Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

Reading, MA

dhcd
Massachusetts

RAPID RECOVERY PLANS

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Acknowledgements

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125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

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

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

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Rapid Recovery Planning Program

● Program Communities
○ Non-Participating Towns and Cities
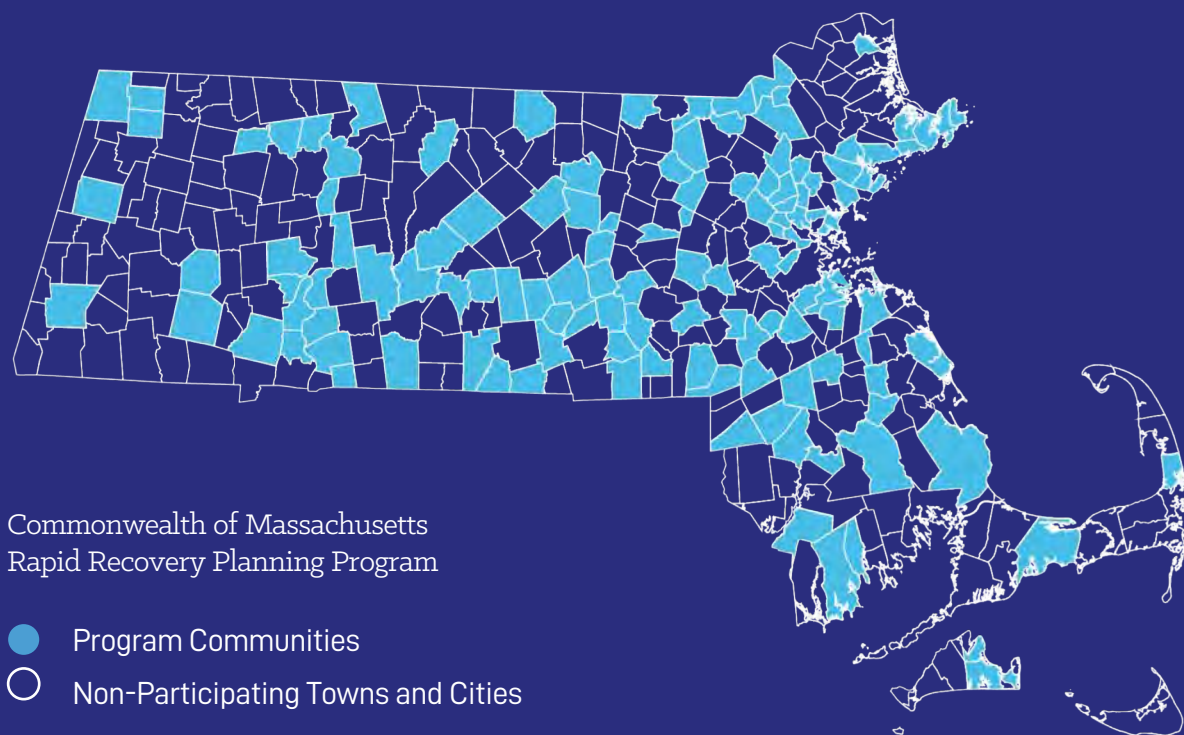
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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

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

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

Each Rapid Recovery Plan was developed across three phases between February-August 2021. Phase 1 - Diagnostic, Phase 2- Project Recommendations, Phase 3 - Plan.
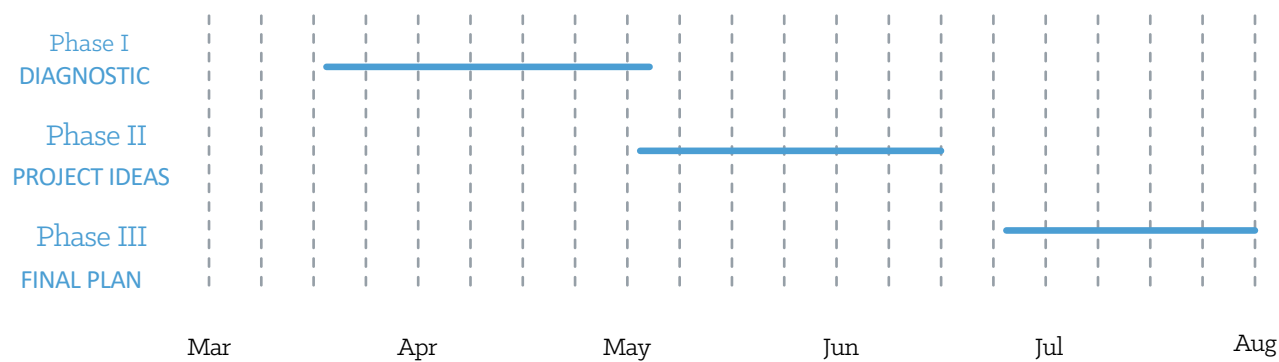
In Phase 1: Diagnostic, Plan Facilitators utilized the Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework that was adapted from the award-winning Commercial DNA approach as published by the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) in "Preparing a Commercial District Diagnostic", and authored by Larisa Ortiz, Managing Director, Streetsense (RRP Program Advisor).

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

Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework

CUSTOMER BASE

Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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

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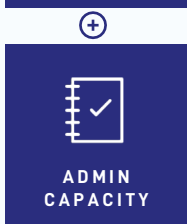
Who are the key stewards of the Study Area? Are they adequately staffed and resourced to support implementation of projects? Are the regulatory, zoning, and permitting processes an impediment to business activity?

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

| Public Realm | Private Realm | Tenant Mix | Revenue/Sales | Admin Capacity | Cultural/Arts | Other |

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Creating a Strong & Resilient Downtown for Everyone

Reading, Massachusetts is a residential suburb located 12 miles north of Boston, MA. With a total population of 26,183, Reading retains a small-town feel with great access to the rest of the region. The Downtown is quaint and attractive with wide sidewalks, streets lined with trees and home to several independent retailers, restaurants, professional and personal service establishments. Nearly all of Downtown is contained within ½ mile, making it a very walkable destination. The Downtown is also accessible by four highway interchanges (all within 2 miles) and served by the MBTA Commuter Rail and Bus System.

Due to these great qualities, the Town has experienced several mixed-use redevelopment projects in the Downtown within the last 10 years. As a result, there has been an increase in foot-traffic and activity in the Downtown prior to COVID-19. Ground floor vacancies remain low, and newly developed commercial spaces are being leased as the Town continues to recover from COVID-19 impacts.

However, the community wants more in their Downtown. Since 2019 the Town has heard from residents that they would like to see more activity in the Downtown, including placemaking, arts, and entertainment. Similarly, they would like to see a better mix of shops and restaurants.

As Reading continues to attract new business and redevelopment opportunities, it is important to ensure existing businesses remain strong and resilient, while also increasing efforts through programming and business attraction that will give residents a reason to shop and visit downtown.

Therefore, to support recovery efforts and attract more visitors to Downtown Reading, the Project Team has identified three main themes for COVID-19 Recovery:

Improved Access/Connectivity: The Town should implement solutions that improve connectivity through the Downtown. This includes deploying interventions that will encourage walking/strolling through the district, better connecting Main Street with Lower Haven Street, and wayfinding solutions to identify destinations while ensuring users can easily navigate the challenging system of one-way streets in Downtown.

Technical Assistance/Business Support: Since the COVID-19 pandemic, shopping habits of Reading residents has changed. As a result many of the Downtown businesses relied on their online presence to fill the revenue gap. While many businesses have already adapted to this new way of doing business, many expressed desire for additional support in marketing their business online. The Town should should create programs that would provide technical assistance and business support to promote stronger district marketing efforts, while also being able to support businesses one-on-one with their digital website and marketing needs.

Outdoor Activity/Placemaking: The Town should leverage creative solutions that will attract more visitors to the Downtown. This includes strategies related to creative placemaking, taking advantage of outdoor dining/selling opportunities, and creating more events or activities for visitors to experience.

A map of the Downtown can be seen on the following page.
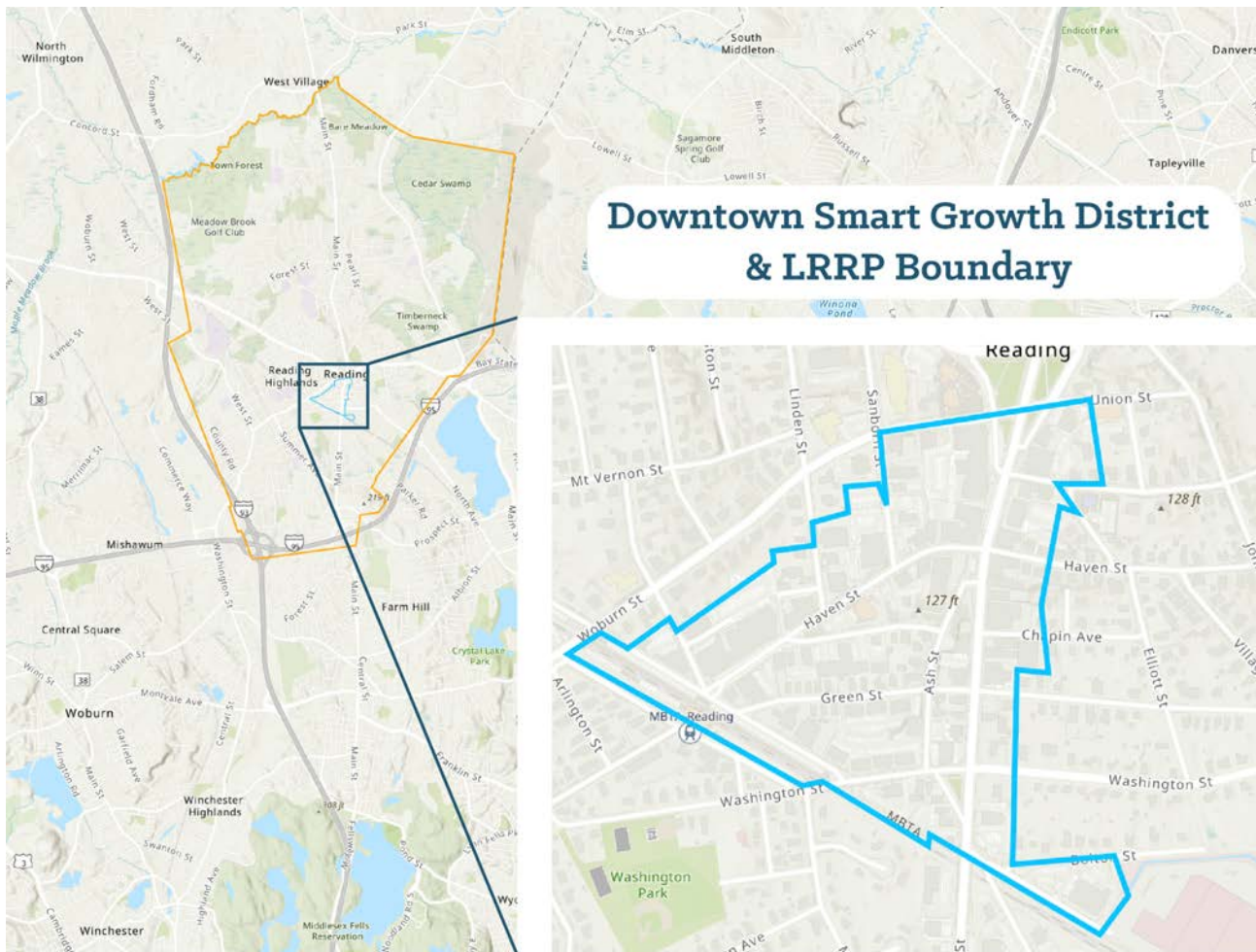
Regional Map of Town of Reading and Downtown Smart Growth District/LRRP Boundary

Diagnostic

Diagnostic Process

As part of Phase 1, one of the goals for the Project Team was to identify the impacts businesses experienced as a result of COVID-19 along with challenges related to recovery efforts. At the same time, the Project Team felt it was necessary to understand the shopping habits of consumers as it relates to COVID-19 while also gaining insight as to what they would like to see for the Downtown moving into recovery. The following is a summary of the process in which this information was gathered from the business and consumer community.

1. Business Survey: The Project Team administered a Business Survey to businesses in Downtown Reading. The survey was administered in March 2021, primarily through email communication, was posted on the Town of Reading website, and flyers were handed out in-person to businesses in the Downtown. The survey closed on April 16, 2021.

2. Consumer Survey: The Project Team administered a community-wide survey in May of 2021 to residents seeking input on their past and current shopping habits. This survey also asked participants questions related to future wants/desires which would encourage them to visit Downtown more frequently. The survey was distributed via Town Communication channels and also within the quarterly water bill. The survey was closed on June 18, 2021.

3. Data Collection: The Project Team also collected various data points, including required data points for the RRP program.

The Phase 1 Diagnostics, was then presented the the community via Zoom Meeting on June 16, 2021. The presentation included a summary of findings within the Diagnostic Framework along with some initial project recommendations.

Phase I DIAGNOSTIC		
Phase II PROJECT IDEAS		
Phase III FINAL PLAN		

Mar   Apr   May   Jun   Jul   Aug
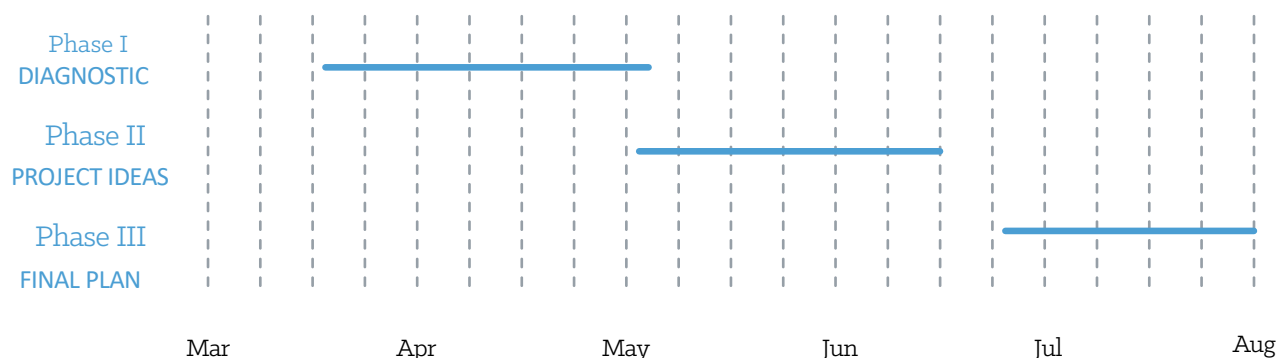
Key Findings

CUSTOMER BASE

The Town's customer base is young, well-educated, and high earners

Reading's customer base consists of well educated, high-earning, young family households. The median age of Reading residents is 41 and nearly half of households include 2.64 persons. Over a quarter of the population is between the ages of 0-20 while 32% is aged 55+. The median household income is $126,457.

Prior to COVID, customers usually visited downtown for dining/takeout or shopping and generally only visited one or two businesses per trip. Very few indicated they like to stroll or window shop when they are visiting downtown. In general, customers are driving to downtown, and they are bringing their kids and/or spouse/partner when they do visit.

COVID-19 did have an impact on customer shopping habits in Reading's downtown. At the time the customer survey was administered (May/June 2021), we learned that they were shopping online and ordering food takeout more since COVID, and feel most comfortable visiting take-out restaurants, or restaurants that offered outdoor seating.

In order to bring customers back to downtown Reading, we learned they would like to see a better selection of restaurants, more outdoor dining options, more variety in retail offerings, arts & placemaking activities, and more entertainment. These responses echo what was expressed by residents in 2019 when Reading conducted a survey as part of their Reimagine Reading downtown visioning process.

Demographic	Town of Reading
College Educated or Higher	87%
Ages 0-20	26%
21-24	5%
25-34	12%
35-44	11%
45-54	13%
55+	32%
Race (Non-White)	11%
Average Household Size	2.64
Median Household Income	$126,457

US Census, 2021 Estimate

In-Person Shopping Frequency Since COVID

- Less 49%
- More 13%
- About the Same 38%
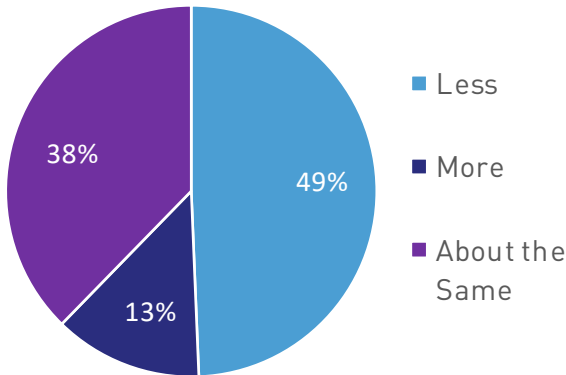
LRRP Customer Survey

Downtown Reading can leverage it's physical environment

The downtown of Reading underwent a $6.1 million dollar downtown improvement project in 2008. The project involved the redesign of streets in the area along Main Street, from Washington Street to Lowell Street, aimed at improving vehicle and pedestrian access, while including upgrades to streetscape elements such as brick crosswalks, new sidewalks, landscaping, and period lighting. This project also updated traffic signals, which included bicycle detection at many of the intersections. While most of the work was limited to Main Street, minor areas of Lowell Street, Ash and Harden Street were also included in this project.

Haven Street, the other main commercial street in Downtown Reading, was not included in that 2008 project. The sidewalks are in moderate condition and provide for safe pedestrian access for the majority of Haven Street from Main Street to High Street. Crosswalks are available at every intersection, but many of them utilize the Transverse (standard) crosswalk pattern, rather than the more visible and preferred Ladder or Continental style.

Public Realm Elements	Rating*
Sidewalks	B
Street Trees and Benches	A
Lighting	B
Wayfinding & Signage	B
Roadbed and Crosswalks	B

*Ratings: See appendix for rating scale

Private Realm Elements	Rating*
Windows	B
Outdoor Display/Dining	F
Signage	A
Awnings	C
Façade	B
Lighting	B

*Ratings: See appendix for rating scale

In general, downtown Reading has several comfortable amenities for pedestrians, including wide-sidewalks, benches, crosswalks at every intersection, and several street trees. However, amenities like benches and street trees were primarily observed along Main Street.

To try and provide more of these amenities, the Town established the Bistro Table Program where street furniture is provided by the Town and business owners "adopt" it by agreeing to store them at the end of each day and in the off-season.

There are approximately 138 storefronts within the downtown and are generally in good condition. Since the completion of the 2008 streetscape project and subsequent adoption of the 40R district in the Downtown, there has been several redevelopment mix-use projects. As such, many of the private buildings and facades are in good condition. However, several properties could benefit from repair or maintenance to ensure downtown remains an attractive place to visit.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Street Trees & Benches in Downtown Reading

Storefront, Downtown Reading, MA. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Downtown Reading is strong, but needs more

Businesses in the Downtown were not immune to impacts of COVID-19. About 76% of businesses reported generating less revenue in 2020 then they did in 2019 and for nearly 40% of these businesses, their revenue declined by 25% or more.

However, Reading's downtown is strong. Despite the fact there were 7 business closures since 2020, the downtown saw 8 new business openings (or expansions). There have also been a number of new mixed used developments with commercial storefront spaces, many of which are under lease and/or being built out to be opening soon, leaving the vacancy rate around 4.7%, below the Boston area average.

Revenue in 2020 Compared to 2019

Category	%
Increased	7%
Stayed the Same	13%
Decreased 1-24%	37%
Decreased 25-49%	29%
Decreased 50-74%	1%
Decreased 75-100%	9%
Don't Know/NA	3%

LRRP Business Survey

Even though downtown businesses are doing well, many of them expressed interest in COVID recovery support to help with improving their marketing strategies, attracting new businesses to the district, and improving the regulatory environment to allow for more outdoor dining/selling and parking availability.

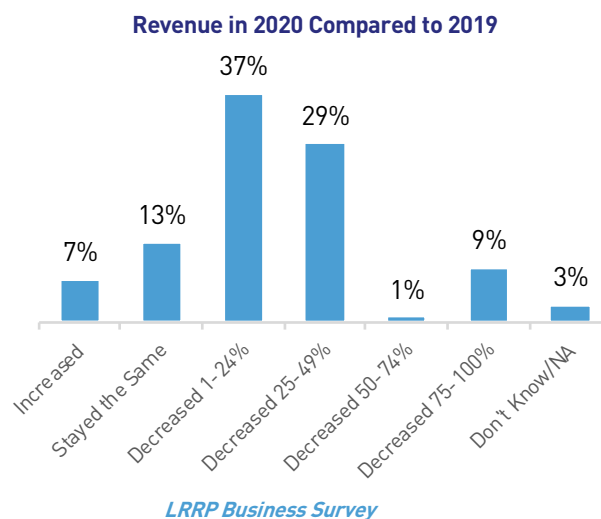When it comes to visiting businesses in the downtown, only 13% of respondents from the customer survey indicated they window shop or stroll or will visit multiple businesses during one trip. This is likely as a result of the current tenant mix weighing heavily in the personal care and medical use sector and less in retail shops and restaurants which tend to support more strolling and window shopping activity. This is further echoed by customers who said the lack of shops or restaurants that interest them is one of the reasons they don't visit downtown more regularly.

Customers want more when it comes to offerings in downtown. According to the Customer Survey, a better selection of restaurants, better variety of retail shops, more outdoor dining, more entertainment, events and arts & culture activities would bring them downtown more often.

Shopping Habits Prior to COVID

Category	%
I don't shop there	2%
I may visit a business on my way to or from commuting on the commuter rail	0.6%
I like to take time to stroll and window shop, visiting multiple businesses	13%
I will visit multiple businesses for a few reasons and then leave	39%
I will visit one business for a specific reason and then leave	45%

LRRP Customer Survey

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT
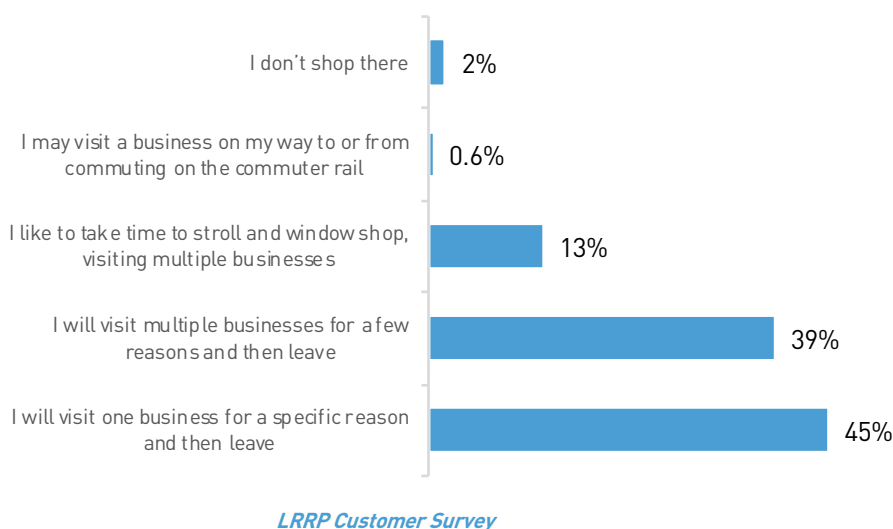
Building Capacity with the business community

ADMIN CAPACITY

The Town of Reading Planning Staff and Economic Development Staff have been instrumental in finding ways to build capacity to support COVID-19 recovery efforts in the Downtown. In addition to their own efforts, including developing the Back to Business Toolkit, and Bistro Table Program for more outdoor seating, the Town has continued to build partnerships with local organizations including the Reading/North Reading Chamber of Commerce, fraternal organizations such as the Rotary Club, and informal organizations like the Reading Retailer's Collaborative.

Most recently, the Town participated in, and encouraged a discussion around district organizing. This effort, which begun in 2019, has resulted in a private group of residents, business owners and property owners forming a steering committee hopes to become a formalized Business Improvement District (BID) that can support future activity in the downtown. The initial goals and activities they would pursue, should the BID be established, would involve support for downtown businesses in the realm of marketing, branding, placemaking, technical assistance and advocacy.

Moving forward, it will be important to continue to build capacity and leverage these partnerships for many of the projects moving forward.

Back to Business Toolkit: Town of Reading

Bistro Tables, Downtown Reading, MA. Photo Credit: Town of Reading

Highlights from the Physical Environment

ACCESS

Downtown Reading is centered near the intersection of Main Street (MA Route 28) and Lowell Street (MA Route 129). The entire district is approximately 46 acres.

Reading has great highway access and is served by four highway interchanges. From Interstate 95, Reading can be accessed via Main Street (Route 28), Washington Street, or Lowell Street (Route 129). From Interstate 93, Reading can be accessed via Lowell Street (Route 129). Each of these access points provides an easy route to Downtown, all under 2 miles.
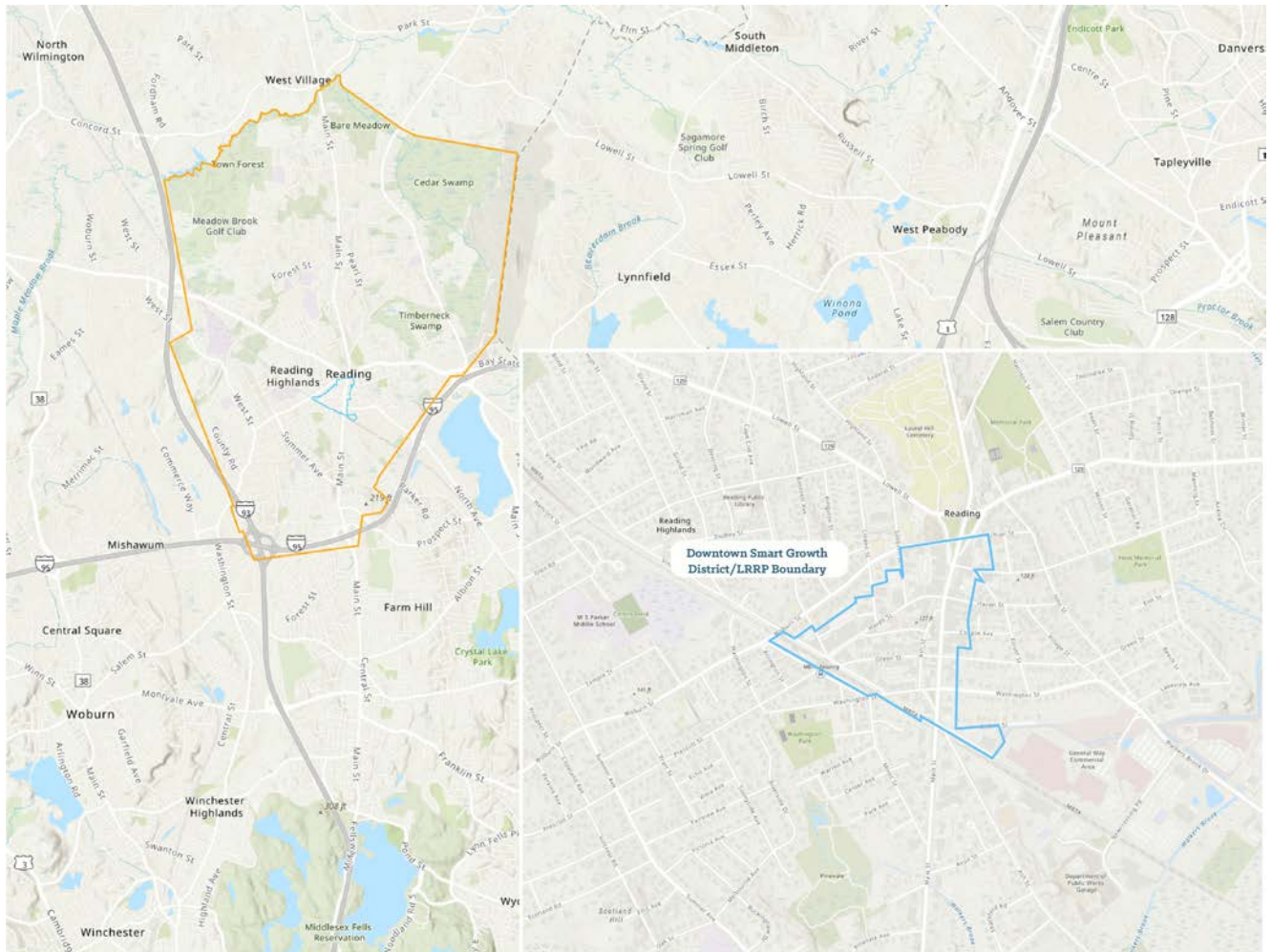
Regional Map of Town of Reading and Downtown Smart Growth District/LRRP Boundary

ACCESS (continued)

Downtown Reading is served by by the MBTA Commuter Rail system with a station located at Haven and High Street. The Downtown is also served by a MBTA Bus Route with a few stops within the district.

The entire Downtown is walkable under ½ a mile, with sidewalks available on most streets. Bike racks were observed primarily on sidewalks adjacent to the Main Street area of Downtown and at the MBTA Commuter Rail Station.

There are approximately 670 public parking spaces in the Downtown Smart Growth/LRRP District*. These spaces are free but many of them have time or use restrictions. The town has also recently installed two electric car charging stations within the district – one is located at the MBTA Train Station Depot and the other is in a small public parking lot at the corner of Main Street/Haven Street.

According to the Business Survey, access did not seem to be a challenge for businesses or their employees. However, both business owners and customers and business owners expressed dissatisfaction with parking access and regulations in Downtown Reading.

Downtown Bike Rack, Reading, MA. Photo Source: Favermann Design

Map of Downtown Reading. Source: Favermann Design

*Per the Town of Reading, there are a total of approximately 1,400 public parking spaces within the Downtown, which expands beyond the boundary of the LRRP District. The 670 public spaces are only what was observed within the official LRRP District Boundary.

Highlights from the Physical Environment

VISIBILITY

Reading's Downtown Businesses are situated primarily along Main Street and Haven Street. Main Street (also known as Route 28) in the Downtown varies in width between 3-4 lanes and is a primary route for those driving into Stoneham and North Reading.

Even with the pedestrian bump-outs, street banners and very visible crosswalks, Main Street in the downtown can feel more like a state highway, rather than a local downtown street. Coupled with the lack of business wayfinding or destination markers, drivers are likely to be unaware of additional shopping/dining opportunities down Haven Street.

Businesses however, have done well with making themselves visible despite the physical challenges of the street layout. While most businesses have legible signage, including the use of blade signs to capture passing by vehicle and pedestrian traffic there were still several properties that could benefit from repairs to their signs and/or awnings.

Street lighting is available in the downtown – including decorative, period lighting along Main Street and portions of Haven Street. However many businesses had limited storefront lighting after hours, which can make the pedestrian environment less inviting and comfortable during these times.

Main Street (Route 28) in Downtown Reading. Source: Google Street View

Main Street Businesses, Reading, MA. Photo Credit: Town of Reading

Town of Reading Wayfinding System. Designed by Favermann Design

Highlights from the Physical Environment

VISIBILITY (continued)

The Town has begun to implement a wayfinding program with prioritizing parking signage to better direct drivers navigate to public parking areas.

Improving visibility to and within the Downtown through further implementation of the approved wayfinding system and gateway elements will help visitors better navigate through the Downtown.

Additionally, the Town should encourage businesses to ensure their signage is up-to-date, visible and well maintained and storefronts illuminated off-hours to increase awareness and foot-traffic in the district.

Town of Reading Wayfinding. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Highlights from the Physical Environment

PUBLIC & PRIVATE REALMS

As a result of the 2008, $6.1 million dollar downtown improvement project downtown, Reading enjoys many upgraded streetscape elements such as brick crosswalks, new sidewalks, landscaping, period lighting that make the downtown an attractive and pleasant place to visit. The work was limited to Main Street, minor areas of Lowell Street, Ash and Harden Street, leaving most of Haven Street (the secondary shopping avenue) out of the project. The Town is currently in the early phases of a streetscape redesign project for Haven Street, which will include upgraded amenities and improved pedestrian facilities. As part of the design process, the Town should consider elements that will help further connect Main Street to the commercial activity on the lower end (western end) of Haven Street near High Street.

Since the 2008 reconstruction project, and the adoption of the 40R Downtown Smart Growth District, the Town has seen a great deal of private investment. A total of five redevelopment projects have been completed in the Downtown creating 59,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space and 189 new housing units. As a result of that investment, many of the storefronts and facades are in good condition and allow for a great walkable experience. This has made Reading's downtown very attractive to prospective tenants and has resulted in low vacancy rates throughout the years. It is important to note that while most of the properties in downtown are well-maintained, there are a few properties and storefronts that could benefit from maintenance and improvements.

New Development Project, Main Street. Photo Source: Town of Reading

30 Haven Street. Photo Source: Town of Reading
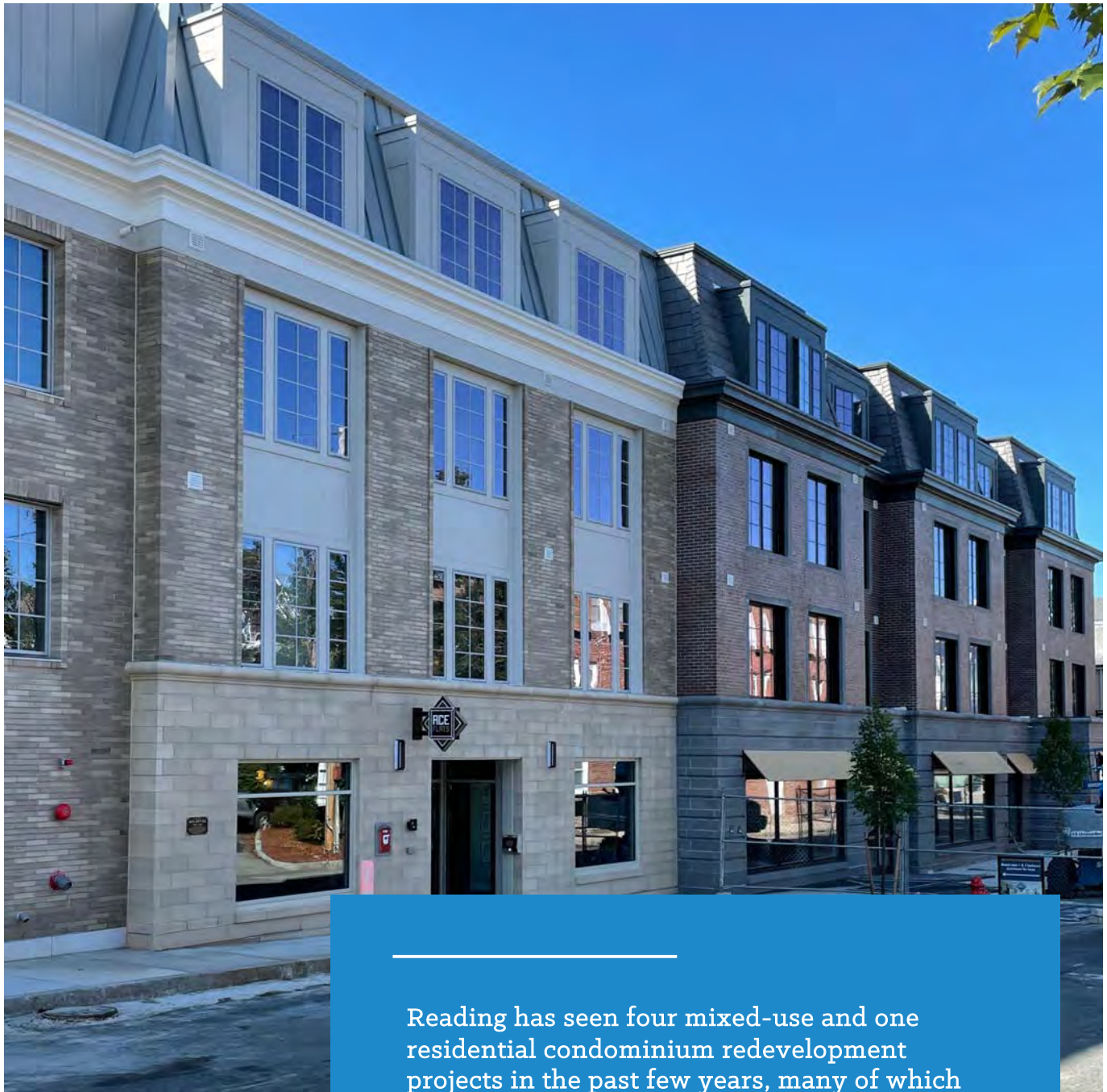
A mixed-use Chapter 40R project under construction in Downtown Reading.

Reading has seen four mixed-use and one residential condominium redevelopment projects in the past few years, many of which were developed under MA Chapter 40R smart growth zoning.

Highlights from the Business Environment

ANCHORS/DESTINATIONS

There is not one single anchor or destination in Downtown Reading. In 2019 the Town administered a survey to area residents and business as part of the Reimagine Reading visioning process. When asked what draws them to Downtown Reading one of the most popular responses was CVS – which is located right off of Main Street. People were also drawn to the local restaurants, shops , including Whitelam Books and the local Caffe Nero.

As part of this LRRP process, we administered a survey to Reading's consumer base and learned that about 28% feel there is no anchor store, destination business, or performing arts venue to bring them to downtown. In fact, 61% said there was just too few stores or shops that interest them and regularly prevented them from visiting downtown.

NODES/CLUSTERS

Reading has two main shopping avenues. The first, which is most visible, is along Main Street from Washington Street to Lowell Street. Business storefronts are scattered along this stretch of Downtown including a good mix of retail and restaurants (both sit-down and take-out). The second is along Haven Street which intersects Main Street just at the center of Downtown. Storefronts are scattered along Haven Street. Due to varied setbacks and an interrupted building wall, Haven Street at times feel less walkable and connected. The tenant mix along Haven Street also includes several professional and service-based businesses (including medical, financial and personal care services) which is not ideal for promoting a 'strolling' or 'window-shopping' environment. At the western end of Haven Street, is the Reading MBTA Station and several take-out restaurants and a few retail establishments. However, due to the lack of connection and visibly, the activity on the western end of Haven Street (known as 'lower Haven') can be unknown to drivers and pedestrians coming through Reading's Downtown on Main Street.

Word Cloud: What Draws you to Downtown Reading. Source: 2019 Re-Imagine Reading Survey

Downtown Reading Shopping Nodes/Avenues. Source: Favermann Design

Town Common, Main Street & Woburn Street. Source: Google Street View

There is interest for more open space and arts & culture

PARKS & PLAZAS

Downtown Reading has limited parks and plazas. There is the Town Common located along Main Street between Woburn and Lowell Street (only a portion is within the district boundary) and a small park on the southern portion of the district between Main Street, Ash Street and Washington Street.

The Town has expressed interest in creating spaces that could serve as pocket parks and plazas to enliven and activate the Downtown, especially on Lower Haven (western end of the district) near High Street.

ARTS & CULTURE

The Town has a vibrant arts and culture scene as discovered through at the 2014 Cultural District Exploratory Study. Most recently, the Town's Planning and Economic Development Division with support from the Reading Historical Commission has implemented an Art Box Program. The Town has also created an online map and walking tour which provides more contextual information about each of the commissioned original works of art.

The Town has also benefitted from the hard work of many organizations that fund and program many seasonal arts & culture activities. This includes the Fall Street Faire, Downtown Artwalk, Porchfest, Discovery the Arts Festival, the Town's holiday lighting, among many other community events.

According to the Customer Survey 49% indicated they would like to see more arts and culture activities in the Downtown. These types of activities would appeal to these customers but also help support additional foot-traffic to the Downtown businesses.

Town of Reading Art Boxes. Photo Credit: Town of Reading

A Town of Partnerships

PARTNERSHIPS

With the absence of a formal downtown organization, the Town of Reading has worked hard to build partnerships with existing organizations to build capacity for the downtown. This has included working closely with The Reading-North Reading Chamber of Commerce, the Reading Retailers Collaborative, The Rotary Club, and many others. However, recognizing the need for extra capacity, a private group of residents, business owners and property owners have come together under a steering committee hopes to become a formalized Business Improvement District (BID) that can support future activity in the downtown.

We heard that consumers want more from downtown. Currently, the town has a few regular events such as the Fall Street Faire and Holiday Tree lighting event. In order to support many of the things they would like to see – including more outdoor dining and activities, entertainment, events and arts & culture offerings, the Town and/or future BID should continue to to leverage these partnerships and build new ones that will not only aid in COVID-19 recovery, but support the overall resilience of downtown.

Fall Street Faire Photo. Photo Source: Reading Rotary Club Facebook Page

Photo from Reading Holiday Tree Lighting. Photo Source: True North Realty

Project Recommendations

Implementation of the Wayfinding & Branding System for Downtown

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP District Boundary/Reading's Downtown Smart Growth District
Origin		Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee
Budget		Low to high budget for implementation ($20,000-$150,000) See page 32 for more information on costs. Funding Sources/Grants • Shared Streets and Spaces Program (MassDOT) • Future BID Budget • Massachusetts Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant Program (only non-profits can apply) • ARPA Funding
Timeframe		Short Term (2-4 months) for fabrication & installation
Risk		Low Risk – risks are generally low but could include lack of political will and community transparency
Key Performance Indicators		1) Number of wayfinding elements installed 2) Foot-traffic increase observed by merchants 3) Positive community feedback & press-media coverage
Partners & Resources		Town of Reading Staff, BID Steering Committee, Reading DPW and Engineering Departments, local financial institutions, local designers and contractors, Walkable Reading
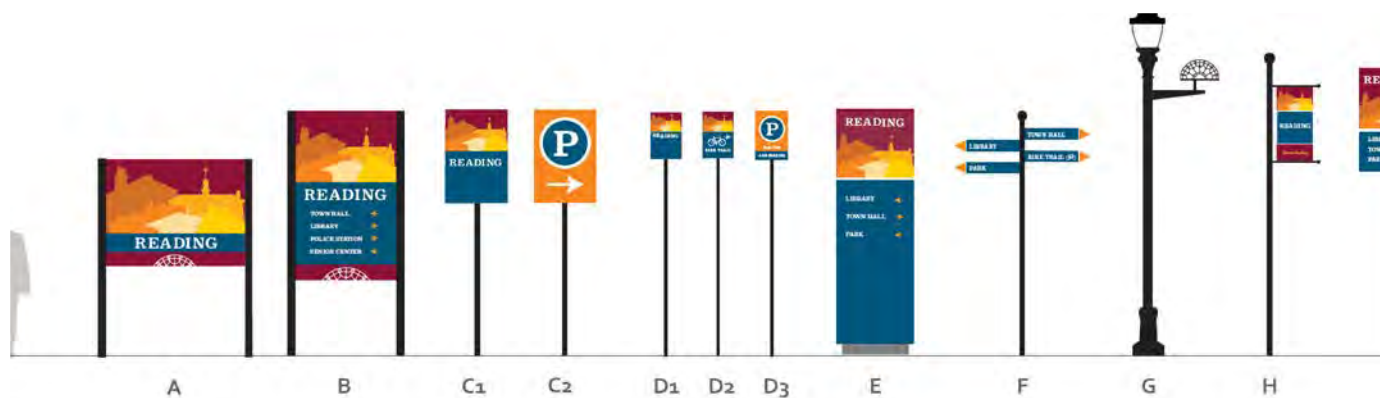
Family of Elements, Wayfinding, Reading, MA. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Diagnostic

Reading's Downtown consists of two main commercial avenues accessed by a series of one-way streets. There are two main off-street parking lots within the Downtown, which can be difficult to find if one is not familiar with the area. As such visitors can be frustrated with finding their way around the Downtown, resulting in missed shopping activity. To address these challenges, the Town applied for, and received a grant in 2017 to develop a wayfinding and branding program. The final design was approved in early 2018 and since then the Town has installed several new parking signs, new light pole banners and two directional signs.

However the layout of downtown makes visibility difficult for some businesses located off Main Street. Therefore, the Wayfinding plan included several sign designs (including shopping kiosks) that could help direct drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists to these less visible commercial areas.

Furthermore, implementation of this Wayfinding System is also in alignment with the BID Steering committee goals and the goals outlined in the 2015 Economic Development Action Plan.

Light post Banners. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Action Item

To continue implementation of the approved Wayfinding and Branding System:

The project would involve:

1. Prioritizing next phases of sign/element installation

2. Seeking quotes for implementation based on Wayfinding Specifications

3. Finalizing budgets for each phase of installations & funding opportunities

4. Hire sign fabricator/installer per phase

5. Track KPIs (key performance indicators)

Installed Directional and Parking Sign, Reading, MA. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Process

1. Prioritizing next phase(s) of sign/element installation

   • Town staff should work to identify the next priorities of wayfinding element installations

   • Since the parking signage has been installed, consider implementing some of the directory signage which can direct users to the less visible portions of Haven and High Streets

   • Map out locations for signage (see page 31 for suggested priorities/locations)

2. Seek quotes for implementation based on Wayfinding Specifications

   • Staff should seek out quotes to understand the budget for each phase of implementation (see page 32 budget for initial cost estimates, actual costs may vary)

   • Quotes should include sign specification and quantities

3. Finalize budgets for each phase & identify funding

   • The team will want to create a final installation phasing plan with associated budget

   • Funding for installation should also be identified – including direct town funds, partnership opportunities with local financial institutions, fundraising through a partnering organization, or seeking out a grant opportunity which may cover some portion of the installation costs

4. Hire sign fabricator/installer

   • Hire a sign fabricator in accordance with town policies regarding services procurement

   • Work with the sign fabricator on designs such as sign copy, arrow location/direction

   • Consider if there is opportunity to include walk/bike distances on signs

   • If installing directory kiosks, Staff will need to update the list of businesses to be included on the Downtown map along with a clear legend for location.

   • Work with the fabricator to ensure the directory can easily be replaced/updated on a specified schedule

   • Work with DPW to identify exact location of wayfinding elements.

   • Sight distances should be taken into consideration

   • Install elements per fabricator recommendation

5. Track KPIs (key performance indicators)

   • Keep track of how many wayfinding elements have been installed per phase

   • Regularly check in with merchants to see if foot-traffic has increased

   • Record any feedback from the public

   • Record any positive press/media coverage

Wayfinding Opportunities

The following graphic identifies a few locations in which wayfinding could be considered. Note: these locations are not approved by the Town and meant for informational purposes.

Haven @ High Street

Main Street & Haven Street

Main Street @ Town Common
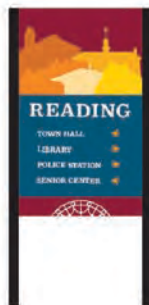
Main Street near 475 Rise

Haven Street @ Main Street

Haven Street @ Gould Street

Wayfinding Element Cost Estimates

The following are cost estimates for the approved Wayfinding System. These estimates are based on recent costs from various vendors. Due to supply chain challenges and delays (aluminum and steel shortages) actual costs may vary along with installation/fabrication lead times.

Approved Wayfinding System. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Item	Cost Estimate
"A" (Post/Panel)	$1,650-$1,875
"B" (Post/Panel)	$1,450-$1,625
"C" (Traffic Sign with post)	$475-$625
"D" (Traffic Sign with post)	$375-$425
"D" (Sign Panel ONLY)	$90-$150
"E" (Monument)	$3,250-$3,575
"F"(Directional with Arms)	$1,025-$1,350
"H" (Printed Banner)	$75-$135
"I" Directory Sign with post)	$600-$735
Kiosk	$8,000-$12,000

Approved Wayfinding System. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Haven on High Pocket-Plaza

Category		Public Realm
Location		Exact location TBD. Initial ideas include adjacent to the Reading MBTA Station or within/along bumpouts along Haven Street
Origin		Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee
Budget		Low to medium budget $5,000– $10,000 per solution (materials vary) Funding Sources/Grant opportunities include: • Shared Streets and Spaces Program (MassDOT) – for elements to support outdoor programming • T-Mobile Hometown Grant • Future BID Budget • Solomon Foundation – Street for Recovery • ARPA Funding
Timeframe		Short Term (1-3months)
Risk		Low Risk – lack of business support, engagement and collective marketing and low use of pocket-plaza
Key Performance Indicators		1) Increased foot-traffic as observed by merchants 2) User Survey for feedback 3) Use of space by groups
Partners & Resources		Town of Reading Staff, BID Steering Committee, downtown property owners/business owners, Reading Retailers Collaborative

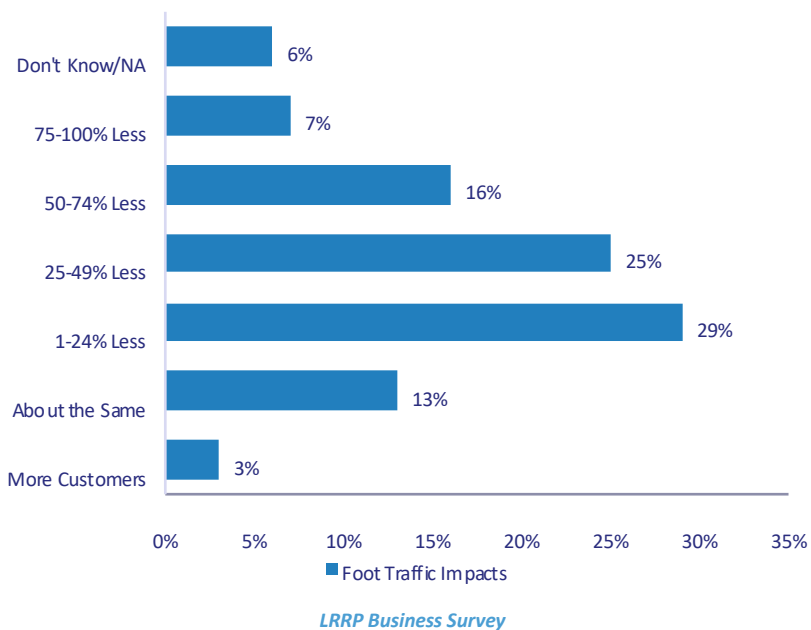*Eagle Street, North Adams, Photo Credit: iBerkshires.com2018*

Diagnostic

Reading's Downtown business community has experienced a decrease in revenue and foot traffic since the onset of COVID-19. Businesses reported a 76% decline in revenue and a 77% decline in foot-traffic from January and February of 2021 than before COVID.

