



Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

**Downtown
Great Barrington**

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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Acknowledgements



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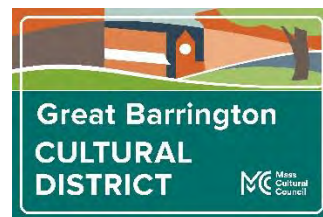
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Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District

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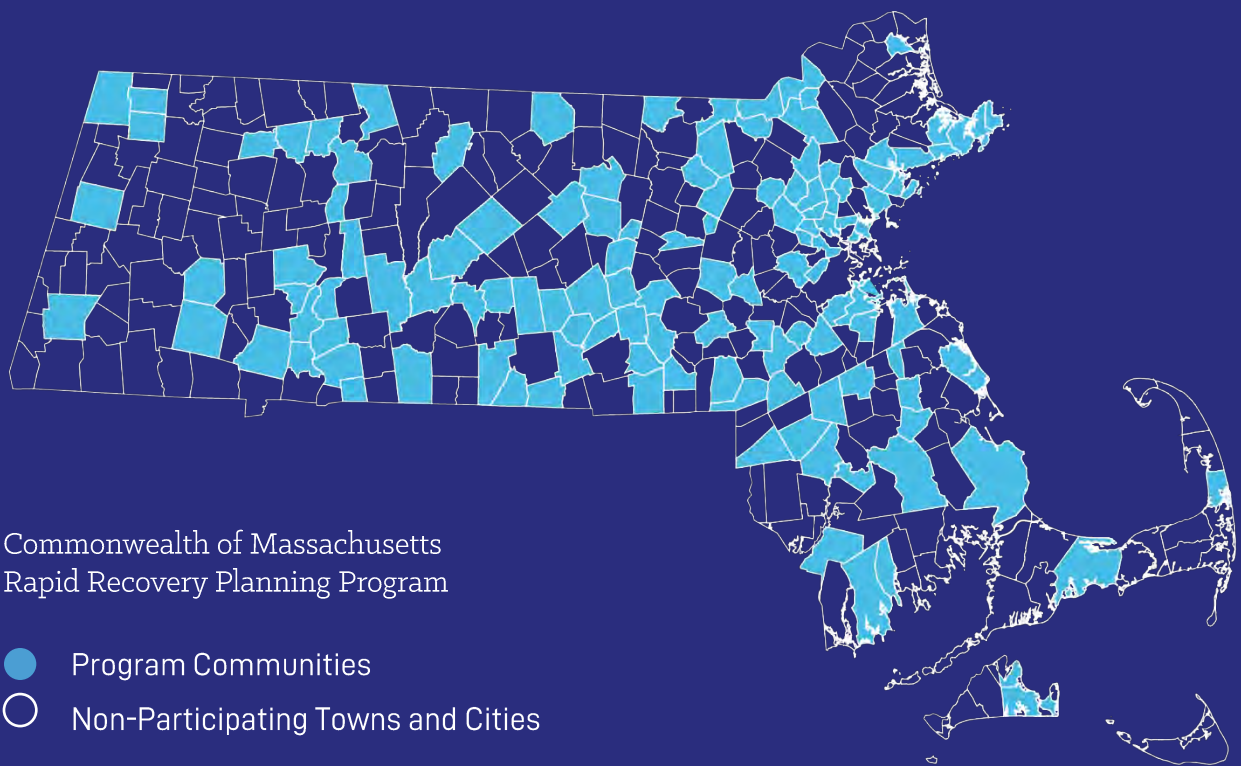
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125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

