



Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

Town of
Westborough



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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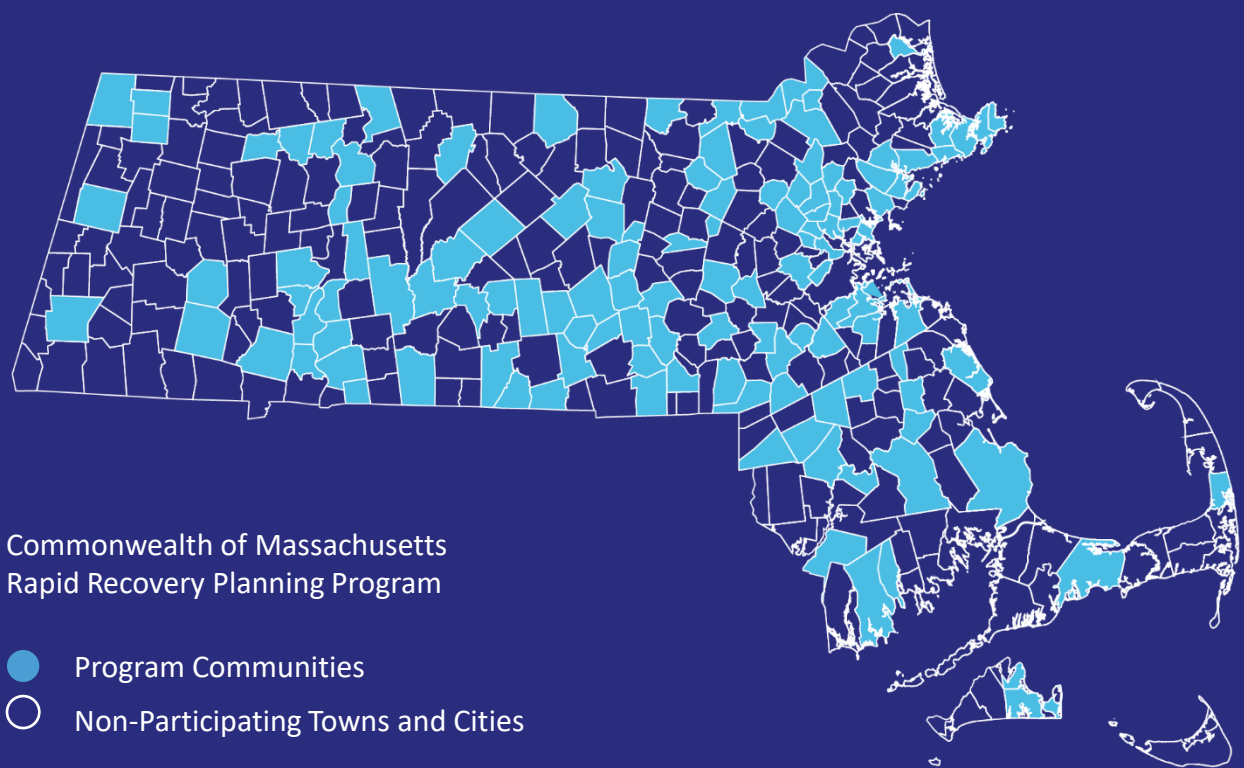
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125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

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.



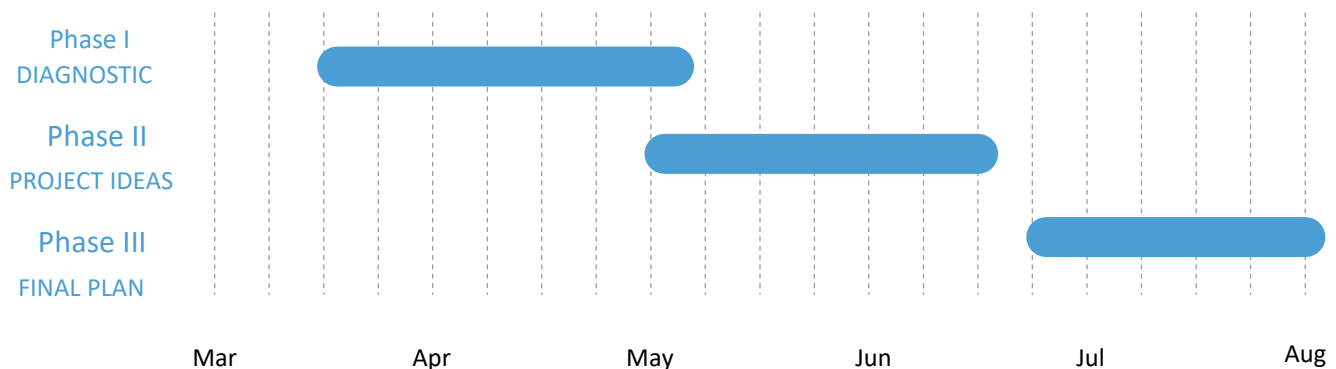
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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



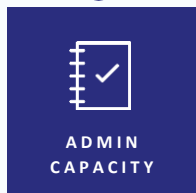
Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?



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

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

A Modern Town with Historic Charm

The Town of Westborough is a medium-sized community located in Worcester County, Massachusetts that approximately 18,000 residents call home.¹ Westborough was incorporated in 1717 as the 100th town in Massachusetts and maintains the historic charm of a small New England community. Even as its economy has grown, Westborough has preserved its “New England village” feel by protecting its open space, historical assets, and prioritizing quality of life. Westborough is also home to a robust business community, with a locus of small businesses in a downtown core, retail opportunities along Route 9, and larger commercial and industrial facilities in office parks off Interstate 495 and along the Otis Street corridor.

Westborough values its history, but it’s also a community that’s changing rapidly. Due in part to the strength of its school system, Westborough has relatively high turnover among its residents. Almost 20% of the community settled in Westborough within the last three years. Additionally, Westborough is becoming increasingly diverse, and, as of 2021, its school system is nearly 45% non-white.² Its business landscape is also changing. As is the case across the country, working patterns are changing, commuting patterns are changing, and its commercial base is changing along with that. Unfortunately, these changes have led to reduced customer traffic for the Town’s downtown business community. As the community’s larger businesses continue to grapple with changing real estate needs, these challenges are still very real for the downtown area.

The RRP focused on a specific “Study Area” within the community. As you can see on the map below, Westborough’s Study Area is effectively the Town’s downtown area, including Bay State Commons and the commercial corridor along East Main Street. The major thoroughfares within the Study Area include West Main Street, East Main Street, South Street, Brigham Street, and Milk Street. The Study Area includes a range of land uses, including a more urban, mixed-use core, suburban shopping plazas that extend the commercial corridor, and single-family residential zoning on the periphery. Approximately 492 people reside in the Study Area, representing only 2.5% of Westborough’s total population.³



Town of Westborough. Source: Westborough TV

1. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates
2. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates
3. Esri Community Analyst, 2020

Westborough Study Area



Westborough Study Area. Source: ESRI Shapefiles, U.S. Census Bureau Tigerline.

The Study Area's location creates several competitive advantages, as it is intersected by major transportation routes. State Route 30 and State Route 135 bisect the Study Area providing commuters access to the downtown area. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) connects Westborough to Boston and Worcester every hour via the Framingham/Worcester line. Additionally, the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) has recently partnered with VIA, a private mobility company, to create an on-demand, ride-share public transportation option. Rides to and from the Study Area to the MBTA station are only \$2.00 flat fee when using WRTA service through VIA. The array of transit options underscore the viability of Westborough as a regional economic hub.

Economic development interventions will require a respect for the local context. By reinforcing the downtown area's strengths and by addressing opportunities for improvement, the project recommendations outlined herein will inspire long-term economic growth and recovery. An inclusive approach is required to achieve this goal. By leveraging the skills, knowledge, and commitment of an already active local constituency, economic recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 will involve all communities represented in Westborough.

Pandemic in a Small Town

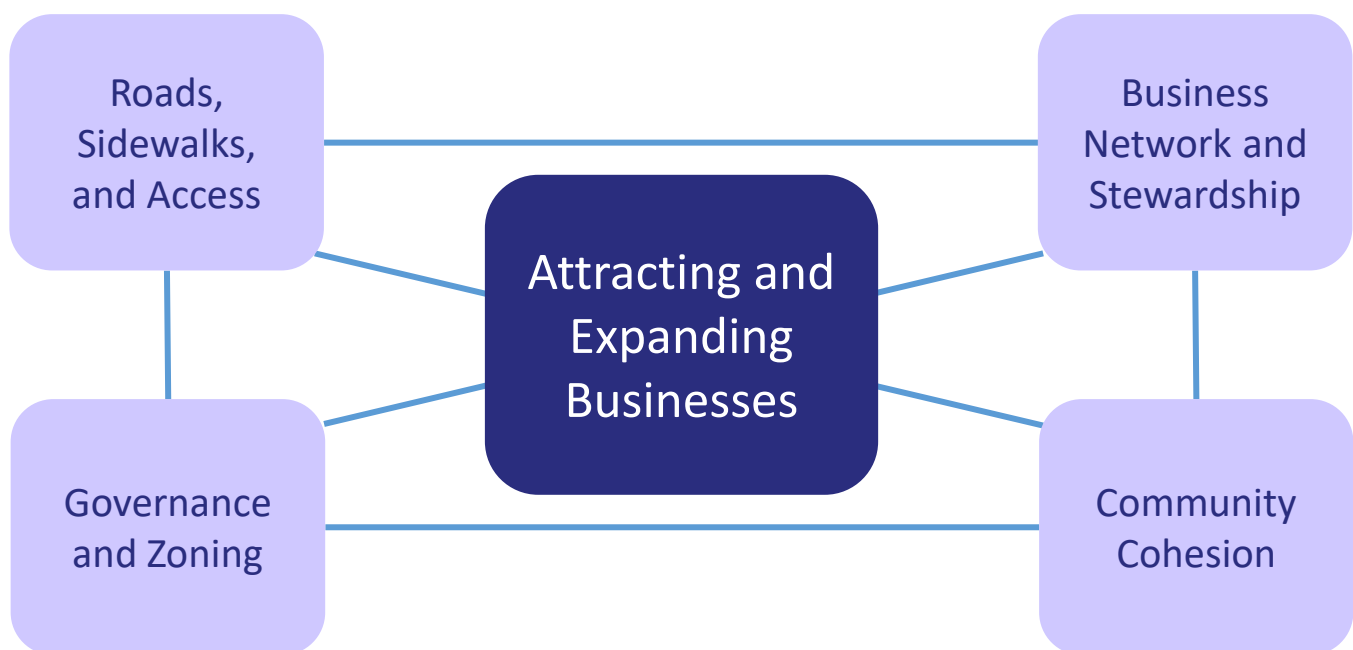
While COVID-19 has disrupted the way of life for many in Westborough, the pandemic has been less severe in this community than in others. Since March 2020, Westborough has recorded 1,738 total COVID-19 cases, which is 9% of the Town's population. Furthermore, the case rate for Westborough is lower than that for Worcester County (10.6%) and for Massachusetts (11.8%). Additionally, most cases recorded in Town have been from less vulnerable populations, specifically individuals between the ages of 20 and 49.⁴

That said, the economic impacts of COVID-19 have been just as severe in Westborough as they have been everywhere. During the pandemic's onset, Westborough's schools, government offices, community and religious centers, and businesses closed. Much of the local workforce lost employment or worked from home, significantly reducing the customer base for businesses. In addition, closed schools and childcare facilities created burdens on parents and guardians that limited their ability to work. The number of individuals on unemployment insurance benefits increased. According to the local business survey, businesses were impacted by reduced operating hours and a decline in revenue and customer traffic.

In preparing for economic recovery due to the impacts of COVID-19, the Town of Westborough will need to consider the different impacts that COVID-19 has had on businesses and the community, existing resources that could be leveraged to support recovery, and a strategic approach to economic development in Westborough.

Economic Recovery Depends on Addressing Infrastructure and Access, Streamlining Regulations, and Building Community

The diagnostic phase of the RRP identified core drivers of community impact and opportunity areas for economic recovery. These themes were identified through an analysis of over 10 documents, 14 key informant interviews, over 20 baseline data points, 15 site visit data points, 32 responses to the statewide business survey, and a stakeholder working session. The project recommendation section will address four themes to support Westborough's existing businesses and attract new business to the community, catalyzing economic recovery from COVID-19. Please see the figure below. More details regarding this research and analysis can be found in the diagnostic section and the appendix.

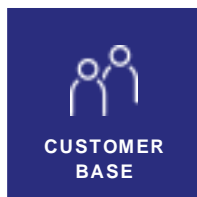


Key Components of Successful Economic Recovery in Westborough

4. Massachusetts Department of Public Health COVID-19 Dashboard - Weekly COVID-19 Public Health Report, 2021

Diagnostic

Key Findings



Diverse Customer Base

The success of Westborough's businesses is dependent on the local customer base. The Town attracts diverse local and regional customers that interact with the businesses and amenities offered. Locally, the community is a family-oriented, bedroom community. The age demographics show a U-shaped distribution where young residents and elderly residents are heavily represented; this characteristic is reinforced by the fact that more than a third of households are occupied by families. In addition to the family character, the high-median income of the community displays opportune spending habits to help economic growth. The community also attracts customers from the region. The labor force in Westborough is composed of a large portion of individuals who commute outside the Town, and the State highways further enable accessibility into Westborough. Stakeholders are aware of the strengths of the customer base. Still, they have also highlighted the need to attract young customers to the Town to support the business community's growth.



Three Distinct Neighborhoods with Limited Connections

The historic New England historic downtown located in Westborough is a treasure for the community. The medium-density, mixed-use buildings that surround a classic Massachusetts rotary provide a comfortable and inviting pedestrian environment. Yet, the high-traffic road network traversing downtown devalues the pedestrian asset. The roads are populated with plazas set back from the street away from the downtown to accommodate parking lots. This environment also detracts from a comfortable pedestrian experience. Because of the pleasing aesthetic of old and new buildings in the community, only modest measures are required to improve walkability in the Study Area.



Density and Diversity

Westborough's strong economy comes from the diversity of businesses located in the Town. The Study Area is characteristic of a small downtown offering a range of retail, neighborhood convenience, professional services, food services, and other low-intensity business activities that support the local and regional market. On the periphery of the Study Area, a healthy mix of industrial and office parks contributes to the community's economy. These uses also provide the downtown area with a steady customer base during the day. Westborough's economic success is incumbent on continuing to draw in new businesses that serve their diverse population.



Westborough Central Business District. Source: Westborough TV



Dedicated and Supportive Staff and Resources

The Town of Westborough has multiple departments and boards dedicated to supporting economic recovery and personnel who can support funding grant applications. This effort is led by an energized Economic Development Committee (EDC) consisting of Town staff and community members committed to seeing the Town prosper. Locally, community organizations support the quality of life in Town by creating networks to support the youth, financially disadvantaged, elderly, and business communities. The Town's economy is additionally supported by various regional partners and community organizations, including two chambers of commerce and a regional planning commission. These entities will be key supporters in the implementation and maintenance of the RRP projects.



Highlights from the Physical Environment

PRIVATE REALM

Westborough's downtown is home to a healthy and robust small business community. Among other things, economic growth is dependent on building and storefront quality. The RRP site visit scorecard included an assessment of the Study Area's storefronts. Storefront windows, outdoor displays, facades, and signage were inspected, as high-quality storefronts attract and retain a customer base. In Westborough, the quality of storefronts varies. Many storefronts have clear windows, vibrant signage, and attractive facades that communicate the businesses' commercial offerings and attract customers. Other storefronts have crowded windows, minimal signage, and/or deteriorated exteriors that do not adequately reflect the quality offerings provided by the businesses inside. A summary of these findings is included in the table below.

Additionally, the storefront typologies in the Study Area accommodate a variety of customers and businesses. In the downtown core, storefronts in historical buildings serve customers that are either on foot or approaching via on-street parking. Meanwhile, the businesses in Bay State Commons, a mixed-use development on the downtown periphery, primarily serve customers using automotive transport, which is highlighted by the massive scale of its parking lot. On East Main Street, most of the storefronts occupy plazas with front-facing parking lots. The quality of signage, outdoor display, and window decorations depends on the community's type of storefront.

Westborough's signage regulations in the Study Area, including those provided by the Historical Commission and the Design Review Board, restrict private realm signage. Westborough Historical Commission approval is often required for new signs and for alterations to existing signage. While the sign bylaw aims to maintain the downtown's historical charm, the process and cost negatively impact the business community.

ELEMENT	GUIDING PRINCIPLES	EXISTING CONDITIONS
Storefront Windows	Storefronts that maintain a minimum of 70% transparency ensure clear lines of sight between the business and the sidewalk to enhance attractiveness of storefront, as well as improve safety for the business, customers, and pedestrians.	About 50% of storefront windows maintain windows with at least 70% transparency.
Outdoor Displays	Attractive window displays and spillover retail/restaurant activity on sidewalks or adjacent parking spaces can help contribute to overall district vibrancy.	More than 25% of storefronts have spillover merchandise display and outdoor dining that pose challenges to the pedestrian experience.
Signage	Signage can help customers identify the location of storefronts and businesses from a distance. Signage should also reflect the visual brand and identity of tenants to help attract new customers.	About 50% of storefronts have clear signage that reflect basic business information and can easily be seen from adjacent sidewalks.
Facade	Storefronts that use high-quality and durable building materials, as well as paint and color to differentiate from other businesses, can dramatically improve the appearance of the commercial district to potential customers.	Although most properties in the Study Area have clean and well-maintained façades, there is at least one significant property requiring structural façade improvements.
Lighting	Storefront interior lighting after business hours help enliven the corridor and boost security on the street.	More than 25% of storefronts do not have lighting.

Source: Site Visit Assessment

MOBILITY PRIORITIES

Like most Central Massachusetts communities, residents primarily rely on personal vehicles for transportation. In addition to the rates of car ownership and commuter patterns, the Study Area's road network characteristics indicate this trend. The rotary is the focal point of the downtown area and a challenge to other modes of transportation. The rotary produces high traffic volume and accompanying pedestrian safety concerns. While crosswalks are widely available, there are faded crosswalk markings and limited rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFB). Sidewalks and crosswalks are less prevalent on the outskirts of the Study Area. Prioritizing pedestrian infrastructure such as RRFBs, high visibility markings, and enhanced lighting can improve pedestrian safety and comfort.

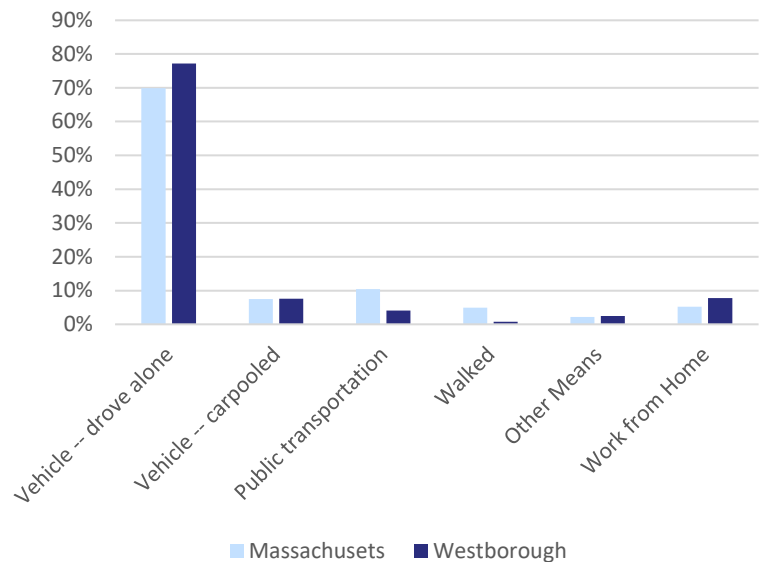
The heavy car traffic in the downtown area additionally increases parking demands. While the public perceives that parking is limited in the Study Area, recent studies proved the opposite. Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission's (CMRPC) 2019/2020 Downtown Parking Study highlighted that on-street and off-street parking is widely available but underutilized. The false perception of limited parking downtown stems from a lack of communication on where parking exists, the duration of parking, and how to access it. Wayfinding signage to inform and direct vehicles to parking will not only help resolve Westborough's parking issue, but it will also free up parking space for adaptive uses that support customers accessing downtown by foot or bike.

CAR OWNERSHIP RATES

Westborough	94.2%
Worcester	82.5%
Massachusetts	89.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates.

Commute to Work by Type



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates.

INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES

A handful of infrastructure challenges inhibit the economic growth in downtown Westborough. Sewer capacity issues prevent the growth of the residential intensity of the Study Area. The residential sewer is at maximum capacity, which prevents new multi-family residential developments. Several parcels in the downtown area have no connection to municipal water or wastewater networks. As a result, some apartments in mixed-use buildings are empty, and opportunities for infill development are severely impacted. Optimizing the residential density, thus enabling mixed-use development, will expand the customer base, business offerings, and prompt more activity downtown.

Several storefronts in the Study Area do not have the necessary improvements to operate as a business. Some commercial spaces are prime opportunities for restaurant or brew-pub space. The cost of installing grease traps to support the business is too much for a potential tenant. Working to resolve the grease trap challenges for commercial properties will help attract needed tenants in the area, especially for attracting industries in limited supply

Another physical improvement extends to a parcel with compliance issues with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This parcel in a historic building offers a prime location for business types needed in the community, per the retail leakage study. Supporting the property owners with ADA improvements will create a viable site for a restaurant or drinking establishment and add to the overall vibrancy of downtown.



Westborough Wastewater Treatment Facility. Source: Wicked Local Westborough



Downtown Westborough showcases a prime opportunity for infill development.. Source: Westborough TV

COMFORT FOR PEDESTRIANS

The RRP site visit scorecard assessed the conditions of Westborough's mobility infrastructure. The quality of sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian amenities, lighting, wayfinding, and roadbeds was evaluated to inform recommended economic recovery solutions. Physical improvements to the public realm are an essential component of recovery, as corridors with accessible public amenities will attract and retain a customer base.

The quality of the public realm varies throughout the Study Area. The core of downtown has wide sidewalks that allow for storefront displays, ample pedestrian space, street trees, and street furniture. However, further from the downtown district along East Main Street the availability of these public amenities becomes sparse. Overall, pedestrian amenities are insufficient throughout the Study Area. Benches, trash cans, shade, water, and other engaging amenities would offer pedestrians respite and work to retain potential customers directly near commercial uses.

ELEMENT	GUIDING PRINCIPLES	EXISTING CONDITIONS
Sidewalk	Sidewalks should be wide enough to accommodate both the flow of customers and spillover retail/dining activity. In addition, sidewalks should be clean and well-maintained to ensure the safety and comfort of pedestrians.	About 50% of sidewalks in the Study Area are cleaned and well-maintained.
Street Trees and Benches	Sidewalks should facilitate a variety of activities, including resting, people-watching and socializing. Street trees and benches are key amenities that support such activities and should be made available without disrupting the flow of pedestrians.	Limited availability of street trees and benches creating an uncomfortable pedestrian experience.
Lighting	Street lighting improves pedestrian visibility and personal safety, as well as aids in geographic orientation.	About 50% of the Study Area is serviced by street lighting that supports pedestrian visibility and safety.
Wayfinding	A wayfinding system supports overall accessibility of a commercial district. It benefits pedestrians and bicyclists and directs motorists to park and walk. Without clear visual cues, customers may find it difficult to park or may be less aware of local offerings.	Limited to no signage available throughout the Study Area.
Roadbed and Crosswalk	Roads should be well maintained to ensure safety of drivers and pedestrians. Crosswalks that are unsafe or inconvenient to customers may undermine accessibility between stores and overall shopper experience.	Roads are designed primarily to move motor vehicles across the Study Area efficiently leaving limited crosswalks for pedestrians.

Source: Site Visit Assessment

CONNECTION TO AMENITIES

Westborough contains numerous amenities that attract local and regional individuals. The Charm Bracelet and the Boston Worcester Air Line Trail provide leisure opportunities; Town parks offer ample recreation; the Bay State Commons hosts entertainment; the Public Library creates space for education; and commercial nodes throughout the Study Area present customers with diverse shopping experiences. However, these amenities are not always well-known or adequately promoted. Opportunities to have wayfinding and branding signage throughout the Study Area will contribute to celebrating Westborough and its unique offerings. Currently, wayfinding signage singularly targets motorists, as road signs direct traffic to notable locations on the edge of streets. Signage directing pedestrians and cyclists to culturally and recreationally significant amenities is absent. Wayfinding signage will improve customer interactions with the community by efficiently circulating people, leading people to amenities, and promoting neighborhoods through branding.



