traffic circulating around the Common and make the crosswalks safer, thus enhancing walkability to and from the Common. The Common 'hub' can be considered a green island in the center of Uptown, with fewer pedestrian accommodations, site amenities and landscaping to be found on the surrounding streets. While Uptown attractions and arrangement of businesses around the Common and functional, the team noted a lack of walkability along and between the radiating street 'spokes' with challenging crossings, lack of public seating/dining areas, few benches, limited green space and few street trees outside of the footprint of the Common.

PUBLIC REALM ELEMENTS	CUMULATIVE SCORE
Lighting	NA / FAIL
Wayfinding & Signage Benches	B
Sidewalk	A
Street Trees & Benches	NA / FAIL
Roadbed & Crosswalks	B



Foxborough would benefit from green space and outdoor dining

Uptown Foxborough, the Central Business district is approximately 3.25 mile in size. While organized around the Common, the majority of the Uptown commercial area land mass is positioned between the Common and the existing railroad line east of the common. Several businesses extend beyond the tracks further to the east.

Portions of uptown are tightly framed with businesses lining the sidewalks, such as on Central Street. Other streets such as Mechanic Street, show far less retail/commercial density.

There were some challenges noted regarding uniformity and proximity of businesses, further exacerbated by walkability challenges related to pedestrian safety crossing the streets and sidewalk continuity. However, the overall urban form of the streets and buildings outside the footprint of the Common provide an excellent framework for retail restoration, with diverse buildings, alleyways, shoulder to shoulder businesses, and curb-side parking the area encircling the Common will be at the center of the Town's economic recovery plan.

PRIVATE REALM ELEMENTS	CUMULATIVE SCORE
Lighting	B
Facade	B
Awning	NA / FAIL
Signage	B
Outdoor Display & Dining	NA / FAIL
Window	B



Proven stewardship in support of local businesses

Deeply steeped in history, the community's identity is closely linked to the Common. The leading business advocacy group in Uptown, the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative (FCBC) is organized and lead by volunteers, Town leaders and staff members. The FCBC has taken the lead since 2017 and implemented many initiatives to enhance the Uptown area, and the work and investment is visible throughout the project area. In 2020-2021, the challenges in front of the FBFC are similar to those faced in many communities: many of the businesses have elevated needs and creative and extensive actions are required to attract and sustain commercial activity. The pandemic continues to highlight areas of need in regard to establishing economic resiliency, and in communities without staffing resources the need continues to out-pace the volunteer resources available to coordinate, program, plan and implement initiatives that could help businesses remain viable.

Analysis



PARKING

The complexion of parking in the Uptown area is as diverse as the businesses, consisting of large off street front door parking lots, on-street curbside parking, interior back-of-house surface lots, and some instances, buildings without on-site parking. The Town is part owner of the Central Street parking lot, south east of the Common. There is available parking at Town Hall, west of Market Street and there are plans to construct fourteen new off-street spaces in a new municipal lot.

Recently all hourly parking restrictions were removed and there are presently no restrictions on parking other than in isolated instances.

Over the years several parking studies have been conducted, with an array of recommendations designed to address what most studies characterize as a parking perception problem, and not a capacity problem. However, with new large scale development projects planned for Uptown an update to the most recent study and corresponding action plan to establish a proactive approach on parking in Uptown is warranted.



PUBLIC GREENSPACE

The central organizing feature in Uptown is the Common, which is sometimes characterized as the center of a traffic rotary, as seven roads converge at this location. The Common has a large central flagpole, a bandstand, as well as several memorials. Beyond the Common, the study area was noted to have very little green space and limited pedestrian amenities. The team observed a only a few street trees and benches beyond the perimeter fence of the Common.

Planting of street trees and related greening of areas combined with installation of pedestrian amenities would make the streets more inviting for pedestrians.

SIDEWALKS

The pedestrian environment within Uptown includes primarily concrete sidewalks along the roadways that are generally continuous. The width in some areas such as along Central Street, fronting businesses, the available space is tight, and as currently configured limits sidewalk dining and outdoor retail opportunities. In other areas such as the edges of the Common, there appears to be excessive sidewalk width.

The surface condition of the sidewalks and crosswalk as good and Business Survey respondents indicated satisfaction. Based on field observation, accessibility appears to be inconsistent in some locations, and street crossings challenging, depending on the time of day.

During the course of this work the Town deployed several pilot projects conceived to slow the speed of vehicular traffic and enhance pedestrian safety at the crosswalks.

These pilot projects appeared to enhance overall safety and provided enhanced walkability in the Uptown, and similar approaches to all streets radiating outward from the Common should be considered to help connect retail, business and restaurant destinations.

Analysis



UPTOWN

Foxborough Center (Uptown) is the traditional commercial and cultural center of the town. The architecture is diverse, 19th, 20th and early 21st century construction, consisting of churches, multi family residences, single story warehouse style buildings, one and two story storefronts, some with office space or living space on the floor above. While much of the early businesses fronted on the Common, today the Uptown retail and business attractions line the streets radiating outward from the Common as well. Originally an important crossroads with regional significance due to the railroad line east of the Common, the current arrangement of the buildings, parking and streets around the Common favors the automobile and is not yet ideally suited for more modern shopping experiences.

Restoring vibrancy in Uptown can be accomplished by continued investment working within the urban street and building pattern that exists, with an emphasis on creating greater density, leading to an enhanced tenant mix, and expanded dining and shopping opportunities. Continuing with wayfinding and enhancing walkability along and, importantly, between streets making street crossings safer, while concurrently making public parking more intuitive will help serve to knit together business attractions scattered across the Uptown and convey a more cohesive, uptown retail experience.



ADMIN CAPACITY

Like most town centers, activity in the Uptown area slowed in 2020-2021. But several large development initiatives have re-started and transformation is coming to the Uptown area, with Shovel Town Brewery presently under construction and a total of one hundred and fifteen housing units planned for construction in 2022-2023.

At this time, expanding the administrative capacity of the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative (FCBC) is important, not only help address COVID -19 economic recovery but to also build administrative capacity toward the future as these new projects come on line and as other infill and redevelopment opportunities ripen such as the potential disposition of excess Schneider Electric property. The FCBC as presently configured has limited capacity and resources to advance the envisioned recovery and resiliency initiatives outlined in this study.

Serving the needs of Foxborough community, the existing businesses and attracting new business and new development to the Uptown area is timely and important now, as the pandemic recovery and other initiatives converge. Establishing the administrative capacity to plan, and guide the implementation of recommendations while increasing events and marketing activities for Uptown will help create future economic resiliency.

4.0 Project Recommendations

4.1 Re-Invent and Organize Central Street Parking Lot

Category		Public Realm and Private Realm
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Phase I Business Survey Public Workshop Stakeholder Interviews
Budget		High \$200,000+
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Medium Risk - Positive outcomes rely on a commonly held vision and public / private partnership
Key Performance Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Workshop participation and satisfaction among participants 2) Ability to implement a legal framework to manage the parking lot 3) Noticeable Physical improvements to the parking lot 4) Increased revenue for adjacent businesses 5) Establishing the lot as the Center of the Foxborough's Un-Common successful use of the lot for community events (chili cook-off, away game events, seasonal street markets, etc.) <p>Exponential impact – inclusion / integration with larger district improvements</p>	
Partners & Resources	<p>Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Town of Foxborough Abutting Landowners and Businesses</p>	



Existing Conditions



Explore Foxborough's "Un-Common" space opposite the Common and immediately adjacent to area businesses. Above is a Conceptual Study depicting minor improvements to better organize parking, improve lighting add greenery and create outdoor eating areas. Access to the 1st and 2nd floors of abutting buildings could be enhanced as part of this initiative.

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- Proximity and ease of parking were cited as challenges. Formalize and enhance the Central Street Parking Area as expressed through stakeholder interviews and in the Phase 1 RRP Public Meeting
- Sets the stage for expanded and flexible use of outdoor space to allow for revenue generation while enabling social distancing.

Action Items

- Envision and Plan: Through a participatory planning process, develop a program and plan for physical improvements and re-organization of parking on several abutting lots that compose the Central St. Parking Lot. This unified master plan will be geared toward multi-party and public use of the central parking lot area and will include related maintenance strategies. The plan will address mechanism to create improvements, manage shared parking and accommodate flexible alternative uses such as entertainment, events, or dining.
- Reach Agreement: Use this information to write a legal agreement (MOU etc.) for shared use, maintenance, and funding among all pertinent parties.
- Transform and connect: Begin process of resource transformation and plan for inclusion of this revitalized resource in the broader district activation strategy.

Process

- Launch: Determine project lead, secure funding, hire consultants. Identify / confirm landownership as well as all business stakeholders. Determine if translation services are required. Gather relevant planning materials and provide to consultants.
- Hold Community Planning Workshop
 1. Invite stakeholders / project participants
 2. Consider the idea of organizing site visits to relevant properties (such as Bow Market in Somerville) prior to the workshop.
 3. Hold Site-walk / Stakeholder Workshop to develop Master Plan. Decide on needed deliverables and design process to create them.
 4. Plan process to orient participants and state workshop goals. Include vision exercise and explore precedents as precursor to program development

Potential Deliverables

- Intent statements: Covid economic recovery and resilience goals + vision for improvement. Relationship to broader community goals / values / initiatives (including other LRRP projects).
- Map inventory of key resources, uses, access needed, and stakeholders.

- Site utilization plan/program and strategy ("design thinking solutions")
- Placemaking elements, inclusive of preliminary cost estimates / funding strategies. Include both fixed interventions and program pilots designed to generate community feedback
- Work Plan: Public Realm improvements & funding; private realm improvements & funding sources; access - improvements & funding sources. Should also address how/ when pilot elements will be integrated.
- Ongoing management strategy: key goals, responsibilities in relationship to each intervention as well as ongoing management and maintenance of areas / resources included. Determine if entity will also be engagement in marketing and event management – or if this will be done separately. Creative funding mechanisms.

Core Content for Legal Framework

- Develop Legal framework / Design physical transformation (likely an iterative process):
- Expand consult with Attorney Re: Formalize legal arrangement to organize land and user groups.
- Create legal structure / license / MOU
- Develop Schematic approach to recycling, trash, etc.
- Develop Schematic Plan for unified and flexible Central Parking Lot.
- Gain consensus and agreement from all invested parties as necessary to formalize management structure
- Create Central Parking Lot Management entity
- Undertake construction / improvements and begin operation strategy:

General Notes

- Brand the revitalized asset as the "Uncommon" and begin events program
- Monitor progress and adjust if need be.
- Celebrate success and acknowledge community creativity & collaboration at every opportunity!

Other

- Re-thinking the parking lot to be more efficient accommodate other uses or be a space to host special events and could expand retail opportunities for adjacent businesses.
- Improving the 'back' of the businesses surrounding the parking lot could include construction of an elevated deck and common elevator to create access to under-utilized second floors for office and business use.

4.2 Create Administrative Capacity for Uptown Foxborough Marketing

HIGH PRIORITY

Category		Administrative Capacity
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Paige Duncan AICP, Planning Director, Town of Foxborough Foxborough Common Business Collaborative
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000) The Town has no budgeted allocation for staffing. Outside funding is necessary
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Medium Risk – Position to be established for a minimum of 3 years
Key Performance Indicators		Anticipated impacts are 1) The development of a more robust and cohesive Uptown Marketing strategy advanced through a specific person. Measurable by <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sales 2) Business participation 3) Uptown Events 4) Web Visits and 5) Sales
Partners & Resources		Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Town of Foxborough Uptown Stakeholders



An example of one type of event for consideration in 2021. All events require coordination for success and they present opportunities to put forth a strong brand for Uptown.

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- Throughout the Rapid Recovery Plan planning process it became clear much of the Uptown Area's marketing and branding is being conducted by a small group of business owners/volunteers and town staff through the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative (FCBC)
- The businesses generally operate as independent entities in regard to marketing ie. Individual 'eggs' within the larger 'basket' of Uptown.
- Business viability during the height of COVID was individual business responsibility of the Business Survey respondents, 78% expressed an interest in receiving some kind of assistance including:
 - Shared Marketing /Advertising
 - Facade Improvements
 - Purchase of Property in Uptown
 - Training on use of social media
- The Business Survey included questions regarding the importance of Attraction and Retention of Customers. Over 71% of the respondents indicated that having more cultural events/activities was either "Important" or "Very Important" to them and 67% noted the same levels of importance regarding the need for Marketing Strategies for Uptown.
- Moving forward to address the Uptown Business Districts needs based on current and projected growth and business interests adequately requires a dedicated, administration and/ or organizational entity to advance the collective business interests of Uptown.

Action Items

- Explore viability of full or part time position
- Secure funding for dedicated staff, expand help for businesses
- Hire staff and establish resources to help move daily operations and initiatives forward: Set aside \$20,000 in a quick access bank account requiring two signatures to become more nimble.
- Develop expanded, structured engagement strategy
- Activate strategy and request sponsorship from banks, large foundations, corporations etc. in support of FCBC as well as specific events and activities.
- Create community calendar of structured Uptown events (three (3) minimum)
- Monitor and confirm results with stakeholders
- Transition FCBC to private sector funding

Process

- Create business and community advisory working group to listen to the community and businesses; obtain feedback to help set level of need and goals.
- Develop organizational structure and job description
- Seek short and long term funding sources

Other





- With an expansion of marketing and programming efforts in Uptown the timing is right to invest in further development of a strong and recognizable Logo for Uptown to correspond with branding initiatives



The Center of Foxborough should not be thought of as a traffic circle, but rather as place where people live and work, with vibrant businesses and engaging public spaces that visitors and residents alike seek out. Advocacy for the Uptown Area requires expanded programming and engagement to reach full potential.

4.3 Create A Parking District Management Plan

HIGH PRIORITY

Category		Public Realm
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		MPAC 2012 Parking Study Paige E. Duncan, AICP Planning Director Foxborough Common Business Collaborative
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000) MassDevelopment's Commonwealth Places, DHCD's MDI Technical Assistance Grant Program, Town funding, Upcoming CARES Act disbursements from the State of MA (TBD), Upcoming ARPA grants (TBD)
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk - 1) Confirm level of need based on updated Inventory, 2) Requires buy-in and cooperation among public and private parties, 3) Development of Town staff support for parking recommendations and implementation, 4) Establishment of sufficient Town capacity to administer / operate an expanded parking management system, 5) Funding - Identifying funding for study and Implementation of recommendations, 6) Long term parking management - Need to determine permanent management and operations practices / capacity
Key Performance Indicators		1) Survey of businesses and public after implementation, 2) Higher level of use for all parking supply, 3) Increased pedestrian activity and use of public spaces at more remote parking areas, 4) Increased parking availability, 5) Increased sales and meals tax revenue
Partners & Resources		1) Foxborough Common Business Collaborative (FCBC), 2) Town of Foxborough, 3) DPW, 4) Police Department, 5) Zoning/Planning Departments, 6) Parking Department/Enforcers (if applicable), 7) Economic Development Committee, 8) Board of Selectmen, 9) Foxborough Common Business Collaborative



Aerial view depicting on-street parking and large central parking lot. Recently installed wayfinding signage has expanded use of the parking lot in 2021.

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- Address public concern regarding safe and convenient parking near desired destinations
- Organize and publicly identify Uptown Parking resources as expressed in RRP Public Meeting
- Building off of new wayfinding signs for the central lot
- COVID-19 has increased the negative perception of parking availability in Uptown Foxborough. While ample available supply exists within a short walk, prime front-door on- and off-street spaces nearest the Common/Uptown Core experience higher occupancy, contributing to negative perceptions when available spaces are not well-known, advertised or incentivized. This condition has worsened with new retail and residential development, impacting the perception that parking availability is constraining the growth of merchant revenues and threatening future development opportunities.

Action Items

- Inventory of both public and private, existing, and proposed parking spaces in Uptown Foxborough
- Compile a review of shared and otherwise obligated parking spaces
- Compare existing and proposed needs.
- Create Uptown Parking Master Plan
- Create structured management
- Developing a parking use, needs and management analysis and recommendations for the Uptown district will require a parking study that recommends a parking management program which the Town and its partners can implement as soon as possible. The study should carefully evaluate previously identified parking patterns (inventory and regulation), regulatory controls, enforcement protocols, off-street regulations and controls, future development impacts and local administrative capacity for the existing district and proposed developments—updating the analysis with recent data, counts and observations if necessary. It should include outreach to Town and private stakeholders, residents,

landowners, merchants, and other key users of the Uptown parking system. The preferred program should address on- and off-street supply, policy, management, controls, regulations and other strategies in a phased approach that considers improved short-term activation of underutilized supply and long-term development of shared parking strategies as parking demand grows. Key outcomes of the study should include:

- Inventory analysis and mapping (building off of the 2012 and 2019 data)
- Use analysis (building off of the 2012 and 2019 data)
- Operations, management and administrative review
- Phased plan for investments in equipment and infrastructure
- Regulatory changes
- Management recommendations
- Marketing, information, wayfinding, etc. improvements
- Formalized shared parking structure
- Pedestrian connectivity to key parking facilities
- Parking technology assessment (for future paid parking and near-term parking wayfinding)

Process

- Define study area: Determine boundary for data collection. Should include primary public parking areas associated with commercial activity and extend a block beyond the limit of associated activity to determine if spill-over parking exists. This should incorporate all parking facilities collected during the 2012 and 2019 inventory and utilization efforts to assess how parking demand and regulations have changed.
- Identify a working group: An oversight committee comprised of municipal staff, volunteer board members, the business community (including the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative), merchants and residents is recommended to define study goals, focus analysis, support outreach activities, and review recommendations.



On-Street parking along central street is typically occupied while spaces in the lot behind the businesses remain open. With the installation of wayfinding signage in 2021 the lot has experienced and increase in use



Cones placed as part of a pilot project to explore reconfigured parking to enhance safety.

- Amass available data: Amassing information about parking activity, parking demand, land uses, multi-modal conditions, etc. in advance of beginning a study will help reduce costs by more clearly defining the need. Demand/use data collected should be compared to previously collected data to understand parking trends in Uptown.
- Scope study: A study sufficient to understand supply, demand and the regulatory, land use and network factors influence parking patterns should include the following steps (outlined in greater detail separately):
 - Establishment of goals for the parking district management plan that guide the analyses and recommendations
 - Detailed parking inventory
 - Parking activity analysis
 - Data Collection Structure Development: create a reporting structure for parking data collection efforts (of inventory and utilization) that includes information such as data collection instructions, and monitoring mechanisms
 - Parking Management Structure Development: analyze existing operational & financial management approach and develop for Uptown
 - Parking demand & zoning analysis
 - This should take into consideration the impact new development has on the existing parking system, and how parking facilities can accommodate new development such as the Shovel Town Brewery, Schneider Electric, and residential complexes on Wall Street, South Street, and Market Street
 - Pedestrian Connectivity/wayfinding analysis
 - This task should address connectivity to more remote parking facilities, such as the Railroad Avenue lot and Town Hall lot as well as identify areas for parking-related wayfinding signage that direct to short and long-term parking facilities
 - Parking enforcement analysis
 - Public engagement process
 - The district management plan team should use this process to present results from the inventory and activity analyses and provide an update from the previous parking planning efforts, as well as collect feedback from the recently implemented wayfinding infrastructure
 - Strategies & recommendations
 - Final plan
 - Identify study lead: While typically a consultant is hired as an outside, objective and professional resource, a parking study can be done by the municipality or a local organization if objectivity and sufficient capacity is available.
 - Study advertising & initiation: For consultant studies, an RFP with the recommended scope should be prepared and advertised, followed by an approved selection process. The start of a study by a consultant or in-house resources should be advertised and promoted to get broad input, especially if public surveys, interviews, etc. are expected.
- Working group engagement and finding a champion: An active working group representing the fully array of parking interests is recommended to participate throughout the study and to provide continuity after the study is complete. Ideally a champion(s) can be found to guide implementation of recommendations and report back to working group members.
- Study Outcomes: A variety of possible outcomes may help Uptown address its parking issues, all of which may be on the agenda for a committed champion. These may include:
 - Changes to on-street regulations, such as adjusting/removing time-limits, adjusting span of regulation/pricing, or changes to pricing;
 - Wayfinding improvements, including static and electronic signs, as well as online mapping for lots, walkways, remote parking, and short & long term options;
 - Parking permit changes, including modifications to on- and off-street residential programs, employee permits, and commuter parking;
 - Supply enhancements, including re-striping on-street spaces, new on-street spaces, lot reconfigurations, and parking garages;
 - Enforcement changes, including adjustment of hours, routes, staffing, handheld technologies, and protocols;
 - Payment technologies, including pay-by-cell, kiosks, smart meters, reservation systems, parking gates, and more;
 - Demand management solutions, such as parking cash-out programs, market-rate parking pricing, transit & bikeshare subsidies, traveler information programs, etc.
 - Integration of future development into parking system, that promotes shared parking and revisits parking standards/requirements
 - Parking access solutions, such as improvements to sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, landscaping, security features, etc.;
 - Parking design improvements, such as landscaping, screening, garage fenestration, walkways, plantings, green infrastructure, and more.
 - Phased supply strategies, including a short-term approach to increasing remote parking lot use through attractive programming and a full-time ambassador on each level of the garage to overcome security concern; followed by a long-term strategy to begin design development, funding strategies and construction of a second garage when parking demand numbers demonstrate its need.

4.4 Develop Uptown Collaborative Marketing Portal / Web Based Marketing

Category		Revenue and Sales
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Paige Duncan AICP, Planning Director, Town of Foxborough Stakeholder Interviews Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Public Workshop
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk - Survey results indicated support of initiative. Requires shared vision and individual business commitment
Key Performance Indicators		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Announce initiative and observe if there is an increase in number of businesses participating in FCBC meetings. 2. Issue and track level of interest / responses to RFP for consultant support and participation in the development of workshops. 3. Count the number of workshop sessions conducted over the course of six (6) months, and track attendance at the workshop sessions. 4. Observe: Within six (6) months is a web page or similar Uptown Commerce portal established?
Partners & Resources		Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Uptown Business

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- In Foxborough there is an existing Uptown Business Association, The Foxborough Common Business Collaborative (FCBC) which, as is typical of these groups, has struggled to maintain membership and energy. The Covid 19 pandemic added to the group's woes as individual business owners struggled to stay afloat- and in doing so by necessity were much less committed to the greater goals of a community organization. Increasingly there have been fewer and fewer participants, and in the last year or so there have been 3 or 4 individuals who have kept the organization moving forward. At this time there is not currently an appetite to establish a more formal structure such as a Business Improvement District, Main Street Organization or similar. As such there is an urgent need to reinvigorate the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative, to establish more direct support for the local businesses, and to expand the work being done to support the business at the next level.
- Consider initially seeking pro bono web management services from high school students, Wheaton College students or local providers. Demonstrate need, and potential, and acknowledge it is OK to ASK for help... even to get things started and set up so that someone else can take over.
- Offer several workshops to retailers to help them be-the-best-they-can-be, post-pandemic. Many know that they lost touch with customers when they could not have their doors open as brick-and-mortar establishments, and many realize that they have not paid as much attention to their brand as they used to... Communicate with the businesses and let them know that you understand this and are putting programs in place to help them will be appreciated and possibly reduce inertia. Remind them "a body at rest stays at rest, but a body in motion stays in motion!"
- Establish business support through workshops designed to help businesses return to strength. Retain a consultant to conduct a 1 ½ workshop and provide 1:1 consultation with business owners to help them determine what they need most, new signage, window displays, interior improvements, promotions (Refer to other Recommendations made within this Study).
- Sessions could also focus on websites, using social media, database instruction, etc. It is important to secure a set location and day. Often Mondays, Tuesdays, or Wednesdays from 8-9:30 are best – assuring business owners that they will be back at their store in time to open. Two possible workshops might be:

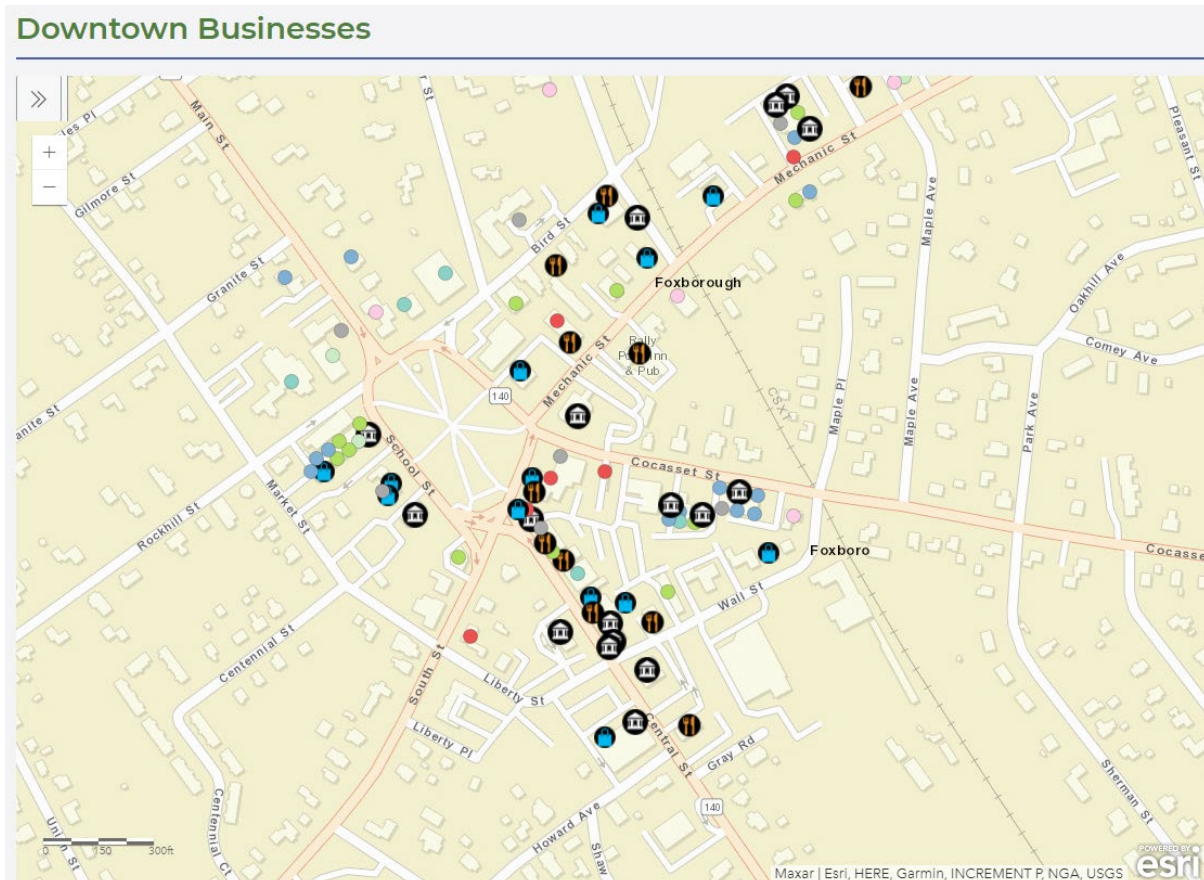
Action Items

- Engage business owners, interested residents and town leaders, etc. to help be ambassadors for this initiative. Administrative support from the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative will add structure and formalize this process. Share the vision that strengthening the FBFC and enhancing the collective branding and web presence of the Uptown Businesses is NEEDED NOW.
 - A collective listing of Uptown Businesses designed to draw increased interest in the Uptown area and help support Foxborough businesses is important to put in place now, and the timing is important to best align and maximize the positive impacts, building on major initiatives that are coming on-line in the Uptown area, such as the new businesses on Central Street, The Shovel Town Brewer, and new residential construction projects in walkable core.
 - Reach out to "Show them the love." Inform retailers, salon owners, restaurateurs, and other small business owners that the town is with them... for one example, adding tabs to the welcome page on the website to help promote local businesses. Link the content in the tab to Foxborough's Uptown Happenings – Facebook page.
 - It is very important to add to add the word Foxborough to this Facebook page /site so that not only "those in the know" can find it; open the door to a broader audience, and then promote it as the place to learn about new businesses, spontaneous events, special sales, etc. occurring in Uptown. The website listings should be more of a directory.
- #1 "Using technology to build and grow business" - with topics like:
- Creating a customer database'
 - Building a website
 - Facebook and Instagram for business
 - Blogs and other social media tools
- #2 "The Power of Presentation" -- with topics like:
- Curb appeal for your storefront – signage and façade improvements
 - Visual Merchandising – in windows and on the selling floor
 - Aligning your website, social and print media with your physical space

Create a Web page showcasing uptown Businesses. Develop a complete directory and links to the business websites.

Process

- Through the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative coalesce the businesses around the goal of creating a Shared Marketing Initiative designed to present a more understandable and uniform web-based presence to the public for all of the Uptown businesses.
- Identify a source of funding CDBG funds are approved for these types of initiatives.
- Seek formal assistance to create a 'road-map' to elevating Uptown's web presence and elevating the web-based offerings as funds permit interview and retain outside expertise in the development of this initiative
- A robust web presence need not translate to web-based commerce, but may in some cases serve to provide more complete information about the business, allow for visitors to the web site to identify synergies and opportunities in the Uptown, and accommodate scheduling of appointments or services, and otherwise open-the-door to enhanced visitation in the Uptown.



4.5 Conduct Arts and Culture Opportunity and Needs Assessment

Category		Culture/Arts
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Paige Duncan AICP, Planning Director, Town of Foxborough Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Foxborough Cultural Commission
Budget		Low less than \$50,000.00
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk - There is an established baseline of interest
Key Performance Indicators		<p>The convergence of history, arts and culture of a community can play a large role in creating an array of interesting attractions and impart vitality in a community. Identifying and making those assets fully expressed is important. The development of an approach to make the cultural and artistic community of Foxborough more visible to the public. Goals include.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct an inventory of resources and publish findings within six (6) months of the issuance of this report 2. Establish a 'trail-map' of identified historic sites within the Uptown area 3. Establish regular open studio events 4. Create a market place for artists
Partners & Resources		Foxborough Cultural Commission Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Town of Foxborough

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- The pandemic threatens arts, culture and community vitality.
- On September 28, 2021 Americans for the Arts released the latest assessment of COVID-19 impacts on the Arts: Over \$17 Billion of financial losses nationally to non-profit arts and cultural organizations. In 2020 across the country nearly 95% of scheduled art exhibits, events, etc. were canceled, and nearly 70% of the organizations studied reported severe impacts. Current data indicates recovery of jobs in this sector lags dramatically behind other sectors.
- Isolation due to the pandemic 'sheltering-in-place' and social distancing has been noted to result in negative mental health impacts. Certain activities such as arts and cultural events may mitigate those impacts.
- Overall community vitality is often expressed through the presence and vibrancy of the Arts Community and Cultural attractions. The arts industry can be an economic catalyst which can accelerate and /or build economic recovery through both in-person and virtual experiences, in both inside and out

Action Items

- Reinforce, bolster or expand existing Arts and Culture Committee if determined necessary to ensure the committee is well balanced and is able to represent all aspects of Arts, Culture, History, etc.
- Develop arts and culture resource inventory
- Identify the top local and potentially regional cultural assets.
- Identify resources that exist to enable the development of a comprehensive heritage and arts tourism plan for Uptown.

Process

- Create a committee to identify community arts and culture resources, include arts educators, artists, cultural organizations etc. Create a committee with a broad cross section of experience and knowledge of resources.
- Identify and list Arts and Culture Assets in the community.
- Identify existing or potential community benefit each arts/ culture resource serves.

Examples of community benefit derived from the assets may be:

- 1) Economic Development
 - 2) Community Livability
 - 3) Arts + Culture Tourism resource
 - 4) Central Business District Revitalization
- Document, record and publicize the results of the inventory process.
 - Create an Action Plan outlining next steps to protect, enhance and expand Arts and Culture resources in the community.



Historic Foxborough Common is an example of colonial era town planning seen in many Massachusetts communities.



Foxborough Common and immediate surrounds visibly showcase history, such as Memorial Hall. Other important historic and cultural attractions remain somewhat out of sight and thus are unknown to the general public.

4.6 Create Public Art Installations / 2D Murals

Category		Culture/Arts
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Paige Duncan AICP, Planning Director, Town of Foxborough Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Foxborough Cultural Commission Public Workshop
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk - There is an established baseline of interest. Requires shared vision
Key Performance Indicators		Anticipated impacts may be measured by: 1. The development of a visible Uptown Arts presence 2. Number of murals created in the Upton Area 3. Increased visitation and visitor retention in the Uptown Area
Partners & Resources		Foxborough Common Business Collaborative, Foxborough Cultural Commission Private Businesses with appropriate host buildings



Before and After mural, photo by Todd Alexander

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- Showcasing talent is a great way to effect change in the urban environment and create buzz and visitation in the Uptown area.
- Personal wellness during the pandemic and sense of safety often necessitated extended outdoor experiences.
- In several locations outdoor seating was established in close proximity to buildings. In some cases the space available is utilitarian.
- Murals create the opportunity to infuse interest, color and visible art into the public realm.

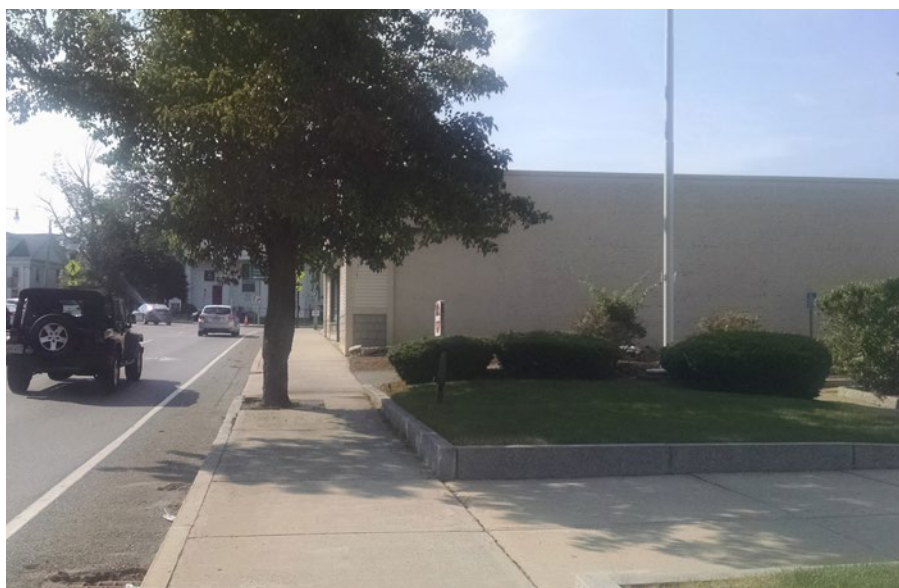
Action Items

- Establishing walkable, outdoor destinations helps encourage mobility during the pandemic. An array of murals and visible art in the community attracts interest and promotes walking within the Uptown business district.
- Create evaluation criteria and "call for entries", RFP or similar
- Establish selection team to review mural proposals, coordinate with building and business owners

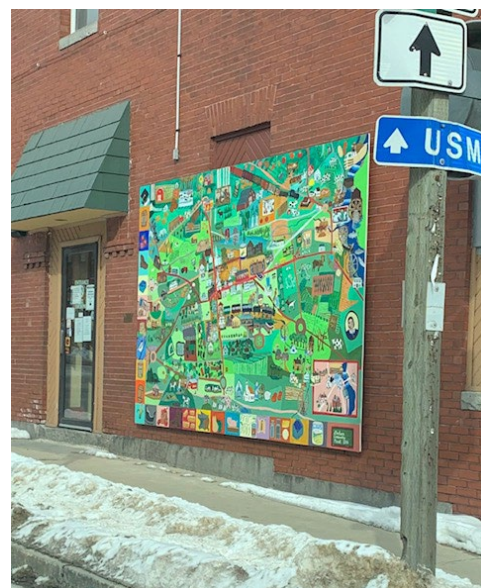
Process

- Obtain funding (Grants, Sponsorship, Community Partners)
- Identify appropriate building facades

- Develop a "Mural Master Plan" of potential sites
- Meet with Landowners/Businesses to confirm sites
- Evaluate potential of community mural that would allow for broad community participation
- Develop "call for entries" / RFP for art work based on space available on the selected buildings
- Review, assess, and assign Artists to mural locations
- Coordinate and facilitate implementation of murals
- Develop Mural Map and Branding program
- Invite the press to observe installations
- Develop and Distribute Media Kit promoting the mural project.
- Consider including public input and/or awards for enhanced recognition of pieces.



Within Uptown Foxborough several prominent blank building facades were identified as potential sites for murals. Projects require consent and coordination with landowners



An example of a mural that was created as an illustrative map of the community and highlights areas of interest

4.7 Create Public Art Installations / 3-Dimensional

Category		Culture/Arts
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Paige Duncan AICP, Planning Director, Town of Foxborough Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Foxborough Cultural Commission
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk - Aligns with Arts and Culture Initiative to make art more visible in Uptown. Requires shared vision
Key Performance Indicators		1) Development of a visible arts presence. 2) Number of installations of Art in Uptown. 3) Increased visitation and visitor retention in Uptown.
Partners & Resources		Town of Foxborough Foxborough Common Business Collaborative, Foxborough Cultural Commission Private Businesses with suitable sites



x

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

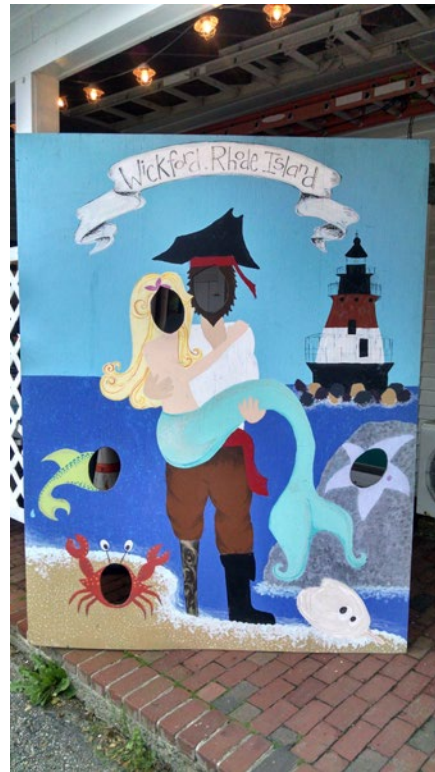
- Returning to more familiar routines include more activity in outdoor settings. As the COVID -19 pandemic continues to ebb and surge it is foreseeable that indoor gatherings will remain less well attended as many people are more comfortable participating in events in open-air settings.
- Creating an array of 3-D art installations throughout the
- Uptown is anticipated to attract visitors while allowing for social distancing. Outdoor attractions will foster visitation to Uptown, and it is anticipated that several installations will promote walkability and commerce in Uptown, with opportunities for corresponding health and wellness benefits to the community.

Action Items

- Identify both public and private sites that could host pieces of art
- Establish Town policy and approval structure
- Coordinate and put in-place any necessary agreements
- Create "Call for Entries"/ RFP or similar for new site specific work
- Evaluate possibility of leasing or renting existing art work to display
- Establish Selection Team to review art work proposals, coordinate with Landowners and Business owners.

Process

- Identify Potential Sites
- Secure rights to display art work at sites
- Develop Master Plan of sites
- Confirm / Secure art pieces for specific locations
- Facilitate installation of art work



Example of 3-D art that is 'interactive' and inspires selfies



Example of a sculpture inspired by nature and represented realistically with modern materials.



Example of large scale abstract modern sculpture constructed on a concrete foundation. Some communities have found rotating exhibitions (1 year turn-over) on fixed bases in set locations to work well for encouraging return visitors.

4.8 Implement Storefront Revitalization and Building Facade Improvements

Category		Private Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area – Uptown
Origin		LRRP Diagnostic Survey Results Public Meeting
Budget		High \$200,000+ Funding Sources: - Build Back Better, MA Downtown Initiative Program - Establishment of a BID/TIF District to fund projects - Tax Abatements/Incentives programs as incentives
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years), - Planning: 1-2 years, Implementation: 3-5 years, - Program, ongoing - Ideally a key project can be utilized as the face of the initiative and the full program can then be phased in.
		Medium Risk - Risk associated with collaboration among Town and property owners. - Funding for program - Private Interest needs to balance with available budget
Key Performance Indicators		- Participation in a storefront façade, signage, lighting, etc. for private realm revitalization in a formal program that would help to enliven downtown - Current property owners subscribing to the idea and implementing any aspects of the redesign - Future property owners ready to invest understanding the additional requirements that they would be required to implement Track number of applications to program received
Partners & Resources		- Town of Foxborough - Foxborough Common Business Collaborative (FCBC) - Foxborough Cultural Commission

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- Uptown Foxborough businesses lost momentum during Covid-19. With foot traffic to businesses down, business owners were looking for creative ways to draw in customers in the safest possible ways.
- The business survey that was conducted in Phase 1 of the LRRP program indicated that 50% of businesses expressed interest in sign and façade improvements as a way to raise awareness of their businesses to customers, this was further expressed in LRRP public meeting. As indicated in discussions, there are opportunities to make improvements to the Uptown that would create a cohesiveness to the district – this could be transformative when coupled with other projects in the area, such as the new apartments and possibly the resurrection of projects that lost momentum due to Covid-19.
- There is strong need to get a consensus and buy-in of property owners and businesses for the project to be successful. This will mean direct meetings with property owners, assessments of buildings and storefronts and other factors to make the program a success.

Action Items

- Create a Storefront Revitalization program with guidelines that allows for improvements to the private realm in the form of enhancements to buildings that includes signage, lighting, façade treatments and door and window upgrades.
- Identify funding to incentivize business owners and building owners to make investments in the Uptown area. This can be approached in multiple ways: grants, tax abatements/incentives, low interest loans.
- Create an incentive program to encourage current and future property owners to participate in the Storefront Revitalization program.
- Develop a regulatory process that enables grandfathering of current buildings and provides for long-range control and revision to the fabric of the Uptown study area as buildings change hands and new opportunities present themselves to increase the "critical mass" of the new vision.

Process- Program Planning

- Identify Town staff and / or FBFC individuals to administer the program
- Inventory and assessment of the Uptown study area buildings
- Identify eligible applicants: Businesses and Property Owners
- Identify shovel ready opportunities
- Prioritize and rate buildings during the assessment process

Budget/Funding

- Identify / budget for cost for typical façade rehabilitation and new signage
- Research and obtain funding source(s)
- Retain Architectural Consultant(s) to design the Guidelines for the program
- Develop a Marketing the program to create awareness of and promote the program.

Conceptualize Various applications within the program

- Conceptualize low to moderate applications
- Arts / Cultural – 2D Murals
- Lighting
- Planters
- Signage and business wayfinding

Conceptualize higher cost/structural applications

- Rehab facades
- Replace windows and storefronts
- Build dumpster enclosures
- Regrade, resurface and re-stripe parking lots
- Rebuild upper floors on buildings that were designed to accommodate them and / or previously had them
- Reconfiguring the parking area within the "triangle" and refurbishing the rear building facades to create a dual approach and increase use potential

Process

- Establish eligibility, application process and approval system.
- Provide initial Architectural Consultation
- Define scope and budget for each project.
- Define how the funding and process is structured
- Who pays for what
- How are payments and incentives structured
- Prepare design(s) of improvements.

- Establish a clear list of eligible improvements and / or rehabilitation. Activities, to include paint / exterior finishes, doors, windows, lighting as well as signage.
- Define approval process from application through build-out to payments
- Architectural Design solicitation / obtain proposals to construct the work.
- Construction of sign / façade / lighting improvements
- If art or murals are used the Cultural Commission should be involved (i.e. – Fresh Paint Springfield program is a good example)
- Consider expanding buildings up to create a more livable Uptown area (creating housing above storefronts)
- Know what projects are in the pipeline that may effect this program

Conceptualize Global Connectivity

- Connecting the "Common" and the "UN"-Common (Central Street triangle)
- Integrating adjacent parks and sidewalks
- Strengthening the "edge" of the Common
- Providing for the new pedestrian traffic
- To be generated by current multi-family housing projects under way
- To be re-directed through the new way-finding structure

Program Evaluation

- Reporting and evaluation on program participation and need for program improvements or modifications
- Conduct survey of businesses / owners that participate to determine any improvements or adjustments to the program
- Goman+York Compendiums on Storefronts and Business Assessments
- Downtown Manchester CT Storefront Guidelines as reference for document Link- Final Manchester ADG May 2019.pdf (townofmanchester.org)
- Attach photos and renderings of storefronts prepared as reference for improvements

Other notes from meeting

- The storefront program can also be utilized for the rear of buildings where people either park or access businesses from the rear
- More involved and transformative building upgrades should enhance access. Consider common elevator concepts to permit expanded use of second floor spaces that are presently underutilized.



Existing Conditions



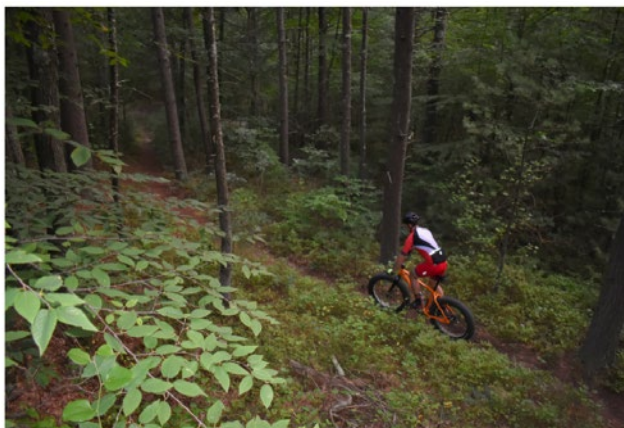
Conceptual study depicting how a existing facade may be able to be modified to engage the public.

4.9 Establish Uptown Foxborough as a Regional Mountain Bike Hub

Category		Other
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		2015 Town of Foxborough Master Plan Public Workshop Business Survey-Written Comments
Budget		High \$200,000+
Timeframe		Medium (5 -10 years)
Risk		Medium Risk - ^T here are established entities with common interests but many moving parts: Initiative requires a coordinator in order to sustain.
Key Performance Indicators		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of written initiative and formal plan to develop outreach and events strategically aligned to draw a connection between nearby F. Gilbert Hills State Forest mountain biking trails and the Uptown Area. 2. Establishment of a committee charged with the implementation of this initiative. Create outreach and build relationships with organizations such as the New England Mountain Bike Association, the local SE MASS NEMBA Foxboro group, and the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation in pursuit of formalizing gatherings and events. 3. Plan and conduct two (2) events within one (1) year of this report.

