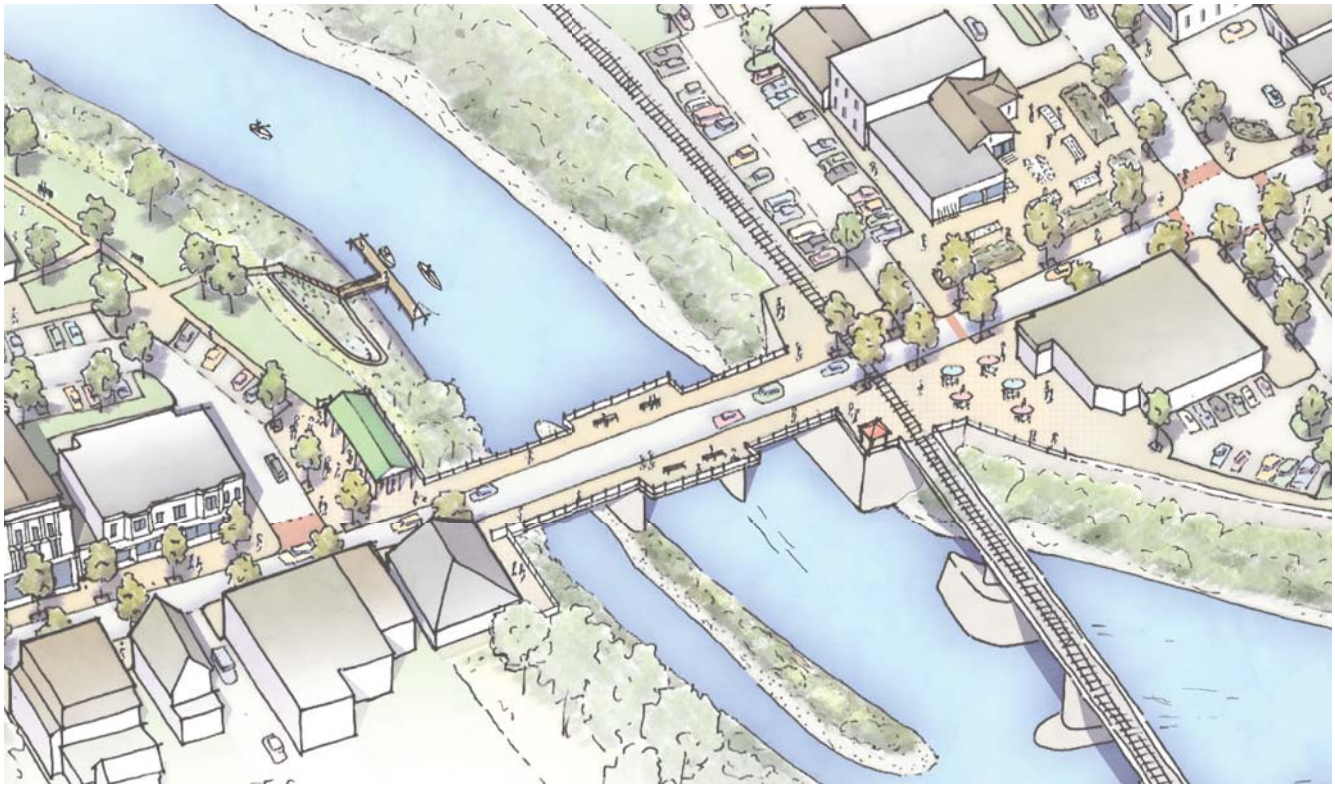
VILLAGE OF THREE RIVERS
REVITALIZATION STUDY

FINAL REPORT

APRIL 5, 2017



UNION STUDIO
ARCHITECTURE & COMMUNITY DESIGN

rustpoint advisory, llc

MASSDEVELOPMENT

PALMER, MASSACHUSETTS
Three Rivers
Bondsville
Depot Village
Thorndike
FOUNDED 1716

The Town of Palmer thanks MassDevelopment for making this plan possible, through financial and technical assistance.

This study is the culmination of work performed by a team of expert consultants led by Union Studio and with Rustpoint Advisory, LLC, and with support from the Town of Palmer.

The Town of Palmer also thanks all the local officials, residents, and businesses, in Three Rivers, and the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation, for their engagement in developing this study.

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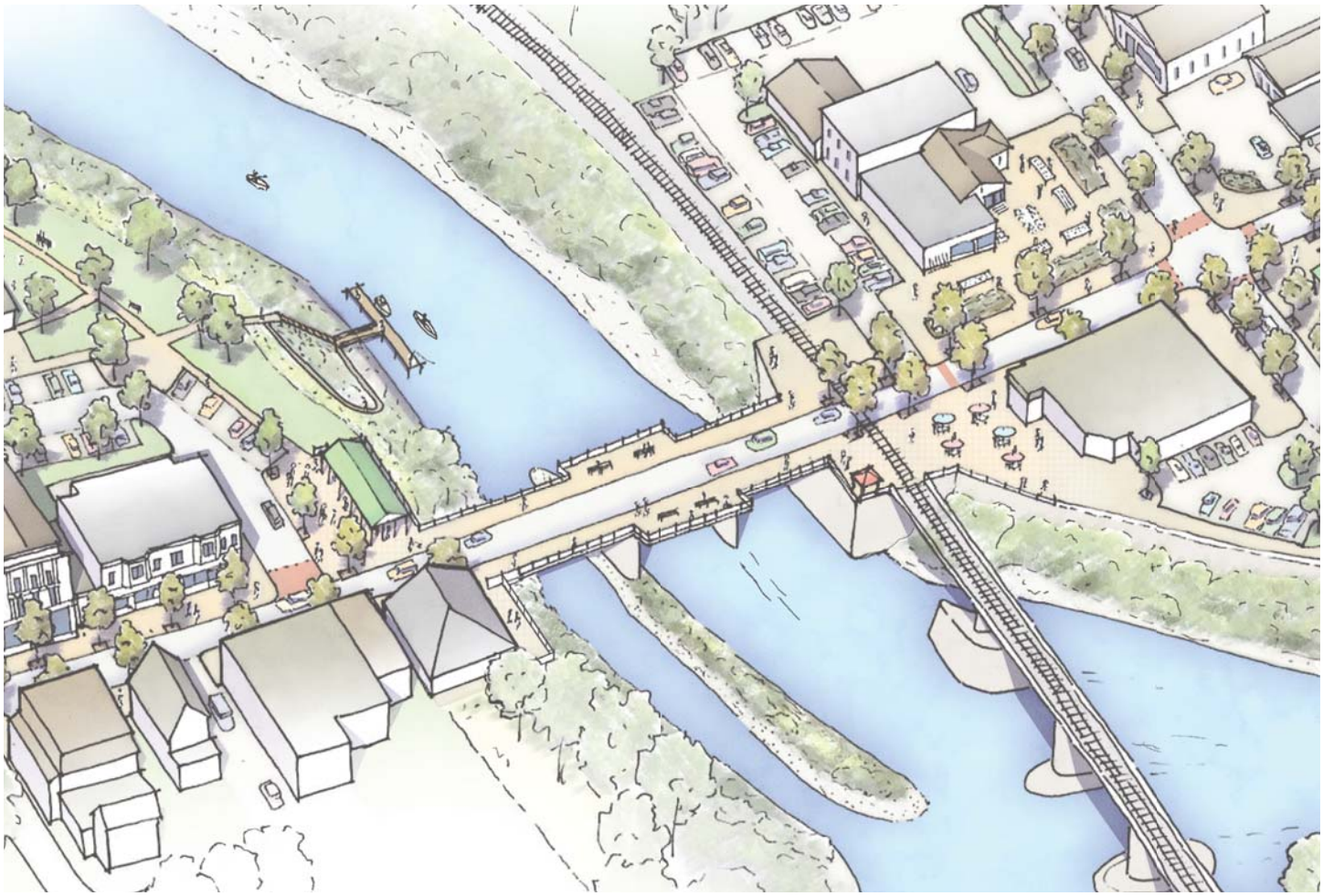
PROJECT OVERVIEW

Since July of last year, the Town of Palmer in collaboration with MassDevelopment has been working on a Masterplan Vision for the core area of the Village of Three Rivers with Union Studio Architecture and Community Design and Rustpoint Advisory, LLC.

Over the last several years, the amount of commercial activity in the core area has experienced gradual decline. The goal of this study was to try to understand how existing conditions in the core area were contributing to this and what could be done to capitalize on the Village's attributes with hopes of turning things around. The revitalization strategy proposed here includes a number of interventions throughout the core area that seek to foster connections to the rivers, build upon the "good bones" of the existing building fabric and create a pedestrian-friendly environment that promotes additional activity.

The plan proposed here was developed and refined through a series of meetings with both public and private stakeholders in which the team was able to garner feedback through presentation and discussion. The plan includes both short- and long-term approaches towards revitalization.

Union Studio has been primarily responsible for facilitating the process and generating the overall vision. Rustpoint Advisory has assisted relative to understanding the economic feasibility of the approach and helping identify precedent studies and alternative sources of funding.



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF PROPOSED PLAN

The project kicked off in July of 2016 with a pre-design phase during which the design team met with the larger project team, familiarized itself with the site, and reviewed background documentation for the study area. In August, the team hosted a series of meetings with local stakeholders to get their thoughts about the current challenges and opportunities in the Village of Three Rivers including what, if any, plans they had for their own individual parcels.

Pre-Design	July 2016
Initial Stakeholder Input	August 9, 2016
Preliminary Concepts	September 2016
Stakeholder Presentation	October 4, 2016
Draft Revitalization Strategy	Nov/Dec 2016
Stakeholder Presentation	January 30, 2017
Final Revitalization Strategy	March 2017

After gathering all of this preliminary information, the project team had a series of preliminary discussions in September to review the information that had been gathered to date and to talk about options for the plan moving forward. These preliminary findings and thoughts were then shared with the stakeholders at a presentation that was held on October 4th at the Palmer Police Station.

Based on the resulting discussion, the design team spent November and December generating a draft revitalization strategy for Three Rivers, including a list of focus areas and potential strategies for achieving the vision. These ideas were discussed with the stakeholders once again in January to garner any final feedback.

The process has culminated with this Final Report that seeks to summarize the efforts to date, describe the final revitalization strategy and outline the steps required to make it a reality.

PROJECT TEAM WALKING THE SITE DURING PRE-DESIGN PHASE

STUDY AREA

Early in the process, the team worked together to define the primary study area to be considered. The decision was made to focus specifically on the core area of Three Rivers as this zone includes a variety of uses and serves as the identifiable center of the community.

Generally speaking the study area includes the parcels on either side of Main Street from St. Stan's Polish Club across the bridge and continuing on Springfield Street to Hryniewicz Park and the Palmer Tech Center.

It was also determined that Laviolette Park should be included since it connects to Main Street, runs along Quaboag River and serves as a large draw to the town core. A few parcels along Bridge Street were also included as these connect to the intersection of Main, Bridge and Springfield Streets.

One immediate observation was the character of Main Street east of the rivers was quite different from the character of Main/Springfield Streets west of the rivers, each facing their own challenges and opportunities.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Currently, Main Street east of the bridge includes a number of historic buildings that while in rough condition help frame the street and give Three Rivers its historic character. While some street trees are present, sidewalks are narrow and overhead power lines detract from the visual character.

The Main Street Bridge is in need of structural repair and is primarily designed for vehicular use. Flags and planters show a desire to improve upon its visual character, but more improvements are needed. While the bridge does provide views to the rivers, in general their presence is hard to appreciate in town.

West of the bridge, the existing uses and general character is more auto-focused which detracts from pedestrian use. That said, the area includes fewer vacancies, and assets such as Hryniewicz Park and the Palmer Technology Center help anchor this end of town.

In August, the design team met with a series of stakeholder groups to garner initial feedback relative to the current conditions and challenges they saw in the Village of Three Rivers. The following points were made during those various sessions:

Meeting #1 - Local Business Owners

- Business has been declining in the last several years. Fewer people are coming into town.
- Longtime business owners are moving on. Absent succession plans, businesses are closing down altogether.
- Three Rivers is getting a bad reputation due in part to the growing rental population and absentee owners.
- The incidence and perception of crime remains an issue but it is getting better thanks to the efforts of business owners and the police.
- Town leadership is missing redevelopment needs. There is lots of red tape for making changes.
- Local owners are willing to help, but would appreciate relief relative to assessments and fees.
- Main Street has lost its "downtown" feel, and could use continuity in design.
- The village core needs more restaurants.
- The village needs to get more people involved and build on the efforts of TRACK, CDC, and the Chamber of Commerce.
- Let's make Three Rivers the "Heartbeat of Palmer" again.

Meeting #2 - Local Property Owners

- It is hard to attract new tenants – old tenants are leaving due to lack of business and the nature of folks loitering on street.
- Make streetscape improvements like lighting, flower planters, and artwork to improve the impression of the village.
- Slow traffic to create a safer environment for pedestrians.
- Encourage people to utilize the local Chamber of Commerce initiative – 6 months of free rent (3 on CoC, 3 on building owner) for new businesses.
- The closing of Red Bridge has caused a significant loss of business.
- Stop the retail-to-residential conversions on Main Street.
- Review sign regulations and inconsistencies in the way taxes are applied.
- Approach local service organizations for volunteer help.

Meeting #3 - Town Officials

- Challenges in Three Rivers started when Tambrands closed operations 20 years ago.
- The Red Bridge closing has had a major impact. It closed 3 years ago and there are still 18 months to go. State representatives are trying to get the repairs fast-tracked.
- Main Street bridge is also in need of repairs.
- A population shift in recent years has brought a drug problem, but not a lot of person-to-person crime.
- Some business owners (especially absentee owners) are not keeping things up.
- Laviolette Park is a big draw but it is hidden behind buildings.
- There are complaints about lack of parking, but problem may be solved with more efficient layout and better signage.
- Streetscape and utility improvements would help but that would require coordination between multiple entities.

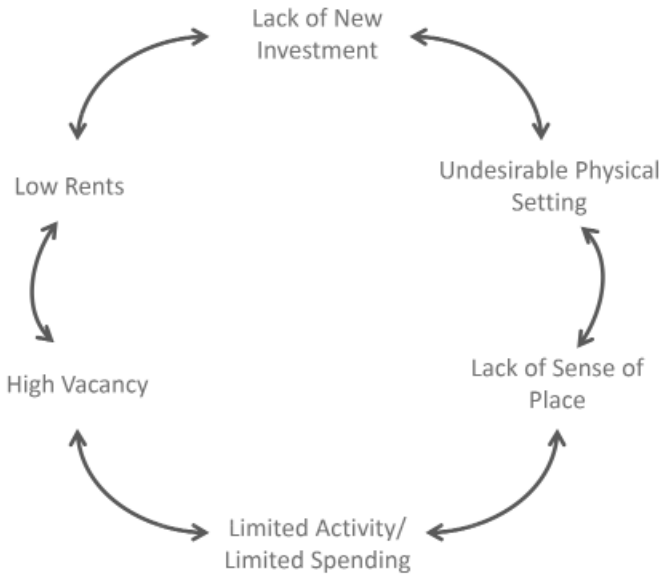
Challenges

While the decline in activity in the core area has been particularly felt in recent years, several stakeholders made reference to the challenge of recovering from the loss of the Tambrands 20 or so years ago. Its rebirth as the Palmer Technology Center has certainly helped what might otherwise be an even more dire situation.

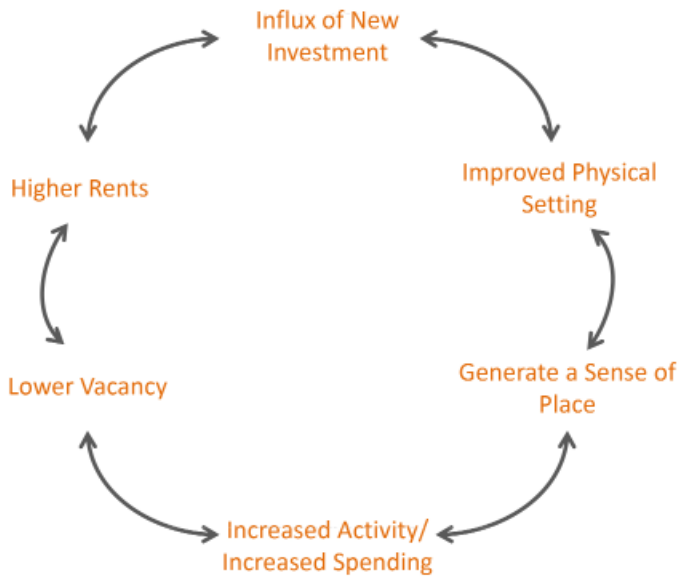
Another challenge has been the steady decline in the condition of infrastructure in the region, particularly the bridges both in town and beyond that make the vital connections to town. Concurrent to this challenge of access has been a steady pattern of long-time business owners moving on, often times without new owners to take over what were once thriving businesses.

