



MEDFIELD

COMMUNITY BRANDING & WAYFINDING PROJECT

FINAL REPORT JUNE 2022

Prepared by Favermann Design

Prepared for the Department of Housing
and Community Development (DHCD)

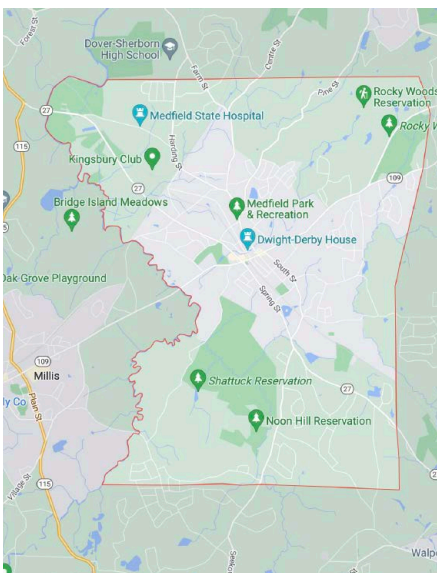


Dwight-Derby House built c.1651

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Located about 17 miles southwest of the City of Boston, the comfortable suburb of the Town of Medfield (Pop. 12,800) is a 40-minute drive to Boston's financial district. The Charles River borders almost one-third of the town. It serves primarily as a bedroom community but has some distinct industries and attractions including the Medfield Clock Company, historic homes, fine recreational water areas, and the soon to be redeveloped former Medfield State Hospital grounds. Medfield has a tradition of community dedication to preserving history and sustaining natural and recreational resources.

The area that Medfield now occupies was, at the time of the Pilgrims, Neponset tribal land. It was "sold" by the Neponset leader Chickatabot to early colonial settler William Pyncheon in the late 1620s. Chickatabot to William Pyncheon in the late 1620s. The Town of Dedham was the first English settlement in the area.



Map of Medfield

Also part of the region, Medfield (New Dedham) was first settled in 1649, principally by people who relocated from the former town. The first 13 house lots were laid out on June 19, 1650. Medfield became the 43rd town in Massachusetts in 1651. The town school was established in 1655.

During King Philip's War 32 houses, two mills, many barns and other buildings or about half the town was destroyed by Native Americans in 1675. One house, known as the Peak House, was burnt during the war but was rebuilt shortly thereafter near downtown Medfield.

At the start of the Revolutionary War in 1774, the town sponsored 25 Minutemen to fight in the battles of Lexington and Concord. Although they did not arrive in time to fight, they were part of the one hundred and fifty-four men who fought in the Continental Army. The impressive ratio of soldiers was one



View of Downtown Medfield

for every five of the town's population. By 1787 a new oath was required of the town officers to renounce loyalty to the king and to instead swear allegiance to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

By 1800, the population of the town was 745. The manufacture of straw bonnets first began during that year. The manufacture of ladies' hats was the principal industry of Medfield until 1954. Mansions for the factory owners and management were built near the factory on North Street while seasonal workers lived in boarding houses throughout the town. During

the busy season, as many as 1,000 individuals were employed at the straw hat shop.

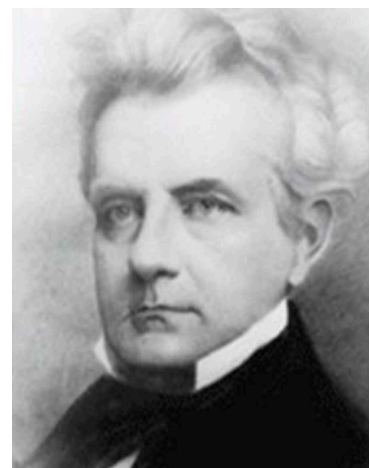
In 1806, the Hartford and Dedham Turnpike was established. Stagecoaches stopped at Clark's Tavern, next door to the Peak House. The stage route through Medfield was known as the Middle Post Road, however the Upper Post Road through Sudbury was preferred by travelers because it provided better taverns. For a period after the discontinuance of the stagecoaches in the early decades of the 19th Century, Medfield had no public transportation until the first passenger train of the New York and Boston Railroad came to town. By 1870 Medfield became an important rail junction. Its freight depot to the Framingham/Mansfield branch of the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad was strategic. At the end of the 19th Century, steam and electric railways terminated in front of the Town House.

Committed abolitionists were the majority of the town's population prior to the Civil War. Eighty-two men served in the army and navy and fifteen men gave their lives for the preservation of the Union during the Civil War.