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

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



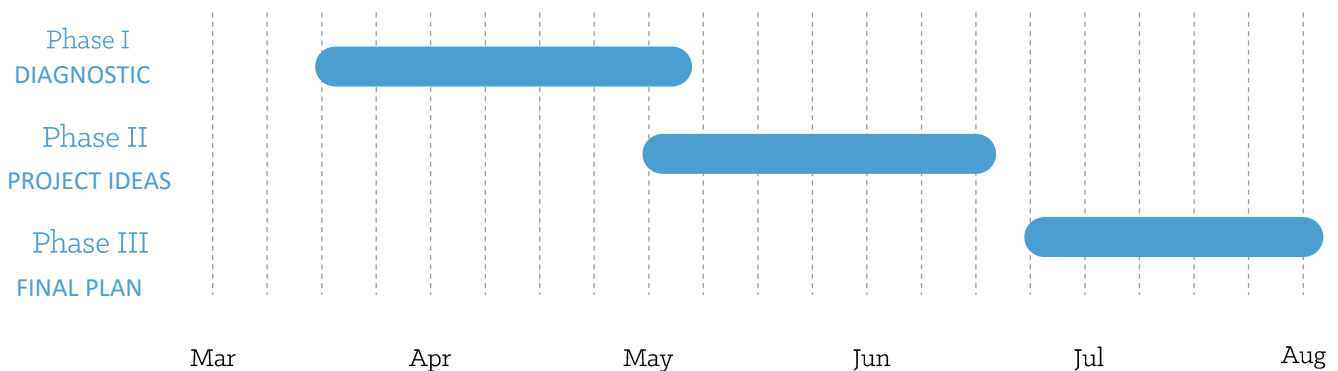
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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

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

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

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



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

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

Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework



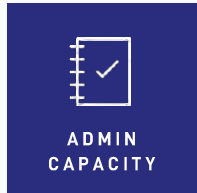
Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?



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



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



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

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



Public Realm



Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Revenue/Sales



Admin Capacity



Cultural/Arts



Other

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

A Town poised to quickly and effectively build upon a strong reputation

The Downtown Great Barrington Rapid Recovery Plan prioritizes quick, lower cost interventions, with a focus on solutions that can be implemented within a 3 to 12-month time frame in most cases. This approach reflects the findings of Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's field work to prepare the plan, responses to business surveys conducted by DHCD, and the desire of local government to address COVID related economic impacts in an expedited manner.

Great Barrington enjoys a strong reputation for cultural, culinary, and shopping experiences. The downtown draws county and regional residents for special events as well as frequent shopping, dining and business activity, and appeals to national and international visitors as a key element of any Berkshires vacation. In order to attract new and repeat clientele, the community should pursue physical improvements and tactics that positively impact visitor experience.

The pandemic highlighted the need for continued investments in the physical environment in order to successfully attract people to downtown, improve their experiences, and inspire them to return. A number of public and private realm strategies have been identified as instrumental in this effort. These include:

1. Public Art Installations, including the "Paintbox" Program
2. Expanded Outdoor Seating and Amenities
3. Improved Wayfinding
4. Public Restrooms
5. Improved Parking Management Plan
6. Town Hall Campus Reconfiguration
7. Façade Improvement Program

Prioritized projects were identified through a process of public engagement and communication with key stakeholders in the community. While an initial list of nearly 20 projects were discussed, the final list explored within this plan represents the most appealing strategies in regard to affordability, achievability, and impact.

It is important to note that while this planning project did not include funds for implementation, there are a wide range of local, state and federal resources which may be well aligned with the proposed projects, and further refinement of the draft project budgets found herein will help to advance these projects in a timely manner.

Downtown Great Barrington: Study Area

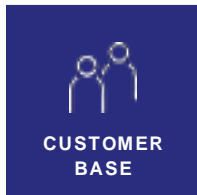
The Study Area expands slightly on the current borders of the established, MCC-designated Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District, extending north to encompass recent development at the Flying Church, and south to include the Visitor Booth and neighboring parcels.

Downtown Great Barrington Local Rapid Recovery Planning



Diagnostic

Key Findings



The downtown attracts consumers from the Berkshires and beyond

The success of business district relies on a much larger pool beyond the small (less than 700) downtown resident population, or on the surrounding neighborhoods. Disruptions in access to customers from further afield, such as those created by travel restrictions during COVID, result in a substantial threat to viability for many businesses. The majority (74%) of business survey respondents reported decreased revenue in 2020 vs. 2021, and 57% reported a prolonged drop in foot traffic.



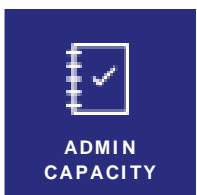
The Town's public and private infrastructure is a mix of old and new

The data collection phase of this planning process revealed a wide range of physical conditions within the public and private realms. While sidewalks, roadbeds and crosswalks scored an "A" grade, the current state of lighting, landscape and seating received a "B", and wayfinding and signage a "C". Private realm conditions were similarly varied. Most window and outdoor displays rated "A", but signage, facades, and awnings did raise concerns, with multiple examples of extreme wear and tear.



