



Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

Middleborough



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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Acknowledgements

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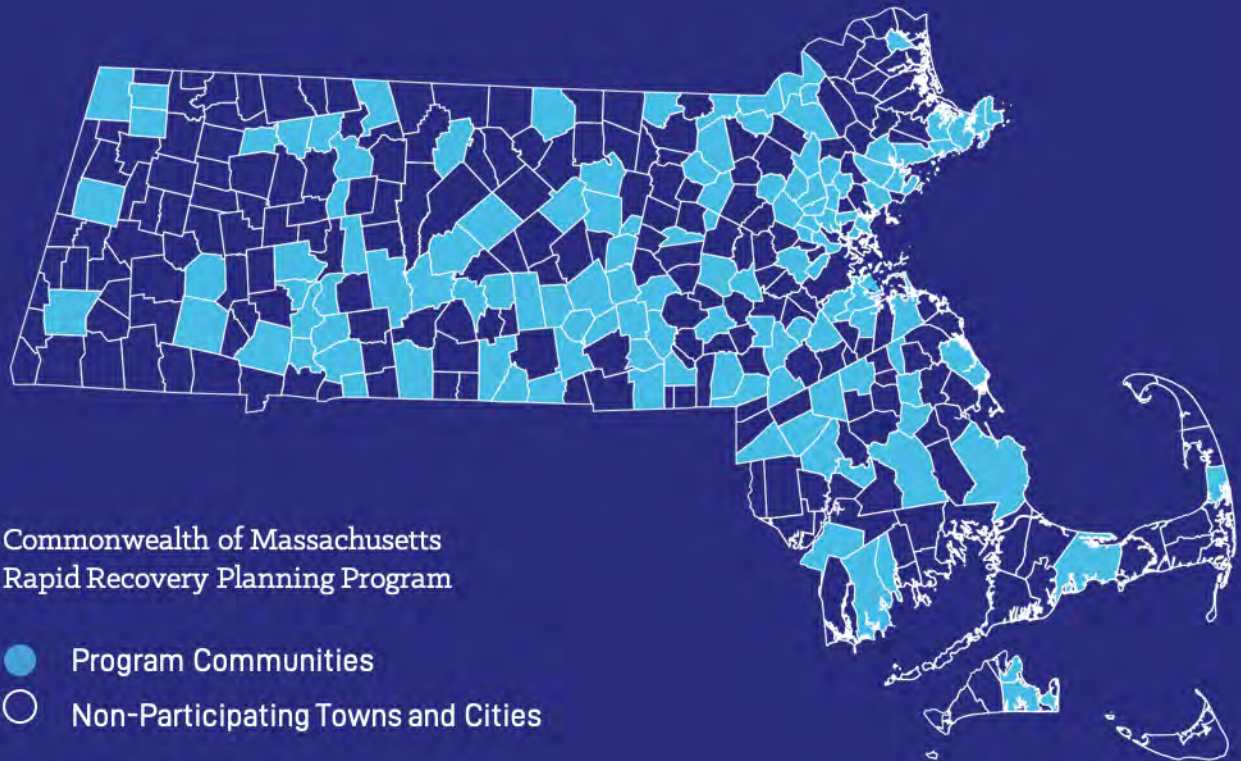
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125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

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

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



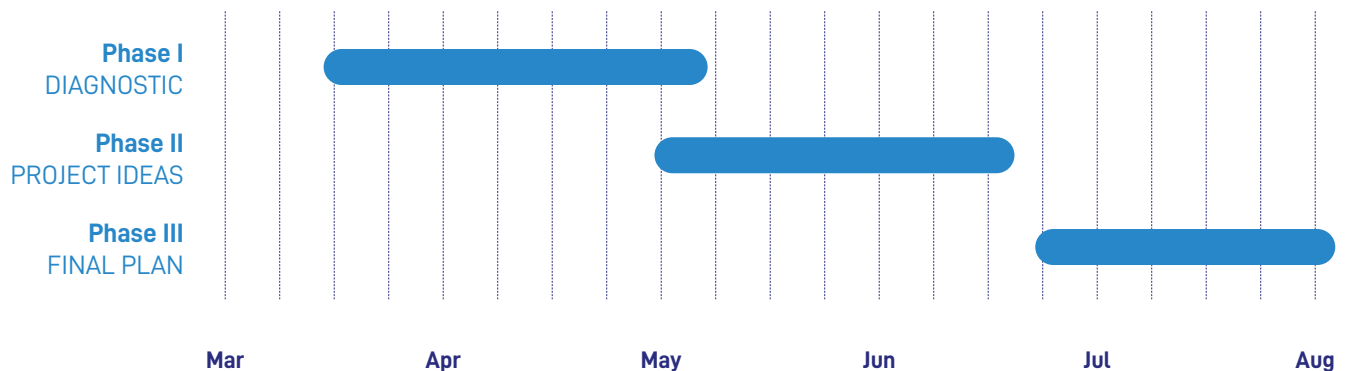
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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

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

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

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



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

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

Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework



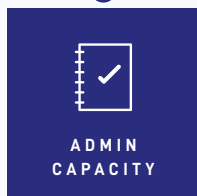
Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?



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



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



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

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



Public Realm



Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Revenue & Sales



Admin Capacity



Cultural/Arts



Other

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

A Town Dependent on Art & Culture

Middleborough, a town of 24,245 people stands as the gateway to Cape Cod on I-495 as the western-most town in Plymouth County. Middleborough has a historic downtown, handsome buildings, and an elegant Town Hall with an observation deck. Downtown Middleborough is home to 97 businesses. Downtown has 361,000 sf of ground floor space with a total of 624,000 sf of building space. There are 18 vacant storefronts with a 14.6% vacancy rate as to ground floor units

The largest segment of ground floor space is dedicated to retail uses (34%) followed by office uses (24%). The leading uses in Downtown by business sector are other services, (personal care businesses, laundry and religious uses), followed by retail uses. Government is the largest employer. Most Downtown retail businesses are micro businesses.

The Covid pandemic significantly impacted Downtown Middleborough, hitting small and micro businesses. Over half of businesses Downtown closed at least temporarily. Over two-thirds of businesses lost revenue, with 59% of businesses losing more than 25% of their revenues due to Covid. One-quarter of Downtown businesses were forced to lay off staff. On-site shopping was greatly reduced – half of Downtown businesses reported fewer on-site customers. One-third of businesses experienced a loss of over 25% of their on-site customers Downtown. Middleborough town-wide lost 912 jobs from 2019 to 2020, nearly ten percent of all people working for businesses in Middleborough.

Despite the significant pain, adversity, and economic losses brought on by Covid, there are a few bright spots. Downtown has a strong core of supporters. Downtown has welcomed some new businesses, although others have moved seeking cheaper space elsewhere to survive the Covid-induced downturn. Downtown Middleborough is looking ahead. The recovery from Covid is still fragile. Active outreach and marketing are needed to fully recover from Covid in Downtown Middleborough.

The basics in Downtown Middleborough as to the physical environment, both the public and private realms, are in good condition. Some spot improvements as to building conditions are needed and restoration of the Pierce Building is an opportunity. Wayfinding is lacking, which makes it difficult for customers to easily locate parking amongst Middleborough's supply of 993 public parking spaces Downtown.

As a small town, Middleborough relies largely on volunteers to organize promotions, special events and activate Downtown. Volunteers are tired and needing support. There is no formal downtown management entity with staff. Town staff works to help Downtown out. The Town's Community and Economic Development office is a staff of one with town-wide responsibilities. A part-time grant writer was just added in October 2021. There is a void in the people-resources and capacity needed for on-the-ground stewardship of Downtown, especially as to promotion, marketing and outreach, which are integral for Downtown Middleborough's recovery.

Six projects to advance Downtown Middleborough's recovery from Covid and strengthen the business district are identified. A comprehensive wayfinding initiative to improve and enhance wayfinding to Downtown Middleborough on a regional scale – roadway signage and commuter rail signage, to wayfinding to and within Downtown and Middleborough, including wayfinding for parking is needed.

Marketing and Branding to Signal Recovery

A Downtown branding study is nearing completion. Brand Implementation will be a major undertaking to successfully roll-out Downtown Middleborough's new brand. Branding is an essential step in rebuilding Downtown's customer base. Windows Alive, a cultural program designed to draw people Downtown featuring art and performances in vacant storefront windows and highlighting locations for new businesses, is designed to be a major initiative. Windows Alive will kick-off with a pilot project within the next few months, followed by a larger Windows Alive festival within the year after. Windows Alive will help activate Downtown, bring people, and showcase opportunities.

Building visitation and customer traffic over the long-term for Downtown Middleborough is central to Downtown Middleborough's Covid recovery. One of Downtown Middleborough's hidden gems is the small Robbins Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology operated by the Massachusetts Archaeology Society. The creation of a Massachusetts Archaeological Trail, in partnership with other archaeological museums and labs, is a recommended project to attract more people to Middleborough and the Robbins Museum.

To activate and get Downtown Middleborough on the map, a careful examination of the best approach to Downtown management and stewardship is required, including exploring the creation of a Business Improvement District for Downtown. Another important tool for effective and strategic downtown management and promotion is the creation of an annual promotion calendar for Downtown.

These six initiatives, successfully implemented, will provide the needed springboard and foundation for Downtown Middleborough to recover from Covid and prosper long-term.

Diagnostic

Downtown Middleborough



DIAGNOSTIC OVERVIEW

At the outset of the Local Rapid Recovery Program (LRRP), a diagnostic of Downtown Middleborough was undertaken examining the physical environment, business environment, customer base, and administrative capacity of the commercial area. These four elements contribute to creating a healthy and vibrant downtown that is attractive to residents, visitors, customers, businesses and investors.

The diagnostic provides communities a base line tool and data to monitor change and improvements. The diagnostic utilizes the framework and criteria established by the LRRP program to provide a consistent assessment of commercial districts throughout the Commonwealth. Baseline diagnostic LRRP data collected will also be used by the Commonwealth to communicate overall program impact and to support future funding and resource allocations that may be used toward implementation of final projects across participating communities.

A survey of Downtown Middleborough businesses was also undertaken that included questions as to the impacts of Covid and business owners' thoughts on approaches to improving the physical and business environments in addition to management and policy-related issues.



Key Findings



STRONG
SUPPORT

Both the Public and Public Realms are in good condition needing some spot improvements.



VOLUNTEER
HELP

A couple blighted private buildings harm Downtown's appearance.



PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT

Wayfinding for Downtown Middleborough and for parking is needed.



BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT

Strengthen connections – sidewalks and lighting – with the residential area.

The Physical Environment

The physical environment of Downtown creates the first impression for the shopper and visitor to Downtown Middleborough. It is the setting and environment where people work, shop, and spend time in Downtown. The two components of the physical environment are the public realm and the private realm. The public realm is comprised of elements typically owned, operated and maintained by the public sector, such as streets, sidewalks, parking, streetscapes, street lights, street trees, open space, wayfinding, and amenities, such as seating areas. The private realm includes building facades, storefront signs and awnings, window display, outdoor dining and seating areas, sidewalk displays.

Downtown Middleborough's physical environment was assessed through a series of site visits primarily in spring 2021, with supplementary visits in the summer.

A welcoming and safe physical environment contributes to:

- A positive customer experience, where customers are more likely to linger and visit multiple businesses.
- Enticing drivers, visitors and local residents to stop and explore Downtown
- A pleasant work environs that adds to the quality of life, making it is easier to recruit and retain workers in Downtown
- Attracting private investment and new businesses.

In today's busy world along with the concern and anxiety regarding the Covid pandemic, it is even more critical for Downtowns to be Alive, Comfortable and Easy (ACE) for customers and visitors. A welcoming and well-maintained physical environment contributes to the image of success. People want to spend time and be in positive, up-lifting environments.

Key Findings



The Physical Environment

In today's busy world along with the concern and anxiety regarding the Covid pandemic, it is even more critical for Downtowns to be Alive, Comfortable and Easy (ACE) for customers and visitors. A welcoming and well-maintained physical environment contributes to the image of success. People want to spend time and be in positive, up-lifting environments.

Alive. Downtowns need to be alive with people. People working. People shopping, eating, hanging-out and people living. Downtowns feel alive when there is outdoor display, outdoor dining, people on the sidewalk, and events.

Comfortable. Downtowns need to be comfortable and welcoming. The physical environment determines the comfort of visitors and uses of downtown. A comfortable downtown has places to sit, places to eat or drink, some shade as well as sun, along with amenities – benches, public art, trees, flowers, bathrooms and trash cans. Comfort includes friendly businesses with great customer service who are welcoming and appreciative of customers.

Easy. Ease and convenience are highly valued by customers today. Thriving Downtowns need to make life, access, patronizing a business and shopping easy. Good wayfinding, signage, well-lit streets, sidewalks and paths all help make downtown easy and convenient.

Getting around downtown whether by foot, car or bus needs to be easy and convenient. It needs to be easy to find Downtown and easy to find one's final destination whether it's a store, doctor's office, restaurant, art museum or public service. Parking needs to be easy and hassle free, whether it is a car or a bike. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of easy and convenient pick-up and to-go and delivery, which needs to be accommodated downtown.



Public Realm

Physical Environment – Public Realm

The Public Realm features in Downtown Middleborough assessed in the LRRP program were Sidewalks, Street Trees and Benches, Roadbed and Crosswalks, Street Lighting, and Wayfinding/ Signage. A scorecard using statewide framework for evaluation summarizes the findings below and the findings for Downtown Middleborough as to the public realm are detailed more fully over the next several pages.

Feature	Grade
<i>Sidewalks</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Street Trees & Benches</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>Lighting</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>Wayfinding & Signage</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>Crosswalks</i>	<i>B</i>

Table D-1. Downtown Middleborough Public Realm Scorecard

Public Realm Features of Successful Downtowns

- Seating Areas & Benches
- Sidewalks in Good Condition and Continuous
- Street Trees for Shade & Ambience
- Landscaping
- Clean and Safe
- Trash Cans
- Lighting for Pedestrians & Vehicles
- Event Spaces, e.g., Open Spaces and Plazas
- Public Art
- Visible, Clear Signage & Wayfinding
- Accessible to All
- Connectivity & Access with good crossings, parking, curb side management and gateways
- District Branding -- Banners, Signs, Decals



Physical Environment – Public Realm

SIDEWALKS

Guiding Principle: Sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate both the flow of customers and spillover retail/dining activity. In addition, sidewalks should be clean and well-maintained to ensure the safety and comfort of pedestrians.

Good Quality Approaches to Sidewalks in Downtown Middleborough



Figure D-1. South Main Street Decorative Streetscape sidewalk.



Figure D-2. New Center Street sidewalk.



Figure D-3. New Center Street sidewalk.



Physical Environment – Public Realm

A Few Sidewalks and Paths Need Improvement on the Perimeter of Downtown -- Some Examples



Figure D-4. Residential sidewalk on perimeter of Downtown.



Figure D-5. Sidewalk to public parking area.

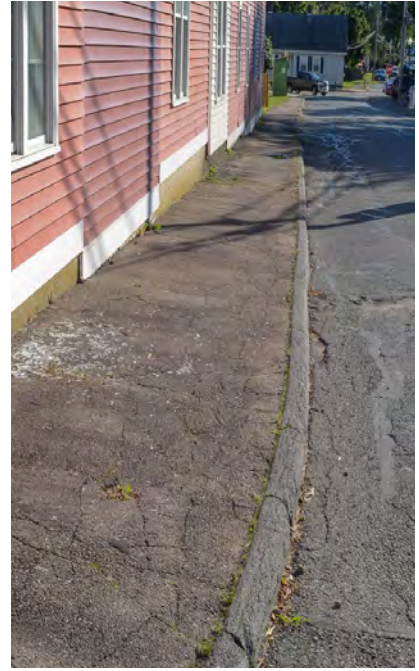


Figure D-6. Lincoln Street sidewalk.

Downtown Middleborough's Sidewalks rate A for the primary Downtown streets and B overall.

A	B	C	F
<p>More than 75% of sidewalks in the study area are cleaned, well-maintained and accessible to multiple users across different ages and abilities.</p>	<p>About 50% of sidewalks in the study area are cleaned and well-maintained.</p>	<p>More than 25% of sidewalks in the study area pose challenges to the pedestrian experience (including narrow sidewalks and lack of cleanliness/maintenance).</p>	<p>There are no sidewalks in the study area.</p>



Physical Environment – Public Realm

STREET TREES & BENCHES

Guiding Principle: Sidewalks should facilitate a variety of activities, including resting, people-watching and socializing. Street trees and benches are key amenities that support such activities and should be made available without disrupting the flow of pedestrians.

Examples of Street Trees in Downtown Middleborough.



Figure D-7: Street trees in early spring and a bench on Wareham Street by the municipal parking lot.



Figure D-8. Street trees along Wareham Street in the sidewalk area.



Figures D-9 and D-10. Some street trees in Downtown are planted in grassy areas, which provides more room for the tree's root systems



Figure D-11. Street trees in the early spring on Center Street.



Public Realm

Physical Environment – Public Realm

Examples of Benches in Downtown Middleborough



Figure D-12. Benches in front of Town Hall.



Figure D-13. A bench at the corner of North Main and Wareham Street.



Public Realm

Physical Environment – Public Realm

Examples of Benches in Downtown Middleborough

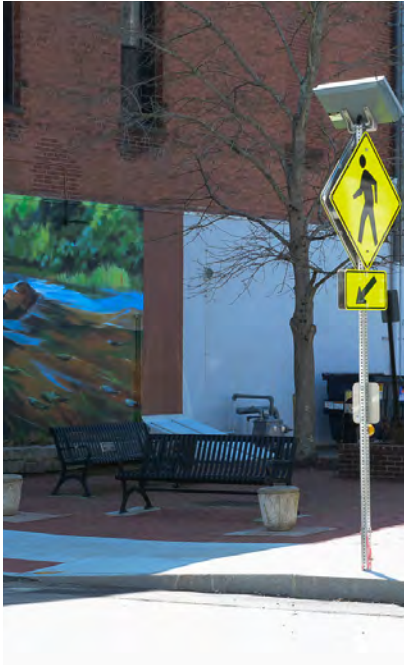


Figure D-14. Kramer Park provides several benches and street trees for shade. This photo was taken in the early spring before trees have leafed.



Figure D-15. A bench for a quiet moment on the grounds of the Middleborough Library.

Downtown Middleborough's rates as to Street Trees and Benches:

A	B	C	F
<p><i>Street trees and benches are readily available throughout the study area. They are well-designed, well maintained, and offer shade and comfort to pedestrians.</i></p>	<p><i>Although street trees and benches are available across the study area, these amenities have not been cleaned or well-maintained, and require improvements.</i></p>	<p><i>Limited availability of street trees and benches creating uncomfortable pedestrian experience.</i></p>	<p><i>There are no street trees and benches in the study area.</i></p>



Public Realm

Physical Environment – Public Realm

LIGHTING

Guiding Principle: Street lighting improves pedestrian visibility and personal safety, as well as aids in geographic orientation.

Downtown Middleborough primary commercial streets – Center Street, Jackson Street, North and South Main Streets, Nickerson Street, Union Street and Wareham Street have decorative street light fixtures that provide lighting for both the pedestrian and vehicular scales. The side streets such as School Street, Pearl Street, Oak Street have one light pole per block, and Lincoln Street has none.

Good Examples of Public Realm Lighting in Downtown Middleborough.



Figures 16 and 17 Decorative light posts can be found on Center Street, including ones with flower baskets.



Figure 18. The decorative street lights can be found on North and South Main Street extending northward to the Library and Pierce Building, and south to Town Hall. This light is in front of the Pierce Building, that provide lighting for the major downtown streets.



Figure 19. Decorative street light on Jackson Street by public parking and the Museum Corner.



Physical Environment – Public Realm

Side Street Lighting Could be Better

The side streets that intersect with North and South Main Streets and Center and Wareham Streets tend to have one pole light fixture per block. This creates a modest level of lighting. Access to some of Downtown’s parking lots is from walking on the side streets. Residents who live nearby need lighting to walk safely to and from Downtown Middleborough especially in winter months when the days are shorter. Lincoln Street which connects Battis Field with Wareham Street has no street light. The photos below illustrate the limited lighting on two different side street blocks within one block of Center Street.



Figure 20. Streetlight on pole on Oak Street.



Figure 21. Streetlight on Pearl Street.

Downtown Middleborough’s Lighting rates for its primary streets:

A	B	C	F
<p>More than 75% of the study area utilizes a range of lighting strategies to ensure safety of pedestrians and motorists, as well as highlight the identity and history of an area.</p>	<p>About 50% of the study area is serviced by street lighting that supports pedestrian visibility and safety.</p>	<p>Street lighting on the primary street in the study area does not support pedestrian visibility and safety.</p>	<p>There is no street lighting in the study area.</p>



Public Realm

Physical Environment – Public Realm

WAYFINDING/ SIGNAGE

Guiding Principle: A wayfinding system supports overall accessibility of a commercial district. It benefits pedestrians and bicyclists, and directs motorists to park and walk. Without clear visual cues, customers may find it difficult to park or may be less aware of local offerings.

Wayfinding has different scales including:

- Regional for more general orientation and direction
- Arrival signs
- Wayfinding for specific places, such as Town Hall, the library and museums
- Parking signage, and
- Interpretation signage.

Downtown Middleborough has very limited wayfinding, except for parking areas. There is some limited signage directing people to the historical museum and Massasoit Community College. There is no signage on I-495 or at the exits and exit ramps for Downtown Middleborough. There is also no signage for Downtown Middleborough along Route 44. What signage does exist is for Middleborough Center, not Downtown. There is also some state route signage at the corner of Main and Center/Wareham Streets directing people elsewhere.



Figure D-23. Directional road signs are located at the primary intersection in Downtown Middleborough.



Figures D-24. Parking lot directional signage on North Main Street.



Figures D-25 and D-26. Parking lot directional signage on School Street from the north and south approaches.



Physical Environment – Public Realm

WAYFINDING/ SIGNAGE (CONT.)



Figure D-27. Directional signage driving to Downtown Middleborough from Route 44 along Route 105 one sees a state road sign for Middleborough Center and small directional signage for the library, museum and Massasoit Community College. Some signs are challenging to read due to their small size.



Figure D-28. A place-directional sign that is too small to read and needs better placement for visibility by drivers as well as pedestrians on Center Street.



Figure 29. Wayfinding signage for Thatcher's Row stores that is easy to read by both pedestrians and drivers on Center Street.



Public Realm

Physical Environment – Public Realm

WAYFINDING/ SIGNAGE (CONT.)



Figure 30. Wayfinding for the museum and parking on North Main Street.



Figure 31. An interpretative sign on the lawn of Town Hall in Downtown Middleborough.

Downtown Middleborough's Wayfinding /Signage rates:

A	B	C	F
<p><i>There is a comprehensive and cohesive wayfinding system that offers geographic orientation to pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. Signage reflects the brand and identity of the area.</i></p>	<p><i>Wayfinding in the study area is primarily geared towards directing motorists across the study area. There is limited signage to identify key assets and destinations to pedestrians.</i></p>	<p><i>Limited to no signage available throughout the study area.</i></p>	<p><i>There is no wayfinding/ signage in the study area.</i></p>



Physical Environment – Public Realm

ROADBED AND CROSSWALKS

Guiding Principle: Roads should be well maintained to ensure safety of drivers and pedestrians. Crosswalks that are unsafe or inconvenient to customers may undermine accessibility between stores and overall shopper experience.

The principal roadways traversing Downtown Middleborough are Main Street (which is also Route 105) and Center Street/ Wareham Street. These two streets are in good condition. Many crosswalks are outlined with white pavement markings. Some of the crosswalks markings have faded and need to be refreshed. The recent streetscape project added installation of yellow crosswalk signs, especially for mid-block crossings. Bump-outs to shorten the pedestrian's travel distance and enhance visibility have been used in the Center Street block between Main Street and School Street. At the edges of Downtown near residential areas, there is less likely to be crosswalks.

The bar or "zebra" crosswalk depicted in Figure 37 below, is a high visibility crosswalk that a Transportation Research Board (TRB) study found reduced pedestrian-vehicle collisions by 37% to 45%. This is the preferred crosswalk marking style by transportation engineers and safety officials due to safety from the enhanced visibility of the crosswalk to drivers with the white bars or zebra-stripes. Middleborough should consider using the bar or zebra-strip crosswalk in the future in Downtown Middleborough in lieu of just the crosswalk outlines.

Downtown Middleborough Crosswalks



Figures 32 and 33. Left is a crosswalk along Center Street. Right is the crosswalk between the parking lot and the Robbins Museum. These are good examples of well maintained, safe crosswalks in Downtown Middleborough.



Public Realm

Physical Environment – Public Realm

ROADBED AND CROSSWALKS (CONT.)

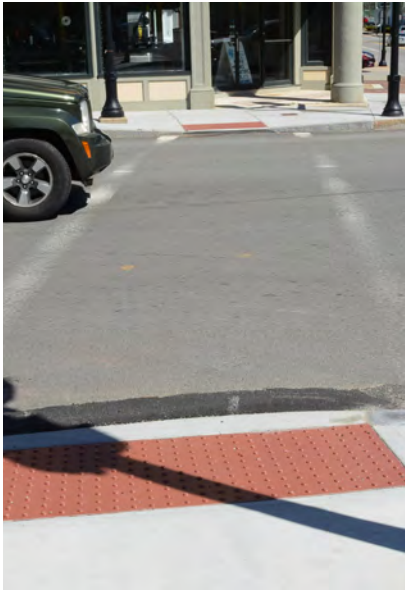


Figure 34 and 35. The pavement markings need to be repainted on these crosswalks on Center Street. On the right is a new pedestrian crossing sign to increase visibility to motorists with a solar-powered crossing light.



Figure 36. The new bump-outs and pedestrian crossing signs on Center Street at the approach to Thatcher's Lane make it easier for pedestrians to safely cross.

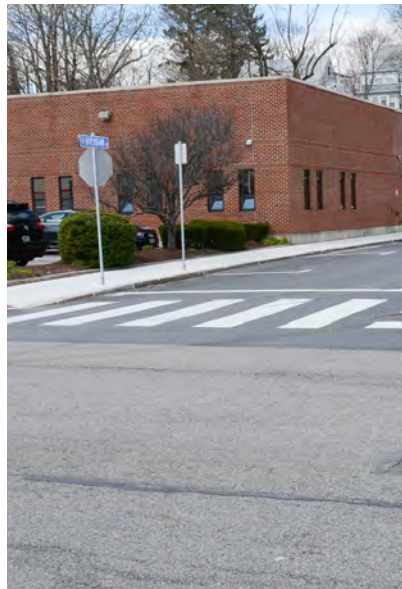


Figure 37. Bar or Zebra-Style Crosswalk Markings pictured here increase the visibility of crosswalks reducing pedestrian-vehicle accidents.



Public Realm

Physical Environment – Public Realm

ROADBED AND CROSSWALKS (CONT.)

Downtown Middleborough's Roadbed and Crosswalks rate:

A	B	C	F
<p><i>Roads are designed to balance the needs of motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians and create a safe environment for all users.</i></p>	<p><i>Roads are designed primarily to move motor vehicles across the study area efficiently, with limited crosswalks for pedestrians.</i></p>	<p><i>Roads are hazardous to all users.</i></p>	<p><i>The study area is not connected by any major roads.</i></p>



Private Realm

Physical Environment – Private Realm

The private realm is comprised principally of the buildings that frame Downtown streets. Key elements of downtown buildings – the windows, facades, signage, and building lighting all contribute to the user’s impression and experience of Downtown. The private realm plays a major role in creating a positive impression and experience for Downtown users. Well-maintained buildings, with transparent windows and good signage creates a positive impression that welcomes residents and visitors, indicating that Downtown Middleborough is alive and ready for business.

The six Private Realm features in Downtown Middleborough assessed in the LRRP diagnostic were windows, outdoor display and outdoor dining, signage, awnings, facades and lighting. These elements were reviewed using statewide criteria. The Downtown Middleborough Private Realm Scorecard offers a quick snapshot of the assessment. The more detailed discussion of the findings regarding the private realm follows.

Feature	Grade
<i>Windows</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>Outdoor Display/ Dining</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>Signage</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Awnings</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>Facades</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Lighting</i>	<i>B</i>

Table D-2. Downtown Middleborough Public Realm Scorecard

Private Realm Features of Successful Downtowns

Windows – transparent with interesting visual displays

Outdoor Display/ Dining – spillover activity adds visibility

Signage – identifiable at a distance by both vehicles and pedestrians, conveys a visual brand to attract new customers

Awnings – add color, provide shade and protection from the weather

Facades – well maintained, handsome buildings add architectural detail and interest to Downtown and help create a sense of place

Lighting – external and interior building lighting



Private Realm

Physical Environment – Private Realm

WINDOWS

Guiding Principle: Storefronts that maintain a minimum of 70% transparency ensure clear lines of sight between the business and the sidewalk to enhance attractiveness of storefront, as well as improve safety for the business, customers, and pedestrians.

Local Examples of Attractive Windows in Downtown Middleborough



Figure D-38 This window illustrates a simple, attractive, low-cost way to add color and cheer to a storefront window.



Figures D-39 and D-40. These retailers have transparent windows displaying merchandise telling passers-by about their store and inviting sales.



Figure D-41. Festive holiday displays attract customer's eyes in this fun window.



Private Realm

Physical Environment – Private Realm

WINDOWS (CONT.)

Downtown Middleborough's Windows rate:

A	B	C	F
<i>More than 75% of storefronts maintain windows with at least 70% transparency.</i>	<i>About 50% of storefront windows maintain windows with at least 70% transparency.</i>	<i>More than 25% of storefronts have windows with limited transparency.</i>	<i>All storefronts are boarded up and/or have limited transparency.</i>



Private Realm

Physical Environment – Private Realm

OUTDOOR DISPLAY/ DINING

Guiding Principle: Attractive window displays and spillover retail/restaurant activity on sidewalks or adjacent parking spaces can help contribute to overall district vibrancy.

Examples of outdoor display, signage, flags and plantings convey that businesses are open and welcoming to customers in Downtown Middleborough.



Figures D-42. Outdoor dining, the flag and the occasional sandwich board at Main Ingredient enliven Downtown Middleborough.



Figure D-43. The Patio at The Alley Theatre featured Patio Pop-Ups partnering with other Downtown businesses with food, music, and libations outdoors as a result of indoor gathering restrictions during the pandemic. Patio Pop-Ups have created a buzz and drawn people in the evening to Downtown Middleborough.



Figures D-44 and D-45. Left: The Middleborough Antique Co-op has outdoor flowering plants at their doorstep when they are open to signal to customers to come visit and shop. Rachel's Hair Expressions uses seasonal decorations to look livelier and more welcoming.





Private Realm

Physical Environment – Private Realm

OUTDOOR DISPLAY/ DINING (CONT.)

Outdoor Display/ Dining in Downtown Middleborough rates:

A	B	C	F
<p><i>More than 75% of storefronts feature an attractive window display and/or spillover merchandise and dining areas that align with the brand and identity of the district.</i></p>	<p><i>About 50% of storefronts maintain an attractive window display with limited spillover merchandise and/or dining areas.</i></p>	<p><i>More than 25% of storefronts have spillover merchandise display and outdoor dining that pose challenges to the pedestrian experience.</i></p>	<p><i>There is little to no spillover retail/ restaurant activity in the district. Less than 25% of storefronts have spillover activity or outdoor dining</i></p>



Private Realm

Physical Environment – Private Realm

SIGNAGE

Guiding Principle: Signage can help customers identify the location of storefronts and businesses from a distance. Signage should also reflect the visual brand and identity of tenants to help attract new customers.

Examples of Good Signage in Downtown Middleborough using Blade Signs



Figure D-46. CLM uses a blade-style sign to be visible to motorists and pedestrians.



D-47. Another good example of a blade sign with Gregory Scot Jewelers on Center Street. This sign is color-coordinated with the building façade.



D-48. A small blade sign for Shades Hair Design.



Figures D-49. Rilee Craft sports a clean easy-to-read sign within the sign band of the façade complemented with window graphics.



Private Realm

Physical Environment – Private Realm

SIGNAGE (CONT.)

Signage in Downtown Middleborough's Private Realm rates:

A	B	C	F
<i>More than 75% of storefront signs reflect the unique brand identity of tenants and can be easily seen from more than 10 ft distance.</i>	<i>About 50% of storefronts have clear signage that reflect basic business information and can easily be seen from adjacent sidewalks.</i>	<i>More than 25% of storefronts have signage that does not communicate names of business or types of products/services being offered.</i>	<i>Storefronts in the study area do not have signage.</i>



Private Realm

Physical Environment – Private Realm

AWNINGS

Guiding Principle: Awnings can provide shade during warmer months, enabling comfortable outdoor dining arrangements for customers. However, they must be well-maintained and designed in coordination with other elements of the storefront.

There are only a few stores in Downtown Middleborough who use awnings. Some use awnings as form of signage. Others use awnings for shade or a pop of color.



