



Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

Oxford

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



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

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

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

For more information, contact DHCD:
100 Cambridge St, Suite 300
Boston, MA 02114
617-573-1100
mass.gov/DHCD

Acknowledgements



Town of Oxford

Tony Souza, Director of Planning
and Economic Development



Favermann Design

Mark Favermann, Principal



Community Circle

Community Circle

Daphne Politis, Principal

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

Over ten Downtown Clinton business owners

Oxford Planning Board (7 members)

Oxford Master Plan Implementation Committee (5 members)

Oxford Town Manager's Office

Oxford Town Assessor's Office

Oxford Historical Commission (5 members)

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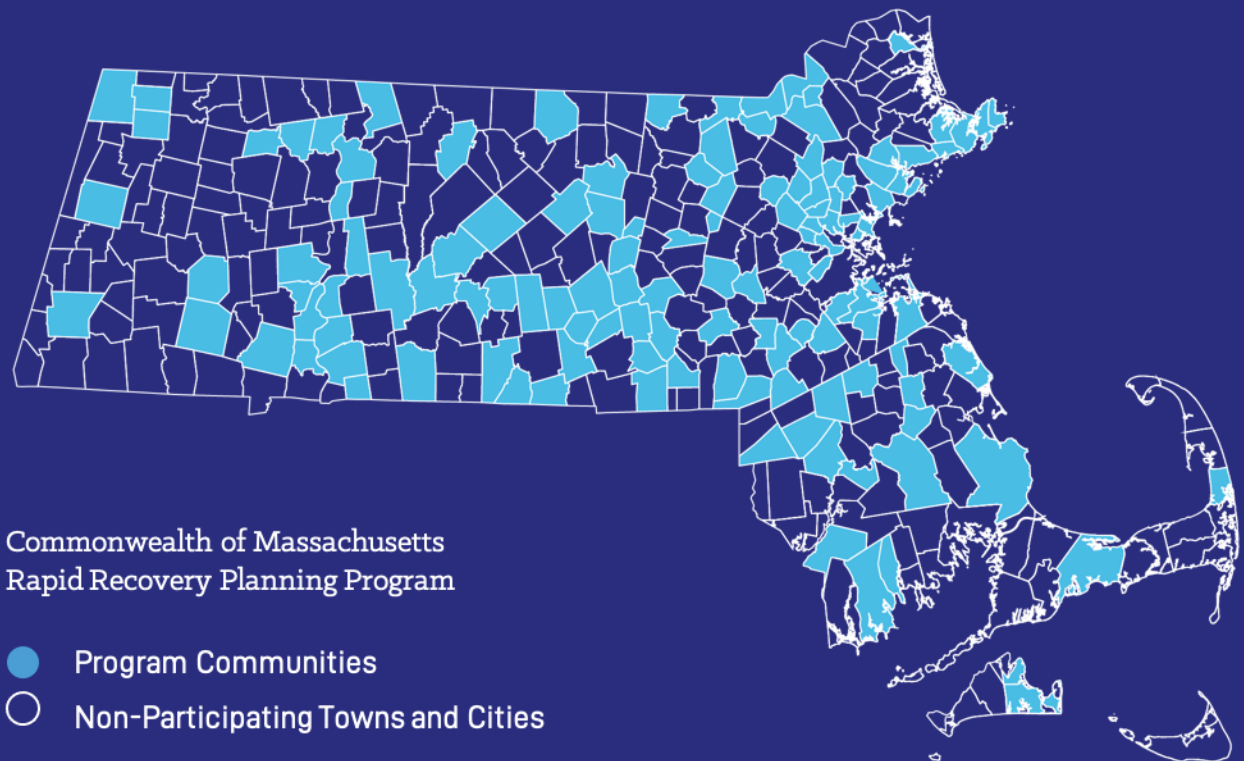
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125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

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.



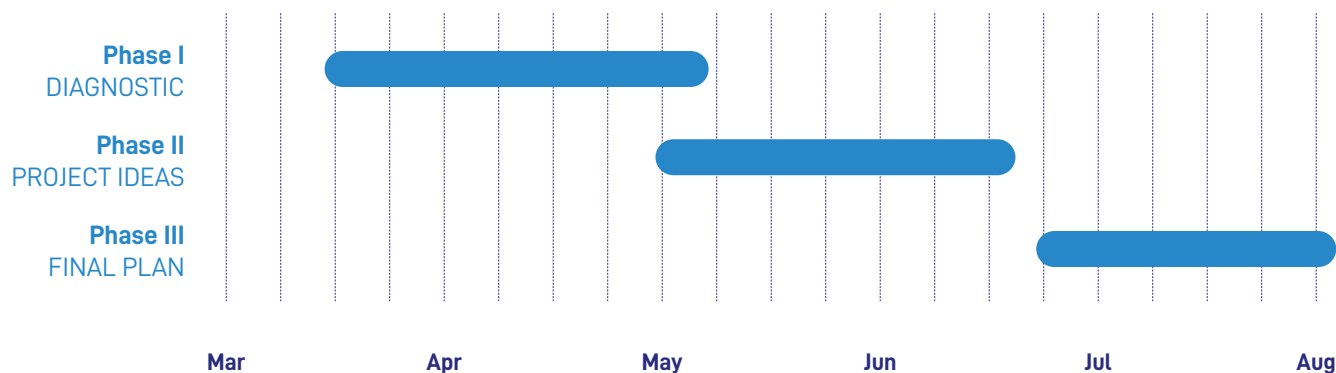
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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.

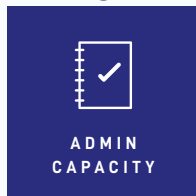
Each Rapid Recovery Plan was developed across three phases between February-August 2021. Phase 1 - Diagnostic, Phase 2- Project Recommendations, Phase 3 - Plan.



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

Incorporating a population of 14,000 and located due south of the City of Worcester, the Town of Oxford was first settled in 1687. The town was originally settled by French Huguenots. Eventually, other ethnic groups added to the population mix. Initially, it was an aquarian community that eventually included some manufacturing. It was the birthplace of Clara Barton, the first president and founder of the American Red Cross. It was also the birthplace Dr. Elliott P. Joslyn, the great pioneer in Diabetes research for which the Joslyn Clinic is named.

A town with an appealing small town feel with good access to a full set of services

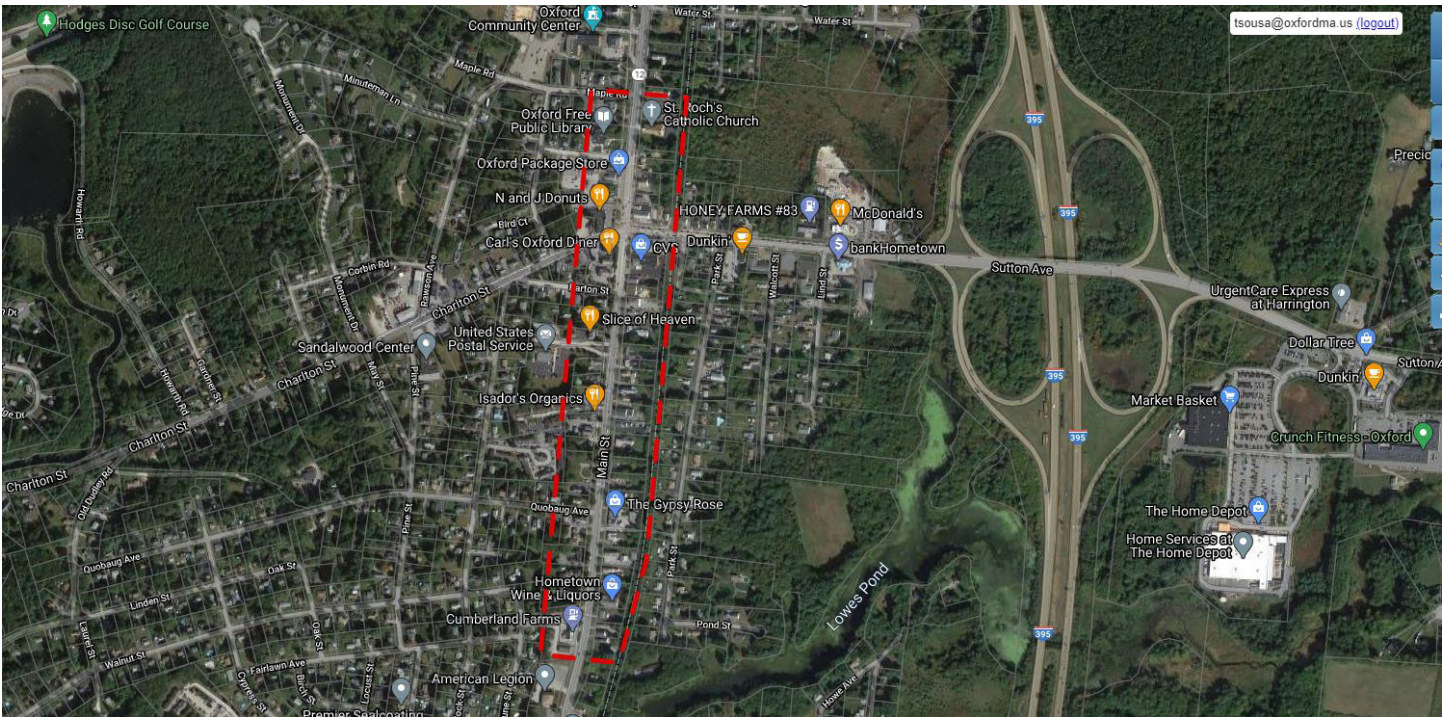
With a wide main street featuring old Colonial homes with front porches, nice sidewalks for an evening stroll, an iconic historic towering town hall, senior and community centers, the classic Karl's old fashioned Diner, an old-fashioned public library, a good town playground for the kids, churches with majestic steeples, its own improving public school and downtown services, Oxford has an appealing small-town feel. It is accessible to major services in Worcester and Boston -- including some of the best hospitals in the northeast (like U/Mass Medical in Worcester). Downtown Oxford is right off Route 395, making for an easy drive to the Massachusetts Turnpike, Worcester and Connecticut. Towns bordering Oxford are Webster, Dudley, Charlton, Leicester, Douglas, Charlton, Auburn, Millbury and Sutton.

The Town's recovery will depend on a number of initiatives including wayfinding, buy local campaigns, storefront improvements and cross-pollination of marketing efforts between stores, retailers and craftspeople

After discussions, public meetings and research, the following recommendations were developed for Oxford's business community for their tactical recovery from the trials and tribulations of Covid-19. These include:

- Completion and refinement of a branding and wayfinding system that underscores access and direction to connect natural and historic town assets
- Promote and codify outdoor dining
- Create of an Oxford Refresh to develop design guidelines and funding for storefronts and facades
- Create opportunities for pop-ups to test new retail concepts
- Develop a Buy Local marketing campaign with a "Shoppers Passport,
- Investigate options for empty storefronts including short-term business incubators
- Develop a systematic cross-pollination of products between stores and retailers as well as craftspeople and retailers (co-marketing
- Explore how to increase town's organizational and outreach
- Investigate public art as a series of focal points around Oxford
- develop and plan for a self-guided historic tour around the town that can be access by a QR code, kiosks and trail markers. This would significantly lead to Oxford becoming a destination rather than another place.

All of the proposed actions will need thoughtful planning and careful design. The Town Administration is very enthusiastic about all of these projects and programs.



Diagnostic

Key Findings



Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?

OXFORD DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION	
2010 Census	13,709
2021 Estimate	14,084
2026 Projection	14,288

HOUSEHOLDS	
2010 Census	5,272
2021 Estimate	5,479
2026 Projection	5,579

INCOME	
2021 Est. Average Household Income	\$ 100,851
2021 Est. Median Household Income	\$ 77,804
Per Capital Income (2021)	\$ 39,233

AGE	
Median Age	42.7
Age 35 – 64	42%
Age 65 – 85	16%

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	
2021 Est. Average Household size	2.6

EDUCATION (AGE 25+ 2021 ESTIMATE)	
At least some college or higher	61%

RACE	
White	93%
Black/African American	1%
Asian	1%
Latin@	5%

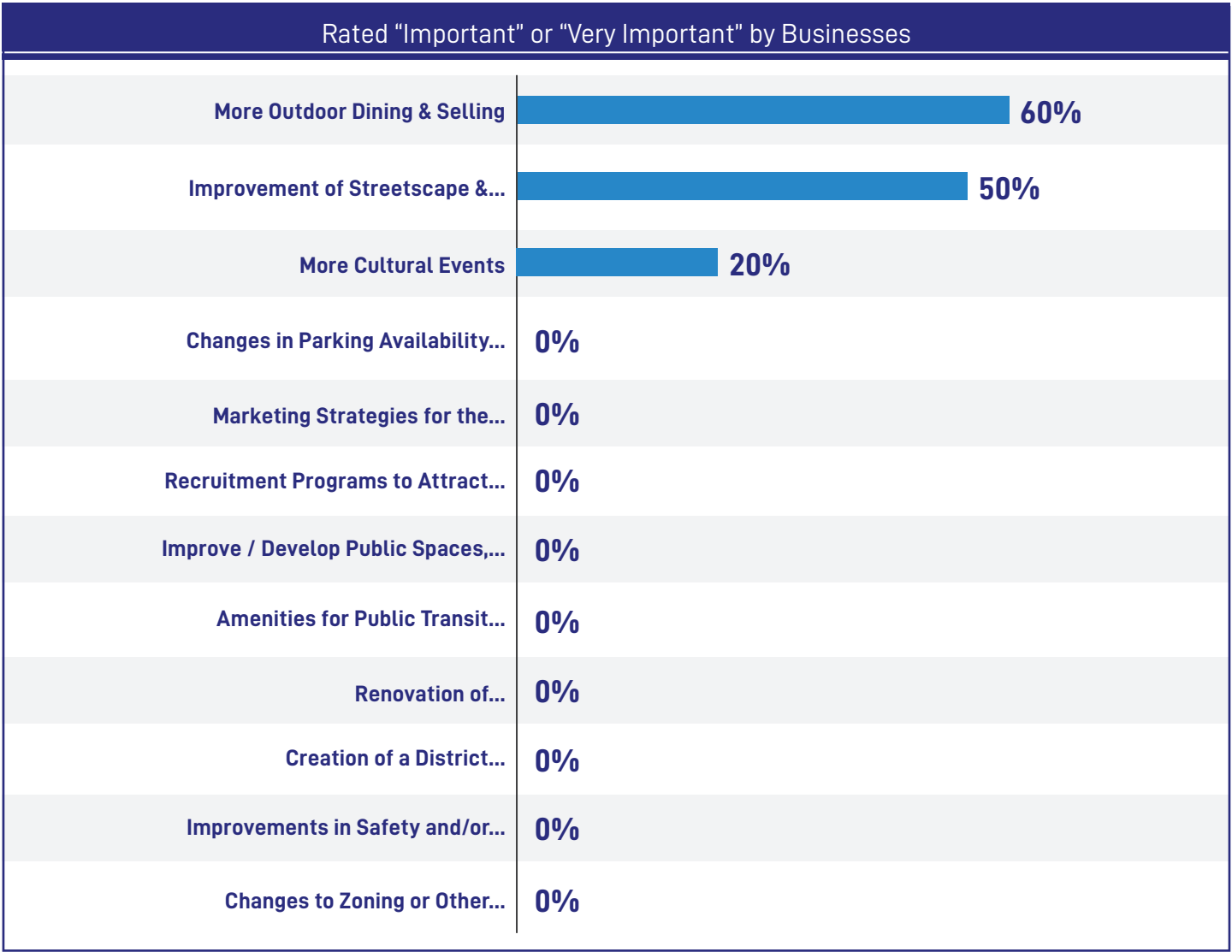


How conducive is the physical environment to meeting the needs and expectations of both businesses and customers?

What Business Owners Had to Say... The strategies most important to Oxford businesses include more outdoor dining and selling opportunities. A slight increase in Oxford's population is projected, as is the expectation that the number of households will also slightly increase. The median household income (\$77,804) is slightly lower than that of the State (\$85,843 in 2019). The majority of residents are of workforce age with at least some college education. The large majority of residents (93%) are White.

