



Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

Downtown Hudson



Acknowledgements



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Hudson BID E-Board

Business owners of Hudson

Property owners of Hudson

Community of Hudson

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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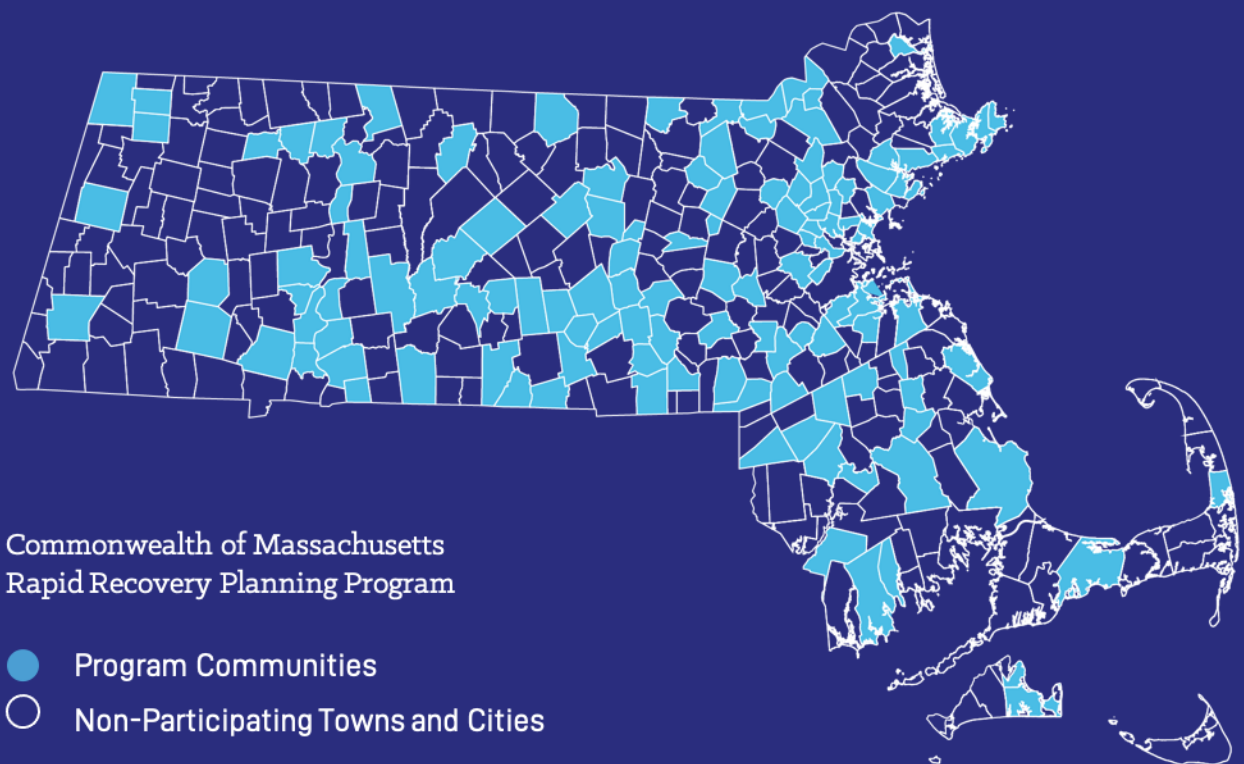
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125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

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.



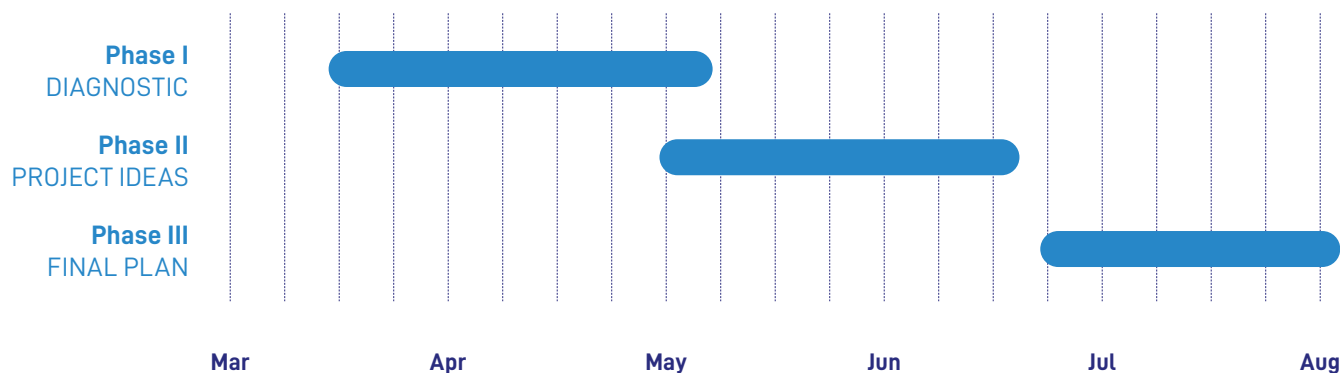
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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.

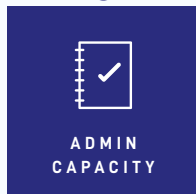
Each Rapid Recovery Plan was developed across three phases between February-August 2021. Phase 1 - Diagnostic, Phase 2- Project Recommendations, Phase 3 - Plan.



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.

Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework



Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?

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

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

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

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



Public Realm



Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Revenue & Sales



Admin Capacity



Cultural/Arts



Other

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Hudson: Looking towards the future

The Downtown Hudson Rapid Recovery Plan examines market and physical conditions, as well as feedback from the business community, in order to identify strategic projects to support a sustainable and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Downtown Hudson is a vibrant business district that has reinvented itself in the past 10 years. The downtown area used to be primarily home to nightlife and scattered retail options. Today it is a healthy mix of smaller footprint retail, food and beverage businesses centered in the core Main and South streets and larger footprint service businesses and long-standing institutions dedicated to home improvement and hardware at its outskirts. Walking through downtown is a pleasant experience as you traverse wide sidewalks lit by historic light posts. Walking through on a Thursday or weekend night you might even come upon some live music or a beer garden. You'll be surrounded by visitors not only from the immediate community but MetroWest as Hudson has become regionally famous due to food and beverage attractions like Rail Trail Flatbread, New City Microcreamery or Medusa Brewery.



From left to right): Outdoor patio space for ice cream on Main Street, Historic buildings fill Downtown Hudson, The Medusa Beer Garden sets up for the summer season (Credit: Jenn Kaplan)

This transformation has been the result of an intentional collaboration between the Town of Hudson and the Hudson Business Improvement District (BID), with many other organizations supporting along the way. With business-friendly regulatory and programming support built into the economic system, downtown has become a space for both long-standing business owners to flourish but also a space for entrepreneurs to experiment.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted Downtown Hudson similar to many other communities across the region. Small businesses reassessed their operations after opening back up with renewed public health guidance and visitors reassessed what they felt comfortable with as they ventured out of their homes and into stores again. During the Local Rapid Recovery Planning (LRRP) outreach process, the MAPC team heard from the business community that continued programming and support for downtown businesses will be crucial to recovery while they operate at reduced capacity. From the community, the team heard that there is continued interest, as there had been the past 3 years, to visit Downtown Hudson for the exciting retail, food and beverage options.

For Downtown Hudson to focus on recovery from the pandemic, it will require a deeper reach into some longer-standing issues that might prevent the Town and Hudson BID from continuing to provide the same level of support to the business community as it grows. The MAPC team has categorized the recommendations in the following categories:

1. Address existing commercial vacancies and long-term marketing needs of the Business Improvement District
2. Expand and improve the public realm
3. Plan for long-term growth for Downtown Hudson

Diagnostic

Diagnostic Key Findings



The community is attracted to Downtown Hudson.

The community survey conducted in June 2021 indicated that more people (55% of respondents) have visited Downtown Hudson more frequently in the past 3 years. Respondents shared that the reasons for this increase in frequency have included the vibrancy and mixed retail and dining options. For those who have visited Downtown Hudson less frequently (12%) this has been due to traffic congestion and perceived parking challenges.



Business owners are interested in shared marketing and additional support for recovery.

The business survey conducted in March–April 2021 indicated that the majority of business owners (95%) had experienced negative impacts to their operations because of the pandemic and had to reduce hours/capacity or close (57%). Recovery strategies that were identified as being important to business owners were to have opportunities to implement shared marketing strategies for the district and more opportunities for outdoor dining and retail to recover.



Downtown Hudson is brimming with opportunity.

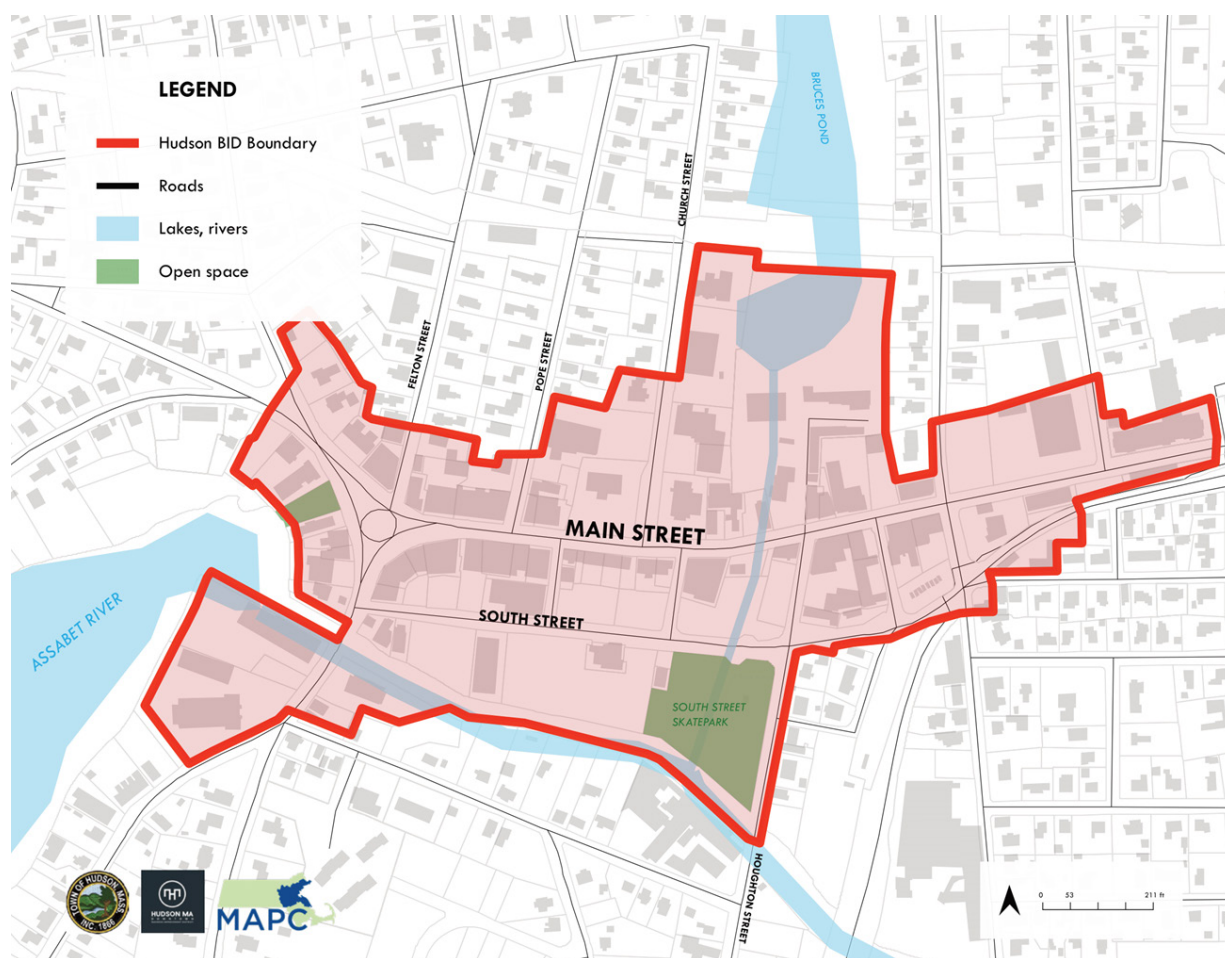
The physical site assessment conducted for this project identified Downtown Hudson as a district that has the physical infrastructure in place to grow and recover from the pandemic. Sidewalks and business storefronts were largely well-maintained with only a few exceptions. Streets were well lit in the physical realm and vacancies were minimal. There is also an incredible community of partners who are all invested in continuing to make Downtown Hudson a special place to visit. These elements will all be important as part of implementing Downtown Hudson's recovery plan outlined in this report.

Diagnostic Findings

Overview

The formation of the Hudson Business Improvement District (BID) in 2018 consolidated much of its transformation from a small industrial downtown into a diverse mix of retail offerings and thriving environment for entrepreneurs. Figure 1 shows a map of the BID which encompasses 160 property parcels and spans 47.8 acres of land. The Diagnostic Phase of this plan concentrated on collecting required and additional data to establish baselines and measure COVID impacts on the BID. The information collected throughout this phase aims to inform our understanding of market constraints and opportunities, and to guide the community to strategically prioritize public and private investments. That said we acknowledge that data can only show a part of the picture and can be used as a guide and only in conjunction with the broader context. Data collected is broadly divided into four key categories: physical environment, market information, business environment, and administrative capacity.

Figure 1 Local Rapid Recovery Plan study area – Hudson BID



Methods

The diagnostic assessment includes data analysis required by DHCD, as well as additional data analysis and community engagement to establish baselines and measure COVID impacts. Primary data was collected through various community engagement efforts between April and June 2021. These included a business survey designed by DHCD and distributed with the assistance of the town's planning department and BID, assessments during site visits, a community survey, virtual public meetings, and solicited input from the BID's executive committee. Secondary data sources included both paid as well as public data. These sources provide data for various geography levels and time durations. The table below provides information on each of these secondary data sources.

Table 1 Data Sources

Data Source	Timespan	Geography Level	Description
ESRI Business Analyst	2020, 2021 estimates	Study area, intermediate, city level	Paid data source; demographic and socio-economic data for the study area, retail leakage estimates, business locator dataset
Infogroup	2016	Study area	Paid data source; utilized to supplement business list creation
CoStar	2020 estimates	Study area	Paid data source; real estate indicators like rents, vacancy, retail space estimations
Census Bureau (ACS)	2014-2019, 5-year estimates	City, census tract	Public data source; demographic estimates, at-risk population data like households with 1+ person with a disability, households with no vehicles
MassGIS	-	Study area, city	Public data source; parcel data, building footprints, city boundaries
MassDOT TDM System Database	2019 and 2020	Locations around study area	Public data source; Average Annual Daily Traffic estimates and mobility dashboard for pedestrian counts
Town of Hudson and Hudson BID	-	Town and BID	Public data source; zoning map, parking studies



Access

Traffic: MassDOT Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) estimates from 2019 for the western side of the BID at the intersection of Main Street and Lincoln Street, show approximately an 18% decrease in traffic between 2019 and 2020. Similar trends were observed on the eastern side of the BID at the intersection of Main Street and Tower Street showing a decrease in AADT estimates by approximately 17% between 2019 and 2020. Much of this trend can attributed to the decrease in traffic seen all over the region due to COVID impacts.

Vehicular traffic from Routes 62 and 85 present an opportunity to attract customers to the diverse and eclectic mix of businesses and retail offerings in the BID.

