



# Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

**Town of  
Shrewsbury**



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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Front Cover Top: Shrewsbury Common & First Congregational Church; Bottom: Main Street vacant storefront Photo Credits: Goman+York

# Acknowledgements

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

Local Rapid Recovery Planning Committee	John Samia, Board of Selectmen & Committee Chair
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Local Rapid Recovery Planning Committee	Andy Truman, Town Engineer
Local Rapid Recovery Planning Committee	Nick Repetka, Highway Division
Local Rapid Recovery Planning Committee	Diana Sladen, Shrewsbury Town Center Association Representative
Local Rapid Recovery Planning Committee	Michael Hale, At-Large Citizen Representative
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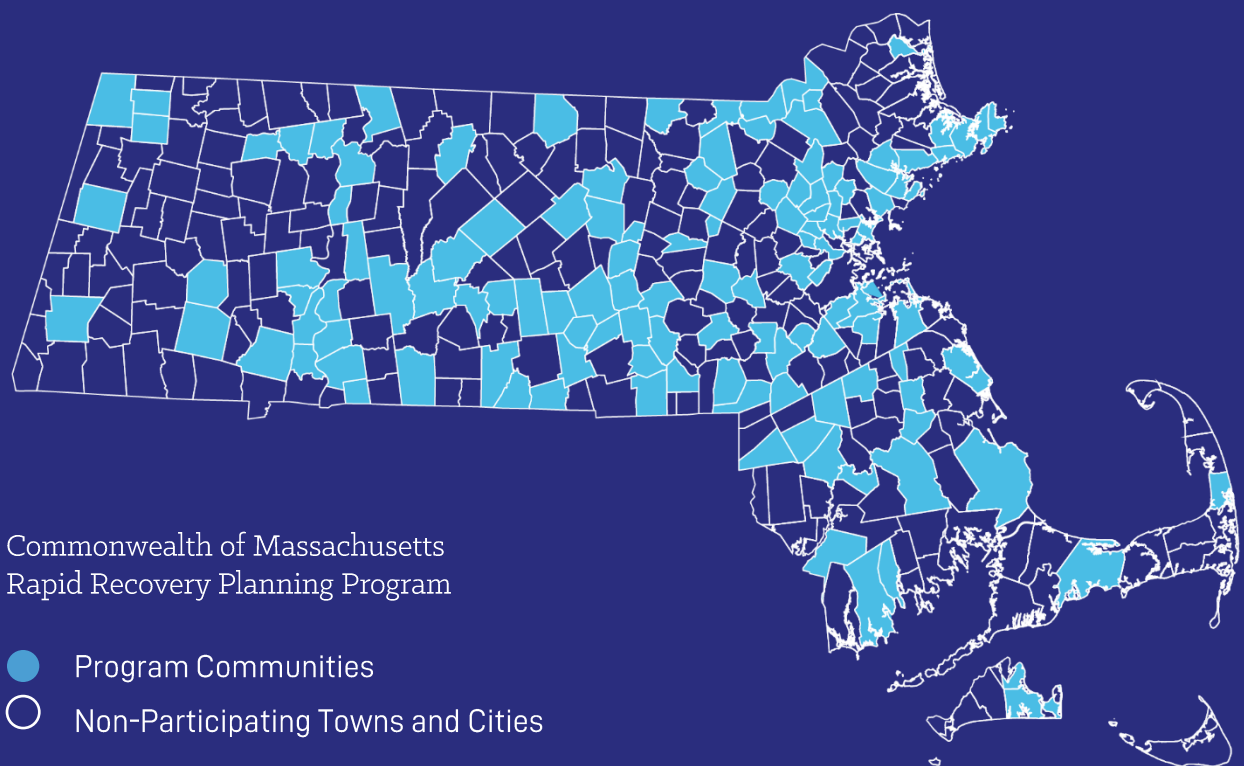
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## 125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

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.



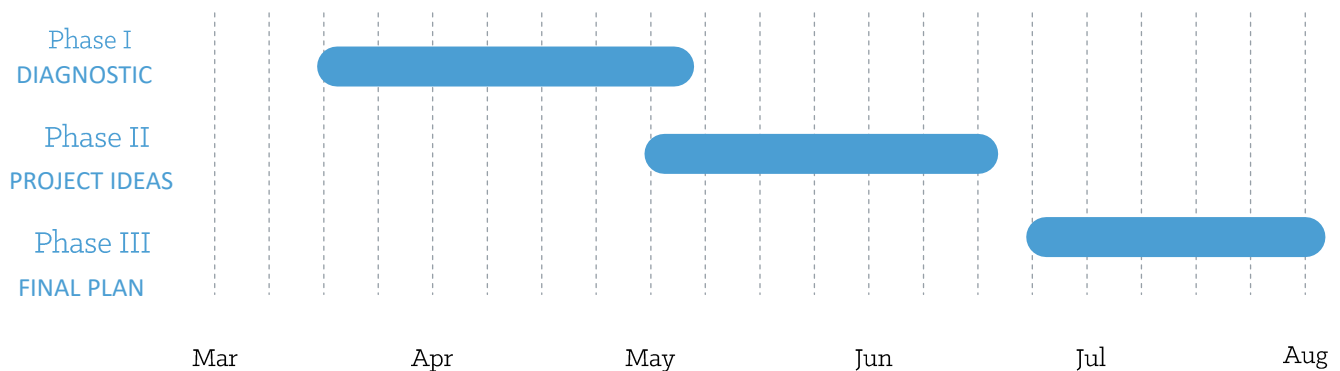
# Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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

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

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

Each Rapid Recovery Plan was developed across three phases between February-August 2021. Phase 1 - Diagnostic, Phase 2- Project Recommendations, Phase 3 - Plan.



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

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

## Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework



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

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## Executive Summary



# Executive Summary

## Recovery and Transformation

The Town of Shrewsbury, located in the growing Central Massachusetts region, was settled in 1722 and officially incorporated in 1727. Today, Shrewsbury has a population of 38,685 with approximately 244 people residing in the Town Center.

Local officials and community leaders recognized the town center was facing identity and economic challenges and in recent years commissioned several studies to help guide a new path forward for the Town Center. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic not only slowed the Town's efforts to implement recommendations from these studies but exacerbated the economic challenges facing the businesses located in the Town Center.

The issues that are pushing Shrewsbury's Town Center in an undesirable direction vary in scope and strength. Further, the amount of power the town has to alter or resist these influences also varies. That being said, by taking intentional steps to change the trajectory of the town center, the Town of Shrewsbury can, at the same time, provide much needed support to local businesses and assist them in their efforts to recover from the pandemic.

Despite COVID-19 related drops in traffic counts (see Table 1), the speed and volume of traffic along the two main corridors in the town center, Maple Avenue and Main Street, remain significant obstacles which must be addressed if the Town is to be successful in changing the perception of the Shrewsbury Town Center as a place to drive through on the way to someplace else. Further, as the properties in the town center developed over time, emphasis was placed on the automobile rather than the pedestrian with most every business providing its own on-site parking.



Shrewsbury Town Center, Main Street. Source: Goman+York

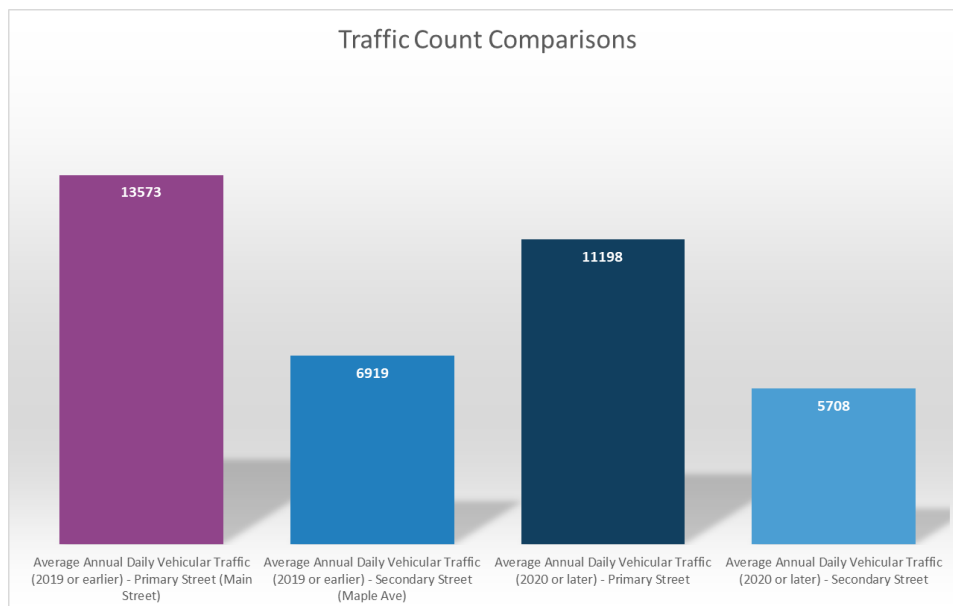
## The Town Center's recovery will depend upon a mix of building organizational capacity, business assistance and placemaking improvements

Last year, the Town of Shrewsbury took a significant step forward in changing the trajectory of the town center's future by amending its zoning ordinance and making regulatory and design provisions for the Town Center District that will address design and parking issues. Further, with the pending redevelopment of the Beal School property, the town is in a unique position to influence the redevelopment of the Beal School and leverage that project as a catalyst for other redevelopments and investments in the town center.

The next steps taken by the Town of Shrewsbury will be crucial to its success and must address business recovery related issues as well as placemaking initiatives. The Town Center Association can and should play a critical role in serving as the bridge between town center businesses and government. Investing in the Town Center Association and its members while making methodical and intentional investment in placemaking initiatives will reinforce and signal the Town of Shrewsbury's commitment to both the recovery and transformation of the Shrewsbury Town Center.

Leveraging existing anchors like the common, the public library, and the town hall and connecting those anchors with infrastructure investments that will make the Town Center more appealing to pedestrians and bikers should be a high priority, and community leaders will need to think creatively how to activate the common and transform it into a social and cultural anchor for the Town Center.

Coupling branding and marketing initiatives with investments in physical improvements that are designed to reposition buildings and parking lots, expand sidewalks and bike lanes, and enhance public spaces, the town center can be transformed into a destination that attracts people not only to live and work in the town center but also bring consumers and tourists to the businesses that are located there. It is time to reclaim the Shrewsbury Town Center as the heart and soul of Shrewsbury. By focusing on anchor developments, unique historical assets, cultural amenities and attractions and an increased interest in urban residential, the Town of Shrewsbury is in a position to make intentional investments that can provide the foundation to define the sense of place and identity that can set the stage for recovery and transformation.



*Above: Table 1 - Affect of COVID-19 on traffic counts in Project Area. Reasonable to assume the Town will see traffic return or exceed 2019 levels when employees fully return to in-person work. Source: Mass DOT*

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## Diagnostic



# Key Findings

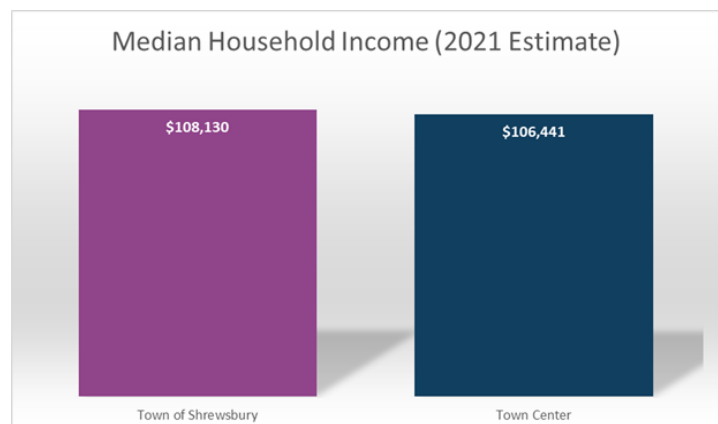
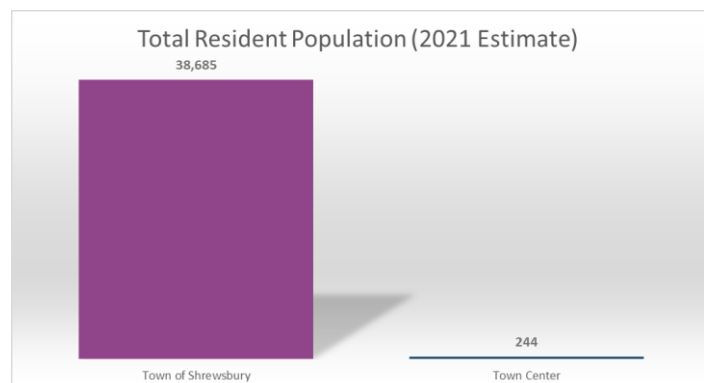
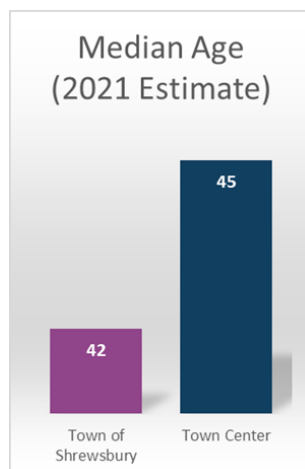


## Room for Growth in the Town Center

The Town of Shrewsbury, the second largest municipality in Worcester County, is a suburban community of approximately 38,685 residents located six miles east of Worcester and 40 miles west of Boston, between Interstate 290 and Routes 9 and 20. Attracted by its ideal location and excellent school system, Shrewsbury's residential population grew by over 8% in the last decade.

Home to a variety of professionals, the town has become more diverse since 2010, with the number of residents who identify as Asian increasing by 61 percent and now representing 24.6 percent of Shrewsbury's population. Additionally, people who identify as Hispanic or Latino increased by 56 percent, while people who identify as two or more races grew by 63 percent. The number of residents who identify as Black or African American increased by 14 percent.

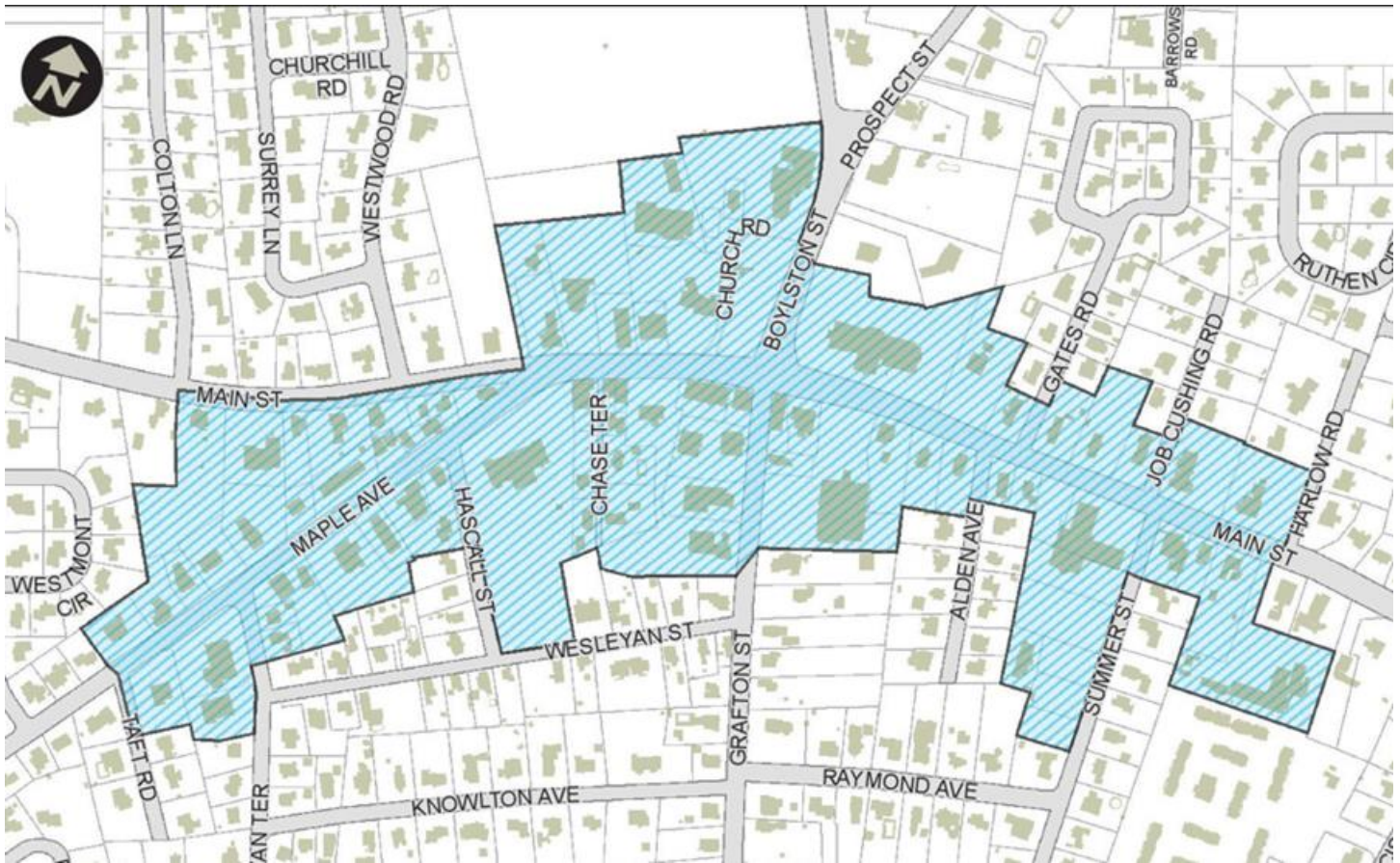
The project area, known as the Shrewsbury Town Center is bounded by Prospect Street and Boylston Street to the north; Danielson Flowers & Greenhouse to the east on Main Street; the Post Office to the south and west (see map on page 15) on Maple Avenue. Currently there are approximately 244 residents in the project area with multiple mixed-use redevelopments pending or underway that will add additional residents to the town center.



Demographics and Information Sources:

ESRI Business Analyst, CoStar/LoopNet, Census, Shrewsbury Parcel Records, MassDOT, site visits, business survey and stakeholder interviews





Above: Map of Town Center Project Area  
Source: Shrewsbury Planning Department

Left: Quote from 2019 Horsley Witten Group  
Shrewsbury Town Center Study

“...Shrewsbury’s Town Center is considered a tremendous asset within the community, and residents and business owners talk about the Center with a sense of pride. They are quick to point out the historic Town Common, the newly expanded library, and a couple of restaurants they truly enjoy. However, residents and business owners also share a sense that the Town Center is not living up to its potential and they are equally quick to point out the problems with traffic and a localized economy that is underperforming.”

# Key Findings



## Public Realm On-site Assessment

The roads and crosswalks have been designed to meet the needs of the automobile rather than pedestrians.

Traffic signals provide insufficient time to easily cross the street and all the cross walks show considerable wear and need repainting.

Public parking is available at the library, but there are no public parking lots clearly marked in the Town Center, including the library lot. (Additionally, since the site visit, 10 street parking spaces on Main Street were removed as part of a MassDOT sidewalk widening project.)

Traffic congestion and speed, including large trucks, creates dangerous pedestrian crossing conditions, especially around the intersection of Main Street and Grafton Street.

At the time of the site visit, there were no public parking or wayfinding signs in the Town Center. This issue should be addressed with the implementation of the 2020 Wayfinding Study

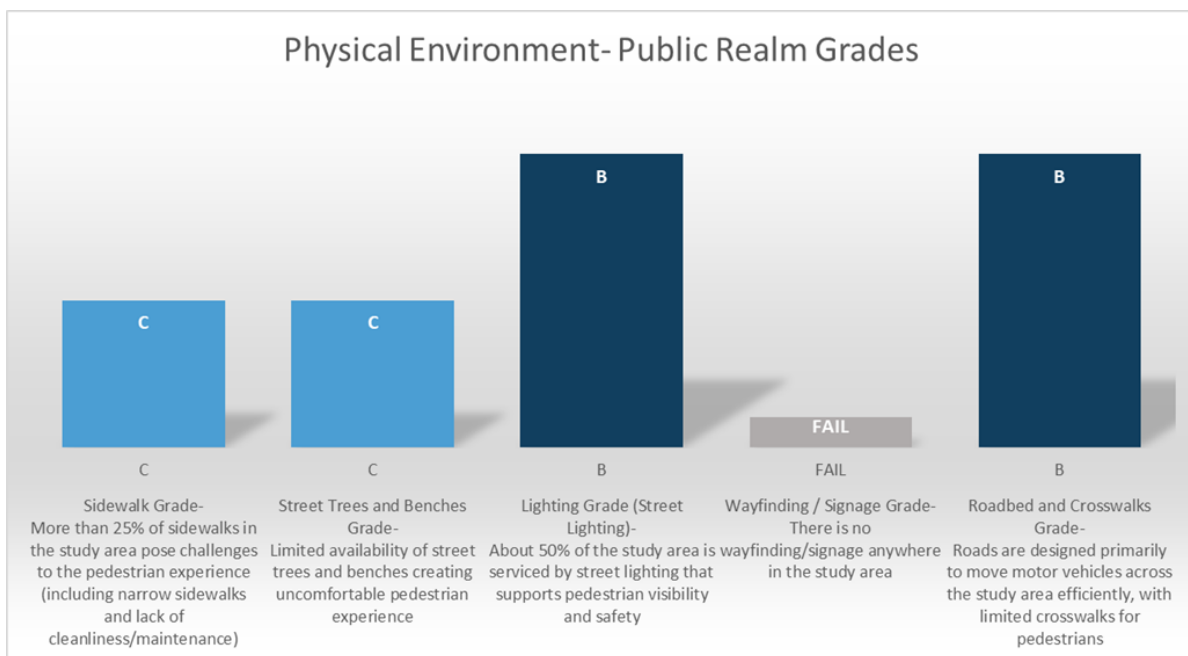


Photo Credits: Goman+York



# Key Findings



## Public Realm -

More than 25% of the sidewalks pose challenges due to width and lack of buffers between the traffic and the sidewalk.

