



Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

**Littleton Common
Commercial District
Revitalization**

Littleton, MA



Acknowledgments



Town of Littleton, MA

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Nashoba Regional Greenways

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Littleton Cultural Council

Jeanne Bracken

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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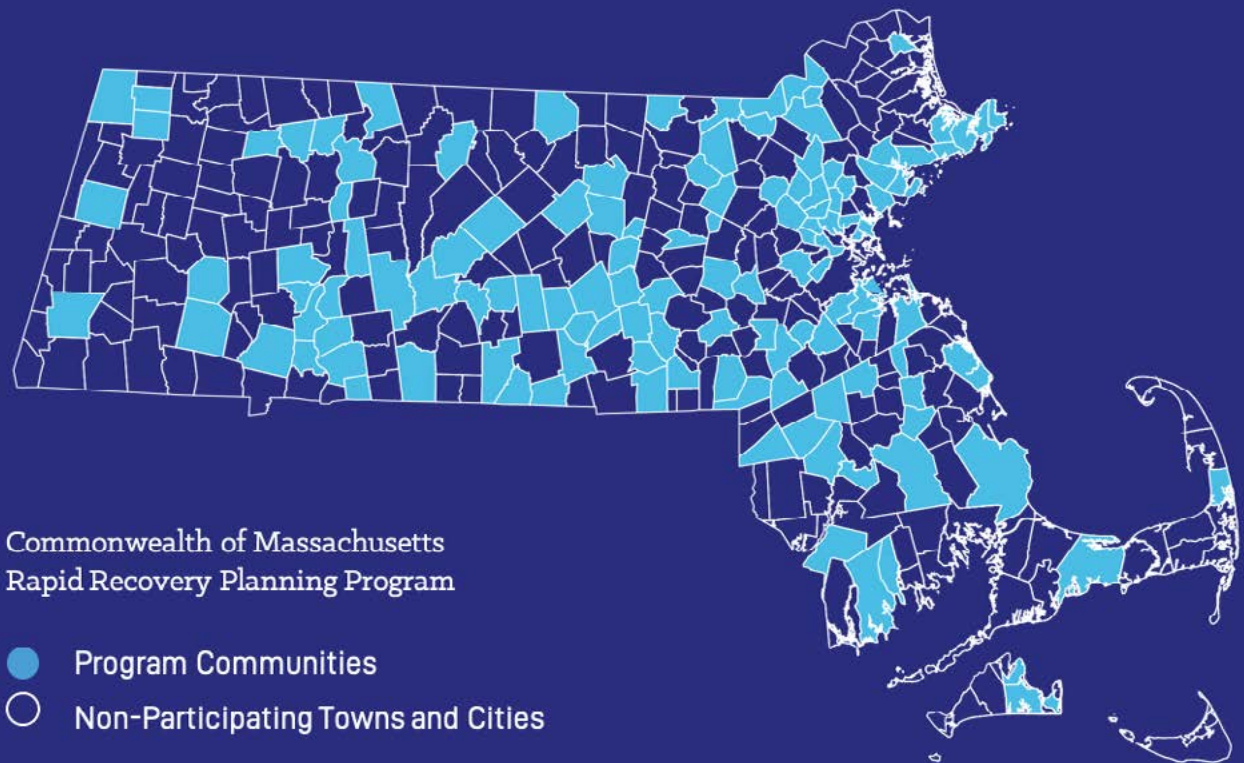
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125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

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.



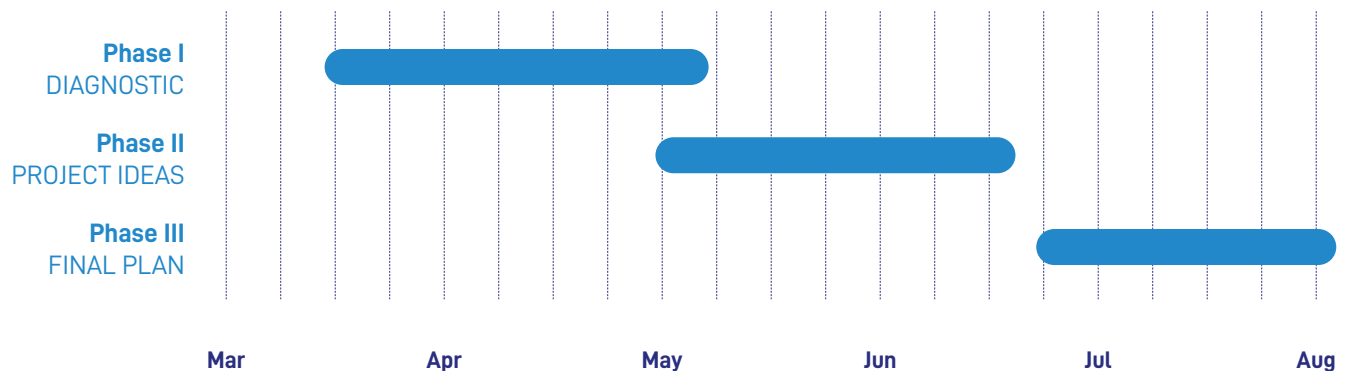
1.0 Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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 (extended to October 8th, 2021.) Phase 1 - Diagnostic, Phase 2- Project Recommendations, Phase 3 - Plan.



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

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

Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework



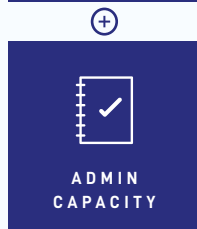
Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?



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



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



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

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



Public Realm



Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Revenue & Sales



Admin Capacity



Cultural/Arts



Other

2.0 Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Littleton, MA

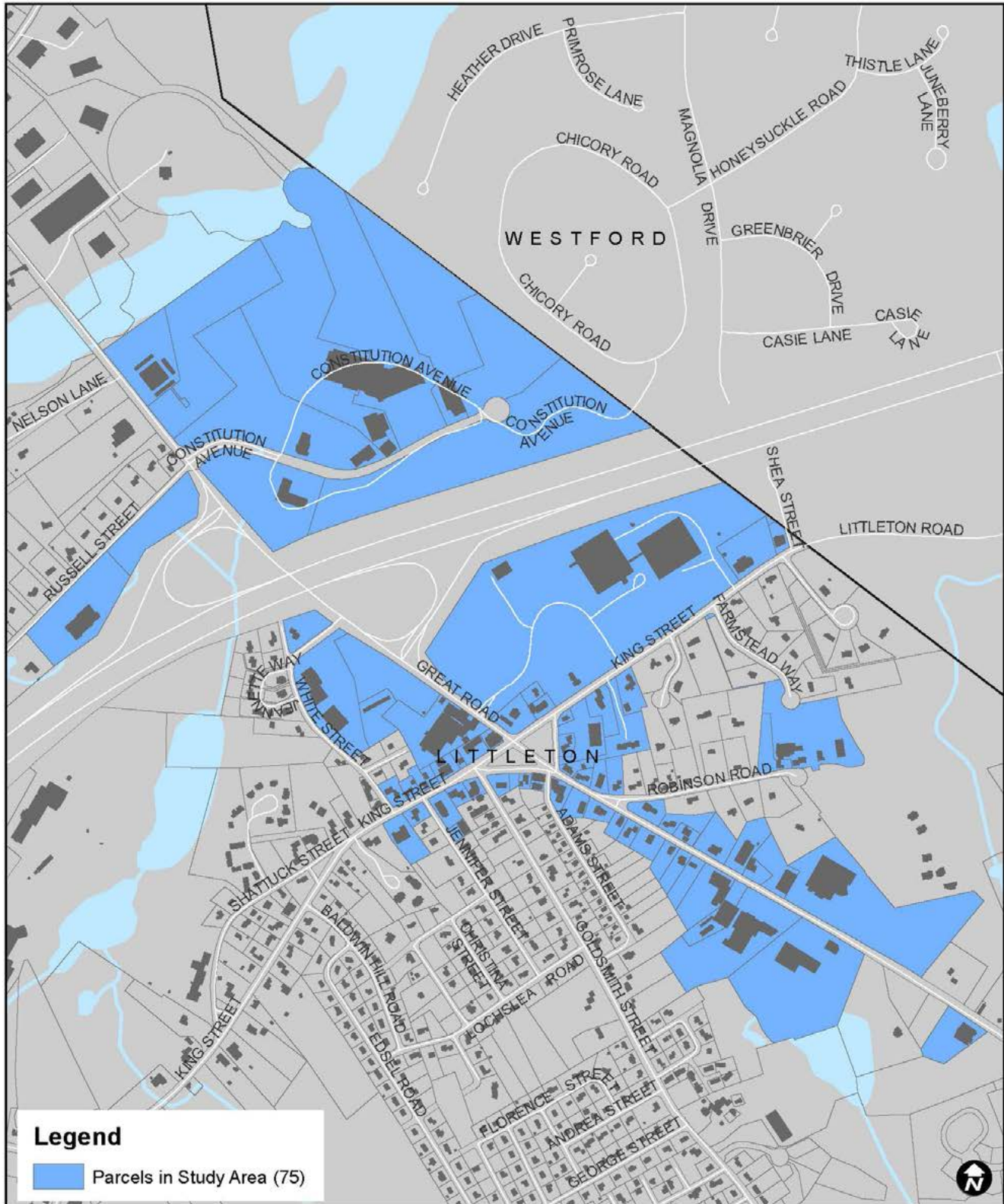
Littleton, Massachusetts is a suburban community located in Middlesex County with a long agricultural history, with several active farms operating in Town, offering a wide range of locally-sourced food, dairy, and produce. Many of the structures in the Littleton Common area date from the nineteenth century. Known for apple orchards and cider production, local farmers utilized the railroads that came with the industrial revolution to transport their crops to Boston and other markets. Littleton was a center for horse-dealing and trading as well in the late 1880s. Pasteurized apple juice was manufactured in town in the early 1900s. In the 1960s a very popular dairy farm operated two large swimming pools with a grill, ice cream stand and bath house. The operation closed in 1968. Although prohibition was repealed in 1933, the predominantly Yankee-inspired members of Littleton did not permit alcohol sales until 1960. Littleton's proximate location to both Hanscom Air Force Base and Fort Devens make it a popular location for military retirees.

In the 1980's two three-story buildings were built for a local computer manufacturing company. Nearly 500,000 square feet of office and server space came online just steps away from Littleton Common. IBM took over the space in 2008 following a major \$50 million renovation. Unfortunately, the site lies empty today, but may soon be revived if a mixed-use partnership including retail, commercial, and many residential units comes to fruition. No matter the outcome, when the site is occupied again it will surely impact the look and feel of Littleton Common.

Visitors to Littleton will enjoy the small-town feel of the shops available along King Street, a bed and breakfast, sub shop, book store, and converted mill building that houses everything from retail firearms sales to drama and acting classes. With a variety of cultural activities like Third Thursdays, dining and shopping options at The Point, churches, the book store, library, and other destinations, Littleton is well-positioned for a strong recovery post COVID-19 as businesses reopen, people travel away from home more, and outdoor adventure opportunities seek the beautiful trails and conservation lands that Littleton has to offer. To ensure that Littleton has a strong post COVID-19 recovery, the project team is recommending the following projects be implemented:

- 1. Conduct Analysis to Fund Construction of Town Sewer**
- 2. Engage Property Owners to Make Improvements and Fill Vacancies**
- 3. Implement a Wayfinding Signage Program**
- 4. Multiple Streetscape Improvements**
- 5. Host More Events on the Town Common**
- 6. Town Hall to Hire an Economic Development Director**
- 7. Complete Construction of the Couper-Wellington Trail**
- 8. Redesign the Intersection of Goldsmith Street at Stevens Street**
- 9. Determine Future Use of 12 Robinson Road**
- 10. Develop Additional Outdoor Dining Opportunities**

The map on the next page shows the study area examined in Littleton as part of this planning effort.



3.0 Diagnostic

Key Findings



The Town's customer base will grow..if

The largest demographic 10-year age group by percentage of the total population is the 45 - 54 years age group which makes up 16% of residents. The median household income for the Town is just over \$133,000.

Littleton relies on a mix of residents and visitors to generate revenue for area businesses. With the likely redevelopment of the 41-acre former IBM campus, Littleton Common area businesses and building owners are well poised to make a strong economic comeback from the shutdowns and downturns associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 41-acre former IBM campus is slated for redevelopment including a significant amount of new housing. If this project stalls, Littleton's downtown businesses will not benefit from the large influx of new customers that the redevelopment would bring.

DEMOGRAPHICS	TOWN OF LITTLETON
Population	10,035
At Least Some College (or higher)	80%
Median Income	\$133,268
Age (0 - 18)	26%
Age (19 - 54)	39%
Age (55 +)	35%
Race (Non-White)	12%



Perceptions about the existing physical environment

The consultant team examined the condition of the private realm during field work analysis. See the table at right for the study area cumulative score of each of the elements examined during the field visit. Littleton's business owner survey received 63 responses, and was distributed to businesses both inside and outside of the study area. The business survey revealed that the primary area of dissatisfaction among business owners and merchants was the condition of public spaces, streets, and sidewalks as well as the condition of private buildings, storefronts, and signs. The business owner survey included a question about possible ways to improve the physical environment, atmosphere, and access for customers and employees. The top rated options include:

- Improvement of streetscape and sidewalks
 - » 35% = very important, 27% = important
- Improvements in safety & cleanliness
 - » 29% = very important, 31% = important
- Development of public spaces and seating areas
 - » 35% = very important, 16% = important

The field analysis team observed a handful of customers at the Sub Shoppe, the veterinarian, and at CVS. Many folks were out enjoying the mild weather jogging, bicycling, or walking their dog. At a high level, it appears that the existing public realm environment appears to effectively meet the needs of business owners, employees, and customers. However, it should be noted that critical gaps in the sidewalk network exist on King Street between Goldsmith Street and Jennifer Street as well as in front of Wild Valley Books, among other places. Additionally, there are a lack of crosswalks across the MassDOT-controlled roadways in town.

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

A critical sidewalk gap in front of Wild Valley Books





Littleton would benefit from an updated business environment

Similar to the scoring process used for the public realm, elements of the private realm were also scored during the field work analysis. See the table at right for the study area cumulative score of each of the private realm elements examined during the field visit.

The project team observed some facades showing signs of age and in need of improvements at some of the businesses in the study area. The team did not see any outdoor dining options during the field visit - with the exception of some outdoor dining at The Point development north of Littleton Common across I-495.

The project team observed a relatively high number of vacancies when compared to the total number of businesses tallied as part of the field work process. See the map on the following page that details the vacancies observed during the last week of April, 2021.

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

A deteriorated sidewalk between the (former) Great Road Liquor store and Rod's Golf Improvement Center



Businesses have support from local groups

The Nashoba valley Chamber of Commerce and the Littleton Business Association provide marketing support and other business development support to Littleton businesses.

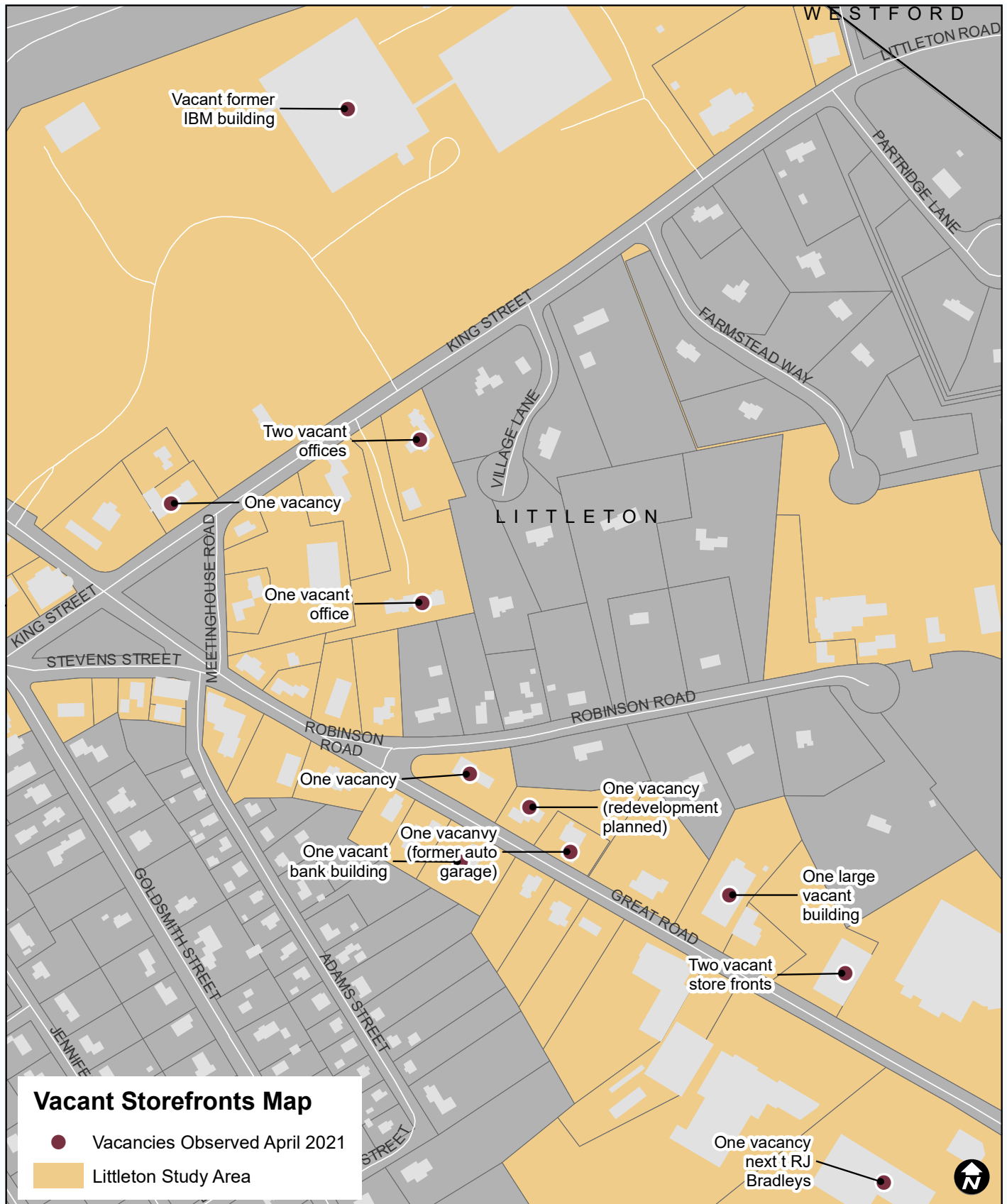
The Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce promotes area businesses on their website, includes community events on their digital calendar, and has a Shop Local Campaign with cash prizes for those who shop at locally-owned businesses that are Chamber members.

The Littleton Business Association is a non-profit organization that represents businesses in the Town in a similar manner to the Chamber, using a membership-based system. The organization has over 100 members and dues are currently \$50 / year. Members are represented and enjoy a respectable working relationship with Town officials. The Littleton Business Association leadership helped to promote the LRRP Phase One public meeting held on July 14th, 2021.

LOCAL FARMS + AGRICULTURE

Littleton has a long agricultural history and is home to multiple local farms. Littleton was known for its production of apples and cider, which was a major driver and very important to the local economy. Many products were shipped to Boston destined for markets further afield.

Large and successful dairy farms and smaller road-side farm stands were popular for many decades. In the booming post war years, Fred Herpy had two swimming pools, a bath house, grill, and ice cream stand at his dairy farm. Kimballs Farm today draws visitors from across the 495/ MetroWest area.



A map of commercial vacancies in the Littleton study area

Analysis



VACANCIES & MUNICIPAL SEWER

Littleton retailers rely on a mix of residents, visitors, and tourists from the surrounding towns. In order for local businesses to thrive post-COVID, town officials and local advocates must work together to ensure that vacant storefronts are marketed and made available for prospective entrepreneurs.

Some business owners have expressed concerns in spending money to update deteriorated storefronts while they have no access to sewer. In their view, any facade improvements, building or structural renovations, should take place after municipal sewerage tie-ins are completed.

The success of local building owners to lure prospective tenants into their vacant spaces hinges on the ability of their properties to be connected to municipal sewer. If potential plans for the full scale redevelopment of the former IBM campus occur, it could act as a catalyst for folks to actively seek out storefronts to serve the needs of the many new residents just steps away from the Town common.



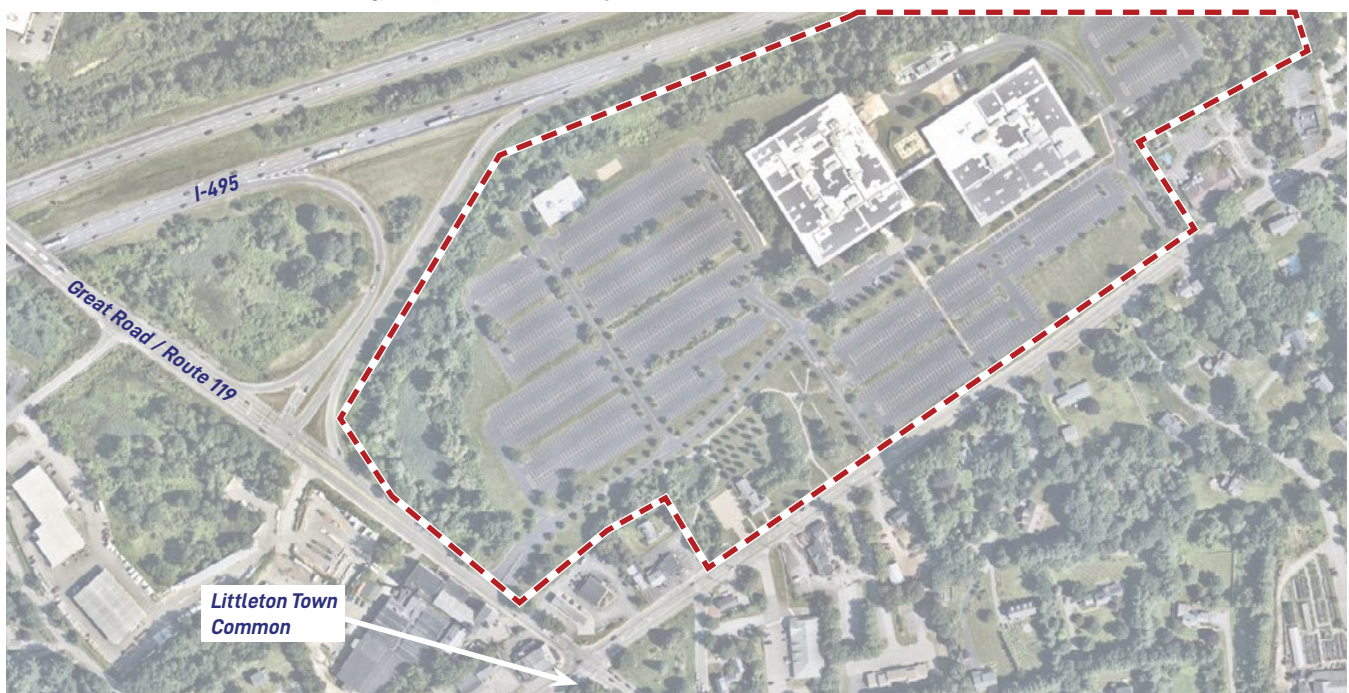
TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Littleton Town Common was the site of multiple activities and events hosted by the Town. Over the years as regional development picked up pace, so did the number of drivers traveling through the Common area each day. Crossing King Street became so uncomfortable that three or four years ago the Town relocated events to be hosted in Fay Park as a result of the safety issue. When events were hosted in the Common, the Town would close Stevens Street, limiting the right-turn movement of motor vehicles traveling east on King Street and making a right turn onto 2A. Because of the layout of the lane striping pattern along King Street, where east-bound straight-through traffic is mixed with south-bound traffic turning onto Route 2A, major congestion occurred as through traffic was slowed for right-turning traffic.

INTERSECTION REDESIGN

This report recommends examining a redesign of the King Street / Gold Street / Stevens Street intersection to prioritize pedestrian safety and reduce the number of vehicles traveling along Stevens Street. A redesign at this critical location would enhance safety and create a calmer and more inviting Town Common entry area.

The 41-acre former IBM campus, partially shown in dashed outline, may be redeveloped into a mixed-use center with residential housing, retail, and commercial space



Source: <https://apps.nearmap.com/maps/#/@42.5483662,-71.4733749,17.00z,0d/V/20210722>

Analysis



RESTAURANTS BRING PEOPLE TO TOWN

Littleton would benefit from additional restaurants near the Town Common, particularly with outdoor dining options. Today, residents and visitors to Littleton have few options to enjoy a sit-down restaurant meal in the area around Littleton common. Many folks may be spending their money at The Point development - which has many regional and national chains - or elsewhere outside of town.

FILLING VACANCIES

Littleton is at a crossroads in terms of spending time and energy attempting to fill in vacant storefronts while many building owners and business owners have expressed that they would rather wait for a municipal sewer tie-in. A later section of this report will identify strategies to engage local landlords to spruce up their store fronts and then how to actively market empty commercial spaces to entrepreneurs.

NASHOBA REGIONAL GREENWAYS (NRG) COALITION

Littleton is home to the growing Nashoba Regional Greenways coalition which advocates for on-road and off-road bicycling and walking routes. Littleton is centrally located between a variety of regional paths and greenways. Linking these greenways will bring recreational bicyclists and other active transportation users into the Town Common area. Bicyclists and hikers spend money during their rides and walks, creating an opportunity for local businesses to cater to their needs. This report suggests continued collaboration between Town staff and NRG volunteers to work towards a shared vision of comfortable and well-signed bicycling and walking routes to and through Littleton. See the Appendix for more information on recent planning work completed by NRG.

The Littleton Business Association promotes Small Business Saturday



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/littletonba/photos/1823178981227440>



https://www.littletonma.org/sites/g/files/vyhlf806/f/uploads/nb_littleton_project_8.17.2021.pdf
Rapid Recovery Plan



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce is a member-based Chamber that includes a region of 17 municipalities in MA. The Chamber promotes Littleton businesses in a variety of ways, including with a Shop Local Campaign, where the public is invited to shop at any one of the chambers many member businesses, submit their receipts, and be entered into a contest to win \$1,000. The Chamber also hosts a community calendar on its website, where Littleton's Third Thursday Events are promoted. In the past the Chamber has sponsored the Big Taste Event where local restaurants, caterers, and breweries provide food and over 1,000 folks attended. Finally, there is an upcoming Hometown Passport Tourist campaign that will promote places to Eat, Shop, and Play in Littleton and elsewhere in the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce member region.

LITTLETON BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

The Littleton Business Association (LBA) has helped local business owners network with one another, answer questions about state policies impacting small businesses, and provided advocacy for important issues facing businesses in Littleton. Additionally, the LBA has:

- Hosted a Candidates Night meet and greet
- Hosted Grand Opening events for new businesses
- Organized and hosted the LBA holiday social
- Promoted local businesses on special holidays like Small Business Saturday
- Hosted the Home Show Event for connecting local contractors with local homeowners

The LBA has thrown their enthusiastic support behind the Smart Sewer proposal in Littleton. A letter to the Select Board in August 2018 makes clear the case for applying for a MassWorks grant to finance the development of a Smart Sewer system in Littleton. The LBA's primary goal of implementing sewer is because it is a critical building block for economic development.

4.0 Project Recommendations

4.1 Conduct Analysis to Fund Construction of Town Sewer

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - Littleton Town Common and Great Road commercial and retail area
Origin		Joseph Laydon, Assistant Town Administrator Maren Toohill, AICP, Town Planner
Budget		Large Budget (\$200,000+)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years). 12-24 months planning, 24 - 60 months implementation
Risk		Low Risk – There is low risk associated with continuing the momentum of this established project
Key Performance Indicators		The ability to successfully fund and conduct a sewer feasibility study
Partners & Resources		Town of Littleton Public Works Department, Town of Littleton Planning Department, additional Town departments or committees as needed

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impact

- Sewer will allow the currently under developed parcels the opportunity to develop for additional uses
- The existing vacant buildings are unable to attract tenants, partially because they are not connected to Town sewer
- During the Phase One LRRP business survey, 94% of respondents reported being impacted by COVID-19:
 - » 75% reported a decline in revenue
 - » 73% reported reduced operating hours or capacity
 - » 59% reported an incurred expense to implement safety measures
- The Town has already completed a feasibility study; the engineering design is well underway; and a discharge site has been purchased. The next steps for the Sewer Department/Town (pending funding approval at upcoming October 25 Town Meeting) is to decide how to pay for construction.