Partners & Resources

Town of Foxborough
Local Businesses
Mountain Bike / Cycling Businesses
Uptown Food and Beverage Businesses



F. Gilbert Hills State Forest is less than a half mile from the Uptown Businesses (Photo Credit, NEMBA)

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- In 2020 a measurable surge in bicycling occurred, with ridership in all age groups expanding and cycling emerging as one of the most popular forms of recreation during the Pandemic. Bicycle riding emerged as a way to be outside and safely interact with others while maintaining social distancing
- Nearby the 800+ acre F. Gilbert Hills State Forest continues to be a popular destination for cyclists. In 2015 the Town's Master Plan sought to establish a more recognized the State Park and Forest and neat Uptown attractions
- Developing a stronger relationship between the recreational activity at F. Gilbert Hills State Forest and the Uptown area will draw visitors and commerce to nearby Uptown
- Expanded use of the state forest may put increased pressure on roadways, trail heads and parking facilities. Current data suggests that outdoor recreation activities will remain prioritized and popular in post-pandemic recovery and beyond.

Action Items

- Identify potential team of businesses, cyclists and Town representatives to advance this initiative
- Create written plan to engage cycling community
- Develop coordinated and specifically timed events that are built around cycling in the State Park and link to the Uptown

Process

- Assemble Committee and build outreach network
- Based on written plan, raise awareness of the link between the park and the Up town, plan and conduct events that emphasize the connection between the park and conservation land and Uptown
- Conduct needs, opportunities and constraints assessment to create a framework for physical improvements that facilitate and make safer cycling to Uptown.
- Develop a master-plan with recommendations for potential improvements such as way-finding signage, roadway paint / sharrows / striping, trail-head information/ kiosk, parking etc.
- Develop partnership with DCR to coordinate and pursue implementation of plan elements that would include work at State Land
- Plan and Implement an initial event such as a race or technical course challenge with local sponsors.
- Consider temporary closure of some streets to allow for the finish line or an awards ceremony in Uptown.
- Explore real-time video feed from trail cameras to Uptown restaurants or a community viewing area.
- Monitor outcomes form event and plan subsequent events



Access to F. Gilbert Hills State Forest is from Granite Street which is narrow and winds through steep terrain. The introduction of modest bicycle accommodations such as painted sharrows would enhance bike safety and use. Cyclists should be encouraged to connect to Uptown via Market Street.



The F. Gilbert Hills State Forest has a network of fire roads, footpaths and single-track trails. Installation of kiosk(s) at trail heads could educate, inform, and establish a link between Uptown attractions. Addressing and improving trail head parking would organize use and improve safety.

4.10 Establish Safety and Walkability Improvements

Category		Public Realm
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Paige Duncan AICP, Planning Director, Town of Foxborough Stakeholder Interviews LRRP Diagnostic Survey LRRP Public Meeting
Budget		High \$200,000+
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk - Safety, access to off street parking and Pedestrian mobility are Town priorities
Key Performance Indicators		<p>The urban center street pattern is a series of streets that radiate out from the center, Foxborough Common. Creating safe, interconnected, walkable linkages between points of interest, parking areas, businesses and civic spaces is important for activating and connecting all areas of Uptown outside the Common. Measurable by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of Uptown walkability improvement plan that identifies an array of specific improvements such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Crosswalks Sidewalks Pedestrian wayfinding Areas to create road 'diets' Street trees Ornamental lighting Components of the plan that are implemented

Partners and Resources

Foxborough Common Business Collaborative
Town of Foxborough



Existing alleyway connection between Central St. and the interior parking lot. This is the most direct access point to and from the lot and is a link to the Common.



Conceptual sketch depicting how the alleyway might appear and function if vehicular access were eliminated and the space was dedicated to pedestrians only. Lighting, table and chairs and planters enhance the link and set the stage to explore the "Un-Common" in Foxborough.

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- During the inventory phase, the team noted the sidewalks to be in generally good condition physically throughout the Uptown area. At least 50% of the Business Survey Respondents ranked Improvement of Streetscape and Sidewalks as "Very Important". As part of the same survey, 56% of respondents gave Improvements in Safety and /or Cleanliness the rankings of either "Important" or "very Important".
- Other input from the businesses reflects significant (76% ranked as "Important or "Very Important") interest in the creation of more opportunities for Outdoor Selling and Dining and 72% of Business Survey respondents expressed it was "Important" or "Very Important" to have more cultural events to bring people into the district.
- The assimilation of data and subsequent scoring of the Public Realm elements resulted in a Sidewalk grade of A, with Crosswalks, Road Bed and Wayfinding signage assigned a grade of B. The inventory revealed that elements such as Lighting, Street Trees and Benches were so few in number as to be effectively absent and thus failing for the Uptown area.
- Attracting and retaining visitors in Uptown as part of realizing identified business objectives along with the 115 units of new housing slated to be constructed in the Uptown area will result in more pedestrians on the sidewalks and crossing the streets
- The two pilot projects the Town conducted during this study illustrates the attention being given to pedestrian safety and enhancing accessibility.

Action Items

- Identify Funding sources
- Identify Private sector partners for expanded beneficial impacts

- Create agreements for improvements outside public R.O.W.
- Develop Master Plan of desired projects and obtain approvals
- Align Projects with related initiatives such as signage & art

Process

- Create working group of Town and business representatives to coordinate areas of need, places of opportunity and include goals of the Town's ADA transition plan.
- Develop a Master Plan outlining potential project areas, types of project being considered (ADA compliant access, Safety, Ornamental Lighting, Curb neck-downs, sidewalk widening, Enhancements, etc) and look for areas of overlap.
- Coordinate and link project identification with other recommendations such as the installation of public art and locations for such installations.
- Ensure the planning effort encompasses the portion of Uptown east of the Rail Road to fully provide for connection to the existing businesses as well as the Schneider Electric Campus and parking area made available through recent agreements.
- Rank the potential projects and systematically develop plans to develop an inter-connected and related improvements that link uses like parking areas with retail destinations.
- Conduct field walk to review types of projects with stakeholders.
- Finalize Master Plan



Several businesses in Uptown are fronted by large surface parking lots which emphasize the automobile and disrupt the visual cohesiveness and walkability of the Uptown area.



Roadway edge improvements such as curbing, street trees, and sidewalks in this location would help create a sense of Gateway and arrival to Foxborough Center.



Under ideal conditions, improvements should enhance the pedestrian experience and promote walkability. People enjoy being able to walk side-by-side and converse while shopping in town centers.



Some existing sidewalks are narrow and limit pedestrian movement between destinations. People walking from various locations and parking areas in Uptown to top local attractions like Shovel Town Brewery and the Marilyn Rodman Theater will utilize this sidewalk. Expanding sidewalks and improving crosswalks between and along radial streets outside of the Common will enhance pedestrian activity in Uptown.

Ornamental / Accent Lighting throughout

Enhanced wayfinding / gateway

Public / Private pocket park / seating area

Extend grass strip with street trees

Construct and extend concrete sidewalks

Granite Curbing



Concept Sketch for possible enhancements to Mechanic Street. This corridor is a Gateway to the center of Uptown and features attractions and businesses. Improving walkability, adding street trees and related amenities will restore scale and make the two blocks physically appear more consistent with the Uptown areas. Partnering with the landowners would allow expanded treatments and inclusion of elements such as a pocket park. Future changes anticipated at Schneider Electric could elevate activity greatly in this part of Uptown.

4.11 Create Pocket Parks and Related Site Improvements

Category		Public Realm
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Paige Duncan AICP, Planning Director, Town of Foxborough Stakeholder Interviews Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Written Comments - Business Survey Respondents
Budget		High \$200,000+
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Medium Risk - to be most effective requires private landowner involvement
Key Performance Indicators		The development of other pockets of green space within the Uptown area to promote pedestrian activity and support outdoor gathering and eating in areas other than the central Foxborough Common. Measurable by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of pocket park locations identified, 2. Diversity and distribution of locations 3. Number of parks constructed.
Partners & Resources		Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Private Landowners/Businesses Town of Foxborough.



View of the south-facing Marilyn Rodman Performing Center Arts.



Planting a few trees strategically and adding site furniture such as tables and chairs would add green and provide shade to make the space more comfortable for theater go-ers.

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- More than 82% of the businesses inventoried reported less foot traffic and fewer on-site customers in the Uptown Area.
- Creating destinations for walking in the Uptown area as well as places to sit and eat beyond the footprint of the Common would help foster walking, particularly if tied to recommendations regarding the installation of Public Art.
- Small parks could be locations for fitness equipment to be installed as stations within the Uptown, potentially expanding health benefits and number of walkers / joggers in the Uptown area at any given time.
- Generally Businesses gave the physical conditions of the Public spaces, streets and sidewalks high marks, however in responses targeted at establishing areas of emphasis, Improvements to Safety and / or Cleanliness and Improvement / Development of Public Spaces and Seating Areas were scored as "Important".
- Support was given in the Business Survey to continue the Banner / Wayfinding initiative in Uptown
- The same notation of "Important" was given by respondents in regard to creating more opportunities for outdoor selling and dining.

Action Items

- Create a Vision Plan for the Uptown of potential sites that could support small scale park type improvements. Prioritize creating a network of locations through the entire Uptown area

- Assimilate and incorporate recommendations from other plans into this master plan
- Identify specific types of improvements by location
- Identify areas of desired improvements that may require work outside the public Right of Way work to coordinate with landowners to determine options such as license agreements, or easements, and possibilities for shared improvements / services between the Town and Landowners.
- Create a committee or similar entity to advance this initiative.
- Identify funding sources and partners

Process

- Create a team to advance this initiative
- Be sure the group includes Town and business stakeholders as well as arts/culture representatives.
- Develop Master Plan of desired improvements, with levels of improvements that allow for incremental implementation yielding visible change in the near term.
- Finalize Master Plan and gain approvals
- Strategically implement improvements by prioritizing areas in Uptown outside the Common.



Site improvements to this area of Railroad Avenue would enhance parking and could help promote walkability to Uptown Businesses East of the train tracks. A 3-D public art installation here or in a location near to Schneider Electric would add great interest. Improvements here also set the stage for future expansion of uses such as shared-use path along the tracks.



Informal seating spaces that encourage outdoor gathering should be considered as part of any new greenspace. Outdoor spaces where people can sit and eat continue to gain in popularity as fewer people are choosing to 'dine-in'

5.0 Funding Sources

5.0 Funding Sources

The following funding sources are anticipated to be available specifically for COVID-19 impact-related project recommendations.

Typical funding sources include federal and state grants dedicated to economic development, community revitalization, and municipal revenue. Many municipalities work with a consortium of interested parties, including local banks, that contribute to the pool of funds. Application fees can be utilized to circulate additional funding through the target area. Occasionally large institutions or private developers may join the team administering the program in an effort to revitalize the corridor and community around a campus or mixed-use development. Local institutions and developers should be contacted to determine if they would contribute to a pool of funding for a storefront facade revitalization program. No dollar amount is too small to contribute, but a specific range of choices should be agreed upon prior to engaging them. A bronze, silver, and gold level would enable their name and logo to be included on construction fencing, flyers, or project web sites. Investigate the MA Downtown Initiative in the spring under the One Stop portal offered by the Commonwealth, Community Development Block Grants, and Main Streets programs.

American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA)

ARPA provided roughly \$385 million to be split between 313 Massachusetts communities with populations under 50,000.

- **Foxborough is slated to receive \$1,815,163**

The Baker Administration received the first 50% of that money on May 28, 2021 and shortly after sent a letter to municipalities that includes details on how they can get their ARPA money deposited into local coffers. It appears that ARPA funding can be used for small businesses and COVID-19 related economic impacts. ARPA Funding can be used for direct relief related to COVID-19 impacts through the use of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CLFRF) in the following five core areas:

1. **Respond to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19 or its negative economic impacts** - this includes COVID-19 mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral health, and certain public health and safety staff
2. **Economic impacts of the public health emergency** - these include efforts to mitigate economic harm to workers, households, small businesses, affected industries, and the public sector
3. **Lost public sector revenue** - payments may be used to fund government services to the extent of revenue

reductions from the pandemic

4. **Premium pay for essential workers** - funds may be used for additional support for those who have faced the greatest health risks because of their service in critical infrastructure sectors
5. **Water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure** - recipients may invest to improve access to clean drinking water, support wastewater and storm water infrastructure, and expand access to broadband Internet:
 - » Wide range of eligible water and sewer infrastructure projects – specifically, all that would otherwise be eligible to receive financial assistance through the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) or Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)
 - » Broadband projects must provide service to unserved and underserved households and businesses. Eligible projects are expected to be designed to deliver, upon project completion, service that reliably meets or exceeds symmetrical upload and download speeds of 100 Mbps

Potential eligible uses within these five core areas include the following expenses:

- Direct COVID-related costs (testing, contact tracing, etc.)
- Public health and safety staff
- Hiring state and local government staff up to the number of employees to pre-pandemic levels
- Assistance to unemployed workers, including job training
- Assistance to households
- Small business assistance
- Nonprofit assistance
- Aid to impacted industries
- Expenses to improve efficacy of public health or economic relief programs
- Survivor’s benefits
- CLFRF funding cannot be used to:
 - Replenish a “rainy day” fund or other reserve fund
 - Make a deposit to a pension fund

Additional Funding Sources for Public and Private Realm Improvement Projects

The following funding sources were included specifically for recommendations generated as part of this ongoing planning study. The list can be applied to a wide variety of public realm and private realm improvement projects.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant Program is a federally funded, competitive grant program designed to help small cities and towns meet a broad range of community development needs. The Community Development Fund (CDF) awards grants to communities throughout the Commonwealth. This program helps eligible cities and towns to meet a broad range of community development needs in housing, infrastructure, revitalization, economic development and public social services. It supports CDBG eligible activities and encourages applicants to develop coordinated, integrated and creative solutions to local problems. Mini-entitlement communities through on a formula calculation based on a high statistical indication of need, poverty rate and size. Eligible CDBG projects include but are not limited to:

- Housing rehabilitation or development
- Micro-enterprise or other business assistance
- Infrastructure
- Community / public facilities
- Public social services
- Planning
- Removal of architectural barriers to allow access by persons with disabilities

“Programs focused on commercial properties are usually administered and staffed by a municipality’s planning, community development, or economic development office; a Main Street organization; a business improvement district, or other government-affiliated entities.”

<https://plannersweb.com/2013/10/how-facade-improvement-programs/>

Massachusetts Downtown Initiative

*Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community One-Stop for Growth
Department of Housing and Community Development*

All communities are eligible to apply. This program provides technical assistance and design services for a variety of downtown improvement elements. MDI staff will assign a consultant to assist the community with the technical services, which could include studying and generating a range of design options and offering a blueprint for how to move forward. The next application round opens in the spring. In 2018, Foxborough, North Chelmsford, and Winchendon received grant awards for wayfinding.

Commonwealth Places Program

MassDevelopment

This competitive grant advances locally driven placemaking projects in downtown and neighborhood commercial districts in eligible communities throughout Massachusetts. The aim of Commonwealth Places Resurgent Places is to help community partners prepare public spaces and commercial districts to best serve their population during COVID-19 social distancing and the phased reopening of the economy.

- Seed grants available from \$250 - \$7,500
- Implementation grants available up to \$50,000
- Successful examples of this grant include:
 - » Marlborough received \$15,000 for wayfinding and branding strategy development
 - » Greenfield received funding used by the Greenfield Business Association for reimbursing restaurants to purchase outdoor dining furniture

Alternative Funding Programs

The following funding programs are grouped as alternative because they either do not stem directly from a local or regional agency or governing body or they do not directly fund the type of proposed improvement projects recommended in this report.

Local Banks and other Community Development Financial Institutions

Local banks with a community development financing program for small businesses may be able to help provide low or no interest loans to small businesses for their share of the improvements, especially for a storefront or sign upgrade. The focus of the program at each bank is different; contact your local bank(s) and discuss how they could participate in investing in the community.

Business Improvement District (BID) or Other Downtown District

Funds from a BID may be used for planters, trash and recycling receptacles, sanitation and maintenance staff, graffiti removal, storefront facades, windows, doors, and sign maintenance, and a variety of other elements.

Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit

Massachusetts Historical Commission

This is available for significant rehabilitation of historic buildings and may help supplement a larger project in a downtown. The guidelines developed for the municipal façade/storefront improvement program could be incorporated into the review of larger projects.

Collaborative Workspace Program

MassDevelopment

This grant provides owners and operators of collaborative work spaces up to \$100,000 for new equipment or building improvements. Alternatively, seed grants of up to \$15,000 to plan for new co-working spaces are available. This grant is an opportunity to address the exterior and the interior of a building while also helping to support existing local jobs and create new job opportunities.

Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund

Massachusetts Historical Commission

This is a 50% reimbursable matching grant for preserving properties, landscapes, and sites listed in the State Register of Historic Preservation. Applicants are limited to municipalities and nonprofits. Many downtown and village centers include nonprofit and municipal anchors. This grant could be used to ensure that all properties in a target area are brought, over time, to the same standard of repair. The program does have limitation on allowable costs. A preservation restriction is required.

Summary

The above funding sources may be used to fund a variety of public and private realm improvement programs, maintenance, and streetscape improvements. While many of the above funding sources could be leveraged in combination with other funds to develop a façade improvement program, the list in general was developed with a wide variety of improvement projects in mind.

See funding spreadsheet in the Appendix for comprehensive list of possible funding sources provided by Department of Housing and Community Development.

Appendices

- A. Potential Funding Spreadsheet
- B. Compendium of Best Practices
- C. Subject Matter Expert Materials
- D. Public Workshop Presentation
- E. Supporting Research and Studies

Appendices

A. Potential Funding Spreadsheet

Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects	Funding Sector	Agency/ Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Cultural Facilities Fund (Systems Replacements)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council	See grant.	Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, and colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	For 20-year capital needs assessments of buildings and mechanical systems.
Cultural Facilities Fund (Capital Grants)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council	See grant.	Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, and colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	For the acquisition, design, construction, repair, renovation, and rehabilitation of a cultural facility.
Real Estate Services Technical Assistance	No Longer Available	Public	Mass Development	\$10,000	Eligible applicants include municipal officials, planners, local stakeholders, and others.	Grants may be used toward technical assistance opportunities in Surplus Property Reuse (e.g. Constraints and Feasibility Analysis, Master Planning, Test Fits, RFP/Q Assistance) or Local District Management Implementation Technical Assistance (e.g. District Improvement Financing, Business Improvement District formation)
Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency/FEMA	See grant.	Property Owners	To reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes, and other structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
MA Downtown Initiative Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$25,000	Municipalities	Technical assistance for downtown revitalization in 6 categories
Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency/FEMA	See grant.	Property Owners	Hazard mitigation projects reducing the risks from disasters and natural hazards

Community Preservation Act	Yes	Public	Community Preservation Trust Fund/State Department of Revenue (DOR)	See grant.	Only communities that have adopted the Community Preservation Act are eligible to receive CPA Trust Fund matching funds annually.	To preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities.
BIZ-M-POWER	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation	\$20,000	Small businesses (i.e. employing 1-20 FTE employees, including 1 or more of whom owns the business, annual revenue not exceeding \$2,500,000) in brick-and-mortar (physical) establishment operating within Massachusetts	To assist low-income and moderate-income entrepreneurs with their acquisition, expansion, improvement or lease of a facility, purchase or lease of equipment, or with meeting other capital needs of a business.
Competitive Tourism Grants	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$10,000,000	See grant.	<p>EDA's ARPA Tourism NOFO is designed to provide a wide-range of financial assistance to communities and regions to rebuild and strengthen their travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industry through various infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Under this NOFO, EDA solicits applications under the authority of the Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program, which is flexible and responsive to the economic development needs and priorities of local and regional stakeholders.</p> <p>EDA's travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation grants will be delivered through two components: (1) State Tourism Grants and (2) EDA Competitive Tourism Grants.</p>

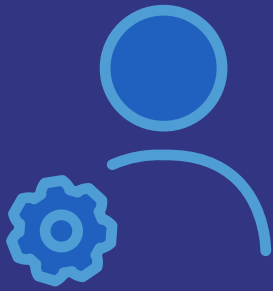
Build Back Better Regional Challenge	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$500,000	Eligible applicants under this NOFO include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. Under this NOFO, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for profit entities. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.	<p>Through this American Rescue Plan Act Build Back Better Regional Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (ARPA BBBRC NOFO), EDA aims to assist communities and regions impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has caused, and continues to cause, economic injury to U.S. communities and regions in devastating and unprecedented ways. This ARPA BBBRC NOFO is designed as a two-phase competition to (1) help regions develop transformational economic development strategies and (2) fund the implementation of those strategies that will create and grow regional growth clusters. Such efforts will help regional economies recover from the pandemic and build economic diversity and resiliency to mitigate impacts of future economic disasters.</p> <p>In Phase 1, EDA will provide technical assistance grants to approximately 50-60 coalitions (through a lead institution). These coalitions will be considered “finalists” and the grants will be used by the finalists to prepare more detailed applications for transformational projects that benefit their respective geographic regions and are aligned around a holistic approach to building and scaling a strategic industry.</p> <p>In Phase 2, EDA will award each of the 20-30 finalist coalitions \$25-75 million (and potentially up to \$100 million) to fund the collection of projects they identified. The projects will be funded through grants to coalition members.</p>
Hometown Grant Program	Yes	Private	T-Mobile	\$50,000	Towns with population <50,000	To build/rebuild/refresh community spaces that help foster local connections in town.
Brownfields Redevelopment Site Assessment Fund	Maybe	Public	Mass Development	\$100,000	See grant.	To finance the environmental assessments of brownfield sites in Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) of the Commonwealth

Community Development Block Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$1,350,000	Municipalities with a population of under 50,000 that do not receive CDBG funds directly from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Municipalities may also apply on behalf of a specific developer or property owner.	A broad range of community development needs - including projects such as housing rehabilitation or development; micro-enterprise or other business assistance; infrastructure; community/public facilities; public social services; planning; removal of architectural barriers to allow access; downtown or area revitalization
Brownfields Redevelopment Remediation Fund	Maybe	Public	Mass Development	\$500,000	See grant.	To finance the remediation of brownfield sites in Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) of the Commonwealth
Housing Development Incentive Program	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	See grant.	Developers (projects located in Gateway Cities)	Tax incentive to undertake new construction or substantial rehabilitation of properties for lease or sale as multi-unit market rate residential housing
Abandoned Housing Initiative Strategic Demolition Fund Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Attorney General's Office	\$125,000	Municipalities, Municipal Housing and Redevelopment Authorities, Nonprofit organizations	To be used for the construction of an affordable housing structure.
Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund	Maybe	Public	State Historic Preservation Office	See grant.	Municipalities and private non-profit organizations	To support the preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites (cultural resources) listed in the State Register of Historic Places - including pre-development work, development projects such as stabilization, protection, rehabilitation and restoration
Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey and Planning Grant Program	Maybe	Public	State Historic Preservation Office	See grant.	Municipalities and private non-profit organizations	To support efforts to identify and plan for the protection of the significant historic buildings, structures, archaeological sites and landscapes of the Commonwealth (including cultural resource inventories, nomination of properties to National Register, community wide preservation plans, other studies/reports/publications to identify and protect significant properties)
Massachusetts Recycling Fund	Maybe	Private	BDC Capital	See grant.	See grant.	To help Massachusetts businesses active in recycling-related activities obtain the capital needed for any reasonable business purpose.

Closed Loop Infrastructure Fund	Maybe	Private	Closed Loop Partners	See grant.	Municipalities and private companies	Provides below-market rate loans to fund replicable, scalable and sustainable recycling and circular economy infrastructure projects across collection, sortation, processing and new technologies.
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Appendices

B. Compendium of Best Practices



ADMIN CAPACITY

Best Practice Compendium

Admin Capacity v1.1
June 09, 2021





Zoning for a Resilient Downtown



Provided by SME Consultant

Levine Planning Strategies, LLC

Location

Burlington, VT

Origin	City of Burlington (VT) Office of City Planning
Budget	 High Budget – \$450,000 (HUD Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant)
Timeframe	 Medium Timeframe – 6 years (3 years' planning & 3 years to finalize code)
Risk	 Medium Risk – increased timeframe and cost helped reduce risk
Key Performance Indicators	Growth and survival of existing businesses; number of business expansions
Partners & Resources	Federal agencies; Community & Economic Development Office; Mayor's Office

Diagnostic

Downtown businesses often need to adapt and change quickly. However, many local zoning codes make it difficult to quickly adjust business models. In many cities, use tables are many pages long, with many common uses requiring a discretionary review. Adding a new use or adding space to a business, even on a trial basis, can be difficult to do. In addition, changes may trigger increased parking requirements that cannot easily be met in a downtown setting. For these reasons, many downtown businesses are reluctant to change their model and potentially find a successful new strategy.

This problem predates COVID-19. However, in the wake of the pandemic, businesses had to adapt quickly, experiment, and be prepared to provide new uses to attract customers. In the short-term, many communities were flexible. Going forward, however, it's likely that many communities will return to reviewing changes in use or space. At the same time, research suggests that businesses need flexibility to succeed post-COVID-19.

Some communities have responded to this issue by reducing the number of uses in their zoning. Others have simply made it easier to add a new use on site or expand existing uses. Still others have looked to remove use limitations altogether in certain zones, focusing on goals outlined in local plans to guide decisions.

Action Items

An important step to help businesses post-COVID is to think about zoning requirements as a small business might. What if a record store wanted to add a small bookstore in the back of their space? Would that be allowed? Would they have to somehow provide additional parking? Would it require a public process with the risk and cost of being denied? If so, communities should think about whether that is their goal. In some cases, it may make sense to keep zoning restrictions on certain uses. For example, drive thru restaurants often have negative externalities, especially in a downtown location. On the other hand, a walk-up window for pedestrians is likely to have few of those negative effects, and can help drive local businesses as visitors continue to be wary of going indoors. Once you have a sense of how your zoning affects business decisions, it would be advisable to check in with some local businesses to get their thoughts as well.

With that data in hand, communities can use their plans to guide how to change their zoning. A few small steps may make a big difference. These could include:

- Reducing or removing regulations on outdoor dining in zoning. Licensing and other municipal processes can usually suffice;
- Revising parking requirements for new uses downtown. Re-tenanting an existing space, or changing from one use to another, should not generally trigger any new parking requirements; and
- Streamlining the review process for changes in use. Either reduce the number of use groups in zoning so small changes don't trigger zoning review or allow more uses by right. If some public review is appropriate, rely on staff-level administrative review as much as possible.

Process

Burlington's planning process began in earnest in 2010 when the city received a Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development. That grant made it possible to develop a plan for the downtown and waterfront, called "PlanBTV." The vision in that plan was then codified in a form-based code beginning in 2013. The new zoning reduced the number of uses downtown by 50%. More importantly, it made it easier for a business to modify their use category by significantly reducing the timeframe and risk to the business. Changes such as these are ongoing. Most recently, city planners have worked to update the definitions and uses for food and beverage uses to recognize the rise of new dining and drinking options.

Not every community needs to have as extensive a process as Burlington. Simply auditing the use table, streamlining the list of uses, and making it easier to change from one use to another, would be helpful for downtown businesses post-pandemic. That process could be done at a much lower cost and much more quickly.



The Pine Street Enterprise District in Burlington (Credit above & cover: David White, FAICP, Burlington Office of City Planning)



Determining a District Management Model for Downtown Reading





Provided by SME Consultant

Ann McFarland Burke , Downtown Consultant

Location

Reading, MA

Origin	Town of Reading, MA
Budget	 <p>A Massachusetts Downtown Initiative grant provided Technical Assistance. The Town provided staff support and early coordination.</p>
Timeframe	 <p>The process took approximately 18 months. This timeframe was expanded due to the pandemic and extensive community education undertaken as part of the process.</p>
Risk	 <p>Political , property owner, tenant and other stakeholder consensus for preferred organization model is required to successfully establish a downtown organization</p>
Key Performance Indicators	<p>Establishment of a sustainable downtown organizations with a real defined program , sustainability model and appropriate staff support.</p>
Partners & Resources	<p>Town of Reading, downtown advisory and steering committee and other downtown stakeholders</p>

Diagnostic

The creation of a downtown management organization was intended to establish a dedicated organization that would provide supplemental programs, services and advocacy for the downtown. The downtown organization would undertake activities to attract businesses, investment, customers and residents to downtown. These could include marketing, placemaking, business development and advocacy.

Determining the appropriate downtown management organization model was a unique process for the Reading community, downtown property owners and businesses. The process included extensive outreach and community education to explore program priorities, financial sustainability, organizational models and champions from both the private and public sector.

Action Item

Economic Development Plans for downtown Reading had included the recommendation to establish a sustainable downtown organization to support the economic and social health of the downtown. The Town of Reading spearheaded activity to launch the process of community and property owner engagement to explore what model would be appropriate for downtown Reading. This included:

- Identification of staff and financial resources
- Creating a Community Outreach and Engagement Strategy
- Research to identify community priorities / recommendations
- Peer learning from other communities
- Consensus building among stakeholders
- Transition of leadership to private sector

Process

- **The Town of Reading secured Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance funding** and committed staff to initiate and support
- **A large broad-based community advisory/working group** was formed to provide input and feedback
- **A survey** was widely distributed to community residents, businesses and other stakeholders - 1600 responses were received providing insight into program priorities and community preferences

Process (Continued)

- **Community Outreach Event - A Pizza/ Ice Cream Social** brought over 150 residents to provide input
- **3 Community Forums** – Panels featuring executive directors of different types of downtown organizations described their programs, challenges and models.
- **Working sessions with Advisory committee** to discuss specific model alternatives / cost and benefits
- **One on one conversations** with key stakeholders
- **Consensus building** with stakeholders and recommendation of preferred model and next steps.
- **Transition from city led effort to Steering committee** comprised of property owners, businesses, and other stakeholders to lead organizational effort. City staff continued staff support. TA support continued through additional MDI grant.
- **BID Steering Committee.** BID organizational process underway



Town of Reading Sponsored Pop-Up Event

ReImagine Reading
Pizza and Ice Cream Social

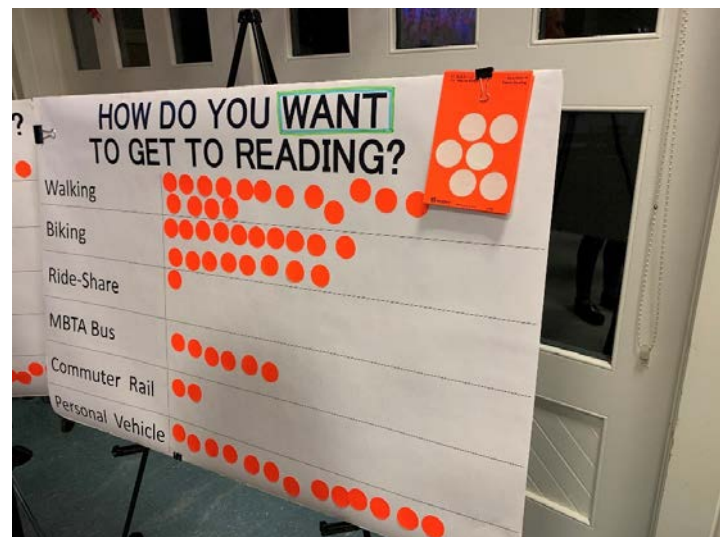


September 18th from 6 pm to 8pm
Pleasant Street Center
49 Pleasant Street

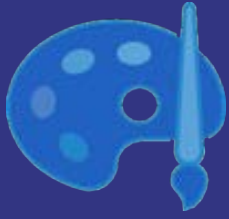
A pop-up public event to help launch a downtown organization
Featuring local businesses, free pizza, ice cream, photo booth and more
Please RSVP on Eventbrite by 9/16: https://ice_cream_social.eventbrite.com

ALL ARE WELCOME!

For more information, please contact Andrew MacNichol, Staff Planner at amacnichol@ci-reading.ma.us



Stakeholder engagement process



CULTURAL/ ARTS

Best Practice Compendium

Cultural/Arts v1.0

June 01, 2021





Conduct Arts & Culture Needs Assessment






Provided by SME Consultant

Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Location

Various locations (Arlington, Beverly, Boston, Franklin MA)

Origin	MAPC - Arlington, Beverly, Boston, Franklin
Budget	 Low (Staff time)
Timeframe	 Short (0-5 years)
Risk	 Low
Key Performance Indicators	<p>Greater artist engagement, reduced downtown vacancies; increased pedestrian activity; increased meals tax revenue; increased coordination among businesses, artists, and organizations; Increased revenue from meals and room taxes.</p>
Partners & Resources	<p>Municipal government planning staff, elected officials, licensing/permitting staff; local artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses.</p>

Diagnostic

The pandemic hit as municipalities in Massachusetts were investing in arts and culture as an important element of civic life and a thriving local economy. MCC-designated cultural districts have been growing across the state, and municipalities were beginning to invest in planning initiatives to document and support their arts and culture assets.

The pandemic's impact on arts and culture hit fast and hard and has lingered for over a year. By March 2021, non-profit and municipal cultural organizations across the state reported over \$588 million in losses; with individual artists and creatives reporting more than \$30 million in lost income. As reopening guidelines ease restrictions on arts and culture activities, municipalities are looking for strategies and tactics to revive arts and culture in their local communities.

Action Item

Strategies that support arts and culture in municipalities strengthen local government's responsiveness to constituents, establish critical partnerships for revitalization, and builds resilience of local businesses and cultural organizations. Providing multi-layered assessments of arts and culture can help improve support for artists, creative enterprise, and civic vitality.

Build Relationships and Collect Data on Arts & Culture

- Use surveys, interviews and creative evaluation strategies to document the presence of artists and creative businesses, assess needs and opportunities, and track impacts of arts and culture programming on community well-being and civic vitality.

Identify Barriers to Cultural Equity

- Where does cultural activity happen? Are opportunities for creative and cultural expression equally available for immigrant communities and communities of color?

Conduct Direct outreach to Artists and Creatives

- Artists are poorly represented in existing data sets. Municipal surveys of artists focused on identifying and responding to their needs generated robust survey response and expressions of gratitude for the outreach and consideration.

Foster Partnerships

- Strong partnership structures that bring together cultural organizations, creative businesses, property owners, municipal staff, and economic development entities have been instrumental in reviving arts and culture activities locally.

Process

Local government

- Survey artists, cultural organizations, creative businesses, and property owners through existing or new partnerships such as cultural districts, local cultural councils, business improvement districts, Main Streets districts, or other entities;
- Support relationship building with artists, schools, youth programs, libraries, historic societies, and other entities.
- Learn from successful projects and programs by interviewing cultural organizations that are leading safe and successful initiatives.
- Identify existing and potential outdoor venue locations, including parks, historic sites, vacant storefronts, and parking lots.
- Include consideration for artists in planning and approving local programs.
- Expand communications and facilitate awareness of and access to arts & culture programming through public schools, libraries, local newsletters, and other means

Arts & Culture Partners and Civic Leaders

- Build networks with artists and creative businesses.
- Support survey outreach and facilitating artist-municipal partnerships.
- Track participation and impact of arts & culture programming through event surveys, artist and organization surveys, pedestrian counts, and data on revenue and business activity.

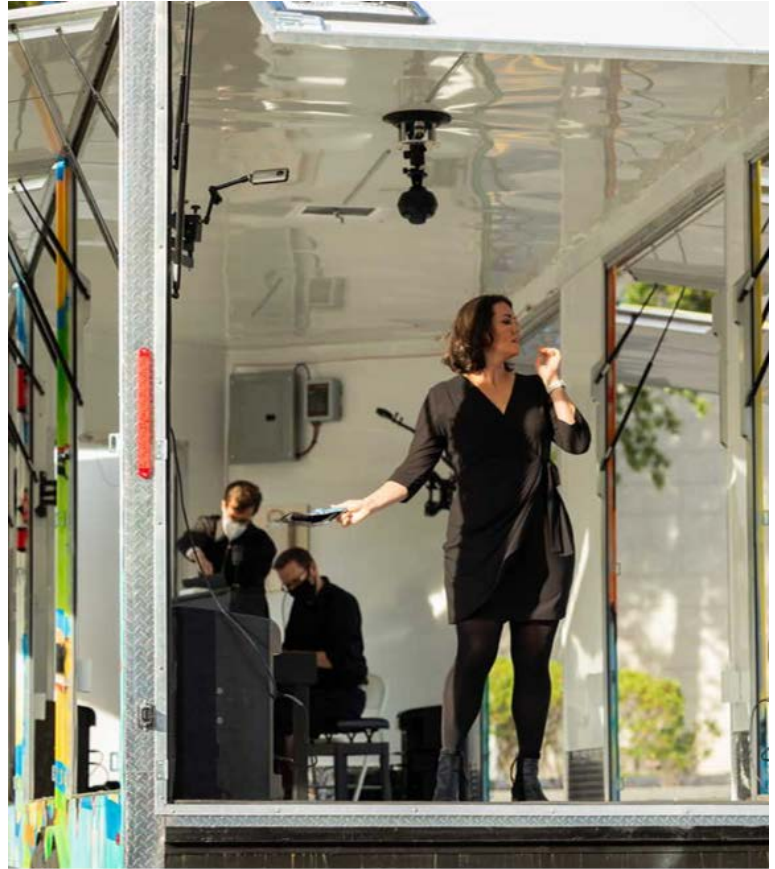


Photo: MAPC



Host a downtown cultural event to support businesses and show positive change






CULTURAL/
ARTS

Provided by SME Consultant

Susan Silberberg, CivicMoxie

Location

Fall River, MA

Origin	Collaborative effort growing out of MassDevelopment TDI project and including other FRACC members involved in Viva Fall River (the Arts, Culture and Creative Economy Master Planning effort for the city)
Budget	 Low – \$37,000 plus in-kind donations
Timeframe	 Short – planning and implementation in 3-1/2 months
Risk	 Low
Key Performance Indicators	Number of attendees, Number of partners working together successfully, Good press
Partners & Resources	One SouthCoast Chamber of Commerce, Fall River Arts + Cultural Coalition (FRACC), MassDevelopment TDI, BayCoast Bank, We Love Fall River, Fall River Public Schools, City of Fall River – main partners

Diagnostic

Fall River has many outstanding attributes but is lacking in a collaborative vision and image that can pull all the great things together. There are many different efforts and activities with no central organizing force to advocate, market, and lead the way in business support, tourism development, and arts and cultural coordination across the city.

Key challenges include high turnover and legal issues for City Hall leaders in recent years that have grabbed headlines and stolen the narrative of the good things happening in the city. In addition, there is a fragmented approach to solving problems and building momentum for positive change. The downtown has significant vacancies and the geographic spread of the city, as well as its hilly topography, make connections and focus a challenge. However, the diversity of the city, including its residents and cultural traditions, food and restaurant offerings, and presence of a small but strong “making” economy offer some unique opportunities. The city’s location on the water, proximity to Boston and Providence, and abundance of relatively affordable housing and workspaces, and a sizeable inventory of old mill buildings provide many opportunities.



Live painting was part of the event.

Action Item

The Winterbridge cultural events (running Fridays and Saturdays for six weeks in the Winter of 2021) at Gromada Plaza downtown was planned to build on the MassDevelopment TDI work on South Main Street and to showcase the collaborative power of FRACC, a 40-member diverse group of arts and culture, business, community nonprofit, philanthropic, and public sector stakeholders. FRACC is charting new territory in the scope of its goals and Winterbridge was meant as a way to:

- Bring the community together and engender city pride (begin to take back the narrative of the city)
- Demonstrate the power of collaboration (put the power of FRACC to work)
- Provide community activities and spaces during winter under Covid-19 guidelines

Winterbridge included music, fire pits, evergreen trees, live painting, community partners providing grab n go services, dancing/Zumba sessions, live entertainers (costume characters, singers, and musicians), and a We Love Fall River window display competition.



Source: for all photos: FRACC

There were over 36 businesses, nonprofits and individuals who came together to provide staff, funding, programming, marketing, and other needs for the events.

Process

The Winterbridge cultural events grew out of the desire for an early “win” and demonstration of the power of collaboration including the MassDevelopment TDI and FRACC. Planning goals focused on attracting people to downtown and exposing them to music, dance, live painting, and other cultural elements...showing what the future can look like. The steps to plan and execute this type of event include:

- Set goals such as: 1) desired audience; 2) how to help businesses attract customers downtown; 3) change image of downtown; 4) practice collaboration or implement a pilot project to see feasibility, etc.
- Gather parties with similar interests, complementary resources and expertise.
- Brainstorm ways to achieve the core goals. Develop criteria to select one strategy to move forward: 1) Is there someone who has done an event before? 2) Does someone have paid staff that can lend a hand? 3) Who has graphics and marketing expertise? Can this strategy tag onto another event or a milestone in the community?
- Answer these questions: 1) Who is the audience? 2) What message to convey? 3) How does this align with municipal and business district goals? 4) What does success look like? 5) What would cause everyone to smile the day after the event? Keep the answers to these questions in mind throughout planning
- Work back from the goals to identify people, organizations, agencies available to help: chart interests, capacity, resources, contacts.
- What location best supports the goals? Create a plan of the area.
- List and draw activity areas, block party elements
- Link program activities with partners/volunteers.
- Refine event: what happens, time, day, activities
- Create a budget sheet for overall event, each activity area.
- Think carefully about branding...what to call it? How does this fit with overall branding and marketing for the downtown or commercial district?



Volunteers helped build the “set” for the weekend activities.



Winterbridge was a success and led to increased “buzz” about what is possible downtown and also the power of collaboration and FRACC’s work.

Process (Continued)

The Winterbridge cultural events grew out of the desire for an early “win” and demonstration of the power of collaboration including the MassDevelopment TDI and FRACC. Planning goals focused on attracting people to downtown and exposing them to music, dance, live painting, and other cultural elements...showing what the future can look like. The steps to plan and execute this type of event include:

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- Create a budget sheet for overall event, each activity area.
- Think carefully about branding...what to call it? How does this fit with overall branding and marketing for the downtown or commercial district?
- Create a detailed implementation plan with timeline of tasks, roles.
- Document what you do and think about how to make the effort sustainable in the long run. How can this event be a pilot project for ongoing programming?
- During the event, try to include ways to capture information the attendees (raffle that requires their zip code, ideas chalk wall that asks what people want to see in the district, etc.)
- Do a debrief immediately after the event to improve efforts for the future. Ask businesses for their input and reactions.



Volunteers helped build the “set” for the weekend activities.



Winterbridge was a success and led to increased “buzz” about what is possible downtown and also the power of collaboration and FRACC’s work.



**PRIVATE
REALM**

Best Practice Compendium

Private Realm v1.1

June 10, 2021

A photograph of a storefront window with a white banner. The banner features the logo for Brew Bar Coffee Roasters, which includes the words "Brew Bar" in a cursive script and "COFFEE ROASTERS" in a bold, all-caps sans-serif font below it. The window frame is dark and ornate.

Brew Bar
COFFEE ROASTERS

Downtown Manchester – Architectural Design Guidelines



Provided by SME Consultant

GOMAN+YORK Advisory Services

Location

Manchester, CT

Origin	GOMAN+YORK
Budget	 <p>Low Budget - Consultant's Time for design standards</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Long-term – Post Covid</p>
Risk	 <p>Low Risk – setting guidelines/policies in place assures that any improvements done in the Downtown must be adhered to</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Tenant Initiation of Recommendations, Tenant Traffic & Sales Growth
Partners & Resources	City/Town Economic Development, Business Owners
Diagnostic	<p>Changes in consumer behavior and a heightened appreciation for community and place made Downtown Manchester a competitive and desirable location. Prior to Covid-19 the town realized that the area's image, market potential, physical attributes and social connections needed to be maintained and improved. Covid-19 accentuated the need and importance of maintaining and strengthening the Downtown area to support the local tenant base.</p> <p>Architectural design guidelines were meant to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the image of Downtown Manchester through the upgrade and maintenance of existing building façades; and • Encourage new construction which reinforces Downtown Manchester's historic development patterns. <p>Manchester's downtown district serves as a visual introduction to the town's character. An attractive image boosts commercial and community vitality when it successfully blends appearance and welcoming public spaces.</p> <p>Main Street's history is revealed in its diverse architectural styles. Each building is a unique record of its place in time. Therefore, building owners need to carefully evaluate the design of any proposed improvements to ensure they make a positive contribution to the collective Downtown environment.</p>

Action Items

Step 1. Define the area – this has already been done by the Plan Facilitators and the cities/towns.

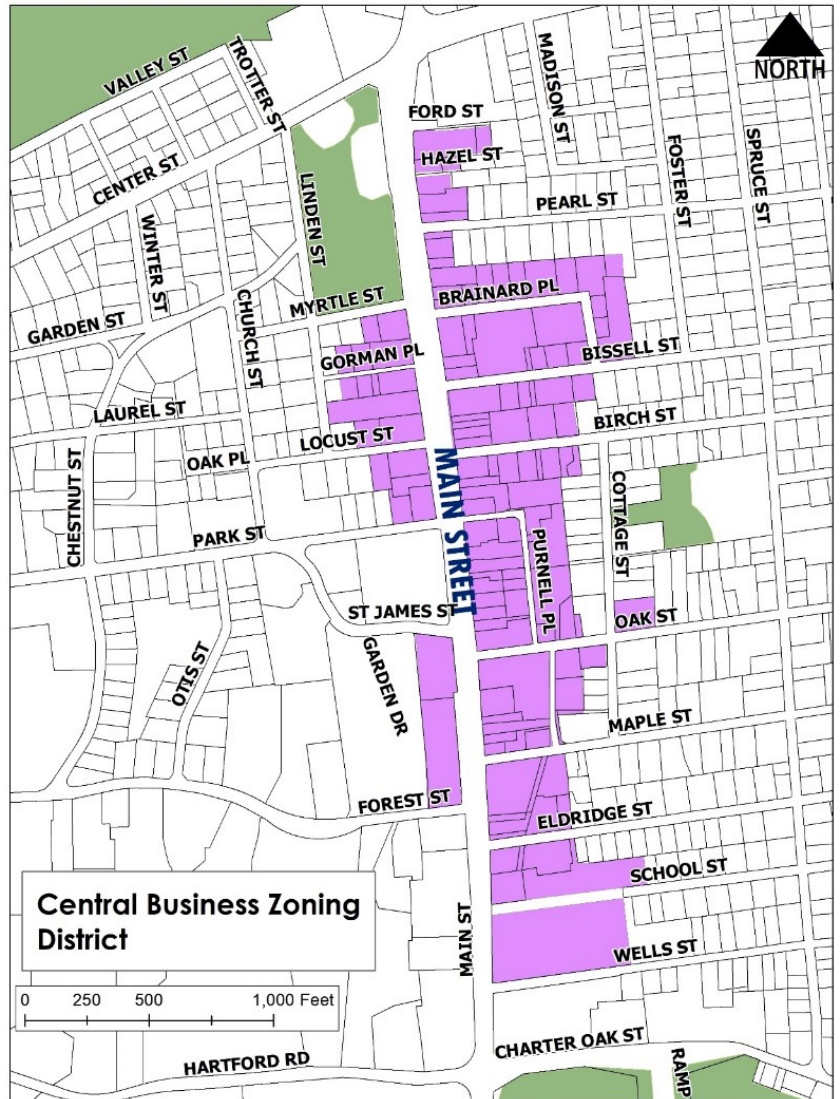
Step 2. Conduct a current conditions assessment –physical, governmental, private, character of the district. Some examples of disruptive alterations include:

- Blocking out windows, which is typically uninviting
- Replacing original architectural detailing with substandard or non-sustainable materials
- Covering original details with aluminum siding or random placement of wood paneling
- Introducing new design elements which were not in keeping with the original design
- Random placement with no coordination of ornamentation, lighting fixtures or signage
- Oversized signage creating visual confusion and blocking architectural details of upper floors

Step 3. Identify main key stakeholders (including but not limited to; Building Owners, Tenants, Residents, Clients and Customers) must preserve and highlight what makes this downtown unique: eclectic structures, public spaces, community facilities, ample parking, and an enjoyable pedestrian experience.

