



Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

Oak Bluffs



Acknowledgements



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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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The Planning Team would also like to thank the following individuals for participating as key stakeholders throughout the planning process:

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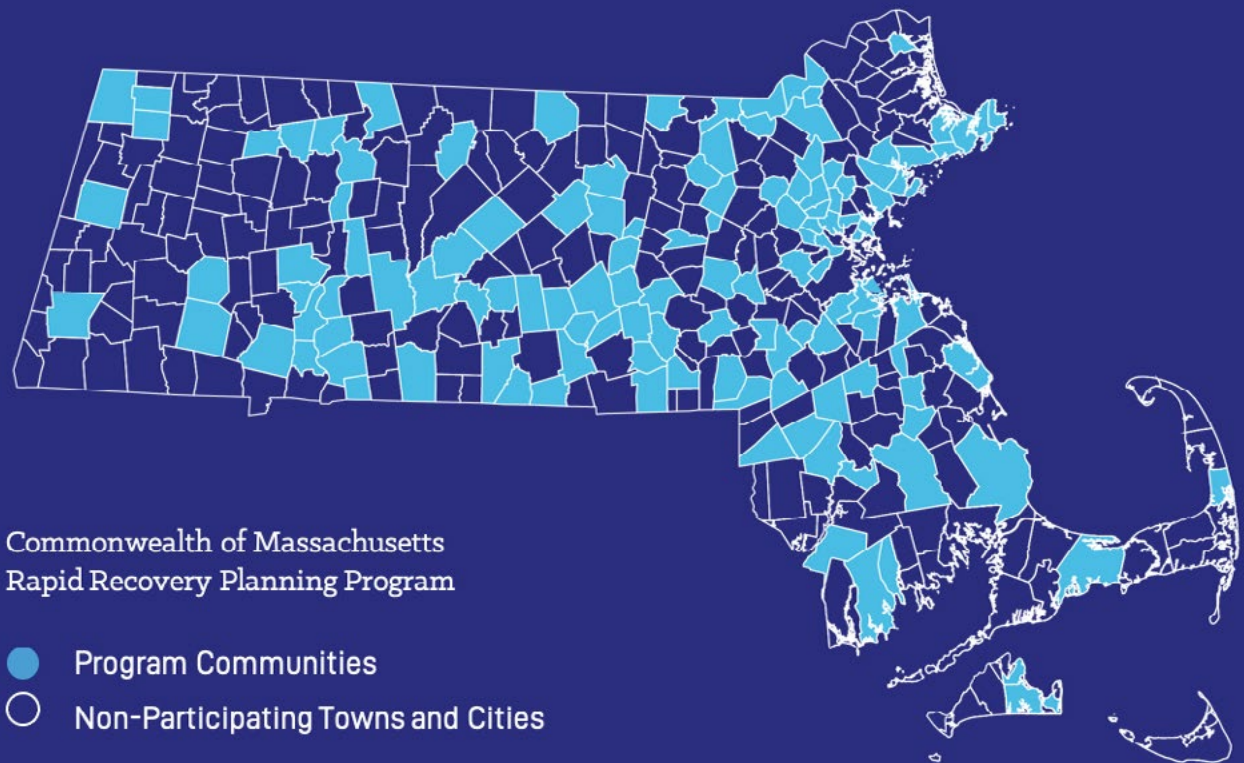
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125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

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

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



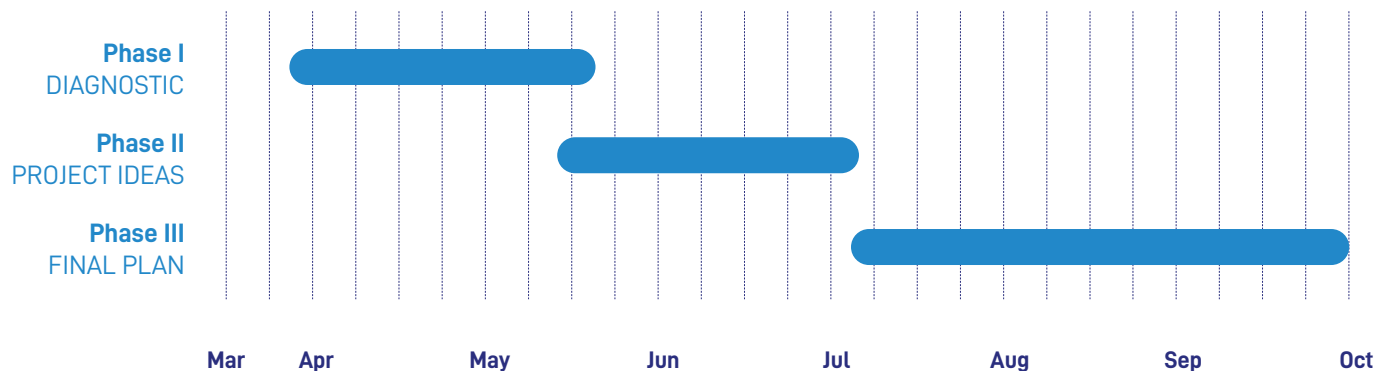
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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

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

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

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



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

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

Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework



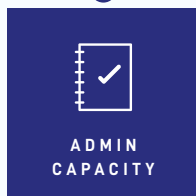
Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?



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



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



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

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



Public Realm



Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Revenue & Sales



Admin Capacity



Cultural/Arts



Other

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

A Beloved Victorian Seaside Community Looking to Expand its Year-Round Economy

Since the 19th century, Oak Bluffs has been known as a seasonal resort community but has steadily seen growth in its year-round population. Today, the community of Oak Bluffs desires to manage tourism to ensure a high quality experience for residents and visitors alike and to support ongoing sustainable community development. COVID-19 has exposed the vulnerabilities that come from having a local economy that is both highly seasonal and highly concentrated in one industry. The loss of revenue experienced due to required business closures or limited operation to mitigate the spread of the virus has been harmful to many businesses and catastrophic for some. Critical economic recovery investment is needed to address acute needs as well as to build a more resilient year round economy capable of weathering future storms.

Some of the broad societal and technological changes that creative responses to the pandemic have helped expedite present unique opportunities for Oak Bluffs to build a more sustainable tourism economy and a more resilient local economy overall.

Noted impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Oak Bluffs:

- 75% of businesses reported generating less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019. 51% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more. 77% were operating at reduced hours/capacity due to COVID-19 at the time of the RRP survey (March / April 2021).
- A surge in the number as well as value of residential real estate transactions, particularly in the second-home market, has created new scarcity in the supply of affordable and workforce housing on island.
- An associated increase in construction permitting related to residential real estate improvements and increase in construction vehicle traffic.
- Evidence of second-home owners as well as other visitors staying on island for longer periods of time, such that homes, and in some cases other locations on the island, have become new centers of remote work.
- Evidence of an uptick in the number of individuals choosing permanent relocation to Martha's Vineyard because of an enhanced ability for remote work in the post-COVID-19 era, made possible both by technology (5G networks, Zoom applications) and new business norms (fully remote employees/virtual offices, 80/20 office time, etc.)
- Evidence of the return and even growth in Martha's Vineyard as a regional and national destination, which may be temporary in nature (due to restrictions on international travel) or could be sustained in the coming years.
- The halting or limitation of international work visa programs has meant a decrease in supply of seasonal staff for businesses that rely on the J1 Visa program. This and other forces have led to a constrained domestic labor supply. In some cases, businesses have had to change practices to increase wages and/or operate with fewer staff - a restaurant limiting its menu, or a store operating on more limited hours, for example - resulting in decreased revenue. This has proved particularly problematic for businesses that have come to rely upon the high season (June 15-September 15) for a significant portion -- or all - of their annual revenue. Variable business closures and operational uncertainty pose a particular threat to any business district seeking to provide a consistent quality of experience and to stay competitive as a destination.

Looking specifically at activities associated with tourism/hospitality, certain growth trends - some of which have the potential to be durable if guided - can be observed:

- An increase in visitors choosing Martha's Vineyard because of the attraction of outdoor recreational activities: fishing, walking/biking, beach going, hiking, as well as its cultural activities and events - many of which take place outdoors or have an outdoor component: Grand Illumination Night, the Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival, LadyFest, Wind Festival Harbor Festival, and Tivoli Day among others.
- Positive sentiment about outdoor dining as expressed by diners
- An increase in the destination event market (wedding, reunions, retreats / conferences) due to high quality outdoor event venues offering the ability to gather while also supporting social distancing requirements
- Interest in the rich cultural heritage of Oak Bluffs, and particularly the African American history, traditions and culture which contribute so much to Oak Bluffs. As one resident said, "We have a responsibility to share this."

From these impacts, three key observations can be made: one, the economy of Oak Bluffs, once highly seasonal, is already in a process of expanding to include more shoulder and "off" season activity. Two, the demands on island infrastructure, including roads and transit systems, wastewater, broadband and housing supply, are increasing. Three, there is a need to monitor more precisely the flows of people on/off the Island as well as the variety of economic activity now taking place, with an eye toward guiding the types of tourism Oak Bluffs desires to support and exposing new opportunities for economic growth. Oak Bluffs, and Martha's Vineyard overall, continues to be a place of great economic disparity, especially when comparing median household income of year-round residents and second home owners, and also when comparing median household income of year-round residents with those of tourists.

"The beauty of the Vineyard is the tradition of generations."

-- Zita Cousens, owner, Cousen Rose Gallery

In Oak Bluffs, Strangers Become Family
New York Times: Sept 24, 2021,
by J. Nailah Avery

Responding to these, this plan outlines six key economic recovery proposals:

1. Public Realm: District Lighting Initiative (with seasonal programming)
2. Public Realm: Park & Ride Strategy / Moving Mural Program
3. Private Realm: Facade Improvement Program
4. Cultural/Arts: Public Art Trail + Wayfinding
5. Revenue & Sales: Update Business Licensing
6. Administrative Capacity: Manage Economy Recovery

Together, these are intended to make a cumulative impact that will support Oak Bluffs in its immediate needs as well as contribute to a more resilient and sustainable year-round economy.