Strategies Most Important to Businesses

1. More Outdoor Dining and Selling Opportunities (60%)
2. Improvement of Streetscapes and Sidewalks (50%)



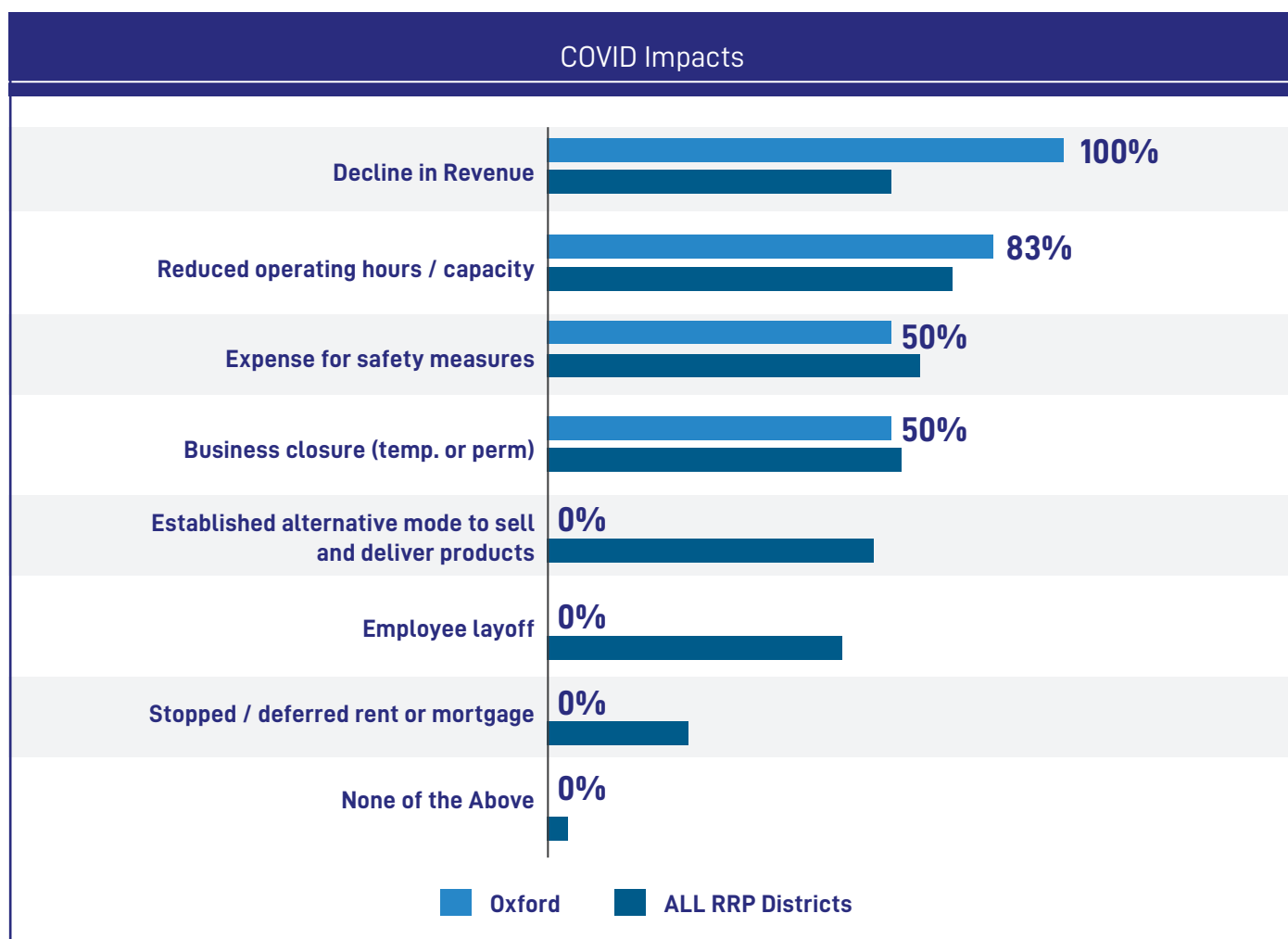


What are the impacts of COVID-19 on businesses in the Study Area? How well does the business mix meet the needs of various customer groups?

COVID impacts were widespread and significant among the businesses.

100% of Oxford Target Area businesses reported impacts from COVID-19. All businesses reported a decline in revenue, and a majority reported reduced operating hours and capacity.

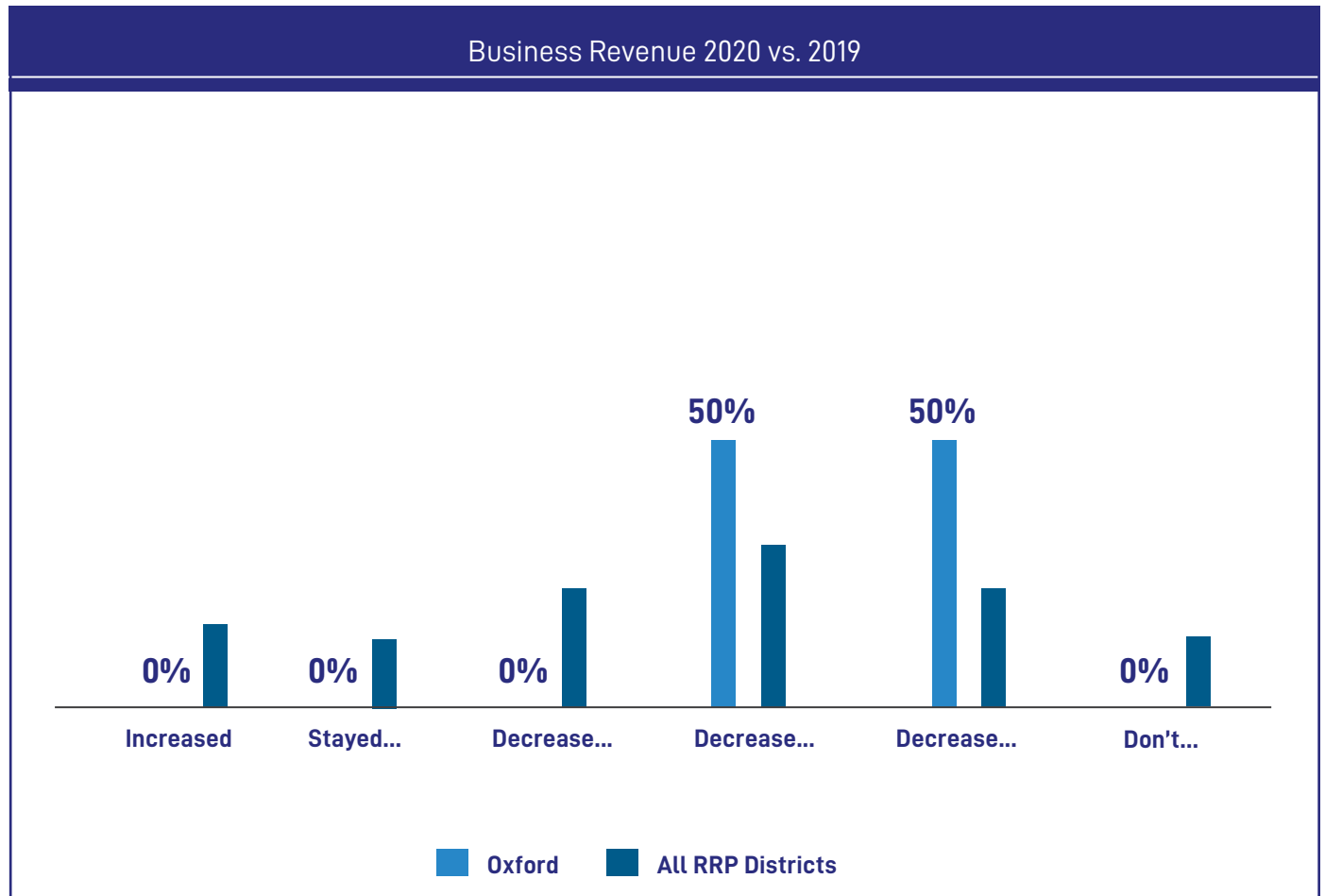
Decline in Business District foot traffic was significant. 100% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID. Customer counts were down by more than 25% for all businesses and more than 50% for one-third of the businesses.



A significantly higher percentage of Oxford businesses reported a year-over-year revenue loss compared to the rate among all businesses in RRP Districts.

Loss of Revenue – 100% of Oxford businesses suffered a year-over-year revenue loss (compared to 68% of businesses in all RRP Districts).

None of the Oxford businesses said they established an alternative mode to sell or deliver products or services (compared to 47% of businesses in all RRP districts).





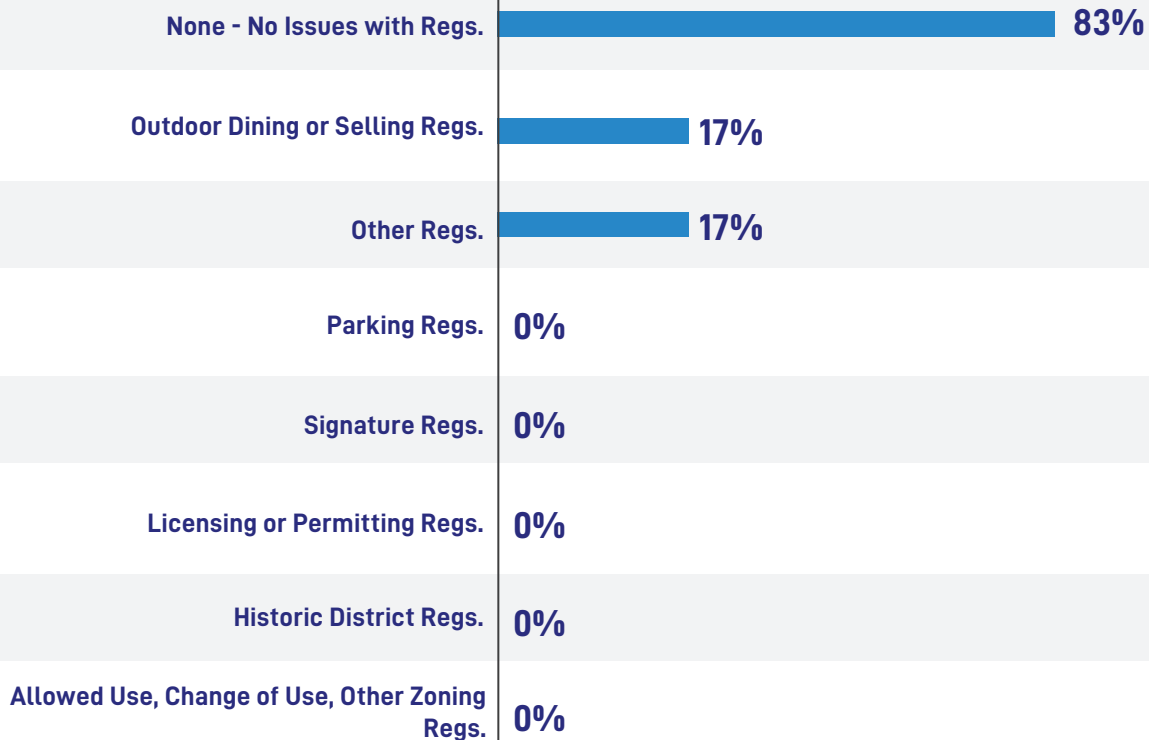
ADMIN CAPACITY

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?

What Business Owners Had to Say . . . The majority of businesses were generally satisfied with the business district and regulatory environment.

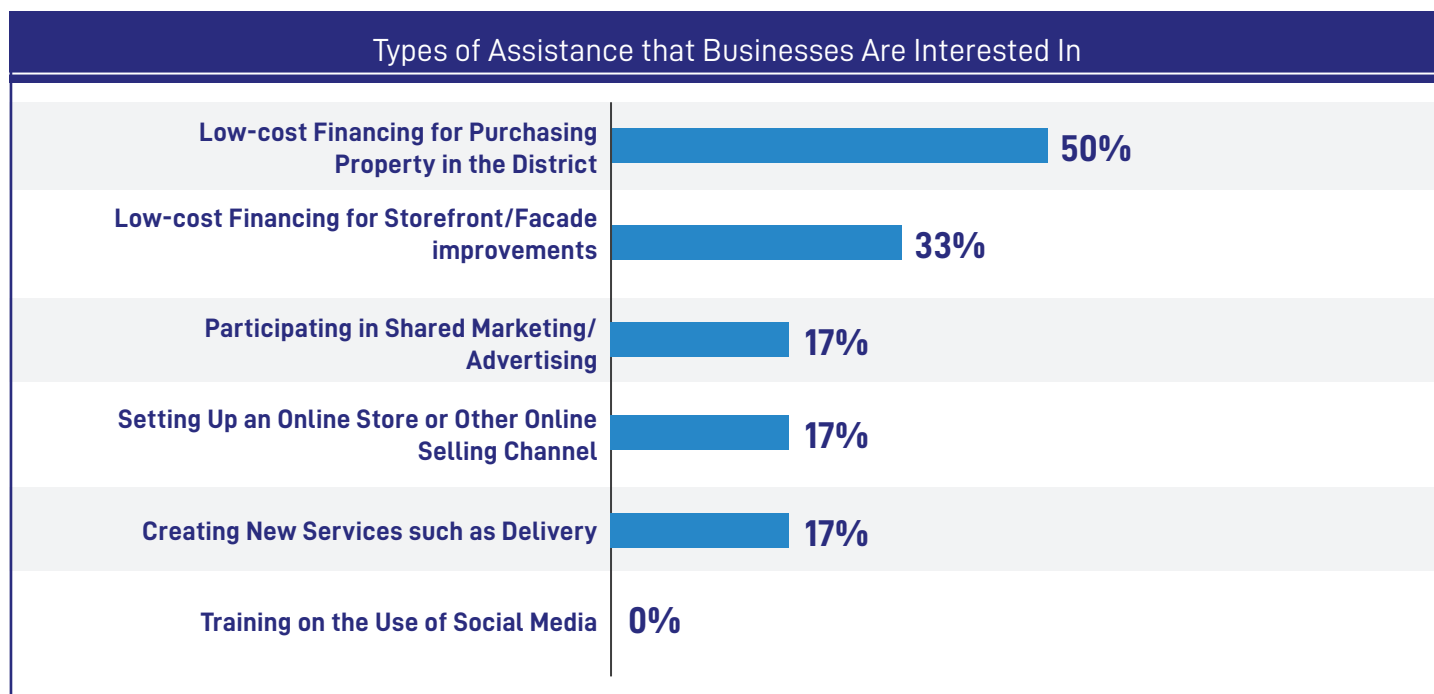
The majority of businesses were neutral or satisfied with the aspects of the commercial area such as: safety, proximity to complementary businesses/uses, customer access, and the condition of private buildings/storefronts and public spaces/infrastructure. 83% of businesses said that they had no issues with the regulatory environment.

Regulations that Pose an Obstacle



 % of Business Respondents

What Business Owners Had to Say. . . Businesses are most interested in receiving low-cost financing assistance to purchase property in the target area.



Highlights from the Physical Environment

Located 11 miles south of the City of Worcester, the small (approximately 14,000) aquarian former mill town of Oxford has an appealing small town feel. Access is good to and from the town. Downtown Oxford is right off Route 395, an easy drive to the Massachusetts Turnpike to Boston and the Berkshires, Worcester and Connecticut. The birthplace of both Red Cross founder Clara Barton and Diabetes pioneer Dr. Elliot Joslin, the town has a large number of historic sites, monuments and significant structures.

Strewn along a wide Main Street is an eclectic mix of new chains stores and older small businesses

Oxford's Town Hall, a majestic memorial to the Civil War, is the monumental focal point of the community. The wide main street is a processional thoroughfare that was somehow designed to serve as a place for large parades and celebrations. It showcases older Colonial homes often with deep front porches, adjacent wide sidewalks for an evening stroll, senior and community centers, a classic Mid-Century Karl's Diner, an old-fashioned prominent public library, a good town kids playground and churches with majestic steeples. Spread along Main Street there is a rather eclectic mix of new chain stores and shabby but community-beloved older businesses.