Parking: Approximately 500 parking spaces exist in and around the BID district based on estimates from the BID. These parking spaces are subject to various types of regulations, time-limits, and levels of enforcement. A detailed map of the existing parking inventory is presented in figure 2.

Pedestrian Activity: According to MassDOT mobility dashboard estimate, between 2019 and 2020, the Town has seen an overall 40% increase in pedestrian counts.

Sidewalks and Crosswalks: Based on site visits and assessments conducted in the months of April-May 2021, the sidewalks within the BID appear wide enough to accommodate both pedestrians, retail and dining activity, and occasional benches. Additionally, the sidewalks were recently updated and are cleaned regularly in coordination with business owners.

While crosswalks in the district were generally visible, a few on Main Street did not seem to deter drivers from speeding through. Remediation in the form of modifications is underway per the town's input.

Wayfinding: The town is implementing a wayfinding plan, which includes new electronic signage and physical signs for the BID. The plan is funded through a MA Office of Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant.

Figure 2 Parking Map



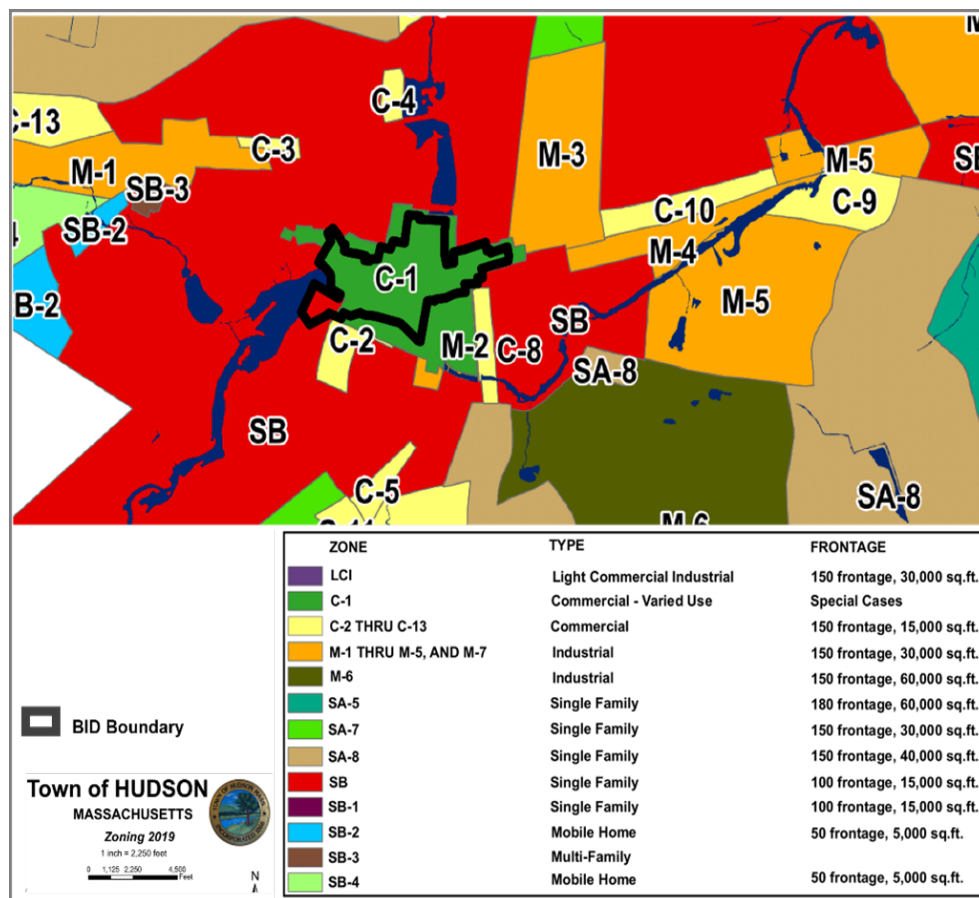


Public Realm

Strengths of the public realm in the study area include a strong mix of businesses, updated and high-quality sidewalks with outdoor dining and beer gardens as well as newly installed signage in the public right of way. The BID also has high-quality traditional/historic lighting on most street corners on both South and Main Streets. Overall, the infrastructure along the streets was accessible and well-maintained.

Zoning: The BID and its vicinities are broadly constituted by the C-1 commercial zone, which allows for varied uses with a small portion on the south-west side under the residential SB zone. The BID also has close proximity to Industrial zones on the eastern side as well as other commercial zones.

Figure 3 Current zoning in Hudson BID District



Historic-style lampposts line Downtown streets
Credit: Jenn Kaplan



Business signage on Main Street
Credit: Jenn Kaplan



Private Realm

Existing businesses: At the time of study, a total of 147 businesses were observed and a majority of these businesses had storefronts. It is important to note that these storefronts differ from the total number of businesses as a few retail offerings or professional services are housed in structures without individual storefronts.

Vacant businesses: At the time of the study, nine vacancies were observed which was a favorable sign following the significant shutdowns and resulting decrease in businesses due to COVID impacts.

Outdoor dining: A major strength of the district is the provision of outdoor dining options. The establishments that had utilized spaces for outdoor dining or outdoor beer gardens also provided awnings or covers for visitors in inclement weather.

Storefronts: Both signage and window displays on individual storefronts were well-maintained and clear. Most storefronts were well-maintained, however a few properties with less active property owners were dilapidated in appearance. The town has leveraged CDBG funding for façade improvement programs in the past.

Lighting: There is opportunity to improve lighting within the private realm. Most private storefronts do not offer sufficient lighting for the district.



Customer Base

We utilized the area within a one-mile radius of the intersection of Main Street and Broad Street to identify the immediate customer base of the BID. Table 3 shows key demographic and socioeconomic indicators for the district and its surroundings to identify characteristics of the immediate customer base.

- Approximately 48% or half of the town's population resides within the BID's immediate vicinity (i.e., within the one-mile radius).
- Median household income is slightly lower (\$80,482) within the one-mile radius as compared to the median income of the town (\$93,616).
- The average household size of the district's immediate vicinity is similar to that of the town, averaging at 2.50.

Table 4 provides information on populations that might have a broader set of needs.

- One in four households within the one-mile radius have one or more persons with a disability within the household.
- Seventeen percent of the population residing within the one-mile radius of the BID is 65 years of age or older.
- Approximately 21% of the population within the one-mile radius is under 18 years of age.

Table 3 Key Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics (2020)

Indicators	*1-mile Radius	Town of Hudson
Total Population	9,997	20,547
Median Household Income	\$80,482	\$93,616
Median Disposable Income	\$60,583	\$70,378
Average Household Size	2.47	2.56
Employed Population, 16+	4,992	10,386
Minority Population	1,850	3,289
Median Age	41.4	42.8
Unemployment Rate	12.6%	12.3%
Daytime Population: Workers	4,218	9,594

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, American Community Survey; *Main and Broad St. as center

Table 4 Customer base with a broader set of needs

Indicators	*1-mile Radius	Town of Hudson
Households with Disability (2019)	993	1,912
Population 65+ (2020)	1,721	3,647
Households below poverty line (2019)	2%	2%
Population under 18 years (2020)	2,118	4,349
Population that does not speak English well or at all (2019)	410 (4.1%)	-
Child Dependency Ratio	34.7	34.4

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, American Community Survey; *Main and Broad St. as center

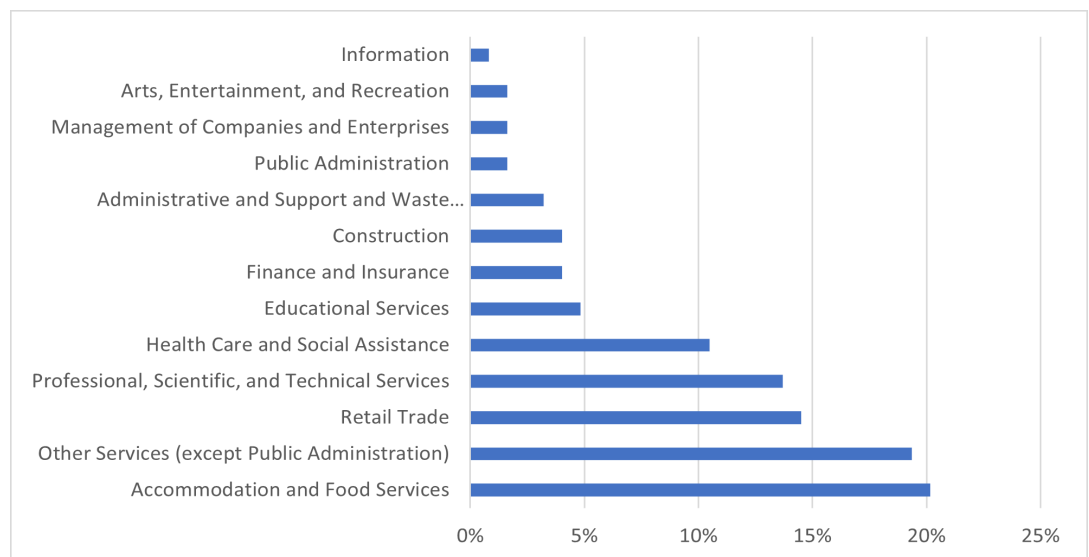


Tenant Mix and Vacancy

- Approximately 147 businesses are operational within the study area.
- A note about business lists: Business lists are key elements of business support infrastructure. The Town along with the BID district aim to maintain a comprehensive list of businesses including contact information and business types to enhance programmatic business support and improve marketing.
- Using various proprietary and open datasets available to MAPC, a list of 147 businesses along with the contact information and industry type was curated for the BID district. This estimate is however caveated with multiple challenges, including lack of recent and curated business lists, the impact of COVID closures not being documented comprehensively, and lack of comprehensive data sources on minority-owned businesses in the area.
- Vacancy rates of approximately 6% were observed.
- The study area's current office, retail, and industrial land inventory (built-up space) is 387,000 sq. ft. with a vacancy rate of 4% for ground floor real-estate according to CoStar 2021 estimates. Additionally, this inventory is made up of 32% office, 59% retail, and 10% industrial spaces.
- Based on CoStar estimates, the BID district has average asking rents of \$18/sq. ft. and \$19/sq. ft. for retail and office spaces respectively.

- Based on our compiled business list, the top three business types in terms of number of establishments within the BID district are below. Figure 4 provides the distribution of these businesses based on broad categories.
 - Food and Accommodation: The majority of businesses (20%) within the district belong to this category. Establishments in this sector consist of restaurants and other food and beverage stores.
 - Other Services Sector: 19% of businesses in the study area belong to this sector which includes establishments that are primarily engaged in activities such as equipment repairing, promoting or administering religious activities, and personal care services like nail salons etc. except public administration.
 - Retail: 15% of businesses in the district belong to this sector which consists of establishments with retail offerings like clothing stores, antique stores, art galleries etc.

Figure 4 Types of businesses within Hudson BID District



Findings from business survey administered by DHCD

Key highlights from a business survey administered by DHCD during March and April of 2021 are presented below. The survey was directed to owners or other appropriate representatives of business establishments located within the study area to solicit information on the impact of COVID on their operations.

- Participant profile: A total of 37 responses were received from primarily (51%) microenterprises with 5 or fewer employees. The top three categories of industry type the respondents belonged to included – retail (27%), food services and accommodation (22%), and personal services (11%). The majority of respondents (78%) rented their space.
- Impacts of COVID: The pandemic had significant negative impacts on the day-to-day operations of the surveyed businesses with 95% of the businesses reporting being impacted by COVID-19.
 - 57% of businesses reported they were operating at reduced hours/capacity or closed.
 - 63% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019 with 44% of businesses reporting revenue declines of 25% or more.
 - 78% of businesses had fewer on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID.

Findings from business survey administered by DHCD (cont'd)

- Satisfaction with the regulatory environment: 46% of businesses expressed concerns about the regulatory environment. 43% of those who expressed those concerns cited parking followed by 34% citing signage regulations-related concerns. For the commercial environment within the BID, business owners reported the following:
 - Business owners reported being "satisfied" with public spaces, streets and sidewalks
 - Business owners reported being "very satisfied" with safety and comfort of customers and employees
 - Business owners reported being "satisfied" with the condition of private buildings, storefronts, and signs
 - Business owners reported being "satisfied" with their proximity to complementary businesses and uses
- Input regarding specific strategies: Business owners reported that it was "important" to consider in the following specific strategies:
 - Bring more cultural events/activities to bring people to the district
 - Recruit programs to attract additional businesses
 - Have more opportunities for outdoor dining and selling
 - Implement marketing strategies for the district
- Interest in receiving assistance: 74% of businesses expressed interest in receiving some kind of assistance. Most interest was expressed in low-cost financing for purchasing property in the district or participating in shared marketing/advertising.



*Downtown Hudson businesses, varied in use, agreed that assistance would be important to recover from the pandemic
Credit: Jenn Kaplan*

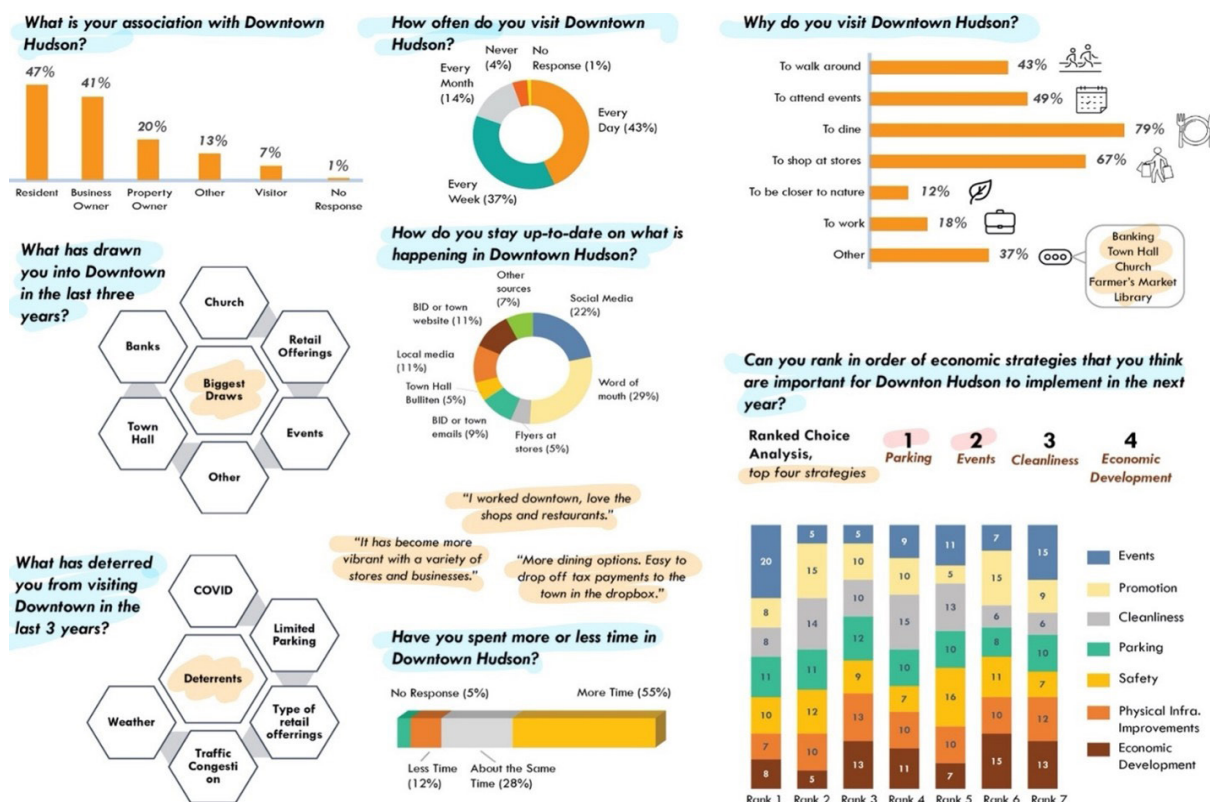


Findings from community survey

To gather further information from the community and to supplement the BID's community outreach, a community survey was conducted as part of this plan. The survey, deployed for two weeks between May and June 2021, took the pulse of the economic health of Downtown Hudson and was directed toward the community, both businesses and residents, who are invested in the economic recovery of downtown. Key findings from the survey are presented below as well as an infographic (figure 5).