Figure D-50. Egger's Furniture bright yellow-awnings get attention and brighten up Center Street.



Figure D-51. The Pizza Pirate uses an awning primarily for advertising and an overhang providing some weather protection at the doorway.



Figure D-52. This is one of several multi-tenanted buildings in Downtown Attleboro that uses an overhang in lieu of awnings. While an overhang offers shade and weather protection, the individual storefronts are less visible.



Private Realm

Physical Environment – Private Realm

AWNINGS (CONT.)

Awnings in Downtown Middleborough's Private Realm rates:

A	B	C	F
<i>More than 75% of properties in the study area have retractable awnings that have been well-maintained and cleaned.</i>	<i>About 50% of properties in the study area have functioning awnings that have been well maintained and cleaned.</i>	<i>More than 25% of properties in the study area do not have awnings and/ or have awnings that are unusable or have not been cleaned and maintained.</i>	<i>Storefronts in the study area are not equipped with awnings.</i>



Private Realm

Physical Environment – Private Realm

FAÇADES

Guiding Principle: Storefronts that use high quality and durable building materials, as well as paint and color to differentiate from other businesses, can dramatically improve the appearance of the commercial district to potential customers.

Good Examples of Well-Maintained Building Facades



Figure D-53. The art gallery has a handsome, colorful façade on Center Street and uses color to highlight historical details on the building façade.



Figure 54. This building has maintained and restored its historic brick façade creating a presence in Downtown Middleborough.



Figure D-55. Rockland Trust has a classic historic brick façade on South Main Street.



Private Realm

Physical Environment – Private Realm

FAÇADES (CONT.)

Façades Needing Improvement



Figure D-56. A fire ravaged this building and façade. Repairs and restoration are quickly needed to avoid a blighting effect on Downtown.



Figure D-57. The blue tarp covered windows on this Wareham Street façade contribute an unkempt look in Downtown and is calling for restoration and repair.

Façades in Downtown Middleborough's Private Realm rate:

A	B	C	F
<p><i>More than 75% of properties have well-maintained façades. Limited structural enhancements are required.</i></p>	<p><i>Although most properties in the study area have clean and well-maintained façades, there is at least one significant property requiring structural façade improvements.</i></p>	<p><i>More than 25% of properties require significant building façade improvements, including power washing, painting, and structural enhancements.</i></p>	<p><i>All properties in the study area require significant façade improvements.</i></p>



Private Realm

Physical Environment – Private Realm

LIGHTING

Guiding Principle: Storefront interior lighting after business hours help enliven the corridor and boost security on the street.



Figure D-58. Freitas Liquor Store is one of the brightest lit businesses in the evening in Downtown Middleborough. It has gooseneck lights that light the sidewalk, as well as ambient light from its windows and doorway in the evening.



Figure D-59. The Burt Wood School of Performing Arts has exterior lighting highlighting the business and providing ambient light for pedestrians.



Figure D-60. Massasoit Community College spotlights its outdoor banner sign using architectural lighting in the evening on Union Street.



Private Realm

Physical Environment – Private Realm

LIGHTING (CONT.)

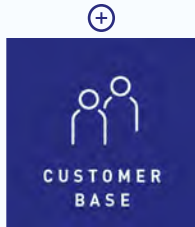
Lighting in Downtown Middleborough's Private Realm rates:

A	B	C	F
<p><i>More than 75% of storefronts have lighting that help illuminate sidewalks.</i></p>	<p><i>About 50% of storefronts have some interior lighting that help illuminate sidewalks.</i></p>	<p><i>More than 25% of storefronts do not have lighting.</i></p>	<p><i>All storefronts in the study area are shuttered and dark at night.</i></p>

The Business Environment



New businesses are opening Downtown despite Covid.



The pandemic resulted in fewer people coming to Downtown Middleborough and caused pain – income losses and layoffs.



Downtown Middleborough is looking ahead.

The LRRP review of the Downtown Middleborough business environment examined the tenant/business mix in Downtown, local anchors and destinations, and business vacancies. A business survey was conducted in March-April to gauge businesses' experience with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, and to obtain local business owners' opinions on needs and issues with sixteen businesses responding. The complete survey results can be found in the Appendix. This was augmented by interviews and conversations with local businesses and stakeholders.



Public Realm



Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Revenue & Sales



Admin Capacity



Cultural/Arts



Other



Business Mix

In spring 2021, there were 97 businesses operating in Downtown Middleborough, approximately one in every seven Middleborough businesses are located in Downtown. The leading four business sectors in Downtown are Other Services (30.9%); Retail (17.5%); Food Services (9.3%); and Professional and Technical Services (7.2%). Government / Public Administration sector, Health Care & Social Assistance sector and the Arts/ Entertainment/ Recreation sector each comprise 5.2% of the business establishments in Downtown Middleborough. Downtown Middleborough also has two banks with a presence in Downtown, Rockland Trust and Santander.

The Other Services sector includes personal care services, such as barbers, hair and nail salons, spas, dry cleaning and laundry services, religious, civic and membership associations and funeral homes. Other Services include many of the week-to-week, month-to-month, and occasional services that people patronize as part of contemporary living. Other Services often have a low-profile presence in many Downtowns, but they regularly bring people to Downtown.

Downtown Middleborough has quite a few small retailers in Downtown ranging from apparel to wood, including an art gallery, bakery, home goods, and gifts. Professional and technical services in Downtown include legal and accounting services, as well as computer/IT services. These uses along with the presence of the Post Office, Town offices, including the local Middleborough Gas & Electric utility, help create a pleasant Downtown which is more active on Saturdays and during non-school hours when residents tend to errands.

Over one in five persons working in Downtown Middleborough works in the governmental sector, the largest employment sector in Downtown. The next five largest employment sectors in Downtown are Health Care and Social Assistance with 12.2%, Food Services with 10% of the Downtown workforce, Other Services (personal care, religious and membership organizations) with 9.6% of workers, followed by Professional & Technical Services at 7.7% and Finance & Insurance at 6.5%. The 2020 Downtown Middleborough work forces is estimated to be 491 workers. The Covid-19 pandemic impacted many Downtown workers with fewer work hours, temporary layoffs because of mandated closures and fewer walk-in customers. Food service, personal care workers, as well as dance studios and the performing arts were particularly hard hit by the pandemic restrictions, which is over one-fifth of the Downtown Middleborough workforce.

Leading Business Sectors as to Establishments – Downtown and Town-Wide.

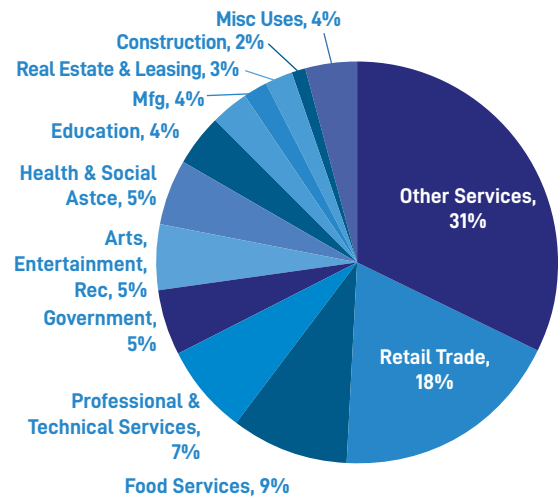


Figure D-61.
Source: McCabe Enterprises, Spring 2021.

Leading Business Sectors as to Establishments – Downtown and Town-Wide.

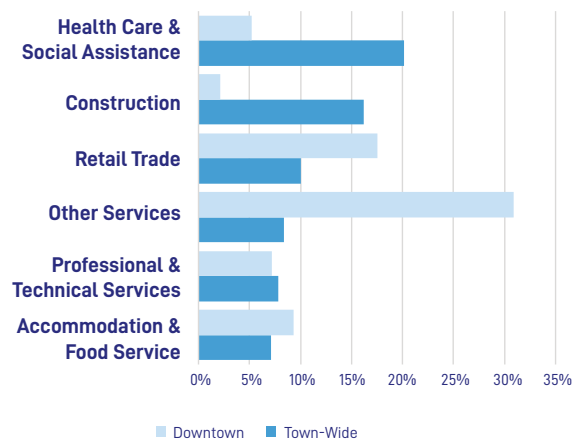


Figure D-62.
Source: McCabe Enterprises' Spring 2021 Field Inventory of Downtown Businesses and 2020 Fourth Quarter ES202 data for town-wide establishment data.

Six Largest Employment Sectors in Downtown Middleborough, 2020.

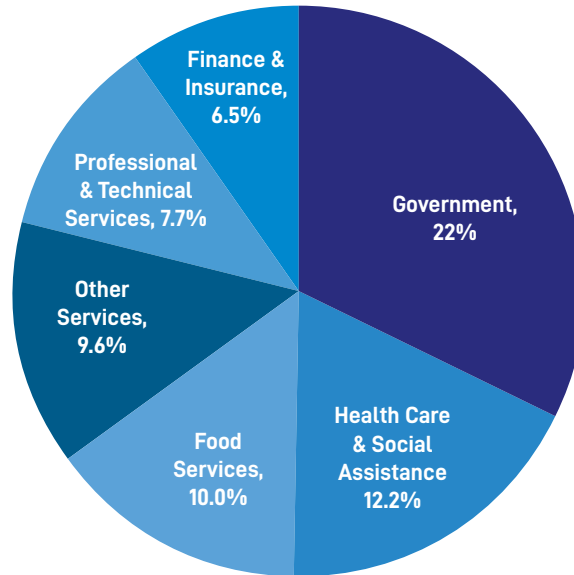


Figure D-63.
Source : McCabe Enterprises and Claritas/Environics 2020 data.

Downtown Anchors

Downtown Middleborough is fortunate to have a strong civic and governmental presence Downtown. Town Hall graces the entrance to Downtown from the south. The Town Hall Annex is in the historic building at the corner of Center and South Main Streets. Middleborough Gas & Electric, the municipal utility is headquartered Downtown. The Post Office is Downtown. Middleborough Fire Department is Downtown, as well.

The Middleborough Public Library is on North Main Street. In 2018, the Middleborough Library hosted 3,326 meetings and events and draws over 46,000 visitors annually, bringing people to Downtown.

In addition to governmental services, parks, recreation and educational uses abut Downtown. The Memorial Early Childhood Center and public school is on the northern edge of Downtown. Pierce Playground and Battis Field are to the immediate northeast with a skate park, playground, and a major recreational park with football and baseball fields with stands and lights for evening games, a skate park, swimming pool, basketball, tennis courts and a field house. Competitive youth sports leagues for both boys and girls play games at Battis Field. The annual 4th of July Town fireworks celebration is at Battis Field.

Downtown is within walking distance of the Nemasket River where the annual herring run occurs every spring, which is celebrated with the Herring Festival.

Downtown Clusters

Middleborough has a home goods cluster in its Downtown, with the Antique Co-op, an interior decorator, home-related gift stores, a woodworker, furniture store, art gallery and the auction house. The presence of real estate brokers, home financing/ lending services augments this small and growing cluster of businesses in the home goods and home enhancements niche. Some of Downtown Middleborough's home goods businesses have long-established reputations in the region.

Middleborough has several businesses and organizations in its Downtown with a cultural orientation, including public, private and nonprofit entities. The Middleborough Historical Society and the Robbins Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology operated by the Massachusetts Archaeology Society on Jackson Street form a museum corner of Downtown. The Middleborough Library is a cultural institution, as well. The Burt Woods School of Performing Arts, the Alley Theater, the Rachel Park Dance Center and the True Grit Art Gallery contribute to the cultural sector with performance arts, events, and visual arts. Moreover, Downtown Middleborough is located within a National Register Historic District. The history and architecture in Downtown Middleborough augment the cultural orientation of Downtown.



Ground Floor Uses

Downtown Middleborough has 361,000 SF of ground floor uses. Overall, there is 624,000 square feet of building space in Downtown Middleborough.

Downtown Middleborough has a wide range of uses and business types in the Downtown. Retail is the largest ground floor use Downtown with 34% of all ground floor space. Office uses amount to just less than a quarter of ground floor space with 23.3% of all space. The next largest users of ground floor space in Downtown are residential, civic and religious houses of worship.

Asking Rents

The asking rents in spring 2021 for retail spaces in Downtown Middleborough were generally in the \$12/SF range. Asking rents for office uses in Downtown were similar -- \$12 per SF. Some owners of office and commercial spaces are beginning to quote triple net rents per SF instead of a fixed monthly rent amounts. Asking rents per square foot information is based on interviews with real estate brokers, property owners, town staff, and a review of Co-Star and Loop-Net listings.

Downtown Middleborough's Ground Floor Uses by Square Foot

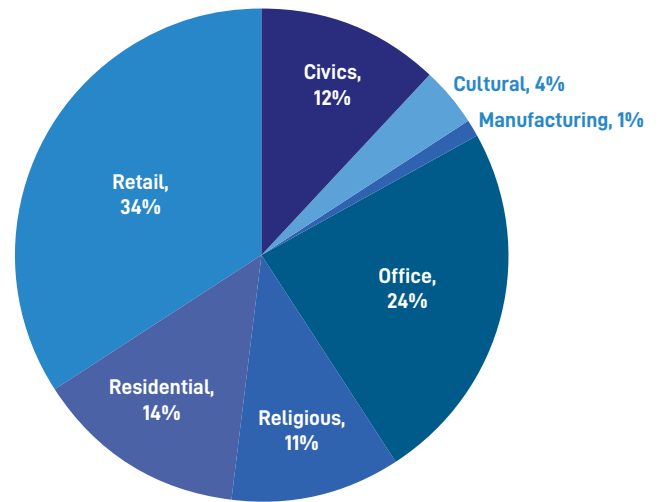


Figure D-64. Source: McCabe Enterprises, spring 2021 field survey and Middleborough Assessor records.

Impact of Covid on the Business Environment

A survey of Downtown businesses was conducted in March-April 2021 to assess the impacts of Covid and to get input from businesses as to needs and preferred approaches to addressing Downtown recovery. In short, Downtown Middleborough businesses lost revenue, experienced higher expenses, had fewer customers, deferred payments, laid off staff or closed temporarily, and made changes in sales and delivery models.



Reduced Business Hours. 56% of Downtown Middleborough businesses still had reduced operating hours or capacity as of April 2021.



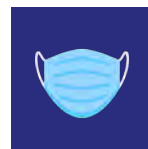
Reduced Business Hours. 68% of Downtown Businesses lost revenue. Lost revenues exceeded 25% of annual revenues for 59% of businesses Downtown.



On-Site Shopping. 52% of Downtown businesses had fewer on-site customers. Nearly one-third (32%) of Downtown Middleborough businesses had a 25% or greater reduction of on-site customers.



Layoffs and Closures. 24% of Downtown businesses reduced staff. 52% of Downtown businesses closed temporarily.



Higher Costs. 52% of Downtown Businesses reported that they incurred more expenses due to Covid-19 safety measures.



Alternative Sales and Delivery. 32% of Downtown Businesses started using new sales and delivery models.



Improving the Physical Environment

Downtown business owners were asked about what approaches and strategies would better the Downtown Middleborough physical business environment. The need to improve storefronts and facades was the strategy that highest percent, 73%, of businesses identified as very important or important. Improving parking availability and management was rated as either very important or important by 69% of businesses. The third most critical physical improvement strategy according to owners was enhancing public spaces and seating areas in Downtown Middleborough. The business owner responses as to the combined rating of important and very important physical environment strategies are summarized in the following chart. Although there are slight differences amongst the alternative physical improvement strategies the priorities are clustered fairly close as to level of importance.

Attracting & Retaining Customers

The LRRP spring 2021 survey asked business owners about six approaches to attract and retain customers in Downtown Middleborough. Business recruitment was the most favored response, with 80% of respondents rating it as important or very important. Almost three-quarters (73%) of businesses rated marketing strategies for Downtown as very important or important. More outdoor dining and selling was also ranked by nearly three-quarters (73%) of business owners ranked as very important or important. More cultural events and activities favored as very important or important by 66% of business owners. Over half of the business owners (54%) indicated that district management was an important/very important strategy for Downtown Middleborough.

Business-Preferred Physical Environment Improvement Strategies.

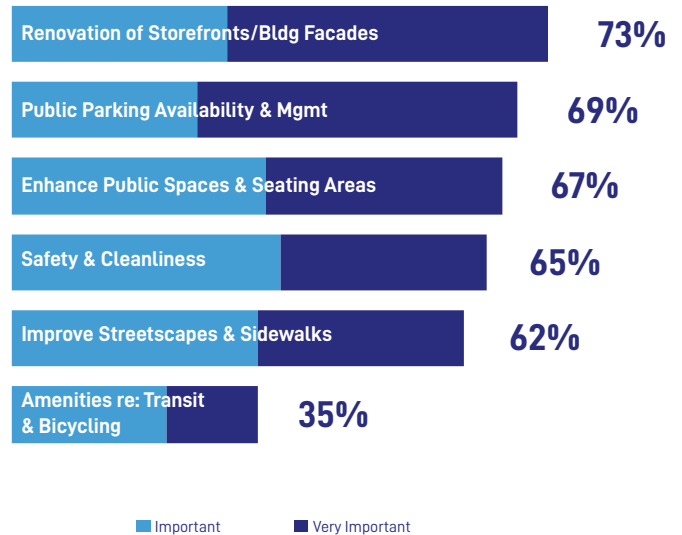


Figure D-65.

Source: Spring 2021 LRRP survey of Downtown Middleborough businesses

Strategies to Attract and Retain Customers.

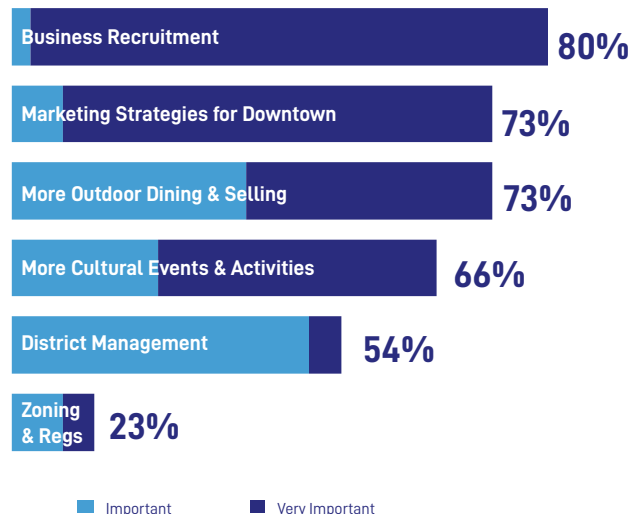


Figure D-66.

Source: Spring 2021 LRRP survey of Downtown Middleborough businesses.



Business Support

Three-quarters of the businesses expressed an interest in receiving some type of assistance. The top three types of assistance desired by businesses were:

- Participating in Shared Marketing/ Advertising (42%)
- Low-cost Financing for Storefront/ Façade Improvements (38%)
- Training on the Use of Social Media (27%).

Thirty-one percent of businesses opted for "none of the above" as to types of business assistance. Businesses have expressed the desire for more outdoor and cultural activities to create vibrant open spaces in the Downtown, including interest in a brewery. Concerns regarding parking continue, including improving existing parking.

Satisfaction with Existing Conditions

Business owners were asked about the level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction as to conditions in Downtown Middleborough. The vast majority (92%) of business owners indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied as to the safety and comfort of customers

and employees in Downtown Middleborough. Fifty-three percent (53%) were very satisfied or satisfied with the condition of public spaces, streets and sidewalks. A substantial number (42%) of business owners were dissatisfied and very dissatisfied with the condition of private buildings, facades storefronts and signage Downtown. Nearly half of business owners (48%) were satisfied with the access for customers and employees in Downtown Middleborough. Although over a quarter (28%) were dissatisfied with access issues.

Business Characteristics

Eighty-four percent (84%) of the businesses responding are microbusinesses, meaning that they are businesses with five employees or less. The vast majority, 69%, of businesses rent their spaces. Businesses were asked about their revenue trends for the three years prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Seventy-three percent (73%) indicated that business revenues were increasing. Retailers and personal care (other services) composed a major portion of the respondents to the business survey. Business owners in all sectors, except health care, responded to the survey.



Figure D-67. Krazy Days along Center Street, pre-pandemic, drew hundreds of people to downtown Middleborough.



Customer Base

Key Findings



Active Outreach & Marketing Needed to Rebuild Downtown's Customer Base

Downtown is in the heart of Middleborough, the Commonwealth's second largest community as to physical size encompassing over 72 square miles (46,202 acres). Middleborough is a suburban community located on the perimeter of Greater Boston along Interstate 495 with agrarian roots in the cranberry industry. It is home to Ocean Spray Cranberries, the largest co-operative of cranberry growers. Middleborough is part of Plymouth County and is a gateway to Cape Cod.

The customer base for a commercial district typically has three components – local residents, local workers, and visitors. A successful Downtown needs to pay attention to all three components of its customer base in terms of marketing and outreach. Understanding the customer base can help local businesses select the right products and price points and target customers. Municipalities and Downtown committees can support marketing and outreach efforts, making it easier for Downtown to be accessed and patronized by a wide range of customers – residents, workers and visitors.

RESIDENTS

The residential market is presently Downtown Middleborough's primary market. The US Census reports that the 2020 population of Middleborough is 24,245 people, an increase of 4.9% over the past decade. Economic forecasters estimate the current population of Middleborough to be 26,250. Middleborough has 9,396 households with an average household size of 2.64 people. Overall, the population of Middleborough is white (94.8%) and Downtown is similar per the US Census. The largest minority group in Middleborough are Hispanics, who comprise 2.4% of the population town-wide.

Downtown Middleborough is physically smaller in comparison to the Town covering 45.7 acres with a population of 422 residents in 172 households. The average household size is 2.43 people, slightly smaller than the town-wide average household size of 2.64 people.

The population of Downtown skews younger than Middleborough town-wide. The median age for persons living in Downtown is 39.6 years. Town-wide the median age is 44.9 years. The median age of Downtown residents is close to the state-wide median age of 39.7 years in Massachusetts. Downtown Middleborough and the surrounding area known as Middleborough Center have a younger adult population than the Town has overall. The proportion of persons 65 years and older town-wide is 18.9%. In Downtown Middleborough and Middleborough Center, the share of seniors (persons 65 years and above) is smaller, 13.7% and 13.8%, respectively.



Customer Base

A slightly larger portion (31.5%) of Downtown residents over 25 years have earned a bachelor's or master's degree compared to Town-wide, 28.1%. However, town-wide the share of residents who have attended some college or completed an associate's degree is higher. Town-wide the rate for associate's degree or some college is 29.8% compared to the Downtown rate of 26.4%. Just over a third (35.8%) of Middleborough residents have earned only a high school degree or less. In Downtown, two-fifths (40.5%) of residents have only obtained a high school degree or less.

The median household income for Middleborough residents town-wide is \$118,573 for 2021. The Downtown median household income is significantly lower and is \$75,000 annually in 2021. Although the household income of Downtown is lower, the aggregate income per acre is higher in the Downtown area, since lot sizes are smaller. Downtown Middleborough benefits from many households being in nearby walking or driving distance.

AREA WORKERS

Pre-pandemic, there were 9,615 persons employed and working in Middleborough. This included an inflow of 7,883 workers living beyond Middleborough and commuting to work. Persons who work in the community are potential customers, whether it is to buy lunch, stop for gas and groceries, go out for drinks or dinner after work, or to purchase a gift.

The pandemic has changed commuting and employment patterns. At the end of 2020, the average number of persons working and employed by Middleborough businesses was 8,703 people. This was a 9.5% reduction of persons working in Middleborough. Depending upon the type of job, people were opting not to commute in 2020 and to work remotely, whether it was office workers or teachers. The number of people actually working in Middleborough in 2020 was likely less than the 8,703 persons employed, due to Covid-induced remote work. However, it is likely that some town residents who commuted prior to Covid became remote workers at home in Middleborough during a portion of the pandemic.

Aggregate Income in Middleborough and Downtown.

	Aggregate Income	Aggregate Income Per Acre
Middleborough Town-wide	\$ 1,114,111,908	\$ 24,111
Downtown Middleborough	\$ 17,051,564	\$ 373,120

Table D-3
Source: McCabe Enterprises and Claritas, 2021

Age Cohorts: Town-wide and Downtown Middleborough.

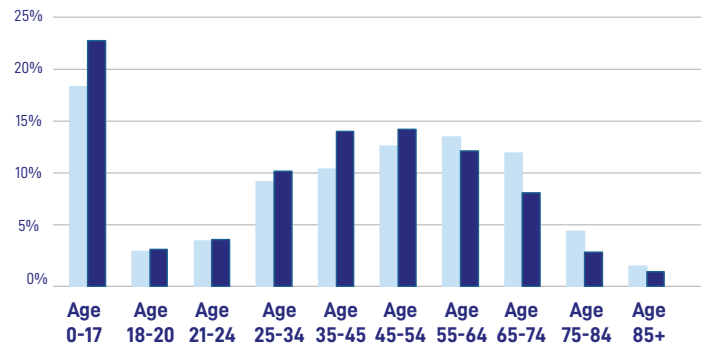


Figure D-68.
Source: Claritas, 2021.

Downtown Middleborough Residential Trade Area Demographic Overview

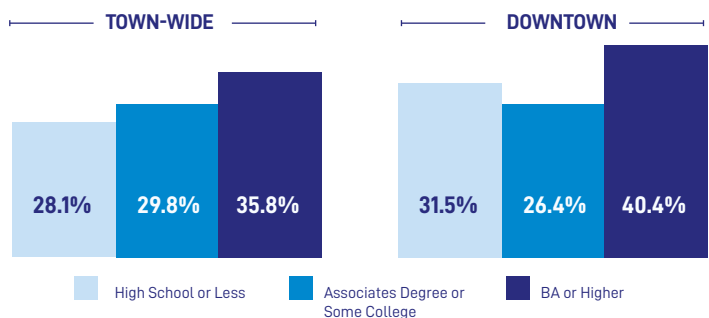


Figure D-69.
Source: Claritas, 2021.



Customer Base

Downtown Middleborough Residential Trade Area Demographic Overview

Downtown Middleborough: 5 Minute Drive Time



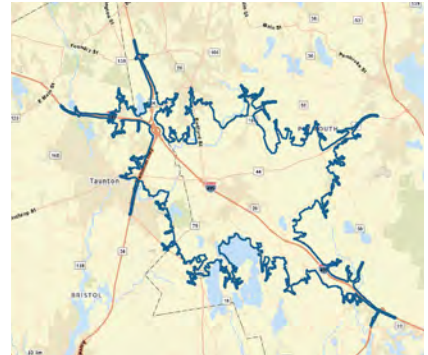
Population:	9,683
Households:	3,205
Family Households:	66%
Average Household Size:	2.53
Median Age:	40.6 years
Race:	91.3% White; 3.5% Hispanic
Tenure:	58% own; 42% rent
Average Household Income	\$106,954
Median Household Income:	\$79,248

Downtown Middleborough: 10 Minute Drive Time



Population:	18,448
Households:	6,962
Family Households:	70%
Average Household Size:	2.62
Median Age:	42.3
Race:	92.6% White; 3% Hispanic
Tenure:	71% own; 29% rent
Average Household Income:	\$116,697
Median Household Income:	\$89,335

Downtown Middleborough: 15 Minute Drive Time



Population:	46,116
Households:	16,252
Family Households:	74%
Average Household Size:	2.68
Median Age:	44.4
Race:	91.6% White; Black 3.6%; Asian 1.25%; Hispanic 3.6%
Tenure:	81% own; 19% rent
Average Household Income:	\$126,759
Median Household Income:	\$100,988

Figures D-70, D-71, D-72. 5-Minute Drive Time; 10-Minute Drive Time; and 15-Minute Drive Time. Source: Claritas. All data is for 2021.

In 2020, the annualized wages paid to people to working in Middleborough was just less than \$134 million. Depending upon employer and type of job annualized average wages ranged from a low of \$12,012/year to a high of \$166,660/year per worker. The average annualized wages paid to a worker in Middleborough was \$59,332. People working in Middleborough are good potential customers for Downtown.

There are 424 people who worked in Downtown Middleborough pre-pandemic. There are also several places of employment on the perimeter of Downtown where there are potential customers for Downtown Middleborough businesses, such as McLean Southeast on Oak Street or the Memorial Early Childhood Center on North Main Street.



Visitors and Attractions.

Visitors to Middleborough, whether they are fans of the Middleborough Cobras, students at Massasoit Community College, tourists or day-trippers, can be an important market for Downtown Middleborough. Downtown Middleborough has many attributes that can attract visitors. Battis Field where the Cobras play is adjacent to Downtown. Children, parents and sports teams play nearly every week at Battis Field during the day, in the evening, and on weekends. Massasoit Community College draws approximately five hundred students regularly for classes and programming.

Prior to the pandemic, The Alley Theater had a full series of theatrical productions by two theater companies, drawing people to Downtown Middleborough. Patrons of culture often dine and/or drink before and after performances.

Covid has adversely impacted Middleborough's two museums, who have been largely closed for most the pandemic. The Middleborough Historical Association's Museum and the Robbins Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology form a museum corner in Downtown Middleborough. The Middleborough Historical Museum includes seven small historic buildings on Jackson Street, depicting different aspects of Middleborough's history, including the Tom Thumb collection, a popular entertainer in the PT Barnum Circus and Revolutionary War

heroine Deborah Sampson. The Middleborough Historical Association's House Museums reopened this summer, The Robbins Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology is operated by the Massachusetts Archaeology Society and has over 150,000 artifacts. Increasing visitation at these two museums would have spillover benefits of increased business for Downtown Middleborough businesses.

Local businesses already notice that they have day-tripper patrons who meet friends, have lunch, walk around and shop during the afternoon. The Cape Cod Flyer train stops at the Lakeville-Middleborough commuter rail stop, just 1.6 miles south of Downtown. The new Middleborough commuter rail station, which is currently under construction, is less than one mile away. Cars speed to the Cape along I-495. Exit 12 on I-495 is only one mile from Downtown Middleborough. As a Plymouth County community with a cranberry heritage, Middleborough could easily position itself as a gateway and stop on the way to and from Cape Cod. Over four million people visit Cape Cod annually. This is an opportunity for Downtown Middleborough.

In summary, the Covid pandemic adversely impacted Downtown Middleborough's customer base. The number of persons working in Middleborough was reduced by at least ten percent. Special events, including athletic games, theatrical productions, the small museums were shuttered due to Covid. Active outreach is needed to rebuild these elements of Downtown's customer base.



Figure D-73, D-74. Middleborough Town Hall, Burt Woods School of Performing Arts.

- ¹ The US Census Bureau's American Community Survey's five-year 2019 estimate of Middleborough's population is 25,463. However, the 2020 decennial census count reports that Middleborough has 24,245 residents. Economic forecasters, such as ESRI, Claritas and EnviroNics had estimated a higher population. Claritas' estimate of Middleborough's population is 26,250 for 2020.
- ² Middleborough Center is a Census Designated Place that encompasses not only Downtown but a larger area around Downtown. It includes the two census tracts where Downtown Middleborough is situated, which are Census Tracts 5423.01 and Census Tract 5423.02, Plymouth County, MA (2020 Decennial tracts).



Administrative Capacity



Downtown Middleborough has strong supporters, but no formal administrative capacity dedicated to Downtown.



Volunteers want support and help.

The revitalization and Covid-recovery response of Downtown Middleborough is supported by the Town of Middleborough, primarily through its Community and Economic Development Department. Janis Akerstrom heads up the two-person department and has town-wide responsibilities for economic development. Middleborough has several commercial areas and industrial parks for which the Community and Economic Development Director is responsible.

The Middleborough Downtown Improvement Committee is a volunteer committee staffed by the Community & Economic Development Department, which has focused on Downtown over the years. The Town Manager participates in the Downtown Improvement Committee and is engaged in supporting Downtown Middleborough. Middleborough made a major commitment and town expenditure for a branding study for Downtown Middleborough, which is currently underway in summer-fall 2021. The branding study has been a major effort of the Downtown Improvement Committee.

The Downtown Improvement Committee is a committee working within the framework of Middleborough's Community & Economic Development Department.

In addition to the Downtown Improvement Committee, there are volunteer efforts and committee that have sponsored special events and downtown promotions, such as Middleborough On the Move. The Town's Tourism

Committee also undertakes special events to attract visitors. Recently, some merchants have organized an ad hoc working committee to developed shared marketing and advertising. Conversations with merchants and volunteers indicate the need for more help to do the work promoting and revitalizing Downtown Middleborough.

The Cranberry Country Chamber of Commerce is a regional chamber serving nine municipalities, including Middleborough, and it is based in Middleborough. The Chamber is supportive, but is not involved in the nitty, gritty, on-the-ground details of promoting and managing Downtown Middleborough.

Middleborough is part of Plymouth County. See Plymouth is the regional tourism board serving the county, which can be a resource on tourism-related marketing.

