



Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

**Union Street
Revitalization
Rockland, MA**



Acknowledgments



TOWN OF
ROCKLAND
MASSACHUSETTS

Town of Rockland, MA

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Affiliate of the South Shore Chamber of Commerce



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

Sandpaper Factory

Alan Curtis, Owner

ReImagine Rockland

Jeff Phelps

Rockland Select Board

Tiffanie Needham

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



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

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

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

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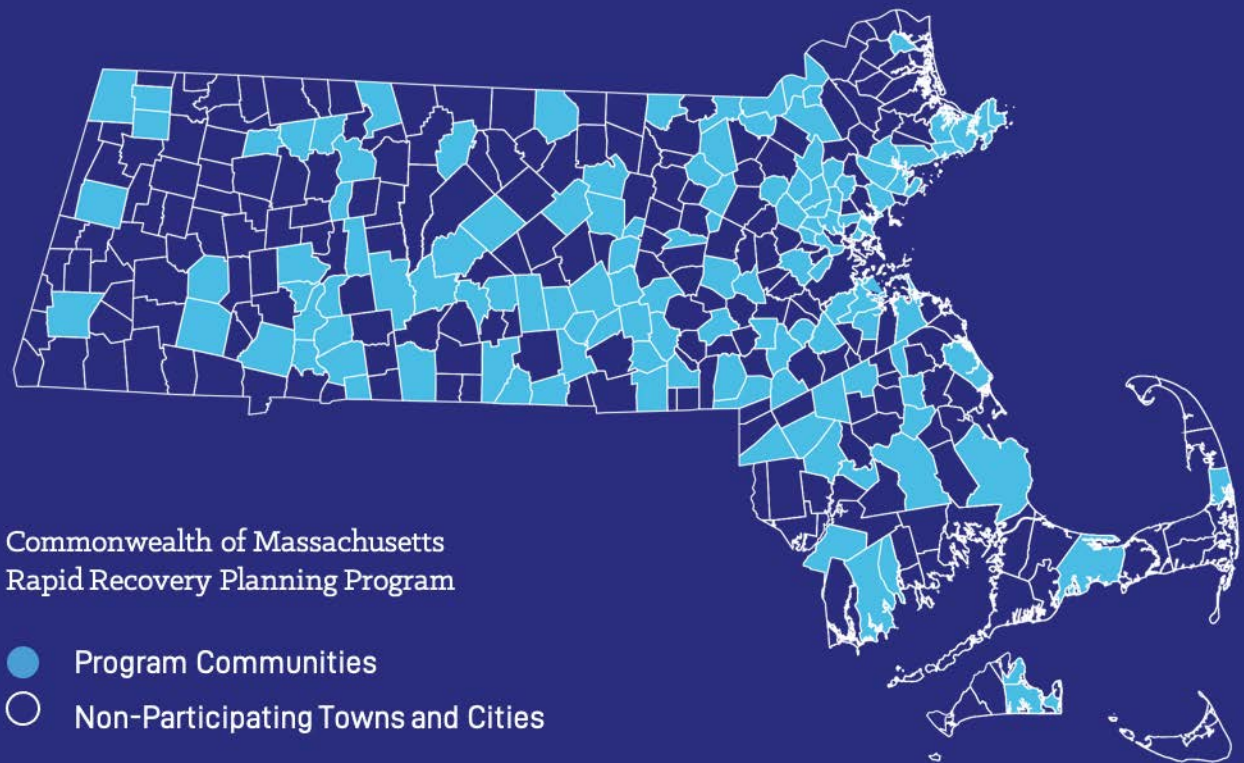
Appendix

- A - Comprehensive Funding Spreadsheet
- B - Parking Space Count + Parking Policy Recommendations from
Downtown Rockland Strategy Report (2019)
- C - Innes Associates, Subject Matter Expert Materials
- D - Best Practices - Everett, MA Storefront Design Guidelines
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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.



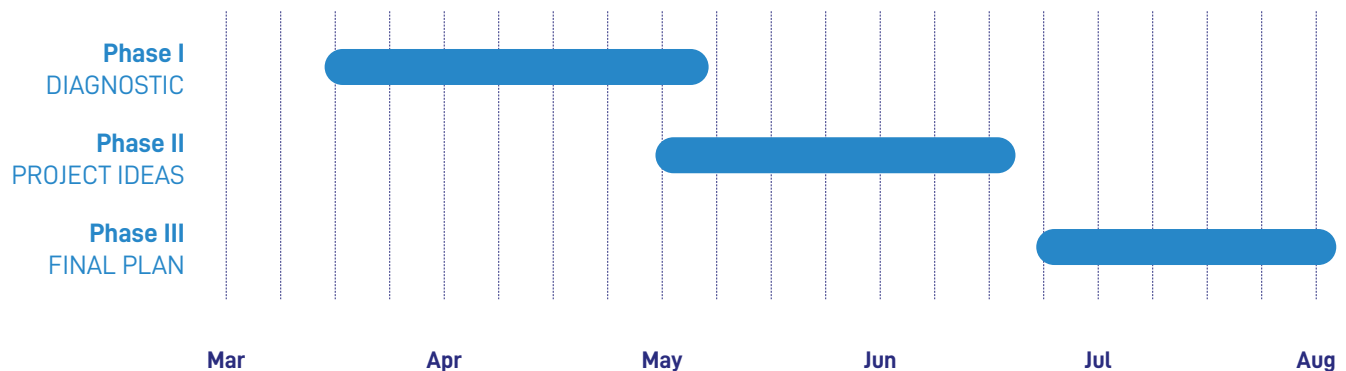
1.0 Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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 (extended to October 8th, 2021). Phase 1 - Diagnostic, Phase 2- Project Recommendations, Phase 3 - Plan.



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

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

Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework



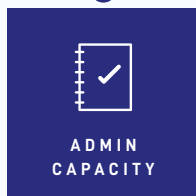
Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?



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



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



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

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



Public Realm



Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Revenue & Sales



Admin Capacity



Cultural/Arts



Other

2.0 Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Rockland Recovery

Rockland, Massachusetts is a predominantly suburban bedroom community in the greater Brockton area. Historically, the rocky soils of the region steered the local economy away from agriculture and towards manufacturing. Rockland was once home to numerous shoe factories, one converting to a sandpaper factory in 1940.

Rockland has a historic downtown corridor with a mix of retail shopping, restaurants, a bar, banks, salons, convenience stores, apartments, and Town offices. Rockland Town officials and citizens have been working to revitalize downtown Rockland since before the COVID-19 pandemic. Rockland had received conditional approval of a 40R overlay district to allow and encourage higher density housing on vacant and under-utilized parcels near downtown. The conditional approval was due to a lack of capacity in the existing water and sewer infrastructure.

Rockland is actively transitioning to a commercially diverse and vibrant arts community. Many artists utilize the renovated Sandpaper Factory studio space as well as the E.T. Wright Building as an inspiring location to sculpt, paint, weave, make, and bake. Collectively known as the 4th Floor Artists, the organization has over 100 members and is growing.

The downtown district is home to a traditional New England close clustering of services including the Rockland Community Center, Fire Department, Town Hall, schools, and the Hanover Branch Rail Trail connecting pedestrians and bicyclists from downtown Rockland west to North Abington and east to West Hanover.

With a handful of vacancies typical of small to medium-sized Massachusetts towns' and cities, Rockland's downtown appears to have not suffered from a dramatic number of closures as a result of COVID-19. Rockland is well-positioned for a strong recovery post COVID-19 as businesses reopen, organizations and clubs host events and activities downtown, and recreational trail enthusiasts utilize the Hanover Branch Rail Trail through the middle of town.

To ensure that Rockland has a strong post COVID-19 recovery, the project team is recommending the following projects be implemented:

- 1. Develop Design Guidelines for Renovation of Storefronts and Facades**
- 2. Support Capital Improvements to Town Water and Sewer Infrastructure**
- 3. Implement a Wayfinding Signage Program**
- 4. Develop Parking Management Plan**
- 5. Host Additional Events**
- 6. Pop-Up Shops Program**
- 7. Create Outdoor Dining and Shared Spaces**
- 8. Public Arts and Culture Campaign**
- 9. Conduct a Study to Improve Transit Services**
- 10. Conduct a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan**

The following page includes a map of the downtown Rockland and highlights the parcels examined during the Phase One diagnostics portion of this planning study.

3.0 Diagnostic

Key Findings



CUSTOMER BASE

The Town's customer base has a variety of age ranges

The two largest groups of resident ages are 45 - 54 and those under the age of 19. The median household income for the Town is just over \$82,000, and just over \$88,000 for the study area.

Downtown Rockland businesses rely on shoppers from Rockland's residential neighborhoods as well as those who reside in surrounding towns. Creating a comfortable, inviting mix of retail tenants downtown will reinforce the regional appeal of downtown Rockland and contribute to success post COVID-19.

DEMOGRAPHICS	STUDY AREA	TOWN OF ROCKLAND
Population	240	18,356
At Least Some College (or higher)	132	11,362
Median Income	\$88,247	\$82,328
Age (0 - 18)	26%	24%
Age (19 - 54)	46%	42%
Age (55+) Race (Non-White)	28%	31%



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Public perceptions about the existing physical environment

The consultant team examined the condition of the private realm during field work analysis. See the table at right for the study area cumulative score of each element examined during the field visit. Rockland's business owner survey received eight responses, or approximately 11% of 68 storefronts audited by the consultant team in the study area. The rather low business survey response rate may not represent the entire business community as a whole. The primary areas of dissatisfaction among business owners and merchants was 1) the condition of private buildings, storefronts, and signs; and, 2) proximity to complementary businesses and uses. The business owner survey included a question about possible ways to improve the physical environment, atmosphere, and access for customers and employees. The top rated options include:

- Changes in public parking availability, management or policies
- Improvement in safety and/or cleanliness

The field analysis team observed strong customer activity at Mike's Pizza and Seafood, at Richdale Food Store, around Town Hall, and along the rail trail. At a high level, it appears that the existing public realm environment appears to effectively meet the needs of business owners, employees, and customers. Although, the team observed only a small handful of public outdoor seating options and no outdoor dining options. Our public outreach indicated that there is interest in expanding the number of events held downtown, perhaps including a partial and temporary street closure to promote a friendly pedestrian experience.

PUBLIC REALM ELEMENT	CUMULATIVE SCORE
Lighting	NA/Fail
Wayfinding & Signage	NA/Fail
Sidewalk	A
Street Trees & Benches	B
Roadbed & Crosswalks	A



Rockland would benefit from storefront renovations

Similar to the scoring process used for the public realm, elements of the private realm were also scored during the field work analysis. See the table at right for the study area cumulative score of each of the elements examined during the field visit.

The project team observed some facade and structural repairs needed across the study area. Additionally, there was discussion during the open comment period at the first public meeting about engaging building owners to make improvements to storefronts. The business landscape downtown benefits from the proximity of the middle and high schools, and it was noted that the churches in town contribute a steady stream of foot traffic on days when services occur. The project team observed a low number of vacancies when compared to the total number of businesses tallied as part of the LRRP field work process. See the map on the following page that details the current vacancies.

PRIVATE REALM ELEMENT	CUMULATIVE SCORE
Lighting	NA/Fail
Facade	B
Awning	NA / FAIL
Signage	B
Outdoor Display & Dining	NA / FAIL
Window	B



Businesses have support from local groups

Relmagine Rockland, a sub group of the Rockland chamber of Commerce, provides support to local businesses and hosts popular events including Rockland Day, which features an annual family-friendly event and a Friday night concert series in the summer.

Additionally, the Rockland Chamber of Commerce, an affiliate of the South Shore Chamber of Commerce, continues to promote and provide support to downtown Rockland businesses.



Rockland Day - a Relmagine Rockland Event
Source: <https://www.reimaginerockland.com/>



0 0.125 0.25 Miles

Town of Rockland, MA



Downtown Rockland - Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program

Legend

- Vacant Storefronts (April 2021)
- Parcels in Study Area

BETA

Data Source: MassGIS
Issue Date: April 2021
This Map is Intended for Planning Purposes Only

A map of retail and office vacancies in the Downtown Rockland study area

Analysis



BUILDING QUALITY, FOOT TRAFFIC & TENANT MIX

Rockland's downtown business district would benefit from storefront facade rehabilitation. Additionally, some business owners and shoppers indicated their strong desire for additional street or surface lot parking in the downtown area.

The success of the downtown Rockland business district hinges on maintaining the existing loyal customer base and generating new customers from Rockland and the surrounding towns. Methods to increase foot traffic and generate new customers include providing opportunities for outdoor dining and retail sales, and planning and hosting cultural and arts events to bring people into the district.

There are some storefronts on Union Street that would benefit from facade and/or structural rehabilitations. Comments made during the public meeting voiced support for this project recommendation.

Downtown Rockland includes some legacy businesses that have been open for more than 20 years



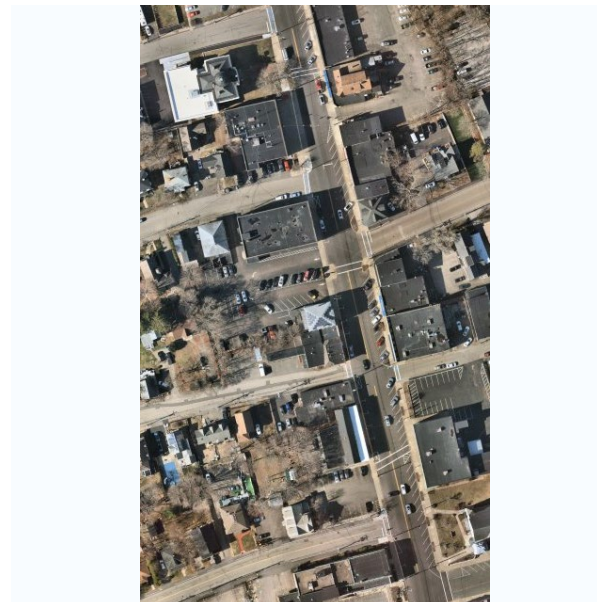
PARKING

The study area includes parallel parking on the west side of Union Street and diagonal pull-in parking along the east side of Union Street. Additionally, many businesses have their own private dedicated parking lots in front of or behind their business. Some business owners feel that more parking would benefit the downtown commercial area.

We recommend that the town develop a parking management strategy that encourages turnover and accessible spaces of on-street spaces and longer term parking located off-street.

The July 2019 Downtown Rockland Action Strategy report completed by Goody Clancy for Relmagine Rockland, MassDevelopment, and the Town of Rockland includes recommendations to maximize the use of existing parking and installation of coordinated signage. This report supports and endorses the recommendations made in the 2019 Action Strategy report. Two pages from the Action Strategy report are included in the Appendix at the end of this report for easy reference.

Between Church Street and Belmont Street there are 53 diagonal spaces on the east side of Union Street - approximately 24% were being utilized when the aerial shot was taken on Saturday, April 3, 2021



Source: NearMap

Analysis



TENANT MIX

Downtown Rockland would benefit from additional restaurants, particularly with the option of outdoor dining. The project team observed an opportunity for the addition of a family-friendly sit-down restaurant that catered to individuals utilizing the rail trail or an ice cream stand located near the rail trail crossing of Union Street.

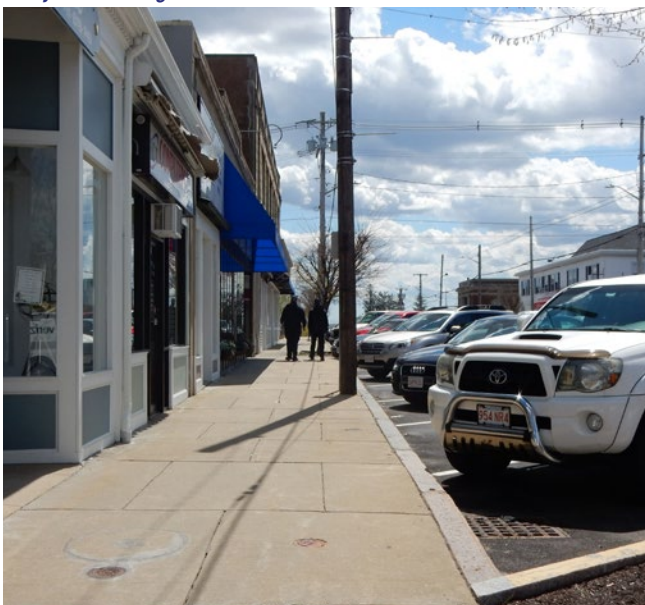
FILLING VACANCIES

Rockland did not have an overwhelming number of vacant commercial spaces, approximately seven out of 68. There were storefronts that appeared dilapidated and may have an owner who is disinterested and has let the building fall into a state of disrepair. While there were relatively few responses overall, the business survey indicated that 75% of businesses rent their space. Often, renters are unable to make facade or other improvements to buildings they do not own because they are not allowed to or because a disincentive exists.

TAX INCENTIVES

The Town could develop an incentive where a business owner with a dilapidated storefront would receive a reduced tax burden if they paint, fix sagging porches or roofs, install benches or flower pots or planters.

The sidewalks along Union Street in the study area are in great condition



SOUTH SHORE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The South Shore Chamber of Commerce covers a large area including 25 communities stretching from Plymouth to Hull and is active in advocating for and promoting local businesses. The Chamber hosts events and professional development programs, includes 17 volunteer groups, is affiliated with 6 local chambers and business councils, one of which is the Rockland Chamber of Commerce.

REIMAGINE ROCKLAND

ReImagine Rockland is a downtown management group formed to focus on revitalizing Union Street. The group was created when the Town was pursuing 40R overlay district to allow and encourage higher density housing on vacant and under-utilized parcels near downtown. The group is still meeting but with less frequency than before COVID-19. Also, the group meets less frequently now that Rockland has received conditional approval of the 40R overlay district. The group hosts events downtown including Rockland Day, Restaurant Week, Purple Heart Day, Rail Trail Chalk Art and Ice Cream Social, Clean Up Day and Bulldog Pride Weekend, and Sole of Rockland Butterfly Chair Project.

A bicyclist pedals along the Hanover Branch Rail Trail next to Dunkin Donuts



4.0 Project Recommendations

4.1 Storefront Facade Renovations and Design Guidelines

Category		Private Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - "Downtown Rockland"
Origin		Jennifer Constable, Town of Rockland, Assistant Town Administrator, First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback
Budget		Large Budget (\$200,000+)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years) - 12 months planning, 24-36 months implementation
Risk		Medium Risk – Private building owners are not required to participate in program and may be uninterested
Key Performance Indicators		The anticipated impacts on the visitor economy include additional foot traffic, additional business revenue, and contribution to a sense of pride and ownership in downtown. Following implementation the number of vacant storefronts should be measured to understand the success of the program.
Partners & Resources		Town of Rockland Planning Department, Rockland Chamber of Commerce, Local business owners and building owners, Relmagine Rockland



As recently as 2012, Hudson, MA suffered from a high number of vacant storefronts. The Towns' Main Street has seen a major economic resurgence since then.

Source: https://www.masslive.com/news/2017/08/hudson_how_this_small_massachu.html



Easthampton, MA Cultural Chaos event draws artists, vendors, musicians, and crowds each year to downtown Easthampton

Source: <https://www.easthamptoncityarts.com/events-festivals/cultural-chaos/>

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- The business survey and public meeting identified an interest in updating storefront facade conditions to establish downtown Rockland as a retail shopping and restaurant destination for the local region
- Field work and Phase One diagnostics and analysis identified existing vacancies and an opportunity to improve area storefronts to attract entrepreneurs to fill those vacancies
- In discussions with officials from the Town, it was evident that certain challenges exist in filling vacant storefronts, including the quality and aesthetics of adjacent properties
- Sprucing up storefronts will make the downtown region more desirable, attract a wider clientele of shoppers and entrepreneur to open new businesses, which will increase sales at existing stores and help struggling business owners by increasing their revenues - lifting them out of the economic slump that was caused by COVID-19
- 63% of business owner survey respondents indicated a decline in revenue as a result of COVID-19
- 88% of business owner survey respondents indicated a reduction in capacity or hours of operations as a result of COVID-19

Action Items

Rockland needs to make certain decisions prior to and during the creation of this program. If the Town already knows the answers, then staff can proceed with developing the program. If not, Rockland staff can work the decision points into a scope of work for assistance in development and perhaps managing the program. See Process for some of these questions.

If starting from scratch, Rockland will need to accomplish the following:

- Identify capacity within Town Hall to guide the program and bring on additional capacity
- Develop an appropriate level of design guidelines
- Engage the businesses, property owners, and community to get buy-in for the program
- Develop the criteria for application, approval, installation, and maintenance
- Develop the funding and oversight structures

Pre-Program Development

- Identify which Town department will manage this program: municipal staff, existing downtown committee/organization, volunteer committee, or a hybrid
- If the Town does not already have design guidelines for the area that are suitable for this program, then decide

how those guidelines will be developed. Will the design guidelines be just for the façade improvement program, or will they be more broadly applicable?

- Note that the entity managing this process does not have to be the Town of Rockland. For example, a Community Development Corporation or other nonprofit could sponsor the program.
- Discuss the potential focus of the program: components of a storefront, the entire storefront, the entire façade, all façades, the site? Will signage, lighting, awnings and other smaller elements be included? Will interior improvements to address accessibility be included?
- Discuss what will not be eligible. Eligibility may also be determined by the funding source (for example, CDBG funds).
- Discuss the length of time that improvements must be maintained and the enforcement process for ensuring that improvements are maintained?
- Decide whether the guidelines and program will be developed in-house or whether the Town will seek outside help. The funding source may determine the type of outside assistance; for example, certain programs will assign on-call consultants. For others, the Town may need to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP).



Hanover Branch Rail Trail

Developing the Guidelines

HIGH PRIORITY

If Rockland already has design guidelines that can be used for the façade improvement program, skip to the next section. For developing the guidelines, review the Best Practices for Design Guidelines

Developing the Program

- Decide the following:
 - » Grant, loan, or hybrid
 - » Which elements will the program fund and which are the responsibility of the property owner?
 - » What are the eligibility requirements for participating in the program?
 - » What is the length of the program?
 - » How long will property owners be required to maintain the improvements?
 - » What is the enforcement procedure for maintenance? (This could be repayment of a grant or a lien on a property.)
 - » Will the responsibility for maintenance transfer to a new owner if the property is sold?
 - » Differentiating between the responsibilities of the tenant (often the small business) and the landlord (the property owner) is critical – a small business may be enthusiastic about the assistance, but the landlord may not. Parallel outreach processes may be desirable.
 - » Decide on the application process and how applicants will be evaluated. Are certain property types or improvements given priority over others? Make sure the process of choosing participants is transparent.
 - » Develop the forms and train the people who will be evaluating the applications.

Implementation

The program can provide grants or loans to property owners/ businesses for the improvements. Grants may provide a greater incentive to participate for reluctant property owners, while loans (no or low interest) provide a revolving fund to assist more properties. Some communities have indicated that requiring a match from the property owner may create longer-term support of the program. If the property owners are less interested in the program, the Town might consider offering grants to the first 3-5 participants to sign up (depending on resources) and transitioning later applicants to a loan program. This method would also allow Rockland to assist specific properties as catalysts for the rest of the target area. Education of all people involved in the program needs to be an ongoing component. A municipality that is short on project

management resources should consider hiring a dedicated staff member or consultant to manage this program.

Finally, Rockland should consider streamlining approvals of projects under this program to reduce the time needed for implementation.

