



Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

Greenfield

**The Deliberate
Downtown**



FinePoint
Associates LLC


dhcd
Massachusetts
RAPID RECOVERY PLANS

Acknowledgements



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Cover Photos: FinePoint Associates

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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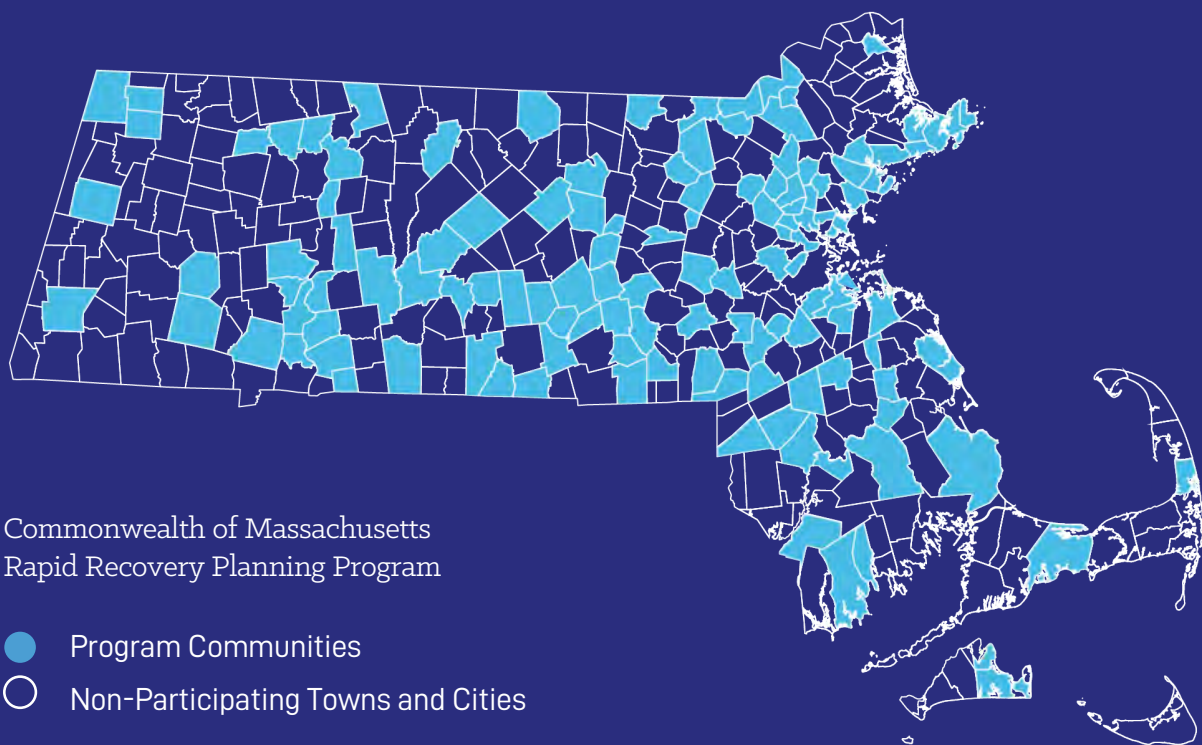
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125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

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.



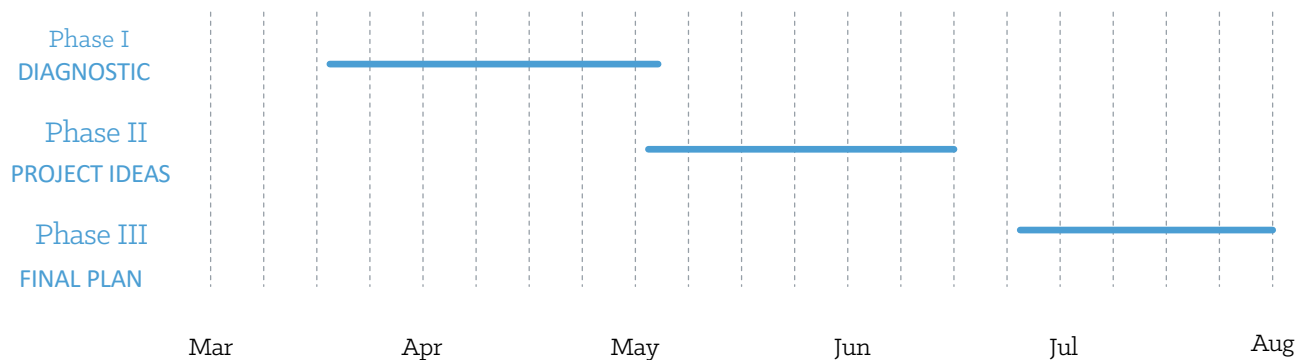
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Downtown Greenfield has been hit hard by COVID-19. Sales have declined, foot traffic is down, and re-opening for several restaurants and other businesses is yet undetermined. Remote working coupled with residents turning to online purchasing have decreased the number of people coming to Downtown. Seventy-two per cent (72%) of Downtown businesses reported a year-over-year revenue loss in 2020, and 66% indicated that on-site customer counts at the beginning of 2021 were still way below pre-COVID numbers.

However, entrepreneurial energy and community spirit remain alive and strong in Greenfield. Despite COVID-19, two new businesses opened in Downtown; the Crossroads Cultural District Committee, working with the City and other partners, managed to install six giant bee statues painted by local artists; and many creative new outdoor dining spaces emerged. Plus, a very large number of business owners, residents, and community leaders came together to work on the Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP). (An overview of the process and community engagement activity is provided Section 3.)

The Diagnostic Phase was instrumental in analyzing existing conditions and determining appropriate strategies – the key findings are summarized in Section 1 below. A synopsis of the final RRP Recommendations is provided in Section 2. The recommendations for new social gathering spaces, implementation of a marketing initiative, and physical improvements are all aimed at bringing customers back to Downtown. The recommended new storefront improvement program will make many more businesses eligible for assistance and promote high-quality storefront treatments, while the proposed sign bylaw revisions will facilitate signage improvements to increase business visibility and aesthetic appeal. The recommendations regarding the Request for Proposal (RFP) process for the historic First National Bank and the suggested strategy to promote residential development will encourage a mix of new uses and increase vitality.

1. Diagnostic Key Findings

Physical Environment

- Downtown is very walkable.
- The 100% Corner is 90% Inactive.
- Downtown is missing a centrally located, visible, and programmable public open space.
- The Fiske Avenue alley area presents an opportunity for potential activation.
- Downtown Greenfield displays many examples of public art and there is opportunity for more.
- Loitering and panhandling may create the perception of an unsafe environment.
- Wayfinding is limited.
- More storefront elements are needed.
- Downtown has several key opportunity properties.
- Downtown residential development is limited.

Business Environment

- Downtown Greenfield encompasses over a million square feet of commercial space with over 700,000 square feet on the first floor. Twelve per cent (12%) of first-floor units are vacant.
- Downtown Greenfield is lucky to have several recreation and entertainment-related anchors, although many were shuttered for over a year.
- Compared to other RRP Districts, Downtown Greenfield was hit somewhat harder by COVID impacts.
- Top priorities for Downtown Greenfield businesses include business recruitment, safety and cleanliness

improvements, and more cultural events.

- District marketing and branding could be improved to help attract customers. Getting people back in the habit of coming to Downtown post-COVID is critical.

Customer Base

- Downtown Greenfield has an opportunity to attract people living in the surrounding area as well as non-resident market segments such as visitors and employees.
- Sales leakage may point to opportunities for Downtown businesses.
- Downtown users are dissatisfied with store selection, business hours, physical appearance, cleanliness, and public spaces.
- If the remote working trend continues, Downtown Greenfield will continue to be negatively impacted, particularly in the restaurant and retail sectors.
- There are a few regularly occurring events in the Downtown and surrounding area that attract visitors.

Admin Capacity

- Downtown zoning focuses primarily on the "private realm" and pays little attention to the "public realm."
- Downtown sign regulations limit the variety of signage and lack definition and clarity.
- There is no designated organization with a dependable funding source managing Downtown improvement and overseeing recovery efforts.

2. Summary of Recommendations

Public Realm	Create a plaza at Court Square in front of City Hall to invigorate Downtown by accommodating social gatherings, civic events, and other community activities.
	Complete the planned pocket park and activate the adjacent Fiske Avenue Alley with enhancements (e.g., overhead lights, greenery, seating) to complement the park and adjacent eateries, and serve as a small event space.
	Install additional streetscape elements (curb-to-storefront) that would complement the planned curb-to-curb Main Street roadway improvement.
Private Realm	Create a storefront/signage improvement program that is designed with more flexibility, allowing additional businesses to participate and encouraging high-quality storefront treatments.
	Complete a 100% Corner Demonstration Project with multiple improvements (e.g., mural, large vertical banners/ improved storefront treatments at corner establishments, streetscape elements).
Revenue/ Sales	Create a marketing initiative for Downtown and the Crossroads Cultural District by incorporating an improved "Visit Greenfield" website, a "Welcome Back to Downtown" campaign, and pledge to support local.
	Implement a wayfinding system to get people to and around Downtown that builds on previous preliminary wayfinding sign design work.
	Develop a Business Directory and Community Information Kiosk to make customers aware of the offerings available in Downtown.
Admin Capacity	Develop a Parking Benefit District to provide a predicable funding source to support Downtown improvements and an organization that can manage programs and projects.
	Revise the existing sign-bylaw regulations to encourage a variety of signage in Downtown and allow businesses to have more than one sign.
Tenant Mix	Implement a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to solicit developer interest in the redevelopment of the First National Bank for a use that would bring people to Downtown.
	Explore the use of UCH-TIF program (Urban Center Housing Tax Increment Financing) to support and encourage residential development in upper floors of Downtown properties.

"Values we want Downtown Greenfield to Exhibit," produced with community input at the RRP Downtown Forum, May 27, 2021



3. Process and Community Engagement

The FinePoint Associates Team, in the role of “Plan Facilitator,” worked in collaboration and partnership with the Mayor of Greenfield, the Greenfield Department of Community and Economic Development and representatives from Sustainable Greenfield Implementation Committee (SGIC), Greenfield Business Association (GBA), Progress Partnership, Crossroads Cultural District, and the business community and residents of Greenfield.

The FinePoint Associates Team conducted a physical assessment of Downtown; collected and analyzed real estate, business, and market data; summarized findings, prepared presentations for several community meetings, and completed a diagnostic report; researched best practices and potential approaches to address issues that were raised; and drafted recommendations and prepared a project profile for each priority recommendation.

Stakeholders engaged in the process and provided input through several activities and input channels.

- SGIC Orientation & Physical Assessment Teams Activity
- Walk About Tours with Community Leaders, Business Owners, and Residents
- Initial Assessment Presentation and Listening Session
- Business Survey of Owners and Representatives
- Interviews with Downtown Organization Representatives
- Review and Incorporation of Results from Consumer Preference Survey (conducted Oct. 2020)
- Community Forum — Diagnostic Findings and Discussion
- Input Regarding Priorities — Greenfield Mayor, Community and Economic Development Director, Ad Hoc Advisory Group
- Community Feedback on Draft Recommendations

Physical Assessment Teams Activity with SGIC



Margo Jones, Carole Collins, and City Councilor Phil Elmer



Lindsay Rowe and Laurie DiDonato



MJ Adams (Community and Economic Development Director) and Marlo Warner (Director of Public Works)



George Touloumtzis (Planning Board, SGIC) and Hannah Rechtschaffen (SGIC)

Walk About Tours



MJ Adams, Community and Economic Development Director (left) and Mayor Roxanne Wedegartner (right) kicking off the East Side Tour. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Some of the West Side Walk About Tour participants; (left to right) Laura Gordon, Greenfield Police Department, Hannah Rechtschaffen (SGIC), Grady Vigneau (Greenfield YMCA), Rachel Roberts (GBA), Tim Grade, Downtown Property Owner, City Councilor Doug Mayo, Otis Wheeler (Downtown Greenfield Neighborhood Association). Photo: FinePoint Associates

Business Representatives



"Wouldn't this be a perfect spot for public art — maybe a metal sculpture?" Rachel Roberts, Greenfield Business Association. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Tim Fisk, owner of Plum Boutique, who is opening a new salon in Downtown (Parker on Main), and Heidi Weeks, Manager of Plum, sharing their thoughts about Downtown Greenfield. Photo: FinePoint Associates

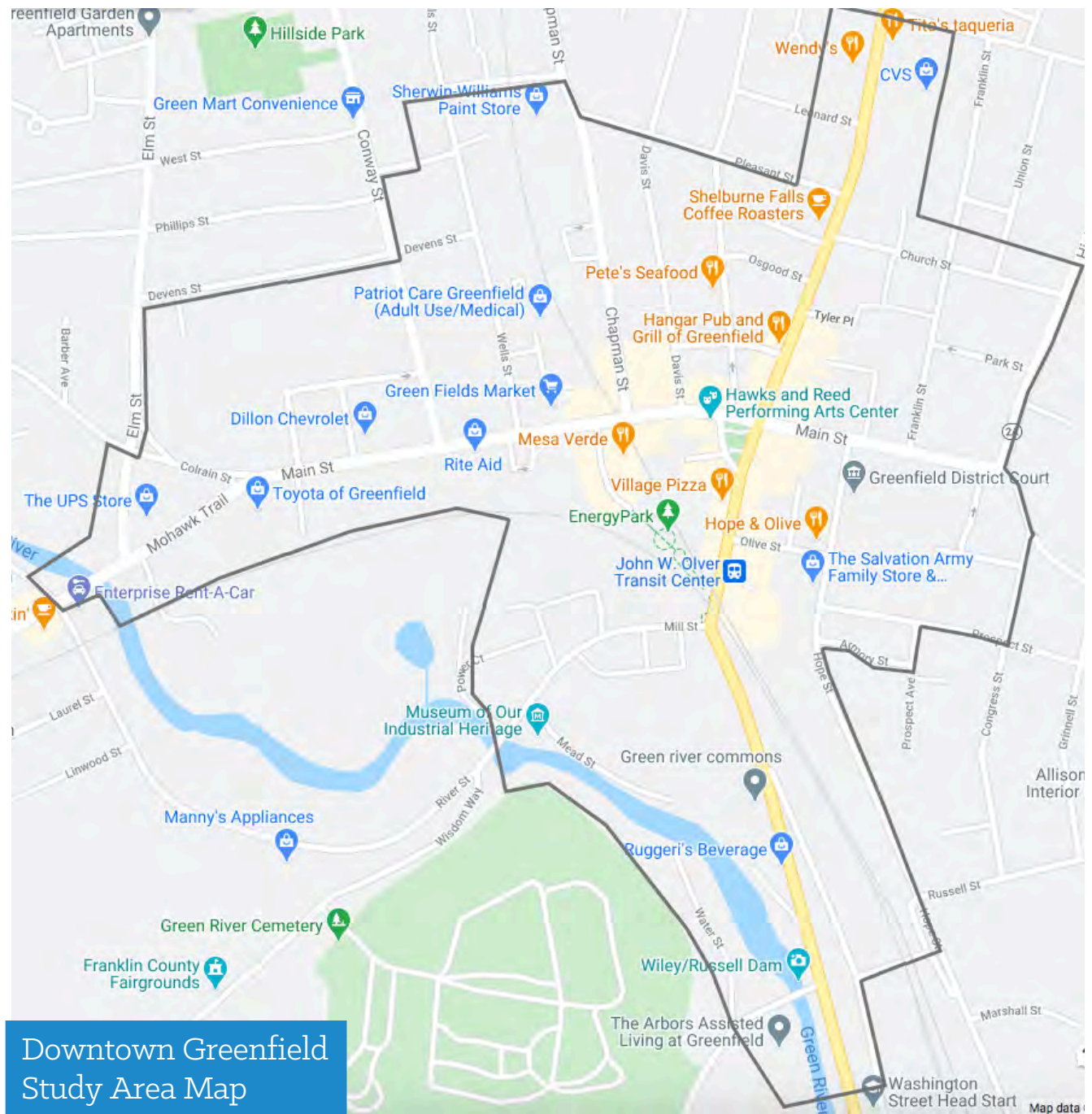


Keith Bailey (Greenfield Community College) discussing concept for potential GCC Entrepreneurship Center in Downtown. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Rachel Katz, artist and owner of The Greenfield Gallery, showing the prototype for the new Downtown Bee Statues. Photo: FinePoint Associates

4. Downtown Greenfield Study Area Map



Diagnostic

Physical Environment



Key Findings – Physical Environment



Downtown is very walkable.

Downtown Greenfield has a compact development pattern making it very walkable. The typical block length on Main Street is about 300 to 400 feet, and it is ideal for pedestrians, accessible to other modes of transportation, and good at dispersing traffic.

Main Street has good street enclosure with buildings placed at the edge of the sidewalk (street right-of-way), which reinforces the pedestrian environment. The average distance from building to building across the street is 100 feet, and as most buildings are 2 to 4 stories (50-feet tall), the ratio of building height to building separation across the street is about 1:2, which is good for a traditional downtown. Main Street also has a good terminal vista looking west toward the hills.



The 100% Corner is 90% Inactive.

In Downtown Greenfield, the 100% Corner is at Main Street/Federal Street/Bank Row. This is the main intersection where first impressions are made. However, there is minimal activation of the 100% Corner. For example, the Hawks and Reed Performing Arts Center and the rarely used Pushkin Building have no visible signage from the intersection to alert drivers of this downtown anchor; and the Greenfield Savings Bank has landscaping between the building and the sidewalk creating a barrier for pedestrians. Other municipalities have enhanced their streetscape treatments at the main intersection (i.e., curb extensions, planters, bollards, ornamental lights and signs) to appeal to drivers and support more activation by adjacent storefronts.



Downtown is missing a centrally located, visible, and programmable public open space.

Unlike many communities in New England, Greenfield does not have a large common. Veterans Park and Court Square are visible and centrally located but are also formal and too small to host large civic gatherings unless expanded. Energy Park hosts civic gatherings, but this is not noticeable from Main Street. A large, highly visible and programmable public open space for large civic gatherings on Main Street would increase foot traffic by bringing in residents, workers, and tourists.



The Fiske Avenue alley area presents an opportunity for potential activation.

Community representatives shared a vision for a new pocket park that would replace the public parking lot off Miles Street. The alley adjacent to the proposed pocket park could be activated with improvements such as overhead lighting and seating to create a lively atmosphere.



Downtown Greenfield displays many examples of public art, and there is opportunity for more.

In Downtown Greenfield, the murals at Veterans Park and City Parking Garage, the bird mural, and the angel wings are good examples of how blank walls can become interesting spaces for public art. Other large blank walls that could be potential spaces for murals are the ones at TD Bank and Wilson's.



Loitering and panhandling may create the perception of an unsafe environment.

During our assessment and in previous community surveys, we heard several comments about the presence of intoxicated individuals, drug deals, and homeless people.



Downtown has balanced parking.

Collectively, the public and private parking systems in Downtown provide spaces with a high capacity to serve shoppers, workers, residents, and visitors. These parking spaces are distributed well throughout the district and include on-street parking, off-street surface lots, and structured parking.



Wayfinding is limited.

There is no coordinated wayfinding system that leads customers to and around Downtown. High-quality wayfinding elements, such as gateway signs, directional signs, business directories, and kiosks, could attract more customers and direct them to shops, restaurants, civic venues and other points of interest they may not be aware of.



More storefront elements are needed.

There is a lot of opportunity for more combinations of storefront and spill-out elements in Downtown Greenfield. Successful downtown storefronts use a variety of tools to draw pedestrians in and create storefront visibility for drivers (e.g., using wall signs, projecting blade signs, banners, awnings, murals and window signs, and displays).



Downtown has several key opportunity properties.

The First National Bank — the subject of much study — has been vacant for decades and is now owned by the City. Additionally, the closing of Wilson's Department store has left a large vacant property available in Downtown, and the owner is looking for a buyer. Another large building, owned by Greenfield Community College (GCC), and previously used as a workforce training facility, is currently underutilized. GCC hopes to redevelop the property for an entrepreneurship center.



Downtown residential development is limited.

There appear to be few residential living units, particularly market-rate housing units, in Downtown. Most commercial buildings on, or within a block of, Main Street are 2 to 4 stories, and this provides an opportunity for a mix of office and residential uses. As downtown residents can be a primary market segment for downtown businesses, this could be an opportunity to increase the customer base, diversify housing choices, and incentivize reinvestment in older properties.



Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Public Realm**

Diagnostic Indicators: Urban Design for a Vibrant District

- Tight settlement patterns (higher ratio of building coverage to land area as well as floor area ratios).
- Moderate block size with lengths and widths that are at comfortable pedestrian scale.
- Street Wall/Street Enclosure (the ratio of building height to street width) that provides a comfortable pedestrian environment.
- Functional and architectural compatibility between buildings (placement, massing, scale).
- Supportive relationship between buildings and the public realm (open spaces and streets).
- High degree of vertical and horizontal mix of uses.
- Diversity of commercial and institutional services that fulfill daily needs.
- Clustering of complementary uses to create synergy.
- Safe and comfortable walking distance to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Active and well-integrated public and civic uses and gathering areas.
- Strong terminal vistas.
- Good public connection and access to surface waters where applicable.



High-quality public open space in Court Square. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Development Patterns and Urban Design Characteristics

Downtown Greenfield has a compact development pattern making it very walkable. The typical block length on Main Street is about 300 to 400 feet, which is ideal for pedestrians, accessible to other modes of transportation, and good at dispersing traffic. The district also has depth with side streets having 1 to 2 blocks of large-scale buildings creating more opportunity for business and residential uses.

Main Street has good street enclosure with buildings built at the edge of the sidewalk (street right-of-way), which reinforces the pedestrian environment. The average distance from building to building across the street is 100 feet, and as most buildings are 2 to 4 stories (50 feet tall), the ratio of building height to building separation across the street is about 1:2, which is quite suitable for a traditional downtown. Main Street also has a pleasant terminal vista looking west toward the hills.

Buildings in Downtown Greenfield have good functional and architectural compatibility. While there are several contemporary buildings, they are compatible with older buildings in terms of placement, massing, and scale. There is also an effective balance of commercial block buildings and institutional buildings such as Town Hall, churches, the Post Office, new Library (soon to be under construction), John Olver Transportation Center, Greenfield Community College, and Greenfield District Court. This combination of private enterprises and public and cultural institutions forms a symbiotic relationship and makes Downtown a "place of necessity" in terms of food, entertainment, shopping, services, learning, and cultural resources for residents as well as workers and visitors.

Downtown Greenfield also has an attractive walking environment with good sidewalks and streetscape, activation of storefronts, and integration of public open spaces including Court Square, Veterans Memorial Park, and Energy Park.

Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Public Realm**

Diagnostic Indicators: Street Design for a Vibrant District

- A distinct street hierarchy in terms of scale and purpose.
- A thoroughfare network with strong connectivity, circulation, and access.
- Moderate block size with lengths and widths that are at a comfortable pedestrian scale.
- "Complete Streets" integrating a broad range of intermodal facilities (auto, pedestrian, bicycle, bus transit, and rail transit).
- Gateway treatments and wayfinding systems that are attractive, informative, visible, and intuitive.

Street Composition

Downtown Greenfield has a distinct street hierarchy. Main Street/High Street (Rt. 2A) and Federal Street/Bank Row (Rt 5 and 10) are the primary streets connecting Downtown to other communities. There are also a series of secondary streets off Main Street connecting Downtown with surrounding neighborhoods and other parts of the City. These secondary streets improve mobility and disperse traffic in and around downtown.

Public Realm Standards for Typical Block | Main Street- Primary [MS-p]



Description

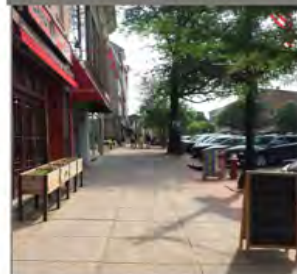
This image represents an idealized, proposed Main Street block with a separated cycle-track, a shared central turning lane, and a widened sidewalk. The existing Main Street right-of-way varies from 75' to 180', allowing room for new public realm elements, such as public seating, cafe spaces, and stormwater infiltration areas. The proposed sidewalk is divided into conceptual 'zones' by their typical use and components. These zones are further described on subsequent pages.

Parameter	Dimensional Range
A Enclosure (facade to facade)	75'-180'
B Right-of-Way	75'-180'
C Street Width (curb to curb)	36'-68'

Main St Primary



Main St Primary Sidewalk



Public realm design standards for a typical block, City of Northampton. Source: Draft standards prepared by Dodson & Flinker, and Brovitz Community Planning & Design



Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Public Realm**

The City of Greenfield is currently completing the preliminary engineering work that would make it possible to get a Main Street Improvement project included in the State Transportation Improvement Plan. This could result in MassDOT funding of approximately \$5 million and would require a City match of about \$500,000. The improvement project would allow for the reconstruction of Main Street from curb-to-curb, including travel lanes, turning lanes, on-street parking, crosswalks/curb extensions, bus pullouts, bike lanes, and signals. The focus of the project will be on multi-mobility, including vehicles, bus transit, and bike lanes and facilities.

Street Cross Section — Main Street has a right-of-way (ROW) width of about 100 feet and a curb-to-curb width of about 65 feet. Currently the ROW contains sidewalks with streetscape treatments, on-street parking (angled and parallel), travel lanes, and turn lanes at key intersections. With a 100-foot ROW, there is a good opportunity to improve multi-mobility, such as bus pullouts, shelters and bike lanes. Most of the side street has a 50-foot ROW and on-street parking is available for a block or two off Main Street.

Crosswalks and Curb Extensions — Crosswalks on Main Street are located at most of the side streets including Fort Square, Conway Street, Wells Street, Chapman Street, Davis Street, Federal Street, Hope Street, and High Street. Since the typical block length is 300–400 feet, the crosswalks appear to be adequately spaced. Curb extensions are located at Conway Street, Davis Street, and Federal Street.

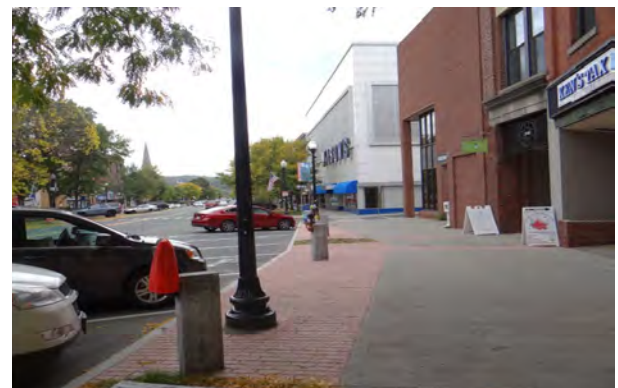


Successful curb extension at Turners Falls. Source: Brovitz Community Planning & Design

Opportunity: As the City creates new street plans under the MassDOT grant, more curb extensions should be considered as they provide a shorter crossing distance, which is safer for pedestrians, and serve as a traffic calming treatment, slowing vehicles as they approach the crosswalk. Curb extensions can also be designed for a variety of streetscape treatments such as canopy trees, seating, and public art (a community representative identified the new curb extensions and treatments on Avenue A in Turners Falls as a possible model).

Sidewalks — There is a lot of variation in the sidewalks in Main Street. The eastern segment between High Street and Court Square generally has a 5–10-foot concrete sidewalk and planting strip with a series of mature canopy trees. There are several institutional buildings (i.e., court, library, Post Office, YMCA, churches) on this end of Main Street that are setback from the ROW. While street enclosure is low on this segment, the added open space provides opportunity for additional trees, providing more shade on the sidewalk. There are also some empty tree pits within the ROW where new street trees could be planted.

The segment between Court Square and Conway Street has a 10–15-foot concrete sidewalk and a brick apron with tree pits that are planted with canopy trees. From Conway Street to Colrain Street, sidewalks are typically 5 feet of concrete with canopy trees and a wide planting strip at the curb. As there are more auto-oriented businesses on this segment, there are more gaps in the sidewalk created by wide curb cuts. This poses a safety concern for pedestrians.



Street view of a typical Main Street sidewalk. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Public Realm**

Diagnostic Indicators: Streetscape Treatments for a Vibrant District

- Active uses of private frontages between the buildings and the sidewalks (civic gathering areas, outdoor dining, store displays, etc.).
- Active uses of public frontages between the private frontage and the curb (sidewalk dining, displays, etc.)
- Well-placed pedestrian crossings and traffic calming devices to enhance safety and the quality of the pedestrian experience.
- Attractive streetscapes with a broad combination of street trees, landscaping, and furnishings that are highly functional and well-maintained.
- Attractive and diverse building elements such as blade signs, wall signs, window signs, and awnings that are in scale with the building.
- Shopfronts that are interesting and engaging to the pedestrian, including various window treatments and displays.
- Other tactical urbanism applications such as parklets, pop-up stores, vendors, and other temporary or incremental treatments to improve vitality.
- Pedestrian level wayfinding systems, including business directories and information kiosks.

Streetscape Treatments

Community leaders indicated that there is a strong desire to "restore browsing" in Downtown Greenfield that starts with a vibrant and activated streetscape combined with attractive storefronts.

Street Trees — As described above, there are a lot of street trees on Main Street that are healthy, mature, and well-distributed throughout the corridor. However, there are some tree planters on the sidewalk where the trees are missing and should be replaced. An important issue for street trees is the need for regular pruning so as not to block visibility of the storefront and signage as some of them are on Main Street.



Trees on Main Street should be pruned so they don't block signage and storefronts. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Opportunity: New trees should be planted at the edge of buildings and between storefronts so as not to block visibility of entrances, store displays, and signs. Street trees can also enhance nighttime ambiance when they are outfitted with lights. This is a common treatment during the holidays, but some communities do this on a year-round basis to draw more visitors at night.

Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Public Realm**

Plantings — A limited number of planters were observed in the district. Community representatives were interested in adding planters along the curb and under store windows and hanging them on storefronts and lampposts. A good example of this is Plum Boutique, a women's boutique that has planters built to match the store's façade treatment and placed under the storefront windows.



Planters at Plum, a women's clothing and gift boutique. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Opportunity: Hanging planters could be added onto the pedestrian level ornamental lamp posts. Extended arms could be added to the poles and hanging plants could be added parallel to the street. Additional arms could be added for street banners that would be mounted perpendicular to the street for optimal visibility. There is also an opportunity to add planters to the center medians on Main Street at Federal Street/Bank Row. It is important for the City, storeowners, and advocacy groups to work together to form a plan for proper maintenance of the planters before starting such a project.

Furnishings — There are not a lot of public furnishings such as benches, trash receptacles, u-racks, water fountains, and others in Downtown Greenfield. This allows more space for businesses to better utilize their frontages for spill-out applications (i.e., café seating, merchandise, sandwich board signs, planters, etc.) as an alternative to generic public furniture. The few trash receptacles on Main Street are mounted to street signs and are not well-maintained. U-shape bike racks are perpendicular to the sidewalk and should be parallel so as not to take up too much space. An example of well-done furnishings are the stainless steel, movable tree seats that were fabricated by students at the Franklin County Technical School. Furnishings that are needed are grouped newspaper stands. Main Street has a few locations where individual paper stands are lined up on the sidewalk. The group stand would take up less space and vastly improve the aesthetic.



Tree seat street furniture fabricated by local technical school. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Public Realm**

Opportunity: More street furnishing projects could be developed to add benches, bike racks, tree guards, newspaper boxes, kiosks, sign boards, and others.

Overhead Utilities — Power lines detract from the aesthetic quality of business districts and are difficult and expensive to relocate. In Downtown Greenfield, overhead utilities are limited and most buildings on Main Street access utilities from the rear.

Street Lighting — Main Street has ornamental pedestrian level streetlights installed at the curb and spaced approximately 45 feet apart. There are no cobraheads or other streetlights hanging over the street. If necessary, it is possible to retrofit the existing lamp posts with double lamps.

Over Street Banners — These type of banners are typically located above the primary street, are attached to buildings on opposite sides of the street, and usually advertise community events. There is an over street banner location at 291 Main Street (Hawks and Reed building) and 298 Main Street (Blue Ginger building). However, community representatives indicate that it is not being utilized because wind causes problems with the banners.

Opportunity: The current location of the over street banner wire is in a visible location on Main Street at the 100% corner, and rotating banners could be installed on a regular basis. The City and property owners could work together to add a second guide wire to keep the banners securely in place.

Public Art — With wide sidewalks and several curb extensions in the district, public art applications are possible on Main Street. A swarm of new bee statues decorated by local artists will land on Main Street soon. There are several other public art installations around Downtown, such as the sculpture at Greenfield Savings Bank on Federal Street, the dinosaur mural at the Olive Street Garage, the war memorial at Veterans Park, and the bike sculpture on Miles Street.



One of several colorful bee sculptures recently installed in Downtown. Source: GreenfieldBeeFest.org

Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Public Realm**

Opportunity: Other examples of public art that the City could consider are interpretive historical wayfinding signs on the sidewalks, painted crosswalks with different themes, music stations (such as the xylophone bus stop in Sedona AZ), movable Adirondack chairs painted by local artists, venues for impromptu concerts (such as in Harvard Square in Cambridge, MA).



*Above and below: Examples of public art in Downtown Greenfield.
Photo: FinePoint Associates*



The 100% Corner — The 100% corner is the main intersection in a downtown where appearance matters most (because it is where drivers form impressions about the District and make decisions about stopping). In Downtown Greenfield, the 100% corner is at Main Street/Federal Street/Bank Street. Typically, downtowns will have a lot of pedestrian activity at this spot because shops and restaurants will want to be at the corner with the best traffic counts and visibility. Municipalities will often enhance streetscape treatments at the intersection (i.e., curb extensions, planters, bollards, ornamental lights and signs, etc.) to appeal to drivers and support more activation by adjacent storefronts.

In Downtown Greenfield, activation at the 100% corner is fairly low. The sidewalks are narrow on the north side of the intersection; the Greenfield Savings Bank building (400 Main) at the northeast corner is brick with tinted windows; and there is limited fenestration (windows) and landscaping between the building and sidewalk (however, there is a nice public art sculpture). On the northwest corner are the Pushkin Gallery and TD Bank building. Pushkin is a classic bank building intended to portray prosperity and security but not permeability to pedestrians. The gallery has no treatments that would soften the appearance (such as vertical wall banners or a kiosk and planters in the front). TD Bank is a white masonry building with a 4-story section without any fenestration. This is a good opportunity to add public art.

On the south side of the intersection is the 345 Main Street block (where Catalpa Coffee is located), which is a 3-story red brick building with small windows and limited storefronts; the Hawks and Reed block (391 Main) is a similar 4-story red brick building with limited storefronts. While the Hawks and Reed storefront on Court Square is temporarily closed due to COVID, visibility and differentiation are fairly low. It is unlikely that visitors would recognize this site as a music venue unless they knew about it. Between these buildings is Court Square, which is an attractive small open space framed by Town Hall and the Second Congregational Church. Possibly, the most interesting view from the intersection is the classic marquee at the Garden Cinema.

Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Public Realm**

Opportunity: The property owners, together with the City, could create a plan to activate the the 100% Corner intersection through a series of coordinated streetscape and façade enhancements. The simulated façade treatment on the TD Bank building illustrates an example of how a blank wall could be activated and transitioned into a public art space.



Greenfield Savings Bank. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Pushkin and TD Bank building. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Additional high-quality signage/façade treatments could enliven the intersection and more clearly identify Hawks and Reed Performing Art Center as an inviting entertainment venue. Photo: FinePoint Associates



TD Bank building has a 4-story section without any fenestration — a good opportunity for public art. Photo: FinePoint Associates



TD Bank building façade with simulated mural of bees. Photo: FinePoint Associates



TD Bank building façade with simulated floral mural. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Public Realm**

West Main Auto-Oriented Businesses — West of Conway Street, Main Street transitions into an auto-oriented strip development area as buildings are pulled back off the sidewalk, parking is placed in front of the buildings, and ground signs get larger. Since this is the gateway to Downtown for most visitors coming off I-91, it is important to make a good first impression.

Opportunity: This 2-block section of the corridor could be enhanced with additional street trees, narrowed or consolidated curb cuts, and more street banners.

Public Open Spaces

Altogether, there are quality public open spaces in and around Downtown Greenfield. However, there are no large, centrally located open spaces for large civic gatherings on Main Street that would draw visitors out of their cars. If the City proceeds with plans for the expansion of Court Square, this will provide a larger and more visible gathering space that can anchor one of the corners at the 100% intersection.

Court Square — This small park is in the center of Downtown and in a highly visible location. It is a formal space with a war memorial and is not easily programmable for civic activity as it is small and bound by streets with heavy traffic.

Opportunity: The City commissioned a concept plan that expands the Court Square Park by converting the street in front of Town Hall (Court Square) into a new plaza where a variety of civic gatherings could be programmed. The new plaza could also extend to Veterans Park by creating a pedestrian court between Town Hall and the Hawks and Reed Performing Art Center (Davis Street), which could also become a programmable space. String lights could be added to the plaza for nighttime activities and an enhanced ambiance.



Concept Plan for expanded Court Square completed by Harriman, 2017, Massachusetts Downtown Initiative

Veterans Memorial Park — This is an attractive and formal space with a beautiful war memorial sculpture, raised planters with a large spruce tree that is decorated for the holidays, benches, iron fencing, and a large mural on the adjacent Borofsky Block (239 Main Street). Community representatives indicated that vagrancy is an issue in the park and noted a need for better control of the space along with some physical improvements and maintenance.



Veterans Park Monument. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Public Realm**

Energy Park — This is an attractive civic gathering space at the end of Miles Street with an old caboose, old ticket office, performance stage, interpretive history board, and public art. It is regularly used as a venue for concerts and other social gatherings. The park is somewhat cut-off from Downtown by railroad tracks and is not visible from Main Street. There is an attractive wayfinding sign to the park provided at the corner of Main Street and Miles Street, but it is not highly visible to passing vehicles.



*Miles Street parking lot, the site for a new planned pocket park.
Photo: FinePoint Associates*

Opportunity: Community representatives shared a vision for a new pocket park that would replace the public parking lot off Miles Street (some of the spaces would become on-street parking). The result would be a new civic gathering space adjacent to an open alley (Fiske Ave) used by Wild Roots and Mesa Verde Restaurant for café seating. The park will be activated with the new bee statues and chess tables. The City could also install a business directory and information kiosk at this location. Overhead lighting along Fiske Avenue could create a festive atmosphere to complement nighttime dining.

In addition to the pocket park, Fiske Avenue Alley could be activated with additional elements such as overhead lighting and seating to create an inviting downtown space.



Fiske Ave Alley, adjacent to the site for the new pocket park, could be activated with lighting and additional elements to create an inviting Downtown atmosphere and potentially serve as an event space. Photo: FinePoint Associates



*Assembly Square, Somerville, provides a vision of how overhead lighting might be added to activate a space like Fiske Ave.
Source: purewander.com*



Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Public Realm**

Opportunity: Future Green River Linear Park
The Green River had an influential role in the settlement and economic growth of Greenfield. In the early 2000s, Greenfield participated in the State's Urban Rivers Visions program and created a concept plan for increasing access and recreational opportunities on the river. From the intersection of Main Street and Bank Row, the river is only 1,800 feet (.34 miles). However, it is not visible from Downtown and would require a detailed wayfinding system to draw people downtown and to the Museum of Our Industrial Heritage.

The Green River crosses the Mohawk Trail (Rt. 2A) west of Main Street near the River Street intersection. However, this is removed from Downtown, and access is difficult. It appears the only possible access is a private road through the Green River Farm Stand. Several years ago, the city of Greenfield, in partnership with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (UrbanRiver Visions 2 Program), conducted a planning charrette and created a concept plan for a stretch of the river close to the town center.

Crime and Safety

Loitering and Substance Abuse — The perception of safety is important to make customers feel comfortable enough to stay longer in the district. We heard comments from community representatives and business owners regarding loitering and substance use issues that may be detracting from the customer environment. Several people mentioned experiences that could deter customers, including homeless individuals panhandling or intoxicated individuals and drug deals on the streets.



Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Private Realm**

General Observations of Key Private Realm Elements

The public and private realms of vibrant downtowns are oriented to pedestrians and activity between the buildings, sidewalks, and streets. Businesses use a variety of techniques to enhance walkability and create interest for potential customers whether they are arriving in the district on foot, in cars, on bikes, by bus, or on trains.

Business Orientation — Downtown Greenfield businesses have worked hard to improve the private realm and create accessible open spaces and an enjoyable pedestrian environment on the sidewalks. Except for auto-oriented businesses on the west end of Main Street, the core area of Downtown has a series of buildings and businesses located at the sidewalk with traditional storefronts geared to draw people in. Businesses have a limited amount of time to make an impression on a potential customer passing by storefront windows.

Wall Signs — Wall signs are best seen by pedestrians from across the street. They should be in proportion to the width and height of the building, located above the windows, externally lit, and artistically unique and expressive. Most businesses in Downtown have wall signs that range in size, quality, and condition. Some good examples include The Solar Store (2 Fiske Ave), Bonnie B's Restaurant (200 Main), Thai Blue Ginger (298 Main), Main Street Grille & Café (94 Main), Plum (281 Main), Wild Roots Eatery (201 Main), and Ice Cream Alley (211 Main). Many of these businesses have also installed external gooseneck lighting to illuminate wall signs, which is another attractive feature of many storefronts.



Average pedestrian time in front of a store. Source: Google Images of Newburyport with overlay graphic by Brovitz Community Planning & Design



Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Private Realm**



Thai Blue Ginger wall sign. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Projecting/Blade Signs — A blade sign is a projecting sign, usually mounted on a wall, column, or pole. These signs are perpendicular to the traffic flow and are usually double-sided.

Opportunity: Downtown Greenfield has some good examples of projecting signs, and more should be encouraged. Blade signs are very important in pedestrian-oriented districts as they are the most visible signs for potential customers on the sidewalks. These signs are particularly important in districts with a high percentage of visitors who may not know the current mix of businesses. Blade signs are also the most visible to cyclists and drivers on the street.

Projecting signs should be perpendicular to the building, a minimum of 8 feet above the sidewalk, and placed in proportion to the width of the business and height of the building. They should also be designed to be legible from the sidewalk and street while expressing the unique qualities of the business through materials, colors, artwork, and iconic symbols (possibly 3 dimensional). Brackets and exterior lighting should be designed so that if one business vacates the building, another business can reuse the apparatus for a new sign.

Some good examples of projecting blade signs in Downtown Greenfield are Balkan Lounge (4 Ames St), Chet's Barber Shop (14 Federal), The Literacy Project (15 Bank Row), Connecticut Rivershed (15 Bank Row — blade sign with public art), Ice Cream Alley (211 Main — blade sign with ice cream icon), Cleary Jewelers (248 Main), and Green Space Cowork (270 Main). Examples of businesses on side streets that would benefit from projecting signs are the Outlet Store (12 Chapman) and VisionWorks (14 Chapman). While there are a fair amount of projecting signs on Federal Street and Bank Row to draw people from Main Street, there are relatively few on other side streets.



People's Pint blade sign. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Ground Signs — In places where buildings are setback from the sidewalk, ground signs can be used to provide visibility to pedestrians and drivers. Ground signs should be 2-sided, located close to the sidewalk, and perpendicular to the sidewalk for optimal visibility. Some examples of successful ground signs are the ones at the Franklin County Judicial Center (43 Hope), Holy Trinity Church (133 Main), Greenfield Coop Bank (62 Federal), and Rite Aid (107 Main).

Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Private Realm**

Window Signage — Quality window signs can make a positive impression on passing customers. Text and logos should be used to identify a business and its address in a limited area of the window (typically no more than 1/3 of the window area). Some good examples of window signs in Downtown are the signs at Mag Pie (23 Bank Row — neon window sign), Back Bone Barbershop (24 Miles — with logo), Extreme Styles (34 Bank Row — neon window sign), Plum (281 Main), and Greenfield Gallery (229 Main).



Backbone Cuts window sign. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Window Displays — Windows should be clean and transparent, and tastefully display the merchandise or services provided on site. Storefront windows can also be used to display activity (such as people making food, printing newspapers, at a radio station, etc.). Some good examples of window displays in Downtown are at Baker Office Supply (310 Main), Cleary Jewelers (248 Main), Plum (281 Main), and Greenfield Gallery (229 Main).

Awnings — This façade element can create variety and texture in a business district. They can also add an attractive façade element to an otherwise plain building. Awnings also provide shade on the sidewalk and storefront windows, which is particularly important for south-oriented buildings, such as the north side of Main Street. Traditional awnings are typically made with high-quality canvas materials, but more contemporary canopies include transparent materials that filter sunlight while covering the sidewalk. Signage can also be attached underneath, or to the front or side of a canopy to identify a business. Some good examples of storefront awnings are the Baker Office Supply's traditional striped canvas awning (302 Main) and Greenfield Coop Bank's contemporary awnings (62 Federal).

A-Frame/Sandwich Board Signs — These temporary signs are helpful for businesses that want to advertise daily specials or sales. They should be located within 3 feet of the buildings, limited in size to 9 square feet, constructed of high-quality materials, and removed from the sidewalk after business hours. Some sandwich board signs observed in the district were at Greenfield Games (238 Main), Antique Revival (186 Main), and Greenfield Market (144 Main).

Storefront Planters — Box planters or flowerpots are typically put in front of the windows and can add a lot of charm to the storefront. Because we conducted our downtown assessment in the spring, there were not many planters, but an exceptional example was found at Plum (281 Main).

Outdoor Displays — Outdoor merchandise displays can be a useful tool for businesses that have room on the sidewalk to accommodate them. The displays should be of high quality, located within 3 feet of the storefront, limited to less than half of the business frontage, and removed at the end of business hours. Some outdoor displays were observed in the district at Plum (281 Main), Goose (233 Main), and Hens & Chicks (242 Main).

Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Private Realm**

Café Seating — Outdoor dining not only activates the sidewalk but can expand business capacity by about 25% with very little investment. Adjacent businesses also benefit from the added visibility created by neighboring sidewalk cafés. A fair amount of café seating was observed on the sidewalk or in parklets in the district (and more are popping up as the weather gets warmer). Community representatives indicated that several businesses set up outdoor dining for the first time because of COVID, and many are likely to continue in the future. Some good examples are at Mesa Verde (10 Fiske), Wild Roots (201 Main — parklet with boxes made locally), Hope & Olive (44 Hope St — new parklet with platform and roof under construction at the time of our assessment), Pete's Seafood (54 School — covered), Main Street Grille & Café (94 Main), El Greco (233 Main), People's Pint (24 Federal — covered), and Green Field Market (144 Main). Community representatives encouraged the City to make café seating and parklets permanent fixtures on the streets and sidewalks and easier to permit.



Main Street Bar and grille outdoor dining. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Green Field Market outdoor dining. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Paint and Murals — Building façades, window frames, doorways, and decorative elements should be painted as needed to maintain quality appearance. There are some buildings and storefronts in Downtown Greenfield that look worn down and in need of repainting. Murals and painted signs can be effective treatments to activate blank or tired façades and enliven the district. The murals at Veterans Park and the City Parking Garage, the bird mural at 56 Hope Street, and the angel on the side of Wild Roots are all examples of how a large blank wall can become an interesting space with public art. Other large blank walls that could be treated with murals are the ones at TD Bank (324 Main) and Wilson's (258 Main).

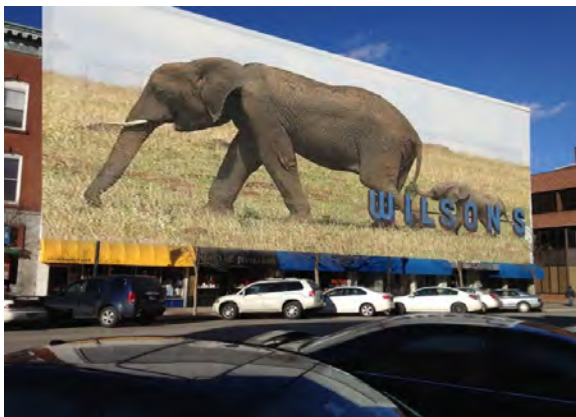


Example of existing wall mural in Downtown Greenfield. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Private Realm**



Vacant Wilson's façade. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Mural simulation with elephants. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Opportunity: The City could consider working with the owner of the abandoned foundation property on Chapman Street. This property could be an opportunity for a public mural wall. This could become a public art park where professional and aspiring street artists could work together to teach each other and improve their own skills. Some examples of public street art walls are in Cambridge, Boston, and Worcester.

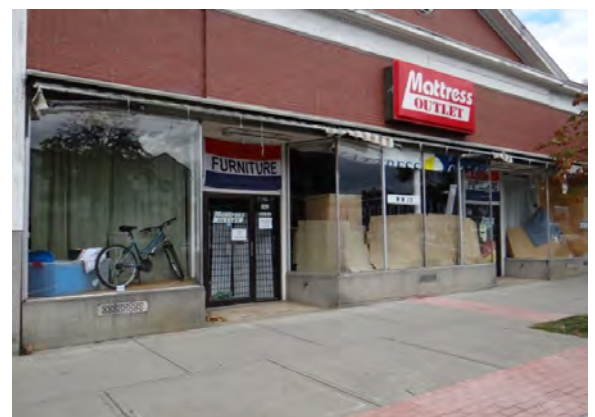
In addition to murals, historic photographs can serve to cover up blank walls and act as temporary window treatments for vacant storefronts. Some good opportunities for this are at the GCC building (270 Main) and vacant storefronts between 160 and 180 Main Street.



Greenfield Community College façade mural opportunity. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Uniform Façades Should be Discouraged — Adding variety storefront by storefront is important to a vibrant business district. Businesses should express themselves individually and artistically through quality awnings, wall and projecting signs, window signs and displays, outdoor displays and sandwich board signs, and other storefront treatments and spill-outs. For example, although the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and Greenfield Community Television at 393 Main Street have attractive storefronts, the same generic gold lettered on a black signs provides no distinction between the storefronts.

Address Vacant Storefronts and Dated Façades — These voids detract from the vibrancy and walkability of a business district. Vacant storefronts were observed at 25 Miles, 142 Main (Mattress Outlet), 158 Main, 192 Main, 188 Main, 192 Main, 238 Main, and 258 Main (Wilson's). Most of these spaces had no temporary window treatments.

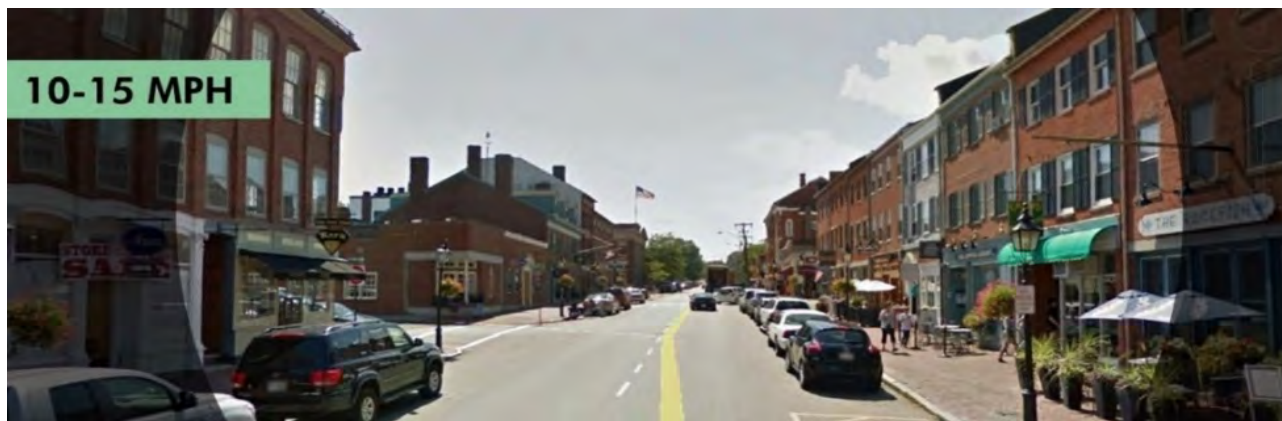


Vacant Mattress Outlet. Photo: FinePoint Associates

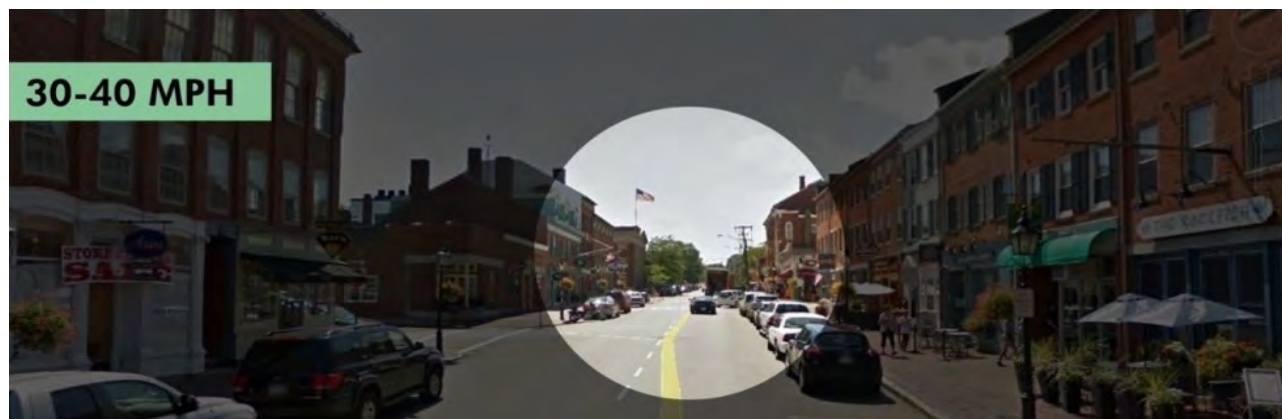
Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Private Realm**

Opportunity: The City and advocacy organizations could take a more active role addressing vacant storefronts. Municipalities have taken a variety of approaches to vacant storefronts by setting up temporary galleries featuring the artwork of local children, allowing other storefronts to utilize window space for auxiliary merchandise display, and creating temporary pop-up stores. The Town of Arlington, MA, has a vacant storefront program that requires the owner to register vacant storefronts and make temporary improvements to the windows to enhance the appearance of the space to make storefronts more attractive to potential tenants. This is an effective program and could be used in Greenfield.

The Traffic Calming Effect of Activation — High-quality and diverse business activation adds vibrancy to the district and generates customers. It also serves as a traffic calming device as drivers take notice of interesting streetscapes, crosswalks, storefronts, signs, banners, and activities on the sidewalks. These activities tend to slow the driver down, expanding their peripheral vision and allowing them to see more of the storefronts. On-street parking and painted bike lanes also slow drivers down. The more active the district, the slower drivers go, and the more exposure businesses have.



Drivers' peripheral vision between 10-15 MPH (above) and 30-40 MPH (below). Source: Google Images with overlay graphic by Brovitz Community Planning & Design



Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Private Realm**

Storefronts

Several businesses had multiple high-quality storefront treatments.

- Green Field Market (144 Main) — Wall sign, gooseneck lighting, window display, sidewalk seating, sandwich board sign, mural, and alley outdoor lighting with string lights.
- Plum (281 Main) — Storefront façade and paint, wall sign, window display and lettering, planters, and outdoor merchandise display.
- Rise Above Bakery (282 Main) — Storefront façade and paint, wall sign, and gooseneck lighting.
- Mesa Verde (10 Fiske) — Projecting sign, café seating, and wall mural.
- Alibers Bridal Shop (18 Federal) — Storefront and window display.
- Peoples Pint (24 Federal) — Projecting sign, bench and planters, and alley outdoor dining.
- Hope & Olive Restaurant (43 Hope) — Façade, wall sign with gooseneck lighting, and covered parklet.
- Whitney Hill Antiques (122 Main) — Projecting sign, awning, and window display.
- Lucky Nails Salon (132 Main) — Wall sign, gooseneck lighting, and window dressing (open curtains).
- Magic Child (134 Main) — Wall sign, gooseneck lighting, and window display.
- Goose Exquisite Thrift (233 Main) — Wall sign, window display, and outdoor merchandise display.
- El Greco Restaurant (233 Main) — Blade sign, café seating on the sidewalk, and sandwich board sign.
- Hens & Chicks Consignment Store (242 Main) — Wall sign, window display, and outdoor merchandise display.
- Lucky Bird (250 Main) — Wall sign, window display, and sandwich board sign.
- Garden Theater (353 Main) — Classic theater marquee sign.



Rise Above main storefront. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Outdoor dining at El Greco. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Mesa Verde café seating and mural. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Private Realm**

There were a few storefronts observed that need refreshing, like the Federal Street Book Store (8 Federal), which needs to be painted; Smoke Heaven (239 Main), which has two wall signs and multiple advertisements attached to the display windows; and Taylor's Tavern (238 Main), which has a fantastic interior but the façade, windows, and canopy over the sidewalk are dated and uninviting.

Key Properties and Opportunities

First National Bank Building (15 Bank Row) — This is a beautiful and architecturally significant building on Bank Row across Town Hall and Court Square. Community representatives indicated that feasibility studies have been done in the past to determine potential future reuse options, but the building is in a deteriorated condition and rehabilitation cost will be high. If the building is not salvageable, perhaps the façade could be saved to preserve the street wall on Bank Row.



First National Bank on Bank Row (vacant). Photo: FinePoint Associates

Old Private Library (7 Franklin) — This historic building is located at the corner of Main Street and Franklin Street next to the Post Office. It has great architectural character but appears to be vacant and deteriorating. Community representatives indicated that it was being used as a music recording studio, but the existing status of its use is unknown. Without knowing the actual condition of the building, it is not possible to determine if renovation is feasible for certain uses. However, similar buildings have been repurposed for a variety of uses such as offices, restaurants, music halls, micro-breweries, theaters, and condominiums. The City could coordinate with the owner to determine plans and options for the building.

Wilson's Department Store — This long-time Downtown anchor store closed in 2019. There are still 3 storefronts in the building (Hens & Chicks, Cleary Jeweler, and Lucky Bird) that soften the visual impact from the sidewalk; however, the future of the rest of the space in this large building is uncertain. Community representatives indicated that the City is working with the owners, prospective tenants, and buyers to determine what to do with the space. The existing large white curtain wall attached to the building covers the 3 upper floors and may inhibit some uses. It is unknown how difficult and expensive it would be to remove and restore the façade. If the curtain wall remains, it could make a good canvas for a mural.



Wilson's Department Store (vacant). Photo: FinePoint Associates



Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Private Realm**

Town-Gown with Greenfield Community College (GCC) Downtown (270 Main Street) — "Town-Gown"

partnerships are beneficial to both the municipality and institution as students, educators, property owners, and businesses all gain from the relationship. GCC owns the building at 270 Main Street and operates a noncredit training program for workforce development. GCC also currently rents upper floors to Green Space Cowork (a cooperative office space for entrepreneurs) on the 2nd floor, and an alternative high school on the 3rd floor. GCC is planning to create a storefront incubator for retail and food-related businesses. MassDevelopment has provided GCC with a \$100,000 grant to renovate the building for these economic development programs. To create the incubator, the college will create a new storefront on Main Street on a section of the façade that is currently a blank wall.

Residential and Mixed Use — The majority of Downtown buildings are at least 2-stories, and several are 3-and-4-stories. From the street, it is difficult to determine the numbers and types of uses that are on the upper floors. Community representatives indicated that there is a fair amount of office space and some subsidized housing, but very few market-rate residential units.

Like many small cities, Greenfield was built when there was much more industry downtown and Main Street was the only commercial district. As that has changed over many decades, upper floor residential uses could be the sustaining force for Downtown while fulfilling a need for diversity in the housing stock.

Opportunity: The City could encourage, and work with, property owners that have vacant upper floor spaces to consider turning them into residential units. With so much upper floor space, there may be a good opportunity to expand housing Downtown for people in a broad range of income and age groups. This is becoming very common in small cities as younger people want to live where there is food and entertainment, and older residents want to live in smaller units where services are available, and lower income residents benefit from access to jobs and services. In some communities, like nearby Brattleboro, there has been a strong and diverse residential component in downtown for decades (there are 53 residential units above Sam's and another 23 in Brooks House alone). Many nearby cities and towns, including Northampton and Amherst, are also changing their zoning to allow for more residential units downtown.



Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Accessibility**

Traffic Flow and Customer Access

Traffic volume is heavy as both Main Street (Rt. 2A) and Federal Street/Bank Row (Routes 5 and 10) are state roads. The high volume and multi-mobility of Downtown is an asset and economic opportunity — the more cars, bikes, buses, and pedestrians that pass by, the more customers are likely to frequent local businesses.

Traffic flow in the downtown is also a broad combination of residents, commuters, and visitors. The key for Downtown traffic is slow and steady. The optimal speed is about 18 to 20 miles per hour. Long backups are an aggravation to drivers, but fast-paced traffic through downtowns will hurt businesses and threaten pedestrian safety. Downtown Greenfield is part of a grid so dispersing congestion is fairly easy, which enhances access for all modes of travel.

Opportunity: The City could implement the Complete Streets projects incorporating bike access and facilities. While commuter cyclists will use the streets regardless of signage and markings, recreational cyclists are less inclined to do so.

Parking

Olive Street Parking Garage — The municipal parking garage was built, and is being operated, by the City. There are 4 levels of parking with an elevator, open staircase, and charging stations. The garage is clean and has good signage, and an attractive pocket park is located on the Bank Row side with benches and interpretive historic sign boards. There is also a large dinosaur mural on the Bank Row side that activates an otherwise plain façade. Community representatives indicated that the Police Department has identified some safety issues such as loitering, drug use, and vandalism in the garage. There may also be perception issues about safety, which is common in the parking garage.



Olive Street Parking Garage. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Opportunity: Rooftop Activation

While utilization has been impacted by COVID, the garage does not appear to be fully utilized, particularly at the rooftop level. This may be a good opportunity for civic gatherings with after-hours food and entertainment. Other cities have leased underutilized rooftop levels to private partners for restaurants and bars. The roof over the garage does have a good view of Court Square and Main Street. In addition to the Oliver Street Garage, there may be other opportunities to activate rooftops for expanded social gatherings and outdoor dining (given the limited amount of public open space downtown and the abundance of flat roofs). The City should connect with property owners to see where rooftop activation might be possible as well as level of interest.



8 UP rooftop garage restaurant, Louisville, KY. Source: 8UP Elevated Drinkery & Kitchen Facebook Page

Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Accessibility**

Parking Capacity — With a large centrally located public parking garage, 9 municipal surface lots, nearly 500 on-street parking spaces, and private lots scattered throughout the district, there appears to be a sufficient distribution and balance of public and private parking downtown. The significant amount of public on-street parking is possible because Main Street is wide enough to accommodate angled parking on one or both sides.

On-Street Parking — As the MassDOT project gets underway on Main Street, the pros and cons of angled and parallel parking will have to be worked out. The primary advantage of angled parking is that you can supply more space on the street and in front of more buildings, which offers proximity to more customers. The main disadvantage is that it can be difficult to back out of the space if there is a lot of traffic and if the parking angle is steep. On Main Street, the angled parking spaces are 60 degrees, which maximizes the number of spaces but also makes it difficult to see while backing out. If the angle is changed to 45 degrees, it would reduce the number of spaces but also make it easier to see when backing out.

Opportunity: Reducing the parking angle from 60 to 45 degrees could be a good compromise, making it easier to back out of parking spaces but also maintaining more of the existing spaces, the character, and natural traffic calming that angle parking provides. Another alternative that is being used throughout the country (including Massachusetts) is "reverse angle parking." This requires drivers to back into a space at an angle. When they exit the space, it is easier to see the traffic behind. This is like parallel parking in that backing in is slow, requiring the car behind to stop, while exiting is faster, but the advantage to reverse angle parking is that you can put more spaces on the street than you can for parallel parking.

Parking Meters — Meters are deployed at on-street public parking spaces. Community representatives indicated that some people would like to eliminate them. Besides the interesting pieces of public art that they have become (thanks to local artists), removing them could have negative consequences in terms of enforcement and keeping customer spaces turning over.



Parking meter with public art. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Public Transit

John Olver Transportation Center — This sleek intermodal transit facility is a real asset for Greenfield. As the hub for the Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA), it brings customers and employees to Downtown via local bus routes and intercity-regional bus services. It also has daily service on Amtrak (The Vermonter), and the Valley Flyer connects Greenfield to travelers from New York City, Hartford, and Montreal. This not only benefits residents but also serves as an opportunity for visitors to come to Downtown Greenfield.



John Olver Transportation Center. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Accessibility**

Bus Stops — The Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) provides fixed route transit bus service to Downtown Greenfield (Route 24). There are bus stops located on Main Street at Coombs Ave, Conway Street, Wells Street, Miles Street, and Hope Street (YMCA). There are also bus stops on Federal Street at Ames Street and at the Olver Transportation Center. No bus pull-outs or shelters were observed in Downtown, except for the one at Olver Center.

Opportunity: Adding bus shelters in the future as part of MassDOT street improvements could enhance multi-mobility in Downtown.

Bike Facilities and Amenities — No designated bike lanes, sharrows, or route signs were observed in the downtown area, but it appears that Main Street, Federal Street, and Bank Row are wide enough to add them. Adding bike lanes is in the City's Complete Streets program and would be a logical component of the MassDOT street improvement project (whose goal is to enhance multi-mobility).

In terms of bike furnishings, there are some U-shaped bike racks located along the sidewalk and conventional bike racks at the Olver Transportation Center and at some Downtown businesses. No bike racks were observed at The Olive Street Parking Garage or Energy Park. The City has adopted a Complete Streets policy and has prepared a prioritization plan that inventories existing bicycle facilities, signage, and markings. It also identifies improvements needed to accommodate safe bike access to and around Downtown.

Opportunity: Bike racks could be added before the tourist season, especially since it is expected that many people will be traveling this summer. Bike racks can also double as public art. Turners Falls has been working to expand bicycle uses along the Power Canal trail. Greenfield and Montague should work together to create a bike loop that follows the Connecticut River, Power Canal, Deerfield River, and Green River. The loop is approximately 9 miles and connects to various parks and heritage sites in both communities.



Bike rack at Turners Falls. Source: Brovitz Community Planning & Design



Bike rack at Scituate. Source: Brovitz Community Planning & Design

Highlights of the Physical Environment: **Accessibility**

District Wayfinding

There appears to be very little wayfinding to and within Downtown Greenfield. Some signage is provided at I-91 and Route 2, and there are state route signs approaching Downtown and on Main Street, Federal, and Bank Row. However, this is insufficient, and a new coordinated wayfinding system is needed. The City received a Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Grant in 2015 and worked with an appointed consultant to prepare a preliminary plan for a wayfinding system, logo, and tagline ("Creative Vistas"). To implement a wayfinding system, additional necessary components include design specifications, identified locations, and messages to be added.

Opportunity: The City could follow up with another consultant to prepare a wayfinding plan identifying locations, type of wayfinding elements, messages, and final graphic designs. A wayfinding system should include information that people can read on foot in various places, for example, free standing and wall mounted business directory maps and community event kiosks. Some potential locations in Downtown might be the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce (FCCC), Olive Street Parking Garage, Town Hall, Olver Transportation Center, parks, the library, and other locations along Main Street. These maps and directories should be updated on an annual basis. The Historical Society should be involved in the wayfinding program as well and it could have a complimentary system for historic markers, the walking tour map, and interpretive history boards.



*Historical wayfinding signage, Portland.
Source: pamplinmedia.com, Newberg
Graphic June 15, 2021*



Energy Park wayfinding sign. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Conceptual wayfinding signage design completed by Favermann Design, Massachusetts Downtown Initiative, 2015

Business Environment



Key Findings — Business Environment



Downtown Greenfield encompasses over a million square feet of commercial space with over 700,000 square feet on the first floor. Twelve per cent (12%) of first-floor units are vacant.

In total, Downtown contains approximately 368 commercial units. Two-hundred and fifty-one (251) of those units have a first-floor presence. At the time of the inventory (April 2021), 30 of the first-floor units were vacant. The Downtown vacancies fall into two categories: 1) storefront vacancies, and 2) large vacant properties (e.g., Wilson's, First National Bank).

The City could consider implementing additional proactive strategies to address vacancies. They have taken a good step forward by getting Downtown designated as a "Certified Vacant Storefront District" for the Massachusetts Vacant Storefront Program (MVSP).



Downtown Greenfield is lucky to have several recreation and entertainment-related anchors, although many were shuttered for a year.

"Retailtainment," the merging of retail and entertainment, may be more important now than ever as we try to bring customers back to downtown after COVID.

The Downtown is home to approximately 327 establishments, including several business clusters, such as restaurants and entertainment venues, specialty/used retail and collectibles, and convenience shopping and personal services.



Downtown Greenfield appears to have been hit slightly harder by negative COVID impacts compared to other RRP Districts.

Thirty-two per cent (32%) of Downtown Greenfield businesses reported that they had to defer making rent or mortgage payments, and 45% of businesses reported laying off staff (compared to 38% and 21% of all businesses in RRP Districts). Seventy-one per cent (71%) of Downtown Greenfield businesses suffered a year-over-year revenue loss in 2020 due to COVID-19, slightly higher than the average of 68% across all RRP districts. On a positive note, 42% of businesses said they established an alternative mode to sell or deliver goods and services.



Top priorities for Downtown Greenfield businesses include business recruitment, safety and cleanliness improvements, and more cultural events.

Over 65% of businesses rated these strategies as "important" or "very important".



There is room to improve district marketing and branding to help attract customers. It is important to get people back in the habit of coming to Downtown post-COVID.

The new bee statues that were recently unveiled in Downtown (May 2021) are a great beginning to developing a brand identity for Greenfield. They present a wonderful opportunity to bring customers Downtown to see something new. The "Visit Greenfield" page on the city website could be enhanced with more dynamic information and links.

Wayfinding signage directing visitors to and around Downtown is very limited and there is no on-site business directory to make customers aware of the offerings available in Downtown.



Highlights of the Business Environment: Real Estate

Downtown Greenfield is a walkable commercial district with a charming historic character. The buildings are mostly two-to-four-story structures featuring Federal, Greek Revival, and Victorian architecture. A wide main street with angle parking and a small town common add to the classic New England downtown atmosphere.

The Franklin County Justice Center is an example of the melding of old and new architecture in the Downtown.

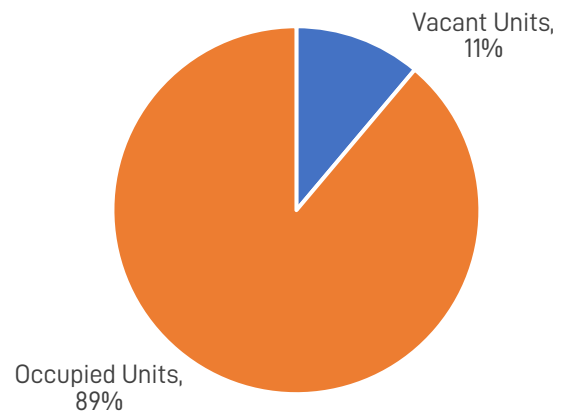
Downtown Greenfield encompasses about a million SF of commercial space under roof.

In total, the Downtown contains approximately 368 commercial units. Two hundred and fifty-one (251) units have a first-floor presence while 117 units are entirely located on other floors.

At the time of the inventory (April 2021), there were 41 vacant commercial units comprising 11% of all units. Thirty (30) of the vacant units include first-floor space and 11 vacant units contain space only on the upper floors.

The Downtown vacancies fall into two categories:
1) Storefront Vacancies, and 2) Large Vacant Properties.

Vacancy – All Units



11% of all units were vacant at the time of the inventory (April 2021); 12% of the first-floor units were vacant.

Storefront Vacancies



Examples of vacant storefronts. Photos: FinePoint Associates

1 Million Total SF

Est. Total 1st Floor
Commercial SF

700,390

Total # of
Commercial Units

368

Total # of 1st Floor
Commercial Units

251

Total # of 1st Floor
Vacant Units

30



Highlights of the Business Environment: **Real Estate**

The City could consider implementing additional proactive strategies to address both vacant storefronts and larger vacant buildings/redevelopment sites.

The city has taken a good step forward by getting Downtown designated as a "Certified Vacant Storefront District" for the Massachusetts Vacant Storefront Program.

The program is operated by the Massachusetts Office of Business Development. After achieving designation, and a commitment of local matching funds, businesses or individuals may apply to the Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC) for refundable EDIP tax credits to lease and occupy a vacant storefront in that district (e.g., up to \$10,000 in refundable tax credits over a 2-year period).

Opportunity: Communities have implemented a variety of "carrot" or "stick" approaches to reduce the number of vacant storefronts. Examples of successful strategies are described below.

Arlington Vacant Storefront By-law

- Registration of vacant space (> 90 days vacant)
- Fee to register (e.g., \$400)
- Fee can be waived if storefront is activated such as with art displays (or meet hardship criteria)
- Fine for not registering (e.g., \$100/day)

Taunton Commercial Rent Subsidy Program (Program rebates the landlord)

- Rent subsidy for 2 years for businesses new to Downtown; must be a for-profit (e.g., \$5 per SF up to \$5,000 year 1, \$2.50 per SF up to \$2,500 year 2)

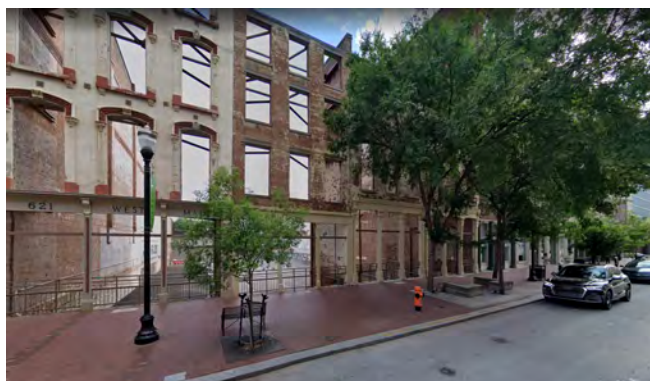
Large Vacant Properties



The closing of Wilson's Department store left a major vacancy in Downtown. Photo: FinePoint Associates



The First National Bank building has been vacant for decades. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Example of façade preservation at 615-21 Main Street, Louisville, KY. Source: Googlemaps.com

Opportunity: Communities can sometimes help obtain gap financing to incentivize large redevelopment projects (e.g., MassDevelopment).

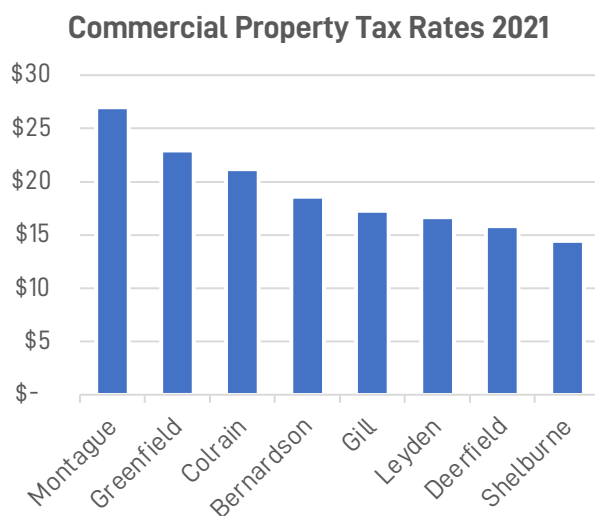
The First National Bank (FNB), the subject of much study, has been vacant for decades and is currently owned by the City. So far, the large redevelopment cost along with access challenges have been deterrents. At present, the property cannot be used for even temporary activities due to unsafe conditions.

Some communities have chosen to preserve only the façade of historic properties in cases where preservation of the entire building was not feasible.



Highlights of the Business Environment: **Real Estate**

A simple comparison of tax rates among communities does not account for possible variation in the level of municipal services provided. With that caveat in mind, compared to surrounding communities, the Greenfield tax rate for commercial properties is second to Montague's.



The central intersection of Main Street and Route 5 in Downtown Greenfield is located 1.2 miles from the Interstate 91 exit. There is a significant amount of commercial development near the exit, predominated by chains and franchises along with a few new build-to-suit commercial space offerings.



The Franklin County Justice Center is a good example of blending the new with the old in Downtown Greenfield. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Highlights of the Business Environment: **Business Mix**

The Downtown is home to approximately 327 establishments including retail, restaurants, recreation, services, and other entities. For the purposes of this study, we define "establishment" as any non-residential entity.

Downtown has a complement of commercial and institutional uses that make it a "place of necessity."

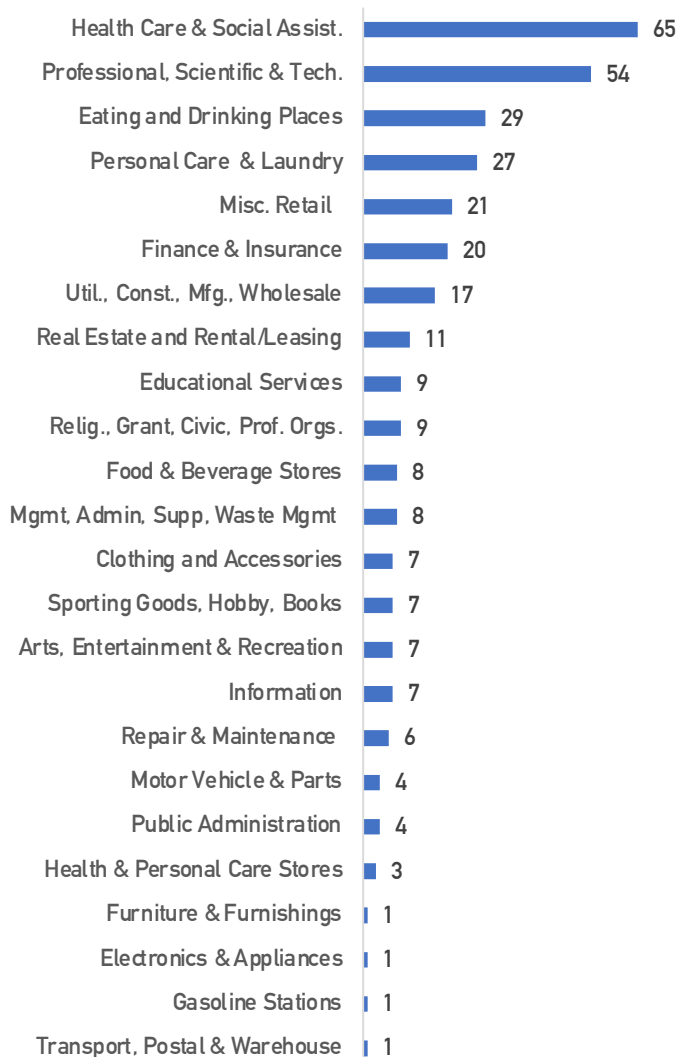
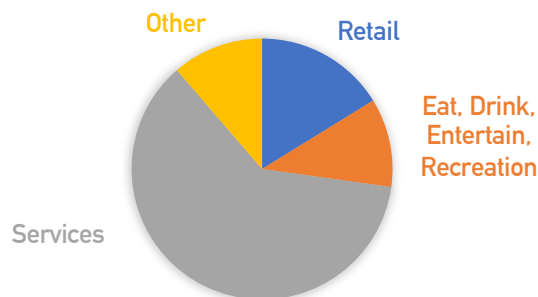
Downtown has three distinct nodes. On the east end of Main Street, there are several institutional establishments such as the Post Office, Public Library, Greenfield and Franklin Country Court systems, YMCA, Olver Transportation Center, banks, and religious institutions. In the central segment of Main Street, the commercial uses focus on merchandise, food, and entertainment. Here, there are a series of shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues (such as the Garden Cinema and Hawks and Reed). On the west end of Main Street are more auto-oriented uses, such as gas stations, car dealerships, and strip retail. This collection of uses complement each other to create synergy. The opportunity to work, eat, shop, learn, recreate, and be entertained makes Downtown a place of necessity for residents and a draw for visitors.