The historical Nathan A. Fisher House, built in 1820 in Westborough, still stands today. Source: [Google](#)



View from a trail near Mill Pond School in Westborough. Source: [AllTrails](#)

PUBLIC RECREATION FACILITIES IN WESTBOROUGH

Playgrounds	Swimming
Softball Fields	Boating
Soccer Fields	Walking Trails
Basketball Courts	Public Golf Course
Tennis Courts	Field Hockey Field
Cricket Pitch	Football Field
Little League Field	Running Track
Baseball Field	

Source: Westborough 2020 Master Plan Draft



Highlights from the Business Environment

OFFICE PARKS

Outside of the Study Area, there is significant commercial activity in Westborough's office parks along Route 9. Westborough Office Park contains parcels on Research Drive and West Park Drive, which host several office buildings and corporate headquarters. COVID-19 amplified the office park's importance for the community's economic vitality, remote working mandates from companies reduced the number of employees in Westborough, and these employees are a significant customer base during weekdays. The role of office parks in Westborough's commercial landscape is anticipated to increase; the 2021 Master Plan Draft suggests office park development for 1300 West Park Drive, 2300 West Park Drive, and 700 Friberg Parkway. The economic success of the Study Area, as well as Westborough as a whole, needs to integrate development initiatives between office parks and the commercial uses downtown. By expanding and reinforcing connections between the two commercial nodes, a return to work for office employees will support the economic growth of the Study Area.



Amazon Robotics innovation hub. Source: Kelly Burneson Photography

VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED STOREFRONTS

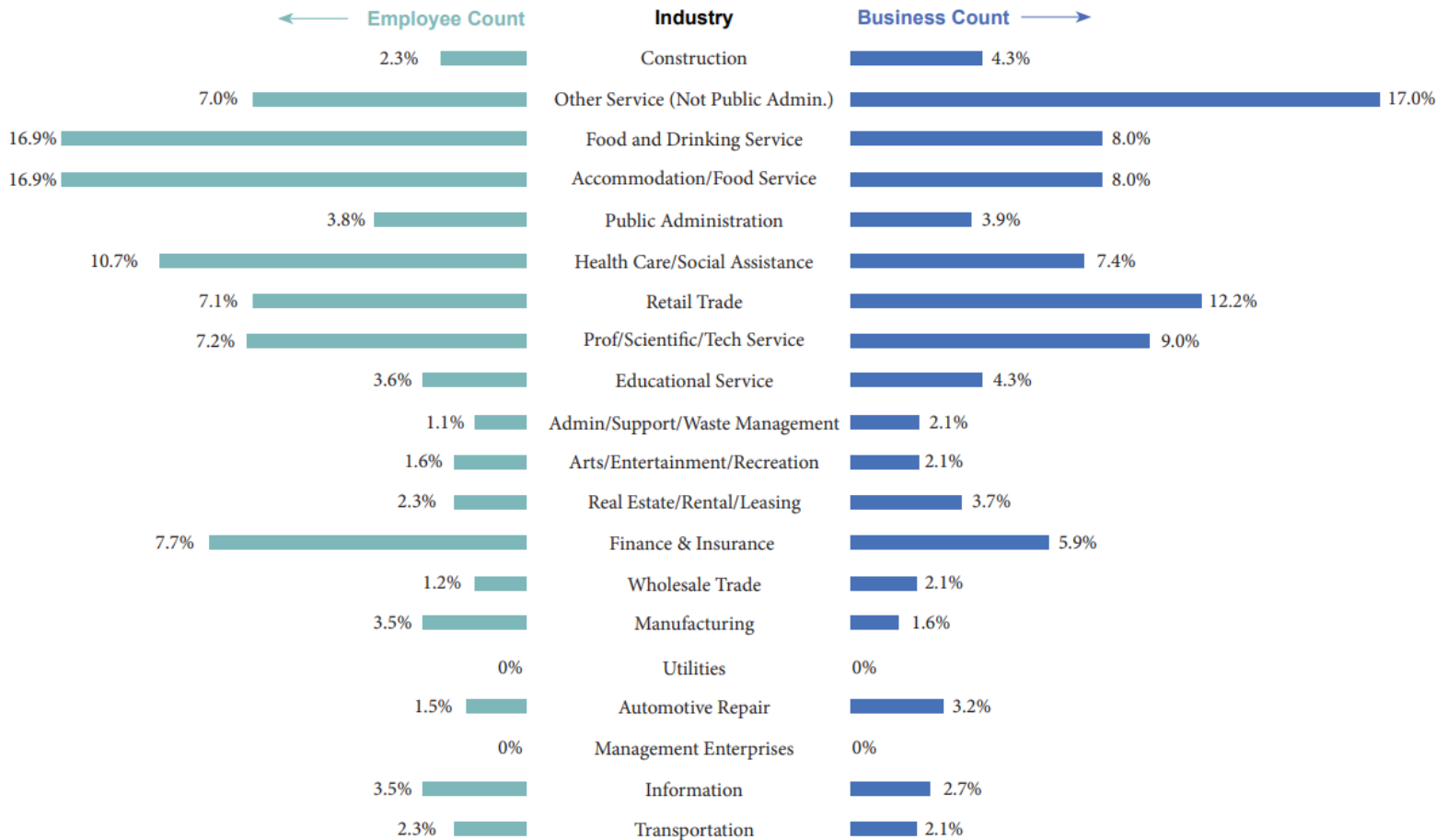
COVID-19 caused extensive business closures throughout the Commonwealth. During the RRP site visit in April 2021, the plan facilitators conducted a vacant storefront audit in the Study Area. The audit recorded a storefront vacancy rate of 7.9% in Westborough. All types of commercial buildings experienced vacancies, including office parks, industrial parcels, storefronts downtown, and plazas along East Main Street. Vacant storefronts create a less engaging shopping experience and threaten the vitality of neighboring businesses. While vacancies impose a blight on the community, they also offer an array of opportunities. Westborough can attract businesses that satisfy local and regional needs, support entrepreneurs with available space, or match the arts community with inexpensive space.



Downtown vacant storefront. Source: Hagerty Consulting

INDUSTRIAL NODES

Industrial uses in Westborough are situated primarily outside the Study Area along Route 9 (including Computer Drive and Research Drive), Interstate 495 and Interstate 90, and Otis Street. In the Study Area, higher intensity uses (e.g., manufacturing, transportation and warehousing, and wholesale trade) have a low share of business representation with 5.8% of the market, while retail contains 12.2%. However, industrial services in Westborough influence the local and regional economy. Currently, it is estimated that 30.8% of vacant land in Westborough is zoned industrial, and of that land 20.9% is categorized as potentially developable land.⁵ With the introduction of Amazon's new Robotics Innovation Hub, Westborough is positioned to attract more advanced manufacturing, industrial uses, and light-industry to the community. Adding these sectors will increase the number of employees interacting with the community, thus expanding the customer base. To recover from COVID-19, Westborough will balance the diversity of tenant mixes, the influence of the industrial economy, and the desire to grow technology, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing jobs.



Business and Employee Proportions in the Study Area. Source: ESRI, August 2017

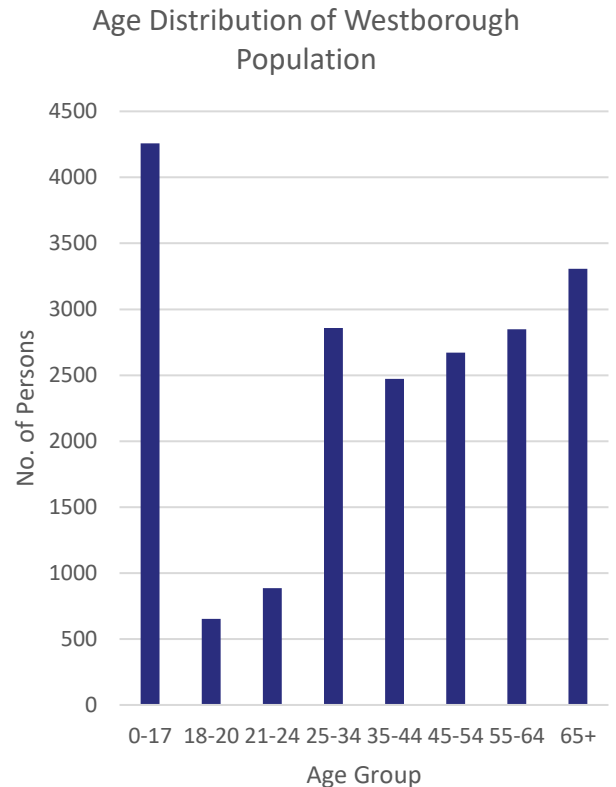


Highlights from the Customer Base

DEMOGRAPHICS OF WESTBOROUGH

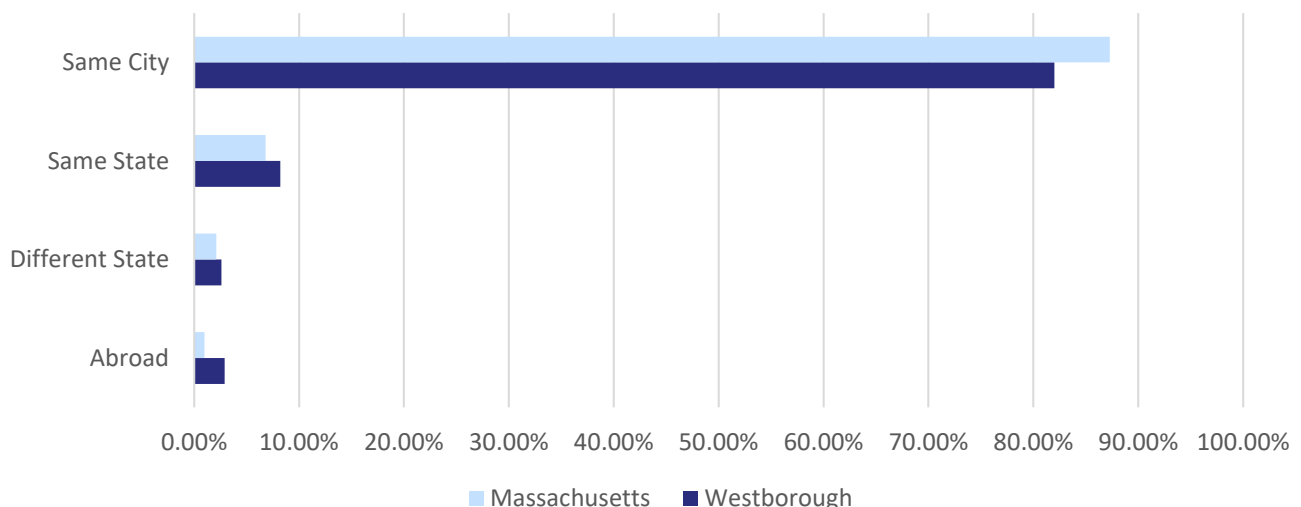
The Town of Westborough can be characterized as a medium-sized community, and its downtown area has sufficient population density for an active urban core. Westborough has nearly 20,000 residents which has increased by 9.2% since 2010, and it has an average population density of 877 persons per square mile. Meanwhile, the Study Area that was selected for the RRP has approximately 492 residents and a population density of 3,060 persons per square mile.⁶ Although the Town of Westborough itself is mostly suburban, it has the makings for a vibrant, walkable downtown area.

Demographically speaking Westborough's residents are highly educated and relatively diverse. Over 96.3% residents have a high school degree and over 66.7% residents have a bachelor's degree. These rates are much greater than that of Massachusetts (90.8% and 43.7%, respectively) and of Worcester County (84.7% and 30.2%, respectively). The median age of Westborough residents is 40 years old. The age distribution impacts both Westborough's labor market and customer base, and it should inform an economic development strategy for attracting businesses and growing the economy. Furthermore, Westborough's residents are constantly changing. Nearly 20% of current Westborough residents have relocated to the Town since 2018, most of whom were previously residents of other jurisdictions within Worcester County.⁷



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates.

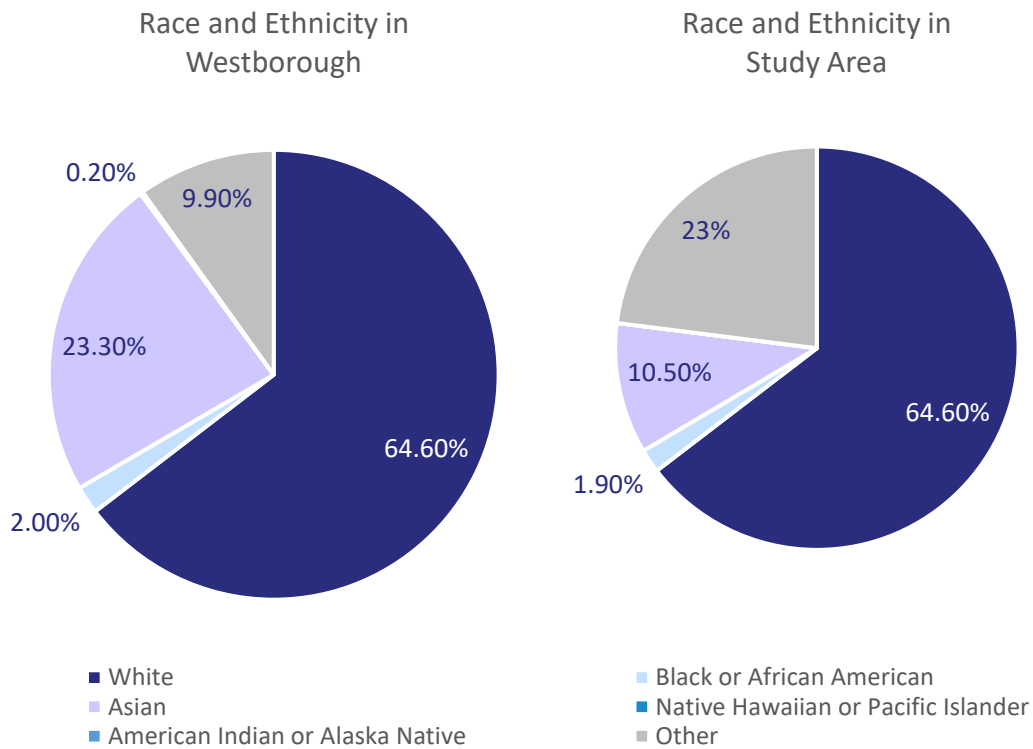
Westborough Residents Locations One Year Ago



6. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates
7. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates.

Although the residents of Westborough primarily identify as white (64.6%), the community is significantly more diverse than this number suggests.⁸ Compare this figure, for example, to the whole of Massachusetts which is 80.6% white. There is a significant pocket of residents who identify as Asian or Pacific Islander (23.3%), and Westborough Public Schools have a more diverse student population (i.e., 48.9% of students identify as an ethnicity or race other than white).⁹ The graph below shows the distribution of identified races and ethnicities in the Town and Study Area.

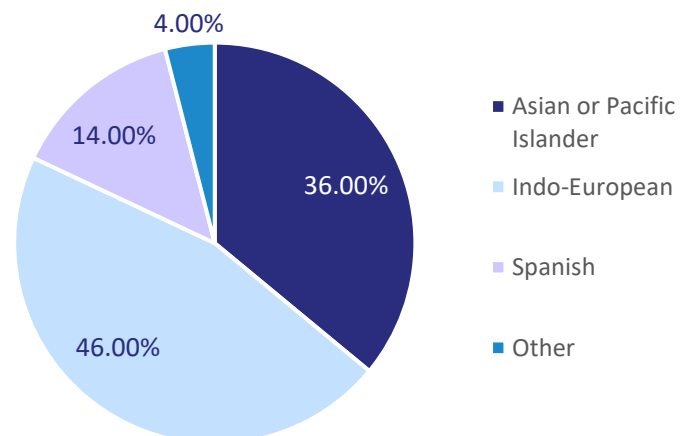


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates.

LANGUAGE ACCESS

Due to its increasingly diverse population, language barriers can be a problem for some. Approximately 6,200 individuals over the age of five speak a language other than English at home, which represents 31.1% of Westborough's population, and since 2014 this number has increased by 5.7%. Additionally, there are approximately 1,800 Westborough residents, which represents 9% of the total population and 29% of multilingual speakers, who are only able "to speak English less than very well." The largest demographic in this category are those who speak an Asian or Pacific Islander language (e.g., Korean, Mandarin Chinese). These statistics indicate the need for COVID-19 economic recovery strategies to be considerate and inclusive of varying languages and English proficiencies.¹⁰

Languages other than English Spoken in Westborough



8. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates

9. Gonsalves, Susan. The Community Advocate. "Westborough school survey airs feelings of inequality, racism." 2021.

10. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates

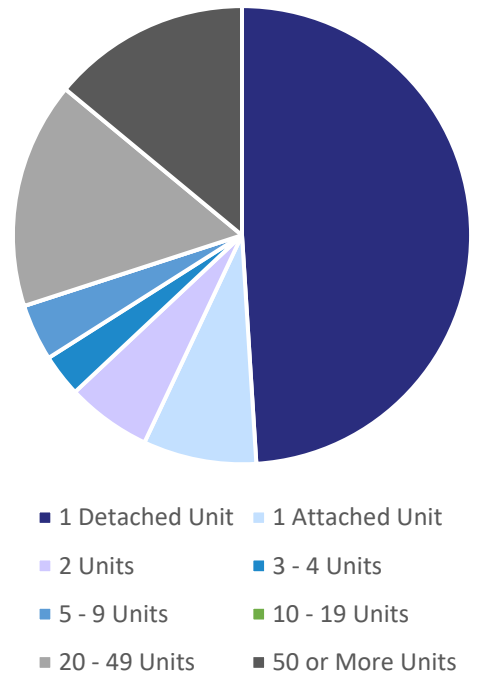
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates.

HOUSING

There are approximately 7,000 households in Westborough. The average occupancy rate of housing units from 2014-2019 was 93.5%, compared to 62.4% for Massachusetts and 41.3% for Worcester County. Approximately 61.6% of residents own their homes. Among renters, approximately 43% of households experience rent burden (i.e., they spend 30% or more of their income on rent). The community's family-oriented character is underscored by the share of family households; 71.8% of households are occupied by families, which is a significantly higher proportion compared to 63.4% for the state (ACS 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates). Engaging families, and especially the youth, will be a priority for the recovery of the community.

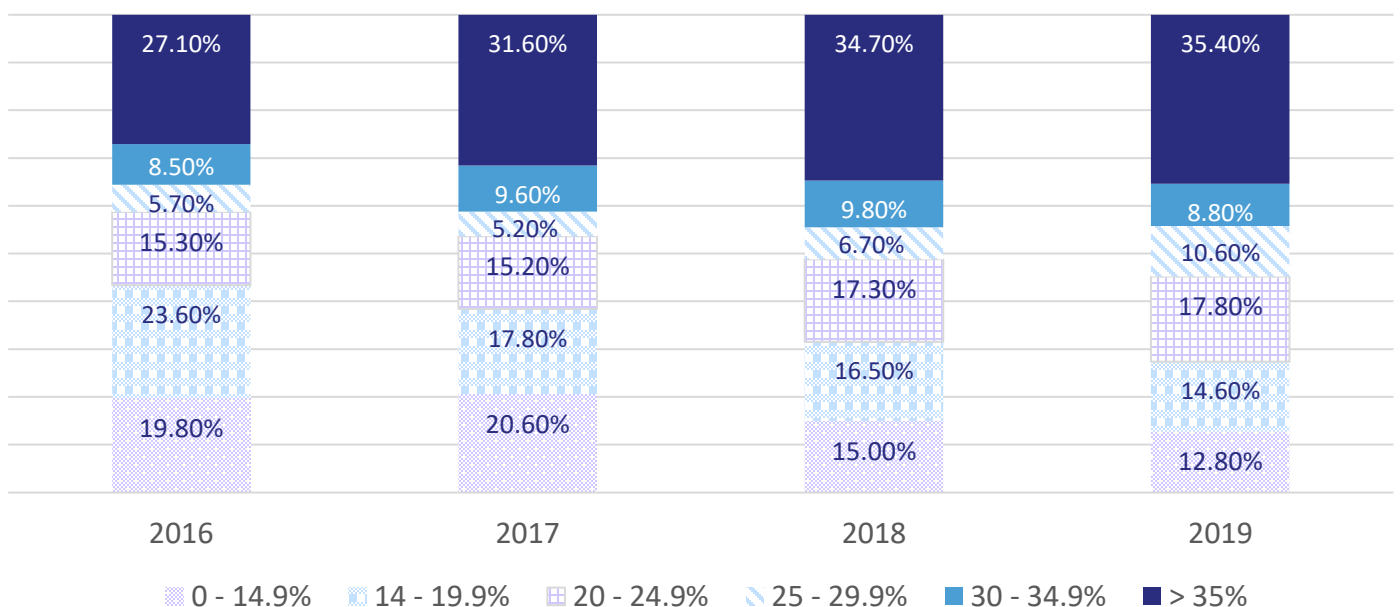
An additional defining feature of the housing profile of Westborough is the diversity of housing in the community. Westborough is the only community in the region where single-family units are less than half of the housing stock. More than 10% of housing units are located in buildings with 50 or more units, and the rest of the housing stock is divided among multi-family buildings with less than 50 units. This array of housing type options positions the community to be attractive to a variety of demographics, age groups, and employees.¹¹

Unit Types of Housing Stock in Westborough



Source: Westborough 2020 Master Plan Draft

Rent Burden: Gross Rent as a Percent of Income



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates.

11. U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

Westborough is dominated by automobiles, but commuting patterns are changing as more residents look for alternative modes of transportation. Most residents in Westborough drive to work, with driving their own vehicle as the primary mode of transportation (77%). Over 94% of Westborough households own a personal vehicle, which is greater than the rate for Massachusetts (87.6%) and the United States (82.5%). Recently, Westborough residents have significantly changed their commuting patterns: public transportation use has increased 37%, walking has decreased 43%, and transportation by other means (e.g., bicycle, carpooling) has increased by 214% over the past five years.

Often classified as a bedroom community, Westborough is truly a “commuter town” where both its residents and its workforce travel to and from different communities to get to work. According to 2018 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, there were 21,600 private primary jobs in Westborough. Among these jobs, 4.8% are filled by persons residing in the Town. Employees from out of Town predominantly live in Worcester (10.4%), Shrewsbury (4.2%), Grafton (2.7%), Marlborough (2.6%), Framingham (2.5%), and Boston (2.5%), with the remainder distributed in lower percentages across other communities (LEHD). Over 50% of local employees commute to Westborough from neighboring towns, whereas 47.3% of employees live in Westborough and work elsewhere in the region. As the COVID-19 pandemic forced more people to work from home, previously known commuting patterns have likely changed significantly, and businesses will need to adapt to this changed behavior.¹²



Westborough MBTA Station. Source: Westborough TV



Traffic on the rotary. Source: Patch

12. U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2018

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

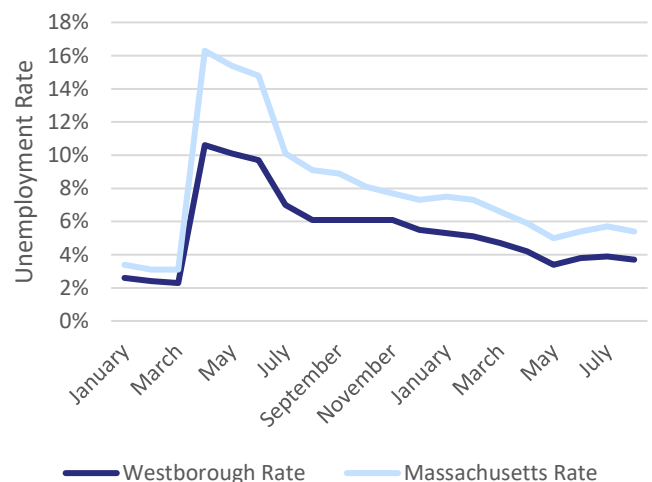
Overall, Westborough residents are generally wealthier and work in high-skill occupations, which creates a robust customer base for local businesses. The median household income is \$112,53, which is nearly double the \$62,834 national average and exceeds the \$81,215 median for Massachusetts and the \$74,000 median for Worcester County. Additionally, Westborough has a very low poverty rate: approximately 4.6% compared to 10.3% for Massachusetts and 10.1% for Worcester County. Westborough's relative spending power derives from its highly skilled labor force. By occupation, the greatest share of Westborough residents (14.2%) work in computer/mathematical fields, which is nearly four times greater than the share of Worcester County residents in the same field (3.6%). Additionally, other high-skill occupations, such as management, education/training/library, and business/financial are top occupations for Westborough residents. Highly skilled residents with relatively high spending power are assets for local businesses.