A few small trees have been planted on Main Street with sparsely placed benches. Adding more trees, benches and public spaces would enhance the pedestrian and shopper experience.

The Common is underutilized and could use placemaking upgrades to encourage regular activation.

Generally, streetlights are sufficient for safety and visibility but adding lights to trees could enhance the nighttime ambiance of the project area.

Spaces between buildings, parking lots, sidewalks and streets is less than ideal and visually disrupts the continuity and walkability of the Town Center.

84% of businesses felt it was important to improve streetscape and sidewalks and 81% agreed improvement to the public spaces and seating areas was important.

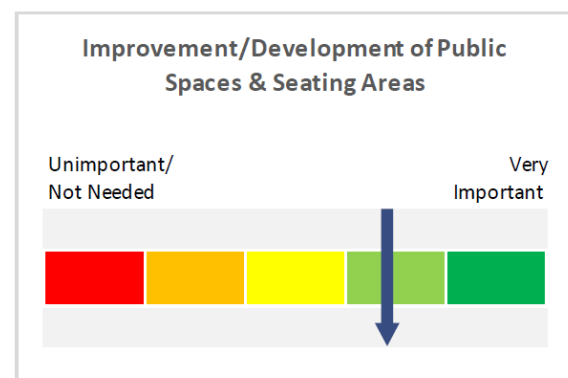
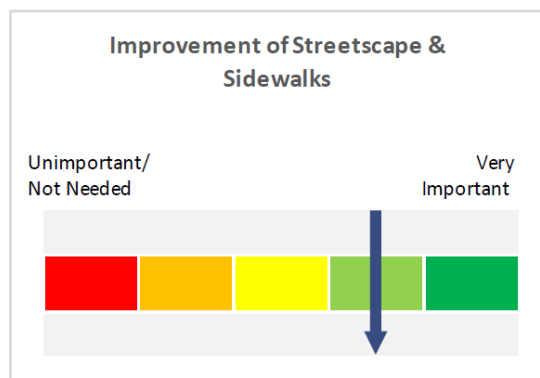


Photo Credits: Goman+York

# Key Findings



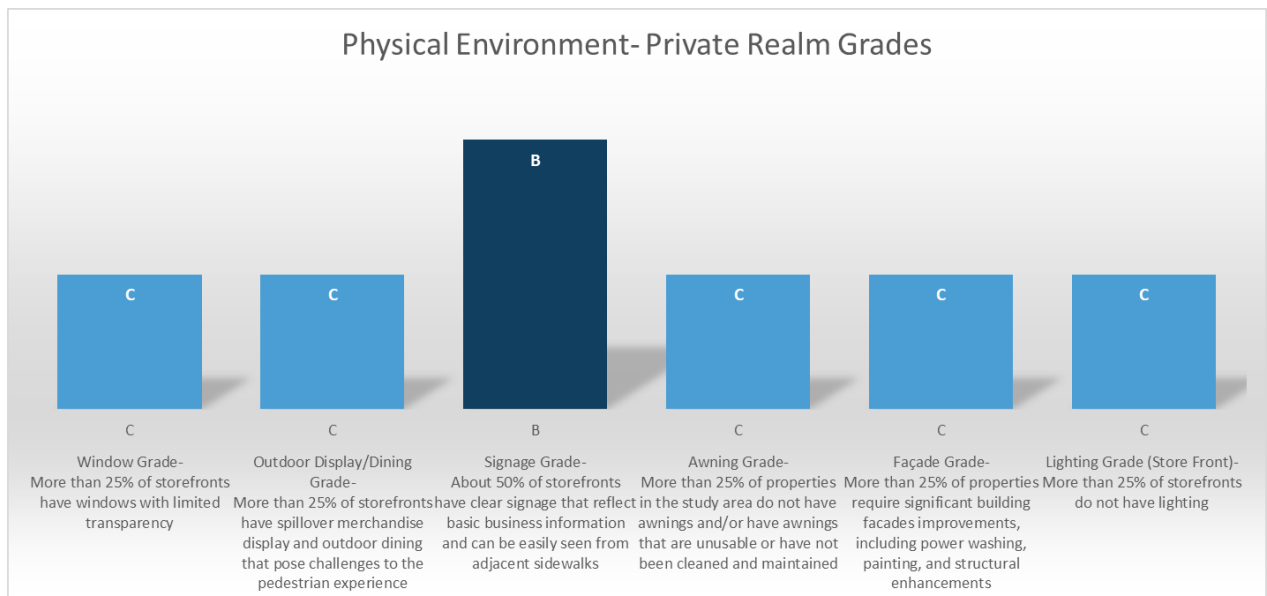
## Private Realm - Signage, Activation of Outdoor Space

A basic assessment of the private realm indicates that between 25-50% of storefronts need to improve lighting, awnings and window transparency.

About 50% of the businesses in the project area have clear signage that can be seen from the sidewalk; however, there is a wide range of styles and design that do not complement or support the desired ambiance or desired identity of the Town Center.

The economic viability of the project area could be elevated by activation of the windows of the vacant retail spaces in the project area.

There is little to no space currently allocated to outdoor dining or storefront spillover which could enhance the pedestrian and consumer experience.



# Key Findings



## Private Realm – cont'd

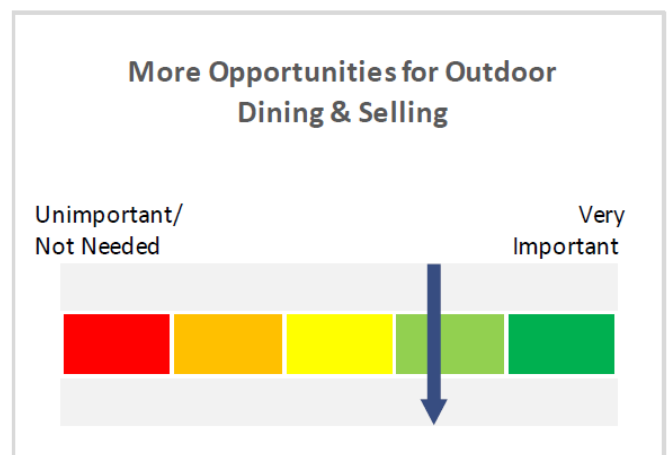
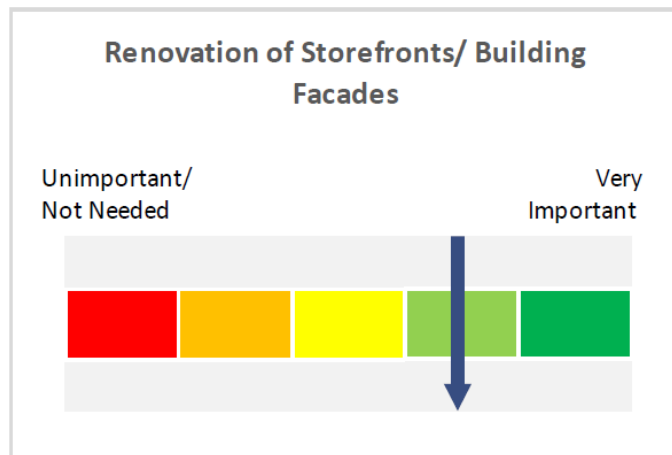
While storefront/building signage is clear or provided for by about 50% of the businesses in the project area, there is no consistency or cohesiveness with business signage.

There is a wide range of property conditions and a variety of architectural styles and designs with more than 25% of the properties requiring significant building façade improvements.

Most buildings in the project area are setback from street and in many cases have parking lots further separating the business from the sidewalks and pedestrian traffic.

Public space constraints only permitted very limited outdoor dining opportunities.

89% of businesses surveyed indicated renovating storefronts and building facades was important and 84% wanted to see more opportunities for outdoor dining and selling in the project area.





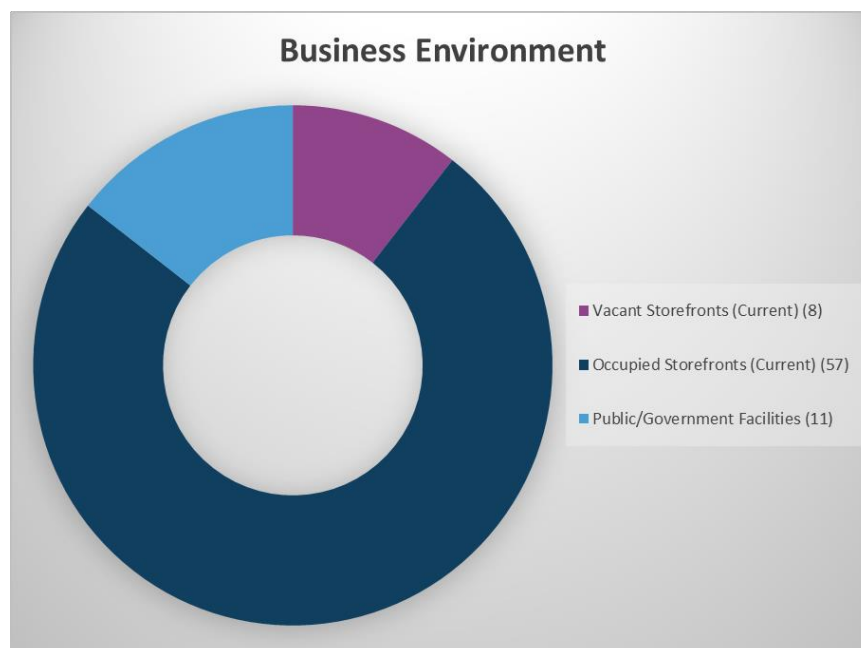
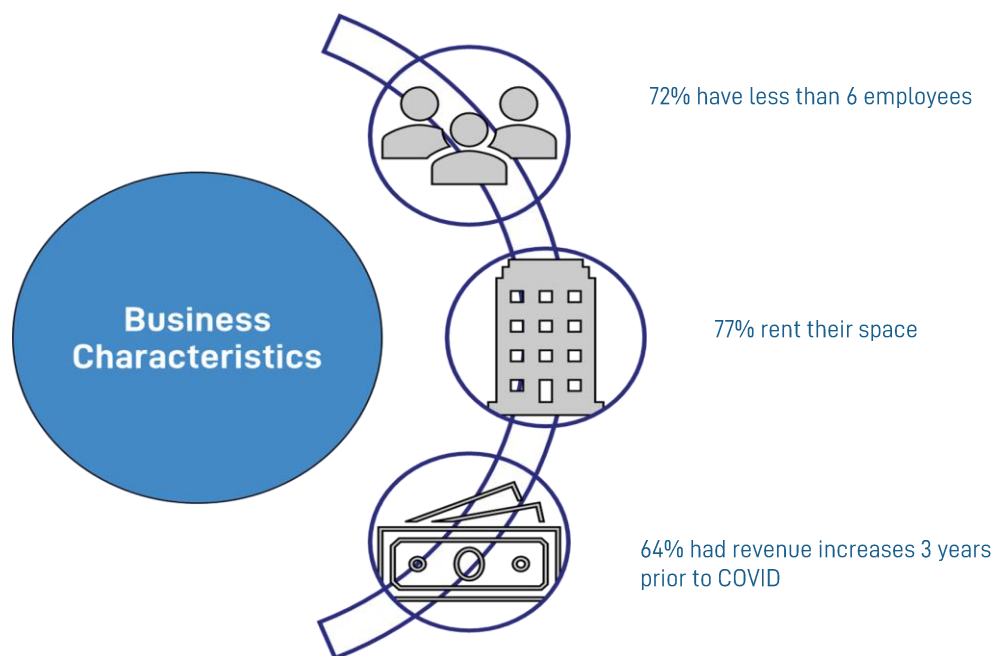


## Small Business Owners Comprise Majority of the Town Center

The town center has 65 storefronts/commercial businesses with 8 vacancies as of April 2021.

The results of the business survey indicate that 72% of these businesses have less than 6 employees.

Major destinations include the public library, the post office, Chiampa Funeral Home, UMASS Memorial Medical Group, two restaurants with regional draw and Town Hall which is just immediately outside the boundary of the project area.





## Town Center has a Weak Retail Mix with Opportunity for Improvement

The Town Center is comprised of 63% office and professional services with a high concentration of medical related uses.

Commercial/Retail uses are divided into three main categories:

11% "traditional" retail; (consumer goods)

11 % Restaurants/food

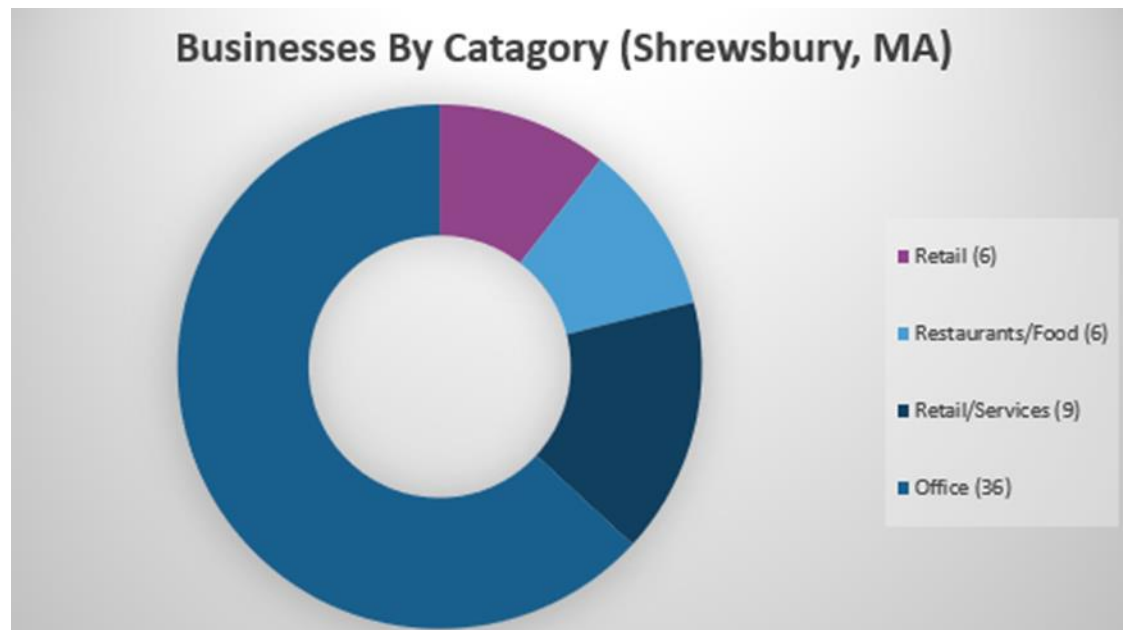
16% Retail Personal Services (salons, drycleaners, etc.)

Ground Floor Retail 46,883 square feet

Ground Floor Office 75,639 Square feet

Open/Public Space 40,000 Square feet

Asking rent: approximately \$28 square foot for ground floor retail and \$20 a square foot for ground floor office.





## Affects of COVID Pandemic\*

88% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID.

64% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID.

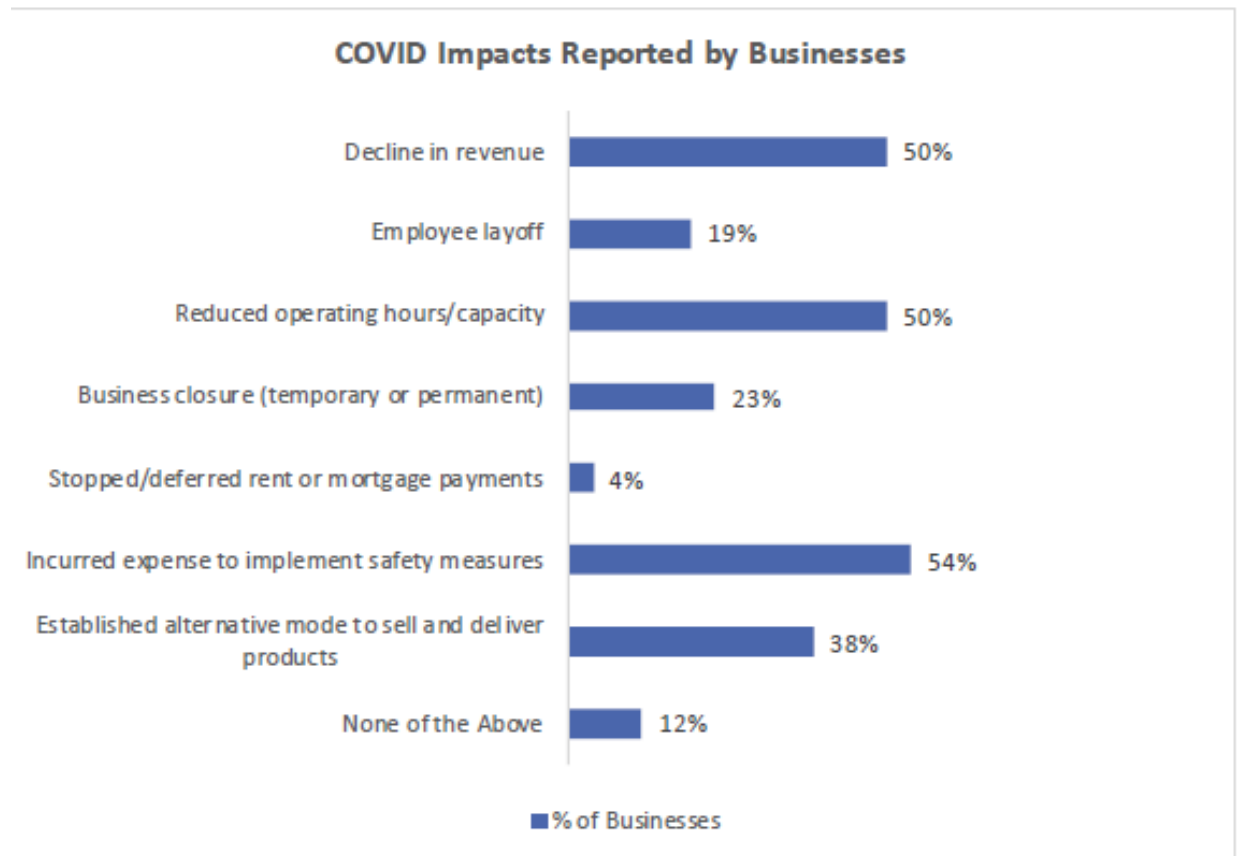
45% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more.

47% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019.

64% of businesses had less foot traffic in early 2021 than pre-Covid.

As of April 2021, 38% of businesses were still operating at reduced capacity or temporarily closed.

\*These numbers are skewed by the high concentration of office and professional services as well as no survey input from closed retailers.



Data collected from business survey conducted during April of 2021 as part of the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development Rapid Recovery Planning initiative. The survey was directed to owners or other appropriate representatives of business establishments located in the targeted project area – Shrewsbury Town Center.



## Professional Staff to Expand Effectiveness of Town Center Association



The Shrewsbury Town Center Association (STCA) was created in 2019 and currently has approximately 30 members.

About half of the businesses in the Town Center are active participants and engaged with the efforts of the STCA which is run by volunteers with some collaboration with Town of Shrewsbury Planning and Economic Development staff.

The STCA has an annual operating budget of \$10,000 with additional special event funds raised through sponsorships. The association provides networking among merchants, hosts the STCA website and community events, and advocates for improvements to the district.

80% of business survey respondents think implementing a comprehensive marketing plan for the district is important.

With the addition of professional staff and additional financial resources, the STCA could strengthen its ability to serve as a liaison between local businesses and stakeholders and the town government and provide more support to the small business owners in the town center by providing technical assistance, updates on COVID recovery assistance and supporting business growth and expansion through marketing, and management of events designed to draw consumers into the district.