Middleborough volunteers are very committed to Downtown, but they are stretched and want more help. There is enthusiasm and personal commitment to Downtown Middleborough. A majority of business owners (54%) in the spring 2021 Business Survey indicated that downtown management was important or very important. There is, however, no structured organization focused solely on Downtown with a sustaining source of revenue to implement and operate desired revitalization and Covid-recovery programs and initiatives, or to coordinate and support volunteer efforts for Downtown Middleborough.



Public Realm



Private Realm



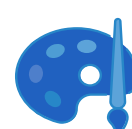
Tenant Mix



Revenue & Sales



Admin Capacity



Cultural/Arts

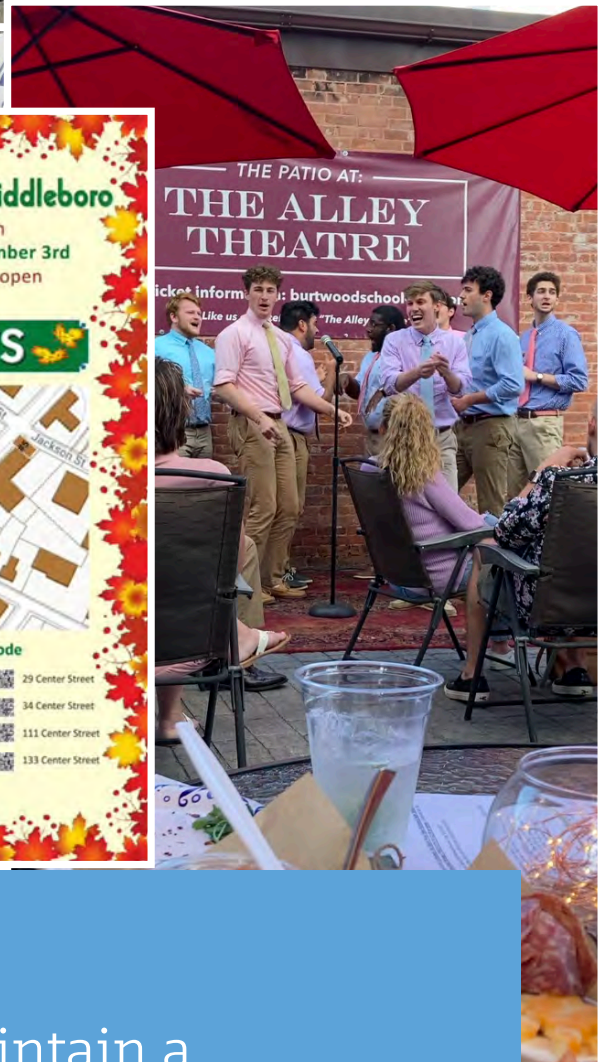


Other

Project Recommendations

Middleborough Recommendations Matrix

Category	Project	Timeframe	Budget	Risk
 Revenue & Sales	Annual Promotions Calendar	 Short	 Low	 Low
 Revenue & Sales	Branding Implementation	 Short	 Low	 Medium
 Public Realm	Wayfinding 1. Downtown Middleborough 2. Regional Roadway 3. Regional Commuter Rail 4. Parking	 Short	 Medium	 Low
  Revenue & Sales Cultural/Arts	MA Archaeological Trail	 Short	 Medium	 Medium
  Tenant Mix Cultural/Arts	Windows Alive • Pilot/ Beta Testing	 Short	 Low	 Low
  Tenant Mix Cultural/Arts	Windows Alive • Full – Larger Scale Event	 Short	 Low	 Medium
 Admin Capacity	Sustaining Downtown Middleborough's Revitalization & Covid Recovery with Downtown Management: Explore Developing A Business Improvement District for Downtown Middleborough	 Short	 Low	 Low



Create & Maintain a Year-Round Promotional Calendar

Images are courtesy of: Middleborough on the Move
 First Friday Flyer image are courtesy of:
 Middleborough Merchants

Create & Maintain a Year-Round Promotional Calendar



Revenue & Sales

<p>Origin</p>	<p>The need and benefits of a year-round promotional calendar for Downtown Middleborough was Identified through discussions with local Downtown merchants.</p> <p>Project Champion: Downtown Improvement Committee</p>
<p>Location/Census Tract</p>	<p>Downtown Middleborough</p> <p>The 2020 decennial census map breaks Downtown Middleborough into two census tracts, CT 5423.01 and CT 5423.02. The 2010 tract was split in two due to population and housing unit growth in Middleborough.</p>
<p>Budget & Sources of Funding</p>	<p>Low Budget Less than \$10,000</p> <p>The major cost of creating and maintaining an annual promotional calendar is the staff and volunteer time to maintain it. Promotional activities sponsored by the Town, Downtown Improvement Committee, local businesses and community organizations will each have their own separate operating costs and budgets. Establishing and maintaining the calendar itself would cost less than \$10,000 annually.</p> <p>Initially the calendar could be maintained through a basic word document or excel spreadsheet. Adding a calendar plug-in to the Downtown Middleborough web site, could enable other organizations to submit information about events and programs that are occurring in and around Downtown. This would require a very small investment to automate.</p>
<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>Creating a promotional calendar for the balance of 2021 and for 2022 should start immediately – within the next 60 days.</p>
<p>Risks</p>	<p>Establishing an annual promotional calendar is a minimal risk activity.</p>
<p>Key Performance Indicators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and maintenance of an annual promotional calendar for Downtown Middleborough. • At least one promotional event per quarter focused on Downtown. • A mix of type of promotional events, including at minimum one or more retail/businesses sale/promotion events; an image-building event for Downtown; and a special event. • Increased foot traffic and customer patronage in Downtown Middleborough.
<p>Partners & Resources</p>	<p>Downtown Improvement Committee Local Merchants and Businesspeople Middleborough on the Move Middleborough Tourism Committee</p> <p>The Town of Middleborough's IT Department could assist with adding a calendar listing widget to the web site opening up participation on creating and maintaining a promotional calendar.</p>



Low



Diagnostic/ COVID-19 Impacts

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, over half (52%) Downtown Middleborough businesses experienced a loss of on-site customers and shoppers. One-third (32%) of businesses experienced over a 25% reduction in the number of on-site customers. This resulted in over 68% of businesses losing revenue because of Covid. Three-fifths (59) of Downtown Middleborough businesses experienced a revenue loss of 25% or greater of their annual revenues as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a clear need to bring back customers to Downtown.

Although there have been well-attended promotional events, such as Krazy Days and holiday promotions in Downtown Middleborough, there has been no year-long and continuing effort to draw people to Downtown Middleborough since the pandemic occurred. Krazy Days has been suspended since 2019. Recovery from the Covid pandemic requires rebuilding foot traffic in Downtown and business sales. Using an annual promotional calendar will help create a consistent and strategic year-round promotion and outreach as part of business and Downtown recovery.

Downtown Middleborough does not have a singular entity coordinating and promoting Downtown and local businesses. Special events are initiated by a range of organizations, ad hoc groups and entities in Middleborough. This void, combined with the significant adverse impacts of Covid on small Downtown businesses, is prompting the need for the Town, town staff, and the Downtown Improvement Committee to take on a more active role in Downtown promotion.

Actions



QUARTER	PROMOTION/ EVENT	EVENT TYOE: SALES, IMAGE, OR SPECIAL	GOALS & SUCCESS MEASURES
Jan-Mar			
Apr - Jun	Herring Run		
Jul - Sept	4th of July Fireworks		
Oct - Dec	Cran Harvest Festival Holiday Promotions		

- Create and maintain an annual promotional calendar for Downtown Middleborough for the next fifteen months – October 2021 through December 2023.
- Begin with an internal annual promotional event calendar to develop a promotional work plan.
- Identify existing events by type – sales, image-building, special events.
- Assess need for additional promotional events – gaps in the calendar or in type of events, e.g., all special events and few, if any, events aimed at directly promoting business and business sales.
- Develop needed promotional events by working with partners.
- Apply a strategic lens to promotion. Identify the purpose of each promotion, goals, target audience, potential benefits and costs of each promotion, and success measures.
- Assess the potential for creation of retail tie-ins to existing community events in Middleborough, particularly events that occur in or near Downtown. What is the potential, if any, for Downtown businesses to create retail tie-ins and take advantage of large numbers of people

participating in events, such as the Herring Run spring event, 4th of July Fireworks at Battis Field, summer concerts, etc.

- Use the annual promotional calendar as an internal planning tool, including the scheduling of advertising, marketing, news releases, and social media postings.
- Share an external version of the Annual Calendar with Downtown businesses, enabling owners to incorporate the calendar into their own marketing and business planning.
- Develop a version of the annual promotions calendar that can be posted on the web and shared with the general public.
- Invite other organizations and entities to list their events on a public version of the annual calendar.
- Evaluate annually past promotions and plan for next year.
- Repeat annual promotion calendar-making process on an annual basis for successive years.



Process

Creating an Annual Promotions Calendar is a process of developing a year-long work plan aimed at helping with Covid recovery, but also creating a flourishing Downtown. Promotions help draw people, increase awareness of Downtown, and connect residents, local workers, and visitors with Downtown businesses.

Creation of an annual promotions calendar initially is an internal planning tool to foster a consistent series of promotions that benefit Downtown throughout the entire year. A good promotions calendar includes events that are directly aimed at promoting business sales and making cash registers sing, as well as special events to draw people Downtown, or events to enhance the image of Downtown Middleborough.

Sales promotions do not need to be events centered around discounts. Promotional sales events can focus on various target audiences, such as new home buyers, outdoors people, couples such as a Valentine Day's through promotion, district-wide window display themes, etc. Some promotional sales focus on creating experiences for people, so a promotional event centered around the many home goods type businesses with in-store demonstrations, or how-tos as to various home improvement or decorating techniques can draw people and create an experience and relationship.

Image building promotions for Downtown Middleborough will focus on launching and celebrating your new brand identity. As the Downtown Improvement Committee completes work with its branding consultant this fall, the roll-out of the new brand and announcements are image-builders. A stronger image and identity with a story and tag line will help differentiate Downtown Middleborough.

Special events focus on drawing people and animating Downtown. People like to gather and be part of vibrant

places. Special events add vibrancy. Successful special events include music, food, overlapping activities, and something for people of all of ages. Giveaways, such as a balloon, memento, or free door prize or raffle, add to a special event's success.

The creation of an annual promotions calendar enables more effective planning for shared advertising and marketing. An external version of annual calendar distributed to all Downtown businesses allows businesses owners to participate. Business owners can then be prepared to participate with the right product mix in-store and strategically use their own limited marketing dollars and staff time to take advantage of downtown promotions to increase sales.

An external version of the annual promotions calendar helps invite others to participate and come Downtown. In some communities, the public annual Downtown promotions calendar becomes the community calendar with organizations contributing information on their event plans. This helps Downtown. Businesses may not be aware of events, for example, planned by local churches in the Downtown, or arts and youth groups. By adding all of these events into one public annual calendar, people can become more aware of Downtown and its many offerings. Use of a calendar plug-in as part of the Downtown Middleborough web site can help automate some of this function. The Middleborough Town IT department may be a helpful resource. The annual calendar can grow into a solid community information tool which people regularly check. The long-term byproduct is increased numbers of people coming to downtown and more partners for promotion.

Resources

National Main Street Center, www.mainstreet.org

Regional Tourism Boards are useful examples on maintaining and publicizing an annual calendar of events.

- Cambridge Office of Tourism has a very user-friendly calendar. <https://www.cambridgeusa.org/events>
- See Plymouth: <https://seeplymouth.com/events/month/>



Celebrate, Launch &
Implement Downtown
Middleborough's New Brand

Celebrate, Launch & Implement Downtown Middleborough's New Brand

Project Title		Branding Implementation Program
Origin		Downtown Improvement Committee and Community & Economic Development Director Janis Akerstrom Project Champion: Downtown Improvement Committee and Janis Akerstrom.
Location		Address: Downtown-wide. The 2020 decennial census map breaks Downtown Middleborough into two census tracts, CT 5423.01 and CT 5423.02. The 2010 tract was split in two because of population and housing unit growth in Middleborough.
Budget		Low Budget Some brand-related initiatives related to Wayfinding may cost more (and are attributed to the Wayfinding recommendation). Sources of Funding for Brand Implementation will vary as to the specific activity, but in general sources include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Municipal appropriation and/or budget for Community & Economic Development• ARPA -- American Rescue Plan Act funding -- either the Town or Plymouth County allocations• Private donations and Corporate philanthropy, including potentially In-kind services• Mass Downtown Initiative funding Special Activity Sources could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mass Department of Agricultural Resources• Mass Cultural Council (when cultural and arts activities are involved)• Middleborough Tourism Council• Middleborough Cultural Council• MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces grants
Timeframe		Short-term - The time frame for starting to work on Brand Implementation is immediate and short-term. Middleborough's branding consultant, ChandlerThinks, is presenting his recommendations, branding statement, tagline, story and log in late fall 2021. The Downtown Improvement Committee needs to review the recommendations, ask questions, discuss, and adopt and be poised for implementing the branding program immediately thereafter.
Risk		Medium Risk - Successful implementation of a branding program requires persistence and consistency. The risks for successful implementation for a branding effort are: Community Buy-In. With place-based branding, there needs to be support, enthusiasm and buy-in for the local brand. The branding study undertaken by Middleborough engaged many people through meetings, interviews, a local survey and Facebook group, which helps sets the stage for community buy-in. However, the Downtown Improvement Committee and Town should be prepared to address local critics, who may raise questions, challenge the expenditure of funds, or otherwise deride the effort. Critics need responses, but the launch of a new brand needs to be prepared and work to secure community buy-in. Consistency & Perseverance: People's lives are busy. Covid has exhausted people. There are life challenges for volunteers to consistently implement a branding program. The excitement about a new logo and colors wears off over time, but branding implementation needs to continue to assure success. In local government, the priorities can quickly change, posing a challenge to consistent implementation and support of a branding program.

Celebrate, Launch & Implement Downtown Middleborough's New Brand

Key Performance Indicators

- A successful brand launch event.
- Development and distribution of branding guidelines specifically designed for Downtown businesses.
- An orientation and tip sheet on how to use and support the new brand for Downtown Middleborough for at least 3 different audiences and Downtown stakeholders:
 - o Town staff
 - o Downtown businesses and property owners
 - o Volunteer groups.
- Adoption of the brand logo, colors and message in promotion and marketing of the Downtown. The metric is the number and percentage of news releases, stories, social media posts, and news articles that reference cranberries and Downtown, use the colors, and key themes of the new brand and story.
- Number and percentage of businesses who incorporate cranberries or cranberry red colors at their places of business, whether through window display, pop-up cards, retail business owners and staff thanking people for visiting Middleborough, using the brand's new tag line (e.g., the cranberry capital of the world).
- The extent Town leadership and staff embrace the new brand and utilize it in conversation and official business.
- The widespread use and adoption of the new brand and logo in signage and wayfinding for Downtown, on the Downtown web site, in advertising for Downtown, and in promotional materials, whether generated by the Town, the Downtown Improvement Committee, the Tourism Committee or community volunteers. Placement and adoption of the brand should be compiled and documented.

Partners & Resources

Potential partners to the Downtown Improvement Committee on the branding implementation program could include the following partners:

- Downtown businesses and property owners
- Middleborough on the Move
- The Town of Middleborough
- Middleborough Tourism Committee
- Middleborough Historical Association
- Middleborough Gas & Electric
- Middleborough Community Cable Access Media
- Cranberry Country Chamber of Commerce
- See Plymouth, the county-wide tourism board
- Ocean Spray Cranberry Cooperative

DIAGNOSTIC / COVID-19 IMPACTS

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, over half (52%) of Downtown Middleborough businesses experienced a loss of on-site customers and shoppers. One-third (32%) of businesses experienced over a 25% reduction in the number of on-site customers. This resulted in over 68% of businesses losing revenue because of Covid. Three-fifths (59%) of Downtown Middleborough businesses experienced a revenue loss of 25% or greater of their annual revenues as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a clear need to bring back customers to Downtown.

The pandemic prompted the temporary closure and reduced operating hours of over half (52% and 56% respectively) of Downtown businesses. Shopping and work commuting patterns have been altered by Covid. The number of workers employed by businesses working in Middleborough dropped 9.5% at the close of 2020 from the pre-pandemic close of 2019. The workforce reduction is largely attributable to Covid. In addition, some residents of Middleborough who previously commuted are now working remotely for all or a portion of their work week. These changes in shopping, the local workforce, and commuting patterns really impact downtowns like Middleborough, precipitating the need for branding and the successful implementation of a new brand. Successful place branding for Downtown Middleborough is critical to enable Downtown Middleborough businesses to better recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. Branding implementation is key.

ACTIONS

- Adopt and commit to a brand implementation strategy.
- Launch event for new Downtown Brand.
- Develop branding guidelines package with colors and digital logo files for businesses in Downtown.
- Distribute branding guidelines and tips package to downtown businesses.
- Institute of branding orientation program for key constituencies and partners of Downtown Middleborough.
- Secure commitments from Town leadership and community leaders to support and embrace Downtown Middleborough's new brand.
- Organize a brand boosters' team.
- Make adoption and use of Middleborough new brand fun
- Incorporate Middleborough's new brand into wayfinding improvements.

- Develop and implement a check list for local branding and logo placement.
- Create and distribute promotional buttons.
- Annually assess brand implementation and plan for next year.

PROCESS

Adopt a Branding Implementation Strategy and Commit to a Brand Implementation Work Plan. When the Downtown Improvement Committee and the Town receive the branding consultant's report and recommendations, particularly regarding brand implementation, the Committee should review, ask questions, adopt and start working on the implementation strategy. A good brand implementation strategy will include many, if not all, of the elements identified in this LRRP Recommendation.

Brand Launch Event. Adopting a new brand should be fun and exciting. The Downtown Improvement Committee and Town should plan a Launch Event, invite the media, key partners, downtown business owners, property owners, elected officials to announce and celebrate the new Downtown Middleborough brand. A launch event enables you to introduce the new brand with a splash and tell the Downtown Middleborough story. It could be a day or evening event, but it should be timed to enable the best local media coverage, including press and cable access television. At the launch event be prepared to reveal the new logo and brand colors. Integrate the brand colors in signage for the event. This should be a professional, high-quality roll-out that echoes and reinforces Middleborough's values and story. All speakers should be briefed about key messages and values in advance of the launch event, and reinforce the story, key messages and values in their comments, demeanor and actions at the event. For example, if small town friendliness is a key value and theme of the new Downtown Middleborough brand, the launch event should feel "small-town" and "friendly". Think through how you will convey the brand values at the launch event.

A brand launch event is an opportunity for the Town and Downtown Improvement Committee to invite connect with businesses and property owners. Let them know about Downtown's new brand, and what you are doing to support and help Downtown businesses recover from Covid. Middleborough has exciting things happening and branding will help you tell your story. Use the launch event to tell Downtown's story.

Successful events have publicity plans, including follow-up publicity and social media. In addition to securing media

attention, it is important to photograph and video the event to enable subsequent publicity and social media posts.

Develop Branding Guidelines Package. As part of the consultants branding study, the Downtown Improvement Committee will likely receive branding guidelines, logo and colors, and key messages. Develop a branding guidelines package to share with local businesses Downtown. This will give local businesses the tools to use to support the new Downtown Middleborough brand. A list of suggestions as to how a local business can use the new brand should be included along with digital copies of the color palette and logos in both black and white as well as full color for businesses to use in their own advertising and promotion. The hand out package for businesses should be a quality, easy-to-use reference package that conveys the new brand. It should be more than a black and white photocopy and jump drive. The new brand is a gift and a tool for local businesses.

Distribute the Branding Guidelines Package. Once, the branding guidelines package is prepared and ready, it should be distributed to businesses downtown. In many cases, a personal visit and delivery of the branding package could help introduce the business to the new brand and encourage its use. In other cases, a letter may be more appropriate. All Downtown Middleborough businesses, whether a sole proprietor, a nonprofit, church or larger business should receive a branding guidelines package within thirty days of the launch event.

Institute branding orientation program. Branding is a term that is frequently used and is often misunderstood. A short orientation program aimed at different audiences and key partners should be developed and shared. Key players include Town staff; the Downtown business community; and ally nonprofits who volunteer and contribute to making Downtown a better place, such as Middleborough on the Move, the Middleborough Historical Association, the Tourism Committee, and others. The branding orientation program should include what is a brand, why branding is important and its benefits. The introduction of the new Downtown Middleborough brand should be the centerpiece of the program. Often people think of branding as colors and a logo, but it is much more. Good branding speaks to the values and character of the community and develops the story and key messages for Downtown Middleborough. The branding orientation program offers an opportunity to share the rationale for Downtown Middleborough's brand and the key themes with allies and partners. An orientation program will help further embed the new Downtown Middleborough brand. A review of the branding guidelines and key messages should also be included.

It might be helpful to do a short video introducing the Downtown Middleborough brand, to enable busy business owners to listen to it at their convenience.

Middleborough Community Cable Access Media could be a helpful resource for video production.

Secure Support for Downtown's Brand from Town Leadership – Select Board and Town Manager. The Town Manager and Select Board have been involved at key points during the branding study. The Downtown Improvement Committee should work to continue this support and ask the Select Board and Town Manager to endorse and embrace the new Downtown Middleborough brand. Ideally Town leadership will be involved at the brand launch event.

Consider organizing a Downtown Middleborough brand booster team to augment and assist the Downtown Improvement Committee's working on branding implementation. The Downtown Brand Booster team can help oversee brand implementation, encourage and prompt people to use Middleborough's new brand. This is an important part of consistent use and reinforcement of the Downtown Middleborough brand. This includes not only a logo, colors, but the communication of key themes and the Middleborough story. Cheerleaders are helpful. Organize a brand boosters' team.

Make adoption and use of the Downtown Middleborough new brand fun. Consider organizing competitions and contests for local businesses to showcase the new Downtown Middleborough brand within in their business, whether it is cranberries appearing in window displays or as part of store products, cranberry-flavored libations, cranberry-inspired decorations cranberry-colored equipment or apparel, or the best telling of the Middleborough cranberry story. Be creative. Think outside the box with cranberries and Downtown Middleborough. A cranberry-related contest to support the new brand also creates an opportunity to publicize Downtown businesses, as well as having fun. The Brand Boosters could be involved to help celebrate the new brand in fun creative ways in Downtown.

Incorporate new brand into wayfinding. Wayfinding is an excellent way to begin to spread the word and communicate Middleborough's brand. The LRRP recommendations for Downtown include a detailed wayfinding program for Downtown, for parking areas Downtown and for regional roadway and commuter rail way finding systems. The timing of the branding study and launch of Middleborough's new brand enable timely implementation branded wayfinding signage for Middleborough. This should also include securing a commitment from the MBTA for new wayfinding signage with the Downtown Middleborough brand at the Middleborough commuter rail station now under construction. Integrating branding and wayfinding should be a high priority for branding implementation.

Integrate Middleborough's new brand in promotional activities, including materials and events, including First Fridays, holiday promotions, Herring Run events, and Windows Alive. All Downtown promotion materials, news releases, announcements, and fliers should include Downtown Middleborough's new brand – logo and tag line.

Develop and implement a check list for local branding and logo placement. The Downtown Improvement Committee should develop a checklist for potential placements of the new Downtown Middleborough brand. Placements could include stationary, advertising, promotions, facilities and building, vehicle marketing, social media and signage. The Downtown Improvement Committee should work to embed the new brand in all of Middleborough.

Create and distribute promotional buttons using Downtown Middleborough's new brand. Distribute promotional buttons to businesses and encourage all staff working in Downtown to wear the button, particularly when serving customers. This is an easy way to involve everyone in downtown with promoting the brand. The brand boosters' team could help with distribution. Promotional materials, whether buttons, refrigerator magnets or balloons, with Downtown Middleborough's new place brand can be used as handouts and free gifts at special events. Spread the word by having fun and sharing the brand.

Annually assess brand implementation and plan for next year. Identify how Downtown Improvement Committee and its partners can each year reinforce and expand and deepen brand awareness and recognition of Downtown Middleborough's new brand focused on the cranberry theme. During the first year of brand implementation, there is a major focus on launching the brand, designing and erecting signage, and getting the word out. Successful branding requires that this effort be sustained. A brand is more than colors and a logo. It is about telling Downtown Middleborough's story and conveying the values, key messages, and themes of the brand throughout Downtown. In successive years, consideration on how to deepen brand awareness will be important. This could include the development of new promotional events around Downtown Middleborough's brand, adding cranberry-related uses in the mix of downtown businesses and services, as well as volunteer and customer service orientations about conveying the Downtown Middleborough brand. Good brand management requires an annual review and plan for safeguarding and enhancing the brand of Downtown Middleborough. You will soon have a brand, use it!

RESOURCES & BEST PRACTICES

- LRRP: Integrate Brand and Art Into your Wayfinding System by Selbert Perkins Design (See <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rapid-recovery-plan-rrp-program>.)
- International Downtown Association, www.downtown.org, particularly IDA's Place Branding: Best Practices and Strategies to Brand and Market Your District
- Examples of place branding guidance documents. Place branding guidance is often prepared by the branding consultant. Here are two examples.
 - o San Marcos, CA. <https://www.san-marcos.net/home/showdocument?id=20401>
 - o Union City, CA. <https://www.unioncity.org/DocumentCenter/View/1375/Union-City-Style-Guide---Digital?bidId=>
- The Local Rapid Recovery Program has best practice resource material including information on branding. See: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rapid-recovery-plan-rrp-program> . One can also access the LRRP branding resources by going to mass.gov and entering RRP in the search line.



Implement Comprehensive
Downtown Middleborough
Wayfinding Initiative

Implement Comprehensive Downtown Middleborough Wayfinding Initiative

Origin



Public Realm

Downtown Improvement Committee and Community & Economic Development Director Janis Akerstrom. Local merchants ad hoc committee all see the need to put in place a visual recognition brand/program that identifies the Downtown to visitors and patrons.

Location

Downtown Middleborough is in Census Tract 5423 in Plymouth County, MA as defined by the 2010 decennial census map. The 2020 decennial census map breaks Downtown Middleborough into two census tracts, CT 5423.01 and CT 5423.02. The 2010 tract was split in two, due to population and housing unit growth in Middleborough.

Budget

Medium Budget

The budget for signage depends upon the extent of wayfinding signage and the number of signs fabricated and installed. The installation of some signs requires adherence to Davis-Bacon prevailing wage regulations, which often affects cost. The cost of regional wayfinding with state road systems and MBTA commuter rail signage could likely be absorbed by state agency partners if the timing of requests is propitious.

The overall Wayfinding Signage initiative is separated into three (3) sub-Initiatives. They can be developed in one stage or phased in by type depending how the budget is approached and structured for this program.

Step 1 - Design of Signage using new logo from Downtown Middleborough Branding initiative

Step 2 - Implementation by Wayfinding Type

1. Downtown Wayfinding System - costs – coordination, design, sign Fabrication and Installation - This will vary based on the number and type of signs
2. Regional Wayfinding
 - a. Major highway and state road directional signage- cost absorbed by MassDOT for the green or brown highway signs
 - b. Wayfinding and information signage at new Middleborough MBTA Commuter Rail Station on Grove Street
 - c. Wayfinding and informational signage at the existing Middleborough-Lakeville MBTA Commuter Rail station - cost absorbed as part of the South Coast Rail project. Advertising signage would be a separate cost to be borne by the Town or Downtown Middleborough Committee.
3. Public Parking Signage (See 1.)



NOTE: The results of the branding study are to be released in October 2021.

Sources of Funding:

- Municipal Appropriation
- Mass Development Grants - TDI Catalyst
- MassDOT, Shared Streets and Ways Program
- CDBG -possibly. CDBG funds may be used if the wayfinding system also advance universal access issues and might be able to contribute elements of wayfinding, determined on a case by case basis.
- American Rescue Plan Act
- Build Back Better
- Private fundraising

Some funding programs can contribute a proportionate share of funds to wayfinding when their mission and goals are being addressed.

- Travel & Tourism funding from MOTT or Regional Tourism Board
- Preservation funding, such as CPA or Mass Historic Commission
- EOE and DCR for parks and open space elements
- Mass Cultural and the Middleborough Local Cultural Council for arts and culture-related wayfinding.

Implement Comprehensive Downtown Middleborough Wayfinding Initiative

Timeframe		Short-term - Branding and logo images will need to be developed first then the wayfinding program can be implemented. The brand development is expected to be completed by the end of 2021
Risk		Low Risk Terminology-Related Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One potential risk is a lack of consensus about using the name Downtown Middleborough in lieu of Middleborough Center. Although Middleborough Center is not on the Secretary of the Commonwealth's list of place names for Massachusetts communities, villages and neighborhoods, the term Middleborough Center is a Census-Designated Place (CDP). However, in 2020, the sole census tract that was the CDP, was split into two tracts, splitting the Downtown Middleborough area into different areas.• A second related risk is the spelling of Middleborough. The official town name is Middleborough with the "ugh" at the end. Some sign makers have shortened the name to "Middleboro" adding some confusion as to name and spelling. This second risk will require continuous due diligence and attention. Implementation/ Site Control Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One of the primary Downtown public parking lots includes Town-owned land and leased land (which is up for renewal in 2022). This could present challenges in siting appropriate parking wayfinding signage.• Working with MassDOT to adapt roadway signs to appropriately name Downtown Middleborough and upgrade signage on I-495, Route 44, Exit 12 on I-495, and key Intersections, such as Routes 28 (Grove St.) and 105 (S. Main Street), and the Route 44 Rotary. Risks regarding Timeliness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design and fabrication of wayfinding sign system is dependent upon the completion and adoption of the Downtown Middleborough branding project. [Low Risk]• Supply chain issues exist within the construction industry, affecting lumber and metals. This could affect the implementation timeline for fabrication and installation.
Key Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased awareness of Downtown Middleborough and its businesses, resources, assets and parking should lead to higher traffic and sales.• Increased utilization of off-street parking spaces.• Increased visitors to local businesses, museums and points of interest• Increased awareness of the Downtown Middleborough brand	
Partners & Resources	Town of Middleborough - Middleborough Select Board, Town Manager, DPW, Economic Development Director and other town departments MassDOT MOBD can be an ally in obtaining signage updates with MassDOT. MBTA - South Coast Rail Middleborough Downtown Improvement Committee Middleborough On the Move; local businesses	

Diagnostic / Covid-19 Impacts

Downtown Middleborough needs a multi-faceted wayfinding program to direct customers and visitors to the Downtown area. This includes directional signage to Downtown, within Downtown to key locations and public parking, from the regional roadways and from the commuter rail station. The Downtown Middleborough Wayfinding Initiative will build upon and incorporate the Downtown Branding project currently underway, and address a key deficit identified in the LRRP diagnostic.

Wayfinding for Downtown Middleborough on a pedestrian and vehicular scale is needed. The diagnostic field observations scored the wayfinding with a Failing score during Phase 1 of the LRRP program. The Diagnostic Findings and Needs observations included:

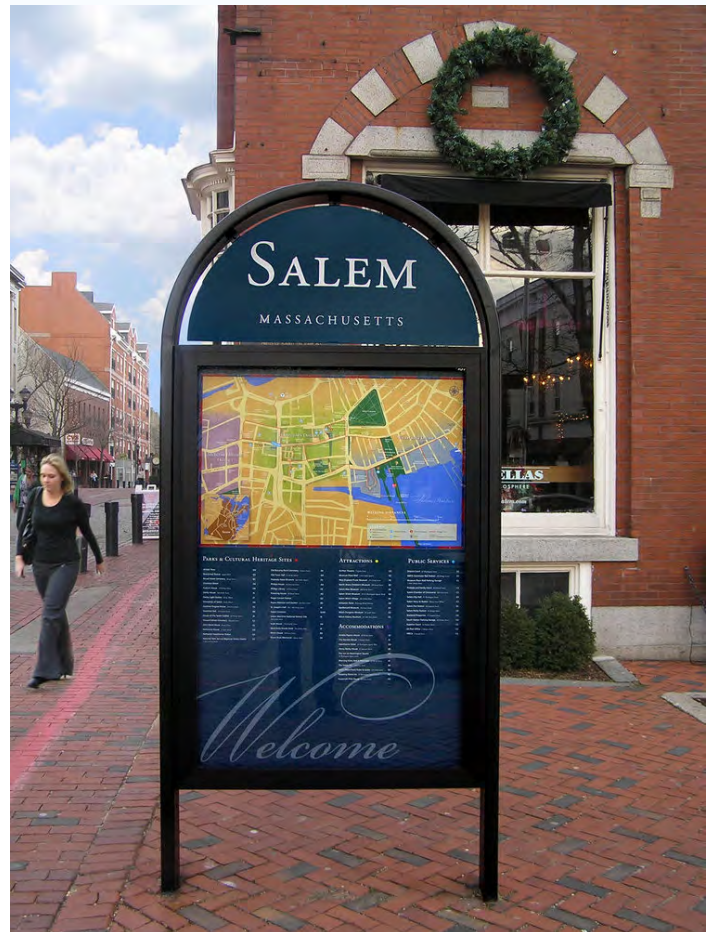
- Identification of the Downtown Middleborough district is confusing. The signage on I-495 directs commuters to Middleborough Center (not Downtown), creating ambiguity and confusion for the district.
- There are few existing directional/wayfinding signs for Downtown Middleborough, and what does exist is vehicular oriented and not specific for Downtown Middleborough.
- Wayfinding for public parking areas is needed as public parking areas are at times obscured not clearly identified. Upon the arrival in Downtown, a driver is uncertain where off-street public parking is located.
- There is no gateway signage or markers conveying arrival in Downtown Middleborough. Changes in land use from residential to commercial/governmental uses, however, is the one clear indicator.