Recent vehicular circulation improvements and pedestrian amenities improvements will help support the Center's recovery efforts

Recently, the town has enhanced Downtown sidewalks with newly placed plantings and street furniture. There have also been traffic studies to investigate traffic calming, easing pedestrian crossing of so large a number of vehicle lanes and the potential of "traffic islands" and different striping approaches at stoplights and blinking lighted locations.

Challenges include the need for a wide range of public as well as private realm improvement

Oxford's physical challenges include dealing strategically with the expansive, overly-wide Main Street, to upgrade, refresh and renovate tired storefronts and facades, implementing a long overdue wayfinding system to give comfort and confidence in pedestrian and vehicular orientation, after nearly 50 years of discussion and the creation of a comprehensive Oxford historic trail in and around the town as a visitor magnet. Also, there is a reluctance of some prominent property owners to upgrade commercial properties and parking.



Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Town Hall



Highlights from the Business Environment

A good mix of goods and services with new stores soon to open

With goods and services spread out linearly along Main Street, the commercial sector of the Town of Oxford is contiguous rather than continuous. However, there is a good mix of goods and services with acknowledgement of retail and food opportunities by neighboring town merchants. This has resulted in a soon to be open new stores and a bakery.

A growing number of home craft and product-makers need support

A rather unique aspect of Oxford's commercial sector is the large number of at home craft and product-makers that sell everything from honey and bee's wax to handcrafted items. This is a growing subset of both makers and sellers that need retail outlets or sell on the internet.

Local restaurants adapted to COVID-19 restrictions and plan to continue increased use of internet ordering, curb-side pick up and deliveries

As with other small town commercial districts, Oxford's merchants and restaurateurs had to learn to adapt to Covid-19 restrictions and now use this flexibility to continue their operations during this transitioning period from the Pandemic. Those who could used their websites and the internet for ordering and sales. New patterns for pick-up and deliveries were transformative for many merchants. Oxford's commercial sector will use these various lessons learned in the future.

Challenges faced by Oxford include how to encourage landlords and commercial tenants to upgrade, renovate and restore tired, unappealing storefronts and facades. A storefront and signage set of town approved guidelines need to be established. The town administration needs to decide whether matching or direct grants be given for this purpose. The challenge of cooperative marketing, both local and regional, needs to be addressed. Focus on co-pollination of products and stores is another challenge. This is about how to encourage and strengthen the ability of merchants and vendors to reinforce each other like the bakery selling cup cakes in the ice cream shop, and the ice cream shop selling ice cream in the bakery.

Recovery will depend on a range of initiatives

How to market Oxford regionally poses a challenge. Cooperation is key and organization and administrative capacity are necessary. The challenging question is how to develop this capacity and sustain a marketing effort. The recommended inclusion of the Oxford historic trail and self-guided tour, should result in more visitors attracted to the Town, adding to Oxford's commerce. A buy local campaign whereby shoppers visit a number of shops and get stamps on their shoppers' passports that result in a prize product or meal could help attract people back to the Center.

Another challenge is to creatively assist the in-home product makers. There needs to be temporary opportunities to showcase locally made products. This can be done at more Oxford-sponsored events and celebrations—festivals, movie nights, etc. through the use of temporal pop-up stores and booths. These can be made available to existing merchants and vendors as well. Week-end fairs could be organized as well with a temporary "makers' mart" at its center.



Oxford Aerial View of Main Street

Project Recommendations

Public Realm



Create a **wayfinding and branding system** and connect previous work by completing wayfinding system for Oxford; connect the natural and historic resources that are currently fragmented; increase pride in place.

Continue to promote outdoor dining. Identify appropriate locations and lessen code restrictions. Also develop a one-page checklist for permitting the displaying of merchandise outdoors.

Oxford Refresh: Update Design Standards for storefront improvements.

Create opportunities for pop up shops/events (e.g. beer garden/brewery in parking lot and parks).

Buy local campaign with "passport" checklist to become eligible for gift card, promote holiday shopping, promote home occupations).

Create a streamlined process for new and expanding businesses.

Private Realm



Make storefront improvements based on updated Storefront Design Guidelines.

Develop a public/private partnership to create and oversee a vacant storefront program.

Create a process for testing "incubator" for businesses to test their businesses ideas with one-month leases. Explore using a central location for locating a Vendor pad.

Develop cross-pollination (co-marketing) and regional shared marketing program. Coordinate efforts so that businesses, including home occupations, link to one another by advertising for one another (e.g. use of pamphlets, etc.)

Provide one-on-one technical assistance to individual businesses to increase their on-line presence. Provide a webinar with guidance for all businesses.

Admin Capacity



Increase the Town's capacity through activation of the business association and work with the regional Chamber of Commerce. Build on pre-COVID activities (e.g. movie night, food trucks, concerts on the gazebo, Bandstand Committee, Lions Club Fall Festival, Farmers' Market). Investigate participating in joint regional marketing.

Cultural / Arts



Develop a **self-guided historic tour** with QR codes and a kiosk with a map of locations of historic places and an audio narrative. Consider adding virtual reality overlay viewing of historic buildings and landscapes. Record old-timers telling stories. Integrate with wayfinding system with trail markers.





Explore the use of **public art** as focal points around Town.



PLEASE NOTE:

While all of the projects listed here were identified as important to the community's recovery, those with a thick, light blue outline were identified as priority projects. More detailed Project Sheets are provided or these in the pages that follow.

Create a **wayfinding and branding system** and connect previous work by completing wayfinding system.

Category		Public Realm
Location		Oxford Center
Origin		Town Planner, Planning Board, Plan Facilitators
Budget		Low budget for Design (\$25,000) and up to high budget for Implementation (\$20,000-\$150,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (6-12 months) for design and implementation (implementation can be phased).
Risk		Low Risk. Creating a wayfinding and branding for the Town represents little or no risk.
Key Performance Indicators		The number of wayfinding elements installed and an increase in the number of visitors.
Partners & Resources		DPW, Town Planner, Wayfinding Advisory Committee, Select Board, area businesses. Mass DOT is a possible funding source.
Diagnostics		A number of historic and natural features exist in the Town that are not necessarily self evident and that by connecting them through consistent signage and branding may help to attract more patrons to the Town Center.
Action Item		<p>Create a wayfinding and branding system to help emphasize the features that make Canton unique and to connect the Town Center to adjacent areas, better integrating the Town Center with these. To create a wayfinding & branding program for Oxford Center that will better direct users to their destination but also create a sense of place for the commercial nodes corridor. The project will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a Team to guide the project • Review of relevant project limits, points of interest, destinations and businesses • Design of a brand theme, logo and optional tagline • Identification of locations for wayfinding elements • Implementation of wayfinding and branding element

Process

Connect the natural and historic resources that are currently fragmented to increase pride in place and help attract visitors and provide guidance in navigating between sites of interest and the Town Center.

1. Work with the recently established Branding and Wayfinding Advisory Committee to coordinate the project. This group will guide the project and ensure concerns within each Department are met early on in the process
2. Review relevant project limits, points of interest, designations and businesses.

The team would review project limits, points of interest, destinations, and businesses

3. Design a brand theme, logo and optional tagline

The team would work to ideate themes around Oxford Center as it relates to community branding which would support strategic placemaking

- a. Review any historical experiences, local symbols both physical and non-physical, and aspirations for the corridor
- b. Translate potential themes into branding and wayfinding concepts along with optional tagline
- c. The team would then select a final brand design and optional tagline
- d. Develop a final Family of Elements which would identify wayfinding opportunities for various applications

4. Identify locations for wayfinding elements

The team will work to identify location for wayfinding elements. (see opportunities next page)

- Create a sign schedule identifying the location of the signs and quantity needed
- Create a map that identifies the sign locations

5. Implementation

- Fabricate and install the wayfinding elements
- Consider phasing implementation if financial resources are limited

Translate the branding across other Town applications such as Town Letter Head, logo, newsletters, etc. to begin telling the brand story Town-wide



A Wayfinding Signage System





Reading, MA

BEST PRACTICE EXAPLE: READING, MA

The map identifies some opportunities for wayfinding elements. During the process, the Team would want to refine these locations, taking into account sight lines and visibility factors.



Oxford Refresh: Update **Design Standards** for storefront improvements.

Category		Public Realm
Location		Oxford Town Center
Origin		Town Planner, Plan Facilitators
Budget		Low Budget (Under \$50k)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years)
Risk		Low Risk.
Key Performance Indicators		The number of property owners that use the guidelines to make improvements to their properties and the degree to which the guidelines provide the necessary guidance to create more appealing storefronts.
Partners & Resources		Town Planner, Consultant
Diagnostics		100% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID. Customer counts were down by more than 25% for all businesses and more than 50% for one-third of the businesses. Site visits revealed that storefronts and signage are in need of a "refresh." More appealing storefronts may help to attract patrons back to the Center.
Action Item		<p>Update the existing Design Guidelines for Storefront Improvements by following the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide whether this is a project that can be done in-house or requires a consultant with appropriate expertise. Decide which funding source is appropriate and, if the source is a grant program, apply for funds. If a consultant is deemed appropriate, go through the Commonwealth's procurement process (unless the grant program has an on-call consultant). Identify the people/organizations who need to be part of this process. Develop an engagement process appropriate for Oxford and the required approval process. Once the design guidelines have been approved, consider a public education program to inform people on a regular basis about the new requirements and their implications. Key targets for this campaign include property owners and real estate brokers.

Process

The timeframe will vary depending on whether the municipality has a city form of government or requires Town Meeting to approve bylaw changes (and of course, whether the design guidelines are specifically incorporated into the zoning). From the kick-off to entering the municipal approval process, the project should take 8-12 months.

- **Months 1-2:** Review existing zoning bylaws for embedded design guidelines and standards; develop inventory of historic and current buildings and site treatments; interview municipal staff, boards with approval responsibility, former applicants, local land use lawyers, others with relevant experience and concerns.
- **Months 3-4:** Research appropriate precedents; develop public outreach/engagement program. Consider a public kick-off/charrette, depending on the needs of the community. Discuss the thresholds for use and the appropriate review body and process.
- **Months 5-7:** Engage with business/property owners and public on options and concerns; develop draft guidelines; develop illustrations. Decide (with municipality) whether design guidelines are a separate, advisory document or part of the zoning bylaw/ordinance. If the guidelines are integrated into the zoning, decide whether illustrations are part of the zoning or a separate document. Consider meeting with the appropriate boards to introduce the draft design guidelines and receive feedback.
- **Months 8-9:** Revise the design guidelines to its final draft prior to the municipal approval process. Publicize the final draft prior to City Council/Town Meeting review and approval.



Oxford Market



Town Center Design Guidelines

Public Realm

Sterling, MA

SEE APPENDIX FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE:

Town Center Design Guidelines
Sterling, Massachusetts

Town Contact : Domenica Tatasciore , Town Planner
dtatasciore@sterling-ma.gov

Consultant: Innes Associates Ltd./Harriman

Cost: \$15,000 (Massachusetts Downtown Initiative)

EXAMPLE:

Dedham Square Design Guidelines
Dedham, Massachusetts

Town Contact : Jeremy Rosenberger , Town Planner
jrosenberger@dedham-ma.gov

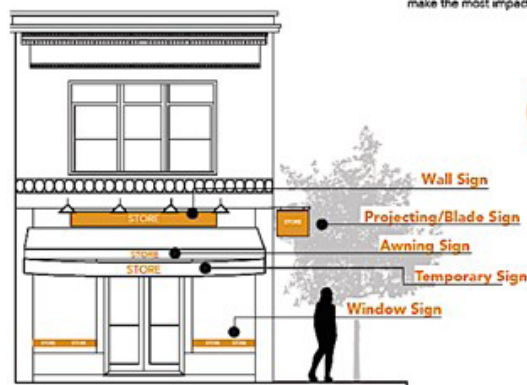
Consultant: Gamble Associates

Cost: \$30,000

Signs

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

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



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





Signs and Technical Requirements

City of Everett Storefront and Façade Design Guidelines



Consultant: Favermann Design

Buy local campaign with “passport” checklist to become eligible for gift card.

Category		Public Realm
Location		Oxford Town Center
Origin		Town Planner, Plan Facilitators
Budget		Low Budget: Materials \$15,000/ Graphics \$1,500 Marketing \$2,500
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years): Immediate impact but with a message that can continue long past the pandemic with simple alterations and replacements.
Risk		Low Risk.
Key Performance Indicators		The number of businesses that participate in the program. The number of patrons that participate in the program. The degree to which sales increase once the program has been launched.
Partners & Resources		Local businesses, Town Planning Department.
Diagnostics		As a result of the pandemic, all businesses reported a decline in revenue, and a majority reported reduced operating hours and capacity. Half (50%) of all businesses closed either temporarily or permanently. None of the Oxford businesses said they established an alternative mode to sell or deliver products or services (compared to 47% of businesses in all RRP districts). A “buy local” campaign is proposed as a way of addressing these significant impacts.
Action Item		Create a marketing campaign that launches Oxford Center on all available platforms addressing the immediate health and safety concerns of the pandemic while reminding all that local businesses cannot survive without patronage. The campaign should continue post-pandemic.

Process

Develop a buy local program

1. Concept: Incentivize people to shop local over a 2 month period in a fun and light way
2. Treasure hunt concept boiled down to a check list
3. Make sure it is within reach, a bit of a stretch but nothing too daunting
 - a. 10 restaurants
 - b. 5 retail
 - c. 3 services
 - d. 10 weeks to complete
4. A Pledge to support: involved, active, challenge for the greater good
5. Create and print Pledge Cards
6. Marketing: Honest "State of the Center": Businesses down 70+%, due to pandemic, you make the difference: a call to arms
7. Marketing Plan:
 - a. 12-week Radio Buy • 4 radio stations • playing 15 spots daily
 - b. 4 full page full color back page of the local paper with "cut out lines"
 - c. 10,000 rack cards distributed to all local business to hand out and include with take away orders and shoppers bags
 - d. Download pledge card from BID website
 - e. Social Media promotions and push to neighboring areas
8. Promote home occupations by including them on the "pledge" card (e.g. honey-stand outside of a resident's home).



Oxford, M, Joslin Park Bandstand



Step Up

Lexington, MA

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE APPENDIX
FOR BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

The Economic Development Office teamed up with the Lexington Retailer's Association, the Lexington Chamber of Commerce, and two Lexington High School students to create the "Step Up for Lexington" program. This initiative is a "shop local" effort aimed at encouraging residents and visitors to shop and dine in Lexington by offering them a stamp on their card for each purchase which then automatically enters them in a weekly raffle which in turn entitles them to win a prize.

For more information see:

<https://shoplexingtonma.wixsite.com/stepupforlexington>



**SHOP. STAMP. REPEAT.
WIN!**

1. Grab a Passport Card at retailers and businesses throughout Lexington or at the Visitors' Center. *Or* you can even download and print your own at <http://shoplexingtonfirst.com/>
2. Get a stamp or signature each time you shop, eat, take a yoga class, buy a gift, get your nails done, pick up a cake, or do business with Lexington-based companies!
*Online purchases count too!
3. Collect 10 stamps from at least 3 different businesses. Turn in your card at the Visitors' Center during business hours *or* you can email a picture of your completed card to visitorscenter@lexingtonma.gov

FURTHER DETAILS:

Participating business list will be updated and current on the Shop Lexington website.
Visitors' Center: 1875 Mass Ave or email visitorscenter@lexingtonma.gov.

Weekly drawings held at the Visitors' Center!
Weekly prizes include \$5 to spend at local businesses or on services. All entries are eligible for the Grand Prize as well:
\$400+ package!
<http://shoplexingtonfirst.com/>

**SHOP LOCAL. SUPPORT
LEXINGTON BUSINESSES.**

AUGUST 17 - OCT 17







SCAN ME





Jointly sponsored by the Lexington Retailers' Association, the Lexington Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Lexington.
Special thanks to Sarah Jensen and Grace Ou of Lexington HS!

Create a process for **testing “incubator”** for businesses to test their businesses ideas with one-month leases.

