



Rapid Recovery Plan

October 8, 2021

North Brookfield



Acknowledgments

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



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

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

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

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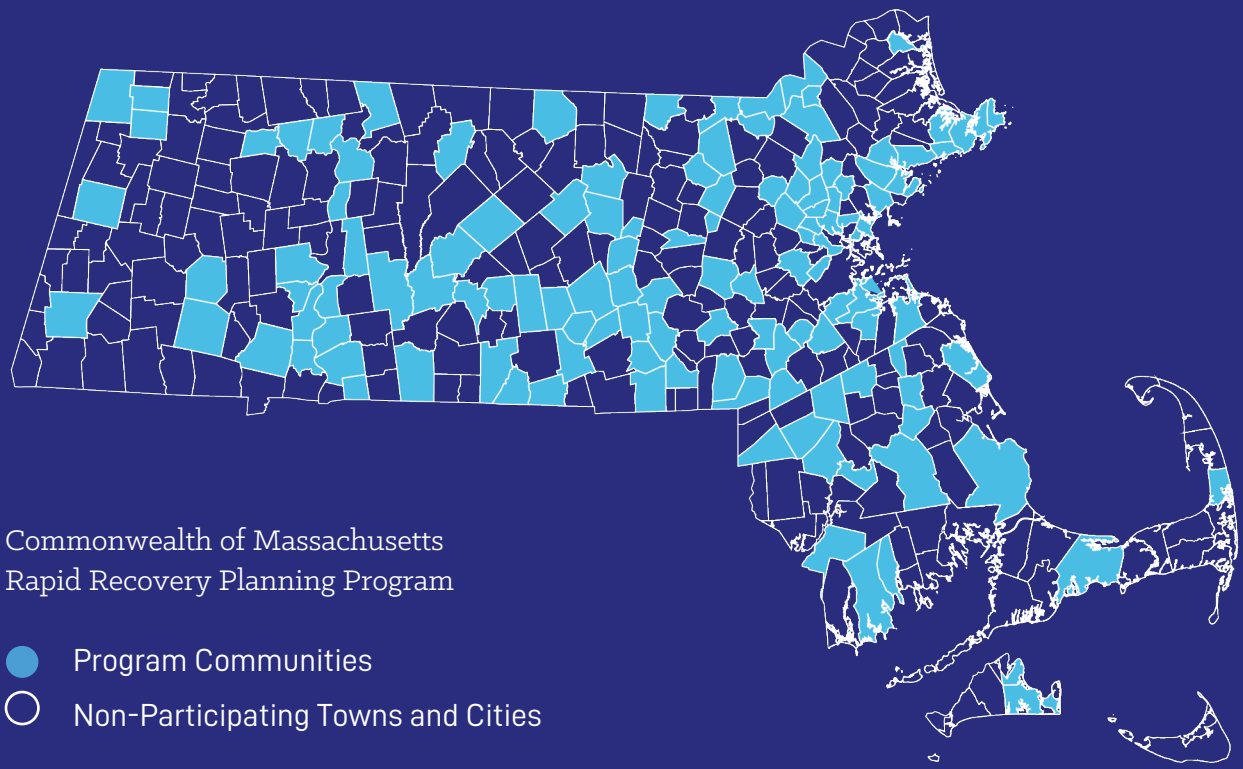
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125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

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

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



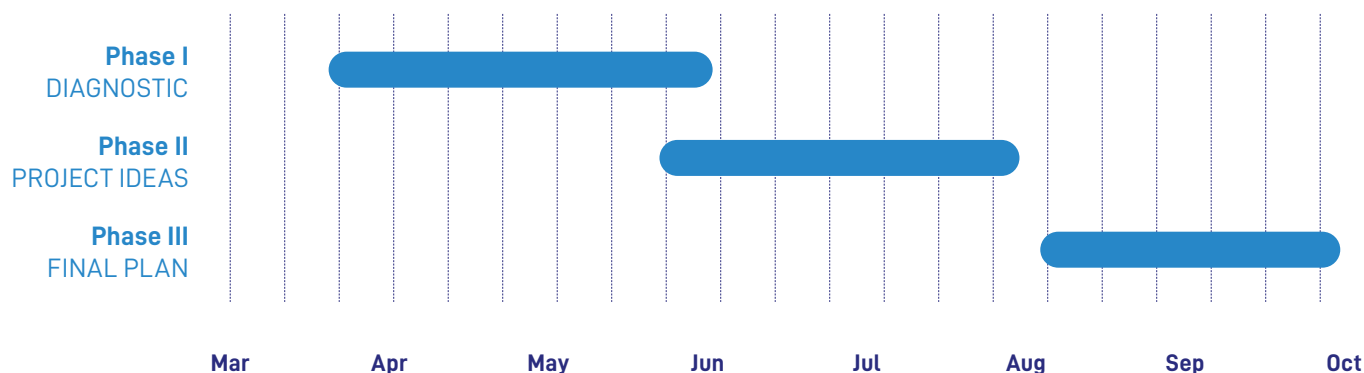
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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

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

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

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



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

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

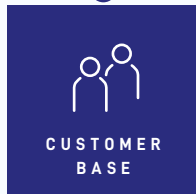
Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework



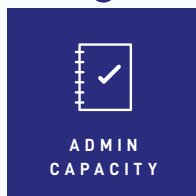
How conducive is the physical environment to meeting the needs and expectations of both businesses and customers?



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 customers of businesses in the Study Area?



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, Tenant Mix, Revenue and Sales, Administrative Capacity, Cultural/Arts & Others.



Public Realm



Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Revenue & Sales



Admin Capacity



Cultural/Arts



Other



The RRP program provides a critical feedback loop, where community needs directly inform the type and scope of state resource allocation
Source: Agency Landscape + Planning

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

North Brookfield is a town of 21.74 square miles, located at the geographic center of Massachusetts state, and about 20 miles west of the City of Worcester. It is a town of less than 5,000 people that has strives to balance agricultural and natural assets with increasing economic opportunities. The town has a rich agricultural and industrial legacy, flourishing as a shoe manufacturing and rubber production center. Mills were erected in town as early as 1750. While many of the town's largest employers are still within these industries, a large portion of residents now turn to neighboring towns and cities for employment opportunities.

North Brookfield residents love living in North Brookfield. They are an involved and proactive constituency that has made big things happen for the town. Residents voluntarily lead highly active and successful boards and committees to compliment local government projects and initiatives. These boards and committees carry out much of the visioning processes and initial grunt work to create change. Despite these highly functioning volunteer systems, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic was a monumental upheaval to the town's economic development and cultural lifelines. It tested the strength of these support systems, making it clear that additional full time small business support would be a valuable asset. The pandemic also occurred during North Brookfield's comprehensive planning process, a challenging and poignant coincidence. This plan attempts to aid North Brookfield in reevaluating and reworking the economic goals of the comprehensive plan, with the lens of COVID -19 recovery.

The RRP process was a Massachusetts state led program intended to develop actionable, personable, and project-based recovery plan in commercial areas throughout the Commonwealth. In North Brookfield, the RRP process centered on Downtown. Key findings revealed that Downtown is not seen as a shopping destination. Despite the proximity of large stores like Hannaford's Supermarket, the Downtown struggles to attract foot traffic. Recommendations throughout this plan aim to alleviate such issues, by strategies such as creating a Downtown branding effort and attracting the "right" stores Downtown. Consumers in North Brookfield are cautious spenders with particular tastes. It is imperative to make sure business tenants cater to these habits within a variety of price points.

Other findings surfaced that both individual buildings and the Downtown as whole could benefit from some creative thinking and care. The plan recommends amending the zoning code so businesses can have more flexibility to use their spaces in new ways. It also champions seizing on this current moment, where funding to downtowns is at a national high due to the economic effects of COVID-19, to invest in facade improvements, streetscape investments, and design guidance. These resources can be applied to new or rehabilitated buildings to reinforce the desired character of a vibrant, thriving Downtown district.

North Brookfield is also a town with a creatively rich past that would like to reinvigorate itself with a community of makers, artists, and doers. The renovation of the Town House is the cornerstone of such an effort. The project will aims to reinstate the building as an artistic and civic convener of local and nearby residents. Building off this momentum, the RRP effort champions hosting low-cost event series Downtown, as well as partnering with local and regional organizations to locate cultural amenities Downtown. Investments in arts and culture town-wide boast significant contributions to urban revitalization and Downtown economic activity.

To assist the more than 30 small businesses located within the Downtown, North Brookfield will need to act boldly and creatively. The RRP effort exists to make this process swift and meaningful. It is a step towards North Brookfield's future and hopefully a helping hand along the way to economic recovery. For many, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed life both superficially and deeply. At the personal, neighborhood, and municipal levels, it has forced many of us to pause and reevaluate what is important and who we want to be. Amidst this environment, North Brookfield has a strong sense of itself. Although Downtown businesses are struggling, there is still a strong vision for the future and hope for what is to come.



Diagnostic

Key Findings



The private and public realm can be more welcoming.

The character of Downtown's building facades, streets, and open spaces varies along each of the district's three major streets, North Main Street, Summer Street, and School Street. While these contrasts provide distinctive moments, they generally make Downtown feel disjointed. The mix of well kept historic facades, aging modern storefronts, and various signage and branding choices, display a lack of a cohesive vision. This makes Downtown feel sleepy, despite the high concentration of active businesses.

There is a lack of arrival to the Downtown, making it difficult for one to feel invited to linger, wander, and explore. Adding to the difficulty of navigation are cracked sidewalks, challenging typography, and lacking in ADA accessible pathways. While the Downtown will be greatly transformed after the implementation of a Complete Streets grant, more work can be done to better integrate the public realm of streets and sidewalks with the private realm of businesses, institutions, and residences. Outdoor seating and other places to pause are almost non-existent. Green spaces are underutilized or read as unwelcoming or inaccessible spaces.

As federal funding increases for projects like facade improvements, signage repairs, and small business counseling, now is the time to reinvigorate and unite the Downtown into mo welcoming space for people.



Residents are generally budget conscious and tend to spend money on experiences.

North Brookfield is largely populated by adults over 35 who prefer to spend money on home improvement projects, amenities for outdoor adventures (like hiking, boating, hunting, etc.), and low cost experiences. They are cautious spenders who research big ticket purchases. The largest consumer profiles within North Brookfield include married couples (either with or with or without children), young families with children, or single heads of households. About half of North Brookfield's consumers spend less than the national average on food, apparel and services, and entertainment and recreation.

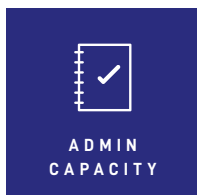
When these consumer behaviors are applied to the COVID-19 landscape, it could mean trouble for small business owners. As a community of prudent spenders, North Brookfield may not have pent up consumer demand like in other towns across the Commonwealth and shoppers may be slower to return to pre-COVID patterns. Small business owners may need longer term support or a concerted town-wide effort to reinvigorate excitement in spending money Downtown.



Despite its small size, North Brookfield supports large and small businesses.

It can be difficult to attract large businesses to smaller towns, but North Brookfield proves that the right businesses can do well. Along North Main Street, just beyond North Brookfield's Downtown intersection, is a large Hannaford Supermarket with over 200 parking spaces. Located within North Brookfield's Downtown is also the international headquarters of the Vibram Corporation, which specializes in high performance rubber compounds, specifically for the soles of shoes. In addition to these larger scale businesses are many smaller, sole proprietor businesses.

The town dreams of increasing the number of small businesses Downtown. Desired tenants include a bakery, family restaurant, and entertainment venues. Vibram and Hannaford's prove that there is stable consumer support in North Brookfield. As anchors, they also provide consistent traffic to the Downtown area that would assist these aspirational businesses. Being able to balance not only business types, but size, would allow the Downtown to become a more resilient business community and shopping destination.



North Brookfield is well loved and supported by passionate residents.

While the population of North Brookfield may be less than 5,000 people, it is full of civic minded and active folks. The town is currently undergoing a comprehensive planning process, redesign of the North Brookfield Common park area, a Technical Assistance Panel sponsored by the Urban Land Institute, and received a Complete Streets grant. This is astonishing when realizing the town lacks a formal planning department. Instead, these initiatives are mostly volunteer driven, with support from the Board of Selectmen and town staff.

Residents have both great pride and big dreams for their downtown, making it an invigorating place to be. However, capacity is limited due to lack of full time staff. In a small town, it is also important to keep efforts as inclusive as possible so decisions are made with a diversity of voices. Balancing passion with practical capacity has been made even more difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic.

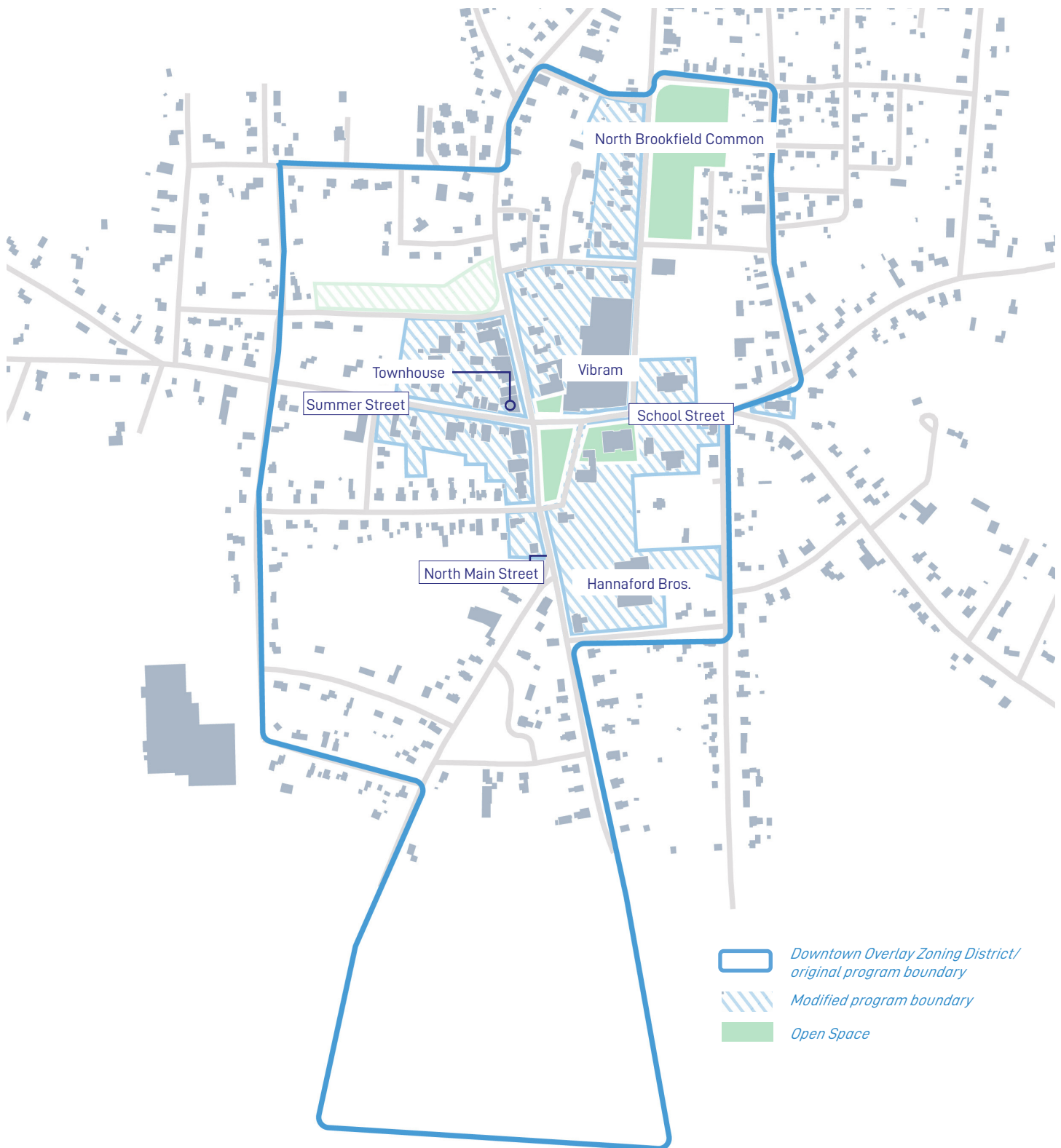


The Town House is a pivotal project and represents the town's cultural aspirations.

The Town House, located on the corner of North Main Street and Summer Street, is a major landmark for the town. The building, constructed in 1864, is a historic creation of the mid-to-late 19th century architecture firm Elbridge Boyden & Son of Worcester, MA. The building originally stood as a frescoed meeting hall and leased for predominately commercial purposes. It also served as a hub for local events and activities. North Brookfield's Town House is listed on both the National Register of Historic Places and Commonwealth of Massachusetts Cultural Information System inventory.

Despite a period of disinvestment, a volunteer-led effort is refocusing investments on the Town House. The Friends of the Town House Organization is busy raising funds to restore the Great Hall and partnering with Rural Opportunity through Art and Restoration to host creative art workshops. This work moves the Town House closer to its goal of becoming a contemporary hub of arts, culture, community, and local entrepreneurship. This renovation, activation, and long-term ongoing investment of the Town House project is absolutely essential to the success of district.

In the wake of COVID-19, it is imperative that the cultural aspirations of the Town House unite with local North Main Street businesses. The successes of outdoor dining, entertainment, and arts programming during the pandemic has renewed interest in the active life of the street. Uniting artistic pursuits, creative events, street activation, and marketing between the Town House and Downtown businesses will strengthen both artistic and economic entities.



Map of Downtown North Brookfield
Source: North Brookfield and state GIS information.
Compiled by Agency Landscape + Planning



Highlights from Administrative Capacity

North Brookfield is full of creative, passionate, and dedicated individuals. In lieu of the financial capital, staff, and capacity of larger municipalities, North Brookfield has made things happen! The Planning Board is currently undergoing a Comprehensive planning process with great help from other volunteer boards, such as the Friends of the Town House, Downtown Development Committee, Cultural Council, Conservation Commission, and Historical Commission. This effort is occurring amidst a multitude of other grants and projects.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES






The Friends of the Town House was created to advocate for and manage the restoration of North Brookfield's historic Downtown Town House, built in 1864. They have acquired numerous grants, including a Rural Opportunity through Art and Restoration (ROAR) grant to rehabilitate the space back into a working theatre, while adding offices and potentially co-working, artist, or small business locations.

The Downtown Development Committee, formed in 2018, has a mission to "rejuvenate the Town Center, thereby creating a vibrant atmosphere for business

and social activities." They work with Town boards and committees, state and regional planning and development organizations, and property owners to address needs in the Downtown area. A long term goal of the Downtown Development Committee is to create a North Brookfield Business Committee. This organization was paramount in applying for the RRP grant, as well as a Complete Streets Grant. The latter was approved in 2020 and has received funding for project implementation along North Main Street within the coming year. North Brookfield was also part of a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) through the Urban Land Institute in July of 2021. This panel also looked into economic opportunities, public space interventions, design guidelines, and Town House strategies; creating a united vision that aligns with smaller, more targeted plans and studies.

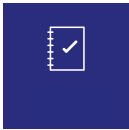
While members of these organizations have been extremely successful and dedicated, they are limited. As volunteers, it can be difficult to navigate full time jobs and family responsibilities with grant deadlines. While these groups have provided unparalleled assistance to Downtown revitalization efforts, a dedicated staff is needed to successfully implement ideas.

Downtown Development Committee Strategic Goals

				
WALKABLE DOWNTOWN	CONNECTED TRAIL SYSTEM	TOWNHOUSE REVITALIZATION	DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT	BUSINESS INVESTMENT
"Walkable streets encourage business activity, generate greater tax revenue per acre and offer a higher return on investment." - Strong Towns	"Trails can generate business, impact and create new jobs, attract visitors and increase property values" - Headwater Economic Review	"The best way to sell your community is to know your cultural back story" - Main Street USA	"We want a community with roads as strong as our businesses, parks as beautiful as our children and a downtown as tall as our imagination" - Laura Miller, APA	"Investment should work organically. Like ripples caused by a pebble tossed in a pond, growth keeps expanding and creating new momentum." - Planning Magazine

The North Brookfield Downtown Development Committee outlined areas of focus during the 2019 Strategic Plan process

Source: Downtown Development Committee



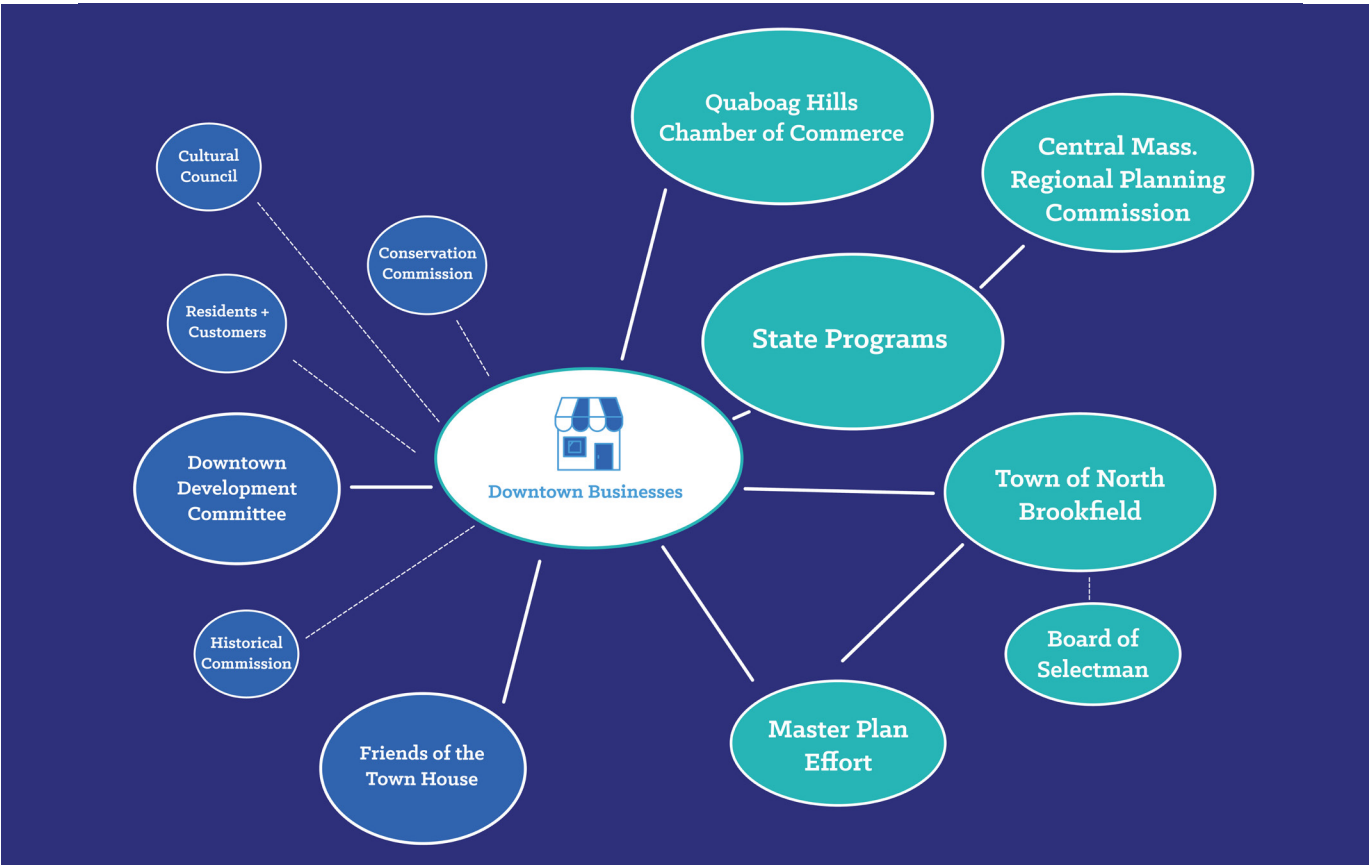
GOVERNMENTAL ADMINISTRATION

At the highest level, the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Board of Selectmen work together to develop and implement policies and procedures for the town. Leadership is strong, but there is a lack of an entity that can focus solely on implementation of ideas.

Town-wide, there is no full time economic development officer or small business support staff. The Town Clerk often plays this role in a day to day capacity, helping business owners with routine needs like securing business permits, licenses, and serving as a liaison between town government and business owners. While there is desire to create a full time position focused on economic development, there is not yet budget or capacity to do so.

There is no local chamber of commerce. The town connects to the regional Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce and Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission. These regional organizations, while constructive and helpful, are simply not as nimble as locally based organizations.

Challenges of capacity and necessary reactivity to the impacts of COVID-19 surfaced in the initial months of the pandemic. North Brookfield's small business advocates were personally stretched very thin and required all hands on deck. Providing more support to both business owners and municipal staff is a core tenant of the recommendations regarding opportunities for more administrative capacity in North Brookfield.



North Brookfield stewards and champions
Source: Agency Landscape + Planning



Highlights from the Customer Base

While North Brookfield is a small town of 4,808 residents¹ that has only increased by 116 people² in the last ten years, it contains a mix of regional attracting businesses and small unique shops. A review of the customer base included a detailed analysis of the demographics of the resident population and an inventory of who, why, and how this population may engage with Downtown businesses before and during the pandemic.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The median age of a North Brookfield resident is 44 and self-identifies as white. About 56% of the town's residents have above a high school level of education. The residents of the Downtown area are slightly different. They tend to be younger (37 compared to 44), also self-identify as white, and 50% have above a high school diploma. As expected, residents who live closer to Downtown are more likely to live in denser neighborhoods and a larger household (2.55 residents per home, compared to 2.26 town-wide).³

THE DOWNTOWN CUSTOMER

An ESRI Tapestry Segmentation Economic Analysis for North Brookfield identified the town as primarily filled with budget conscious consumers. When consumers do spend money, they do so on home projects and hobbies, like gardening and remodeling. Consumers also spend money on outdoor experiences, like visiting parks, fishing, hiking, camping, hunting, and fishing. Participants in the public presentation hosted by the Plan Facilitator and Community Liaisons felt like these profiles generally match the buying patterns of people they know.

(More about consumer categories can be found within recommendation "Create A Tenant Recruitment And Retention Program In Line with North Brookfield's Consumer Capacity" on pg. 41).

These findings are important when considering both the future of Downtown and the current COVID-19 moment. Any new businesses brought into Downtown should be able to serve multiple price points. Additionally, North Brookfield businesses may see a slower path to pre-COVID revenue.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau (2015-2019). Sex by Age American Community Survey 5-year estimates

² Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2019. U.S. Census Bureau Population Division VIA UMass Database

³ U.S. Census Bureau (2015-2019). Sex by Age American Community Survey 5-year estimates

As a financially conservative community, North Brookfield may not have the "pent up consumer demand" many economists believe exist in sectors like dining, travel, and expensive purchases. The Delta variant will undoubtedly slow the return of revenue even further.

WHY DO PEOPLE GO DOWNTOWN?

When asked "why do you go downtown?" public presentation participants responded:

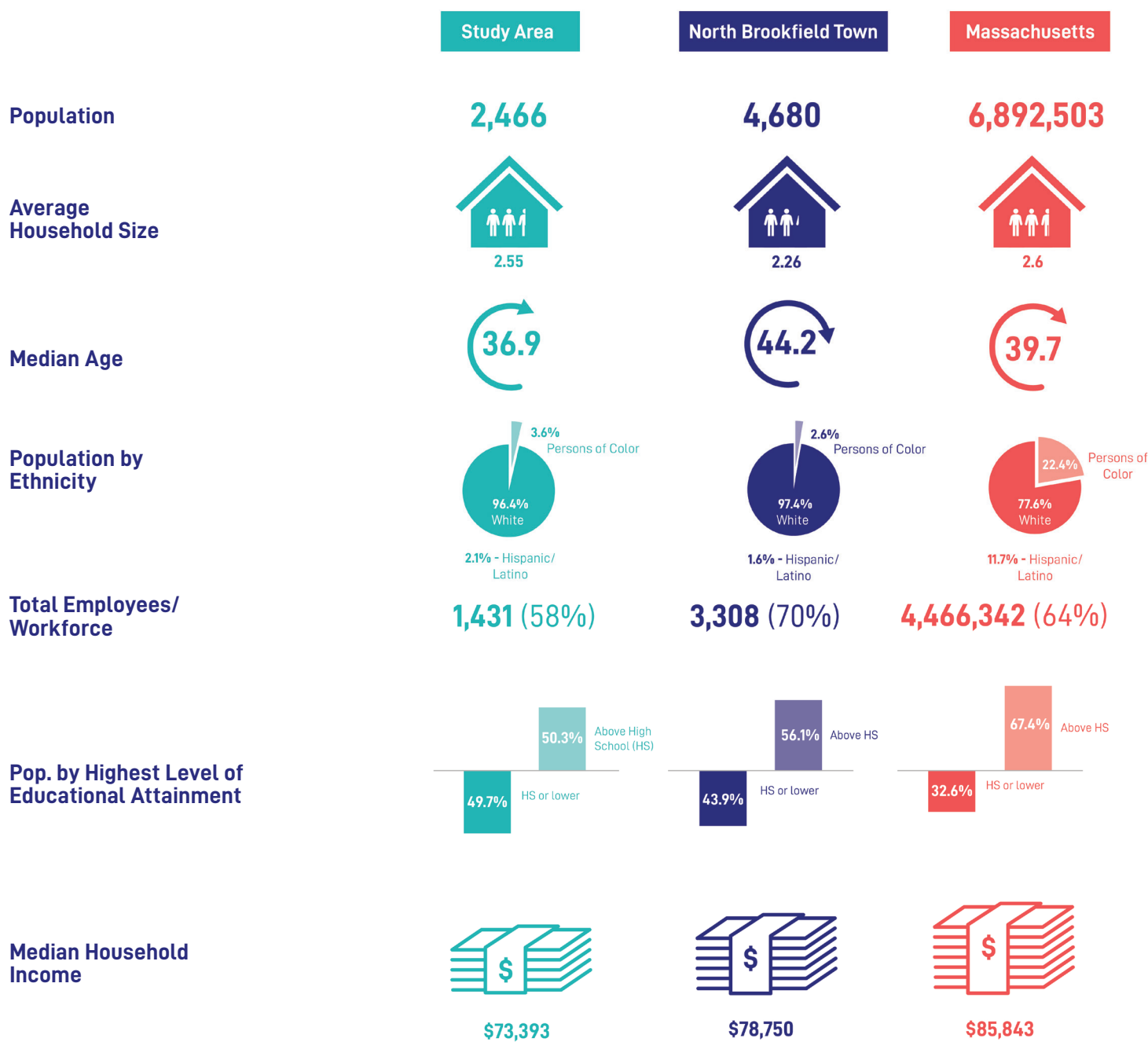
- 29%- to go to the grocery store
- 21%- to walk the dog
- 18%- other
- 14% - to receive a service (hair cut, doctor's appointment, insurance advice, go to the bank)
- 11%-to attend an event (Farmer's Market, Movie Night)
- 7%- to shop at a business

**(more than one answer could be selected)*

While these participants represent only a small slice of the North Brookfield community, they provide guidance on how consumers view the Downtown. It is not seen as a place to stroll, enjoy a meal, shop, or attend events, all actions that often lead to lively Downtowns. Instead, people seem to pass through or head to a single destination. There is an opportunity to provide more services, retail destinations, and events into the study area.

IN A SMALL TOWN, INCLUSION IS KEY

North Brookfield has many enthusiastic residents who are very active. However, this could lead to a feeling that a few passionate residents drive most of the decision making. It is extremely important to make sure people are invited to participate. Togetherness, communication, and capacity building is all the more important in this current moment. After a summer of relaxed restrictions and the return of social gatherings, the Delta variant threatens to once again restrict social circles. Creating opportunities for social connections and continuing business revenue will be important. This will ensure people feel confident and connected, both as consumers and as residents.



Community metrics compared between the Town of North Brookfield, the census tracts within the study area, and the state
Source: U.C. Census Data



ARTS AND CULTURE

North Brookfield residents are committed to expanding arts and cultural opportunities within the town. This includes the revitalization of the Town House as a performance space, creating COVID safe events like outdoor movie nights, and crafting strategies to entice creatives and entrepreneurs to live and work in town.

If North Brookfield is to become the arts and cultural hub it wishes, it may also need to increase services for non-English speakers and potential multi-cultural community members. Luckily, the town boasts a strong Cultural Commission and Historical Commission upon which to build.

North Brookfield residents are almost entirely white identifying. A public presentation participant noted that this demographic characteristic may impede people of the Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) community, be they artists, entrepreneurs, or visitors, from coming to town. People holding these identities may feel out of place or simply not have the resources they need to thrive.

North Brookfield is a small town with real financial restraints. Often, the services that support underrepresented or under-resourced communities are too expensive to execute, even if community members wish to offer them. While the conversation of multi-culturalism in North Brookfield is out of scope of this RRP effort, it is worthy to note. All recommendations within this report, as well as potential federal, state, and local monies can work in tandem to ameliorate both economic and social issues.

As the United States becomes more diverse as a nation, communities all over the county will need to navigate these social and cultural changes. North Brookfield is a welcoming community that sees the value in alternative perspectives and lived experiences. Keeping future communities in mind when applying for grants and crafting policies is a great way to build the exciting artistic place North Brookfield wishes to become.



Highlights from the Business Environment

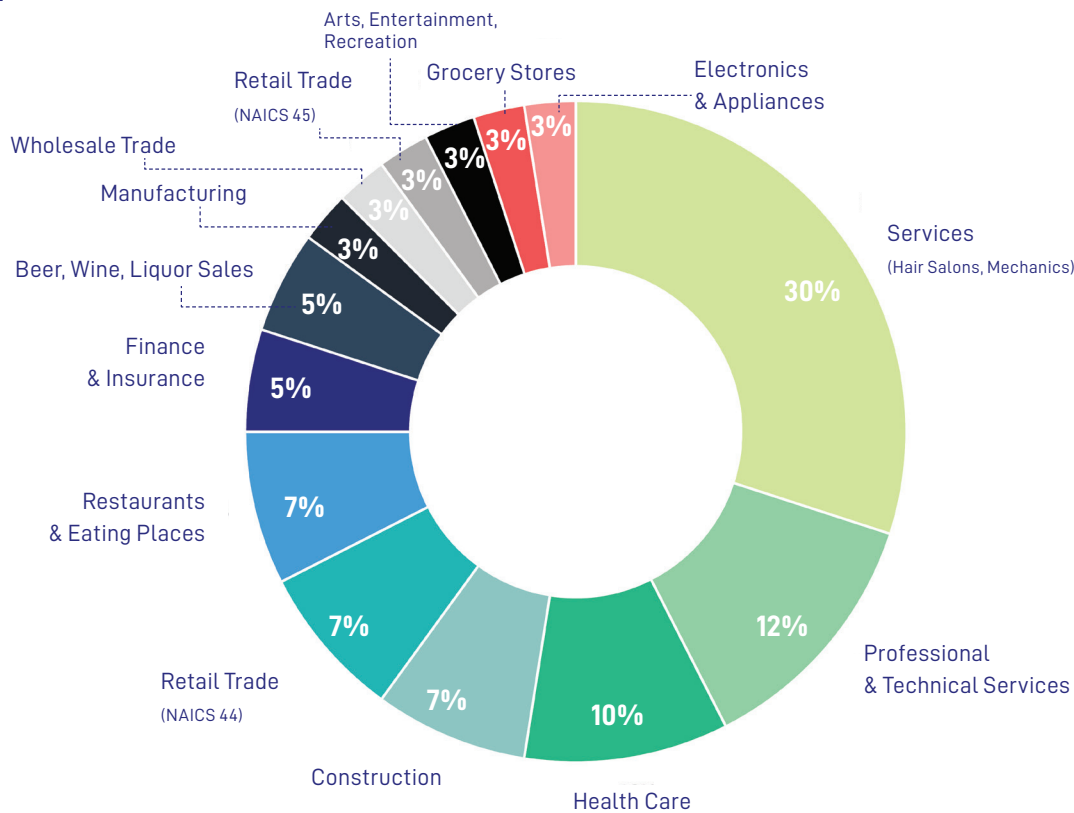
WHAT BUSINESS ARE IN DOWNTOWN?

North Brookfield's Downtown exists at a quaint and unassuming intersection. One would not know that around this intersection are 38 businesses! It is often difficult to understand not only where businesses are but what services they offer. Downtown, 30% of business are services (like hair salons, mechanics, etc), 12% offer professional services, and 10% are involved in health care (doctor's office, social worker, etc). While these businesses are often important anchors of commercial areas, they do not always create a high degree of foot traffic. Retail stores, arts, entertainment and recreation, and restaurants and eating places often do this work. Downtown, these various industries represent between 3-7% of Downtown businesses.

THE AVERAGE BUSINESS OWNER

The results of the RRP Business Survey revealed that most business owners within Downtown are micro enterprises (less than 5 employees) and were experiencing an increase in revenue in the 3 years prior to COVID-19. 69% of business owners rent their space, while 31% own. The survey also revealed that many business owners were, expectedly, hit hard by the pandemic.

Types of Businesses Downtown



Downtown industry breakdown (by NAICS code)
Source: Agency Landscape + Planning, North Brookfield's Assessor's Database base

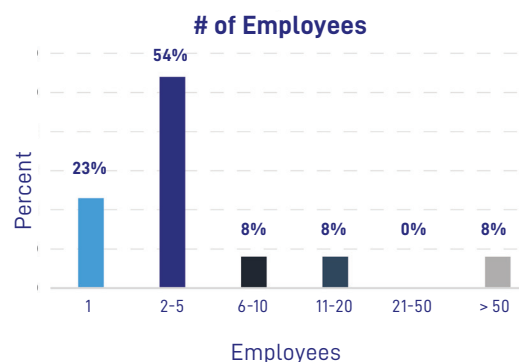


EFFECTS OF COVID-19

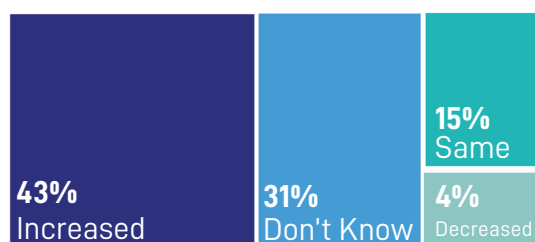
The following highlights rely on a businesses survey released by the State during Phase 1. The Survey collected responses from 13 businesses in the Downtown and highlights some of the challenges experienced by businesses in the first year of COVID-19.