Diagnostic



Summer staff at MV Salads
Source: @MVsalads

Key Findings



CUSTOMER BASE

Oak Bluffs's customer base is diverse and looking for more

While much is observed and written about the diversity of visitors to Oak Bluffs, a number of steps could be taken to refine consumer/visitation data and understanding of what visitors are looking for -- and what they find -- when they come to Oak Bluffs. From anecdotal accounts, it can be understood that there is a great variety of experience -- some visitors quickly feel a connection in Oak Bluffs and find what they are looking for, while others struggle to get oriented and to connect with what Oak Bluffs has to offer. Thinking beyond tourism, it is important to identify areas of mismatch between Oak Bluff residents and Oak Bluff businesses. Documenting areas of unmet demand (coffee in winter, for instance) may provide the necessary persuasion for businesses to extend their operating periods or add new offerings.

One approach for achieving district level improvements is to identify businesses within the community that stand out in their capabilities in relationship marketing and ask them to share best practices on specific topics - from limited edition merchandise offerings to customer engagement over social media.



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Oak Bluffs has a chance to leverage its planned streetscape improvements and greatly enhance shoulder/off season activity

Critical among Oak Bluffs opportunities is the chance to leverage investment of public funds for streetscape improvements with investment in the private realm, including facade improvement. Other public realm improvements - from lighting to public art, additional wayfinding strategies and improved transit management (such as via a park & ride program) should all be coordinated with the streetscape improvement. This does not mean that they need to wait until it is complete, but regular, centralized communication should ensure that construction schedules as well as project scopes are clearly understood by the broader community.

Streetscape improvements and enhancing shoulder/off season activity are related in a number of ways -- one is through the potential for additional improvements as just noted. But more broadly, comprehensive streetscape improvement holds the potential to unlock new investment in the district -- including new business and new operating strategies geared toward an increasing number of year-round (or near year-round) residents. It also may be the lever to bring key property out of dormancy, including the Island Theater site. A broader diversification of businesses from the current level of concentration in retail and food / accommodations (hospitality) would likely be good for the local economy overall, but there is also potential for further diversification in tourism-related goods and services related to agritourism, recreational tourism and ecotourism -- a stand-up paddle shop, a cooking school program, or a store specializing in camera equipment are all offerings that might be anticipated if Oak Bluffs were to achieve strategic physical improvements while also sharing a vision of the types of economic activity it would like to grow.



Oak Bluffs has a strong set of retail and cultural offerings but needs to offer more curated information and continue to differentiate retail offerings to guide and retain visitors.

Throughout the pandemic, many Oak Bluffs businesses have proved their ability to pivot under changing conditions. In addition to creative partnerships among restaurateurs, evolution of historic hotel properties, new galleries, savvy storytelling by food purveyors and retailers working to elevate and differentiate their offerings, the district has also seen the arrival of a new flagship store location.

There is much to celebrate, but there is also much work to be done to raise the quality of retail experience -- both in terms of visual presentation and differentiation among offerings. While it may be true that a t-shirt purchased in Oak Bluffs can be a work of art or a prized limited edition, the volume of similar merchandise currently offered across a number of stores is problematic on two levels: it can lead casual strollers to think that this is all that Oak Bluffs has to offer. And as vendors begin to compete solely on the basis of price, it will be a race to the bottom. They will also likely be impacted by the fact that near indistinguishable products are now available online, often for an even cheaper price.

Three things can be done to address this situation:

- 1) Curated itineraries, in which stories and recommendations are offered from a particular point of view, can help visitors better understand local culture and craft. Embedded within this information can be more practical information (location of bathrooms, seating/shade, walking and biking times to specific destinations) that can also help limit the bottleneck effect that can happen at peak visitation times.
- 2) Expanded dialogue among business owners about best practices in merchandising can help all further develop their own niche.
- 3) Developing co-promotion and shared marketing campaigns (including social media reposting) to connect with particular demographics - is a win for businesses as well as consumers. The Oak Bluffs Arts Stroll is a good example of a marketing and programming approach that is helping people be aware of a developing cluster of synergistic activities and businesses.



The Town needs to work in partnership with other sectors to oversee recovery efforts.

Due to the limited size of town staff and the increase in work load due to pandemic conditions, the Town of Oak Bluffs will need to continue to work with the Oak Bluffs Association, as well as other representatives from the private sector and non-profit sectors to monitor conditions as they continue to unfold, and to plan and undertake discrete recovery efforts.

Given that information about both state and federal ARPA related funding is still forthcoming, it is recommended that Town act now to establish an Oak Bluffs economic (recovery/development) advisory team that can ensure work moves forward in sourcing grant information, applying for grants, and managing projects as they are funded. Within this context, the OBA is likely to continue to play a major role; both the Town and OBA will benefit from a formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) about key responsibilities. This can in turn be the basis for exploring longer term, more sustainable strategies to district management, marketing and local economic development.



Highlights from the Physical Environment

THE VISUAL QUALITY OF THE DISTRICT IS HIGHLY VARIABLE

With a growing number of new players strong in store presentation and merchandising, the potential for improvements conceived through peer-to-peer knowledge sharing is high. A facade improvement program would further support these efforts.

PARKS & OPEN SPACE REMAIN A VALUABLE ASSET

Oak Bluffs has a world class system of parks and open spaces. Further activating these spaces while being sensitive to the concerns of abutters can be a critical strategy for managing the flow of visitors in high season and increasing the flow of visitors in the shoulder seasons and off-season.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR STORYTELLING ABOUT OAK BLUFFS' REMARKABLE ARCHITECTURE AND COMMUNITY

While it may seem that the history of Oak Bluffs has already been covered in many books, there is much more to reveal. Social media, film and sound technology are changing the way we tell stories and experience places. Working in conjunction with key events, such as the Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival and other initiatives that celebrating using a plethora of voices and perspectives to interpret history and share culture, Oak Bluffs can continue to be a haven for artists and lead dialogue about what it means to be stewards of a rich architectural history and cultural landscape.

ADDRESSING DORMANT LOCATIONS

As part of economic recovery and in effort to realize a district that is more economically resilient, any anchor sites that remain dormant will need to be addressed through new approaches. Sites such as the Island Theater, which serve as Oak Bluffs's de facto front door, have a disproportionate impact on perceptions about the Oak Bluffs's economy and municipal administration.



*Lessons in contrasts: new flagship location of Stefanie Wolf Designs and the dormant Island Theater.
Photos: Zapalac Advisors*



Highlights from the Business Environment

CURATING DISTINCT BLENDS OF OFFERINGS

As a destination, Oak Bluffs has so much to offer visitors in terms of natural and cultural heritage, as well as dining and shopping opportunities that it is impossible to take it all in through one visit. While some landmarks are easy to find, others are more subtle. Creating public art experiences and curated itineraries can help provide guidance, especially to visitors who may come without having done a lot of preparation for their visit. These can serve to demonstrate that there is much that visitors should return for -- each time seeing Oak Bluffs in a new light. Expanding infrastructure and promotion of shoulder season events will also provide opportunities to deepen understanding about what makes Oak Bluffs special - not merely as a visitor, but also a participant in the events and rituals of Oak Bluffs culture.

FINDING NEW WAYS TO EXPLORE THE BRAND(S)

Following the challenges of the pandemic, there are new ways to explore the values behind the Oak Bluffs and Martha's Vineyard brands. The time is ripe for new dialogue with residents and visitors about what community means and how it is valued in a post-pandemic world. Many have expressed renewed appreciation for the haven that Oak Bluffs offers. As the brand icon of Martha's Vineyard finds its way onto more and more merchandise, the time is ripe for exploring brand meaning - in dialogue, in public art, and in other ways -- in a way that can further strengthen community connection.

INCREMENTAL CHANGE TO SUPPORT SHOULDER SEASON ACTIVITY

Oak Bluffs functions as an exceedingly vibrant destination in the high season, but there is work to be done to create a more robust shoulder season and to begin to activate the district during the off season in meaningful ways. In addition to updating the regulatory framework that shape business hours of operations, the Town can look for new ways to encourage critical attractors, such as coffee shops, to remain open all year long. Finding leeway in the operation of pop-up retail, coffee carts and special events / use of outdoor space may be one way to incentivize year-round operation. Increasing special events (street closures that invite outdoor experiences with local music, artisans, and food trucks when brick and mortar businesses are closed) and shared marketing strategies are other ways to expand the flow of customers year round.

