



# Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

City of  
Woburn



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



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

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

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

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Front Cover Top: The Brick Yard Restaurant;  
Bottom: Main Street vacant storefront Photo  
Credits: Goman+York

# Acknowledgements

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The Honorable Scott Galvin, Mayor

## Woburn Redevelopment Authority

Donald Queenin, Chair

## Woburn Chamber of Commerce

Chris Kiesel, Executive Director

## Goman+York

Cynthia E. Stewart, Senior Vice President & LRRP Plan  
Facilitator

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

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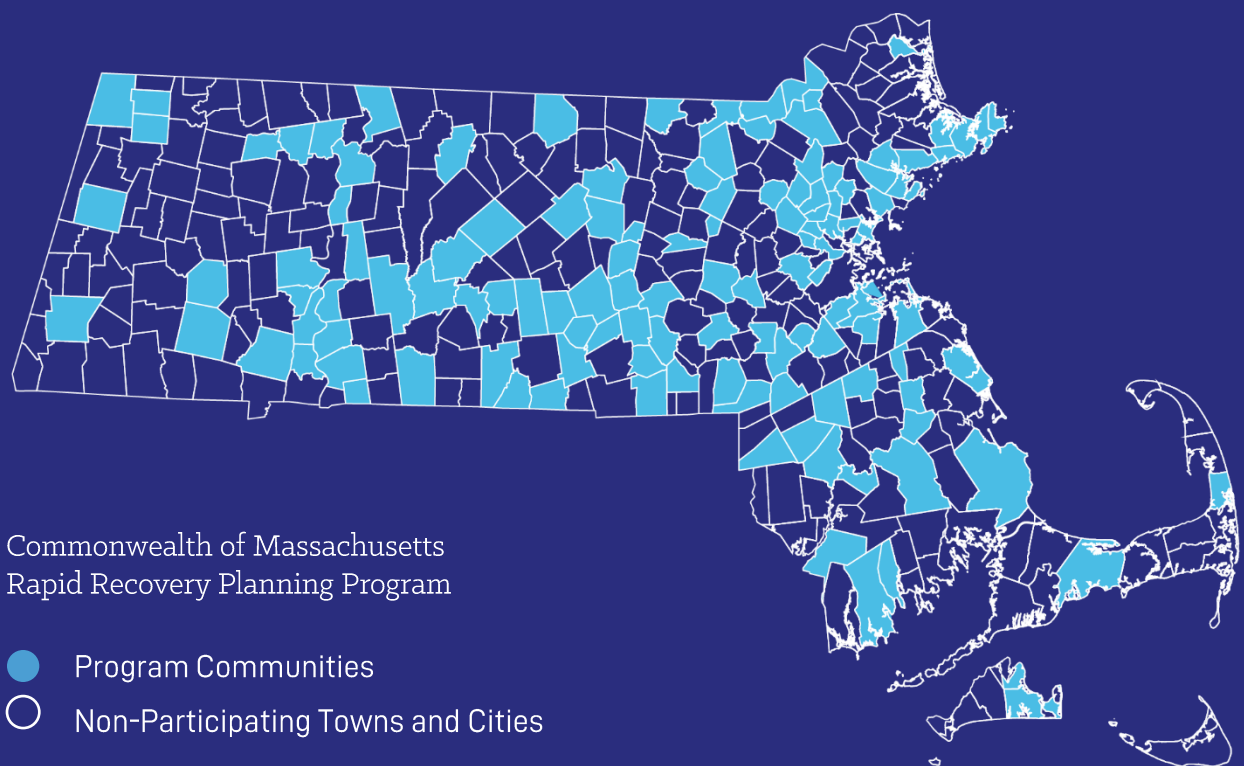
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## 125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

52 Small Communities  
51 Medium Communities  
16 Large Communities  
6 Extra Large Communities

Mass Downtown Initiative distributed nearly \$10 million across 125 communities throughout the Commonwealth to assess impacts from COVID-19 and develop actionable, project-based recovery plans tailored to the unique economic challenges in downtowns, town centers, and commercial districts.



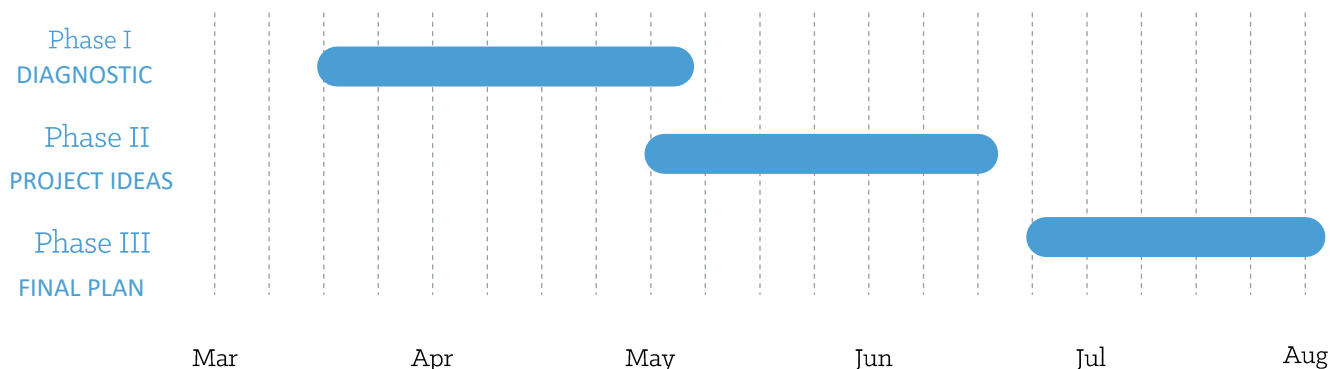
# Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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

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

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

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



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

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

## Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework



Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?

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

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

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

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



Public Realm



Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Revenue/Sales



Admin Capacity



Cultural/Arts



Other

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## Executive Summary

# Executive Summary

## Recovery and Transformation

The City of Woburn, located in Middlesex County nine miles northwest of Boston, was first settled in 1640 and incorporated as a distinct township in 1642. Today, Woburn has a population of 40,011 with approximately 395 people residing in Woburn Center.

Local officials and community leaders recognized that Woburn Square was facing identity and economic challenges and in 2000, commissioned a revitalization study to help guide a new path forward for the downtown commercial corridor. Since the release of that report, the City has made progress implementing several recommendations including installation of energy-efficient period lighting, banners and hanging plants, upgrades to Marlowe Park and the addition of new public parking lots. Numerous buildings have been renovated and dozens of business signs replaced using a combination of private and public funding. However, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic not only paused those efforts but amplified some shortcomings and challenges facing the businesses located in the downtown now referred to as Woburn Center.

There is a large variation in the age and quality of the building stock in the area, and storefront conditions vary from store to store. New businesses and redeveloped buildings generally have better quality signage and street presence with many buildings in desperate need of updating. There is room to expand the existing façade improvement program and take a more proactive approach to recruiting tenant and owner participation from those that have not yet participated in the program.

Further, during the site visit significant deterioration to the sidewalks, crosswalks, and tree pits/grates was creating hazardous walking conditions. Also noted were several storefronts with blocked windows or a lack of signage which is uninviting for consumers and negatively impacts the entire commercial corridor.





Vacant Business, Main Street. Source: Goman+York

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

Many communities saw a downturn for local businesses and reduced traffic during the Covid-19 pandemic and Woburn Center was no exception. Businesses reported significant decreases in foot traffic, loss of revenues, and temporary closures with eleven businesses in the downtown closing permanently.

A google search for Woburn Center brings up the study from 2000 rather than a listing of the diverse businesses in the district. There is no website, Facebook page or Instagram account devoted to promoting the businesses in Woburn Center. This is indicative of the lack of a proactive branding and marketing initiative. In order to compete with neighboring commercial developments like Woburn Village and the pending redevelopment of Woburn Mall, addressing this issue will be crucial to the viability and economic success of this commercial corridor and its small businesses.

A formal downtown branding and marketing initiative is needed to highlight the retail, the diverse restaurants, and other key assets in the city center. Providing the administrative capacity to implement this and other business-related projects will be the key to the city's success.

Despite COVID related drops in traffic counts, the speed and volume of traffic along Main Street remains a significant obstacle which must also be addressed if the city is to be successful in encouraging families and customers of all ages to visit and linger in the downtown area. The next steps taken by the City will be crucial to its success in reviving the downtown and must address placemaking initiatives. Leveraging existing anchors like the common, the public library, and the city hall and connecting those anchors with pedestrian friendly infrastructure improvements will make Woburn Center more appealing to visitors and should include thinking creatively on how to add more public space along the sidewalk with permanent or temporary bump outs, activating the existing pocket park and adding art and other improvements to the public space.

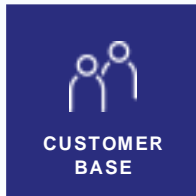
Methodical and intentional investment in administration capacity, marketing, and placemaking initiatives will reinforce and signal the City of Woburn's commitment to both the recovery and transformation of the downtown. These projects can provide the foundation to define and update Woburn Center's identity moving forward and set the stage for recovery and transformation.

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## Diagnostic



# Key Findings

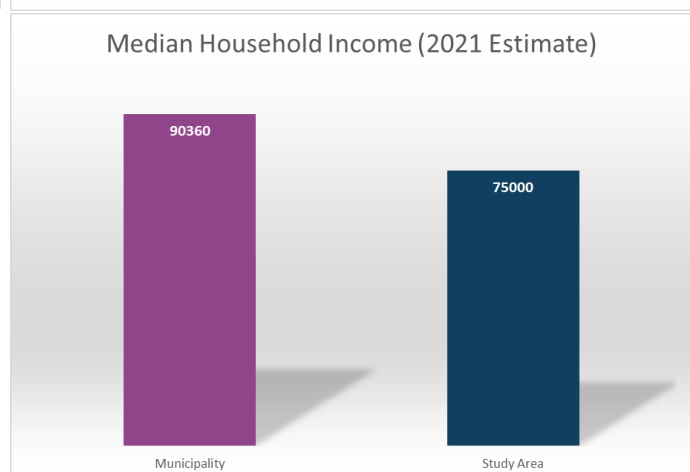
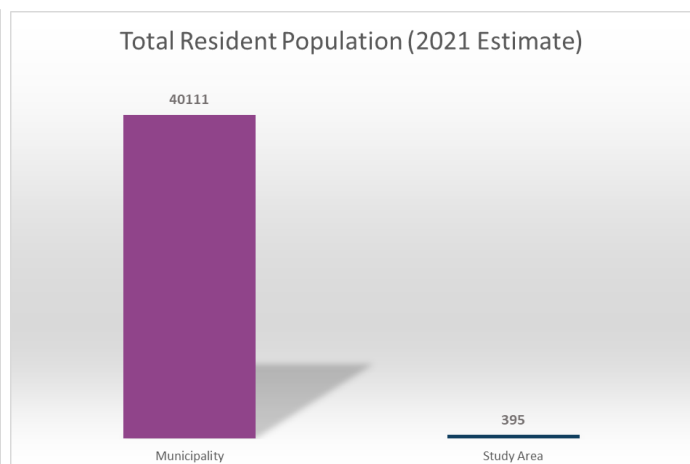
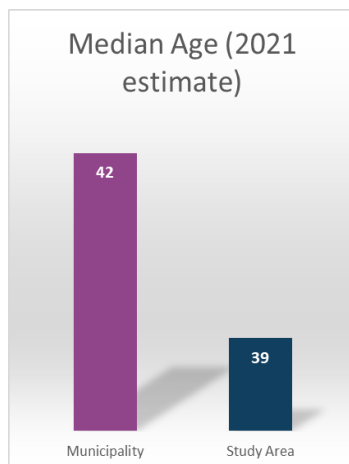


## Moving Toward More Diverse Customer Base

The City of Woburn is a suburban community located in Middlesex County about nine miles northwest of the City of Boston with a population of 40,011. First settled in 1640 and incorporated as a distinct township in 1642, it is one of the oldest and most historic communities in New England. The City features a mix residential neighborhoods, office, and industrial parks, as well as open spaces, centered around the city's historic downtown. With a dense suburban feel, most residents own their homes.