Also Consider

- Examine offering tax incentives to Main Street building owners who upgrade aging facades, also critically examine the opportunity of tax disincentives for those landlords who let their buildings age and who do not perform general exterior upkeep
- Examples of existing vacant storefront tax disincentives include:
 - » Arlington: Rolled out in 2017, Arlington's bylaw allows building owners with vacant storefronts "the option of displaying public art in their storefront windows rather than paying the \$400 fine associated with the vacant storefront registry."¹
 - » Melrose: Like Arlington, Melrose too has a \$400 annual vacancy fee for those building owners who do not entice local proprietors into their vacant storefronts.²
- Research the opportunity to acquire the under-utilized parcel of land where the Hanover Branch Rail Trail crosses Union Street (currently a Metro PCS cell phone retail store) as an area to redevelop into mixed-use to accommodate Hanover Branch Rail Trail users

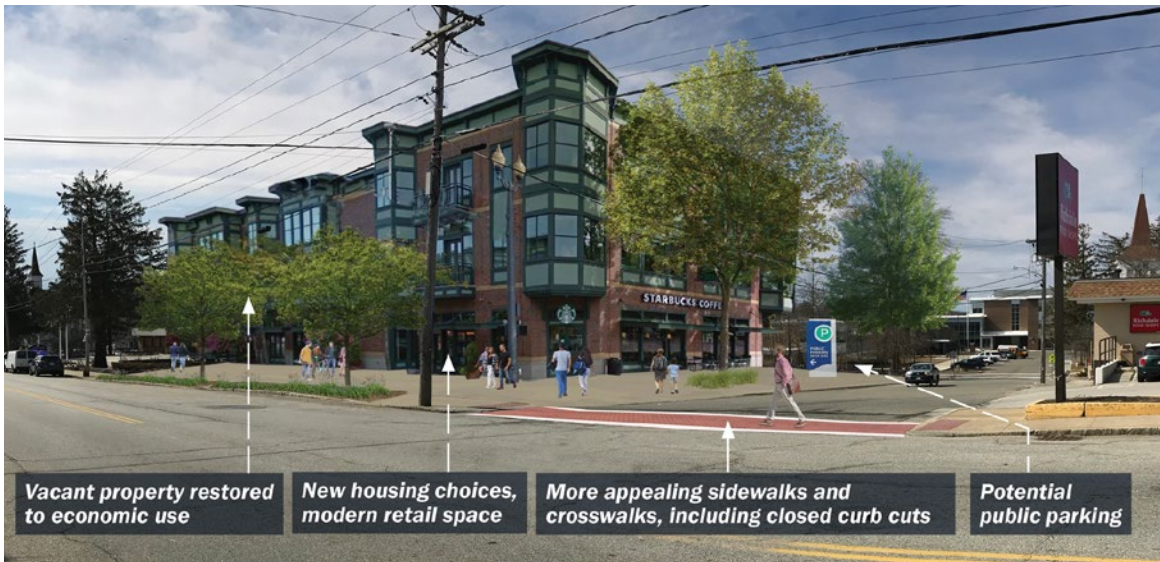
Process

- Identify Town department staff responsible for leading the coordination effort
- Identify and confirm the building owners to be contacted
- Secure grants, incentives, or other opportunities for funding
- Implement the program: work with property owners and ensure improvements are scheduled and completed
- Market vacant storefronts using Rockland Chamber of Commerce, ReImagine Rockland, and a variety of other sources to locate entrepreneurs interested in starting a business in Rockland
- See Appendix for additional materials on this topic provided by Emily Innes of Inness Associates, LTD., The Subject Matter Expert for a storefront facade revitalization program in Rockland

¹ <https://arlington.wickedlocal.com/news/20180912/efforts-to-install-public-art-in-arlingtons-vacant-storefronts-is-slow-to-evolve>
² <https://ecode360.com/35444245>

4.2 Support Capital Improvements to Town Water and Sewer Infrastructure

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - "Downtown Rockland"
Origin		Jennifer Constable, Town of Rockland, Assistant Town Administrator, First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback
Budget		Large Budget (200,000+)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years) 12-52 months planning, design, and implementation
Risk		Low Risk – The risk is low to conduct a feasibility study
Key Performance Indicators		1) Implement a Comprehensive Waste Water Treatment Plant Assessment and Evaluation Plan 2) Continued support of Capital Improvements to water and sewer infrastructure and capacity
Partners & Resources		Town of Rockland Planning Department, Rockland Chamber of Commerce, Local business owners and building owners, Sewer Commission



Rockland has successfully adopted both a Downtown Rockland Revitalization Overlay District (DRROD) as well as a 40R "Smart Growth" District -- both planning efforts would be furthered with the investment of capital improvements to water and sewer infrastructure

Downtown Rockland Action Strategy - July 2019

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- 63% of phase one LRRP business survey respondents indicated that they had a decline in revenue as a result of COVID-19
- 88% of phase one LRRP business survey respondents indicated that they had to reduce operating hours as a result of COVID-19
- Town water and sewer expansion would likely enable the construction of much needed housing in the region, and provide downtown businesses with hundreds more customers within the neighborhoods along Union Street

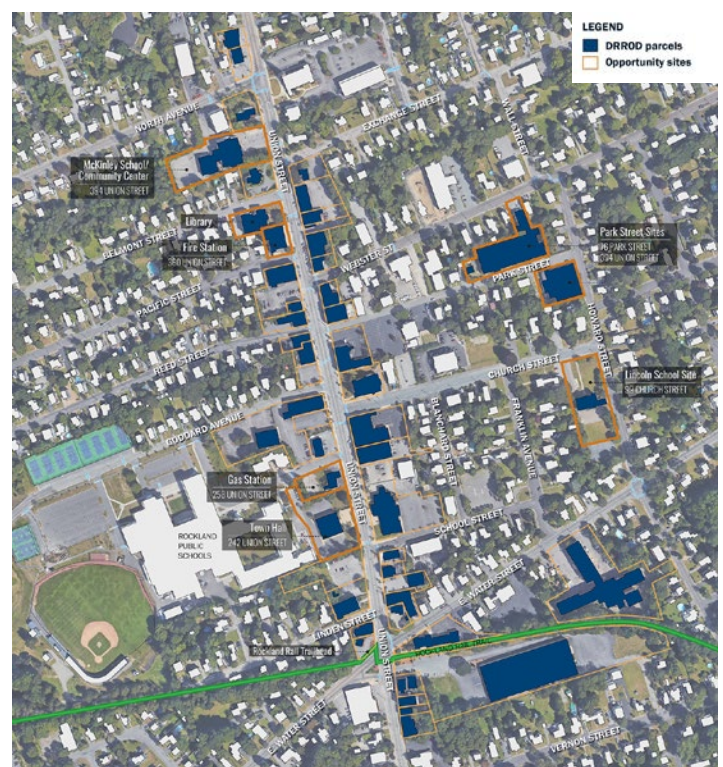
Action Items

- Continue to explore regional opportunities to support growth and invest in critical water and sewer projects
- Make investments today to ensure that water and sewer infrastructure can meet the capacity needs of future development within the town-approved Downtown Rockland Revitalization Overlay District (DRROD) and Smart Growth 40R District
- Draft a plan with cost estimates and timeline for design, engineering, construction, and maintenance of proposed capital improvements
- Conduct Sewer Rate Analysis in order to support necessary facility and infrastructure improvements

Process

- Prioritize capital improvements based on Downtown Rockland Revitalization Overlay District (DRROD) and Smart Growth 40R District growth projections
- Identify opportunities for funding and secure grants and other funds
- Discuss feasibility of expanding capacity at existing waste treatment plant vs. constructing a new plant
- Evaluate the existing flow from the district against projected growth
- Begin implementation of capital improvements
- Continue to evaluate and monitor additional opportunities to address capacity, service, and infiltration and inflow problems, among others
- Continue the momentum that has been generated from the completion of recent studies
- Explore regional opportunities to support growth and invest in critical water and sewer projects

Study Area Map



*The Rockland Downtown Rockland Revitalization Overlay District (DRROD) parcels shown here in the Downtown Rockland Action strategy report
Downtown Rockland Action Strategy - July 2019*

4.3 Implement a Wayfinding Signage Program

Category		Public Realm & Revenue and Sales
Location		LRRP Study Area - "Downtown Rockland"
Origin		Jennifer Constable, Town of Rockland, Assistant Town Administrator, First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years) - 12-24 months planning and design, 24-36 months implementation
Risk		Low Risk – There is low risks associated with cooperation among different participants
Key Performance Indicators		<p>1) Meeting with local business owners and a wide cross section of the public to distribute different signage options and solicit their feedback.</p> <p>2) Increase in foot traffic, or motor vehicle traffic, that stops and shops in retail or restaurant offerings, after the signs are installed (consider travel intercept surveys before and after implementation to assess the increase in people walking, biking, and driving to local shops)</p>
Partners & Resources		Town of Rockland Planning Department, Rockland Chamber of Commerce, Local business owners and building owners, Highway Department



Wayfinding signage combined with street signs in Cedar Falls, Iowa

Source: <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/tool-kits-resources/info-2015/13-short-range-livability-solutions.html>

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

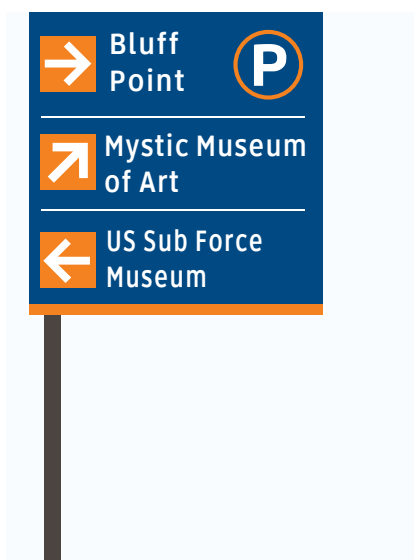
- General wayfinding signage to help direct visitors to Downtown Rockland and other destinations was identified at the first public meeting as a way to increase foot traffic, sales, and revenues
- 63% of phase one LRRP business survey respondents indicated that they experienced a decline in revenue as a result of COVID-19

Action Items

- Identify locations for proposed signage installation
- Share proposed wayfinding signage family with the public, local residents, and business owners to solicit and incorporate feedback and input on signage text
- Develop branding to be included with the wayfinding signage
- Continue the momentum from the nearly complete wayfinding study completed with grant assistance from the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative

Process

- Apply for grants, or utilize ARPA money (secure funding)
- Implement a Wayfinding and Signage Program
- Generate a map showing sign type, specific text, locations of signs in Downtown. Include confirmation signs, turn signs, and decision sign types. Include signage to/from the Rail Trail
- Record which sign was installed in which location and what the precise text wording says. Use this document to ensure maintenance over time
- Promote the new wayfinding signage on the Chamber of Commerce website
- Fabricate and install signage



*A recently completed draft wayfinding plan in Groton, CT
Source: BETA Group, Inc.*



Downtown Concord, NH has pedestrian-oriented wayfinding signage in the historic downtown that includes the number of minutes to reach each destination by foot

Source: <https://twitter.com/BrentToderian/status/971842182742122496/photo/2>

4.4 Develop A Parking Management Plan

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - "Downtown Rockland"
Origin		Jennifer Constable, Town of Rockland, Assistant Town Administrator, First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000). Funds will be sought for a study with prioritized recommendations.
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years) - 1-6 months to release a RFP and retain a consultant, 6-12 months for the study, 1-3 years to implement safety upgrades
Risk		Low Risk – Parking improvements are unlikely to be controversial among the public
Key Performance Indicators		1) Completion of a Parking Management Study
Partners & Resources		Town of Rockland Planning Department, Rockland Chamber of Commerce, Local business owners and building owners, Highway Department



Parking was widely available on the day of the Phase One field analysis

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

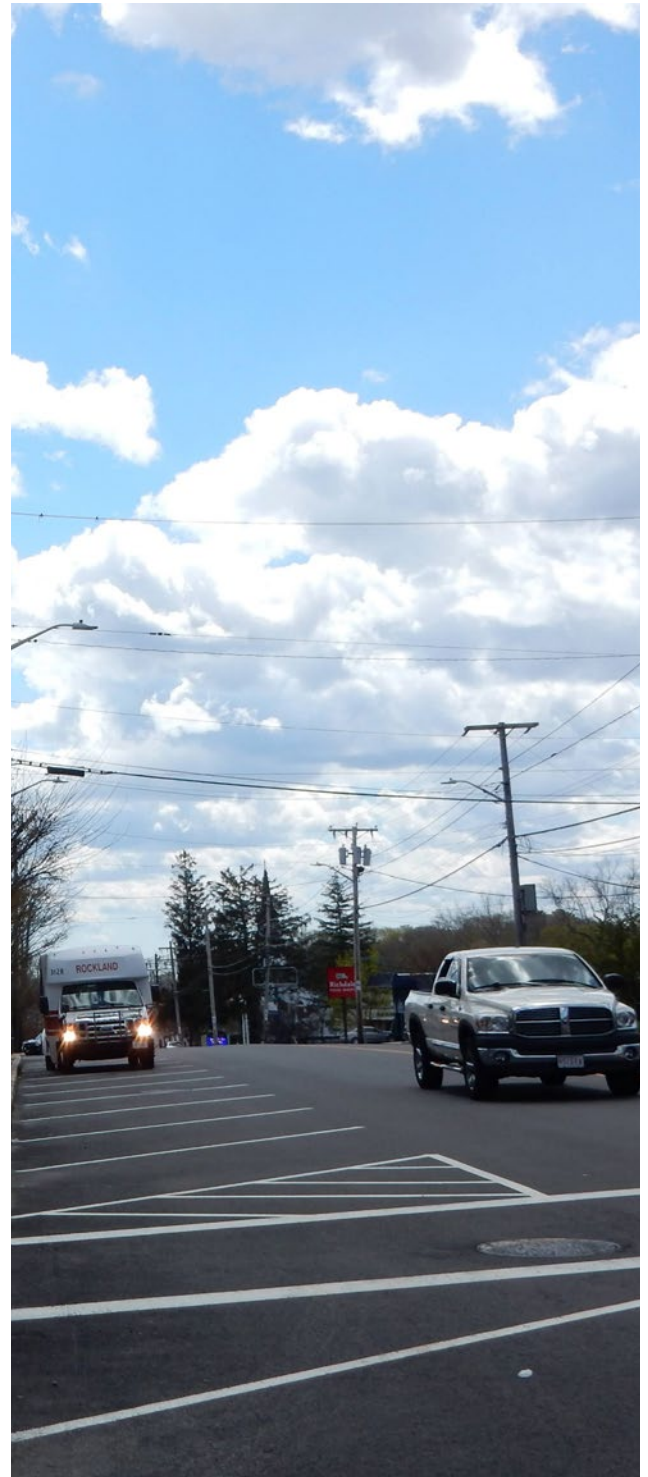
- 63% of business owner survey respondents indicated a decline in revenue as a result of COVID-19
- 88% of business owner survey respondents indicated a reduction in capacity or hours of operations as a result of COVID-19
- A parking management plan is needed to improve parking and traffic operations for both events and typical weekdays and weekends
- Improving parking and curb side operations and increasing parking supply will improve access and safety for customers to businesses and events

Action Items

- Improving the turnover of parking spaces will help improve customer parking for businesses
- Identify the goals, study area, scope of work, schedule, and funding to develop a parking management plan
- Identify Town department/commission/committee to oversee undertaking the parking management plan

Process

- Identify budget and funding source for parking management plan
- Develop a Request for Proposal to hire a transportation consulting firm to assist the Town in developing the plan
- Hold Kick-off meeting with Town and consultant to review goals, scope, study area, and schedule for the plan
- Solicit input from businesses, residents, and stakeholders on draft and final recommendations of the plan
- Evaluate the potential to convert head-in diagonal on-street parking to parallel parking
- Develop implementation strategy for parking recommendations
- Town to formally adopt and approve parking management plan



4.5 Host Additional Events

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - "Downtown Rockland"
Origin		Jennifer Constable, Town of Rockland, Assistant Town Administrator, First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback
Budget		Low Budget (\$50,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (Less than 5 years) - 6 months planning, 6-12 months implementation
Risk		Low Risk – The risk for this project category is relatively low
Key Performance Indicators		Increasing the number of events will drive foot traffic into businesses
Partners & Resources		Town of Rockland Planning Department, Rockland Chamber of Commerce, Local business owners and building owners, Relmagine Rockland



Events in Northfield, MA draw substantial crowds including the Drive-In Circus event pictured here

Source: <https://www.recorder.com/Northfield-Drive-In-circus-event-an-opportunity-to-enjoy--more-of-a-normal-summer--41304356>

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- Business survey and public meeting identified arts and cultural events as a successful way to generate additional foot traffic in the downtown area
- Generating additional foot traffic in the downtown area is a critical way to directly support businesses who were impacted by shutdowns and restrictions as a result of COVID-19. Increased foot traffic will drive sales, increase revenues, and lift struggling businesses out of the economic slump caused by COVID-19 related shutdowns and restrictions
- 63% of business owner survey respondents indicated a decline in revenue as a result of COVID-19
- 88% of business owner survey respondents indicated a reduction in capacity or hours of operations as a result of COVID-19

Action Items

- Identify areas for events, schedule minor improvements with Department of Public Works staff
- Engage a committee to examine arts / cultural events, holiday events
- Continue to hold existing events including Rockland Day, the concert series, and others

Process

- Identify Town department staff responsible for leading the coordination effort
- Examine opportunities for funding events, including arts, culture, and tourism councils
- Obtain funding for engagement and promotional materials such as MassDevelopment Seed Grants
- Work with ReImagine Rockland and the existing event organizers who contribute to the many successful existing events including Rockland Day, Holiday Stroll, Farmer's Market, etc. to continue to coordinate and discuss best practices for future events



Bulldog Pride Celebration event in Rockland

Source: <https://www.reimagine-rockland.com/>

4.6 Pop-up Shops Program

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - "Downtown Rockland"
Origin		Jennifer Constable, Town of Rockland, Assistant Town Administrator, First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (1 - 5 years). 6 months for strategic planning, 3 months for pop-up vendor solicitation, 3 months for pop-up space build out, 6 months
Risk		Medium Risk – Some risk involved in utilizing Town or Chamber of Commerce resources to help temporarily fill empty commercial and retail stores
Key Performance Indicators		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increase in foot traffic 2) Increase in sales and revenue at neighboring food and retail businesses 3) Possible long-term tenancy at formerly vacant properties 4) Positive feedback among landlords / building owners, the public
Partners & Resources		Town of Rockland Planning Department, Rockland Chamber of Commerce, Local business owners and building owners, ReImagine Rockland



The Corner Spot in Ashland is an example that the Town Economic Development Director should explore for further insight

Source: <https://thecornerspotashland.com/>

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- 63% of business owner survey respondents indicated a decline in revenue as a result of COVID-19
- 88% of business owner survey respondents indicated a reduction in capacity or hours of operations as a result of COVID-19

Action Items

- The project will attract small businesses that provide services not currently available
- Pop-up stores may be unfamiliar but can build a loyal following. Residents that champion the businesses and engage with town and Chamber of Commerce officials to choose additional businesses will have a voice in what types of businesses come to these spaces and ultimately which businesses thrive as a part of the program

Process

- Critical questions that need to be answered before the project begins include:
 - » How is the Town identifying locations?
 - » Is the Town helping to connect plaza owners and pop up opportunities? What does that process look like?
- Organize a small group of stakeholders representing local government, economic development, small business, real estate, tourism, marketing, and design/web/social media sectors to spearhead the project. Ensure representation from diverse and often under-represented groups such as low-income, minority, women, and LGBTQ residents and business owners as part of the steering committee
- Initiate a fundraising campaign to cover three months of rent for seven pop-up vendors. Build relationships with building owners to negotiate reduced rent in vacant stores for a specified period (ideally 90 days) with graduated rent for the first year made available to pop-ups that agree to stay into Year 2
- Engage internal marketing/design/web/social media experts or engage a pro bono consultant to create a website and social media campaign to promote the project. Develop marketing materials to help vendors understand community dynamics and ensure a good fit between their products or services and local resident and visitor interests

- Involve community members early in the process to increase buy-in around the project. As part of that, appoint a community ambassador to each location that can acquaint incoming business owners with neighbors, resources, and town amenities
- Create a social media campaign once pop-ups are in place and encourage businesses to offer incentives to stimulate repeat and returning patronage. Examples include coupons, sale days, promotions, and experiential offerings
- Gather regular feedback from consumers and vendors about the pop-ups' presence and impact on local culture, so that changes can be made in real time to respond to consumer demands and vendor needs. Use surveys that include rewards for respondents, and which can be activated at pop-up shops, to increase response rate
- Incentivize successful pop-ups to permanently relocate by adding a pitch competition that would bring additional funding to projects after the pilot period ends

4.7 Create Outdoor Dining and Shared Spaces

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - "Downtown Rockland"
Origin		Jennifer Constable, Town of Rockland, Assistant Town Administrator, First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000). Funds will be sought for the planning, design, and purchasing of street area outdoor dining equipment.
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years) - 1-4 months for planning, 4-12 months for implementation
Risk		Low Risk – The temporary re-purposing of parking spaces for street dining isn't without controversy, but will likely be popular before COVID-19 is fully over and no longer part of daily life
Key Performance Indicators		1) Number of new seating and dining areas established 2) Positive feedback from businesses and patrons
Partners & Resources		Town of Rockland Planning Department, Rockland Chamber of Commerce, Local business owners and building owners, Relmagine Rockland



Leonard Street in Belmont, MA offers robust outdoor dining options in (temporary) formerly parallel street parking spaces

Source: <https://www.bostonchefs.com/run-down/heated-outdoor-dining-boston-cambridge-fall-winter/>

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- 63% of business owner survey respondents indicated a decline in revenue as a result of COVID-19
- 88% of business owner survey respondents indicated a reduction in capacity or hours of operations as a result of COVID-19. The business owner survey indicated that changes in streetscape and sidewalks was one of the top-rated responses to improve the physical environment
- Providing additional outdoor dining opportunities would create a sense of place in Rockland which would allow patrons to sit, rest, and socialize. This would increase visitors and foot traffic which would help improve business at other stores and shops

Action Items

- Evaluate areas in Rockland that can be potentially used for outdoor dining and seating
- Identify potential funding sources
- Identify time frame for implementation (for example April-November)

Process

- Identify lead Town department and other departments to be involved
- Conduct an inventory of existing public spaces and sidewalks in Downtown Rockland to identify potential areas for outdoor dining and seating
- Identify parking or travel lanes that can potentially be repurposed for outdoor dining and seating area
- Identify areas for weekend street closures to provide temporary pedestrian-only blocks with outdoor dining, seating, and entertainment
- Evaluate potential impacts to traffic patterns and parking
- Identify temporary traffic and parking signage needed
- Identify cost and potential funding sources, including private foundations for purchase of chairs, tables, lights, heaters, barriers, signs, etc.
- Reach out to businesses to receive feedback on potential impacts
- Develop a schedule for implementation and notify businesses and the public
- Develop promotion materials for event kick-off
- Install outdoor dining and seating areas, barriers, and traffic and parking signs
- Monitor operations and make adjustments as necessary
- Review results and consider adopting areas for permanent installation
- Create a node at Union Street and the Hanover Branch Rail Trail crossing
- Identify potential for weekend street closures
- Projects can be coordinated with streetscape improvements



Union Street in Rockland includes a wide right-of-way, presenting opportunities for outdoor dining within the public realm

4.8 Public Art & Culture Campaign

Category		Public Realm & Arts + Culture
Location		LRRP Study Area - "Downtown Rockland"
Origin		Jennifer Constable, Town of Rockland, Assistant Town Administrator, First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback
Budget		Medium (\$50,000 - \$200,000). \$20,000 is sought to administer the program and \$100,000 is sought to compensate the artists and fund the installation of substantial pieces on publicly owned property (outdoors)
Timeframe		Short Term (1 - 5 years) - 6-12 months planning, 12-48 months implementation
Risk		Low Risk – Some risk involved in locating suitable locations for temporary vs. permanent artists' installations
Key Performance Indicators		1) Number of artists' applications per funding cycle 2) Number of successful installations in programs first 24 months
Partners & Resources		Town of Rockland Planning Department, Rockland Chamber of Commerce, Local business owners and building owners

Left: A mural painted by a local Boston artist
Right: A mural at Northeastern University



Source: <https://www.wbur.org/news/2016/08/29/boston-best-public-art>

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- Public art can create a sense of place and pride in a community, which is an important step when rebuilding the economic foundation of Downtown Rockland that was heavily impacted by COVID-19
- Bringing artists into municipal beautification projects can encourage activity in downtown commercial and retail areas
- A grant-funded artist installation program will provide local artists with fair compensation for their work and inject money into the local economy
- Utilizing public talent to effect change in the urban environment is a great way to create buzz and a reason for folks to come and visit the downtown area to see the new pieces
- Local artists were hard hit during COVID-19 related shutdowns and restrictions. Compensating artists for possible future works would be a direct revenue stream for area artists / residents

Action Items

- Establish a dedicated staff member to administer the project, and assign this person the role of Artist Liaison - the one stop shop for those navigating the permit application process
- Remain flexible and build flexibility into the application process - artists are good creative problem solvers, and traditional municipally-led grant application programs often are not
- Release a "Call for Submissions" and ensure that it is spread out through the Town website, on social media, and on paper flyers in different neighborhoods and in different languages
- Identify public lands, and / or privately owned spaces suitable for 3-dimensional artists' pieces or murals
- Develop the program materials, including an application, and a payment / compensation structure for artists' time
- Release the application materials and publicize the program
- Coordinate with local artists including those with spaces in the Wright Building, Rockland Arts Center, and the Sandpaper Factory

Process

- Obtain grant funding
- Identify potential locations for public art
- Develop criteria for artists who apply to take part in the program
- Secure a variety of sites on publicly owned land and consider reaching out to privately property owners as well
- Coordinate with local artists (Rockland Arts Center, Sandpaper Factory, Wright Building)
- Release a call for applications
- Include a deadline for the applications to be submitted and require artists' to explain their piece, the media/ medium, how much it weights, if it requires electricity or plumbing, if it is 2d like a mural or 3d like a sculpture, and if it can be moved without the aid of a special vehicle
- Select winners, install the pieces, invite the press to observe and if successful, consider another round of funding for the program

Shark Girl - by Casey Riordan Millard



Source: <https://stepoutbuffalo.com/places-to-see-unique-public-art-installations-in-wny/>

4.9 Conduct a Study to Improve Transit Services

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - "Downtown Rockland"
Origin		Jennifer Constable, Town of Rockland, Assistant Town Administrator, First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback
Budget		Medium (\$50,000 - 200,000 +)
Timeframe		Short Term (1 - 5 years)
Risk		Medium Risk – Funding for bus and shuttle improvements is not guaranteed
Key Performance Indicators		1) Completion of a transit-service study
Partners & Resources		Town of Rockland Planning Department, Brockton Area Transit (BAT), MassDOT, Local senior centers, hospitals, schools, and other major area destinations

A Brockton Area Transit Bus



Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/southerncalifornian/4550365452>

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- The Rockland downtown area is not well served by transit
- The Brockton Area Transit Authority (BAT) only provides one bus shelter and route in Rockland – the Rockland Flex route which provides a flexible route schedule. The route runs between Brockton Hospital and the Rockland Community Center on Union Street in the LRRP study area. The route provides seven trips on weekdays
- There is currently no shuttle bus service or connections to the MBTA Commuter Rail Stations in Abington and South Weymouth
- Many Rockland residents rely on public transit to commute to work and reductions in transit service from COVID-19 has increased commute times and reduced reliability in service
- The proposed 40R overlay district in downtown will increase the number of residents, many of which may to rely on transit

Process

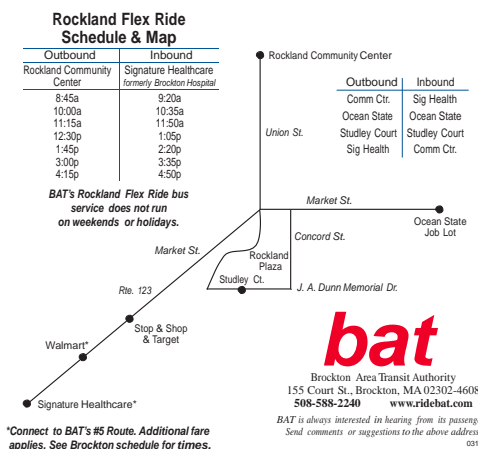
- Identify funding sources including BAT, MassDOT, private foundations, and private donations
- Study micro transit, shuttle service, and pilot programs
- Coordinate with BAT to conduct transit study to evaluate improving service to Rockland including:
 - » Bus service and connections to MBTA commuter rail stations
 - » Local shuttle service including conducting pilot program
 - » Increased service on existing Rockland Flex route
 - » Improvements and/or new bus shelters and amenities

Action Items

- Identify which Town department will lead effort to improve transit and bicycle facilities
- Identify goals, study area and scope to conduct a transit feasibility study
- Identify potential funding sources to conduct study and partners

BAT's Rockland Flex Ride Bus Schedule

BAT's Flex Ride service travels primarily on Union Street in Rockland, Monday through Friday, according to the schedule below. The Flex Ride bus will stop and wait only at the Rockland Community Center and Signature Healthcare (formerly Brockton Hospital). Also, three stops have been added, one at Ocean State Job Lot in Rockland and two on Quincy Avenue behind Signature Healthcare.