Step 4. Development & Implementation

Reminder: A vibrant, healthy and attractive downtown must be clean, safe and aesthetically pleasing. This relies on quality design and positive public-private relationships.



Define the Downtown Area

Ground Floor Tenant Storefronts

The storefront is the most significant feature of most commercial buildings. Its appearance plays a critical role in how a business is perceived and contributes to the pedestrian experience from the sidewalk. Building owners are expected to acknowledge critical elements of a building when redesigning a storefront.

Traditionally, the storefront is set into an opening in the building, framed by a building's columns or piers on either side, and sometimes includes a cornice or lintel along the top. Decorative elements of the storefront are definitive characteristics that ground the upper portions of the building to the sidewalk. When possible, these decorative elements should be retained in their original material, color and finish. The window area is generally large in contrast to the smaller windows on the upper stories to visually communicate and display the products and services offered within. The entranceway is often asymmetrical and recessed to increase display window area, provide weather protection, and allow clearance for the door swing.

When planning to renovate a storefront, its proportion in relation to the entire façade should be considered. Renovations should be done with durable and sustainable materials and retain existing modules, proportions, and structure



Urban Lodge Brewery – photo: Patch.com

Display Windows

Lighting: Night lighting is encouraged as it extends the pedestrian experience, makes a building façade more welcoming, and adds consistency to the downtown district. Lighting plans should be sensitive to potential impacts on vehicular traffic.

Temporary signage, seasonal displays and window seating: Products, furnishings or activities placed within a display window become part of the pedestrian experience. Merchants should consider the visual and messaging impact when designing displays, as they reflect the character of the business and affect the integrity of Downtown Manchester.

Cleanliness of windows – interior & exterior – sometimes it's that simple!

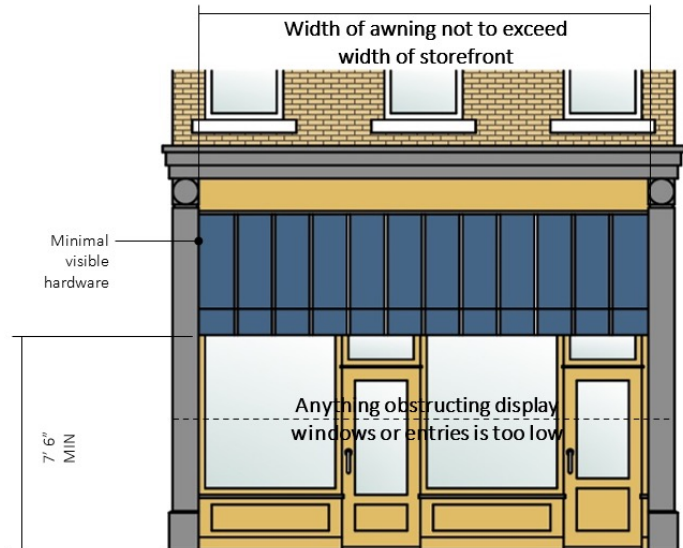


Display Windows

Awnings and Canopies

Storefront awnings and canopies are both functional and decorative. They are functional because they provide sun protection for merchandise, weather protection for visitors, and signage for the business (see "Signage" section for guidelines). These structures also add decorative color, patterns or graphics to the streetscape.

Both commercial grade, exterior fabric, retractable and permanent awnings have been successfully integrated in the past. The color or stripe chosen for the awning should complement the general color scheme of the building. Building owners are discouraged from using metal awnings because of their susceptibility to weather damage and fading.



Awnings and Canopies

Signage

Signage provides scale, color and interest to the streetscape. A sign has a positive effect on business and community atmosphere when it is appropriately placed, well designed, and in scale with its architectural surroundings.

A poorly designed sign results in visual confusion, harming both the streetscape and the value of the sign. While these guidelines provide structure for what signs are appropriate, the Town of Manchester's zoning regulations mandate what signs can and cannot be used in the Downtown district.

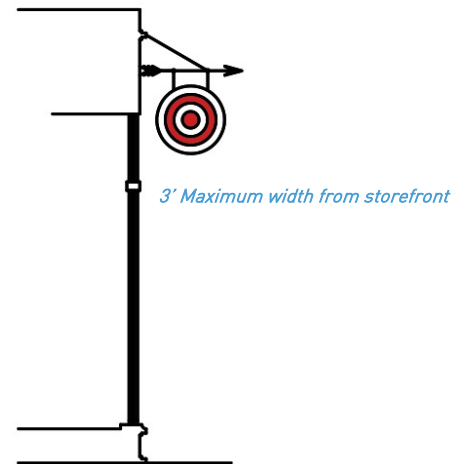
Information on a sign should be simple, clear and concise. The type face and graphic symbols should convey only the name of the business and its main product or service. The color should be coordinated with the building and storefront, and the letters or logo should contrast with the background, so the sign is readable. Light box signs should not be used. In some instances, simpler is better. Channel cut letters or flat metal signs lit with goose neck lighting are encouraged.

Signage to serve multiple tenant storefronts within the confines of a single building should be well coordinated to fit within the pre-described signage area defined by the building's architecture.

Before beginning any signage project, refer to Zoning Regulations for specific restrictions. Special regulations can be adopted for the Downtown district.



Restaurant Menu Boards



Blade or Hanging Bracket Signs

Exterior-Mounted & Painted on Glass

Redeveloping Underutilized Commercial Space



Provided by SME Consultant

Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Location

Various locations

Origin	Chris Kuschel, AICP and Ralph Willmer, FAICP
Budget	 Low (staff time)
Timeframe	 Long (3-5 years)
Risk	 High (financial)
Key Performance Indicators	Adoption of zoning by City or Town Council/Town Meeting; assuming zoning is adopted, the transition of the site to new residential and commercial space
Partners & Resources	Municipal government planning staff, elected officials, licensing/permitting staff; local property owners, local residents, developers, attorneys, architects, engineers, landscape architects
Diagnostic	<p>Within the Greater Boston region, there are 3,100 sites covering approximately 10.5 sq. miles in area. These sites are currently occupied by strip malls and related auto-centric retail, some of which can be redeveloped into more productive properties. As single-story, single-use structures with abundant parking, they are often under-utilized. Factors that are driving this condition include various demographic shifts, changes in personal shopping preferences, environmental considerations, and an increased attention to equity. COVID-9 has accelerated these changes.</p> 

Diagnostic

These under-utilized developments present opportunities to activate the sites by creating a more vibrant place with multi-use structures that include both residential and commercial uses. Frequently, zoning changes are required to permit that more expansive range of allowable land uses. These sites can be further enhanced through design guidelines that encourage streetscape improvements, public open spaces and plazas, and landscaping.

The process for amending and updating zoning bylaws and ordinances can be a challenging one. The more successful efforts involve a robust community engagement process that includes a wide variety of stakeholders. These stakeholders can include municipal government planning staff, elected officials, local property owners, local residents, developers, and business owners.



Action Item

In its role as the regional planning agency, MAPC regularly works with communities to promote Smart Growth and identify sites that have redevelopment potential. Once a site has been identified, it is important to review the existing zoning to ascertain if there are any barriers to redevelopment such as the uses allowed in the specific zoning district, dimensional regulations, parking standards, etc. In many cases, zoning amendments are required to encourage more efficient use of a site and better design than what had been previously allowed.

Impact

Redevelopment could revitalize existing businesses, provide much-needed housing and enhance the surrounding neighborhoods.

Redevelopment offers the following potential benefits:

Preserving existing businesses

- Preserving active, vibrant businesses during the redevelopment is crucial

Ease of redevelopment

- Parcels are typically small enough that they can be redeveloped in a relatively short amount of time
- It can be easier politically to change uses and forms than single-family districts

Creating cohesive neighborhoods

- Multiple contiguous parcels can be redeveloped incrementally to enhance or create cohesive neighborhoods over the long term

Dior – Dedham near Legacy Place



Mashpee Commons

Key to Success

Local creativity

- Use local help: using local architects and attorneys allow a developer to navigate local politics and know what is expected
- Activate outdoor space: overcapacity of parking can allow surplus space to be used for food vendors and seating to activate space
- Break up big box space: breaking down large anchor space allows for more small local businesses

Work with what exists

- When possible, work within existing zoning: proposing a development aligned with existing zoning could remove roadblocks
- Leverage existing planning studies: planning studies can provide a vision and market analysis for the area
- Have patience: long lead time and red tape can be daunting for a developer

Process

Local government

- Provide education to local property owners regarding opportunity and potential
- Help identify locations for updated planning and zoning for mixed-use development
- Work with property owners to identify barriers
- Connect developers with property owners on sites that help achieve the municipality's goals
- Ensure that there is a robust public outreach process to explain and advocate for the zoning changes including the use of graphic material that helps to visualize the proposed changes

State government

- Incorporate analysis as part of scoring for various grant programs
- Utilize that analysis for infrastructure investments



TENANT MIX

Best Practice Compendium

Tenant Mix v1.0
June 01, 2021



ReLaunch

A Collaborative Small Business Technical Assistance Effort to Drive Business Resilience and Opportunity to Diverse Communities



Provided by SME Consultant

Revby LLC

Location

Arlington, VA

Origin	BizLaunch, Arlington Economic Development Team (Internal group of 5)
Budget	 <p>Medium (\$200,000) - CARES Act Funding (Committed Funding) through December 31, 2021. Funding to be used for technical assistance and the development of digital technology tools.</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Short Term (1 year) - October 2020 Funding earmarked; November - December 2020 Project Development; January - February 2021 Procurement process and selection of vendors; March 2021 Informational Meetings and Call for Applications; April - December 2021 - Rolling applications and delivery of services.</p>
Risk	 <p>Low Risk - Budget losses; participation of legacy businesses and hard to reach business populations; funding elimination; staffing; lack of overall participation.</p>
Key Performance Indicators	<p>Positively impact and successfully sustain Arlington's small business ecosystem. Particularly a positive impact to those businesses most in need due to the negative effects of the pandemic. Mitigate risk of business closures. Business closures will be monitored in key industries</p>
Partners & Resources	<p>Arlington County Government (Office of Economic Development); Commissioner of Revenue; Purchasing Office; Police Department (Office of Nightlife); Revby; Amazon Web Services (AWS) & Nub8 (Cloud Provider); Treasurer's Office; County Attorney's Office; Communications Team for Arlington County and AED.</p>

Diagnostic

ReLaunch is a collaborative effort to drive business resilience and opportunity in 2021. Companies will receive tailored tools and professional assistance to revitalize, strengthen and transform their businesses. For detailed information please visit: www.relaunch.business

ReLaunch is designed to provide service to diverse communities, particularly those that have limited digital infrastructure, making them more exposed to the business decline during COVID-19 business disruptions.

It serves business owners whose primarily language is Spanish; service business owners who are immigrants or people of color.

Action Item

Community Action Items:

- Identify partners/providers to implement program in a timely fashion
- Identify marketing tools to reach the target market
- Identify what microentrepreneurs need the most help with in solidifying their organizations
- Ensure there are enough resources to meet the need
- Consider CARES Act Funding to help with impact
- Ensure quick turnaround with Purchasing Office to Select consultants

Revby (the TA provider) Action Items:

- Create a system to approach small business technical assistance topics, such as digital marketing, eCommerce, financial, and strategy with empathy, patience, and encouragement acknowledging that the topics are difficult for many of the diverse audiences that suffer from a digital divide disadvantage.
- Provide materials that can be referenced following time the one-on-one TA sessions.

Process (by the Community)

1. Research needs of hard impacted small businesses
2. Interview organizations which are currently doing work to assist businesses during the health pandemic. Identify best practices and improve deliverables
3. Design framework for ReLaunch program. (ReVitalize = Technical Assistance & ReNew = Technology Assistance)
4. Develop working Budget
5. Work with purchasing office to develop criteria for vendor's who can provide assistance
6. Advertise for assistance with formal RFP process
7. Hire Vendors
8. Training of Vendors
9. Training of Staff
10. Develop CRM system to keep track of businesses accepted/rejected or pushed forward.
11. 10-month Communications plan designed - yard signs, direct mail campaign, blogs, social media strategy etc.
12. Select businesses eligible for ReLaunch program
13. Communicate with vendors. Repeat for the next 10 months
14. Program ends December 31, 2021

Process (by Revby, the TA provider)

1. Meet with the BizLaunch team at least once a month to discuss any logistics topics or feedback on the TA activity with the current cohort of business owners.
2. For each monthly cohort of approximately 15 businesses, send out an introduction email with a link to schedule a first meeting within the next 2 weeks.
3. Identify which meetings should be conducted in Spanish. Identify with business owners need special accommodations to participate in a virtual meeting (i.e., need access to a laptop)
4. Conduct introduction meetings (virtually, over Zoom) with each business owner. Goal of the first call is to build rapport and a shared understanding of the TA format, confirm the need and objectives the business owner identified in their application, and mutually agree upon a plan for their working session.
5. Spend time researching and preparing for the TA working session. Prepare a multi-page document to aid the discussion during the working session.
6. Conduct a 1-hour virtual working session on the topic(s) agreed upon. Ensure to conduct the session with empathy and patience while providing a high quality and effective session in terms of content and business & marketing best practices.
7. Provide a document that the business may use for ongoing guidance. Provide a total of 3 – 4 hours of TA work per business.



Photo Courtesy of www.chashama.org

Supporting Entrepreneurs and Commercial Landlords with Pop Up Business Activations



TENANT
MIX

Provided by SME Consultant

Jeanette G. Nigro, Perch Advisors

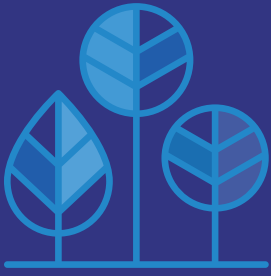
Location

Various Locations ([New York City])

Origin	Project was created within ideation of the NYC Department of Small Business Services and ChaShaMa, property owners, and business owners, along with community orgs such as BIDs
Budget	 <p>Medium (\$50,000-\$200,000) – Project required dedicated staff and project subsidies</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Short Term (<5 years) – Program launched within 90 days; space is generally tenanted for 30 – 60 days maximum</p>
Risk	 <p>Low Risk – Landlords with existing empty space offer short term opportunities with no permanent build out or commitment</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Temporary commercial vacancy reduction; business increase in sales; businesses accessing space
Partners & Resources	NYC Department of Small Business Services, ChaShaMa
Diagnostic	<p>With an increased amount of vacant space in New York City during the COVID-19 pandemic, the City partnered with ChaShaMa, a not-for-profit that generally offers space to artists, to create short term opportunities for businesses to test out a brick-and-mortar location in commercial areas across the city.</p> <p>This creates opportunity to liven commercial districts with new, short-term businesses, helping landlords to activate their unused space, make the street feel more alive, create increased opportunities for commerce for small, minority and women-owned businesses, and provide no-cost space to businesses otherwise unlikely to be able to afford commercial rents in high traffic commercial corridors.</p> <p>Challenges of this program currently being addressed are ensuring businesses have commercial storefront opportunities once the no-cost space has ended; supporting businesses with technical assistance such as access to capital and finding affordable, permanent space, and sustainable resourcing of the project for the long term success of small minority and women-owned businesses.</p>
Action Item	<p>Storefront Start-Up is a partnership between a not-for-profit community organization that typically supports artists in accessing work and exhibit space and the NYC Department of Small Business Services to support minority and women-owned businesses in accessing free storefront space (avg 30 days) in high traffic commercial areas.</p> <p>The non-profit or municipal partner can begin by evaluating vacant space in their commercial corridors and contacting property owners to determine their interest in short term space leases. The organization will have to determine if they can cover necessities for opening a commercial space (such as utilities and wifi) or if a landlord would be willing to provide short term access to these services.</p> <p>Simultaneously, the lead partner can connect with local businesses in need of space through social media marketing (no to low cost), partnerships with local business serving organizations (such as SBDC's, chambers of commerce) and begin to create a database of businesses interested in short term commercial leases. Essentially, building both the space and potential tenants together will help launch the matches efficiently and quickly.</p> <p>The lead organization should also determine business priority – is the program focused on women entrepreneurs? People of color? Create an evaluation tool to match businesses with respective spaces based on a set of priorities.</p> <p>Businesses should receive operating guidelines, a MOU to discuss what they can and can't do with the space, their responsibility to the program, and how long the term of the space use is.</p> <p>The lead organization should provide as much support to both the landlord and tenant as possible and consider connecting with a local technical assistance provider to help the business leverage the storefront opportunity to their long-term growth.</p>

Process

- Determine the strategy to support businesses – are you focused on serving a specific demographic (ex. Women-owned businesses) or sector (retail, design)
- Decide on a criteria on how businesses will be selected for space
- Research and identify vacant storefront properties in communities, particular those commercial corridors that may have high current vacancy rates. Local BIDs or DIDs can help identify vacant properties.
- Connect with property owners of vacant spaces to determine their interest in short-term no-cost lease opportunities, and if so, their terms of use.
- Create a database with notes and updates on available properties and interested businesses.
- Create a standard Memorandum of Understanding to be used as a baseline of agreement between the organization, the property owner, and the business owner. For example: how long will the space be used? Who will pay for buildout costs (if any)? Who will cover utility costs?
- Begin to match businesses with potential vacant spaces. Determine how far in advance businesses would need to be “occupancy ready” and how long landlords would need for the property to be considered “move in condition”
- Support both the business and property owner with the transition into the space; troubleshoot any issues in real time to mitigate any future problems or miscommunications
- Create social media and marketing opportunities to businesses to let people know they will be in the activated space, with plenty of lead up marketing prior to the move in date
- Determine further support for the business after the space agreement has expired, if any



PUBLIC REALM



Best Practice Compendium

Public Realm v1.0
June 01, 2021





Develop an urban renewal plan to support revitalization of the public realm



PUBLIC
REALM

Provided by SME Consultant

Emily Keys Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND, Innes Associates Ltd.

Location

Brockton, MA

Origin	Downtown/Trout Brook Redevelopment Plan
Budget	 Medium (\$50,000-\$200,000) – Operating Funds, MassDevelopment Technical Assistance
Timeframe	 Medium (5-10 years) – Property acquisition and disposition; public infrastructure improvements; private development
Risk	 Medium – Risk Political, legal
Key Performance Indicators	<p>Linear feet of multimodal trails, sidewalk, bicycle lanes, roads, utilities, installed.</p> <p>Square feet of open space, recreation, non-residential uses developed.</p> <p>Units of market-rate and affordable housing developed; types of housing developed.</p>
Partners & Resources	<p>Redevelopment Authority; Municipal Boards and Committees; Residents, Property owners, Employers, Institutions; Municipal Planning Staff; Department of Housing and Community Development</p>
Diagnostic	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted existing inequities in access to jobs, housing, public open space, broadband, safe non-vehicular transit, and many other elements of our built environments. By combining public and private investment into a single strategic plan, a municipality with a redevelopment authority can address some of these inequities through three steps: acquiring underutilized land; implementing public infrastructure improvements; and disposing of the land to developers who must meet specific criteria for redevelopment. This process allows communities to incorporate long-term changes to address challenges from the last year.</p> <p>In Brockton, the criteria for redevelopment grew out of the goals for the planning process, including the continued revitalization of the Downtown, which is adjacent to the redevelopment area; connecting existing isolated neighborhoods to the Downtown, regional public transit, and local playgrounds and parks; addressing repetitive loss from the flooding of Trout Brook; and using Trout Brook as an organizing and linking component of the plan.</p>
Action Item	<p>The acquisition of underutilized land will allow the Brockton Redevelopment Authority to reparcelize the land for four distinct purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a central multiuse path along Trout Brook that links the existing neighborhood to two other parks in the area and a proposed new neighborhood playground. • Extending local streets to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to public transit and the Downtown. • Creating flood storage areas to address repetitive flood losses from the impaired brook. • Developing a mix of uses, including commercial flex, multifamily, and small single-family to provide space for local jobs and a variety of housing types to meet different community needs. <p>Other action items include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifying the zoning ordinance to meet the redevelopment goals of the plan. • Applying for grants and other funding sources to address the public components of the plan.

Process

Implementation of this plan includes the following steps:

- Modify the existing zoning to incorporate new uses and dimensional standards that reflect the proposed and existing uses.
- Acquire underutilized land.
- Develop an RFP for the acquired land incorporating criteria for the required improvements.
- Develop design and engineering plans for the multi-use path, flood storage, and new street layout.
- Dispose of the land according to specific criteria for the redevelopment of that land.
- Apply for grants to address public infrastructure component of the plan. Other funding sources are outlined in the plan and include state and federal grants as well as District Improvement Financing.



Source: Arlington

Establishment of Parking Benefit District for Improvements and Amenities in Arlington's Town Center



PUBLIC REALM

Provided by SME Consultant

Stantec Consulting, Inc.

Location

Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Origin	Town of Arlington
Budget	 <p>Low – No cost to the Town to establish a Parking Benefit District (PBD) through the Select Board. Arlington DPW manages maintenance tasks. The Town hired a contractor for beautification efforts and snow plowing.</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Short Term (<5 years) – The establishment of the Parking Benefit District, implementation of new parking meters, and formal allocation of meter funds took approximately 1 year.</p>
Risk	 <p>Medium Risk – Political buy-in and support from local businesses and perception issue related to implementing new meters</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Parking meter revenue
Partners & Resources	Arlington Select Board, Arlington Department of Public Works, Finance and Capital Planning Committee
Diagnostic	<p>Arlington was in need of a dedicated revenue source to fund needed changes in their Town Center. The PBD was ideal for setting aside a stream of money to implement improvements that did not have priority in the Town’s Capital Plan.</p> <p>Through a parking study, Arlington determined that a performance-based adjustment to their parking pricing would provide much needed curbside availability while increasing revenues. Arlington installed new meters and initiated the parking management changes during the PBD approval process.</p> <p>The PBD fund was created to support a wide range of physical improvements as well as administrative/maintenance responsibilities including installation & ongoing meter maintenance; the parking control officer’s salary; credit card & collection fees; servicing lease payments for meters; implementing pay-by-phone; snow removal in parking lots; the Arlington Center Sidewalk Project [ongoing]; and parking lot re-designs.</p>
Action Item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a Parking Advisory Committee, to manage the PBD. The Committee has complete flexibility to amend revenue allocation details and the operational/managerial structure, as the adopted local enabling legislation was written to ensure flexibility • Establishing a system of accountability and trust for ongoing oversight by the Town’s Financial Committee & Capital Planning Committee, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic reporting to committees & stakeholders, maintaining consistent engagement and input; and • Making an annual presentation at Town Meeting • Establishing a special revenue fund with a revolving fund structure for on-going parking meter revenues • Defining a list of streetscape, mobility, connectivity, and accessibility improvements that are funded by the PBD special revenue fund

Process

In 2016, the Massachusetts General Court enacted the Municipal Modernization Act. One of the provisions of that law authorized the creation of parking benefit districts (PBDs).

The Town approved the article and adopted local legislation to create a PBD in Arlington Center with a defined geographic area, per State rules.

The Arlington Center Parking Benefit District Committee formed and developed a reporting structure to the Select Board, regularly proposes PBD-funded improvements, and manages PBD operations.

Once the PBD had been defined, parking meter revenue only is transferred into the Parking Benefit District Special Revenue fund, from which disbursements are made.

Following the adoption of the PBD, additional managerial responsibilities and expenditure management tasks may need to be assigned depending on the project type [e.g. the Department of Public Works manages sidewalk improvements].

Success Story

Upon adoption of the PBD no negative impacts have been identified. New parking meters on Massachusetts Avenue were readily embraced by the community.

The original PBD revenue projection presented to the Select Board was conservative. It has regularly exceeded expectations.

The PBD has created an appetite for parking meters in other districts, which are being explored.

While parking revenue was lower due to pandemic impacts, the Town took advantage of the MassDOT Shared Streets & Spaces Grant in 2020 to create impactful temporary improvements downtown. PBD funds were used to supplement this award through the purchase of planters to beautify and protect outdoor dining areas.

In the future, the PBD will fund permanent installations of other temporary improvements including outdoor dining infrastructure and landscaping.

**ARLINGTON CENTER
BUSINESS OWNERS**

Join Us For a Meeting about
NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS
from parking meter income
Wednesday March 1st at 8:30 am
Regent Underground, 7 Medford Street

RSVP to acarter@town.arlington.ma.us

TAKE THE ONLINE SURVEY:
[SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/GVP2XFS](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GVP2XFS)

Save the date for the community
meeting March 30th at 6pm



Public engagement flyer for PBD. Source, Arlington.

Plan of proposed downtown improvements, including PBD-funded features such as landscaped pots and benches, and sidewalk enhancements. Source, Town of Arlington.



Creating Safe Pedestrian Access in a Rural Village Center



Provided by SME Consultant

Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Location

Whately, MA

Origin	The project was envisioned in a master plan for the Whately Center Historic District.
Budget	 <p>Medium Budget (\$50,000 - \$200,000) for construction Design and engineering funded by the Town of Whately Additional public participation process and construction funded through Massachusetts Complete Streets grant</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Short Term (Less than 5 years)</p>
Risk	 <p>Medium Risk</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Measures of the positive impacts of the improvements are an increased number of events, visitors, and restaurant receipts as well as a reduction in traffic speeds.
Partners & Resources	Municipal committees focused on the target area and technical assistance providers, including a landscape architecture school and the regional planning agency.

Diagnostic

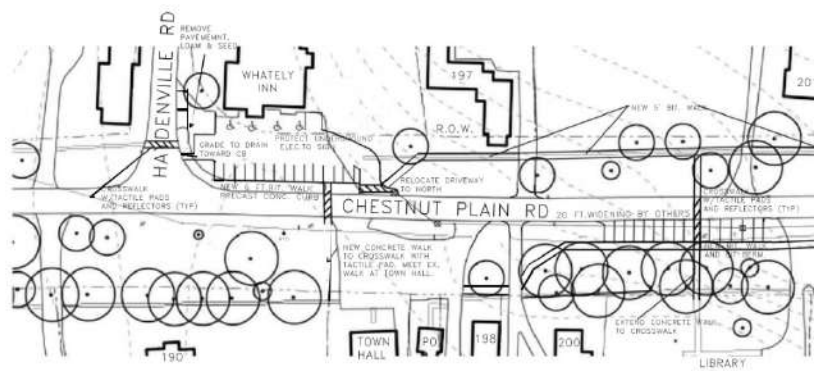
Chestnut Plain Road has a wide linear town common layout and is an integral part of the character and landscape of the town center historic district.

Creating safe pedestrian access in the village center was identified as a priority during the development of the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan that was part of the town's participation in the MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program. The Complete Streets Prioritization Plan was developed through a comprehensive public process. A committee comprised of representatives from the Selectboard, the Planning Board, the Historical Commission, and the Finance Committee, a Library Trustee, a resident, the Town Administrator, and the Highway Superintendent worked with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments staff to compile a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and seek implementation funding for the project. Public outreach for the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan included a series of meetings of the committee to review and prioritize the projects, an input meeting with the general public, and a meeting of the Whately Selectboard to review and endorse the project rankings.

Therefore, to move forward, this project needed to have broad and strong community support. The project was successfully implemented because public outreach and an engaged planning process had taken place during the town center master planning process before the initiation of the final design and implementation of the improvements.



BEFORE: Google Maps aerial image of the Whately Inn at the corner of Chestnut Plain Road and Haydenville Road. A major renovation of the old Town Hall completed in 2019 resulted in a new community center and history museum across the street from the Whately Inn. With no crosswalks or sidewalks, the pedestrian pathway connecting these two attractions was not well defined.



Engineering plan created by Sara E. Campbell, PE, consulting civil engineer, for the project area of Chestnut Plain Road near Haydenville Road.

Action Items

The The Whately Historic District Complete Streets project included the construction of new sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure on the town's main street, Chestnut Plain Road – e.g. construction of a new section of sidewalk in front of the Whately Inn, a vibrant local restaurant, where there was no sidewalk. Some of the parking for the Whately Inn was located next to the road in the space where a sidewalk would be located. The town worked cooperatively with the Whately Inn to redesign and relocate the parking area to allow for the construction of a sidewalk. By relocating the entrance to the parking area, additional parking was created and the sidewalk was constructed. Site ownership at a location where there was no sidewalk has the potential to pose an obstacle to the successful implementation of a continuous sidewalk through a project area. By the town and the Whately Inn communicating and working collaboratively this project was a success.

The project also improved pedestrian connections between the Whately Inn and the recently renovated old Town Hall, which is now a community center and local history museum. As in-person events begin to be held again at the old Town Hall, residents and visitors can safely and easily park and walk to and from the Whately Inn and the event.



AFTER: With new crosswalks and sidewalks, pedestrians have safe access to the Whately Inn as well as the new community center and history museum, Post Office and public library across the street.



AFTER: The well defined parking area in front of the Whately Inn provides space for both parking and a seasonal tent for outdoor dining.

Process

- Completion of a conceptual design process that included broad participation.
- Adoption of a Complete Streets Policy.
- Development of a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, facilitated by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.
- Approval of Complete Streets Prioritization Plan by the Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program so that the community is eligible to apply for complete streets implementation funding.
- Application to the Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program for project implementation funding.
- Approval of implementation funding through the Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program for the project.
- Completion of the final design for the project which includes collaboration with businesses and abutters so as to address needs for parking, outdoor dining, and pedestrian facilities.
- Temporary construction or permanent easements were identified and sought
- Conduct procurement process to hire contractor.
- Contractor completes project construction.

Importance of Public Engagement

Early in the project development the interests, concerns, and perspectives of many residents were considered through a master plan development process. Concerns related to the preservation of the historic streetscape while updating the sidewalks and crossings to improve accessibility for pedestrians was a challenge. Specifically, a robust public outreach process was completed that included a solicitation of input from those who would be impacted by the project. Two major considerations/challenges to implementation were making sure to preserve the historic double row of trees and to avoid damaging the root systems and also making sure that any signs did not detract from the historic character of the neighborhood. The project involved balancing pedestrian and motorist safety while also not detract from the historic qualities and feel of the area.

With the approval of the Select Board, the Whately Historical Commission formed an ad hoc committee to focus on the Whately Center Historic District. The ad hoc committee included a broad range of representation. They engaged the Conway School of Landscape Design to facilitate a visioning process and create conceptual designs for a Whately Center Historic District master plan. Since the visioning took place early in the project development, many interests and concerns were considered and incorporated into the conceptual designs that helped communicate proposed improvements.

Later, during the development of the design plans for the Chestnut Plain Road sidewalk, representatives of the Whately Inn were also consulted to discuss and brainstorm a solution to the parking issue. The solution was developed that improved the access to the parking lot and the configuration of the parking to allow for the construction of the sidewalk. The Inn donated towards the construction costs to compensate for a portion of the project that was on their property.



REVENUE & SALES

Best Practice Compendium

Revenue & Sales v1.0

June 01, 2021





Helping Main Street in the Long Term After COVID-19



REVENUES
& SALES

Provided by SME Consultant

Levine Planning Strategies, LLC

Location

Flint, MI; Haverhill, MA; Lansing, MI; Portland, ME; Nashua, NH; and Youngstown, OH

Origin	Department of Urban Studies & Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Budget	 <p>Medium Budget – varies by actions taken but may exceed \$100,000</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Medium Timeframe – 5 to 10 years</p>
Risk	 <p>Medium Risk – requires political and funding stability to implement</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Sales and/or economic activity downtown; percentage of occupied storefronts; number of businesses open in 2019 still open 5-10 years later.
Partners & Resources	Municipal government; downtown business groups; state & federal partners

Diagnostic

Even before 2020, many downtowns businesses struggled. The shutdown of local businesses in the past year simply revealed the weaknesses in existing support systems for local economies. Some businesses survived through quick adaptation and embracing new tools such as enhanced social media and additional delivery services. Other businesses struggled to make those transitions, either because their business model did not work well remotely, or because the owners lacked the skills to make such transitions. Regardless of whether a business was able to pivot, most likely its overall revenue was down in 2020, raising the question of how to pay for its (largely vacant) physical space and employees.

Large federal and state programs helped take the edge off of these issues, but there remains a large backlog of rent and mortgage payments. At the same time, small property owners are in danger of losing their properties to lenders because their tenants cannot make rent payments.

At the same time, there were some forced innovations, such as changes to public spaces, that were popular among many customers. While the overall affect of the pandemic was negative for downtowns, it would still be wise to learn from those efforts and potentially retain the best of them.

There has been a fair amount of attention paid to what small businesses will need in the near term to recover from the pandemic. However, not as much work has been done on how COVID-19 will affect downtowns in the long term.

These case studies and survey, funded by the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning, were designed to explore the changes communities should consider for the next five to ten years to ensure their commercial districts can thrive. What do businesses want and need from local government to survive in the long term? What will they need if there is another significant disruption to business? What do local economic development officials think would help in their community? While this study didn't offer all the answers, it outlined areas to think more about.

Study Findings

This study was designed to understand the long-term needs of local businesses from their perspectives, as well as from the perspectives of local economic development officials. Businesses were asked about their short-term priorities, but the focus of the study was on their long-term needs. The results of the study reflected the views of a variety of local businesses. Approximately half of the responding businesses were minority-owned or woman-owned, and almost half had five or fewer employees prior to COVID-19.

While there was a wide range of views from local businesses and officials, a few long-term priorities emerged:

- A top priority for local businesses was for government to provide financial incentives to help them remain competitive as the pandemic recedes. *For example, the sign & façade improvement grant program run by the City of Gardner, offers 5 year forgivable loans for up to \$2,500 for signs, or \$15,000 for façades. This program is funded through the City's CDBG program;*
- Another high priority for local businesses was the provision of rent or mortgage relief so they could remain in their locations. *For example, the Small Business Relief Program run by the Local Initiative Support Corporation has provided up to \$25,000 in funding for rent and similar expenses for small businesses over the past year. To date, that program has had 12 rounds, totaling \$215 million;*
- A third priority was for communities to develop a thoughtful and consistent program for public space based on which business owners could make long term investment. There was a concern that changing priorities, such as annual changes to open streets programs or outdoor dining rules, would add uncertainty to future business decisions. *For example, after a successful pilot project in 2015, Halifax, Nova Scotia, redesigned Argyle Street in their downtown as a permanent shared street, allowing businesses to make long term investments for outdoor dining;*

Study Findings (Continued)

Finally, local businesses were interested in changes to health, licensing and zoning codes that would allow their operations to respond quickly to business opportunities. For example, the Town of Freeport, ME, exempts conversions between most restaurants and retail trade uses from site plan review to allow for rapid changes in downtown spaces. Similarly, the City of South Burlington, VT, “flipped” its table of uses in 2016. In their City Center form based code, there is a list of prohibited uses rather than a list of permitted uses, allowing businesses to change between any use that is not explicitly prohibited.

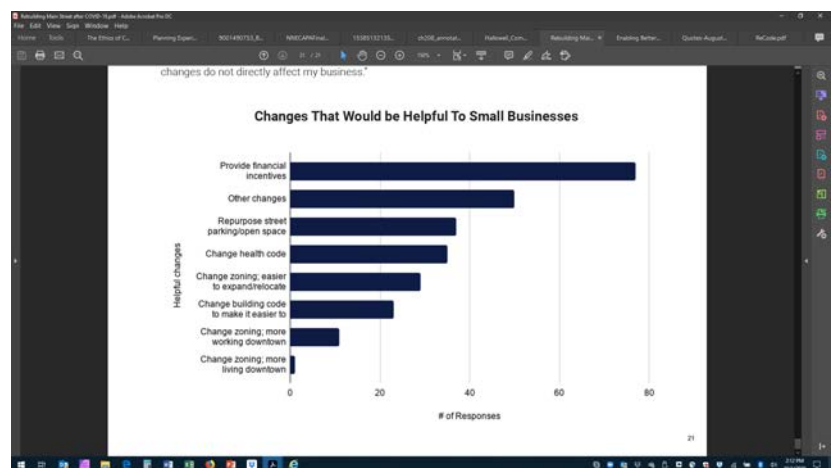
Process

The study used the following methodology:

1. An initial list of about 15 communities was developed, based on community size and built form. In order to control for weather and built form elements, only communities in New England and the Upper Midwest were part of that initial list;
2. Of those 15, six responded with an interest in participating in the study. Those six had a wide range of median household income levels and demographics;
3. Researchers compiled summary sheets about each of the communities for background information (see sample sheet for Haverhill below);
4. Study researchers interviewed local economic development officials, ranging from the Mayor of Youngstown, OH to the head of the Portland, ME, downtown improvement district;
5. With the assistance of these local officials, researchers distributed a survey to local businesses asking questions about their size and ownership; use of federal and state COVID relief programs; short-term needs; and long-term needs;
6. Researchers compiled the results into a summary report outlining business responses and interview summaries, as well as their recommendations for public actions based on those findings.



Argyle Street in downtown Halifax, NS, has been an outdoor dining spot for 25 years. In 2017, following a planning process & pilot program, the street was reconstructed as a permanent shared street, allowing local businesses to make long term investments based on the redesign (Source: Steven Lee under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license)



In the long run, businesses were still looking for financial help, but also changes in how public realm spaces were managed; changes to health codes; and simplification of zoning requirements

Haverhill, Massachusetts

Racial demographics

- White: 73% Black: 3%
- Latina/o: 20% Other: 4%

Household median income

- \$67,579

“There is strong local leadership on diversity and inclusion because it leads to a stronger workforce, better education, and better healthcare. We need to continue to embrace and welcome Latino community.”

– **Dougan Sherwood,**
President & CEO, Greater
Haverhill Chamber of
Commerce

HAVERHILL IS A CITY THAT IS HOME TO 64,000 PEOPLE located 35 miles north of Boston on the border of Massachusetts and New Hampshire. One of the state’s oldest historic communities, Haverhill has seen several industries come and go from lumber mills and flour mills in the seventeenth century to shoe manufacturing in the nineteenth century. By the mid-twentieth century, the shoe industry had declined and the city embraced urban renewal, demolishing swaths of historic buildings downtown. In recent decades, the city has invested in major downtown revitalization including the Haverhill Riverfront Boardwalk and the conversion of abandoned factories into loft apartments and condominiums.

Organizations working to strengthen the economy of Haverhill’s downtown include the Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce, Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, and the City of Haverhill Office of Economic Development and Planning. For this report, we interviewed Dougan Sherwood, President and CEO of the Haverhill Chamber of Commerce. We received survey responses from a total of **22 small businesses** in Haverhill.



Washington Street in downtown
Haverhill, MA. 2017.
Photo credit: Jim Davis.

Sample profile sheet on one of six small city case studies



Source : Manchester Connects

Create a walking loop to attract customers and test ideas for long-term implementation



REVENUES
& SALES

Provided by SME Consultant

Susan Silberberg, CivicMoxie

Location

Manchester, NH

<p>Origin</p>	<p>An “early win” pilot project growing out of the <i>Manchester Connects</i> land use and multi-modal transportation plan for the Manchester NH Downtown and Amoskeag Millyard/Riverfront.</p>
<p>Budget</p>	<p> Low – under \$10,000</p>
<p>Timeframe</p>	<p> Short – planning and implementation in 4 months</p>
<p>Risk</p>	<p> Low</p>
<p>Key Performance Indicators</p>	<p>Number of attendees, Number of partners working together successfully, Good press</p>
<p>Partners & Resources</p>	<p>Manchester Connects Steering Committee, City of Manchester, University of New Hampshire, Public Art Group, other volunteers</p>

Diagnostic

There are thousands of high-tech workers and university students in the Amoskeag Millyard in Manchester, NH. These potential customers are separated from downtown by wide streets, a rail line, and a change in topography that necessitates stairs at some connecting streets. In addition, the Merrimack River at the Millyard is an underutilized resource that is lined with asphalt parking areas and minimal signage and amenities. These challenges presented opportunities that included:

- How can public art and space programming help reduce the perceived distance between Millyard and downtown to better connect the two?
- Would it be possible to establish a route that could be the focus of short and long-term improvements to encourage pedestrians and cyclists?
- Could a pilot project test the collaborative power of a citizen-led project steering committee and demonstrate the long-term viability of a bricks and mortar project enhancing connections?

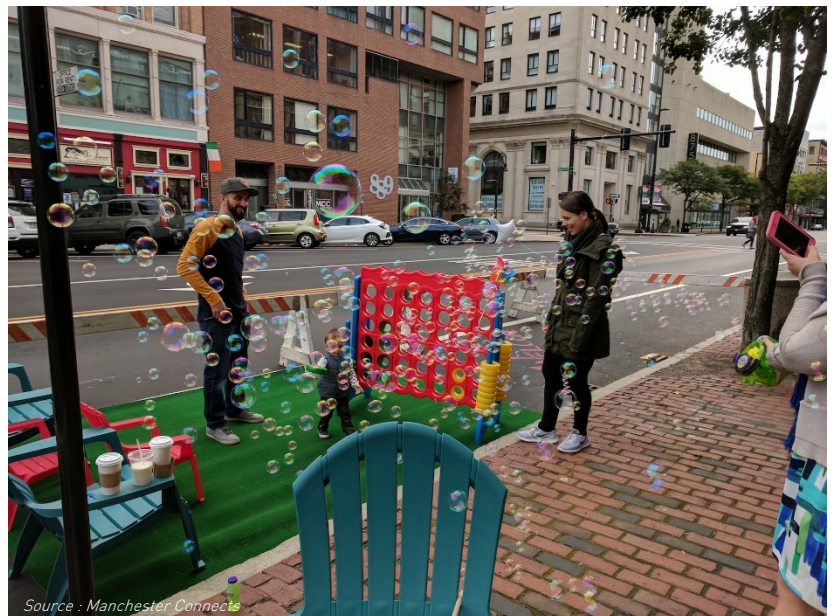
The project focused on analyzing the best route and providing technical assistance and graphics help to get the pilot up and running.



The Amoskeag Millyard is lacking in "third places" such as restaurants and cafes, places to sit outdoors, and welcoming public spaces. Because it is isolated from Elm Street in downtown by topographical changes and wide streets, downtown businesses have trouble attracting the Millyard market and an overall sense of vibrancy is missing from the entire area.

Action Item

The resulting project was called "The Loop" and was the name of the designated route as well as the event that tested the conceptual idea of creating a focused path between the Millyard and downtown. Using a map created by the consultants, the steering committee programmed a series of events, coordinated public art projects, and created seating and public space areas (all temporary) along a loop that connected downtown to the riverfront and Millyard. Businesses were involved in promotions and the Public Art Commission of the City collaborated with organizers to highlight new artists works. The downtown BID and City were also involved in helping plan and provide permitting for the event.



Source : Manchester Connects

The Loop event demonstrated the benefit of public art and programmed spaces and the impact these improvements make on the perception of space and distance between the Millyard and riverfront and the downtown

Process

The Loop event was a pilot project that grew from recommendations in the Manchester Connects plan for the Millyard and downtown. Seen as a way to demonstrate that Manchester Connects was about action, Loop Event Planning began with conceptual brainstorming with the entire project steering committee on multiple ways the committee could achieve the goal of better connectivity between downtown and the Millyard. The steps to plan and execute this type of event include:

- The consultant team identified the challenge of physical connectivity and created a suggested map of the easiest route to and from the two disconnected areas.
- A few members of the steering committee volunteered to lead the effort and began planning.
- Partners were approached, including the City of Manchester, the Public Art Commission, some local retailers, the Millyard Museum, and others.
- Local graphic designers offered their services to design promotional literature and a major social media campaign was launched, building on the thousands of followers on the Manchester Connects Facebook page.
- Collaborators planned for approximately three months, garnering good press and many attendees the day of the event.



The Loop was identified and carefully programmed by the consultants after a brainstorming session with the client steering committee prioritized physical connections as a good pilot project to begin implementation of the plan.



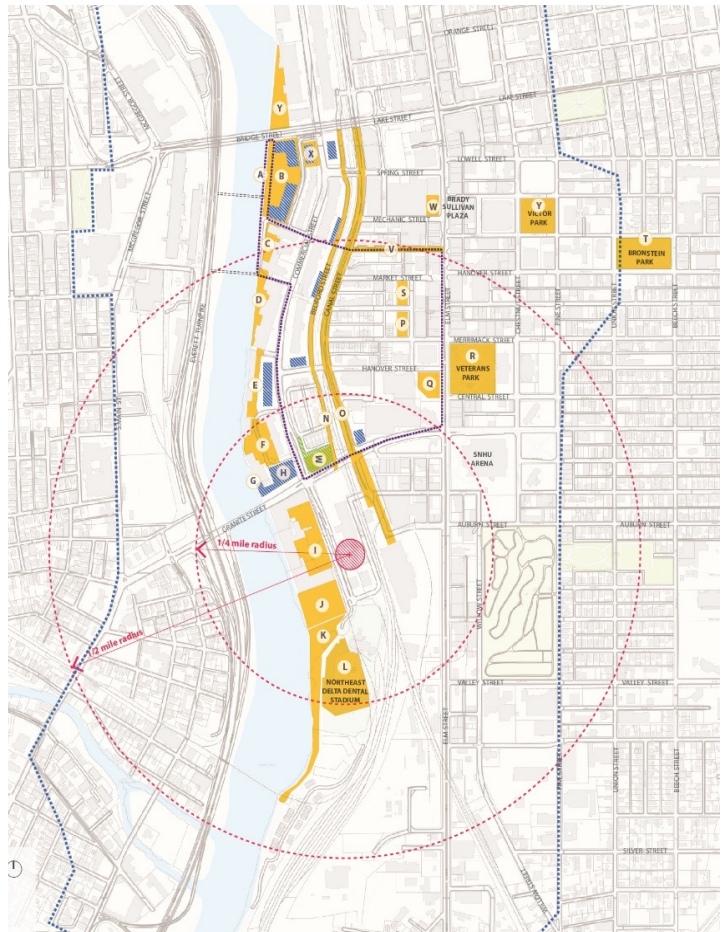
Support for the public art component of the event came from the City's Public Art Commission.