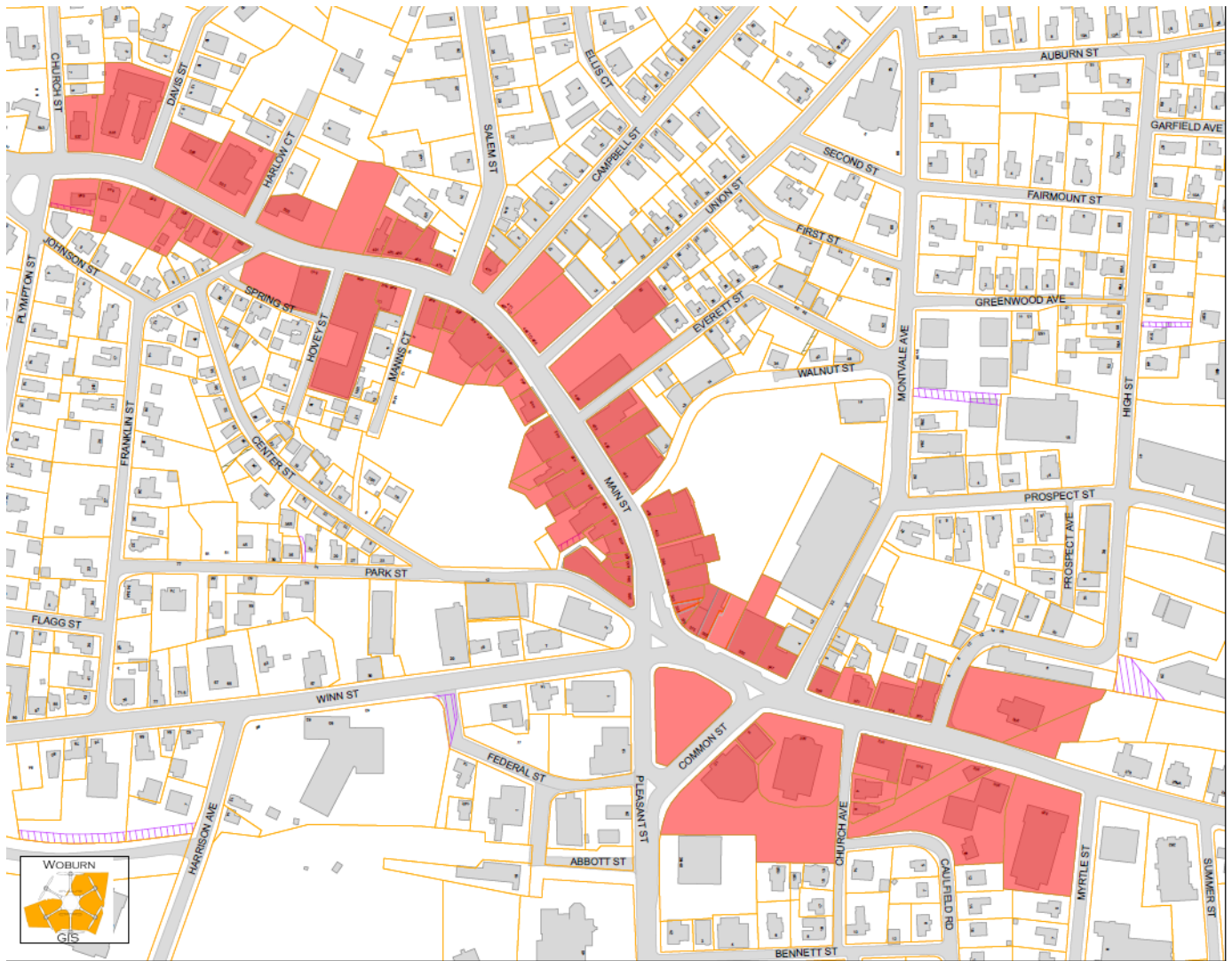
Home to a variety of professionals, more live and work in and close to Woburn rather than in Boston proper. The City's population grew by over 7% in the last decade and has also become more diverse. While Woburn is still predominately white at 78% , the number of residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino increasing by 50 percent and now represents 7.7% percent of the City's population. Woburn also had significant growth in its Asian population bringing it to 13% with Black or African American representing 5.3% of Woburn's population.

The project area, known as Woburn Center, includes the properties that front Main Street beginning at Church Street to the north and running southerly to Myrtle Street and include the Common and properties along Common Street. Currently there are approximately 395 residents in the project area with a median age of 39.



Demographics and Information Sources:

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



While progress has been made in Woburn Center with upgrades including energy-efficient period lighting, banners, hanging plants, additional public parking lots and the renovation to Marlowe Park there is still room for improvement. Building façades, outdoor and window signage regulations need more stringent enforcement and perhaps additional regulation.

Above: Map of Woburn Center Project Area Source: Woburn Planning Department

# Key Findings



## Public Realm On-site Assessment

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

There seem to be enough crosswalks; however, they all show considerable wear and need repainted. The crosswalks not located at a traffic light need additional enhancement to slow traffic and ensure the safety of pedestrians.

The City has made considerable progress in adding public parking spaces in the project area and providing directional signage; however, there are still concerns from business owners regarding availability or the perception of availability of parking for customers.

Traffic congestion and speed, including large trucks, creates dangerous pedestrian crossing conditions, especially at night and at crosswalks not located at a traffic signal.

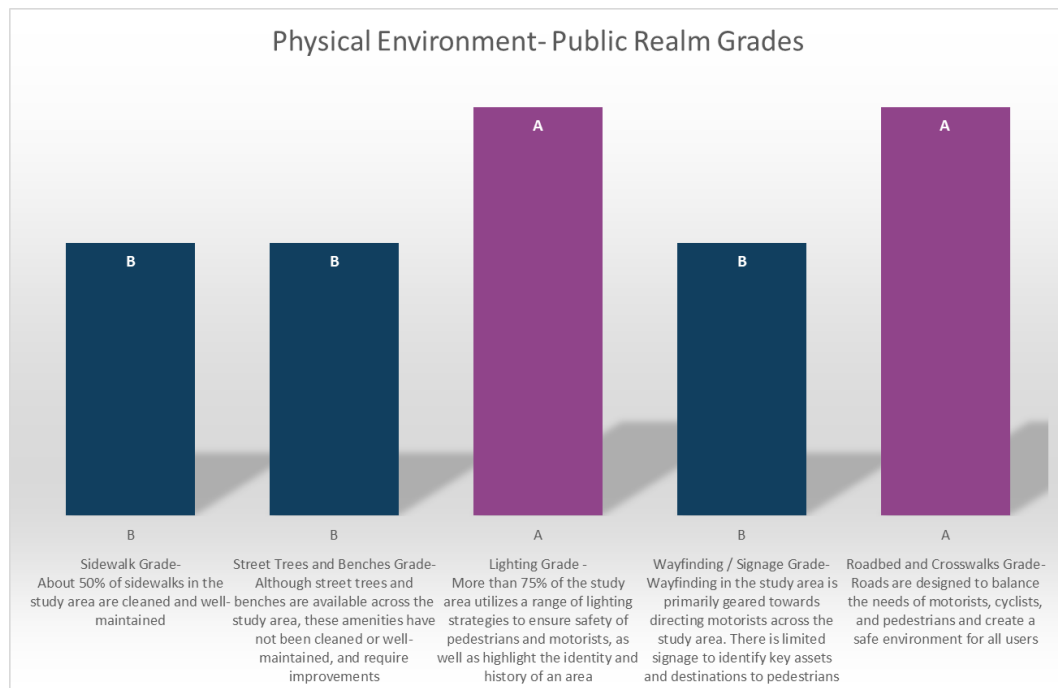


Photo Credits: Goman+York



# Key Findings



## Public Realm -

More than 45% of the sidewalks pose challenges due to narrow width and lack of buffers between the traffic and the sidewalk.

Trees have been planted on Main Street with sparsely placed benches. Adding more trees, benches and public spaces would enhance the pedestrian and shopper experience. Further, there is some inconsistency in the quality of the seasonal landscape from the "adopt and island" participants which may warrant further review and oversight.

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

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

66% of businesses felt it was important to improve streetscape and sidewalks and 99% agreed improvement to the public spaces and seating areas was important\*.

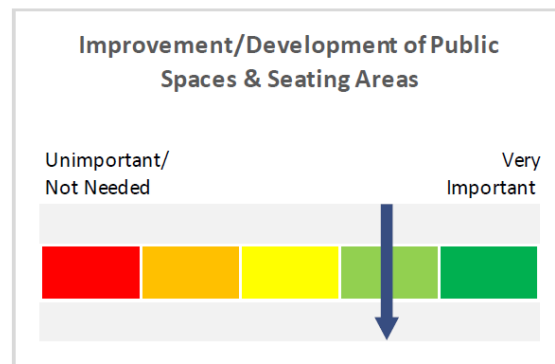
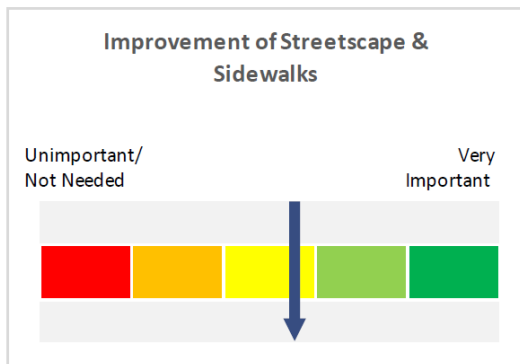


Photo Credits: Goman+York

# Key Findings



## Private Realm - Signage, Windows, and Activation of Outdoor Space

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

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

The economic viability of the project area could be elevated by activation of the windows of the vacant retail spaces in the project area and regulating and improving the window signage and displays of the operating businesses.

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

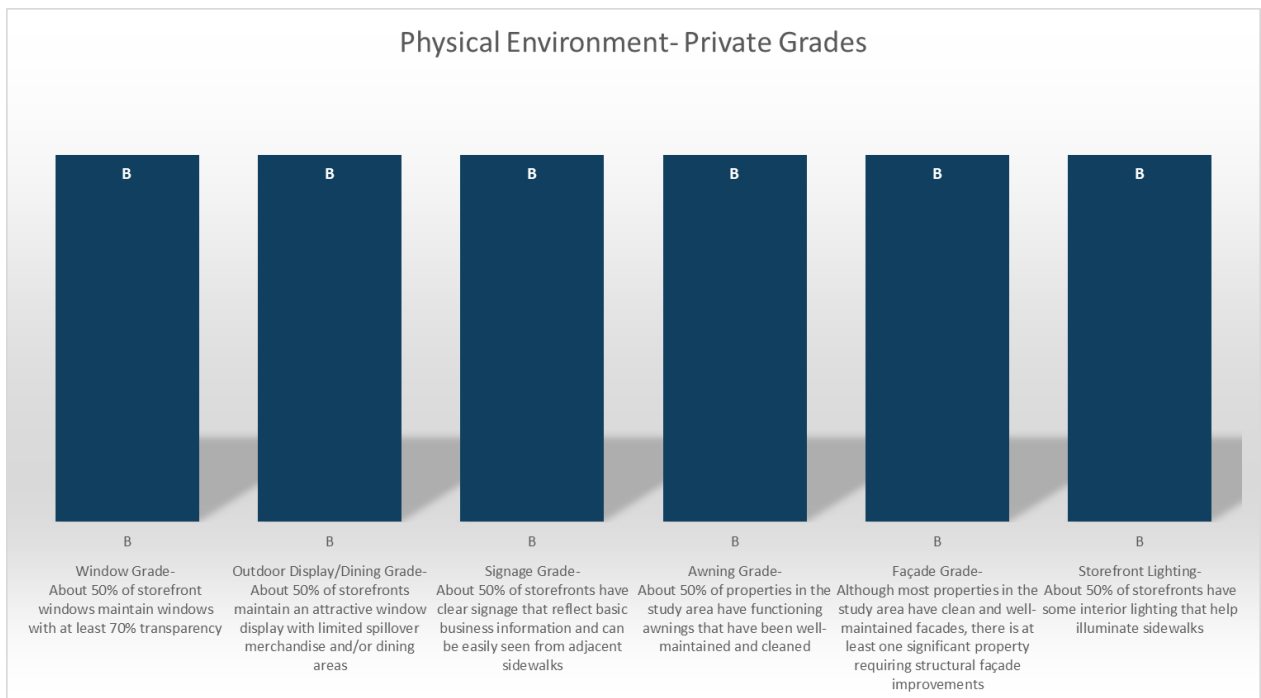


Photo Credits: Goman+York

# Key Findings



## Private Realm - Facades, lighting and Trash Receptacles Need Attention

There is a large variation in the age , quality and architectural styles of the building stock in the area, and storefront conditions vary from store to store. More than 25% of the properties require significant building façade improvements.

There are many trash receptacles and dumpsters visible from the street and parking lots that need to be screened or beautified. This downgrades the overall aesthetic of the corridor.

Many of the businesses have adequate storefront lighting, but there are some glaring misses along the corridor which detract from the feeling of safety.

77% of businesses surveyed indicated renovating storefronts and building facades was important and 77% would like to see improvements in safety and cleanliness in the district\*.

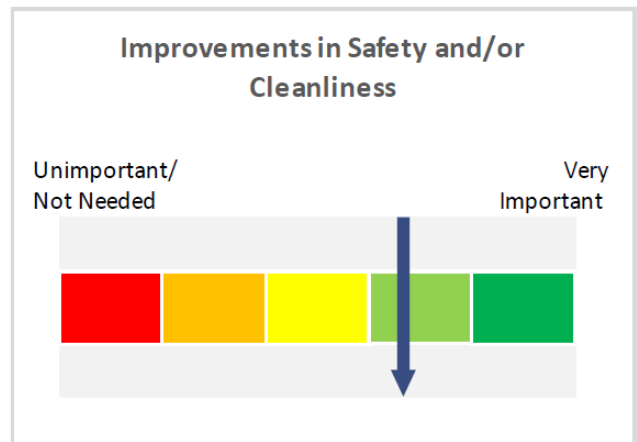
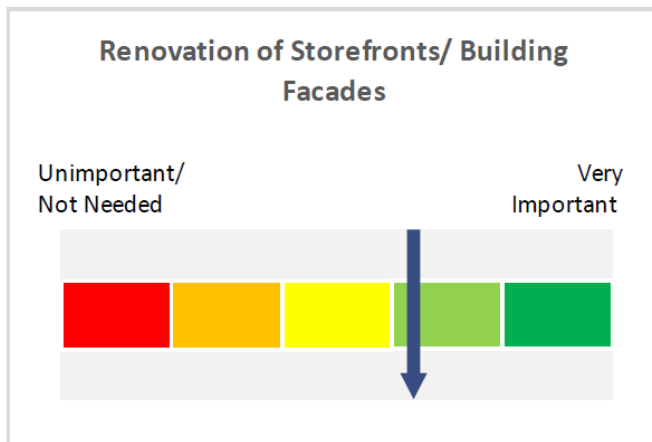