The Town of Medfield remained a rural village for the entire 19th Century. However, with the 1896 establishment of the "asylum" --Medfield State Hospital, the population of the town doubled to over 3,000 by the end of the century. Half of the town's population were patients at the hospital, which provided employment for over 600 residents of Medfield and from surrounding towns.

In 1901 (the 250th Anniversary of the town's founding), Medfield remained a lovely village with green fields, lush meadows, and winding rivers. It was a typical New England Town consisting of 335 dwellings, churches, shops and public building. Education had the highest share of the town budget. Those continuing their schooling after ninth grade graduated from Dedham or Walpole high schools until the new Medfield high school graduated its first class of eight in 1908.

Many famous athletes, politicians, educators, and artists that either were born, grew up in or lived in Medfield. Two in particular stand out. Lowell Mason (January 8, 1792 – August 11, 1872) was an American music director, composer, and banker who was a leading figure in 19th-century American church music. He composed over 1600 hymn tunes--many of which are often sung today. His best-known work includes an arrangement of Joy to the World and the tune Bethany which sets the hymn text of Nearer, My God, to Thee. Mason also set music to Mary Had A Little Lamb. He is largely credited with introducing music into American public schools and is considered the first important U.S. music educator.



Lowell Mason

Another creative citizen was painter George Inness (1825-1894). Inness moved from New York City to Medfield in 1860. Considered by art historians to be one of the most influential American artists of the nineteenth century, Inness himself was influenced by the Old Masters, the Hudson River School and the Barbizon School. Over a prolific 40-year



Medfield Natural Area

career, his work consistently earned accolades for powerful depth of mood, atmosphere, and emotion. Inness was a transitional figure between realism and Impressionism. He stated that he wanted his art to portray the “reality of the unseen” and to connect the “visible with the invisible.” His paintings are in the collections of at the Museum of Fine Arts, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Brooklyn Museum and scores of others.

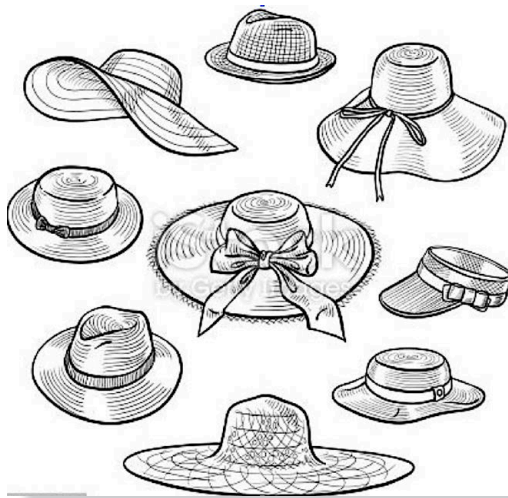


Medfield Clock

Citizens of the Town of Medfield encouraged the voting rights of women decades before the 19th Amendment to the Constitution in 1920. In 1900 seven women paid a poll tax and qualified to vote. As early as 1881 women voted for the school committee. Women were permitted to serve as elected officers by 1916, and first found seats on the school committee, as overseers of the poor, and as trustees of the public library. When the Massachusetts Constitution was amended to conform to the federal law, 48 of the 381 votes cast were by Medfield women residents.

In 1900 the importance of farming was reflected in the records of personal property taxes which were levied on 431 cows, 64 other cattle, 31 swine, 1,637 fowl, and 256 horses. Associated trades and small industry, such as three sawmills, and slaughterhouses, a tannery and two cider mills, were flourishing in the town. A wire factory, a straw shop, a hat shop, and a steam packing mill also existed. The finely crafted wagons and carriages manufactured by J.H. Baker were known worldwide for their quality.

The hat industry was an important aspect of Medfield’s industrial history from 1851 until 1956. It was, in fact, Medfield’s most important industry, that, in its height, developed into the second largest straw and felt hat factory in the United States. At its peak in the early 1900s, the factory employed more than 1,200 people, larger than the population of the town at that time.



Hats

The history of the manufacturing of straw bonnets in Medfield began in 1801. Johnson Mason and George Ellis started what would become the leading manufacturing of the town in their tavern and store on North Street. In the beginning, the straw was braided by families, a few local women were hired to sew the braid into bonnets and some bonnets were completed at home. Only the finishing and packing were done at the shop.

By the 1830s, Warren Chenery began to manufacture straw bonnets. He constantly grew his business and did so well that in 1857, he constructed a three-story high factory. Chenery later sold the factory to Jeremiah B. Hale. In 1879, the three-story hat factory burned to the ground and was never rebuilt.