The Business Survey found that:

- 54% of businesses incurred expenses to implement safety measures in order to remain open
- 39% of these businesses saw a reduction of foot traffic by more than 25%!
- 23% laid off employees
- Only 8% of businesses were able to pivot, establishing alternative modes to sell and deliver their products
- 46% of businesses generated less money than they did in 2019. **For all businesses who reported less revenue, that revenue declined by 25%!**

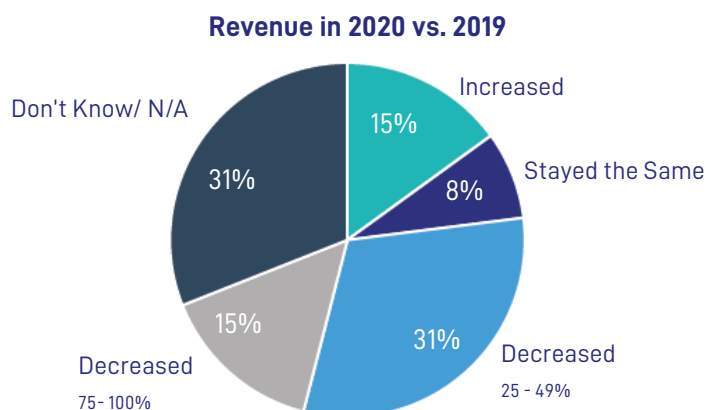


Revenue 3 Yrs Prior



VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

According to North Brookfield's 2019 Strategic Plan a "lack of businesses and amenities, deteriorating properties, few cultural opportunities for young people, and lack of activity and growth" were listed as resident's least favorite aspects of the town.¹ Public presentation participants noted similar desires, specifically around activities and experiences. Young parents are looking for low-cost locations to bring children for day trips. Donut shops, coffee shops, pizza places, gift stores, and general stores, especially those around parks and playgrounds, are attractive destinations. Participants expressed interest in ethnic restaurants and dining options, a dance studio, and entertainment options for night times and weekends.



¹ North Brookfield Downtown Development Committee, "North Brookfield Strategic Plan," 2019, pg. 11

Responses from Business Survey report that most businesses employee 5 or less people, were seeing revenue increase before the pandemic, and saw some kind of decrease in revenue between 2019 and 2020
Source: RRP Business Survey



The comprehensive plan Survey had similar results to the RRP survey. It found that:

- 41% of participants have a serious interest in a restaurant/cafe
- 25% of respondents had interest in small scale retail, a bakery, or hardware store

Feedback shared in the state survey and resident's sentiments about desired businesses Downtown can provide clear next steps for businesses reinvestment, and attraction and retention of new businesses and amenities. It may be best to channel COVID relief funds **first** to industries that are represented within the Downtown, had a higher degree of unemployment claims, and are desired in greater number by residents. After this, industries like arts, entertainment, and food services could receive funds.

VACANT SPACES PROVIDE EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES

Luckily, there is availability in Downtown building stock that can be activated for these purposes. As of Spring 2021 there were 4 vacant tenants, representing roughly 3,450 sq. ft of vacant ground floor commercial space. For North Brookfield's small size, this is roughly 9.5% of available ground floor space being vacant. These vacancies are in prime locations, making the absence of tenants all the more noticeably. However, that also means that a small number of well selected tenants can transform the whole of Downtown. There are also vacancies on upper floors. A few buildings in particular have almost entirely second, third, or fourth floors open. This is an exciting opportunity to ground a co-working space, light manufacturing company, or creative industry in such spaces.

WORKING WITH OTHER PLANS

As previously mentioned, North Brookfield has already laid the groundwork and developed clear, actionable plans that this RRP effort can build on and bridge into implementable, funded projects. Now is the time for action! This plan is meant as a **"Yes, and..."** to the town's larger economic vision, while helping to place these goals in the context of COVID-19. The interventions outlined in the recommendations, while applicable to all North Brookfield businesses, can begin within the Downtown. Beginning here would have a substantial impact on the perception of the town as a whole.

Downtown North Brookfield

Total Businesses	38
Vacant Tenants	4
Ground Floor Commercial	36,372 sq. ft
Ground Floor Office	15,339 sq. ft
Ground Floor Manufacturing	30,651 sq. ft
Ground Floor Vacant	3,450 sq. ft (9.5%)

Most of Downtown's ground floor space is used for either retail or manufacturing (mostly due to the Vibram headquarters). Roughly 10% of available Downtown square feet is vacant. Data collected Spring '21

Source: Site Visit, Assessor's Database, Google Streetview



Current vacant spaces are in prime locations. This space, on North Main Street, is on the corner of Downtown's main intersection

Source: Agency Landscape + Planning



Highlights from the Physical Environment

The layout of North Brookfield's Downtown follows a classic form. The heart of Downtown is noted by a major intersection. Nearby is the North Brookfield Common, the largest public gathering space near the Downtown. Despite its walkable size, Downtown does not feel like a place to stroll or socialize. Many elements of both the private and public realm received a "C" score or "fail" on the RRP Data Collection Rubric. This Rubric was created by the state to understand the physical condition of the Commonwealth's many commercial areas. It standardized subjective elements, like the condition of sidewalks, into a comparable ranking system. (*Elements could be ranked as an "A," "B," "C," or "Fail."* See Appendix pg. 98 for the Data Collection Rubric.)

SIDEWALKS and CROSSWALKS

Currently, Downtown feels car-centric and lacking in recent investment. Sidewalks and crosswalks are in poor shape. While sidewalks are wide, they are often disconnected, or riddled with potholes, cracks, and missing asphalt. They are especially difficult to navigate for those using strollers or wheelchairs, or those who are differently-abled.

Roadbeds are in better shape than sidewalks, but favor cars and vehicular transportation. During an inventory in Spring of 2021, the Plan Facilitator noted that crosswalks are evident and painted on the road at the intersection of North Main Street and Summer Street/School Street, but do not include crosswalk lights.

LIGHTING

Lighting is greatly lacking Downtown. Only one side of North Main Street contains street lights. Lights that do exist are out of scale for pedestrian and support fast moving vehicle traffic. These lights are not aesthetically pleasing and cater to cars, not people. Storefront lighting is equally deficient. Most storefronts do not have ample exterior or interior lighting. Light exist are often neon window based lights, which do not add to feelings of safety or welcome visitors.



Crosswalks are well marked, but show signs of age
Source: Agency Landscape + Planning



Sidewalks are wide, but can be difficult to navigate due to cracking concrete
Source: Agency Landscape + Planning



SIGNAGE, WINDOWS, AND BUILDINGS

There is little cohesive signage in Downtown. There are no banners or welcome signs that create a sense of arrival. While there is an electric sign at the main intersection that provides town news, it feels out of place among the historic buildings. There is no consistent branding or identifying logos, images, or colors that note one has entered Downtown.

Save for small signs that direct one to public safety facilities and the location of the Farmer's Market, there are no signs pointing visitors to other North Brookfield destinations or services. Three businesses have made handmade signs directing patrons to their locations, but these are easy to miss and often conflict with the municipal code regulations.

Signs in front of businesses are also difficult to read. Many are small and often need a patron to be directly in front of the store to know what goods are inside. The bank, grocery store, and Vibram are a few of the locations with signage that can be read from afar. Signs are not consistent throughout the district. While each business should retain individuality in its exterior branding, there are no cohesive colors, sign sizes, or materials that build the sense of a downtown identity.

Windows are generally dark and very small. During site visits, shades were often drawn or interiors were dark. Many stores have limited transparency, due to a high number of handmade signs or neon lighting. This makes it difficult to see what a store was selling or to know if it is open.

Facades and building condition fair slightly better than other elements listed in the RRP Data Collection Rubric (*found in the Appendix on pg. 98*). Some Downtown buildings appear well kept and well cared for, while others seem to be suffering from disinvestment. There are also multiple architectural styles represented Downtown. Done well, juxtaposing architectural styles can be exciting and interesting. However, in North Brookfield, many square modernist buildings contrast with the 1800s/early 1900s historic structures in a way that feels unintentional and ad hoc. Public realm treatments on either side of North Main Street also feel disconnected. One side is lined with denser, taller buildings that facilitate commercial activity. The other consists of buildings that appear to be single family homes converted to businesses on larger plots of land. This misalignment makes Downtown feel uneven, as if only one side of the street contains businesses.



Lighting is harsh, located on only one side of the street, and serves the needs of cars. Signage is small, difficult to read, and uncoordinated.

Source: Agency Landscape + Planning



Benches that do exist are awkwardly placed, facing traffic and without other landscaped elements

Source: Agency Landscape + Planning

STREET TREES AND FURNITURE

Downtown received a "Fail," in its ranking of street trees. There are almost no street trees Downtown, save for the few trees in parks and open spaces. This leaves North Main Street feeling sparse and open. A lack of trees also means there is little shade from the sun or protection from the rain or snow. Downtown is also greatly lacking in street furniture. Only three benches can be spotted Downtown outside of the corner pocket park. During site visits, people were seen sitting on steps and stumps.

A lack of benches and tables also means there is a lack of social interaction. Downtown restaurants do not provide places for customers to eat, be seen, or see others.

During site visits, the only business that was seen providing outside dining was Subway, which placed two small tables and chairs outside their front door.

This lack of street furniture, plazas, and gathering spaces does a disservice to Downtown businesses. Restaurants are not provided an opportunity to showcase how good their food is by the presence of a plethora of outside diners. Employees on lunch breaks are not incentivized to eat outside and residents to not have a place to meet, relax, and people watch. Providing these public spaces is integral to an active and lively Downtown.

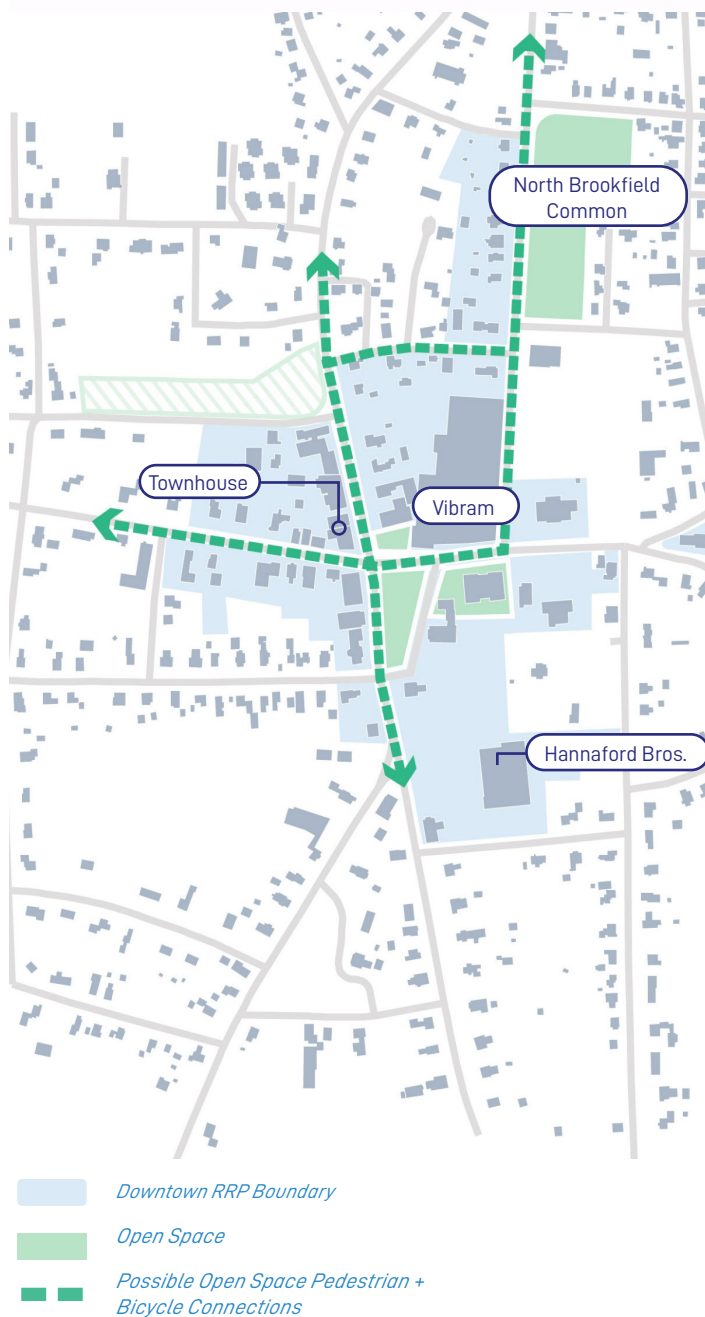


PUBLIC SPACE

Downtown's largest open space is the roughly 1,337 square feet of open lawn owned by the First Congressional Church. The lawn provides lush green space and is a unique asset. It can be uncommon to find an open space parcel of this size located directly within a downtown. While the First Congressional Church does have a public playground, the open space is generally unprogrammed. It is worthwhile to recognize that the Church's lawn is in a significant location that could better stimulate Downtown activity. Hosting more events or installing street furniture could have an immense effect on Downtown life. The Church has been open to programming in the past. It is the hope of this plan that this sentiment continue and expand.

Beyond the Church's lawn is the corner park outside of Vibram headquarters. These parks is a recent town investment and provides much needed space for seating. However, the arrangement of benches is not conducive to face to face interaction and socializing. When opportunities arise for reinvestment in parks and open spaces, care should be taken to redesign the space for such interactions. These will help in stimulating Downtown activity.

Finally, there is the North Brookfield Common. While not located directly along North Main Street, it is within walking distance. The Common currently hosts various athletic fields, but is also under utilized. As a parcel of roughly 192,463 square feet, it has the opportunity to become the epicenter of North Brookfield public life. The Common will need many investments in recreational facilities, street furniture, lighting, plazas, landscaping, and pedestrian and bicycle connections if it is to reach its full potential.



A network of public spaces moved pedestrians through Downtown, stimulating foot traffic

Source: Massachusetts GIS Records, Agency Landscape + Planning





TRAFFIC AND ROAD USE

COVID-19 has greatly changed daily commute patterns and methods of getting around. Stuck inside during stay at home orders, many people rediscovered (or were forced to find) a love for walking in their communities. According to MassDOT's Mobility Dashboard (via StreetLight Insight), North Brookfield saw pedestrian activity increased by 92% between 2019 and 2020!

Average Annual Daily Vehicular Traffic (AADT) counts are the total volume of vehicle traffic one location experiences for a year, divided by 365 days. It articulates where roads are busy. The intersection of North Main Street and Summer and School Street has seen a decrease in AADT since the late 1980s and early 1990s. Despite a slow recent regain of traffic volume, the onset of COVID stalled progress.

From 2019 to 2020, annual growth of traffic volume on this spot on Summer Street decreased by 12%.¹ Traffic volume had increased by 1% in both 2017 and 2018.

Further down North Main Street (Gilbert Street South of R 67), just outside of Hannaford Supermarket, traffic volume decreased by 17% from 2019 to 2020. Since 2004, this location had only seen traffic volume fluctuate by 3% in either direction. AADT at this location was 3,571 in 2020 compared to 4,328 in 2019. These data points illuminate two conditions. The first is that COVID-19 obviously decreased the number of people traveling along North Main Street. The second is that despite being located within walking distance of one another, the traffic count location outside of Hannaford's sees more than triple the AADT than along Summer Street. **This indicates that consumer traffic from this anchor does not flow to North Main Street's small businesses.**

Lived experience confirms this data. When visiting the Downtown on a sunny Saturday in May, only 12 pedestrians were seen between 5-6 pm. Three people walked dogs while others passed through. Most people seen walking around had arrived in cars and visited one particular location.

Finally, parking and delivery logistics will need further investigation. North Brookfield currently houses around 530 parking spaces, all of which are free and many of which are not clearly demarcated.

¹ MASSDOT, Transportation Management System

Street Location	2019 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)	2020 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)	Change from 2019-2020
Gilbert Street, South of R 67 (Primary Street)	4,328	3,571	757 (17% reduction)
Summer Street West of North Main Street (Secondary Street)	1,420	1,172	248 (17% reduction)

The volume of vehicular traffic around Downtown decreased 17% from 2019 to 2020

Source: MASSDOT Transportation Management System



Street network around the Downtown area

Source: MassGIS Data Layers, Agency Landscape + Planning



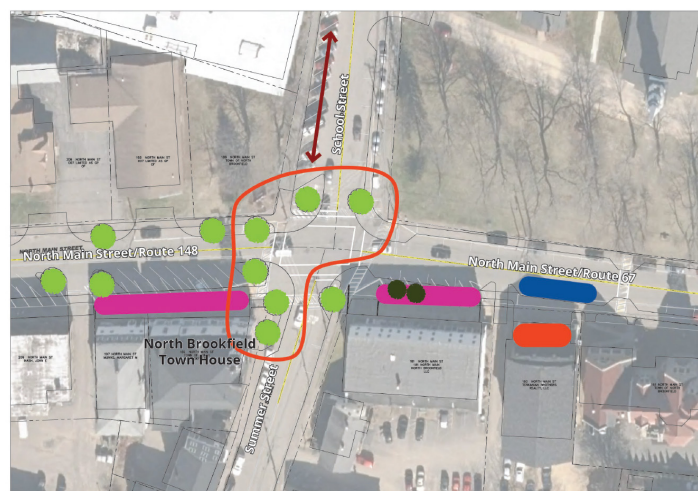
Previous planning efforts have looked into this issue, both in the creation of new lots, reorganizing of existing spaces, and the economics around charging for parking. This RRP effort agrees a parking strategy is necessary if North Brookfield is to expand its current tenant capacity. However, it cautions against locating large parking lots near the center of Downtown. While this location is convenient and appealing now, it may greatly limit future development, housing, or commercial activity in the future.

Despite Downtown's sleepy nature, residents noted ongoing conflicts with delivery trucks. Trucks often double park while offloading and do not adhere to posted signage about the appropriate procedure for offloading. While the RRP plan does not address this issue head on, it supports further investigation into alternative routes and procedures.

A DOWNTOWN IN TRANSITION

While previous sections of this report summarize the research and inventory of the Downtown as it exists today, this section provides detail on steps the town is taking to alleviate these public realm issues.

The Complete Streets grant will alleviate many of the sidewalk, crosswalk, roadway, and traffic flow issues. The Strategic Plan and comprehensive plan intend to add a bicycle lane network, add landscaped medians, and streetcar amenities. There is even a plan in place to redesign the North Brookfield Commons! North Brookfield knows that aesthetics matter and that an inviting, creative, beautiful, and connected Downtown is at the heart of economic development and COVID-19 recovery. While the RRP Data Collection Rubric may have caught North Brookfield in a moment of transition, there are big changes to the public realm on the way. This plan cheers on and supports many of the public realm improvements. The hope is that it provides a structure and further guidance on linking these coming changes to intentional economic development strategies in a post- COVID-19 world.



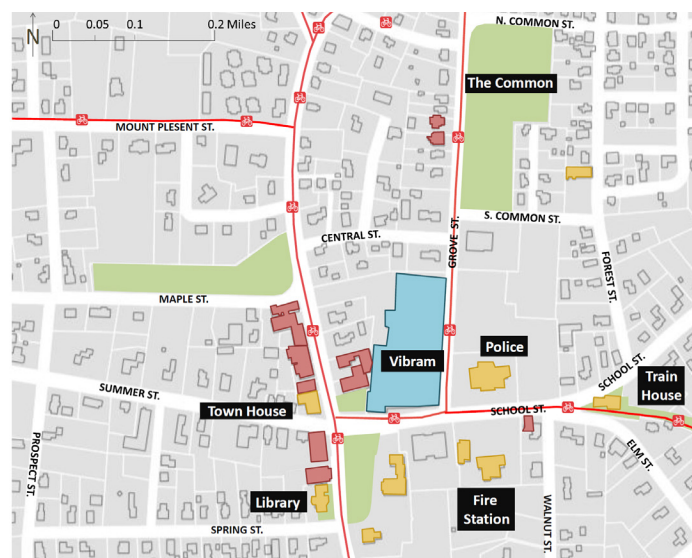
SITE CONCEPT
DOWNTOWN COMPLETE STREETS PROJECT
NORTH BROOKFIELD, MA
APRIL 2, 2021

Streetscape 2

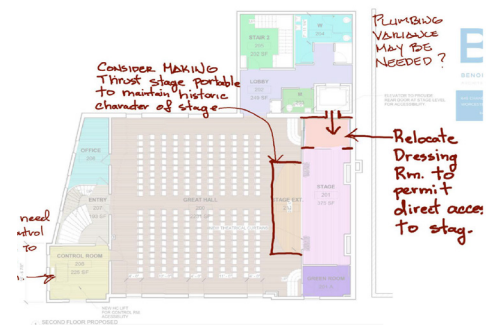
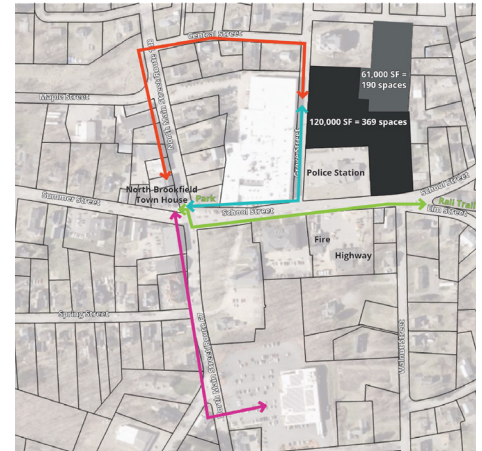
- Consider creating dedicated delivery (8am-12pm) and drop-off/pick-up zones to support local businesses. Check position of proposed trees relative to entrances to ground floor retail.
- Extend new sidewalk to connect to proposed Grove Street parking lot.

- Address accessibility to ground floor entries. Consider elevated plaza with seating/dining.
- Remove addition to ground floor facade of Union Star Building.
- Evaluate impact of proposed trees on historic view of Town House.

Downtown Complete Streets concept
Source: BSC Group via Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel



Proposed bike network for Downtown
Source: MassGIS Data Layers, Map Produced by CMRPC via Strategic Plan 2019



Examples of public realm analysis and studies conducted by North Brookfield and various professional organizations
 Source: Technical Assistance Panel- Urban Land Institute, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Council- Strategic Plan 2019

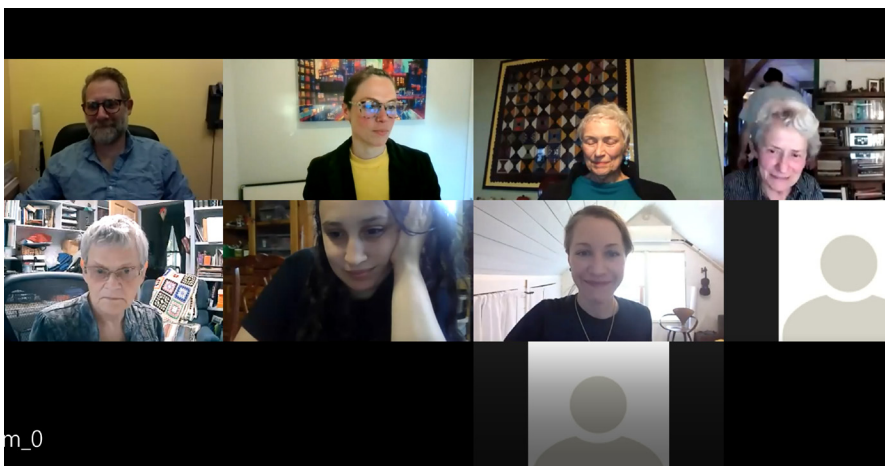
Project Recommendations

Create a Downtown Liaison/Town Manager Position

Category		Administrative Capacity
Location		Study Area
Origin		Focus groups, interviews with community contacts, business surveys
Budget		<p>Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)</p> <p>Funding: American Recovery Act Funding, Community Development Block Grants (possible), Downtown Business Improvement District or District Increment Financing, Small Business Technical Assistance Grant Program, State Small Business Credit Initiative</p>
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)- there is interest in filing the position as soon as possible
Risk		Medium Risk – procuring stable funding sources is a concern
Key Performance Indicators		Growth in # of downtown businesses that remain open for 3+ years, total sales tax revenue, # of downtown visitors, increase in customers for downtown businesses
Partners & Resources		<p>Partners: Downtown Development Committee, Friends of the Town House, regional agencies (Central Mass Regional Planning Commission, nearby town economic development departments), local businesses, Town Clerk, Board of Selectmen</p> <p>Resources: CMAPC Rural Eleven Prioritization Project, Rural Justice Network, S.C.O.R.E, Entrepreneurship for All</p>



ULI Technical Assistance Panel Site Tour with town volunteers
Source: ULI TAP - North Brookfield



North Brookfield RRP Public Presentation via Zoom with town volunteers and community members
Source: Agency Landscape + Planning

Diagnostic

North Brookfield is flush with passionate volunteer lead civic organizations. However, a full time small business resource is needed to focus on post- COVID 19 recovery and foster a thriving local economy. Downtown requires specific investment, strategy, and capacity if local's visions are to be realized.

- Expertise is needed to guide Downtown businesses to adapt to new COVID-19 norms and practices.
- The Downtown economy would be made more resilient with professional assistance in case of new disruption, such as a future COVID related resurgence (Delta) or other events.
- Businesses were without a clear "go-to" resource/organization during initial COVID-19 federal funding opportunities.
- Liaison will connect property owners with facade improvement resources, additional PPE grants, and organize cultural/artistic initiatives.

Action Item

- Town government and/or Board of Selectmen approve position. They also participate in recruitment.
- Hire a full time economic development professional.
- Share position among neighboring towns (if needed or desired).
- Acquire funding to guarantee 2-3 years of support.

Process

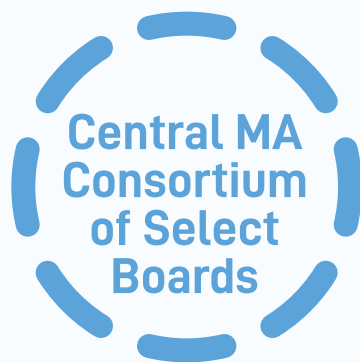
Until this position is filled, the Town should deputize the Downtown Development Committee (or another committee with interest and capacity) to lead RRP implementation. Once recruited, the Downtown Liaison would assume responsibility for implementation.

Brainstorm required skill set, position requirements, and duties.

- *Develop:* Draft a conceptual job description that outlines key job responsibilities and reporting structure for the position.
 - Is this an administrative position as part of town government, or would the position stand alone as part of a non-profit entity?
- *Survey Possibilities:* Analyze existing pool of ideal candidates- either by name or current job type.
 - Is there preference to higher local? Would applicant need to relocate?
 - Develop a list of potential applicants to inform intent of creating position.

Locate funding sources and understand town's commitment to grant writing or appropriating funds.

- *Identify:* Find potential funding sources. Look to grants.
- *Understand:* Articulate town's willingness (or capacity) to fund or partially fund the position. For how long?
 - Decide if grant writing to continue position will be part of Liaison's responsibilities.
- *Explore:* Investigate state and foundational grants, as well as reality of a Business Improvement District or District Increment Finance District.
- *Partner:* Connect with local/regional/national organizations with overlapping goals. Use these coalitions to open additional funding streams.
 - If desired, multiple municipalities can partner together to fund a shared regional Liaison.
- *Execute:* Solidify and secure funding commitments from town, state, or other organization before hiring.



Consider an expansion
the liaison's role and
capacity with a regional
'sharing' of resources.

Regional and state
funding support

Partners with:
Businesses
Advocacy groups
Downtown Committee
Friends of the Town House

Sustainable funding for position is most likely if other town administrative tasks are accomplished as part of the role. However, the position cannot be simply administrative. **A combined Town Administrator/Economic Development Director position is worth serious consideration.**

Approach to the Downtown Liaison role and relationships
Source: Agency Landscape + Planning

Process Cnt'd

Draft a formal job description.

- *Write:* Craft job description based on conceptual description developed during brainstorming.
 - Modify job based on funding received, both in terms of position expectations and hours per week.
- *Approve:* Job description is approved by funding source (town human resources or grantees, if necessary).

Publicize and market opportunity.

- *Advertise:* Post position widely.
 - Use conventional job posting sites, specialized sites (i.e.-Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association, Central Mass Regional Planning Agency), and listservs.
 - Ask local universities that train economic development professionals to list the position.
- *Discuss:* Use informal word-of-mouth to spread the word about the position locally.

Interview and hire.

- *Collaborate:* Create a strong and diverse hiring committee to gain a variety of perspectives and position legitimacy.
 - Include local business owner(s)
- *Interview:* Interview all candidates with the same general set of questions and in the same environment.
- *Check:* Follow up on reference of top one or two candidates.
- *Offer:* Make a clear offer and express excitement about the chosen candidate.
- *Plan:* Have a backup candidate in mind in case the leading choice does not accept the position.

Onboard and introduce.

- *Tour:* Visit all businesses and business owners in the area. Provide a one on one connection.
- *Set Expectations:* Articulate if position requires grant writing and funding to continue.
 - Make clear if that is responsibility of Liaison.
- *Welcome:* Introduce person to fellow staff. Provide access to business and community information.

support Town decisions and orchestrate project and policy implementation

lead grant writing

manage downtown project funds

attract new businesses

improve and market the downtown experience

A list of priority tasks for a Downtown Liaison as stated in public presentations and stakeholder conversations.






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	 A Massachusetts Downtown Initiative grant provided Technical Assistance. The Town provided staff support and early coordination.
Timeframe	 The process took approximately 18 months. This timeframe was expanded due to the pandemic and extensive community education undertaken as part of the process.
Risk	 Political , property owner, tenant and other stakeholder consensus for preferred organization model is required to successfully establish a downtown organization
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

Town of Reading Sponsored Pop-Up Event

ReImagine Reading
Pizza and Ice Cream Social



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

A pop-up public event to help launch a downtown organization featuring local businesses, free pizza, ice cream, photo booth and more

Please RSVP on Eventbrite by 9/16: https://ice_cream_social.eventbrite.com

ALL ARE WELCOME!

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



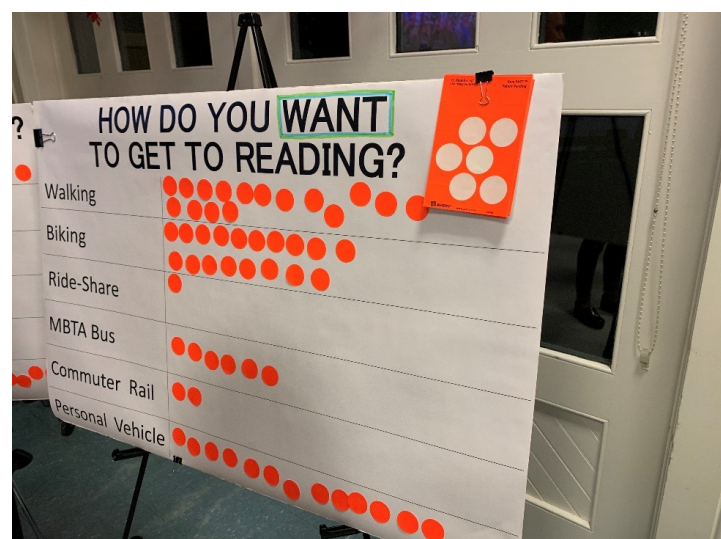
ReImagine Reading
SURVEY!



Or by web: <https://www.readingma.gov/reimagine-reading>





Scan QR Code with your phone camera to take the survey

More Info on back 



Stakeholder engagement process

Create A Tenant Recruitment And Retention Program In Line with North Brookfield's Consumer Capacity

Category		Revenue & Sales
Location		Study Area
Origin		Market study, focus groups, community contacts, site visit, survey results
Budget		<p>High Budget (>\$200,000)</p> <p>Funding: Value Add Producer Grants (for 2022), Build Back Better Regional Challenge (American Recovery Act), Mass Development Real Estate Services Technical Assistance Grant</p>
Timeframe		Medium Term (5- 10 years)
Risk		High Risk – Intense collaboration required among stakeholders. Strategy must be responsive to fluid consumer needs and preferences.
Key Performance Indicators		# and types of new businesses opening downtown in a 5 to 10 year period, increased pedestrian traffic Downtown, # of Downtown programs and attendance at such programs
Partners & Resources		<p>Partners: property owners, businesses, consumers, visitors, town officials, Downtown Development Committee, Friends of the Town House, Planning Board, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and other artistic, cultural, and agricultural based organizations, neighboring municipalities and local economies, local banks, S.C.O.R.E, Entrepreneurship for All</p> <p>Resources: regional orchards and farms (Brookfield Orchards, Ashland Farm, Farmer Matt, Stone Cow Brewery at Carter & Stevens Farm), ESRI Tapestry</p>

Diagnostic

North Brookfield has a vision of transforming Downtown into an arts and cultural center with dining and shopping opportunities. Implementing this goal will take skill, as the small town's size and distance to larger communities may limit opportunities. COVID-19 aid however, provides resources and funding to investigate possible futures for Downtown.

- Future tenants that align with North Brookfield's goals will provide greater economic opportunities to Downtown businesses.
- Recruiting businesses that promote foot traffic can help Downtown rebound after COVID-19 revenue losses.
- Study areas has a lower median household income than the state by \$12,450. Appropriately matching business types with the town's disposable income and consumer habits will ensure a viable long-term Downtown.
- Creative industries can enliven Downtown with activities, events, and places to gather that foster social connection in the event of future COVID-19 restrictions.

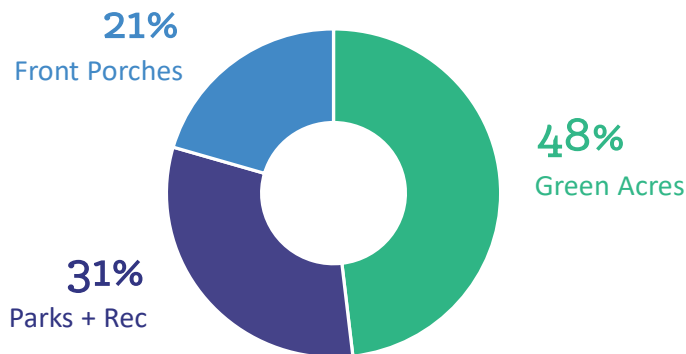
Action Item

- Identify the "right" tenant mix for North Brookfield. Disposable income, consumer spending, and population size all contribute to this analysis.
- Emerge from the pandemic with a clear vision for business recruitment and retention.
- Attract creative industries to locate Downtown and host events.



The breadth of businesses found Downtown is difficult to identify. Non-cohesive signage highlight only a few current tenants
Source: Agency Landscape + Planning

It is imperative to understand the financial, economic, and educational make up of both North Brookfield and the Downtown study area. There should be shopping options for various budgets.



Spending

Market analysis identifies 3 customer types in North Brookfield. All “types” are conscious of budgets, spend money on activities, and enjoy the outdoors. Spending habits should dictate Downtown tenant mix.

Green Acres

Median Age: 44

- Primarily **married couples**, most with **no children**
- Enjoy outdoor living, home improvement projects, and gardening

- Cautious spenders, with a focus on quality
- Spend money on tools, hobbies (hunting/fishing, etc.)
- Spend **above** national average on:
 - Food
 - Apparel & Services
 - Entertainment + Recreation

Parks + Rec

Median Age: 41

- Primarily two income **married couples**, **approaching retirement**
- Take advantage of local parks + recreation activities

- Budget conscious, stock up on staples
- Financially shrewd, research big ticket purchases
- Spend **less than** national average on:
 - Food
 - Apparel & Services
 - Entertainment + Recreation

Front Porches

Median Age: 35

- Young families with children or single households
- More than half are renters
- Seek adventure and strive to have fun

- Friends and family influence buying decisions
- Price is important-limited incomes lead to less adventurous shopping
- Spend **less than** national average on:
 - Food
 - Apparel & Services
 - Entertainment & Recreation

Description of North Brookfield consumers and consumer spending habits
 Source: Esri Tapestry, U.S Census

Process

Brainstorm and envision future of Downtown.

- *Clarify:* Determine town's goals regarding tenant recruitment and retention programs.
- *Articulate:* Define which businesses should be attracted. Which existing businesses would leave a gap if they left?
- *Listen:* Meet with existing businesses owners to hear which business they believe would complement their own.
 - Meet with residents to hear what they would like to see Downtown.

Conduct a market analysis to determine economic gaps and strengths.

*Decide if a consultant is necessary to carry out this phase.

- *Understand:* Analyze Downtown consumer capacity.
 - Investigate disposable income ranges within walking/driving distances and similar sector competition in nearby areas.
- *Determine:* Define Downtown's market gaps.
 - What retail, service, or business uses can be supported Downtown?
- *Research:* Understand the economies of aspirational industries.
 - Determine what subsidies or public/non-profit actions might be needed to attract them.

Identify resources.

- *Identify:* Determine resources (local, regional, state or private) that exist to fund effort.
 - Understand if they are the correct scale for this program.

Develop tenant recruitment and retention policies.

- *Create:* Write a draft set of policies based on data and brainstorming that would guide recruitment.
- *Share:* Present these draft policies to stakeholders such as business leaders and residents for response.
- *Edit:* Revise the draft policies as needed and finalize a set of guiding policies.

Design a program.

- *Create:* Craft a recruitment program and strategy appropriately aligns community aspirations, market realities, and possible policies and resources.
 - The financial market should serve a variety of price points
- *Game Plan:* Develop a program work plan for the program,
 - Include staffing needs and trouble shoot for unknowns.
 - Determine metrics to gauge success.

Launch programs, policies, and recruitment tactics.