However, prior to COVID and even through recovery, businesses are starting to see more and more foot-traffic as a result of the new housing units being developed in the Downtown.

To learn more about customer shopping habits, the Project Team administered a Customer Survey as part of the LRRP process. Through that survey, the Project Team learned that in addition to a better selection of retail shops and restaurants, that customers are wanting more outdoor dining, outdoor events, entertainment and cultural and arts activities.

Space for these types of activities are limited in the downtown. Therefore, the creation of a pop-up park or plaza would provide opportunity for some of these activities. This pop-up plaza could also help inform any future streetscape projects on Haven Street.

This project recommendation is also supported by the BID goal for cultural placemaking in that it would help strengthen the sense of community and place while giving more of a destination to the Downtown. This project is also aligned with Goal 6 of the 2015 Economic Development Action Plan.

Chart: Foot Traffic Impacts

Category	Percent
Don't Know/NA	6%
75-100% Less	7%
50-74% Less	16%
25-49% Less	25%
1-24% Less	29%
About the Same	13%
More Customers	3%

■ Foot Traffic Impacts

LRRP Business Survey

Action Item

To create "Haven on High" a central pocket park in Downtown Reading that can become a passive place for residents to sit and enjoy the day in Downtown Reading while also serve as a plug and play event space for area organizations to activate and draw more people and in turn more energy into Downtown. The basis for the proposal is a small pocket park either adjacent to the train station or at the intersection of Haven and High Streets. From there, small "sticking points" parklets, patio seating, public art, benches etc. will be distributed strategically up the length of Haven Street to draw energy between the train station and the Downtown core.

1. Establish a Team to champion Haven on High

2. Identify a location

3. Plan for implementation

4. Create a Maintenance Plan

5. Implementation

6. Feedback

7. Iterate

Image Provided by Bench Consulting

Process

1. **Establish a Team**

   - Identify a Team to be the champion for the Haven on High pocket-park/plaza.

   - Look to Downtown business and property owners, residents and other stakeholders to engage early in the planning process.

2. **Identify a Location**

   - Review possible locations along Haven and High Street. Consider existing bumpouts and areas that can be utilized without taking up parking spaces.

   - Initial location opportunities include adjacent to the MBTA Station and/or bumpouts at Haven Street (see next page for recommended locations).

3. **Plan**

   - Develop a project concept and design elements that would also identify how the space will be used or programmed.

   - The design should including options for seating and relaxing and shade while also including flexible solutions to fit the needs of groups who may use the space creatively.

   - Consider creating a central hub on lower Haven and then smaller interventions leading up to Main Street.

4. **Create a Maintenance Plan:** Identify a plan for maintenance of the space. This should include identifying:

   - Who will be responsible for securing any materials.

   - Who will be responsible for ensuring the space is clean and well kept – including trash removal.

   - If the space is seasonal, identify how the items will be stored and who will be responsible for storage.

5. **Implementation:** Seek funding for materials through partnership, grant opportunities or donations. Leverage the power of local contractors to help supply materials to reduce costs and volunteers to help construct.

   - To encourage use of the space, develop a system for groups to sign-up and utilize the space. This could include meetups and small events. This will help make the space appear active and encourage further use of the space.

6. **Feedback**

   - It is important to collect feedback for phased projects (or pilot projects) like this. Some valuable ways to collect this feedback include in-person discussion with adjacent business owners and residents along with users of the space.

   - There is also opportunity to seek feedback via online surveys which could also be implemented with the us of QR codes placed within the location itself. While many times the feedback may be from those who have had a negative experience with the space, it is important to also collect feedback from those who have enjoyed the space.

7. **Iterate**

   - This project could serve as a pilot project to guide the development of the Pop-Up Permitting Guide (see page 78).

   - It is important to understand what worked and didn't work with the first project. Future projects (including permanent solutions) should incorporate solutions to address any concerns and lessons learned from the initial project.

   - It is also important to continue to communicate with business owners, residents and users to ensure success and sustainability into the future.

Batesville Main Street, Indiana. Photo Credit: Provided by Bench Consulting

Project Locations

Bench Consulting provided some ideas for project locations as their role as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) for this proposed project. Below are some of the locations they identified to be explored further by the Team. Additional information is provided by Bench Consulting in Appendix 5.a.
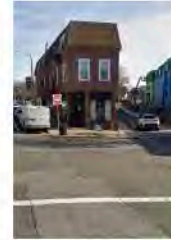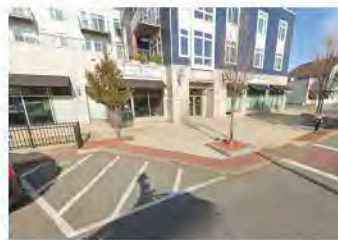
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCATIONS

The Plaza Adjacent to the MBTA station: We'd recommend starting at the Reading train station to draw visitors the length of Haven Street. Create a space for respite with landscaping, tables, chairs, wifi, a place to do work, meet with friends, enjoy a coffee or a book in the heart of Reading.

Suggested Materials:
tables, chairs, umbrellas, benches, lighting, plantings, Small, wooden storage container for equipment storage and place to hold activities for loan to community.

Small Plazas and Bumpouts along Haven
Utilize existing plazas and excess roadway (not parking spaces) to create new plaza spaces within the Haven corridor. Create a mix of shaded and sunny spaces and, if possible, install wifi to encourage these as work space.

Suggested Materials:
tables, chairs, umbrellas, planters and temporary landscaping, gravel.

Project Cost Estimates

Based on the recommendations by Bench Consulting, below is an estimate of project costs.

Item	Cost Estimate	Source
Tables	$108.98/table,2 chairs	Steel Tables http://tacticalurbanismguide.com/
Umbrellas	$420 for umbrella + base with wheels	Moveable Umbrella Tactical Urbanist Guide http://tacticalurbanismguide.com/
Park Bench/Table	$995 8ft bench	https://www.homedepot.com/p/Portable-8-ft-Pressure-Treated-Wood-Commercial-Park-Table-LC4281-PT/206940091
Lighting	$40 for 48ft of Outdoor String Lights	https://www.amazon.com/Outdoor-Shatterproof-Bulbs-UL-Commercial-Backyard/dp/B073PWBMPJ
Planters/Barriers	$90/4ft or $150 /6ft	Galvanized Steel Planters Tactical Urbanist Guide http://tacticalurbanismguide.com/
Plants/Landscaping	$50-$200 for small trees $10-$40 for small/medium plans	Small Trees – Tactical Urbanist Guide http://tacticalurbanismguide.com/
Storage	$200	https://www.etsy.com/listing/998595353/porch-box-medium-with-lock-lockable?ga_order=most_relevant&ga_search_type=all&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_search_query=outdoor+storage+box&ref=sr_gallery-1-6&frs=1
Deck/Platform	$600-$800 for materials	Parkade https://parkade.com/parklet-guide-and-how-to-build-a-parklet#parklet-construction-guide

Batesville Main Street

PUBLIC REALM

Location	Batesville, IN

Project Summary

Batesville Main Street was looking to increase pedestrian traffic and energy on the Main Street. Two previous seating experiments creating parklets on the street helped created a space for people to sit, enjoy the day, meet with neighbors and made the Main Street a destination for more than just a quick pop up errand. This project took those experiments and are in the process of constructing a more permanent solution.

The budget for the project was $65,000 for all components, including the permanent installation. The initial, tactical solution was implemented in 3-6 weeks. Materials included decking, seating, planter boxes, landscaping, tables, chairs and benches.

Key Takeaways

The Batesville Main Street project is a good example in creating a pilot pocket-park which was turned into a more permanent solution into the urban fabric of their Main Street. Reading can leverage several elements of this project for Haven on High, including:

• Testing pocket-park/plazas as temporary pilot projects which could be considered for more permanent installations into future streetscape projects.

• The design for the Batesville project included landscaping. Due to the lack of landscape elements on lower Haven and High Street, this would be a crucial element for Haven on High to make the space inviting and comfortable.

• Consider a crowd-funding campaign to fund the project. This will create excitement and ownership in the project and provide a way for businesses to get involved early on in the process.

Batesville Main Street, Indiana. Photo Source: Provided by Bench Consulting

Batesville Main Street, Indiana. Concept Plan. Photo Source: Patronicity

Construction Progress, Batesville Main Street, Indiana. Photo Source: Patronicity

Safe Connections in Downtown

Category		Public Realm
Location		Focus area on Haven and High Streets. Continue to monitor pedestrian signals on Main Street.
Origin		Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee
Budget		Low budget (under $5,000) for paint and flex posts. Funding Sources/Grant opportunities include: • Shared Streets and Spaces Program (MassDOT) – for elements to support outdoor programming • MassWorks – for future/permanent installations • Future BID Budget • Solomon Foundation – Street for Recovery • ARPA Funding
Timeframe		Short Term (1-3months)
Risk		Low Risk – lack of communication with community, safety concerns regarding change in traffic/vehicle movements, paint fading, potential driver confusion after installation
Key Performance Indicators		1) Safety: Crash history, reduction in speed 2) User Feedback: Improved feeling of safety and use of new interventions 3) Increased foot-traffic as observed by merchants
Partners & Resources		Town of Reading Staff, BID Steering Committee, Walkable Reading, DPW Staff, Public Safety Staff, Engineering Staff, the PTTTF, local arts organizations, local artists

Downtown Natick, MA. Photo Credit: Natick Center Cultural District

Diagnostic

Reading's Downtown has seen several redevelopment projects since the adoption of the Downtown 40R District. Since 2011, there have been five completed downtown redevelopment projects (one currently under construction), resulting in a total of 189 housing units and approximately 59,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space. There was also a residential project, developed in 2020 just outside of the district that contains 68 units. This increase in housing units has resulted in additional foot-traffic observed by ground floor merchants. Despite this, and as a result of COVID, 77% of businesses reported a decline in foot-traffic from January and February of 2021 than before March of 2020 (pre-COVID)

The Town has expressed the need for improved pedestrian access within the downtown, as there are more people living in the downtown since the adoption of the 40R District in 2009. A wide range of improvements are being considered in a future streetscape project for Haven and High Streets, but the schedule for that project is unknown. As such, there is opportunity to provide temporary, more tactical interventions that could be deployed quickly, but also serve as a way to test improvements that could then be included into a more permanent streetscape redesign project.

This project recommendation is aligned with the 2015 Economic Development Action Plan, Strategy 2 which is to enhance walkability and connectivity within and between priority redevelopment areas.

Reading Downtown Redevelopment, 2011-2021. Source: Town of Reading

Action Item

To create tactical pedestrian improvements which improve safety and walkability in the downtown, that can also serve as pilot projects for future, more permanent solutions.

1. Establish a Team and point person to guide the project

2. Identify and prioritize locations for pedestrian improvements

3. Plan and design interventions

4. Communicate with and engage businesses

5. Finalize design interventions

6. Implementation

7. Feedback & Iterate

Jersey City, New Jersey. Photo Source: Street-Plans.com

Process

1. Establish a Team

   • Identify a Team and point person to guide the project

   • Include relevant Town Staff including individuals from DPW, Public Safety, Engineering

   • Leverage Reading's Parking Traffic Transportation Taskforce (PTTTF)

2. Identify and prioritize locations:

   • Identify locations that can be prioritized for interventions (see following pages for opportunities)

   • Consider doing a few small projects to start to ensure feedback is adapted throughout a phased implementation plan

   • Seek feedback from public safety and engineering departments on key areas with known safety challenges

3. Plan and design interventions:

   • Determine if additional design support is needed or if interventions can be designed in-house

   • Consider a call for art for street murals

   • Develop initial designs and budget for projects – consider yearly maintenance to repaint annually

   • Ensure concerns from public safety and engineering departments are addressed

4. Communicate with and engage businesses and residents

   • Perform in-person outreach to businesses regarding the interventions. Include flyers of draft designs

   • Include initial designs into Town communication channels

   • Be sure to speak to the temporary nature of the projects to gain support through the pilot phase

5. Finalize design interventions

   • Finalize the intervention design

   • Finalize the budget and materials costs

   • Include a maintenance plan especially for flex posts as they will likely take some damage

6. Implementation

   • Hire contractors to install the design or leverage DPW

   • If pavement paint includes a creative design, consider a volunteer day to paint

   • Installation could also be done through a call for art

7. Feedback and Iterate

   • Measure KPIs (key performance indicators)

   • It may be necessary to track vehicle speeds prior to implementation

   • Seek feedback from businesses and residents via survey and through conversations

   • Incorporate feedback into future tactical interventions which ultimately can be adapted into a more permanent streetscape redesign

Downtown Natick, MA. Photo Credit: Natick Center Cultural District

Opportunities

The graphics below identifies some initial ideas for tactical pedestrian improvements in the Downtown at the intersection of Haven Street and Gould Street. These improvements include paint and flex-post solutions which are low-cost and easily implemented. Graphics provided by Nelson Nygaard.
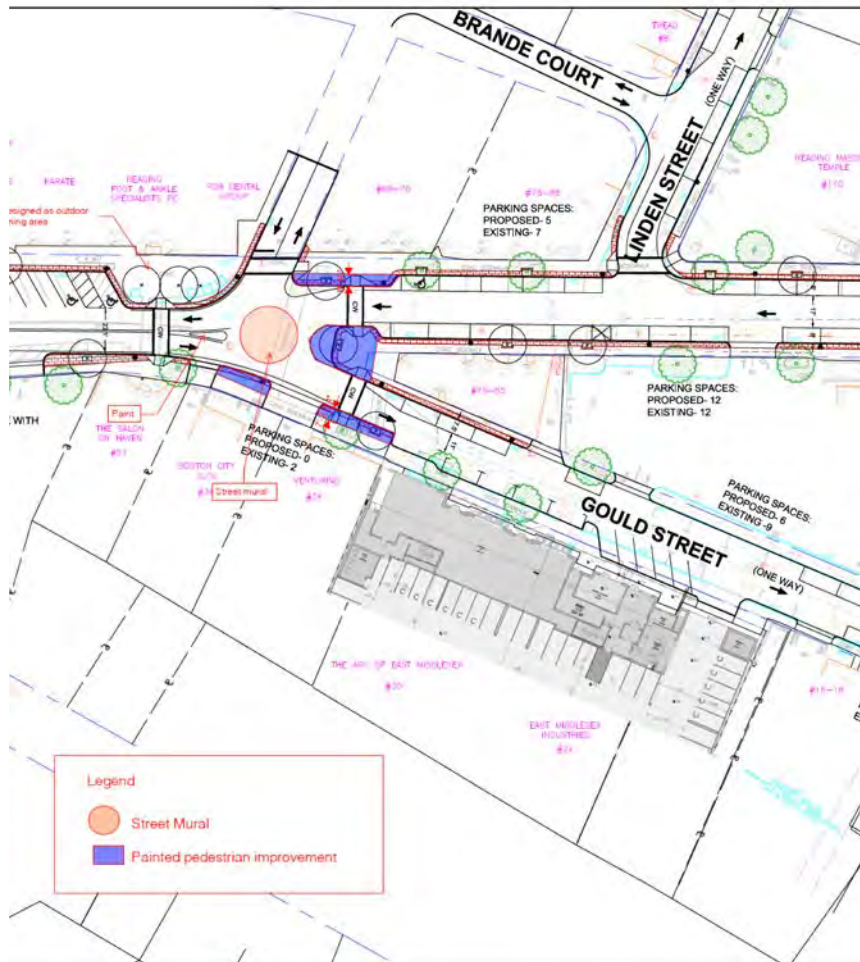
Baltimore, MD. Photo Source: SmartGrowthAmerica.org

Location Unknown. Photo Source: Seattle Right-of-Way Improvements Manual

Item	Unit	Cost Estimate
Paint for approximately 2,325sf	~ 50/gal Covers 250sf	$500
Flex Posts spaced approximately 20ft for approximately 220LF	$40/post	$440
TOTAL		**$940**

Opportunities

The graphics below identifies some initial ideas for tactical pedestrian improvements in the Downtown at the intersection of Haven Street and High Street. These improvements include paint and flex-post solutions which are low-cost and easily implemented. Graphics provided by Nelson Nygaard.

Planters

Legend

⬤ Street Mural

▮ Painted pedestrian improvement
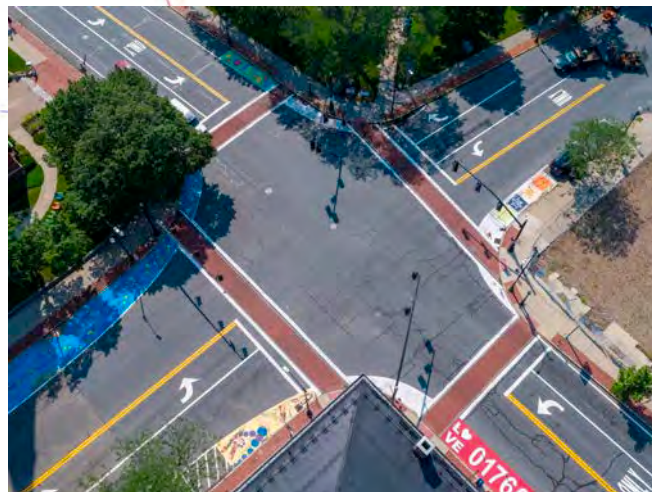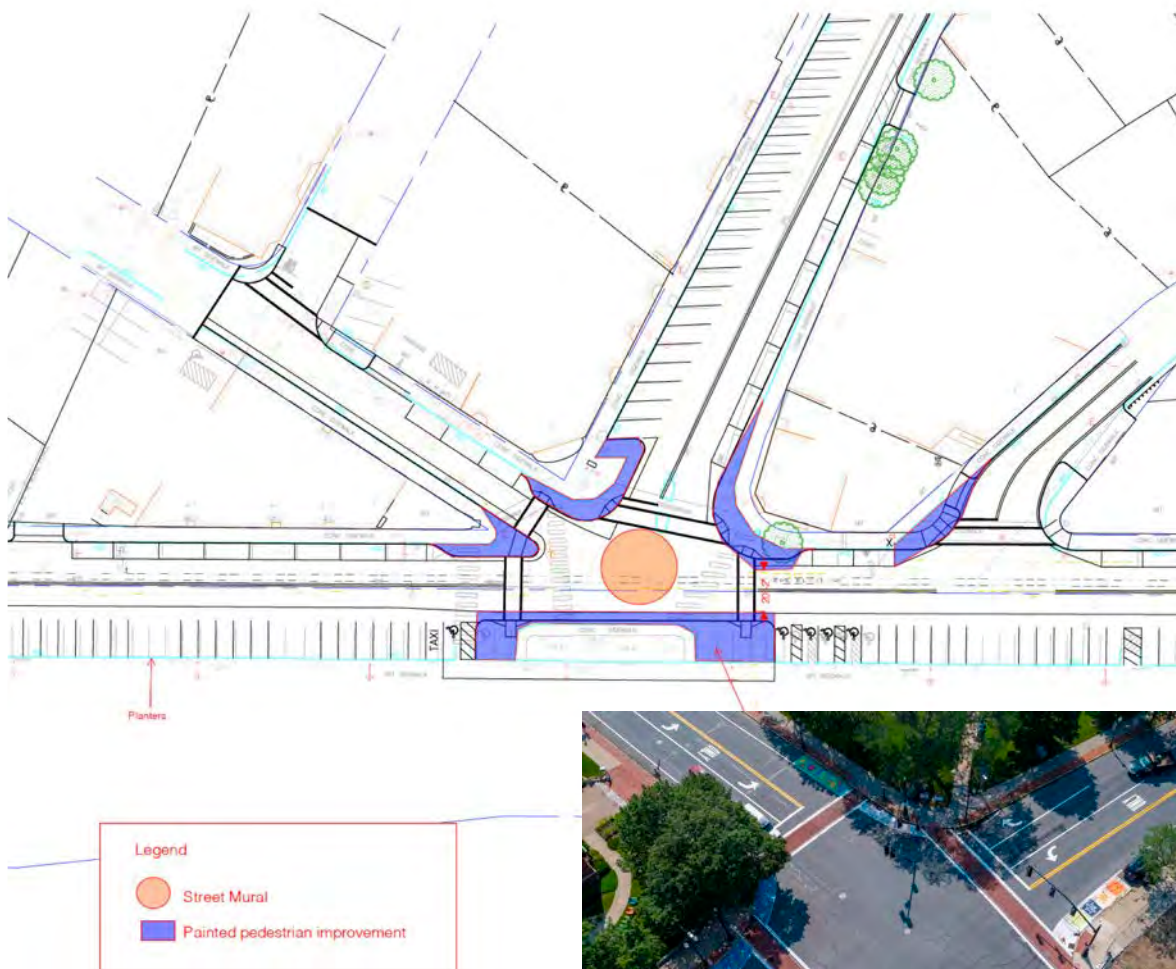
Downtown Natick, MA. Photo Credit: Natick Center Cultural District

Item	Unit	Cost Estimate
Paint for approximately 5,621sf	~ 50/gal Covers 250sf	$1,125
Flex Posts spaced approximately 20ft for approximately 500LF	$40	$1,000
TOTAL		**$2,125**

Opportunities

The graphics below identifies ideas for tactical pedestrian improvements at the intersection of High Street and Vine Street. These improvements include paint and flex-post solutions which are low-cost and easily implemented. Graphics provided by Nelson Nygaard.

Attachment B: Possible Pedestrian and Safety Improvements at High St/Vine St
Reading, MA

Remove centerline

Extend centerline

Remove parking spaces. T-up intersection. Create pedestrian space

DRAFT - NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

Vine Street Seattle, WA. Photo Source: Seattle Right-of-Way Improvements Manual

Item	Unit	Cost Estimate
Paint for approximately 2730sf	~ 50/gal Covers 250sf	$500
Flex Posts spaced approximately 20ft for approximately 170LF	$40	$360
TOTAL		**$860**

Build Out Scenario for Parking

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP District Boundary/Reading's Downtown Smart Growth District
Origin		Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee
Budget		Low budget. $20,000-$25,000 for Consultant Services. Potential funding sources include: • Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) Program • Future BID Budget • ARPA Funding
Timeframe		Short Term: 6 Months for Plan, additional time for any necessary zoning changes
Risk		Low Risk – risks are generally low but could include lack of political will, community communication
Key Performance Indicators		1) Number of strategies implemented 2) Perception of access in the downtown – surveys to residents and businesses 3) Vacancy rates (turnover) as a result of improved access
Partners & Resources		Town of Reading Staff, Reading DPW and Engineering Departments, Select Board, Community Planning and Development Commission, businesses and property owners

Postmark Square Redevelopment Project. Haven Street, Reading. Photo Credit: Town of Reading

Diagnostic

Reading's Downtown has undergone many changes in the last 10+ years. From the redesign of Main Street in the center of the Downtown, to the development/redevelopment of several properties under Chapter 40R. Since 2011, there have been five completed downtown redevelopment projects (one currently under construction), resulting in a total of 189 housing units and approximately 59,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space. There was also a residential project, developed just outside of the district that contains 68 housing units. This increase in housing units has resulted in additional foot-traffic observed by ground floor merchants.

However, parking continues to be a concern of local residents and business owners. According to the Business Survey, 52% of respondents indicated that parking regulations posed an obstacle to their business operations. Similarly, customers also indicated the lack of on-street parking as one of the reasons they don't visit Downtown more often.

Downtown has approximately 670 public parking spaces (both on and off-street) within the LRRP Boundary*. Prior to COVID and in 2018, the Town engaged Nelson Nygaard to update the parking study for the downtown which was last completed in 2009. According to their report, highest space utilization was typically around the the MBTA Station and lower Haven Street (both on and off-street), Lowell Street and the public lot behind the CVS, and on-street parking at the intersection of Main and Haven Streets (Nelson Nygaard Parking Memorandum, January 22, 2019). Even with limited capacity during peak times at these locations, the consultant noted there was still availability for on-street parking just a short walk from these high demand areas.

To ensure that Reading's downtown remains accessible as future development occurs, it is important to evaluate whether current zoning regulations will meet the need of future build-out scenarios. As such, a build-out assessment as it relates to parking is an important strategy so that any changes to parking regulations and/or zoning can ensure Downtown remains accessible as recovery efforts continue.

*Per the Town of Reading, there are a total of approximately 1,400 public parking spaces within the Downtown, which expands beyond the boundary of the LRRP District. The 670 public spaces are only what was observed within the official LRRP District Boundary.

Downtown Reading, MA. Photo Credit: Town of Reading

Action Item

To evaluate existing zoning and build-out scenarios as it relates to parking to ensure the needs are being met by both residents and businesses.

The project would involve:

1. Identifying a Town Staff person as the lead for the project

2. Develop a Scope of Services to hire a traffic/engineering firm that could perform a parking analysis based on build-out scenarios

3. Implement recommendations from the analysis

4. Track KPIs (key performance indicators)

Process

1. Identify a Town Staff person as the lead for the project
   - This person would be the point for all project communication
   - Responsible for coordinating with other relevant staff/boards/committees

2. Develop a Scope of Services to issue an RFP and hire a traffic/engineering firm to perform a parking analysis based on build-out scenarios. Scope could include:
   - Review of existing supply/demand of public and private parking facilities (on/off-street)
   - Analysis of parking demand for future build-out scenarios. Consider whether separate scenarios should be completed for the underlying zoning and the Chapter 40R Zoning.
   - Recommendations for management strategies – consider prioritizing them into short, medium and long term strategies

3. Implement Recommendation Strategies
   - Prioritize recommendations
   - Implement strategies

4. Track KPIs (key performance indicators)
   - Measure KPIs after implementation
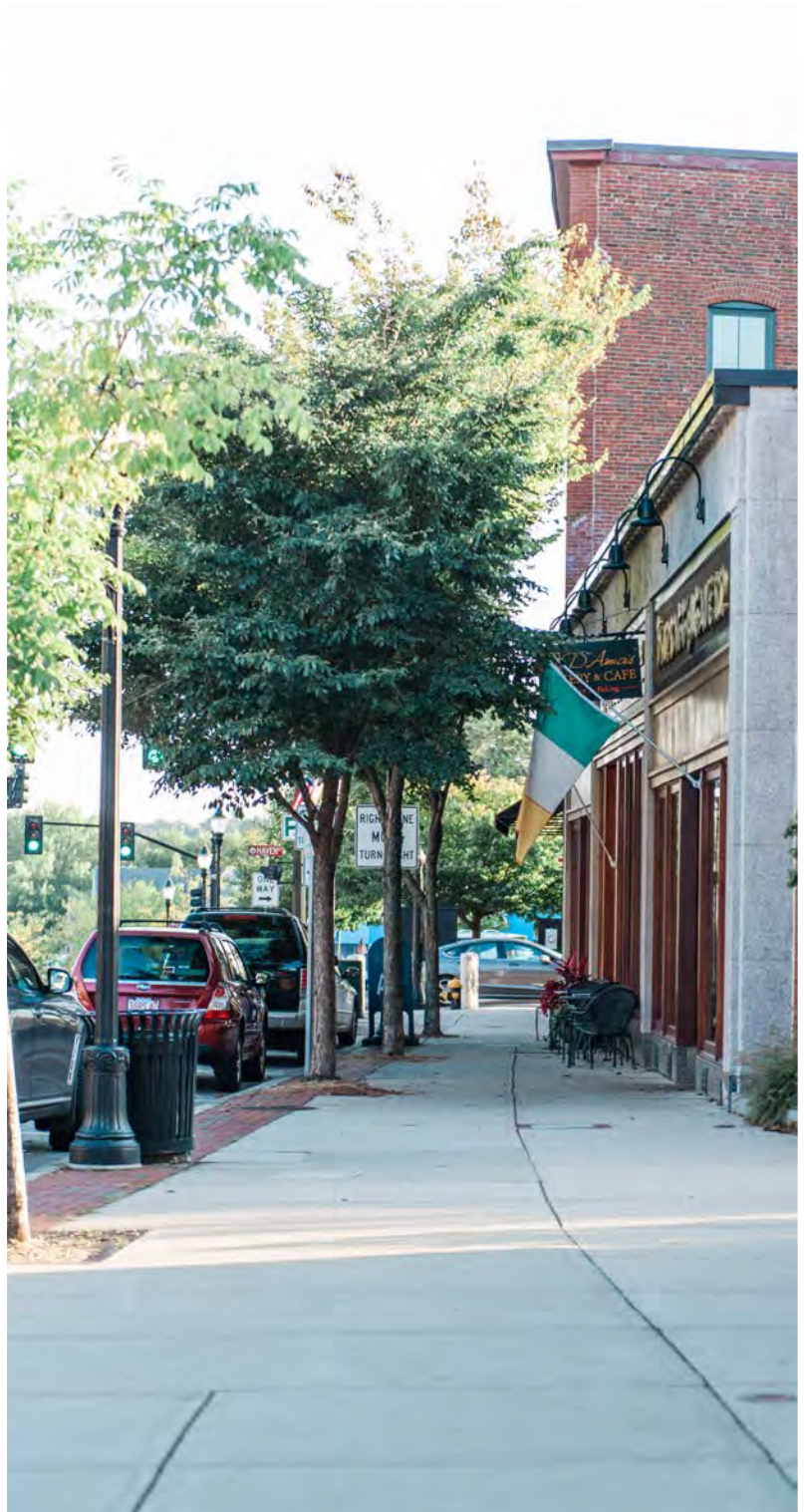
Downtown Reading, MA. Photo Source: Favermann Design

Storefront Improvement Program

Category		Private Realm
Location		LRRP District Boundary/Reading's Downtown Smart Growth District
Origin		Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee
Budget		Low Budget $35K-$50K for program design and set-up + any subsidy for improvements Funding Sources/Grant opportunities include: • Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Program • Future BID Budget • Massachusetts Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant Program (only non-profits can apply) • ARPA Funding
Timeframe		Short Term (3-6) on-going depending on program length
Risk		Low Risk – previous programs were well received
Key Performance Indicators		1) Program participation rates 2) Quality of streetscape/perception of the district 3) Increased foot-traffic reported by merchants
Partners & Resources		Town of Reading Staff, BID Steering Committee, Reading-North Reading Chamber, Local Financial Institutions, local designers and contractors

Gould Street Redevelopment Project, Downtown Reading. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Diagnostic

The Downtown Smart Growth District in Reading is home to approximately 200 businesses and 140 storefronts. According to the Business Survey, business owners are generally satisfied with the condition of buildings. This is not surprising as many of the properties are in good condition, several of which are newly redeveloped.

However upon visiting the site, the Project Team did observe several storefronts with signs and facades that were not well maintained or in need or replacement or repair.

Ensuring storefront elements such as signage, facades and awnings are in well-maintained and good condition can ensure a pleasant pedestrian experience. Well designed signs can provide an attractive storefront to welcome a potential customer while also adding to overall storefront visibility. Well maintained facades can attract customers and future tenants, while awnings create a pleasant pedestrian experience by providing shade and business visibility.

This project is also aligned with BID Steering Committee's goals for Business Support and Recruitment.

Action Item

To create a Storefront and Façade Improvement program that will offer business owners and property owners the opportunity to access funding to improve their façade, signage, awnings or other storefront elements.

The project would include:

1. Creation of a Team that will be responsible for guiding the project

2. Determine program focus and goals

3. Establish program/design guidelines

4. Develop program eligibility & process

5. Determine program Funding

6. Determine if outside assistance is required

7. Create program materials/documents

8. Launch the program

9. Highlight successes

Building Storefronts (Downtown Reading). Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Process

1. Establish a Team: Identify a Team to guide the project and establish the program. This could include members from various Town Departments including Planning and Building Departments and members from the BID Steering Committee.

2. Determine program focus and goals: The Team would discuss whether program would focus on the entire storefront/façade or specific elements such as lighting or signage. Ultimately this decision will guide what project types would be eligible for the program.

3. Establish program/design guidelines: The Team would work with a designer/consultant to establish the Storefront Program, including any design guidelines that will need to be achieved and development of the application/approval process. The Team should work with relevant staff to ensure the process is streamlined and meets all permitting requirements under zoning and buildings codes.

4. Develop program eligibility & process: The Team will want to identify the eligibility for the program. Would it be open for to all business owners/property owners? Will all improvements be eligible or just specific components like signage or lighting? During this stage the Team will also want to design the application process, including how applicants can apply but also who will review applications, what the approval requirements are and how to issue awards. The Team should also discuss timeline requirements for project implementation and/or maintenance needs.

5. Determine program funding: The Team will need to determine how the program will be administered and how funding or monies will be available to applicants (or at all). There are a number of ways the program can deliver financial subsidies to business owners and property owners. Some options include:

   • Grants

   • Forgivable loans after a certain time

   • Grants through a lottery process

   • Instead of grants offering low-interest loan options (also via partnership with local financial institutions)

   • A combination of the above

   The source of funds could come directly from Town funds, through an outside organization which could fundraise for project dollars, partnerships with local financial institutions.

6. Determine if outside assistance is required: The project team may want to seek outside help in creating the program and design guidelines.

Caffe Nero, Downtown Reading. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Process (continued)

7. Create program materials/documents: The Team will then create program materials. This would include:

   - Design Guidelines
   - Application guidance which should include the overall application and review process along with Eligibility Requirements
   - Application Forms
   - Program Marketing Material - which would include materials to help promote and launch this program to the businesses

8. Launch the program: The team should consider promoting the program prior to launch to inform business and property owners of this new program. Then, once ready to launch the program, the Team should put together a campaign to encourage applicants. To make it easy for a 'post and share option' the Team should provide and create easily shareable marketing materials. Then distributing this information to: local business and property owners, leveraging local media including local press and RCTV, and partnering with local financial institutions to get the word out.

9. Highlight successes: The Team should highlight successful projects. Collecting before and after images and feature these case studies on the Town's Economic Development webpage.

Pepperberry Shop, Melrose, MA. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Sign & Façade Improvement Program

Location   Ashland, MA

PRIVATE
REALM

Program Summary

The Town of Ashland established a Sign and Façade Improvement Program to provide technical and financial assistance to businesses looking to make improvements to the exterior of their storefronts. The program matches 50% of the project costs or $5,000 for façade and/or sign improvements. Ashland also designated a target area for project priority but allows all business to apply.

Eligible Improvements Include:

- Accessibility improvements (i.e. handicapped accessible ramps)
- Exterior signs
- Awnings
- Lighting energy conservation for windows & doors
- Painting
- Surface parking lots
- Planters and landscaping
- Correction of code issues
- Program funds may not be used for improvements to the interior of the business or to sidewalks or public walkways

Key Takeaways

There are several key takeaways in which Reading can leverage as they create their own Storefront Improvement Program including:

- Targeting and prioritizing an area – Reading could create this program town-wide and target Downtown Reading.

- Is flexible with eligible improvements – Businesses in Downtown Reading could benefit from a wide range of improvements, from new signage, to new façade treatments such as replacing bricks or windows. Therefore it is recommended to be flexible with eligible improvements.

- Ashland's program includes site improvements (parking and landscaping) –Reading could allow site improvements as part of the eligible activities under the program which would encourage additional beautification efforts.

- Program application is simple and does not require a lot of information by the business owner/property owner – keeping it simple will encourage application to the program

Storefront Improvement Program

PRIVATE
REALM

Program Summary

The City of Cambridge, MA administers a Storefront Improvement Program for property owners or tenants seeking to renovate or restore their commercial building exterior façade.

The program provides access to financial resources in the form of grants ranging from $2,500 to $35,000 based on the scope and scale of the projects. The program also includes improvement or replacement of doors or windows to accommodate COVID-19 restrictions.

The financial assistances includes:

- 90% matching grant up to $20,000 for ADA improvements to entrances, including ramps, lifts, doors hardware and automatic openers, accessible parking, and signage.

- 50% matching grant up to $15,000 for other façade improvements, including better windows, paneling, architectural details and restoration of historic features.

- 50% matching grant up to $2,500 for signage, lighting and awning improvements.

Applicants are required to submit an application and review the Program Guidelines, including adhering the the Design Principles and Guidelines.

Key Takeaways

Key takeaways from the Cambridge, MA Storefront Improvement Program are:

- Funded by municipal capital funds – Reading should review town funds to see if there is a way to program this type of project

- Grants are awarded on a tiered system based on the type of improvements – this would encourage certain improvements as a priority

- The program extends eligibility to improvements related to COVID-19 safety protocols and operating requirements – since Downtown businesses did incur expenses related to COVID-19 requirements, including these types of improvements would help directly with COVID-19 recovery

- Program application is simple and does not require a lot of information by the business owner/property owner – encourages applicants

- Includes simple design guidelines and principals to encourage projects that will enhance the overall appearance and aesthetic of the storefront/façade – Reading should consider implementing design standards to achieve a more aesthetically pleasing Downtown or reference one of the existing guideline programs such as the Downtown Smart Growth Design Guidelines or the South Main Street Design Guidelines.

Completed Storefront Project, Cambridge, MA . Photo Credit: Cambridge MA Website

Completed Storefront Project, Cambridge, MA . Photo Credit: Cambridge MA Website

Small Business Technical Assistance with Website & Digital Marketing

Category	Revenue/Sales	Private Realm
Location	Serving the Businesses in Downtown Reading in the LRRP District Boundary	
Origin	Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee, BID Steering Committee	
Budget	Low Budget $3,500 for workshop development and $2,000-$3,000 per business. Funding opportunities include: • Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Program • Massachusetts Growth Capital Growth Corporation Small Business Technical Assistance Program (only non-profit organizations can apply) • Future BID Budget • ARPA Funding	
Timeframe	Short Term 3-4 months for program development then on-going for implementation	
Risk	Low Risk – risks include lack of follow-through and implementation of recommendations by business	
Key Performance Indicators	KPIs would vary based on the type of technical assistance but could include: 1) Number of program participants 2) Business growth (revenue, customers, employees) 3) Number of online orders for curbside pickup 4) Workshop attendees	
Partners & Resources	Town of Reading Staff, Reading/North Reading Chamber of Commerce, Reading Retailers Collaborative, local businesses, local media	

Downtown Reading Business Storefront. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Diagnostic

Reading's Downtown businesses were not immune to the impacts of COVID. According to the business survey 76% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019. This is concerning considering that nearly 75% of businesses reported increasing revenue the last 3 years prior to COVID. They also reported having to reduce operating hours and/or capacity while also incurring expenses to implement safety measures for re-opening.

However, 46% indicated they established alternative modes to sell and deliver products. Many of them pivoted more of their operation online, offering delivery or curbside pickup. This pivot was reflective of changes to customer shopping habits as a result of COVID-19. According the the customer survey, 77% reported they were shopping or ordering takeout MORE online since March of 2020. Approximately 45% reported having shopped online with a business in downtown Reading.

Despite this increase in support to downtown businesses during the pandemic, customers were still more likely to shop online with a bigger box retailer or with an online store like amazon. About 62% of customer survey respondents said they are not likely to shop online at a store in downtown Reading versus a online with a box-store or online retailers like Amazon.

It is important to ensure the businesses in Downtown Reading continue to piggy-back off the momentum of the shop local support businesses experienced during the pandemic when customers turned to online shopping. As such, a strong online presence and digital marketing plan will be an important strategy for these businesses moving forward.

This project is also aligned with the goals of the BID Steering Committee to provide support for new and existing businesses.

Action Item

To create a small business technical assistance program that would provide a mix of 1:1 technical assistance, and workshops to Downtown Businesses to address their digital marketing needs.

1. Program Development

2. Program Launch

3. 1:1 Technical Assistance Consultations and/or workshops

4. Feedback & Adjustment

5. Showcasing Successes

Main Street Storefront, Reading, MA. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Process

1. Program Development

- Establish a Team: Identify a Team which would include Town Staff Economic Development from the Planning Department.

- Determine Program Funding: The Team will need to determine how the program will administer the technical assistance and whether the town will offer grants or a number of available consults each year.

- Determine Program Elements: What types of technical assistance will the program include? Seek stakeholder input such as from the BID Steering Committee, Reading Retailers Collaborative and/or Reading/North Reading Chamber of Commerce.

- Based on initial discussion with businesses and the LRRP Advisory Group the program would include a mix of 1:1 Technical Assistance and Workshops such as:

    - 1:1 TA Digital Marketing/Website Assessments, Digital Marketing (organic/paid social media advertising).
    - Rapid Website Development.
    - Workshops on DIY Website Development, Social Media Marketing and Advertising.

- Hire a consultant to deliver the program, including the 1:1 TA Consultations, website development and workshops.

    - Consultant would develop the workshop trainings and syllabi – consider workshops on the above mentioned topics.
    - Trainings would be recorded and available to all businesses.
    - Determine whether the workshops would have a certification component.
    - Create the application process for businesses to apply for Technical Assistance.

2. Program Launch

- Launch the Program: The team would promote the Small Business Technical Assistance Program prior to launch to inform business and property owners of this new program.

- Then, once ready to launch the program, the Team should put together a campaign to encourage applicants .

- To make the campaign widely distributed the Team should provide and create easily shareable marketing materials that can be distributed to: local business and property owners, leveraging local media including local press, RCTV, and partnering with other business organizations such as the Reading Retailers Collaborative, Reading/North Reading Chamber of Commerce and BID Steering Committee.

- Receive applications for Technical Assistance from Downtown Businesses.

3. Consultations and/or Workshops

- Host workshops in-person (if available) or virtually. Record replays.

- The consultant to hold 1:1 consultations with business owners owners.

4. Feedback & Adjustment

- The Team should establish a way to collect feedback from business owners.

- Adjust future programs as needed.

5. Highlight Successes

- The Team should highlight successful projects. Collect testimonials from business owners and feature these case studies the Town's website.

Item	Cost	Total Estimate
Website Development for Businesses*	$1,500/business $100/month ongoing maintenance)	$1,500 - $2,700/business
1: 1 Technical Assistance for Digital Marketing	$2,000-$3,000 (not including ad budget if any)	$2,000-$3,000/business
Workshop Series in Digital Marketing/Website Development*	$3,500 for three trainings	$3,500

For more information, see Appendix 5.c for more detailed budget information

Best Practice

Wakefield Digital Marketing Program

PRIVATE
REALM

Location   Wakefield, MA

Project/Program Summary

The Town of Wakefield established a Digital Marketing Training and Grant Program in 2020 to support the new way in which businesses are operating more online in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To help support their local businesses, the Town created a digital marketing training and grant program for small, independently owned, brick-and-mortar retailers, restaurants and personal service businesses in the community.

Grants of up to $2,000 were made available to eligible businesses to implement digital marketing services.

Additionally, the Town worked with a consultant to create two online trainings 1) Creating a Marketing Plan and Social Media Marketing and 2) Intro to Website and Search engine Optimization. In order to apply for the grant, businesses were required to view the trainings.

Process

Using only Town funds, the Town established a simple application process for businesses to apply.

1. Outline the program and process including eligibility for grant funding

2. Secure funding for a consultant to create online workshops

3. Set up the application process

4. Launch the program and promote it to local businesses through various channels including Town owned social media and leveraging outside media outlets

5. Receive applications and issue funding to applicants

6. Seek feedback report from business owners on use of funds

Key Takeaways

• Town funded which allowed for flexibility in program delivery

• Applicants were allowed to use the funding towards any form of digital marketing needs including: digital ads, hiring a consultant, creating a website, etc.

• Eligibility criteria and program details clearly identified on the Town's website along with online application to the program

• The program included an online workshop available to all Wakefield businesses and made available for replay

Town of Wakefield, MA - Government ✓
February 2 · 🌐

Do you own a small business here in Wakefield and need a hand getting your online marketing plan on track? Check out Thursday's free webinar: Intro to Website and Search Engine Optimization. In partnership with Wakefield's Community and Economic Development Office, this second webinar in the training series will be led by Susu Wong from Tomo360. Learn more about the digital-marketing training and grant program and sign up for the webinar here: https://www.wakefield.ma.us/digital-marketing-grant

DIGITAL MARKETING TRAINING &

Eligibility for grant funding

The Digital Marketing Training and Grant Program is being funded through the Town Administrator's office and small businesses that are interested in receiving grant funding must comply with the following regulations:

• Business physically located in Wakefield;
• Be independently owned, brick-and-mortar retailer, restaurants, and personal services;
• Has been established for at least one year as of March 15, 2020;
• Experienced a financial loss due to COVID-19;
• Have at least one year remaining on business lease or proof of commercial real estate ownership;
• Total revenue must not exceed $1,000,000;
• Retain at least one full-time employee excluding the owner, or multiple part-time employees equivalent to a full-time employee on payroll and;
• Have demonstrated a best effort to remain operational or resume operations since March 2020 and have followed the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' COVID-related executive orders.

The following are ineligible for grant funding:

• Business not physically located in Wakefield;
• Businesses with annual revenue exceeding $1,000,000;
• Franchisees;
• Non-profit, home-based, or faith-based organizations;
• Cannabis businesses, liquor-stores, pawn shops, tobacco stores, and used car dealerships;
• Have past due bills, tax liens, or have filed for bankruptcy;
• Have not complied with COVID-19 regulations or protocol or;
• Does not have a valid/current business registration with the Town/State

Use of funds

Funds can be only used for marketing-related services, such as: working with a marketing consultant, website design or redesign, creation of ecommerce platform, creation or growth of social media and blogging platforms, email marketing, digital advertising, online reservation system and booking software, and other marketing-related services.

These funds are not to be used for working capital such as rent, payroll, utilities, etc. The grantee must submit a detailed invoice (can be estimates of products/services) to the Community and Economic Development office for pre-approval. Proof of payment will be required in the form of detailed bank or credit card statements, cancelled checks, or receipt payments for the grant funds used towards eligible expenses. Grant funds cannot be used to pay for non-marketing related expenses.

If the grant funds are used toward unapproved services and goods approved by Community and Economic Development office, the grantee will be subject to paying back the funds to the Town.

Additional considerations:

Businesses MUST attend the online webinar trainings to apply for the grant funding. Businesses are welcome to attend the webinar trainings but not take advantage of the grant funding. The webinar trainings are open to any Wakefield-based business, including one's ineligible for the grant funding (non-profit, home-based, faith-based, cannabis, liquor-stores, pawn shops, tobacco stores, and used car dealerships).

Small businesses who currently have a limited or nonexistent online presence may be given preference as this program is intended to assist businesses and organizations start and/or grow their digital reach.

Please note that even if a business meets the aforementioned criteria, it is not guaranteed to receive a grant due to funding constraints of this program. The Town reserves the right to discontinue or modify requirements and funding as necessary.

Town of Wakefield Website and Facebook Page

Walk the Downtown, One-Day Event

Category		Revenue/Sales
Location		Exact location/path to be determined within the Reading Downtown Smart Growth District
Origin		Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee
Budget		Low Budget under $10K depending on programming.

Funding Sources/Grant opportunities include:
- Shared Streets and Spaces Program (MassDOT) for certain elements
- T-Mobile Hometown Grant
- Future BID Budget
- ARPA Funding

Timeframe		Short Term 3 months for planning, 1 day event
Risk		Low Risk – regulatory restrictions or ability to easily program events. Establishing a strong campaign to draw people to the one-day event. Low participation by businesses.

Key Performance Indicators

1) Number of attendees of the event

2) Number of partners working together

3) Daily revenues from businesses during the event

Partners & Resources

Town of Reading Staff, BID Steering Committee, Reading DPW and Engineering Departments, Reading Public Safety Department, Downtown Businesses, Reading Retailers Collaborative, Walkable Reading, cultural and creative organizations

Project Mapping for The Loop in Downtown Manchester. Source: Civic Moxie

Diagnostic

Downtown Reading is very walkable, being contained mostly within ½ mile. The walkable nature of this district is also something Reading residents love. In 2019, as part of the Reading Reimagine Survey, residents indicated they loved the walkable aspect of Reading.

Similarly, in the 2019 Reimagine Reading survey, many indicated they loved the shops in Downtown. This is echoed in the LRRP Customer survey in that 80% of responses indicated that shopping was one of the reasons that brought them to downtown.

However, the Project Team learned that 37% of responses indicated that the lack of available on-street parking has prevented them from regularly shopping/dining or running errands in Downtown. At the same time, we learned that trips are short, and that many customers are just visiting one business and then leaving.

While the most visible and convenient on-street parking (near the shops on Main Street) is full much of the time, there are parking spaces elsewhere in the downtown within a short walk. Considering the walkable nature of the Downtown, it is important to encourage shoppers to park where spots may be less utilized and take a short walk to their destination.

This project is also in alignment with the goals of the BID Steering Committee on cultural placemaking to implement activities that will unify the district as a location.

Wordcloud, Town of Reading Reimagine Reading Survey, 2019. Source: Town of Reading

Action Item

To create a one-day attraction event in the form of a Walking Tour in the Downtown which would connect customers to businesses with programming and activities.

The project would include:

1. Event Concept and Development

2. Event Planning & Marketing

3. Marketing

4. Implementation

5. Evaluation & Next Steps

Map with walking radius of Downtown Reading. Source: Favermann Design

Process

1. Event Concept Development

- Establish a Steering Committee for the event that would include a mix of stakeholders to guide the project - including partners such as local artists, retailers, restaurants, and media outlets.

- Discuss key event details such as budget, marketing, event operations (e.g. staffing, traffic and parking, materials, storage), and potential obstacles to implementation.