Furthermore, because of Westborough's robust commercial and industrial base, the local customer base is not limited to Westborough residents, and local employment characteristics should also be considered. Westborough businesses will need to adapt to new customer markets as Westborough undergoes shifting employment patterns, as evidenced by its largest employment sector, professional/technical services, declining while other prominent sectors grow rapidly. By employment, Westborough's most significant industries are professional/technical services (20.4%) and healthcare and social assistance (14.4%). From 2013 to 2018, Westborough's fastest growing sectors were manufacturing (12.0% annually), healthcare and social assistance (10.0% annually), other services (9.9% annually), real estate, rentals, and leasing (8.5% annually), and transportation and warehousing (7.6% annually). On the other hand, over that same time period, Westborough saw industries like wholesale trade (-9.6% annually), public administration (-2.7% annually), information (-1.9% annually), arts/entertainment/recreation (-1.8% annually), and professional/technical services (-0.7% annually) decline in employment footprint.¹³

Occupation Types	Workforce Representation
Computer/Mathematical	14.2%
Management	13.3%
Sales and Sales Related	10.8%
Education/Training/Library	8.2%
Office/Administrative Support	8.2%
Healthcare Practitioner/Technician	7.5%
Business/Financial	7.3%

Percent of Labor Force by Occupation (2019). Source: ESRI Business Analyst Online, 2019

Unemployment During COVID-19



Unemployment Rates. Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance, Labor Market Information.

¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2015-2019 5-Year Estimates



Highlights from Administrative Capacity

DEDICATED TOWN LEADERSHIP

The Town of Westborough maintains multiple departments and boards that support economic growth, including the EDC, Planning Department and Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Building Department. Economic development has strong support from all levels of local government, and members of the Town Council were engaged throughout the RRP process. These dedicated staff members and volunteers have led economic recovery efforts in Westborough and are key stakeholders for the success of the RRP. Additionally, the Town is in the process of restructuring the EDC and clarifying the committee's vision and purview. The aim of the restructuring effort is to define Westborough's community economic development strategy and strategize broader engagement with the Westborough civic and business communities.

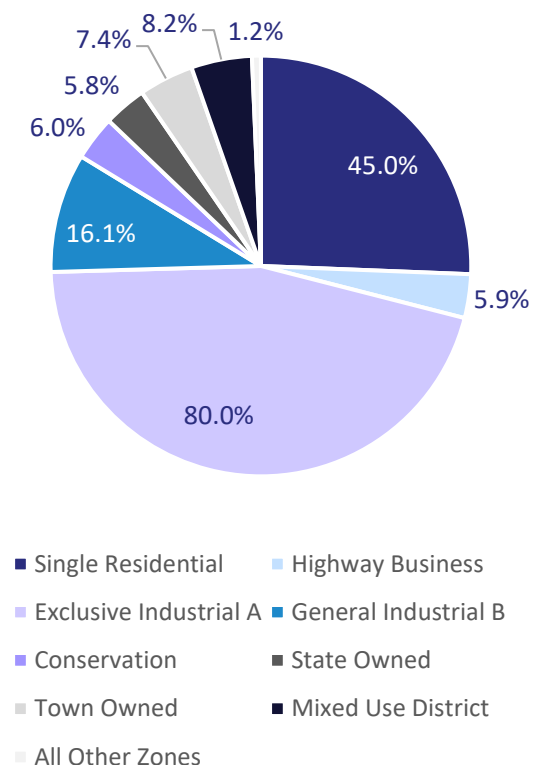
REGULATORY AND ZONING FRAMEWORK

The zoning for the Study Area primarily consists of the Residential and Downtown Business and aligns with the Downtown Business District (zoned BB) overlay and the Downtown Planning overlay. In Westborough, 45% of the land is zoned for single-family residential and this intensity has constrained public services (e.g., schools, water systems, sewer systems). The objective of Westborough's zoning regime is to improve traffic congestion, promote climate resilience, support public health outcomes, create housing affordability and diversity, and adequately provide access to public services and open space. Yet, 75% of business survey respondents noted that changes to zoning and other local regulations are of some importance for the community's recovery from COVID-19. Improvements to Westborough zoning by-laws enable ease and flexibility in guiding economic growth while maintaining the vision of a New England Village.

FISCAL RESOURCES AND GRANTS MANAGEMENT

The Town of Westborough's annual operating budget is approximately \$120 million, with a dedicated budget for economic development efforts. Additionally, the Town recently received an allocation from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to support COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. The Town of Westborough maintains personnel skilled in grant writing (e.g., Economic Development Coordinator) who can support applications to access funding needed to implement the projects outlined herein. Additionally, the Town is currently hiring a Chief Procurement Officer/Grant Administrator to further assist municipal departments in grant writing and procurement. Local businesses have indicated an interest in financial support to recover from the impacts of COVID-19. In the business survey, over 30% of respondents expressed an interest in financing opportunities that may be used for storefront or facade improvements or other uses.

Breakdown of Base Zoning Districts



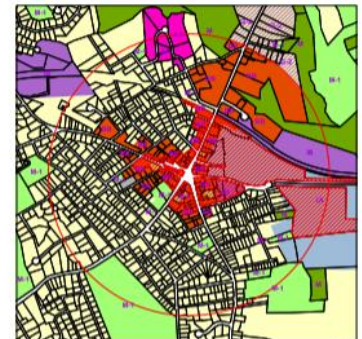
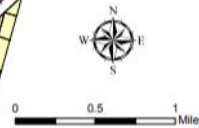
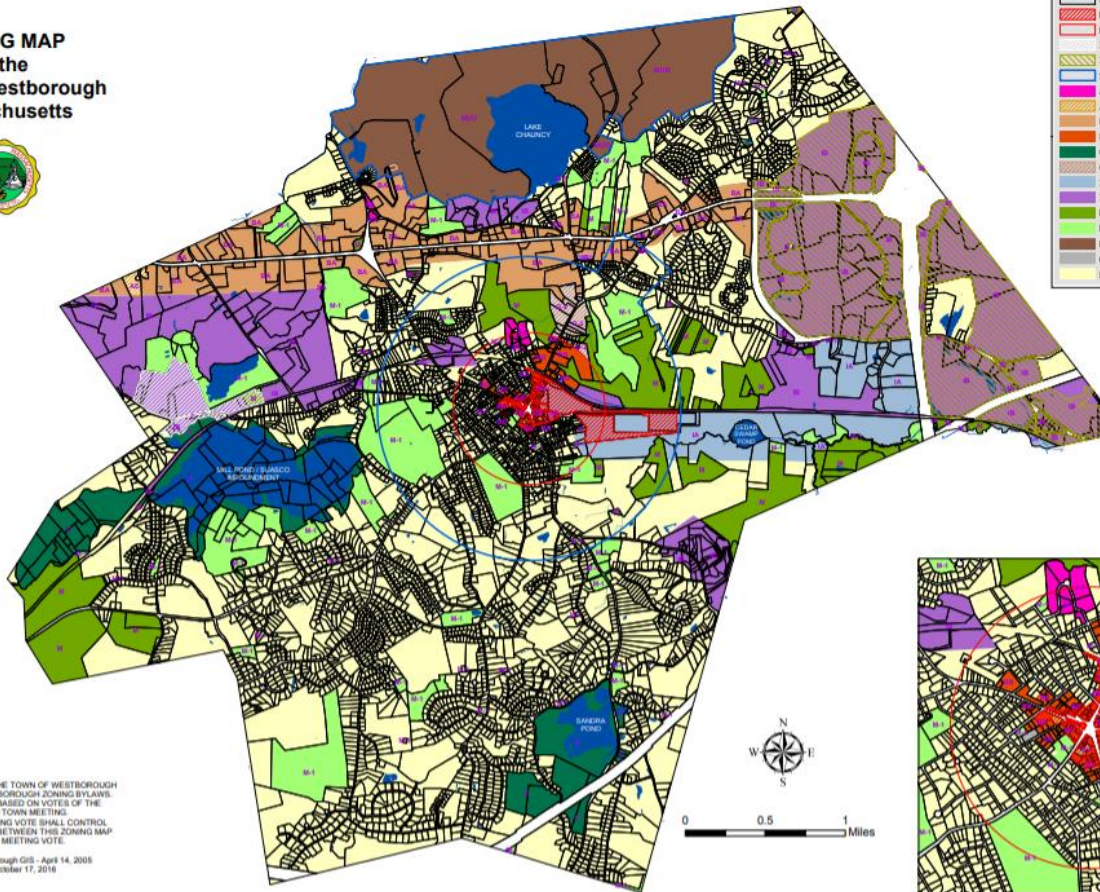
Source: Westborough 2020 Master Plan Draft

ZONING MAP of the Town of Westborough Massachusetts



Parcels
Downtown Planning Overlay
Downtown Business District
IC Overlay District
ID Overlay District
Senior Living Overlay
AA Apartment, Garden
AE Adult Entertainment
BA Business, Highway
BB Business, Downtown
C Conservation
G-2 Gateway 2
IA Industrial A
IB Industrial B
N State Owned
N-1 Town Owned
MUD Mixed Use District
OTH All other Zones
R Residential, Single

OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE TOWN OF WESTBOROUGH
UNDER 2120 OF THE WESTBOROUGH ZONING BYLAWS.
THIS MAP IS COMPILED BASED ON VOTES OF THE
WESTBOROUGH TOWN MEETING.
THE ACTUAL TOWN MEETING VOTE SHALL CONTROL
AS TO ANY DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THIS ZONING MAP
AND THE TOWN MEETING VOTE.
Map created by Westborough GIS - April 14, 2005
Map revised October 17, 2016



Zoning Map of Westborough Source: Town Website

Further impeding economic growth, the Study Area does not have a business management entity (e.g., business improvement district [BID]) to support businesses; nearly 76% of business survey respondents expressed an interest in establishing such a group. However, the establishment of a BID has a contentious history in the community. While there is broad agreement on the benefits of a district management entity, BIDs historically cause concern among business owners due to their financial direct impact.

Additionally, the Study Area contains Historical Districts, National Register Properties, and the Design Review Board Area that constrain the type of uses and improvements to parcels and buildings, respectively. Establishing clarity in the purpose and process of zoning and local regulations can better support attracting new businesses and guiding existing businesses to ensure efficient operation and long-term growth.

STRONG REGIONAL PARTNERS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Westborough is a member of the Corridor/495 Regional Chamber of Commerce and the MetroWest Chamber of Commerce, groups dedicated to advocating for and supporting businesses in Central Massachusetts. The Corridor/495 Regional Chamber services 66 communities and provides advocacy and support for these businesses by offering networking events, free professional and business training, business identity groups (e.g., Young Professionals Group, Women Professional Networking group), and marketing and advertising opportunities. Meanwhile, the MetroWest Chamber of Commerce, which services over 20 communities in the “Greater MetroWest” suburbs of Boston, MA, focuses on local community engagement, networking, and increased visibility for businesses.

Additionally, Westborough is a member of the CMRPC, a planning body for the Central Massachusetts region. CMRPC writes plans to prepare for and address regional issues, including transportation access, land use, community development, and homeland security. They also offer economic development planning and support services, including:

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS);
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis;
- Zoning bylaw review;
- Storefront and facade improvement programs; and
- Wayfinding and signage analysis.

Finally, Westborough businesses are supported by the 495/MetroWest Partnership. The 495/MetroWest Partnership facilitates collaboration among businesses, municipal governments, and other community stakeholders to foster sustainable economic growth and development across jurisdictional boundaries. The key priorities of the Partnership are transportation, energy and sustainable development, water resources, and housing. The 495/MetroWest Partnership manages the Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO), that Westborough is a member of, and provides support to businesses accessing resources from the Commonwealth.



Regional entities that support Westborough. Sources: [CMRPC](#), [495/MetroWest Partnership](#), [Corridor/495 Regional Chamber](#), and [MetroWest Chamber of Commerce](#).

CIVIC GROUPS

Rotary Club of Westborough
Westborough Lions Club
Westborough Historical Society
Westborough Garden Club
Westborough Spirit Committee
Westborough Civic Club
Knights of Columbus
Westborough

TOWN RESOURCES

Economic Development
Coordinator & EDC
Town Manager
Town Council
Building Department
Zoning Board of Appeals
Historical Commission
Town Planner & Planning Board
Westborough TV

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Westborough Cultural Council
Westborough Diversity and
Inclusion Committee
Westborough Public Library
Westborough Interfaith
Association
Boroughs Family Branch YMCA

Westborough Economic Recovery

REGIONAL RESOURCES

Corridor/495 Regional Chamber of Commerce
MetroWest Chamber of Commerce
495/MetroWest Partnership
Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
MetroWest Visitors Bureau

STATE RESOURCES

MA Department of Housing and Community
Development
MassDevelopment
MA Office of Business Development
MA Growth Capital Corporation
MassEcon
MassHire
MA Life Sciences Center

There are many organizations in Westborough who are dedicated to supporting the community by addressing various challenges. A sample of these organizations is included in the graphic above, categorized as state resources, regional resources, other local resources, civic groups, and cultural institutions. These entities will be key supporters in the implementation and maintenance of the RRP projects. They can also help address any barriers to community engagement by leveraging their networks to encourage Westborough residents to participate and establish trust as community leaders.

Project Recommendations

Create an Outdoor Dining Strategy and Toolkit

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Town of Westborough
Origin	Lead: Town Council, Westborough EDC Support: Building Department
Budget	 Low Budget (Less than \$50,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (Less than 5 years)
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Restaurant and retail businesses retention rates (i.e., how many can stay open during various phases and resurgences during the pandemic); The number of new outdoor dining and/or retail spots created
Partners & Resources	Corridor 4/495 Chamber of Commerce, MetroWest Chamber of Commerce, Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC), Board of Health, MA Restaurant Association, Building Commissioner

Key Performance Indicators (continued)

- The number of new restaurants that open and are in business one year and two years out.
- Results of the business survey indicating improvement in sales and revenue (or not).
- The number of social media impressions of dining and retail spots.
- Count of applicants and success rate of applications.

Partners (continued)

- Local artists/arts and cultural organizations
- Fire Chief
- DPW
- Latin American Businesses Organization (LABO)



Improvise the use of extra space for outdoor dining purposes. Source: [Google](#)

Budget (continued)

Costs are low and include dedicated municipal staff time or consultant time to determine needed resources, make decisions, instigate necessary changes, and provide clear and concise guidelines and requirements to businesses.

Additional costs include improvements to online permitting capabilities, marketing the program to businesses, instituting a bulk purchasing program, or other program elements.

Funding Sources:

- [Massachusetts Department of Transportation \(MassDOT\) Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program](#)
 - Accepting new applications beginning January 2022
 - Grants range from \$5k to \$200k
- [MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program](#)
- [Urban Agenda Grant Program](#)
- [Massachusetts Downtown Initiative \(MDI\) Technical Assistance Grant](#)
- [Community Change Grant](#)
- [Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation Grants and Loans](#)
- [Sponsorships from Local Businesses](#)

Timeframe (continued)

The timeframe is estimated to be from 3 – 6 months for most elements of this project, with additional time potentially needed to conduct outreach and education prior to attempting any permanent zoning bylaw changes that are relevant.

The timeframe for permanent changes will also depend on the continuation or termination of the temporary loosening of State permitting requirements in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Westborough's project timing will hinge on the need to change zoning bylaws; if changes are required, they cannot be enacted until the next Town Meeting in March 2022.

Phasing Recommendations:

- Weeks 1 – 4: Needs assessment, create a task force or working group
- Weeks 5 – 8: Research information on focus areas for the program (look at examples in the attached Toolkit)
- Weeks 9 – 12: Research information (costs incurred by Westborough, bulk purchasing capability), write up draft regulations, prepare educational materials and presentations for relevant boards, commissions, the public, and businesses, and conduct outreach
- Weeks 13 – 24 (or longer): Institute changes, obtain agreement on concepts, bylaw votes

Risks (continued)

Risks are low for this project and include building political will, weighing the cost vs. benefit of the program, and any financial costs the municipality wishes to incur to support businesses (e.g., lower permit fees, covering the cost of bulk purchases, consultant fees).

Some risks in the program are outside of Westborough's purview. ABCC regulation on liquor and licensing is dependent on the State and may impact the outdoor dining regulations in the long term. The Massachusetts Package Store Association has been reluctant to support the expansion of liquor licenses to outdoor servicing, creating another bottleneck.

Any permanent installations must comply with Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) regulations for accessibility. This may increase the cost of the program and make it less flexible. Please see the RRP Outdoor Dining and Retail Toolkit.

Finally, if parking spaces are required for outdoor dining infrastructure, then there might be pushback from the downtown businesses that are not restaurants and perceive on-street parking as critical to their business.



Utilize sidewalk space for outdoor dining purposes. Source: [Mass Live](#)



Increase Outdoor Dining and Safe Bike/Pedestrian Connections

Provided by CME Consultant

Created by CME Consultant



Location: North and South Pleasant Streets, Town of Amherst, Massachusetts

Best Practice: Increase Outdoor Dining and Safe Bike/Pedestrian Connections

Amherst, MA

The project focused on a group of solutions that, together, facilitated socially-distanced outdoor dining and extended business activity into the evening and cooler months, increased space for those walking and biking in downtown, and enhanced the experience of transit riders during the colder months. The key project elements included: installing expanded on-street dining areas and designated rideshare/pick-up areas by removing on-street parking; adding propane heating towers for diners; preservation of bicycle facilities by removing a turn lane; adding detectable warning surfaces for crosswalk ramps; adding new picnic tables in the Town Common; adding new pedestrian-scale streetlights; and installing heated bus shelters at two downtown stops.

Diagnostic



Utilize extra space (i.e., parklets) for outdoor dining use. Source: Public Realm Compendium

The restrictions on indoor dining during COVID-19 caused restaurants to focus on takeout and outdoor dining to remain in business. The Commonwealth temporarily loosened several permitting requirements for outdoor dining, and municipalities streamlined their local permitting processes to allow businesses to quickly implement these changes. Westborough implemented an outdoor dining and alcohol temporary regulation to allow local restaurants to adapt quickly to outdoor dining protocols. Improved coordination between the Building Commissioner, the Board of Health, and the Fire Chief allowed restaurants to quickly implement an outdoor dining set-up. The Town Council also met almost weekly to approve applications for alteration of premises, allowing restaurants to serve alcohol outdoors.

Despite these efforts, businesses and community members expressed that not all restaurants benefited from Westborough's outdoor dining strategy. Some restaurants were inhibited by the lack of adequate space, inability to obtain materials, or the complexity of the requirements. One business owner mentioned that the outdoor dining installations of their neighbors negatively impacted the visibility of their business, highlighting how a comprehensive guidance is required. Nearly 85% of business survey respondents indicated that expanded opportunities for outdoor dining and retail are important. Prior to making permanent investments in construction, equipment, and furniture, businesses need consistent bylaws and regulations to refer to, including simplified outdoor dining requirements and permitting, clear regulations and shortened review and permitting timelines, and assistance with design elements.

Action Item

Rapid Recovery Plan

Outdoor Dining/Retail Community Toolkit

A guide for communities seeking to assist business owners in creating outdoor dining and retail options



September 2021



Outdoor Dining/Retail Toolkit created for the RRP Program. The toolkit can be found in the Appendix.

The RRP Outdoor Dining/Retail Toolkit (see Appendix) will assist municipalities in determining how to maintain and expand upon outdoor dining and retail in their community. The toolkit offers project examples of best practices, space guidelines that adhere to ADA requirements and recommended strategies, and general guidance on the facilitation of permanent outdoor dining regulations. The Outdoor Dining Strategy will adapt the toolkit to meet the specific needs of Westborough's business community.

The project will begin with assessing the current state of outdoor dining and/or retail programs, which will be conducted by a Task Force composed of public sector and the private sector representatives. The Task Force will review the Town's draft sidewalk dining policy and existing permit for temporary outdoor dining installations and compare them to the best practices in the RRP Outdoor Dining/Retail Toolkit. The conclusions of this review will lead to a permanent policy that enables outdoor dining in the sidewalk or right of way for businesses in urban areas (i.e., the Downtown Business District), which will likely require a zoning change to be approved during Westborough's Town Meeting in March 2022. If the proposed policy will require any changes to on-street parking spaces, Westborough will consider implementing a pilot program (e.g., weekends only or one month only) before making the change permanent. Westborough may also consider bulk purchasing programs or infrastructure grants to help restaurants to take advantage of the program.

Process

Phase 1: Initial Assessment

- Conduct an internal needs assessment by reviewing the Toolkit, conducting an internal meeting with the Town Planner, Department of Public Works (DPW), Board of Health, Fire Department, Police Department, and others, about the current state of outdoor dining and/or retail, and gather feedback on the effectiveness and challenges with the current status.
- Gather feedback from businesses about their needs and feedback on how any current program is going (what works/what does not) using one or more of the following:
 - Conduct focus group(s)
 - Issue online survey
 - Conduct a larger meeting
- From internal meetings and business surveys, discuss the opportunity and geography for making the program permanent. The Downtown Business District (zoned BB) is the suggested geography.
- Assign a Task Force or Working Group representative as a liaison for the participating businesses in the Downtown Business District to support the Outdoor Dining/Retail program. Suggested members include:
 - Town Planner or Economic Development staff, DPW, Recreations Department, Board of Health
 - Business district representatives (Community Advocate, 9/495 Corridor Chamber of Commerce, MA Restaurant Association)
 - Business representatives
 - Others as needed
- Set an overall schedule for this project and regular meeting dates.
- Create a presentation template to use during the project including:
 - History of what municipality has done to support outdoor dining/retail during the pandemic
 - The rationale for current efforts



Outdoor Dining in Massachusetts. Source: Google

Questions to Ask Businesses

What is your desire for outdoor winter dining?

What type of storage challenges may you encounter for winter dining equipment?

Do you have any feedback on the permitting process for outdoor dining?

Are you interested in bulk purchasing and/or financial assistance to support outdoor dining?

Are you interested in participating in a pilot program for outdoor dining?

What is your staffing capacity for set-up/take-down on a regular basis?

Process (continued)

Phase 2: Analysis

- Assess Westborough's existing temporary outdoor dining/retail program, looking for gaps based on business feedback from Phase 1, the *RRP Outdoor Dining/Retail Toolkit*, and sample policies from other communities.
 - Create a summary of findings and possible to share with internal (i.e., municipal stakeholders) for feedback.
 - Create a series of recommendations from these case examples and best practices for inclusion in Westborough's permanent policy.
 - Syndicate recommendations with internal and business stakeholders, incorporating their input.
- Create a "skeleton" policy that highlights the key elements of the program.
- Conduct public meetings to get feedback on draft ideas.

Phase 3: Draft Requirements

- Revise program elements as necessary based on feedback.
- Write up draft regulations and requirements, including:
 - Draft permanent outdoor dining/retail policy
 - Draft permit application
 - Memo to municipal departments outlining process
- Prepare educational materials/presentations for boards/commissions/public/businesses.
- Conduct outreach.

Phase 4: Regulatory Changes

- Utilizing the information collected during Phases 1 - 3, identify any additional regulatory changes required to support outdoor dining.
- Confirm language regarding bylaw changes.
- In accordance with Town procedures, propose and pass targeted amendments to the outdoor dining regulations.



Streamline permitting processes to allow for extended use of shared streets for outdoor dining. Source: [Google](#)



Outdoor dining with planters and plastic barriers to buffer pedestrian crossing. Source: [Chicago Tribune](#)

Create a Comprehensive Wayfinding System

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Downtown Census Tract 7432 (e.g., West Main St., East Main St., and Bay State Commons)
Origin	Lead: Westborough EDC/Community Development Department and DPW
Budget	 Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (less than 5 years)
Risk	 Medium Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Public perception surveys, number of wayfinding signs implemented, increase in pedestrian traffic, increase in traffic in nearby ground floor businesses
Partners & Resources	Town Council (if on public roads), MassDOT (if on state roads), Community Organizations, Westborough Historical Commission, Design Review Board, Westborough Connects, Corridor 9/495 Chamber of Commerce, MetroWest Chamber of Commerce, MetroWest Tourism and Visitors Bureau, Westborough Planning Department, Westborough Building Department, Westborough DPW, Hoteliers, WRTA VIA ride share service, Local designers, Student support, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Westborough Cultural Council



Existing wayfinding signage in Westborough. Source: Town of Westborough

Budget (continued)

Costs depend on the material used in the pilot program, geographic extent of the wayfinding program, and number and type of signs used. Costs will include:

- Design
- Signage Family
- Installation
- Marketing
- Materials used for a pilot program

Funding Sources:

- [T-Mobile Hometown Grants](#)
- [Urban Agenda Grant Program](#)
- [MDI Technical Assistance Grant](#)
- [MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program](#)
 - Accepting new applications beginning January 2022
 - Grants range from \$5k to \$200k
- [U.S. Economic Development Administration \(EDA\) Travel Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation Grant](#)
- [Community Change Grant](#)

Risk (continued)

It can be difficult to implement temporary programs because of concerns about circumventing zoning, capital expenditures for public improvements, and overall resident concerns about the change in the downtown and potential opportunities for outsiders to alter the character of the community.

Potential risks to this project also include signage bylaws, permitting challenges, and relatively high costs associated with the project.