Green Fields Market, a local natural food co-op, is a popular destination for community residents. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Total # of Business
Establishments

327





Highlights of the Business Environment: **Business Mix**

Anchor Businesses — Destination businesses, services, and civic institutions are important to downtowns because they help drive customers to other nearby businesses. Downtown Greenfield has several public and private anchors. Institutional anchors include the Town Hall, Franklin County and Greenfield Courts, Post Office, Public Library, Olver Transportation Center, GCC Downtown Campus, YMCA, religious institutions, and Energy Park.

The new Greenfield Public Library (planned completion in 2023) is sure to be an even bigger anchor for Downtown with expanded materials and space for new programs. Utilization of the space in front of the building will be important. An open plaza with formal and informal seating, tree pits, and enough space to program public activities could contribute significantly to the vibe of Downtown.

Private anchors include Green Fields Market, Rite Aid, Hawks and Reed Performing Arts Center, Garden Cinema, banks, art galleries, and, collectively, a broad range of restaurants, personal and professional services, and retail shops. The loss of Wilson's Department Stores has created a void for a large retail anchor downtown and filling this large and visible building could be a challenge.



“Retailtainment,” the merging of retail and entertainment, may be more important now than ever as we try to bring customers back to Downtown after COVID. Downtown Greenfield is lucky to have several recreation and entertainment-related anchors, although many were shuttered for a year.

During COVID, customers have become even more comfortable with online shopping, and it will take more than the need to simply be able to acquire goods for them to get back into shopping areas. Even before COVID, millennials had demonstrated a clear preference for experience-related spending, and “retailtainment” was a growing trend.

Greenfield has several entertainment-related establishments. Hawks and Reed Performing Arts Center is the largest entertainment venue in the district and includes The Ballroom (primary performance space), The Perch (banquet and dance hall), The Wheelhouse (underground “speakeasy” type bar), and The Pushkin (32 Main), a beautiful event space. In the future, activating the Hawks and Reed building façade with lighting, banners, murals, or projecting signs could enliven the appeal to visitors.

The Garden Cinema is also an important entertainment venue in Downtown. The cinema shows first-run movies as well as hosts some special events (e.g., speaker before or after a movie) and runs promotions with local businesses (e.g., \$1 off admission to certain films with restaurant receipt).

The LAVA Center (Local Access to Valley Arts), located on Main Street, is an arts incubator with a small black box theater/community space. Other downtown music venues include Energy Park, 10 Forward, and other various bars and restaurants.

The Franklin County YMCA is a major downtown anchor and brings both children and adults to Main Street. The 1970s building is somewhat dated, and the brown brick façade could be activated with colorful banners or murals along with some landscaping in front. A representative of the Y told us their facilities are limited, and more parking and building spaces are needed for the many programs administered by the Y. The organization would also like to create new programs such as a teen center and childcare. The Y is evaluating the church next door, but it is reportedly in poor-condition.

Hawks & Reed Music Venue (right, top) and The Garden Cinema (left, bottom) are two of Downtown’s entertainment establishments. Photos: FinePoint Associates



Highlights of the Business Environment: **Business Mix**

The presence of significant linkages between businesses is an important aspect of a good business mix. This should be considered when exploring opportunities for new businesses. Identifying business linkages and clusters that already exist in a commercial district can reveal existing customer patterns and point to potential opportunities for new related businesses.

Downtown Greenfield has several established business clusters that offer crossover patronage and comparative shopping opportunities to consumers.

- **Restaurants** and Entertainment
- Specialty/Used Retail and Collectors
- Errands, Convenience Shopping, Personal Services
- Courthouse and Related Services
- Wellness, Fitness and Recreation
- Families and Children
- Visitors and Tourists



Hope & Olive (top) and Mesa Verde (bottom) are two of the many popular Downtown eateries. Photos: FinePoint Associates

Establishment Type by NAICS Code	#
Retail	53
441 - Motor Vehicle & Parts	4
442 - Furniture & Furnishings	1
443 - Electronics & Appliances	1
444 - Building Materials & Garden Equip	0
445 - Food & Beverage Stores	8
446 - Health & Personal Care Stores	3
447 - Gasoline Stations	1
448 - Clothing and Accessories	7
451 - Sporting Goods, Hobby, Books	7
452 - General Merchandise Stores	0
453/454 - Misc. Retail (Incl. used goods) & Nonstore	21
Eating, Drinking, Entertainment & Lodging	36
71 - Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	7
721 - Accommodation	0
722 - Eating and Drinking Places	29
Services	201
52 - Finance & Insurance	20
53 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	11
54 - Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	54
61 - Educational Services	9
62 - Health Care & Social Assistance	65
811 - Repair and Maintenance (incl. auto)	6
812 - Personal Care & Laundry Services	27
813 - Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Prof. & Similar	9
Other	37
11-21 - Agric., Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Mining	0
22-42 - Util., Constr., Manufacturing, Wholesale	17
48-493 - Transportation, Postal & Warehousing	1
51 - Information	7
55-56 - Mgmt, Admin, Support & Waste Mgmt	8
92 - Public Administration	4
Total Establishments	327
Vacant Commercial Units	41
TOTAL Commercial Units	368

Note: The Establishment Type Table shows all business categories that may be present in downtowns/commercial districts. Showing all categories is intended to illustrate those that are represented and not represented.



Highlights of the Business Environment: **Business Mix**

Compared to other downtowns in small communities, Downtown Greenfield has:

- A strong supply, and fairly wide variety, of eating and drinking establishments as well as entertainment venues.
- Average to above average amount of outdoor dining opportunities.
- A strong representation of retail but an average to below average portion of establishments selling new goods versus used/vintage merchandise.
- Above average representation of health care and social assistance services.
- Strong concentration of community-serving institutions (e.g., library, town hall, YMCA).
- An above average amount of professional and technical service businesses (mostly owing to the large amount of small legal practices) associated with proximity to the Courts.



Downtown is home to a large number of shops that sell used goods and collectibles, such as Vintage Vinyl, Federal Street Books, Lucky Bird Thrift (above). Photos: FinePoint Associates



People's Pint (above), a local brew pub, with a planned post-COVID reopening in summer 2021. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Customers enjoy outdoor dining in a parklet in front of Wild Roots (left); attractive outdoor seating next to Green Fields Market (above) awaits lunch patrons. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Highlights of the Business Environment: **Business Characteristics**

Most of the establishments (80%) in Downtown are independently owned, single-location businesses.

Of the 327 Downtown establishments, approximately 80% are independent single-location enterprises. National or regional multi-location businesses, chains, and franchises comprise about 8% of the establishments (e.g., Rite Aid, TD Bank, Coldwell Banker). Approximately 13% of the establishments are public entities and nonprofits (e.g., Franklin County Justice Center, City Hall, Public Library, YMCA, social service organizations, etc.).

Most businesses in Downtown Greenfield have at least some online presence and almost all the eating and drinking establishments show up on TripAdvisor.

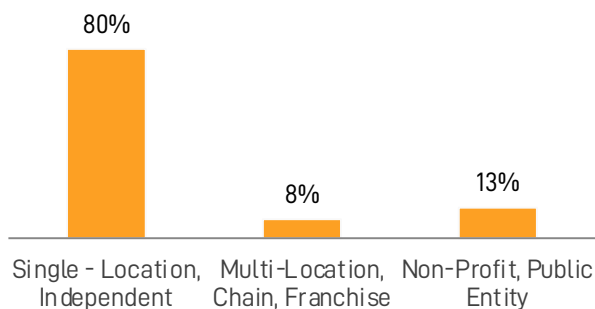
Most businesses in Downtown Greenfield have at least some online presence, such as a website and/or Facebook page, and show up on Google Maps.

Almost all the eating and drinking establishments show up on Trip Advisor and approximately 60% of the restaurants have their own websites.

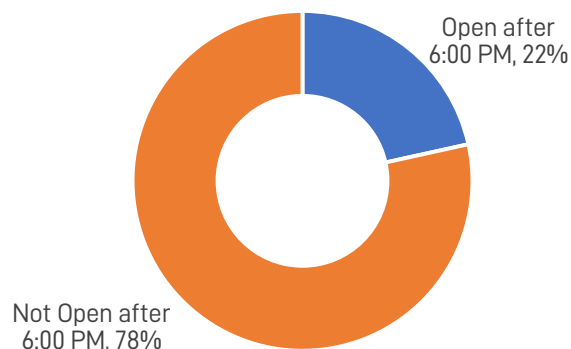
Business activity declines sharply in the evening hours. Many of the restaurants, the cinema, and a few retailers are open in the evening. However, most businesses are not open past 6:00 PM.

Most businesses rent their space. The results of our recent business survey suggest that approximately three-quarters of the businesses rent, rather than own, the space where they operate.

Ownership Characteristics



Operating Hours



Independent, Single-location Businesses

80%

Open after 6:00 PM

22%

Rent their Business Space
(est. based on survey results)

74%



Highlights of the Business Environment: Impacts of COVID

As part of the RRP Program, a business survey was conducted in March/April 2021. COVID impacts was a major topic. Sixty-six (66) businesses responded.

Ninety-four per cent (94%) of Downtown Greenfield businesses reported being negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Although the impacts in Greenfield were fairly similar to impacts in all RRP Districts, Downtown Greenfield appears to have been slightly harder hit.

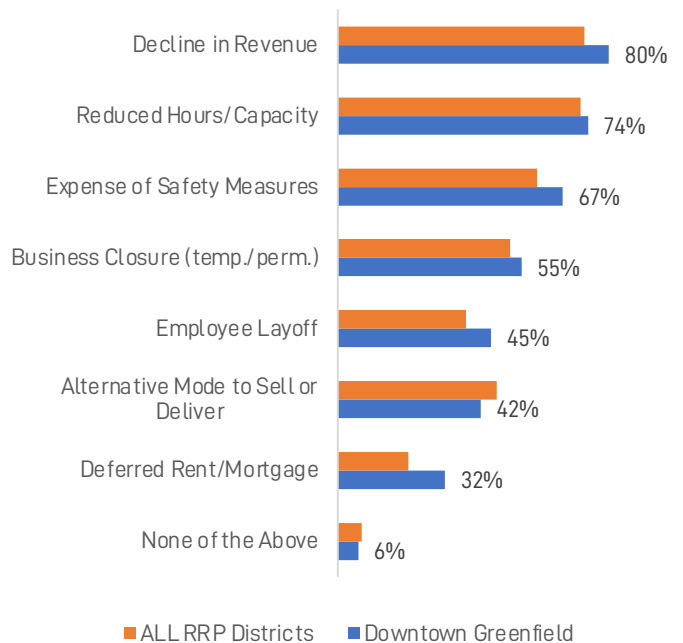
Particularly, 32% of Downtown Greenfield businesses reported that they had to defer making rent or mortgage payments during COVID compared to 21% across all RRP Districts. And 45% of Greenfield businesses reported laying off staff compared to 38% of all businesses.

A majority of Downtown Greenfield businesses reported revenue loss, reduced operating hours/capacity, and incurred unplanned expenses to implement safety measures.

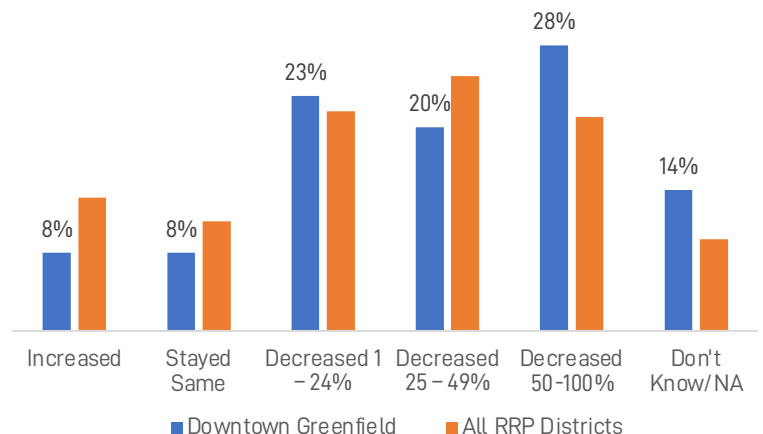
A full 55% of Greenfield businesses were shut down for some time period due to COVID, and at the time of the survey (March/April 2021), only 35% of businesses were operating at full hours/capacity, while 65% were either still closed or operating at reduced hours/capacity.

Revenue Loss: Seventy-one per cent (71%) of Downtown Greenfield businesses suffered a year-over-year revenue loss in 2020 due to COVID-19. (This is just slightly higher than the average of 68% across all RRP districts). For almost half of Greenfield businesses (48%), revenue decreased by 25% or more.

COVID Impacts
(% of Business Respondents)



Business Revenue 2020 vs. 2019
(% of Business Respondents)





Highlights of the Business Environment: **Impacts of COVID**

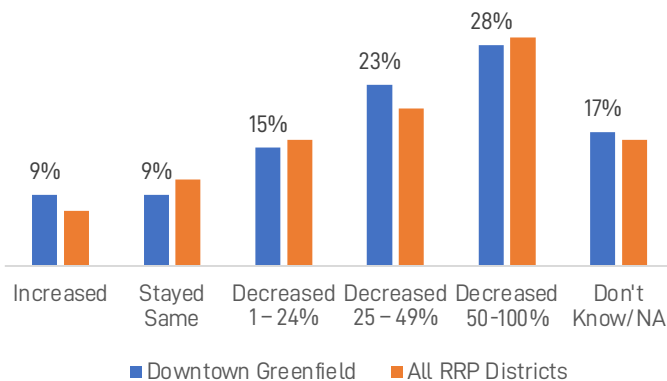
Decline in Foot Traffic: A total of 66% of businesses indicated a reduction in foot traffic in January and February 2021 compared to the year before COVID. For 51% of businesses, on-site customer traffic was down by 25% or more.

On a positive note, **42% of businesses said that they established an alternative mode to sell or deliver good and services.**



Plum, a women's clothing and gift boutique, is an attractive new addition to Downtown Greenfield. Plum is a multi-channel retailer that sells online and at their bricks and mortar location, which has helped the business weather the impacts of COVID. Photos: FinePoint Associates

**On-site Customers 2021 Jan.- Feb.
vs. Pre- COVID**
(% of Business Respondents)





Highlights of the Business Environment: **Business Input**

What Business Owners Had to Say . . .

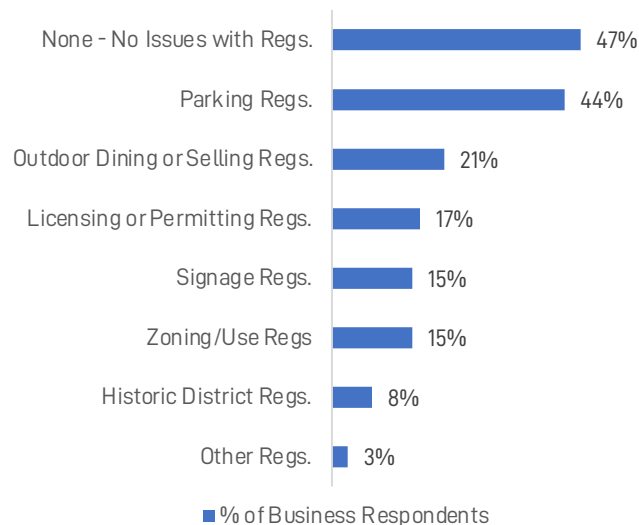
When asked about their satisfaction pertaining to various elements of Downtown, the average rating among respondents fell in the neutral category for all aspects. However, the "Condition of Private Buildings, Façades, Storefronts and Signage" received the most negative ratings — 44% of businesses said they were "Dissatisfied" or Very Dissatisfied."

Fifty-three per cent (53%) of businesses indicated that some aspect of the regulatory environment poses an obstacle to business operation. Parking regulations were cited most frequently (by 44% of businesses).

Businesses indicated the need for a long list of improvements in Downtown (as illustrated in the chart below). **The top three strategies rated as most important to businesses include:**

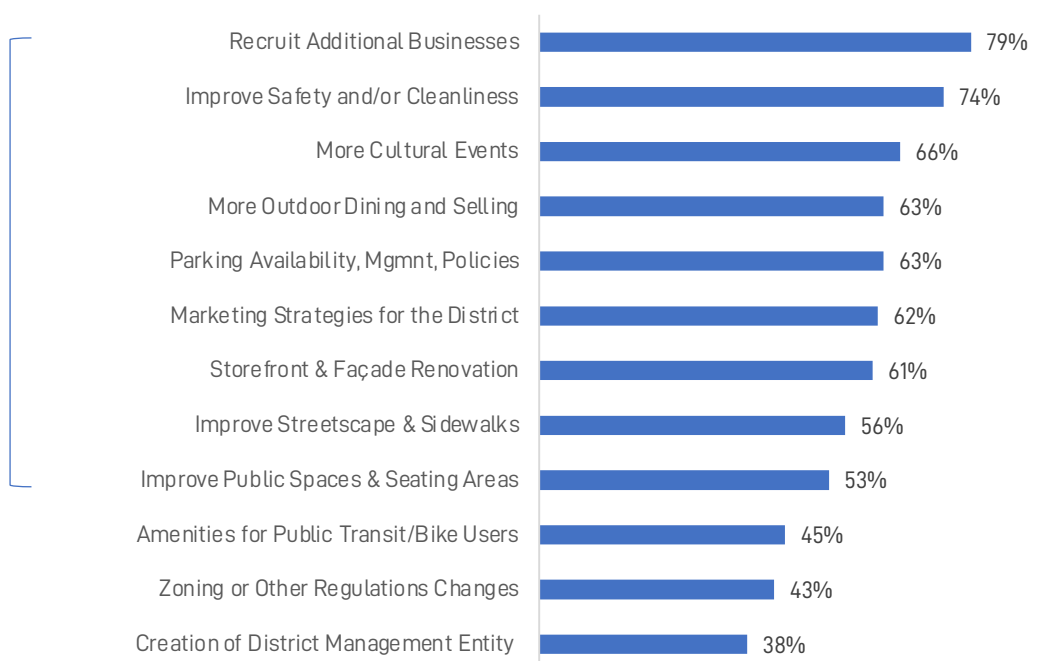
- 1) Business Recruitment,**
- 2) Safety and/or Cleanliness Improvements, and**
- 3) More Cultural Events.**

Regulations that Pose an Obstacle



A business survey was conducted in March/April 2021 as part of the RRP Program, and 66 business responded. The data reported on this page are based on results from that survey.

Strategies Rated as "Important" or "Very Important" by Businesses



More than 50% of businesses rated "Important" or "Very Important."

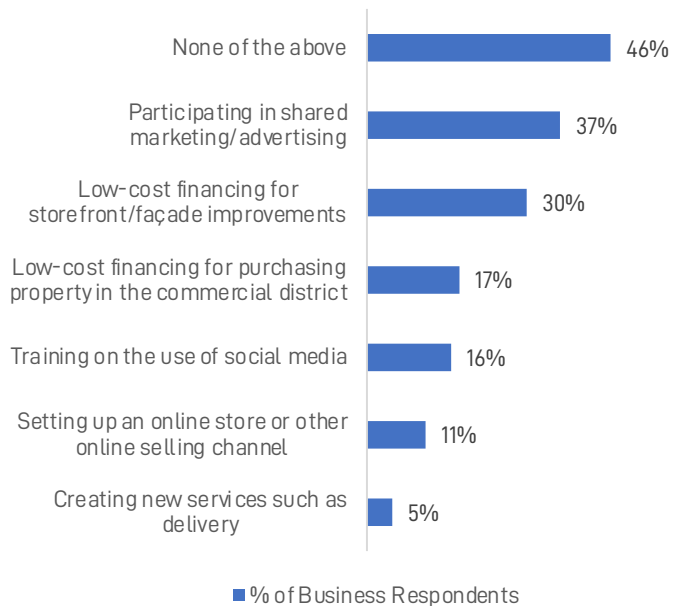


Highlights of the Business Environment: **Business Input**

What Business Owners Had to Say...

When asked about receiving assistance, businesses most frequently expressed interest in 1) shared marketing/advertising, and 2) low-cost financing for facade/storefront improvements.

Interest in Receiving Assistance



A business survey was conducted in March/April 2021 as part of the RRP Program, and 66 businesses responded. The data reported on this page are based on results from that survey.



Highlights of the Business Environment: District & Business Marketing

There is room to improve District marketing and branding to help attract customers to Downtown (by building on a good start).

The new bee statues, recently unveiled in Downtown, are a great beginning for brand development, and they present a wonderful opportunity to bring customers Downtown to see something new. Six sculptures, painted by local artists, were installed in Downtown in May 2021 in time for the annual Bee Fest (held primarily virtually due to COVID).

The project was championed by Progress Partnership and the Crossroads Cultural Committee. The initiative came out of a brainstorming session on branding — the main idea was that bee sculptures could “become to Greenfield what cows are to Chicago.”

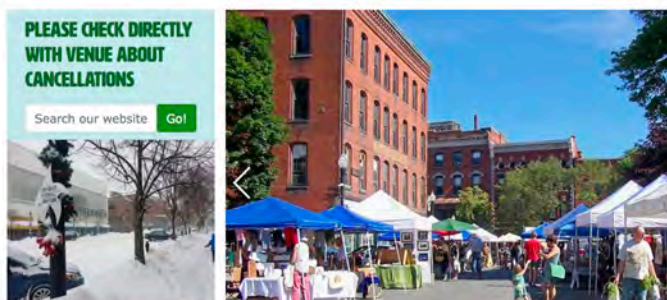
Bees are special to Greenfield because Lorenzo Langstroth, who was a resident of Greenfield and pastor of the Second Congregational Church in the mid-1800s, is considered the father of modern beekeeping.

There is some marketing of the District through the City website. The “Visit Greenfield” page contains some information about upcoming events and has a business directory.

Opportunity: There may be an opportunity to enhance the “Visit Greenfield” page with more dynamic content and linkage to other websites to help drive traffic.



New attraction in Downtown Greenfield. Bee sculptures, painted by local artists, unveiled in May (2021). Source: www.GreenfieldBeeFest.org



“Visit Greenfield” page on the City website. Source: <https://visitgreenfieldma.com/>





Highlights of the Business Environment: **District & Business Marketing**

What we heard about post-COVID Marketing in Downtown Greenfield . . .

- **"We have to get people to come back Downtown."**
- **"We need foot traffic."**
- **"We need to make people feel that it is safe."**

People have significantly changed their behaviors in the last year, but as the vaccination rate rises, a window opens to shape new routines and traditions. It is important to get customers to come back and keep coming back again and again.



Example of inviting place created in Norwood, MA. Source: Town of Norwood Facebook Page

Opportunity:

Strategies from other communities . . .

1. Streamline approval process for use of public and private outdoor space for dining and selling.
2. Support/expand existing attractions and develop new complementary attractions.
3. Create fun and inviting places. Activate underutilized spaces.
4. Develop programming — Events.
5. Promote Downtown and what's new. Get a social media campaign going (use organization networks. Encourage individuals to post photos using Downtown hashtags).
6. Make it easy to walk and bike downtown.



Highlights of the Business Environment: District & Business Marketing

Wayfinding signage to get people to and around the Downtown as well as providing information about businesses and attractions are also key parts of District marketing and branding.

Wayfinding is very limited. There is significant economic opportunity to capture dollars from visitors and tourists but there is no coordinated wayfinding system that leads customers to and around downtown. High-quality wayfinding elements, such as gateway signs, directional signs, business directories, and kiosks, could attract more customers and direct them to shops, restaurants, civic venues, and other points of interest they may not be aware of.

There is no business directory on site to make customers aware of the offerings available in Downtown Greenfield. Many communities provide a business directory and community event kiosk to help market businesses. There is nothing available in Downtown Greenfield.

There is minimal district definition. Key branding elements, such as gateway treatments (i.e., welcome signs, icons, and planters), wayfinding sign systems that identify points of interest, and business/cultural directories and kiosks, are largely missing in Downtown Greenfield.

Opportunity: As a start to implementing a wayfinding program, welcome signs could be installed at both ends of Main Street and on Federal Street. Banners with branding themes, historic images, and wayfinding could also be attached to the streetlights.

The Chamber serves as a visitor information center but is not well-identified or easily found by visitors.

Greenfield is fortunate to have the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce located right in Downtown. The FC Chamber has racks of maps and brochures pertaining to walking tours, recreational activities, historical sites, etc., and pleasant and helpful staff on site. However, it is unclear how visitors would know that this is a place they could come to for information. There is no signage on the storefront that identifies it as a visitor information center and there is no wayfinding signage in the area that would lead visitors to it.



Franklin County Chamber of Commerce with no signage identifying it as a visitor information center (top). Examples of information available (right). Photos: FinePoint Associates

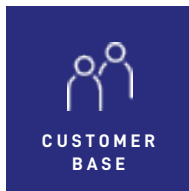


Kiosk example (Sandwich, MA) and Business Directory example (Scituate, MA) Source: Scituate "Harbor Wayfinding System Potential Placement Sites & Elements", www.scituatema.gov/

Customer Base

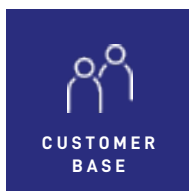


Key Findings — Customer Base



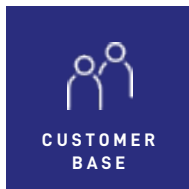
Downtown Greenfield has an opportunity to attract people living in the surrounding area as well as non-resident market segments, such as visitors & employees.

There are 32,222 people in the primary trade area and 68,829 people in the secondary trade area. The population in the two trade areas are predominantly 'moderate income.' Compared to the statewide population, trade area residents are older and less likely to have children in the household. The percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher is above the national average and lower than the state.



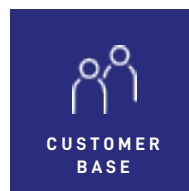
Sales leakage may point to opportunities for Downtown businesses.

Restaurant sales leakage is significant, particularly from the secondary trade area (over \$50 million annually). This indicates that there might be an opportunity for new or expanded restaurant offerings in Downtown Greenfield if they are comparable to those currently attracting residents outside of the trade area.



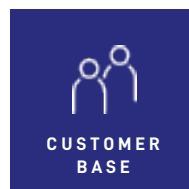
Downtown users are dissatisfied with store selection, business hours, physical appearance, cleanliness, and public spaces.

A majority are in favor of more outdoor dining options (beyond the COVID period), improved streetscape, additional cultural/community events, and public art.



If the remote working trend continues, Downtown Greenfield will continue to be negatively impacted, particularly in the restaurant and retail sectors.

There are close to 10,000 employees working in Greenfield. The largest concentration is near Downtown and represents a significant market opportunity. When employees of county agencies, the court system, financial institutions, etc., began working remotely, it significantly impacted Downtown business.



There are a few events in Downtown Greenfield and the surrounding area that attract visitors.

Downtown Greenfield is host to a few annual events such as the Bee Fest, events related to Cider Days and the Winter Carnival, and the summer farmers' market. The Green River Music Festival and Franklin County Fair, which take place in Greenfield (although not in Downtown), typically attract 15,000 and 25,000 attendees, respectively.



Highlights of the Customer Base: Trade Area

Downtown Greenfield has the opportunity to attract customers living in the surrounding area (resident market segment) as well as visitors and employees (non-resident market segments).

The resident market segment presents the biggest opportunity and is defined by a geographic trade area.

The primary trade area for Downtown Greenfield is about a 7-mile radius, and Franklin County represents a secondary trade area.

The term retail trade area refers to the geographic area from which a retail entity generates its sales. The primary trade area for a commercial center is the area from which most of the steady, repeat sales for all the businesses are derived (typically, where 65–80% of the total sales are generated).

FinePoint Associates, in collaboration with the Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department, conducted a Consumer Preference Survey in October 2020 (we received almost 800 responses from Downtown users).

After reviewing input from this consumer research, identifying the location of existing commercial facilities, analyzing travel times and circulation routes, and discussing consumers patterns with Community and Economic Development Department Staff, it was determined that the likely potential **primary trade area (PTA)** for the Downtown business district is about a 7-mile radius.

There may also be potential to attract some customers from a **secondary trade area (STA)**, Franklin County. This secondary trade area was identified because of the limited competition, particularly to the east and west of the primary trade area, and the fact that Greenfield strongly identifies as the County Center with several county-wide serving agencies. However, it is expected that the capture rate would be less than in the primary trade area and it would depend on the uniqueness and quality of the merchandise or services being offered.

Potential Customers for Downtown

Resident Market Segment

- People living in the surrounding area
- Defined by a geographic trade area

Non-resident Market Segments

- Visitors coming to the area
- Employees in reasonable proximity

Resident Market Segment Trade Area





Highlights of the Customer Base: **Demographics**

The major potential customer base for businesses located in Downtown Greenfield is the surrounding residential population.

The primary trade area (PTA), a 7-mile radius from Downtown, contains 34,222 residents. The secondary trade area (STA), Franklin County, contains 68,829 residents.

The population in the two trade areas are predominantly moderate income; the median household income is \$59,392 and \$63,717, respectively, compared to \$86,645 statewide. The percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher is above the national average and lower than the state.

Compared to the statewide population, trade area residents are older and less likely to have children in the household. Over 90% of the households in both trade areas have access to a private vehicle for acquiring goods and services.

Greenfield Population	PTA Population	STA Population
16,879	34,222	68,829
Greenfield Households	PTA Households	PTA Households
7,852	15,204	30,441

The trade areas are less racially and ethnically diverse than Massachusetts overall. Ninety-two per cent (92%) of the PTA population is White, compared to 75% in the state. Six per cent (6%) of PTA residents are Hispanic, compared to 13% in the state.

	Greenfield	PTA	STA	MA
Income, Education & Age				
Median Household Income	\$52,500	\$59,392	\$63,717	\$86,645
Per Capita Income	\$32,390	\$34,622	\$36,550	\$48,708
Residents ≥25 with Bachelor's Degree+	36%	36%	39%	44%
Median Age	45.2	46.5	47.1	40.5
Households				
Average Household Size	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.5
Households with Children <18	25%	26%	26%	31%
Home Ownership	56%	63%	69%	62%
Household Vehicle Ownership	89%	91%	93%	89%
Avg. Vehicles per Household	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.6
Race & Ethnicity				
White Alone	90%	91%	92%	75%
Black/African American Alone	2%	2%	2%	8%
Asian Alone	2%	2%	2%	7%
Other Race Alone/More than 1 Race	6%	5%	4%	9%
Hispanic	7%	6%	5%	13%



Highlights of the Customer Base: **Expenditures and Sales Leakage**

Sales leakage (pertaining to the resident market segment) may point to opportunities for Downtown businesses.

PTA residents spend
\$362 million
 per year at stores & restaurants¹

More than
\$69M
 is spent outside PTA each year

19%

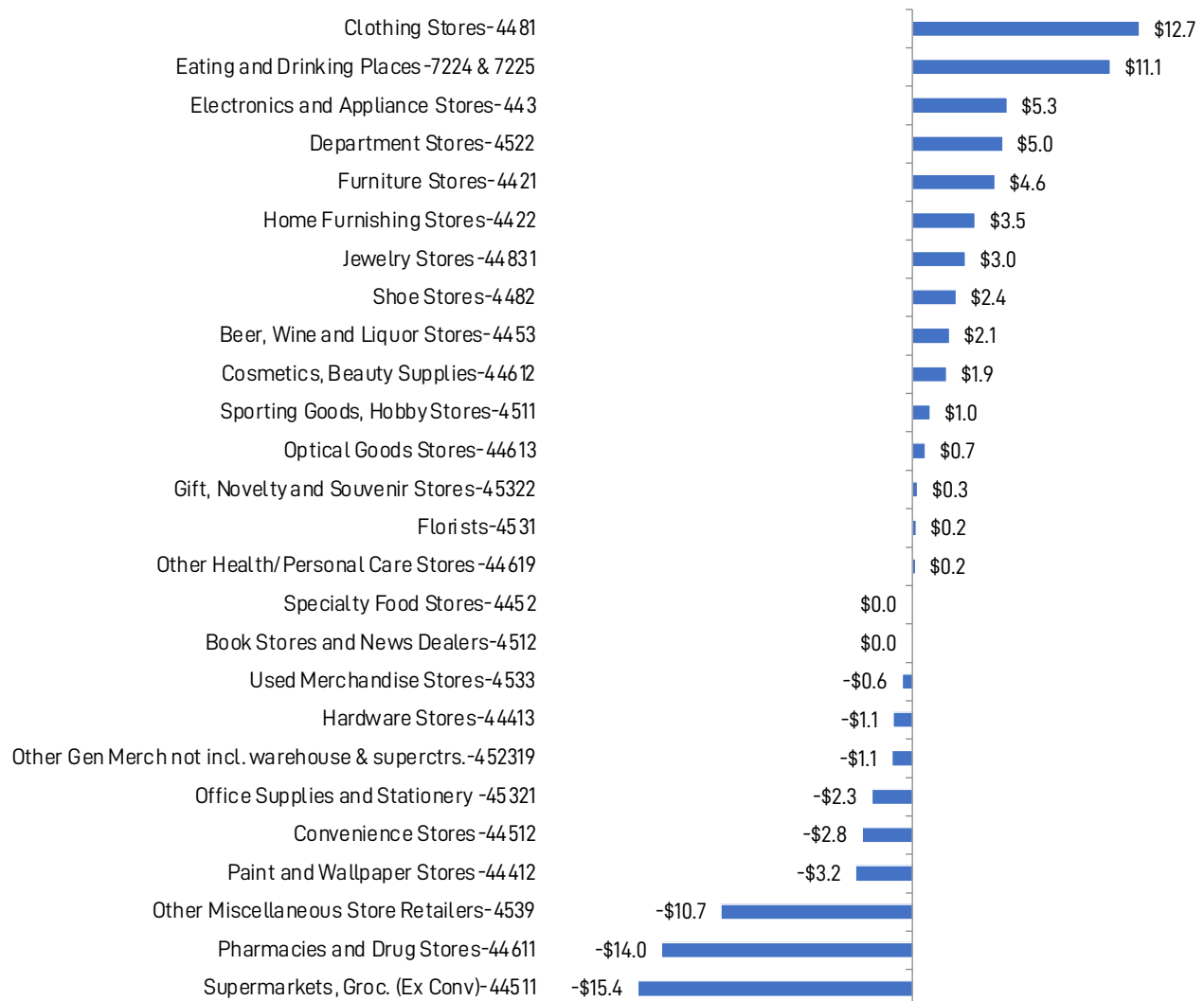
STA residents spend
\$765 million
 per year at stores & restaurants¹

More than
\$229M
 is spent outside STA each year

30%

¹ Excludes vehicle and gas purchases

Estimated Retail & Restaurant Demand Compared to Business Sales (PTA)





Highlights of the Customer Base: **Expenditures and Sales Leakage**

Restaurant sales leakage is significant, particularly in the STA. This indicates that there might be opportunities for new or expanded restaurant offerings in Downtown Greenfield if they are comparable to those currently attracting residents outside of the trade area.



PTA residents spend at least
\$11.1 million
outside the PTA each year
at eating & drinking places



STA residents spend at least
\$50 million
outside the STA each year
at eating & drinking places



Highlights of the Customer Base: **Non-Resident Market Segments**

Attracting more visitors to Downtown can benefit businesses by generating more sales. Increased visitor numbers benefit residents by supporting a wider variety of stores, restaurants, and entertainment establishments.

In addition to the residential customer base, there may be additional market opportunity presented by other segments such as visitors and employees who do not live in the area. Expenditures from these segments are not calculated in the sales leakage analysis and therefore represent additional potential market opportunity. Food service businesses are often the most likely enterprises to benefit from visitors.

Visitors to the area, drawn to attractions and events that bring them within proximity of a commercial center, can create potential opportunities for area restaurants, retailers, entertainment venues, service providers, and lodging establishments.

Downtown Greenfield has entertainment offerings at local venues, such as Hawks and Reed Performing Arts Center, and events like the Bee Fest. Greenfield is the hub of Franklin County, full of natural beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities. The region is also rich with cultural events that draw visitors, like the Green River Music Festival and Cider Days.

Private schools also generate visitors to the region. Several private schools bring students and their families from around the world to the area (e.g., Deerfield Academy, Northfield-Mt. Hermon, Stonleigh-Burnham, Eaglebrook & Bement).



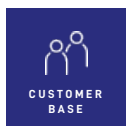
One of six locally produced bee sculptures unveiled in Downtown Greenfield during the 2021 Bee Festival. Source: www.GreenfieldBeeFest.org

Benefits of Attracting Visitors

- Downtown businesses get more sales
- Residents get access to a larger variety of stores, restaurants and entertainment establishments that wouldn't be supported by only residents.

Annual Events that Draw Visitors to the Area

Event	Where	When	Days	Attendance	Where Attendees Come From
Bee Fest	Downtown Greenfield	May/June		NA	Greenfield and Franklin County
Franklin County Fair	Franklin County Fairgrounds	Sept.	4	25,000 avg. attendees	Franklin County (majority), Northampton, Brattleboro, North Worcester, Berkshires
Green River Festival	Greenfield Community College (usually)	July or Aug.	3	15,000 avg. attendees/yr., 5,000/day	Approximately 70% from Western MA and Southern VT. Others are from Northeast and further.
Cider Days	Multiple venues, Greenfield & County	Nov.	2	NA	NA
Greenfield Winter Carnival	Multiple venues in Greenfield	Dec.	2	NA	NA



Highlights of the Customer Base: **Non-Resident Market Segments**

Employees of area businesses represent market opportunities for meal/snack purchases as well as convenience goods and services before, during, and after work. Close to 10,000 people work in Greenfield.

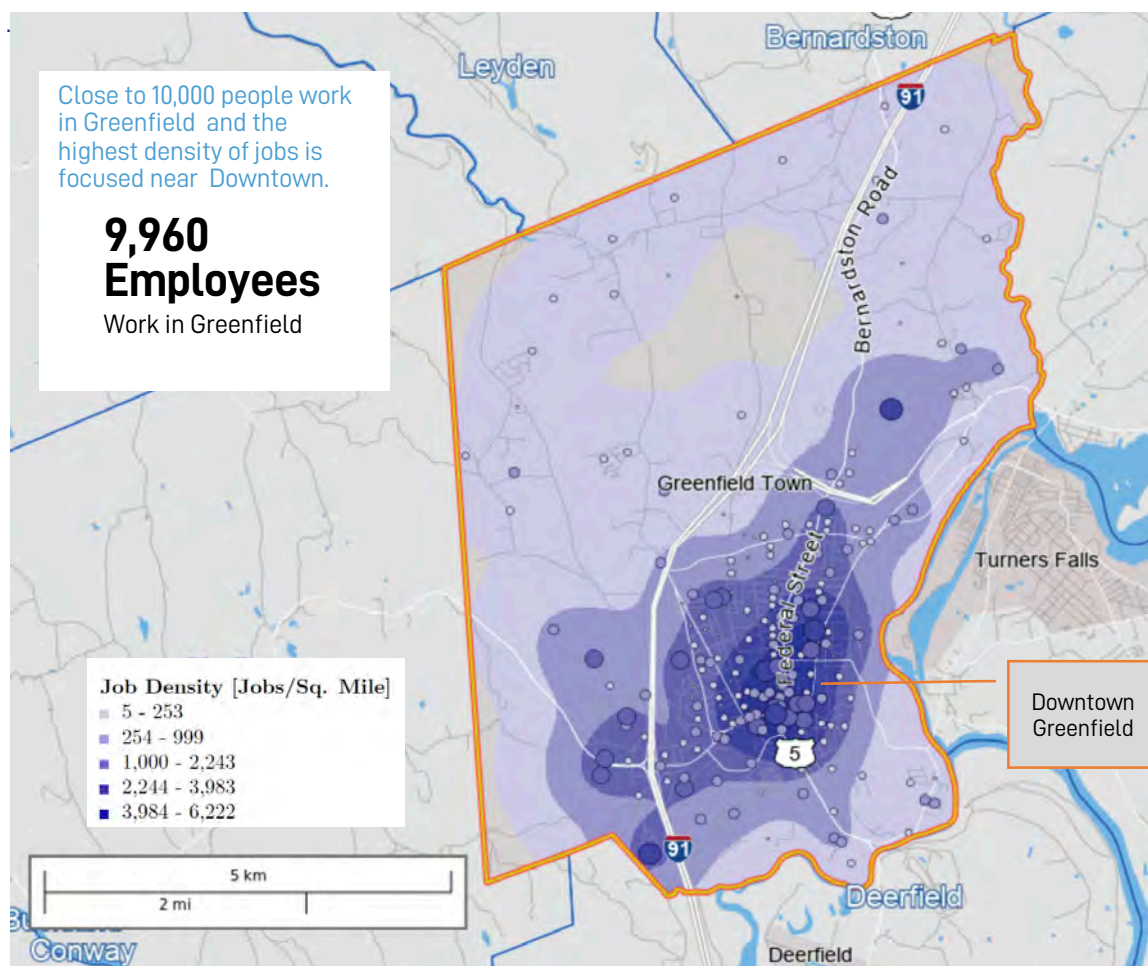
In addition to employees, **Users of the Justice Center and Related Agencies** also represent a market segment for food purchases or shopping before and after court/agency-related activities.