The combination of a reduced workforce, challenged access and fewer viable businesses in town has created a vicious cycle in which higher vacancies result in less physical investment which detracts from the physical character of town, meaning fewer potential customers are coming or staying in town to support the few remaining businesses.

In addition, the existing configuration and condition of streets and sidewalks doesn't support pedestrian activity, disrupting potential connections between the current uses that do exist in town.



VICIOUS CYCLE



VIRTUOUS CYCLE

Opportunities

The good news is the town benefits from having both historic fabric (streets and buildings) that can support a pedestrian friendly environment, as well as the presence of the Three Rivers, which provide both a scenic setting and opportunity for focused redevelopment and recreation.

While in need of reinvestment, the existing building fabric to the east of the rivers give Three Rivers a sense of place and local character. The historic structures also provide an opportunity to leverage state and federal financial incentives for redevelopment. While the existing character west of the rivers is more challenging, the existing businesses, residents and Hryniewicz Park are all strong assets to the local community that can be built upon.

The rivers themselves are currently hard to appreciate, but a few strategic interventions can allow them to become the focal point they deserve to be as the namesake of the community.

In addition to the physical potential of the buildings and rivers, Three Rivers also benefits from a group of local stakeholders who understand something needs to be done and are ready to help do what they can to improve their community.

MASTERPLAN VISION

The masterplan proposed on the following pages seeks to pull together the various objectives identified for Three Rivers into a cohesive vision for the core area of town.

Three Rivers is so named because it sits at the confluence of the Chicopee, Ware and Quaboag Rivers. While these serve as the source of the town's identity, there are few opportunities currently to appreciate the rivers. The masterplan vision proposed here seeks both to create meaningful views to the rivers while also creating

an environment that is more pedestrian friendly in order to spur additional activity in the town core. East of the rivers, this means building on the "good bones" of the existing fabric and promoting more public use of the rivers edge including Laviolette Park. West of the rivers, this means finding ways to reduce the visual and physical impact of vehicles to create a public realm that fosters pedestrian connections.

The following pages include a number of partial plans that call out the new features in more detail.

MASTERPLAN VISION

EXISTING CONDITION - HRYNIEWICZ PARK AND PALMER TECH CENTER

1. Parking along Springfield separates Park from street/Palmer Tech Center
2. Spur of Park Avenue unnecessary and divides green space
3. Difficult to note presence of historic fountain
4. Opportunity at Palmer Tech Center to create stronger connection to Park
5. Blank walls and rough streetscape don't promote pedestrian activity
6. Limited opportunities for crossing Springfield Street

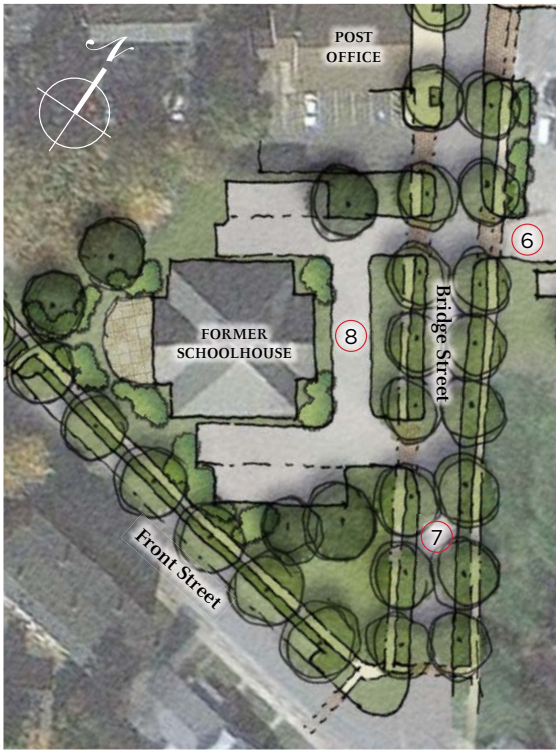
PROPOSED VISION - HRYNIEWICZ PARK AND PALMER TECH CENTER

1. Park extended to connect to Street, parking distributed to adjacent streets
2. Park extended to connect open spaces, parking distributed to adjacent streets
3. Small plaza space celebrates historic fountain, facilitates pedestrian activity
4. Potential for Brew Pub (or similar) across from Park
5. Potential for retail in lower level, streetscape improvements incl. parking
6. Additional crosswalks and bulb-outs at crossings

EXISTING CONDITION - INTERSECTION OF BRIDGE/MAIN AND FORMER SCHOOLHOUSE

0 100' 200'

1. Void at corner of Palmer Tech lot creates disconnect to rest of town
2. Large curb radii/lane widths not supportive of pedestrian safety/activity
3. Parking area not taking advantage of river adjacency/views
4. Current rail crossing not taking advantage of river adjacency/views
5. Parking/service in front of Chudy's disconnects pedestrians from retail
6. Exposed parking/service areas not supportive of pedestrian safety/activity
7. General streetscape improvements will promote pedestrian safety/activity
8. Former schoolhouse under utilized and not contributing to town center



PROPOSED VISION - INTERSECTION OF BRIDGE/MAIN AND FORMER SCHOOLHOUSE

0 100' 200'

1. Potential for infill (e.g., cafe) to help hold corner and activate streetscape
2. Reduced curb radii and special paving promote pedestrian safety/activity
3. Space adjacent to Tenczar's treated as hardscape/paths with view of rivers
4. Overlook creates gateway at western edge of bridge
5. Space in front of Chudy's repurposed as forecourt/sales area
6. Landscaping can create buffer between sidewalks and parking/service areas
7. General streetscape improvements will promote pedestrian safety/activity
8. Former schoolhouse repurposed as housing (e.g., senior) to add residents

MASTERPLAN VISION

EXISTING CONDITIONS - BRIDGE AND MAIN STREET (WEST)

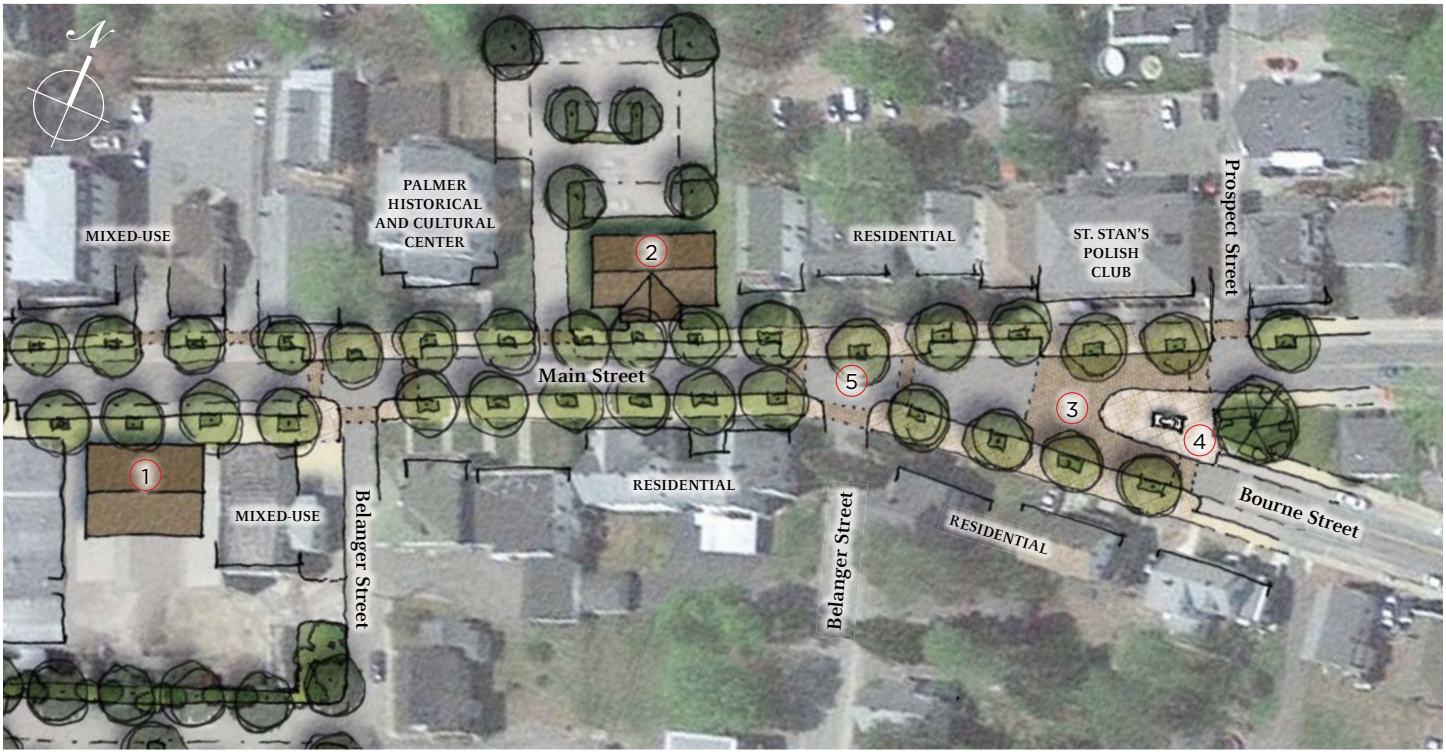
1. Bridge includes light posts/planters, but otherwise is not pedestrian friendly
2. Minimal sidewalks due to inclusion of travel lanes and shoulders
3. Current tenant fit-out includes blank wall on rivers' edge not taking advantage of views
4. Park has minimal presence on street, no connection to river
5. Poor visibility coming out of lot, especially with speeding traffic
6. Streetscape in poor condition, dominated by overhead utilities, has limited crossings and promotes speeding traffic

PROPOSED VISION - BRIDGE AND MAIN STREET (WEST)

1. Bridge reconstruction can include lookouts and other pedestrian amenities
2. Expand sidewalk on bridge by removing shoulders and minimizing lanes
3. Open up side of corner building and include deck with views of rivers
4. Pavilion at eastern end of bridge serves as gateway to bridge and park
5. Plaza space, including special paving in street, to promote pedestrian activity by reducing crossing distances and calming traffic
6. Improved streetscapes with underground utilities, regularly spaced street trees, new crosswalks and bulb-outs promote pedestrian safety/activity

EXISTING CONDITIONS - MAIN STREET (EAST)

1. Site of old lumber yard canopy is currently an eyesore and creates a gap in the street fabric
2. PHCC parking lot is oversized and creates a gap in street fabric
3. Lots of paving at intersection of Bourne and Main Streets
4. Triangular lot difficult to utilize, potential for gateway to town center
5. Streetscape in poor condition, dominated by overhead utilities, has limited crossings and promotes speeding traffic



PROPOSED VISION - MAIN STREET (EAST)

1. Potential for infill (e.g., mixed-use) at site of old lumber yard canopy
2. Potential for infill (e.g., housing) at edge of PHCC parking lot
3. Bulb outs and special paving can create plaza space in front of St. Stan's helping calm traffic as it enters Main Street mixed use zone
4. Opportunity for civic placemaking at triangular lot that can help create gateway to core area
5. Improved streetscapes with underground utilities, regularly spaced street trees, new crosswalks and bulb-outs promote pedestrian safety/activity

EXISTING CONDITIONS - LAVIOLETTE PARK

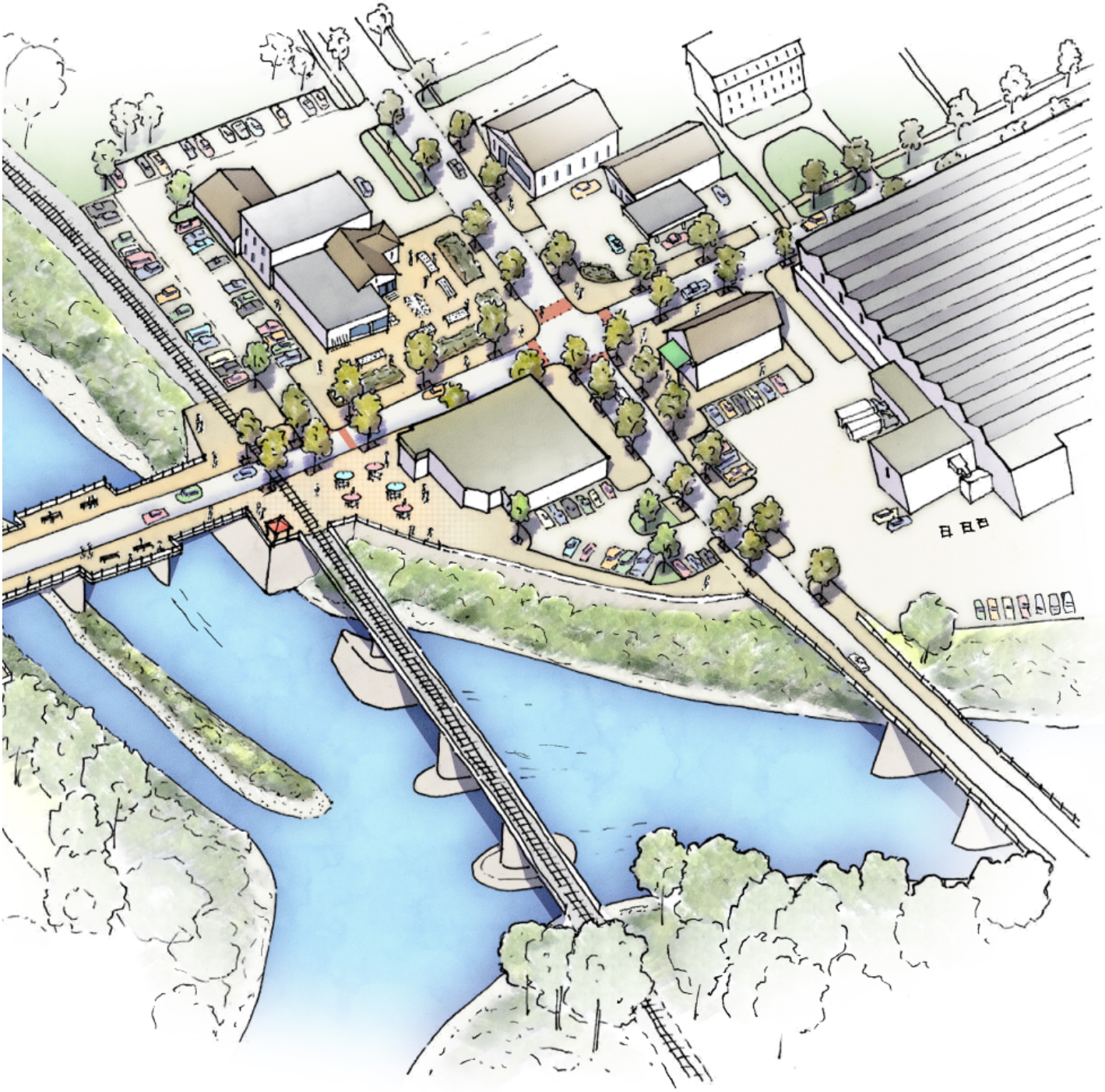
1. Currently there are no opportunities for people to access the water's edge
2. Park not taking advantage of river adjacency/views
3. Parking lot inefficient with no separation between parking and service areas
4. Park currently under utilized - informal and used only for sporting events
5. Current service/overflow parking area not well defined

PROPOSED VISION - LAVIOLETTE PARK

1. Small dock would provide access for boaters/pedestrians and visual interest
2. Hardscape area could provide gathering point and visual connection to river
3. Lot reconfigured to fit additional parking and screen service areas. Extension to Belanger St. would provide secondary access and more spaces
4. Walking trails formalize park and promote additional use
5. Secondary parking area could be formalized and serve as primary parking for fields leaving other lot available for Main Street uses.
6. Opportunity for civic placemaking as view termination of Belanger Street

PERSPECTIVE VIEWS

This “bird’s eye” view of the core area shows the culmination of the various interventions proposed in the vision plan, including the creation of public, pedestrian-friendly spaces on either side of the bridge and general improvements to the streetscape to facilitate additional pedestrian activity in the town core.



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF CORE AREA

PERSPECTIVE VIEWS

In order to further embrace the rivers as an asset, this view shows the potential for creating a more pedestrian friendly bridge, as well as a public pavilion/plaza to slow vehicles and draw people into the park. This view also shows the potential for a public dock on the river itself.

PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF NEW PUBLIC AMENITIES EAST OF THE BRIDGE

On the other side of the bridge, a hardscape plaza adjacent to the old Tenczar's creates another opportunity for people to gather at a location with visual connections to the rivers while also helping connect the eastern and western halves of the town core.

PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF NEW PUBLIC AMENITIES WEST OF THE BRIDGE

PERSPECTIVE VIEWS

This view shows the impact of the various physical improvements proposed for Main Street and the buildings that line it. Burying overhead utilities, planting regularly-spaced street trees and including bulb outs at more regular crossings in combination with improvements to the buildings themselves create a more pedestrian-friendly zone that will spur increased activity in the town core.

PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF BUILDING AND STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS ON MAIN STREET

The economic equation weighs the cost of making improvements or investing in the core area against the economic value created by the invested dollars. Typically, the investment of capital would be justified by an economic value that returns that dollar amount with an additional level of return for the risk and time of having those dollars in place. For example, when people invest in a stock, they expect that they will eventually have an asset that has a monetary value greater than their initial purchase price. If it is a highly risky new company, the investor needs to be incentivized to invest by the chance of a higher return – to accommodate their increased risk of losing money. At its core, investing in a community follows a similar path – where individuals and businesses make rational decisions of risk and return before investing in a location. Outside factors play a major role, especially for those that have strong connections to a place, but the fundamental economic equation still dictates and influences overall patterns of investment.

As reflected in the recent and current state of disinvestment within the core area of Three Rivers, the economic equation is challenged. Current property owners and business owners are challenged to invest in capital improvements or in expansion of their properties because the cost of such an investment does not seem to offer an equivalent or greater level of value.

In its simplest form, if a homeowner invests in a new kitchen, porch, or exterior painting, will the value of their home increase in a manner that justifies the investment? Or, if the landlord of a commercial space upgrades building systems and storefront, will it result in a greater probability of occupancy or increased tenant rents to pay a return on the investment? The answers to these questions influence behavior.

Stakeholder discussions revealed that there is currently a clear disconnect in this cost-to-value equation. This economic equation extends beyond influencing the behavior and actions of current owners and stakeholders in the core area, but also to the ability to draw new capital from outside the district. In a market like Boston, for instance, the economic equation is tilted in the opposite direction, as capital has flowed to the city to invest in buildings and development projects as rents and sale prices have increased.

The economic equation in Three Rivers has been influenced by internal and external forces including the reduction of through-traffic due to the bridges, a reduction of local workers in the neighborhood, and a negative momentum that leads to the vicious cycle.

The Importance of Local Champions

Many cities and towns face similar economic challenges. Fortunately, Three Rivers has a strong set of champions that other communities often lack -- local stakeholders that are passionate about the District. These stakeholders are invested in the District (both financially and emotionally) and have a strong incentive to work towards rebalancing the economic equation. The existing business owners and property owners have repeatedly shown a strong will to invest further and to work together to force a change. This factor often skews the cost vs. value issue because of several factors:

- Existing property owners have differing value drivers such as the need to reduce negative cash flow outlays, related investments, emotional and family connections that impact the level of risk that they are willing to accept. Also, dedicated local stakeholders are willing to take a longer, more patient timeframe. Whereas a developer often views returns on their investments over a period of three to ten years, an existing owner may have a longer horizon or even a generational perspective on the value of the asset as part of their overall holding strategy.

- A new purchaser would have a higher cost profile given the fact that they would have to invest dollars in acquisition. This alone can make a significant impact on the economic equation.

- Real estate is greatly influenced by the actions or inactions on neighboring properties and in the broader neighborhood. As has been evidenced throughout the recent process, those who have lived and worked in the core area for decades have a strong understanding of their neighbor's behavior and intentions. They also may have a more rounded understanding of the history and actions and elements that influence the neighborhood, including police and public safety efforts, usage patterns in the parks, public improvements plans, etc. Existing owners also typically have a greater ability to influence and organize and plan with others through strong communications and familiarity with other stakeholders.

How to Change the Equation

From an economic standpoint, there are numerous direct approaches to rebalancing the equation. There are also a number of indirect considerations. In speaking with stakeholders, there were several examples of actions or inactions that may work against the process of incenting investment in the core area. Without outlining specific examples, local municipal-level items such as property tax treatment, sewer and water billing, unclear building and fire codes, or simply a lack of responsiveness to questions or issues can impact those who are committed to investing. As an ecosystem, all elements of the public and private policies will impact the speed and efficacy of positive change.

In general, there are three fundamental methods to address the economic equation with the goal of helping to incentivize investment:

A. Additional Funding Sources

Identifying and providing sources of funds, or subsidy, that limit the amount of private investment of equity and/or limit the amount of debt (and therefore required interest or mortgage payments) can have a significant impact. For example: a property owner might be contemplating a $10,000 in capital improvements to make his retail space more attractive to prospective tenants. But that $10,000 investment might not generate high enough returns to warrant the capital outlay. If the Town can provide half of that funding -- say, $5,000 -- through a grant program, the owner may be more willing to risk his own money. Generating a positive return on $5,000 becomes much more feasible than a $10,000 investment.

- One tool that stands out of particular use in the Three Rivers District is the use of federal and state Historic Tax Credits (HTCs). The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program provides a tax credit for up to 20% of costs directly related to the rehabilitation of historic structures. The process is overseen by the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office. The design and construction must adhere to a set of standards and guidelines to ensure that the work is completed with respect to the historic integrity of the buildings and grounds. However, this funding source is a significant part of addressing the economic equation; it has been commonly used across the country for decades. By following the set process and guidelines, a landlord or developer can generate tax credits that can be sold to a third party for cash equity that can be invested into the redevelopment project. Secondary markets are in place in Massachusetts, and elsewhere to sell such credits.

In addition, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts offers a similar program. State HTCs can be obtained for up to 20% of direct rehabilitation costs. The popular state program will be in place through 2022. The state program is capped each year, so projects must compete for credits with other projects across the state. The federal program is not competitive at this time, so credits are available for those projects that follow the designated process.

- APPENDIX: BUSINESS & ECONOMIC RESOURCES outlines a series of potential grants, tax credits, low interest loan programs and other products that exist to help to provide landlords or developers an alternative source of capital.

B. Reduce Capital Costs for Landlords and Developers

Similar to providing grants and subsidies to reduce the amount of private investment, the reduction of project costs can also encourage investment. Lower development and permitting costs, as well as infrastructure investments such as sidewalk plantings, enhanced storm water systems, street lighting upgrades and shared parking, can help to ease the cost of development by off-setting costs that may otherwise be borne by property owners.

- It can take several months to fully understand the permits and approvals necessary to modernize a building. This process often requires significant private engineering and legal costs. Any guidance through the permitting process, or streamlining of the approvals process can offer a clear advantage. Because the Three Rivers target area is relatively small, it may be feasible to consolidate the necessary information and make it available to interested parties. This assistance could also help broker discussions with utility providers and/or Public Works. Providing such efficiencies in permitting and regulations can have a profound impact on the time, uncertainty and cost for developers and landlords.

- Providing common improvements, such as shared parking, can also lower project costs, as well as maximize density and potential building area. Access to such common elements reduces the need to re-create or improve as part of the private development budget.

C. Increase Annual Cash Flow for Developers/Investors

Although many think of subsidy and incentive programs as one-time investments in capital costs, finding a means to increase annual cash flow from properties can have a similar, if not greater, impact than a grant.

A few relevant options for Three Rivers include:

- Decreased and predictable real estate property taxes. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts allows for a series of property tax-based incentive programs that could be leveraged to encourage investment and redevelopment in Three Rivers. By temporarily reducing property taxes and decreasing the annual operating expenses to the landlord or developer, participants see higher returns and are in a more favorable position to borrow money from banks.

The Tax Increment Financing (TIF), District Increment Financing (DIF), and/or Special Tax Assessment (STA) programs should be further explored. One of the significant impacts of these programs is the ability for developers and landlords to see a predictable part of their own equation as they evaluate potential investments. Despite a potential short term reduction in much-needed tax dollars, the tools often work to increase the overall tax base for the future and also to protect against a decrease in future tax base caused by reduced values for vacant, obsolete or abandoned buildings.

If the Town of Palmer decides to adopt any of these tools, it should clearly define the program's parameters and then market the program to local landlords and potential developers.

Program	Description	Term
TIF | Tax Increment Financing	The municipality can establish flexible agreements with private landowners and developers that provide property tax abatement. A portion of forecast property tax increases (above the current, baseline amount of taxes being collected) can be used to finance infrastructure improvements up front, and/or to offer annual cash flow savings to the developer. Often, the tax relief provided to the property owner/developer allows them to alter the economic equation and allows a project to move forward.	5-20 Years
DIF | District Improvement Financing	The municipality may finance public works and infrastructure projects in a designated area by leveraging the forecast increase in property tax revenues derived from new housing, commercial and/or industrial activity within a defined district. Rather than allowing the property owner/developer to benefit from tax relief (per the TIF program), the municipality may pledge a portion of new tax dollars (above the current, baseline amount of taxes being collected) toward the financing related to an infrastructure investment that allows the new development to happen.	30 Years
STA | Special Tax Assessment	A real estate property tax exemption program that allows a municipality to adjust current, baseline taxes plus new, forecast tax increases for a specific investment/development. For example, the municipality may negotiate with a property owner to pay 0% of assessed value in year one after an investment in a business or a relocation, 25% of assessed value in year two, 50% of the assessed value in year three and continue to phase-in to full assessment over a defined number of years. Similar to TIF, the tax relief provided to the property allows them to alter the economic equation and allows an investment to move forward.	5-20 Years

- The most sustainable and long-term path to improving the economic equation is to engender increased rents via placemaking and increasing critical mass and desirability. Often, this is the result of the successful implementation of a combination of the other tools described herein. For example, improvements to the Laviolette Park and to Hryniewicz Park would have an impact on the value and attraction of the adjacent properties, clear view corridors and seating areas above the river would immediately make the abutting retail locations more attractive. Public infrastructure investments such as sidewalk improvements, green spaces and enhanced street lighting can have a profound effect on the desirability of a neighborhood.

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program could be sought to help upgrade the infrastructure, and the use of this program has been catalytic in other communities throughout the Commonwealth. The intent of this program is as follows:

"*The MassWorks Infrastructure Program provides a one-stop shop for municipalities and other eligible entities seeking public infrastructure funding to support economic development and job creation.*

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program provides infrastructure grants for work including, but not limited to, sewers, utility extensions, streets, roads, curb-cuts, parking facilities, site preparation and improvements on publicly owned land, demolition, pedestrian walkways, and water treatment systems to support four project types:

- Multi-family housing development at a density of at least 4 units to the acre (both market and affordable units)

- Economic development in weak or distressed areas

- Community revitalization to promote mixed-use development

- Transportation improvements to enhance safety in small, rural communities"

Public realm improvements can have a profound impact on the economics of a single project, or on many projects, and can often increase land values and marketability of a district.

As the economic equation improves, rents and sales prices will increase. This feeds into a virtuous cycle where new and existing stakeholders see the value in investing in the Three Rivers District.

These general principals and strategies are all part of creating the proper ecosystem for investment by existing landlords and to incent others to locate and invest in the core area.

Conceptual Case Study Analysis

As part of the process to evaluate the current state of Three Rivers and the path towards the vision and Master Plan outlined in this report, the team completed a conceptual economic study on a series of key redevelopment parcels within the core area. Consultants selected a number of parcles to study based upon feedback from local stakeholders.

For each parcel, a simple real estate development budget and pro forma were established. The process relied heavily upon publicly available data sources, including but not limited to:

Property Description	Potential Redevelopment Use, Program or Repositioning	Order of Magnitude Funding Gap	Notes
Two story new construction of 7600 square feet on roughly ½ acre lot. With surface parking	Four apartment units at approx. 850 square feet. Roughly 3,600 square feet of commercial space for lease	40%	Includes acquisition cost based roughly on assessed value
Now vacant former retail building (originally built mid-century); Approximately 13,000 gross square feet including the basement	Reposition as simple market with informal outdoor seating with weather/shade structure. Potential to partner with local vendors to provide pre-made sandwiches, coffee, baked goods, ice cream – targeting peak volume times in the District and to capture some existing workers from the Palmer Tech Center	20-30%	Includes acquisition cost. Given current lack of traffic and volume of visitors, best suited as low cost, simple approach that grows organically over time – as other complementary aspects of the district improve
Existing retail building (originally built before 1900); Approximately 5,000 square feet	Existing owner reposition retail space to accommodate café, outdoor seating	20-30%	Key assumptions is existing ownership/ i.e. no acquisition
Now vacant former retail building (originally built in 1970); Approximately 6,000 square feet	Retail/arts space + area of green space in adjacent paved area. Limited storage in small basement.	35%	Key assumptions is existing ownership/ i.e. no acquisition

- Tax Assessment data for lot and building (if applicable) square footages, as well as property tax amounts
- Market data from comparable buildings in the district and beyond to approximate retail, commercial and apartment rents, as well as for sale prices for residential homes
- Discussions with real estate brokers
- Conversations and one-on-one meetings with business and property owners
- Cost, revenue, and expense data gathered from previous third party studies in Palmer
- Data from a broad range of projects in regional markets via the team's experience

THE ECONOMIC EQUATION

The purpose of the exercise was to better inform the Masterplan and the recommendations included herein.

The exercise also helped to create a shared understanding of the challenges and scale of the "funding gap" faced by existing property owners, businesses and prospective developers as they evaluate whether to invest in the core area. The funding gap is essentially the order of magnitude amount that causes the imbalance of the economic equation; the difference between cost and value/return.

Given many variations within each property, and the variability of approaches that may be taken to improve or reposition each parcel, this summary is intended to be illustrative only. Specific property details are not provided given concerns and sensitivity to private ownership.

Potential means to address the funding gap are outlined both conceptually and specifically in the Appendix.

The following ten items are areas that the project team and stakeholders have identified as having a high priority to help jump start the revitalization of Three Rivers. On the following pages, a brief description is included for each item that outlines action items to be considered as well as suggested funding sources.

1. Reinforce connection to the rivers and strengthen ties between both ends of Main Street by making physical improvements to the Main Street Bridge
2. Improve access to Laviolette Park with a riverside pavilion and walking path around the park
3. Consolidate and reorganize parking and rear loading areas of Main Street buildings by Laviolette Park
4. Create new housing opportunities and preserve historic character of the village by renovating and reusing the former school house
5. Enhance pedestrian experience with streetscape improvements like street trees, bulb-outs, and parklets
6. Leverage the pending redevelopment of the town-owned parcel to attract new business and encourage improvements by existing businesses
7. Enhance programming in the village core to attract visitors and support existing businesses
8. Shape key intersections in village core by landscaping corners where buildings do not exist
9. Create a social gathering place adjacent to Hryniewicz Park by encouraging Palmer Tech Center to add a cafe, brew pub, etc.
10. Support local development by compiling and maintaining technical resources like sample pro-formas, etc.

MAIN STREET BRIDGE: Reinforce connection to the rivers by making physical improvements to the Main Street Bridge

In its current configuration, the Main Street Bridge gives priority to vehicular traffic traveling through Three Rivers rather than to people walking or biking from one side of the village to the other. The bridge features wide travel lanes, excessive shoulders, and narrow sidewalks which combine to create an uncomfortable pedestrian experience and make the bridge seem longer than it is – it treats the river as an obstacle to be overcome, rather than a feature to be celebrated. Narrowing the street and widening the sidewalks would slow vehicular traffic and create a pleasant pedestrian promenade from one side of Main Street to the other. Look-outs over the river would further enhance the experience, creating a place to stop and admire the rivers for which the village was named.

In the short term, paint, planters, or cones could be utilized to suggest that the shoulder is available for pedestrian use. Long term, reconstruction or replacement of the bridge is included in the MassDOT Bridge Improvement program. If that program does not cover the elements that would slow vehicular traffic and encourage pedestrian activity, the Town of Palmer could utilize the MassWorks program, Palmer's capital improvement budget, the Complete Streets program, or Chapter 70 funds.

LAVIOLETTE PARK: Improve access to Laviolette Park with a riverside pavilion and walking path around the park

Laviolette Park is an asset to Three Rivers but it does not take full advantage of its prime location. A new community pavilion along Main Street would signal to passersby that something important is tucked behind the buildings on Main Street as well as create a centralized meeting place for the entire community. The pavilion would anchor a walking path that would lead from Main Street into the park, along the riverfront, and around the playing fields encouraging activity from one to support the other.

In the short term, planters could define a pedestrian zone with a simple gazebo in the parking area. Long term, new paths and hardscape areas with a more purpose-built pavilion would be appropriate. MassDevelopment's Commonwealth Places program helps fund place-based, community-driven projects - like parks, trails, markets, and more - that revitalize downtown and neighborhood commercial districts.. Other potential funding sources include Project Reinvest from Neighborworks, a Community Development Block grant administered by the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development or the Town of Palmer's capital improvement budget.

PARKING: Consolidate and reorganize parking and rear loading areas of Main Street buildings by Laviolette Park

The parking lot adjacent to Laviolette Park currently suffers from sharing space with the loading areas of the buildings on Main Street, a single poorly defined access point, and an inefficient layout. The parking lot should be reconfigured to connect Main Street and Belanger Street, with new trees planted along the southern edge of the lot. This configuration would create a more efficient parking layout, and would separate public parking from the back-of-house loading areas. The parking lot would also create a well-defined edge for the north end of Laviolette Park.

Short term, simply painting new lines could better define and add new parking. Long term, planting beds with vertical curbs would better define and screen these areas. If approved, funding for these improvements could come from the Department of Public Works or the Parks Department budget, or funds could be sought through a Community Development Block Grant.