In 1851, Walter Janes began employing about 30 women to make straw hats in the old Unitarian parsonage across the street from the First Parish Church on North Street. By 1865, 3,000 cases of hats were being shipped annually and an addition was built to the old parsonage, which doubled the shops capacity. After Janes' death, brothers-in-laws Haskell Searle and Granville Dailey of New York City joined Curtis. In 1876, their shop in the old parsonage burned to the ground. It was at this point that Curtis built the current building that still stands today along North Street and Janes Avenue. Under the ownership of Curtis and later Searle and Dailey, the hat factory was known as the Excelsior Straw Works.

Workers were predominantly young girls from small communities in Maine and Canada, and the Edwin V. Mitchell Company would turn out over two and one half million hats a year from the Medfield plant. After Curtis' death in 1885, Searle and Dailey brought in Edwin Mitchell. He became an owner, and he would go on to become the most powerful and important person in



Medfield Library

Medfield's history. Eventually taking it over, the Edwin V. Mitchell Company would turn out over two and one half million hats a year from the Medfield plant. After Mitchell died in 1917, the family-owned business continued as a success until it was economically devastated by the Great Depression.

In 1930, it was sold to Julius Tofias & Brother of Boston. By the 1950s, the workers began to demand to be unionized. Against unionized workers, he threatened to close the entire factory rather than accept a union. The workers went ahead and voted to form a union. Tofias then closed the factory on June 8, 1956. The plant was later converted into the Medfield Industrial Park. It housed Corning Medical and then Bayer Diagnostics before being sold to the Montrose School. The closing of the hat factory by Julius Tofias brought to an end 215 years of hat-making in Medfield and an end to Medfield's largest industry.

As the 20th Century progressed, buses and automobiles began to replace steam and electric trains. The town sold its electric company in 1906 to the Boston Electric Illuminating Company. In 1921, the town took over the operation of the Medfield Water Company. In 1924, the town established a



Vintage Mural

Planning Board to prevent haphazard growth. That same year the Peak House was restored, and Baker's Pond was purchased from the carriage manufacturers.

A major industrial contributor to Medfield continues to be the Electric Time Company. It has been in continuous operation since the early 1900s when it was first located in Boston. Incorporated in the state of Massachusetts in 1928, the Electric Time Company has developed into a firm that has over 10,000 tower clocks and street clocks installations located on every continent. In 1986, the company moved permanently to Medfield with full engineering, designing and manufacturing facilities.

Traditionally, citizens of Medfield have taken recreational resources, open space and conservation very seriously. Over the years, public and private contributions have been made to institutin and sustaining shared open spaces and natural areas. Other more formal attempts to conserve green areas came with the establishment of the Conservation Commission in 1962. In 1964, a Master Plan was undertaken to plan for projected growth. To maintain Medfield as a desirable, residential suburb, new subdivisions are developed in a controlled manner. Industrially zoned land has been strategically limited to clean light industry.

Medfield passed a historic district bylaw and created the John Metcalf Historic District during the 1989 annual town meeting. This first historic district included four houses on west Main Street and the oldest portion of Vine Lake Cemetery. The district was enlarged to include a total of sixteen historic buildings in 1996. The second historic district, established in 1994, included 33 buildings at the Medfield State Hospital and the historic landscape surrounding the buildings. A third district, the



Grist Mill

Clark-Kingsbury Farm Historic District on Spring Street, was approved at the 1997 Town Meeting. This provides protection to the unique grouping of the 18th century farmhouse, outbuildings, and pond with grist mill.

The voters of Medfield have committed themselves to several significant downtown projects. In 1996 the town went forward with plans to completely renovate the Town Hall, to construct a major addition to the library and to assist the historical society in its efforts to preserve and restore the Dwight Derby House. The Town Hall renovations, library additions and a new post office were all completed in 1998.

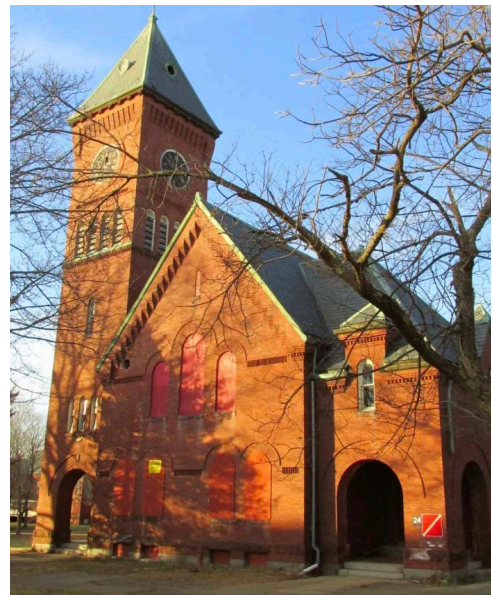
One of the oldest buildings in Massachusetts, the Peak House was built in 1651 by Benjamin Clark, was burned during King Philip's War on February 21, 1676, and was rebuilt ca. 1677–1680. The current Peak House, however, was built in 1711 as an expansion to the rebuilt house. It was moved to its current location in 1762. It is one of the earliest surviving examples of post-medieval English (Elizabethan) architecture in the United States. Some of the original panes of imported English glass in the windows can still be seen. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. Significantly, it has the highest pitched roof on record in Massachusetts for a Colonial American house.