Strategic Decisions

Careful consideration should be given to the physical environment when planning an event. The top image shows an overlay of the Mall of New Hampshire, to scale, on the core of the focus area for the Loop, demonstrating some of the challenges of connecting the Millyard to the downtown. The Loop event was a way of testing the validity of the concept that an interesting and pedestrian friendly route, filled with public art, pleasant public spaces, and eventually, active ground floor uses, would encourage connectivity between the two areas and would support downtown businesses and provide amenities and activities for Millyard employees.

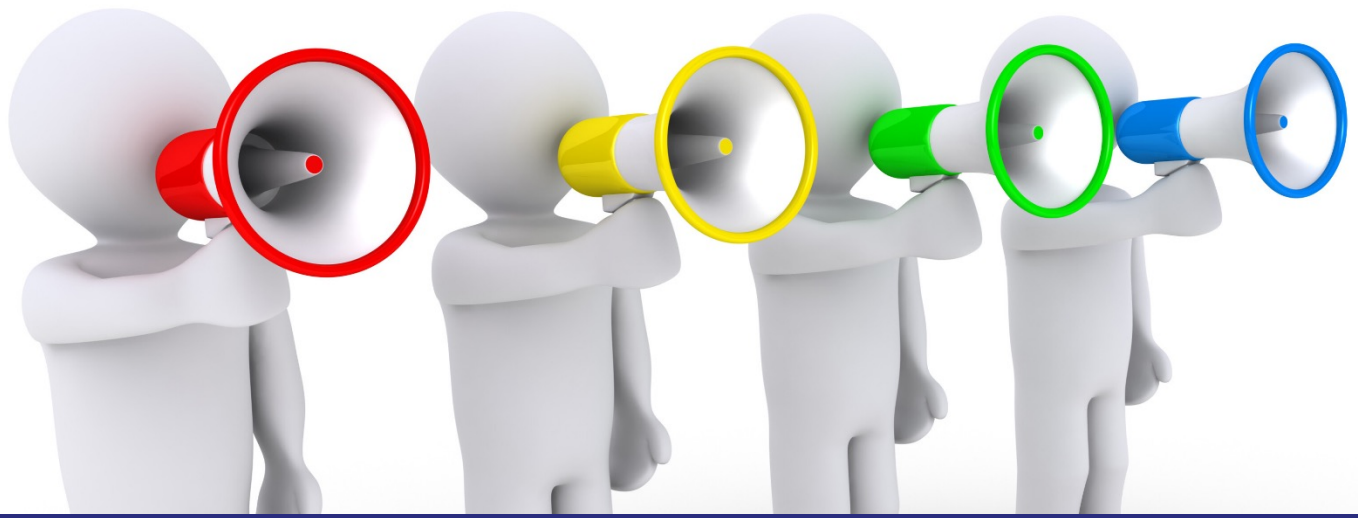


The Mall of New Hampshire building footprint at scale was overlaid on the core area of focus to give a sense of scale to the area and inform design and programming decisions.



Distances were mapped to better understand the barriers to pedestrian activity and to help inform public space design and programming decisions.





Coordinated Social Media Marketing



REVENUES
& SALES

Provided by SME Consultant

Cepheid Solutions

Location

Online

<p>Origin</p>	<p>If you JUST build it, they will NOT come! Our Marketplace project benefits from a coordinated communications campaign to increase visibility and awareness. However, these tools and strategies will benefit any community project or initiative.</p>
<p>Budget</p>	<p> The human assets are probably already in place for most communities. The new costs will involve training (and practice), a strategic guide, and the time dedicated to organize and implement an effective program.</p>
<p>Timeframe</p>	<p> Training is an ongoing activity, but initial training can be completed in 30 days. Organizing and creating a strategic guide can be completed in 30 days, as well. Implementation is also an ongoing activity.</p>
<p>Risk</p>	<p> There are few downside risks, except poor organization and implementation. Must be sensitive to messaging, opt-out, and privacy issues.</p>
<p>Key Performance Indicators</p>	<p>Message impressions, followers (media dependent), responses, reach</p>
<p>Partners & Resources</p>	<p>Community administration, Departments of Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce, Business Community, Sources of Training, the traditional media (Radio/TV/Newspapers)</p> <p>The strength of this project is not in creating a single powerful marketing group, but in leveraging the combined strength of many voices to create a unified and effective communication eco-system. So, more voices and more participation is better.</p>

Diagnostic

In context to the Local-search eCommerce Marketplace project, the initial objective is to create awareness and engagement with the project. Going forward, the goal is to create a coordinated and integrated marketing effort that encourages shopping with the local retail community – both online and in-store.

The three dimensions of success in this arena are:

1. Skills competency - does each constituency understand the tools they have to work with, and is proficient in their use
2. Activity and Deployment – are each of the tools fully put to use
3. Integration and Coordination – are the different constituencies collaborating towards a common goal

The final measure in effectiveness will be the change in Total Local Retail Sales. An effective program will see awareness and engagement with the marketplace.

Beyond the Marketplace project, these tools and skills

Action Item

Initial planning session (1hr – one time)

Training (ongoing – but i2.5 hour initial self-paced training course)

Interview Stakeholder(s) (1hr – one time)

Setup Social Media Accounts (3 hrs one time)

Content Development (1-10 hrs monthly)

Operate Program (4hrs monthly - assuming weekly posts)

Planning & Coordination (1 hr weekly)

Program Reporting (1 hr monthly)

Process

Launching this project requires an initial planning session in which the constituency groups and their key spokesmen are identified, along with the initial timeline and objectives.

Focus of activities for each group are identified and dates to complete initial training (ongoing training needs can be identified at 6 week point).

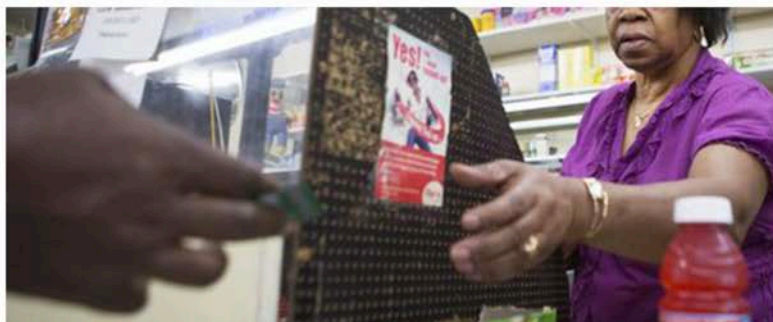
Selection of a point person to coordinate.

Establish weekly, monthly quarterly goals, and adjust accordingly.

In the Marketplace project, two of the constituencies (The State Govt and Traditional Media) will not be actively involved. However, the coordinator can obtain editorial calendars, position papers, etc. that can be used by the other groups to coordinate with.



Donate



Is your business or organization:

- ✓ Black-Owned,
- ✓ Black-Operated,
- ✓ Black-Oriented?

If so...

Get Listed! Its FREE!

Sponsoring Culturally-specific Portals for Digital Marketing and Promotion



REVENUES
& SALES

Provided by SME Consultant

Third Eye Network, LLC

Location

Rochester, New York/Finger Lakes Region

Origin	Susu Management Group, LLC (<i>d/b/a Black-owned Business Rochester</i>) Niche Market Insights Foundation, Inc. (<i>501(c)3 not-for-profit organization</i>) InfoWorks Development
Budget	 Portals: \$25k – \$75k ea (implementation); \$12k – \$15k/year ea (maintenance) APIs: \$5k ea (implementation); \$1k+/year ea (maintenance)
Timeframe	 Portals: 3 – 6 months ea (implementation and training) APIs: 1 – 3 months ea (implementation and training)
Risk	 Requires a regional organizational affiliate or sponsoring agency, socio-political will and actively engaged community collaboration; the digital divide
Key Performance Indicators	Engagement Rates (<i># of niche listings, # of user accounts, # of pageviews, # of new visitors</i>); Community Commerce (<i># of paid subscriptions, niche market sales, non-niche revenues</i>); Community Impact (<i>funds raised, # of reinvestments, grants awarded, # of businesses/jobs</i>)
Partners & Resources	Dr. Lomax R. Campbell, Matthew T. Bain, The BOB Squad SM , and NMI Foundation Board; Proprietary Database, Niche Market Portals, Directory APIs, CalendarWiz API (<i>discontinued</i>)

Diagnostic

Backgrounder

- BOB Rochester was launched in late 2014 as an anti-racist response to the untimely deaths of Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Michael Brown Jr., and others at the hands of police; inspired by the legacy of Victor Hugo Green who published *The Green Book* (1936 – 1966)
- By design, it is a community-driven marketing and promotion resource for area BOBs intended to empower Black enterprise, public service organizations and affinity associations; this social enterprise has organically amassed over 700 listings since its public launch

Pandemic Effects

- Site statistics demonstrate community participation runs parallel with crises (i.e., civic unrest, COVID-19 pandemic)
- Renewed interest in BOBs evidenced by 26.5k in new users (a 723.99% increase) with 36.5k sessions; average monthly pageviews have increased from 1,600 (pre-pandemic) to 6,900 (post-pandemic); pageviews spiked during the summer of 2020: 4.2k (May), 83.2k (Jun), 17.5k (Jul), 6.9k (Aug), 7.6k (Sept)
- Local community gifts surpassed \$50k

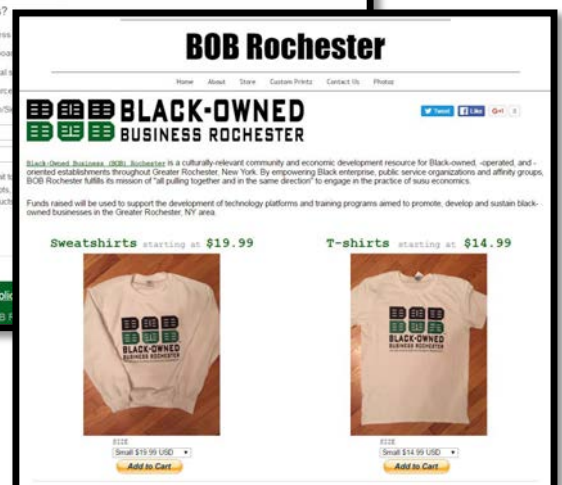
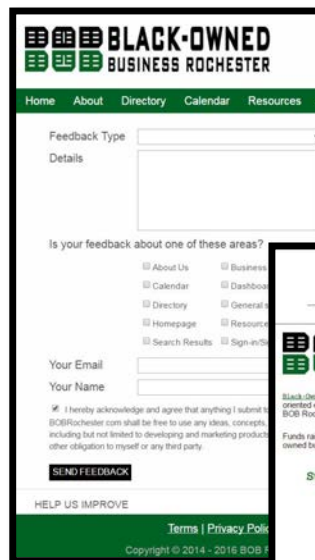
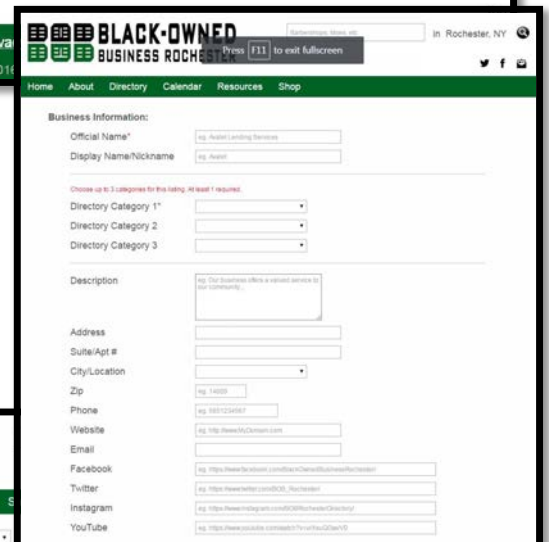
Actions – Pandemic-related Pivots

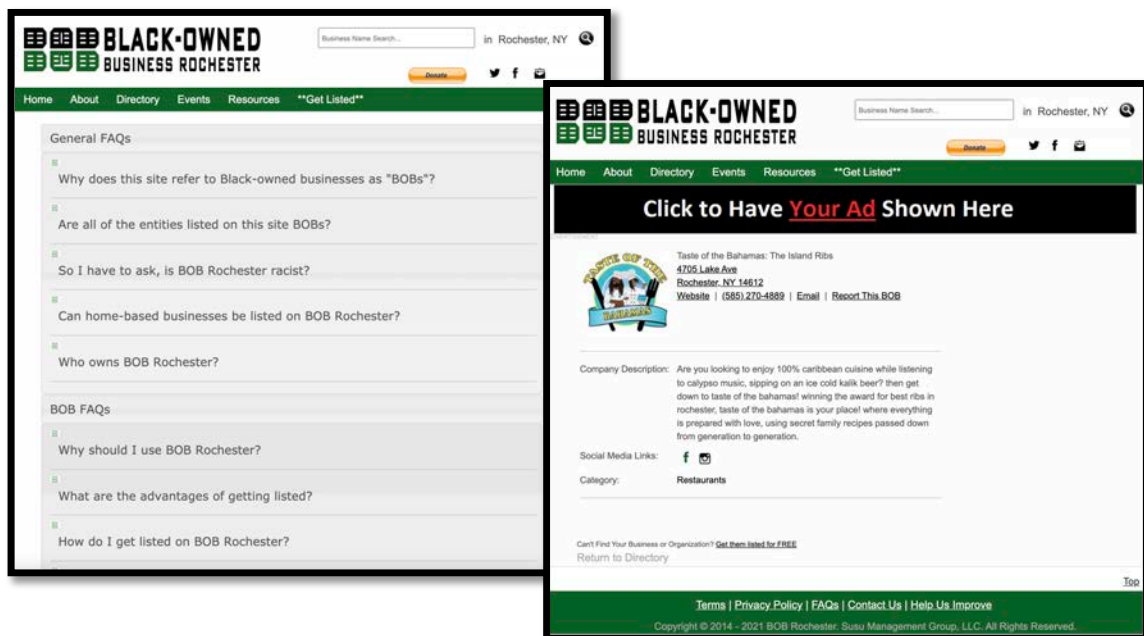
Platform Development

- Developed an API to expand network reach, BOB promotion, and the data warehouse; allot 1 – 3 months at \$5k
- New brand development is underway, LocalBOBs.com (Fall 2021), for national expansion; allot 6+ months at ≤\$75k
- Create niche-specific platforms centering Latinx-, Asian-, and Native American-owned businesses; can filter by women-, disadvantaged-, LGBT-, and veteran-owned, as well as certification statuses (including MBE, WBE, DBE, LGBTBE, SDVOB/VOSB, and Section 3 businesses); allot 4 months at \$25k – \$75k each and \$12k – \$15k for annual maintenance
- New features will include check-ins, profile administration, crowdsourcing, job boards, ratings, reviews, eCommerce, a request for responses feature, custom APIs, niche-specific reporting, free and paid subscription levels, and more
- Connect a community reinvestment fund



BOBRochester.com screenshots





Sample Pages Documentation

Ready for technical detail	Page	Description
4/23/20XX	About	Information page. A billboard of sorts to suggest the purpose of the site to the user in greater detail than the Home page.
	Add a BOB	(See Get Listed)
7/18/20XX	Calendar	A calendar display of events entered into the system. These events can be 'downloaded' to a user's device at will.
	Contact Us	A form to allow users to engage BOB Rochester administrators.
2/7/20XX	Directory	Listing of BOBs. Displayed in multiple ways to afford a comfortable user experience.
	FAQs	Frequently asked questions of users.
	Get Listed	A form interface that allows a user to request that a BOB get listed.
	Header (Search)	Used to search for BOB-records in the system by category, name, or tags. This should support partial string search. This page persists across all pages used in the site except for error-pages.
	Help Us Improve	A form to allow users to suggest ideas through the existing website.
	Home	An informational page. A billboard of sorts to suggest the purpose of the site to users, and highlight recent news and upcoming events.
	Privacy Policy	Static governing terms of privacy afforded to users of the BOB Rochester website.
	Resources	A listing of culturally-relevant books, movies, podcasts and other media focused on skill building and cultural community development.
	Shop	A listing of products for sale to support/sustain the efforts of BOB Rochester.
	Terms	Static terms of service provided by BOB Rochester to users of this website and system.
	Page (search results)	Resulting page of search or BOB Directory selection.
10/10/20XX	Profile	Static result of specific BOB listing.
	Media	Links to news articles, audio-visual files, and BOBR press kit items

Sample page documentation list for describing the purpose of each page and managing platform development

Process

Regional Integration Strategy

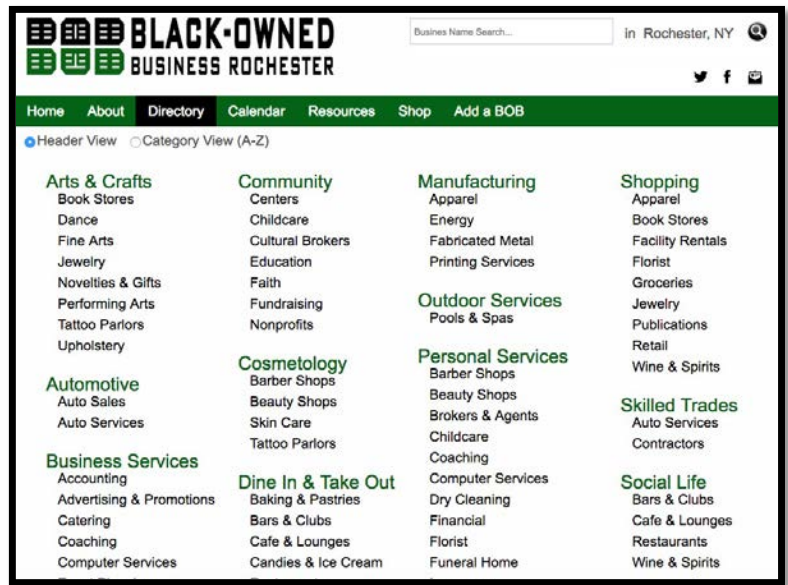
- Decide whether or not to partner with NMI Foundation, Inc. a new national non-profit (501c3) community wealth building organization to support these and related efforts within the regional context
- Identify an economic development or non-profit organization to serve as the *Organizational Affiliate* for the territory or region; they would spearhead network development and implementation with the software vendor and administer the network post-implementation, including onboarding and managing paid staff and/or volunteers (*see the next bullet*)
- Cultivate *Niche Market Ambassadors* (e.g., the BOB SquadSM) to perform outreach focused on deepening cultural community engagement through technical assistance and network navigation (budgetary considerations can include stipends, interns or co-ops, part-time, and full-time jobs)

Strategic Resource Development

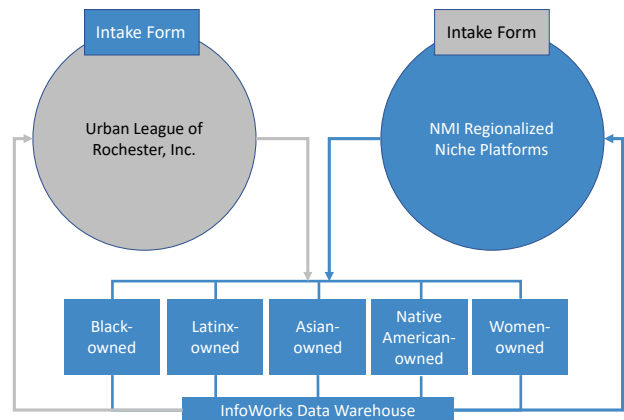
- Conduct outreach to the private sector, government, philanthropy, and the general community to garner financial support for the project; private sector incentives may include tax credits
- Establish a community fund connected to the network for garnering financial support and through which to allocate revenues for community reinvestment

Platform Implementation

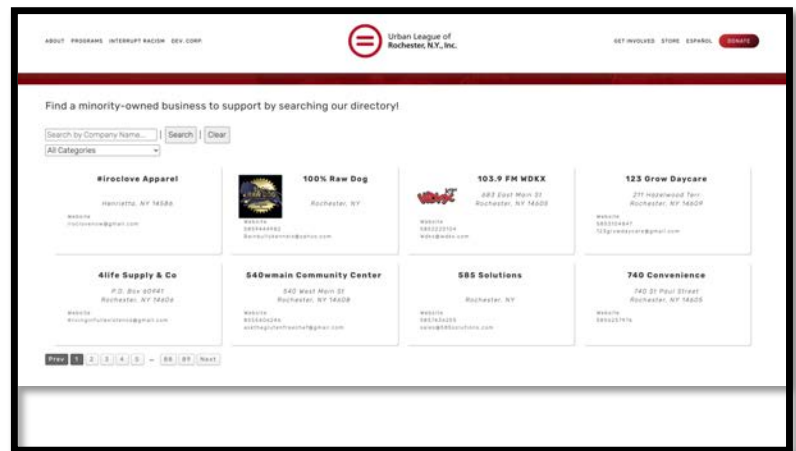
- Determine whether to sponsor one or more integrated culturally-specific portals and custom APIs in support of cultural communities of interest (*keep in mind that prices may vary by vendor, number of counties, population size, and/or features*)
- Select a vendor like InfoWorks and collaborate with the community to determine the desired scope of work
- Form a 3 – 7 person project team and maintain a weekly meeting schedule with the vendor
- Develop site content, create social media pages, pilot site developments, participate in training workshops, and identify niche directory listings with the community; celebrate wins publicly
- Prepare a rollout strategy with actions



Original BOB Rochester directory screenshot in header view



API conceptual model for NMI regionalized platforms and Urban League of Rochester (client)



New LocalBOBs.com API on client's website (www.urbanleaguero.org)



Optional Other Search Parameters

Location: Search near me
 Search near
 Ignore location

Search radius:

Local eCommerce Marketplace






REVENUES & SALES

Provided by SME Consultant

Mondofora

Location

Online – Ashland Marketplace is in process

Origin	The idea sprang from a frustrating day trying to locate an item I knew was available somewhere in my town. Hours of effort gave way to simply ordering the item online and waiting a week for it to arrive. The technology for local online shopping was widely available and mostly free but required planning and organization.
Budget	 <p>Many of the tools are free. Planning and organization may benefit from an educational seminar, training, and consultations, at a nominal fee. Training is also widely available online for many of the tools.</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Individual retailers can create accounts in ~1 hour. Community efforts to coordinate should be ~6 weeks, and a community-centric marketing effort, is an ongoing activity, > 6 months.</p>
Risk	 <p>The potential benefit, leveraging internet technologies to steer shoppers to local stores rather than distant, online-only websites, is great. The financial and structural risks are minimal.</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Total sales (\$), total online sales (\$), total number of transactions, number of BOPIS, BOPAC, and local deliveries, # of customers, # of new customers
Partners & Resources	The core technologies – SEO, mapping, marketplaces, etc. already exist and mostly free. An effective program will also integrate with other projects, such as business websites, email campaigns (CRM), Facebook, Etsy, etc. Additional resources could include: community business directory, community outreach resources, scheduling a group discussion for the purposes of planning and organizing, and coordination with other LRRP projects and teams to incorporate the benefits of those programs into store, community, and marketplace operations.

Diagnostic

Every porch-delivery – by FedEx, UPS, Amazon, etc. – is potentially a purchase that was made online and shipped from a distant retailer. Most of these purchases are items that could be purchased from local retailers. Providing a “shop local online, buy local online” capability, mindset, and awareness can strengthen the local economy, and help local retailers.

A leading metric of this phenomenon is Decreasing Total Retail Sales. In the absence of decreasing population, this is an indicator that sales dollars are being spent outside the community.

Decreasing retail employment is generally an early indication that revenue/employee is insufficient to maintain employee headcount. Technology can be a force multiplier which can increase sales per employee, and create a need for additional employees, and increase the needs for other supporting businesses that provide training, equipment, communications, and connectivity services

Even local retailers that have their own websites from which they can sell, are at a competitive disadvantage to large eCommerce platforms that present thousands of products in dozens of product categories. A local multi-vendor eCommerce marketplace combines the communities total product selection, and creates a comparable selection of products to large eCommerce companies, making the community an eCommerce destination.

This approach should also promote the store, provide a map to their location, and strengthen the relationship between shoppers and local businesses. Retailer identification and branding reinforces the shopper-retailer relationship, and encourages repeat business.

Action Item

The recommended course of action is an initial outreach to community stores to present the benefits of a coordinated community-centric online marketplace technologies. This may require some collateral materials, and an outreach effort.

As with the “Coordinated Communications” project, the “Local eCommerce Marketplace” project is effectively a coordinated and integrated process. This means that the project results will benefit greatly from identifying a point person to coordinate the discussion and efforts.

The community of retailers may also benefit from a group presentation on the creation of a marketplace, websites, a local online business directory, local search technologies, and how integrating the various technologies and platforms can create a powerful “local online” alternative to the major eCommerce websites.

Many of the technologies and platforms are already built and no development or customization activity is required. Awareness of the technologies and how to apply and integrate them will also benefit from a community sponsored publicity effort and/or outreach campaign.

In some cases, integrating the various technologies may require some outside specialists or training, depending on the specific groups of technologies selected. Retailers can and should sign up for accounts on various platforms and establish omni-channel strategies. Communities can and should build directories. Directories and websites can and should be integrated with marketplace platforms. And, ideally, retailers should leverage cross-platform inventory management tools.

Process

The process for implementing this project begins by identifying whether this should be a consultant-led project, a DIY project, or some combination of the two. The community should identify the community point person on the project who will centralize communications, set a project schedule, and monitor the key metrics in monitoring its success. This should be someone that can speak for the community and with local retailers.

Next, we recommend scheduling a community discussion/presentation (~1 hour) to present the project, describe the implementation, and enroll participants.

Each enrollee will receive an email that provides links to information, tools, and tutorials that will help them create vendor accounts on the various platforms. Emphasis should be placed on these activities being coordinated on a community level, and integrated to create a "the community is a marketplace" result. Ideally, this should also include a community retail business directory and local-search enabled marketplace platform.

With vendors accounts created and products uploaded, the marketplace is effectively fully operational. However, it is our experience that merely creating the capability does not automatically mean that customers will begin using it.

We highly recommend that the marketplace project be implemented in conjunction with a marketing or communications project. This can take many forms, from community communications up to a fully coordinated social media marketing project. We will provide a Best Practices project sheet for a coordinated social media marketing project which is designed to work with the marketplace project, but can also be leveraged to benefit any community projects or communications.

We highly recommend integrating the directory and marketplace with other online retail initiatives, facilitating an omni-channel solution for those retailers engaged in selling via multiple online marketplaces.

The last component in the process is to collect data on the project progress and integrate it with other community communications. This will keep residents and businesses engaged and informed about the community's efforts to strengthen the local economy, and invested in a positive outcome.

To be competitive with major eCommerce websites, the community marketplace will need to provide a comparable level of product selection and convenience features. But the project can gain a competitive advantage by emphasizing those dimensions of competition which eCommerce sites cannot match, such as: Customer Service, Product Demonstrations, shopping as an experience, personal relationships, proximity, and location-based fulfillment options (BOPIS, BOPAC, Local Delivery, etc.)

ashlandmass.com/842/Shop-Local-Ashland

CORONAVIRUS INFO Covid-19 Information for 2021
Read On...

Create an Account - Increase your productivity, customize your experience, and engage in information you care about. Sign In

Ashland Restaurant Directory

Shop Local Ashland

Ashland Deals & Steals

Home > Doing Business > Business Directory > Shop Local Ashland



Shop Local Ashland

Shopping local was never more important than NOW! Please remember during these tough times our local shops and restaurants need us now more than ever. During the next few months when you are looking for holiday presents or are looking to enjoy a delicious dinner, think ASHLAND! There is so much right here in your own backyard!

If you shop or dine local in town let us know! Tag @TownofAshlandMA on Facebook or Instagram, share the love and spread the news that Ashland is not only a great place to live, work but is the best place to play, eat and shop!

Shopping

Click any image below to be directed directly to the businesses website.

A community business directory (community government owned) provides a listing service for interested businesses. In this example, different pages are created for different categories of businesses, including restaurants and retail.

Westborough

https://mondofora.com

Become a seller Vendors Sale My Account

mondofora

- All categories - Search products

Optional Other Search Parameters






Location: Search near me Search near Ignore location

Search radius:

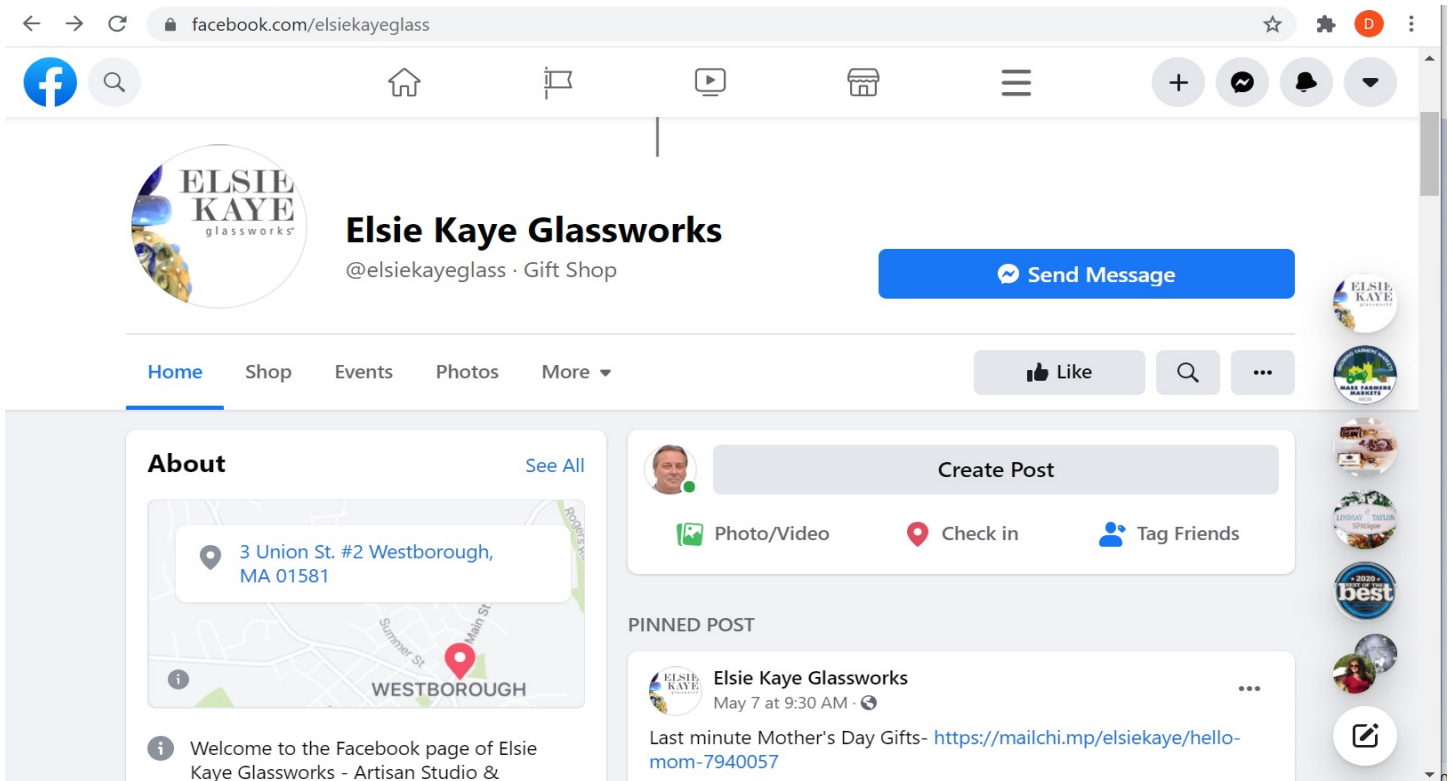
Search

Cart is empty

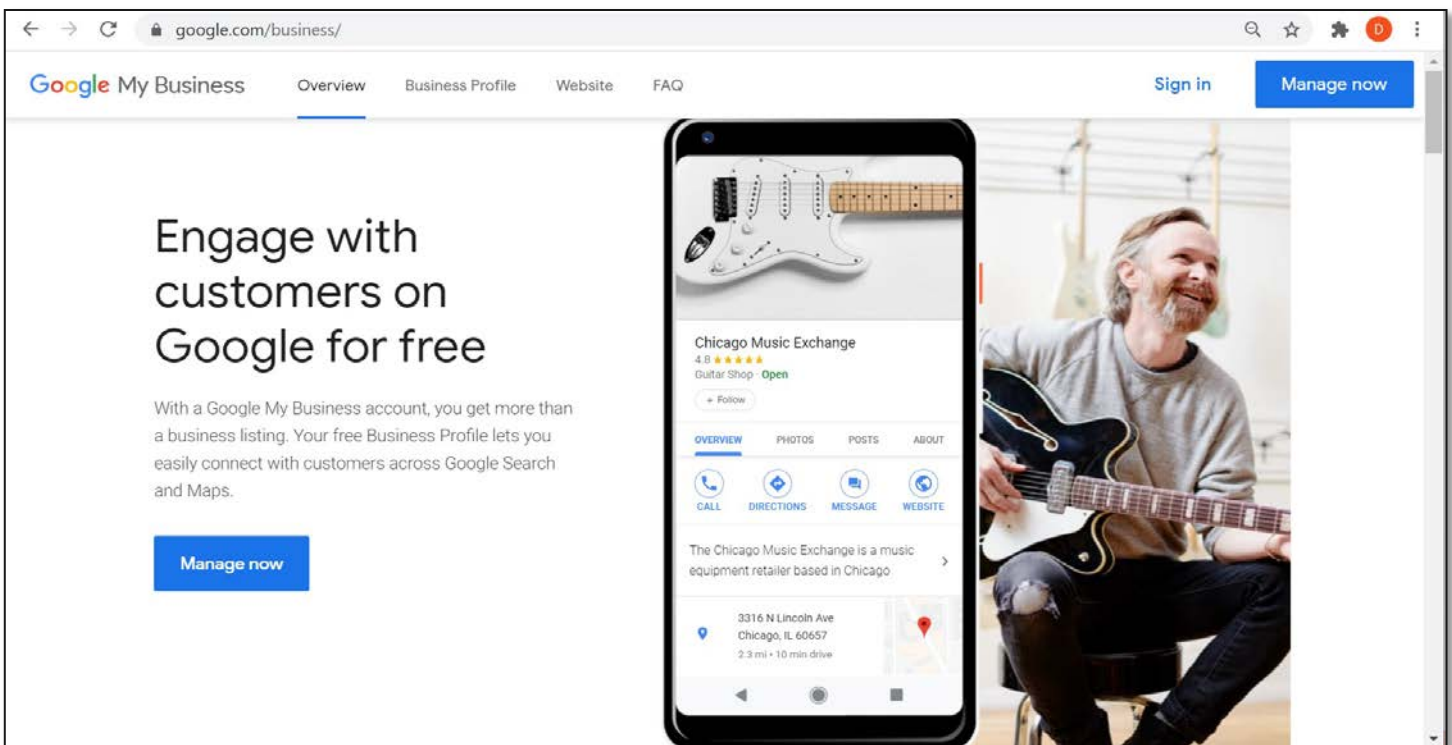
Featured Vendors Near You

Mondofora is a local-search enabled marketplace, that allows shoppers to identify their location, their radius of search, and keywords of the product that they are shopping for. The Home page also provides featured vendors that might be of interest to shoppers.




A Facebook Page connects your business with customers and offers key information about your business, products, and services. It also creates a “feed” of information that is presented to your best customers, helping to solidify the shopper-store relationship, and keeping them informed about news and upcoming events.




Credibility gained from Google is enough to sway people to be 38% more likely to visit your store, and 29% more likely to buy something. Research finds that 88% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations.

Checkout


Deliver to



Curbside Pickup — Free
(Immediate)



USPS — \$1.00
(2 days)



Local Delivery — \$3.00
(Same day)

Want it right now? Pick it up at the store.

Customer Sign in

Customer's notes

Chat

Blue Ice - the novel by Mark Cahill	1 x \$9.95
1 item(s)	\$9.95
Stripe surcharge	\$0.20
Taxes	
VAT (6.25% included)	\$0.59
Order Total	\$10.15

Shoppers appreciate preferred additional delivery methods, and stores that offered BOPIC and BOPAS options saw their sales increase >17%. In addition to the traditional shipping options that eCommerce websites offer – like FedEx, UPS, and USPS – local retailers can offer options which their proximity to shoppers enables – such as Buy Online Pickup In Store (BOPIS), Buy Online Pickup At Curb (BOPAC), and Local Delivery.



Appendices

C. Subject Matter Expert Materials

SME REPORT – Foxborough, MA

Shared Marketing for Storefront Business Support and Downtown Activation

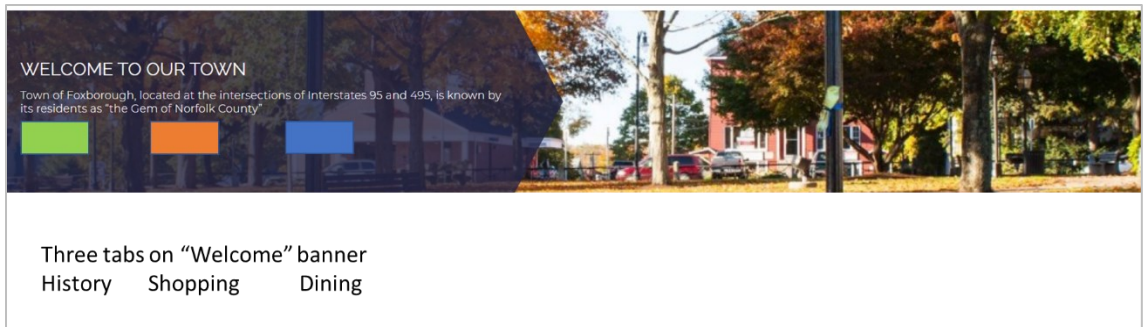
Submitted by Christine Moynihan, Retail Visioning

September 15, 2021

Foxborough has good small business bones. The downtown has a central park off which are several streets with vibrant retail, dining, personal services and “a little bit of everything else”. There is an existing Uptown Business Association which, as is typical of these groups, has struggled to maintain membership and energy. The Covid 19 pandemic added to its woes as individual business owners struggled to stay afloat – much less be committed to the greater goals of a community organization. There have been 3 or 4 individuals who have kept the organization together. Since there is not currently an appetite to establish a more formal structure such as a Business Improvement District, Main St. Organization or similar, there is an urgent need to get this Uptown Business Association back on its feet. Paige Duncan, Town Planner for Foxborough is interested in helping this happen.

Setting the Stage for Success in Shared Marketing Initiatives.

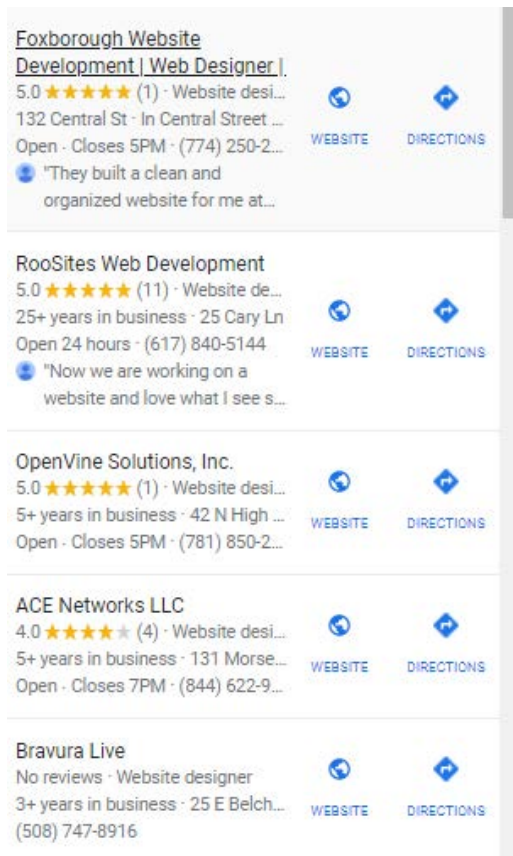
1. *“Show them the love.”* Inform retailers, salon owners, restaurateurs and other small business owners that the town is with them... for one example, adding tabs to the welcome page on the website to help promote local businesses.



Link the content in this tab to Foxborough’s Uptown Happenings – Facebook page. Be sure to add the word Foxborough to this site so that not only “those in the know” can find it... then promote it as the place to learn about new businesses, spontaneous events, special sales, etc. The website listings will be more of a directory more modest – but maybe something like the first 5 pages of this:

[e81d2c_48321aad16764636bb9931f5ca944feb.pdf \(filesusr.com\)](https://filesusr.com/e81d2c_48321aad16764636bb9931f5ca944feb.pdf)

Seek probono web management services from high school students, Wheaton College students or local providers. ASK for help... even to get things started and set up so that someone else can take over. See possibilities on the next page,



- Offer several workshops to retailers to help them be the best they can be post-pandemic. Many know that they lost touch with customers when they could not be open as brick and mortar establishments, and many realize that they have not paid as much attention to their brand as they used to... Letting them know that you understand this and are putting programs in place to help them will be appreciated and possibly reduce inertia. Remind them “a body at rest stays at rest, but a body in motion stays in motion!” Two possible workshops might be:

“Using technology to build and grow business” -- with topics like:

- Creating a customer database
- Building a website
- Facebook and Instagram for business
- Blogs and other social media tools

“The Power of Presentation” -- with topics like:

- Curb appeal for your storefront – signage and façade improvements
- Visual Merchandising – in windows and on the selling floor
- Aligning your website, social and print media with your physical space

Engaged and Working Together

3. Engage business owners, interested residents and town leaders, etc. to re-build The Uptown Business Association in a more formal way. Share the vision that this organization is NEEDED NOW in order to have Foxborough businesses benefit from the major initiatives that the town is working on. Examples – Brewery, new residential buildings, celebrations.

4. Identify key players – president, treasurer, secretary. Provide them with resources –

Share information about lighting the common for the holidays, new walkways, local art installations, regional restaurant week. Add “traditional events” that will be continuing and brainstorm new ideas.

Create a BURST STRATEGY for 3 selected events/year where businesses are totally involved (traffic builder punch cards, balloons, decorations, face painting, prizes, musicians, etc.)

Be sure to name events such that folks know they are to benefit downtown businesses.

Foxborough Uptown Business Association hosts:

Shining a Light on Foxborough -- Holiday Tree Lighting

On the Common -- Dec 1 at 6pm

All businesses on the common will be open until 9pm!

\$20,000 in a quick access bank account requiring 2 signatures. Also request sponsorship from banks, and other larger corporations for the organization or specific activities. Whatever works...

“Borrow” marketing help from a local business as a sponsorship “barter” (maybe 8 hours/ month for communications materials, event poster graphics, etc. where they get recognition?) Print company???

Empower everyone in the organization to be a salesperson for Foxborough

Power of Presentation Workshop model.

Similarly a Technology Workshop could work the same way – much of the work is done by the provider.

Typically, costs for this type of technical assistance are \$1500-\$3000 for the workshop and prep -- and \$500 for each consultation (1 hour meeting plus written recommendation and ½ hour follow up meeting).

Additionally, the funds for the retailer to implement the recommendations run between \$500-\$1000. Example 1 workshop and 10 business consultations + \$1000 investment per business – **Total TA program = \$16,500 - \$18,000***

CDBG funds are approved for this.

1. Retain a consultant to conduct a 1 ½ workshop and provide 1:1 consultations with business owners to help them determine what they need most, new signage, window displays, interior improvements, promotions – OR website, using social media, database instruction, etc.
2. Secure a location – Mondays, Tuesdays, or Wednesdays from 8-9:30 are best – assuring business owners that they will be back at their store in time to open. Many hair salons are closed on Mondays.

#3-7 below are usually handled by the consultant.

3. Announce the event, the 1:1 component and the improvement grant. Applications for 1:1 and grant are handed out at the workshop – (basically making attendance at the workshop a pre-requisite) Fliers, follow up phone calls, press release, post event on town calendar and Foxborough Uptown Happenings
 4. Prepare an application for the 1:1 consultation.
 5. Hold workshop, distribute applications.
 6. Schedule and attend on-site or virtual consultations.
 7. Prepare a grant request form.
-
8. Following consultation, business owner submits grant request for approval to town.
 9. Grant is paid to business owner upon receipt of paid invoice.
 10. Photo of business improvement (sign, new fixtures to organize store, website or FB home page with link, window displays, etc.) taken and published.

A few additional thoughts and opinions:

From my conversations, review of materials, visits, etc. I think Foxborough has LOTS of parking... ***The only places I think people need to be able to cross the street from any parking space attached to the town common (where they could walk across the common in any direction) would be from the common to across South Street to walk down Central Street and from the common to the theater/new brewery corner of School Street (and then across Rockhill Street there).*** The businesses on Cocasset Street and Bird Street either have their own parking, drive-thrus or are FOR cars.

I agree that there could be better use of the parking behind the Central Street shops for the community. (Is the Verizon building available?) Kennebunk, ME built an open-air pavilion for community events that hosts – art fairs, children’s festivals, pickle ball in summer, ice skating in winter, movie nights. I love it.