Photo Credits: Goman+York



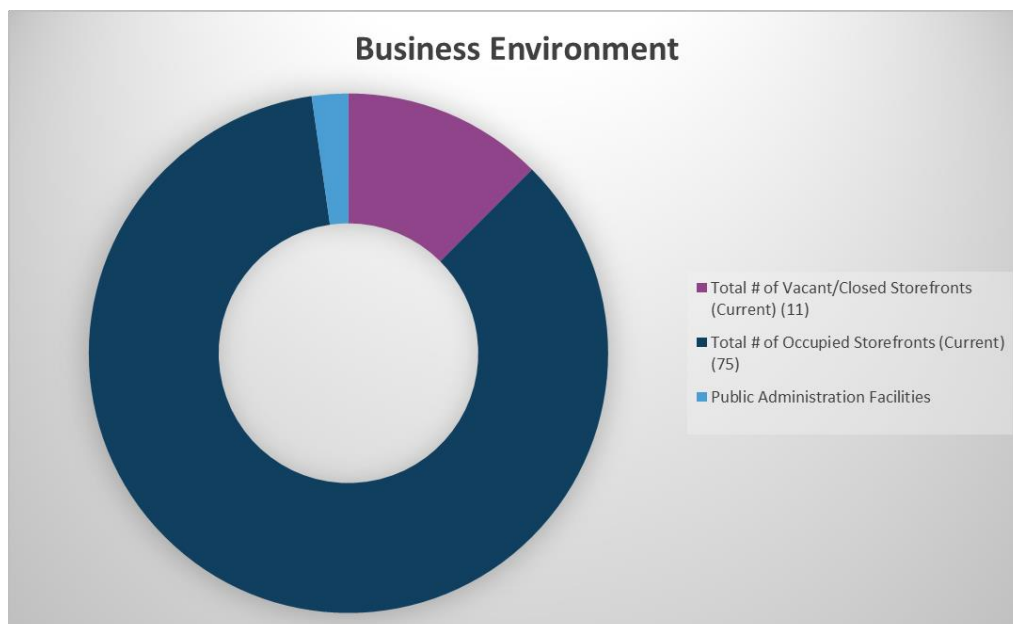
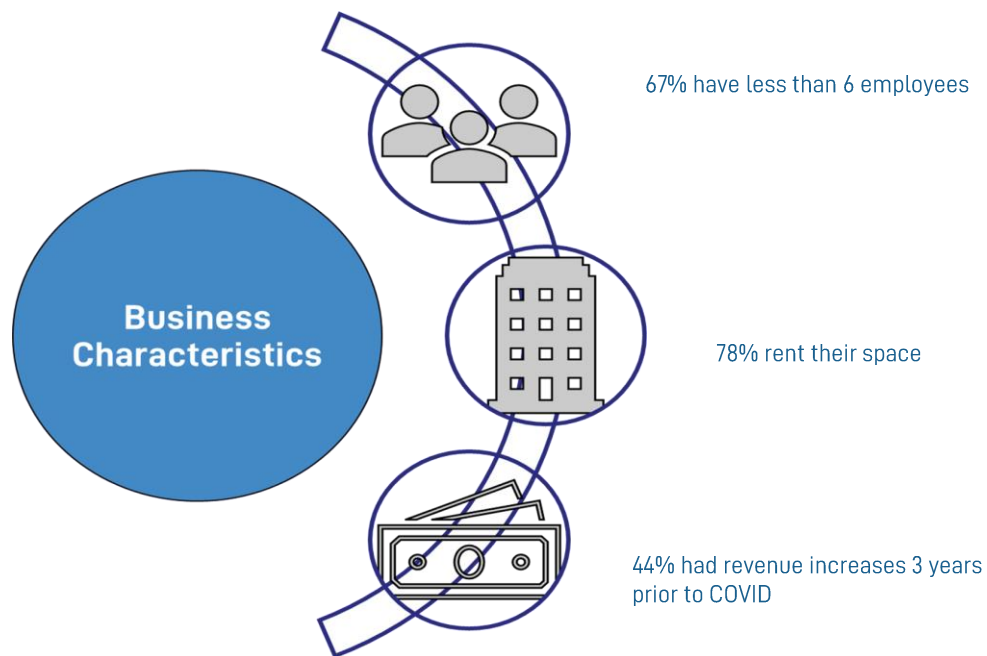


## Some National Retailers but Majority are Small Business Owners

The Town Center has 75 storefronts which include office, retail and a large number of restaurants. There were 11 vacancies as of April 2021.

The results of the business survey indicate that 67% of these businesses have less than 6 employees.

Major destinations include the City Hall, the Woburn District Court, the U.S. Post Office, the Woburn Common, and the Public Library which is just immediately outside the boundary of the project area.





## Retail and Entertainment Centric

Woburn Center is mostly retail uses at 79% retail/commercial with a higher concentration of restaurant/food uses. Other uses include office/professional services, government and arts/entertainment.

Commercial/Retail uses are divided into three main categories:

23% "traditional" retail; (consumer goods)

35% Restaurants/food

21% Retail Personal Services (salons, drycleaners, etc.)

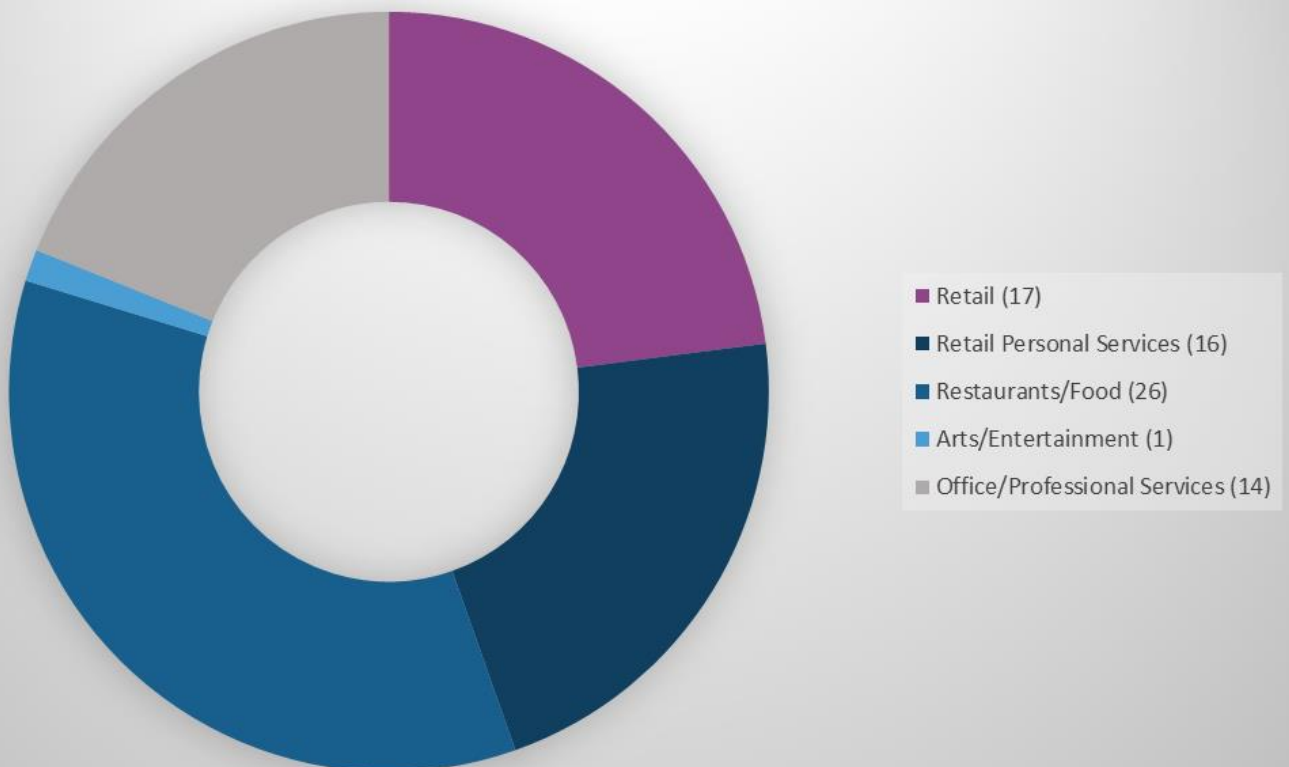
Ground Floor Retail 155,509 square feet

Ground Floor Office 24,317 Square feet

Open/Public Space 37,026 Square feet

Asking rent: approximately \$25 square foot for ground floor retail and \$30 a square foot for ground floor office.

### Business By Category (Woburn, MA)





## Affects of COVID Pandemic\*

100% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID.

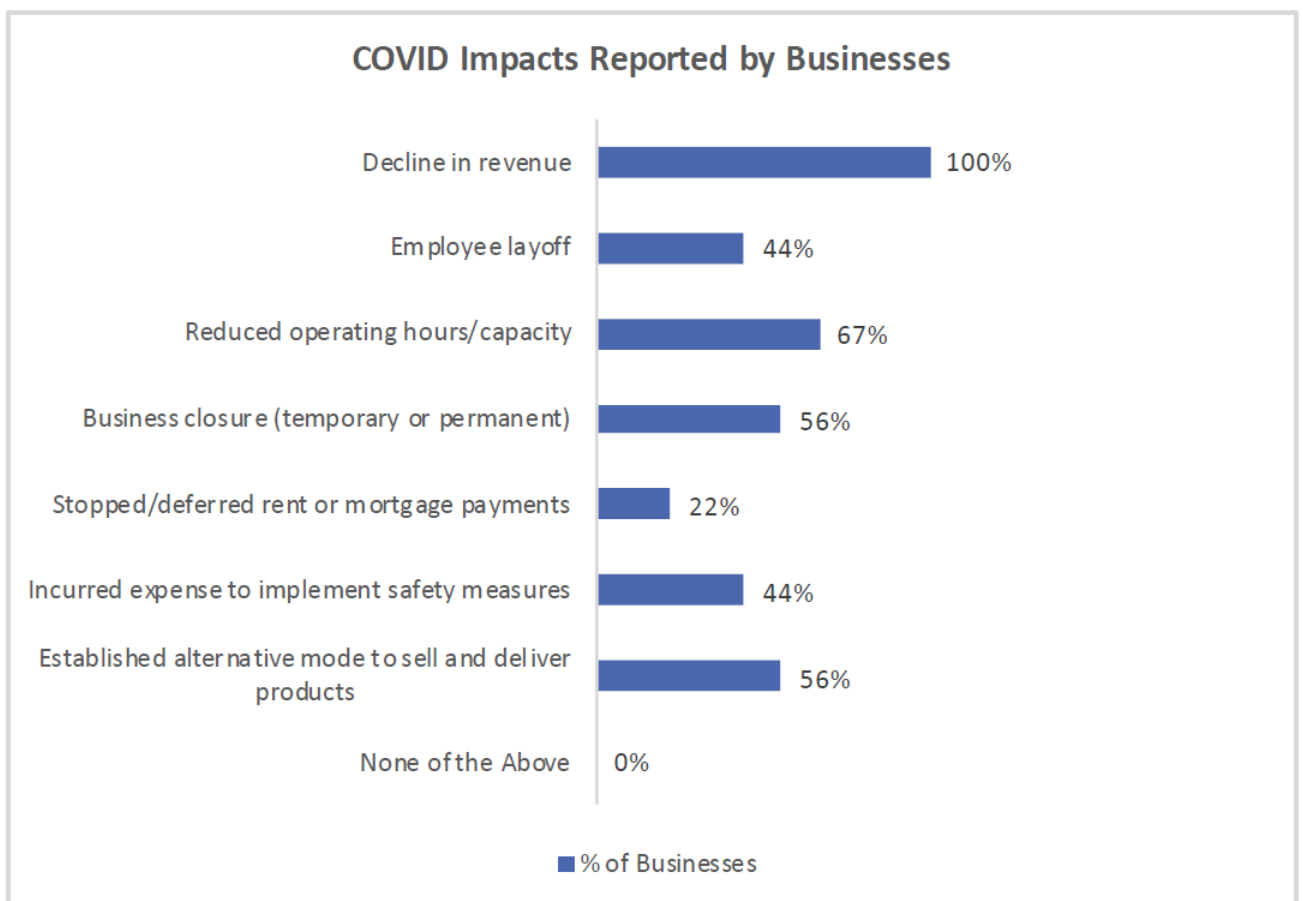
88% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID.

65% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more.

77% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019.

88% of businesses had less foot traffic in early 2021 than pre-Covid.

As of April 2021, 56% of businesses were still operating at reduced capacity or temporarily closed.



\*Data collected from business survey conducted during April of 2021 as part of the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development Rapid Recovery Planning initiative. The survey was directed to owners or other appropriate representatives of business establishments located in the targeted project area – Woburn Center. Only nine business owners participated in the survey despite email and in-person outreach.





## Need Professional Management to Promote Unique Merchants



Woburn does have a Chamber of Commerce, but very few businesses in Woburn Center are members of the Chamber. There is some speculation this is due to the large number of small business owners in the district who don't have the time or resources to participate.

City staff worked diligently to add tenant information to the property records but was only able to compile complete contact information for about 35% of the businesses in the project area.

Interviews with business owners confirmed a need for more communication between business owners and city officials.

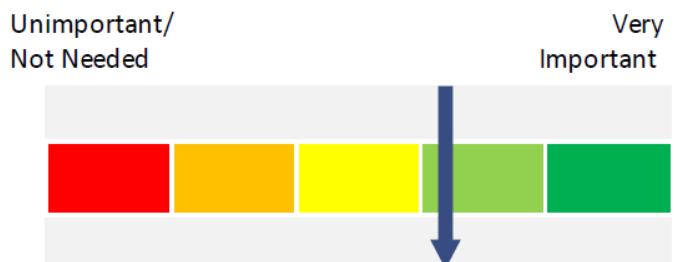
100% of business survey respondents think implementing a comprehensive marketing plan for the district is important and 88% would like to see more cultural events and activities hosted in the downtown. This was confirmed through in-person interviews with additional business owners during the site visit.

Designating an organization or employee to manage or oversee the downtown and build a rapport with business owners should be a top priority for the City of Woburn. Having a trusted liaison between local businesses, stakeholders and City government could provide more support to the small business owners in Woburn Center by providing technical assistance, updates on COVID recovery assistance and support business growth and expansion through marketing, and management of events designed to draw consumers into the district.