Process

- Conduct a feasibility study
 - » Identify Town department staff responsible for leading the coordination effort
 - » Examine opportunities for funding
 - » Allocate funds for financial consultant(s) to assist the Town in working through the grant application processes, identifying State grants, ARPA funds, other possible infrastructure funds, and examining the issuance of bonds
 - » Examine opportunities for funding: bond counsel or outside financial experts/consultant to analyze the fiscal / market / financial impacts of bonds

Action Items

- Conduct a feasibility study
 - » Consultant to assist Town with funding options for construction and operation of Town sewer infrastructure
 - » Obtain public input and distribute concise information about opportunities and constraints and a fee schedule for those that tie-in to the new system
 - » Draft a plan with cost estimate and timeline for construction and maintenance



Inside the nearby West Acton sewage treatment plant

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMJwj507IE8>

4.2 Engage Property Owners to Make Improvements and Fill Vacancies

Category		Private Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - Littleton Town Common and Great Road commercial and retail area
Origin		Joseph Laydon, Assistant Town Administrator, and Maren Toohill, AICP, Town Planner, First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback, Littleton Business Association, Business Survey
Budget		Large Budget (\$200,000+)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years) - 12 months planning, 24-36 months implementation
Risk		Medium Risk – Private building owners are not required to participate in program and may be uninterested
Key Performance Indicators		The number of businesses that participate in the program
Partners & Resources		Town of Littleton Economic Development Committee, Littleton Business Association, The Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, Mitigation funds from future development



As recently as 2012, Hudson, MA suffered from a high number of vacant storefronts. The Town's Main Street has seen a major economic resurgence since then.
 Source: https://www.masslive.com/news/2017/08/hudson_how_this_small_massachu.html

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- Business survey and public meeting identified existing vacancies and dissatisfaction with storefront facade conditions
- During the Phase One LRRP business survey, 94% of respondents reported being impacted by COVID-19:
 - » 75% reported a decline in revenue
 - » 73% reported reduced operating hours or capacity
 - » 59% reported an incurred expense to implement safety measures
- Revitalizing storefronts will lead to additional entrepreneurs occupying those storefronts, which will drive additional foot traffic into downtown. This in turn will drive local stores sales and increase revenues, helping folks out of the economic slump that was a direct result of COVID-19

Action Items

- Efforts should be led by the Town
- Conduct a Current Conditions Assessment and overview of existing vacancies (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis of commercial properties)
- Develop a simple Excel database that is easy to update of vacancies and owners / leasing agents (update quarterly)
- **Consult the 2019 Revitalization Road Map** to address the types of structural designs, signage, setbacks, and parking that would enhance the Common Area and add to the character of the community

Process

1. Develop a Communication Plan and Identify Key Properties

- Develop a communication plan to gain buy-in from owners of vacant property
- Work in conjunction with the Littleton Business Association to communicate with property owners
- Target approach to property owners - utilizing database of owners and vacancies as a first step to open lines of communication
- Get the property owners insight on what they see as benefits of their vacancies

2. Develop an Incentive Program

- Used to encourage property owners - tax abatements, redevelopment incentives (only use blight regulations/ fines in extreme cases)

- For new businesses - start-up grants or business assistance such as MassDevelopment's Implementation Grants for up to \$50,000
- Consider developing a disincentive program if the incentive program does not prove successful

3. Develop a Marketing Plan to Make the Case to Fill Vacancies

- Highlight local farms, pastoral, recreation, "New England" destination, highlight local businesses - "Benefit and grow from their success"
- Update Business section website - add highlights of local businesses - contact info for those interested in starting a business
- Property Owners - importance of actively listing vacancies - i.e. Loopnet.com
- Create a theme for local tourism/businesses/events

4. Address the Administrative Capacity

- Who in town is responsible to lead the effort - what partners can be activated as support

5. Identify Funding Sources

- See additional research on following pages

6. Develop a Database of Property Owners and Tenants

- Easily formatted in Excel this can capture relevant information on ownership, contacts, inventory of commercial space, square footage and conditions assessments



A permanently closed Bank of America branch in Littleton

4.3 Implement a Wayfinding Signage Program

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - Littleton Town Common and Great Road commercial and retail area
Origin		Joseph Laydon, Assistant Town Administrator, and Maren Toohill, AICP, Town Planner, First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback, Littleton Business Association, Business Survey
Budget		Low Budget (\$50,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years) - 6 months planning, 6-12 months implementation
Risk		Low Risk – The risk for this project category is relatively low
Key Performance Indicators		Increased awareness among visitors about the many destinations to stop and explore in Littleton
Partners & Resources		Town of Littleton Town Administration, Littleton Business Association, The Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, Mitigation funds from future development



Wayfinding signage locations would have to be designed with existing signage locations in mind



Wayfinding concepts include Great Road / Route 2A signage intended for motorists as well as regional rail trail and bike path signage intended for bicyclists and pedestrians

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impact

- Wayfinding signage will orient visitors to Littleton and has proven elsewhere to be a successful way to generate additional foot traffic in town, driving an increase in local sales
- Takeaways from the business owner survey that support streetscape, placemaking, and wayfinding signage types of enhancements include:
 - » 46% of business owner survey respondents indicated that public space improvements are important or very important
 - » 62% of respondents indicated that improvements in streetscapes and sidewalks are important or very important
 - » In total, 94% of business owner survey respondents indicated that they were negatively impacted by COVID-19

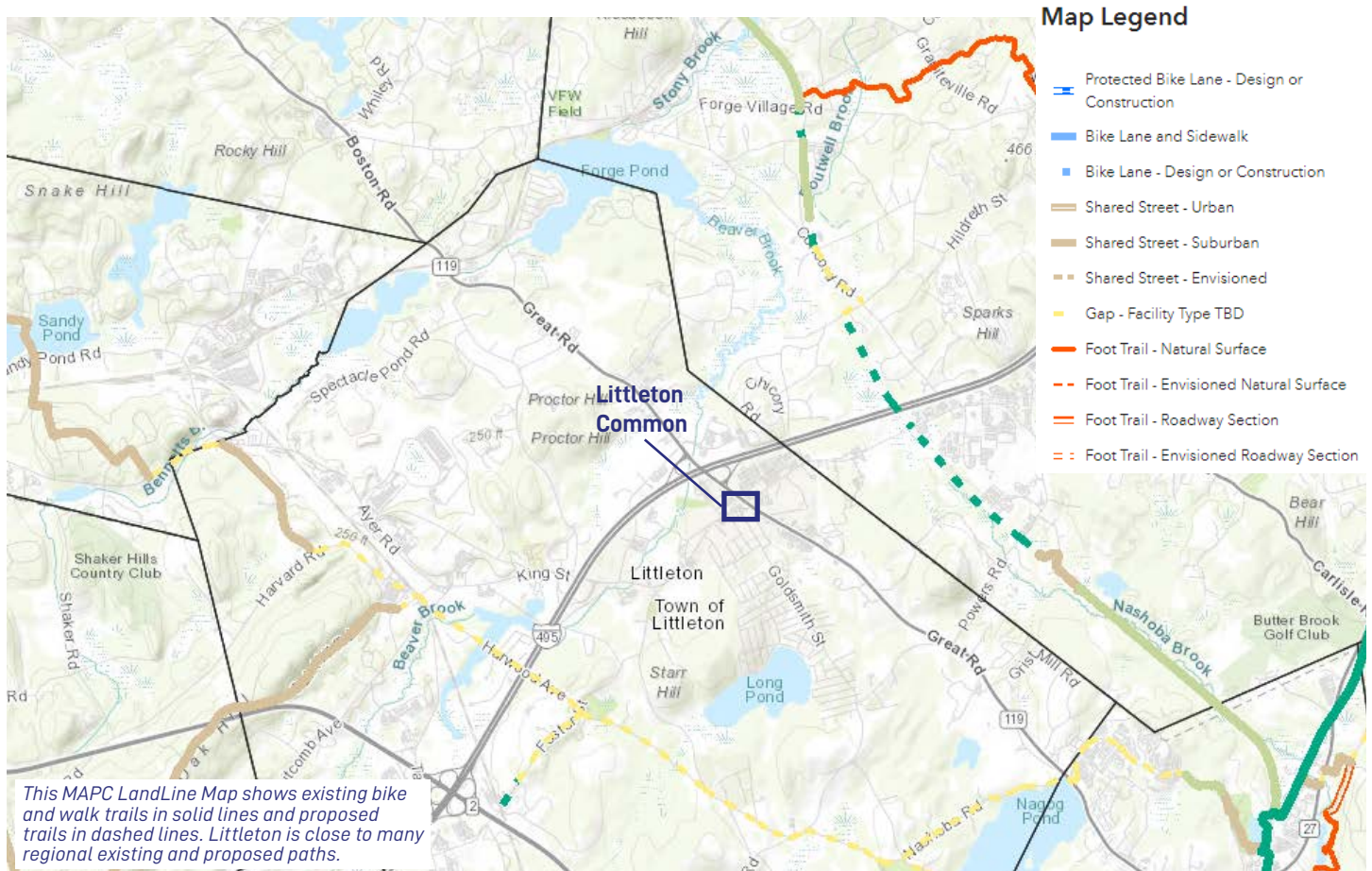
- Utilize similar design to existing MassDOT dark green signs for uniformity along state-owned routes
- Share proposed wayfinding signage family with the public, local residents, and business owners to solicit and incorporate feedback and input on signage text
- Develop branding to be included with the wayfinding signage

Process

- Drivers approaching Littleton Common on Route 2A / Great Road typically have to slow down prior to the traffic light, resulting in a natural opportunity to add signage which will prepare visitors for what the amenities are available by turning at the intersection, or continuing straight ahead
- Work closely with business owners to decide which signs will include business names and directional arrows pointing to those locations, including: Wild Valley Books, the Sub Shoppe, the veterinarian, The Point, the hardware store, the renovated mill building, etc.
- Promote the new wayfinding signage on the Chamber of Commerce website

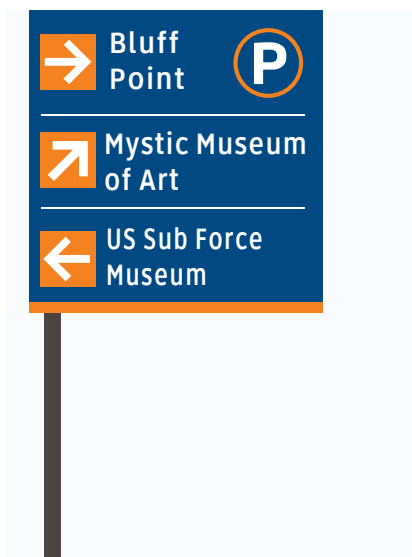
Action Items

- Identify locations for proposed signage installation



Wayfinding Signage - Regional Bike Paths and Trails

- Purpose: Pedestrian- and bicyclist-oriented wayfinding signs provide orientation and guidance at key locations. They reinforce district identity and create a uniform branding for the area. Signs along trails and sidewalks geared towards pedestrians and bicyclists have smaller font sizes and can include distances in miles and/or minutes of walking or bicycling
- Materials:
 - » Sign Face - Painted metal sign with vinyl letters and digital painted graphics
 - » Sign Posts - Extruded metal



A recently completed draft wayfinding plan in Groton, CT
Source: BETA Group, Inc.



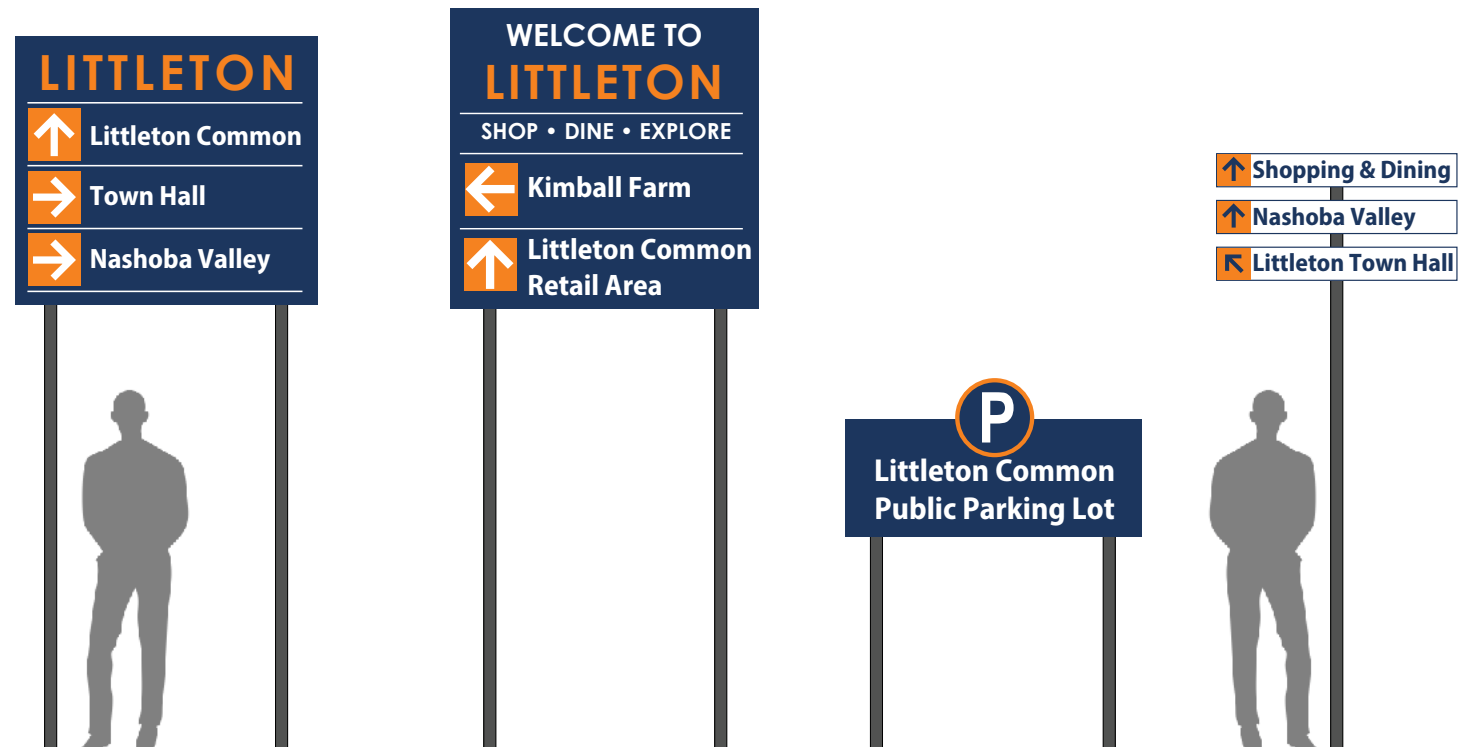
Downtown Concord, NH has pedestrian-oriented wayfinding signage in the historic downtown that includes the number of minutes to reach each destination by foot

Source: <https://twitter.com/BrentToderian/status/971842182742122496/photo/2>

Wayfinding Signage - Route 2A, Great Road, King Road

HIGH PRIORITY

- Purpose: Motorist-oriented wayfinding signs provide orientation and guidance at key locations. They reinforce district identity and create a uniform branding for the area. Signage intended for motorists has larger font size, typically does not include distances, and can be reinforced with two poles for extra support. Signs guide visitors on the Town's roadways to important destinations and key public facilities including schools, parks, trail heads, and government buildings.
- Materials:
 - » Sign Face - Painted metal sign with vinyl letters and digital painted graphics
 - » Sign Posts - Extruded metal



Proposed signage in Westport, CT

Source: <https://www.westport-news.com/news/article/New-wayfinding-signage-in-the-works-for-Westport-15054050.php>



4.4 Multiple Streetscape Improvements

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - Littleton Town Common and Great Road commercial and retail area
Origin		Joseph Laydon, Assistant Town Administrator Maren Toohill, AICP, Town Planner First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback Littleton Business Association LRRP Phase One Business Survey
Budget		Large Budget (\$200,000+)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years) - 6-24 months planning, 24-48 months implementation
Risk		Low Risk – Streetscape improvements is not deemed as a risky use of funds
Key Performance Indicators		The ability to successfully complete a variety of sidewalk and roadway safety improvement projects
Partners & Resources		Town of Littleton Planning Department, Town of Littleton Department of Public Works, MassDOT, Littleton Business Association

Placemaking

Along Stevens Street will create a gathering point and foster a sense of pride in the community through public participation



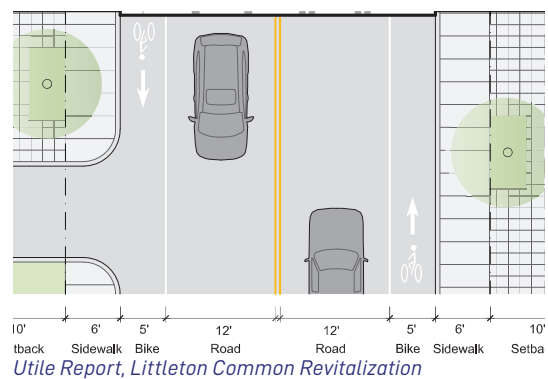
Crosswalks

Throughout the study area will provide more comfortable options for people accessing local businesses on foot



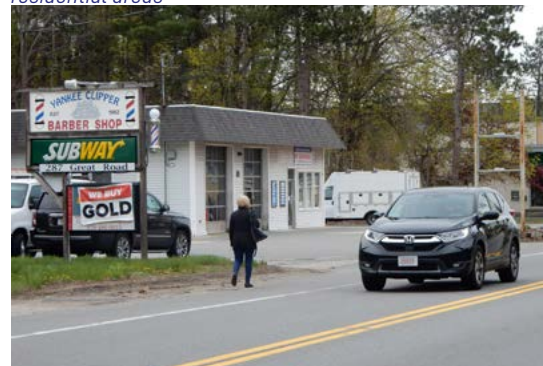
Bike Lanes + Bike Parking

Along Great Road will encourage alternative methods of transportation for locals and visitors to access Great Road businesses



Sidewalk Gaps

Need to be filled in throughout the study area, which will encourage foot traffic between businesses and residential areas



Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- During the Phase One LRRP business survey, 46% of respondents indicated that they were Very Dissatisfied or Dissatisfied with the "condition of public spaces, streets, and sidewalks"
 - » Very Dissatisfied: 13%
 - » Dissatisfied: 33%
- During the Phase One LRRP business survey, 62% of respondents indicated that "improvement of streetscape and sidewalks" as a tool to "revitalize the physical environment, atmosphere, and access in commercial districts" was either Important or Very Important
 - » Important: 27%
 - » Very Important: 35%
- During the Phase One LRRP business survey, respondents indicated the following impacts as a result of COVID-19 related shutdowns and restrictions
 - » 75% reported a decline in revenue
 - » 73% reported reduced operating hours or capacity
 - » 59% reported an incurred expense to implement safety measures
- Developing safe and comfortable **sidewalks, bike lanes, intersection redesigns, and placemaking** will encourage pedestrian activity and increase foot traffic - which will drive sales at local stores and increase revenues, helping folks climb out of the economic slump that was a direct result of COVID-19

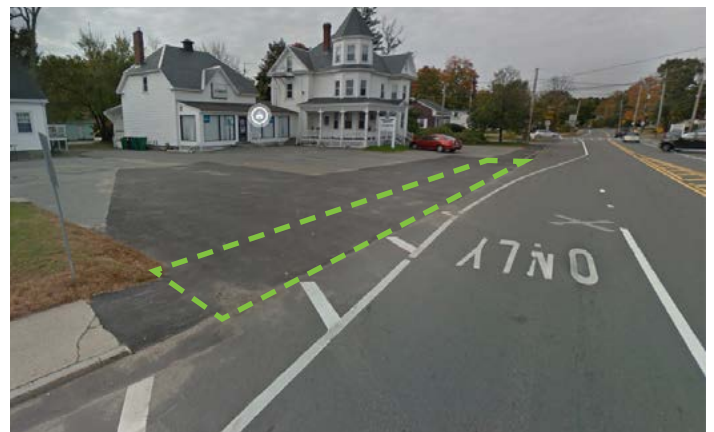
Action Items

- Review Littleton Common Revitalization Roadmap (Utile) report and determine which recommendations are being prioritized for funding, design, and construction as part of this report
- Develop an in-house study or retain an outside expert to help:
 - » **Placemaking:** Implement placemaking and sidewalk / streetscape redesigns at the intersection of Stevens Street by the veterinarians office
 - » **Crosswalks:** Review the proposed crosswalk locations within the Utile report and stripe new crosswalks at these locations (requires coordination efforts with MassDOT)
 - » **Sidewalks:** Identify sidewalk gaps, prioritize a list of sidewalks to be constructed / repaired, develop cost estimates and begin the sidewalk repair and reconstruction process

- » **Bike Lanes + Bike Parking:** Design and stripe bike lanes along Great Road (requires coordination with MassDOT) and solicit input on bike rack locations and install bicycle parking racks

Process

- Communicate the intentions and proposed outcomes of the streetscape improvement projects with local property owners and the public
- Ensure a mix of placemaking, crosswalk striping, sidewalk repair and replacement, and bike lanes and bike parking are included in the communications, designs, and funding requests
- Work in conjunction with the Littleton Business Association to communicate with property owners the proposed changes and seek feedback on the design
- Include MassDOT to discuss proposals on any and all state-controlled roadways
- Prioritize each sidewalk and crosswalk project - during this prioritization process, examine:
 - » The location of and distance from existing crosswalks
 - » High-crash locations or locations with noted historic low rates of compliance among drivers yielding to pedestrians
 - » Locations where additional features like a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon may be located
- Work with property owners and developers to recommend (or perhaps require) private funding of certain lengths of new sidewalks or spur sidewalk extensions that connect to private developments



The First Baptist Church parking lot has an overly generous curb cut and no sidewalk delineation

Next Steps: Placemaking

- Involve the public in identifying ideal placemaking strategies
- Generate a plan for the redesign of the sidewalk, curb, benches, and bike parking area
- Invite the public to participate in-person, provide art supplies, block off a small handful of parking spots, and create a community-atmosphere around the areas placemaking redesign goals
- Dedicate funding, work with contractors, and implement the redesign

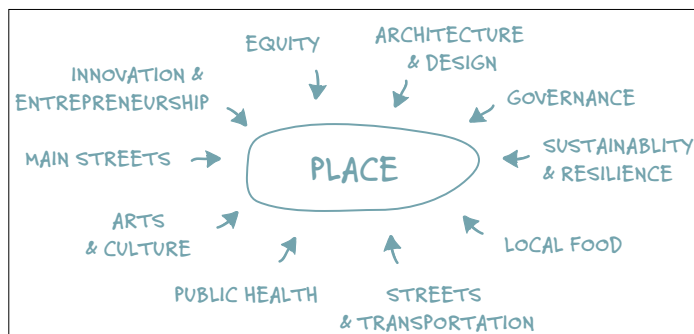
The area proposed for a placemaking insertion / sidewalk redesign is the corner of Stevens Street and Route 2A



This photo provided by Neighborways Design



What makes a successful place is not any one thing -- it's a layered variety of elements that are ultimately built and designed around people



Next Steps: Bicycle Parking Racks

- Identify critical bicycle parking locations, seek public input on proposed locations
- Dedicate funding to purchasing and installation of new bike racks
- Ensure a variety of the different Tiers of Bike Racks are included
- Provide bike racks on buses and shuttle buses
- Purchase equipment and ensure secure installation (theft proof concrete footings, etc.)
- Monitor their use and fix any damage or vandalism as soon as it is reported

Consider requiring Bicycle Parking in Zoning Ordinances

- For example, the City of Providence, RI requires long term and short term bicycle parking in its Zoning Ordinance for new development and redevelopment projects depending on use

The Three Tiers of Bicycle Parking

TIER	EXPLANATION	POTENTIAL LOCATIONS
I	Short-term bicycle Parking	Parks, Town Beach, Retail / Restaurant Locations, Littleton common
II	Covered Medium-term Bicycle Parking	Schools, Large Employment Centers, Train Station
III	Covered Long-term / Secure-indoor Bicycle Parking	Apartment and Condominium buildings (indoors)

"Inverted-U" style racks are the gold standard for short-term bicycle parking



Source: <https://cyclesafe.com/bike-parking/bike-racks/classic-bike-u-rack/>

Next Steps: Crosswalks

This diagram was pulled directly from the Littleton Common Revitalization Road Map published in January 2019. The project team heartily endorses reducing the distance between crosswalks and striping new, high visibility crosswalks at the following locations. (Requires coordination efforts with MassDOT.)



PROPOSED CROSSWALK LOCATIONS

Next Steps: Sidewalks

The following list of sidewalk gaps is not complete and should be used as a starting point:

1. From Curtis Septic Service, past CVS, to Il Forno Restaurant
2. In front of Wild Valley Books and the Sub Shoppe (remove informal parking)
3. Replace sidewalk at Aubuchon Hardware and Donelans
4. From the car dealership, past Subway, to the Dentists office
5. In front of the First Baptist Church (also formalize church parking, curb edge)

This sidewalk plaza near the veterinarian would benefit from the removal of the center granite curb and resetting of paver stones. This is an opportunity for additional placemaking as well



4.5 Host Additional Events on the Town Common

Category		Public Realm and Arts / Culture
Location		LRRP Study Area - Littleton Town Common and Great Road commercial and retail area
Origin		Joseph Laydon, Assistant Town Administrator Maren Toohill, AICP, Town Planner First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback Littleton Business Association Phase One LRRP Business Survey Littleton Cultural Council
Budget		Medium Budget - (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years). 3-6 months planning, 6-12 months implementation
Risk		Low Risk – The risk for this project category is relatively low
Key Performance Indicators		The number of hosted and curated events held in the Common area following the implementation of the program
Partners & Resources		Littleton Cultural Council, Littleton Business Association, Local Business Owners, The Town Economic Development Committee, The Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce, Town of Littleton Planning Department, Mass Cultural Council



Littleton has a beautiful Town Common which is a natural place to host cultural, arts, and other events for the public to enjoy

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impact

- Hosting events on the Town Common will drive much needed foot traffic to local businesses
- The Phase One LRRP business owner survey asked about approaches to attract and retain customers in commercial districts. One idea involved “more cultural events / activities to bring people into the district.” Respondents to the survey indicated support for this idea, including:
 - » 35% of business owner survey respondents indicated that cultural events / activities were **important**
 - » 22% of business owner survey respondents indicated that cultural events / activities were **very important**
- Mass Cultural Council estimates the economic impact of culture on the Commonwealth is 2.3 billion dollars per year
- The Mass Cultural Council states:
 - » Culture enriches community
 - » Culture embraces everyone
 - » Culture drives growth and opportunity
 - » Culture empowers a new creative generation

Action Items

- Identify events ideas and share them with various town departments to solicit feedback
- A survey of the Littleton community indicated suggestions for:
 - » Ethnic festivals
 - » Outdoor music concert series
 - » Public Art
- Dedicate funding, plan and market the event
- Record attendance and feedback to track progress against future events

Process

- Create a schedule of a variety of events held throughout the year
- Include concerts, art show, book festival, movies, seasonal (winter) activities, family-friendly activities

(story hours, kids music events, etc) and fitness classes, etc.

- Include sculpture, murals, and other public art in the common area
- Consider re-purposing vacant spaces for art centers
- Consider a pop-up beer garden (note: this has recently been permitted on state land at the Rose Kennedy Greenway and Paul Dudley White Bike Path along the Esplanade)
- Decorate green signal cabinets and electric boxes around town
- Hang baskets of flowers and barrels of flowers all around the common and sidewalks along Great Road
- Work with a variety of organizers to ensure a broad array of successful events, including: local arts organizations, cultural groups, performance groups, school clubs / youth clubs, local gyms / trainers, local restaurants, caterers, and food trucks
- Identify town department staff responsible for leading the planning and promotional effort
- Identify materials the Town can provide or rent out for events, such as additional trash cans, electrical hook-up, stage materials, etc.
- Create a centralized location on the Town's website to apply and see the events calendar

Event Considerations

- Work with Town staff, committed event organizers, and local committees, groups, and clubs, and discuss the following questions:
 - » How will people reserve the space? Can the Town rent the space and charge a fee?
 - » What fees will be charged? How will funds be used?
 - » Can food and beer sales occur on the site?
 - » Who will be point person on the day of the event to answer questions and ensure success of each event?

