

Shared Streets & Spaces

A MassDOT Quick-Launch/Quick-Build Municipal Grant Program



With support from the Barr Foundation,
the Solomon Fund, and the
Metropolitan Area Planning Council

September 2020

City of Waltham, MA, Moody Street Closure; Abby Auld

Shared Streets and Spaces Program



Interest in the program has been overwhelming and overwhelmingly positive.



In response to the Covid-19 public health crisis, MassDOT established this program to provide quick-launch/quick-build grants to improve municipal sidewalks, curbs, streets, on-street parking spaces, and off-street parking lots in support of public health, safe mobility – especially around schools – and renewed commerce during the summer and fall of 2020.



Shared Streets

- The Shared Streets concept re-imagines public space as a shared and safe environment for all transportation modes, with a specific emphasis on pedestrians, cyclists and transit users
 - Conceptually distinct from shared streets urban design
 - Rooted in movements such as Open Streets, Livable Streets, and Slow Streets
 - The Shared Streets concept is a targeted approach to help cities and towns respond to new pressures created by COVID-19
- Cities in the US and abroad, including Milan, Paris, New York, and Oakland, have tried to use the Covid crisis to embrace new approaches to city planning and urban design to create more and safer space for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users



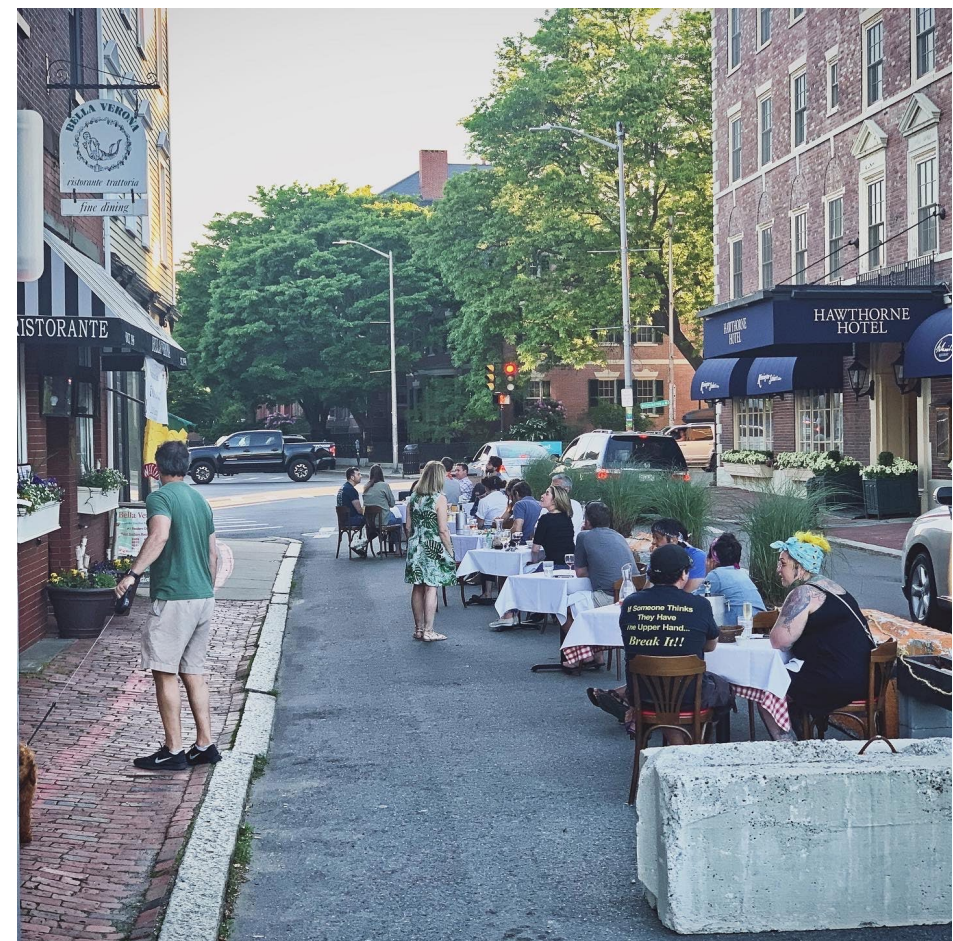
Program Details

- MassDOT allocated \$10 million in funding (doubled from original \$5 million)
- Dedicated cross-functional program team within MassDOT
- Award size: \$5,000-\$300,000
- Applications accepted from June 22nd-September 22nd
- Application process kept intentionally simple
- Improvements can be temporary or permanent
- Projects must be substantially completed by October 9th
- Philanthropic and RPA support for technical assistance and program evaluation