Category		Revenue/Sales
Location		Various possible locations in and around Oxford Center
Origin		Town Planner
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50k - \$200k).
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years). Implementation can take 2-3 months while annual setup can be done in a few weeks.
Risk		Low Risk.
Key Performance Indicators		Number of businesses that use the space. Number that go on to expand operations in town. Number of businesses on the waiting list. The number of attendees at different events and pedestrian counts in downtown.
Partners & Resources		Area small business support groups, local chambers of commerce, designers, landscapers, contractors and community groups.
Diagnostics		The Town Planner is interested in supporting and growing more small businesses in the community by giving them an opportunity to test their ideas before making any significant investment and commitment. Additionally, these types of “incubator” spaces tend to draw creative ideas which in turn it is hoped will attract additional patrons to the Town Center overall.
Action Item		This is an opportunity to support and grow new local businesses. As with any community focused placemaking project, its important to ensure collaboration and cooperation with local organizations, non profits and community residents to ensure a project is adoption by the community and receives community support over time. Locating a place that will support strong foot traffic while also being close enough to the Town Center core that it will draw visitors into the Center after visiting this location is also key.

Process

1. **LOCATE:** Find a suitable location(s) for the project. This could be a vacant lot, an alley, a parking lot space or street space currently devoted to vehicles. Ensure its centrally located within walking distance of numerous other commercial opportunities. Be sure it's a space that can support a true business test while drawing visitors to your Downtown.

Some ideas include:

- Invite food trucks to movies/concerts in Joslin Park on Main St. and provide 2-3 vendor pads for the sale of local products.
 - At the entrance to the bikepath provide a concrete pad with electricity, hand wash station and restrooms.
2. **PARTNER:** Identify a strong base of supporters to help implement and ensure space is embraced by the community & businesses have a constant flow of local customers and visitors to the community.
 3. **PLAN:** A combination of active and passive uses will ensure adoption of the site. While the programmed retail space will be your focus, passive community space is a must, whether recreational activities, seating, swings, a neighborhood lawn or other activity, ensure there are multiple draws to attract all different types of users to the space.
 4. **IMPLEMENT:** With support of local contractors repurpose a small sheds into portable retail spaces, given a custom touch by each of the vendors paying a modest annual fee to operate the business.
 5. **KEEP A WAITING LIST:** As business test their ideas and perhaps decide to move to a more permanent space, it will be important to keep the spaces active. Keeping a waiting list will ensure that others will take their place.
 6. Create a process for permitting the temporary structures.



Oxford Private Sector, Unappealing Quality of Retail



Maker to Market and The Corner Spot

Revenue/Sales

Worcester, MA

Ashland, MA

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE APPENDIX FOR BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE:

Maker to Main Market, Worcester, MA:

A market crafted and curated from local growers (farmers) and makers within Massachusetts and New England. The market's main's mission is to "remain committed to strengthening the community through a regional food system, by increasing accessibility for area residents. We will do this while providing a platform for small local producers who will not only directly support and advance their economic vitality but will also promote environmental consciousness".

<https://www.makertomain.com>

EXAMPLE:

"The Corner Spot," Ashland, MA:

The Corner Spot is a place in downtown Ashland where businesses can test-drive their market and residents can come together. The Corner Spot is intended to stimulate economic activity, attract new developers and business owners, and increase foot traffic downtown to help support existing and future business.

The Corner Spot is located at 6 Cherry Street and serves as the home for new businesses to "pop up" every week (or more), allowing residents to enjoy a variety of potential additions to the Ashland business community.





The Corner Spot has brought new life into our downtown incorporating outdoor seating and tables, porch swings, a free mini library, kids play area and a place that gives us a bright glimpse of the future of Ashland's downtown area.

<https://thecornerashland.com>



The Corner Spot, Ashland, MA

Develop cross-pollination (co-marketing) and regional shared marketing program.

Category		Private Realm
Location		Oxford Center
Origin		Town Planner
Budget		Low Budget (Under \$50k)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years).
Risk		Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators		The number of small businesses and home occupations that participate in co-marketing.
Partners & Resources		Town Planner, local businesses, home occupations
Diagnostics		It was noted that some small businesses and residents with home occupations do not have the funds and/or the know how to engage in large scale marketing. However, if support one another by providing information or even selling one another's merchandise, it may result in an increase in sales.
Action Item		Encourage local businesses to co-market perhaps introducing them to one another.
Process		<p>Cross-pollination of marketing</p> <p>Coordinate efforts so that businesses, including home occupations, link to one another by advertising for one another (e.g. use of pamphlets, etc.).</p> <p>Introduce small business owners and give ideas regarding how they could support one another (e.g. advertise for smoothies shop in the yoga studio and the yoga studio in the smoothies shop).</p> <p>Help businesses to create, increase, or otherwise improve their on-line presence by creating an on-line local business directory.</p>



Newfoundland Candle Company and Rockport Art Exhibit

Sterling, MA

Rockport, MA

THERE ARE DIFFERENT EXAMPLES OF HOW TO CROSS-POLLINATE MARKETING.

EXAMPLE:

Sterling, MA

Newfoundland Candle Company is a home-based business in the Town of Sterling and is located in the historic Town Center district. Named after the owners two Newfoundland dogs and a portion of proceeds from every candle sale goes towards the Newfoundland Rescue of New England and to the Sterling Massachusetts Animal Shelter.

The candle making started out as a hobby in the basement and as interest grew, the owners started their home-based business. In addition to selling their merchandise at fairs, festivals and on Etsy, the Newfoundland Candle Company also makes their products available at Sterling's Appletown Market, located only 0.2 miles away!





EXAMPLE:

Rockport, MA

Many artists in Rockport exhibit their art in area establishments such as coffee shops but also in Town Hall and the Library. Also a candle maker sells jar candles at area inns. The Town also co-organizes a "Maker's Festival" where local artists sell their art and crafts supported by food, music and family-friendly activities.



Develop a **self-guided historic tour** with QR codes and a kiosk with a map of locations of historic places and an audio narrative.

Category		Public Realm
Location		Oxford Center and surrounding areas
Origin		Town Planner, Planning Board, Plan Facilitators
Budget		Low Budget (Under \$50k)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years)
Risk		Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators		The number of people taking the tour, the number of sites, institutions, etc. that work together to create and maintain the tour. Increased patronage of Town Center establishments.
Partners & Resources		<p>Connect historic sites including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birthplace of Clara Barton, founder of Red Cross • Huguenot Fort • Greenbriar Nature Preserve • Agnes Ballard, woman architect and first woman to be elected to office in Florida, born here • Hudson Home, historic house <p>Potential funding sources include The Last Green Valley grants. https://thelastgreenvalley.org/last-green-valley-awards-grants/</p>
Diagnostics		This is a reaction to the significant loss in foot traffic experienced by Oxford businesses.
Action Item		Develop a self-guided tour with QR codes, etc. and a kiosk with a map of locations of historic places and audio narration. Consider virtual viewing of historic buildings and landscapes. Record old timers telling stories. Consider adding virtual reality overlay viewing of historic buildings and landscapes. Integrate with wayfinding system with trail markers.

Process

1. Organize a small group of stakeholders representing local government, economic development, small business, historic commissions, real estate, tourism, marketing, and design/web/social media sectors to spearhead the project.
2. Create an informational /resource page on Town website. Engage internal marketing/design/web/social media experts or engage a pro bono consultant to create a website and social media campaign to promote the project.
3. Begin with conceptual brainstorming with the project steering committee on multiple ways the committee could achieve the goal of better connectivity between downtown and identify the sites to include in the tour.
4. Design and develop promotional materials.
5. Hire a consultant to design and develop interpretative signage and create a map with the route.
6. Explore ways of adding audio (e.g. through QR code) and record older adults telling their stories and relating them to the sites.

Oxford Historic Tour Concept

- Huguenot Fort
- Johnson Massacre
- Charles Lindbergh Landing
- Camp Hill Monument
- Joslin Park
 - * Bandstand
 - * One room schoolhouse
- Clara Barton summer home
- GAR Building (Town Hall)
- Various War Monuments
- Library Museum
- Universalist Church



Oxford Historic Trail and Tour Concept, 1974-75



Historical Walking Tour

Cambridge, MA

SELF GUIDED HISTORIC TOUR OF CAMBRIDGE, MA

<https://www.gpsmycity.com/tours/historical-cambridge-ma-walking-tour-2424.html>

Guide Name: Historical Cambridge MA Walking Tour

Guide Location: USA » Boston (See other walking tours in Boston)

Guide Type: Self-guided Walking Tour (Sightseeing)

of Attractions: 8

Tour Duration: 2 Hour(s)

Travel Distance: 3.5 Km or 2.2 Miles

Author: anna

Sight(s) Featured in This Guide:

- Memorial Hall / Sanders Theatre
- Fogg Museum (Harvard Art Museums)
- Harvard Square
- Brattle Street
- Longfellow National Historic Site
- Hooper-Lee-Nichols House
- Elmwood House
- Mount Auburn Cemetery

HOW IT WORKS:

Download the app "GPSmyCity: Walks in 1K+ Cities" from iTunes App Store or Google Play to mobile phone or tablet. The app turns the mobile device into a personal tour guide and its built-in GPS navigation functions guide one from one tour stop to next. The app works offline, so no data plan is needed when traveling abroad.



Aerial of Main Street, Oxford, MA

Additional Proposed Projects

The Town's recovery from COVID-impacts will depend on both public and private actions. It will be helpful to coordinate these actions so that they have a more significant impact.

The following additional projects will help to reinforce the priority projects described in the previous pages.

ADDITIONAL PROPOSED PROJECTS	COMMENTS
Continue to promote outdoor dining. Identify appropriate locations and lessen code restrictions. Also develop a one-page checklist for permitting the displaying of merchandise outdoors.	See Outdoor Dining Toolkit: https://www.mass.gov/doc/outdoor-dining-retail-toolkit/download
Create opportunities for pop up shops/ events (e.g. beer garden/brewery in parking lot and parks).	See Best Practice Sheets in Appendix
Provide one-on-one technical assistance to individual businesses to increase their on-line presence. Provide a webinar with guidance for all businesses.	
Create a streamlined process for new and expanding businesses.	
Develop a public/private partnership to create and oversee a vacant storefront program	See Best Practice Sheets in Appendix
Explore the use of public art as focal points around Town.	

Potential Funding

MOST UP TO DATE LISTING CAN BE FOUND HERE FOR:

Public Realm: <https://airtable.com/embed/shrh5rVQMbVbpYLKF/tblk00qQMPM2JPpie>

Private Realm: <https://airtable.com/embed/shrhYPjzJxaDNAnLd/tblk00qQMPM2JPpie>

Tenant Mix: <https://airtable.com/embed/shrRjd2TKWvkesvB8/tblk00qQMPM2JPpie>

Revenue / Sales: <https://airtable.com/embed/shrGwkcX0Je00UwDW/tblk00qQMPM2JPpie>

Administrative Capacity: <https://airtable.com/embed/shrlcJ9EmP9PAW6JD/tblk00qQMPM2JPpie>

Arts / Culture: <https://airtable.com/embed/shrGt0Q6HzMWergit/tblk00qQMPM2JPpie>

Examples

Planning Assistance Grants

NAME OF FUND

Planning Assistance Grants

AVAILABLE FOR RRP PROJECTS

Yes

FUNDING SECTOR

Public

AGENCY/ORGANIZATION

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE GRANT AMOUNT PER APPLICANT

\$125,000

MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE LOAN AMOUNT PER APPLICANT**ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Municipalities and Regional Planning Agencies

DESCRIPTION/ALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

To fund technical assistance and help communities undertake public process associated with creating plans and adopting land use regulations consistent with the Baker-Polito Administration's land conservation and development objectives including reduction of land, energy, and natural resource consumption, provision of sufficient and diverse housing, and mitigation of/ preparation for climate change.

Regional Pilot Project Grant Program

NAME OF FUND

Regional Pilot Project Grant Program

AVAILABLE FOR RRP PROJECTS

Yes

FUNDING SECTOR

Public

AGENCY/ORGANIZATION

Massachusetts Office of Business Development

MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE GRANT AMOUNT PER APPLICANT

\$250,000

MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE LOAN AMOUNT PER APPLICANT**ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Partnerships of municipalities, public entities, or 501(c) organizations

DESCRIPTION/ALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

To fund projects that support businesses and communities in stabilizing/growing their regional economy with one or more of the recovery efforts under Partnerships for recovery. no capital-related projects will be funded.

MassWorks Infrastructure Program

NAME OF FUND

MassWorks Infrastructure Program

AVAILABLE FOR RRP PROJECTS

Yes

FUNDING SECTOR

Public

AGENCY/ORGANIZATION

Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE GRANT AMOUNT PER APPLICANT**MAXIMUM ELIGIBLE LOAN AMOUNT PER APPLICANT****ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Municipalities

DESCRIPTION/ALLOWABLE USE OF FUNDS

The most flexible source of capital funds to municipalities and other eligible public entities primarily for public infrastructure projects that support and accelerate housing production, spur private development, and create jobs - particularly for production of multi-family housing in appropriately located walkable, mixed-use districts.

Potential Funding Sources

GENERAL INFORMATION ON FUNDING LRRP PROJECTS

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds will be a primary source of funding opportunity for LRRP projects.

- <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-funds>
- <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-federal-funds> <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/covid-related-federal-funds-in-massachusetts-cities-and-towns>

LRRP projects will most likely need to be funded by a "mosaic" of funding sources. Not likely that there will be a "one-stop shop" sourcing at the state level due to recent decisions on how to distribute state level ARPA funds. Local ARPA funding is likely the place for municipalities to look to as a first, primary source. Downtown / Main Street organizations will need to coordinate with their city leaders.

The rules for ARPA funds are that the projects are data-driven, Covid-impact projects.

There are also other (non-ARPA) state programs available.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (REDO) GRANT PROGRAM

The goal of Regional Economic Development Organization² (REDO) is to support businesses seeking help from the state. Working with the Office of Business Development, these organizations facilitate regional projects that grow businesses and the Massachusetts economy. Their successes attract new employers and foster existing businesses. REDOs have recently received funding that could potentially be used to support LRRP efforts in participating communities. Lawrence is one of these.

SHARED STREETS AND SPACE GRANT PROGRAM

The State of MA's Shared Streets and Spaces grant program has supported 143 communities—from cities to small towns—in testing ideas to improve local outdoor spaces so that people can safely be in public together during the pandemic. The Shared Streets and Spaces Grants Program can be used for outdoor seating, to pilot a road diet or for bike racks. At this stage of the program, extra points are awarded during the scoring process for projects that provide better access and opportunities for school children and elders, to open space and public transit, and in Environmental Justice and 'COVID-19 red' communities

Project Types Eligible for Funding Five types of projects are eligible for the Shared Winter Streets and Spaces grant program:

- **Main Streets**—Making investments in local down- towns and villages by repurposing streets, plazas, sidewalks, curbs, and parking areas to facilitate people- centric activities and community programming.
- **Reimagined Streets**—Prioritizing safe space for people walking and biking by implementing low-speed streets, "shared streets," new sidewalks, new protected bike lanes, new off-road trails, new bicycle parking, new crosswalks, traffic-calming measures, and ADA-compli- ant ramps.
- **Better Buses**—Improving bus riders' commutes through establishing new facilities for buses, including dedicated bus lanes, traffic-signal priority equipment, and bus shelters
- **Shared Mobility**—Supporting the capital costs of new bikeshare equipment to support more people trying cycling.
- **Investments in the Future**—Converting temporary/ pilot Shared Streets projects—including those not funded by MassDOT—to permanent facilities to benefit community members over the long-term.

THE LAST GREEN VALLEY GRANTS

Federal grants available to Eastern CT and Southern MA communities that are part of the national heritage corridor. Oxford is in this corridor. The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) awards small grants especially for the marketing and interpretation of historic and cultural resources in the National Heritage Corridor. The grant program encourages projects that use digital technology and other creative and innovative methods to tell stories from the past that matter. Grants are available for a range of activities including trail markers, youth engagement, clean up efforts, staff social media training, video to promote history, upgrade website to promote local business, interpretative signage and historical trails.

