



TENANT
MIX



Small Business Technical Assistance and Beyond:

Helping Small Businesses Stabilize and Grow in the Face of COVID-19

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Agenda

Best Practice Case Studies

Support for Small Businesses

Introduction to small business technical assistance and other creative small business support initiatives

Michael Aparicio, Revby LLC

- Case study 1: Provide Funding and Technical Assistance to Enable Business Viability During COVID-19 Economic Disruption.
- Case study 2: Reposition an Existing Program with Auto Shop Businesses to Focus on COVID-19 Related Technical Assistance.

Theo Boguszewski, Perch Advisors, LLC

- Case study 1: Technical Assistance and Beyond: Lessons from the NYC Small Business Resource Network.
- Case study 2: Help Businesses Expand and Access New Customers: Two New York City Pilot Programs

Jeff Levine, Levine Planning Strategies

- Case study 1: How to Help Main Street in the Long Run
- Case study 2: New Zoning in Burlington, Vermont that Streamlined the Review Process for Changes in Commercial Uses Downtown.

“Expanding entrepreneurship and small business opportunities for MWBEs and LMI small businesses should be a priority for cities responding to economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not only the right thing to do, it is also the smart thing.”

-Bloomberg Associates and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

Technical Assistance and Beyond: Action Areas and Guiding Principles

Technical Assistance Action Areas

- Business Plan Review
- TA on Loan Applications / Program Applications
- Website / eCommerce Development
- Startup Business / Entrepreneurial Support
- Other Marketing, Operations, Technology, and Financial Support
- Beyond TA:
 - Regulation
 - Zoning Initiatives
 - Commercial Lease Support
 - Use of Public Space

Guiding Principles for Program Types and Design

- ✓ Realize Equity
- ✓ Build on Strengths / Develop Community-Based Solutions
- ✓ Create New Partners while Leveraging Existing Ones
- ✓ Make a Commitment to Place

(Source: Inclusive Small Business Support, Bloomberg Associates and LISC, November 2020)

ABOUT REVBY LLC



- Boston-based small business consultant and technical assistance provider, focus on micro-enterprises (i.e., less than 10 employees)
- Provides support through municipalities, economic development organizations, and directly with small businesses in the US.
- Certified Minority Business Enterprise (MBE)



Michael Aparicio
Founder & Principal Consultant
Revby LLC

Case studies

1. Provide Funding and Technical Assistance to Enable Business Viability During COVID-19 Economic Disruption (Arlington, MA)
2. Reposition an existing program with auto shop business to focus on COVID-19 related technical assistance (Bronx, NY)

Case Study 1: Provide Funding and Technical Assistance to Enable Business Viability During COVID-19 Economic Disruption

Origin / Location

- Arlington, MA
- Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development; Arlington Economic Development Recovery Task Force; Arlington Community Development Block Grant Subcommittee

Timeframe

- Short Term (< 1 year) - TA contract to end of 2021.
- One-on-One TA: 10 hours to be completed within the current calendar year.
- Workshops completed before end of June 2021.

Budget

- Medium (\$200,000)
- \$180,000 of direct assistance to businesses via working capital grants and \$20,000 to a technical assistance program with two contracted consultants.

COVID-19 Impact

- Need for working capital
- Need to help businesses build resilience
- Address digital divide problem; Increase digital infrastructure



Case Study 1: Provide Funding and Technical Assistance to Enable Business Viability During COVID-19 Economic Disruption

Key Performance Indicators

- Business viability through the pandemic and into the post-pandemic world.
- Support small businesses with one-on-one TA as a supplement to financial support.
- Workshop attendance and views of the recordings

Partners and Resources

- Town of Arlington, MA Dept. of Planning and Community Development
- Small businesses (grant recipients)
- Contracted consultants (technical assistance providers), including Revby LLC

TA Provider Process (One-on One TA)

- Build trust with the business owner during the first sessions and collaboratively work on a plan on how the technical assistance time allotted may be used to support the business owner in the best way possible.
- Conduct several TA sessions over Zoom
- Provide a final project deliverable that outlines the work completed and provides resources and recommendations for the business owner’s ongoing use.