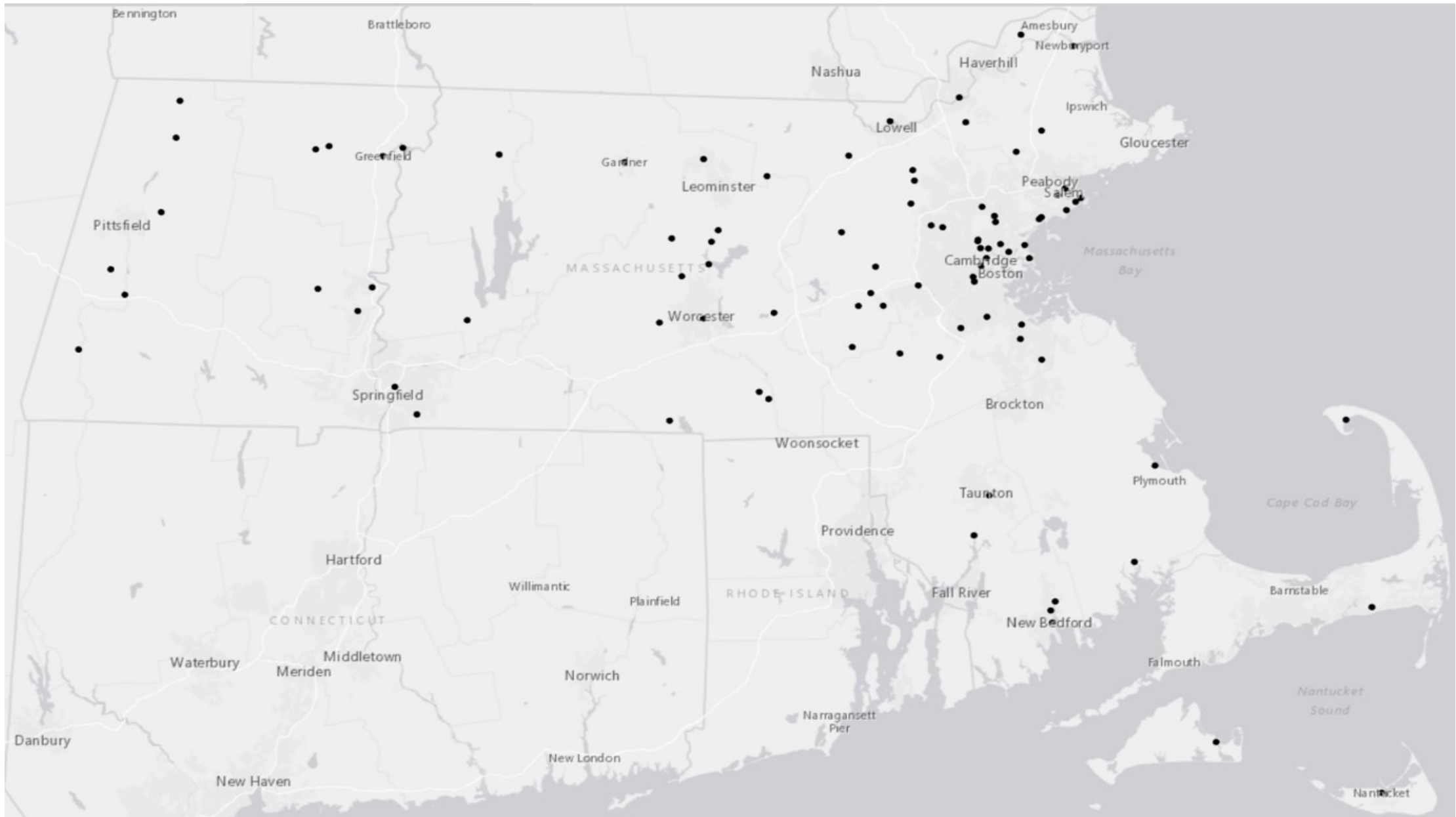
Internal Processes

- A true, whole-agency collaboration, with staff from all corners of the Highway Division, the MBTA, Communications, Legislative Affairs, and the Secretary's Office participating.
- Simple applications, submitted online
- Initial eligibility checks to rule out ineligible projects and applicants
- Project scores are averaged and compared by project type
- Recommended, rejected and ineligible projects are presented and discussed each week
- Award letters are generated following Secretary approval, which triggers contract and payment processes. Award letter emails contain Project Implementation Guideline FAQs and MAPC contact details for procurement assistance
- Rejection letters are sent in tandem, with detailed feedback provided on request
- Grant funds are electronically transferred within 1-2 weeks of award letter date to municipalities' Chapter 90 account
- Approximately 1 month after receipt of funds, a check-in survey is sent to municipalities to assess project progress and implementation