In 1924, the Peak House was deeded to the Medfield Historical Society by its then-owners, Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Mason Smith. This was followed by a down-to-the-frame restoration. The house has served both as a dwelling and an historical site, as well as an artist's studio and workshop.

Set on a half-acre lot and overlooking Meeting House Pond, like the Peak House, the Dwight-Derby House is a First Period house as well. The earliest, southwest portion of the house was built in 1697, and an addition was built in 1713. The town bought the house in 1996. Through generous donations and grants, it was appropriately restored following structural and exterior major repairs, and it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.



The Peak House



Medfield State Hospital

Another historical and geographical Town of Medfield component is the former Medfield State Hospital. It opened in 1896 and originally operated on 685 acres of pasture. At its peak in 1952, it housed 1,500 patients. By 2001, it was down to about 300 acres and employed 450 people (including four psychologists) to care for a maximum of 147 patients. No longer cost-effective, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts closed it on April 3, 2003. The beautiful campus and buildings will be redeveloped in the next few years.

Underscoring the notion of Medfield's civic commitment to both history and recreation, Straw Hat Park was dedicated in July 2016. Initially, it was referred to as the "pocket park" between the Starbucks and Zebras on North Street. But thanks to Jean Mineo and a hard-working committee, a positive vote at town meeting, support from town residents, town officials and town departments, it became Medfield's newest park, known as "Straw Hat Park." This was because of a strategic democratic move allowing the naming of the park by the town citizens. Due to its proximity near what was the old hat factory was, the overwhelming vote was in favor of "Straw Hat Park."

Over the years, with prompting and recommendations by Master Plans, the 2021 LRRP Program, elected and appointed town officials and various town committees, it became a focus of the Town of Medfield to apply for a competitive Massachusetts Downtown Initiative grant for Branding and Wayfinding design consulting services. Medfield was awarded this grant for the 2022 interval. With all this in mind, Medfield's Town Planner and Wayfinding Advisory Committee worked with consultants Favermann Design to create and develop a civic brand that captured the essence of the town and could be strategically applied to wayfinding and signage.



Evening At Medfield, Massachusetts by George Inness at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

THE PROCESS

To develop the program ideas, creative concepts and initial feedback, it was necessary for a sounding board in the form of a Wayfinding Advisory Committee. The core of the committee was the Town of Medfield's Planning Board. Added to this were interested residents and business operators. The Wayfinding Advisory Committee was comprised of the following individuals:

Seth Meehan - Planning Board

Paul McKechnie - Planning Board

James Brand - Planning Board

Sarah Lemke - Planning Board

Teresa James - Planning Board

Black McDermott - Planning Board Associate

Jamie Sullivan - Planning Board Associate

Jean Mineo - Resident

Laurel Scotti - Resident

Jay Duncan - Resident

Matt McCormick - Resident

Matt Triest - Resident

Osler Peterson - Board of Selectmen Representative

Sarah Raposa, AICP - Town Planner

With examples from Massachusetts, New England, the US and internationally, the process began by the consultant sharing a presentation about all types of community branding. At the next meeting, a presentation of case studies of other town and cities' branding and wayfinding efforts were shared and discussed. After significant or unique images of the Town of Medfield were requested by the consultant from the committee members, the third meeting was a word and phrase-association workshop referred to as an Ideation Exercise. This involved all members of the committee describing Medfield in various ways and answering questions about present and future aspirations for the town. The word pictures and essence evoking allowed for a focus on Medfield's sense of place. Examples of this process can be seen below:

MEDFIELD IDEATION EXERCISE

How would you describe Medfield in 2 words?

Small town	Proud citizens
Family friendly	Engaged community
People first	Generous spirit
Shop local	Town pride
Open space	Train tracks
Human scale	Walking trail
Gathering place	Conservation land
Natural resources	Charles River
Historical building	Wedding Hill
Walkable downtown	State hospital
Storied past	Future oriented, future/forward momentum



Exercise #3: How would you describe Medfield with 3 or more words or a phrase?