Case Study 2: Reposition an existing program with auto shop business to focus on COVID-19 related technical assistance

- An initiative originally on TA for environmental regulation compliance, the focus shifted to COVID-19 related support

Origin / Location

- Bronx, NY
- Jerome Avenue Corridor. SoBro under a program with NYC Small Business Services (SBS) and NY State DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation)

Timeframe

- Short Term (1 year)
- To meet one on one with 98 auto shop businesses. Project extended and revised due to COVID-19.

Budget

- Medium (\$50,000 - \$200,000).
- Grant from DEC and SBS.
- \$60,000 allocated to an external consultant expert in auto shop sector.

COVID-19 Impact

- New priorities due to COVID-19:
 - Funding, Partnership, and a **Local Digital Hub**



Case Study 2: Reposition an existing program with auto shop business to focus on COVID-19 related technical assistance

Considerations / Challenges

- 80% of business owners primarily speak Spanish
- Need to gain trust with business owners crucial
- Mistrust of technology and non-cash systems / Community in need of financial education
- This community is clearly part of the Digital Divide
- Need to “meet them where they are” (e.g., in-person visits, use of WhatsApp)

Key Outcomes

- Shift focus to a KPI related to number of businesses gaining access to emergency Covid-19 pandemic relief funding.
- Development of trust with technology, including non-cash payment systems
- Leverage existing partnerships
- Focus on the promotion of outside programs, grants, and services



Technical Assistance and Tailored Support for Small Business

Theo Boguszewski
Perch Advisors LLC
New York City



ABOUT PERCH ADVISORS



- ❑ NYC-based Women-owned consulting firm specializing in workforce, economic, and community development
- ❑ Provides support to neighborhoods through engagement with Business Improvement Districts, merchants associations, chambers of commerce, workforce development organizations, government agencies
- ❑ Specializing in program design, neighborhood outreach, community engagement, small business technical assistance, program strategy
- ❑ Focus on underserved communities in NYC with an emphasis on BIPOC business clusters



Technical Assistance and Beyond: Lessons from the NYC Small Business Resource Network

What is the Small Business Resource Network?

- Partnership between nonprofit business associations (chambers of commerce)
- Clearinghouse of all technical assistance and COVID resource offerings including grants and loans, regulation and permits, outdoor dining design support, health and safety navigation, technology and e-commerce, and industry specific support
- Privately funded through philanthropic donor
- Prioritizes reach to small, BIPOC businesses

Personalized Guidance and Recovery Solutions for Small Business

COVID uncovered the need for specific and personalized business technical assistance in a range of support areas. Businesses, already short on time, were buried in navigating and understanding the qualifications for pandemic assistance and reopening tools. The Small Business Resource Network (SBRN) was born out of COVID needs but continues to grow its base of technical assistance options for small, neighborhood-based businesses.



Technical Assistance and Beyond: Lessons from the NYC Small Business Resource Network

How does the clearinghouse support businesses:

- Thorough business needs assessment in 12 + languages
- Offers access and vetting across dozens of programs including grants, loans, tech support, industry specific operations support (restaurant, retail)
- Saves businesses time in determining which programs they qualify for
- Direct in-house support for the following: Tech assistance (Building a website, ecommerce site or social media presence), restaurant operations

Ongoing support along the way – COVID recovery and beyond

One of the hallmarks of the program is the consistent reengagement of businesses - business assessment and support is ongoing once engaged by the SBRN. The SBRN has also partnered with Open Streets programs and the Storefront Start Up Program, outlined further in this presentation.



Transforming Streets into Public Space for Dining and Community Engagement: NYC Open Streets

NYC Open Streets Program piloted in 2020 and expanded in 2021 to provide restaurants and retail business sidewalk and street space to activate additional useable square footage for customers.