- **Participant Profile:** A total of 76 responses were received from the community survey.
 - Majority of survey respondents were residents (47%) followed by business owners (41%) and property owners (20%).
 - A majority responded (55%) that they visited Downtown Hudson more frequently in the past 3 years. Respondents attributed the reasons they visited to the vibrancy of the downtown and its varied mix of retail offerings for dining and shopping. Other reasons to visit included to work, attend events and be closer to nature.
 - Respondents who indicated reduced visitation (12%) reported traffic congestion, lack of parking, and type of retail offerings as their key reasons.
- **Preferred Economic Strategies:** Based on a ranked choice analysis of the responses, the economic development strategies that the respondents prioritized for implementation in the next year were:
 - Parking (e.g., additional parking or better signage to find parking)
 - Events (e.g., live music)
 - Cleanliness (e.g., sidewalk, pressure washing)
 - Economic Development (e.g., technical assistance for businesses)
- **Input for BID marketing and publicity:** Most respondents reported staying up-to-date with the events and programs through word-of-mouth (29%), social media (22%), local media (11%) or BID website (11%).

Figure 5 Hudson community survey results





Administrative Capacity

The Hudson BID is a 501(c)3 non-profit with an annual budget of approximately \$172,700, nearly two-thirds of which is derived from BID fees. The nonprofit structure enables it to fundraise and access other sources of funding. The BID is staffed with a part-time director responsible for collaboration and communication with property owners, town officials and residents. The BID also utilizes in-kind support from community volunteers and strategic partnerships to stretch its modest budget to make a significant impact on its downtown. The management of the BID is undertaken by a Board of Directors comprised of the steering committee and other property owners. The functions of the BID include but are not limited to marketing, cultural programming and events, maintenance and beautification, infrastructure planning as well as business support. The BID also presents a unified voice of downtown Hudson businesses and property owners and partners with the Town of Hudson regularly through infrastructure projects etc.

Project Recommendations

GOAL 1.

Address existing
commercial vacancies
and long-term
marketing needs of the
Business Improvement
District.

1.1 Marketing plan and digital marketing strategy for the BID to reach current members and attract future members

Category		Admin Capacity
Location		Downtown Hudson (Census Tracts 3222)
Origin		Hudson BID, Hudson Planning Department, MAPC
Budget		<p>Medium (\$50K - \$200K)</p> <p>Funding: BID Revenue; Travel & Tourism Recovery (TTR) grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FY21 applications opened January 22 – February 12, 2021. FY22 applications, if administered, may be on a similar timeline.• Eligible projects should support the My Local MA campaign and create an enhancement to the visitor experience intended to increase the likelihood of visitation from 50 miles outside the local area or increase overnight stays• Project type: Marketing content development• <u>Previous relevant awards</u>: Downtown Hudson Wayfinding Program, Bring Visitors Back to Plymouth marketing plan and digital marketing strategy
Timeframe		Short term (Less than 5 years)
Risk		Medium Risk: The process of gathering consensus on direction of the marketing plan and digital marketing strategy may be challenging to balance priorities and opinions. The success of this effort will depend on the vote of the Executive Board of the Hudson BID as well as funding.
Key Performance Indicators		<p>This digital marketing plan and marketing strategy for the Downtown Hudson BID will support the administrative capacity of the BID administrator to reach two different audiences: (1) members of the BID and provide and receive regular updates and (2) new members to join the BID.</p> <p>Impacts should be seen in the next 3-5 years. Key indicators would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• BID members receiving and engaging with regular updates on the BID's activities• BID members reporting back to BID administrator updates to property (tenants turnover vacancies, etc.)• Measuring increase in marketing reach with metrics• Increase in BID members over the next 3-5 years
Partners & Resources		Hudson BID, Town of Hudson, Hudson Business Association, Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

Downtown Hudson suffered impact from the COVID-19 pandemic similar to many other cities and towns in the region. With programming and many other activities that usually bring residents and visitors downtown on pause for a year, there is a lot of excitement and anticipation to bring life back to the community. The community survey conducted by the MAPC team indicated that over the past three years people are visiting Hudson more but the way they learn about programming and events are varied (see community survey results on pg 20) from word of mouth, online, print media, etc.

There are also several long-term vacancies in town that need to be filled with tenants. However, the current organizational capacity of the BID does not support active communication from members on when these vacancies arise and how they are being advertised, making them harder to fill.

Action Item

Investing in a marketing strategy and digital marketing plan that consolidates and maximizes the reach of current communication channels will support the efforts of the BID to lead Downtown Hudson in recovery and engage BID members, both current and new. The strategy and plan will serve as a starting point for Downtown Hudson to gauge growth in the next 3-5 years.

Process

- Establish steering committee for implementation that includes stakeholders from Hudson BID, Town of Hudson, business community, and residents
- Hire marketing consultant to work with steering committee
- Marketing strategy will be developed through both feedback from the BID Administrator, BID Executive Board and the larger community
- Incorporate digital marketing plan which will be established through the same process

Final deliverables will include:

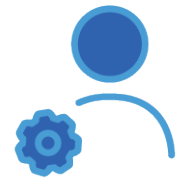
- A physical and digital marketing brochure for Downtown Hudson
- An updated website
- A professionally produced promotional video
- Social media engagement strategy



Investing in a marketing plan that emphasizes communication between BID members could help fill long- and short-term vacancies
Credit: Jenn Kaplan



Marketing Plan



Admin Capacity

Baltimore, MD

The City of Baltimore BID created a digital and physical brochure/guide to welcome visitors back to their district following the business closures during the first few months of the pandemic. The guide is a good example of seamless information sharing of public health safety guidelines, business that are open and ready to welcome customers and events/programming.

Excerpts from the Downtown Baltimore brochure

WELCOME BACK!
WELCOME BACK!
WELCOME BACK!

DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE

WELCOME BACK!
WELCOME BACK!
WELCOME BACK!
WELCOME BACK!
WELCOME BACK!

As people return to Downtown offices, restaurants, and theaters we want to make the transition to the new normal as seamless as possible. So we put together resources to help you know what's open, what events are happening, and how our team at Downtown Partnership is working like never before to make our neighborhoods clean, safe, and vibrant!

For regular updates and development news, follow us on
Twitter: @DowntownBalt and
Instagram: @DowntownBaltimore,
or visit us online at
GoDowntownBaltimore.com





DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP OF BALTIMORE

WHERE TO EAT

What's for Lunch?

Welcome back to the office. Your friendly neighborhood deli misses you, and so do the sit-down lunch and dinner restaurants. Things have changed—some of your favorite spots may have closed or changed hours, but many have also added delivery, outdoor seating, and welcome back specials. Here is a handy list of who is open and operating for lunch and or dinner. Check their websites or call ahead for more information.




PRATT STREET CORRIDOR



Filicori Zecchini

- Miss Shirley's – 750 E. Pratt
- Blackwall Hitch – 700 E. Pratt
- Ihop – 600 E. Pratt
- Fogo de Chao – 600 E. Pratt
- Chipotle – 600 E. Pratt
- The Capital Grille – 500 E. Pratt
- The Corner Bakery – 500 E. Pratt
- Chick Fil-A – 400 E. Pratt
- Nalley Fresh – 400 E. Pratt
- Shake Shack – 400 E. Pratt
- Starbucks – 10 E. Pratt & 250 E. Pratt
- Kona Grille – 1 E. Pratt
- Filicori Zecchini – 1 E. Pratt

1.2 Market analysis to address retention and recruitment of current and future tenants and development to Downtown Hudson

Category		Tenant Mix
Location		Downtown Hudson (Census Tracts 3222)
Origin		Hudson BID, Hudson Planning Department, MAPC
Budget		Medium (\$50K - \$200K) Sources of Funding: District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Program, Planning for MetroFuture Technical Assistance (PMTA) Program
Timeframe		Short term (Less than 5 years)
Risk		Low risk: There is some amount of risk associated with investment decisions based upon a market analysis. The commercial real estate market in particular has proven in the past year to be susceptible to the pandemic. While there is no way to truly prepare oneself for state-mandated shutdowns of non-essential businesses, there are certain precautions that can be taken with technical assistance so that businesses are resilient in the face of a volatile market. Consider coupling any decisions to bring in sole properties and/or smaller, independent businesses with robust technical assistance services provided by both the Town of Hudson and the Hudson BID, and any additional organizations where possible.
Key Performance Indicators		Retention of businesses who establish tenancy following market analysis
Partners & Resources		Hudson BID, Town of Hudson, Hudson Business Association, Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce



Shops along Main Street in Downtown Hudson (Credit: Jenn Kaplan)

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

During the diagnostic phase of this project, the team worked closely with the Hudson BID and Town of Hudson to understand the current and future desired tenant mix. The second community presentation for this project hosted small group discussions to facilitate these conversations. The team heard that the larger community is interested in more independent stores, small scale supermarkets, service-oriented businesses, bakeries, bookstores and beyond in Downtown Hudson.

Additionally, the team interviewed CBRE, a full-service commercial real estate services company, in order to understand what kind of development may be supported regionally. From this conversation, the following themes arose:

- Specialty retail types that may be sustainable moving forward in the context of COVID are **medical office conversion into retail (e.g. chiropractors in a typical office setup) and second generation, or second location, food and beverage businesses**
- **Online existence is important for survival irrespective of the scale of operation.** Small businesses might need more support on this front – useful consideration when thinking about grant support and such. Even more relevant for business with language proficiency barriers etc.
- **Co-tenancy programs in one space are not as lucrative** from the landlord perspective. Need a clear and easy way to navigate regulatory environment to see success in such programs.

Action Item

A market analysis is a tool to identify the type and amount of development that could be potentially supported by both a local and regional market. At a MAPC North Suburban Planning Council meeting in 2015, it was stated that a "market analysis provides basis for more specific, targeted, achievable recommendations based on real market trends of what is supportable."¹ It does not, however, predict what will occur on a site.²

With the completion of a market analysis, the Town of Hudson, partnered with the Hudson BID, will be able to conduct a site-specific analysis of Downtown Hudson's commercial economic development goals and priorities for the immediate future. The consultant selected for the study will assess both existing plans, demographics, real estate trends and community feedback.

Process

- Review of existing data, plans
- Existing conditions review and market analysis
 - Workforce/resident demographic profile
 - Hudson and regional market conditions and comparison
 - Existing business composition analysis
 - Economic development SWOT analysis
- Market position visioning
 - Identify and interview stakeholders
 - Conduct community outreach
- Business engagement
 - Identify challenges and opportunities for growth, expansion and retention
- Strategic planning
 - Develop business recruitment and retention strategy
- Final deliverables





Best Practices

The [Town of Franklin Market Study](#), conducted by MAPC in 2020 is a good example of how a historic, pedestrian friendly downtown can position itself for growth.

¹ http://www.mapc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Market-Analysis-at-MAPC-NSPC_MSmith.pdf

² MAPC, Town of Franklin Market Study, July 2020 <https://www.franklinma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif6896/f/mai/files/8a_final_town_of_franklin_market_study_1.pdf>

1.3 Small business plan to assess services and regulatory environment of Downtown Hudson businesses

Category		Admin Capacity
Location		Downtown Hudson (Census Tracts 3222)
Origin		Hudson BID, Hudson Planning Department, MAPC
Budget		Low (Under \$50,000) Funding: District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Program, Planning for MetroFuture Technical Assistance (PMTA) Program
Timeframe		Short term (Less than 5 years)
Risk		Low risk: The project risk is low as it will be a survey of current small business needs and whether municipal services are meeting those needs
Key Performance Indicators		Increase in small businesses utilizing municipal services around small businesses technical assistance, grant programs and beyond
Partners & Resources		Hudson BID, Town of Hudson, Hudson Business Association, Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce, Hudson Historical District Commission



Credit: Jenn Kaplan

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

During the diagnostic phase of this project, the team conducted a business survey to understand the challenges experienced by business owners as they recovered from the impacts of the pandemic. Nearly half of the business owners who took the survey (46%) expressed concerns about the regulatory environment and within that specifically signage regulations. A deeper analysis of the qualitative feedback on the survey revealed that there are certain obstacles to downtown businesses understanding historic district signage and façade requirements.

Action Item

Downtown Hudson being both a thriving commercial and historic district presents unique circumstances for the business community. A small business plan that evaluates the current universe of small businesses in Downtown Hudson and the current resources and regulation available to support those businesses will help provide a strategic framework to address those needs. Deliverables from a small business plan should include:

- Report on the current composition of small businesses in the Town of Hudson with an emphasis on downtown and any other small business districts, as relevant
- Summarize both current small business services, regulations and intersection with 40C historic district regulations
- Analysis of the needs and opportunities facing small businesses in the town, as well as an analysis of the needs of future small businesses (based on recent trends and expected developments)
- A summary of available resources (provided by local and state government entities, as well as entities such as the Hudson BID, Hudson Business Association and the Assabet Chamber of Commerce)
- An analysis of the gaps in the services available, based on the business analysis conducted
- Research on best practices for small business programs in comparable cities and towns
- A strategic small business assistance plan for the Town of Hudson and key partners





Process

- Existing conditions review
 - Workforce, resident demographic profile update
 - Small business analysis, including small business district mapping analysis
 - Analysis of expected developments
 - Economic development SWOT analysis
 - Analysis of small business services, regulations
 - Analysis of 40C historic district regulations
- Small business stakeholder engagement
 - Work with Hudson BID to identify and interview small business owners, service organizations, realtors and other key stakeholders
- Strategic planning
 - Work with Town of Hudson to develop strategy and implementation plan to achieve goals of Small Business Plan
- Final deliverables

GOAL 2.

Expand and improve
the public realm.