OLD SCHOOL HOUSE: Create new housing opportunities and preserve historic character of village core by renovating and reusing the former school house

Adapting and reusing the former school house for housing -- potentially senior housing – will breathe new life into one of Three Rivers' most beautiful historic buildings. In addition to preserving the history, materials, and culture embodied in the former school house building, bringing new residents into the village core will broaden the tax base and support existing and new businesses. The former school house's location between Bridge Street and Hryniewicz Park make it an especially attractive redevelopment opportunity.

In the short term, the current owner should be encouraged to make cosmetic improvements to improve the building's curb appeal. Long term, historic tax credits should be pursued and alternate development options should be considered. If the building is converted into a job-creating use, the owner might be able to use the Massachusetts Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP) or the building could be developed using a local Tax Increment Financing (TIF) method.

STREETSCAPE: Enhance pedestrian experience with streetscape improvements like street trees, bulb-outs, and parklets

The vision plan proposes narrowing streets where possible, particularly at intersections where the majority of pedestrian crossings will occur. In general, narrower streets reduce traffic speeds which in turn increases pedestrian safety. Planters can be used to line empty lots or to help temporarily define underutilized areas for parklets or farmers' markets. While funds for more extensive infrastructure improvements are sought, the Village should instead use paint to help differentiate pedestrian crossings (crosswalks and bulb-outs), travel lanes, parking lanes and bike lanes. Paint also allows for the testing of various scenarios in advance of the expense of longer term solutions. In addition, as funds become available for streetscape improvements, overhead utilities should relocated underground and regularly-spaced street trees should be added to both sides of the street to further enhance the visual character of Main Street.

In the short-term, lighter, quicker, and cheaper solutions should be pursued to prove the benefits of a more comfortable pedestrian experience. Limited funds should be required assuming the efforts are largely done by volunteers. When the proper balance has been established through short-term tactical interventions, there are several programs that could be utilized for more long-term streetscape improvements, including MassDevelopment's Commonwealth Places or the MassWorks Infrastructure Program. Funds could also be raised through the local and regional Chambers of Commerce.

NEW BUSINESS: Leverage the pending redevelopment of the town owned parcel to attract new business and encourage improvements by existing businesses

The town-owned parcel at 2032 Main Street has long been considered an eyesore and representative of the challenge of doing business in Three Rivers. Fortunately, the town is in the process of partnering with a group that plans to renovate the building, helping bring new life to Main Street. Such reinvestment should be leveraged to suggest there is opportunity in Three Rivers. To the extent possible, its redevelopment should also be used as a catalyst to encourage other building owners and/or tenants to make physical improvements to their own properties.

The NeighborWorks Project Reinvest: Neighborhoods program provides grant funding to eligible nonprofit organizations to help stabilize and revitalize distressed communities suffering from direct or indirect effects of the foreclosure crisis. Such a program can help make development in Three Rivers more attractive. Community Development Block Grants, administered by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, could help fund facade improvements and signage. Alternatively, the local Chambers of Commerce could help via a subsidized or matching rent program.

PROGRAMMING: Enhance programming in the village core to attract visitors and support existing businesses

Periodic events such as farmers' markets, movie nights and local festivals are a good way of attracting people to town in order to build community and help support local businesses, particularly when they can be hosted right in the core of Three Rivers. Potential locations include the parking lot at the corner of Main and Laviolette Park, Hryniewicz Park, temporary street closures or the use of empty or underutilized parcels. To facilitate these events, the town should work out the logistics of allowing such temporary uses and search out partners to help organize and host them.

The specific costs of hosting various events downtown will vary. If the incremental cost for any one event is more than the event itself can bear, consider finding additional sponsors (like local vendors whose business may benefit from increased exposure) or carrying a small budget in the town's yearly operating costs to help with the potential need for additional municipal personnel. The Three Rivers Arts Community Knowledge (TRACK) program could also help organize and host events in the village center of Three Rivers. The town could also partner with the owners of the Palmer Tech Center to spearhead events that would appeal to their employees or try to help jump start a "young professionals" group to also organize events.

LANDSCAPE: Shape key intersections in the village core by landscaping corners where buildings do not exist

Public spaces and intersections function best when their edges are clearly defined. Buildings do a great job of shaping public space, but sometimes a building is not an option. In the absence of a building, landscaping can hold the edge of a public space fairly well, particularly when it is more than a patch of mulch or grass. This technique would be particularly effective at intersections that are currently auto-oriented, like the intersection of Main Street and Bridge Street.

In the short term, planters and/or benches can help define these edges. These can be directly sponsored and maintained by the local businesses most affected by the areas being planted, or done as village-wide effort with donated materials. In the long term, more permanent landscape treatments like planting beds and/or low site walls should be considered by property owners. A Community Development Block Grant program could be used to help fund landscape improvements.

GATHERING PLACE: Create a social gathering place adjacent to Hryniewicz Park by encouraging Palmer Tech Center to add a cafe, brew pub, etc.

The narrow range of uses around Hryniewicz Park means that there are many hours of the day when there is no significant activity taking place around the park. Introducing a social gathering place like a cafe or a brew pub on the north side of Springfield Street would take advantage of the beautiful park view and activate the park during more hours of the day. Such an establishment would also benefit from its close proximity to the numerous employees at the Palmer Tech Center.

In the short-term, invites could be extended to temporary vendors like food trucks to schedule a regular visit to Three Rivers to set up next to the park during lunchtime or during events in the park to test the viability of a more permanent tenant here. Long-term, the village and Palmer Tech Center can market that location with a targeted pitch to potential vendors, highlighting the concentration of nearby workers and the beautiful view of Hryniewicz Park.

TECHNICAL RESOURCES: Support local development by compiling and maintaining technical resources like sample pro-formas, etc.

In order to help with the acquisition of funds for improvements in Three Rivers, a centralized database of applicable funding sources should be created and sample pro-formas done to help illustrate the real market potential for redevelopment. An initial list of applicable sources and some local case studies can be found in the Appendix. In addition to available funds, this database should also include a list of previous projects that have sought such funds and whether or not they were successful in obtaining them. Such a database can be a great resource for future projects and can help retain institutional knowledge of such efforts even with the possibility of changing personnel. An individual point of contact should be established to upkeep the list, but all applicable Town personnel should be made aware of it in order to benefit from it and contribute to it over time.

This report, especially the resources detailed in the Appendix, provides a strong starting point for compiling technical resources necessary for supporting development in Three Rivers. Moving forward, the town should appoint an individual point of contact to maintain the list and keep it up-to-date.

CONCLUSION / NEXT STEPS

Over the last several years, commercial activity in the Village of Three Rivers has declined. The area currently suffers from a vicious cycle of disinvestment due to a reduced number of local employees and customers, challenged access due to the condition of local infrastructure and fewer viable businesses in town due to a combination of tough market conditions and high vacancy rates.

The good news is the Village benefits from having "good bones" relative to both the uses that still exist and the historic fabric of buildings and open spaces, as well as the presence of the three rivers themselves that give the town its name. While reinvestment and interventions are needed, these assets can be leveraged to improve the conditions in the core area to spur additional activity.

The vision proposed in this revitalization strategy was achieved through a series of meetings with both public and private stakeholders. It attempts to set a course towards the physical improvement of the village core by providing the various stakeholders a shared focus, keeping everyone on track, spanning political cycles, serving as the basis for grants and ultimately creating a new market for growth.

A series of ten priority items, listed below, have been identified by the project team and stakeholders which should be targeted in the short term to help jump start the revitalization of Three Rivers. Most are physical in nature.

The transformation of Three Rivers won't happen over night. It might be years before the vision outlined here is fully achieved. But results are still possible and can be achieved by chipping away at one action item at a time.

- Reinforce connection to the rivers and strengthen ties between both ends of Main Street by making physical improvements to the Main Street Bridge
- Improve access to Laviolette Park with a riverside pavilion and walking path around the park
- Consolidate and reorganize parking and rear loading areas of Main Street buildings by Laviolette Park
- Create new housing opportunities and preserve historic character of the village by renovating and reusing the Old School House
- Enhance pedestrian experience with streetscape improvements like street trees, bulb-outs, and parklets
- Leverage the pending redevelopment of the town owned parcel to attract new business and encourage improvements by existing businesses
- Schedule additional programming in the village core to attract visitors and support existing businesses
- Shape key intersections in village core by landscaping corners where buildings do not exist
- Create a social gathering place adjacent to Hryniewicz Park by encouraging Palmer Tech Center to add a cafe, brew pub, etc.
- Support local development by compiling and maintaining technical resources like sample pro-formas, etc.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX: BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES

The following list was generated by the project team and contains brief descriptions and links to selected organizations and programs that can offer support to local governments, non-profit organizations, and/or private businesses. Please note that grant resources are predominantly only available to local governments or non-profit organizations, and are competitive programs with no guarantee of funding. For a complete description of the services offered and eligibility requirements, go to the websites identified or contact these organizations directly.

Federal Government Resources:

- The U.S. Department of the Treasury operates a variety of programs to support access to capital for economic growth in targeted low-income areas. One such program is the **New Market Tax Credit Program**. Through this program, federal tax credits are awarded to certified organizations, which can issue tax credits to developers for specific projects. To use these tax credits certain criteria must be met and the project must be located in an eligible, economically distressed Census Tract. The tax credit provided to the investor can total 39% of the cost of the investment and is to be claimed over a 7-year credit allowance period. Certified organizations that have allocated tax credits and have participated in projects in the region are the Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation (MHIC) and Common Capital, Inc. Website: https://www.cdfifund.gov/programs-training/Programs/new-markets-tax-credit/Pages/default.aspx
- Both federal and state governments maintain historic rehabilitation tax credit programs. The **Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program** is administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service and the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The tax incentives may be applied to costs incurred for renovation, restoration, and reconstruction of eligible buildings. Generally, the percentage of these costs that can be taken as a credit is 10% for buildings placed in service before 1936, and 20% for certified historic structures. Website: www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm
- The **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)** administers the **Our Town** program, which supports creative placemaking projects through three categories: arts engagement projects, cultural planning projects, or design projects. This competitive federal grant program is open to non-profit organizations and municipal governments. Website: www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/our-town/introduction

Private Foundation Resources:

- The **National Trust for Historic Preservation** administers the **National Trust Preservation Funds** program, which supports planning studies and other activities to protect historic places and may be used to conduct feasibility studies to determine how historic facilities could appropriately be returned to productive use. Funding may not be used for construction or property acquisition. This is a competitive grant program open to non-profit organizations and members of the National Main Street Network. Website: www.preservationnation.org/resources/find-funding/preservation-funds-guidelines-eligibility.html

- **Preservation Massachusetts** administers the **Predevelopment Loan Fund**, which offers financing to conduct predevelopment work, such as architectural or feasibility studies, for an historic redevelopment project. The applicant must have site control and sites must be on or eligible for the National Historic Register. Website: www.preservationmass.org/programs/predevelopment-loan-fund-2/

State Government Resources:

- The **MassWorks Infrastructure Program** coordinates the administration of six infrastructure programs: Public Works Economic Development (PWED), Community Development Action Grant (CDAG), Growth District Initiative (GDI) Grants, Massachusetts Opportunity Relocation and Expansion (MORE) Grants, Small Town Rural Assistance Program (STRAP), and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Grants. These programs fund a range of publicly owned infrastructure projects. The CDAG Program provides funding to local governments for projects that "build local economies, eliminate blight, create jobs and produce workforce and affordable housing that would not occur by private enterprise alone." The Program requires that projects do not benefit any single individual or business, and that the project must be publicly owned/managed for a minimum of 30 years. Website: www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/pro/infrastructure/massworks

- Programs within the **Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development** (DHCD):

    - The **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program** provides assistance for housing, community, and economic development projects that assist low and moderate-income residents in eligible communities. Municipalities with populations under 50,000 must apply to the competitive state program. Example projects include: public infrastructure or rehabilitation project to support the re-use of a downtown commercial or mixed commercial/residential building; pre-development planning study; or revolving business loan program. Website: www.mass.gov/hed/community/funding/community-development-block-grant-cdbg.html

- The **Massachusetts Downtown Initiative** offers the Technical Assistance Site Visit Program to municipalities. Professional consultant services valued up to $15,000 are provided at no cost to the community for specific issues related to a downtown revitalization effort. The categories of eligible activities include: Business Improvement District (BID), Design, Creative Economy, Economics of Downtown, Housing, Parking, Small Business Support, Walkability, and Wayfinding/Branding. Past awards in the region include: a downtown market assessment for Palmer-Three Rivers (2015), a market study to support the Shelburne Falls Composting Collaborative project (2011), a report to support best practices for small businesses in Millbury (2015), and design guidelines for Auburn's village center (2016). Website: www.mass.gov/hed/community/planning/massachusetts-downtown-initiative-mdi.html

- The **Peer to Peer Technical Assistance Program** provides small grants up to $1,000 to municipalities for short-term problem solving or technical assistance projects. Website: www.mass.gov/hed/community/funding/peer-to-peer.html

- Programs administered by the **Massachusetts Historical Commission** (MHC):

  - The **Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program** is managed by the Massachusetts Historic Commission under the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Under this program a certified rehabilitation project on an income-producing property is eligible to receive up to 20% of the cost of certified rehabilitation expenditures in state tax credits. There is an annual limit on the amount of tax credits available through the Commonwealth's program, so selection criteria is employed to ensure that funds are distributed to the projects that provide the most public benefit. In past years, projects in Downtown Greenfield and Turners Falls have received awards. Website: www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhctax/taxidx.htm

  - The **Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund** is a state-funded 50% reimbursable matching grant program established in 1984 to support the preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites (cultural resources) listed in the State Register of Historic Places. Eligible activities include pre-development, development, and acquisition projects. Website: www.sec.state.ma.us/MHC/mhcmppf/mppfidx.htm

  - The **MHC Survey and Planning Grant Program** is a federally funded, reimbursable, 50/50 matching grant program to support historic preservation planning activities in communities throughout the state. Annual grants are contingent on Massachusetts' federal budget allocation. MHC is required to pass through grant awards representing 10% of its total annual federal funding allocation to Certified Local Governments. Eligible activities include completion of cultural resource inventories, nomination of significant properties to the National Register of Historic Places, completion of community-wide preservation plans, and other types of studies, reports, publications and projects that relate to the identification and protection of significant historic properties and sites. Website: www.sec.state.ma.us/MHC/mhchpp/Surveyandplanning.htm

- Programs administered by the **Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP)**:

    - The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection administers the state's **Brownfields Tax Credit Program**. This program allows a tax credit for eligible clean-up costs. Specifically, the program allows a state tax credit of up to 50% after clean-up is completed, and 25% for a clean-up that uses an Activity and Use Limitation (AUL) on the property. The program also allows for the tax credit to be transferred, sold or assigned to another eligible person or to a non-profit organization. It is important to note that the developer cannot be responsible for the contamination on site. The project must also be located within an economically distressed area, such as a state certified Economic Target Area. The deadline for eligible clean-up costs has been extended to January 1, 2019. Website: www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/cleanup/programs/brownfields-tax-incentives.html

    - The **Massachusetts Land and Water Conservation Fund** provides up to 50% of the total project cost for the acquisition, development and renovation of a park, recreation or conservation area. Municipalities, special districts and state agencies are eligible to apply. Access by the general public is required. Website: www.mass.gov/eea/grants-and-tech-assistance/grants-and-loans/dcs/grant-programs/massachusetts-land-and-water-conservation-fund.html

    - The Massachusetts **Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Program** (formerly the Self-Help Program) was established to assist municipal conservation commissions acquiring land for natural resource and passive outdoor recreation purposes. Lands acquired may include wildlife, habitat, trails, unique natural, historic or cultural resources, water resources, forest, and farm land. Compatible passive outdoor recreational uses such as hiking, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, bird observation and the like are encouraged. Access by the general public is required. Offers a reimbursement rate of 52-70% of project cost with a maximum award amount of $400,000. Website: www.mass.gov/eea/grants-and-tech-assistance/grants-and-loans/dcs/grant-programs/massachusetts-local-acquisitions-for-natural.html

    - The Massachusetts **Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Program** (formerly the Urban Self-Help Program) was established to assist municipalities in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes. Any town with a population of 35,000 or more year-round residents, or any city regardless of size, that has an authorized park /recreation commission is eligible to participate in the program. Communities that do not meet the population criteria listed above may still qualify under the "small town," "regional," or "statewide" project provisions of the program. Grants are available for the acquisition of land and the construction, or renovation of park and outdoor recreation facilities. Access by the general public is required. Up to $250,000 of funding is set aside for grants in the Small Town category. Website: www.mass.gov/eea/grants-and-tech-assistance/grants-and-loans/dcs/grant-programs/massachusetts-local-acquisitions-for-natural.html

- Program administered by the **Massachusetts Office of Business Development** (MOBD):

    - Private businesses can partner with local municipalities and state government for a tax incentive through the state's **Economic Development Incentive Program** (EDIP). The project must be located within an economically distressed area, such as a state certified Economic Target Area. Three Rivers is located in the Ware River Valley Economic Target Area (#35). The EDIP allows communities to negotiate a **Tax Incremental Financing** (TIF) and other tax incentive agreement with a private business that is expanding, renovating, relocating, or building new facilities and creating jobs with an Economic Opportunity Area (a targeted area designated for economic development with an established ETA). For a business seeking a break from their State tax obligation using this program, they must be able to demonstrate that the project will generate substantial sales outside of Massachusetts, and the project must be approved by Town Meeting and the state. The regional office of the Massachusetts Office of Business Development is a key partner in guiding businesses and communities through this process. Website: www.mass.gov/portal/business/taxes/credits-incentives The Town of Palmer's Economic Development Committee reviews each application individually. More information on this program can be found at http://www.mass.gov/hed/economic/eohed/bd/econ-development/ or contact Linda Leduc in the Planning Deptartment. at 413-283-2605.