## Need for Management of Public Space Use and Administration of Events

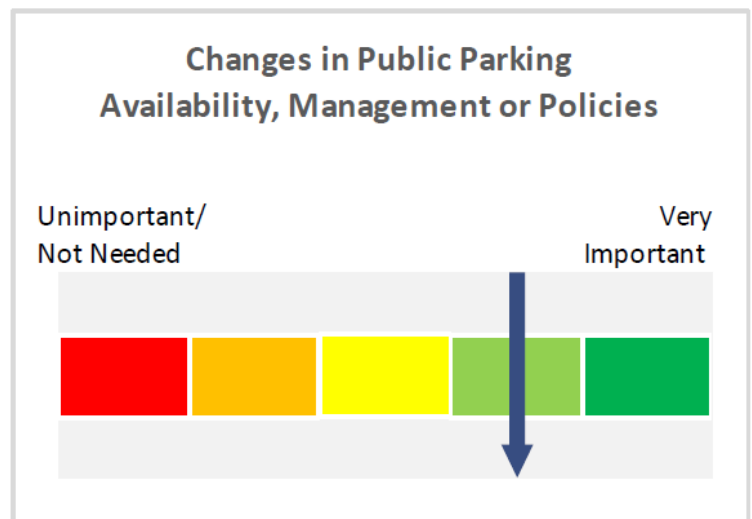
84% of the business owners in the town center rated changes in the public parking availability and management as important

The 2018 Parking Study indicated at that time there were 1,981 off-street parking spaces and 60 on-street parking spaces; however recent updates to Main Street eliminated 10 on-street parking spaces and there are no parking lots clearing marked as available for public parking.

84% of business survey respondents would like to see more cultural events or activities in the district

Interviews indicated there is a lack of clarity when it comes to obtaining approvals for the use and activation of The Common.

There does not appear to be an application or permitting process for hosting public events. This creates a lack of intentional coordination between organizations and groups planning events in the Town of Shrewsbury.





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## Additional Considerations

- Prior to the pandemic, the Town of Shrewsbury authorized and received recommendations from three important studies: 1) 2018 Town Center Parking Management Plan; 2) 2019 Shrewsbury Town Center Study and 3) 2020 Community Branding & Wayfinding Project. In addition, the Town has identified priorities and projects in a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.
- The projects recommended in this plan were developed as a result of the diagnostic process in Phase 1. It is important to note there is some overlap in the Local Rapid Recovery Plan projects and those the town received from earlier studies. This simply reinforces the validity of those recommendations. Further, the projects in this report are **not** presented in order of priority but follow the project categories identified and required by MDHCD.
- A valuable next step might be the preparation of a worksheet or implementation plan that merges and prioritizes the recommendations from this report and the various studies with consideration given to capacity building, logical order and availability of funding. Top consideration should be given to projects that address COVID-19 commercial revitalization and the long-term resiliency of the Town Center.
- While implementation and oversight of the Local Rapid Recovery Plan projects will fall primarily to the Town of Shrewsbury, an underutilized asset and resource is the Town Center Association. Investing in paid staff and operating budget, the STCA could be strengthened to expand its outreach, marketing and activation efforts as well as assist businesses with accessing COVID recovering funding and support services as well as regular small business technical assistance and general funding. Addressing this priority early in the process will provide a strong foundation toward successful implementation of other projects.
- Often large projects, like the pending Beal School redevelopment, serve as the catalyst or springboard to additional investment and redevelopment in a neighborhood or district. While the affect of the Beal School project will be extremely important to the Town Center, it may take some time to break ground and realize its potential. It is important, therefore, not to underestimate the value of incremental redevelopment and revitalization projects. The ten projects recommended in this report can also serve as a catalyst or springboard for the recovery and transformation of the Shrewsbury Town Center.
- Although no projects in this report address tenant mix or business recruitment, the ten projects in this report are the necessary precursors to setting the stage for a successful business attraction initiative. Any assistance the STCA can give business owners in filling current vacancies with traditional retail tenants will be a significant move in the right direction.

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A valuable next step - preparation of an implementation plan that merges and prioritizes the recommendations from this report and the various previous studies with top priority given to projects that address COVID-19 commercial revitalization and the long-term resiliency of the Town Center.

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## Project Recommendations

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# Project Categories

## Public Realm

Public spaces, landscaping, lighting, wayfinding signage, parking



## Private Realm

Façade & storefront interior improvements, vacancies



## Revenue & Sales

Consumer/traffic generation



## Administrative Capacity

District entity, regulations, permitting processes



## Cultural/Arts

Arts, programming, events



# Make Improvements to the Common and Implement Management Agreement

Category	 Public Realm and Admin Capacity
Location	Corner of Main and Grafton
Origin	Meetings with Shrewsbury Town Center Association and Site Visit
Budget	 Low Budget – Under \$50K Potential sources of funding NEA grants, local philanthropy, crowdsourcing, Shrewsbury Public Works
Timeframe	 Short time frame – Initial improvements should take six months or less. Future additions, changes, improvements can occur over the years and as funding becomes available
Risk	 Will require cooperation and flexibility from various organizations. Any additions or installations could be approached as temporary which would have lower budget implications and could test receptiveness to art and other activations/events
Key Performance Indicators	Reduction in time to gain approvals for use of Common for events, increased usage of common, increase in visitors to the Common, increase in business activity on days of events or activations;
Partners & Resources	Shrewsbury Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Planning, Fire Department, Historical Society, First Congregational Church, Town Center Association as well as local landscape companies, local fabricators, local craftspeople and artists



Above: Shrewsbury Common Photo Credits: Goman+York



## Diagnostic

With the COVID-19 pandemic, people were drawn to outdoor spaces for social interaction.

The town has an historical Common in the center of the project area that sits directly across the street from the public library.

This open space is an underutilized asset that could provide a central gathering place for special activities and serve as the hub of the town center and the community.

The Common is a placemaking opportunity for the town, that if regularly activated, could increase the sense of community and also stimulate economic activity in Shrewsbury Town Center.

According to City Parks Alliance “Relatively modest investments can improve neighborhood park conditions to encourage physical activity for everyone, regardless of age, gender, or income.”

Thinking outside the box for ways to activate the common with year-round activities with programs offered for all ages has the potential to maximize the value of the common while attracting important consumers and visitors to the town center.



*Above: Shrewsbury Town Common Benches & Walkway. Photo Credit: Goman+York*

## Action Item

Develop Memorandum of Understanding between the Historical Society, First Congregational Church and the Town of Shrewsbury to clarify oversight and management responsibilities for The Common.

Designate one department within the Town with responsibility for approval/coordination of events, maintenance, and activation of space

Develop and implement a regular maintenance plan.

Engage with a variety of community partners to provide regular and intentional free programming for all audiences.

Draw people to Town Center by creating compelling reasons for them to visit.



Above: Percussion Play outdoor instruments. Photo Credit: [www.Percussionplay.com](http://www.Percussionplay.com)



# Process

1) Convene working group with representatives from Town, Historical Commission and First Congregational Church to draft a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to:

- Clarify value of designated management of Common.
- Define organizational and financial contributions, responsible parties, roles and responsibilities.
- Establish expectations, processes for communications, decision making and approvals.

2) Once MOU is approved and signed:

- Designate primary municipal point of contact (POC)
- Establish application and approval process
- Widely promote information to general public and encourage increased use of the Common
- Implement regular maintenance, upkeep and improvements to the Common

3) Develop and implement maintenance and activation plan

- Inventory and assess maintenance and needed upgrades to existing infrastructure like the benches and the bandstand
- Consider hosting a “Community Workday” with town staff and/or community volunteers assisting with upgrades and maintenance
- Facilitate community engagement to identify additional active and passive uses that would appeal to a wide variety of residents (yoga, chess, additional seating, interactive art, etc.). Ensure that there are multiple draws to attract all different types of users to the space.
- Develop budget and implementation plan for additional upgrades and events
- Consider new solar-powered and cellular enabled park benches to track the number of cellular devices of people within range of the bench
- Utilizing adjacent infrastructure and buildings to offer simple amenities that meet basic human needs, like a refreshing water fountain, convenient Wi-Fi, or a comfortable public restroom.







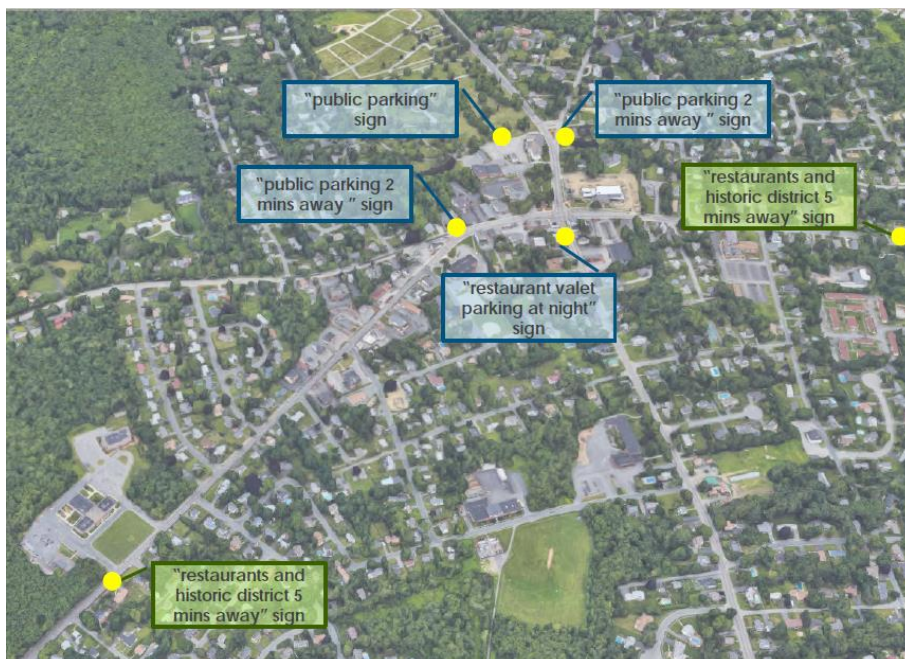
Top to Bottom: Park n Suwanee, GA; Klyde Warren Park, Dallas, TX; Romare Bearden Park, Charlotte, NC

Photo Credits: AARP “[Creating Parks and Public Spaces](#)”



# Develop Parking Management Plan and Install Wayfinding Signage

Category	 Public and Private Realm and Admin Capacity
Location	Study Area
Origin	Interviews, site visit observations, Shrewsbury parking and wayfinding studies
Budget	 Medium Budget – \$50-75K - Administration might be absorbed by existing departments/employees; funds for signage, installation and contract requirements from general fund, Mass Dev Grants (TDI Catalyst, Shared and Safe Streets), CDBG
Timeframe	 Short Term (< 5 years) – Parking and Wayfinding studies already complete, need to negotiate parking management agreements and implement report recommendations; may be delayed awaiting adoption of new town Center brand or logo (see Branding & Marketing Project)
Risk	 Low Risk – will require cooperation of owners of private parking lots; signage installation might be affected by supply chain issues affecting lumber and metals
Key Performance Indicators	Increased utilization of off-street parking spaces; increased visitors to Shrewsbury Town Center; increased awareness of Shrewsbury Town Center brand
Partners & Resources	Town of Shrewsbury Planning and Public Works Department, Town Center Association, MassDOT



Left: Wayfinding and signage map from 2018 Stantec Shrewsbury Town Center Parking Management Plan Photo Credit: Stantec.

## Diagnostic

Because there were no wayfinding or public parking signs in the project area, the town received a grade of “F” for wayfinding. However, the town completed a branding and wayfinding study in 2020 but the COVID 19 pandemic delayed execution of the recommendations.

COVID-19 increased take out and curb side pick-up for restaurants and retailers. All signs indicate that consumers have embraced this as an essential element in their shopping experience.

Change in consumer purchasing habits coupled with the elimination of prime on-street parking elevates the need to help motorists and shoppers to easily identify off-street parking locations in the town center.

## Action Item

Negotiate parking agreements with owners of selected private parking lots to provide designated number of daytime public parking spaces and additional nighttime public parking during specified hours.

With priority given to public parking signage, implement the wayfinding signage recommendations from the 2020 study. Ensure that all public parking is handicap accessible, clean, safe and well lit.

Determine whether the branding program (recommended) might update previously approved wayfinding signage.

Additionally, develop visual signage/wayfinding opportunities that will direct visitors, commuters and consumers to town center restaurants, other businesses and historical/cultural attractions.



*People's United Bank Parking Lot Photo Credit: Goman+York*



# Process

- Appoint parking management working group comprised of selected representatives from Public Works, Planning, Police, parking lot owners, affected tenants, and Town Center Association;
- Review and prioritize recommendations from the 2018 Stantec Town Center Parking Management Plan with a focus on developing and implementing a parking management plan that provides convenient parking for customers and clients in the town center
- Identify private lots that could be utilized for additional public parking, including but not limited to the Peoples Bank parking lot Main Street to replace recently eliminated curbside parking (more long-term parking might be considered for Beal School lot and the parking lots at Library and U Mass Memorial Medical Group, for example);
- Develop “shared parking agreements” for the identified lots, including provisions for use, maintenance, taxes, signage, enforcement, insurance, indemnification, etc.;
- Consider opportunities for addition of EV charging stations and accessible parking spaces in the negotiated agreements;
- Develop budget for implementation of parking agreements, including any rent, maintenance, signage or other expenses;
- Work in conjunction with the Branding and Marketing initiative in the design of parking and wayfinding signage;
- Review and consider recommendations from the Favermann Community Branding and Wayfinding Report to prioritize and install negotiated public parking signage;
- Install public parking signage without delay;
- Provide for training of parking enforcement officers, as needed;
- Develop and install additional wayfinding signs that direct visitors, commuters and consumers to Town Center restaurants, other businesses and historical/cultural attractions



*Shrewsbury Public Library Parking Lot Photo Credit: Goman+York*





Source: Arlington

# Establishment of Parking Benefit District for Improvements and Amenities in Arlington's Town Center



Provided by SME Consultant

Stantec Consulting, Inc.

BEST PRACTICE

Location

Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

Origin	Town of Arlington
Budget	 <p>Low – No cost to the Town to establish a Parking Benefit District (PBD) through the Select Board. Arlington DPW manages maintenance tasks. The Town hired a contractor for beautification efforts and snow plowing.</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Short Term (&lt;5 years) – The establishment of the Parking Benefit District, implementation of new parking meters, and formal allocation of meter funds took approximately 1 year.</p>
Risk	 <p>Medium Risk – Political buy-in and support from local businesses and perception issue related to implementing new meters</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Parking meter revenue
Partners & Resources	Arlington Select Board, Arlington Department of Public Works, Finance and Capital Planning Committee
Diagnostic	<p>Arlington was in need of a dedicated revenue source to fund needed changes in their Town Center. The PBD was ideal for setting aside a stream of money to implement improvements that did not have priority in the Town's Capital Plan.</p> <p>Through a parking study, Arlington determined that a performance-based adjustment to their parking pricing would provide much needed curbside availability while increasing revenues. Arlington installed new meters and initiated the parking management changes during the PBD approval process.</p> <p>The PBD fund was created to support a wide range of physical improvements as well as administrative/maintenance responsibilities including installation &amp; ongoing meter maintenance; the parking control officer's salary; credit card &amp; collection fees; servicing lease payments for meters; implementing pay-by-phone; snow removal in parking lots; the Arlington Center Sidewalk Project (ongoing); and parking lot re-designs.</p>
Action Item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing a Parking Advisory Committee, to manage the PBD. The Committee has complete flexibility to amend revenue allocation details and the operational/managerial structure, as the adopted local enabling legislation was written to ensure flexibility</li> <li>Establishing a system of accountability and trust for ongoing oversight by the Town's Financial Committee &amp; Capital Planning Committee, including             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Periodic reporting to committees &amp; stakeholders, maintaining consistent engagement and input; and</li> <li>Making an annual presentation at Town Meeting</li> </ul> </li> <li>Establishing a special revenue fund with a revolving fund structure for on-going parking meter revenues</li> <li>Defining a list of streetscape, mobility, connectivity, and accessibility improvements that are funded by the PBD special revenue fund</li> </ul>



## Process

In 2016, the Massachusetts General Court enacted the Municipal Modernization Act. One of the provisions of that law authorized the creation of parking benefit districts (PBDs).

The Town approved the article and adopted local legislation to create a PBD in Arlington Center with a defined geographic area, per State rules.

The Arlington Center Parking Benefit District Committee formed and developed a reporting structure to the Select Board, regularly proposes PBD-funded improvements, and manages PBD operations.

Once the PBD had been defined, parking meter revenue only is transferred into the Parking Benefit District Special Revenue fund, from which disbursements are made.

Following the adoption of the PBD, additional managerial responsibilities and expenditure management tasks may need to be assigned depending on the project type [e.g. the Department of Public Works manages sidewalk improvements].

## Success Story

Upon adoption of the PBD no negative impacts have been identified. New parking meters on Massachusetts Avenue were readily embraced by the community.

The original PBD revenue projection presented to the Select Board was conservative. It has regularly exceeded expectations.

The PBD has created an appetite for parking meters in other districts, which are being explored.

While parking revenue was lower due to pandemic impacts, the Town took advantage of the MassDOT Shared Streets & Spaces Grant in 2020 to create impactful temporary improvements downtown. PBD funds were used to supplement this award through the purchase of planters to beautify and protect outdoor dining areas.

In the future, the PBD will fund permanent installations of other temporary improvements including outdoor dining infrastructure and landscaping.



Public engagement flyer for PBO. Source: Arlington.

*Plan of proposed downtown improvements, including PBD-funded features such as landscaped pots and benches, and sidewalk enhancements. Source: Town of Arlington.*

# Develop and Implement a Placemaking Initiative

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Project Area
Origin	Site visit, interviews, Town Center Association, 2019 Horsley Witten Shrewsbury Town Center Study (Town Center Study)
Budget	 Medium Budget - \$50-200K General fund, placemaking & shared streets grants; infrastructure, ARPA (for study)
Timeframe	 Short time – Less than 5 years
Risk	 Will require some collaboration and approvals from MassDOT or change in jurisdiction/control of Main Street
Key Performance Indicators	Increase pedestrian and bicycle traffic, Increase sales, new business development in town center
Partners & Resources	Shrewsbury Planning and Public Works, MassDOT, Town Center Association, businesses and property owners



Left: After school bike riders in heavy traffic on Main St. to Maple Ave.

Photo Credit: Goman+York.



## Diagnostic

The COVID-19 pandemic required municipalities to become creative around strategies for using the public and private realms in downtowns. This included outdoor dining, retail display, expanded outdoor seating, and small events.

Consistent with the findings in the Town Center Study, site visits in April 2021 confirm high volumes of traffic moving through the Town Center and during rush hour at speeds which are often dangerous to people crossing the street on foot.

Slowing traffic down as it moves through the project area will help facilitate the perception and contribute to the aesthetic that Shrewsbury Town Center is not merely a “drive by” corridor but a viable commercial corridor.

Additionally, slowing the traffic and making a concerted effort to elevate the pedestrian experience is an important element in keeping restaurants and retail alive in this area.

Certain sidewalk hazards noted during site visit have been addressed by recent MassDOT improvements on Main Street, but there is an opportunity to implement streetscape improvements that provide visual connectivity between Main Street and Maple Avenue while enhancing the look and feel of the town center as a whole.



Above: Shrewsbury Town Center Crosswalk Main and Grafton April 2021 Below: Same Crosswalk September 2021 Credit: Goman+York



## Action Item

Create an atmosphere and placemaking that makes the town center more attractive to pedestrians and bikers.

Enhance the customer's image of the area providing a safe, clean and attractive place to visit.

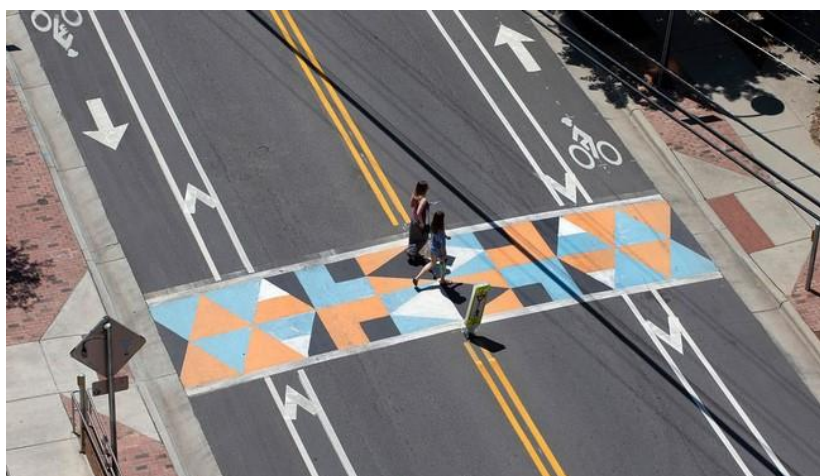
Develop Placemaking Plan to facilitate improvements to town center streets, sidewalks, crosswalks and public spaces/parks.