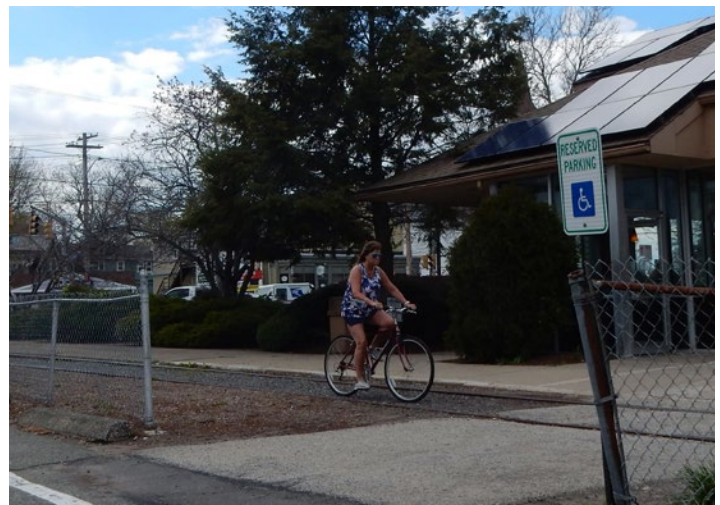
Brockton Area Transit Authority
Rockland Flex Ride Service
How to Ride • Fares • Cancellation/No-Show • Schedule
bat
Effective August 17, 2014

This limited service bus route requires users to schedule a trip 24 hours in advance

4.10 Conduct a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Category		Public Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area - "Downtown Rockland"
Origin		Jennifer Constable, Town of Rockland, Assistant Town Administrator, First LRRP Public Meeting Feedback
Budget		Medium (\$50,000 - 200,000+)
Timeframe		Short term (1 - 5 years) 1-12 months to develop a sidewalk and bicycle plan, 12 - 36 months to implement recommendations from the plan
Risk		Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators		1) Completion of a town-wide bicycle and pedestrian masterplan
Partners & Resources		Town of Rockland Planning Department, Town ADA Commission

Pedestrians and bicyclists frequent the Hanover Branch Rail Trail



Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- 63% of businesses reported a decline in revenue as a result of covid-19
- Sidewalk improvements and the introduction of bike lanes or other bicycle infrastructure to a retail zone establishes an additional method by which people can access businesses which will drive sales and revenue

Action Items

- Conduct a town wide bicycle and pedestrian master plan
- Focus prioritization in high crash locations and other locations where safety and access improvements are important
- Implement prioritized recommendations

Process

- Secure funding to develop a pedestrian and bicycle master plan
- Ensure the LRRP study area is a major focus of the plan
- Conduct in house or retain a consultant through the release of an RFP
- Work collaboratively to ensure a robust mix of sidewalk improvements, ADA compliance improvements, pedestrian signal upgrades, and bike lane, bike path, and bike parking recommendations
- Install multiple bicycle parking rack throughout the Downtown and study area
- Identify funding opportunities for implementing recommendations

Rockland has completed a variety of streetscape improvements along Union Street including new pavement and rebuilt sidewalks



5.0 Funding Sources

Funding Sources

The following funding sources are anticipated to be available specifically for COVID-19 impact-related project recommendations

American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA)

Rockland is slated to receive \$1.77 million in ARPA funding according to the Massachusetts Municipal Association. ARPA Funding can be used for direct relief related to COVID-19 impacts through the use of **Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CLFRF)** in the following five core areas

1. **Respond to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19 or its negative economic impacts** - this includes COVID-19 mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral health, and certain public health and safety staff
2. **Economic impacts of the public health emergency** - these include efforts to mitigate economic harm to workers, households, small businesses, affected industries, and the public sector
3. **Lost public sector revenue** - payments may be used to fund government services to the extent of revenue reductions from the pandemic
4. **Premium pay for essential workers** - funds may be used for additional support for those who have faced the greatest health risks because of their service in critical infrastructure sectors
5. **Water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure** - recipients may invest to improve access to clean drinking water, support wastewater and storm water infrastructure, and expand access to broadband internet:
 - » Wide range of eligible water and sewer infrastructure projects – specifically, all that would otherwise be eligible to receive financial assistance through the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) or Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)
 - » Broadband projects must provide service to unserved

and underserved households and businesses. Eligible projects are expected to be designed to deliver, upon project completion, service that reliably meets or exceeds symmetrical upload and download speeds of 100 Mbps

Potential eligible uses within these five core areas include the following expenses:

- Direct COVID-related costs (testing, contact tracing, etc.)
- Public health and safety staff
- Hiring state and local government staff up to the number of employees to pre-pandemic levels
- Assistance to unemployed workers, including job training
- Assistance to households
- Small business assistance
- Nonprofit assistance
- Aid to impacted industries
- Expenses to improve efficacy of public health or economic relief programs
- Survivor's benefits
- CLFRF funding **cannot** be used to:
 - » Replenish a "rainy day" fund or other reserve fund
 - » Make a deposit to a pension fund

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

Raleigh is moving forward with ARPA-funded projects to combat the economic downtown that was a direct result of COVID-19:

- \$400,000 in "light and sound improvements in downtown Raleigh to mitigate COVID-19 transmission by promoting more outdoor space usage"
- \$200,000 for a grant pool which "local businesses impacted by COVID-19 can apply for financial aid"
- \$250,000 will fund the "development of an ice rink in downtown Raleigh" that is anticipated to contribute to spillover economic activity in the area
- \$230,000 will be used to "fund a downtown economic development study in collaboration with the Downtown Raleigh Alliance."
- \$230,000 will fund "two new temporary fiscal analyst positions to manage federal grant compliance reports over approximately five years."

Additional Funding Sources for Various Public and Private Realm Improvement Projects

The following funding sources were included specifically for recommendations generated as part of this planning study. The list can be applied to a wide variety of public realm and private realm improvement projects.

Building Improvements Funding Sources

Hometown Grants

T-Mobile provides grants up to \$50,000 per town and may be used to rebuild or refresh community spaces, including historic buildings. Towns with populations under 50,000 are eligible to apply.

Underutilized Properties Program

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community One-Stop for Growth MassDevelopment

This funding source is for large scale projects. It could be used to help address larger buildings in a target area that have more significant issues related to deterioration, disinvestment, or ADA-compliance. Bundling this program and a few of the other more specialized grants could enable a municipality to address both large scale building interior renovations and smaller scale properties and lower cost facade improvements with a separate improvement program at the same time.

Collaborative Workspace Program

MassDevelopment

This grant provides owners and operators of collaborative work spaces up to \$100,000 for new equipment or building improvements. Alternatively, seed grants of up to \$15,000 to plan for new co-working spaces are available. This grant is an opportunity to address the exterior and the interior of a building while also helping to support existing local jobs and create new job opportunities.

Community Preservation Act

This source only applies in those communities that have adopted the CPA. CPA funds may be used to acquire, preserve, and rehabilitate and/or restore historic assets. A municipality could tie this to the design guidelines for a façade improvement program and consider, for example, acquiring a downtown historic building, updating the façade and ground floor for commercial use, and adding an elevator to allow for housing on the upper floors.

Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund

Massachusetts Historical Commission

This is a 50% reimbursable matching grant for preserving properties, landscapes, and sites listed in the State Register of Historic Preservation. Applicants are limited to municipalities and nonprofits. Many downtown and village centers include nonprofit and municipal anchors. This grant could be used to ensure that all properties in a target area are brought, over time, to the same standard of repair. The program does have limitation on allowable costs. A preservation restriction is required.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant Program is a federally funded, competitive grant program designed to help small cities and towns meet a broad range of community development needs. The Community Development Fund (CDF) awards grants to communities throughout the Commonwealth. This program helps

eligible cities and towns to meet a broad range of community development needs in housing, infrastructure, revitalization, economic development and public social services. It supports CDBG eligible activities and encourages applicants to develop coordinated, integrated and creative solutions to local problems. Mini-entitlement communities through on a formula calculation based on a high statistical indication of need, poverty rate and size. Eligible CDBG projects include but are not limited to:

- 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 by persons with disabilities

Massachusetts Downtown Initiative

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community One-Stop for Growth Department of Housing and Community Development

All communities are eligible to apply. This program provides technical assistance and design services for a variety of downtown improvement elements. MDI staff will assign a consultant to assist the community with the technical services, which could include studying and generating a range of design options and offering a blueprint for how to move forward. The next application round opens in the spring. In 2018, Foxborough, North Chelmsford, and Winchendon received grant awards for wayfinding.

Commonwealth Places Program

MassDevelopment

This competitive grant advances locally driven placemaking projects in downtown and neighborhood commercial districts in eligible communities throughout Massachusetts. The aim of Commonwealth Places Resurgent Places is 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.

- Seed grants available from \$250 - \$7,500
- Implementation grants available up to \$50,000
- Successful examples of this grant include:
 - » Marlborough received \$15,000 for wayfinding and branding strategy development

-
- » Greenfield received funding used by the Greenfield Business Association for reimbursing restaurants to purchase outdoor dining furniture

Community Preservation Act

This source only applies in those communities that have adopted the CPA. CPA grants can fund projects that enhance local arts and cultural infrastructure and contribute to economic revitalization - including public art, placemaking, and stabilization or organizations and creative business collectives.

Alternative Funding Programs

The following funding programs are grouped as alternative because they either do not stem directly from a local or regional agency or governing body or they do not directly fund the type of proposed improvement projects recommended in this report.

Local Banks and other Community Development Financial Institutions

Local banks with a community development financing program for small businesses may be able to help provide low or no interest loans to small businesses for their share of the improvements, especially for a storefront or sign upgrade. The focus of the program at each bank is different; contact your local bank(s) and discuss how they could participate in investing in the community.

Business Improvement District (BID) or Other Downtown District

Funds from a BID may be used for planters, trash and recycling receptacles, sanitation and maintenance staff, graffiti removal, storefront facades, windows, doors, and sign maintenance, and a variety of other elements.

Municipal Vacant Storefronts Program

Economic Assistance Coordinating Council

This program is intended to encourage municipalities experiencing an economic downturn and a high rate of vacancies to apply to officially form a Certified Vacant Storefront District. Businesses within the district then apply for refundable tax credits to address vacant storefronts. This could help reduce the number of vacant storefronts while a separate façade improvement program addresses accessibility, deferred maintenance, and design issues on the exterior or the site.

Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit

Massachusetts Historical Commission

This is available for significant rehabilitation of historic buildings and may help supplement a larger project in a downtown. The guidelines developed for the municipal façade/storefront improvement program could be incorporated into the review of larger projects.

Summary

The above funding sources may be used to fund a variety of public and private realm improvement programs, maintenance, and streetscape improvements. While many of the above funding sources could be leveraged in combination with other funds to develop a façade improvement program, the list in general was developed with a wide variety of improvement projects in mind.

See funding spreadsheet in the Appendix for comprehensive list of possible funding sources provided by Department of Housing and Community Development.

Appendix

APPENDIX A - Comprehensive Funding Spreadsheet

APPENDIX B - Parking Space Count + Parking Policy Recommendations from
Downtown Rockland Strategy Report (2019)

APPENDIX C - Innes Associates Subject Matter Experts Materials

APPENDIX D - Everett, MA Storefront Design Guidelines

APPENDIX E - Public Presentations

Appendix

APPENDIX A - Comprehensive Funding Spreadsheet

Name of Fund	Available for RRP Projects	Funding Sector	Agency/ Organization	Maximum Eligible Grant Amount per Applicant	Eligible Applicants	Description/Allowable Use of Funds
Cultural Facilities Fund (Systems Replacements)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council	See grant.	Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, and colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	For 20-year capital needs assessments of buildings and mechanical systems.
Cultural Facilities Fund (Capital Grants)	No Longer Available	Public	Massachusetts Cultural Council	See grant.	Nonprofit Organizations 501(c)(3) engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences; municipalities, and colleges or universities that own cultural facilities	For the acquisition, design, construction, repair, renovation, and rehabilitation of a cultural facility.
Real Estate Services Technical Assistance	No Longer Available	Public	Mass Development	\$10,000	Eligible applicants include municipal officials, planners, local stakeholders, and others.	Grants may be used toward technical assistance opportunities in Surplus Property Reuse (e.g. Constraints and Feasibility Analysis, Master Planning, Test Fits, RFP/Q Assistance) or Local District Management Implementation Technical Assistance (e.g. District Improvement Financing, Business Improvement District formation)
Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency/FEMA	See grant.	Property Owners	To reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes, and other structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
MA Downtown Initiative Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$25,000	Municipalities	Technical assistance for downtown revitalization in 6 categories
Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency/FEMA	See grant.	Property Owners	Hazard mitigation projects reducing the risks from disasters and natural hazards

Community Preservation Act	Yes	Public	Community Preservation Trust Fund/State Department of Revenue (DOR)	See grant.	Only communities that have adopted the Community Preservation Act are eligible to receive CPA Trust Fund matching funds annually.	To preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities.
BIZ-M-POWER	Yes	Public	Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation	\$20,000	Small businesses (i.e. employing 1-20 FTE employees, including 1 or more of whom owns the business, annual revenue not exceeding \$2,500,000) in brick-and-mortar (physical) establishment operating within Massachusetts	To assist low-income and moderate-income entrepreneurs with their acquisition, expansion, improvement or lease of a facility, purchase or lease of equipment, or with meeting other capital needs of a business.
Competitive Tourism Grants	Yes	Public	Economic Development Administration	\$10,000,000	See grant.	<p>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.</p> <p>EDA's travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation grants will be delivered through two components: (1) State Tourism Grants and (2) EDA Competitive Tourism Grants.</p>

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.	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Hometown Grant Program	Yes	Private	T-Mobile	\$50,000	Towns with population <50,000	To build/rebuild/refresh community spaces that help foster local connections in town.
Brownfields Redevelopment Site Assessment Fund	Maybe	Public	Mass Development	\$100,000	See grant.	To finance the environmental assessment of brownfield sites in Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) of the Commonwealth

Community Development Block Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	\$1,350,000	Municipalities with a population of under 50,000 that do not receive CDBG funds directly from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Municipalities may also apply on behalf of a specific developer or property owner.	A broad range of community development needs - including projects such as housing rehabilitation or development; micro-enterprise or other business assistance; infrastructure; community/public facilities; public social services; planning; removal of architectural barriers to allow access; downtown or area revitalization
Brownfields Redevelopment Remediation Fund	Maybe	Public	Mass Development	\$500,000	See grant.	To finance the remediation of brownfield sites in Economically Distressed Areas (EDAs) of the Commonwealth
Housing Development Incentive Program	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Department of Housing & Community Development	See grant.	Developers (projects located in Gateway Cities)	Tax incentive to undertake new construction or substantial rehabilitation of properties for lease or sale as multi-unit market rate residential housing
Abandoned Housing Initiative Strategic Demolition Fund Grant	Maybe	Public	Massachusetts Attorney General's Office	\$125,000	Municipalities, Municipal Housing and Redevelopment Authorities, Nonprofit organizations	To be used for the construction of an affordable housing structure.
Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund	Maybe	Public	State Historic Preservation Office	See grant.	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	See grant.	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	See grant.	See grant.	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	See grant.	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.
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Appendix

APPENDIX B - Parking Space Count + Parking Policy Recommendations from Downtown Rockland Strategy Report (2019)

Transportation and Downtown Connections

Parking inventory around Union Street:

666

off-street spaces in major private lots within one block of Union Street

144

on-street spaces

209

off-street spaces on Town-owned property

73

off-street spaces in school lots

1,092

total parking spaces

Maximize Use of Existing Parking

Despite ample supply of private and public parking downtown, stakeholders and residents expressed concerns during interviews about parking availability and circulation. Some downtown stakeholders do not like using the public on-street parking spaces and would prefer more off-street spaces. Existing parking is provided in a variety of formats and locations, which can be difficult to navigate. In order to address this concern, a parking inventory was conducted to create a tally of public on-street spaces, public off-street spaces, private off-street spaces, and an overall total of parking in the downtown area.

Overall, public and private parking is well-distributed along downtown's blocks. Stakeholder concerns focused more on the convenience of parking, rather than the capacity. Drivers can generally find a place to park but may need to walk one or two blocks to their destination. The Town's top priority should be to increase access to, and use of, existing parking resources.

Parking should be added sparingly as little land is available, it can detract from walkability, it does not contribute directly to economic



development, and comes with significant costs. Downtown presents many opportunities for alternative ways to increase parking convenience: 1) enhancing walkability and bikability 2) improving signage indicating parking availability and 3) expanded sharing of existing parking supply.

If these strategies are unsuccessful and a future parking utilization study finds a need for more parking management or supply, then the Town should consider locating new public parking lots at that time.

Design and Install Coordinated Parking Signage



Consistent signage with a unified design could be installed at the multiple public parking areas across downtown to clearly communicate that they exist and are public. The Town should also pursue opportunities to make school parking available for public use outside of school hours and install signage indicating its availability.

Clear, consistent signage helps make public parking easier to locate and use.



(Left) The Doughboy parking lot could be a potential location for shared parking. (Right) There are existing shared parking arrangements in downtown, such as this lot shared by Bagnell Auto Supply, Rockland Public Schools, and the First Baptist Church. Signage needs to clearly explain hours and rules of access for shared parking.

Examples of private shared parking arrangements, where multiple destinations share a parking area owned by one property owner, already exist in downtown Rockland. Expanding shared parking—where the public is able to access private lots outside of business hours or access excess spaces—will help make better use of all the existing parking in downtown Rockland. Clear signage explaining hours and rules of access will be important. The Doughboy parking lot, located right on Union Street, is a potentially useful location for shared parking in a private lot.

Parking signage should be coordinated with an overall wayfinding and signage program that reflects Rockland's unique identity and contributes to placemaking.

Appendix

APPENDIX C - Innes Associates, Subject Matter Experts



Newburyport

Create or update design guidelines for a downtown, village center, or commercial corridor.






Provided by SME Consultant

Emily Keys Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND, Innes Associates Ltd.

Location

Any downtown, commercial corridor, or village center.

Origin	Innes Associates Ltd.	
Budget		Low (less than \$50,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (1-5 years)
Risk		Medium
Budget: Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Costs will include the consultant's time, if a consultant is used. If the design guidelines are fully incorporated into the municipal zoning bylaw or ordinance, review by municipal council is recommended.The range for the consultant's time is between \$20,000-\$50,000, depending on the level of public engagement and how illustrative the code is. Review by municipal council may be covered by the municipal on-call agreement or may need to be added to the cost of the project.	

Budget: Sources

In addition to municipal funds, the following are appropriate sources:

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Assistance to small businesses includes loans, grants, in-kind assistance, technical assistance, or other services. These funds should cover assistance with the design of façade, storefront, or site improvements when tied to a specific impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Creating or revising design guidelines may be linked to a façade/storefront improvement program. Possible impacts are addressed in the sections on Key Performance Indicators and Diagnostic.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts One Stop for Growth Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (project limit \$25,000) Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

All communities are eligible to apply. Some of the funding for this program is reserved for non-entitlement Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) communities. MDI staff will assign a consultant to assist the community with the technical services, which would include developing the design guidelines. The MDI grant should be sufficient for the full project for a smaller community unless the community is looking for a more extensive set of illustrations or a significant public engagement process. A larger community may need additional funding.

Community Planning Grants (project limit \$25,000-\$75,000) Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

A Community Planning Grant may be used for Zoning Review and Updates, which could include design guidelines if it is part of the municipality's zoning bylaws or ordinance. In 2021, the priorities for this grant included mitigation of climate change through zoning and other regulations; design guidelines and standards integrated into the municipality's zoning and incorporating elements to reduce the impact of climate change would qualify.

District Local Technical Assistance Grant Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) and DHCD

Funds for this program are allocated to the regional planning agencies. These funds may be used for planning projects. Each RPA has a different focus on how these funds may be used to meet the state's funding goals.

All municipalities are eligible to apply directly to their RPA. The RPA will work with the municipality on the program; a separate consultant is not usually required.

Survey and Planning Grant Program Massachusetts Historical Commission

This grant is a 50/50 matching program that support planning activities that help preserve significant historic resources. For communities, whose target area contains significant resources, this source may help fund design guidelines that include specific requirements for the preservation of significant historic resources. Interested communities are encouraged to reach out to the Massachusetts Historic Commission directly about this grant; it may be tied to the creation of a local historic district.

Complete Streets Funding Program Massachusetts Department of Transportation

Design guidelines do not have to be limited to the private realm. Creating consistency in a downtown, village, or corridor is an important part of defining its identity both within and beyond the community. As part of a Complete Streets Project, a municipality should identify the specific materials, street furniture, trees, and public signage (including wayfinding) that will be used in the target area. These choices can be incorporated into the overall design guidelines to address both public and private realms.

Risk: Explanation

The risk for this project is in part dependent on the form of government and whether the design guidelines will be an advisory document or incorporated into the zoning bylaw/ordinance as specific standards.

The highest risk would be a Town form of government in which the design guidelines become part of the zoning bylaws and municipal regulations have been controversial in the community.

In general, experienced developers and builders like the predictability of a clear set of design guidelines which is consistently applied by a municipality. Property owners with less development experience are likely to have more concerns.

A second risk category is creating design guidelines that are too restrictive. This sends a negative message to those who are considering investing in the community. Guidelines that are too subjective send a similar negative message in that applicants cannot be certain as to how the guidelines will apply to them.

Key Performance Indicators

Design guidelines help reinforce a community's identity and provide a clear message that the municipality is balancing the needs of the community with a streamlined approval process for new development. Codifying community values about the physical environment into the guidelines allows applicants to present proposals for new construction, rehabilitation, or adaptive reuse that are consistent with those values.

KPIs for this project could include the following:

- Successful adoption of the new design guidelines.
- Increase in the number of applications that are consistent with the design guidelines.
- Decrease in the number of meetings dedicated to design in the site plan or special permit approval process.
- Increase in the number of buildings constructed, renovated, or rehabilitated that meet the design guidelines.

If this project is accompanied by a façade/storefront improvement project, additional KPI related to the number of façades or storefronts improved under the program could be added. Without such a program, changes will take more time as they will be dependent on applications for approval process that trigger the use of the guidelines. Without an application for site plan, special permit, and/or PUD approval, property owners are not obligated to meet the design guidelines.

Partners & Resources

- Municipal staff (planning and economic development, building and/or zoning inspector)
- Municipal boards (City Council/Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Design Review Board, Economic Development Committee)
- Property/business owners
- Downtown organizations

Diagnostic

Creating or updating design guidelines and combining the update with financial assistance to property owners to update buildings and sites to be consistent with the new guidelines addresses several negative economic impacts of the COVID - 19 pandemic.

Design guidelines can sometime be seen primarily as an aesthetic requirement. However, they can also have significant impacts on the economic and public health of an area, both of which are directly related to the continuing impacts of the pandemic:

- Small businesses in deteriorating downtowns, villages, and corridors are less likely to recover quickly because of a perception of a lack of safety or viability. Design guidelines that are responsive to community identity will reinforce a revitalized, vibrant area.
- Design guidelines that include landscape requirements can help improve air quality and reduce the heat island effect, improving public health for people who live, work, and shop in the target area.
- Design guidelines can also address accessibility for people with physical disabilities by requiring appropriate access that is well-integrated into the building and the site.
- Tools such as outdoor dining, outdoor retail display, serving windows, and upgraded HVAC systems can be integrated into the design guidelines to encourage permanent solutions that address the health and safety of the target area.

<p>Action Item</p>	<p>Key actions include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand why the municipality feels that design guidelines are necessary. Is this part of a façade/sign improvement program, a new local historic district, and/or to control new development in an existing area? What are the areas of greatest concern? • Decide whether this is a project that can be done in-house or requires a consultant with appropriate expertise. • Decide which funding source is appropriate and, if the source is a grant program, apply for funds. • If a consultant is deemed appropriate, go through the Commonwealth’s procurement process (unless the grant program has an on-call consultant). • Identify the people/organizations who need to be part of this process. • Develop an engagement process appropriate for the municipality and the required approval process. • Once the design guidelines have been approved, consider a public education program to inform people on a regular basis about the new requirements and their implications. Key targets for this campaign include property owners and real estate brokers.
<p>Process</p>	<p>The timeframe will vary depending on whether the municipality has a city form of government or requires Town Meeting to approve bylaw changes (and of course, whether the design guidelines are specifically incorporated into the zoning). From the kick-off to entering the municipal approval process, the project should take 8-12 months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Months 1-2: Review existing zoning bylaws for embedded design guidelines and standards; develop inventory of historic and current buildings and site treatments; interview municipal staff, boards with approval responsibility, former applicants, local land use lawyers, others with relevant experience and concerns. • Months 3-4: Research appropriate precedents; develop public outreach/engagement program. Consider a public kick-off/charrette, depending on the needs of the community. Discuss the thresholds for use and the appropriate review body and process. • Months 5-7: Engage with business/property owners and public on options and concerns; develop draft guidelines; develop illustrations. Decide (with municipality) whether design guidelines are a separate, advisory document or part of the zoning bylaw/ordinance. If the guidelines are integrated into the zoning, decide whether illustrations are part of the zoning or a separate document. Consider meeting with the appropriate boards to introduce the draft design guidelines and receive feedback. • Months 8-9: Revise the design guidelines to its final draft prior to the municipal approval process. Publicize the final draft prior to City Council/Town Meeting review and approval.