The wayfinding system should integrate the branding and image/logo development project currently underway. Wayfinding at public parking lots with maps should also be added. Directions to points of interests (POI), such as, downtown/stores, the library, the Robbins Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, the Middleborough Historical Museum's buildings, Town Hall, Massasoit Community College, Battis Field, Herring Run, are just a few of the places that should be incorporated into the wayfinding system.

Downtown Middleborough suffers from the perception that there is limited parking. With increased use of on-street parking for curb-side pick-up options as a result of Covid-19, there is greater need to help motorists and shoppers to easily identify off-street parking locations in

Downtown. Low visibility and low awareness of public parking in Downtown Middleborough exacerbated the adverse impacts of Covid-19 closures and reduced hours.

The Covid-19 pandemic saw consumers more focused on local and nearby areas to visit. People were exploring nearby areas that they may be less familiar with but are close and offer a sense of safety. Middleborough can capitalize on this trend by letting people know where Downtown Middleborough is. As the second largest municipality measured by physical size, "where Downtown Middleborough is" should not become a search effort to find it. Clear wayfinding is needed.



Source: Local business directory sign in Salem, Massachusetts.

Action Items

OVERVIEW

Wayfinding helps to create a sense of place and provides information to pedestrians and motorists as to location, direction, and offerings in a Downtown area. Wayfinding helps to define the downtown area, and lets people know that they have arrived, where they may be headed, and enables people to discover that there is more than the single destination they may have come for.

Wayfinding systems incorporate the logo and branding images for Downtown, to help create an identity and raise awareness of the defined area. Elements of a wayfinding system include entrance/gateway signs, directional signs (vehicular and pedestrian), maps, identification of public parking, trail signage, banners, etc. Some wayfinding systems also feature business and downtown directories. As a National Register Historic District, interpretative signage for Downtown highlighting Middleborough's history and local culture is particularly important and should be incorporated within a wayfinding program. Key to a successful program implementation is the visual cohesiveness utilizing the new brand across the signage program.

ACTION

Institute a wayfinding signage system for Downtown Middleborough utilizing the branding program that is under development. The Downtown Middleborough wayfinding system should be multi-tiered and include:

1. Downtown Wayfinding System
2. Regional Wayfinding for Roadways
 - a. Major highway and state road directional signage
3. Regional Multi-modal Wayfinding
 - a. Wayfinding and information signage at new Middleborough MBTA Commuter Rail Station on Grove Street
 - b. Wayfinding and informational signage at the existing Middleborough-Lakeville MBTA Commuter Rail station.
4. Public Parking Signage



This sign greets motorists as they arrive in Salem, MA.

Develop visual signage/wayfinding program that will assist in the branding, marketing and identity efforts of the Downtown Middleborough district.

Develop visual signage/wayfinding program that will direct visitors, commuters and consumers to Downtown Middleborough retail, restaurants, other businesses and historical/cultural attractions.

Develop visual signage/wayfinding program that will assist in the utilization of and awareness of the public parking areas in Downtown Middleborough

Action Items

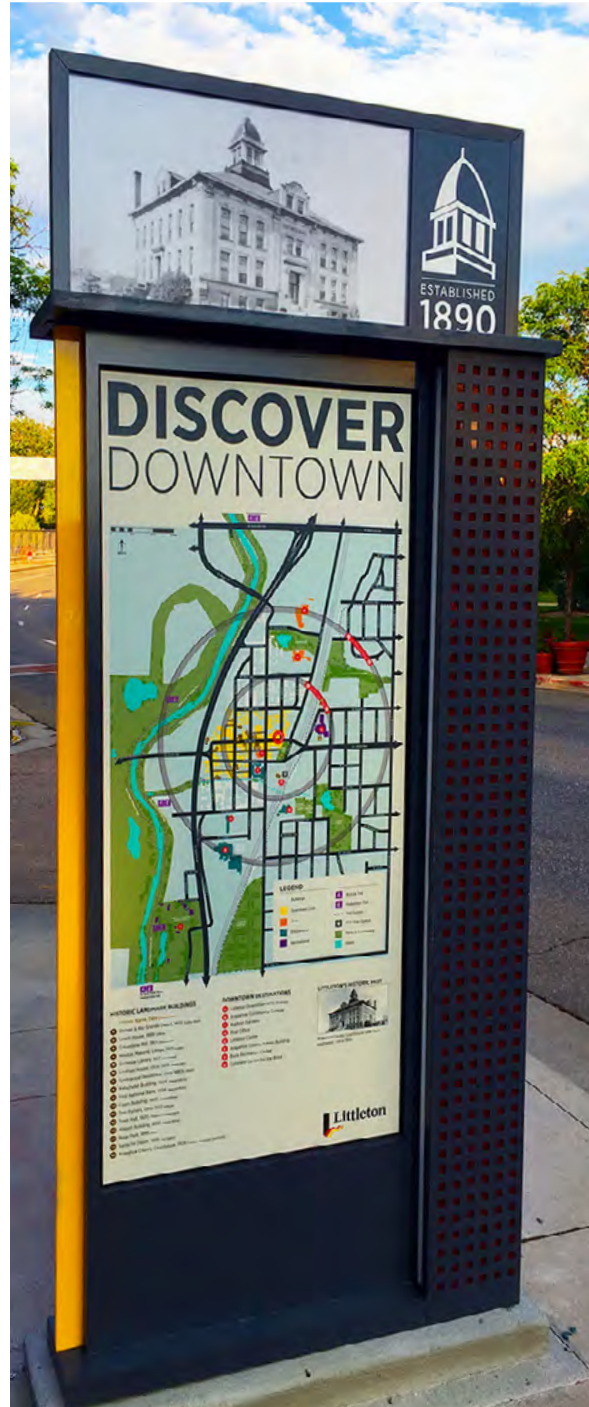
PROCESS

- Determine the Town lead on the project and assemble a team of key stakeholders.
- Clarify and recommit to the name Downtown Middleborough. It may be appropriate to secure a resolution by the Middleborough Select Board.
- Engage a consultant and/or sign professional.
- Perform a wayfinding audit and prepare a master plan/map to determine the locations and type of signage desired. Determine how far out of Downtown do you want to capture. Consider primary, secondary and tertiary locations in the mapping.
- Develop a budget that is determined by the implementation schedule and scope of the project. The budget should take into consideration the timeline if the project is to be instituted in phases, especially if this is a multi-year process and should include design, fabrication, staff coordination, installation and an ongoing maintenance program.
- See narratives below for the scope of this project by type.

THE BASIC PROCESS OF WAYFINDING INVOLVES FOUR STAGES:

1. Orientation is the attempt to determine one's location, in relation to objects that may be nearby and the desired destination.
2. Route decision is the selection of a course of direction to the destination.
3. Route monitoring is checking to make sure that the selected route is heading towards the destination.
4. Destination recognition is when the destination is recognized.

Credit: Lidwell, William; Holden, Kritina; Butler, Jill (2010). "Wayfinding"



Business Directory Sign from Littleton, CO.

Downtown Middleborough Wayfinding Initiative

WAYFINDING IN DOWNTOWN MIDDLEBOROUGH

Wayfinding signage should portray the image of the town – a “quaint New England” town and should be used in a strategic manner. Downtown Middleborough would benefit from wayfinding signage, including gateway signage, landmark locators, public parking identification, and maps of Downtown. The map signage is typically pedestrian in scale and could incorporate a business directory and some historical and interpretative information about Middleborough. Use of a QR code could enable easy updating of a business directory making it more timeless (and minimizing costly and time-consuming updates to physical signage).

Gateway signage could be helpful particularly on the east and western edges of Downtown along Center and Wareham Streets, and well as approaching Downtown from North Main Street (Route 105). Middleborough Town Hall signifies the arrival to Downtown from the south.

The signage program needs to start at the farthest most “point of capture” (that point at which you initially grab the attention of vehicular traffic, prior to the “turn here” signage so they can be on the lookout for subsequent direction) and go all the way down to the “enter parking here or Point Of Interest here” signage. Knowing that this is a vast area to cover, a great deal of detail will need to be coordinated and an ever-evolving process as things may seasonally rotate, business change and the Community evolves; it is recommended that this initial project is identified as a “Phase 1” and the ongoing maintenance, upgrading and editing be covered in various Capital Improvement planning and future project phasing wherever possible.

The program can be instituted in various types of signage, for example, stationary signage, banners, informational (maps), sidewalk graphics, etc. For instance, sidewalk graphics could become part of Downtown Middleborough’s wayfinding system. In this, directional signage is adhered to the sidewalk, making it easy for pedestrians to follow a path. Examples of sidewalk-based directional signage will have to be designed to withstand the New England elements.

Examples of Sidewalk-Based Wayfinding Signage



Left: Sidewalk signage with metal emblem for the Boston Trail. Center: Vinyl graphic sidewalk wayfinding sign. Right: Sidewalk graphic for local farmer's market.

Regional Wayfinding



A directional wayfinding sign used on a local street in Salem, MA.

ROADWAY DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

The regional directional signage for Middleborough is limited and confusing. The existing signage both north and south bound on I-495 approaching Exit 12 mention Middleborough Center, and not Downtown Middleborough. Furthermore, there is no signage at the end of the exit ramps when drivers are making a decision as to whether or not to turn north to Middleborough and Downtown Middleborough, or south to Lakeville.

PROCESS FOR REGIONAL WAYFINDING

- The Downtown Improvement Committee should consider enlisting the assistance of the MOBD liaison for Southeastern Massachusetts as well as the Town's legislative delegation in securing signage updates and corrections from MassDOT.
- Request MassDOT to upgrade and signage on I-495 to indicate that Exit 12 is for Middleborough and Downtown Middleborough. The upgrades are needed on both the north(west) and south(east) bound approaches to Exit 12.
- Request MassDOT install green state highway signage at the end of each of the exit ramps from I-495, Exit 12 indicating the direction of Middleborough and Downtown Middleborough as the enter South Main Street (Route 105).
- Request MassDOT include in the existing signs at the intersection of Route 28 and Route 105 (Grove Street and South Main) wording on the green road sign indicating the direction to Downtown Middleborough.
- Signage on Route 44 as it approaches Route 105 does indicate that this is a turn-off for Middleborough. Ideally, an additional sign or a wording upgrade on existing signage should indicate the direction towards Downtown Middleborough. This could be done on the existing green roadway signs or one of MassDOT's brown/cultural attraction signs that could indicate direction to the Robbins Museum or Middleborough Historical Museum in Downtown Middleborough. This will entail a request to MassDOT.
- Downtown Middleborough may opt to incorporate directional signage to Downtown to augment any state highway signage on local streets and Route 44. An example of directional signage used in a wayfinding system is depicted on this page.

Regional Wayfinding – Commuter Rail Stations

There are two stations in close proximity to Downtown Middleborough. The existing MBTA Lakeville-Middleborough Station, and the new commuter rail station on Grove Street being constructed as part of the South Coast Rail project. Wayfinding issues as to each station are discussed next.

SIGNAGE AT NEW MIDDLEBOROUGH MBTA COMMUTER RAIL STATION

Construction is currently underway for a new Middleborough train station and stop as part of the South Coast Rail project. The new station is on Grove Street (Route 28) in Middleborough approximately 1 mile from Downtown. Inclusion of a map indicating the location of Downtown Middleborough, as well as local destinations and attractions, such as Town Hall, Middleborough Historical Museum, the Robbins Museum, Massasoit Community College, the Library, should be part of the permanent display signage at the new station. Interpretative signage about the history of Middleborough, including Downtown Middleborough could enhance the new commuter rail station. The plans and specifications for the new station include signage and display with room for an area local map as well as interpretative signage. Other commuter rail stations feature such signage. This increases the awareness of Downtown Middleborough and could provide helpful information as to accessing Downtown Middleborough.

In addition, the Downtown Middleborough Committee should consider some regular advertising at the new Middleborough Commuter Rail Station to increase awareness and patronage of Downtown Middleborough businesses. The Downtown Middleborough branding project will provide a tag line as well as imaging that can be used for some initial advertising at the new station when it opens in 2023.

The plans for the new Middleborough Commuter Rail Station call for 500 parking spaces at the new station. This provides a potential captive audience of people to see the local area map, interpretative signage and advertising that could contribute to increase awareness and patronage of Downtown Middleborough.

Signage placement at the new Middleborough Commuter Rail Station should include: platform signage in the area where people wait to board and deboard the commuter rail; directional signage to Downtown at the vehicular exits on Grove Street; as well as any potential kiosks or signage areas at pedestrian entries to the station area.

SIGNAGE AT THE EXISTING MIDDLEBOROUGH-LAKEVILLE COMMUTER RAIL STATION

The existing Middleborough-Lakeville Commuter Rail Station is currently being used for commuter rail service, albeit with reduced ridership attributable to the pandemic. There are display cases and signage opportunities to display information about Downtown Middleborough that could be seen and read by waiting commuters. Advertising specialists view advertising at commuter rail stations as opportunities for extended visibility (dwell time) by commuters who are waiting for trains, enhancing the value of the information and advertising placement.

This station will continue to be used until train service is switched to the new Middleborough train station opening in late 2023 as part of South Coast Rail. In addition to the operation of the Middleborough-Lakeville line, the Cape Cod Flyer stops at the existing Middleborough-Lakeville station. The Cape Cod Flyer is train service from Boston to Cape Cod operating on weekends from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Proponents of the Cape Cod Flyer contend that the Middleborough-Lakeville Station will continue to operate after Phase 1 of South Coast Rail begins service.



Local heritage sign at commuter rail station.

PROCESS FOR WORKING WITH MBTA ON COMMUTER RAIL SIGNAGE

- The Middleborough Economic Development Director and Town Manager should contact the South Coast Rail project manager and formally request a permanent sign with wayfinding for Downtown Middleborough's points of interest at the new Middleborough commuter rail station. The station is currently under construction and the Town has a unique window of opportunity to secure the MBTA's firm commitment for a local orientation map as well as historical interpretative signage as illustrated in the review of MBTA commuter rail signage found in this section. This request should be filed immediately in writing, and followed up with a personal contact.
- It is easier for the MBTA to respond positively to a request when there is an existing construction contract for the station. The new Middleborough rail station design plans do provide space for signage, but the easily available public plans do not detail the type of signage at the new station. At some stations in the MBTA system, a blank area is left, since a specific sign was perhaps not requested or detailed.
- The Downtown Improvement Committee and the Town may wish to enlist the assistance and support of their legislative delegation for this request.
- The Town's request to the MBTA should be for:
 1. The MBTA to design, fabricate and install at least two large permanent platform signs of similar quality to signs recently upgraded and constructed at the Fairmount line and Greenbush commuter rail lines featuring local wayfinding sign indicating points of interest in Middleborough including Downtown Middleborough, and for interpretative signage on the history and culture of Middleborough. Middleborough may be able to provide additional input into the content and design, supplying historic images and facts to the MBTA.
 2. Install directional signage to Downtown Middleborough from the new Middleborough station oriented to vehicles departing the station parking areas.
 3. Include, design and install kiosks or signage areas at pedestrian entries to the new station.
- Middleborough and the Downtown Improvement Committee may opt at later date once the new station opens to use some of the stations advertising space for special events and Downtown marketing campaigns.

Commuter Rail Signage Examples

Within the MBTA Commuter Rail system, the MBTA has constructed platform and station signage, which includes a commuter rail system map, and at times a local area map. Some stations have signage with permanent signage featuring local history and culture. The local area map typically depicts major streets and landmarks, parks, civic areas and points of interest. There are some stations where the local regional transit agency has signage depicting local bus routes.

The new Middleborough South Coast Rail station is under construction and now is an appropriate time to request that the MBTA include permanent signage that includes a local area map highlighting how to access Downtown Middleborough from the commuter rail station, as well as other points of interest, such as Middleborough Town Hall, Massasoit Community College, Robbins Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, the Middleborough Historical Museum.

EXISTING PLATFORM SIGNAGE AT MBTA STATIONS WITH LOCAL AREA MAP

Following are images of best practice station signage with permanent local area maps. The Back Bay station is a commuter rail station. The second image is an MBTA subway station. Each station has a system map and a wayfinding map orienting commuters to local points of interest within proximity to the station. Downtown Middleborough is within a mile of the new Middleborough commuter rail station, which is very close proximity for suburban I-495 communities.



Commuter rail system map and local area maps at commuter train stations for wayfinding orientation to the local area.

EXISTING PLATFORM SIGNAGE AT MBTA COMMUTER RAIL STATIONS FEATURING LOCAL HISTORY

This set of photographs shows existing commuter rail platform signage depicting local history at Blue Hills Station and Morton Street Station on the Fairmount line and the Greenbush Station on the Greenbush line. Funding for inclusion of art and cultural/history exhibits is sometimes funded through a Percent for Art initiative within a station construction budget or other arts/cultural-related funding or construction resources.



Commuter Rail Platform signage.

LOCAL AREA MAPS AT A MULTI-MODAL CENTER WITH COMMUTER RAIL

The following photographs illustrate signage at the Downtown Attleboro commuter rail station which is part of a multi-modal center operated by the regional transit agency, GATRA. The maps are found on a kiosk near the pedestrian entrance to the bus and commuter rail area. These examples could be strengthened with better notation of Downtown Attleboro and key points of interest. Including signage on the commuter rail platform would further capture the attention of all rail commuters as they wait for the train – a captive environment with a long dwell-time is ideal from an advertisers' perspective.



Wayfinding maps at a kiosk at the Transit Center adjacent to the Attleboro Commuter Rail Station. This is a missed opportunity for highlighting Downtown's many assets.

ADVERTISING ON LOCAL COMMUTER RAIL STATION BILLBOARDS

In addition to taking steps to assure visibility of Downtown Middleborough at the new commuter rail station through permanent signage, such as a local area map and signage depicting local history, private advertising is another option. Downtown Middleborough could elect to obtain use of private billboard space on the station platform. The MBTA uses a private media firm vendor, Onward Media, to manage station advertising. There are separate rates for signage on trains and possibly station billboards for local government and nonprofits.

Public Parking Wayfinding for Downtown Middleborough

Downtown Middleborough has six off-street parking areas plus the Friends of the Library parking lot. There needs to be a cohesive wayfinding system that identifies public parking that is readily visible to motorists, as well as an identification signage at each parking lot location. A summary of existing wayfinding for Middleborough's seven public parking lots and some photos of existing signage can be found on the following page.

The critical thought path is how to get vehicular traffic from that initial "point of capture" to a place to store the vehicle so the wayfinding can then lead the pedestrian traffic to the business provider(s). This must be mapped out in an iterative aspect and intuitive way. Critical to the current thought patterns after the pandemic is how we make the travel from the safety of one's self-contained environment (their car) into pedestrian traffic (surrounded by others) as quick and efficient as possible. Anytime we can explain or justify a primary direction sign or wayfinding "cluster", it will further promote the justification for funding in response to the economic impacts of the pandemic.

The wayfinding and signage for public parking areas should be complemented by a parking location map for Downtown Middleborough that can be used on the Town's website and Facebook page, as well as shared with local businesses in both print and digital formats. The parking wayfinding system should incorporate the branding and logo for Downtown Middleborough now under development.

Signage at each of the public parking lots in Downtown is also an opportunity to incorporate a map and highlight local institutions, businesses, and landmarks.

Existing Wayfinding Conditions for Public Parking in Downtown Middleborough

There are seven public parking lots in Downtown Middleboro. An overview of existing wayfinding directional and identity signage by location is highlighted here, followed by some images.

- 1. Jackson Street**, north side is a municipal lot has a small directional sign at the corner of North Main Street and Jackson, but no identification sign. There is a small red sign indicating police only parking on the property line between the Pierce Building and the municipal parking lot. This is a remain from the former police use of the Pierce Building.
- 2. Wareham Street lot** on, the south side between South Main and Clifford Streets has no directional or identifications signs.
- 3. Town Hall parking lot** off Union Street has no directional sign.
- 4. Small municipal lot behind Kramer Park on Center**, accessible from South Main Street has no directional signage or identification signs.
- 5. The "Benny's Lot"** behind Center Street stores on the north side with access from North Main or School Street have signs that are dual purpose directional and identity signs. The most visible signage is on North Main Street, which can be seen by drivers and pedestrians from both north and south directions. There is one directional sign on Center Street which appears to suggest that a driver turn right into the Santander Bank drive-up lane to access the rear public parking lot. The view of the parking sign on School Street from Center is somewhat obscured by light poles.
- 6. The Friends of the Library parking lot** for library patrons on the southwest corner of Pierce Street and North Main Street has identification signs that it is a public parking area for library patrons.
- 7. The Pearl Street lot** on the north side of Center Street behind the commercial and residential buildings that is accessed from either Pearl or Oak Streets. This lot is behind the Father Shea Center. Dual directional/identity parking signage on Pearl Street is visible.

Existing Wayfinding for Downtown Middleborough's Public Parking Areas

Wareham Street Municipal Parking Lot



"The Benny's" – Municipal Parking Lot



Directional Sign for Jackson Street Lot

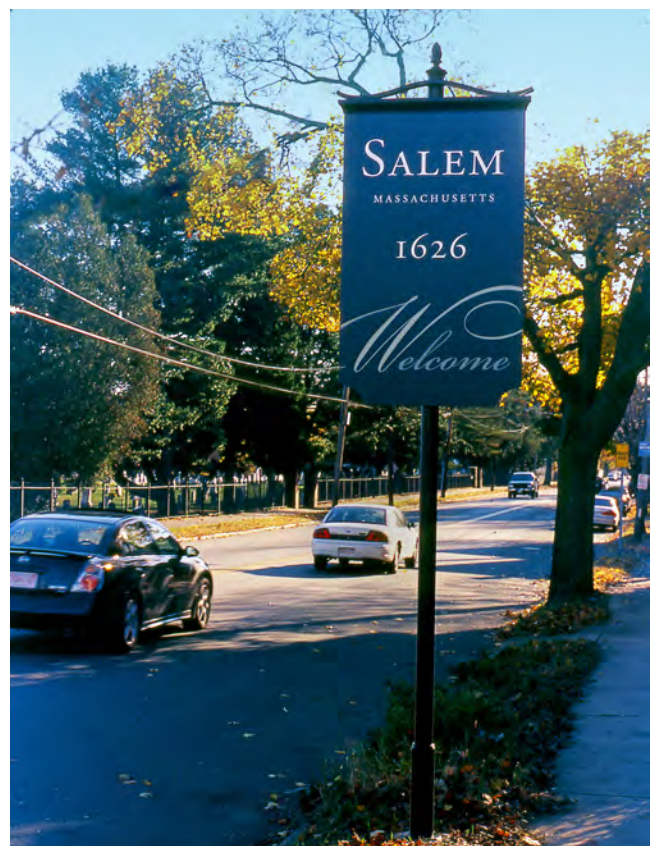


Directional/Identity Signage on Pearl Street



Best Practices & Illustrations Of Wayfinding Systems

Salem, Massachusetts. The City of Salem developed and installed wayfinding system that includes arrival signs, wayfinding and interpretation that has a common long and feel and advances the City's brand.



Best Practices & Illustrations Of Wayfinding Systems

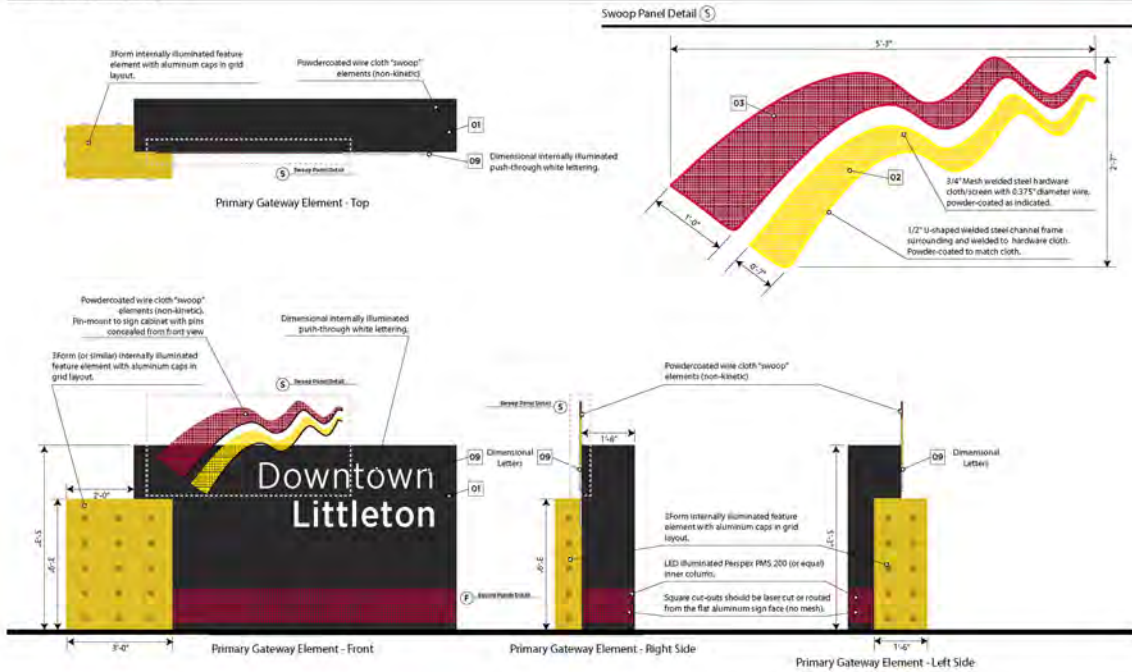
Littleton, Colorado. Littleton instituted a citywide wayfinding system using a very contemporary look and approach, which include regional gateway signs as well as downtown wayfinding and interpretative signs for pedestrians. This wayfinding design was chosen with public consultation and citizen surveys on preferred design alternatives. Elements of their comprehensive system are shown below.



Best Practices & Illustrations Of Wayfinding Systems

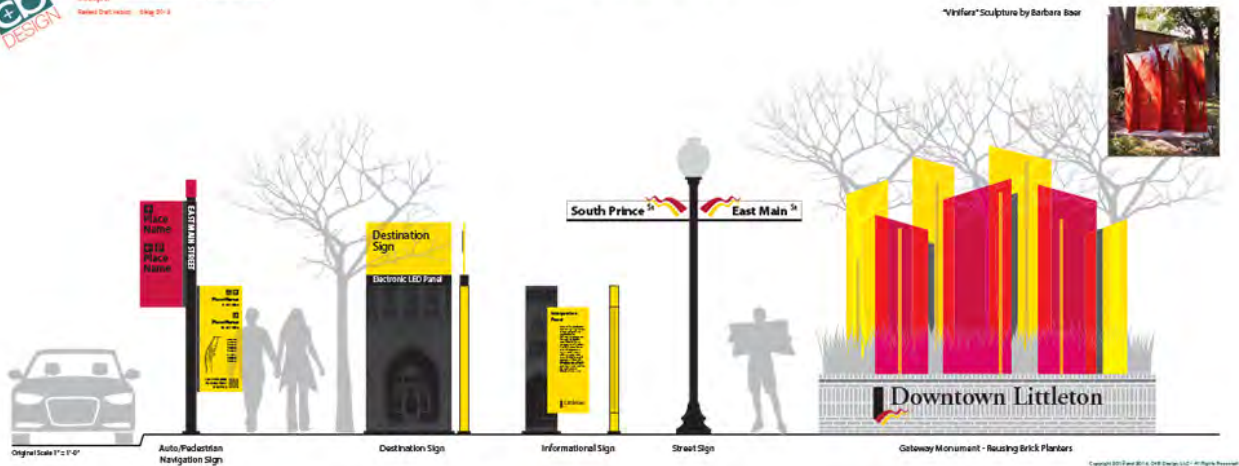
Littleton, Colorado.

A Gateway Signage



Historic Downtown Littleton Signage and Wayfinding
Concept B
Revised Draft Version - August 2014

CONCEPT B



RESOURCES

- LRRP Best Practice: Integrate Brand and Art Into your Wayfinding System - Selbert Perkins Design
- Lidwell, William; Holden, Kritina; Butler, Jill (2010). "Wayfinding". The Pocket Universal Principles of Design: 125 Ways to Enhance Usability, Influence Perception, Increase Appeal, Make Better Design Decisions, and Teach through Design. Rockport Publishers. p. 260. ISBN 9781610580656 – via Google Books.
- MBTA's outdoor media advertising firm is Outward Media and the contact is Eoin McCann, eoin.mccann@outfrontmedia.com, (781) 792-2123.



Develop the Massachusetts
Archaeological Trail

Develop the Massachusetts Archaeological Trail



Revenue & Sales



Cultural/Arts

Origin

The Robbins Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, the home of the MA Archaeological Society (MAS), with 180,000 artifacts, is in Downtown Middleborough. The idea for the MA Archaeology Trail came from a discussion with former Robbins Museum board member and the Plan Facilitator. Subsequent discussions with the Trustees of the MAS identified significant interest in the project so as to develop this project. The Middleborough Downtown Improvement Committee sees this project as an overall benefit and is an enthusiastic supporter.

Project Champion: Massachusetts Archaeological Society

Location/Census Tract

This is a multi-site marketing strategy to increase visitation to archaeological-related museums and sites, and thereby increase visitation to Downtown Middleborough. The actual trail would benefit multiple communities and commercial areas throughout the Commonwealth

Address: 17 Jackson Street, Middleborough, MA 02346

The Robbins Museum Is located in Census Tract 5423.01, Plymouth County, MA (2020 decennial census tract).

Budget & Sources of Funding



Medium

Budget:

The initial budget for the creation and development of the Mass Archaeological requires Trail Product Development Process to identify and involve partners, and the subsequent development of a web site along with marketing and promotional materials. A medium size budget will be needed of approximately \$150,000 to undertake the pre-development and, partnership building phase, along with some funds for a web site, initial design and marketing of the MA Archaeology Trail.

Prospective Funding Sources:

- Mass Office of Travel & Tourism – EDA Tourism Build Back Better Recovery funding
- REDO funding from regional economic development organizations where archaeological museums and labs are located.

[Note: Middleborough does not participate in a Regional Economic Development Organization].

- Mass Humanities Council
- Mass Cultural Council
- Mass Tourism – Regional Tourism District & Boards, CVBs
- Middleborough Tourism Committee
- Mass Historical Commission


Timeframe



Short

Approximately one year to initiate.

continued

<p>Risks</p>  <p>Medium</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Extent of Cooperation and Support of larger Archaeological Museums, Labs, Sites2. Quality and Legitimacy regarding participating sites and elements of the Trail.3. Sustainability of marketing and trail web site curation4. Need for funding for set up and continuing marketing5. MAS is principally operated through volunteer trustees and limited staff. <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Varied operation hours and seasons. Some sites and locations are open one month a year for visitors, e.g., Archaeology Month• Wide range of types and capacity of Institutions Involved In archaeological resources.• There Is a sensitivity to security concerns regarding outdoor archaeological resources, due to the risk of theft of uncovered archaeological resources.
<p>Key Performance Indicators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner participation in the formation of a MA Archaeology Trail• Visitor Metrics to the Robbins Museum, and other Archaeological Museums, Labs and Sites.• Mass Archaeology Museum Trail web site visitors and site analytics
<p>Partners & Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Massachusetts Archaeological Society. The MAS officers are excited about developing a Trail; formal endorsement by the Board will be presented this fall.• Other Archaeological institutions and holders of archaeological resources, such as City of Boston Archaeological Lab; Peabody Institute of Archaeology; Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Plimoth Plantation, Peabody Essex Museum; DCR; the Springfield Museums.• Middleborough Economic Development Director, Downtown Improvement Committee, and Tourism Committee

Diagnostic/ COVID-19 Impacts

The Robbins Museum was temporarily closed as a result of the pandemic restrictions and had no visitors. Small museums experienced similar closures. The Robbins was one of 56% of all establishments in Downtown Middleborough which had reduced hours and capacity in April 2021 and 52% of businesses that were closed temporarily during the pandemic. Museums and cultural organizations were particularly hard hit as a result of Covid-related closures.

Development of the MA Archaeology Trail would help the Robbins Museum and others recover from the Covid-induced closures, increase awareness and availability of nearby cultural resources to explore.

Action

Discovering Hidden Gems – Creating the MA Archaeology Trail entails convening interested players; organizing and developing a Mass Archaeology Trail; launching and marketing the MA Archaeology Trail, including the Robbins Museum; and sustaining and evaluating the impact of the trail.