- **MassDevelopment** is the state's finance and development agency, which works with businesses, developers, non-profits, financial institutions, and communities to provide technical assistance, financing and real estate services. Offering a wide range of finance programs and real estate development services, MassDevelopment supports economic growth, development, and investment across all sectors of the Massachusetts economy: public and private; commercial, industrial, and residential; and nonprofit, including healthcare, educational, cultural, and human service providers. The MassDevelopment staff works in collaboration with private- and public-sector developers, businesses, and banks to identify investors and leverage public and private funds to support economic growth. Website: www.massdevelopment.com

- The **Massachusetts Small Business Development Center (MSBDC) Network** provides one-to-one free comprehensive and confidential services focusing on business growth and strategies, financing and loan assistance as well as strategic, marketing and operational analysis. In addition, low cost educational training programs are offered across the state targeted to the needs of small business. Website: www.msbdc.org

- The **Massachusetts Cultural Council** (MCC) supports access to the arts, sciences and humanities. MCC provides **Local Cultural Councils** with grant funding to support locally selected community based projects. In addition, MCC has the **Cultural Facilities Fund**, which is a competitive program to fund the acquisition, design, repair, renovation and construction of non-profit and municipal cultural facilities. Website: http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/

Please note this is not an exhaustive list of all services available from the Commonwealth. In addition to these State resources, there are additional programs and agencies that provide support to specific sectors or industries, such as **Massachusetts Export Resource Center** (www.mass.gov/export)**, MassTech Innovation Institute** (www.masstech.org), the **Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources** (www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr), and the **Massachusetts Digital Games Institute** (www.massdigi.org). Go to www.mass.gov to find additional resources.

APPENDIX: BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Regional Resources

- The **Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts (EDC)** markets development opportunities in the region, and provides data and information to help business locating to or expanding in the region. Website: www.westernmassedc.com

    - The EDC is a private, non profit corporation that is leading the region's economic development by helping businesses to expand, relocate and succeed in Western Massachusetts. By providing services for no charge, EDC generates quick and simple solutions for many business needs while working for a stronger regional economy and the addition of high quality, local employment.

    - The EDC's mission is to deliver the services and business resources that will enable companies to thrive in Western Massachusetts while improving the region's economy and lifestyle through the creation of quality jobs and enhanced public and private investment. The EDC can help businesses and their representatives in the following areas: Real Estate Searches, Workforce Development, Manufacturing Supply Chain, Data and Demographics, Incentives and Financing, New Market Opportunities, Service Providers, Academic and R&D Connections, and Visitation Programs.

    - The EDC accomplishes this through their work and the collective efforts of seven affiliated partner organizations: the Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau, Springfield Regional Chamber, Amherst Business Improvement District, Springfield Business Improvement District, Westmass Area Development Corporation, Westover Metropolitan Airport and Valley Venture Mentors.

- **Small Business Administration - Western Massachusetts Office**

    - Over the years, the SBA has developed many small business loan and assistance programs, special outreach efforts and initiatives to aid and inform small businesses. The Boston SBA Office is responsible for the delivery of SBA's many programs and services throughout the state. The Western Massachusetts SBA District office is located in Springfield. Website: www.sba.gov/offices/district/ma/boston

- **Western Massachusetts Small Business Development Center**

    - The Massachusetts Small Business Development Center Network's Western Regional Office provides free and confidential one-to-one business advising to prospective and existing small businesses. Services are available to Massachusetts start-ups and existing businesses located in Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin counties. Areas of assistance include business plan development, pre-venture feasibility, conventional and non-conventional financing, cash flow analysis, organizational and personnel issues and marketing. Website: www.msbdc.org/wmass/

- **Western Mass S.C.O.R.E.**
    - The Western Massachusetts chapter of SCORE provides FREE, confidential counseling to small business entrepreneurs at 6 locations in Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, and Berkshire counties. SCORE, the nation's largest volunteer business counseling service, is a nonprofit association dedicated to help those in business, about to start one, or just thinking about it. SCORE chapters provide free mentoring to small business owners and startups, and modestly priced local Workshops as well. Whether you're starting a new business, or are already in business, you could benefit from the experienced counselors' expertise at SCORE. Website: https://westernmassachusetts.score.org/

- **Western New England University Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship**
    - The Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship is a joint effort of the School of Law and College of Business at Western New England University, located in Springfield, Massachusetts. The Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship provides real world learning experiences for graduate business and law students, while at the same time supporting the establishment and development of small businesses in western Massachusetts. The Center's programs fall into two broad categories: clinical services and community outreach. Website: www1.wne.edu/law/centers/innovation-and-entrepreneurship.cfm

- **Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce**
    - The Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce's mission is to advocate for business and community development in the area by providing our members with a voice in political, social and economic issues. We offer numerous opportunities to meet and network with other members which has given some great business contacts and customers. The Chamber of Commerce is a 15 town member district within the Quaboag Hills Region. Website: www.qhma.com/

- **Quaboag Hills Community Coalition**
    - The QHCC is made up of agencies and organizations who work for the people of the Quaboag Hills region in western Massachusetts. They help people get what they need to solve basic problems: food, shelter, childcare, health and substance use, support and information. The region covers a set of fifteen towns in three Massachusetts counties; Hampden, Hampshire and Worcester. Website: http://qhcc.weebly.com/

- **Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation**
    - The Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation (QVCDC) is a private non-profit corporation. As a place-based organization, QVCDC's mission is to improve the quality of life in the Quaboag Valley by addressing the economic, environmental, and social needs of its residents while maintaining the integrity and character or each community in the region. The QVCDC works in partnership with the Quaboag Valley Business Assistance Corporation (QVBAC) and numerous community partners to provide a wide range of programs and

services to enhance the economic climate of our region. Objectives include: loans to area businesses, job creation, business development services, education-to-employment programs, and coordination of community services. QVCDC makes loans from $500 to $100,000 to existing and startup businesses operating withoin the area that cannot access equivalent funding through conventional resources. Website: http://www.qvcdc.org/aboutus.html

- **Springfield Regional Chamber**
    - The Springfield Regional Chamber has been taking care of business for more than a century. Over that time, the Chamber's core mission has remained constant: to promote, support and enhance the economic health of the business community and the region. The Springfield Regional Chamber brings a regional approach to the value of networking, economic development and business development to industry of all sizes and types.
    - The Springfield Regional Chamber is an effective legislative advocate on the local, state and national levels working to educate businesses of all sizes and types during today's changing corporate environment. We help connect members to commerce by providing the tools necessary to forge strategic partnerships. We expand marketing opportunities for member businesses. We lead the way in improving the overall quality of life in the region. And, through the support and involvement of our members, we continue to be a leading force for economic development and civic excellence. Website: www.myonlinechamber.com/
- **Valley Venture Mentors**
    - Valley Venture Mentors (VVM) provides key support to the entrepreneurial ecosystem by uniting carefully selected startups together with high quality business mentors at a structured monthly pitch and planning sessions. These events are oozing with innovation and excitement as entrepreneurs tell their story and then ask for help in addressing specific hurdles – all in crisp seven- minute presentations. During the second part of the session, volunteer mentors gather with the entrepreneurs of their choice and begin to plan, create, and problem solve. Website: www.valleyventurementors.org/
- **Holyoke Community College - The Kittredge Center for Business & Workforce Development**
    - The Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development is the Pioneer Valley's premier resource for workforce training, professional development, and personal growth. It provides innovative and affordable programming that helps businesses, organizations, and individuals achieve their goals. Its offerings range from training and consulting to adult basic education classes. Website: www.hcc.edu/business-and-community/kittredge-center
- **TWO (Training & Workforce Options) - Holyoke Community College & Springfield Technical Community College**
    - TWO is a one-of-a-kind collaboration between Holyoke Community College and Springfield Technical Community College that provides affordable custom contract training for your

business—at your business, on your schedule and customized to fit your company's needs. TWO equips organizations of all sizes to succeed—and thrive—through a variety of professional development trainings and services. We are a certified Workforce Training Fund (WTF) vendor. Websites: www.hcc.edu/business-and-community/training-and-workforce-options and https://www.stcc.edu/wt/two/

- **CareerPOINT MA**
    - Since 1996, CareerPoint has been serving the workforce and economic development needs of individual job seekers, social service agencies, and the business community throughout Hampden County and beyond. Chartered through the Regional Employment Board, CareerPoint specializes in exceptional customer service, innovative programming, creative problem solving, and an entrepreneurial "can do" attitude. CareerPoint transforms the maze of complex, bureaucratic Employment and Training Programs into one seamless service delivery system for job seeking and employer customers alike. And we keep our sense of humor while we do it! Website: www.careerpointma.org/

- **Pioneer Valley Planning Commission**
    - The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) is a regional planning agency serving the 43 cities and towns comprising Hampden and Hampshire Counties. As part of this work, the PVPC administers the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Program, which provides regional economic development planning and maintains the region's eligibility for select U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) competitive grant programs that invest in public infrastructure or feasibility or planning studies that will result in job creation and private investment. The region's economic development plan, the Plan for Progress, lays out four main goal areas over the next decade: Talent Development, Business Growth and Development, Infrastructure, and Collaboration and Engagement.

    - The PVPC also administers a Regional Brownfields Program, funded by grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This Program provides access to a revolving loan fund program to clean-up brownfields sites and funds (as resources allow) to conduct environmental site assessments on eligible properties and at no cost to the property owner. These assessments determine if the site is contaminated, and if so to what extent.

    - The Transportation Planning Section at PVPC conducts transportation planning studies, conducts traffic counts, and administers the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The Pioneer Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the body which approves federally funded projects in Hampshire and Hampden counties. The MPO jointly develops, reviews, and endorses a Planning Works Program which includes a Unified Planning Works Program (UPWP); a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP); a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), as well as any transportation plan or program that may be required by federal and state laws and regulations. The MPO is a forum for cooperative transportation decision making and will seek and consider the advice of any interested party in the Pioneer Valley. The Joint Transportation Committee (JTC) meets monthly to discuss transportation issues and makes recommendations on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Regional

Transportation Plan (RTP), and Unified Planning Works Program (UPWP) endorsements to the MPO.

- In addition, the PVPC partners with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments on the National Scenic Byway Program, which is a federal transportation program that provides funding for eligible scenic byway projects, including the Western Massachusetts Scenic Byway Promotional Campaign, which created marketing materials, logos, way-finding signs, and a website for the seven designated byways of western Massachusetts. Website: www.pvpc.org

- **Common Capital**
  - Common Capital is a non-profit organization that is committed to a thriving local economy in order to create positive social and community impacts. We align capital and other resources to community needs and opportunities. We accomplish this by providing financing and business assistance consultation to small businesses and high-impact community projects. Every dollar that Common Capital deploys is an investment in job creation, providing opportunity for low-income people, essential community services, neighborhood rejuvenation and environmental sustainability. We focus on businesses that are locally owned and that recirculate local dollars. Website: www.common-capital.org/

- **Mass Growth Capital Corporation**
  - MGCC provides a centralized resource at the state level that offers working capital, loan guarantees, and targeted technical assistance to solve specific financial and operational problems. MGCC will provide 50 % of the cost of such assistance while the company being assisted will invest the other 50%. MGCC will build on the work of its predecessor agencies by working with traditional financial institutions to make "un-bankable" loans bankable, by working with community development corporations and other non-profits to provide financing for job-producing projects, and by assisting a wide range of small businesses to find the growth capital they require. MGCC will seek to assist manufacturers that are expanding, other growth sectors and small businesses in our older Gateway Cities. Website: www.massgcc.com/

Market Assessment & Business Recruitment Tool

Three Rivers Downtown Business District

Prepared for and in collaboration with:

The Three Rivers Downtown Task Force, A Partnership of the Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce, Town of Palmer and Palmer Redevelopment Authority
Alice Davey, Community Development Director

FinePoint Associates LLC
Prepared by Peg Barringer
FinePoint Associates
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Sponsored by
Massachusetts Downtown Initiative

Prepared by: Peg Barringer, FinePoint Associates, in collaboration with the Three Rivers Downtown Task Force
Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

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Addendum: Business Recruitment/Marketing Document

Project Purpose

To conduct a market assessment for the Three Rivers Main Street District to help inform revitalization efforts and develop a business recruitment brochure/marketing tool that can be used in conjunction with the planned business recruitment program.

Acknowledgements

This project was sponsored by the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative, a program of the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, Emmy Hahn, Program Coordinator.

This project was conducted by FinePoint Associates, Peg Barringer Project Director, in collaboration with the Downtown Three Rivers Task Force that contributed time, information and insights.

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Gail Farnsworth- French, Quaboag Valley CDC
Renee Niedziela, Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce
John Sasur, Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce
Paul & Lorraine Wisnewski, Three Rivers Residents
Marc Graveline, Crimmins/Graveline Insurance
Dave Golden, Former Branch Manager, North Brookfield Savings Bank
Lenny Weake, Affordable Caskets & Urns
Nancy Roy, Interactive School House

Thank you to the Palmer Historical and Cultural Center Patrons and downtown employees that took the time to respond to surveys and provide input.

Prepared by: Peg Barringer, FinePoint Associates, in collaboration with the Three Rivers Downtown Task Force
Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

Three Rivers Downtown Business District Description

Three Rivers is a village in the western section of Palmer, a Town in western Massachusetts located between Boston, Hartford and New York. The downtown business district runs primarily along Main Street from Pleasant Street to Anderson Street. It is a compact, pedestrian-friendly commercial area, approximately 5 miles in travel distance from Exit 8 off the Massachusetts Turnpike. Buildings of one to three stories line the sidewalks and provide a village center feel.

The downtown district is a hub for commercial, entertainment and recreation uses. Main Street contains a collection of retail and service establishments (e.g., bank, liquor, convenience goods, pizza, beauty/barber shops, law office, tutoring services, etc.) and the Palmer Technology Center, a 300,000 sq. ft. commercial complex. The Palmer Technology Center houses close to 20 businesses ranging from motorcycle seat manufacturing to artisanal chocolate production to special needs and children's day care. The district also features the Palmer Historical and Cultural Center (PHCC), an architectural gem, that offers twice monthly musical and theatrical performances (September to June) and is available for private events. Hrynewicz Park, with iconic band stand, serves as a Town Common hosting many events such as movie nights, summer concerts and a weekly farmers market.

The confluence of three rivers provides a picturesque backdrop for the district and an opportunity for recreational activities. The river is used for kayaking and fishing and is the site for a planned river walk. A large athletic field directly behind the commercial district is frequently used for soccer games and other sports activities. In addition, Pulaski Park, located a short distance from the district hosts several events including weekly music picnics earning its recognition as the "Polka Capital of New England".

Currently, there are several underutilized properties in the target area offering opportunities for new businesses.

Overview of Potential Market Segments

Businesses located in the Three Rivers Downtown have the opportunity to serve several potential market segments:

- Residents of the Surrounding Area
- Employees Working Nearby, particularly at the Palmer Technology Center
- Visitors to Palmer Historical and Cultural Center (PHCC)
- Users of nearby Recreation Facilities (Laviolette Athletic Field, Quabaog River and Pulaski Park)
- E-Commerce Customers and Business–to-Business

** The Three Rivers Downtown Task Force is a partnership of Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce, the Town of Palmer & Redevelopment Authority.*

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Location of Surrounding Commercial Facilities

Grocery, Small Shops, Restaurants, Home Improvement

- ☑ Palmer – small shops & restaurants in Depot Village, Kmart, Ocean State and Big Y Supermarket
- ☑ Immediately surrounding towns of Ware (incl. Walmart Supercenter, Lowes), Wilbraham Area (incl. Home Depot), Ludlow and Belchertown

Regional Malls (apparel, home goods, restaurants, etc.)