- *Publicize:* Use social media, print, radio, local television, and other media sources about new programs and policies.
 - Build perception of North Brookfield as a small business friendly town.
- *Maintain:* Periodically audit Town codes and by laws. Check for alignment with recruitment and retention aims. Amend as necessary.
- *Reach Out:* Start local. Connect with neighboring farmers, creatives, restaurant owners, and small business whom are well loved. Propose they open new locations as Downtown's anchor tenants.



North Brookfield Tenant Recruitment Considerations

LEVERAGE CURRENT SUCCESSES

North Brookfield lies within a region rich with agricultural tradition. Many cider houses, wine producers, and farms are nearby. Determine if expanding their presence in town, like through a Downtown market, would be of interest.

WORK COLLABORATIVELY

Discuss economic goals with neighboring towns. See if there is political will to collaborate on attracting complementary industries and grow assets collectively.

MARKET THE MARKET

Once a recruitment strategy is in place, imagine a larger marketing and branding approach. Publicize the town's desired tenants (artists, makers, craftspeople) and any financial incentives offered to those industries.

While it is important to communicate the town's quality of life in these recruitment initiatives, it is more important to highlight a strong market. Entrepreneurs want to know they can make money in North Brookfield, in addition to enjoying the town's lifestyle.



Downtown (and nearby) already boast a wide variety of tenant types. However, it will be important to recruit tenants that increase foot traffic
Source: Agency Landscape + Planning, Facebook

Undergo an Identity and Branding Effort

Category		Public Realm
Location		Downtown, specifically along North Main Street, School Street, and Summer Street
Origin		North Brookfield community and RRP community facilitator
Budget		Low (<\$50,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Medium Risk – Branding can be something that people rally around, but also surface differences of opinion around identity and aesthetics
Key Performance Indicators		Increased number of visitors at key businesses or destinations; increased consumer spending Downtown; increased visits to specific websites; increased hotel nights or other tourism measures
Partners & Resources		<p>Partners: Downtown property and business owners, tenants, Town Administration, active volunteers, marketing/branding/graphic design team or support</p> <p>Resources: MassDevelopment Initiative Assistance Grants, Planning Assistance Grants (possible)</p>



Downtown buildings have individual character, but do not tie to a greater brand strategy

Source: Agency Landscape + Planning



There is interest in the idea of the "apple" as a centerpiece for North Brookfield's identity

Source: Agency Landscape + Planning

Diagnostic

North Brookfield's Downtown area has a committed community dedicated to its success and willing to jump in and take on big projects. While the community's love for the Downtown is evident, this passion has not been channeled into a consistent brand. This brand could be externalized beyond those "in the know" to tell the story of what makes North Brookfield special and a great experience to visit, shop at, and frequent for services. This lack of a unified brand extends to a lack of consistent and clear business signage. COVID-19 has brought challenges to the success of the Downtown that illuminate the need for better information, attractions, and cohesion.

Within and after the pandemic, a stronger brand that unifies Downtown businesses and organizations can set the stage for unified marketing to attract more people to Downtown as a district, not just as a series of individual places. Likewise, it can be a first step toward future capital projects like public signage and beautification, collaboration with businesses around private signage standards, and promotion of North Brookfield within the greater region. Distinct from a formal Town seal, a district brand can result in a more accessible logo, colors and visual guidelines, narrative, and messaging.

The branding process will "get everyone on the same page." Developing a clear and unified brand will give passionate North Brookfield advocates the tools and basic information needed to tell a powerful, exciting story about their Downtown and will help brokers, advertisers, marketers, tourism professionals, and others create the campaigns and communications to promote the Downtown, the Town in general, and the region.

Action Item

- Create brand guidelines
- Undertake a signage study and implement cohesive signage and wayfinding Downtown.
- Deploy the brand specifically along North Main Street, School Street, and Summer Street.
- Amend zoning code (as/if needed) to foster desired private signage
- **Long Term Goal: Coordinate with nearby jurisdictions for a local marketing and tourism effort.**

Process

Create a Downtown Brand

- *Strategize:* Determine who will lead the branding effort, if it will be conducted internally or via consultation, and the scope of work, including precise study areas.
 - Depending on the level of committee and community engagement as well as the level of detailed design, a process may take 3-6 months.
- *Define:* Determine if the focus of the study will begin with only Downtown North Brookfield and be expanded later in collaboration around a regional strategy, or if it will start regionally and grow to a focused implementation plan.
 - Reach out to build partners regionally for either scenario, establishing communication and collaboration methods.
- *Acquire Funds:* Gather funds from grants, technical assistance, and/or partners to fund the process. Create an RFP and secure outside support and technical expertise.
- *Research:* Understand the current brand experience, strengths, and weaknesses, focused specifically on North Main Street, School Street, and Summer Street.
 - This may include gaining an understanding of customer experience, visitor or user touch points, downtown's sales history, customer satisfaction or experience information, key products and market edge, culture and history, and competitive or collaborative landscape in the region.
 - This step may include data analysis, surveys, listening sessions, interviews, and focus groups.
 - Out of the research phase, create a summary of findings and a draft vision and mission.
- *Envision:* Describe and outline North Brookfield's aspirational personality, brand story, audience focus, and target market.
 - For example, North Brookfield has a historic and agricultural based brand around apples and cidering
 - This step may include drafting core values, a SWOT analysis, and outlining North Brookfield's competitive advantages.
- *Develop:* Create a draft brand strategy or set of branding options. These drafts should include taglines and narrative for the area's unique position, key messages, tone or voice, and a possible name for the area. Based on feedback, refine the strategy and select a single preferred direction.

- *Refine:* Use the preferred direction to create brand collateral options.
 - Include elements like a visual logo, visual style and standards, colors, fonts, image or photo use style, and area names.
- *Deploy:* Establish a priority list of ways to implement the brand through print, digital, and physical strategies.

Use The Preferred Brand as the Basis for a Signage and Beautification Strategy.

- *Acquire Funds:* Gather funds from grants, technical assistance, local resources and/or partners to fund the process. Create an RFP and secure outside support and technical expertise.
- *Craft a Strategy:* Undertake implementation studies to develop a phased roll out process.
 - Phases would include deploying the brand by updating items such as: public and private signage, banners, or playful elements like murals, iconic moments, and building wraps.
- *Begin Downtown:* Deploy the brand initially along North Main Street, School Street, and Summer Street. Focus on high impact, visible elements that fit North Brookfield's playful personality, such as local art, banners, and colorful elements at the key intersection.
- *Consider:* Work with the Town to evaluate if the zoning code needs adjustments to enable desired private signage outcomes. Employ incentives, such as small grant programs or a public pledge, to nudge businesses to update signage.
- *Expand:* Coordinate with nearby jurisdictions for a local marketing and tourism effort that nests the new North Brookfield Downtown brand within a larger regional strategy.

I AM STRONG

I AM POSITIVE

I AM RESILIENT

I AM CONSIDERATE

I AM WELCOME

I AM HOPEFUL

I AM **HERST**



HELLO

Welcome back.

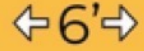
We're so glad to see you. Please be considerate of others to keep Amherst safe and healthy.



WASH YOUR HANDS



WEAR A MASK



SOCIAL DISTANCE

WELCOME BACK

AMHERST DOWNTOWN



#IAMherst Welcome






REVENUES
& SALES

Provided by SME Consultant

Amherst Business Improvement District

Location

Amherst MA

Origin	Amherst BID, Downtown Amherst Foundation, Town of Amherst, Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce
Budget	 <p>Low Budget: Materials \$15,000/ Graphics \$1,500 Marketing \$2,500</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Immediate impact but with a message that can and will continue long past the pandemic with simple alterations and replacements</p>
Risk	 <p>Every moment of this pandemic has been immediate and high risk for downtowns and Main Streets across the globe. There was never time, money or energy to waste.</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Social Media reaction. Business stability. Consumer Confidence .
Partners & Resources	Tiger Web graphics, Downtown Amherst Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce
Diagnostic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amherst MA was effectively “shut down” 3 weeks prior to the Shelter in Place orders on March 13. The University and College with in 48 hours closed and sent their students, faculty and staff home, effectively removing close to 40,000 residents of our community. Our downtown and surrounding areas became a ghost town overnight. We did not see the robust summer that the “summer vacation destinations” enjoyed while case numbers were relatively low. Amherst business hovered at around 20-25% of previous years and our unemployment at an all time high of 22% in the State today remains at one of the highest at 5.1%. Consumer confidence during the pandemic with our student population and spikes had to be addressed as did the “anti-student” sentiment that continued to grow with each spike. The #IAMherst campaign addressed head on our demands that in our BID area masks were to be worn, distancing was to be respected and that we took this Virus seriously. Just as important to this messaging was that ALL are WELCOME in Amherst and that we are a strong, resilient, compassionate and open community to all residents.
Action Item	Create a marketing campaign that can launch Amherst Wide on all available platforms addressing the immediate concerns of the pandemic while reminding all that we are welcome, safe and in this together.

Process

- ① Identify the need for rebranding for Pandemic Life
 - ② Bring Tiger Web design team on board
 - ③ Start with key elements of 1.Mask 2. Hand washing 3. Social Distance
 - ④ Look to how to "lighten" and make less threatening
 - ⑤ Establish "emoticons"
 - ⑥ #IAMherst – borrowed from incredible ad campaign seen in Amsterdam
 - ⑦ Brainstorm of who "we are": Strong! Resilient! Etc.
 - ⑧ Maintain thread that We, YOU, I am/are WELCOME – keep in mind that we want this campaign to go past COVID-19
 - ⑨ Be able to separate with ease the COVID related parts. IE: hand wash, mask, distance
 - ⑩ Selfie Wall concept – large scale – find placement
- Distribution: 100+ Light post banners
 - *Wear a Mask, Wash Your Hands, 6' Distance Posters in over 200 Amherst wide storefronts*
 - *Delivered with FREE PPE: masks, gloves, hand sanitizer*
 - 12 Sandwich boards Amherst wide
 - 8 – 12' tall window "Selfie wall" I AM & Welcome Back facing UMASS campus
 - Continued Print and Social Media
 - 20+ Town Ambassadors promoting mask awareness, health and safety wear the "I AMherst" shirts

Continued messaging and support with and for businesses that Amherst businesses take this pandemic seriously, we take safety measures, we support you and are grateful that you support local business.

AT&T

10:57 AM

38%

AMHERSTDOWNTOWN

Posts



Amherst, Massachusetts



Liked by mindvforma and 26 others



Social media posts.

Post Pandemic

- The #IAMherst campaign will continue post pandemic with timeless messaging that our community both visitors, residents and passers through are WELCOME
- The Campaign serves this community through uncertain and certain times and maintains a positive, happy and heartening message for all when in our downtown.
- The mask, hands and distance signs will outlive their relevance but the #IAMherst signs will continue to serve our area with bright, open messaging



Takeout & Delivery Options Scan Image QR Code







Support Local • Eat Global
amherstdowntown.com/takeout

Fridge magnet QR code to current up to date list of dining establishments . 10,000 given out at start of fall semesters to UMASS & Amherst College students



Amend Zoning Code to Allow Flexibility in Use and Encourage Greater Business Mix

Category		Private Realm
Location		Study Area
Origin		Site visit, research into zoning code, Subject Matter Expert consultation, vision of Downtown expressed in Focus Groups
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000) Funding: Planning Assistance Grants , HUD Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant , Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks Grant (ARPA funds) , Hometown Grant (possible) , Mass Development Real Estate Services Technical Assistance Grant
Timeframe		Medium Term (5- 10 years) <i>*Many steps can be taken now. Drafting changes and gaining approval may take some time</i>
Risk		Medium/High Risk - zoning changes may be slow; require buy in/a united vision between local government, property owners, and private businesses. New rules will need to be in place for a period of time, despite inevitable requests for changes and relief
Key Performance Indicators		Frequency of activation of alleyways and side streets, cohesive branding/ facades, greater ease for businesses receiving town approval for zoning changes
Partners & Resources		Partners: Board of Selectmen, local businesses, Town Clerk, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Agency Resources: Current Comprehensive planning process

Diagnostic

In North Brookfield, the onset of COVID-19 did not usher in increased outside dining or the commandeering of sidewalks for gathering spaces as it did in other communities. The Downtown instead appeared to hibernate until restrictions lifted. There are many causes for this response. However, it is suspected the current zoning code was a hindrance to flexible changes.

- Clear, consistent, and easy-to-implement standards for business appearances will help develop a consistent appearance for Downtown North Brookfield.
- Activating side streets and alleyways Downtown, most of which are privately owned, is of particular interest.
- Effort would help Downtown adapt to new norms and practices.
- Economy would be more resilient with the ability to adjust their business models more quickly in response to COVID-19 resurgence (Delta) or other events.



Action Item

- Streamline small use changes zoning amendments.
- Activate private spaces, like alleyways and side streets, in creative/commercial ways.
- Encourage originality in facade and building design while retaining historic elements of loved Downtown architecture.
- Create an illustrative "Zoning 101 Manual," that simplifies and clarifies zoning code for average person.



Alleyways and side streets provide opportunities for unique seating, artwork, or event space

Source: Agency Landscape + Planning, Downtown Bozeman Plan

Process

Brainstorm zoning goals.

- *Articulate:* Determine goals for promoting code changes and design standards
- *Research:* Create a list of towns with admired qualities, be they foot traffic, curb appeal, or variety of business types. Acquire images of these places. Investigate zoning codes of similar sized emulated towns.
 - List essential qualities worth replicating, as specifically as possible. Are they changes to the public spaces? The uses? The appearance of the commercial frontages?
- *Listen:* Speak with owners of the privately-owned alleys. Determine aspirations or concerns about use of those spaces that might inform the potential for more active use.

Audit existing code.

- *Identify:* Find key elements in code that affect how businesses and property owners make business decisions. A consultant or the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Agency could help clarify zoning codes.
 - Ask Planning Board and Zoning Board to articulate, in as clear language as possible, what uses are and are not allowed Downtown.
- *Match:* Compare uses to aspirations. Determine if business types the Town is interested in attracting are permitted in the appropriate locations. Are the uses defined sufficiently? Are the size caps consistent with Town goals?
 - **Limits on retail size and amount permitted on one floor should be closely examined.**
- *Examine:* Evaluate the process an existing business must undergo to change uses.
 - Develop case studies to do so. How would a bookstore add a coffee shop? Is it easy for office add a workshop? How long would permitting take to convert an old factory to a gym?
 - Determine if the level of review is proportional to the change requested. Define what is considered a cumbersome process.
 - Evaluate subdivision regulations to determine ways to adjust that allow for more active use of alleyways and side streets, such as by adjusting frontage requirements.
- *Discuss:* Meet with Downtown business and property owners to identify issues and opportunities they see in the code. Ask what design changes they may be willing to adopt in return for others meeting the same standards.
- *Analyze:* Examine zoning map and overlays to determine if they cover the appropriate Downtown areas.
 - **An initial look at the overlay maps suggests the Central Business (BC) district could be examined to determine if five separate areas is consistent with town goals.**

Draft revised zoning and subdivision language.

- **Decide if a consultant is necessary to carry out remaining process needs.**
- *Write:* Draft changes to zoning language that better meet town goals.
 - Draft changes (if needed) to subdivision regulations that may allow for frontage along private alleys and side streets.

Process Cnt'd

Draft Design Guidelines and/or standards.

Design Guidelines and standards are often highly illustrative documents. While a zoning code may state what types of uses are allowed in an area, Design Guidelines aim to articulate what buildings and amenities should look like. There are essentially "best practices" or agreed upon standards. Design guidelines can provide examples of preferred signs types, exterior building materials, or types of lighting. High quality design guidelines are able to balance cohesion with individuality. It is most certainly an art. Often, it can be easier to begin by imaging what a community does not want to see and create guidelines that restrict undesired aesthetics. However, these guidelines can lack teeth if there is no active and responsible entity to enforce them. Design Guidelines are a good first step towards Form Based Code, another tool described on pg. 66

- **Write:** Draft design guidelines.
 - Determine which elements are recommended but not required and/or design standards which are required unless waived.
 - Prepare for Planning Board application.
- **Determine:** Decide if the guidelines and/or standards will apply to all changes to Downtown buildings or only ones requiring other board review.
 - For example, changes to exterior illuminated signs may be subject to both design guidelines and board review. Sandwich boards may only be subject to design guidelines.
 - Draft language accordingly.

Review drafts informally and provide explanations.

- **Communicate:** Prepare short explanatory documents and/or web pages to outline proposed changes and benefits.
 - Make these pages highly illustrative. Show, do not just tell, what are the preferred standards.
- **Review:** Discuss potential changes with stakeholders. Revisions are easier to make in an informal setting before a formal submission.
- **Review and approval.**
- **Coordinate:** Use formal town process to pass zoning text and map amendments, subdivision regulation changes, and design guidelines/standards.
 - Include Planning Board as required.

Disseminate changes in a fun and engaging way

- **Design:** Work with graphic designers, artists, and creatives to make an illustrative manual to explain new code and their effects.
 - The [Detroit Land Guides](#) and [Philadelphia Administrative Manual](#) are excellent examples.
- **Publicize:** Distribute these resources at town hall, frequent community gathering spaces, and possibly through the mail.

Detroit's Land Guides display zoning requirements and opportunities with easy to understand graphics and jargon free language. Guides can be downloaded online. Additional toolkits exist for urban agriculture, accessory buildings, corner lots, and many more!

Property boundaries and setbacks

Before you start drawing your plot plan, you'll want to know your property's boundaries and where you can place different features on your site. Your property is composed of one or more parcels and is defined by its property boundaries. Within these boundaries, your use of the land may also be impacted by setbacks, existing buildings, and your property's relationship to city-owned streets, alleys or utility areas.

How to identify property lines

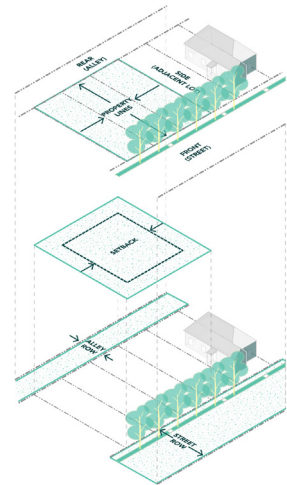
General information about your property lines are available on the Detroit parcel viewer, www.cityofdetroit.github.io/parcel-viewer including its width, length and area.

What is a setback?

A setback defines the required distance between your property boundaries and the buildings or features you plan to place on your property. For example, in the drawing at right, the inner "setback" rectangle defines the area of your property that can include structures or features like compost. The Site Design Guide discusses some important things to know about setbacks for features like crops and orchards ([page 10](#)) or compost ([page 14](#)).

What is a right of way?

A right of way (ROW) is a public corridor, adjacent to several properties that allows the movement of people and infrastructure. It can include public sidewalks, roads and alleys or utility easements.



Plot Plan Example #2

"Hoophouse Garden, LLC"
1234 Fifth Street
Detroit, MI 01234

Draw your site:

- Property lines
- Sidewalks along edge of property
- Required setbacks for plantings, structures, and other items from the property line

Draw all existing and proposed:

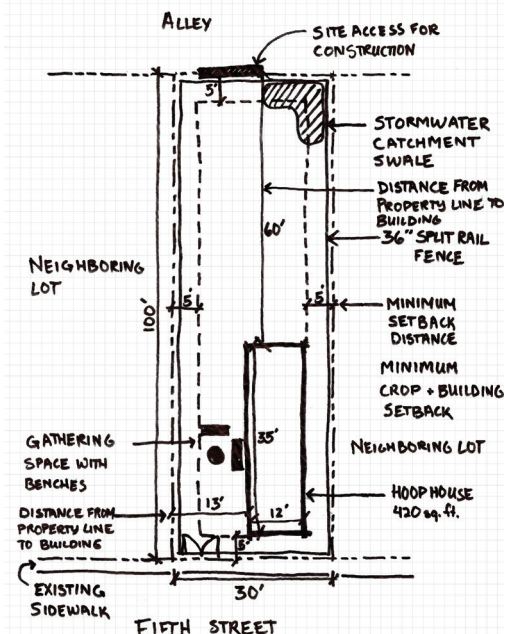
- Structures
- Fences or other features
- Driveways or other vehicle access locations
- Water access
- Rain catchment systems or rain gardens
- Trees
- Signage
- Compost, brush and/or trash storage
- Temporary restrooms and screening
- Benches and sculptures or other art elements
- Paths

Draw in the areas where you will have:

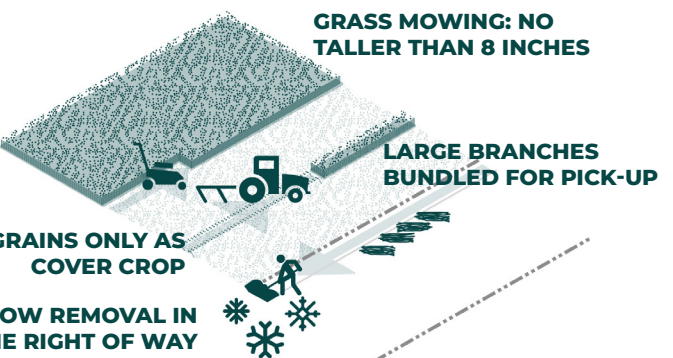
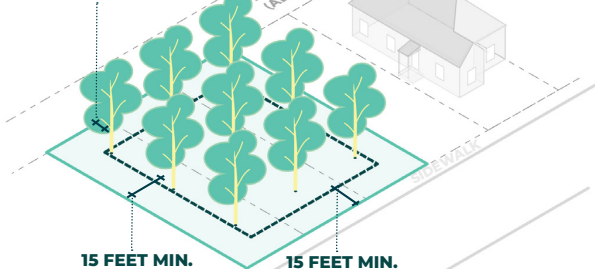
- Row crops/planting areas
- Raised beds

Label all existing and/or proposed:

- Seed banking, permaculture techniques and pollinator habitat
- Streets and alleys next to the property
- Fences with heights and materials
- Dimensions and area of structures in feet
- Tool storage and chemical/fuel storage needs
- Utility poles and fire hydrants



5 FEET MIN.



Other online tools, like WhatisFAR.org from the Center for Urban Pedagogy, provide interactive teaching tools about the effects of particular urban planning concepts. These tools are meant to empower community members to advocate for their neighborhoods.

North Brookfield Zoning Considerations

SIDE STREETS AND ALLEYS

Support commercial and creative uses in these spaces. Look to mural, public art, rotating exhibitions, and pop-up events, as well as low-cost street furniture.

SIGNAGE

Allow for sandwich boards and signage on Main Street. Standardize guidelines so signage is at a pedestrian scale and entices foot traffic to enter stores and spaces.

TOWN HOUSE

Look into zoning to see what is allowed by-right in the Town House. Imagine creative uses that can begin immediately.

LANDSCAPING

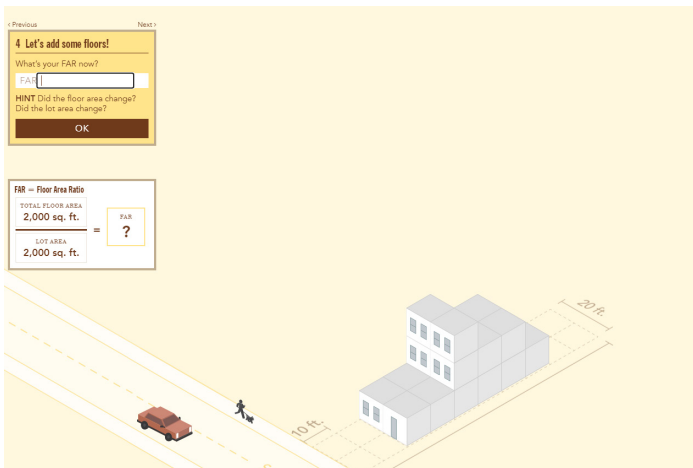
Consider requiring landscaping in private surface parking lots (i.e.- landscape buffers, street trees, etc) to reduce the scale of the lot and urban heat island effect, as well as beautify the area.

SKILLED LABOR/TRADE

Consider removing the 4 person maximum for skilled trade/labor in the Central Business District. This can assist in acquiring light manufacturing, makers spaces, "ghost kitchens," co-working manufacturing, shared kitchen, and studios Downtown.

"MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT"

An initial investigation suggests North Brookfield's current definition of "mixed-use development" may need greater clarification. As Downtown aims to recruit creative businesses, it may be asked to accommodate industries of the future, like ghost kitchens and communal manufacturing space. It is unclear if these are allowed in the current definition of "mixed-use development."



In these interactive pages, participants learn about "Floor Area Ratio," a development term that effects the allowable height, size, and shape of buildings

Source: Center for Urban Pedagogy, WhatisFAR.org



Zoning for a Resilient Downtown



Provided by SME Consultant Levine Planning Strategies, LLC

Location Burlington, VT

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

Diagnostic

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

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

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

Action Items

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

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

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

Process

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

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

Channel Creative Funding Sources Into Private Realm Improvements

Category		Private Realm
Location		Downtown Area (individual businesses and property owners)
Origin		Downtown Development Committee
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000) Funding: CDBG Funds, CARES Act, National Foundation for the Arts grant funding, Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund, MassDevelopment Underutilized Properties Program
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk – stakeholders have found consensus around the role of building owners in reinvestment in the beautification and vibrancy of downtown
Key Performance Indicators		Year of year change in downtown foot traffic; vacancy rate change, increased social media presence
Partners & Resources		Partners: The North Brookfield Downtown Development Committee, Board of Selectman, Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission <i>* There is no one agency or funding source that can do it alone – coordination will be critical to achieve the long term goals described in this recommendation</i>



Various storefronts along Summer Street and North Main Street
Source: Agency Landscape + Planning

Diagnostic

The quality of small downtowns – streets, sidewalks, plazas, green spaces, landscaping, public art, stores and buildings – is vital to attracting visitors, residents and business, and sustaining a strengthened and diverse, economic development strategy. It also contributes to the region's competitiveness and the image of the city, attracting people to live, work, and visit North Brookfield.

The Downtown is North Brookfield's economic center. The Town House and businesses that grew around it, stretched to the town's first rail lines. This development formed the very basis of Downtown's creative spirit and guided the city's resurgence after the Civil War. Today, with several major regional businesses employing hundreds of employees like Vibram and Healthwise Foundation, Downtown is the town's largest employment district.

Downtown is experiencing a wave of individual exterior investments to building facades, landscaping, and signage. The renovation of the Town House, securing of the Complete Streets project for North Main Street, and reinvestment in the old rail line as a regional trail, are all recent investments that distinguish Downtown from the Central Massachusetts region. Despite these recent investments, COVID-19 has put undue burden on businesses to shift business practices and increase visibility to attract customers. Given these pressures on businesses, many storefronts have shifted to messaging that conflicts with the town's historic character and zoning code, including LED signs, multiple window displays, and limited visibility between the interior of the store and the sidewalk. Decreased revenues during COVID-19 have also pushed off beautification efforts by businesses and property owners.

North Brookfield can benefit from a comprehensive and creative funding strategy that supports private realm improvements for all of its businesses and destinations, from the Town House and First Congregational Church to the small businesses that dot Summer Street and School Street.

Action Item

- Standardize storefronts and window displays.
- Engage in a comprehensive beautification effort for the Downtown. Build off the Complete Streets project for Main Street.
- Consider form-based code to enable a comprehensive Downtown character and preserve the area's small town feel.
- Take advantage of innovative funding strategies, like Patronicity, to support private realm investments.

Downtown Stockbridge preserves its historic small town character through standardized signage, lighting guidelines, and recommendations for landscape improvements through the town's comprehensive zoning code and historic overlay zone.



Source: Travel Massachusetts; New England Today Travel

Process

Standardize storefronts and window displays.

- *Catalogue:* Engage in an inventory of existing business signage, including adherence to the municipal/zoning code.
- *Analyze:* Assess how people are currently accessing businesses in Downtown today, identifying modes of travel, barriers, user types, and other patterns. Confirm boundaries and any existing sub-areas.
- *Discuss:* Convene Downtown businesses and property owners to understand decisions about building investments, including decisions about landscape, signage, window displays, and other exterior treatments.
- *Identify Funding:* Based on feedback from businesses and residents, establish funding sources for improvements that balance the needs of businesses and visitors. Funding could come from grants, technical assistance, and/or partners. The Town could also take advantage of innovative funding strategies, like crowdfunding (an example includes Patronicity), to support private realm investments.

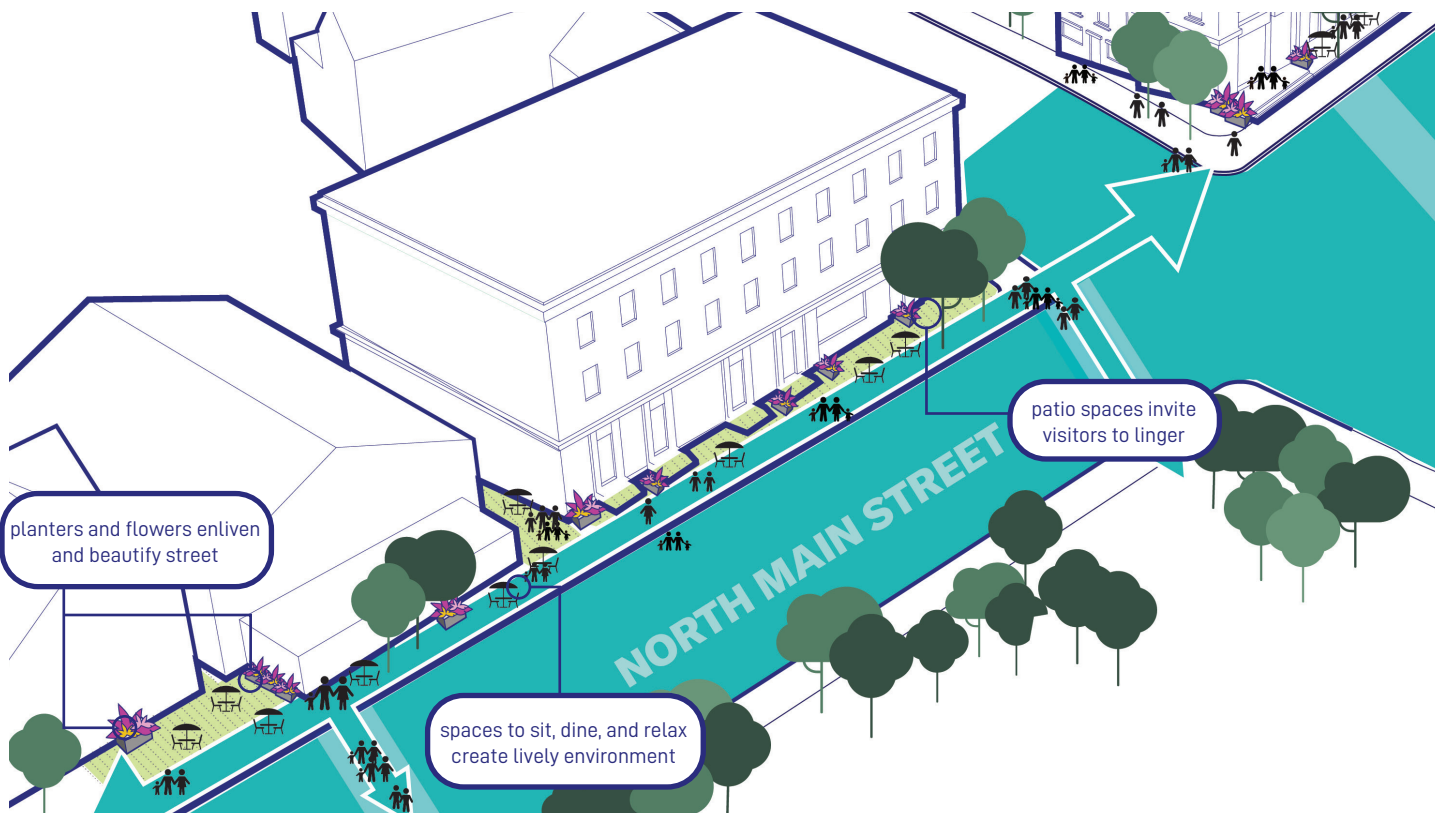
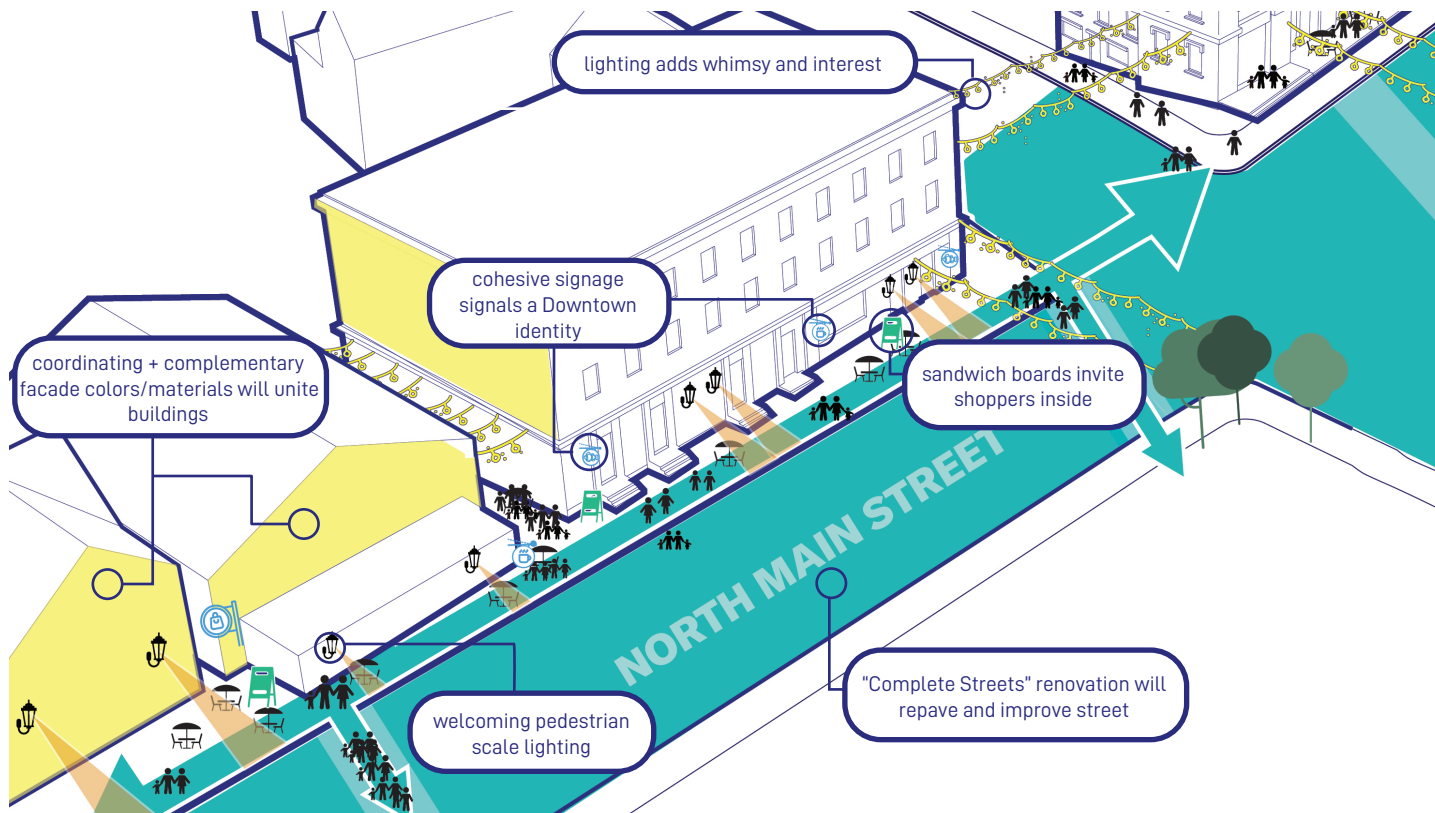
Craft a comprehensive beautification effort.

- *Decide on a Leader:* Identify what organization will lead the effort and who will engage private landholders and business owners.
- *Articulate:* Create a list of guidelines for landscape improvements including appropriate plants and trees. Consider other elements like landscape materiality, maintenance, and sight lines.
- *Pilot:* Implement a town-led grant program for private property owners or businesses to apply for funding for landscape improvements and other exterior beautification efforts.





Consider form-based code to preserve the small town feel of downtown.

Form based code is type of zoning that aims to regulate not only land use, but building form. Elements like building height, roof design, architectural elements, and how far the building is setback from the road can all be written into a form based code. This code is different from Design Guidelines in that they are written into law and highly enforceable.

- *Convene:* Unite separate groups of property owners and business owners to discuss opportunities and barriers to the current zoning code. Focus on issues related to signage and exterior improvements.
- *Co-Design:* Work with a planning consultant to engage stakeholders (including the Board of Selectmen, residents, and businesses) to draft recommendations for changes to the zoning code. At the beginning of these conversations, it will be important to discuss whether form-based code is appropriate for the Town, or if the Town would prefer to make strategic changes to the existing zoning code.
- *Implement:* Use local and federal grants and crowdfunding platforms to fund private realm improvements. The funds could support:
 - Codified signage standards
 - A pilot signage, standard window display and other storefront investments for volunteer partner businesses.