During COVID, many employees of Franklin County Justice Center as well as county and state agencies started working remotely and many agencies became closed to the public or significantly reduced hours. This has significantly impacted the volume of customers in the area on a daily basis and has contributed to a decline in sales.

If the “remote working” trend continues, Downtown Greenfield will be negatively impacted, particularly in the restaurant and retail sectors.

What can be done?

- Encourage agencies not to promote remote working.
- Make people want to come to work in and near Downtown by improving facilities and offerings.
- Encourage Downtown to host more remote workspaces to accommodate workers that may no longer have an office but don't want to work from home (e.g., expansion of co-working spaces like Green Space Co-Work).
- Increase efforts to attract visitors to replace decline of employee market.



Source: Census Bureau on the Map, Work Area Profile, 2018



Highlights of the Customer Base: **Consumer Patterns and Preferences**

Consumers expressed dissatisfied with selection of stores, business hours, physical appearance, cleanliness, and public spaces. A majority are in favor of more outdoor dining options (beyond the COVID period), improved streetscape, additional cultural/community events, and public art.

Some highlights from the Consumer Preference Survey conducted in October 2020 by FinePoint Associates.
(798 responses)

Where else do Downtown Greenfield users go to dine and shop?

- ✓ Northampton
- ✓ Montague (Turners Falls)
- ✓ Amherst and Hadley
- ✓ Brattleboro, VT
- ✓ Keene, NH

Downtown users are Satisfied:

- ✓ Availability of parking

Downtown users are Dissatisfied:

- ✓ Selection of retail stores
- ✓ Evening business hours
- ✓ Physical appearance
- ✓ Cleanliness
- ✓ Public spaces

Satisfaction with Restaurant Selection:

42% satisfied and 30% dissatisfied

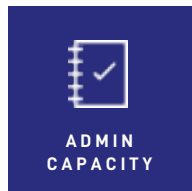
A majority of Downtown users are in favor of:

- ✓ More outdoor dining options (beyond COVID period)
- ✓ Improved streetscape
- ✓ Additional cultural/community events
- ✓ Public art installation

Administrative Capacity

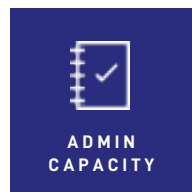


Key Findings — Admin Capacity



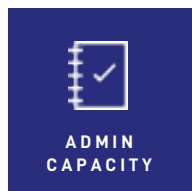
Downtown zoning focuses primarily on the “private realm” and pays little attention to the “public realm.”

Greenfield's conventional zoning ordinance addresses “private realm” elements, including building and site improvements such as dimensions, uses, parking, and landscape. However, in a downtown setting, urban design is a critical issue that also takes into consideration the “public realm.” To ensure a cohesive and compatible environment between the two, context-based design standards are often adopted by municipalities to coordinate fenestration, sidewalk activation (signs, displays, café seating), publicly-accessible open spaces, curb cuts, and the location of off-street parking, private and semi-public outdoor spaces, with particular attention given to the interface between the public and private realms.



Downtown sign regulations limit the variety of signage and lack definition and clarity.

The basic sign standards for Downtown Greenfield allow for one sign within a specified size limit. Business owners must seek a special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals for additional signage. This may be inhibiting the use of a combination of high-quality signs such as wall signs, window signs, projecting signs, and sandwich board signs often employed by storefronts in vibrant downtown settings. In some communities, related design standards are often provided to address placement, size, lighting, and materials, and if the proposed sign plan meets these standards, they are approved administratively instead of requiring a special permit and ZBA approval process.



There is no designated organization with a dependable funding source managing Downtown improvement and overseeing recovery efforts.

There are several organizations and many dedicated individuals who play a role in Downtown Greenfield, but there is no central coordinating entity. A few of these organizations occasionally apply for and use small grants, but financial management capacity is very limited for most.

Opportunity: Consider formalizing a district management structure for Downtown Greenfield.



Highlights of Administrative Capacity: Zoning and Regulations

Overview

Downtown zoning districts are different from other districts in that they tend to have a broader mix of uses, higher density, older buildings that are being repurposed from their original uses and limited open space on site. They also rely heavily on a supportive public realm of sidewalks, streets, open spaces, and parking. Therefore, a collaborative relationship is necessary between the City and private sector to foster a vibrant district, and zoning is a primary tool for success.

Downtown zoning focuses primarily on the “private realm” and pays little attention to the “public realm.”

Downtown Greenfield is incorporated into the Central Commercial (CC) zoning district. The dimensional requirements of the CC include no minimum lot size, frontage, or lot width. This flexibility is important for older downtowns where lot dimensions range significantly because of the variety of uses that have located there over hundreds of years. There is also no minimum front setback, and side and rear setbacks are 0 to 15 feet. The zero-front setback along the frontage is an important standard to create a relationship between the building and the sidewalk. However, a range should be provided for institutional buildings that are typically raised and setback from the sidewalk to portray prominence. Additionally, design standards for the use of open space in front of the building is common in newer downtown zoning regulations to ensure active uses adjacent to the sidewalks (i.e., dining terraces, plazas, pocket parks, etc.) as opposed to landscaped areas. These active uses could be included as an eligible treatment under the “Minimum Landscaped Open Space” requirement of 15%, as should rooftop terraces. Downtown is an urban environment and publicly accessible hardscapes are beneficial while large, landscaped areas along the street (i.e., Greenfield Savings Bank) are a negative.

In terms of property uses, the CC district allows for a broad range of agricultural, residential, institutional, recreational, and commercial uses. The flexibility in uses is generally a positive thing for downtown. However, the core storefront area where older buildings line the sidewalk on Main Street, Federal Street, and Bank Row needs to be somewhat protected.

This can be accomplished with a “pedestrian frontage zone” where the ground floor uses along the sidewalk must be in retail, restaurant, or other commercial uses that are open and inviting to pedestrians such as personal and professional services and similar offices. Other allowed uses would have to be above the first floor or setback a distance from the streetline (typically 60–100 feet). This zoning tool protects the integrity of the core retail, food, and entertainment area of downtown. “Mixed Residential/Businesses Uses” are also allowed but it unclear as to the allowed density and combination of uses. Mixed use is an essential element of successful downtowns and provides a built-in market for local businesses and housing choices for residents. Allowable higher density mixed use incentivizes property owners to rehabilitate older buildings.

The parking requirements do not apply to the CC district because downtown has ample public parking to support the district. This is an important and positive waiver for downtown vitality and growth.

Downtown sign regulations limit the variety of signage and lack definition and clarity.

The sign regulations basically allow 1 sign per business up to the lesser of 10% of the building width or 45 SF. The type of signs allowed include wall signs, projecting signs, marquees, and awning signs. Businesses are also allowed a ground sign and identification sign. As written, the sign regulations appear to say that the 10%/45 SF area of sign area can only be used for one of the sign types. This section lacks definition and clarity.

Opportunity: Specific standards and illustrative graphics could be established to clearly define wall signs, projecting blade signs, ground signs, marquee signs, awnings and banner signs, window signs, sandwich board signs, and iconic signs in Downtown Greenfield. Because Downtown's success depends on quality storefront treatments, a combination of signs and spill-out applications (such as merchandise displays) should be allowed by right with high-quality standards. Sign permits should be issued administratively with clear standards and without board review or unnecessary fees that may deter the use of high-quality signage and displays.



Highlights of Administrative Capacity: **Zoning and Regulations**

Projecting Blade Signs — While projecting signs are permitted by the City, relatively few are being utilized to the benefit of both customers and businesses. The lack of creative projecting blade signs will reduce the chances that customers will see businesses from the sidewalk or from inside vehicles. The City should encourage all shops and restaurants to install blade signs. This should also be an emphasis of the façade improvement program and designed so that the bracket and lighting can be reused to hold other businesses' signs if the first business leaves.

Parking Regulations

Community representatives indicate that a discussion regarding the removal of parking meters is taking place in the City. This is an important decision as it could have negative consequence for Downtown. First, removing meters will likely result in long-term parkers (mostly employees) taking up Main Street spaces in areas intended for shopping convenience. That may make it difficult for customers to find parking spaces near retail shops and restaurants, which business owners rely on. Convenience to their customers and a regular turnover of the parking spaces near their stores is critical. In these areas, parking limits should be shorter (typically 2 hours). The second issue with removing meters is that they keep the spaces turning over as they should in different parts of the street, which benefits customers and businesses owners. The meters themselves are good at keeping the spaces turning over even if they are not consistently enforced. Meters also generate revenues that are used to maintain and enhance the public parking system.

Opportunity: As an alternative to removing parking meters, the City and business community could reevaluate appropriate timing, fees and enforcement policies that properly maintain the system, keep the spaces turning over as designed, and keep the customers happy.

Other Regulations

In addition to the zoning bylaws, Greenfield has several ordinances intended to enhance the downtown business district including:

- Bike Parking Guidelines
- Commercial Corridor Design Standards
- Residential Design Guidelines
- Sidewalk Café Permit Application
- Vacant Storefront Registration

Downtown Greenfield Designations

Downtown is also under several local, state, and national designations:

- Slum and Blight District
- Urban Renewal District
- MA Cultural District
- Opportunity Zone
- Vacant Storefronts District (MassDevelopment Program)
- Downtown Historic District
- Several of these designations qualify the City for state or federal funding as well as grant programs that can benefit the district.

Business Survey Results Regarding Regulations

Results from our recent Business Survey suggest that just over half of the businesses (53%) feel that elements of the regulatory environment pose an obstacle to business operation. Parking Regulations were cited most frequently followed by Outdoor Dining Regulations and Licensing and Permitting.



Highlights of Administrative Capacity: **District Management & Organization Ecosystem**

The city does not have a staffed organization with a dependable funding source managing the Downtown and overseeing recovery efforts.

There are several organizations and many dedicated individuals who play a role in Downtown Greenfield, but there is no central coordinating entity. The entities involved include the Greenfield Business Association, Progress Partnership, Crossroads Cultural District Committee, Sustainable Greenfield Implementation Committee, Greenfield Neighborhood Association, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, and the City's Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department (see chart on following page for overview of organizations).

There is no dedicated dependable funding source to pay for Downtown promotion, cultural activities, or general management staffing.

A few of these organizations occasionally apply for and use small grants, but financial management capacity is very limited for most.

Example: Parking Benefit District

Can allocate some or all the parking revenue into a dedicated fund.

Transportation-related improvements

- Parking maintenance, operations, enforcement
- Wayfinding and signage
- Walking and biking Infrastructure improvements and amenities
- Open space
- Marketing, promotion and events
- Management

Opportunity: Consider formalizing a District Management Structure for Downtown Greenfield.

Management Entity	District Delineation	Revenue Sources
Volunteer Downtown Organization	Volunteer program model addressing design, organization, promotion and economic vitality.	Not self-sustaining; state grants, municipal contributions and fundraising
Community Development Corporation	Engages residents and businesses to undertake sustainable community development efforts. Geared to benefit low/moderate income.	Not self-sustaining; state grants, foundations and donations
Business Improvement District	Contiguous area within which property owners paid to develop, fund, and execute supplemental services to benefit economic and social vitality of district.	Self-sustaining through fees; reauthorized every five years, grants and fundraising
Parking Benefit Districts	Geographically defined district in which parking revenues are dedicated to related improvements. Can be a standalone or part of an existing downtown organization.	Self-sustaining through parking revenue fees



Highlights of Administrative Capacity: District Management & Organization Ecosystem

Entities Involved in Downtown Greenfield

Entity Name	Founding Year	Organization Mission and Activities	Paid Staff	Annual Budget and Experience Managing Grants
Greenfield's Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD)	2017/18	Increase economic opportunity for community, encourage investment and job creation in Greenfield. Examples of Activities: 1) Administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and acts as coordinator for grants; 2) Downtown revitalization, signage and façade program, update of Downtown Plan; 3) Staff support for Cultural Council and Crossroads Cultural District; 4) Liaison to organizations in economic development (Chamber, GBA, PP).	3 FT & 1 PT	\$263,000/yr. (from the City and grants). CDBG up to \$825,000.
Sustainable Greenfield Implementation Committee (SGIC)	2014	Implement Sustainable Master Plan (fostering programs focusing on economy, environment and society). Examples of Activities: 1) Assessing walkability/biking in Downtown; 2) Support businesses after COVID, e.g., helping with outdoor dining efforts; 3) Kicking off "community conversations" to share positive things and areas for focus in Greenfield.	0	\$0 Not pursued grants as a committee.
Franklin County Chamber of Commerce (FCCC)	1919	Promote economic and civic vitality, and workforce development. Examples of Activities: 1) Visitors' center; 2) Support businesses in Downtown by being a source of information and acting as a communications point; 3) Hub to attract tourists (work with Regional Tourism Council).	3 FT	\$500,000/yr. \$150,000 yearly grant from Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT) to promote tourism in Franklin County, used for promotion efforts.
Crossroads Cultural District Committee	N/A	Facilitating arts and culture in Downtown Greenfield. Examples of Activities: 1) Facilitates funding to different events; 2) Financial assessment and technical support to the Bee Festival; 3) Spearheaded installation of the Bee Sculpture.	0	\$0 Occasional grant funds for activities, e.g., MA Cultural Council Grant of \$5,000–\$7,000.
Progress Partnership Inc.	2017	To act as a non-partisan, Downtown-specific space for business owners to facilitate a more effective way to market Downtown and give it more attention. Examples of Activities: 1) Supported local events and worked to develop cohesive branding campaigns, e.g., for the Bee Festival; 2) Brand building for the Bee Sculpture project, and development of The Hive.	0	\$0 1) partnered with The Hive on MassDev. Grant before COVID; 2) MA Cultural Council grants for smaller projects: \$7,000–\$15,000.
Downtown Greenfield Neighborhood Association	2019	Non-governmental, citizen-driven organization to support Greenfield in achieving a healthy urban, economic, safe and beautiful community; hub for civic engagement; incubator for upcoming projects. Examples of Activities: 1) Organized events (e.g., neighborhood cleanup and larger projects like pedestrianizing Court Square urbanism; 2) Organized forums to share information about elections; 3) Before COVID, hosted quarterly meetings and Q&As to discuss and get feedback from public about issues in Downtown Greenfield.	0	\$0 (unincorporated). \$1,000 (donations for activities and operations).
Greenfield Business Association (GBA)	2018	Promote economic and civic well-being and vitality in Greenfield; help businesses and business communities in Downtown Greenfield. Examples of Activities: 1) Marketing efforts to get customers to come to stores and increase foot traffic; 2) Upcoming video series to promote local businesses; 3) Helping promote business activities and lending expertise, e.g., scavenger hunt with replica bees.	1 PT	\$20,000/yr. Grant writing experience of <\$10,000 with MA Cultural Council, Crossroads Cultural District, and MassDev. Grant for outdoor reopening.



Highlights of Administrative Capacity: **District Management & Organization Ecosystem**

There are a few existing programs available to Downtown Businesses, including a Façade Improvement Program, Microenterprise Loan/Grant Program, and Vacant Storefront Program.

The Façade Improvement Program provides up to 75% of project costs with a maximum of \$60,000. It requires a 15-year easement on the façade improvements, which is not uncommon for these programs but can be a deterrent as storefront treatments such as wall and blade signs, awnings, window treatments are often designed for a specific business that may not be there for the duration of the easement. While this has been a successful program for renovating storefronts and signs, the required 15-year restriction on altering the improvements may be a deterrent to property owners as tenants tend to come and go.

Opportunity: The City may want to consider a secondary program to fund storefront treatments such as display windows, doorway, awnings, signs, and lighting that do not have a full façade restriction.

The Microenterprise Assistance Program is a regional program administered in partnership with the City and Franklin County Community development Corporation (FCCDC).

The Massachusetts Vacant Storefront Program (MVSP) is a Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD) initiative. The City of Greenfield applied to have Downtown designated as a "Certified Vacant Storefront District." After achieving such a designation and achieving a commitment of local matching funds, businesses or individuals may apply to the EACC for refundable EDIP tax credits for leasing and occupying a vacant storefront in the district (e.g., up to \$10,000 in refundable tax credits over a 2-year period).

Project Recommendations

Summary of Recommendations

Public Realm	Create a plaza at Court Square in front of City Hall to invigorate Downtown by accommodating social gatherings, civic events, and other community activities.
	Complete the planned pocket park and activate the adjacent Fiske Avenue Alley with enhancements (e.g., overhead lights, greenery, seating) to complement the park and adjacent eateries, and serve as a small event space.
	Install additional streetscape elements (curb-to-storefront) that would complement the planned curb-to-curb Main Street roadway improvement.
Private Realm	Create a storefront/signage improvement program that is designed with more flexibility, allowing additional businesses to participate and encouraging high-quality storefront treatments.
	Complete a 100% Corner Demonstration Project with multiple improvements (e.g., murals, large vertical banners/ improved storefront treatments at corner establishments, streetscape elements).
Revenue /Sales	Create a marketing initiative for Downtown and the Crossroads Cultural District by incorporating an improved "Visit Greenfield" website, a "Welcome Back to Downtown" campaign, and pledge to support local.
	Implement a wayfinding system to get people to and around Downtown that builds on previous preliminary wayfinding sign design work.
	Develop a Business Directory and Community Information Kiosk to make customers aware of the offerings available in Downtown.
Admin Capacity	Develop a Parking Benefit District to provide a predicable funding source to support Downtown improvements and an organization that can manage programs and projects.
	Revise the existing sign-by-law regulations to encourage a variety of signage in Downtown and allow businesses to have more than one sign.
Tenant Mix	Implement a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to solicit developer interest in the redevelopment of the First National Bank for a use that would bring people to Downtown.
	Explore the use of UCH-TIF program (Urban Center Housing Tax Increment Financing) to support and encourage residential development in upper floors of Downtown properties.

Public Realm Recommendations

Create a plaza at Court Square to invigorate Downtown by providing a central space for social gathering and community events.

Category



Public Realm

Location

This project is located in front of City Hall at the intersection of Main Street and Court Square (2020 Census Tract State 25, County: 011, Tract: 0413.00).

Origin

Contributors to the Idea: The Mayor has been championing this idea and moving it forward. The original concept for the plaza came from the Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD) working with a consultant provided by the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative in 2017. The RRP participants and consulting team strongly support the creation of a central public gathering space.

Champion: The Mayor will likely lead the project with assistance from the Department of Public Works, Community and Economic Development Department, and the Department of Planning and Development.

Budget and Sources of Funding



Large Budget (\$200,000+)

Budget: The budget for this project will depend on the final design of the plaza. The key elements of the budget will include the following:

- Design and Approval— The City will need to retain a consultant with planning, landscape architecture, and civic engineering qualifications to prepare design plans for the plaza. The design consultant will also assist the City in local and state permitting as needed.
- Construction and Programming— Installation of the plaza will require a contractor with experience building small urban parks. Once completed, additional costs may be required for special furnishings (tables, chairs, kiosks, public art, etc.) and for programming, which will likely be carried out by the City and local civic organizations.
- The budget is estimated at approximately \$1,124,000 based on original cost estimates prepared by Harriman adjusted for inflation.

Potential Funding Sources:

- MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and CDBG program income
- Commonwealth Places (via non-profit partner)
- Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) Grant (in partnership with Western Mass EDC)
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal/state funds
- Contributions from local businesses
- Municipal funds

Timeframe



Short Term (<5 years)

A general timeline for completing the project is approximately 2 years. This includes coordination between the City and adjacent property owners on Main Street, Court Square, Davis Street, and Newton Place; preparation of final plaza design plans; approval of the plans and funding sources by City Council; and construction. There are no known or anticipated start and completion dates at this time.

Risk



Low Risk

There are no significant risks to creating a plaza at Court Square. Potential impediments to successful implementation could be the following:

- A lack of political will to build the park (not considered a high priority).
- Lack of support by adjacent property and business owners (such as concern over parking changes).
- Limitations on the municipal budget or lack of grant funding for the project.
- Access to materials (the pandemic has impacted availability of materials and furnishings that would be used in constructing the plaza).
- Public perception of a lack of parking if too many parking spaces are removed for the plaza.

Key Performance Indicators

Performance indicators that might be used to measure anticipated impacts of the project after implementation include the following:

- **Increase in business sales/customers, particularly around the plaza, on Main Street, Bank Row, and Court Square.** The business owners in this area could be surveyed 3–6 months after the opening of the plaza for their opinions on the impacts of the new public gathering space.
- **Increase in the number of people in Downtown.** This might be measured by:
 - the number of outdoor seats in the plaza that are occupied during certain times of day,
 - the number of attendees at the plaza during different events,
 - average annual daily traffic (AADT) measured at the MassDOT permanent counters in and around Downtown before and after the plaza is built.
- **Increase in positive perception of Downtown.** This could be measured by public opinion surveys about the plaza 6 months after its opening.

Partners and Resources

A summary of entities/organizations/individuals that might be required to implement the project are identified below:

- Mayor — Support and spearhead the project and liaison with the downtown business community.
- Director of Community and Economic Development — Manage grants obtained from state and federal programs.
- Department of Public Works (DPW) — Oversee the design and construction of the project.
- Recreation Department — Participate in the design and future programming of civic events.

Partners and Resources (cont'd)

- Department of Planning & Development — Oversee any municipal design review and permitting requirements.
- Greenfield Historic Commission — Provide recommendations for the design of the plaza and any modifications to the Court Square open space.
- City Council — Approve of the plaza and funding sources.
- Adjacent property and business owners — Support the project and participate in spill-outs, including outdoor seating, entertainment, and merchandise displays (particularly Hawks and Reed Performing Arts Center), on Main Street, Court Square, and Davis Street.
- Greenfield Business Association — Assist with communication with businesses.
- Partnership Inc. and Crossroads Cultural District Committee — Assist with programming and marketing of events.

Diagnostic

The community has a shared vision for a new plaza, located at the corner of Main Street and Court Square (directly in front of City Hall), that would extend the small historic common and create a vibrant civic gathering space. This project responds to the impacts of COVID-19 and the challenges and opportunities in the Downtown Study Area in the following ways.

How this Project Responds to Key Challenges/Opportunities Identified in Diagnostic Phase: As described in more detail in the Diagnostic Report, the lack of vibrant and visible civic gathering spaces in the study area limits the potential to draw more tourists and customers from Greenfield and nearby communities. Creating a vibrant new plaza provides the opportunity for additional programming and events in the heart of Downtown where they can have the biggest impact on nearby businesses. The existing open space/common is a small historic public park with a war memorial that is not easily accessible for civic activity due to its limited size and proximity to heavy traffic on the adjacent Bank Row.

Harmful COVID-19 Impacts this Project seeks to Address: COVID-19 forced several downtown businesses to close or scale back in 2020 and 2021 resulting in a steep decline in local customers and tourist visits. As businesses begin to recover over the next few years, new civic attractions in Downtown Greenfield will be critical to draw not only regular customers but several regional customers and tourists to respond to the impacts of lost revenue for local businesses over the past 2 years. In addition, the park provides an opportunity to offer an open space for the community to safely gather and spend time outside. CDC guidelines suggest that COVID transmissions are significantly reduced outdoors.

How did COVID Create or Exacerbate the Issue Addressed by this Project: COVID-19 exacerbated the issue of Downtown's lack of civic open spaces as large gatherings were not permitted for the last 1 and a half years, limiting the City's efforts to attract more people to Downtown Greenfield to support local businesses. The City understands how important it is to address this issue and has made the development of the plaza a high priority with the goals of bringing more customers into Downtown and improving visibility and access to businesses, leading to rapid economic recovery.

Action Item

The concept for the new Court Square plaza expands the park by converting the street in front of City Hall (Court Square) into a new plaza where a variety of civic gatherings can be programmed. This new plaza will face the Hawks and Reed Performing Arts Center, Town Hall, and the Second Congregational, creating a large and programmable civic space. The concept plan also creates a pedestrian court between the new plaza and Veterans Park along Davis Street (an alley between City Hall and Hawks and Reed), allowing for more activation opportunities.



Court Square Concept Plan. Source: MA Downtown Initiative 2017, Harriman Associates

Actions to be taken include the following:

Temporary Demonstration Pilot: Temporary activation of the space could be achieved with the installation of temporary planters, bollards, string lights, and synthetic turf. Activation could include installing movable chairs and tables as well as programming a variety of civic events and activities. This would provide the opportunity for the community to try out the space and get used to a new traffic pattern.

Final Design Plans should be Prepared: The final design should create a combined plaza and park space that achieves the following:

- Visual and physical connections to surrounding uses.
- Flexible space that supports a variety of community event types.
- Accessible elements for users of all ages and abilities.

Action Item (cont'd)

- Limited vehicular access, circulation, and parking.
- Low-maintenance plantings, bollards, hardscape materials, and decorative lighting.
- Dedicated facilities for bicycle parking.

Partner with Adjacent Property and Business Owners: The City should form a partnership with key stakeholders near Court Square on Main Street and Bank Row to ensure that they are supportive of the project and will take an active role in the activation of the new plaza and surrounding area.

Activation and Programming: As the park opens, activation and programming will be critical to success. Activities should be for all ages and abilities and support multi-cultural activities. The partnership should determine the roles that the City, business and property owners, and civic organizations will play in creating a vibrant gathering space. Some potential applications could be a business directory map and information kiosk, temporary performance stage, string lights, picnic tables, movable chairs, interactive public art, game boards, and other furnishings. Potential programming could include live music, movies, the Greenfield Farmers' Market, exercise classes, appropriate signage and wayfinding. Spill-out opportunities for adjacent businesses, such as a beer garden, outdoor dining spaces, merchandise displays, and "pop-up" uses, should further enhance the activity in the plaza and park.

Coordinate with other Ongoing and Proposed Projects: The City should consider opportunities to coordinate and complement the development of Court Square plaza with other projects such as the ongoing redesign of Main Street (curb-to-curb), proposed Main Street streetscape improvements (sidewalks), and the proposed activation of the "100% Corner."

Process

- 1. Form a Court Square Partnership**
Form a committee and conduct a series of meetings between property owners, business owners, City staff from appropriate departments (e.g., Planning, Community and Economic Development, Public Works), the Mayor, and key stakeholder groups, including the Greenfield Business Association and Greenfield Historical Society. This committee should identify design objectives and oversee the planning and construction process, identifying potential funding sources, permitting requirements, and future activation and programming opportunities and responsibilities.
- 2. Hire Contractor**
Select qualified firms for the planning, design, and construction of the plaza.
- 3. Public Input**
Conduct public workshops to inform the community about the project and obtain sufficient feedback on the overall park design and activation plan.
- 4. Design Specifications and Permits**
Prepare design specifications for the plaza and obtain any necessary local or state permits.
- 5. Funding Allocation**
Determine sources and levels of funding for the plaza, including funding for activation and programming.

Process (cont'd)

6. **Approval**

Obtain City approval of the final plaza design plan and funding sources.

7. **Construction**

Hire contractors, prepare construction schedule, and oversee construction.

The Court Square park and plaza are owned by the City and there are no anticipated requirements for property purchase or transfers, site clearance, remediation, or training and technical assistance. The City will have to go through a vendor procurement process to select contractors to design and construct the plaza.

Best Practice Example

Downtown Norwood, MA Central Street Shared Street

The Town of Norwood is interested in creating more active gathering spaces in the downtown center to facilitate more businesses and draw visitors and customers. They have long considered closing off a section of Central Street adjacent to the Town Common and the Norwood Theater block. This is a secondary street that is not used significantly for traffic management or parking. Before making a significant commitment to the project, the Town decided to conduct a "New Urbanism" temporary application. Using all local funds, the Town installed fillable roadway blockades on both ends of the 275-foot block and synthetic turf on the street. They added outdoor bistro tables and chairs, planters, and temporary lights. The "shared street" has become popular, and the adjacent Town and Norwood Theater have begun to program the space for various community activities. Other nearby restaurants have also benefitted. Many people order take-out and eat on the street. The Town is now considering making this area a permanent plaza. The Norwood DPW and Recreation Department acquired and installed all furnishings. The costs are summarized below:

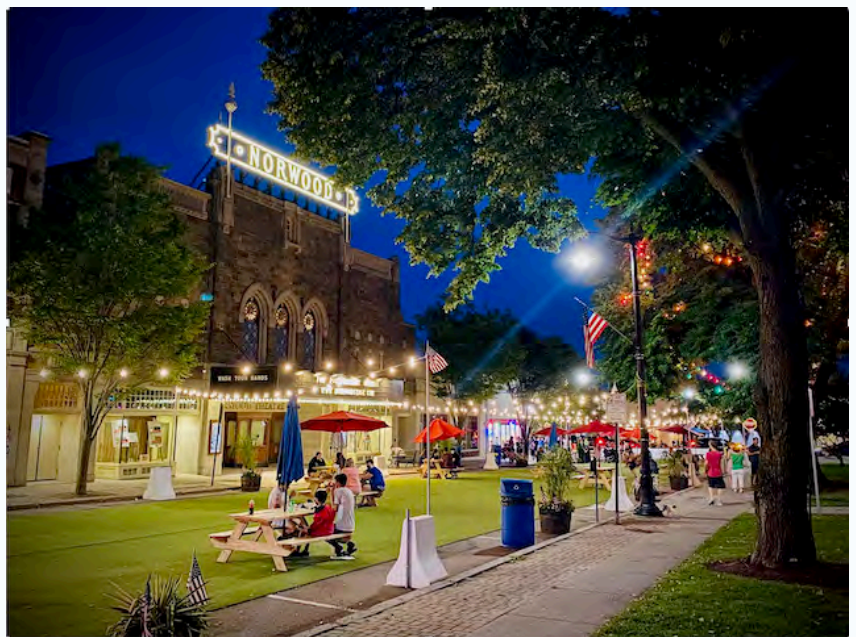
Easy Turf, EZ Putt 2 — 6,750 square feet (SF) for a total of \$16,870 (\$2.50/SF)

Easy Turf installation with Velcro seams — \$3,950

Furnishing (Amazon) — \$1,590



Photo: Brovitz Community Planning & Design



Source: Town of Norwood Facebook Page

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Best Practice Example

Downtown Springfield, MA Duryea Way

Duryea Way is a pedestrian way in Downtown Springfield that connects Taylor Street and Worthington Street at Stearns Square. It is named after the Duryea brothers, the first Americans to build a gasoline-powered automobile. The pedestrian way is at the site where the brothers built, tested, and drove the country's first gasoline-powered car.

The renovated Duryea Way and abutting sidewalk on Worthington Street were renovated to provide for a more inviting, safe, and aesthetically pleasing outdoor space. Improvements include hardscape treatments, landscaping, furnishing, lighting, and a bump-out along the curb at Worthington Street for outdoor dining. Currently, the space is highly activated, and programming, which includes live music, a farmers' market, and other civic events, is provided through the Springfield Business Improvement District (BID). The Duryea Way improvements were part of a larger project that included significant renovations to Stearns Square, which was developed in the late 1880s as a public sculpture park by Chester W. Chapin. The total project was financed with \$1.6 million from City funds and \$300,000 from federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The project cost about \$1.9 million, or about \$44.5/SF, for renovation of the two open spaces; these included utility upgrades, lighting, clay brick paving, extensive landscaping, irrigation, a new pink granite fountain, furnishing, and paving within the roadway.

Sources:

City of Springfield MA Website
Anja Duffy, Designer, GZA
GeoEnvironmental Inc.



Duryea Way. Source: Springfield Downtown Business Improvement District

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REALM

Best Practice Example

Downtown Springfield, MA Duryea Way (cont'd)

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Duryea Way Site Plan. Source: GZA, Inc., 2017



Duryea Way Archway. Source: Springfield Downtown Business Improvement District

Best Practice Example

Downtown Northampton, MA **Pulaski Park**

Pulaski Park is centrally located on Main Street in Downtown Northampton. The one-acre municipal park provides a natural space as well as plaza space with shade trees, walkways, benches, and a play structure. In 2014, the Department of Public Works (DPW) received funding from the Northampton Community Preservation Committee to design renovations to Pulaski Park (the Park was last renovated in 1976). The DPW contracted with Stephen Stimson Associates Landscape Architects to solicit community input regarding park renovations and complete a design for the renovations. Three public workshops were held in April, May, and June 2014 to gather community insights for the park and present preliminary site plans. The final plans were completed, and construction began soon after. Public participation and design plans by Stimson were funded with \$194,500 of the Community Preservation Act money. The City's planning office applied for, and received, a \$400,000 construction grant from the Massachusetts Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) program. In addition, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) included Pulaski Park in a region-wide grant application.

Sources: City of Northampton, MA, Website (DPW homepage), "The Republican," by Mary C. Serreze, April 26, 2014



Images: Site Design, Stephen Stimson Associates. Source: City of Northampton, MA, Homepage



Downtown Northampton, MA
Pulaski Park (cont'd)

PUBLIC
REALM



Site Design, Stephen Stimson Associates. Source: City of Northampton, MA, Homepage

Complete the planned pocket park and activate Fiske Avenue Alley with enhancements/amenities to complement the park and adjacent eateries.

Category	 Public Realm
Location	<p>The pocket park is planned for a city-owned public parking lot (Parcel 51-86) between Main Street, Miles Street, and Fiske Avenue (Fiske Ave). The Fiske Avenue Alley is adjacent to the pocket park and includes 4 properties on Main Street, Fisk Ave, and Miles Street. All properties are in the Downtown Greenfield Study Area, which includes portions of the 2020 Census Tracts State 25, County: 011, Tract: 0413.00.</p>
Origin	<p>Contributors to Project Idea: The Mayor, Director of Community and Economic Development, and the RRP participants and consulting team.</p> <p>Possible Champions: The City's Community and Economic Development Department will likely lead the project with assistance from the Department of Public Works (DPW), and Department of Planning and Development (DPD), and input from the private property owners on the Fiske Avenue Alley.</p>
Budget and Sources of Funding	<div> Large Budget (\$200,000+)</div> <p>Budget: The budget for this project will depend on the final design of the pocket park and treatments done to the alley. The key elements of the budget will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <u>Fiske Avenue Pocket Park (Est. \$200,000+)</u> — There is a concept plan for the Fiske Avenue Pocket Park, however, refinements may be needed prior to construction. The City will need to retain a consultant with planning, landscape architecture, and civic engineering qualifications to prepare design plans for the pocket park, and assist with permitting. Installation of the pocket park will require a contractor with experience in building small urban parks. Once completed, additional costs may be required for special furnishings (tables, chairs, kiosks, public art, etc.).▪ <u>Fiske Avenue Alley Activation (Est. \$10,000)</u> — Expenses for tactical urbanism treatments to the alley include signage, lighting, furnishing, painting, public art, and other activation and programming techniques. <p>Committed Funding: The City was awarded \$200,000 from the MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program (July 2021) for the Pocket Park.</p> <p>Potential Additional Funding Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Massachusetts Downtown Initiative through Community One Stop for Growth for plan refinement- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)- Hometown Grant- Commonwealth Places (via non-profit partner) for programming

Budget and Sources of Funding (cont'd)

For the implementation of the Fiske Avenue Alley Activation, funding sources may include MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program, CDBG program income, municipal funds, and private contributions from property owners. Design and fabrication of special furnishings could be provided by the Franklin County Technical School.

Timeframe



Short Term (<5 years)

A general timeline for completing the projects is approximately 2 years.

- **Fiske Avenue Alley Activation (6 months)** — This includes coordination between the City and adjacent property owners on Fiske Avenue Alley, preparation of activation plan, obtainment of local permits and funds, installation of activation treatments, and programming.
- **Fiske Avenue Pocket Park (18 Months)** — This includes the preparation of final design plans, permitting, securing of funding sources, securing of contractors and materials, and construction.

There are no known or anticipated start and completion dates at this time.

Risk



Low Risk

There are no significant risks to creating a pocket park and activating the Fiske Avenue Alley. Potential impediments to successful implementation could be the following:

- A lack of political will to build the park or activate the alley (not considered a high priority).
- Lack of support by adjacent property and business owners (such as concern over parking changes).
- Limitations on the municipal budget or lack of grant funding for the projects.
- Limited availability of materials and furnishings (due to the pandemic) that would be used in constructing the park.
- Containing outdoor alcohol consumption on Fiske Ave (private) and not in the public park.
- Public perception of a parking problem if the parking spaces are removed or relocated to the street.

Key Performance Indicators

Performance indicators that might be used to measure anticipated impacts of the projects after implementation include:

- **Increase in customers for businesses on Fiske Avenue Alley** (e.g., Wild Roots, Mesa Verde, 10 Forward, The Solar Store). These business owners and other nearby businesses could be surveyed 3–6 months after the opening of the pocket park and activation of the alley to gather opinions about the impacts of the new gathering spaces.
- **Increase in the number of outdoor dining seats after the projects are implemented.**
- **The number of attendees at events held at the park and alley.**

Key Performance Indicators (cont'd)

- **More people in Downtown**, which could be measured by:
 - Public opinion surveys about the park and alley 6–12 months after they open.
 - Biannual pedestrian counts of the Downtown Study Area before and after the projects are implemented.
 - Average annual daily traffic (AADT) measured at the MassDOT permanent counters in and around Downtown before and after the projects are implemented.
 - Daily Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRA) boarding data at the downtown bus stops before and after the projects are implemented.

Partners and Resources

A summary of entities/organizations/individuals that might be required to implement the project are identified below:

- Director of Community and Economic Development (City) — Spearhead the project and manage grants obtained from state and federal programs.
- Department of Public Works (City) — Oversee the design and construction of the project.
- Recreation Department (City) — Participate in the design and future programming of civic events.
- Department of Planning & Development (City) — Oversee any municipal design review and permitting requirements.
- Mayor of Greenfield (City) — Support the project and liaison with the downtown business community.
- City Council (City) — Approve the pocket park and funding sources.
- Adjacent property and business owners on Fiske Avenue, Main Street, and Miles Street — Support the project and participate in the activation of Fiske Avenue Alley.
- Greenfield Business Association (GBA/Private/Non-Profit) — Assist with communication with businesses, and potentially get involved in programming and marketing of civic events in the park and on the alley.

Diagnostic

The community has a shared vision for a new Fiske Avenue Pocket Park and Alley located at the corner of Main Street and Miles Street that can create a vibrant civic gathering space and respond to the impacts of COVID-19 and the challenges and opportunities in the Greenfield Downtown Study Area.

How these Projects Respond to Key Challenges/Opportunities Identified in Diagnostic Phase: As described in more detail in the Diagnostic Report, the lack of vibrant and visible civic gathering spaces in the study area limits the potential to draw more customers from the City and nearby communities, and tourists from Route 2 and I-91. Creating a new vibrant park and activating the adjacent alley will draw more local customers and tourists to Downtown Greenfield. Additionally, CDC guidelines suggest that COVID transmissions are significantly reduced outdoors. The new park and activated alley provide an opportunity to offer open space for the community to gather and interface with local businesses so that they can recoup lost revenue from the last 2 years over time.