- ☑ Eastfield Mall just over Springfield border (regional mall, 900,000 s.f. anchored by Macys and Sears, with movie theater, restaurants, 70 specialty shops) and surrounding area (Lowes, Ocean State, etc.)
- ☑ Holyoke Mall (1.6 million s.f. regional mall anchored by Macy's, Sears, Burlington Coat Factory and JC Penney, 200 stores, several restaurants)

Destination Restaurants and Specialty

- ☑ Sturbridge
- ☑ Amherst
- ☑ Northampton

Cultural/Performing Arts Centers

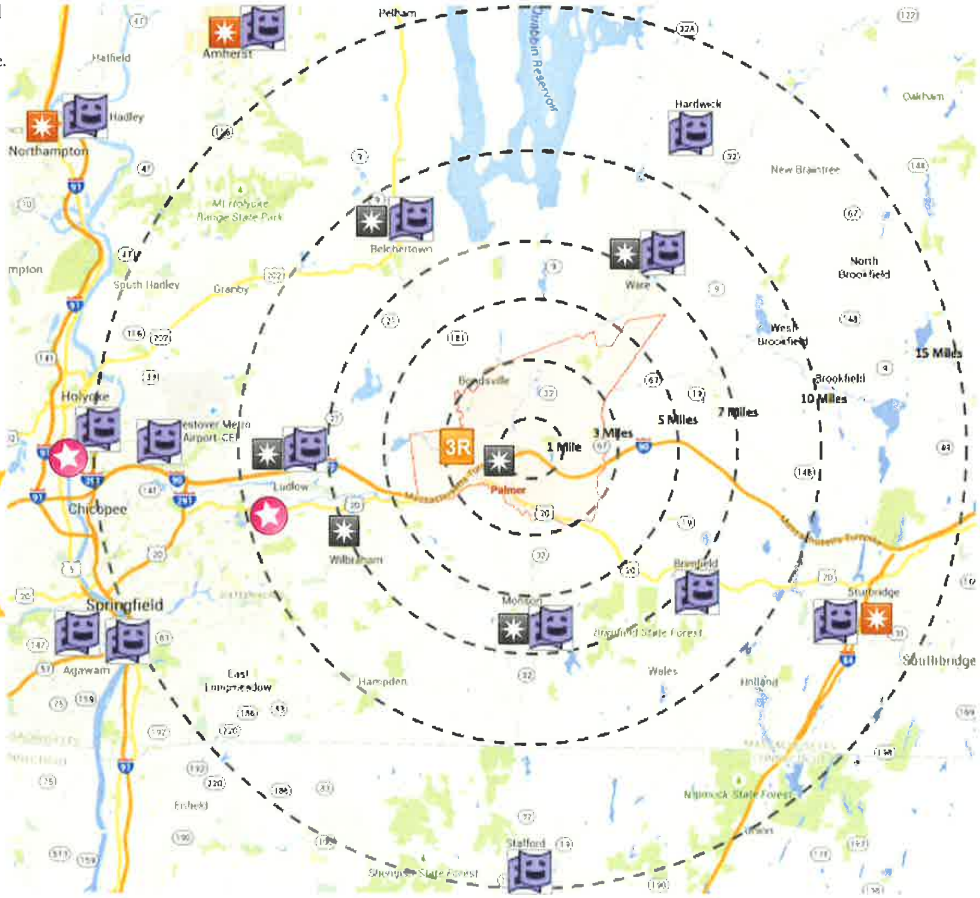
- ☑ Ludlow – Exit 7 Players
- ☑ Hardwick – The Center at Eagle Hill
- ☑ Belchertown – Belchertown performing Arts Center
- ☑ Monson -Memorial Hall/Monson Art Council
- ☑ Ware - Workshop 13
- ☑ Brimfield – Hitchcock Academy
- ☑ Stafford Springs, Palace Theater
- ☑ Fiskdale/Sturbridge - Stageloft Repertory
- ☑ Chicopee - Hu Ke Lau
- ☑ Holyoke – Enchanted Circle Theater
- ☑ Springfield – Bing Arts Ctr, CityStage, Symphony Hall
- ☑ Northampton – Calvin Theatre
- ☑ Amherst – UMass Fine Arts Center

*** Note:** This listing and map is intended to be illustrative not exhaustive.

There are commercial facilities located in most surrounding towns. Competition intensifies significantly beyond the 7- mile radius and is much more intense to the West. The center point used for the radii is MA exit 8; this is because there is less competition and more opportunity to draw customers to the east.

Denser Commercial Competition (All Types)

- ☑ Springfield, Chicopee, Holyoke



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Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

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Potential Market Segments Description

Resident Market Segments

- **Residents** of the surrounding area comprise the largest potential customer base for businesses located in downtown Three Rivers. The primary trade area has been identified as a 7-mile radius from Exit 8 of the MA turnpike. The primary trade area is the region from which most of the regular, repeat sales are expected to generate. A secondary trade area, a 10-mile radius, has also been identified as offering some potential for sales.

✓ More than 45,000 residents live within the 7-mile primary trade area (TA1). Residents of this trade area spend over $518 million per year at stores and restaurants. Currently, over $190 million (37%) is being spent outside of the primary trade area. This is known as "sales leakage" and may constitute opportunity for new or existing businesses. The most significant sales leakage is in the following categories: Clothing, Jewelry, Other Miscellaneous Retailers (pets/supplies, tobacco, art, other), Gifts, Sporting Goods/Hobby/Toy, Home Furnishings, Electronics, Full-service Restaurants and Furniture Stores. This indicates a retail gap and a geographic advantage for new businesses within TA1 (as residents are currently traveling significant distances to shop and dine). However, the potential for new businesses in downtown Three Rivers to capture this leakage is dependent on their ability to offer equivalent quality goods, services and shopping environment. Some businesses (such as clothing and accessories) do better when they clustered and offer comparative shopping options; this may lessen the potential to attract retailers in these categories.

✓ Over 110,000 residents live within 10 miles, the secondary trade area (TA2). Residents of the secondary trade area spend over $1.2 billion per year at retail stores and restaurants. Currently, more than $366 million (30%) is being spent outside of the 10-mile trade area. A smaller potential market capture would be expected within the secondary trade area , however, depending on the uniqueness of the offering, there may be some opportunity for capturing expenditures for specialty retail or services.

✓ A detailed description of population, demographic characteristics and consumer patterns is provided in the section entitled "Resident Market Segments: Trade Areas, Demographics, Expenditures & Sales leakage".

Non-Resident Market Segments

- **Visitors to the Palmer Historical and Cultural Center** coming to enjoy one of the many performances and special events. The Center offers live music, dramatic performances and other cultural events about twice per month during September through June. In addition the venue is available for weddings, parties and other private events. Harmony Hall (the Center's largest event space) can accommodate seating for 160 people theater-style and 80 people with function style seating while the smaller Villages Room is suitable for smaller gatherings. There may be an unmet market opportunity to serve audiences looking for a meal or snack before or after performances or catering/culinary services for special events.

✓ A survey of Cultural Center patrons (September 2015) showed that approximately 75% of patrons come from within the 7-mile trade area, another 14% come from between 7 and 10 miles and approximately 7% comes from between 10 and 15 miles. Currently about one-third of patrons go out to eat before or after PHCC events (about 60% in Three Rivers, predominantly at Pinocchio's). The survey results showed that these patrons typically go out to eat 50% of the time when attending cultural events anywhere (not just at PHCC) indicating that they might go out more often if more options were available. Other activities that patrons like to do in combination with attending a cultural performance/event include: 1.) have a drink/cocktail, 2.) walk around the area/shop and 3.) have coffee, tea or dessert. The top three most frequently cited business types that respondents said they would patronize include: 1.) restaurants, cafes, pubs, 2.) coffee shops and 3.) specialty food such as ice cream/yogurt, bakery. Additional information about survey results can be found in the section entitled "Non Resident Market Segments: Palmer Historical and Cultural Center Patrons Survey Results".

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Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

Potential Market Segments Description (cont'd)

Non-Resident Market Segments (cont'd)

- **Employees** of nearby businesses (particularly at the Palmer Technology Center located at the western edge of the commercial district). There are approximately 20 businesses located at the Technology Center with a total of over 200 employees. According to interviews with several employers (conducted by Downtown Task Force members) these employees get regularly scheduled lunch breaks and would be interested in additional food options available nearby and by delivery. One of the larger employers frequently buys lunch for their employees (i.e., twice per week) and another mentioned they order lunch from a restaurant in Ludlow because it delivers.

✓ A survey of Palmer Technology Center employees (September 2015) indicates that this may be a largely untapped market. While about one-quarter of employees said they patronize downtown Three Rivers businesses several times per week, three-quarters patronize businesses once per week or less, including over 30% that patronize businesses less than once per month. Employees located in downtown spend close to $700,000 per year on work day meal purchases but are making less than 20% of their purchases in downtown Three Rivers.. Other shopping and errands that employees do during or after their work day include: 1) grocery shopping, 2.) purchase gas, and 3.) go to a drugstore. Additional information about survey results can be found in the section entitled "Non Resident Market Segments: Downtown Three Rivers Employee Survey Results".

- **Users of nearby Recreational Facilities** including Laviolette Athletic Field, the Quaboag River (blue trail and planned river walk), AMVETS, and Pulaski Park (Polka Capital of New England) that attracts hundreds of visitors to weekly seasonal Polish picnic and music events. There may be opportunity to market to these potential customers and entice them to patronize businesses in the business district.
  - Pulaski Park/St. Stan's – 10 Sunday polka events, averaging 300 people (90% from out of town) plus 20 other Friday/Saturday music club events
  - AMVETS – 35 bingo nights annually, averaging 250 people (40% from out of town) plus about 50 other events per year such as weddings, showers, breakfast, pitch league, blood drives, etc.
  - Laviolette Field – more than 15 events per year that attracts players and parents of local and visiting team members (approximately 50 per event)

- **E-Commerce and Business-to-Business (B2B)Customers** beyond the surrounding area. Inexpensive operating costs make the area a good location for start-ups and other companies that attract some sales from Internet and B2B.

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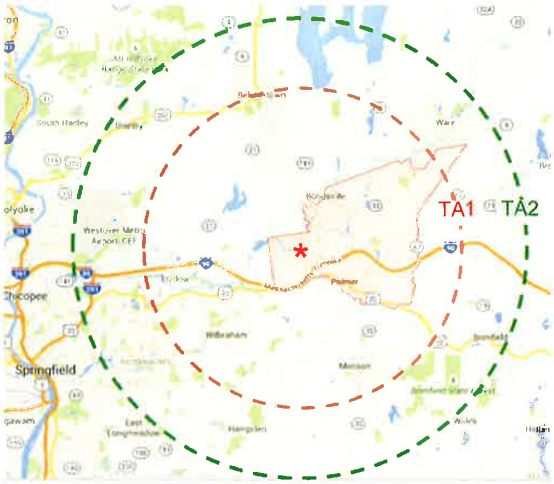
Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

Three Rivers Business District

Market Profile (cont'd)



7-Mile Radius (TA1) 10-Mile Radius (TA2)

Resident Market Segments:

Trade Areas, Demographics, Expenditures & Sales Leakage

Residents living in the surrounding area represent a major market opportunity for a business district. After discussing consumers patterns with local business owners and residents, and reviewing the location of existing commercial facilities and circulation routes, it was determined that a 7- mile radius and 10-mile radius represent the market areas most accessible for businesses located in the Three Rivers Main Street Target Area.

The following presents an analysis of the market population living within two trade areas:
Primary Market Area - Trade Area 1 (TA1): 7-Mile Radius
Secondary Market Area -Trade Area 2 (TA2): 10-Mile Radius

Retail & Restaurant Opportunity

GROWING MARKET

Trade Area 1 (TA1) = 7 Mile Radius

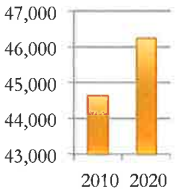
Residents spend
518 million
per year at stores & restaurants*

Over **$190 Million** being spent outside TA1

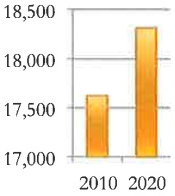
$71 **Million** spent at non-store retailers

2015 Population	2015 Households	2015 Household Income Median	Average
45,239	17,897	$64,716	$81,815

Population



Households



Growth rate in the trade area is approximately 50% the rate of the state

Trade Area 2 (TA2) = 10 Mile Radius

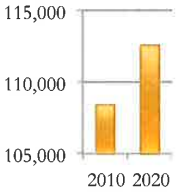
Residents spend
1.2 billion
per year at stores & restaurants*

Over **$366 Million** being spent outside TA2

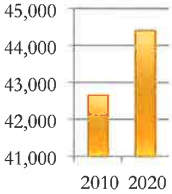
$169 **Million** spent at non-store retailers

2015 Population	2015 Households	2015 Household Income Median	Average
110,011	43,364	$62,999	$80,435

Population



Households



Growth rate in the trade area is approximately 60% the rate of the state

** Excludes motor vehicle and gas station purchases. ** All data is 2015 estimates unless noted.*

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Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

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Three Rivers Business District

Market Profile (cont'd)

Residents

Median age is **44.5** in TA1 and **43.1** in TA2 compared to 39.7 statewide and 37.9 in U.S.

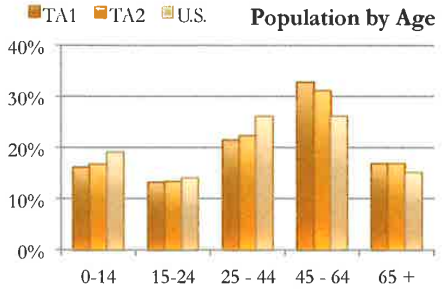
69% Families TA1

66% in U.S.

32% of households in TA1 and **32%** in TA2 contain children compared to 31% statewide and 33% U.S.

13% **New Customers in the Neighborhood?**

of county residents moved to current home in the last year

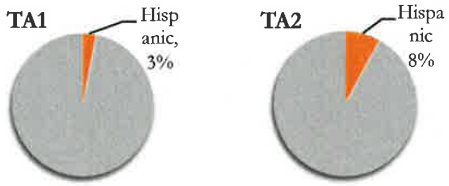


MULTI - CULTURAL

Race & Ethnicity	TA1	TA2	MA
White Alone	95%	89%	79%
Black/African American	1%	4%	7%
Asian	1%	1%	6%
Other/More than 1 Race	3%	5%	8%
Latino/Hispanic	3%	8%	11%

8% of TA1 and 14% of TA2 residents speak a language besides English at home

Asian/Pacific Island Language: 0 - 1%, Indo/European Language: 6 - 8%, Spanish: 2 - 5%, Other: 3 - 5%



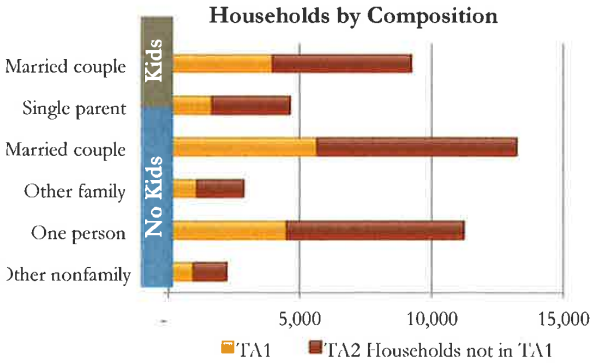
Cultural Concentration	TA1	US
Polish	15%	2%
French (except Basque)	14%	2%
Irish	12%	7%
Italian	9%	4%
French Canadian	7%	<1%

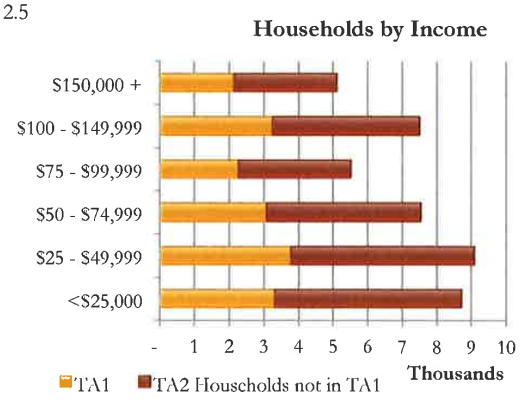
Lifestyle

2.5 Persons per Household in TA1 and 2.5 in TA2 compared to 2.5 statewide

78% Homeowners in TA1, **76%** in TA2, 62% in MA

Foot Traffic . . . **7% & 8% car-free** households in TA1 and TA2 respectfully -- residents likely to shop close to home





7,679 households in TA1 have income > $75,000; Median household income is $64,716 & $62,999 in TA1 & TA2; $67,928 statewide, $53,706 in U.S.

38% TA1 & TA2 residents have Associates Degree or higher; 47% statewide, 37% in the U.S.