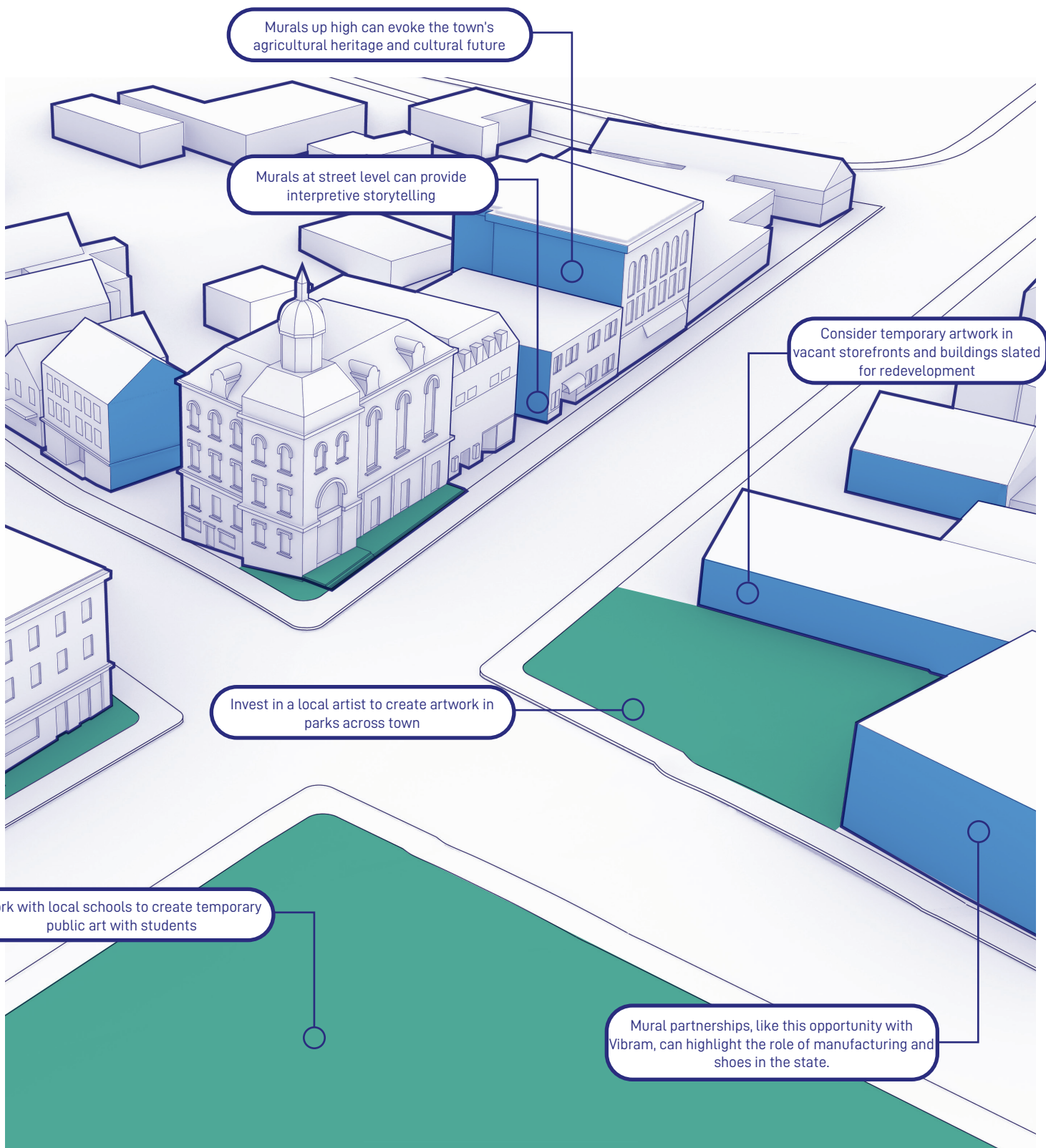
Partner to Bring Public Art and Cultural Amenities Downtown

Category		Private Realm & Cultural/Arts
Location		North Brookfield Downtown open spaces and blank facades
Origin		Downtown Development Committee
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000) - call for artists and compensation for artists; Board of Selectmen engagement
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Small Risk – There is some aversion to new investments that may detract from the historic legacy and character of the town. Investments would be focused on non-historic buildings or in public park spaces
Key Performance Indicators		Social media tags, total # of district banners installed, pedestrian foot traffic numbers
Partners & Resources		<p>Partners: Public Art Network at Americans for the Arts (PAN), New England Foundation for the Arts, Central Mass. + Metropolitan Area Planning Councils, The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC)</p> <p>Resources: Mass Cultural Council (funding and call for artist resources)</p>



North Brookfield buildings with blank facades that encompass over 60% of the building's exterior are good candidates for a mural or other public art investment

Source: Agency Landscape + Planning



Opportunities for vertical public art are highlighted in blue and sculptural public art in green.

Source: Agency Landscape + Planning

Resources Cnt'd

Patronicity - Helps to crowd source funding for a variety of project types, with a focus on community-led and community benefiting place-making projects

T-Mobile Hometown Grants -To build/rebuild/refresh community spaces that help foster local connections in town

Grow Grant - Fund to support non-profit or volunteer groups to engage stakeholders in a planning or project process and bring more voices and lived experiences into core decision-making processes

Central Berkshire Fund - To fund projects, programs, capital improvements and general operating support of initiatives that benefit the community in arts and culture, early childhood development, environment, and health and social services

Action Items

- Identify a private realm/artist liaison to facilitate the process of identifying a site for the art installation and coordination with the artist.
- Identify the site(s) for public art.
- Identify funding sources, permitting requirements, and maintenance needs for artwork.
- Ensure public art and cultural investments reflect the diverse nature of the town, its full history, and its residents.

Process

Identify a Private Realm/Artist Liaison.

- *Leverage Existing Resources:* Take advantage of the Massachusetts Cultural Council's resource applications for "Calls for Artists" to cater an application process to North Brookfield.
- *Organize:* Ensure that the artist has a contact within the municipality who can help navigate permitting processes, access to space and equipment, and help build relationships with other areas of municipal government such as schools and libraries. Consider working under the auspices of an existing organization such as the Downtown Development Committee.



Marka 27, Downtown Worcester, MA
Source: Steven King photography

Process Cnt'd

Identify site(s) for public art.

- *Determine Possibilities:* Assess ownership of all the building facades in Downtown.
- *Find Advocates:* Survey local businesses and building owners to see who would be interested in "donating" empty wall space or underutilized outdoor space for a temporary (or permanent) mural or other public art piece.
- *Collaborate:* Meet with Planning Department to discuss opportunities for temporary uses that would not require changing zoning or getting variances. This will avoid long application processes and time intensive legislative processes
- *Engage:* Approach owners of vacant properties and ask if spaces could be "borrowed" on a very short-term basis for creatives to sell products. The Liaison manages relationship with property owners and works with the Town to create a short-term agreement that avoids dealing with zoning or other formal processes.
- *Insure:* The Liaison would also carry insurance for all of the art projects.

Create Culturally Sensitive and Inclusive Public Art Investments.

- *Design With:* Building a welcoming and inclusive community renewal after the pandemic requires that the Town be purposeful about artists that are chosen and artwork that is created. Any decisions about what is funded should engage a multitude of town stakeholders - including those often left out of traditional planning processes.



Free Humanity at the Union-Street Lynn Community Health Center
Source: Lynn, MA



Askew One, Downtown Worcester, MA
Source: Steven King photography



Downtown Springfield, MA Vacant Storefront
 Temporary Mural
 Source: Downtown Springfield



Imagine (Artist) Allston, MA
 Source: Karen Tran (Photographer)



Best Practice

Bow Market Courtyard



Cultural/Arts

Somerville, MA

Previously an unused storage building, Bow Market will provide much-needed, small-scale storefronts to established and aspiring food vendors, retailers, and artists from Somerville and Greater Boston. Over 30 new, owner-operated businesses will open in 2018.

Bow Market will not only be a shopping and eating destination, it will also be a home for the arts. Our vision, in addition to providing affordable space for makers, cooks and artists, is to transform the courtyard into a place where Somerville artists can present their work in a safe and protected environment. Here's where we need your help.

Just as the brick-and-mortar spaces are designed to support Somerville's small, local businesses, the courtyard is designed to help showcase Somerville's amazing artists.

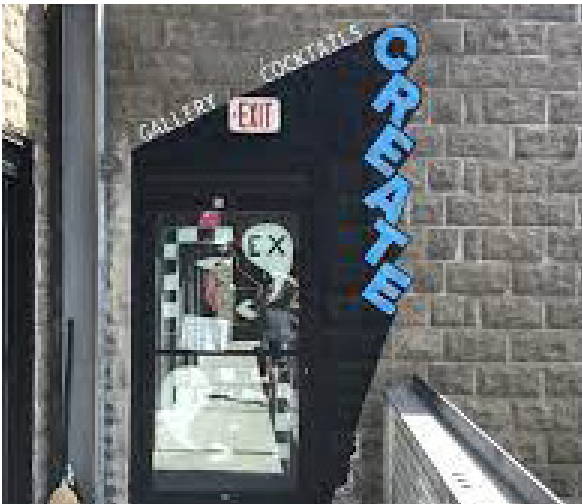
The funds raised from this campaign went toward an Artists in Residence program that enabled painters/sculptors/visual artists/performing artists to use the courtyard as their canvas, lead workshops, curate shows in our gallery space, and create large scale murals and installations that will inspire the public and spark conversation.

Through crowdfunding the Bow Market courtyard was transformed into a community space with murals and wall infrastructure to support an on-going public art program, lighting that showcases installations and murals and creates a safe environment for visitors, and flexible, sturdy, all-season seating.

Somerville Community Corporation and other community groups partnered to assist in programming the courtyard with markets, festivals, and other public events that bring residents together in an inclusive, family-friendly setting.

Bow Market Cnt'd

- Partnership with the Somerville Arts Council for active programming and to facilitate the mural programming.
- Murals within Bow Market surround the exterior second story retail shops as well as the first level restaurants and bars. Murals were also commissioned in the interior community



Source: Bow Market, Studio Fresh (top); Blind Fox Art for Hooked Fish Shop (bottom)



Source: Bow Market, ©2019 Christian Philips Photography







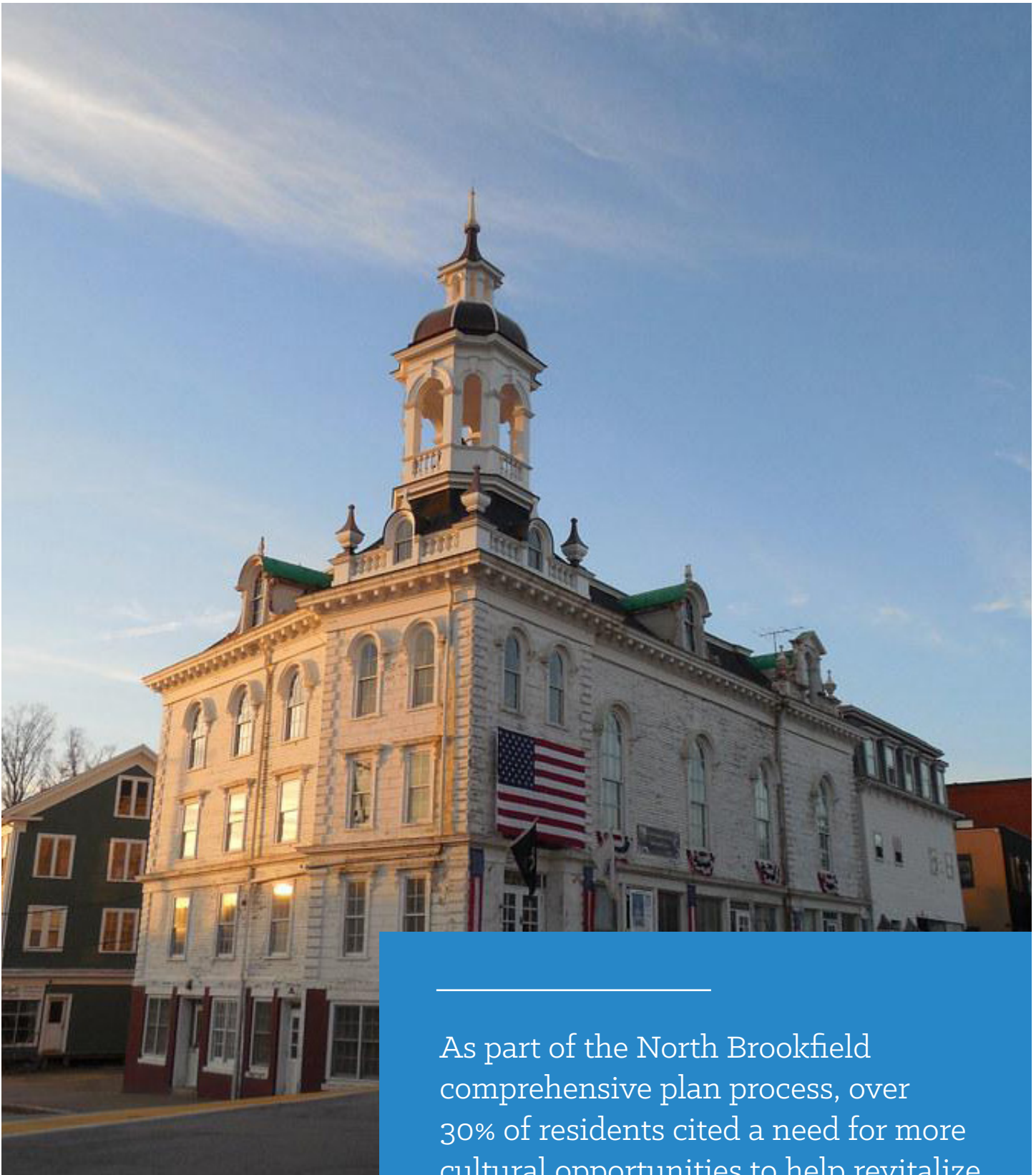
Source: Bow Market, ©2019 Christian Philips Photography



Source: Bow Market, ©2019 Christian Philips Photography

Initiate a Low Cost Event Series, Activating Summer Street and School Street

Category		Cultural/Arts
Location		North Brookfield Downtown and surrounding areas
Origin		Town of North Brookfield; Urban Land Institute Technical Advisory Committee engagement
Budget		Low to Medium Budget (\$10,000-\$50,000) <i>* See "Resources" below</i>
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk – in conversations during this RRP process, stakeholders have found consensus on the need for a comprehensive activation strategy
Key Performance Indicators		# of attendees, Social media tags, total # of district banners installed, pedestrian foot traffic numbers, change in # of vendors participating in programs and events , amount of press
Partners & Resources		<p>Partners: North Brookfield area schools, New England Foundation for the Arts, Central Mass. + Metropolitan Area Planning Councils, The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC), North Brookfield Department of Recreation and Open Space</p> <p>Resources: Mass Cultural Council - connects towns and volunteer groups to artists and resources for calls for artists, grant programs, and other cultural resources EDA Competitive Tourism Grants - EDA's ARPA Tourism NOFO assists communities and regions to rebuild and strengthen their travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industry. Under this NOFO, EDA solicits applications under the authority of the Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program, enabling municipalities to apply T-Mobile Hometown Grants -To build/rebuild/refresh community spaces that help foster local connections in town Grow Grant - Fund to support non-profit or volunteer groups to engage stakeholders in a planning or project process and bring more voices and lived experiences into core decision-making processes Central Berkshire Fund - To fund projects, programs, capital improvements and general operating support of initiatives that benefit the community in arts and culture, early childhood development, environment, and health and social services</p>



North Brookfield Town House
Source: New England Public Media

As part of the North Brookfield comprehensive plan process, over 30% of residents cited a need for more cultural opportunities to help revitalize

Diagnostic

Across North Brookfield, nationally, and even globally, the role of public open spaces and outdoor events are expanding as issues of equity, public health, economic development, and cultural identity become paramount. COVID-19 has amplified these issues and made business districts and downtowns important hubs of safe gathering, dining, and shopping. It has also encouraged more people to relocate from cities and suburbs to small towns and rural areas, or at a minimum, to frequent small towns more.

North Brookfield's Downtown is positioned to facilitate transformative and culturally significant experiences in support of a strengthened downtown. Already, the Haston Public Library, North Brookfield Common, and First Congregational Church host events for youth and families. Outside of the Downtown, Common Ground Ciderworks brings in live music every weekend. For a small town over just over 4,000 residents, North Brookfield already has many events and activities that attract visitors from near and far.

Despite these many outstanding attributes, the town could do more to attract regional visitors and drive traffic to Downtown businesses. A comprehensive event strategy and piloted season of programs that attract people of all ages will showcase the Town's creative culture and drive more activity to the Downtown district. Without a centralized organization to advocate, market, and lead an event program, partnerships will be vital to a successful event program marketing effort and kick-off.

Events should be catered to all people, including residents and visitors. Events should also encourage small business engagement, including pop-up sales and vending at the site of the events, and business advertising provided by the Town.

Action Item

- Create a cultural events calendar centered on Downtown, but in partnership with businesses, the Town House, and cultural destinations (library, religious institutions).
- Provide community activities and spaces throughout the year, especially in the winter time.

Process

Create a cultural events calendar

- *Define a Leader:* Identify what organization will lead the inaugural events. A volunteer group active in Downtown (like the Friends of the Town House or the Downtown Development Committee) should lead the effort and manage events in concert with Town staff.
- *Partner:* Identify key partners. A mix of partners should include for-profit and non-profit groups to provide a diversity of activities and offerings. These partners can contribute in the following ways:
 - *Space partners:* the First Congregational Church, Town of North Brookfield Parks Department, and Friends of the Town House are important venue partners.
 - *Food and Drink Sales:* Local restaurants can sell food, Common Ground Ciderworks can sell beverages and are welcome to host their own activities on the venue grounds. Local business participation should be free or deeply discounted to encourage participation. Other vendors from outside of the Town can pay higher rates to participate.
 - *Cultural Activities:* Haston Free Library and the schools can provide family friendly programs and showcase student work, reading circles, and other activities.

Process Cnt'd

- **Program:** Using grants and vendor fees, hire live performers, outdoor movie providers and other timed events to draw audiences throughout the day.
- **Consistency:** Organize events to happen at least once a month that run for a season, e.g. September through December, with themes for each event.
- **Publicize:** Market the event calendar throughout the region.
 - Using social media and news media advertising, the Town should advertise a summary events calendar a month before the first event milestone. Then, advertise for individual events two weeks, one week, and the day before those events.
- **Refine:** After the events have ended, meet with event partners and participating businesses to understand the impacts of events on the Town and their individual missions/revenues. Send a survey to residents and participating vendors to understand how to adjust the events (including location, timing, structure) for the next year.

Summer CONCERT SERIES

PRESENTED BY:
THE SOUTH HADLEY RECREATION DEPARTMENT & THE VILLAGE COMMONS

TOWN COMMONS THURSDAY'S 6:30-8PM

JULY 15	MIDLIFE CRISIS SOUTHERN ROCK & MUCH MORE	AUGUST 19	3X SOCIAL ENTERTAINING ACOUSTIC ROCK CLASSICS
JULY 22	LIVIO GRAVINI & THE FREE SPIRIT SOCIETY HIGH ENERGY / ORIGINAL ROCK & ROLL	AUGUST 26	BERKSHIRE HILLS ACADEMY
JULY 29	OFF THE RECORD ALL YOUR FAVORITE CLASSIC ROCK FROM THE 60'S & 70'S	*SEPTEMBER 2	JEFF GAVIOLI AND HIS BAD NEWS JAZZ AND BLUES ORCHESTRA 19 PC BIG BAND SWING ORCHESTRA PLAYING JAZZ & BLUES
AUGUST 5	NIGHT MOVES 4 DECADES OF GREAT R&B	*SEPTEMBER 9	THE WILLIES THE BEST OF THE 50'S, 60'S & 70'S DANCEABLE R & B
AUGUST 12	JIMMY MAZZ DUO CLASSIC ROCK, MOTOWN, COUNTRY	*PLEASE NOTE THESE CONCERTS WILL TAKE PLACE 6-7:30PM	

IF THERE IS INCLEMENT WEATHER AND THE CONCERT IS CANCELED, THE RAIN DATE WILL BE THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY.

FOR UPDATES ON CANCELLATIONS YOU CAN VISIT OUR WEBSITE OR FACEBOOK PAGE.

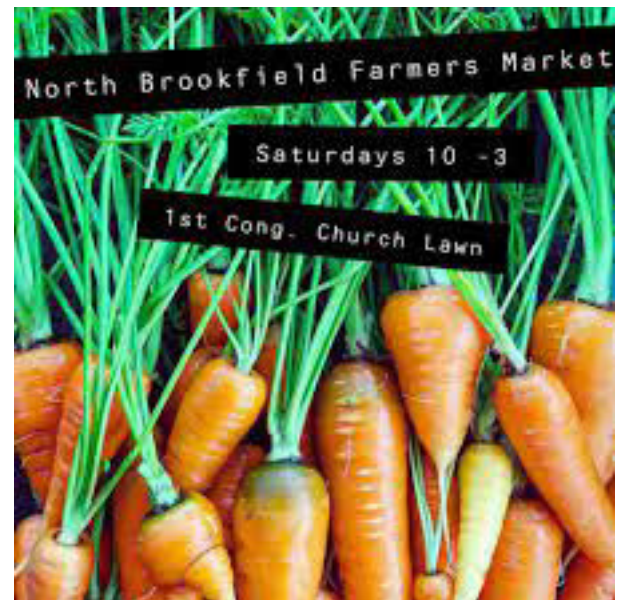
 THIS PROGRAM IS SPONSORED IN PART BY A GRANT FROM THE SOUTH HADLEY CULTURAL COUNCIL, A LOCAL AGENCY WHICH IS SUPPORTED BY THE MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL, A STATE AGENCY.

South Hadley Concert Series Poster 2021

Source: South Hadley, MA



Children's reading circle in Columbus, Indiana for the 2019 Miller Prize
Source: Agency Landscape + Planning



Farmers Market Social Media Advertisement
Source: North Brookfield



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



Provided by SME Consultant

Susan Silberberg, CivicMoxie

Location

Fall River, MA

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

Diagnostic

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

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

Action Item

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

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

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



Live painting was part of the event.



Source: for all photos: FRACC

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

Process

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

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



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



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

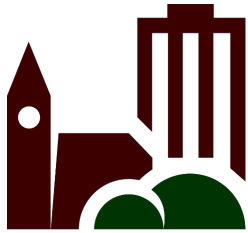
Process (Continued)

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

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LEVINE PLANNING STRATEGIES

Tools for Building Communities

Levine Planning Strategies, LLC

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SME PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Administrative Capacity Project: Rapid Recovery Program

“Create a Downtown Liaison/Town Manager position to foster a thriving local economy”

North Brookfield (Agency Landscape & Planning)

August 2, 2021

You have requested a Subject Matter Expert (SME) to assist you in developing a process for evaluating how North Brookfield might retain ongoing, professional assistance to help with local economic development efforts. To date, volunteers have been effective and committed in helping downtown redevelopment efforts, especially on North Main Street, but there is concern that these important local initiatives cannot always rely on volunteers.

KEY FACTORS

Timeframe: Short – there is interest in having such a position as soon as possible.

Concerns: Sustainable funding source(s.)

Partners: Downtown Development Committee; Friends of the Townhouse; regional agencies; local businesses.

Relationship to COVID-19 Recovery: Such an effort would help downtown adapt to new norms and practices; downtown economy would be more resilient with professional assistance in case of new disruption (related to COVID-19 resurgence or other events.)

Performance Indicators: Growth in number of downtown businesses that remain open for 3+ year; total sales tax revenue; number of downtown visitors; increase in customers for downtown businesses.

RECOMMENDED PROCESS

Based on the information provided, as well as the meetings we have held with the project facilitator and local project team, we recommend the following process for moving forward with this proposed project:

1. Brainstorming

- ✓ Survey the potential pool of ideal candidates – if not by name than by current job types. Would you expect to hire someone local? Is there a candidate pool nearby or



would someone have to relocate? Developing this list will help inform the intent of creating this position.

- ✓ Develop a conceptual job description that outlines key job responsibilities and reporting structure for the position. Is this an administrative position as part of town government, or would the position stand alone as part of a non-profit entity?

2. Identifying Funding

- ✓ Identify potential funding sources. Will the town be willing to appropriate funds for at least the first couple of years? Are there grants available? Would there be a grant writing aspect to this position that would help fund it?
 - Other than town appropriations, some funding sources to explore would include state grants; Community Development Block Grant funds; a downtown Business Improvement District or District Increment Finance district; and grants from foundations.
- ✓ Line up funding commitments. Town funds would have to be appropriated at Town Meeting and other funding would have to be secured in advance.

3. Drafting a Formal Job Description

- ✓ Draft a formal job description based on the conceptual description developed during brainstorming. This description will be affected by the funding received, both in terms of job expectations and hours per week.
- ✓ Have the description approved by funding sources, such as Town human resources and any grantees (if necessary).

4. Posting and Recruiting

- ✓ Advertise the position widely, in conventional job posting sites but also in specialized sites such as the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association website and your regional planning agency. Post the position on listservs if possible. Ask local universities that train economic development professionals to list the position.
- ✓ Use informal word-of-mouth to spread the word about the position locally.

5. Interviewing and Hiring

- ✓ Create a strong and diverse hiring committee in order to gain a variety of perspectives and legitimacy for the position. Including a local business owner should be considered.
- ✓ Interview all candidates with the same general set of questions and in the same environment.
- ✓ Check references of your top one or two candidates.



- ✓ Make a clear offer and express excitement about the chosen candidate.
- ✓ Have a backup candidate in mind in case the leading choice does not accept the position.

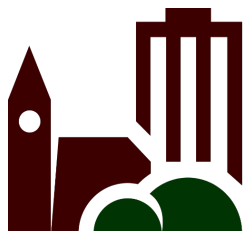
6. Onboarding

- ✓ Make sure the new staff person feels welcome and has access to information about the community and their new role.

INITIAL THOUGHTS

- A position such as this would likely best be housed in town government and report to the Selectmen. So many things it would need to accomplish require their participation and approval.
- The long-term funding of such a position is most likely if this person is also accomplishing other administrative tasks for the town. On the other hand, this position cannot become simply administrative. A combined Town Administrator/Economic Development Director position is worth serious consideration.

I hope this process overview is helpful as you work on this project.



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SME PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Private Realm Project: Rapid Recovery Program

**“Amend design standards/zoning code to allow more flexibility
in commercial use & encourage a greater business/retail mix”**

North Brookfield (Agency Landscape & Planning)

August 2, 2021

You have requested a Subject Matter Expert (SME) to assist you in developing a process for evaluating how North Brookfield might amend its design standards and zoning requirements to assist commercial users and enhance the business and retail mix. There is some concern that existing requirements may have limited options for downtown economic development and should be revised. At the same time, having clear, consistent, and easy-to-implement standards for business appearances will help develop a consistent appearance for downtown North Brookfield. There is a specific interest in seeing in code changes could help activate side streets and alleyways downtown, most of which are privately owned.

KEY FACTORS

Timeframe: Medium – drafting changes and gaining approval may take some time.

Concerns: Building political support for changes.

Partners: Local businesses, Town Clerk, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Board of Selectmen.

Relationship to COVID-19 Recovery: Such an effort would help downtown adapt to new norms and practices; downtown economy would be more resilient with the ability to adjust their business models more quickly in response to COVID-19 resurgence or other events.

Risks: Will require political will and ability of private business and property owners to buy into a united vision. Will also require ability to keep new rules in place for a period of time, despite inevitable requests for changes and relief.

Performance Indicators: Frequency of activation of alleyways & side streets; Cohesive branding/facades; Greater ease for businesses receiving town approval for changes.

RECOMMENDED PROCESS

Based on the information provided, as well as the meetings we have held with the project facilitator and local project team, we recommend the following process for moving forward



with this proposed project:

1. Brainstorming

- ✓ Determine what the goals are for promoting code changes and design standards. Pulling images of other communities' downtowns of similar size that are emulated is helpful.
- ✓ List the essential qualities of those downtowns that are worth emulating, as specifically as possible. Are they changes to the public spaces? The uses? The appearance of the commercial frontages? Other things?
- ✓ Speak to owners of the privately-owned alleys and determine if they have aspirations or concerns about use of those spaces that might inform the potential for more active use.

2. Auditing Existing Code

- ✓ Look through the existing code to identify key elements that affect how downtown businesses and property owners make business decisions.
- ✓ Look at the table of uses in the zoning code to determine if business types that the town is interested in attracting are permitted in the appropriate locations. Are the uses defined sufficiently? Are the size caps consistent with Town goals? An initial look suggests that the definitions of "mixed-use development" may need some clarification. In addition, the limits on retail size and amount permitted on one floor should be closely examined.
- ✓ Determine the process for an existing business to change from one use to another. Is it cumbersome? Is the level of review appropriate to the change requested?
- ✓ Meet with business and property owners to walk through some of the issues and opportunities they see in the code. Ask them what they might be willing to see in terms of design standards on their properties in return for others meeting the same standards.
- ✓ Examine the zoning map and overlays to determine if they cover the appropriate areas of downtown. An initial look at the overlay maps suggests that the Central Business (BC) district could be examined to determine if having five separate areas is consistent with town goals.
- ✓ Examine subdivision regulations to determine if there are ways they can be adjusted to allow for more active use of alleyways and side streets, such as through adjusting frontage requirements.

3. Drafting Revised Zoning and Subdivision Language

- ✓ Draft changes to zoning language that help better meet town goals.



- ✓ Draft changes (if needed) to subdivision regulations that may allow for frontage along private alleys and side streets.
- ✓ If necessary, retain a consultant to draft language and/or review potential language. If budget permits, a consultant could also conduct the audit listed above, as well as the design guidelines/standards listed below.

4. Drafting Design Guidelines and/or Standards

- ✓ Draft design guidelines – which are recommended but not required – and/or design standards – which are required unless waived – for Planning Board application.
- ✓ Determine if the guidelines and/or standards will apply to all changes to downtown buildings or only ones requiring other board review, and draft the zoning language accordingly.

5. Reviewing Drafts Informally and Provide Explanations

- ✓ Prepare short explanatory documents and/or web pages to outline what changes are being proposed and how they will benefit the town.
- ✓ Review potential changes with stakeholders before formal submission. Revisions are easier to make before submission, and it is helpful to have had an informal process prior to a formal one.

6. Review and Approval

- ✓ Coordinate passage of zoning text and map amendments, as well as subdivision regulation changes, through the formal town process.
- ✓ Coordinate passage of design guidelines and/or standards, if authorized in the zoning language, by the Planning Board.

I hope this process overview is helpful as you work on this project.



LEVINE PLANNING STRATEGIES

Tools for Building Communities

Levine Planning Strategies, LLC

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Portland, ME 04112-7215

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SME PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Revenue & Sales Project: Rapid Recovery Program

**“Create a tenant recruitment and retention program
in line with North Brookfield's consumer capacity.”**

North Brookfield (Agency Landscape & Planning)

August 2, 2021

You have requested a Subject Matter Expert (SME) to assist you in developing a process for developing a tenant recruitment and retention program. You are seeking this program to be consistent with the consumer capacity in the region, likely using measures such as disposable income and household needs. This program would be designed to help downtown achieve a mix of businesses that are viable in the long-run, while also growing creative industries downtown. One factor in program design is the relatively small size of the town and its distance from larger communities. While that is in some ways a disadvantage, it can also be an advantage in some situations.

KEY FACTORS

Timeframe: Medium – such a program may take some time to develop and implement.

Concerns: This program will take collaboration and cooperation among stakeholders, including property owners, businesses, consumers and town officials.

Partners: Downtown Development Committee, Friends of the Townhouse, Planning Board, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and other artistic, cultural, and agricultural based organizations.

Relationship to COVID-19 Recovery: This effort could help downtown emerge from the pandemic with a clear vision for business recruitment and retention, and also attract creative industries to locate and hold events downtown.

Risks: This program has a high risk of not developing a coherent strategy that will be supported by all stakeholders while also being responsive to consumer needs and preferences.

Performance Indicators: Number and types of new businesses opening downtown in a five- to ten-year period. Pedestrian traffic downtown. Amount of programming downtown and the attendance at such programs.



RECOMMENDED PROCESS

Based on the information provided, as well as the meetings we have held with the project facilitator and local project team, we recommend the following process for moving forward with this proposed project:

1. Brainstorming

- ✓ Determine what the town is hoping to accomplish with a tenant recruitment and retention program. What businesses should be attracted? Which ones would leave a gap if they left?
- ✓ Meet with existing businesses to hear what they think would be complementary businesses to what they provide.
- ✓ Meet with residents to hear what they would like to see downtown.

2. Market Analysis

- ✓ Analyze (or hire a consultant to analyze) what the consumer capacity is for downtown. This will involve determining disposable income within certain distances as well as what competition exists in that area.
- ✓ Analyze (or hire a consultant to analyze) what gaps appear to be in the market downtown. Are there missing types of retail, service, or business uses that could be supported?
- ✓ Determine what aspirational or “basic” industries (that might attract other businesses and visitors beyond basic needs) are of interest.
- ✓ Research the economics of these aspirational industries to understand what subsidies or other public or non-profit actions might be needed to make them relevant.

3. Identify Resources

- ✓ Determine what resources (local, regional, state or private) exist to fund an effort and whether they are sufficient for such a program.

4. Develop Tenant Recruitment and Retention Policies

- ✓ Create a draft set of policies based on data and brainstorming that would guide a program.
- ✓ Present these draft policies to stakeholders such as business leaders and residents for response.
- ✓ Revise the draft policies as needed and finalize a set of guiding policies.



5. Design a Program

- ✓ Given the policies and resources identified, and the market realities and aspirations documented, design a program that works within those constraints and opportunities.
- ✓ Develop a workplan for the program, including any staffing needs and unknowns, as well as metrics to gauge success.

6. Launch Program & Policies

- ✓ Provide opportunities for media to learn about the program and/or policies and provide coverage.
- ✓ Audit Town codes and bylaws and propose amendments as necessary for consistency with tenant recruitment and retention policies.

INITIAL THOUGHTS

Based on our limited exposure to the conditions in North Brookfield, we offer some basic thoughts about this project:

- While there is some discussion of developing an additional parking area, such a use of downtown land may limit other choices. If a parking area is developed, it should be designed for other uses such as large programmed events and pop-up gatherings as well.
- Existing limitations on drive throughs likely should be retained, at least for food services. Any drive throughs allowed in a downtown context should be carefully designed so as not to detract from the streetscape and walkability of downtown.
- Downtown would benefit from a couple of uses that draw from a larger area for events. Those uses would draw to local restaurants and other amenities. However, those secondary uses will have to draw from a smaller area on a more consistent basis in order to remain viable.
- The Town should consider a Business Improvement District and/or District Increment Financing to help encourage desired policy goals.

I hope this process overview is helpful as you work on this project.



Gove Street Crossing: Pop-up Park + Plaza



Provided by SME Consultant

Civic Space Collaborative

Location

East Boston, MA

1

Origin	Friends of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway and Boston Society of Landscape Architects (BSLA)
Budget	 Low (\$16,000 in total from Barr Grant. \$6,000 for materials, \$10,000 BSLA design competition and project management. \$20,000 pro bono time from Toole Design)
Timeframe	 Short Term (<5 years) – October 2018 to June 2019
Risk	 Low Risks (temporary installation, low-cost materials)
Key Performance Indicators	Participants at events, increase in the number of people sitting on the Greenway and picnic, positive comments from greenway visitors, and excited youth walking to school.
Partners & Resources	Friends of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway, Greenway Council, Boston Society of Landscape Architects (BSLA), Toole Design, Boston Parks, City of Boston's Public Realm Director, East Boston Public Library, Krina Patel (artist), Zumix (music onsite), and volunteers
Diagnostic	<p>This project happened prior the COVID-19 pandemic, although planning and installation would be possible while still maintaining appropriate guidelines for public health.</p> <p>Painting the asphalt, planting annuals in the containers and perennials, and building the benches were all COVID-19 friendly activities since people were able to social distance and/or work in small groups.</p> <p>Over the past year, we saw important open space in our communities is for both physical and mental health, with parks being one of the few places where people could meet up safely outside. The pop-up park and plaza activated the Greenway using tactical urbanism and placemaking. As a result, the Greenway became even more of a destination and provided passive forms of recreation, which did not previously exist. In addition, the Greenway was transformed into an exciting place for people, and especially for children. As part of the installation, mini-libraries were filled with children's books and toys and were very exciting for the kids to discover when they went to school on Monday morning. With everyone spending a lot of time in their neighborhoods this past year, it is important to make spaces a little more exciting.</p>
Action Item	<p>The Friends of the Mary Ellen Greenway (FoMEWG) worked with the Boston Society of Landscape Architects (BSLA) to host a design competition for the Gove Street section of the Mary Ellen Greenway. A 12-member jury selected Toole Design to work on a seasonal installation.</p> <p>Over three months, Toole Design worked to refine the design by engaging East Boston residents. The final design and project included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a pop-up plaza on Gove Street next to a residential apartment building, and 2. a seasonal installation on the Greenway. <p>Both designs included a pavement graphic and seating. The FoMEWG hosted several programs at the pop-up plaza.</p> <p>This project was funded by a Barr Foundation grant to the Friends of the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway</p>

Process

Design Competition

- **Design Challenge:** FoMEWG worked with BSLA to host a design competition for the Gove Street section of the Greenway. Eight entries were submitted that included both long and short-term ideas for the Greenway at Gove Street. The full set of design entries can be viewed at <https://maryellenwelchgreenway.org/2019/03/27/bsla-design-challenge-entries/>.
- **Design Selection:** The entries did not include the names of the individuals or firms in order to ensure a blind judgement of the designs. The 12-member jury of East Boston residents selected Toole Design to work on a seasonal installation. The final design was selected since it successfully active the spaces, greatly enhanced the east / west connections used by students, incorporated community engagement into the design process, and the materials were also in Spanish.

Pop-Up Installation Planning + Design

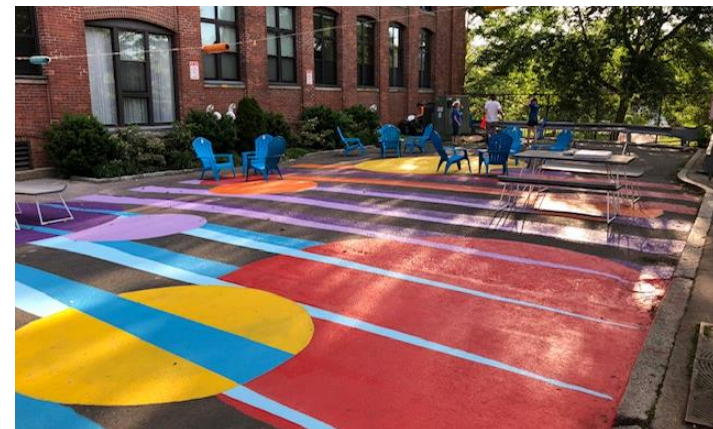
- **Planning + Design:** Over three months in Spring 2019, Toole Design worked to refine the tactical short-term installation by engaging East Boston residents and FoMEWG. The design was shared at the monthly Greenway meeting, and the Project Team engaged youth at the East Boston Public Library. The final tactical design with pavement graphic and seating including:
 1. a pop-up plaza on Gove Street next to a residential apartment building, and
 2. a seasonal installation on the Greenway.
- **Approvals for Boston Parks:** The Project Team met with Boston Parks to review the proposed design, and Boston Parks was asked to weigh on the seating structures and painting before the design was final. The FoMEWG submitted a "Small Projects Form" outlining the proposed project, its design, and maintenance plan for Parks to review and approve.
- **Approvals from Boston Transportation Department:** The Project Team met with the City of Boston's Public Realm Director to discuss the plaza concept. For the one-week temporary plaza installation, the project team applied for a 1-week event permit and posted "No Parking" signs.