Example 1: Town Center Design Guidelines

Sterling, Massachusetts

Town Contact

Domenica Tatasciore

Town Planner

dtatasciore@sterling-ma.gov

Consultant


Innes Associates Ltd./Harriman

Cost

\$15,000 (Massachusetts Downtown Initiative)

Characteristics

- Advisory
- Applicable to Town Center only
- Includes discussion of design elements for public right-of-way
- References historic buildings as context for new development.




Rehabilitation

- Changes to a building façade should be consistent with the original architectural style and the principles of composition that are typically associated with that style as evidenced in precedents and relevant examples.
- Contemporary materials and components may be appropriate if they are visually compatible with the historic components.
- Additions should be distinguishable from the original building, although roof forms should be compatible with the original building.
- Building cornice lines should be maintained, preserved, or recreated to define building façades and create façade components consistent with historic parapet or cornice lines, as originally designed and built in the Town Center (see page 25 for definitions).

Storefront Composition

Storefronts should clearly indicate to passersby the function of the business, whether retail, restaurant, or service. Windows should be large and not blocked by signs or shades at eye level. Both windows and entry should have appropriate lighting. Elements that tie the street to the building, such as awnings, window boxes, and projecting signs, are strongly encouraged.

- Materials should be selected to be compatible with or complementary to the Town Center. Storefronts should fit within the building frame as formed by columns, piers, and cornices.
- Where it is appropriate for the existing or proposed architectural style, a base panel and sill course should be provided; the base panels and sill course should continue across the entire width of the storefront bay and terminate at doors or the vertical elements framing the bay.
- Storefronts with recessed entryways to ground floor commercial spaces should be preserved or restored to their original format; the recess should remain open for the full height of the ground floor story; signs, panels, or other features should not shorten the height of the recess.
- Storefront windows and doors should be transparent. They should not be mirrored, use tinted glass, or be obstructed by curtains or shades.



Storefront: Base, Middle, Top

22 Town Center Design Guidelines, Town of Sterling June 2021

Courtesy of the Town of Sterling, Innes Associates, and Harriman

Example 2: Residential Design Guidelines

Arlington, Massachusetts

Town Contact

Jenny Raitt

Director

Department of Planning and Community Development

jraitt@town.arlington.ma.us

Consultant

Harriman

Cost

\$49,000


Characteristics

- Advisory
- Applicable to Residential zoning districts
- Included analysis of neighborhood characteristics
- Included in-depth public outreach

Principle C-1 (continued)

Building elements such as entrances, roofs, dormers, and windows should be used in a way to help the house to feel welcoming and active.

Dormers and other Roof Elements




a. gable dormer set back from the edge of the roof
b. shed dormer set back from the edge of the roof
c. shed dormer set back from the edge of the roof

Definition

A dormer is a roofed structure that projects vertically beyond the plane of a pitched roof. It usually has a window or multiple windows and is used to increase usable space in the attic or roof space. Two common types of dormers are **gable** and **shed**. Other roof elements include chimneys and other defining features of certain styles, such as turrets.

Encourage

- Well-proportioned dormer: Dormers should be a detail on the roof rather than the dominant feature.
- Consistent dormer types: Use similar dormer types and level of detailing to dormers on surrounding houses, if applicable. Match dormer type to roof type and pitch.
- Setback from the roof: To reduce their appearance, dormers, especially larger shed dormers, should be set back. Existing eye line to remain continuous. Small wall dormers are acceptable to be flush with the front wall.
- Dormer alignment: Line up dormers and windows with existing elements on the wall below.



Dormers are set back from roof and are lined with windows to meet historic design objectives.

Discourage

- Large dormers: Inconsistent dormers can disrupt the streetscape pattern. Dormers should not occupy more than half the width of the roof.
- Inconsistent dormer types: Multiple, conflicting styles of dormers.
- Undersized windows: Small windows and lack of detailing on dormers can create too much blank space. Windows should extend from the top to bottom of the dormer.

While the height of the dormer is too large relative to the house, dormer is too large relative to the house. Source: Google Earth.

36 | Arlington Residential Design Guidelines

Courtesy of the Town of Arlington and Harriman

Example 3: Dedham Square Design Guidelines

Dedham, Massachusetts

Town Contact

Jeremy Rosenberger

Town Planner

jrosenberger@dedham-ma.gov

Consultant

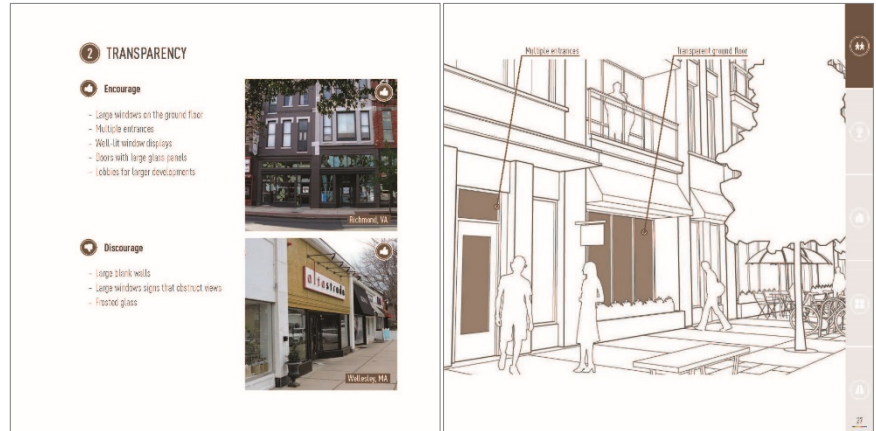
Gamble Associates

Cost

Unknown

Characteristics

- Advisory
- Applicable to Dedham Square and gateway streets
- Includes discussion of design elements for pocket parks and connections to open spaces.
- References historic development patterns.



Courtesy of the Town of Dedham and Gamble Associates

Example 4: Kendall Square Design Guidelines

Cambridge, Massachusetts

City Contact

Jeff Roberts

Zoning and Development Director

Community Development Department

jroberts@cambridge.gov

Consultant

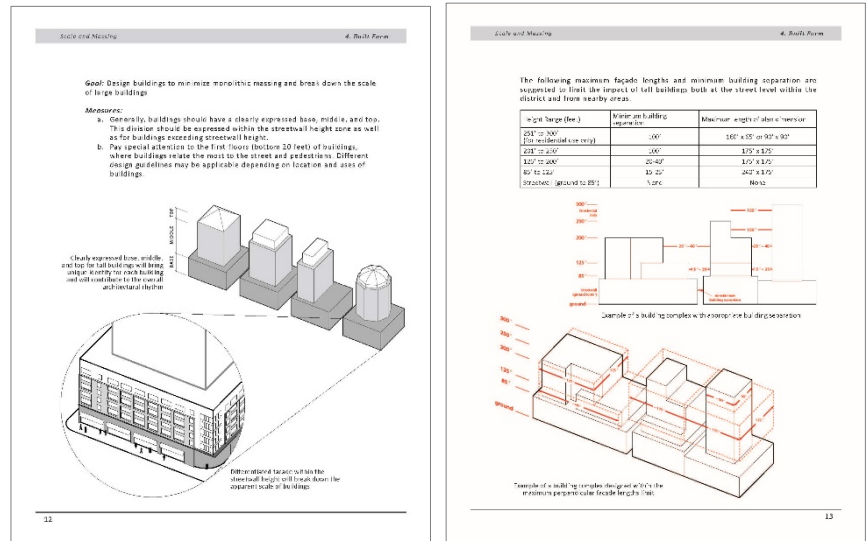
Goody Clancy

Cost

Unknown

Characteristics

- Tied to zoning, including special permit and PUD applications
- Applicable to Kendall Square
- Addresses different building uses, including residential and academic buildings.



Courtesy of the City of Cambridge and Goody Clancy



Andover

Develop a façade/storefront/site improvement program.



Provided by SME Consultant

Emily Keys Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND, Innes Associates Ltd.

Location

Any downtown, commercial corridor, or village center.

Origin	Innes Associates Ltd.
Budget	<div>  Low (less than \$50,000)  Medium (\$50,000-\$200,000) </div>
Timeframe	<div>  Short Term (1-5 years) </div>
Risk	<div>  Medium </div>
Budget: Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop design guidelines for the façade elements to be improved. • Develop the structure of the program. • Manage the program over time. • Design assistance. • Implementation, including construction. • Displacement protection programs.

In addition to municipal funds, the following are appropriate sources:

Funding Sources for All Façade Improvement Programs

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Assistance to small businesses includes loans, grants, in-kind assistance, technical assistance, or other services. These funds should cover assistance with the design of façade, storefront, or site improvements when tied to a specific impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Possible impacts are addressed in the sections on **Key Performance Indicators** and **Diagnostic**.

Hometown Grants

T-Mobile

This program will fund up to \$50,000 per town and may be used to rebuild or refresh community spaces, including historic buildings.

<https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/hometown-grants>

Local Banks and other Community Development Financial Institutions

Local banks with a community development financing program for small businesses may be able to help provide low or no interest loans to small businesses for their share of the improvements, especially for a storefront or sign upgrade. The focus of the program at each bank is different; contact your local bank(s) and discuss how they could participate in investing in the community.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community One-Stop for Growth

Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (project limit \$25,000)

All communities are eligible to apply. Some of the funding for this program is reserved for non-entitlement Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) communities. MDI staff will assign a consultant to assist the community with the technical services, which could include creating the program, developing the design guidelines, and providing conceptual designs for improvements, depending on the complexity of the project. This program could be used to develop the design guidelines for the façade improvement program.

Business Improvement District or Other Downtown District

Funds from a BID may be used for a façade improvement program.

Funding Sources that May be Leveraged

A façade improvement program may be used to address components of the façade (including awnings and signs), a storefront system, accessibility, the entire façade or façades visible from a public way, and/or components of the site (including signage, planters, restriping for outdoor dining or retail display, or adding more permanent landscaping). However, within a target area such as a downtown, corridor, or other commercial area, some buildings may have more extensive needs. For example, many historic buildings require elevators for access to upper floors. Other buildings may require structural repairs to the façade or interior.

The sources on the next page are examples that can work in tandem with a façade improvement program to address buildings with larger needs.

Budget: Leveraging Other Sources

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community One-Stop for Growth: Underutilized Properties Program

MassDevelopment

As with the historic tax credits below, this funding source is for a much larger project. It could be used to help address larger buildings in a target area that have more significant issues. Bundling this program and a few of the other more specialized grants could help a municipality address smaller properties with the façade improvement program and larger ones with these more targeted funds.

Municipal Vacant Storefronts Program

Economic Assistance Coordinating Council

This program will not fund façade improvements. The municipality would form a district. Businesses the district then apply for the funds to address vacant storefronts. This could help reduce the number of vacant storefronts while the façade improvement program addresses accessibility, deferred maintenance, and design issues on the exterior or the site.

Collaborative Workspace Program

MassDevelopment

This grant provides another option to address both the exterior and the interior of this space while also helping to support local jobs and job creation.

Community Preservation Act

This source only applies in those communities that have adopted the CPA. CPA funds may be used to acquire, preserve, and rehabilitate and/or restore historic assets. A municipality could tie this to the design guidelines for a façade improvement program and consider, for example, acquiring a downtown historic building, updating the façade and ground floor for commercial use, and adding an elevator to allow for housing on the upper floors.

Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund

Massachusetts Historical Commission (project limit \$3,000-\$100,000, depending on project type)

This is a 50% reimbursable matching grant for preserving properties, landscapes, and sites listed in the State Register of Historic Preservation.

Applicants are limited to municipalities and nonprofits. Many downtown and village centers include nonprofit and municipal anchors. This grant could be used to ensure that all properties in a target area are brought, over time, to the same standard of repair. The program does have limitation on allowable costs. A preservation restriction is required.

Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit

Massachusetts Historical Commission

This is available for significant rehabilitation of historic buildings and may help supplement a larger project in a downtown. This is included in this best practice sheet because the guidelines developed for the municipal façade/storefront improvement program could be incorporated into the review of larger projects.

Risk: Explanation

The risk level depends on the community and the relationships of the property owners with the municipality. The highest level of risk occurs in conversations with property owners; for various reasons, the owners of the most distressed properties may be reluctant to participate. Once funding is secured and a few projects have been successfully completed, this risk level is likely to drop. Early engagement with property and business owners will also reduce this level of risk.

Some communities have indicated that that owners will not want to participate in programs funded by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds because of the number of requirements. Communities using these funds should consider helping with the paperwork and providing a list of local designers and contractors who meet the program's eligibility requirements.

Façade improvements can also be about community values relative to the physical space; a third level of risk occurs within the community conversations around the design standards for the program. In some communities, a façade improvement program may be an implementation step in an earlier planning process. In others, developing a community vision for the area before creating the program will be necessary to receive support for the program.

The final risk is the displacement of smaller businesses as property values, and rents, increase to match the upgrades to the physical environment. Since many smaller businesses are often also local businesses, improvements without protection for those small businesses may result in attractive, but empty, storefronts. Municipalities should consider structuring the criteria for participation in their façade improvement programs to reduce the risk of displacement.

Key Performance Indicators

Improvements as a result of these programs include safety, accessibility, pedestrian comfort, and aesthetics. Over time, upgrades to façades and sites contribute to a perception that an area is vibrant, safe, and attractive to businesses and their customers. The increase in value attracts investment and contributes to a higher tax base.

KPI for this project could include the following:

- Creation of the program.
- Number of applicants over a specific timeframe.
- Number of façades, storefronts, and/or sites improved within a specific timeframe.
- Maintenance of the improvements after a set number of years.
- Increase in visitors to the target area.
- Increase in sales at the property/business improved and within the target area.
- Ability to extend the program to other commercial areas within the municipality (if appropriate).
- If anti-displacement measures are included in the program:
 - Number of local businesses within improved properties that are still there after a set number of years.
 - Number of new local businesses that have started or relocated to the target area within a set number of years.

Partners & Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal staff (planning and economic development, building and/or zoning inspector) • Municipal boards (City Council/Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Design Review Board, Economic Development Committee) • Property/business owners • Downtown organizations
Diagnostic	<p>Reasons for undertaking a façade or storefront improvement program may include one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements to address the transmissibility of COVID-19, such as new windows, doors, or HVAC system may be unaffordable to a small business owner and/or may have a negative impact on the façade if improperly sourced and installed. • On-site parking spaces are poorly organized and, if reorganized, can provide room for outdoor dining or retail display. • Local small businesses do not have the resources (time, money, expertise) to address substandard storefronts. • Distressed properties have a negative impact on people’s impression of the viability and/or safety of a business district and property owners are unable to make the improvements themselves. • Storefronts are not accessible to those who have problems with mobility, whether temporary or permanent. • Historic downtowns often have empty upper floors because of the lack of accessible elevators. A major improvement project could provide grants to address both interior and exterior accessibility. • Historic properties may have been “improved” with inappropriate materials or repairs. <p>Site improvements that reduce asphalt and add landscape can address public health issues by reducing the heat island effect, planting trees to address air quality, and using low impact design to manage stormwater onsite.</p>
Action Item	<p>The municipality needs to make certain decisions prior to and during the creation of this program. If the municipality already knows the answers, then staff can proceed with developing the program. If not, the municipality can work the decision points into a scope of work for assistance in development and perhaps managing the program. See Process for some of these questions.</p> <p>If starting from scratch, the municipality will need to accomplish the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify capacity within the municipality to guide the program and bring on additional capacity. • Develop an appropriate level of design guidelines. • Engage the businesses, property owners, and community to get buy-in for the program. • Develop the criteria for application, approval, installation, and maintenance. • Develop the funding and oversight structures.

Pre-program development

1. Identify who in the municipality will manage this program: municipal staff, existing downtown committee/organization, volunteer committee, or a hybrid.
2. If the municipality does not already have design guidelines for the area that are suitable for this program, then decide how those guidelines will be developed. Will the design guidelines be just for the façade improvement program, or will they be more broadly applicable?
Note that the entity managing this process does not have to be the municipality. For example, a Community Development Corporation or other nonprofit could sponsor the program.
3. Discuss the potential focus of the program: components of a storefront, the entire storefront, the entire façade, all façades, the site? Will signage, lighting, awnings and other smaller elements be included? Will interior improvements to address accessibility be included?
4. Discuss what will not be eligible. Eligibility may also be determined by the funding source (for example, CDBG funds).
5. Discuss the length of time that improvements must be maintained and the enforcement process for ensuring that improvements are maintained?
6. Consider the funding structures. The program can provide grants or loans to property owners/businesses for the improvements. Grants may provide a greater incentive to participate while loans (no or low interest) provide a revolving fund to assist more properties. If the property owners are less interested in the program, the municipality might consider offering grants to the first 3-5 to sign up (depending on resources) and transitioning later applicants to a loan program. This method would also allow the municipality to assist specific properties as catalysts for the rest of the target area.
7. Decide whether the guidelines and program will be developed in-house or whether the municipality will seek outside help. The funding source may determine the type of outside assistance; for example, certain programs will assign on-call consultants. For others, the municipality may need to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP).

Developing the Guidelines

1. If the municipality already has design guidelines that can be used for the façade improvement program, skip to the next section.
2. For developing the guidelines, review the Best Practices for Design Guidelines.

Developing the Program

1. Decide the following:
 - a. Grant, loan, or hybrid
 - b. Which elements will the program fund and which are the responsibility of the property owner?
 - c. What are the eligibility requirements for participating in the program?
 - d. What is the length of the program?
 - e. How long will property owners be required to maintain the improvements?
 - f. What is the enforcement procedure for maintenance? (This could be repayment of a grant or a lien on a property.)
 - g. Will the responsibility for maintenance transfer to a new owner if the property is sold?
2. Differentiating between the responsibilities of the tenant (often the small business) and the landlord (the property owner) is critical – a small business may be enthusiastic about the assistance, but the landlord may not. The municipality may need to consider parallel outreach processes.
3. Decide on the application process and how applicants will be evaluated. Are certain property types or improvements given priority over others? Make sure the process of choosing participants is transparent.
4. Develop the forms and train the people who will be evaluating the applications.

Implementation

The program can provide grants or loans to property owners/businesses for the improvements. Grants may provide a greater incentive to participate for reluctant property owners, while loans (no or low interest) provide a revolving fund to assist more properties. Some communities have indicated that requiring a match from the property owner may create longer-term support of the program.

If the property owners are less interested in the program, the municipality might consider offering grants to the first 3-5 participants to sign up (depending on resources) and transitioning later applicants to a loan program. This method would also allow the municipality to assist specific properties as catalysts for the rest of the target area.

Education of all people involved in the program needs to be an ongoing component. A municipality that is short on project management resources should consider hiring a dedicated staff member or consultant to manage this program.

Finally, the municipality should consider streamlining approvals of projects under this program to reduce the time needed for implementation.

Example 1: Sign & Façade Improvement Program

Ashland, Massachusetts

Town Contact

Beth Reynolds

Economic Development Director

breyolds@ashlandmass.com

Funding by:

Ashland Economic Development Incentive Program; funds appropriated by Town of Ashland

Structure

50% match up to \$5,000

Characteristics

- Preferred target area (high traffic streets) but is open to all businesses in Ashland.
- Includes building improvements (accessibility, signs, awnings, painting).
- Includes site improvements (parking lots, planters, landscaping)

<https://www.ashlandmass.com/669/Business-Incentive-Programs>

Note: Many existing programs use CDBG funds. Examples 1 and 2 both use municipal funding sources. Examples 3 and 4, which are both Main Streets Programs, provide a model for using historic preservation funds.

APPLICATION FOR SIGN & FAÇADE PROGRAM

Purpose:

The Sign & Façade Program was established to provide technical and financial assistance to Ashland businesses making external improvements to their establishments. This program matches up to half of the project's cost or \$5,000 (whichever is less) for facade and/or sign improvements with town funding through the Ashland Economic Development Incentive Program. In doing so, the town seeks to promote local businesses and enhance the physical appearance of Ashland.

Eligibility Requirements:

This program is open to all businesses in Ashland but targeted to properties located on viable or high-traffic areas such as Main Street, Pleasant Street, Route 125, Ford Street. The applicant must either own the property in question or have a letter of authorization for the project from the owner. Moreover, if a property is involved, there are no existing obligations to the Town (i.e., no back taxes owed, town liens, etc.).

The project must have all required town approvals and permits. There is no permit required for basic landscape improvements but please consult the building department if any structures, paving or signs that are being modified.

Examples of exterior improvements that are eligible under this program include:

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

APPLICATION:

BUSINESS INFORMATION

Name of Business:

Business Address:

Contact Name:

Contact Phone:

Contact Email:

Have incidents of the business been new or existing?

Type of Business:

PROJECT INFORMATION

Please describe the scope of work for the proposed renovation project:

Please indicate the estimated total project cost of the total amount budgeted for improvements:

Does the project require you to obtain a building permit? Attach copies of permits.

Courtesy of the Town of Ashland

Example 2: Storefront Improvement Program

Cambridge, Massachusetts

City Contact

Christina DiLisio

Project Manager

cdilisio@cambridgema.gov

Funding by:

Municipal capital funds

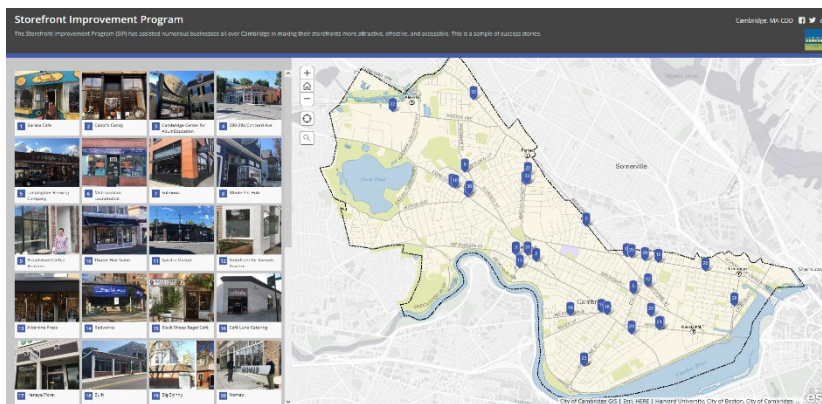
Structure

Tiered matching grants based on improvement type

Characteristics

- Includes increasing accessibility to the store (part of their Storefronts-for-All program) and improving or replacing windows and doors to address COVID-19 restrictions.
- Also recommends tax credit programs to address accessibility, historic preservation, and energy efficiency

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/econdev/smallbusinessassistance/smallbusinessprograms/storefront>



Courtesy of the City of Cambridge

Example 3: NPS Main Street Façade Improvement Grant

Main Street America

<https://www.mainstreet.org/ourwork/projectspotlight/facadeimprovements/npsgrant>

- Main Street America announced a façade improvement grant program using funds from the Historic Revitalization Subgrant Program, now the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants Program. This grant is sponsored by the National Park Service.
- This example is not given as a funding source, rather, it is an option for using historic preservation funds, such as CPA funds, to create a façade improvement program that would address the historic buildings in a target area. This option is provided because some communities were looking at non-CDBG sources for a façade improvement program. This may be a useful model for a local program.
- The site provides a link to each of the communities chosen for this program. The awards are expected to be \$25,000 per project, and the site has the preservation covenants, grant agreements, and two webinars which may be useful.

Example 4: Historic Commercial District Revolving Fund

Main Street America

<https://www.mainstreet.org/ourwork/projectspotlight/facadeimprovements/hcdrf>

- State-by-state program – in 2016, it was Texas and in 2019, it was Maine.
- This is not a funding source, but an example of a program that could serve as a model for communities with a significant number of historic buildings in their commercial centers.
- The Texas program includes a PDF of before-and-after pictures, the scope of work, and the cost for each building.
- This program also serves as a reminder that historic photos of a downtown can be used to as a base for developing design guidelines for the program, reinforcing characteristics specific and unique to each community.

Appendix



APPENDIX D - Best Practices - Everett, MA Storefront Design Guidelines



Developing storefront guidelines to energize downtown



Provided by SME Consultant Mark Favermann, Favermann Design
 Location Everett, MA

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

Diagnostic

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

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

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

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

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

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

Action Items

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



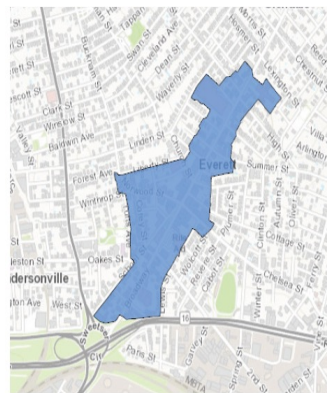
Everett Square

Applicable Commercial Areas

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

Everett Square

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



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

Process

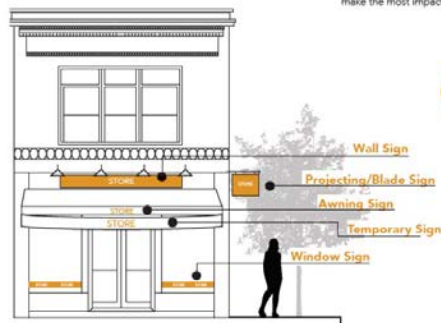
- Extensive research of other cities and towns guidelines and procedures.
- Based on best practices, create easily understandable illustrated storefront component pages that reference City of Everett regulations.
- Establish storefront element criteria through including specifically referenced dimensions,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

Signs

Signs

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

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



City Ordinance/Regulation:
Section 12.5(f) of the City Ordinance further regulates the number and size of signs. See Technical Requirements for more information.