4.6 Town Hall to Hire an Economic Development Director

Category		Admin Capacity
Location		Littleton Town Hall
Origin		Joseph Laydon, Assistant Town Administrator Maren Toohill, AICP, Town Planner
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000 - \$200,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years). 3-6 months to post the position and start the search, 6-9 months to bring on a new hire
Risk		Low Risk – The risk for this project category is relatively low
Key Performance Indicators		The ability to successfully hire a person to administer COVID-19 relief funds
Partners & Resources		Town of Littleton Planning Department, Town of Littleton Select Board, Economic Development Committee



Littleton Town Hall

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impact

- Hiring a staff person to administer COVID-19 relief funds will allow for the funds to be spent more quickly, directly benefiting the various recipients of the funds
- The Phase One LRRP business owner survey respondents indicated that 75% of business owners experienced a decline in revenue as a direct result of COVID-19

Action Items

- Write a job description, post the job, interview candidates and hire a person to fill the role
- Identify the role and responsibilities of the new position within the Town's organizational structure

Process

- Determine if the new position would be part- or full-time
- Town to approve request for Economic Development Director
- Identify salary for Economic Development Director
- Identify sources for funding the new position including ARPA funds
- Develop a new job posting for new position
- Develop a list of prioritized projects for Economic Development Director

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

Raleigh is moving forward with ARPA-funded projects to combat the economic downturn that was a direct result of COVID-19:

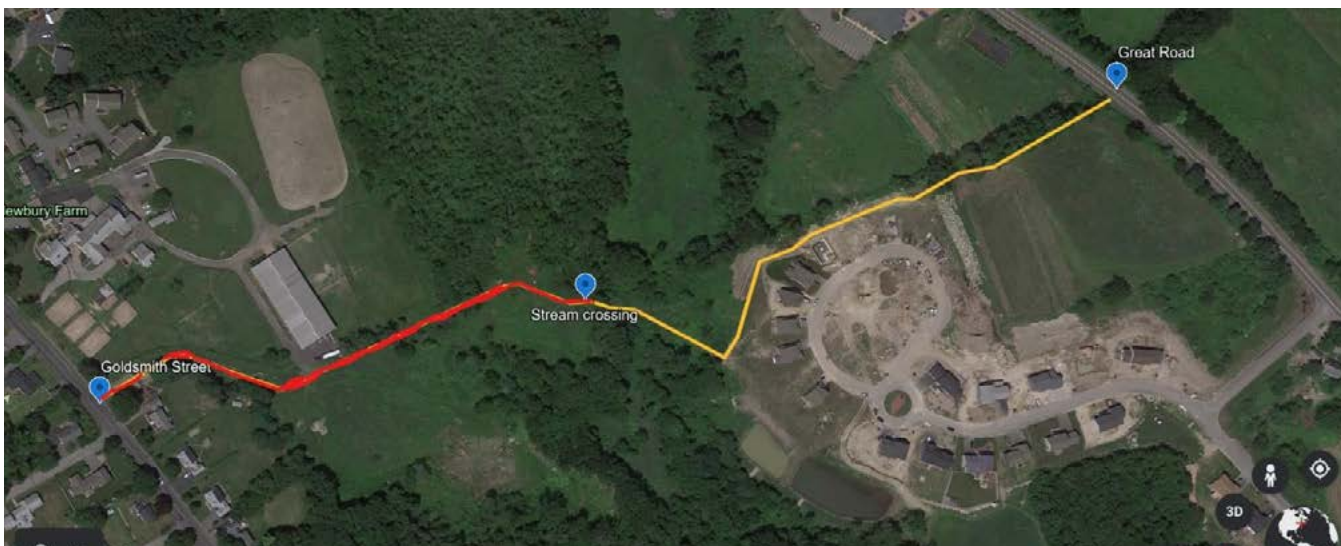
- \$400,000 in "light and sound improvements in downtown Raleigh to mitigate COVID-19 transmission by promoting more outdoor space usage"
- \$200,000 for a grant pool which "local businesses impacted by COVID-19 can apply for financial aid"

- \$250,000 will fund the "development of an ice rink in downtown Raleigh" that is anticipated to contribute to spillover economic activity in the area
- \$230,000 will be used to "fund a downtown economic development study in collaboration with the Downtown Raleigh Alliance."
- \$230,000 will fund "two new temporary fiscal analyst positions to manage federal grant compliance reports over approximately five years."

<https://indyweek.com/news/wake/raleigh-american-rescue-plan-funds/>

4.7 Complete Construction of the Couper-Wellington Trail

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - Littleton Town Common and Great Road commercial and retail area
Origin		Joseph Laydon, Assistant Town Administrator Maren Toohill, AICP, Town Planner First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback Littleton Business Association Phase One LRRP Business Survey
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000 - \$200,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years). 3-6 months planning, 6-18 months implementation
Risk		Low Risk – The risk for this project category is relatively low
Key Performance Indicators		The ability to successfully complete the trail between the two private developments and Great Road
Partners & Resources		Town of Littleton Economic Development Committee, Private Developers, Town of Littleton Planning Department, Contractors, additional Town committees or departments as needed



The Wellington trail in Red -- The Couper Trail in Yellow

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impact

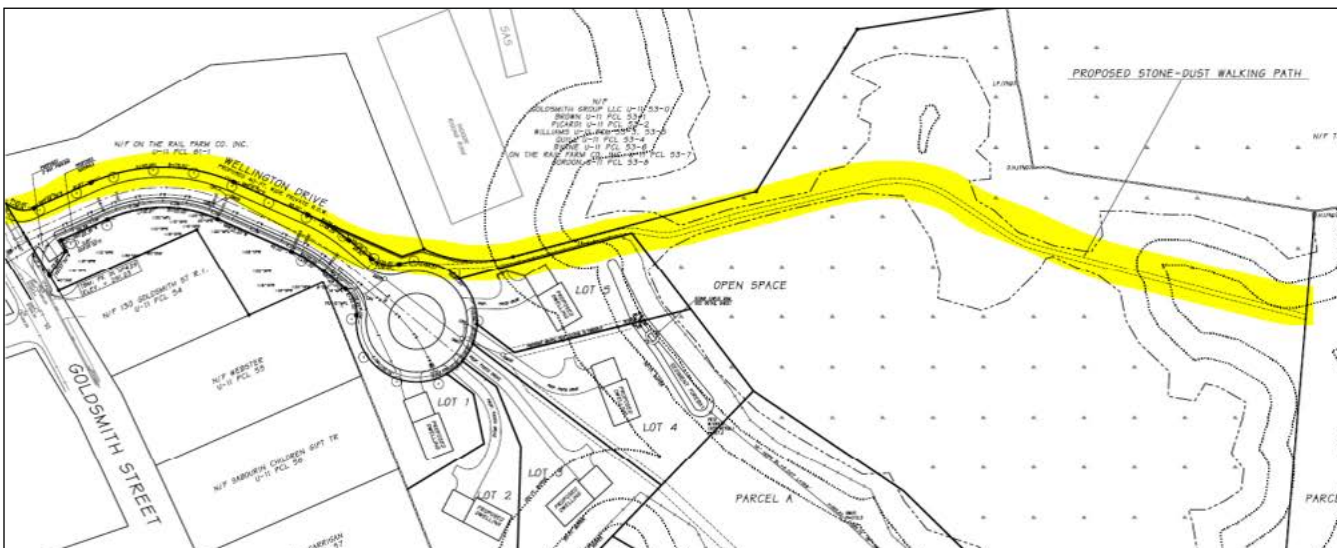
- The trail will allow folks to travel by foot or bicycle to Great Road
- The trail will connect to the relatively densely populated Long Lake neighborhood
- The trail has tremendous support already as documented by the MassTrails grant process
- The trail will drive much needed foot traffic to Great Road businesses
- During the Phase One LRRP business survey, 94% of respondents reported being impacted by COVID-19:
 - » 75% reported a decline in revenue
 - » 73% reported reduced operating hours or capacity
 - » 59% reported an incurred expense to implement safety measures

Process

- Build off recent successes and momentum:
 - » A bridge over a stream has been approved to connect the two trails with CPC funding at the Spring 2021 Town Meeting
 - » Work with existing stakeholders to move the project forward
- Determine project boundaries and scope of work
- Include wayfinding signage in scope of work
- Town to secure funding and develop schedule for construction
- Town to receive and review RFP submissions from contractors and select contractor to construct work
- Town to oversee contractor work and schedule

Action Items

- Examine portions of the trail for paving vs. stonedust surface application
- Work with stakeholders to complete the process
- Work with MassTrails grant programs to secure funding to build the trail



Detail plan of the Couper Trail

4.8 Redesign the Intersection of Goldsmith Street at Stevens Street

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - Littleton Town Common and Great Road commercial and retail area
Origin		Joseph Laydon, Assistant Town Administrator Maren Toohill, AICP, Town Planner First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback
Budget		Large Budget (\$200,000+)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years). 6-18 months planning, 18-48 months implementation
Risk		Low Risk – The intersection is in need of redesign
Key Performance Indicators		The ability to successfully plan and design a safer and more functional intersection
Partners & Resources		Littleton Bike-Ped Committee, Littleton Transportation Advisory Committee, Town of Littleton Planning Department, MassDOT



Existing conditions at the intersection of Goldsmith Street at Stevens Street at King Street

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impact

- Simplifying the intersection movements, reducing the curb radius, shortening the pedestrian crossing distances, daylighting some areas and creating a sense of place will encourage bicyclists to ride through here and enjoy downtown
- During the Phase One LRRP business survey, 94% of respondents reported being impacted by COVID-19:
 - » 75% reported a decline in revenue
 - » 73% reported reduced operating hours or capacity
 - » 59% reported an incurred expense to implement safety measures

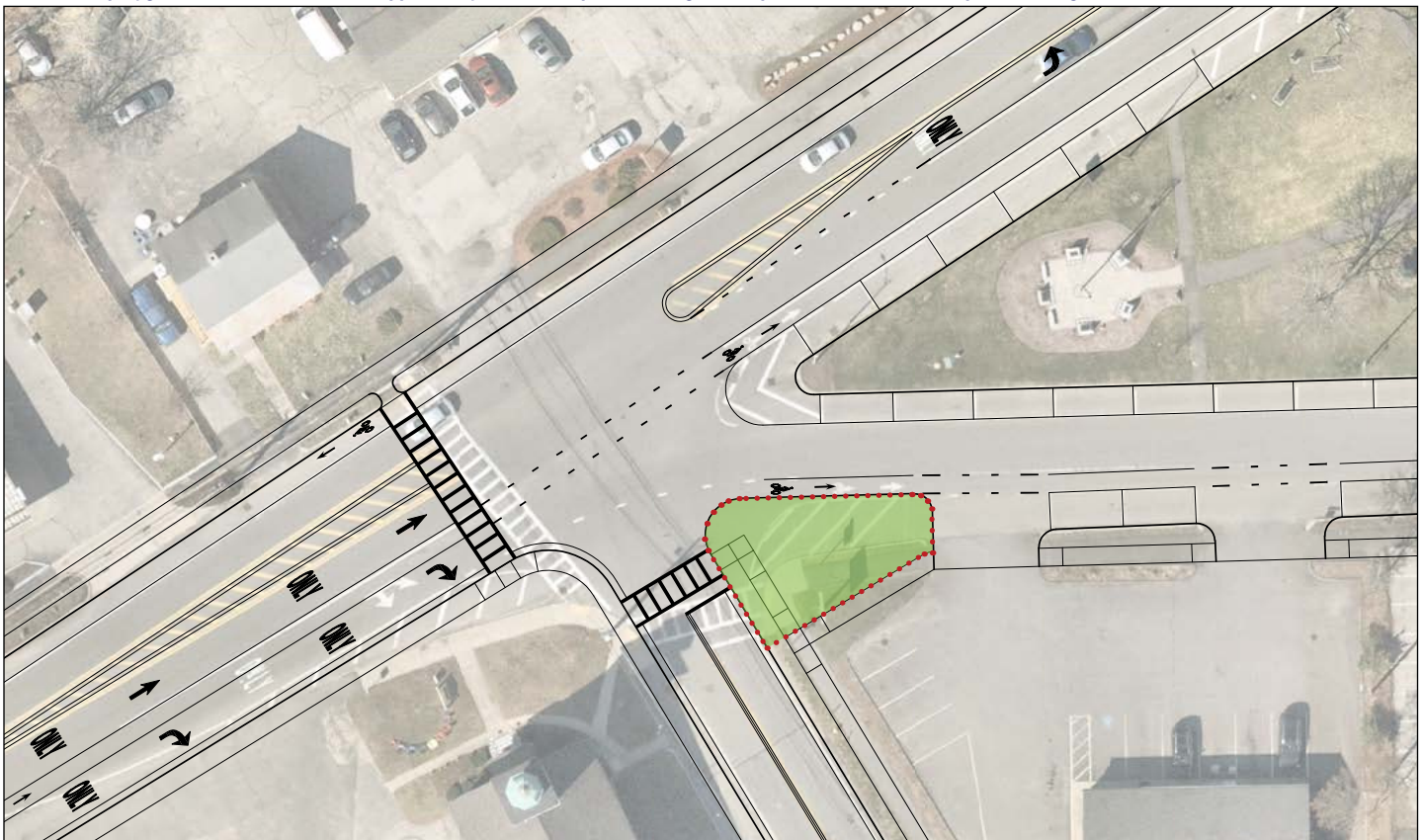
Action Items

- Conduct an in-house redesign or retain a consultant to aid in the redesign of this intersection
- Work with stakeholders, local businesses, and the public to flush out the design

Process

- Ensure pedestrian crossing distances are reduced
- Ensure comfortable and ADA-compliant sidewalks and pedestrian curb ramps are included
- Ensure bicycle lane includes through lane and turn dashed line stenciling
- Town to secure funding and develop a schedule for design and construction
- Town to release RFP for design or conduct in-house
- Town to select design consultant if using out-of-house services
- Town to review and approve final design
- Town to receive and review RFP submissions from contractors and select contractor to construct work
- Town to oversee contractor work and schedule

The shaded polygon below is an additional opportunity for further placemaking to compliment recommended placemaking on the other end of Stevens Street



A potential concept plan rendering for discussing goals of the redesign (NOTE: for discussion / planning purposes only)

4.9 Determine the Highest and Best Use for 12 Robinson Road

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - Littleton Town Common and Great Road commercial and retail area
Origin		Joseph Laydon, Assistant Town Administrator Maren Toohill, AICP, Town Planner
Budget		Small Budget (less than \$50,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years). 3-9 months planning
Risk		Low Risk – A simple feasibility study is low risk
Key Performance Indicators		The ability to generate a report that successfully assesses best use of this Town-owned property
Partners & Resources		Littleton Historic Commission, Town of Littleton Planning Department, additional committees as needed



12 Robinson Road - a Town-owned property

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impact

- Thoughtful redevelopment of this historic property could drive additional foot traffic to downtown businesses
- During the Phase One LRRP business survey, 94% of respondents reported being impacted by COVID-19:
 - » 75% reported a decline in revenue
 - » 73% reported reduced operating hours or capacity
 - » 59% reported an incurred expense to implement safety measures

Action Items

- Study in-house or retain an expert to study the market dynamics and potential uses of this property
- Work with stakeholders, local businesses, and the public to seek input on the planning process
- Register the building with the historic commission if required

Process

- Town to release RFP for study or conduct in-house
- Town to select design consultant if using out-of-house services
- Town to review and approve final study findings
- Town to seek funding for study recommendations



An aerial view of the 12 Robinson Road property shows the parcel lines

4.10 Develop Additional Outdoor Dining Opportunities

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - Littleton Town Common and Great Road commercial and retail area
Origin		Joseph Laydon, Assistant Town Administrator Maren Toohill, AICP, Town Planner
Budget		Small Budget (less than \$50,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years). 3-9 months planning, 9 - 18 months implementation
Risk		Low Risk – Outdoor dining is family friendly and very popular
Key Performance Indicators		The ability to successfully design and implement an outdoor dining program for local businesses
Partners & Resources		Littleton Business Association, Town of Littleton Planning Department, Local Restaurant owners, additional Town departments or committees as needed



Space could be dedicated here for more people-focused activities like outdoor dining instead of just catering to motor vehicle traffic.

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impact

- Outdoor dining allows those who aren't comfortable eating indoors to enjoy a restaurant meal, and increases sales and revenues at local restaurants
- During the Phase One LRRP business survey, 94% of respondents reported being impacted by COVID-19:
 - » 75% reported a decline in revenue
 - » 73% reported reduced operating hours or capacity
 - » 59% reported an incurred expense to implement safety measures

Action Items

- Identify lead Town Department
- Conduct outreach and coordination with restaurant/shop owners
- Develop temporary pilot program for outdoor dining areas

Process

- Identify restaurant/shop owners willing to participate in program
- Town to identify roles of public realm and private realm including potential for public-private partnership
- Confirm area to implement pilot outdoor dining area(s)
- Coordinate with restaurant/shop owners
- Develop schedule for implementation of pilot program
- Identify elements and materials of pilot outdoor dining program:
 - » Tables and chairs
 - » Lighting
 - » Heaters
 - » Barriers
 - » Signage and striping
 - » Parking
- Town to secure funding for pilot program
- Town to evaluate performance of pilot program and determine if treatments will become permanent or implement further on a seasonal basis



Leonard Street in Belmont, MA offers a robust outdoor dining options in (temporary) formerly parallel street parking spaces

Source: <https://www.bostonchefs.com/rundown/heated-outdoor-dining-boston-cambridge-fall-winter/>

Additional Proposed Projects

The following proposed project will help bolster the other project recommendations from this report.

PROJECT RECOMMENDATION	TIMELINE	DETAILS
Update the sign by-law	Mid Term	Since the COVID-19 pandemic began there has been no enforcement of the bylaw. Update the sign bylaw to encourage signs that fit within the character of Littleton but allow advertising of businesses that are open with flexible or reduced hours. Allow temporary signage for a set amount of time.

5.0 Additional Research + Funding Sources

5.0 Additional Research & Funding Sources

Filling Empty Storefronts

The project team spoke with experts in the region about the tough choices facing business owners, building owners, and residents of Littleton and elsewhere in the region. The following summary captures the critical high-level takeaways from our interviews and research.

Building Age & Owner Disincentive

Low rents have historically drawn entrepreneurs to available storefronts in Littleton. Rents have remained low over the years in comparison to the sky-rocketing rents of Greater Boston. While the rents have remained low, the building owners have made few investments and repairs to building structures, facades, and mechanical systems. In New England the cost of rehabilitation is high; landlords who don't have the necessary capital to invest in costly rehabilitation are disincentivized because they would have to raise rents dramatically to cover the costs. Since many business owners are not able to shoulder the burden of these increased rents, the result is aged building stock in need of rehabilitation. The bottom line is that landlords aren't going to invest if they do not think they'll make their money back. To add to the cycle of disinvestment, a new business owner seeking a brick and mortar space to establish a lively retail store or eatery is unlikely to set up shop in an older space with unreliable mechanical systems or an outdated, aesthetically unpleasing, or crumbling facade or building envelope.

Finally, most of the traditional grant funding programs available are specifically designed to help the *business* owner. There are few precedents of established funding mechanisms to help the *building* owner make improvements. This section of the report attempts to establish a funding mechanism precedent for a building owner.

Possible Solutions & Partnerships

The goal of filling vacant commercial store fronts requires us to examine how to entice building owners to make investments in rehabilitation. Options include zero- or low-interest loans from local banks, local / state / federal grants, establishment of a tax abatement initiative, or encourage landlords to forgo the first 3-6 months of rent for a business owner to make improvements on their own. Utilizing one or more of these possible solutions, the remainder of this section of the report will serve as a blueprint for town planners / economic development staff to start a local grant initiative to incentivize building owners to make much needed repairs.

King Street Common

Support of rezoning for the former IBM campus to allow significant redevelopment of that site would invite new customers to the area. Additionally, supporting the proposal from Northern Bank for the redevelopment of 5 parcels on

Great Road would provide the first redevelopment that could be a catalyst for other redevelopment projects in the study area.

Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce and Littleton Business Association

The Town should utilize existing relationships with the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Littleton Business Association to help promote newly rehabilitated storefronts. The Chamber and the Association may have staff time or organizational capacity to:

- Help organize and staff a business information session to help garner interest
- Collaborate on a regional effort to bring in a pop-up retail or craft / artist tenant for a special Holiday Event or other retail
- Formally share knowledge of grants, timing, funding cycles, and expert small business advice

Incentive Programs

Facade revitalization programs have found success elsewhere using a broad array of actions and guidelines. Incentive programs encourage building owners and business owners / tenants to make storefront and structural improvements through the use of financial incentives such as a zero- or low-interest loan, matching grant, tax incentive, and design assistance.

Zero- or Low-Interest Loan

The Town could establish a pool of funds **specifically designated for facade or other structural improvements to existing commercial properties in the Littleton Town Common area**. The terms of the loan would require that building owners pay back in full over 5, 7, or 10 years depending on the size of the loan. Written into the loan agreement, if applicable, should be the opportunity for some or all of the loan to be forgiven in the future if a particular grant or donation comes in that can explicitly be used for that purpose.

Matching Grant

The Town of Littleton could require a matching dollar amount from building owners to receive the funds for revitalization. For example, the Town could provide 70% of the costs from an established funding pool for a given agreed-upon structural enhancement, while the building owner would have to provide the remaining 30%. The matching grant requires that building owners have some "skin in the game" and encourages a concerted level of effort and contribution.

Tax Incentive / Disincentive

Town staff could implement a program that allows commercial property owners to pursue structural and facade upgrades and in turn receive a reduced property tax burden for that tax year. The program would require that commercial property owners get an itemized quote from a licensed contractor that details eligible improvements to be made. Agreement between the Town, the building owner, and the contractor would also be required prior to any work being performed. Only eligible activities will be funded. Town staffing levels would need to be increased to support this program.

Design Assistance

Design assistance ensures that any modifications made to a historic structure or a structure within a historic district meets established guidelines. These programs are often orchestrated by a group of residents, business owners, or government officials with a strong interest in local commercial area improvements. The Littleton Historic Commission could be tasked with providing support for this program recommendation.

Successful Tactics

- Work with property owners, business owners, and folks who contribute to the funding pool to write out a statement that establishes clear goals of the program and includes a timeline. Contact local banks, The Point, and the future developer of the IBM campus, and the Chamber of Commerce and the Littleton Business Association to seek a contribution to the revitalization fund.
- Develop clear criteria to determine eligibility. Be sure to include both building owners and business owners who have written permission from building owners to make structural / facade improvements.
- Establish a list of clearly communicated eligible activities (and ineligible activities) that can be pursued with program funding.

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

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

- Review designs before beginning construction. Require a professional to draw up some alternatives for the facade improvement project and check them against area historic district requirements. The Littleton Historical Commission should be included in this project idea.

Additional Recommendations

- ARPA funding appears to specifically allow the hiring of a staff person to coordinate an ARPA-funded revitalization program that specifically targets privately-owned commercial structure enhancement around the Littleton Town Common / Great Road area.
- Some funding resources may require ADA compatible entrances, while others may stipulate fire code upgrades or changes. Research the impacts of including a Code Assessment requirement in the funding program.
- Establish relationships early on and include state and local elected or appointed officials in your letters.

Funding Sources

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

American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA)

Littleton is slated to receive \$2.9 million in ARPA funding according to the Massachusetts Municipal Association. The table on the following page shows an approximation of the amount of ARPA funding likely to be received by each Town around Littleton. ARPA provided roughly \$385 million to be split between 313 Massachusetts communities with populations under 50,000. The Baker Administration received the first 50% of that money on May 28, 2021 and shortly after sent a letter to municipalities that includes details on how they can get their ARPA money deposited into local coffers. ARPA funding can be used for small businesses and COVID-19 related economic impacts. ARPA Funding can be used for direct relief related to COVID-19 impacts through the use of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CLFRF) in the following five core areas:

1. **Respond to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19 or its negative economic impacts** - this includes COVID-19 mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral health, and certain public health and safety staff
2. **Economic impacts of the public health emergency** - these include efforts to mitigate economic harm to workers, households, small businesses, affected industries, and the public sector
3. **Lost public sector revenue** - payments may be used to fund government services to the extent of revenue reductions from the pandemic
4. **Premium pay for essential workers** - funds may be used for additional support for those who have faced the greatest health risks because of their service in critical infrastructure sectors
5. **Water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure** - recipients may invest to improve access to clean drinking water, support wastewater and storm water infrastructure, and expand access to broadband internet:
 - » Wide range of eligible water and sewer infrastructure projects – specifically, all that would otherwise be eligible to receive financial assistance through the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) or Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)
 - » Broadband projects must provide service to unserved and underserved households and businesses. Eligible projects are expected to be designed to deliver, upon project completion, service that reliably meets or exceeds symmetrical upload and download speeds of 100 Mbps

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

- Direct COVID-related costs (testing, contact tracing, etc.)
- Public health and safety staff
- Hiring state and local government staff up to the number of employees to pre-pandemic levels
- Assistance to unemployed workers, including job training
- Assistance to households
- Small business assistance
- Nonprofit assistance
- Aid to impacted industries
- Expenses to improve efficacy of public health or economic relief programs
- Survivor's benefits

TOWN	POPULATION	PROJECTED ARPA FUNDING
Littleton	10,035	\$2,992,414
Ayer	8,014	\$2,398,145
Groton	11,386	\$3,313,688
Westford	24,296	\$7,261,439
Harvard	6,610	\$1,937,008
Acton	23,662	\$6,923,487

Source: <https://41g41s33vxd2vc05w415s1e-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/MMA-American-Rescue-Plan-Aid-Estimates-Updated-March-12-2021.pdf>

- CLFRF funding cannot be used to:
- Replenish a "rainy day" fund or other reserve fund
- Make a deposit to a pension fund

Additional Funding Sources for Public and Private Realm Improvement Projects

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

Building Improvements Funding Sources

Hometown Grants

T-Mobile provides grants up to \$50,000 per town and may be used to rebuild or refresh community spaces, including historic buildings. Towns with populations under 50,000 are eligible to apply.

Underutilized Properties Program

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community One-Stop for Growth

MassDevelopment

This funding source is for large scale projects. It could be used to help address larger buildings in a target area that have more significant issues related to deterioration, disinvestment, or ADA-compliance. Bundling this program and a few of the other more specialized grants could enable a municipality to address both large scale building interior renovations and smaller scale properties and lower cost facade improvements with a separate improvement program at the same time.

Collaborative Workspace Program

MassDevelopment

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

Community Preservation Act

This source only applies in those communities that have adopted the CPA. CPA funds may be used to acquire, preserve, and rehabilitate and/or restore historic assets. A municipality could tie this to the design guidelines for a façade improvement program and consider, for example, acquiring a downtown historic building, updating the façade and ground floor for commercial use, and adding an elevator to allow for housing on the upper floors.

Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund

Massachusetts Historical Commission

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

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

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

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

Wayfinding Funding Sources

Massachusetts Downtown Initiative

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community One-Stop for Growth

Department of Housing and Community Development

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

Commonwealth Places Program

MassDevelopment

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

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

Alternative Funding Programs

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

Local Banks and other Community Development Financial Institutions

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

Business Improvement District (BID) or Other Downtown District

Funds from a BID may be used for planters, trash and recycling

receptacles, sanitation and maintenance staff, graffiti removal, storefront facades, windows, doors, and sign maintenance, and a variety of other elements.

Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit

Massachusetts Historical Commission

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

Summary

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

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



Appendix

APPENDIX A - Funding Sources Spreadsheet

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

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

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

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

Closed Loop Infrastructure Fund	Maybe	Private	Closed Loop Partners	See grant.	Municipalities and private companies	Provides below-market rate loans to fund replicable, scalable and sustainable recycling and circular economy infrastructure projects across collection, sortation, processing and new technologies.
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Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects	Funding Sector	Agency/ Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Planning Assistance Grants	Yes	Public	Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs	\$125,000	Municipalities and Regional Planning Agencies	To fund technical assistance and help communities undertake public process associated with creating plans and adopting land use regulations consistent with the Baker-Polito Administration's land conservation and development objectives including reduction of land, energy, and natural resource consumption, provision of sufficient and diverse housing, and mitigation of/preparation for climate change.
Regional Pilot Project Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Office of Business Development	\$250,000	Partnerships of municipalities, public entities, or 501(c) organizations	To fund projects that support businesses and communities in stabilizing/growing their regional economy with one or more of the recovery efforts under Partnerships for recovery. no capital-related projects will be funded.
MassWorks Infrastructure Program	Yes	Public	Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development	See grant.	Municipalities	The most flexible source of capital funds to municipalities and other eligible public entities primarily for public infrastructure projects that support and accelerate housing production, spur private development, and create jobs - particularly for production of multi-family housing in appropriately located walkable, mixed-use districts.
Community Compact IT Grant	Yes	Public	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	\$200,000	Municipalities	This is a competitive grant program focused on driving innovation and transformation at the local level via investments in technology. support the implementation of innovative IT projects by funding related one-time capital needs such as technology infrastructure, upgrades and/or purchases of equipment or software. Incidental or one-time costs related to the capital purchase such as planning, design, installation, implementation and initial training are eligible.
Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency/FEMA	See grant.	Property Owners	To reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes, and other structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

MA Downtown Initiative Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$25,000	Municipalities	Technical assistance for downtown revitalization in 6 categories
TDI Creative Catalyst	Yes	Public	Mass Development	\$40,000	Individuals and organizations in current and graduated Transformative Development Initiative Districts	To support public-facing projects that enhance local arts and cultural infrastructure and contribute to economic revitalization - including public art, placemaking, and stabilization of organizations and creative business collectives
Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency/FEMA	See grant.	Property Owners	Hazard mitigation projects reducing the risks from disasters and natural hazards
Commonwealth Places	Yes	Public	Mass Development	\$300,000	Municipalities	To help community partners prepare public spaces and commercial districts to best serve their population during COVID-19 social distancing and the phased reopening of the economy, including improvements to sidewalks, curbs, streets, on-street parking spaces and off-street parking lots in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce in their communities. This program complements the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) Shared Streets & Spaces.
Community Preservation Act	Yes	Public	Community Preservation Trust Fund/State Department of Revenue (DOR)	See grant.	Only communities that have adopted the Community Preservation Act are eligible to receive CPA Trust Fund matching funds annually.	To preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities.
Partnerships Matching Funds Program	Yes	Public	Department of Conservation and Recreation	\$25,000	State park friends and advocacy groups, civic and community organizations, institutions, businesses, municipal governments, dedicated individuals	To support capital investments at DCR-owned state parks, beaches, and other reservations.