Diagnostic

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the customer base of the Study Area. Less people occupy Westborough's office parks at the intersection of Rt. 9 and I-495, which were previously the primary patrons of downtown businesses. Nearly 80% of respondents to the business survey experienced fewer customer visits since the onset of COVID-19 compared to previous years. Currently, the downtown area lacks the infrastructure to direct unfamiliar customers to local businesses and other relevant locations. For example, a recent parking study concluded that despite the perception of limited parking in the downtown area, there is a wide availability of parking that is underutilized. To address this challenge, the report recommended that the community install wayfinding signage to direct patrons to available parking spaces. During the site visit conducted in the diagnostic phase, Westborough scored a 'C' for wayfinding, suggesting economic recovery could be helped by improved wayfinding infrastructure. Multiple community stakeholders similarly identified the need for wayfinding to highlight Westborough's many cultural, historical, and commercial assets. Therefore, the downtown will implement key wayfinding signage to adapt to the changing customer base and better support local businesses.

Action Item

The project will create a comprehensive wayfinding system that directs people to parking, amenities, businesses, recreation, transit options, areas of significance, and the downtown area itself (e.g., Route 9, I-495). The wayfinding system will include stations and leaflets with a QR code to the downtown area, business directory, and other locations/amenities. The process incorporates gradual updates to the wayfinding system to ensure community buy-in, adequate funding, and long-term success.



Wayfinding on Fairmount Greenway

Provided by SME Consultant
Client: Open Collaborative

Location: Boston, MA



Best Practice: Wayfinding on Fairmount Greenway

Boston, MA

Boston's nine-mile Fairmount Greenway is a life-changing development, connecting Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, and Hyde Park with a route that links parks, green space, on-street bike routes, trails, transit stations, and city squares. Since 2008, the Greenway's 10-member task force have been working with the City of Boston and multiple other organizations on this long-term vision to connect the Fairmount communities to the heart of Boston. More than 1,000 residents have joined in planning, designing, and implementing Greenway park, streets, and greenway projects. In 2021, the Fairmount Greenway installed wayfinding signs to mark a 1.5-mile on-street route of the Fairmount Greenway in Dorchester near Four Corners and Codman Square. The wayfinding signs were updated to include key neighborhood destinations and mark the on-street route in February 2021. Twelve signs were printed on corrugated plastic and installed with residents in May 2021.

Process

Phase 1: Program Design

- Create a Wayfinding Working Group that includes members of the Planning Department, DPW, EDC, and the Board of Selectmen. Determine roles and responsibilities for members of the working group and establish a vision for the program.
 - A key decision is whether the Town should internally conduct a wayfinding design and implementation strategy or create a Request for Proposal (RFP) and select a vendor (typical wayfinding packages, which include research and design, cost ~\$50k. This also does not include fabrication and installation).
- Audit existing wayfinding signage to determine the location and extent. Coordinate with the Planning Department's Global Information System (GIS) team to develop a database that determines that type of wayfinding, the population it serves, and the institutions/locations it directs. Determining the decision points experienced by commuters (pedestrian, bicycle, public transit, and automotive) and matching those points with destinations and districts will support creating an effective wayfinding program.
 - Additionally, create a master list of Points of Interest (POI) and categorize or sort this list into groups based on the destination's popularity, type of destination, and distance from other POIs.
- Create a comprehensive map of Westborough that displays major routes for vehicles & pedestrians, POI's, town limits, parking & points of entry and exit. Using this map, the Working group can begin to decide where signage can be placed to help specific users find their way through the city/town. This will then inform the design of a wayfinding pilot program to test the locations and types of wayfinding signage based on the initial audit.
 - Sign location plan (where the signs are located)
 - Message schedule (what each sign says)
 - Signage family (what types of signs are used, including, district map, branding signs, banners, directional tools)
- Begin creating a wayfinding signage family to design wayfinding to accommodate specific Westborough districts, their amenities, and the populations served (pedestrian, bicycle, automotive). Some sign examples include:
 - Directory sign: designed for pedestrians, this is placed in high pedestrian traffic situations, normally where most traffic originates. The sign includes a map outlining all POIs within a certain walking distance. A best practice is to indicate the amount of time it would take to walk to each destination, either in time or distance.
 - Vehicular directional signs: include large text and is meant to indicate the direction for destinations that influence wayfinding users that are driving vehicles. These signs should also be placed before users have to make turns in their journey—they should have enough time to interpret the signage, make decisions, and have time to correct their course before an intersection.
 - Highway Signage: includes signs to direct highway traffic, especially from Route 9. Signage on major highways can point potential visitors into the Town from the region. These signs require coordinating with the MassDOT office to identify permitting, design, and installation agreements and processes.
- Create a pilot program that utilizes existing street poles to attach signs. The initial low-cost program supports creating community buy-in and pilots the locations and direction of the wayfinding signage.
- Create an evaluation guide for the wayfinding program to monitor and evaluate the success of the program.
 - Incorporate QR codes into the temporary signage that link to a survey that asks questions about the efficacy of the signage and aspects of the program that will inform the formal signage and wayfinding program.

Process (continued)

Phase 2: Outreach and Coordination

- Draft a wayfinding outreach information document and flyer
 - Detail the vision of the program to potential users, the design of the wayfinding and future iterations, and a map of the districts and points.
- Coordinate with Town agencies to streamline permitting and approval processes for installation of wayfinding points.
- Align the wayfinding pilot program with a Town event and use the location, partners, and details of the event as possible wayfinding content.

Phase 3: Program Implementation

- Implement the wayfinding pilot program to test the locations and types of wayfinding signage based on the initial audit.
 - Use existing poles and infrastructure to attach temporary wayfinding signage.
 - Acquire materials for installation (tape, zip ties).
 - Design and print weather-proof wayfinding signage.
- Evaluate the success of the wayfinding pilot program using community surveys and results from the QR codes.
- Use the evaluation information to finalize the formal wayfinding package and the required elements.
 - Sign location plan (where the signs are located)
 - Message schedule (what each sign says)
 - Signage family (what types of signs are used, including, district map, branding signs, banners, directional tools)
- Determine the installation process by creating a prioritization plan and specification package.
 - Design/Build: Determine if the Town will solicit a private vendor for creation. Two suggested partners are the Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School (AVRTHS) and MassCor, a division of the Massachusetts Department of Corrections. Priority should be given to the AVRTHS to promote the trade school. Additionally, locally sourced talent and partnerships will support the community's support of the process.
 - Installation: Determine installation needs for the wayfinding signage (right of way, concrete base, existing or new pole). Additionally, identify the installation lead, whether it is a private vendor or the DPW.
- Create a specifications package for each wayfinding sign so vendors (AVRTHS, MassCor, or others) can review and cost proposals.
- Finalize the contract with the vendor and coordinate the time frame for design, fabrication, and installation.



Materials from the Fairmount Greenway wayfinding system. Source: Best Practice Compendiums

Develop a Mobility Strategy

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Downtown Census Tract 7432 (e.g., West Main St., South Street)
Origin	Lead: Planning Department Support: EDC, DPW
Budget	 Low Budget (Less than \$50,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (Less than 5 years)
Risk	 Medium Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Observed increase in the use of nearby municipal parking; Increase in pedestrian/bicycle traffic; Increase in traffic to nearby ground floor storefronts
Partners & Resources	Active Transport and Safety Committee, Fire Department, Police Department, DPW, Town Council, VIA and WRTA, Rotary Club of Westborough, Local businesses and artists

Diagnostic

Westborough's downtown is focused on a rotary where several roads converge. The rotary is difficult for drivers to navigate due to the large volume of vehicles and angled, curbside parking within and on the approaches to the roundabout. These parking spaces are perceived as essential to support local retail businesses, despite the two municipal parking lots in the commercial center. A majority of community stakeholders voiced how the roundabout poses a danger to pedestrians and cyclists, including one stakeholder who characterized the rotary as a "death trap." The resulting downtown area is unwalkable and encourages auto-centric, single-stop shopping. Improving the mobility for pedestrians and cyclists in downtown Westborough is an essential to supporting businesses recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

Many of Westborough's planning documents, including the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, the 2020 Master Planning Process, the 2018 Strategic Plan, 2021 Climate Action Plan Final Draft, and the 2020 Proposed Downtown Overlay District, emphasize the importance of implementing interventions to increase walkability in Westborough. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic increased the use of non-vehicle transportation by residents. Westborough experienced a 15.7% increase in pedestrian activity according to MassDOT's Mobility Dashboard. communities across the Commonwealth to rethink commercial corridors and adapt to pedestrian and bicycle traffic. In the business survey, more than a fifth of respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the condition of public spaces, streets, sidewalks, and nearly two-thirds of respondents indicated that improvements in streetscapes, sidewalks, safety, and cleanliness are important to their recovery. By adapting the downtown to become more accommodating for pedestrians, Westborough can support the changing behavior of local businesses' customer base.

Action Item

The Town will develop a temporary pilot project that would replace a portion of the existing angled curbside parking with pedestrian-friendly amenities, including seating, shade, and parklets. The improvements will expand the range of the customer base by creating a comfortable environment to drive pedestrian traffic to ground floor commercial businesses. The pilot project will include a pre-and post-implementation study, wayfinding signage, and possible curb extension at an existing mid-block crossing to provide better pedestrian access to a nearby underused municipal parking.



Sample locations of the mobility strategy actions. Source: Subject Matter Expert

Process

Phase 1: Establish the Planning Process

- Establish a steering committee composed of representatives from the DPW, EDC, the Building Department, the Planning Department, and at least one downtown business representative. Determine roles and responsibilities of the group. Suggested roles include:
 - DPW: Procurement of materials, implementation and maintenance (e.g., set-up, take-down, snow removal strategy, weather protection, repair and replacement) of the mobility strategy pilot program, and technical expertise.
 - EDC: Community and stakeholder outreach lead, as well as general coordinator and the monitoring and evaluation entity.
 - Building: Technical expertise on any temporary or permanent structures; advise on any zoning relief or permits required.
 - Planning: Design of the program including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure layout and locations, material selection, and sketch plans/alternative treatments.
- Align key timelines for the planning process, and create a work plan from this to ensure that the project stays on track.
- Propose a general concept plan for the vision of the mobility strategy to formalize the project's goals and guide the visioning process with the community.
 - The concept plan will clearly articulate project interventions, desired outcomes, schedule, and deliverables, including the demonstration project, a permanent extension, and any long-range studies.
 - The concept plan may include an initial layout of the pilot demonstration project. The attached graphic is an inspiration for the first draft, but is not a prescriptive recommendation on what the demonstration project should include or where infrastructure might be placed. More community input will be required to iterate and finalize.
 - The general concept plan will finalize KPIs to evaluate the pilot project.
- Share this initial concept plan with business stakeholders in the immediate vicinity of the proposed project to get their feedback and make any recommended changes.
- Share the initial concept plan at a "Business One-Stop" meeting to get feedback from other departments on processes/requirements outside of the core planning group's expertise.
- Conduct a study of the pedestrian environment in the vicinity of the roundabout to establish existing conditions and to study existing parking, cycling, and pedestrian patterns. This assessment can be conducted by a Town staff member by following best practices established by the Federal Highway Administration. Elements of the study include:
 - Pedestrian/Bicycle: audit of all pedestrian and bike infrastructure in the downtown to determine gaps in amenities (e.g., benches, trash cans, art installations, bus shelters, crosswalks, bike lanes). Additionally, conduct the pedestrian count and survey to observe traffic, pain points, wait times, and other information from the community.
 - Automobile: Conduct a car count and survey to observe traffic, pain points, wait times, and other information concerning traffic flow in the Study Area (AADT and information from the parking study).
- Store information in a spreadsheet and transfer the data to GIS to serve as a database/map of the existing conditions.

Process (continued)

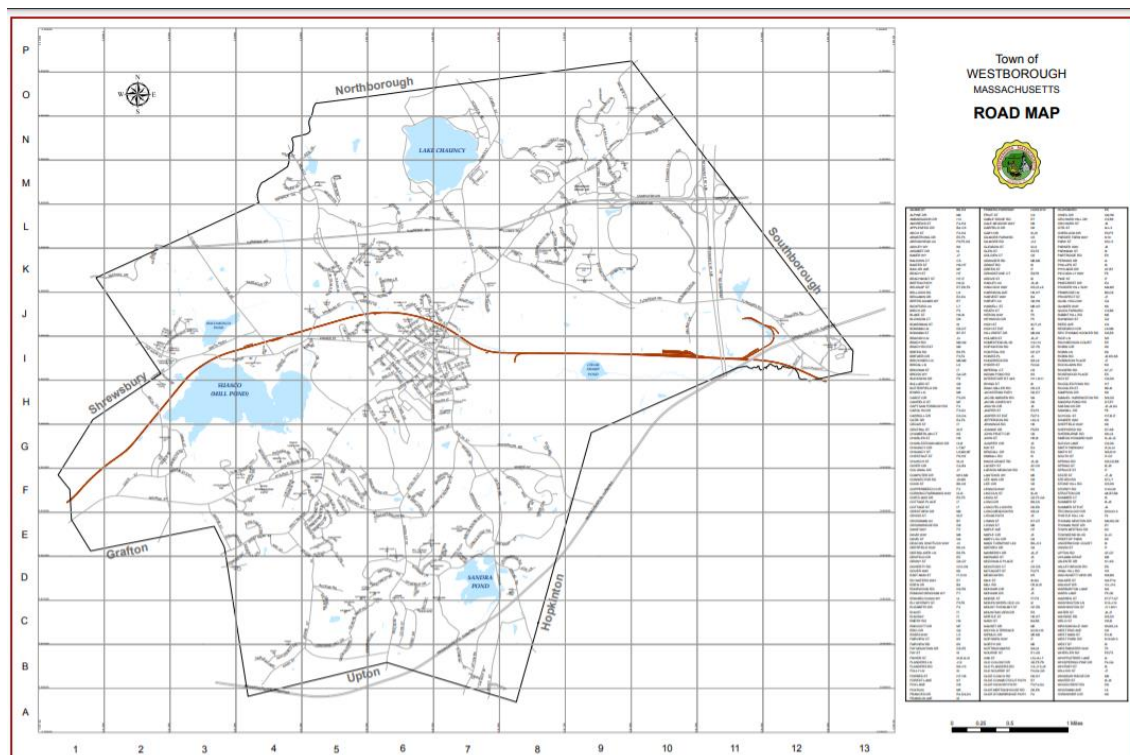
- Create a community stakeholder engagement strategy to dictate the approach to business and greater community outreach.
 - Coordinate with businesses and property owners in the area to discuss the benefits of the mobility program.
 - Interface with residents to understand their needs and expectations for improved walkability/bikeability in the downtown area. This may be achieved by disseminating a survey to the community (within and outside the Study Area because all will access the downtown) or a set of 2-3 public meetings or workshops. Consider using digital and physical survey formats to increase reach. Example questions are below:
 - What is your current comfort level with walking/biking downtown?
 - What is the main deterrent from walking/biking more often?
 - What type of amenities would inspire you to walk/bike downtown?
 - Would [amenity] encourage you to walk/bike downtown more than driving?
 - What is the timeframe you envision for having a pilot program implemented?
 - Translate the findings from the public engagement process into key decisions for the mobility strategy and present the findings to the public and municipal staff.
- Create a Pilot Program Improvement Plan that lists the performance indicators, means of collection, and mode of analysis to ensure the successes of the program are based on empirics.
- Coordinate with DPW to conduct a speed study before implementation. Add the study's analysis into the Pilot Program Improvement Plan.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	MEANS OF CAPTURE	MODE OF ANALYSIS	OWNER
Traffic Speed	Speed Study	Before and After	DPW
Pedestrian Count	On-Site Survey/Hand Count	Before and After	Planning
Public Perception	Online Perception Survey, Open Meetings, Workshops, or Interviews	Before and After Qualitative Study	EDC
VIA/WRTA Ridership	Remote Data Collection	Trends, Before and After	Planning

Process (continued)

Phase 2: Implement a Pilot Program

- Finalize the layout and components of the pilot program, building upon the initial layout proposed in the first phase after incorporating feedback solicited from the community.
- Finalize the layout of the mobility strategy pilot program, ensuring that plans align with ADA accessibility, emergency vehicle access, and traffic engineering standards. Leverage expertise from the core planning group in this decision-making.
- Determine the location of the pilot program. Suggested pilot program locations include West Main Street and South Street. Please note that some of the businesses along South Street pushed back on the idea of removing parking spaces, so West Main Street may be preferable.
 - W Main Street
 - Advantages: Synergy with restaurants moving into that area and other active uses (e.g., Canvas n' Cup); Pedestrian access to the municipal lot behind Town Hall; opportunity to activate the alleyway connecting West Main Street to the municipal lot.
 - Disadvantages: Narrower right of way than on South Street; little business activity on side of West Main Street opposite Town Hall; no automotive access to the municipal lot from West Main Street.
 - South Street
 - Advantages: Synergy with many restaurants on South Street (e.g., Sake Hana, South Street Diner, Thai Minal); wider right of way than on West Main Street; adjacent to the municipal lot on South Street.
 - Disadvantages: Some businesses on South Street (i.e., Red Barn) have discouraged taking away parking spaces in favor of parklets; less opportunity to convert the municipally-owned alleyway next to Town Hall into an active space.
- Coordinate with VIA and the Western Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) to determine the location of VIA pick-up/drop-off zones in the downtown area.
- Consider including marketing material to promote alternative modes of transit as a viable option for Westborough.



Westborough Road Map. Source: [Google](#)

Process (continued)

- After the location and high-level layout has been finalized, align on what public realm infrastructure should be included in the pilot to attract and retain pedestrians and cyclists and its location. Items to implement may include benches, tables, umbrellas, planters, street gardens, art installations, water fountains, bicycle lock stations, and trash and recycling stations. This should be informed by the community outreach and existing conditions survey conducted in the first phase.
- Before any layout is finalized, make sure to confirm support from any adjacent businesses.
- Determine the type of materials needed for the pilot program. Items may include plastic jersey barriers, planters, haystacks, trash cans, tables, chairs, bike racks, bike locks, temporary bike lanes (i.e., cones and caution tape), temporary speed humps, and decorations.
 - Leverage expertise from the Building Department and DPW in this decision-making.
 - Decide the responsible party for procuring specific materials. Coordinate with private and nonprofit entities to determine what materials can be leased or donated.
 - Coordinate with the Westborough Cultural Council and other arts organizations to coordinate art installations and/or painting some of the materials and locations.
 - Coordinate with DPW to determine storage requirements for the pilot program's materials. Identify if any publicly-owned storage facility or general land can be used to store the equipment. If no public option is available, determine if a lease agreement with a private entity to use a facility or land for storage.
- Encourage the Community Development Director to advise on the process to authorize temporary changes in parking alignment. In coordination with the Town Council advocate for a permanent regulatory method to update the parking alignment to ensure the long-term success of the program. The parking realignment should alter Westborough's 70-foot street width to accommodate:
 - 15' parklet
 - 8' bike lane
 - 3' buffer
 - 11' travel lane (one direction)
 - 11' travel lane (other direction)
 - 3' buffer
 - 8' bike lane
 - 15' parklet

Town of Westborough Development Guidebook



A Guide to the Review and Approval Process for Development in Westborough

RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE SUBDIVISION OF LAND IN WESTBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS

ADOPTED BY THE WESTBOROUGH PLANNING BOARD

ON DECEMBER 12, 1990

REVISED:

June 19, 1991

February 10, 1993

January 19, 1994

November 15, 1995

February 5, 1997

November 28, 2000

Review local bylaws, rules, and regulations on zoning and land development. Source: Town of Westborough

Process (continued)

- Determine parklet uses outside of local outdoor dining options in front of restaurants. For example, consider leveraging the municipally-owned alleyway between 30-32 W Main Street and Westborough Town Hall. Differing parklet uses may require specific materials. All parklet designs should be communicated and inspected by the Westborough Fire Department to ensure public safety. Potential parklet uses may include:
 - Playground for children. Materials include AstroTurf, sandbox, outdoor play furniture, and children sized public furniture
 - Outdoor Library for leisure, conversation, programming, and book club. Materials may include books, shelving, seating, and podium. If this option is selected, consider partnering with the Westborough Public Library.
 - Bicycle Maintenance Station operated by a local business. Materials may include trash and recycling for bicycle material.
 - Coordinate with the business owners of Landry's Bicycles and Frank's Bicycle Barn to discuss opportunities for partnership. Engagement with these two businesses may include donating bicycle tools, providing maintenance and tune-ups at specific times during the day, and overall bicycle advocacy. Determine if a specific parklet location should be assigned for bike repair and instruction.
 - Arts Hub for displaying and practicing various art forms. Materials may be provided by local artists. The Town may need to operate trash and recycling.
 - Rain Garden parklet. Materials include soil, plants, liners, and other natural materials to help absorb water, cool temperatures, clean the air, promote biodiversity, and beautify neighborhoods.
 - Greenhouses. Materials include a plastic overhead sheet, soil, plants, liners, and other natural materials.
 - General Parklet. Materials include street furniture, green infrastructure
 - Align all location decisions with Project 3: Wayfinding so that the two interventions can work in tandem to support the overall pedestrian experience downtown.
- Coordinate with DPW to install all the defined project components. Work on determining the schedule of the pilot program dates the pilot will be activated and dates the pilot will be demobilized.
 - Determine a volunteer base (Rotary Club members, High School students, or other civic organizations) to support DPW with installation and demobilization.
 - Create an installation and demobilization schedule that aligns with the pilot program timeframe. If the pilot program operates on weekends, decide when the installation and demobilization processes begin. If a longer-term pilot program (one week to one month), decide the date and time for installation/demobilization, and dates for maintaining the temporary equipment and materials.
 - Identify maintenance requirements (e.g., trash collection and removal, painting, plant watering and care) and determine whether the Town or the permit holder for the space is responsible for the maintenance.
- Implement a satisfaction survey and evaluation interviews during the pilot program to determine mid-program success.
 - What did you enjoy about the pilot program? What would you expand on?
 - What did you dislike about the pilot program? What would you change?
 - Were you more comfortable navigating downtown?
 - Were you more inclined to stay in the downtown area (leisurely)?
- Coordinate with Westborough TV and the Community Advocate to market and promote the pilot program. Additionally, display marketing material throughout the Study Area and within businesses.
- Consider partnering with local businesses (e.g., Canvas n' Cup, Board and Brush, Elsie Kaye Glassworks) or municipal and civic organizations (e.g., Westborough Public Schools, Rotary Club of Westborough) to host events to draw attention.

Process (continued)

Phase 3: Implement a Permanent Program

- Coordinate with the steering committee to conduct a post-pilot program evaluation. Using the data collected from the pedestrian and traffic studies, the surveys and interviews, and any additional data collected by businesses and transit agencies, develop a post-pilot picture to share with the community, municipal staff, and MassDOT as a means to transition the pilot program into a long-term, capital project.
 - Coordinate with other municipalities or the private business environment to determine if the materials bought for the program will be sold or donated to a specific entity. Additionally, Westborough can continue to store the materials to use for pilot programs at different locations in the community.
- Decide on how to transition the pilot program into an enduring mobility strategy. Prioritize interventions that will become permanent and determine their scheduling. It is suggested to implement interventions that require fewer funds and coordination with the state, such as public furniture and art installations.
 - Part of the effort includes conducting a broader study to create a long-range mobility plan (e.g., connecting Downtown Business District with MBTA, schools, recreational assets through circulation plans for bikes and pedestrians). Discuss the long-term vision with the Planning Department and DPW to ensure the transition aligns with the 2020 Master Plan transportation vision and the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan.
- Determine the extent of the capital improvements and whether they require a Traffic Management Plan. The Traffic Management Plan will ensure proper flow of traffic through the construction area, so as not to disrupt the downtown business and commuter activity.
- Discuss redesigning the program for other locations in Westborough (e.g., shopping centers on Rt. 9).

Implement a Vacant Storefronts Program

Category	 Private Realm
Location	Downtown Census Tract 7432 (e.g., West Main St., East Main St., South Street)
Origin	Lead: Westborough EDC Support: Planning Board, Cultural Council
Budget	 Low Budget (Less than \$50,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (Less than 5 years)
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Number of businesses, entrepreneurs, and artists applied to the program; Reduction in time to fill vacancies; Reduction in storefront/ground floor vacancy rate, increased foot traffic to downtown; Number of activated vacant storefronts
Partners & Resources	EDC, Landlords, Real Estate Agents, Westborough Cultural Council, Town Departments (Planning, Building, Zoning Enforcement, Board of Health, Liquor Licensing)



Example of vacant storefronts that businesses can utilize for short- and long-term opportunities. Source: [Google](#)

Budget (continued)

Costs will include:

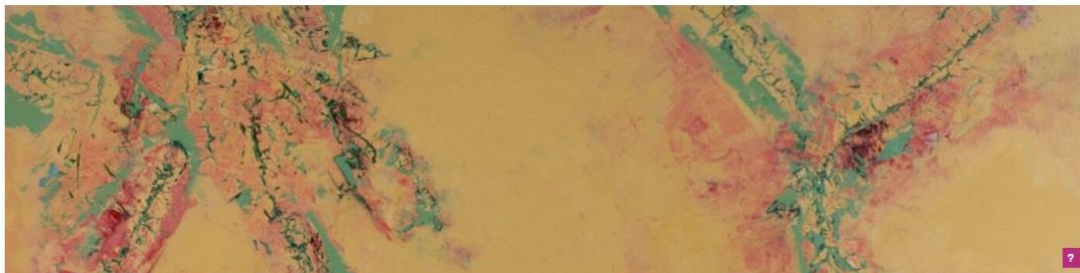
- Staff time to recruit uses, manage the program application, and coordinate with property owners, businesses, and the arts community.
- Marketing to highlight storefront program through social media, banners, Westborough TV, and other mediums (sidewalk signs, electronic signs, and flyers).
- Insurance costs if the Town decides to take a blanket policy for spaces.
- Materials used for the activation of the storefronts:
 - Arts activation: frames, wires, canvas, printing, lighting, and art name cards
 - Business activation: signage, tables, lighting, and other specific items to support retail or professional services
 - Event/Meeting space: chairs, tables, and lighting

Funding Sources include:

- Town of Westborough support for staff's time
- [Westborough Cultural Council LCC Grant Program](#)
 - Maximum award: \$10,000
 - Deadline: TBA
- [Massachusetts Office of Business Development \(MOBD\) Regional Pilot Grant Program](#)
- [T-Mobile Hometown Grants](#)

ChaShaMa

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[FAQ](#)
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Chashama helps create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive world by partnering with property owners to transform unused real estate. These spaces are used for artists, small businesses, and for free community-centric art classes.