<https://thelastgreenvalley.org/last-green-valley-awards-grants/>

'Emmy Hahn, DHCD

²<https://www.mass.gov/regional-economic-development-organization-grant-program-redo#:~:text=The%20goal%20of%20Regional%20Economic%20Development%20Organization%20%28REDO%29,succeses%20attract%20new%20employers%20and%20foster%20existing%20businesses.>



GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Biz-M-Power crowdfunding matching grant program offers small businesses in Massachusetts financial assistance with their acquisition, expansion, improvement or lease of a facility, purchase or lease of equipment, or with meeting other capital needs for the business. Eligible applicants will be empowered to advance their business with an innovative approach to obtaining capital. Through crowdfunding campaigns, these businesses connect with their local residents and stakeholders to advance projects that support economic success and transformation for their business and in their communities. This program is funded by the Commonwealth's Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2021.

Preference shall be given to low to moderate (LMI) brick-and-mortar small businesses owned by women, minorities, immigrants, non-native English speakers, U.S. military veterans, disabled individuals, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and businesses operating in Massachusetts Gateway Cities.

<https://www.empoweringsmallbusiness.org/bizmpower>

Appendix



Strategy Guide for Activating Public Spaces






Provided by SME Consultant

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

Location

Worcester, MA

Origin	CMRPC
Budget	 Medium
Timeframe	 Medium Term
Risk	 Medium Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Communities will have realistic action plan for easily permitting commercial and community activity on a range of public spaces
Partners & Resources	Regional Planning Agency, Municipal Planning Boards and Staff

Action Items

1.0 Background and Baseline Research

- 1.1 Inventory of public spaces (public and private): Identify the location and basic characteristics of all public spaces within the study area, including access, ownership and suitability for public activities
- 1.2 Inventory of existing permitted activities and processes : Review all processes for issuing of permits for public and privately organized events within public spaces
- 1.3 Stakeholder Identification and Outreach: Identify and solicit feedback from organizations, companies and individuals that have in the past held public events or showed interest in holding public events within the town or study area
- 1.4 SWOT Analysis : Analyze potential opportunities and challenges around utilization of public spaces
- 1.5 Case Studies and Resources: Research similar communities in the state and region and create a catalogue of realistic, achievable activities

2.0 Community Input

- 2.1 Municipal Listening Session(s): Solicit feedback on existing processes, paying special attention to what has worked, where friction points may be
- 2.2 Community / Stakeholder Listening Session(s): Solicit feedback from community stakeholders on opportunities and challenges
- 2.3 Summary of Community Feedback: Summarize all community feedback and develop recommendations for reducing friction points

3.0 Strategy Guide Development and Review

- 3.1 Summary and analysis of existing processes
- 3.2 Opportunities and Challenges
- 3.3 Case Studies
- 3.4 Recommendations for streamlining the permitting process
- 3.5 Review all recommendations with municipality and incorporate recommended edits

Process

1. Outreach and background research
2. Develop draft materials and visuals
3. Municipal review and revision

Streamlining Special Event Permitting



Provided by SME Consultant

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Location

Osceola County, Florida

Origin	Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies, Osceola County (FL) Board of County Commissioners Community Development Department
Budget	 Low-cost, municipal staff engagement
Timeframe	 Short-term, may require changes to municipal review processes
Risk	 Low risk
Key Performance Indicators	Number of permits reviewed and issued, length of permitting and approval process
Partners & Resources	Municipal departments, to include, but not limited to Planning, Police, Fire, Building, DPW, and Health, and Town/City Administration; DLTA funding to assess permitting
Diagnostic	<p>The COVID pandemic has unleashed creativity and permissiveness in municipal special events permitting that cities and towns want to hold onto as society opens up. Elements to be retained include easing the burden of applying for permits and making sure costs reflect the amount of effort necessary to process the permits and do not result in inequitable access by different groups.</p> <p>More efficient and easier permitting processes can lead to quicker turn-around and peace of mind for those organizing these events for the community. Streamlining event permitting can help agencies organizing events to use their resources more efficiently and will result in better events when permitted on a singular parcel as zoning dictates.</p> <p>The following example is a regulatory process taken from Osceola County in Florida that employs best practices for special event permitting: a central repository for application with the ability to submit electronically and follow the permit review process via electronic permitting. Review processes are done transparently and discussed at routinely scheduled meetings in conformance with the local government's regulatory codes.</p>

Action Item

In order to streamline your permitting process, the municipality should review its permitting powers: who reviews and approves, how much does the permit cost, is there an appeal procedure, etc.

The following Best Practices can be used to improve communication between stakeholders and the community about the local permitting process for special events. For this best practice, the Osceola County Board of County Commissioners utilizes these techniques to ensure an expedient, open permitting process for their special events.

- Single Point of Contact
- Users' Guide to Permitting with Permitting Flow Charts & Checklists
- Clear Submittal Requirements
- Concurrent Applications
- Combined Public Hearings, if needed
- Pre-Application Process
- Development Review Committee (DRC)
- Regularly scheduled inter-departmental meetings
- Physical proximity of professional staff to review

These best practices apply to streamlining special event applications that are allowed in specific areas of a community. In most cases, the zoning district would dictate the type of uses allowed in a community. This particular example permits special events as a type of use in commercially zoned areas and have a limitation of occurrences per calendar year.

Process

As listed above, streamlined permitting can be realized if a municipality explores the concepts below. Not only has COVID maybe expedited these processes, but it has likely created a more permanent change in the ways municipalities interact with special events.


1. Single Point of Contact. The Community Development Department was the repository for the initial application and would determine if requirements were met leading to the scheduling of a Development Review Committee Meeting.
2. Users' Guide to Permitting and Permitting Flow Charts and Checklists. If a community already has a product like this, the process for permitting for special events can be incorporated into the existing guide. As the government provided an electronic permitting system, following the flow of the permit was easy for the applicant to see what either was missing or if a staff review had occurred.
3. Clear Submittal Requirements. Special event permit applications required documented permission from the property owner, site plan, photos, proof of insurance, and a narrative description of the event. Other documents would be required if necessary.
4. Concurrent Applications. Other required application permits, and their approvals, would need to be furnished as part of the permit approval process. The communication internally would be to ensure those permit approvals were occurring with the County Health Department or Public Safety, if necessary.
5. Combined Public Hearings, if needed. This was not a likely occurrence due to the local regulation, however, concurrent approvals would occur at a designated meeting of the local Development Review Committee.
6. Pre-Application Process. The point of contact for the process was the specific department staff person who would be able to address outstanding issues and questions regarding the permit requirements.

Process (Continued)

Development Review Committee. The administrative approval of the DRC would occur either through a consent agenda or if pulled to be addressed publicly. The DRC included DPW, Buildings, and Planning/Zoning. The Departments of Public Safety and Health and the School District are often attendees at these meetings.

Regularly scheduled inter-departmental meetings. These meetings kept the issues of the specific special event permit in the County's pipeline of coordinated reviews.

Physical proximity of professional staff to review. The County Administration Building housed all departments. The housing of all departments in the building allowed for a One-Stop shop of sorts. Like with other permitting, increased the ability of interdepartmental staff communications with applicants and each other.

	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Osceola County Special Event Application</h3> <p>Osceola County Board of County Commissioners Community Development Department 1 Courthouse Square, Suite 1400 Kissimmee, FL 34741 Phone: (407)742-0200 Specialpermits@osceola.org</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Application No.: _____ Date Received: _____</p>
<p><u>Submittal Checklist</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Property Owner Authorization <input type="checkbox"/> Proof of Ownership <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Description <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Narrative describing the event in detail. Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sounds which will project beyond the property lines. • Vehicular Traffic and parking <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site plan showing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot Dimensions, • Location of Special Event (with all details of set-up), Setbacks of set-up from property and right-of-way lines, Driveways, identifying parking and access, roads, tents, signs, portable toilets, and any other structures and setbacks from property lines and any other existing site improvements <input type="checkbox"/> Application Fees \$620.00 	<p>In accordance with Chapter 3, Article 3.8, Section 3.8.1.O of the Osceola County Land Development Code, authorization for a Special Event is issued to:</p> <p><u>Applicant</u></p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Agent/Lessee: _____ Tax ID# _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>Email: _____ Phone: _____</p> <p><u>Event Details</u></p> <p>Address of Event: _____</p> <p>Parcel Number: _____</p> <p>Dates of Event: _____ Hours: _____</p> <p>Event on County property? Yes (<input type="checkbox"/>) No (<input type="checkbox"/>) If yes provide liability Insurance. The insurance shall have a limit not less than \$1 million per occurrence for the general aggregate.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Details of Event: (a narrative may be attached to describe the event in detail.)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

An application like this existed both as a fillable paper version and electronically at the county's permitting website.




Developing storefront guidelines to energize downtown



Provided by SME Consultant Mark Favermann, Favermann Design

Location Everett, MA

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

Diagnostic

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

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

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

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

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

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

Action Items

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



Everett Square

Applicable Commercial Areas

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

Everett Square

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



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

Process

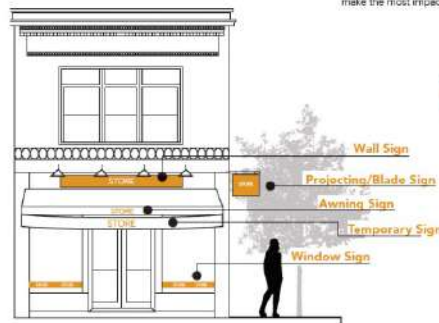
- Extensive research of other cities and towns guidelines and procedures.
- Based on best practices, create easily understandable illustrated storefront component pages that reference City of Everett regulations.
- Establish storefront element criteria through including specifically referenced dimensions,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

Signs

Signs

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

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



City Ordinance/Regulation:
Section 15.54b) of the City Ordinance further regulates the number and size of signs. See Technical Requirements for more information.

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Signs and Technical Requirements

Awnings

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

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



Awning Signs - Material

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

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



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

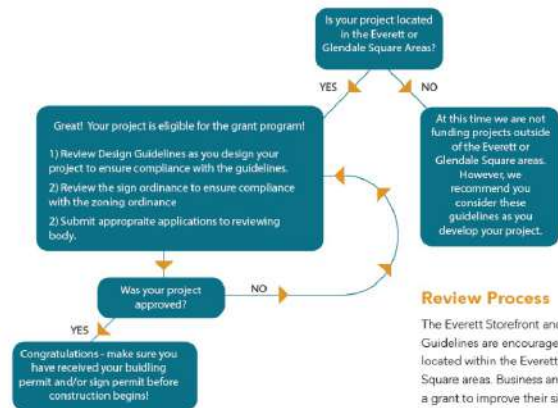


This awning is made of shiny vinyl and is not encouraged.

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

Process- Strategic Decisions

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



Review Process

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

Review Process and Grant Application

Everett Square

Before



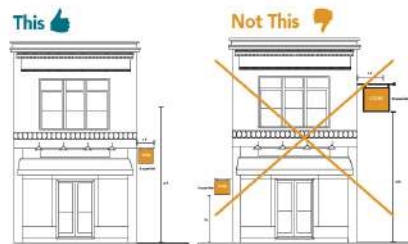
After





Projecting/Blade Signs

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



Signs and Technical Requirements

Wall Signs

Wall Signs - Height

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

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

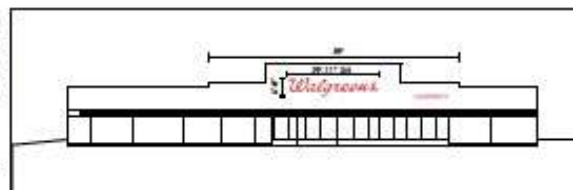


Everett MA Signage Case Study

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

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

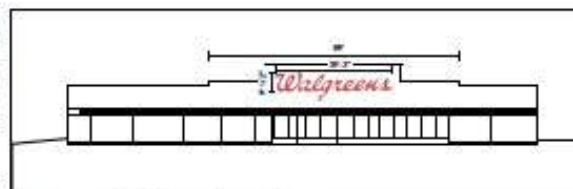
Main Sign As Shown = 199.77sf



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

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

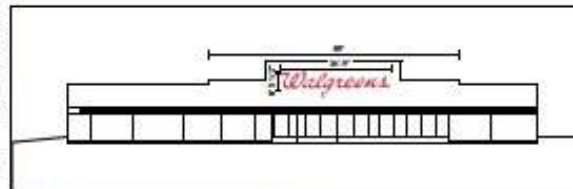
As shown = ~ 354 sf
Dimensions = 39.25' x 9.04'



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

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

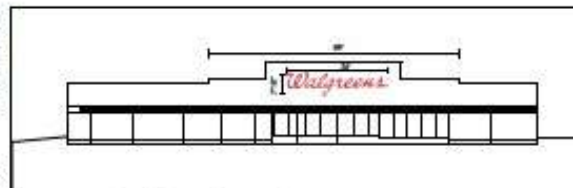
As shown = ~311.12sf
Dimensions = 36.75' x 8.47'



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

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

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



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

FAVERMANN DESIGN | DECEMBER 2019

Event Branding: Taste Fall River



Provided by SME Consultant

Zapalac Advisors

Location

Boston, MA

Origin	The Fall River TDI partnership, supported by Laurie A Zapalac, PhD working as a technical advisor to MassDevelopment's TDI program and the partnership
Budget	 Low (Less than \$30,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (Less than 1 year)
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Number of event tickets sold, direct feedback from the community including participating restaurants and ticket buyers, social media response and press coverage
Partners & Resources	Mass Development, The TDI Fall River Partnership, People Inc., Alexandra's, City of Fall River, Bank Five and Rockland Trust
Diagnostic	<p>In 2017 Fall River launched a new "brand" for the city, <i>Make it Here</i>, drawing from the city's textile heritage and celebrating its potential as an environment for Makers.</p> <p>Fall River had applied to the MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative and in 2018, MassDevelopment wanted to ensure that critical public sector, private sector and institutional partners on the ground were ready to make the commitment to support the two to three-year technical assistant program to drive transformative change on Main Street.</p> <p>Just as planning was underway, negative headlines about Fall River started appearing in the press in relationship to the indictment of the current mayor. This led to broader discussion about the need to drive key narratives about Fall River that put a spotlight on positive things in the community</p> <p>In 2019, planning begun on the creation of a "first initiative," intended to give the partners experience collaborating with one another while addressing the need to amplify an existing city brand and find new things to celebrate.</p>

Diagnostic (continued)

The partnership had enough institutional memory to know that a similar event had been carried out in Fall River in years past – and had been relatively successful – but not sustained due to relying heavily on volunteers, so one goal was to strengthen cross-sector collaboration and work toward a sustainable operating model.

Among the Main Street businesses there were traditional, well known Portuguese and Portuguese-influenced restaurants – something for which Fall River is recognized – as well as number of newer additions expanding offerings in downtown.

While Main Street had maintained an interesting mix of uses, there were deficiencies in building management and some properties were vacant. So one goal was to raise the “brand” of Main Street by showing it’s potential and a vibrant and activated streetscape.

As the *Taste Fall River* idea emerged, there were two interrelated concerns from certain members of the partnership: 1) Would anyone from beyond Fall River be interested in this event and 2) Were online ticket sales even necessary? – reflecting an “everyone uses cash” mindset. The partnership discussed both and pressed forward with the idea that if they worked to assemble a top-notch event, there would be interest from Fall River – as well as other markets. That then confirmed that investing the time and money in developing a website and Eventbrite posting for the event would be necessary and worthwhile.