- Discuss potential event themes. Could the walking tour be centered around history? A specific business industry (e.g. fitness)? Could it leverage the creative arts – similar to the Downtown Art Walk? See next page for potential theme opportunities.

- From the planning phase, treat the event as a demonstration for testing potential placemaking and programmatic features that could become permanent for the Downtown. How can this 1-day event lead to lasting activation for Downtown Reading?

- Which other recovery planning project recommendations tie into such an event?

2. Event Planning and Marketing

- Promote a request for programming to local businesses and residents.

- Identify the location of stations that would serve as stops for active and passive programming or shopping at various retailers along the walking path during the event. The path should include stops throughout the entire downtown to demonstrate district walkability.

- Consider taking over parking spaces for the day (in a manner operationally consistent with a Parking Day event) in order to provide enough space for both pedestrian passage (on sidewalks) and programming (in parking spaces).

- Non-material programming (e.g. exercise classes, storytelling, etc.) which can be donated by local residents and businesses should be considered due to their low cost and ease of implementation for a one-day event.

- Consider wayfinding and station signage, as well as event content (e.g. flyers, websites with QR code, events schedule), to ensure an effective flow of attendees throughout the event.

- Finalize key performance indicators, survey questions to administer, and capture during the event.

3. Marketing:

- Create a marketing campaign leveraging social media, local media outlets, leveraging Town Hall community connections and reaching out to adjacent communities.

- Promotional pushes should begin one month prior and recur two weeks out, one week out and daily the week of the event.

4. Implementation

- Host a successful event by checking in frequently with volunteers and vendors, as well as monitoring for changes needed to program locations and attendee orientation.

- Leverage insights from past one-day events to save time in coordination efforts.

- Capture your key performance indicators, administer your survey, and capture lots of photos and videos!

5. Evaluation and Next Steps

- Process results from qualitative and quantitative data captured.

- Meet as a Steering Committee to share findings and begin to populate a set of recommended next steps to iterate upon the event. Which event programming could become permanent placemaking or cultural arts features? What will be the most effective way to follow-up with local businesses and encourage future activations?

- Determine the best way to share results from the event with members of the public (e.g. public meeting, infographics on Town website, etc.)

Theme Opportunities

Food

Reading's Downtown offers several restaurants and eateries. There would be an opportunity to have a food-themed walking tour of downtown including:

- Venetian Moon, Main Street
- Caffe Nero, Main Street
- Nella's Pizza, Main Street
- Bunratty Tavern, Main Street
- Bangkok Spice, Haven Street
- Fat Larry's, (coming soon on Haven Street)
- Pamplemousse, Haven Street
- Green Tomato, High Street (future Gould Street Location)
- Last Corner Restaurant, High Street
- Colombo's Pizza, Brande Court
- Swiss Bakers, High Street
- Christopher's Restaurant, Main Street
- Fusion Café, Main Street
- Zucca Italian, Main Street
- Avana Sushi, Main Street
- Pizza World, Main Street
- Biltmore & Main, Main Street
- Drew's Stews, Main Street
- The Chocolate Truffle, Main Street
- Professor's Market, Main Street
- Jimbo's Roast Beef, Main Street
- Dunkin Donuts, Main Street

Fitness

There are several fitness-oriented businesses in the Downtown. This includes:

- Fitness Within, Main Street
- Healthy Changes Pilates
- Karate, Haven Street
- Tread, Linden Street
- Tread II , High Street
- Empower on Haven, Haven Street

There could be an opportunity to also include wellness-oriented businesses including medical practices, physical therapy offices, mental health practitioners, etc.
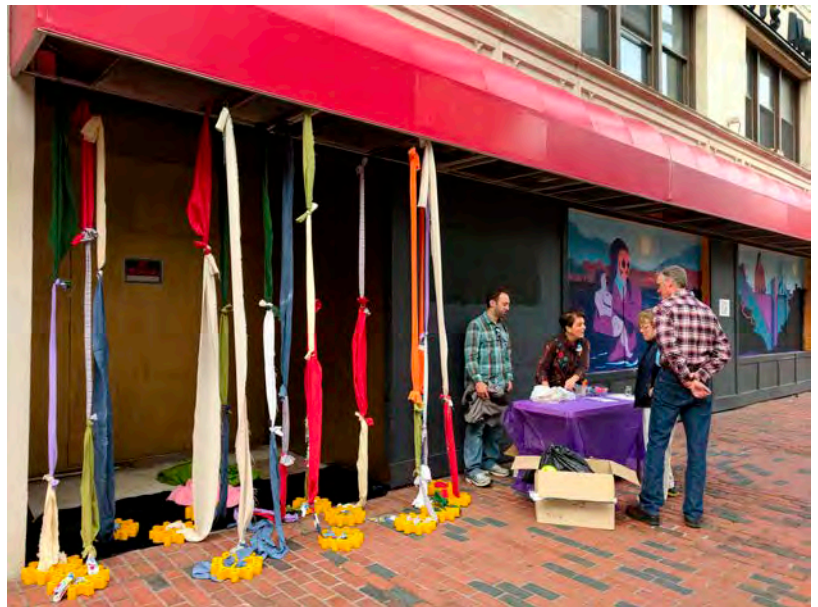
Interactive Stop, The Loop, Manchester, NH. Photo Source: Manchesterinklink.com

Budget Breakdown

Potential costs associated with this project may include:

Item	Cost Estimate
Artists Fee for any creative temporary public art	$800-$1500
Print Fee for Route Signage (doesn't include design fee if not done in-house)	$250/sign
Participants to provide/donate their participation time and services. This would include activities provided by participants or active programming.	$250/sign

A — Bike Lane

B — Bike Rack

C — Parklet

D — Public Art

E — Seating

F — Sidewalk Art

Sources, top to bottom: www.peopleforbikes.org, www.forms-surfaces.com, www.stlmag.com, www.veryprivateart.com, www.homemydesign.com, www.weburbanist.com
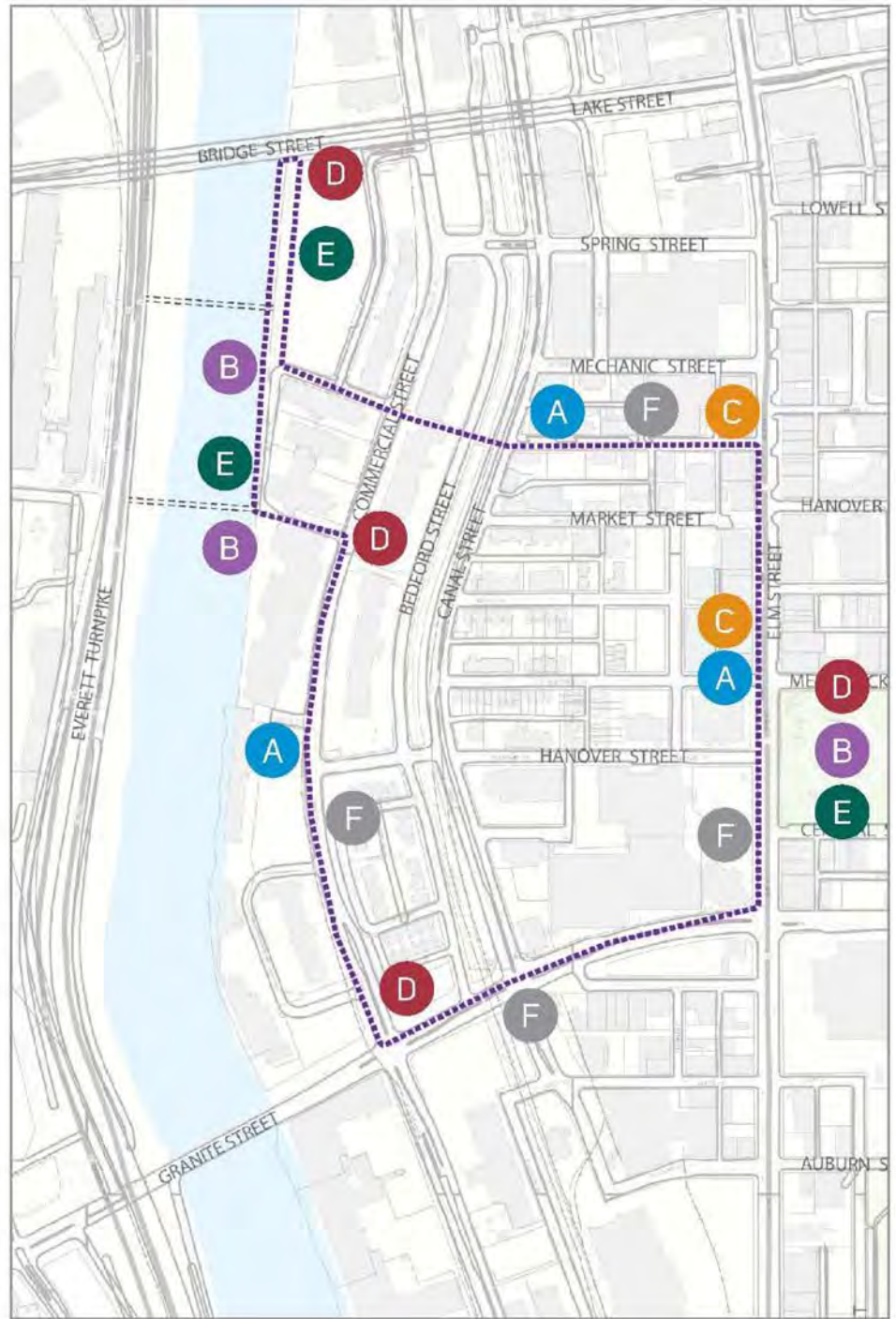

Source: CivicMoxie

Best Practice

The Loop Walking Tour

Location   Manchester, NH

REVENUES & SALES

Project Summary

Manchester, NH is home to thousands of high-tech workers and university students in the Amoskeag Millyard. These potential customers are separated from downtown by wide streets, a rail line, and a change in topography that necessitates stairs at some connecting street.

To help potential customers reach downtown and help reduce the perceived distance between the Millyard and downtown, the goal is to physically break up this distance by leveraging public art and programmed spaces via an designated route.

With the help of consultants, and guided by a steering committee of stakeholders, a series of programmed events and coordinated public art projects along with spaces of seating and gathering (all temporary) were identified to be implemented along the designated route which connected downtown to the riverfront and Millyard.

The Loop event was a way of testing the validity of the concept that an interesting and pedestrian friendly route, filled with public art, and pleasant public spaces, would encourage connectivity between the two areas and would support downtown businesses and provide amenities and activities for Millyard employees.

The Loop, Manchester, NH. Photo Credit: Manchester Connects

Process

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

1. The consultant team identified the challenge of physical connectivity and created a suggested map of the easiest route to and from the two disconnected areas.

2. A few members of the steering committee volunteered to lead the effort and began planning.

3. Partners were approached, including the City of Manchester, the Public Art Commission, some local retailers, the Millyard Museum, and others.

4. Local graphic designers offered their services to design promotional literature and a major social media campaign was launched, building on the thousands of followers on the Manchester Connects Facebook page.

5. Collaborators planned for three months, garnering good press and many attendees the day of the event.

Key Takeaways

The Loop is a great example of a way in which Reading can similarly change the narrative regarding walking distances in the Downtown. Some key takeaways include:

- Engage stakeholders early on to help identify the route and destinations – this also gets business owners and tenants excited about the project and more likely to participate in interventions

- Take into account the physical environment and elements (shade, space, amenities) – work with DPW and public safety to ensure their concerns are addressed

- Leverage existing partners to help build upon the theme identified – using partners early on will help build support and capacity for the project

- Leverage local designers to help create promotional material, map, and marketing campaign

- Create excitement for the event in advance to ensure good participation – leverage local media for press around the event while also encouraging businesses to build excitement through social media channels

Wayfinding on the Fairmount Greenway

REVENUES & SALES

Location   Boston, MA   Reading, MA   65

Project Summary

Boston's nine-mile Fairmount Greenway is a life-changing development, connecting Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, and Hyde Park with a route that links parks, green space, on-street bike routes, trails, transit stations, and city squares. Since 2008, the Greenway's 10-member task force have been working with the City of Boston and multiple other organizations on this long-term vision to connect the Fairmount communities to the heart of Boston. More than 1,000 residents have joined in planning, designing, and implementing Greenway park, streets, and greenway projects.

In 2021, the Fairmount Greenway installed wayfinding signs to mark a 1.5-mile on-street route of the Fairmount Greenway in Dorchester near Four Corners and Codman Square. The wayfinding signs were updated to include key neighborhood destinations and mark the on-street route in February 2021. Twelve signs were printed on corrugated plastic and installed with residents in May 2021.

Key Takeaways

There are several elements from the Fairmount Greenway project that can be leveraged and adopted by Reading in implementing the Walking Tour for the Downtown. This includes:

- Using wayfinding signage which were designed for 12x18-inch corrugated plastic sheets for $250 – these are low-cost and easily printed

- Using a local print shop to print the materials – Reading should leverage a local print shop to continue to support local businesses

- Include the Wayfinding branding elements to tie the back to the wayfinding process

- Identifying locations/destinations for your interventions first, then create signage that will point to 'what's ahead' – This is key to really changing the narrative around the Downtown

- Signs should also include walking distance + times along with biking distance + times – Again, this information will set the expectation for participants and allow them to experience how long it actually takes them to walk the downtown

Key spaces to connect and a Fairmount Greenway map
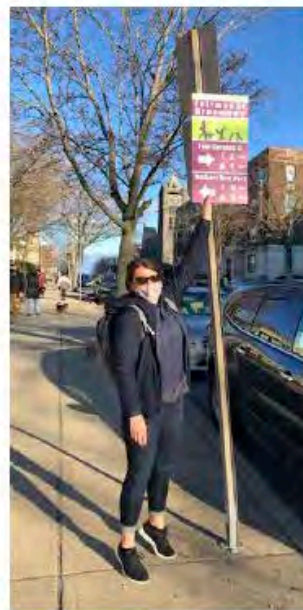
Fairmount Greenway. Images provided via Best Practice by Civic Moxie

Downtown Business Marketplace

Category		Revenue/Sales
Location		Serving the Businesses in the Downtown Smart Growth District/LRRP Boundary
Origin		Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee
Budget		Low Budget $8K-$25K – with ongoing costs and fees. Potential funding sources include: • Massachusetts Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant Program (only non-profits can apply) • Future BID Budget • ARPA Funding
Timeframe		Short Term (3 months) with ongoing maintenance and support
Risk		Low Risk – there are limited risks with this type of project but include lack of customer use and lack of business participation
Key Performance Indicators		1) Total sales ($) 2) Total online sales ($) 3) Total number of transactions 4) Number of Bought Online Pickup in Store (BOPIS), Bought Online Pickup at Curb (BOPAC), and local deliveries 5) Number of new customers
Partners & Resources		Town of Reading, Reading Retailers Collaborative, Reading/North Reading Chamber of Commerce, BID Steering Committee, businesses
Diagnostic		Downtown Businesses experienced a number of impacts related to COVID-19 including reduced operating hours/capacity, temporary closures (or permanent), and increased expenses to implement safety measures. These impacts resulted in 76% of businesses generating less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019 despite the fact that many businesses were experiencing increasing revenues the 3 years prior to COVID. Customer shopping habits were also impacted, including a major pivot to online shopping and delivery. According the the customer survey, just under 77% indicated they are shopping more online since COVID-19 and just under 50% indicated they have shopped online with a business in Downtown. We also heard that in addition to standard safety protocols, customers would be more likely to shop locally if their menu, service, and products were made available online. Customers are also wanting to see more options for curbside pickup for their takeout and online retail orders. The creation of a collective, online marketplace for the Downtown businesses could help ensure those shopping dollars are captured by local businesses. This online marketplace could expand upon the existing online directory of businesses already listed in the Shop the Readings website (managed by the Reading/North Reading Chamber of Commerce) or be an entirely new platform. This project is also supported by the BID Steering Committee goal of Marketing and Branding to strengthen collective marketing efforts.

Action Items:

To create an online marketplace for Downtown businesses to sell their products online and establish a stronger, collective online presence. This would be coupled with marketing campaign to the community to inform them of the online marketplace and a campaign to businesses to encourage participation. The project would include:

1. Establishing a point person or group to manage and guide the project

2. Engage a developer and establish a project timeline

3. Create and/or update the existing database of businesses in the Downtown

4. Collect interest from local businesses

5. Begin outreach to businesses for use of the platform

6. Identify platform elements and needs

7. Development of the platform

8. Creation of a marking campaign to encourage listing on the platform

9. Solicit feedback and make changes as needed

Note, additional information regarding this project can be found in Appendix 5.c.

Process

1. Establish a point person or group to manage and guide the project. This should include a person tied to the ownership of the website and/or other community stakeholder representatives.

2. Engage the developer and establish a project timeline for implementation and directory launch. The developer would be responsible for platform development but also in administering workshops and/or trainings for retailers to understand what is required to participate in this form of marketplace for online sales within their regular business operations.

3. Create and/or update the existing database of businesses in the Downtown.

4. Establish a way to collect interest from local businesses. This could be done via electronic survey and boots-on-the-ground approach.

5. Begin outreach process starting with an informational campaign to businesses regarding the project, leveraging the database of business contact information or survey form. At the same time leverage outreach and project promotion through local traditional media, social media and regular town communication.

6. Work with the developer to incorporate desired services which could include but not limited to: business database, marketplace, jobs, calendar, directories, etc.

7. The developer would then create the platform (see SME Report from Mondofora in Appendix 5.c for more information regarding platform design) including populating the services and data, performing QA tests and collecting feedback from beta testers.

8. Create a marketing campaign to both businesses for participation and the customer base informing them of this newly launched directory to help them support local business.

9. Solicit feedback regularly from businesses and shoppers to further enhance the platform.

Mondofora Online Marketplace

REVENUES & SALES
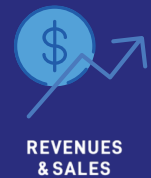
Location   Online

Program Summary

Mondofora is an online local-search enabled marketplace that allows for the searching and purchasing of products locally. This platform serves as a convenience to shoppers who wish to support local, but prefer to order online and either pick-up at the store or have it delivered.

Features of the Mondofora Online Marketplace include:

- Home page features "Local Vendors"
- Include vendor name and map
- Shoppable within each store
- Integrates with community directories
- Integrates with vendor website
- Integrates with omni-channel solutions
- Vendor control products, price, inventory count, etc.
- Purchase is between vendor and shopper
- Funds go directly to vendor
- Each vendor gets their own sales & performance reports
- Each vendor collects their customer info

In order to implement this marketplace, the process would involve:

1. Identifying a point person to guide the project, regardless if it is consultant-led or DIY project
2. Coordinate with stakeholders and to receive interest from businesses – this may include a community presentation of marketplace websites and local search technologies
3. Begin on-boarding with vendors to set up their account and uploading their products
4. Develop a marketing campaign for the community marketplace to encourage shop local online
5. Integrate the marketplace with other online retail initiatives including online directories

Key Takeaways

Mondofora is a solution to develop an online marketplace where Reading businesses can sell their products locally, online. Reading could easily implement a similar solution, or a more customized, shop-local online marketplace. Key takeaways to consider when implementing this project are:

• Consider early outreach to businesses to seek interest and understand their needs

• Determine if additional trainings are needed for businesses to prep for their online transition – including product listing/information and trainings for the use of the platform

• Consider using an existing technology and platform to save cost – including administration and platform maintenance

• Integrate the website with existing platforms – consider working with the Reading/North Reading Chamber of Commerce to connect the "Shop the Readings" website
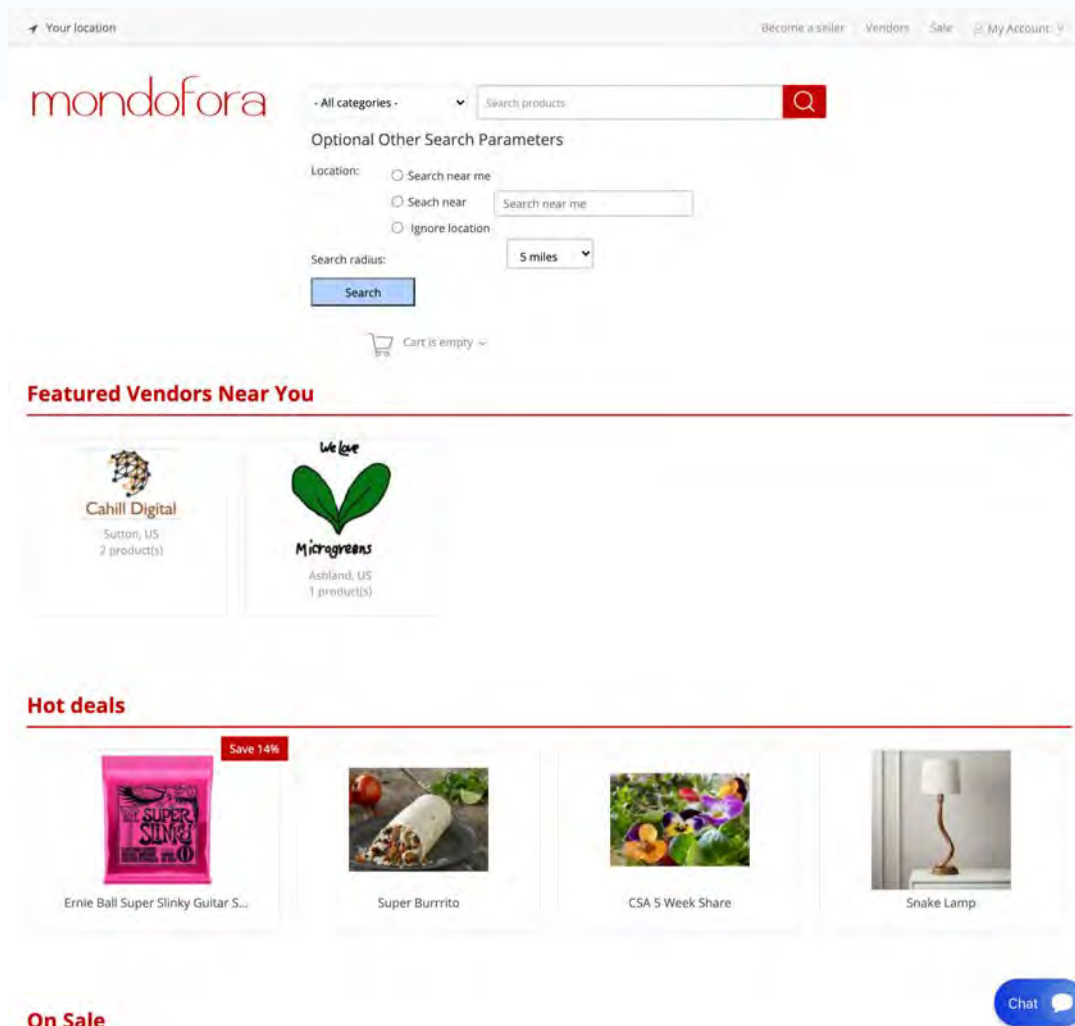
Screenshot, Mondofora. Source: Mondofora.com

Marketing Toolkit for Downtown

Category		Revenue & Sales
Location		Serving the Businesses in the Downtown Smart Growth District/LRRP Boundary
Origin		Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee
Budget		Low Budget ($2,000-$5,000 for toolkit creation) ($500 - $2,000 for workshop). Potential funding sources include: • Massachusetts Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant Program (only non-profits can apply) • Future BID Budget • ARPA Funding
Timeframe		Short Term and Medium Term Phases
Risk		Low Risk – risks are limited to volunteer and staff capacity limits and low ROI
Key Performance Indicators		1) Use by Business Owners 2) Awareness of district offerings (marketing reach) 3) Event Attendance Rates
Partners & Resources		Town Staff/Departments, Downtown Businesses, Reading/North Reading Chamber of Commerce, BID Steering Committee, Reading Retailers Collaborative

Photo of Downtown Reading, MA. Photo Credit: Town of Reading

Diagnostic

According to the customer survey about 50% of customers had reported they are shopping less in Downtown as a result of COVID. This is reflective of the decrease in in-person shopping that 76% of businesses reported. When asked about potential strategies to help with COVID-19 impacts 50% of businesses who responded to the survey, felt it was important/very important to implement strategies that would help market the district to bring people back Downtown.

Additionally, discussions with the LRRP Advisory group indicated that support with collective marketing would be an important strategy to help better market downtown offerings and events.

Therefore, it is important to develop a process that will help streamline collective/shared marketing strategies for the Downtown during shopping and holiday events. As such it is recommended that a resource and/or program be created to give businesses an easy method to leverage the power of collective marketing for regular shopping and holiday events.

This project recommendation is supported by the BID Steering Committee goal of Marketing and Branding to strengthen collaborative marketing efforts and increase foot-traffic in the downtown.

Action Item

To create a marketing toolkit for district-wide marketing of Downtown Reading. The project would involve the creation of a toolkit in which businesses can use to collaborate on marketing efforts, leveraging existing shopping events and holidays and to begin connecting the downtown through district-wide marketing. This project would include:

1. Establishing a Team to guide the project

2. Business Workshop to identify the current challenges when it comes to district-wide marketing

3. Creation of a Marketing Toolkit which businesses can use collectively to help promote existing shopping events and holidays along with newly created events

4. Solicit Feedback and Update as Needed

Sample of Branding from North Flatbush BID. Graphic Provided by: Perch Advisors

Marketing Toolkit, IDA. Photo Source: downtown.org

Process

1. Establish a Team: Identify a Team which would include Town Staff, representatives from the BID Steering Committee, and downtown businesses

2. Hold a Marketing Workshop for Downtown Businesses to 1) better understand the challenges business experience with marketing efforts and 2) begin to educate the businesses on ways in which they can work collaboratively with district-wide marketing campaigns. This workshop should also encourage businesses to organize while identifying someone who could 'lead' or 'champion' district-wide marketing efforts.

3. Create a Marketing Toolkit with the help of a consultant or local marketer, leveraging insights gained from the Marketing Workshop. Toolkit should include:

   • An easily accessible list of events or calendar that Downtown Businesses will create campaigns around. This should be a document that is easily accessible and updated by businesses.

   • How to co-brand or pair up with complementary businesses to create additional offers

   • A step-by-step path for creating a marketing campaign around a holiday or shopping event

   • Templates for businesses to grab and promote as part of the larger District including: email newsletter templates and social media graphics and swipe files/copy bank.

   • Creation of social hashtags for use of district businesses to promote the event or holiday.

   • A marketing checklist and timeline that can be applied to each campaign. This checklist could also include a way to designate certain activities to various individuals among the business community. The timeline should include promotion periods for promotion including social media, newsletters and sharing with other organizations and media outlets.

4. Make the Toolkit Available on the Town's Economic Development Webpage.

5. Solicit Feedback and Success

   • Establish a method for measuring KPIs (key performance indicators) and success/implementation of the Toolkit.
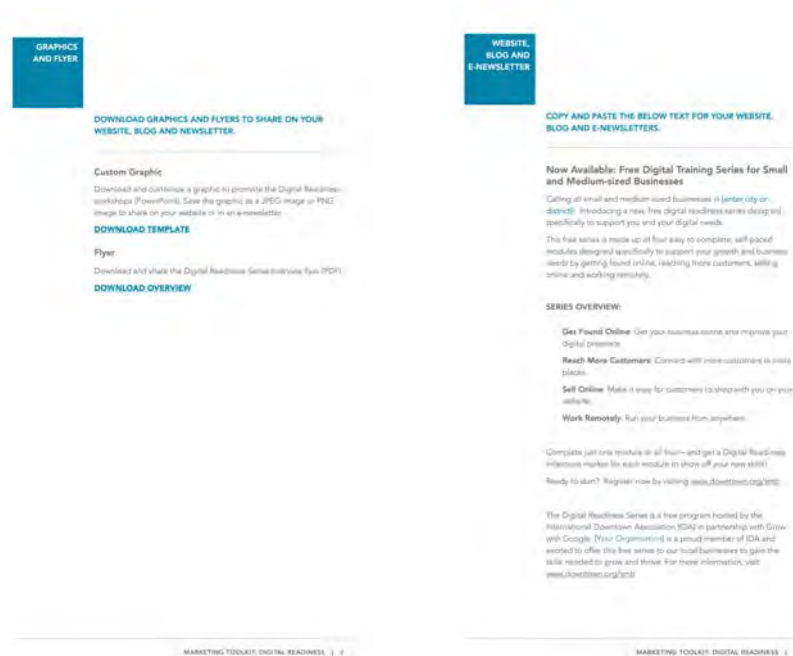
Pages from the IDA Marketing Toolkit: Source: Downtown.org

2021 Capital Arts Fest Marketing Toolkit

REVENUES & SALES

Location Concord, NH

Program Summary

The Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce, which serves the business community in Concord, NH offers a marketing toolkit for members to help promote various events and offerings.

The toolkit resides on the Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce and is easily accessible by it's members.

The current toolkit is for the marketing of the 2021 Capital Arts Fest, and includes a variety of tools that businesses can use to collectively support the event.

Some of the resources available to members include:

- Sample Social Media Posts – including dates on when to post

- Downloadable Graphics

- Printable Graphics

- Email copy

Key Takeaways

Even though there is not a Chamber of Commerce within Reading, there is opportunity to create resources and make them available to Downtown businesses. Some of the key takeaways from this example include:

- Online access to the materials – the Town of Reading could easily include a similar page on the Economic Development webpage of the Town's website

- Ease in implementation by business owners – businesses can easily access and use the templates with little effort

- Inclusion of event hashtags to promote on social media which helps create a buzz around the event

- Easily downloadable graphics to create a consistent visual brand to the event

- Website: https://www.concordnhchamber.com/2021-capital-arts-fest-marketing-toolkit

Calendar of Happenings for Downtown

Category		Revenue & Sales
Location		Serving the Businesses in the Downtown Smart Growth District/LRRP Boundary
Origin		Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee
Budget		Low Budget: $2,000-$5,000 for new website/platform development. If integrated into existing platform budget would be in the range of $1,000-$3,000 Potential funding sources include: • Massachusetts Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant Program (only non-profits can apply) • Future BID Budget • ARPA Funding
Timeframe		Short Term for implementation, long term for on-going maintenance
Risk		Low Risk – risks are limited to ensuring events are up-to-date and available to the public to refer to
Key Performance Indicators		1) Website/calendar visits 2) Number of businesses/organizations that post events 3) Event attendance
Partners & Resources		Town Staff/Departments, Downtown Businesses, Reading/North Reading Chamber of Commerce, BID Steering Committee, Reading Retailers Collaborative

Photo of Event/Activity on Town Common, Reading, MA. Photo Credit: Town of Reading Facebook Page

Diagnostic

Due to COVID-19 businesses in the Downtown experienced a 77% decline in on-site customers in January and February 2021 than before COVID. This is not surprising as about 50% of customers had reported they are shopping less in Downtown since COVID-19. Even so, prior to COVID, many trips to Downtown were short, with nearly 45% indicated only visiting one business and then leaving, rather than strolling or taking their time to visit multiple businesses. This may be due to a tenant mix that doesn't meet the needs of customers since nearly 61% of responses to the customer survey indicated there were not enough stores or restaurants that interested them.

Reading has a very active arts and culture community. In 2014 the Town worked with Fine Point Associates to identify the potential for a cultural district in Downtown Reading. Through that process, the consultant identified several cultural facilities & organizations, venues, historical assets, and complementary businesses within or near the Downtown. This study also identified several annual events, along with repeating events by several of Reading's performing arts organizations. Currently, these events/performances are advertised through a variety of means, but could benefit from a centralized calendar to inform residents of all the upcoming happenings in Town. Even though some of these organizations and venues operate outside of the immediate Downtown, there is opportunity to leverage these events to bring more foot-traffic to Downtown Reading.

The creation of an online event calendar is also supported by the BID Steering Committee goals for Marketing and Branding which will help support a sustainable marketing strategy for the Downtown.

Action Item

To create a centralized online calendar of events to attract visitors from Reading and also the region.

1. Establishing a point person or group to manage and guide the project

2. Engage a developer and establish a project timeline

3. Begin outreach to businesses and local organizations for use of the calendar

4. Identify calendar platform & needs

5. Development of the platform

6. Creation of a marking campaign to encourage using the calendar

7. Solicit feedback and make changes as needed
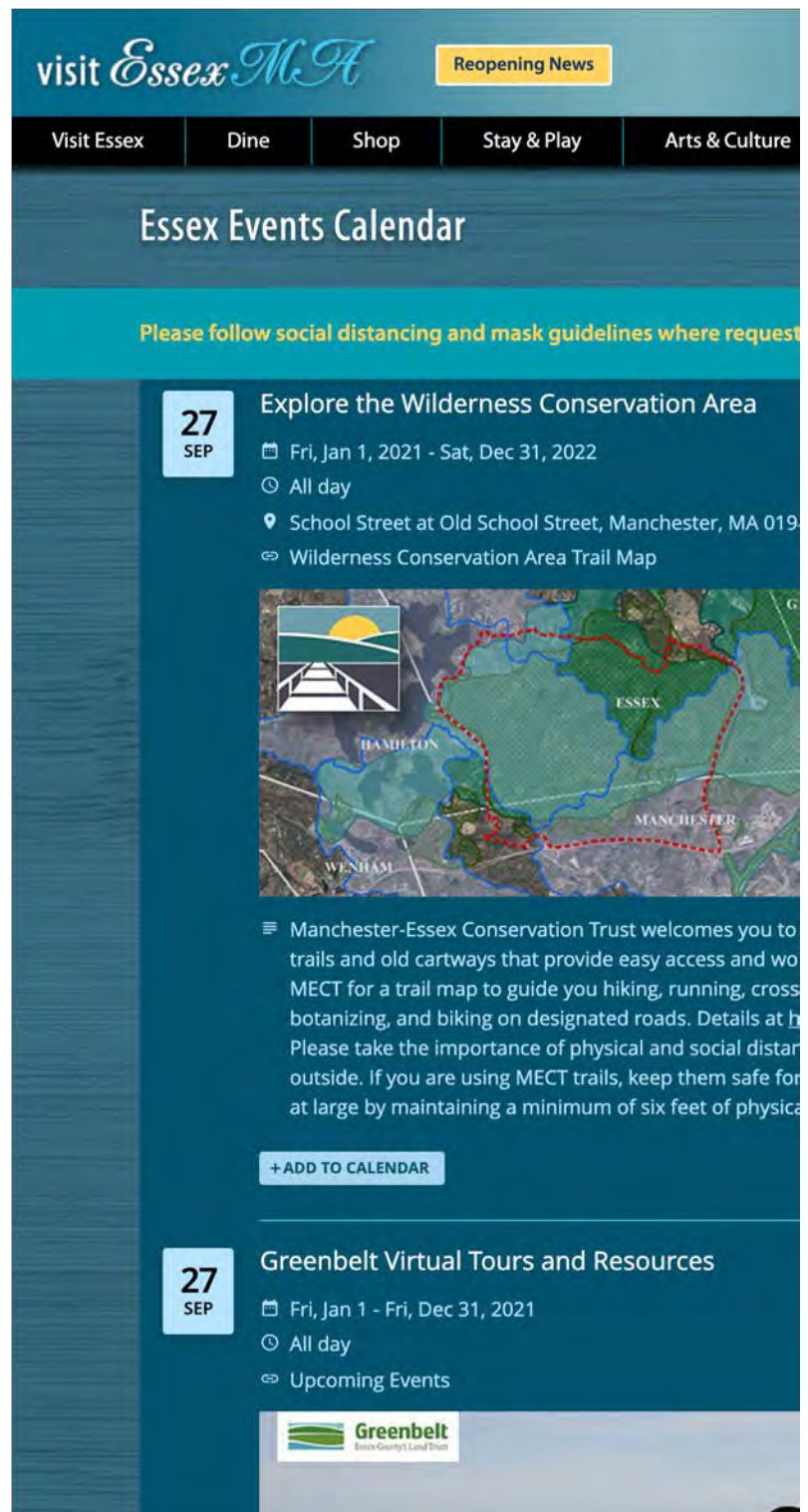
Screenshot of Visit Essex MA, Calendar of Events. Source: VisitEssexMA.com/events

Process

1. Establish a point person or group to manage and guide the project. This should include a person responsible to the ownership of the calendar.

- The Town may consider integrating calendar management into the roles and responsibilities of an existing staff member
- In many cases the District Organization takes over this task

2. Engage the developer and establish a project timeline for implementation and calendar launch.

- The developer would be responsible for calendar development
- Developer would also administer workshops and/or trainings to use the calendar

3. Begin outreach process starting with an informational campaign to businesses and local organizations regarding the project. At the same time leverage outreach and project promotion through local traditional media, social media and regular town communication.

4. Identify calendar and platform needs.

- Consider leveraging an existing platform and wordpress plug-ins such as **The Events Calendar**, for ease in crowdsourcing

5. The developer would then create the platform or add the plug-in to an existing platform, performing QA tests and collecting feedback from beta testers.

6. Create a marketing campaign to both businesses and organizations for participation and the customer base informing them of this newly launched calendar to help them support local events and activities.

7. Solicit feedback regularly from businesses and shoppers to further enhance the platform.

Various Events/activities, Reading, MA. Photo Source: Town of Reading Facebook Page

Pop-Up Permitting for Downtown

Category		Administrative Capacity
Location		LRRP District Boundary/Reading's Downtown Smart Growth District
Origin		Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee
Budget		Low budget (under $35,000-$50,000 for policy/zoning review & recommendations + design of guide). Potential funding sources include: • Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Program • Future BID Budget • ARPA Funding
Timeframe		Short Term (6-12 months)
Risk		Low Risk – use of pilot projects to test pop-ups
Key Performance Indicators		1) Number of pop-up permits reviewed/approved 2) Increased foot-traffic observed by Downtown Merchants 3) Improved perception of Downtown – survey to residents
Partners & Resources		Town of Reading Staff including Building Department and Planning Staff, Community Planning and Development Commission, Walkable Reading, Reading Retailers Collaborative, Reading/North Reading Chamber of Commerce, local arts organizations (including performing arts) businesses and property owners

Photo of Dimick Street, Somerville, MA. Photo Credit: Neighborways Design

Diagnostic

As a result of COVID-19, businesses in the Downtown experienced a decline in revenue, decline in foot-traffic, and reduction in operating hours and staff. During re-opening, many businesses and had to incur expenses to implement safety measures and quickly pivoted their businesses to establish alternative methods to sell or deliver their product. And in some cases, businesses had to close completely due the the capacity limitations imposed by the state.

Customers also had to adapt to these changes, while also figuring out their comfort levels when visiting business establishments. At the time the Customer Survey was administered (May 2021), customers reported feeling most comfortable visiting take-out restaurants and at sit-down restaurants that were outdoors.

The Project Team also learned that customers indicated that more outdoor dining and shopping options would make them more likely to shop at a local business when it comes to business operations and the situation with COVID-19. While many others indicated that more outdoor activities along with cultural and art events would bring them to the commercial district more often in the future.

Recognizing this need to be flexible while also creating an environment that attracts more visitors to commercial districts, businesses and communities are beginning to think creatively in developing solutions that can easily be implemented and permitted in the mist of any COVD related safety protocols. These sort of solutions, or, Pop-up events have been able to serve this need, as they tend to be flexible, easily implemented and temporary in nature.

However, these types of projects can quickly be stifled due to challenging and unclear permitting/approval processes. As such, creating streamlined permitting and approvals for pop-up events will encourage the use of these interventions with the goal of increasing the Downtown's visibility and attract more people, and continue to improve upon COVID-19 recovery efforts.

This project is aligned with the goals of the BID Steering Committee to allow for improvements and activities that will strengthen sense of community and place, and make downtown a fun and engaging destination for everyone.

Where do you feel most comfortable visiting?
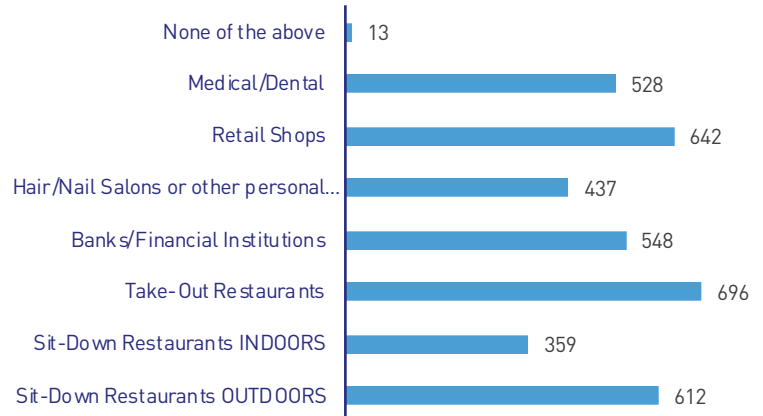
Category	Responses
None of the above	13
Medical/Dental	528
Retail Shops	642
Hair/Nail Salons or other personal...	437
Banks/Financial Institutions	548
Take-Out Restaurants	696
Sit-Down Restaurants INDOORS	359
Sit-Down Restaurants OUTDOORS	612

LRRP Customer Survey

Note: Respondents were able to select more than one. Numbers are total responses.

When it comes to business operations and COVID-19, what would make you more likely to shop at a Downtown Business?
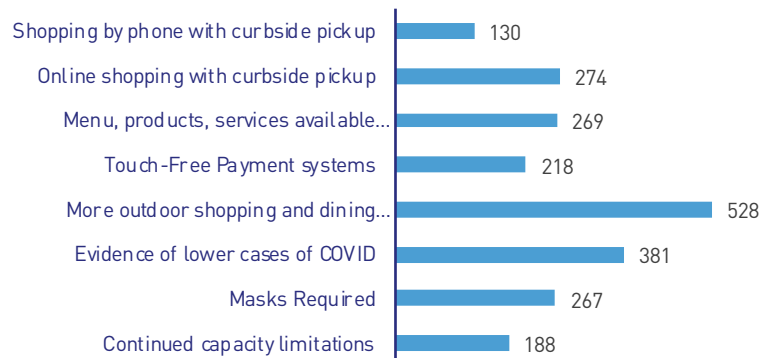
Category	Responses
Shopping by phone with curbside pickup	130
Online shopping with curbside pickup	274
Menu, products, services available...	269
Touch-Free Payment systems	218
More outdoor shopping and dining...	528
Evidence of lower cases of COVID	381
Masks Required	267
Continued capacity limitations	188

LRRP Customer Survey

Note: Respondents were able to select more than one. Numbers are total responses.

Action Item

To develop a pop-up event and tactical urbanism guide for the Town of Reading.

The project would involve:

1. Establish an Team of Town Staff to coordinate and guide the project

2. Implementation of pilot projects (see Haven on High and Safe Connections in Downtown project recommendation)

3. Review of pilot projects & existing regulations/permitting requirements

4. Development of a pop-up permitting guide

5. Promotion of guidelines and awareness campaign to encourage use

6. Evaluate and revise as needed

Process

1. Establish an Team of Town Staff coordinate and guide the project
   - The team should include any staff members that have stake in the approval or review process – including Town Leadership, DPW, Public Safety (Fire/Police) and Health Departments
   - Members from the BID Steering Committee and/or Reading Retailers Collaborative should be involved and provide direct connection/communication with merchants and other community groups

2. Implementation of pilot projects (see Haven on High and Safe Connections in Downtown project recommendation)
   - At this point, the team would have implemented some pilot projects for testing

3. Review of pilot projects & existing regulations/permitting requirements
   - After each pilot project the team would want to assess what worked and what didn't work. This would include gathering feedback from those partners that installed the project, uses of the projects and adjacent property owners/businesses.
   - At the same time the team would review existing regulations as it pertains to event permitting. This would include the existing outdoor dining regulations, Block Party requirements, zoning bylaws, etc.

4. Development of a pop-up permitting guide
   - The Team would then create the pop-up event guide in-house or with the assistance of a consultant
   - Allow for stakeholder feedback in the guide, leveraging the success of pilot projects
   - The guide should include elements like:
     - Permitting Flow Chart
     - Permitting lead-times including time for staff review
     - Notification requirements
     - Identification of projects that could qualify for expedited approval and/or automatic approval
     - Application requirements
     - Criteria for approval – including design & location requirements, considerations for safety, access and street closures
     - Project Examples or list of project types (include real pilot projects)
     - Any debrief or reporting requirements

5. Promotion of guidelines and awareness campaign to encourage use
   - Create an awareness campaign around the new guidelines – this could include press-release, inclusion in town-wide email newsletter, emailing out to local community organizations and business owners
   - Publish the guidelines on the Town's Economic Development webpage including a link to apply

6. Evaluate KPIs (key performance indicators) and revise as needed
   - Implement a process to track KPIS
   - Evaluate projects for pit-falls
   - Regularly update the guide to address these issues or challenges

COMMUNITY-LED DEMONSTRATION PROJECT POLICY + GUIDE

City of Burlington, VT | January 2018

Best Practice

Community-Let Demonstration Project Policy & Guide

ADMIN CAPACITY

Program Summary

The City of Burlington, VT created a guide for tactical urbanism projects with the goal to streamline short-term projects, demonstrations or temporary events. The city built upon this idea from past tactical projects along with the existing pilot ordnances adopted by the city.

The Guide Includes:

- An overall description of the permitting process

- How to get started with the application

- Project Types – including photograph examples

- Ideas for materials

- Project planning & evaluation

- Follow-Up

- Demonstration project policy

- Permit & application requirements

- Additional resources

The guide was prepared by Street Plans Collaborative and was funded in part by the City of Burlington, VT and Local Motion.

Key Takeaways

This guide allows for ease in implementing pop-up events and projects/demonstrations that will engage and attract visitors to Downtown, while also providing a mechanism to explore ideas before implementing them as full, more permanent designs. Key takeaways from this example include:

- Leveraging past pilot projects to inform many of the guidelines within the plan

- Includes the official policy for pop-up events/activities along with eligible proponents

- Coordination with stakeholders directly involved in the approval review process – including Fire and Police Departments

- Included a permitting flow chart to easily help applicants understand the process and timeline for approvals

- Specifies design and location requirements

- Includes examples of project types, location + design considerations and materials

- Project Planning tips for project proponents

- The guide includes a process for Project Evaluation

Pages and Photos from Burlington, VT Demonstration Project Policy + Guide. Source: https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/DPW/Tactical-Urbanism-and-Demonstration-Projects

Getting the Right Mix Downtown

Category	Tenant Mix
Location	LRRP District Boundary/Reading's Downtown Smart Growth District
Origin	Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee
Budget	Low budget ($20,000-$25,000) for Consultant Services • Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Program • Mass Development Real Estate Services Technical Assistance • Future BID Budget • ARPA Funding
Timeframe	Short Term: 3-6 months for technical assistance report. Additional time required for implementation of any recommendations
Risk	Low Risk – risks to this projects are ever changing market need/demand, transparency to potential developers or tenants
Key Performance Indicators	1) Number of vacant/available ground floor uses occupied by preferred uses/tenant mix 2) Observed foot-traffic to existing businesses 3) Perception of the District (survey to residents)
Partners & Resources	Town of Reading Staff including Building Department and Planning Staff, Community Planning and Development Commission, businesses and property owners

Storefront Downtown Reading, MA,. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Diagnostic

Reading's Downtown has undergone many changes in the last 10+ years. From the redesign of Main Street in the center of the Downtown, to the development/redevelopment of several properties under Chapter 40R. Since 2011, there have been five completed downtown redevelopment projects (one currently under construction), resulting in a total of 189 housing units and approximately 59,000 square feet of ground floor commercial space. While most of this retail space is either occupied or leased to be occupied, many of the uses going into these spaces are not meeting the demand of residents for ground floor retail uses.

According to the customer survey, respondents indicated that the lack of stores or restaurants that interest them was a primary reason for them not regularly visiting Downtown. Furthermore, when asked what would bring them Downtown more in the future, a better selection of restaurants and shops was among the highest selected response.

In speaking with Town Staff, the Project Team learned that many of the ground floor spaces are being leased by less-preferred ground floor uses such as office or medical, rather than restaurant and retail uses. In speaking with local leasing agents, Town Staff learned that these missed opportunities are sometimes due to the physical layout of the space or certain design features not being available in the space to accommodate restaurant or retail spaces (such as ventilation systems, rear loading access, size, etc.).

To ensure that Reading's Downtown is meeting the needs of customers, it is important to ensure that these redevelopment projects and ground floor commercial spaces are designed and developed to attract more restaurant and retail uses. Therefore, a review of the existing zoning and plan review process would help identify where improvements can be made to ensure there are less missed opportunities to capture some of these more desired ground floor uses.

What prevented you from regularly visiting Downtown Reading?