Downtown Great Barrington businesses have a high level of satisfaction

Business survey respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with most elements of public realm conditions. They prioritized strategies for improving public spaces/seating, public parking, and amenities for public transit and bike users. Desired private realm improvements included increased marketing, growth in cultural events/activities, increased opportunities for outdoor dining and selling, and recruitment of additional businesses.



Collaboration will be key to the success of stewardship entities

Great Barrington benefits from having a professionally staffed Planning and Community Development department, a rarity in a community of its size. The town also serves as headquarters for the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, and in 2018 the downtown area was designated as a Cultural District by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Currently these three entities work together and continued, deepened participation in collaborations will help to bring recovery projects to fruition.



Highlights from the Physical Environment

Public Realm

All major commercial streets scored well in review of sidewalk, roadbed, and crosswalk conditions, with the exception of Rosseter and Elm and the Triplex parking lot area, all of which are slated for improvements in the near future.

Downtown lighting and street trees are new, but street furniture received a "B" grade, largely due to observed need for more benches on Railroad, Bridge and Castle Streets as well as Rosseter and Elm. Improvements in these areas could help expand the perceived footprint of the business district, increase long-term tenancy, and extend the duration of visits by consumers.

Assessment of wayfinding and signage systems revealed extremely limited pedestrian wayfinding, as well as outdated parking signage. Improvements may help to welcome foot traffic throughout a larger commercial area and encourage visitors to stay longer and presumably spend more with downtown merchants.

Private Realm

The downtown environment is dominated by street-level storefronts offering shopping, dining, cultural as well as health and wellness experiences, and various professional services including legal, banking, real estate, and insurance.

Storefront vacancies are generally concentrated in areas off Main Street, which contributes to a sense of overall vibrancy. Attractive window displays, where applicable, also provide a pleasant visual experience.

Unightly façade conditions, including poor signage and general wear and tear cause negative impressions that affect tenants, building owners, and their neighbors. Building directories observed during site visits were sometimes incomplete or inaccurate, again contributing to negative experiences by visitors. Awnings in particular, where they are being utilized, were often in disrepair and in need of replacement. These observations of physical conditions in both the public and private realms contributed heavily to development of a proposed project list.



Minimal street furniture on Main Street



Outdated wayfinding display in northern portion of study area



Damaged and unsightly awning on Main Street



Highlights from the Business Environment

Business Mix

The downtown study area currently contains 175 active businesses, covering a range of sectors including retail, dining, and a range of medical and professional services.

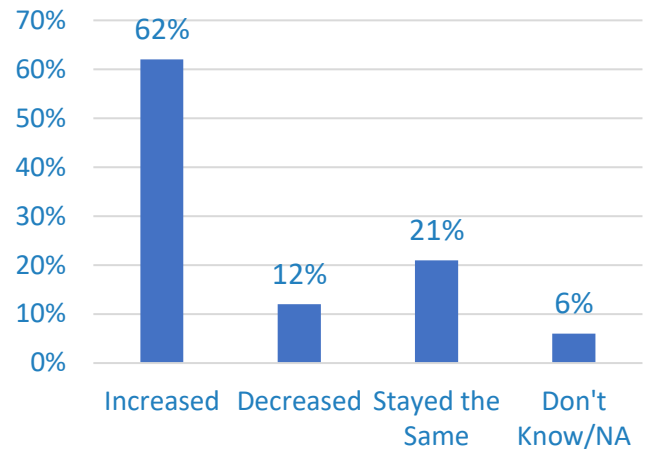
Overall, the study area includes 217,300 square feet of ground floor retail space, and 143,282 square feet of ground floor office space. There are 112 storefronts within the downtown, with 17 of these storefronts vacant as of summer 2021. This equates to a 15% vacancy rate. The total square footage of ground floor vacant space is approximately 38,000. A substantial number of these vacancies are within one structure located on Bridge Street, resulting in the appearance of nearly full tenancy on Main Street between the northern and southern borders of the study area.

A business survey conducted in Phase 1 of the Rapid Recovery Planning process garnered 34 responses. While this does not represent a majority of establishments in the study area, we do consider these responses to be indicative of the overall experience downtown.