Toole Design laying out the design before volunteers arrive



Working on an active Greenway and volunteer recruitment for people walking or biking by



Gove Street one week pop-up tactical plaza

Process, continued

Implementation

- **Material Acquisition:** In June, the project team acquired the materials from nurseries, lumber yards, the hardware store, and ordered the bistro sets online. These items were transferred to the site in East Boston upon procurement.
- **Installation:** Toole Design staff worked to build the exchange benches off-site and then assisted the benches on site. The Project Team planned for two installation days, which included a Saturday. Toole Design outlined the pavement graphics prior to volunteers arriving each day. Volunteers painted the pavement graphics on the Greenway and plaza, planted plants in the planters, and placed the seating. Lunch was provided to the volunteers.
- **Programs:** The FoMEWG hosted several programs at the pop-up plaza, including music in the evenings by local musicians, a piñata party with a local artist, Krina Patel, and games for children. Later in the summer, the Friends and Toole Design lead a bike ride for the LandLine Coalition, a group working to connect community paths and greenways in the Greater Boston region.
- **Removal:** The one-week pop-up plazas were removed, and the chairs and tables were relocated to the seasonal Parks installation on the Greenway. In the fall, the Parks installation with the benches were removed and put into storage for the winter.
- **Re-Installation:** In Summer 2020, the benches and Adirondack chairs were placed in the Parks section of the Greenway.



Gove Street Crossing: East Boston Greenway signage and temporary benches



View from Bremen Street towards the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway, exchange benches with cases and planters



Piñata Party planned by artist Krina Patel at the pop-up plaza

Physical Realm Data Collection Rubric

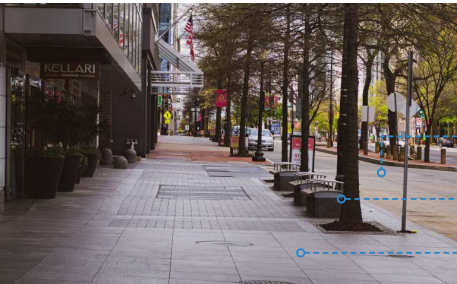
Physical Environment

PUBLIC REALM



Wayfinding/Signage

Street Lighting



Roadbed and Crosswalk

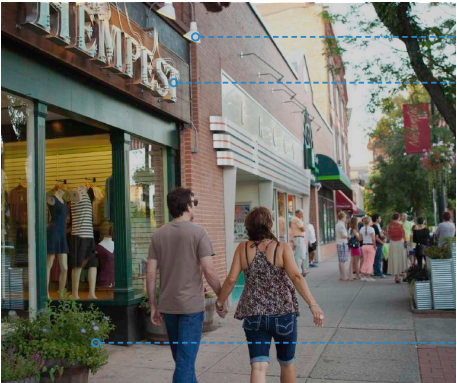
Street Trees and Benches

Sidewalk

Element	Guiding Principles	A	B	C	FAIL
Sidewalks	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.	More than 75% of sidewalks in the study area are cleaned, well-maintained and accessible to multiple users across different ages and abilities.	About 50% of sidewalks in the study area are cleaned and well-maintained.	More than 25% of sidewalks in the study area pose challenges to the pedestrian experience (including narrow sidewalks and lack of cleanliness/maintenance).	There are no sidewalks in the study area.
Street Trees and Benches	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.	Street trees and benches are readily available throughout the study area. They are well-designed, well-maintained, and offer shade and comfort to pedestrians.	Although street trees and benches are available across the study area, these amenities have not been cleaned or well-maintained, and require improvements.	Limited availability of street trees and benches creating uncomfortable pedestrian experience.	There are no street trees and benches in the study area.
Lighting	Street lighting improves pedestrian visibility and personal safety, as well as aids in geographic orientation.	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.	About 50% of the study area is serviced by street lighting that supports pedestrian visibility and safety.	Street lighting on the primary street in the study area does not support pedestrian visibility and safety.	There is no street lighting in the study area.
Wayfinding/Signage	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.	There is a comprehensive and cohesive wayfinding system that offers geographic orientation to pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. Signage reflect the brand and identity of the area.	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.	Limited to no signage available throughout the study area.	There is no wayfinding/signage in the study area.
Roadbed and Crosswalks	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.	Roads are designed to balance the needs of motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians and create a safe environment for all users.	Roads are designed primarily to move motor vehicles across the study area efficiently, with limited crosswalks for pedestrians.	Roads are hazardous to all users.	The study area is not connected by any major roads.

Physical Environment

PRIVATE REALM



Lighting

Signage

Outdoor Display



Façade

Awning

Window

Element	Guiding Principles	A	B	C	FAIL
Window	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.	More than 75% of storefronts maintain windows with at least 70% transparency.	About 50% of storefront windows maintain windows with at least 70% transparency.	More than 25% of storefronts have windows with limited transparency.	All storefronts are boarded up and/or have limited transparency.
Outdoor Display/Dining	Attractive window displays and spillover retail/restaurant activity on sidewalks or adjacent parking spaces can help contribute to overall district vibrancy.	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.	About 50% of storefronts maintain an attractive window display with limited spillover merchandise and/or dining areas.	More than 25% of storefronts have windows with limited transparency.	There is no spillover retail/restaurant activity in the district.
Signage	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.	More than 75% of storefront signs reflect the unique brand identity of tenants and can be easily seen from more than 10 ft distance.	About 50% of storefronts have clear signage that reflect basic business information and can easily be seen from adjacent sidewalks.	More than 25% of storefronts have signage that does not communicate names of business or types of products/services being offered.	Storefronts in the study area do not have signage.
Awning	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.	More than 75% of properties in the study area have retractable awnings that have been well-maintained and cleaned.	About 50% of properties in the study area have functioning awnings that have been well-maintained and cleaned.	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.	Storefronts in the study area are not equipped with awnings.
Façade	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.	More than 75% of properties have well-maintained façades. Limited structural enhancements are required.	Although most properties in the study area have clean and well-maintained façades, there is at least one significant property requiring structural facade improvements.	More than 25% of properties require significant building facade improvements, including power washing, painting, and structural enhancements.	All properties in the study area require significant facade improvements.
Lighting	Storefront interior lighting after business hours help entice the corridor and boost security on the street.	More than 75% of storefronts have lighting that help illuminate sidewalks.	About 50% of storefronts have some interior lighting that help illuminate sidewalks.	More than 25% of storefronts do not have lighting.	All storefronts in the study area are shuttered and dark at night.

Funding Resources

Funding sources were crowd sourced during the Local Rapid Recovery Planning effort. The following sheets include funding sources noted on the site as of October 8, 2021. Original tables can be found by clicking on each of the following links. Original tables are slightly easier to navigate through and include direct links to funding sources

[Public Realm](#)

[Private Realm](#)

[Tenant Mix](#)

[Revenue/Sales](#)

[Administrative Capacity](#)

[Culture/Arts](#)

Public Realm

Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects (funds listed as "No Longer Available" may be available in upcoming funding cycles for FY 22 +)	Funding Sector	Agency/Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Maximum Eligible Loan Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Efficiency and Regionalization grant program	No Longer Available	Public	Community Compact Cabinet	\$100,000		Municipalities, regional school districts, school districts	For governmental entities interested in implementing regionalization and other efficiency initiatives that allow for long-term sustainability. These grants provided funds for one-time or transition costs for municipalities, regional school districts, school districts considering forming a regional district or regionalizing services, regional planning agencies and councils of governments interested in such projects. Small capital purchases or improvements that are integral to the implementation of a functional program such as equipment or software; Technical assistance including consulting services, assistance in drafting contracts or other agreements; and Transition or project management costs, not to exceed one year.
MDAR Urban Agriculture Program	No Longer Available	Public	Mass Department of Agriculture			Municipalities, Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3), Public or non-profit educational or public health institutions, Established urban farmer with more than three (3) years of commercial urban farming experience	To fund long-term, capital investments such as infrastructure improvements, building upgrades, purchase of computer software and systems, land procurement, and purchase of farm equipment to increase access of fresh, local produce in urban neighborhoods with a high concentration of low-moderate income residents
Cultural Facilities Fund (Systems Replacements)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council			Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, and colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	for 20-year capital needs assessments of buildings and mechanical systems.
Coastal Resilience Grant Program	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management	\$1,000,000		Municipalities located within the Massachusetts coastal zone; Certified 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations that own vulnerable coastal property that is open and accessible to the public	to provide financial and technical support for local and regional efforts to increase awareness and understanding of climate impacts, identify and map vulnerabilities, conduct adaptation planning, redesign and retrofit vulnerable public facilities and infrastructure, and restore shorelines to enhance natural resources and provide storm damage protection.
Housing Choice Capital Grant	No Longer Available	Public	Mass Housing Choice Initiative			Housing Choice Communities	To plan and build the diverse housing stock located on publicly owned land, leasehold, easement or right-of-way, or are for the purchase of public land - includes pre-construction survey, design, engineering and construction costs, feasibility studies, land acquisition, etc.
Cultural Facilities Fund (Capital Grants)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council			Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, and colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	for the acquisition, design, construction, repair, renovation, and rehabilitation of a cultural facility.
Cultural Facilities Fund (Feasibility and Technical Assistance Grants)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council			Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, and colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	for the planning and assessment of a cultural facility.
Shuttered Venue Operators Grant	No Longer Available	Public	Small Business Administration	\$10,000,000		Businesses such as live venue operators or promoters, theatrical producers, live performing arts organization operators, museum operators, motion picture theater operators (including owners), and talent representatives.	Funds may be used for specific expenses including rent, payroll, mortgage, debt, utility, taxes and fees, administrative costs, advertising, production transportation, and capital expenditures related to producing a theatrical or live performing arts production.
Regional Pilot Project Grant	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Office of Business Development	\$250,000		Municipalities, public entities, or 501(c) organizations that are federally tax exempt under the Internal Revenue Code and intend to promote regional recovery from the economic impacts of COVID19	To support businesses and communities in stabilizing and/or growing their regional economy through solutions including (but not limited to) job creation, transportation, childcare, digital marketing and promotion efforts, digital business directories. This funding should not be used to fund projects or purposes for which there is already state or federal funding available (i.e. Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program, Paycheck Protection Program, Small Business Grant Relief programs). No capital-related projects will be funded through this program.
Real Estate Services Technical Assistance	No Longer Available	Public	MassDevelopment	\$10,000		Eligible applicants include municipal officials, planners, local stakeholders, and others.	Grants may be used toward technical assistance opportunities in Surplus Property Reuse (e.g. Constraints and Feasibility Analysis, Master Planning, Test Fits, RFP/Q Assistance) or Local District Management Implementation Technical Assistance (e.g. District Improvement Financing, Business Improvement District formation)
Business Equity COVID-19 Emergency Fund	No Longer Available	Private	Foundation for Business Equity		\$100,000	Black and Latinx majority-owned (51% or more) businesses with revenues of at least \$250,000	Flexible loans may be used for working capital and other demonstrated business needs (e.g., salaries and wages, inventory, equipment, marketing, etc.)
Planning Assistance Grants	Yes	Public	Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs	\$125,000		Municipalities and Regional Planning Agencies	To fund technical assistance and help communities undertake public process associated with creating plans and adopting land use regulations consistent with the Baker Polito Administration's land conservation and development objectives including reduction of land, energy, and natural resource consumption, provision of sufficient and diverse housing, and mitigation of/preparation for climate change.

Public Realm

Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects (funds listed as "No Longer Available" may be available in upcoming funding cycles for FY 22 +)	Funding Sector	Agency/Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Maximum Eligible Loan Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Real Estate Services Technical Assistance	No Longer Available	Public	MassDevelopment		\$10,000	Eligible applicants include municipal officials, planners, local stakeholders, and others.	Grants may be used toward technical assistance opportunities in Surplus Property Reuse (e.g. Constraints and Feasibility Analysis, Master Planning, Test Fits, RFP/QAssistance) or Local District Management Implementation Technical Assistance (e.g. District Improvement Financing, Business Improvement District formation)
Business Equity COVID-19 Emergency Fund	No Longer Available	Private	Foundation for Business Equity		\$100,000	Black and Latinx majority-owned (\$1% or more) businesses with revenues of at least \$250,000	Flexible loans may be used for working capital and other demonstrated business needs (e.g., salaries and wages, inventory, equipment, marketing, etc.)
Planning Assistance Grants	Yes	Public	Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs	\$125,000		Municipalities and Regional Planning Agencies	To fund technical assistance and help communities undertake public process associated with creating plans and adopting land use regulations consistent with the Baker Polito Administration's land conservation and development objectives including reduction of land, energy, and natural resource consumption, provision of sufficient and diverse housing, and mitigation of/preparation for climate change.
Regional Pilot Project Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Office of Business Development	\$250,000		Partnerships of municipalities, public entities, or 501(c) organizations	To fund projects that support businesses and communities in stabilizing/growing their regional economy with one or more of the recovery efforts under Partnerships for recovery. no capital-related projects will be funded.
MassWorks Infrastructure Program	Yes	Public	Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development			Municipalities	The most flexible source of capital funds to municipalities and other eligible public entities primarily for public infrastructure projects that support and accelerate housing production, spur private development, and create jobs - particularly for production of multi-family housing in appropriately located walkable, mixed-use districts.
Community Compact IT Grant	Yes	Public	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	\$200,000		Municipalities	This is a competitive grant program focused on driving innovation and transformation at the local level via investments in technology. support the implementation of innovative IT projects by funding related one-time capital needs such as technology infrastructure, upgrades and/or purchases of equipment or software. Incidental or one-time costs related to the capital purchase such as planning, design, installation, implementation and initial training are eligible.
Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency/FEMA			Property Owners	to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes, and other structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
MA Downtown Initiative Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$25,000		Municipalities	Technical assistance for downtown revitalization in 6 categories
TDI Creative Catalyst	Yes	Public	MassDevelopment	\$40,000		Individuals and organizations in current ad graduated Transformative Development Initiative Districts	To support public-facing projects that enhance local arts and cultural infrastructure and contribute to economic revitalization - including public art, placemaking, and stabilization of organizations and creative business collectives
Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency/FEMA			Property Owners	hazard mitigation projects reducing the risks from disasters and natural hazards
Commonwealth Places	Yes	Public	MassDevelopment	\$300,000		Municipalities	To help community partners prepare public spaces and commercial districts to best serve their population during COVID-19 social distancing and the phased reopening of the economy, including improvements to sidewalks, curbs, streets, on-street parking spaces and off-street parking lots in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce in their communities. This program complements the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) Shared Streets & Spaces.
Community Preservation Act	Yes	Public	Community Preservation Trust Fund/State Department of Revenue (DOR)			Only communities that have adopted the Community Preservation Act are eligible to receive CPA Trust Fund matching funds annually	To preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities.
Partnerships Matching Funds Program	Yes	Public	Department of Conservation and Recreation	\$25,000		State park friends and advocacy groups, Civic and community organizations, Institutions, Businesses, Municipal governments	To support capital investments at DCR-owned state parks, beaches, and other reservations.
Restaurant Revitalization Fund	Yes	Public	Small Business Administration		\$10,000,000	Eligible entities include restaurants, food stands/trucks/carts, caterers, bars/saloons/lounges/taverns, snack and non alcoholic beverage bars, bakeries, brewpubs, breweries/microbreweries, wineries, distilleries, inns, and licensed	Funds may be used for specific expenses including rent, payroll, mortgage, debt, utility, business maintenance expenses, construction of outdoor seating, business supplies, business food and beverage expenses (including raw materials), covered

Public Realm

Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects (funds listed as "No Longer Available" may be available in upcoming funding cycles for FY 22 +)	Funding Sector	Agency/Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Maximum Eligible Loan Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Restaurant Revitalization Fund	Yes	Public	Small Business Administration		\$10,000,000	Eligible entities include restaurants, food stands/trucks/carts, caterers, bars/saloons/lounges/taverns, snack and non alcoholic beverage bars, bakeries, brewpubs, breweries/microbreweries, wineries, distilleries, inns, and licensed facilities of a beverage alcohol producer. Priority group: Small businesses that are at least 51% owned by one or more individuals who are women/veterans/socially and economically disadvantaged.	Funds may be used for specific expenses including rent, payroll, mortgage, debt, utility, business maintenance expenses, construction of outdoor seating, business supplies, business food and beverage expenses (including raw materials), covered supplier costs, and business operating expenses
BIZ-M-POWER	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation	\$20,000		Small businesses (i.e. employing 1-20 FTE employees, including 1 or more of whom owns the business, annual revenue not exceeding \$2,500,000) in brick-and-mortar (physical) establishment operating within Massachusetts	To assist low-income and moderate-income entrepreneurs with their acquisition, expansion, improvement or lease of a facility, purchase or lease of equipment, or with meeting other capital needs of a business.
Shared Streets and Spaces	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Transportation	\$200,000		Municipalities	To support the repurposing of streets, plazas, sidewalks, curbs, and parking areas to facilitate outdoor activities and community programming, including but not limited to facilities for eating, shopping, play, and community events and spaces for all ages.
Small Business Technical Assistance Grant	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation	\$85,000		501(c)3 organizations	To fund specific counseling and training programs that assist small businesses in securing new or increased financing for growth, providing digital grants (MGCC Program), establishing crowdfunding campaigns through the Biz-M-Power grant (MGCC Program), achieving stability and viability, creating/retaining jobs, increasing the economic vitality of the neighborhood, community, or region.
Economic Adjustment Assistance	Yes	Public	Economic Development Association	\$10,000,000		Eligible applicants under the EAA program include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. Under the EAA program, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for profit entities. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.	EDA's ARPA EAA NOFO is designed to provide a wide-range of financial assistance to communities and regions as they respond to, and recover from, the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, including long-term recovery and resilience to future economic disasters. Under this announcement, EDA solicits applications under the authority of the Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program, which is flexible and responsive to the economic development needs and priorities of local and regional stakeholders. This is the broadest NOFO EDA is publishing under ARPA and any eligible applicant from any EDA Region may apply.
Competitive Tourism Grants	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$10,000,000		For EDA Competitive Tourism Grants, eligible entities include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. 42 U.S.C. § 3122(4)(A); 13 C.F.R. § 300.3.	EDA's ARPA Tourism NOFO is designed to provide a wide-range of financial assistance to communities and regions to rebuild and strengthen their travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industry through various infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Under this NOFO, EDA solicits applications under the authority of the Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program, which is flexible and responsive to the economic development needs and priorities of local and regional stakeholders. EDA's travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation grants will be delivered through two components: (1) State Tourism Grants and (2) EDA Competitive Tourism Grants.
Build Back Better Regional Challenge	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$500,000		Eligible applicants under this NOFO include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. Under this NOFO, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for profit entities. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.	In Phase 1, EDA will provide technical assistance grants to approximately 50-60 coalitions (through a lead institution). These coalitions will be considered "finalists" and the grants will be used by the finalists to prepare more detailed applications for transformational projects that benefit their respective geographic regions and are aligned around a holistic approach to building and scaling a strategic industry. In Phase 2, EDA will award each of the 20-30 finalist coalitions \$25-75 million (and potentially up to \$100 million) to fund the collection of projects they identified. The projects will be funded through grants to coalition members.

Public Realm

Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects (funds listed as "No Longer Available" may be available in upcoming funding cycles for FY 22 +)	Funding Sector	Agency/Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Maximum Eligible Loan Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$6,000,000		Eligible applicants under the EAA program include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State unless EDA waives the cooperation requirement. For Statewide Planning grants, eligible applicants are limited to the Governor's Office, or equivalent, of a State, who may designate an eligible applicant type described above to apply for and administer the award. Under section 3(10) of PWEDA the term "State" includes the fifty States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of	The ARPA Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks NOFO is part of EDA's multi-phase effort to respond to the coronavirus pandemic as directed by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Specifically, this NOFO seeks to build regional economies for the future through two primary avenues: a) Statewide Planning and b) Research and Networks. Subject to the availability of funds, awards made under this NOFO will help develop coordinated state-wide plans for economic development and data, tools, and institutional capacity to evaluate and scale evidence-based economic development efforts, including through communities of practice and provision of technical assistance among existing and new EDA grantees.
Regional Economic Development Organization Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Office of Business Development			Eligible organizations shall be corporations, foundations, organizations or institutions that operate regionally and service 10 or more contiguous towns/cities. They must be exempt from federal taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code, and have a primary focus of economic development and perform the services required by MGL Chapter 23A Section 3J and 3K.	Grants should be used to assist entrepreneurs, small businesses, and business partners in order to stabilize and/or grow regional economy. They may not, however, be used to increase salaries or hire additional staff for the organization.
Hometown Grant Program	Yes	Private	T-Mobile	\$50,000		Towns with population <50,000	To build/rebuild/refresh community spaces that help foster local connections in town.
Greener Greater Boston Program	Yes	Private	Solomon Foundation/Barr Foundation	\$20,000		Municipalities, Trail conservancies and non-profits	To fund preliminary design (for each stage of design), capacity building and operational support, and public engagement and implementation toward projects that enhance the beauty, utility, and accessibility of Greater Boston's greenways.
Nellie Leaman Taft Foundation Competitive Grants	Yes	Private	Nellie Leaman Taft Foundation	\$15,000		Non-profits 501 (c)(3) (small to mid sized) that benefit residents of greater Boston inside the Route 495 beltway	To seed funding for new ideas and initiatives, start-up and on-going support for grass roots organizations, and entrepreneurial projects that may enable an organization or its constituents to achieve greater self-sufficiency.
Seed Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$1,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$100,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support groups launching new projects or starting to significantly change the direction of an existing project. Most often, groups have been working on the project less than a year and usually don't yet have much direct experience with implementing the idea.
Grow Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$4,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$100,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support groups to deepen their work by further developing a community vision, lowering barriers to participation, identifying new stakeholders and working to bring more voices and lived experiences into core decision-making processes.
Young Leaders Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$6,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$175,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support projects led by young leaders aged 15-25
Small Business Matching Grant	Yes	Private	NewVue Communities	\$5,000		22 North Central Massachusetts cities and towns from Athol to Harvard with a combined population of 240,000 (refer to https://newvuecommunities.org/cities-towns-we-serve/)	To support micro-enterprises (businesses with 5 or fewer employees) that need help with marketing and accounting.
William J. & Margery S. Barrett Fund	Yes	Private	Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation			Nonprofit organizations, public agencies or community organizations that provide services to the residents of Adams, Cheshire or Savoy, MA.	To fund projects, programs, capital improvements and general operating support of initiatives that benefit the community in arts and culture, early childhood development, environment, and health and social services.
Central Berkshire Fund	Yes	Private	Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation	\$5,000		Nonprofit organizations, public agencies or community organizations that provide services to the residents of the communities of Becket, Cummington, Dalton, Hinsdale, Peru, Washington and Windsor.	To fund projects, programs, capital improvements and general operating support of initiatives that benefit the community in arts and culture, early childhood development, environment, and health and social services.
Merrimack Valley Municipal Business Development and Recovery Fund	Yes	Private	Essex County Community Foundation/Columbia Gas	\$2,000,000		City of Lawrence, the Town of Andover, and the Town of North Andover	To provide direct support (individual business support, general business promotions, technical assistance and business consultation services, economic development and planning) to the municipalities and their business communities (not businesses directly) impacted by the recent gas disaster in Andover, North Andover, and Lawrence

Public Realm

Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects (funds listed as "No Longer Available" may be available in upcoming funding cycles for FY 22 +)	Funding Sector	Agency/Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Maximum Eligible Loan Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Community Change Grant	Yes	Private	America Walks (funded by General Motors)	\$1,500		Eligible groups must have a project that engages General Motors employees from any facility (dealerships, plants, offices) or you live in a location with a primary General Motors facility	Grants should be used to create healthy, active, and engaged communities that support walking as transportation, health, and recreation. Projects that center the concerns of BIPOC residents, reach across the demographics of communities to build coalitions, and/or create unique civic partnerships with new perspectives will be prioritized.
Brownfields Redevelopment Site Assessment Fund	Maybe	Public	MassDevelopment	\$100,000			To finance the environmental assessment of brownfield sites in Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) of the Commonwealth
Urban Agenda Grant Program	Maybe	Public	Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development			Cross sector consortiums and coalitions	Funding to local partnerships to implement projects that are based on collaborative work models with the goal of advancing economic progress. Typically, Early Stage Strategy Development and Strategy Implementation by an Existing Cross-Sector Consortium or Coalition
Community Development Block Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$1,350,000		Municipalities with a population of under 50,000 that do not receive CDBG funds directly from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Municipalities may also apply on behalf of a specific developer or property owner.	to meet a broad range of community development needs - including projects such as housing rehabilitation or development; micro-enterprise or other business assistance; infrastructure; community/public facilities; public social services; planning; removal of architectural barriers to allow access; downtown or area revitalization
Brownfields Redevelopment Remediation Fund	Maybe	Public	MassDevelopment	\$500,000			To finance the remediation of brownfield sites in Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) of the Commonwealth
National Endowment for the Arts Grants	Maybe	Public	National Endowment for the Arts			Regional Arts Agencies	This funding will be allocated to local state and regional arts agencies to distribute through their funding programs
Housing Development Incentive Program	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development			Developers (projects located in Gateway Cities)	Tax incentive to undertake new construction or substantial rehabilitation of properties for lease or sale as multi-unit market rate residential housing
MassTrails Grants	Maybe	Public	Department of Conservation & Recreation, Massachusetts Department of Transportation	\$100,000		Public entities and non-profit organizations (with documented land owner permission and community support)	to design, create, and maintain the diverse network of trails, trail systems, and trails experiences
MassEVIP Fleets Incentives	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	\$7,500		Public Entities	helps eligible public entities acquire (buy or lease) electric vehicles for their fleets.
Abandoned Housing Initiative Strategic Demolition Fund Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Attorney General's Office	\$125,000		Municipalities, Municipal Housing and Redevelopment Authorities, Nonprofit organizations	To be used for the construction of an affordable housing structure.
Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund	Maybe	Public	State Historic Preservation Office			Municipalities and private non-profit organizations	to support the preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites (cultural resources) listed in the State Register of Historic Places - including pre-development work, development projects such as stabilization, protection, rehabilitation and restoration
Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey and Planning Grant Program	Maybe	Public	State Historic Preservation Office			Municipalities and private non-profit organizations	to support efforts to identify and plan for the protection of the significant historic buildings, structures, archaeological sites and landscapes of the Commonwealth (including cultural resource inventories, nomination of properties to National Register, community-wide preservation plans, other studies/reports/publications to identify and protect significant properties)
Massachusetts Recycling Fund	Maybe	Private	BDC Capital		\$500,000		To help Massachusetts businesses active in recycling-related activities obtain the capital needed for any reasonable business purpose.
Closed Loop Infrastructure Fund	Maybe	Private	Closed Loop Partners		\$5,000,000	Municipalities and private companies	Provides below-market rate loans to fund replicable, scalable and sustainable recycling and circular economy infrastructure projects across collection, sortation, processing and new technologies.

Private Realm

Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects (funds listed as "No Longer Available" may be available in upcoming funding cycles for FY 22 +)	Funding Sector	Agency/Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Maximum Eligible Loan Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Cultural Facilities Fund (Systems Replacements)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council			Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	for 20-year capital needs assessments of buildings and mechanical systems.
Cultural Facilities Fund (Capital Grants)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council			Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	for the acquisition, design, construction, repair, renovation, and rehabilitation of a cultural facility.
Real Estate Services Technical Assistance	No Longer Available	Public	MassDevelopment	\$10,000		Eligible applicants include municipal officials, planners, local stakeholders, and others.	Grants may be used toward technical assistance opportunities in Surplus Property Reuse (e.g. Constraints and Feasibility Analysis, Master Planning, Test Fits, RFP/Q Assistance) or Local District Management Implementation Technical Assistance (e.g. District Improvement Financing, Business Improvement District formation)
Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency/FEMA			Property Owners	to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes, and other structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
MA Downtown Initiative Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$25,000		Municipalities	Technical assistance for downtown revitalization in 6 categories
Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency/FEMA			Property Owners	hazard mitigation projects reducing the risks from disasters and natural hazards
Community Preservation Act	Yes	Public	Community Preservation Trust Fund/State Department of Revenue (DOR)			Only communities that have adopted the Community Preservation Act are eligible to receive CPA Trust Fund matching funds annually.	To preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities.
BIZ-M-POWER	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation	\$20,000		Small businesses (i.e. employing 1-20 FTE employees, including 1 or more of whom owns the business, annual revenue not exceeding \$2,500,000) in brick-and-mortar (physical) establishment operating within Massachusetts	To assist low-income and moderate-income entrepreneurs with their acquisition, expansion, improvement or lease of a facility, purchase or lease of equipment, or with meeting other capital needs of a business.
Competitive Tourism Grants	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$10,000,000		For EDA Competitive Tourism Grants, eligible entities include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. 42 U.S.C. § 3122(4)(A); 13 C.F.R. § 300.3.	EDA's ARPA Tourism NOFO is designed to provide a wide-range of financial assistance to communities and regions to rebuild and strengthen their travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industry through various infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Under this NOFO, EDA solicits applications under the authority of the Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program, which is flexible and responsive to the economic development needs and priorities of local and regional stakeholders. EDA's travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation grants will be delivered through two components: (1) State Tourism Grants and (2) EDA Competitive Tourism Grants.
Build Back Better Regional Challenge	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$500,000		Eligible applicants under this NOFO include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. Under this NOFO, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for-profit entities. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.	Through this American Rescue Plan Act Build Back Better Regional Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (ARPA BBRC NOFO), EDA aims to assist communities and regions impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has caused, and continues to cause, economic injury to U.S. communities and regions in devastating and unprecedented ways. This ARPA BBRC NOFO is designed as a two-phase competition to (1) help regions develop transformational economic development strategies and (2) fund the implementation of those strategies that will create and grow regional growth clusters. Such efforts will help regional economies recover from the pandemic and build economic diversity and resiliency to mitigate impacts of future economic disasters. In Phase 1, EDA will provide technical assistance grants to approximately 50-60 coalitions (through a lead institution). These coalitions will be considered "Finalists" and the grants will be used by the finalists to prepare more detailed applications for transformational projects that benefit their respective geographic regions and are aligned around a holistic approach to building and scaling a strategic industry. In Phase 2, EDA will award each of the 20-30 finalist coalitions \$25-75 million (and potentially up to \$100 million) to fund the collection of projects they identified. The projects will be funded through grants to coalition members.
Hometown Grant Program	Yes	Private	T-Mobile	\$50,000		Towns with population <50,000	To build/rebuild/refresh community spaces that help foster local connections in town.
Brownfields Redevelopment Site Assessment Fund	Maybe	Public	MassDevelopment	\$100,000			To finance the environmental assessment of brownfield sites in Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) of the Commonwealth
Community Development Block Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$1,350,000		Municipalities with a population of under 50,000 that do not receive CDBG funds directly from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Municipalities may also apply on behalf of a specific developer or property owner.	to meet a broad range of community development needs - including projects such as housing rehabilitation or development; micro-enterprise or other business assistance; infrastructure; community/public facilities; public social services; planning; removal of architectural barriers to allow access; downtown or area revitalization
Brownfields Redevelopment Remediation Fund	Maybe	Public	MassDevelopment	\$500,000			To finance the remediation of brownfield sites in Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) of the Commonwealth
Housing Development Incentive Program	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development			Developers (projects located in Gateway Cities)	Tax incentive to undertake new construction or substantial rehabilitation of properties for lease or sale as multi-unit market rate residential housing
Abandoned Housing Initiative Strategic Demolition Fund Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Attorney General's Office	\$125,000		Municipalities, Municipal Housing and Redevelopment Authorities, Nonprofit organizations	To be used for the construction of an affordable housing structure.
Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund	Maybe	Public	State Historic Preservation Office			Municipalities and private non-profit organizations	to support the preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites (cultural resources) listed in the State Register of Historic Places - including pre-development work, development projects such as stabilization, protection, rehabilitation and restoration
Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey and Planning Grant Program	Maybe	Public	State Historic Preservation Office			Municipalities and private non-profit organizations	to support efforts to identify and plan for the protection of the significant historic buildings, structures, archaeological sites and landscapes of the Commonwealth (including cultural resource inventories, nomination of properties to National Register, community-wide preservation plans, other studies/reports/publications to identify and protect significant properties)
Massachusetts Recycling Fund	Maybe	Private	BDC Capital		\$500,000		To help Massachusetts businesses active in recycling-related activities obtain the capital needed for any reasonable business purpose.
Closed Loop Infrastructure Fund	Maybe	Private	Closed Loop Partners		\$5,000,000	Municipalities and private companies	Provides below-market rate loans to fund replicable, scalable and sustainable recycling and circular economy infrastructure projects across collection, sortation, processing and new technologies.