Response	Number
Other (please specify)	66
It felt like there was nothing "to do"	240
On-street parking is always full	287
Too much traffic congestion in Downtown	130
No anchor store, destination business, or performing arts venue downtown	218
Selection or quality of the merchandise in stores does not interest me	151
Too few stores or shops/restaurants that interest me	468
Nothing – I regularly shopped there	174

Number of Responses

LRRP Customer Survey

Action Item

To evaluate existing zoning and site plan review process to ensure spaces are being adequately designed to attract preferred ground floor uses/tenants. The project would involve:

1. Identifying a Town Staff person as the lead for the project

2. Develop a Scope of Services to hire a consultant team that could perform a review of existing zoning and site plan review processes and develop a list of recommendations for improvements

3. Implement recommendations from the analysis

4. Track KPIs (key performance indicators)

Process

1. Identify a Town Staff person as the lead for the project
   - This person would be the point for all project communication
   - Responsible for coordinating with other relevant staff/boards/committees

2. Develop a Scope of Services to issue an RFP and hire a consulting team to perform a review of existing zoning and site plan review processes and develop a list of recommendations for improvements. Scope should include:
   - Review of current zoning requirements to see if there is opportunity to require certain uses for ground floor storefronts
   - Review site plan review procedures to determine if there is opportunity to ensure projects are being designed to encourage preferred uses
   - Stakeholder feedback and engagement
   - Analysis on understanding the preferred ground floor uses
   - Recommendations/strategies – this could include changes to zoning, site plan review process, negotiation strategies

3. Implement Recommendation Strategies
   - Prioritize recommendations
   - Implement strategies

4. Track KPIs (key performance indicators)
   - Measure KPIs after implementation

Downtown Reading, MA. Photo Source: Favermann Design

Illuminate Downtown

Category		Arts & Culture
Location		Various Locations in Downtown Reading/LRRP District Boundary
Origin		Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee
Budget		Low for simple interventions ($5,000) to Medium for a variety of interventions ($100,000) Funding Sources/Grant opportunities include: • Local Cultural Council Funding • Shared Streets and Spaces Program (MassDOT) – for elements to support outdoor programming • Future BID Budget • Massachusetts Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant Program (only non-profits can apply) • ARPA Funding
Timeframe		Short Term (3-6) depending on level of interventions
Risk		Medium Risk – weather, technology, political will, community response
Key Performance Indicators		1) Evening foot-traffic activity observed by merchants 2) Increased seasonal revenue 3) Perception of the district
Partners & Resources		Town of Reading Staff, BID Steering Committee, Arts Reading, Reading Art Association, Reading Retailers Collaborative, downtown property owners

Photo from Downtown Philly. Photo Source: Visitphilly.com

Diagnostic

Foot-traffic in the Downtown has slowly been increasing as a result of the new housing units being developed. However, the Downtown was not immune to the impacts of COVID as 77% of businesses did report less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID. As a result, 76% of businesses had a decline in revenue in 2020 versus 2019.

Many businesses did establish alternative alternative modes to sell and deliver products, but at the time the survey was administered (April 2020) 64% of businesses were still operating at reduced hours or capacity as a result of COVID.

It is important to bring as many customers back to Downtown and get back to pre-pandemic levels. As part of the LRRP Customer Survey, customers were asked what would bring them downtown more in the future. About 50% of responses were for more cultural and arts activities and entertainment.

Implementing creative and attractive lighting projects can make the district more attractive, activate the evening hours, and give people more of a reason to stop and shop.

The Town has already started to consider this type of project as they recently hired a lighting designer to create a project in the Downtown. The Town can use that project as a basis for future projects to activate the Downtown.

This project recommendation is also aligned with the BID Steering Committee goal of Cultural Placemaking to create a downtown a fun and engaging destination.

Action Item

Giving customers a reason to visit the Downtown will generate more foot-traffic and leveraging creative and useful lighting techniques will also allow for an improved and more enjoyable shopping experience especially during the longer nights that straddle the holiday season.

Implementation of various lighting solutions will encourage evening foot-traffic, while giving residents a reason to visit and explore the Downtown.

The project would involve:

1. Establish a Team & Town Staff person to lead the project. Identify goals of the lighting project including initial ideas for interventions

2. Stakeholder outreach and engagement

3. Determine whether the support of a lighting designer is required or if a solution may be completed in-house

4. Implementation & promotion of installations
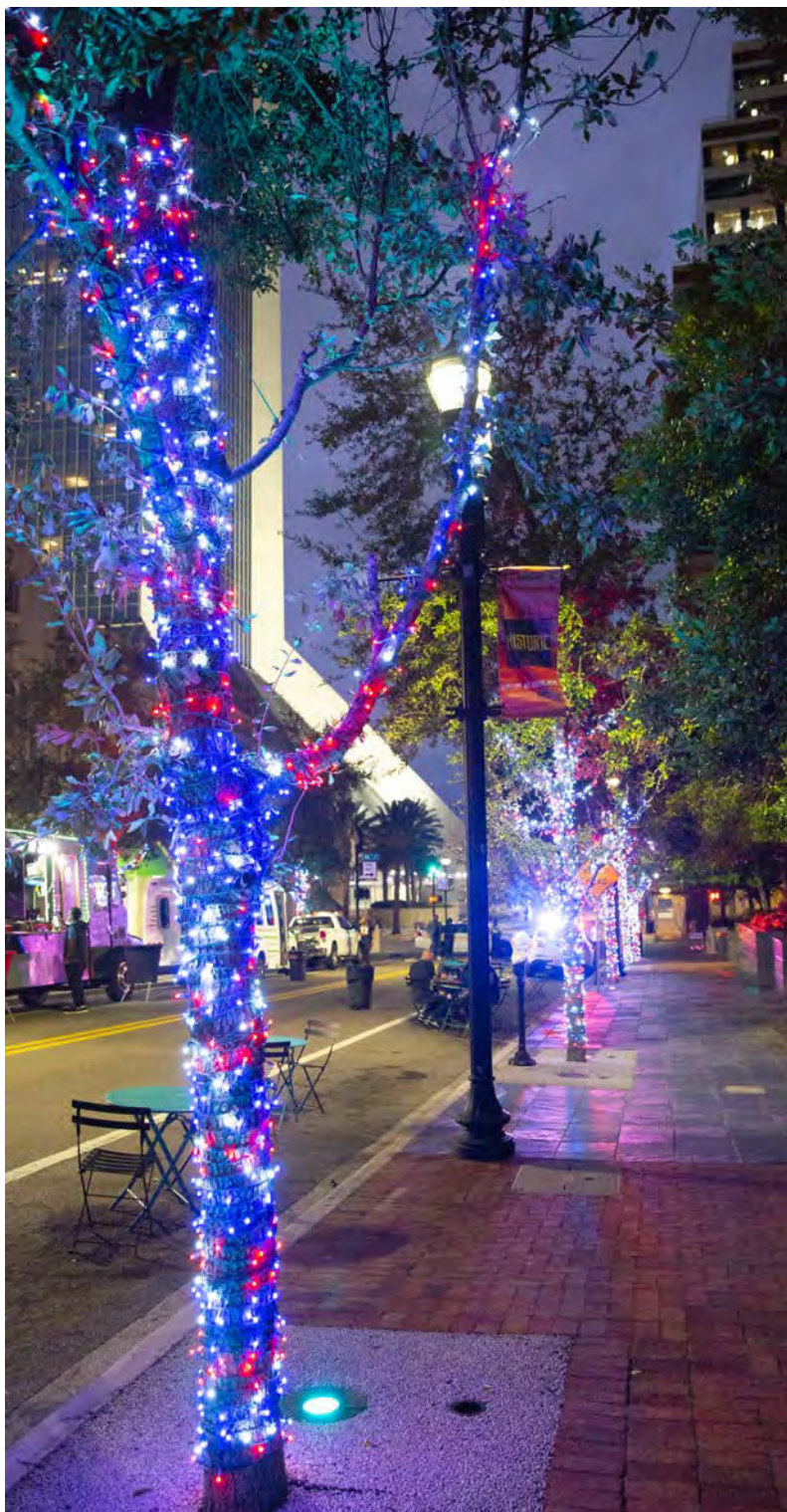
Street Lighting, Jacksonville FL. Photo Source: myjaxchamber.com.

Process

1. Establish a Team
   • Identify a Town Staff person to lead the project.
   • Involve other key staff early on for the initial project planning, including DPW Staff.
   • Include a representative from the BID Steering Committee.

2. Identify goals of the lighting project
   • Identify the goals of the project. (see opportunities next page). Will the project aim to involve local artists for creative or cultural displays? (lighting sculptures, projections, etc.) Or will installations serve to provide a more pleasant and attractive evening pedestrian experience (string lighting, pole lighting).
   • Consider existing lighting projects such as the holiday tree lighting event.
   • Determine the timeframe for installations (seasonally? Temporary? Long-term?)
   • The Team should also begin to consider installation locations based on the goals of the lighting project. Consider locations that have access to electrical hookups and are within the public space. If lights are to be strung overhead, ensure there is proper clearance for vehicles and/or public transit/buses.

3. Stakeholder Outreach
   • The team should consider a public process to engage the business community and other stakeholders. This could include seeking feedback on the types of installations they would like to see and where they would like them located.

4. Determine if a Lighting Designer or Artist is needed for the project
   • Depending on the goal of the project, the Team may want to secure the support of a Lighting Designer and/or Artist. For example, simple string lighting may not require the assistance of a lighting designer.
   • If a designer is required, the Town may opt to issue an RFP or call for artists.
   • Prepare and finalize the project budget.

5. Implementation & Promotion of Installation
   • Install the project – whether it is through an in-house department (such as DPW) or by the Lighting Designer/Artist.
   • Work with the BID Steering Committee, Reading Retailers Collaborative and other Town Partners to promote the installations.
   • Encourage businesses to promote a coordinated shopping event for residents and shoppers to view and enjoy the lighting installations – ensure merchants adjust opening hours as needed for later evening shopping.

Photo from Downtown Wayzata. Photo Source: Musicant Group

Opportunities

The images below identifies some initial location and ideas lighting concept ideas for Downtown.

Sidewalk projections

Sidewalk projections

Tree Lighting

Sidewalk projections

Sidewalk projections

Sculptural/free-standing

Sidewalk projections

Sculptural/free-standing

Sidewalk projections

Sculptural/free-standing
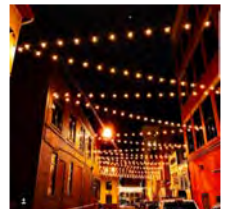
String lighting

String lighting

Item	Cost Estimate
Small sidewalk projection	$2,500-$5,000
Tree/light pole Lighting	~$1,250 per block
String Lighting	$40 for 48ft of Outdoor String Lights
Sculpture Lighting	$5,000 for multiple sculptures

NOTE: The examples shown here are meant to identify lighting typologies and not specific solutions. The exact design/projection/sculpture can vary based on the goal of the project.

Winter Activation at the Panoway in Downtown Wayzata
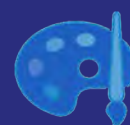
CULTURAL/ ARTS

Location	Wayzata, MN

Program/Project Summary

Wayzata is a lakefront main street community located 15 miles west of Minneapolis, MN and is long known as a destination for shopping and dining. A major challenge that the downtown has faced for decades is that while the single-sided main street looks out over Lake Minnetonka, there lies a parking lot and active freight railway that cut off access between the two. Through years of effort, the 2-block long parking lot was converted into a linear park – the Panoway – which opened in the late summer of 2020. As the effects of COVID were increasingly felt by the community and the retailers, the city and chamber saw the newly opened space as a strategic features to help drive customer traffic downtown during the coldest months of the year.

In order to remain responsive and iterative with the changing COVID-19 landscape, they adopted a gradual implementation that focused on providing a variety of activity within regularly scheduled times and serving the needs of the community members already present, while building to safe in-person gatherings for signature events.

The project budget was $90,000 and was funded by the City of Wayzata and the Panoway Conservancy.

The project included the following features:

• Letters to the Lake

• Activity care: Kubb + Curling

• Winter Garden + Lighting installation + ice globes

• Fires

• Pop-Up Dog Run + Petting Zoo

• Fireworks

• Trivia, live music, other events

• On-Site Signage about

Winter Activation at the Panoway in Downtown Wayzata
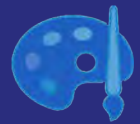
CULTURAL/ ARTS

Location   Wayzata, MN

Key Takeaways

The key takeaways from this project are the physical elements included as part of this activation, including the use of lighting. Lighting was used to illuminate the space at night, especially since the sun set earlier in the winter months, and also used to to create a sense of warmth and attraction to the lakeside park. Various lighting solutions were deployed including:

- Illuminated sculptures

- Ice globes

- Tree/string lights along the adjacent commercial streets

Reading could consider utilizing some of the lighting techniques used for the Downtown Wayzata project to add warmth and visibility to the the Downtown shopping district.

Create a Placemaking Master Plan

Category		Arts & Culture
Location		LRRP District Boundary/Reading's Downtown Smart Growth District
Origin		Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee
Budget		Medium Budget ($50,000-$75,000) for Consultant Services Funding Sources/Grant opportunities include: • Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Program • Future BID Budget • Massachusetts Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant Program (only non-profits can apply) • ARPA Funding
Timeframe		Short Term (3-5) for Plan Development
Risk		Low Risk – there is already interest in the community for more arts & culture programming
Key Performance Indicators		1) Number of projects installed/implemented 2) Positive press/community feedback 3) Foot-traffic observed by merchants
Partners & Resources		Town of Reading Staff, BID Steering Committee, Arts Reading, Reading Art Association, Friends of Reading Recreation, Walkable Reading, The Garden Club, local performing arts groups
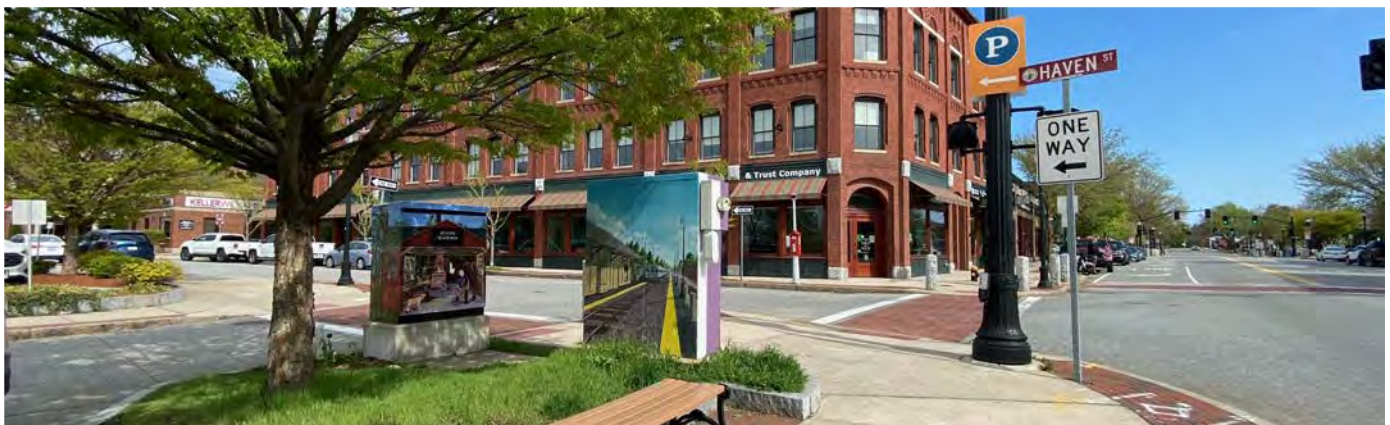
Downtown Reading, MA. Photo Credit: Town of Reading

Diagnostic

To bring customers back to downtown Reading and address the impacts of loss revenue and foot-traffic, we learned that they are wanting more do to – including more cultural and arts activities. Up until this point Reading has made great efforts in supporting these types of activities, including the delivery of an Art Box Program, which was very well received, and also gave customers and residents something to experience in a safe manner during COVID-19. The Town has also participated in an annual Art Walk which connects businesses and venues in the downtown with local artist – giving residents and customers a reason to stroll and enjoy downtown.

The the Project Team also learned that 44% of of shoppers tend to visit one business in the downtown and then leave. This is not surprising as we heard that 31% of consumers felt like there is 'nothing to do' in the downtown.

In order to bring people downtown and give them something to do, the Town should create a placemaking masterplan and identify locations and activities to attract people to the Downtown while also being mindful of the safety requirements of COVID-19.

This project is also aligned with BID Steering Committee's goals to support Cultural Placemaking activities to bring a sense of place and make downtown a more fun and engaging destination for everyone.

Action Item

To create a placemaking master plan to help identify and implement placemaking projects throughout the downtown. This project would include:

1. Establishing a steering committee to guide the project

2. Collect an inventory of current works of art

3. Identify the project area and/or location for specific interventions/art installations or programming

4. Engage residents and community stakeholders

5. Establish a funding mechanism for placemaking activities

6. Develop a commission process for projects or creation of new works of art

7. Develop the Masterplan

8. Implementation

9. Showcases successes
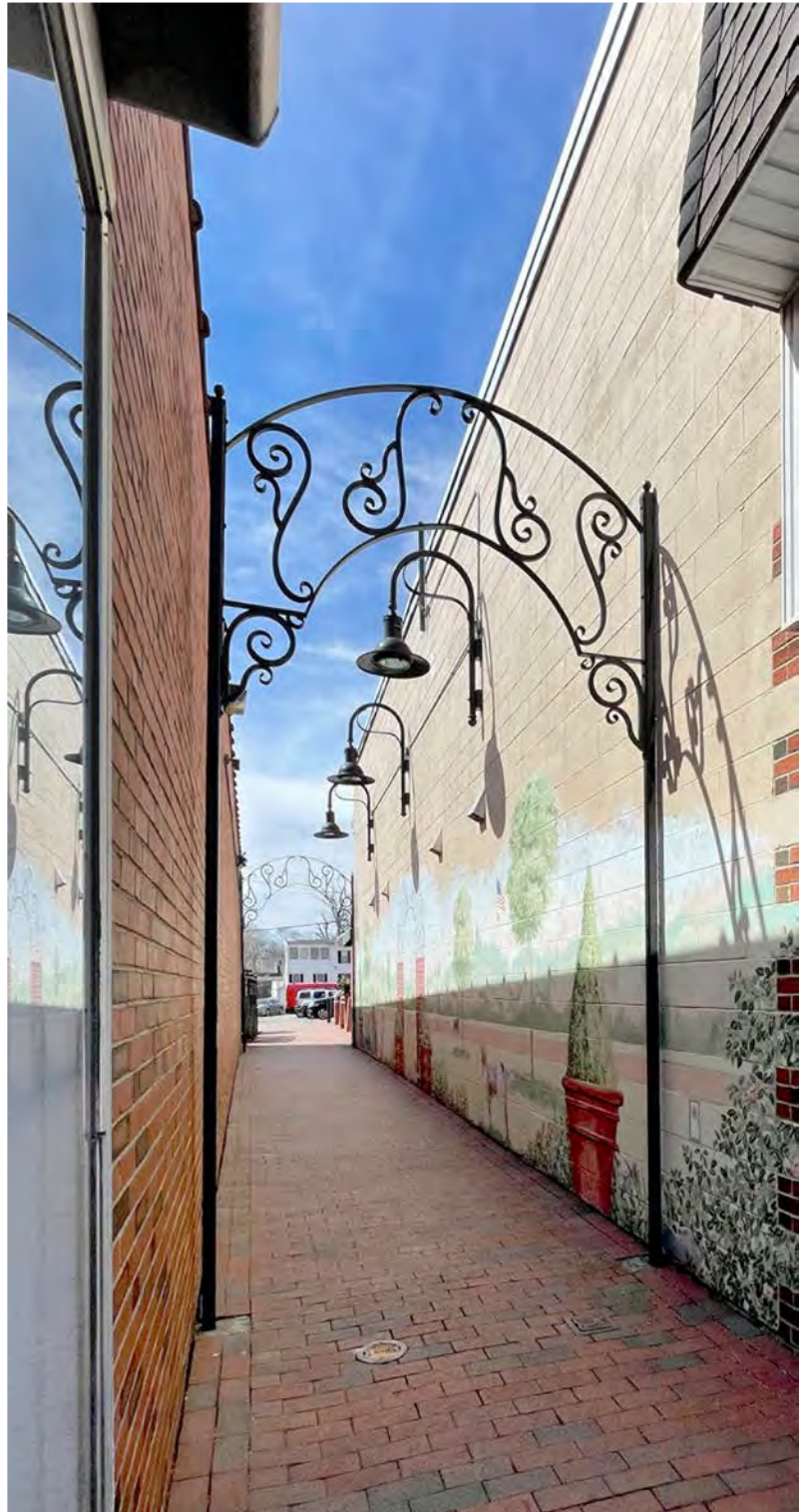
Alleyway Downtown Reading. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Process

1. Establishing a steering committee to guide the project
   - Identify the stakeholders and decision-makers
   - Leverage existing partnerships
   - Include those who can 'champion' the project
   - Determine whether this project would require the need of a consultant or would be done in-house
   - Identify goals of the placemaking masterplan. It the goal to make connections? Engage residents? Activate unused spaces? Improve safety? Add vibrancy through public art?

2. Collect an inventory of current works of art and placemaking activities/projects

3. Identify the project area and/or location for specific interventions/art installations or programming
   - Perform a site walk of the project area for potential locations for art installations and programming
   - Research the history or the space that could inspire interventions
   - Seek feedback from appropriate Town Departments including public safety, engineering, planning and building departments

4. Engage residents and community stakeholders
   - Gather input from stakeholders on potential project ideas, their needs and locations for interventions

5. Finalize project types and locations such as murals, sculptures, lighting, tactical/safety interventions, furniture, art-boxes, etc.
   - Work with stakeholders to identify locations of interventions that meet the goals of the placemaking masterplan

6. Establish a funding mechanism for placemaking activities
   - Identify sources of town funding that can be dedicated to public creative placemaking projects. This could include a perfect-for-placemaking program which would set aside a percentage of public works projects to be dedicated to public creative placemaking projects.
   - Another funding option is to partner with existing organization to help raise funds for public art and creative placemaking projects. This could be done through the BID if approved in Reading.

7. Develop a commission process for projects or the creation of new works of art. This would include:
   - Call for artists
   - Selection Process – 1) Open Call 2) Selected Call or 3) Direct commissions
   - Request for Qualifications (RFQ) – see Appendix 6 for more information regarding considerations for the RFQ
   - Request Proposals (RFP) - see Appendix 6 for more information regarding considerations for the RFP

8. Develop the Masterplan that includes:
   - Community goal for creative placemaking
   - Inventory of existing works of art and placemaking activities/projects
   - Locations for projects and art installations based on active and passive programming types
   - Funding Mechanisms
   - Implementation

9. Implementation
   - Issue calls for art or RFQ/RFP for project implementation
   - This could include permanent and temporary works

10. Showcases successes and track performance
    - After each implementation, the project should be celebrated through press releases or announcements on social media and other outlets
    - Measure performance through interviewing downtown merchants for increased foot-traffic, number of installations/year, positive community feedback and or user activity (if there is a user experience involved with the project).

Best Practice

Public Art Program
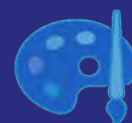
| Location | Melrose MA |

Program/Project Summary

In 2020 the City of Melrose sought quotes for a wayfinding study and design services. The initial scope was for the development of a multi-modal wayfinding system that speaks to the city's past and present, while also offering a clear wayfinding system for pedestrians, cyclists & vehicles.

After awarding the project to the designer, Selbert Perkins, Design with Civic Space Collaborative, the scope was modified to include a larger outreach effort, including public art that would be an important element of the placemaking and wayfinding effort.

As a result, the process included:

- Community Engagement
- Wayfinding Audit
- Circulation Analysis
- Placemaking Opportunities
- Master Plan Document
- Call for Public Art
- Art Program Brand

The public engagement process also included surveys, individual interviews, community meetings and focus groups to identify priorities and preferences on wayfinding and public art in the community.

Key Takeaways

Reading is currently in the process of implementing an already approved wayfinding system. However, there are several key takeaways that the Town can consider from Melrose's Wayfinding & Creative Placemaking Master Plan such as:

- Including a strong community engagement process into the scope of work

- Identifying spaces for public art of various types including sculpture, pop-up installations and performance art

- The inclusion of a Call for Art process which was divvied up into Phases

- Leveraging public art into the wayfinding program – Reading could consider including elements of the approved wayfinding system into public art opportunities

Public Engagement Process. Source: Civic Space Collaborative

Creative Placemaking Locations. Source: Civic Space Collaborative

Activate Vacant Storefront Windows

Category		Arts & Culture
Location		Vacant Properties in the Reading Downtown Smart Growth District/LRRP District Boundary
Origin		Town of Reading Staff, LRRP Advisory Committee
Budget		Low Budget $4,800 per install Funding Sources/Grant opportunities include: • Future BID Budget • Local Cultural Council Funding • ARPA Funding
Timeframe		Short Term (6-9 months)
Risk		Low Risk – overall low risk, lack of property owner approval/communication. This activity would be in line with the BID Steering committee goals.
Key Performance Indicators		1) Increased foot-traffic 2) Transformation/overall aesthetic of the downtown 3) Number of projects complete
Partners & Resources		Town of Reading Staff, BID Steering Committee, Arts Reading, Reading Art Association, Friends of Reading Recreation, Walkable Reading, Reading Retailers Collaborative, downtown property owners

Vacant Storefront, Reading, MA. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Diagnostic

Reading's downtown is desirable and maintains a low vacancy rate of about 4% (May 2021). Even with the low vacancy rate, it is important to fill available spaces as vacancies can detract from the overall vibrancy of the district.

One solution is to activate vacant storefronts through the use of art and creative displays that add to the vibrancy to the Downtown. Not only will this improve the overall look of vacant storefronts, but it will also give customers something to enjoy while visiting the Downtown. In fact, the Project Team heard that 49% of respondents to the LRRP Customer Survey indicated they would like more cultural and arts activities. Vacant storefronts and be leveraged to create a more engaging and memorable experience in downtown.

This project is also aligned with BID Steering Committee's goals to support Cultural Placemaking activities to bring a sense of place and make downtown a more fun and engaging destination for everyone.

Action Item

To pilot a window activation program for vacant storefronts in Downtown Reading. This would serve as a way to gauge interest and success for a permanent program in the future. The pilot project would involve:

1. Establish an Team of Town Staff and representatives from the BID Steering Committee and representatives from the local arts community

2. Identify Project Goals and Locations

3. Build support with property owners & local artists

4. Issue a Call for Storefront Art

5. Select Artists

6. Installation

7. Promote & Encourage Visitation

8. Seek Feedback & Create Permanent Program

Vacant Storefront, Main Street, Downtown Reading. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Process

1. Establish an Team of Town Staff and representatives from the BID Steering Committee and representatives from the local arts community

   • Team members should include staff from Community Development, Building Department, representative from the BID Steering Committee, and local arts community.

2. Build Support with Property Owners & Local Artists

   • Begin reaching out to local artists, including young artists for interest in participation.

   • Reach out to landlords and property owners of vacant storefronts for their participation. Provide them with examples of similar projects in other communities.

   • Interview property owners on preferences for art display and install types. For example, some property owners would prefer reproduced art be affixed to the storefront vs having artist create the original art in-store/on windows.

   • Identify their requirements for insurance coverage (if any).

3. Identify Program Guidelines & Theme (if any) and Locations

   • Based on feedback from local artists and landlords, the team should identify the goals of the program – whether there should be a theme around the type of art created.

   • Will the program encourage original art painted directly to the windows? Or will original art be reproduced into 2D art affixed to windows? Or 3d displays in window fronts?

   • Identify any applicable zoning requirements as it relates to storefront window coverage.

   • Discuss a project timeline and 'launch' date.

   • The teams should then update a list of vacant storefronts in Downtown and confirm their vacancy status with the property owner .

4. Finalize Locations & Coordinate with Landlords/Property owners

   • Finalize a list of locations that are visible and accessible with property owners that are interested in participating

5. Issue a Call for Art.

   • The team will create and distribute a call for artists.

   • The call should include: the program outline/theme, eligibility, selection process, stipend, selection criteria, timeline, installation requirements, removal requirements, and any required artist agreement form including any limitations on: copyrighted/trademarked images, original artwork, town usage rights of materials, relate of claims and/or insurance needs.

   • The call should also include photos of vacant properties/storefronts.

   • Distribute the call for art via existing communication including, email networks, social media, e-newsletters, newspapers, flyers at schools, libraries, etc.

Window Art, Worcester, MA. Photo Credit: Unknown

Process (continued)

6. Select the Artists
   - The team will select the artists according the the selection process and criteria mentioned in the call for art.
   - Inform the selected artists of their award.

7. Installation & Removal
   - Prior to install the Team should ensure the Artist has completed any required agreements prior to the start of work and obtained any necessary insurance coverage by the property owner.
   - Identify a install timeline for the Artists and help facilitate access with the property owner and landlord.
   - Ensure removal of art is done in accordance with the program guidelines.

8. Promote the Installation
   - Promote the installations through existing communication channels – local press, social media, e-newsletters.
   - Create a flyer for businesses to use to promote on their own communication channels including social media and e-newsletters.

9. Seek Feedback & Create Permanent Program
   - Survey property owners and artists as to what went well/didn't go well.
   - Identify areas of improvement to guidelines and/or process.
   - Implement a permanent window activation program for vacant storefronts in which artists can regularly be leveraged for on-going vacancies.

Storefront, Downtown Reading. Photo Credit: Town of Reading

Vacant Storefront, Downtown Reading. Photo Credit: Favermann Design

Best Practice

WindowART, Newton Community Pride
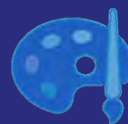
CULTURAL/
ARTS

Location   Newton, MA

Program/Event Details

Newton Community Pride is a non-profit organization serving the City of Newton in supporting beautification projects and culture programming throughout the community.

WindowART is a public art project that encourages activation of vacant storefront windows through existing artwork by local artists. The program is free to any commercial property owner located in the City of Newton who has a storefront vacancy.

The goal of this program is to engage shoppers and pedestrians through the commercial centers while also beautifying storefronts making them more attractive to potential tenants.

Program Process

The following action items were taken to implement this program:
- Documentation of empty storefronts
- Identify focus areas – in Newton they focused on areas of concentrated vacancies
- Identify and contact landlords – this proved to be challenging in the case of absentee landlords and in some cases many different forms of outreach were needed including: cold-calling, emailing, press releases for "Call for Landlords"
- Engage landlords to seek feedback on the program approach
- Develop an approach to installation of existing art which was previously funded by Newton Community Pride's FenceART Program
- The art was then easily installed into vacant storefront windows

Key Takeaways

Key Takeaways from the program/event which can be leveraged by Reading:
- Persistence with landlord outreach – in the case of unengaged or absentee landlords it may take several attempts to outreach to landlords.
- Using existing art for simplicity and ease in installation for immediate results. Since there are several arts organizations in Reading, this approach may be the simplest to pilot.

Program/Event Details

The City of Cambridge, MA along with Cambridge Arts has created the Vacant Storefront Creative Design Contest, with the goal to activate vacant storefronts and commercial districts through creative window art reproductions by locally made art.

The program is set up as a design competition which invites local artist to submit their original designs for review. If selected, their art can be chosen by landlords for display in their vacant storefronts as reproductions of their original art.

The Program Includes:
• Annual Contest – including rules
• The selection process – which included finalist selected by a jury, then 5 winners selected by the public
• Timeline
• Request for Property owners for Art/Designs

For more information:
https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/econdev/vacantstorefrontresources/vacantstorefrontcreativedesigncontest

Key Takeaways

Key takeaways that Reading can leverage for it's Downtown include:
• The selection process provided for public involvement – this can get the public excited about the upcoming installations and drive awareness to the project
• Allowing the landlord to select the art from a pool of contest winners – this can give the landlord opportunity for more involvement, however can also result in lack of motivation or follow-through
• Consider having hosting the program annually, which will also prompt updates to the list of vacant properties and create an event around the program to attract visitors to view the art
• Leveraging and partnering with an existing arts organization – there are several arts organizations in Reading. There may be opportunity to have the program managed outside of Town operations.

Interactive Storefronts: Engage Residents Through Artistic Installations in Storefronts

Best Practice
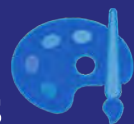
CULTURAL/ ARTS

Program/Event Details

The Interactive Storefronts project in Worcester was created in response to the impact that COVID-19 had on engaging the public as it related to the development of a Downtown Placemaking Plan. Using vacant storefronts as a tool in the public engagement process allowed for public engagement when options were limited as a result of the safety protocols in place for the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project involved the engagement of local artists to create works in the storefronts of vacant properties in downtown Worcester. Using art as a survey tool, downtown visitors were able to participate in the public process by questions asked through the window art demonstrations. This was done through the use of QR codes in which visitors could access the full placemaking survey.

Implementation of the window art was done in tandem with the larger project for Downtown Placemaking with a separate call for artists specifically for the window art.

Key Takeaways

While this specific project created interactive storefronts as a tool to a larger planning process, there are certain takeaways that Reading can leverage for their own Vacant Storefront Window program including:

- Following the process for establishing a window program and call for art (see Appendix 7 for this process)
- The program involved one property owner with multiple windows – Reading could target one property that is owned by an already interested landlord
- Giving priority to local artists & giving artistic freedom
- Working with existing organizations that could support the effort – Reading should work with existing arts organizations to solicit feedback for this type of project
- Providing measurements of the windows in the call for art – Reading should include photos and window measurements in the call for art

Appendix

1. Business Survey Results/Report
2. Reading Consumer Survey Results
3. Rating Scale for Physical Environment
4. Phase 1 Community Presentation
5. SME Reports/Deliverables
    a. Patronicity/Bench Consulting "Haven on High"
    b. Nelson Nygaard "Safe Connections in Downtown"
    c. Mondofora (Cepheid Solutions) "Small Business Technical Assistance" and "Shared-Marketing-Advertising"
6. Placemaking Masterplan RFQ/RFP Notes
7. Call for Artist Process – Interactive Storefronts
8. Funding Resources

Appendix 1

Business Survey Results/Report

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

Reading
Targeted Commercial Area

Responses: 68

Impacts of COVID-19

Decline in Business Revenue
76% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019.
For 39% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more.

Revenue in 2020 Compared to 2019

Category	Percent
Increased	7%
Stayed the Same	13%
Decreased 1 – 24%	37%
Decreased 25 – 49%	29%
Decreased 50 – 74%	1%
Decreased 75 - 100%	9%
Don't Know/NA	3%
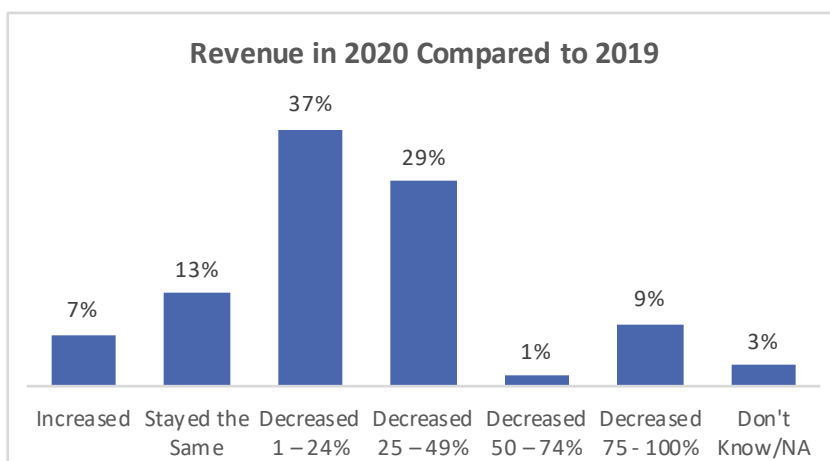
Less Foot Traffic in Commercial Area
77% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID.
48% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more.

On-site Customers 2021 (Jan - Feb) vs. Pre-COVID

Category	Percent
More Customers	3%
About the Same	13%
1 – 24% Less	29%
25 – 49% Less	25%
50 – 74% Less	16%
75 - 100% Less	7%
Don't Know/NA	6%
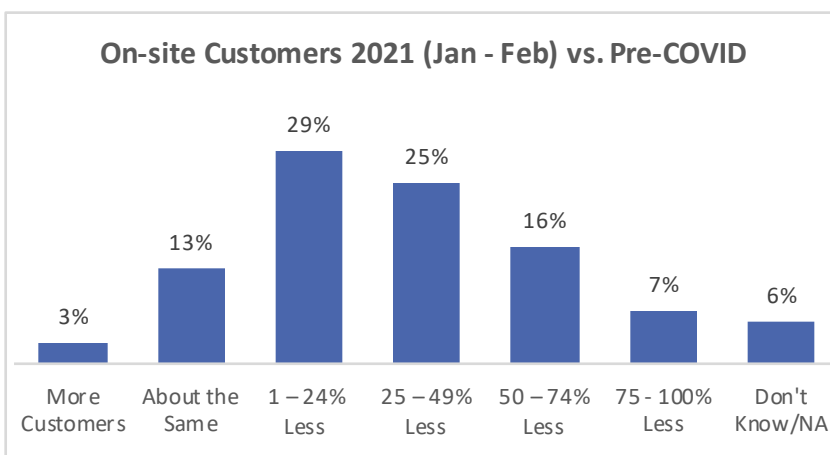
Impacts of COVID-19 (cont'd)

Reported Impacts

91% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID.

COVID Impacts Reported by Businesses

Impact	% of Businesses
Decline in revenue	79%
Employee layoff	31%
Reduced operating hours/capacity	68%
Business closure (temporary or permanent)	51%
Stopped/deferred rent or mortgage payments	16%
Incurred expense to implement safety measures	59%
Established alternative mode to sell and deliver products	46%
None of the Above	9%

■ % of Businesses

Operating Status

At the time of the survey, 64% of businesses reported they were operating at reduced hours/capacity or closed.

Current Operating Status of Businesses (March/April 2021)

Status	%
Operating at Full Capacity	36%
Reduced Hours/Capacity due to COVID	64%
Temporarily Closed due to COVID	0%
Permanently Closed due to COVID	0%
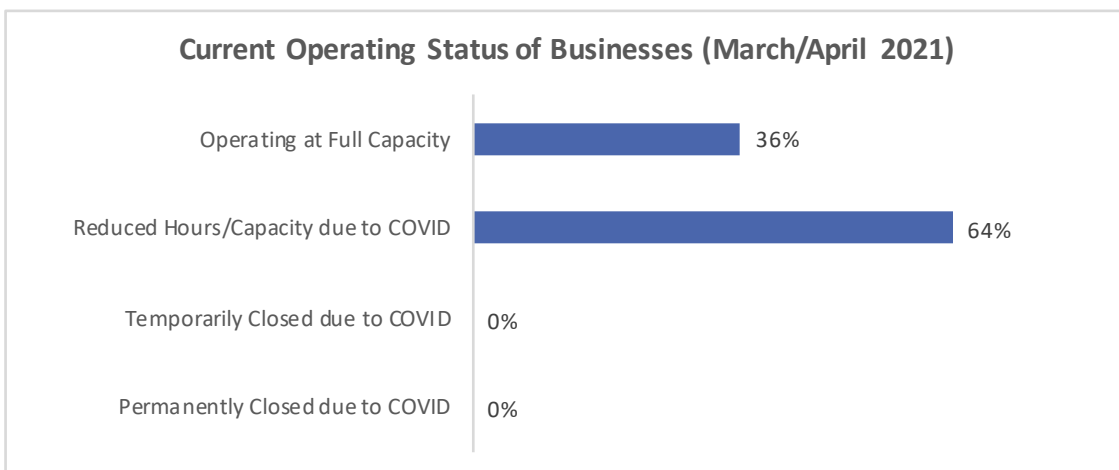
Business Satisfaction with Commercial District

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

Condition of Public Spaces, Streets & Sidewalks

Very Dissatisfied   Very Satisfied

Safety and Comfort of Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied   Very Satisfied

Condition of Private Buildings, Storefronts, Signs

Very Dissatisfied   Very Satisfied

Proximity to Complementary Businesses & Uses

Very Dissatisfied   Very Satisfied

Access for Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied   Very Satisfied

Regulatory Environment

63% of businesses indicated that the regulatory environment poses an obstacle to business operation.

Regulations that Pose an Obstacle to Businesses Operation

Regulation	% of Businesses
Licensing or Permitting Regs.	18%
Signage Regs.	21%
Parking Regs.	52%
Outdoor Dining or Selling Regs.	9%
Allowed Use, Change of Use, Other Zoning Regs	3%
Historic District Regs.	3%
Other Regs.	7%
None - No Issues with Regs.	37%

■ % of Businesses
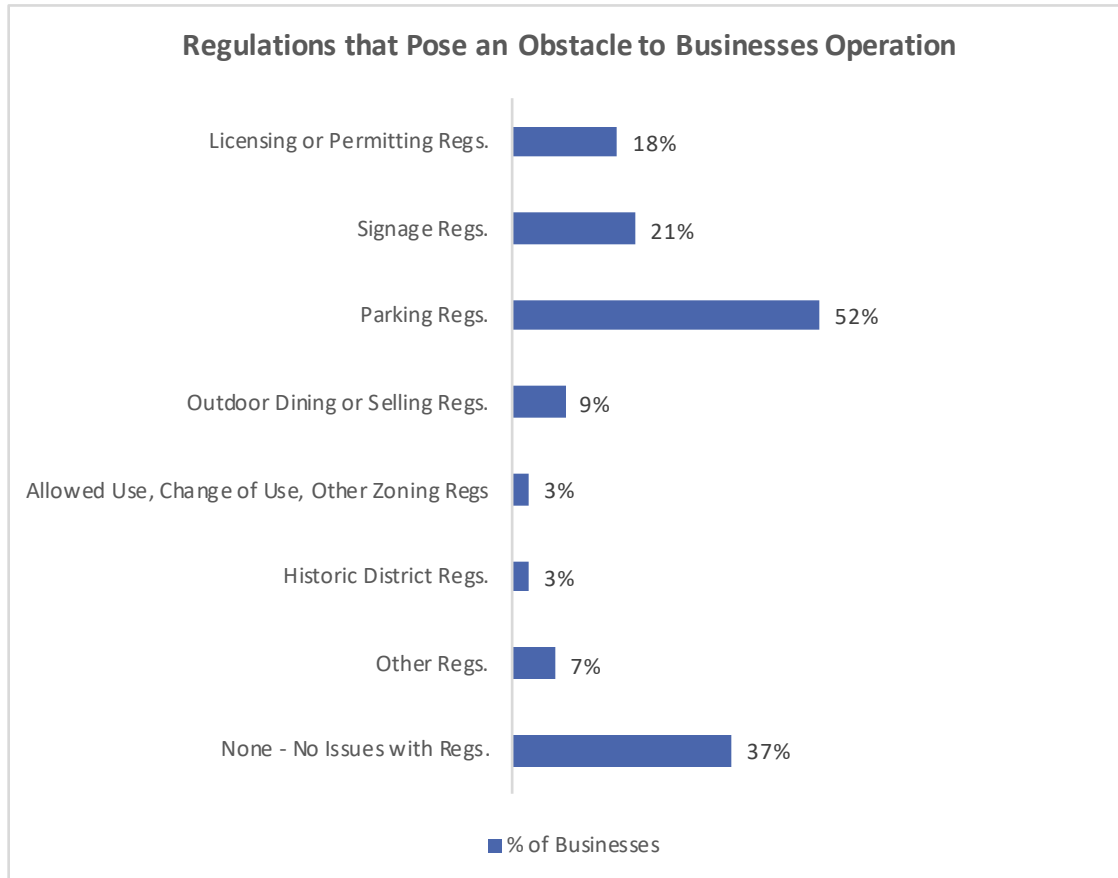
Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.

Renovation of Storefronts/ Building Facades

Unimportant/ Not Needed — Very Important

Improvements in Safety and/or Cleanliness

Unimportant/ Not Needed — Very Important

Improvement/Development of Public Spaces & Seating Areas

Unimportant/ Not Needed — Very Important

Changes in Public Parking Availability, Management or Policies

Unimportant/ Not Needed — Very Important

Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks

Unimportant/ Not Needed — Very Important

Amenity Improvements for Public Transit/Bike Users

Unimportant/ Not Needed — Very Important
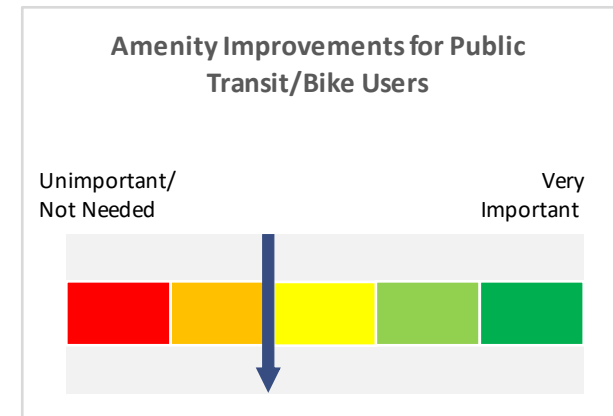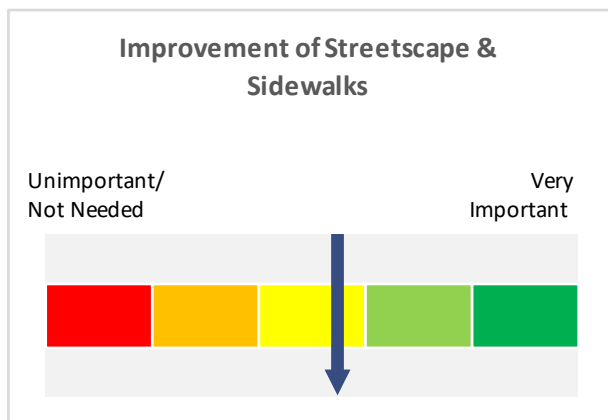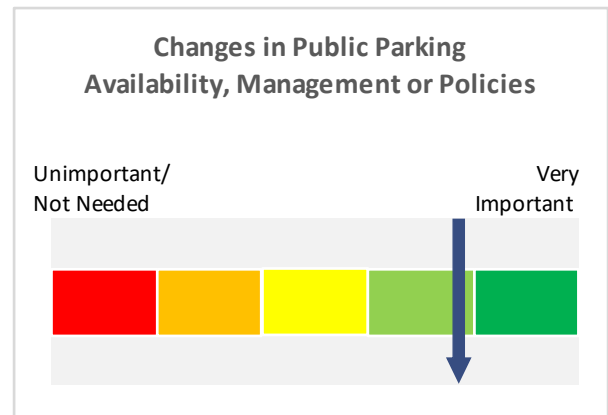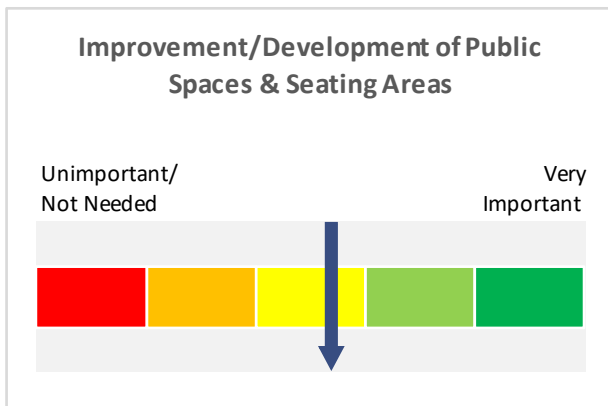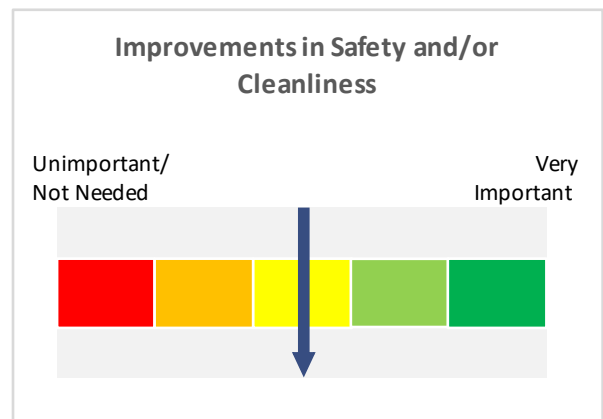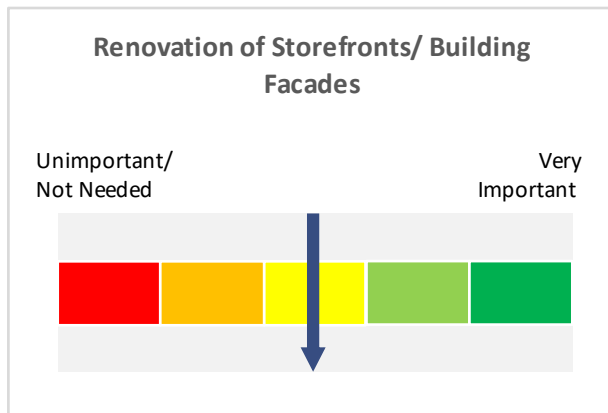
Attraction/Retention of Customers and Businesses
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.

More Cultural Events/Activities to Bring People into the District

Unimportant/Not Needed — Very Important

Recruitment Programs to Attract Additional Businesses

Unimportant/Not Needed — Very Important

More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining & Selling

Unimportant/Not Needed — Very Important

Changes to Zoning or Other Local Regulations

Unimportant/Not Needed — Very Important

Implementing Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District

Unimportant/Not Needed — Very Important

Creation of a District Management Entity

Unimportant/Not Needed — Very Important

Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

Businesses Support
46% of businesses expressed interest in receiving some kind of assistance.

Businesses Interested in Receiving Assistance

Category	% of Businesses
Setting Up an Online Store or Other Online Selling Channel	7%
Creating New Services such as Delivery	1%
Participating in Shared Marketing/Advertising	30%
Low-cost Financing for Storefront/Façade improvements	16%
Low-cost Financing for Purchasing Property in the District	7%
Training on the Use of Social Media	27%
None of the Above	54%

■ % of Businesses

Business Characteristics

Business Size

59% of businesses are microenterprises (≤ 5 employees).
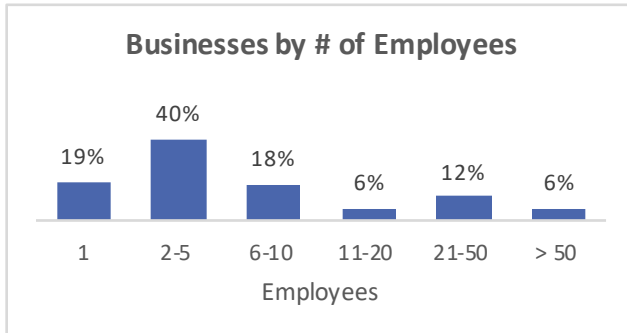
Business Tenure

72% of businesses rent their space.