This plan should include other recommended projects such as wayfinding, parking and public art and public space improvements.

## Process

### Project Initiation and Planning

- Identify staff or consultant responsible for implementing Placemaking Initiative for Shrewsbury Town Center
- Analyze and prioritize recommendations from various studies and secure additional public input to develop plan. Projects might include painted crosswalks and bike lanes, pedestrian activated crosswalks with warning lights or rumble strips, park benches, plants, additional expanded sidewalks, and tightened intersection turn radii;
- Prepare conceptual designs to better define objectives (may require outside consultant);
- Identify goals and define successes;
- Present plan to City Council and Town Center Association for additional input and approval;
- Prepare detailed action plan for projects with realistic and achievable objectives and list of specific actions necessary to achieve them. The description of each action should include the time frame, needed resources (whether funding, staff time, outside contractors or volunteers), and most importantly, the party responsible for carrying out that action;



*Above: Painted Cross walks in Chapel Hill, NC The designer crosswalks are part of an initiative to increase the visibility between people who walk and people who drive. A basic test project was installed to monitor the durability of the paint through traffic, weather and regular maintenance before launching full program.*

*Credit: City of Chapel Hill, NC*



# Process – cont'd

## Implementation:

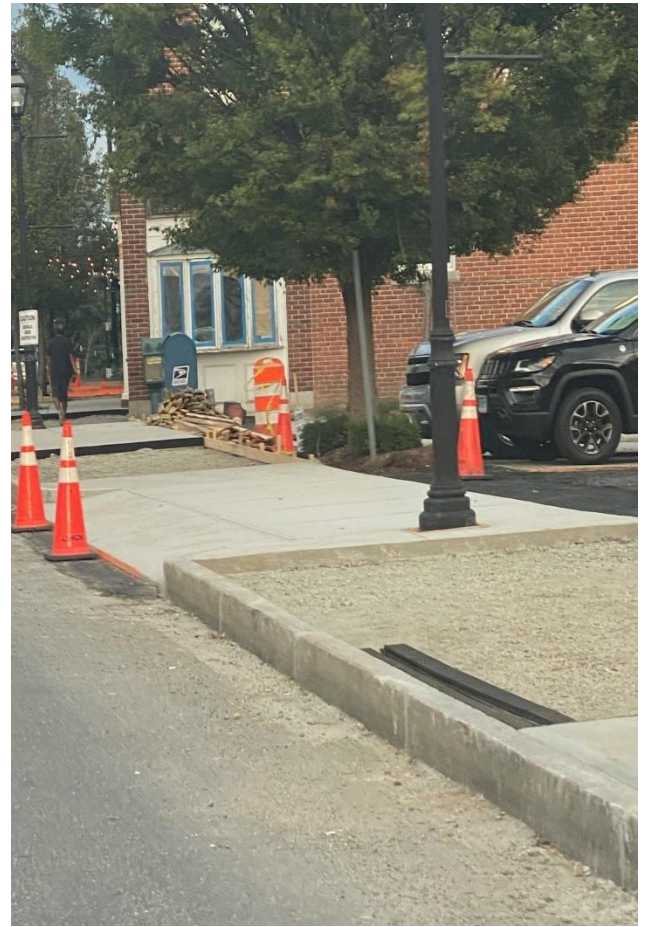
- Prepare any needed zoning amendments or other regulatory changes necessary to implement the plan;
- Determine whether the plan is eligible for the Massachusetts Complete Streets Program and apply for those and other grants, state, and federal funding to offset cost of the implementation;
- If possible, activate some elements of the plan, like reduced turn radius, bike lanes, in a temporary configuration to determine validity and acceptance of design element and adjust as necessary;
- Identify and procure any needed easements and permits;
- Determine which projects can be completed utilizing city staff and resources and prioritize and conduct procurement process for contractors and consultants for remaining projects;

## Ongoing Monitoring / Maintenance:

- Develop feedback portal and maintenance plan;
- Coordinate volunteers (street stewards) to support monitoring and maintenance.

## Evaluation:

- Gather before and after implementation measures including quantitative (e.g., speeds, volumes, revenue of businesses) and qualitative (e.g. photo, video, conversations, surveys).



*Above: September 2021 Sidewalk and Street Improvements on Main Street  
Photo Credit: Maribeth Lynch*



*Above: Streetscape Example from 2019 Town Center Study  
Photo Credit: Horsley Witten*



# DOWNTOWN TULSA



Best Practice

## Traffic Calming & Walkability



Location

Downtown Tulsa, Oklahoma

2019 International Downtown Association (IDA) Best Practice Submission from the Tulsa Downtown Coordinating Council

PROJECT COST: \$75,000  
START DATE: May 2016  
END DATE: November 2019

**DESCRIPTION:** In the last decade, more than \$1B has been invested in public and private projects to create jobs, residential population, entertainment venues, restaurants, and a new civic pride in downtown. Holding it back from excellence was a public realm focused on the pedestrian and ensuring his or her walk from point to point was safe and exciting – more walkable. What remained, however, was a mindset that the ways in which our streets are designed and built, our buildings are designed, and our sidewalks are lined doesn't matter to the success of downtown. After inviting Jeff Speck to Tulsa to present on his book *Walkable City*, the Downtown Coordinating Council (DCC) officially retained Speck and Nelson/Nygaard in September 2016 to begin a study of downtown's streets, sidewalks, ground floor activation, recent and proposed streets projects, and points of connection. The team conducted a street-by-street analysis (20 miles total) of existing conditions including lane width, sidewalk width, on-street parking, traffic speeds, pedestrian traffic, and ground floor vacancy in an effort to gauge how existing conditions impact the efficiency and economic functionality of downtown. With fieldwork completed, the team engaged with city planning and traffic engineering staff to better understand the thought and efforts going into street reconstruction and striping efforts. The team also hosted public forums and focus groups about what was desired out of this process to make a better and more walkable downtown. Speck presented a summary report to project stakeholders and the community in March 2017. Over the next year, the team continued meeting with city staff to align future projects with these new recommendations and to show how the proposal, while very different than Tulsa's standards, could be achievable.

**INNOVATION:** In a district that was built around an automobile with wide streets, one-way highway connectors, and what can seem to be end-less surface parking lots, this question was posed to shift the mindset of business and civic leaders. Downtown Tulsa was once the densest geographic area in the Midwest, but in the last 40 years has seen its architectural heritage demolished for surface parking. Even more, each street project acts to widen each road and lane to ease maneuverability into and out of downtown via its surrounding highway. The cost was losing more than half of downtown's daytime population and all its retail. Walkability in this sense means more than walking on two feet. It's a mindset that people matter more than slowing someone's vehicular entrance into downtown by one minute, that we must build transparent storefronts with active uses and orient our buildings to the sidewalk and people rather than parking lots or interior uses. It's as much bikeability and the efficient use of our streets for multiple modes of transportation.

## IDA BEST PRACTICE - Cont'd

**OUTCOME:** Implementation of the study's recommendations began in fall 2018. Monthly coordination meetings are led by the DCC and include City of Tulsa's department directors from Streets/Traffic Engineering, Engineering Services, Planning, the Tulsa bike and pedestrian advocacy group in order to keep projects moving and to ensure projects are implemented in alignment with the study's recommendations. Two streets have been restriped to include parking-protected bike lanes and reduced travel lanes. One street is under construction for a two-way conversion with its parallel street to commence in winter 2020. In the last six months, plans have been approved and bid for an unprecedented 5.5 miles of new road striping to incorporate road diets, lane diets, and the introduction of parking-protected bike lanes with installation to be completed by the end of 2019.

**EXECUTION:** Most importantly, this project didn't end with a study. The execution of the planning process was rather simple, albeit relatively long, compared to the implementation of the study's recommendations. We may not achieve full implementation of this document for 20 years or more. However, progress is being made very quickly. Implementation of the study's first recommendations began in fall 2018. Monthly coordination meetings are led by the DCC and include City of Tulsa's department directors from Streets/Traffic Engineering, Engineering Services, Planning, the Tulsa bike and pedestrian advocacy group in order to keep projects moving and to ensure projects are implemented in alignment with the study's recommendations. Two streets have been restriped to include parking-protected bike lanes and reduced travel lanes. One street is under construction for a two-way conversion with its parallel street to commence in winter 2020. In the last six months, plans have been approved and bid for an unprecedented 5.5 miles of new road striping to incorporate road diets, lane diets, and the introduction of parking-protected bike lanes with installation to be completed by the end of 2019.

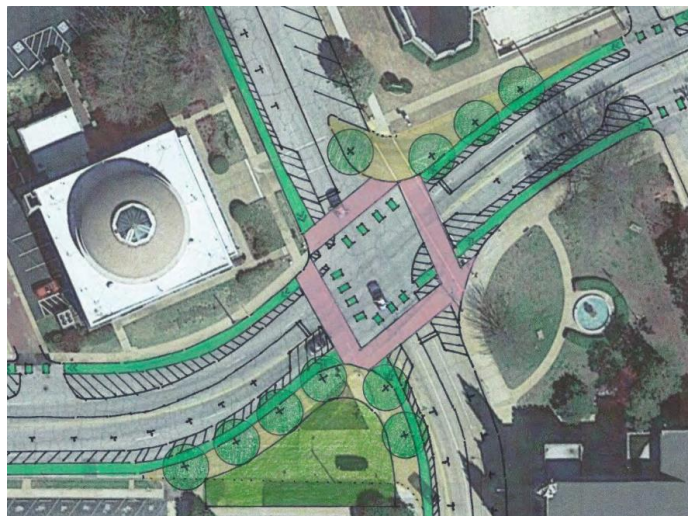
**REPRESENTATION:** Speck and Nelson/Nygaard hosted public forums, focus groups with Downtown stakeholders, and one-on-one meetings with city departments responsible for the creation of streets plans and the eventual implementation of the study's recommendations. The final draft was presented to the public with 300 attendees in May 2017 at which point open feedback was taken through the City of Tulsa's feedback channel, FeedbackTulsa.org. Comments and thoughts were taken into consideration and with additional engagement of City departments, the final study was released in May 2018 for consideration by City Council.

**REPLICATION:** This is an attainable plan as it provides a "Kit of Parts" that any city or neighborhood can adopt to create desired streets based on Driving Lanes, Cycle Lanes, Parallel or Angled Parking Lanes. It is a package that includes transportation options, zoning and design standards, increasing density, active storefronts, and ensuring that every project addresses walking, biking, and access to public transportation.

**COMPLEXITY/SIMPLICITY:** The entire project process followed the question: "What changes can be made, in the least time and for the least cost, that will have the largest measurable impact on the amount of walking and biking in Downtown Tulsa?" The final study gives the City of Tulsa a tool to deliver walkability. This study provides a block-by-block roadway design guide that details street width and proposed lane allocations. The plan includes nearly 10 miles of bike lanes, the conversion of nine one-way streets to two-way traffic, and design guidelines for Downtown that inspires and creates vibrancy and activity on the ground floor and within the public realm. Consistent implementation meetings allow everyone to check in on Downtown's infrastructure projects and to ensure we are doing things the recommended way. It saves our engineers and consultants time in conceptualizing street design because it's done. It delivers a tool for design standards that hasn't been present previously.

**WEBSITE** Link to Downtown Tulsa Walkability Study

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d73ca98fac60369a9c6e43b/t/5e5d44989d88357d4155f531/1583170770298/FINAL-Tulsa-Walkability-Analysis-Report.pdf>



*Proposed improvements from Tulsa Study Source: Speck and Nelson/Nygaard*



*Main Street, Tulsa OK Source: Speck and Nelson/Nygaard*



Best Practice

# Michigan Municipal League PlacePlans Initiative Experimenting with Place



Location

Berkley, Michigan

## Challenge

The intersection of Robina and Twelve Mile in downtown Berkley has the potential to be a great public gathering space. Twelve Mile is full of shops and restaurants, and Robina has some small businesses and parking before quickly transitioning to residential one block north and south of Twelve Mile. However, the space is poorly maintained, the physical environment is outdated, and the sidewalks are in bad condition. City officials were planning on doing minor improvements to the sidewalk anyway but wanted to explore the idea of placemaking and see if residents might want to invest in enhancing the public space.

## Overview

The City of Berkley was selected to undertake a civic engagement pilot project. To engage the community in placemaking at the Robina and Twelve Mile intersection, the city decided to initiate a short-term planning process and tactical placemaking pop-up project during the Berkley Art Bash, an annual art fair in downtown Berkley. The city planner organized a community stakeholder group to guide the project, including residents, business owners, representatives from the planning commission and the Downtown Development Authority, council members, and the city manager.

The goal of the project was to show residents possible uses for the space, collect feedback and ideas, and to promote the findings to guide the next steps of the intersection's future. The stakeholder group set up the following elements during Art Bash:

- An outdoor seating area with moveable patio furniture, fake hedges, and umbrellas to block the sun;
- A giant checkerboard painted in the street with Frisbees as the checker pieces ;
- Sidewalk chalk for kids to draw with;
- A local artist's metal sculptures in planters and student art displayed on an exterior brick wall;
- A long piece of paper posted to an exterior wall to collect feedback and ideas from Art Bash patrons.



Participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The stakeholder group to guide the process</li> <li>2. City officials to act as project champions</li> <li>3. A skilled facilitator (provided by the League)</li> </ol>
Budget & Funding	<p>It cost under \$2,000 to rent patio furniture, purchase materials for the giant checkerboard, print photos of placemaking ideas, and other miscellaneous supplies.</p> <p>The city dedicated part of its budget to purchase materials and the League’s staff time was paid for by the PlacePlans grant, which is funded by the Michigan State Housing Development Authority through the MiPlace placemaking initiative.</p>
How To	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify an area in need of rejuvenation, preferably one near other attractions and amenities. The Robina and Twelve Mile intersection was selected because of its proximity to shops, restaurants, and other downtown assets. The city was planning on improving the space’s sidewalks anyway but wanted to explore the possibility of spending more money to really enhance the area as a public gathering space.</li> <li>2. Convene a community stakeholder group to guide the process. City staff and elected officials led the initiative but created a stakeholder group of active residents, business owners, and others who joined early in the planning process. The League’s facilitator hosted four meetings with the stakeholder group to help guide the process. The goals of each meeting were as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Initial meeting “Introduce concepts of placemaking, share potential concepts to test at Art Bash, generate ideas, and recruit community members to join the planning committee.</li> <li>B. Committee planning meeting #1 “Share examples of how other communities have implemented popular ideas generated at the first meeting, narrow the project’s focus, and secure volunteers to further develop selected project elements.</li> <li>C. Committee planning meeting #2 “Report progress and information from responsibilities from the previous meeting and decide on key project elements.</li> <li>D. Committee planning meeting #3 “Finalize unfinished plans, determine final arrangement of project elements, finalize public input questions, and secure volunteers for the Art Bash event.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Host the event! Volunteers helped set up the placemaking pop-up before Art Bash began and participants were present all day talking to visitors, sharing information about the project, and collecting ideas. Volunteers also took pictures and posted on social media to document the event.</li> <li>4. Debrief findings and compile a report to illustrate what happened, key findings, and ideas generated at the event. Access the entire report <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>5. Keep the momentum going. As a result of the Art Bash placemaking pop-up, Berkley stakeholders and public officials were excited to continue moving forward on the project. The League outlined several immediate and short-term action steps to continue to promote placemaking and explore options for a permanent structural change..</li> <li>6. Prepare for future planning. Incremental changes to the intersection can help keep costs low and keep up excitement around the project. Permanent changes to the physical structure will need additional funding and planning. The city is exploring funding opportunities and discussing plans with designers and architects interested in working on the project.</li> </ol>

## Lessons Learned

1. Host a placemaking pop-up at an existing community event. The Berkley Art Bash was a great way to test ideas and engage with residents about potential uses of the Robina and Twelve Mile intersection. Using an existing public event was a great way to take advantage of people already gathering in downtown Berkley.

2. Let people experience placemaking to make more educated decisions. People are most willing to reconsider physical design and use of public infrastructure when they are shown or can experience possibilities. Allowing new ideas to live temporarily at the site gives people the opportunity to reach beyond what they would normally consider possible.

3. Test ideas before making large, expensive changes. Temporarily testing proposed changes allows the community to experience aspects of the project before making big decisions. It's much cheaper to test ideas than to spend money on a space the community won't use.

4. Use photos of great public spaces to educate the public about placemaking. Rather than getting bogged down in technical descriptions of placemaking, showing photos of great spaces allowed people to imagine what is possible for Berkley.

5. Use programming to attract people to the public space. The Art Bash placemaking project provided opportunities for multiple constituencies to enjoy the space (kids playing with sidewalk chalk, seniors using the cafe, yogis doing yoga, etc.). Adding programming or creating joint programming contributes to the richness of the space and to the diversity of input gathered.

6. Keep kids in mind. Kids have great ideas and are outside-the-box thinkers. Children and families freely participated in the engagement wall at Art Bash. Having specific ways to make sure they are engaged can help generate some of the most creative ideas.

7. Start small. As illustrated with Art Bash, it's possible to explore big ideas and get people excited about a project in just a few hours with a limited budget.

## Additional Potential Funding

One potential funding opportunity is through crowdfunding, which is an online platform to raise money for a specific venture. People excited about the project contribute varying dollar amounts until a final goal is met or time frame runs out. Patronicity is a Detroit-based crowdfunding site that raises support for community projects across the state. Commonwealth Places, a collaborative initiative from MassDevelopment and Patronicity, is a crowd granting challenge program to activate new or distressed public places and community spaces.

## Contact the Experts

Sarah Szurpicki, New Solutions Group  
sarah.szurpicki@gmail.com

Amy Vansen, AICP City Planner for the City of Berkley  
avansen@berkleymich.net


Additional Documents:

[2015 Robina Plaza Project](#)

[2014 Robina Plaza Project](#)



# Acquire Empire Cleaners Parcel and Construct Maple Avenue Public Parking

Category	 Public Realm
Location	15 Maple Avenue
Origin	Site visit, interviews, meeting with Town Center Association
Budget	 Large budget – could exceed \$200K but offset by EPA Brownfield Grants and Mass DEP Grants for technical assistance, assessment and cleanup
Timeframe	 Short time frame – less than 5 years
Risk	 High Risk - Potential liability concerns, extensive cleanup expenses, ability to secure funding
Key Performance Indicators	Utilization of parking lot, adjacent property improvements, increased property values of adjacent properties
Partners & Resources	Town of Shrewsbury, Town Center Association, neighborhood or community groups, attorneys, environmental consultants, state and federal regulators



15 Maple Avenue Photo Credit: Google Maps.

## Diagnostic

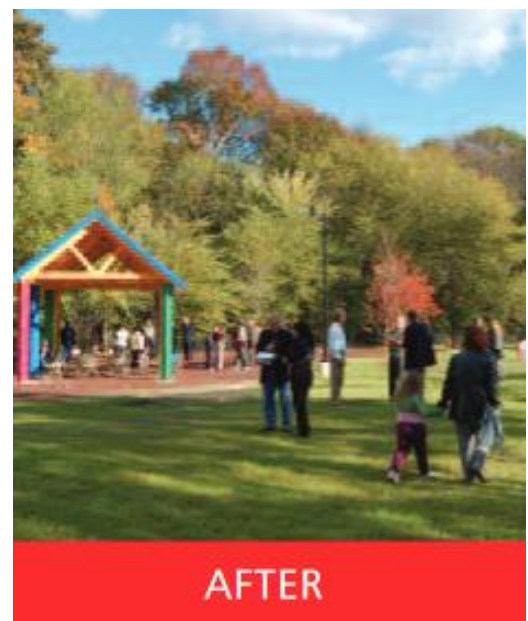
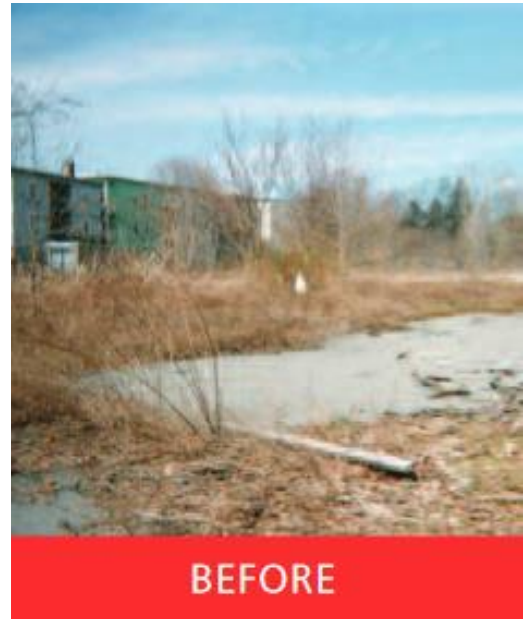
During the COVID-19 pandemic Shrewsbury Town Center businesses suffered from loss of sales and reduced customer visits.