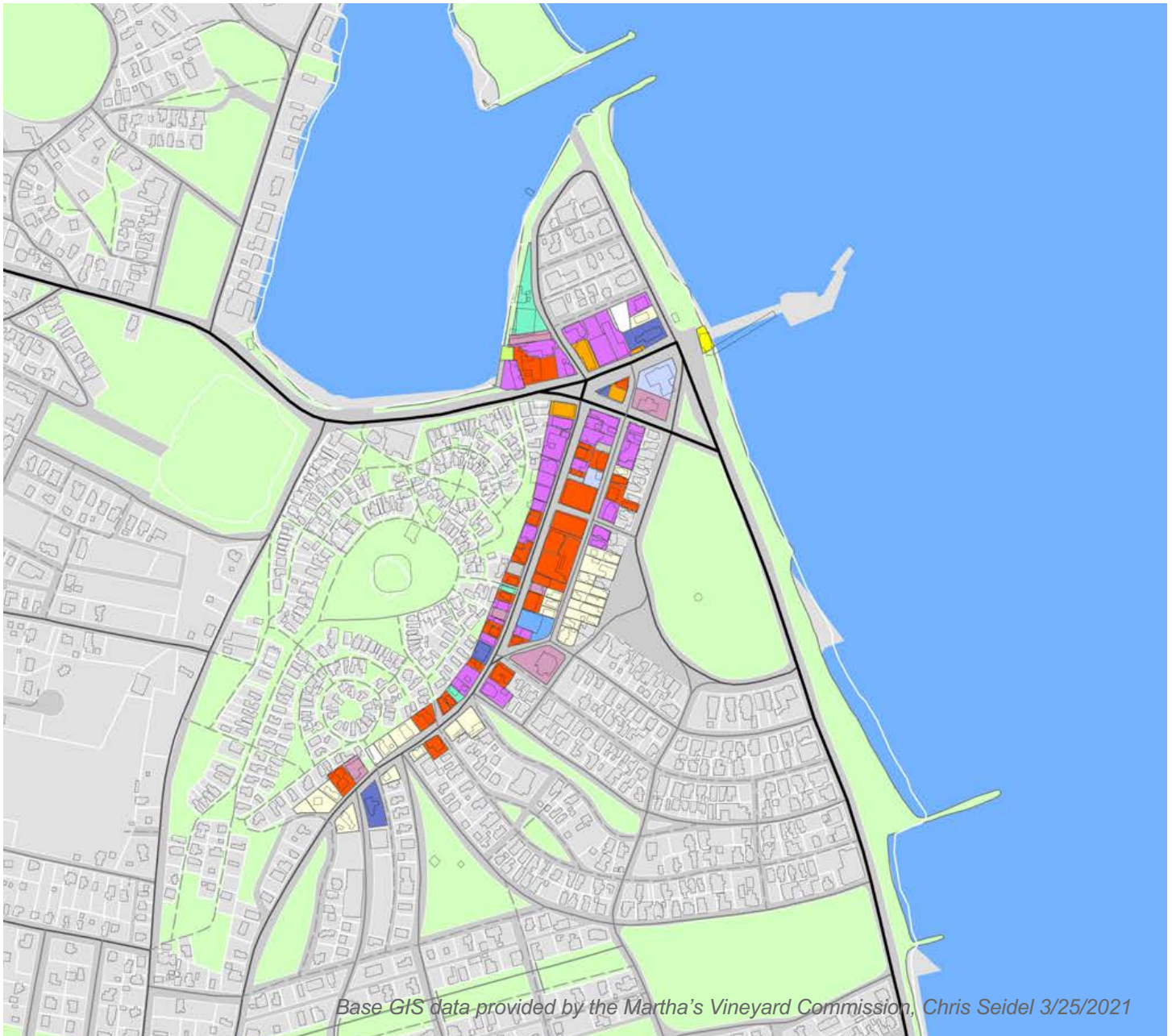


Cottage City Oysters' farm tours give people a glimpse into ecology, culture and commercial seafood in Oak Bluffs, helping them forge a deep connection to place. This type of immersive experience can be designed for other activities within the district.

Source: Chrispin Haskins, @crispinhaskinsmy



Local artists profiled and unique brand articulation at Stefanie Wolf Designs. Photo: Zapalac Advisors



Oak Bluffs RRP Study Area.

Parcels characterized by NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) code for ground floor activity. Note that some parcels include more than one business and/or business category, but have been characterized by a single category.

Source: Zapalac Advisors

Parcels by NAICS Industry Classification Code:

44-45 Retail Trade
48-49 Transportation and Warehousing
52 Finance and Insurance
53 Real Estate Rental and Leasing
54 Professional, Scientific and Technical Services
71 Arts, Entertainment and Recreation
72 Accommodation and Food Services
81 Other Services (except Public Administration)
92 Public Administration
<Null>
Extra parcel of adjacent activity
Park or Public Open Space
Residential
Vacant Land

RRP Study Area Findings:

156 locations

7 closures during the pandemic (5 opened as new or relocated businesses, 2 remain vacant)

+

3 vacancies predating March 2020

=

5 vacancies total (3% vacancy rate, current)

*6 businesses temporary closed or delaying launch

Project Recommendations

*Store owner Sofie Green, Island Outfitters
Source: @Islandoutfittersmv*

Create a district lighting initiative (with seasonal programming)

Category		Public Realm
Location		Circuit Avenue, Circuit Avenue Extension, Kennebec Avenue, Ocean Park, Oak Bluffs Harbor and other select destinations
Origin		Wendy Brough, Assistant Town Administrator, and Christine Todd, Oak Bluffs Association
Budget		Medium Budget (\$150,000 - \$200,000 for year 1; year 2-5: 25% - 35% of year 1)
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk – builds off an existing program while offering more design coherence and program support
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive reaction/buy-in by the Oak Bluffs community • Positive reaction/buy-in by visitors to Oak Bluffs • Increased hotel occupancy, restaurant, and retail sales during the program timeframe. • Year-over-year increased revenue • Positive media and social media coverage
Partners & Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Oak Bluffs + Oak Bluffs Association • Dukes County Commission • Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce • Local artisans – photography, artists • Media Partners - GOMV.com and other media/social media entities



European winter markets as a model for winter placemaking. Source: FindUsLost
Remote control tech makes management of lighting even easier.
Oak Bluffs Grand Illumination Night. Source: MV Times
Ocean Park Victorian architecture illuminated in contrast to the night sky. Source: Michael Blanchard Photography, @crossroadsgallery

Diagnostic

How does this project respond to key challenges and opportunities that were identified during the diagnostic phase of this project?

The Town of Oak Bluffs (year-round population: 4659, 2020) currently relies heavily on tourism for direct and indirect revenue, and the Town's commercial district plays a central role in this activity. As an industry, tourism has been hit extremely hard by the impacts of COVID-19 and may likely continue to experience fluctuations as the market responds to new variants, new outbreaks, and other impacts.

98% of businesses who responded to the LRRP survey reported being impacted by COVID-19. Although 2021 tourism activity in Oak Bluffs' appears to have rebounded quite well, being aware that persisting as a local economy overly dependent upon a single industry, and in particular - focused on seasonal activity for only three months of the year - can be a risky proposition. This was evident before COVID-19 and has become more apparent by the experience of the pandemic. The aim is to expand the seasonality of tourism activity as well as the year-round economy and overall community experience for residents and visitors alike. For businesses to stay open more months, will require that demand is present. For demand (and other year-round activities) to grow in the off-season there is a need to ensure that there is a diverse core "supply" of open businesses, services and activities.

How did COVID-19 create or exacerbate the issue you are seeking to address with this project?

56% of businesses reported reduced hours/capacity due to COVID-19 and 80% reported a decline in revenue. We have seen that the prolonged closure of businesses due directly to COVID-19 and then indirectly, to a lack of labor, poses risks to the integrity of Oak Bluffs' entire local economy, not just the specific businesses that were closed. Ultimately, the goal is to see fewer seasonal closures, because whether seasonal or permanent - these closures impact those around it. Further, while the town experienced a labor shortage during the high season, we often experience a job shortage/higher rate of unemployment during the low season which leads to numerous social issues. Developing more year-round activities should lead to more year-round jobs thus helping to decrease the high seasonal variation in job opportunities and leading to more year-round, stable jobs for island residents.

Other Diagnostic observations

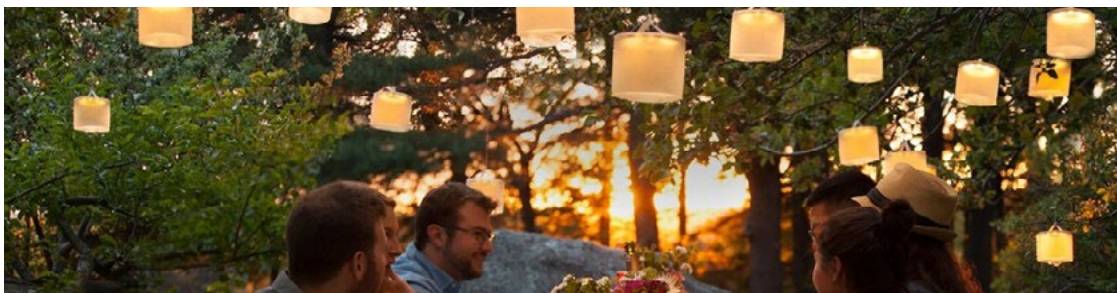
It was discussed that the town currently has a holiday lighting program that can be built upon to better reflect the history and uniqueness of the Oak Bluffs community. Newly created events and décor should focus on events and interests such as the Grand Illumination, the diversity of the community (past and present), public arts and the uniqueness of Oak Bluffs. Further, increased use of outdoor space for dining and retail has highlighted the need for more lighting outdoors for aesthetic and safety reasons.

Action Item

Develop a District Lighting Initiative as a placemaking program, with the goal of promoting community and economic activity, especially during the shoulder and off seasons. Contributing to post COVID-19 economy recovery by serving as a catalyst to create more year-round, full-time jobs.

- Create and execute a decorative lighting program for the commercial district and surrounding open space - developed by a holiday décor/lighting designer and following current best practices (including efficient, programmable LED and designing for night sky preservation).
- Create a holiday tradition / signature event in Oak Bluffs through an inclusive and creative expression that represents the character and history of the island community which will draw locals from the island communities and off-island visitors during a normally non-tourist period.
- Assemble the lighting kit so that specific core components (such as programmable LED string lights) can be installed, customized and used all year round to support other events such as LadyFest, Grand Illumination Night, HarborFest, Tivoli Day, and the Wind Festival to lend a general festive atmosphere to the district.
- Build upon the popular activity/industry of taking and selling photographs of Oak Bluff's unique architecture and atmosphere.

Solar-powered lanterns that do not require tree wrapping are easy to install and immanently flexible in design.
Source: Luci Luxi at DoneGood.com



Process

District Lighting Initiative (with Seasonal Programming):

- Set up a Lighting Program committee with key town, business and community stakeholders – set a Mission Statement for the program, i.e., "To develop a Holiday Lighting Program that will develop into a long-term Oak Bluffs Holiday Tradition which will foster economic and job growth while increasing visitors to the community during the Holiday season."
- Set a preliminary budget and funding strategy – this will include a long-term projections (1-5 year budget), purchases, installation, replacements/additions, coordination, electricity, etc.
- Develop a sponsorship plan – this can offset costs – various levels will determine how the sponsors recognized: Presenting (1-2); Signature (3-5), etc. Establish a level for local business sponsors and address the term of their commitment. Look at examples of sponsors and levels of sponsorship for the Nantucket Stroll and consider prominent businesses to approach.
- Define areas to be illuminated, including intended walking paths and routes throughout the district and waterfront.
- Work with design group/décor provider to develop of lighting and décor master plan for the district.
- Work with designer to determine which elements of decor (base kit) can be used all year long and in a flexible manner.
- Coordinate with local businesses and property owners; if needed, obtain consent for facades to be illuminated as part of the plan – it is beneficial to set up a suggested plan or guidelines with color scheme for businesses to coordinate with the master plan

Marketing & Execution of the Initiative

- As part of the long-range budget developed, there should be line items for the execution and promotion of the initiative. This plan/budget will include: staff (coordinator), marketing (advertising, events, media & social media, communications (with businesses, residents and visitors).
- Determine what businesses will be open during the timeframe of any signature event. Encourage retail businesses to stay open or extend hours during the event period – especially on weekends.
- Coordinate with hotels and restaurants, ensuring that a minimum number will be open during the planned event period. Create of specialty packages – Stay – Dine – Shop; Holiday Lights Weekend(s)
- Coordinate series of events: photography competition, historical and evening walking tours, museums, public art, Victorian carolers and musical performances, Champagne Stroll, ice sculptures (featuring or sponsored by), family events.
- Promote through a variety of marketing avenues - seasonal marketing publications, search, Facebook and social media ads; press releases, visitor websites, business customer lists.