Businesses by # of Employees

Employees	%
1	19%
2-5	40%
6-10	18%
11-20	6%
21-50	12%
> 50	6%

Tenure

- Own, 28%
- Rent, 72%
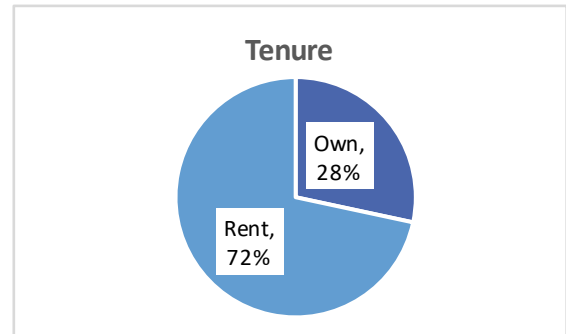
Revenue Trend Prior to COVID

74% of businesses reported increase in revenue during the 3 years prior to COVID.

Revenue 3 Years Prior to COVID

	%
Increased	74%
Decreased	7%
Stayed the Same	18%
Don't Know/NA	1%

Businesses by Type

Type	%
Retail	22%
Food Service, Accommodation	10%
Personal Service	10%
Professional, Scientific, Technical, Legal	18%
Finance, Insurance	9%
Healthcare	13%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Fitness	4%
Non-Profit, Community Service	1%
Other	12%
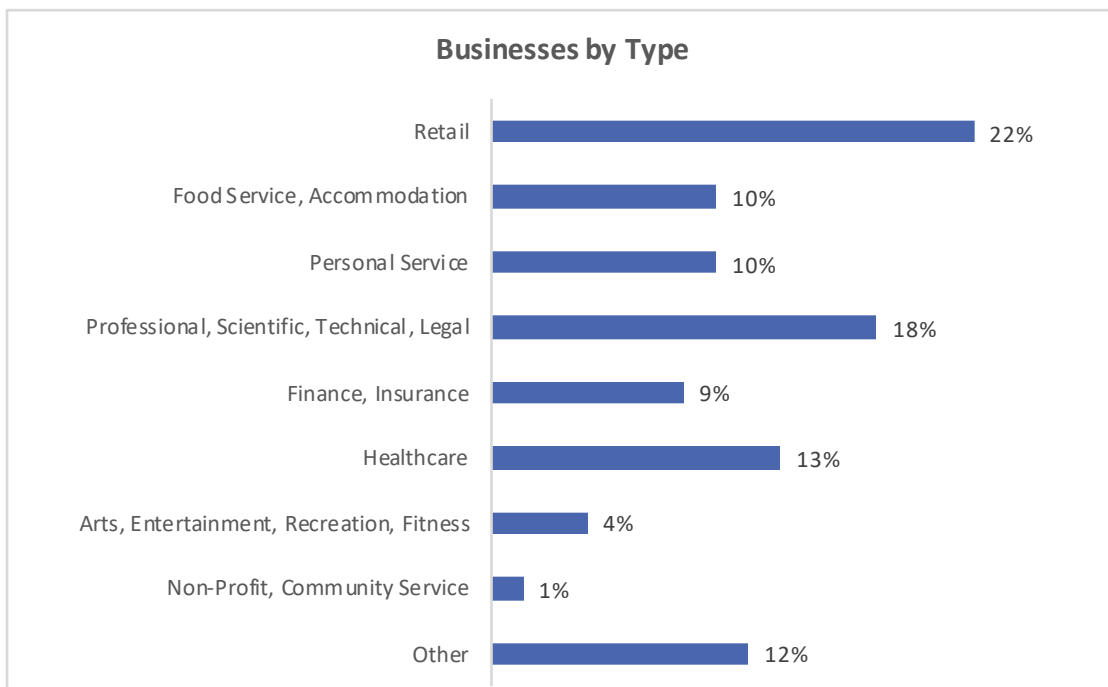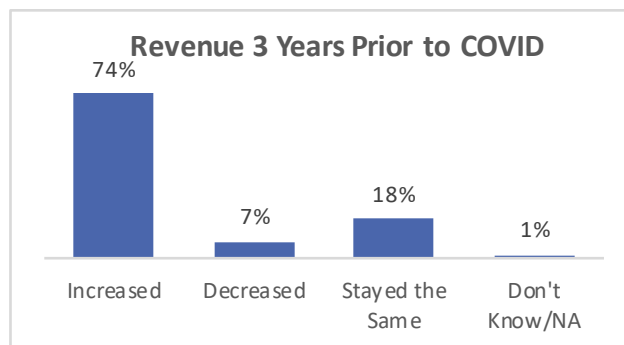
Community Where Targeted Downtown or Commercial District is Located

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

Reading	68

Business Characteristics & Satisfaction with Commercial Area

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

1	13	19%
2 to 5	27	40%
6 to 10	12	18%
11 to 20	4	6%
21 to 50	8	12%
More than 50	4	6%
Total	68	100%

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

Own	19	28%
Rent	48	72%
Total	67	100%

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

Increased	50	74%
Decreased	5	7%
Stayed about the Same	12	18%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	1	1%
Total	68	100%

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

Retail (NAICS 44-45)	15	22%
Food Service (restaurants, bars), Accommodation (NAICS 72)	7	10%
Personal Service (hair, skin, nails, dry cleaning) (NAICS 81)	7	10%
Professional Scientific, Technical, Legal (NAICS 54)	12	18%
Finance, Insurance (NAICS 52)	6	9%
Healthcare (medical, dental, other health practitioners) (NAICS 62)	9	13%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Fitness (NAICS 71)	3	4%
Non-Profit, Community Services	1	1%
Other	8	12%
Total	68	100%

6. Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of the Downtown or Commercial District where your business is located.

Condition of public spaces, streets, sidewalks

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	11	16%
Neutral	22	33%
Satisfied	27	40%
Very Satisfied	7	10%
Total	67	100%

Condition of Private Buildings, Facades, Storefronts, Signage

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	8	12%
Neutral	22	33%
Satisfied	32	48%
Very Satisfied	5	7%
Total	67	100%

Access for Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	4	6%
Dissatisfied	14	21%
Neutral	23	34%
Satisfied	22	33%
Very Satisfied	4	6%
Total	67	100%

Safety and Comfort of Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	1	1%
Dissatisfied	1	1%
Neutral	16	24%
Satisfied	33	49%
Very Satisfied	16	24%
Total	67	100%

Proximity to Complementary Businesses or Uses

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	6	9%
Neutral	23	34%
Satisfied	28	42%
Very Satisfied	10	15%
Total	67	100%

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

Licensing or permitting regulations	12	18%
Signage regulations	14	21%
Parking regulations	35	52%
Outdoor dining or selling regulations	6	9%
Allowed uses, change of use or other zoning regulations	2	3%
Historic District regulations	2	3%
Other regulations (not related to COVID)	5	7%
None - No Issues with regulations	25	37%

Impacts of COVID

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

Decline in revenue	54	79%
Employee layoff	21	31%
Reduced operating hours/capacity	46	68%
Business closure (temporary or permanent)	35	51%
Stopped/deferred rent or mortgage payments	11	16%
Incurred expense to implement safety measures	40	59%
Established alternative mode to sell and deliver products (on-line platforms, delivery, etc.)	31	46%
None of the Above	6	9%

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

Increased compared to 2019	5	7%
Stayed about the same as 2019	9	13%
Decreased 1 – 24% compared to 2019	25	37%
Decreased 25 – 49% compared to 2019	20	29%
Decreased 75 - 100% compared to 2019	1	1%
Decreased 50 – 74% compared to 2019	6	9%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	2	3%
Total	68	100%

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

More customers than before COVID	2	3%
About the same number as before COVID	9	13%
1 – 24% less customers than before COVID	20	29%
25 – 49% less customers than before COVID	17	25%
50 – 74% less customers than before COVID	11	16%
75 – 100% less customers than before COVID	5	7%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	4	6%
Total	68	100%

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

Operating at full capacity	24	36%
Operating at reduced hours/capacity due to COVID	43	64%
Temporarily closed due to COVID	0	0%
Permanently closed due to COVID	0	0%
Total	67	100%

Strategies for Supporting Businesses and Improving the Commercial District

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

Renovation of Storefronts/Building Facades

Unimportant/Not Needed	9	13%
Of Little Importance or Need	9	13%
Moderately Important	26	39%
Important	20	30%
Very Important	3	4%
Total	67	100%

Improvement/Development of Public Spaces & Seating Areas

Unimportant/Not Needed	8	12%
Of Little Importance or Need	7	11%
Moderately Important	23	35%
Important	23	35%
Very Important	5	8%
Total	66	100%

Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks

Unimportant/Not Needed	9	13%
Of Little Importance or Need	7	10%
Moderately Important	23	34%
Important	18	27%
Very Important	10	15%
Total	67	100%

Improvements in Safety and/or Cleanliness

Unimportant/Not Needed	8	12%
Of Little Importance or Need	13	20%
Moderately Important	20	31%
Important	18	28%
Very Important	6	9%
Total	65	100%

Changes in Public Parking Availability, Management or Policies

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	3%
Of Little Importance or Need	5	7%
Moderately Important	9	13%
Important	21	31%
Very Important	31	46%
Total	68	100%

Amenity Improvements for Public Transit Users and/or Bike Riders

Unimportant/Not Needed	15	23%
Of Little Importance or Need	15	23%
Moderately Important	22	33%
Important	12	18%
Very Important	2	3%
Total	66	100%

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

More Cultural Events/Activities to Bring People into the District

Unimportant/Not Needed	9	13%
Of Little Importance or Need	14	21%
Moderately Important	23	34%
Important	13	19%
Very Important	9	13%
Total	68	100%

More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining and Selling

Unimportant/Not Needed	9	13%
Of Little Importance or Need	7	10%
Moderately Important	15	22%
Important	21	31%
Very Important	15	22%
Total	67	100%

Implementing Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District

Unimportant/Not Needed	5	7%
Of Little Importance or Need	6	9%
Moderately Important	19	28%
Important	20	30%
Very Important	17	25%
Total	67	100%

Recruitment Programs to Attract Additional Businesses

Unimportant/Not Needed	6	9%
Of Little Importance or Need	7	10%
Moderately Important	11	16%
Important	22	32%
Very Important	22	32%
Total	68	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	7	10%
Of Little Importance or Need	13	19%
Moderately Important	22	32%
Important	17	25%
Very Important	9	13%
Total	68	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	12	18%
Of Little Importance or Need	15	22%
Moderately Important	20	29%
Important	16	24%
Very Important	5	7%
Total	68	100%

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

Setting up an online store or other online selling channel	5	7%
Creating new services such as delivery	1	1%
Participating in shared marketing/advertising	20	30%
Low-cost financing for storefront/façade improvements	11	16%
Low-cost financing for purchasing property in the commercial district	5	7%
Training on the use of social media	18	27%
None of the above	36	54%

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

Comments

—
Little Treasures Schoolhouse inc.
—
—
—
—
—
Community engagement, business spotlight. Town day type events etc.
—
improve parking
—
—
—
zoning relief for outdoor dining/fast tract process
—
Your CBD Store
—
—
—
Christopher`s Restaurant
More parking spots for customers. Increase the time limit. Free employee parking
—
Dynamik Sports
READING ICE ARENA AUTHORITY, INC.

DiCicco Sign
Renaissance Education LLC DBA The Goddard School
—
—
—
We need a parking facility or garage. The issue is not the customers, it's the buisness owners and employees that have no room to park.
Parking Issues the biggest problem we have in Reading and our selectboard is completely inept in handling this.
—
Your CBD Store
—
—
—
REMAX Renaissance
—
—
—
—
—
—
—
Law Office
Assistance offsetting the cost of changes mad, due to covid
Less condo development/workers taking over, add more retail and restaurants
—
Removing Covid restrictions
provide more parking and regulate existing parking regulations

—
—
Business owner and employee parking
Bunratty Tavern, Traditional Irish Pub, Reading
The Chocolate Truffle
—
—
—
—
—
—
—
parking will become a huge problem once these residential units fully open since they do not offer enough parking
REMAX RENAISSANCE
—
Cole Insurance Agency Inc
Employee parking is concerning because they cannot leave and move their cars throughout the day
—

Appendix 2

Reading Customer Survey Results

Q1 What is your age:

Answered: 790   Skipped: 4
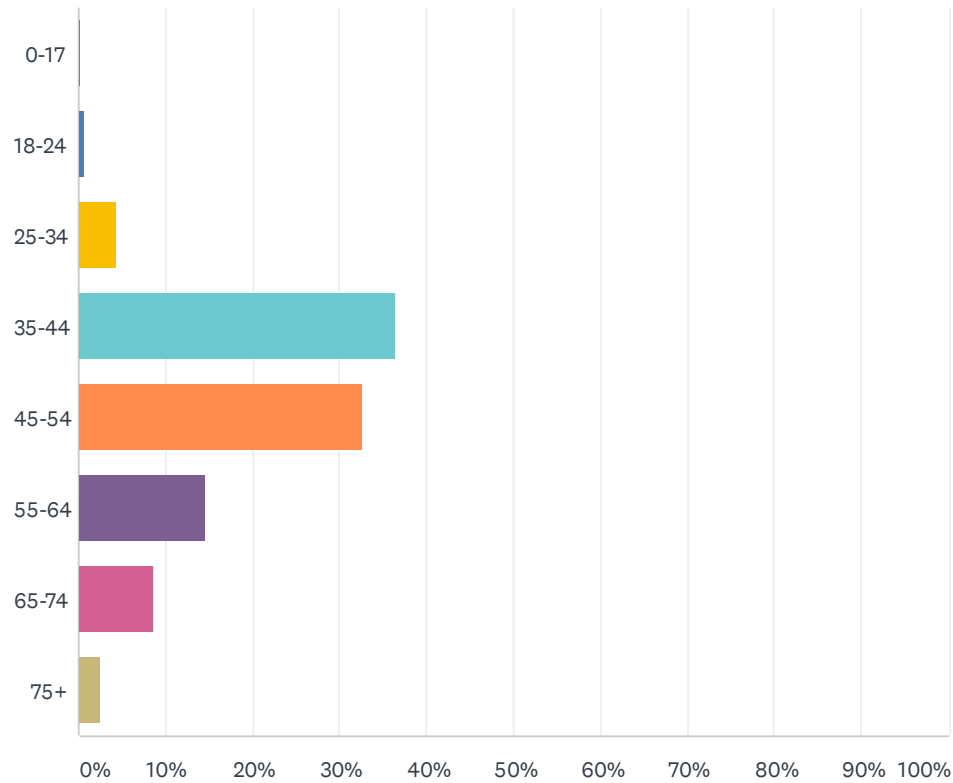
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-17	0.13%	1
18-24	0.63%	5
25-34	4.43%	35
35-44	36.46%	288
45-54	32.66%	258
55-64	14.56%	115
65-74	8.61%	68
75+	2.53%	20
TOTAL		790

Q2 Are any members of your household under the age of 18?

Answered: 789   Skipped: 5
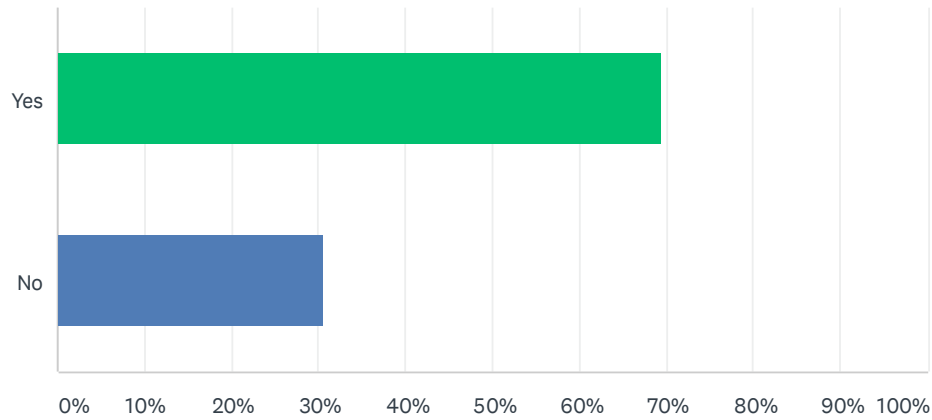
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	69.46%	548
No	30.54%	241
TOTAL		789

Q3 Where do you live?

Answered: 787   Skipped: 7

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Name	0.00%	0
Company	0.00%	0
Address	0.00%	0
Address 2	0.00%	0
City/Town	100.00%	787
State/Province	99.87%	786
ZIP/Postal Code	0.00%	0
Country	0.00%	0
Email Address	0.00%	0
Phone Number	0.00%	0

Q4 Do you work in Downtown Reading?

Answered: 762   Skipped: 32
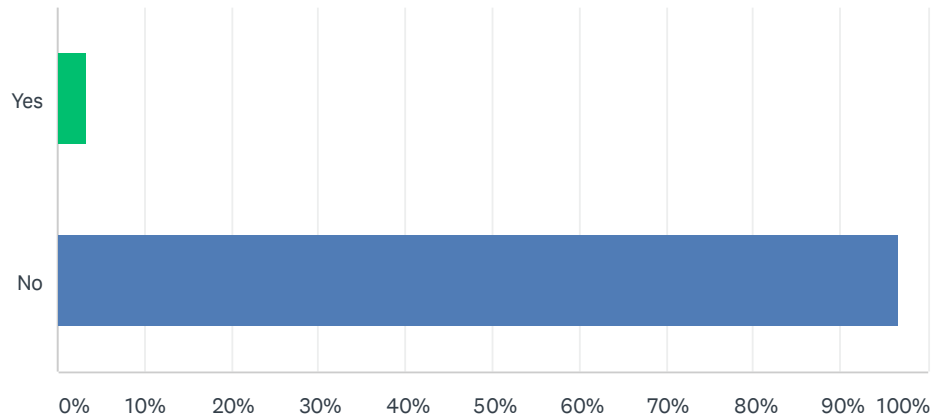
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	3.41%	26
No	96.59%	736
TOTAL		762

Q5 Which best describes how you travel to Downtown?

Answered: 763   Skipped: 31
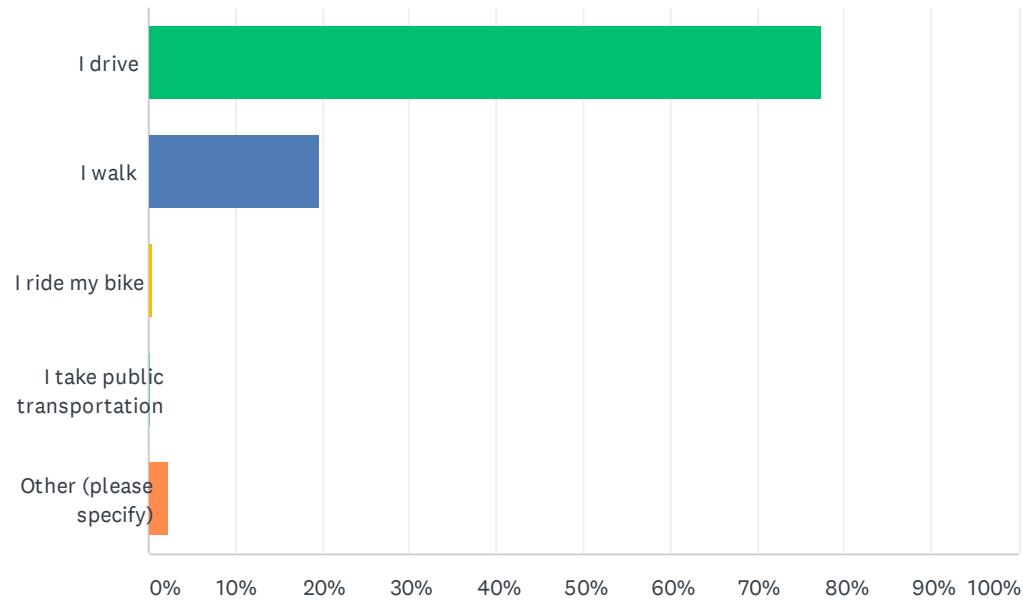
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I drive	77.46%	591
I walk	19.66%	150
I ride my bike	0.39%	3
I take public transportation	0.13%	1
Other (please specify)	2.36%	18
TOTAL		763

Q6 When you visit downtown, who are you bringing? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 763　　Skipped: 31
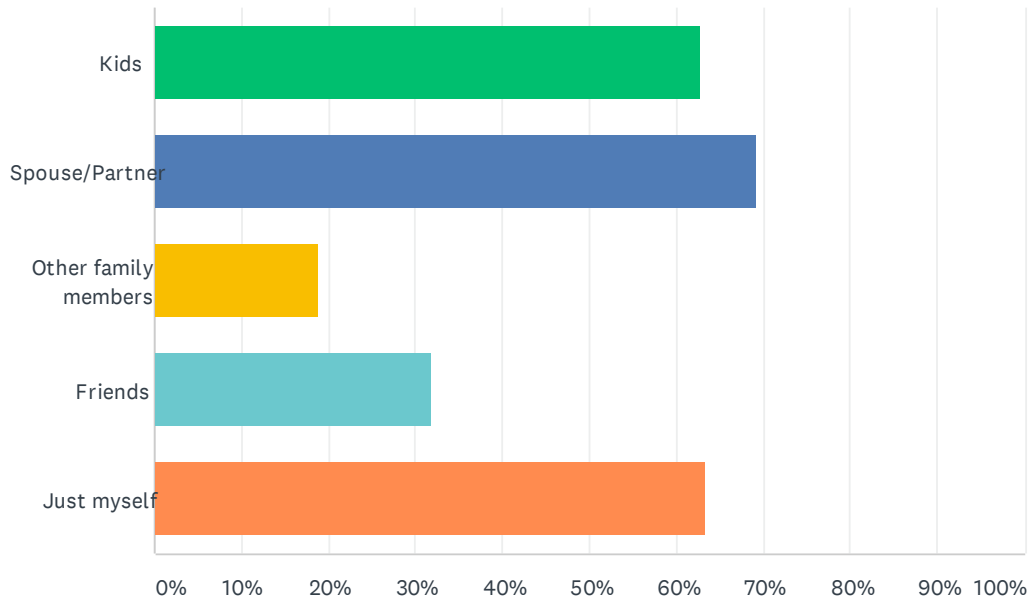
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Kids	62.78%	479
Spouse/Partner	69.33%	529
Other family members	18.87%	144
Friends	31.85%	243
Just myself	63.43%	484
Total Respondents: 763		

Q7 Since March of 2020, are you visiting Downtown businesses, less, more or about the same?

Answered: 764   Skipped: 30
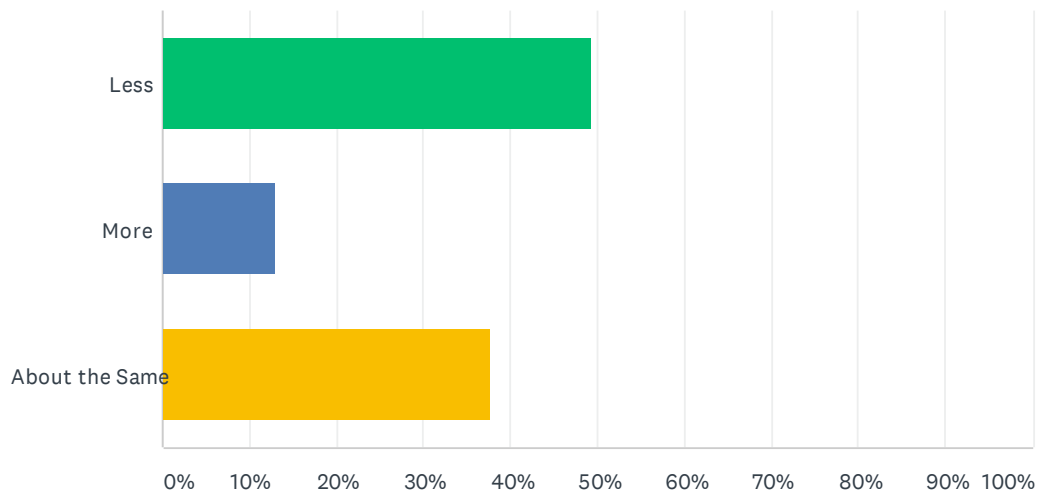
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less	49.35%	377
More	12.96%	99
About the Same	37.70%	288
TOTAL		764

Q8 Since March of 2020, on average, how often do you visit Downtown Reading to go shopping, eat, run errands or attend events:

Answered: 762   Skipped: 32
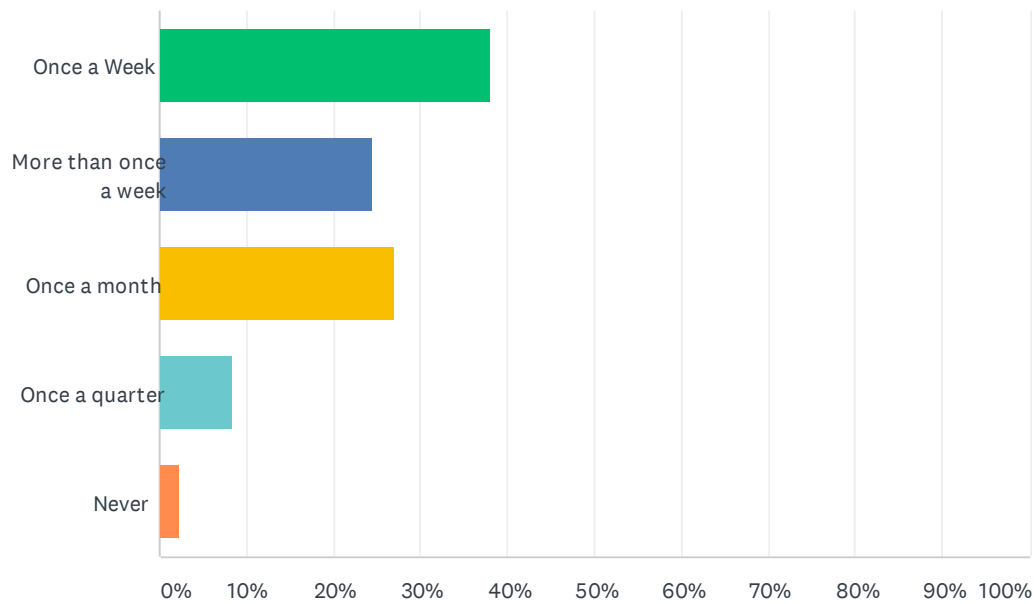
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Once a Week	38.06%	290
More than once a week	24.41%	186
Once a month	27.03%	206
Once a quarter	8.27%	63
Never	2.23%	17
TOTAL		762

Q9 Do you feel comfortable visiting Downtown businesses since March 2020?

Answered: 764   Skipped: 30
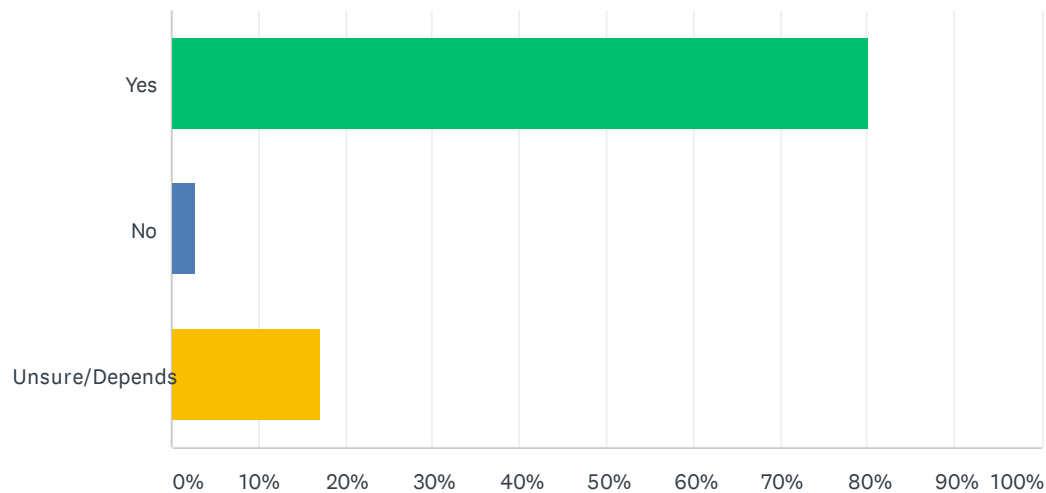
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	80.10%	612
No	2.75%	21
Unsure/Depends	17.15%	131
TOTAL		764

Q10 What types of businesses do you feel comfortable visiting? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 763   Skipped: 31
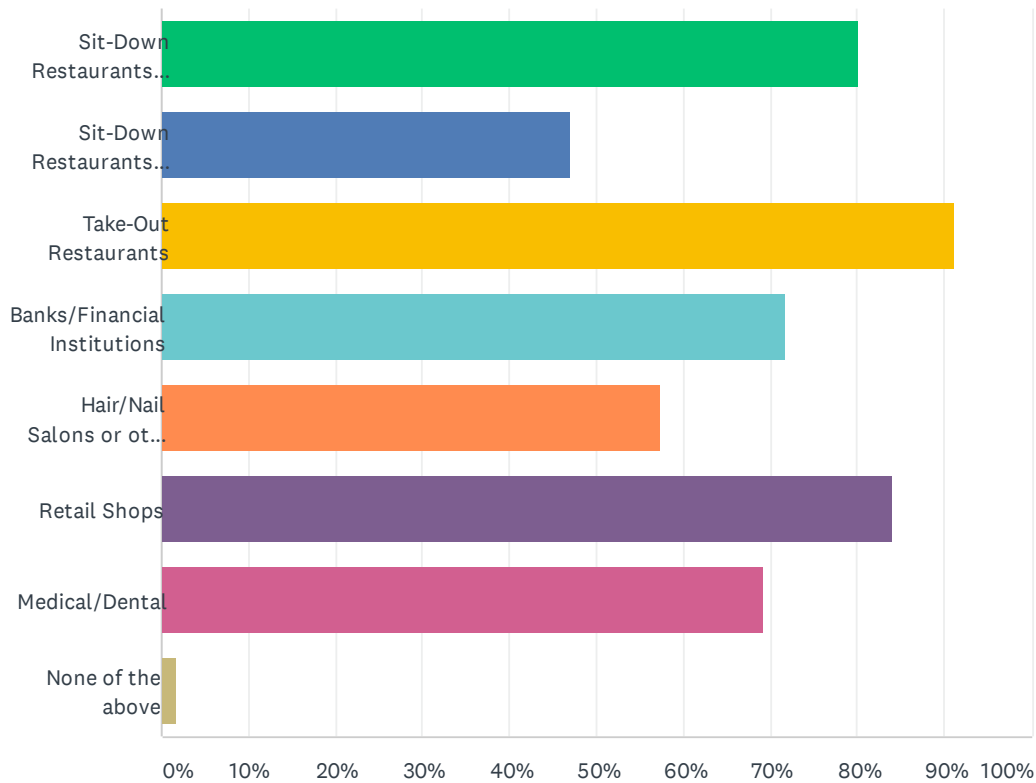
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Sit-Down Restaurants OUTDOORS	80.21%	612
Sit-Down Restaurants INDOORS	47.05%	359
Take-Out Restaurants	91.22%	696
Banks/Financial Institutions	71.82%	548
Hair/Nail Salons or other personal services such as spas or skin treatment	57.27%	437
Retail Shops	84.14%	642
Medical/Dental	69.20%	528
None of the above	1.70%	13
Total Respondents: 763		

Q11 When it comes to business operations and the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, please indicate what would make you more likely to shop at a Downtown Reading business? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 716   Skipped: 78
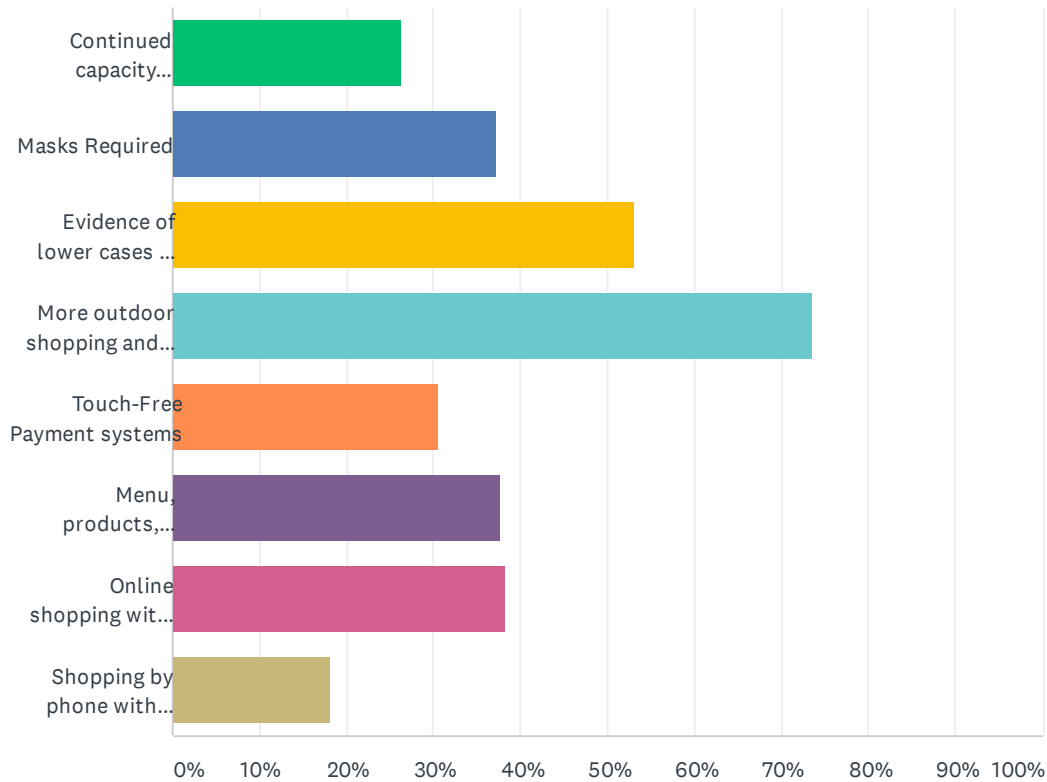
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Continued capacity limitations	26.26%	188
Masks Required	37.29%	267
Evidence of lower cases of COVID	53.21%	381
More outdoor shopping and dining options	73.74%	528
Touch-Free Payment systems	30.45%	218
Menu, products, services available online	37.57%	269
Online shopping with curbside pickup	38.27%	274
Shopping by phone with curbside pickup	18.16%	130
Total Respondents: 716		

Q12 Since March of 2020, how have your online shopping or dining (including ordering takeout & delivery) habits changed?

Answered: 761   Skipped: 33
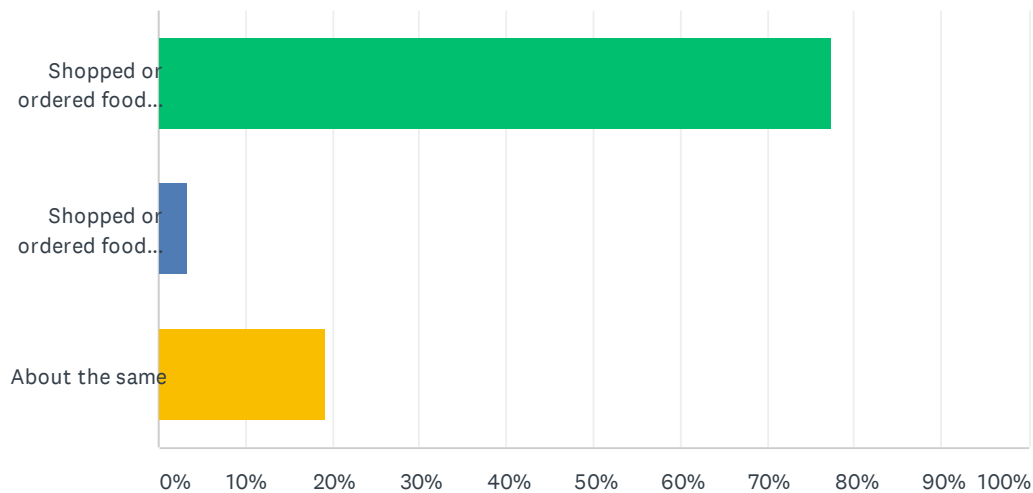
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Shopped or ordered food takeout more online	77.40%	589
Shopped or ordered food takeout less online	3.29%	25
About the same	19.32%	147
TOTAL		761

Q13 Since March of 2020 have you shopped online with Businesses in Downtown Reading?

Answered: 764   Skipped: 30
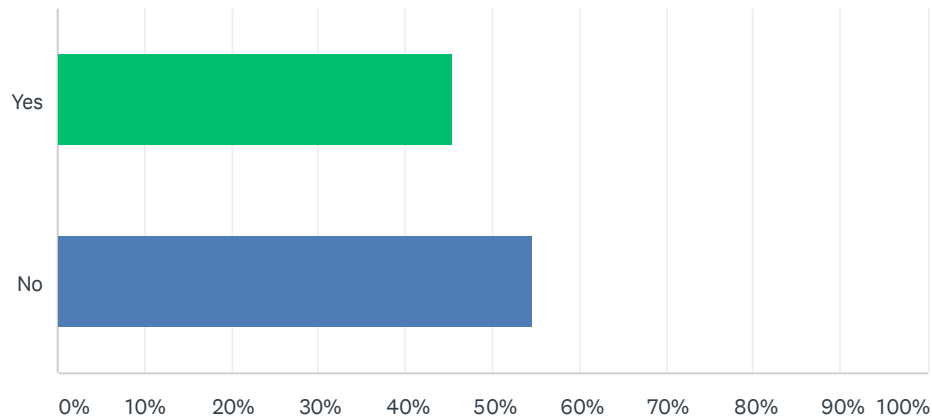
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	45.42%	347
No	54.58%	417
TOTAL		764

Q14 Since March of 2020 have you ordered delivery/takeout from Restaurants in Downtown Reading?

Answered: 761   Skipped: 33
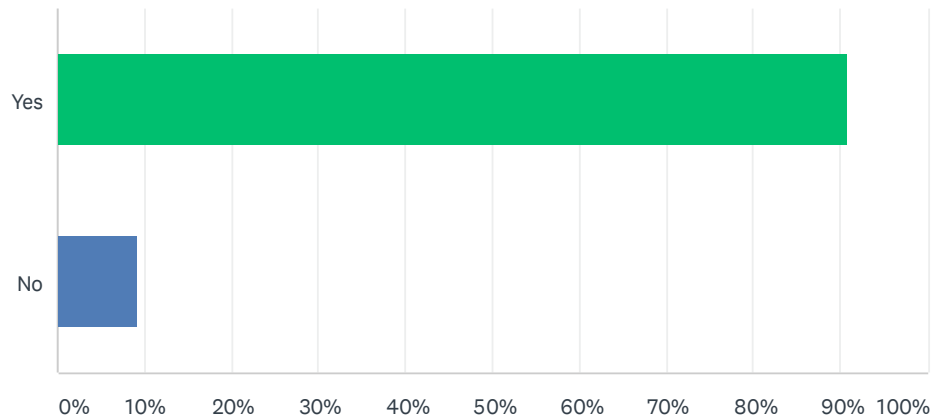
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	90.80%	691
No	9.20%	70
TOTAL		761

Q15 Since March of 2020 have you ordered delivery/curbside pickup from Retail Businesses in Downtown Reading?

Answered: 763   Skipped: 31
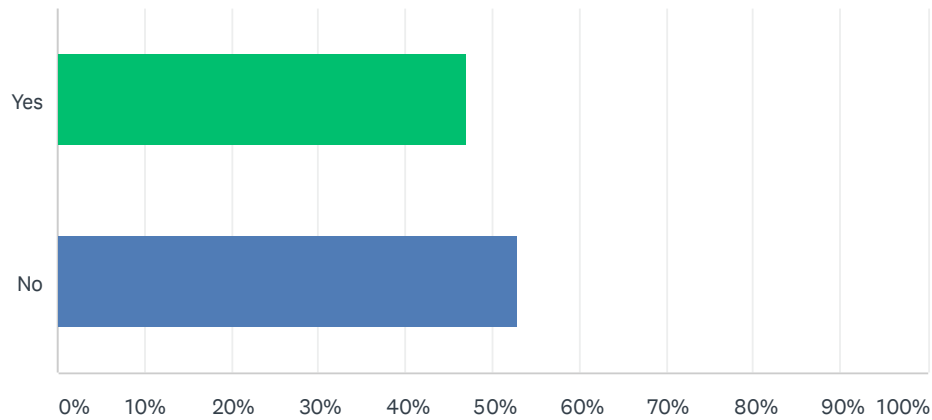
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	47.05%	359
No	52.95%	404
TOTAL		763

Q16 What best describes your shopping habits in Downtown Reading PRIOR to March 2020 (pre-COVID)?

Answered: 758   Skipped: 36
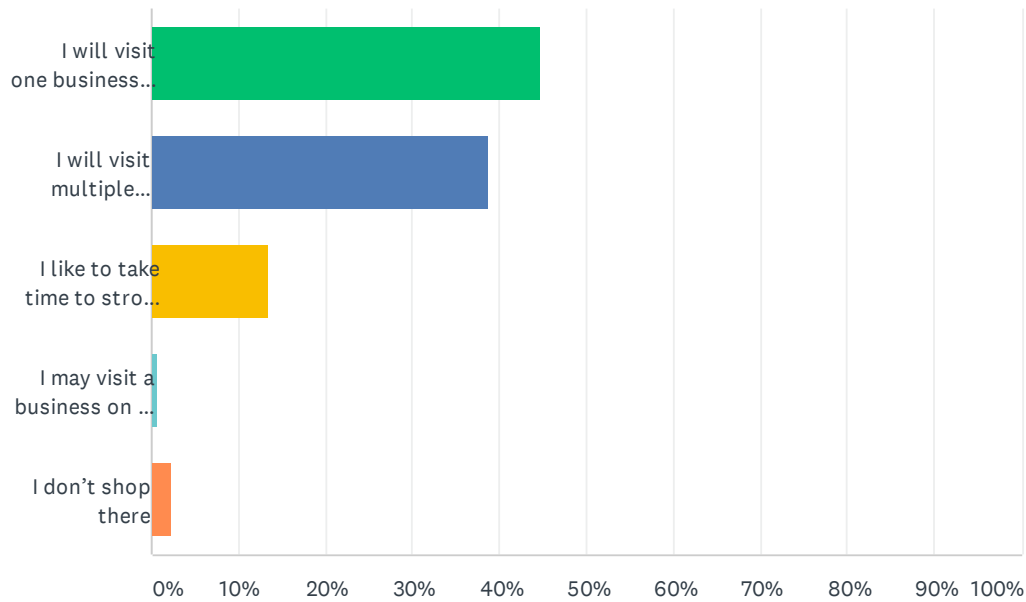
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I will visit one business for a specific reason and then leave	44.85%	340
I will visit multiple businesses for a few reasons and then leave	38.79%	294
I like to take time to stroll and window shop, visiting multiple businesses	13.32%	101
I may visit a business on my way to or from commuting on the commuter rail	0.66%	5
I don't shop there	2.37%	18
TOTAL		758

Q17 Prior to March 2020 (pre-COVID), what brought you to Downtown Reading? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 757　　　Skipped: 37
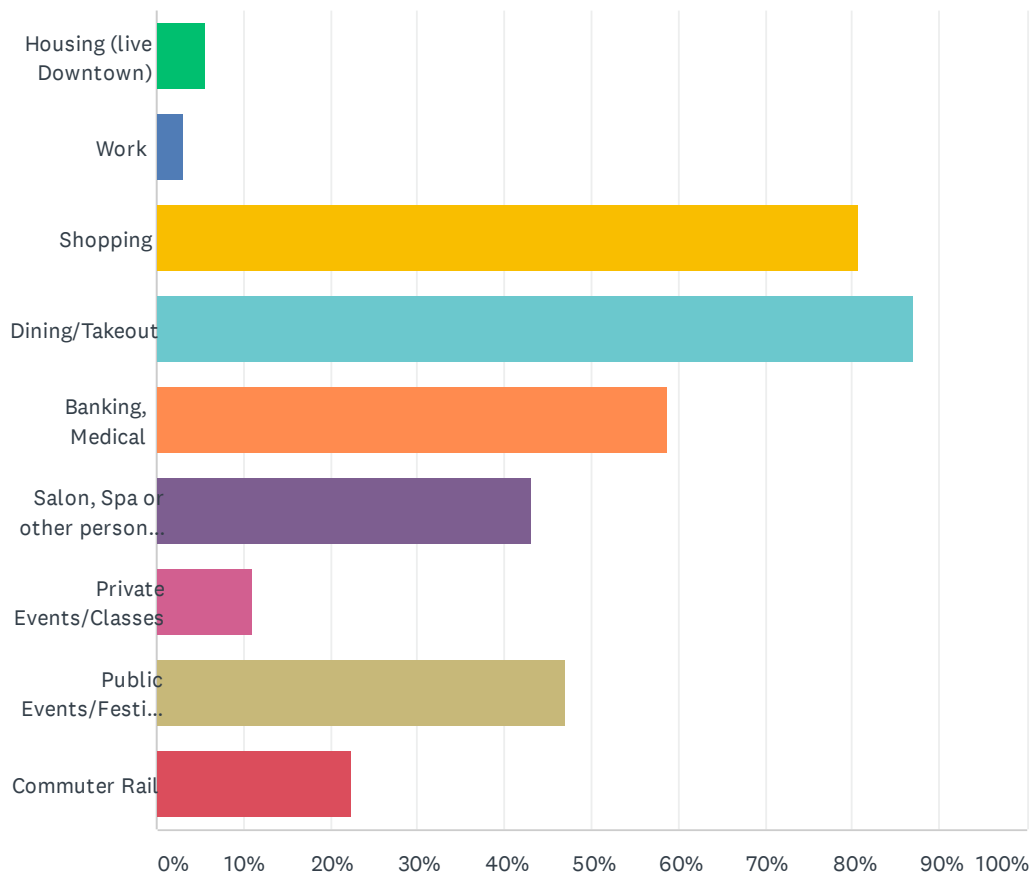
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Housing (live Downtown)	5.55%	42
Work	3.04%	23
Shopping	80.85%	612
Dining/Takeout	87.05%	659
Banking, Medical	58.78%	445
Salon, Spa or other personal service	43.20%	327
Private Events/Classes	11.10%	84
Public Events/Festivals	47.03%	356
Commuter Rail	22.46%	170
Total Respondents: 757		

Q18 Prior to March of 2020 (pre-COVID), what prevented you from regularly shopping/dining/running errands in Downtown Reading? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 761   Skipped: 33
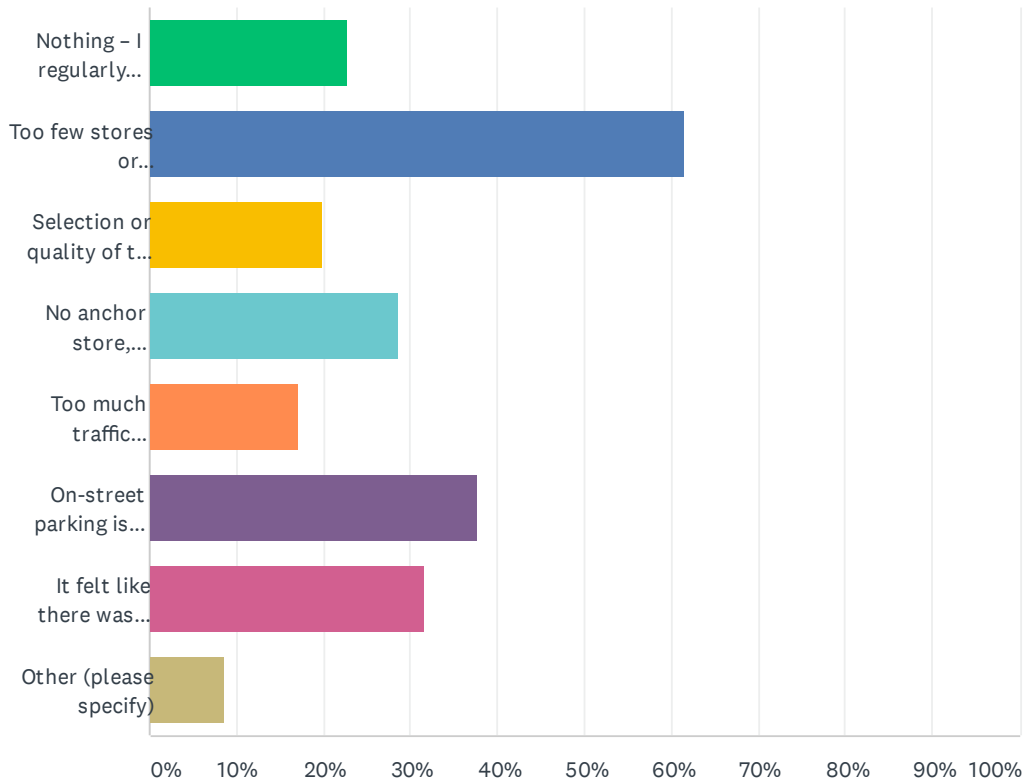
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Nothing – I regularly shopped there	22.86%	174
Too few stores or shops/restaurants that interest me	61.50%	468
Selection or quality of the merchandise in stores does not interest me	19.84%	151
No anchor store, destination business, or performing arts venue downtown	28.65%	218
Too much traffic congestion in Downtown	17.08%	130
On-street parking is always full	37.71%	287
It felt like there was nothing "to do"	31.54%	240
Other (please specify)	8.67%	66
Total Respondents: 761		

Q19 What would bring you to Downtown Reading more in the future? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 760   Skipped: 34
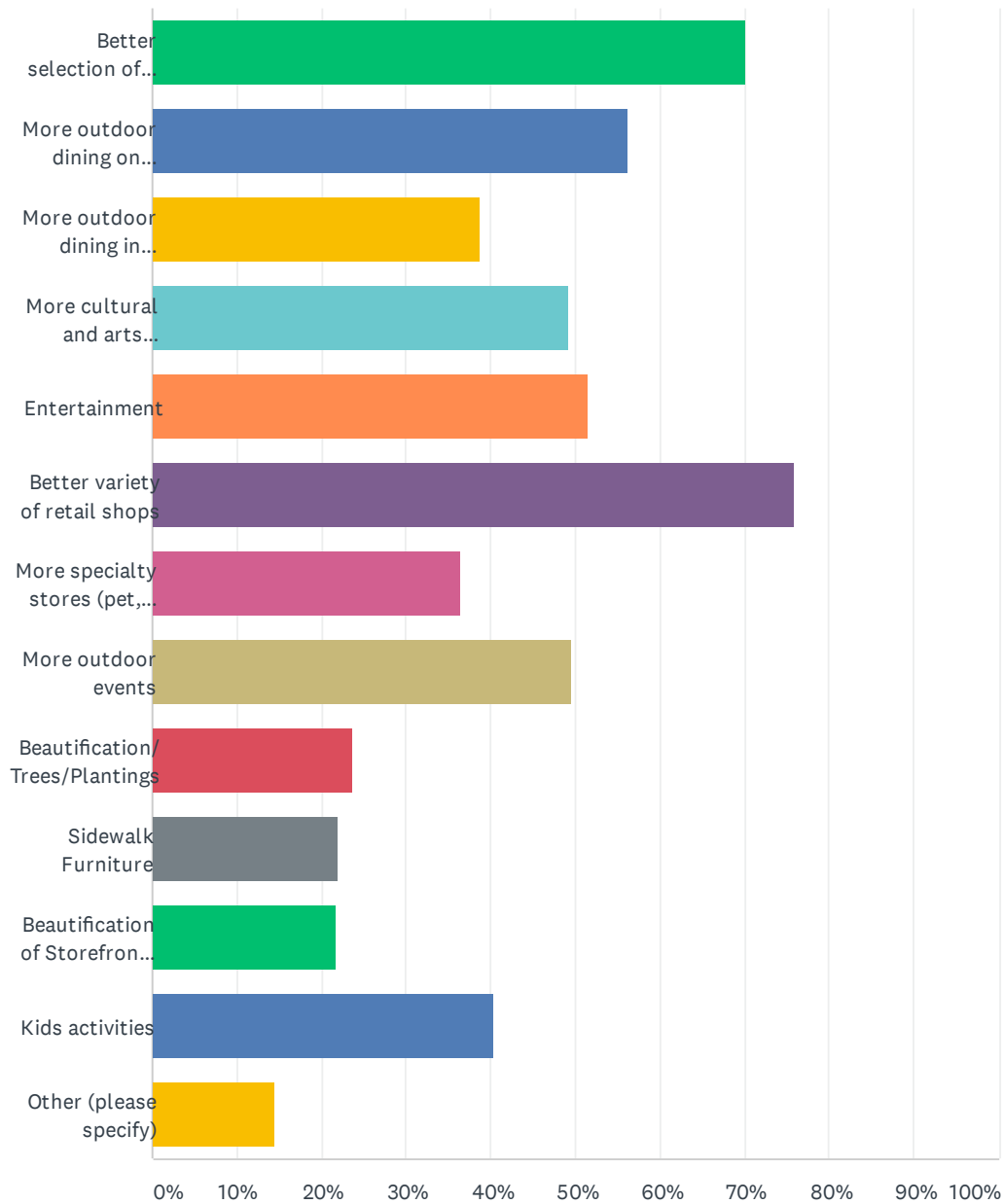
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Better selection of restaurants	70.00%	532
More outdoor dining on sidewalks	56.32%	428
More outdoor dining in parklets	38.68%	294
More cultural and arts activities	49.08%	373
Entertainment	51.45%	391
Better variety of retail shops	75.92%	577
More specialty stores (pet, food, home goods)	36.45%	277
More outdoor events	49.61%	377
Beautification/Trees/Plantings	23.55%	179
Sidewalk Furniture	21.97%	167
Beautification of Storefronts and Buildings	21.84%	166
Kids activities	40.39%	307
Other (please specify)	14.34%	109
Total Respondents: 760		

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	

Q20 When it comes to online shopping, how likely are you to shop at a store in Downtown Reading than at a box-store or online retailer like Amazon?