### Implementing Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District



### More Cultural Events/Activities to Bring People into the District



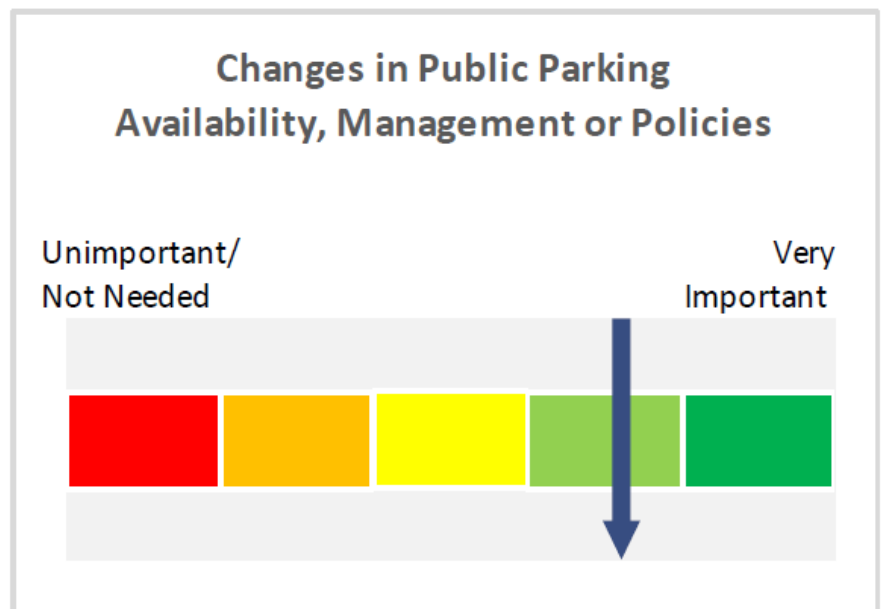


## Need for Management of Parking and Administration of Events

99% of the business owners surveyed rated changes in the public parking availability and management as important. This was one of the number one issues raised in interviews with business owners.

As a result of a 2012 parking study, the city acquired property on Main Street to create a new 60-car off-street parking lot and multiple business-friendly zoning amendments have been adopted. The City studied ways to improve traffic flow through Woburn Center (including the feasibility of reconfiguring some of the travel lanes) and installing parking meters but no changes have been forthcoming.

There does not appear to be an application or permitting process for hosting public events. This creates a lack of intentional coordination between organizations and groups planning events in the City of Woburn and creates missed opportunities for participation by Woburn Center businesses.



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## Project Recommendations

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# Project Categories

## Public Realm

Public spaces, landscaping, lighting, wayfinding signage, parking



## Private Realm

Façade & storefront interior improvements, vacancies



## Revenue & Sales

Consumer/traffic generation



## Administrative Capacity

District entity, regulations, permitting processes



## Cultural/Arts

Arts, programming, events



# Implement a Safe/Shared Streets & Sidewalks Initiative

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Project Area
Origin	Site Visit, interviews and business survey
Budget	 Medium Budget (Less than 200K) – Funding sources may include Woburn DPW, Massachusetts Shared Streets and Spaces Program (accepting new applications beginning in January 2022).
Timeframe	 Short Term (<Five Years) – Initial improvements can begin immediately and be spread out over time as funding and resources permit
Risk	 Low Risk – May require some coordination with MassDOT
Key Performance Indicators	Decrease in vehicle speeds, increased pedestrian safety, awareness of pedestrians by drivers
Partners & Resources	Woburn Public Works, Massachusetts Department of Transportation, downtown business owners



Woburn Town Center sidewalks and crosswalks. Photo Credit: Goman+York



## Diagnostic

Pedestrian traffic decreased substantially during COVID-19, but as the City returns to normal there will be an increase in pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the project area. Further, several business owners expressed concern about the speed of traffic and pedestrian safety.

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

There are at least three crosswalks that are not located at a signaled intersection that should be assessed for pedestrian activated flashing lights. Heading north on Main Street and curving to the right onto Main rather than going straight to the intersection with Winn Street, is one of the most concerning crosswalks which is located on a “blind” curve in Main Street (see right).

In addition, there are maintenance issues that need to be addressed not only regarding crosswalks but sidewalks as well with just one example highlighted in the photo to the right.



*Downtown Woburn Main Street sidewalk Photo Credit: Goman+York*



*Blind Curve Crosswalk Main Street Photo Credit: Google Maps*



## Action Item

Institute traffic calming/slowing for safe pedestrian crossings. Add pedestrian crossing lights and speed reduction features such as iridescent painted crosswalks, rumble striping/grooved pavement.

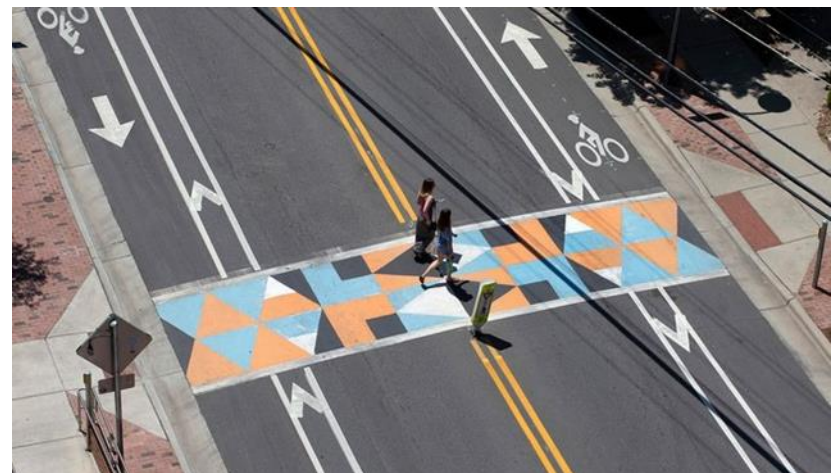
Raise driver awareness of pedestrian crossings with temporary traffic cones in the evening/after dark and/or create “fun-looking” easy maintainable crosswalks along Main Street.

Pavement appearance can be altered through unique treatments that add visual interest, such as colored or pattern-stamped asphalt, concrete, or concrete pavers, which can be used to make other traffic calming techniques more noticeable to drivers.

Pedestrian crossings and intersections can be painted to highlight crossing areas.

Assess sidewalk and street infrastructure and prioritize maintenance and new projects.

Providing opportunities to further enhance Main Street with the established streetscape amenities.



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

*Credit: City of Chapel Hill, NC*

# Process

## Project Initiation and Planning:

- Meet with Department of Public works and other City departments to discuss the issue and how to take steps to improve the safety of pedestrians in the area;
- Seek input on concerns with outreach to businesses, residents, police and other stakeholders;
- Identify goals, priority projects and define success;
- Identify sidewalk areas and crosswalks needing immediate repair/maintenance;
- Consider branded painting/art for crosswalks to elevate the pedestrian experience;
- Identify crosswalks not at signalized intersections and prioritize for pedestrian activated warning lights;

## Implementation:

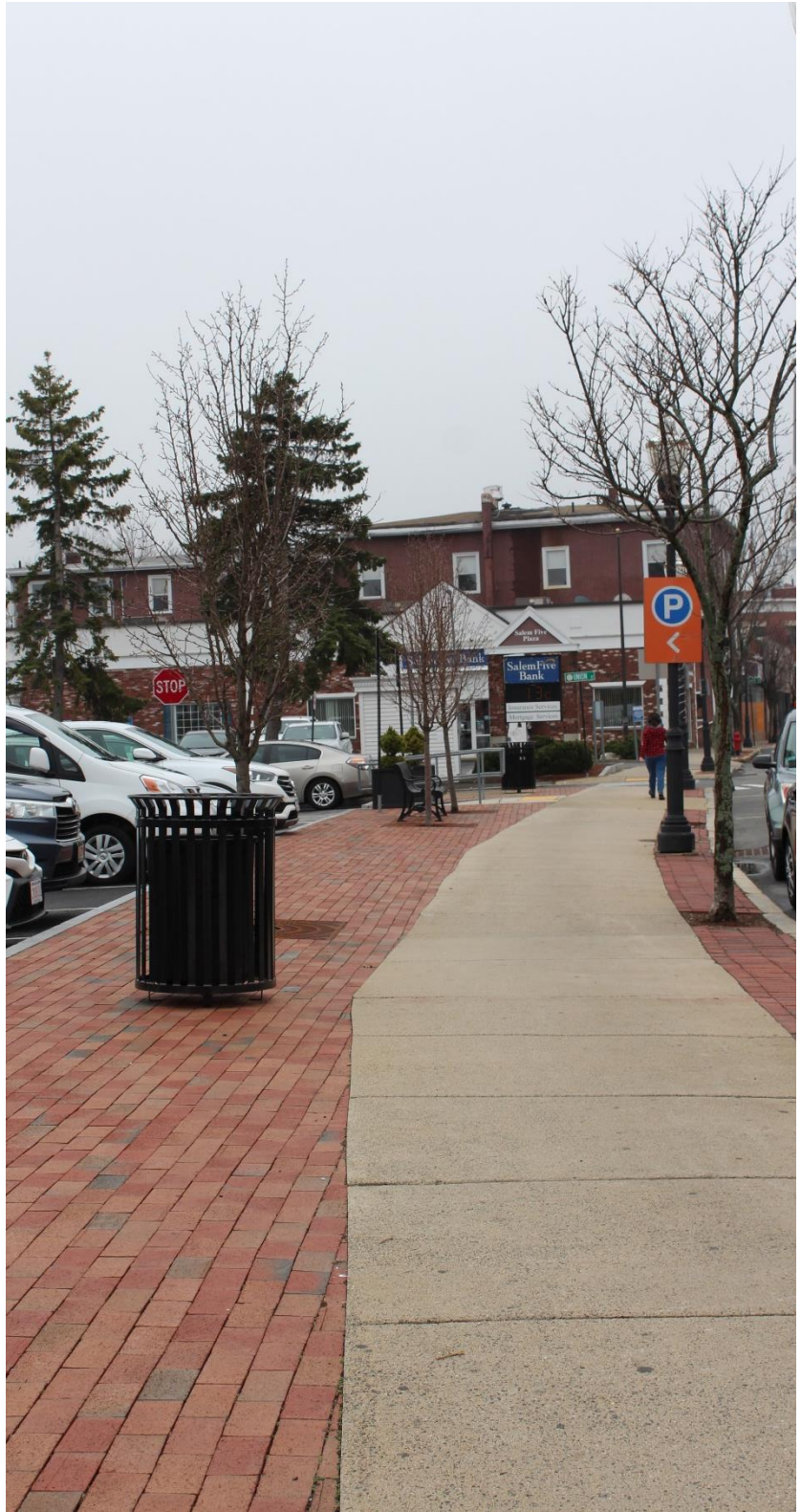
- Determine sources of funding;
- Develop timeline for implementation (determine single and multi-phased projects);
- Hire contractors or have public works complete maintenance and install new cross walk paint and lighting;

## Ongoing Monitoring / Maintenance:

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

## Evaluation :

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



*Sidewalk improvements in front of municipal lot located between Union and Campbell Streets.*

*Credit: Goman+York*



# DOWNTOWN TULSA



Best Practice

## Traffic Calming & Walkability



Location

Downtown Tulsa, Oklahoma

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

PROJECT COST: \$75,000

START DATE: May 2016

END DATE: November 2018

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

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

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

## IDA BEST PRACTICE - Cont'd

### EXECUTION

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

### REPRESENTATION

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

### REPLICATION

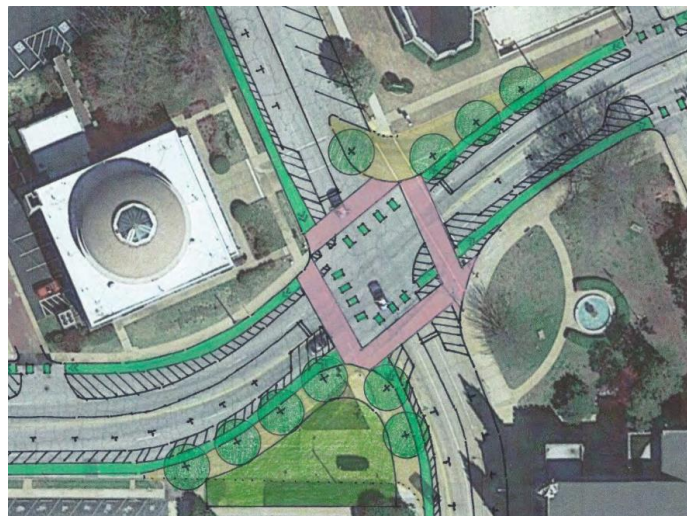
This is an attainable plan as it provides a "Kit of Parts" that any city or neighborhood can adopt to create desired streets based on Driving Lanes, Cycle Lanes, Parallel or Angled Parking Lanes. It is a package that includes transportation options, zoning and design standards, increasing density, active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

### COMPLEXITY/SIMPLICITY

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

WEBSITE Link to Downtown Tulsa Walkability Study

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



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



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

# Develop and Implement a Placemaking Initiative

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Study Area
Origin	Site visit, interviews and City of Woburn
Budget	 Medium Budget - \$50-200K General fund, Placemaking & Shared Streets grants, MassDOT
Timeframe	 Less than 5 years
Risk	 Medium Risk – May require some collaboration and approvals from MassDOT
Key Performance Indicators	Increase pedestrian and bicycle traffic, increase sales, new business development in downtown
Partners & Resources	Woburn Public Works and Planning Department, MassDOT, Woburn Center businesses, designers, landscapers, contractors and community groups



Temporary outdoor dining Woburn Main Street Photo Credit: Google Maps



## Diagnostic

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

Existing bump-outs removed several parking spaces on one side of the street, and they provide a relatively large area for seating, amenities and even al-fresco use (most beneficial in concentrated restaurant areas). Continuing this pattern further down Main Street would bolster traffic calming efforts while contributing to placemaking initiatives.

Slowing traffic down as it moves through the project area will also help facilitate the perception and contribute to the aesthetic that the Woburn Center is not merely a “drive by” corridor but a viable commercial corridor. It will also elevate the pedestrian experience which is an important element in keeping restaurants and retail alive in this area.