Special Notes

- As streetscape improvements are advanced, they should incorporate any infrastructure needs for this initiative and any sidewalk improvements
- Plan early to address ADA/Accessibility and universal design goals

Grand Illumination Night is already a major draw for Oak Bluffs. Creating a complementary winter placemaking program could build off this momentum (and some of the same infrastructure) while creating and celebrating the Oak Bluffs winter / seasonal experience.

Source: tparty.typepad.com





Best Practice

Palisades Village Holiday Lighting



Public Realm

Palisades Village

Pacific Palisades, CA

- Downtown Decorations provided a thematically consistent seasonal decor strategy planned for key elements as well as open spaces within a lifestyle center / shopping district.
- Holiday Programs (caroling, evening events, food & beverage pop ups) were planned and promoted as part of the strategy.
- A defined color palette was chosen to reinforce key themes. In the case of Oak Bluffs, these could build upon and/or complement a Victorian color palette. (For instance, all lights might just be white to sit in contrast to very decorative architecture.)
- Elements are specified with the intention of achieve of 5-7 years of useful life.



Classic Holiday



Evoking the nostalgia of classic holiday decor, the warmth of the reds and golds points back to traditional New England Christmas decor.



Downtown Decorations concept design and style guide for Palisades Village
Source: Downtown Decorations (via Goman + York)

Develop a Park & Ride / Moving Mural Program

[Primary Goal]

[Secondary Goal]

Category		Public Realm
Location		Parking Area on County Road and adjacent neighborhood, as well as downtown streets implicated
Origin		Oak Bluffs 2019 Strategic Planning Priorities, "Continue Development of a Park and Ride" and Oak Bluffs Select Board
Budget		Low (\$25,000 - \$50,000 for impact study and revenue plan depending on community engagement process); MDI Technical Assistance Grant as possible source. Tom Tom Foundation as model for public art component.
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk – preliminary planning undertaken and conceptual plan developed. Concern about impact from adjacent property owners to be addressed through study
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community feels satisfied with thoroughness of the planning process Implementation of a sustainable revenue generation strategy Less traffic congestion downtown (diminished number of cars and decreased number of cars idling while looking for parking).
Partners & Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Oak Bluffs, Parks & Recreation Oak Bluffs Association Vineyard Transit Authority (VTA) Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce Martha's Vineyard Commission Arts Martha's Vineyard Steering Committee



City Art Bus Competition: Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT) Bus - Bridget Olsen, public art competition winner, 2020. Each year, a winning design is chosen by the community to transform a 35' clean diesel public transit CAT bus and JAUNT bus into spectacular moving murals. The design competition draws contributions from dozens of local, national and international artists. Oak Bluffs could take a similar approach, selecting designs reflect that its unique culture and heritage. Source: Tom Tom Foundation

Diagnostic

How does this project respond to key challenges and opportunities that were identified during the diagnostic phase of this project?

In 2019, the Oak Bluffs Select Board identified development of a Park and Ride System as one of their top strategic goals and initiated the process to bring a system online. Town Staff have already identified a remote parking site on County Road near the transfer station and determined parking capacity through a preliminary schematic, but approval to go forward with planning and implementation failed to pass a Town Meeting vote due to concerns regarding a couple of key information gaps, including traffic impact, coordination with the Vineyard Transit Authority (VTA) regarding bus route and schedule, and a clear revenue generation plan.

An impact study would fill in those gaps. A park and ride system would help to create a more walkable, less car dependent Oak Bluffs -- contributing to quality of life and community experience for residents and visitors alike. Sustaining a high quality town experience, including continued development of the public realm and open air activities, is critical to the economy of Oak Bluffs post-COVID-19.

What are the harmful impacts of COVID-19 that this project seeks to address?

One of the challenges brought about by COVID-19 has been an increase in the number of cars coming on Island, likely due to a combination of factors, including concerns about travel by mass transit (especially in the early stages of the pandemic, some of which has now abated) as well as an uptick in regional, auto-based travel generally. While an increase in the number of visitors is welcome, the streetscapes simply cannot support the increased volume of traffic that occurs at peak times. Introducing park and ride, as well as park and walk concepts, are critical. Locations within a five minute walk to downtown, such as Waban Park, have been identified as potential zones for improved parking. Improved signage/wayfinding would also be essential for successful adoption of these concepts.

How did COVID-19 create or exacerbate the issue you are seeking to address with this project?

COVID-19 delayed the planning process for this initiative, which started in 2018. With new data as well as the experience of the 2020 summer season, this is an opportune time to move forward with this project.

Action Item

Develop a plan for a Park & Ride system to alleviate downtown congestion

- Undertake an impact of traffic for streets / neighborhood adjacent to the intended Park & Ride lot location
- Develop a revenue plan for Park & Ride operation
- Work with VTA to ensure integration with current transit system and to secure state matching funds for shuttle (75% state / 25% town)
- Seek feedback from the community and collaboratively plan to ensure maximum community benefits
- Identify signage / wayfinding locations needed to support lot usage (but assume roadway signage/wayfinding will be implemented through a separate scope)
- Create conceptual map and summary information to easily integrate the Park & Ride system into Oak Bluffs branding and visitor communication. Look for key opportunities, such as the ability to "market" the park & ride system by customizing the shuttle with commissioned works by local artists.

Process

1. Collect relevant planning materials based upon work done to date (conceptual parking plan, existing bus routes).
2. Refine scope of impact study and hire transit consultant to guide process (1-2 months).
3. Conduct impact study and hold community meetings (2-3 months).
4. Coordinate with VTA to establish hours of service and daily schedule (1 month).
5. Develop conceptual transit map and present strategy for review by Select Board (1 month).
6. Provide critical materials to others (consultants/contractor/public works) who will implement design/ construction of remote lot and supporting roadway signage / wayfinding. (1-2 months).
7. Create brief for moving mural component, hold competition, implement work (4-6 months).

Art can be selected from contemporary designs and/or notable works that celebrate the rich heritage of the Oak Bluffs arts community. Paintings by Harlem Renaissance artist and influential teacher Lois Mailou Jones (1905-1998) of life on Martha's Vineyard. Sources: @simfidel and Jaleeca Yancy, *Harmony of Many Part, 2*. Source / currently on exhibit: Knowhere Art Gallery





Best Practice

Park & Ride System Study (2010)



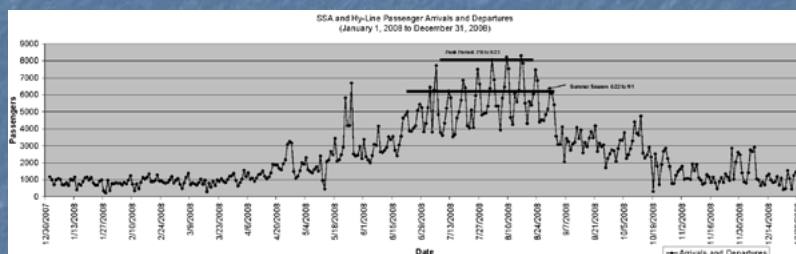
Public Realm

Nantucket

Nantucket Island

- 2010 Park & Ride Study utilized ferry data, parking inventory, analysis of other bus routes, shuttle bus model / cost operation comparison to develop proposed seasonal routes/schedules and summary of start-up costs as well as revenue strategy.
- Also included transit rider survey
- Developed strategy for a service that runs every 15 minutes at peak times / every 30 minutes during other operating hours. Free parking / \$3.00 fee each way; passes available for frequent riders
- Integration with broader parking plan and payment strategies

System Schedule







- Summer Season – June 20th to September 6th (79 days)
- Shoulder Season – April 20th to June 19th and September 7th to October 26th (111 days)

TETRA TECH RIZZO



System Schedule based on peak traffic analysis
Source: Tetra Tech Rizzo

Facade Improvement Program (Parts 1 & 2)

Category		Private Realm
Location		Downtown Oak Bluffs: Circuit Ave, Circuit Ave Extension and Kennebec Ave
Origin		Wendy Brough, Assistant Town Administrator, and Christine Todd, Oak Bluffs Association
Budget		Part 1: Low (Under \$50K) - Toolkit for Empty Storefronts (\$20,000) Part 2: Large Budget (\$200K +) Matching Grant for exterior improvements \$580,000 over five years
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk – builds off an existing program while offering more design coherence and program support
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of locations improved • Feedback from community and press about impact of improvements • Satisfaction reported from business owners • Reported impact on revenue (by season) • Secondary impact: commercial loan transactions and revenue for contractors • Longer term: new businesses attracted to area; building occupancy rates
Partners & Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Oak Bluffs + Oak Bluffs Association • Oak Bluffs businesses and property owners • Town of Oak Bluffs - Building Department • Town of Oak Bluffs - Planning Board • Town of Oak Bluffs - Cottage City Historic District Commission • Local banks • Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce

Left:
Seasonally closed businesses with paper covered windows impact other businesses. A unified public art / thematic strategy would communicate a more positive message and give energy to the street.

Right:
While some facades in Downtown Oak Bluffs have been very well maintained - even through COVID-19 - others are in need of basic repair to ensure good streetscape functionality (drainage, lighting, etc.) and presentation.

Source: Zapalac Advisors



Diagnostic

How does this project respond to key challenges and opportunities that were identified during the diagnostic phase of this project?

As of April 2021, there were 154 ground floor businesses/storefront locations in the district. The diagnostic phase revealed a number of business closures – some that occurred during the pandemic and some that pre-date it. In several cases, the locations represent buildings that are in need of repair. It is important to note that a number of vacancies have been filled, with some new businesses and/or new owners undertaking substantial rehabilitation of their buildings. This, however, makes neglected buildings stand out even more. The combined example from new businesses, together with the provision of technical assistance and funding, may provide the nudge to encourage reluctant property owners to take action.

Importantly, in the LRRP survey, 59% percent of businesses responded that they rent their space. The program would need to encourage business owners and property owners to work together by and agree to provision, such as limiting the raising of rents for existing businesses for a period of time following the improvements.