Restaurant Revitalization Fund	Yes	Public	Small Business Administration	See grant.	Eligible entities include restaurants, food stands / trucks / carts, caterers, bars / saloons / lounges / taverns, snack and non alcoholic beverage bars, bakeries, brewpubs, breweries / microbreweries, wineries, distilleries, inns, and licensed facilities of a beverage alcohol producer. Priority group: Small businesses that are at least 51% owned by one or more individuals who are women / veterans / socially and economically disadvantaged.	Funds may be used for specific expenses including rent, payroll, mortgage, debt, utility, business maintenance expenses, construction of outdoor seating, business supplies, business food and beverage expenses (including raw materials), covered supplier costs, and business operating expenses
BIZ-M-POWER	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation	\$20,000	Small businesses (i.e. employing 1-20 FTE employees, including 1 or more of whom owns the business, annual revenue not exceeding \$2,500,000) in brick-and-mortar (physical) establishment operating within Massachusetts	To assist low-income and moderate-income entrepreneurs with their acquisition, expansion, improvement or lease of a facility, purchase or lease of equipment, or with meeting other capital needs of a business.
Shared Streets and Spaces	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Transportation	\$200,000	Municipalities	To support the repurposing of streets, plazas, sidewalks, curbs, and parking areas to facilitate outdoor activities and community programming, including but not limited to facilities for eating, shopping, play, and community events and spaces for all ages.
Small Business Technical Assistance Grant	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation	\$85,000	501(c)3 organizations	To fund specific counseling and training programs that assist small businesses in securing new or increased financing for growth, providing digital grants (MGCC Program), establishing crowdfunding campaigns through the Biz-M-Power grant (MGCC Program), achieving stability and viability, creating/retaining jobs, increasing the economic vitality of the neighborhood, community, or region.

Economic Adjustment Assistance	Yes	Public	Economic Development Association	\$10,000,000	<p>Eligible applicants under the EAA program include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. Under the EAA program, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for profit entities. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.</p>	<p>EDA's ARPA EAA NOFO is designed to provide a wide-range of financial assistance to communities and regions as they respond to, and recover from, the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, including long-term recovery and resilience to future economic disasters. Under this announcement, EDA solicits applications under the authority of the Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program, which is flexible and responsive to the economic development needs and priorities of local and regional stakeholders. This is the broadest NOFO EDA is publishing under ARPA and any eligible applicant from any EDA Region may apply.</p>
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Competitive Tourism Grants	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$10,000,000	<p>For EDA Competitive Tourism Grants, eligible entities include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. 42 U.S.C. § 3122(4)(A); 13 C.F.R. § 300.3.</p>	<p>EDA's ARPA Tourism NOFO is designed to provide a wide-range of financial assistance to communities and regions to rebuild and strengthen their travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industry through various infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Under this NOFO, EDA solicits applications under the authority of the Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program, which is flexible and responsive to the economic development needs and priorities of local and regional stakeholders.</p> <p>EDA's travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation grants will be delivered through two components: (1) State Tourism Grants and (2) EDA Competitive Tourism Grants.</p>
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Build Back Better Regional Challenge	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$500,000	<p>Eligible applicants under this NOFO include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. Under this NOFO, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for profit entities. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.</p> <p>Through this American Rescue Plan Act Build Back Better Regional Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (ARPA BBBRC NOFO), EDA aims to assist communities and regions impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has caused, and continues to cause, economic injury to U.S. communities and regions in devastating and unprecedented ways. This ARPA BBBRC NOFO is designed as a two-phase competition to (1) help regions develop transformational economic development strategies and (2) fund the implementation of those strategies that will create and grow regional growth clusters. Such efforts will help regional economies recover from the pandemic and build economic diversity and resiliency to mitigate impacts of future economic disasters.</p> <p>In Phase 1, EDA will provide technical assistance grants to approximately 50-60 coalitions (through a lead institution). These coalitions will be considered “finalists” and the grants will be used by the finalists to prepare more detailed applications for transformational projects that benefit their respective geographic regions and are aligned around a holistic approach to building and scaling a strategic industry.</p> <p>In Phase 2, EDA will award each of the 20-30 finalist coalitions \$25-75 million (and potentially up to \$100 million) to fund the collection of projects they identified. The projects will be funded through grants to coalition members.</p>
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Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$6,000,000	See grant.	<p>The ARPA Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks NOFO is part of EDA's multi-phase effort to respond to the coronavirus pandemic as directed by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Specifically, this NOFO seeks to build regional economies for the future through two primary avenues: a) Statewide Planning and b) Research and Networks.</p> <p>Subject to the availability of funds, awards made under this NOFO will help develop coordinated state-wide plans for economic development and data, tools, and institutional capacity to evaluate and scale evidence-based economic development efforts, including through communities of practice and provision of technical assistance among existing and new EDA grantees.</p>
Regional Economic Development Organization Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Office of Business Development	See grant.	Eligible organizations shall be corporations, foundations, organizations or institutions that operate regionally and service 10 or more contiguous towns/cities. They must be exempt from federal taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code, and have a primary focus of economic development and perform the services required by MGL Chapter 23A Section 3J and 3K.	Grants should be used to assist entrepreneurs, small businesses, and business partners in order to stabilize and/or grow regional economy. They may not, however, be used to increase salaries or hire additional staff for the organization.
Hometown Grant Program	Yes	Private	T-Mobile	\$50,000	Towns with population <50,000	To build/rebuild/refresh community spaces that help foster local connections in town.
Greener Greater Boston Program	Yes	Private	Solomon Foundation/ Barr Foundation	\$20,000	Municipalities, Trail conservancies and non-profits	To fund preliminary design (for each stage of design), capacity building and operational support, and public engagement and implementation toward projects that enhance the beauty, utility, and accessibility of Greater Boston's greenways.

Nellie Leaman Taft Foundation Competitive Grants	Yes	Private	Nellie Leaman Taft Foundation	\$15,000	Non-profits 501 (c)(3) (small to mid sized) that benefit residents of greater Boston inside the Route 495 beltway	To seed funding for new ideas and initiatives, start-up and on-going support for grass roots organizations, and entrepreneurial projects that may enable an organization or its constituents to achieve greater self-sufficiency.
Seed Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$1,000	Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$100,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support groups launching new projects or starting to significantly change the direction of an existing project. Most often, groups have been working on the project less than a year and usually don't yet have much direct experience with implementing the idea.
Grow Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$4,000	Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$100,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support groups to deepen their work by further developing a community vision, lowering barriers to participation, identifying new stakeholders and working to bring more voices and lived experiences into core decision-making processes.
Young Leaders Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$6,000	Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$175,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support projects led by young leaders aged 15-25
Small Business Matching Grant	Yes	Private	NewVue Communities	\$5,000	22 North Central Massachusetts cities and towns from Athol to Harvard with a combined population of 240,000 (refer to https://newvuecommunities.org/cities-towns-we-serve/)	To support micro-enterprises (businesses with 5 or fewer employees) that need help with marketing and accounting.
William J. & Margery S. Barrett Fund	Yes	Private	Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation	See grant.	Nonprofit organizations, public agencies or community organizations that provide services to the residents of Adams, Cheshire or Savoy, MA.	To fund projects, programs, capital improvements and general operating support of initiatives that benefit the community in arts and culture, early childhood development, environment, and health and social services.
Central Berkshire Fund	Yes	Private	Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation	\$5,000	Nonprofit organizations, public agencies or community organizations that provide services to the residents of the communities of Becket, Cummington, Dalton, Hinsdale, Peru, Washington and Windsor.	To fund projects, programs, capital improvements and general operating support of initiatives that benefit the community in arts and culture, early childhood development, environment, and health and social services.

Merrimack Valley Municipal Business Development and Recovery Fund	Yes	Private	Essex County Community Foundation/Columbia Gas	\$2,000,000	City of Lawrence, the Town of Andover, and the Town of North Andover	To provide direct support (individual business support, general business promotions, technical assistance and business consultation services, economic development and planning) to the municipalities and their business communities (not businesses directly) impacted by the recent gas disaster in Andover, North Andover, and Lawrence
Efficiency and Regionalization grant program	No Longer Available	Public	Community Compact Cabinet	\$100,000	Municipalities, regional school districts, school districts	For governmental entities interested in implementing regionalization and other efficiency initiatives that allow for long-term sustainability. These grants provided funds for one-time or transition costs for municipalities, regional school districts, school districts considering forming a regional district or regionalizing services, regional planning agencies and councils of governments interested in such projects. Small capital purchases or improvements that are integral to the implementation of a functional program such as equipment or software; Technical assistance including consulting services, assistance in drafting contracts or other agreements; and Transition or project management costs, not to exceed one year.
MDAR Urban Agriculture Program	No Longer Available	Public	Mass Department of Agriculture	See grant.	Municipalities, Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3), Public or non-profit educational or public health institutions, Established urban farmer with more than three (3) years of commercial urban farming experience	To fund long-term, capital investments such as infrastructure improvements, building upgrades, purchase of computer software and systems, land procurement, and purchase of farm equipment to increase access of fresh, local produce in urban neighborhoods with a high concentration of low-moderate income residents
Cultural Facilities Fund (Systems Replacement)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council	See grant.	Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, and colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	For 20-year capital needs assessments of buildings and mechanical systems.

Coastal Resilience Grant Program	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management	\$1,000,000	Municipalities located within the Massachusetts coastal zone; Certified 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that own vulnerable coastal property that is open and accessible to the public	To provide financial and technical support for local and regional efforts to increase awareness and understanding of climate impacts, identify and map vulnerabilities, conduct adaptation planning, redesign and retrofit vulnerable public facilities and infrastructure, and restore shorelines to enhance natural resources and provide storm damage protection.
Housing Choice Capital Grant	No Longer Available	Public	Mass Housing Choice Initiative	See grant.	Housing Choice Communities	To plan and build the diverse housing stock located on publicly owned land, leasehold, easement or right-of-way, or are for the purchase of public land - includes pre-construction survey, design, engineering and construction costs, feasibility studies, land acquisition, etc.
Cultural Facilities Fund (Capital Grants)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council	See grant.	Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, and colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	For the acquisition, design, construction, repair, renovation, and rehabilitation of a cultural facility.
Cultural Facilities Fund (Feasibility and Technical Assistance Grants)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council	See grant.	Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, and colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	For the planning and assessment of a cultural facility.
Shuttered Venue Operators Grant	No Longer Available	Public	Small Business Administration	\$10,000,000	Businesses such as live venue operators or promoters, theatrical producers, live performing arts organization operators, museum operators, motion picture theater operators (including owners), and talent representatives.	Funds may be used for specific expenses including rent, payroll, mortgage, debt, utility, taxes and fees, administrative costs, advertising, production transportation, and capital expenditures related to producing a theatrical or live performing arts production.

Regional Pilot Project Grant	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Office of Business Development	\$250,000	Municipalities, public entities, or 501(c) organizations that are federally tax exempt under the Internal Revenue Code and intend to promote regional recovery from the economic impacts of COVID19	To support businesses and communities in stabilizing and/or growing their regional economy through solutions including (but not limited to) job creation, transportation, childcare, digital marketing and promotion efforts, digital business directories. This funding should not be used to fund projects or purposes for which there is already state or federal funding available (i.e. Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program, Paycheck Protection Program, Small Business Grant Relief programs). No capital-related projects will be funded through this program.
Real Estate Services Technical Assistance	No Longer Available	Public	MassDevelopment	\$10,000	Eligible applicants include municipal officials, planners, local stakeholders, and others.	Grants may be used toward technical assistance opportunities in Surplus Property Reuse (e.g. Constraints and Feasibility Analysis, Master Planning, Test Fits, RFP/Q Assistance) or Local District Management Implementation Technical Assistance (e.g. District Improvement Financing, Business Improvement District formation)
Business Equity COVID-19 Emergency Fund	No Longer Available	Private	Foundation for Business Equity	See grant.	Black and Latinx majority-owned (51% or more) businesses with revenues of at least \$250,000	Flexible loans may be used for working capital and other demonstrated business needs (e.g., salaries and wages, inventory, equipment, marketing, etc.)
Brownfields Redevelopment Site Assessment Fund	Maybe	Public	MassDevelopment	\$100,000		To finance the environmental assessment of brownfield sites in Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) of the Commonwealth
Urban Agenda Grant Program	Maybe	Public	Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development	See grant.	Cross sector consortiums and coalitions	Funding to local partnerships to implement projects that are based on collaborative work models with the goal of advancing economic progress. Typically, Early Stage Strategy Development and Strategy Implementation by an Existing Cross-Sector Consortium or Coalition

Community Development Block Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$1,350,000	Municipalities with a population of under 50,000 that do not receive CDBG funds directly from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Municipalities may also apply on behalf of a specific developer or property owner.	A broad range of community development needs - including projects such as housing rehabilitation or development; micro-enterprise or other business assistance; infrastructure; community/public facilities; public social services; planning; removal of architectural barriers to allow access; downtown or area revitalization
Brownfields Redevelopment Remediation Fund	Maybe	Public	MassDevelopment	\$500,000	See grant.	To finance the remediation of brownfield sites in Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) of the Commonwealth
National Endowment for the Arts Grants	Maybe	Public	National Endowment for the Arts	See grant.	Regional Arts Agencies	This funding will be allocated to local state and regional arts agencies to distribute through their funding programs
Housing Development Incentive Program	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	See grant.	Developers (projects located in Gateway Cities)	Tax incentive to undertake new construction or substantial rehabilitation of properties for lease or sale as multi-unit market rate residential housing
MassTrails Grants	Maybe	Public	Department of Conservation & Recreation, Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs	\$100,000	Public entities and non-profit organizations (with documented land owner permission and community support)	To design, create, and maintain the diverse network of trails, trail systems, and trails experiences
MassEVIP Fleets Incentives	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	\$7,500	Public Entities	Helps eligible public entities acquire (buy or lease) electric vehicles for their fleets.

Abandoned Housing Initiative Strategic Demolition Fund Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Attorney General's Office	\$125,000	Municipalities, Municipal Housing and Redevelopment Authorities, Nonprofit organizations	To be used for the construction of an affordable housing structure.
Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund	Maybe	Public	State Historic Preservation Office	See grant.	Municipalities and private non-profit organizations	To support the preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites (cultural resources) listed in the State Register of Historic Places - including pre-development work, development projects such as stabilization, protection, rehabilitation and restoration
Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey and Planning Grant Program	Maybe	Public	State Historic Preservation Office	See grant.	Municipalities and private non-profit organizations	To support efforts to identify and plan for the protection of the significant historic buildings, structures, archaeological sites and landscapes of the Commonwealth (including cultural resource inventories, nomination of properties to National Register, community-wide preservation plans, other studies/reports/publications to identify and protect significant properties)
Massachusetts Recycling Fund	Maybe	Private	BDC Capital	See grant.	See grant.	To help Massachusetts businesses active in recycling-related activities obtain the capital needed for any reasonable business purpose.
Closed Loop Infrastructure Fund	Maybe	Private	Closed Loop Partners	See grant.	Municipalities and private companies	Provides below-market rate loans to fund replicable, scalable and sustainable recycling and circular economy infrastructure projects across collection, sortation, processing and new technologies.

Appendix

APPENDIX B - Public Presentations

Local Rapid Recovery Plan
Impacts of COVID-19
Littleton, Massachusetts
Littleton Common
July 14, 2021

Agenda

Tonight's Meeting – 6:30-8:00PM

1. Introductions
2. Overview of Local Rapid Recovery Program
3. Schedule
4. Project Goals
5. Littleton Common Study Area
6. Existing Conditions: Diagnostics and Business Surveys
7. Public Comments
8. Next Steps

Project Team

BETA Group

Jeff Maxtutis

- Plan Facilitator

Charlie Creagh

- Project Planner

Town of Littleton

Joseph Laydon

- Assistant Town Administrator

Maren Toohill

- Town Planner

LRRP Program

Local Rapid Recovery Plan

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

Schedule

Local Rapid Recovery Program

Phase I: Diagnostic and Business Surveys

- Completed between March and May

Phase II: Project Recommendations

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

Phase III: Plans

- August > September

PROJECT PLAN CATEGORIES



Goals

Local Rapid Recovery Plan

PHASES

GOALS

Phase I: Diagnostic and Business Surveys



- Collect baseline diagnostic data
- Engage stakeholders to understand COVID impacts and district concerns
- Provide an overview of on-the-ground conditions within the Study Area

Phase II: Project Recommendations



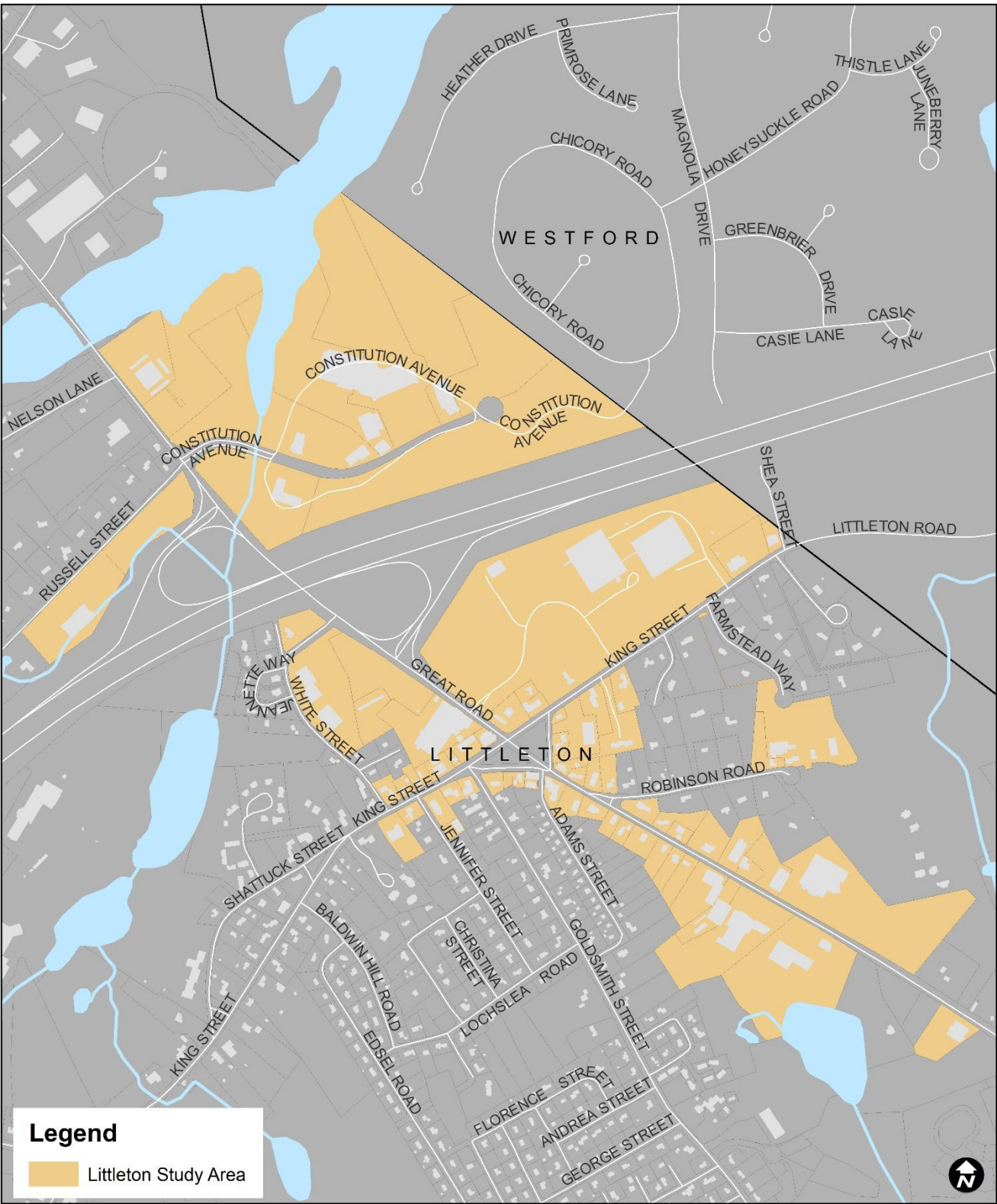
- Consult key stakeholders on priority projects
- Refine design of projects with Subject Matter Experts
- Develop final list of projects

Phase III: Plans



- Create draft of Rapid Recovery Plan
- Gather community feedback on draft Plan and Project Recommendations
- Finalize Plan for submission to commonwealth

Study Area



Town of Littleton, MA

Littleton - Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program

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





Phase I Diagnostic Category

Consumer Base:

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

Data Collection Analysis

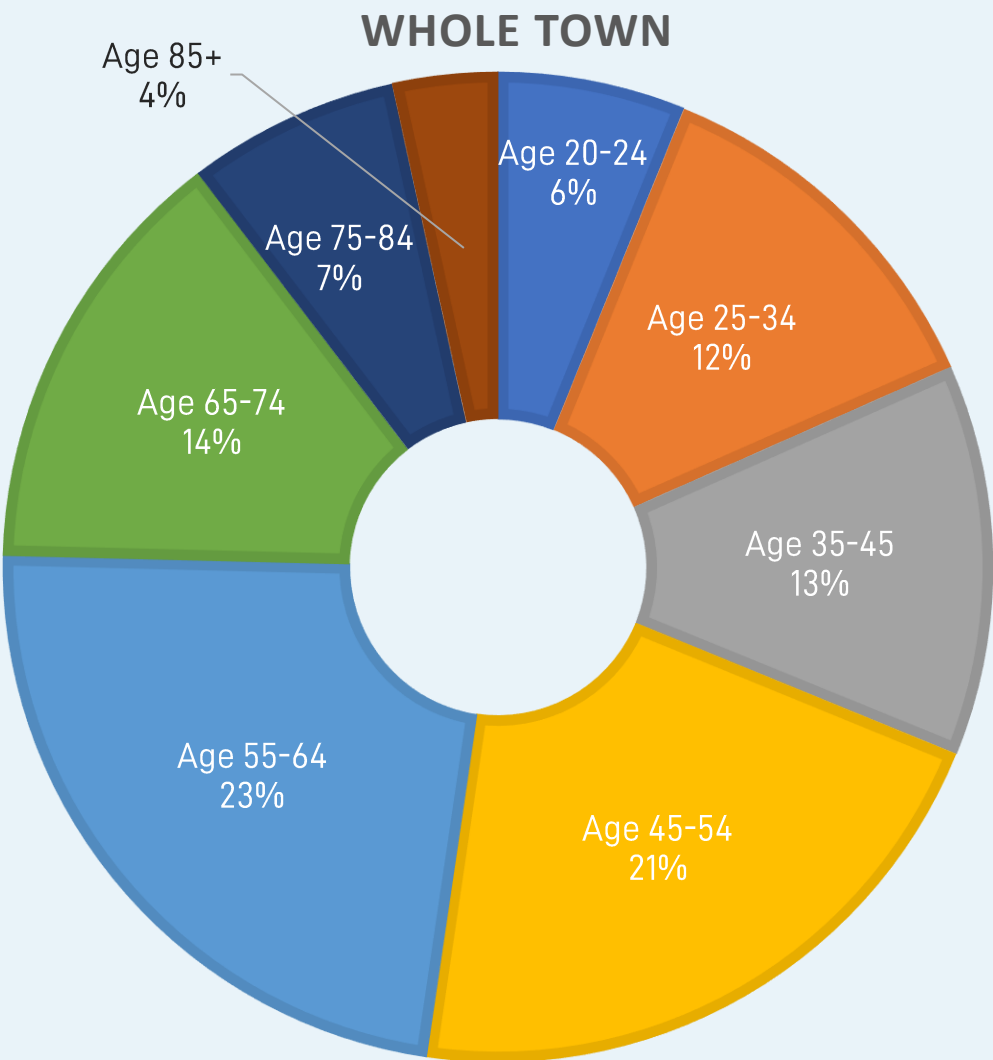
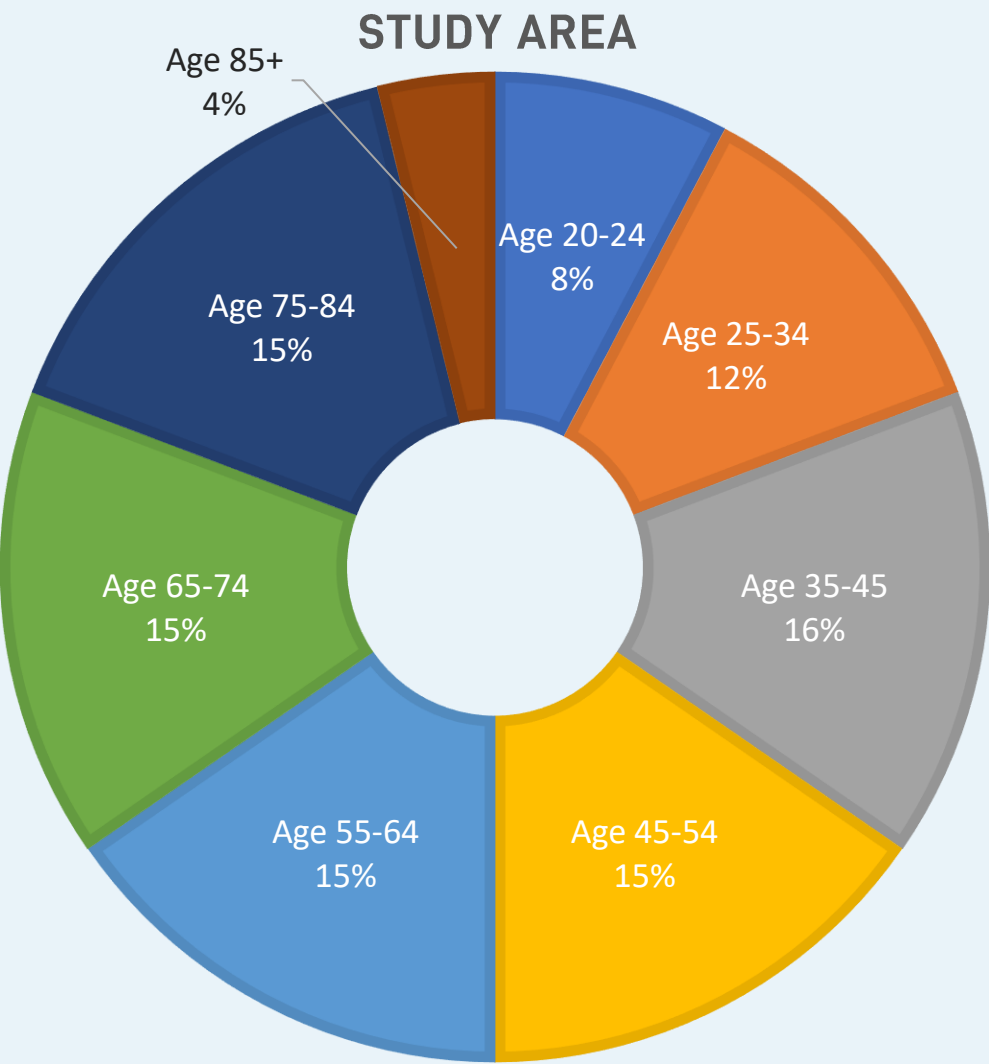
District Demographics



	Study Area	Whole Town
Total Resident Population	23	10,035
Median Household Income	\$86,037	\$123,268
Median Age	51.2	45.7
Median Household Size	2.3	2.7