## Action Item

Develop a placemaking initiative that creates an atmosphere that makes Woburn Center more attractive to pedestrians and bikers.

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

Incorporate improvements street, sidewalks, crosswalks and public spaces/parks.

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



Existing Main Street bump outs. Photo Credit: Google Maps

## Process

1. Identify key stakeholders and potential partners, include business owners, cultural, religious and educational organizations as well as appropriate city staff;
2. Appoint an advisory or working group representative of diverse cross section of stakeholders;
3. Evaluate spaces and identify issues. Consider kicking off with a placemaking workshop facilitated by an outside consultant;
4. Create a vision and goals. Define how spaces will be used and by whom;
5. Develop an action plan for short term experiments and experiences with budget, implementation, management and evaluation;
6. Grow the space plan incrementally by implementing short term improvements and programs that require short timeline and small budget. This will lay the ground-work for the long-term plan;
7. Plan for long term improvements based upon the results/findings. This can include seating amenities, planters, rotating public art, programming/events and light development;
8. The process can be retrofitting existing spaces or planning for new space;
9. Success will depend upon continued management, observation and analysis;



Street Seats | Lawrence St + Albee Square West

*Temporary bump out. Photo Credit: Downtown Brooklyn.*



*Hendersonville, NC Apple Festival. Photo Credit: Google*





Best Practice

# Michigan Municipal League PlacePlans Initiative Experimenting with Place



Location

Berkley, Michigan

Challenge

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

Overview

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

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

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



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

## Lessons Learned

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Additional Potential Funding

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

## Contact the Experts

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

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

Additional Documents:

[2015 Robina Plaza Project](#)

[2014 Robina Plaza Project](#)

# Pocket Park Improvements

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Main Street Pocket Park – 460 Main Street
Origin	Woburn Redevelopment Authority, Site Visit, Interviews and previous G2 Collaborative Pocket Park study
Budget	 Low Budget – City Funding, MA Downtown Initiative Program, Shared Streets & Spaces, Community Change Grant
Timeframe	 Short Term – Less than Five Years
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Use of area, number of participants at events
Partners & Resources	City of Woburn Planning and Public Works, Woburn Conservation Commission, landscape and design companies, local foundations



Image of Design Charette. Photo Credit: G2 Collaborative

## Diagnostic

Time and resources were devoted to the creation of a Pocket Park Plan by G2 Collaborative in 2018.

The plan was not implemented due to excessive costs associated with proposed improvements.

COVID-19 pandemic raised awareness and demand for outdoor spaces especially for dining and socializing.

77% of businesses surveyed wanted to see an increase in outdoor dining in Woburn Center.

The underutilized pocket park on Main Street presents an opportunity to create a sense of place while providing opportunities for art and dining installations.



*Pocket Park . Photo Credit: Google Maps*

## Action Item

Develop a phased approach for implementing improvements to the pocket park.

Upgrade and activate the space so it can be utilized as a welcoming social gathering place and provide additional opportunities for outdoor dining and public art.

Start with Phase 1 which is a necessary step to any subsequent improvements or installations.

Offer community volunteers an opportunity to invest sweat equity which has the potential to create sense of “ownership” and vested interest in the future of the park.



*Pocket Park Design Schematic Photo Credit: G2 Collaborative Study*



# Process

Determine project lead and scope of work;

Potential project elements: demo of current space, landscaping, lighting, soft surfacing, furniture, art, water feature;

Determine costs, budget and sources of funding (allow for both internal and external requests and any necessary applications);

Develop a timeline for implementation of the improvements;

Determine if outside contractors are required, implement bid and award process;

Suggested phased approach:

## 1 - CLEAR EXISTING RETAINING WALL AND DEBRIS

- Possibly schedule a "Community Volunteer Workday" with a few skilled contractor volunteers overseeing unskilled yet enthusiastic labor (safety and liability being primary concern)

- Salvage/stockpile as much material as possible for re-use

## 2 - PLACE ROLLED PEA-STONE/STONE-DUST AND PLANT AS MANY TREES AS POSSIBLE

- This surface would provide for any variety of "temporary" tables/chairs or even users who want to bring their own.
- Could be easily "shaped" with an affordable edging (steel and/or PVC)
- Using the right material could provide the subbase for pavers in the next phase

## 3 - SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT OF PAVERS, POURED CONCRETE AND/OR DECKING

- Even an iterative/temporary park solution provides for better utilization of the space
- When the funds are available, the hardscape surfaces could be installed at anytime

## 4 - SUBSEQUENT INSTALLATION OF SEATING AND SITE FURNISHINGS

- Similarly, when future funding is available; the additional plantings, seating and furnishings could be installed to finalize the original vision of the park.

Don't forget all along the way to celebrate milestones, market and raise awareness of the park and the improvements.



460 Main Street, Woburn. Photo Credit: G2 Collaborative

## IMPLEMENTING THE PLANS FOR PARK ON MAIN



460 Main Street, Woburn. Photo Credit: G2 Collaborative w/ overlay by Dusty McMahan, Goman+York.



# Develop and Implement a Window Activation Initiative

Category	 Private Realm and Revenue & Sales
Location	Study Area
Origin	Onsite assessment and interviews
Budget	 \$50,000 or less –Aid to small business utilize ARPA funds, AARP Grants
Timeframe	 Short term – Less than one year
Risk	 Low Risk – willingness of businesses to participate
Key Performance Indicators	Number of businesses updating window displays, self-reported tenant traffic and sales growth
Partners & Resources	City staff administration of program, Local artists/makers, students, and community members

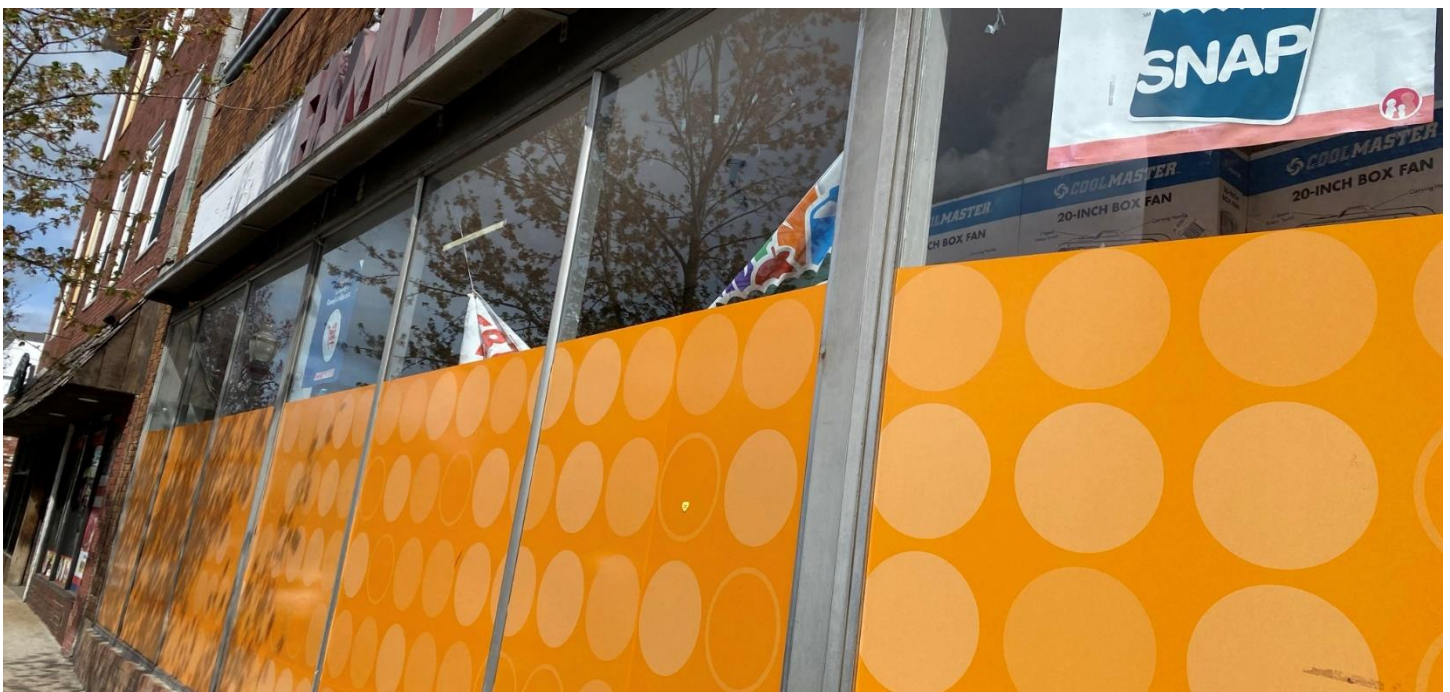


Image of Woburn Main Street Storefront. Photo Credit: Goman+York

## Diagnostic

COVID-19 decreased pedestrian traffic and sales in Woburn Center. As businesses reopened, consumers are venturing out more.

Storefronts and their window displays are a business's introduction to potential consumers and clients.

Fully utilizing storefront windows will aid in recovery from the affects COVID-19 has had on local businesses.

## Action Item

Develop a Window Activation Program.

Provide training and guidance to businesses on attractive activation of store windows.

Activate 5 or more storefronts (occupied or vacant) located on Main Street using temporary or long-term window displays, or interior displays visible from the street, created by Woburn artists/makers.

Help business owners of occupied buildings better market their businesses; and help the property owners of vacant commercial buildings market vacant spaces to prospective tenants.



Woburn Main Street Storefront Windows. Photo Credit: Goman+York



## Process

- Identify staff or consultant to develop and implement initiative;
- Fund initiative;
- Develop criteria and recruit artists, makers, and community volunteers;
- Artist/Maker conduct site visit and consultation with business owner;
- Prepare design renderings and/or written summary of project;
- Develop estimated project budget, including stipend and materials;
- Projects should be implemented quickly and make an immediate impact;
- Installation should be short and no more than 10 days;
- Promote the program and completed projects;
- Project budgets should range from \$250 to \$2,500;

Encourage all businesses to:

- Take down the handwritten signs
- Produce printed easy to read signs
- Clean windows
- Remove old and outdated merchandise that may be faded or is gathering dust



*Storefront Window Display Germantown, PA. Photo Credit: Germantown United CDC*



*Window displays can tell a story, educate, entertain and draw attention to downtowns. Photo Credit: Retailworks, Inc.. [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org)*



Best Practice

# Storefront Activation Program



Location

Germantown United Community Development Corporation, Philadelphia, PA



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

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

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

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

Germantown United CDC:

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

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

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

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



# Business Assessments



Location

Multiple Communities

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

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

## Solutions to thrive & survive

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



### The Report

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

### The Consultation

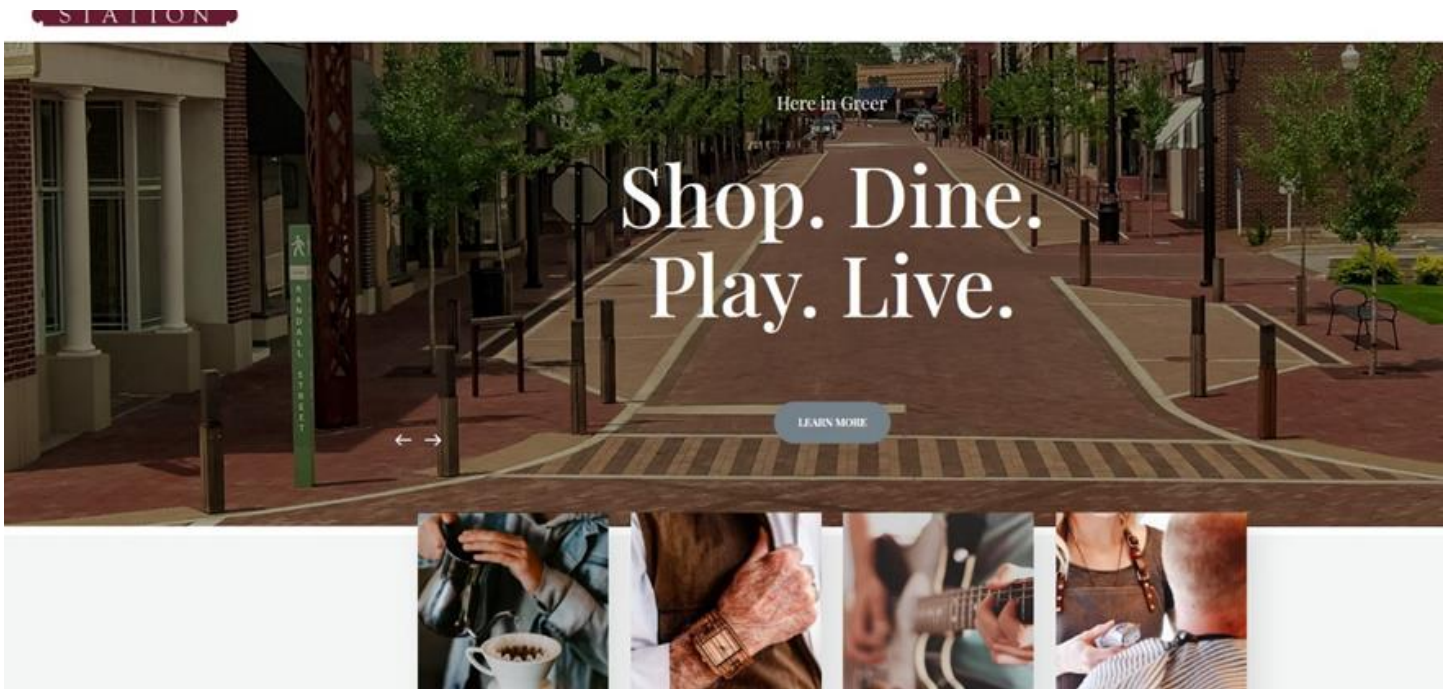
- ✓ Be direct
- ✓ Be sympathetic
- ✓ Be honest
- ✓ Offer suggestions
- ✓ Do an outside-in walkthrough
- ✓ Be open to questions
- ✓ Share your findings with key stakeholders

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



# Develop and Implement a Branding and Marketing Initiative

Category	 Revenue/Sales
Location	Study Area
Origin	Observation, interviews, business survey
Budget	 Low Budget –(\$50K or less to hire professional assistance) - ARPA funds, Grow Grant, Downtown Initiative Grant, Pilot Project Grant
Timeframe	 Short Term – (Less than one year)
Risk	 Medium Risk - requires political will, dedicated funding, and participating businesses
Key Performance Indicators	Webpage traffic, “likes” and social media response; increased customer foot traffic and growth in business sales
Partners & Resources	Woburn Chamber of Commerce, City of Woburn, merchants, local media



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

## Diagnostic

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

88 % of businesses in Woburn Center had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID.