- Worked across NYC government agencies to eliminate as much red tape as possible; ease permitting, provide support to create non-vehicle streets on designated days/times
- Used the collective power of small business commercial corridors to increase active open space, improving overall customer traffic and safe outdoor space for recreation and dining
- On Vanderbilt Avenue in Brooklyn, NY, Open Streets created or retained an estimated 60 + jobs in 2020 and increased restaurant revenue by an average of 45%
- Fueled in 2020 by volunteers in donations; in 2021 the program garnered sponsorship, financial support from businesses, and community crowdsourced donations



Transforming Streets into Public Space for Dining and Community Engagement: NYC Open Streets

Lead community organization, Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council, partnered with Perch Advisors to manage Open Streets along their 6 block commercial corridor. Support included:

- Work in collaboration with SBRN to support restaurant businesses with connection to services
- Staffing of event teams to manage street opening/closing, sanitation, safety
- Ongoing advisory support as the program moves from pilot to permanent



Supporting Entrepreneurs and Commercial Landlords with Pop Up Business Activations

- Partnership between ChaShaMa (typically houses temporary storefront art pop ups) and NYC Department of Small Business Services (NYCDSBS)
- ChaShaMa connects and brokers no cost temporary space with commercial landlords
- Storefronts are temporary (average 30 days) and businesses are responsible for outfitting, moving, set up and breakdown
- NYC DSBS recruits local businesses to apply for spaces and ChaShaMa identifies property owners to donate space
- Prioritizes Minority and Women-owned businesses
- Increases street traffic and improves visibility/sales for small businesses

When COVID-19 began, both long term and new vacancies in NYC neighborhoods became a hallmark of the pandemic. How could partnerships help improve commercial corridor conditions?



Photo courtesy of: madeinqueens.com

Supporting Entrepreneurs and Commercial Landlords with Pop Up Business Activations

- In the first 6 months, the program has paired 18 businesses with vacant storefronts
- Perch Advisors seeks to expand support to businesses by partnering with ChaShaMa to connect temporary commercial tenants to business technical assistance
- Opportunity: helping businesses to use the temporary space as a gateway to permanent space in their community
- Opportunity: helping property owners market their space and connect with prospective commercial tenants

By creating short term business activations in vacant commercial spaces, the community benefits from more street activity, new business offerings, and visibility for new, local future businesses.

ChaShaMa Storefront Startup

In partnership with NYC Department of Small Business Services

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How We Help



Rent-Free Storefronts

Rent-free temporary storefronts for qualifying small business



Free Amenities

Free utilities including WiFi



Business Promotion

Promotion of your business through Chashama's newsletter and social media

Photo courtesy of: chashama.org

LEVINE PLANNING STRATEGIES, LLC

A small New England consulting firm working between the public and private sectors to achieve sustainable economic development and housing goals.



Case Study #1



Jeff Levine, AICP

“Rebuilding Main Street After COVID-19”

- Applied research with case studies on implementing ways to help businesses in the long term after the pandemic

Case Study #2

“Zoning for a Resilient Downtown”

- How Burlington, Vermont, changed their downtown zoning to accommodate flexibility for businesses



Helping Main Street in the Long Run
Jeff Levine, AICP
Levine Planning Strategies, LLC

- What do business owners say they need to thrive after the pandemic is over?
- What do local economic development officials think?
- What are some good examples of these ideas in practice?

What do businesses say they need in the 2020's?

- Through a series of qualitative and survey-based tools, the “Rebuilding Main Street After COVID-19” study discovered what public and private actions local business owners felt would help them succeed and thrive in the next five years.
- Businesses were asked about their short-term priorities, but the focus of the study was on their long-term needs. While there was a wide range of views from local businesses and officials, a few long-term priorities emerged.

Money

A top priority for local businesses was for financial incentives and/or rent relief to help them remain competitive



Public Realm Plans

An interest in communities to develop a thoughtful and consistent program for public space based on which business owners could make long term investment.