Population By Age Distribution

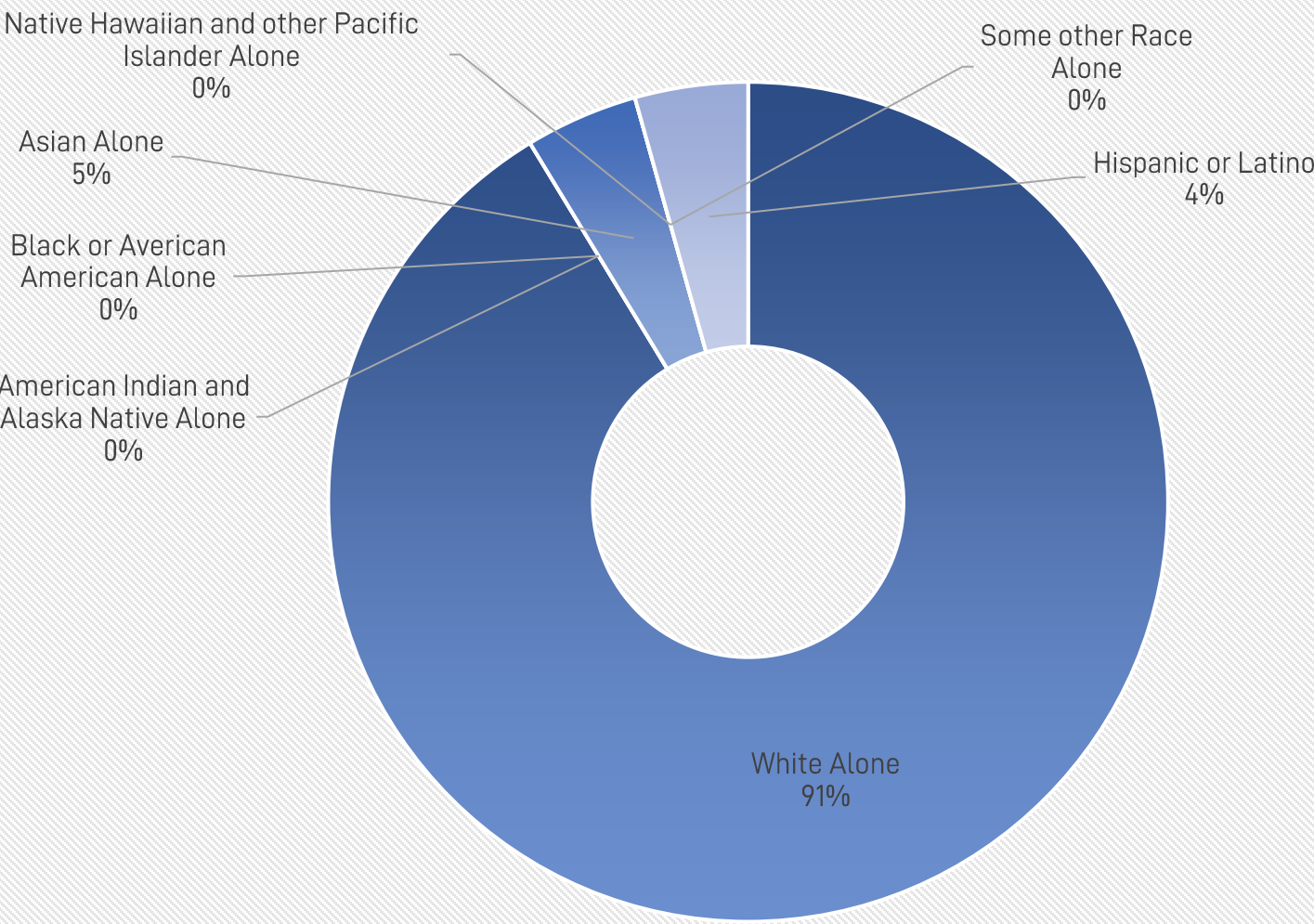


Data Collection Analysis



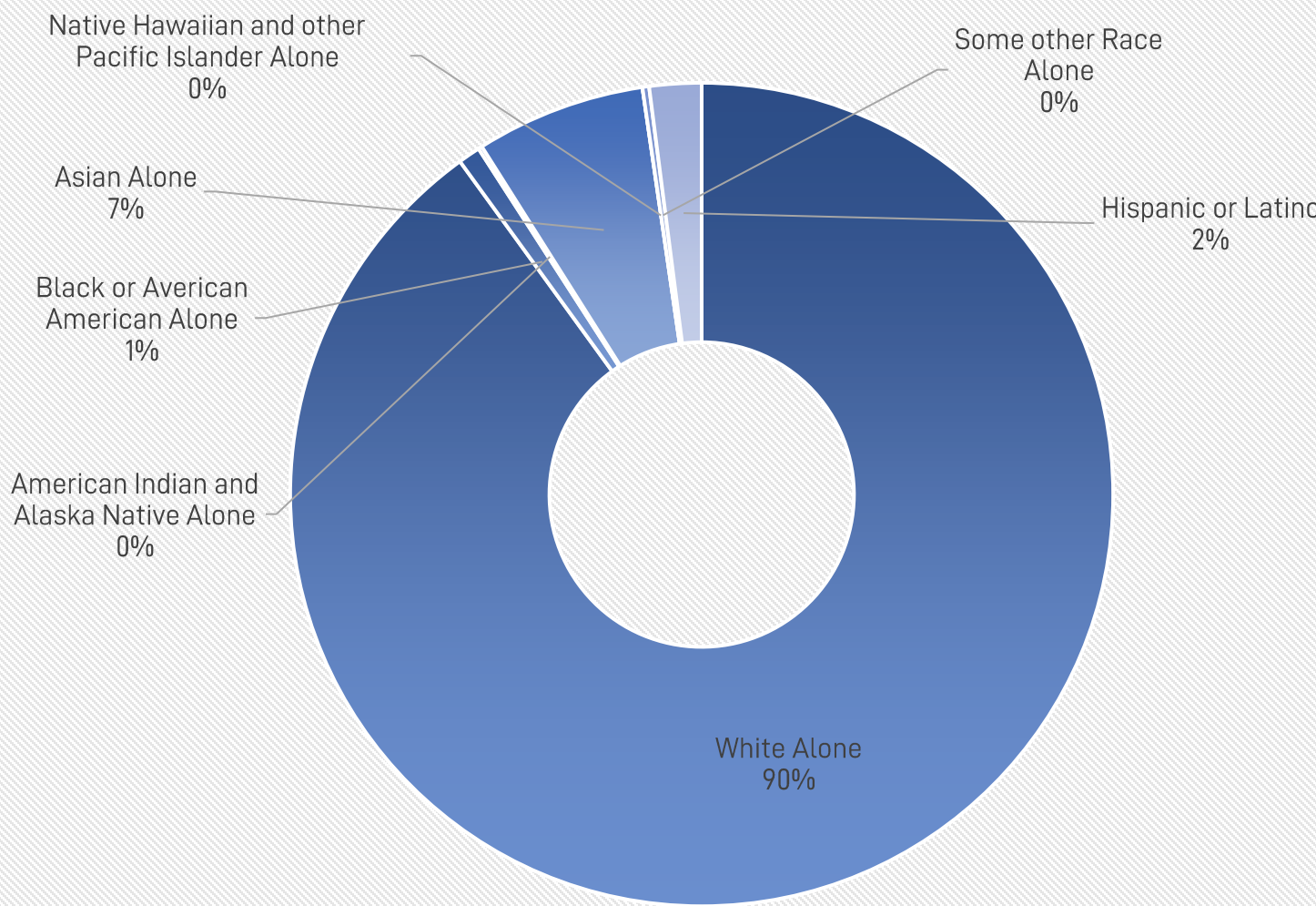
Population By Race/Ethnicity

Study Area



Littleton, MA

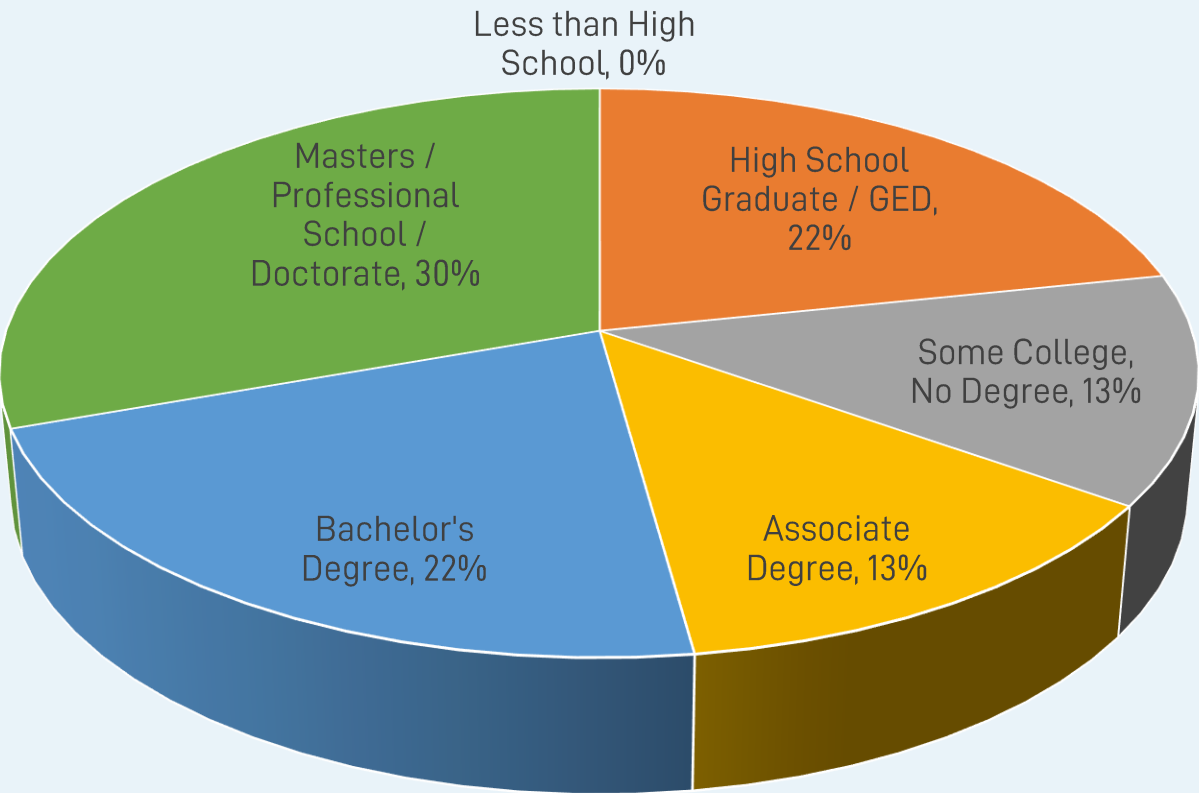
Whole Town



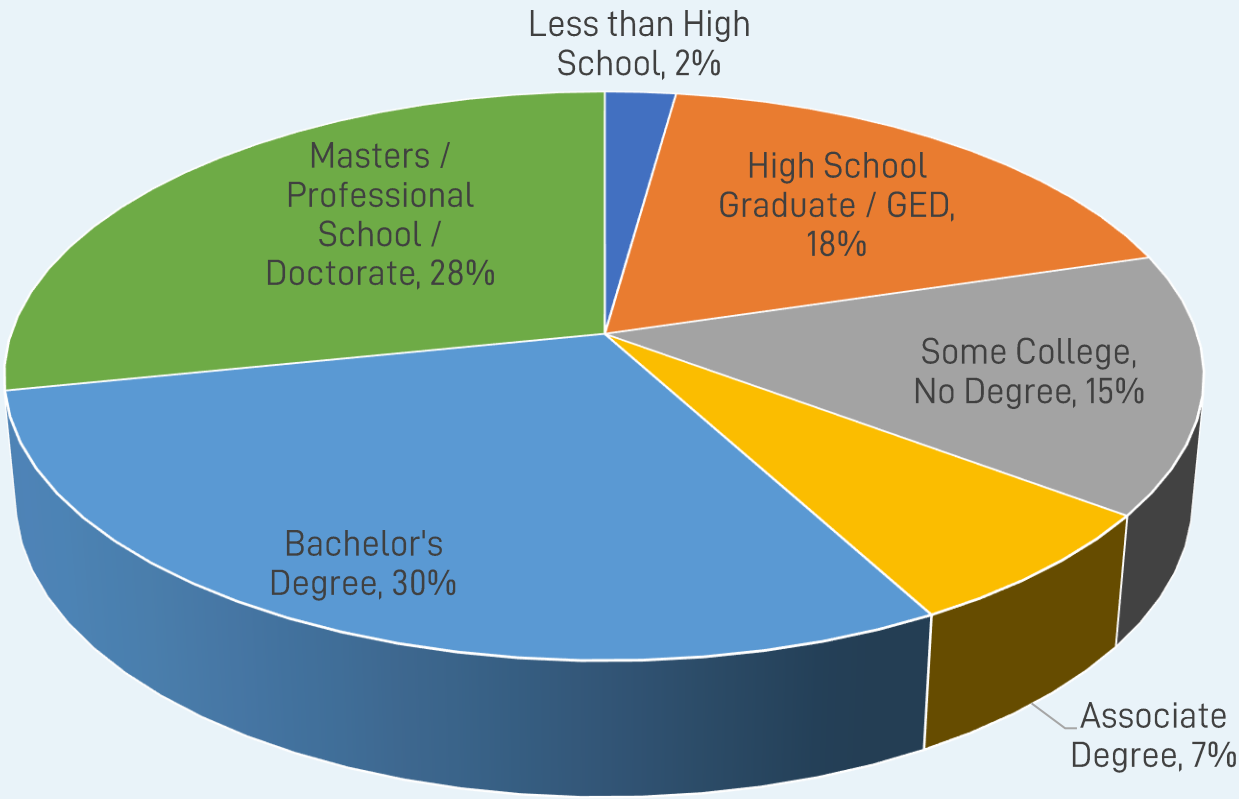


Population by Education Attainment

Study Area (Total Population of 23)



Whole Town (Total Population of 10,035)



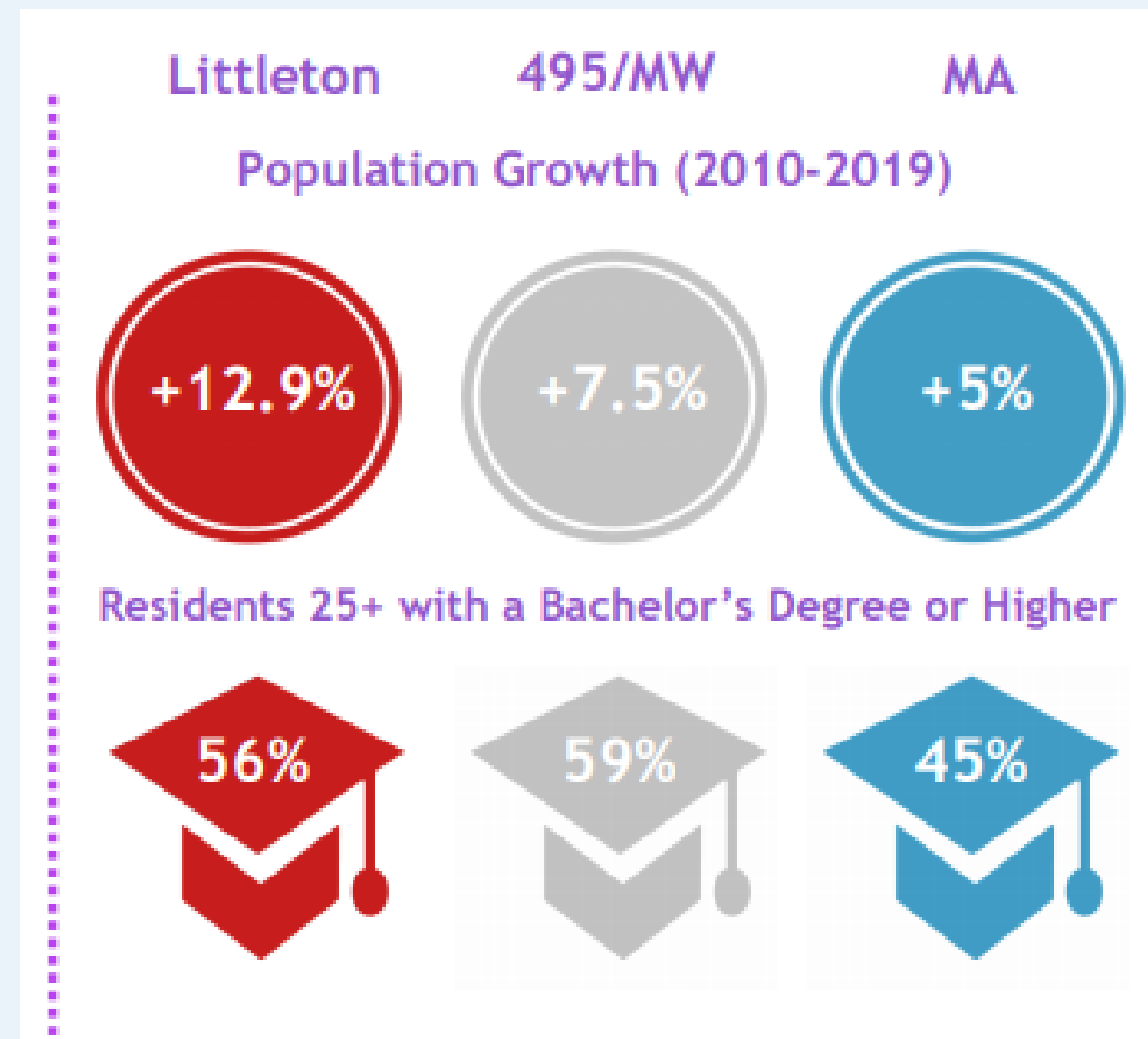


Population Growth / Education

Between 2010 and 2019,
Littleton has experienced a

- 13% increase in population
- 56% increase in the number of adults over 25 with a Bachelor's (or higher) Degree

Graphic: 495/MetroWest Partnership





Phase 1

Diagnostic Category

Business Environment:

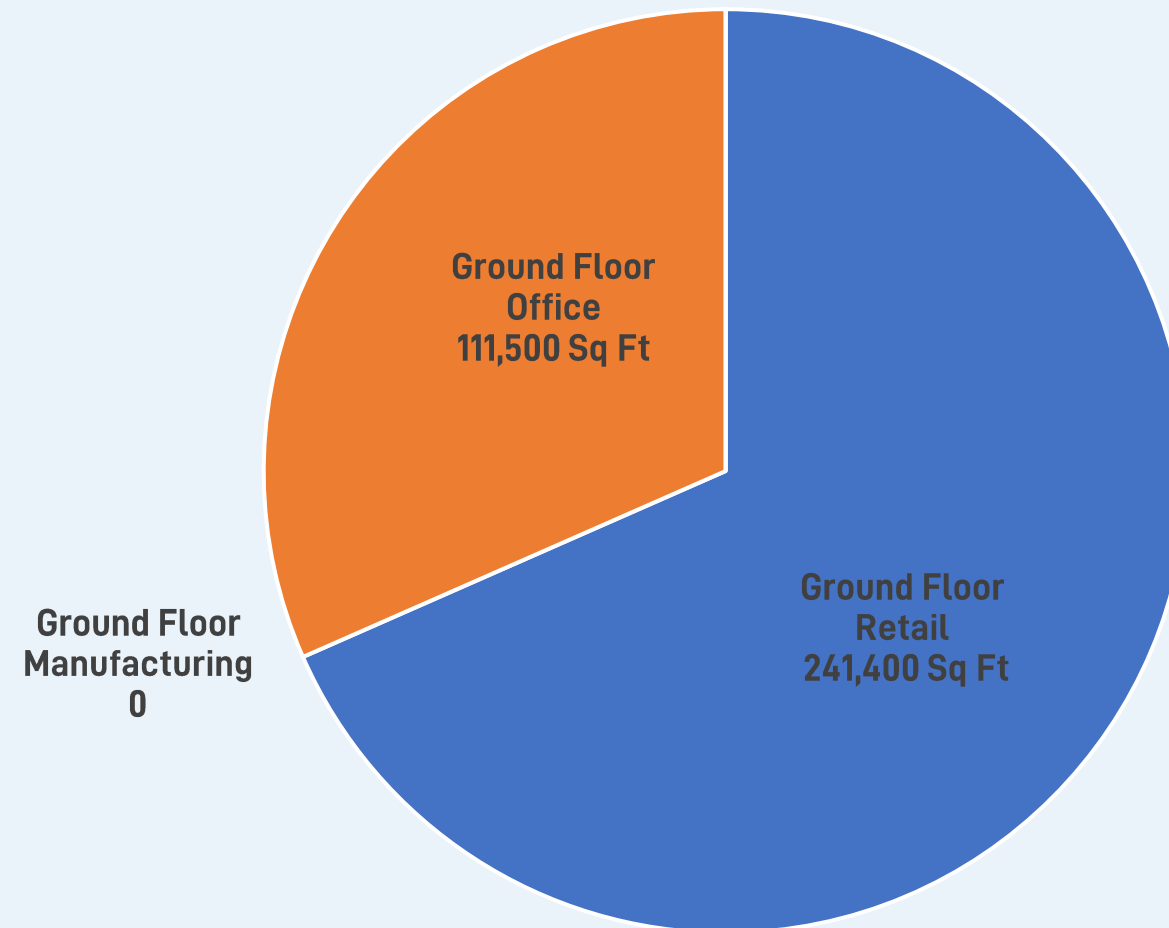
- What are impacts of COVID-19 on businesses?
- Is there an anchor, destination, or mix of businesses driving the local economy?
- How well does the business mix meet customer groups?



Storefronts



Study Area: 116 Storefronts



Massachusetts DHCD Rapid Recovery Plan Program

BUSINESS SURVEY REPORT

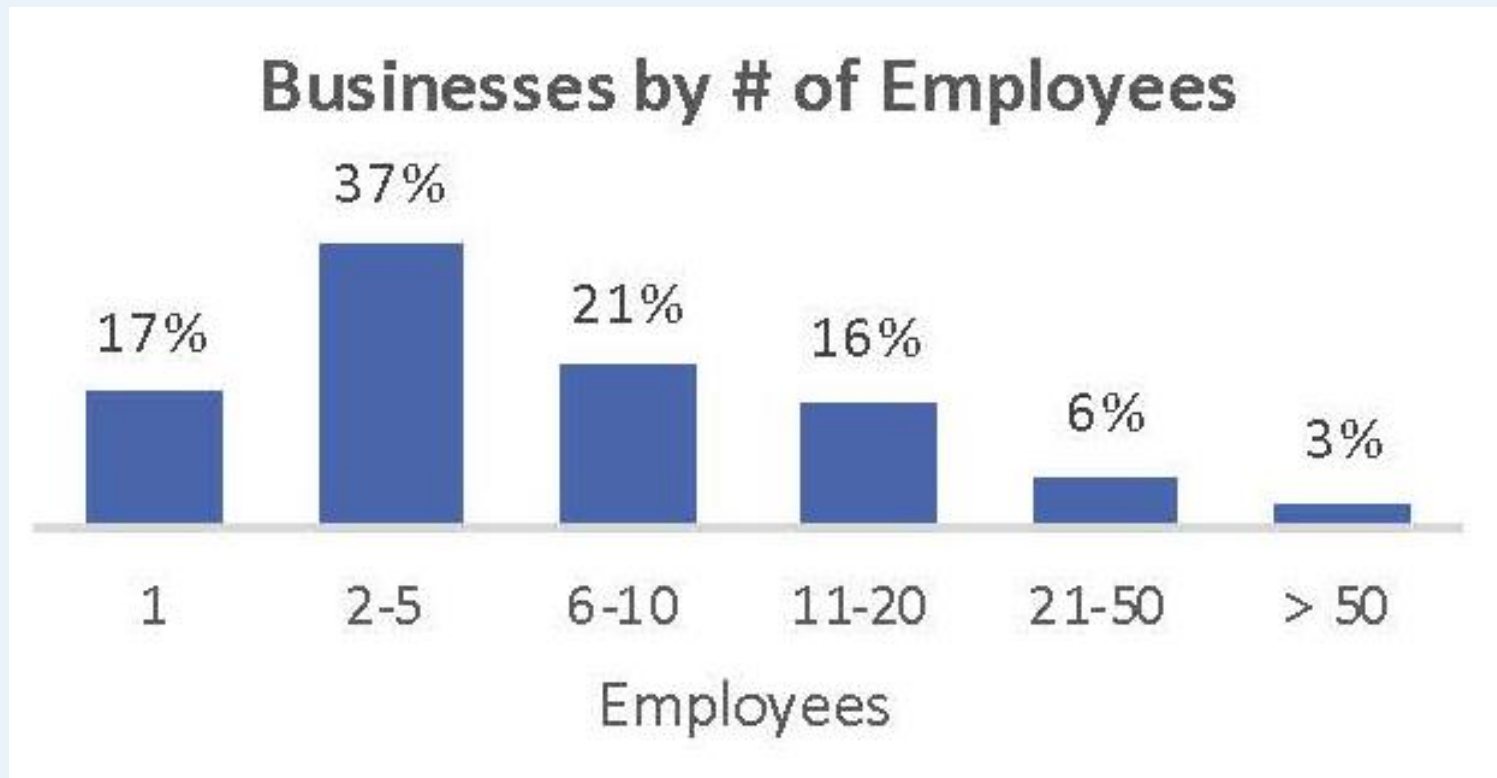


- Results of a business survey conducted during March and April of 2021
- Survey was launched by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
- To help communities develop Rapid Recovery Plans for downtowns and commercial districts
- Directed to owners or other appropriate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

Littleton Common: 63 Responses

Business Characteristics - Business Size

- **54% of businesses are micro-enterprises (<5 employees)**

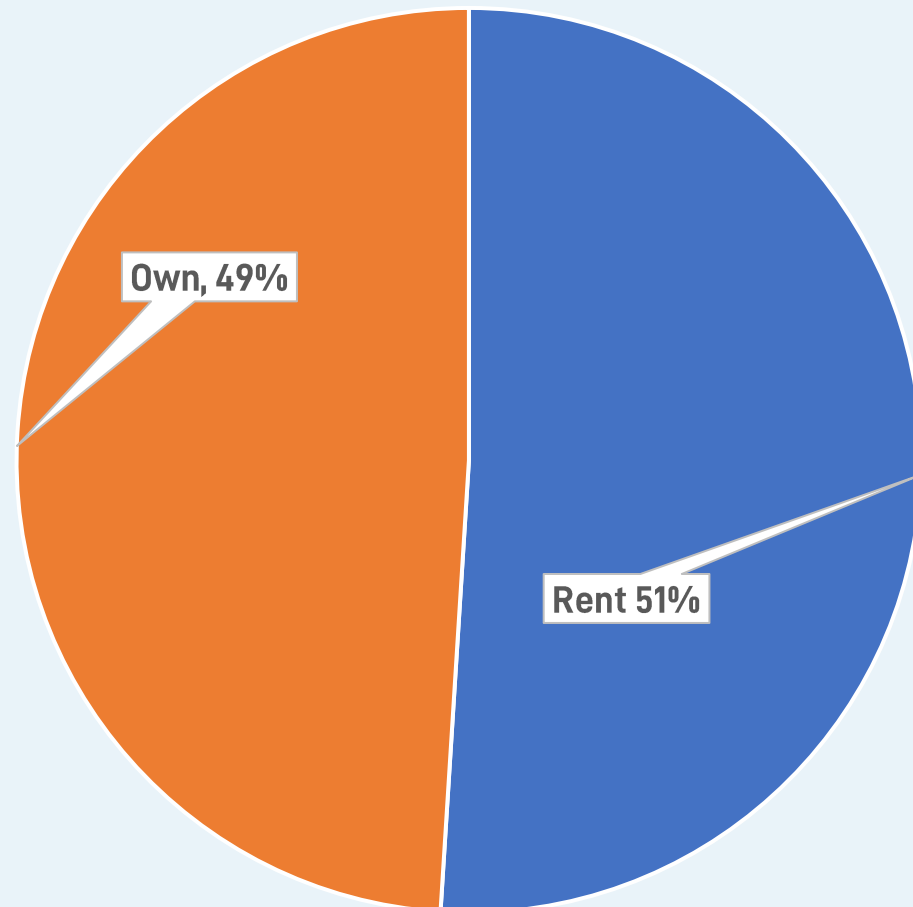


Littleton Common: 63 Responses

Business Characteristics - Business Tenure

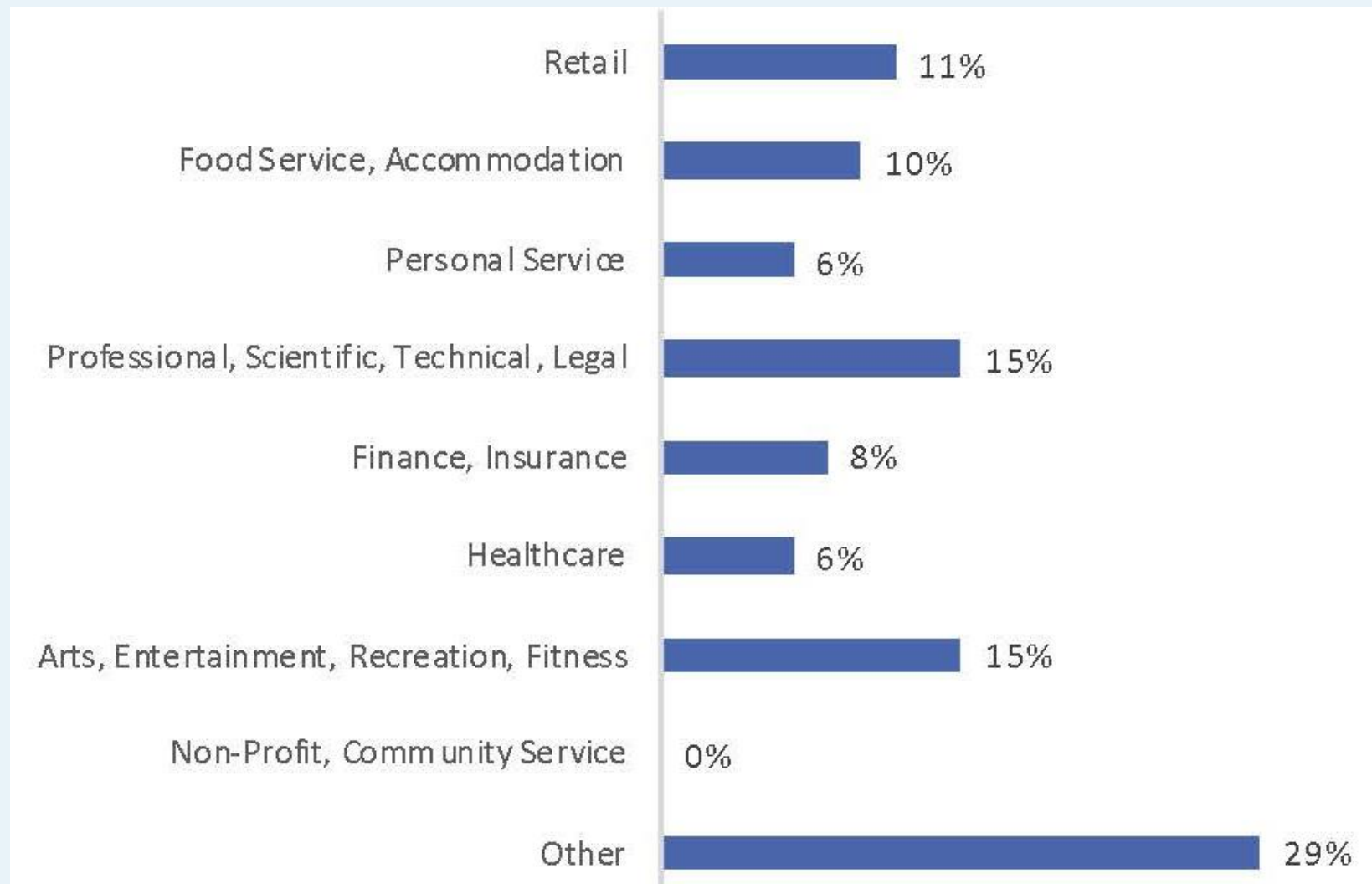
- **51% of businesses rent their space**