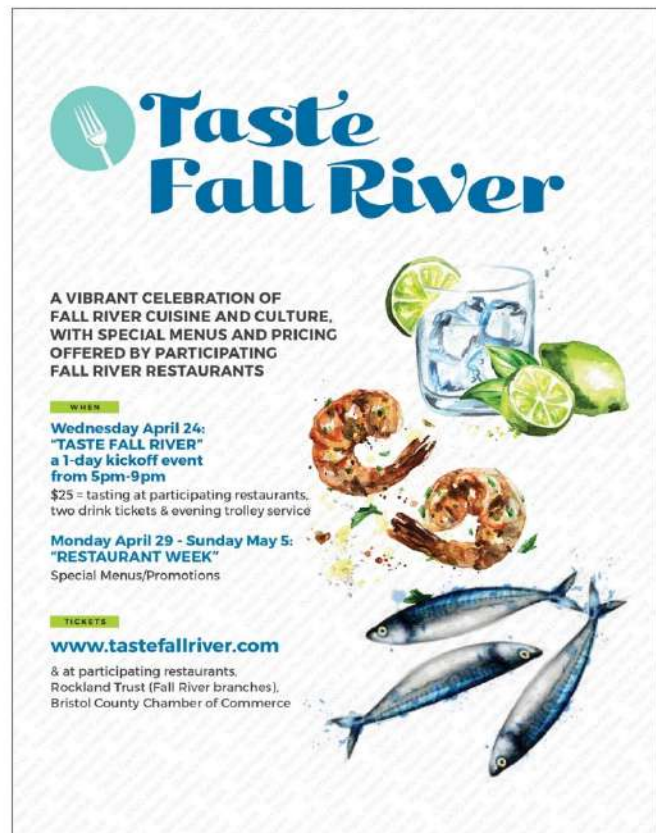
Action Item

The relevance of this project for thinking about Covid rapid recovery includes:

- Bringing together a set of partners to collaborate on a response to drive economic development and direct narratives towards shared values and aspiration.
- The actual event included Taste Fall River – a one evening dining event – and Fall River Restaurant Week – a weeklong program of discounts offered by participating businesses.
- In tandem, the partnership developed an information “kit” that included a topline narrative that elaborates on the core “Make it Here” brand, while also including practical information for any party interest in investing or developing along Main Street. We gathered cut sheets for all property listed for sale or lease and summarized this information, making all of it available as part of the information kit.

Process (for Covid pivots)

- **Event conceptualization led by the partnership**, including event co-chairs who organized schedule, recruited restaurants to participate, other "node" locations to be open, and managed ticket sales by all partners. Other partners played key roles including securing sponsorships and lining up musicians who played at key locations throughout the evening.
- **Coordination led by the City of Fall River representative on the partnership** – including securing trolley, permitting, police detail, etc.
- **Website Design and Social Media Campaign.** The lead consultant worked closely with one of the event co-chairs to launch an event website. Another partner member set up the Eventbrite for online ticket sales (and acted as the fiscal representative for the project). Another partner worked with an in-house graphic designer to develop the event poster. We found ways to message creative and strategic tie-ins between the Make it Here and Taste Fall River concepts, "Make it a girls' night, make it a date night ... etc."
- Any social media coverage for a new event starts small – so it was important to not let a low number of "likes" discourage efforts. Training and encouragement were necessary to drive home the importance of liking/sharing/posting – but we felt this was worthwhile overall to encourage businesses to support one another.
- We aligned with a relevant social media influencer active on Instagram (and Facebook) to push out the message to her audience and provide some specialty photography. On the day of the event, we posted restaurant owners preparing ("pre-game"), during the event, as well as as the event wrapped and an after-party at one of the participating restaurants was underway.
- A partner member with marketing and social media experience was instrumental in deploying a press release and managing a social media campaign.
- **Information Kit and Real Estate Data.** Was created by the lead consultant, with input from local commercial real estate brokers.
- 2019 Taste Fall River proved to be a fun and successful event, helping Main Street businesses built stronger relationships, prove the vitality of the district, showcase a unique range of dining offerings, and inspire confidence in all partners as well as the broader community about what is possible in Fall river's future.
- Having access to analytics from the event website, Eventbrite, Facebook and Social Instagram gave us clear feedback about what messages resonated and hard data about interest in Fall River from the broader regional market.
- The partnership surpassed the goal of selling 400 tickets, and the profit was donated to the City of Fall River to be put towards the purchase of an ADA-accessible trolley.



Taste Fall River – Fall River, MA



Gove Street Crossing: Pop-up Park + Plaza



Provided by SME Consultant

Civic Space Collaborative

Location

East Boston, MA

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



Gove Street Crossing: Pop-up Park + Plaza site plan. [Site Design: Toole Design]

Process

Design Competition

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

Pop-Up Installation Planning + Design

- **Planning + Design:** Over three months in Spring 2019, Toole Design worked to refine the tactical short-term installation by engaging East Boston residents and FoMEWG. The design was shared at the monthly Greenway meeting, and the Project Team engaged youth at the East Boston Public Library. The final tactical design with pavement graphic and seating including:
 1. a pop-up plaza on Gove Street next to a residential apartment building, and
 2. a seasonal installation on the Greenway.



Toole Design laying out the design before volunteers arrive



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



Gove Street one week pop-up tactical plaza

Process (Continued)

- **Approvals for Boston Parks:** The Project Team met with Boston Parks to review the proposed design, and Boston Parks was asked to weigh in on the seating structures and painting before the design was final. The FoMEWG submitted a “Small Projects Form” outlining the proposed project, its design, and maintenance plan for Parks to review and approve.
- **Approvals from Boston Transportation Department:** The Project Team met with the City of Boston’s Public Realm Director to discuss the plaza concept. For the one-week temporary plaza installation, the project team applied for a 1-week event permit and posted “No Parking” signs.

Implementation

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



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



Gove Street Crossing: East Boston Greenway signage and temporary benches



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



Create a way-finding system to help reinforce the downtown experience






Provided by SME Consultant

Mark Favermann, Favermann Design

Location

Wakefield, MA

Origin	Town of Wakefield
Budget	 Medium-- approximately \$80,000 (kiosk only; additional elements to cost \$30,000)
Timeframe	 Short -- planning and implementation in 3-1/2 months
Risk	 Medium --political will, lightning caused devastating fire, unjustified NIMBYism and lack of community transparency
Key Performance Indicators	Continued use by visitors and residents
Partners & Resources	Wakefield Main Streets, Town of Wakefield, Mass Legislature, Wakefield Police Department, Wakefield Public Library, Wakefield Historical Commission and Wakefield DPW

Diagnostic

The Town of Wakefield is a north of Boston middle-income suburban community. Most residents work outside of Wakefield and commute to work. There are two MBTA Commuter rail stations in Wakefield—Wakefield Center and Greenwood.

There was no universally accepted brand or wayfinding system for the Town of Wakefield.

On the edge of Wakefield Center, Lake Quannapowitt is a popular setting for walkers, joggers, bikers, and in-line skaters off Route 128 in Middlesex County. It is the site of many organized races from 5Ks to Ultra Marathons. However, rarely do outside visitors travel beyond the lakeside the 200 yards to the Town of Wakefield's Downtown. This is a lost opportunity to support restaurants and shops in the Downtown.

With a vital mix of restaurants, goods and services, the downtown appeared robust. However, things could be improved by an effort for better direction and more on-street communication. Here was an opportunity to build on the downtown's commercial base and solidify Wakefield as a Northshore destination.

The Town's administration allotted funding to design a branding and wayfinding system. Seven months later a Massachusetts Legislative Earmark was granted to the Wakefield Main Streets Program for the design and fabrication of informational kiosks.

Action Item

The two overlapping programs took two different paths.

- Over an eight-month period, the branding and wayfinding design process went through a series of group meetings with a large Advisory Group of 24 representatives.
 - A month after the town landscape-based brand was approved by the Advisory Committee and presented in the local daily newspaper and to the Town Council, a devastating lightning-induced fire burned down the majestic church steeple. The loss of the church set back the discussion of whether or not the approved image should be brought forward as a historical image or changed to reflect the current conditions.
 - The designs and branding and wayfinding program were put on hold.
- Overseen by the Wakefield Main Streets Board of Directors and invited Town officials, the kiosk design program was mandated to have only 3.5 months to complete design, design review, put out for bidding and start implementation.
 - The kiosk program went fully ahead.
 - However, some community members felt left out of the design and placement of the project elements. Their concerns had to be integrated.



Joggers and runners around Crystal Lake, a target audience of non-residents as potential patrons to the downtown.



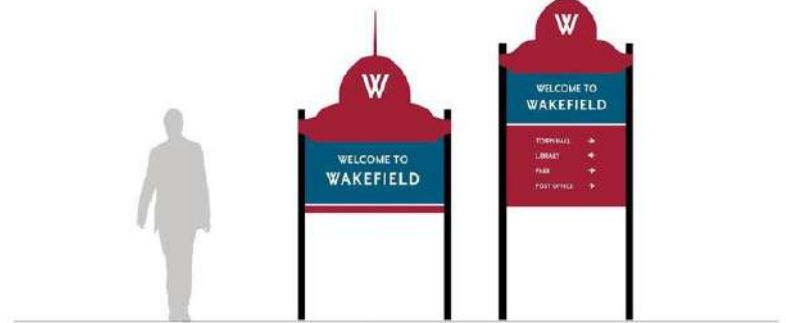
Old Band Stand adjacent to Lake Quannapowitt in Wakefield, MA

Process

- After a number of kiosk design alternatives were presented to the Wakefield Main Streets Board, one design was chosen to develop, locate and specify.
- Three (3) of the kiosks were to be two-sided and analog; the fourth was to be digital and four-sided. The digital one would be set closest to the lake.
- Historical town images and commentary was developed to fit around as a border around a business directory for one side of the directory.
- Set in an airtight locked Plexiglas window, this information could be easily changeable on the two-sided kiosks. On the opposite side was space for timely event posters and community announcements.
- The digital kiosk was designed to have a screen/monitor that was programmable from the town hall.
- There was much criticism around the placement and look of the digital kiosk. The town council eventually addressed the public and took a stand that the location, size and look of the kiosk was the best possible solution.
- Kiosk-opposing residents were invited to an expanded Branding and Wayfinding meeting to assist with eventual sign element placement on maps.
- Favermann Design was then hired by the Town administration to create a style guideline to reflect the iconic kiosk toppers.
- After a period of about four months the guidelines have resulted in the establishment of a consistent Town of Wakefield visual brand for internal communication, the official website, e-mails, business cards, interior town hall signage, newsletters and even drop boxes.
- These guidelines were in place during the Covid-19 pandemic, and further thought was given to the on-hold wayfinding program. It was decided that a new approach should be taken that abandoned the problematic landscape and instead visually reflected the kiosk and style of the Town of Wakefield.
- Utilizing the new design approach, plans are going ahead for a new directional sign for the Greenwood neighborhood. A test will take place during the Summer of 2021 to see how wayfinding can connect the Lake with downtown.



The Bandstand was the inspiration for the shape of the signage.



Besides interested citizens, town officials including the Town Planner, Police Officer, City Counselor, and Main Street board member are making decisions regarding locations.

Local Press Coverage of Controversial Town Council Meetings Occurred due to Kiosks

- Though carefully announced by the Main streets Board, controversy was caused by residents feeling left out of the process.
- Several Town council meetings addressed the size, content and location of the kiosks, especially the proposed digital one adjacent to the lake.
- All kiosk locations are on Town property and are at the best decision-point locations possible.
- The “waters” were eventually calmed and the process continued until a successful implementation of the program.

Previous Historical Landscape Design for Wakefield’s Branding and Wayfinding Shelves

- Below is an image of the previous design that was affected by the destructive church fire.
- The “new” simpler design has found favor in the community.
- The Town of Wakefield is now creating a fully consistent “look” for all its official elements.



Sailboat with cherries



A BLACK CHERRY tree (according to the Audubon Field Guide: New England) along the shore of Lake Quannapowitt. (Robert Pushkar Photo)

Community Meeting and Open House: Hurd School future options

WAKEFIELD — The Town Council and Town Administrator Stephen P. Maio will give the public an update on the ongoing

evaluation of the Hurd School located at 27 Cordis Street in the “Lakeside” neighborhood. The public is invited to a second Open House and Community Meeting.

The first Open House and Community Meeting was held on Tuesday, June 15, at 6:15 p.m. at the school. The Town Administrator will lead the discussion and provide updates to the ongoing evaluation followed by a question and answer session about the building's future.

“After hearing from the public at our first meeting and evaluating our swing space and other needs, it is time to re-engage the neighborhood and community to discuss the best use of the building moving forward,” according to the Town Administrator.

The Hurd School was declared excess property in 2005 by the Wakefield School Committee and

Stolen credit cards reported

WAKEFIELD — A Winthrop Drive woman called police at about 11 a.m. yesterday to report that her credit cards had been stolen. The woman noticed that the cards were missing over the weekend but was not sure when they were taken.

Police said that fraudulent charges were made using the credit cards at Home Depot in Danvers and Target in Stoneham. The cards have been cancelled.

At about 3 p.m. yesterday, a caller reported that a UPS truck took down some wires at the corner of Oak Street and Orchard Avenue. Police confirmed that they were cable wires and made sure they

POLICE Page 9

HURD Page 7

Kiosks coming to downtown

Town Council notebook

By MARK SARDELLA

WAKEFIELD — As part of the ongoing effort to revitalize the downtown area, four new kiosks will be installed at various locations offering “way-finding” and other useful information for visitors and residents. The Town Council approved the installation of the signs, one of which will have a digital component, at their meeting last week.

Bob Mailhot, president of Wakefield Main Streets, appeared before the Town Council along with Mark Faverman of Faverman Design to discuss the project. The kiosks will be paid for by Wakefield Main Streets through their private fundraising efforts. Faverman Design has been retained by the town to develop a branding and wayfinding program for the town's business districts.

Two of the free-standing, two-sided kiosks will be located on sidewalks in the Square and will be placed at Main and Water streets and Main and Albion streets. A third two-sided kiosk will be placed near Veterans Field on North Avenue. The digital kiosk will be three-sided and will be placed at the southern end of the Lower Common, near the corner of Common Street and Lake Avenue. One side of this kiosk will be digital and have a changeable screen. Faverman talked about the design of the kiosks, which will incorporate the look of the iconic Bandstand, including a red top that

KIOSKS Page 7



KIOSKS LIKE THIS ONE will be installed at four key locations around town to help promote the downtown area. Conceived by Faverman Design, the kiosks will incorporate the look of the iconic Bandstand.



Kiosks back before Council tonight

Rebuckled in the July 16, 2018 edition. WAKEFIELD — A plan to display wayfinding kiosks as a way to help drive visitors to the downtown area has been approved by the Town Council last night. The council voted 5-2 to approve the plan.

The council also approved the plan to install a digital kiosk at the southern end of the Lower Common. The council also approved the plan to install a digital kiosk at the southern end of the Lower Common. The council also approved the plan to install a digital kiosk at the southern end of the Lower Common.

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Kiosk Debate Dominates Town Council Meeting

Latest town effort to draw visitors to downtown faces no shortage of debate. By Bob Harris, Staff Writer | July 16, 2018 11:15 am ET



WAKEFIELD — It's true that Lake Quannapowitt was formed by glacial ice some 12,000 years ago. It's true that the town's history is a rich tapestry of stories. But the debate over the kiosks is a different story.

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STYLEGUIDE



WINTER 2021

UPGRADED DROP BOXES AT TOWN HALL



With safety a top priority for Town Hall employees and guests, residents are strongly encouraged to conduct their Town transactions virtually. Payments can be made online at www.wakefield.ma.us/online-payments for many services, including taxes, water bills, white-goods stickers, refuse bags, cemetery services, and more. Many forms and applications can also be accessed on the Town's website www.wakefield.ma.us.

Town Hall has installed new drop boxes to make submitting documents to staff quick and easy. These boxes are clearly marked and located near the accessible parking spaces and sidewalk ramp, to the left of the Town Hall entrance.

DATES TO NOTE

Tax Collector

Third-quarter actual real estate bill due:

February 1, 2021

Third-quarter actual personal property bill due:

February 1, 2021

2021 motor vehicle excise bill commitment #1
Issued February 4, 2021 | Due March 8, 2021

Assessing Department

Abatement applications due:

February 1, 2021

Statutory exemptions due:

April 1, 2021



In 2015, Wakefield lifted its December-to-April on-street parking ban and now enforces parking limitations on an emergency basis.

When preparing for a snow event, the Town often initiates a temporary restriction of on-street parking. This allows plowing crews and public safety vehicles to safely access the roads and perform curb-to-curb cleanup. Parking ban announcements and other emergency notifications are made via our CodeRED e-alert system.

All parked cars must be removed from the roadways during a parking ban. If your residence does not have a driveway, connect with your landlord for parking options or coordinate with a neighbor who has extra driveway space. Vehicles that interfere with snow operations or emergency-vehicle access may be towed.