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

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

## Action Item

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

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

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



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



*Greer Station Facebook Photo Credit: Screenshot*

## Process

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



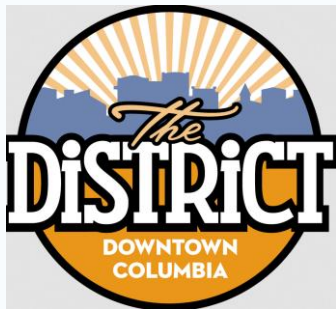
*Greer Station Instagram Pictures Photo Credit: Screenshots @greerstation*

# The District Branding & Marketing



Location

Downtown Columbia, Missouri



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

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

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

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

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

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



# Create Woburn Center Website & Calendar of Events

Category	  Revenue & Sales and Cultural/Arts
Location	Study Area
Origin	Interviews, business survey and assessment
Budget	 Low Budget – Sponsorships, Crowdfunding, Grants
Timeframe	 Short term – Development of website less than six months, organizing and expanding offerings/events as resources and environment allow
Risk	 Low risk - Will require cooperation of city and other event organizers
Key Performance Indicators	Visits to Woburn Center website, increased restaurant and retail sales, and increased foot traffic in Woburn Center during event dates, positive media and social media coverage
Partners & Resources	City of Woburn, Chamber of Commerce, Woburn Redevelopment Authority, Historical Society, local tech/website development companies, local media, local stakeholders

Festival on the Common  
Photo Credit:  
City of Woburn





## Diagnostic


100% of businesses who responded to the LRRP survey reported being impacted by COVID-19 with affects ranging from lost revenues, decreased pedestrian traffic, and increases in health and safety related expenses.

2020 events were either cancelled or presented in a virtual format.

In person events will likely continue to experience fluctuations as the market responds to new variants, new outbreaks, and other impacts.

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

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



CITY OF WOBURN

RESIDENTS ▾ BUSINESSES ▾ GOVERNMENT ▾ SERVICES ▾ EVENTS ▾

EVENTS

EVENTS

View all categories ▾

October 2021

<

>

month

week

day

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
	6:00 pm City Council Committee	5:00 pm Woburn Redevelopment Authority	8:30 am Woburn Retirement Board	5:00 pm Woburn Housing Authority Regular/Annual Meeting		
		7:00 pm Woburn Planning Board	7:00 pm Woburn School Committee	6:00 pm Woburn Conservation Commission Meeting		
3	4	5		6	7	8
	1:30 pm Woburn School Committee Policy and Safety Subcommittee (Virtual Meeting Format)	10:00 am Woburn Council on Aging		10:00 am Blood Pressure Clinic at City Hall		9
	5:00 pm Board of Appeals site visit	6:00 pm Woburn Public Library Board of Trustees Meeting		4:00 pm Mayor and 17's Cedar Street Ramp Advisory Committee		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
		7:00 pm Woburn City Council	6:00 pm Zoning Board of Appeals			
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
		5:00 pm Woburn Redevelopment Authority	8:30 am Woburn Retirement Board			
		7:00 pm Woburn Planning Board				
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
				10:00 am Blood Pressure Clinic at City Hall		

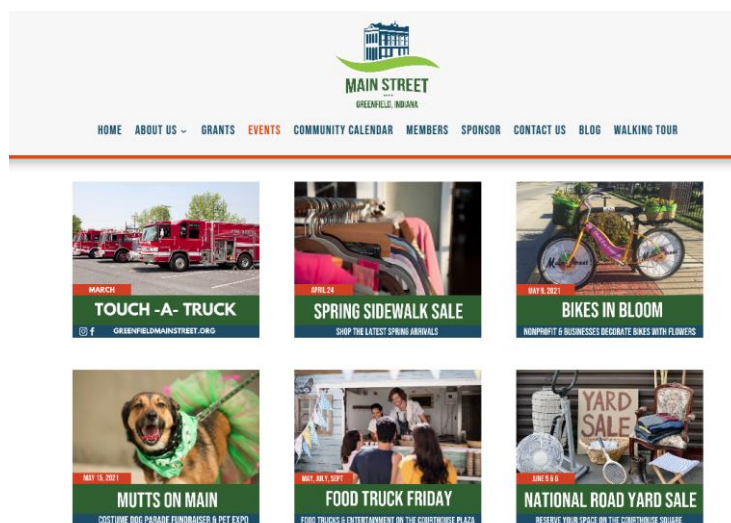
Above: City of Woburn calendar of events  
Photo Credit: webpage screenshot

## Action Item

Develop a website dedicated to the promotion of businesses, events and improvements in Woburn Center. In conjunction, build a responsive calendar of events page which offers quick and easy access to community and Woburn Center events and tourism information that highlights all there is to see and do in historic downtown Woburn.

Create a process or reporting procedure to ensure appropriate staff are aware of and have an opportunity to coordinate and collaborate with other organizations and businesses hosting events in the City of Woburn with the objective of including Woburn Center in those efforts.

Provide year-round opportunities to draw visitors to the downtown and enhance the overall community experience for residents and visitors and grow economic opportunities for businesses. Start by adding additional quarterly events to build upon the success of Festival on the Common.



Above: Main Street Calendar, Town of Greenfield IN  
Photo Credit: Greenfield Main Street [webpage screenshot](#)

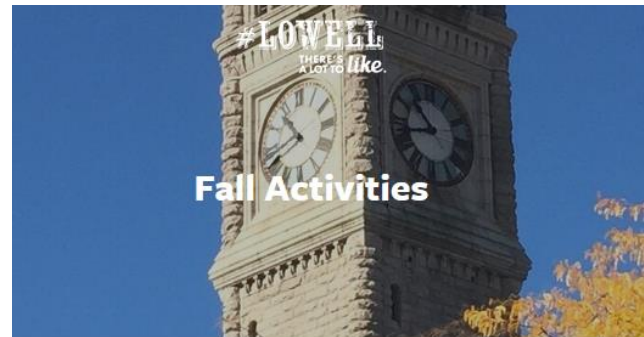
# Process

## Website Development

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

## Calendar of Events Implementation

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



### See what Fall has to offer!

Are you planning to visit Lowell, looking for a specific event, or maybe just want to learn about the yearly on-goings?



### Lowell Celebrates Kerouac

The October Festival features tours of Kerouac's Lowell places – including many sites described in his Lowell-based novels. There are panel discussions, readings, jazz and folk music, films, open mike events, poetry competition, book signings, and more. Kerouac fans and scholars from across the United States and around the world travel to Lowell for the festival.

[Learn More](#)

### Lowell Kinetic Sculpture Race

The Lowell Kinetic Sculpture Race is a wacky sporting event, and the only one of its kind in New England. The race features teams going head-to-head in machines-mixed-with-art, or as the event's website puts it, "a li-terrain, human-powered vehicles with an art twist." The event is free and fun for all ages!

The 2021 Lowell Kinetic Sculpture Race has been postponed to 2022, check the link below for updates.

[Learn More](#)



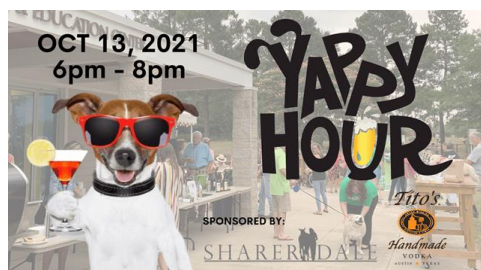
Above: City of Lowell Calendar of events

Photo Credit: Screenshot [www.likelowell.com](http://www.likelowell.com)

## Process – cont'd

### Enhanced and new events

- Focus on four seasonal events expanding and enhancing existing events and adding additional events as resources and COVID recovery allow. Recommendations/ideas:
- Spring – Taste of Woburn event promoting local restaurants (block party with street closure)
- Summer – “Woburn Center StoryWalk®” joint event with public library
- Summer – “Concerts on the Common” or expand Library Park Blues Festival to include Woburn Center Events
- Fall – “Fall in Love” with Woburn (new fall festival)
- Winter – “Festival on the Common” Winter Festival continue to expand this event with complementary activities, and Instagram opportunity, hashtag, or charity fundraising opportunity (“Shine the Light on Hunger, for example) etc.
- Consider collaboration or complementary events for Woburn Center to support events like Flag Day Carnival, various lighting events on the Common, Summer Concert Series, Veterans Day Memorial Day Parades



Existing and proposed events. Credits Festival on the Common, [StoryWalk](#), SPCA Albrecht Yappy Hour 2021 and Woburn Blues for Veterans



## Process – cont'd

### Event Planning

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



Malden, MA Summer Festival Credit: Logo and photo courtesy of the City of Malden



# Rapid Website Development



Location

Boston, MA

Excerpted from Revenue & Sales  
Compendium by Cambridge Retail  
Advisors

## Diagnostic

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

## Action Item

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

## Process

### Onboarding Phase

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

### Discovery Phase

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

### Review/Finalization Phase

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

# Event Branding: Taste Fall River



Provided by SME Consultant

Zapalac Advisors

Location

Boston, MA

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

## Diagnostic (continued)

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

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

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

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

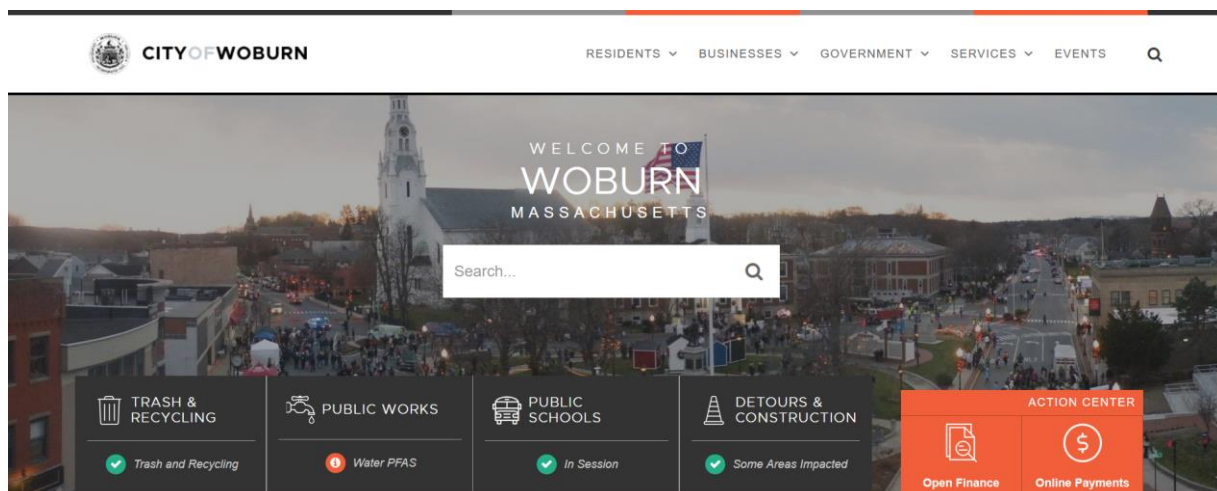
## Action Item

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

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

# Hire Staff or Consultant Dedicated to Management of Woburn Center

Category	 Admin. Capacity
Location	Study Area
Origin	Community/Business input
Budget	 Medium Budget (\$50-200K depending upon structure and budget) - ARPA Funds, Regional Pilot Project Grant, MA Downtown Initiative, Build Back Better
Timeframe	 Short Term (< 5 years) Recommend 2-year pilot program
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Decrease in commercial occupancy rates; quicker service delivery; increase in commercial traffic and sales; increase in social media impressions and website hits
Partners & Resources	Woburn Redevelopment Authority, City of Woburn, Chamber of Commerce, business and property owners, residents, other local champions for Woburn Center



City of Woburn website Photo Credit: [www.Woburnma.gov](http://www.Woburnma.gov)



## Diagnostic

There is currently no staff dedicated to the management and facilitation of two-way communications with Woburn Center businesses and the City of Woburn.

The pandemic amplified the need for someone to be responsible for the marketing and oversight of the Woburn Center commercial district with the resources to develop and implement technical assistance, training and loan and grant programs.

This person could help fortify the local government/business community relationship and encourage businesses to seek the city's assistance, particularly when it may prove to be beneficial to their financial solvency during an economic downturn.

Having professional staff dedicated to the management of Woburn Center would allow for the capability of responding quickly to the changing needs of the business community and allow the downtown businesses to be better able to compete with nearby retail and business centers with regular focused marketing, outreach, events, etc.

During and after the Covid-19 recovery process, the emergence of unified group can help to aid in the recovery process, while at the same time being a voice for the district.