Diagnostic (cont'd)

Harmful COVID-19 Impacts these Projects seek to Address:

COVID-19 forced several downtown businesses to close or scale back in 2020 and 2021 resulting in a steep decline in local customers and tourist visits. As businesses begin to recover over the next few years, new civic attractions in Downtown Greenfield are critical to draw not only regular customers but several regional customers and tourists to respond to the impacts of lost revenue for local businesses over the past 2 years.

How did COVID Create or Exacerbate the Issue Addressed by these Projects: COVID-19 exacerbated the issue of Downtown's lack of civic open spaces as large gatherings were not permitted for the last 18 months, limiting the City's efforts to attract more people to Downtown Greenfield to support local businesses. The City understands how important it is to address this issue and has made the development of this pocket park and activation of Fiske Avenue Alley 'high priority' with the goals of bringing more customers into downtown and improving visibility and access to businesses, leading to rapid economic recovery.

Action Item

Create the Fiske Avenue Pocket Park: In 2012, City officials and residents worked together with The Conway School on the Streetscape Enhancement & Ecological Parking Lot Design Plan with the goal of creating a "vibrant and welcoming downtown that is enjoyable for residents, attracts visitors, supports local businesses, and is environmentally sustainable." From this process emerged the Fiske Lot Pocket Park Preferred Design. This concept plan creates a shaded, green parking lot with expanded gathering spaces while reducing impervious surface and related negative environmental effects. The key elements of this sustainable concept plan are as follows:

- Parking is directly accessed on Miles Street, reducing the total amount of asphalt.
- The sidewalk is routed around the parking lot, eliminating potential pedestrian/vehicle conflicts.
- An expanded Fiske Avenue alley is surfaced with attractive permeable pavers, providing more room for sitting and outdoor dining. The wider entry area along Main Street draws the eyes of passersby on foot, bike, and car, connecting the park to downtown.
- Fine crushed rock is used to create a durable and permeable walking surface while supporting tree health and stormwater infiltration.
- Large deciduous trees planted in an allée pattern form a canopy over the park, creating a shaded space.
- A vegetated rain garden treats and infiltrates stormwater from the parking lot and part of the street.
- Smaller shade-tolerant trees are located in the planting bed along Fiske Avenue.
- A gently sloped ramp provides easy access for wheelchairs between the on-street parking area and Fiske Avenue.

Rapid Recovery Plan



Fiske Ave Lot and Alley Parcel Map. Source: City of Greenfield



Fiske Ave Lot and Alley Location Map. Source: Google

Action Item (cont'd)

Enhance and activate the adjacent Fiske Avenue Alley to expand the benefit of the Pocket Park: Fiske Avenue is a 10-foot wide privately owned open alley that provides access to 4 properties with 4 buildings. Businesses with access to the alley are Wild Roots Take Out Kitchen, The Solar Store, 10 Forward, Mesa Verde Restaurant, and Conte Office Interiors (Wild Roots Take Out Kitchen and Mesa Verde Restaurant utilize Fiske Ave for café seating). The new pocket park and activation of the adjacent Fiske Avenue Alley will require collaboration between the City and property and business owners. Some potential activation methods on the alley could include a "Fiske Ave Alley" wayfinding sign at the sidewalk, resurfacing, façade enhancements (painting, lighting, display windows, doors, projecting business signs, vertical banners), pedestrian level lights with banners, string lighting, café seating, murals, merchandise displays, and live music.

Partner with Fiske Ave business and property owners: Create a partnership with the City and property owners to ensure that they are supportive of the projects and will take an active role in the planning and activation of Fiske Avenue Alley. The partnership should determine the roles that the City, business and property owners, and civic organizations will play in creating a vibrant gathering space. The partnership should ensure that activities between the pocket park and alley are coordinated and compatible.

Coordinate with sidewalk streetscape treatments on Main Street: The City recently installed one of the new bee statues, public chess/checkers table, and a bike repair stand in front of the proposed pocket park. Additional streetscape improvements are planned in the future along Main Street. Development of the pocket park and Fiske Avenue Alley activation need to be coordinated with ongoing and future streetscape enhancements on the sidewalks in this area of downtown.

Programming: Programming will be critical to success of the Pocket Park and alley activation. Potential programming could include live music, movies, farmers' markets, exercise classes, or even seasonal "Art Sheds" where small colorful sheds are installed and leased to local and regional artists so they can display and sell their work.



Alternative for Consideration: Add on-street parallel parking to the east side of Miles Street from Main Street to Energy Park as an alternative to head in parking on the Fiske Pocket Park site. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Alternative for Consideration — Currently there are 11 spaces in the Miles Street lot. The 9,583 square foot parcel is owned by the City and has 53 feet of frontage on Main Street and about 175 feet of frontage on both Miles Street and Fiske Avenue. The 2012 preferred concept plan had the 11 existing parking spaces relocating to Miles Street with on-street/head in (perpendicular) parking requiring about 4,350 SF (25x171) or about half the parking lot. More land could be dedicated to the new park if the parking spaces could be added to Miles Street as parallel parking. Miles Street right-of-way (ROW) is approximately 44 feet at the park parcel and widens out to about 68 feet directly south of the lot, allowing for 2 travel lanes and on-street parking on both sides of the street. Several on-street parking spaces could be added to the east side of the street allowing for a larger park.

Process

- 1. Form a Fiske Ave Park and Alley Partnership**
Form a committee and conduct a series of meetings between property owners, business owners, City staff from CEDD, DPW, Planning Department, the Mayor, and key stakeholder groups, including the Greenfield Business Association (GBA).
- 2. Finalize Park Design and Activation Plan**
The partnership should reconfirm the pocket park design and alley activation plans, make adjustments as necessary, and identify future programming opportunities and responsibilities.
- 3. Secure Funding**
Identify and secure funding sources for the pocket park and alley activation.
- 4. Retain Contractor**
The City will select qualified firms for the final design and construction of the pocket park.
- 5. Construction**
Obtain any necessary permits, secure materials, prepare construction schedule, and oversee construction.

The Fiske Ave lot is owned by the City and there are no anticipated requirements for property purchase or transfers, site clearance or remediation, or training and technical assistance. The City will have to go through a vendor procurement process to select contractors to design and construct the park.

Best Practice Example

Downtown Brattleboro, VT Pliny Park

This Park is located at the intersection of Main Street and High Street — the primary corner in Downtown Brattleboro. It is the site of an old Dunkin' Donuts (DD), which was demolished in the early 2000s and replaced with the Thai Bamboo Restaurant. The frontage along Main Street, where the DD parking lot was located, was acquired by Building a Better Brattleboro (BABB), a non-profit downtown advocacy organization, for the purpose of creating a pocket park. After construction, BABB transferred the property to the Town of Brattleboro for ownership. The 6,700 SF park opened in 2006 and was dedicated to longtime downtown merchant, Pliny N. Burrows. The attractive and highly visible pocket park includes attractive pavers, benches, shade trees, landscape planters, and a large mural of downtown. The Park is heavily used for civic events, demonstrations, live music, and other social gatherings. The total cost of the project was \$702,500 and funding sources included:

- Conventional financing (33%)
- State legislature funds (21%)
- Local Town match (14%)
- FHWA Enhancement Grant (31%).

Expenses included:

- Grants management (1%)
- Final design and permitting (6%)
- Other Soft Costs (31%)
- Hard costs (48%)
- Owner contingency, working capital, escalation of BID date (14%).

Sources: Brattleboro Historical Society, Brattleboro Downtown Master Plan (Town of Brattleboro).



Pliny Park, Downtown Brattleboro, VT. Source: Brattleboro — The One and Only Facebook Page

Best Practice Example

Hyannis, MA Beech Tree Alley

This is a privately owned alley on the west end of Main Street in Hyannis. The 10-foot-wide alley provides access to 2 properties from the sidewalk and extends about 100 feet to an open area with a magnificent 200-year-old beech tree. The 2 buildings on either side of the alley have had various commercial uses over the years, but are currently occupied by Treasures & Temptations, Country Soul, and Anejo Mexican Bistro. The restaurant has taken over the entire building on the east side of the alley and has activated the alley space with café seating, an outdoor bar, string lights, lights on the beech tree, signs, and live music. The Hyannis Main Street Business Improvement District (BID) has worked with businesses to activate the space and install the zip-zag pattern string lights in the alley. The BID has also held their Annual Long Table in the alley, which is a popular annual event of fine dining and wine tasting that showcases the restaurants of Main Street.



Beech Tree Alley, Main Street Hyannis, MA. Source: Town of Barnstable



Source: Google Earth

Hyannis, MA Beech Tree Alley (cont'd)



Images: Beech Tree Alley — Main Street Hyannis, MA. Source: Google Earth



Best Practice Example

Hyannis, MA Beech Tree Alley (cont'd)

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*Images: Beech Tree Alley, Main Street
Hyannis, MA. Source: Anejo Mexican
Bistro, Brian Samuels Photography*



Beech Tree Alley, Main Street Hyannis, MA. Source: Hyannis Main Street BID

Best Practice Example

Downtown Fitchburg, MA **Heritage Park**

In 1998, the City of Fitchburg formed a partnership with Fitchburg by Design (FBD), a private downtown revitalization organization, to create a privately owned public space (POPS) in Downtown Fitchburg at the corner of Main Street and Boulder Drive, adjacent to City Hall. The property was owned by the City by tax title and was given to Fitchburg Savings Bank (FSB), who agreed to create a publicly accessible open space. The bank cleared the site, including a dilapidated building, and worked together with FBD and the City to design the new park. The 10,454 SF open space includes shade trees and landscaped gardens, the Fitchburg Police Memorial, a public clock, reflecting pool, ornamental lights and fencing, a trellis with seating, lawn area, picnic tables, and a terrace used for food trucks and vendors. FBD and the City has organized activities, including live music and a farmers' markets, in the park. The open space was renamed Heritage Park in the early 2000s and is also known as "Flag Park," as a series of flags commemorate the many cultures and nationalities that make up the community. The cost of construction was approximately \$200,000, and it was paid for by Fitchburg Savings Bank.

Sources: City of Fitchburg; Ted Brovitz, former Director of Fitchburg by Design



Heritage Park – Downtown Fitchburg, MA. Source: Google Earth



Heritage Park – Downtown Fitchburg, MA. Source: Google Earth

Downtown Fitchburg, MA Heritage Park (cont'd)



Images: Heritage Park — Downtown Fitchburg, MA. Source: Google Earth



Install additional streetscape elements (curb-to-storefront) that would complement the planned curb-to-curb Main Street roadway improvement.

Category



Public Realm

Location

This project would focus on the sidewalks on Main Street, Bank Row, and Federal Street in the Downtown Greenfield Study Area, which includes portions of the 2020 Census Tracts State 25, County: 011, Tract: 0413.00.

Origin

Contributors: Mayor, Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD) Director RRP participants and consulting team.

Possible Champions: Mayor, CEDD Director

Budget and Sources of Funding



Large Budget (\$200,000+)

The City's Community and Economic development department (CEDD) will likely lead the project with assistance from the Department of Public Works (DPW), and Department of Planning and Development (DPD). The City will need to retain a design consultant with planning, landscape architecture, and civic engineering qualifications to prepare streetscape plans and public realm design standards for the utilization of each section of the sidewalk. Installation of the streetscape improvements will require a contractor with experience in roadway and sidewalk construction.

Potential Funding Sources:

- Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) through Community One Stop for Growth
- MassDOT Infrastructure Program
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- Municipal funds

Timeframe



Short Term (<5 years)

A general timeline for completing the project is approximately 3 years. This includes preparation of the streetscape design plans, public realm design standards, public vetting of design plans and standards, approval by the City Council, selection of design and installation contractors, and construction. The project schedule will have to be coordinated with the Main Street roadway and parking improvement plan (currently in the design phase). This may affect the overall timeframe for the streetscape project as the curb-to-curb roadway improvements could change the dimensions of the sidewalks. There are no known or anticipated start and completion dates at this time.

Risk



Low Risk

There are no significant risks to constructing streetscape improvements and adopting design standards for utilization zones except for the temporary disruption of access to businesses as the sidewalks are being reconstructed.

Risk (cont'd)

Potential impediments to successful implementation could be a lack of political will to make changes to the existing sidewalks due to cost, liability concerns with adjacent property owners, or disruption to businesses; a lack of community interest (i.e., not considered a high priority); and business concerns over impacts on revenue during construction.

Key Performance Indicators

Performance indicators that might be used to measure anticipated impacts of the project after implementation include the following:

- **Increase in people accessing businesses on foot or bike.** This could be measured by doing a baseline counting before the improvements and then after (e.g., number of pedestrians on the sidewalks and cyclists on the street bike lanes and utilization of bike racks).
- **Increase in business customers that result from streetscape improvements, ADA accessibility improvements, and better utilization/activation of the sidewalks.** This could be somewhat difficult to measure precisely; however, business owners could be surveyed 3–6 months after improvements to get their opinion about the impacts on customer traffic.

Partners and Resources

A summary of entities/organizations/individuals that might be required to implement the project are identified below:

- Director of Community and Economic Development — Spearhead the project and manage grants obtained for the project.
- Department of Public Works — Support the project and oversee the design and construction of the streetscape improvements.
- Department of Planning & Development — Support the project and oversee design and utilization standards.
- Mayor of Greenfield — Support of the project and liaison with the downtown business community.
- City Council — Approve funding sources.
- Partnership Progress Inc. — Promote the Downtown and Crossroads Cultural District during construction, and help to ensure customers know that businesses are open.
- Greenfield Business Association — Assist with communication with businesses.

Diagnostic

How this Project Responds to Key Challenges/Opportunities Identified in the Diagnostic Phase:

Sidewalk streetscape improvements and utilization/activation design standards will improve opportunities for business development in Downtown Greenfield. As described in more detail in the Diagnostic Report, the current poor condition of sidewalks, accessibility limitations, and lack of utilization flexibility will be addressed in this project, resulting in a more attractive and vibrant downtown district.

Harmful COVID-19 Impacts this Project seeks to Address: As COVID-19 forced several downtown businesses to scale back or close, local customers and tourist visits declined significantly in 2020 and 2021. As businesses begin to fully reopen, the streetscape improvements provide an opportunity for businesses to take advantage of attractive enhancements to the sidewalks, better accessibility, and activation that will draw more visitors to downtown.

Diagnostic (cont'd)

How did COVID Create or Exacerbate the Issue Addressed by this Project: COVID-19 exacerbated the issue of poor streetscape conditions as local businesses closed or scaled back, limiting the capital necessary to make improvements. The new streetscape improvements, sidewalk design, and activation standards will allow businesses and the City to create an attractive new setting for economic development in Downtown. It will also create new opportunities for businesses to utilize enhanced sidewalks, leading to more rapid economic recovery.

Action Item

Actions to be taken for streetscape improvements include the following key steps:

- The City is currently in the design phase of the reconstruction of Main Street, which was funded through a MassDOT Transportation Grant and addresses curb-to-curb improvements, including travel lanes, turning lanes, on-street parking, crosswalks/curb extensions, bus pullouts, bike lanes, and signals with a focus of enhanced multi-mobility. As such, the first step is to closely coordinate with the streetscape improvement project.
- Retain a consultant(s) to prepare design specifications for streetscape improvements and a contractor to install the plans once approved by the City and State.
- Work collaboratively with the City and the business community to “restore browsing” in Downtown Greenfield by creating a vibrant and activated streetscape with the following goals:
 - Handicapped accessibility improvements at pedestrian crossings and storefronts and designated on-street parking spaces.
 - Attractive streetscapes with a broad combination of street trees, landscaping, and furnishings that are highly functional and well maintained.
 - Active uses such as tactical urbanism and other activation applications such as parklets, pop-up stores, public art, store displays, sidewalk cafés, and other temporary or incremental treatments to improve vitality.
 - Pedestrian level sidewalk wayfinding systems, including business directories, community information kiosks, banners, and interpretive history sign boards.
- Install streetscape improvements, including handicap accessibility, curb extensions and crosswalks, new street trees as needed, sidewalk materials that are safe and attractive, furnishings (i.e., ornamental/pedestrian level lighting, benches, bike racks/corrals, public art, etc.), and business activation zones (i.e., outdoor seating, displays, parklets, etc.).

Process

Once a consultant is selected, the project should follow the process below:

1. Kick Off Meeting

Conduct a meeting to be attended by the design consultant, City staff from CEDD, DPW, Planning Department, the Mayor, and key stakeholder groups, including the Greenfield Business Association (GBA) to oversee the design and installation of streetscape improvements.

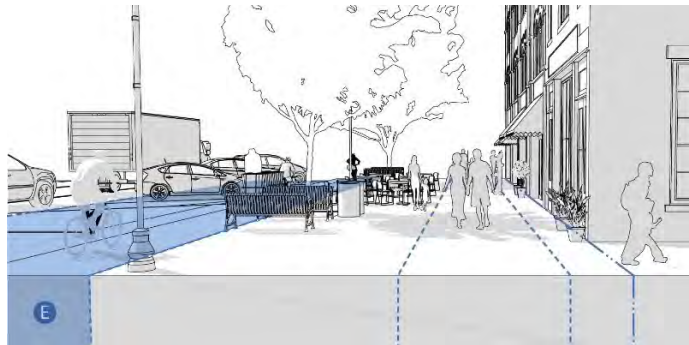
2. Public Workshops

Conduct interactive workshops with property owners, business owners, GBA, relevant boards and committees, and other stakeholders and interested residents in order to educate the public about the project and obtain sufficient input on the overall design of the streetscape improvements and design standards for activation uses for local businesses.

3. Prepare Streetscape Design and Activation Plan and Standards

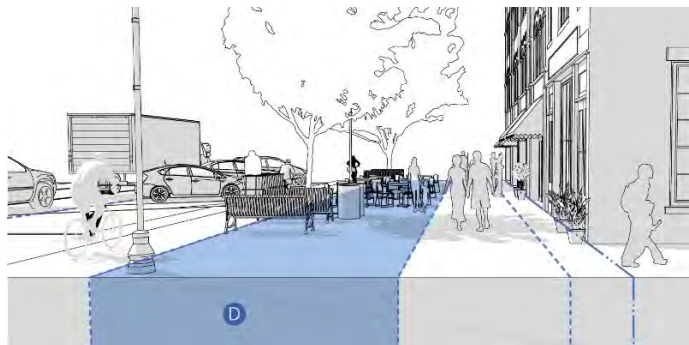
Prepare design specifications and activation standards for zone of the sidewalk as follows:

- **Street Enhancement Zone:** Prepare design plan and activation standards for the street enhancement zone, which includes the area extending past the curb where the following components may be placed: sidewalk curb extensions and crosswalks, bicycle lanes, bike racks and corrals, planter islands, bus pullouts and shelters, and exercise stations. Temporary activation uses like parklets and food trucks may be allowed.



Source: City of Northampton Draft Form-Based Code, October 2019, prepared by Dodson & Flinker and Brovitz Community Planning & Design

- **Furnishing and Utility Zone:** Prepare design plan and activation standards for this zone, which is the area of the sidewalk where pedestrians might utilize benches or café seating and where many of the utilities, like lighting and hydrants, are located. This zone is also where street trees are typically planted. Design specifications and standards should be provided for street trees and tree pits, public seating, bicycle parking, and driveways/alley crossings.



Source: City of Northampton Draft Form-Based Code, October 2019, prepared by Dodson & Flinker and Brovitz Community Planning & Design

Process (cont'd)

- **Pedestrian Throughway Zone:** Prepare design specifications for this zone, which is the primary portion of the sidewalk used for active movement and travel by pedestrians. The zone must be designed with an adequate width for comfortable two-way pedestrian movement, remain clear of obstacles, and have a relatively level paving surface.



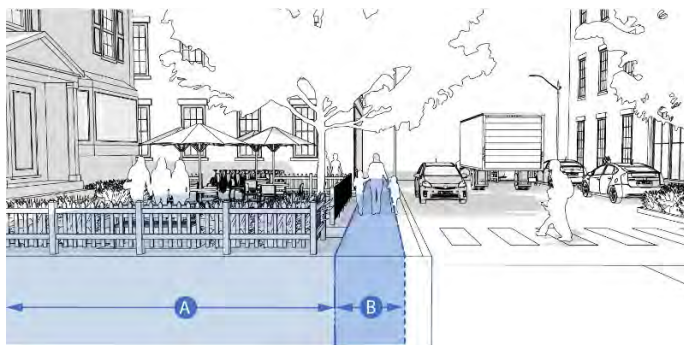
Source: City of Northampton Draft Form-Based Code, October 2019, prepared by Dodson & Flinker and Brovitz Community Planning & Design

- **Public Frontage Zone:** Prepare design specifications for this zone, which is the area between the Pedestrian Throughway and the front lot line of buildings. The size and character of the Public Frontage Zone varies widely depending on context. On wide sidewalks, this zone provides a transitional space for people who are entering a building or viewing a storefront. The materials and design specifications are typically similar to the pedestrian throughway or building frontage zone but may differ in their functions. Design standards should be provided for café seating and outdoor merchandise displays.



Source: City of Northampton Draft Form-Based Code, October 2019, prepared by Dodson & Flinker and Brovitz Community Planning & Design

- **Building Frontage Zone:** Prepare design specifications for this zone, which is the area in front of a building or lot that abuts a public right-of-way. This is a crucial part of the public realm and can define its character. Functionally, this zone provides a transition between the public space and private space, and may include semi-public or private outdoor spaces such as alcoves, dooryards, plazas, forecourts, dining terraces, arcades, galleries, and porches, which should be included in the activation and design standards.



Source: City of Northampton Draft Form-Based Code, October 2019, prepared by Dodson & Flinker and Brovitz Community Planning & Design

4. Implement Streetscape Plan and Design Standards

Prepare detailed cost estimates for streetscape improvements and activation design standards, obtain any necessary permits, secure funding sources, hire contractors, prepare the construction schedule, and oversee construction.

Since the streetscape improvements are within the public right-of-way, there are no anticipated requirements for property purchase and transfers, site clearance or remediation, or training and technical assistance. The City will have to go through a vendor procurement process to select a contractor to design and construct the streetscape improvement.

Private Realm

Recommendations

Create a storefront improvement program with more flexibility allowing additional businesses to participate and encouraging high-quality storefront treatments.

Category



Private Realm

Location

All properties and businesses in the Downtown Greenfield Study Area would be eligible for this project. The study area includes portions of the 2020 Census Tracts State 25, County: 011, Tract: 0413.00.

Origin

Contributors to Project Idea: The Mayor, Director of Community and Economic Development, representatives of the Greenfield Business Association (GBA), RRP Process Participants and Consulting Team.

Champion: Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department.

Budget and Sources of Funding



Low Budget (Under \$50k) for Planning/Design
Medium Budget (\$50 - \$200k) for Implementation

The budget for this project will depend on how the work is carried out. If the City's Community and Economic Development department (CED) staff have the experience and time, it is possible that the entire project could be accomplished "in-house." The City could also retain a planning consultant (possibly including the regional planning commission) to evaluate the current Greenfield Commercial Improvement/Architectural Barrier Removal Grant Program requirements and prepare revised program requirements and context-based storefront design standards. The preliminary cost estimate of retaining a consultant to assist City staff in revising the current program into a storefront/signage improvement program is \$10,000.

Potential Funding Sources - Program Design/Planning:

- Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) through Community One Stop for Growth
- Franklin Regional Council of Governments technical assistance grants

Potential Funding Sources - Implementation:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds or CDBG program income
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal/state funds (Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund/State Program TBD).

Timeframe



Short Term (<5 years)

A general timeline for completing the project is approximately 6 months. This includes public workshops to inform business and property owners about potential changes to the commercial improvement program regulations and provide an opportunity for feedback prior to adoption. Once implemented, the City should work with the Greenfield Business Association and property owners to make sure that local businesses are aware of new opportunities under the program. There are no known start and completion dates at this time.

Risk



Low Risk

There are no significant risks to adopting revised storefront improvement program requirements and design guidelines. Potential impediments to successful implementation could be a lack of political will to make changes to the existing storefront improvement program, liability concerns (such as with placing easements on private property), lack of community interest (such as a general feeling that storefront improvements are not a high priority), site ownership (i.e. some owners may already have façade easements that prevent certain changes to the façade), or financing limitations under the program or lack of capital with local businesses.

Key Performance Indicators

Performance indicators that might be used to measure anticipated impacts of the project after implementation include the following:

- **Increase in the variety and quality of storefronts and signs in Downtown.** This could be measured by the number of new façade restorations and paintings, awnings, wall and projecting signs, lighting, windows, and doors.
- **Increase in customers for businesses that implement more attractive and effective storefront treatments.** This could be somewhat difficult to measure precisely; however, business owners could be surveyed 3–6 months after the installation of new signage and storefront treatments for opinions about the impacts on customer traffic.

Partners and Resources

A summary of entities/organizations/individuals that might be required to implement the project are identified below:

- Director of Community and Economic Development (City) — Spearhead the project.
- Mayor of Greenfield (City) — Support the project.
- City Council (City) — Approve the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.
- Greenfield Business Association (GBA/Private/Non-Profit) — Assist with communication with businesses.
- Director of Department of Planning & Development (City) — Support the project and development review.

Diagnostic

How this Project Responds to Key Challenges/Opportunities Identified in Diagnostic Phase:

Revisions to the commercial improvement program (CIP) regulations and design standards will improve opportunities for business development in Downtown Greenfield. According to our business survey, a very large percentage (74%) of businesses in Downtown Greenfield do not own the property in which they operate. The current Commercial Improvement Program is targeted to commercial property owners rather than renters and therefore may be missing the opportunity to encourage many storefront and signage improvement projects. As described in more detail in the Diagnostic Report, the current program regulations and design guidelines lack flexibility and can be better calibrated to a traditional central business district like Greenfield. The challenge is to provide flexible and context-based standards that allow businesses to install a range of high-quality storefront improvements without excessive costs and restrictions.

Diagnostic (cont'd)

Harmful COVID-19 Impacts this Project seeks to Address: As COVID-19 forced several downtown businesses to scale back or close, local customers and tourist visits declined significantly in 2020 and 2021. As businesses begin to fully reopen, the revised CIP provides an opportunity for businesses to expand and upgrade the quality of their storefronts and signage, and by doing so, they can increase marketing efforts to bring people back to Downtown.

How did COVID Create or Exacerbate the Issue Addressed by this Project: COVID-19 exacerbated the issue of poor storefront conditions as local businesses closed or scaled back, limiting the capital necessary to make improvements. The revised CIP will allow for a broader range of high-quality storefronts, creating a more vibrant image of the district and leading to rapid economic recovery.

Action Item

The current Commercial Improvement Program (CIP) is funded through the CDBG program and is intended to "assist commercial property owners in the renovation of the exterior of their buildings in order to improve the visual quality of the downtown and to enhance the area as a place to visit, shop and work."

The current program is targeted to commercial property owners and requires a 15-year lien on the property. The prospect of this lien might be deterring property owners from participating. In addition, the majority of businesses in Downtown Greenfield are tenants and this program does not encourage businesses that are not property owners to complete storefront improvements. The current program design is more indicative of a commercial property improvement program rather than a storefront improvement program.

Actions to be taken in revising the current CIP requirements and design guidelines include the evaluation of the following key elements:

- Previous projects under the CIP and Vacant Downtown Storefront Program to determine the quality of work and feedback from participants.
- The annual level of CDBG funding, current level of City contribution (75%/\$45,000 maximum) to determine if adjustment is needed to increase participation.
- The 15-year preservation agreement to determine if this is a disincentive to program participation.
- Potential alternative funding sources to Davis Bacon (prevailing wages) to reduce costs to participants.
- Program design guidelines that generally address program principles, height, proportions, shape, signs, outdoor lighting, windows, and materials.

Process

- 1. Public Participation**
Conduct public workshops and interviews with prior CIP participants, business and property owners, City staff and officials, and GBA to discuss program strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities to improve results and participation.
- 2. Evaluate Current Program Requirements**
Evaluate the key elements of the existing CIP program as outlined in the Action Item above to identify potential revisions and new elements necessary to improve program participation and project results.

Process (cont'd)

3. Case Studies

Identify regional examples of successful storefront and signage programs relevant to Downtown Greenfield that should be considered in the revised program requirements and design guidelines.

4. Prepare New/Revised Storefront and Signage Program Requirements

Define new program requirements, funding levels and sources, design guidelines with illustrative graphics, application materials, and review and approval procedures.

5. Funding Allocation

Determine sources and levels of funding based on anticipated annual participation.

6. Adoption

Provide final funding levels/sources, storefront and sign standards, and design guidelines to be adopted by City Council.

There are no requirements for property purchase and transfers, site clearance or remediation, or training and technical assistance. The City may have to go through a vendor procurement process to select a consultant to complete the revisions to the CIP. Depending on local procurement policies, the process may be expedited if the budget is below a specified threshold.

Best Practice Example

Several cities and towns have adopted storefront improvement programs including the following:

Cambridge, MA

This Storefront Improvement Program provides financial assistance to property owners or tenants seeking to renovate or restore commercial building exterior facades. The Program seeks to improve the physical appearance of independent businesses, increase accessibility into businesses, and enhance the commercial districts of Cambridge. Reimbursement grants range from \$2,500 to \$35,000 based on the scope of work. Some example projects include the Lamplighter Brewing Co., Sumona Restaurant, Thazar Hair Salon, and Hanaya Flora.

Source:
<https://cityofkaukauna.com/2019/12/02>

The Cambridge Storefront Improvement Program differs from the Greenfield program in that it does not require a 15-year lien on the property and is targeted to retail tenants as well as property owners. Retail tenants can participate in the program if they have written approval from the property owner and a current lease that is at least for one year with an option for renewal. The Cambridge program also explicitly states that architectural design fees may be included in the total cost of eligible improvements (but cannot exceed \$5,000). This program model encourages smaller projects completed by business tenants while Greenfield's program does not.

The Cambridge Storefront Improvement Program provides financial assistance to property owners or tenants seeking to renovate or restore commercial building exterior facades. The Program seeks to increase accessibility into storefronts, improve the physical appearance of independent businesses, and enhance the commercial districts of Cambridge.

This Cambridge Storefront Improvement Program provides:

- Ninety per cent (90%) matching grants up to \$20,000 for ADA improvements to entrance, including ramps, lifts, doors hardware and automatic openers, accessible parking, and signage.
- Fifty per cent (50%) matching grants up to \$15,000 for other façade improvements, including better windows, paneling, architectural details, and restoration of historic features.
- Fifty per cent (50%) matching grants up to \$2,500 for signage, lighting, and awning improvements.

The full Cambridge Storefront Improvement Program Guidelines and Application Form can be obtained at the following link.
<https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/econdev/smallbusinessassistance/smallbusinessprograms/storefront>



Baraka Mediterranean Cafe installed bright new signage and painting to communicate their brand at their new location. Source: City of Cambridge

Cambridge, MA (cont'd)



The owner of 290-294 Concord Street used SIP funds to update the building façade and make the entrances and display windows more inviting. Automatic door openers were also installed to make the stores more accessible. Source: City of Cambridge



The Hanaya Floral Shop used SIP funds to install a new storefront branding, including a combination of wall sign, blade sign, window sign, and painting. Source: City of Cambridge

Beverly, MA

The City of Beverly, in partnership with Beverly Main Streets, offers a façade and sign improvement program to help business and property owners in Downtown Beverly improve their storefronts. Funding is provided by the CDBG program, Community Preservation Act (CPA), and other grants received by the City. The level of funding varies from year to year. This program has been in place for over 10 years and has led to several examples of building restorations, façade enhancements, and high-quality signage. Some example projects include the Organic Rainbow, Kitty O'Shea's, GAR Hall, and the YMCA.

PUBLIC
REALM

Complete a 100% Corner Demonstration Project with multiple improvements.

Category



Public
Realm



Private
Realm

Location

This project focuses on streetscape improvements and façade enhancements on buildings at the intersection of Main Street, Federal Street, Bank Row, and Court Square in the Downtown Greenfield Study Area that includes portions of the 2020 Census Tracts State 25, County: 011, Tract: 0413.00.

Origin

Contributors to Project Idea: The RRP consulting team introduced the idea and it resonated with the RRP participants.

Champion: The Director of Community and Economic Development would likely be the project champion.

Budget and Sources of Funding



Large Budget (\$200,000+)

The City's Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD) will likely lead the project with assistance from the Department of Public Works (DPW), and the Department of Planning and Development (DPD). The City will need to retain a consultant with planning, landscape architecture, and civic engineering qualifications to prepare streetscape design plans for the sidewalks. Installation of the streetscape improvements will require a contractor with experience in building roads and sidewalks.

Potential funding sources for the project include the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (Community One Stop for Growth) for the planning and design phase. MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces, CDBG funds, CDBG program income, or municipal funds could be tapped into for construction. Façade improvements on private buildings could possibly be funded through the existing CIP or the new storefront improvement program (recommended by the Rapid Recovery Plan) along with investment from property and business owners.

Timeframe



Short Term (<5 years)

A general timeline for completing the project is approximately 2 years. This includes coordination between the City and property owners, preparation of streetscape design plans for the intersection, public vetting of design plans and approval by City Council, and construction. The project schedule will have to be coordinated with the Main Street Roadway and Parking Improvement Plan (currently in the design phase). This may affect the overall timeframe for the streetscape improvements as the curb-to-curb roadway improvements could change the dimensions of the sidewalks. There are no known or anticipated start and completion dates at this time.

Risk



Low Risk

There are no significant risks to implementing streetscape and façade improvements at the 100% Corner. Potential impediments to successful implementation could be a lack of political will to make the streetscape improvements, lack of property and business owner participation (not considered a high priority), building restrictions (i.e., some owners may already have façade easements in place that prevent certain changes over a period of time), financing limitations under a future storefront improvement program, or lack of capital available to property and business owners.

Key Performance Indicators

Performance indicators that might be used to measure anticipated impacts of the project after implementation include the following:

- **Increase in the variety and quality of façade improvements at the intersection.** This could be measured by the number of new façade restorations, repainting, murals, awnings, signs, and storefront improvements completed on buildings at the 100% Corner.
- **Increase in customers for businesses that implement façade improvements and sidewalk activation elements.** This could be somewhat difficult to measure precisely; however, business owners could be surveyed 3–6 months after installing streetscape improvements and façade treatments to get their opinions about the impacts on customer traffic.

Partners and Resources

A summary of entities/organizations/individuals that might be required to implement the project are identified below:

- Director of Community and Economic Development — Spearhead the project and manage grants obtained for the project.
- Department of Public Works — Support the project and oversee the design and construction of the streetscape improvements.
- Department of Planning & Development — Support the project and oversee façade renovation permitting.
- Mayor of Greenfield — Support of the project and liaison with the downtown business community.
- City Council — Approve streetscape plan and funding sources.
- Property and business owners at the 100% Corner.
- Greenfield Business — Assist with communication with businesses.

Diagnostic

How this Project Responds to Key Challenges/Opportunities Identified in Diagnostic Phase:

The 100% Corner is 90% inactive. In Downtown Greenfield, the 100% Corner is at Main Street/Federal Street/Bank Row. This is the main intersection where first impressions are made. However, there is minimal activation of the 100% Corner. For example, the Hawks & Reed Performing Arts Center and the rarely used Pushkin Building have no visible signage from the intersection to alert drivers of this downtown anchor; and the Greenfield Savings Bank has landscaping between the building and the sidewalk creating a barrier for pedestrians. This project, including sidewalk streetscape improvements, façade renovations, and sidewalk activation will result in a more attractive and vibrant gateway into the district.

Diagnostic (cont'd)

Harmful COVID-19 Impacts this Project seeks to Address: COVID-19 had a severe impact on Downtown Greenfield's customer traffic due to forced business closings/limitations, drastic changes in the consumer patterns of trade area residents, and a substantial reduction in the number of nearby employees due to remote working policies. The streetscape and façade improvements at the key intersection provides an opportunity for improved visibility, an attractive pedestrian environment, and a sense that Downtown is vital again. This will significantly help to attract customers back to Downtown.

How COVID Created or Exacerbated the Issue to be Addressed by this Project: Forced business closures and limitations on capacity inside of businesses and restaurants severely impacted customer traffic in Downtown. Business owners had come to depend on the purchases of the employees working at nearby offices and agencies related to the County and Court system that COVID-19 turned into remote workers who were no longer occupying Downtown every day. The streetscape and façade improvements at the intersection will result in a public-private cooperative effort to create an attractive "front door" to Downtown Greenfield, setting the stage for new business development and leading to a more rapid economic recovery.

Action Item

The "100% Corner" in Downtown Greenfield includes the streetscape and buildings located around the intersection of Main Street (Route 2A) and Federal Street/Bank Street (Route 5 & 10). It is important to have a high level of pedestrian activity and engaging storefronts at this corner because it is where most visitors enter the district. The area could be enhanced with a series of streetscape improvements and storefront treatments, such as curb extensions, street trees and planters, ornamental lights, façade renovations, signs, banners, sidewalk seating, and other elements to appeal to drivers and pedestrians passing through the intersection. Actions to be taken include the following:

- Form a partnership between property owners and the City to create a plan to activate the intersection through a series of coordinated streetscape and façade enhancements.
- Widen the sidewalks around the intersection if the opportunity exists based on the necessary space needed for travel lanes, turn lanes, and parking lanes in the Main Street Improvement Plan.
- Work with Greenfield Savings Bank (400 Main) to enhance the streetscape treatments along the frontage on the northeast corner. This could include replacement of landscaping between the building and sidewalk with hardscape that would accommodate seating, possibly combined with planters, street trees, community kiosks, and public art, including the bank's attractive sculpture.
- Work with the owners of Pushkin Galley and the TD Bank building on the northwest corner to enhance the façades and streetscapes in front of the buildings. This could include murals on the blank façades, vertical wall banners, public benches, street trees, planters with seating, public art, and a business directory along the sidewalk.

Action Item (cont'd)

- Work with the owners of the 345 Main Street block (where Catalpa Coffee is located) on the southeast corner of the intersection. This 3-story red brick building could be repainted to brighten up the façade. Other treatments such as murals, awnings, vertical wall banners, and storefront window and doorway improvements could be added. Landscape planters/seating, café seating, benches, a business directory sign, and public art could be added along the sidewalk.
- The Hawks and Reed block (391 Main) on the southwest corner of the intersection is a primary anchor in Downtown Greenfield, but the 4-story red brick building has a limited presence in the intersection. A recommended action item would be to work with the property owners on façade improvements, including storefront treatments (Plum could serve as an example), painting of buildings to make them brighter, vertical wall banners, a projecting blade sign above the Wheelhouse storefront, new awnings, and a marquee with a sign board identifying current and upcoming entertainment and events. The façade treatments would be oriented to the intersection and highly visible to drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. A community kiosk and business directory, benches, café seating, and outdoor displays would also be added to the sidewalk in front of the building.
- All streetscape and façade treatments at the intersection should be coordinated with design plans for the expansion of Court Square adjacent to Town Hall and Second Congo Church.

Process

- 1. 100% Corner Partnership**
Form a committee and conduct a series of meetings between property owners, business owners, City staff from CEDD, DPW, the Mayor, and key stakeholder groups. This committee should oversee the design and installation of streetscape and façade improvements at the 100% Corner (this could be a subcommittee of an oversight committee for the recommended streetscape improvement project recommended in the plan).
- 2. Hire Contractor**
Select qualified firms for the design and construction of streetscape improvements.
- 3. Public Workshops**
Conduct public workshops to inform the public about the project and obtain sufficient input on the overall design of the streetscape improvements and façade treatments at the 100% Corner.
- 4. Prepare Streetscape Design Specifications**
Prepare design specifications for streetscape improvements at the intersection.
- 5. Funding Allocation**
Determine sources and levels of funding for streetscape improvements and façade enhancements.
- 6. Approval**
Obtain City and State approval of the 100% Corner streetscape design plan and final funding levels/sources.

7. Implement Streetscape Plan and Façade Improvements

Obtain any necessary permits, secure funding sources, hire contractors, prepare construction schedule, and oversee construction.

Since the streetscape improvements are within the public right-of-way, there are no anticipated requirements for property purchase or transfers, site clearance or remediation, or training and technical assistance. The City will have to go through a vendor procurement process to select a contractor to design and construct the streetscape improvements. Façade improvements that utilize the City's matching grant program may be subject to certain alteration restrictions and maintenance requirements.