Owner VS Renter



Littleton Common: 63 Responses

Business Characteristics - Businesses by Type

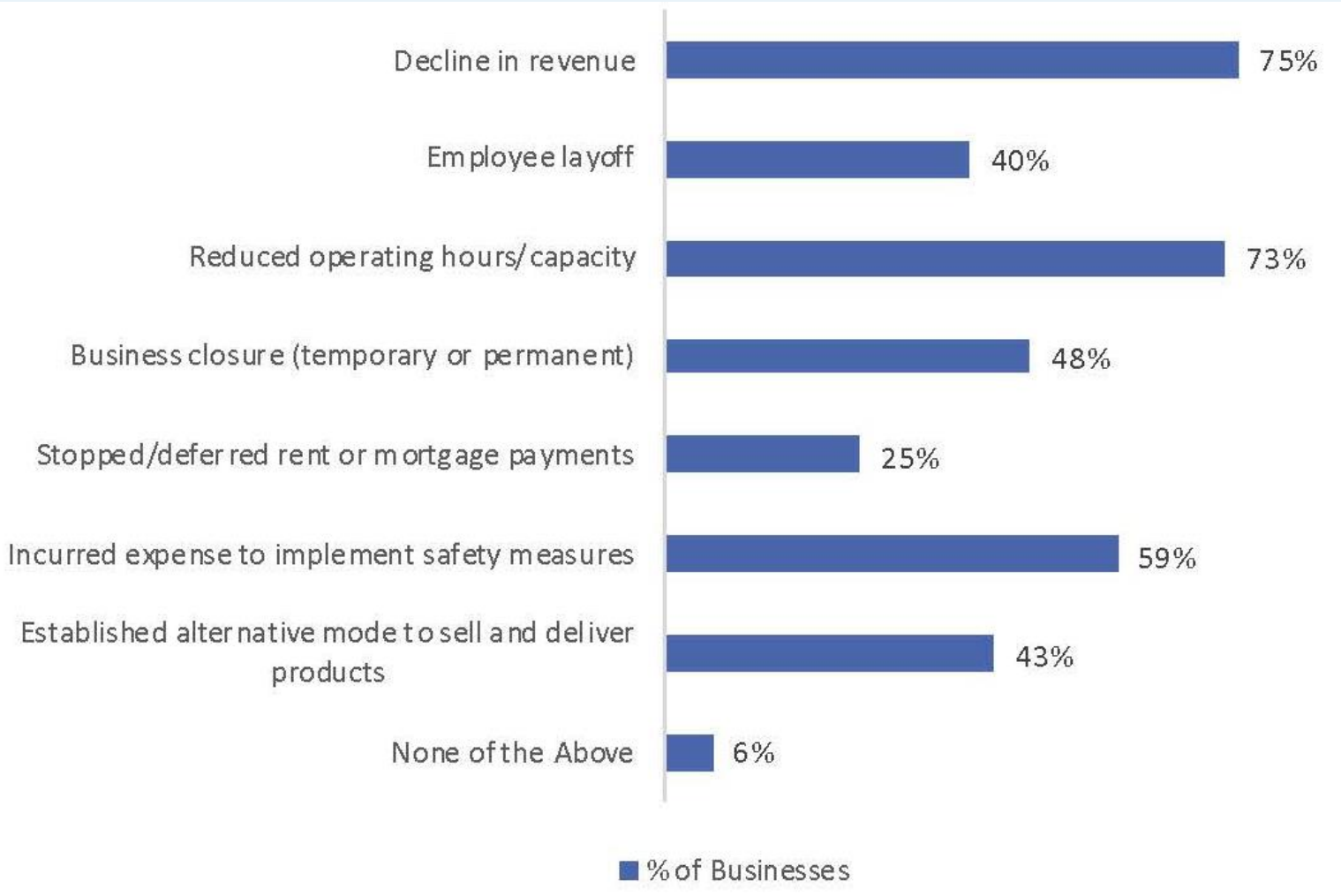


Littleton Common: 63 Responses

Reported Impacts

- **94% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID**

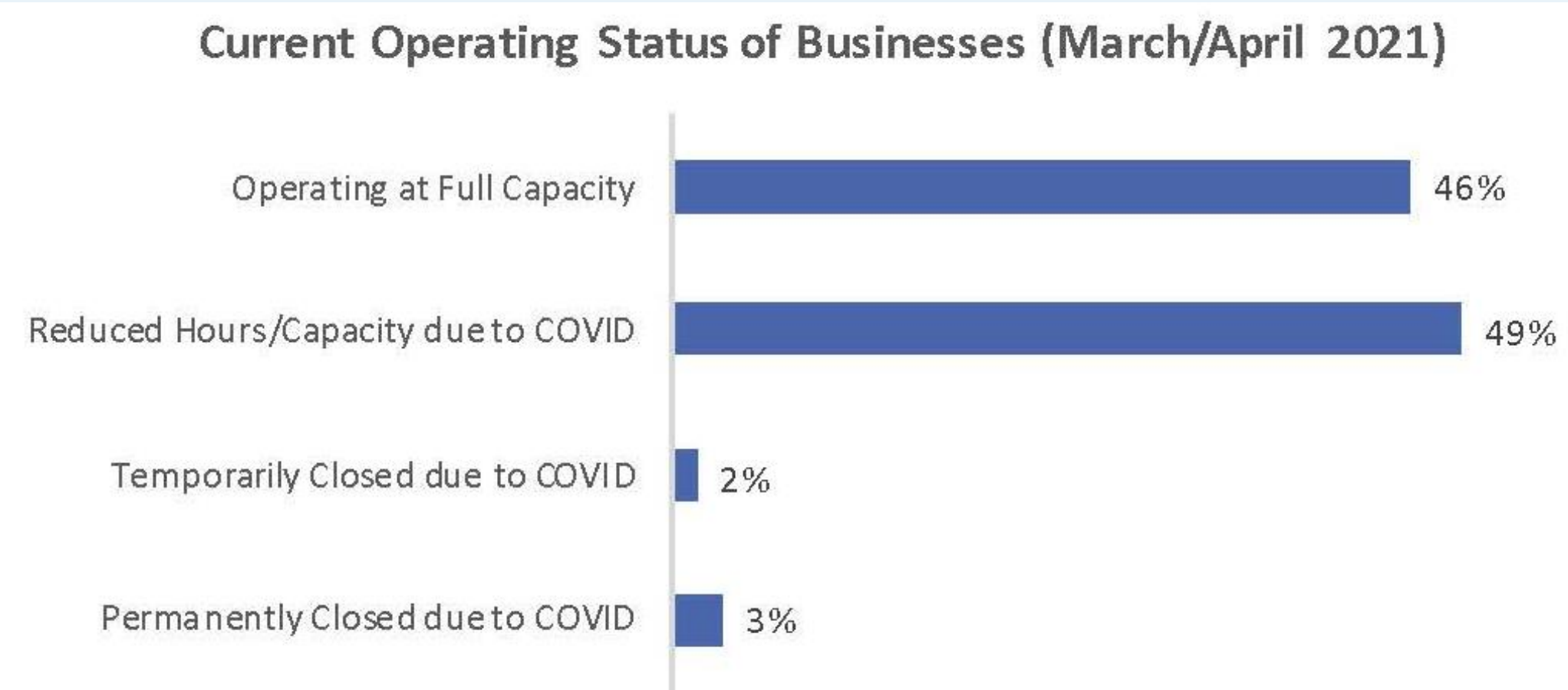
COVID Impacts Reported by Businesses



Littleton Common: 63 Responses

Operating Status

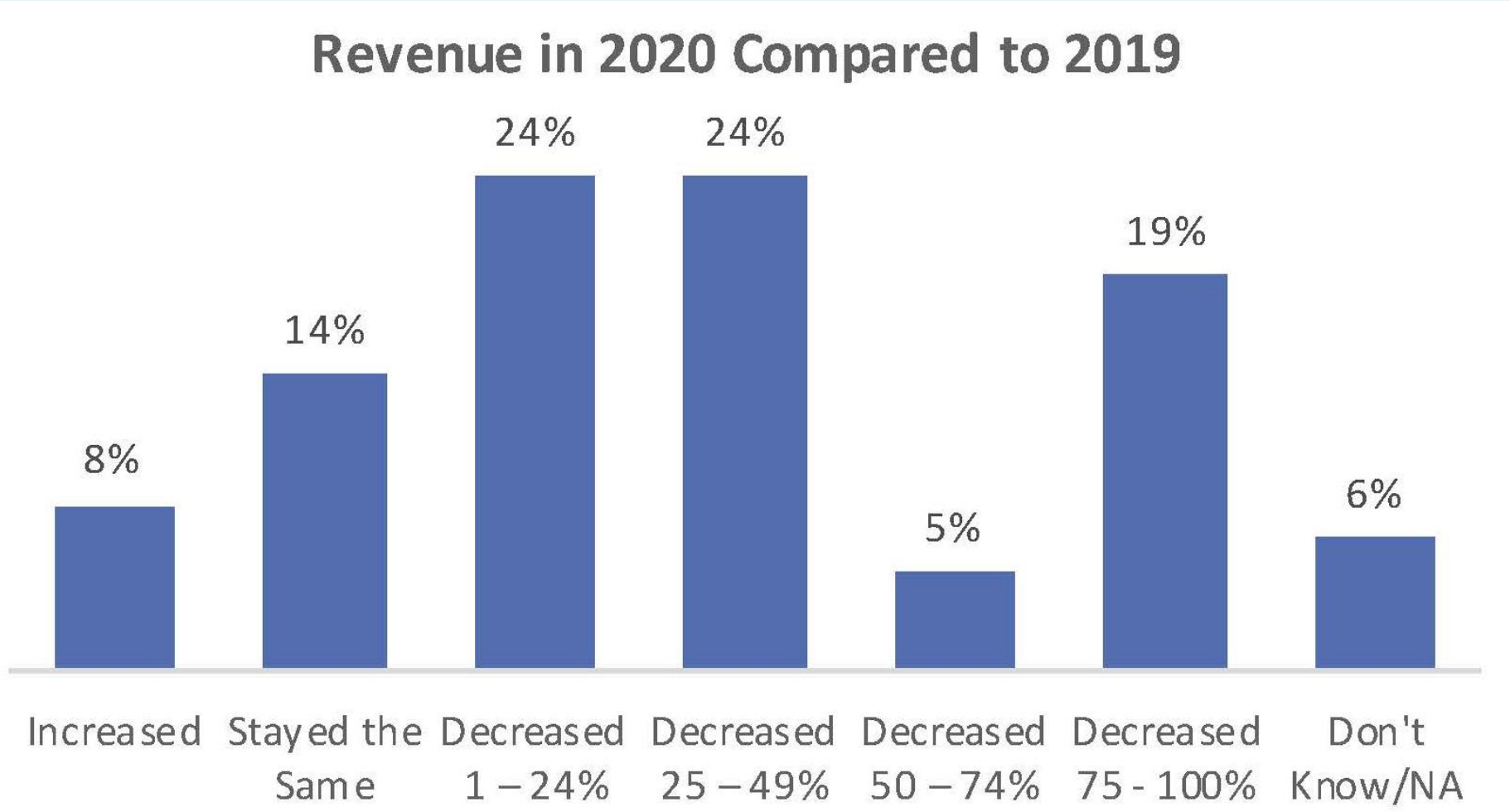
- At the time of the survey, 54% of businesses reported they were operating at reduced hours / capacity or closed



Littleton Common: 63 Responses

Decline in Business Revenue

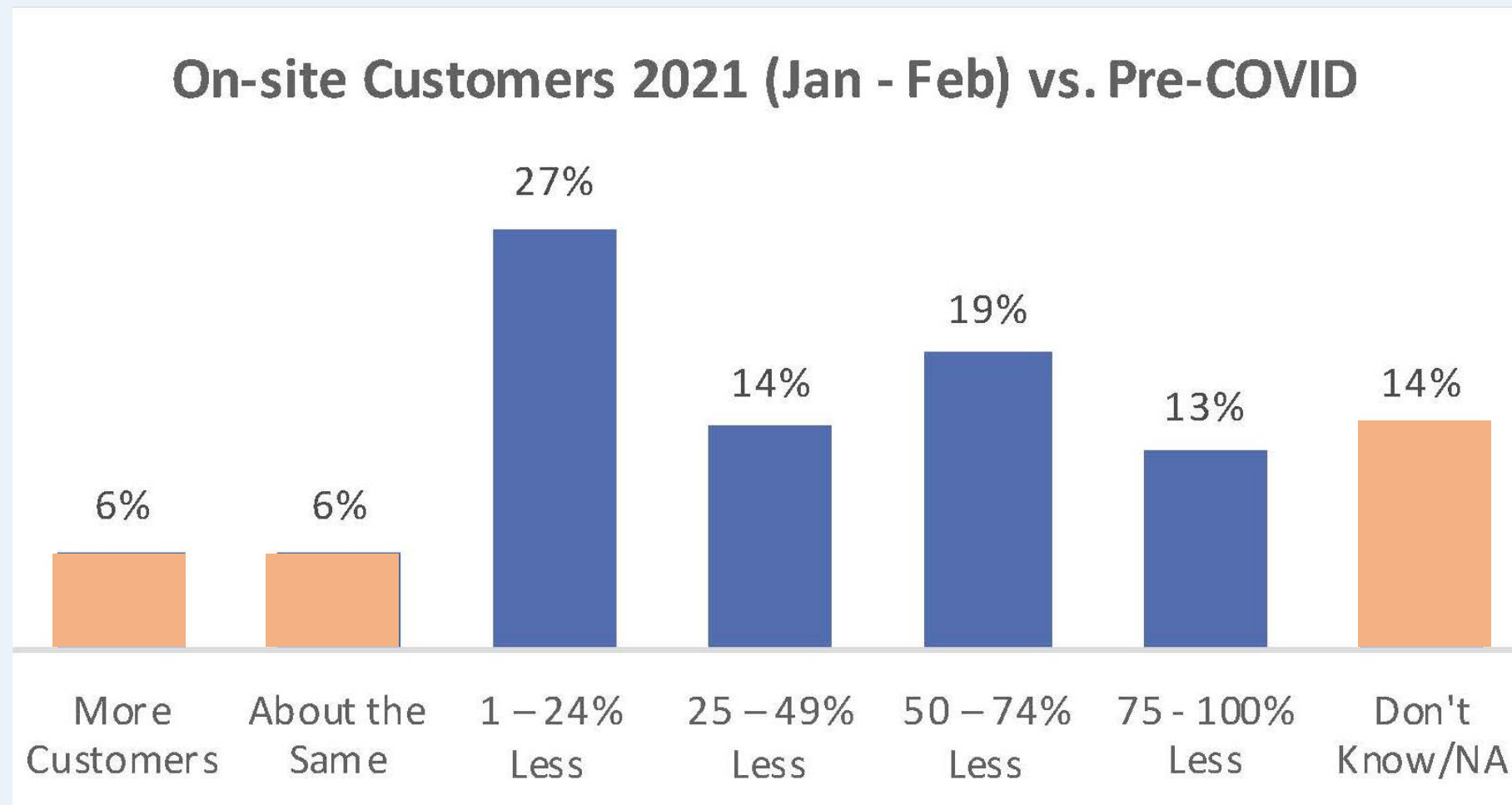
- 72% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than in 2019
- For 48% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more



Littleton Common: 63 Responses

Less Foot Traffic in Commercial Area

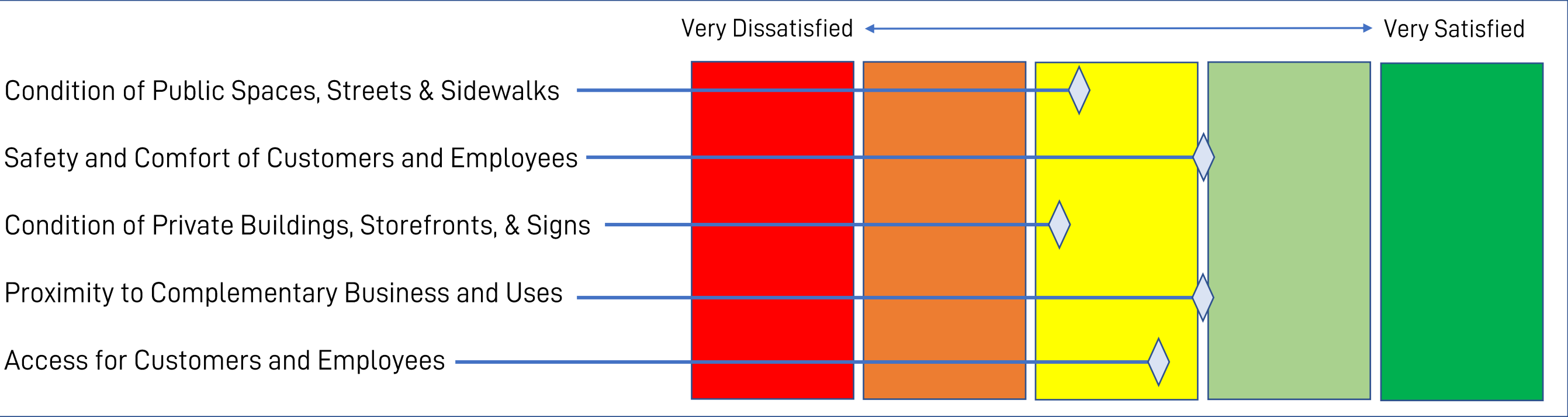
- **73% of businesses had fewer on-site customers in Jan. / Feb. of 2021 than before COVID**
- **46% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more**



Littleton Common: 63 Responses

Business Satisfaction with Commercial District

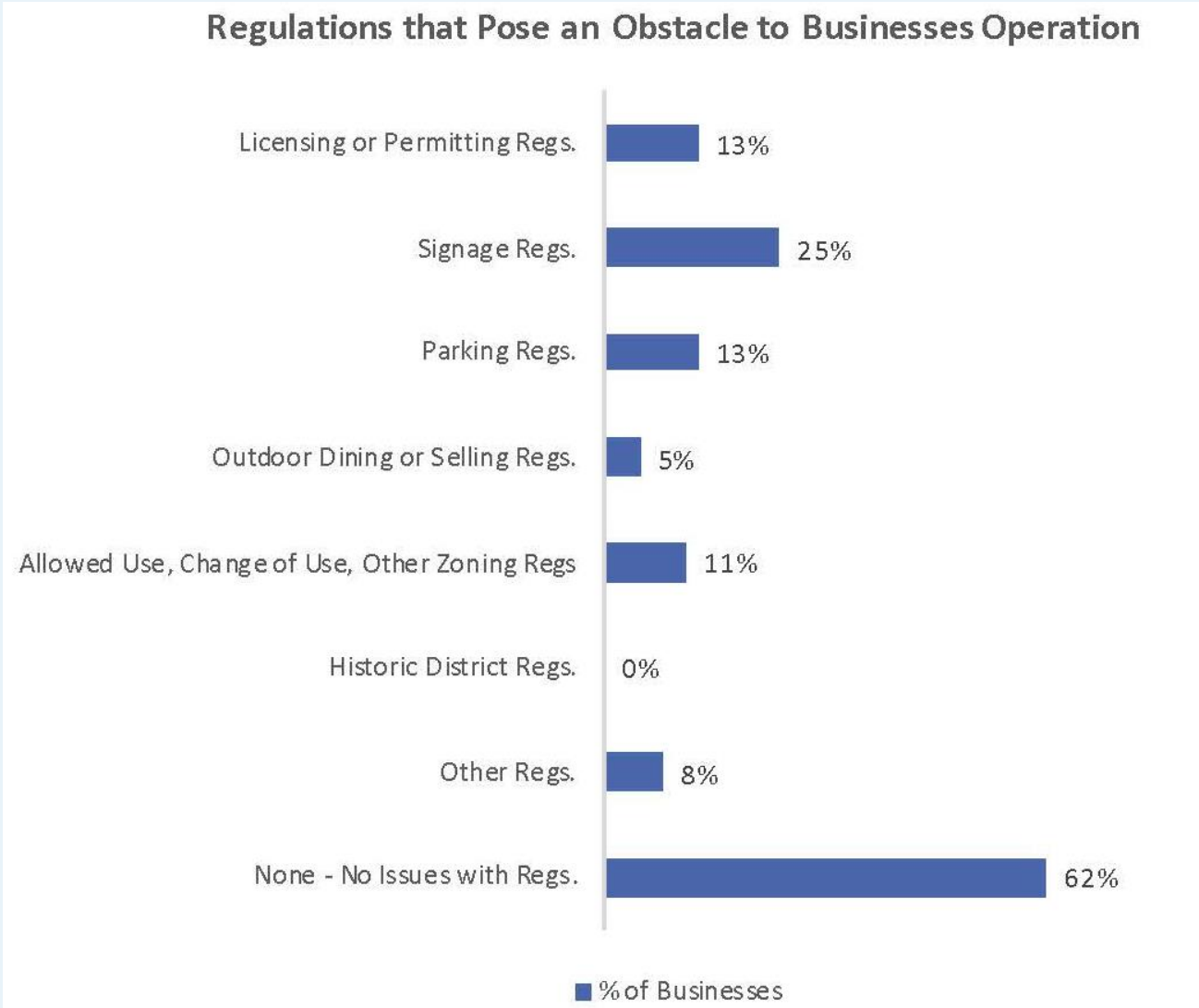
The charts below illustrate the average satisfaction rating among respondents regarding various elements.



Littleton Common: 63 Responses

Business Satisfaction with Commercial District - Regulatory Environment

- 38% of businesses indicated that the regulatory environment poses an obstacle to business operation

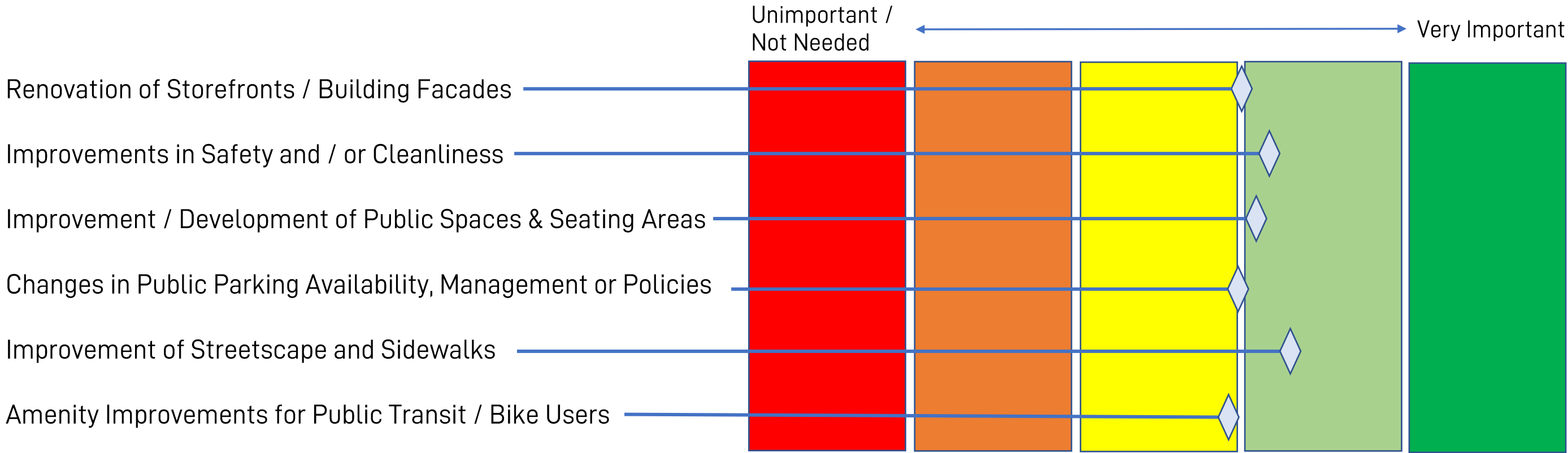


Littleton Common: 63 Responses

Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

- Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access

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

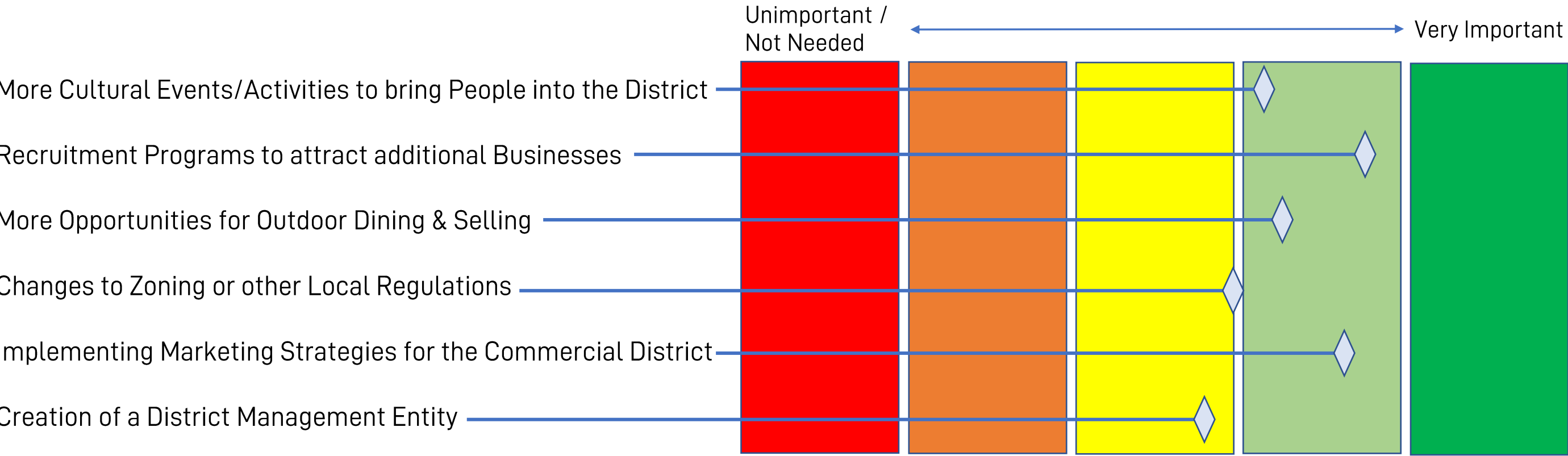


Littleton Common: 63 Responses

Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

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

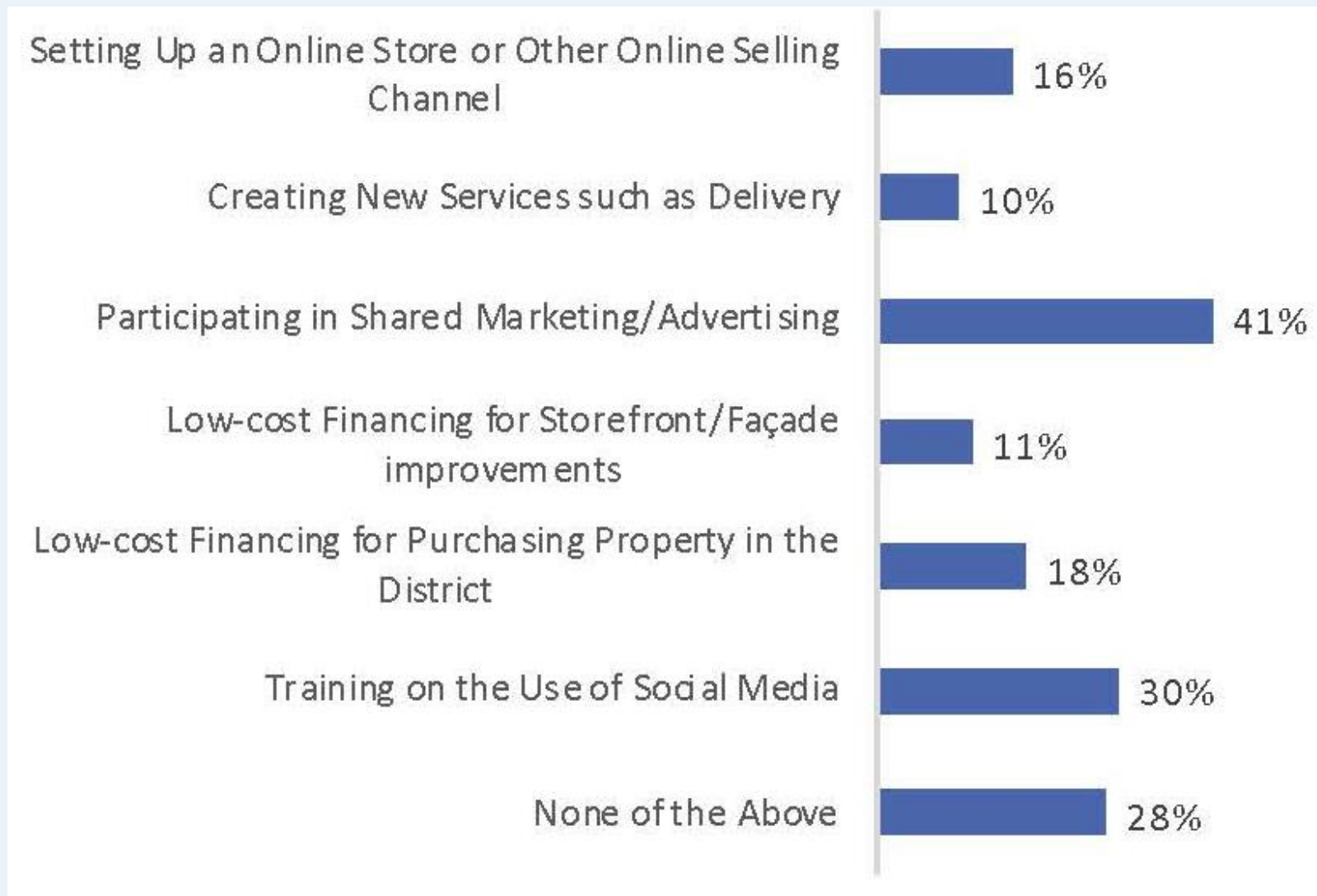
The charts below illustrate the average satisfaction rating among respondents regarding various strategies.