2.1 Shared streets visioning plan “Connect on South” for South Street to address creative solutions to limited space for outdoor dining and retail businesses

Category		Public Realm
Location		Downtown Hudson (Census Tracts 3222)
Origin		<p>Hudson BID, Hudson Planning Department, MAPC, Patronicity</p> <p>The project recommendation was developed in consultation with the Jonathan Berk, Director of Patronicity. For further detail, see the “SME Consultation for Shared Streets Visioning Plan” in the Appendix, which contains the original ideas for this project which have since been updated.</p>
Budget		<p>Low budget (Under \$50K) depending on the goals of the project</p> <p>Funding: Local Fiscal Recovery Funds through the American Rescue Plan Act, under the priority category of small business spending; NEFA Grants; Art Place America; MassDevelopment Placemaking grants; Area property owners and small businesses to sponsor equipment and event infrastructure; crowdfunding as dozens of communities have done across Massachusetts for similar placemaking projects through platforms such as Patronicity</p>
Timeframe		Short-term (less than 5 years): If the Hudson BID partnered with the town, a visioning process could be completed in less than a year.
Risk		Low Risk: Risks associated with this initiative are designed to be minimal by planning for a more tactical, low-cost intervention as a pilot before installing any permanent installations. Potentially removing on street parking or vehicle access may require further discussion, however, all projects can be started as temporary installations or “pilots” which would allow for any future decisions to be made with strong data gathered as part of the evaluation of the pilot.
Key Performance Indicators		<p>User sentiment: How do users feel about Downtown? Is it a place for a single errand or to spend time? Do visitors make more trips Downtown? Do visitors consider Downtown more of a destination as opposed to a single errand? Do visitors patron more than 1 business in a trip now? Do visitors spend more time in the Downtown?</p> <p>Business sentiment: Has there been an increase in sales (receipts) since installation of the project? Has there been more customer foot traffic since installation of the project?</p>
Partners & Resources		<p>Having a tangible project with a clear goal can serve as the catalyst to get more people involved in improving the Downtown and patron area businesses. Ensure stakeholders, like area businesses and residents, are engaged from the earliest phase of this planning process. Loop in area workers to find out what they’d want and continue to engage those groups through the duration. Partner with area businesses, organizations and more who may be able to sign up to activate this space through meeting and events of their own and encourage further, deeper adoption of the space for the community.</p> <p>Possible partners might include: Hudson BID (property owners), Town of Hudson, Hudson Business Association, Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce and then any additional businesses, boards and commissions, non-profits, as relevant</p>

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

South Street businesses are looking to harness new energy around a number of streetscape and river front improvements in the adjacent area and a number of private properties, all while planning for new development over the next few years. The Town, BID and stakeholders seek a way to enliven the South Street Streetscape while better connecting the Assabet River to Main Street as South Street runs parallel to each.

Investing in outdoor dining and programming to activate South Street would support the corridor's path towards becoming a destination in the next few years, similar to that of Main Street. The past year has shown an incredible support for outdoor dining in downtown streets across the Commonwealth. People love the experience of being able to enjoy the fresh air and dine al fresco, all while never leaving the comfort of their local dining scene. A recent report published by CivicMoxie and DHCD highlighted the following as major draws of outdoor dining and retail :

- Outdoor dining and retail, both the process and implementation of, have been embraced by the business community. This is incredibly important as the "local businesses play an important role in fostering the culture, activity, and sense of community in downtowns and neighborhoods, and can be influential advocates for outdoor dining and retail." (PG 51, CivicMoxie "Outdoor Dining/ Retail Toolkit")
- There is benefit in outdoor dining and retail boosting revenue for businesses who have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. Increasing revenue for these businesses will continue to be important to their recovery. Additionally, there has been research in the past two years on how investing in "placemaking and public spaces, like outdoor dining or retail zones, indirectly benefits local businesses by increasing foot traffic to the surrounding area." (PG 50, CivicMoxie "Outdoor Dining/Retail Toolkit")
- Outdoor dining has allowed the community to reimagine public and shared spaces. Having temporary or permanent installations and programming have generated activity and made local "commercial areas more vibrant, attractive, and economically healthy." (PG 51, CivicMoxie "Outdoor Dining/ Retail Toolkit")



Hudson Town Hall (Credit: Jenn Kaplan)

Action Item

Patronicity's proposal is a phased approach to activating South Street while providing better connectivity between the Assabet River and Main Street with South Street as the heart of that journey. In Phase 1, they propose creating a number of active public spaces along South Street using decking, tables, chairs, landscaping, umbrellas or shade sales to provide a place to sit outside along South Street, do work or enjoy a cup of coffee with a friend. This would be designed to have minimal impact on area parking. In Phase 2, the team proposes installing outdoor dining and retail on South Street. The process for installing these outdoor dining and retail options should rely on what has worked for already successful projects that are currently active on Main Street and South Street. Locations for these installations should be determined by both data, both quantitative and qualitative in nature (see Key Performance Indicators above).



South Street spaces
Credit: Jonathan Berk, Patronicity

Recommendation for locations

Phase 1 - South Street Spaces:

Utilizing excess street space (try for non parking spots) or gravel areas along South Street on private property to create small community hubs that will serve as passive work spaces for the community to visit and enjoy. Allow easy sign ups of the space for communities to visit and host meetings and events of their own as a way to activate the spaces further.

Suggested materials: tables, chairs, umbrellas, benches, lighting, plantings, Small, wooden storage container for equipment storage and place to hold activities for loan to community



Credit: Jonathan Berk, Patronicity

Phase 2 – South Street Plazas:

Small Plazas: Utilize existing plazas to create new plaza spaces on South Street for outdoor dining and retail. Location should be dependent on data gathered from Phase 1. Create a mix of shaded and sunny spaces and, if possible, install wifi. Make sure all installations comply with state accessibility requirements. Businesses should also be responsible for any barriers and furniture used as part of the installation. When not in use, any furniture should be put away in a secure location and should not obstruct the public-right-of-way.

Suggested materials: tables, chairs, umbrellas, planters and temporary landscaping, gravel



Outdoor dining space in Arlington, MA
Credit: Town of Arlington

Keys to Success

Early Engagement: Bring together a team of engaged business owners, property owners, creatives and residents from the area early in this planning process so they can feel as much of the planning process as possible and are more likely to stay engaged throughout this first iteration and hopefully beyond. Find your one “leader” who will drive the project forward and have an easy way to engage feedback from others involved in planning through in person and online methods so they can remain a part of the process.

Capacity: Build early partnerships with area organizations, stores, restaurants, fitness groups, school groups, non-profits, affinity groups etc and let them take some of the burden of event planning (which can be some of the most cumbersome of this whole project) off your plate. Develop an easy to use sign up process for groups interested in activating spaces.

Feedback: Have an online survey always open combined with in person surveys of attendees to events and users of the space as well as direct outreach to abutting residents and businesses. This will cut down on the ability for negative responses to overpower positive by more passive sentiment.

Flexibility: Any equipment purchased for this project should be viewed as portable, meaning it can be reused in a different space in town should this space not become widely adopted and can be packed up and reused to activate another public space throughout the rest of town. The benefit of this sort of low cost, tactical and iterative project is that you can maintain these resources to test in other spaces before making expensive municipal investments and to help inform those investments.



Process

- **Location:** Our proposal looks at the stated goals of activating South Street and better connecting the Assabet River and its related assets to the Main Street and Downtown commercial activities. For phase 1 & 2, we suggest public street space.
- **Identify inspiration:** Below are two sample projects that encapsulate components of this recommendations for implementation.
- **Plan & Implement:** A key piece of the success of this or any placemaking project is early stakeholder engagement. Not just approval but actively seeking out their input in the planning of this project. Identify groups who could host events in the space later on and seek out their input on what they'd like to see in these spaces.
- **Feedback:** This piece is often overlooked but one of the single most important things that determine success. Building constructive outlets where stakeholders can leave constructive feedback through in person surveying at events and an online forum will be imperative.
- **Iterate:** What worked? What didn't work? Adapt your project based upon user feedback. Did residents benefit? Did area businesses benefit. How could things be improved and could another location be more appropriate for this intervention if it becomes apparent location is an issue.



Downtown Hudson businesses who have established outdoor dining on Main Street found success expanding outdoor dining to South Street during the pandemic (Credit: Left: Jenn Kaplan; above: Richard Braga)

Shared Streets



Public Realm

Eagle Street Initiative, North Adams, MA

North Adams was seeking to transition pedestrian traffic from Main Street down their historic Eagle Street. The key piece of this project was a central gathering space that was created through the construction of a parklet. The parklet serves as a host for events but also a place to eat lunch, enjoy coffee and spend a day in town working remotely.

BUDGET: \$12,000 for a custom made parklet

IMPLEMENTATION: 8-12 weeks

TIMELINE: year round w/ adaptations for winter

MATERIALS: custom parklet built locally, seating, shadesails and lighting.



Credit: Kristina Johnson

Corner Spot, Ashland, MA

Ashland was seeking to create a community hub in the Downtown that would be a passive place for residents to gather, grab a meal or enjoy take out from town while also hosting small recurring events. The retail space serves as a way for area businesses to test the viability of a brick & mortar retail presence while also serving as an activator for the space itself while passive tables, chairs swings, lawn games and wifi allow for users to enjoy the space outside of events.

BUDGET: \$65,000 for all components

IMPLEMENTATION: 8-12 weeks

TIMELINE: year round programming and passive use

MATERIALS: landscaping, swings, tables, chairs, shade sails, shed fitted for retail use, audio equipment, games

MAINTENANCE: moderate- cleaning, landscaping, repairs, event programming.



Credit: Jonathan Berk, Patronicity

2.2 Parking management plan to address current challenges related to asset management

Category		Public Realm
Location		Downtown Hudson (Census Tracts 3222)
Origin		Hudson BID, Hudson Planning Department, MAPC
Budget		<p>Medium (\$50K - \$200K)</p> <p>Funding: District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Program, Planning for MetroFuture Technical Assistance (PMTA) Program, 495/MetroWestPartnership REDO</p>
Timeframe		Short term (Less than 5 years): A standard parking management plan would take approximately 1 year.
Risk		Medium risk: Potential risks for implementation of a parking management plan will be political will to make changes to the current parking ordinances and regulations.
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking meter revenue for the Town of Hudson Improved public perception of parking supply no longer being a challenge for the town <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data could be identified through a partnered effort with Downtown Hudson BID and business owners to gather feedback from customers
Partners & Resources		Town of Hudson, Hudson BID (property owners), businesses, boards and commissions



Credit: Jenn Kaplan

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

Historically, the issue of parking has predated the impacts of COVID-19 on Downtown Hudson. The 2014 Nelson\Nygaard study found that there was an adequate supply of parking, however spots were hard to find, both in the timeframe (i.e., for more than 2 hours) or are physically too far from the commercial center. During COVID-19, when foot traffic was vital to keeping small businesses on Main Street and South Street open, this continued perception of limited parking has been a challenge. The community survey conducted by the team between May and June 2021 identified that for community members who had visited Downtown Hudson less in the past 3 years, a main reason was "limited parking." Additionally, when asked what additional services, public events, or other activities people would like to see in Downtown Hudson, there were several answers regarding more accessible and reasonable parking options. Overcoming this perception of there being limited parking in Downtown Hudson and conducting a parking management plan will be an important goal for the town in the next decade as it continues to invest in growth.



Municipal parking lots on South Street are where most visitors currently park (Credit: Jenn Kaplan)

Action Item

The Town of Hudson should consider conducting a parking management plan with the goal of solving the parking challenges in downtown. Final recommendations may include regulatory or physical updates to the current parking infrastructure.

The management plan can be led by best practices, identified by MAPC's transportation team in the Maynard Downtown Parking Analysis conducted in January 2018.

Best practices to guide downtown parking management³:

- Parking regulations should be visible, clear and consistent
- Parking policies and regulations should encourage people to park once and visit multiple destinations in one trip
- Short-term parking should be prioritized for on-street spaces close to businesses, with long-term parking in parking lots
- Parking policies should aim for 85% parking occupancy for on-street parking, meaning parking is generally close to being fully utilized but there are always a few spaces available. Occupancy greater than 85% may be appropriate for off-street parking, depending on the size and configuration of the lot

In order to conduct this plan, the consultant working with the Town of Hudson will need to collect the following data to help guide any regulatory recommendations made as part of this process⁴:

1. Existing parking capacity and regulations within the study area
2. Hourly occupancy and duration on both a weekday and a Saturday morning
3. Average duration, and patterns of short- and long-term parking
4. Times and locations of peak parking demand
5. Occupancy observations of additional private off-street lots





Process

- Background data collection and kick-off meeting
- Review any recent studies, projects, and parking analysis conducted in Downtown Hudson
- Existing conditions and fieldwork
- Analysis and evaluation of parking data
- Mapping and signage
- Final report
- Engagement (throughout process)

³ MAPC, Maynard Downtown Parking Analysis, January 2018 <<https://www.townofmaynard-ma.gov/documents/mapc-parking-analysis-20180110.pdf>>

⁴ MAPC, Maynard Downtown Parking Analysis, January 2018 <<https://www.townofmaynard-ma.gov/documents/mapc-parking-analysis-20180110.pdf>>

2.3 Downtown storefront guidelines and reactivate storefront façade program

Category		Private Realm
Location		Downtown Hudson (Census Tracts 3222)
Origin		Hudson BID, Hudson Planning Department, MAPC
Budget		Medium (\$50K - \$200K) Funding: Local Fiscal Recovery Funds through the American Rescue Plan Act
Timeframe		Short term (Less than 5 years): Given that a façade improvement program previously existed, an update and expansion of the program will likely take less than 2 years
Risk		Medium risk: Potential risks may include property owners not adhering to design guidelines, however this can be mitigated by offering guidance and additional financing mechanisms for implementation
Key Performance Indicators		Level of participation by businesses For businesses: Total receipts before and after the façade improvement, sales before and after the façade improvement, number of customers before and after the façade improvement, property value before and after the façade improvement
Partners & Resources		Town of Hudson, Hudson BID (property owners), businesses, Hudson Historical District Commission and other various boards and commissions as relevant



Credit: Jenn Kaplan

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

The diagnostic phase of this project identified that there were a few key parcels in Downtown Hudson that would benefit from storefront design guidelines and a façade improvement program. While a façade improvement program previously existed in the Town of Hudson, there were challenges related to administrative capacity and sustainable funding that ultimately led to the program taking a pause. Reactivating this program and adding the component of storefront guidelines that observe historic district requirements, would ultimately help guide consistent design vision in Downtown Hudson.

Action Item

Formalizing storefront design guidelines will help set a cohesive design vision for Downtown Hudson. It will also set expectations for the level of investment that property owners will need to adhere to when observing both the town's recommendations and the historic district requirements. All guidelines would be built with an analysis of current guidelines and documentation that are guiding the Historic District Commission's analysis of appropriate frontage.

As observed with the City of Everett's Storefront Guideline program, it would be helpful to first document all commercial blocks and stores in Downtown Hudson to create documentation of "existing" and "proposed" conditions.

Reactivating the storefront façade program will require an evaluation of administrative capacity to continue to the program both for staff to operate the program and funding to distribute loans or grants to finance the program. There are several considerations to establishing a loan or grant program. The City of Brookline established a façade loan program that has been successful in distributing up to \$10,000 in loans that can be repaid annually in four equal installments. Testimonials from Brookline businesses who received loans indicated that the financing helped address some of the additional capital needed with bank loans or paved the way for future grants. The nature of loans being paid back to the town may also allow for higher amounts. A grant program would allow for smaller amounts to be disbursed within the community with the average amount in neighboring communities being ~\$2,000. The two funding programs can also be combined for maximum effectiveness.

Process

- Prepare RFP and hire consultants to prepare downtown storefront guidelines
- Background data collection and existing conditions analysis
 - Review both current historic district requirements and any additional documents guiding Historical District Commission's decision-making process for appropriate frontage
 - Review current downtown zoning for any design requirements
 - Develop inventory of current building stock, reviewing both frontage and site treatment
 - Interview municipal staff, boards (in addition to Historic District Commission) and former applicants
- Analysis and evaluation of precedents + outreach
 - Research precedents for design guidelines by looking at similar historic downtowns throughout New England
 - Conduct outreach to business community and residents
- Develop draft guidelines
 - Explore any updates to zoning that may be needed with new guidelines in place
- Planning process for storefront façade programs start
 - Draft a proposed budget for façade program and decide if they should be in grants or loans, or combined
 - Draft application form for façade program
- Implement façade program
- Finalize deliverable
 - Downtown Storefront Guidelines are published
- Advertise and implement façade program

GOAL 3.