Answered: 764   Skipped: 30
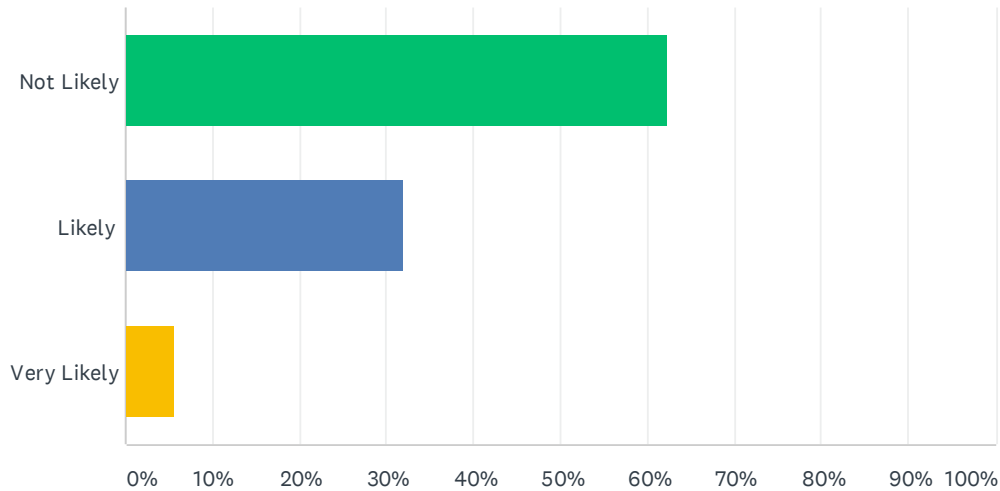
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not Likely	62.30%	476
Likely	32.07%	245
Very Likely	5.63%	43
TOTAL		764

Q21 When it comes to in-person shopping, how likely are you to shop at a store in Downtown Reading than at a box-store or online retailer like Amazon?

Answered: 762   Skipped: 32
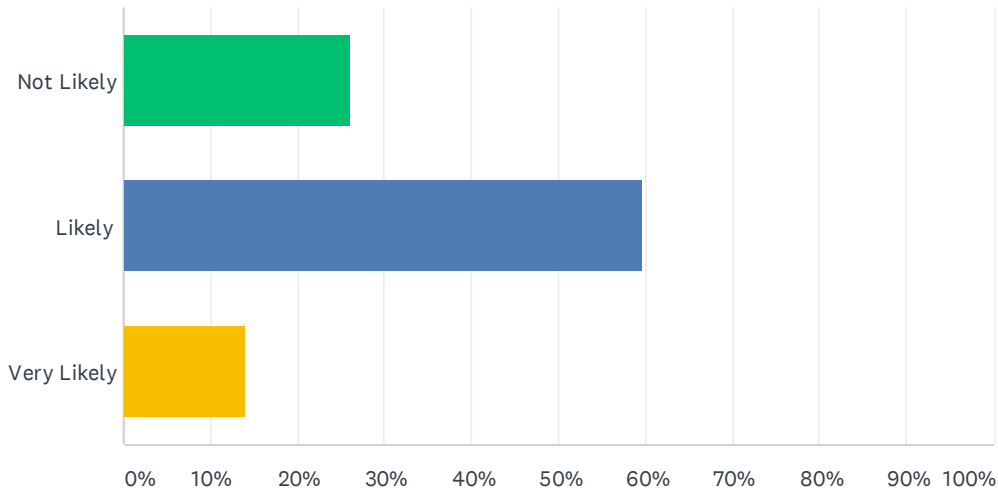
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not Likely	26.25%	200
Likely	59.71%	455
Very Likely	14.04%	107
TOTAL		762

Q22 What influences your decision to shop online or in-person in Downtown Reading vs a big-box retailer or online retailer like amazon.

Answered: 710   Skipped: 84

Q22 What influences your decision to shop online or in-person in Downtown Reading vs a big-box retailer or online retailer like amazon.

Answered: 710   Skipped: 84

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	if the store has what i need, i would much rather shop local	6/21/2021 2:14 PM
2	I will shop for fresh food/drink (ie: Pamplemousse) or unique needs (ie: custom frame) downtown. I am not likely to shop for something downtown that I can get with the click of a button.	6/18/2021 2:49 PM
3	Desire to support local business when able to get what is needed/wanted	6/18/2021 1:42 PM
4	Offerings are limited in Reading	6/17/2021 9:43 PM
5	I hate the big box- want to support local business- we have a terrible selection though- just nothing I can use in the shops :-(and I've tried!!	6/17/2021 12:05 PM
6	Wanting to support local businesses so we can maintain/grow a vibrant downtown.	6/17/2021 6:23 AM
7	ease of use	6/16/2021 9:21 PM
8	Like to support Liz W over Jeff Bezos	6/16/2021 8:02 PM
9	more selections with online shopping	6/16/2021 10:38 AM
10	NOT MANY BUSINESSES IN READING	6/15/2021 6:40 PM
11	convenience	6/15/2021 2:54 PM
12	How soon I need an item	6/15/2021 1:22 PM
13	selection	6/15/2021 10:59 AM
14	Quality in-person shopping experience. Unique merchandise not available online	6/15/2021 9:38 AM
15	Product need	6/15/2021 6:14 AM
16	Less expensive online, can find things for cheaper	6/15/2021 3:16 AM
17	I like the personal contact and to actually see what I'm buying	6/15/2021 1:41 AM
18	Selection and uniqueness	6/14/2021 8:57 PM
19	Support small businesses	6/14/2021 8:30 PM
20	price	6/14/2021 8:17 PM
21	shopping in person is an activity, there needs to be good stores, variety, and quantity to make it appealing. Otherwise, if you're going for one thing you NEED it's easier to shop on amazon.	6/14/2021 6:21 PM
22	Specialty items and support of small businesses	6/14/2021 6:19 PM
23	convenience; price	6/14/2021 5:59 PM
24	Not usually looking for what the Reading stotres offer	6/14/2021 5:42 PM
25	Supporting locally owned small businesses	6/14/2021 12:36 PM
26	simplicity	6/14/2021 10:50 AM
27	Amazon has way more to offer	6/14/2021 10:22 AM
28	Online has a better variety and the prices are right within my budget.	6/14/2021 7:49 AM
29	Support local businesses	6/13/2021 6:25 PM

30	The item I am looking for drives the decision. I tend to go downtown for specialty or unique items, to the kids' store, trophy shop, dog store, book store	6/13/2021 3:40 PM
31	support of local businesses	6/13/2021 2:51 PM
32	convenience	6/13/2021 9:16 AM
33	what I need to buy	6/13/2021 8:41 AM
34	Support local & specific items needed	6/13/2021 7:36 AM
35	I prefer shopping local shops over big online retailers	6/13/2021 7:12 AM
36	needing something in particular. most things i can't find at stores in downtown.	6/12/2021 8:56 PM
37	I prefer online shopping (even before COVID). I shop in Reading for specialty items (e.g., Goodhearts) and takeout food.	6/12/2021 4:55 PM
38	What influences my online shopping is price and selection. In person is determined by feeling safe or not during the pandemic.	6/12/2021 2:51 PM
39	I love going in a store and I love shopping local.	6/12/2021 2:42 PM
40	Supporting community	6/12/2021 2:02 PM
41	Kind of priduct	6/12/2021 1:05 PM
42	Price--it's unfortunately cheaper on Amazon	6/12/2021 11:18 AM
43	product availability	6/12/2021 10:53 AM
44	Selection of goods	6/12/2021 10:46 AM
45	Variety/selection and price	6/12/2021 10:42 AM
46	Selection, support local business	6/12/2021 9:46 AM
47	inventory	6/12/2021 9:28 AM
48	Convenience, having it delivered if I can't get out	6/12/2021 7:40 AM
49	quality of products	6/12/2021 6:57 AM
50	There are not enough variety of retailers in downtown	6/11/2021 10:54 PM
51	Shopping local helps small business owners	6/11/2021 9:24 PM
52	Selection	6/11/2021 9:10 PM
53	im not a big online shopper- I like to see my merchandise before buying	6/11/2021 8:32 PM
54	Products needed	6/11/2021 7:08 PM
55	selection, pricing	6/11/2021 6:56 PM
56	I always choose to shop local when I can. Typically it is really only at Whitelam.	6/11/2021 6:32 PM
57	price/selection	6/11/2021 4:57 PM
58	supporting the community and promoting more local business. better shopping experience as well.	6/11/2021 3:57 PM
59	variety/pricing	6/11/2021 3:36 PM
60	Keep good small businesses in Reading	6/11/2021 3:16 PM
61	price, convenience and selection	6/11/2021 2:51 PM
62	I don't like Amazon.	6/11/2021 1:35 PM
63	Price and options	6/11/2021 1:25 PM
64	Price	6/11/2021 12:27 PM
65	Depends on the need.	6/11/2021 11:57 AM

66	selection of goods and items that I need	6/11/2021 11:15 AM
67	want to support local business. need items right away, specialty items and shops that are harder to find online, I enjoy browsing in shops, but wish there were more shops I was interested in downtown	6/11/2021 11:05 AM
68	I try to shop local and never buy at amazon	6/11/2021 11:04 AM
69	I prefer to support local businesses	6/11/2021 11:00 AM
70	The product itself (like clothing or home goods I'm more likely to go downtown to see in person) or immediate need vs waiting for shipping	6/11/2021 10:32 AM
71	There needs to be more available downtown. I would always prefer to shop local	6/11/2021 10:30 AM
72	Convienince and larger selection	6/11/2021 10:10 AM
73	support local businesses, unique gifts	6/11/2021 9:52 AM
74	The lack of variety or stores in Reading. Need more restaurants and shops	6/11/2021 9:52 AM
75	Selection	6/11/2021 9:47 AM
76	boutique	6/11/2021 9:26 AM
77	Cost. Hours of operation.	6/11/2021 9:19 AM
78	price	6/11/2021 8:36 AM
79	I like the personal service that I get when I shop downtown.i like the bookstore. All of the stores are unique. I live in Lynnfield, but my grandchildren live in Reading. I like all of the parades, Reading Town Day, the Christmas party. the Halloween party, etc. I am most likely to be in Reading because of the grandchildren, ages 7 and 17.	6/11/2021 8:16 AM
80	Selection	6/11/2021 8:07 AM
81	Convenience of picking up something quickly.	6/11/2021 8:05 AM
82	I like to shop in person and will shop locally if I can.	6/11/2021 7:18 AM
83	Seeing people - interaction. Social.	6/11/2021 6:55 AM
84	online has what I am looking for. Could really use a toy store in person.	6/11/2021 6:43 AM
85	I try and buy gifts when I can at local stores, but often what I need isn't at a local store so need to get it online or larger box store	6/11/2021 6:31 AM
86	Options available and convenience	6/11/2021 6:29 AM
87	product selection	6/11/2021 6:16 AM
88	depends on what I am shopping for. If I can get it locally I do. If not, Amazon.	6/11/2021 5:39 AM
89	selection and availability of what i am looking for. The selection of stores downtown is very limited and I cannot often get what I need without going to another town or online	6/11/2021 5:13 AM
90	Unique selection	6/11/2021 5:13 AM
91	I hate amazon-if I can find what I want in person I much prefer it.	6/10/2021 10:29 PM
92	Whether I think the item is available in-person at a downtown store	6/10/2021 10:18 PM
93	I won't generally find what I'm looking for in downtown reading, there's not much of a selection.	6/10/2021 10:14 PM
94	Variety - cost - ease of purchase -	6/10/2021 9:57 PM
95	Selection. I love to support local businesses when I can but downtown lacks key stores I need like a toy store, local hardware store. We also love to eat out but need more variety of restaurants.	6/10/2021 9:47 PM
96	Products available that interest me	6/10/2021 9:40 PM
97	Limited stores in downtown Reading lead to big-box retailer and online purchases, because the products can't be found in downtown Reading.	6/10/2021 9:32 PM

98	Parking is a main reason. I would love to park and stroll and visit stores.	6/10/2021 9:32 PM
99	If I want to support a local business for a specific item, I will stay local. But we need more options.	6/10/2021 9:09 PM
100	Supporting businesses and being able to see items I'm buying	6/10/2021 9:09 PM
101	If I know I can't get it in reading the. I may buy online	6/10/2021 9:05 PM
102	Convenience	6/10/2021 8:59 PM
103	Availability, variety and cost of items	6/10/2021 8:41 PM
104	Support local businesses	6/10/2021 7:59 PM
105	Local.	6/10/2021 7:58 PM
106	Selection, convenience	6/10/2021 7:48 PM
107	Convenience	6/10/2021 7:46 PM
108	Parking, time	6/10/2021 7:46 PM
109	Prefer smaller stores	6/10/2021 7:23 PM
110	Convenience	6/10/2021 7:16 PM
111	Convenience	6/10/2021 6:13 PM
112	Product availabilty	6/10/2021 5:49 PM
113	No stores selling things that interest me	6/10/2021 5:44 PM
114	Want to support local!	6/10/2021 5:34 PM
115	I don't shop online	6/10/2021 5:31 PM
116	I don't feel comfortable shopping in reading bc the shop owners are very friendly	6/10/2021 5:16 PM
117	Easy	6/10/2021 5:10 PM
118	Most stores in downtown are expensive. I go to them for special gifts only	6/10/2021 5:03 PM
119	to get an item same day. if i can't find it downtown, i will order on amazon instead. if there was a better variety of stores that would also affect my decision to head downtown to complete more than one errand instead of just one	6/10/2021 5:02 PM
120	Nothing I need available downtown reading	6/10/2021 4:57 PM
121	People	6/10/2021 4:49 PM
122	If I have something specific in mind and it is not available locally, I will order it online and save myself running around trying to find it. I'm more apt to shop locally if I'm looking for a gift that's thoughtful, but not something specific - I'll look around for something that just catches my eye.	6/10/2021 4:37 PM
123	Availability of products and ease of shopping	6/10/2021 4:27 PM
124	Price and selection	6/10/2021 4:24 PM
125	The feel of the downtown area	6/10/2021 4:12 PM
126	Supporting local retail	6/10/2021 4:03 PM
127	I like to support local businesses as long as prices are comparable.	6/10/2021 3:49 PM
128	Lack of variety in Reading shops.	6/10/2021 3:49 PM
129	I like to support local businesses. I love having a local bookshop.	6/10/2021 3:49 PM
130	Support local business	6/10/2021 3:41 PM
131	I don't shop big box retailers or Amazon	6/10/2021 3:35 PM
132	Will shop downtown for books, stuff at CVS, specialty gift items at Pamplemousse. Will shop big box/online for items not currently available downtown.	6/10/2021 3:23 PM

133	Same day pick up, support of local business	6/10/2021 3:20 PM
134	Convenience and price	6/10/2021 3:16 PM
135	Cost and variety	6/10/2021 2:44 PM
136	Selection of products	6/10/2021 2:43 PM
137	Wide selection of products and ease of purchase	6/10/2021 2:40 PM
138	Amazon has EVERYTHING/ fast	6/10/2021 2:36 PM
139	No selection downtown, wasting time	6/10/2021 2:32 PM
140	Convivence and get the product right away	6/10/2021 2:20 PM
141	Depends on if I need the item right away or if I can wait for delivery	6/10/2021 2:09 PM
142	Ease of ordering online from a large retailer. Also, not having to worry about finding a parking spot to pick up in Downtown Reading.	6/10/2021 1:59 PM
143	supporting local merchants	6/10/2021 1:56 PM
144	Seeing the item before purchasing, supporting the town, and gifts etc I purchase in person	6/10/2021 1:54 PM
145	Availability	6/10/2021 1:54 PM
146	Sales	6/10/2021 1:51 PM
147	Selection	6/10/2021 1:49 PM
148	Convenience & more choices online	6/10/2021 1:44 PM
149	Price, variety	6/10/2021 1:38 PM
150	Time (and how much free time i have)	6/10/2021 1:38 PM
151	more to choose from	6/10/2021 1:38 PM
152	Available merchandise	6/10/2021 1:34 PM
153	Specific wants	6/10/2021 1:33 PM
154	Price, selection	6/10/2021 1:32 PM
155	lack of variety in retail stores downtown	6/10/2021 1:26 PM
156	Quality and variety of items offered.	6/10/2021 1:24 PM
157	No many retail shops in reading or restaurants they we like	6/10/2021 1:12 PM
158	availability of the product. I would love a hardware store.	6/10/2021 1:12 PM
159	Support local businesses	6/10/2021 1:10 PM
160	I like to support the smaller shops. I enjoy shopping downtown.	6/10/2021 1:05 PM
161	I like to see a product before I buy.	6/10/2021 1:02 PM
162	Time and availability	6/10/2021 1:02 PM
163	selections and prices	6/10/2021 12:54 PM
164	Very few shops in Reading.	6/10/2021 12:43 PM
165	Better price, don't have to deal with limited parking	6/10/2021 12:41 PM
166	I would like to help local business	6/10/2021 12:40 PM
167	Do they have the item I am looking for locally.	6/10/2021 12:39 PM
168	More options at Amazon	6/10/2021 12:38 PM
169	Convienece & price	6/10/2021 12:37 PM

170	I try to buy locally, but prices and availability of whatever it is we're looking for, along with the ease of ordering from an online retailer does lead me in that direction	6/10/2021 12:36 PM
171	desire to help out small businesses and my community	6/10/2021 12:35 PM
172	Pricing, ease of finding what I want and not going to multiple stores bc they don't have websites to find what I want then go there	6/10/2021 12:30 PM
173	Price and convince - I will go to stores that have multiple products I need. Specialty shops are expensive and my income has decreased.	6/10/2021 12:30 PM
174	Convenient and offer small business supports	6/10/2021 12:28 PM
175	ability to find what I want and parking	6/10/2021 12:26 PM
176	support local business; seeing/touching merchandise prior to purchase.	6/10/2021 12:18 PM
177	If I want a specialty item (like wine or gift) or something specific to Reading, then I would more likely shop on person.	6/10/2021 12:17 PM
178	Pricing! Sometimes local stores are just so overpriced I can't justify shopping local, but I do try!	6/10/2021 12:17 PM
179	Reading doesn't have the variety or convenience	6/10/2021 12:16 PM
180	Supporting local businesses	6/10/2021 12:10 PM
181	what I am looking for	6/10/2021 12:04 PM
182	Need and cost	6/10/2021 11:59 AM
183	Amazon is cheaper and more efficient	6/10/2021 11:57 AM
184	Availability of certain product	6/10/2021 11:57 AM
185	Supporting local business	6/10/2021 11:54 AM
186	Deals and ease	6/10/2021 11:54 AM
187	Supporting local business	6/10/2021 11:52 AM
188	Support local business	6/10/2021 11:48 AM
189	the stores in downtown Reading do not have complete on-line shopping, except CVS	6/10/2021 11:47 AM
190	selection, convenience	6/10/2021 11:41 AM
191	Product availability. Do Downtown stores have what I need, even at a slightly higher price ?	6/10/2021 11:39 AM
192	Easily and prime comes in 2 days	6/10/2021 11:36 AM
193	Convenience, time, cost	6/10/2021 11:32 AM
194	If stores have what I need	6/10/2021 11:32 AM
195	Variety - prefer to purchase locally even if a bit more expensive but there are only a few things that I can buy locally	6/10/2021 11:31 AM
196	The only store I shop from other than CVS is Whitlam Books, and I prefer to go in person	6/10/2021 11:30 AM
197	Local retail	6/10/2021 11:29 AM
198	I always try to purchase in town first--but often, stores do not have what I need. I am willing to pay the extra for in-town stores, but selection of items is limited.	6/10/2021 11:28 AM
199	quality products & good customer service	6/10/2021 11:27 AM
200	How soon I want the item.	6/10/2021 11:24 AM
201	Availability of things I want or need. I try to buy books from white lamb but other gifts and things I need for my family are not sold on Main Street. It's not about price.	6/10/2021 11:21 AM
202	I'd rather give the business locally, but I don't see the options	6/10/2021 11:21 AM
203	time and convenience	6/10/2021 11:17 AM

204	n/a	6/10/2021 11:16 AM
205	Downtown Reading is much better than Amazon or big box for purchasing gift items and books. Parking can be tricky sometimes.	6/10/2021 11:16 AM
206	Do they have what I'm looking for	6/10/2021 11:15 AM
207	Availability of products	6/10/2021 11:14 AM
208	Support Local, if it's a fundraiser for school etc, unique gift ideas	6/10/2021 11:14 AM
209	Selection/varity of products	6/10/2021 11:14 AM
210	Convenience and price	6/10/2021 11:12 AM
211	Products offered and parking ease	6/10/2021 11:11 AM
212	Ease/availability	6/10/2021 11:09 AM
213	Availability	6/10/2021 11:08 AM
214	Variety	6/10/2021 11:08 AM
215	time	6/10/2021 11:08 AM
216	Price	6/10/2021 11:07 AM
217	I like to support local businesses. I'll buy from Whitelam over Amazon any day!	6/10/2021 11:06 AM
218	Accessibility to product to receive that day	6/10/2021 11:05 AM
219	A lot of stores downtown don't have websites set up for online purchases. Not all their inventory is listed or described. This makes shopping online hard.	6/10/2021 11:04 AM
220	attention of clerks	6/10/2021 11:01 AM
221	I try to shop local when I can, but look forward to even more variety coming to Reading!	6/10/2021 10:58 AM
222	Selection	6/10/2021 10:57 AM
223	Variety	6/10/2021 10:56 AM
224	Human Interaction + Support local	6/10/2021 10:54 AM
225	Choices	6/10/2021 10:54 AM
226	Shopping local	6/10/2021 10:54 AM
227	I like to browse & see the selection in person. I don't like online shopping as much.	6/10/2021 10:53 AM
228	Product availability	6/10/2021 10:50 AM
229	Uniqueness of offerings and goods	6/10/2021 10:49 AM
230	Variety. The feeling a store gives. Welcoming. I like to see and touch what i am buying. There are fee shops i truly love downtown. We need more!	6/10/2021 10:46 AM
231	price, supporting small business	6/10/2021 10:45 AM
232	I like to support local shops so long as the price is right.	6/10/2021 10:44 AM
233	If I feel that the store will have the item I need in stock then I will shop in Downtown Reading.	6/10/2021 10:43 AM
234	Prices and Parking	6/10/2021 10:40 AM
235	Timing of product. If I need something right away I shop in person	6/10/2021 10:39 AM
236	Actually having the stuff I need	6/10/2021 10:39 AM
237	Supporting local businesses	6/10/2021 10:38 AM
238	supporting a local business	6/10/2021 10:38 AM
239	Price/convenience	6/10/2021 10:37 AM

240	It's quicker, if I can find parking	6/10/2021 10:37 AM
241	Whether there's a store I can find my product at.... which is usually none.	6/10/2021 10:36 AM
242	No variey in Reading. No restaurants, no shops, it's not a downtown. We should be like Melrose Downtown	6/10/2021 10:35 AM
243	i like to support my neighbors and small businesses	6/10/2021 10:35 AM
244	selection	6/10/2021 10:34 AM
245	If the items I need are available would shop local	6/10/2021 10:33 AM
246	I like to support my town businesses and I like it best when I have a few errands downtown	6/10/2021 10:32 AM
247	avaiability of item	6/10/2021 10:32 AM
248	Depends on what I'm shopping for	6/10/2021 10:31 AM
249	Convenience	6/10/2021 10:30 AM
250	Selection	6/10/2021 10:28 AM
251	Weather - because I walk to downtown, what I need to get	6/10/2021 10:27 AM
252	selection on amazon is limitless	6/10/2021 10:26 AM
253	Support local	6/10/2021 10:23 AM
254	not available in a downtown store/shop, variety,	6/10/2021 10:22 AM
255	available parking and product availability	6/10/2021 10:20 AM
256	Desire to support local businesses	6/10/2021 10:18 AM
257	time	6/10/2021 10:17 AM
258	Just close to home	6/10/2021 10:17 AM
259	Time and service needed	6/10/2021 10:16 AM
260	Selection and price	6/10/2021 10:15 AM
261	Selection	6/10/2021 10:14 AM
262	Merchandise being available, competitive pricing	6/10/2021 10:14 AM
263	pricing and convenience	6/10/2021 10:12 AM
264	availability of products and time	6/10/2021 10:12 AM
265	PARKING!	6/10/2021 10:07 AM
266	It's easier to shop online and faster	6/10/2021 10:05 AM
267	Something I need with a personal touch, last minute gift or food item needed or wanting to support local	6/10/2021 10:05 AM
268	Ease, convenience and more selections	6/10/2021 10:03 AM
269	Price, selection and ease	6/10/2021 10:02 AM
270	Prefer shopping local	6/10/2021 10:02 AM
271	Specialty item or need to browse for ideas	6/10/2021 10:02 AM
272	There isn't a lot of different types of stores in Downtown Reading.	6/10/2021 9:59 AM
273	Ease & variety	6/10/2021 9:59 AM
274	limited variety in reading stores- need more shops	6/10/2021 9:59 AM
275	Availability and pricing. If I need a baby or kids gift I KNOW Goodhearts will have something I can use. We also can count on Whitelam for its selection and events!	6/10/2021 9:59 AM
276	Need better selection of stores/better parking	6/10/2021 9:59 AM

277	price, availability	6/10/2021 9:58 AM
278	My preference is always to shop local but sometimes there isn't a local option for an item. This applies to things like toys and hardware/gardening.	6/10/2021 9:57 AM
279	I always try to see if I can buy something from independently owned downtown shops first.	6/10/2021 9:55 AM
280	Handmade or specialty items would motivate me to shop inperson downtown	6/10/2021 9:55 AM
281	Comparable price and convenience	6/10/2021 9:55 AM
282	Parking availability	6/10/2021 9:55 AM
283	selection, prices, convenience	6/10/2021 9:54 AM
284	Variety of shops offering products that interest me	6/10/2021 9:54 AM
285	Fuck Amazon and fuck big corporations	6/10/2021 9:54 AM
286	If it is more convenient depending I'm driving through the downtown area. I most only visit the same 3-4 businesses.	6/10/2021 9:54 AM
287	I prefer to buy gifts at smaller shops	6/10/2021 9:53 AM
288	Main influence is support for local business	6/10/2021 9:53 AM
289	Immediate receipt	6/10/2021 9:52 AM
290	Better selection online than Downtown	6/10/2021 9:51 AM
291	COVID safety and product availability	6/10/2021 9:47 AM
292	There is not much variety in Reading to shop.	6/10/2021 9:47 AM
293	Convenience and variety of shops	6/10/2021 9:45 AM
294	wanted to see and feel things before i buy	6/10/2021 9:44 AM
295	Online retailers have more variety.	6/10/2021 9:43 AM
296	variety of merchandise and stores	6/10/2021 9:40 AM
297	price	6/10/2021 9:40 AM
298	Convenience, the town has become to congested and will only be getting worse given the added condominium building being built, occupied	6/10/2021 9:39 AM
299	convenience	6/10/2021 9:38 AM
300	how busy I am and how easy it is to find what I need online and then it arrives on my door step	6/10/2021 9:36 AM
301	like to give business to local ppl	6/10/2021 9:35 AM
302	Better selection at big-box or online	6/10/2021 9:34 AM
303	Variety and speed of products needed	6/10/2021 9:34 AM
304	availability of what I want to purchase	6/10/2021 9:34 AM
305	Shop local	6/10/2021 9:33 AM
306	convenience	6/10/2021 9:33 AM
307	I would shop downtown more if I could buy more of the things I need.	6/10/2021 9:33 AM
308	Depends	6/10/2021 9:33 AM
309	selection and ease of shopping	6/10/2021 9:33 AM
310	Depends on the product I'm looking for and if it is available Downtown or not.	6/10/2021 9:32 AM
311	Is it available now	6/10/2021 9:32 AM
312	There isn't much available. The one kid's store is very upscale as well as the women's clothing. The sizes also are limited. There is no parking sometimes. If you have kids and a	6/10/2021 9:31 AM

stroller or just need to run in someplace quick it can be really difficult when you are driving in circles looking for a space. If I need more than one specific item that I can't find I. Downtown Reading I will go to a big box store to get all my shopping done instead of making many different trips.

313	Selection and price	6/10/2021 9:29 AM
314	Sometimes it is pure ease of clicking on amazon and shipping to my door. I will fully admit to not being proactive enough to see if our local boutiques have online shops that I can browse and purchase from.	6/10/2021 9:29 AM
315	Convenience and selection	6/10/2021 9:29 AM
316	support the community	6/10/2021 9:29 AM
317	Just easier sometimes to shop online	6/10/2021 9:28 AM
318	online = convenience and downtown = supporting a beautiful downtown that I look forward to walking around once I feel more comfortable	6/10/2021 9:28 AM
319	Wide selection of products and ease of purchase	6/10/2021 9:27 AM
320	Ease of accessing what I need.	6/10/2021 9:26 AM
321	Good selection of stores	6/10/2021 9:26 AM
322	I can't stand Amazon	6/10/2021 9:26 AM
323	not many shops that carry things I like/need	6/10/2021 9:23 AM
324	Lack of selection/items of interest downtown	6/10/2021 9:21 AM
325	Store variety and product availability	6/10/2021 9:20 AM
326	Convenience	6/10/2021 9:19 AM
327	convience	6/10/2021 9:19 AM
328	supporting local businesses.	6/10/2021 9:18 AM
329	Product availability	6/10/2021 9:17 AM
330	convenience	6/10/2021 9:17 AM
331	Needing a specific product and lower prices online	6/10/2021 9:16 AM
332	If there was a store offering something I needed it would come down to urgency, availability, and then cost.	6/10/2021 9:15 AM
333	I like to support our small business and keep our town thriving	6/10/2021 9:15 AM
334	merchant availability	6/10/2021 9:15 AM
335	selection of goods	6/10/2021 9:14 AM
336	I'd rather support a local business that provides jobs for people in the area and brings business to the area.	6/10/2021 9:14 AM
337	Convenience with Amazon, better selection of goods	6/10/2021 9:13 AM
338	Selection, convenience- one less errand to order online	6/10/2021 9:13 AM
339	Availability, time constraints	6/10/2021 9:13 AM
340	Downtown Reading does not have the stores that carry the types of merchandise that most people need on a regular basis therefore everyone will continue to shop at Big box stores or Amazon. Supply/Demand 101	6/10/2021 9:12 AM
341	Support local business	6/10/2021 9:12 AM
342	Availability of what I'm looking for	6/10/2021 9:12 AM
343	Depends on what I need at that time and whether a downtown shop would have it.	6/10/2021 9:10 AM

344	Not a good selection of shopping	6/10/2021 9:09 AM
345	Specific products	6/10/2021 9:09 AM
346	Specialty shops such as Dynamik where I can get the same sports equipment as Dicks Sporting Goods plus Reading-specific merchandise. Same w/places like Chocolate Truffle. I also find the customer service top-notch and want to support community businesses	6/10/2021 9:09 AM
347	I like to be able to see products in person. I enjoy shopping in person and particularly at Aines.	6/10/2021 9:09 AM
348	SELECTION OF STORE FOR WHAT I'M SHOPPING FOR	6/10/2021 9:09 AM
349	Depends on what I need	6/10/2021 9:08 AM
350	Bigger selection, easy, fast at online retailer	6/10/2021 9:08 AM
351	Customer service	6/10/2021 9:07 AM
352	sometimes convince or selection. I know Amazon will have what I need. For gifts I love shopping the Reading shops to find something unique . If only people had not voted down Market street imagine having that plus downtown ! What were people thinking??????	6/10/2021 9:07 AM
353	Ease, convenience	6/10/2021 9:06 AM
354	Prices - we have a super tight budget so if an item is $5+ cheaper online we buy there.	6/10/2021 9:05 AM
355	i like to support small business, but never think about ordering locally online	6/10/2021 9:04 AM
356	pricing, variety, ease of finding item	6/10/2021 9:04 AM
357	$$$	6/10/2021 9:04 AM
358	Availability of what I need	6/10/2021 9:04 AM
359	Like to support local businesses and see items in person before purchasing	6/10/2021 9:03 AM
360	Price	6/10/2021 9:03 AM
361	I like supporting local businesses, especially those that have unique items and a positive presence in the community.	6/10/2021 9:02 AM
362	Stores that offer something unique, personal	6/10/2021 9:02 AM
363	convenience	6/10/2021 9:02 AM
364	Support of small business; love specialty shops (Tin Bucket, Aine's)	6/10/2021 9:02 AM
365	Convenient	6/10/2021 9:02 AM
366	Support local businesses	6/10/2021 9:01 AM
367	price, but lately I alway think local before i go to amazon.	6/10/2021 9:01 AM
368	I don't want my money to go to China, who created COVID in a lab. Amazon = China.	6/10/2021 9:01 AM
369	Convenience	6/10/2021 9:00 AM
370	unique items	6/10/2021 9:00 AM
371	Variety of options/products available	6/10/2021 8:59 AM
372	Selection of goods; delivery time.	6/10/2021 8:58 AM
373	Socialization.	6/10/2021 8:58 AM
374	aines small boutique	6/10/2021 8:58 AM
375	Time of day	6/10/2021 8:58 AM
376	I like the personalized attention at the local businesses where the owners know us by name and what we like	6/10/2021 8:58 AM
377	Quick access	6/10/2021 8:57 AM
378	Support small business and local economy	6/10/2021 8:57 AM

379	Convenience	6/10/2021 8:56 AM
380	Convenience	6/10/2021 8:55 AM
381	I shop online when I am looking for something specific and can get within a couple days. I shop downtown in a few select stores for more unique/gift type items.	6/9/2021 3:33 PM
382	how fast I can get it.	6/4/2021 3:10 PM
383	Convenience, selection, inventory availability, pricing	6/3/2021 9:00 PM
384	The type of item I'm shopping for.	6/3/2021 6:16 AM
385	When do I need the item	6/3/2021 6:15 AM
386	if they have what i need downtown	6/2/2021 8:22 PM
387	I like to try local first	6/2/2021 6:36 PM
388	Availability & support for the business	6/2/2021 6:15 PM
389	If I know items are sold or in stock locally I would prefer the money spent goes to a smaller business.	6/2/2021 5:50 PM
390	I don't really know the stores downtown yet so online is hard with searching and all. Proximity makes it good for in person shopping, though. I can walk there and get my steps in on my way to buy.....whatever	6/2/2021 2:23 PM
391	Readiness of things I need, price and shipping. Carting around a bunch of littles is tiring!	6/2/2021 9:02 AM
392	Close, local, and helps my community	6/1/2021 8:18 PM
393	Time, cost, number of products needed, wanting to support local business	6/1/2021 5:55 AM
394	convenience, price and covid make me order online	6/1/2021 12:36 AM
395	Availability of merchandise	5/31/2021 5:32 PM
396	Convenience. Online order takes about a minute.	5/30/2021 1:21 PM
397	I wish there was a grocery store, shoe store, and a nice bakery downtown.	5/30/2021 10:24 AM
398	Just trying to support our local businesses	5/29/2021 8:34 PM
399	What I'm purchasing	5/29/2021 2:25 PM
400	Parking needs to be addressed. Being elderly it is very difficult to plan to shop, esp. in winter . Amazon prime is my go to store	5/28/2021 5:29 PM
401	Availability of the product i need. I prefer to shop local, but often the stuff i need is not available or hard to find.	5/28/2021 12:48 PM
402	If downtown had similar item, I would always shop there. I hate ordering online as I like to see/feel merchandise before buying.	5/28/2021 10:51 AM
403	Quaintness of shops	5/28/2021 7:14 AM
404	Depends on the item needed	5/28/2021 6:47 AM
405	Nothing	5/28/2021 12:18 AM
406	Lack of actual businesses is why I am limited from shopping in town. I can choose pizza or a doctor's office	5/28/2021 12:16 AM
407	Amazon is easier. Traffic and parking dow town are horrendous	5/27/2021 11:39 PM
408	the product and price	5/27/2021 11:34 PM
409	If it is something I can get in Reading and the price is reasonable.	5/27/2021 7:06 PM
410	I support local	5/27/2021 1:36 PM
411	Like to try and shop local	5/27/2021 9:05 AM

412	I prefer in-person shopping and supporting my community and small businesses	5/25/2021 3:44 PM
413	How busy I am	5/25/2021 2:23 PM
414	CVS , banks and P.O. Pampelmousse, green tomato, Whitlam books	5/25/2021 12:16 PM
415	Convenience	5/25/2021 10:07 AM
416	I like to see things in person. However, I do like to get the best price for purchases	5/25/2021 9:56 AM
417	Depends on what I need- I love the bookstore and one or two other shops but I don't need carpets or trophies or 7000 hair salons, so what I buy mostly comes from big box with a few add ons from local stores.	5/24/2021 3:59 PM
418	Not sure	5/24/2021 3:46 PM
419	price	5/24/2021 2:32 PM
420	prices	5/24/2021 11:04 AM
421	Big box more likely to have what I want.	5/23/2021 7:46 AM
422	Specific items	5/22/2021 6:33 AM
423	There are not many retailers in Downtown Reading.	5/22/2021 12:14 AM
424	Convenience	5/21/2021 11:20 PM
425	Convenience, quality and expertise. Dyons being a good example	5/21/2021 12:56 PM
426	Variety of options available	5/21/2021 12:44 PM
427	I love places like Whitelam Books and TIn Bucket and want them to stay in business!	5/21/2021 10:51 AM
428	Immediate need	5/21/2021 10:11 AM
429	CVS is about the only "retailer" I have shopped at "downtown" for over a year. Used to love going to D'Amici's with friends…No "gift shops", no "clothing" shops that interest me…rather "dull" actually. Certainly do not need another "pizza" place!	5/20/2021 7:15 PM
430	selection and time item is needed	5/20/2021 3:48 PM
431	support for independent/small retailers who directly support the local community.	5/20/2021 11:30 AM
432	I don't like to give Amazon more money	5/20/2021 10:33 AM
433	Supporting small independent shops and restaurants	5/20/2021 9:19 AM
434	Support local businesses	5/20/2021 4:59 AM
435	I like to support our local businesses and have tried to particularly since COVID.	5/19/2021 9:57 PM
436	Ease	5/19/2021 9:48 PM
437	Decreased COVID risk, cheaper cost	5/19/2021 9:41 PM
438	Convenience and cost	5/19/2021 8:23 PM
439	I like to support our small businesses	5/19/2021 7:50 PM
440	My go to stores are market basket for groceries, Home Depot for home supplies, liquor store by MB, less frequently but at least once a month Fusion, Neros, reading. coop, bookstore, pompadoeri, if I get my nails done I always stay in Reading. Always shop at CVS reading	5/19/2021 7:26 PM
441	I like to do business with local places.	5/19/2021 4:34 PM
442	Niche of needed item	5/19/2021 4:26 PM
443	Prices, variety of items I need, and getting to the location without a car	5/19/2021 4:19 PM
444	Supporting local, unique businesses.	5/19/2021 3:47 PM
445	Unique products and reasonable prices	5/19/2021 3:41 PM
446	customer service	5/19/2021 3:38 PM

447	would rather support local businesses	5/19/2021 3:24 PM
448	Convenience	5/19/2021 3:20 PM
449	More unique inventory	5/19/2021 2:18 PM
450	We like to support local when we can, but there isn't a lot of stuff available in our stores. Books. Dog food. Some women's clothes but zero men's clothes. Specialty drinks / foods. No groceries. No other anchor store.	5/19/2021 2:13 PM
451	Cost	5/19/2021 1:18 PM
452	What is available at the stores- if they have what I need etc.	5/19/2021 11:38 AM
453	Fast free shipping, certainty that I will get the item, time to be able to go into a store to look	5/19/2021 7:16 AM
454	Free time	5/18/2021 10:21 PM
455	I prefer to support our small business and usually try there before a big box store	5/18/2021 9:12 PM
456	Convenience vs. feeling obligated to shop local	5/18/2021 8:30 PM
457	I like to patronize my local businesses.	5/18/2021 6:37 PM
458	Availability of item	5/18/2021 3:24 PM
459	For me, there is not much there to shop	5/18/2021 1:39 PM
460	Price	5/18/2021 12:55 PM
461	closer to home, more local stuff. fresher food,	5/18/2021 11:57 AM
462	Price and product availability	5/18/2021 11:36 AM
463	what is available to purchase, I would rather local, but we have limited stores in Reading	5/18/2021 11:02 AM
464	Specialty stores and local vendors	5/18/2021 6:46 AM
465	options/selection- i shop downtown as much as i can but we just dont have enough stores to cover most goods needed - we need a Trader Joes or Whole Foods	5/18/2021 5:44 AM
466	price and selection. downtown retailers have to offer value added service to make price (and sometimes selection) less of an obstacle. willing to pay more in person if the in person experience in downtown businesses is superior. sadly too often it is not. and in my opinion the difference is not a matter a government economic stimulus grant can address. if over time better businesses are established, perhaps the subpar qualities will be ironed out or refreshed with more contemporary practices, products, propositions and attitudes.	5/17/2021 10:51 PM
467	Convenience. If there were a hardware shop or easy to access market that was right downtown I would go there over big box. I love pamplemouse for instance	5/17/2021 10:46 PM
468	If I think they have what I want. Would like to shop local.	5/17/2021 8:41 PM
469	I prefer to support local	5/17/2021 5:01 PM
470	I don't drive!	5/17/2021 4:43 PM
471	selection, availability within desired time, friendliness of staff, interest in merchandise, desire to support local business	5/17/2021 4:32 PM
472	The shops in downtown do not have the day to day items I need. CVS too expensive and inconvenient. I might go to certain stores for special gifts at times, but the only things that regularly draw me downtown are my ATM, coffee at Nero. I used to do breakfast with friends at several places, but the pandemic stopped that. REalistically, a lot of what I need are things like electronics, clothes, groceries, home improvement items, and these week to week purchases cannot be made downtown.	5/17/2021 3:26 PM
473	keep local businesses in business	5/17/2021 2:37 PM
474	Time frame item is needed, childcare (I am not comfortable bringing my unvaccinated young children indoors yet)	5/17/2021 2:28 PM
475	Available personalized items and attention; ease of shopping and ability to obtain a gift	5/17/2021 2:07 PM

immediately. Ability to support a local business.