Prepared by: Peg Barringer, FinePoint Associates, in collaboration with the Three Rivers Downtown Task Force
Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

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Three Rivers Business District

Market Profile (cont'd)

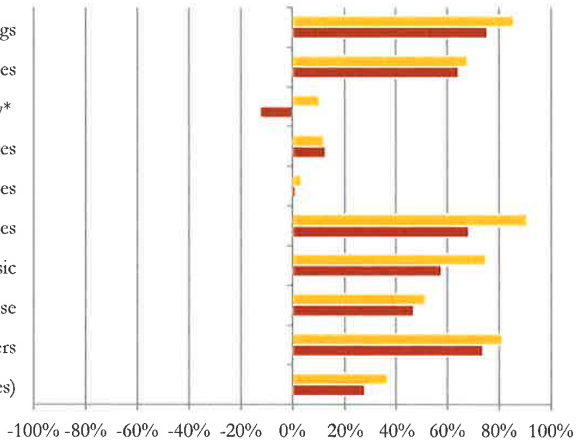
Expenditures

Spending Power

TA1	TA2	
$16.8	$40.0	Furniture & Home Furnishings
$15.1	$35.9	Electronics & Appliances
$92.2	$217.7	Bldg. Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply*
$104.0	$247.6	Food & Beverage Stores
$44.6	$106.7	Health & Personal Care Stores
$39.0	$93.3	Clothing & Accessories
$15.7	$37.5	Sporting Gds., Hobby, Books, Music
$95.8	$228.9	General Merchandise
$23.4	$55.0	Misc. Store Retailers
$71.5	$169.8	Food Service & Drinking (excl. spec. foodservices)

$ millions

Local Demand Compared to Local Business Sales



The most significant TA1 sales leakage is in following categories: Clothing, Jewelry, Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers (pets/supplies, tobacco, art, other), Gifts, Sporting Goods/Hobby/Toy, Home Furnishings, Electronics, Full-service Restaurants and Furniture Stores.

$ millions

Est. Sales Leakage - Select Categories	TA1	TA2
Furniture Stores-4421	$7.24	$14.44
Home Furnishing Stores-4422	$7.17	$15.72
Electronics and Appliance Stores-443	$10.18	$23.04
Paint and Wallpaper Stores-44412	$1.10	$1.74
Hardware Stores-44413	($0.44)	($2.09)
Supermarkets, Groc. (Ex Conv)-44511	$5.76	$11.82
Convenience Stores-44512	$1.19	$4.60
Specialty Food Stores-4452	($3.07)	($6.44)
Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores-4453	$8.74	$21.29
Pharmacies and Drug Stores-44611	($3.29)	($8.99)
Cosmetics, Beauty Supplies-44612	$2.48	$5.86
Optical Goods Stores-44613	$0.06	($1.94)
Other Health/Personal Care Stores-44619	$2.29	$6.35
Clothing Stores-4481	$18.68	$28.05
Shoe Stores-4482	$2.51	$2.84
Jewelry Stores-44831	$12.77	$29.18
Sporting Goods, Hobby Stores-4511	$9.82	$19.47
Book, Periodical and Music Stores-4512	$1.96	$2.14
Department Stores Ex Leased Depts-4521	$16.24	$21.46
Other General Merchandise Stores-4529	$32.92	$85.43
Florists-4531	$0.81	$1.94
Office Supplies and Stationery -45321	$5.02	$9.61
Gift, Novelty and Souvenir Stores-45322	$3.69	$6.40
Used Merchandise Stores-4533	$0.78	$2.54
Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers-4539	$8.70	$19.97
Full-Service Restaurants-7221	$16.26	$26.28
Limited-Service Eating Places-7222	$8.92	$19.93
Drinking Places- Alcoholic Beverages-7224	$1.14	$0.92

Opportunity Gap (Sales Leakage)
The retail categories with high sales leakage may suggest opportunity for local businesses (existing and/or new businesses). To determine the feasibility of capturing the leakage, it is necessary to evaluate the strength of the competing businesses outside of the trade area that are currently attracting resident expenditures.

In categories showing little or no leakage, it does not necessarily mean that there is no opportunity. There might be opportunity depending on the ability of local businesses to attract expenditures from non-resident market segments (i.e., employees and visitors) and/or overtake trade from existing competition by offering more desirable products or services.

Negative Sales Leakage (Surplus)
Categories with negative sales leakage indicate that businesses are currently meeting more than just local demand. Businesses in these categories are generating sales from customers that live outside of the identified trade area which may include employees of nearby businesses or visitors travelling into the district from beyond the immediate area because of attractions or destination businesses.

*Note: Sales leakage calculations include all businesses in the trade area, not just the business in the commercial district.

* *Includes building material dealers not typically located in retail districts*

Prepared by: Peg Barringer, FinePoint Associates, in collaboration with the Three Rivers Downtown Task Force
Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

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Additional Data Tables

Est. Population by Age	TA1		TA2		MA	U.S.
	45,239	%	110,011	%	%	%
Age 0 - 4	2,133	5	5,485	5	5	6
Age 5 - 9	2,293	5	5,797	5	6	6
Age 10 - 14	2,852	6	7,014	6	6	6
Age 15 - 17	1,848	4	4,570	4	4	4
Age 18 - 20	1,705	4	4,225	4	5	4
Age 21 - 24	2,397	5	5,864	5	6	6
Age 25 - 34	4,550	10	11,804	11	13	13
Age 35 - 44	5,122	11	12,720	12	12	13
Age 45 - 54	7,624	17	17,331	16	15	14
Age 55 - 64	7,133	16	16,782	15	13	13
Age 65 - 74	4,402	10	10,487	10	9	8
Age 75 - 84	2,065	5	5,220	5	4	4
Age 85 and over	1,116	2	2,712	2	2	2

Est. Households by Size	TA1		TA2		MA	U.S.
	17,897	%	43,364	%	%	%
1-persons	4,520	25	11,186	26	29	27
2-persons	6,166	34	14,655	34	32	32
3-persons	3,097	17	7,565	17	16	16
4-persons	2,618	15	6,258	14	14	13
5-persons	1,006	6	2,497	6	6	6
6 or more	490	3	1,204	3	3	5

Est. Households by Income	TA1		TA2	%	MA %	U.S.%
< $15,000	1,707	10	4,671	11	12	13
$15,000 - $24,999	1,626	9	4,029	9	9	11
$25,000 - $34,999	1,786	10	4,056	9	8	10
$35,000 - $49,999	2,013	11	5,012	12	11	14
$50,000 - $74,999	3,087	17	7,527	17	16	18
$75,000 - $99,999	2,271	13	5,497	13	13	12
$100,000 - $124,999	1,979	11	4,493	10	10	8
$125,000 - $149,999	1,278	7	2,987	7	7	5
$150,000 - $199,999	1,203	7	2,803	6	8	5
$200,000 - $249,999	443	2	1,069	2	3	2
$250,000 - $499,999	415	2	991	2	4	2
$500,000+	90	1	228	1	2	1
Med. Household Income	64,716		62,999		67,928	53,706

Avg. Length of Residence (Years)	TA1	TA2	MA	US
Homeowners	20	20	19	17
Renters	10	9	9	8

Est. Population 16+ by Employment Status	TA1-%	TA2-%	MA %	US %
In Labor Force	67	97	67	64
Employed	60	61	61	58
Self-employed	10	10	9	10
Unemployed	7	6	6	6

Est. Population 16+ by Occupation	TA1-%	TA2-%	MA %	US %
Architect/Engineer	2	2	2	2
Arts/Entertain/Sports	1	1	2	2
Building Grounds Maint	3	3	3	4
Business/Financial Ops	5	5	6	5
Community/Soc Svcs	1	1	2	2
Computer/Math	2	2	4	3
Construction/Extract	6	6	4	5
Edu/Training/Library	8	7	7	6
Farm/Fish/Forestry	0	0	0	1
Food Prep/Serving	5	6	5	6
Health Practitioner/Tec	8	8	7	6
Healthcare Support	3	3	3	3
Maintenance Repair	4	4	3	3
Legal	1	1	1	1
Life/Phys/Soc Science	1	1	2	1
Management	10	9	11	10
Office/Admin Support	11	12	13	14
Production	6	6	4	6
Protective Svcs	2	3	2	2
Sales/Related	10	11	10	11
Personal Care/Svc	4	3	4	4
Transportation/Moving	6	6	4	6

Est. Population Age 25+ by Education	TA1-%	TA2-%	MA %	US %
Less than 9th grade	3	4	5	6
Some High School	7	7	6	8
High School Grad/GED)	33	32	26	28
Some College, no degree	21	20	17	21
Associate Degree	9	9	8	8
Bachelor's Degree	18	18	22	18
Master's Degree	8	8	12	8
Professional School Degree	1	2	3	2
Doctorate Degree	1	1	2	1

Prepared by: Peg Barringer, FinePoint Associates, in collaboration with the Three Rivers Downtown Task Force
Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

Three Rivers Business District — **Market Profile (cont'd)**

Additional Data Tables

Est. Hispanic Population by Origin	TA1		TA2		MA	U.S.
	45,239		110,011		%	%
Not Hispanic or Latino	43,947	97	101,759	92	89	82
Hispanic or Latino:	1,292	3	8,252	8	11	18
Mexican	123	10	426	5	6	63
Puerto Rican	836	65	6,505	79	42	9
Cuban	46	4	137	2	2	3
Other	286	22	1,184	14	50	25

Est. Population-Asian Alone by Category	TA1		TA2		MA	U.S.
	45,239	%	110,011	%	%	%
Not Asian Alone	44,773	99	108,489	99	94	95
Asian Alone	466	1	1,522	1	6	5
Chinese, except Taiwanese	174	37	494	32	35	22
Filipino	14	3	98	6	3	17
Japanese	2	0	3	0	2	5
Asian Indian	38	8	74	5	21	19
Korean	78	17	241	16	7	10
Vietnamese	17	4	83	5	13	11
Cambodian	52	11	225	15	8	2
Hmong	0	0	0	0	0	2
Laotian	13	3	30	2	1	1
Thai	12	3	86	6	1	1
Other	67	14	187	12	9	10

Est. Population by Ancestry	TA1		TA2		MA	U.S.
	45,239	%	110,011	%	%	%
Arab	171	0.4	442	0.4	0.9	0.5
Czech	37	0.1	113	0.1	0.1	0.3
Danish	65	0.1	133	0.1	0.1	0.2
Dutch	118	0.3	331	0.3	0.3	0.8
English	3,499	7.7	8,157	7.4	6.3	5.5
French (exc. Basque)	6,464	14.3	13,566	12.3	4.7	1.6
French Canadian	3,267	7.2	6,175	5.6	2.8	0.5
German	1,981	4.4	4,600	4.2	3.3	10.4
Greek	168	0.4	426	0.4	1.0	0.3
Hungarian	80	0.2	156	0.1	0.2	0.3
Irish	5,314	11.7	12,434	11.3	16.1	6.8
Italian	4,082	9.0	9,806	8.9	10.1	4.2
Lithuanian	274	0.6	543	0.5	0.5	0.1
U.S./American	1,425	3.1	3,725	3.4	3.8	6.7
Norwegian	109	0.2	239	0.2	0.3	0.9
Polish	6,615	14.6	14,001	12.7	3.2	2.0
Portuguese	1,714	3.8	5,623	5.1	3.7	0.3
Russian	114	0.3	349	0.3	1.3	0.6
Scottish	767	1.7	1,709	1.6	1.3	1.1
Scotch-Irish	133	0.3	384	0.3	0.5	0.8
Slovak	1	0.0	79	0.1	0.1	0.1
Subsaharan African	50	0.1	769	0.7	1.7	0.9
Swedish	427	0.9	854	0.8	1.0	0.8
Swiss	53	0.1	91	0.1	0.1	0.2
Ukrainian	146	0.3	351	0.3	0.3	0.2
Welsh	45	0.1	106	0.1	0.2	0.3
West Indian (exc Hisp groups)	57	0.1	253	0.2	1.7	0.8
Other ancestries	4,618	10.2	16,178	14.7	26.3	40.7

= Cultural Concentrations

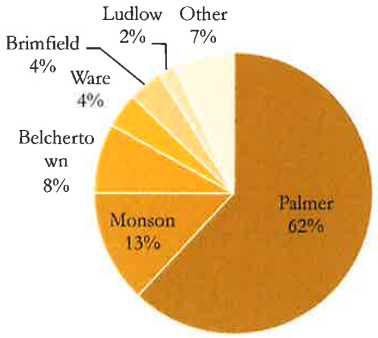
Prepared by: Peg Barringer, FinePoint Associates, in collaboration with the Three Rivers Downtown Task Force
Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

Non Resident Market Segments:
Palmer Historical and Cultural Center Patrons Survey Results

Survey Conducted September, 2015 (84 respondents)

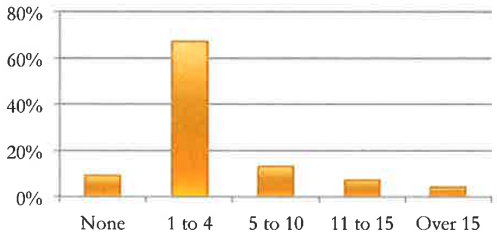
Residency and Attendance Frequency

Where do Patrons Live



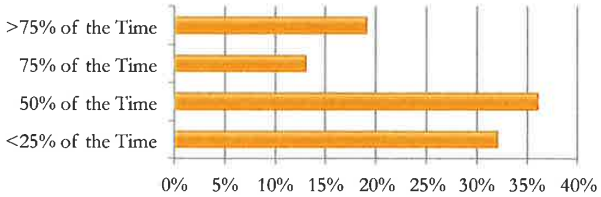
Other includes: Springfield, W. Springfield, East Longmeadow, West Brookfield, Northampton and Holland

Frequency of Attending PHCC Events
(# of Times in Last Year)



Consumer Behavior Before and After Cultural Events

When Attending a Cultural Performance/ Event ANYWHERE . . . how often do Patrons typically go out to eat before or after?



Weighted average = 49% . . Typically, close to 50% would likely go out to eat before or after a cultural performance.

Other Activities that Patrons Like to do in Combination with Attending Cultural Performance/Event	
1.	Have a drink/cocktail
2.	Walk around/shop
3.	Have coffee, tea, dessert

When Attending their last Cultural Performance/Event at PHCC . . . did Patrons go out to eat before or after?

Approximately 1/3 of patrons went out to eat before or after last PHCC event.

Of those that dined out:

- 80% dined in Palmer (Pinocchio's, Steaming Tender)
- 20% dined in other communities

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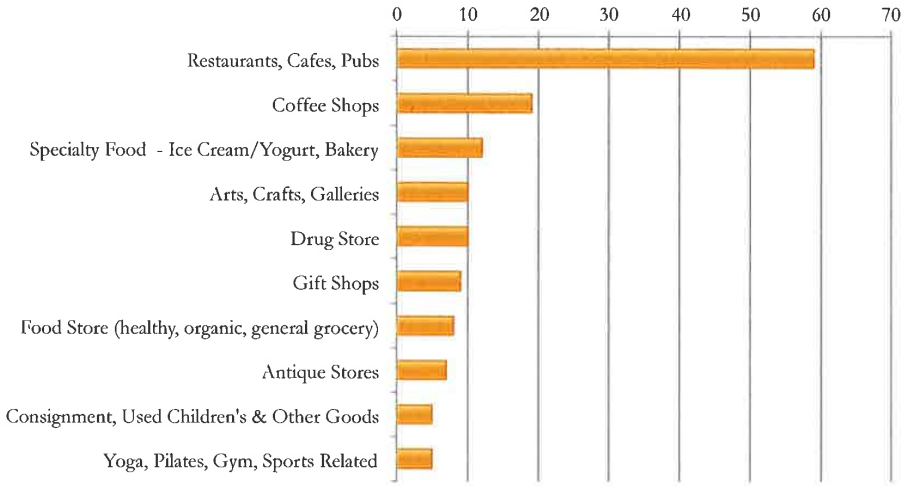
Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

Non Resident Market Segments:
Palmer Historical and Cultural Center Patrons (cont'd)

Survey Conducted September, 2015

Businesses that Patrons would Like to See in Downtown Three Rivers



*In some cases, respondents cited more than one business in a category.