Web references

https://www.google.com/maps/uv?pb=!1s0x4cb2add735d9dcf7%3A0x575032828dc77083!3m1!7e115!4shttps%3A%2F%2Fh5.googleusercontent.com%2Fp%2FAF1QipOnpCf_m7dqgqq06fTys5_hkbaLEcbGz0DU55M%3Dw284-h160-k-no!5skennebunk%20Maine%20pavilion%20-%20Google%20Search!15sCglgAQ&imagekey=!1e10!2sAF1QipOnpCf_m7dqgqq06fTys5_hkbaLEcbGz0DU55M&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiL-sXs0oHzAhWBFikFHfx_D7QQoip6BAhZEAM



RRP Rubric for Proposed Project*

SME Input – Zapalac Advisors

Laurie A. Zapalac, PhD

laurie@zapalacadvisors.com

Project Title	Create Master Plan and Legal Framework for Central Street Parking Lot Enhancement, Activation and Management
Origin	Paige E. Duncan, AICP Planning Director
Location/Census Tract	LRRP Study Area – Uptown
Budget & Sources of Funding	<p>Budget: Medium (\$50k-\$200k)</p> <p>Preliminary budget estimates by phase / task:</p> <p>Community Workshop + Plan Refinement: \$25,000 - \$60,000 depending upon scope</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDI Community Capacity Building (\$25,000) <p>Legal Agreement Development: \$20,000</p> <p>Physical Improvements / events: \$100,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces • Commonwealth Places, \$50,000, 1:1 match required <p>Funding may be necessary for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time for project management • Professional Services consultants – transportation/parking and community planning and grant writing, legal services
Timeframe	<p>Short (Less than 5 years)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine project lead, secure funding, hire consultants – 2-3 months • Plan and conduct workshop – 2-3 months • Synthesize findings, undertake schematic design and present back to stakeholders – 2 months • Write legal agreement – 2 months (iterative with step above)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure funding and complete design for physical improvements and events – 3 months • Construction / undertake physical improvements, including pilots – 6 months • Hold events / manage and maintain - ongoing • Report – as determined by funding sources
Risks	<p>Low</p> <p>Greatest risk is from lack of participation among businesses owners and property owners. Address this by clearly explaining what is in it for them (better resources; grant funding; enhanced revenue down the line, pride of place.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Landowners and Businesses will be involved, Including Municipality. • Community seeks to address as part of larger conversation on parking in Uptown. • Risk typical of those associated with Public Private Partnership and/or cooperation among all parties • Multiple parties desire an organizational 'vehicle' to allow for improvements and management of the parking area.
Key Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop participation and satisfaction among participants • Ability to implement a legal framework • Physical improvements to the lot that the community notices • Increased revenue for adjacent businesses • Events: successful use of the lot for community events (chili cookoff, away game events, seasonal street markets, etc.) • Exponential impact – inclusion / integration with larger district improvements
Partners & Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foxborough Common Business Collaborative (FCBC) • Town of Foxborough • The Kraft Group (New England Patriots organization)
Diagnostic/ COVID-19 Impacts	<p><i>Should Address specific questions:</i></p> <p>•How does this project respond to the key challenges and opportunities that were identified during the diagnostic phase of this project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalize and enhances the Central Street Parking Area as expressed in RRP Public Meeting. • Sets the stage for expanded and flexible use of outdoor space to allow for revenue generation while enabling social distancing.

	<p>•What are the harmful impacts of COVID-19 that this project seeks to address?</p> <p>•How did COVID create or exacerbate the issue you are seeking to address with this project?</p>
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Action Item	<p>Envision and Plan: Through a participatory planning process, develop a program and plan for physical improvements and re-organization of parking on several abutting lots that compose the Central St. Parking Lot. This unified master plan will be geared toward multi-party and public use of the central parking lot area and will include related maintenance strategies. The plan will address mechanism to create improvements, manage shared parking and accommodate flexible alternative uses such as entertainment, events, or dining.</p> <p>Reach Agreement: Use this information to write a legal agreement (MOU etc.) for shared use, maintenance, and funding among all pertinent parties.</p> <p>Transform and Connect: Begin process of resource transformation and plan for inclusion of this revitalized resource in the broader district activation strategy.</p>
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Process	<p>Launch: Determine project lead, secure funding, hire consultants. Identify / confirm landownership as well as all business stakeholders. Determine if translation services are required. Gather relevant planning materials and provide to consultants.</p> <p>Hold Community Planning Workshop</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invite stakeholders / project participants 2. Consider the idea of organizing site visits to relevant properties (such as Bow Market in Somerville) prior to the workshop. 3. Hold Site-walk/Stakeholder Workshop to develop Master Plan. Decide on needed deliverables and design process to create them. 4. Plan process to orient participants and state workshop goals. Include vision exercise and explore precedents as precursor to program development <p>Potential Deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intent statements: covid economic recovery and resilience goals + vision for improvement. Relationship to broader community goals/values/initiatives (including other LRRP projects). • Map inventory of key resources, uses, access needed, and stakeholders. • Site utilization plan/program and strategy ("design thinking solutions") • Placemaking elements, inclusive of preliminary cost estimates / funding strategies. Include both fixed interventions and program pilots designed to generate community feedback
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Plan: Public Realm improvements & funding; private realm improvements & funding sources; access - improvements & funding sources. Should also address how/when pilot elements will be integrated. • Ongoing management strategy: key goals, responsibilities in relationship to each intervention as well as ongoing management and maintenance of areas / resources included. Determine if entity will also be engagement in marketing and event management – or if this will be done separately. Creative funding mechanisms. • Core content for Legal Framework. <p>Develop Legal framework / Design physical transformation (likely an iterative process):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand consult with Attorney Re: Formalize legal arrangement to organize land and user groups. • Create legal structure/license/MOU • Develop Schematic Designs • Develop Schematic Plan for unified and flexible Central Parking Lot. • Gain consensus and agreement from all Invested parties as necessary to formalize management structure • Create Central Parking Lot Management Entity <p>Undertake Construction / Improvements and Begin Operation Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brand the revitalized asset and begin events program • Monitor progress and adjust if need be. <p>Celebrate success and acknowledge community creativity & collaboration at every opportunity!</p>
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Uptown Foxborough - Storefront Revitalization

Prepared with: Goman+York

Project Title	Storefront Revitalization of Uptown Foxborough
Origin	Paige E. Duncan, AICP, Planning Director and survey results
Location/Census Tract	LRRP Study Area – Uptown
Budget & Sources of Funding	<p>Large Budget - \$200K+</p> <p>Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build Back Better, MA Downtown Initiative Program • Establishment of a BID/TIF District to fund projects • Tax Abatements/Incentives programs as incentives
Timeframe	<p>Short Term- Less than 5 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning: 1-2 years • Implementation: 3-5 years • Program – ongoing <p>Ideally a key project can be utilized as the face of the initiative and the full program can then be phased in.</p>
Risks	<p>Medium Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk associated with collaboration among Town and property owners. • Funding for program • Private Interest/need exceeds available budget
Key Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in a storefront façade, signage, lighting, etc. for private realm revitalization in a formal program that would help to enliven downtown • Current property owners subscribing to the idea and implementing any aspects of the redesign • Future property owners ready to invest understanding the additional requirements that they would be required to implement Track number of applications to program received
Partners & Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Foxborough • Foxborough Common Business Collaborative (FCBC) • Foxborough Cultural Commission
Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts	<p>Uptown Foxborough businesses lost momentum during Covid-19. With foot traffic to businesses down, business owners were looking for creative ways to draw in customers in the safest possible ways.</p> <p>The business survey that was conducted in Phase 1 of the LRRP program indicated that 50% of businesses expressed interest in sign and façade</p>

	<p>improvements as a way to raise awareness of their businesses to customers, this was further expressed in LRRP public meeting. As indicated in discussions, there are opportunities to make improvements to the Uptown that would create a cohesiveness to the district – this could be transformative when coupled with other projects in the area, such as the new apartments and possibly the resurrection of projects that lost momentum due to Covid-19.</p> <p>There is strong need to get a consensus and buy-in of property owners and businesses for the project to be successful. This will mean direct meetings with property owners, assessments of buildings and storefronts and other factors to make the program a success.</p>
Action Item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Storefront Revitalization program with guidelines that allows for improvements to the private realm in the form of enhancements to buildings that includes signage, lighting, façade treatments and door and window upgrades. • Identify funding to incentivize business owners and building owners to make investments in the Uptown area. This can be approached in multiple ways: grants, tax abatements/incentives, low interest loans. • Create an incentive program to encourage current and future property owners to participate in the Storefront Revitalization program. • Develop a regulatory process that enables grandfathering of current buildings and provides for long-range control and revision to the fabric of the Uptown study area as buildings change hands and new opportunities present themselves to increase the “critical mass” of the new vision.
Process	<p>Program Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Town Staff and/or FBFC individuals to administer the program • Inventory and assessment of the Uptown study area buildings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify eligible applicants: Businesses and Property Owners • Identify shovel ready opportunities • Prioritize and rate buildings during the assessment process <p>Budget/Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify /budget for cost for typical façade rehabilitation and new signage • Research and obtain funding source(s) • Retain Architectural Consultant(s) to design the Guidelines for the program • Develop a Marketing the program to create awareness of and

promote the program.

Conceptualize Various applications within the program

- Conceptualize low to moderate applications
 - Arts/Cultural – 2D Murals
 - Lighting
 - Planters
 - Signage and business wayfinding

- Conceptualize higher cost/structural applications
 - Rehab facades
 - Replace windows and storefronts
 - Build dumpster enclosures
 - Regrade, resurface and restripe parking lots
 - Rebuild upper floors on buildings that were designed to accommodate them and/or previously had them
 - Reconfiguring the parking area within the “triangle” and refurbishing the rear building facades to create a dual approach and increase use potential

Process

- Establish eligibility, application process and approval system.
 - Provide initial Architectural Consultation
 - Define Scope and Budget for each project.
 - Define how the funding and process is structured
 - Who pays for what
 - How are payments and incentives structured
 - Prepare Design(s) of improvements.
 - Establish a clear list of eligible improvements and/or rehabilitation. activities, to include paint/exterior finishes, doors, windows, lighting as well as signage.
 - Define approval process from application through buildout to payments
- Architectural Design Solicitation /obtain proposals to construct the work.
- Construction of Sign/Façade/Lighting Improvements

Program Evaluation

- Reporting and evaluation on program participation and need for program improvements or modifications
- Conduct survey of businesses/owners that participate to determine any improvements or adjustments to the program

Best Practices

- Goman+York Compendiums on Storefronts and Business Assessments
- Downtown Manchester CT Storefront Guidelines as reference for document [Link- Final Manchester ADG May 2019.pdf \(townofmanchester.org\)](#)
- BETA to attach photos and renderings of storefronts prepared as reference for improvements

Other notes from meeting

- The storefront program can also be utilized for the rear of buildings where people either park or access businesses from the rear
- If art or murals are used the Cultural Commission should be involved (i.e. – Fresh Paint Springfield program is a good example)
- Consider expanding buildings up to create a more livable uptown area (creating housing above storefronts)
- Know what projects are in the pipeline that may effect this program

Conceptualize Global Connectivity

- Connecting the Common and the “UN”-Common (Central Street triangle)
 - Integrating adjacent parks and sidewalks
- Strengthening the “edge” of the Common
- Providing for the new pedestrian traffic
 - To be generated by current multi-family housing projects under way
 - To be re-directed through the new way-finding structure

Appendices

D. Public Workshop Presentation

Local Rapid Recovery Plan
Impacts of COVID-19
Foxborough, Massachusetts
Uptown Foxborough
June 10, 2021

Agenda

Tonight's Meeting

1. Introduction
2. Overview of Local Rapid Recovery Program (LRRP)
3. Schedule
4. Project Goals
5. Uptown Foxborough Study Area
6. Existing Conditions: Diagnostics and Business Surveys
7. Public Comments
8. Next Steps

Project Team

BETA Group

Arek Galle

- Plan Facilitator
- Certified Planner
- Landscape Architect
- 25+ yrs. Experience

Charlie Creagh

- Project Planner, Researcher

Timothy Blackwell

- GIS Field Operations Coordinator

Town of Foxborough

Paige Duncan

- Planning Director

LRRP Program

Local Rapid Recovery Plan

- Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
- The Local Rapid Recovery Program (LRRP) provides municipalities an opportunity to develop actionable, project-based recovery plans tailored to the unique economic challenges and COVID-19 related impacts to downtowns, town centers, and commercial areas
- Three Phases:
 - Phase I: Diagnostic and Business Surveys
 - Phase II: Project Recommendations
 - Phase III: Plans

Schedule

Local Rapid Recovery Program

Phase I: Diagnostic and Business Surveys

- Completed between March and May

Phase II: Project Recommendations

- In progress May -> June
- Gather additional input from business owners and stakeholders

Phase III: Plans

- July -> August

PROJECT PLAN CATEGORIES



Local Rapid Recovery Plan

Goals

PHASES		GOALS
Phase I: Diagnostic and Business Surveys	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect baseline diagnostic data• Engage stakeholders to understand COVID impacts and district concerns• Provide an overview of on-the-ground conditions within the Study Area
Phase II: Project Recommendations	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consult key stakeholders on priority projects• Refine design of projects with Subject Matter Experts• Develop final list of projects
Phase III: Plans	→	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create draft of Rapid Recovery Plan• Gather community feedback on draft Plan and Project Recommendations• Finalize Plan for submission to commonwealth

Study Area



Legend
Foxboro Study Area

Town of Foxborough, MA
Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program

Data Source: MassGIS
Issue Date: April 2021
This Map is Intended for Planning Purposes Only

BETA





BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT

Phase 1 Diagnostic Category

Business Environment:

- What are impacts of COVID-19 on businesses?
- Is there an anchor, destination, or mix of businesses driving the local economy?
- How well does the business mix meet customer groups?

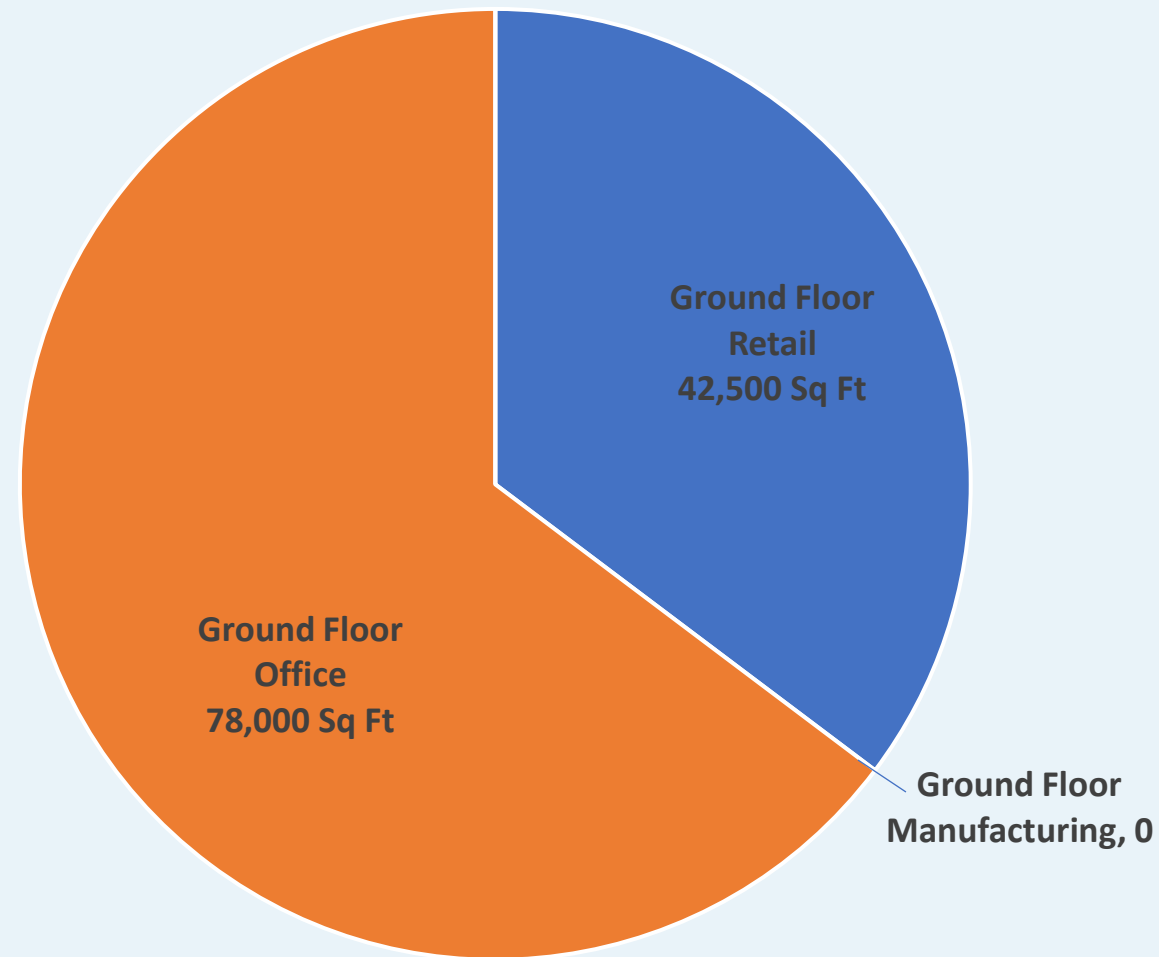
- Results of a business survey conducted during March and April of 2021
- Survey was launched by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
- To help communities develop Rapid Recovery Plans for downtowns and commercial districts
- Directed to owners or other appropriate representatives of business establishments located in the targeted commercial area

Data Collection Analysis

Storefronts



Study Area: 115 Storefronts

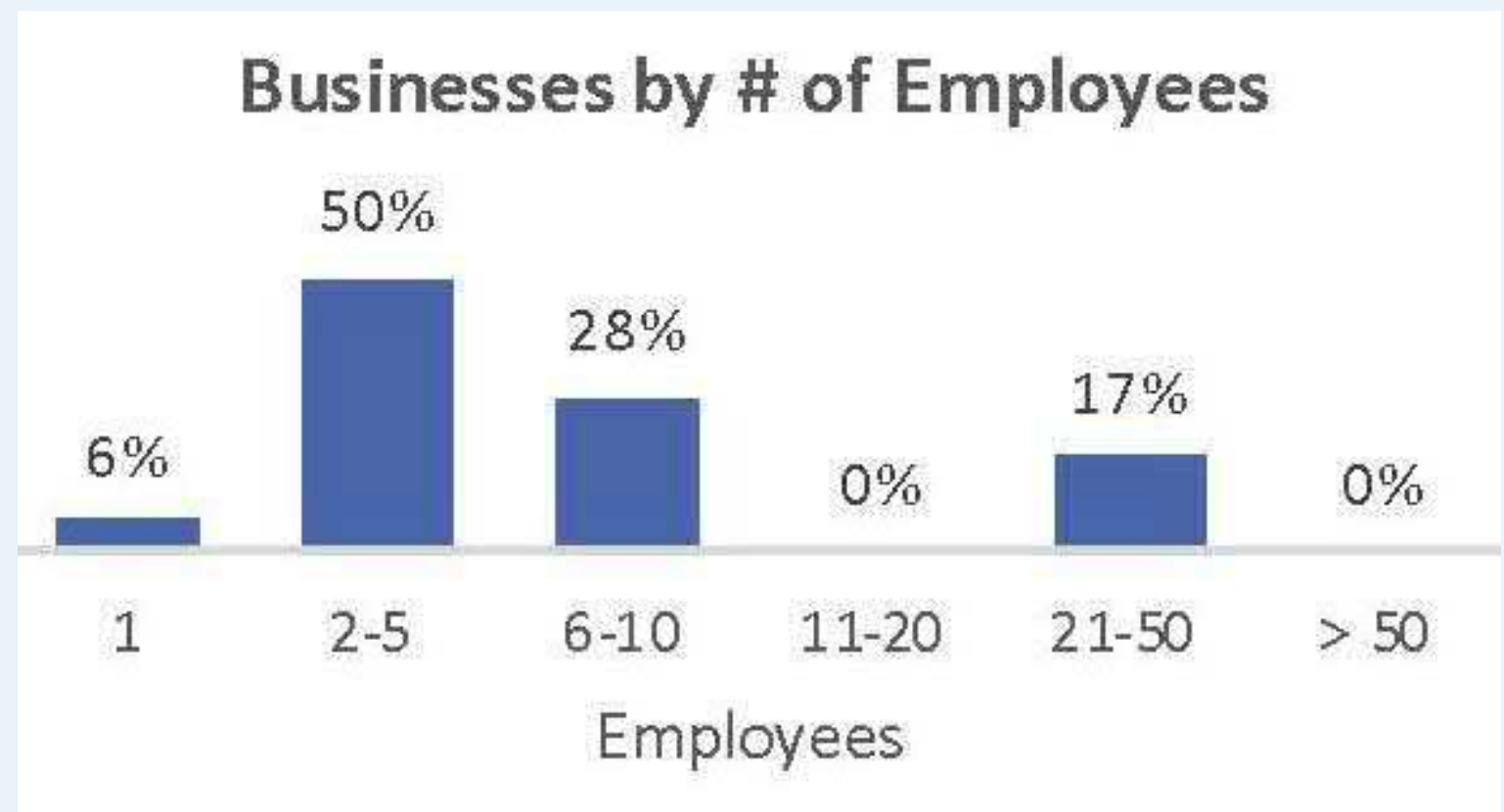


Uptown Foxborough: 18 Responses / 72 Sent Out = 25% Response Rate

Business Characteristics

Business Size

- 56% of businesses are micro-enterprises (<5 Employees).



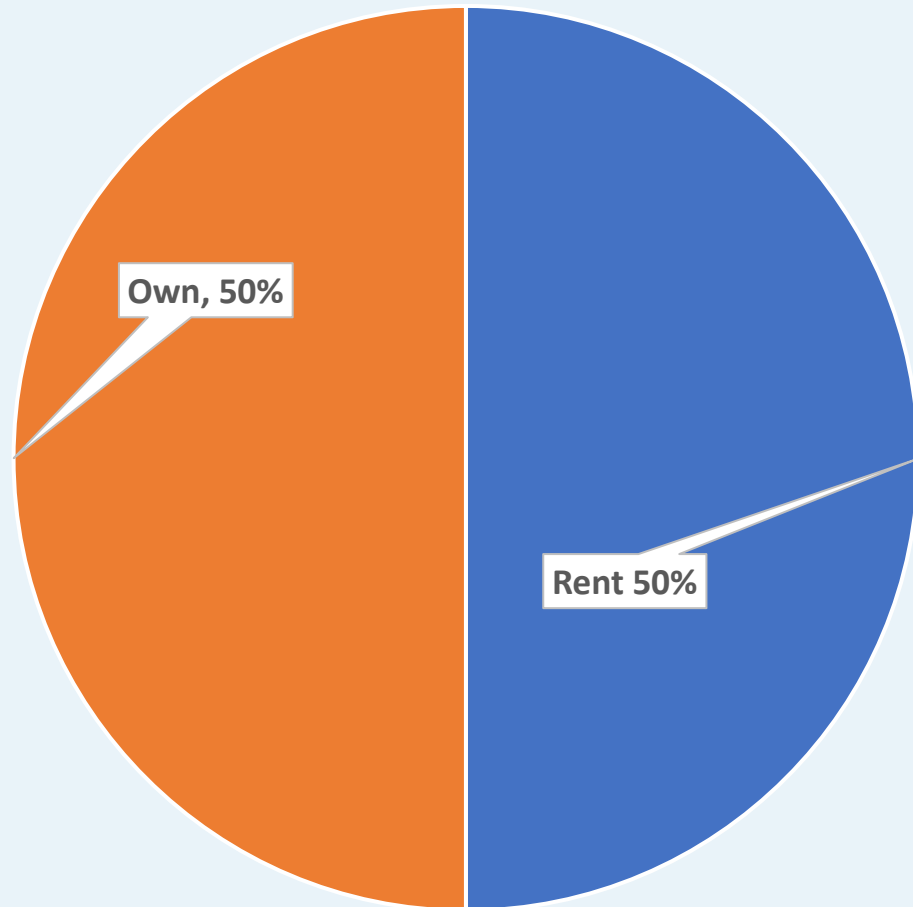
Uptown Foxborough

Business Characteristics

Business Tenure

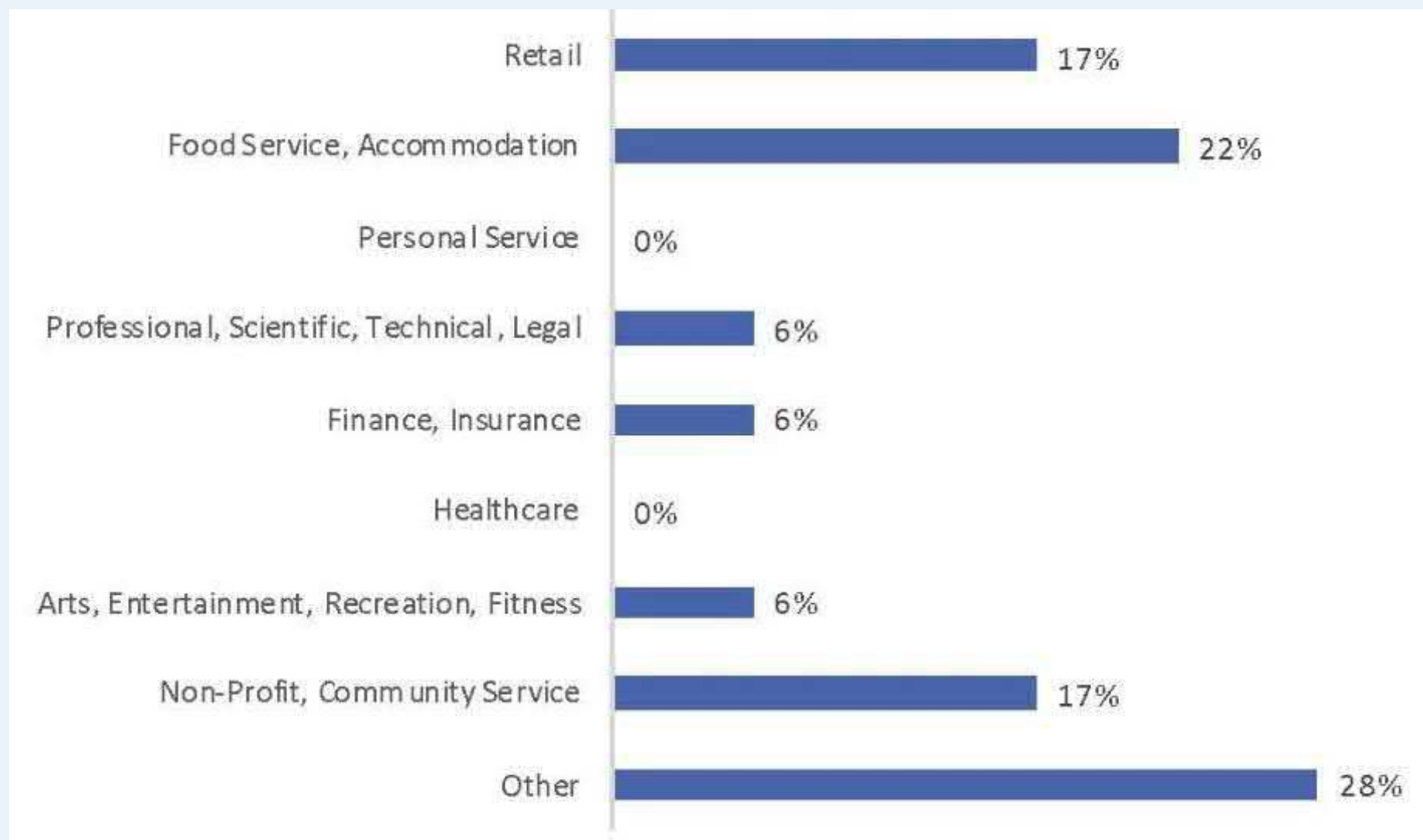
- 50% of businesses rent their space

Owner VS Renter



Uptown Foxborough

Business Characteristics Business by Type

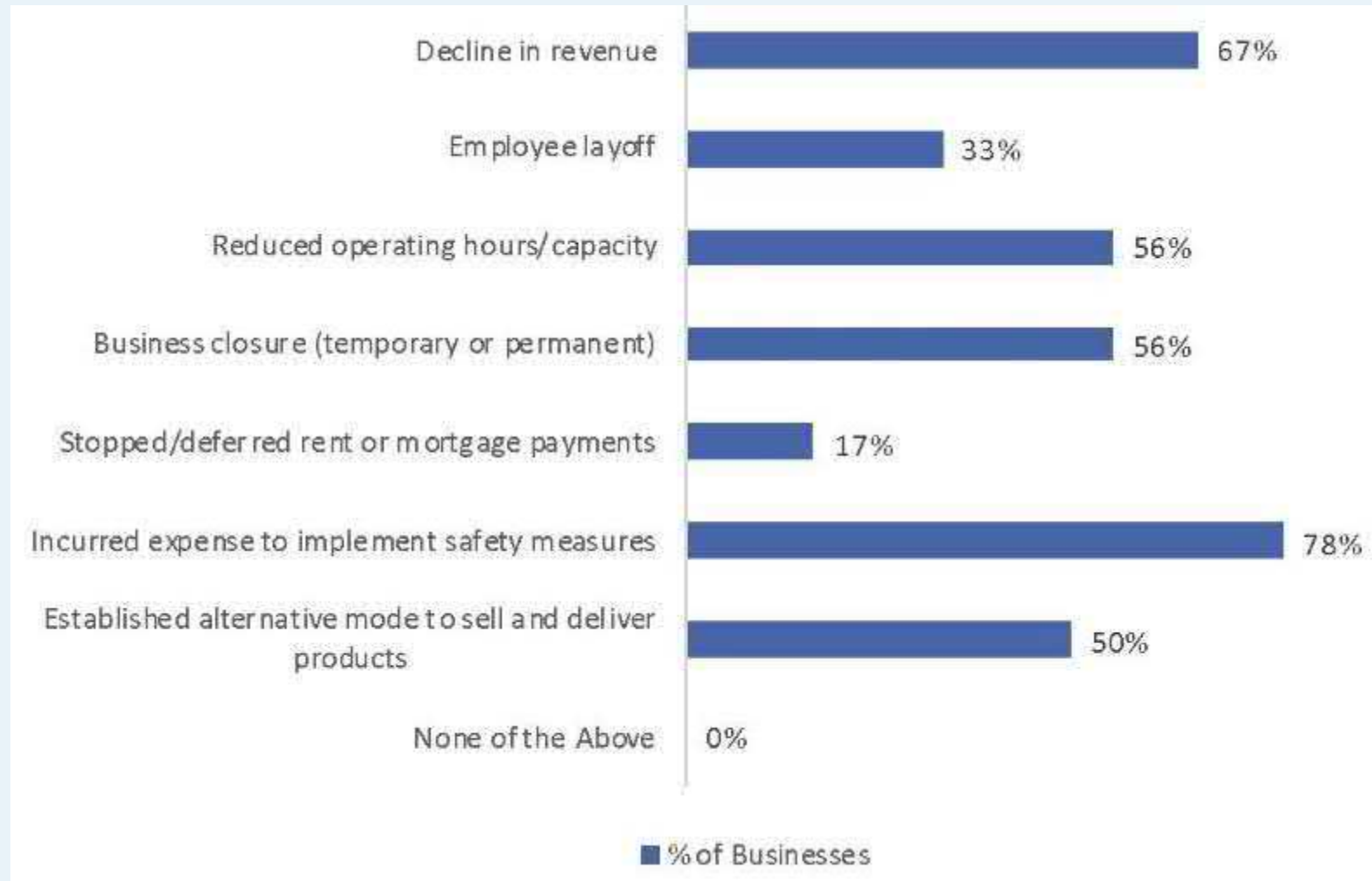


Uptown Foxborough

Reported Impacts

- 100% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID

Businesses reported being impacted by:

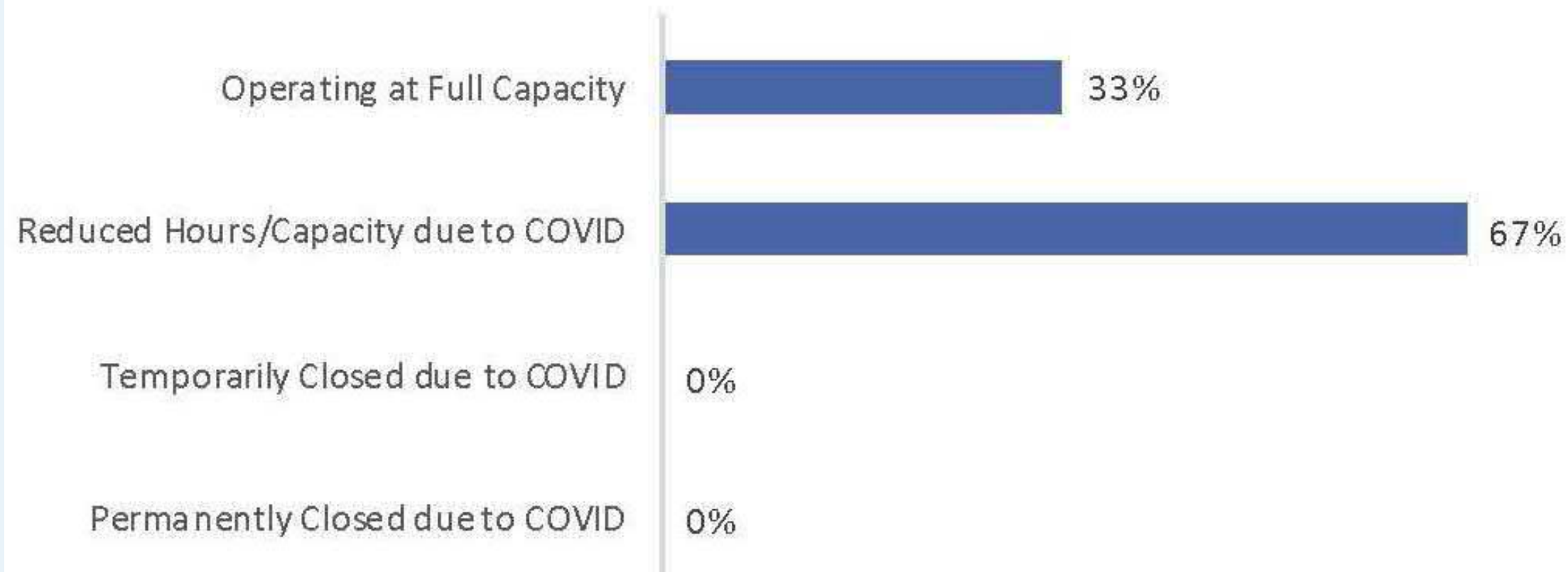


Uptown Foxborough

Operating Status

- At the time of the survey, 67% of businesses reported they were operating at reduced hours / capacity or closed.

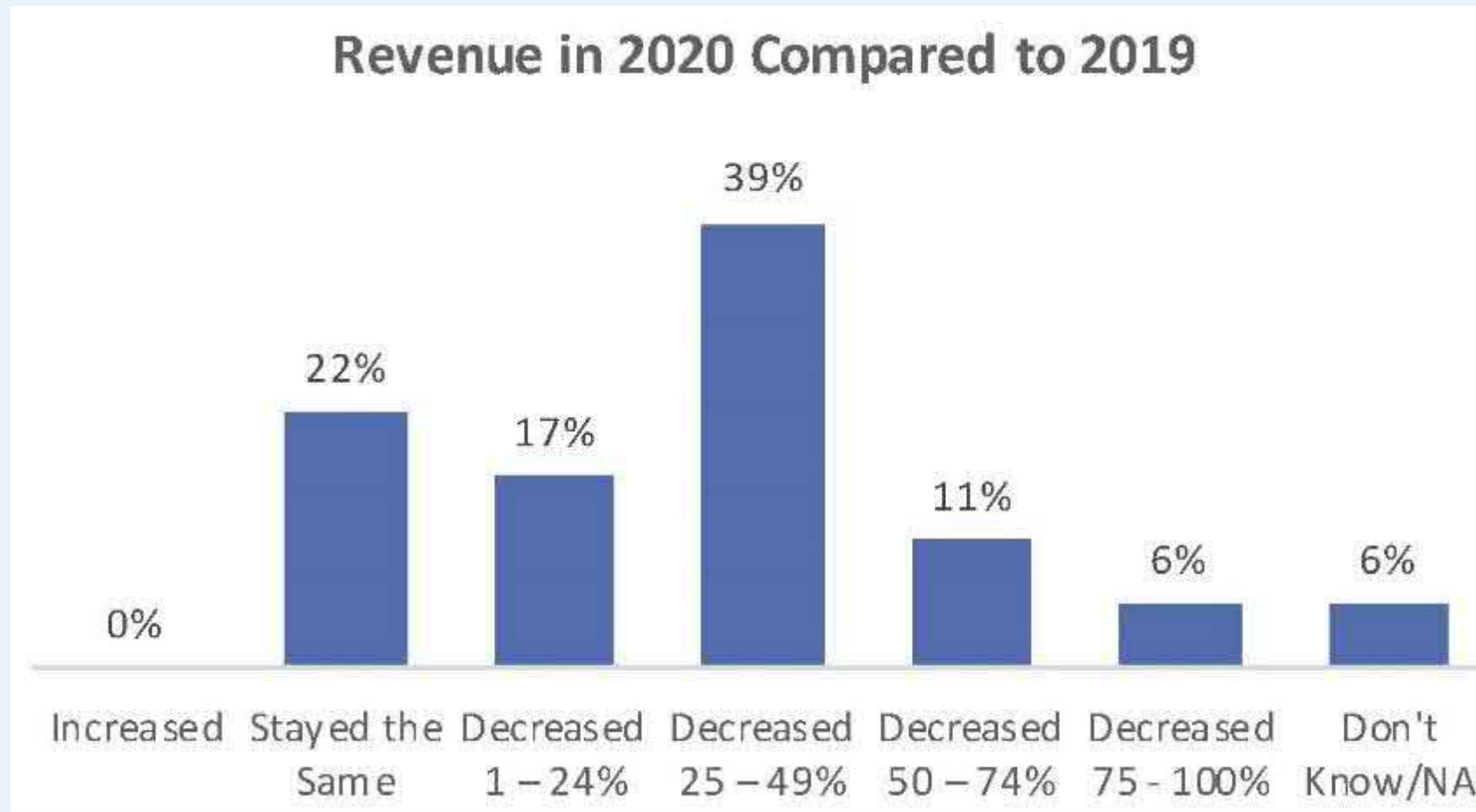
Current Operating Status of Businesses (March/April 2021)



Uptown Foxborough

Decline in Business Revenue

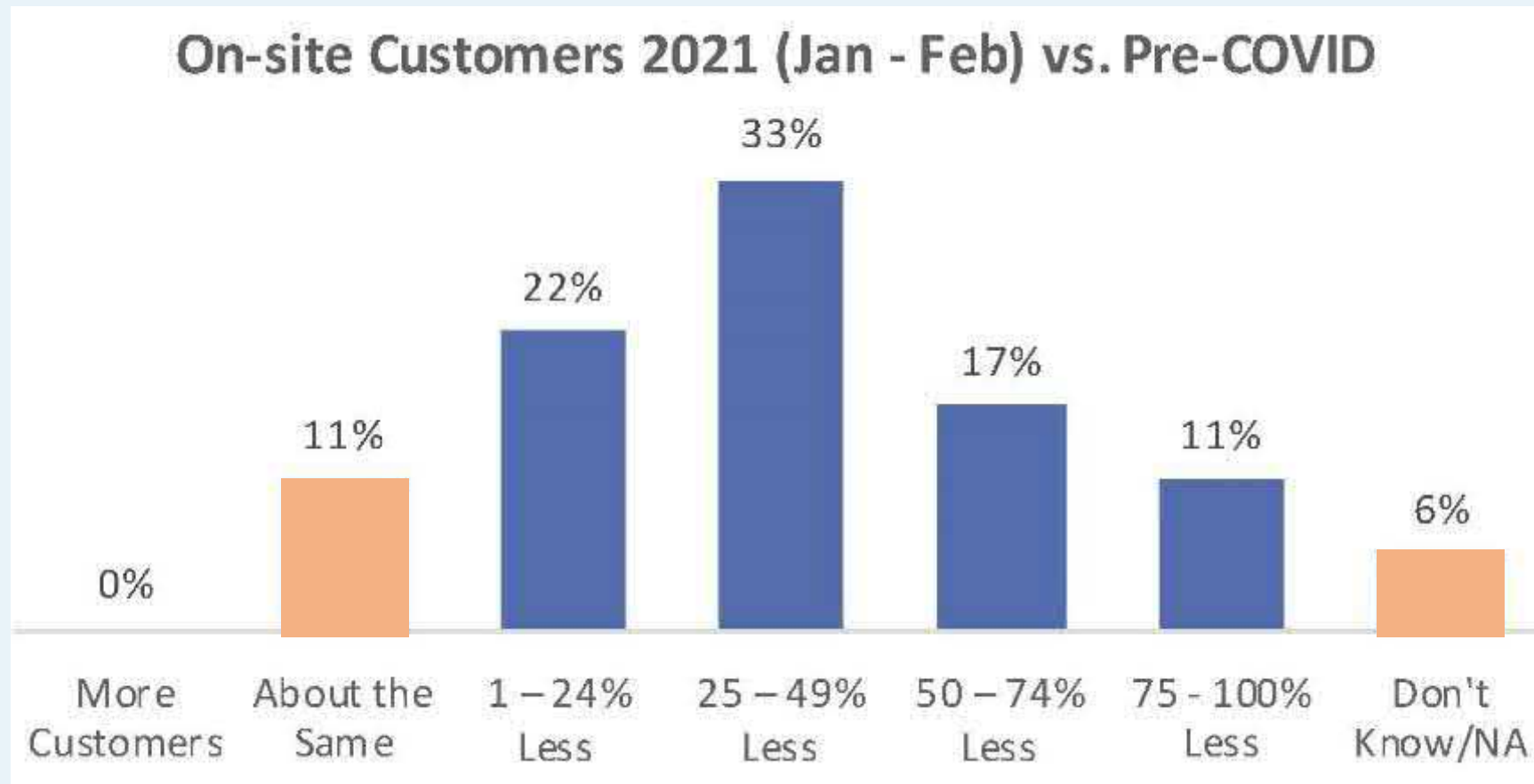
- 73% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019.
- For 56% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more.



Uptown Foxborough

Less Foot Traffic in Commercial Area

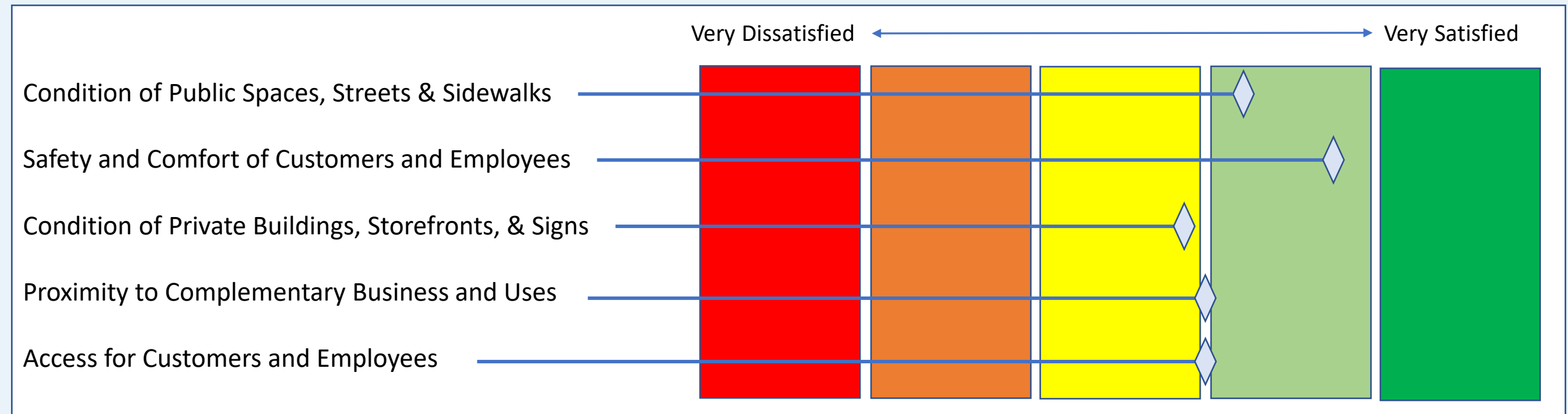
- 83% of businesses had less on-site customers in January / February of 2021 than before COVID
- 61% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more



Uptown Foxborough

Business Satisfaction with Commercial District

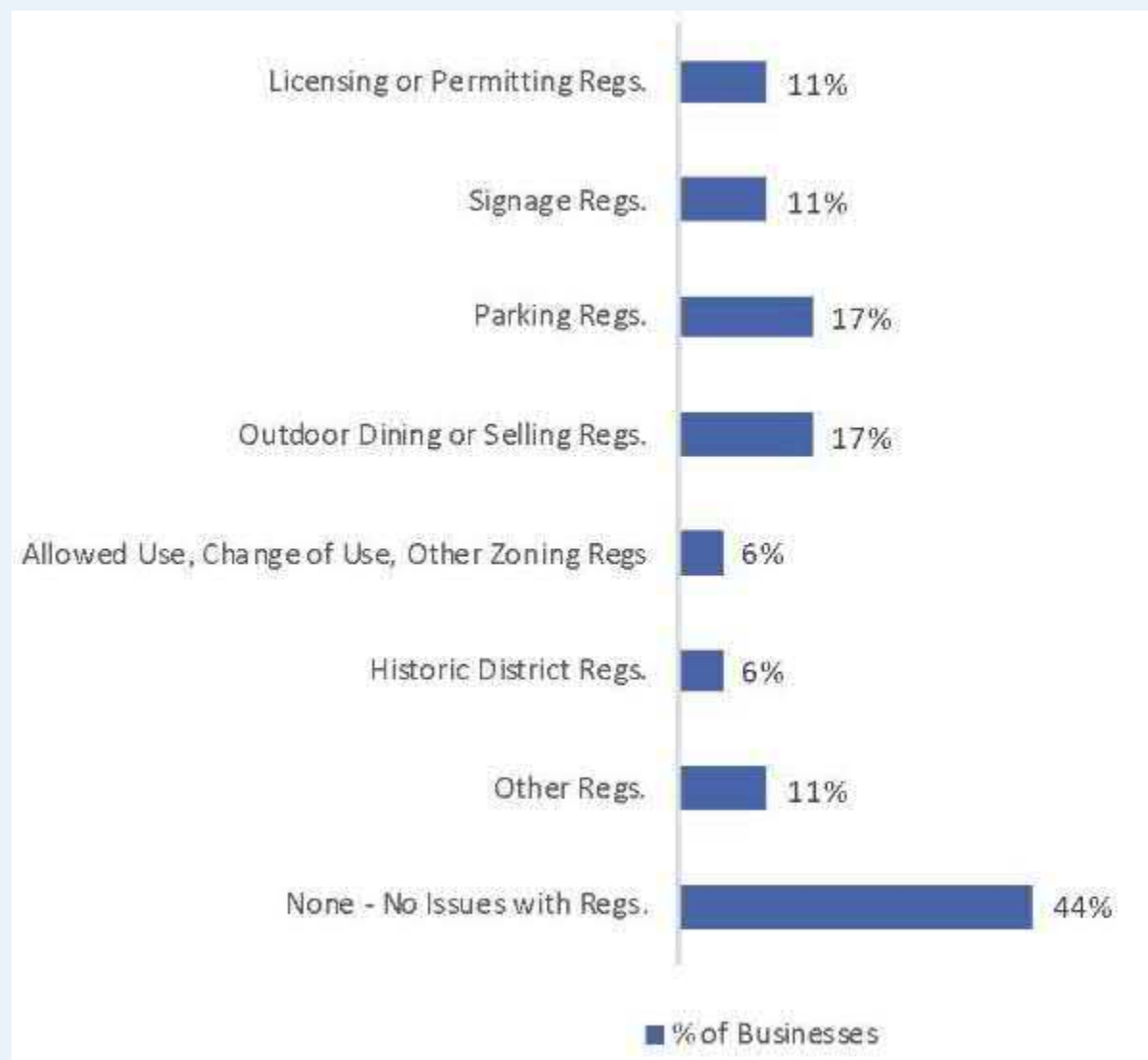
The charts below illustrate the average satisfaction rating among respondents regarding various elements.