Creating short term business activations in vacant spaces will help businesses use their temporary spaces as a gateway to establishing a more permanent space within their communities. Source: [Google](#)

Timeframe (continued)



Vacant storefronts can contribute to a lack of vibrancy in the Town's main centers. Source: Private Realm Compendiums

The program can be running in six months:

- Months 1-3: Identify potential tenants, contact landlords/property managers, assemble sample guidelines (e.g., lease, indemnity agreement, marketing commitment from tenants and landlords), and secure funding.
- Months 4-5: Move tenants into spaces, align with Project 5: Night Market and other Town events (e.g., farmers markets, holiday scroll) to create activity and raise the visibility of downtown and storefronts.
- Month 6: implement event plan. Evaluate success, plan moving forward.
- After 9 months: An evaluation should be done to judge foot traffic, survey existing businesses and vacant storefront tenants about changes in customers/business.

Risk (continued)



Art installations can be utilized to fill window spaces in empty storefronts. Source: Private Realm Compendiums

Risks are related to political and regulatory hurdles. It can be difficult to implement temporary programs because of concerns about circumventing zoning, landlord concerns regarding the lease and maintenance of spaces, and overall resident concerns about the change in the downtown and potential opportunities for outsiders to alter the character of the community.

The Downtown Business District requires a permit for almost all activities, creating a slow process that is not conducive to the tempo necessary for the temporary use of space. The permitting process may also be particularly challenging to navigate for informal users of business entities. Temporary uses may require zoning changes which would delay implementation and create uncertainty (requires planning board public hearing/town meeting and 2/3 approval). Rules of assembly may create specific zoning and building code hurdles if spaces will be used for gatherings, crafts, or artists. Additionally, Westborough signage bylaws may limit the type of marketing and promotion necessarily for the temporary spaces.

Landlords may worry about liability if something happens in their space (must be covered in the lease/use agreement; uses that are not consistent with the image or their goals for long-term tenants.) There is a challenge with determining who covers the cost of operating the space during the short-term lease (electricity, water, internet incurred by landlord or tenant) and if there is a possibility if the Town can subsidize the costs.

Diagnostic

COVID-19 caused many business closures, expanding the number of vacant spaces that existed prior to the pandemic. At the time of the diagnostic, Westborough had a 37% commercial vacancy rate and an 8% storefront vacancy rate. Vacant storefronts pose many challenges to the community, including disrupting the character of the district and potentially creating eyesores for customers. When marketing vacancies, landlords traditionally market the commercial space through window signs or advertisements, which further clutter the appearance of the district. In the past, Westborough's economic vitality was driven by patrons from office parks. However, with the uncertainty of when business and customer activity will "return to normal," Westborough will consider creative solutions to reimagining vacant space and attracting customers to the downtown area.

The availability of vacant space can be used to attract new businesses and diversify the tenant mix of Westborough. Business owners have emphasized a desire to attract new businesses, as 85% of the business survey respondents indicated that recruiting/attracting new business is important for the Town. Additionally, 70% of respondents believe renovating storefronts, improving streetscapes, and improving cleanliness are important to the economic recovery of the commercial area.

Action Item

The program will activate vacant storefronts through a combination of temporary art installations, temporary "pop-ups" for local entrepreneurs, and renderings of possible uses in windows. Establishing a vacant storefronts program in Westborough will address two major challenges identified by the community. First, it will increase the aesthetic appeal of the downtown and plazas in the Study Area. Second, it will create the opportunity for businesses, artists, and civic organizations to utilize available spaces at a discount. By creating opportunities to showcase the creativity and entrepreneurship of the community, Westborough will increase the diversity of their tenant mix, increase business offerings, and promote stability in the commercial rental market. These opportunities align with the goals of COVID-19 recovery, by attracting new and retaining customers in a comfortable pedestrian setting.

Process

Phase 1: Program Design

- Organize a Working Group for a Vacant Storefront Program including the Town Planner, 1-2 local real estate brokers, 1-2 property owners, an EDC representative, and a Corridor 9/495 Chamber representative (Town Planner to lead).
 - Determine if there is an existing entity (non-profit organization) that can serve as an independent body to:
 - Manage relationships with property owners (legal aspects)
 - Coordinate with the Town (regulatory aspects)
 - Oversee and manage insurance for all of the temporary projects
 - If no viable entity exists, consider the requirements for creating a new non-profit.
- Conduct an audit of existing storefront vacancies to create a database of available spaces in the target area of the Vacant Storefront Program.
- Coordinate with the Town Planner to discuss the type of temporary uses that do not require zoning amendments or variances. Coordinate with the Building Commissioner to determine potential building code hurdles.
- Develop a storefront typology using assessor data to create categories for storefront types. The categories should group storefronts based on window space, square footage, neighborhood, previous use, zoning/ variance requirements, and additional information to support coordinating the space with the activation use.
- Determine target market for temporary uses and align those uses with the storefront typology. Potential uses may include retail, art spaces, test kitchens, professional services, event space, local crafts, and art galleries.
- Create a Storefronts Landlords Database that tracks ownership of storefronts, contact information, and status of involvement in the program.
- Collect all necessary documentation that may be needed to ensure legal and contractual compliance, which may include:
 - Lease Indemnity Agreement: Ensures that tenants are not held responsible for personal injury or property damage on the leased property. Insurance: Provides coverage to the tenant for personal injury or property damage on the leased property.
 - Develop a memorandum of understanding for the Town and property owners to provide property owners with boilerplate temporary tenant agreement for their review, editing, and use, as desired.
 - Insurance: Provides coverage to the tenant for personal injury or property damage on the leased property.
 - Rolling 30-day licensing agreements: Creates short-term conditions so the programs are temporary.



Best Practice: Pop-Ups in the Retail Mix

Adams, MA

The project will attract small businesses to Adams that address local's day-to-day needs and provide amenities for visitors who are there to explore the region. To accomplish this, the project will build on local boosterism and capture residents' pride while identifying new and under-represented voices the Town may not have previously engaged. Years of disinvestment have led many to give up hope on Adams' potential to provide good local jobs. By bringing positive attention to Adams, the project hopes to re-inspire residents challenged by poverty. Pop-up stores, while unfamiliar, can build a following, so long as residents take an active role in choosing those selected and see their success as providing benefits to neighbors.

Pop-Ups in the Retail Mix

Provided by EDC Consultant
Adams, MA



Process (continued)

Phase 2: Outreach and Coordination

- Draft a Vacant Storefronts Program outreach information document or flyer for potential users and landlords, which may include:
 - User Outreach Document: Detail the vision of the program to potential users, including businesses, entrepreneurs, artists, and civic organizations about the opportunity of the program, types of spaces, legal information, financial information, and additional requirements for eligibility. Incorporate best-practice examples for reference.
 - Property Owner Outreach Document: Detail the vision of the program to property owners including the potential benefits the program will have on the commercial area, the possibility of future tenants, marketing of the space, and other additional selling points. Incorporate best-practice examples for reference.
- Begin a Landlord Outreach Campaign and reach out to landlords through cold calls, e-mails, and online and print publications (guidance document).
- Consult landlords on the development of guidance documents for the use of the space, including types of materials used, consent to alterations and repairs, location of installations, and expectations for vacating the space.
- Coordinate with Town agencies to streamline permit and approval processes for storefront improvements and alterations (Building Commissioner and Fire Department process for qualifying a space).

Phase 3: Program Implementation

- Design the Vacant Storefronts Pilot Program. Establish a timeframe for the pilot program, the number of participants and type of uses, the locations of the storefronts, the duration of occupancy (i.e., established timeframe or until a permanent tenant is found), the matchmaking process, and the marketing of the program.
- Begin a Vacant Storefronts Marketing Campaign by using the guidance documents, local media (e.g., the Community Advocate, Westborough TV), other press releases, social media, and the Town of Westborough's website to communicate the program.
- Align the Vacant Storefronts Program with the Night Market project recommendation to ensure increased foot traffic and publicity.
- Use Project 5: Night Market Program as an opportunity to gather feedback about the program to support marketing materials, identify gaps in retail and business services, evaluate overall impacts, and decide on the next steps for identifying new commercial tenants.
 - Potential survey questions include:
 - What did you enjoy about the Vacant Storefront program?
 - How did you hear about it?
 - What types of businesses or art installations do you want to see?
 - How do you feel about the program's impact on downtown?
 - Did you purchase anything?
 - What can be improved?
- Determine opportunities to transition from the pilot program into something longer term. Consider how pop-up users may become permanent tenants and provide the entrepreneurs with the technical assistance needed to make the transition.

Launch a Sign Improvement Campaign

Category	 Private Realm
Location	Downtown Business District
Origin	Lead: Building Department Support: Westborough EDC, Planning Department
Budget	 Low Budget (Less than \$50,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (Less than 5 years)
Risk	 Medium Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Number of participants in public meetings, Number of applicants and grant awardees, Number of projection signs installed, increased foot traffic to downtown businesses, average revenue increase for downtown businesses compared to 2019 levels
Partners & Resources	EDC, Building Department, Planning Department, Design Review Board, Historical Commission, Town Council, Property Owners/Landlords, Business Owners

Before



After

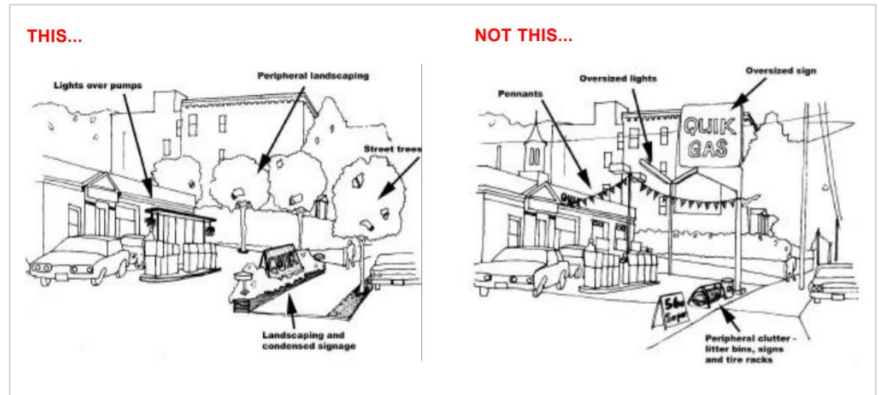


City of Everett Design Guidelines Rendering. Source: Best Practice Compendiums

Budget (continued)

The cost of the program may fluctuate depending on the number of matching grants awarded each year and the use of external consultants to support any further audit of sign regulations. Expected budget is approximately \$15,000. Funding sources include:

- [CMRPC Community Development and Planning Services](#)
- [T-Mobile Hometown Grants](#)
- [MOBD Regional Pilot Project Grant Program](#)
- [Community Planning Grant Program](#)
- Town of Westborough support for staff's time



Samples from the Guide to Sign and Façade Design by the Town of Brookline. Source: Town of Brookline

Risk (continued)

- Projection signs may not address the real issues that businesses have with local signage regulations.
- Some signage bylaws may not align with best practices.
- Sign bylaws may be unclear to the community, further complicating efforts to streamline signage.
- Business preferences for signage may not align with marketing and sales best practices.

Signs

Signs

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

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



Examples of City of Everett's Storefront Guideline Pages. Source: Best Practice Compendiums

Diagnostic

The sign improvement campaign will support businesses in improving their signage and facades to attract more customers to the downtown area. Community stakeholders noted that the business community perceives that “more is more” (i.e., more signs will attract more business), although this does not align with industry best practices. The sign improvement campaign will need to provide education regarding signage best practices in addition to funding resources. Businesses have indicated an interest in physical improvements to support economic recovery. Since 2019, 83% of respondents experienced a decrease in customers frequenting their business and 73% of respondents experienced a decrease in business revenue. Over one-third of respondents have experienced a decrease greater than 25%. Businesses survey respondents and community members alike indicated that programs providing direct support for signage changes were a priority for economic recovery.

Action Item

Program Components

The sign improvement campaign will provide impetus and access for business owners to update their signs and improve the overall economic vitality of Westborough. The program will consist of three main components:

- Amend the zoning bylaw to allow for projection signs in the Downtown Business District;
- Offer participating businesses matching funds to upgrade their signs; and
- Conduct an audit of signage and zoning regulations to assess further changes to align with signage best practices.

The sign improvement campaign will begin with the downtown businesses and then expand into the broader community in future iterations.

Awnings

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



City Ordinance/Regulation:

City Council Rule 74.8 further regulates awnings. Awning signs are also further regulated in City Ordinance Section 12A.



Awning Signs - Material

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

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



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



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

Examples of City of Everett's Storefront Guideline Pages. Source: Best Practice Compendiums

Action Item (continued)

Grants Administration

The administration of the matching grants will rely on obtaining a funding source, identifying a set of impartial program managers, evaluating grants, and marketing the program. The funding source selected for the program may evolve over time as the target areas expand. It is recommended that administered matching grants are a maximum of \$5,000 in value.

The program will require a few dedicated program managers (i.e., members of the Community Development Department and/or EDC) to establish and maintain the program and who can impartially evaluate applicants. The program managers will be responsible for establishing criteria for eligible businesses, developing a rubric to score and evaluate applications, and awarding grants. It is recommended that each program manager evaluate applications and then the averaged scores be used to determine grant awardees. In order to be eligible for a matching grant, the business's proposed signs must be in alignment with the Town's existing design guidelines.

Grant evaluations should be as transparent as possible to equitably administer the grants and establish confidence in the program. The program managers should be prepared to publish clear scoring guidelines for applications and to provide feedback to applicants who were not awarded grants. The program managers will also support the marketing and community engagement efforts associated with the program.

Community Engagement

The Best Practice Design Workshop in Phase 2 will be utilized to educate businesses about signage best practices and market the newly established sign improvement program. It is recommended that these outreach activities be conducted by an objective third-party expert who can focus on how signage changes will help businesses grow and attract customers, as well as market the program itself. Town staff who have a vested interest in the signage changes (e.g., Building Commissioner) should be available to answer questions and provide support during the workshop, but not facilitate the conversations.

The community engagement conducted under Phase 3 will focus on understanding signage challenges and will ask the community questions such as:

- What are the greatest regulatory challenges for signs?
- What does a perfect signage display look like at a business?
- Are you interested in changing the way signs are displayed in your business? If so, what would you like to change most?
- Are you interested in a sign improvement grant opportunity? If not, what might make you interested?

This research will direct the suggested additional changes to the signage bylaws.

Regulatory Updates

Throughout this effort, the program managers and engaged stakeholders may identify specific codes or regulations that should be altered to better align with best practices or more clearly reflect storefront criteria. Some potential changes that may be considered include creating greater allowances for projecting signs in the downtown area. The Building Commissioner should be engaged throughout the effort to discuss these potential areas of improvement and further refine related codes and regulations accordingly.

Process



Sample Design Guidelines for Display Windows from Manchester, CT. Source: Best Practice Compendium

Phase 1: Establish the Planning Process and Conduct Outreach

- Identify program managers who will be responsible for driving the initiation and maintenance of the sign improvement campaign.
- Review signage bylaws to confirm language for necessary changes regarding projection and A-frame sign allowances.
- In accordance with Town procedures, propose and pass targeted amendments to the signage bylaws.

Phase 2: Establish and Facilitate a Sign Improvement Program

- Identify a funding source for the grant program.
- Establish the structure of the Sign Improvement Program, including:
 - Criteria for businesses to be eligible to apply;
 - Amount and value of grants to be awarded;
 - Application collection system;
 - Rubric and method to score applications; and
 - Process to select and distribute awarded grants.
- Market the sign improvement program.
- Hold a Best Practice Workshop to educate businesses about signage best practices and market the application for sign improvement matching grants.
- Collect and evaluate applications according to the pre-established rubric.
- Select grant recipients and administer the grants.
- Monitor grant awardees progress until project completion.




Phase 3: Conduct a Pilot Program

- Collect feedback from the Sign Improvement Committee and pilot program participants to understand strengths and areas for improvements of signage bylaws and design guidelines.
- Identify business owners, Town staff, and key community members who have insight on the needs of local businesses to engage.
- Research best practices for signage in communities with qualities similar to Westborough.
- Hold community roundtables with businesses to identify perceptions of signage practices in Westborough and any solutions to address these issues.
- Utilizing information collected through the above community engagement, create an initial list of known challenges for business owners regarding signs (e.g., education about best practices, cost of signs, knowledge of bylaws, accessibility to information).
- Hire an external consultant to review the signage bylaws and identify particular areas for potential changes, specifically ways to address the list of known challenges and how to better align signage bylaws with best practices.
- Follow steps outlined in Phase 1, propose changes to signage bylaws.



Sample Design Guidelines for Awnings and Windows Manchester, CT. Source: Best Practice Compendium

Create an Online Business Directory

Category	 Revenue and Sales
Location	Town of Westborough
Origin	Lead: Town Council, Westborough EDC Support: Building Department
Budget	 Low Budget (Less than \$50,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (Less than 5 years)
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Number of monthly active users (MAU), Daily page visits (for the homepage); Monthly page visits (for each business)
Partners & Resources	EDC, Corridor 9/495 Chamber of Commerce, Metro West Chamber of Commerce; Community Advocate; Business Owners

Budget (continued)

Costs include ~\$20,000 for technical assistance to develop and/or host the platform; program upkeep may require EDC staff time and/or IT staff time.

Funding sources include:

- [Community Compact IT Grant Program](#)
- [MOBD Regional Pilot Project Grant Program](#)
- [EDA Competitive Travel and Tourism Grants](#)
- [ARPA Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation Grant](#)

Partners (continued)

- Community Organizations (Rotary Club of Westborough, BNI)
- Web Developer(s), Business Directory Experts, and Mondoforma
- Westborough IT Department

Risks (continued)

- There is limited municipal capacity to oversee, implement, and maintain the directory, and a paid role may be required to ensure the directory's success. Oversight of the directory is crucial to ensure information is up to date and verified.
- There is a risk that the directory may be redundant to some services provided by the Corridor 9/495 Chamber of Commerce and MetroWest Chamber of Commerce.
- The directory requires hiring a software vendor to establish the website, creating a cost risk.
- The directory is at risk of being redundant to larger web-services like Google and Amazon.
- The platform may not integrate well with CivicPlus, which is the platform that hosts the Town of Westborough website and the EDC website.

Diagnostic



The Town may use a similar model for creating their own repositories. Source: [Massachusetts State Online Business Directory](#)

Westborough's businesses supported each other to adapt to the impacts of COVID-19, including co-promotional efforts to expand their customer base and increase revenue. For example, Westborough Cork and Grain partnered with Flirt Boutique to create a cross-marketing coupon promotion that provided discounts for patrons if they shop at both stores. Cross-marketing campaigns proved to be a viable and productive solution to increasing revenue, and community stakeholders noted that these efforts are critical to Westborough's economic recovery. While these cross-marketing efforts had positive results, they were fragmented and only implemented by a few select businesses. Respondents to the business survey emphasized the importance of increasing access to cross-marketing opportunities, as 40% of businesses expressed an interest in shared marketing/advertising assistance. Respondents identified this type of assistance as more important than low-cost financing opportunities, training on the use of social media, or technical support for setting up online selling channels.

Action Item



Listings on online business directories will improve businesses' visibility in the local community. Source: [City Local Pro](#)

An Online Business Directory for the Town of Westborough will be another resource to support the growth, retention, and expansion of the business community. The Online Business Directory will serve as a central hub for details of local businesses, including hours of operation, descriptions, contact information, website links, and active promotions. The directory will help connect people to the business, civic organizations to businesses, and businesses to each other. The directory will also serve as an analytical tool for the Town of Westborough to help diversify its tenant mix, market the Town to outside businesses, and provide other metrics to ensure the health of Westborough's economy.

Process

Phase 1: Planning and Design

- Create a Steering Committee to plan, design, and oversee the implementation of the Online Business Directory. Organizations should represent the interests of the Town, businesses, community, and property owners. Suggested participants include the EDC, Corridor 9/495 Chamber of Commerce, and the Community Advocate.
- Identify a viable organization to serve as the lead coordinator for the implementation. The role of the lead includes overseeing coordination with a software vendor for development, administration, and transitioning the vendor's role to staff.
- Design a stakeholder engagement process to coordinate with the business community and understand how the business directory can serve their specific needs. Business engagement will ensure the content within the directory meets their needs and that businesses are bought into the process and will engage in the offerings.
 - Establish a community discussion/presentation to detail the project, describe the implementation, and get feedback from participants.
- Determine the administrative roles for maintaining the Online Business Directory post-implementation. Internships and volunteer options provide an opportunity to engage Westborough's youth and develop their skill sets.
- Develop a vision of the site content.
 - Home Page:
 - Calendars: Contains Information on scheduled events, meetings, promotions, and other relevant information.
 - Business Spotlight: A page meant to highlight a particular business or industry in Westborough through a formal selection process.
 - Promotions Pages: Curates all the current promotions offered in Westborough. Promotions can be specific to one business or through cross-marketing strategies.
 - Social media Collage: Contains a collage of the social media accounts of Westborough businesses to provide a visual representation of the business community and an engaging section within the home page.
 - Website Tabs:
 - Directory: A complete database of all active businesses in the community. Includes filtering options for industry, minority, and women-owned businesses, hours of operation, location, products.
 - Business Profiles: Contains a business page with a business description, contact information (phone, email), address, hours of operation, social media links, active promotions, partnerships, and product information.
 - Contact: Provides the contact information for the organization/staff/volunteer that is maintaining the website so businesses and customers can obtain more information or solicit ideas.
- Identify what business information needs to be collected when joining the directory. Create a simple survey or form on the EDC website so that businesses can efficiently submit and update their Information. Determination of what type of information to collect from businesses.
 - Name, address, contact information, associations, services/products offered, MWBE designation
 - Include room for customer feedback/experience at each business – potential line of communication between businesses and customers
- Determine how the Online Business Directory can integrate with other RRP projects, such as the Night Market and Branding Campaign.

Process (continued)





Phase 2: Implementation

- Engage the private sector, government, philanthropy, and the general community to get financial support for the project.
- Begin applying to relevant grant programs to secure funding for web development technical assistance.
- Coordinate with Town of Westborough's IT Department to align on what's needed to integrate an online businesses directory with the Town's other digital infrastructure (i.e., website) or if the online business directory should be hosted separately.
- Work with the *to be hired* Chief Procurement Officer/Grant Administrator to understand Westborough's process for issuing an RFP.
 - Draft an RFP for a software vendor to deliver the online business directory. Consider reaching out to Mondoforma, a local business that has indicated interest in delivering this project for the Town of Westborough.
 - Issue the RFP and evaluate and select technical assistance vendors.
 - Westborough IT Department should be engaged in vendor selection to ensure portability with the EDC website and/or Town of Westborough website.
- Design a concurrent marketing campaign to attract potential users from the business and customer community.
 - Marketing to Businesses:
 - Door-to-door advertising directly to the businesses.
 - Advertisements and profiles are marketed on Westborough TV and through the Community Advocate.
 - Interested and participating businesses as advocates and ambassadors to promote the directory.
 - Marketing to Customers:
 - Flyer campaign in residential areas and adjacent communities (include QR codes that can provide people with more information).
 - Flyers in participating businesses detailing the offerings of the directory (include QR codes that can provide people with more information).
 - Shop local campaigns to promote sustainable, equitable, and community-oriented purchasing behavior.
 - Social media to highlight promotions and services.
 - Advertisements and profiles are marketed on Westborough TV and through the Community Advocate.
 - Testimonials from key stakeholders in the community.
 - Additional ways to drive traffic to the online business directory include methods like:
 - Search Engine Optimization
 - Social Media Marketing
 - Email Marketing
 - Paid Advertisements

Phase 3: Project Maintenance

- Create a Maintenance Document that details the lead role, critical responsibilities, and demobilizing/onboarding procedures for the individual or organization responsible for keeping the directory current and up to date.
 - Check social media pages weekly to consistently update the directory
 - Reach out to businesses monthly to understand updates in operations, promotions, or other relevant information.
 - Provide passwords and administrative information for maintaining the website.
 - Investigate the analytics of the directory to strategize marketing and outreach processes weekly.
- Create a coordinating strategy to ensure consistent engagement with the business community to communicate updates and address issues.
- Utilize website analytics and work with businesses to identify gaps in information, opportunities for new features, and other aspects to increase traffic and ensure usability.
- Collect data on the project's progress and integrate it with other community communications to keep customers and businesses engaged and informed about the community's efforts to strengthen the local economy and support businesses.