Littleton Common: 63 Responses

Business Input Related to Possible Strategies - Business Support

- **72% of businesses expressed interest in receiving assistance**





PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT



Phase 1 Diagnostic Category

Physical Environment:

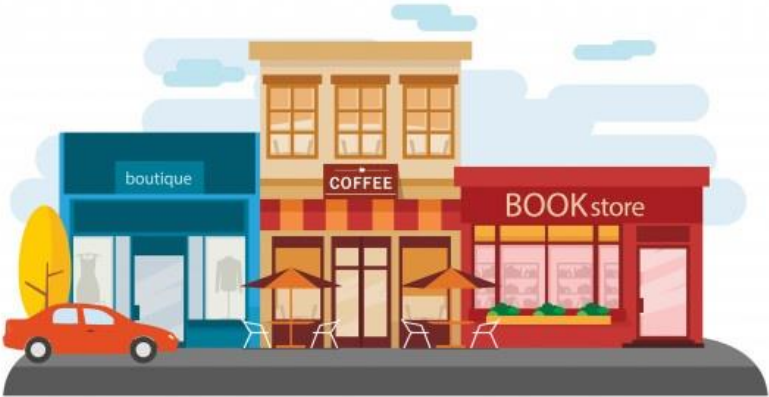
- How is the physical environment meeting the needs of businesses?
- What are the challenges and opportunities:
 - Public Realm
 - Private Realm
 - Access + Visibility

Physical Environment: Private Realm

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

Data Collection Analysis

Private Realm



Feature Grading	Most Positive			Least Positive
	A -	B -	C -	
Lighting				B
Façade				B
Awning				B
Signage				A
Outdoor Display/Dining				NA/FAIL
Window				B

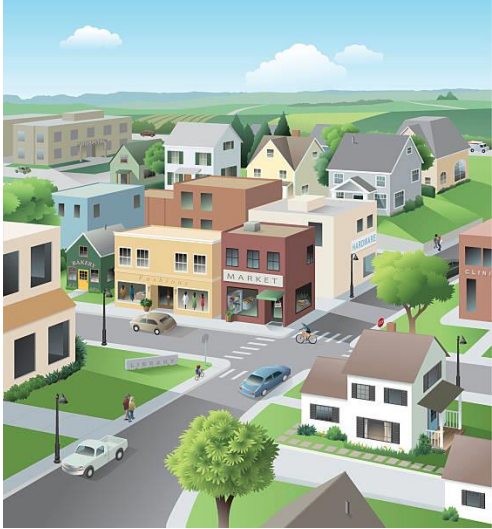


Physical Environment: Public Realm

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

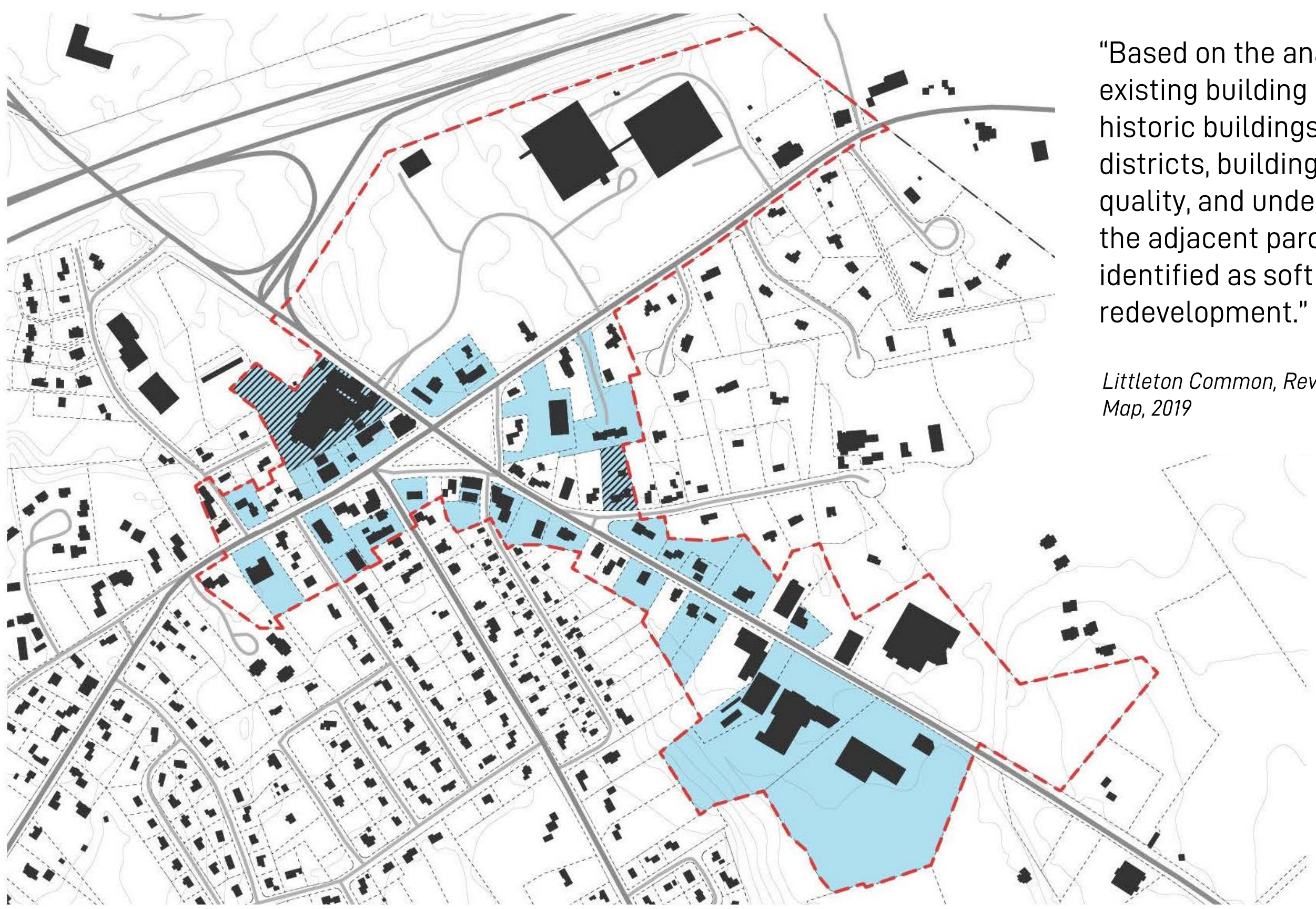
Data Collection Analysis

Public Realm



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





"Based on the analysis of existing building density, historic buildings and districts, building age and quality, and under utilization, the adjacent parcels were identified as soft sites for redevelopment."

Littleton Common, Revitalization Road Map, 2019

Existing Conditions

Some examples of:

- Store fronts
- Sidewalk furniture
- Surface parking lots
- Poor sidewalk definition
- Town Common



Existing Conditions

Some examples of:

- Outdoor signage



Existing Conditions

Some examples of:

- Facades
- Parking
- Generous building setbacks





ADMIN
CAPACITY

Phase 1 Diagnostic Category

Administrative Capacity:

- Who are the stewards of the study area?
- Are there adequate resources?
- Are regulatory, zoning, or permitting processes impediments to businesses?



ADMIN
CAPACITY

Phase 1 Diagnostic Category

Administrative Capacity:

- Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce
- The Littleton Business Association



SUMMARY



What We Have Heard from Businesses



PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT



Businesses Dissatisfied with:

- Condition of public spaces, streets, and sidewalks
- Condition of private buildings, storefronts, and signs



PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT

Improvement Strategies for Physical Environment

- Improvement of streetscape and sidewalks
- Improvements in safety & cleanliness
- Development of public spaces and seating





**BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT**

Regulations Pose an Obstacle to Business Operation:

- Signage Regulations – 25%





**BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT**

Improvement Strategies to Attract and Retain Customers

- Recruitment program to attract businesses
- Marketing strategies for the commercial district
- More opportunities for outdoor dining and selling
- More cultural events and activities



Potential Project Ideas

- Implement smart sewers
- Re-construct intersection at King at Goldsmith at Stevens Streets

Pedestrian Improvements

- Construct curb extension and coordinate additional sidewalk furniture on Stevens Street
- New sidewalk in front of Donelan's Grocery and Aubuchon Hardware
- New sidewalk in front of Sub Shoppe and Wild Valley Books



PROPOSED CROSSWALK LOCATIONS



COMMENTS



Comments

Next Steps:

- Gather & summarize additional information
- Develop recommendations & discuss with town staff
- Finalize plan and recommendations
- Final presentation: August
- Submit final plan to DHCD: Mid-September

Thank You!

Local Rapid Recovery Plan
Impacts of COVID-19
Project Recommendations
Littleton, Massachusetts
Littleton Common
October 6, 2021

Agenda

Tonight's Meeting

1. Introductions
2. Project Team | Schedule + Goals
3. Littleton Common Study Area
4. July 14, 2021 Meeting Recap
5. Recommended Projects
6. Comments and Q&A
7. Next Steps

Project Team

BETA Group

Jeff Maxtutis

- Plan Facilitator

Charlie Creagh

- Project Planner

Town of Littleton

Joseph Laydon

- Assistant Town Administrator

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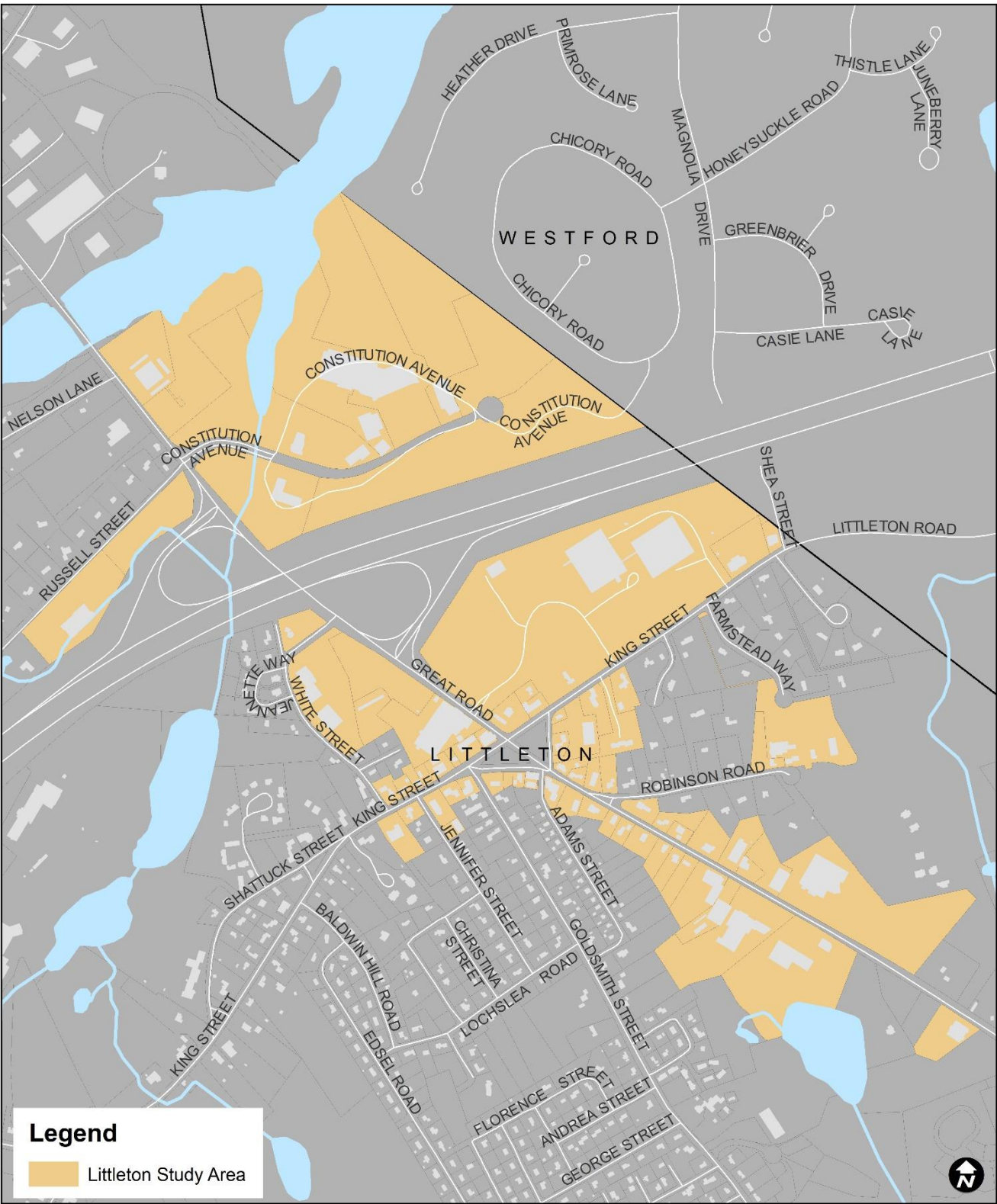
- Town Planner

Local Rapid Recovery Plan

Goals

PHASES		GOALS
<i>COMPLETE</i> Phase I: Diagnostic and Business Surveys	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect baseline diagnostic data• Engage stakeholders to understand COVID impacts and district concerns• Provide an overview of on-the-ground conditions within the Study Area
<i>COMPLETE</i> Phase II: Project Recommendations	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consult key stakeholders on priority projects• Refine design of projects with Subject Matter Experts• Develop final list of projects
<i>ONGOING</i> Phase III: Plans	➔	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create draft of Rapid Recovery Plan• Gather community feedback on draft Plan and Project Recommendations• Finalize Plan for submission to DHCD by October 8, 2021

Study Area



Town of Littleton, MA

Littleton - Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program

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



July 14, 2021 Meeting Recap

1. Local Rapid Recovery Program
2. Schedule
3. Goals
4. Study Area
5. Existing Conditions: Diagnostics and Business Surveys
 - Dissatisfied with public spaces, streets, sidewalks, storefronts, and signs
 - Need streetscape, sidewalk, seating, and public space improvements
6. Public Comments



Recommended Projects

Recommended Projects

1. Engage Building Owners to Make Façade and Building Renovations
2. Wayfinding Signage along Great Road and Area Rail Trails
3. Streetscape Improvements
4. Host More Events on the Town Common
5. Hire an Economic Development Director
6. Complete Construction of the Couper-Wellington Trail
7. Redesign the Intersection of Goldsmith Street at Stevens Street
8. Determine Future Use of 12 Robinson Road
9. Develop Additional Outdoor Dining Opportunities
10. Conduct Analysis to Fund Construction of Town Sewer

1. Engage Building Owners to Make Façade and Building Renovations

Observations:

- There is a strong desire to update storefront façade conditions

Recommendations:

- Develop design guidelines
- Develop criteria for application and approval
- Identify components of renovations and facades program
- Identify funding opportunities



2. Wayfinding Along Great Road and Area Rail Trails

Observations:

- Signage around Littleton Common would reinforce the area as a commercial district that is open for business

Recommendations:

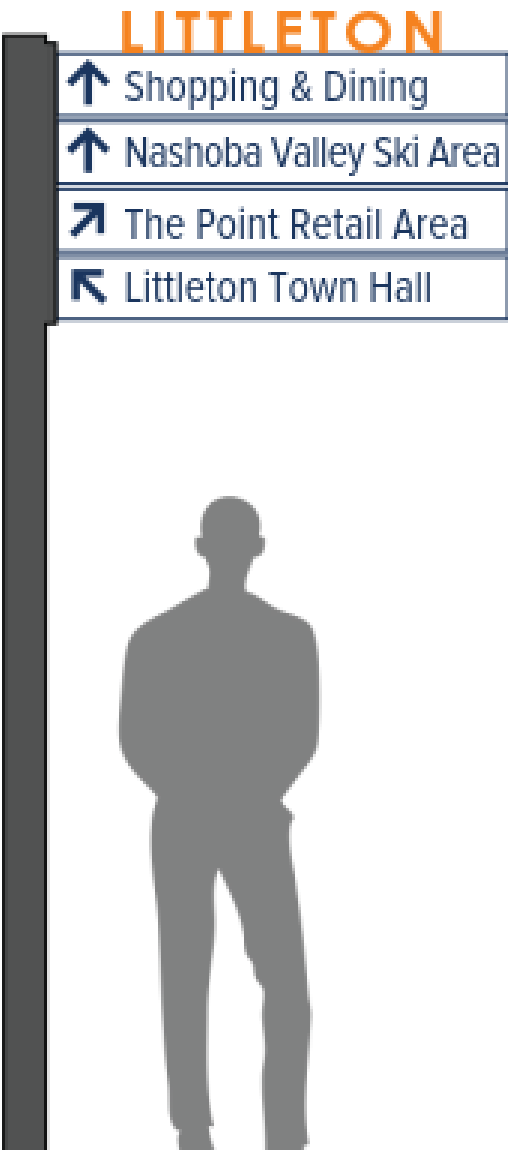
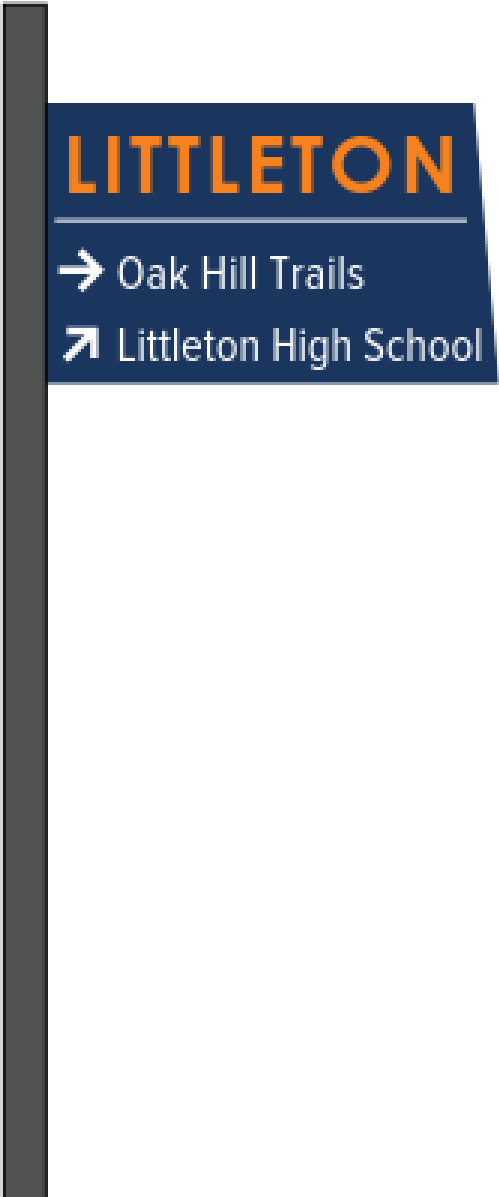
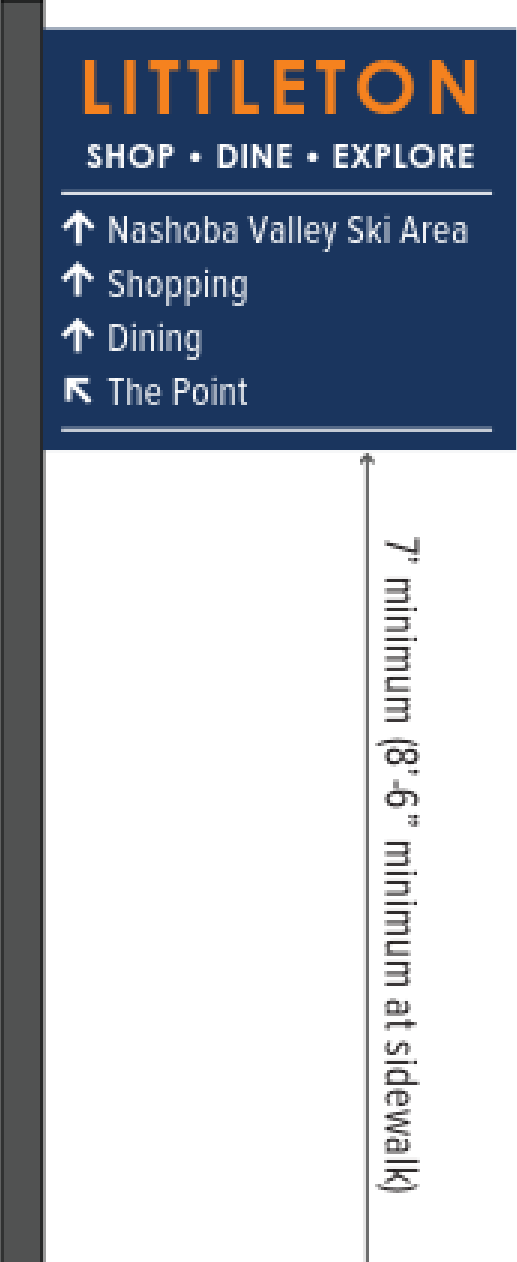
- Develop a brand for the Common
- Generate wayfinding family signage options
- Solicit public feedback and input on sign choices and locations
- Potentially utilize ARPA money for sign installation



Wayfinding signage locations would have to be designed with existing signage locations in mind



Wayfinding concepts include Great Road / Route 2A signage intended for motorists as well as regional rail trail and bike path signage intended for bicyclists and pedestrians



3. Multiple Streetscape Improvements

Observations:

- Developing safe and comfortable sidewalks, bike lanes, intersections, and placemaking will encourage pedestrian activity and increase foot traffic

Recommendations:

- Identify priority locations
- Coordinate with property owners and public
- Coordinate with MassDOT
- Improve safety at crosswalk including flashing beacons
- Identify costs and funding

This sidewalk plaza near the veterinarian would benefit from the removal of the center granite curb and resetting of paver stones. This is an opportunity for additional placemaking as well



The First Baptist Church parking lot has an overly generous curb cut and no sidewalk delineation

4. Host Additional Events on the Town Common

Observations:

- Hosting events on the Town Common will drive much needed foot traffic to local businesses
- Suggested by Great Road business owners

Recommendations:

- Identify different event types, work with local groups to plan and implement
- Work with Littleton Cultural Council
- Include ethnic festivals, outdoor music concert series, and other public art



5. Hire an Economic Development Director

Observations:

- Hiring a staff person to administer COVID-19 relief funds will allow for the funds to be spent quickly, directly benefiting the various recipients of the funds

Recommendations:

- Potentially utilize ARPA money for this position
- Develop the requirements and post the job opening
- Develop a list of prioritized projects for the Economic Development Director to begin working on after they are hired



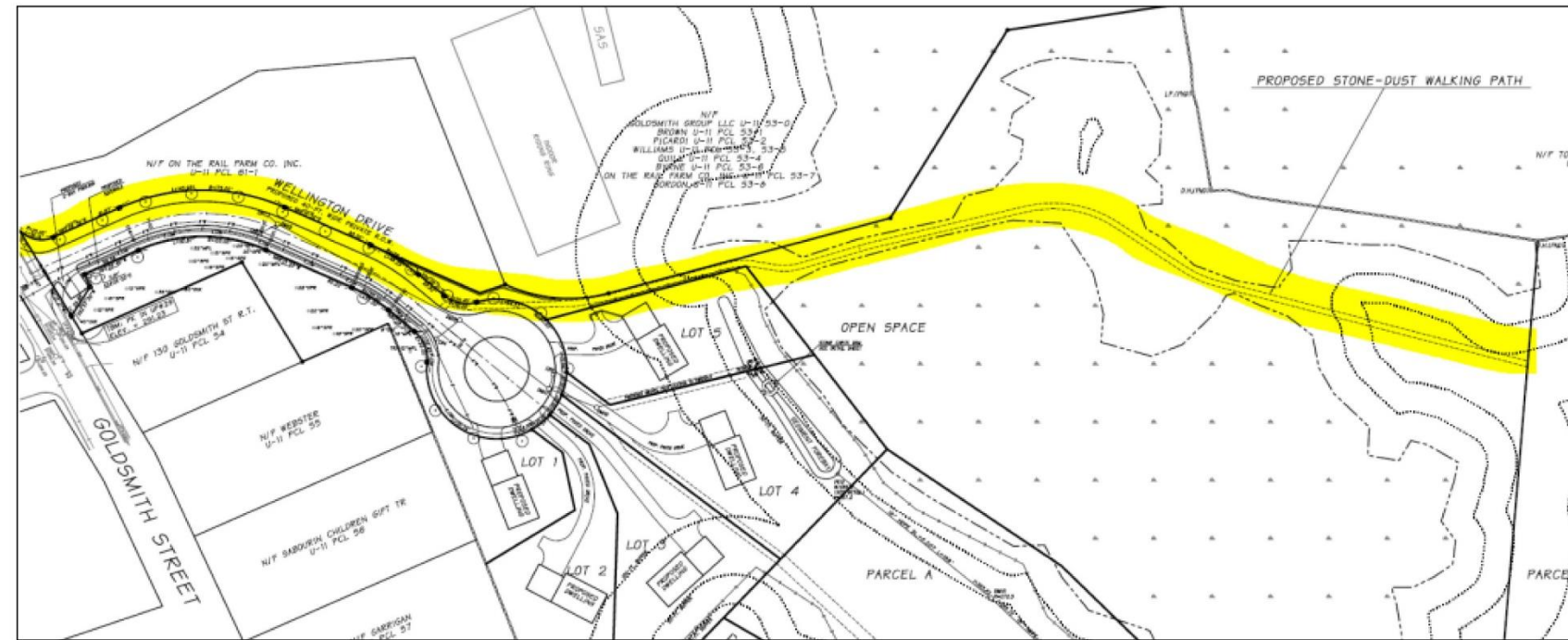
6. Complete Construction of the Couper-Wellington Trail