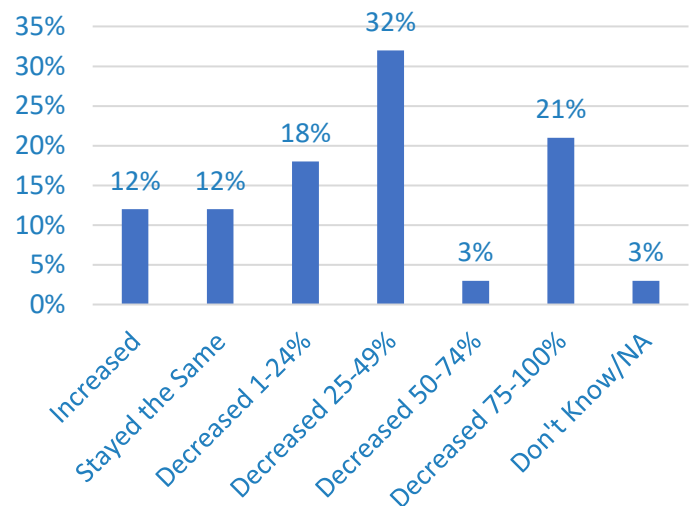
A majority (62%) of business survey respondents reported increasing revenue in the three years prior to COVID. This upward trajectory was severely disrupted in 2020 when travel restrictions and capacity limits were imposed. 74% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than in 2019, and for 56% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more. In terms of foot traffic, 74% of respondents reported having fewer on-site customers in early 2021 than before COVID. More than half (54%) reported this reduction to be at least 25%.

Operational impacts went beyond revenue and customer counts to include the implementation of alternative modes to sell and deliver product, implementing safety measures, reducing hours of operation, laying off employees, deferring rent or mortgage payments, and temporary or even permanent closures. 91% of survey respondents were impacted in at least one of the ways mentioned above.

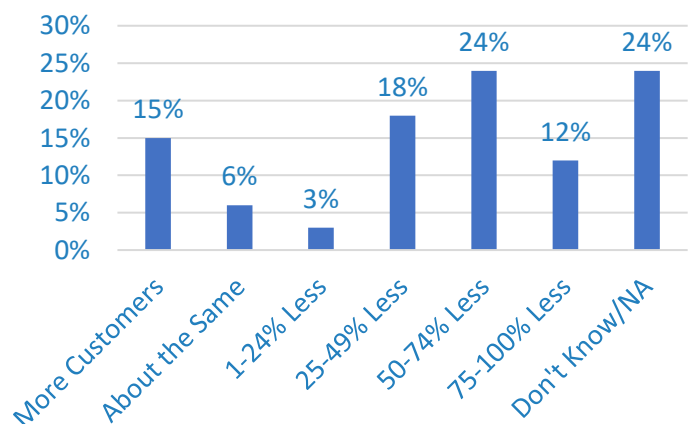
3-Year Revenue Trends Prior to COVID

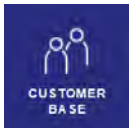


Impact on Revenue 2020 vs. 2019



Early 2021 foot traffic vs. pre-COVID





Highlights from the Customer Base/Market Information

Downtown Population

The downtown study area has a population of less than 700*. This represents approximately 9.9% of the entire town, which has a population of 7,172 according to the 2020 Census.

Downtown households are slightly smaller than those in the rest of the town (1.94 vs. 2.1)

We estimate that the downtown population has a similar educational attainment to the Great Barrington community at large. Approximately 35% of those aged 25 and above hold an Associates Degree, Bachelor's Degree, or Post-graduate Degree.

The downtown population is less racially diverse than the Town of Great Barrington, with an estimated 93% identifying as "White Alone" as opposed to 89% in the town. Ethnically, 6% of the town's population self-identifies as Hispanic, while approximately 9% of the downtown population self-identifies as Hispanic.

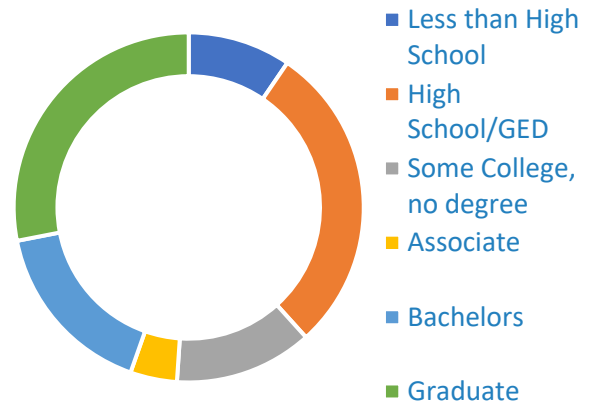
Downtown residents' estimated median age (49.4) is higher than that of Great Barrington residents (46.5). Age distributions generally align, with a small portion of residents within the 20-24 range, and larger portions falling between 45-54 and 55-64.