Launch a Branding Campaign

Category	 Revenue and Sales
Location	Town of Westborough
Origin	Lead: Westborough EDC, Community Development Department
Budget	 Low Budget (Less than \$50,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (Less than 5 Years)
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Number of businesses, community organizations, and community members that participate in offering feedback; Adoption rate of new Town brand by businesses and the broader community
Partners & Resources	Town Planner, EDC, Westborough Town Seal Review Committee,



The Town Branding will also highlight Westborough's rich historical and cultural offerings. Source: [Westborough Center](#)

Diagnostic



Update signage that includes Town name and logo. Source: [Google](#)

COVID-19 impacted Westborough's business community in reduced operating hours, business closures, and decreases in revenue. To recover successfully from COVID-19, Westborough will need to retain existing businesses and customers and attract new ones. Establishing a cohesive Town brand will help local businesses attract a larger audience and support overall economic recovery.

Downtown Westborough is located 1.5 miles from State Route 9, but there is no advertising for the community on the highway. There is little infrastructure for advertising Westborough (e.g., light pole banner fixtures, and cross-street banners) in the downtown area. Community members similarly noted a lack of cohesive Westborough identity that can support attracting businesses and customers. One community member noted that a branding campaign should "show Massachusetts that there is more to Westborough than what many think; our identity concerning technology, architecture, recreation, and community should not be overlooked."

Nearly 90% of business survey respondents indicated that developing marketing strategies that promoted business growth and retention was important to their recovery from COVID-19. A branding campaign will increase the visibility of the Westborough business district and Town as a whole and act as a catalyst for further economic development.

Action Item



The branding campaign will aim to attract larger audiences to local businesses. Source: [Google](#)

A Westborough branding campaign will help local businesses attract a larger audience and support their overall economic recovery. The branding campaign will highlight the Town's assets and include the following aspects:

- Centralized Town message and brand for Westborough;
- Thorough review of the current branding and marketing;
- Outreach and feedback from key stakeholders to identify best practices and areas for improvement; and
- Targeted marketing strategy for potential customers.

Process

Phase 1: Audit of Current Branding

- Identify Town staff and community members who will be responsible for leading the campaign.
- Identify a broader group of stakeholders to support program development and implementation.
- Align the efforts of “One Westborough” branding campaign with the Town Seal Review Committee to ensure that these efforts do not overlap and that the Town of Westborough’s new brand is versatile enough to work with any potential Town Seal emerging from that parallel effort.
 - Coordinate with the Town Seal Review Committee Chairperson to align on the timing and scope of the effort.
 - Outline an initial list of infrastructure where each (Town Seal and “One Westborough” brand) would be featured--remember that some infrastructure might have both!
 - Identify critical junctures in this process where the Town Seal Review Committee would need to be engaged.
- Once an oversight committee has been formed, determine whether a marketing/brand consultant will be hired to assist in the process of developing the new Town branding.
 - If third-party consultants are needed, proactively apply to relevant grant programs to secure funding for branding technical assistance.
 - If the Town of Westborough opts to hire third-party consultants, then it will need to conduct an RFP process for vendor selection. The oversight committee will need to:
 - Work with the *to be hired* Chief Procurement Officer/Grant Administrator to understand Westborough’s process for issuing an RFP.
 - Draft an RFP.
 - Issue the RFP and evaluate and select technical assistance vendors.
 - Scope of any RFP should be informed by alignment with Town Seal Review Committee.
- Carry out a comprehensive internal assessment of current Town branding. The purpose of this audit will be to highlight existing strengths, best practices, and areas for improvement:
 - The assessment should highlight current available Town resources and infrastructure (e.g., “New England Village” feel, Westborough’s historic downtown, Lake Chauncy, Charm Bracelet, Lake Hocomoco, Mill Pond, Golf Course, Westborough Public Schools, I-495, Rt. 9).
 - This assessment should also include review of the Town of Westborough’s website, Westborough Public Schools branding, street signs, and Town announcements/advertisements for examples of current branding.
 - Additionally, the assessment should consider all elements of Town of Westborough infrastructure (e.g., website, street signs, municipal vehicles, light poles) that may need to be changed upon completion of the branding effort.
 - Some of these elements may not need to be updated with the “One Westborough” brand but only the updated Town Seal--engage Town Seal Review Committee and Town Manager to finalize scope.
 - Finally, collect “best practice” examples of branding in other communities to compare against Town of Westborough’s current brand; the RRP best practice compendiums could be a good resource for this.
 - If the Town of Westborough has opted to hire a third-party consultant for branding technical assistance, share examples of current branding for an assessment on how it differs from best practices.
- Summarize lessons from this audit to share with the broader community in Phase 2.

Project Leads

Town Council
Town Planner
Historical Commission
Westborough Public Schools

Project Stakeholders

Westborough Public Schools
Westborough Cultural Council
Westborough Diversity and Inclusion
Committee
Economic Development Committee
Corridor 9/495 Chamber of
Commerce

Town Planner
Town Manager or designee
Town Council
Historical Commission
Design Review Board
Spirit Committee
Recreation Director

Process (continued)

Phase 2: Community Outreach

- Conduct outreach to members of the community to share findings from internal audit and to further identify Westborough's strengths and offerings.
- Conduct interviews with business owners, municipal staff, and local organizations to understand and identify key existing Town offerings that are to be highlighted in the new campaign. Interviews should also be utilized to understand areas that community members want to highlight. Sample questions to ask my include:
 - What's Westborough's best kept secret?
 - What are your favorite things to do in Westborough?
 - What are some aspects of Westborough that you think will attract more people?
- Conduct initial outreach to cultural councils, historical councils, and local civic organizations to spur involvement. Outreach can be conducted through public surveys or door-to-door advertising, and/or round-table meetings and town halls.
 - As applicable, hold one (or a series) of round-table meetings amongst group representatives for continued joint coordination.

Phase 3: Branding Development and Marketing

- Using information and feedback collected from community members and key stakeholders, work with consultants (if applicable) to develop a vision and centralized message for the Town's branding campaign.
 - Integrate findings and the Town's main objectives to create a cohesive Town brand.
- Identify possible marketing approaches and identify the most feasible approach for the Town. Initial marketing approaches may consist of displaying banners, flyers, and posters in public spaces.
 - Target additional marketing efforts to utilize dormant public spaces and open downtown areas.
- Align Town branding with other RRP projects, such as the Wayfinding Project, Online Business Directory, and other recurring Town events (e.g., proposed "Night Market" program, Westborough Farmers' Market, Holiday Stoll).
- Conduct research on existing bylaws and any regulations pertaining to the display of banners and posters in public spaces. Identify which permits (if any) are needed for displaying marketing materials.
 - Coordinate with Town agencies to expedite the permitting and approval process for banners, flyers, posters.
 - Identify any potential legal constraints that may interfere with the approval and marketing processes. Legal constraints might include:
 - Regulations and requirements pertaining to the size, location, and general display of signs.
 - Potential trademark infringement and/or protection of materials developed by the Town that contain Town logos and images.
 - Conduct research on existing MassDOT regulations and potential sign improvements for signage on Rt. 9.

Process (continued)




Phase 4: Launch the Campaign

- Launch initial marketing approach for the branding campaign as a “pilot” (i.e., leverage temporary infrastructure for a “soft launch” of the “One Westborough” brand: social media, light pole fixtures, banners, flyers).
- Hold a stakeholder review period to collect feedback on the pilot branding program. During the feedback period, identify best practices and areas for improvement.
 - If necessary, tweak “One Westborough” brand and/or marketing approach based on feedback.
- Design and implement a more comprehensive marketing campaign to continue to integrate the “One Westborough” brand into the local ecosystem.
 - The campaign should continue to build on successes from the pilot program, including reaching community members through temporary installations such as social media, light pole fixtures, banners, and flyers.
 - Focus marketing efforts to include businesses and business owners.
 - Prioritize other infrastructure (e.g., EDC website, Town of Westborough website, business cards, promotional videos) for integration with the “One Westborough” brand.
- Based on success (or lack) of current marketing efforts, consider utilizing additional marketing platforms and avenues. This could include community newsletters and advertisements on the municipal websites (e.g., Town of Westborough, EDC).
 - Identify a party responsible for maintaining and updating the digital platforms on a regular basis to ensure that the most up to date information is available.
- Evaluate any growth/decline in businesses and business retention to study the effectiveness of the Town’s branding. If needed, re-evaluate the brand and message, and tailor towards the current needs of the Town.
 - Gather feedback from the same property and business owners interviewed during Phase 2 of the project to determine the effects of the branding campaign on their businesses.



Collaboration amongst Town Departments is crucial in developing the new Town Branding. Source: Best Practice Compendiums

Develop a Minority and Women Business Outreach and Support Plan

Category	 Administrative Capacity
Location	Town of Westborough
Origin	Lead: Westborough EDC, Community Development Department
Budget	 Low Budget (Less than \$50,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (Less than 5 years)
Risk	 Medium Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Number of MWOBs contacted throughout process of draft planning and in the first year following the plan; Number of MWOBs supported in the first following plan completion
Partners & Resources	Corridor 9/495 Chamber of Commerce, MetroWest Chamber of Commerce, Center of Women and Enterprise, Westborough EDC, Town Staff and Manager, Westborough Planning Department, Westborough Cultural Council, BNI, and Westborough Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Committee

Budget (continued)

- Town of Westborough staff time
- \$10,000-\$50,000 for D&I consultants (if deemed necessary)

Funding Sources:

- [Regional Economic Development Organization \(REDO\) Funding](#)
- [Urban Agenda Grant Program](#)
- [MDI Technical Assistance Grant](#)
- [Community Planning Grant Program](#)
- [CMRPC Community Development and Planning Services](#)

Key Performance Indicators (continued)

- Number of MWOBs memberships added to the local business organizations (e.g., Corridor 4/945 Chamber of Commerce, MetroWest Chamber of Commerce, Center for Women and Enterprise, Rotary Club of Westborough)
- Annual revenue increase for MWOBs in Westborough

Risks (continued)

Additional funding may be required for program implementation after the plan is complete

- Woman-owned business enterprises (WBEs) and minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs) are distinct business groups with very different needs and solutions spaces, so a single outreach and support plan may not be considerate of the nuances of each group.
- Because the MWOB Outreach and Support plan is aimed at tackling a regional issue, extensive coordination will be required to develop and implement an effective plan.
- High turnover rates among committees and Town staff may hinder project progress.
- The planning process will need to strongly incorporate language and cultural considerations in order to effectively engage the target audience of the plan.
- Non-minority and non-female entrepreneurs may feel alienated by the project (e.g., “How does this help me?”).
- The Town of Westborough may lack staff capacity to implement the outreach and support plan.

Diagnostic

COVID-19 has severely impacted small business across the country, but those owned by women and minorities have faced more acute challenges. Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth (MassINC) reported that 54% of women-owned businesses in Massachusetts lost half or more of their income during COVID-19, compared to 39% of businesses owned by men. Additionally, 29% of minority-owned businesses in Massachusetts reported missing rent payments compared to 19% of white-owned businesses. The MWOB Outreach and Support Plan will support these businesses that often get overlooked.

Cultural and language barriers contributed to a lack of awareness of and access to resources offered by the Town of Westborough and the Commonwealth of MA during COVID-19. Additionally, MWOB lack representation in the administration of these resources. The EDC lacks representation from MWOB. At the time of the diagnostic, no minority business owners served on the EDC, no people of color applied for the EDC vacancy in 2021, and no people of color or women applied for the previous vacancy. As of 2019, 12% of businesses in the Town of Westborough were owned by women and 10% were minority-owned (2017 Annual Business Survey). Given the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on marginalized communities and business owners, these businesses have likely suffered significantly. The MWOB Outreach and Support Plan will identify challenges these businesses are experiencing, establish a clear understanding of the resources available, and outline actionable steps to address these challenges.

Action Item

The MWOB Outreach and Support Plan will assess Westborough's current capabilities and effectiveness in reaching and supporting women and minority-owned small businesses. The plan will provide guidance on addressing identified barriers and will cover the following components:

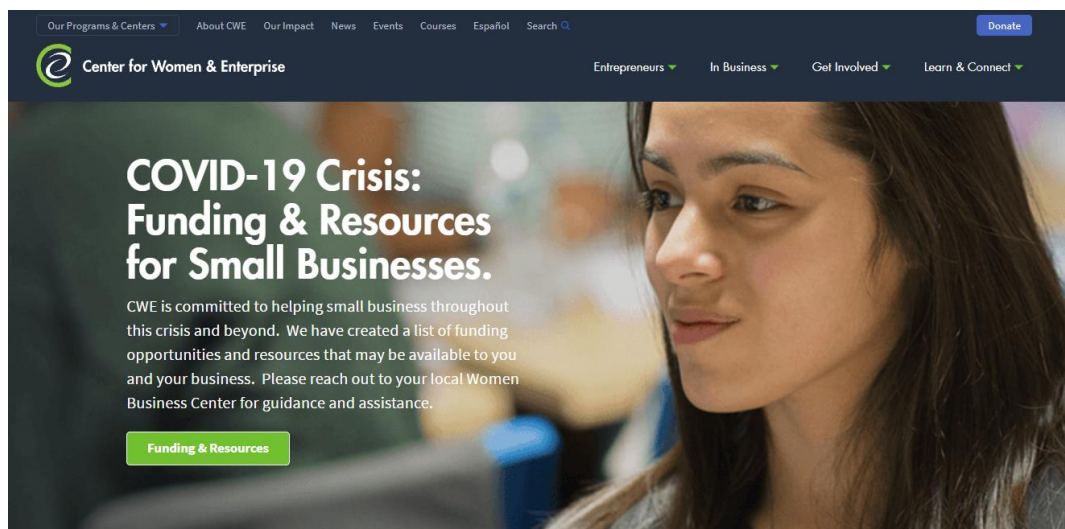
- A vision and objectives for the MWOB Outreach and Support Plan for the Town of Westborough and surrounding areas;
- A baseline assessment of existing conditions;
- Internal analyses that address the challenges identified by women and minority business owners;
- A list of recommendations for how the Town of Westborough and its EDC may increase engagement from MWOB owners and how to better support them through the COVID-19 recovery; and
- Roles and responsibilities for various Town of Westborough staff and community organizations in implementing these recommendations.

The baseline assessment and internally analysis will entail an in-depth comparison of existing Town resources and the barriers preventing business owners from accessing them. The information for this analysis will be obtained through surveys, interviews, discussions, and other data collection tools as needed. In addition, the Town will identify a subset of stakeholders who can offer unique perspectives on the challenges faced by women and minority business owners. The Center for Women and Enterprise, based in Westborough, will be a participant in this group and leverage their network to identify other members to include.

Process

Phase 1: Outreach and Research

- Identify Town staff and/or third-party consultants responsible for overseeing the process of developing the MWOB Support and Outreach Plan.
- If the Town of Westborough opts to hire third-party consultants, conduct an RFP process for vendor selection. The estimated cost of third-party consultants for D&I technical assistance projects ranges from \$10,000 to more than \$50,000. The identified project lead will need to:
 - Work with the *to be hired* Chief Procurement Officer/Grant Administrator to understand Westborough's process for issuing an RFP.
 - Draft an RFP. Sample RFPs for D&I technical assistance projects can be found [here](#).
 - Issue the RFP and evaluate and select technical assistance vendors.
- Identify key community stakeholders who could provide input on the challenges business owners encounter in obtaining the additional support they qualify for.
- Develop and distribute a survey to community members and business owners to identify their needs and gather additional input on what types of support they are seeking. Questions to ask might include:
 - On a scale from 1 to 5 (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree), how would you rate the following?
 - Statement: Westborough values diversity.
 - Statement: Westborough invests time and energy into building diverse teams.
 - Statement: I feel my unique background and identity are valued by Westborough.
 - Do you think businesses in Westborough represent the overall demographics of the community?
 - If applicable, what were some of the barriers you experienced in establishing your business?
 - How do you envision Westborough improving the landscape for MWOB?
- Conduct interviews, round-table discussions, or hold open town hall meetings with business owners and other community members to discuss ways in which they would like to see MWOBs be spotlighted.
- Establish and implement an appropriate structure to identify local advantages, existing partnerships, and resources that could be leveraged to address the barriers identified.
- Conduct an internal analysis of the resources and funding opportunities that the Town of Westborough currently has to offer women and minority business owners.



The Center for Women and Enterprise is another resource that offers tools for success to women and minority owns businesses. Source: [Google](#)

Process (continued)

Phase 2: Develop the Plan

- Conduct an in-depth assessment/gap analysis of the data collected to identify common trends reported among MWOBs.
- Based on the conclusions made from community outreach, identify ways to address business owner needs and ways to connect businesses to technical assistance and workforce development resources.
- Develop a draft MWOB Outreach and Support Plan.
- Define and hold a review period for stakeholders to provide feedback on the plan draft.
- Adjudicate feedback received from stakeholders and finalize the MWOB.

Phase 3: Implementation and Maintenance

- Implement the recommendations as outlined in the Plan, prioritizing the projects that are most achievable to support economic recovery from COVID-19.
- Identify additional potential partners, in and around the Town, to create and expand mentorship programs for women and minority business owners.
- On an annual basis and as significant changes occur in the region, review the MWOB Outreach and Support Plan to note progress, changes in needs, and report any relevant impacts on local businesses.
- Every five years, conduct a full review of the plan and make any necessary updates to ensure that the Plan aligns with changes in priorities and goals.



Mayor's Office of Economic Development Boston

October 8, 2020 · 🌐

...

You don't want to miss this one! A FREE virtual Economic Development Center workshop series: Thriving in Small Business for Immigrant Entrepreneurs! The first workshop is today at 3:00 PM! Register at: bit.ly/thrivinginbiz

Thriving in Business for Immigrants

FREE WORKSHOP SERIES

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

- October 8th** Opening a Business
- October 15th** Business Planning
- October 22nd** Legal aspects of running a business
- October 29th** Financing a business
- November 5th** Digitally marketing for a business



To register or for additional information,
please visit: <http://bit.ly/thrivinginbiz>



Mayor's Office of
Economic Development



Mayor Martin J. Walsh

Example of a resource/workshop series for immigrant business owners. Source: Best Practice Compendiums

Create a Shared Marketing Program

Category	 Tenant Mix
Location	Downtown Business District with potential to expand to other commercial corridors in future program years
Origin	Lead: EDC
Budget	 Low Budget (Less than \$50,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (Less than 5 years)
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Average increase in revenues during program month vs. pre-COVID-19 revenues in that month; Qualitative evidence that foot traffic to downtown businesses increased during the program month vs. Pre-COVID-19
Partners & Resources	Corridor 9/495 Chamber of Commerce; MetroWest Chamber of Commerce; Community Advocate; Westborough TV; Rotary Club of Westborough



Best Practice: ShopGraftonMA

Grafton, MA

The Town of Grafton designed a ShopGraftonMA program to support co-marketing efforts of local businesses. Over 70 businesses participated in the two-month program. Customers picked up a frequent visitor card and received a stamp if they were to patron at any participating businesses. When customers receive 10 stamps, they could drop off the card at the local municipal building and were entered into a raffle for gift certificates. The program provided co-marketing opportunities for auto & hardware businesses, banks, farms, fitness and dance businesses, gift shops and personal item vendors, health & beauty businesses, liquor and convenience stores, pet and animal businesses, and restaurants and catering businesses.

Risk (continued)

- Westborough businesses may not be interested in participating in the shared marketing program.
- Program dates overlap with marketing efforts in other communities, diluting the impact of Westborough businesses' revenues.
- Bad weather (e.g., snow) and other external events (e.g., competing Town events, school holidays) could limit peoples' willingness to shop.
- Program may not demonstrate meaningful impact on business revenues.

Key Performance Indicators (continued)

- Program costs are anticipated to be approximately \$3,000-\$4,000 per year including the following:
 - \$2,000 for fifteen \$150.00 gift cards to participating businesses
 - Less than \$1,000 for marketing and promotion
 - Staff/EDC Ambassador time to design the program details, recruit businesses to participate, and market the program to potential customers

Funding sources include:

- [Regional Economic Development Organization \(REDO\) Grant](#)
- [MOBD Regional Pilot Project Grant Program](#)
- EDC budget for printing and copying (budget is \$5,000)
- EDC gift account, which has ~\$2,000 total as of today
- EDC "downtown improvement" gift fund, which has ~\$9,000 total as of today (but is also used to fund the downtown beautification program)

Partners and Resources (continued)

- Westborough Recreation Department
- Westborough Spirit Committee
- Heat of Westborough Facebook Page
- EDC Ambassadors
- Local business owners/leaders

Resources include:

- Westborough Recreation Department
- Digital billboards on Route 9 and I-90 (potential to advertise program)
- EDC website and social media (for program advertising)
- Town of Westborough social media
- Potential for business sponsorships to fund the program
- "Shop Grafton" case study



Foster involvement from local businesses and encourage residents to shop locally. Source: [Google](#)

Diagnostic

The Town of Westborough's downtown businesses have struggled with the economic impacts of COVID-19. Specifically, many downtown businesses have experienced a decline in revenue. From the Business Survey conducted in April 2021, 81% of businesses within the Study Area reported less revenue in 2020 than they had in years prior. For 41% businesses, that revenue decline was 25% or more. This has been driven by a decline in on-site customers and, more generally, foot traffic in the downtown area. Also from the Business Survey, 78% of businesses had fewer on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than they did in those months before the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, 56% of businesses estimated the decline in foot traffic to be 25% or more, with 22% of businesses even reporting a decline in on-site customers of 50% or more.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put immense pressure on Westborough's downtown business community, and these businesses need to find new ways to attract customers in order to bolster their revenues. Prior to COVID-19, the lifeblood of Westborough's downtown business economy was the multiplier effects that it received from all the office parks around Rt. 9 and I-495; given their proximity, office park employees would patron downtown businesses. However, these office parks will not be the engine of the downtown area's economic recovery due to the uncertainty around vacancy rates and the COVID-19 pandemic's influence on work from home preferences, relying on foot traffic from office parks to support downtown businesses is not sustainable. At the time of this diagnostic, JLL, a real estate investment firm, had reported Westborough's office vacancy rate at 37%, and the future of the market for office space in Westborough and around the Commonwealth is uncertain. Many downtown businesses have begun to innovate and adapt their businesses to this "new normal," with 63% of businesses surveyed reporting that they established alternative mode(s) to sell and deliver their products. However, anecdotes from businesses emphasize how these efforts were not significant enough to supplement their lost revenue.

Furthermore, there is a lot of appetite among the Westborough business community for new marketing strategies and partnerships to attract more customers to the downtown area. 87% of businesses listed "implementing marketing strategies for the commercial district" as an important need, with 39% of businesses identifying that need as very important. Additionally, 43% of businesses expressed interest in participating in shared marketing for the commercial district. A shared marketing program would support this interest and help address some of the vulnerabilities highlighted through COVID-19.

Action Item

Westborough will establish a recurring "Buy Local, Westborough" campaign, in which customers who shop at ten or more participating downtown businesses in a certain time period (e., month) are entered to win a \$150.00 gift certificate. Fifteen total gift certificates will be awarded. This project is modeled after the "Shop Grafton MA" campaign, in which customers pick up punch cards in municipal buildings or at participating businesses, which then get stamped anytime they make a purchase at a local business.