Best Practice Example

Downtown Greenfield Simulations

Simulated façade and streetscape treatments on the TD Bank building and the Hawks & Reed building below illustrate a combination of streetscape improvements and façade enhancements that can create a vibrant entrance to Downtown Greenfield.

PUBLIC
REALM



A photo simulation of the Hawks & Reed building at 289 Main Street with a theater marquee, a sign board, and vertical wall banners to break up a bland façade and capture the interest of drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians at the “100% Corner” (Route 2A) & Federal Street/Bank Row (Route 5&10). Source: FinePoint Associates

Downtown Greenfield Simulations (cont'd)

PUBLIC
REALM



Photo simulation of a mural painted on the blank façade of the TD Bank building located at 342 Main Street. Source: FinePoint Associates

Best Practice Example

Lighting installation is another possibility to highlight the 100% Corner.

Denmark

PUBLIC
REALM



Projecting light onto building façade in Randers, Denmark. Source: Rockart Design



World renowned cellist, Yo-Yo MA, projected onto Symphony Hall in Boston. Source: WBUR article by Amy Gorel, May 3, 2018. Photograph by Erik Jacobs

Revenue/Sales

Recommendations

Create a Marketing Initiative to get people to come back to Downtown and the Crossroads Cultural District (e.g., "Visit Greenfield" website, "Welcome Back" campaign, and pledge to support local).

Category



Revenue/Sales

Location

Downtown Greenfield, MA.
State: 25, County: 011, Tract: 0413.00.

Origin

Contributors to Project Idea: Rachel Katz, (business owner, Chair of Crossroads Cultural District and founding member of Progress Partnership Inc.), RRP Process participants, Progress Partnership Inc., Greenfield Business Association, Greenfield Mayor, Community and Economic Development Department.

Possible Champions: Rachel Katz, Crossroads Cultural District Committee, Progress Partnership Inc.

Budget and Sources of Funding



Low (Under \$50k)

The following are ballpark cost estimates.

Visit Greenfield Website Improvement

\$3,000 – \$6,000 for update and \$10,000 – \$20,000 for new site plus additional funding is needed to maintain the site internally and externally. (This time is usually bought in blocks of time from the website developer (e.g., \$200/hour).

Consulting assistance that may be required includes:

- Website consultant - Determine if the current site can be reformatted or if a new design is needed and then proceed with revisions or site development.
- Social media consultant - Utilize the most relevant social media outlets to drive traffic to Downtown Greenfield's businesses and events.
- Webmaster – Update content, maintain consistency and freshness of the site. (This could be done by consultant or in-house staff person depending on capacity.)

Welcome Back to Downtown Promotional Campaign

\$4,000 – \$9,000+ for 4 – 6 months

Photography - \$2,000 – \$3,000

- Photographer to take photos of Downtown activities on a regular basis for postings and promo materials
- Drone video featuring local businesses, restaurants, cultural/arts, and other highlights. (The regional chamber has done a video showcasing multiple towns, and it should be researched to see if that can be shared and edited to feature only Greenfield.)

Social Media Coordinator (\$500 - \$1,000 per month if contractor)

- Social media postings & press releases (use volunteer, student or hire contractor for a few hours per month)

Pledge to Support Local Program

\$7,000+

- Printing (\$1,500)
- Advertising — print, radio, etc. (\$3,000+)
- Gift Cards for Winners (\$2,500+)

Budget and Sources of Funding (Cont'd)

Potential Funding Sources:

- The Community and Economic Development Department currently has some funds available for the "Visit Greenfield" website.
- Local banks (Greenfield Savings Bank, TD Bank, Greenfield Co-Operative Bank, etc.) are potential funding partners for the other marketing activities. Banks would likely be amenable to a Buy-Local message and may be able to sponsor advertising. (Greenfield Savings Bank helped support a Pledge Local Program in Amherst.)
- Competitive Tourism Grant funds (EDA) - perhaps as part of a larger county effort
- Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) Grant (in partnership with Western Mass EDC)

Timeframe



Short Term (<5 years)

Projected term for the start-up of this project is 3-12 months. The project should be approached as the start of a long-term and ongoing effort to drive traffic and create awareness of Downtown Greenfield.

Risk



Low Risk

Impediments include the need for buy-in from multiple parties, and funding sources will need to be identified through the political process and public/private partnerships and sponsorships.

Key Performance Indicators

Performance indicators that might be used to measure anticipated impacts of the project after implementation include the following.

- **Increase in the number of people in Downtown.** This could include people coming to visit businesses, attend events (like the farmers market and concerts in the Park) or check out the public art, including the new Bees. Downtown event sponsors could be asked to keep track of attendance and compare to previous years.
- **Increase in sales for Downtown Businesses.** Business owners could be surveyed after implementation to get their opinion about the impacts on sales as well as general foot traffic in Downtown.

Partners and Resources

- Progress Partnership Inc.
- Crossroads Cultural District
- Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department
- Greenfield Business Association
- Local banks (Greenfield Savings Bank, TD Bank, Greenfield Co-Operative Bank, etc.)

Diagnostic

How this Project Responds to Key Challenges/Opportunities

Identified in Diagnostic Phase: It is important to get customers to come back — we heard that over and over again from Greenfield businesses.

- "We have to get people to come back Downtown."
- "We need foot traffic."
- "We need to make people feel that it is safe."

Diagnostic (cont'd)

People have significantly changed their behaviors in the last year, but as the vaccination rate rises, there is an opportunity to shape new routines and traditions. The proposed Marketing Initiative is intended to do that.

COVID-19 Impacts Addressed by this Project: Businesses are hoping to reverse the downward trend they experienced in 2020. Seventy-one per cent (71%) of Downtown Greenfield businesses suffered a year-over-year revenue loss in 2020 due to COVID-19. However, customer counts have not returned to normal levels. Sixty-six per cent (66%) of businesses said their foot traffic in January and February 2021 was still down compared to the previous year. For 51% of businesses, on-site customer traffic was down by 25% or more.

How did COVID Create or Exacerbate the Issue Addressed by this Project: While businesses were shut down or forced to operate at reduced capacity, people fell out of the habit of shopping, dining out, and socializing. At the same time, they became more comfortable with online purchasing. This is not good news for Downtown Greenfield businesses. In addition, there still remain concerns among some community members about whether it is safe to resume previous shopping and dining activities.

Action Item

The proposed recommendation is to implement a Marketing Initiative aimed at bringing people back Downtown.

The proposed Initiative has several components.

1. **“Visit Greenfield” Website Improvement**
The “Visit Greenfield” landing page/website is linked to the City’s website and contains information about upcoming events, a business directory and other information. Recent enhancements have been effective, including links to the Bee Fest website and QR code links from the new bee statutes. There may be an opportunity to further activate this page with more dynamic content and linkage to other websites to help drive traffic. Also, search engine optimizations (SEO) is needed. We recommend hiring a consultant to assess the website and make improvements regarding content and format (the City is planning to redesign the City website in late 2021/early 2022.)
2. **“Welcome back to Downtown” Promotional Campaign**
It’s time to make people aware of all of the improvements that have have recently been made and the many things happening in Downtown Greenfield. This would include a devoted social media and print media campaign. People like people — showing that people are back in Downtown and having a great time will attract more people to come.
3. **Pledge to Support Local Program.**
The purpose is to incentivize people to patronize Downtown businesses over a 2-month period. A similar type of program was very successfully implemented in Amherst during the pandemic. The same idea could be used to encourage people to come back to Downtown post-pandemic. The idea is to get people used to coming back to Downtown and getting them re-acquainted and making new discoveries.

Action Item (cont'd)

A version of a treasure hunt concept could be used to get people re-acquainted with businesses and to encourage them to try out new businesses. The program would ask participants to patronize local; for example, 6 restaurants, 4 retail stores, and 3 entertainment venues or services within a specified period such as 2 months. Participants would receive pledge cards (with a checklist of businesses by category) and then proceed to check off the businesses, and when complete, mail, e-mail, or drop off the cards with accompanying receipts to be eligible to win local area gift cards.



Downtown Greenfield has many outdoor dining options that could be featured in social media posts and other promotional material. Photos of these dining spots when full of happy patrons would help get people thinking about coming back to Downtown. Photo: FinePoint Associates



Downtown Greenfield has many public art pieces that could be featured in social media posts and other promotional material. The new bee statues are a great new attraction. Photos: (right and left) FinePoint Associates. Photo (center): www.greenfieldbeefest.org

1. **Establish a lead organization and committee to oversee the marketing, events and social media for the Downtown district.** Progress Partnership may be the most appropriate organization to take the lead. Key stakeholders to be included on the committee are representatives of Crossroads Cultural District Committee, local business owners, non-profits, and representatives from the City.
2. **Hire consultant(s) to assess the Visit Greenfield Website and make improvements in content and format and drive traffic to the website.** This process should be directed and advised by the lead organization and committee. The CEDD Director and the City's IT/Webmaster should have input in the linking and content of the Visit Greenfield Site. Consultants should be hired if the town or lead organization does not have the capacity to execute and upkeep the website and carry out a successful social media campaign. In order for the consultants to carry out their tasks successfully, they may need to be engaged on an ongoing basis.

The website consultant's task should be to:
Determine if the current site can be reformatted or if a new design is needed to create a vibrant site and then proceed with revisions or site development.

The social media consultant's task should be:
To utilize the most relevant social media outlets to drive traffic to Downtown Greenfield's businesses and events.

Note that all content and changes to the website should require a review by a designated representative of the lead organization. Social media campaigns should be planned to coordinate with events, seasonal happenings, and promotions of the area businesses.

3. **Launch a "Welcome back to Downtown" promotional campaign for 4 to 6 months.**
 - Develop a theme. The lead organization and committee can come up with the most appropriate campaign name. For example, "Bee surprised by Downtown Greenfield" to highlight the bees; something simple like "Greenfield's back" or something seasonal like "Fall back in love with Downtown Greenfield."
 - Determine the website and social media accounts that will be used; open new accounts as necessary and determine hashtags for the campaign.
 - Create a partnership for the campaign with other organizations and non-profits who agree to share information with their networks through social media postings, newsletters, etc. (e.g., Progress Partnership Inc., Crossroads Cultural District, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, Greenfield Recreation Department, Downtown Neighborhood Association, Greenfield Community College, Greenfield Business Association, other clubs and organizations)
 - Plan to inform other partners that you will be posting and ask them to share with their networks.
 - Create a good set of materials (photos, captions, other content) on a regular basis. Hire a photographer or recruit a qualified volunteer to take great shots of what's happening in Downtown weekly.

Process (cont'd)

**Check off 10 Restaurants
5 Retail and
3 Services/Salons**

<input type="checkbox"/> Antonio's	<input type="checkbox"/> Lone Wolf
<input type="checkbox"/> Amherst Coffee	<input type="checkbox"/> Miss Saigon
<input type="checkbox"/> Arigato	<input type="checkbox"/> Moge Tee
<input type="checkbox"/> Bistro 63	<input type="checkbox"/> Momo Tibetan
<input type="checkbox"/> The Black Sheep	<input type="checkbox"/> Oriental Flavor
<input type="checkbox"/> Bruno's Pizza	<input type="checkbox"/> Osteria Vespa
<input type="checkbox"/> Bruegger's Bagels	<input type="checkbox"/> Panda East
<input type="checkbox"/> Bueno y Sano	<input type="checkbox"/> Paradise of India
<input type="checkbox"/> Crazy Noodles	<input type="checkbox"/> Pasta E Basta
<input type="checkbox"/> Formosa	<input type="checkbox"/> Pita Pockets
<input type="checkbox"/> Fresh Side	<input type="checkbox"/> Primo Too
<input type="checkbox"/> Henion Bakery	<input type="checkbox"/> Shanghai Gourmet
<input type="checkbox"/> HoneyCrisp Chicken	<input type="checkbox"/> Share Coffee
<input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia Cookies	<input type="checkbox"/> Subway
<input type="checkbox"/> Iya Sushi	<input type="checkbox"/> The Spoke
<input type="checkbox"/> Johnny's Tavern	<input type="checkbox"/> Taste Thai
<input type="checkbox"/> Kaiju	<input type="checkbox"/> 30 Boltwood
<input type="checkbox"/> La Veracruzana	<input type="checkbox"/> Vivi Bubble Tea
<input type="checkbox"/> Lili's	<input type="checkbox"/> The Works Cafe
<input type="checkbox"/> LimeRed Teahouse	

<input type="checkbox"/> A.J. Hastings	<input type="checkbox"/> Left Click
<input type="checkbox"/> Amherst Books	<input type="checkbox"/> Levellers Press
<input type="checkbox"/> Clay's	<input type="checkbox"/> Mass Vintage
<input type="checkbox"/> Exscape Smokeshop	<input type="checkbox"/> M&M Links
<input type="checkbox"/> Fretted Instrument	<input type="checkbox"/> Mystery Train
<input type="checkbox"/> Hope & Feathers	<input type="checkbox"/> Russells Liquors
<input type="checkbox"/> Knowles Flowers	<input type="checkbox"/> Stamell Stringed
<input type="checkbox"/> J. Austin Antiques & Jewelry	<input type="checkbox"/> The Toy Box
<input type="checkbox"/> Laughing Dog Bikes	<input type="checkbox"/> Unnameable Books
	<input type="checkbox"/> Zanna

<input type="checkbox"/> Amherst Barbers	<input type="checkbox"/> Hair East
<input type="checkbox"/> Amherst Dog Wash	<input type="checkbox"/> If Wishes Were
<input type="checkbox"/> Amherst Laser	<input type="checkbox"/> Horses Salon
<input type="checkbox"/> Amherst Optical	<input type="checkbox"/> Matt's Barbershop
<input type="checkbox"/> Artressa Salon	<input type="checkbox"/> Ren's Gas Station
<input type="checkbox"/> Casimir Kocot	<input type="checkbox"/> Pioneer Valley
<input type="checkbox"/> Elements Hot Tub & Spa	<input type="checkbox"/> Dermatology
<input type="checkbox"/> Eliana's Barbershop	<input type="checkbox"/> Sandy's Barbershop
<input type="checkbox"/> Electrolysis by	<input type="checkbox"/> red door salon
<input type="checkbox"/> Athena and Elaine	<input type="checkbox"/> Sei Bella Salon
<input type="checkbox"/> Hair by Harlow	<input type="checkbox"/> Vici Hair Studio

amherstdowntown.com  

Pledge Card used in the Amherst Pledge to Support Local Program. Source: Amherst Business Improvement District

- Consider utilizing a drone video featuring local businesses, restaurants, cultural/arts, and other highlights. The regional chamber has done a video showcasing multiple towns, and it should be researched to see if that can be shared and edited to feature only Greenfield.
- Post photos and content on social media and get into newspapers and newsletters. Hire a marketing contractor or recruit qualified volunteers to be responsible for regular posting, tweeting and press releases. Show and promote all the great new outdoor dining opportunities, the public art like the new bee statues, local business profiles/highlights/happenings, the pop-up pilot plaza at Court Square (hopefully with new programming), the Farmers Market, Saturday Salon (a pop-up art salon and marketplace) and any other event.
- Encourage individuals to post photos using the Downtown campaign hashtags.
- Consider creating a Downtown Public Art walking Tour with a map and highlight one piece each week.
- Establish a routine — target to get promotional material out weekly or at least bi-weekly.
- Track social media to assess the impacts of the campaign. i.e., Google Analytics. Consultants should provide reports of hits, visits, traffic, etc.

4. Implement a Pledge to Support Local Program

- Get buy-in and participation from the Downtown business community.
- Determine which businesses should be listed on the pledge cards.
- Finalize the rules for the program. Arrange for prizes (e.g., local business gift cards could be purchased at a discount from the businesses).
- Create and print pledge cards with information about the program, instructions, and a checklist of business names by category.
- Distribute cards (give them to local businesses and organizations to hand out, place in strategic locations).
- Make downloadable Pledge Card available through website and social media.
- Get the word out with radio advertisements, social media and several newspaper ads and articles.
- Collect completed pledge cards, determine winners and award prizes.
- Promote, promote, promote.
- Assess impacts of the program.

5. Survey businesses to determine impacts of both the 'Pledge to Support Local Program' and the 'Welcome back to Downtown' promotional campaign.

Best Practice Example

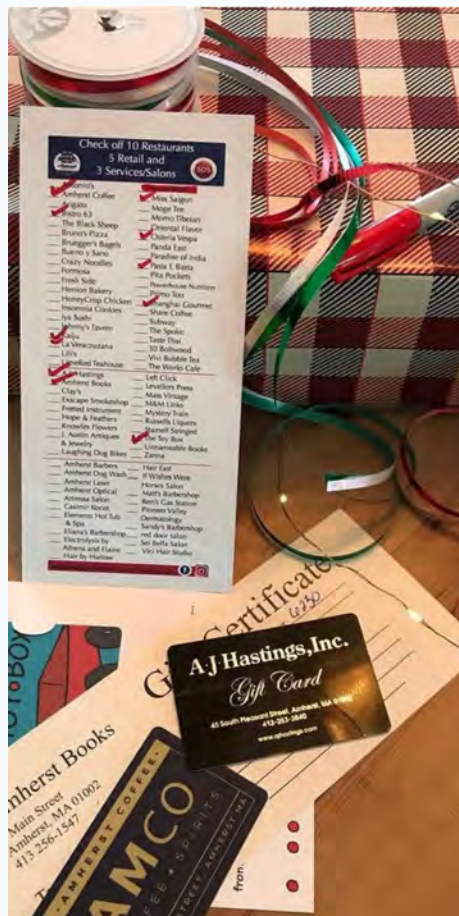
Amherst, MA "Take the Pledge" Program

The Pledge . . .
Over 2 months, patronize 10 downtown Amherst restaurants, cafes or coffee shops; purchase from at least 5 local retail stores; and enjoy 3 downtown services.

Pledge Cards were printed on card stock, available to download from the website and placed in the local newspaper to cut out. Local radio marketing ads invited people to take the challenge to support local.

"Success was immediate with requests for pledge cards from all businesses. Hundreds of entries were mailed to us with receipts as proof. Calls, social media posts and emails to our offices expressing excitement and commitment to supporting downtown were constant throughout — months later we are being asked to run a similar campaign."

Source: Amherst Business Improvement District



THIS FALL & WINTER
**PLEDGE TO SUPPORT
DOWNTOWN
AMHERST**

Businesses, Restaurants, Services & Salons are calling **SOS!**
The Amherst BID invites you to take the **PLEDGE TO SUPPORT LOCAL** Shop Local, Style Local, Take Away & SAVE THE DAY

TAKE THE PLEDGE
Check Off 10 Restaurants, 5 Retail & 3 Service/Salons by **December 31** w/ Proof of Purchases and Enter To Win * :

First Prize: \$500
Second Prize: \$250
Third Prize: \$100

Amherst Area Gift Card
Shop. Dine. Explore.

Amherst
Downtown

Greenfield Savings Bank

Pledge Card and Prizes (gift certificates for local businesses). Source: Amherst Business Improvement District



Completed pledge cards rolling in. Source: Amherst Business Improvement District

Best Practice Example

Various Communities

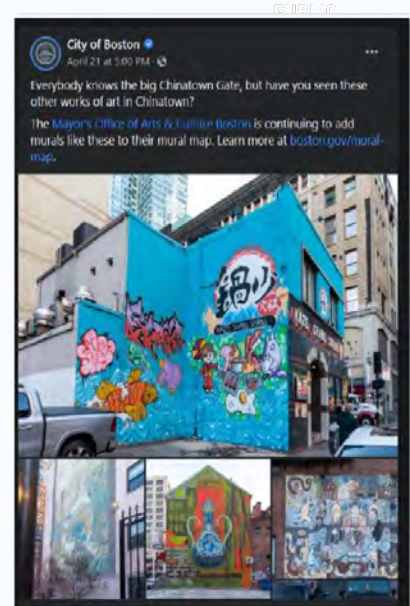
Examples of promoting Downtown through social media postings and encouraging “buy local.”



Putting the reality out there. Source: www.littleindiana.com



Woohoo Welcome Back! Posting from Gula-Gula café, Salem Main Streets posting. Source: Michelle Moon, Civic Moxie Collaborative



Promoting art to attract people — “Everybody knows about the Chinatown Gate but have you seen the other artworks in Chinatown? Learn more at boston.gov/mural-map.” City of Boston. Source: Michelle Moon, Civic Moxie Collaborative

Best Practice Example

Greenfield, MA Events Page

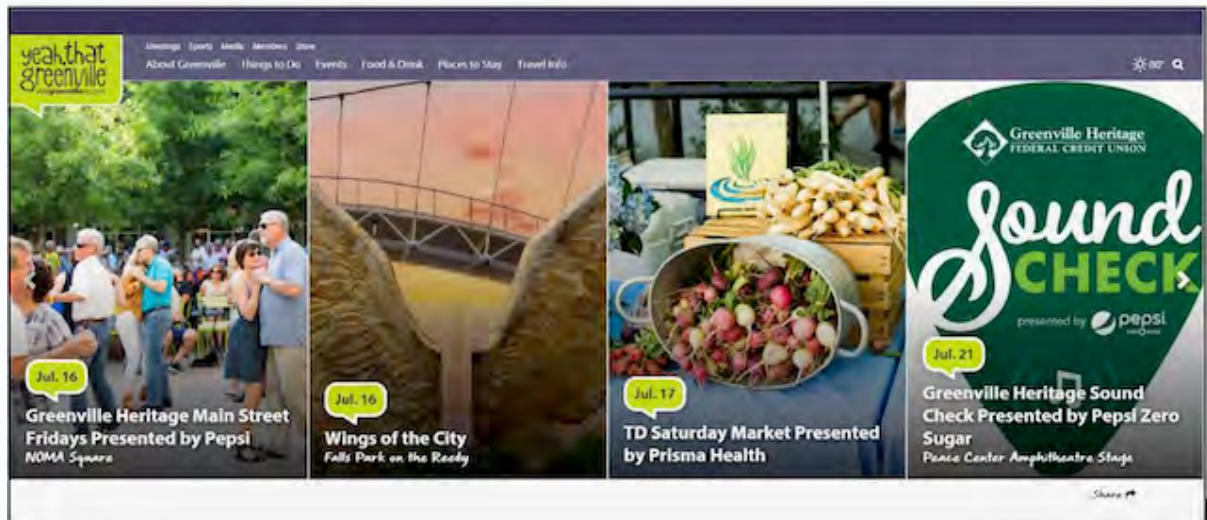
PUBLIC
REALM



Source: visitgreenfieldma.com

Greenville, SC Events Page

Photos can significantly add to a website's appeal



Source: www.visitgreenvillesc.com

Implement a Wayfinding System to get people to and around Downtown that builds on previous preliminary wayfinding sign design work.

Category



Revenue/Sales

Location

Wayfinding signs and elements will be located at strategic locations leading into downtown as well as in the Downtown Greenfield Study Area (2020 Census Tract State 25, County: 011, Tract: 0413.00) .

Origin

Contributors to the Project Idea: The RRP participants and consulting team.

Champion: The Director of Community and Economic Development would be the likely project champion.

Budget and Sources of Funding



Medium Budget (\$50k - \$200k)

The budget for this project will depend on how the work is carried out. The Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD) will likely oversee this project and will likely need a wayfinding consultant to follow up on previous preliminary work prepared in 2015 to move the project forward as follows: graphic artwork and logos; identification of the location; type and message of wayfinding elements; obtainment of permits or easements for installation; and fabrication of signs and elements.

It is possible that some parts of the project could be accomplished "in-house" such as element fabrication by the DPW or the Franklin County Technical School. The City might also be able to obtain assistance in preparing the wayfinding plan at a lower cost by using technical support service provided by the Franklin County Regional Council of Government planning staff, or through the UMass Planning & Landscape Architecture Program. The preliminary cost estimate for retaining a consultant to assist the City in the preparation of a complete wayfinding plan and installation of elements is likely to range from \$50,000–\$100,000.

Potential sources of funding for preparing the wayfinding plan include the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (Community One Stop for Growth), UMass Planning & Landscape Architecture Program, and Community Preservation Act funds (CPA). Potential sources for implementation funding include municipal funds, CDBG funds and Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) Grant (in partnership with Western Mass EDC) and in-kind services from Franklin County Technical School.

Timeframe



Short Term (<5 years)

A general timeline for completing the wayfinding project is approximately 3 years. This includes securing consultants, preparation of the wayfinding plan, public participation, approval by City Council, permits and easements (as necessary), fabrication of elements, and installation. There are no known or anticipated start and completion dates at this time.

Risk



Low Risk

There are no significant risks in preparing, adopting, and implementing a wayfinding project. Potential impediments to successful implementation could be a lack of cooperation with MASSDOT, reluctance on the part of private property owners where installation is sought, liability concerns (such as with placing easements on private property), community interest (i.e., a general feeling that wayfinding is not a high priority), or funding availability.

Key Performance Indicators

Performance indicators that might be used to measure anticipated impacts of the project after implementation include the following:

- **Increased access to Downtown through an attractive network of wayfinding elements.** This could be measured by the number of new wayfinding elements installed and customer counts at the Greenfield Tourist Visitor Center or other sites.
- **Increased customers led to Downtown by an effective wayfinding system.** This could be somewhat difficult to measure precisely; however, business owners could be surveyed in 3–6 months and weekly traffic counts could also be taken after installing new wayfinding elements between the gateways at I-91/Route 2, Route 2A/Route 2, and Downtown Greenfield.

Partners and Resources

- Director of Community and Economic Development (City) - Project leader.
- Mayor of Greenfield (City) - Support of the project.
- City Council (City) - Approval of funding for wayfinding project.
- Greenfield Business Association (GBA/Private/Non-Profit) – Assist with communication with businesses.
- Director of Department of Planning & Development (City) - Support the project and assist in project review.
- Department of Public Works (City) - Potential installer of wayfinding elements.
- Franklin County Chamber of Commerce (FCCC/Private/Non-Profit) - Potential partner in the project.

Diagnostic

How this Project Responds to Key Challenges/Opportunities Identified in Diagnostic Phase: The lack of a coordinated wayfinding system leading customers into Downtown Greenfield was identified as a key challenge. As described in more detail in the Diagnostic Report, the current wayfinding elements between Interstate 91, Route 2, and Downtown are insufficient and not clearly visible from a driving or walking perspective. The implementation of an attractive and visible wayfinding system will lead more customers into downtown.

Harmful COVID-19 Impacts this Project seeks to Address: As COVID-19 forced several downtown businesses to scale back or close, local customers and tourist visits declined significantly in 2020 and 2021. Installation of a coordinated, visible, and attractive wayfinding system will lead more travelers into Downtown Greenfield helping businesses to recover more rapidly.

How did COVID Create or Exacerbate the Issue Addressed by this Project: COVID-19 exacerbated the issue of poor wayfinding as there were significantly less tourists on the major roads during the pandemic, and those few travelers that remained did not have sufficient directional signage to entice them and lead them to businesses in Downtown Greenfield.

Action Item

"Wayfinding" describes the various ways that people orient themselves in a physical setting and navigate from place to place. In the context of a community or district (such as downtown), wayfinding systems may include a variety of tools (both physical and virtual) that provide a consistent and predictable way for people to find their way around.

There is significant economic opportunity to capture dollars from visitors and tourists but there is no coordinated wayfinding system that leads customers to and around Downtown Greenfield. High quality wayfinding elements such as gateway signs, directional signs, business directories, and interactive community kiosks could attract more customers and direct them to shops, restaurants, civic venues, and other points of interest they may not be aware of.

The City completed a preliminary wayfinding report in 2015 with a grant from the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI). This report laid out a rudimentary hierarchy of wayfinding elements, a logo (Poets Tower), and tagline ("Creative Vistas"). However, these conceptual elements do not include design specifications, element locations, or messages. For Downtown Greenfield, the primary objectives of the proposed wayfinding system include:

- Establishing a shared sense of place within the community.
- Orienting drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists with a system that is attractive, logical, and intuitive.
- Increasing accessibility to downtown destinations and businesses within the study area.

Using the preliminary wayfinding report as a starting point, the City should take the following action steps to carry out the wayfinding project:

- Retain consultant(s) to prepare a comprehensive wayfinding plan identifying locations, type of wayfinding elements, messages for each element, and final logo graphic designs.
- Inventory of existing wayfinding signs to determine what needs to be added and how new elements can complement existing elements.
- Design wayfinding elements to convey information that people can read on foot, on a bike, and in a car.
- Install gateway and directional wayfinding elements leading to Downtown Greenfield from Route 2 (Mohawk Trail/Route 2A (French King Highway), Route 2 (Mohawk Trail/Route 5&10 (Bernardston Road), and I-91 (Exit 43)/Route 2 (Mohawk Trail).
- Install free-standing and wall-mounted business directory maps/community information boards at key downtown locations such as at FCCC, Olive Street Parking Garage and other public surface parking lots, Town Hall, Olver Transportation Center, Post Office, Greenfield Public Library, and other strategic locations along Main Street and Federal Street. These maps and directories should be updated on an annual basis.
- Install complimentary wayfinding elements such as historic markers, walking tour map, and interpretive history boards.
- Provide additional maps and wayfinding system elements at the Greenfield/Mohawk Trail Visitor Center.

Action Item (cont'd)



Preliminary wayfinding signage design completed by Favermann Design, Massachusetts Downtown Initiative, 2015.

Process

Once a consultant is selected, the wayfinding project should follow the process below:

- 1. Kick Off Meeting**
Conduct a meeting between the consultant and a wayfinding committee made up of staff from CEDD, PDD, Recreation, DPW, the Mayor, and key stakeholder groups to outline goals and implementation strategies; discuss existing wayfinding elements, including context and visual influence; and establish the overall project schedule.
- 2. Review Previous Work and Inventory of Existing Elements**
Review 2015 preliminary plan and complete an inventory of existing wayfinding elements in and leading to Downtown Greenfield. Determine which existing elements and sites can be used.
- 3. Public Workshop**
Conduct an interactive workshop with property owners, business owners, GBA, FCCC, Historic Commission, relevant boards and committees, and other stakeholders and interested residents in order to educate the public about the process and obtain sufficient input on the overall vision and design of branding and wayfinding elements.
- 4. Branding and Graphic Design**
Prepare an overall branding theme, logo, and slogan including color, font, and graphic art. Coordinate as much as possible with other existing logos, colors, and graphics used by the City, School Department, Historic Commission, FCCC, GBA, and other civic organizations to create a compatible and uniform look and feel.
- 5. Wayfinding Element Hierarchy**
Develop a wayfinding element hierarchy of gateway, directional, informational, and interactive elements for review by the committee and approval by City Council.

6. Element Placement Plan

Provide a detailed plan for placement of wayfinding elements to identify type, location, message, and design specifications for each element. The placement plan should also include:

- An aerial base map that identifies and illustrates the specific location of the wayfinding elements and property ownership or control. If the property is privately owned, outline the strategy for obtaining permission for installing the wayfinding element.
- Recommendation for implementation that identifies phases and responsible City departments or contractors.
- Identification of permitting requirements and strategy for installation on Federal, State, Town, or private properties.
- Prepare a detailed cost estimate by component.

7. Implementation Plan

Determine if fabrication and installation will be done in house or with assistance from contractors; finalize cost per wayfinding element; obtain all necessary permits; prepare final phasing and installation schedule; and identify funding sources.

There may be requirements for property purchase and easements if wayfinding elements are located on private property. There may also be costs for transfers, site clearance or remediation. The City will have to go through a vendor procurement process to select consultants to design and install the wayfinding project.



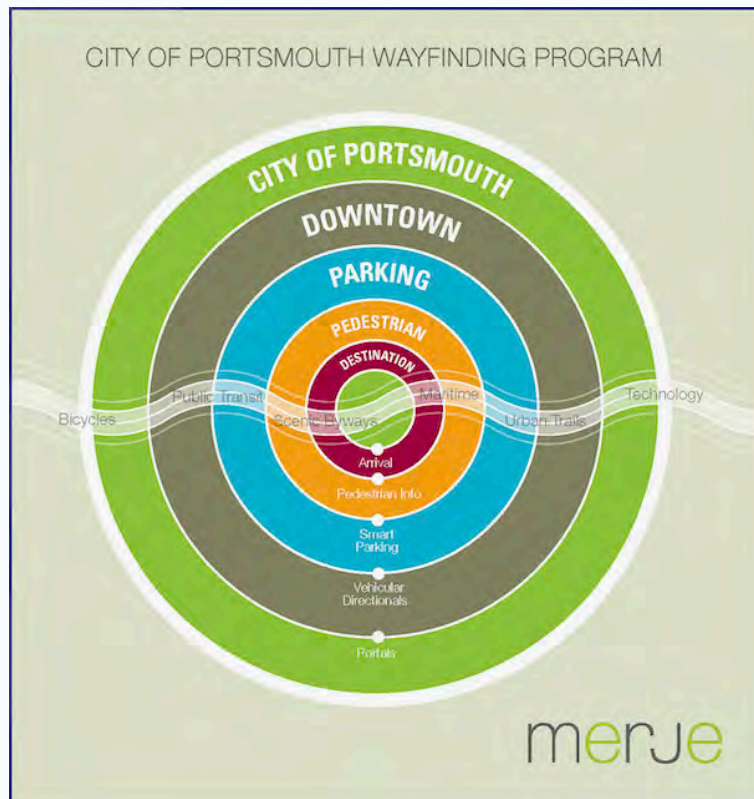
Councilor Phil Elmer and Nancy Hazard suggested sponsoring an art contest to spruce up some of Greenfield's eyesores, starting with the Bank Row overpass, a major Downtown gateway. Nancy noted that this had been done in Northampton with great success and that "Come back soon" art could be included on the other side. Source: Phil Elmer/Nancy Hazard

Best Practice Example

A number of cities and towns around New England have prepared wayfinding plans. Best practice examples of municipalities that have implemented part or all of their planned wayfinding project elements follow.

Portsmouth, NH

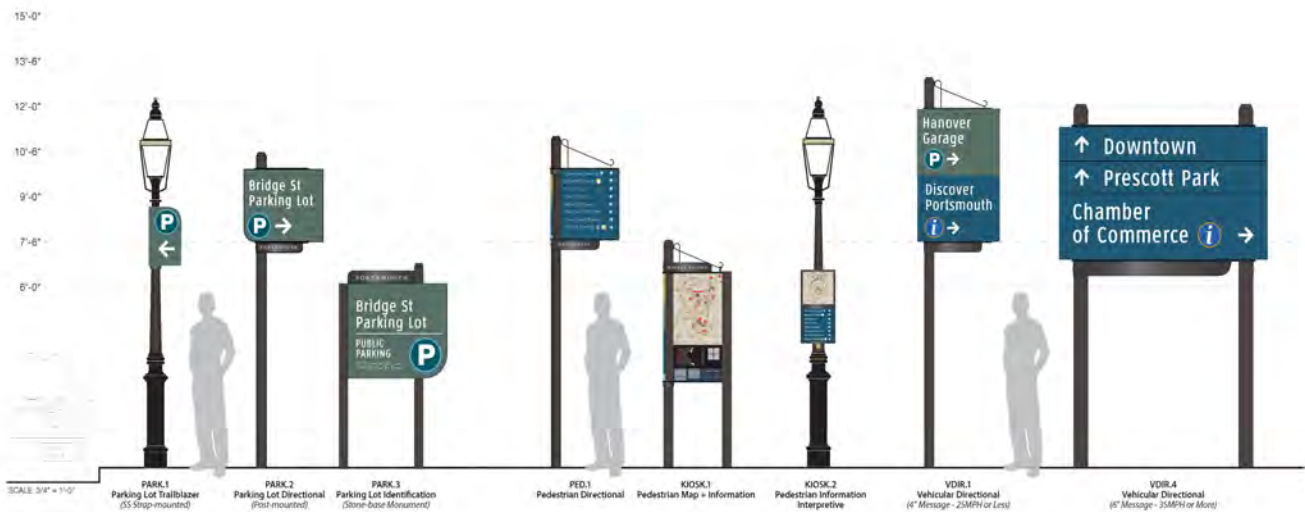
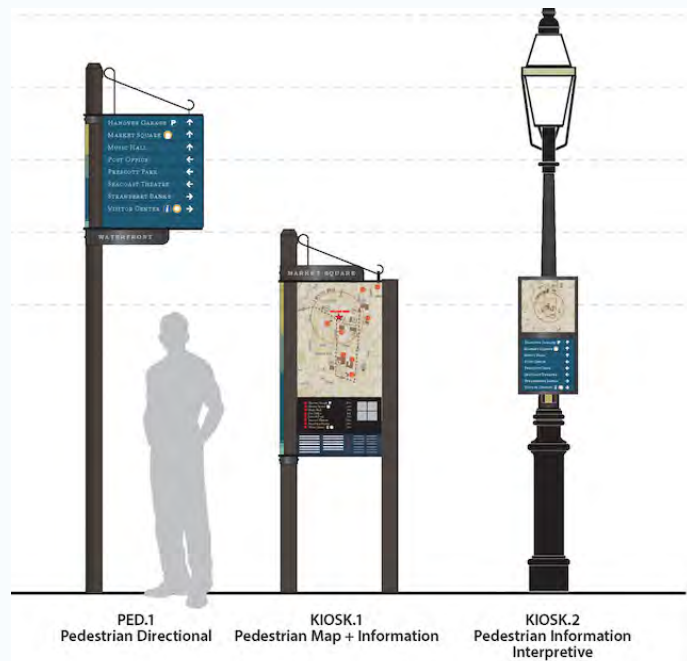
The City hired consultants to design and install a new wayfinding system about 10 years ago. They have completed the first phase program, which was to develop a dependable and standardized wayfinding plan that identifies appropriate wayfinding types, messaging, locations, and uniform design. Implementation of the second phase has been in process over the past few years with the priority of fabricating and installing consistent and visible parking signs and directional, interior and exterior enhancements to the parking garage, and developing mobile-friendly (internet and smartphone) wayfinding.



Best Practice Example

Portsmouth, NH (cont'd)

The City adopted a comprehensive form-based code in 2019, which includes detailed sign and display regulations under Section 10.9. The design standards include a broad range of signs, which are well illustrated and cover a range of commercial districts from pedestrian-oriented to strip commercial.