Uptown Foxborough

Business Satisfaction with Commercial District Regulatory Environment

- 56% of businesses indicated that the regulatory environment poses an obstacle to business operation (44% No-Issues)

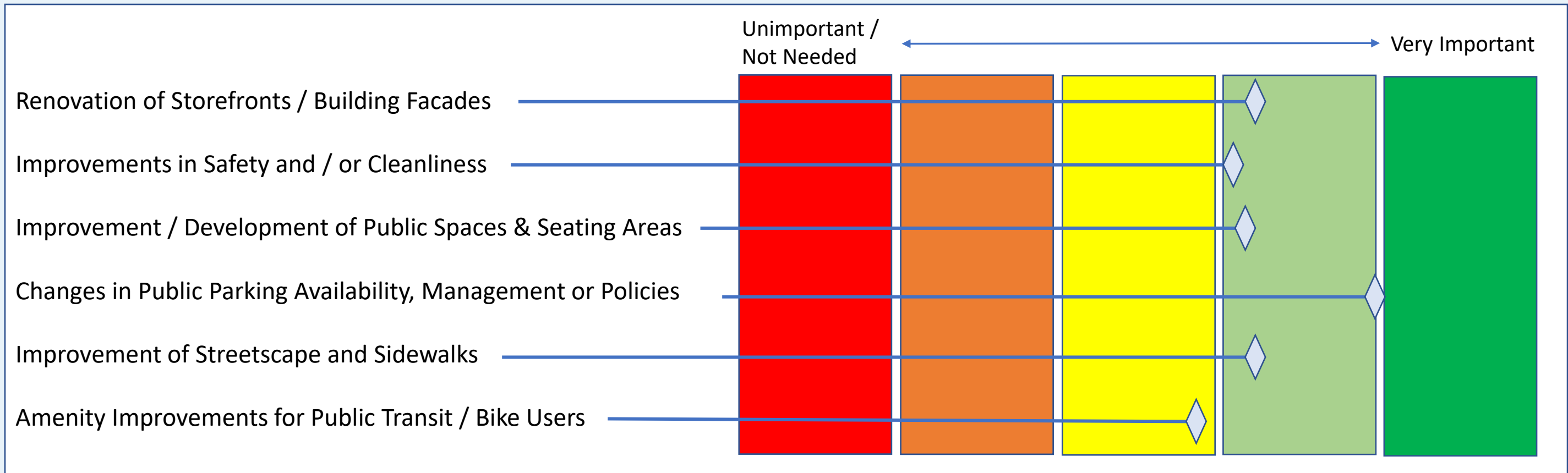


Uptown Foxborough

Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

- Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access

The charts below illustrate the average satisfaction rating among respondents regarding various strategies.

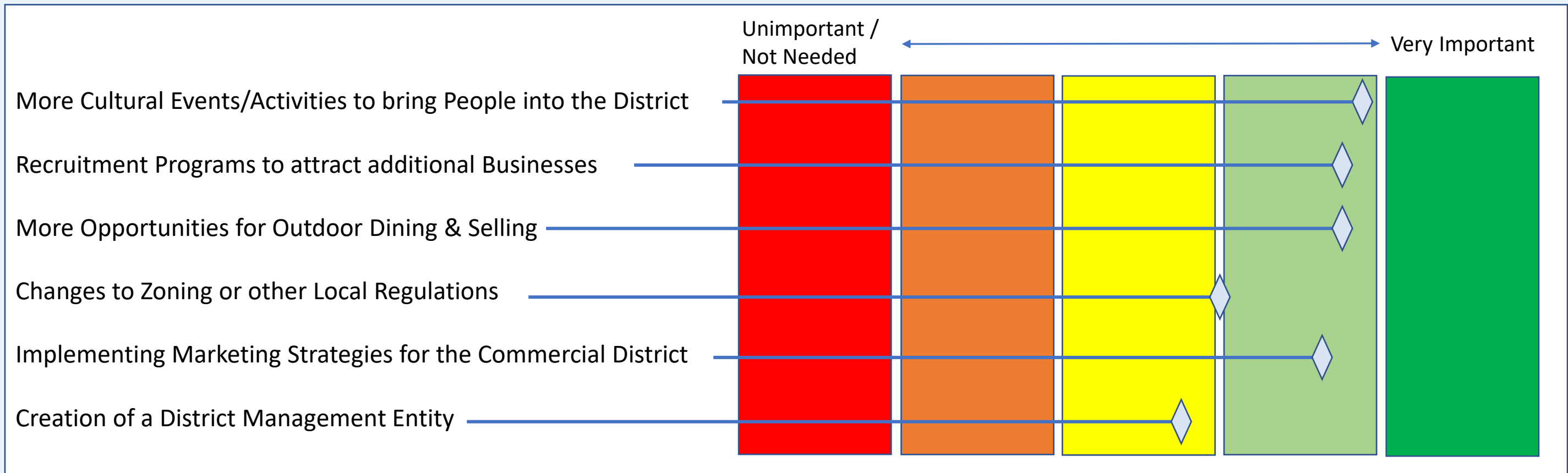


Uptown Foxborough

Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

- **Attraction / Retention of Customers and Businesses**

The charts below illustrate the average satisfaction rating among respondents regarding various strategies.



Uptown Foxborough

Business Input Related to Possible Strategies Business Support

- 78% of businesses expressed interest in receiving assistance.





BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT

Improvement Strategies to Attract and Retain Customers

- Expand cultural events and activities
- Consider recruitment program to attract businesses /compatibility
- Create more opportunities for outdoor dining and selling
- Review potential changes to zoning
- Expand Uptown Marketing strategies





PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT



Phase 1

Diagnostic Category

Physical Environment:

- How is the physical environment meeting the needs of businesses?
- What are the challenges and opportunities:
 - Public Realm
 - Private Realm
 - Access + Visibility

Physical Environment: Private Realm



SCORING RUBRIC

ELEMENT	A	B	C	FAIL / NA
Windows <i>Windows are maintained and appear 70% transparent</i>	< 75%	+/- 50%	> 25%	<i>Storefronts are boarded up or windows have no transparency</i>
Outdoor Display / Dining <i>Attractive window displays / spillover restaurant & retail activity on sidewalks</i>	< 75%	+/- 50%	> 25%	<i>There is no spillover retail / restaurant activity in the district</i>
Signage <i>Storefront signage reflects the unique brand identity of tenants and can be easily seen from a distance</i>	< 75%	+/- 50%	> 25%	<i>Storefronts in the study area do not have signage</i>
Awning <i>Awnings are retractable, well-designed, maintained, and clean</i>	< 75%	+/- 50%	> 25%	<i>Storefronts in the study area are not equipped with awnings</i>
Façade <i>Facades should be attractive, well-maintained, and not require any major structural upgrades</i>	< 75%	<i>At least a few require major upgrades</i>	> 25%	<i>Nearly all properties in the study area require significant façade improvements</i>
Lighting <i>Interior storefront lighting after business hours improves the sidewalk lighting conditions</i>	< 75%	+/- 50%	> 25%	<i>Nearly all storefronts in the study area are shuttered and dark</i>

Data Collection Analysis

Private Realm



Feature Grading	
Lighting	B
Façade	B
Awning	NA/FAIL
Signage	B
Outdoor Display/Dining	NA/FAIL
Window	B

A	B	C	NA/FAIL
Most Positive	Least Positive	



Physical Environment: Public Realm

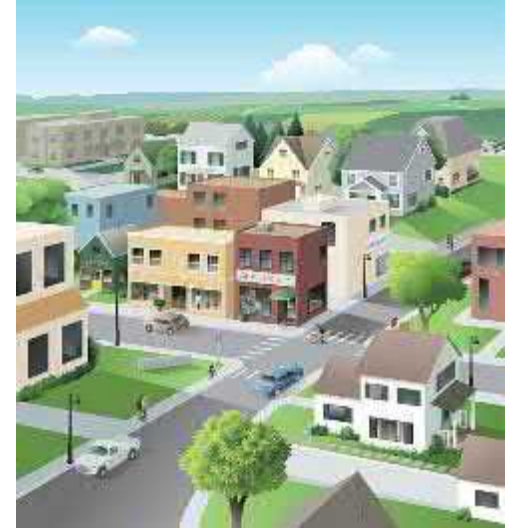


SCORING RUBRIC

ELEMENT	A	B	C	FAIL / NA
Sidewalks <i>Sidewalks are clean, well-maintained and accessible to multiple users across different ages and abilities</i>	< 75%	+/- 50%	> 25%	<i>There are no sidewalks</i>
Street Trees and Benches <i>Street trees and benches are readily available and offer shade and offer opportunities to rest and socialize</i>	<i>Street trees and benches are readily available throughout out the project area</i>	<i>Street trees and benches have not been cleaned and require other improvements</i>	<i>Limited availability of street trees and benches results in an uncomfortable pedestrian experience</i>	<i>There are no street trees and benches</i>
Lighting <i>Street lighting improves pedestrian and motorist safety as well as highlights the history and identity of an area</i>	< 75%	+/- 50%	<i>Street lighting on the primary street in the study area does not support pedestrian visibility and safety</i>	<i>There is no street lighting</i>
Wayfinding / Signage <i>Cohesive wayfinding systems offer visual cues for bicyclists and pedestrians as well as direct motorists where to park and walk</i>	< 75%	<i>Wayfinding is primarily intended for motorists, little to no signage for pedestrians and bicyclists</i>	<i>Limited or no signage</i>	<i>There is no wayfinding / signage</i>
Roadbed and Crosswalks <i>Roads are well-maintained to ensure motorist and pedestrian safety and are balanced to the needs of different users</i>	< 75%	<i>At least a few require major upgrades</i>	> 25%	<i>The study area is not connected with major roads</i>

Data Collection Analysis

Public Realm



Feature Grading	
Lighting	NA/FAIL
Wayfinding - Signage	B
Sidewalk	A
Street Trees - Benches	NA/FAIL
Roadbed - Crosswalks	B

A	B	C	NA/FAIL
Most Positive	Least Positive	





PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT



Framework for Recommendations

- Public Realm
- Private Realm
- Access + Visibility
- Visitor Attraction & Retention



PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT



Framework for Recommendations Built Upon

- Growing Assets out of ideas
- Sense of Place
- Changing Habits
- Social Connectivity
- Supporting area businesses

BUILD BACK BETTER

DHCD Breaking News

“Greater Boston voters support changes on streets in their community, even if it means less space for cars.”

Boston-area voters support shifting space on streets from cars to bikes, pedestrians
% who strongly or somewhat support each policy

	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Total support
More public seating like benches	43%	40%	83%
More space for outdoor dining	43%	36%	79%
Bike lanes that are separated from cars	41%	34%	75%
Adding more parking for bikes	33%	39%	72%
Wider sidewalks	35%	36%	71%
More spaces for public art	35%	34%	69%
Adding stations for bikeshare bikes	28%	41%	69%
Giving buses their own lanes to speed up bus trips	37%	30%	67%
Closing some streets to car traffic and letting walkers and bikers use the entire street	31%	28%	59%

MassINC
POLLING GROUP

Q: During the pandemic, many cities and towns in Massachusetts made changes to their streets to create more space for walking, biking, and outdoor dining. In some cases, making these changes meant removing some space for driving or parking. How much would you support or oppose making each of these changes in your community as the state reopens from COVID-19, even if it means less space for cars?

Released June 10th, 2021

**Foxborough,
MASSACHUSETTS**

- Uptown Foxborough

TOWN COMMON

Hub with Spokes



Foxborough, MASSACHUSETTS

- Uptown Foxborough

RECOMENDATIONS FRAMEWORK

UPTOWN WALKABILITY & CONNECTIVITY

VEHICLES & PEDESTRAIN BALANCE



REDUCING CONFLICT POINTS



RECOMENDATIONS FRAMEWORK

WALKABILITY

NECKDOWNS



PILOT PROJECT



RECOMENDATIONS FRAMEWORK

SAFETY

SHORTER CROSSINGS/AREAS OF REFUGE



IMPROVED CROSSINGS



RECOMENDATIONS FRAMEWORK

CLARITY AND VISIBILITY

PARKING



OUTDOOR COMMERCE



RECOMENDATIONS FRAMEWORK

Inspirational

PEOPLE SPACES ON THE EDGES



VIBRANT STREETSCAPES



RECOMENDATIONS FRAMEWORK

Inspirational

HEALTH AND WELLNESS



COMMUNITY



RECOMENDATIONS FRAMEWORK

Inspirational

ART WALLS AND NEW SPACES



MURALS TO ACTIVATE LINKAGES



RECOMENDATIONS FRAMEWORK

Inspirational

ATTRACTIONS /ART



CULTURE/HISTORY





Foxborough, MASSACHUSETTS

- South-East Common

Foxborough, MASSACHUSETTS

- School Street



Foxborough, MASSACHUSETTS

- School St.



Foxborough, MASSACHUSETTS

- Mechanic Street



RECOMENDATIONS FRAMEWORK

Inspirational

NODES AND 'GREEN' POCKETS



PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES/WALKABILITY



Center of Study Area

Foxborough, MASSACHUSETTS

- Uptown Foxborough



Foxborough, MASSACHUSETTS










- Uptown Foxborough

-  Bethany Congregationalist Church
-  Foxborough Universalist Church
-  O'Reilly Auto Parts
-  Todson Inc.(Bike)
-  Congdon Auto Center
-  Bay Colony Group
-  Rockland Trust Bank
-  Foxboro Federal Savings
-  Bank of America
-  Memorial Hall
-  Housing



Foxborough, MASSACHUSETTS

- Uptown Foxborough

-  Bethany Congregationalist Church
-  Foxborough Universalist Church
-  O'Reilly Auto Parts
-  Todson Inc.(Bike)
-  Bay Colony Group
-  Rockland Trust Bank
-  Foxboro Federal Savings
-  Bank of America
-  Memorial Hall



Foxborough, MASSACHUSETTS

- Uptown Foxborough



- Marylin Rodman Theater
- Boyden Library
- Primos
- Union Straw
- Rally Point
- Foxboro Wine and Spirits
- South St. Pizzeria
- Subway
- Commons Cafe
- Foxboro House of Pizza
- Gunther Tooties
- Sal and Mals
- Post Office
- Cindis Jewelry
- Fab Finds Foxborough
- Shovel Town Brewery



Foxborough, MASSACHUSETTS

- Uptown Foxborough

Enhancing connectivity

Destinations

Attractions

Parking + Walkability



Foxborough, MASSACHUSETTS

- Uptown Foxborough

CENTRAL PARKING



CENTRAL PARKING

Conceptual Thoughts

**Foxborough,
MASSACHUSETTS**





BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT

Improvement Strategies to Attract and Retain Customers

- Enhanced Walkability
- Greater Visibility
- Evident Attractions
- People spaces
- Clarity
 - Vehicular Circulation
 - Public Parking
 - Reducing vehicle/ped. conflict points



Next Steps:

- Gather & summarize additional info.
- Expand discussions with businesses
- Assess need for Subject Matter Experts
- Develop recommendations
- Discuss with town staff
- Finalize plan and recommendations
- Final presentation: July - August
- Submit plan to DHCD: August





COMMENTS

Comments/Questions

Paige E Duncan, AICP
Planning Director
W: 508.543.1250
pduncan@foxboroughma.gov

Thank You !





Reference slides

Study Area

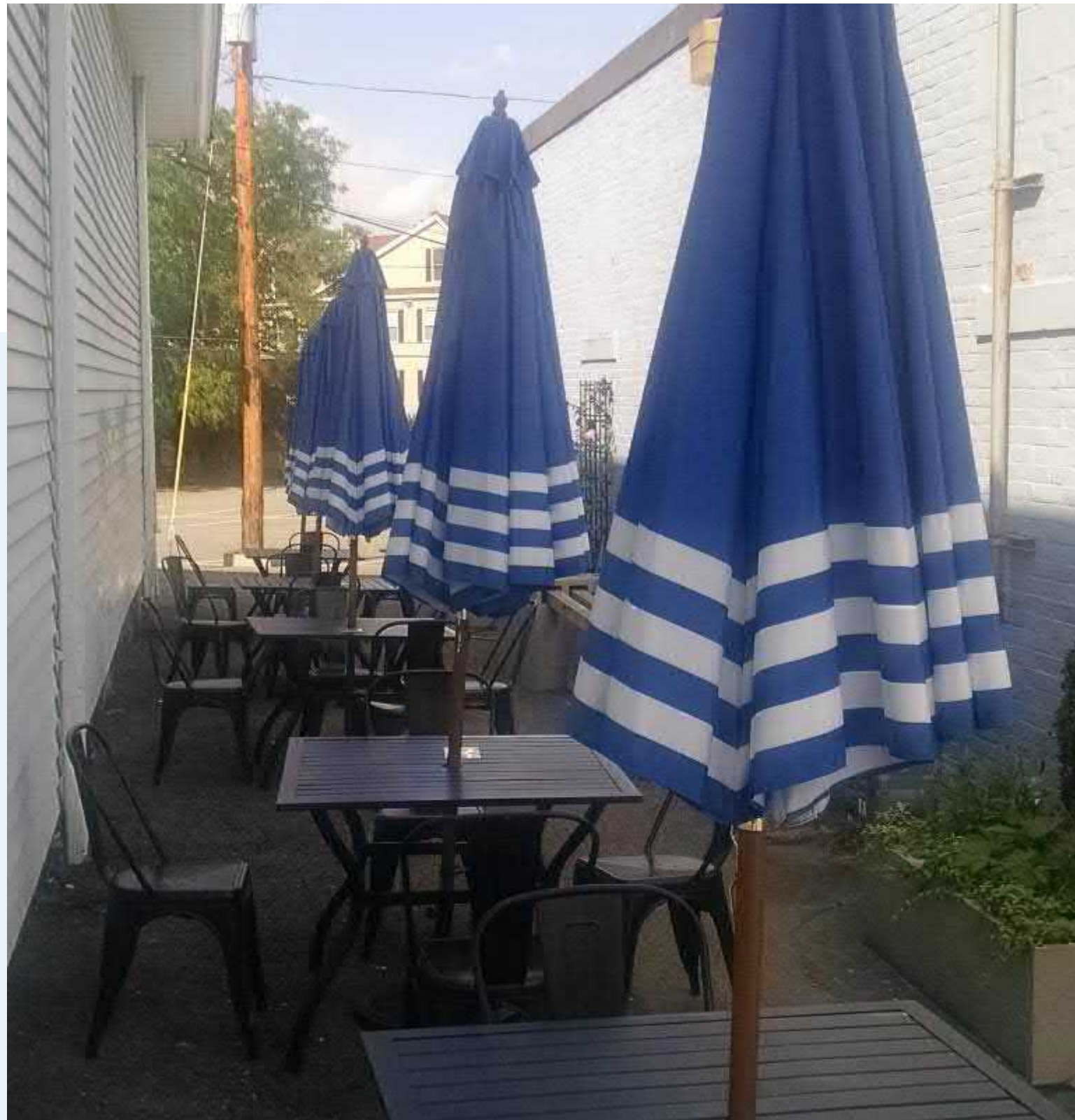
Foxborough, MASSACHUSETTS

- Uptown Foxborough Growth Node



Foxborough, MASSACHUSETTS

- Uptown Foxborough





Phase I Diagnostic Category

Consumer Base:

- Who are the customers?
- What are their preferences and needs?

Data Collection Analysis

District Demographics



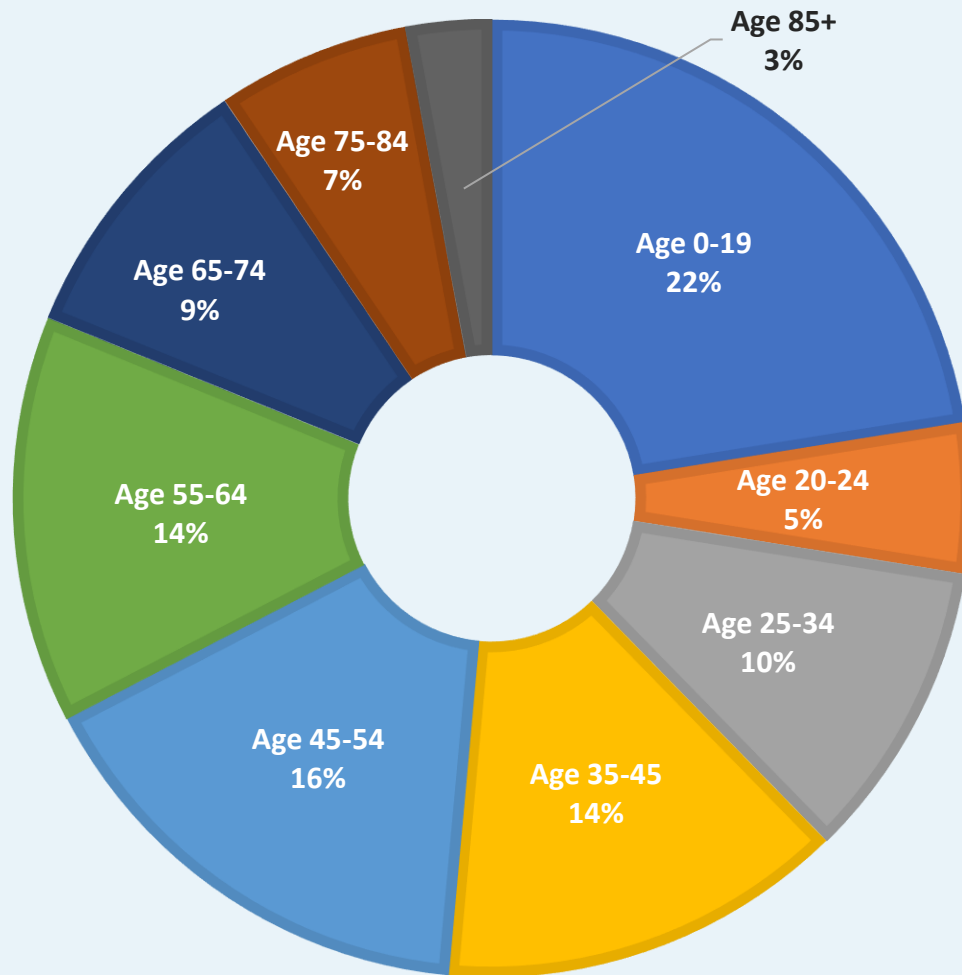
	Study Area	Whole Town
Total Resident Population	137	18,276
Median Household Income	\$82,991	\$105,983
Median Age	43.9	43.6
Median Household Size	1.6	2.6

Data Collection Analysis

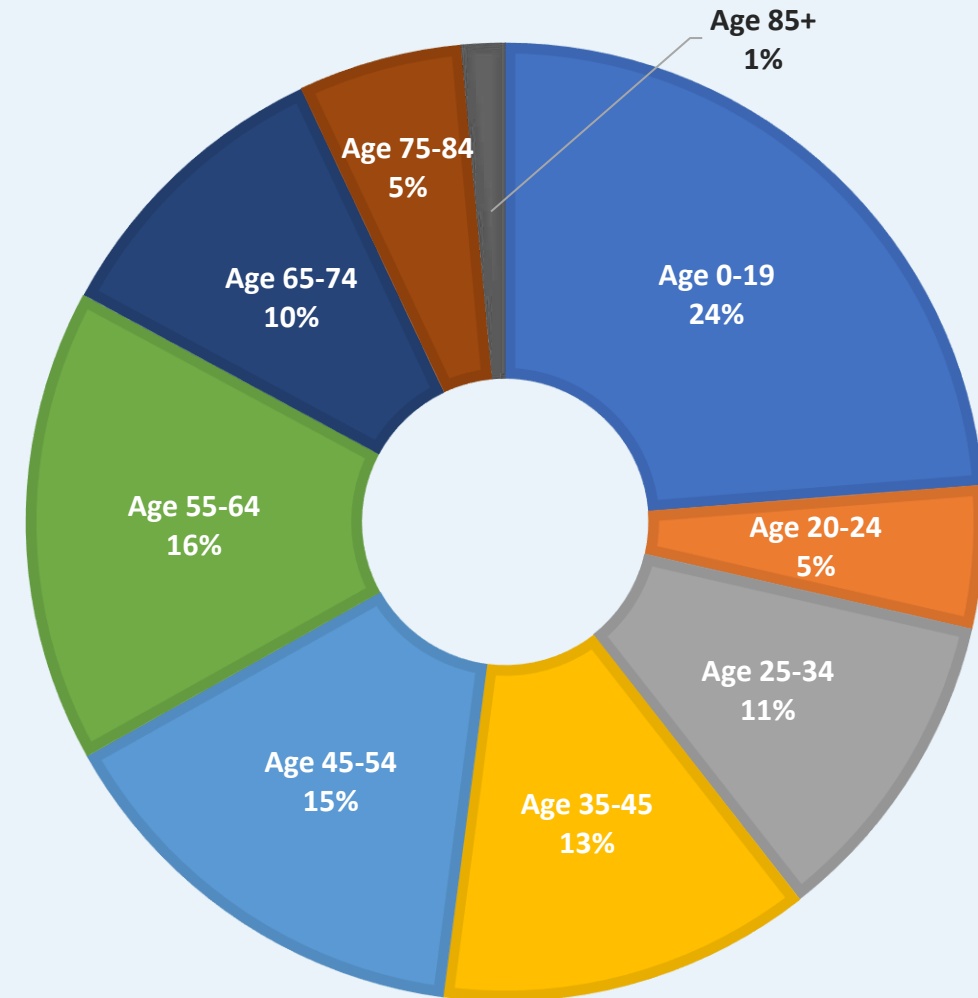


Population By Age Distribution

STUDY AREA



WHOLE TOWN

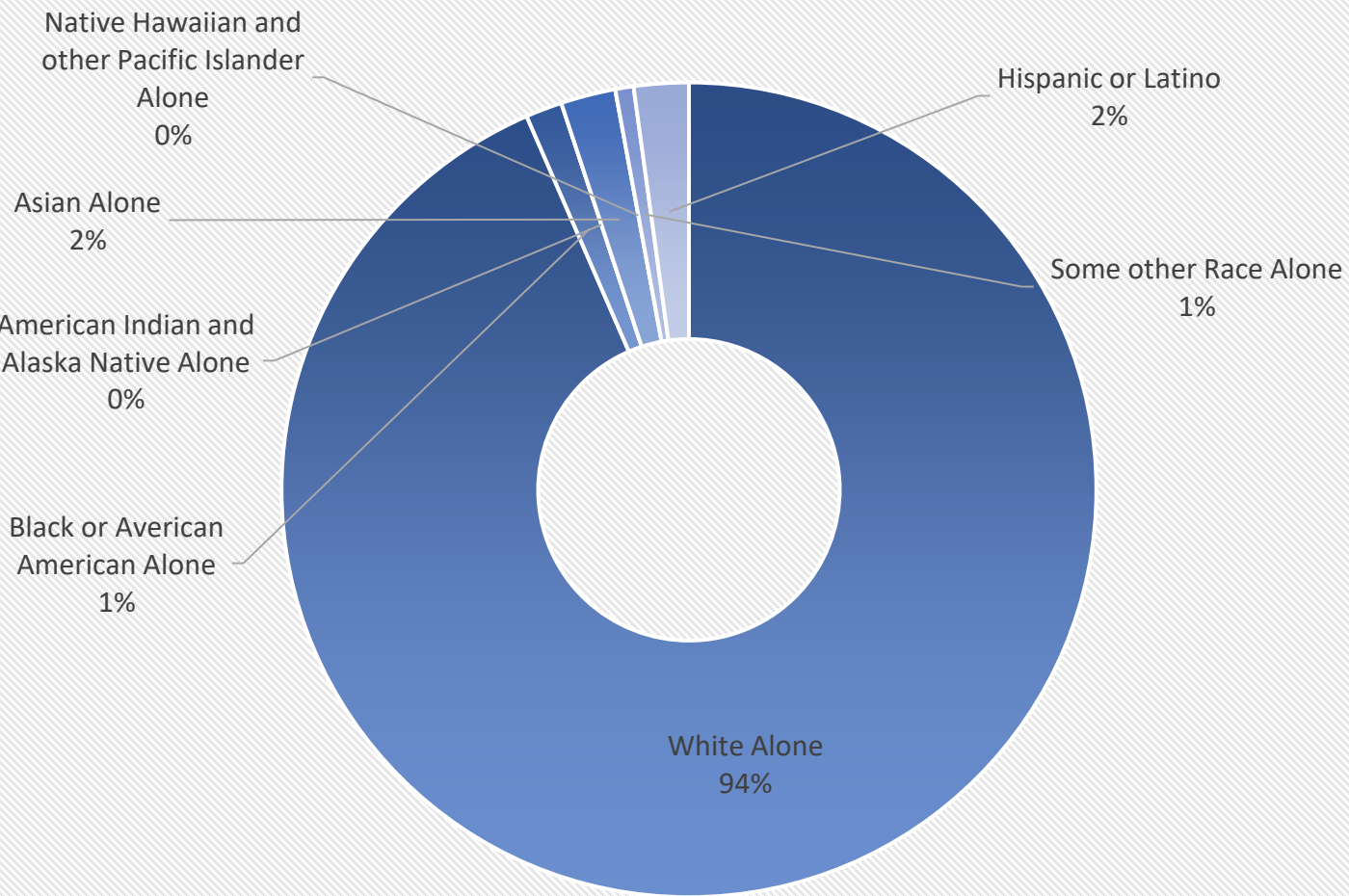


Data Collection Analysis

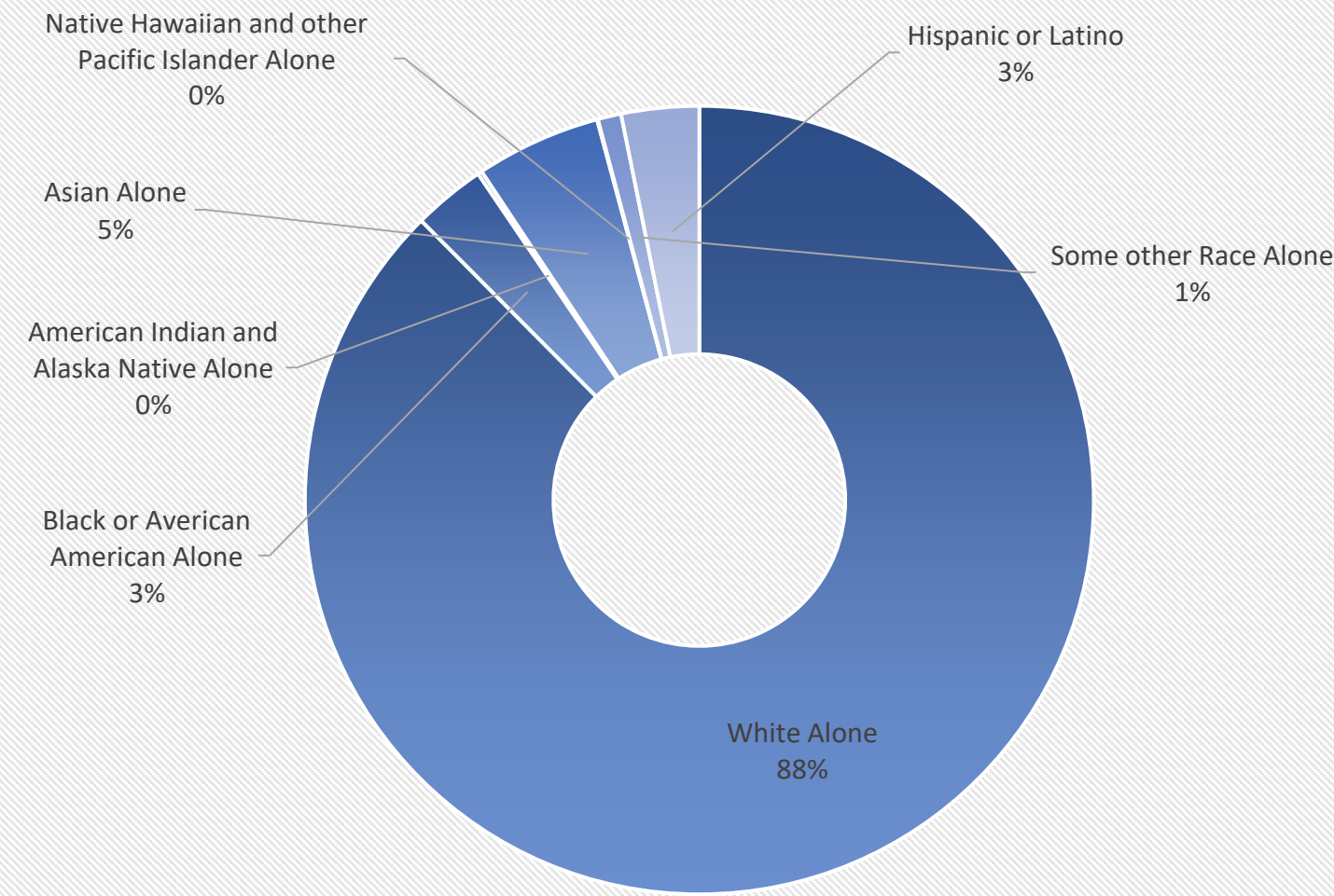


Population By Race/Ethnicity

Study Area



Whole Town

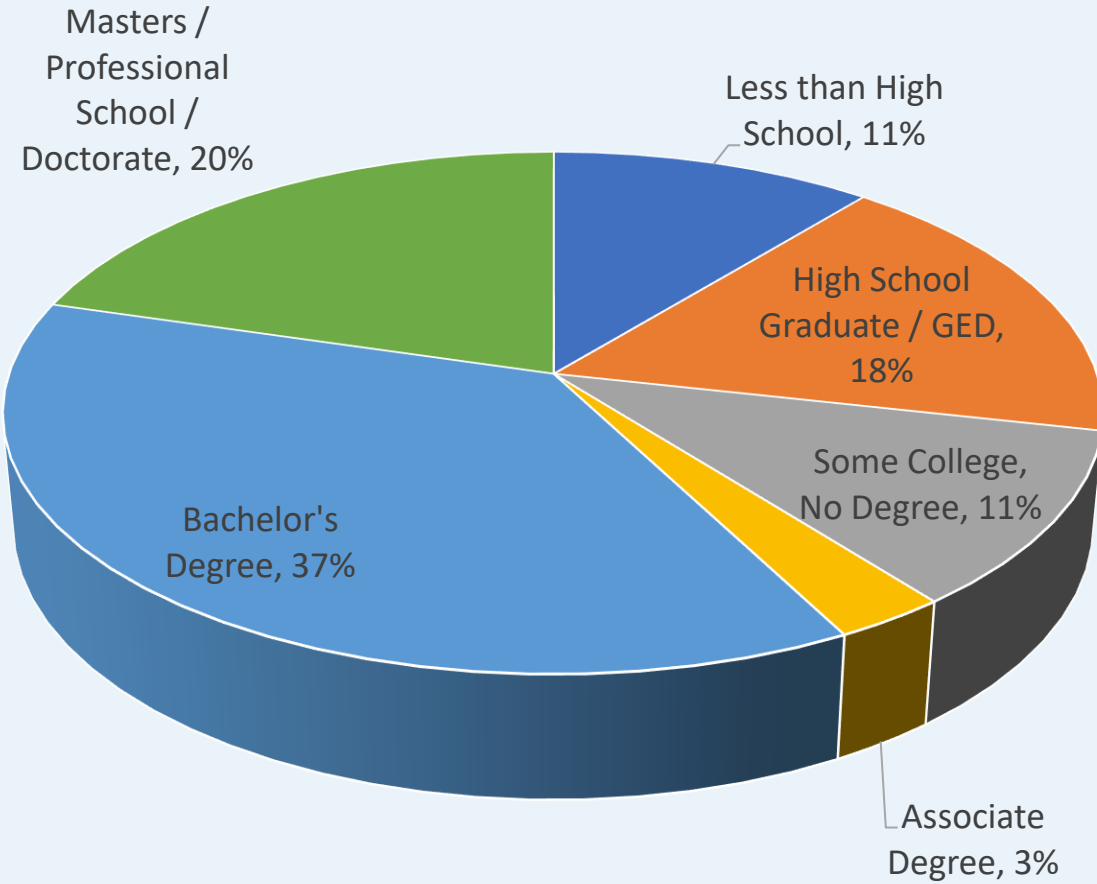


Data Collection Analysis

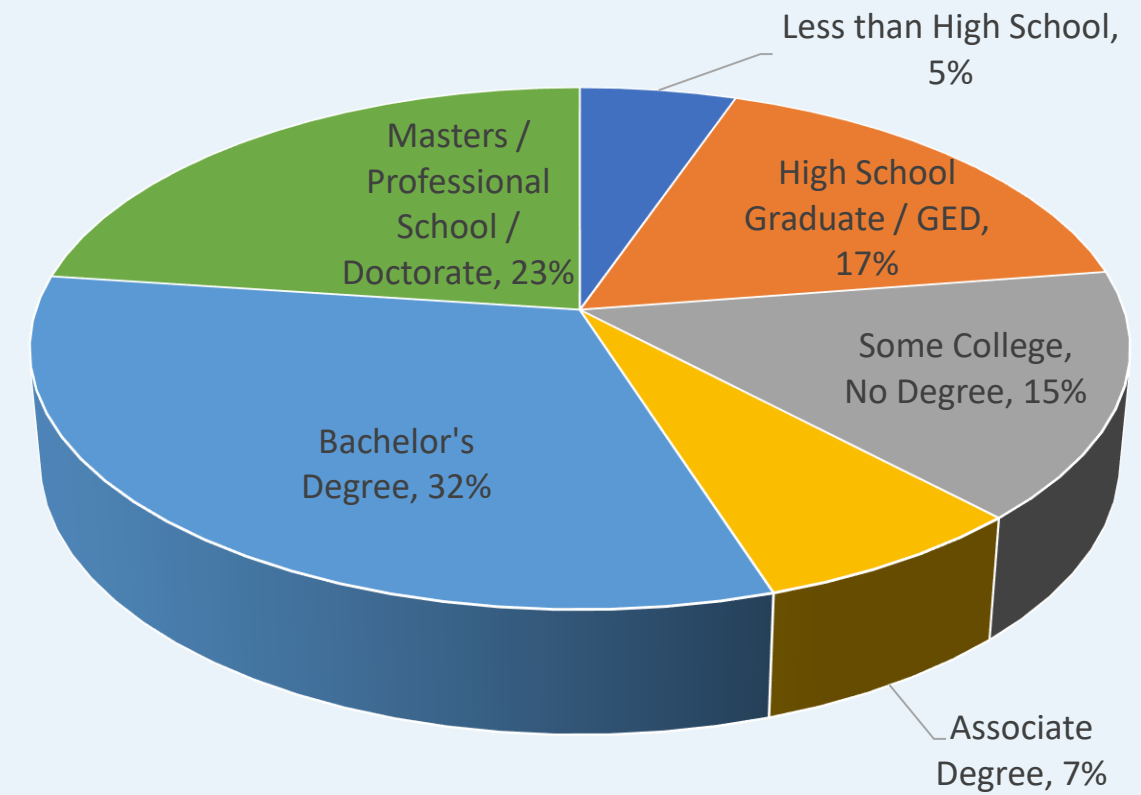


Population by Education Attainment

Study Area



Whole Town



Appendices

E. Supporting Research and Studies

Activating Austin's Downtown Alleys as Public Spaces



A Report by the City of Austin Downtown Commission
Alley Activation Workgroup
November 4, 2013

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Adopted by the City of Austin Downtown Commission on November 20, 2013, on an 11-0 vote.

I. Introduction

Today, Austin’s downtown area suffers from a critical lack of developed vibrant public spaces. As a city known for its festivals, live music, and dynamic civic life, Austin in fact has few permanent physical resources to support this identity within downtown.

Traditionally seen as utilitarian corridors, Austin’s downtown alleys have long been overlooked for their potential to help fill Austin’s need for activated public spaces downtown. With alleys conceived of as spaces suited only for cars, trash, and deliveries, the city has not planned a role for alleys to serve as vibrant urban spaces, as alleys do in other cities across the United States and abroad. The general perception of alleys as “eyesores” that are unsafe and unclean has reinforced the lack of popular and political support needed to maximize their potential as open space resources.

To add to this issue is the ever-mounting pressure in Austin to create super-block developments. In the past 15 years, the City Council has vacated and sold off its easement rights for at least 10 downtown alleys to developers. In one of the most recent examples, in 2010, the Council approved vacating the alley in block 18 just east of Congress for the development of the new Marriott hotel. In 2013, a developer submitted a request for the vacation of an alley in the Rainey Street district, for one of the longest remaining alley corridors in downtown Austin.

With more than 100 blocks of alleys still remaining in downtown—more than half a million square feet of public space—Austin’s alleys offer a tremendous opportunity to help fill Austin’s need for more vibrant public spaces downtown. Other cities around the world have been embracing alleys for the special role they play in providing engaging and intimate public spaces, enhancing the pedestrian experience, supporting small businesses and the arts, providing areas that serve as a respite to busy streets, and attracting people into underutilized areas of downtown. Residents and tourists alike flock to alleys in places like San Francisco, Melbourne, and Seville for the unique opportunities these charming spaces offer as places to visit, relax, shop, play, and explore.

In Fall 2012, the City of Austin Downtown Commission created a workgroup to examine opportunities for activating Austin’s downtown alleys in order to contribute to a more vibrant network of people-oriented public spaces in Downtown Austin. The workgroup, which grew over the course of the project, consisted of representatives from the Downtown Commission, the City of Austin, a range of downtown and citywide institutions, individual artists and community activists.ⁱ This Report summarizes the workgroup’s findings and policy recommendations. It should be noted that the findings presented within the report do not necessarily represent the position held by the specific organizations that took part in the workgroup.

II. Brief History of Austin's Downtown Alleys

Austin's current downtown alley network goes back to the Waller Plan of 1839, which laid out Austin's downtown street grid and set out a comprehensive network of alleys throughout downtown, with one alley per block (typically 20 feet wide), with only a few exceptions, such as the four blocks with public squares.ⁱⁱ As the current Downtown Austin Plan notes, this grid and open space pattern has formed the "DNA" of the city:

Waller's street pattern laid out in the 1839 City Plan contributes significantly to the form and character of Downtown Austin. The orthogonal grid of streets allow for walkable blocks (measuring 276 feet in each direction), with alleys that contribute to the fine-grained urban fabric.ⁱⁱⁱ

Starting in the 1960s, private development plans focused on the creation of super blocks and recommended the vacation of alleys to accommodate the large-scale redevelopment. In the following decades, the Austin City Council authorized the vacation of many alleys, destroying the connectivity between alleys set out in the Waller Plan and creating "dead ends" in the city's alley network.^{iv} Over one-third of the alleys from the Waller Plan grid in the heart of the Central Business District (at least 23 alleys), have been vacated and redeveloped for other uses.^v

In the midst of these redevelopment pressures, in 1971 an architect named David Graeber proposed repurposing the alley behind 6th Street from the Driskill Hotel to Waller Creek. He submitted a petition to City Council to rename the alley as "Serendipity Alley" and transform it into a year-round social center and major economic stimulant lined with "cafes, boutiques, business offices and unusual shops."^{vi} The plan was never adopted, although that alley remains intact.