What are the harmful impacts of COVID-19 that this project seeks to address?

If Oak Bluffs were to see a major uptick in COVID-19, it would be detrimental to the community in more ways than one. Oak Bluffs has taken masking and social distancing very seriously, as direct and indirect revenue from tourism activity makes up the core of our local economy. Our goal is to do what we can to ensure we are thinking ahead -- to ensure the district can sustain a wide range of businesses capable of delivering a high quality experience for tourists while also being part of the underpinning of a vibrant year round community.

How did COVID-19 create or exacerbate the issue you are seeking to address with this project?

Prolonged closure of businesses due directly to COVID-19 and then indirectly, to a lack of labor, poses risks to the integrity of our entire business district, not just the specific businesses closed. Given loss of revenue and a climate of uncertainty, some property owners have been reluctant to make improvements in their properties. These programs should provide much needed support, with improvements benefiting the entire district overall.

Action Item

Design & Implement a Façade (and Signage) Improvement Program.

PART 01: Provide a visual guide for facade maintenance and window covering toolkit to guide the appearance of storefronts (those open as well as those closed) during the shoulder season and off season.

- Design created each year by a different local artist or group of artists
- OBA handles printing and provides best practices for installation
- District lighting plan integration
- Opportunities for shared maintenance contracts

Goal: achieve a collective "upgrade" to the district even as other streetscape improvements and facade improvements are forthcoming.

PART 02: Façade Improvement Grant Program

Provide technical assistance to business and property owners as well as limited matching grant funding for façade improvements (construction costs) and/or other pilots – such as a "pop up" coffee station (managed/staffed by a local coffee shop) that might move between retailers who commit to staying open during the shoulder season / low season.

- Matching grant for façade improvements
- Includes opportunity to apply for technical assistance + capital construction
- Peer-to-peer learning and knowledge sharing, including access to other state/fed grant and tax credit programs
- Leverage investment in streetscape improvements

Goal: achieve longer term improvements to ensure the key commercial district of Oak Bluffs continues to provide a high quality community experience for residents and visitors alike.

While some businesses are very savvy about merchandising, deferred maintenance, store appearance and even vacancy continues to be a challenge for other property and business owners. Technical assistance and grant funding would help achieve more consistence quality of presentation and pride of place.
Sources: Zapalac Advisors



Process

In the LRRP survey, 40% of respondents indicated they would be interested in low-cost financing for storefront/facade improvement. Property owners and business owners may be hesitant to make improvements prior to buildings prior to the streetscape construction. The program manager should work closely with the town to stay in the know on the schedule specifics and to anticipate any points of conflict and/or ideal timeframes for work to be undertaken.

Part 01: Critical to the success of adoption of the toolkit is that it be ready and distributed prior to the start of seasonal closures. Further, the design strategy should be conceived to achieve consistency while also allowing for some customization, and window covering materials should allow for easy installation and take down. There are an increasing number of products on the market which now make this feasible.

For **Part 02**, there are numerous facade improvement precedent programs in Massachusetts as well as elsewhere in the U.S. (ex: Restoring Historic Facades, New Albany, Indiana) that may serve as good program templates and a number of new program are now in development. Planning should begin by more thoroughly evaluating the impacts of other programs.

Note that there is a risk of triggering other building improvements required by code. At the outset of the program, the program manager should work closely with the town to identify types of improvements that may trigger code issues and/or more complex project review. Some property owners may want to use this funding opportunity to launch more complex building improvements; others may want to take a more surgical/tactical approach -- limiting improvements to painting, siding repair, signage (without triggering more costly improvements required by code, such as the addition of a fire suppression system.) The project manager, together with the technical assistance provider, should work with the property owner (and their contractor, etc) to discuss possible paths and their implications. Ideally the program will be structured such that any property owner can take advantage of technical assistance before committing to making improvements. (One does not obligate the other.)

The program will need to encourage work around the high season (June 15-Oct 15), with the idea of limiting business disruptions and construction during the period in which businesses generate the bulk of their income.

Finally, some of the buildings in this district are included in the Cottage City Historic District (a local historic district), for which additional oversight of planned architectural changes visible from a public way should be submitted to the Cottage City Historic District Commission (CCHDC) for review regarding adherence to historic architectural guidelines

Roles of town:

- Develop MOA with Oak Bluffs Association for project management
- Permitting department: review and potentially creating a fast-track review process for certain types of projects or work under a certain dollar amount, such as sign review approval
- Work with the program manager (OBA) and technical assistance providers to create a "best practices" booklet on facade materials, signage styles, etc.
- Enforce building code and business license operating requirements, supported by inspections as needed

Role of the OBA:

- Via the MOA (including fees for service), serve as the project manager for Part 01 and Part 02.
- Write grants for funding; finalizes program details based upon funding availability
- Coordinate with local artists on window covering design and develops contents of "toolkit"
- Work closely with business and property owners to ensure high rates of participation

Roles of property owner:

- Commit to program terms
- Coordinate with tenants, town and CCHDC, including on technical assistance
- Provide necessary matching funds
- Responsible for construction and submitting expense documentation to town as required

Roles of tenants/business owners:

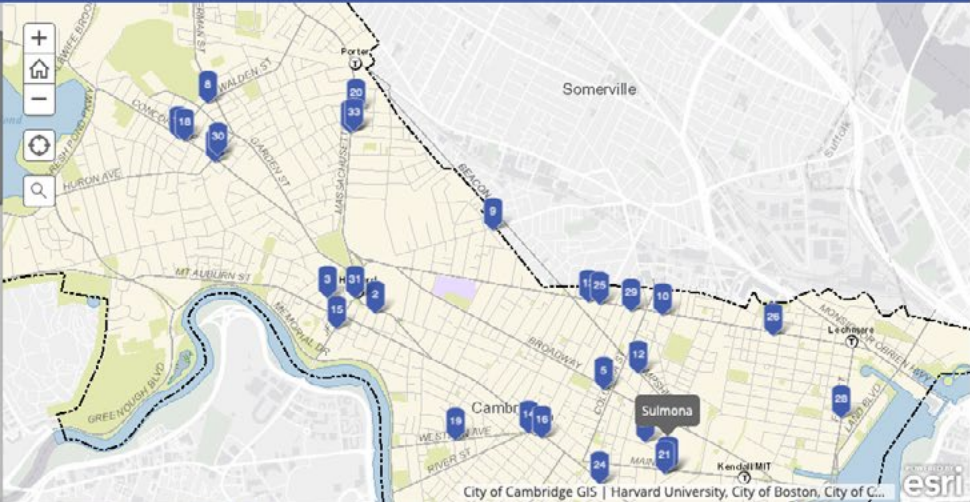
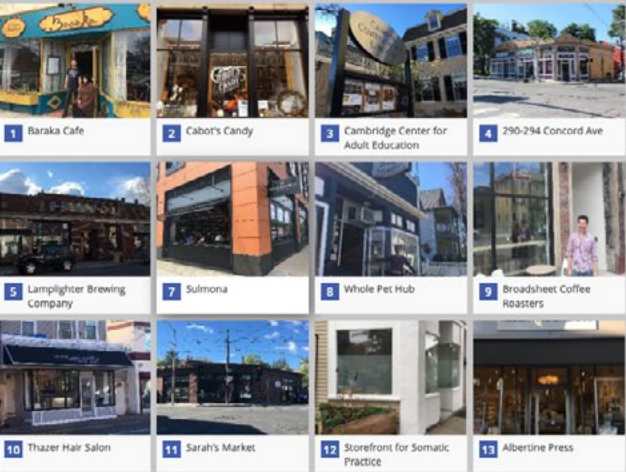
- Encourage property owner to participate
- Share ideas of what is needed most
- Coordinate with technical assistance; provide access to building for condition assessment
- Plan timing / time building improvements to occur outside of peak and shoulder seasons if possible.

Role of banks:

- Promote program and provide lending assistance to businesses who desire to leverage program funds as part of more significant expenses/undertakings

Role of Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce:

- Promote program among members
- Profile businesses that have completed improvements



Best Practice

Storefront Improvement Program



Private Realm

Entire City





Cambridge, MA

- For part 01: In the examples of temporary storefront improvements on the right, note the strength of impact when the entire window space (and more) is used as a canvas.
- See also Newton Community Pride's WindowArt Program (Favermann Design).
- Part 02: See image at top for Cambridge Storefront Improvement Program. <https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/econdev/smallbusinessassistance/smallbusinessprograms/storefront>. This program has evolved to be highly scalable and to serve a wide variety of businesses and building improvements needs.



Temporary Window Covering Strategies for Real Estate advertisement as well as store promotion
Top: Charles Smith Design for Cadogan, London
Bottom: Vinyl stickers transform both a facade and sidewalk for a pop-up store in France.

Launch Public Art Experiences

Category		Private Realm
Location		Downtown Oak Bluffs: Circuit Ave, Circuit Ave Extension and Kennebec Ave
Origin		Wendy Brough, Assistant Town Administrator, and Christine Todd, Oak Bluffs Association
Budget		Medium: \$50,000-\$200,000 depending upon how the program is scaled.
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk - The most significant barrier to success is fundraising for an annual program, but this can be addressed by identifying a variety of sponsors. Developing a program that introduces temporary public art installations also allows for more cost control compared to costs required to achieve more permanent installations (lighting, bases, maintenance, etc.)
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreases in peak pedestrian congestion / overcrowding on streets for which overcrowding has been identified as an issue. Enhanced use and enjoyment of open spaces, including an expanded schedule of year round events that can be promoted.
Partners & Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Oak Bluffs + Oak Bluffs Association Town of Oak Bluffs, Parks & Recreation Oak Bluffs Association Featherstone Center for the Arts Oak Bluffs Arts District Stroll coordinators African American Heritage Trail Martha's Vineyard Museum Arts Martha's Vineyard Steering Committee Council on Aging Dukes County Associate Commissioner for Americans with Disabilities

Locations like Ocean Park already possess iconic features and architecture that can serve as framework elements for a public art trail and strategic wayfinding. Temporary public art interventions, carefully conceived for their setting -- along with easily accessible interpretive content sharing many points of view -- can help people derive more meaning and build even deeper relationships to the many extraordinary cultures and places in Oak Bluffs.