Long-term growth
for Downtown
Hudson.

3.1 Strategic development plan to guide growth

Category		Private Realm
Location		Downtown Hudson (Census Tracts 3222)
Origin		Hudson BID, Hudson Planning Department, MAPC
Budget		Medium (\$50K - \$200K) Funding: District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Program, Planning for MetroFuture Technical Assistance (PMTA) Program
Timeframe		Short term (Less than 5 years)
Risk		Low risk: This project may mitigate risk for future growth in Downtown Hudson, as this work could potentially establish collective values and an consensus-driven model for future parcel development in Downtown Hudson.
Key Performance Indicators		<p>The town and BID could evaluate effectiveness of the strategic development plan with a once-a-year evaluation of progress which asks the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are we meeting, or close to meeting the goals we set out as benchmarks?• Are we meeting the values we set to guide growth?• What is on the horizon for strategic development?
Partners & Resources		Hudson BID, Town of Hudson

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

Throughout the engagement process of this project, the team continuously heard from the community how the expanded commercial environment of Downtown Hudson is an asset. More people are visiting downtown in the past 3 years than they are not, and this has been largely due to the expanded retail and food services as well as the steady investment in housing. While the pandemic slowed redevelopment of projects due to uncertainty in the market and stagnant supply chains, it would be to the benefit of the Town to continue to work closely with the Hudson BID and additional property owners to strategically redevelop and activate key parcels that support continued growth in downtown.

During the diagnostic phase of this project, the team worked with the Town of Hudson, BID administrator and executive board to identify key sites that would benefit from strategic redevelopment and reactivation:

136 Main Street

- Unfortunately, one of the two property owners recently passed away and the current status of the redevelopment is unknown.
- In early 2021, the owners were poised to submit a site plan application to the planning board for redevelopment of the site, which included a mix of housing and retail uses.

32 Washington Street

- McDonald's was demolished in 2017 and rebuilt at 173 Washington St. McDonald's was under a lease with the property owner until December 2019. Property owner is currently investigating options for redevelopment via a commercial broker.
- Great opportunity to connect the southern portion of Washington Street with the rest of Downtown Hudson.
- MassDOT completed a reconstruction of the Assabet River Bridge in 2018. This was completed as part of the Accelerated Bridge Program. It provides a key connection between the downtown core and this site.
- Town of Hudson is expanding the downtown zoning district to encompass this property. This would facilitate more flexibility for redevelopment.

Medusa Project

- A vacant parcel currently activated as a summer beer garden.

7 South Street

- Property owner is currently undergoing the site permit process for development.
- There is a potential for this property to be a new mixed-use development and provide more commercial/residential options on South Street.

Historic Armory

- Built in 1910 around the time that Main Street was being rebuilt after the great fire of 1894.
- Active National Guard Armory until the space was vacated within the last 10 years.
- A non-profit community arts organization is working with the Town to facilitate the funding of the acquisition and future rehabilitation of the space if the armory can be acquired.
- Potential to be retrofitted to a community space, potentially a community art space and performance center, acknowledging limited community space currently.



Historic Armory (Credit: Jenn Kaplan)

Action Item

The Town of Hudson currently has a favorable regulatory framework that allows for development to occur downtown. The zoning has no parking ratios and allows for mixed-use. A strategic development plan would build upon these current regulations to investigate further creative financing mechanisms that would support development. Some examples may include a Tax Increment Financing District or utilizing historic tax credits.






*There are parcels that pose opportunities to think about growth downtown
(Credit: Jenn Kaplan)*

Process

- Prepare team and framework
 - Identify stakeholders for strategic development plan to start process and management
 - Establish steering committee for development plan and identify values that will guide growth
- Existing conditions analysis
 - Review existing plans for growth including Hudson Master Plan and other relevant planning efforts
 - Assess local resources that would support business and residential growth
 - Evaluate and review zoning for growth area
- Implement outreach strategy to involve additional stakeholders and gather input from the community throughout the process
- Draft report
 - An important part of this process will be to set implementation benchmarks that will guide development for the next decade
- Finalize report
- Present for adoption by formal governing bodies including but not limited to the Select Board

3.2 Digitized permitting process to modernize development process

Category		Admin Capacity
Location		Town of Hudson (Census Tracts 3221, 3222, 3223, 3224)
Origin		Hudson BID, Hudson Planning Department, MAPC
Budget		<p>Medium (\$50K - \$200K), realistically between \$40,000 - \$70,000</p> <p>Funding: Town of Hudson funding, Community Compact IT Grant</p> <p>FY22 applications open September 15 – October 15 (at noon)</p> <p>Grants of up to \$200,000 to implement innovative IT projects related to one-time capital needs (technology infrastructure or software)</p> <p><u>Previous relevant awards:</u> Wareham implementation of an enterprise-wide e-permitting and licensing platform (\$66,900), Wayland implementation of an e-permitting solution (\$38,000)</p>
Timeframe		Short term (Less than 5 years)
Risk		Medium risk: This project will require buy-in across many departments in town hall, who may not be used to collaborating together. While there is a moderate amount of risk attributed to bringing diverse needs together, ultimately it will be the only way to smoothly implement new software.
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there an increase in how many long-term and one-time permits are being processed online?• Has there been an expansion of permit types?• Has the town's Building Inspector office issued more or less permits in the fiscal year?
Partners & Resources		Town of Hudson

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

The remote nature of COVID-19 has changed the landscape of how municipal services can be provided in communities like Hudson. Prior to the pandemic, the current system of paper and in-person service was largely the norm across the region. The need for social-distancing and remote decisions broadened the realm of possibilities for how customer-facing service is provided in town hall. In Hudson, there is an opportunity to reimagine how the current permitting and inspection systems operate. During the visioning session with the Hudson BID Executive Board, the team conducted a SWOT (strength-weakness-opportunity threat) analysis for each goal for the LRRP process. Members of the board and staff who were present indicated that a weakness that may prevent long-term growth in Downtown Hudson is that the development process has yet to be modernized. Updating the permitting process to bring it online and have remote options will expand Downtown Hudson's capacity to welcome more entrepreneurial-minded individuals to the business community.

Action Item

Implement an e-permitting, or cloud based, system that brings the current permitting system online and streamlines the process. Implement remote inspection software that will allow for inspectional services to operate via video.

Process

- Identify departments and individuals within town hall who are currently involved in the permitting workflow to set up an implementation committee
- Meet with implementation committee to document current permitting and inspection workflow
- Research several e-permitting software companies that meet the needs of the implementation committee and schedule demonstrations
- Reach consensus with committee on what software will meet most of the identified needs a matrix to evaluate
- Purchase and install software and then train relevant staff across town hall
- Implement new software
 - Gather feedback for evaluation at 3-month mark from both supporting staff and community using new software (through survey or short questionnaire distributed after successful use)

Best Practices





City of Salem's conversion to OpenGov's Citizen Services cloud suite followed the following best practices in cloud permitting software implementation⁵ :

- **"Build with accountability in mind.** To do this, Salem's CIO Matt Killen, recommends creating a project team with representatives from every department. That way they can bring forward concerns and risks and take answers back to their teams.
- **Get air cover from executives.** Arm your mayor, department heads, and key administrators with talking points about the value of adopting a cloud solution for concurrent and collaborative workflows.
- **Gain a shared understanding of workflows.** Make sure you have your subject matter experts at the table to determine when an inspection should pass or fail and what comes next. You need to resolve business process debates at the table and identify hand-off and notification points.
- **Sequence your go-lives starting for optimal buy-in.** Start with core permitting workflows (i.e., buildings) that involve many departments. After successfully implementing a critical process, ask: what additional workflow needs can we meet and successfully manage?
- **Move from informed to streamlined.** When you're just getting started, turn on notifications for everyone involved in the workflow. Then, as you figure out who really needs to be informed, you can begin reducing the number of notifications to those involved."

The Town of Franklin published a case study with Engaging Local Government Leaders on implementing their cloud based permitting software that you can find here: <https://elgl.org/case-study-how-franklin-ma-implemented-cloud-based-permitting-software/>

⁵ OpenGov "Case Study: Salem, MA, Sees Jump in Permit Applications After Exorcizing Old Software Inefficiencies" <<https://opengov.com/customers/salem-ma-sees-jump-in-permit-applications-after-exorcizing-old-software-inefficiencies/>>

3.3 Arts and Culture Action Plan to expand cultural footprint on Main Street

Category		Cultural/Arts
Location		Downtown Hudson (Census Tracts 3222)
Origin		Hudson BID, Hudson Planning Department, MAPC
Budget		Medium (\$50K - \$200K) Funding: District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) Program, Planning for MetroFuture Technical Assistance (PMTA) Program
Timeframe		Short term (Less than 5 years)
Risk		Low risk: This project will build upon the cultural identity of Downtown Hudson, which has already been identified as an asset by the town and greater community. Hudson was ready to undergo the effort of working with consultants on an Arts and Culture Action Plan, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has there been a growth of cultural assets in Downtown Hudson?• Has there been a decline of cultural assets in Downtown Hudson?• Have there been new artists who have been welcomed to the Hudson arts scene?• Have existing artists continued to have the opportunity to contribute to the Hudson arts scene?
Partners & Resources		Town of Hudson, Hudson BID, Hudson Cultural Council, Hudson Cultural Alliance

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

In the past decade, Downtown Hudson has not only grown as a commercial district but also as a cultural hub. This has been in large part due to the successful partnership of both town staff and Hudson BID, which hosts an arts and culture subcommittee working to make the arts scene more prominent with events such as ArtsFest Hudson which was held in partnership with the Rivers Edge Arts Alliance. While the COVID-19 pandemic has deeply impacted the regional arts and culture economy, there continues to be a desire in the community to incorporate more cultural assets into Downtown Hudson. During the diagnostic phase of this project, the team heard that there was interest in bringing the Hudson Historical Museum from Broad Street to Main Street, interest in more downtown activation through pop-up spaces like the shared piano and more shared artist spaces and events. The BID also contracted with a local artist to create a historical mural on the side of a building visible to traffic and pedestrians. The team also learned about the growing interest in converting the historic Hudson Armory into a Community Art Center and Event Space.

Action Item

An Arts and Culture Action Plan would encourage the Town of Hudson and BID to establish a blueprint for understanding arts and cultural assets and needs and outline a preliminary list of policy and programmatic actions the Town and BID can take to recover and grow arts and cultural opportunities in Hudson.

Process

- Define and analyze existing conditions
- Conduct outreach to stakeholders to identify both cultural assets and indicators
- Develop and prioritize actions for implementation
- Finalize action plan
- Evaluate periodically to identify progress on actions



Cultural resources in Downtown Hudson include a pop-up piano for public use and a skate park, popular with local youth (Credit: Jenn Kaplan)

3.4 Community arts center at the historic armory

Category		Cultural/Arts & Private Realm
Location		Downtown Hudson (Census Tracts 3222)
Origin		Hudson BID, Hudson Planning Department, MAPC
Budget		<p>Large (\$200K+), the cost of acquisition is \$230K, rehabilitation ~\$2-3M and then operating costs \$50-100K annually and donations</p> <p>Funding: Commonwealth of Massachusetts One Stop for Growth (Massachusetts Downtown Initiative), Crowdfunding (Patronicity or other platforms)</p>
Timeframe		Medium term (5-10 years)
Risk		<p>High risk: While the project has garnered a lot of community support, ultimately its success will be tied to also establishing an operations model that includes self-sustaining revenue. Partnerships and finding the right tenants will be imperative to the success of this space even after complete rehab.</p>
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there sufficient revenue to continue operating the community arts space?• How many people are coming through the space daily/weekly/yearly?• Is the community arts space meeting the needs of the community who are seeking to use it?

Partners & Resources	Town of Hudson, Hudson BID, Hudson Cultural Alliance, Hudson Cultural Council
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The current armory sits vacant on Park Street (Credit: Jenn Kaplan)

Diagnostic/COVID-19 Impacts

In 2018, the Town of Hudson was presented with an opportunity to establish a new community amenity with the acquisition of the Historic Armory. Since then, a group of interested community members have organized an initiative, the Hudson Armory Project, to coordinate the acquisition and rehabilitation of the space with the town. Currently the project has approval from the Select Board to pursue acquisition and \$230K is being funded by the Commonwealth.

While the process to acquire the armory predates the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that Downtown Hudson would benefit from a vibrant community arts and events space. The vision for the space is focused on building community through active programming, creative maker spaces and exhibitions/performances. The team heard through the engagement process of this project that there is a desire within the community for more community spaces that focus on arts programming and events. While the mission does focus on providing maker spaces, the team recommends that the Armory project focuses on establishing affordable and sustainable tenancy or co-tenancy spaces within the new arts center. Additionally, private funding may be worth exploring as an additional revenue source. Finding an operational model that is balanced between tenancy, event and donations revenue could address some of the challenges similar spaces in the region have struggled with.

Action Item

Acquire the Hudson Armory and rehabilitate it as a Community Arts Center.

Process

The project phases have been established by the Hudson Armory Project:

- Phase 1: Acquire the Armory from the State (Expected completion date: Spring/Summer 2022)
 - Environmental condition analysis
 - Building condition analysis (will determine the total rehabilitation cost)
- Phase 2: Rehabilitate the building (Expected completion date: 2024)
- Phase 3: Operation

Implementation Matrix

Implementation Matrix

Action Item	Parties responsible	Partners	Timeframe	Potential resources (Technical assistance or funding opportunities)
Goal 1: Address commercial vacancies and long-term marketing needs of the Business Improvement District				
Strategy 1.1: Establish a marketing plan and digital marketing strategy for the BID to reach current members and attract future members	Hudson BID	Town of Hudson	Immediate	TTR Grant, BID revenue
Strategy 1.2: Conduct market analysis to address retention and recruitment of current and future tenants and development to Downtown Hudson	Town of Hudson	Hudson BID, Hudson Business Association, Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce	Mid-term	DLTA, PMTA
Strategy 1.3: Small business plan to assess services and regulatory environment of Downtown Hudson businesses	Town of Hudson	Hudson BID, Hudson Business Association, Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce	Mid-term	DLTA, PMTA
Goal 2: Expand and improve the public realm				
Strategy 2.1: Shared streets visioning plan for South Street to address creative solutions to limited space for outdoor dining and retail	Town of Hudson	Hudson BID, Hudson Business Association, Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce	Immediate	ARPA, NEFA Grants, Art Place America, MassDevelopment Placemaking grants, Area property owners and small businesses to sponsor equipment and event infrastructure, Crowdfunding
Strategy 2.2: Parking management plan to address current challenges related to asset management	Town of Hudson		Immediate	DLTA, PMTA, 495/MetroWest Partnership REDO
Strategy 2.3: Establish downtown storefront guidelines and reactivate storefront façade program	Town of Hudson	Hudson BID, Hudson Business Association, Assabet Valley Chamber of Commerce	Mid-term	ARPA
Goal 3: Long-term growth for Downtown Hudson				
Strategy 3.1: Strategic development plan to guide growth	Town of Hudson	Hudson BID	Long-term	DLTA, PMTA
Strategy 3.2: Modernize development process by digitizing permitting process	Town of Hudson		Mid-term	Town of Hudson funding, Community Compact IT Grant
Strategy 3.3: Arts and Culture Action Plan to expand cultural footprint on Main Street	Town of Hudson, Hudson BID	Hudson Cultural Council	Mid-term	DLTA, PMTA
Strategy 3.4: Establish community arts center in the historic armory	Town of Hudson, Hudson BID	Hudson Cultural Council	Long-term	One Stop for Growth, Crowdfunding

Appendices

This report provides the results of a business survey conducted during March and April of 2021. The survey is part of a program launched by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development to help communities develop Rapid Recovery Plans for downtowns and commercial districts. The survey was directed to owners or other appropriate representatives of business establishments located in the targeted commercial areas. (For Data Tables, see page 9.)