Despite skewing older than the town's population, a higher percentage of downtown residents are in the workforce. In the downtown area approximately 427, or 62.5% of the population are in the workforce. In Great Barrington, the workforce totals 3,819, or 55.3% of the overall town population.

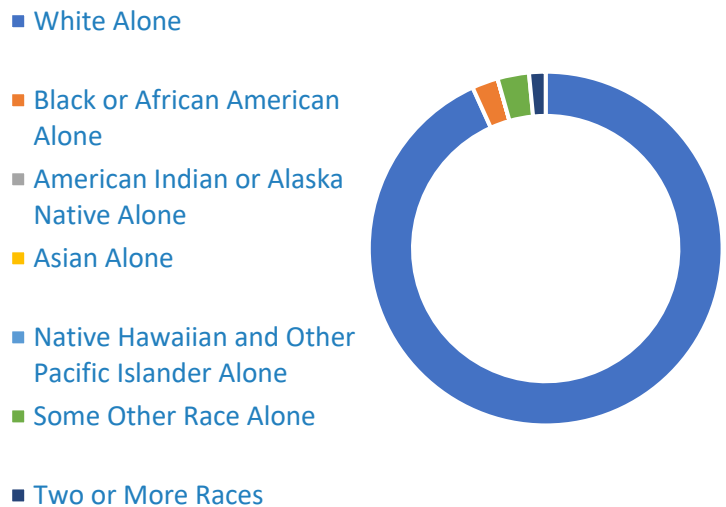
The median household income in downtown (\$52,243) is 5.8% lower than the median household income of Great Barrington (\$55,478). This difference may be explained in part by the smaller household size.

**calculations for the downtown area are derived by averaging figures from three contributing census tracts. All quantities and percentages are approximate.*

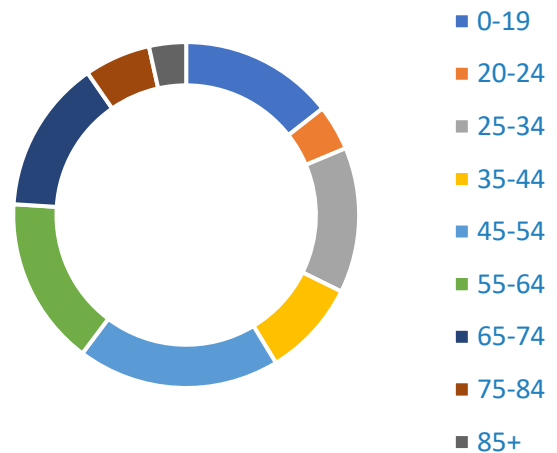
Educational Attainment

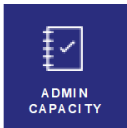


Race/Ethnicity



Population by Age





Highlights from Administrative Capacity

Three primary organizations act as stewards of the downtown commercial district in some capacity, including the Town of Great Barrington, the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District. Many proposed projects should include participation and support from all three entities to reach potential.

Town of Great Barrington

The Town of Great Barrington has a Planning and Community Development Department, which actively works to improve and revitalize downtown and surrounding areas. This department manages brownfields assessment and mitigation, redevelopment of underutilized properties, and provides staffing support on all planning, zoning, and development matters. With adequate financial resources, the Town is well positioned to manage projects in this rapid recovery plan.

Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce

The SBCC's footprint encompasses nine towns. The Chamber is a 501 (c) 6 membership organization with a focus on shopping local and promoting unique aspects of the region. Its 17-member volunteer board promotes civic, commercial, industrial and agricultural progress in the Southern Berkshires. Supported by two staff members, the SBCC shoulders a large geographic area of responsibility and a complex roster of member businesses. Added staffing capacity could allow the SBCC to take a lead role in some recovery projects.

Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District

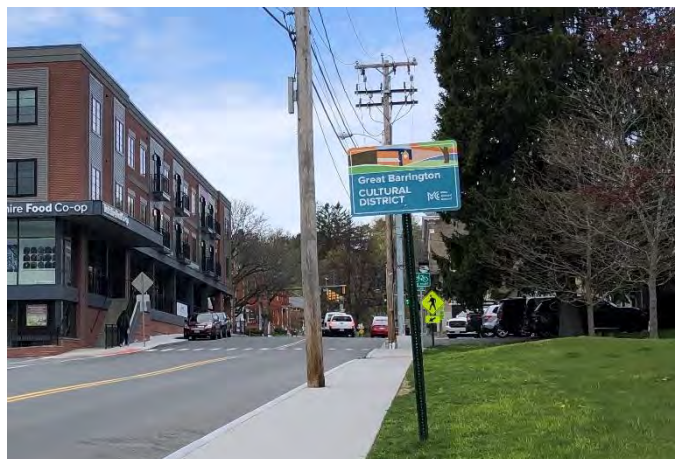
Great Barrington's Cultural District was officially designated in 2018. Steering committee membership draws from cultural institutions, for-profit creative economy businesses, the local cultural council, and individual artists or artist collectives. To date, their focus has been to promote downtown as a destination and assist in promoting programming hosted by stakeholders. The district's budget is currently limited to annual grants from MCC, though the Town also invests in staffing to support district management. In order to take a lead role in furthering recovery projects, the district would need to secure additional funding and consider expanding its volunteer base.



Great Barrington Town Hall



Visitor Center, Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce



Signage for the Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District

Project Recommendations

Public Art Installations

Category	 Cultural/Arts
Location	Throughout Study Area, with a focus on alleys and large exterior walls of private buildings
Origin	Cultural District Steering committee, downtown merchants
Budget	 Low Budget (under \$50,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (<5 years)
Risk	 Medium Risk – project will necessitate partnerships with private landlords, involve juried selection process
Key Performance Indicators	Number of public installations guided by open and inclusive community engagement process
Partners & Resources	Downtown Great Barrington Cultural District Funding leads: LISC; Commonwealth Places; Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation; GFCU; Lee Bank; Deann Dylandale Foundation



Public mural in alley of Great Barrington

Diagnostic

Downtown Great Barrington has an established history of implementing public art installations in a variety of ways. The pedestrian underpass west of Town Hall features a collaborative effort, a mural honoring W.E.B. DuBois was installed in the alley from Railroad Street to the Triplex parking area in 2018, and more recently, the town repainted north/south crosswalks along Main Street in a rainbow color scheme during the pandemic.

There remain several wide alleys and large exterior walls which may be suitable for murals. Finding ways to draw more visitors downtown was ranked highly among business owners' preferences for recovery strategies. This approach also aligns well with ongoing efforts to encourage social distancing and outdoor enjoyment of what the town has to offer.

Interest has already been expressed in a "Paint Box" program, which would wrap existing utility boxes in historic scenes of Great Barrington, positioned to present an historic perspective alongside modern conditions. This program may be incorporated into a larger public art project or exist alongside of it.

Action Items

- Identify locations which may accommodate large-scale outdoor art installations.
- Communicate with private landlords as well as tenants about potential collaborations.
- Promote outdoor art opportunities to a wide range of potential contributors, including high school students and area college students.
- Develop a system for adjudication and selection, as well as a calendar for installations over time.
- Launch an initial pilot process and revise for future iterations.



Pedestrian underpass leading from Town Hall to Castle Street and Castle Hill Avenue



Rainbow crosswalks were painted in spring of 2020 as a sign of hope during the pandemic

Process

- Conduct inventory of available spaces for future art installations.
- Determine which locations may need restoration or maintenance before artwork could be installed.
- Discuss potential with private property owners, establish ongoing discussions with interested parties.
- Solicit suggestions and input from artists from a range of disciplines.
- Share initial findings with key stakeholder groups including Selectboard and Cultural District Steering Committee.
- Develop draft program guidelines and procedures/policies for selection.
- Review with potential funders to gauge interest and determine what parameters may be imposed.
- Finalize program guidelines and publicize a Call for Art.
- Incorporate plans for events and educational opportunities to accompany the installation's unveiling – artist reception, etc.
- Ingrain new installations into walking tours of downtown, and in overall marketing and communications efforts of Town, Chamber, and Cultural District.