1 Lafayette Street Wakefield, MA 01880 | wakefield.ma.us

The Town of Wakefield "branded" elements and strictly adhered to style guidelines demonstrate how programs can build upon and even improve each other to reinforce a sense of place, a sense of arrival and a sense of shared experience.



Source : Manchester Connects

Create a walking loop to attract customers and test ideas for long-term implementation



REVENUES
& SALES

Provided by SME Consultant

Susan Silberberg, CivicMoxie

Location

Manchester, NH

Origin	An “early win” pilot project growing out of the <i>Manchester Connects</i> land use and multi-modal transportation plan for the Manchester NH Downtown and Amoskeag Millyard/Riverfront.	
Budget		Low – under \$10,000
Timeframe		Short – planning and implementation in 4 months
Risk		Low
Key Performance Indicators	Number of attendees, Number of partners working together successfully, Good press	
Partners & Resources	Manchester Connects Steering Committee, City of Manchester, University of New Hampshire, Public Art Group, other volunteers	

Action Items

The project will attract small businesses to Adams that address local's day-to-day needs and provide amenities for visitors who are there to explore the region. To accomplish this, the project will build on local boosterism and capture residents' pride while identifying new and under-represented voices the town may not have previously engaged.

Years of disinvestment have led many to give up hope on Adams' potential to provide good local jobs. By bringing positive attention to Adams, the project hopes to re-inspire residents challenged by poverty.

Pop-up stores, while unfamiliar, can build a following, so long as residents take an active role in choosing those selected and see their success as providing benefits to neighbors.

Process

- Organize a small group of stakeholders representing local government, economic development, small business, real estate, tourism, marketing, and design/web/social media sectors to spearhead the project. Ensure representation from diverse and often under-represented communities such as low-income, minority, women, and LGBTQ residents and business owners as part of the steering committee.
- Initiate a fundraising campaign to cover three months of rent for seven pop-up vendors. Build relationships with building owners to **negotiate reduced rent in vacant stores for a specified period (ideally 90 days) with graduated rent for the first year made available to pop-ups that agree to stay into Year 2.**
- Engage internal marketing/design/web/social media experts or engage a pro bono consultant to create a website and social media campaign to promote the project. Include demographic, economic, infrastructure, and tourism data about Adams (i.e., availability of broadband, utility rates, etc.) in marketing materials to help vendors understand community dynamics and ensure a good fit between their products or services and local resident and visitor interests.
- Select pop-up applicants through an open competition that attracts media attention. Choose winners based on pre-determined criteria (e.g., financial need, community-identified service gaps, qualifications) and with lead stakeholder input. Select at least two businesses through a public "audience favorite" process to build community excitement. Select pop-ups that offer similar or complementary services in a single location to create a market "district" feel.
- Include one-on-one S.C.O.R.E. or business mentoring to winners and provide ongoing marketing support during the project to support pop-up owners' interest in making a long-term commitment to downtown Adams.
- Involve community members early in the process to increase buy-in around the project. As part of that, appoint a community ambassador to each location that can acquaint incoming business owners with neighbors, resources, and town amenities.
- Create a social media campaign once pop-ups are in place and encourage businesses to offer incentives to stimulate repeat and returning patronage. Examples include coupons, sale days, promotions, and experiential offerings.
- Gather regular feedback from consumers and vendors about the pop-ups' presence and impact on local culture, so that changes can be made in real time to respond to consumer demands and vendor needs. Use surveys that include rewards for respondents, and which can be activated at pop-up shops, to increase response rate.
- Incentivize successful pop-ups to permanently relocate by adding a pitch competition that would bring additional funding to projects after the pilot period ends.

Process

The Loop event was a pilot project that grew from recommendations in the Manchester Connects plan for the Millyard and downtown. Seen as a way to demonstrate that Manchester Connects was about action, Loop Event Planning began with conceptual brainstorming with the entire project steering committee on multiple ways the committee could achieve the goal of better connectivity between downtown and the Millyard. The steps to plan and execute this type of event include:

- The consultant team identified the challenge of physical connectivity and created a suggested map of the easiest route to and from the two disconnected areas.
- A few members of the steering committee volunteered to lead the effort and began planning.
- Partners were approached, including the City of Manchester, the Public Art Commission, some local retailers, the Millyard Museum, and others.
- Local graphic designers offered their services to design promotional literature and a major social media campaign was launched, building on the thousands of followers on the Manchester Connects Facebook page.
- Collaborators planned for approximately three months, garnering good press and many attendees the day of the event.



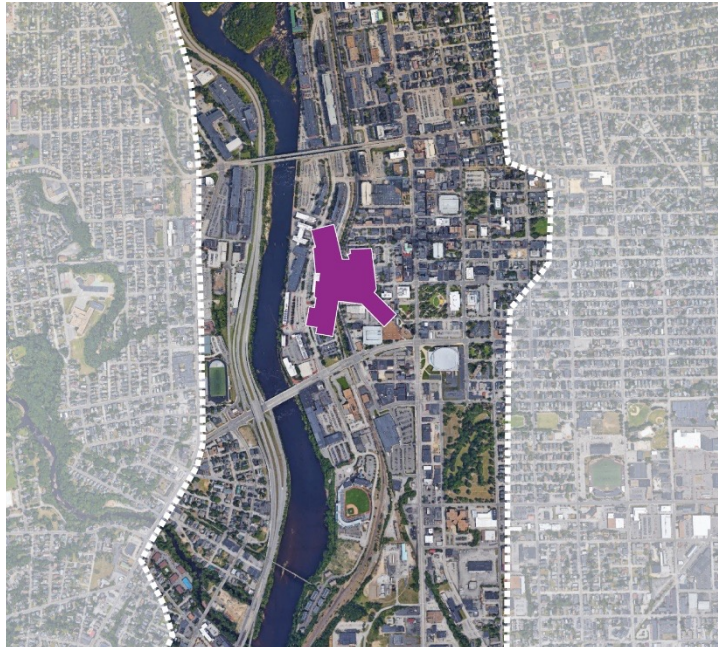
The Loop was identified and carefully programmed by the consultants after a brainstorming session with the client steering committee prioritized physical connections as a good pilot project to begin implementation of the plan.



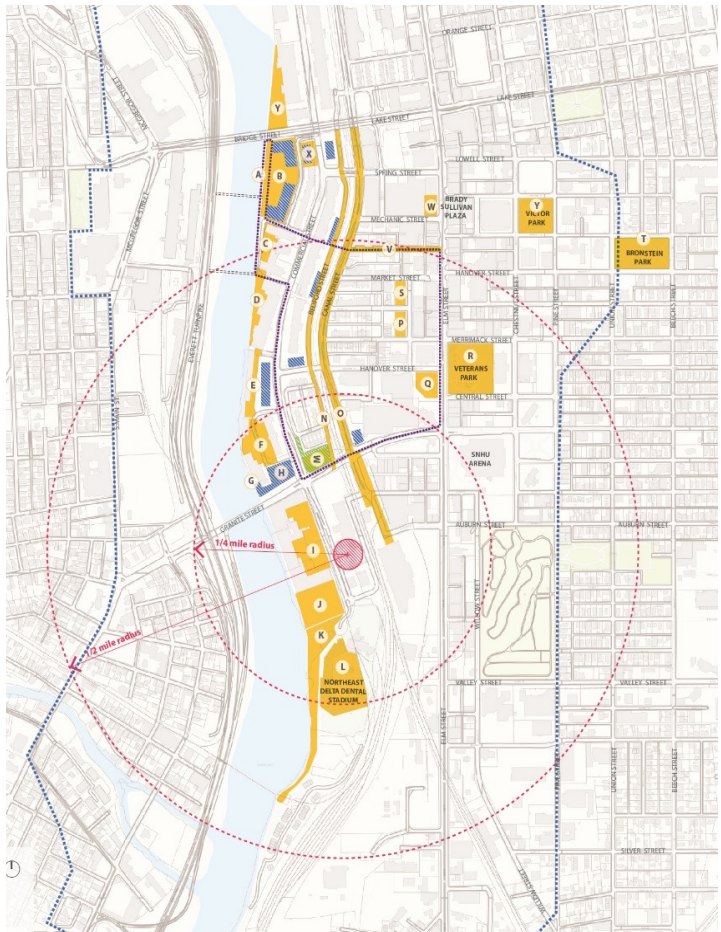
Support for the public art component of the event came from the City's Public Art Commission.

Strategic Decisions

Careful consideration should be given to the physical environment when planning an event. The top image shows an overlay of the Mall of New Hampshire, to scale, on the core of the focus area for the Loop, demonstrating some of the challenges of connecting the Millyard to the downtown. The Loop event was a way of testing the validity of the concept that an interesting and pedestrian friendly route, filled with public art, pleasant public spaces, and eventually, active ground floor uses, would encourage connectivity between the two areas and would support downtown businesses and provide amenities and activities for Millyard employees.



The Mall of New Hampshire building footprint at scale was overlaid on the core area of focus to give a sense of scale to the area and inform design and programming decisions.



Distances were mapped to better understand the barriers to pedestrian activity and to help inform public space design and programming decisions.



Pledge To Support Local





Provided by SME Consultant

Amherst Business Improvement District

Location

Amherst, MA

Origin	Amherst BID
Budget	 Under 20,000 all in.
Timeframe	 Immediate impact
Risk	Every moment of this pandemic has been immediate and high risk for downtowns and Main Streets across the globe. There was never time, money or energy to waste.
Key Performance Indicators	Success was quantifiable with entries for prizes
Partners & Resources	Greenfield Savings Bank as Media Partner
Diagnostic	<p>Holiday Shop local, support small business and "take away" were main focus of the Pledge Campaign. Pledge Cards were printed on card stock, available to download from website and placed in local paper to cut out. Local radio marketing invited people near and far to take the challenge to support local. Over 2 months eat at or take away from 10 downtown Amherst restaurants. Cafes or coffee shops, purchase from at least 5 local retail stores and enjoy 3 downtown services.</p> <p>Success was immediate with requests for pledge cards from all businesses. Hundreds of entries were mailed to us with receipts as proof. Calls, social media posts and emails to our offices expressing excitement and commitment to supporting downtown were constant through out – months later we are being asked to run a similar campaign.</p>

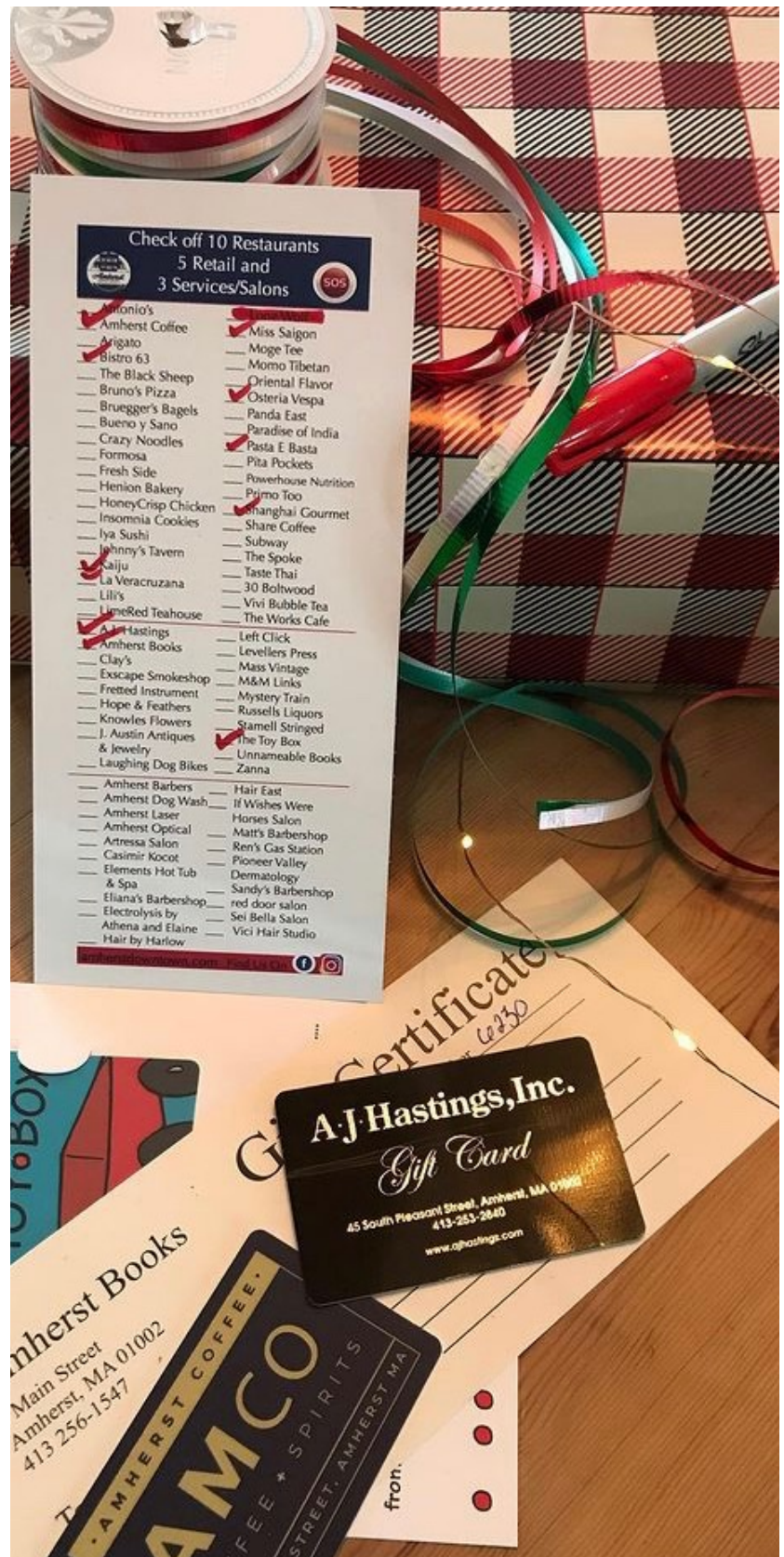
Process

- ① Concept: Incentivize people to shop local over a 2 month period in a fun and light way
- ② Treasure hunt concept boiled down to a check list
- ③ Make sure it is within reach, a bit of a stretch but nothing too daunting
 - ① 10 restaurants
 - ② 5 retail
 - ③ 3 services
 - ④ 10 weeks to complete
- ④ A Pledge to support: involved, active, challenge for the greater good
- ⑤ Create and print Pledge Cards
- ⑥ Marketing: Honest "State of the Downtown":

Businesses down 70+%, due to pandemic, you make the difference: a call to arms

Marketing Plan:

- 12-week Radio Buy
 - 4 radio stations
 - playing 15 spots daily
- 4 full page full color back page of the local paper with "cut out lines"
- 10,000 rack cards distributed to all local business to hand out and include with take away orders and shoppers bags
- Download pledge card from BID website
- Social Media promotions and push to neighboring areas



Checking off the businesses....

Success

- The Pledge to Support was a HUGE success for our downtown businesses
- Hundreds of completed pledge cards were mailed, emailed and dropped off complete with all receipts as proof
- We received countless emails and calls letting us know how fun this was, how many NEW businesses they tried
- Businesses reported sales increase and customers relating that they were there because of the Pledge and will be back to continue to support
- All winners were awarded local area gift cards – keeping the money local and in the hands of our small business owners.



Local Store owner Social Media post



Mailed in receipts with pledge card

I AM STRONG

I AM POSITIVE

I AM RESILIENT

I AM CONSIDERATE

I AM WELCOME

I AM HOPEFUL

I AM **HERST**



HELLO

Welcome back.

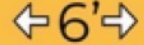
We're so glad to see you. Please be considerate of others to keep Amherst safe and healthy.