- 300 years of progress
- Good place to raise a family
- A place to live
- Pride of place
- Quality of life
- There's only one Medfield
- A beautiful place full of beautiful people
- A strong generational community
- People purpose pride
- Creative & compassionate people
- Embracing the past, embracing the future
- A place of conservation and preservation and progressive place
- Keeping time with change



Exercise #4: What color or colors do you associate with Medfield?

Blue (river and ponds)

Green (open spaces)

Red (brick buildings)

Exercise #6: What does Medfield Aspire to? List Future Perfect goals?

Diversity

Interesting buildings in downtown (Prentiss Place)

Better retail mix (retail on 1st floor, offices on 2nd/3rd)

Be more green/sustainable

Recreational (Hinckley Playground, Straw Hat Park)

Upgrade Meeting House Pond area/Baker's Pond)

Sidewalks (brick sidewalk with granite curving)

Better neighborhood connections

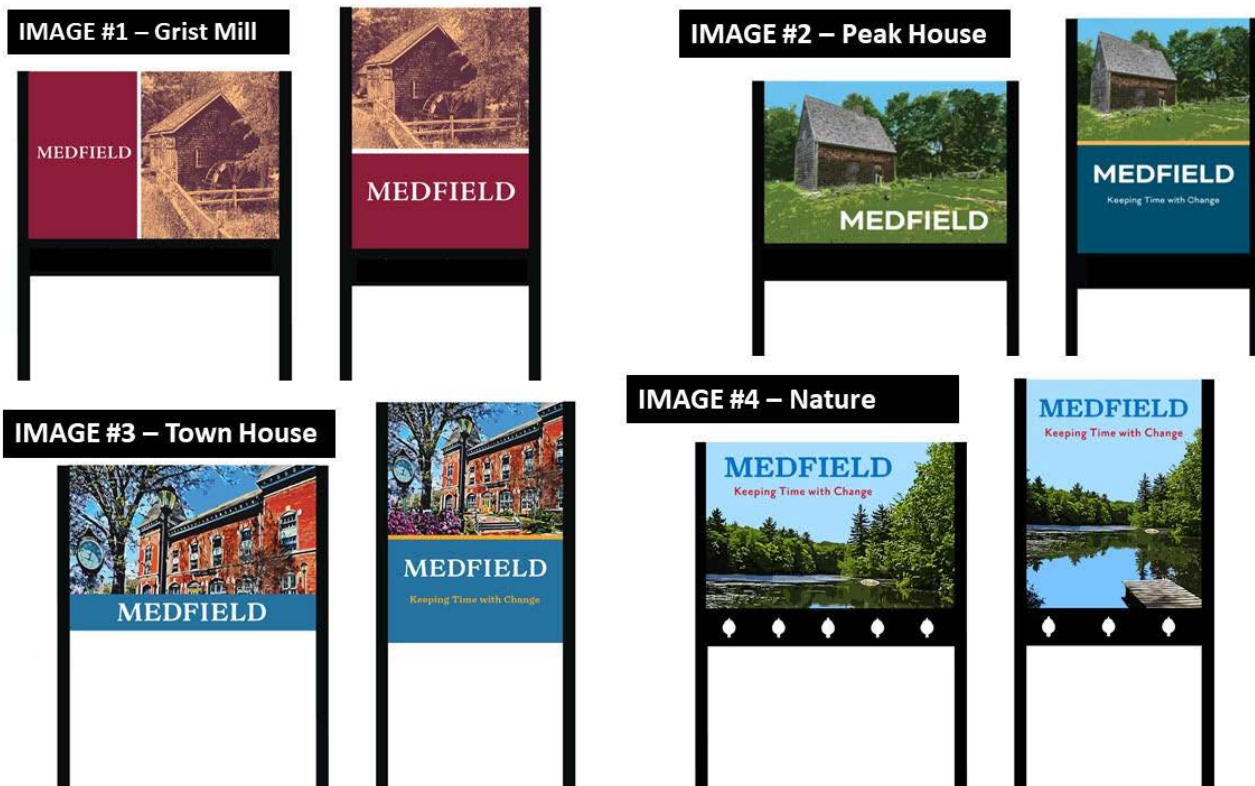
Downtown aesthetics/vibrant

Street Festivals or celebrations (Medfield Day, Christmas Stroll, Beer Garden, Memo Concert Series)

From these word pictures and phrases, the consultants created a number of design options for review by the committee and eventually the extended community. The designs included color options as well as size and perspective alternatives. The potential designs included images of the Medfield Town House, a Clock, a Metronome, an Iris, image of a Natural Area, image of the Peak House and an image including flowers, a clock and Town House. After review, the image options were reduced by the committee to five concepts. These were then shared by Medfield's Town Planner Sarah Raposa. Using a tool to assess consensus, Medfield's Town Planner distributed a survey to over 500 residents and businesses to consider design options.