As the pandemic wanes, people are slowly returning to visiting restaurants and shops. This elevates the need for convenient parking.

With recent Main Street roadway improvements, the town center lost 10 on-street parking spaces.

The property at 15 Maple Avenue is an eyesore located in the middle of the project area that has been vacant and abandoned for about four years.

Abandoned properties, like 15 Maple Avenue, can lead to increased vandalism, and either increased crime or the perception of the area being a “bad” place to live or visit, potentially leading to lost revenue and a negative economic impact on surrounding businesses.



## Action Item

Assess feasibility of redeveloping 15 Maple Avenue into a public parking lot.

If findings support project, move forward with acquisition and redevelopment to remove neighborhood “eyesore”, provide much needed public parking in town center, which may encourage other infill redevelopment which could spur job creation and perhaps kick-start additional town center revitalization and property investment activities.

*Top – The “Brook Street site”, a 2.7-acre former brownfield located in a densely settled residential neighborhood on the banks of the Spicket River in Lawrence, MA.*

*Bottom - Dr. Nina Scarito Park now provides safe recreational opportunities for hundreds of children and families, contributes to improved air and water quality, and helps to grow the City's tax base by adding value to the surrounding neighborhood. The park was made possible through a combination of federal, state, city, and private funds, including an Urban Self-Help grant.*

*Photo Credit: Groundwork LAWRENCE*

# Process

## Pre-Development:

- Conduct due diligence and environmental site assessment (see Exhibit A for detailed environmental assessment recommendations from Subject Matter Expert BETA Group, Inc.)
- Determine whether any fatal flaws inhibit proceeding, if not
- Identify budget and sources of funding, including but not limited to local, state or federal government programs that offer tax credits, loans, incentives or abatements, bonds, subsidies or grants
- Develop Proforma and Agreement for acquisition of property
- Use the Proforma to prepare preliminary site design and redevelopment plan
- Acquire environmental insurance or “covenant not to sue”
- Acquire property

## Development:

- Obtain permits and necessary approvals
- Determine whether project will be completed in-house or with a private contractor
- If necessary, prepare RFP or RFQ, and contract documents for demolition, remediation, and parking lot construction
- Conduct environmental cleanup and site remediation activities
- Complete construction and open the final project

## Management:

- Assume operation and management of site, including any required environmental monitoring
- Periodically assess whether the site remains in current use or whether economic conditions warrant the sale of the property to private owner for additional redevelopment and return to Town of initial investment



*Left – King of Prussia District’s Food Truck Tuesday utilizes parking lots in the district to host weekly food truck “popup” events.*

*Attendees enjoy the sunshine, giant yard games and get to know the sponsors of the event series and bring customers and activity to the district*

*Photo Credit:  
[www.visitkop.com](http://www.visitkop.com)*



# Exhibit A



## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** July 20, 2021 **Job No.:** 7513  
**To:** Cinthia Stewart, Goman and York  
**Cc:**  
**From:** Craig Ellis, LSP  
Marylou Armstrong, LSP  
**Subject:** Empire Cleaners, 15 Maple Street, Shrewsbury, MA

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This project involves the potential redevelopment of a vacant dry cleaner located at 15 Maple Street into a public parking lot for the project area. More parking is needed for the area and the property has been vacant for 3-4 years and the owner owes back taxes.

The property is a Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) listed disposal site. BETA has reviewed information provided by Goman and York, the Town, and the Permanent Solution Statement / Activity & Use Limitation and has prepared this memorandum with the objective of discussing the feasibility of using the property as a parking lot, potential risks for obtaining the property due to contamination and recommend next steps to evaluate / manage the identified potential risks.

### Background

- The Site is located at 15 Maple Street has been a drycleaner since the 1960s when the building was constructed.
- There are three (3) release tracking numbers (RTNs) associated with the property (RTN 2-0967, 2-14715 & 2-17850). A fuel oil release occurred on the northeast portion of the property. Approximately 300 cubic yards of petroleum-impacted soil was excavated and regulatory closure was achieved. A release of chlorinated volatile organic compounds (CVOCs) has impacted the property and downgradient residential and commercial properties.
- Groundwater is located at 8 to 11 feet below grade and flows in a south southwesterly direction.
- The source of the CVOC release has been determined to be chlorinated solvents used in business operations being discharged to the site septic tank. Approximately 8 cubic yards of soil were excavated to a depth of 9 feet below grade by the septic tank. The septic tank was formerly located in proximity of well MW-27D.
- Multiple rounds of off-site subslab soil gas and indoor air sampling have been conducted at the Site and nearby properties by both the owner and MassDEP.
- Environmental assessment activities conducted as part of the Phase I – Initial Site Investigation and Phase II – Comprehensive Site Assessment have included 20+ soil borings / monitoring wells (both on and off-site) including bedrock wells.
- The petroleum and CVOC releases were closed with a Permanent Solution With Conditions Statement (PSWC) and an Activity and Use Limitation (AUL) was placed on the entire parcel. The AUL includes operation of a sub-slab depressurization system (SSDS) on the rear portion of the building.

## Exhibit A – Page 2

Empire Cleaners

July 20, 2021

Page 2 of 3

### Site Conditions

- Bedrock is located at approximately 16 feet below grade. Groundwater samples collected from bedrock well MW-27D exceeded GW-2 standards for Tetrachloroethene (PCE) and Trichloroethene (TCE) in 2017. TCE Concentrations increased in the bedrock well on-site since the 2005 sampling event (from 240 ug/l to 690 ug/l).
- In 2017, groundwater samples collected in the overburden wells exceeded Method 1 GW-2 standards for PCE and TCE. TCE ranged from ND to 5.5 ug/l.
- Confirmatory soil samples from the petroleum excavation area near the building foundation exceed Method 1 S-1 soil standards. No soil borings or soil samples were collected from beneath the site structure and the Permanent Solution indicated it was infeasible to remove this soil without jeopardizing the structural integrity of the site structure.
- No chlorinated compounds were detected in soils samples collected from borings B7 or B9 at depths of 11 to 15 ft below grade. These two borings were in proximity of the septic tank.
- PCE detected in soil gas beneath the site building exceeded MassDEP commercial/industrial thresholds and a sub-slab depressurization system (SSDS) is being operated on-site as part of the AUL. The SSDS operates with a remote telemetry system that alerts the MassDEP if it shuts down.

### Adjoining Downgradient Properties

BETA has summarized results from properties at 11 Maple Avenue, 19, Maple and 6 Hascall. Each of these properties are have residential/commercial usage and are downgradient and abut the subject Site.

- Six soil samples were collected from 11 Maple Street for VOCs. Each sample was below Method 1 S-1 standards.
- Bedrock well MW-32D, located on 19 Maple Avenue, was below Method 1 GW-2 standards for CVOCs.
- Groundwater concentrations exceeding Method 1 GW-2 standards for CVOCs were identified at 6 Hascall, 19 Maple and in one well on 23 Maple Street.
- PCE was detected in indoor air at 6 Hascall and 19 Maple at concentrations below MassDEP risk based thresholds. Risk to indoor air was evaluated with a Method 3 Human Health Risk assessment and a condition of No Significant Risk was determined for these detections.

### Further Downgradient Properties

- Average CVOC concentrations detected in groundwater samples collected from wells at 34, 38 & 45 Wesleyan Street were below their respective Method 1 GW-2 and GW-3 standards. The properties along Wesleyan are residential.
- Indoor Air sampling conducted by MassDEP in 2017 were below applicable MassDEP indoor air threshold values at 34, 38, 40 & 42 Wesleyan Street.



## Exhibit A – Page 3

Empire Cleaners

July 20, 2021

Page 3 of 3

### Findings and Recommendations

While it is feasible to use the property as a parking lot, additional activities should be completed as part of the evaluation for acquiring the parcel. BETA recommends the following:

#### Pre-Acquisition

- Conduct an ASTM Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) for the property to evaluate if there are any other potential Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) on the property that would need evaluation. This step also provides liability protection for the Town.
- The Permanent Solution Report referenced that petroleum contamination was present on the property near the foundation of the building. No borings have been completed beneath the structure. Conduct an ASTM Phase II ESA on the property that includes evaluating if soil contamination is beneath the footprint of the building along with any issues identified in the Phase I ESA.
  - The ASTM Phase I process provides liability protection for the Town and would identify if there are potential for releases beyond the ones that have been documented to date. One thing we noted is that no work has been completed beneath the building and we are recommending the Town evaluate soil and/or GW beneath the building as part of this process.
  - The ASTM Phase II assessment is a subsurface investigation that is completed following the ASTM Phase I in order to evaluate if any issues identified in the ASTM Phase I report may have impacted soil or groundwater at the Site. The assessment can also be planned to develop costs for managing contaminated material during parking lot construction. An access agreement will be needed to complete this work.
- Contamination has been documented off-site on downgradient parcels. There is potential, should Shrewsbury take the property, for the impacted property owners to attempt to recover costs from the Town for lost property values. BETA recommends consulting with an environmental attorney to evaluate this and strategize potential Brownfield protections such as Covenant not to sue.
- Conduct a hazardous material building survey prior to demolition of the building.

#### Post-Acquisition

- Evaluate the feasibility of managing stormwater due to the presence of contamination.
- Based upon the above steps, develop/revise cost estimate for hazardous building material abatement, building demolition, remediation, and parking lot construction. This would include considerations such as modifications to the AUL, management of stormwater on a contaminated property and off-site management of CVOC and petroleum-impacted soil, as warranted.
- Prepare Contract Documents for building demolition, remediation and parking lot construction.

Ref: O:\7500s\7513 - DHCD - Local Rapid Recovery Plan (LRRP)\Correspondence\Shrewsbury 06.23.21\BETA Shrewsbury Memo r9.23.2021.docx





# Brownfields

## Success Story



## Brownfield Redevelopment in a Historic Neighborhood

### Covington, Kentucky

This former junkyard is located in a heavily industrial region of Covington, Kentucky, directly across the Ohio River from Cincinnati, Ohio. From 1886 to 1949 the site was used as a residential structure, then converted into an auto garage and unregulated junkyard. Environmental concerns associated with the lot perpetuated its use as a dumping ground and discouraged potential developers. With funding from EPA's Brownfields program, two local groups investigated the site, cleaned it up, and redeveloped the area. The lot was transformed into a parking area for the adjacent circa-1880s "shotgun" style housing, an Orchard Street neighborhood that would come to be known as Shotgun Row.

### From Junkyard to Community Asset

After 50 years of use as an auto garage and junkyard, the city of Covington conducted environmental assessments at the site in 2005 and 2006. These efforts indicated that historical junkyard operations contaminated site soil with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and lead, and the property continued to sit vacant, contributing to an area challenged by high crime rates. As the Center for Great Neighborhoods of Covington (CGN) began to look for ways to bring new life to the area as the site's new owner, they focused on the Orchard Street neighborhood and the junkyard property for revitalization efforts. The CGN worked in collaboration with the Northern Kentucky Area Development District (NKADD), who focused on the site's cleanup. In 2012, NKADD utilized approximately \$17,000 in EPA Brownfields assessment grant funding to conduct environmental assessments for the property. These studies further confirmed soil contamination and laid the foundation for a cleanup that would support reuse. The area was ready for change and the lot's cleanup would provide a spark to jumpstart redevelopment.

**EPA Grant Recipient:**  
Northern Kentucky Area Development District (NKADD)

**Grant Type:**  
Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Grant and Assessment Grant

**Former Use:**  
Junkyard

**Current Use:**  
Neighborhood parking lot used by the owners of refurbished historic shotgun style homes



The junkyard site prior to cleanup and area revitalization efforts.



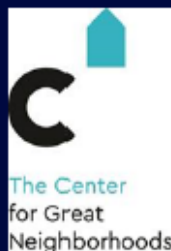
A residential parking lot adds value to the neighborhood where a junkyard once stood.

***"This was the most disinvested block in the area. The project overall was very catalytic to growth in the community, and the parking lot was a critical piece."***

**Adam Rockel,**  
CGN Program Director

## The Center for Great Neighborhoods of Covington (CGN)

CGN is a comprehensive Community Development Corporation that has facilitated the transformation of Covington, Kentucky since 1976. They work with community members to build a vibrant, inclusive, equitable neighborhood.



CGN is committed to helping each person in the community develop their skills, give them the resources they need, and discover partners who share their concern for the wellbeing of Covington. Their work often involves the physical transformation of spaces, which includes seeing the potential of how a neglected space could enhance the community.

CGN has won design and historic preservation awards for their work on Shotgun Row.



### For More Information:

EPA Brownfields Program  
[www.epa.gov/brownfields](http://www.epa.gov/brownfields)

EPA Region 4 Brownfields Program  
(404) 562-8729

Through a joint effort, CGN and NKADD refurbished the homes and constructed the parking lot. In 2013, an EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) subgrant supported the lot's \$46,000 cleanup, which included removing contaminated soil, backfilling the area with clean soil, and paving the lot with asphalt. In accordance with city requirements, CGN planted trees and drought-tolerant plants around the lot to control runoff and provide landscape bedding. CGN also provided the lot's finishing touches, such as striping and signage, before each Shotgun Row resident was assigned a designated parking spot.

## Catalyst for Positive Change in the Community

CGN renovated and refurbished the interiors of the Shotgun Row houses primarily with funding from the city of Covington and the Kresge Foundation; the renovation effort included asbestos removal and bringing the structures up to code. In addition, Orchard Park, a community garden and chicken coop, was created across the street. The park has become a unifying and beautifying force in the community.

The site's cleanup and redevelopment have spurred area-wide revitalization with a focus on serving the community and keeping homes affordable. This Orchard Street neighborhood previously had low home ownership rates, high numbers of vacant properties and high crime rates. The National Trust for Historic Preservation stated that saving these historic homes ultimately led to the rehabilitation of the whole neighborhood. Since completion of the work on Orchard Street, the area has experienced a significant increase in real estate investment. The convenience of guaranteed parking has been important to the residents; plans are in place to provide a few commercial spaces to a local restaurant as well. "Having parking nearby in an older city is definitely an added value," explained Sarah Allan, a program director with CGN.

With support from EPA, the cleanup, investments and neighborhood connections that NKADD and CGN helped foster over the years have generated a renewed sense of pride within this community.

*Images used with permission of the Center for Great Neighborhoods of Covington and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.*



Newly refurbished houses, along with a community garden across the street, contribute to the revitalization of the area.



# Realign Chase Terrace and Add Pocket Park/Public Space to Main Street

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Chase Terrace entrance onto Main Street
Origin	Site Visit, input from citizens
Budget	 High budget total project could exceed \$200,000; MA Downtown Initiative Program, Shared Streets & Spaces, Community Change Grant, state infrastructure funds
Timeframe	 Short Time Frame – Less than 5 years Phase 1 – Less than 6 months Phase 2 – 6 to 12 months
Risk	 Medium Risk – will require buy-in and support from property owners, city and state.
Key Performance Indicators	Degree of space utilization and activation Ability to draw new development/tenant interest to town center Increased visitor/consumer traffic and sales.
Partners & Resources	Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Shrewsbury Public Works, Planning and Public Safety, Beal School developer



Chase Terrace and Main Street Photo Credit: Google Maps



## Diagnostic

Chase Terrace residents have limited visibility for egress onto Main Street creating a safety hazard for both pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Pedestrian traffic drives sales and increases business activity.

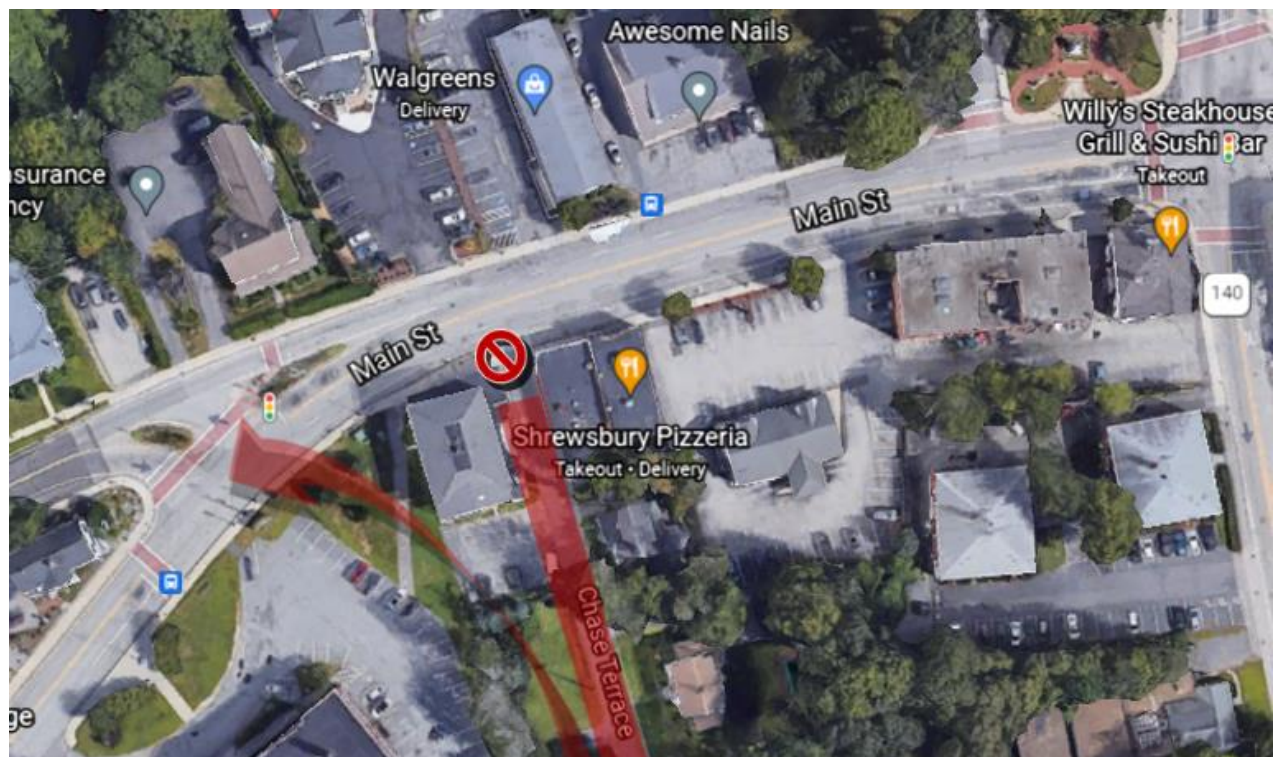
With the pending redevelopment of the Beal School, the Town of Shrewsbury is in a unique position to facilitate the terms of the development agreement to assist in the facilitation of this project.

Redesigning the traffic pattern farther away from the retail area and replacing it with a pedestrian plaza will improve the town center visitor experience and could potentially lead to increased pedestrian traffic and increased sales. Further, this project has the potential to serve as a catalyst to economic development and growth in Shrewsbury Town Center.

## Action Item

Limited visibility for egress onto Main Street from Chase Terrace. Coordinate/reroute new egress as part of the redevelopment of the Beal School property.

Convert existing road between the buildings into a pedestrian plaza and/or parklet.



*Mockup for relocation of Chase Terrace from Main Street to Main/Maple Traffic Signal Photo Credit: Google Maps & Goman+York*

# Process

## PHASE 1

### DESIGN ASPECT

- Hire a traffic engineer and or landscape architect
- Conduct a design charette with stakeholders in attendance
- Review current Town Center Association and Town Design Regs
- Do conceptual design, design development and construction documents
- Send out to bid
- Source funding based on bid amounts

## PHASE 2

### LEGAL ASPECT

- Redefine property boundaries
- Draft easements
- Prorate compensation as necessary

### IMPLEMENTATION

- Determine how much of the work can be done by the Town/ or State
- Contract local and/or minority owned businesses to complete work as necessary



Chase Terrace Pocket Park Design Concept Photo Credit: Goman+York.



# Adopt & Implement Façade Improvement Program

Category	 Private Realm
Location	Study Area
Origin	Town of Shrewsbury, STCA, survey, site assessment
Budget	 Medium Budget = \$50- 200,000K Sources: general fund, special tax district revenue, Community Development Block Grant funds, other state or federal grants, low-interest or no-interest loans from community banks
Timeframe	 Short Term – Less than 5 years Planning and preparation – 3 – 6 months Implementation 1-2 years
Risk	 Low Risk – Will require cooperation among all parties and sufficient funding to meet response/applications from local business
Key Performance Indicators	Number of applicants, number of completed projects, increase in consumer visits to participating businesses, increase in sales post improvements (will require self reporting from businesses).
Partners & Resources	Shrewsbury Town Center Association, Shrewsbury Historical Society, Shrewsbury Planning & Zoning Departments, property owners and business owners in the project area



1920's Hale Block Building, Shrewsbury Town Center Photo Credit: Google Maps 2019



## Diagnostic

The business survey indicated that over 47% of businesses in the project area experienced a drop in revenues and 64% had less on-site customers in January of 2021 than before the pandemic.