WASH YOUR HANDS



WEAR A MASK



SOCIAL DISTANCE

WELCOME BACK

AMHERST DOWNTOWN



#IAMherst Welcome






REVENUES
& SALES

Provided by SME Consultant

Amherst Business Improvement District

Location

Amherst MA

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

Post Pandemic

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



Takeout & Delivery Options Scan Image QR Code



Support Local • Eat Global
amherstdowntown.com/takeout

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



MASSACHUSETTS PLANNING

A publication of the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Planning Association



American Planning Association
Massachusetts Chapter

Creating Great Communities for All

Fall 2021

The Success of the Shared Streets and Spaces Program

page 3

Topsfield, MA

Plus: *The History of MPOs...6 / SNEAPA 2021...7 / News From CPM (new name!)...9*

Planning for People: The Success of Massachusetts' Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program



Downtown Belmont, MA transformed into a Shared Street for people, public transit, retail, and dining during COVID-19.

Credit: Solomon Foundation

Even as communities approach widespread vaccination, we know life will never be the same as before. One program in Massachusetts gives us a glimpse into the meaningful quality of life improvements we can take with us into the future if we continue to design healthy, fun, safe and affordable ways for people to get around and within our communities.

The Bay State's **Shared Streets and Spaces** grant program has supported 143 communities—from cities to small towns—in testing ideas to improve local outdoor spaces so that people can safely be in public together during the pandemic. Administered by the [Massachusetts Department of Transportation](#) (MassDOT) with support from the [Barr Foundation](#), the [Solomon Foundation](#), and the [Metropolitan Area Planning Council](#) (MAPC), and other nonprofit partners, the program has empowered [municipalities across Massachusetts](#) to implement [changes](#) to make their streets, sidewalks, and other public spaces more equitable, inclusive, and accessible.

While these projects may look simple—setting up a few chairs for strangers to have small talk, slowing down traffic so kids can play, adding a bus stop for essential workers—all strengthen community bonds and combat loneliness, keep downtowns buzzing, and remind all of us that we're in this together.

The Shared Streets and Spaces grant program has been successful in piloting projects and policies that in many cases will now be made permanent. So, how does it work, and what lessons does the program provide other cities around the country?

How Does it Work?

■ Grantmaking

The Shared Streets and Spaces grant program was formed in June 2020 in response to COVID-19 and has so far invested \$21.6 million in 194 projects, with 60% in designated Environmental Justice communities. All municipalities and public transportation authorities are eligible to apply for grants ranging from \$5,000-\$500,000, depending on project type, through an application process that is entirely online and is intentionally simple to complete.

Applications are reviewed and grants are made as quickly and seamlessly as possible deliver funding and support to communities fast. At this stage of the program, extra points are awarded during the scoring process for projects that provide better access and opportunities for school children and elders, to open space and public transit, and in Environmental Justice and 'COVID-19 red' communities. Finally, pro

continued next page

bono technical assistance is available to all municipalities, funded by the Barr Foundation, for assistance in developing applications. Another unique aspect of this program is that grants are paid in full and upfront, unlike other grant programs which are paid through reimbursement and electronically transferred to municipal Chapter 90 accounts (Chapter 90 funds are for capital improvements such as highway construction, preservation and improvement projects).

■ Project Types Eligible for Funding

Five types of projects are eligible for the Shared Winter Streets and Spaces grant program:

- **Main Streets** — Making investments in local downtowns and villages by repurposing streets, plazas, sidewalks, curbs, and parking areas to facilitate people-centric activities and community programming
- **Reimagined Streets** — Prioritizing safe space for people walking and biking by implementing low-speed streets, “shared streets,” new sidewalks, new protected bike lanes, new off-road trails, new bicycle parking, new crosswalks, traffic-calming measures, and ADA-compliant ramps
- **Better Buses** — Improving bus riders’ commutes through establishing new facilities for buses, including dedicated bus lanes, traffic-signal priority equipment, and bus shelters
- **Shared Mobility** — Supporting the capital costs of new bikeshare equipment to support more people trying cycling
- **Investments in the Future** — Converting temporary/pilot Shared Streets projects—including those not funded by MassDOT—to permanent facilities to benefit community members over the long-term

Transformational and Successful

Whether through [more vibrant Main Streets](#) and [greenspaces](#), safer routes to school or work, warmer places to safely [gather](#) or wait for the bus, people and communities alike benefit from the Shared Streets and Spaces grant program that continues to create increased space for people to move around safely, engage in commerce, recreate, and participate in civic life. Communities that have seen successful adoption of shared streets projects have also found opportunity to lay the ground work for adoption of regulatory change in areas like three season dining or expedited permitting processes.

Here are some examples of the variety of projects that have emerged through the program:



New Bedford, MA

■ Main Streets

- **Great Barrington** — Temporary barriers on Railroad Street created space for outdoor dining, commerce, community gathering, and entertainment, supporting residents and local business owners
- **New Bedford** — Multiple new outdoor dining destinations and safe pedestrian spaces within the city

■ Reimagined Streets

- **Belchertown** — New safe, child-friendly neighborhood walking and biking trail that connects to schools and other essential destinations and workplaces
- **Chelsea** — New crossings at the Chelsea Elementary School and Brown Middle School make the walk to school safer for kids

continued next page



Left: Outdoor dining parklets in repurposed on-street parking spaces in New Bedford, MA. Right: Shared Streets signage on Broadway in Everett, MA.



■ Better Buses

- **Brockton**—Installation of 10 new bus shelters with heaters to give dignity and comfort to bus riders
- **Lynn**—New bidirectional, curb-running shared bus/bike lanes and two transit signal priority treatments to speed up trips for bus riders and cyclists
- **Somerville**—New transit priority treatments, with additional benefits to bicyclists and pedestrian safety on Washington Street at McGrath Highway

■ Shared Mobility

- **Boston**—New bikeshare stations for residents in East Boston, Mattapan, Dorchester, and Roslindale
- **Newton**—Four new bikeshare stations with both electric-assist and pedal-powered bikes

Additional Shared Streets images are available on the [Shared Streets and Spaces Photo Library](#) on Flickr.

Shaping the Future of Municipalities through Continuing to Invest in Shared Spaces

Cities are at an inflection point with an opportunity to build back better than before by [investing](#) in our shared future as we recover from the pandemic and confront other existential challenges like climate change and inequality. Giving people more options to be outside and be connected to their communities helps to prevent the spread of the virus while also supporting our community's mental health and helping to create more fun and livable cities over the long run.

Additional Resources:

- [A Better City's Tactical Public Realm Case Studies](#)
- [Bench Consulting's Winter Places Guide](#)
- [The Better Block Foundation](#)
- [MAPC's COVID-19 Resources — Shared Streets Website](#)
- [Mass Healthy Aging Collaborative's Age-Friendly Winter Spaces Ideas for Municipalities to Embrace Winter](#) and corresponding resources
- [National Association of City and Transportation Officials — Streets for Pandemic Response and Recovery](#)
- [Neighborways](#)
- [New York Times: How New Yorkers Want to Change the Streetscape for Good, December 18, 2020](#)
- [Open Streets Project](#)
- [Toole Design's Ensuring an Equitable Approach to Rebalancing Streets](#)




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Massachusetts | Connecticut | New Hampshire



Muskegon Western Market



PUBLIC
REALM

Provided by SME Consultant

Bench Consulting (from Patronicity)

Location

Muskegon, Michigan

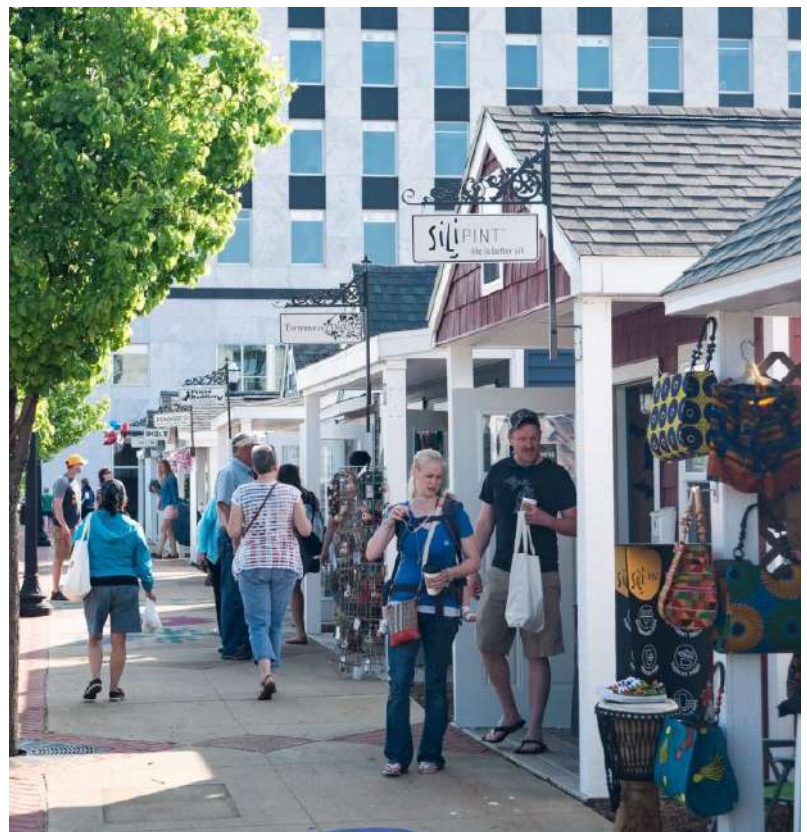
Origin	The City of Muskegon
Budget	 <p>The total project budget ran was \$100,000 but low cost rentals from vendors allow the municipality to recoup a portion of the costs of building and operating this project, in addition to recouped sales tax revenue.</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Implementation can take 2-3 months while annual setup can be done in a few weeks. This project runs May to November annually.</p>
Risk	 <p>Risks here are fairly minimal but are dependent on the type space you choose to locate the project. Here, municipal parking spaces are removed to create this destination.</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Number of businesses to use the space. Number that go on to expand operations in town. The number of attendees at different events and pedestrian counts in downtown. Area business increase on days of events or activations.
Partners & Resources	Area small business support groups, local chambers of commerce, designers, landscapers, contractors and community groups.
Diagnostic	<p>Downtown Muskegon was once a bustling downtown but like many communities, suffered at the hands of failed Urban Renewal projects and a Downtown adjacent indoor shopping mall which sucked the commercial life away from Downtown. As the downtown began to recover, retail rents increased rapidly and it became difficult to fill many of the empty storefronts in town with small, local businesses. A local farmers market was becoming one of the most successful in the state and the City was looking for a way to build upon that success, drawing more visitors, while also supporting and growing more small businesses in the community to fill vacant store fronts. It was determined that a destination or "central" point for visitors to orient themselves in the community was needed in hopes of sprawling out into the community from that central base.</p>
Action Item	<p>The Muskegon Western Market is an opportunity to support and grow new local businesses. As with any community focused placemaking project, its important to ensure collaboration and cooperation with local organizations, non profits and community residents to ensure a projects adoption by the community and prolonged community engagement. Locating a place that will support strong foot traffic while also being close enough to the downtown core that it will draw visitors into the Downtown after visiting this location is also key. Whether you use a parking lot, public park, vacant lot, alley or converted street space, ensure the location serves the goals you're trying to accomplish with the project. If you want to draw people into the downtown, be sure it's adjacent and walkable.</p>

Process

1. **LOCATE:** Find a suitable location for the project. This could be a vacant lot, an alley, a parking lot space or street space currently devoted to vehicles. Ensure its centrally located within walking distance of numerous other commercial opportunities. Be sure it's a space that can support a true business test while drawing visitors to your Downtown.
2. **PARTNER:** Identify a strong base of supporters to help implement and ensure space is embraced by the community & businesses have a constant flow of local customers and visitors to the community.
3. **PLAN:** A combination of active and passive uses will ensure adoption of the site. While the programmed retail space will be your focus, passive community space is a must, whether recreational activities, seating, swings, a neighborhood lawn or other activity, ensure there are multiple draws to attract all different types of users to the space.
4. **IMPLEMENT:** With support of local contractors, the town was able to repurpose a number of small sheds into portable retail spaces, given a custom touch by each of the vendors paying a modest annual fee to operate the business. The space itself was slated for redevelopment and everything built was designed to move to another site when the time came to build.
5. **ITERATE:** After year 1, 2 businesses actually entered into full time leases based on their success in the chalets. As year 3 begins, half of the businesses are brand new and a waiting list exists for others to come in and try their hand at brick and mortar retail.

"It is a great way to add temporary retail at an affordable price. Vendors have the opportunity to open their own business and determine if it is the right fit for them without investing significant amount of capital. It has been a win-win all the way around."

- City Manager Frank Peterson





The Corner Spot



Provided by SME Consultant

Bench Consulting (from Patronicity)

Location

Ashland, MA

Origin	Town of Ashland, Area business owners, resident volunteers.
Budget	 <p>Total project budget was \$59,000 with funding provided through a MassDevelopment grant, online Patronicity crowdfunding campaign and in kind donations.</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Implementation timeframe is just a few weeks. Since most placemaking is iterative, changes and improvements to both the site and programming occur over the years of its lifetime.</p>
Risk	 <p>As is the nature with more tactical interventions like this, risks are diminished since this is initially a temporary installation with a far lower budget than many municipal projects.</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Number of businesses to use the space. Number that go on to expand operations in town. The number of attendees at different events and pedestrian counts in downtown. Area business increase on days of events or activations.
Partners & Resources	Local landscape companies, local fabricators, local craftspeople and artists to help design and build components of project.
Diagnostic	The town had a small, municipally owned lot with a structure slated for demolition on the edge of downtown, between the center of Town and the MBTA station. A local diner had closed depriving the town of the key “third space.” With an increasing number of storefront vacancies in the Downtown Area, there was a need to draw people back into the downtown while also encouraging stopping and staying activities. This need for a central gathering space and a place for small businesses to develop more of a foothold in the community made a project like the Corner Spot the perfect opportunity to create a “town square” like atmosphere for residents to create a public heart and hub of the community.
Action Item	The Corner Spot is a placemaking opportunity for downtown Ashland where businesses can test drive the market and residents can come together to increase the sense of community and help revitalize the downtown area. The Corner Spot is intended to stimulate economic activity in Ashland, attract new developers and business owners as well as increase foot traffic downtown to help support existing and future business. You’ll need to locate a prime site for this, ideally on a property controlled by the town, whether municipal parking lot, vacant lot or centrally located space. Once you have the space determine any initial permitting issues that may preclude or hinder you from using the site for certain passive or commercial activities. Develop a site layout plan and a rough preliminary budget and allocate any funding opportunities including grants and private donations that may be available. Ensure you have an adequate programming plan and maintenance plan lined up for the site. Maintenance could require some funding so ensure you have long term funding set aside to operate the site.

Process

1. **LOCATE:** Find a suitable location for the project. This could be a vacant lot, an alley, a parking lot space or street space currently devoted to vehicles. Ensure its centrally located within walking distance of numerous other commercial opportunities.
2. **PARTNER:** Identify a strong base of supporters to help plan and implement any placemaking project from community groups to business owners, artists and other stakeholders.
3. **PLAN:** Determine the different major component parts of this project to begin to formulate a vision for the site. Do you want a mix of passive and active recreation opportunities? Seating to encourage takeout dining from area restaurants. Wifi to encourage outdoor remote workers to the area? If there's a retail opportunity, what does the physical space look like, do you to be able to conduct light food prep which will require plumbing. Determine any ADA and other accessibility issues early on as well. Obtain necessary permitting and insurance on the site.
4. **IMPLEMENT:** Demolition of the existing structure was donated by a local contractor and grading & landscaping labor was donated by another. From there, local makers were used for the swings and table seating and a local contractor fit out an old tool shed to design and develop the Corner Spot's central retail space.
5. **FEEDBACK:** The Town conducted numerous resident surveys during the first years of the Corner Spot and continues to solicit feedback from residents and businesses about how the space can better fit their needs. Use a combination of electronic and in person survey tools to engage constructive feedback.
6. **ITERATE:** Over the years, new components have been added to the site based on resident donations and new types of events based on requests of area businesses and residents. Event schedule

The space has become the "heart and soul" of the community allowing a passive space for community gathering in the heart of Downtown while also providing a space expose the community to area small and startup businesses.



Family events at The Corner Spot are popular including story time, concerts and fitness classes.



Nu3Kidz was one a nearly 50 businesses that have popped up for a week at a time at the Corner Spot.