24

Signs and Technical Requirements

Awnings

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

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



Awning Signs - Material

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

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



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

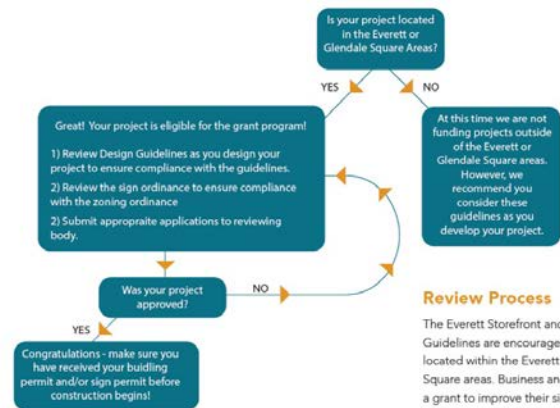


This awning is made of shiny vinyl and is not encouraged.

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

Process- Strategic Decisions

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



Review Process

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

Review Process and Grant Application

Everett Square

Before



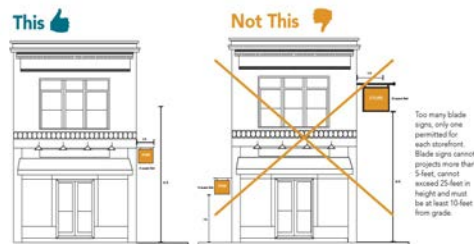
After





Projecting/Blade Signs

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



Signs and Technical Requirements

Wall Signs

Wall Signs - Height

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

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

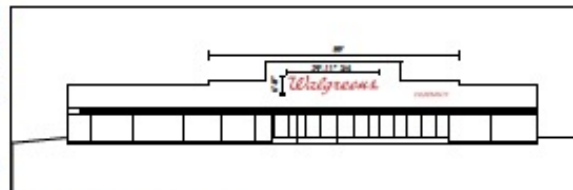


Everett MA Signage Case Study

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

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

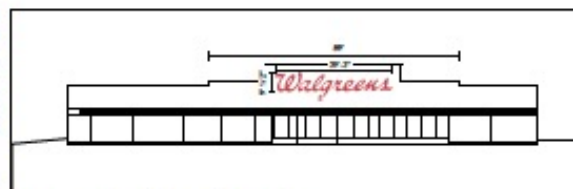
Main Sign As Shown = 199.77sf



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

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

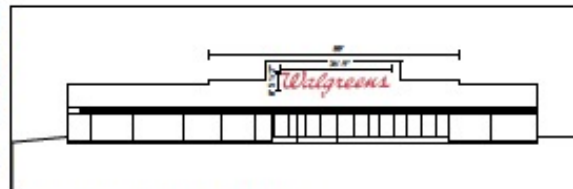
As shown = ~ 354 sf
Dimensions = 39.25' x 9.04'



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

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

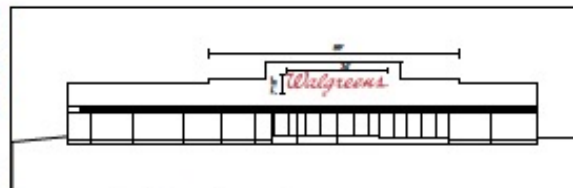
As shown = ~311.12sf
Dimensions = 36.75' x 8.47'



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

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

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



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

FAVERMANN DESIGN | DECEMBER 2019

Appendix

APPENDIX E - Public Presentations

Local Rapid Recovery Plan
Impacts of COVID-19
Rockland, Massachusetts
Downtown Rockland
June 15th, 2021

Agenda

Tonight's Meeting – 4:00-5:30PM

1. Introductions
2. Overview of Local Rapid Recovery Program
3. Schedule
4. Project Goals
5. Downtown Rockland Study Area
6. Existing Conditions: Diagnostics and Business Surveys
7. Public Comments
8. Next Steps

Project Team

BETA Group

Jeff Maxtutis

- Plan Facilitator

Charlie Creagh

- Project Planner

Town of Rockland

Jennifer Berardi-Constable

- Assistant Town Administrator

LRRP Program

Local Rapid Recovery Plan

- Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
- The Local Rapid Recovery Program (LRRP) provides municipalities an 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
- Three Phases:
 - Phase I: Diagnostic and Business Surveys
 - Phase II: Project Recommendations
 - Phase III: Plans

Schedule

Local Rapid Recovery Program

Phase I: Diagnostic and Business Surveys

- Completed between March and May

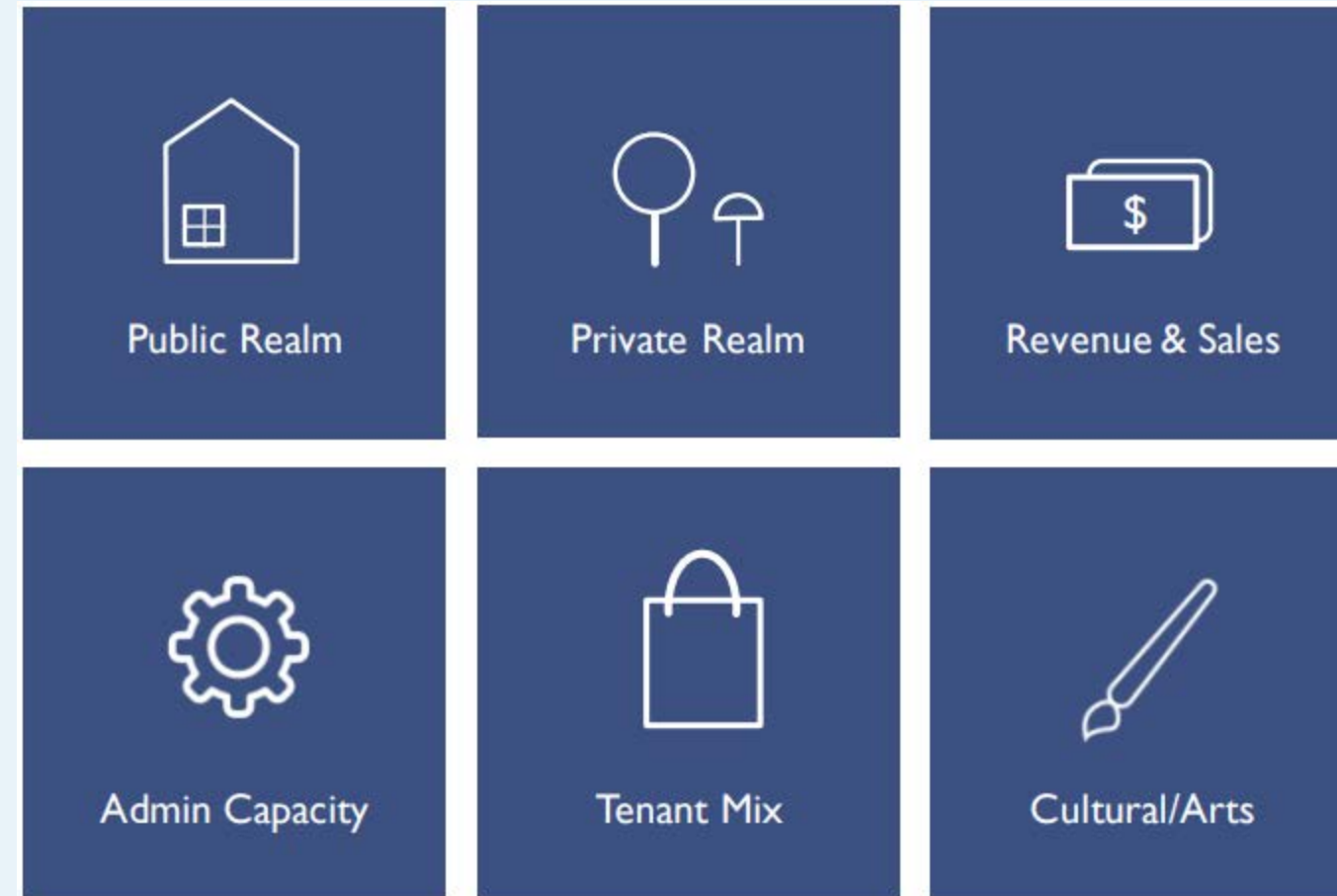
Phase II: Project Recommendations

- In progress May > June
- Gather additional input from business owners and stakeholders

Phase III: Plans

- July > August

PROJECT PLAN CATEGORIES



Goals

Local Rapid Recovery Plan

PHASES

GOALS

Phase I: Diagnostic and Business Surveys



- Collect baseline diagnostic data
- Engage stakeholders to understand COVID impacts and district concerns
- Provide an overview of on-the-ground conditions within the Study Area

Phase II: Project Recommendations



- Consult key stakeholders on priority projects
- Refine design of projects with Subject Matter Experts
- Develop final list of projects

Phase III: Plans



- Create draft of Rapid Recovery Plan
- Gather community feedback on draft Plan and Project Recommendations
- Finalize Plan for submission to commonwealth



0 0.15 0.3 Miles

Town of Rockland, MA 

Downtown Rockland - Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program

 Parcels in Study Area



Data Source: MassGIS
Issue Date: March 2021
This Map is Intended for Planning Purposes Only

Study Area





Phase I Diagnostic Category

Consumer Base:

- Who are the customers?
- What are their preferences and needs?

Data Collection Analysis

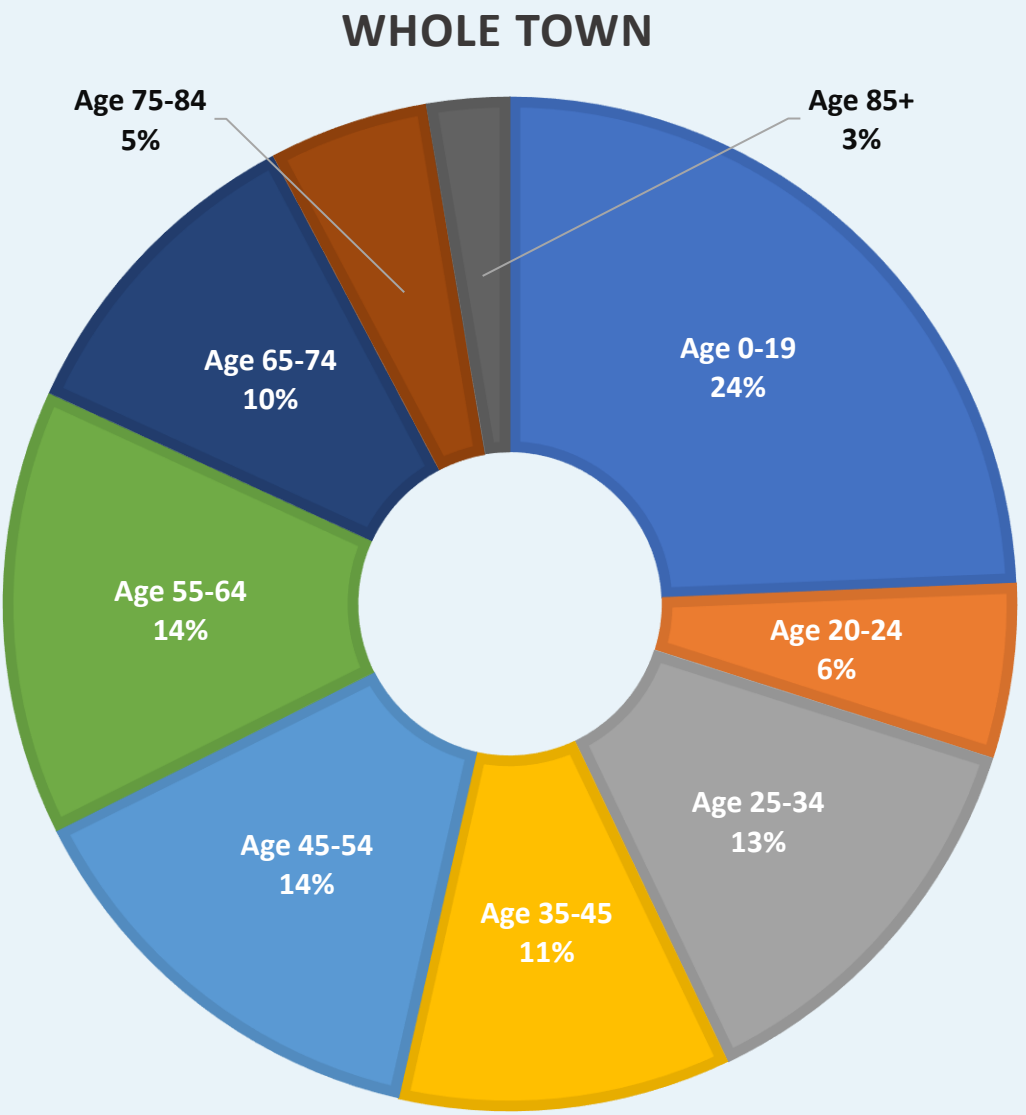
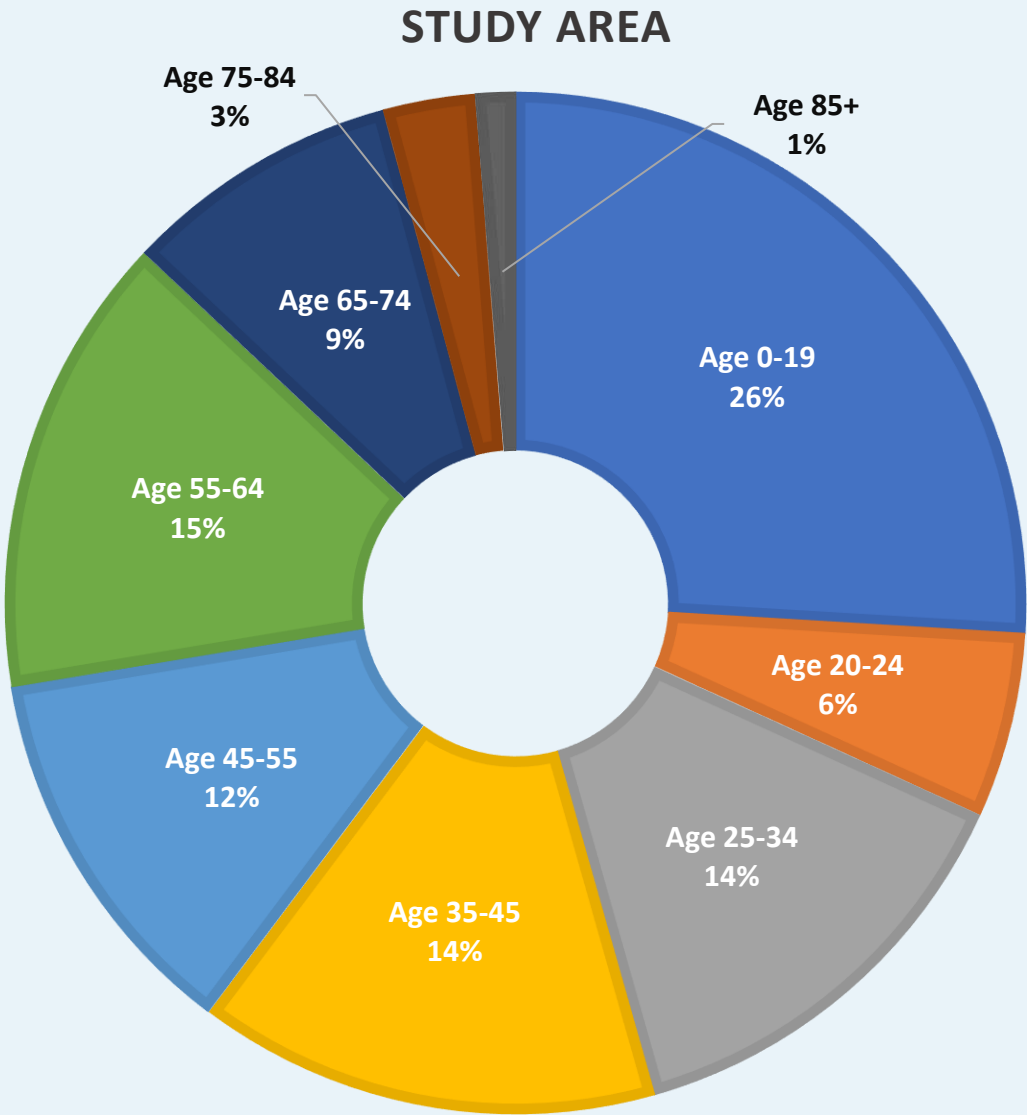
District Demographics



	Study Area	Whole Town
Total Resident Population	240	18,356
Median Household Income	\$88,247	\$82,328
Median Age	38	41
Median Household Size	3.0	2.6



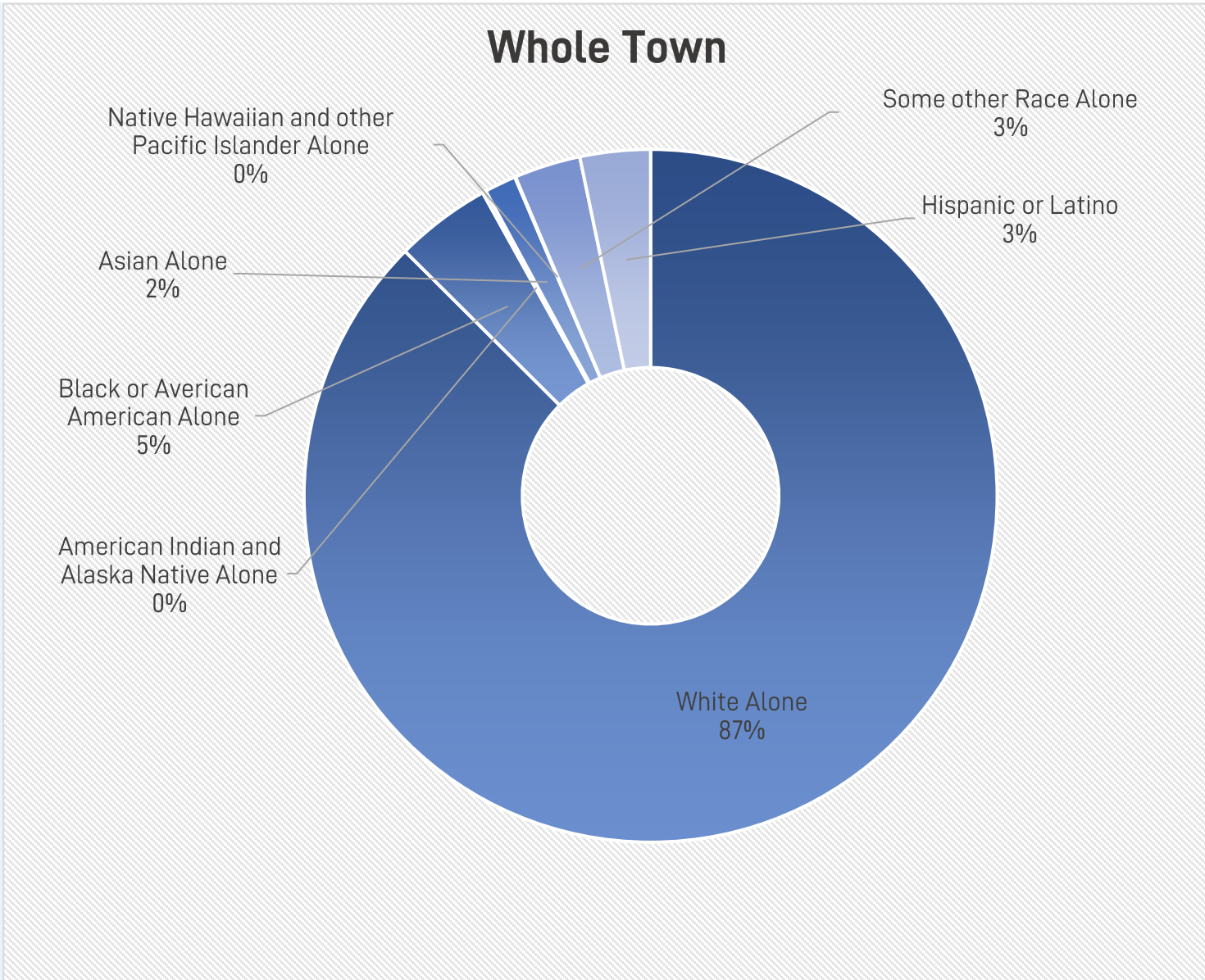
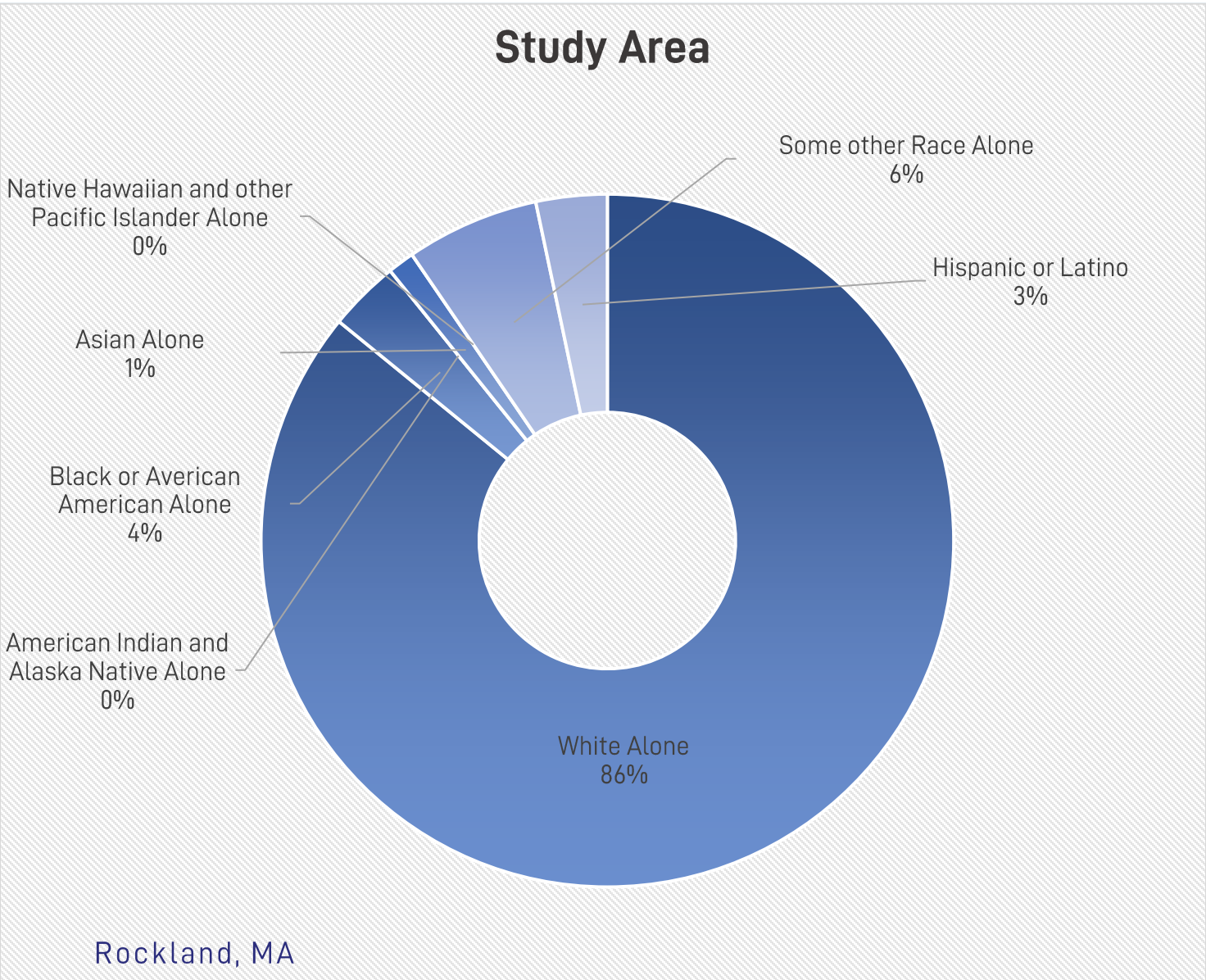
Population By Age Distribution