There are currently eight vacancies in the project area, and the building façades received a grade of "C" - meaning that more than 25% of the properties require significant building façade improvements.

Studies have shown that thoughtful design improvements and a more appealing street presence often lead to greater sales for a business.

While there are a small number of key historical landmark properties in the project area, most of the properties contain a wide variety of building types with no cohesive design or aesthetic. Encouraging improvements and redevelopment that capitalizes on unique qualities and characteristics will elevate the customer experience in the town center and potentially increase sales.



*Above: 2019 Town Center Vision Report identifies erosion of the historic connection between buildings and the sidewalks as well as the evolution of a wide range of build types and facades in project area. Photo Credit: Horsley Witten Group*

## Action Item

Develop a Facade Improvement Program (FIP) to help businesses finance exterior renovations to support the recovery and revitalization of the Shrewsbury Town Center.

With matching grants and/or no interest loans, the program should be designed to stimulate private investment in high-quality improvements that enhance the appearance of buildings and properties while eliminating blight and non-conforming design.

Providing design/architectural consultation and/or a guidebook with examples and recommended improvements will aid businesses in creating a new vision for their property.

In addition to direct funding other considerations might include streamlined permitting, low or no permitting fees, tax abatements to allow recovery of costs, tax fixing agreements to postpone tax increases on the improvements for a set time period.



*Photos Left: Town Center contains a wide range of build types*

*Photo Credit: Goman+York*



## Process

- Appoint staff and/or oversight committee to develop and implement program;
- Draft a budget for implementation of the program include staff, design consultant, advertising, program fund (final figures depend upon utilizing current staff or adding additional staff, levels of funding and whether program will include grants or forgivable loans). Budget ranges for implementation \$75-100K; program fund \$50-100K;
- Adopt formal purpose statement which clearly defines objectives and target area;
- Establish eligibility criteria and terms for participation as well as incentives, related requirements;
- Create inventory of buildings/structures and type of needs;
- Establish a list of eligible improvements and/or rehabilitation;
- Review design standards and guidelines in recently amended zoning ordinance and determine whether any additional amendments or detail is needed for the façade improvement program;
- Determine whether the town will provide some form of design assistance from staff architect, contracted architect or volunteer architects;
- Identify funding sources for program which could include general fund, Community Development Block Grant funds, grants from state and federal sources, AARP, ARPA funds, and/or crowdsourcing;
- Create an application and selection process;
- Define funding criteria whether forgivable loans or a tiered award structure for different levels of improvements;
- Create awareness of and promote the program;
- Provide initial architectural design consultation;
- Define Scope and Budget for each project;
- Process initial applicants, evaluate success and adjust program, as necessary;
- Continue to evaluate long-term economic impact of program;



Half-Moon Outfitters breathed new life into a 15,000-square-foot auto parts building by relocating its Greenville store and inviting three other businesses to share the space. An “adaptive reuse or in-fill development” that avoids sprawl, the building was remodeled around Green Construction philosophies and uses awnings with solar arrays to power the businesses. Photo Credit: Façade Improvement Program, City of Greenville, SC



# Case Study

## Downtown Manchester—Architectural Design Guidelines



Provided by SME Consultant

GOMAN+YORK Advisory Services

Location

Manchester, CT

Origin	GOMAN+YORK
Budget	 <p>Low Budget - Consultant's Time for design standards</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Long-term – Post Covid</p>
Risk	 <p>Low Risk – setting guidelines/policies in place assures that any improvements done in the Downtown must be adhered to</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Tenant Initiation of Recommendations, Tenant Traffic & Sales Growth
Partners & Resources	City/Town Economic Development, Business Owners
Diagnostic	<p>Changes in consumer behavior and a heightened appreciation for community and place made Downtown Manchester a competitive and desirable location. Prior to Covid-19 the town realized that the area's image, market potential, physical attributes and social connections needed to be maintained and improved. Covid-19 accentuated the need and importance of maintaining and strengthening the Downtown area to support the local tenant base.</p> <p>Architectural design guidelines were meant to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance the image of Downtown Manchester through the upgrade and maintenance of existing building façades; and</li> <li>• Encourage new construction which reinforces Downtown Manchester's historic development patterns.</li> </ul> <p>Manchester's downtown district serves as a visual introduction to the town's character. An attractive image boosts commercial and community vitality when it successfully blends appearance and welcoming public spaces.</p> <p>Main Street's history is revealed in its diverse architectural styles. Each building is a unique record of its place in time. Therefore, building owners need to carefully evaluate the design of any proposed improvements to ensure they make a positive contribution to the collective Downtown environment.</p>

## Action Plan

**Step 1. Define the area** – this has already been done by the Plan Facilitators and the cities/towns.

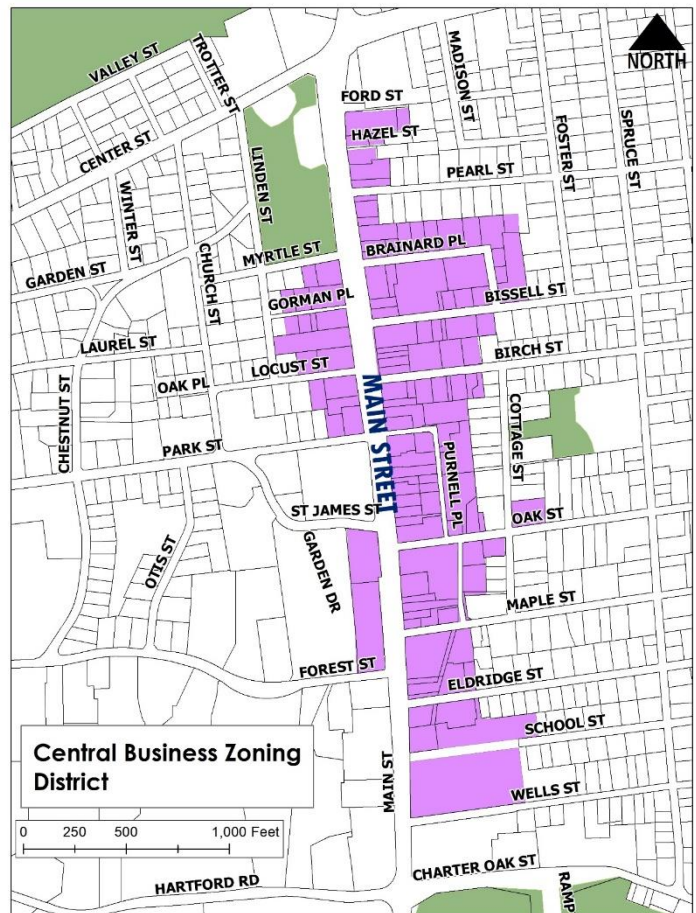
**Step 2. Conduct a current conditions assessment** – physical, governmental, private, character of the district. Some examples of disruptive alterations include:

- Blocking out windows, which is typically uninviting
- Replacing original architectural detailing with substandard or non-sustainable materials
- Covering original details with aluminum siding or random placement of wood paneling
- Introducing new design elements which were not in keeping with the original design
- Random placement with no coordination of ornamentation, lighting fixtures or signage
- Oversized signage creating visual confusion and blocking architectural details of upper floors

**Step 3. Identify main key stakeholders** (including but not limited to; Building Owners, Tenants, Residents, Clients and Customers) must preserve and highlight what makes this downtown unique: eclectic structures, public spaces, community facilities, ample parking, and an enjoyable pedestrian experience.

## Step 4. Development & Implementation

**Reminder:** A vibrant, healthy and attractive downtown must be clean, safe and aesthetically pleasing. This relies on quality design and positive public-private relationships.



Define the Downtown Area

## Ground Floor Tenant Storefronts

The storefront is the most significant feature of most commercial buildings. Its appearance plays a critical role in how a business is perceived and contributes to the pedestrian experience from the sidewalk. Building owners are expected to acknowledge critical elements of a building when redesigning a storefront.

Traditionally, the storefront is set into an opening in the building, framed by a building's columns or piers on either side, and sometimes includes a cornice or lintel along the top. Decorative elements of the storefront are definitive characteristics that ground the upper portions of the building to the sidewalk. When possible, these decorative elements should be retained in their original material, color and finish. The window area is generally large in contrast to the smaller windows on the upper stories to visually communicate and display the products and services offered within. The entranceway is often asymmetrical and recessed to increase display window area, provide weather protection, and allow clearance for the door swing.

When planning to renovate a storefront, its proportion in relation to the entire façade should be considered. Renovations should be done with durable and sustainable materials and retain existing modules, proportions, and structure.



Urban Lodge Brewery—photo: Patch.com



## Display Windows

**Lighting:** Night lighting is encouraged as it extends the pedestrian experience, makes a building façade more welcoming, and adds consistency to the downtown district. Lighting plans should be sensitive to potential impacts on vehicular traffic.

**Temporary signage, seasonal displays and window seating:** Products, furnishings or activities placed within a display window become part of the pedestrian experience. Merchants should consider the visual and messaging impact when designing displays, as they reflect the character of the business and affect the integrity of Downtown Manchester.

**Cleanliness of windows** – interior & exterior – sometimes it's that simple!

## Awnings and Canopies

Storefront awnings and canopies are both functional and decorative. They are functional because they provide sun protection for merchandise, weather protection for visitors, and signage for the business (see "Signage" section for guidelines). These structures also add decorative color, patterns or graphics to the streetscape.

Both commercial grade, exterior fabric, retractable and permanent awnings have been successfully integrated in the past. The color or stripe chosen for the awning should complement the general color scheme of the building. Building owners are discouraged from using metal awnings because of their susceptibility to weather damage and fading.



Display Windows



Awnings and Canopies

## Signage

Signage provides scale, color and interest to the streetscape. A sign has a positive effect on business and community atmosphere when it is appropriately placed, well designed, and in scale with its architectural surroundings.

A poorly designed sign results in visual confusion, harming both the streetscape and the value of the sign. While these guidelines provide structure for what signs are appropriate, the Town of Manchester's zoning regulations mandate what signs can and cannot be used in the Downtown district.

Information on a sign should be simple, clear and concise. The type face and graphic symbols should convey only the name of the business and its main product or service. The color should be coordinated with the building and storefront, and the letters or logo should contrast with the background, so the sign is readable. Light box signs should not be used. In some instances, simpler is better. Channel cut letters or flat metal signs lit with goose neck lighting are encouraged.

Signage to serve multiple tenant storefronts within the confines of a single building should be well coordinated to fit within the pre-described signage area defined by the building's architecture.

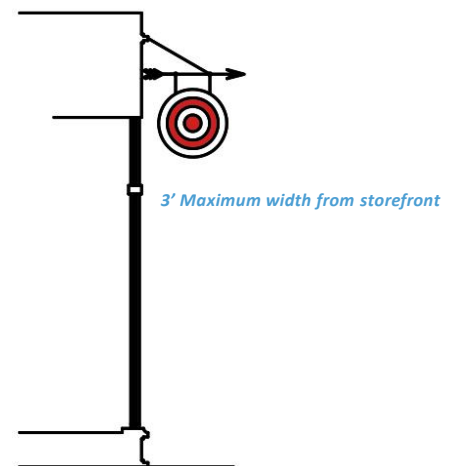
Before beginning any signage project, refer to Zoning Regulations for specific restrictions. Special regulations can be adopted for the Downtown district.



*Restaurant Menu Boards*



*Exterior-Mounted & Painted on Glass*



*Blade or Hanging Bracket Signs*

# Additional Examples

## Façade Improvement Programs



Location

Various

### City of Birmingham, AL

The pilot program provides \$20 per square foot based on the total project cost. The maximum that can be received per building is \$50,000. Applicants must provide a match equal to or greater than 20% of the amount awarded through the program. The match must be spent on the facade improvement pilot program.

Funding is provided to property owners in the form of a loan that is forgiven over a five-year period with no payments required if the property continues to be maintained in accordance with the program requirements. Buildings eligible for the pilot program are commercial and mixed commercial/residential locations with facades visible from the street. New construction is not eligible for the program.

Funding for the pilot program comes from Community Development Block Grants administered through the federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Department. The program targets economic development through job creation and retention.

<https://www.birminghamal.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Facade-Improvement-Program-Guide-1.pdf>

<http://www.birminghamal.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ThriveBhmBirminghamDesignGuidelinesDRAFT111617.pdf>

### City of Cambridge, MA

The City of Cambridge's Storefront Improvement Program provides financial assistance to property owners or tenants seeking to renovate or restore commercial building exterior facades. The Program seeks to increase accessibility into storefronts, improve the physical appearance of independent businesses and enhance the commercial districts of Cambridge.

This program provides:

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

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

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

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

### City of Columbia, SC

The City of Columbia's Façade Improvement Program aims to improve the appearance of commercial corridors throughout the city that are significantly deteriorated. Through this forgivable loan program, commercial property owners and/or business tenants can make improvements to the front and other exterior portions of commercial buildings that can be seen from the public right-of-way.

Funded with Community Development Block Grant funds

[https://www.columbiasc.net/depts/obo/FINAL\\_CRRBrochure\\_2018-19.pdf](https://www.columbiasc.net/depts/obo/FINAL_CRRBrochure_2018-19.pdf)

[https://www.columbiasc.net/depts/obo/FINALSBS\\_CRR2018-19.pdf](https://www.columbiasc.net/depts/obo/FINALSBS_CRR2018-19.pdf)



# Business Assessments



Location

Multiple Communities

Excerpted from LRRP Business Assessments: An Outside in Approach by Goman+York

*"A Business Assessment can help to transform a struggling business or a long-term successful business that needs a refresh. A critical look at the business from the outside in is important not only from the customer's perspective, but for the business to grow and be a vibrant contributor to the community."*

## Solutions to thrive & survive

- An honest assessment of a business will help the business owner to recover from the effects COVID-19 has had on their business. Consumers are venturing out more with the positivity rates declining and vaccinations increasing.



### The Report

- Be direct as to what needs to be done
  - "Take down the handwritten signs"
- ✓ Producing printed easy to read signs
- "Clean your windows"
- ✓ Allows customers to see what you have to offer and entices them to enter
- "Window displays should feature what you have to offer"
- ✓ Customers will want to walk in to see more!

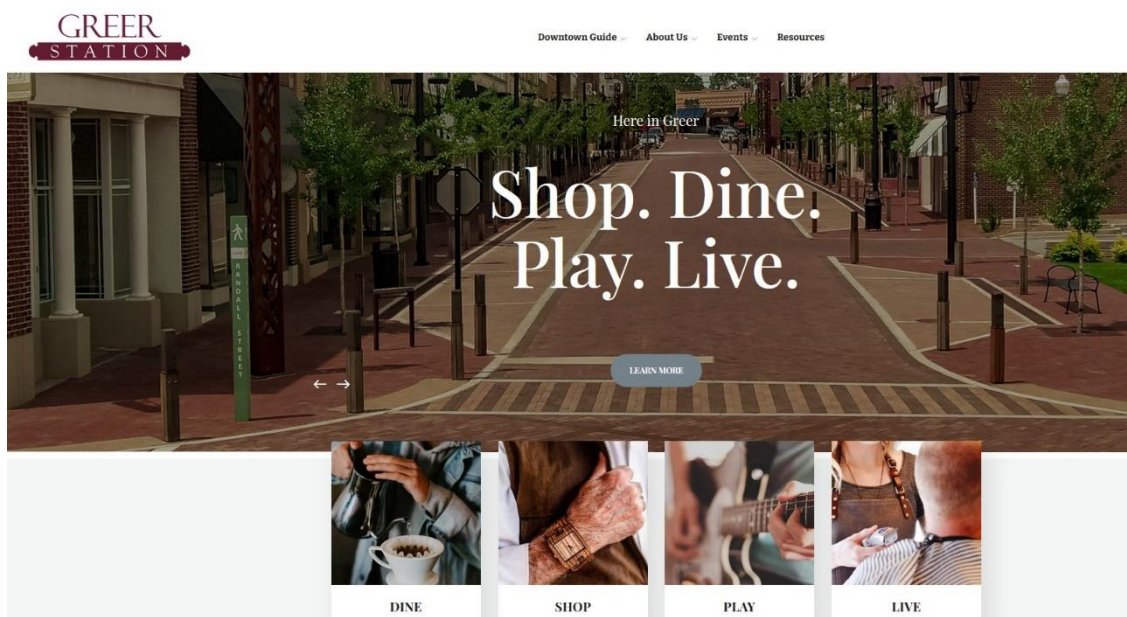
### The Consultation

- ✓ Be direct
- ✓ Be sympathetic
- ✓ Be honest
- ✓ Offer suggestions
- ✓ Do an outside-in walkthrough
- ✓ Be open to questions
- ✓ Share your findings with key stakeholders

- Business assessments are funded through a variety of sources. The GOMAN+YORK team has worked with individual tenants at their request, at the request of a town as an ongoing Economic Development consultant and throughout our careers in the commercial real estate industry.
- Our business consultants have provided business assessments for a variety of public and private clients including, the Town of Bloomfield, CT; the CTrail Property Management and Utilities Unit, Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) shopping center and local retail tenants.

# Develop and Implement a Branding & Marketing Initiative

Category	 Revenue/Sales
Location	Study Area
Origin	Community and business input, assessment
Budget	 Low Budget (<50K costs to hire professional) – ARPA funds, Grow Grant, Downtown Initiative Grant, Pilot Project Grant
Timeframe	 Short Term (Less than one year)
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Increased awareness of town center, increased customer traffic, increase in sales, increases in web traffic and social media responses
Partners & Resources	Town Center Association, SELCO, Town of Shrewsbury, local marketing and media experts



Greer Station (The Downtown Merchant Association of Greer, SC) Website Photo Credit: Screenshot <https://www.greerstation.com/>

## Diagnostic

Like many communities, Shrewsbury saw a downturn in sales and customer traffic for its local businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

64% of businesses in the town center had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID.

The Town Center businesses must also compete with other more high-profile commercial districts and corridors.

A branding and marketing initiative could provide cohesive signage, messaging and help the Shrewsbury Town Center stand out as a unique location.

## Action Item

Create a brand and marketing campaign that will distinguish Shrewsbury Town Center from neighboring commercial districts and corridors and drive increased consumer traffic to the Town Center.

Implement marketing with a brand that can be used in multiple scenarios – i.e. website, marketing, advertising, social media to promote awareness and economic development of the corridor.

Provide business owners with technical assistance and training on improving websites and social media, window activations and brand recognition, visitor analysis, consumer surveys, launch website/marketing of district/social media training for local business.



*Greer Station Instagram with direct link to Crate Restaurant and Bar Instagram  
Photo Credit: Screenshot @greerstation*

All **Posts** People Groups Photos



### Greer Station: Historic Downtown Greer

Sep 16 • 🌐

🎉 We're SO EXCITED... the Historic Greer Depot is announcing their Grand Opening celebration for October 15, and we're all invited to see this incredible and beautiful restoration of a piece of Greer's history. Mark your calendar!

Repost from @historic\_... See More



News Feed Watch Marketplace News Notifications Menu

*Greer Station Facebook Photo Credit: Screenshot*



## Process

- Select a team to work on this effort comprised of key stakeholders from the town - officials, cultural representatives, business owners (small & large) and residents. This team should work with the graphic designer and host meetings to gain input to determine the “Name” and “Look” of the area. It will be important that they consider the various uses for the brand;
- Hire graphic designer – consider using a local designer that knows the area and can reflect in the design that this is a special, vibrant and unique area. The designer should also be able to apply this new look to various marketing applications and for use by the area businesses;
- This branding will help to build on and complement previous efforts of the Shrewsbury Town Center Association (STCA) as well as what is proposed for wayfinding, streetscapes, banners, advertising, social media, website, etc.;
- Update the existing promotional video to include the new brand;
- Create a brand template (the designer should create this) to ensure that the brand is used correctly and consistently in all uses by the Town of Shrewsbury, STCA and town center businesses;
- Develop a Marketing, Communications and Media Plan – Consider if this is done in-house or contracting with a communications professional (which would affect budget). Consider utilizing an intern from a local college or funding this position to both market the district businesses and to foster economic development;
- This plan will serve as a feeder to events marketing for the area - events that should encourage patrons to explore the Shrewsbury Town Center area;
- Determine what media outlets – social and traditional – will be used. And whether there is a need to enhance the town’s or STCA’s current Facebook and Twitter feeds or to develop a #VisitShrewsbury separate from existing accounts to complement the town and the STCA. This may warrant engaging a social media coordinator;
- Provide training and support for local businesses for marketing their businesses individually and in a shared format – social media, geo-targeted advertising, sales and events marketing programs will serve to enhance promotion of the district;



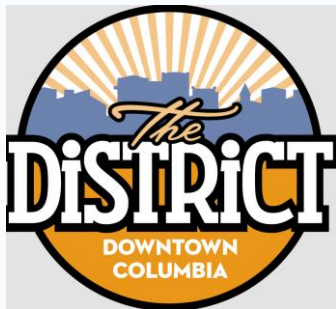
*Greer Station Instagram Pictures Photo Credit: Screenshots @greerstation*

# The District Branding & Marketing



Location

Downtown Columbia, Missouri



In the past, the conversation had been about discovering all the unique shopping, dining, and events in The District. That conversation, and great City and Community Improvement District programs, did not lead to any measurable increases in pedestrian traffic nor have any significant economic affect on local businesses.