476	Convenience and selection of products	5/17/2021 8:27 AM
477	Shopping local usually at Tin Bucket and Whitelamb Boooks	5/17/2021 7:29 AM
478	Availability of they type of items I would buy at Amazon or Target; prices	5/17/2021 7:02 AM
479	Price n variety	5/16/2021 11:18 PM
480	If there are other activities downtown, we'd likely shop there. But since we're not there very often, it's easier to buy elsewhere.	5/16/2021 10:11 PM
481	Support of businesses, friendly store owners, unique products	5/16/2021 9:56 PM
482	Familiarity/personal service	5/16/2021 2:45 PM
483	Price, inventory	5/16/2021 1:12 PM
484	Availability of what we're in search of, as well as price.	5/16/2021 1:00 PM
485	Price and availability	5/16/2021 10:29 AM
486	trying to support local businesses	5/16/2021 9:36 AM
487	Impulse buys, in-person.	5/16/2021 7:47 AM
488	I like to support small businesses when ever I can.	5/16/2021 7:37 AM
489	$$$	5/16/2021 7:20 AM
490	The stores in Downtown don't have what I need. I'm shopping for sports equipment and clothing for my kids. I'm shopping for makeup. I'm shopping for kitchen wares and furniture. None of these items are available Downtown.	5/16/2021 7:08 AM
491	Product available right away	5/16/2021 6:21 AM
492	Supporting local businesses	5/15/2021 4:24 PM
493	Wanted to shop local, spent an additional $15 on a book that I could of bought cheaper from a big box store.	5/15/2021 3:45 PM
494	Shopping local to support the community	5/15/2021 8:45 AM
495	Only the bookstore and bank are regular shopping stops for me.	5/15/2021 7:59 AM
496	Selection, it's pretty simple if the store exists and is run well. The problem is the rents drive out the small businesses. In the old days you had a single owner or family control a building. It has changed to banks and REIT which only car about maximizing their investment.	5/15/2021 6:23 AM
497	Convenience, variety	5/14/2021 10:49 PM
498	Price, selection, urgency	5/14/2021 9:41 PM
499	I like to walk!	5/14/2021 9:03 PM
500	Availability of what I'm looking for; I try to support local businesses as much as I can, such as buying dog food or treats at "Everything But the Dog" even though the price is a bit higher than Amazon or PetSmart. But Downtown Reading contains few options for shopping outside of CVS. It's design is also more of a thoroughfare for cars zipping through than a casual strolling by shops like in Wakefield or Melrose. Maybe the new shops under the condos will change things but the options currently don't always match what I'm looking for.	5/14/2021 2:41 PM
501	Time & convenience	5/14/2021 1:48 PM
502	Ease	5/14/2021 12:31 PM
503	I much prefer local shopping and supporting area businesses	5/14/2021 11:02 AM
504	Selection and availability of needed items	5/14/2021 10:12 AM
505	lack of merchandise and choices	5/14/2021 10:08 AM
506	Convenient for me. Like to see goods before buying.	5/14/2021 9:51 AM

507	Like to support local businesses. If the store has unique items (specialty shops, gifts).	5/14/2021 9:23 AM
508	availability to get what needed and parking	5/14/2021 9:16 AM
509	Shopping local, supporting local business	5/14/2021 9:11 AM
510	How much time I have -- I love shopping downtown but if I don't have a free hour to drive, park, shop and come back home, online becomes much more practical.	5/14/2021 8:57 AM
511	It matters what I am buying and who has it in stock at that time	5/14/2021 8:47 AM
512	Timing	5/14/2021 8:45 AM
513	selection and price	5/14/2021 8:33 AM
514	Prefer to shop local but options in Reading are very limited	5/14/2021 8:07 AM
515	Convenience relative to ability to quickly explore items and convenience of delivery services.	5/14/2021 7:26 AM
516	I prefer to see what I'm buying. I'm not a fan of Amazon. They're taking away too many businesses	5/14/2021 6:44 AM
517	Nothing - I go to Market Basket and Home Depot in Reading only	5/14/2021 6:15 AM
518	Convenience	5/14/2021 4:21 AM
519	big-box retailers usually have merchandise not available downtown, but knowing the owners & employees in the small stores makes downtown shopping more appealing	5/14/2021 1:36 AM
520	Best selection at a good price.	5/13/2021 10:26 PM
521	support a local business	5/13/2021 9:47 PM
522	More variety clothing and gift shops	5/13/2021 9:39 PM
523	I support local business	5/13/2021 9:20 PM
524	Relationship with the owner, item selection, personal service	5/13/2021 9:05 PM
525	The convenience and the price. There are very few retail shops in the Square. It would be good to have Trader Joe's or other interesting store with a choice of products.	5/13/2021 9:05 PM
526	If I could get multiple things in a trip to town. Like, I needed to buy a book the other but I also needed apples	5/13/2021 8:43 PM
527	Very little in Reading appeals to me	5/13/2021 8:37 PM
528	Do I actually think the local retailer will have what I need? Love shopping downtown for books and restaurants, but there are no clothing options for me (Plus-Size) or my kids (too old for the Children's store), or my husband (needs tall sizes).	5/13/2021 8:28 PM
529	Cost, inconvenience	5/13/2021 8:19 PM
530	Time	5/13/2021 7:54 PM
531	Convenience and the businesses hat I frequent have what I want.	5/13/2021 7:39 PM
532	The feeling of supporting small businesses and enjoying seeing the people working there!	5/13/2021 7:28 PM
533	Variety other than banks. Pizza places, nail and hair salons	5/13/2021 7:26 PM
534	Desire to "shop small" and support local	5/13/2021 7:07 PM
535	Pricing	5/13/2021 6:58 PM
536	I prefer to support local businesses, and I avoid shopping at Amazon whenever possible.	5/13/2021 6:40 PM
537	Online here only for drugstore and wines	5/13/2021 6:02 PM
538	Want something right away. Cost.	5/13/2021 5:56 PM
539	Parking , variety	5/13/2021 5:07 PM
540	Handicap parking	5/13/2021 5:03 PM

541	desire to support local; look at/touch purchases live	5/13/2021 4:36 PM
542	Availability of what I want to buy.	5/13/2021 4:23 PM
543	Keep local businesses thriving; support people, not anonymous retailer, community focus	5/13/2021 4:20 PM
544	Many more choices when shopping online or at big-box retailer. Can accomplish more in one place.	5/13/2021 4:19 PM
545	Selection, price and/or convenience	5/13/2021 4:13 PM
546	I like to support local businesses, even if I pay a little more. Want more variety (good arts/gifts store like the first Sense of Wonder). More ethnic, funky restaurants, not more pub food.	5/13/2021 3:52 PM
547	Parking	5/13/2021 2:49 PM
548	Depends on what I need. Reading does not offer much.	5/13/2021 2:46 PM
549	Able to walk to downtown, rather shop in smaller stores	5/13/2021 2:38 PM
550	Prefer to support local businesses even if the cost is a little higher.	5/13/2021 2:38 PM
551	convenience	5/13/2021 2:10 PM
552	Availability of products	5/13/2021 2:02 PM
553	I prefer in-person, small experiences	5/13/2021 1:46 PM
554	convenience, variety	5/13/2021 1:42 PM
555	Helping local businesses	5/13/2021 1:28 PM
556	variety	5/13/2021 12:30 PM
557	Product selection. I tend to shop downtown for gifts and go to big-box and online retailers for day-to-day items.	5/13/2021 11:41 AM
558	Selection, parking	5/13/2021 11:29 AM
559	Selection and price	5/13/2021 11:01 AM
560	Best value and product availability	5/13/2021 10:14 AM
561	Selection/ready availability	5/13/2021 9:53 AM
562	NO PARKING! i mean really the town allows all these apartments in the area that people can walk to but those who don't live in town can find parking to go to businesses in town	5/13/2021 9:24 AM
563	There are no stores that carry the merchandise that I need. With the exception of CVS or Bangkok Spice, I really don't go downtown at all.	5/13/2021 8:40 AM
564	Availability of the item I am looking for. There are very few retailers in downtown reading. I can't buy clothes or shoes and if I need cleaning supplies etc CVS is the only option	5/13/2021 8:19 AM
565	I want stores to survive and more to fill empty storefronts. Therefore I buy local what I can get local.	5/13/2021 8:07 AM
566	Boutique/specialty item	5/13/2021 7:57 AM
567	Making decision to support local	5/13/2021 7:40 AM
568	Convenience, cost, feeling safe going out in person	5/13/2021 7:36 AM
569	What I need/what I am shopping for.	5/13/2021 7:34 AM
570	Trying to shop small	5/13/2021 6:45 AM
571	Sadly, I often choose online retailers because there is more selection and better prices. I would prefer to shop in Downtown Reading for clothes but there is a limited selection.	5/13/2021 6:41 AM
572	Ease of shopping and delivery	5/13/2021 6:30 AM
573	Unique gift items or things that can't be found on Amazon	5/13/2021 5:50 AM
574	Prices	5/13/2021 1:36 AM

575	Convenience and sometimes online ordering	5/13/2021 12:35 AM
576	Quality/price	5/12/2021 11:39 PM
577	Being able to browse and get creative and unique ideas. Having staff to help me with my selections. Convenience of being close to home.	5/12/2021 11:01 PM
578	I like to shop local first because I want Reading to have a nice vibe like Winchester, Andover, Lexington - if we don't support local businesses our town will go downhill.	5/12/2021 10:53 PM
579	Support local businesses	5/12/2021 10:49 PM
580	Convenience	5/12/2021 10:10 PM
581	Availability of product. Prefer to shop other than Amazon	5/12/2021 10:04 PM
582	It's the pleasant walk outdoors, for me.	5/12/2021 10:01 PM
583	Ease of item pickup	5/12/2021 9:52 PM
584	Relationships with the business owners	5/12/2021 9:50 PM
585	I want to support small businesses	5/12/2021 9:48 PM
586	Reading	5/12/2021 9:36 PM
587	Easier website. Cheaper prices.(Amazon) I like to support the local businesses whenever possible but go in person.	5/12/2021 9:29 PM
588	Selection of stores/products and desire to support local business.	5/12/2021 9:28 PM
589	Wanting to support local businesses. Being able to look at/touch merchandise	5/12/2021 9:25 PM
590	I would prefer to keep my shopping local if the offerings are what I'm looking for and pricing is somewhat competitive. I like being able to look before I buy	5/12/2021 9:11 PM
591	I prefer to shop local but need more stores with things that interest me and those I shop for.	5/12/2021 8:54 PM
592	Specific needs, like to browse books, toys before purchasing. Need item immediately, cannot wait for shipping	5/12/2021 8:44 PM
593	Want to shop local	5/12/2021 8:35 PM
594	Ability to peruse available goods	5/12/2021 8:35 PM
595	How quickly I need it and would a shop downtown have the item. I'd always prefer to shop local esp after Covid when businesses need the support.	5/12/2021 8:33 PM
596	Convenience and price of big box stores	5/12/2021 8:32 PM
597	Price	5/12/2021 8:30 PM
598	The availability of the items that I need to purchase is not available downtown. When Atlantic grocery store and the Hitching Post and and the hardware store I shopped more often downtown	5/12/2021 8:24 PM
599	Want to support local businesses	5/12/2021 8:11 PM
600	Product, service	5/12/2021 8:03 PM
601	Convenience and variety	5/12/2021 7:54 PM
602	If I know I can get in and out of the shop quickly, easy parking and store hours	5/12/2021 7:47 PM
603	Local businesses are an important part of our community, and they offer things (atmosphere, personal attention) that online shopping does not.	5/12/2021 7:05 PM
604	Cost of goods cheaper online, easier to find something specific online. If I shop in person it is because I don't need something specific. I do prefer to buy local.	5/12/2021 6:51 PM
605	Price, parking, home delivery	5/12/2021 6:50 PM
606	Availability of products	5/12/2021 6:40 PM

607	Local support	5/12/2021 6:38 PM
608	Wanting to support small business	5/12/2021 6:32 PM
609	Selection	5/12/2021 6:10 PM
610	I like to do business locally if possible	5/12/2021 5:56 PM
611	how quickly an item is needed	5/12/2021 5:55 PM
612	Selection	5/12/2021 5:40 PM
613	Store hours. Everything is closed in the evening, eliminating customers that work 9-5 hours.	5/12/2021 5:37 PM
614	Product availability	5/12/2021 5:35 PM
615	availability and selection of what I am looking for	5/12/2021 5:32 PM
616	Trying to support small/local businesses	5/12/2021 5:22 PM
617	Shop local	5/12/2021 5:02 PM
618	Easy to visist	5/12/2021 4:58 PM
619	Different, non generic items	5/12/2021 4:49 PM
620	Price and variety of options	5/12/2021 4:46 PM
621	Merchandise	5/12/2021 4:30 PM
622	Availability of what I need to purchase. Quite often I can't get what I need at our limited (but wonderful) shops.	5/12/2021 4:29 PM
623	They have parking	5/12/2021 4:05 PM
624	If I think a store carries what I am looking for.	5/12/2021 4:03 PM
625	Buy local	5/12/2021 4:02 PM
626	Ease of getting an item, parking and price	5/12/2021 3:51 PM
627	What I'm looking to puchase	5/12/2021 3:50 PM
628	Ads	5/12/2021 3:46 PM
629	Specialty products that are hard to come by via big-box (e.g. Everything but the Dog, Aine's)	5/12/2021 3:36 PM
630	Availability, price, convenience	5/12/2021 3:27 PM
631	finding what I need	5/12/2021 3:25 PM
632	Supporting the local businesses that appeal to me. Wanting them to stay in Reading and be successful.	5/12/2021 3:15 PM
633	reading	5/12/2021 3:13 PM
634	Type of merchandise	5/12/2021 3:11 PM
635	Whats available	5/12/2021 3:09 PM
636	Walked by the store	5/12/2021 2:56 PM
637	Supporting small businesses and not having to wait for delivery	5/12/2021 2:49 PM
638	Selection	5/12/2021 2:47 PM
639	Choice and cost	5/12/2021 2:41 PM
640	supporting small business	5/12/2021 2:39 PM
641	If I think I can find it downtown then I will shop in downtown Reading	5/12/2021 2:34 PM
642	There is no parking in Reading, it's all condo's and getting worse	5/12/2021 2:33 PM
643	Convenient	5/12/2021 2:26 PM

644	Few options downtown for what I want to buy	5/12/2021 2:21 PM
645	Parking	5/12/2021 2:17 PM
646	Supporting local small businesses	5/12/2021 2:16 PM
647	Availability and quality of online stores	5/12/2021 2:15 PM
648	price, convenience	5/12/2021 2:06 PM
649	I will always support local. There are too many banks, hair salons B2B spots downtown. restaurants are not good. For retail Whitelam books and Pampelmouse are the only spots that are good.	5/12/2021 2:03 PM
650	Desire to support local, small businesses	5/12/2021 2:02 PM
651	I try not to shop for entertainment. The big online stores are very convenient.	5/12/2021 1:53 PM
652	convenience, quick errand, support local	5/12/2021 1:51 PM
653	Selection	5/12/2021 1:45 PM
654	What I'm shopping for	5/12/2021 1:43 PM
655	Limitations in Reading Retail Offerings	5/12/2021 1:40 PM
656	goods selection and availability	5/12/2021 1:38 PM
657	If I can get to downtown Reading at a time when there is likely to be parking and less traffic I will go to downtown Reading.	5/12/2021 1:35 PM
658	Cost and convenience	5/12/2021 1:33 PM
659	Parking, higher prices	5/12/2021 1:31 PM
660	I WANT to support small/local businesses	5/12/2021 1:31 PM
661	To support local businesses	5/12/2021 1:27 PM
662	selection	5/12/2021 1:25 PM
663	Safety price options	5/12/2021 1:10 PM
664	Time and price	5/12/2021 1:08 PM
665	Shopping local, helping local economy	5/12/2021 1:05 PM
666	Price vs. desire to support a small business.	5/12/2021 1:03 PM
667	Cost and range of goods	5/12/2021 12:48 PM
668	like to get multiple errands done at once and like the smaller local stores	5/12/2021 12:45 PM
669	Convenient and safety(Covid)	5/12/2021 12:45 PM
670	Ease	5/12/2021 12:35 PM
671	A desire to support local businesses	5/12/2021 12:35 PM
672	I prefer to shop locally when I can	5/12/2021 12:34 PM
673	HAVING A REAL PERSON TO TALK TO AND ASK OPINIONS OF	5/12/2021 12:31 PM
674	I try to support our small businesses when I'm able and when it fits my needs.	5/12/2021 12:29 PM
675	If at all possible, I want to support local businesses, even if the cost is slightly higher	5/12/2021 12:22 PM
676	Variety of items available	5/12/2021 12:22 PM
677	I believe in shopping local and supporting local businesses.	5/12/2021 12:18 PM
678	If it's something available in downtown Reading, I'll buy there. I try to only shop at box stores/Amazon if there aren't other options	5/12/2021 12:16 PM
679	Combination of price and availability	5/12/2021 12:14 PM

680	Prefer to touch, see and feel when shopping. Like shopping local and supporting small businesses. Especially all of these women owned businesses (Aine's, tin bucket, Whitelam, Bunratty)!	5/12/2021 12:13 PM
681	Unique gift ideas. I miss hitching post	5/12/2021 12:09 PM
682	Price and availability and selection	5/12/2021 12:08 PM
683	Supporting local business	5/12/2021 12:07 PM
684	Price, knowing my product will be in stock/available	5/12/2021 12:06 PM
685	Totally depends on what I am shopping for. If a local Reading store doesn't have it I will choose big-box or Amazon.	5/12/2021 12:03 PM
686	Price	5/12/2021 12:02 PM
687	Not aware of retailers in Reading with online shopping	5/12/2021 11:59 AM
688	If I can buy what I need/want locally I do!	5/12/2021 11:58 AM
689	Product availability	5/12/2021 11:57 AM
690	Will I be able to find a parking spot.	5/12/2021 11:56 AM
691	Need and convenience	5/12/2021 11:54 AM
692	Product availability and price.	5/12/2021 11:53 AM
693	Product needs	5/12/2021 11:53 AM
694	Pricing and how fast I need an item	5/12/2021 11:51 AM
695	Ability to browse/see items; ability to pick up same day; support of local businesses	5/12/2021 11:47 AM
696	Product Availability	5/12/2021 11:42 AM
697	If I can find a similar product at a similar cost I will always choose to buy local. We shop frequently at Pamplemousse and Whitelam Books for this reason.	5/12/2021 11:42 AM
698	Timing of needing items	5/12/2021 11:41 AM
699	Comparable prices, ease of access, customer service	5/12/2021 11:40 AM
700	Convenience - if I nrealize I want something at 10pm I can just order it from amazin	5/12/2021 11:40 AM
701	Options	5/12/2021 11:37 AM
702	supporting local workers and owners	5/12/2021 11:35 AM
703	Merchandise~ it has to exist in a store downtown.	5/12/2021 11:30 AM
704	Like to support local	5/12/2021 11:30 AM
705	Support local biz	5/12/2021 11:30 AM
706	general preference to support local businesses	5/12/2021 11:26 AM
707	Time/convenience	5/12/2021 11:26 AM
708	Saves time, in need of a particular item...most often health or beauty products purchased online.	5/12/2021 11:21 AM
709	Support for small businesses	5/12/2021 11:20 AM
710	What is available	5/12/2021 11:17 AM

Q23 When you can't find what you're looking for in Downtown Reading, please tell us where you do your shopping or dining (including the location)?

Answered: 705   Skipped: 89

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Shopping Center Name	97.16%	685
Location (City/Town, State	88.79%	626

Q23 When you can't find what you're looking for in Downtown Reading, please tell us where you do your shopping or dining (including the location)?

restaurants Home Depot Trader Joes Dollar store Mall Assembly Row Market place
North Reading North Shore Mall hardware Woburn Mall Trader Joe s center
Wakefield Center Lynnfield Market Place Red Stone stores Winchester
Redstone Plaza Lynnfield Common online Downtown Wakefield
Woburn towns Amazon depends Marketstreet
Northshore mall Lynnfield Marketplace N
Target Andover Market Street Varies
Burlington Mall Redstone Shopping Center
Lynnfield Boston Redstone Downtown Walmart
shopping center Marketplace place Burlington Home Goods
Market st Lynn field Wakefield Market Basket shops Various
Lynnfield Market Target Market Lynnfield Market Street Walkers Brook
Stoneham Whole Foods Target Woburn Marshalls TJ Maxx area Plaza

Lynnfield Burlington MA Stoneham Peabody MA n Peabody mass
North Reading MA Lynnfield Woburn MA
North Reading Woburn Stoneham Reading Woburn MA Lynfield
Lynnfield MA Stoneham Lynnfield Lynnfield
Danvers Burlington Lynnfield,MA Woburn Melrose Wakefield
Various Wilmington N Reading Reading Andover

Q24 Fill in the blank: The thing I love the most about Reading's Downtown is _____.

Answered: 710   Skipped: 84

Q24 Fill in the blank: The thing I love the most about Reading's Downtown is _____.

Everything Dog whitelamb books Reading specialty stores variety love see local close home Whitelam local businesses cute Pamplemouse places nice shops restaurants know Proximity safe friendly owners Venetian Moon Caffe Nero town Christopher people unique Cafe Nero kids small Looks close Bunrattys quaint Supporting local businesses s welcoming love location Pamplemousse one walk Tin Bucket downtown run Whitelam Books live stores outdoor shops walk around restaurants food walkable clean Walkability business owners bookstore small town feel parking good feel retail CVS small businesses Nothing see potential atmosphere community years great lot convenience options businesses green space events Seeing friends neighbors Bunratty Nero home trees charm hometown area etc book store used much walking distance Christmas lights s close Convenient feel safe common Chocolate Truffle needs walk house family sense community

Appendix 3
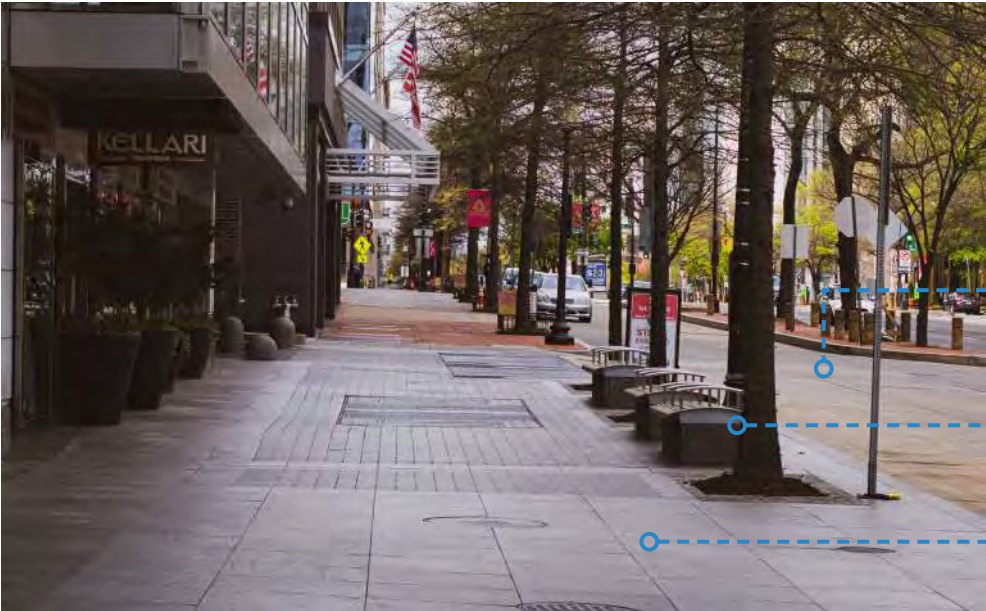Rating Scale for Physical Environment

Physical Environment

PUBLIC REALM

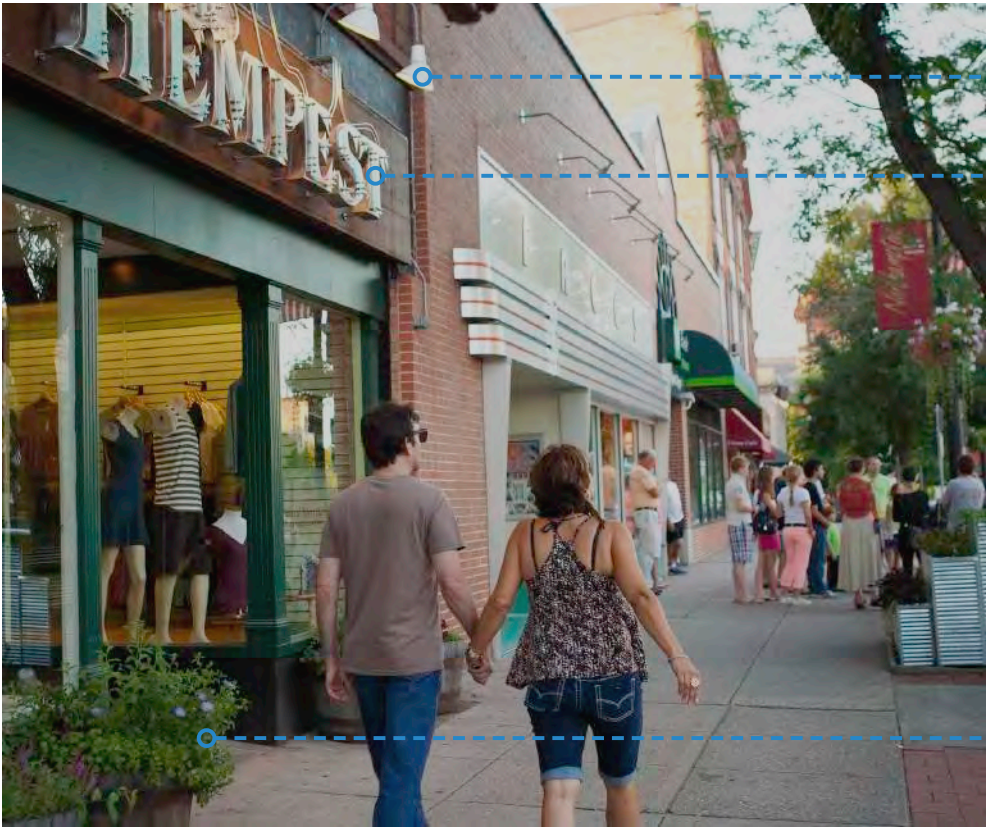Wayfinding/Signage

Street Lighting

Roadbed and Crosswalk

Street Trees and Benches

Sidewalk

Element	Guiding Principles	A	B	C	FAIL
Sidewalks	Sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate both the flow of customers and spillover retail/dining activity. In addition, sidewalks should be clean and well-maintained to ensure the safety and comfort of pedestrians.	More than 75% of sidewalks in the study area are cleaned, well-maintained and accessible to multiple users across different ages and abilities.	About 50% of sidewalks in the study area are cleaned and well-maintained.	More than 25% of sidewalks in the study area pose challenges to the pedestrian experience (including narrow sidewalks and lack of cleanliness/maintenance).	There are no sidewalks in the study area.
Street Trees and Benches	Sidewalks should facilitate a variety of activities, including resting, people-watching and socializing. Street trees and benches are key amenities that support such activities and should be made available without disrupting the flow of pedestrians.	Street trees and benches are readily available throughout the study area. They are well-designed, well-maintained, and offer shade and comfort to pedestrians.	Although street trees and benches are available across the study area, these amenities have not been cleaned or well-maintained, and require improvements.	Limited availability of street trees and benches creating uncomfortable pedestrian experience.	There are no street trees and benches in the study area.
Lighting	Street lighting improves pedestrian visibility and personal safety, as well as aids in geographic orientation.	More than 75% of the study area utilizes a range of lighting strategies to ensure safety of pedestrians and motorists, as well as highlight the identity and history of an area.	About 50% of the study area is serviced by street lighting that supports pedestrian visibility and safety.	Street lighting on the primary street in the study area does not support pedestrian visibility and safety.	There is no street lighting in the study area.
Wayfinding/Signage	A wayfinding system supports overall accessibility of a commercial district. It benefits pedestrians and bicyclists, and directs motorists to park and walk. Without clear visual cues, customers may find it difficult to park or may be less aware of local offerings.	There is a comprehensive and cohesive wayfinding system that offers geographic orientation to pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. Signage reflect the brand and identity of the area.	Wayfinding in the study area is primarily geared towards directing motorists across the study area. There is limited signage to identify key assets and destinations to pedestrians.	Limited to no signage available throughout the study area.	There is no wayfinding/signage in the study area.
Roadbed and Crosswalks	Roads should be well-maintained to ensure safety of drivers and pedestrians. Crosswalks that are unsafe or inconvenient to customers may undermine accessibility between stores and overall shopper experience.	Roads are designed to balance the needs of motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians and create a safe environment for all users.	Roads are designed primarily to move motor vehicles across the study area efficiently, with limited crosswalks for pedestrians.	Roads are hazardous to all users.	The study area is not connected by any major roads.

Physical Environment

PRIVATE REALM

- Lighting
- Signage
- Outdoor Display

- Façade
- Awning
- Window

Element	Guiding Principles	A	B	C	FAIL
Window	Storefronts that maintain a minimum of 70% transparency ensure clear lines of sight between the business and the sidewalk to enhance attractiveness of storefront, as well as improve safety for the business, customers, and pedestrians.	More than 75% of storefronts maintain windows with at least 70% transparency.	About 50% of storefront windows maintain windows with at least 70% transparency.	More than 25% of storefronts have windows with limited transparency.	All storefronts are boarded up and/or have limited transparency.
Outdoor Display/ Dining	Attractive window displays and spillover retail/restaurant activity on sidewalks or adjacent parking spaces can help contribute to overall district vibrancy.	More than 75% of storefronts feature an attractive window display and/or spillover merchandise and dining areas that alignn with the brand and identity of the district.	About 50% of storefronts maintain an attractive window display with limited spillover merchandise and/or dining areas.	More than 25% of storefronts have spillover merchandise display and outdoor dining that pose challenges to the pedestrian experience.	There is no spillover retail/restaurant activity in the district.
Signage	Signage can help customers identify the location of storefronts and businesses from a distance. Signage should also reflect the visual brand and identity of tenants to help attract new customers.	More than 75% of storefront signs reflect the unique brand identity of tenants and can be easily seen from more than 10 ft distance.	About 50% of storefronts have clear signage that reflect basic bussiness information and can easily be seen from adjacent sidewalks.	More than 25% of storefronts have signage that does not communicate names of business or types of products/services being offered.	Storefronts in the study area do not have signage.
Awning	Awnings can provide shade during warmer months, enabling comfortable outdoor dining arrangements for customers. However, they must be well-maintained and designed in coordination with other elements of the storefront.	More than 75% of properties in the study area have retractable awninngs that have been well-maintained and cleaned.	About 50% of properties in the study area have functioning awnings that have been well-maintained and cleaned.	More than 25% of properties in the study area do not have awnings and/or have awnings that are unusable or have not been cleaned and maintained.	Storefronts in the study area are not equipped with awnings.
Façade	Storefronts that use high-quality and durable building materials, as well as paint and color to differentiate from other businesses, can dramatically improve the appearance of the commercial district to potential customers.	More than 75% of properties have well-maintained façades. Limited structural enhancements are required.	Although most properties in the study area have clean and well-maintained façades, there is at least one significant property requiring structural façade improvements.	More than 25% of properties require significant building façades improvements, including power washing, painting, and structural enhancements.	All properties in the study area require significant façade improvements.
Lighting	Storefront interior lighting after business hours help enliven the corridor and boost security on the street.	More than 75% of storefronts have lighting that help illuminate sidewalks.	About 50% of storefronts have some interior lighting that help illuminate sidewalks.	More than 25% of storefronts do not have lighting.	All storefronts in the study area are shuttered and dark at night.

Appendix 4
Phase 1 Community Presentation

Reminders!

- This meeting is being recorded and broadcast live on RCTV and Zoom

- Call-In Dial by your location

    +1 646 518 9805 US (New York)

    +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

  Meeting ID: 977 8588 4388

- We are taking questions at the end of the presentation. Use the "raise hand" function or you can use *9 if you are dialing in.

- You will be muted upon entry, please remain muted. You may unmute when called upon to speak. Use *6 to mute/unmute if dialing in.

- All questions will be read and answered after the presentation

- The presentation and survey information is available on the Town Website through the Economic Development Page

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Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions

- Partnerships for Recovery

- Reading's Response

- What have we seen in Reading?

- Who have we heard from in Reading?

- Opportunities and Next Steps

- Q & A

Welcome to the Local Rapid Recovery Planning Public Forum!

Partnerships for Recovery

A Business Improvement District creates a way for property owners to pool resources together to initiate, manage and sustainably fund supplemental programs and services to generate more business activity and enhance the district to benefit everyone who lives, works or visits the district.

Reading Economic Development Efforts

Business Support

Public Art

Outdoor Dining

Collaborative Marketing

Building Partnerships

Timeline

Focus Area: Downtown Reading
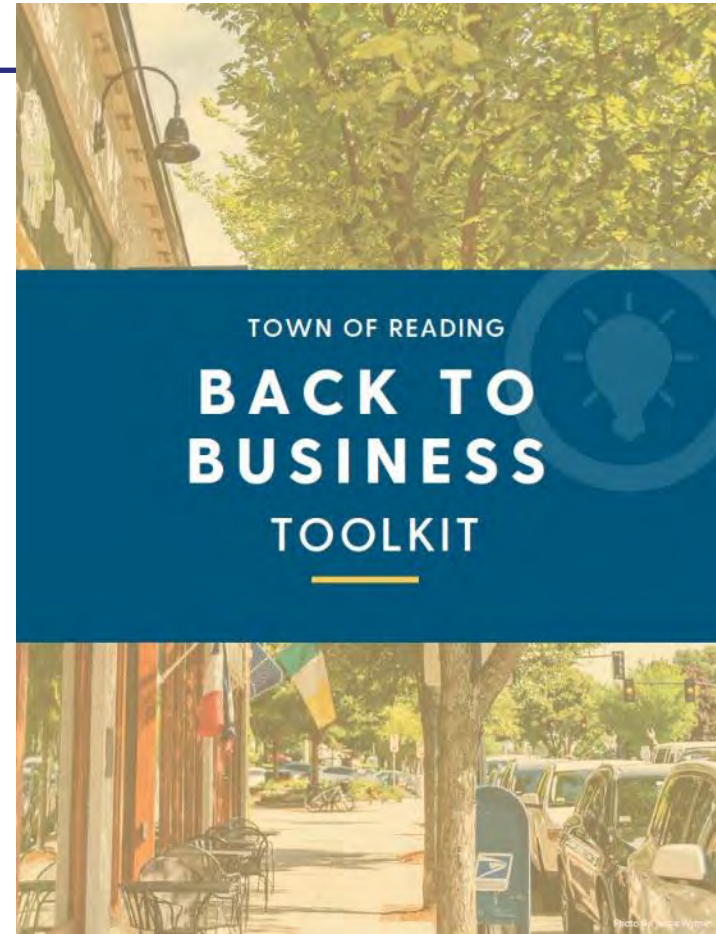
Phase 1 Diagnostic | March- May

- Activities: Baseline data collection and business survey, customer survey, DHCD webinars

- Deliverables: Data submission to DHCD and public presentation of findings

Phase 2 Recommendations | June – July

- Activities: Customer survey, stakeholder meetings, consultation with subject matter experts

- Deliverable: Draft action plan recommendations, develop templates for action, and identify resources

Phase 3 Final Plan | July - September

- Activities: Draft plan based on outreach findings

- Deliverable: Final Plan

Phase 1 – What Did Phase 1 explore?

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

CUSTOMER BASE

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

ADMIN CAPACITY

LRRP Phase I – How did we explore these questions?

Quantitative

Qualitative

Data Collection
- Consumer demographics
- Total businesses
- Total storefronts
- Vacancies
- Business Closures
- Retail Mix
- Commercial Sq. Footage
- Commercial Rents

Business Survey
- 68 Respondents
- Via email and in-person handouts
- Closed 4/16

Customer survey
- Distributed Week of 5/10
- Over 750respondents
- Closes 6/18

Stakeholder Interviews
- Town staff
- Reading-North Reading Chamber
- BID Steering Committee

Data Collection – Reading Demographics

Reading's customer base is highly educated with multiple person households

26,183   Number of residents

22%   Are under 18 years of age

9,837   Households

46%   Of households have 3+ persons

69%   Have college degree or higher education Age 25+

$126,457   Median Household Income

4.6%   Are unemployed (April 2021)

41.3   Median Age

Data Collection- Commercial Property Trends of Downtown Reading

~138	Storefronts (first floor stores)
~170,525	Ground floor retail space
~50,000	Ground floor office space
~$23/psf	Rent for ground floor office/retail space
7	Downtown business closures since March 2020
10	Business openings
4.7%	Vacancy rate for ground floor storefonts

Sources: Favermann Design, Town of Reading, CoStar

Business Survey- Business Type

27% Personal Care Services (salon, spas, laundry, auto)

15% Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

14% Health Care & Social Assistance

12% Retail Trade

12% Food Service & Accommodation

21% Arts-Entertainment-Rec, Educational Services, Real Estate Rental/Leading, Finance/Insurance, Transportation/Warehousing, Wholesale Trade, Construction

NAICS per Reading Database

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

What Do Downtown Businesses Need?

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Business Survey- COVID Business Impacts

91% of respondents were negatively impacted by COVID
22% of survey respondents identified as retail establishments

74% Experienced less foot-traffic than before COVID

64% Business surveyed operating at reduced hours
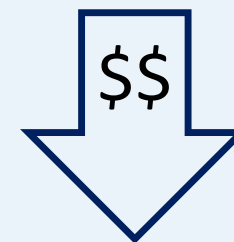
46% Experienced a revenue decline of 25% or more

LRRP Business Survey, 2021

Business Survey- Reading Business CREATIVITY AND RESILIENCE

46% of respondents established alternative methods of doing business

- Physical door-step/no-contact delivery
- Sidewalk pick-up/drop-off
- Window shopping – *Literally!*
- Creation of websites and online shopping
- Development of social media tools
- Collaborative marketing and branding efforts
- Physically distanced shopping "events"
- Investment in public art with inspirational messages on storefront windows

Downtown Retailers Collaborative

CUSTOMER BASE

What Do Downtown Reading Customers Need?

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Customer Survey- Our Customers

Downtown Reading needs something for everyone!

- Over half of survey respondents are between the ages of 35-54

- Over 50% of respondents have someone under the age of 18 living in their household

- 18% of respondents are 65+

- Customers visit downtown Reading with family and friends

LRRP Consumer/Shopper Survey, 2021

Photo Credit: Whitelam Books

Customer Survey- COVID Shopping and Dining Habits

THANK YOU FOR CONTINUING TO SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES!

Shop the Block Reading

91% Have ordered takeout/delivery from a downtown business

47% Have ordered curbside pickup/delivery from a downtown business

75% Are feeling safe when visiting Downtown (as of March 2021)

LRRP Business Survey, 2021

Customer Survey- Customer Needs

Where do you shop when you can't find what you're looking for in downtown Reading?

The walk from a back lot in Market Street Lynnfield to Wahlburgers is the same as walking from the train station to Whitelam Books – approximately .25 miles or a 4-5 minute walk
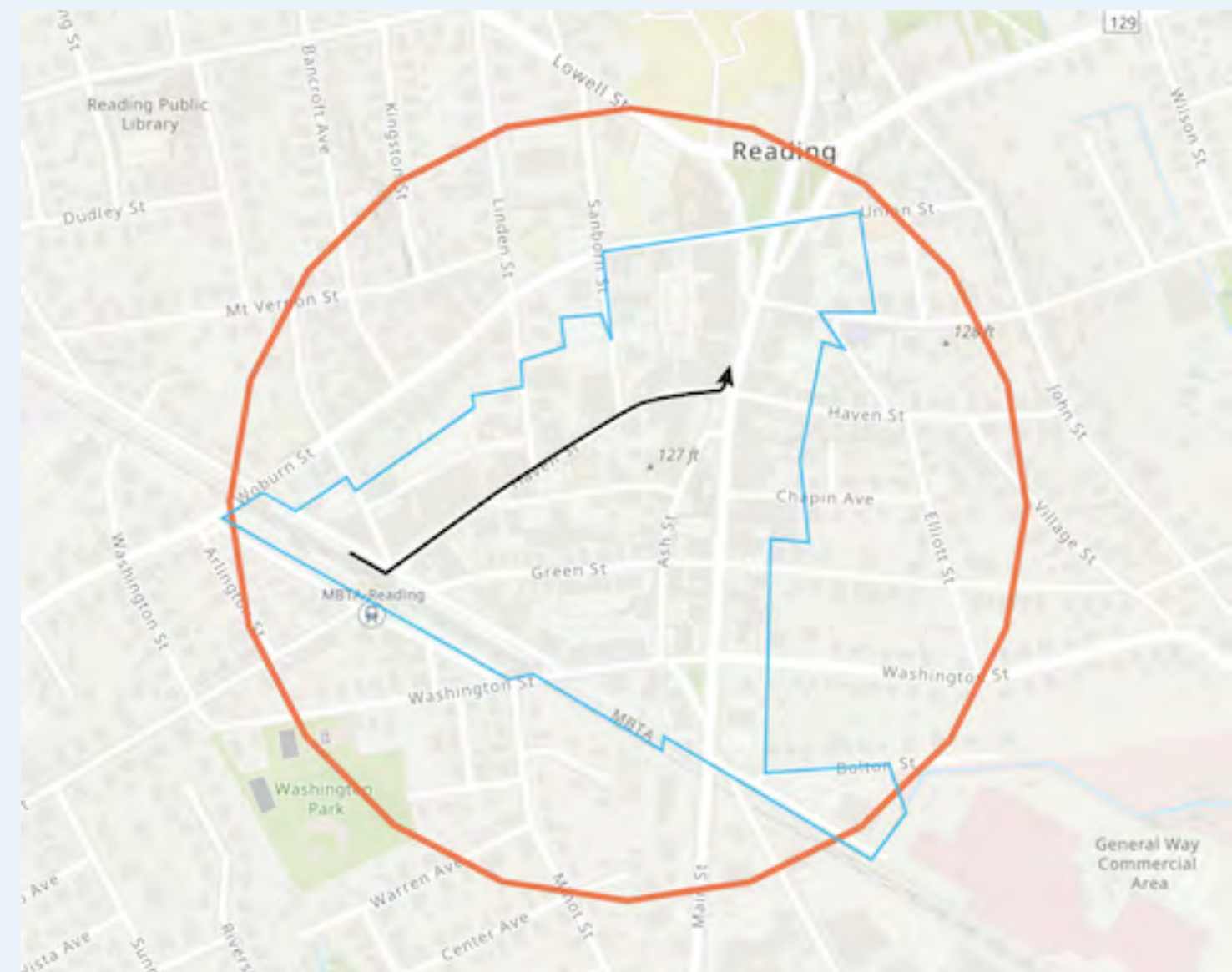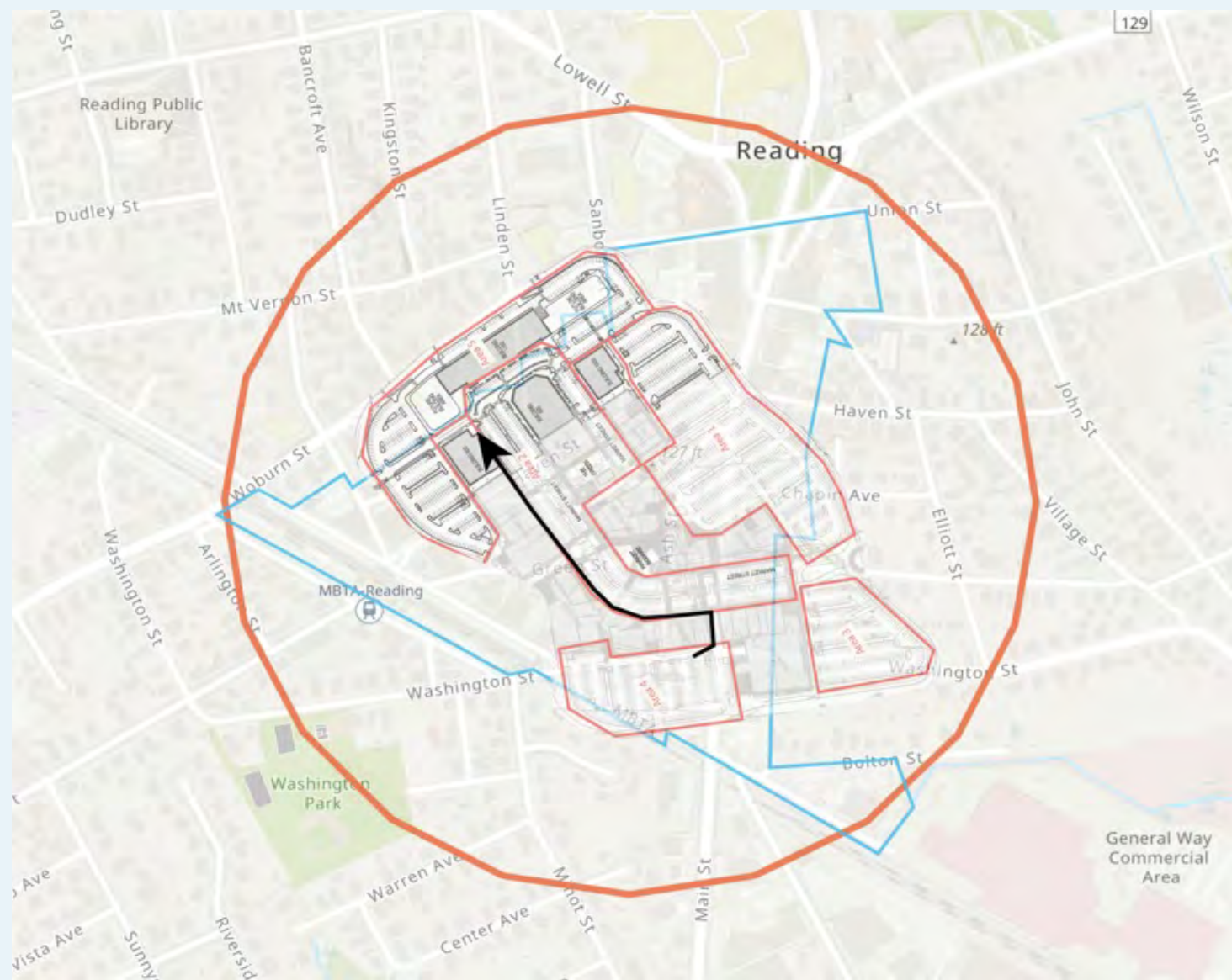
Customer Survey- Customer Needs

Downtown Reading customers want more!

45% — Visit Reading for one specific business and then leave

36% — No downtown destination business, anchor, or things "to-do"

75%+ — Too few shops and restaurants of interest or of quality/selection of merchandise

LRRP Business Survey, 2021

What can we do to help businesses recover and welcome people to downtown Reading?

Business Priorities and Recommendations

62% of business respondents expressed interest in some form of technical or financial assistance

We get there by:

- Business support to generate Revenue & Sales
- Improving Tenant Mix through Marketing and Branding
- Public Improvements & Access

Customer Priorities and Recommendations

Over 50% customers want public art, entertainment, outdoor dining and events

We get there by:

- Cultural Placemaking
- Business Support and Recruitment to generate Revenue & Sales
- Public Space Improvements and Access

Summary of Priorities and Recommendations

Phase 2 Recommendations | June – July

Phase 3 Final Plan | July - September

PUBLIC REALM

PRIVATE REALM

REVENUES & SALES
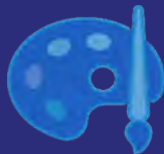
CULTURAL/ ARTS

TENANT MIX

ADMIN CAPACITY

Q & A

- Use the chat function for questions

- To ask questions use the "raise hand" function or you can use *9 if you are dialing in.

- You may unmute when called upon to speak. Use *6 to mute/unmute if dialing in.

- All questions will be read before answering

- Reminder: The presentation and survey information is available on the Town Website through the Economic Development Page

Thank You!

For more information:
www.readingma.gov/public-services/economic-development

Contact: Erin Schaeffer, Economic Development Director

eschaeffer@ci.reading.ma.us

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RAPID RECOVERY PLANS

Appendix 5

SME Reports/Deliverables

a. Patronicity/Bench Consulting "Haven on High"

"HAVEN ON HIGH IN READING"

Reading, Massachusetts – Prepared for LRRP Program

benchconsulting
Powered by Patronicity

DIAGNOSTIC

Reading's Downtown business community has seen decreased sales and foot traffic over the past few years, starting just before the pandemic. Along with that, area residents expressed they'd like to see more energy in the downtown to entice them there more often; events, arts and culture, outdoor dining and other things to do aside from quick pop in errands at one store. There are plans underway to completely redesign the streetscape and incorporating principals of good placemaking in addition to mobility could ensure this project sets the Downtown up for long term success.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Haven on High is a plan to develop a central pocket park in Downtown Reading that can become a passive place for residents to sit and enjoy the day in Downtown Reading while also serve as a plug and play event space for area organizations to activate and draw more people and in turn more energy into Downtown. The basis for the proposal is a small pocket park either adjacent to the train station or at the intersection of Haven and High Streets. From there, small "sticking points" parklets, patio seating, public art, benches etc will be distributed strategically up the length of Haven Street to draw energy between the train station and the Downtown Core.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Having a tangible project with a clear goal can serve as the catalyst to get more people involved in improving the Downtown and specifically Haven and High Street as the town works to form a BID for the area. Ensure stakeholders like area businesses and residents are engaged from the earliest phase of this planning process. Loop in area workers to find out what they'd want to see from a project like this and continue to engage those groups through the duration. Partner with area businesses, organizations and more who may be able to sign up to activate this space through meeting and events of their own.

RESOURCES

- Patronicity's website of 100's of sortable placemaking projects for inspiration.
- LRRP Project Sheets for ideas and inspiration
- ARPA funding, NEFA Grants, Art Place America, Mass Development Placemaking grants.
- Area property owners and small businesses to sponsor equipment and event infrastructure through local crowdfunding campaigns.

PROJECT INSPIRATION

Eagle Street Initiative, North Adams, MA

North Adams was seeking to transition pedestrian traffic from Main Street down their historic Eagle Street. Uniform storefront signage, small public art installations and gateway arches announcing your entrance to the street. The key though, was a central gathering space that was created through the construction of a parklet. The parklet serves as a host for events but also a place to eat lunch, enjoy coffee and spend a day in town working.

BUDGET: $35,000 for all components

IMPLEMENTATION: 8-12 weeks

TIMELINE: year round w/ adaptations for winter

MATERIALS: Signage, public art call, custom parklet built locally, landscaping, gravel, shade sails

Batesville Main Street, Indiana

Batesville Main Street was looking to increase pedestrian traffic and energy on the Main Street. Two previous seating experiments creating parklets on the street helped created a space for people to sit, enjoy the day, meet with neighbors and made the Main Street a destination for more than just a quick pop up errand. This project now took those experiments and created permanent spaces built into a new streetscape redesign, something we'd recommend looking into in Reading.

BUDGET: $65,000 for all components

IMPLEMENTATION: 3-6 weeks

TIMELINE: year round programming and passive use

MATERIALS: decking, seating, planter boxes, landscaping, tables, chairs, benches

"HAVEN ON HIGH IN READING"

Reading, Massachusetts

benchconsulting
Powered by Patronicity

PROCESS

Location
Our proposal would be to look to activate areas adjacent to the train station and along Haven Street to connect the train station to Main Street through a series of spatial "breadcrumbs." A main hub would be located adjacent to the train station at Haven and High while smaller seating areas could be spread throughout the Haven corridor.

Identify Inspiration
We've provided two sample projects that encapsulate components of our recommendations for implementation here. Please feel free to explore other inspiration projects as you seek to implement programming here.

Plan & Implement
A key piece of the success of this or any placemaking project is early stakeholder engagement. Not just approval but actively seek out their input in the planning of this project. Identify groups who could host events in the space later on and seek out their input on what they'd like to see in these spacees.

Feedback
This piece is often overlooked but one of the single most important things you can do to ensure success. Get ahead of any complaints with a constructive outlet where stakeholders can leave positive or negative but constructive feedback through in person surveying at events and an online forum.