Data Collection Analysis



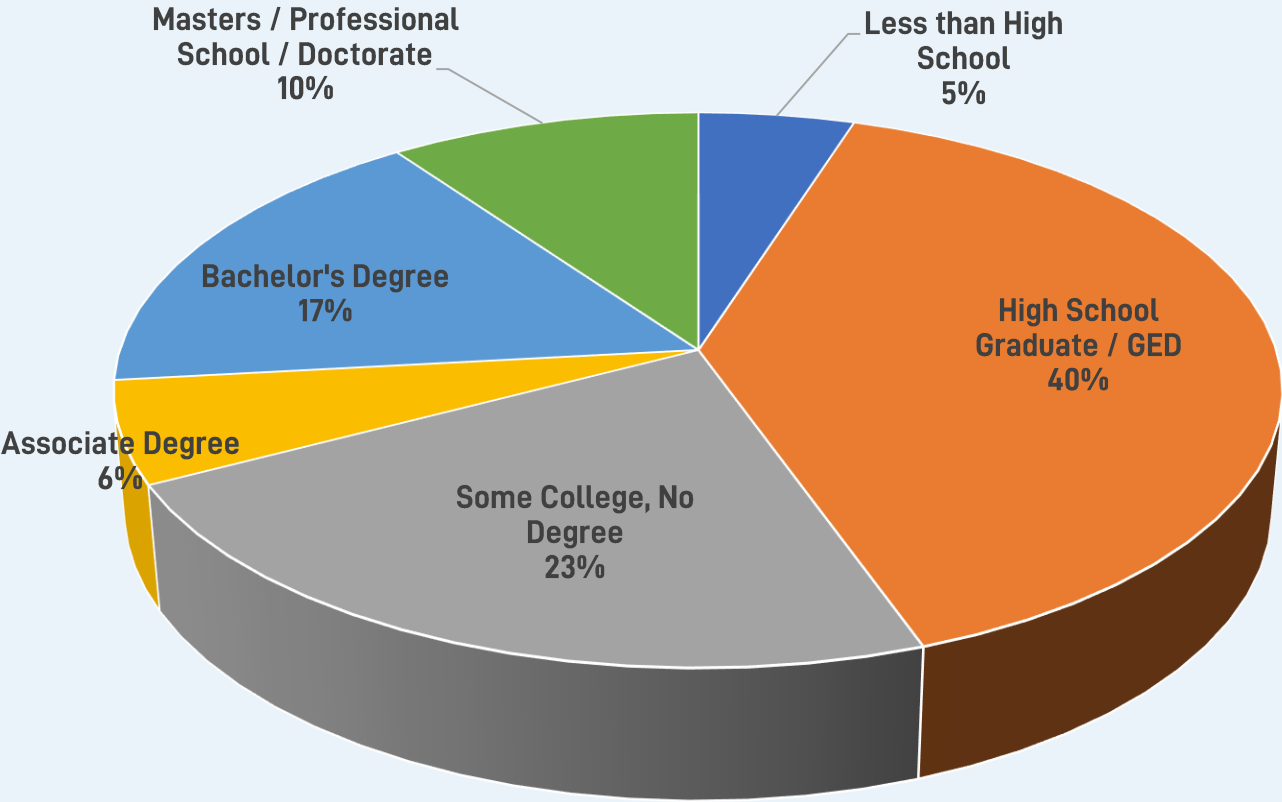
Population By Race/Ethnicity



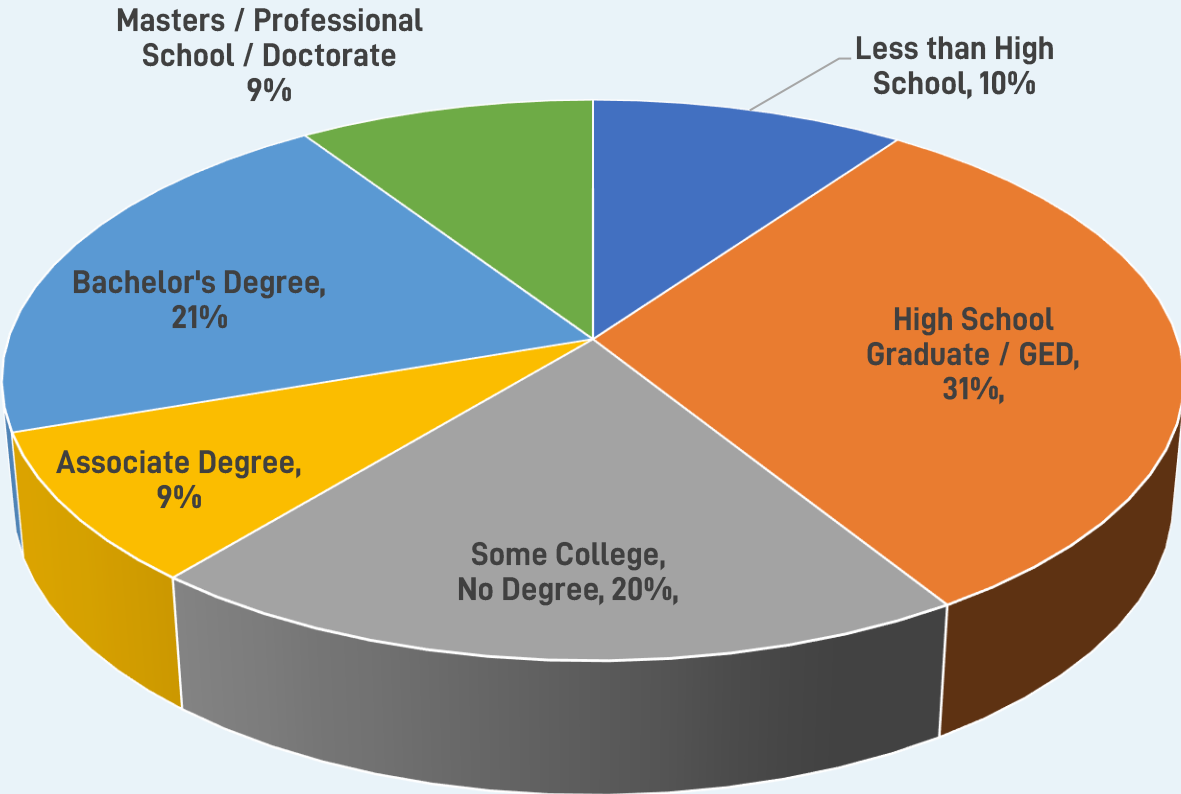


Population by Education Attainment

Study Area



Whole Town





Phase 1

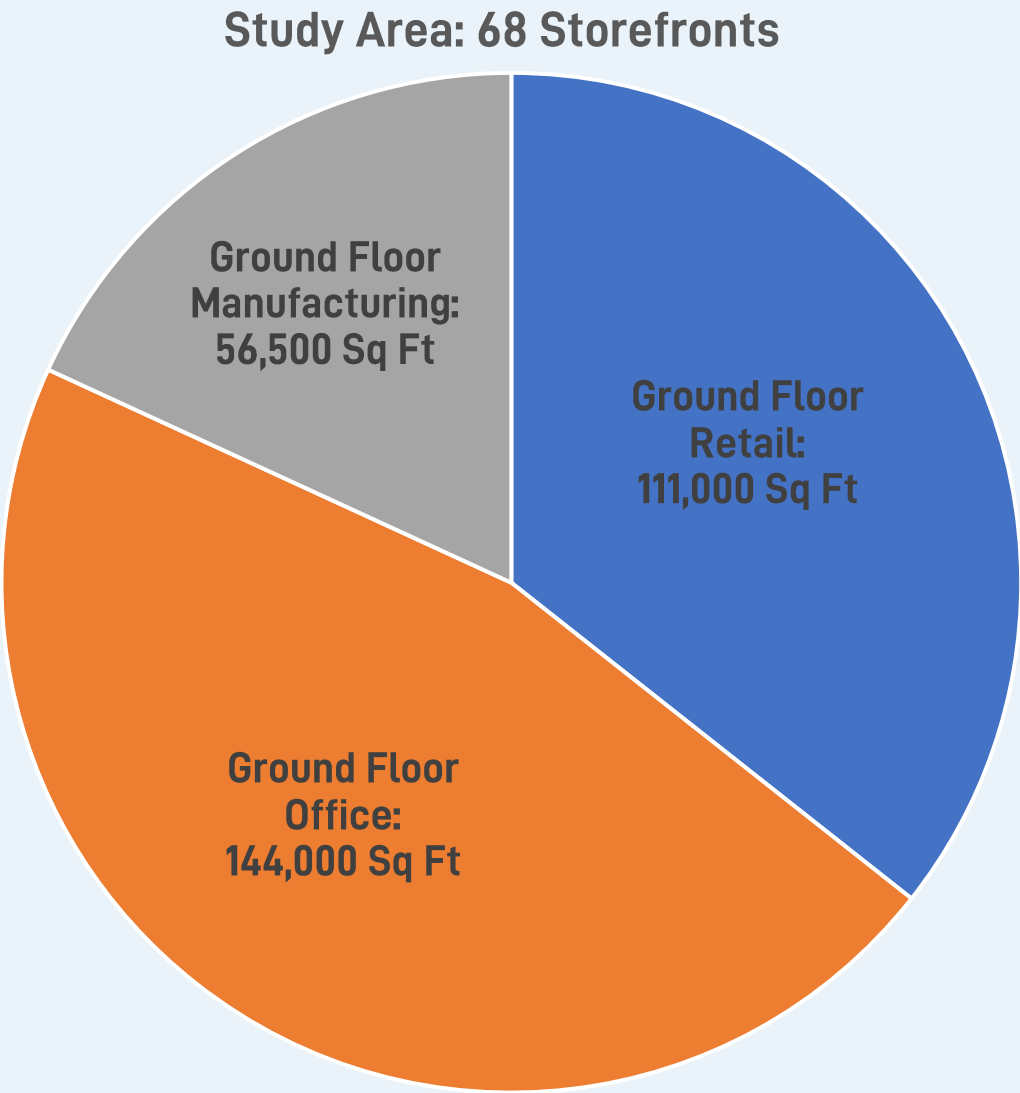
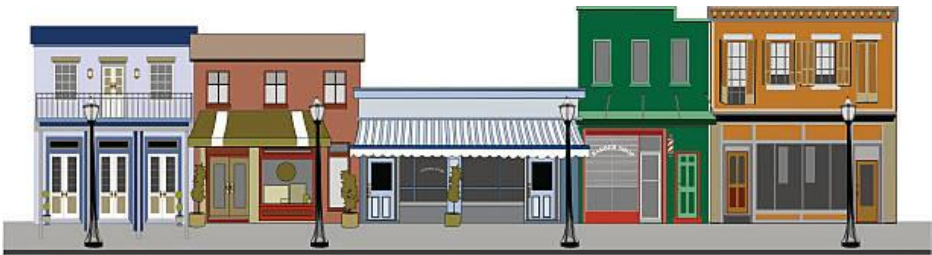
Diagnostic Category

Business Environment:

- What are impacts of COVID-19 on businesses?
- Is there an anchor, destination, or mix of businesses driving the local economy?
- How well does the business mix meet customer groups?



Storefronts



BUSINESS SURVEY REPORT

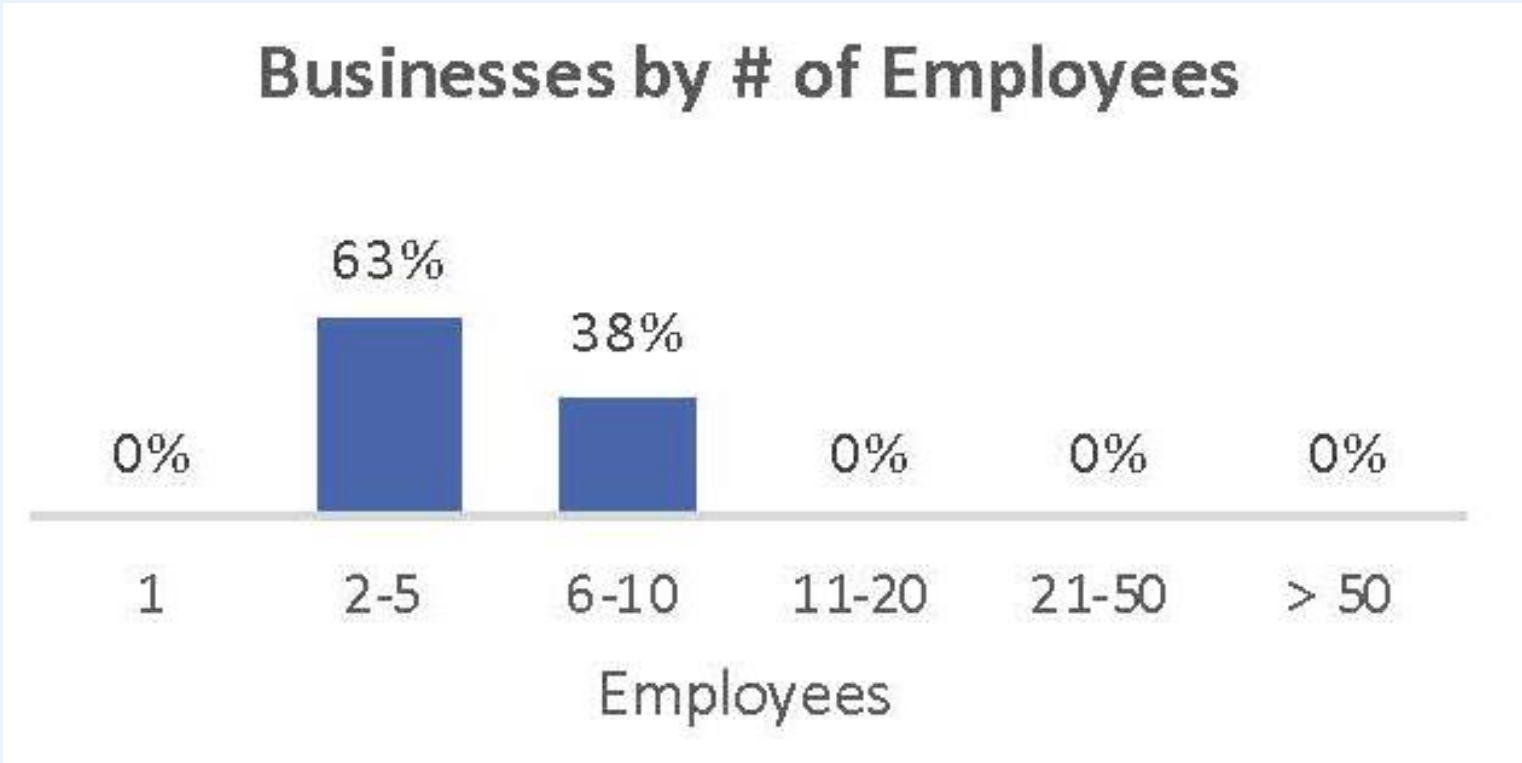


- Results of a business survey conducted during March and April of 2021
- Survey was launched by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
- To help communities develop Rapid Recovery Plans for downtowns and commercial districts
- Directed to owners or other appropriate representatives of business establishments located in the targeted commercial area

Downtown Rockland: 8 Responses

Business Characteristics - Business Size

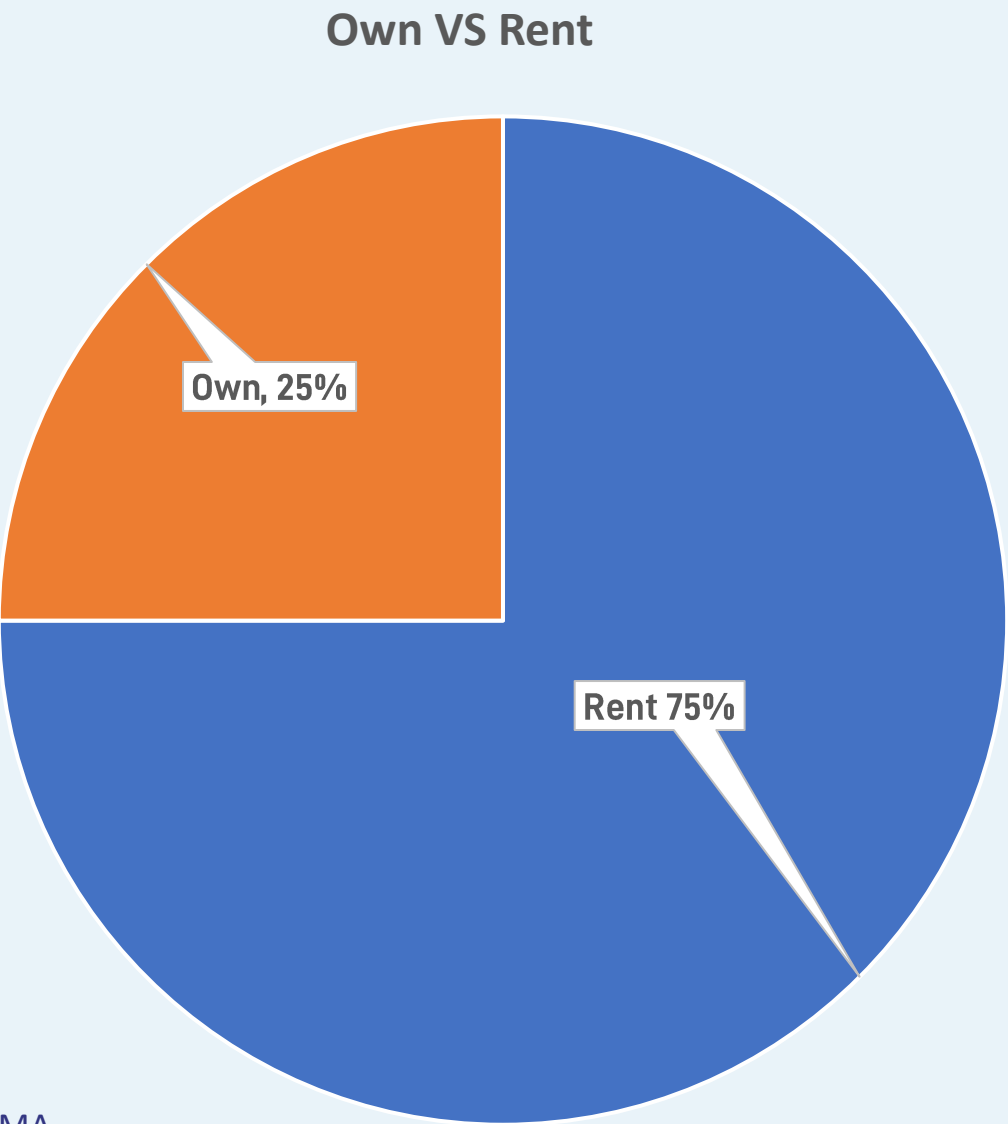
- 63% of businesses are micro-enterprises (<5 employees)



Downtown Rockland: 8 Responses

Business Characteristics - Business Own VS Rent

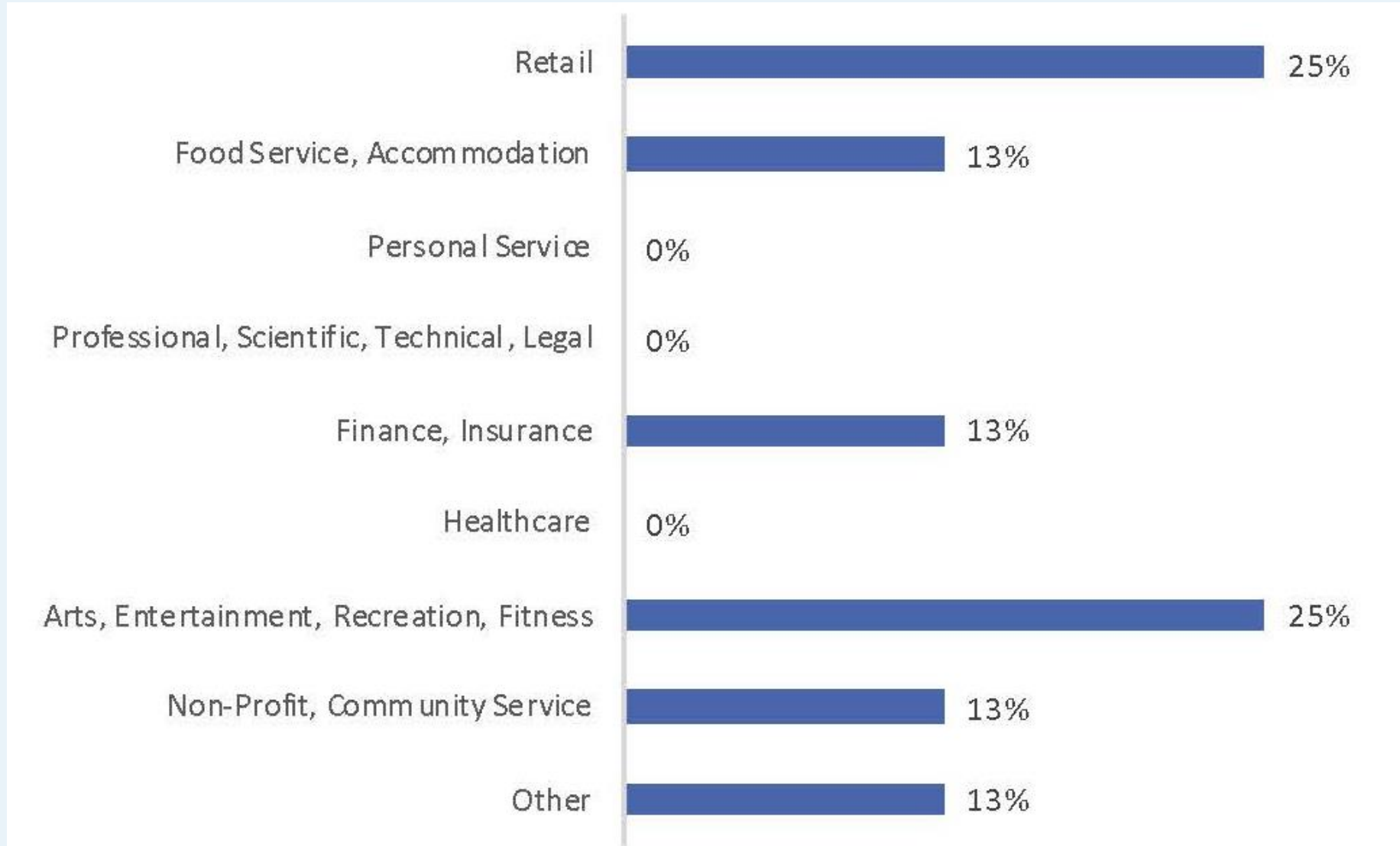
- 75% of businesses rent their space



Downtown Rockland: 8 Responses

Business Characteristics - Businesses by Type

- Mostly Retail & Arts / Entertainment / Recreation / Fitness

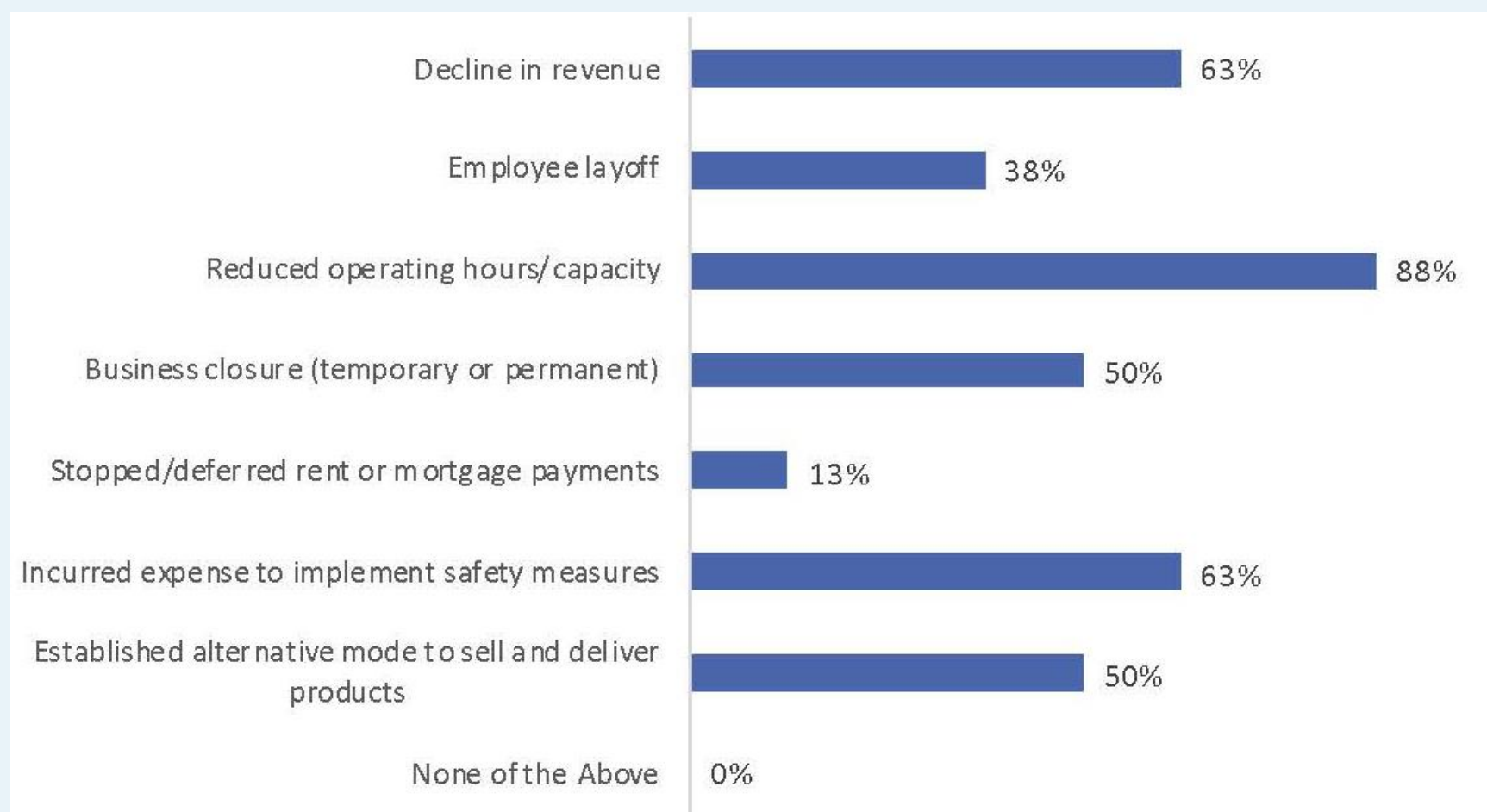


Downtown Rockland: 8 Responses

Reported Impacts

- 100% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID

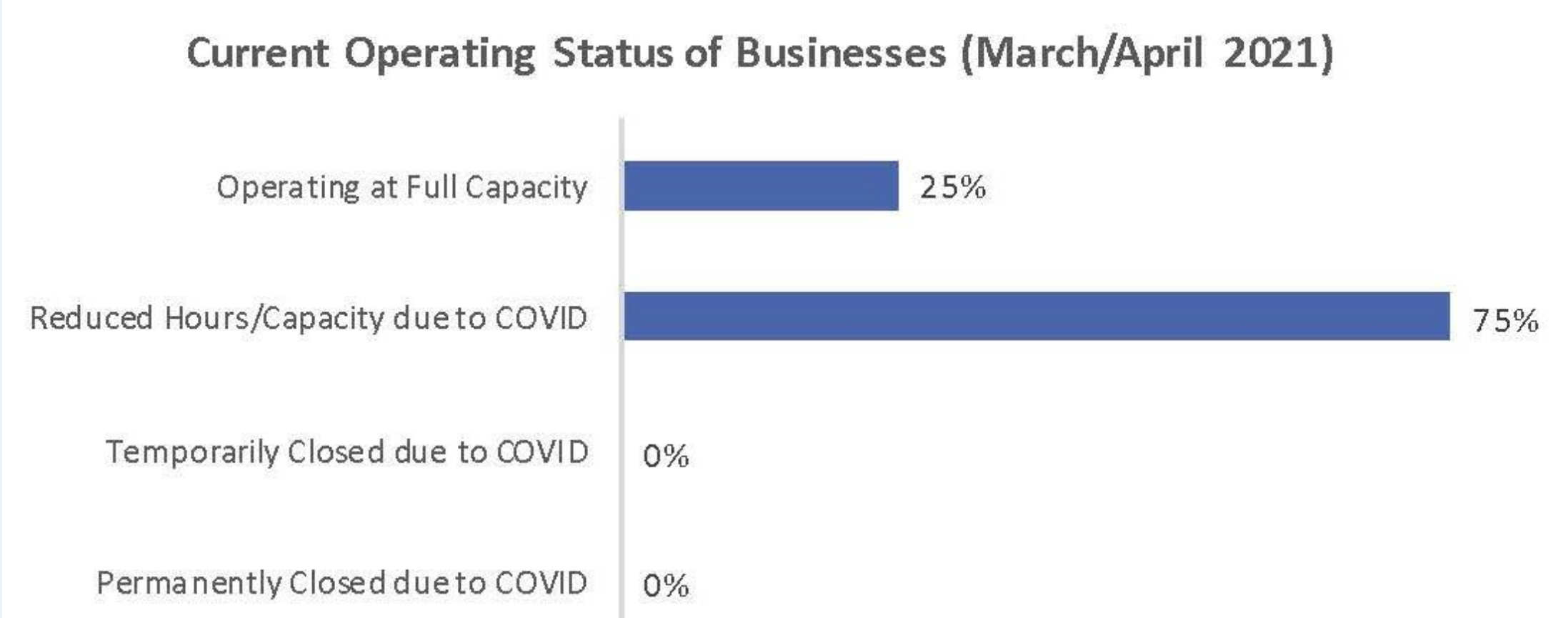
Businesses reported being impacts Reported by:



Downtown Rockland: 8 Responses

Operating Status

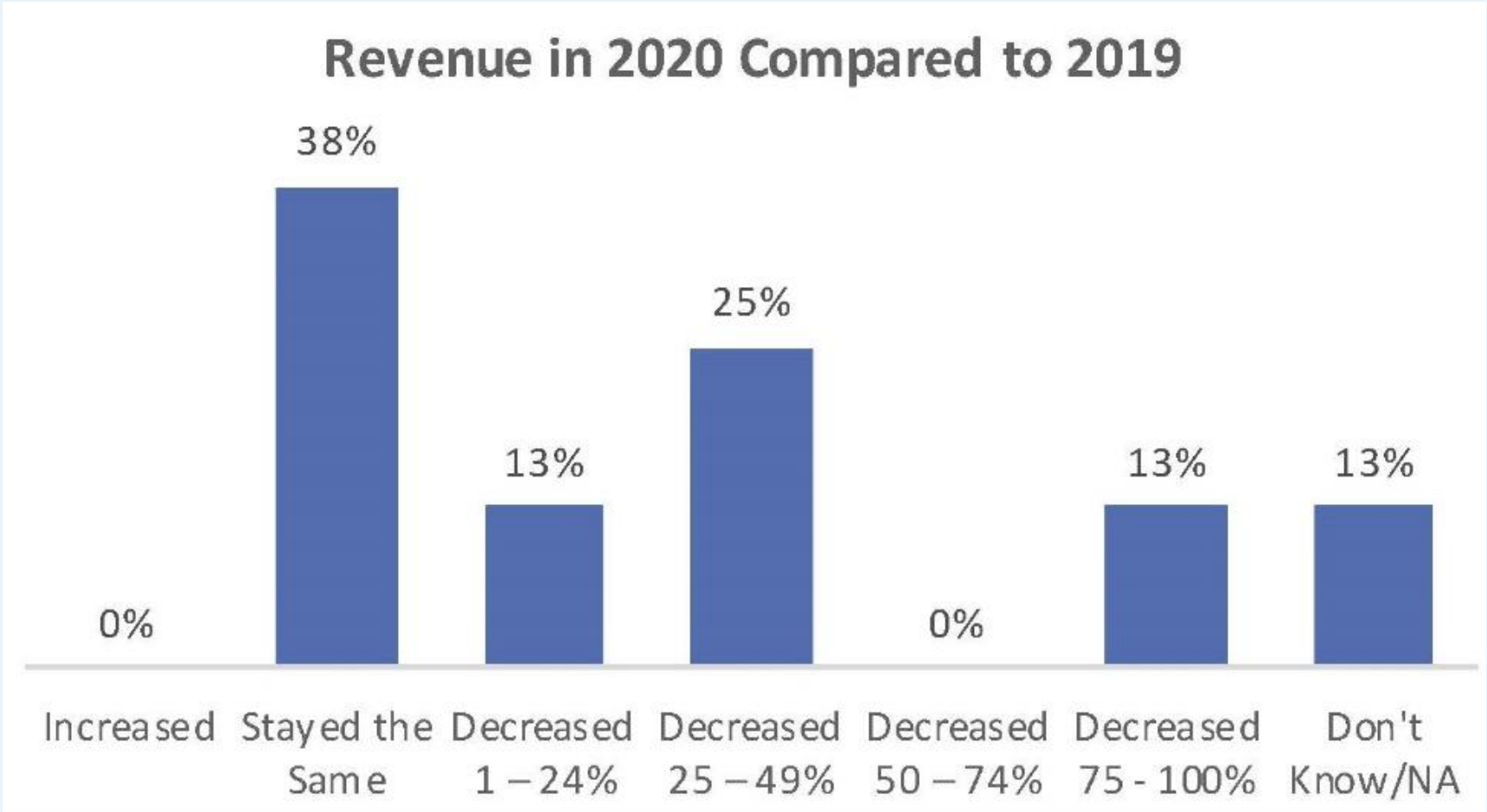
- At the time of the survey, 75% of businesses reported they were operating at reduced hours/capacity or closed



Downtown Rockland: 8 Responses

Decline in Business Revenue

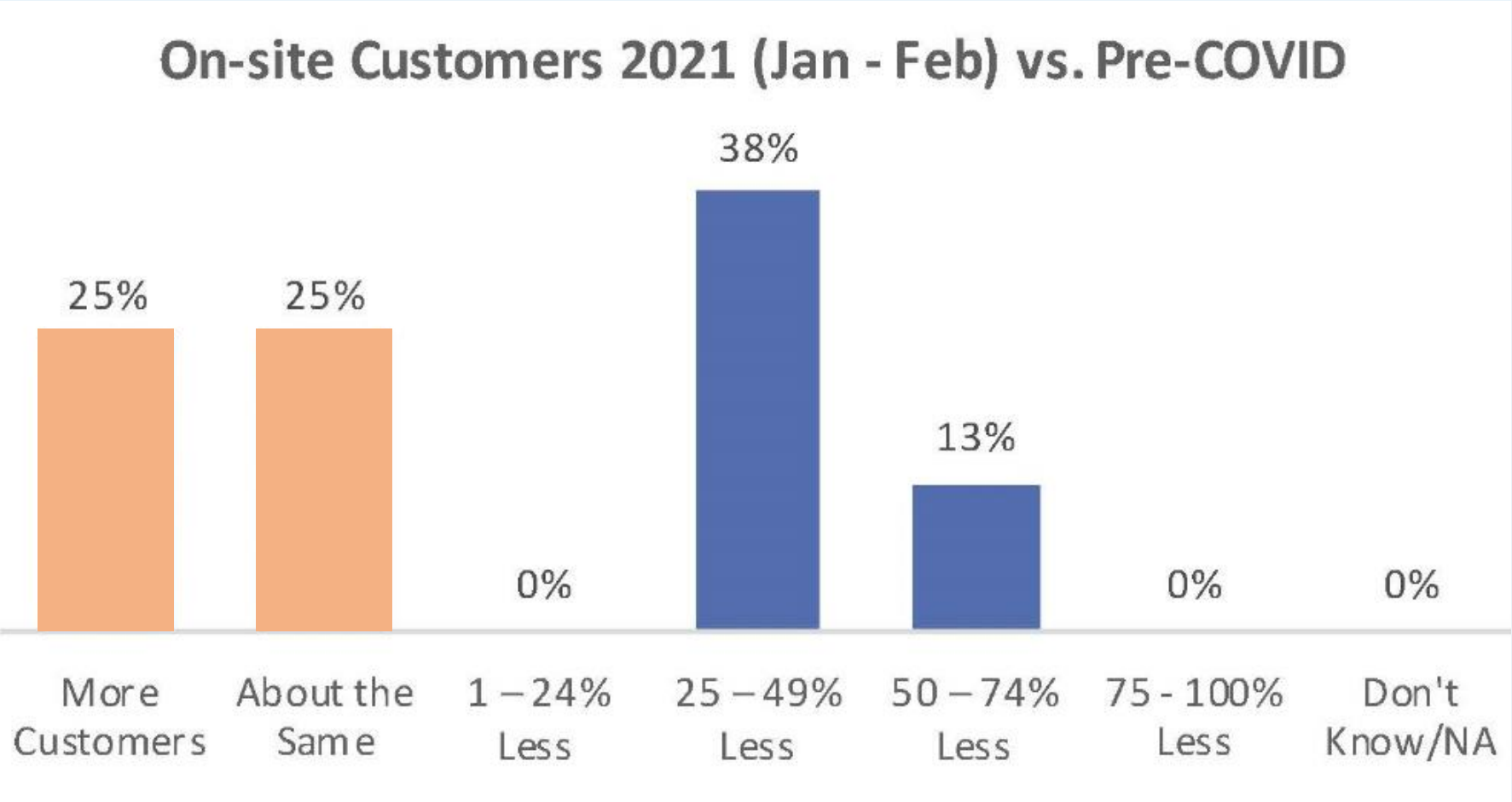
- 51% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019
- For 38% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more



Downtown Rockland: 8 Responses

Less Foot Traffic in Commercial Area

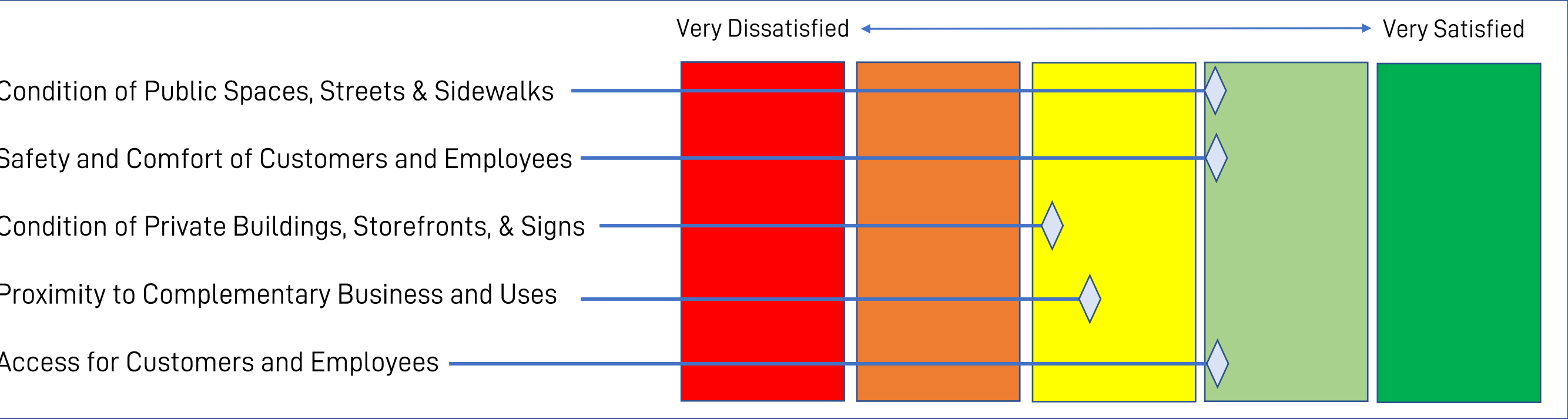
- 51% of businesses had fewer on-site customers in January / February of 2021 than before COVID
- 51% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more



Downtown Rockland: 8 Responses

Business Owner Satisfaction with Commercial District

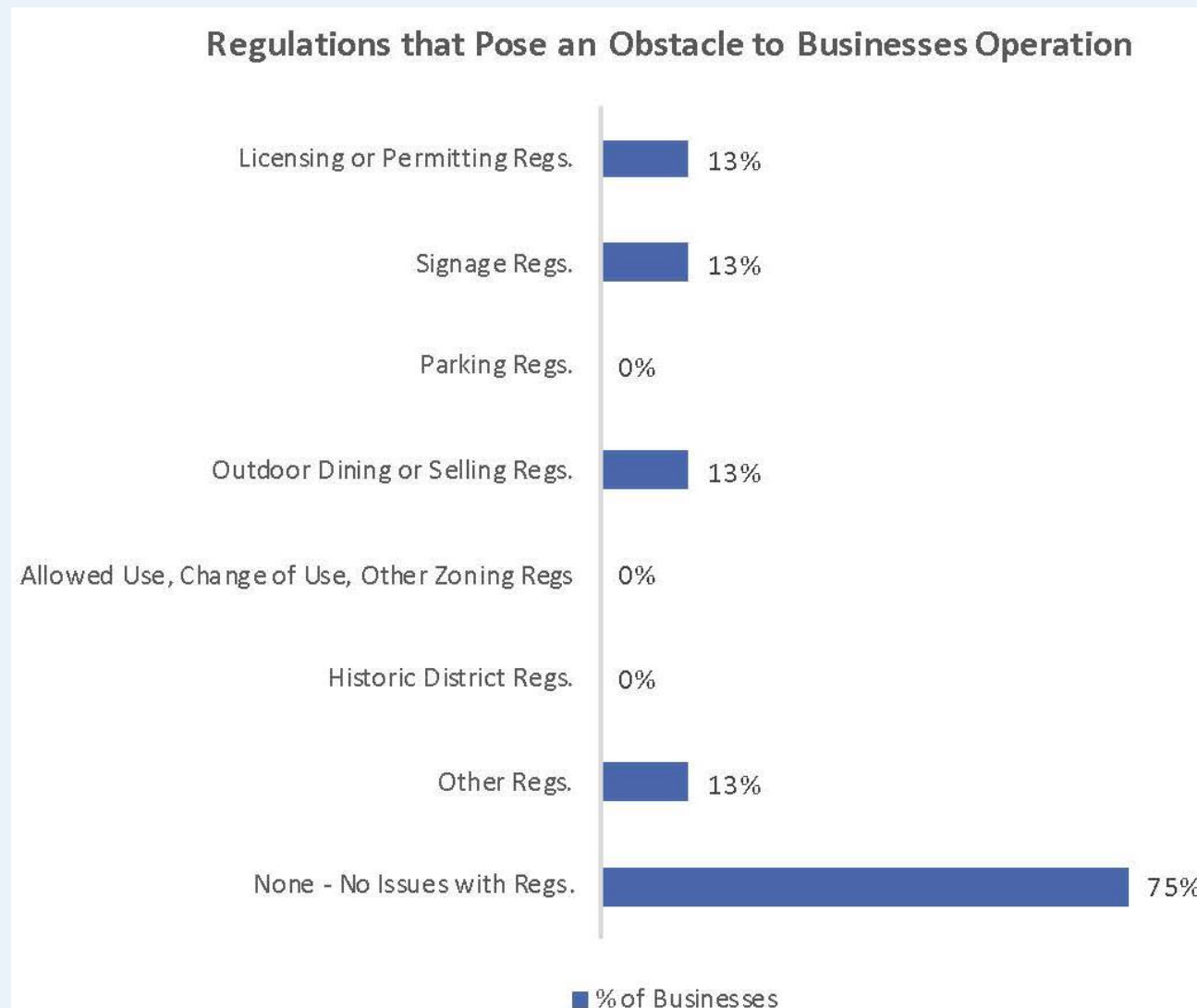
The charts below illustrate the average satisfaction rating among respondents regarding various elements.



Downtown Rockland: 8 Responses

Business Satisfaction with Commercial District - Regulatory Environment

- 25% of businesses indicated that the regulatory environment poses an obstacle to business operation

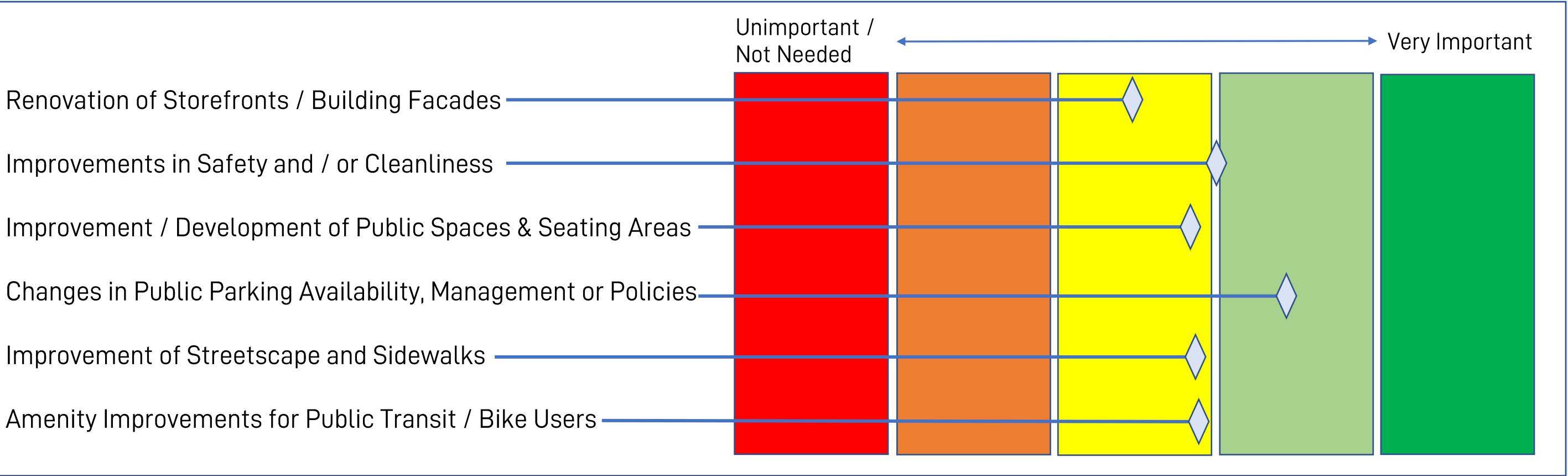


Downtown Rockland: 8 Responses

Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

- Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access

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

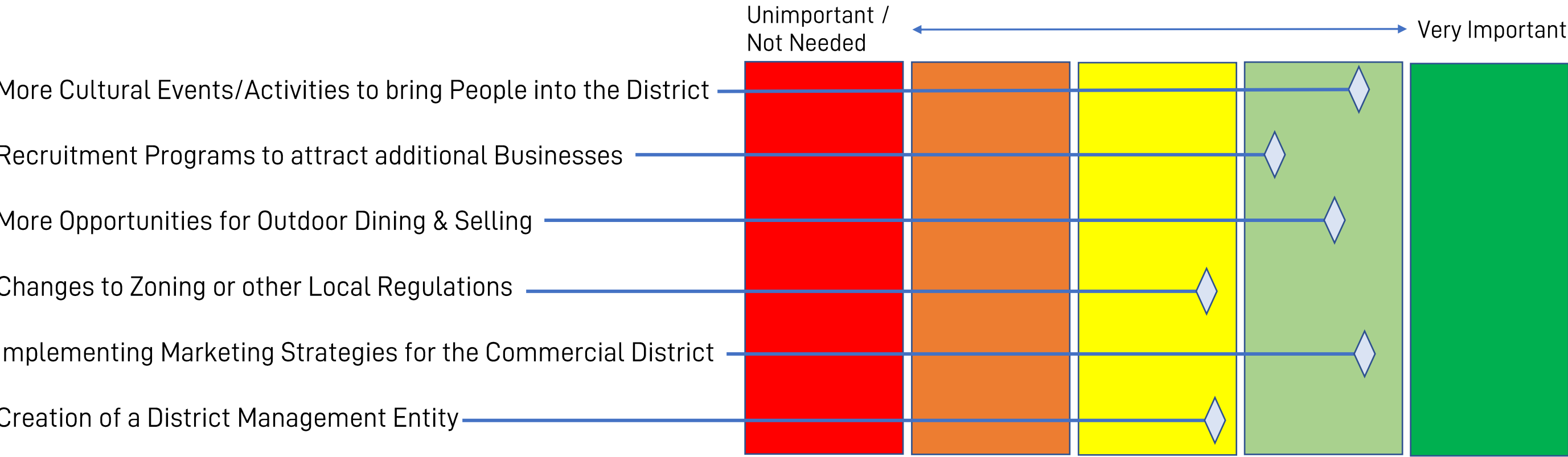


Downtown Rockland: 8 Responses

Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

- Attraction / Retention of Customers and Businesses

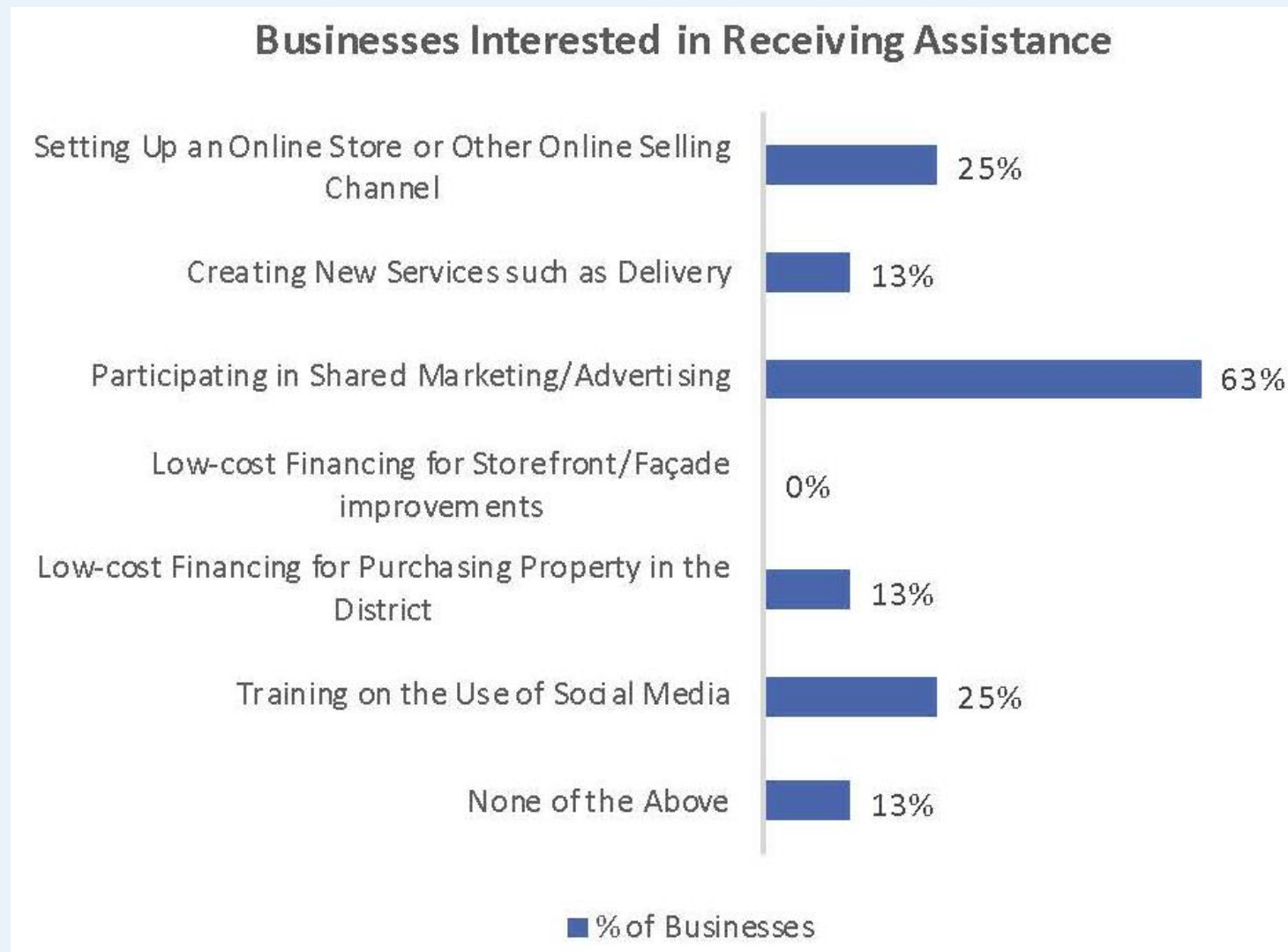
The charts below illustrate the average satisfaction rating among respondents regarding various strategies.