Process

1. Define initial goals.
2. Recruit participating organizations and partners.
3. Establish working committee with representatives from partnering organizations.
4. More fully develop trail concept, likely features and themes.
5. Pursue funding and implementation funding,
6. Select project coordinator. (This may entail hiring a staff person, contractor or intern.)
7. Identify type of locations/ entities to be included in the trail – archaeology museums; museums with archaeology collections; archaeological labs; physical sites with archaeological resources open to the public; seasonal or periodic events/ openings; etc.
8. Recruit potential sponsors and local tie-ins
9. Continue managing the MA Archaeology Trail.



The Robbins Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Downtown Middleborough.



Potential sites for a MA Archaeology Trail. This map is suggestive. There are other sites throughout the Commonwealth that could be included.

Best Practices

Trails have become a proven strategy to build audience and visitor awareness of cultural resources. One of the first and most highly successful trails is the Boston Freedom Trail, which jointly markets and promotes visitation to 16 sites in Boston. Visitors can start anywhere on the trail, take breaks, and visit at their own pace. The trail has increased awareness of the sites and contributes to the overall economy.

Two other successful examples from New England are the Connecticut Artist Trail and the Maine Art Museum Trail. The Connecticut Artist Trail was created in 1995 with twenty art museums as the CT Impressionist Art Trail and has adapted to include all types of art and historic sites, and most recently added outdoor "scenic views" where artists have painted. The Maine Art Museum trail began in 1997 with seven museums. There are now nine participating art museums throughout the state of Maine. The Maine Art Trail advertises 9 museums, 80,000 art works, and 350 scenic miles. In addition to the trail, during the Covid pandemic the nine Maine art museums collaborated on jointly marketing virtual events and sharing ideas on Covid response.

The private sector has also begun using trails as a marketing strategy, particularly in the food and agriculture sector, with wine and cheese trails.

North Carolina has developed trails to promote local cultural sites and artisans, including developing trails based on various target audiences. Eight eastern North Carolina counties are home to the African American Music Trail. NC found that visitor spending in these eight counties increased 11% after the trail was established. The Crooked Road Heritage Music Trail in Virginia celebrates music venues, local artisans and culture in the nineteen rural southwestern counties. The economic Impact of the Crooked Road Heritage Trail exceeds \$6.4 million direct benefits annually with a total economic impact of \$9.2 million and 131 jobs. Trails can make a difference and are effective approaches to increasing visitors and creating economic benefits to local communities.



The Maine Art Museum Trail has increased visitation at Maine's nine art museums.



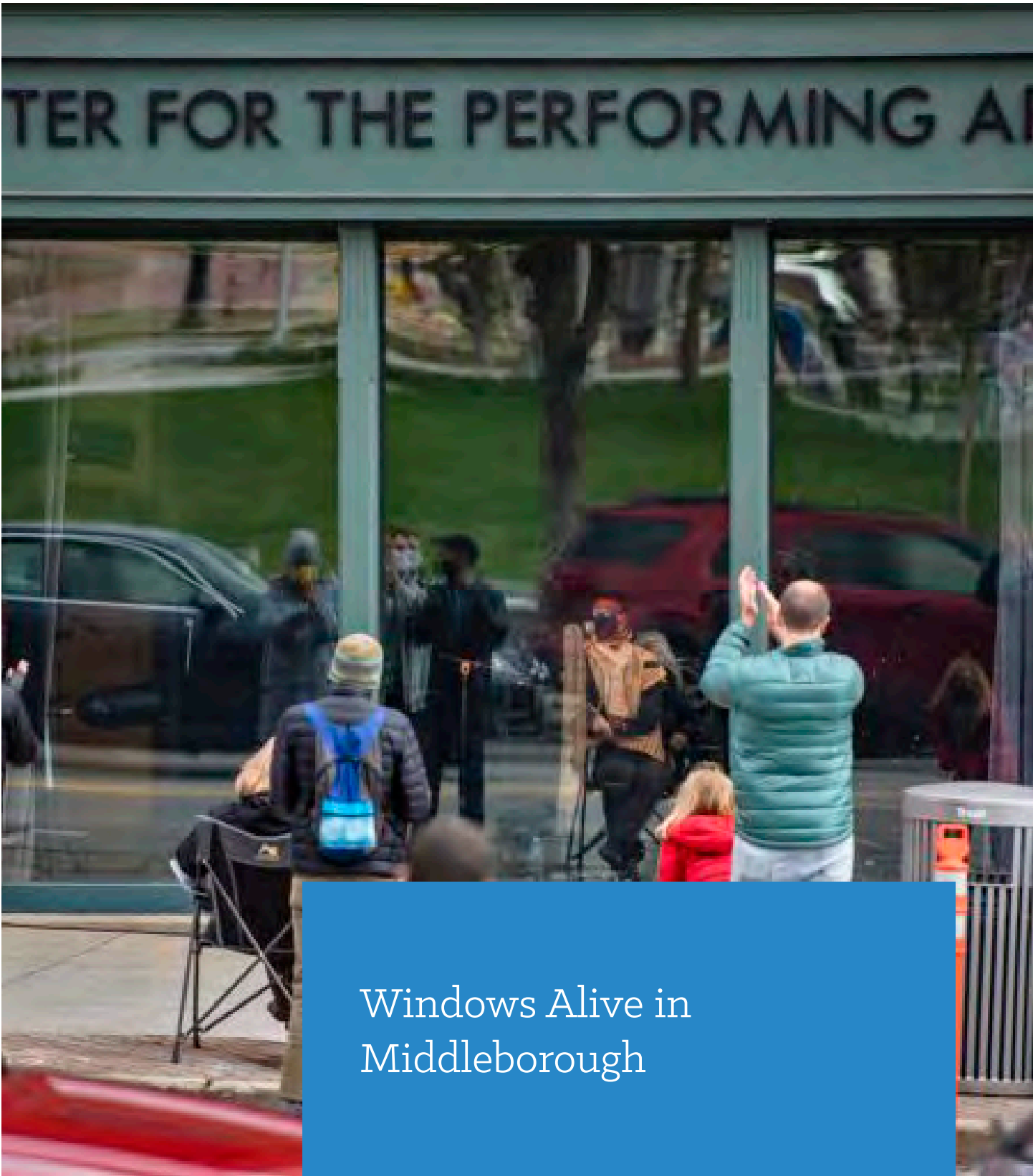
Crooked Road Heritage Music Trail In Virginia generates over a \$9 million economic impact annually, pre-Covid.



The African American Music Trail located in eight eastern counties of North Carolina increased visitor expenditures in these 8 counties.

RESOURCES

- Interpretative Planning Tools for Heritage Areas, Historic Trails and Gateways published by the National Park Service: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/upload/Interp-Planning-Toolkit-for-Heritage-Areas-Historic-Trails-and-Gateways-2.pdf>
- Cultural Routes, a Guideline for Planners: https://lnm.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Cultural_routes.pdf



Windows Alive in
Middleborough

Activate Windows with Performance Art & Showcase Vacant Storefronts for Rent



Tenant Mix



Cultural/Arts

Category	Cultural Arts/Tenant Mix
Location	Middleborough
Origin	<p>Downtown Middleborough has several buildings with large vacant windows and has discussed creating an art in windows program. Downtown is also home to the Burtwood School of Performing Arts, Alley Theater, and Rachel Park Dance Center.</p> <p>Project Champions: Janis Akerstrom and Lorna Brunelle</p>
Budget	<p>Budget: Artist Fees: Estimate (\$500 to \$1,500 per artist) Other costs of the Windows Alive event may be covered by funding or volunteer/pro bono services and they include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing & Promotion • Videography & Photography Services • Utilities and Fees to Property Owners • Equipment/Services/Supplies to make Windows suitable performance spaces • Temporary & Event Signage • Website • Printing • Insurance <p>Funding Sources: Middleborough Cultural Council Private Foundations Middleborough Tourism Committee Mass Cultural Council New England Foundation for the Arts Sponsors</p>
Timeframe	<p>Launch within 6 to 10 months, following beta project.</p>
Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord/Property Owner Cooperation • Legal agreements as to use of space • Funding • Weather • Health/Pandemic <p>Since this project requires funding and participation by a variety of stakeholders and actors, it is identified as a medium risk project. To reduce risk, it is recommended that Middleborough undertake a smaller pilot or beta project to gain experience and work out some of the issues regarding use of storefront window spaces, and coordinate with DPW and Middleborough Police regarding safety issues.</p>

Key Performance Indicators

- Visitors to Downtown during Windows Alive in Middleborough
- Activation of vacant (and vacant-appearing) storefronts in Downtown Middleborough
- Increase awareness of small business leasing opportunities for landlords
- Provide performance artists and visual artists work opportunities who have been negatively impacted by Covid.
- Media and social media coverage of Windows Alive events, noted by news articles, social media postings, likes and comments, as well as any digital and electronic media coverage.

Partners & Resources

Town of Middleborough – Economic & Community Development Office; Cultural Council; Downtown Improvement Committee; Tourism Committee, DPW, Police
Middleborough Community Cable Access Media
Local Property Owners
Local Arts Community



Source: Amherst Center Cultural District, Amherst, MA.

Diagnostic/Covid-19 Impacts

Performing art venues were closed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, including the Alley Theater in Downtown. 52% of businesses in Downtown had fewer on-site sales, and one-third of businesses experienced a 25% reduction in on-site customers. Drawing people back to Downtown Middleborough is critical to Covid-19 pandemic recovery. Eighteen vacant storefronts representing nearly 30,000 sf of space were identified during the LRRP diagnostic phase (spring 2021) and additional businesses have closed/relocated since, creating more vacancies.

Mass Cultural Council found at the beginning of 2021 that statewide individual artists on average had loss over \$10,303 in personal income and experienced 23 cancelled gigs/jobs. In southeastern Massachusetts, where Middleborough is located, these adverse impacts were greater. Individual artists in southeastern MA lost on average \$10,408 and had 28 cancelled gigs/jobs. The number of cancelled gigs as a result of Covid-19 was highest in southeastern MA of all regions in the Commonwealth.

Action

Windows Alive in Middleborough will create live performances and display art in vacant storefronts and empty windows in Downtown Middleborough, activating Downtown. Windows Alive will create reasons for people to come to Downtown Middleborough to safely enjoy performance arts and see what else Downtown has to offer, create gigs for artists, and promote rental of storefronts. Implementation of Windows Alive will require: (1) involving and convening partners; (2) identifying and securing window performance/art spaces from property owners; (3) assessing and readying storefront windows for performance/art spaces; (4) call for artists and selection; (5) marketing and outreach for Windows Alive In Middleborough; (6) event planning & execution, metrics and documentation; (7) volunteers; (8) post-publicity; and (9) evaluation; (10) securing funding and sponsorship which should start at the outset and continue.

Involve & Convene Partners

Windows Alive will require a working committee of volunteers, business people, artists and partners to facilitate the success of Windows Alive. This could be a formal committee, a sub-committee of the Downtown Improvement Committee, or an ad hoc organizing committee. The role of this committee will be to help identify cooperating property owners, develop applicable policies, assist with the call for artists, as well as handling outreach, marketing and event operations. Build a committee of interested citizens and include different types of people with a range of skills including performing artists, marketing communication, web design and social media, project management, fund raising, grant writing, landlords, retailers.

Give the event a memorable, meaningful name. Feedback from the Working Committee will also be a helpful part of evaluation. Organizing a working committee near the outset of the Windows Alive project is optimal. Additional partners and people can be recruited throughout the process.

Develop & Refine Windows Alive

Windows Alive can provide an opportunity to feature a wide range of artists and creatives of all ages and genres, including musicians from bands to classical quartets to soloists of various instruments; dance whether is ballet, jazz, folk dance or contemporary; mime; puppetry; poetry readings; short theatrical plays or musicals; vocalists and choral singing; actors; video and film makers; and painters.

Determine the format and style of the Windows Alive event. Questions to consider include:

- Will it be a one-day event, week-long, or month-long event? For the first year, it might be better to start small and build a highly successful event, that people find exciting, enjoy and wish to repeat. If it's a one-day event, should a rain date be considered?
- Will Windows Alive include both performance and visual arts?
- Timing of Windows Alive? When would a Windows Alive event be best scheduled, considering allowing enough time for preparation and marketing; a good time for drawing audiences to Windows Alive; and fitting into an annual calendar of promotions and events for Downtown Middleborough and other potential programming conflicts?

Process

A web page for Windows Alive should be developed to provide basic information about the event, including the call for participation by property owners and artists. The web page could be part of the Town's or Downtown Middleborough's web site. A Windows Alive in Middleborough web page helps create credibility and confidence in the project when recruiting sponsors and inviting participation of building owners and artists.

It is important to articulate the goals for Windows Alive and how to measure success. How will Windows Alive support the performing artists/cultural community, and also support the need for landlords to rent space to businesses that are desirable and will help Downtown Middleborough prosper? Consider how Windows Alive will help activate Downtown and support local businesses.

Securing Funding & Sponsorships

Funding for stipends for artists, marketing, web site, insurance, equipment, utilities and rental fees will be needed. Securing grants and sponsorships will be an important task at the outset of the project. Windows Alive provides opportunities for sponsorship. The specifics of Windows Alive events will determine the number and types of sponsorship opportunities. For example, the overall program could have a lead or gold sponsor; opening or closing event(s) for Windows Alive in Downtown Middleborough could have sponsor(s); individual windows could also have sponsor(s). Recruitment of sponsors is enhanced by delineating not only program benefits but also providing specifics as to recognition and visibility of sponsors, particularly in marketing and outreach materials.

Consider selling buttons in advance to promote the date, provide seed money and suggest that this will be an annual event.



Source: The Flynn Theater used picture windows in Downtown Burlington to delight audiences on the street with performance artists.

Process *continued*

Involving Property Owners

Identify and Secure Window Performance/Art Spaces from Property Owners.

Property owners are an important part of the Windows Alive in Middleborough program. Property owners are being asked to provide critical space and locations for performance arts, the heart of Windows Alive. Windows Alive also has the potential to make a wider audience aware of the potential to lease vacant storefronts. As part of Windows Alive, listing of all participating venues, along with leasing contact information (name, website and phone) should be considered as an integral part of the program and benefit to property owners. Listings could at minimum be included on the Windows Alive web site, as well as in any print and digital brochure. This would

create additional value and benefit to the property owners, and could contribute to permanently filling store vacancies beyond the temporary performance art use.

Prospective spaces in vacant and empty-looking storefronts for Windows Alive should be identified in Downtown Middleborough by address, window size and property owners. Property owners (or lessors, in some cases) should be contacted as to their willingness to participate in Windows Alive. A simple lease agreement or written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for window space should be developed in advance and reviewed by legal counsel and approved in writing by property owners. Issues and questions with the property owner in advance include the following:



Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/26/theater/new-york-theater-windows-art.html>

Process *continued*

- Dates of the Windows Alive events including access and time for set-up, practice and clean-up should be determined.
- Utilities, especially electrical, and provisions for heat or cooling (as may be appropriate depending upon the season). Access to water for advance cleaning may be needed, as well. Discuss with the property owner, who is responsible for paying for utilities and electricity for Windows Alive. It may be necessary to put utilities in the Program's Name or pay the property owner a small fee to compensate for utility costs.
- Access. Will the building manager or property owner provide Windows Alive with a key to access the storefront, or will arrangements for someone to be present to unlock and lock the storefront be necessary?
- Security. What are the policies and procedures for security of the storefront and any equipment or artwork related to Windows Alive?
- Insurance. The Windows Alive program will likely need insurance for any installation or performance art pieces and equipment that are part of the Windows Alive performance to minimize liability burdens, costs and risks to the property owner. It's possible to secure one-day, festival or special event insurance.
- Permission to install hooks to hang art, or backdrop curtains, etc., make adjustments to enable lighting and sound, as may be needed.

These issues are often addressed in the MOU or lease agreement as well.

Assessing and Readying Storefront Windows for Performance/Art Spaces

In addition to securing the property owner's cooperation and agreement, it is important to assess and ready storefront windows for performance art. A sample assessment form is included. Key issues to consider include; existing conditions and extent of needed clean-up and preparation; performance space by window area; access; lighting; electrical availability; and provisions for sound. It is useful to do a sound and audio-test at least a week in advance to avert any issues. It is Important to make sure that all sound is audible to the audiences on the street looking in. Blue tooth can be an easy tech resource to make sound audible from the interior locations to the exterior.



Source: The Flynn Theater, Burlington, Vermont.

Process *continued*

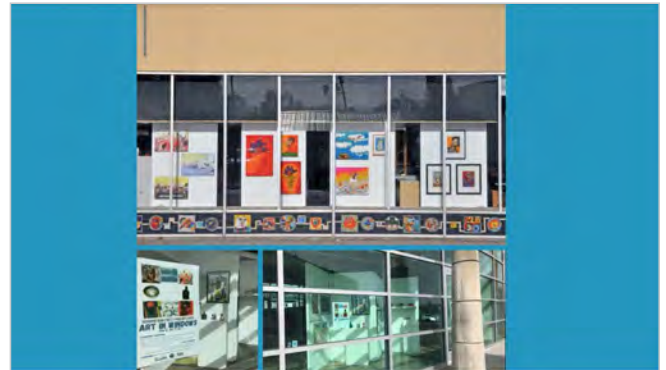
Call for Artists and Selection

Individual artists can be invited to participate in Windows Alive or a Call for Artists can be issued. A Call for Artists contributes toward greater inclusion of all types of artists and community members. A call often minimizes complaints. A good Call for Artists takes time. For the beta/pilot version It may be useful to Invite one or two artists.

Early on, discussions should occur regarding the process for selecting artists for participation, preference for Middleborough-connected artists, and the amount of the artist honorarium. Artists may be invited to respond to a theme for the Windows Alive event. It is helpful to advise artists as to the target audience for Windows Alive. Expectations, if any, regarding the length of the performance should also be specified, e.g., 30- to 60-minute sets, two 40-minute sets with a half-hour break, etc. Expectations for artists to supply their own equipment and amplifiers should also be stated. Any restrictions or limitations as to materials and performance spaces should also be noted. It is recommended that the fee structure for performing artists be established in advance, prior to issuing the call for artists. A written agreement with artists is recommended specifying the details of the engagement, date, time, duration of the performance, equipment requirements and expectations and policies regarding recording and photographs.

The individual invitation or Artists Call should detail roles and responsibilities for participating artists as well as what Windows Alive will provide. Issues in the Artists Call should at minimum include:

- Date, time and duration of event
- Sale policy regarding art work displayed or generated during Windows Alive, including guidelines for pricing and commissions
- Insurance of artwork during display and performances
- Policies and roles regarding pickup and display of artwork and equipment
- Copyright and fair usage issues regarding use of photos, images and video of artwork and performances for publicity, outreach, marketing and documentation of the event, both digital and print channels.
- Pickup and clean up policies after completion of



Source: NIAD Art Center and Richmond Main Street Initiative, Richmond, VA.

Amherst Center Cultural District
PRESENTS

WINDOWS INTO ART
June - August around Amherst Center

A CELEBRATION OF THE ARTS
JUNE 27 12 - 6 PM
AMHERST TOWN COMMON

ARTISTS MARKET, PERFORMANCES & LIVE MUSIC
FROM THE COVID 19 ARTIST CONTEST
WINNERS & AMHERST CULTURAL COUNCIL AWARDEES:

JEFF GAVIOLI AND HIS BAD NEWS JAZZ AND BLUES ORCHESTRA
DINA STANDER - POETRY + MADELEINE BONN - DANCE
ILANA MORRIS - MUSIC + DRIVING WHEEL BAND + KARIMA DISE
STORYTELLING + DANIEL HALES - MUSIC
MUSICAL THE MUSICAL - THEATER + AMHERST BALLET

Amherst Center Cultural District Mead Amherst Regional School District

Poetry • Music • Theater • Dance

Source: Amherst Center Cultural District, Amherst, MA.

Process *continued*

Windows Alive event.

- Policies and signage regarding photographs, videography, and recordings of the Windows Live events and subsequent use. The Town and the Downtown Improvement Committee to reserve re-use rights.
- Encouraging artists to promote Windows Alive amongst their own networks. And,
- Sponsor acknowledgement.

Distributing the Call for Performance Artists/Art

A five to six-week period, at minimum, should be allocated for the Artists Call. This will allow time to widely distribute an Artists Call; conduct an information session; and provide adequate time for artists to respond by the specified deadline.

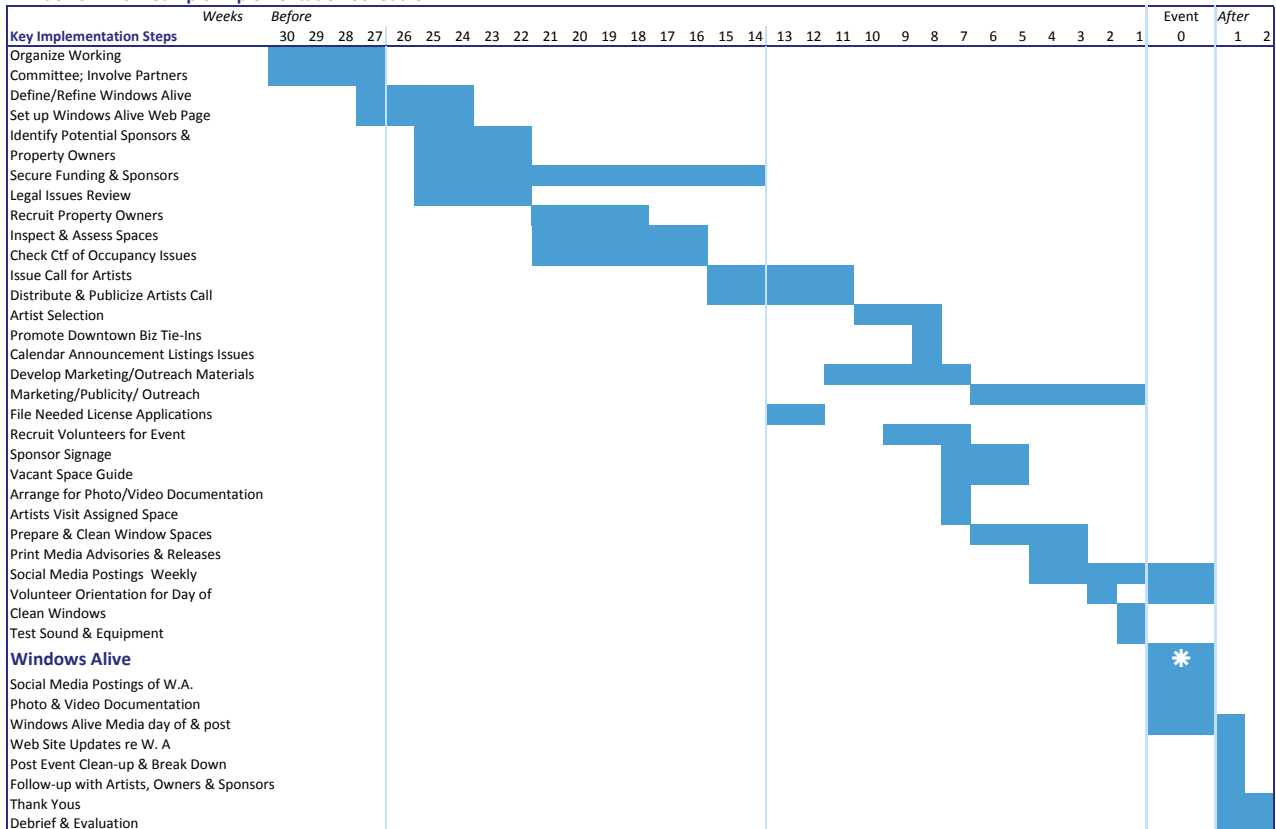
The call or invitation for artists should be widely distributed using a range of channels including social media, word-of-mouth, notices to partners and allied organizations, digital and print posters and fliers

distributed to area stores, organizations, the library, cultural venues, art supply stores, arts organizations, news releases, web site postings etc. Targeted emails and phone calls can also be very helpful in generating interest amongst artists. An interactive informational session online or in-person for artists can be helpful to respond to questions. Recording and posting the informational session is useful. At minimum notes from the information session with questions and answers should be written and posted.

Marketing and Outreach for Windows Alive in Middleborough

A marketing and outreach plan for Windows Alive should be developed to publicize the event and generate interest and participation. Windows Alive should develop an image, colors and visual event identity that can be used with all communications. It is helpful to prepare a marketing and outreach plan in advance. The marketing/outreach plan sets forth potential media outlets – print, online, radio, and television (including public access), along with contacts and deadlines for calendar listings,

Windows Alive -- Sample Implementation Schedule



A sample implementation schedule for Windows Alive.

Process *continued*

frequency of online and print publication, as well as social media tools. Key community groups, arts and cultural organizations and related media should also be identified. These organizations can help publicize Windows Alive to their members, both as part of the Call for Artists as well as the event itself.

The marketing/outreach plan details frequency, content, and key messages are outlined and identified with a schedule for execution and posting. Time should be also allocated for making calls and reaching out to organizations and media outlets. Personal contact still matters.

Establishing a web site early on in the development of the Windows Alive program will enable people who are interested in learning more about Windows Alive to share their email addresses and receive periodic updates through social media and email blasts. It is often useful to use programs such as Mail Chimp or Constant Contact to send email announcements that easily incorporate graphics and convey information in a visually pleasing manner.

A record of media stories, social media posts, and announcements about Windows Alive should be retained.

Event Management, Metrics and Documentation

A successful Window Alive event requires engaging partners in pre-planning, event execution and follow-up. Solid preparation and advance planning are keys to success. A sample implementation schedule for Windows Alive with a detailed listing of tasks and suggested time frames is provided. From convening a working committee to hosting Windows Alive, a thirty-week period will likely be needed.

Licenses & Permits. Downtown Middleborough is zoned Business, and consequently entertainment and cultural uses are considered permitted uses Downtown. Massachusetts General Laws empowered Towns to issues Public Theatrical & Exhibition licenses in accordance with Chapter 140 §181. Towns generally grant or deny permits within 30 days of application, but can require a public hearing and undertake additional time to consider an application. The entire process can conceivably take up to 85 days following submission of a completed application. Early discussions with permitting officials regarding Windows Alive can help identify issues and streamline the permitting process.



Middleborough has several cultural businesses in Downtown. The Alley Theater used Patio Pop-Up to pivot and serve audiences during Covid drawing good crowds. This is an indication of strong interest in performance art.

Process *continued*

Week-Of & Day-Of. Managing the event, coordinating with building owners, performance artists, public safety officials, welcoming patrons, and providing for clean-up are all important parts of event management. Everything comes together during the event itself. Before Windows Alive commences, sponsorship signage, and storefront leasing information should be ready, placed and available. It is important to have a check-in point during the duration of event for media, artists, and attendees. Information as to bathrooms and location of amenities, including local businesses to patronize for food and drink should be posted and noted in Windows Alive brochures and materials.

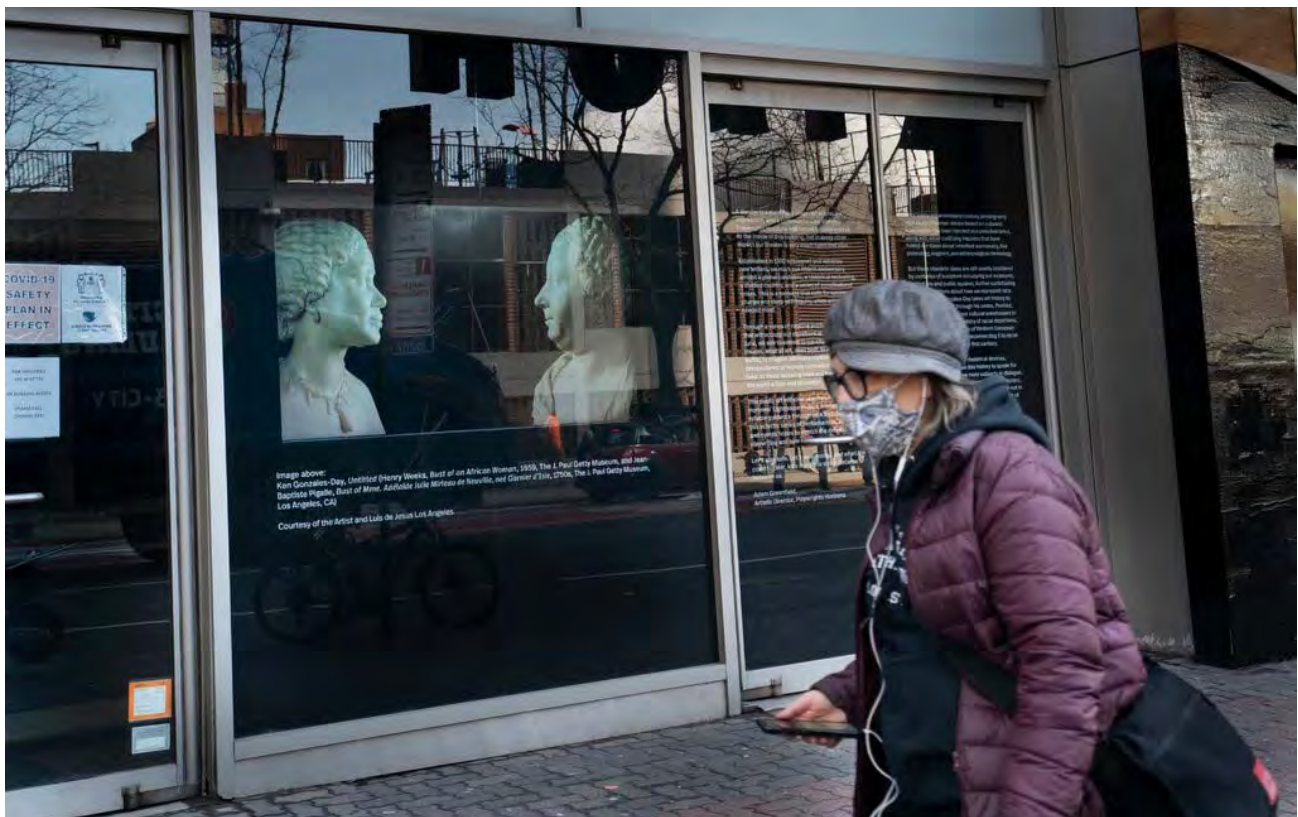
Documentation. Quality photographs and videos of the Windows Alive performances and visitors are an important part of telling the story and documenting the event. Photographs and video can be posted on the Downtown web site and extend the life of event, as well as be used in post-event publicity. Photographs and video can also be helpful tools in thanking sponsors. Middleborough Community Cable

Access Media could be a helpful partner with video documentation for Windows Alive.

Metrics. It is important to try and get a good estimate of the number of people visiting and participating in the Windows Alive event(s). One or two Windows Alive working committee members should be asked to estimate participation during the event. During and following Windows Alive, it is useful to visit area stores and talk with owners to gauge patronage levels at local stores during Windows Alive. Data such as foot traffic, where attendees are from, email addresses, popularity of various performers and shopping revenue for the day are good metrics to collect and review.

Volunteers. The use of volunteers to help with the Windows Alive event should be organized. Specific jobs and tasks for volunteers should be identified and assigned. Volunteers can assist with set-up as well as greeting and welcoming audiences and observers. It might be helpful to have a volunteer stationed at each window behind the scenes to be on call to help the performance artist with space-related issues as may be needed and to assure that persons do not

Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/26/theater/new-york-theater-windows-art.html>



Process *continued*

enter the vacant storefront. Volunteer recruitment should occur approximately eight weeks prior to the event with a training and orientation one to two weeks prior. Volunteers can also assist with metrics and documentation activities.

Post-Publicity

Following an event, it is important to publicize the success of Windows Alive and highlight the participating artists, sponsors, and memorable moments. News releases and photos to local media outlets should be planned for immediately following Windows Alive, as well as mid-stream if Windows Alive is a multi-day event. Posting on social media – Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter – during and after Windows Alive should be undertaken.

Evaluation

Following the Windows Alive event, it is important to assess the successes and challenges of Windows Alive, and compile a record of what was accomplished. The documentation should include all Windows Alive communications, copies of articles and recordings about Windows Alive; photographs and video of the performances and audiences; list of all participating property owners, venues, artists, and sponsors; a financial summary; and a summary of impacts and benefits. It is also helpful to create a written summary of lessons learned. An online survey can be another useful feedback tool.

Engaging the working committee to respond to two questions: What went well? and What could be done better next time? is often very constructive. This exercise helps build local capacity to undertake Windows Alive, as well as other events, in the future.