Iterate
What worked? What didn't work? Adapt your project based upon user feedback. Did residents benefit? Did area businesses benefit. How could things be improved and could another location be more appropriate for this intervention. .

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCATIONS

The Plaza Adjacent to the MBTA station: We'd recommend starting at the Reading train station to draw visitors the length of Haven Street. Create a space for respite with landscaping, tables, chairs, wifi, a place to do work, meet with friends, enjoy a coffee or a book in the heart of Reading.

Suggested Materials:
tables, chairs, umbrellas, benches, lighting, plantings, Small, wooden storage container for equipment storage and place to hold activities for loan to community.

Small Plazas and Bumpouts along Haven
Utilize existing plazas and excess roadway (not parking spaces) to create new plaza spaces within the Haven corridor. Create a mix of shaded and sunny spaces and, if possible, install wifi to encourage these as work space.

Suggested Materials:
tables, chairs, umbrellas, planters and temporary landscaping, gravel.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Number of different groups using the space for events
- Average users per day
- Change in sales at area businesses during events
- Time spent in Downtown

User Sentiment:
- How do users feel about Downtown? Is it a place for a single errand or to spend time?
- Do visitors make more trips Downtown?
- Do visitors consider Downtown more of a destination as opposed to a single errand?
- Do visitors patron more than 1 business in a trip now?
- Do visitors spend more time in the Downtown?

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Early Engagement

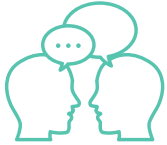Bring together a team of engaged business owners, property owners, creatives and residents from the area early in this planning process so they can feel as much of the planning process as possible and are more likely to stay engaged throughout this first iteration and hopefully beyond. Find your one "leader" who will drive the project forward and have an easy way to engage feedback from others involved in planning through in person and online methods.

Capacity

Build early partnerships with area organizations, stores, restaurants, fitness groups, school groups, non-profits, affinity groups etc and let them take some of the burden of event planning (which can be some of the most cumbersome of this whole project) off your plate. Develop an easy to use sign up process for groups interested in activating spaces.

Feedback

Have an online survey always open combined with in person surveys of attendees to events and users of the space as well as direct outreach to abutting residents and businesses.

Flexibility

Any equipment purchased for this project should be viewed as portable, meaning it can be reused in a different space in town should this space not become widely adopted and can be packed up and reused to activate another public space throughout the rest of town. The benefit of this sort of low cost, tactical and iterative project is that you can maintain these resources to test in other spaces before making expensive municipal investments and to help inform those investments.

Appendix 5

SME Reports/Deliverables

b. Nelson Nygaard "Safe Connections in Downtown"

Legend

⬤ Street Mural

■ Painted pedestrian improvement

Planters

Planter

BRANDE COURT

LINDEN STREET
(ONE WAY)

TREAD
#8

KARATE

READING
FOOT & ANKLE
SPECIALISTS PC.

POA DENTAL
GROUP

#68—76

#78—88

PARKING SPACES:
PROPOSED- 5
EXISTING- 7

READING MASONIC
TEMPLE

#110

signed as outdoor
ning area

Paint

CW

CW

PARKING SPACES:
PROPOSED- 0
EXISTING- 2

#75—85

PARKING SPACES:
PROPOSED- 12
EXISTING- 12

WITH

THE SALON
ON HAVEN
#51

BOSTON CITY
DJ'S
#36

Street mural

VENTURING
#34

GOULD STREET

PARKING SPACES:
PROPOSED- 6
EXISTING -9

(ONE WAY)

THE ARC OF EAST MIDDLESEX
#20

#16—18

EAST MIDDLESEX
INDUSTRIES
#24

Legend

Street Mural

Painted pedestrian improvement

Attachment B: Possible Pedestrian and Safety Improvements at High St/Vine St
Reading, MA

Remove centerline

Extend centerline

Remove parking spaces. T-up intersection. Create pedestrian space

Vine St

High St

DRAFT - NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

nearmap
current · clear · change

Appendix 5

SME Reports/Deliverables

c. Mondofora (Cepheid Solutions) "Small Business Technical Assistance" and "Shared-Marketing-Advertising"

PROJECT: "Small Biz Technical Assistance" for Downtown Reading and "Shared Marketing-Advertising" for Downtown Reading

COMMUNITY: Reading, MA - Downtown Smart Growth District

PLAN FACILITATOR: Favermann Design

SME: Mondofora (Cepheid Solutions Inc.)

Project Overview: Town leadership, supported by the LRRP Advisory Group, identified helping Downtown Reading businesses develop and/or improve their online presence and, consequently, improve the opportunities for local sales is a goal for the community. A critical component in the achievement of this objective is technical assistance in enabling an online capability for the community.

Additional factors: The pandemic, combined with changing consumer behavior and competitive business operational efficiencies, have had negative consequences for many small businesses. The net impact, if unaddressed, could be a potential threat to local economies. We recognize that recent advances in technology and its utilization can not only help to address these short-term challenges, but can also help communities to survive and thrive in a future in which greater reliance on and incorporation of digital technologies will be endemic. It is in our interest to leverage the capabilities of a "digital downtown", to recover from the impacts of the pandemic and to prepare for an increasingly competitive future economy in which "online" will be table stakes for all competitive businesses and communities.

Solution Guidelines: As with any project, there are some desired design features, specifications, and limitations that are identified as being important to any proposed solutions. Among these are:

- Leverage internet technologies to support local businesses
- Enable local search of community businesses
- Allow online transactions
- Increase community engagement
- Facilitate wayfinding in the community
- Low-moderate cost to create
- Low-moderate cost to maintain
- Low-moderate manpower requirements
- Minimize ownership complexities
- Facilitate both short-term adoption and long-term engagement

Approach: We recognize that building a "digital economy" is a process. And every community has to start where they are and build up to a complex, integrated system of tools and solutions. Our approach for the Town of Reading is to first evaluate the current level of business internet interest and utilization – by both businesses and residents – and to separate the recommendations into two primary time horizons: the long-term, big-picture goals, representing solutions which the community would like to have in place, and the short-term, initial projects that create awareness and movement towards those longer term objectives.

Here, we will focus on the short-term projects which can get the community started on the path towards a long-term digital business model. The long-term, big-picture objectives are best identifiable via a "Master Plan" like process. Initiating that process is our first recommendation. However, we feel that the Digital Master Planning process will benefit from the initiation of a few foundational projects which will create awareness, engagement, and initial momentum necessary to encourage participation and investment in long-term results.

Recommended Solutions: We are proposing four distinct but mutually beneficial projects, each of which addresses a specific aspect of the goals expressed by community representatives. Each project can be developed and run independently, but each will also benefit from their mutually reinforcing nature. The four projects include:

> **Business Online Presence –** The starting point for most businesses – retail and service – to become "internet ready" is the creation of a company website. Whereas once upon a time a company website just entailed converting the company brochure into an HTML document with a company-specific URL, most business websites should allow a business to be searched for online (SEO), provide clients a way to contact them (email), allow online transactions (product purchase or appointment making), create customer relationship (CRM), and possibly enable direct interaction (chat).

> Today, attractive, high-function websites are reasonably quick and easy to create. Leveraging the power of content-management-systems (CMS), the broad availability of capable website developers, and an extensive catalog of functional plugins, there are very few reasons for any business to not have an online presence.
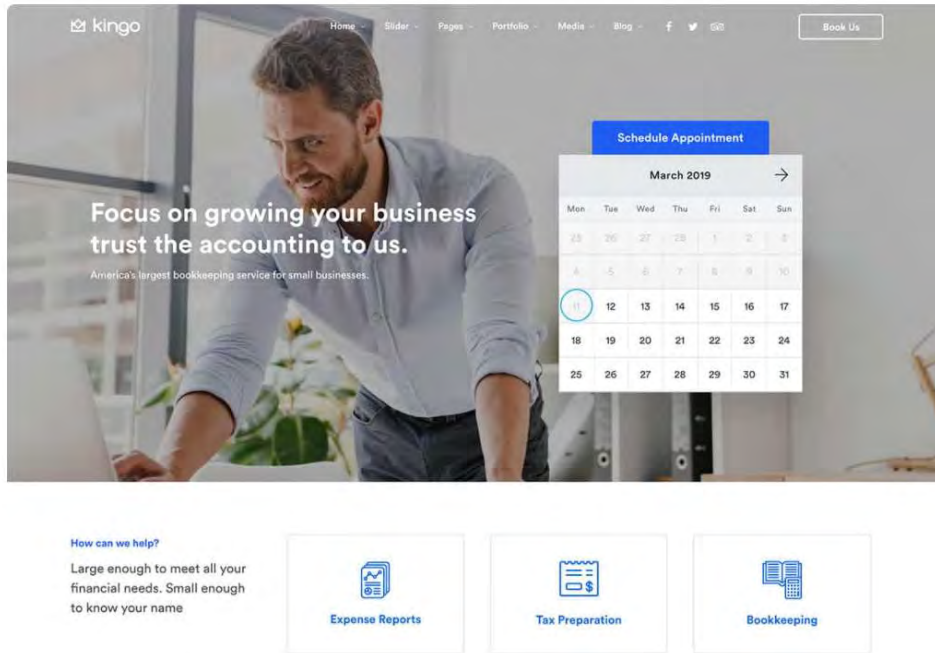
Figure 1: Example template-based website development

Customization, quality, and cost-containment are all possible using defined scope of service, a CMS-enabled template, and a finite set of function-enhancing add-ons. We recommend using WordPress-based templates, as they are inexpensive, have the largest installed base of business usage, a large catalog of plugins, and experienced developers are plentiful and reasonably priced.

Examples of WordPress plugins:

Figure 2: Example of a WordPress appointment plugin
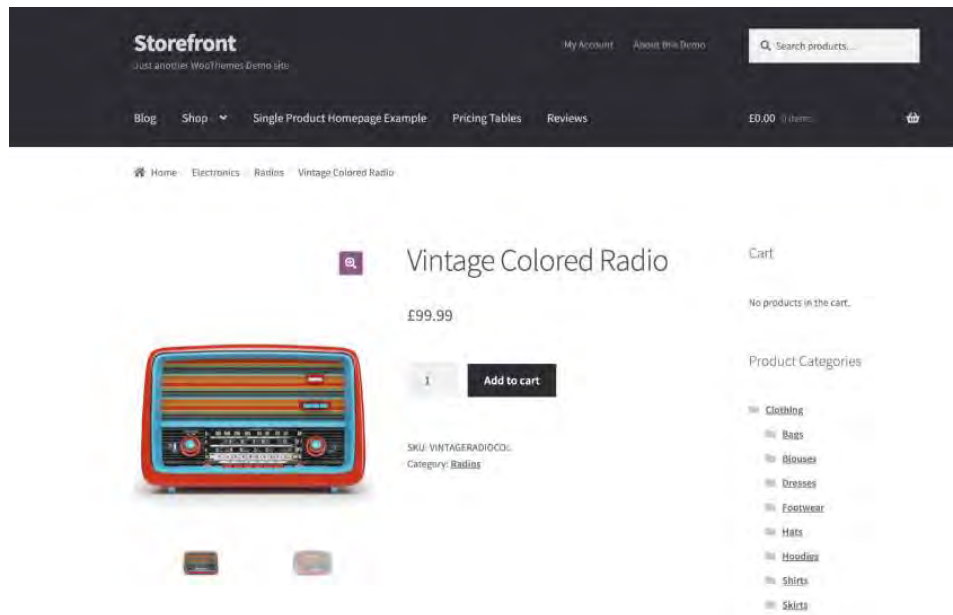
Figure 3: Example of an eCommerce plugin
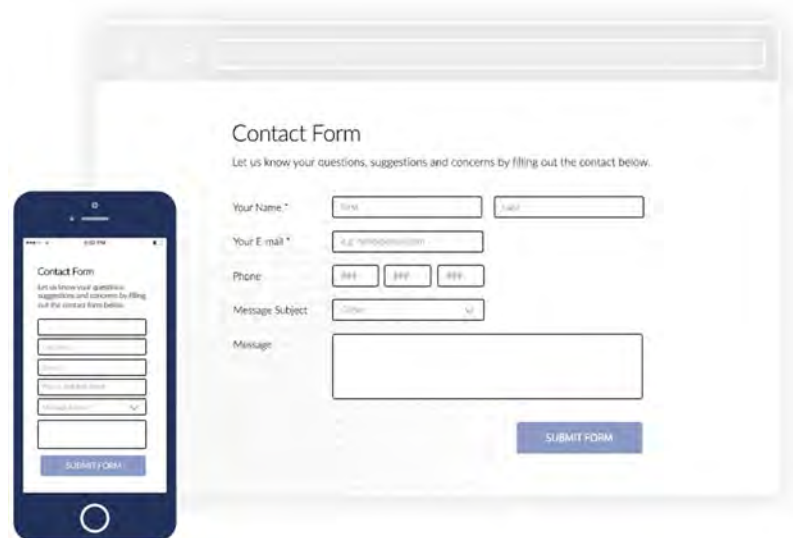
Figure 4: Example of a Forms plugin (contact form, survey, registration, etc)

These plugins add functionality easily and inexpensively, and are a great way to create engagement with customers. But perhaps most importantly, they can enable integration with other websites and services, such as marketplaces, blogs, news-sites, etc. which can provide the foundation for future enhancements and a path towards the Master Plan defined long-term digital goals.

Tasks and Estimated Timeline:

Task	Cost (est)	Time (est)
Businesses selection	$0	2 weeks
Create catalog of themes & plugins	$0	.5 days
Present & select design recommendations	$0	1 day
Page design & planning consultation	$300/business	.5 days/business
Build website	$600/business	1 day/business
Review website design, develop edit list	$300/business	.5 days/business
Organize article archive	$300	.5 days/business
Website maintenance, admin & training	$25	1 - 3 hrs/weekly
Total (range)	$1500/business	2 wks + 1wk/bus
Total (ongoing)	$100/mo	5 -15 hrs/weekly

Local-Search enabled Multi-Vendor Marketplace – Perhaps the greatest threat to local retail is the change in consumer behavior, becoming more reliant on online shopping. Ecommerce sales, as a percentage of total retail, grew dramatically as a result of the pandemic. Consequently, local retailers without an online sales channel lost sales. Even those with an online store are at a disadvantage as they won't typically have the product selection of large sophisticated ecommerce marketplaces.

The convenience and product selection provided by the giant e-commerce websites makes it easy for shoppers to opt for online shopping as the first resort when looking for specific products. The net result is that products are often purchased and shipped from 300 miles away, even when available in a local store. We can level the playing field by creating a local search enabled marketplace which combines all the collective product selection of the local brick & mortar retail businesses, and the ease and convenience of shopping online.

Our proposed project is to provide a local-search enabled multi-vendor marketplace of the community's vendors. This approach would create an online presence that can compete with the large e-tailers by offering broad product selection and the convenience of online shopping, while enabling online sales directly with local retailers. An advantage of this approach is that transaction services are provided by the platform but processing is directly between shopper and vendor.

The marketplace can be built as a part of a large local-search enabled platform, as a Reading-only marketplace, or as a combination of the two. By leveraging already existing technologies and platforms, the cost – in dollars, manpower, and administration – are reduced to the customization costs of geographic market segmentation and, if desired, establishing a URL-redirect capable sub-domain on the marketplace server.

As mentioned in the Business Presence recommendation, the individual websites can be integrated with the marketplace solution, to allow customers to either "shop

the store" or to "search the community" for the products they are looking for. And similarly, the marketplace can be linked to the existing community "Shop The Readings" business directory to leverage augment the existing business capabilities. To be effective, this marketplace would need to on-board a minimum number of retailers, upload their inventory, train them in the management and administration of their e-store, and discuss strategies to leverage their new online sales capability. Additionally, a local marketplace would benefit greatly from a coordinated outreach and engagement messaging project.

Tasks and Estimated Timeline:

Task	Cost (est)	Time (est)
Create Geographic Subdomain & URL	$1000 (opt.)	1 week
Outreach to Retailers	$3000 - $10,000	3 weeks
Onboard Retailers & Inventory	$200/store	4 -10/day
or Self-Onboarding (free tools & tutorials)	$0/store	~3 hrs/store
Training (Webinar, group trg, - 100 people)	$1000/webinar	1/day
or Training (in-person, store trg – 10 ppl)	$500/store	2/day
or Self-Training (free tools & tutorials)	$0/store	1 - 10 hrs/store
Strategic Application session	$5000	1/day
or ongoing Newsletter & Video	$0	ongoing
Total (to launch)	$8000 - $25,000	6 - 12 weeks

Here are a few screenshots of what a local-search enabled marketplace could look and act like:
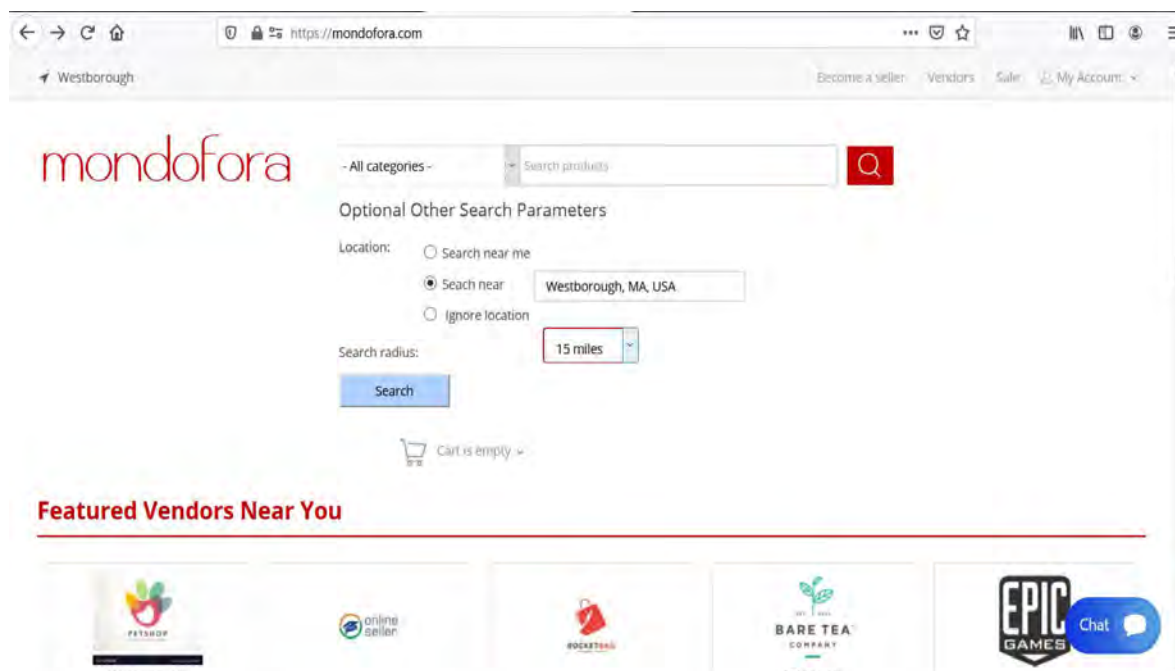
Figure 5: Homepage, where the shopper identifies his location and radius of search

Figure 6: Search Results page, showing Product, Vendor, Price, and Location

Figure 7: Fulfillment Selection page, showing Vendor-specific fulfillment options
(this can include local pickup and courier-delivery options that non-local cannot)

Education and Certification program – The world is changing quickly. To implement a "digital downtown" community that can fully leverage the on-going changes in technology, the community would benefit from an education, or community enrichment, program.

A managed program could offer a structure for different levels of proficiency. The courses could be offered either via internally developed content or through external content which has been reviewed & approved by an appropriate Reading community business organization, Chamber, and/or Town Management. To provide motivation, each level could come with a "digital competence certification". Proposed certification levels could include: Internet Practitioner, Internet Manager, and Internet Master – with each level targeted to specific audiences, individuals, businesses, and consultants/SME's/educators, respectively.

This could be split into two distinct projects, either or both of which could be performed internally, or by a 3rd party entity. The two components are: (1) design the appropriate course subject matter syllabus, and (2) manage the delivery and certification process. The creation or identification of already created materials could be performed by either of these two sub-projects.

Tasks and Estimated Timeline:

Task	Cost (est)	Time (est)
Stakeholder interviews	$250	1 week
Design syllabi	$125	1 week
Develop Trainings (3 Webinar presentations)	$2000	3 weeks
Conduct 3 sessions (recorded for reuse)	$600	ongoing
Identify Additional sources of content	$250	3 weeks
Evaluation/certification	TBD	ongoing
Messaging to the community	$0	1 hr/week
Total	$3,225	5 wks

Coordinated Communications Program – This recommendation is for the establishment of an intentionally designed organization (people and activities) which will, collectively, create and promote messaging to create awareness of the Reading digital downtown programs (Business Websites, Marketplace, events, goals, etc) and encourage enthusiasm and participation in both the near-term activities and the long-term goals of digitally enabling the Reading economy.

This is intended to be a community-wide project, with the goal of creating community awareness and engagement. Content creation is probably already occurring within the community, in the form of business newsletters, article writing, blogs, etc. What we are proposing is the coordination of these activities to create a more powerful messaging effect. So the emphasis is on the

coordination, with content creation efforts added to shore up missing components.

The key role is that of the central organizer, and we see this as a largely informal and volunteer-driven organization, comprised of members of the community devoted to a robust local business community.

The first step in this process is recognizing that there are multiple constituencies in the community – businesses, residents, municipal government, community organizations, the media (traditional media and social media), and that they each have their own agenda, mindset, and messages. The second step is establishing the resources and processes to get these different constituencies to collaborate and message their respective audiences in a coordinated and complementary manner. The strength of this project is not in creating a single powerful marketing group, but in leveraging the combined strength of many voices to create a unified and effective communication eco-system.

Tasks and Estimated Timeline:

Task	Cost (est)	Time (est)
Initial planning session	$200	1 week
Identify grp reps and coordinator (volunteer?)	$0	3 weeks
Initial Training	$500	1 day
Ongoing Training	$200 -$500/month	4 hrs/month
Consolidate Editorial Calendars	$0	2 days
Content Development	$0 - $1000/month	4 – 16 hrs/mo
Operate Program	$0 - $1000/month	4 hrs/month
Planning & Coordination	$0	1 – 3 hrs/weekly
Program Reporting	$0	1 hr/week
Total (to launch)	$900	3 wks
Total (ongoing)	$200 - $2500/mo	ongoing

Adjacencies: It is tempting to think of these kinds of projects in isolation. However, because of their intended community transformation purpose, they are likely to both benefit and complicate other aspects of town operations, including other LRRP projects under consideration. As an example, online sales and community engagement will impact physical aspects of the community – such as parking, traffic flow, signage, etc.

It would be worthwhile considering how the community could leverage their benefits. Some of the changes to be considered should include: modifications for Curbside Pickup (Parking area layout, signage, traffic flow, etc), Internal Layout (Online Purchase pickup area, floor plan, wayfinding, etc), Staff Training (new business models, customer service, online chat, marketplace administration and inventory uploading, etc.), and considerations for community space like roadways, sidewalks, public parking, landscaping, etc. These specific items are beyond the scope of our analysis, but should be considered as part of an ongoing process of development and modernization.

Appendix 6

Placemaking Masterplan RFQ/RFP Notes

This is a call for qualified candidates to submit an application (including resume, statement of interest and images of past work) for consideration by a selection panel. The RFQ outlines the project location, budget, scope, theme, timeline, and other specifics relevant to the project, and offers applicants instructions for submitting. A selection committee made up of key stakeholders is usually established to review submissions and narrow the pool of applicants to a smaller number of finalists who are then contracted to produce proposals. Finalists are given adequate time to develop proposals and then submit them for final review, often in an interview setting. An RFQ can be widely distributed or sent to only a select number of artists, depending on restrictions that may be imposed by the funding source, the budget and the administrative time available for the project. "Invitational RFQs" are RFQs that are sent to a pre-selected, qualified pool of artists, and not broadcast to all artists. (Source: MAPC Public Art Tool Kit)

** Request for Proposals (RFP)
This is a call for artists to submit a full project proposal for a specific project. The project is outlined and general direction and client desires are included. There are two ways to conduct an RFP process: ask all applicants to include their proposal in the application materials; or select finalists based on the application process and then pay each finalists to develop proposals. An RFP might be issued in a limited invitational call. Proposals are usually requested from finalists after the selection panel has met for the first time. This approach can work out well if you have a specific project in mind and access to a small number of competent artists that you believe are qualified for the job. (Source: MAPC Public Art Tool Kit)

Appendix 7

Call for Artist Process – Interactive Storefronts

Interactive Storefronts: Engage Residents Through Artistic Installations in Storefronts
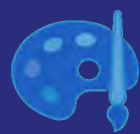
CULTURAL/
ARTS

Provided by SME Consultant

Civic Space Collaborative

Location

Creative Commons storefronts at 554 Main St, Worcester, MA

Origin	During the Downtown Worcester Placemaking Plan (2020), Interactive Storefronts was created by Claudia Paraschiv, Adrianne Schaeffer-Borego, and Michelle Moon (Civic Space Collaborative), with Evelyn Darling and Andrew McShane (Worcester BID) and Hank Van Hellio (Worcester PopUp at the JMAC), and Courtney Truex (Menkiti Group).
Budget	Low Budget ($4,800): Full installation, including $900 artist stipend and $300 material budget for each artist/storefront
Timeframe	Short Term (6-9 months)
Risk	Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Transformation of empty storefronts; Increased foot traffic; Ongoing implementation of the storefront program
Partners & Resources	Funding by Downtown Worcester BID and the storefront space's owner, the Menkiti Group, with instrumental support from Hank Van Hellion of Worcester PopUp at the JMAC. The Downtown Worcester BID oversaw the installation days and coordinated directly with the artists.
Diagnostic	Interactive Storefronts were a direct response to the shifting COVID-19 landscape, where social distancing was a key factor to maintain public health, yet engaging the community in public processes remained an important goal.

Interactive Storefronts operated simultaneously with an online survey and the development of a Downtown Placemaking Plan. Interactive Storefronts enabled civic art for public engagement in a creative and safe manner according to current COVID-19 best practices for public safety. Staggered installation times and viewing art through a storefront was a COVID-friendly activity. The use of photography, social media, and QR codes were engaged. The project helped bring art to a diminished Downtown, support a local artist community, and engage residents in a planning process while maintaining public health.

Action Item

Interactive Storefronts enlisted local artists to engage residents in feedback for the Downtown Worcester Placemaking Plan and enliven downtown storefronts in anticipation of the Creative Commons at 554 Main Street. Residents and Downtown visitors were able to view the public process of the placemaking and beautification survey unfold in-person. Over several months the Interactive Storefronts traced the survey progress from survey questions, to community answers, and finally to proposed public space placemaking interventions.
The goals of the project included:
- Engaging residents to enjoy public art in Downtown Worcester.
- Encouraging residents to provide input toward the Downtown Worcester Placemaking Plan in a real physical space, and to interact with the installations through photography and social media.
- Motivating residents to access the full placemaking survey via QR codes.
- Supporting the local artist community, especially emerging artists, while keeping opportunities for engagement alive during COVID-19.
- Prototype Interactive Storefront Art for future iterations.
- Creating public art while maintaining safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action Item (Continued)

The storefronts featured temporary installations from August to December 2020 with a rotation of three phased installations:

Phase 1: Placemaking survey engagement to prompt people to take the online survey (with a QR code) and respond to a question on site through safe interaction.

Phase 2: Survey results to communicate primary survey results to the public.

Phase 3: Placemaking proposals to illustrate primary placemaking interventions coming to Downtown Worcester.

Artists creatively brought empty storefronts to life and engaged residents to participate in a placemaking survey with such novel artistic strategies as creating a "mirror" to show who Downtown Worcester is and encouraging viewers to take a photo for themselves and post on social media.

Process

Planning

In Worcester, the Interactive Storefronts served multiple purposes: engaging the community to participate in the Downtown Worcester Placemaking Plan, activating empty storefronts, supporting the local artists community, and keeping public health as a priority during Covid-19. The Interactive Storefront Committee emerged from these desired outcomes. Our Interactive Storefront Committee met weekly for several weeks and communicated by email to get from concept to implementation efficiently.

It is important to engage the community around a common issue: Identify a local policy, public realm / placemaking, or community /environmental issue that would benefit from creative community engagement. For Worcester Interactive Storefronts, the project engaged residents to participate in a survey for the Downtown Worcester Placemaking Plan.

Interactive Storefront Installation Phase 1 (Survey Questions) by Joshua Croke

Interactive Storefront Installation Phase 2 (Survey Answers) by Joshua Croke

Process (Continued)

Create an Interactive Storefront Committee:
Identify one to three local groups to help shepherd the project. In Worcester, the collaborative efforts between Civic Space Collaborative, the Downtown BID, the building owner, and local Worcester PopUp covered all the necessary needs for a successful project. Local groups should have expertise, connections, and missions around local placemaking, creative endeavors, community building, or particular issues as they relate to the policy issue to be addressed. For instance, if the goal is to inform residents about sea level rise, then a local nonprofit focused coastal clean-up may be a good partner.

Identify a Project Lead, clarify roles for the Committee members, and create a project implementation timeline, and clear budget.
The Project Lead is responsible for overseeing the Call for Art, shepherding the selection process, and aiding the implementation. The Lead can be a member from the Committee, or a hired local with an interest in civic and/or artistic engagement and can themselves be an artist. Civic Space Collaborative led the initial process including the Call for Art, and up until the artist selection, and then wrote the artist prompts for Phases 2 and 3 based on survey responses and selected projects. For implementation, the local Worcester team (Downtown BID and Worcester PopUp) took over to support on the project on the ground. This was a successful transition of leadership that strengthened the relationship between local institutions and individual artists and built local capacity to create similar projects in the future.

Identify location(s): Identify visible and accessible empty or underused storefronts for the art-work. Note that underused means that, while the space may have a tenant, the tenant might not have the ability or inclination to outfit their public facing storefront and may benefit from the artistic installation. In Worcester, the Interactive Storefronts served the plans of the building owner to create an artistic hub in the future, Creative Commons, as well as the goals of the rest of the Committee. Ideally, finding shared goals is important, but equally effective is using a storefront activation to serve multiple discrete goals.

Build and support the local artist community:
One of the goals of the project is to help build up the local artist community. To create a more supportive and inclusive process, the Call should clearly favor local artists, and it should be accessible to artists at different levels of their career, especially beginning, and of varying degrees of proficiency in English, technology, or other barriers to applying. The Committee Members should be comfortable acting as support to the artists. In Worcester, four artists participated over the course of seven months as they activated the storefronts andxs were involved in the civic process of the Downtown Worcester Placemaking Plan, the Covid-19 response of bringing art Downtown, and building community with each other.

Artist: John Vo, Phase 3 (Public Space Interventions)

Artist: Pamela Stolz, Phase 1 (Survey Questions)

Process (Continued)

Call for Art + Artist Selection

Issue a Call for Storefront Art: Gather all the partners and create a mutually beneficial plan outlined through a "Call for Storefront Art." Choose an agreed upon digital space such as Google Drive or email to collect the information. The Project Lead should keep all discussions, drafts, and ideas in one organized space. Translate the Call into different languages to reach immigrant communities. Determine a feasible schedule that keeps momentum but is do-able for artists and the Storefront Art Committee. Distribute important technical information to aid artists in their application regarding any restriction on materials or media (for example: specify only non-toxic, sustainable, recyclable materials), whether the installation would be on the exterior of the storefront (as a painted mural) or on the interior (as either a painted mural or a multi-media installation), availability of electricity, and dimensions of the storefront window and space for the installation.

Support artistic freedom in public art: Art is meant to hold up a mirror to society, to lead the viewers to question assumptions, and to provoke. Too often, art that is curated by a committee becomes a watered-down version of itself. Make a commitment to each other and to artists that they have artistic freedom and will be judged on excellence of vision and craft, rather than on an unspoken censorship of pleasing the least common denominator.

Distribute the Call for Art: Distribute the call through all available channels such as: email networks of partners, municipal networks, social media, e-newsletters, newspapers, targeted emails and phone calls to specific artists, and flyers at schools, libraries, coffee shops, and other hubs of foot traffic. Create an opportunity for an online information session where artists seeking to submit applications can go over the Call step by step and ask questions. In Worcester, the information session was well attended by over a dozen artists who asked clarifying questions about the Call for Art and better understood the requirements and the process. Even during times where in-person gathering is safe, an online information session is convenient and can be viewed on people's own schedules. Ensure the info session is recorded for those who cannot attend.

Select the artist(s): Determine a Selection Committee, review and selection process, and timeline to select the artist(s). A good process includes allowing each committee member to review the submissions before coming together to review and select. For Worcester, the Committee was able to efficiently and unanimously select artists over an online meeting. Immediately following the meeting, email every applicant whether they were selected based on clear selection criteria.

Detail of artist: Pamela Stolz, Phase 1 (Survey Questions)

Detail of artist: Eamon Gillen, Phase 1 (Survey Questions)

Process (Continued)

Installation + Removal

Preparing for Installation: The client and artist should sign contracts and be clear about expectations soon after selection that outlines the deliverables, time, and payment amount. In addition, discuss need and coverage of insurance. In the case of Worcester, the building owner provided insurance coverage for the artists during installation, as well as for the artwork.

Publicize and promote the installation: Distribute press releases, post in eNewsletters, and on social media about the installation. The Worcester BID and Civic Space Collaborative worked to develop the materials and publicize the project.

Installation day and events: Determine appropriate times and a timeline for installation. If social distancing is required, then stagger installations of multiple storefronts. If the installation is entirely from the interior, then public viewing on the installation day can still follow public health social distancing guidelines. If social distancing is no longer required, then installation day is a good opportunity to engage the local community by providing a local ambassador to speak with the public about the goals of the project. In the case of Worcester, we maintained social distancing as was necessary for public health. Each artist had a set time for the installation and a BID staff member met the artist on site. The installation is also a good opportunity to hire a local photographer to document the process and any events.

Help visitors view and understand the storefront art: Provide simple, legible information about the purpose of the installation and a bio of the artist(s) on site, and to translate the information as appropriate. A QR code is an effective way to connect interested viewers with more information. At the Worcester Storefronts their signs about the survey with QR code and website links posted for the Phase 1 installation.

Removal of installation: In few cases, the artist can save the installation for another purpose; however, in most cases, the installation will need to be removed and properly disposed. Recycle as much as possible, for instance in the case of fabric art installation, use textile recycling. In the case of paint on glass, use a bladed paint scraper to remove all paint without getting it into the storm drain system. If the paint is stubborn, spray the on the glass mural/paint with a mixture of warm water and acetone at a 1:1 ratio, soaking the scraper in the mixture prior to scraping. Keep a trash barrel close by to toss the paint chips and a broom and dust pan to sweep up and properly dispose of paint dust.

Following this Storefront Installation the BID installed a snowflake installation in winter 2020-2021 and is working on larger storefront installation in 2021.

Artist: Eamon Gillen, Phase 1 (Survey Questions)

Artist: Eamon Gillen, Phase 2 (Survey Answers)

Artist: Eamon Gillen, Phase 2 (Survey Answers)

Appendix 8

Funding Resources

Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects	Funding Sector	Agency/Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Planning Assistance Grants	Yes	Public	Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs	$125,000	Municipalities and Regional Planning Agencies	To fund technical assistance and help communities undertake public process associated with creating plans and adopting land use regulations consistent with the Baker-Polito Administration's land conservation and development objectives including reduction of land, energy, and natural resource consumption, provision of sufficient and diverse housing, and mitigation of/preparation for climate change.
Regional Pilot Project Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Office of Business Development	$250,000	Partnerships of municipalities, public entities, or 501(c) organizations	To fund projects that support businesses and communities in stabilizing/growing their regional economy with one or more of the recovery efforts under Partnerships for recovery. no capital-related projects will be funded.
MassWorks Infrastructure Program	Yes	Public	Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development		Municipalities	The most flexible source of capital funds to municipalities and other eligible public entities primarily for public infrastructure projects that support and accelerate housing production, spur private development, and create jobs - particularly for production of multi-family housing in appropriately located walkable, mixed-use districts.
Community Compact IT Grant	Yes	Public	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	$200,000	Municipalities	This is a competitive grant program focused on driving innovation and transformation at the local level via investments in technology. support the implementation of innovative IT projects by funding related one-time capital needs such as technology infrastructure, upgrades and/or purchases of equipment or software. Incidental or one-time costs related to the capital purchase such as planning, design, installation, implementation and initial training are eligible.
Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency/FEMA		Property Owners	to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes, and other structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
MA Downtown Initiative Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	$25,000	Municipalities	Technical assistance for downtown revitalization in 6 categories
TDI Creative Catalyst	Yes	Public	MassDevelopment	$40,000	Individuals and organizations in current ad graduated Transformative Development Initiative Districts	To support public-facing projects that enhance local arts and cultural infrastructure and contribute to economic revitalization - including public art, placemaking, and stabilization of organizations and creative business collectives
Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency/FEMA		Property Owners	hazard mitigation projects reducing the risks from disasters and natural hazards

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Commonwealth Places	Yes	Public	MassDevelopment	$300,000	Municipalities	To help community partners prepare public spaces and commercial districts to best serve their population during COVID-19 social distancing and the phased reopening of the economy, includingimprovements to sidewalks, curbs, streets, on-street parking spaces and off-street parking lots in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce in their communities. This program complements the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) Shared Streets & Spaces.
Community Preservation Act	Yes	Public	Community Preservation Trust Fund/State Department of Revenue (DOR)		Only communities that have adopted the Community Preservation Act are eligible to receive CPA Trust Fund matching funds annually.	To preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities.
Partnerships Matching Funds Program	Yes	Public	Department of Conservation and Recreation	$25,000	State park friends and advocacy groups, Civic and community organizations, Institutions, Businesses, Municipal governments Dedicated individuals	To support capital investments at DCR-owned state parks, beaches, and other reservations.
Restaurant Revitalization Fund	Yes	Public	Small Business Administration		Eligible entities include restaurants, food stands/trucks/carts, caterers, bars/saloons/lounges/taverns, snack and non alcoholic beverage bars, bakeries, brewpubs, breweries/microbreweries, wineries, distilleries, inns, and licensed facilities of a beverage alcohol producer. Priority group: Small businesses that are at least 51% owned by one or more individuals who are women/veterans/socially and economically disadvantaged.	Funds may be used for specific expenses including rent, payroll, mortgage, debt, utility, business maintenance expenses, construction of outdoor seating, business supplies, business food and beverage expenses (including raw materials), covered supplier costs, and business operating expenses
BIZ-M-POWER	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation	$20,000	Small businesses (i.e. employing 1-20 FTE employees, including 1 or more of whom owns the business, annual revenue not exceeding $2,500,000) in brick-and-mortar (physical) establishment operating within Massachusetts	To assist low-income and moderate-income entrepreneurs with their acquisition, expansion, improvement or lease of a facility, purchase or lease of equipment, or with meeting other capital needs of a business.
Shared Streets and Spaces	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Transportation	$200,000	Municipalities	To support the repurposing of streets, plazas, sidewalks, curbs, and parking areas to facilitate outdoor activities and community programming, including but not limited to facilities for eating, shopping, play, and community events and spaces for all ages.
Small Business Technical Assistance Grant	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation	$85,000	501(c)3 organizations	To fund specific counseling and training programs that assist small businesses in securing new or increased financing for growth, providing digital grants (MGCC Program), establishing crowdfunding campaigns through the Biz-M-Power grant (MGCC Program), achieving stability and viability, creating/retaining jobs, increasing the economic vitality of the neighborhood, community, or region.

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Economic Adjustment Assistance	Yes	Public	Economic Development Association	$10,000,000	Eligible applicants under the EAA program include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State.Under the EAA program, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for profit entities. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.	EDA's ARPA EAA NOFO is designed to provide a wide-range of financial assistance to communities and regions as they respond to, and recover from, the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, including long-term recovery and resilience to future economic disasters. Under this announcement, EDA solicits applications under the authority of the Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program, which is flexible and responsive to the economic development needs and priorities of local and regional stakeholders. This is the broadest NOFO EDA is publishing under ARPA and any eligible applicant from any EDA Region may apply.
Competitive Tourism Grants	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	$10,000,000	For EDA Competitive Tourism Grants, eligible entities include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State. 42 U.S.C. § 3122(4)(A); 13 C.F.R. § 300.3.	EDA's ARPA Tourism NOFO is designed to provide a wide-range of financial assistance to communities and regions to rebuild and strengthen their travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industry through various infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Under this NOFO, EDA solicits applications under the authority of the Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program, which is flexible and responsive to the economic development needs and priorities of local and regional stakeholders. EDA's travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation grants will be delivered through two components: (1) State Tourism Grants and (2) EDA Competitive Tourism Grants.
Build Back Better Regional Challenge	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	$500,000	Eligible applicants under this NOFO include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State.Under this NOFO, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for profit entities. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.	Through this American Rescue Plan Act Build Back Better Regional Challenge Notice of Funding Opportunity (ARPA BBBRC NOFO), EDA aims to assist communities and regions impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has caused, and continues to cause, economic injury to U.S. communities and regions in devastating and unprecedented ways. This ARPA BBBRC NOFO is designed as a two-phase competition to (1) help regions develop transformational economic development strategies and (2) fund the implementation of those strategies that will create and grow regional growth clusters. Such efforts will help regional economies recover from the pandemic and build economic diversity and resiliency to mitigate impacts of future economic disasters. In Phase 1, EDA will provide technical assistance grants to approximately 50-60 coalitions (through a lead institution). These coalitions will be considered "finalists" and the grants will be used by the finalists to prepare more detailed applications for transformational projects that benefit their respective geographic regions and are aligned around a holistic approach to building and scaling a strategic industry. In Phase 2, EDA will award each of the 20-30 finalist coalitions $25-75 million (and potentially up to $100 million) to fund the collection of projects they identified. The projects will be funded through grants to coalition members.

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Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	$6,000,000	Eligible applicants under the EAA program include a(n): (i) District Organization of an EDA-designated Economic Development District (EDD); (ii) Indian Tribe or a consortium of Indian Tribes; (iii) State, county, city, or other political subdivision of a State, including a special purpose unit of a State or local government engaged in economic or infrastructure development activities, or a consortium of political subdivisions; (iv) institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions of higher education; or (v) public or private non-profit organization or association acting in cooperation with officials of a general purpose political subdivision of a State unless EDA waives the cooperation requirement. For Statewide Planning grants, eligible applicants are limited to the Governor's Office, or equivalent, of a State, who may designate an eligible applicant type described above to apply for and administer the award. Under section 3(10) of PWEDA the term "State" includes the fifty States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau. Under its EAA program, EDA is not authorized to provide grants or cooperative agreements to individuals or to for profit entities. Requests from such entities will not be considered for funding.	The ARPA Statewide Planning, Research, and Networks NOFO is part of EDA's multi-phase effort to respond to the coronavirus pandemic as directed by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Specifically, this NOFO seeks to build regional economies for the future through two primary avenues: a) Statewide Planning and b) Research and Networks. Subject to the availability of funds, awards made under this NOFO will help develop coordinated state-wide plans for economic development and data, tools, and institutional capacity to evaluate and scale evidence-based economic development efforts, including through communities of practice and provision of technical assistance among existing and new EDA grantees.
Regional Economic Development Organization Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Office of Business Development		Eligible organizations shall be corporations, foundations, organizations or institutions that operate regionally and service 10 or more contiguous towns/cities. They must be exempt from federal taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code, and have a primary focus of economic development and perform the services required by MGL Chapter 23A Section 3J and 3K.	Grants should be used to assist entrepreneurs, small businesses, and business partners in order to stabilize and/or grow regional economy. They may not, however, be used to increase salaries or hire additional staff for the organization.
Hometown Grant Program	Yes	Private	T-Mobile	$50,000	Towns with population <50,000	To build/rebuild/refresh community spaces that help foster local connections in town.
Greener Greater Boston Program	Yes	Private	Solomon Foundation/Barr Foundation	$20,000	Municipalities, Trail conservancies and non-profits	To fund preliminary design (for each stage of design), capacity building and operational support, and public engagement and implementation toward projects that enhance the beauty, utility, and accessibility of Greater Boston's greenways.
Nellie Leaman Taft Foundation Competitive Grants	Yes	Private	Nellie Leaman Taft Foundation	$15,000	Non-profits 501 (c)(3) (small to mid sized) that benefit residents of greater Boston inside the Route 495 beltway	To seed funding for new ideas and initiatives, start-up and on-going support for grass roots organizations, and entrepreneurial projects that may enable an organization or its constituents to achieve greater self-sufficiency.
Seed Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	$1,000	Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under $100,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support groups launching new projects or starting to significantly change the direction of an existing project. Most often, groups have been working on the project less than a year and usually don't yet have much direct experience with implementing the idea.

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Grow Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	$4,000	Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under $100,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support groups to deepen their work by further developing a community vision, lowering barriers to participation, identifying new stakeholders and working to bring more voices and lived experiences into core decision-making processes.
Young Leaders Grant	Yes	Private	Grassroots Fund	$6,000	Volunteer-driven groups that have no more than 2 full-time paid staff and an annual operating budget of under $175,000. Note that the group does not need to have formal tax status or a fiscal sponsor.	To support projects led by young leaders aged 15-25
Small Business Matching Grant	Yes	Private	NewVue Communities	$5,000	22 North Central Massachusetts cities and towns from Athol to Harvard with a combined population of 240,000 (refer to https://newvuecommunities.org/cities-towns-we-serve/)	To support micro-enterprises (businesses with 5 or fewer employees) that need help with marketing and accounting.
William J. & Margery S. Barrett Fund	Yes	Private	Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation		Nonprofit organizations, public agencies or community organizations that provide services to the residents of Adams, Cheshire or Savoy, MA.	To fund projects, programs, capital improvements and general operating support of initiatives that benefit the community in arts and culture, early childhood development, environment, and health and social services.
Central Berkshire Fund	Yes	Private	Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation	$5,000	Nonprofit organizations, public agencies or community organizations that provide services to the residents of the communities of Becket, Cummington, Dalton, Hinsdale, Peru, Washington and Windsor.	To fund projects, programs, capital improvements and general operating support of initiatives that benefit the community in arts and culture, early childhood development, environment, and health and social services.
Merrimack Valley Municipal Business Development and Recovery Fund	Yes	Private	Essex County Community Foundation/Columbia Gas	$2,000,000	City of Lawrence, the Town of Andover, and the Town of North Andover	To provide direct support (individual business support, general business promotions, technical assistance and business consultation services, economic development and planning) to the municipalities and their business communities (not businesses directly) impacted by the recent gas disaster in Andover, North Andover, and Lawrence
Brownfields Redevelopment Site Assessment Fund	Maybe	Public	MassDevelopment	$100,000		To finance the environmental assessmen of brownfield sites in Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) of the Commonwealth
Urban Agenda Grant Program	Maybe	Public	Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development		Cross sector consortiums and coalitions	Funding to local partnerships to implement projects that are based on collaborative work models with the goal of advancing economic progress. Typically, Early Stage Strategy Development and Strategy Implementation by an Existing Cross-Sector Consortium or Coalition
Community Development Block Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	$1,350,000	Municipalities with a population of under 50,000 that do not receive CDBG funds directly from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Municipalities may also apply onbehalf of a specific developer or property owner.	to meet a broad range of community development needs - includiing projects such as housing rehabilitation or development; micro-enterprise or other business assistance; infrastructure; community/public facilities; public social services; planning; removal of architectural barriers to allow access; downtown or area revitalization
Brownfields Redevelopment Remediation Fund	Maybe	Public	MassDevelopment	$500,000		To finance the remediation of brownfield sites in Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) of the Commonwealth
National Endowment for the Arts Grants	Maybe	Public	National Endowment for the Arts		Regional Arts Agencies	This funding will be allocated to local state and regional arts agencies to distribute through their funding programs

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Housing Development Incentive Program	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development		Developers (projects located in Gateway Cities)	Tax incentive to undertake new construction or substantial rehabilitation of properties for lease or sale as multi-unit market rate residential housing
MassTrails Grants	Maybe	Public	Department of Conservation & Recreation, Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs	$100,000	Public entities and non-profit organizations (with documented land owner permission and community support)	to design, create, and maintain the diverse network of trails, trail systems, and trails experiences
MassEVIP Fleets Incentives	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection	$7,500	Public Entities	helps eligible public entities acquire (buy or lease) electric vehicles for their fleets.
Abandoned Housing Initiative Strategic Demolition Fund Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Attorney General's Office	$125,000	Municipalities, Municipal Housing and Redevelopment Authorities, Nonprofit organizations	To be used for the construction of an affordable housing structure.
Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund	Maybe	Public	State Historic Preservation Office		Municipalities and private non-profit organizations	to support the preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites (cultural resources) listed in the State Register of Historic Places - including pre-development work, development projects such as stabilization, protection, rehabilitation and restoration
Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey and Planning Grant Program	Maybe	Public	State Historic Preservation Office		Municipalities and private non-profit organizations	to support efforts to identify and plan for the protection of the significant historic buildings, structures, archaeological sites and landscapes of the Commonwealth (including cultural resource inventories, nomination of properties to National Register, community-wide preservation plans,other studies/reports/publications to identify and protect significant properties)
Massachusetts Recycling Fund	Maybe	Private	BDC Capital			To help Massachusetts businesses active in recycling-related activities obtain the capital needed for any reasonable business purpose.
Closed Loop Infrastructure Fund	Maybe	Private	Closed Loop Partners		Municipalities and private companies	Provides below-market rate loans to fund replicable, scalable and sustainable recycling and circular economy infrastructure projects across collection, sortation, processing and new technologies.