Downtown Rockland: 8 Responses

Business Input Related to Possible Strategies - Business Support:

- 88% of businesses expressed interest in receiving assistance





PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT



Phase 1

Diagnostic Category

Physical Environment:

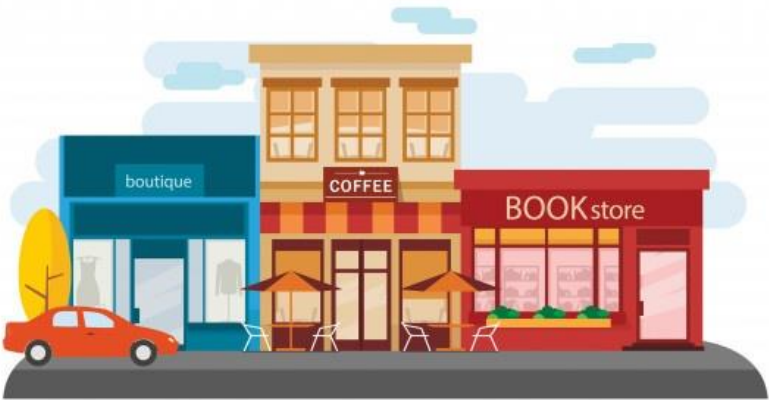
- How is the physical environment meeting the needs of businesses?
- What are the challenges and opportunities:
 - Public Realm
 - Private Realm
 - Access + Visibility

Physical Environment: Private Realm

SCORING RUBRIC				
ELEMENT	A	B	C	FAIL / NA
Windows <i>Windows are maintained and appear 70% transparent</i>	< 75%	+/- 50%	> 25%	<i>Storefronts are boarded up or windows have no transparency</i>
Outdoor Display / Dining <i>Attractive window displays / spillover restaurant & retail activity on sidewalks</i>	< 75%	+/- 50%	> 25%	<i>There is no spillover retail / restaurant activity in the district</i>
Signage <i>Storefront signage reflects the unique brand identity of tenants and can be easily seen from a distance</i>	< 75%	+/- 50%	> 25%	<i>Storefronts in the study area do not have signage</i>
Awning <i>Awnings are retractable, well-designed, maintained, and clean</i>	< 75%	+/- 50%	> 25%	<i>Storefronts in the study area are not equipped with awnings</i>
Façade <i>Facades should be attractive, well-maintained, and not require any major structural upgrades</i>	< 75%	At least a few require major upgrades	> 25%	<i>Nearly all properties in the study area require significant façade improvements</i>
Lighting <i>Interior storefront lighting after business hours improves the sidewalk lighting conditions</i>	< 75%	+/- 50%	> 25%	<i>Nearly all storefronts in the study area are shuttered and dark</i>

Data Collection Analysis

Private Realm



Feature Grading	Most Positive			Least Positive	
	A -	B -	C -	NA/FAIL	
Lighting				NA/FAIL	
Façade				B	
Awning				NA/FAIL	
Signage				B	
Outdoor Display/Dining				NA/FAIL	
Window				B	

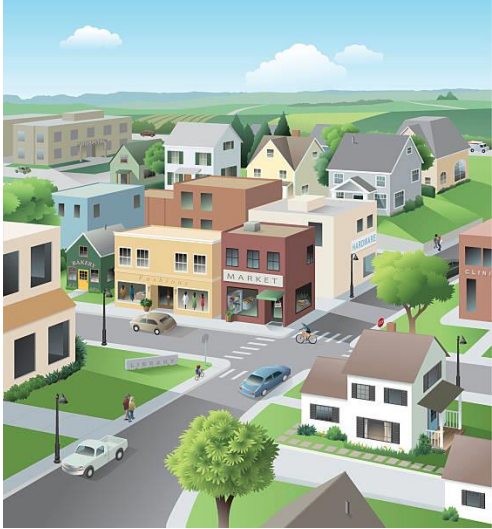


Physical Environment: Public Realm

SCORING RUBRIC				
ELEMENT	A	B	C	FAIL / NA
Sidewalks <i>Sidewalks are clean, well-maintained and accessible to multiple users across different ages and abilities</i>	< 75%	+/- 50%	> 25%	There are no sidewalks
Street Trees and Benches <i>Street trees and benches are readily available and offer shade and offer opportunities to rest and socialize</i>	<i>Street trees and benches are readily available throughout out the project area</i>	<i>Street trees and benches have not been cleaned and require other improvements</i>	<i>Limited availability of street trees and benches results in an uncomfortable pedestrian experience</i>	There are no street trees and benches
Lighting <i>Street lighting improves pedestrian and motorist safety as well as highlights the history and identity of an area</i>	< 75%	+/- 50%	<i>Street lighting on the primary street in the study area does not support pedestrian visibility and safety</i>	There is no street lighting
Wayfinding / Signage <i>Cohesive wayfinding systems offer visual cues for bicyclists and pedestrians as well as direct motorists where to park and walk</i>	< 75%	<i>Wayfinding is primarily intended for motorists, little to no signage for pedestrians and bicyclists</i>	Limited or no signage	There is no wayfinding / signage
Roadbed and Crosswalks <i>Roads are well-maintained to ensure motorist and pedestrian safety and are balanced to the needs of different users</i>	< 75%	<i>At least a few require major upgrades</i>	> 25%	The study area is not connected with major roads

Data Collection Analysis

Public Realm



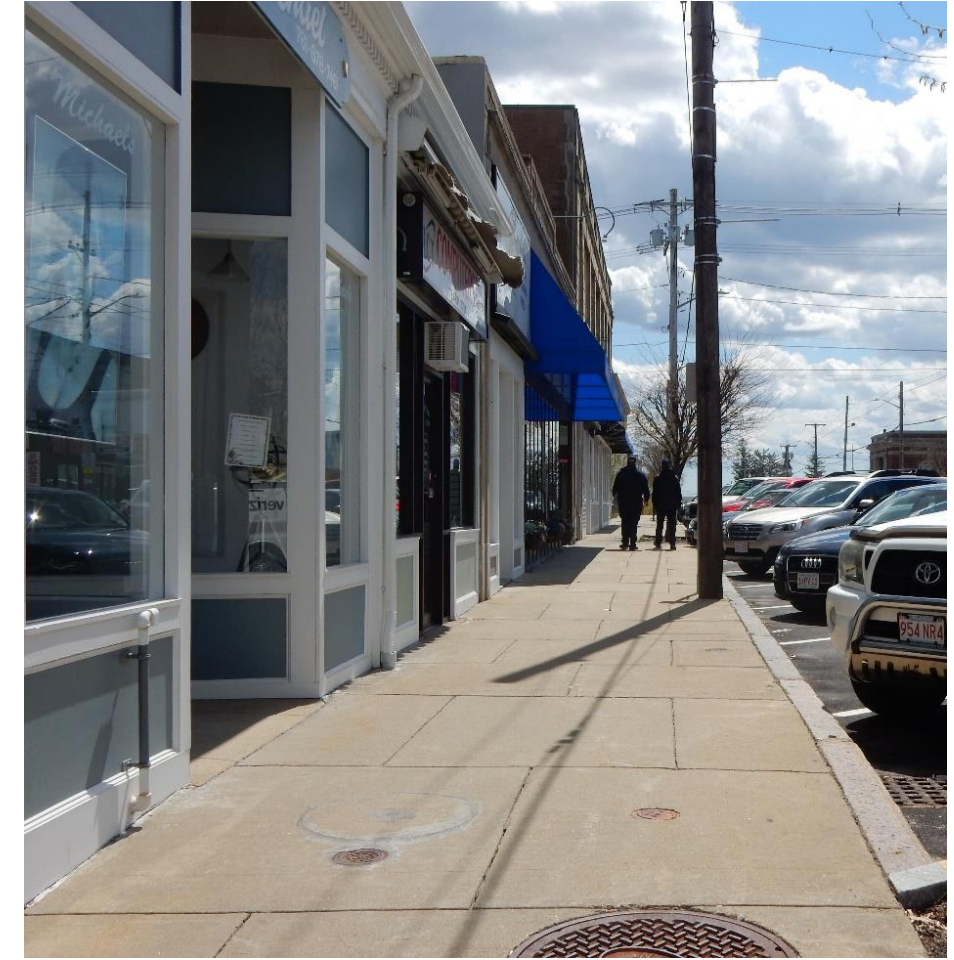
Feature Grading	Most Positive			Least Positive	
	A-	B-	C-	NA/FAIL	
Lighting				NA/FAIL	
Wayfinding - Signage				NA/FAIL	
Sidewalk				A	
Street Trees - Benches				B	
Roadbed - Crosswalks				A	



Existing Conditions

Some examples of:

- Store fronts
- Windows & facades
- Sidewalks
- Parking



Existing Conditions

Some examples of:

- Outdoor signage advertising businesses



Existing Conditions

Some examples of:

- Signage
- Sidewalks
- Crosswalks



Existing Conditions

Example of:

- Popular rail trail
- Important amenity to promote visitors to downtown





ADMIN
CAPACITY

Phase 1 Diagnostic Category

Administrative Capacity:

- Who are the stewards of the study area?
- Are there adequate resources?
- Are regulatory, zoning, or permitting processes impediments to businesses?



ADMIN
CAPACITY

Phase 1 Diagnostic Category

Administrative Capacity:

- ReImagine Rockland
- Rockland Chamber of Commerce





SUMMARY



What We Have Heard from Businesses



PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT

Business Owners Most Dissatisfied with:

- Condition of Private Buildings, Storefronts, and Signs





PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT

Improvement Strategies for Physical Environment

- Improvements in safety & cleanliness
- Parking availability, management, policies





Improvement Strategies to Attract and Retain Customers

- More cultural events and activities
- Recruitment program to attract businesses
- More opportunities for outdoor dining and selling
- Marketing strategies



Clean Up Day – Photo credit: ReImagine Rockland



**BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT**

Other Improvement Strategies

- Bike trail can be used to stimulate economic development
- Targeted outdoor placemaking
- Pop-up retail opportunity for vacant storefronts
- Comprehensive wayfinding / signage

The KickStand Café in Arlington, MA
along the Minuteman Bikeway





COMMENTS



Comments

Next Steps:

- Gather & summarize additional information
- Develop recommendations
- Discuss with town staff
- Finalize plan and recommendations
- Final presentation: July - August
- Submit plan to DHCD: August

Thank You!

Local Rapid Recovery Plan
Impacts of COVID-19
Rockland, Massachusetts
Downtown Rockland
August 10th, 2021

Agenda

Tonight's Meeting – 7:00PM

1. Introductions
2. Project Team | Schedule | Goals
3. Downtown Rockland Study Area
4. Recommended Projects
5. Q + A | Comments
6. Next Steps

Project Team

BETA Group

Jeff Maxtutis

- Plan Facilitator

Charlie Creagh

- Project Planner



Town of Rockland

Jennifer Berardi-Constable

- Assistant Town Administrator

Innes Associates Ltd

Emily Innes

- Founder
- Subject Matter Expert



Goals

Local Rapid Recovery Plan

PHASES

GOALS

COMPLETE

Phase I: Diagnostic and Business Surveys



- Collect baseline diagnostic data
- Engage stakeholders to understand COVID impacts and district concerns
- Provide an overview of on-the-ground conditions within the Study Area

ONGOING

Phase II: Project Recommendations



- Consult key stakeholders on priority projects
- Refine design of projects with Subject Matter Experts
- Develop final list of projects

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER

Phase III: Plans



- Create draft of Rapid Recovery Plan
- Gather community feedback on draft Plan and Project Recommendations
- Finalize Plan for submission to commonwealth



0 0.15 0.3 Miles

Town of Rockland, MA 

Downtown Rockland - Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program

 Parcels in Study Area



Data Source: MassGIS
Issue Date: March 2021
This Map is Intended for Planning Purposes Only

Study Area





PHYSICAL
ENVIRONMENT

Business Owners Most Dissatisfied with:

- Condition of Private Buildings, Storefronts, and Signs



Improvement Strategies for Physical Environment

- Improvements in safety & cleanliness
- Parking availability, management, policies





Improvement Strategies to Attract and Retain Customers

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- Marketing strategies



Clean Up Day – Photo credit: ReImagine Rockland



COMMENTS

Project Recommendations





BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Engage property owners to make improvements and fill vacancies

OBSERVATIONS:

- There are vacant storefronts and other buildings that need façade and structural improvements

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Engage building owners and identify buildings in need of improvements
- Identify Town staff responsible for leading the coordination effort
- Review ARPA grant funding requirements





**BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT**



Additional Projects

PROJECT RECOMMENDATION	STEPS
Water and Sewer	Rockland should pursue the 40B conditional approval by increasing the capacity of wastewater treatment and freshwater supply systems
Wayfinding, Branding, and Identity	Implement the recently completed Wayfinding program and consider using ARPA funds to finance the fabrication and installation of the signs
Develop Design Guidelines	Engage with local historians, architects, planning staff, and others to undertake a design guidelines planning process and ensure that building owners take part in the revitalization program
Parking Management Plan	Incentivize employees to park behind store fronts on in another central parking facility to free up spaces for customers in front of retail store fronts

Next Steps:

- Revise recommendations
- Develop final plan
- Submit final plan report to Town of Rockland in early-September for review





COMMENTS



Comments

Thank You!

Jeff Maxtutis

JMaxtutis@beta-group.com

Charlie Creagh

CCreagh@beta-group.com

Local Rapid Recovery Plan
Impacts of COVID-19
Rockland, Massachusetts
Downtown Rockland
Recommendations
October 5th, 2021

Project Team



BETA Group

Jeff Maxtutis

- Plan Facilitator

Charlie Creagh

- Project Planner



Town of Rockland

Jennifer Constable

- Assistant Town Administrator

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Goals

Local Rapid Recovery Plan

PHASES

GOALS

COMPLETE

Phase I: Diagnostic and Business Surveys



- Collect baseline diagnostic data
- Engage stakeholders to understand COVID impacts and district concerns
- Provide an overview of on-the-ground conditions within the Study Area

ONGOING

Phase II: Project Recommendations



- Consult key stakeholders on priority projects
- Refine design of projects with Subject Matter Experts
- Develop final list of projects

AUGUST - OCTOBER

Phase III: Plans



- Create draft of Rapid Recovery Plan
- Gather community feedback on draft Plan and Project Recommendations
- Finalize Plan for submission to commonwealth

Study Area Union Street



0 0.15 0.3 Miles

Town of Rockland, MA 

Downtown Rockland - Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program

 Parcels in Study Area



Data Source: MassGIS
Issue Date: March 2021
This Map is Intended for Planning Purposes Only



Recommended Projects

Recommended Projects

1. Develop Design Guidelines for Renovation of Storefronts and Facades
2. Fund Capital Improvements to Town Water and Sewer Infrastructure
3. Implement Wayfinding Signage
4. Develop Parking Management Plan
5. Host Additional Events
6. Pop-Up Shops Program
7. Create Outdoor Dining and Seating
8. Public Arts and Culture Campaign
9. Conduct Study to Improve Transit Services
10. Conduct Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

1. Develop Design Guidelines for Renovation of Storefronts and Facades

Observations:

- There is a strong desire to update storefront façade conditions

Recommendations:

- Develop design guidelines
- Develop criteria for application and approval
- Identify components of renovations and facades program
- Identify funding opportunities
- SME: Innes Associates



2. Fund Capital Improvements to Town Water and Sewer Infrastructure

Observations:

- Expansion of water and sewer would enable residential development in the Downtown Rockland Revitalization Overlay District (DRROD) Union Street area

Recommendations:

- Build on previous and current studies
- Continue to explore regional opportunities to support growth and invest in critical water and sewer projects
- Make investments to ensure future Smart Growth areas have the needed capacity
- Draft cost estimates and a timeline for design, engineering, and construction
- Investigate feasibility of adding capacity to existing treatment plant vs. constructing a new plant

3. Implement a Wayfinding Signage Program

Observations:

- Wayfinding Signage will help direct visitors to Downtown and other areas

Recommendations:

- Finalize ongoing wayfinding study and recommendations along and adjacent to Union Street
- Continue momentum from Mass Downtown Initiative wayfinding study
- Utilize ARPA funding for sign fabrication and installation



4. Develop a Parking Management Plan

Observations:

- Improving parking and curb side operations and increasing parking availability will improve access, turnover, and safety for customers and events

Recommendations:

- Identify funding to conduct Parking Management plan
- Evaluate converting head-in parking to parallel parking and shared-parking opportunities
- Solicit input from businesses, residents, and stakeholders
- Implement implementation strategy



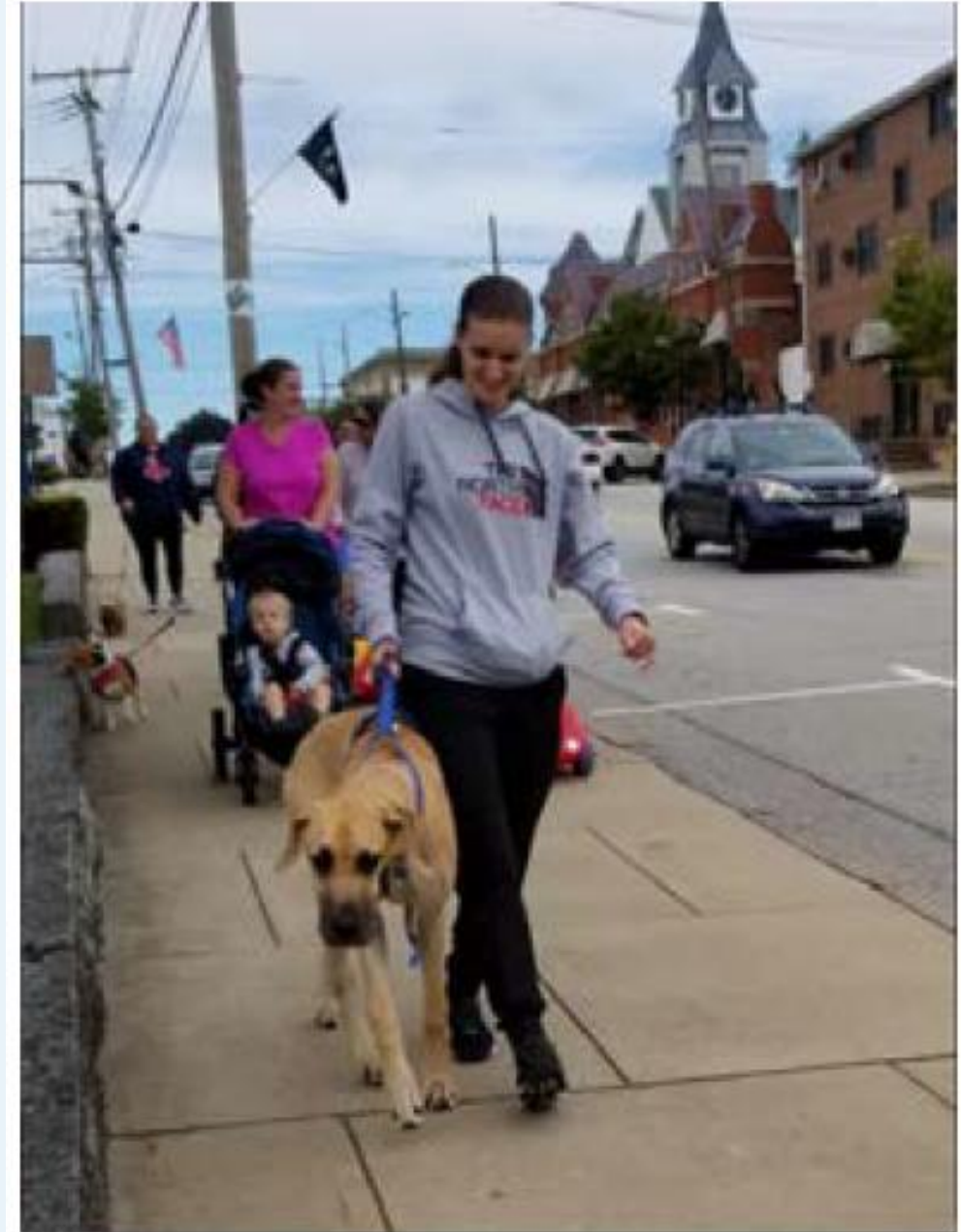
5. Host Additional Events

Observations:

- Business surveys and public meeting identified events as a successful way to generate additional foot traffic in Downtown

Recommendations:

- Continue holding existing events, Rockland Day, etc.
- Identify new events and areas for events
- Identify Town oversight for coordination
- Identify funding opportunities



Bulldog Pride Celebration event in Rockland

6. Pop-Up Shops Program

Observations:

- Pop-Up Shops will attract businesses that provide goods that are not typically available

Recommendations:

- Form a group of Town staff and stakeholders to lead the effort
- Identify potential locations, vacancies, and building and business owners
- Identify dates/seasons for Pop-Ups
- Consider permanency of Pop-Ups



The pop-up at the Corner Spot in Ashland, MA

7. Create Outdoor Dining and Seating Areas

Observations:

- Providing additional outdoor dining opportunities would create a sense of place which would allow patrons to sit, rest, eat, drink, and socialize
- Businesses owners indicated that changes to streetscape was one of the top-rated response to improve the physical environment

Recommendations:

- Identify lead Town department
- Inventory potential areas for outdoor dining and seating
- Identify parking and travel lanes that can be repurposed
- Identify potential for weekend street closures
- Create node at Union Street and Rail Trail
- Can be coordinated with streetscape improvements
- Identify funding opportunities



8. Public Art and Culture Campaign

Observations:

- Public art can help create a sense of place and pride in a community and in the Downtown
- Town has many local artists and artisans

Recommendations:

- Develop criteria and guidelines for public art (murals, sculpture, etc.)
- Identify potential locations
- Coordinate with local artists (Rockland Arts Center, Sandpaper Factory, etc.)
- Obtain grant funding



9. Conduct Study to Improve Transit Services and Connectivity

Observations:

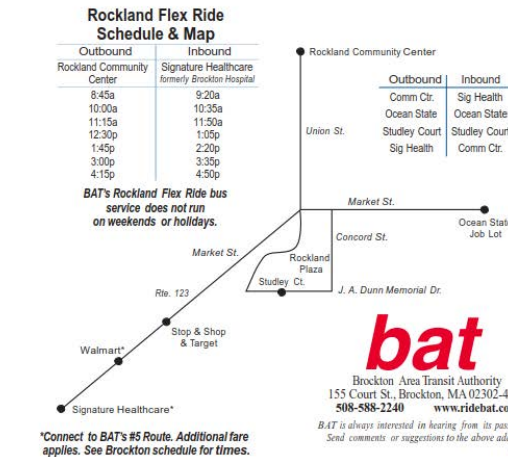
- The Downtown area is not well served by transit or shuttle bus service
- Transit improvements will be needed as population grows

Recommendations:

- Identify sources to fund study including BAT, MBTA and MassDOT
- Identify areas to evaluate including:
 - Bus service and connections to Commuter Rail stations
 - Local shuttle service and pilot programs
 - Improvements to bus stops and amenities

BAT's Rockland Flex Ride Bus Schedule

BAT's Flex Ride service travels primarily on Union Street in Rockland, Monday through Friday, according to the schedule below. The Flex Ride bus will stop and wait only at the Rockland Community Center and Signature Healthcare (formerly Brockton Hospital). Also, three stops have been added, one at Ocean State Job Lot in Rockland and two on Quincy Avenue behind Signature Healthcare.



Brockton Area Transit Authority

Rockland Flex Ride Service

How to Ride • Fares • Cancellation/No-Show • Schedule

bat

Effective August 17, 2014

This limited service bus route requires users to schedule a trip 24 hours in advance



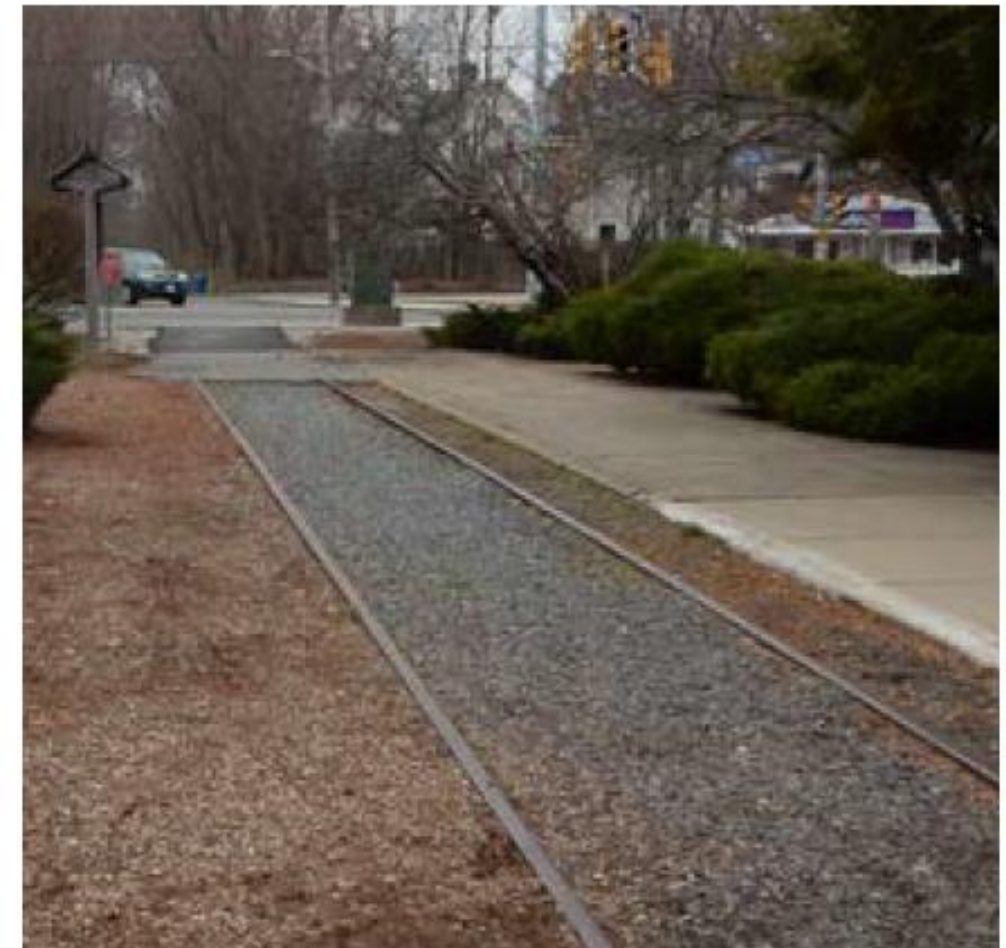
10. Conduct a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Observations:

- Improvements in pedestrian and bicycle mobility, connectivity, and safety promotes vibrancy and attracts people to businesses

Recommendations:

- Obtain funding and conduct a Town-wide bicycle and pedestrian master plan
- Focus on safety and accessibility for people of all ages and abilities
- Identify robust bicycle and pedestrian improvements and identify cost and potential funding
- Install bicycle racks as an early action item



Next Steps:

- Finalize recommendations and report
- Submit final report by October 8th





COMMENTS



Comments

Thank You!

Jeff Maxtutis

JMaxtutis@beta-group.com

Charlie Creagh

CCreagh@beta-group.com