Resources

- Temporary use of space: <https://www.lawinsider.com/clause/temporary-space>
- "Event" insurance for each venue/performance: https://www.eventsured.com/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw4eaJBhDMARIsANhrQAD5x-4Qygv1GwVFWyilV293T4izM1uwFaYgQg7LIZlkQfsy13v5y0YaAo9eEALw_wcB
- Mass Cultural Council's tool kit on festivals: <https://massculturalcouncil.org/communities/festivals/festivals-toolkit/>
- LRRP Best Practice: Windows Before Stores
- LRRP Best Practice: Supporting Entrepreneurs and Commercial Landlords with Pop-Up Business Activations

Windows Alive

Window Assessment Form

Address: _____
Property Owner: _____
Phone Number: _____ office
_____ mobile
Email: _____
Alternative Contact: _____
Cell: _____ Email: _____
Emergency Contact: _____; Phone: _____

of Windows: _____
Size of Window _____

Lighting:

- What type of lighting is available in the window?
 - Overhead
 - Spots
 - Exterior lighting
 - Other _____
 - None

Electrical Outlets:

- What is the proximity of the electrical outlet box to the window? _____
 - In the window area (within 48 inches) ground level area
 - In the vicinity of the ceiling in the window area (within 48 inches)
 - Within 6 feet of window area
 - Within 8 feet of window area
 - Beyond 8 feet of window area. Specify Distance _____
- How many outlets?
- Type of outlets? 2-prong; 3-prong; 110volts; 220 volts
- Does the storefront have a fuse box or circuit breaker box?
- Where is the fuse box or circuit breaker box?

Window Access and Size of Performance Area:

- Window area is on ground level with the floor plane of the store
 - How large is the performance and/or display area in the front of window? Specify dimensions and total SF
- Window area has a platform display area above the floor plane of the store.
 - Height above the floor _____
 - Steps, if any _____
 - Size of platform/window display area
- Is there a backdrop or wall between the window and the store area?
 - Yes

Windows Alive

Window Assessment Form *continued*

- No
- Describe _____

Existing Conditions:

- Cleanliness
 - Windows _____
 - Window/display area _____
 - Vacant Store Area _____

Describe and include a photo:

Occupancy Certificate

- Does the building have a Certificate of Occupancy?
- Can a temporary occupancy certificate be obtained for temporary use?

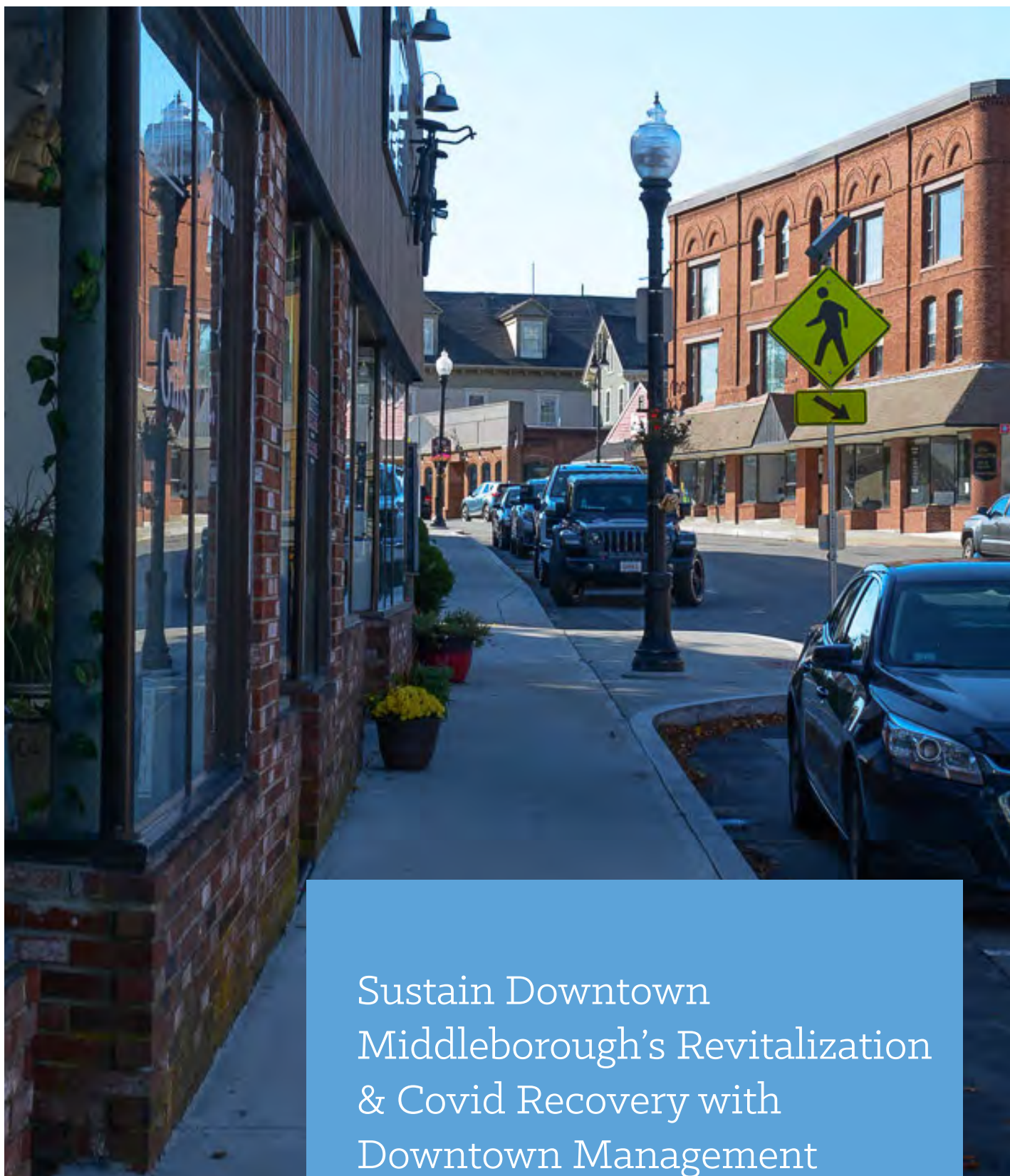
Sound:

What provisions if any is there to convey sounds to an exterior audience?

Bathroom Access:

- Yes
- No
- Where _____

Other Observations and Comments:



Sustain Downtown
Middleborough's Revitalization
& Covid Recovery with
Downtown Management

Sustain Downtown Middleborough's Revitalization & Covid Recovery with Downtown Management



Admin Capacity

<p>Origin</p>	<p>The need for additional help and support has been mentioned by several downtown organizations, including the Middleborough Downtown Improvement Committee. Project Champions: Middleborough Community & Economic Development Director Janis Akerstrom working with the Downtown Improvement Committee</p>
<p>Location/Census Tract</p>	<p>Downtown Middleborough Downtown Middleborough is located in Census Tracts 5423.01 and Census Tract 5423.02, Plymouth County, MA (2020 Decennial tracts).</p>
<p>Budget & Sources of Funding</p>	<p>Budget: Preliminary estimate \$10,000 plus staff support and engagement.</p> <p>When it is decided to advance a proposal for formation of a Business Improvement District, additional resources will likely be needed for developing and printing materials, postage and technical assistance. This could range from \$15,000 to \$50,000.</p> <p>Funding Sources: MDI – Mass Downtown Initiative grant American Rescue Plan Act possibly MassDevelopment Private Foundations</p>
<p>Timeframe</p>	<p>Strategy and Approach for BID or other strategy to increase administrative capacity for Downtown Middleborough: initiate within 6 to 8 months. Creation of a BID District: 18 to 20+ months or sooner for a district this size.</p>
<p>Risks</p>	<p>Political risks. Property owner, business owner, community stakeholders and civic leadership is required to successfully organize a Business Improvement District.</p> <p>This project is in essence a "pre-development" phase to explore the viability in the current environment for formation of a BID or other management entity to increase capacity and staffing resources for Downtown Middleborough. As a consequence, it is a low risk project to begin assessing options.</p>
<p>Key Performance Indicators</p>	<p>Greater understanding of what a BID is and how BIDs can support and advance revitalization, business recruitment and filling vacancies in Downtown Middleborough. Development of a strategy to approach formation of a BID or other downtown management entity embraced by the Middleborough Downtown Improvement Committee and other key stakeholders.</p>
<p>Partners & Resources</p>	<p>Town of Middleborough Downtown Improvement Committee Middleborough on the Move Business owners' working group</p>

Diagnostic/ COVID-19 Impacts

In the LRRP Business Survey 50% of respondents indicated that a District Management Entity was Important and another 4% indicated a District Management Entity was Very Important for a total response of 54%

During interviews and discussions with Middleborough residents and businesses, the need for staffing and support for Downtown was mentioned several times. Volunteers feel lack they have limited energy and cannot sustain special events that have drawn people to Downtown. The pandemic has exhausted small business owners and volunteers.

The COVID pandemic significantly impacted downtown businesses. Business surveys have verified that downtown small businesses, dining, cultural attractions, residential developments, and tourist destinations experienced loss of employment, revenue, customer base and foot traffic. Downtowns with active downtown organizations were able to pivot and respond to this crisis to help their small businesses weather the storm. Many downtowns have realized that a sustainable district management entity is positioned to help downtowns recover from COVID and prepare for the future.

In Middleborough, there is interest in establishing a Business Improvement District. The LRRP Project is an opportunity to launch this effort with the support of the Town and a group of downtown stakeholders and interested partners. There are currently several volunteer organizations focused on downtown Middleborough, each targeting specific activities and stakeholders. The Middleborough on the Move group produces events and festivals, a new merchants association is forming to create retail promotions, and a Downtown Improvement Committee has been formed by the Town manager for address overarching downtown economic development strategies. These groups are all staffed by volunteers and have limited administrative and organization capacity. Collectively, however, they are enthusiastic supporters of the downtown. These volunteer-based efforts are difficult to sustain, and the Town and business community would like to explore a different organizational model to offer supplemental services and support businesses in COVID recovery in Middleborough and forge collaborations and partnerships with other groups. Additionally, the Town is preparing to launch a marketing and branding program that will require a centralized management organization to execute.

The Town has begun to introduce the concept of forming a BID. The Middleborough BID would provide the organizational infrastructure to coordinate, collaborate and leverage the volunteer work already underway in Middleborough, assist in executing branding recommendations and LRRP projects for downtown Middleborough.

Action Items

- Relationship Building
- Launching the BID Effort
- Develop the Value Proposition/ Communication Tools
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Create a Community Outreach and Engagement Strategy
- Identify Downtown Priorities
- Confirming the BID Model
- Secure Resources for Sustainability

Relationship Building. The right people, personalities and political support need to align to form a BID. These relationships plant the seeds for successfully launching the effort and its successful execution. The Town should make a deliberate effort to continue to develop relationships with key individuals in stakeholder organizations to build trust and create a common goal and shared vision of executing the BID effort and other strategies for the downtown.

Getting Started. There is the opportunity to use the new Branding project and the LRRP recommendation to form a BID as the launching point for additional stakeholder engagement. The Town may take the role through its Downtown Improvement Committee to convene volunteer organizations, new merchant group, property owners, tenants, arts organizations, and other downtown stakeholders to initiate the conversation.

Develop the Value Proposition/Communication. It will be essential to develop the value proposition for investing human capital and the financial resources into a BID and communicate to the Town and private stakeholders the impact of their investment. The long- term goal of a BID is to build a destination that is attractive to potential developers, businesses, residents, and visitors. In the near term, A BID can play an important role in COVID recovery. A successful BID can help achieve increased property values, improved sales and meals taxes, stronger tenancy, a vibrant cultural scene, and create a branded destination where people want to shop, locate a business, dine, and live. A well-managed and sustainable BID will undertake strategic supplemental programs and services that will help achieve that goal. Key talking points include:

- Ability to collectively and cost effectively purchase priority supplemental programs and services to achieve impact /scale
- Provide a unified voice / "seat at the table" for district priorities

Action Items *continued*

- Professional management and staff dedicated to implementing programs and services in the district.
- Produce and execute cultural and event programming
- Market and brand the downtown
- Ability to respond to crisis - COVID
- Support new and existing businesses
- Leverage resources and build partnerships and collaborations

Stakeholder Engagement/ Leadership and Partnerships. Launching the organizing efforts to form a BID in Middleborough should be an intentionally inclusive process that welcomes new as well as long term property and business owners, volunteer organizations, Town, arts community, entrepreneurs, and other key downtown stakeholders to develop the organizational and leadership infrastructure to form a BID. The goal of this effort would be to form a strong, diverse, and inclusive steering committee to guide the development of a BID in Middleborough, identify key champions and build a solid coalition around the concept. The Town may convene this effort but should quickly transition to a private sector led working steering committee with strong public sector support. The clear demonstration of a public / private partnership will help move this effort forward.

Create a Community Outreach and Engagement Strategy. The Steering Committee should undertake efforts to engage media, businesses, property owners, nonprofits, cultural organizations, visitor attractions, volunteer groups, and interested residents to continue

to identify and refine needs and priorities for the downtown. This work will be used to inform the BID Improvement Plan. Additionally, these outreach efforts provide the opportunity to educate stakeholders on the BID model, identify needs and opportunities as well as potential leadership. Community engagement can happen in a variety of ways including:

- Community Forums - fun, engaging and informational visioning sessions held in accessible, approachable locations such as a local business, restaurant, park, libraries, or community gathering space.
- Peer Learning Panels - Invite Executive Directors from BIDs in similar communities to present on their work and impacts of their organizations.
- Visits to other communities with BIDs to see programs in action.
- Survey needs and priorities from a broad cross section of downtown stakeholders and residents.
- Focus groups with key interest groups
- Websites/social media.

Q&A

THE PLAN DISTRICT SERVICES

CULTURAL PLACEMAKING

MARKETING

PARKING/INFRASTRUCTURE

ADVOCACY/POLICY/ADMINISTRATION

WHAT WILL IT COST? PROPERTY OWNERS?

- Cultural Programming: 40%
- Marketing/Arts/Culture: 25%
- Public Safety: 15%

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The plan developed by Hudson business and property owners to help establish and secure support for a Business Improvement District.

Action Items *continued*

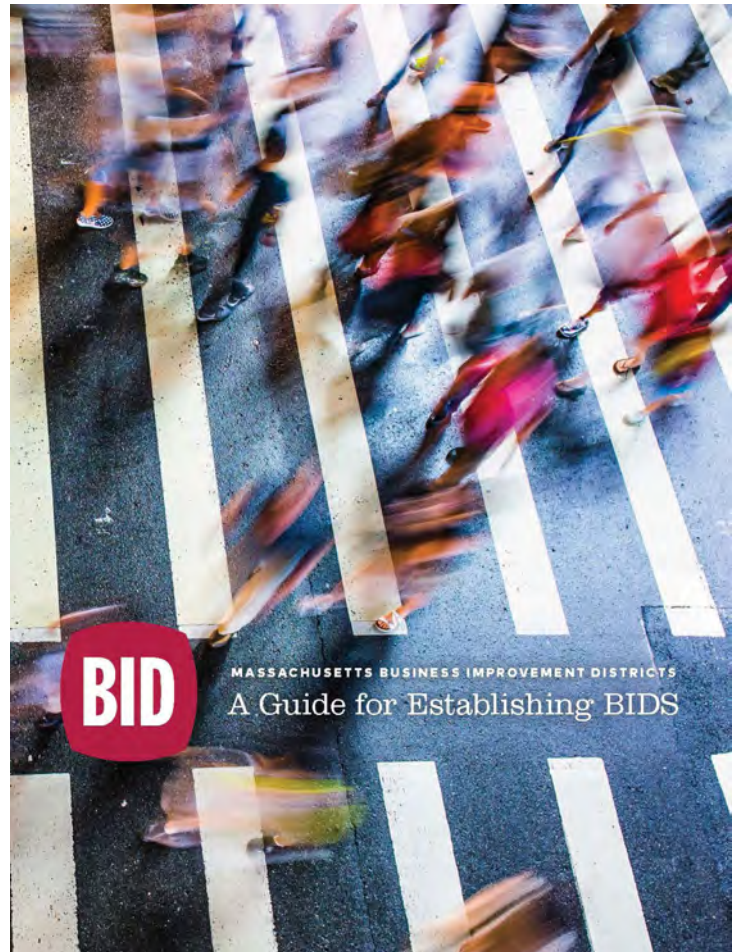
Confirming BID Organizational Model. Once organizers have established the downtown priorities/ proposed supplemental programs and budget, it will be important to confirm that there is consensus that a BID is appropriate for Middleborough. Organizers should seek support letters / statements from key stakeholders like Middleborough on the Move, merchants' association, Downtown Improvement Committee, Chamber, volunteer organizations and other important groups.

Resources for Startup and Sustainability. Seed money is required to start a BID. Sources include TA through the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative, MassDevelopment Real Estate Technical Assistance Program, or ARPA funds (if the development of the organization is tied to implementing COVID recovery activities). Additionally, local Institutions, foundations and key stakeholders/individual contributors may be sources for seed money to launch an effort to form a BID. Organizers should develop a realistic budget, and a variety of revenue opportunities for the organization. In addition to BID fees, additional revenue sources may include sponsorships, event revenue, grants or contracts, foundations, memberships, and individual giving. If the Municipality approves the formation of a BID, property owners will reauthorize the organization every 5 years.

Process

The following process is recommended to build support for a BID in Middleborough.

- Create property owner and business databases using information provided by the Town as the official property owner database for the BID process
- Define proposed boundaries
- Confirm threshold requirements for forming a BID are met.
- Create a downtown partnership with Town, Downtown Improvement Committee, Middleborough on the Move, merchants' association, key property owners, developers, key businesses, cultural and tourist destinations, residential groups, nonprofit, volunteer organizations, and chamber of commerce to launch the effort.
- Create list of potential steering committee members for the BID formation process.



DHCD has developed a how-to handbook for Downtowns to use in setting up a Business Improvement District.

Process *continued*

- Form a broad-based advisory committee to provide input and feedback.
- Secure seed funding for TA through Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (now part of the One Stop), Mass Development Real Estate TA program, ARPA, Foundations and other stakeholders.
- Create community outreach events, widely distribute surveys, convene sector specific focus groups, and other engagement tools to develop program priorities.
- Hold Community forums on BID model.
- One on one conversations with stakeholders to secure support and engagement in process.
- Consensus building with stakeholders on BID model /programming /budget/fee structure
- Consider executing a demonstration project that could "show" potential programs and services provided to the downtown through a BID. Potential funding may be available through MassDevelopment Commonwealth Places or MA Urban Agenda program.
- Develop the BID Petition components.
- Develop MOU with Town for support of BID.
- Basic outline of BID signature campaign and legislative approval requirements:
- Undertake a petition process under direction of the steering committee to secure support of 60% of property owners representing, 51% of the assessed valuation of the district.

The petition will include:

- › Map and legal description of BID boundaries,
- › BID improvement Plan – programs and services
- › Fee Structure
- › Budget
- › Hardship Provisions
- › ID Management
- › Property owner signatures of support



Informational materials that Central Square used to create a Business Improvement District.

Process

- Formal Local Legislative Approval - Public hearing and formal vote by Select Board to establish the BID.
- Complete 501c3 and Articles of Organization filings
- Approval of bylaws
- Establishment of a Board of Directors
- Hire Staff
- Prepare RFPs and secure contracted services as needed
- Continue to develop additional revenue to fund programs and supplemental services and leverage BID fees through grants, sponsorships, events, and other collaborations and partnerships.
- Reauthorization by property owners every 5 years.

Additional Resources

- How to Form a BID In Massachusetts: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2020-revised-business-improvement-district-manual/download>
- Best practice rubric -Forming a BID in Hudson
- Case Studies:
 - › https://www.massdevelopment.com/assets/what-we-offer/BID/HowToCreateABID_2020_CaseStudy_Hudson.pdf
 - › https://www.massdevelopment.com/assets/what-we-offer/BID/HowToCreateABID_2020_CaseStudy_CentralSquare.pdf
 - › https://www.massdevelopment.com/assets/what-we-offer/BID/HowToCreateABID_2020_CaseStudy_Hyannis.pdf
 - › BIDs in Massachusetts: Hyannis, Worcester, Hudson, Springfield, Boston, Central Square Cambridge, Taunton, Amherst
- Commonwealth Places: <https://www.massdevelopment.com/what-we-offer/real-estate-services/commonwealth-places/>
- Massachusetts Downtown Initiative: <https://www.mass.gov/services-details/massachusetts-downtown-initiative-mdi>

Best Practices



Integrate Brand and Art into your Wayfinding System

Provided by SME Consultant

Selbert Perkins Design

Location

Worcester, MA



Integrate Brand and Art into your Wayfinding System



Provided by SME Consultant

Selbert Perkins Design

Location

Worcester, MA

Origin	City of Worcester, MA
Budget	 High Budget (\$200k+) - with full build-out
Timeframe	 Medium Term (5-10 years)
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Ownership and longevity of brand/system, amount of development/investment
Partners & Resources	Mayors, City Planning Departments, Marketing & Communications Departments
Diagnostic	<p>SPD created a unified brand identity and wayfinding master plan for the City of Worcester, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• City-wide Logo• District Identity• Storytelling and Interpretive Elements• Signage Design• Art Opportunities <p>SPD collaborated with the project team to increase awareness and tourism, and to improve the overall image of the City by creating an iconic brand and functional wayfinding system for visitors and residents.</p>

Diagnostic (continued)

As a large City, it was important to create consistency but also provide distinctions between districts to help people navigate and understand the unique character and stories of each area.

The brand reflects the colors of each district and creates a scalable kit-of-parts still in use some 15 years later. Worcester implemented a sampling of signs and landmarks to raise capital for the larger system, which is being installed now.

Action Item

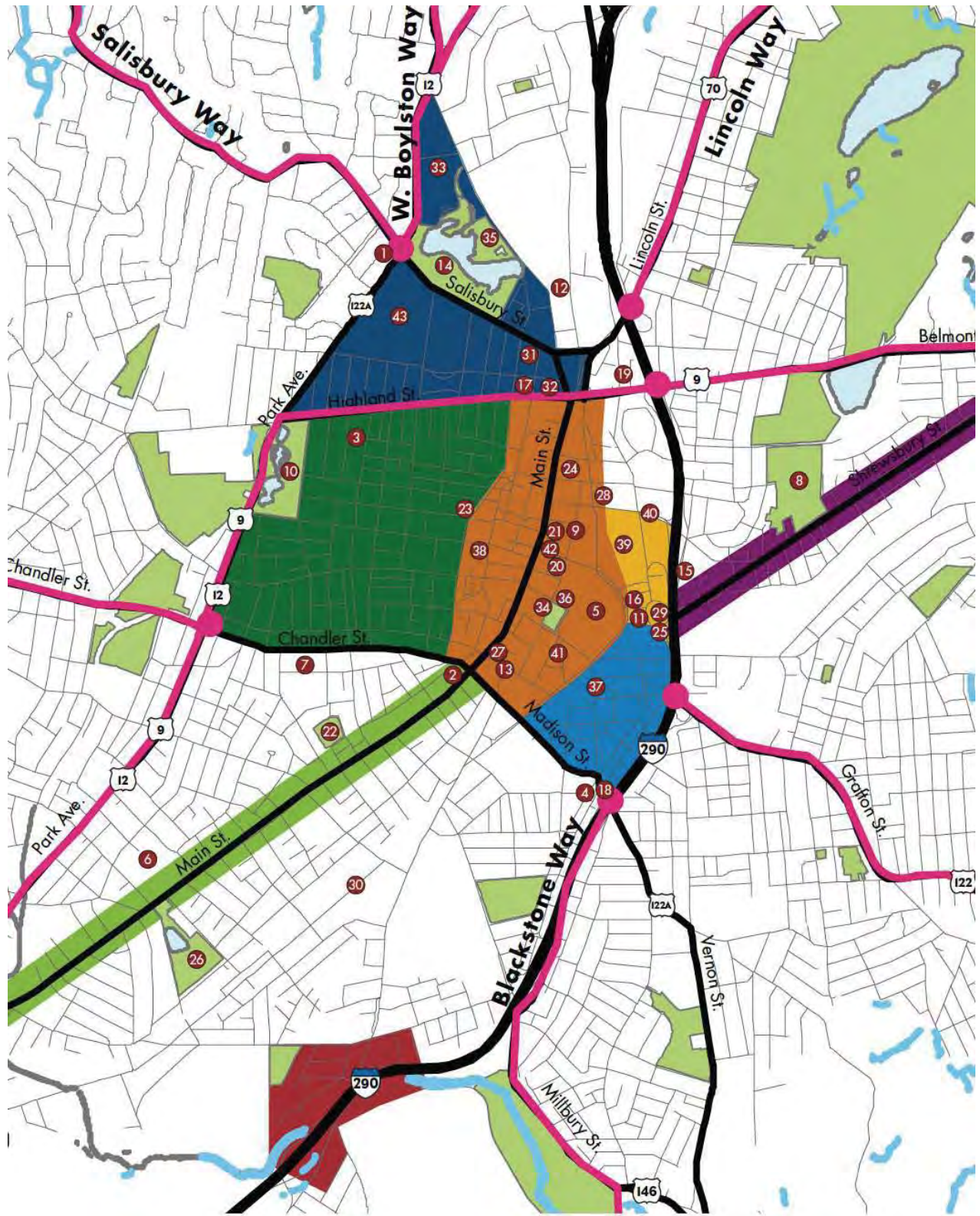
As this project continues to roll out it will be important to look at it in light of current development, updating locations and messages as-needed.

Things to consider adding in the future:

- Dynamic signage
- Walking distances
- Sculptural landmarks
- Integrated elements to reinforce District stories
- Revenue generation

Process

- Understand who the stakeholders and decision-makers will be.
- Visit site to audit of existing conditions.
- Conduct a Wayfinding Analysis including; multi-modal circulation, main decision points, key destinations, etc.
- Identify opportunities for art/placemaking
- Research the history of the place, uncover stories that might inspire the design.
- Engage with stakeholders and the public to understand needs and perceptions. If possible, create a survey to get feedback from a larger cross-section of people.
- Develop project goals and a positioning statement to guide design efforts.
- Design concepts for brand and wayfinding elements.
- Develop the preferred design into a family of sign types with materials, colors, etc.
- Provide a sign location plan and message schedule.
- Create Design Intent drawings and a bid document to solicit pricing from fabricators
- Update the budget and project schedule
- Assist with communication between the fabricator and municipality.
- Provide Construction Administration, Site Visits, and Punch List as-needed.
- Celebrate!



Districts and Wayfinding analysis



Determining a District Management Model for Downtown Reading



Provided by SME Consultant

Ann McFarland Burke , Downtown Consultant

Location

Reading, MA

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

Diagnostic

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

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

Action Item

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

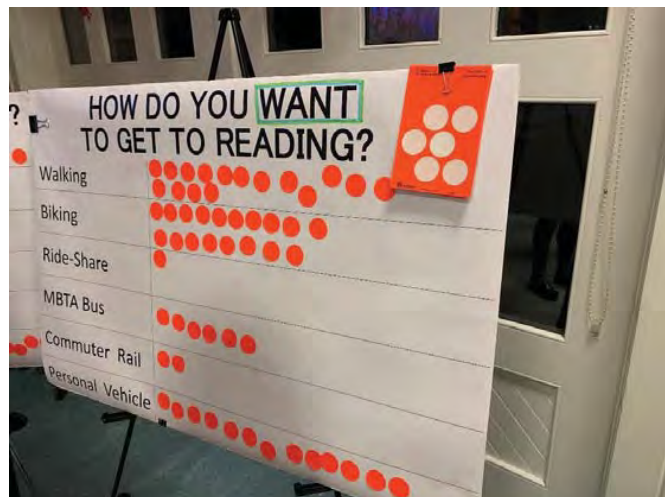
- Identification of staff and financial resources
- Creating a Community Outreach and Engagement Strategy
- Research to identify community priorities / recommendations
- Peer learning from other communities
- Consensus building among stakeholders
- Transition of leadership to private sector

Process

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

Process (Continued)

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



Stakeholder engagement process



Formation of a Business Improvement District in Hudson, MA



Provided by SME Consultant

Ann McFarland Burke, Downtown Consultant

Location

Hudson, MA

Origin	Downtown Hudson Business Association, Town of Hudson, MA
Budget	 MDI Grant for Technical Assistance. Town staff provided support to Steering committee.
Timeframe	 Short term (<5 years). Planning, Signature campaign and Initiation took approximately 2 years
Risk	 Medium Risk – property owner, business and political support required for success.
Key Performance Indicators	Formal vote by Board of Selectmen to formally establish the BID, corporate and tax filings completed, staffing and initiation of services
Partners & Resources	Hudson Planning Dept, Property Owner Steering Committee, MDI, donated legal, graphic design

Diagnostic

The Hudson BID was formed to capitalize on an emerging renaissance of downtown and sustain positive economic growth. New activities, cultural events and entrepreneurs had begun the positive momentum for the downtown and stakeholders believed a BID would help ensure sustainable success. The BID created a way for downtown Hudson to implement a BID Improvement Plan that included wayfinding, enhanced and well-managed parking, infrastructure improvements, marketing and event coordination. The BID services were designed to help the downtown continue to grow and thrive as a destination to shop, work, live and visit.

Hudson had an engaged business community, as well as property owner and town administration support for the effort.

The strong steering committee and town support resulted in overwhelming buy-in of property owners (80%) and the unanimous vote by the Board of Selectmen to approve the BID.

Action Item

To form a BID, a community must have the support of 60% of the property owners representing 51% of the assessed within the proposed district. Hudson is a small BID with 120 parcels in the district.

The Downtown Hudson Business Association in partnership with the Town of Hudson spearheaded activities to form a BID and execute the step-by-step process to successfully create a BID in Hudson. This included:

- Identification of staff and financial resources
- Establishment of a strong property owner based steering committee
- Creation of a property owner outreach strategy
- Consensus among stakeholders on program priorities, fee structure, boundaries and budget
- Execution of the petition process and formal approval by Board of Selectmen
- Initialization of BID services

Process

Forming a Business Improvement District is a four phase project. Resources to help a community organize and execute the strategies and legislative authorization process can be found in these publications :

[How To Form a BID in MA-](http://www.mass.gov/MDI) Manual available at www.mass.gov/MDI

BID Case Studies available at www.massdevelopment.com

Hudson began their BID formation process scratch.. A working committee that included stakeholder property owners and planning staff undertook the following steps to successfully build a BID in Hudson.

[BID Case](#)

Process continued

PHASE 4 - INITIATE OPERATIONS

1. Form Bylaws and Articles of Organization.
2. Establish the initial Board of Directors.
3. Apply for nonprofit status.
4. Communicate with members.
5. Hire staff.
6. Select vendors.
7. Formally launch services.

Early Highlights

A Seat at the Table / Partnership with the Town of Hudson- The BID provides a unified voice and effective advocacy for downtown businesses and property owners.

- **Enhanced Downtown Appearance** - Implemented wayfinding signage, banners, hanging baskets, holiday lighting, benches and other physical enhancements to the district to create a more appealing experience for the visitors to downtown Hudson.

- **Rotary Gateway** - The BID has been active in the design, implementation and communication to property owners and tenants on the Gateway rotary project. These efforts help mitigate the disruption caused by construction by ensuring timely communication and execution of the project.

- **Business Support** - Actively working with property owners to retain and recruit tenants. Vacancy rates in the BID fell from 11% to 5% since its inception in 2017. Provided free TA on PPP and other financial relief programs during Covid.

- **Creating Collaborations** - Formed new collaborations with groups and organizations that were previously untapped resources.

The Legislative Authorization Process





Photo Courtesy of www.chashama.org

Supporting Entrepreneurs and Commercial Landlords with Pop Up Business Activations



TENANT
MIX

Provided by SME Consultant

Jeanette G. Nigro, Perch Advisors

Location

Various Locations ([New York City]

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

Process

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



Windows Before Stores



PRIVATE
REALM

Provided by SME Consultant

Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Location

Great Barrington, MA

<p>Origin</p>	<p>Town of Great Barrington, Great Barrington Cultural District, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission</p>
<p>Budget</p>	<p> The project has a proposed budget of \$20,000 to \$35,000. The budget will be used to pay 14 artists (\$1K each) and building owners (\$1K each @ 7 sites). Money will also be applied toward stipends for docents (\$500 for 7), public relations/publicity, and a website. Funds will be sought from MCC, local philanthropies that support the arts, youth, and economic development projects, and in-kind donations from larger businesses, including community leaders.</p>
<p>Timeframe</p>	<p> Strategic Planning: 2-3 months; Artist Solicitation: 1 month; Storefront Design/Marketing: 1-2 months; Implementation: 2 months</p>
<p>Risk</p>	<p> Owner interest/willingness to participate; Legal and building code barriers and costs; Public fatigue and lower engagement post-COVID-19.</p>
<p>Key Performance Indicators</p>	<p>The project will improve public perceptions of downtown Great Barrington as a place to do business. The project will highlight the town's commitment to economic and creative revitalization and increase public interest in supporting a downtown creative economy. The project will increase interest in small businesses establishing a foothold in Great Barrington for longer-term tenancy.</p>
<p>Partners & Resources</p>	<p>Public: Town of Great Barrington; Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District; Nonprofit: Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce; Local arts organization; Private: Bard College at Simon's Rock, artists, building owners, neighboring retail and restaurant tenants.</p>

Diagnostic

Challenges facing the project include a depressed commercial landscape in Great Barrington due to COVID-19-induced business closures. There are currently over 10 vacant stores downtown following the pandemic out of 150 businesses overall.