Gazebo



MEDFIELD BRANDING QUESTIONNAIRE

As we prepare for the upcoming Special Town Meeting regarding the reuse of Medfield State Hospital (a week from today), I hope you don't mind taking a few minutes for this fun poll... Choosing an image for our community branding and wayfinding project!

Earlier this year, the Planning Board began working with design consultant Mark Favermann of Favermann Design to explore community branding and wayfinding options. The Board partnered with a smaller 'working group' of residents as they endeavored to come up with a suitable "logo" that the Town can use on new signage and banners in the Downtown area. Grant funding was provided by the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative. The Working Group has shortlisted the designs to the following four images (designs are larger in the survey):

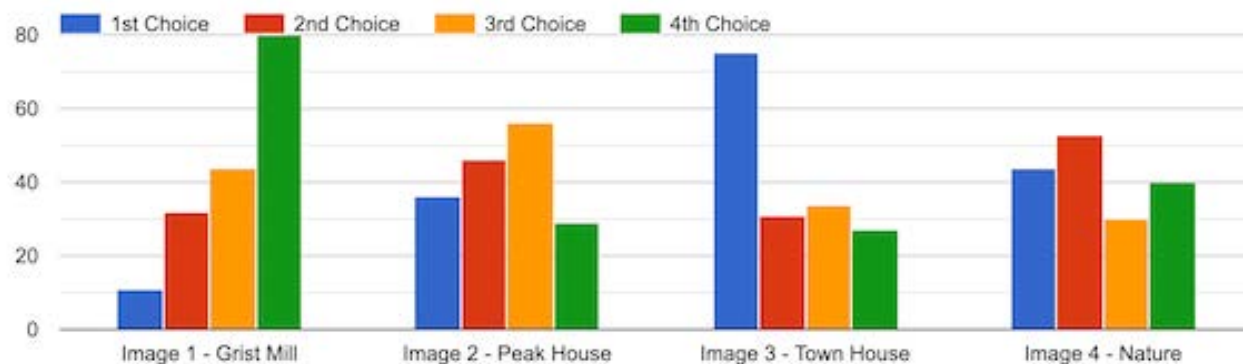
Please Rank your Choices: <https://forms.gle/nSD1q4pFdqj1VCyh7>

An excerpt on Wayfinding from the 2021 Local Rapid Recovery Plan:

Wayfinding signage can help visitors efficiently navigate an area and can increase visibility of lesser known businesses and amenities, helping to attract new customers. The goal of the Town's wayfinding program is to provide consistent and attractive information to assist the public in navigating the Town and to improve the overall downtown experience for all visitors.

Main Street struggle to attract customers due to limited visibility of their storefronts.

The purpose of this project is to create visual cohesiveness and a sense of place for the downtown area and to allow visitors to more easily navigate the district in order to access parking, businesses and civic resources. A successful wayfinding system, providing directional signs, on-street communication and clear Town branding would improve the downtown experience for visitors and improve access to and visibility of secondary attractions.



Rank Image - #1 FIRST PLACE [Image 3 - Town House]	347
Rank Image #2 SECOND PLACE [Image 4 - Nature]	401
Rank Image #3 THIRD PLACE [Image 2 - Peak House]	412
Rank Image #4 FOURTH PLACE [Image 1 - Grist Mill]	527

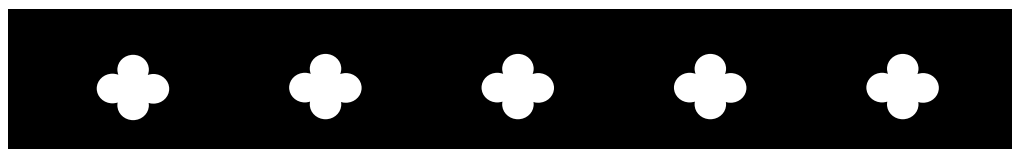
In the recently conducted survey of downtown businesses, many tenants indicated a concern about the lack of street parking in downtown, as well as a need for public beautification enhancements. A comprehensive wayfinding system would serve to direct visitors to public parking and other downtown amenities while also implementing physical improvements in the way of signage and banners to promote Medfield and create a sense of place.