Go local campaign to reinforce the idea of shopping local to build the local economy. Source: [Google](#)

Process

Phase 1: Program Design

- Form a Steering Committee finalize program design, roles, and responsibilities for all parties involved. Proposed composition of the group may include Economic Development Coordinator, 1-2 EDC representative(s), Community Development Director, 2-4 business owners, and a Corridor 9/495 Chamber of Commerce representative.
- Consider and finalize the following key elements for program design:
 - Program duration (e.g., 1 week, 1 month, 2 months)
 - Program dates (Steering Committee should consider other competing programs, like Shop Grafton, and align dates to avoid competition and maximize program success)
 - Number of “winners” (e.g., 10 winners, 15 winners, 20 winners)
 - Value of gift cards, depending on what will motivate customers to participate
 - Program brand (e.g., name, logo)
 - “Punch card” design (e.g., paper or digital, size, style). The “punch card” will need to have contact information somewhere so EDC can notify winners.
 - “Stamp” design. The “stamps” or “punches” should not be easily forged.
 - Business responsibilities (e.g., staff required to “stamp” punch cards, hand out cards, promote the program with signage in windows)
 - Municipal responsibilities (e.g., staff required to distribute and receive cards, recruit businesses, develop marketing and promotional materials, distribute “stamps” to each participating business, select winners)
 - Success metrics to track program success
- Once program details are finalized and aligned among the Steering Committee / Working Group, syndicate these draft program details with downtown businesses for feedback—consider hosting a “business roundtable” type meeting with downtown businesses for their input.
 - Create a short presentation (e.g., 2-3 pages) for meeting with downtown businesses
 - Incorporate feedback from businesses into the program design

Process (continued)

- Create a business-facing landing page on the EDC website for information about the program, including a fillable form for interested businesses to sign up.
- Then, devise a plan to recruit businesses to participate in the program, remember to leverage the following resources for business recruitment: Corridor 9/495 Chamber of Commerce, MetroWest Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club of Westborough, and the EDC Ambassadors.
 - Set a target for the number of participating businesses desired, and set goals for how many businesses might be reached week over week
 - Draft any materials needed to pitch the program to prospective participants, including business flyers, email blasts, social media posts, and door-knocking.
- Create a marketing strategy and plan to spread the word and generate excitement among potential customers, remembering to leverage partners such as the Community Advocate, Westborough TV, the Rotary Club of Westborough, the Westborough Spirit Committee, the Heart of Westborough on Facebook, the Westborough Recreation Department.
 - Develop a marketing timeline.
 - Draft any materials needed for promotion:
 - Flyers
 - Email blasts
 - Social media posts, hashtags
 - Advertisement for digital billboards on Rt. 9 and I-495
 - Coordinate with Westborough TV on how they might be able to promote the program before, during, and after program execution.
- Begin recruiting businesses with a multi-pronged approach, including door-knocking, email blasts, and social media outreach, which should be completed on a 2 - 4-week timeframe.
- Finalize participating business list and send out an email to businesses confirming program dates, details, their responsibilities, and next steps.



Go Local, Westborough

Partner with local TV stations as a part of the marketing strategy to recruit businesses. Source: [Google](#)

Want to get the latest from WTV? Subscribe to our newsletter and join our 1,522 subscribers.

Process (continued)

Phase 2: Outreach and Coordination

- Create a customer-facing page on the EDC website about the program, featuring all the participating businesses.
- Include participating businesses on customer-facing flyers/social media/email blasts, and distribute to key partners (e.g., Westborough Recreation Department).
- Reach out to the Town Council's office to get program advertisements on the Town of Westborough's digital billboards.
- Execute on the marketing strategy and plan to spread the word and generate excitement for the program.
 - Consider hanging a banner on West Main Street to market the initiative—work with Town Manager's office to iron out details.
- Purchase any materials required for the program, for example:
 - Signage for businesses to promote program in windows
 - "Punch cards"
 - "Stamps"
 - Banner
- Distribute materials to businesses and other stakeholders.
- Create two surveys (one for participating businesses and another for participating customers) to study the program's effects. Sample questions are included in the graphic below.

Business Survey Questions

- Did you record higher revenues in this month than you did in the same month a year prior?
- Did you observe more foot traffic to your business than you did in the same month a year prior?
- How many punch cards did you distribute?
- Would you participate in this program again? Why?
- What changes would you recommend to future iterations of the program?
- Would you have any interest in a district management entity to run similar programs in the future?

Customer Survey Questions

- How did you learn about the "Buy Local, Westborough!" campaign?
- Did you visit Westborough businesses more frequently than before? Did you visit any new businesses?
- How many purchases did you make at Westborough businesses over the course of the program?
- Could you estimate how much money you spent at Westborough businesses throughout the program?
- Would you want to see "Buy Local, Westborough!" happen again?

Phase 3: Program Implementation

- Launch the first iteration of the program—continuing to promote throughout. EDC might consider doing the following to encourage continued interest in the program:
 - Social media profiles of participating businesses
 - Social media profiles of customers and their experiences
 - Promotion of active sales that participating businesses might have throughout the program
- Select program "winners" and, based on their selection, purchase gift cards to their chosen business and distribute to "winners".
- Launch customer survey and business survey—keep live for at least 2-3 weeks.
- Assess feedback from surveys to determine future program viability and potential for expansion to other commercial corridors (or distinct events for each commercial corridor).
- Hold another "business roundtable" for participating businesses to share feedback, gauge interest in future campaigns, and propose changes to the program (if any).
- If program is successful, launch a social media campaign (potentially with Westborough TV) to celebrate the program's successes and build political capital for future iterations.
- Seek a permanent funding source (potentially through Town Meeting warrant) for the program, if successful.
- Iterate on the program and launch again (either in distinct corridors or municipality-wide).

Create a Night Market Program

Category	 Arts and Culture
Location	Downtown Census Trace 7432 (e.g., Bay State Commons, Union Street, Colonial Plaza, Municipal Lot on South Street, Municipal Lot behind Town Hall)
Origin	Lead: Community Organization (e.g., Westborough Cultural Council, Rotary Club of Westborough, Westborough Spirit Committee) Support: EDC, Community Development Department
Budget	 Low Budget (Less than \$50,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (Less than 5 years)
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Number of vendors and businesses participating; Number of attendees at the event; Sales metric for storefronts in the Study Area (i.e., revenue); Equity and inclusion indicator (vendor mix based on Minority and Women-Owned Businesses (MWOB), geographic, size of business, and vendor mix)
Partners & Resources	EDC, Rotary Club of Westborough (Westborough Farmers Market), Westborough Cultural Council, Westborough Spirit Committee, Center for Women and Enterprise, The Community Advocate, Westborough TV, Corridor 9/495, Metro West Chamber of Commerce, Individuals belonging to the artistic community (e.g., artists and musicians)



Example of night market programs. Source: [Google](#)

Diagnostic



Recruit various vendors and businesses to recruit their goods/services at night markets. Source: [Google](#)

Historically, Westborough's downtown businesses have depended on the customer base from local office parks. The pivot to remote work has decreased the occupancy of office parks, and at the time of this diagnostic, Westborough had a 37% commercial vacancy rate. Additionally, 78% of businesses had fewer customers during COVID-19 than in previous years, according to the business survey. Decreased customer traffic also led to a decrease in revenue, as 60% of businesses reported less revenue in 2020 than they did the year prior, and revenue declined 25% or more for 41% of those surveyed. Increasing pedestrian traffic in the downtown area is core to local businesses' recovery from COVID-19.

Holding community and cultural events will attract and retain customers in the downtown area, and businesses have expressed interest in these strategies. Nearly 60% of businesses listed "more cultural events or activities to bring people into the district" as important to their recovery. Community stakeholders reinforced the emphasis on these events, as stakeholders noted that "We need to find ways to create and publicize events downtown" and "Some kind of recurring celebration in downtown that can bring people into the area would be great for growing revenues." Stakeholders additionally agreed there is a need for the downtown to be activated during the evening. Few businesses are open in the evening downtown, as there are limited restaurants and other service-oriented establishments close early. The night market will enable local businesses to maintain a customer base during the evening and improve the economic growth of the area.

Action Item

Rapid Recovery Plan

Outdoor Dining/Retail Community Toolkit

A guide for communities seeking to assist business owners
in creating outdoor dining and retail options



September 2021



Outdoor Dining/Retail Toolkit created for the RRP Program.
The toolkit can be found in the Appendix.

The night market program will provide a space for businesses and other groups to offer their services in specific locations in the community during the evening. By leveraging support from the arts, music, and greater creative community, these night events will draw in customers from Westborough and the surrounding region. The program will increase the exposure of established businesses, burgeoning entrepreneurs, artists, performers, and other creative individuals to a broader customer base. The long-term goal of the night market program is to attract and retain businesses that will operate in the evening as permanent tenants.

Process

Phase 1: Plan

- Create a planning committee with Westborough stakeholders across the business community (e.g., Corridor 9/495 Chamber of Commerce), arts and culture community (e.g., Westborough Cultural Council), and civic organizations (e.g., Westborough Rotary) to discuss the program opportunities and elements. This group should align on:
 - Program goals
 - Implementation roles/responsibilities
 - Implementation process
 - KPIs/performance metrics
 - Event timing and frequency
- (Optional) Survey the arts community, specific cultural institutions, businesses and entrepreneurs, and landlords to gain their perspective on the Night Market, how they can support the program, and what success looks like to them. Incorporate their perspectives into the planning process.
- Create a guidance document for the permitting process by reviewing current regulations on street closures (i.e., Union Street), events on Town property (e.g., Municipal Lots, Bay State Common), and coordinate with relevant municipal agencies (i.e., Board of Health, Building and Grounds, Building Department, Fire Department, and Police Department). Discuss an expedited and singular permitting process for the Night Market by coordinating with municipal agencies on specific requirements.
- Identify all the potential uses and activities for the Night Market.
- Create a “Vendor Information Guide” that outlines the following for potential vendors.
- Draft vendor participation agreement forms and health and safety forms based on case examples, with input from relevant municipal agencies. Review the document with the Town Council.

Potential Night Market Activities

Retail vendors
Food and beverage vendors
Artist activities (e.g., live painting)
Live music and performances
Children's activities
Non-profit and advocacy booths
Regional partner booths
Town agency booths

Vendor Information Guide

Infrastructure provided by Westborough
Infrastructure required from vendors
Size of space for each vendor
Permitting required by each vendor
Insurance requirements
Healthy and safety requirements

Process (continued)

Phase 1: Plan (continued)

- Design the layout of the Night Market using different geographic scenarios.
 - Consider consolidating the market in the Bay State Common Parking Lot, Bay State Green / Union Street, East Main Street Plazas, Municipal Lot behind South Street, and Municipal Lot behind Town Hall.
 - If using smaller geographies for the market, consider a rotating market schedule so each area can experience the evening activation provided.
 - Consider the coordinating requirements with businesses that are located away from the market's location. Determine a method for these businesses to participate in the program as street side vendors. This may include access tents, utilities, transit, and marketing during the Night Market.
 - Coordinate with local property owners if identified parcels require partnerships, leases, or memorandum of understanding.
 - Create parking plans and signage for people accessing the market if streets are closed.
 - Once the location and layout of the Night Market are established, create an overview document that details the number of spaces available for vendors, the breakdown of types of vendors included (e.g., 5 food vendors, 5 retail, 4 civic organizations), resource requirements for each vendor (e.g., generators, lights, tables, chairs), and scheduling information to ensure participating vendors have fair and equitable access to the Night Market programming.
- Create a satisfaction survey, to distribute during and after the Night Markets, to support program monitoring and evaluation.
- Identify Night Market staffing needs and leverage volunteer resources. Staff is required to:
 - Coordinate with businesses and artists.
 - Mobilize the event (e.g., provide vendors and businesses with advertising documents and necessary equipment, set up vendor tents throughout the Night Market location, and set up support equipment such as generators, lighting, audio equipment, and food/beverage equipment).
 - Conduct the event (e.g., ticketing, information, clean-up and maintenance, documentation [video, photographs, interviews], and customer service).
 - Demobilize the event (e.g., takedown tents and other structures, consolidate event equipment into a single location/storage area, and coordinate demobilization with businesses and vendors).



Utilize Night Markets to foster community involvement. Source: [Google](#)

Process (continued)

Phase 2: Implement a Pilot Program

- Create a Google Survey to invite vendors to sign-up for the Night Markets and detail their requirements and services/products offered. The survey should translate into a database to support scheduling, marketing and promotions, and ensuring even access to the market. If interest is high, consider expanding the geographic scope of the market.
- Create a resources database to identify implementation resource needs (e.g., lighting, generators, safety, signage) and who is providing each item. If resources are required, the planning committee can use funds to obtain certain resources. Additionally, identify the storage needs for the resources.
 - If obtaining new resources (tents and staff clothing), consider branding the items with the Town's or Night Market's logo and branding.
- Coordinate with Town agencies to obtain permits for vending, alcohol consumption, closed streets (i.e., Union Street), and safety coordination (e.g., health, traffic, public safety). Identify if a singular permit can serve as a one-time permit for recurring Night Market events.
- Develop a marketing strategy to attract vendors in the business and arts community and promote the market to Westborough and regional communities.
 - **Flyer Campaign:** Detail the program's vision, strategy, and desired outcomes to the business community. Communicate the business role and responsibility and how they can engage.
 - **Digital Marketing:** Use the Town website and social media to promote the Night Market
 - **Community-Wide Marketing:** Leverage the Community Advocate and Westborough TV to communicate the vision and process for the Night Market program.
 - Identify ways to promote the local businesses during the night market (cross-marketing, coupon program, aligning complementary vendors next to retailers, discounts based on travel).

Phase 3: Iterate and Scale

- Create surveys that target business participants, Town staff, customers to understand the strengths and opportunities for improvement.
- Hold a post-event debrief meeting with the planning committee to gain perspectives on the next steps, refining the design and implementation processes, and finalizing roles and responsibilities.
- Determine scalability of the program:
 - Identify additional locations
 - Additional participants willing to contribute to the program
 - Expand to regional partners and event coordination
- Use photos, videos, and testimonials to refine and expand on marketing opportunities for future events.
- Analyze the potential for the Night Market to carry through the winter and the additional requirements needed (e.g., winter lights, fire pits, heat lamps, and staff clothing).

Phase 4: Alignment with other Town Efforts

- Align the Night Market Program with Project 3: Wayfinding. Use branded and updated wayfinding to support Night Market-specific wayfinding for vendors, entertainers, and events.
- Align the Night Market Program with the Project 6: Mobility Strategy. Align the recommendation in the mobility Strategy for complete streets and pedestrian-oriented updates to the Downtown to showcase the benefits of improved mobility.
- Align the Night Market Program with Project 8: Branding. Use updated Westborough branding to promote and brand the Night Market Program.

Appendix

Appendix A. Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
ABCC	Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission
ACS	American Community Survey
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ARPA	American Rescue Plan Act
BID	Business Improvement District
CEDS	Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
CMRPC	Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
D&I	Diversity and Inclusion
DHCD	MA Department of Housing and Community Development
DPW	Department of Public Works
EDA	U.S. Economic Development Administration
EDC	Economic Development Committee
GIS	Global Information System
LABO	Latin American Business Organization
LEHD	Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics
MAAB	Massachusetts Architectural Access Board
MassDOT	Massachusetts Department of Transportation
MassINC	Massachusetts Institute for a New Commonwealth
MBE	Minority-Owned Business Enterprises
MDI	Massachusetts Downtown Initiative
MOBD	Massachusetts Office of Business Development
MWOB	Minority and Women-Owned Businesses
POI	Points of Interest
RFP	Request for Proposal
RRFB	Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons
RRP	Rapid Recovery Plan
WBE	Woman-owned Business Enterprises
WRTA	Worcester Regional Transit Authority

Appendix B. Data Profile

Westborough Data Appendix

Study Area Boundary



Area Demographics

Total Population

492	Study Area
19,956	Westborough
185,143	Worcester
6,850,553	Massachusetts

Population Density (per sq. mile)

3,060	Study Area
877	Westborough
233	Worcester
885	Massachusetts

Average Household Size

1.66	Study Area
2.59	Westborough
2.47	Worcester
2.51	Massachusetts

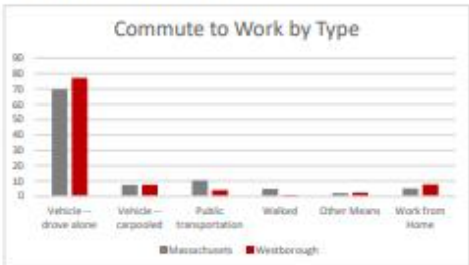
Commute Type

50.0%	Work in Westborough, Live Elsewhere
2.7%	Live & Work in Westborough
47.3%	Live in Westborough, Work Elsewhere

Car Ownership

N/A	Study Area
94.2%	Westborough
82.5%	Worcester
87.6%	Massachusetts

Commute to Work



Data Sources : ESRI, August 2017. US Census Bureau, 2014-2019 American Community Survey. 2018 OnTheMap Application.

Area Demographics

Race and Ethnicity



	Study Area	Westborough	Worcester	MA
Hispanic or Latino	14.7%	5.8%	21.9%	11.8%
White Alone	64.8%	64.6%	69.2%	78.1%
Black or African American Alone	1.8%	2.0%	13.3%	7.6%
Asian Alone	10.5%	23.3%	7.4%	6.6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	0.0%	0.2%	0.6%	0.2%
Two or More Races	2.8%	2.3%	4.0%	3.3%

Educational Attainment



	Study Area	Westborough	Worcester	MA
12th Grade or Less	1.9%	2.6%	13.7%	8.7%
High School Graduate	17.9%	14.2%	30.7%	23.9%
Some College, No Degree	13.0%	8.2%	17%	15%
Associate's Degree	5.2%	5.7%	7.8%	7.4%
Bachelor's Degree	30.2%	36.2%	19.8%	24.7%
Graduate or Professional Degree	31.8%	32.9%	11%	20.3%

Population by Age



	Study Area	Westborough	Worcester	MA
Under 5	4.2%	5.8%	5.0%	5.3%
5-14 Years	8.3%	12.2%	10.4%	16.4%
15-24 Years	13.3%	12.0%	18.9%	13.8%
25-44 Years	30.4%	27.6%	27.8%	26.4%
45-64 Years	30.1%	28.6%	24.2%	27.3%
65+ Years	13.7%	13.9%	13.6%	16.4%

Median Age

41.8	Study Area
40.0	Westborough
34.7	Worcester
39.5	Massachusetts

Foreign-Born Population

N/A	Study Area
26.7%	Westborough
21.8%	Worcester
17.3%	Massachusetts

Income

Median Household Income

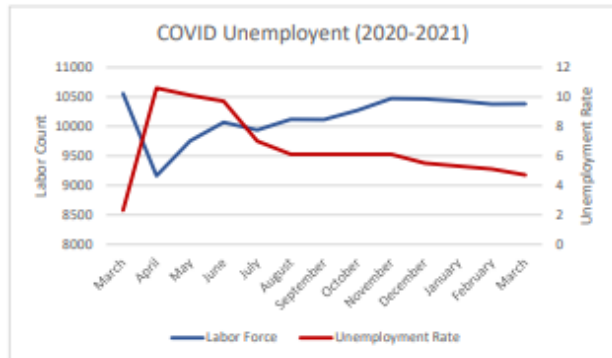
\$77,204	Study Area
\$112,701	Westborough
\$57,092	Worcester
\$85,843	Massachusetts

Pop. Below Poverty Line

NA	Study Area
4.6%	Westborough
11.7%	Worcester
10.3%	Massachusetts

Employment

Labor Force and Unemployment Rates



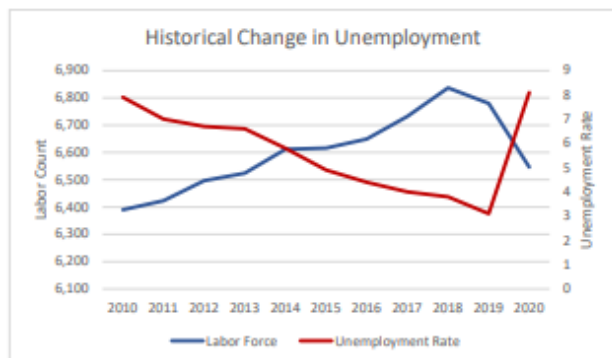
Housing Characteristics

Pop. Rent Burdened

N/A	Study Area
44.2%	Westborough
52.0%	Worcester
48.8%	Massachusetts

Average Rent

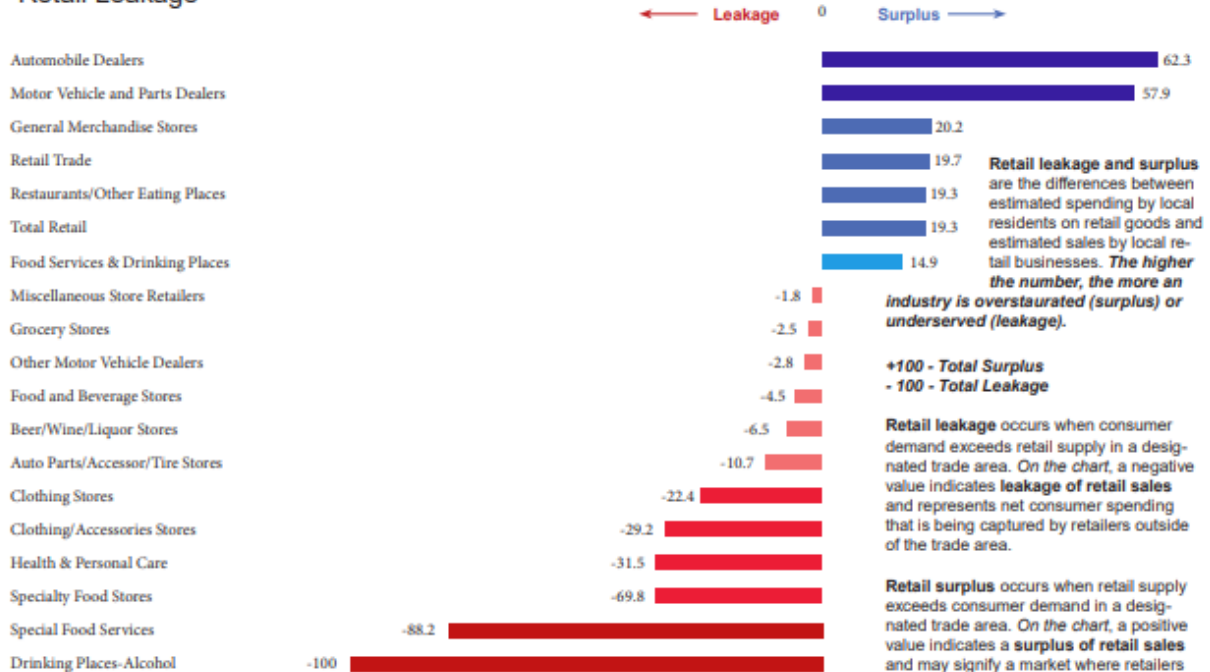
N/A	Study Area
\$1,663	Westborough
\$1,133	Worcester
\$1,360	Massachusetts



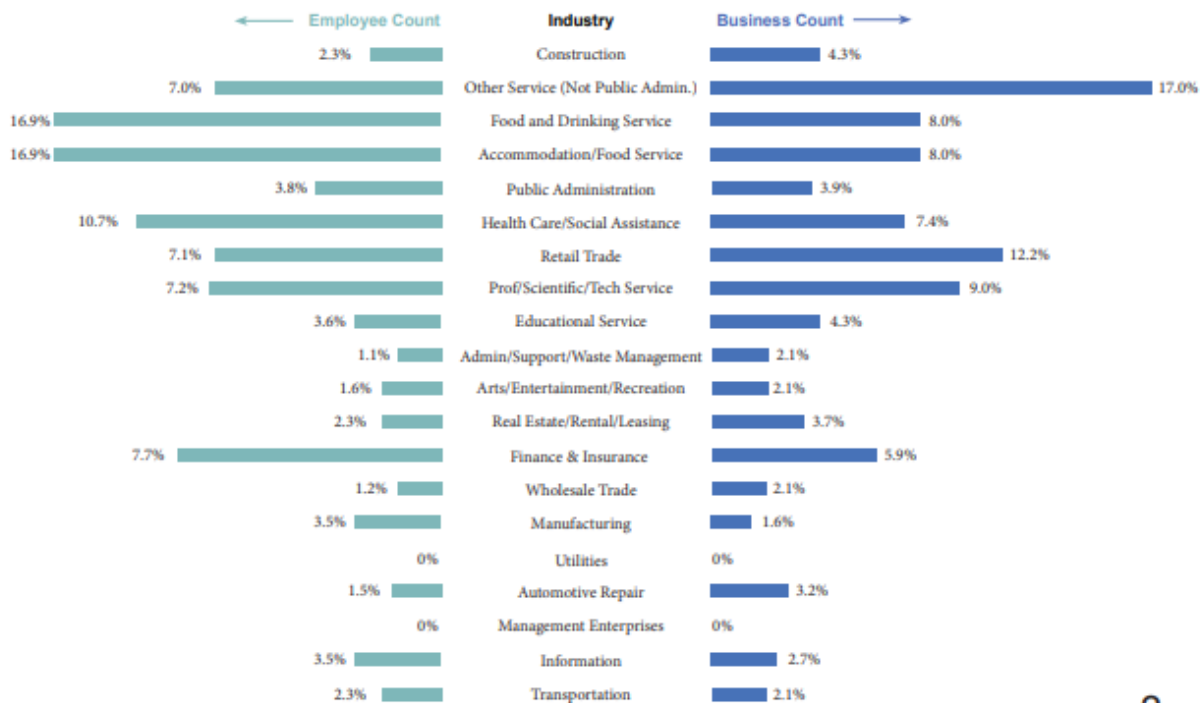
Data Sources: US Census Bureau. 2014-2019 American Community Survey.