Wide alley in Downtown Great Barrington that could house mural installations



Utility box on Main Street – a possible location for small scale installation



Best Practice

Launch a Public Art Program



CULTURAL/
ARTS

Location

Melrose, MA

Best Practice Summary

In this example, the public art program was part of a Wayfinding and Creative Placemaking Master Plan, which may be a consideration for the Town of Great Barrington as both wayfinding and public art are among their Rapid Recovery Projects. This multi-pronged approach was accomplished with the help of a pairing of consultants who won the bid for a wayfinding study with design services. The scope of work required that the community's past and present be honored through the final projects and incorporated extensive outreach to community members. Implementation of the projects involved local officials and town staff, but also local arts organizations, business owners, and school students.

A full description of this Best Practice/Sample Project can be found in Appendix B.



Best Practice

Activate Alleys: Attract People to Under-Utilized Spaces



Location

Frost Alley Somernova Campus, Somerville, MA





Best Practice Summary

Activation of alleys in Great Barrington has the potential to dramatically expand the presence of public art throughout the downtown, as well as complement several other recovery projects described within this report. Encouraging safe, inviting alley usage can:

- Connect primary foot traffic areas with less visible parking options
- Create additional space for live performances and social gatherings
- Expand the perceived business district to incorporate additional secondary streets
- Provide additional locations for self-watering pollinator plantings

A full description of this Best Practice/Sample Project can be found in Appendix B.

Expanded Outdoor Seating & Amenities

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Throughout Study Area, with a focus on areas currently lacking street furniture
Origin	Great Barrington Select Board
Budget	 Low Budget (less than \$50,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (<5 years)
Risk	 Low Risk – business survey respondents are in favor, key stakeholders agree to prioritize this project
Key Performance Indicators	Total number of benches installed, replacement and expansion of rubbish and recycling containers
Partners & Resources	Town of Great Barrington, Downtown merchants via Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, Cultural District Funding leads: Shared Streets and Spaces; T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program; Jane and Jack Fitzpatrick Trust



Sidewalk benches on Main Street in Great Barrington

Diagnostic

Expanded and improved outdoor seating is one of the first projects suggested by members of the community upon launch of this planning project. It has been noted that many of the benches currently located on Main Street are positioned facing the street, which often results in a view of parked cars rather than foot traffic and storefronts. There are also multiple locations where gathering spots could be created with two or more benches accompanied by trash receptacles and/or seasonal planters.

While updated metal benches have been added along Main Street, other primary and secondary streets are lacking in street furniture or house benches and receptacles in poor condition.