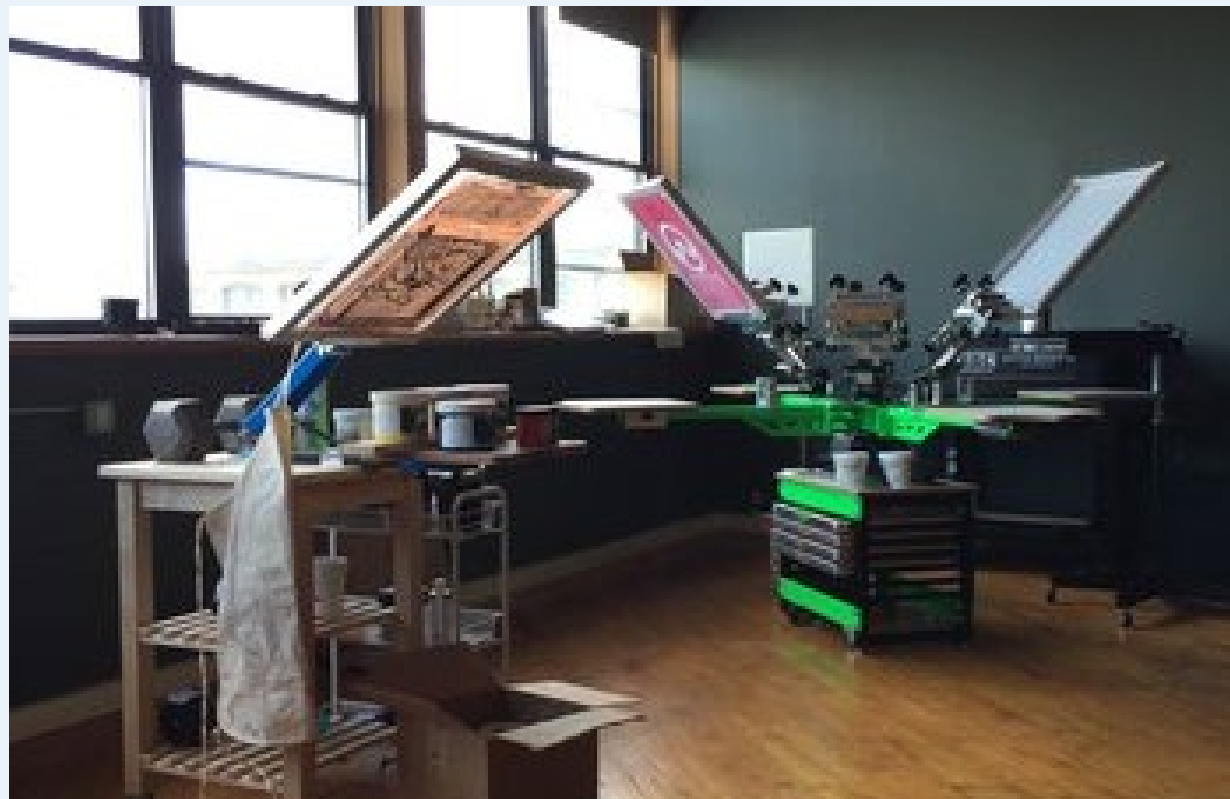
Regulatory Changes

An interest in changes to health, licensing and zoning codes that would allow their operations to respond quickly to business opportunities.



Case Study

- The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) has run a Small Business Relief Program, providing up to \$25,000 in business funding for rent and similar expenses for small businesses over the past year. To date, that program has had 12 rounds, totaling \$215 million in support. Boston LISC worked with Citizen's Bank to create the LISC Rapid Relief & Resiliency Fund for Massachusetts, with a focus on equity and long term results.



Direct Funding



Rent/Mortgage Relief

Case Study

- The sign & façade improvement grant program run by the City of Gardner, offers 5 year forgivable loans for up to \$2,500 for signs, or \$15,000 for façades. This program is funded through the City's Community Development Block Grant program.