In one BRPC-LRRP survey, for example, 74% of respondents reported earning less revenue in 2020 than in 2019 and 61% stated they had to reduce their business' hours; 57% reported a reduction in foot traffic. Parking regulations are frequently cited as an obstacle to business growth, as are a lack of public amenities such as bathrooms.

Many businesses in downtown Great Barrington are small, with over half having less than 10 employees. Businesses also report needing help with online sales and marketing. Business owners say they would like more cultural events and activities to help draw people downtown.

Working in the area's favor is the presence of a cultural district led by an active stakeholder group that includes government, business, and arts partners. The downtown underwent a major renovation in 2011 that dramatically improved accessibility and appearance. The downtown has a strong visual presence and includes buildings on the National Register of Historic Places (e.g., Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center). In March 2021, *Boston Magazine* rated Great Barrington as one of its top places to live in the state.



Available storefront in Great Barrington

Action Items

Windows to Stores will engage four stakeholders -- local government, building owners, visual arts organizations and artists, and community members -- to activate vacant stores by employing local artists to create dynamic sculptural and movement-oriented pieces inside windows that the public can view from the street. Artwork will be highlighted in "Opening Night" evenings. Following increased interest in spaces, potential commercial tenants can request access to stores from business owners to evaluate their fit for commercial tenancy.

Key actions for the project include identifying willing building owners; having local government serve as a matchmaker between building owners and visual arts organizations and artists; and streamlining legal, zoning, and/or regulatory challenges that hinder short-term activation (e.g., insurance, certificate of occupancy).

Community members will be invited to play a central role in the project to ensure local buy-in. As an example, high-school youth and college students will be provided stipends to serve on art selection committees and act as docents in front of store windows.

Process

- Identify a dedicated and diverse group of partners who are committed to lead the project from start to finish. We will recruit people who are known in the community and have earned public trust and put out a call to newcomers and under-served audiences who can bring an outside perspective to the project's implementation.
- Outline the resources (funding, knowledge, relationships) needed to succeed and determine how these items will be acquired. We will seek funding through grants and fundraising from local sponsors and patrons. Funding will be used to support artists and compensate building owners, pay stipends to youth docents, and market and promote the project.
- Secure building owner participation through an outreach campaign that includes showcasing examples of successful window-to-store projects in other towns of similar scale. We will focus outreach on vacant stores located in a walkable radius to create a sense of momentum and energy in the downtown corridor.
- If building owners need to address interior or exterior code issues to qualify, we will work with them to streamline the permit and approval process and provide incentives in the form of grants or low-interest loans in partnership with local lenders where possible. We will also seek to negotiate reduced pricing from private construction and trade companies to assist with improvements in exchange for publicity.
- Organize a public call for art through a public relations, press, and social media campaign. We will select artists and artwork reflective of the community's identity and diversity. Youth will be involved in the selection process. Art that showcases community pride will take precedence.
- Work with a local college to create a social media campaign for the project and reward community-generated social media postings during the project in the form of gifts from local businesses. Have high-school and college students act as docents during the event. Docents will be asked to take an active role in championing the project, artwork, artist, and building. Docents will be mentored to establish longer-term relationships with the building owner, artist, or tradespeople as part of career exploration.
- Run the window-to-store event over a series of eight weeks during a less-touristed period of the year with displays changed every two weeks. "Opening Nights" will take place each Thursday or Friday with local merchants encouraged to plan promotions to coincide.
- Use "Opening Nights" as opportunities to gather feedback about broader community needs, most importantly to identify gaps in retail and business services.
- After the event, we will hold a partner and public closing conversation to assess impact and decide on next steps for securing new commercial tenants.

Appendix

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

Middleborough

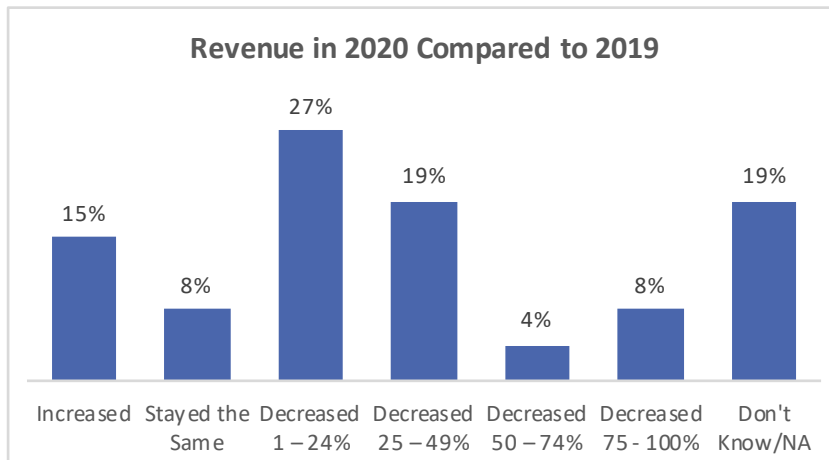
Downtown Middleborough

Responses: 26

Impacts of COVID-19

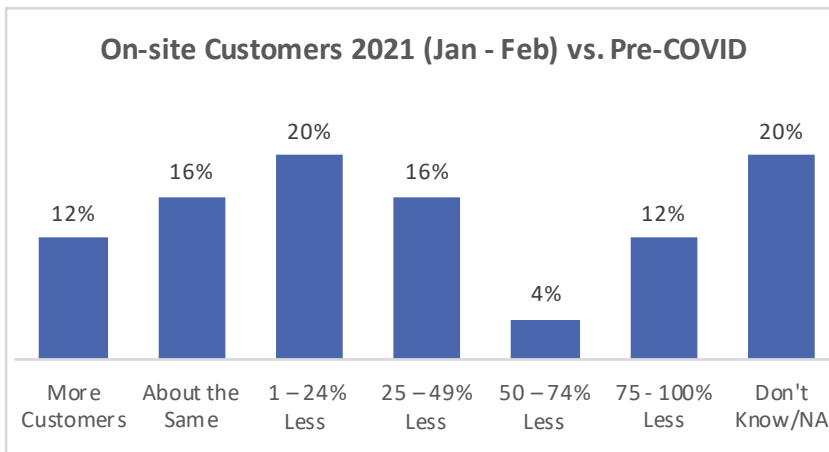
Decline in Business Revenue

58% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019. For 31% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more.



Less Foot Traffic in Commercial Area

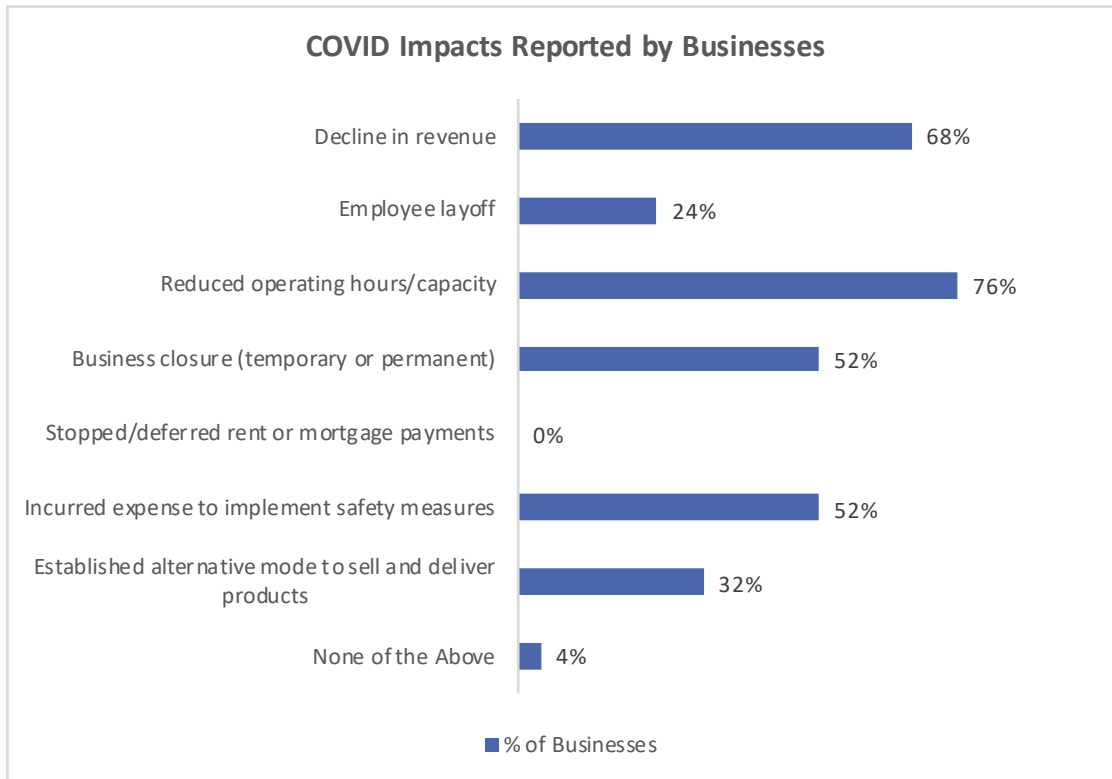
52% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID. 32% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more.



Impacts of COVID-19 (cont'd)

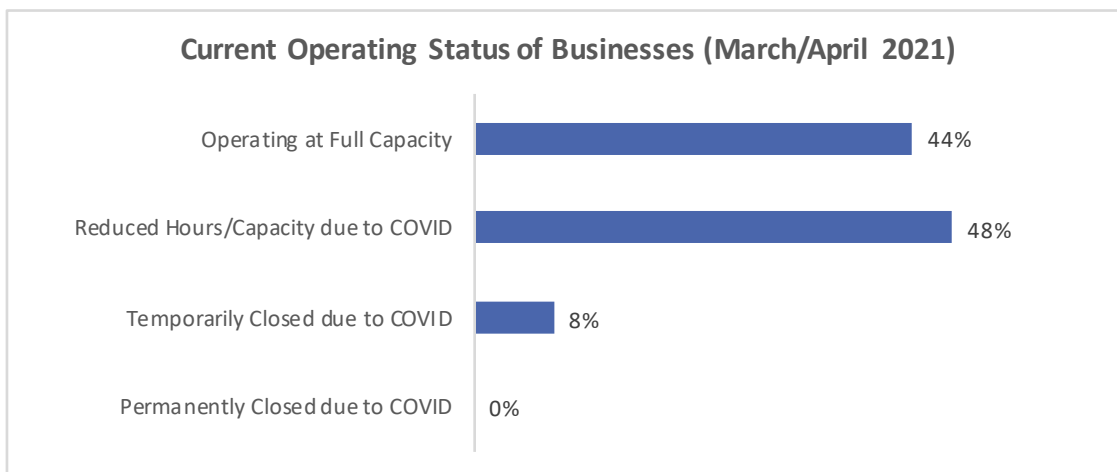
Reported Impacts

96% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID.



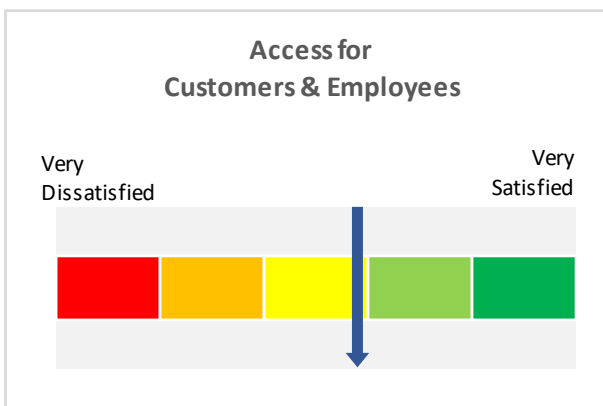
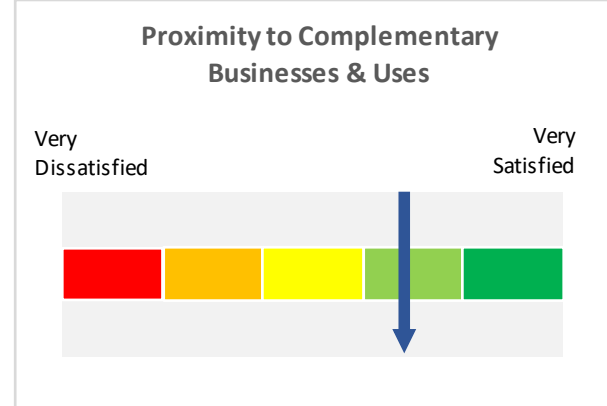
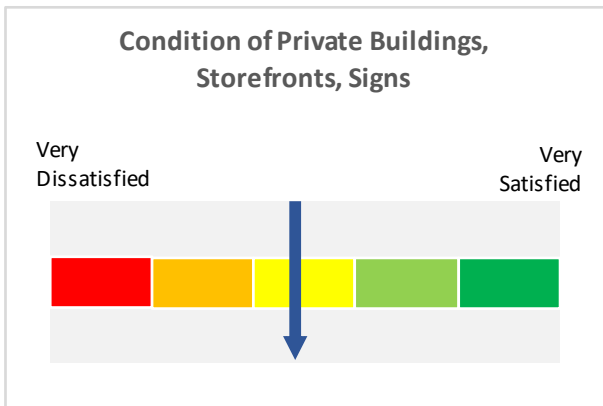
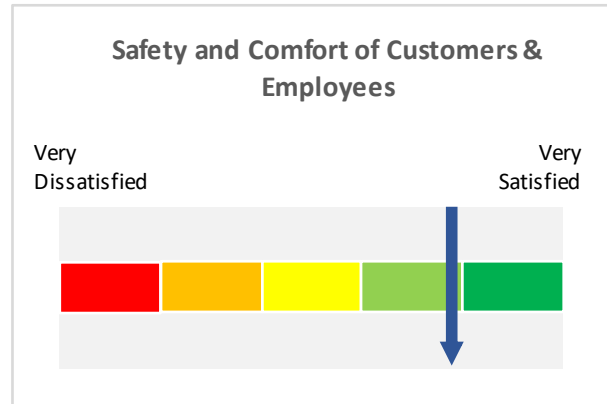
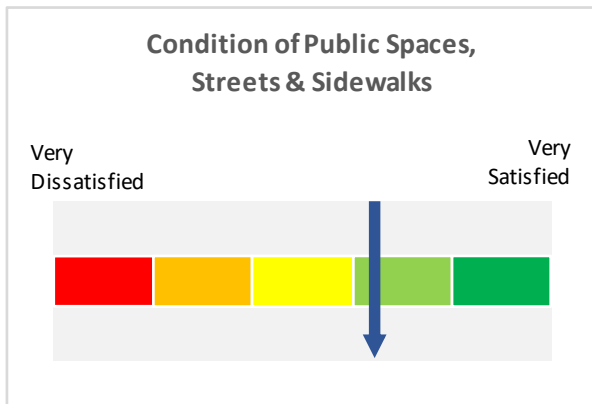
Operating Status

At the time of the survey, 56% of businesses reported they were operating at reduced hours/capacity or closed.



Business Satisfaction with Commercial District

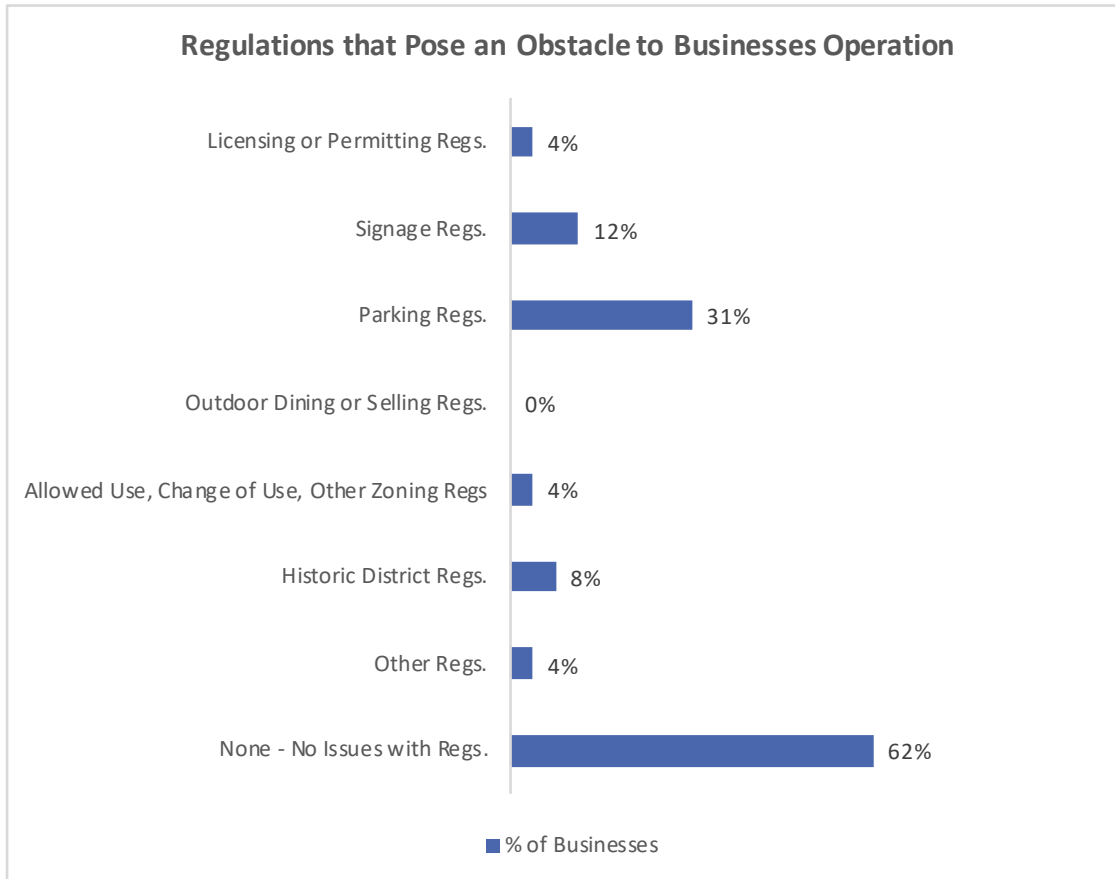
The charts below illustrate the average satisfaction rating among respondents regarding various elements.



Business Satisfaction with Commercial District (cont'd)

Regulatory Environment

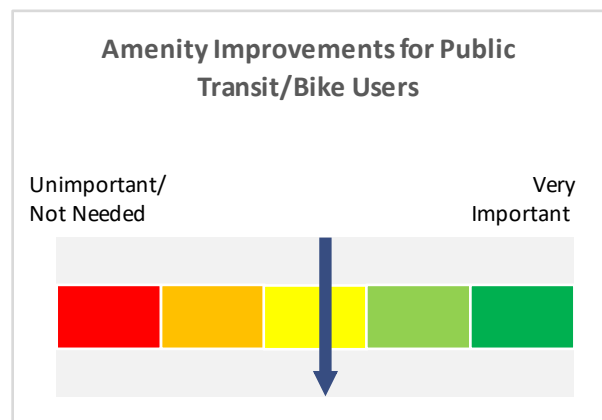
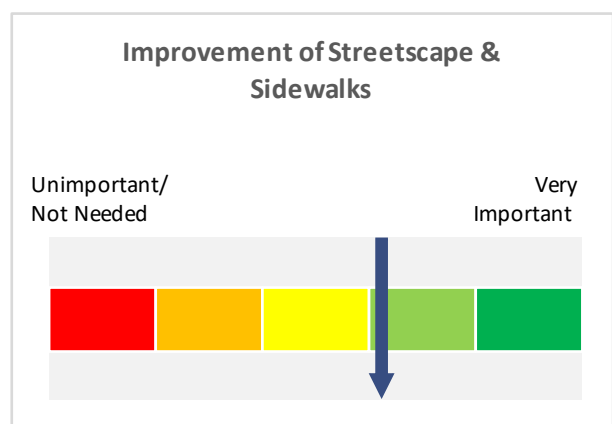
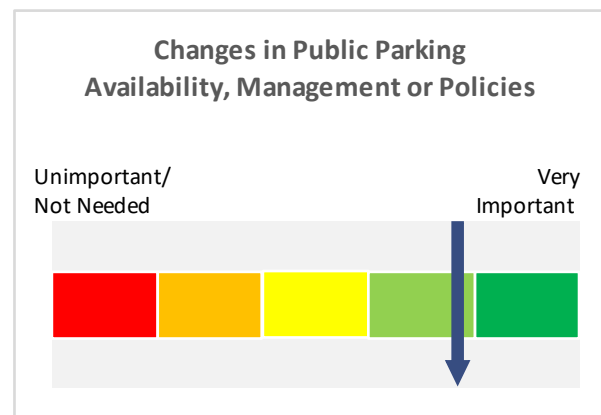
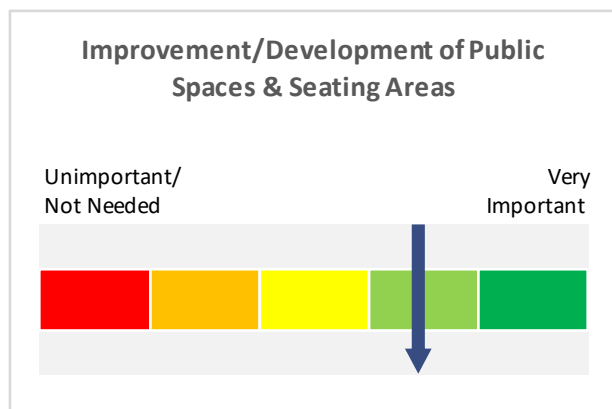
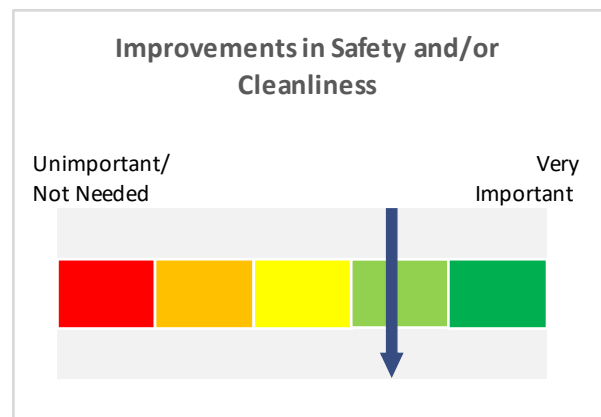
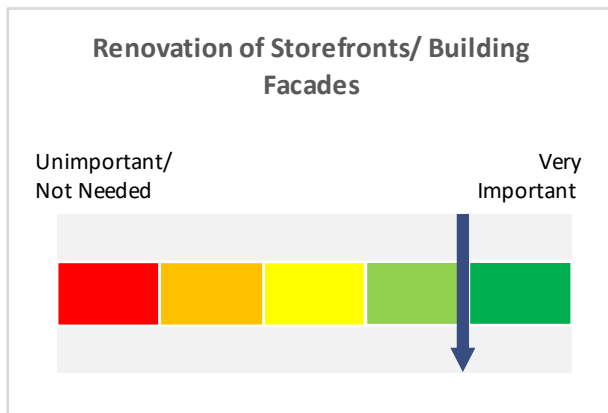
38% of businesses indicated that the regulatory environment poses an obstacle to business operation.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access

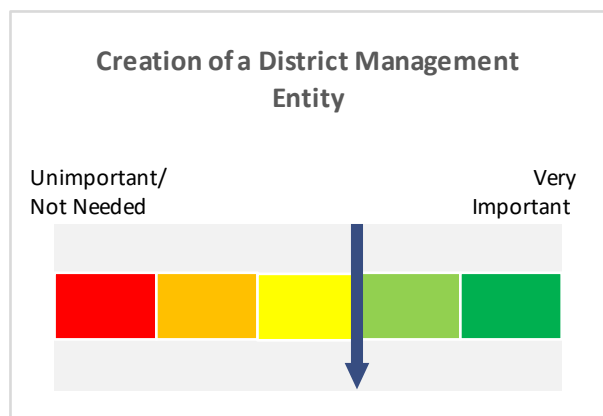
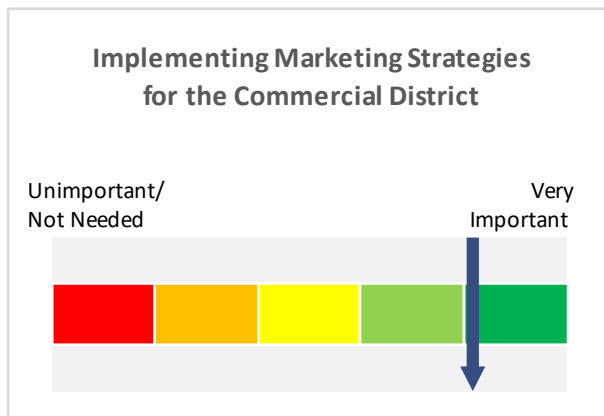
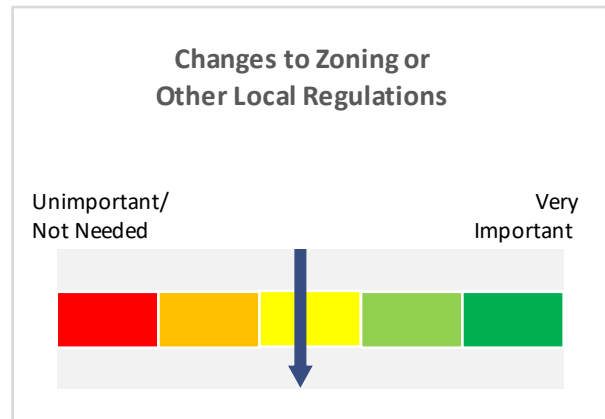
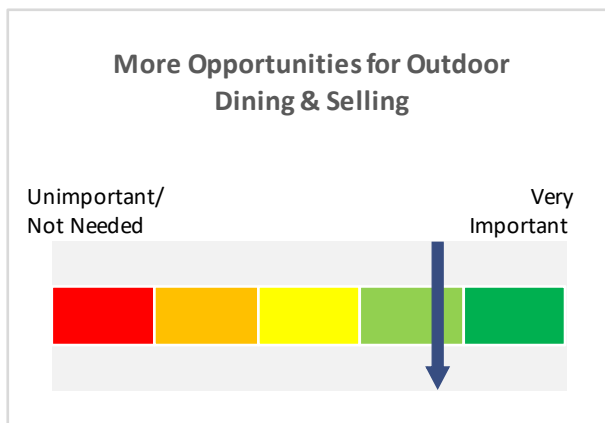
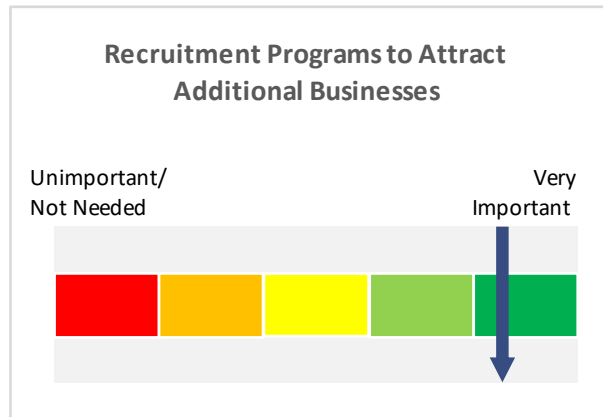
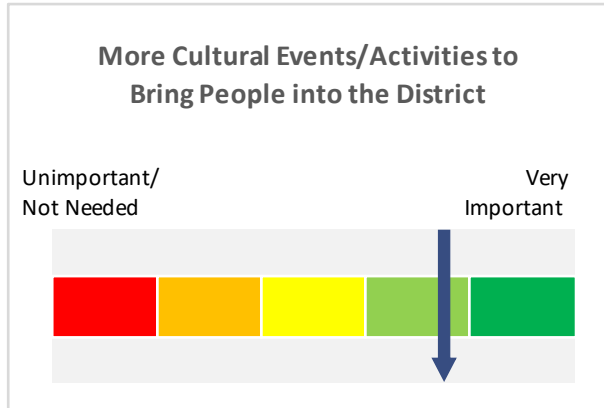
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

Attraction/Retention of Customers and Businesses

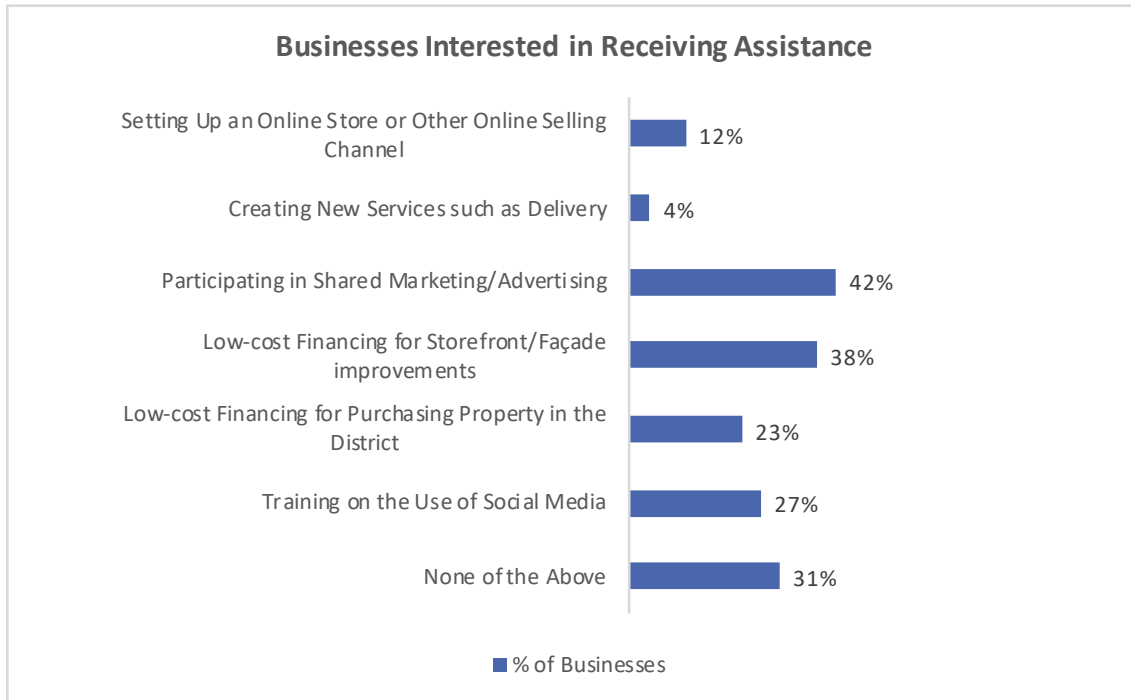
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

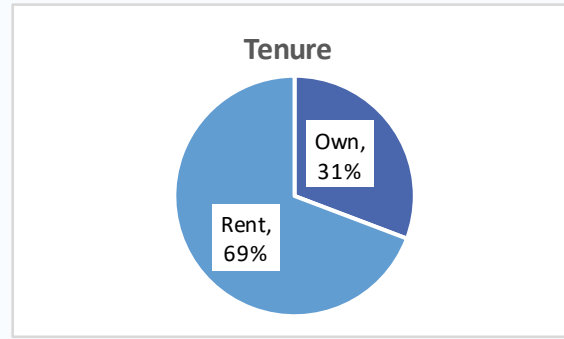
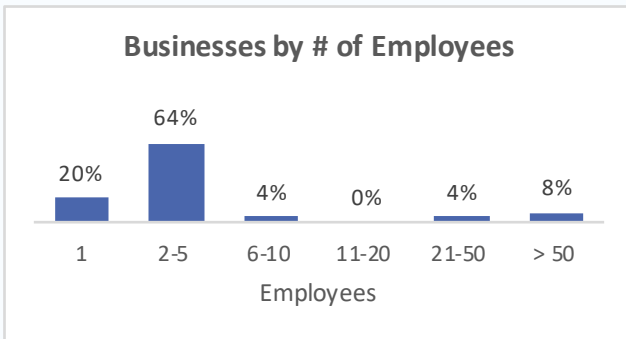
Businesses Support

69% of businesses expressed interest in receiving some kind of assistance.