*Main Street Sidewalk. Photo Credit: Goman+York*

## Action Item

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

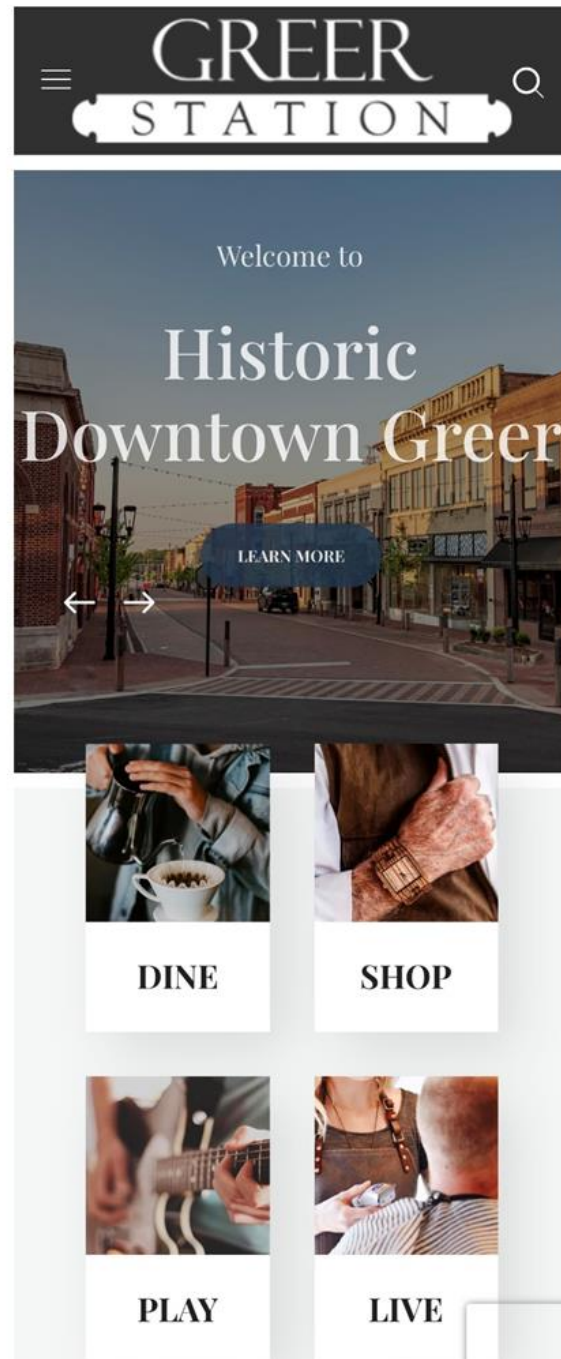
Promote the growth and vitality of the Center and its businesses, implement beautification projects, support transportation initiatives, and host events that bring people to the downtown.

With support from chamber and city, this firm or individual should undertake activities to attract businesses, investment, customers and residents to downtown. These could include marketing, placemaking, business development, advocacy and activating and engaging with volunteers and business owners.

Addition duties might include providing marketing support for website and social media; community outreach and recruitment of partners & sponsors; new member recruitment; coordinate and manage special events; pursue the creation of a merchants' association to advocate for small businesses and the Woburn Center commercial district needs.

AA

greerstation.com

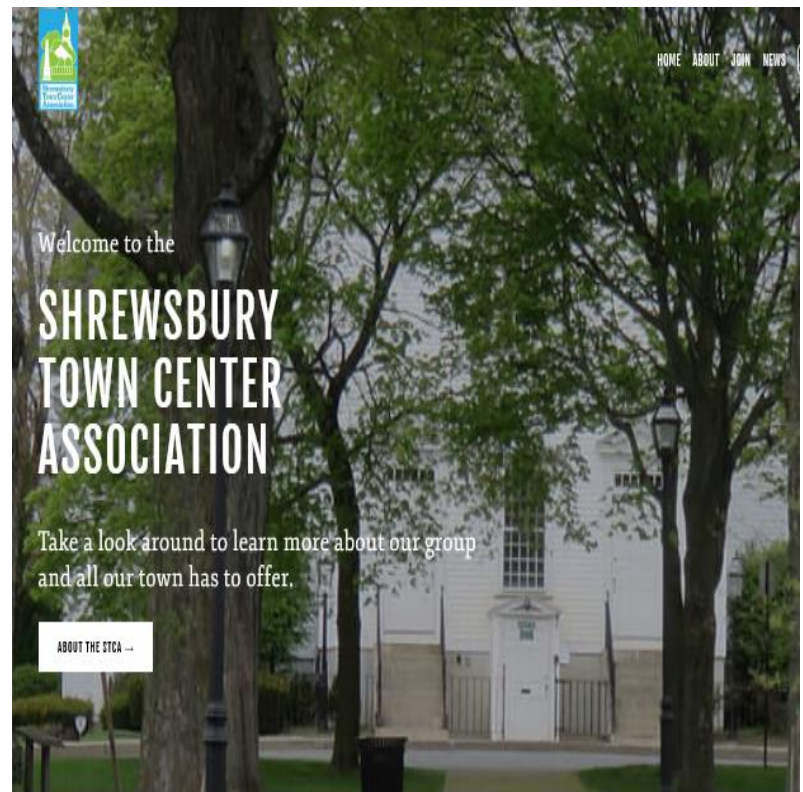


Mobile website for Greer, SC Merchant Association Photo Credit: [Greer Station](#).



## Process

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



### Our Town Center Is Open!

Special thanks to **SELCO** for producing this video to support our town center businesses.



Website for Shrewsbury Town Center Photo Credit: [Shrewsbury Town Center](#)

# Create Business Registry & Outreach Strategy

Category	 Admin. Capacity
Location	Study Area
Origin	Observation, staff input, interviews
Budget	 Low Budget (<\$50K Staff/software) - District Local Technical Assistance Funding (DLTAF), ARPA funds
Timeframe	 Short Term – Registry can be completed in matter of weeks. Formalizing outreach efforts and creating communications channels may take longer but can be completed in few than five years
Risk	 Low Risk – Need cooperation or access to existing databases and cooperation of businesses and owners
Key Performance Indicators	Number of businesses and owners captured in initial database; decrease in number of returned communications, accuracy of real-time business data
Partners & Resources	Chamber of Commerce, Assessor's office, business license department

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
	Business Name	Primary Contact Name	Address	Phone	Email	Legal Entity Name	NAICS code	Business Type	Lot/Block/Map	Ownership Type	Date Updated
1	Mary's HairCare	Mary Smith	123 Main Street	508-222-3333	Mary@gmail.com	Mary's HairCare LLC	12345	Hair salon	123/44/555	rent own	8/12/2021
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11											
12											
13											
14											
15											
16											
17											
18											
19											

Reverse Business Data

Business Name: Mary's HairCare

Primary Contact Name: Mary Smith

Address: 123 Main Street

Phone: 508-222-3333

Email: Mary@gmail.com

Legal Entity Name: Mary's HairCare LLC

NAICS code: 12345

Business Type: Hair salon

Lot/Block/Map: 123/44/555

Ownership Type: rent

Date Updated: 8/12/2021

1 of 1

Next

Delete

Restore

Find Prev

Find Next

Criteria

Close

Sample Excel spreadsheet. Photo Credit: Goman+York



## Diagnostic

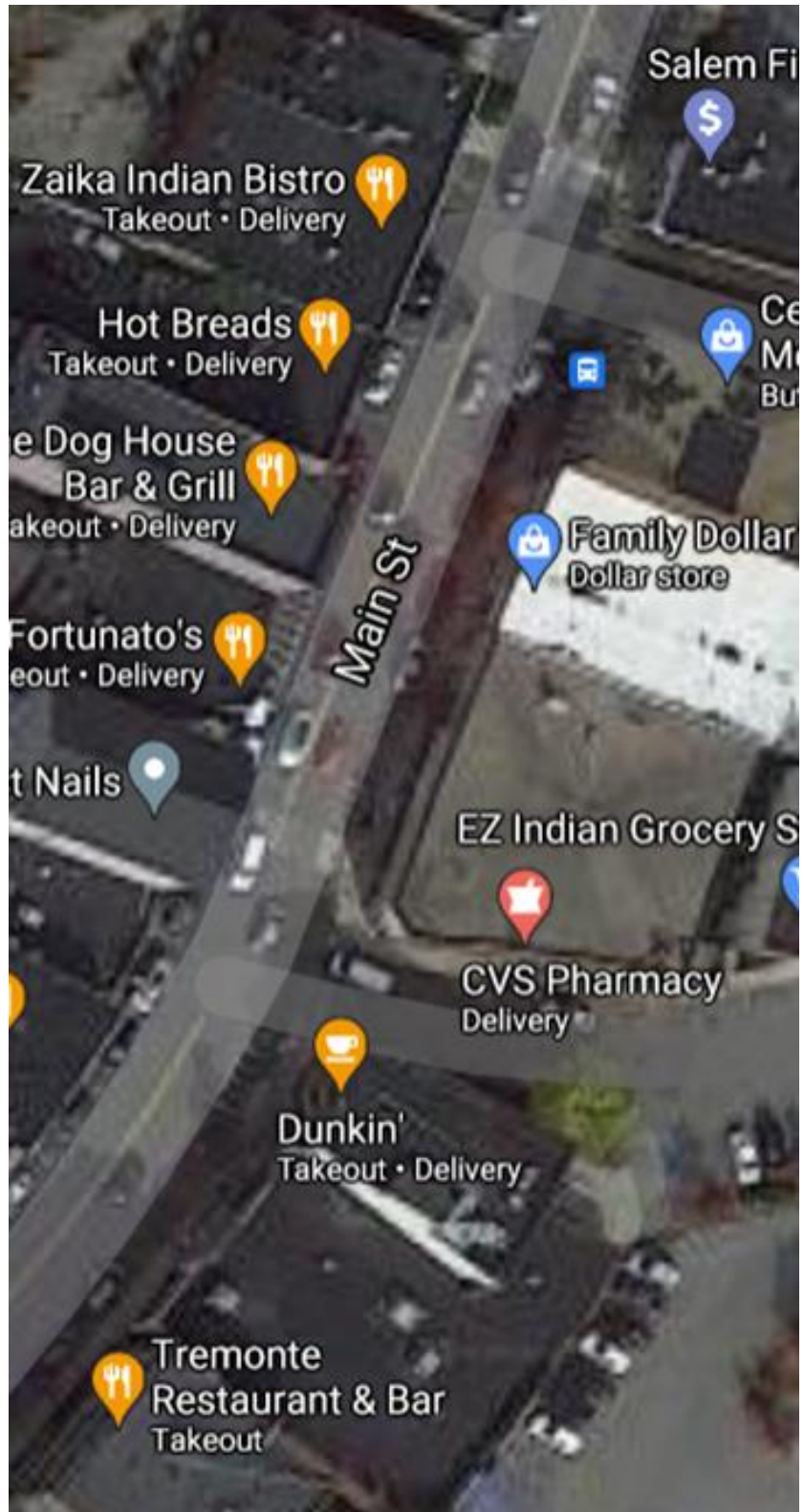
The City did not have access to a comprehensive database and indications were that the City did not have the ability to quickly communicate directly with businesses in the downtown with up-to-date Information regarding restrictions and resources available to them during the shutdown and subsequent reopening.

A significant percentage of the city data was incomplete without emails or phone numbers. Developing formalized communications and connections between the City and the downtown businesses will help facilitate future business support efforts.

## Action Item

Create a current database of downtown businesses and owners.

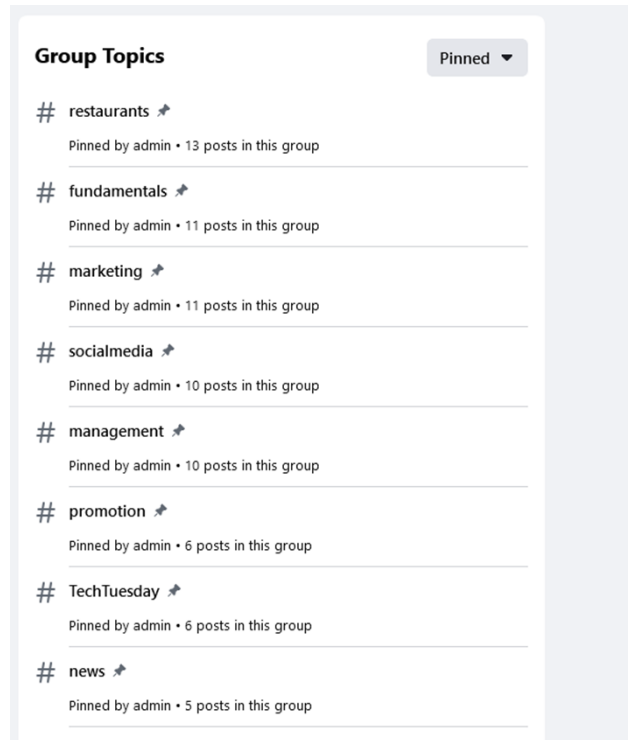
Develop a strategy for regular communication and interaction with businesses and property owners in Woburn Center.



Main Street Woburn . Photo Credit: Google Maps

## Process

- Upon hiring of Woburn Center staff or consultant, conduct an analysis of current data management solutions utilized by the city and determine if they have the capability to be shared within different departments;
- If no other city databases are available, an Excel spreadsheet can be used to capture up to 30 fields of information – this can be created in a protected document using the FORM function to enter and edit data. If at later date the City decides to purchase CRM software this data can be easily transferred. (See screenshot sample data base previous page);
- Determine utilization scenarios of data – internal and external, i.e. who “owns” the database – designate staff champion(s); who will utilize the data and for what uses: communications, grants opportunities, promotions, etc.;
- Determine information/fields of data to be captured - If data is used by multiple departments, buy in for all is important – i.e. planning, building, communications, enforcement – types of data to be captured: minority/women-owned businesses, size, location, building ownership (tie to town GIS – block/lot/map), email/phone, legal entity name, license number, etc. (See screenshot sample previous page);
- Compile date and build database – consolidate multiple sources of capturable data;
- Develop a maintenance plan to regularly update and check registry (every 6 months or yearly);
- Evaluate any existing communications tools, and explore the need for CRMs like Salesforce, Insightly or private Facebook group that can be used to regularly communicate with businesses in the downtown;
- With other town officials and Woburn Redevelopment Authority determine various engagement channels with the business and property owners: 1) monthly newsletter; 2) monthly/quarterly breakfast; 3) office hours with Woburn Center staff; 4) ongoing needs assessments/surveys;



Screenshot Facebook group Photo Credit: Angel Cicerone, Tenant Mentorship



March Quarterly Business Breakfast . Photo Credit: Village of Park Forest, IL

# Develop a Parking Management Plan

Category	 Admin. Capacity
Location	Study Area
Origin	Business survey, site visit and interviews
Budget	 Medium (\$50k-\$200K - utilize existing employees to implement, may require additional staff to enforce) general fund,
Timeframe	 Short Term (<5 years) – Development of management plan and implementation of permitting initiative can be accomplished in 12 months or less
Risk	 Medium Risk – Need political buy-in and support from local businesses and public
Key Performance Indicators	New parking revenues from permits & fines. Increase in number of vehicles utilizing on street parking
Partners & Resources	Traffic Commission, Traffic Bureau, Parking Ticket Clerk, Redevelopment Authority, and Town Center Businesses



Image of Walnut Street Parking Lot. Photo Credit: Goman+York



## Diagnostic

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

Input from several business owners through onsite interviews indicated concerns with customers finding on street parking due to prolonged parking in on-street spaces by customers and employees.