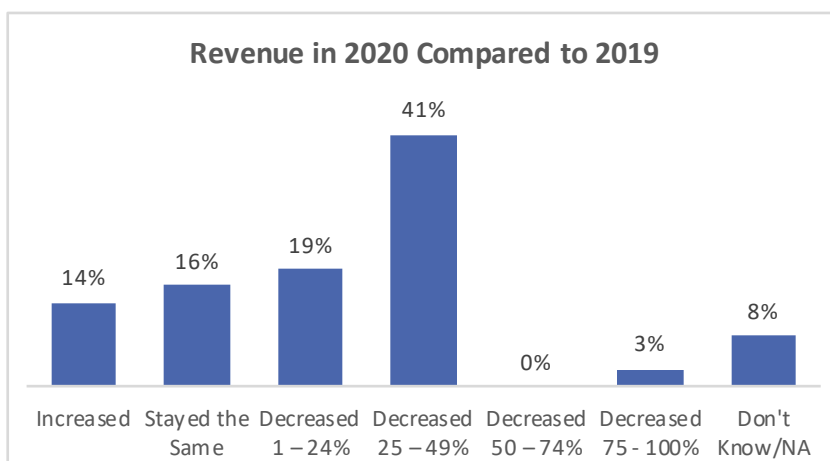
Hudson

Hudson Business Improvement District

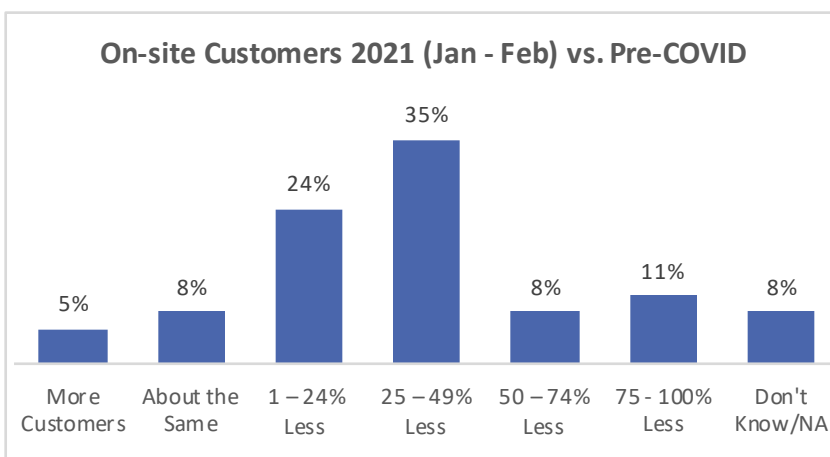
Responses: 37

Impacts of COVID-19**Decline in Business Revenue**

63% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019.
For 44% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more.

**Less Foot Traffic in Commercial Area**

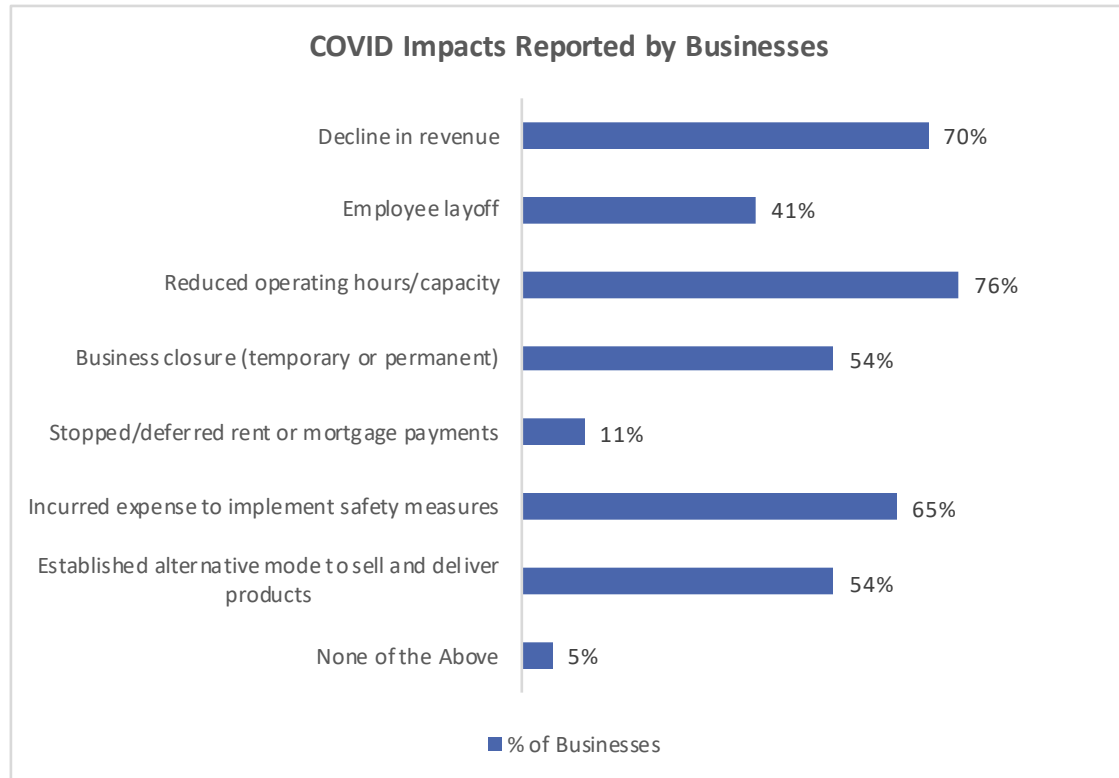
78% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID.
54% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more.



Impacts of COVID-19 (cont'd)

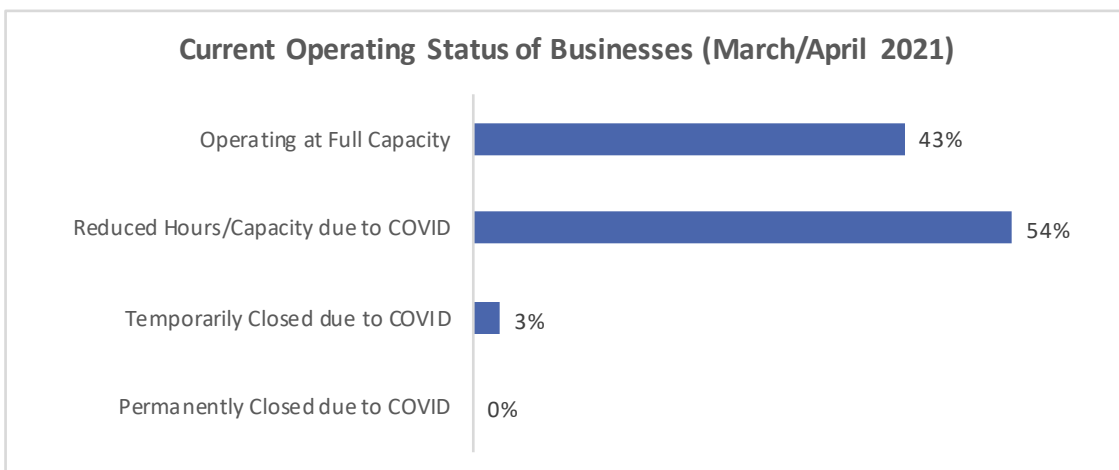
Reported Impacts

95% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID.



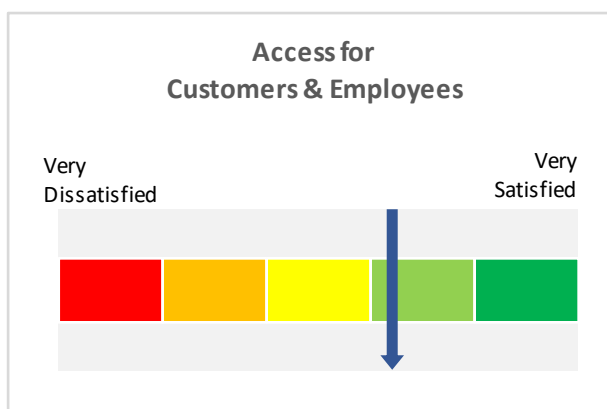
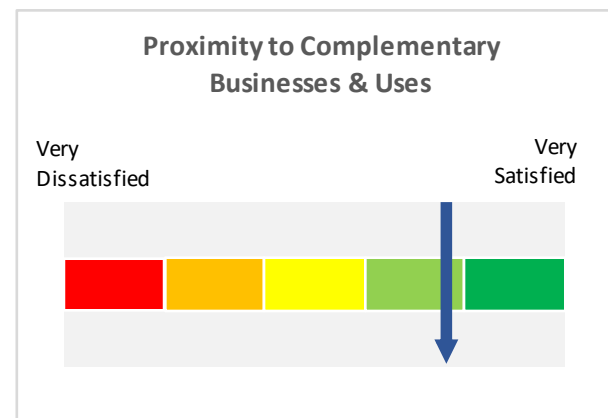
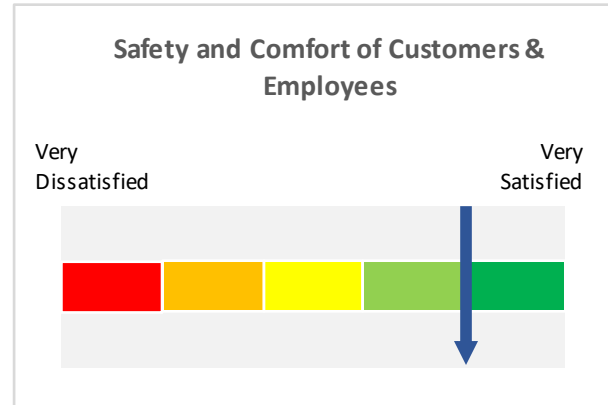
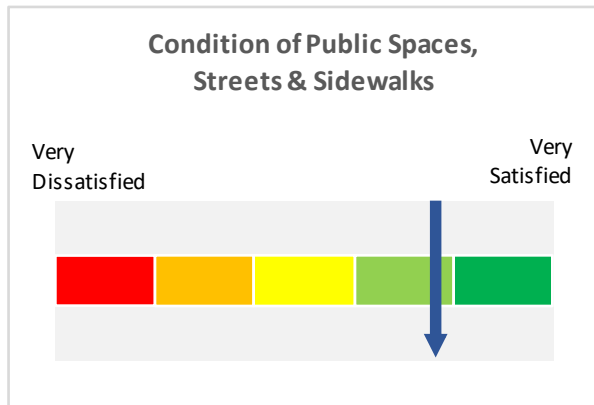
Operating Status

At the time of the survey, 57% of businesses reported they were operating at reduced hours/capacity or closed.



Business Satisfaction with Commercial District

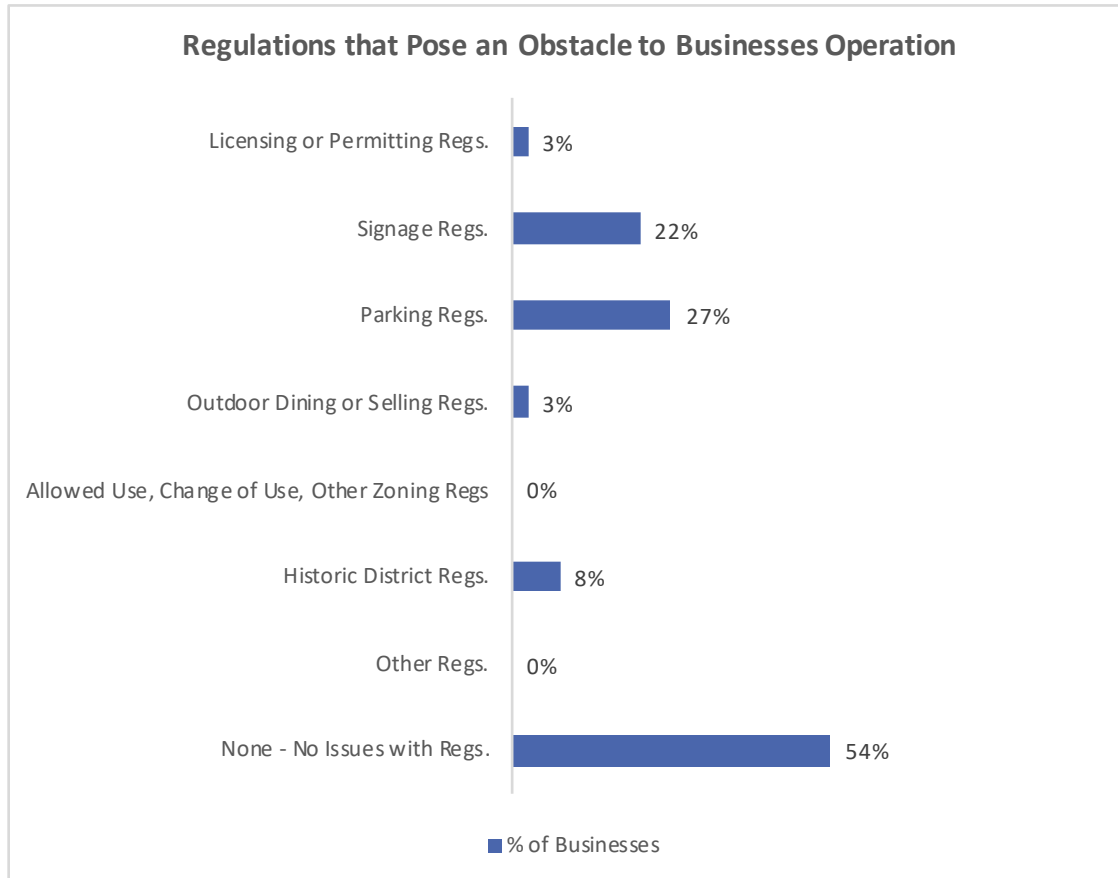
The charts below illustrate the average satisfaction rating among respondents regarding various elements.