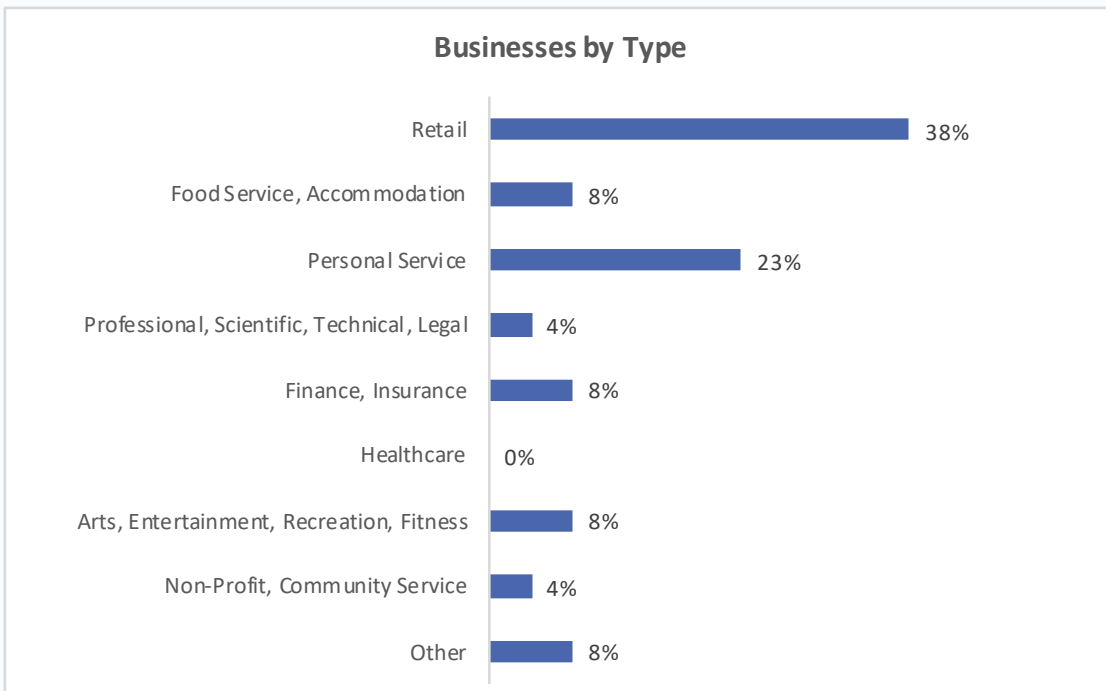
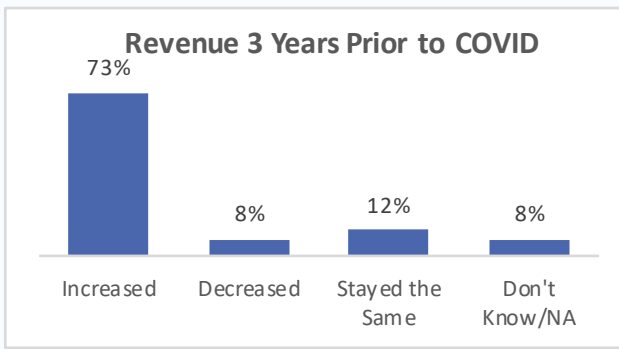
84% of businesses are microenterprises (≤ 5 employees).

69% of businesses rent their space.



Revenue Trend Prior to COVID

73% of businesses reported increase in revenue during the 3 years prior to COVID.



Business Survey Results - Data Tables

Community Where Targeted Downtown or Commercial District is Located

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

Middleborough	26
---------------	----

Business Characteristics & Satisfaction with Commercial Area

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

1	5	20%
2 to 5	16	64%
6 to 10	1	4%
11 to 20	0	0%
21 to 50	1	4%
More than 50	2	8%
Total	25	100%

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

Own	8	31%
Rent	18	69%
Total	26	100%

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

Increased	19	73%
Decreased	2	8%
Stayed about the Same	3	12%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	2	8%
Total	26	100%

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

Retail (NAICS 44-45)	10	38%
Food Service (restaurants, bars), Accommodation (NAICS 72)	2	8%
Personal Service (hair, skin, nails, dry cleaning) (NAICS 81)	6	23%
Professional Scientific, Technical, Legal (NAICS 54)	1	4%
Finance, Insurance (NAICS 52)	2	8%
Healthcare (medical, dental, other health practitioners) (NAICS 62)	0	0%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Fitness (NAICS 71)	2	8%
Non-Profit, Community Services	1	4%
Other	2	8%
Total	26	100%

Condition of public spaces, streets, sidewalks

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	3	12%
Neutral	9	35%
Satisfied	10	38%
Very Satisfied	4	15%
Total	26	100%

Condition of Private Buildings, Facades, Storefronts, Signage

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	11	42%
Neutral	7	27%
Satisfied	7	27%
Very Satisfied	1	4%
Total	26	100%

Access for Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	7	28%
Neutral	6	24%
Satisfied	9	36%
Very Satisfied	3	12%
Total	25	100%

Safety and Comfort of Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	0	0%
Neutral	2	8%
Satisfied	19	73%
Very Satisfied	5	19%
Total	26	100%

Proximity to Complementary Businesses or Uses

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	2	8%
Neutral	8	31%
Satisfied	11	42%
Very Satisfied	5	19%
Total	26	100%

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

Licensing or permitting regulations	1	4%
Signage regulations	3	12%
Parking regulations	8	31%
Outdoor dining or selling regulations	0	0%
Allowed uses, change of use or other zoning regulations	1	4%
Historic District regulations	2	8%
Other regulations (not related to COVID)	1	4%
None - No Issues with regulations	16	62%

Impacts of COVID

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

Decline in revenue	17	68%
Employee layoff	6	24%
Reduced operating hours/capacity	19	76%
Business closure (temporary or permanent)	13	52%
Stopped/deferred rent or mortgage payments	0	0%
Incurred expense to implement safety measures	13	52%
Established alternative mode to sell and deliver products (on-line platforms, delivery, etc.)	8	32%
None of the Above	1	4%

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

Increased compared to 2019	4	15%
Stayed about the same as 2019	2	8%
Decreased 1 – 24% compared to 2019	7	27%
Decreased 25 – 49% compared to 2019	5	19%
Decreased 75 - 100% compared to 2019	1	4%
Decreased 50 – 74% compared to 2019	2	8%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	5	19%
Total	26	100%

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

More customers than before COVID	3	12%
About the same number as before COVID	4	16%
1 – 24% less customers than before COVID	5	20%
25 – 49% less customers than before COVID	4	16%
50 – 74% less customers than before COVID	1	4%
75 – 100% less customers than before COVID	3	12%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	5	20%
Total	25	100%

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

Operating at full capacity	11	44%
Operating at reduced hours/capacity due to COVID	12	48%
Temporarily closed due to COVID	2	8%
Permanently closed due to COVID	0	0%
Total	25	100%

Strategies for Supporting Businesses and Improving the Commercial District

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

Renovation of Storefronts/Building Facades

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	0	0%
Moderately Important	7	27%
Important	8	31%
Very Important	11	42%
Total	26	100%

Improvement/Development of Public Spaces & Seating Areas

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	4%
Of Little Importance or Need	2	8%
Moderately Important	6	24%
Important	9	36%
Very Important	7	28%
Total	25	100%

Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	12%
Of Little Importance or Need	4	15%
Moderately Important	3	12%
Important	9	35%
Very Important	7	27%
Total	26	100%

Improvements in Safety and/or Cleanliness

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	5	19%
Moderately Important	4	15%
Important	10	38%
Very Important	7	27%
Total	26	100%

Changes in Public Parking Availability, Management or Policies

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	1	4%
Moderately Important	7	27%
Important	7	27%
Very Important	11	42%
Total	26	100%

Amenity Improvements for Public Transit Users and/or Bike Riders

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	12%
Of Little Importance or Need	4	15%
Moderately Important	10	38%
Important	6	23%
Very Important	3	12%
Total	26	100%

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

More Cultural Events/Activities to Bring People into the District

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	0	0%
Moderately Important	9	35%
Important	8	31%
Very Important	9	35%
Total	26	100%

More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining and Selling

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	1	4%
Moderately Important	6	23%
Important	11	42%
Very Important	8	31%
Total	26	100%

Implementing Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	0	0%
Moderately Important	7	27%
Important	5	19%
Very Important	14	54%
Total	26	100%

Recruitment Programs to Attract Additional Businesses

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	1	4%
Moderately Important	4	15%
Important	4	15%
Very Important	17	65%
Total	26	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	4%
Of Little Importance or Need	7	27%
Moderately Important	12	46%
Important	5	19%
Very Important	1	4%
Total	26	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	4%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	12%
Moderately Important	8	31%
Important	13	50%
Very Important	1	4%
Total	26	100%

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

Setting up an online store or other online selling channel	3	12%
Creating new services such as delivery	1	4%
Participating in shared marketing/advertising	11	42%
Low-cost financing for storefront/façade improvements	10	38%
Low-cost financing for purchasing property in the commercial district	6	23%
Training on the use of social media	7	27%
None of the above	8	31%

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

Comments

We need better snow removal for Town parking lots and better parking.
Art festival, cranberry Harvest fest. promote Herring Run, night life activities. better vendors for Krazy Day, Social media <u>page spotlights</u> and <u>video promos on the downtown</u>
To improve our facade & signage would be a huge help. Do a mural in the downtown to draw arts & culture and advertise our business
—
Revamp Thatchers Row and publicly parking area.
—
—
I think that creating a more vibrant outdoor downtown space for dining/drinks would be great. A brewery in the large vacant building across from the post office would be a game changer.
—
Parking! Any help appreciated!
—
more events for arts and cultural. Outdoor events
local cultural events
1976
—
THE EMPTY HAMPER CORP
Businesses closed when we are open. ..Businesses close so early. .. lack of foot traffic. Businesses stay open one day a week later? <u>Suggestions: Coffeeshops, Dessert spot, cafe'</u>
—
Outdoor music, police walking the beat, Krazy Days, sidewalk sales, pop ups for local non-profits, craft beer tasting (nite)
—
Lack of parking is a significant issue downtown impacting customers ability to get to the store. Not sure if the old police station would be a potential spot for parking.
Collaboration with others to draw in shoppers/diners. Major need to improve parking behind co-op/former Reedy's.
—
Eggers Furniture Inc

Middleborough

Local Rapid Recovery Program

McCabe Enterprises



Downtown Middleborough

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The Local Rapid Recovery Program



Revenue & Sales



Public Realm



Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Cultural/Arts



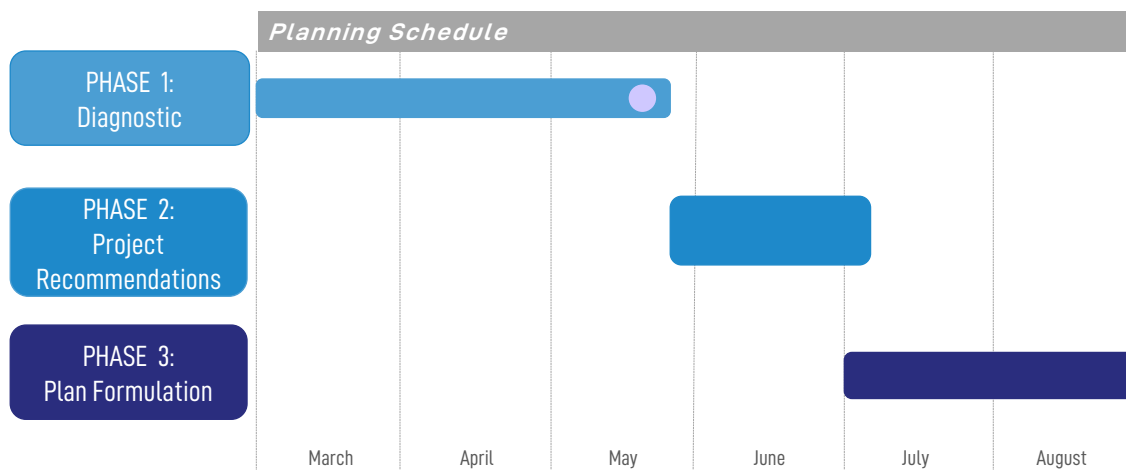
Admin Capacity

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3

The LRRP Approach



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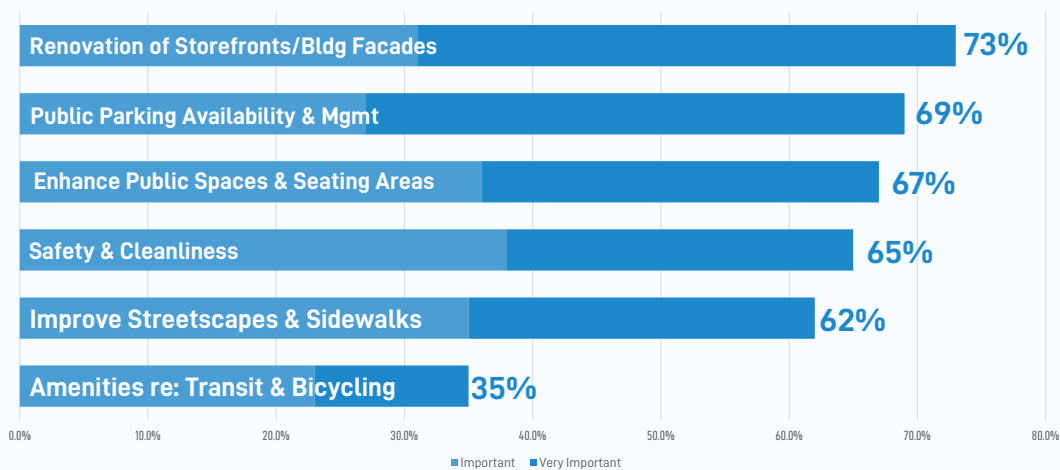
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Covid-19 Impacts on Downtown Middleboro



Downtown Business Survey

Physical Environment Strategies



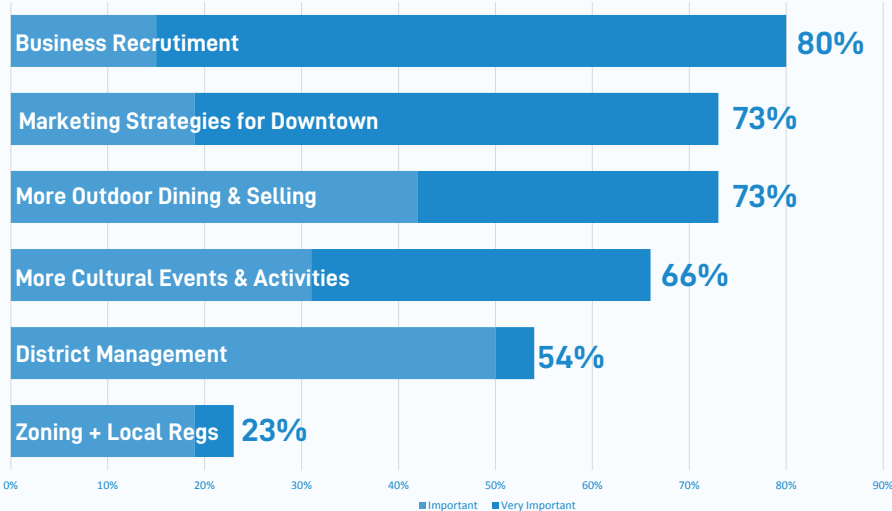
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Downtown Business Survey

Business & Customer Attraction Strategies



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Just the Facts

	Middleborough Town- Wide	Downtown Middleborough
Size	46,202 acres	45.7 acres
Residents	26,250	422
Households	9,396	172
Aggregate HH Income	\$1.1 Billion +	\$17.1 Million
Aggregate Income per Acre	\$24,111	\$373,120
Businesses		97
Employees	7,883	424
Parking Spaces		993
Average Rents Per SF		\$12.00/ SF

- 123 Storefronts
- 18 Vacant Storefronts
- 29,271 vacant SF
- 14.6% Vacancy Rate – Ground Level as to units

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Parking in Downtown Middleborough

◆ 993 public and private spaces

- Public Parking Spaces
- Public-Private Parking Area
- Private Parking Area



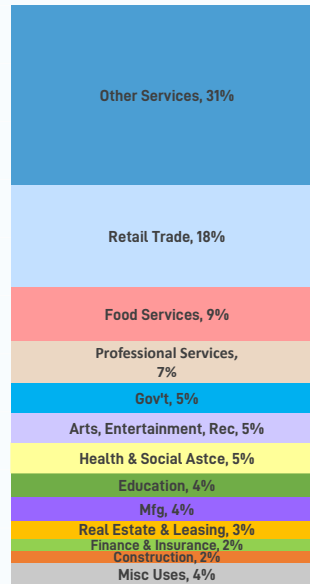
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Business Mix

- Recruit
- Grow Your Own Businesses
 - Start-ups
 - Pop-ups
 - Co-Working
- Engage & Involve Customers
- Shop Local & Support Businesses
- Add more uses



1

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Customer Base Components

1 Residents

- 422 Downtown Residents
- 26,250 Town residents

2 Workers

- 424 Downtown Workers
- 9,615 people work in Middleborough

3 Visitors

- Robbins Museum
- Historical Houses
- Need to Grow Visitor Market

4 People in/near Downtown

- 3,236 meetings/ events at Library annually (2018)
- 46,000+ library patron visits annually (2018)
- Battis Field and Nearby Schools
- Churches
- Massasoit Community College

Special Events

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Attracting Customers

- Awareness
- Marketing & Promotion --
 - Sales Events and
 - Downtown Promotion Events
- Convenience
 - Outdoor Dining & Sales
 - Curb Side Pick-Up
- Integrating New Approaches
 - Online; Mobile Ordering;
 - Curb-side Pick-Up
- Desired Businesses & Uses



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Downtowns are Becoming Social Districts

- Food
- Entertainment
- Gathering Spaces
- Open Space
- Fitness
- Arts, Culture, Creativity

Middleborough has features, of a Social District and needs to activate Downtown as the place to be, see friends, meet people !

It's the Experience Economy.



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The Recovery Challenge: Making Cash Registers Sing



**Drawing Customers & Enhancing the Business Environment in
Downtown Middleborough is the Key!**

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Local Rapid Recovery Program Aims

- Support & Facilitate Recovery
- Ready Communities for Using ARPA Funds
- Strengthen Commercial Districts
- Enhance Downtown's Resiliency

The Local Rapid Recovery Program



CUSTOMER
BASE



PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT



BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT



ADMIN
CAPACITY



Revenue & Sales



Public Realm



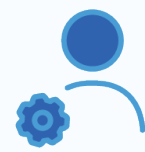
Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Cultural/Arts



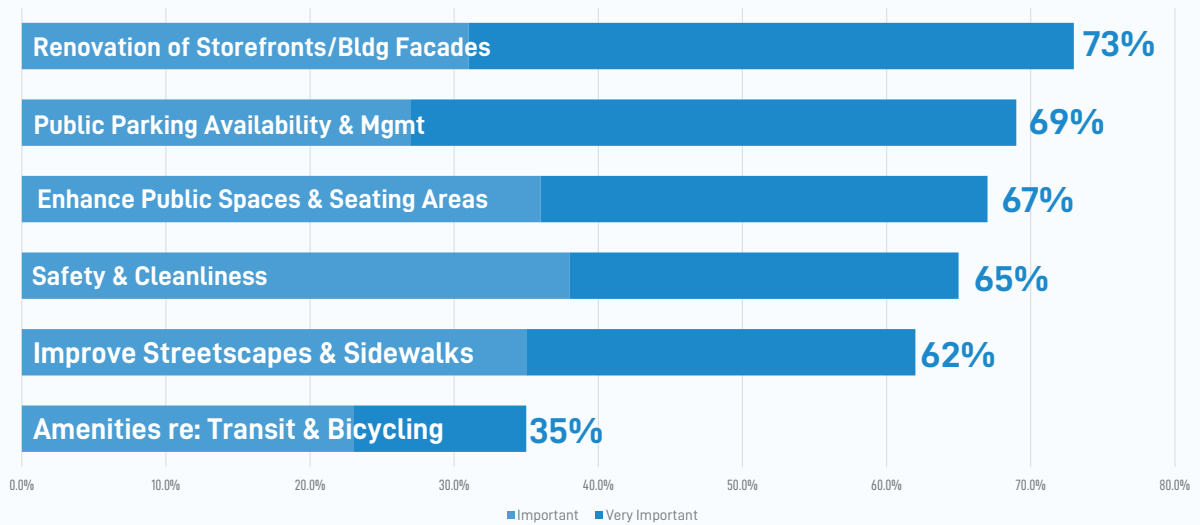
Admin Capacity

Covid-19 Impacts on Downtown Middleboro



Downtown Business Survey

Physical Environment Strategies



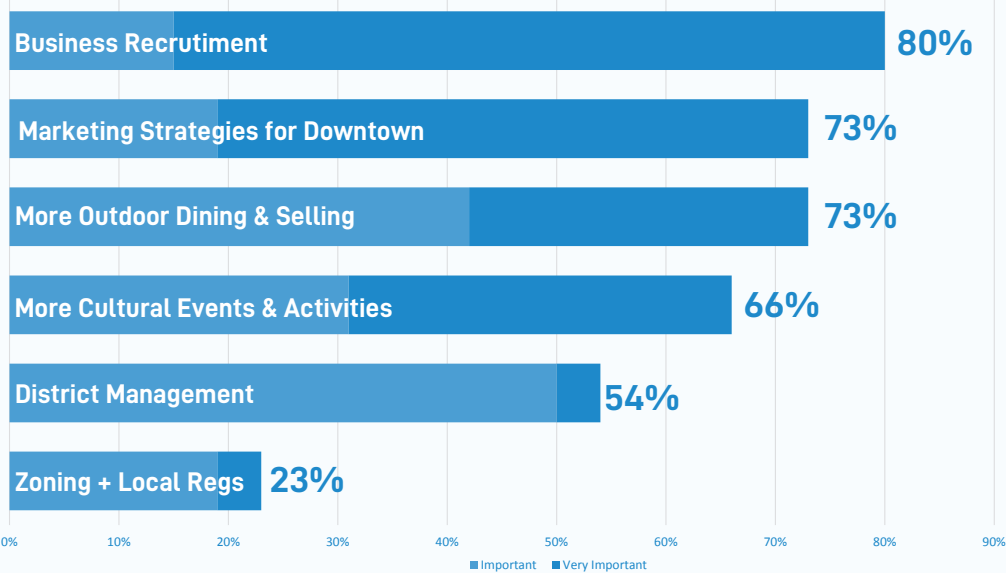
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Downtown Business Survey

Business & Customer Attraction Strategies



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LRRP Recommendations

Revenue & Sales	Public Realm	Arts & Culture	Admin Capacity
Promotional Calendar	Wayfinding	Windows Alive Pilot and Larger Project	Downtown Mgmt for Middleborough's Future
Branding Implementation		Mass Archaeology Trail	

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Wayfinding

Goals

- Put Downtown Middleborough on the Map
- Easy to find and access Downtown Middleborough
- Parking easier to find
- Expand customer base through Wayfinding
- Enhance Brand

Metrics

- Wayfinding Program
- Wayfinding Signs



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Wayfinding

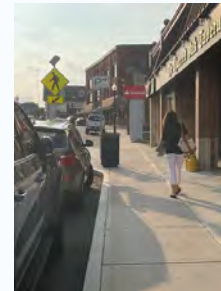
Help Customers Find Downtown & Get Around

- Regional Directional Signs for Roads
- Regional Directional Signs for Places
- Vehicular Direction Signage
- Public Parking Areas
- Downtown Institutions
- Pedestrian – Level Signage
- Commuter Rail Station – Existing & New

Design Wayfinding Program for Various Scales

Utilize New Branding Identity

Incrementally Implement & Monitor



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Wayfinding and Parking



- Help Customers Find Parking as they Arrive Downtown
- Sign clutter can obscure Parking Signs
- Create Parking Guide for Local Businesses to Use on Web & Handout
- Parking lots are an Opportunity to Orient People to Downtown + Benches
- EV stations are opportunities for a wayfinding sign to businesses

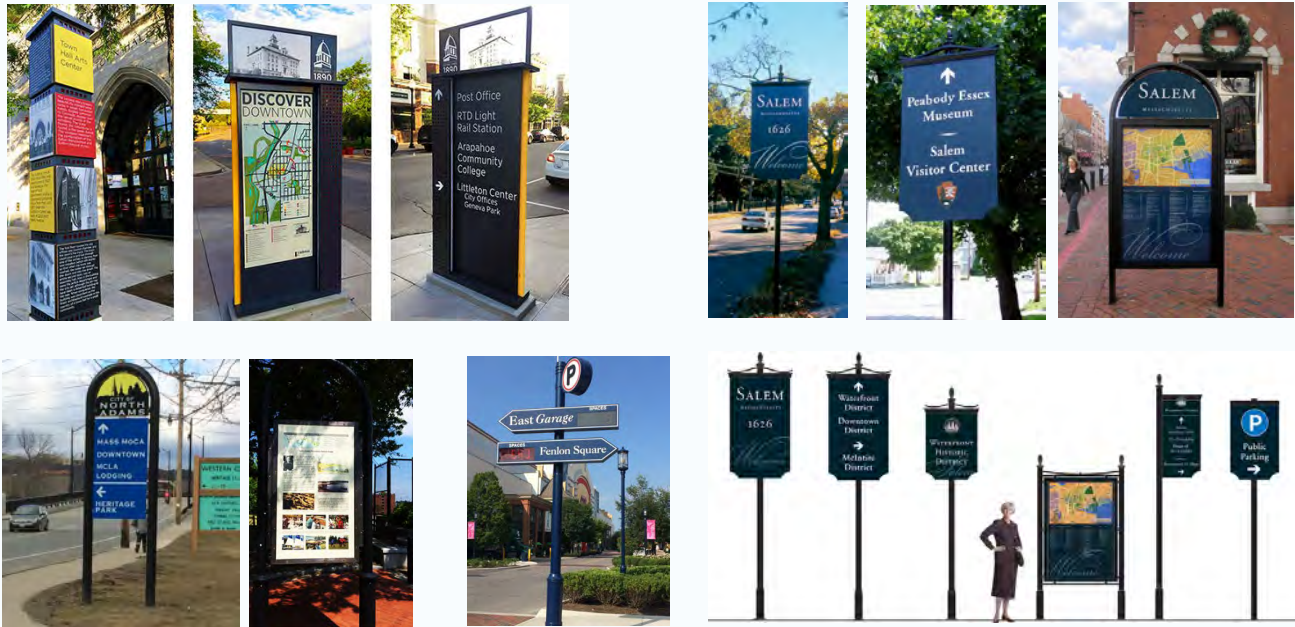
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Wayfinding -- Examples



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Branding Implementation

- Goals**
 - To successfully launch Downtown Middleborough branding
 - Utilize recommended branded imaging
 - Integrate brand throughout Downtown
- Metrics**
 - # of Examples/ Occurrences of Downtown Middleborough Brand & Cranberries -- Media hits; Signage; Windows; Local business advertising; Promo Products with Brand
- Act**
 - Distribute branding style guide and logo
 - Tip sheet for local businesses on using Downtown brand
 - Wayfinding
 - Tell the Middleborough story through cranberries
 - Add Downtown Uses that Highlight Cranberries
 - Spread the Word

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Windows Alive

- Goals**
 - Art & Performances in Windows
 - Draw People Downtown
 - Activates Windows in Vacant Stores
 - Employs Local Artists & Hillites Local Biz
- Metrics**
 - # of Attendees & Participating Storefronts
 - Media Coverage –Visibility for Downtown
- Act**
 - Initial Pilot Project
 - Grow Into Larger Event



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Mass Archaeology Trail

- Goals**
 - Increase Visitor Base to Downtown
 - Elevates Middleborough
 - Expands Marketing Effort & Audience
- Metrics**
 - # of Key Partners who Commit
 - # of Visitors to Middleborough's Museums
 - Spillover sales to local businesses
 - Visibility for Downtown Middleborough
- Act**
 - Secure funds for feasibility effort to involve & engage potential partners
 - Develop and Market Trail



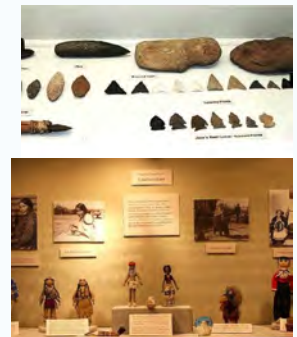
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Mass Archaeology Trail Potential Partners

- Peabody Institute of Archaeology, Andover
- Gabel Museum of Archaeology, Boston Univ.
- Harvard Museum of Natural History, Cambridge
- Boston Archaeology Office & Archive/Lab
- Peabody Essex Museum, Salem
- Cape Cod Maritime Museum, Hyannis
- Cape Cod Museum of Natural History, Brewster
- Plimoth Plantation, Plymouth
- Springfield Museums



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Making the Cash Register Sing

Annual Promotion Calendar

3 Types of Promotion

- Image Building & Marketing / Branding
- Retail Sales
- Special Events & Festivals



Annual Calendar Enables Planning, Collaboration & Retail Tie-Ins

Quarter	Promotion/ Event	Promo Goals	Retail Tie- Ins	Marketing
Jan-Mar				
Apr - Jun	Herring Festival			
Jul - Sept	Summer Concerts; Krazy Days			
Oct - Dec	CranHarvest Festival Holiday Promo/events			

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Sustaining the Downtown Middleborough's Revitalization

Downtowns with Business Improvement Districts pivoted faster and are recovering faster than other commercial areas

- Amherst BID raised \$400,000 local to support small biz & procured \$20,000 of bulk PPE and distributed to local businesses
- Hudson BID hired an accountant to help all businesses file PPP applications and secured loans and funding

Healthy Downtowns typically have some form of Public-Private Partnership with a sustainable form of revenue to implement and manage desired programming and services.

- Business Improvement Districts
- Main Street Districts -- voluntary
- Parking Benefit Districts



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Steps for Creating A Sustainable Approach for Downtown Middleborough Stewardship

- Goals**
 - Sustainably Support & Manage Downtown
 - Support Volunteer Efforts
- Metrics**
 - Short-term – Business & Property Owner Participation
 - Long-term: Continued/ consistent work improving Downtown
 - Increased numbers of people Downtown
 - Reduced vacancies
- Act**
 - Get Started - Identify Start-up Resources
 - Develop the Value Proposition/ Communication Tools
 - Stakeholder Engagement
 - Create a Community Outreach & Engagement Strategy
 - Identify Downtown Priorities
 - Evaluate Organizational Models
 - Secure Resources for Sustainability



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Questions and Discussion

Kathleen “Kathy” McCabe, FAICP
Plan Facilitator for the Local Rapid Recovery Program
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Appendix - Team

About McCabe Enterprises and the LRRP team for Middleborough

McCabe Enterprises are downtown experts. We provide strategic solutions in public financing, community planning and economic development to public and private sector clients with innovative and award-winning work working with downtowns, town centers, and neighborhood commercial centers. As Director of Roslindale Village Main Street (RVMS), McCabe received the National Preservation Honor Award from National Trust for Historic Preservation, the first "Main Street" program so honored. Rudy Bruner Foundation recognized RVMS as second for its prestigious national Excellence in Urban Environment Award.

A wholly woman-owned consulting firm founded by Kathleen McCabe, FAICP, McCabe Enterprises works with clients to develop customized solutions addressing the unique needs of each client and community. Our approach encompasses planning and economic analysis, financing, community consultation, with a focus on implementation and community engagement. Our work includes market analysis, feasibility studies, downtown revitalization, Covid-recovery, public financing, sustainability and resiliency, neighborhood planning, industrial retention, brownfields re-use planning and redevelopment.

McCabe Enterprises can be reached at mccabe@plan-do.com or 617 469-9444.

Kathleen "Kathy" McCabe served as the Downtown Expert and Plan Facilitator for the Downtown Middleborough Local Rapid Recovery Program assignment. Three Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) assisted with the recommendations. The Middleborough LRRP team members include Kathleen McCabe, FAICP, of McCabe Enterprises and:

Ann McFarland Burke, Consultant. Ann Burke specializes in helping communities develop sustainable district management organizations to create economically and socially vibrant downtowns. Ann contributed to the section on downtown management and Business Improvement Districts. www.linkedin.com/in/ann-burke-5295a5a/

Denise Robidoux and Dusty McMahon, Goman + York. GOMAN+YORK Property Advisors LLC works at the leading edge of real estate and economic development. GOMAN+YORK delivers expert advice and high-value services to provide customized and cost-effective solutions in the delivery of real property engagements. New England-based in East Hartford, CT, with regional offices in the Southeast; Dallas, TX; and Phoenix, AZ, GOMAN+YORK's reach is nationwide. Visit: www.goman+york.com Denise and Dusty contributed to the sections on Wayfinding.

Chris Moynihan, RetailVisioning. RetailVisioning works with storefront businesses to help them be the very best they can be. We provide strategic consulting and technical assistance to individual merchants as well as to commercial districts and towns. Most of our work is around best practices in visual presentations, brand positioning and marketing. Our mission is to improve business one store at a time, as we improve downtowns store by store by store. Christine Moynihan, RetailVisioning principal, may be contacted at www.retailvisioningonline.com. Chris contributed to the Windows Alive section.

Beverly Kunze Photography contributed photographs of Downtown Middleborough for this report and project.

Massachusetts Local Rapid Recovery Program (LRRP) has a wealth of resources and reference materials for commercial districts and communities responding to Covid and seeking to strengthen and revitalize their downtowns. See <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rapid-recovery-plan-rrp-program>

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