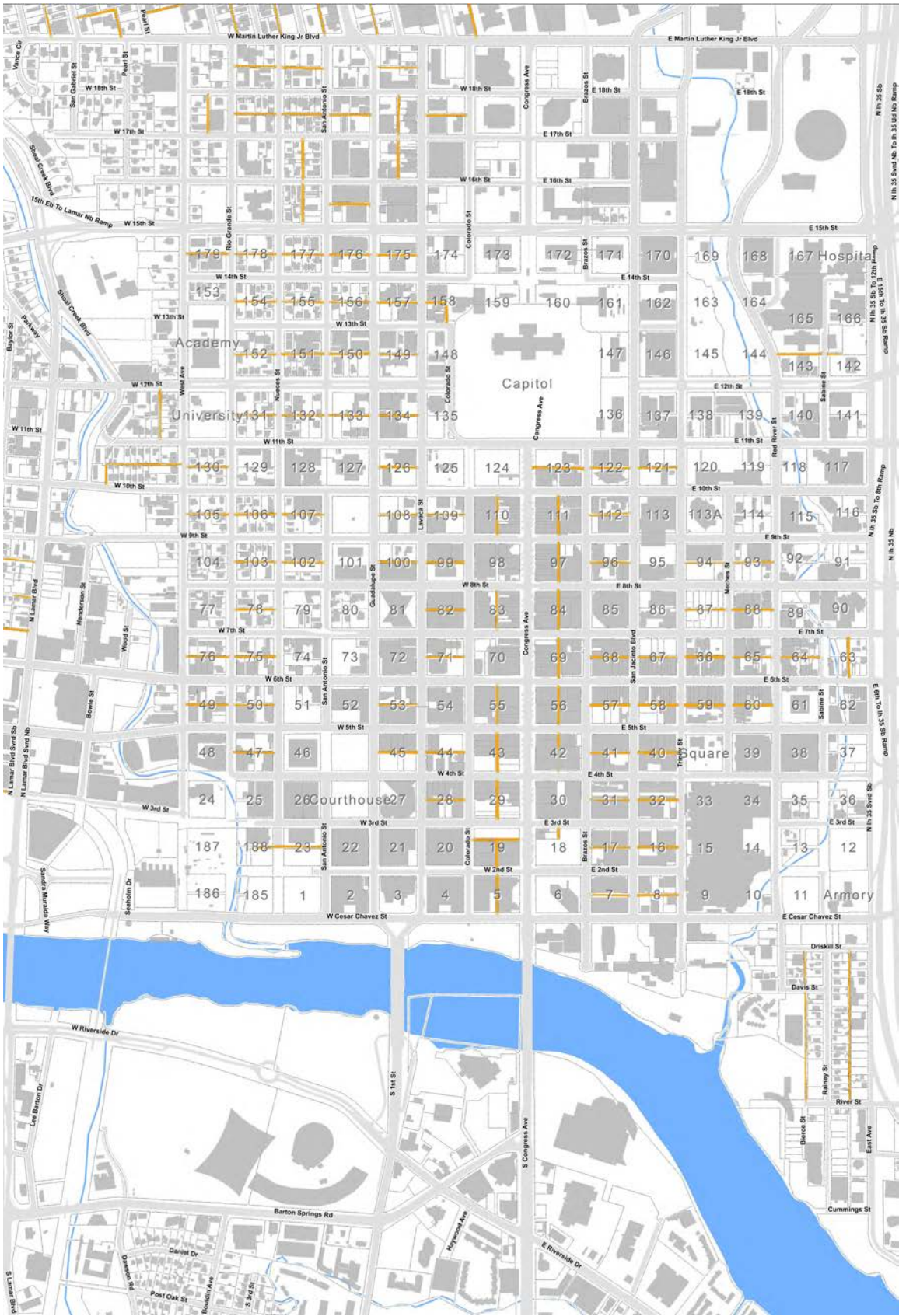
The current plan for downtown, the Downtown Austin Plan, which was adopted by the City Council in 2011, envisions preserving the historic grid system, by calling for city actions to "maintain, extend and restore Downtown's grid system of streets and alleys."^{vii} The Plan specifically calls for a ban on vacating and abandoning alleys except in special circumstances.^{viii}

While the Plan calls for "preserving and enhancing alleys," the Plan lays out very little detail in this regard. The specific policies that the Plan lays out for alleys relate to enhancing their role in providing loading, serving, and parking access, such as through eliminating dumpsters and above-grade grease traps.^{ix} There is no tie made in the Plan between alleys and the Plan's core vision of creating a "dense and livable pattern of development that supports a vibrant day and nighttime environment" and forming an "an interconnected pattern of streets, parks, and public spaces that instill a unique sense of place and community."^x Recognizing the dual roles that some alleys can serve

to provide critical off-street services while also supporting a vibrant downtown would help advance the city's vision for Downtown.

Thinking about a broader set of uses for alleys also supports the Plan's vision for preserving and highlighting downtown's historic resources. Currently there are two occasions where the Plan mentions protecting the historical features of alleys: The first is where the Plan calls for including the portion of the north-south alley immediately west of Congress Avenue in the Warehouse District in a possible Local Historic District (this particular alley runs largely intact from Lady Bird Lake to the Capitol), and the second is where the Plan calls for "ensur[ing] a compatible relationship between new development and historic buildings with a landmark designation, including setting towers back from alley to provide appropriate separation."^{xi} We believe the Plan's vision for historic preservation can be extended to include the historic resources found within the alleys themselves.

Citing the work of the Downtown Commission's alley activation workgroup, the Austin City Council adopted a resolution on March 21, 2013, calling for the creation of a Downtown Austin Alley Master Plan. In adopting the resolution, the Austin City Council expressed a commitment to Austin's downtown alleys, by calling upon the council to "strive to preserve possibilities for Austin's urban alleys" and to "refrain from vacating alleys at least until the plan has been completed and reviewed." The master plan will verify existing conditions; analyze alleys and their uses and cultural/historical significance; identify which alleys offer the most potential for ongoing or permanent activation; address the merits of allowing loading and unloading by right; and describe other opportunities and challenges that may exist. However, the master planning process has not begun yet, and no funding has been allocated for the development of the plan.



Map of existing paved alleys in the downtown area.
 Produced by Michael Knox, City of Austin, Economic Development Department

III. Planning for the Downtown Austin Alley Activation Project

The Downtown Commission's alley workgroup decided early on that it wanted to be hands-on by doing an actual activation project rather than talking about how to go about creating one. The team started with questions such as:

- "Which city regulations would be supportive?"
- "Which ones would stand in the way?"
- "How difficult would it be to gather private support?"
- "How could the goals best be communicated to adjacent property owners?"

After laying out the questions the workgroup wanted to investigate, the team adopted the following vision statement and goal during its initial meetings:

Vision Statement: A downtown alley will be activated into a vibrant, people-oriented space.

Goal: By end of April 2013, our workgroup will implement a pilot alley reactivation project involving the temporary activation of a downtown alley. The project will allow us to build images of success and also to test barriers and opportunities for future activation of other downtown alleys. We will summarize these findings in a report to City Council.

As the workgroup proceeded, the team also asked what it would mean to create a vibrant, people-oriented space in the context of an alley. Before finding specific programmatic solutions to the project goal, the team outlined its vision for a successful Austin alleyway:

Vision: A successful Austin alley will: be safe and walkable; celebrate nature; foster commercial presence; allow for food and beverages; provide a venue for public art; be augmented with light and sound; stimulate the senses; honor existing historical features; provide family-friendly activities and spaces; be a location for comfort and warmth; provide a clean, functional space; respect current legitimate uses; and makes people want to return again and again. (For good measure the team also added that the alley activation should feel magical.)

After establishing the group's goals and vision, the next step was to find a specific alley for conducting a pilot activation project. The workgroup spent several months developing criteria and selecting the alley for the activation project. To test possible alleys for the project, the workgroup created a set of criteria to evaluate Austin's downtown alleys:

- Ability to accommodate existing services: delivery, garbage pick up, fire, possibly parking

- Surrounded by buildings on both sides (i.e., to have the feeling of an alley)
- Current undesirable activity (that could thus be offset with an activation project)
- Physical interaction with businesses on the alley (i.e., businesses with entrances that faced the alley)
- Support of surrounding businesses (this actually turned out to be a prerequisite)
- Ability for the alley to be cleaned up
- Unique characteristics (architecture, trees, etc)
- Walkability: ability to walk to the alley and within the alley
- Ability to be magical/beautiful
- Current desirable activity
- ADA accessibility
- Connectivity between alleys
- Placemaking potential

In December and early January, the workgroup members spread across downtown to survey the alleys and took pictures, which were uploaded onto a shared Dropbox folder. Using the results, the workgroup narrowed down the list of potential alleys to a few that showed the greatest potential to serve as a pilot project. The group then reached out to the business owners to find out whether they would support an activation project in the alley. Based on the assessment results and conversations with the business owners, the workgroup selected the alley that runs North-South from 9th to 10th streets, between Congress Avenue and Brazos.^{xii} This alley was named “Alley 111,” following the numerical designation for that city block provided on a City of Austin map.

IV. Activating Alley 111: 20ft Wide

After the alley was selected, many weeks of planning went into how to activate the alley. Because of the 20-foot width of the alley—like most of the other alleys laid out in the Waller Plan grid—the activation project was penned “20ft Wide.” There were two main areas of focus for the project: the physical space and the event programming. Fortunately, the team comprised a diverse set of professional partners that included curatorial lead Art Alliance Austin; architects Dan Cheetham (Fyoog) and Michelle Tarsney; Creative Action, a local non-profit group; and TBG Partners Chris Jackson and Nicole Warns, who led the work on the space’s physical design.^{xiii}

Activation through physical improvements:

As a physical space, the workgroup aimed to create a place that was human-scale and had visual interest at multiple levels, while working with a very small budget. The City of Austin Cultural Arts Division provided a grant of \$5,000 for the visual art installed overhead, and TBG provided a grant of \$500 for the physical design on the ground level. The rest of the physical improvements were covered through in-kind donations of materials and time.

The alley was activated with a variety of art, plants, seating, and other elements, while accommodating the existing alley functions for trash disposal and access by KTBC/Fox 7 of the northern half of the alley for the company’s parking.^{xiv} For seating, the alley used primarily donated materials that reflected typical alley functions: painted crates (which also served as book shelves), cut polystyrene shipping foam, and burlap sacks stuffed with second-hand clothes. The space also included two sets of tables and chairs loaned out by Forms + Surfaces, and a variety of plants on loan from a local nursery.



Photo courtesy of Michael Knox, City of Austin, Economic Development Department

For the art elements, Dan Cheetham and Michelle Tarsney designed a temporary aerial sculpture with brightly colored, interwoven twine that was hung across the alleyway, together with a collection of paper origami peace cranes created by children at the Art City Austin festival from the prior weekend under the direction of Creative Action. Additional art installed in the alley included a whimsical temporary mural painting of peppermints (which was coupled with a peppermint scavenger hunt) by Matthew J. Winters, and a series of temporary stencil paintings of birds on the asphalt pavement created by Griffon Ramsey with assistance by Burt Norville. Recordings of bird calls typical to Central Texas, provided courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, were mixed by composer, performer and sound artist Steve Parker into a soundscape that could be heard in the alley during much of the event.

Activation through activities and events:

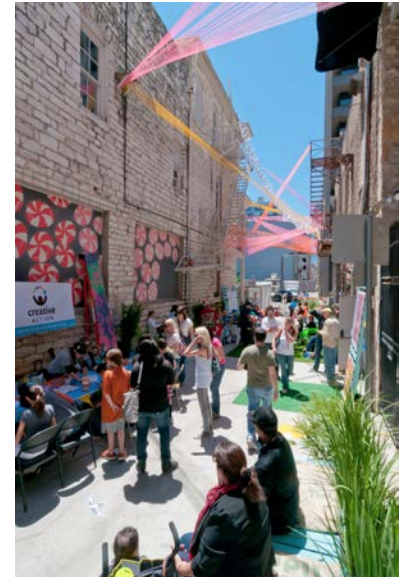
The workgroup decided that the activation project should offer diverse programming that would appeal to a broad range of age groups and interests and that would showcase many of the different ways in which an alley could be activated as a public space.

The programming consisted of the following:

- **Wednesday, April 17th PM: Opening Night Party.** Hosted by the Fusebox Festival and Art Alliance Austin, this event featured an a capella performance by Convergence. The event attracted over 200 people.
- **Thursday, April 18th PM: Pecha Kucha.** Art Alliance Austin hosted an evening PechaKucha session where 20 presenters showed 20 images for 20 seconds each as part of a fast-moving presentation. The alley was packed, with approximately 300 people in attendance.
- **Friday, April 18th AM: Pop-Up Commuter Breakfast.** Zipcar and Movability Austin hosted a morning commuter breakfast attended by downtown workers and commuters who enjoyed coffee and pastries. The alley remained open throughout most of the day, with WIFI connections, for downtown workers to use as a meeting space and workspace.
- **Friday, April 18th PM: Dining in the Alley.** The alley workgroup and volunteers enjoyed a candlelit dinner in the alley.
- **Saturday, April 19th All-Day: Alley Kids Family Day.** On Saturday, the alley was transformed into an artist-driven playground for kids and adults, including musical performances, acro yoga, jugglers, and hula hoopers, supported with a \$1,100 grant from the City of Austin Cultural Arts Division; storytelling hosted by

the Austin Public Library Friends Foundation; origami hosted by Creative Action; and food trucks. Dozens of families attended.

- **Sunday, April 20th: Open Day.** Sunday was an open day for the public to come and experience the alley without any programming.



Photos courtesy of Michael Knox, City of Austin, Economic Development Department

Key elements to the success of 20ft Wide

There were many components of 20ft Wide that contributed to the success of the project. The first component was the support of the surrounding property owners, which meant maintaining several of the alley's core service features, including trash pick up and service delivery. A second component, which was just as critical, was a multidisciplinary planning team of dedicated and passionate volunteers. Each team member for 20ft Wide had a different skill set that added value to the project and enabled us to overcome the roadblocks we confronted during the project. A third component was the project's diverse programming, which appealed to different, targeted audiences and cut across multiple generations, thus allowing for us to highlight the multiple roles alley can play and allowing us to serve a wide cross-section of the community.

The particular alley we selected was also an important component of the project's success. The alley's scale and rich architectural features, all contributed to the engaging and intimate nature of the space. The support and involvement of City Council and multiple city departments also turned out to be critical—including, but by no means limited to, the funding the City provided for part of the artists' costs, assistance with navigating the special events permit process, in-kind donations of city equipment, and City Council-authorized fee waivers. Other key components that made the project possible included: the in-kind support of numerous organizations and individuals; access to a vacant building space to stage events; and access to electricity and water from the adjacent property owners.

Surveys:

As a test of existing and potential policy measures, the 20ft Wide team understood the importance of collecting data about the activation project, and so a simple survey instrument was created and administered during most of the events.^{xv} Results showed that the alley project drew in tourists as well as residents from outside of downtown: 10% of attendees were visitors to the city, 84% of attendees surveyed did not live downtown, and 57% did not work downtown. Almost half arrived by means other than car.

In addition, the survey showed a great deal of interest in the space both by people who came intentionally to see the installation and by those who just happened to pass by. Some quotes from the surveys:

- “When you see something like this it changes your whole attitude in a positive way.”
- “It’s like a kiss on the cheek.”
- “Got me into a space I otherwise wouldn’t.”
- “Would love to utilize this space; a place to meet for appointments.”
- “This should be done more.”

- “Reclaiming an old alley that would have otherwise been a lost space made it fabulous!”
- “Great idea! Great way to turn a space into something inhabitable for both old and young.”
- “Like the feel, like you are walking into a new little world, like Dr. Seuss; should be permanent.”
- “Oh, I don’t want to leave this place.”
- “It’s awesome, very relaxing, makes downtown more exciting.”
- “It’s fun, a great idea, they should make this permanent. I’m from Germany and there’s much more going on there in the streets.”
- “Love the concept of using alleys for public spaces.”
- “Charming and a lot of potential. “
- “Beautiful, brightens up the alley, could be a great public space.”
- “Great initiative; we want more public space.”

Public Relations and Press

20ft Wide received a lot of recognition in the press. The project was featured on the cover of the Urban Land Institute’s Tactical Urbanism magazine, on KUT,^{xvi} the Austin Business Journal,^{xvii} KEYE-TV,^{xviii} and in other media outlets. The City of Austin’s Channel 6 created a time lapse video showing the installation and first series of events in the alley: <http://youtu.be/j2VGSiu6ZPQ>. A video summary of the activation project, also created by Channel 6, is available at <http://youtu.be/fxx1q5oPbVk>.



Photos courtesy of Michael Knox, City of Austin, Economic Development Department

V. Why Activate Austin's Downtown Alleys

In embracing the transformation of alleys into vibrant public spaces, cities throughout the world have recognized that activated alleys can play a central role in enhancing the character and livability of a dense urban core and facilitate the ability of cities to offer a diverse range of public spaces. Cities such as Seattle and San Francisco—which have strong support for alley activation projects—have also found that alleys, compared to other urban spaces such as streets and parks, provide inviting, intimate, and human-scale experiences that are hard to provide with other types of public spaces. Cities have also found ways to activate alleys—with their broad range of potential uses and economic benefits—through a relatively small investment of public resources.

In Austin, as the downtown area experiences ever-increasing population growth, new public spaces are needed more than ever to fulfill the needs of current residents and to meet the expectations of new residents, including those arriving from cities where smaller-scaled urban public spaces are the norm. When looking at Austin's downtown alleys as possible public space amenities, it must also be remembered that these spaces are needed to accommodate existing functions that are integral to the operations of downtown businesses and organizations. Downtown alleys allow for functions such as trash pick up and service deliveries to be handled without disrupting traffic on streets. Other urban infrastructure functions that alleys provide, depending on the alley, include: secondary pedestrian and bikeway routes, fire lanes, and access to loading docks and parking garages.

Working within the Downtown Austin Plan

The Downtown Commission workgroup's vision for reinvigorating Austin's alleys draws from the goals and vision statements set forth in the Downtown Austin Plan (DAP), whereby, "[i]f Downtown is to continue to attract new residents, businesses and visitors, excellent parks, open spaces and streetscapes will be essential to its success."^{xix} As the Plan states, the "quality and interconnectivity" of our public spaces "defines to a great extent our day-to-day urban experience and the overall livability and identity of Downtown."^{xx}

Specifically, the activation of Austin's downtown alleys directly supports the following vision statements set forth in the Downtown Austin Plan, as laid out on the City's home page for the Plan:^{xxi}

- A dense and livable pattern of development that supports a vibrant day and nighttime environment.
- An interconnected pattern of streets, parks, and public spaces that instill a unique sense of place and community.
- A beloved fabric of historic places, buildings, and landscapes that celebrate the unique journey Austin has taken over the past 200 years.

- An array of innovative businesses – small and large – that are attracted to Downtown by its rich human capital and unique sense of place.
- A variety of districts and destinations that support the creative expression of Austin's citizenry through art, music, theater, dance, and performance.^{xxii}

Additionally, and related to the last vision statement above, the revitalization of Austin alleyways supports the Downtown Austin Plan's goals of providing for new cultural facilities and live music venues, incubator spaces for artists, rehearsal and performing spaces, and other creative culture uses and businesses.^{xxiii}



San Francisco Alley.
Photo courtesy of Heather Way, Downtown Commission

VI. The Potential for Future Alley Activations in Austin

Over the past decade, Austin has transformed from a small city with a low-key downtown to a major urban center known for its features like the Ann and Roy Butler Hike and Bike Trail at Lady Bird Lake and its entertainment districts. As Austin matures as a city, the city's downtown must develop in ways that support a full and rich urban experience—particularly if we are to remain competitive as a destination for new residents and new businesses.

We know from the work done by other cities that the development of alleys holds a tremendous potential for a relatively small investment—as spaces that already exist in the public realm. Some benefits that other cities have found from activating alleys, include the following:

Benefits of activating alleys:

- Improving public safety and beautification of downtown.
- Providing opportunities for engaging public spaces—places for people to visit, relax, and enjoy being with other people.
- Providing affordable opportunities for new small businesses and expansion of existing local businesses (e.g., Sydney, Australia small business program for alleys).
- Supporting green corridors (Austin,^{xxiv} Chicago).
- Celebrating visual and performing arts by creating areas to showcase the work of local artists.
- Expanding the pedestrian network and connectivity to other parts of downtown.
- Highlighting historical assets.
- Enhancing pedestrian experiences through car-free, intimately-scaled spaces.
- Providing intimate retail zones.

The revitalization of Austin's alleys can be supported through both physical improvements and the support of specific programming opportunities.

Potential Physical improvements:

Learning from other cities, we can see that the size of alleys is one of their greatest assets. They provide an intimate scale that serves as a sharp contrast to whole block developments and surrounding streetscapes. Meanwhile, the features of alleys that limit positive pedestrian engagement—such as dumpsters lining the walls, limited lighting, and an overall grimy atmosphere—can be easily addressed with a range of physical improvements.

The type of physical improvements needed to activate an alley will be unique to each alley and should draw upon existing positive features of the alley. Some may be activated with very small-scale and inexpensive changes such as suspended artwork or

engaging lighting. Others may need more extensive improvement to allow for both utilitarian and social uses.



Seville, Spain Alley.

Photo courtesy of Heather Way, Downtown Commission

Examples of potential improvements to enhance public engagement and public safety in alleys include:

- Plantings and window boxes
- Opening up of existing doors to allow entranceways into the alley
- Incorporating permanent or temporary art overhead and on building facades
- Lighting
- Paving upgrades; incorporating a variety of paving: can make an alley more inviting to pedestrians and provide a clearer signal to cars to not enter or to drive more slowly
- Seating and tables
- Signs at the entrances to the alleys, with the name for the alley
- Canopies to provide shade
- Physical upgrades to building facades to facilitate location of cafes, retail, and other businesses
- More visually appealing dumpsters

- Addressing the concentration of garbage dumpsters such as through moving or consolidating dumpsters in one part of alley, or offering alternative disposal methods (e.g., Seattle bans dumpsters in city right-of-way and offers bag service with frequent pick ups).
- Entry gateways where alley meets street to invite exploration.

Potential Programming and Activities:

Once the physical space in an alley has been modified to enhance the public’s engagement while preserving the alley’s utilitarian service functions, a broad array of different programming and activities can be imagined, which could be offered temporarily or permanently in the alley. Other cities have activated alleys for a number of different activities and uses, such as:

- Walking tours: historical tour, art tour, etc.
- Historical programs to highlight historic elements in the alley, such as historical signs and walking tour app
- Movies
- Televised sporting events
- Live music
- Places to meet, work, relax
- Outdoor dining: permanent restaurants as well as cafés that pop up for lunch and/or dinner
- Bike lanes and pedestrian passageways
- Shopping districts
- Retail and small business venues
- Art events
- Art galleries
- Family-friendly events



San Francisco Alley.
Photo courtesy of Heather Way,
Downtown Commission

Importantly, what many other cities have shown is that these uses can often be “layered” depending on the time of day. Thus, an alley that provides for garbage pick-up and deliveries during the morning hours and retail during business hours, can turn into an art event space at night and a family-oriented space on the weekends.^{xxv}

In her master’s thesis for the University of Texas, Sarah Hammerschmidt identified three different typologies for activating Austin’s downtown alleys:^{xxvi}

- *Activity Thoroughways*: alleys that serve as nodes for activities such as cafes, bars, and retail.
- *Pedestrian and Bicycle Thoroughways*: alleys that prioritize pedestrian and bicycle access to provide connections to parks, businesses, and retail.
- *Green Thoroughways*: alleys that expand park space in downtown through the addition of grass and other plantings, or a hybrid model that incorporates both grass and pavement.



San Francisco Alley.
Photo courtesy of Heather Way, Downtown Commission

VII. The Logistics of Activating Alleys

While the 20ft Wide project helped to identify potential roles for Austin's alleys as engaging public spaces, the project also identified many of the challenges that others will face when looking to do similar types of projects. When working on a future activation project, whether temporary or permanent in nature, it will be important to consider the following:

1. **Heavy concentration of dumpsters.** Many of the alleys in downtown alley are lined with large dumpsters. For the 20ft Wide installation, we were able to work with Austin Resource Recovery to temporarily move one of the dumpsters to the other side of the alley near a big concentration of dumpsters, which cleared up space for event programming and made the space more conducive to pedestrians.
2. **Poor lighting.** Austin's downtown alleys typically have poor lighting, making it difficult to create a stronger sense of safety in these spaces.
3. **Parking (legally and illegally).** Several alleys we surveyed contain permanent parking spaces for surrounding businesses and entrances to parking garages. We also observed several instances of cars parked illegally in alleys.
4. **Fire code.** Two primary issues related to fire safety arose during the 20ft Wide installation process: 1) a bar on utilizing any materials overhead that could be considered flammable; and 2) the issue of ensuring fire truck access through alley. It is unclear at this point how other cities handle fire truck access in activated alleys. This is an issue that will need to be explored further.
5. **Alley entrances and traffic control.** During the 20ft Wide installation, one of the primary concerns was traffic control and the maintenance of pedestrian safety in an area typically inhabited by cars. The City required us to erect large traffic barricades, but these barricades then made the alleyway less inviting and deterred cyclists and pedestrians from entering the space. Other cities have addressed safety concerns with less obstructive barriers. This is an issue that should be explored further by figuring out a way to maintain safety while also enhancing aesthetics and facilitating access by pedestrians and cyclists.
6. **Special Events permit process.** Our project highlighted the need for a separate Special Events permit process that is calibrated for smaller events such as our 20ft Wide installation. The Special Events permit process we utilized—which is in the process of undergoing changes—assumes heavy crowd concentrations and increased life safety hazards brought about by a festival atmosphere. Although the City of Austin Special Events team cooperated to help the 20ft Wide take place, we found the following requirements to be overly taxing and recommend they be eliminated or reduced.

- a. Traffic engineer-certified parking control plan. Standard details and procedures should be created for alley closures in lieu of requiring an event sponsor to pay an engineer to certify a traffic control plan, which can run more than a thousand dollars.
 - b. Requirement to hire police. Even though the Special Events office required us to hire police to guard the barricades during the 20ft Wide alley events (a fee which the Council waived), the police ended up not showing up to the events and the requirement seemed unnecessary.
 - c. The 180-day “minimum” City of Austin permit review period. This period is unnecessary for a small passive installation like 20ft Wide. We also found that the special events permit costs were not calibrated for small events.
 - d. The Special Events permit requirement to provide a fully-detailed drawing of the alley closure should be replaced with a Special Events permit checklist for small installations and events, similar to the checklist used for expedited building permit requirements and the site plan exemption process.
7. **Supported Services.** Alleys serve a critical infrastructure function for the downtown area and these services must be maintained. Some of these services include the passage of delivery trucks and dumpster trucks. Any future project will need to understand what and when service activities occur in the alley to carefully coordinate any temporary installation with the schedule for those services.
8. **Wayfinding.** The City of Austin recognizes the need to improve wayfinding for the downtown area for the benefit of both residents and visitors. Currently a plan is being formulated to address this critical need. During the production of the 20ft Wide event it was recognized that additional urban design elements, such as street signage, could improve the visibility of alleys and help people find and access them as part of their urban pedestrian experience.
9. **Funding.** Financial support is critical for creating vibrant urban spaces. While the 20ft Wide event was produced with relatively little money, the volunteer-based model used by the working group is not a sustainable model for creating lasting urban benefits. Larger budgets will be needed in order to provide permanent investments for alleys to become both economic and cultural assets for the city.
10. **Access to electricity.** Alley spaces not only need to support a wide range of infrastructural, logistical, and cultural needs, but they also need to take advantage of the various types of urban users that might use alleys at different times of day/night/week/season. Supporting nighttime activities (which come relatively early during the winter months), and daytime events (such as music) necessitates having access to electricity. Future event planning will need to establish early on in the planning process mechanisms for creating access to electricity.

11. Adjacent Property and Business Owners. As the team worked through the logistics of setting up the 20ft Wide event, we discovered that while adjacent business owners may support an activation project, the land owner may not. Many property owners are out of town and may not feel comfortable with a new idea for the space. From the 20ft Wide project, the team identified the need to work closely with business owners from day one in order to ensure support for the project.

From a regulatory standpoint, one of the most critical discoveries was the fact that the City of Austin does not actually own many the alleys downtown but instead only owns an easement. The surrounding property owners own the alleys. Any project involving a permanent activation of an alley will need to explore the exact parameters of the City's easements and what type of legal documentation is needed to facilitate the permanent activation.

It is also important to say that not every alley is appropriate for an activation project. Some bear a heavy reliance on delivery trucks throughout the day as well as others that have parking garage entrances that remain active at all times.

Next Steps for Planning Alley Events

To activate Austin's alley network, it will take support from both elected officials and staff to create an overall vision for how alleys can support Austin as economic and cultural resources, and to administer the future efforts to bring such a vision to life. We recommend that any future efforts begin with a mapping exercise that would identify alleys that are ripe for activation projects and the individual private property owners that are needed to catalyze successful events.

After the team's experience with creating the 20ft Wide project we offer the following checklist to project managers looking to support future alley activation events.

Alley Activation Checklist:

- Identify supporting property owners and businesses along alley.
- Talk with City Special Events permit staff at least 4 months prior to event.
- Plan for space to accommodate food trucks and delivery vehicles for the event.
- Work with local businesses to accommodate expected flows of vehicular traffic.
- Address need for barricade requirements and search for possible new solution that would address aesthetic concerns as well.
- Address requirement for police presence at barricades.
- Meet with City of Austin Fire Department reviewers early in the process to identify any potential issues concerning flammable materials.
- Provide liability waivers for installation so the City is not held accountable beyond normal property protection.

VIII. Examples of Alley Activation Programs in Other Cities

In cities around the world, alleys that once served as areas for trash and illicit activities have been transformed into engaging public spaces, economic engines, urban art galleries, and major tourist draws. The following are examples of cities that have been at the forefront of activating alleys in and around the downtown urban core:

Fort Collins, Colorado.^{xxvii} After a pilot project that renovated two downtown alleys, the Downtown Development Authority in Fort Collins commissioned an alley master plan in 2008, through a process that included workshops with building owners and other downtown stakeholders. The Authority plans to renovate a total of 14 alleys utilizing tax revenue from a downtown public improvement district, with the goal of enhancing the alleys aesthetically, providing safe pedestrian access, and stimulating economic vitality and use of the spaces. So far, at least 5 alleys have been renovated, at a cost of approximately \$900,000 each, through a series of physical improvements including special pavers, lighting, flower pots, and storm water management improvements. New trash enclosures were built, and benches were placed in the alleys. An Art in Public Places program provided for 40 granite pavers engraved with children’s drawings. Following the renovations, private improvements swiftly followed, including several new small business storefronts and a beer garden. The renovated alleys now serve as lively pedestrian walkways, new retail spaces, and gathering spaces. With an increase in pedestrian traffic and customers, the reception of local businesses has been very positive.

Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne is a worldwide leader when it comes to transforming its alleys (called laneways in Australia) into engaging amenities providing a broad range of experiences. The activation of the city’s alleys is a central part of the Melbourne City Plan and began in the 1980s as a way to improve livability in downtown through engagement of public spaces. Since then, dozens of alleys in the city have been revitalized into an urban network of alleys with art installations, small cafes, residences, and retail.^{xxviii} Today, the alleys, which cover 3.5 kilometers (22 miles), are a vital part of the city’s urban landscape and attract hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. To support the alley transformation, the City operates a “Love your Laneway” project,^{xxix} which partners with local stakeholders to improve and revitalize alleys through waste management, amenities and access, public lighting and road surfacing, and artistic and cultural uses. The City has adopted a number of planning policies to support the transformation of the alleys. In 2001, the City created a Laneways Commission Program, which commissions artists each year to transform alleys into contemporary art galleries, and in 2007 adopted a policy addressing building form and frontages and other design elements in alleys. The City Council’s current “Lanes policy” calls for on-going alley preservation and revitalization through the coupling of service functions and pedestrian amenities. The city has also provided grants to businesses to locate in alleys.

San Francisco: The City of San Francisco has made the preservation and activation of alleys a citywide priority, recognizing their important role in dense urban neighborhoods for creating human-scale space and pedestrian-oriented spaces, while breaking up the scale of large blocks and creating a more useable development pattern.^{xxx} Dozens of alleys in the urban core have been renovated and transformed into spaces actively utilized by small businesses, retail, and dining/entertainment establishments. Belden Place in the financial district is one of the city’s most famous alleyways, with multiple restaurants and outdoor seating—the alley has become a magnet for residents and visitors. Some of the alleys are open for services during the early morning hours, and then closed to vehicular traffic during the day. Maiden alley, for example, has two beautiful white gates at end of the alley, which are used to close off the alley to vehicles starting in the late morning, when the alley is transformed into a shopping esplanade with high end boutique stores. New alleys are also being included in new development to break up super blocks and provide opportunities for small business opportunities and enlivened public spaces, and the City has developed height limits and step backs along alleys to allow light and air to circulate. The City’s general plan bans the selling off of alleys, and the city routinely incorporates the makeover of alleys in its public works projects.



San Francisco Alley.
Photo courtesy of Heather Way, Downtown Commission

Sydney, Australia: To activate its alleys (aka laneways), the City of Sydney provides a number of programs, which grew out of a 1993 study evaluating the potential of Sydney's alleys and recognizing their role as economic engines for the city. The City is upgrading paving and installing a range of physical improvements including lighting, street furniture, signs, and permanent and temporary art installations in its alleys. The City sponsors a Laneway Art Program, which each year commissions seven different art projects for alleys, resulting in a range of art installations attractive to a broad range of age groups.^{xxxii} The City sponsors a walking guide of laneway art in the central city to showcase these installations. Sydney also offers business incentives via "fine grain" matching grants to small businesses to encourage the activation of alleys through cafes, retail, and galleries.^{xxxiii} For development adjacent to alleys, the City has adopted development guidelines requiring that new development reinforce the role of the alley as public open space and enhance pedestrian access, encourage pedestrian use by providing for retail or other activity, and provide for service access as appropriate.

Brisbane, Australia: Through Brisbane's Vibrant Laneways and Small Spaces program, which is part of the City's Centre City Master Plan, Brisbane is leading a number of alley activation projects to transform alleys into "imaginative, fun and engaging" spaces.^{xxxiii} The program includes a new art program showcasing the work of nine artists in alleys and physical improvements such as new lighting, seating, art work, and paving. The city has completed more than three activation projects and is currently leading five more projects.

Perth, Australia: In 2008, the City of Perth adopted a formal strategy to revitalize the city's alleys, followed by an action plan for each of the alleys targeted for revitalization.^{xxxiv} The City evaluated each alley and its potential for revitalization and then identified priority projects. The project has resulted in the revitalization of several alleys and stimulated commercial interest in previously neglected spaces.

Seattle: Seattle has revitalized a number of alleys in the city's urban core and adopted policies to promote future activation projects. The City of Seattle adopted new special permit policies to make it easier for nonprofit groups and businesses to host special events in alleys, and a nonprofit created a guidebook on how to put on events in alleys. One major step the City took was to address the concentration of dumpsters in its alleys through the adoption of the Clear Alleys Program.^{xxxv} The program removed 700 dumpsters in downtown alleys and replaced them with smaller color-coded bags and small containers, coupled with increasing garbage collection to multiple times a day. The City also banned permanent storage of containers in the City's right of way, including alleys. The initiative was aimed at increasing the attractiveness of alleys for pedestrians; allowing better alley access for business services and possible expansion of commercial activity; and creating cleaner, safer alley spaces. Much of the alley activation work in Seattle has been lead or spurred by two nonprofits, the Alley Network Project and International Sustainability Institute, which have developed partnerships with surrounding businesses and stakeholders in the Pioneer Square area. The City of Seattle

has also adopted a stringent street and alley vacation ordinance to ensure that alleys are not vacated if they address purely private concerns such as acquiring additional property for development.^{xxxvi}

Chicago: As a city, Chicago has more alleyways than any other city in the world. Improving these alleys is recognized as being essential for both the environment and for the quality of life of the residents. One of the alley initiatives the city has spearheaded is the Chicago Green Alley Program, which began in 2007. This initiative lays out a series of recommended design features that can help homeowners and businesses develop their alleys in a way to more effectively deal with the issues of storm water management, urban heat island effect, materials recycling, and lighting to reduce nighttime glare. By creating a guidebook of best management practices, the city shows how accessible design options can create alley spaces that will work better as infrastructure and have the added benefit of being beautiful spaces as well.

Los Angeles: Los Angeles has recently activated a number of urban and neighborhood alleys into engaging public spaces. One of the most recent transformations was the EaCa Alley in Hollywood. The alley was originally a crime-ridden area, but then transformed into a pedestrian thoroughfare and dining space in 2012. The idea for transforming the alley grew out of a UCLA student's master thesis. The transformation was made possible through a collaboration of the City Council, the local redevelopment association, and the support of the surrounding business owners, who formed an alley association after seeing the value in attracting pedestrians into the alley and using the alley for dining space. The transformation cost \$800,000 and included repaving with red bricks, storm water and drainage improvements, lighting, and elimination of trash bins. The city issued permits to the surrounding businesses to offer seating up to ten feet into the alley along with serving food and alcohol in the alley.

IX. Policy Recommendations

There are a number of new policies and practices that Austin could adopt to support the activation of Austin’s downtown alleys. Additional information on the examples referenced below is available in Appendix C.

DOWNTOWN PLAN AMENDMENTS

1. Amend the Downtown Austin Plan to add the following policy goal: With support of the surrounding businesses, establish a program for renovating and enhancing downtown alleys to serve as lively pedestrian walkways, new spaces for artists and small businesses, and vibrant gathering spaces.

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

2. As part of the Downtown Alley Master Plan under development, adopt and implement a comprehensive ten-year strategy to revitalize five to ten of Austin’s downtown alleys as vibrant, activated public spaces. See, for example, the plans adopted by Fort Collins, Colorado, and Perth, Australia. We recommend the master plan assign typologies based on the potential each alley offers for being activated, based on the recommendations in Sara Hammerschmidt’s thesis discussed above. We also recommend the master plan process include one or more community charrettes to capture the community’s vision for downtown’s alleys.
3. Through the Public Works Department and in collaboration with downtown stakeholders, develop a template for design standards to facilitate the installation of physical improvements in alleys across downtown to enhance safety and create more pedestrian-oriented experiences, such as better lighting, special paving, and seating. See, for example, the design standards promoted in [Activating Alleys for a Lively City](#). We recommend the City explore additional partnerships with the UT School of Architecture for leading the charrettes, developing the master plan, and assisting with other aspects of these policy recommendations.
4. In partnership with the surrounding businesses, the Downtown Austin Alliance, the Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association, and other stakeholders, select one to two alleys as “catalyst” projects for permanent activation in the next two years.
5. While preserving the role of alleys for trash pick up, create a program to remove and consolidate trash dumpsters located in alleys downtown and, over time, to change the appearance of the remaining dumpsters to make them more attractive. Explore a program similar to Seattle’s Clean Alley program for removing of the large-scale dumpsters and replacing them with trash bins and more frequent pik-ups.

6. Ensure that the unique historical features and facades of alleys are incorporated into the City's historic preservation programs for downtown.
7. Adopt a process for naming Austin's downtown alleys and creating street signs at the entrances of the alleys.
8. For new development: adopt design standards or guidelines for new development along alleys. The standards could address the design of the "backside" of the building facing the alley to facilitate a pedestrian-oriented environment and encourage small businesses, cafes, and retail in the alley. Consideration should be given to banning blank facades in new development facing alleys. See, for example, the City of San Francisco's alley design standards.
9. Include funding in the next transportation bond initiative for improvements to alleys and the creation and implementation of the downtown alley master.

PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT

10. Develop a plan for how city staff could support temporary and permanent alley activation projects. One possibility is the development of a team of existing city staff from across departments, including Economic Development Department, Planning and Development Review, and Parks and Recreation, to work collaboratively on creating and enhancing public open spaces, including alleyways.
11. Evaluate the new changes to the City's special events permit process to ensure that they facilitate the ability of organizations to host special alley activation events. See, for example, the special permitting process for alleys adopted in Seattle. In facilitating events in alleys, Austin's special events office should adopt a policy allowing for the placement of alternative kinds of barricades during alley activation events, rather than the traditional orange and white large street barricades which impede pedestrian access into the alley. See, for example, Seattle's alley activation projects, which utilize small orange cones or no barricades at all, and San Francisco's artistic Maiden Lane gates.^{xxxvii} The policy regarding the placement of police officers at the barricades should also be reviewed; this is not a practice followed by other cities we identified with activated alleys.
12. Create an alley event handbook to highlight how to navigate the city permitting process and put on an alley activation event. See, for example, the special permitting process and handbook for alleys adopted in Seattle.

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

13. Create a grant and loan program to facilitate the location of small businesses in alleys. See, for example, the “fine grain” grant program adopted in Sydney, Australia.

THE ARTS

14. Commission artists and partner with property owners to install permanent and temporary public art in alleyways and examine the creation of additional public and public-private relationships that would foster permanent and temporary public art installations in alleys. Potential sources of funding could include outside fundraising, foundation support, hotel/motel taxes for promotion of tourism (especially the new taxes that will be generated from the multiple hotels under development), the Art In Public Places (AIPP) 2% allocation from capital improvement project budgets (such as for repairs made to surrounding streets), downtown Public Improvement District dollars, and partnerships with local businesses (such as establishing a matching grants program with the AIPP and local businesses). For example, see the robust public art alley programs offered in Sydney and Melbourne as models.

TOURISM

15. Create a downtown alley walking tour mobile app for residents and tourists to explore Austin’s downtown alleys and discover their historical and architectural features.

Appendix A: Project Participants

Downtown Alley Conversion Workgroup Members (“Team Alley”)

Melissa Barry, Downtown Austin Alliance
Thomas Butler, Downtown Austin Alliance
Dan Cheetham, Fyoog
Megan Crigger, City of Austin Economic Development Department, Cultural Arts Division
Ann S. Graham, Community Arts Consultant
Shannon Halley, Councilmember Kathie Tovo’s Office
Chris Jackson, TBG Partners
Kit Johnson, City of Austin Public Works Department
Michael Knox, City of Austin Economic Development Department
Michael McGill, Mayor Pro Tem Sheryl Cole’s Office
Matt Parkerson, Councilmember Chris Riley’s Office
Meredith Powell, Art Alliance Austin
Lynn Osgood, Downtown Commission and Parks Board
Kevin Shaw, City of Austin Economic Development Department, Cultural Arts Division
Michelle Tarsney, Architect
Rachel Tepper, University of Texas, School of Community and Regional Planning
Nicole Warns, TBG
Heather K. Way, Downtown Commission
Bart Whatley, Downtown Commission and Design Commission
Barbara Brown Wilson, University of Texas Center for Sustainable Development

Creative and Project Partners:

Art Alliance Austin
Creative Action
Fyoog
TBG
The Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Austin Public Library Friends Foundation and Badgerdog
City of Austin Channel 6
City of Austin Cultural Arts Division
City of Austin Downtown Commission
City of Austin Economic Development Department
City of Austin Public Works Department
Downtown Austin Alliance
Fusebox Festival
Movability Austin
UT Center for Sustainable Development
Zipcar

Non-Profit and Business Contributors and Supporters:

Art Seen Alliance
Anderson's Coffee
Austin Club
Austin Magic Camp
BuildaSign
Capitol Center
City of Austin Street and Bridge
Clean Scapes LP
Co-Lab
Colibri Cuisine
Convergence
Coolhaus Ice Cream
Forms and Surfaces
Nelsen Partners
Shermin Nurseries Inc.
Texas Juggling Society
Texas Public Policy Foundation

Individual Artists, Contributors, and Supporters:

Ibrahim Aminou
Brittany Andrews
Cameron Beauchamp
Lillian Beckwith
Ron Berry
Tammy Bishop
Greg Budney
Miyoko Chu
Taylor Dinkins
Zack Dryer
Julie Finney
Matt Fisher
Glenn Gadbois
Sean Gaulager
Jenna Jasso
Shirley Johnson
Jeremy Kee
Jena Kirkpatrick
Shane Kistner
Tommy Lather
Pat Leonard

Mike Lewis
Jim Maxwell
Lana McGilvray
Warren McKinney
Brad Nelsen
Burl Norville
Brian Ott
Aaron Parker-Fasel
Steve Parker
Hugh Powell
Erika Ragsdale
Griffon Ramsey
Ken Richardson
Keith Reeves
Kenneth Rosenberg
Cecily Sailer
Sandra Turner Saldana
Greg Sindelar
James Stanley
Oliver Steck
DJ Stout
Zac Tolbert
Sallie Trout
Dalton Wallace
Mike Webster
Matthew Winters
Steve Wiswell
Sue Young
Cara Zimmer

Special Thanks to:

Mayor Pro Tem Sheryl Cole
Council Member Chris Riley
Council Member Kathie Tovo
Council Member Laura Morrison
Frances Hargrove and the City of Austin Special Events Permits Office
Howard Lazarus and the City of Austin Public Works Department

Appendix B: 20Ft Wide Survey Instrument and Results

20ft Wide Alley Activation Survey Evaluation

How did you hear about 20ft Wide? _____

Was this event a destination or did you chance upon it ?

Are you a Resident or Visitor Zip Code: _____

Do you work downtown? Yes No Do you live downtown? Yes No

How did get to the event (walk, bike, bus, drive, etc.)? _____

What else will you do while downtown? _____

Do you have any comments to share about the event? _____

How did you hear about 20ft Wide? _____

Was this event a destination or did you chance upon it ?

Are you a Resident or Visitor Zip Code: _____

Do you work downtown? Yes No Do you live downtown? Yes No

How did get to the event (walk, bike, bus, drive, etc.)? _____

What else will you do while downtown? _____

Do you have any comments to share about the event? _____

How did you hear about 20ft Wide? _____

Was this event a destination or did you chance upon it ?