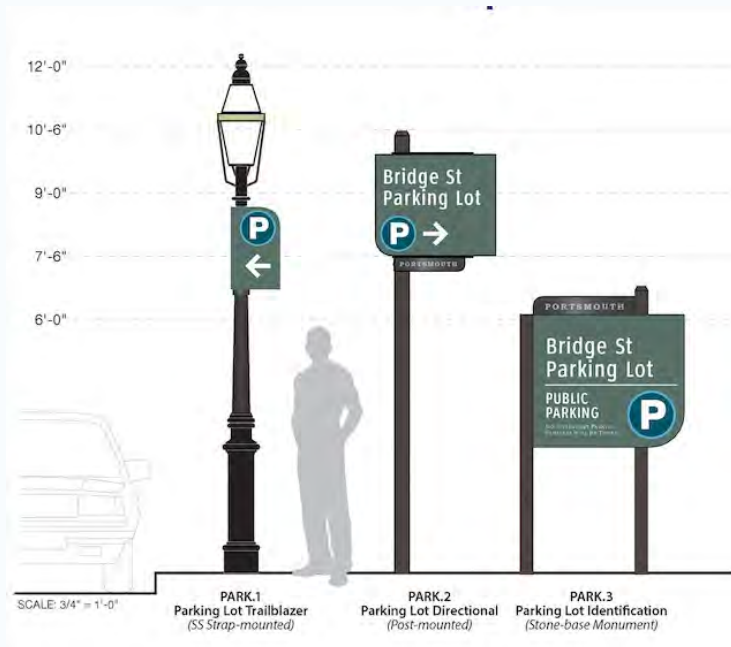
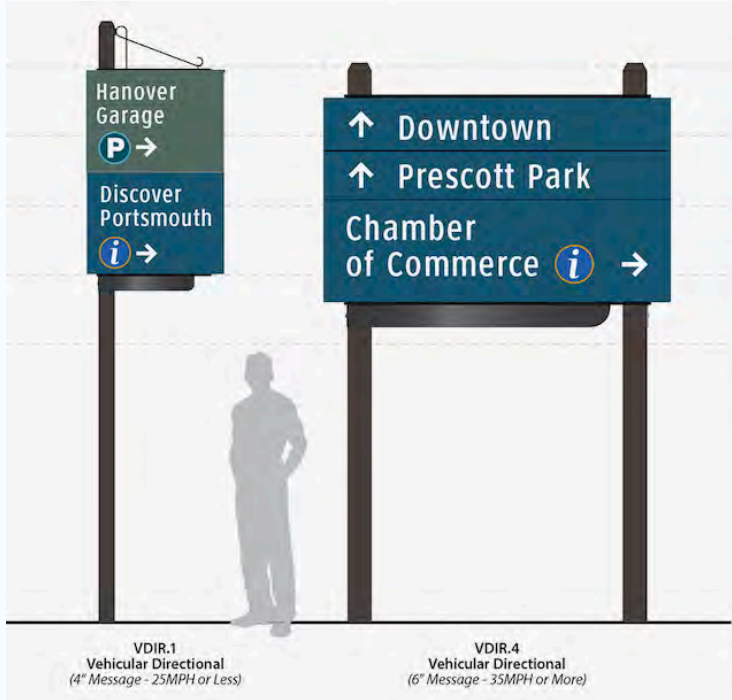


Pedestrian level wayfinding elements including directional signs and mapping system. Source: Merje Design and the City of Portsmouth, NH

Best Practice Example

Portsmouth, NH (cont'd)

PUBLIC
REALM



Vehicle wayfinding elements, including directional signs and banners. Source: Merje Design and the City of Portsmouth, NH

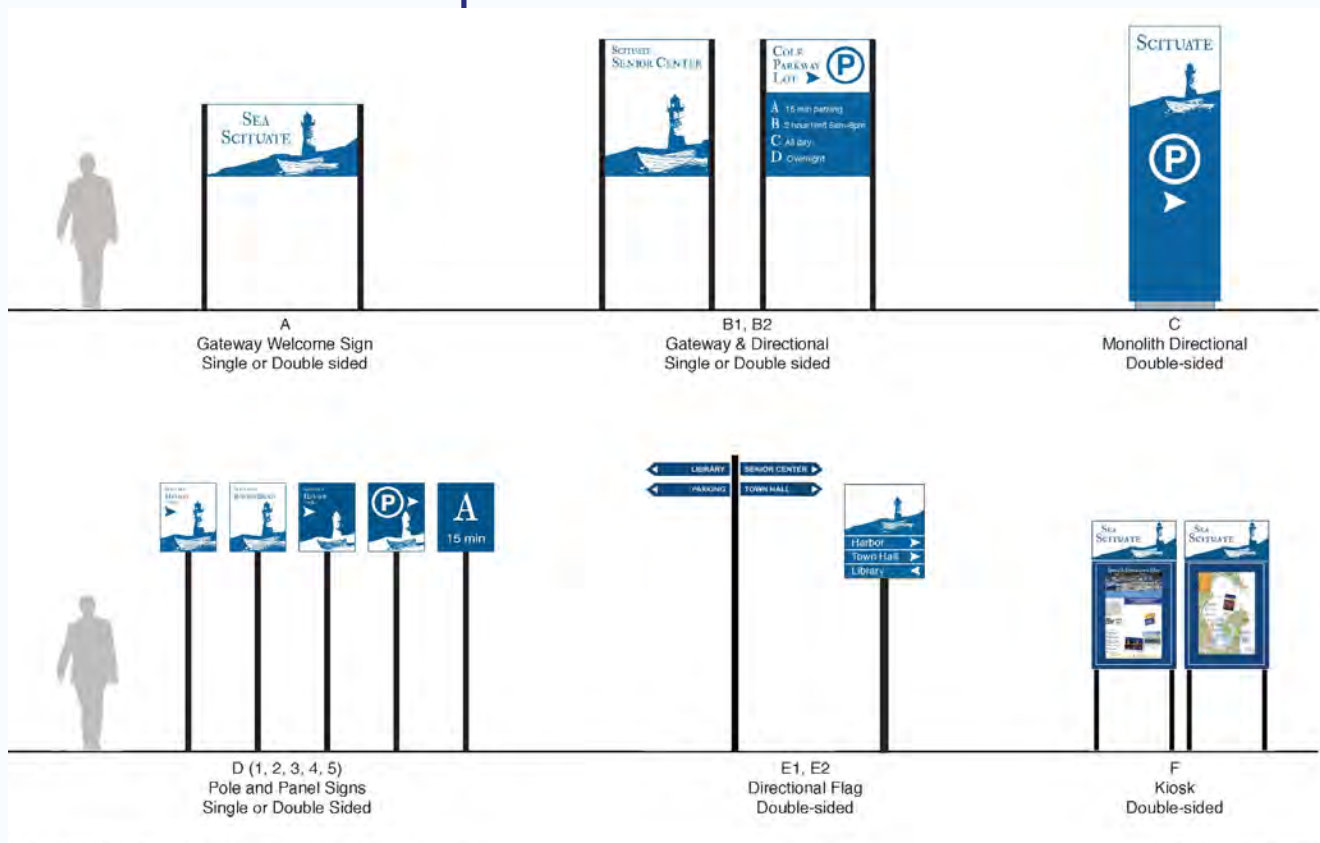
Best Practice Example

Scituate, MA

The Town of Scituate hired consultants about 5 years ago to prepare a comprehensive branding and wayfinding system to improve community visibility and access. The wayfinding system is intended to lead travelers and tourists to community points of interest, primarily Scituate Harbor, which serves as the "downtown" of the town. They have installed several directional wayfinding elements as part of the first phase of the project and will be installing business directories and a community kiosk in the Harbor for the second phase. Funding for the project was appropriated by the Town's Economic Development Commission.

PUBLIC
REALM

Scituate Wayfinding Elements & Specifications. Source: Favermann Design and the Town of Scituate MA



Develop a Business Directory and Community Information Kiosk to make customers aware of the offerings available in Downtown.

Category



Revenue/Sales

Location

The Business Directory/Community Information Kiosk is an extension of the proposed wayfinding system and would be located in strategic locations on the way to and within Downtown Greenfield. (2020 Census Tract State 25, County: 011, Tract: 0413.00).

Origin

Contributors to Project Idea: RRP participants and consulting team.

Champion: The Director of Community and Economic Development would be the likely project champion.

Budget and Sources of Funding



Low Budget (Under \$50k)

The Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD) will likely oversee this project and need a design consultant. Services required include the development of graphic artwork and logos; determination of element location; type and format of provided information; and fabrication and installation.

It may be possible that some parts of the project could be accomplished "in-house" such as element fabrication by the DPW or the Franklin County Technical School (to be determined). The City might also obtain assistance in preparing the design plans at a lower cost through the UMass Planning & Landscape Architecture Program (also to be determined). The preliminary cost estimate for retaining a consultant to assist the City in preparing design plans, fabrication, and installation is likely to range in price from \$25,000–\$40,000 depending how many kiosks will be installed. (The Community Development Director in Bennington told us they will be installing an additional kiosk in their downtown this fall (to join the existing four) at a cost of about \$5,000 – see Best Practice Example.)

Potential sources of funding for the project include: Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds, CDBG funds or CDBG program income, Competitive Tourism Grant (EDA) (possibly as part of larger regional effort), Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) Grant (in partnership with Western Mass EDC), contributions by local businesses and civic organizations, municipal funds, and the Franklin County Technical School (possible fabrication resource).

Timeframe



Short Term (<5 years)

A general timeline for completing the Business Directory/Community Information Kiosk is one year. This includes securing consultants, preparation of a design plan, public participation, approval by City Council, fabrication of elements, and installation. This project may also precede the full wayfinding project. There are no known or anticipated start and completion dates at this time.

Risk



Low Risk

There are no significant risks to designing and implementing a Business Directory/Community Information Kiosk. Potential impediments to successful implementation could be a lack of political will or community interest (i.e., a general feeling that wayfinding is not a high priority); lack of cooperation between the City and local organization on design, placement, and maintaining and updating of information; and limited City funds or private contributions.

Key Performance Indicators

Performance indicators that might be used to measure anticipated impacts of the project after implementation include the following:

- **Increase customer awareness regarding the offerings available in Downtown.** This could be measured by a resident survey and/or businesses asking new customers, “How did you hear about us?” to gather anecdotal data.
- **Increase in customers for businesses.** Business owners could be surveyed 3–6 months after installation. If the information board is electronic, the number of inquiries could also be tracked to determine level of use and type of information requested by visitors.
- **Increased participation in community events.** If events require registration/ticketing, this could be measured by a question on the registration form such as, “How did you hear about this event?” Likewise, this question could be asked if there is any surveying done at or after the event.

Partners and Resources

A summary of entities/organizations/individuals that might be required to implement the project are identified below:

- Director of Community and Economic Development — Project leader.
- Mayor of Greenfield — Supports the project.
- City Council — Approves funding for the Business Directory/Community Information Kiosk.
- Greenfield Business Association and Progress Partnership Inc. — Assist with communication with businesses and collection of information on community events.
- Department of Public Works — Potential fabrication and installation of the Business Directory/Community Information Kiosk.
- Franklin County Chamber of Commerce — Potential partner in the project.

Diagnostic

How this Project Responds to Key Challenges/Opportunities Identified in Diagnostic Phase:

The lack of a Business Directory/Community Information Kiosk leading customers to businesses in Downtown Greenfield was identified as a key challenge. There are 327 establishments in Downtown, including 53 retail shops, 36 restaurants, 27 personal care services, 20 banks/financial services, and more. Potential customers are unaware of the breadth of these offerings. The business directory and community information kiosk are critical components to help customers discover what is available in Downtown and lead customers to their destination points as they transition from drivers to pedestrians.

Diagnostic (cont'd)

Harmful COVID-19 Impacts this Project seeks to Address: Since COVID-19 forced several Downtown businesses to scale back or close, it has been more than a year since many people that had patronized Downtown in the past returned. While some things have changed, some things haven't, and a business directory will help customers re-discover businesses that are still in operation and discover businesses and offerings that are new or hadn't been frequented before. Installation of a Business Directory/Community Information Kiosk as part of a coordinated, visible, and attractive wayfinding system will lead more customers to downtown businesses and points of interest, making for a more rapid recovery.

How did COVID Create or Exacerbate the Issue Addressed by this Project: Since the onset of COVID-19, people have gotten out of the habit of coming to Downtown to shop, dine, get their hair cut, go to the bank, etc. Now that more than 14 months have past, customers are less aware than ever about the available offerings in Downtown. They may have forgotten what is available or unsure of what businesses are open. The Business Directory and Community Information Kiosk would contribute to the "Welcome Back to Downtown" campaign and be a signal to the community that Downtown Greenfield is back in business.

Action Item

A Business Directory/Community Information Kiosk is needed in Downtown Greenfield to provide a convenient and predictable way for people to find their way to businesses and points of interest. There is significant economic opportunity to capture dollars from both local residents and visitors, but without information about local businesses and community events, customers may not be aware all of that Downtown Greenfield has to offer. High-quality wayfinding elements, particularly business directories and community kiosks at the point of entry, will entice more customers and direct them to shops, restaurants, services, civic venues and other places of interest they may not otherwise be aware of.

The City completed a preliminary wayfinding report in 2015, which laid out a rudimentary hierarchy of wayfinding elements, including a business directory and community information kiosk. The main objective of this project is to orient and introduce drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists to downtown destinations with an attractive, logical, and intuitive community information kiosk and business directory.

Using the preliminary wayfinding report as a starting point, the City should take the following action steps to install the business directory and community information kiosk.

- Retain a consultant to prepare design specifications for the community kiosk, including dimensions, materials, and graphics. The City may decide to install an interactive electronic kiosk that will have to be included in the design specifications.
- Identify location for the community information kiosk. This may include secondary community information boards at public parking lots (customer point of entry) and strategic locations on Main Street providing a map of the downtown area and key points of interest.
- Design and prepare a business directory map identifying all businesses in the Downtown Greenfield Study Area by category, address, and contact information.

Action Item (cont'd)

- Install the community information kiosk and free-standing business directory maps/community information boards at key downtown locations such as at FCCC, Olive Street Parking Garage and other public surface parking lots, Town Hall, Olver Transportation Center, Post Office, Greenfield Public Library, and other strategic locations along Main Street and Federal Street. These maps and directories should be updated on an annual basis.

Process

Once a consultant is selected, the wayfinding project should follow the process below:

1. Kick Off Meeting

Conduct a meeting between the design consultant, City staff from CEDD, Recreation Department, DPW, the Mayor, and key stakeholder groups including the Greenfield Business Association (GBA), Progress Partnership Inc. (PPI), Franklin County Chamber of Commerce (FCCC) and Crossroads Cultural District Committee to oversee the design, location, and installation of the community information kiosk and business directory project.

2. Public Workshop

Conduct an interactive workshop with property owners, business owners, GBA, PPI, FCCC, Crossroads Cultural District Committee, Historic Commission, relevant boards and committees, and other stakeholders and interested residents in order to educate the public about the project and obtain sufficient input on the overall design of the community information kiosk and business directory.

3. Placement Plan

Prepare a detailed plan for placement of community kiosk elements, including type, location, information to be provided, and design specifications for each element.

4. Implement Plan

Prepare detailed cost estimates for each element, determine if fabrication and installation will be done in house or with assistance by contractors, obtain any necessary permits, prepare installation schedule, and identify funding sources.

There may be requirements for easements if kiosk elements are located on private property or state right-of-way. The City will have to go through a vendor procurement process to select consultants to design and install the wayfinding project.

Best Practice Example

Saratoga, NY

The City of Saratoga Springs, NY, together with Discover Saratoga recently installed new business directory signs and maps throughout the downtown area identifying businesses by type and location, historic districts and buildings, community events and venues, and other points of interest. The business maps are updated annually.



Source: The Saratogian



Source (above and below): Landworks LLC

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Best Practice Example

Hyannis, MA

The Hyannis Main Street Business Improvement District prepares a downtown business and points of interest map every year. This is available online and in various locations throughout the district.

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Source: Hyannis Main Street Business Improvement District

Best Practice Example

Bennington, VT

Information Kiosk — The Town of Bennington, VT, installed four corner community kiosk structures in their downtown area. These elements display information on local businesses, community events, and history.

Another kiosk is planned for this fall. According to Shanon Barsotti, Community Development Director, the cost for the kiosk was “around \$5,000 for the kiosk itself, installation, and graphic design and panels.”

Across the Street Project — The Better Bennington Corporation, Bennington Museum and Historical Society together with the Town created the Historic Bennington “Across the Street” project where signs were placed at the downtown intersections describing the historic buildings across the street along with a QR code providing additional information. According to Barsotti, the cost of the installation was about \$4,000.



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*Community Kiosk and Public Clock at the main intersection of downtown Bennington.
Photo: Brovitz Community Planning and Design*



“Across the Street” Project (above and below). Source: Bennington Banner



Newburyport, MA



Downtown Newburyport, MA, has an attractive and centrally located business directory and map board in Market Square, which is updated annually and identifies local businesses by type and location. Source: Greater Newburyport Chamber of Commerce



Boston, MA

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The City of Boston has installed information kiosks throughout the downtown area providing maps and directions to numerous cultural districts and points of interest. Source: City of Boston

Best Practice Example

Falmouth, MA





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The Town of Falmouth, MA, has installed a downtown business directory on Main Street near the entrance to a large public parking lot. The kiosk provides a downtown map and information about local businesses, community events, and other points of interests. Photo: Brovitz Community Planning and Design

Admin Capacity Recommendations

Create a Parking Benefit District to provide a predictable funding source to support Downtown improvements and an organization that can manage programs and projects.

Category	 Admin Capacity
Location	Downtown Greenfield, MA. State: 25, County: 011, Tract: 0413.00.
Origin	Contributors to Project Idea: Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department Director, RRP Process Participants. Champion: Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department, Progress Partnership.
Budget and Sources of Funding	 Low Budget (Under \$50k) \$0 - \$20,000 for consulting services to prepare materials and conduct parking study The budget will depend on how the work is carried out.. The Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD) will likely oversee this project. If consulting/planning assistance is required, potential funding sources include Massachusetts Downtown Initiative through the Community One Stop for Growth Program and Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) Grant (in partnership with Western Mass EDC).
Timeframe	 Short Term (<5 years) The establishment of the Parking Benefit District (PBD), and formal allocation of meter funds would take approximately 1 year. Formal designation is allowed to take up to 5 years.
Risk	 Medium Risk Risk: There would need to be political buy-in to allocate parking meter funds to support a Downtown management entity and pay for improvements and activities. In addition, the establishment of a segregated fund may require special administrative and legal knowledge, potentially requiring outside consultation services. Impediments: The City has a Downtown parking garage and uses parking revenue to pay off the bond used to finance it. Rate changes may be necessary to create higher revenues to cover both the debt and PBD expenditures.
Key Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Annual parking revenue allocated to Downtown management and improvements.▪ Additional grant funds leveraged using PBD funds.▪ Additional public realm improvements.▪ Increase in business revenue (measured by business survey).

Partners and Resources

- Greenfield Mayor and City Council.
- Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD).
- Greenfield Department of Public Works.
- Progress Partnership Inc.

Diagnostic

How this Project Responds to Key Challenges/Opportunities Identified in Diagnostic Phase:

This recommendation is a direct response to one of the key diagnostic findings — there is not a designated organization with a dependable funding source managing Downtown improvement efforts and overseeing COVID recovery. There are several organizations and many dedicated individuals that play a role in Downtown Greenfield, but there is no central coordinating District management entity. The Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department has been working diligently to help Downtown recover from COVID-19 and increase vibrancy, but this department has many City-wide responsibilities.

Progress Partnership Inc.(PPI), a non-profit corporation, was formed in 2017 to act as a non-partisan, Downtown-specific organization to facilitate a more effective way to market Downtown and give it more attention. To date, PPI has supported local events and worked to develop cohesive branding campaigns (e.g., for the Bee Fest) and played a role in the creation of the Hive (a Downtown makerspace). However, this organization has no staffing and no predictable annual budget and therefore, limited capacity.

COVID-19 Impacts Addressed by this Project: Sales have declined, foot traffic is way down, and re-opening for many restaurants and other businesses is yet undetermined. The RRP Process resulted in many recommendations to increase vitality and bring customers back to Downtown. These recommendations include activating public spaces, wayfinding signage, storefront improvement programs, streetscape improvement, marketing initiatives, etc. However, there is limited funding for the improvements (many state and federal grant programs require a local match) and there is limited organizational capacity to implement these strategies and manage programs. A predictable funding source to support a staffed Downtown organization would resolve the capacity issue.

How did COVID Create or Exacerbate the Issue Addressed by this Project:

The Greenfield CED Department has been stretched very thin addressing COVID-related impacts and it has even fewer resources now to address Downtown. Greenfield is a moderate-income community (the median household income is 31% lower than the statewide median.) The economic impacts of COVID-19 were widespread among the population and already challenging problems that fall under the CED Department such as homelessness, other housing issues, and need for emergency services have been exacerbated.



*Colorfully painted parking meters in Downtown Greenfield.
Photo: FinePoint Associates*

Action Item

Section 22A1/2 of the Massachusetts State Legislature enables a municipality to:

- Establish a geographic area of choice (PBD),
- Reallocate some or all parking revenue into a dedicated fund,
- Use some or all parking revenue from the PBD for various improvements (as noted in Section 22A).

Create a Parking Benefit District in Downtown Greenfield.

A Parking Benefit District (PBD) is a specific geographic area in which parking revenues can be collected and used to fund a wide range of improvements and programming in the District. The enabling legislation gives communities greater control over parking supply and demand and allows communities to leverage parking management strategies for Downtown revitalization and economic development. Funds may be used for a range of purposes such as:

- Parking, maintenance, operations, enforcement
- Wayfinding and signage
- Walking and biking infrastructure and amenities
- Streetscape (benches, planters, landscape maintenance)
- Outdoor spaces for dining and entertainment
- Management, marketing and events

For Downtown Greenfield, it would be beneficial to use PBD funds to help staff a District management entity as well as implement improvements. There is an existing non-profit organization (Progress Partnership Inc.) that may be able to play the role of a District management entity if it had a predictable funding source, could plan an annual budget, and had at least a part time staff person.

Process

1. Parking Study

It is highly recommended that clear parking utilization data be collected to determine whether parking pricing is warranted or needs adjustment. The data collection should encompass areas of highest demand plus a boundary zone to help identify the limits of the PBD geography. Local stakeholders can collect data and guide municipal staff to modify on- and off-street regulations in response to actual parking demand, which often results in notable changes to parking fees, time-limits, spans of payment, violation fees, enforcement activities and more that can create higher revenues for the PBD while improving parking availability for customers and visitors. Wayfinding, management agreements, improved connections, better lighting, and other strategies are typical recommendations. Often, professional consultation is advisable.

2. Study Area Definition

The PBD boundary must be defined to establish the area within which parking revenues can be segregated and later expended. Typically, this is driven by parking study results as well as the entirety of a defined commercial district. A community may have multiple PBDs.

3. Designation of Management Entity

The PBD will require an entity to manage it, which includes the mechanics of distributing revenues, selecting projects and programs to fund, approving and managing projects, marketing, and reporting. There are multiple entities that are candidates such as a specific municipal department, a working group, a Business Improvement District (BID) or Main Street district, or a new entity formed to manage the PBD.

4. Designation of Improvements Program

For transparency and accountability as well as planning purposes, it is important to designate a prioritized list of improvements for the PBD to fund. Steps to take to do this include reviewing past or ongoing planning efforts (such as a Comprehensive Plan, District Plan, or Parking Management Plan) to identify elements that a PBD might fund.

The process may also include identifying additional supporting investments. Ideally, all investments will impact the metered area so that customers, businessowners, and residents alike see that their parking revenue is reinvested locally. The management entity should maintain the Improvements Program.

5. Designation of Parking Fund

In Massachusetts, PBDs are typically set up through an enterprise fund. Enterprise funds are a separate accounting mechanism for municipal services for which a fee is charged. The account lasts a minimum of three years and does not require a separate bank account.

Best Practice Example

Downtown Rockport, MA **Meter Revenue Allocated to** **Cultural District Organization**

In Rockport, 12% of the parking meter revenue (up to \$10,000) was allocated to cover services provided by the Executive Director of the Rockport Cultural District to bring artists, cultural organizations, and businesses within the District together to build a thriving environment in Downtown.



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Source: <https://www.rockportma.gov/community-development/cultural-district>



Source: www.facebook.com/rockportculturaldistrict
Posted May 29: Thanks to the efforts and talents of Mechelle Brown of the Rockport Cultural District, the Department of Public Works, and the Rockport Garden Club, Dock Square — and other downtown locations—are looking very spiffy and colorful.

Best Practice Examples

Arlington, MA **Arlington Center Parking District**

Source: MA Rapid Recovery Program, "Establishment of Parking Benefit District for Improvements and Amenities in Arlington's Town Center," provided Stantec Consulting, Inc.



*Public engagement flyer for PBD.
Source: Arlington*

Brookline, MA **Brookline Village Parking District**

Source: MA Rapid Recovery Program, "Establish Parking Benefit District to Better Manage Parking Resources and Enhance Village Vitality," provided Stantec Consulting, Inc.



*Brookline Village
Source: www.en.Wikipedia.org*

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 revenue stream to implement improvements that did not have priority in the Town's Capital Plan.

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.

The PBD fund was created to support a wide range of physical improvements as well as administrative/maintenance responsibilities, including installation and 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.

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

Parking meter revenue is transferred into the Parking Benefit District Special Revenue fund and disbursements are made.



The creation of the PBD was intended to help Brookline respond to the commercial decline of Brookline Village and an increase in vehicle congestion. Through the creation of a PBD, funds from meters in a Parking Meter Zone could be allocated to expenditures and Town budgets used to create improvements that continue attracting visitors and businesses, including:

- Accessibility improvements to sidewalk infrastructure
- Public art recommendations from the Arts Commission
- Parking and traffic operational improvements.

The Brookline Village Parking District Advisory Board (BVPDAB) was established and is comprised of local businesses and residents. The BVPDAB defined the area of the parking benefit district. The BVPDAB's ongoing tasks include:

- Recommending an annual budget,
- Recommending parking rates and expenditures to Select Board
- Making recommendations to the Transportation Board and/or DPW related to parking/traffic operations and physical changes
- Making recommendations related to public art to the Arts Commission.

Revise the existing sign bylaw regulations to encourage a variety of signage in Downtown and allow businesses to have more than one sign.

Category	 Private Realm
Location	The current sign regulations in Section 200-6.7 of the Greenfield Zoning Ordinance apply to all properties and businesses in the Downtown Greenfield Study Area, which is covered by the Central Commercial Zoning District (CC). This zoning district includes portions of the 2020 Census Tracts State 25, County: 011, Tract: 0413.00.
Origin	<p>Contributors to Project Idea: During our site tour and public forums, several business owners and property owners expressed frustration with the City's sign regulations as they pertain to Downtown Greenfield. The Mayor, Director of Community and Economic Development, and the Director of Planning & Development underlined the need to facilitate a variety of high-quality signage.</p> <p>Champion: The Director of Planning & Development would likely be the project champion and lead the effort to revise the sign regulations as the administrator of the zoning ordinance.</p>
Budget and Sources of Funding	 Low Budget (Under \$50k) <p>The budget for this project will depend on how the work is carried out. If the City planning staff have the experience and time, it is possible that the entire project could be accomplished "in-house". The City could also retain a zoning consultant (including the regional planning commission) to evaluate current regulations and prepare context-based sign design standards. In this scenario, CED and PD staff members would assist in identifying model signs, organizing public participation, and guiding the adoption process. As sign regulations tend to be a sensitive topic and often difficult to change, having City staff directly involved could be a critical part of the process. The preliminary cost estimate of retaining a consultant with assistance from City staff is provided below.</p>

Project Task	Cost Estimate if Consultant is Used
Evaluate the existing sign bylaw	\$2,000
Identify representative local examples and models for high quality signs.	\$2,000
Identify case studies and model bylaws from similar communities.	\$2,000
Prepare specific standards, illustrative graphics, and review procedures for all sign types	\$15,000
Conduct legal review of draft bylaw for consistency with sign content case law.	\$2,000
Conduct public workshops and hearings to review draft sign bylaw (4 meetings estimated).	\$10,000
Prepare and adopt final sign bylaw amendments.	\$3,000
Total	\$36,000

Budget and Sources of Funding (cont'd)

Potential sources of funding may include the City (general funds), CDBG program income, Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) (Community One Stop for Growth), and the Franklin Regional Council of Government (FRCOG) technical assistance grants or general planning services.

Timeframe



Short Term (<5 years)

A general timeline estimates that the project will take approximately 6 months to complete. This includes public workshops to inform business and property owners about potential changes to the sign regulations and provide an opportunity for feedback prior to adoption. Once implemented, the City should work with the GBA and property owners to make sure that local businesses are aware of new opportunities and standards for signage and the City's storefront improvement program, which may be used to implement new business signs.

Project Task	Month					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Evaluate the existing sign bylaw	X					
Identify representative local examples	X					
Identify case studies and model bylaws from similar communities	X					
Prepare specific standards, illustrative graphics, and review procedures for all sign types	X	X	X			
Conduct legal review of draft bylaw for consistency with sign content case law.			X			
Conduct public workshops and hearings to review draft sign bylaw (4 estimated).	X		X		X	X
Prepare and adopt final sign bylaw amendments.				X	X	X

There are no known or anticipated start and completion dates at this time.

Risk



Low Risk

There are no significant risks to adopting new sign regulations as long as the new standards are clear, flexible, produce combinations of high-quality signage, and improve business image and opportunity. Potential impediments to successful implementation could be a lack of political will to make zoning revisions, liability concerns (such as with signs and displays that project over the sidewalk), community interest (such as a general feeling that signs are not a high priority), site ownership (i.e., some owners may have façade easements that prevent certain changes to the façade), or financing limitations of local businesses.

Key Performance Indicators

Performance indicators that might be used to measure anticipated impacts of the project after implementation include the following:

- **Increase in the variety and quality of signs in Downtown.** This could be measured by the numbers of new high-quality signs, new projecting signs and new sidewalk display signs/elements.

Key Performance Indicators (cont'd)

- **Increase in customers for businesses that implement more attractive and effective signage.** This could be somewhat difficult to measure precisely, however business owners could be surveyed 3–6 months after the installation of new signage to get their opinions on the impacts on customer traffic.

Partners and Resources

A summary of entities/organizations/individuals that might be required to implement the project are identified below:

- Director of Department of Planning & Development (City) — Spearhead the project.
- Planning Board (City) — Play a role in sign permitting review/recommendation to City Council.
- Zoning Board of Appeals (City) — Play a role in sign permit review/recommendation to City Council.
- Mayor of Greenfield (City) — Provide support to the project.
- City Council (City) — Approve zoning amendments.
- Greenfield Business Association (GBA/Private/Non-Profit) — Assist with communication with businesses.
- Director of Community and Economic Development (City) — Support the project.

Diagnostic

How this Project Responds to Key Challenges/Opportunities

Identified in Diagnostic Phase: Revisions to the sign regulations will improve opportunities for business development in Downtown Greenfield. As described in more detail in the Diagnostic Report, the current sign regulations are generic and apply to a large commercial district. They are not properly calibrated to a traditional central business district like Greenfield where pedestrians are the primary customers. The challenge is to provide context-based standards that allow businesses to have a range of high-quality signs geared to the pedestrian while visible to drivers as well. These revisions provide businesses an opportunity to improve their appearance and attract more customers.

Harmful COVID-19 Impacts this Project seeks to Address: As COVID-19 forced several downtown businesses to scale back or close, local customers and tourist visits declined significantly in 2020 and 2021. As businesses begin to fully reopen, the revised sign standards provide an opportunity for businesses to expand and upgrade the quality of signage and by doing so, increase marketing efforts to bring people back to Downtown.

How did COVID Create or Exacerbate the Issue Addressed by this Project: COVID-19 exacerbated the issue of limited signage as local and visiting customers have to get reacquainted with Downtown Greenfield as some businesses closed permanently while new ones opened in the last year. Improving the business sign standards allows for a broader range of high-quality signage directed at both pedestrians on the sidewalk and travelers in cars. Collectively, existing and new businesses that install a coordinated sign program (such as wall signs, blade signs, window signs, and awnings) will help customers overcome the lack of access to the downtown market and create a more vibrant image of the district, leading to more rapid economic recovery.

Action Item

The current sign regulations in Section 200-6.7 of the Greenfield Zoning Ordinance allows only one (1) sign per businesses in the downtown area. This is very limiting in a district that is oriented to customers that are both pedestrians and drivers. As people walk down the sidewalk or travel in their cars, they are more likely to overlook a business due to the limited numbers and size of signage. This section also lacks definition and clarity in the permitting process for business signs.

Revising sign standards would allow for a combination of high-quality business signs such as wall signs, projecting blade signs, ground signs, marquee signs, awnings and banner signs, window signs, sandwich board signs, iconic signs, and merchandise displays in Downtown Greenfield. Recently adopted sign standards in similar districts as Downtown Greenfield have also incorporated illustrative diagrams and images of model signs that help business owners achieve intended quality.

Successful downtown businesses depend on visibility with quality storefront treatments, a combination of signs, and spill-out applications (such as sandwich board signs and merchandise displays). With clear standards, sign permits could be approved administratively without board review or unnecessary fees that may deter the use of high-quality signage and displays. These changes to sign regulations should result in higher quality storefronts, improved customer visibility, and improved business revenues.

Process

- 1. Bylaw Evaluation**
Evaluate existing sign regulations in Section 200-6.7 of the Greenfield Zoning Ordinance to determine the impact on downtown business development in terms of the number and type of signs permitted over the past 2 years, the review process (length of time and board approval), and limitation on businesses to provide a combination of signs.
- 2. Case Studies and Character Example**
Identify representative local and regional examples of high-quality signs appropriate for Downtown Greenfield, including wall signs, projecting blade signs, ground signs, marquee signs, awnings and banner signs, window signs, sandwich board signs, iconic signs, and others as appropriate.
- 3. Modal Bylaws**
Identify model sign regulation bylaws from similar communities.
- 4. Prepare Sign Regulations**
Define standards and illustrative graphics for all types of signs identified in Number 2 above in terms of size shape, placement, materials, lighting, and allowed combinations of different sign types. Prepare sign permitting and approval procedures with board review and administrative review by staff.
- 5. Legal Review**
Conduct legal review of draft bylaw for consistency with sign content case law.

Process (cont'd)

6. Public Participation

Conduct public workshops and hearings to present and discuss sign type and design options and review draft sign regulations (4 meetings estimated).

7. Adoption

Prepare final sign bylaw amendments for adoption by City Council.

There are no requirements for property purchase and transfers, site clearance or remediation, or training and technical assistance. The City may have to go through a vendor procurement process to select a consultant to complete the revisions to the sign regulations. Depending on local procurement policies, the process may be expedited if the budget is below a specified threshold.

Best Practice Example

Several cities and towns have adopted (or are in the process of adopting) flexible and context-based sign regulations for the purpose of creating more vibrancy in their downtown districts. A couple of recent examples relevant to Downtown Greenfield follow.

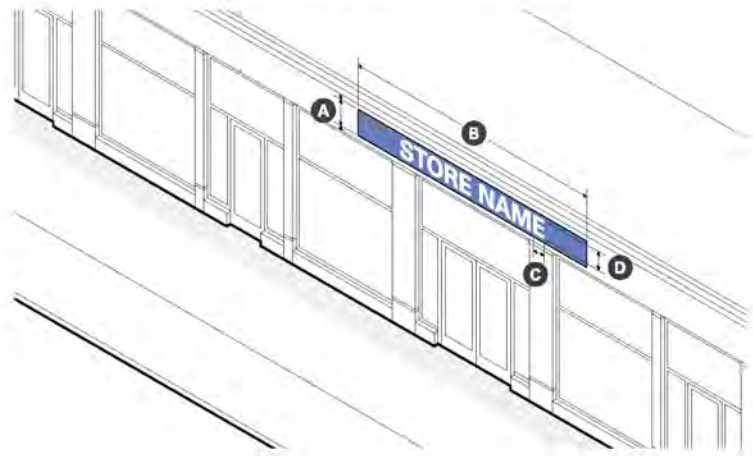
Somerville, MA

The City adopted a comprehensive form-based code in 2019, which includes detailed sign and display regulations under Section 10.9. The design standards include a broad range of signs that are well illustrated and cover a range of commercial districts from pedestrian-oriented to strip commercial.

The City of Somerville adopted a new Form-Based Code in 2019, which includes context-based sign regulations with detailed design standards and illustrative diagrams for different types of signs. Above are example standards for wall signs, blade signs, and awning signs. Source: Somerville Zoning Ordinance

12. Wall Sign

- a. A sign attached flat or mounted parallel to the facade of a building that identifies a commercial establishment. Wall signs are intended to be viewed by pedestrians on the opposite side of street.



Size	
Area (max)	40 sq. ft.
Height (min/max)	3 ft 4 ft
Width (max)	90% of facade width

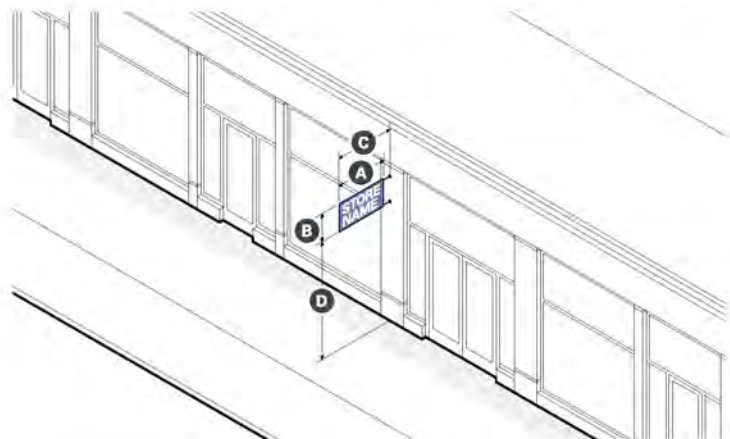
Lettering	
Width (max)	75% of sign width
Height (max)	75% of sign height
Projection from facade (max)	6 inches
Raceway Height (max)	50% of Letter Height

b. Standards

- Wall signs are only permitted for ground-floor businesses.
- Internally illuminated sign cabinets are prohibited.
- Wall signs are prohibited from covering windows or architectural details.
- No portion of a wall sign is permitted to extend above the lower eave line of a building with a pitched roof.
- No portion of a wall sign is permitted to extend above the roof line or parapet wall of a flat-roofed building.
- No portion of a wall sign is permitted to extend above the cornice or expression line of the base of a building.
- Information type is limited to business name and logo. Additional information is prohibited.

11. Blade Sign

- a. A small, two-sided sign that is attached to and projecting perpendicularly from the facade of a building that identifies a commercial establishment. Blade signs are intended to be viewed by pedestrians on the same side of the street.



Size	
Area (max)	6 sq. ft. / side
Width (max)	4 ft
Height (max)	3 ft
Thickness (max)	6 inches

Location	
Clear Height over Sidewalk (min)	8 ft
Projection from facade (max)	4 ft
Number of signs	1 per Tenant

b. Standards

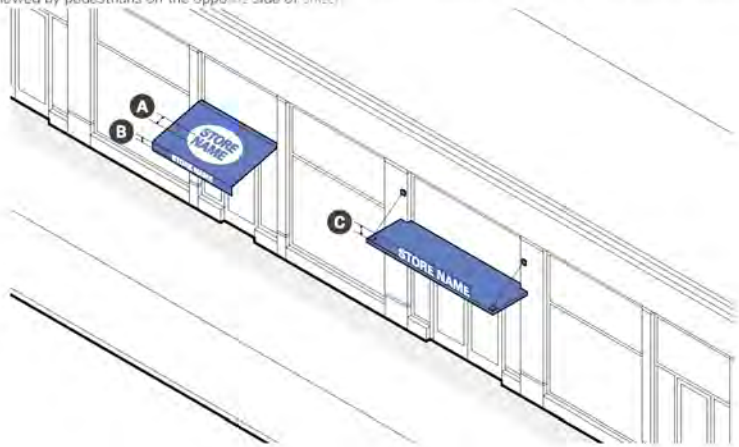
- Blade signs are prohibited for upper-story businesses.
- A blade sign must be located within ten (10) feet of the principal entrance for the business it identifies.
- A blade sign, including any support hardware, must be mounted below the sills of the second-story windows of multi-story buildings or below the roof line, parapet wall, or cornice of a single-story building.
- Any supports, braces, anchors, and other supporting hardware must be integral to the design of the sign.

Best Practice Example

Somerville, MA (cont'd)

13. Awning or Canopy Sign

- a. A sign that is painted, screen printed, sewn, or adhered onto the surface of an awning or attached above, below, or to the face of an entry canopy that identifies a commercial establishment. Awning/canopy signs are intended to be viewed by pedestrians on the opposite side of street.



Area	
Located on Valance (max)	50% coverage
Located on Awning Slope (max)	25% coverage
Projecting from Canopy (max)	1 sf. per width of canopy

Lettering	
Height	-
Valance (max)	8 in
Awning Slope (max)	18 in
Projecting from Canopy (max)	12 in

b. Standards

- Signs are not permitted on awnings or canopies that do not conform to the provisions for each type of BUILDING component. See §3 D. BUILDING COMPONENTS for more information.
- Signage located on the sloping portion of an awning is only permitted for storefronts where the typical area for a wall sign is missing.
- Signage is prohibited on UPPER STORY awnings and on the side of awnings with closed ends.
- Information type is limited to business name, logo, and address. Additional information is prohibited.