Award Summary

To date, the program has given out a total of **\$8.6 million** to fund **101** projects in **87** municipalities across Massachusetts, of which **60% are Environmental Justice communities**. We have received **225 applications valued at \$28 million**.



Projects Funded (as of 9/17/2020)



Project Type 1:

Shared Streets and Spaces

- Converted neighborhood streets for exclusive/shared use by people walking/ biking
- Temporary expansion of sidewalks using movable elements such as cones, sawhorses, etc.
- Safety, traffic calming and speed reduction measures
- Modified traffic signals
- Protected bicycle lanes, bicycle parking, signage, pavement markings
- New and/or expanded infrastructure and capital start-up costs for bicycle and scooter sharing networks
- Accessibility upgrades to curb-ramps, crosswalks, and/or related facilities
- **Municipalities funded in this category:** Acushnet, Andover, Boston, Brookline, Dighton, Framingham, Holliston, Lynn, Maynard, Melrose, Merrimac, Montague, Natick, Princeton, Quincy, Somerville, and Swampscott.



Project Type 2: *Outdoor Dining and Commerce*

- Repurposed and/or expanded portions of streets, curbs, parking areas (on or off street), and/or sidewalks to create more safe space for retail activity, dining, and community programming.
- **Municipalities funded in this category:** Adams, Arlington, Billerica, Brookline, Buckland, Edgartown, Gardner, Great Barrington, Greenfield, Lawrence, Lexington, Lynn, Marblehead, Medfield, Medford, Melrose, Natick, North Adams, Norwood, Orange, Revere, Wareham, Wayland, Webster, Weymouth, and Worcester.



Project Type 3: *Better Buses*

- Dedicated bus lanes
- Transit signal priority
- Bus stops and related facilities and infrastructure
- **Municipalities funded in this category:** Everett, Medford, and Somerville.



Project Type 4: *Safe Routes to School*

- Repurposed and/or expanded portions of streets, curbs, parking areas (on or off street), and/or sidewalks to create more safe space for retail activity, dining, and community programming.
- **Municipalities funded in this category:** Billerica, Braintree, Dedham, Lexington, Milton, Northbridge, Shelburne, Shirley, Springfield, Sterling, Stoneham, Taunton, Uxbridge, West Boylston, Westborough, Westford, and Westhampton.



Project Type 5: *Innovation*

- Any other project types not identified here that reimagine and repurpose streets, sidewalks, curbs, and parking areas for safer walking, biking, retail, dining, and/or other civic purposes will be considered
- **Municipalities funded in this category:**
Cambridge, Provincetown, and Winthrop.

Awards by Project Type

Project Type 1: Shared Streets & Spaces

- 20 grants awarded
- Total of \$2.2 million in funding

Project Type 2: Outdoor Dining and Commerce

- 27 grants awarded
- Total of \$1.4 million in funding

Project Type 3: Better Bus

- 3 grants awarded
- Total of \$500,000 in funding



Project Type 4: Safe Routes to School

- 17 grants awarded
- Total of \$1.3 million in funding

Project Type 5: Innovation

- 3 grants awarded
- Total of \$224,000 in funding

Hybrid Projects of 2 or more Project Types

- 31 grants awarded
- Total of \$3.1 million in funding

Link to Award Announcements: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/shared-streets-press-releases>

Photo: City of Salem, credit: Streets for Recovery Coordination



Lessons learned

- **What went well**

- Shrewd program design – broad eligibility criteria, easy application process, and use of Chapter 90 payment mechanisms
- Excellent partnerships with the Barr Foundation and Technical Assistance providers
- Quick turnaround time for application processing, contract execution and grant payment
- Cross-departmental input and effort was critical to our success

- **What we learned**

- High levels of need for municipal sidewalk and road repair funding
- Interest from communities to improve traffic safety and reduce speeds
- Robust community engagement, even within this emergency response program, is essential to a project's ultimate success in the community