Are you a Resident or Visitor Zip Code: _____

Do you work downtown? Yes No Do you live downtown? Yes No

How did get to the event (walk, bike, bus, drive, etc.)? _____

What else will you do while downtown? _____

Do you have any comments to share about the event? _____

20Ft Wide Survey Results										
How did you hear about 20ft Wide?	Was this event a destination or did you chance upon it?	Are you a resident or visitor?	Zipcode	Do you work downtown ?	Do you live downtown ?	How did you get the event?	What else will you do while downtown?	Do you have any comments to share about the event?		
1 Do 512 Family	Destination	Resident	78745	No	No	Drove	Might go eat	Neat small space		
2 Art City Austin	Destination	Resident	78705	No	N/A	Bus	Lunch	Glad we came		
3 Facebook	Destination	Resident	78745	No	N/A	Drove	Nothing	Great!		
4 Imagine Austin & Radio	Destination	Resident	78722	Yes	N/A	Bike	Starbucks, ArtHouse & Work	Great initiative, we want more public space		
5 Instagram	Destination	Resident	78705	Yes	No	Walk/ Bus	Working	Good use of space; "I feel at peace"		
6 Friend	Destination	Resident	78704	No	No	Car	N/A	Should be permanent		
7 Friend	Destination	Resident	78757	No	No	Car	Wander/ Adventure	Like the feel, like you are walking into a new little world, like Dr. Suess, Should be permanent		
8 Fusebox	Destination	Resident	78702	No	No	Car	N/A	Great to see under utilized spaces being used for community spaces; transformed into a beautiful place with art. Relaxing. More plants!		
9 Friend-Facebook/Instagram	Destination	Resident	78705	Yes	No	Bike	Go to work at 4:30	I wish more people would have known about it. I don't think people will believe me "Oh I don't want to leave this place"		
10 Work next door	Destination	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	N/A	Working	A couple of the club's members wondered "how much money the City was wasting on this."		
11 Email Newsletter	Destination	Resident	78723	Yes	No	Walk	Errands	It's awesome, very relaxing, it makes downtown more exciting		
12 Live Downtown	Destination	Resident	78701	Yes	Yes	Walk		It's fun, a great idea, they should make this permanent. I'm from Germany & there's much more goin on there in the streets.		
13 Ad at Art Festival	Destination	Resident	78759	No	No	Car	Maybe go for drinks	Impressive- everything should look like this.		
14 Heather Way	Destination	Resident	78704	No	No	Bus	Farmers Market	Not Yet.		
15 Friend & TV	Destination	Resident	78704	No	No	Bus	Farmers Market	It's great! Nice to see the city continue to mature. Just need to get more people involved. Thought it would be a fence block.		
16 Heather Way	Destination	Resident	78703	Yes	No	Drove	Library Visit	Cool idea. We should do more of these		
17 DAMA closures	Destination	Resident	78732	No	No	Drove	Breakfast, Farmers Market, Shopping	Love creative movement open to the public		
18 Facebook	Destination	Resident	78757	No	No	Drove	Coffee	It's great!		
19 Free Fun Austin	Destination	Resident	78748	No	No	Drove	Walk around	It's great. This is Austin, we love it!		
20 Tv News	Destination	Resident	78705	No	Yes	Walk	Ballet Austin Class	Seems nice		
21 N/A	Visiting from Nashville	N/A	N/A	No	No	Drove	N/A	N/A		
22 Do512.com	Destination	Resident	78704	No	No	Drove	Unknown	It's great, creative use of space you usually avoid		
23 Project Involvement	Destination	Visitor	78736	No	No	Drove		So far so good		
24 Looking for something else	Chance	Visitor	Houston					It's neat. It has a feeling like Europe		

20Ft Wide Survey Results									
How did you hear about 20ft Wide?	Was this event a destination or did you chance upon it?	Are you a resident or visitor?	Zipcode	Do you work downtown ?	Do you live downtown ?	How did you get the the event?	What else will you do while downtown?	Do you have any comments to share about the event?	
25	Art City Austin	Destination	78701	No	Yes	Walk	Renew library card, lunch	Nice to do these kinds of things- hope there are more of them	
26	Drive by	Chance		Yes	No	Drove	Market	Awesome. Could have done a dinner last, might do one behind me	
27	DANA	Destination		Yes	Yes	Bike	Breakfast Tacos	Arts Mural Program	
28	Walking by	Chance	NA			Walk		Fantastic Idea	
29	Austin Biz Journal	Destination	78721	Yes	No	Drove	Brunch	Cool Idea- interested to see id this happens again	
30	Facebook Friend	Destination	78745	No	No	Drove	Farmers Market	Love the concept of using alley's for public spaces	
31	Newspaper	Destination	78704	No	No	Drove	None	Charming and a lot of potential	
32	Free fun in Austin.com	Destination	78729	Yes		Drove	Toy Joy	Liked creative writing & wanted more	
33	Free fun in Austin.com	Destination	78727	No	No	Drove	None	Like- Something for Families	
34	Free fun in Austin.com	Chance	78707	N/A	Yes	Drove	Pipy Longstocking & Accordian Fest	N/A	
35	Email	Destination	78751	No	No	Scooter	Looking at condo	Pleasant & Appreciate place to sit and relax	
36	Walk by	Chance	78732	No	No	Drove	Walking Dogs, Visit Capitol, meet friends for lunch	Beautiful, brightens up the alley, could be a great public space	
37	Sue Lambe & AIPP	Destination	78703	Yes	Yes	Drove	Lunch	It's great, want more.	
38	AAA	Destination	78746	Yes	No	Drove	Lunch	Fantastic! Exceeded Expectations	
39	Email	Destination	78705	Yes	No	Walk	No Plans. Lunch	Incorporate lights into boarded up bldgs to illuminate.	
40	Facebook	Destination	78751	No	No	Bike	Movie	"when you see something like this it changes your whole attitude in a positive way"	
41	KUT	Chance	78756	Yes		Walk	Lunch	Love to see more of it!	
42	DAA Social Media	N/A	78754	Yes	No	Walk	Working	"it's like a little kiss on the cheek" Maybe go a little deeper, more edgy, more alleys, etc	
43	Downtown Austin Blog	Destination	78701	No	Yes	Bike	Walk/Bike Around	Great Idea	
44	DAA	Destination	N/A	Yes	No	Walk from Office	Working	Hope city goes through with it for more places	
45	Word of Mouth	Destination	78701	Yes	Yes	Walk	Lunch	"It's silly" we should focus on the parks we have already	
46	City Council Agenda	Destination	78702	Yes	No	Walk	Forget the world	Got me to go into a space I otherwise wouldn't-safe & clean	
47	DAA Newsletter	Destination		Yes	No	Walk	On break from work	Love it, fun. Don't think people know that they are welcome, barricades and signage	
48	Walk by	Chance	N/A	Yes	No	Walk	Working	Love the concept. Rich history in alley. Might not be sustainable on a large scale without business involvement	
				Yes	No	Walk	Working	Reminds me of Joey Santori. Would like to see more	

20Ft Wide Survey Results									
How did you hear about 20ft Wide?	Was this event a destination or did you chance upon it?	Are you a resident or visitor?	Zipcode	Do you work downtown ?	Do you live downtown ?	How did you get the the event?	What else will you do while downtown?	Do you have any comments to share about the event?	
49	Works @ Austin Club							Is the art done? Like it built felt like there could be more art.	
50	Walking by	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A	Walk	Working	He added something to the defunct electrical box- three black bats	
51	Facebook/Blog	Resident	78704	No	No	Walk	Coffee	When are you going to do this again?	
52	City Employee	Resident	78704	Yes	Yes	Drove	Coffee	Would love to utilize this space, a place to meet for appointments	
53	Here & There	Resident	N/A	Yes	No	Walk	Meetings/Lunch	The photos drew me to it. Great use of an unused street.	
54	512 Family	Resident	78703	No	Yes	Bus	Event at City Hall on way home	Interesting- Downtown needs more quiet places to hang out at lunch & after	
55	Fusebox	Resident	78704	No	No	Drove	Bus Ride	Cool! Glad you guys are doing this.	
56	Word of Mouth	Resident	78759	Yes	No	Long Board	Lunch	Great!	
57	Sister in law/ Facebook	Resident	78745	No	No	Drove	Fusebox Talk	This should be done more	
58	Chronicle	Resident	78703	No	No	Drove	Unknown	Should have more art in public spaces & love art commissioners	
59	Pecha Kucha- AAA	Resident	78746	No	No	Drove	Lunch	Fantastic/ Also went to Pecha Kucha	
60	Chronicle- AA Statesman	Resident	78746	Yes	No	Drove	Lunch	Fabulous use in urban space	
61	Heather Way	Resident	78733	No	No	Car	Lunch	Reclaiming an old alley that would have otherwise been a lost space made it fabulous!	
62	Friend	Resident	78748	No	No	Car	Eat, go to a few museums	Great idea! Great way to turn a space into something inhabitable for both old & young	
63	Friend	Visitor	14467	No	No	Car	N/A	I think its cool. Love the colors in the dead space. Wish it could stay up all the time	
								Would like to see the businesses, more projects to do and take home. Love the interactiveness and want to be involved in making.	

Appendix C: Resources on Alleys

Alley Event Handbook and Alley Network Project: www.alleynetworkproject.com;
<http://alleynetworkproject.com/what-weve-learned/activating-your-alley/>.

City of Austin, Downtown Austin Plan (Dec. 8, 2011):
<http://www.austintexas.gov/downtownplan>

City of Austin, Green Alley Demonstration Project Website:
<http://austintexas.gov/page/2012-demonstration-project>

City of Brisbane, Australia, Vibrant laneways program:
<http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/planning-building/planning-guidelines-and-tools/urban-design-projects/vibrant-laneways-small-spaces/index.htm>.

City of Fort Collins, Downtown Alley Enhancement Project and Alleys Master Plan (Dec. 1, 2008): <http://www.downtownfortcollins.org/alleys.html>.

City of Melbourne, Arcades and Lanes Website:
<http://www.thatsmelbourne.com.au/Gettingaroundthecity/walks/Pages/ArcadesandLanes.aspx>

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<http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/ForResidents/StreetCleaningandGraffiti/Pages/LoveYourLaneway.aspx>

City of Perth, Australia, Forgotten Spaces—Revitalizing Perth’s Laneways Initiative:
<http://www.perth.wa.gov.au/planning-development/city-initiatives/city-laneways-enhancement-and-forgotten-spaces>

City of San Francisco, Living Alleys Project: <http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/reclaiming-roadway-space/living-alleys/>.

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http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/120375/ManagementOfLaneways.pdf

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<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/business/business-support/grants-and-sponsorship/finegrain-matching-grants>

Mary Fialko and Jennifer Hampton, Activating Alleys for a Lively City:
<http://greenfutures.washington.edu/publications.php>.

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<http://m.theatlanticcities.com/design/2012/02/why-alleys-deserve-your-attention/1249/>

Sara M. Hammerschmidt, "New Life for Downtown Alleys: Creating an Open Space Network in Downtown Austin, Texas," Master's Report for Master of Science in Community and Regional Planning, University of Texas at Austin (May 2009):
http://soa.utexas.edu/work/publicspace/home/SaraHammerschmidt_MastersReport_May09.pdf

End Notes

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- ⁱ See Appendix A for a list of the workgroup members and other project partners.
- ⁱⁱ Sara Hammerschmidt, in her UT master's thesis, chronicles the history of Austin's downtown alleys up to 2009". Sara M. Hammerschmidt, "New Life for Downtown Alleys: Creating an Open Space Network in Downtown Austin, Texas," Master's Report for Master of Science in Community and Regional Planning, University of Texas at Austin (May 2009), available at http://soa.utexas.edu/work/publicspace/home/SaraHammerschmidt_MastersReport_May09.pdf.
- ⁱⁱⁱ City of Austin, Downtown Austin Plan (Dec. 8, 2011), p. 9, <http://www.austintexas.gov/downtownplan>.
- ^{iv} Hammerschmidt, *supra*, p. 36.
- ^v Hammerschmidt, *supra*, p. 41.
- ^{vi} "Renovation of Downtown Alley Proposed," *Daily Texan* (circa 1970s; exact date of article unknown).
- ^{vii} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, Policy 3.1, at 24.
- ^{viii} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, pp. 134, 146.
- ^{ix} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, TP-1.3, pp. 146-47.
- ^x Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, p. 2.
- ^{xi} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, pp. 36, 115.
- ^{xii} Because of Fox News's use of the northern section of the alley for entering the station's parking lot, the workgroup limited the activation project to the southern half of the alley.
- ^{xiii} A more complete list of partners and participants for 20ft Wide can be found in Appendix A.
- ^{xiv} Chris Jackson, "The Biggest Party Ever in Alley Number 111," *Urban Land Magazine* (Aug. 2013), <http://urbanland.uli.org/Articles/2013/Aug/JacksonAlleys>.
- ^{xv} See Appendix B for a copy of the survey instrument.
- ^{xvi} Joy Diaz, "Can the Lowly Alleyway Transform Downtown Austin?" *KUT News* (Mar. 18, 2013).
- ^{xvii} Jan Buchholz, "Here's an art demo up your alley," *Austin Business Journal* (Apr. 18, 2013), available at <http://www.bizjournals.com/austin/blog/creative/2013/04/heres-an-art-demo-thats-up-your-alley.html?page=all>.
- ^{xviii} "Austin's Alleys Could Come Become the Next Art Spot," *KEYE TV* (Apr. 12, 2013), available at <http://www.keyetv.com/news/features/waste-local/stories/austins-alleys-could-come-next-art-spot-69.shtml>.
- ^{xix} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, p. 119.
- ^{xx} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, p. 119.
- ^{xxi} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*.
- ^{xxii} Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, p. 119.
- ^{xxiii} See Downtown Austin Plan, *supra*, p. 91.
- ^{xxiv} City of Austin, "Green Alley Demonstration Project," <http://austintexas.gov/page/2012-demonstration-project>.
- ^{xxv} For an excellent example, see Mary Fialko and Jennifer Hampton, *Activating Alleys for a Lively City*, p. 28-29, <http://greenfutures.washington.edu/publications.php>.
- ^{xxvi} Hammerschmidt, *supra*, p. 62-66.
- ^{xxvii} City of Fort Collins, Downtown Alley Enhancement Project and Alleys Master Plan (Dec. 1, 2008): <http://www.downtownfortcollins.org/alleys.html>.

^{xxviii} For a brief overview of Melbourne’s laneways, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lanes_and_arcades_of_Melbourne.

^{xxix} City of Melbourne, “Love Your Laneway,” <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/ForResidents/StreetCleaningandGraffiti/Pages/LoveYourLaneway.aspx>.

^{xxx} City of San Francisco Planning Department, “San Francisco’s Alleys,” <http://www.sf-planning.org/modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=1961>; and City of San Francisco, “Living Alleys Project,” <http://www.sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/reclaiming-roadway-space/living-alleys/>.

^{xxxi} City of Sydney, “Laneway Art Program,” <http://www.cityartsydney.com.au/cityart/projects/lanewayart/>.

^{xxxii} City of Sydney, “Central Sydney Laneways,” <http://sydneyyoursay.com.au/laneways>; City of Sydney, Fine Grain Matching Grant Program, <http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/business/business-support/grants-and-sponsorship/finegrain-matching-grants>.

^{xxxiii} City of Brisbane, Australia, “Vibrant laneways program,” <http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/planning-building/planning-guidelines-and-tools/urban-design-projects/vibrant-laneways-small-spaces/index.htm>.
<http://www.planning.org.au/documents/item/3253>

^{xxxiv} City of Perth, Australia, “Forgotten Spaces—Revitalizing Perth’s Laneways Initiative,” <http://www.perth.wa.gov.au/planning-development/city-initiatives/city-laneways-enhancement-and-forgotten-spaces>.

^{xxxv} City of Seattle, “Clear Alleys Program,” <http://seattlecap.wm.com>.

^{xxxvi} City of Seattle, “Street Vacations,” <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/streetvacations.htm>.

^{xxxvii} For an image of the gates in Maiden Alley, see <http://sanfrancisco.about.com/od/photogalleries/ig/Photo-Tour--Barbary-Coast/Maiden-Lane.htm>.

Parking Plan Guide

Mobility SME Toolkit



Table of Contents

- **Why Develop a Parking Plan?**
- **Key Components of a Parking Study**
- **Tips for Successful Outcomes**
- **Best Practice Parking Strategies**



Why Develop a Parking Plan?



Tip

Typically, a parking study is requested when members of a community or neighborhood see regular front-door parking problems impacting the ease of finding a space. The front-door problem is often real, even if ample parking is nearby. A parking study reveals where parking is available and should recommend management practices to better utilize spare capacity, with supply enhancements only if cost-effective.

Most municipalities do not have a comprehensive or current understanding of what parking exists in their communities, how it is managed including regulations such as time limits and price, and how it is used by residents, employees, and visitors.

A parking plan helps to support community goals and ongoing planning efforts by addressing parking access to key destinations, downtowns, residences, public facilities, places of employment, etc. It should also provide an objective perspective on parking demand in a given area, understand public feedback on parking conditions, and develop parking policy, management and supply solutions to address identified problems.

The best parking plans begin with a thorough analysis of existing conditions, management practices and associated policies.

Common Parking Plan Goals

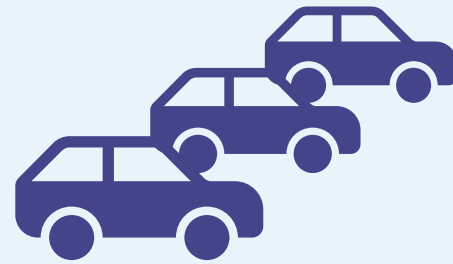
- *Support economic development*
- *Overcome negative perceptions of parking system*
- *Improve the experience for different users such as residents, employees, customers and visitors*
- *Document parking supply and demand*
- *Improve the management of the parking system*
- *Identify and recommend parking supply efficiencies/opportunities to improve parking in areas of higher demand*
- *Develop flexible parking standards to support development*

Key Components of a Parking Plan



Parking Inventory Analysis

- Mappable database
- On-street regulations
- Off-street restrictions
- Public & privately owned spaces



Parking Demand Analysis

- Counting all cars across multiple hours
- “Typical” conditions
- Weekdays & weekends
- Utilization numbers and percentages



Operational & Financial Management Analysis

- Enforcement & hours
- Violations schedule & collections rate
- Meter/facility revenues
- Debt service, parking fund, maintenance costs



Parking Demand & Zoning Analysis

- Land use projections
- Assess parking requirements
- Peer & national standards reviews
- Forecast demand based on existing demand patterns



Public Engagement Process

- Key stakeholders
- Public surveys
- In-person workshops
- Language considerations



Strategies & Recommendations

- Operations/management
- Policy/zoning
- Supply & access
- Customer information



Final Plan

- Clear data & maps
- Actionable recommendations
- Responsible parties
- Projections

Parking Plan Tips for Successful Outcomes



Develop Parking Inventory

- *Pick a study area at least one-block bigger than focus area to identify any spill-over parking*

- *Not necessary to count small private driveway parking*



Conduct Parking Demand Analysis

- *Make data entry simple (paper is ok!)*

- *Walking can be fastest method. One person can count one mile in one hour*

- *Turnover/length of stay valuable but alternately obtained through a user survey*



Analyze Parking Operational & Financial Management Structure

- *Enforcement span often mismatched with parking demand*

- *Often difficult to identify all financials when revenues & expenses are general fund transfers*

- *Many people dodge payment/enforcement. Revenue projections will be higher than reality.*



Conduct Parking Demand Model & Zoning Analysis

- *Use ULI / ITE rates and shared parking methodologies for comparisons*

- *Standardize parking requirement rates (per 1k sf or per unit) for comparisons*



Engage Public & Stakeholders

- *Talk with all related departments*

- *Survey perceptions & actual experience*

- *Hours of merchant & resident availability don't match*



Create Parking Plan Strategies

- *Don't overburden police with enforcement*

- *Liability fears of shared parking are red herrings*

- *Reveal costs of building / maintaining parking*



Develop Draft & Final Parking Plan

- *Accessible infographics help communicate a boring topic effectively*

- *Address all users & readers*

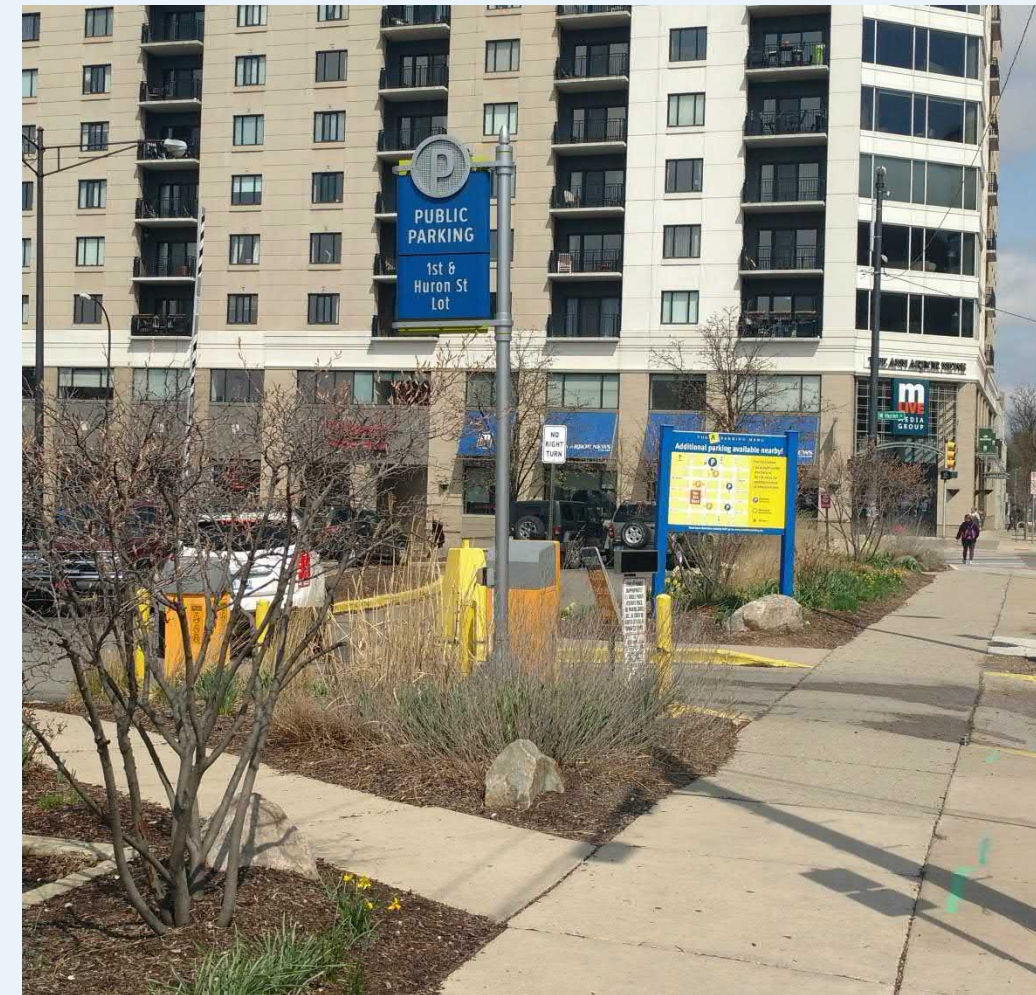
- *The best plans are compelling!*

Best Practices: Shared Parking Districts



West Hartford, CT – Consolidated Lots

- Town worked to consolidate privately owned lots
- For customers – just one big lot
- Town maintains – striping, snow removal, etc.
- Paid parking
- More info: <https://www.westhartfordct.gov/town-departments/parking> (“Brace Lot”)



Ann Arbor, MN – Streamlined Public System

- BID manages parking on behalf of City
- Includes parking on private lots
- Signage/wayfinding bring private lots into public system
- Parking revenues fund parking management AND transit, travel information, and a commuter pass program
- More info: <https://www.a2dda.org/getting-around/drive/>

Best Practices: Parking Payment Technologies



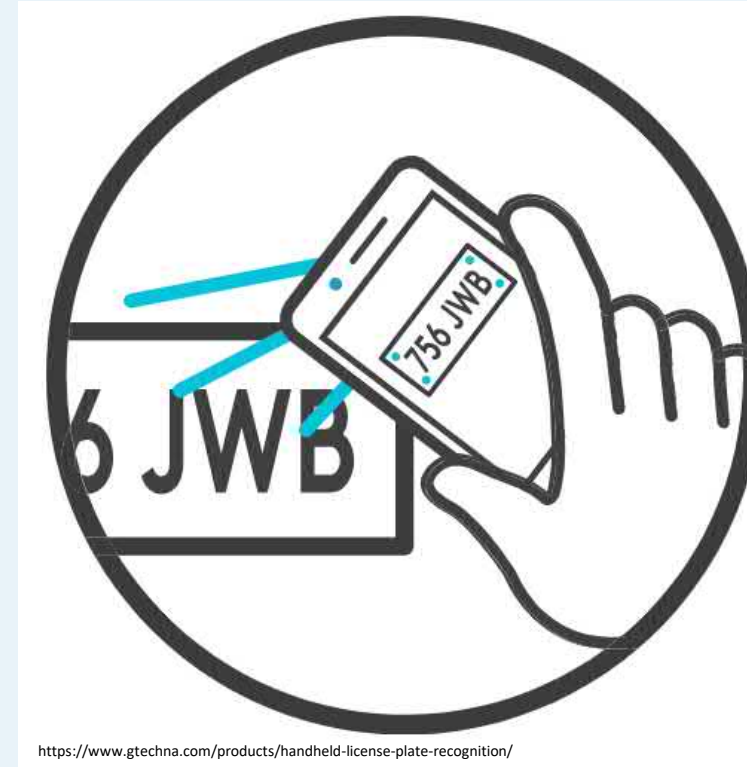
Kiosk

- Can use credit card or cash
- Pay-by-plate / Pay-and-display
- Can overlay with pay-by-cell
- Easy to program to make changes



Smart Meter

- Can use credit card or coins
- Easy to program to change price



License Plate Recognition (LPR)

- Capture additional data such as turnover
- Backup images for violations
- Ability to use license plates for permitting



Pay-by-Phone

- Overlap with existing meter tech OR
- Use phone only for payment
- Users can extend remotely
- Users typically don't mind paying fee for convenience of using app

Best Practices: Parking Wayfinding



Salem, MA – Blue P

- Blue “P” is universally understood
- Overall wayfinding scheme includes parking
- Ped-level signage helps you **return to your car** as well as find a place to park



Beverly, MA – Signage for Zones

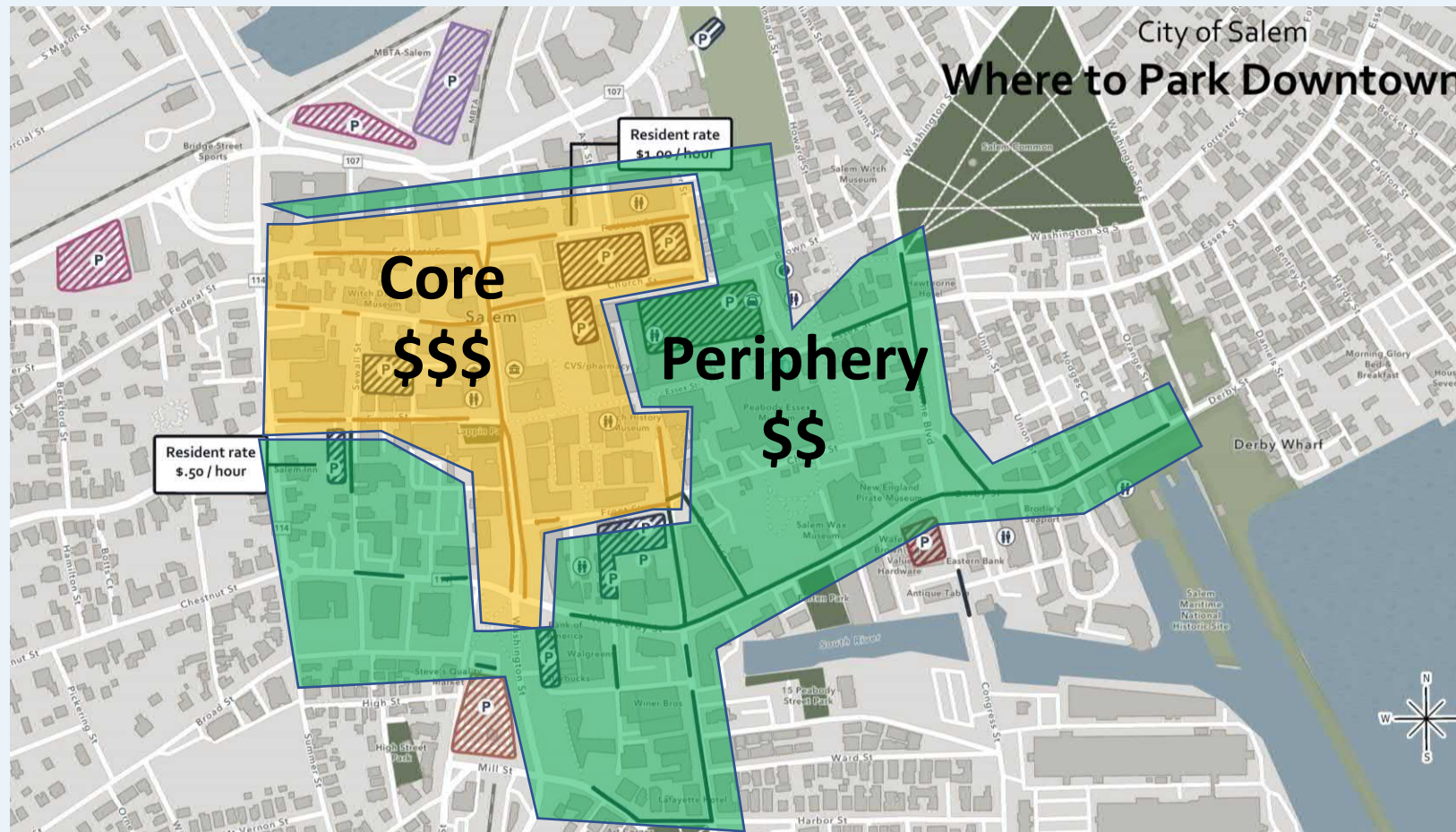
- Signage matches pricing zone
- Actual price not on sign (easy to change)
- More info: <https://www.parkbeverly.com/visitors>



Hanover, NH – Short- and Long-Term Guidance

- Wayfinding includes options for short and long-term
- Intercept people before they get to the heart of Downtown

Best Practices: Parking Pricing Strategies



Salem, MA – Pricing Tiers

- Prices tiered by location relative to core
- Creates availability in key locations
- Creates options for all users – pay a little more to go directly to your destination, pay a little less outside of the core and stay longer



Haverhill, MA – Time Of Day Adjustments

- Implemented paid parking in 2011
- Originally: 3:00 pm – 8:00 pm to create availability at key times
- Recently expanded to 10:00 am to 8:00 pm
- More information:
<https://www.cityofhaverhill.com/Paid%20Parking%20program%20updates.pdf>

Best Practices: Parking Design



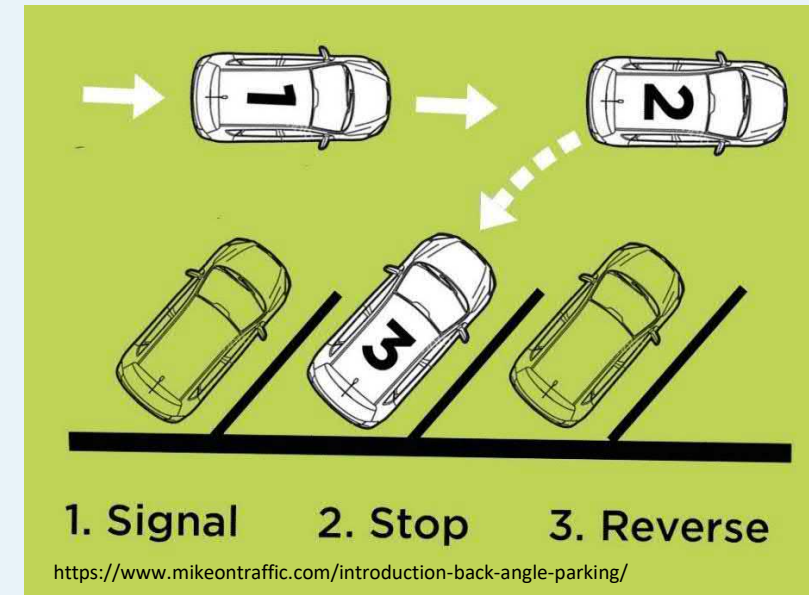
Topsfield, MA – Parking Space Reuse

- Seasonal
- One parking space = 8 dining chairs
- Temporary materials
- Aesthetically pleasing



Somerville, MA – Parking Space Reuse

- Seasonal
- Bike corral
- Can be removed in winter
- Protected by flex post
- One parking space = ~10 parked bikes



Somerville, MA – Reverse Angle Parking

- Data showed speeds decreased 15%
- Safer for cyclist visibility
- Opening door directs passengers to curb
- Safer loading/unloading trunk

Best Practices: Future Parking Needs/Trends (i.e. Electric Vehicle Stations)



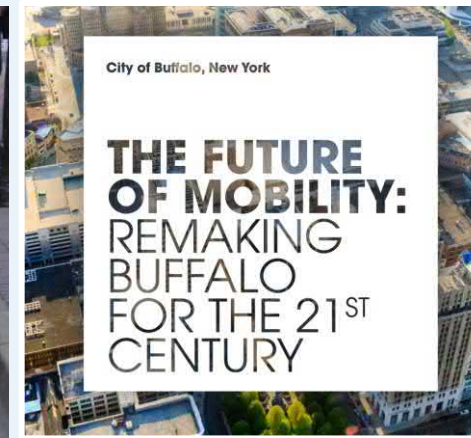
Beverly, MA – Public EV Stations

- Level 2 Charge Point chargers
- More info: <https://www.beverlyma.gov/712/Electric-Vehicles>



Arlington, VA – On-Street Carsharing spaces

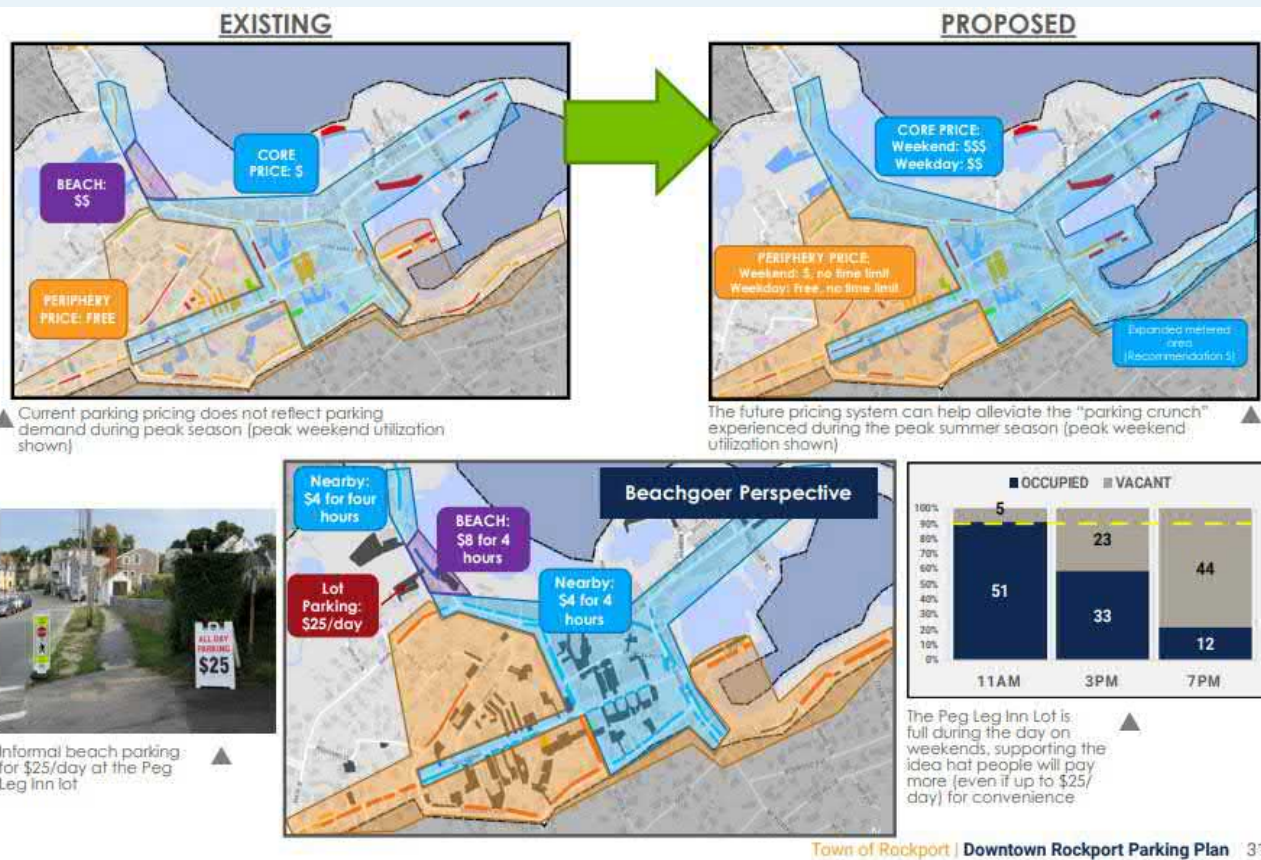
- Making valuable spaces open to more members of the public



Buffalo, NY – Imagining a Multimodal Future

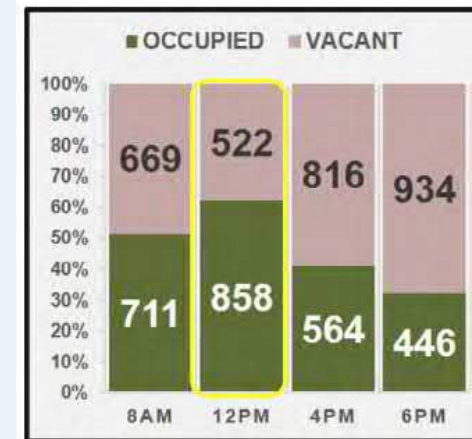
- Held a multi-day charette to understand goals for future of mobility in city
- Create a plan for a Mobility and Equity Innovation Zone
- More info: <https://www.stantec.com/en/ideas/the-future-of-mobility-remaking-buffalo-for-the-21st-century>

Case Studies: Demand Patterns as seen in Regional Parking Plans



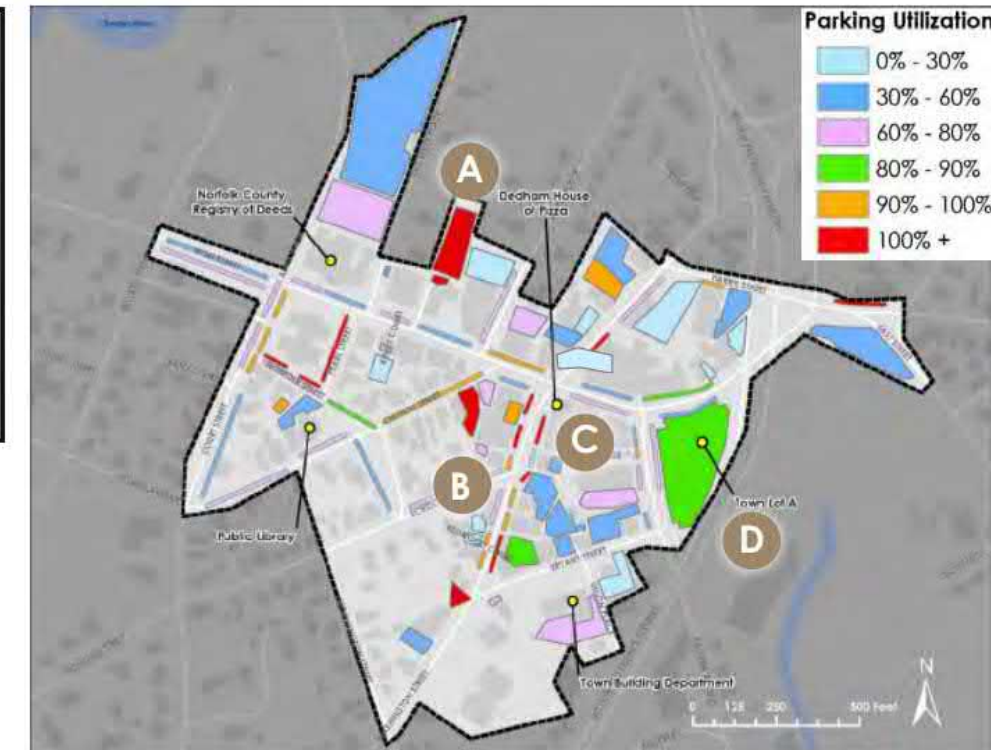
Rockport, MA – Seasonal Parking Demand

- High demand for on & off-street parking adjacent to recreational and commercial destinations
- Existing priced parking does not reflect demand and requires tiered parking zones to better distribute parking
- Remote, long-term parking for beachgoers needs to be promoted to encourage people to park farther away
- More info:
- https://www.rockportma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1141/f/uploads/downtownrockportparkingplan_20190208_draft_1.pdf



Observations

- A** District Court employee lot over capacity
- B** Washington Street on-street parking highly utilized
- C** Lots north of Bryant Street under-utilized
- D** Town Lot A ideally utilized



Dedham, MA – Downtown Parking Demand

- Develop a parking plan that quantifies parking demand in a commercial core/downtown
- Identify public and private parking facilities that reflect high demand and target underutilized facilities that have additional capacity, particularly during peak weekday and weekend periods
- More info:
- <https://www.mass.gov/doc/mobility-town-of-dedham/download>

Case Studies: Shuttle & Jitney Services



Cambridge, MA – Commuter Shuttle

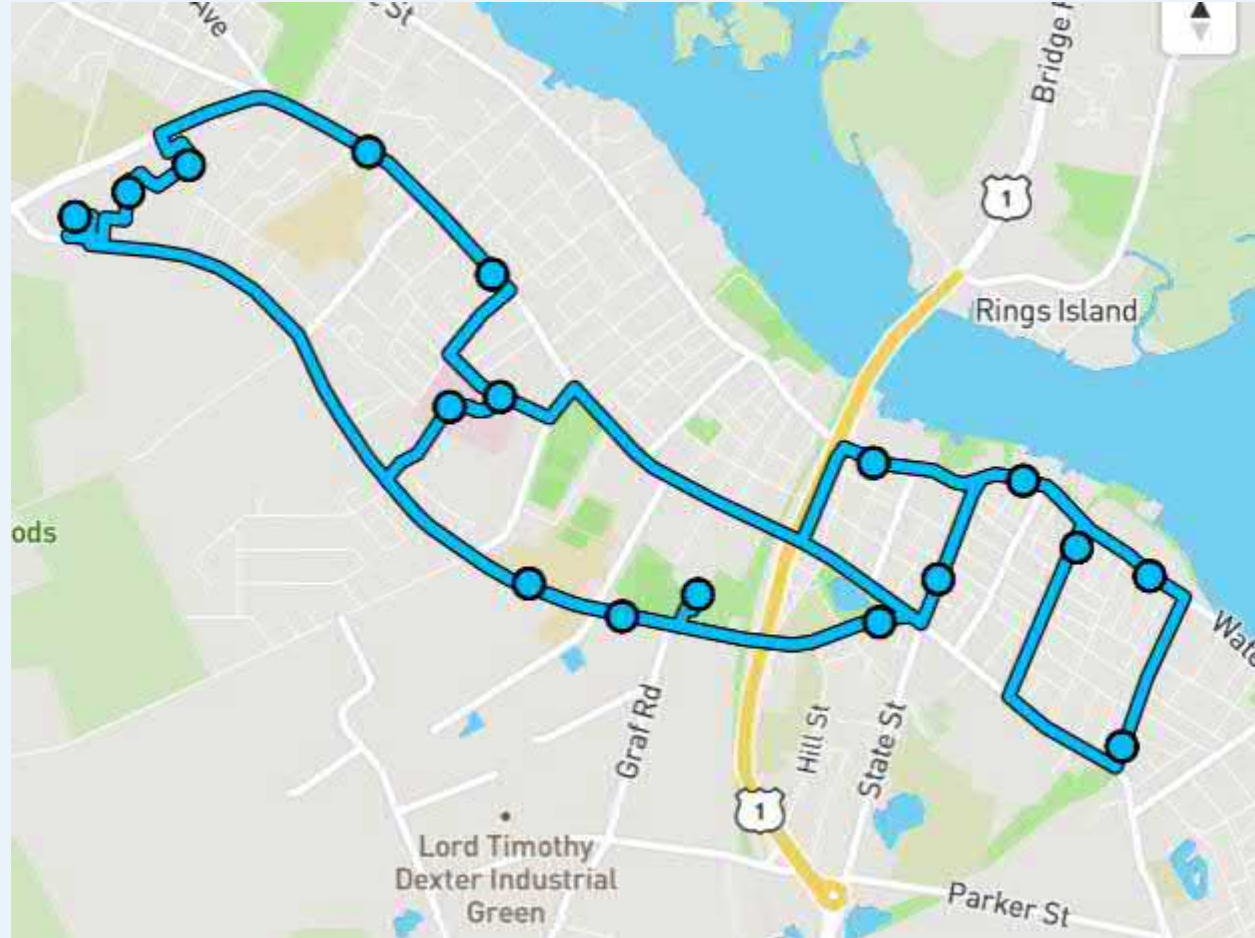
- Shuttle Stop Signage at Alewife Station, MA
- Fare-free during COVID-19, however fare collection is resuming with the integration of mobile ticketing
- Runs between Alewife Station and office campuses
- More info: <https://128bc.org/schedules/alewife-route-c/>



Rockport, MA – Beach Shuttle

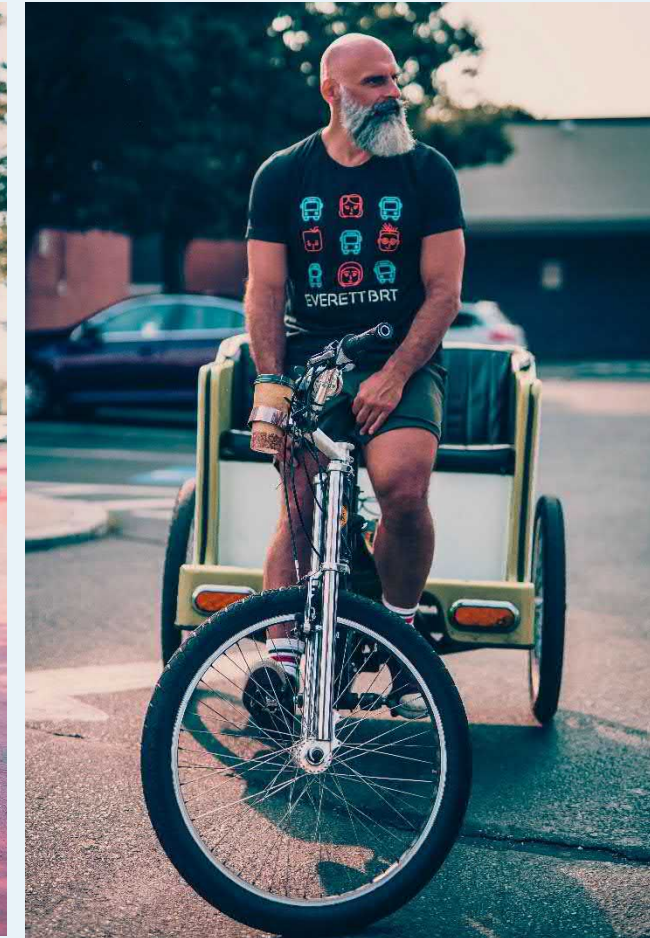
- Shuttle service during peak season that connects visitors from remote parking lot to Downtown and recreational attractions
- Advertised as a “Park N Ride” shuttle
- Costs \$1/person each way (with reduced prices for seniors, children under five, and persons with disabilities)
- More info:
- <https://rockportusa.com/parking-in-rockport/>

Case Studies: Shuttle & Jitney Services



Newburyport, MA – Regional Shuttle

- Operated by MVRTA
- Runs on weekdays and weekends and circulates through Downtown, regional attractions, plazas, and commuter rail station
- Integrated with Charlie Card MBTA fare system
- More info: <https://www.mvrta.com/alerts/new-route-57-newburyport-shuttle/>



Everett (Boston BRT Program), MA – Pedicab Service

- Free pedicab service on Broadway
- Provided drop-off/pick-up services to bus stops and key destinations
- Created a more interactive way to connect first & last mile services for Everett residents

Case Studies: Shuttle & Jitney Services



Atlantic City, NJ – Jitney Service

- Operated by private vendor
- Free service from bus stations, resorts, local destinations, and rail terminal
- More info: <https://www.jitneyac.com/atlantic-city-rail-terminal>



Boston (Seaport District), MA – First/Last Mile Shuttle

- “Circuit” shuttle that provides free service for Seaport visitors and residents
- Electric shuttles that can be hailed from the street or requested for pick-up through a mobile phone application
- Rides are offered all week
- More info: <https://www.ridecircuit.com/boston>