Source: Somerville Zoning Ordinance

Best Practice Example

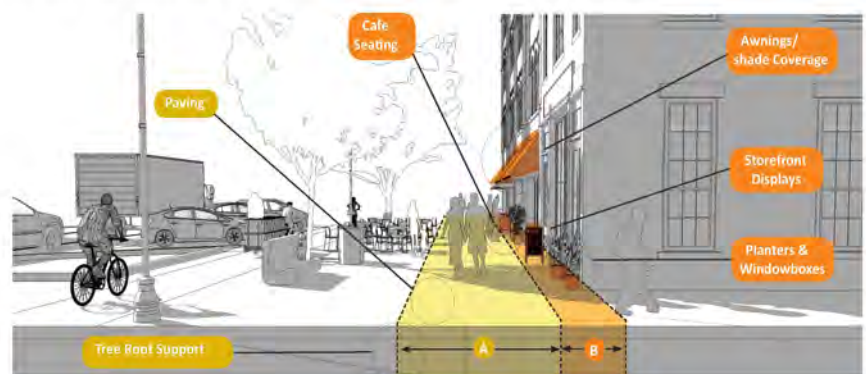
Northampton, MA

The City provides for a broad combination of signs in the Central Business District, including wall signs, ground signs, projecting blade signs, awning signs, and others under Section 350-7 of the zoning ordinance. The City is also reviewing new draft form-based zoning ordinance (Section 350-16), which includes building frontage zone standards for the downtown area and Florence center. These design standards address streetscape applications, building encroachments, outdoor displays, café seating, furnishings, and other activation applications on the public sidewalk.



City of Northampton is reviewing new character-based zoning for Downtown and Florence Center, including design standards for Throughway & Frontage Zones along the sidewalks for the placement of furnishing, utilities, landscape treatments, and use by adjacent businesses. Source: Northampton Character-Based Zoning Draft 9.16.19 prepared by Dodson & Flinker and Brovitz Community Planning & Design

Throughway & Frontage Zone Standards | Main Street- Primary [MS-p]



Throughway Zone		Frontage Zone	
A	Width	B	Width
	5' (min.) - 12' (preferred)		2' (min.) ; 4' minimum for Cafe Seating
Description	Components	Description	Components
The throughway zone is the portion of the sidewalk used for active movement and travel from one place to another in the public realm. It is important that the throughway zone be an adequate width for comfortable two-way pedestrian movement, that it remains clear of obstacles, and that the paving surface is relatively level.	Paving Public Art Tree Root Structural Support	The frontage zone represents the area in front of first floor shops and restaurants where pedestrians might pause—to read a menu, peer through a shop window, or wait for friends before entering a restaurant.	Awnings Cafe Seating Planters & Window Boxes Ramps, Steps and Terraces Storefront Displays Public Art Bike Racks

Tenant Mix

Recommendations

Implement a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to solicit developer interest in the redevelopment of the First National Bank for a use that would bring people to Downtown.

Category



Tenant Mix

Location

9 Bank Row, Greenfield, MA
State: 25, County: 011, Tract: 0413.00

Origin

Contributors to Project Idea: Greenfield Redevelopment Authority, Friends of First National Bank, Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department, RRP Process Participants,

Champions: Greenfield Redevelopment Authority. (The GRA currently owns the property.) Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department

Budget and Sources of Funding



Low Budget (Under \$50k)

Low to implement the RFP process, however the budget to redevelop the property would be High

Project Task	Low Estimate	High Estimate
RFP Development		
RFP Consultant to oversee writing and editing the document, RFP promotion & public presentations*	\$7,000	\$10,000
Graphic design and building + context photography	\$3,000	\$5,000
3-d scan of building	\$10,000	\$15,000
Supplemental structural analysis (Review analysis done for performing Arts Facility Concept in 2019; cost may be less.)	\$5,000	\$10,000
Supplemental Market study (Review District market analysis done in 2020; cost may be less.)	\$5,000	\$10,000
Legal review	\$10,000	\$10,000
Prepare and adopt final sign bylaw amendments.	\$3,000	\$3,000
Subtotal	\$33,000	\$55,000
RFP Promotion		
Email list development	\$0	\$1,000
Determine appropriate list serves and social media through which announcements can be shared (MHC, MassDev, etc)	\$0	\$1,000
Advertising	\$0	\$1,000
Site visit + Community Conversation/networking: 1/2 day program, inviting all on a guided tour of the building, meet with MHC rep, MassDev Rep, local business owners, Town Staff, etc. Town staff or reps present key market data; local business owners/developers speak on their success and working with the community. Could also include tax credit specialists, lenders, etc. and ask them to speak briefly on key topics. Serve food/beverage and encourage informal networking.	\$0	\$1,000
Printing	\$0	\$1,000
Consultant time for site visit event and coordination	\$2,000	\$3,000
Subtotal	\$2,000	\$8,000
Preliminary Total Estimate	\$35,000	\$63,000
Mid Point: \$49,000		

*Assumes City of Greenfield will lead RFP Administration.

Budget (cont'd)

Potential funding sources:

- MassDevelopment Real Estate Services Technical Assistance Program is an appropriate funding source for this project. RFP assistance is one of the eligible uses. (A draft Project Sheet was provided to the community in July, 2021 to assist them in applying for a MassDevelopment Technical Assistance Grant before the August 8th deadline.)
- Underutilized Properties Program (MassDevelopment), accessed through Community OneStop for Growth

Timeframe



Short Term (<5 years)

Approximate Time Estimates

3 months	RFP Development
3-4 months	Market the RFP (longer if no response), site tour planning and hosting
2-3 months	Evaluate Responses
3-6 months	Negotiate Redevelopment Agreement
1 year +	Redevelopment Completion

Risk



Medium Risk due to impediments

Risk: The risk is that the RFP does not generate any responses.

Impediments: The Massachusetts Historic Commission (MHC) holds a Preservation Restriction on the property. The Preservation Restriction requires adherence to the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and all changes to the property are subject to approval by MHC. Any developer of the property would be subject to the terms of the preservation restriction agreement.

Another challenge includes the high cost of redevelopment due to general condition from long-term vacancy, no systems, and lack of seismic bracing on the structure, etc.

Key Performance Indicators

Short-term:

- Number of RFP inquiries
- Number of site tour participants

Long-term, depending on the end use of the property:

- Number of people regularly coming to the site that represent potential customers for Downtown establishments
- Number of new businesses
- Number of jobs created; number of employees working on site
- Number of new households residing in Downtown

Partners and Resources

- Greenfield Redevelopment Authority, current owner of property
- Massachusetts Historical Commission must approve all changes according to the Preservation Agreement
- Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department

Diagnostic

How this Project Responds to Key Challenges/Opportunities

Identified in Diagnostic Phase: This building was identified as a key property in Downtown. It is the second building from the main intersection where first impressions are made by visitors. This building contributes to one of the key diagnostic findings — “The 100% corner is 90% inactive.”

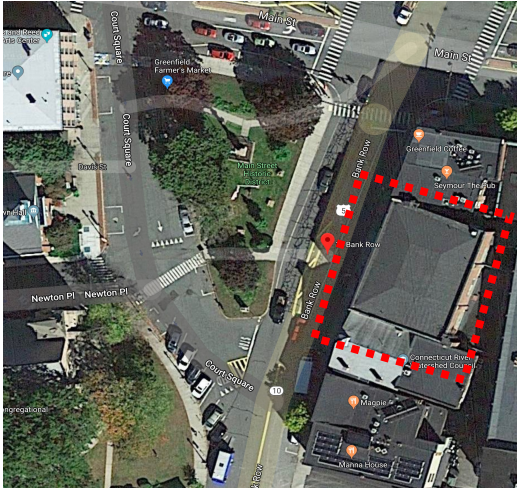
COVID-19 Impacts Addressed by this Project: Downtown foot traffic has decreased significantly. Remote working coupled with residents turning to online purchasing has decreased people in Downtown with a corresponding decline in sales for Downtown businesses (our business survey showed that 66% of Downtown businesses indicated a reduction of on-site customers in 2021 compared to pre-COVID; over one-half of businesses said that foot traffic was down by more than 25%. And 72% reported a 2020 revenue loss compared to 2019). It is essential to bring more customers into Downtown. Redeveloping the First National Bank (FNB) property for a destination use or a use with a significant number of on-site employees and/or residents would help to increase customers for Downtown establishments.

How did COVID Create or Exacerbate the Issue Addressed by this Project: Over the last several years, Downtown Greenfield had shown great signs of revitalization. In large part, this was due to the many entertainment and dining establishments that had begun to find success in Downtown, including Hawks & Reed Performing Arts Center, 10 Forward music venue, Hope & Olive restaurant and several other eateries. COVID-19 caused the entertainment venues to close and restaurants to severely limit the number of customers.

Action Item

This property has been vacant for over 40 years, was owned by a non-profit for over 30 years and is now owned by the City of Greenfield (Greenfield Redevelopment Authority or GRA). It has seen more than a few community/non-profit proposed redevelopment concepts over the years that have not come to fruition. It remains a large vacancy in a key location in a Downtown that has several vacant properties. The community is ready to try soliciting interest from private sector developers that may be able to redevelop the property in a way that would benefit Downtown Greenfield.

The GRA can use a tool called a **request for proposal (RFP)** for this purpose. An RFP is a document that solicits proposals to procure a particular service or achieve a desired outcome such as the redevelopment of a particular site. Redevelopment authorities and other government agencies frequently issue RFPs to attract developers interested in **purchasing and redeveloping publicly-owned properties in a way that would be beneficial to the community**. In this case, the purpose would be to get the desired use and redevelopment outcome rather than an expectation of generating revenue from a purchase price. In fact, incentives such as the opportunity for state and federal tax credits and/or grant funds would likely be needed to entice developer interest.



First National Bank Building, located one building in from the major intersection in Downtown — the “100% Corner.” Photo: FinePoint Associates



First National Bank Building, 9 Bank Row, vacant since 1970s. This Art Deco Style structure was designed by Dennison and Hirons in 1929. Photo: FinePoint Associates



The building contains approx. 6,600 SF on the ground floor with a large open space and soaring 48-foot-high ceiling, a small mezzanine level space (670 SF) and a full basement. Photos: FinePoint Associates

Background on the Property and the Preservation Restriction

Background on the FNB Building

The FNB Building, an historic Art Deco property, functionally abandoned since the 1970s, is located on Bank Row facing the Common, across from the City Hall and the proposed new extended plaza. The City of Greenfield (through the GRA) acquired the property from the Franklin County CDC in 2017. The CDC had owned the property for over 30 years and had invested in improvements to sustain the building over the years but was never able to redevelop it. The original plan for the property when the City acquired it was to develop the building into a City-owned multi-function performing arts facility. In 2019, Massachusetts Development Finance Agency hired FinePoint Associates to work with the GRA and the City to complete a market and feasibility study for the creation and operation of a proposed cultural facility. At the conclusion of the feasibility study, it became clear there were several factors that could inhibit the success of a potential cultural facility, including the potential negative impact on existing cultural arts facilities in Greenfield, redevelopment cost estimates of \$4.1 to \$4.6 million for ground floor occupancy (not including basement occupancy) with a potential additional cost of around \$1.7 million for the renovation of the historic façade, and the need for ongoing operating subsidy if the facility were to be used as a multifunction cultural arts facility.

Preservation Restriction — Information received from the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC)

FinePoint Associates communicated with Michael Steinitz, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer Director, Preservation Planning Division and received the following clarifications.

1. The preservation restrictions held by the MHC remain in effect in perpetuity. They are binding on all present and future owners or holders of lesser real interest in the property. Any developer of the property would be subject to the terms of the preservation restriction agreement.
2. Under the terms of the preservation restriction agreement, any proposed alterations to the property are subject to prior review and approval by the MHC as specified in the agreement. The agreement does not prohibit changes to the property.
3. Both the terms of the preservation restriction agreement and the requirements of the state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credit programs require that any rehabilitation plans meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
4. There is no "waiver" process; the preservation restriction does not prohibit change, but all changes are subject to prior review and approval by MHC, and changes must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Suggested Follow-up:

1. Contact Paul Holtz, Co-director of MHC's Grants Division, who oversees review of properties on which MHC holds restrictions, to discuss the current condition of the property, and options the City is considering. He is the primary contact at MHC regarding MHC's review under the terms of the restrictions and would also have information about available funding. (FinePoint made several attempts to contact Paul in July 2021). Paul Holtz's email address is: paul.holtz@state.ma.us.
2. Elizabeth Sherva, Director of Architectural Review at the MHC, might also be a helpful resource for questions regarding tax credits. Her email address is: elizabeth.sherva@state.ma.us.

Process

1. Follow up with MHC

It would be useful to get additional information from MHC as described in the previous “Preservation Restriction” section.

2. Develop the RFP

The basic components of the RFP include:

- Community Vision for the Downtown/the property
- Purpose (e.g., solicit proposals from highly qualified developers to purchase and redevelop, etc.)
- Description of the property and surrounding area (including availability of previous engineering/structural studies and Downtown plans)
- Redevelopment goals for the property (e.g., destination use that will attract potential customers for Downtown establishments or a use with a significant number of on-site employees and/or residents that would increase customers for Downtown establishments)
- Restrictions (e.g., preservation restriction, redevelopment agreement)
- Incentives (e.g., availability of federal and state Historic Tax Credits, grants such as MA Preservation Projects Fund, TIF, low-interest financing programs, etc.)
- Submission requirements
- Evaluation criteria
- Developer selection process
- Schedule for site visits, interviews, and selection
- Forms and certifications.

3. Market the RFP to attract potential developers.

Aggressive marketing efforts are required and could include:

- Posting on the City website
- Issuing a local and regional press release
- Purchase strategic print advertisements
- Update distribution list by using the network of businesses and developers already in Greenfield and the region.
- Email to all businesses and property owners and ask them to SHARE!
- Social media campaign /cross-posting
- Boost/ advertise online
- Email the pdf in responses to any development inquiry
- Make RFP available during events in Town
- Plan a Developer’s Tour, showcase the Downtown, local businesses and the community as well as the property. Make it an event with food/beverage (e.g., Court square Beer Garden).

4. Evaluate Responses

Responses must be submitted in accordance with the requirements outlined in the RFP. The GRA would evaluate proposals based on specific criteria for selection outlined in the RFP and evaluate/select :

- the plans which most effectively advance the Downtown Greenfield revitalization goals,
- the redevelopment teams that are best equipped to implement the plan based on skills and experience, and
- the financing plan that affords the highest probability of successful development, the greatest investment in the community, and the most effective utilization of funds.

Note: Disposition of property can be by sale or long-term lease. In the case of a housing development with affordability requirements, a long-term lease may be employed or a sale with deed restrictions.

5. Negotiate a Redevelopment Agreement

Once the redeveloper team has been selected, the plan reviewed, and evidence of financing vetted, a redevelopment agreement would be negotiated that outlines:

- the obligations of the redeveloper and GRA
- the process for plan approval
- the transfer of the title
- the scheduled deadlines for the beginning and completion of construction
- the terms for issuance of a certificate of completion that concludes the process and certifies that the redevelopment entity has met all its obligations under the agreement.

6. Redevelopment Completion

Once the agreement has been approved and executed, the construction timeline begins. After the improvements to the property have been made and the certificate of completion has been issued, the property may be placed in service.

Kaukaunna, WI

The City of Kaukaunna's Redevelopment Authority issued an RFP, December 2, 2019. The purpose of the RFP was to solicit offers to purchase and proposals for redevelopment of the Historic Carnegie Building, a surplus property that was once used as a city library.

Their goals were preservation, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse that would benefit their downtown.

On March 30, 2021, the Common Council voted to enter into an agreement with a developer committed to restoring the façade of the buildings to its original look and converting the addition that was built in the 1970s to eight market-rate apartments with balconies overlooking the Central Park and Fox River.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR REDEVELOPMENT AND PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC CARNEGIE LIBRARY BUILDING



Source: <https://cityofkaukauna.com/2019/12/02>

The RFP is available at <http://www.lwm-info.org/DocumentCenter/View/3583/RFP-PACKET-CARNEGIE-BLDG-Kaukauna>

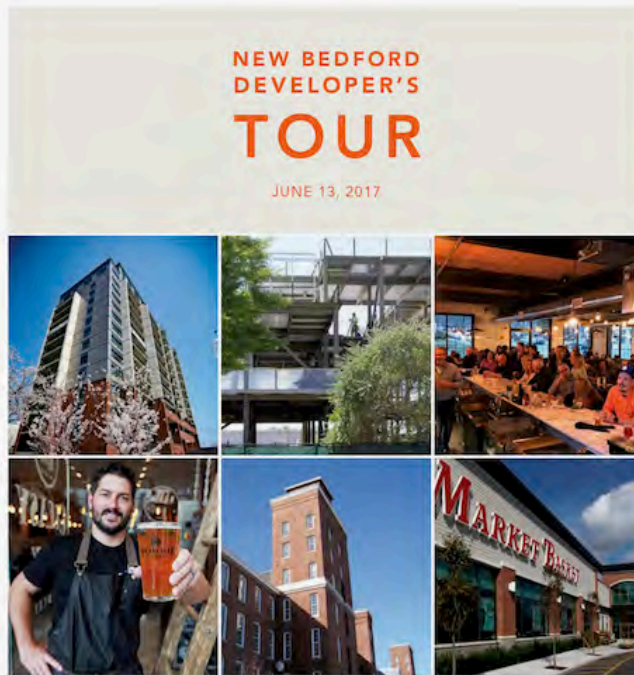
Best Practice Examples

New Bedford, MA Developer's Tour

In 2017, the New Bedford Economic Development Council, with the help of a Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) Fellow, Jim McKeag), created a booklet showcasing the City's development opportunities and conducted a Developer's Tour. The 38-page booklet included:

- Introductions from the Mayor and MassDevelopment
- Agenda for the Tour
- Property profiles and maps, and
- New Bedford information — history, industries, culture, and contact information.

PUBLIC
REALM



Agenda for the Day

1:30 PM Registration Opens

1:45 PM Welcome

Marty Jones, MassDevelopment President & CEO

1:50 PM Remarks

Mayor Jon Mitchell
Secretary Jay Ash, Housing and Economic Development

Elected Officials in attendance:

New Bedford Legislative Delegation

- Sen. Mark C.W. Montigny
- Rep. Antonio Cabral
- Rep. Robert Koczera
- Rep. Chris Markey
- Rep. William Straus
- Rep. Paul Schmid, III

Joseph Lopes, City Council President

2:15 PM Tour Overview

Derek Santos, NBEDC, Executive Director

2:30 PM Short Break, Assemble for Tour

2:45 PM Walking Tour

Derek Santos, NBEDC
Angela Johnston, NBEDC
Jim McKeag, TDI Fellow

4:00 PM Conclude tour at Moby Dick Brewing Company - All Welcome!

4:10 PM Optional bus tour to south end and drop off back at Moby Dick Brewing Company



Excerpts from the "New Bedford Developer's Tour" booklet. Source: New Bedford Economic Development Council

The New Downtown



Throughout our history, New Bedford has always been a creative and diverse community. During the 19th century, when the whaling industry fueled New Bedford's economy, acclaimed artists, such as Albert Bierstadt, William Bradford, Albert Pinkham Ryder, and Clifford Ashely lived and worked in this cosmopolitan seaport.

Today, New Bedford's downtown is the arts and culture center of the SouthCoast of Massachusetts, boasting a wide array of attractions and diverse venues that showcase the historic, artistic, and cultural fabric of a community that is home to hundreds of artists and performers contributing to our distinct seaport identity.

Downtown is home to nearly 600 establishments, with over 6,500 employees, and \$500 million in annual business sales. Regional business clusters exist in printing and publishing, depository institutions, real estate, legal services, accounting and consulting services, and administration of human resource programs. There is a strong potential to build clusters in health services, educational services, and eating and drinking establishments.

Competitive advantages include developable space, the National Park, existing business and arts and culture clusters, parking and public transportation, proximity to the working waterfront, and superior access to large regional consumer and business markets.

Since 2007, 60 Businesses have opened or expanded in downtown New Bedford. We see that trend continuing with a new hotel, 4 additional establishments and residential projects scheduled to break ground or open in the next year.

"New Bedford is where the arts, history, culture and commerce intersect in a pedestrian friendly downtown. Come see why Richard Florida ranked New Bedford among the best cities in America for artists to live and work."

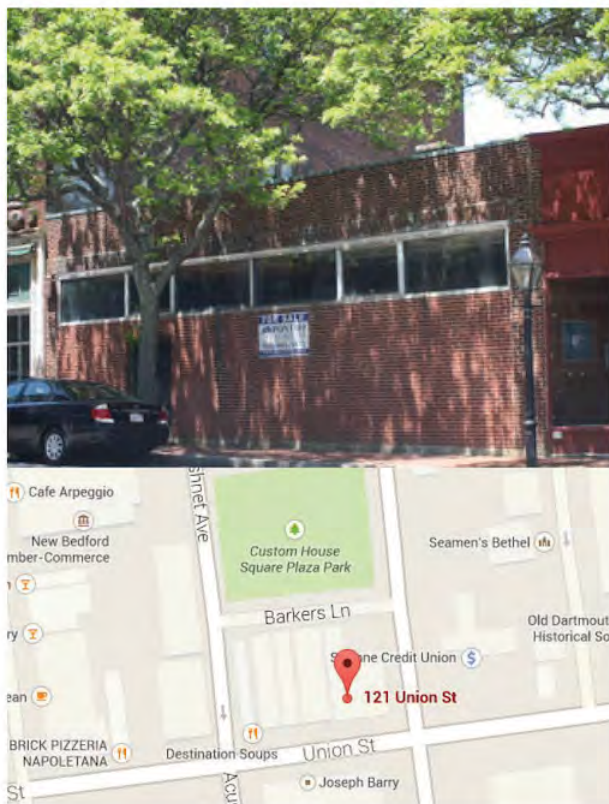
ADRIAN TIO, FORMER DEAN OF THE UMASS DARTMOUTH COLLEGE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Example of Downtown Summary in the "New Bedford Developer's Tour" booklet. Source: New Bedford Economic Development Council

Downtown & Center

121 Union Street

This site is adjacent to 117 Union Street and completely independent for separate development opportunities. Located on the central artery that runs through downtown connecting New Bedford to Fairhaven and Dartmouth. Retail, restaurants and cultural institutions surround the site.



INVESTMENT PROFILE

MAP/PARCEL: 53 215
 OWNERSHIP: PIVA A PAUL, GAIL FLOREK
 ZONING: MUB
 CURRENT USE: VACANT
 LOT SIZE: 2,074 SQ. FT. BLDG., 0.049 ACRES
 ASSESSED VALUE: \$187,000

127-129 Union Street

This is a 3-floor structure with retail opportunities on the first floor. A highly visible location, walking distance to the working waterfront, waterfront hotel, entertainment and restaurants.



INVESTMENT PROFILE

MAP/PARCEL: 53 146
 OWNERSHIP: PIVA A PAUL, GAIL FLOREK
 ZONING: MUB
 CURRENT USE: VACANT
 LOT SIZE: 8,652 SQ. FT. BLDG., 0.099 ACRES
 ASSESSED VALUE: \$340,100

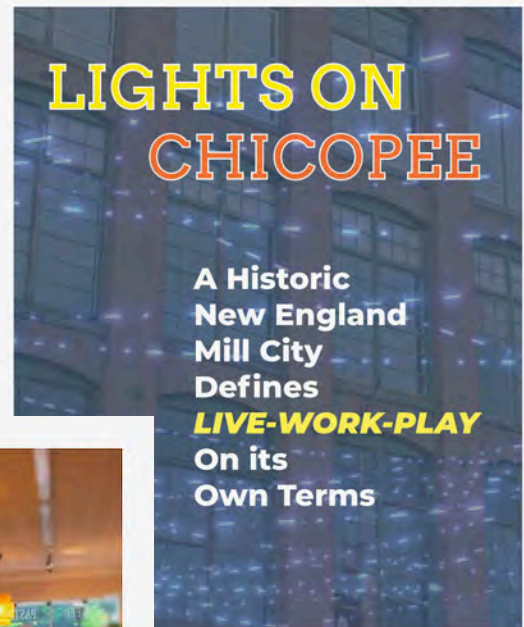
Example of Property Profiles highlighted in the "New Bedford Developer's Tour" booklet. Source: New Bedford Economic Development Council

Best Practice Examples

Chicopee, MA Marketing Booklet & Real Estate Cut Sheets

The City of Chicopee prepared a 6-page booklet marketing the community along with real estate cut sheets profiling development opportunities.

The materials were shared at the Lights On Arts & Culture event.



*Excerpts from marketing booklet.
Source: City of Chicopee*

Brights Ideas

From Market Test to Business Launch

Temporary events like Downtown GetDown and Lights On are proving to be useful market testers for new businesses coming into Chicopee. "We couldn't have done it without you" are the words shared by Katie and Victor Narvaez of [Goodworks Coffee House](#), which opened on Center Street in 2018. The City of Chicopee's Community Development Block Grant assisted in the purchase of equipment and furniture.

In fact, Chicopee's role in coffee culture already has a global reach. [Chemex](#), the pour-over style coffee maker invented by Peter Schlumbohm in 1941, is manufactured by the Chemex Corporation in Chicopee. The legendary hourglass flask and coffee brewing system, exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in 1943, maintains a worldwide following -- embodied by the more than 500,000 images on Instagram with the #chemex hashtag.

Big (Real Estate) Business

In late 2017, [Mount Holyoke Development](#) announced its plan to convert the Lyman Mill (formerly Dwight Manufacturing Company Mill #7) into 170 live-work apartments, with financing from [Westfield Bank](#) and supported in part by a \$2.6 million [MassWorks](#) infrastructure grant to upgrade infrastructure in the area that has been known as Cabotville Industrial Park.

Just a short distance away and supported in part by the same grant, one of the largest projects to come online in Western Massachusetts is real estate developer [SilverBrick Group](#)'s purchase of the 12+acre/ 750,000 square foot Cabotville Mills in 2018. Permitting is now underway for a \$55 million revitalization that will include up to 600 units of residential apartments and 200,000 square feet of retail, office and light manufacturing space. This is a game changer for Chicopee, both in terms of making vital use of historic architecture, and creating new demand for local businesses and services.

Live-Work-Play HERE

The City of Chicopee is working hard to encourage additional thoughtful redevelopment. A designated [opportunity zone](#) on the northwest edge of downtown along with several other well studied properties await developers, established businesses and new entrepreneurs looking to move forward with creative projects. Today, Downtown Chicopee offers a growing set of "urban" amenities at village scale in a diverse community, coupled with access to regional recreation, farms and breweries. Located a short distance from



From top: the interior of the Goodworks Coffee House. Owners Katie and Victor Narvaez with Mayor Richard Kos. The bespoke coffee is made to order. Goodworks sources beans from local roaster Monsoon Roastery in Springfield.

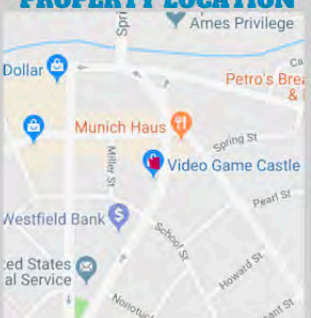
FOR SALE

Chicopee - Property Profile

PROPERTY OVERVIEW



- Map/Parcel:
- Lot Size: 3,500 sq ft
- Office, Retail and Restaurant Ready Spaces
- Downtown Location
- Adjacent to City Hall
- Very Walkable (85 Walk Score)
- Daytime Foot Traffic
- High Ceilings
- Refinished Wood Floors
- Kitchen Facilities
- Historic Building

PROPERTY LOCATION



CONTACT


AJ
 (413) 594-7105
[email](#)

28 Center Street

(former Front St. Laundry)

Zoned: Business A



DESCRIPTION

Up for sale is this beautiful retail/office building for sale on busy Exchange Street in Chicopee. The property is 4698.11 sq ft and has been renovated inside and out, and features multiple private offices, a kitchen area, a conference room, four bathrooms (including two ADA compliant), ample storage, and an auditorium with a sound room. Two new HVAC units installed in 2018. Many potential uses. Call for more information!

Real estate cut sheets prepared by the Planning Department to highlight vacant properties available for development. Source: City of Chicopee

Explore the use of the UCH-TIF program to support and encourage residential development in upper floors.

Category



Tenant Mix

Location

Downtown Greenfield, MA.
State: 25, County: 011, Tract: 0413.00.

Origin

Contributors to Project Idea: Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department, RRP Process Participants

Champion: Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department

Budget and Sources of Funding



Low Budget (Under \$50k)
\$0 - \$25,000

The recommendation is for a preliminary exploratory process to determine if there is an appetite and support for implementing the UCH-TIF program before investing a lot of time and effort. The Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD) staff and/or the Planning Department staff may be able to complete this preliminary investigation in house. If the initial investigation evolves into implementation, additional consulting expertise may be required to develop the UCH-TIF Plan and legal assistance to prepare the UCH-TIF Agreements. A potential funding source at that point would be Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (Community One Stop for Growth).

Timeframe



Short Term (<5 years)

The initial evaluation would not take much time. The schedule would depend on the availability of the staff conducting the investigation and the availability of the property owners and any potential developers to have initial exploratory conversations. If the City decides to pursue the UCH-TIF, then it would take a more substantial time period to prepare the UCH-TIF Plan and go through the approval process depending on the time required for a developer to confirm a plan for a site and negotiate the UCH-TIF Agreement.

Risk



Low Risk to Explore; Implementation has Impediments

There is no risk involved in evaluating the potential for the use of the program. There are, however, possible impediments to implementing the UCH-TIF Program. For this strategy to be successfully implemented:

1. There needs to be political buy-in for the City to agree to provide a real estate tax exemption on all or part of the increased value (the "Increment") of improved real property.
2. There must be one or more property owner/real estate developers interested in creating residential units that will meet the program criteria.
3. A portion of the housing units must meet affordability standards.

Key Performance Indicators

- Reduced vacancy especially in upper floors of large buildings (e.g., former Wilson's Department Store).
- Increased residents living in Downtown resulting in expanded market potential for Downtown businesses.

Partners and Resources

- Greenfield Mayor and City Council
- Greenfield Community and Economic Development Department (CEDD)
- Greenfield Planning Department to assist with boundary mapping, parcel identification, information about zoning, etc. for the UCH-TIF application
- Greenfield Tax Assessor's Office
- Private real estate owners interested in developing residential units in Downtown

Diagnostic

How this Project Responds to Key Challenges/Opportunities

Identified in Diagnostic Phase: Downtown Greenfield has a large amount of vacant and under-utilized space. There are 30 vacant ground floor commercial units and a substantial amount of vacant and underutilized upper floor space. The former Wilson's Department Store, the First National Bank building and the Armory are notable large vacant properties in the Downtown Study area. Mixed-use development may be a good redevelopment option for these or other properties in Downtown.

Mixed use/residential development can be a viable use for under-utilized properties while increasing market support for Downtown businesses and adding more eyes and activity on the street (especially during evening hours) making for a more vibrant and safer environment. (During the diagnostic phase, we received input regarding the perception of Downtown Greenfield as being unsafe as well as concerns about the lack of evening activity).

The prospect of a property tax exemption (allowable through the UCH-TIF Program) that would help make a development project more financially feasible could help to encourage residential development, particularly in vacant/under-utilized upper floors.

COVID-19 Impacts Addressed by this Project: For Downtown Greenfield to recover, there needs to be customers for the businesses. Foot traffic has declined and so has revenue for Downtown establishments. The expansion/recruitment of anchor uses in ground floor locations coupled with the existence of additional households with spending power would go a long way to support market demand.

How did COVID Create or Exacerbate the Issue Addressed by this Project: The economic impacts of COVID-19 have made it harder to attract real estate development interest for vacant properties. Several businesses have not re-opened, foot traffic has not returned to pre-COVID levels, interest rates have increased, and potential developers view the market as uncertain.

Action Item

What is the UCH-TIF Program?

The Urban Center Housing — Tax Increment Financing program is a state program in which the Department of Housing and Community Development authorizes cities and towns to promote housing and commercial development, including affordable housing in commercial centers through tax increment financing. In order to offer tax increment financing for specific projects, the City must demonstrate eligibility for both the district and the project through a UCH-TIF Plan that must be certified by DHCD. More information can be found on the DHCD website:

<http://www.mass.gov/hed/community/planning/uch-tif.htm>

Like other forms of TIF, the UCH-TIF program provides real property tax exemptions on all or part of the increased value (the "Increment") of improved real estate.

There is no exemption for the pre-existing tax base, and the City does not lose any revenue. In this case, such development must be primarily residential and in a commercial center area with a demonstrated need for re-investment.

The recommendation is to explore the use of the UCH-TIF program to support development/reuse of Downtown properties and encourage residential development in upper floors. In particular, the potential implementation of this program should be evaluated to determine if it could be effective to spur redevelopment of the former Wilson's Department Store.

The UCH-TIF program allows the City to provide a property tax exemption on all or part of the increased value (the "Increment") of improved real estate for up to 20 years. So, in the case of Wilson's Department Store Property, this might provide an incentive for redevelopment.

Wilson's Department Store closed its doors for good in January of 2020 after serving Franklin County for 137 years. Wilson's, one of the very few remaining family-owned department stores left in New England, was an anchor in Downtown. Mixed-use development may be a good redevelopment option.

Downtown would greatly benefit from a new or expanded anchor use at this location that would serve as a destination bringing in customers that might also patronize other establishments.

Wilson's is a large property with several upper floors and might be a good candidate for mixed-use development with an anchor business establishment on the ground floor and residential units in the upper floors.

A property like this would require substantial redevelopment, especially of the upper floors, and financial feasibility concerns may deter potential buyers/developers. The prospect of a real estate tax exemption could help to encourage redevelopment by making a project more financially feasible.



The vacant Wilson's Department Store building may be a good candidate for mixed-use redevelopment. If the incentive of a tax exemption could result in a first-floor anchor use and upper floor households with spending power, it might be an overall win for the community. Photo: FinePoint Associates

Process

Housing Affordability

The requirement that a certain percentage of housing units must be affordable to occupants below specified income levels means that there is a cap on the rent that can be charged. In general, affordable means not spending more than 30% of income on housing. So, for example, if the project qualified because 25% of the units were affordable to people at or below 110% AMI, the maximum permitted monthly rent cannot exceed one-twelfth of 30% of 110% of AMI, adjusted for household size, bedroom size and utilities.

1. Understand how the process works

- Designate an UCH-TIF Zone with high business/commercial use.
- Prepare an UCH-TIF plan and the form of the UCH-TIF Agreement (i.e., a document containing the basic provisions of the UCH-TIF Agreement with specific provisions to be completed as they become known). If an UCH-TIF Agreement has been negotiated with a property owner, that Agreement is attached and becomes part of the UCH-TIF Plan. (Frequently, when a community applies for the UCH-TIF program, they have at least one proposed development project lined up.)
- Public Hearing to receive public comment on the proposed Zone, Plan, form of the Agreement and negotiated Agreements, if any.
- Approval by the Municipality — after the public hearing, the municipality's legislative body can make amendments if necessary and approve by majority vote. The approval shall include 1) the authority to implement tax increment exemptions from property taxes for a period not to exceed twenty years, and 2) the maximum percentage of any public project costs that can be recovered through Special Assessments on properties receiving tax increment exemptions.
- Execute UCH-TIF Agreements — after municipality approval. Agreements can be executed for previously negotiated projects and new Agreements can be executed that are subject to DHCD approval.
- Submit UCH-TIF Application to DHCD for Approval of the Zone, Plan, Form and negotiated Agreements (if any).

2. Review the program requirements, such as:

- UCH-TIF zone must meet one of the criteria that shows the need for commercial growth in the area (such as high commercial vacancy or unemployment, low average income, high percentage of blight or sub-standard conditions)
- A portion of the housing units developed must meet affordability thresholds (e.g., at least 15% of the housing units must be affordable to occupants with incomes at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) or at least 25% of the housing units must be affordable to occupants with incomes at or below 110% of the AMI).

3. Begin to draft the objectives the City would like to accomplish with the UCH-TIF program that fits within the purpose of the statute to “encourage increased residential growth, affordable housing and commercial growth” in the locally designated UCH-TIF Zone. For example . . .

- Decrease Downtown vacancy
- Encourage expansion of existing anchor uses and the development of new anchor uses in Downtown
- Promote new business development
- Encourage mixed-income residential development that would expand market demand for Downtown establishments.

4. **Review UCH-TIF Program information with appropriate parties,** stakeholders and departments within the City. Get consensus around the value of further investigating the UCH-TIF option.
5. **Have initial exploratory meetings** with owners of appropriate vacant/underutilized properties (e.g., Wilson's) and potential real estate developers to determine potential plans for the properties, gauge interest in development scenarios that would qualify for UCH-TIF, get preliminary feedback on financial feasibility and measure the impact that the prospect of a tax exemption might have on encouraging development.
6. If there is interest on the part of property owners/developers and it appears that the tax exemption program would be appropriate, **then more serious action can be taken to ascertain political and community support and attract developer interest.** Further steps would include actions such as requesting proposed development plans and preparing an UCH-TIF Plan. Additional consulting expertise may be required to develop the UCH-TIF Plan and professional legal consultation to prepare UCH-TIF Agreements.

The components of the UCH-TIF Plan include the following.

- Executive Summary
- Objectives of the UCH-TIF Plan
- Parcel Description, Coverage and Zoning in the UCH-TIF Zone
- Specification of Development and Useful Life of Housing
- Compliance with Zoning
- Schedule and Cost of Public Construction in the UCH-TIF Zone
- Affordable Housing
- UCH-TIF Agreements

More information can be found at:
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/uch-tif-application-guidelines/download>

Lowell, MA

UCH-TIF Program

Lowell City councilors voted unanimously to approve the Downtown Urban Center Housing Tax increment Financing Plan (UCH-TIF) in October of 2019. At the same meeting, they also approved the first property set for development under the UCH-TIF. The 125-unit mixed-income and mixed-use building, a \$50 million project, was planned by WinnDevelopment.

In June 2020, WinnDevelopment closed financing for the project. Located on parcels eight and nine of the Hamilton Canal Innovation District, the building includes 5,000-square-feet of ground-floor commercial space and 125 apartments. It will be a mixed income project — 32 apartments will rent at market rates; 54 workforce apartments will rent at rates for people at 100% of Area Median Income (AMI); and 39 units will be affordable to people up to 60% of AMI.

Source: "City passes tax incentives for housing developers," Lowell Sun October 29, 2019, and "Winn Press Release, June 11, 2020"

A Draft of the 2019 Downtown Lowell UCH-TIF plan is available at:
www.lowellma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/9222/20190913-DRAFT-UCH-TIF-Zone-and-Plan-revisions-Final-Clean



Mixed-use, mixed-income development project at the gateway of Downtown Lowell

Source: Winn Press Release June 11, 2020, "Winn Closes Financing for Development of Mixed Income Housing in Lowell"

Framingham, MA

UCH-TIF Program

Source: Town of Framingham Press Release March 3, 2017

A Special Town Meeting of Framingham residents approved tax-increment financing (TIF) agreements for two proposed transit-oriented developments for Downtown Framingham and a new Urban Center Housing Tax Increment Financing (UCH-TIF) plan and zone for Downtown Framingham.

The proposed development at 266 Waverly Street by Mill Creek Residential will create 270 new units of multifamily housing for the MetroWest region and invest \$73 million in Framingham. The development at 75 Concord Street bring 197 units of housing into the downtown and \$60 million in new investment.

Prior to the vote, the Division of Community and Economic Development delivered 12 formal presentations to ten town committees and other interested groups providing details on the agreement. As part of the agreement for 266 Waverly Street, the Town of Framingham will provide an estimated \$2.8 million in property tax exemptions for a 7-year term.

For the 75 Concord Street development, the Town will provide \$5.9 million in property tax exemptions for a 15-year term. In total, the two projects will raise \$9.2 million in revenue over 15 years, bring \$133 million in private investment to Downtown Framingham, and generate up to 624 new construction jobs to the town.

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266 Waverly Street by Mill Creek Residential will create 270 new units of multifamily housing for the MetroWest region and invest \$73 million. Source: Choose Framingham Newsletter



75 Concord Street by Wood Partners will bring 197 units to the downtown and bring \$60 million in new investment. Source: Choose Framingham Newsletter