Funding for Signage

(Credit: Rehua under a CC BY-SA 4.0)



Funding for Façade Improvements

(Credit: City of Gardiner)

Case Study

- After a successful pilot project in 2015, Halifax, Nova Scotia, redesigned Argyle Street in their downtown as a permanent shared street, allowing businesses to make long term investments for outdoor dining



Argyle Street Pilot

(Credit: Thorfinn Stainforth under a CC Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license)



Argyle Street Permanent Design

(Credit: Steven Lee under a CC BY-SA 4.0)

Case Study

- The Town of Freeport, ME, exempts conversions between most restaurants and retail trade uses from site plan review to allow for rapid changes in downtown spaces. Similarly, the City of South Burlington, VT, “flipped” its table of uses in 2016. In their City Center form based code, there is a list of prohibited uses rather than a list of permitted uses, allowing businesses to change between any use that is not explicitly prohibited.



Freeport, ME

(Credit: Dirk Ingo Franke under a CC Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license)



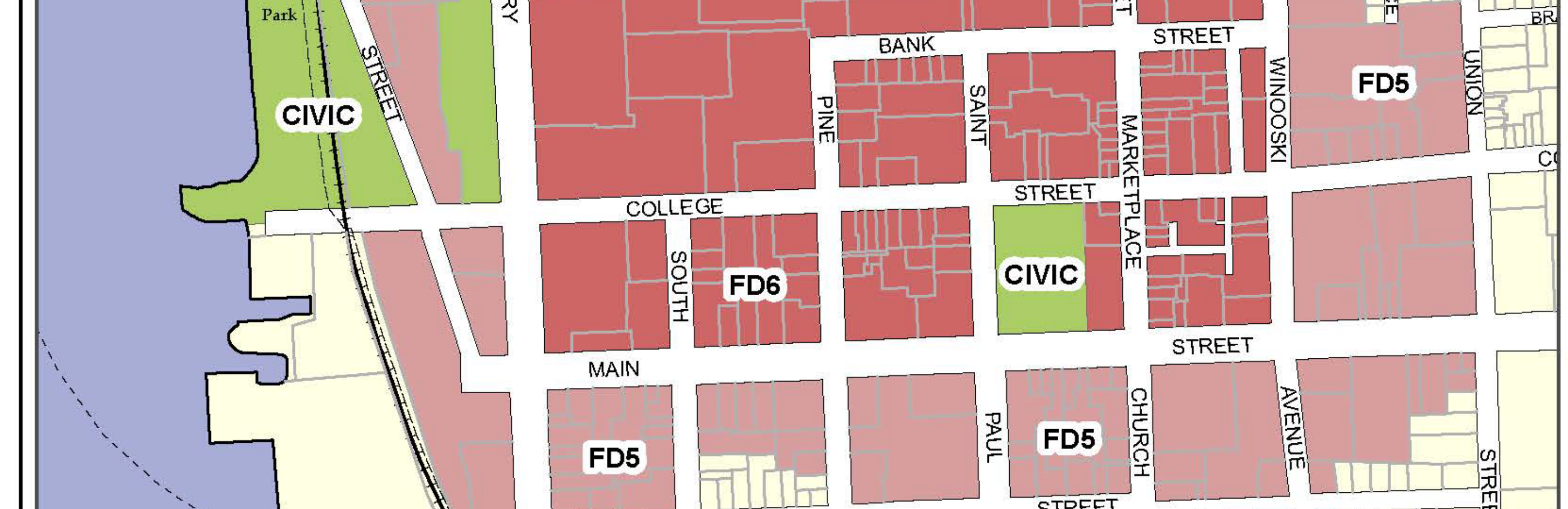
South Burlington, VT

(Credit: City of South Burlington)



Zoning for a Resilient Downtown: Burlington, Vermont

- Burlington adopted a form-based code in 2013. The new zoning reduced the number of uses downtown by 50%. More importantly, it made it easier for a business to modify their use category by significantly reducing the timeframe and risk to the business.



Zoning for a Resilient Downtown: Burlington, Vermont

- Burlington's planning process began in 2010 when the city received a Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development. That grant made it possible to develop a plan for the downtown and waterfront, called "PlanBTV." The vision in that plan was then codified in a form-based code that reduced review processes for changes of use.
- Other ways to improve the review process without a form-based code are possible, such as eliminating increased parking requirements for downtown uses; reducing the number of uses in a conventional use table; or making specific exceptions for changes in use downtown.

Thank You!

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