Business Satisfaction with Commercial District (cont'd)

Regulatory Environment

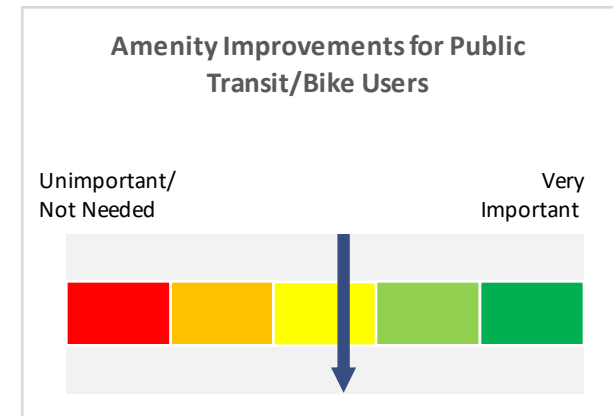
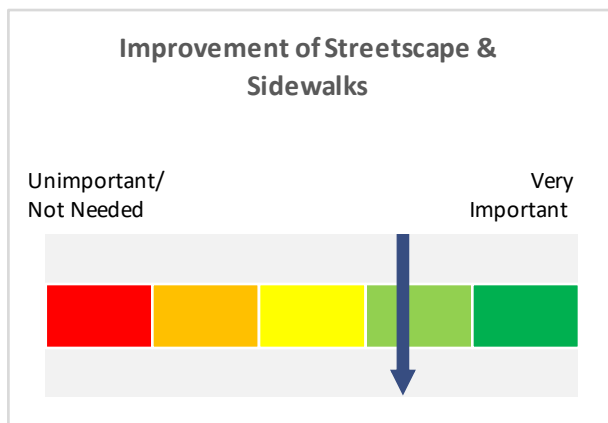
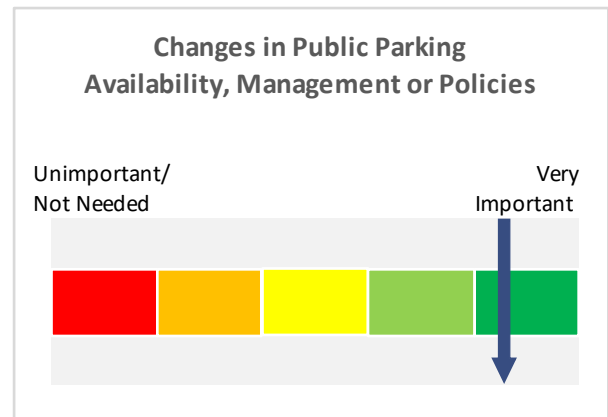
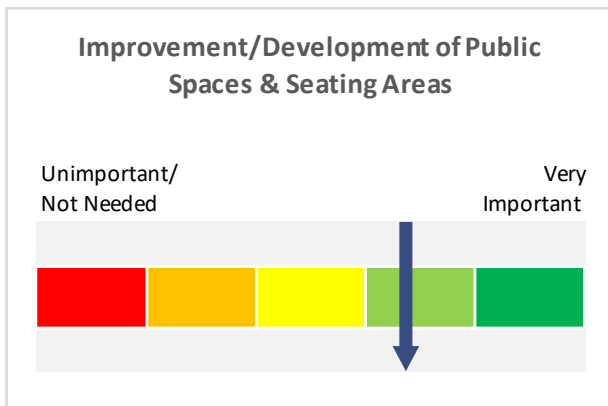
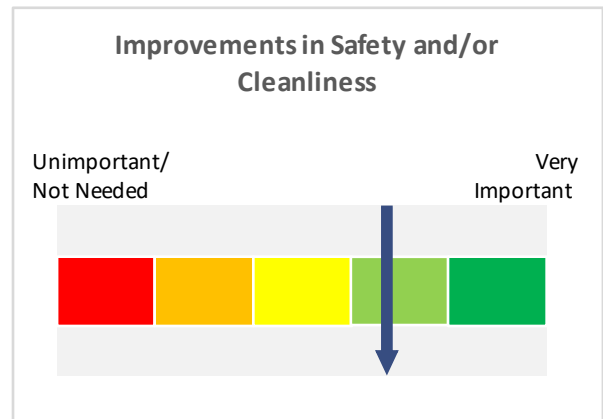
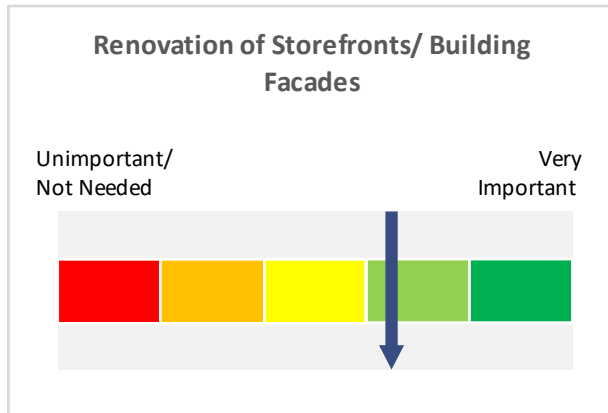
46% of businesses indicated that the regulatory environment poses an obstacle to business operation.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access

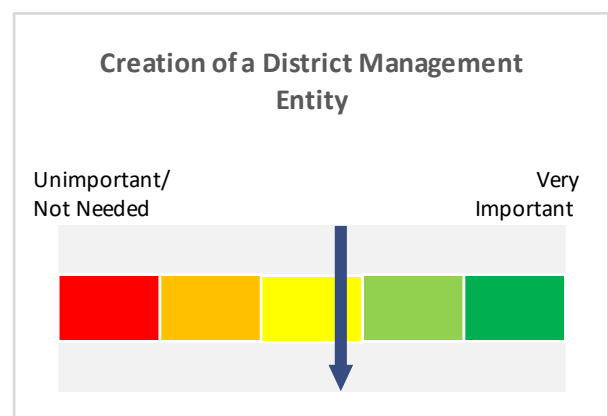
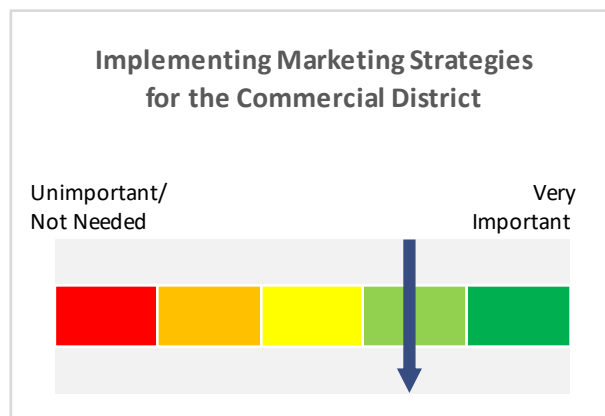
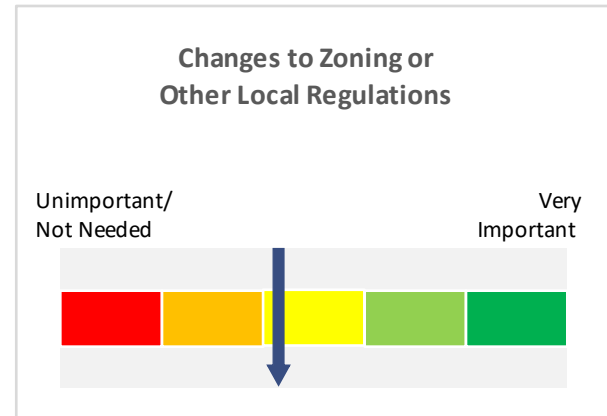
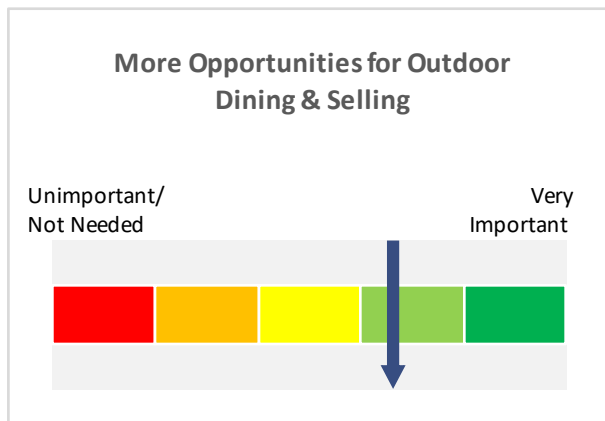
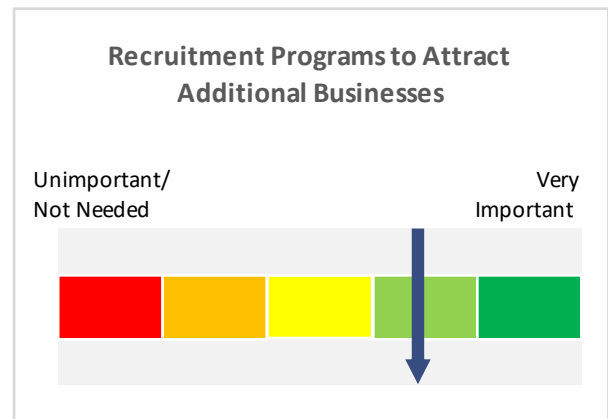
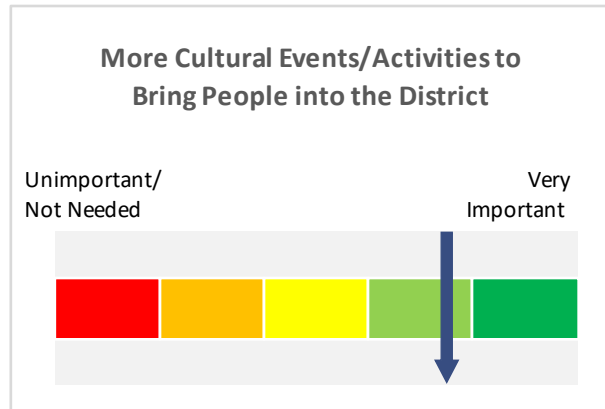
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

Attraction/Retention of Customers and Businesses

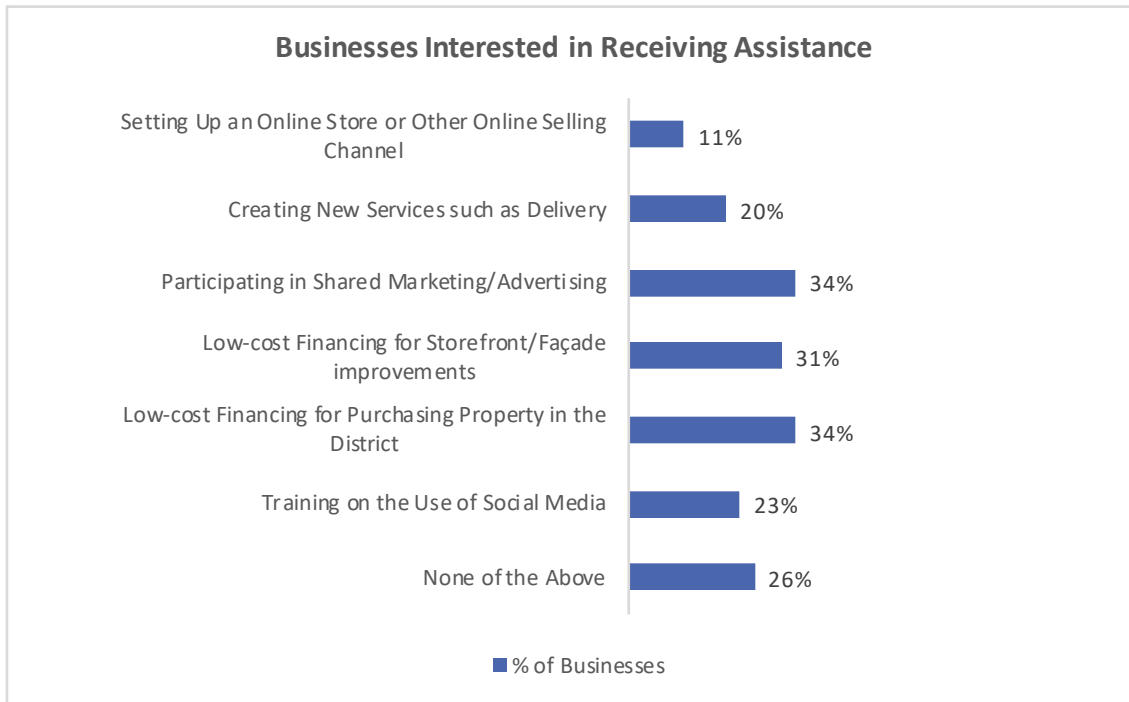
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

Businesses Support

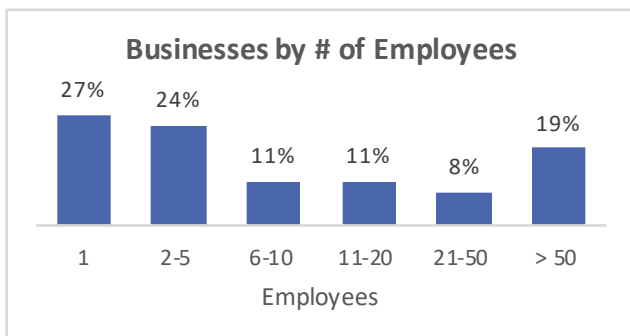
74% of businesses expressed interest in receiving some kind of assistance.



Business Characteristics

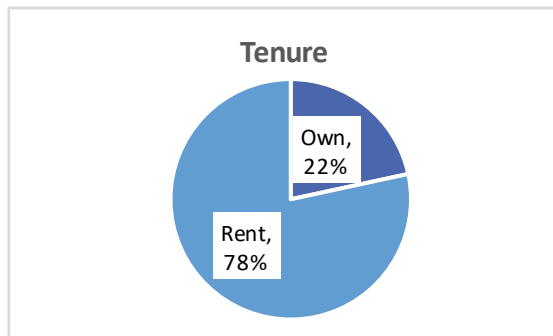
Business Size

51% of businesses are microenterprises (≤ 5 employees).



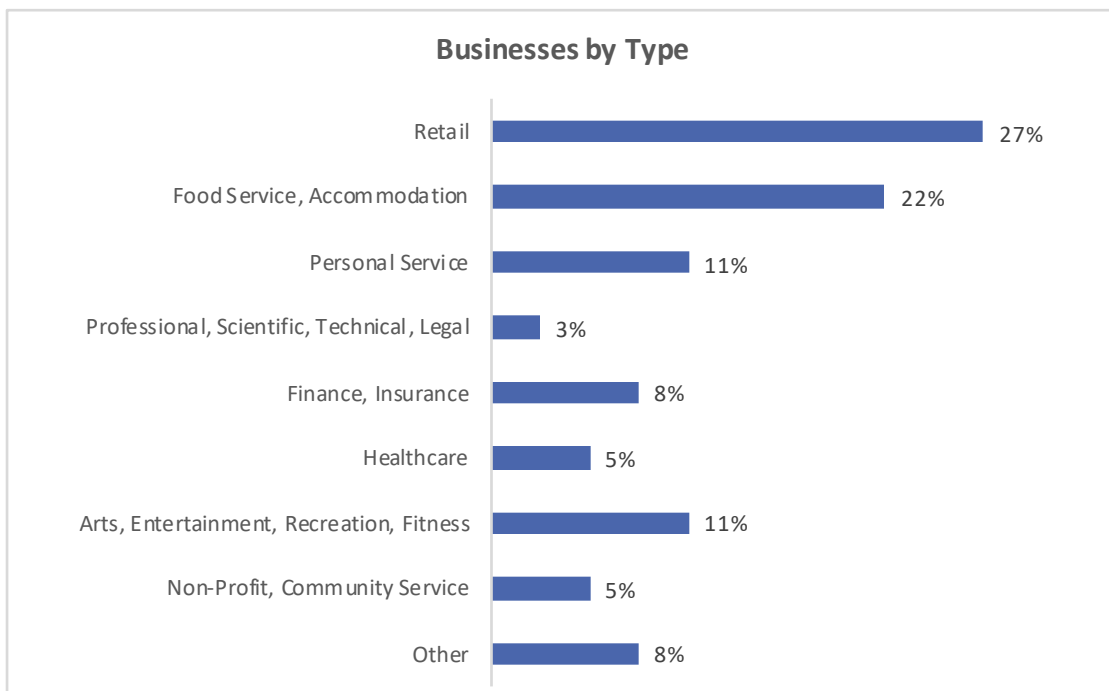
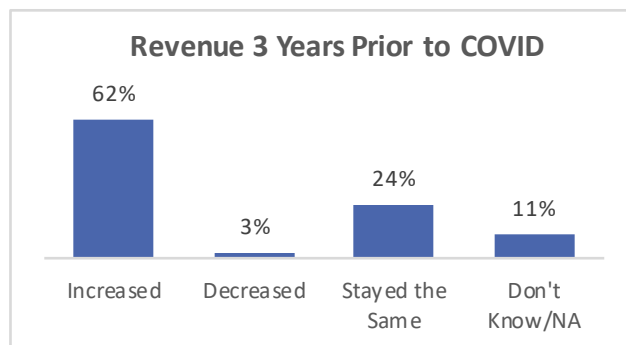
Business Tenure

78% of businesses rent their space.