**BRANDING STRATEGY:** Start a new conversation focused on the positive people, features, well-loved establishments, and events in our community. Create a campaign to reflect a proud attitude and promote a 24/7 vibe in the community using traditional and non-traditional forms of media.

Changing the conversation provided the perfect opportunity to refresh the “The District” brand with new mission statement, logo, tagline, website etc.

**MARKETING PLAN:** Production of video commercials for web and television; production of weekly interview videos, new promotional banners with “It’s Good To Be Here” slogan; incorporation of #ItsGoodToBeHere hashtag in social media posts; coordination of social media posts with participating retailers and restaurants; new spots for print media incorporating slogan and scenes from videos and downtown.

<https://www.discoverthedistrict.com/>

**RESULTS:** In the first year, The District saw a large return in terms of social media success. This success was best recorded by the video, which had 8,600 YouTube views, and the weekly videos received at least four times the reach when compared to other social media posts and outlets.



Best Practice

# Storefront Activation Program



Location

Germantown United Community Development Corporation, Philadelphia, PA



Thrift Shop Window Display. Photo Credit: Germantown United CDC Storefront Activation Program

Pairing Local Artists and Makers with Germantown Businesses, this low-cost, high impact initiative pairs local artists and makers with neighborhood businesses and property owners to upgrade storefront window displays, and interior spaces visible from the street.

The program supports efforts to revitalize Germantown's business corridors by strengthening current businesses, activating street-level storefronts, and improving the overall appearance of the corridor by adding a visual richness to the walkway. The grant program also aims to enliven the street for pedestrians, attract more customers to existing businesses, market available commercial properties, and promote Germantown to prospective businesses.

This grant is supported by PNC Charitable Trusts, which manages the Rowell Family Foundation.

Germantown United CDC:

1. Provides financing for the project including full cost of supplies
2. Provides artist stipends, based on the agreed-upon budget for each individual project
3. Serves as an intermediary between artists and business/property owners
4. Promotes the program and completed projects via GU's website and social media networks, and select press outreach

Project budgets may range from \$250 to \$2,500.

Projects that re-use and re-purpose materials and include in-kind donations of supplies and materials are highly encouraged; Germantown United CDC offers assistance with outreach to potential partners.

<https://germantownunitedcdc.org/what-we-do/grants/storefront-activation-program/>



# Improve Town Center Website and Develop Calendar of Events

Category	  Revenue & Sales and Cultural/Arts
Location	Study Area
Origin	Shrewsbury Town Center Association, Shrewsbury Public Library, Interviews, assessment
Budget	 Low Budget – Low Budget – (\$50K or less to hire professional assistance) - ARPA funds, Grow Grant, Downtown Initiative Grant, Pilot Project Grant
Timeframe	 Short term – Development of website less than six months, organizing and expanding offerings/events as resources and environment allow
Risk	 Low risk. Will require cooperation of town and other event organizers
Key Performance Indicators	Increase visits to Town Center website, increase restaurant and retail sales, increase foot traffic in town center during event dates, positive media and social media coverage
Partners & Resources	Shrewsbury Town Center Association, Town of Shrewsbury, Spirit of Shrewsbury, Garden Club, Historical Society, local tech/website development companies, local media, local stakeholders



Left: 2019 Shrewsbury  
Light the Common event  
Photo Credit:  
Maribeth Lynch

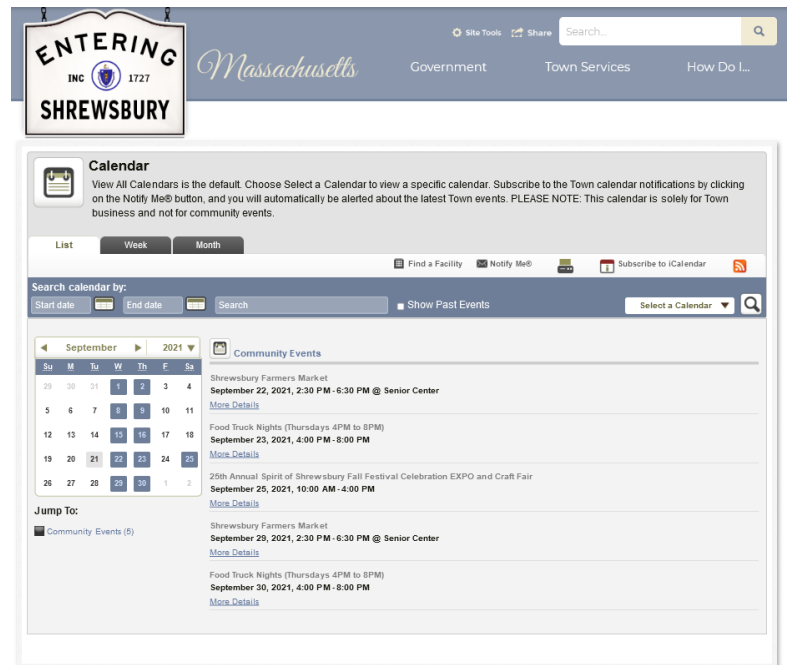
## Diagnostic

88% of businesses who responded to the LRRP survey reported being impacted by COVID-19 with affects ranging from lost revenues, decreased pedestrian traffic, and increases in health and safety related expenses.

The few events currently hosted in the Town Center were cancelled and greatly curtailed in 2020. In-person events will likely continue to experience fluctuations as the market responds to new variants, new outbreaks, and other impacts.

There is a COVID induced demand for social interaction and events. Programmed experiences can be the vehicle to entice consumers back to the Shrewsbury Town Center.

Regular and more consistent events can foster economic growth and new business opportunities.



Above: Town of Shrewsbury web calendar  
Photo Credit: webpage screenshot

## Action Item

Develop a responsive calendar of events page which offers quick and easy access to community and town center events and tourism information that highlights all there is to see and do in historic Shrewsbury Town Center.

Create a process or reporting procedure to ensure the Town Center Association has an opportunity to coordinate and collaborate with other organizations and businesses hosting events in the Town of Shrewsbury with the objective of including the town center businesses in those efforts.

Provide year-round opportunities to draw visitors to the town center and enhance the overall community experience for residents and visitors and grow economic opportunities for businesses. Start by adding additional quarterly events to build upon the success of the "Light the Common" winter festival.



Above: Main Street Calendar, Town of Greenfield IN  
Photo Credit: webpage screenshot  
[www.greenfieldmainstreet.org](http://www.greenfieldmainstreet.org)

# Process

## Website Development

- Convene a select stakeholder committee/working group comprised of business owners, town staff, other nonprofit and event organizers and event sponsors;
- Develop a budget and identify funding (grants, sponsorships, crowdfunder funding);
- On interim basis utilize other marketing opportunities on 3<sup>rd</sup> party web sites, like Town of Shrewsbury calendar, Discover Central Massachusetts, etc.;
- Secure a website developer either through RFQ or in-kind contribution;
- Develop a visually impactful site designed to inform, influence and inspire a decision to visit Shrewsbury Town Center;
- In addition to an upgraded and improved calendar of events consider including 1) improved global navigation and a professionally optimized mobile-layout; 2) directory of downtown tenants including restaurants, boutiques, entertainment venues and service-based businesses; 3) enhanced, interactive parking map; 4) downloadable historical walking tour; 5) visitor and events brochures;

## Calendar of Events Implementation

- Inventory/assess existing event permitting and approval processes;
- If no formal process exists, coordinate with Town of Shrewsbury to develop a formal reporting/approval process which should be designed to encourage events which support linkages between the Town Center, The Common and other public and private events;
- Inventory public and private spaces within the Town Center suitable for public activities include information on access, ownership and capacity and basic characteristics;
- Identify and solicit feedback from organizations, companies and individuals that have in the past held public events or showed interest in holding public events within the town or study area;
- Analyze potential opportunities and challenges around utilization of public and private spaces and develop an event planning strategy guide;

discovercentralma.org

## Town of Shrewsbury Links

Town Web Site

Shrewsbury Farmers' Market

## In Town



The Shrewsbury Club



Knight's Airport Limousine Service



Shrewsbury Public Library



Shrewsbury Farmer's Market



Above: Shrewsbury page on the Discover Central Massachusetts website

Photo Credit: Screenshot

<https://www.discovercentralma.org/regions/worcester/shrewsbury/>



## Process – cont'd

### Enhanced and new events

Focus on four seasonal events expanding and enhancing existing events and adding additional events as resources and COVID recovery allow. Recommendations/ideas:

- Spring – “Shrewsbury - Come Grow with Us” (plant sale/econ dev)
- Summer – “Town Center StoryWalk®” which could build upon the success of the Lake Street Park StoryWalk®
- Summer – “Concerts on the Common”
- Fall – “Fall in Love” with Shrewsbury (new fall festival) OR collaborate and coordinate with Spirit of Shrewsbury to do intentional collaborative events in the town center
- Winter – “Light the Common” Winter Festival continue to expand this event with complementary activities, and instagram opportunity, hashtag, or charity fundraising opportunity (“Shine the Light on Hunger, for example) etc.



Existing and proposed events. Photo Credit: Goman+York, STCA, StoryWalk®, Spirit of Shrewsbury

# Process – cont'd

## Event Planning

- Set up an event committee with key town, business and community representatives;
- Define an event mission statement, preliminary budget and funding strategy (include long-term projections (1-to-5-year budget) for future purchases, installation, replacements/additions, coordination, electricity, etc. ;
- Develop a sponsorship plan with various levels which determine how the sponsors are recognized: Presenting (1-2); Signature (3-5), etc. Keep in mind that you should have a level for town center business sponsors. The term of their commitment should be addressed;
- Identify area/properties to be used for event and consider ADA and Accessibility requirements;
- If pertinent, work with design group/décor provider to develop lighting;
- Coordinate with local businesses and property owners; if needed. Determine if event might require a suggested plan or guidelines with color scheme for businesses to coordinate with the master plan of the event;
- As part of the long-range budget developed above there should be line items for the execution and promotion of the plan. This plan/budget will include staff (coordinator), marketing (advertising, events, media & social media, communications (with businesses, residents and visitors);
- Determine what businesses will be open during the timeframe of the event;
- Encouraging retail businesses to stay open or extend hours during the event period – especially on weekends;
- Coordinate with hotels and restaurants, ensuring that a minimum number will be open during the planned event period. If event warrants, create specialty packages – Stay – Dine – Shop; i.e. Light the Common Weekend(s);
- Some events will provide opportunities for complimentary events such as Scarecrows on the Common, a photography competition, historical and evening walking tours, museums, public art, Victorian carolers and musical performances, Champagne Stroll, ice sculptures (featuring or sponsored by), family events;
- Promote through a variety of marketing avenues – new website, seasonal marketing publications, Facebook and social media ads; press releases, visitor websites, business customer lists;



*Light the Common*

*Photo Credit: Shrewsbury Town Center Association*

# Rapid Website Development



Location

Boston, MA

Excerpted from Revenue & Sales  
Compendium by Cambridge Retail  
Advisors

## Diagnostic

Websites are a pivotal gateway for businesses to reach out to the world, often serving as a centralized hub of activity. As part of this process, we provide expertise that has been refined through hundreds of builds. Our Rapid Website Development is honed and proven to deliver immediate digital transformation.

## Action Item

Our website development program provides a fast and effective web presence for retailers or restaurants. We alleviate the major pain points of including technological hurdles and costs, and in less than 2 weeks create a platform to promote from and sell on. Websites not only serve as the face of an organization, but they also serve as a pivot point for most operations including marketing and sales. We're proud to offer this service and have many success stories from small businesses throughout Boston.

## Process

### Onboarding Phase

1. Explain the simple design process and benefits of the end website
2. Purchase the desired domain name
3. Set manageable goals with clear timeframes

### Discovery Phase

1. Gather content and determine look/feel for the website
2. Collect media such as photos and video  
(Schedule photographer if required)
3. Link Social Media (if applicable)
4. Link online selling platforms (if applicable)

### Review/Finalization Phase

1. Review website with business owner prior to publishing live
2. Publish site and encourage business owner to incorporate their new website into their marketing plan
3. Handoff website to business owner and encourage frequent edits!



# Event Branding: Taste Fall River





Provided by SME Consultant

Zapalac Advisors

Location

Boston, MA

Origin	The Fall River TDI partnership, supported by Laurie A Zapalac, PhD working as a technical advisor to MassDevelopment's TDI program and the partnership
Budget	 Low (Less than \$30,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (Less than 1 year)
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Number of event tickets sold, direct feedback from the community including participating restaurants and ticket buyers, social media response and press coverage
Partners & Resources	Mass Development, The TDI Fall River Partnership, People Inc., Alexandra's, City of Fall River, Bank Five and Rockland Trust
Diagnostic	<p>In 2017 Fall River launched a new "brand" for the city, <i>Make it Here</i>, drawing from the city's textile heritage and celebrating its potential as an environment for Makers.</p> <p>Fall River had applied to the MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative and in 2018, MassDevelopment wanted to ensure that critical public sector, private sector and institutional partners on the ground were ready to make the commitment to support the two to three-year technical assistant program to drive transformative change on Main Street.</p> <p>Just as planning was underway, negative headlines about Fall River started appearing in the press in relationship to the indictment of the current mayor. This led to broader discussion about the need to drive key narratives about Fall River that put a spotlight on positive things in the community</p> <p>In 2019, planning begun on the creation of a "first initiative," intended to give the partners experience collaborating with one another while addressing the need to amplify an existing city brand and find new things to celebrate.</p>

## Diagnostic (continued)

The partnership had enough institutional memory to know that a similar event had been carried out in Fall River in years past – and had been relatively successful – but not sustained due to relying heavily on volunteers, so one goal was to strengthen cross-sector collaboration and work toward a sustainable operating model.

Among the Main Street businesses there were traditional, well known Portuguese and Portuguese-influenced restaurants – something for which Fall River is recognized – as well as number of newer additions expanding offerings in downtown.

While Main Street had maintained an interesting mix of uses, there were deficiencies in building management and some properties were vacant. So one goal was to raise the “brand” of Main Street by showing it’s potential and a vibrant and activated streetscape.

As the *Taste Fall River* idea emerged, there were two interrelated concerns from certain members of the partnership: 1) Would anyone from beyond Fall River be interested in this event and 2) Were online ticket sales even necessary? – reflecting an “everyone uses cash” mindset. The partnership discussed both and pressed forward with the idea that if they worked to assemble a top-notch event, there would be interest from Fall River – as well as other markets. That then confirmed that investing the time and money in developing a website and Eventbrite posting for the event would be necessary and worthwhile.

## Action Item

The relevance of this project for thinking about Covid rapid recovery includes:

- Bringing together a set of partners to collaborate on a response to drive economic development and direct narratives towards shared values and aspiration.
- The actual event included Taste Fall River – a one evening dining event – and Fall River Restaurant Week – a weeklong program of discounts offered by participating businesses.
- In tandem, the partnership developed an information “kit” that included a topline narrative that elaborates on the core “Make it Here” brand, while also including practical information for any party interest in investing or developing along Main Street. We gathered cut sheets for all property listed for sale or lease and summarized this information, making all of it available as part of the information kit.

# Provide Administrative Support for Shrewsbury Town Center Assoc.

Category	 Admin. Capacity
Location	Study Area
Origin	Community/Business input
Budget	 Medium Budget (\$50-200K Market rate and scope of responsibilities will determine salary/fee) ARPA funds, Regional Pilot Project Grant, MA Downtown Initiative, Grassroots Fund Seed Grant
Timeframe	 Short Term (< 5 years) 2-year pilot program
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Decrease in commercial occupancy rates; quicker service delivery; increase in commercial traffic and sales; increase in social media impressions and website hits
Partners & Resources	Shrewsbury Town Center Association (STCA), Town of Shrewsbury, business and property owners, residents, other local champions for Town Center



## Welcome to the Shrewsbury Town Center Association

The mission of the STCA is to improve, enhance and foster economic and cultural development in the Town Center district of Shrewsbury, MA.

Shrewsbury Town Center Association membership is open to all individuals, corporations, and other organizations that support its purpose and pay annual membership dues. STCA's mission to create a vibrant and viable downtown welcomes members of all ethnicities, races, genders, orientations, religions, cultures, and backgrounds. Through diverse community engagement, we seek to support a thriving business and cultural district in Shrewsbury Town Center that enhances our community.

Supporters are committed to advocating to advance the development of the Town Center through thoughtful planning and support to attract businesses and enhance the quality of life for residents.

Website for STCA Photo Credit: STCA <https://www.shrewsburytca.com/>



## Diagnostic

The Shrewsbury Town Center Association (STCA) is a voluntary membership organization for the businesses in the project area. The STCA is currently run by volunteers with some guidance and support from the Planning Department Staff.

The pandemic and subsequent recovery, has revealed a growing need to have staff dedicated to communication between town center businesses, the STCA and the town.

Having staff dedicated to town center management and oversight and administering the STCA would allow for the capability of responding quickly to the changing needs of the business community and encourage businesses to seek the town's assistance, particularly when it may prove to be beneficial to their financial solvency during an economic downturn.

Having professional staff or consultant dedicated to management and promotion of the district will let businesses be better able to compete with nearby retail and business centers with regular focused marketing, outreach, events, etc.



*Shrewsbury Fall Festival Banner (2019)*

*Photo Credit: Google Maps*

## Action Item

Hire a person or firm dedicated to administrative and marketing responsibilities to support Town Center Association and serve as liaison between businesses and local government.

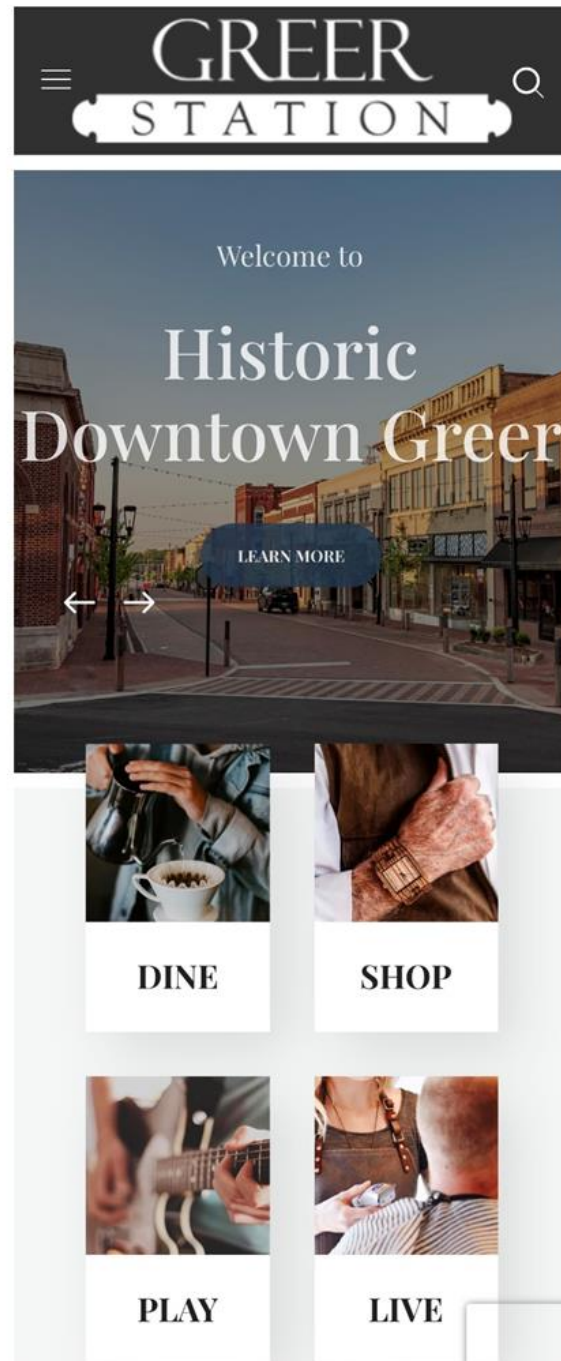
Promote the growth and vitality of the town center and its businesses, implement beautification projects, support transportation initiatives, and host events that bring people to the district.

With professional support, the STCA would be able to undertake activities to attract businesses, investment, customers and residents to the town center. These could include marketing, placemaking, business development, advocacy and activation and engagement with volunteers and business owners.