Image Source: Crispin Haskins



<div>Diagnostic</div>	<div>How does this project respond to key challenges and opportunities that were identified during the diagnostic phase of this project?</div> <div> <p>Martha's Vineyard has shown itself to be a population location for travel under post-pandemic conditions, given the amount of open space it has preserved. Downtown Oak Bluffs is a known area of high pedestrian congestion due to the ferry terminal's proximity to the town's main commercial district, particularly during the high season. This "point loading" and bottle necking of the tourist flow creates less than ideal conditions.</p> </div> <div> <p>This project focuses on developing outdoor, land-based public art installations that are prime for shoulder season weather (when it is warm enough to be outside but perhaps not warm enough to swim). We expect the program to have a direct effect on pedestrian flows during the event period and hopefully, to provide an additional nudge for hospitality related businesses to stay open longer during the year. It also has the potential to generate carry over effect into high season, given that changing public art installations can be desired to "plug and play" into wayfinding frameworks that can encourage alternate routes and more exploration.</p> </div> <div> <p>Business owners who responded to the RRP survey, include remarks such as "Increase tables for eating outside", "keep more businesses open year round or at least thru the holidays", "more events, music events, art fairs...", "more culture" and "regular street closures for local artists/vendor." An updated, year round special events program, of which this Public Art program is but one component, can help contribute to a more year round economy, that by nature, gives visitors more choices, including the ability to avoid contributing to peak season congestion.</p> </div> <div>What are the harmful impacts of COVID-19 that this project seeks to address?</div> <div> <p>If Oak Bluffs were to see a major uptick in COVID-19, it would be detrimental to the community in more ways than one. As an island community, the healthcare system is limited. As a community highly dependent upon tourism, Oak Bluffs both direct and indirect revenue from tourism activity makes up the core of the local economy. As a result, they have has taken masking and social distancing very seriously. Better use of the Town's open space is both a way to nudge visitors to avoid congestion and to discover more of Oak Bluffs.</p> </div> <div> <p>The town plan of Oak Bluffs was intentional and designed largely with pedestrians in mind, with open spaces serving as important hubs and diffuse gathering places. This form, however, can be a challenge for visitors who are used to urban grids and automobile-based routing. By dialing up the importance of these open spaces, in conjunction with better wayfinding overall, we can alleviate the bottlenecks that sometimes occur -- particularly at the bottom of Circuit Avenue - and which can be a hindrance to businesses farther up the avenue.</p> </div> <div>How did COVID-19 create or exacerbate the issue you are seeking to address with this project?</div> <div> <p>First, the need for social distancing brought about by COVID-19 proved to be a critical tipping point for the approval of the Conceptual Streetscape Plan by the Oak Bluffs Select Board, which will likely set in motion a number of much needed physical improvements to the district.</p> </div> <div> <p>Secondly, as a community, Oaks Bluffs has experienced that prolonged closure of businesses due directly to COVID-19 and then indirectly, to a lack of labor, pose risks to the integrity of the entire Oak Bluffs business district, not just the specific businesses closed. In addition to helping individual businesses address challenges, creating marketing/ wayfinding solutions that benefit the entire district and town is a way to provide support for multiple businesses at once and improve overall community experience.</p> </div> <div> <p>Third, public art can be a useful tool community healing, reflection and dialogue in a post-pandemic world. The program brief can be written to ask artists to present works that help residents and visitors process the complex emotions brought about by the challenges of the last 18 months and to find ways to come together again (safely) after periods of prolonged isolation.</p> </div>
<div>Action Item</div>	<div>Create a Public Art Program (Public Art Experiences) to improve utilization of open space and encourage the development of multiple pedestrian and bike routes through the district.</div> <div> <p>Create an annual program of temporary installations of public art, overseen by a curator whose role is to establish the event's title and theme, and to select artists' works for inclusion. In addition to celebrating Oak Bluffs's rich artistic cultures and to foster community conversations through art, the event aims to establish new artistic routes/ itineraries as part of the Oak Bluffs experience and to create more vitality during the shoulder seasons. This is seen as a highly scalable program that may also be supported by local philanthropy.</p> </div> <div> <p>Plan for the art experiences to be thematically related, utilizing main downtown streets, parks and open spaces in a short distance of Circuit Ave and Kennebec Ave. Develop curated itineraries and special event programs to give visitors and residents a sense of destination alternatives, and to link the program with hotel packages, shopping and dining.</p> </div>

Process

Oct 2021: continue planning and secure funds

April / May 2022: year 01 program

Summer 2022: monitor impacts, use of wayfinding resources and visitor flows

Fall 2022: start to plan program 02 for year 2023

PROGRAM DESIGN:

- Hire planning consultant to provide technical assistance.
- Identify curatorial team and other project partners. Engage key arts & culture actors in the district.
- Identify curatorial team and process and budget for selection of public art to be installed.
- Anticipate all personnel requirements, looking for opportunities to engage volunteers whenever possible.
- Write a program mission and roadmap for years 1-3 (at the least).
- Secure funding, including opportunity for sponsorship.
- Build on Martha's Vineyard Commission datasets and GIS resources to develop discrete mapping of cultural assets in Oak Bluffs that will serve as the base or "framework" in which public art can be added.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:

- Undertake a community mapping process to crowdsource information about individual landmarks and other assets that might be included with public art program maps.
- Identify key wayfinding objectives and ways that activation of open space through the installation of public art can help drive visitor flows.

INSTALLATION / EVENT PLANNING:

- Identify specific locations for public installation as well as infrastructure available for installation and support (such as electrical power, water, etc.)
- Write artist application (or selection process), including program objective statements and scope.
- Review and select works.

INSTALL AND ENGAGE:

- Plan installations, confirming schedules, production requirements, etc.
- Plan opportunities for revenue generation through swag (t-shirts, bags, etc.)
- Plan social media promotion and community engagement process (via hashtags, etc.)
- Develop program maps and interpretive information. Ensure that these are shared with key partners and the media.
- Identify specific events (artists talks, tours, participatory art making, performances) that can take place in tandem with the installed works.
- Document installation of works as well as public engagement in all associated programs; share on social media.

POST EVENT:

- Plan and schedule de-installation process.
- Gather data to report on project impacts to funders and sponsors.
- Make adjustments to the program as needed for the next installation cycle.

PADDINGTON PUBLIC ART TRAIL



The Paddington Partnership

LONDONIST
www.londonist.com

Paddington Public Art Trail



Cultural/Arts

Paddington Train Station District

London, England

- A thematic art trail design to help with wayfinding and drive business activity in the area around Paddington Train Station. A consistent style / brand contributes to sense of place.
- Critical info provided via links. Virtual and printed maps can be updated as new art and key streetscape improvements are completed.
- Landmarks serve as anchors to share specific stories, themes and values with visitors, who can in turn share their experiences via social media.

Source: *Paddington Public Art Trail / the Paddington Partnership / Londonist.com*

DISCOVER PADDINGTON

Bridges, bronzes, busts and bears make up a stunning range of public art pieces. The trail contains 22 different installations and sculptures, charting Paddington's industrial heritage, medical and scientific pioneers, engineering and military history, royal, stage and literary connections. The Public Art Trail tells the story of Paddington's past and its regeneration.



UNKNOWN SOLDIER



1
Charles Sargeant Jagger
Bronze / Unveiled November 1922
Platform One, Paddington Station

At the height of World War One, almost twenty thousand mailbags were transported from Britain to France every day carrying almost two million letters to the front line. This monumental bronze by Sargeant Jagger MC (b. UK 1885 - 1934), himself a veteran of Gallipoli, was unveiled by Viscount Churchill on Armistice Day, 11 November 1922, exactly two years after the Unknown Warrior had been laid to rest at Westminster Abbey. It captures a soldier as he reads a letter from home and honours the employees of the Great Western Railway who died in both World Wars, and whose names are retained in a sealed casket within the plinth.

As part of the ongoing memorials to World War One, during 2014, members of the public were invited to write a letter to the soldier with thousands being submitted. All of these letters are available to read online as a permanent memorial. Unknown Soldier is one of Sing London's Talking Statues, with the narrative here written by Tony Harrison and voiced by Patrick Stewart.

Visit thisispaddington.com or follow us on Twitter @thisispaddington for more information about our trails, events, places to eat and things to do in Paddington.
© The Paddington Partnership and Londonist, 2016.





PADDINGTON BEAR™



2
Marcus Cornish
Bronze
Unveiled 2000
Platform One, Paddington Station

Located in pride of place, underneath the station clock on Platform One of Paddington Station, this bronze statue of the much loved fictional character Paddington Bear was unveiled by the author of the Paddington stories, Michael Bond, on 24 February 2000. The statue by London based sculptor Marcus Cornish (b. UK 1964) is based on the book illustrations of Paddington by Peggy Fortnum and shows Paddington, newly arrived from darkest Peru, sitting on his battered suitcase, with a label around his neck reading 'Please look after this bear. Thank you. The location marks the spot where Paddington was first found by the Brown family, who welcomed him to their London home as described in the first of now more than twenty Paddington books A Bear Called Paddington, published in 1958.

Update Business Licensing Regulations

Category		Administrative Capacity, but also greatly impacting Revenue and Sales
Location		Entire Town
Origin		Wendy Brough, Assistant Town Administrator, and Christine Todd, Oak Bluffs Association
Budget		Low: Less than \$50,000. The primary budget and service contract for e-permitting software has already been established by the Town. This program would focus on ensuring the regulatory framework is updated to work smoothly with the new technology to help realize Oak Bluff's strategic goals. Data collection and educational components included.
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years) Timeframe: Short (8 to 12 months)
Risk		Medium: Some risks associated with resistance to change as well as potential disagreements about the need and ability to keep businesses open year-round. Address through community dialogue, supported by access to data on market capture potential as well as seasonal revenue report analysis.
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported satisfaction by Town staff and citizens • Efficiency increases in permit approvals and renewals • Efficiency increases in payments received • Better data collected and shared to guide future development • More businesses open year-round • Better compliance with licensing requirements
Partners & Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town of Oak Bluffs • Oak Bluffs Association • Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce.