Revenue Trend Prior to COVID

62% of businesses reported increase in revenue during the 3 years prior to COVID.



Business Survey Results - Data Tables

Community Where Targeted Downtown or Commercial District is Located

1. Please select the community where your business is located.

Hudson	37
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Business Characteristics & Satisfaction with Commercial Area

2. Including yourself, how many people did your business employ prior to COVID (February 2020), including both full-time and part-time?

1	10	27%
2 to 5	9	24%
6 to 10	4	11%
11 to 20	4	11%
21 to 50	3	8%
More than 50	7	19%
Total	37	100%

3. Does your business own or rent the space where it operates?

Own	8	22%
Rent	29	78%
Total	37	100%

4. During the 3 years prior to COVID, had your business revenue . . . ?

Increased	23	62%
Decreased	1	3%
Stayed about the Same	9	24%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	4	11%
Total	37	100%

5. Please select the category that best fits your business.

Retail (NAICS 44-45)	10	27%
Food Service (restaurants, bars), Accommodation (NAICS 72)	8	22%
Personal Service (hair, skin, nails, dry cleaning) (NAICS 81)	4	11%
Professional Scientific, Technical, Legal (NAICS 54)	1	3%
Finance, Insurance (NAICS 52)	3	8%
Healthcare (medical, dental, other health practitioners) (NAICS 62)	2	5%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Fitness (NAICS 71)	4	11%
Non-Profit, Community Services	2	5%
Other	3	8%
Total	37	100%

6. Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of the Downtown or Commercial District where your business is located.

Condition of public spaces, streets, sidewalks

Very Dissatisfied	1	3%
Dissatisfied	2	5%
Neutral	2	5%
Satisfied	21	57%
Very Satisfied	11	30%
Total	37	100%

Condition of Private Buildings, Facades, Storefronts, Signage

Very Dissatisfied	1	3%
Dissatisfied	0	0%
Neutral	12	32%
Satisfied	18	49%
Very Satisfied	6	16%
Total	37	100%

Access for Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	2	5%
Dissatisfied	4	11%
Neutral	8	22%
Satisfied	17	46%
Very Satisfied	6	16%
Total	37	100%

Safety and Comfort of Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	1	3%
Neutral	1	3%
Satisfied	24	65%
Very Satisfied	11	30%
Total	37	100%

Proximity to Complementary Businesses or Uses

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	1	3%
Neutral	5	14%
Satisfied	22	59%
Very Satisfied	9	24%
Total	37	100%

7. Do any local regulations (not related to COVID) pose an obstacle to your business operation?

Licensing or permitting regulations	1	3%
Signage regulations	8	22%
Parking regulations	10	27%
Outdoor dining or selling regulations	1	3%
Allowed uses, change of use or other zoning regulations	0	0%
Historic District regulations	3	8%
Other regulations (not related to COVID)	0	0%
None - No Issues with regulations	20	54%

Impacts of COVID

8. Did your business experience any of the following due to COVID? Select All that apply.

Decline in revenue	26	70%
Employee layoff	15	41%
Reduced operating hours/capacity	28	76%
Business closure (temporary or permanent)	20	54%
Stopped/deferred rent or mortgage payments	4	11%
Incurred expense to implement safety measures	24	65%
Established alternative mode to sell and deliver products (on-line platforms, delivery, etc.)	20	54%
None of the Above	2	5%

9. How did your 2020 business revenue compare to your 2019 revenue?

Increased compared to 2019	5	14%
Stayed about the same as 2019	6	16%
Decreased 1 – 24% compared to 2019	7	19%
Decreased 25 – 49% compared to 2019	15	41%
Decreased 75 - 100% compared to 2019	0	0%
Decreased 50 – 74% compared to 2019	1	3%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	3	8%
Total	37	100%

10. Please estimate how the number of customers that physically came to your business in January and February 2021 compares to before COVID.

More customers than before COVID	2	5%
About the same number as before COVID	3	8%
1 – 24% less customers than before COVID	9	24%
25 – 49% less customers than before COVID	13	35%
50 – 74% less customers than before COVID	3	8%
75 – 100% less customers than before COVID	4	11%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	3	8%
Total	37	100%

11. At the current time, what is the status of your business operation?

Operating at full capacity	16	43%
Operating at reduced hours/capacity due to COVID	20	54%
Temporarily closed due to COVID	1	3%
Permanently closed due to COVID	0	0%
Total	37	100%

Strategies for Supporting Businesses and Improving the Commercial District

12. A few approaches to address Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access in commercial districts are listed below. Considering the conditions in your commercial area, in your opinion, how important are each of the following strategies?

Renovation of Storefronts/Building Facades

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	3%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	8%
Moderately Important	13	35%
Important	13	35%
Very Important	7	19%
Total	37	100%

Improvement/Development of Public Spaces & Seating Areas

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	6%
Of Little Importance or Need	1	3%
Moderately Important	13	36%
Important	10	28%
Very Important	10	28%
Total	36	100%

Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	6	17%
Moderately Important	9	26%
Important	10	29%
Very Important	10	29%
Total	35	100%

Improvements in Safety and/or Cleanliness

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	3%
Of Little Importance or Need	8	22%
Moderately Important	6	17%
Important	7	19%
Very Important	14	39%
Total	36	100%

Changes in Public Parking Availability, Management or Policies

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	2	5%
Moderately Important	5	14%
Important	5	14%
Very Important	25	68%
Total	37	100%

Amenity Improvements for Public Transit Users and/or Bike Riders

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	9%
Of Little Importance or Need	4	11%
Moderately Important	16	46%
Important	9	26%
Very Important	3	9%
Total	35	100%

13. A few approaches to address Attraction and Retention of Customers and Businesses in commercial districts are listed below. Considering the conditions in your commercial area, in your opinion, how important are each of the following strategies?

More Cultural Events/Activities to Bring People into the District

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	6%
Of Little Importance or Need	1	3%
Moderately Important	3	8%
Important	19	53%
Very Important	11	31%
Total	36	100%

More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining and Selling

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	8%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	8%
Moderately Important	6	16%
Important	17	46%
Very Important	8	22%
Total	37	100%

Implementing Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	5%
Of Little Importance or Need	2	5%
Moderately Important	11	30%
Important	10	27%
Very Important	12	32%
Total	37	100%

Recruitment Programs to Attract Additional Businesses

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	6%
Of Little Importance or Need	2	6%
Moderately Important	10	28%
Important	11	31%
Very Important	11	31%
Total	36	100%

Changes to Zoning or Other Local Regulations (not related to COVID)

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	8%
Of Little Importance or Need	14	39%
Moderately Important	11	31%
Important	6	17%
Very Important	2	6%
Total	36	100%

Creation of a District Management Entity (Business Improvement District or other organization)

Unimportant/Not Needed	8	23%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	9%
Moderately Important	6	17%
Important	9	26%
Very Important	9	26%
Total	35	100%

14. Are you interested in receiving assistance for your business in any of the following areas? Select All that Apply.

Setting up an online store or other online selling channel	4	11%
Creating new services such as delivery	7	20%
Participating in shared marketing/advertising	12	34%
Low-cost financing for storefront/façade improvements	11	31%
Low-cost financing for purchasing property in the commercial district	12	34%
Training on the use of social media	8	23%
None of the above	9	26%

15. Please list any specific suggestions or ideas for possible projects, programs or actions that could help support businesses and improve the commercial district. (Optional)

Comments

—
—
—
—
—
Parking!
—
way finding signage , help to get entertainment on the streets IE: music, street performers
I think the town should be more open to food trucks and outdoor seating that is not limited to a specific venue
—
—
—
—
—
additional parking is essential to get more people in to downtown
—
—
—
Creation and implementation of a succinct, slick, marketing guide designed to attract new businesses to our district that will translate well with printed media and social media.
a.t knight fuel company
—
—
—
Parking needs to be addressed and funding for the Armory project would be a boost to the area

—
—
—
—
—
—
The town can help by reducing or remove Histical district requirements for renovations/ builds to help ease cost. Exp remove requirement of hardy board. Help with façade funding.
Law Offices Of Paul V. Giannetti
—
Parking meters or extended parking hours-2 hour parking downtown makes customers in a rush
—
—
—

DIAGNOSTIC

South Street businesses are looking to harness new energy around a number of streetscape and river front improvements in the adjacent area as new investments have been made in a number of private properties with new development in the works over the next few years. The Town, BID and stakeholders seek a way to enliven the South Street Streetscape while better connecting the Assabet River to Main Street as South Street runs parallel to each.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Our proposal is a phased approach to activating South Street while providing better connectivity between the Assabet River and Main Street with South Street as the heart of that journey. **In Phase 1**, we propose creating a number of active public spaces along South Street using decking, tables, chairs, landscaping, umbrellas or shade sales to provide a place to sit outside along South Street, do work or enjoy a cup of coffee with a friend. This would be designed to have minimal impact on area parking. **In Phase 2**, we propose piloting an "open street" on Market Street that would provide an inviting and welcoming space for people to gather, serving as a "town square" type environment while also being an enjoyable passageway between South Street & The Assabet and nearby Main Street.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Having a tangible project with a clear goal can serve as the catalyst to get more people involved in improving the Downtown and patron area businesses. Ensure stakeholders, like area businesses and residents, are engaged from the earliest phase of this planning process. Loop in area workers to find out what they'd want and continue to engage those groups through the duration. Partner with area businesses, organizations and more who may be able to sign up to activate this space through meeting and events of their own and encourage further, deeper adoption of the space for the community.

RESOURCES

- [Patronicity's](#) website of 100's of sortable placemaking projects for inspiration.
- LRRP Project Sheets for ideas and inspiration
- ARPA funding, NEFA Grants, Art Place America, Mass Development Placemaking grants.
- Area property owners and small businesses to sponsor equipment and event infrastructure.
- Crowdfunding as dozens of communities have done across Massachusetts for similar placemaking projects.

PROJECT INSPIRATION

Eagle Street Initiative, North Adams, MA



North Adams was seeking to transition pedestrian traffic from Main Street down their historic Eagle Street. The key piece of this project was a central gathering space that was created through the construction of a parklet. The parklet serves as a host for events but also a place to eat lunch, enjoy coffee and spend a day in town working remotely.

BUDGET: \$12,000 for a custom made parklet

IMPLEMENTATION: 8-12 weeks

TIMELINE: year round w/ adaptations for winter

MATERIALS: custom parklet built locally, seating, shade sails and lighting.

Corner Spot, Ashland, MA



Ashland was seeking to create a community hub in the Downtown that would be a passive place for residents to gather, grab a meal or enjoy take out from town while also hosting small recurring events.

The retail space serves as a way for area businesses to test the viability of a brick & mortar retail presence while also serving as an activator for the space itself while passive tables, chairs swings, lawn games and wifi allow for users to enjoy the space outside of events.

BUDGET: \$65,000 for all components

IMPLEMENTATION: 8-12 weeks

TIMELINE: year round programming and passive use

MATERIALS: landscaping, swings, tables, chairs, shade sails, shed fitted for retail use, audio equipment, games

MAINTENANCE: moderate- cleaning, landscaping, repairs, event programming.

PROCESS



Location

Our proposal looks at the stated goals of activating South Street and better connecting the Assabet River and its related assets to the Main Street and Downtown commercial activities. For phase 1 & 2, we suggest public street space but if we can identify a private asset that doesn't involve taking parking that could be a lower barrier here. We feel Market Street is an important connector that could serve a major role in connecting the energy of the Main Street and Assabet through South Street.

Identify Inspiration

We've provided two sample projects that encapsulate components of our recommendations for implementation here. Please feel free to explore other inspiration projects as you seek to implement programming here.

Plan & Implement

A key piece of the success of this or any placemaking project is early stakeholder engagement. Not just approval but actively seeking out their input in the planning of this project. Identify groups who could host events in the space later on and seek out their input on what they'd like to see in these spaces. This will hopefully take some of the burden off the Town and BID.

Feedback

This piece is often overlooked but one of the single most important things you can do to ensure success. Get ahead of any complaints with a constructive outlet where stakeholders can leave positive or negative but constructive feedback through in person surveying at events and an online forum.

Iterate

What worked? What didn't work? Adapt your project based upon user feedback. Did residents benefit? Did area businesses benefit. How could things be improved and could another location be more appropriate for this intervention if it becomes apparent location is an issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCATIONS

Phase 1- South Street Spaces



Utilizing excess street space (try for non parking spots) or gravel areas along South Street on private property to create small community hubs that will serve as passive work spaces for the community to visit and enjoy. Allow easy sign ups of the space for communities to visit and host meetings and events of their own as a way to activate the spaces further.



Suggested Materials:

tables, chairs, umbrellas, benches, lighting, plantings, Small, wooden storage container for equipment storage and place to hold activities for loan to community.

Phase 2- Market Street Plaza



Small Plazas and Bumpouts along Haven

Utilize existing plazas and excess roadway (not parking spaces) to create new plaza spaces within the Haven corridor. Create a mix of shaded and sunny spaces and, if possible, install wifi to encourage these as work space.



Suggested Materials:

tables, chairs, umbrellas, planters and temporary landscaping, gravel.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

User Sentiment;

- How do users feel about Downtown? Is it a place for a single errand or to spend time?
- Do visitors make more trips Downtown?
- Do visitors consider Downtown more of a destination as opposed to a single errand?
- Do visitors patron more than 1 business in a trip now?
- Do visitors spend more time in the Downtown?

RISKS

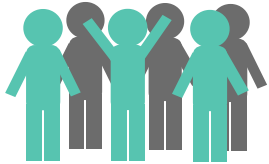
Risks associated with this initiative are designed to be minimal by planning for a more tactical, low cost intervention. Obviously potentially removing on street parking or vehicle access may result in a contentious discussion but couching the conversation as a temporary project may allow this to go forward and show folks that these changes can be popular, even after initial opposition.

KEYS TO SUCCESS



Early Engagement

Bring together a team of engaged business owners, property owners, creatives and residents from the area early in this planning process so they can feel as much of the planning process as possible and are more likely to stay engaged throughout this first iteration and hopefully beyond. Find your one "leader" who will drive the project forward and have an easy way to engage feedback from others involved in planning through in person and online methods so they can remain a part of the process.



Capacity

Build early partnerships with area organizations, stores, restaurants, fitness groups, school groups, non-profits, affinity groups etc and let them take some of the burden of event planning (which can be some of the most cumbersome of this whole project) off your plate. Develop an easy to use sign up process for groups interested in activating spaces.



Feedback

Have an online survey always open combined with in person surveys of attendees to events and users of the space as well as direct outreach to abutting residents and businesses. This will cut down on the ability for negative responses to overpower positive by more passive sentiment.



Flexibility

Any equipment purchased for this project should be viewed as portable, meaning it can be reused in a different space in town should this space not become widely adopted and can be packed up and reused to activate another public space throughout the rest of town. The benefit of this sort of low cost, tactical and iterative project is that you can maintain these resources to test in other spaces before making expensive municipal investments and to help inform those investments.