Tenant Mix

Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects (funds listed as "No Longer Available" may be available in upcoming funding cycles for FY 22+)	Funding Sector	Agency/Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Maximum Eligible Loan Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Shuttered Venue Operators Grant	No Longer Available	Public	Small Business Administration	\$10,000,000		Businesses such as live venue operators or promoters, theatrical producers, live performing arts organization operators, museum operators, motion picture theater operators (including owners), and talent representatives.	Funds may be used for specific expenses including rent, payroll, mortgage, debt, utility, taxes and fees, administrative costs, advertising, production transportation, and capital expenditures related to producing a theatrical or live performing arts production.
Business Equity COVID-19 Emergency Fund	No Longer Available	Private	Foundation for Business Equity		\$100,000	Black and Latinx majority-owned (51% or more) businesses with revenues of at least \$250,000	Flexible loans may be used for working capital and other demonstrated business needs (e.g., salaries and wages, inventory, equipment, marketing, etc.)
MA Downtown Initiative Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$25,000		Municipalities	Technical assistance for downtown revitalization in 6 categories
Restaurant Revitalization Fund	Yes	Public	Small Business Administration		\$10,000,000	Eligible entities include restaurants, food stands/trucks/carts, caterers, bars/salons/bouges/brewers, snack and non alcoholic beverage bars, bakeries, brewpubs, breweries/microbreweries, wineries, distilleries, inns, and licensed facilities of a beverage alcohol producer. Priority group: Small businesses that are at least 51% owned by one or more individuals who are women/veterans/socially and economically disadvantaged.	Funds may be used for specific expenses including rent, payroll, mortgage, debt, utility, business maintenance expenses, construction of outdoor seating, business supplies, business food are beverage expenses (including raw materials), covered supplier costs, and business operating expenses
BIZ-M-POWER	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation	\$20,000		Small businesses (i.e. employing 1-20 FTE employees, including 1 or more of whom owns the business), annual revenue not exceeding \$2,500,000 (in brick-and-mortar (physical) establishment operating within Massachusetts	To assist low-income and moderate-income entrepreneurs with their acquisition, expansion, improvement or lease of a facility, purchase or lease of equipment, or with meeting other capital needs of a business.
Build Back Better Regional Challenge	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$500,000		Eligible applicants under this NOFO include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. Under this NOFO, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or foundations, organizations or institutions that operate regionally and service 10 or more contiguous towns/cities. They must be exempt from federal taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code, and have a primary focus of economic development and perform the services required by MGL Chapter 23A Section 3i and 3k.	Through this American Rescue Plan Act Build Back Better Regional Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (ARPA BBBC NOFO), EDA aims to assist communities and regions impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has caused, and continues to cause, economic injury to U.S. communities and regions in devastating and unprecedented ways. This ARPA BBBC NOFO is designed as a two-phase competition to (1) help regions develop transformational economic development strategies and (2) fund the implementation of those strategies that will create and grow regional growth clusters. Such efforts will help regional economies recover from the pandemic and build economic diversity and resiliency to mitigate impacts of future economic disasters. In Phase 1, EDA will provide technical assistance grants to approximately 50-60 coalitions (through a lead institution). These Grants should be used to assist entrepreneurs, small businesses, and business partners in order to stabilize and/or grow regional economy. They may not, however, be used to increase salaries or hire additional staff for the organization.
Regional Economic Development Organization Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Office of Business Development			Eligible organizations shall be corporations, foundations, organizations or institutions that operate regionally and service 10 or more contiguous towns/cities. They must be exempt from federal taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code, and have a primary focus of economic development and perform the services required by MGL Chapter 23A Section 3i and 3k.	
Seed Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$1,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$100,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support groups launching new projects or starting to significantly change the direction of an existing project. Most often groups have been working on the project less than a year and usually don't yet have much direct experience with implementing the idea.
Grow Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$4,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$100,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support groups to deepen their work by further developing a community vision, lowering barriers to participation, identifying new stakeholders and working to bring more voices and lived experiences into core decision-making processes.
Young Leaders Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$6,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$175,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support projects led by young leaders aged 15-25
Small Business Matching Grant	Yes	Private	NewVue Communities	\$5,000		22 North Central Massachusetts cities and towns from Athol to Harvard with a combined population of 240,000 (refer to https://newvuecommunities.org/cities-towns-we-serve/)	To support micro-enterprises (businesses with 5 or fewer employees) that need help with marketing and accounting.
Merrimack Valley Municipal Business Development and Recovery Fund	Yes	Private	Essex County Community Foundation/Columbia Gas	\$2,000,000		City of Lawrence, the Town of Andover, and the Town of North Andover	To provide direct support (individual business support, general business promotions, technical assistance and business consultation services, economic development and planning) to the municipalities and their business communities (not businesses directly) impacted by the recent gas disaster in Andover, North Andover, and Lawrence
Community Development Block Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$1,350,000		Municipalities with a population of under 50,000 that do not receive CDBG funds directly from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Municipalities may also apply on behalf of a specific developer or property owner.	to meet a broad range of community development needs - including projects such as housing rehabilitation or development; micro-enterprise or other business assistance; infrastructure; community/public facilities; public social services; planning; removal of architectural barriers to allow access; downtown or area revitalization

Revenue/Sales

Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects (Funds listed as "No Longer Available" may be available in upcoming funding cycles for FY 22 +)	Funding Sector	Agency/Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Maximum Eligible Loan Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Efficiency and Regionalization grant program	No Longer Available	Public	Community Compact Cabinet	\$100,000		Municipalities, regional school districts, school districts	For governmental entities interested in implementing regionalization and other efficiency initiatives that allow for long-term sustainability. These grants provided funds for one-time or transition costs for municipalities, regional school districts, school districts considering forming a regional district or regionalizing services, regional planning agencies and councils of governments interested in such projects. Small capital purchases or improvements that are integral to the implementation of a functional program such as equipment of software. Technical assistance including consulting services, assistance in drafting contracts or other agreements; and Transition or project management costs, not to exceed one year.
Shuttered Venue Operators Grant	No Longer Available	Public	Small Business Administration	\$10,000,000		Businesses such as live venue operators or promoters, theatrical producers, live performing arts organization operators, museum operators, motion picture theater operators (including owners), and talent representatives.	Funds may be used for specific expenses including rent, payroll, mortgage, debt, utility, taxes and fees, administrative costs, advertising, production transportation, and capital expenditures related to producing a theatrical or live performing arts production.
Regional Pilot Project Grant	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Office of Business Development	\$250,000		Municipalities, public entities, or 501(c)3 organizations that are federally tax exempt under the Internal Revenue Code and intend to promote regional recovery from the economic impacts of COVID19	To support businesses and communities in stabilizing and/or growing their regional economy through solutions including (but not limited to) job creation, transportation, childcare, digital marketing and promotion efforts, digital business directories. This funding should not be used to fund projects or purposes for which there is already state or federal funding available (i.e. Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program, Paycheck Protection Program, Small Business Grant Relief programs). No capital-related projects will be funded through this program.
Business Equity COVID-19 Emergency Fund	No Longer Available	Private	Foundation for Business Equity		\$100,000	Black and Latinx majority-owned (51% or more) businesses with revenues of at least \$250,000	Flexible loans may be used for working capital and other demonstrated business needs (e.g., salaries and wages, inventory, equipment, marketing, etc.)
Regional Pilot Project Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Office of Business Development	\$250,000		Partnerships of municipalities, public entities, or 501(c)3 organizations	To fund projects that support businesses and communities in stabilizing/growing their regional economy with one or more of the recovery efforts under Partnerships for recovery, no capital-related projects will be funded.
MA Downtown Initiative Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$25,000		Municipalities	Technical assistance for downtown revitalization in 6 categories
Restaurant Revitalization Fund	Yes	Public	Small Business Administration		\$10,000,000	Eligible entities include restaurants, food stands/trucks/carts, caterers, bars/saloons/lounges/taverns, snack and non alcoholic beverage bars, bakeries, brewpubs, breweries/microbreweries, wineries, distilleries, inns, and licensed facilities of a beverage alcohol producer. Priority group: Small businesses that are at least 51% owned by one or more individuals who are women/veterans/socially and economically disadvantaged.	Funds may be used for specific expenses including rent, payroll, mortgage, debt, utility, business maintenance expenses, construction of outdoor seating, business supplies, business food and beverage expenses (including raw materials), covered supplier costs, and business operating expenses
BIZ-M-POWER	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation	\$20,000		Small businesses (i.e. employing 1-20 FTE employees, including 1 or more of whom owns the business, annual revenue not exceeding \$2,500,000) in brick-and-mortar (physical) establishment operating within Massachusetts	To assist low-income and moderate-income entrepreneurs with their acquisition, expansion, improvement or lease of a facility, purchase or lease of equipment, or with meeting other capital needs of a business.
Shared Streets and Spaces	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Transportation	\$200,000		Municipalities	To support the repurposing of streets, plazas, sidewalks, curbs, and parking areas to facilitate outdoor activities and community programming, including but not limited to facilities for eating, shopping, play, and community events and spaces for all ages.
Small Business Technical Assistance Grant	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation	\$85,000		501(c)3 organizations	To fund specific counseling and training programs that assist small businesses in securing new or increased financing for growth, providing digital grants (MGCC Program), establishing crowdfunding campaigns through the Biz-M-Power grant (MGCC Program), achieving stability and viability, creating/retaining jobs, increasing the economic vitality of the neighborhood, community, or region.
Build Back Better Regional Challenge	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$500,000		Eligible applicants under this NOFO include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) Institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. Under this NOFO, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for-profit entities. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.	Through this American Rescue Plan Act Build Back Better Regional Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (ARPA BBBRC NOFO), EDA aims to assist communities and regions impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has caused, and continues to cause, economic injury to U.S. communities and regions in devastating and unprecedented ways. This ARPA BBBRC NOFO is designed as a two-phase competition to (1) help regions develop transformational economic development strategies and (2) fund the implementation of those strategies that will create and grow regional growth clusters. Such efforts will help regional economies recover from the pandemic and build economic diversity and resiliency to mitigate impacts of future economic disasters. In Phase 1, EDA will provide technical assistance grants to approximately 50-60 coalitions (through a lead institution). These coalitions will be considered "finalists" and the grants will be used by the finalists to prepare more detailed applications for transformational projects that benefit their respective geographic regions and are aligned around a holistic approach to building and scaling a strategic industry. In Phase 2, EDA will award each of the 20-30 finalist coalitions \$25-75 million (and potentially up to \$100 million) to fund the collection of projects they identified. The projects will be funded through grants to coalition members.
Regional Economic Development Organization Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Office of Business Development			Eligible organizations shall be corporations, foundations, organizations or institutions that operate regionally and service 10 or more contiguous towns/cities. They must be exempt from federal taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code, and have a primary focus of economic development and perform the services required by MGL Chapter 23A Section 31 and 3K.	Grants should be used to assist entrepreneurs, small businesses, and business partners in order to stabilize and/or grow regional economy. They may not, however, be used to increase salaries or hire additional staff for the organization.
Seed Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$1,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$100,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support groups launching new projects or starting to significantly change the direction of an existing project. Most often, groups have been working on the project less than a year and usually don't yet have much direct experience with implementing the idea.
Grow Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$4,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$100,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support groups to deepen their work by further developing a community vision, lowering barriers to participation, identifying new stakeholders and working to bring more voices and lived experiences into core decision-making processes.
Young Leaders Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$6,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$175,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support projects led by young leaders aged 15-25
Small Business Matching Grant	Yes	Private	NewVue Communities	\$5,000		22 North Central Massachusetts cities and towns from Athol to Harvard with a combined population of 240,000 (refer to https://newvuecommunities.org/cities-towns-we-serve/)	To support micro-enterprises (businesses with 5 or fewer employees) that need help with marketing and accounting.
Merrimack Valley Municipal Business Development and Recovery Fund	Yes	Private	Essex County Community Foundation/Columbia Gas	\$2,000,000		City of Lawrence, the Town of Andover, and the Town of North Andover	To provide direct support (individual business support, general business promotions, technical assistance and business consultation services, economic development and planning) to the municipalities and their business communities (not businesses directly) impacted by the recent gas disaster in Andover, North Andover, and Lawrence
Urban Agenda Grant Program	Maybe	Public	Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development			Cross sector consortiums and coalitions	Funding to local partnerships to implement projects that are based on collaborative work-models with the goal of advancing economic progress. Typically, Early Stage Strategy Development and Strategy Implementation by an Existing Cross-Sector Consortium or Coalition
Community Development Block Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$1,350,000		Municipalities with a population of under 50,000 that do not receive CDBG funds directly from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Municipalities may also apply on behalf of a specific developer or property owner.	to meet a broad range of community development needs - including projects such as housing rehabilitation or development; micro-enterprise or other business assistance; infrastructure; community/public facilities; public social services; planning; removal of architectural barriers to allow access; downtown or area revitalization

Adminstrative Capacity

Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects (funds listed as "No Longer Available" may be available in upcoming funding cycles for FY 22 +)	Funding Sector	Agency/Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Maximum Eligible Loan Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Efficiency and Regionalization grant program	No Longer Available	Public	Community Compact Cabinet	\$100,000		Municipalities, regional school districts, school districts	For governmental entities interested in implementing regionalization and other efficiency initiatives that allow for long-term sustainability. These grants provided funds for one-time or transition costs for municipalities, regional school districts, school districts considering forming a regional district or regionalizing services, regional planning agencies and councils of governments interested in such projects. Small capital purchases or improvements that are integral to the implementation of a functional program such as equipment or software; Technical assistance including consulting services, assistance in drafting contracts or other agreements; and Transition or project management costs, not to exceed one year.
Cultural Facilities Fund (Feasibility and Technical Assistance Grants)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council			Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, and colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	for the planning and assessment of a cultural facility.
Real Estate Services Technical Assistance	No Longer Available	Public	MassDevelopment	\$10,000		Eligible applicants include municipal officials, planners, local stakeholders, and others.	Grants may be used toward technical assistance opportunities in Surplus Property Reuse (e.g. Constraints and Feasibility Analysis, Master Planning, Test Fits, RFP/Q Assistance) or Local District Management Implementation Technical Assistance (e.g. District Improvement Financing, Business Improvement District formation)
Planning Assistance Grants	Yes	Public	Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs	\$125,000		Municipalities and Regional Planning Agencies	To fund technical assistance and help communities undertake public process associated with creating plans and adopting land use regulations consistent with the Baker-Polito Administration's land conservation and development objectives including reduction of land, energy, and natural resource consumption, provision of sufficient and diverse housing, and mitigation of/preparation for climate change.
Regional Pilot Project Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Office of Business Development	\$250,000		Partnerships of municipalities, public entities, or 501(c) organizations	To fund projects that support businesses and communities in stabilizing/growing their regional economy with one or more of the recovery efforts under Partnerships for recovery; no capital-related projects will be funded.
Community Compact IT Grant	Yes	Public	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	\$200,000		Municipalities	This is a competitive grant program focused on driving innovation and transformation at the local level via investments in technology, support the implementation of innovative IT projects by funding related one-time capital needs such as technology infrastructure, upgrades and/or purchases of equipment or software. Incidental or one-time costs related to the capital purchase such as planning, design, installation, implementation and initial training are eligible.
MA Downtown Initiative Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$25,000		Municipalities	Technical assistance for downtown revitalization in 6 categories
TDI Creative Catalyst	Yes	Public	MassDevelopment	\$40,000		Individuals and organizations in current ad graduated Transformative Development Initiative Districts	To support public-facing projects that enhance local arts and cultural infrastructure and contribute to economic revitalization - including public art, placemaking, and stabilization of organizations and creative business collectives
Build Back Better Regional Challenge	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$500,000		Eligible applicants under this NOFO include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. Under this NOFO, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for profit entities. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.	In Phase 1, EDA will provide technical assistance grants to approximately 50-60 coalitions (through a lead institution). These coalitions will be considered "finalists" and the grants will be used by the finalists to prepare more detailed applications for transformational projects that benefit their respective geographic regions and are aligned around a holistic approach to building and scaling a strategic industry. In Phase 2, EDA will award each of the 20-30 finalist coalitions \$25-75 million (and potentially up to \$100 million) to fund the collection of projects they identified. The projects will be funded through grants to coalition members.
Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$6,000,000		Eligible applicants under the EAA program include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State unless EDA waives the cooperation requirement. For Statewide Planning grants, eligible applicants are limited to the Governor's Office, or equivalent, of a State, who may designate an eligible applicant type described above to apply for and administer the award. Under section 3(i)(0) of PWEDA the term "State" includes the fifty States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau. Under its EAA program, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for profit entities. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.	The ARPA Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks NOFO is part of EDA's multi-phase effort to respond to the coronavirus pandemic as directed by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Specifically, this NOFO seeks to build regional economies for the future through two primary avenues: a) Statewide Planning and b) Research and Networks. Subject to the availability of funds, awards made under this NOFO will help develop coordinated state-wide plans for economic development and data, tools, and institutional capacity to evaluate and scale evidence-based economic development efforts, including through communities of practice and provision of technical assistance among existing and new EDA grantees.
Seed Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$1,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$100,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support groups launching new projects or starting to significantly change the direction of an existing project. Most often, groups have been working on the project less than a year and usually don't yet have much direct experience with implementing the idea.
Grow Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$4,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$100,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support groups to deepen their work by further developing a community vision, lowering barriers to participation, identifying new stakeholders and working to bring more voices and lived experiences into core decision-making processes.
Young Leaders Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$6,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$175,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support projects led by young leaders aged 15-25

Adminstrative Capacity

Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects (funds listed as "No Longer Available" may be available in upcoming funding cycles for FY 22 +)	Funding Sector	Agency/Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Maximum Eligible Loan Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
William J. & Margery S. Barrett Fund	Yes	Private	Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation			<p>Eligible groups must have a project that engages General Motors employees from any facility (dealerships, plants, offices) or you live in a location with a primary General Motors facility</p> <p>Nonprofit organizations, public agencies or community organizations that provide services to the residents of Adams, Cheshire or Savoy, MA.</p>	To fund projects, programs, capital improvements and general operating support of initiatives that benefit the community in arts and culture, early childhood development, environment, and health and social services.
Central Berkshire Fund	Yes	Private	Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation	\$5,000		Nonprofit organizations, public agencies or community organizations that provide services to the residents of the communities of Becket, Cummington, Dalton, Hinsdale, Peru, Washington and Windsor.	To fund projects, programs, capital improvements and general operating support of initiatives that benefit the community in arts and culture, early childhood development, environment, and health and social services.
Merrimack Valley Municipal Business Development and Recovery Fund	Yes	Private	Essex County Community Foundation/Columbia Gas	\$2,000,000		City of Lawrence, the Town of Andover, and the Town of North Andover	To provide direct support (individual business support, general business promotions, technical assistance and business consultation services, economic development and planning) to the municipalities and their business communities (not businesses directly) impacted by the recent gas disaster in Andover, North Andover, and Lawrence
Community Change Grant	Yes	Private	America Walks (funded by General Motors)	\$1,500		Eligible groups must have a project that engages General Motors employees from any facility (dealerships, plants, offices) or you live in a location with a primary General Motors facility	Grants should be used to create healthy, active, and engaged communities that support walking as transportation, health, and recreation. Projects that center the concerns of BIPOC residents, reach across the demographics of communities to build coalitions, and/or create unique civic partnerships with new perspectives will be prioritized.
Urban Agenda Grant Program	Maybe	Public	Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development			Cross sector consortiums and coalitions	Funding to local partnerships to implement projects that are based on collaborative work models with the goal of advancing economic progress. Typically, Early Stage Strategy Development and Strategy Implementation by an Existing Cross Sector Consortium or Coalition
Community Development Block Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$1,350,000		Municipalities with a population of under 50,000 that do not receive CDBG funds directly from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Municipalities may also apply on behalf of a specific developer or property owner.	to meet a broad range of community development needs - including projects such as housing rehabilitation or development; micro-enterprise or other business assistance; infrastructure; community/public facilities; public social services; planning; removal of architectural barriers to allow access; downtown or area revitalization

Cultural/Arts

Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects (funds listed as "No Longer Available" may be available in upcoming funding cycles for FY 22+)	Funding Sector	Agency/Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Maximum Eligible Loan Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects	Funding Sector	Agency/Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Maximum Eligible Loan Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Efficiency and Regionalization grant program	No Longer Available	Public	Community Compact Cabinet	\$100,000		Municipalities, regional school districts, school districts	For governmental entities interested in implementing regionalization and other efficiency initiatives that allow for long-term sustainability. These grants provided funds for one-time or transition costs for municipalities, regional school districts, school districts considering forming a regional district or regionalizing services, regional planning agencies and councils of governments interested in such projects. Small capital purchases or improvements that are integral to the implementation of a functional program such as equipment or software; Technical assistance including consulting services, assistance in drafting contracts or other agreements; and Transition or project management costs, not to exceed one year.
Cultural Facilities Fund (Systems Replacements)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council			Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, and colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	for 20-year capital needs assessments of buildings and mechanical systems.
Cultural Facilities Fund (Capital Grants)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council			Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, and colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	for the acquisition, design, construction, repair, renovation, and rehabilitation of a cultural facility.
Cultural Facilities Fund (Flexibility and Technical Assistance Grants)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council			Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, and colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	for the planning and assessment of a cultural facility.
Shuttered Venue Operators Grant	No Longer Available	Public	Small Business Administration	\$10,000,000		Businesses such as live venue operators or promoters, theatrical producers, live performing arts organization operators, museum operators, motion picture theater operators (including owners), and talent representatives.	Funds may be used for specific expenses including rent, payroll, mortgage, debt, utility, taxes and fees, administrative costs, advertising, production transportation, and capital expenditures related to producing a theatrical or live performing arts production.
MA Downtown Initiative Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$25,000		Municipalities	Technical assistance for downtown revitalization in 6 categories
TDI Creative Catalyst	Yes	Public	MassDevelopment	\$40,000		Individuals and organizations in current advanced Transformative Development Initiative Districts	To support public-facing projects that enhance local arts and cultural infrastructure and contribute to economic revitalization - including public art, placemaking, and stabilization of organizations and creative business collectives
Community Preservation Act	Yes	Public	Community Preservation Trust Fund/State Department of Revenue (DOR)			Only communities that have adopted the Community Preservation Act are eligible to receive CPA Trust Fund matching funds annually.	To preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities.
Shared Streets and Spaces	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Transportation	\$200,000		Municipalities	To support the repurposing of streets, plazas, sidewalks, curbs, and parking areas to facilitate outdoor activities and community programming, including but not limited to facilities for eating, shopping, play, and community events and spaces for all ages.
Competitive Tourism Grants	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$10,000,000		For EDA Competitive Tourism Grants, eligible entities include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. 42 U.S.C. § 3122(4)(A); 13 C.F.R. § 300.3.	EDA's ARPA Tourism NOFO is designed to provide a wide-range of financial assistance to communities and regions to rebuild and strengthen their travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industry through various infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Under this NOFO, EDA solicits applications under the authority of the Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program, which is flexible and responsive to the economic development needs and priorities of local and regional stakeholders. EDA's travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation grants will be delivered through two components: (1) State Tourism Grants and (2) EDA Competitive Tourism Grants.
Build Back Better Regional Challenge	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$500,000		Eligible applicants under this NOFO include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. Under this NOFO, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for-profit entities. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.	Through this American Rescue Plan Act Build Back Better Regional Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (ARPA BBBRC NOFO), EDA aims to assist communities and regions impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has caused, and continues to cause, economic injury to U.S. communities and regions in devastating and unprecedented ways. This ARPA BBBRC NOFO is designed as a two-phase competition to (1) help regions develop transformational economic development strategies and (2) fund the implementation of those strategies that will create and grow regional growth clusters. Such efforts will help regional economies recover from the pandemic and build economic diversity and resiliency to mitigate impacts of future economic disasters. In Phase 1, EDA will provide technical assistance grants to approximately 50-60 coalitions (through a lead institution). These coalitions will be considered "finalists" and the grants will be used by the finalists to prepare more detailed applications for transformational projects that benefit their respective geographic regions and are aligned around a holistic approach to building and scaling a strategic industry. In Phase 2, EDA will award each of the 20-30 finalist coalitions \$25-75 million (and potentially up to \$100 million) to fund the collection of projects they identified. The projects will be funded through grants to coalition members.
Hometown Grant Program	Yes	Private	T-Mobile	\$50,000		Towns with population <50,000	To build/rebuild/refresh community spaces that help foster local conversations in town.
Nellie Leaman Taft Foundation Competitive Grants	Yes	Private	Nellie Leaman Taft Foundation	\$15,000		Non-profits 501 (c)(3) (small to mid sized) that benefit residents of greater Boston inside the Route 495 beltway	To seed funding for new ideas and initiatives, start-up and on-going support for grass roots organizations, and entrepreneurial projects that may enable an organization or its constituents to achieve greater self-sufficiency.
Seed Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$1,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$100,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support groups launching new projects or starting to significantly change the direction of an existing project. Most often, groups have been working on the project less than a year and usually don't yet have much direct experience with implementing the idea.
Grow Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$4,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$100,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support groups to deepen their work by further developing a community vision, lowering barriers to participation, identifying new stakeholders and working to bring more voices and lived experiences into core decision-making processes.
Young Leaders Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	\$6,000		Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under \$175,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support projects led by young leaders aged 15-25
William J. & Margery S. Barrett Fund	Yes	Private	Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation			Nonprofit organizations, public agencies or community organizations that provide services to the residents of Adams, Cheshire or Savoy, MA.	To fund projects, programs, capital improvements and general operating support of initiatives that benefit the community in arts and culture, early childhood development, environment, and health and social services.
Central Berkshire Fund	Yes	Private	Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation	\$5,000		Nonprofit organizations, public agencies or community organizations that provide services to the residents of the communities of Becket, Cummington, Dalton, Hinsdale, Peru, Washington and Windsor.	To fund projects, programs, capital improvements and general operating support of initiatives that benefit the community in arts and culture, early childhood development, environment, and health and social services.
Community Development Block Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$1,350,000		Municipalities with a population of under 50,000 that do not receive CDBG funds directly from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Municipalities may also apply on behalf of a specific developer or property owner.	to meet a broad range of community development needs - including projects such as housing rehabilitation or development; micro-enterprise or other business assistance; infrastructure; community/public facilities; public social services; planning; removal of architectural barriers to allow access; downtown or area revitalization

Cultural/Arts

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						Development (HUD). Municipalities may also apply on behalf of a specific developer or property owner.	public social services; planning; removal of architectural barriers to allow access; downtown or area revitalization
National Endowment for the Arts Grants	Maybe	Public	National Endowment for the Arts			Regional Arts Agencies	This funding will be allocated to local state and regional arts agencies to distribute through their funding programs
Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund	Maybe	Public	State Historic Preservation Office			Municipalities and private non-profit organizations	to support the preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites (cultural resources) listed in the State Register of Historic Places - including pre-development work, development projects such as stabilization, protection, rehabilitation and restoration
Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey and Planning Grant Program	Maybe	Public	State Historic Preservation Office			Municipalities and private non-profit organizations	to support efforts to identify and plan for the protection of the significant historic buildings, structures, archaeological sites and landscapes of the Commonwealth (including cultural resource inventories, nomination of properties to National Register, community-wide preservation plans, other studies/reports/publications to identify and protect significant properties)

Additional Funding Sources

Grant	Description
List of Central Mass Funding	
Small Business Strong	Women owned business focused, but also targeted to F& B, arts, hospitality, agriculture/food supply, and retail
Restaurant Resources	
LISC Digital Growth Accelerator	The LISC Digital Growth Accelerator is a 7-week, post-pandemic boost for businesses. The accelerator program leverages consulting teams and digital tools to empower businesses of color to strengthen their core business, grow their capacity and double their revenue.
MassDevelopment Grants Mass Development Real Estate Technical Assistance	Provides technical assistance aimed at addressing site-specific and/or district-wide economic development challenges through creative solutions and clear, implementable action steps. Technical assistance in Surplus Property Recuse and Local District Management Implementation Technical Assistance (District Improvement Financing + BIDs)
Mass Development Real Estate Technical Assistance	part of the One Stop for Growth program (one application for multiple grants), all focused on economic development and downtown revitalization.
Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI)	Prioritizes those disadvantaged in accessing previous federal funding. Provides state and local flexible funding for place based investments like physical improvements, district-based marketing, and special events, as well as major infrastructure projects. Best for District wide ideas.
State Small Business Credit Initiative	Injects capital into state small business support and capital access programs, provides collateral support, facilitates loan participation, and enables credit guarantee programs. It will boost state venture capital programs and provide funding for technical support and assistance.
Capital Projects Fund	Addresses specifically rural America and low- and moderate-income communities,' challenges to pivot based on old infrastructure. Emphasis on broadband, but other capital improvements too.
Small Business Technical Assistance Grant Program	<p>Offered through the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation. Grant is aimed at "facilitating economic stability and viability for small businesses by helping to improve their ability to navigate business operations in a post Covid-19 era." Other details are presented below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proposed programs shall include individual and/or group counseling, training programs, loan packaging services, or direct technical assistance that advance: new business startups, business expansion, business stabilization, other measurable economic growth - Funds available for this grant program in FY 2022 is subject to appropriation (\$4-7 Million) - Organization proposals will not exceed \$85,000. - Collaborative joint proposals will not exceed \$175,000. - A collaborative is defined as two or more eligible non-profit organizations sharing costs and providing complementary services in coordination with each other. - Only open to non-profit corporations
Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts	<p>Civic Development Grants are made for new or on-going projects that garden clubs will help maintain. A long-term maintenance plan must be included.</p> <p>Examples of appropriate projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal planting projects, including traffic islands, parks, etc. • Landscaping at schools, memorial halls, libraries • Plantings of labeled trails at nature preserves <p>Historic Landscape Preservation Grants are given for new or on-going projects designed to preserve the past in the context of the present. Grants are awarded for the improvement of sites that are of historic significance to the local community. Preference is given to accurate plans that relate to the history of the property and are practical for current uses of the property. A long-term maintenance plan must be included.</p> <p>Examples of appropriate projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restoration of landscaping at a historic building/property in your community • Projects undertaken with local Historic Preservation groups • Creation of a garden that is appropriate and authentic to a particular significant historic period of the building on the property and/or an historically recognized style • A landscape that is 50 years or older & has historical significance • A landscape project associated with a building/property that is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, Landmarked, or in a local Historic District

Social Media Graphics

Downtown Business Owners

This program includes a survey of business owners (or managers), for-profits, and non-profits in the downtown and surrounding areas. Even if your business is temporarily closed, your input will inform future policy decisions.

Access the survey Closes April 16th

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LRRPBiz>

or



Scan Me!

North Brookfield is participating in a statewide program to develop downtown Local Rapid Recovery Plans.

We Need Your Input!

Downtown Development Committee

NorthBrookfieldDDC@gmail.com



HELLO!



Hear the results

from our business survey.



+ Tell Us More!

about what you wish to see in the Downtown.



Join our town's Public Workshop!

(Virtually on Zoom)

May 25th at 6 p.m.

➔ <https://bit.ly/3te40n7>

North Brookfield is **discussing COVID recovery!** Share your thoughts and **help guide recovery planning in the Downtown!**

Here's What You Told Us!

North Brookfield is special.
People who live there really want to make it better and are very invested.

A bakery, dentist, consignment shop, and family restaurant would be **positive additions** to Downtown.

Make a place where people want to go, relax, and hang out!

Inclusion is key in a small town. People should be **invited to participate.**

North Brookfield is special.
People who live there really want to make it better and are very invested.

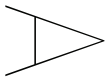
Young parents are looking for **low cost, local day trips and activities for children.**

Reestablish the tree-lined street

Thank You!

North Brookfield, **thank you** for sharing your vision for the future of North Main Street and **guiding the recovery** of Downtown.





What We Heard: Public Engagement Summary

North Brookfield

Local Rapid Recovery Planning (LRRP)
Public Presentation #1

Approach:

North Brookfield boasts an active local volunteer community, making a discussion based public meeting an appropriate outreach strategy. The presentation was embedded with polls and time was left for ample conversation. Community volunteers helped to publicize the presentation through social media, flyers, and in person announcements

Time:

1:00-1:15 total
~20 minutes for presentation + polling
~45 mins of discussion time

Attendees:

- Roughly 10 people
 - Representatives of the Members of the Downtown Development Committee and Friends of the Townhouse
 - Property owners
 - Residents

Key Findings (when combined with data analysis)

- Residents are generally budget conscious and tend to spend their money on hobbies
- North Brookfield is well loved and supported by passionate, civic-minded residents
- The town is small yet supports a few large businesses (Vibram, Hannaford, etc)
- Competition from an online market exists
- Downtown has an opportunity to be more experiential
 - Permanent theatre, bowling alley, entertainment venue, etc

- The Town House is an important town landmark. It represents the town's aspirations for a cohesive identity.

Takeaways:

Social Justice issues exist in North Brookfield. One participant noted their involvement in the Rural Justice Network (RJN), which is a listening board and activist convener for rural communities. The RJN often found that people of color or non-native Americans express hesitation about moving to small towns because there are a lack of resources, specifically around multi-lingualism. Public meetings, signage, subtitles, and resources are often not available in languages other than English. Many within the BIPOC community also express feeling unsafe in public space. Due to this hesitation, many BIPOC and multi-cultural allies do not have interest in moving to smaller towns. There is acknowledgment that many small towns, like North Brookfield, often want to increase these types of serves, but do not have the money or capacity to do so. it will be important to frame equity and inclusion in recommendations.

Desired business include places to gather, socialize as a community, and support local creators. A consignment shop, bakery, family dining option, restaurant with a bar, and small scale retailers were highlighted as preferred businesses to add to the Downtown. One resident also noted a desire to increase health and social services, such as dentist, doctor, and therapist offices, substance abuse and domestic violence counselors, and places to hold support meetings. These services could be a great way to address social issues as well.

In a small town, inclusion is key. Divisions feel even greater in a small town. North Brookfield has many enthusiastic residents who are very active. However, this could lead to a feeling that a few passionate residents drive most of the decision making. It is extremely important to make sure that all those who want to be involved in public processes are. People should be invited to participate. Togetherness, communication, and capacity building is important not only to get things done, but to create a welcoming town culture.

It is unclear if economic development should be for North Brookfield residents or a more regional clientele. The reality is that North Brookfield is currently limited by its size, which is roughly 4,000 residents. Finding the right type and size of tenant mix is strategic. However, large retail, like Hannaford Brothers Super Market, does show that higher capacity stores are possible. Many attendees expressed a desire to unite a tenant mix that first serves community members (like a bakery) and then reach out to attracting shoppers from nearby towns. While development and increasing the population of the town was mentioned, it was a neutral issue during this discussion. Some participants were interested in speaking with real estate agents and brokers about strategies to attract people to come to town. It was also noted that online shopping is a cultural hurdle to overcome. Local retail may be lead to a higher price tag and shopping local, even if it is more expensive, may need to be incentivized.

People are hungry for experiences. Young parents are looking for low-cost locations to bring children for day trips. Donut shops, coffee shops, pizza places, gift stores, and general stores, especially those around



parks and playgrounds are attractive destinations. Participants expressed interest in ethnic restaurants and dining options, a dance studio, and entertainment options for night times and weekends. An ESRI Tapestry Segmentation Economic Analysis for North Brookfield identified the town as primarily filled with budget conscious consumers. When consumers do spend money, they do so on home projects and hobbies, like gardening and remodeling. Consumers also spend money out outdoor experiences, like visiting parks, fishing, hiking, camping, hunting, and fishing. Participants felt like these profiles generally match the buying patterns of people they know.

North Main Street has traffic created by delivery vehicles. Drivers take up space on North Main Street when they deliver to the liquor stores and retailers. While the town has tried to block off delivery only spaces, they are often not enforced.

The Town House is a pivotal key to Downtown revitalization. Physically, its renovation will beautify North Main Street. Socially, it will provide a communal gathering space. Creatively, the theatre inside the building will provide entertainment. Financially, an effort to refurbish the historic structure will open the town to federal, state, and local artistic funding. Currently, these types of funding mechanics are unavailable to the Town House until the Master Planning process is completed.

Aesthetics matter. Participants noted the Downtown looks tired and miss the trees that used to line the streets. Suggestions included installing more public gathering places and spaces, increasing green space, and activating North Main Street with events and activities. North Main Street should become a place where people want to go to meet friends. The open space plan should be updated and integrated into the vision for Downtown.

North Brookfield is special. Town residents are invested in making their community a better place and excited about shaping the future!

Public Presentations 1 & 2

Welcome to the Local Rapid Recovery Plan Workshop

Getting to know Zoom!

North Brookfield Public Presentation #1
Agency Landscape + Planning
Rapid Recovery Plans

Public Workshop #1 | May 25 2021

dhcd
Massachusetts
RAPID RECOVERY PLANS

Chat
Add comments and your answers to our questions here!

Mute + Unmute
Please mute during the presentation and unmute during discussions

Stop and start video
We'd love to see you!

We are recording!

North Brookfield Public Presentation

#1
Agency Landscape + Planning
Rapid Recovery Plans

Agenda

1. Hello! Introductions
2. What is the Rapid Recovery Planning effort?
3. What We've Learned So Far
 - Market Information
 - Physical Environment
 - Business Environment
 - Administrative Capacity
4. Next Steps
5. Discussion



What is the Local Rapid Recovery Planning Effort?



Rapid Recovery Planning Effort

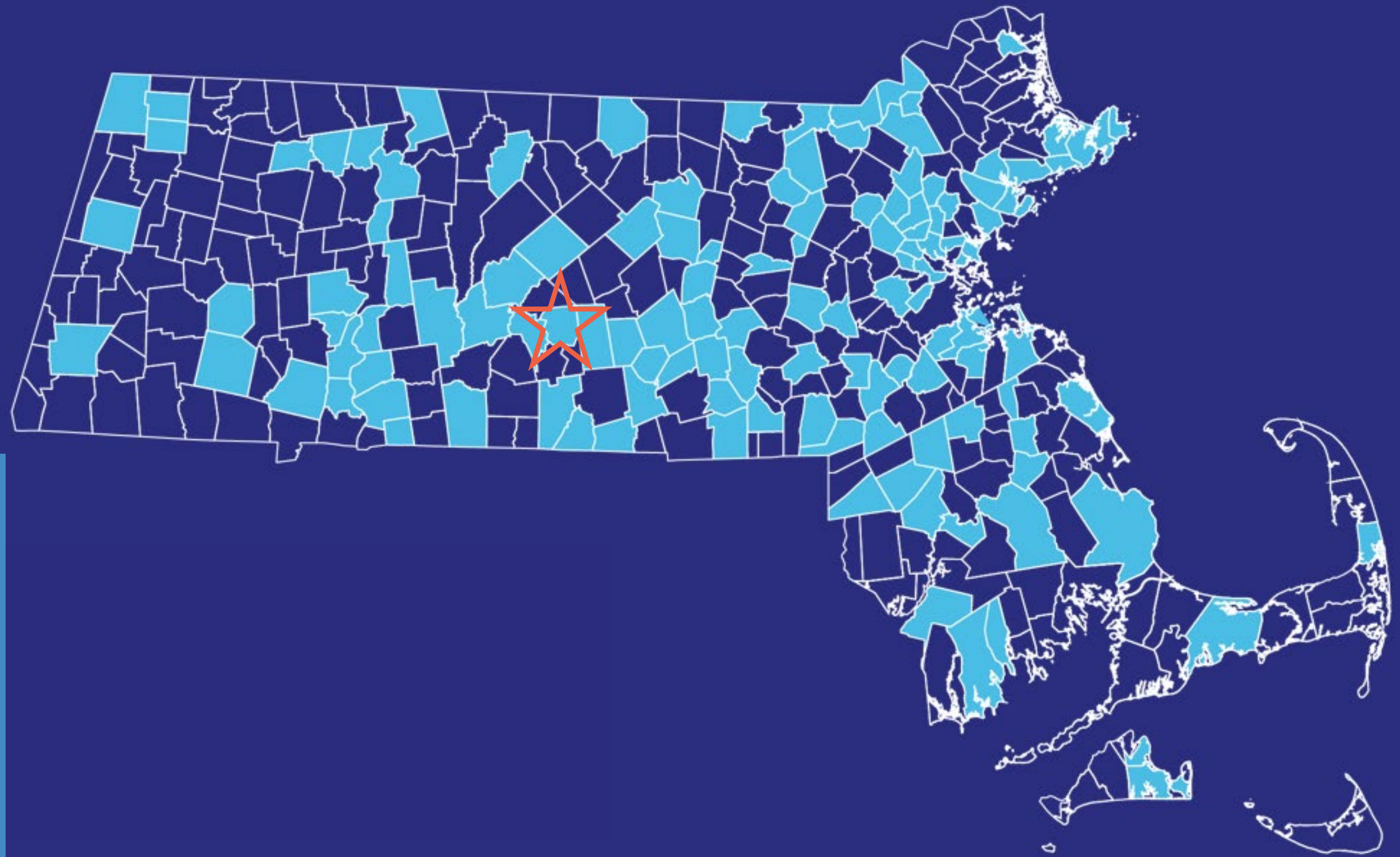
How Can Our Small Businesses Survive?