Even prior to COVID-19, numerous Massachusetts communities have transitioned to e-permitting programs. Now with the need to limit unnecessary in person interactions and to streamline electronic workflow and to respond quickly to changing conditions, efficient e-permitting and licensing is taking on new importance. This is particularly critical for a location like Oak Bluffs where many business and property owners often live off-island for parts of the year. Ensuring that the regulatory framework is in lock-step with refinement of strategic community goals post COVID-19 as well as new technology, is critical to promoting an adaptable and resilient business district.
Right: @thecardboardboxmv



<p>Diagnostic</p>	<p>How does this project respond to key challenges and opportunities that were identified during the diagnostic phase of this project?</p> <p>COVID-19 hit the tourism industry hard in Oak Bluffs in 2020. While 2021 has been much better, the concern persists that a local economy overly dependent upon a single industry and focused on activity three months of the year will be vulnerable to future shocks. Adaptation during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic revealed inconsistencies in licensing operations, as well as creating an opportunity to experiment with on-line submissions.</p> <p>What are the harmful impacts of COVID-19 that this project seeks to address?</p> <p>75% of businesses reported generating less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019. For 51% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more. At the time of the survey in March/April 2021, 77% were operating at reduced hours/capacity due to COVID-19. These statistics convey that, from a financial standpoint, "every day matters." Making it easier for businesses to "get to the starting line" efficiently and also ensuring that businesses follow town regulations regarding seasonal operation will benefit the entire district.</p> <p>How did COVID-19 create or exacerbate the issue you are seeking to address with this project?</p> <p>The pandemic has affirmed the need to be able to apply for permits from a distance as well as the need to encourage / require broader periods of operation, rather than depending upon revenue solely from the peak season.</p>
<p>Action Item</p>	<p>Develop a process for legal and procedural review of the business licensing and renewal processes as part of an overall update to the business licensing regulations and process.</p> <p>Oak Bluffs is seeking to both update the licensing process and also use the licensing process to provide incentives and/or encouragement for businesses to remain open year-round.</p> <p>Oak Bluffs currently relies heavily on tourism for revenue, and many businesses are open only during the peak summer months. Some stay open for the so-called shoulder seasons but very few remain open year-round. As the tourism economy recovers from COVID-19, Oak Bluffs is hoping to use this opportunity to see if a more efficient licensing process can leverage more year-round businesses.</p> <p>The goals of this project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring consistency/transparency in the application process; • Encouraging or requiring businesses to stay open during the shoulder season; • Gathering and sharing discrete market data about shoulder season economic activity; and • Making this data available to all businesses to guide their decision making. <p>Challenges:</p> <p>Business owners often apply in-person the spring for their summer licenses and are often rushed, leading to gaps in compliance. In the fall, many businesses close up for the off season, leaving gaps in the commercial fabric of the Town. The licensing process is geared towards in-person submissions and does not make it easy to apply before arriving for the season.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will be challenging to use the licensing process to require that businesses remain open year-round. However, there may be opportunities to encourage year-round businesses through licensing changes such as potential variable fees for seasonal and year-round businesses. • The licensing process could also potentially require that businesses provide information for condition their property will be left if closed for the off-season. The licensing process could include minimum design standards for closed businesses such as ways to make the close storefront a more positive part of downtown. • Accepting applications on-line may increase compliance from seasonal businesses whose owners live elsewhere in the off-season. • One common and legitimate way to partially or entirely fund additional software or staff to upgrade licensing processes is to increase licensing costs commensurate with the increased level of service. While there may still need to be an increased budget up front, the revenue side of the Town budget would also increase.

Process

1. Collecting and Analyzing Data about the Market and Regulatory Environment

- Analyze (or hire a consultant to analyze) what the consumer capacity is for downtown both in peak season and off-season. 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 both in peak season and off-season. 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.
- Examine (or hire a consultant to examine) existing zoning and licensing rules for Oak Bluffs to determine if there are likely barriers to new business attraction that could be modified.
- Look at (or hire a consultant to look at) comparable communities' licensing processes to understand potential alternative models.
- Outline key objectives of the existing licensing process in terms of protecting public health, safety and welfare, to preserve in any changes to the system.

2. Conduct a legal / procedural review of the business licensing and renewals processes

- Interview key stakeholders, including property owners and business owners to understand what they know about the process from a user standpoint and what their key aspirations for a better process might be.
- Interview town staff that implement the licensing process and enforcement efforts to map out the current process for licensing and what they see as the key weaknesses and strengths of the current process.
- Engage town legal counsel or other legal representatives to outline the legal basis for the current licensing process and what options might exist to leverage the process for more year-round business activity.
- Conduct a fee survey to determine how current Oak Bluffs licensing fees compare to comparable communities, as well as to the actual cost of providing a licensing system.
- Determine approach, process and personnel responsibilities for inspections and addressing non-compliance.
- Produce a flowchart of the current licensing process and explore how the process might be modified for efficiency and other Town goals.
- Produce recommendations for the revised licensing system, including workflow changes, fee changes, revised requirements and review processes, and migration to the online system

3. Develop educational materials and information sessions to instruct staff and the business community about changes to the business license program

- Create easily followed information sheets about the changes from the former system to the proposed new system.
- Share these sheets with Town staff and sample licensees for feedback as to the changes and concerns they may have.
- Revise proposed changes based on legitimate concerns raised.
- Present final recommendations to the Select Board for feedback and additional revisions as needed, and revise educational materials accordingly.

4. Present changes to the Select Board and, if needed, put on Town Meeting warrant

- Present final changes to Select Board for revisions to licensing regulations.
- If needed, present changes requiring Town Meeting approval at the next Town Meeting for approval.
- Secure any funding needed for online licensing software or other financial needs of the new systems.

5. Finalize methods for automated reminders for renewal and payments online

- If the recommended system includes a method for reminding licensees to renew and/or an online payment system, prepare methodology well in advance.
- Test run automated reminders and online payments before launch to ensure they work as intended, through use with a few volunteer businesses or a "dummy" list of recipients.



Best Practice

Zoning for a Resilient Downtown



Admin Capacity

Levine Planning Strategies

Burlington, VT




- While this best practice focuses on zoning rather than solely on business permitting, it is relevant in that it takes the approach of developing a more streamlined process for users, while allowing ensuring regulations reflect strategic goals.
- Similarly, KPIs include growth and survival of existing businesses, as well as the number of business expansion.
- In the RRP compendium, see also "Expedite License Modifications for Outdoor Dining" (Tyngsborough, MA)
- Other useful best practices may be found by examining e-permitting and similar projects funded through the Massachusetts Community Compact IT Grant.

Burlington's planning process began when the city received a Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (2010). 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.

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.

Support District Management + Economic Recovery

Category		Administrative Capacity
Location		Downtown Oak Bluffs: Circuit Ave, Circuit Ave Extension and Kennebec Ave
Origin		Wendy Brough, Assistant Town Administrator, and Christine Todd, Oak Bluffs Association
Budget		Medium: \$60,000-\$80,000 over two years, depending upon how the program is scaled and how much grant writing assistance comes from other programs. Technical Assistance from Mass Downtown Initiative, ARPA.
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Medium risk. Risk can be mitigated by establishing clear MOA and contract terms, including clear performance expectations. The project manager(s) will need to be brought on as soon as possible, to ensure funds are secured for each critical project outlined. Contract terms will need to address what happens if funds are not secured.
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Success in securing grants for all RRP projects• Smooth management and successful undertaking each project (each having its own KPIs)• Using the process to evaluate if the partnership structure, or one similar to it, should be extended beyond the initial contract period and identifying funding to make this possible.
Partners & Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town of Oak Bluffs + Oak Bluffs Association• Martha's Vineyard Commission• Martha's Vineyard Chamber of Commerce

Tivoli Day, organized by the OBA, is an event that brings thousands of people to downtown Oak Bluffs.
Source: Joshua Robinson White



Diagnostic

How does this project respond to key challenges and opportunities that were identified during the diagnostic phase of this project?

The Town of Oak Bluffs does not presently employ any staff whose primary role is to oversee economic development, including economic recovery planning responsibilities. This is a critical gap given the town relies heavily on tourism for direct and indirect revenue, and the Town's commercial district plays a central role in this activity. As an industry, tourism has been hit extremely hard by the impacts of COVID-19 and will likely continue to experience fluctuations as the market responds to new variants, new outbreaks, and other impacts.

The Oak Bluffs Association (OBA), led by an executive director, is the primary business association of the Town of Oak Bluffs. In addition to advocacy and promotion on behalf of member businesses, as well as the staffing of the Town's only information booth, the organization manages a set of annual special events that attract visitors to Oak Bluffs, raise funds for the organization and ensure several high revenue days for Oak Bluffs businesses. With businesses closed due to COVID-19, OBA dues were suspended, resulting in the furloughing of the executive director at a critical period when advocacy on behalf of local businesses and creative thinking was needed most.

Even with the potential to apply for federal recovery funding (American Rescue Plan, etc.) there is currently no one identified with the primary role of pursuing and overseeing the strategic utilization of these funds.

What are the harmful impacts of COVID-19 that this project seeks to address?

The prolonged closure of businesses due directly to COVID-19 and then indirectly, to a lack of labor, poses risks to the integrity of our entire local economy, not just the specific businesses closed.

How did COVID-19 create or exacerbate the issue you are seeking to address with this project?

The impacts of COVID-19 have put additional demands on an already lean Town Staff. The other five priority projects outlined by Oak Bluffs through the RRP process aim, specifically, to increase economic activity and improve district appearance/vibrancy during the shoulder seasons and the low season. These projects have been conceived as a set, each reinforcing the impact of the other. Hence, ensuring that personnel and resources are in place to identify grants, write grant applications, hire consultants (when necessary) and manage projects - including through reporting - is critical for recovery.

There is interest in enhancing the organizational capacity of the OBA and/or developing other project management capacity to manage COVID-19 recovery projects and other activities such as marketing, business recruitment, events, cultural programming, and other destination drivers for the downtown that will support small businesses and further COVID-19 recovery efforts.

The Town is interested in partnering with OBA, businesses, and property owners to develop a sustainable approach to providing the administrative and organizational capacity to realize the set of priority projects outlined through the RRP process.

Action Item

Create an approach and provide funding to ensure management for each of the five other RRP proposal projects, as well as others economic recovery and economic development efforts, as determined by the Oak Bluffs Select Board.

Ensure personnel is in place to identify and apply for state / federal funding, as well as other types of grant funding for projects outlined, and to undertake any required reporting.

As part of this effort and through experience gained from more formal collaboration, develop a strategy for a more permanent approach to district management and local economic development.