Specific Businesses Mentioned: Dunkin Donuts (coffee shop), CVS (drugstore), Aldi's (grocery)

Prepared by: Peg Barringer, FinePoint Associates, in collaboration with the Three Rivers Downtown Task Force
Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

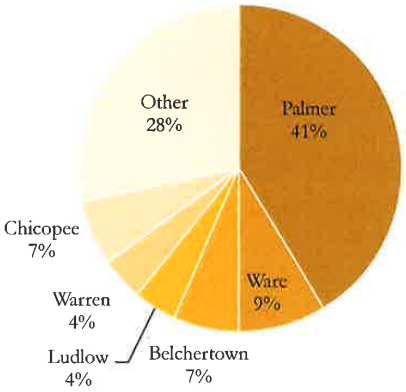
Non Resident Market Segments:

Downtown Three Rivers Employee Survey Results

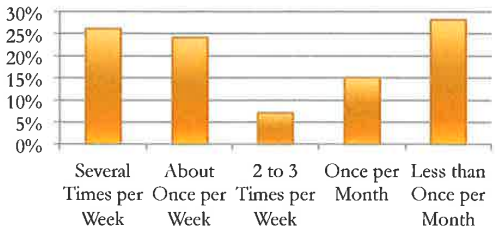
Survey Conducted September, 2015 (46 respondents)

Residency and Patronage Frequency

Where do Employees Live



Frequency of Patronizing Main Street Three Rivers Businesses



Businesses Patronized: Gas Station (12); Dominick's Restaurant (10); Saporito's Pizza (9); Corner Store (7); Pinocchio's Restaurant (5); Tenczar's Superette (5)

Consumer Behavior During Work Day

Current Employee Spending on Work Day Food Purchases

	Avg. Times Employees Purchase per Week	Avg. Expenditure	Expenditures per Week	Expenditures per Yr	Total Expenditures for DT Employees	% Being Spent in DT Three Rivers
Breakfast	2.82	$5.24	$14.79	$739	$147,864	11%
Lunch	2.29	$9.18	$21.01	$1,050	$210,075	21%
Dinner	1.63	$17.07	$27.73	$1,387	$277,333	13%
Total			$65.53	$3,176	$685,272	

** Employees may eat out more often/spend more if more options were available.*

Shopping & Errands During or After Work Day	
1.	Grocery shopping
2.	Purchase Gas
3.	Drugstore

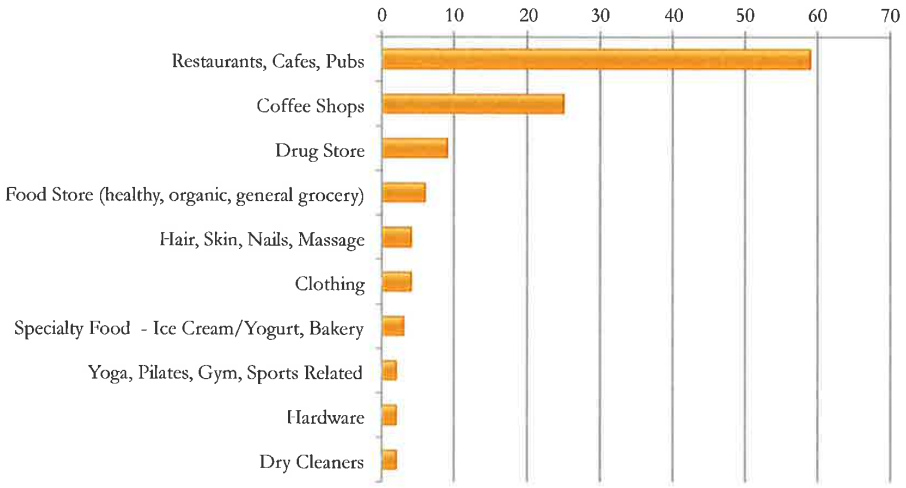
Top 5 Most Frequently Mentioned Places for Meal Purchases During Work Day	
1.	Oscar's, Ludlow
2.	Dunkin Donuts, Palmer
3.	Paramount Pizza, Palmer
4.	Burgundy Brook, Palmer
5.	Tang's, Palmer

Prepared by: Peg Barringer, FinePoint Associates, in collaboration with the Three Rivers Downtown Task Force
Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

Non Resident Market Segments:
Downtown Three Rivers Employees (cont'd)

Survey Conducted September, 2015

Businesses that Employees would Like to See in Downtown Three Rivers



*In some cases, respondents cited more than one business in a category.

Specific Businesses Mentioned: Subway (sandwich shop), KFC, Panera Bread, Wendy's, Dunkin Donuts (coffee shop), Dippin Donuts, Starbucks, CVS (drugstore), Walgreens, Aldi's (grocery), Dollar Tree (dollar discount store)

Prepared by: Peg Barringer, FinePoint Associates, in collaboration with the Three Rivers Downtown Task Force
Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

Overview and Suggestions for Consideration Moving Forward

Downtown Three Rivers has a walkable layout, a picturesque riverside setting, an attractive town common, several historic buildings and a cultural center with a growing list of events. There appears to be moderate sales leakage and therefore possible market potential opportunities in several retail and restaurant categories. However, it is unclear that businesses looking to capture those sales would be likely to choose Downtown Three Rivers at the present time over other possible locations within the trade area (such as Depot Village). The following are some suggestions to consider.

1. **Market the Area to Small Businesses**. Make businesses aware of the locational advantages of the area and provide services and incentives (e.g., rent assistance, storefront improvement grants/loans, technical assistance, tax incentives). Use the Business Recruitment Brochure developed for Downtown Three Rivers (see Addendum).

2. **Build on what you have.** Consider the existing clusters of businesses and activities in the area and look for potential complementary business opportunities. Strategize about what actions can be taken to encourage complementary businesses to locate in downtown Three Rivers.

Existing Clusters	Complementary Businesses/Other
Children and Education Interactive School House Blue Stone Dojang (martial arts) Learning Factory Day Care Head Start Palmer Monson Family Network Laviolette Sports Field	Children's Theater Dance Studio Children's consignment/gently used equipment & clothing Ice cream/yogurt shop Family restaurant Toy/game Kids sports, family fun center, place for kids parties After school programs Educational institutions
Dining & Entertainment Palmer Historical & Cultural Center St. Stan's Polish Club Pinocchio's Ristorante Saporito's Pizza Polka Picnics (Pulaski Park)	Coffee Shops Bakery/Café Restaurants, eateries Ice cream/yogurt shop Children's Theater, Adult Theater Company Cultural/entertainment events in the Common
Recreation/Sporting Quabaog River Laviolette Field Pulaski Park	Outdoor/Sporting Goods (fly-fishing, canoe, kayak, etc.) Hobby Team uniforms, trophy store Gym, yoga, pilates Climbing gym, trampoline park
Arts Palmer Historical & Cultural Center	Storefront art gallery using vacant storefront windows (improve the appearance and give people something to walk around and see) Art/craft store, store selling locally produced products Art studio, production, display space Art/craft fair in the park
Startups, Entrepreneurs, Small Businesses Palmer Technology Center (20 companies) Technical Assistance and Loans available from QVCDC	More start-up companies Business incubator Makerspace facility Coffee and lunch places

Prepared by: Peg Barringer, FinePoint Associates, in collaboration with the Three Rivers Downtown Task Force
Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

Summary and Suggestions for Consideration Moving Forward (cont'd)

3. **Explore traditional and non traditional tenants as well as temporary enterprises and events to improve leasing environment and promote vibrancy.** The high vacancy and condition of some properties may make it challenging to attract traditional retailers and restaurants at the present time. It would be prudent to look at both traditional and non-traditional tenant possibilities to increase the business activity on the street and improve the leasing environment. It would also be a good idea to work on creating temporary activities and enterprises (pop-up retail, public markets, art fairs, etc.) to promote the area as a vibrant place for social interaction and commerce.

4. **Build partnership with Pathfinders Regional Vocational Technology High School and explore possibilities of creating a school-associated Coffee Shop or Restaurant and other ways to work together to support revitalization of downtown Three Rivers.** Pathfinders Tech is located very close to downtown Three Rivers and is a great asset for the area. This school currently has a culinary training program and operates a part-time restaurant and a tea room at their facility. Perhaps there could be an opportunity to partner with the school and encourage them to use one of the properties in downtown to create a coffee shop or other restaurant open to the public on a full-time or part-time basis. There may also be other potential opportunities to involve the school in revitalization efforts and bringing vibrancy into downtown Three Rivers (events, special projects, use of facilities).

5. **Activate the town common/Hrynewicz Park with more events.** The Town is already doing a great job with movie nights and a seasonal farmers market. Consider expanding programing, inviting groups to put on events through an RFP/Call for Producers process. Example: arts/crafts, school performances, flea market/tag sale, etc.

6. **Broadcast openness to social enterprises.** A social enterprise is a mission driven organization that trades in goods and services for a social purpose. There are all kinds of social enterprises -- from businesses involved in alternative energy and accomplishing environmental goals to businesses that provide job training and create employment for disadvantaged populations -- all kinds of enterprises focused on making a better world. Since Three Rivers is located within relative close proximity to several universities, there may be budding social entrepreneurs with ideas that would consider locating in Three Rivers.

7. **Do something to improve the appearance and activate vacant properties in the short term.** Turners Falls set up an art gallery of sorts using their empty forefront windows. This might make a great complement to PHCC events – survey respondents said they like to walk around before and after performances. Plus, it would give local residents a reason to walk around downtown and perhaps even attract people from out of town. Contact local universities and art associations to see if they would be willing to curate a show.

8. **Complete a property inventory**. Find out who owns the properties, if they are available for lease or sale, rental and sale prices, length of existing leases, if the owner has any plans for the property and the general condition.

9. **Develop a public relations and branding campaign to make people (potential businesses and customers) more aware of Three Rivers and create a positive image.** It is necessary to spread the word about where Three Rivers is located and that it is a good, safe place to live, work, recreate and locate a business.

10. **Implement a Storefront Improvement program with design guidelines.** Many storefronts in downtown Three Rivers require improvement and current conditions are likely impeding the attraction of businesses and customers. A storefront/façade improvement program that provided a matching grant or forgivable loan could help entice property owners to make an investment that could benefit the entire area.

11. **Pick a couple of projects that could have short term impact.** Select one or two ideas that seem feasible, can be accomplished in the near term and have the commitment of a specific team of people willing to spearhead them.

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Sources: The Nielsen Company, U.S. Census, InfoUSA, American Community Survey, Primary Data Collection, www.FinePointAssociates.com

Addendum:
Business Recruitment/Marketing Document

Downtown Three Rivers

P A L M E R , M A

Bring your Business to Downtown Three Rivers

We're recruiting!

- Coffee shop, cafés, sit-down restaurants, ice cream
- Children's new and used products & services
- Recreation-related businesses, sporting, hobby
- Artists, artisans and creative enterprises
- Social enterprises and education related services
- Vintage/consignment, antiques
- Children's theater company
- Pet products & services
- Hair, skin & nail services
- Professional offices
- Entrepreneurs & exciting startups
- Microbrewery
- Other great ideas

Three Rivers is a village in the Town of Palmer, Massachusetts, located between Boston, Hartford and New York. The downtown is a compact, pedestrian-friendly commercial area with one to three story buildings lining the sidewalks and a village center feel.

Top Ten Reasons to Locate Your Business in Downtown Three Rivers

1. Market opportunity --- over 45,000 potential customers living within 7 miles, and more than 200 employees work in the downtown district every day.
2. Easy access from the Mass Pike (Exit 8) and other Highways (Routes 32 and 20).
3. Regional cultural anchor -- very active and growing Palmer Historical and Cultural Center offering numerous performances and events throughout the year.
4. Waterside setting at the convergence of three rivers (with planned river walk).
5. Compact, walkable commercial district with beautiful bridges, vistas and wildlife.
6. Attractive town common offering serene workday respite and great venue for social events.
7. Affordable storefront and other commercial rental space.
8. Nearby recreational attractions that draw residents and out-of-town visitors.
9. Close to regional vocational high school, town offices, courthouse and office/industrial complexes.
10. Within commuting distance of several universities, including the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

For more information . . . Quaboag Hills Commercial Action Network, 413-283-2418, www.qhcan.com

Prepared for and in collaboration with the Three Rivers Downtown Task Force by FinePoint Associates, www.FinePointAssociates.com 1

P A L M E R , M A

Downtown Three Rivers is a hub for commercial, entertainment and recreation uses. Main Street contains a collection of retail and service establishments (e.g., bank, liquor, convenience goods, pizza, beauty/barber shops, law office, tutoring services, etc.) and the Palmer Technology Center, a 300,000 sq. ft. commercial complex. The Tech Center houses close to 20 businesses ranging from motorcycle seat manufacturing to artisanal chocolate production to day care. The district also features the Palmer Historical and Cultural Center, an architectural gem, that offers musical and theatrical performances. Hrynewicz Park, serves as a Town Common and the site of many events such as movie nights, summer concerts and a weekly farmers market.

The confluence of three rivers provides a picturesque backdrop for the district and an opportunity for recreational activities. The river is used for kayaking and fishing and is the site for a planned river walk. A large athletic field directly behind the commercial district is frequently used for soccer games and other sports. In addition, Pulaski Park, located a short distance from the district hosts several events including weekly music picnics, that draw hundreds of visitors, earning it recognition as the "Polka Capital of New England".

Currently, several underutilized properties offer opportunities for new businesses.

Business Mix	
Food and Beverage Stores	4
Eating & Drinking Places	3
Entertainment	3
Home Improvement	1
Bank	1
Healthcare and Related Services	4
Professional Services	3
Children and Family-Related Services	5
Personal Services	2
Government Services	2
Manufacturing	4
Other	9
Total	**41**

Palmer Historical & Cultural Center (PHCC) Located in Downtown Three Rivers, this multipurpose performance center and function hall draws visitors from throughout the region. The 160-seat theater hosts live music, dramatic performances and other cultural events from September through June. With adjacent parking off Main Street, the Center is also a convenient space for weddings, showers and other private functions. Harmony Hall, the larger space, can hold up to 160 people with theater-style seating or 80 people with function-style seating, and the Villages Room is ideal for smaller gatherings.

MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

Local residents (within 7 miles) spend $72 million on dining and $446 million on the types of retail goods that could be located right in Downtown!

Opportunity for New Businesses

7-Mile Trade Area

0ver 45,000 residents live within 7 miles of Downtown Three Rivers. **The median household income in this area is $64,716, within 5% of the State median and 21% higher than the U.S.**

The residents of this area spend approximately $518 million at retail stores and restaurants each year. Close to 40%, (over $190 million) is being spent outside of the trade area.

10-Mile Trade Area

Over 110,000 residents live within 10 miles of Downtown Three Rivers. **The median household income in this area is $62,999, within 7% of the State median and 17% higher than the U.S.**

The residents of this area spend approximately $1.2 billion on retail and restaurants each year. Close to 30% (over $366 million) is being spent outside of the trade area.

* 2015 Estimates

Spending Power (millions)

Annual Expenditures	7 Mile	10 Mile
Furniture & Furnishings	$16.80	$39.99
Electronics, Appliances, Hardware, Building Materials	$107.29	$253.54
Food & Beverage Stores	$103.96	$247.57
Health & Personal Care Stores	$44.64	$106.65
Clothing & Accessories	$39.04	$93.31
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Books, Music	$15.73	$37.49
General Merchandise & Misc.	$119.24	$283.91
Eating & Drinking Places	$71.54	$169.85
Total	**$518**	**$1,232**

Demographics

2015	7 Mile	10 Mile	U.S.
Population & Households			
Population	45,239	110,011	———
Households	17,897	43,364	———
Median Age	44.5	43.1	37.9
Avg. Household Size	2.51	2.5	2.57
Households with Children	37%	37%	37%
Owner-Occupied	78%	76%	65%
Income			
Median HH Income	$64,716	$62,999	$53,706
Average HH Income	$81,815	$80,435	$74,165
Per Capita Income	$32,367	$31,706	$28,114
Education			
Associates Degree +	38%	37%	37%
Bachelor Degree +	28%	28%	29%
Race & Ethnicity			
White	95%	89%	71%
African American	1%	4%	13%
Asian	1%	1%	5%
Other/>1 Race	3%	5%	11%
Hispanic Origin	3%	8%	18%
Age			
0 - 14	16%	17%	19%
15- 24	13%	13%	14%
25-44	21%	22%	26%
45-64	33%	31%	26%
65+	17%	17%	15%

P A L M E R , M A

"In 2013, I opened my retail showroom in the Palmer Technology Center in downtown Three Rivers. This location provides easy access for my customers and is a big asset for me when it comes to delivering my products throughout the region. Being a new business I had to consider the costs of rent and Three Rivers offers a great value for the price. The town common gives me a space to relax during my workday down time and the bridges allow me to enjoy bird watching, one of my favorite pastimes. I'm really happy I picked downtown Three Rivers for my business location and would recommend it to anyone with a dream of opening or moving their business to an amazing town with lots of potential for growth."

- Lenny Weake, Owner, Affordable Caskets and Urns

Area Attractions

- Palmer Historical & Cultural Center (PHCC)
- Pulaski Park, Polka Capital of New England (in Three Rivers)
- Railroad Research Center at Palmer Public Library
- World Famous Antique & Collectible Shows in nearby Brimfield (three times per year)
- Laviolette Field

Always Something Happening

- Three Rivers Farmer's Market (weekly during the season)
- Shows, Music, Lectures & Movies at PHCC
- Polka picnics (weekly in summer) and other music events at Polaski Park and St. Stan's Polish Club.
- Movie Nights and Concerts on the Common
- AMVETS Bingo and other events
- And more . . .

Business Assistance is Available!

The Three Rivers Small Business Development Program sponsored by Town of Palmer & Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce can help with:

- location assistance, and
- in some cases, commercial rent subsidy may be available.

Through a partnership with Quaboag Valley CDC (www.qvcdc.org), businesses may be eligible for:

- Mini grants for business development services (e.g., accounting, legal, financial planning, marketing)
- Loans from $500 to $100,000
- Computer and Other Classes (e.g., Microsoft Office, QuickBooks, workforce training)

"Kids love the inviting space of my school in Three Rivers. This affordable location provides generous square footage for storage and comfortable studio space for our tutoring and creative workshops. The Main Street location offers easy drop off of students to my front door, and the back door opens onto an active ball park and municipal parking lot. We like doing business in downtown Three Rivers — it works for us and our customers."

- Nancy Roy, Owner, Interactive School House, LLC