Addition efforts could focus community outreach and recruitment of partners & sponsors; new member recruitment; coordination and management of special events; investigation and assessment of the implication and benefits of adoption of formal Business Improvement District (BID).

AA

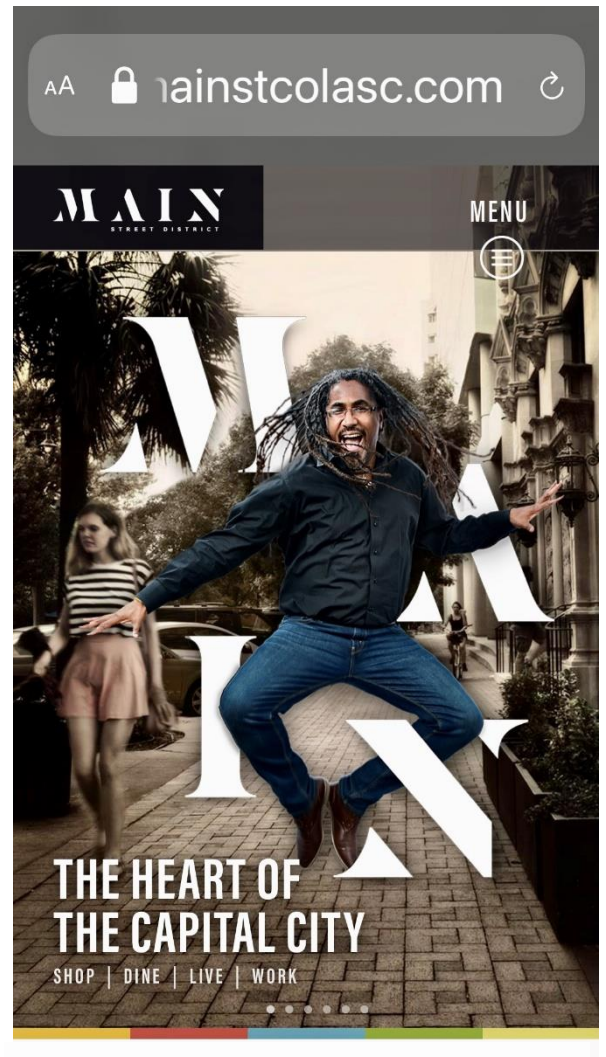
greerstation.com



Mobile website for Greer, SC Merchant Association Photo Credit: [Greer Station](#)

## Process

- Prepare a job description or Request for Qualifications (RFQ) if outsourced to a consultant;
- Develop budget and scope of work to include salary/fees, office supplies, marketing, advertising, insurance, special projects, program coordination, website design, etc.;
- Identify potential candidates and financial resources;
- Creating a business outreach and engagement strategy;
- Identify community, association and town priorities and initiate consensus building among stakeholders;
- Identify key stakeholders and champions and work with STCA leadership on appointment of appropriate committees;
- Develop rapport with town staff to work collaboratively to achieve shared goals with clear expectations and transparency;
- Prioritize project plan which should include but not be limited to 1) comprehensive data base of property owners and commercial tenants; identification of stakeholders including municipal departments, real estate brokers, nonprofit organizations;
- Embark upon outreach initiative with all businesses in the project area to encourage membership and support of the STCA and the Local Rapid Recovery projects;
- Conduct community outreach event and/or forums to facilitate to input on priorities/projects;
- After facilitating and/or managing implementation of rapid recovery plan projects identify other improvements that may need to be addressed;
- Additional focus should be placed upon a needs assessment/study of the formation of a formal business improvement district (BID);



**THE MAIN STREET DISTRICT** Enjoy art, live entertainment, cultural events, shopping, and some of the greatest foodie hotspots in the heart of the Capital City. The Main Street District is home to many of the City's most popular attractions and events, including the Soda City Market, First Thursday on Main, Columbia's Greek Festival, Famously Hot New Year, and the Indie Grits Festival.

## Upcoming Events

**OCT 7** **FIRST THURSDAY ON MAIN**  
6:00pm - 10:00pm

Mobile website for Downtown Columbia, SC BID Photo Credit: Columbia City Center Partnership – [www.mainstcolasc.com](http://www.mainstcolasc.com)



# Develop and Implement a Public Art Program

Category	 Culture/Arts
Location	Program Area
Origin	Town Center Association, site visit, interviews
Budget	 Low – (Under \$50,000) Shared Streets and Spaces, MA Downtown Initiative, TDI Creative Catalyst, T-Mobile Hometown Grant, NEA grants, partnerships and sponsors
Timeframe	 Short Term – less than five years
Risk	 Medium Risk – will require support from numerous stakeholders, artists and funders
Key Performance Indicators	Change in economic activity and pedestrian traffic downtown, number of paid opportunities for local artists
Partners & Resources	Cultural Council, Garden Club, Shrewsbury Historical Society, Shrewsbury High School Art Department, Shrewsbury Town Center Association, Shrewsbury Planning and Public Works Departments, local artists



Hendersonville, North Carolina's Bearfootin' Public Art Walk, a collection of bear sculptures that showcases this town's fascination with black bears in a way that brings together man, nature and art, to be a part of one community.

Since 2003, the Bearfootin' Art Walk has helped raise funding for Downtown Hendersonville and a variety of local non-profits. In 2020, the Bears raised more than \$84,000,

Photo Credit: [Historic Downtown Hendersonville](#)



## Diagnostic

COVID-19 saw a significant drop in pedestrian traffic in the Town of Shrewsbury and a change in shopping patterns.

To regenerate traffic and interest into the town center, a public art program could enliven the visitor experience, encourage social media posts and enhance a sense of placemaking and culture through art.

In addition to static art displays, there are at least two blank facades on Main Street (on the side of Shrewsbury Pizza and the Amici building) that face the Peoples Bank parking lot that could be utilized for murals.

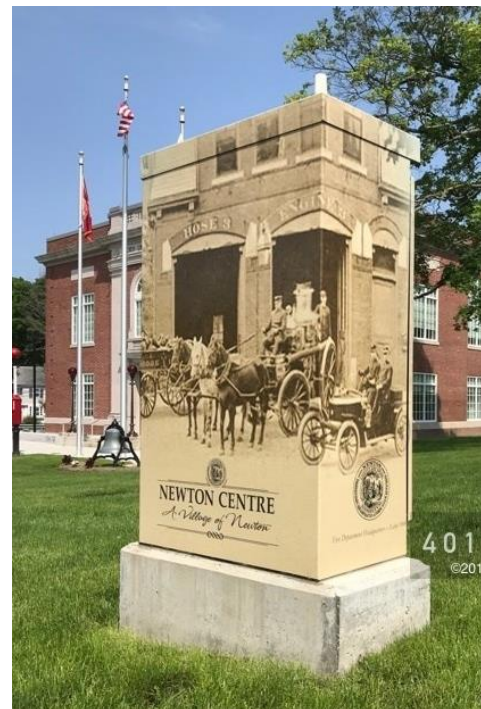
Art can be used as a way of connecting and healing the community. Art can also generate traffic without large scale events.

Engaging local artists will enhance the sense of community and support placemaking efforts.

Attracting visitors and customers to downtowns, when they have become accustomed to ordering items on-line and even watching live music remotely, will require more than simply turning on the "OPEN" signs. Providing additional support for artistic endeavors that will attract people to downtowns will be an important part of COVID-19 recovery.



*Scarecrows from 2020 "Scarecrows on the Common" delighted community members amid lingering COVID-19 shutdowns. Photo Credit: Melanie Petrucci & Community Advocate*



*NewtonSERVES BoxART Program - utility box in front of the Newton Fire Department on Centre Street in Newton Centre, Massachusetts, is vinyl wrapped with a century-old photograph of the Fire Department Headquarters Photo Credit: Jason Freedman 401 Photos*

## Action Item

Develop a public art program that is designed to explore Shrewsbury's historical past, celebrate the Spirit of Shrewsbury's present, and shape the identity of Shrewsbury's future.

Art is a way of connecting and healing a community. Art is also a way to generate traffic without large scale events.

Considerations could include building murals - (Shrewsbury Pizza/Amici Bldg./Post Office); historical or artistic wraps of utility boxes; art in coordination with Storywalk® or other temporary static art displays, like the bear walk in Hendersonville, NC or the Piano Project in downtown Stamford, CT.



*Kim Kennell at [Hotel Trundle](#), Columbia SC  
Photo Credit: Matt Kennell, CEO, City Center Partnership, Columbia, SC*



*[The Piano Project in Stamford Downtown](#), an exciting musical outdoor sculpture exhibit transformed downtown Stamford, CT with decorated pianos summer 2021*

*Credit: Pianist Joe Sette | Piano Artist Amrita Majumder – Sponsored by The Cingari Family screenshot [www.hestamford.com](http://www.hestamford.com)*



## Process

1. Define purpose, goals and guidelines;
2. Designate a public art committee to advise on public art process, priorities, artists, etc. be sure to include representatives from the community;
3. Collaborate with any appropriate Federal, State and Local agencies , especially Planning and Public Works;
4. Prepare guidelines for governance of the Public Art Program, primarily decision-making authority and funding. The plan should also include a policy for gifts and loans, and for when the commissioning of a commemorative artwork is proposed for public land;
5. Create an artist identification process which might include recruitment of volunteers and professional artists; open competitions; development of pre-qualified artists list; and/or curated process;
6. Identify project criteria and develop a selection/approval process;



*Shrewsbury Pizza potential mural canvas Photo Credit: Goman+York*



*"Pizzashine" Mural, Cleveland Ohio Credit: Mike Sobeck, Artist*

# Creativity Everywhere



CULTURAL/  
ARTS

Location

Downtown Lafayette, LA



Azalea Bench, Louisiana State Art Teachers



Cross Your Heart Walk Crosswalk, Downtown Lafayette Staff



The Y LAFAYETTE sign in Parc Sans Souci is one of Downtown's most photographed landmarks and is available for artists, non-profits and volunteer groups to paint throughout the year. The 7-foot-tall concrete letters are painted regularly by groups that create a design for the sign and repaint it to promote awareness, events, or just express creativity.

<https://www.downtownlafayette.org/about/l-a-f-a-y-e-t-t-e-sign/>

**The Project:** The Creativity Everywhere project started in 2013 to improve the district through art after several meetings with the arts community. We said, "Where's the art?" They said, "Where's the money?" So, they got creative. It was Creativity Everywhere.

**Our Role:** We initiated this project and have been moving it forward since 2013 while creating projects that match our mission for improving our Downtown and encouraging creative community collaborations. By using our existing budget to invest in our Downtown District, we have been able to support the arts community already in the district while creating lasting art contributions and other improvements for the Downtown community to enjoy while improving our image.

**Innovation:** The idea was incredibly simple. With a limited advertising budget, we knew every dollar mattered. We also recognized that advertising is all about image. So, we thought, "why not use our advertising budget to actually improve our district, which would naturally also improve our image?" With this idea, we justified using our advertising budget to invest in real district improvements and hoped that our constituency and the media would take notice and they have.

**Replication:** We started small in 2013 with the mantra of "paint it or plant it" when we sought to improve our district through art and small-scale improvements. We even adopted an informal motto that we were "fixing the ugly" in the Downtown. We audited our public spaces first, including parks, streets and other gathering spaces. We identified cultural assets and focused on improving our public space immediately adjacent to these cultural assets. We took notice of where we needed to improve and took a more creative and fun approach whenever we could. In one park, the lawn was poorly lit. Through Creativity Everywhere, we installed festoon lighting to light up the lawn of the park for safety with an added benefit of charm. This project is always evolving. Over the last few years, we've continued these efforts and have looked for opportunities to use existing funding to make a bigger impact. For example, when we needed to replace our street banners, we used this existing budget to contract a local artist to make one-of-a-kind metal sculptures of our logo for the same amount. We've created a greater sense of place through these and other installations that reflect our culture and give opportunities for residents and visitors to celebrate being in Downtown Lafayette.

**Representation & Partnerships:** As a small staff, we know the power of partnerships and quickly identified willing partners in our local university student volunteer groups, non-profit organizations, arts organizations, educational institutions and many other community partners. We found out that many businesses, schools and organizations were looking for community improvement projects, but were challenged to find easy, one-day projects that achieved a feeling of accomplishment that they had actually made a difference. Creativity Everywhere allowed these groups just that. They could paint bike racks in fun designs and plant fragrant creeping jasmine to cover ugly electrical box gates. We also seized any branding opportunity we could. We also painted fun icons related to Downtown that we use in our branding, such as a bike, house, stars and moons on neglected park fence.

**Sustainability:** We found out that paint is relatively cheap, but it makes an obvious and quick difference in an area deserving of additional attention and love. Because we have been using our existing advertising and marketing budget to fund Creativity Everywhere, this project is self-funded. What we've learned though, is that when you're having this much fun and doing so much cool stuff, people want to take part. With our initial investment from our existing budget, we have also received grants, sponsorships, in-kind partnerships and even crowd-funding that have enhanced the Creativity Everywhere project and made it a community-wide effort. The provided permanence of the art installations is more sustainable for us to showcase how we've invested in the district through this project through constant additions to what we've already contributed while created a new sense of community pride.

**The Outcome:** We have seen significant impacts of the Creativity Everywhere project through a renewed sense of pride in the district by our constituents, visitors and the media. We measure this through a variety of ways including stakeholder interviews, board member feedback, social media comments and earned media. Through Creativity Everywhere, we have invested \$48,000 since 2013 from our marketing and advertising budget and have seen over \$200,000 of earned media in the form of positive media coverage for the district through the project, quadrupling our investment and buying us something that's actually impossible to buy. The media coverage of each of these installations or projects has been more than encouraging. Each project is covered and often accompanied by front-page color photos or online photo galleries that we could never buy. It has also vastly improved our media relations, as evident in an ongoing partnership with two newspapers that has earned us a weekly column on anything Downtown, free ads and even sponsorship of a band during ArtWalk. The media participation has improved our image and connected us with the community in a way that has not only met our goal but has surpassed our expectations. We feel more connected because most of these projects were done with willing volunteers looking for a service project. Through this established foundation we've been able to add grants for artists, property owners or project visionaries to make their own Creativity Everywhere mark on the district, achieving our original goal of supporting the arts community in the district. Each project has created an immediate impact on the built environment, volunteers and even the businesses surrounding these projects that is tangible. It provided a renewed vibrancy and a certain aspect of surprise that something positive was always showing up Downtown.

\*2019 International Downtown Association Excellence Award Submission



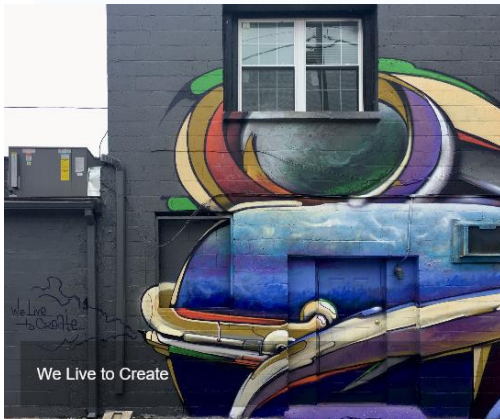
# Downtown Kinston Mural Program



CULTURAL/  
ARTS

Location

Kinston, NC



In 2019, the City of Kinston received funding from the NEA Our Town program to support the creation of a Downtown Kinston Mural Program and to commission seven original outdoor public murals. The mural locations are scattered throughout downtown, with the aim of enhancing connectivity between cultural and economic assets in Kinston's city center. The creation of the murals will coincide with a City-led \$3.2 million downtown streetscape improvement project (to include new street trees, sidewalks, crosswalks, parking streetlights, and traffic patterns).

Key objectives of the program:

To revitalize downtown as a cultural and shopping experience for both residents and tourists.

To provide economic opportunities for local and regional artists, establishing Kinston as a place for creative people to live, work, and sell their wares.

To inspire, motivate, and instill pride in Kinstonians by creating an accessible outdoor gallery of beautiful and thought-provoking public art that reflects the unique character of our community.

The National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) funded the Downtown Kinston Mural Program with \$100,000 from the NEA Our Town program.

Complete details including detailed program summary, owner permission form, Call for Artists- Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and a current mural map can be found [here](http://kinstonnc.gov/574/Mural-Program).

<http://kinstonnc.gov/574/Mural-Program>





# Fresh Paint Springfield 2021



Location

Springfield, MA

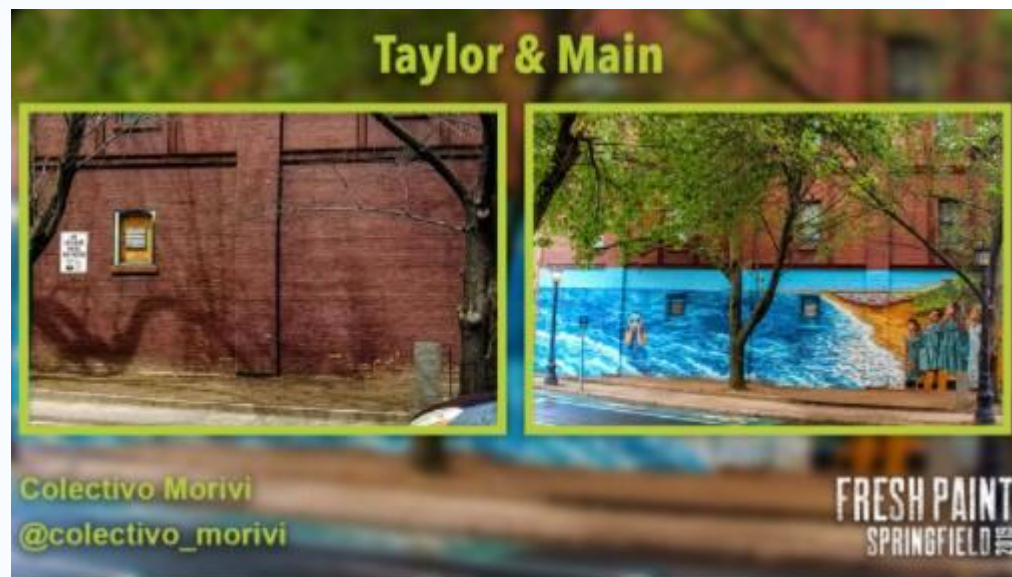
**"FRESH PAINT  
SPRINGFIELD 2021:  
PROFESSIONAL  
MURALISTS FROM  
ACROSS THE US  
COLLABORATED WITH  
THE COMMUNITY TO  
CREATE ALL OF THE  
MURALS"**

"During FPS2021, all of the murals were created using a special process where community members gave input into the design of the murals, the murals were turned into giant paint-by-numbers on special mural fabric, we held outdoor covid-safe paint parties every day so over 1000 people could help paint, and then the murals were permanently installed on the walls.

We put up most of the murals in Mason Square and added to the murals downtown. Professional murals attract new investment in the neighborhood, increase walkability and pedestrian traffic, and improve perceptions of Springfield."

Source: [Fresh Paint Springfield - https://www.freshpaintspringfield.com/](https://www.freshpaintspringfield.com/)

**FRESH PAINT  
SPRINGFIELD 2021**



# Simsbury ART TRAIL



CULTURAL/  
ARTS

Location

Simsbury, CT

Simsbury Chamber of Commerce –  
ART TRAIL

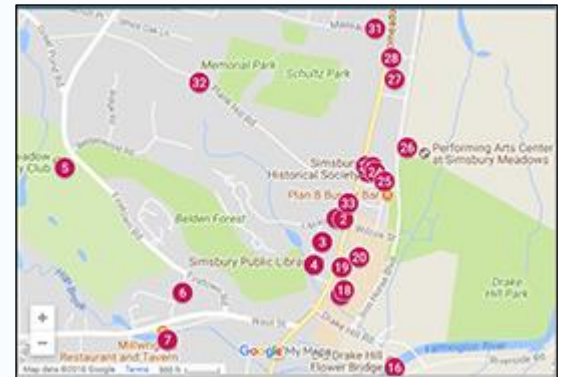
Links:

[News | Simsbury Art Trail -  
http://www.simsburyarttrail.com/news/n  
ews/](http://www.simsburyarttrail.com/news/news/)

[Art Trail - Simsbury Chamber of  
Commerce, CT \(simsburycoc.org\) -  
https://www.simsburycoc.org/art-trail](https://www.simsburycoc.org/art-trail)

[Simsbury Art Trail | Simsbury Art Trail -  
http://www.simsburyarttrail.com/](http://www.simsburyarttrail.com/)

ART TRAIL encouraged people to visit key areas of the community – this art project was *On Loan From The Seward Johnson Atelier, Inc.* and hosted by the Simsbury Chamber of Commerce with community sponsors for the pieces of artwork.



info@simsburycoc.org 860-651-7307

**Simsbury**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
**ART TRAIL**

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#simsburyarttrail

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- ✓ Publicize your support
- ✓ Draw visitors to Simsbury

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**SIMSBURY**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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