Medfield has a relatively compact and walkable downtown with a variety of restaurants, goods and services. However, businesses and municipal officials have found it challenging to draw people to spend time downtown due to a perceived lack of public parking and some traffic intersections that pedestrians find unsafe to cross, especially during peak traffic hours. A public parking lot is available opposite Town Hall on Janes Avenue, but without clear signage directing visitors to this lot, it tends to be underused. In addition, some businesses off some businesses off of Main Street struggle to attract customers due to limited visibility of their storefronts.

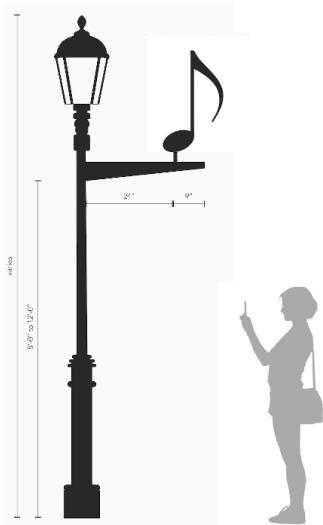
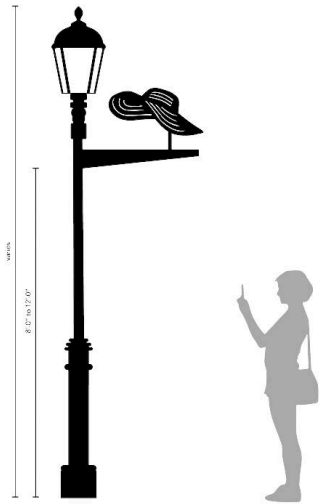
The purpose of this project is to create visual cohesiveness and a sense of place for the downtown area and to allow visitors to more easily navigate the district in order to access parking, businesses and civic resources. A successful wayfinding system, providing directional signs, on-street communication and clear Town branding would improve the downtown experience for visitors and improve access to and visibility of secondary attractions.

The graphic flower symbol from the Town House will be on the lower bar along with “Keeping Time With Change” as the slogan.

Taking the Advisory Committee’s recommendations, approval of the branding and wayfinding program will be voted on by The Town of Medfield Select Board in the fall of 2022.