Observations:

- The trail will allow folks to travel by foot and by bicycle to Great Road, connecting relatively densely populated area with shops

Recommendations:

- Examine portions for paving vs. stone dust surface application
- Work with MassTrails grant program administrators to secure funding to build the trail
- Continue existing momentum generated from town-approved bridge over the stream along the trail
- Include wayfinding signage in scope of work



Detail plan of the Couper Trail

7. Redesign the Intersection of Goldsmith at Stevens Street

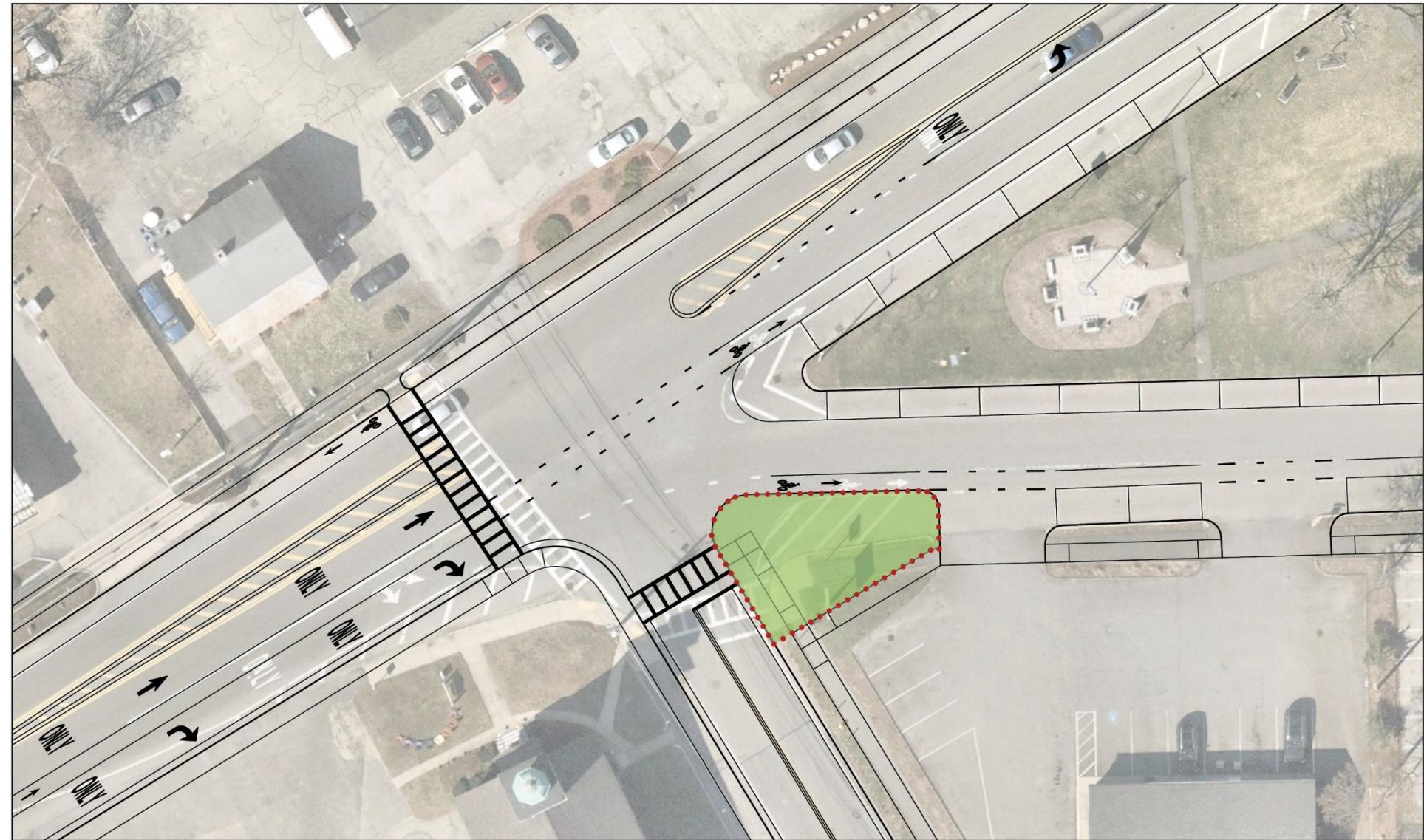
Observations:

- Simplifying the intersection movements and reducing the curb radius will create a sense of place and increase comfort for all modes

Recommendations:

- Conduct an in-house redesign or retain a consultant to aid in the redesign of this intersection
- Work with stakeholders, local businesses. And the public to flush out the design
- Ensure pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is thoughtfully integrated

The shaded polygon below is an additional opportunity for further placemaking to compliment recommended placemaking on the other end of Stevens Street



A potential concept plan rendering for discussing goals of the redesign (NOTE: for discussion / planning purposes only)

8. Determine the Highest and Best use of 12 Robinson Road

Observations:

- Thoughtful redevelopment of this historic property could drive additional foot traffic to downtown businesses

Recommendations:

- Study in-house or retain an expert to study the market dynamics and potential uses of this property
- Work with stakeholders, local businesses, and the public to seek input on the planning process
- Register the building with the historic commission if required



9. Develop Additional Outdoor Dining Opportunities

Observations:

- Outdoor dining allows those who aren't comfortable eating indoors to enjoy a restaurant meal, and increases sales and revenues at local restaurants

Recommendations:

- Conduct outreach and coordination with restaurant owners
- Town to identify roles of public realm and private realm including potential for public-private partnership
- Identify materials and elements of pilot outdoor dining program



Leonard Street in Belmont, MA offers a robust outdoor dining options in (temporary) formerly parallel street parking spaces

Source: <https://www.bostonchefs.com/rundown/heated-outdoor-dining-boston-cambridge-fall-winter/>

10. Conduct Analysis to Fund Construction of Town Sewer

Observations:

- Very strong interest by business owners and property owners to increase sewer capacity to allow for other uses (restaurants, gyms, other)

Recommendations:

- Continue the momentum built from recent studies and the purchase of the discharge site to analyze funding structures for sewer expansion
- Include package treatment plants
- Perform critical public outreach, solicit input
- Seek support from public officials, business owners



A package wastewater treatment plant



COMMENTS

Comments

- Determine High Priority



Next Steps:

- Finalize Report
- Submit Final Plan to DHCD tomorrow
- Prepare for grant funding opportunities in 2022

Thank You!

Appendix

APPENDIX C - Nashoba Regional Greenways Fact Sheet

Nashoba Regional Greenways (NRG) Coalition

The NRG Coalition is an alliance of communities that are working together to designate, develop, and promote safe, friendly, local, and regional connections and access for cyclists and pedestrians to shared-use paths, community centers, and attractions in the Nashoba Region/Route 2 corridor west of Rte. 128. NRG effectively implements a local portion of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) Landline vision (<https://www.mapc.org/resource-library/landline-vision-plan/>) - a 1,400-mile connected network of trails and greenways within the Boston region.

The NRG region is blessed with many existing major shared-use trails and greenways, notably the Nashua River Rail Trail, the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, the Assabet River Rail Trail, and the Minuteman Rail Trail. Currently, however, there are no designated safe/appropriate routes to connect these resources to mass transit, community centers, or regional attractions. The NRG initiative is an attempt to fill that gap and create those connections - an important step forward for MAPC's Landline vision. [Attached](#) is a map of the existing infrastructure with this summary.

The Goals of the NRG Coalition include:

- Improve cycling and pedestrian connectivity within the Nashoba portion of the MAPC and Montachusset Regional Planning Council (MRPC) regions
- Provide a viable well-used shared and alternative transportation network to complement existing Complete Streets initiatives
- Improve the quality of life in the Nashoba region
- Increase exposure to local agriculture, natural resources and commercial centers
- Educate other road users to support a 'share-the-road' mindset
- Promote proper road etiquette amongst cyclists, pedestrians and drivers (all road users)
- Work with local DPWs and MADOT to implement bike and pedestrian-friendly roads

In one year, the network of communities that have participated in meetings to discuss the idea has grown to include:

Acton, Ayer, Bedford, Bolton, Boxborough, Concord, Devens, Harvard, Hudson, Lincoln, Littleton, Stow, and Sudbury with the expectation that additional neighboring communities will also participate.

The NRG initiative is now ready to move from an idea to a project. Steps taken by the NRG Coalition to date include: development of a route map through each community, drafting of a mission statement and charter, and development of a shared-use information repository, but assistance is needed to take it from an ad-hoc group to a more sustainable and formalized entity. Towards that end, NRG recently received Technical Assistance Grants from both the MRPC and MAPC for professional and administrative support. Specific support will be provided to: (1) help organize and establish a more formal structure for the coalition, (2) support public education and outreach, (3) support community review and input into the Landline map routes, and (4) develop local implementation guidance and a signage plan

The NRG Coalition is very excited to continue this important work in our region and appreciate any support that can be provided in supporting these efforts and in recognizing the positive impact it will have in our communities.

For questions or additional information, please reach out to: Gary Lacroix, Executive Chair – Nashoba Regional Greenways Coalition (email: gaduzabe@yahoo.com).

Nashoba Greenways

LandLine Network Facility Type



- MA Town Boundaries
- Shared Use Path - Existing
- Shared Use Path - Design
- Shared Use Path - Envisioned
- Shared Use Path - Unimproved Surface
- Protected Bike Lane and Sidewalk
- Bike Lane and Sidewalk
- Protected Bike Lane - Design
- Shared Roadway - Low Traffic
- Shared Roadway - Design
- Gap - Safety Upgrades Needed
- Regional Foot Trail
- Regional Foot Trail - Envisioned
- Regional Foot Trail on roadway

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

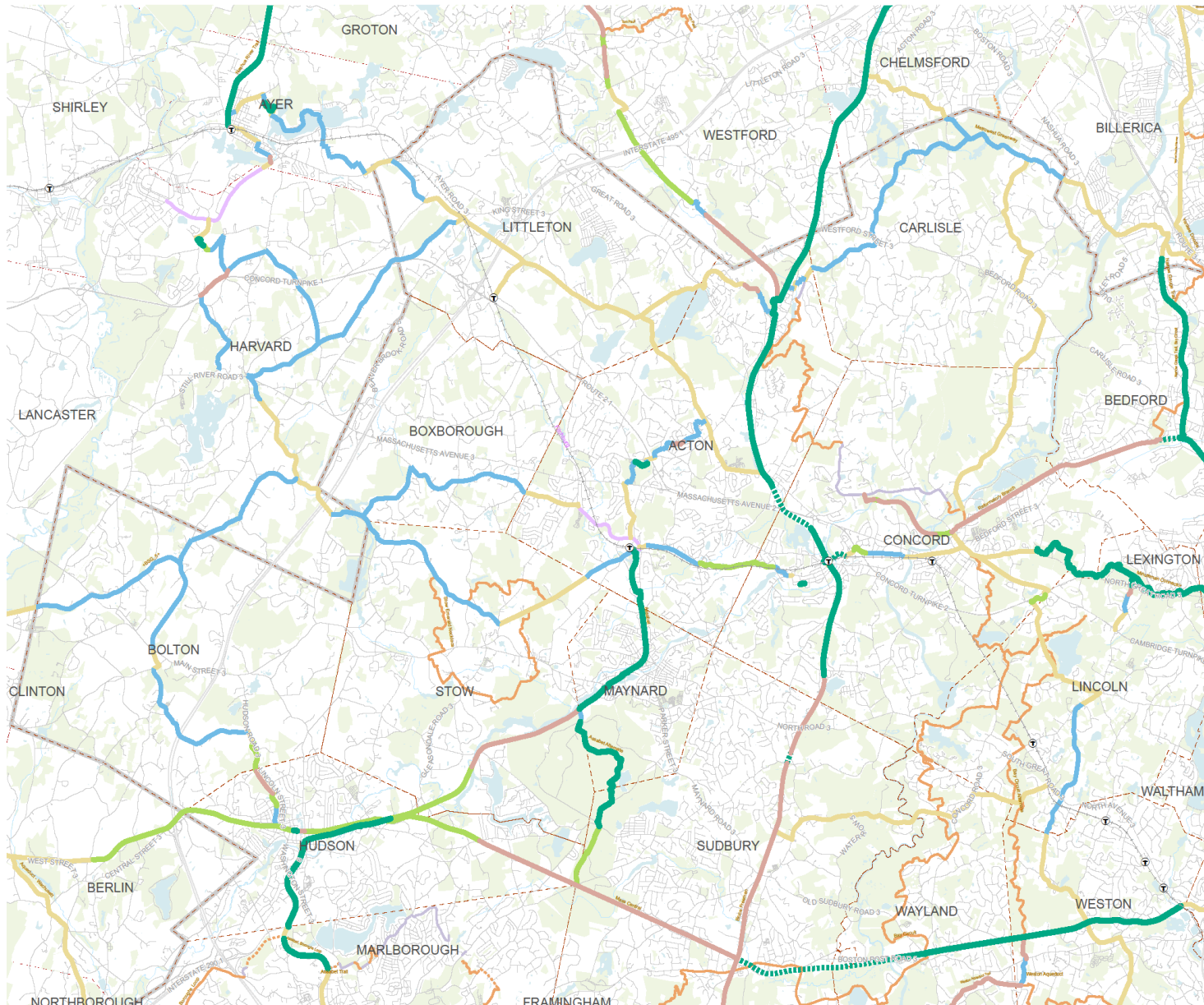


The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analyses.

Produced by:
Metropolitan Area Planning Council
60 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111 | (617) 933-0700

Data Sources:
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS)
Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

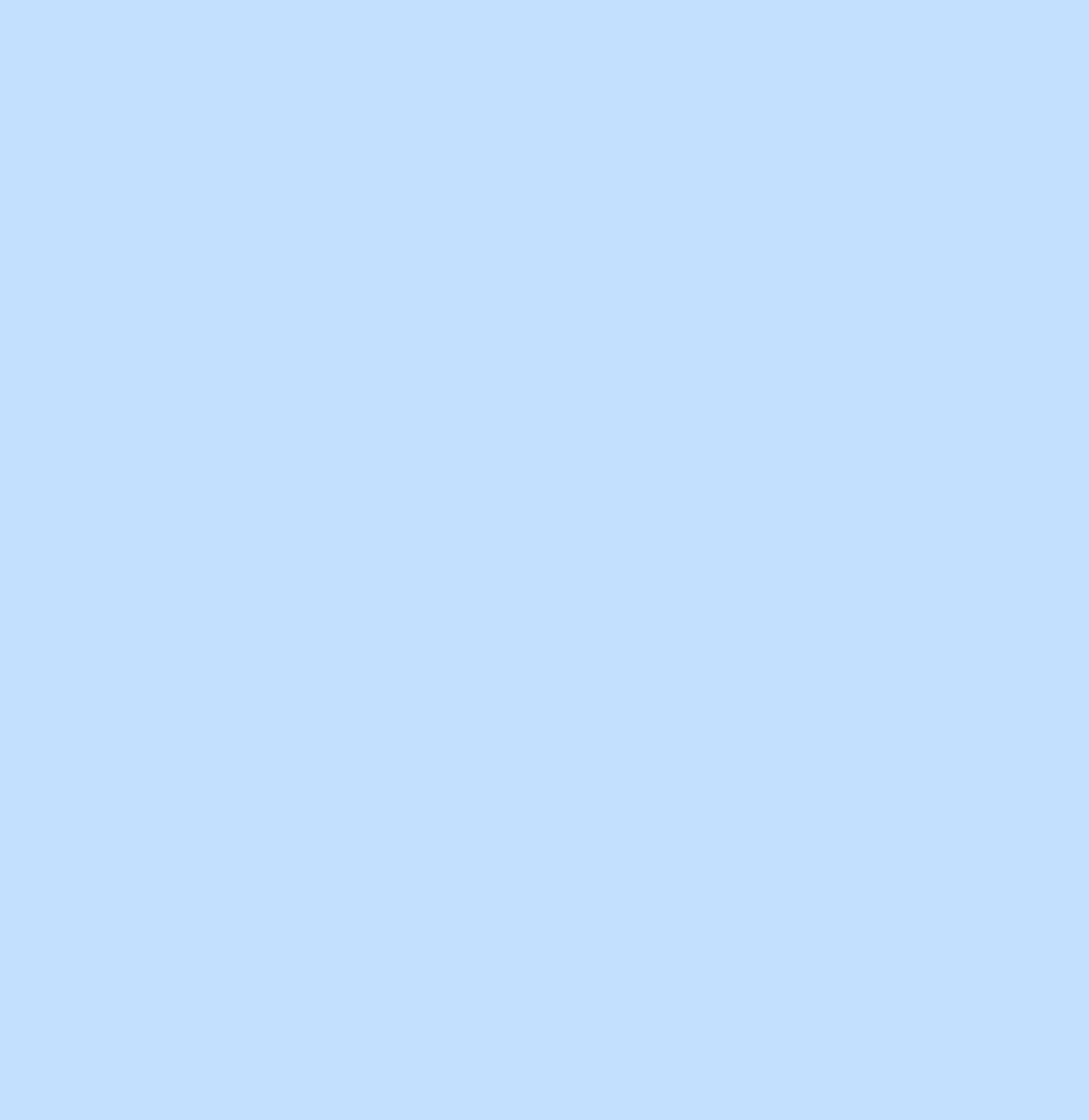
December 2020



Document Path: K:\Data\Projects\Current_Projects\Transportation\Bike_Pedestrian_Facilities\Analysis\midwest_LandLineRegional Greenway Facility Type 24036.mxd

Appendix

APPENDIX D - Everett Storefront Design Guidelines





Developing storefront guidelines to energize downtown



Provided by SME Consultant Mark Favermann, Favermann Design
 Location Everett, MA

Origin	Mayor, City of Everett
Budget	 Low - \$35,000 for design fee + program to subsidize implementation for \$25,000
Timeframe	 Short- 10 -12 months
Risk	 Low
Key Performance Indicators	Level of participation by landlords and merchants
Partners & Resources	City of Everett, Everett Building Department and Community Development Department, and landlords and merchants.

Diagnostic

The City of Everett is a primarily working class community just north of Boston. It has a large share of Brazilian, Latino and Italian first- and second-generation residents.

In the last few years, a very large casino has located there that gives the city some needed donations and fees for public improvements. There are two major retail enclaves in Everett: Everett Square and Glendale Square.

Everett Square, the larger of the two, is the traditional downtown where the public library and City Hall and many amenities are located.

Stores and restaurants are primarily locally-owned, family enterprises. Only a minority of Everett's business are national or regional chains.

In a bid to encourage the appeal of Everett's downtown to outside visitors, the year before the Pandemic, the Mayor directed the Community Development Director to create a framework to better guide merchants in enhancing their storefronts. A subsidy grant program was being developed to encourage merchant and landlord participation.

The Mayor also felt that a more restricted approach to storefront design be adhered to with similar sign details and limited awning colors. A study was commissioned to develop Guidelines for Signage and Storefronts. Following this, the guidelines were to be translated into the City of Everett's Building Code.

Action Items

- Photo-documentation of all commercial blocks and stores in both Everett Square and Glendale Square.
- Creating a panoramic view each block showing "existing" and "proposed."
- Thorough review of existing storefront improvement programs throughout the United States and Canada to recognize applicable precedents and best practices.
- Development of a City of Everett Guidelines format while exploring various cases for refinement and review.
- Drafting distinct pages referencing individual aspects of storefronts. These included wall signs, blade signs, awnings and window treatments.
- Review the drafted pages with Everett's planning staff, Building Department and representatives of the Mayor's office.
- Final approval of Storefront Guidelines.



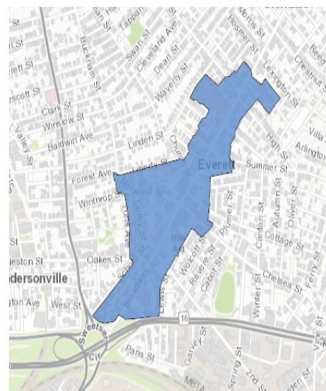
Everett Square

Applicable Commercial Areas

The Everett Storefront Sign and Design Guidelines are applicable to any storefront located in the Everett Square neighborhood and the Glendale Square Neighborhood.

Everett Square

Everett Square is a prominent commercial corridor in the city center running along Broadway Street between Hancock Street in the north and Revere Beach Parkway in the south. The center of Everett Square is at the intersection of Broadway and Chelsea/Norwood streets.



The high number of vacant storefronts contributed to lack of vibrancy downtown.

Process

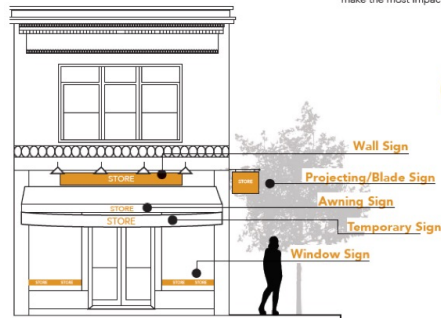
- Extensive research of other cities and towns guidelines and procedures.
- Based on best practices, create easily understandable illustrated storefront component pages that reference City of Everett regulations.
- Establish storefront element criteria through including specifically referenced dimensions, materials and placement.
- Photo-document good and bad examples of storefront elements.
- Create a City of Everett color pallet.
- Show by illustration approved and not approved ways of applying storefront elements.
- Circulate among town staff the drafts individual guideline pages for review and refinement.
- Organize whole Storefront Guidelines set of pages.
- After completion of Storefront Guidelines, during the Covid-19 shutdown, work with the Building Commission to rewrite Everett's Building Code to reflect the clearer storefront criteria.
- Others involved in the rewriting of Building Code include the city attorney and community development director.
- This sentence by sentence intense exercise gave focus to the Building Code while doing away with unnecessary zoning code criteria
- This Collaboration made a tedious set of tasks quite reasonable to complete.
- This process allowed an opportunity to address sign issues throughout the City such as non-conforming uses, public/private garages, etc..

Signs

Signs

Business signage is a very critical element to the storefront. Not only does it provide a first impression to customers, but it also helps convey the business' brand and character.

Signs should clearly communicate the business name, but not be overwhelming. The average person can only process four to seven words while passing by. Therefore keeping text and graphics to a minimum will make the most impact.



City Ordinance/Regulation:
Section 12.54(n) of the City Ordinance further regulates the number and size of signs. See Technical Requirements for more information.

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Signs and Technical Requirements

Awnings

Awnings can be a great addition to a storefront. Not only can they provide an area for signage, but they also help provide a visual cue on where the entrance is located. Awnings also provide shelter for customers in inclement weather and also provide shade for store items being displayed in the window.

City Ordinance/Regulation:
City Council Rule 74.B further regulates awnings.
Awning signs are also further regulated in City Ordinance Section 12A.



Awning Signs - Material

Awnings should be a solid color and made from a fabric or canvas material. Shiny, high gloss or translucent materials should be avoided.

Lettering and material should be consistent for all awnings on the same building.



This fabric awning is NOT shiny, high gloss or translucent. The awning frame also matches the black fabric.

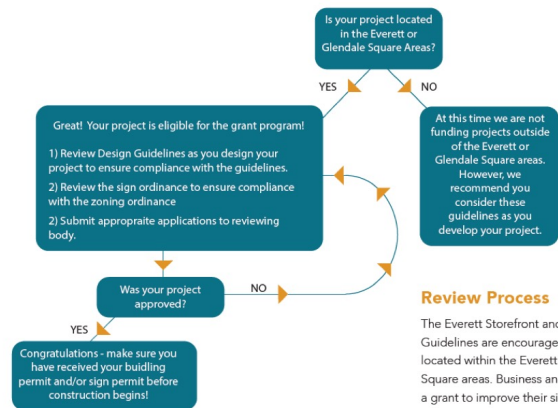


This awning is made of shiny vinyl and is not encouraged.

The block party was a near-term, easy action item in the overall implementation plan and was intended to support a good image for this area of the downtown and set up for larger and longer-term action items such as building redevelopment, wayfinding, and business recruitment for ground floor spaces.

Process- Strategic Decisions

- City of Everett deciding to create storefront guidelines
- Building Commission desiring to match new guidelines to City's Building code.
- Creation of a digital set of storefront criteria for use by merchants, landlords and fabricator/installers.
- Use of panoramic photo-montage to establish existing conditions.
- Use of photo-montages to act as baseline show proposed conditions using new storefront criteria.
- Collaboration between strategic City departments for ownership of the guidelines and shared development of the review process for design and grant applications.
- Creation of easily understandable and illustrated storefront criteria.



Review Process

The Everett Storefront and Facade Design Guidelines are encouraged for any storefront located within the Everett Square and Glendale Square areas. Business and property owners seeking a grant to improve their signage or awning shall demonstrate compliance with these guidelines and any applicable zoning regulations. This flow chart is meant to help you understand the process to get your project approved.

Review Process and Grant Application

Everett Square

Before



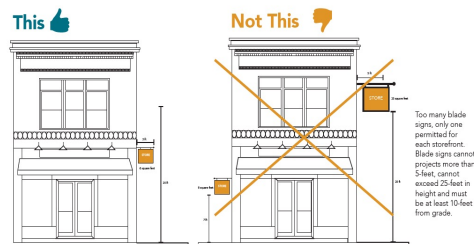
After





Projecting/Blade Signs

Projecting/Blade signs should be limited one to a business entrance and should not contain more than two faces. To maintain the pedestrian feel of the corridor, projecting/blade signs cannot project more than 5 feet from the building or be larger than 8 square feet. The sign should also not be placed higher than the following (whichever is the lowest): 25 feet above grade; the top of the sills of the first level of windows above the first story; or the height of the building at the building line.



Wall Signs

Wall Signs - Height

The top of wall signs should be higher than any of the following, whichever is lowest:

- 25 feet above grade;
- top of sills of the first level of windows above the first story; or
- the height of a building at the building line

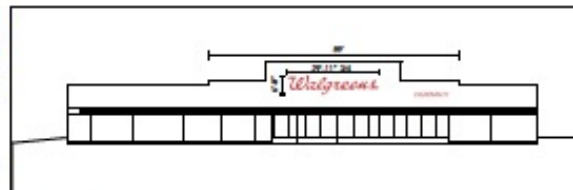


Everett MA Signage Case Study

The following depicts how signage is applied based on current and proposed regulations. The proposed regulations are depicted in Example 2. However, two additional renderings were provided to show alternative sign sizes.

Example 1
Allowed Under Current Regulations
Based on Sign Permit Documentation
Max Sign Size = 395 (158ft x 2.5 = 395, per sign permit)

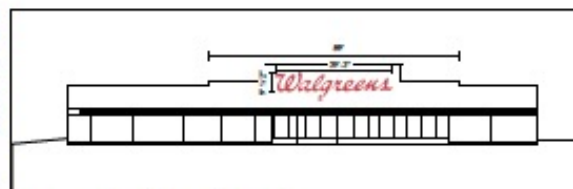
Main Sign As Shown = 199.77sf



Note - square footage is split up between the two signs "Walgreens" & "Pharmacy"

Example 2
Proposed Regulations
4 square ft per linear foot of wall which pertains to the sign, for facades set back more than 100 feet from the centerline of the road
Max Sign Size = 356 sf

As shown = ~ 354 sf
Dimensions = 39.25' x 9.04'



Note - proposed regulations would not permit two wall signs on the same facade, therefore this example using all allotted sign size to the single wall sign.

Example 3
Comparison
3.5 sf per linear foot of wall which pertains to the sign, for facades set back from than 100 feet from the centerline of the road.
Max Sign Size = 311.5sf

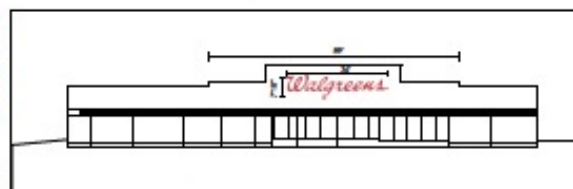
As shown = ~311.12sf
Dimensions = 36.75' x 8.47'



Note - proposed regulations would not permit two wall signs on the same facade, therefore this example using all allotted sign size to the single wall sign.

Example 4
Comparison
3 sf per linear foot of wall which pertains to the sign, for facades set back from than 100 feet from the centerline of the road.
Max Sign Size = 267sf

As shown = ~266.30'
Dimensions = 34' x 7.83'



Note - proposed regulations would not permit two wall signs on the same facade, therefore this example using all allotted sign size to the single wall sign.

FAVERMANN DESIGN | DECEMBER 2019