Business Landscape

Retail Leakage



Types of Businesses in Study Area



Data Sources : ESRI, August 2017.

Appendix C. Business Survey Results

Business Survey Results - Data Tables

Community Where Targeted Downtown or Commercial District is Located

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

Westborough	32
-------------	----

Business Characteristics & Satisfaction with Commercial Area

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

1	2	6%
2 to 5	13	42%
6 to 10	9	29%
11 to 20	3	10%
21 to 50	2	6%
More than 50	2	6%
Total	31	100%

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

Own	5	16%
Rent	27	84%
Total	32	100%

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

Increased	19	59%
Decreased	2	6%
Stayed about the Same	6	19%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	5	16%
Total	32	100%

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

Retail (NAICS 44-45)	2	6%
Food Service (restaurants, bars), Accommodation (NAICS 72)	11	34%
Personal Service (hair, skin, nails, dry cleaning) (NAICS 81)	4	13%
Professional Scientific, Technical, Legal (NAICS 54)	1	3%
Finance, Insurance (NAICS 52)	2	6%
Healthcare (medical, dental, other health practitioners) (NAICS 62)	4	13%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Fitness (NAICS 71)	4	13%
Non-Profit, Community Services	1	3%
Other	3	9%
Total	32	100%

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

Condition of public spaces, streets, sidewalks

Very Dissatisfied	1	3%
Dissatisfied	6	19%
Neutral	4	13%
Satisfied	17	53%
Very Satisfied	4	13%
Total	32	100%

Condition of Private Buildings, Facades, Storefronts, Signage

Very Dissatisfied	1	3%
Dissatisfied	7	22%
Neutral	5	16%
Satisfied	16	50%
Very Satisfied	3	9%
Total	32	100%

Access for Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	1	3%
Dissatisfied	1	3%
Neutral	9	28%
Satisfied	13	41%
Very Satisfied	8	25%
Total	32	100%

Safety and Comfort of Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	1	3%
Dissatisfied	0	0%
Neutral	4	13%
Satisfied	15	47%
Very Satisfied	12	38%
Total	32	100%

Proximity to Complementary Businesses or Uses

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	2	6%
Neutral	7	22%
Satisfied	18	56%
Very Satisfied	5	16%
Total	32	100%

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

Licensing or permitting regulations	1	3%
Signage regulations	8	25%
Parking regulations	5	16%
Outdoor dining or selling regulations	4	13%
Allowed uses, change of use or other zoning regulations	1	3%
Historic District regulations	9	28%
Other regulations (not related to COVID)	0	0%
None - No Issues with regulations	18	56%

Impacts of COVID

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

Decline in revenue	26	81%
Employee layoff	17	53%
Reduced operating hours/capacity	28	88%
Business closure (temporary or permanent)	17	53%
Stopped/deferred rent or mortgage payments	5	16%
Incurred expense to implement safety measures	20	63%
Established alternative mode to sell and deliver products (on-line platforms, delivery, etc.)	20	63%
None of the Above	0	0%

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

Increased compared to 2019	4	13%
Stayed about the same as 2019	3	9%
Decreased 1 – 24% compared to 2019	6	19%
Decreased 25 – 49% compared to 2019	9	28%
Decreased 75 - 100% compared to 2019	0	0%
Decreased 50 – 74% compared to 2019	4	13%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	6	19%
Total	32	100%

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

More customers than before COVID	1	3%
About the same number as before COVID	4	13%
1 – 24% less customers than before COVID	7	22%
25 – 49% less customers than before COVID	11	34%
50 – 74% less customers than before COVID	7	22%
75 – 100% less customers than before COVID	0	0%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	2	6%
Total	32	100%

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

Operating at full capacity	9	28%
Operating at reduced hours/capacity due to COVID	23	72%
Temporarily closed due to COVID	0	0%
Permanently closed due to COVID	0	0%
Total	32	100%

Strategies for Supporting Businesses and Improving the Commercial District

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

Renovation of Storefronts/Building Facades

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	9%
Of Little Importance or Need	6	19%
Moderately Important	7	22%
Important	11	34%
Very Important	5	16%
Total	32	100%

Improvement/Development of Public Spaces & Seating Areas

Unimportant/Not Needed	4	13%
Of Little Importance or Need	4	13%
Moderately Important	10	32%
Important	11	35%
Very Important	2	6%
Total	31	100%

Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	3%
Of Little Importance or Need	11	35%
Moderately Important	6	19%
Important	6	19%
Very Important	7	23%
Total	31	100%

Improvements in Safety and/or Cleanliness

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	10%
Of Little Importance or Need	8	26%
Moderately Important	8	26%
Important	9	29%
Very Important	3	10%
Total	31	100%

Changes in Public Parking Availability, Management or Policies

Unimportant/Not Needed	6	19%
Of Little Importance or Need	5	16%
Moderately Important	10	32%
Important	7	23%
Very Important	3	10%
Total	31	100%

Amenity Improvements for Public Transit Users and/or Bike Riders

Unimportant/Not Needed	6	19%
Of Little Importance or Need	7	23%
Moderately Important	11	35%
Important	5	16%
Very Important	2	6%
Total	31	100%

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

More Cultural Events/Activities to Bring People into the District

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	5	16%
Moderately Important	8	26%
Important	13	42%
Very Important	5	16%
Total	31	100%

More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining and Selling

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	6%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	10%
Moderately Important	6	19%
Important	7	23%
Very Important	13	42%
Total	31	100%

Implementing Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	6%
Of Little Importance or Need	2	6%
Moderately Important	6	19%
Important	9	29%
Very Important	12	39%
Total	31	100%

Recruitment Programs to Attract Additional Businesses

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	10%
Of Little Importance or Need	5	16%
Moderately Important	8	26%
Important	6	19%
Very Important	9	29%
Total	31	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	6%
Of Little Importance or Need	7	23%
Moderately Important	14	45%
Important	3	10%
Very Important	5	16%
Total	31	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	4	13%
Of Little Importance or Need	8	26%
Moderately Important	11	35%
Important	5	16%
Very Important	3	10%
Total	31	100%

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

Setting up an online store or other online selling channel	0	0%
Creating new services such as delivery	3	10%
Participating in shared marketing/advertising	13	43%
Low-cost financing for storefront/façade improvements	7	23%
Low-cost financing for purchasing property in the commercial district	3	10%
Training on the use of social media	5	17%
None of the above	14	47%

Appendix D. Phase I Presentation



Project Team Introductions

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Local Rapid Recovery Plan Program

- The Local Rapid Recovery Plan (LRRP) Program supports the economic and development needs of communities as they recover from the impacts of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- LRRP Objectives:
 - Collect **primary data** to measure COVID-19 impacts on the local business community.
 - Develop **actionable projects** that reflect COVID-19 recovery needs, community priorities, available resources, and local implementation capacity.
 - Finalize a **rapid recovery plan** that meets the short-term and long-term economic recovery goals of the community.

PROJECT STATUS UPDATES

FINDINGS FROM PHASE I

TRANSITIONING TO PHASE II

Project Status Updates

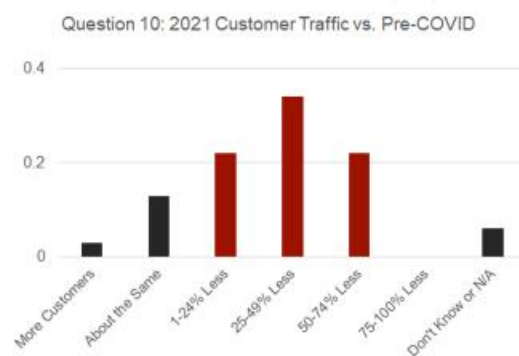
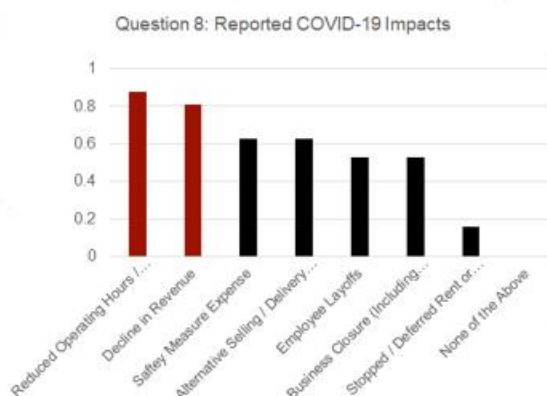
Our data collection included:

- Reviewing 10+ Town Documents
- Interviewing 14 Key Informants
- 20+ Baseline Data Points
- 15 Site Visit Data Points
- 32 Responses to Statewide Business Survey



Business Survey: Key Findings

Businesses were impacted in various ways by COVID-19, but the most common impacts were reduced operating hours (88% of respondents) and a decline in revenue (81% of respondents).

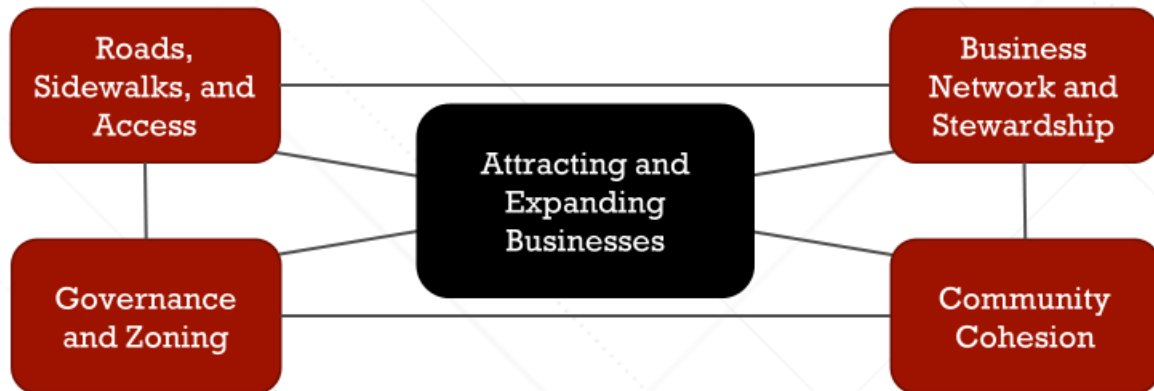


PROJECT STATUS UPDATES
FINDINGS FROM PHASE I
TRANSITIONING TO PHASE II

Drivers of Community Impact



Drivers of Community Impact



Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

- Car-centric Infrastructure
- Perceived Gaps in Parking
- Minimal Wayfinding



Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

Governance and Zoning

Business Networking and Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

- **Car-centric Infrastructure**
- Percieved Gaps in Parking
- Minimal Wayfinding

57% of survey respondents indicated improvements for public transit users and bike riders moderately to very important.

Business Survey

Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

Governance and Zoning

Business Networking and
Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

- Car-centric Infrastructure
- **Percieved Gaps in Parking**
- Minimal Wayfinding

"We know there is a gluttony of parking, so the issue isn't parking per se, but how to direct and inform people of the type and location of parking"

Key Informant Interviews, Documentation Review

Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

Governance and Zoning

Business Networking and
Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

- Car-centric Infrastructure
- Perceived Gaps in Parking
- **Minimal Wayfinding**

"Visibility is key. People need to know what exists downtown."

Key Informant Interviews, Documentation Review

Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

Governance and Zoning

Business Networking and Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Governance and Regulations

- Streamline Business Procedures
- Focus on Rapid Governance
- Restrictive Zoning and Development Regulations



Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

Governance and Regulations

Business Networking and Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Governance and Regulations

- **Streamline Business Procedures**
- Focus on Rapid Governance
- Restrictive Zoning and Development Regulations

"Westborough needs to make it easier to establish a business, which might include a process map for new business owners. These new/potential business owners do not want to undertake a complicated process to register their business. When considering a new opportunity, as a businesses owner, it is important that the Town support them."

Key Informant Interviews

Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

Governance and Regulations

Business Networking and Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Governance and Regulations

- Streamline Business Procedures
- **Focus on Rapid Governance**
- Restrictive Zoning and Development Regulations

"We can expand opportunities for improvement in Westborough through strategic policy. This process can support quick initiatives that do not require Town Meetings."

Key Informant Interviews, Town Website

Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

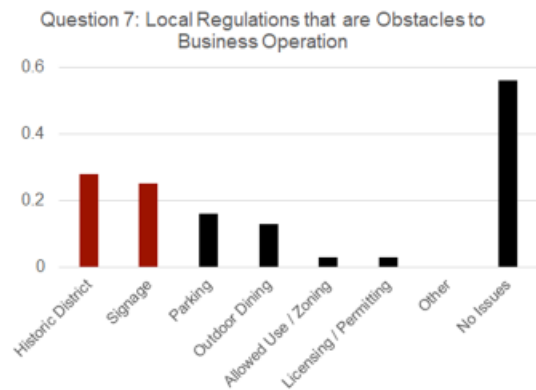
Governance and Regulations

Business Networking and Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Governance and Regulations

- Streamline Business Procedures
- Focus on Rapid Governance
- **Restrictive Zoning and Development Regulations**



Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

Governance and Regulations

Business Networking and Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Business Networking and Stewardship

- Leverage Regional Opportunities
- Improve Westborough's Marketing
- Coordinate the Business Community



Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

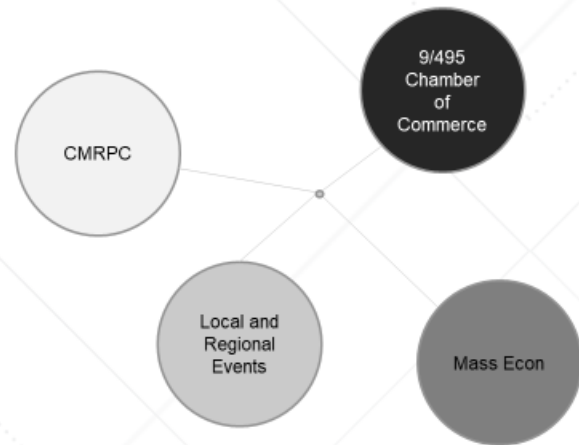
Governance and Regulations

Business Networking and Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Business Networking and Stewardship

- **Leverage Regional Opportunities**
- Improve Westborough's Marketing
- Coordinate the Business Community



Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

Governance and Regulations

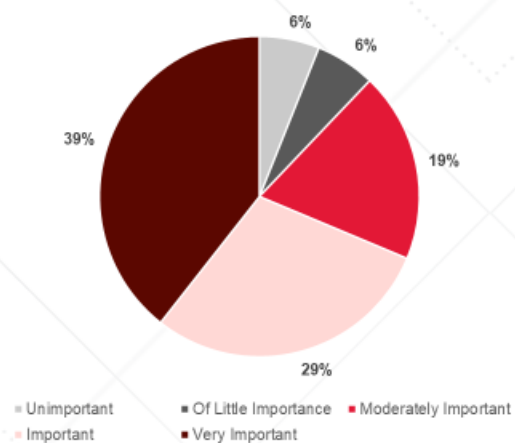
Business Networking and Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Business Networking and Stewardship

- Leverage Regional Opportunities
- **Improve Westborough's Marketing**
- Coordinate the Business Community

Importance of Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District



Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

Governance and Regulations

Business Networking and Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Business Networking and Stewardship

- Leverage Regional Opportunities
- Improve Westborough's Marketing
- **Coordinate the Business Community**

"Westborough should engage more marketing opportunities on behalf of the Town, finding a mechanism to promote what the Town does for business."

Key Informant Interviews

Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

Governance and Regulations

Business Networking and Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Community Cohesion

- Hold Community Events
- Connect with All of Westborough
- Leverage Local Capacity for Engagement



Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

Governance and Regulations

Business Networking and Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Community Cohesion

- **Hold Community Events**
- Connect with All of Westborough
- Leverage Local Capacity for Engagement

84% of respondents believe it is important to have more cultural events/activities that bring people downtown.

Business Survey, Key Informant Interviews

Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

Governance and Regulations

Business Networking and Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Community Cohesion

- Hold Community Events
- **Connect with All of Westborough**
- Leverage Local Capacity for Engagement

"Westborough is a culturally diverse town... [therefore,] highlighting the cultural side of Westborough is a huge task. Westborough should consider engaging minority-owned businesses and focusing on filling gaps in representation."

Key Informant Interviews

Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

Governance and Regulations

Business Networking and Stewardship

Community Cohesion

Community Cohesion

- Hold Community Events
- Connect with All of Westborough
- **Leverage Local Capacity for Engagement**

"Identify community representatives who have established rapport with subsets of business owners to serve as liaisons and local champions."

Key Informant Interviews, Documentation Review

Roads, Sidewalks, and Access

Governance and Regulations

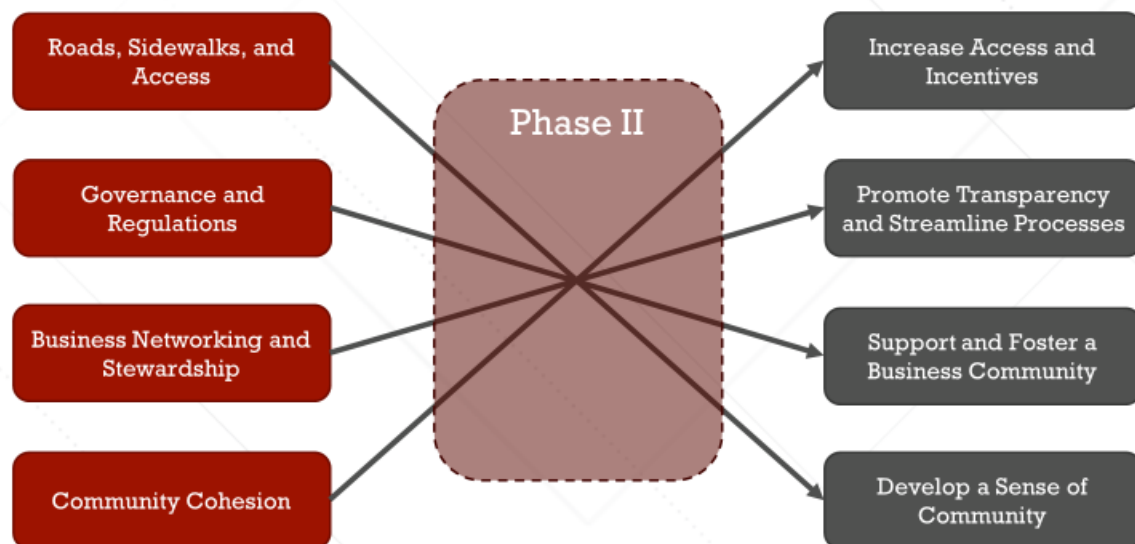
Business Networking and Stewardship

Community Cohesion

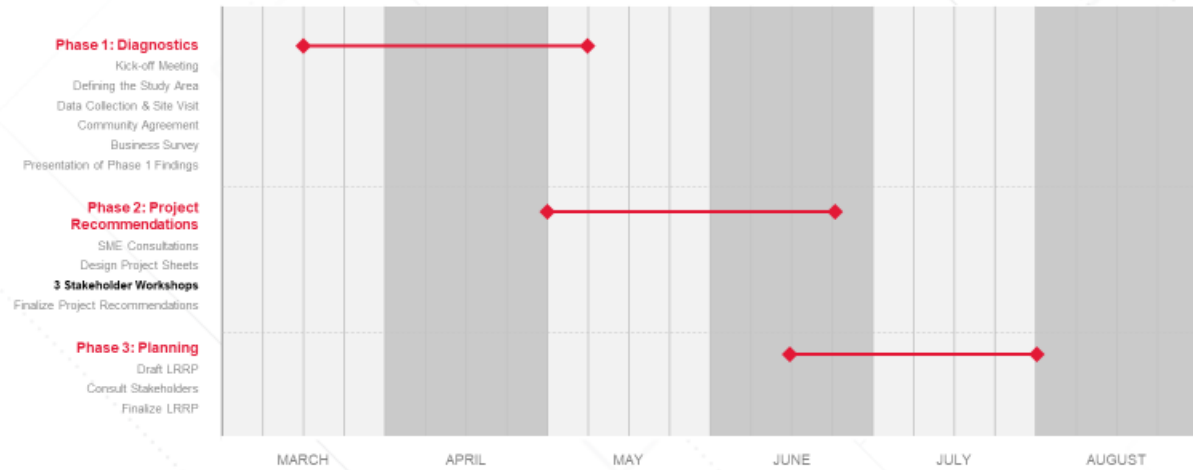
Do these conclusions accurately represent
Westborough?

PROJECT STATUS UPDATES FINDINGS FROM PHASE I TRANSITIONING TO PHASE II

Data to Project Analysis



Project Timeline and Milestones



Questions?

Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program: Phase I Stakeholder Meeting

Town of Westborough, Massachusetts

May 12, 2021



Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program: Phase I Stakeholder Meeting

Town of Westborough, Massachusetts

May 12, 2021



Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program: Phase I Stakeholder Meeting

Town of Westborough, Massachusetts

May 12, 2021



Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program: Phase I Stakeholder Meeting

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Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program: Phase I Stakeholder Meeting

Town of Westborough, Massachusetts

May 12, 2021



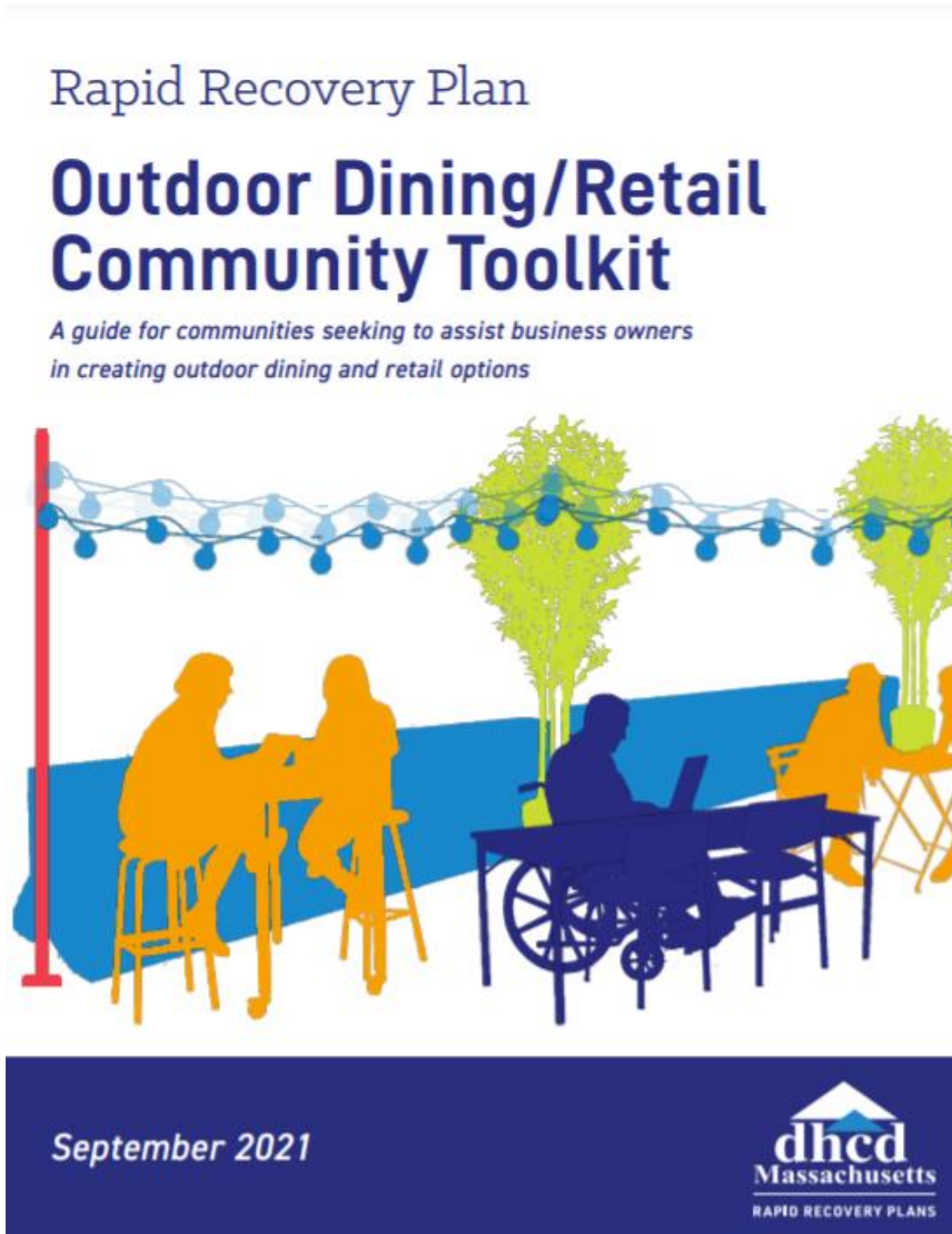
Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program: Phase I Stakeholder Meeting

Town of Westborough, Massachusetts

May 12, 2021



Appendix E. Outdoor Dining Toolkit



The Outdoor Dining Toolkit Retail/Community Toolkit is provided as an attachment to this document.