Lower Sign Band



MEDFIELD
FAMILY OF ELEMENTS



A

B

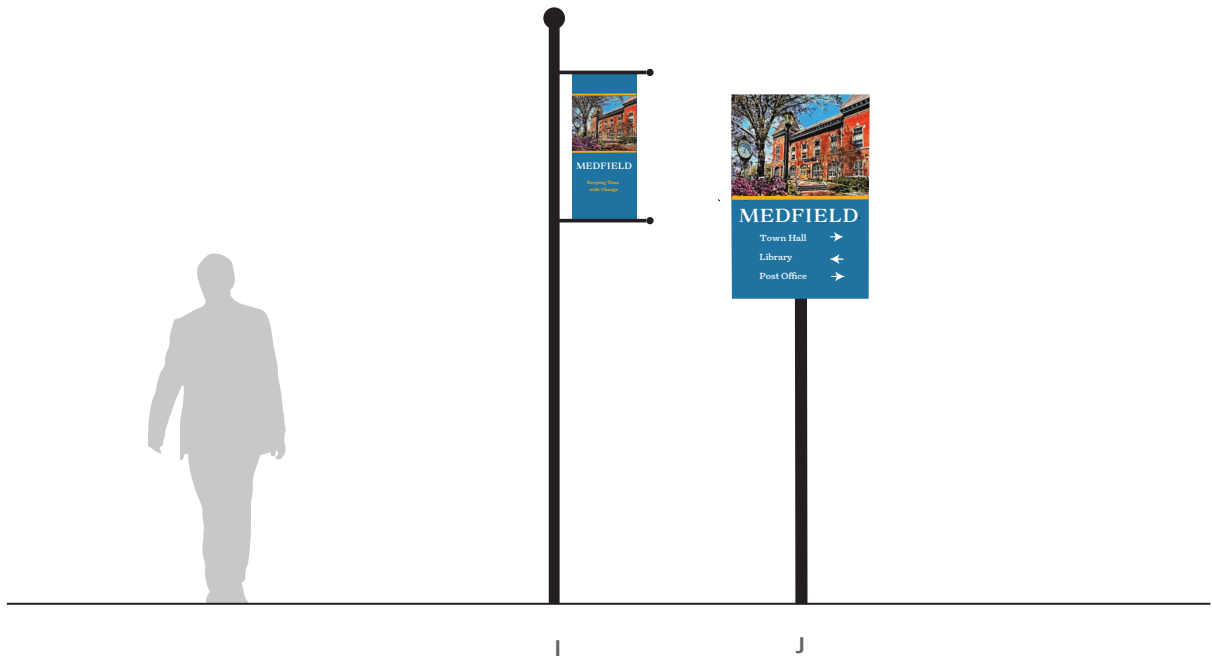


C1

C2

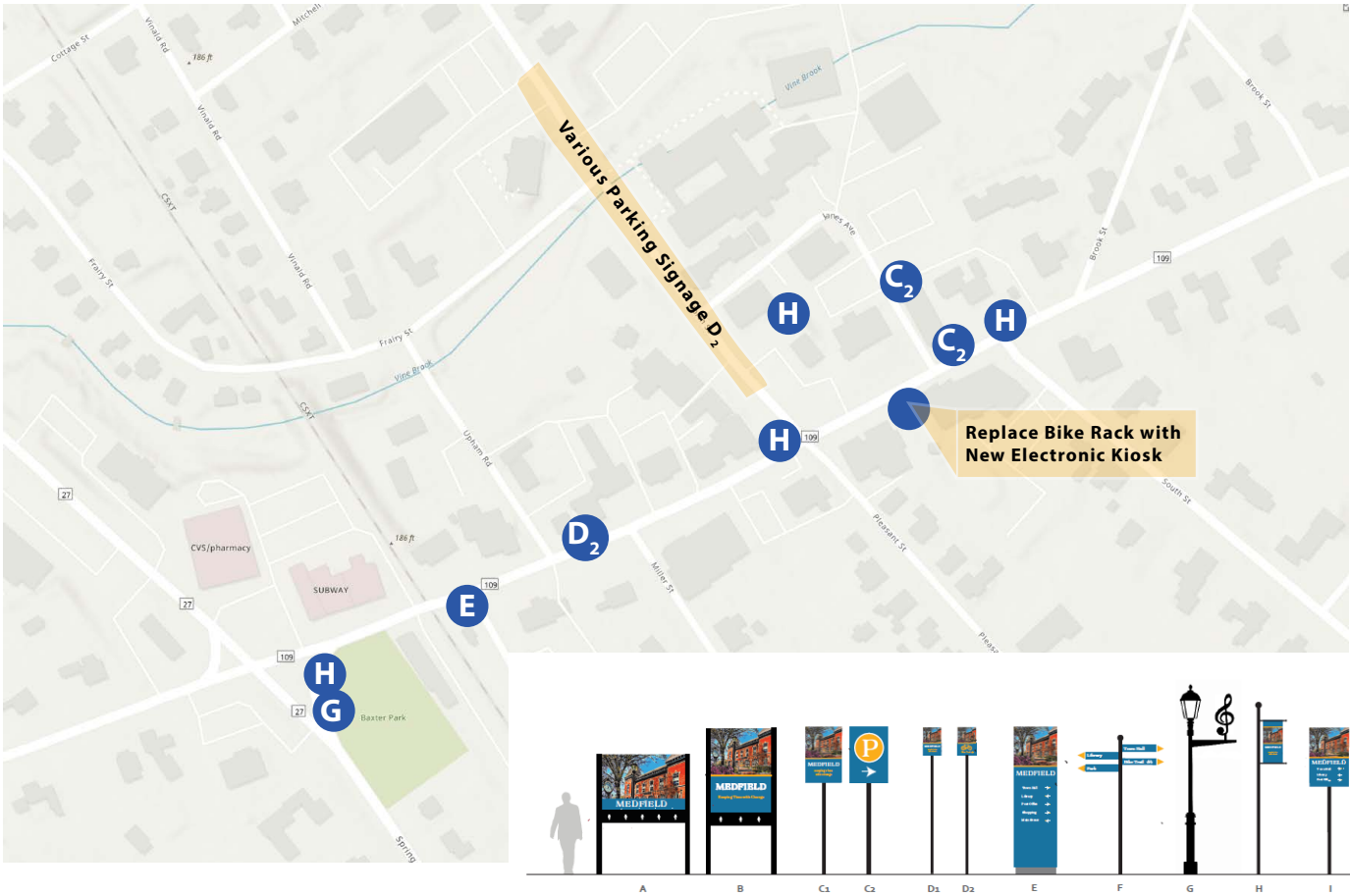
D1

D2



WAYFINDING LOCATIONS

Medfield Downtown Wayfinding Locations



Favermann Design | June 2022
MEDFIELD, MA | Sign Elements and Wayfinding Locations