Process

KEY STEPS:

1) Getting Started:

- Establish Oak Bluffs economic [recovery/development] advisory team (OBEAT)
- Identify priority needs, especially as related to grant identification and grant writing for major economic recovery projects. Consider this a pilot process for exploring a longer term strategy for district management.

2) Identify Priorities and Project Management Responsibilities for each of the other five priority projects identified in the RRP process:

- (1) Public Realm: District Lighting Plan
- (2) Public Realm: Park & Ride / Moving Mural Program
- (3) Private Realm: Facade Improvement Program
- (4) Cultural/Arts: Public Art Experiences + Wayfinding
- (5) Administrative Capacity: Update Business Licensing

3) Confirm Project Management Frameworks and Develop Contracts:

- Develop MOA with OBA in relationship to project management of specific projects.
- Hire additional project management and / grant writing assistance through professional service contracts.
- Ensure coordination and reporting expectations are clear.
- While it is envisioned that the OBA may lead the hiring of other consultants and individuals as necessary for specific projects for which they will manage, they will work with Town staff to be sure processes are compliant with Town requirements.

4) Implement Work / Projects (1-5 years):

- Write grants and launch projects as funding is secured.
- Regularly convene the OBEAT and monitor new grant opportunities as well as required reporting requirements.
- Report to the Town Administrator, Select Board and Oak Bluffs community at large.

5) Identify Approach for Ongoing District Management:

- Explore next steps for more permanent and resilient district management: ongoing MOA; directed funding for district management and/or other possible mechanisms (BID, DIF or parking benefits district, etc.).
- For the OBA, this will likely include adding or converting to a 501c3 structure in order to be able to apply for specific types of grants and to allow supporters to make tax deductible donations. This would mean adding organizational structure, but the process could be used to strengthen and clarify OBA's roles in providing marketing and economic recovery/development services on behalf of the entire Oak Bluffs community, not just its members.
 - Stakeholder Engagement / Community Outreach. It should be "right sized" for Oak Bluffs.
 - Develop Bylaws and articles of organization for OBA 501c3
 - Establishment of a Board of Directors
 - MOU with Town and Initiation of supplemental services
 - Timeframe: Organizers should be able to form 501c3 organization within the OBA and MOU with Town in 9 months or sooner if there is consensus.



Best Practice

Determine a District Management Model for Downtown Reading



Admin Capacity

Ann McFarland Burke,
Downtown Consultant

Reading, MA

- A Massachusetts Downtown Initiative grant provided Technical Assistance. The town provided staff support and early coordination
- See RRP Compendium - Administrative Capacity for other Best Practice examples.







In the case of Reading, the goal was the establishment of a sustainable downtown organization with a defined program, sustainability model and appropriate staff support.

- A large broad-based community advisory committee was formed to provide input and feedback. A survey was widely distributed to community residents, businesses and other stakeholders provided insight into program priorities and community preferences.
- In addition to community outreach events and community forums, panels featuring executive directors of different types of downtown organizations described their programs, challenges and models.
- A consultant guided working sessions with the advisory committee to discuss specific model alternatives / cost and benefits, to build consensus and arrive at a preferred model.
- The effort transitioned from city-led effort to a BID steering committee comprised of property owners, businesses, and other stakeholders. While a BID structure may not necessarily be the right outcome for Oak Bluffs, working to ensure key responsibilities are covered through formal agreements between the Town, the OBA and parties may prove to be an efficient way to be sure District Management, Community Branding, Economic Development and Economy Recovery Planning (including grant identification and application coordination) are undertaken with strong involvement from the private sector and without adding additional permanent town staff.

Appendix

Live music returns to the Ritz
Source: @Pointbrealty

RRP Projects – Summary Matrix

#	Project	Project Management	Key Partners (including OBEAT)	Estimated Budget	Recommended Funding	Possible Funding Sources
1 	District Lighting Initiative (with Seasonal Programming)	Town applies to EDA grant. Contracts to OBA for project management	Parks Dept Lighting Consultant Install Team Business and property owners.	Year 1: \$150,000 Year 2 – 5: 30% of year 1 via corporate sponsorships	Federal	EDA Travel Tourism and Outdoor Recreation grants – rolling / competitive. Award floor: \$100,000; ceiling = \$10,000,000. It may be worth it to combine projects into a single application. Submit ASAP.
2 	Park & Ride Study / Moving Mural Program	Town Staff + OBA assists with Moving Mural	VTA MV Steering Committee	\$25,000 for study; additional funding for moving mural program (\$10,000 - \$25,000)	State	State matching funds; National Trust for Historic Places funding for storytelling or foundation funding for arts + culture.
3 	Façade Improvement (toolkit + matching grant program)	OBA	Professional services (art + graphic design, printing) Participation: Business and property owners. Permitting: Town staff.	Toolkit + policy communication: \$20,000 Façade improvement grant program: \$600,000	State (Mass Development) + State/Fed/Private	Toolkit - Commonwealth Places Seed Grant Façade Improvement: Commonwealth Places Matching Grant, NPS-Main Street American (rural communities)
4 	Public Art Experiences + Wayfinding Program	OBA	Parks Dept MV Steering Committee Graphic Designer	Year 1: \$100,000-\$250,000 Year 2 – 5: same or similar	Federal	EDA Travel Tourism and Outdoor Recreation grants. And/or: MOTT (state) + foundation funding for arts + culture, sponsors.
5 	Update Business Licensing Regulations	Town Staff manages professional services contract	Professional services (IT + graphic design). Input from business community and Town Counsel.	Year 1: \$15,000 - \$25,000 Year 2: follow up (\$5,000)	Year 1: Federal – EDA	EDA: Economic Adjustment Assistance
6 	Support District Management + Economic Recovery	Town Staff manages MOA with OBA and prof service contracts as needed	OBA through formal agreement w/ funding support + Public funding grant writer and professional service consultants as needed	\$60,000-\$80,000 starting Oct. 2021 to cover first year/phase of project management for projects listed above. Future need for direct funding TBD.	Municipal	Year 1: Oak Bluffs municipal budget general fund (from portion of ferry passenger fees to town) Goal will be to cover future project management funding through grants or increases in sales & STR tax revenue.

Preliminary Budgets - Details

1) District Lighting Initiative (with Seasonal Programming) [including equipment and installation]

Medium Budget (under \$200,000)

Budget includes:

- Purchase of lighting and décor (\$75K approx.)
- Installation/Maintenance Costs (contracted) (\$30K approx.)
- Electricity Costs
- Events, promotion, social media and advertising (ongoing)
- Administration costs – décor, marketing/events, design professionals

Year 1 costs \$150,000 - \$200,000

Year 2 - 5 costs: Costs will decrease as the purchase of the lighting and décor would be eliminated, other than a small replacement budget for damages or lighting replacement.

Typical budget for yearly installation is 25%-35% of initial budget. However, more budget dollars should be added in Year 2 to increase events, marketing, and promotions. It is reasonable to assume 5-7 seasons of décor use if it is well maintained and installed properly.

Potential Sources of Funding

- MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces
- EDA Travel Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Grants
- Economic Development Administration
- National Association of Realtors grant program
- In-place Town funding and potential cost split with energy provider
- Business sponsorship program

2) Park & Ride Study / Moving Mural Program

Low to Medium Budget (under \$200,000)

- Primary Goal: Plan, including Impact Study: \$25,000 - \$50,000 depending on scope and specifically, approaches to community engagement
- Secondary Goal: Moving Mural Program: \$10,000-\$50,000 for organization of competition, fabrication and installation of art, program PR / community engagement and artists award

Potential Sources of Funding

- Mass Downtown Initiative - Technical Assistance Grant
- Moving Mural component: National Trust for Historic Preservation storytelling grant, Mass Cultural Council, Barr Foundation
- Council on Aging

Preliminary Budgets - Details

3) Facade Improvement Program

Large Budget (\$200,000 +)

- Part 01: \$20,000 (Toolkit)
- Part 02: (\$580,000 over five years) depending on approach and participation level)

Preliminary estimate: \$600,000

It is estimated that at least 20% of "storefronts" need some type of improvement ranging from (\$10,000-\$30,000). This program does not necessarily need to follow the planned streetscape improvements but it should be coordinate.

Assumed costs:

- Program consultant. Due to the limited size of town staff, an outside consultant or non-profit entity will be needed to run the program - including program design and promotion, as well as the application and reimbursement process. (Program design, application management + website & materials, program reporting = \$90,000)
- Technical assistance: limited input on design, construction, cost estimating (30 x \$3000 = \$90,000)
- Facade improvements: direct costs of grant or forgivable loans (30 x \$10,000-\$30,000 per improvement = \$600,000) Assume 75%/25% match = \$400,000 direct cost
- For each component, the goal would be to hire local service providers whenever possible.

Potential Sources of Funding

- Toolkit - Commonwealth Places Seed Grant
- Façade Improvement: Commonwealth Places Matching Grant, NPS-Main Street American Rural Communities program
- Some buildings may be eligible for federal and State tax credits for historic rehabilitation. These programs operate on their own specific schedules, but for property owners interested in more complex building improvements, it may be worth investigating them and/or targeting them for later phase improvements.

4) Public Art Experiences + Wayfinding

Medium Budget (under \$200,000)

- Year 1: \$100,000 to \$250,000
- Year 2-5 Same or similar (through sponsorships)

Potential Sources of Funding

- EDA Travel Tourism and Outdoor Recreation grants. (\$100,000 floor)
- And/or: MOTT (state) + foundation funding for arts + culture, sponsors.

Preliminary Budgets - Details

5) Update Business Licensing Regulations

Low Budget (Under \$50,000)

Year 1: \$15,000-\$25,000

Year 2: follow up (\$5,000)

Budget includes:

- Review of licensing regulations, community input process and recommendations for amendments
- Additional market data / market study may be required

Potential Sources of Funding

- EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance

6) Support District Management + Economy Recovery

Low to Medium Budget (under \$200,000)

Year 1-2: \$60,000-\$80,000 starting October 2021. Future need for direct funding TBD.

Use of funds:

1. Management of specific projects by OBA through MOA.
2. Additional grant finding / grant writing assistance
3. Limited professional services for projects (beyond what is provided via grants)

Potential Sources of Funding

- Year 1: Oak Bluffs municipal budget general fund (from portion of ferry passenger fees to Town of Oak Bluffs)
- Goal will be to cover future project management funding through grants or increases in sales tax, as well as short term rental tax revenue.