Concern was expressed regarding inconsistent parking and public parking spaces being used by commuters rather than customers. These complaints are all consistent with the key findings in the 2012 Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates Parking Management study.

Change in consumer purchasing habits coupled with the issues regarding short term on-street parking elevates the need to address parking in downtown.

## Action Item

Parking is at a premium for both on-street, public lots and for businesses.

Develop a formal parking management plan to implement key elements from the 2012 study including

- 1) reduction in time limits for on street parking;
- 2) stringent enforcement of those limits and
- 3) establishing a commuter and employee parking permit initiative.

This will free up space in both the on-street parking and the closer more convenient parking lots.



Woburn Main Street after dark. Photo Credit: Goman+York.



## Process

- Appoint parking management working group comprised of representatives from Traffic Commission, Traffic Bureau, Parking Ticket Clerk, Redevelopment Authority, and Woburn Center businesses;
- Develop and implement parking management plan in line with Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates Study that “provides convenient parking for customers/clients; establishes clear city and private employee parking areas; accommodates commuter parking appropriately and protects residential neighborhoods from spillover;
- EV charging should be addressed as well as accessibility;
- Develop budget for implementation of plan;
- Recruit and train parking enforcement/parking ambassadors;



Parking Enforcement Photo Credit: [www.passportinc.com](http://www.passportinc.com)



Source: Arlington

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



Provided by SME Consultant

Stantec Consulting, Inc.

Location

Town of Arlington, Massachusetts



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



## Process

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

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

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

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

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

## Success Story

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

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

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

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

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



Public engagement flyer for PBD. Source, Arlington.



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

# Develop and Implement Mural Program

Category	 Cultural/Arts
Location	14 Union Street at back of new municipal lot; 458 and 466 Main Street abutting underutilized pocket park; other locations in project area
Origin	Site visit and interviews
Budget	 Medium Budget (\$70K to Launch Program depending upon scope) - Shared Streets and Spaces, MA Downtown Initiative, TDI Creative Catalyst, T-Mobile Hometown Grant, NEA grant, partnerships and sponsors
Timeframe	 Short Time (less than 5 ears)
Risk	 Will require cooperation of property owners and paid artists
Key Performance Indicators	Increased pedestrian traffic; increase in visitor dwell time
Partners & Resources	City of Woburn, local artists, art students, property owners



Image of X. Photo Credit: Flickr



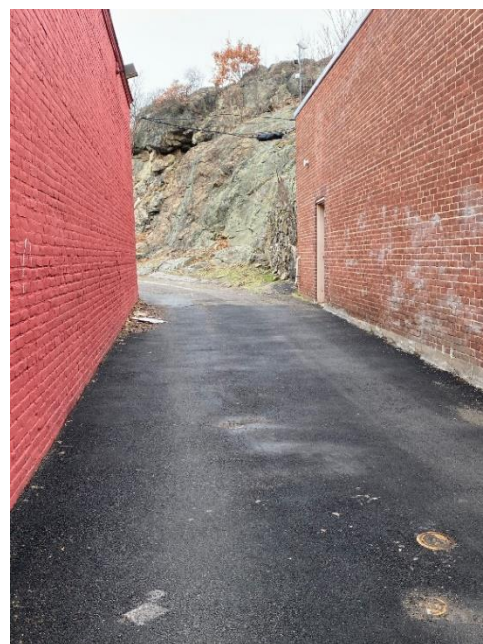
## Diagnostic

88% of businesses reported less foot traffic in January-February of 2021 than before COVID.

A mural in a well-considered location often brings a community together and improves spaces for people passing through commercial corridors. A mural can create belonging and a sense of pride, reduce graffiti and tagging, and allow neighborhoods to shape their community through beautification and shared project goals.

A mural should be relevant to the community (e.g., can highlight the history and significance of a place).

The National Endowment for the Arts says “Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.”



Woburn potential mural locations. Photo Credit: Goman+York

## Action Item

Create a mural program that will activate walls/spaces with murals that enhance Woburn Center and reflect the businesses and the diversity of the corridor.

Identify potential artists.

Use mural program to connect Woburn's past with its future.

Create instagrammable moments #WOWoburn.



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



# Process

Outline your motivations as a team and consult with businesses and community - plan an initial gathering of all the community members who are interested in participating in the mural project. This may include residential neighbors and businesses. Identify a coordinator who can lead the project going forward (if you haven't already);

Identify the mural site(s) and get necessary permissions;

Identify artist(s) to work with the community;

Meet to discuss process and sign an agreement - the mural coordinator should meet with the site owner, artist and interested community members to discuss the mural's objectives, budget, action plan and timeframe, health and safety concerns, and whether a special event permit or traffic management plan are necessary;

Host a mural workshop led by the artist to brainstorm ideas for the mural – design, color, health and safety, and painting logistics;

Present mural design to the site owner and key stakeholders for approval;

Determine whether special event permit or traffic management plan will be necessary if the creation of the mural will impact public space (e.g., a sidewalk, roadway, plaza or park);

Prepare the mural site which may involve pressure washing to remove dirt and debris and repairing any cracks or irregularities in the surface;

Implement mural painting (the artist should lead and coordinate and provide support and guidance to the community and any volunteers;

Document the development of the mural, either by video or photography, as a record of the process;

Organize an unveiling event inviting the community and media to help celebrate the mural's completion;

Evaluate the success of the mural by identifying the project's strengths and challenges and collecting feedback from participants and neighborhood stakeholders;



*Wind Power. Photo Credit: Glasgow City Center Mural Trail, Glasgow, Scotland*



*Malden, MA. Photo Credit: Goman+York*

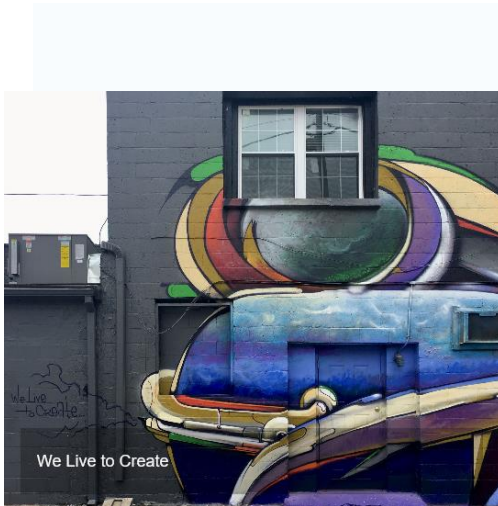
# Downtown Kinston Mural Program



CULTURAL/  
ARTS

Location

Kinston, NC



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

Key objectives of the program:

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

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

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

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

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

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





# Fresh Paint Springfield 2021



Location

Springfield, MA

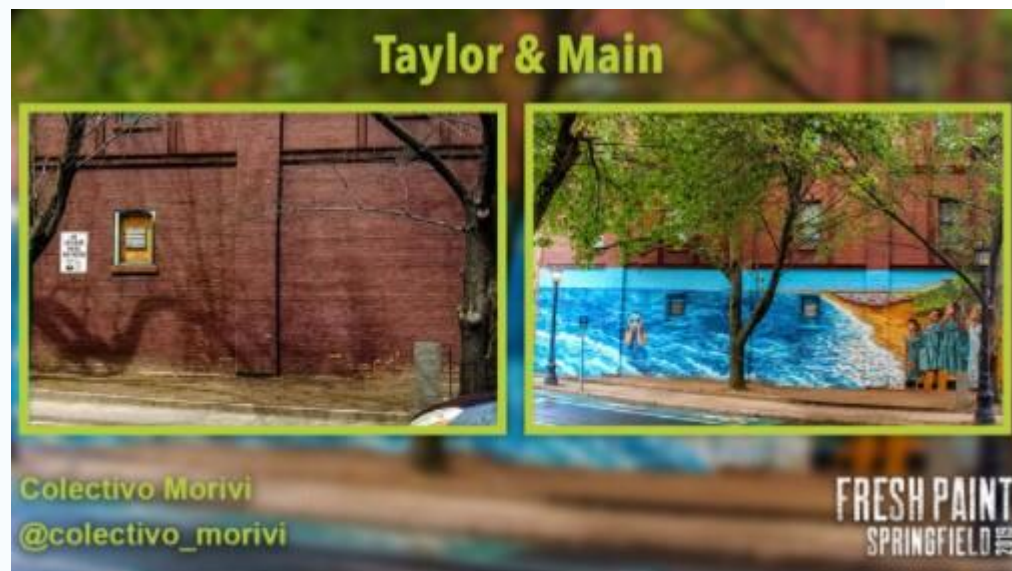
**"FRESH PAINT  
SPRINGFIELD 2021:  
PROFESSIONAL  
MURALISTS FROM  
ACROSS THE US  
COLLABORATED WITH  
THE COMMUNITY TO  
CREATE ALL OF THE  
MURALS"**

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

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

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

**FRESH PAINT  
SPRINGFIELD 2021**





# Develop and Implement a Public Art Program

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



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

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

Photo Credit: [Historic Downtown Hendersonville](#)



## Diagnostic

The COVID-19 Pandemic significantly affected pedestrian traffic in Woburn Center and as people's shopping habits changed, it is now more important than ever to find ways to bring pedestrian traffic back to Woburn Center.

A public art program could enliven the visitor experience, encourage social media posts and enhance placemaking efforts. Art can also generate traffic without large scale events.

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

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

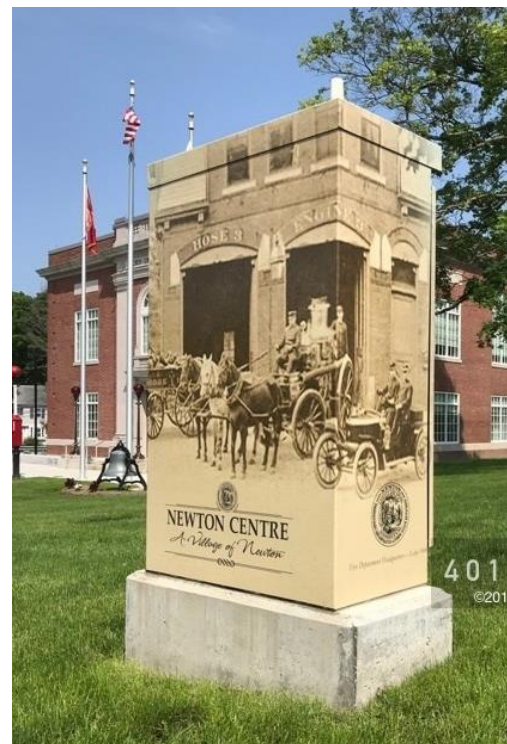
## Action Item

Create a public art program that will activate spaces with both permanent and temporary art installations which enhance the downtown and reflect the history and diversity of the district.

Considerations could include historical or artistic wraps of utility boxes; art in coordination with Storywalk® or other temporary static art displays, like the bear walk in Hendersonville, NC or the Piano Project in downtown Stamford, CT.



*"Schools of Thought on Climate Change" Pop-up Art Installation  
Metropolitan Planning Council  
Photo Credit: Carolyn Lewenberg*



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



## Process

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

Note: Example of Sculptural Gate (above right) was a gift to the property owner from building architect (create opportunities for philanthropic donations of art);



*Sculptural gate is a functioning work of art and symbolizes Greenville, SC's legacy as the textile capital of the world with an abstract design motif that reflects textile machine parts made of welded steel*

*Photo Credit: Goman+York*



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

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



# Simsbury ART TRAIL



CULTURAL/  
ARTS

Location

Simsbury, CT

Simsbury Chamber of Commerce –  
ART TRAIL

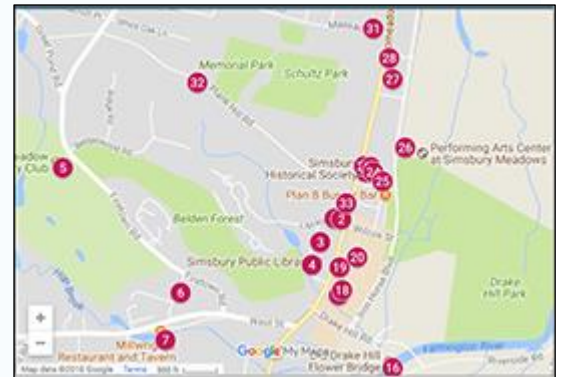
Links:

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

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

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

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



[info@simsburycoc.org](mailto:info@simsburycoc.org)
[860-651-7307](tel:860-651-7307)

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## TAKE A SELFIE WITH A SCULPTURE

## POST IT ON

## #simsburyarttrail

- ✓ Be part of the movement
- ✓ Publicize your support
- ✓ Draw visitors to Simsbury

[DONATE NOW](#)

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# Creativity Everywhere



CULTURAL/  
ARTS

Location

Downtown Lafayette, LA



Azalea Bench, Louisiana State Art Teachers



Cross Your Heart Walk Crosswalk, Downtown Lafayette Staff



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\*2019 International Downtown Association Excellence Award Submission