Primary Goal
COVID Recovery

Secondary Goal
Long Term Strategies for
Downtown Businesses

This Project Includes

- **A data collection effort**, standardized so the state and municipalities have comparable metrics
- Creation of **data driven plans** to aid in COVID-19 Recovery Efforts
- Opportunities for participating communities **to network and collaborate**
- **A Business Survey**, so we can hear directly from business owners!
- **Multiple outreach opportunities**, so we can hear from North Brookfield residents



Rapid Recovery Plans

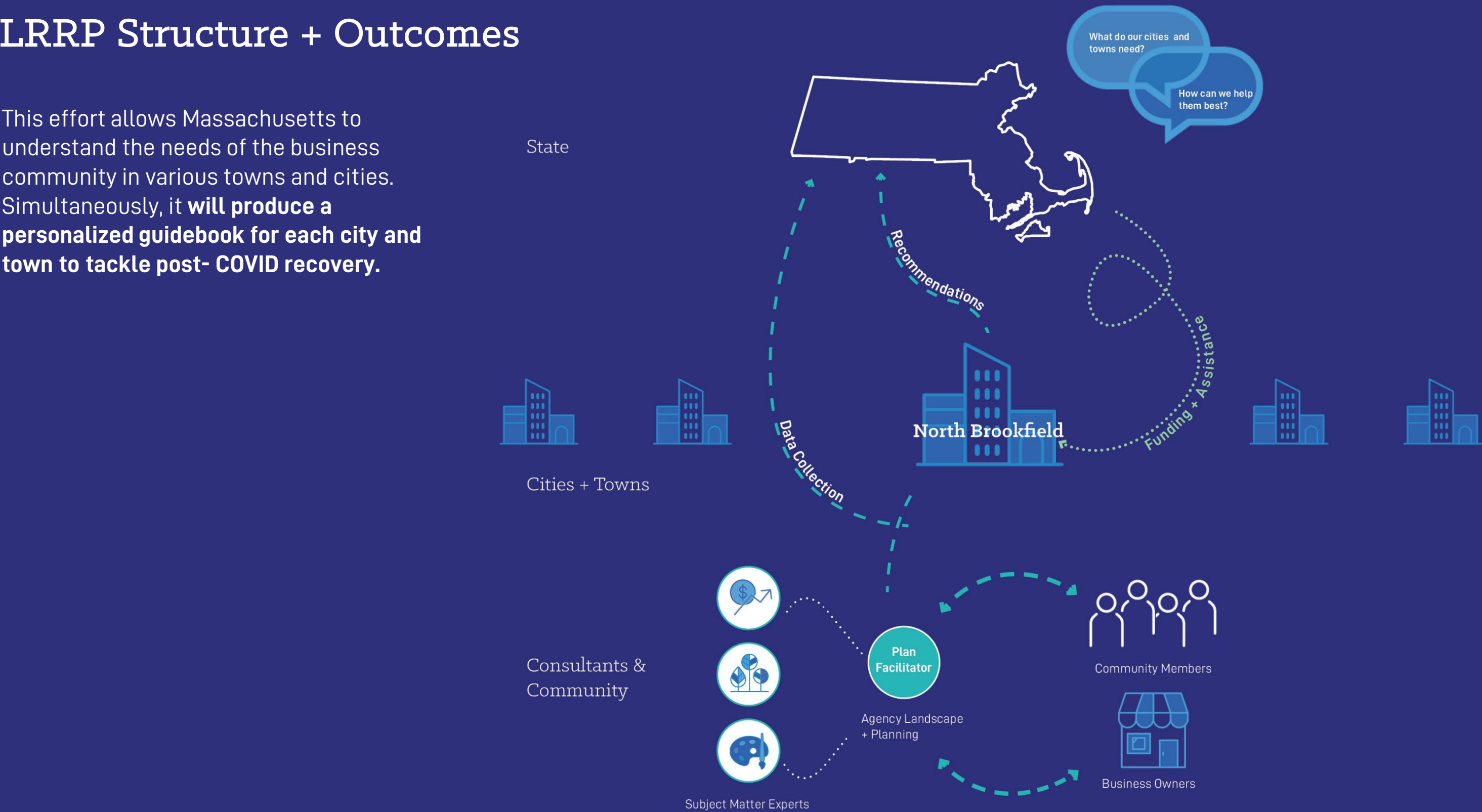
125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

- **52 small**
 - **North Brookfield**
- 51 medium
- 16 large
- 6 extra large

- Program Communities
- Non-Participating Towns and Cities

LRRP Structure + Outcomes

This effort allows Massachusetts to understand the needs of the business community in various towns and cities. Simultaneously, it **will produce a personalized guidebook for each city and town to tackle post- COVID recovery.**



RRP Outcomes



It Will Deliver

To the State:

- A set of **actionable, well developed projects** that reflect COVID-19 recovery needs, community priorities, available resources and incentives, and the capacity of implement at the local level
- Information to the state on **how best to allocate public and private resources** in support of COVID-19 Recovery

To North Brookfield:

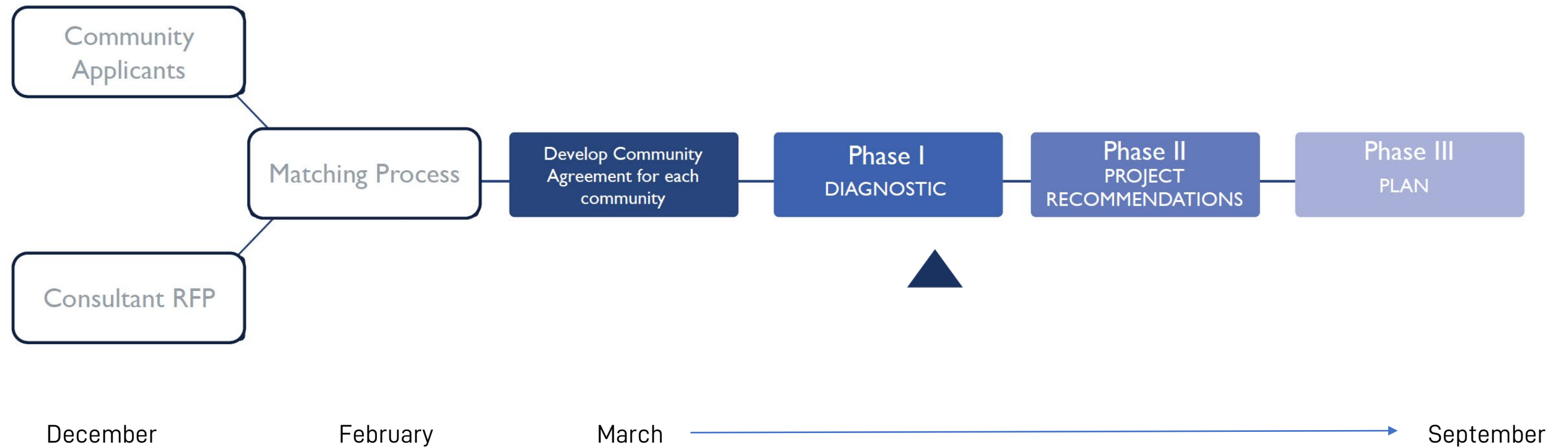
- **High level recommendations** to stimulate business development '
- An **understanding of the current small business landscape** within the Study Area
- Suggestions for **public realm investments, business support strategies, and local capacity opportunities**
- **Sketches, images, drawings** of what downtown **could look like**



It Will NOT Deliver

- **Detailed** plans about **specific sites**
 - Recommendations will be suggestions, backed by data collection and interviews
- **In-depth economic development analysis**
 - **Suggestions will remain high level** and **recommend first steps** towards business development
- **Detailed redesigns of parks, streets, or buildings**

RRP Timeline



The LRRP effort follows a **9-month timeline**.



Meet the Team!



Sheila Orsi
Board Member, Downtown Development Committee
North Brookfield Master Plan Committee

Ethan North Brookfield
Representative/Plan Liaison

Rhiannon Project Manager,
Senior Planner



**AGENCY
LANDSCAPE +
PLANNING**
Plan Facilitator



Mac Landscape Designer



Abby Content Manager,
Planner



Brie Planning Principal



What We've Learned So Far

What We've Learned

State's Guiding Questions



CUSTOMER
BASE

Who **visits North Brookfield's Downtown?**



PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT

Is the **physical environment** conducive to **businesses** and **customers**?



BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT

How has **COVID 19 impacted businesses?**
Does the **business mix** of the Downtown **meet the needs** of consumers?



ADMIN
CAPACITY

Who are the **champions and stewards of Downtown North Brookfield?**
Do **regulations impede businesses** growth?

Data Collection

How was data collected?

- **Demographic data retrieved** from Federal, State, City **Census** databases
- **Interviews** to understand customer profiles and lease pricing
- **Site visits** to the district to inventory condition and quality of public realm and quantity of storefronts
- **Phone interviews** with building owners, city representatives
- **Vehicle Traffic Data and other square footage takeoffs retrieved** from Federal, State, and local
- **Business Data and information** about vacancy, business closure, ownership and square footage of commercial uses gathered from **interviews, Town Clerk records, North Brookfield's Assessor's database, and State GIS maps**

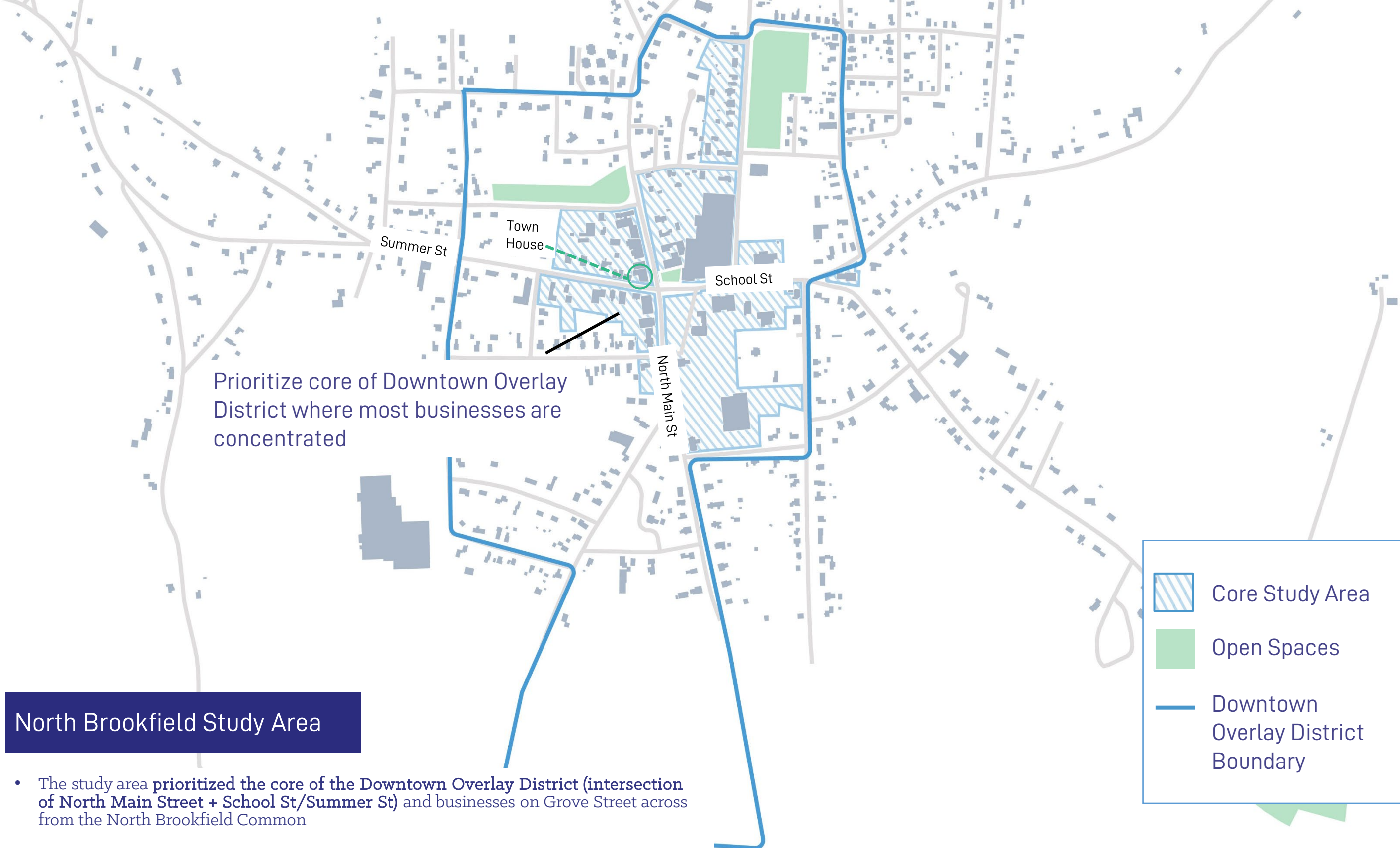




CUSTOMER
BASE



Who Visits North Brookfield's Downtown?



Poll Time!

Why Do You Go Downtown?

(can provide more than one answer)

- To shop at a business
- To go to the grocery store
- To receive a service (hair cut, doctor's appointment, insurance advice, go to the bank)
- To walk (the dog, for leisure, etc.)
- To attend an event (Farmer's Market, Movie Night)
- I do not go Downtown/only pass through
- Other (answer in chat)

Answer via the Zoom Poll or write your answer in the chat

Study Area

North Brookfield Town

Massachusetts

Population

2,466

4,680

6,892,503

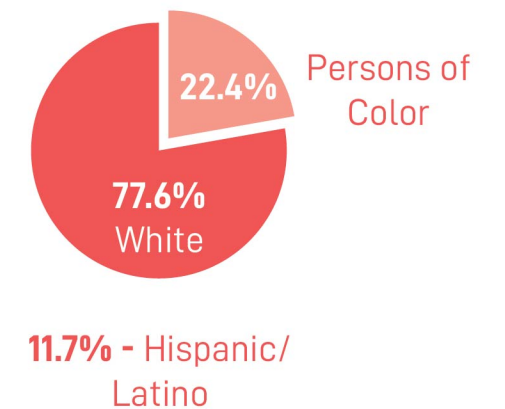
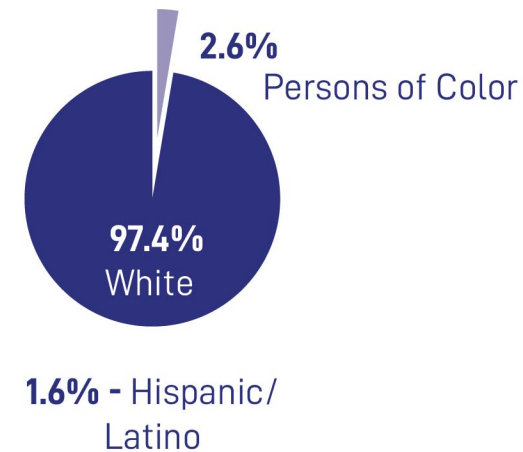
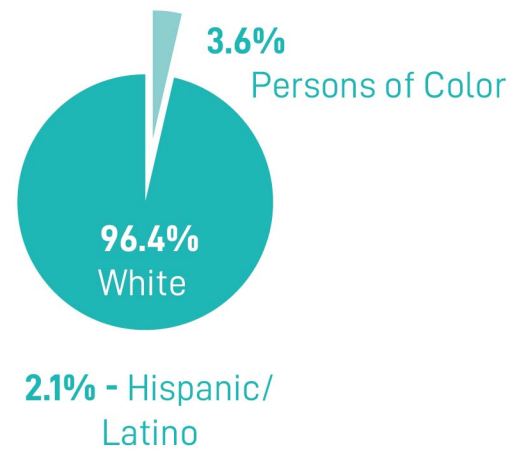
Average Household Size



Median Age



Population by Race/Ethnicity



**Total
Workforce/Employees**

Study Area

1,431 (58%)

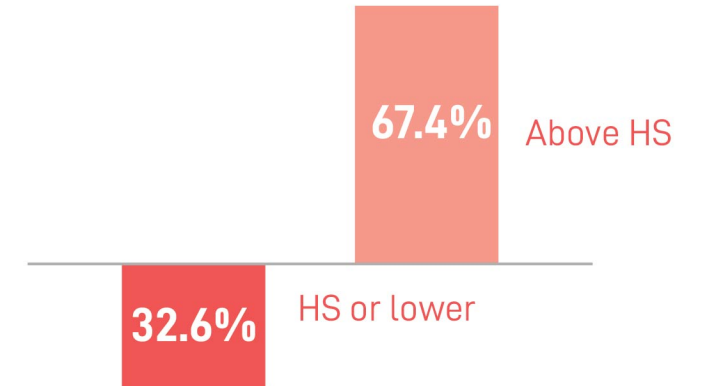
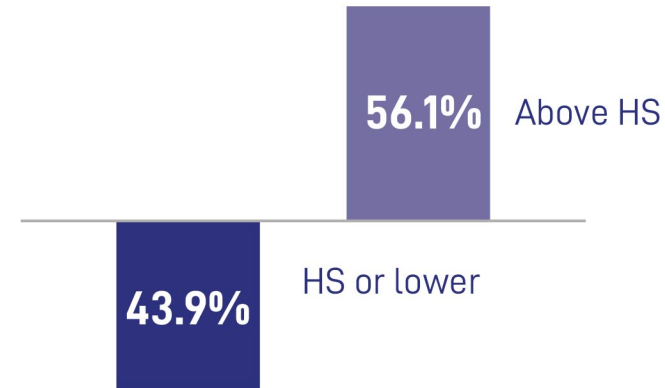
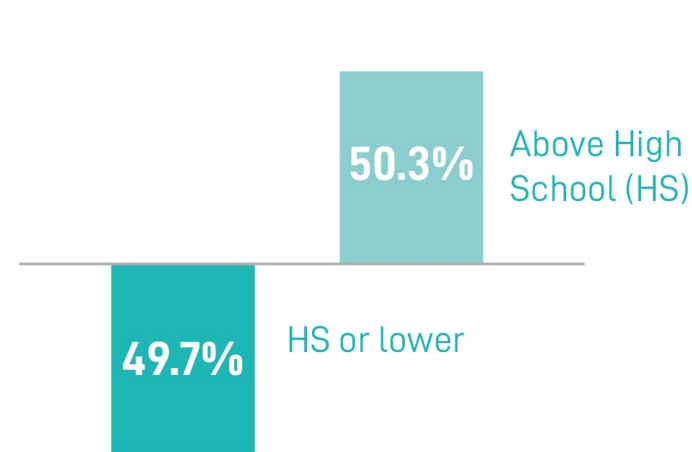
North Brookfield Town

3,308 (70%)

Massachusetts

4,466,342 (64%)

**Population by
Highest Level of
Educational Attainment**



**Median
Household Income**



\$73,393



\$78,750

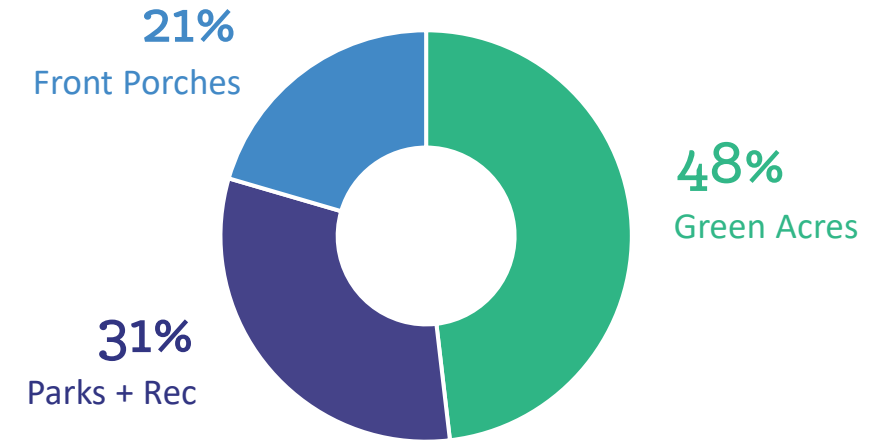


\$85,843

Who Are Our Customers?

ESRI Tapestry Data

- Classifies neighborhoods into **67 unique types** based on **demographics** and **socioeconomic characteristics**.



Green Acres

Median Age: 44

- Primarily **married couples**, most with **no children**
- Enjoy outdoor living, home improvement projects, and gardening
- Cautious spenders, with a focus on quality
- Spend money on tools, hobbies (hunting/fishing, etc.)
- Spend **above** national average on:
 - Food
 - Apparel & Services
 - Entertainment + Recreation



Parks + Rec

Median Age: 41

- Primarily two income **married couples**, **approaching retirement**
- Take advantage of local parks + recreation activities
- Budget conscious, stock up on staples
- Financially shrewd, research big ticket purchases
- Spend **less than** national average on:
 - Food
 - Apparel & Services
 - Entertainment + Recreation



Front Porches

Median Age: 35

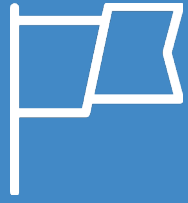
- Young families with children or single households
- More than half are renters
- Seek adventure and strive to have fun
- Friends and family influence buying decisions
- Price is important-limited incomes lead to less adventurous shopping
- Spend **less than** national average on:
 - Food
 - Apparel & Services
 - Entertainment & Recreation

Poll Time!

Do These Profiles Describe North Brookfield Residents?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Other (answer in chat)

Answer via the Zoom Poll or write your answer in the chat



PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT



Is the Physical Environment Conducive to Businesses and Consumers?

Physical Environment

What We Found...

- **The sides of North Main Street feel separate**
 - Public safety, facilities, churches, housing, and properties in transition separate retail and commercial uses
- **Pedestrian activity has increased 92% since January 2019**
 - Providing an opportunity for Downtown businesses to capture pedestrian activity
- **Open spaces are centrally located, but can be better connected**

3,571

vehicles per day

Average Annual Daily Vehicular
Traffic (AADT)
Gilbert St, South of R67 (2020)

6,350

vehicles per day

AADT
Summer St, west of North Main St
(2020)

5.6

Acres of open space

530

Parking spaces

Physical Environment



Commercial District Grades



Sidewalks

Street Trees +
Benches

Lighting

Wayfinding +
Signage

Roadbed +
Crosswalks

C

C

C

C

B

Businesses surveyed said it
was **important to improve
sidewalks and streets**

Downtown Has A Lot to Love...



Historic facades
with local
champions

Concentration of
small local businesses

Various building styles
add visual interest

On + off street parking

Future gas station

Crosswalks and
easy navigation

Great visibility up and down North Main St

...But the Public Realm Could Be More Welcoming

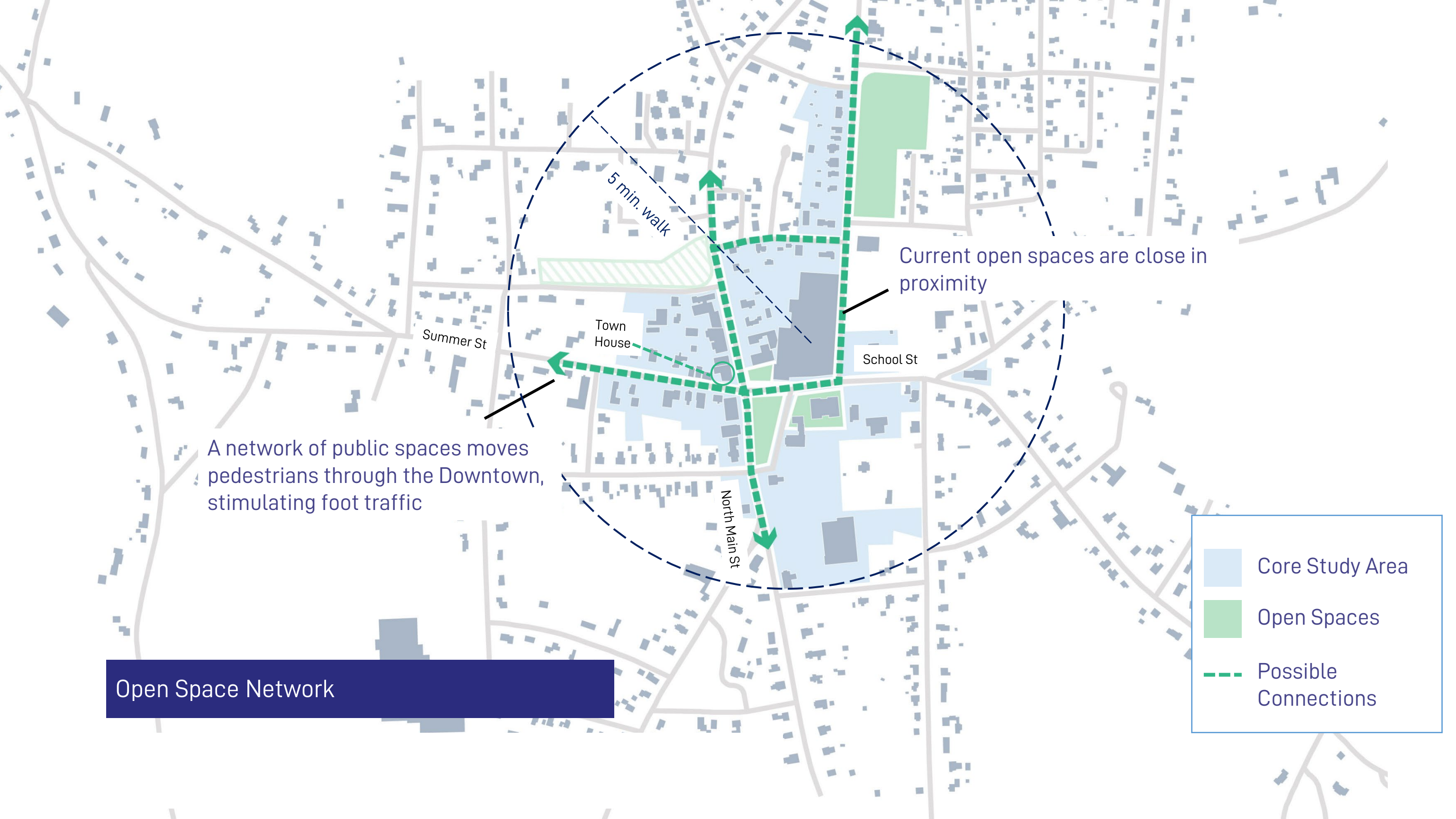


Site Concept Downtown Complete Streets Project

BSC Group
North Brookfield
April 2021



SCALE 1" = 20'
0 10 20 40



Open Space Network

A network of public spaces moves pedestrians through the Downtown, stimulating foot traffic

Current open spaces are close in proximity

5 min. walk

Summer St

Town House

School St

North Main St

- Core Study Area
- Open Spaces
- Possible Connections

Poll Time!

I Wish The Downtown Had More...?

(can provide more than one answer)

- Places to relax and sit
- Gathering spaces for larger events
- Shaded, walkable sidewalks
- Distinctive look and feel
- Infrastructure for evening activities
- Other (answer in chat)

Answer via the Zoom Poll or write your answer in the chat



**BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT**



Does the Business Mix Meet the Needs of Consumers?

Business Environment

What We Found...

- **Despite a concentration of businesses, North Main Street feels sleepy**
 - Public safety, facilities, churches, housing, and properties in transition separate retail and commercial uses
- **Vacant tenants in prime locations**
 - At least 4 vacancies exist in prime ground floor locations. Other buildings lack tenants on upper floors.

38

businesses

In the Downtown Study Area

4

Vacant storefronts

Current or short-term
planned

36,372

Total Ground Floor
Commercial Space

3,450 (9.5%)

Vacant Ground Floor
Commercial Space

Business Environment

The business survey was shared from
March 29th to April 16th

13 businesses participated in the survey
(**34%** of Downtown businesses)

Most Businesses Saw A Decrease

- **46%** of businesses generated less revenue than they did in 2019
- For **46% of businesses**, revenue declined by **25%**

Most businesses reduced hours, capacity, or revenue

Safety measures cost businesses money

- **54%** of businesses incurred expenses to implement safety measures

But Some Saw Business Improve

- **15%** of businesses stated revenue increased from 2019 to 2020
- **8%** stated business stayed the same

8% of businesses were able to pivot

- Establishing alternative modes to sell and deliver products

Effects were substantial

- **39%** of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of **25% or more**
- **23%** laid off employees
- **69%** reduced hours and/or capacity

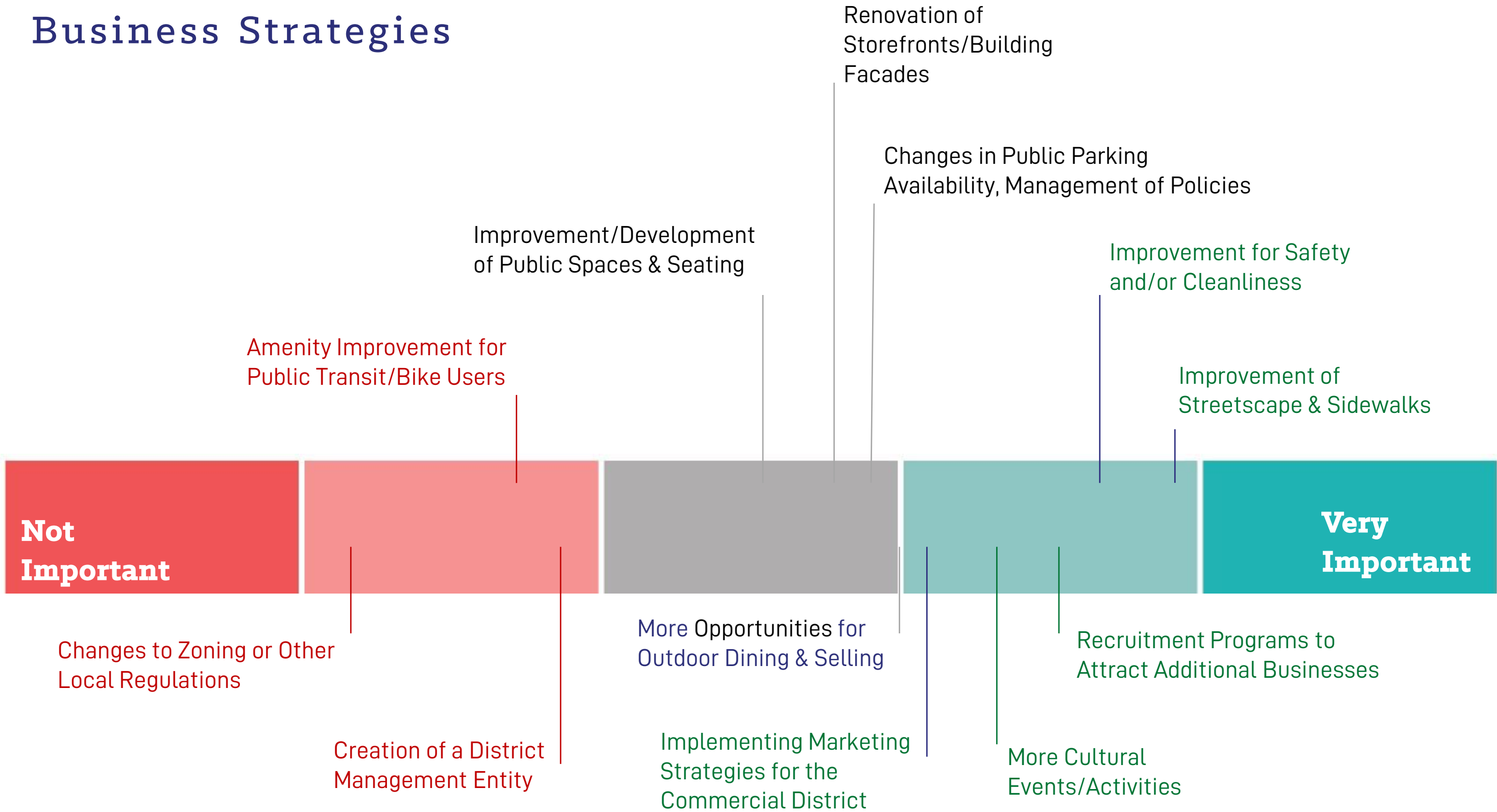
Business Satisfaction

- Condition of Private Buildings, Storefronts, Signs
- Condition of Public Spaces, Streets & Sidewalks
- Access for Customers & Employees
- Safety + Comfort of Customers & Employees
- Proximity to Complementary Businesses + Uses

Very Dissatisfied

Very Satisfied

Business Strategies



Poll Time!

When You Think of Downtown, What Words Come to Mind?

(can provide more than one answer)

Write your answer(s) in the chat!



ADMIN
CAPACITY

Who Are the Champions and Stewards of Downtown?

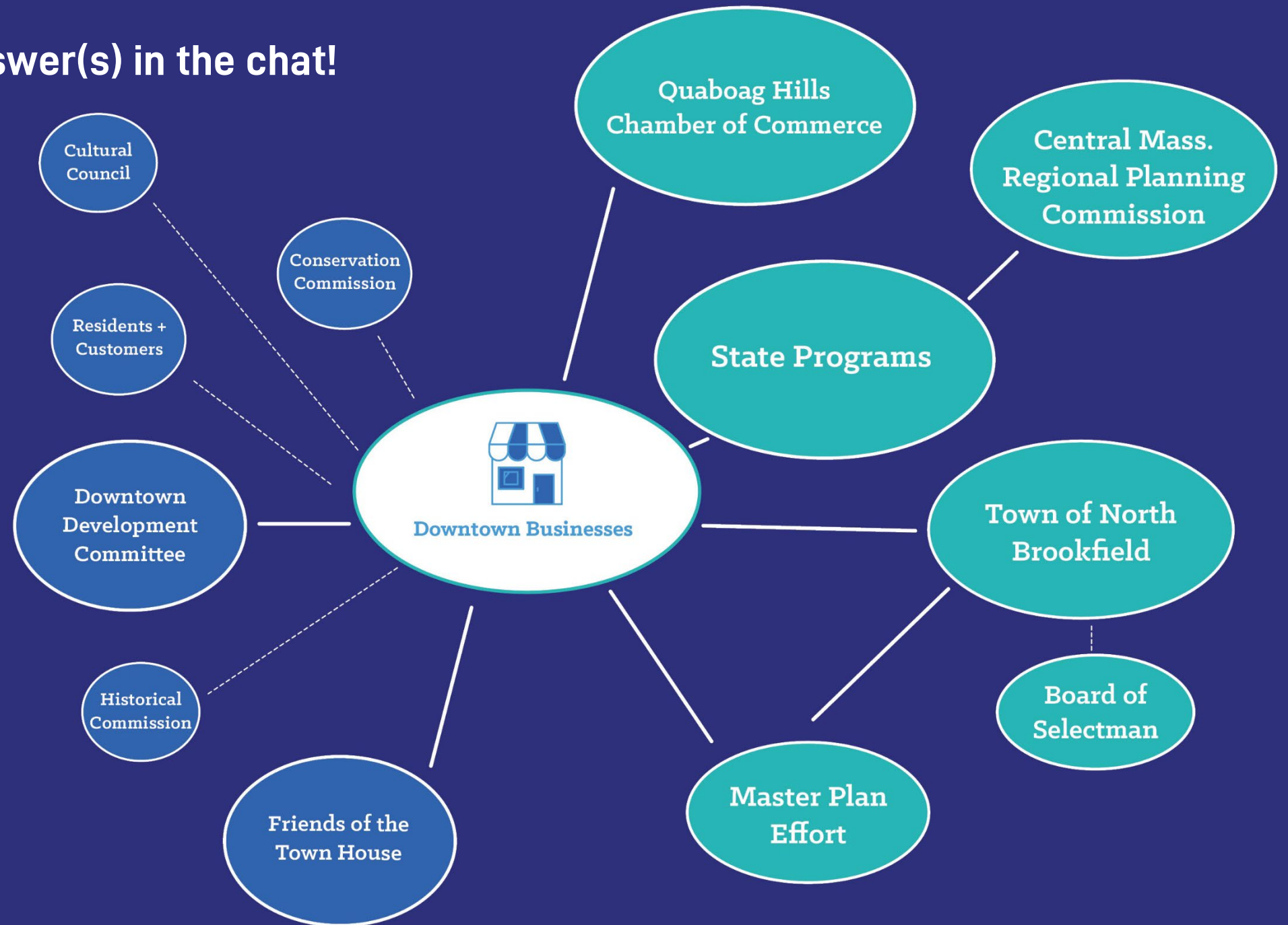


Poll Time!

Which Champions and Stewards Are We Missing?

(can provide more than one answer)

Write your answer(s) in the chat!



Next Steps + Discussion

What did we miss? What did we get right?

Discussion

- If you are a business tell us about your typical customer? If you are a customer, what businesses do you frequent?
- Who are the **champions and stewards** of the district's success?
- **What improvements** could be made to **access and the public realm** to better attract business and customers?
- Attracting businesses was identified as very important to COVID recovery. **What kinds of businesses should the district attract?**

Next Steps...

- **Phase 2**
 - Consult key stakeholders on priority projects
 - Who should we talk to?
 - Consult with Subject Matter Experts on recommendations
 - **Cocreate recommendations with you!**
 - Develop a final list of projects

Thank You!

Want to follow up with additional questions or feedback?

Ethan Meland
Representative/ Plan Liaison
ethan@meladstudioworks.com

North Brookfield Downtown Commercial Area Recommendations

Agency Landscape + Planning
Rapid Recovery Plans

Agenda

1. Review of Local Rapid Recovery Planning Effort
2. Key Findings
3. Recommendations
4. Next Steps + Questions





Review of Local Rapid Recovery Planning Effort



Meet the Team



RRP Structure + Outcomes

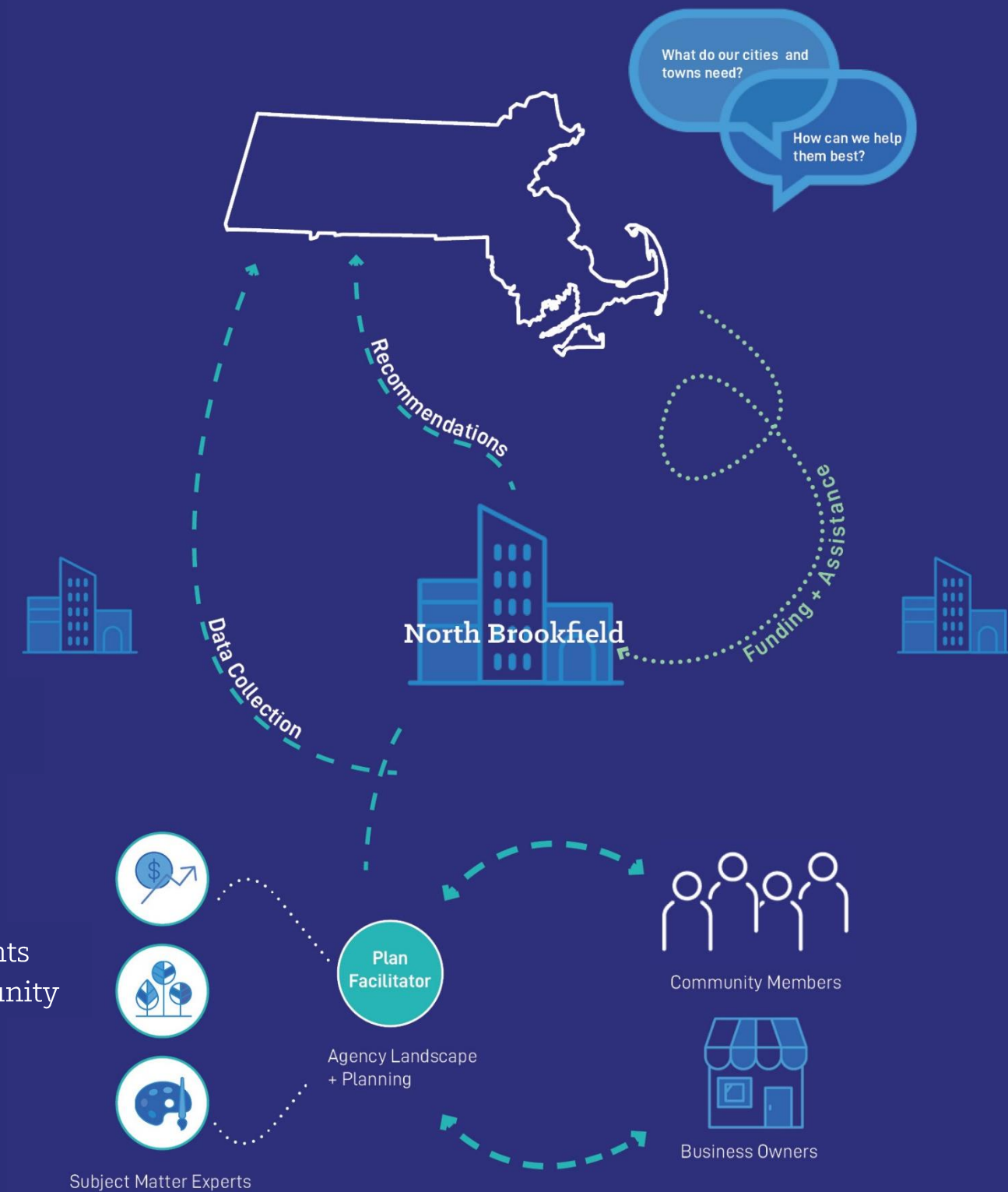
This effort allows Massachusetts to understand the needs of the business community in various towns and cities. Simultaneously, it **will produce a personalized guidebook for each city and town to tackle post-COVID recovery.**

State

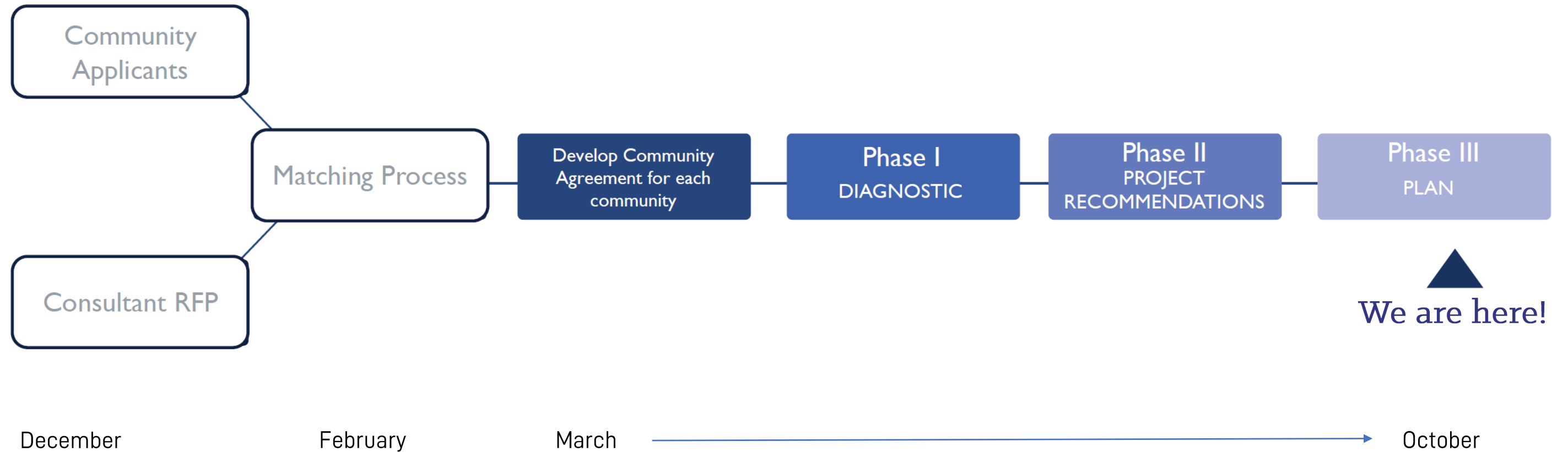
Cities
& Towns

Consultants
& Community

Subject Matter Experts



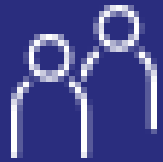
RRP Timeline



The RRP effort follows a 10-month timeline.

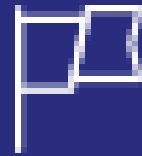
RRP Data Collection Framework

- Research centered around 4 main categories



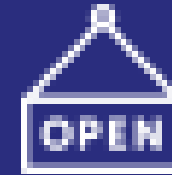
CUSTOMER BASE

- Trends
- Consumer Profiles
- Demographic Data



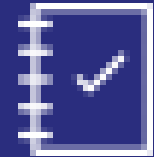
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Public Realm
(open space, street furniture, lighting, etc.)
- Private Realm
(signs, facades, lighting, etc..)
- Access & Visibility
(roads, crosswalks, streets)



BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

- Anchors & Destinations
- Assets & Business Mix
- Nodes & Clusters



ADMIN CAPACITY

- Partners & Organizations
- Funding
- Regulations & Zoning

Key Findings



The Private and Public Realm Can be More Welcoming

- Downtown feels disjointed and lacks a cohesive vision. Cars prioritized over pedestrians



Residents are Budget Conscious and Spend Money on Hobbies

- It is important to match future tenants to existing consumer habits. Knowing consumer trends also informs COVID recovery strategies



Despite Small Size, North Brookfield Supports Large Businesses

- Presence of Vibram and Hannaford's Super Market proves the right (large) business can do well



The Town is Well Loved By Passionate Residents

- Residents have both great pride and big dreams for the town. They have been able to achieve a lot!



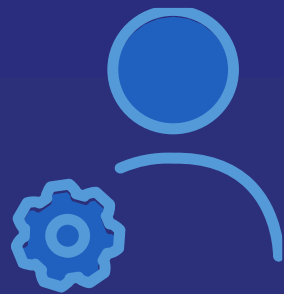
Town House is Pivotal and Represents the Town's Cultural Aspirations

- Renovation of the Town House into an arts destination will drive business activity. Cultural and economic goals should work in tandem



Recommendation Themes

- 7 categories guide the creation of recommendations



**Administrative
Capacity**



Public Realm



Culture/ Arts



Revenue & Sales



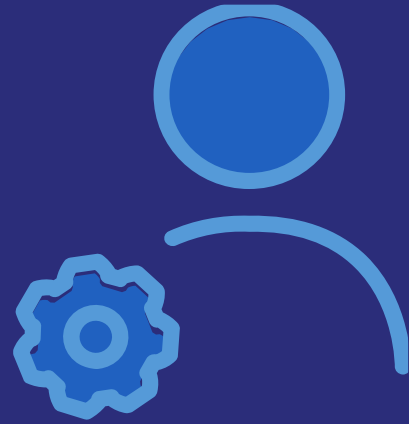
Tenant Mix



Private Realm



Other



Administrative Capacity

Create A Downtown Liaison/Town Manager Position





Create A Downtown Liaison/Town Manager Position

Timing



Short (< 5 yrs)

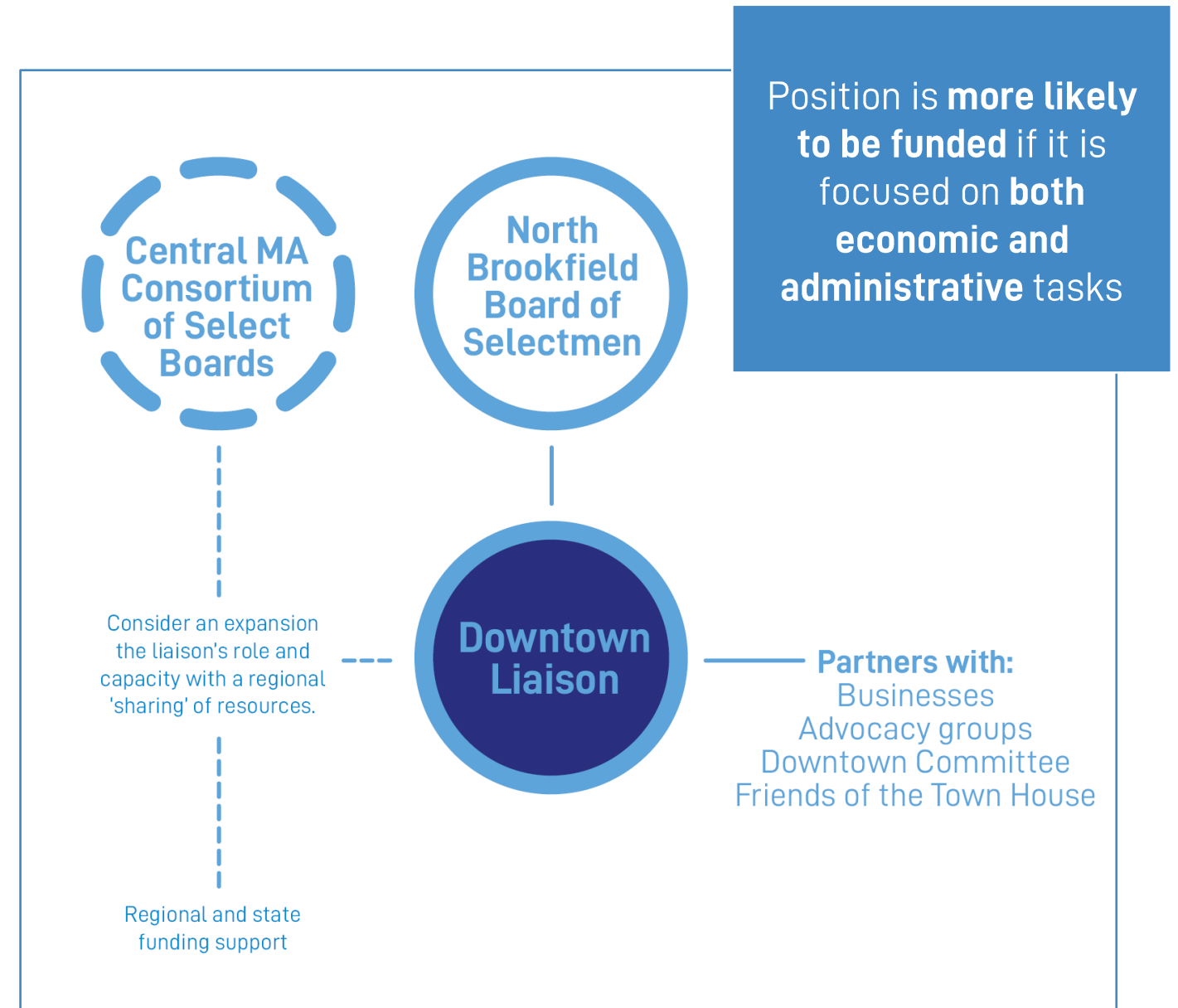
Funding



Medium (\$50 - \$200K)

Key Actions

- Town government / Board of Selectmen approve position. They also participate in recruitment
- Hire a full-time economic development professional
- Share position among neighboring towns (if needed or desired)
- Acquire funding to guarantee 2-3 years of support



Possible structure of Downtown Liaison position



Revenue & Sales

Create A Tenant Recruitment and Retention Program
In Line with Town's Consumer Capacity



Create A Tenant Recruitment And Retention Program In Line with Town's Consumer Capacity



Revenue & Sales

Timing



Medium (5-10 yrs)

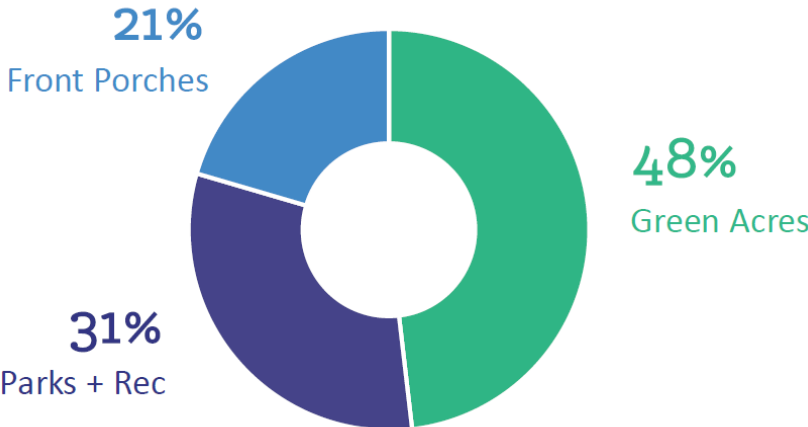
Funding



High (> \$200K)

Key Actions

- Identify the “right” tenant mix for North Brookfield. Disposable income, consumer spending, and population size contribute to this analysis
- Emerge from pandemic with clear visions for business recruitment and retention
- Attract creative industries to location Downtown and host events



North Brookfield's consumers are **budget conscious**, spend money on **activities, hobbies, and outdoor recreation**.



Green Acres

Median Age: 44

- Primarily **married couples**, most with **no children**
- Enjoy outdoor living, home improvement projects, and gardening

- Cautious spenders, with a focus on quality
- Spend money on tools, hobbies (hunting/fishing, etc.)

- Spend **above** national average on:
 - Food
 - Apparel & Services
 - Entertainment + Recreation



Parks + Rec

Median Age: 41

- Primarily two income **married couples**, **approaching retirement**
- Take advantage of local parks + recreation activities

- Budget conscious, stock up on staples
- Financially shrewd, research big ticket purchases

- Spend **less than** national average on:
 - Food
 - Apparel & Services
 - Entertainment + Recreation



Front Porches

Median Age: 35

- Young families with children or single households
- More than half are renters
- Seek adventure and strive to have fun

- Friends and family influence buying decisions
- Price is important-limited incomes lead to less adventurous shopping

- Spend **less than** national average on:
 - Food
 - Apparel & Services
 - Entertainment & Recreation



Public Realm

Undergo an Identity and Branding Effort



Undergo an Identity and Branding Effort

Timing



Short (< 5 yrs)

Funding



Low (<\$50K)

Key Actions

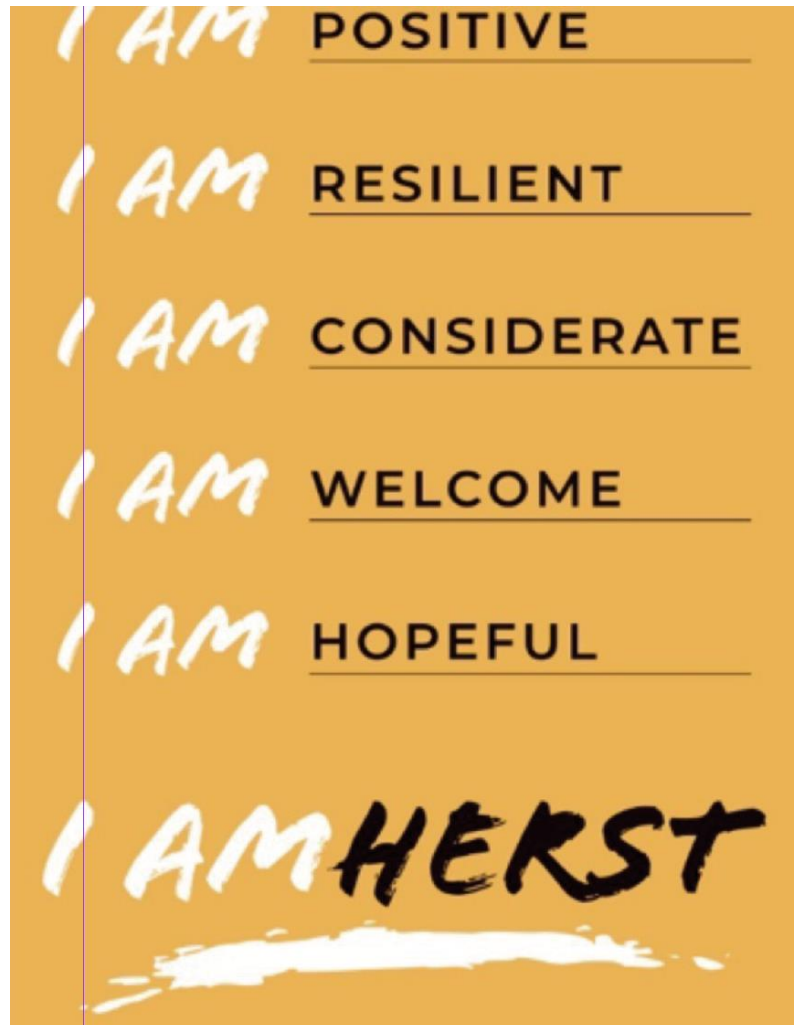
- Create brand guidelines
- Undertake a signage study and implement cohesive signage and wayfinding Downtown
- Deploy the brand specifically along North Main Street, School Street, and Summer Street
- Amend zoning code (as/if needed) to foster desired private signage
- **Long Term Goal: Coordinate with nearby jurisdictions for a local marketing and tourism effort**



Color schemes, iconography, and graphic elements of the brand can come from North Brookfield's well-loved places

Branding and wayfinding strategies can be tweaked for **COVID recovery**.

Amherst, MA, launched a campaign aimed at bringing people back downtown



The #IAMherst Campaign raised awareness about **business reopenings**, **instilled confidence in safety precautions**, and was **interactive**. Murals, signage, and social media campaigns **encouraged direct communication between shoppers and business owners**



Private Realm

Amend Zoning Code to Allow Flexibility in Use and Encourage Greater Business Mix

Channel Creative Funding Sources Into Private Realm Improvements



Amend Zoning Code to Allow Flexibility in Use and Encourage Greater Business Mix



Private Realm

Timing



Medium (5-10 yrs)

Funding



Medium (\$50 - \$200K)

Key Actions

- Streamline small use changes zoning amendments
- Activate private spaces, like alleys and side streets, in creative/commercial ways
- Encourage originality in façade and building design while retaining loved historic elements
- Create an illustrative "Zoning 101 Manual," that simplifies and clarifies zoning code for average person



Alleyways and side streets provide opportunities for unique seating, artwork, or event space

The **Downtown Bozeman Plan (Montana)** views "in between spaces" as places for creative uses



Channel Creative Funding Sources Into Private Realm Improvements

Timing



Short (< 5 yrs)

Funding



Medium (\$50 - \$200K)

Key Actions

- Standardize storefronts and window displays
- Engage in a beautification effort for the Downtown. Build off the Complete Streets project.
- Consider form-based code to enable a comprehensive Downtown character and preserve small town feel
- Take advantage of innovative funding strategies, like Patronicity, to support private realm investments



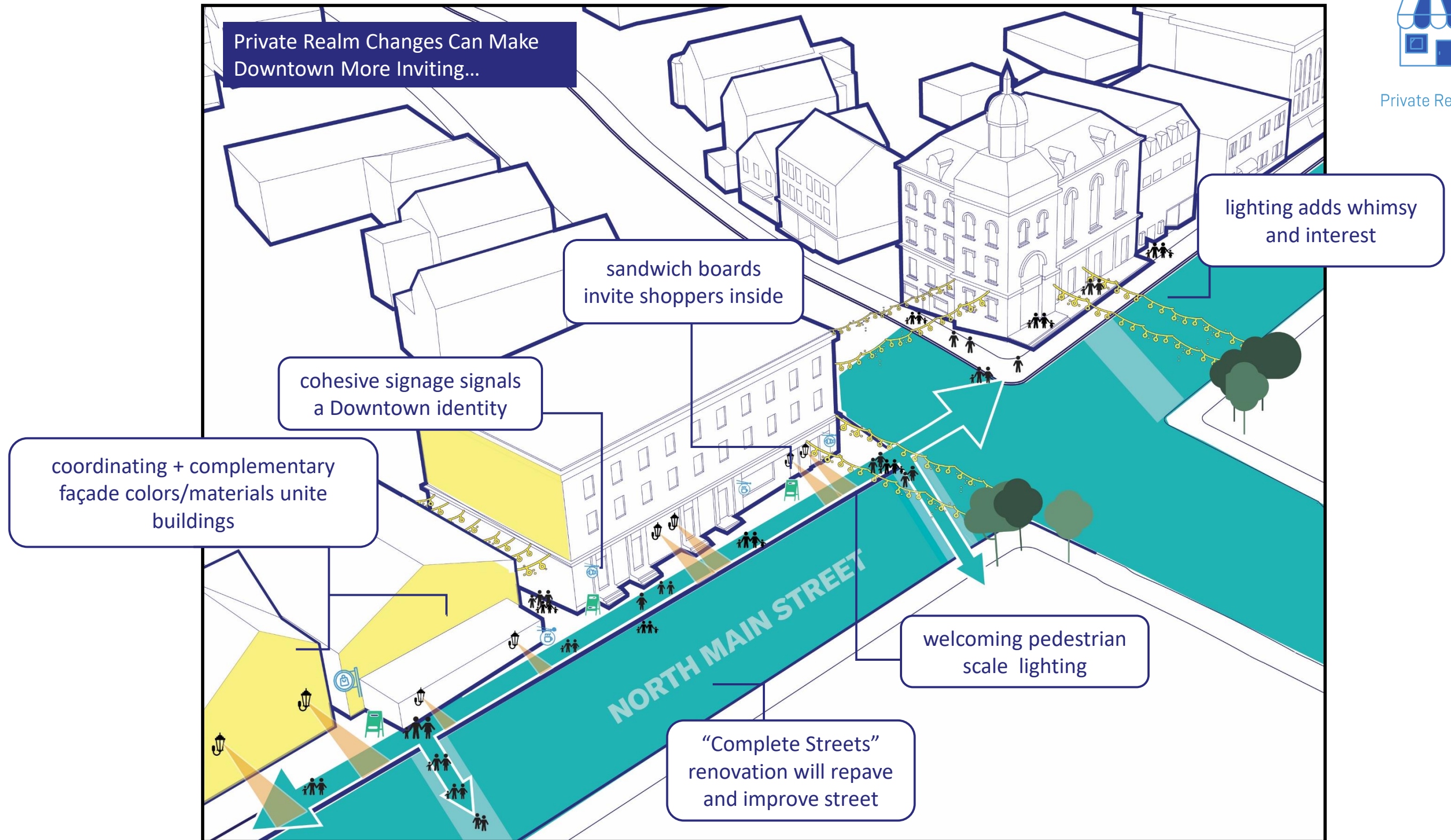
Private Realm

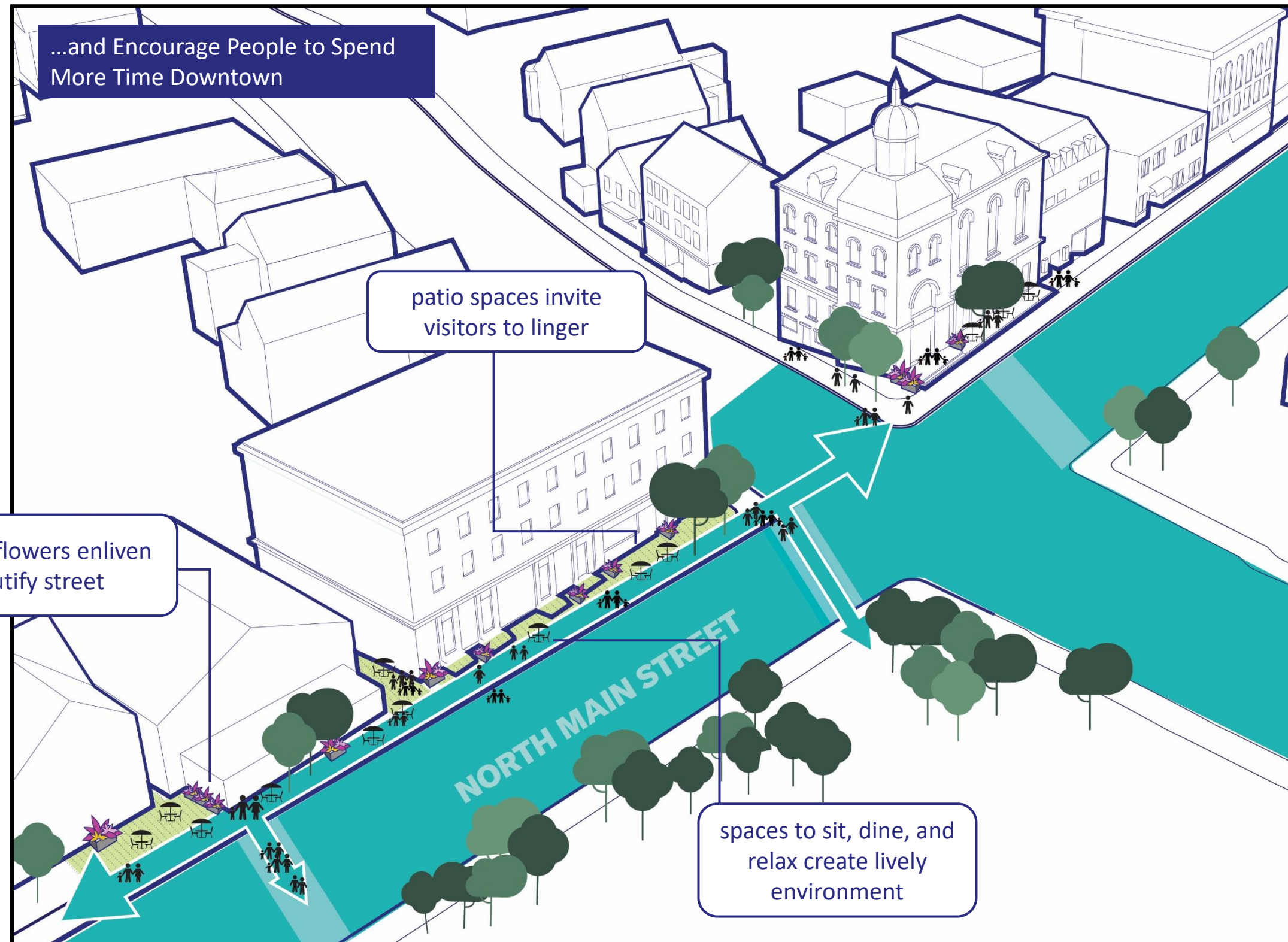


Downtown Stockbridge preserves its historic character through **standardized signage**, **lighting guidelines**, and **landscaping** through **zoning codes and overlays**.



Private Realm





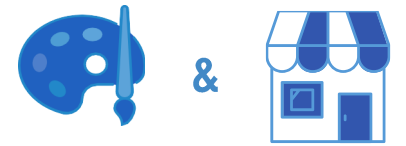


Cultural/Arts

Partner to Bring Public Art and Cultural Amenities
Downtown

Initiate A Low-Cost Event Series, Activating
Summer Street and School Street

Partner to Bring Public Art and Cultural Amenities Downtown



Cultural/Arts

Private Realm

Timing



Short (< 5 yrs)

Funding



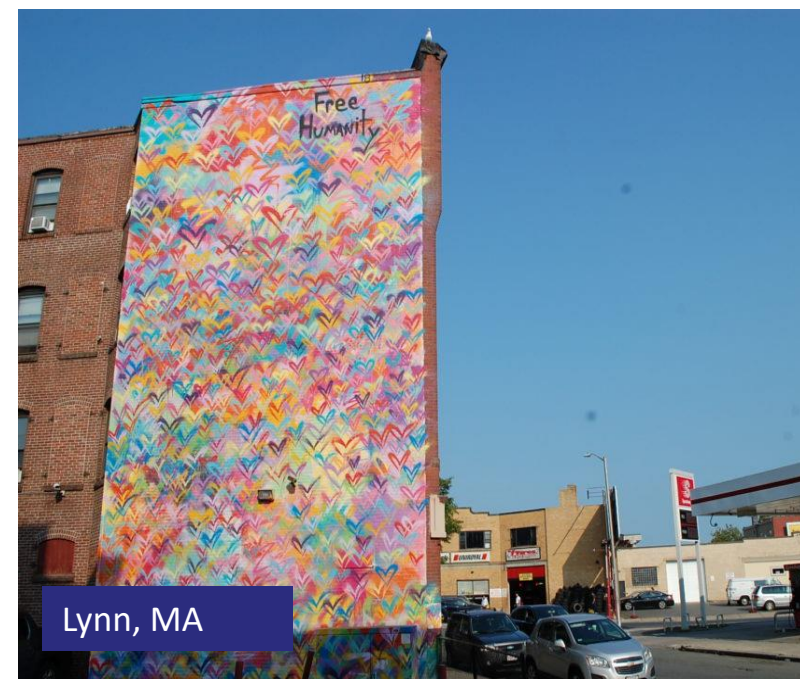
Medium (\$50 - \$200K)

Key Actions

- Identify a private realm/artist liaison to facilitate the process of identifying a site for the art installation and coordination with the artist
- Identify the site(s) for public art
- Identify funding sources, permitting requirements, and maintenance needs for artwork
- Ensure public art and cultural investments reflect the diverse nature of the town, its full history, and its residents



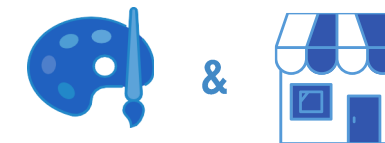
Worcester, MA



Lynn, MA



Worcester, MA



Cultural/Arts

&

Private Realm

Opportunities for public art:
Vertical (blue) and sculptural (green)

murals up high can evoke
the town's agricultural
heritage and cultural future

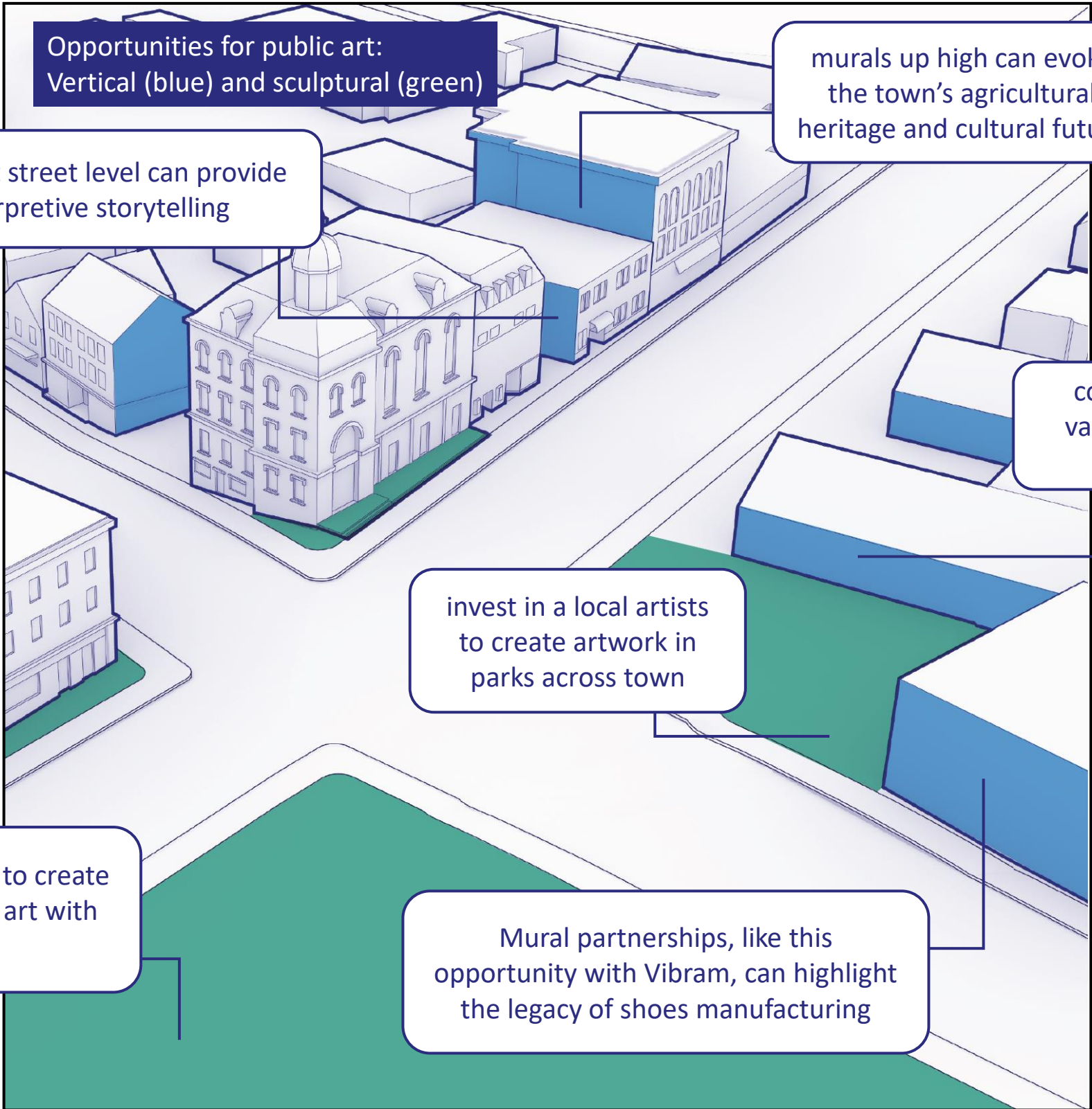
murals at street level can provide
interpretive storytelling

consider temporary artwork in
vacant storefronts and buildings
slated for redevelopment

invest in a local artists
to create artwork in
parks across town

work with schools to create
temporary public art with
students

Mural partnerships, like this
opportunity with Vibram, can highlight
the legacy of shoes manufacturing



Initiate A Low-Cost Event Series, Activating Summer Street and School Street



Cultural/Arts

Timing



Short (< 5 yrs)

Funding



Low - Medium (\$50 - \$200K)

Key Actions

- Create a cultural events calendar centered on Downtown, but in partnership with businesses, the Town House, and cultural destinations (library, religious institutions)
- Provide community activities and spaces throughout the year, especially in the wintertime



The **Winterbridge** event series in Fall River, MA **highlighted the city's small but strong "making" economy** and invited folks to **Downtown businesses**. It ran Fridays and Saturdays for 6 weeks in the winter.

Events included **live painting demonstrations, music, fire pits, Zumba dance sessions, and a window display competition**. Partnerships with local businesses and non-profits were very important

Partners

Implementing recommendations will require help from many hands. North Brookfield has access to many hardworking and enthusiastic partners.

Municipal + Governmental + Volunteer

- Central Mass. Regional Planning Commission
- MassDevelopment
- Board of Selectmen
- Downtown Development Committee
- North Brookfield Master Planning Committee
- Friends of the Town House
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- Planning Board
- Department of Recreation and Open Space
- Town Administrators
- Town Clerk
- Nearby municipalities

Local

- Downtown businesses and property owners
- Residents, visitors, and customers
- Restaurants and entrepreneurs
- Farmers and agricultural organizations/entrepreneurs
- Schools
- Banks
- Marketing/branding/graphic design consultants/professionals
- Planning and design consultants

Regional Small Business Services

- Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce
- S.C.O.R.E.
- Entrepreneurship for All (Greater Worcester)
- Nearby municipal economic development departments

Cultural

- The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC)
- Public Art Network at Americans for the Arts (PAN)
- New England Foundation for the Arts
- Massachusetts Cultural Council
- North Brookfield Cultural Council
- North Brookfield Conservation Commission
- North Brookfield Historical Commission
- Nearby cultural councils/districts
- Local arts organizations
- Rural Justice Network
- Patronicity

Funding

The COVID-19 pandemic offers “once in a generation” resources. Implementing these projects will require utilizing a mix of federal, state, local, and private funding

Public



- American Recovery Act
 - Economic Adjustment Assistance
 - Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation
 - Indigenous Communities
 - Build Back Better Regional Challenge
 - Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks
 - Good Jobs Challenge
 - State Small Business Credit Initiative
- USDA Value- Add Producer Grants 
Helps agricultural producers enter into value-add activities. Priority given to beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers
- Mass Preservation Projects Fund 
Preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites/cultural resources listed in MA Register of Historic Places

- MassDevelopment Grants 
 - Real Estate Technical Assistance
Technical assistance for surplus property reuse or District Management organization implementation
 - Downtown Initiative Program
Downtown revitalization projects within 6 categories
 - Commonwealth Places
To prepare public spaces and commercial districts with social distancing and phased reopening
 - Underutilized Properties Program
Improve abandoned, blighted, or vacant buildings
- Community Development Block Grants 
Serves a wide range of needs, from downtown development to infrastructure, business assistance, social services, etc.

- CARES Act Funding 
- HUD Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant 
Funds zoning/land use plans, building code changes, affordable housing creation
- Planning Assistance Grants 
Technical assistance for the public process associated with creating plans and land use regulations
- Small Business Technical Assistance Grants 
Counseling and training programs for small businesses
- BIZ-M-Power 
Leasing/purchasing assistance to low to moderate-income entrepreneurs
- Shared Streets and Spaces 
Support repurposing of streets, plazas, sidewalks, etc. for outdoor activities and programming
- National Endowment for the Arts 
Allocated to state and regional arts agencies

Funding

The COVID-19 pandemic offers “once in a generation” resources. Implementing these projects will require utilizing a mix of federal, state, local, and private funding

Private

- Seed Grant

Support for volunteer groups launching new projects



- Grow Grant

Support for groups with < 2 FTE's to bring more voices and deepen work

- Hometown Grant Program

Build/refresh/rebuild community spaces



- Central Berkshire Fund

Funds projects, programs, and capital improvements for arts and culture, early childhood development, environmental, health, and social services initiatives



- Patronicity

Helps to crowdsource funding for community-led/community placemaking projects



Let's Talk...

- Which recommendation(s) should North Brookfield implement first?
- What other partners or funding sources are important?
- Which local champions should be consulted?



Thank You!

Want to follow up with additional questions or feedback?

Ethan Melad

ethan@meladstudioworks.com

Downtown Development Committee

Town of North Brookfield