Wide sidewalks provide opportunities for small gatherings



A dilapidated bench sits in front of the Town Hall campus

Action Items

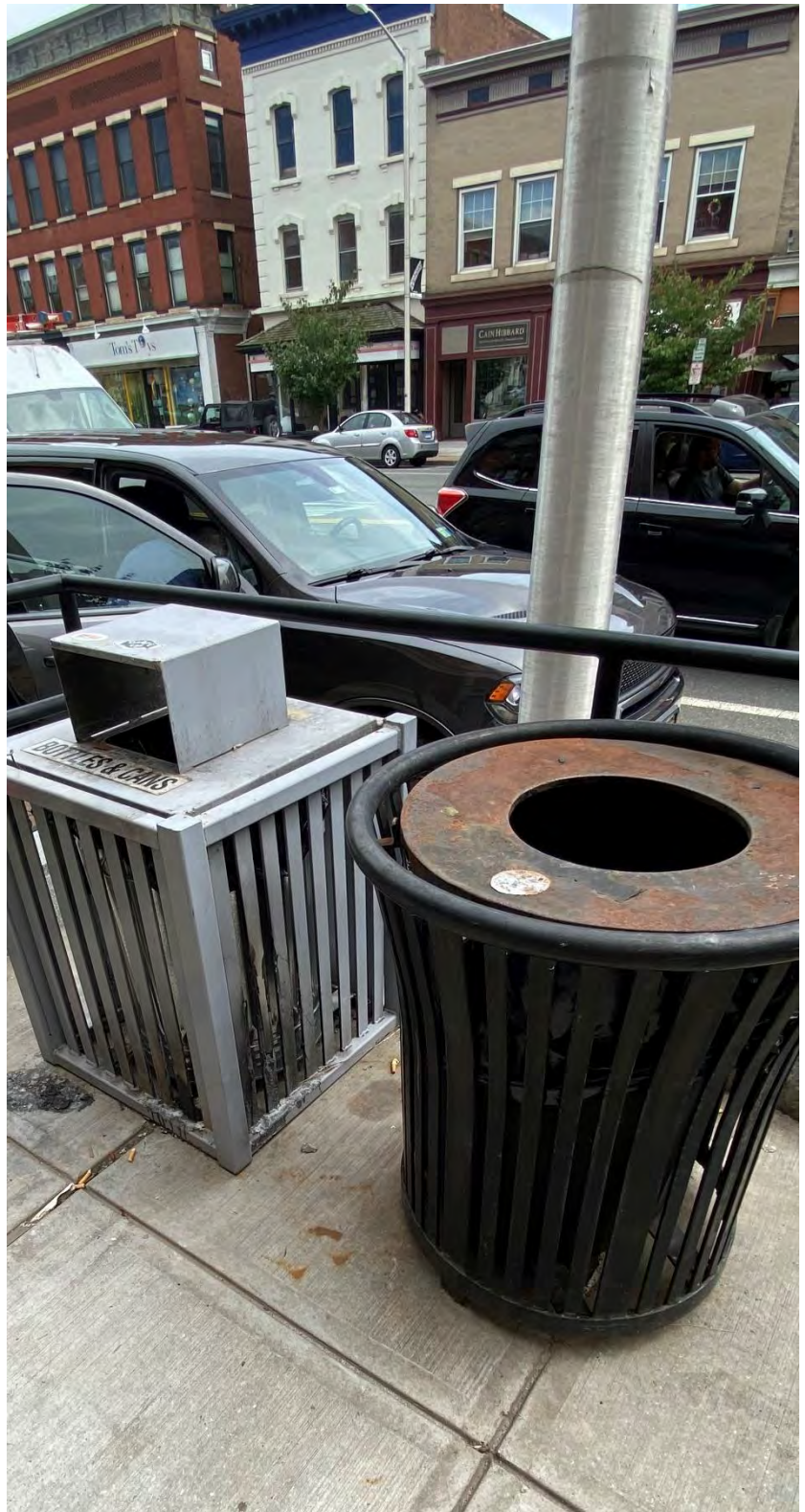
- Identify locations and areas lacking appropriate street furniture.
- Determine additional amenities which could contribute to a positive visitor experience downtown – bike racks, receptacles, public wifi stations, seasonal planters and other landscaping
- Prioritize areas which can become “social zones” and offer opportunities for small gatherings and pop-up events, meetings, performances.
- Identify responsible parties for permanently positioned and temporary/seasonal fixtures, working with business community to enlist stewards



Trash and recycling bins on Main Street

Process

- Inventory existing assets (furniture, trash receptacles, planters and landscaping).
- Assess condition of existing assets – should some be removed/and replaced? What can be reused?
- Review a wide range of possible locations to install assets. Some may be revamping or re-configuring of current locations, others will be new.
- Strategize about the most impactful locations for asset placement. How can the walkable business district be expanded by drawing people past typical circulation paths?
- Look at options available that fit the durability and aesthetic needs of the community. Investigate local sources for products when possible.
- Determine per unit costs of desired assets.
- Conduct further research into available funding opportunities and identify which will require local match.
- Identify any potential local partners to help with placement decisions and ongoing stewardship of assets once installed.
- Consider ADA requirements before finalizing purchases or placements.
- Iterate if needed – installations of street fixtures may need to occur over time depending on funding.



Trash and recycling bins on Main Street



Best Practice

“Social Zones and Shared Streets”



Location

Grand Rapids, MI (and other locations)

Best Practice Summary

In many of the “best practice” case studies provided through DHCD, expanded outdoor seating involved at least seasonal alterations to vehicle access and parking, with any reclaiming of street space designed to encourage spending with downtown restaurants. Given the concerns raised by Great Barrington business owners regarding immediate, storefront-adjacent parking, these scenarios are expected to be met with resistance locally. However, the Grand Rapids example does set forth a system of “social zones” identification that might be applied to existing sidewalk bump-outs to create natural gathering spaces and facilitate outdoor gatherings and performances without impeding on existing parking spaces

A full description of this Best Practice/Sample Project can be found in Appendix B.



Best Practice

Beech Tree themed street furniture: community branding through functional public art



CULTURAL/
ARTS

Location

Chelmsford, MA

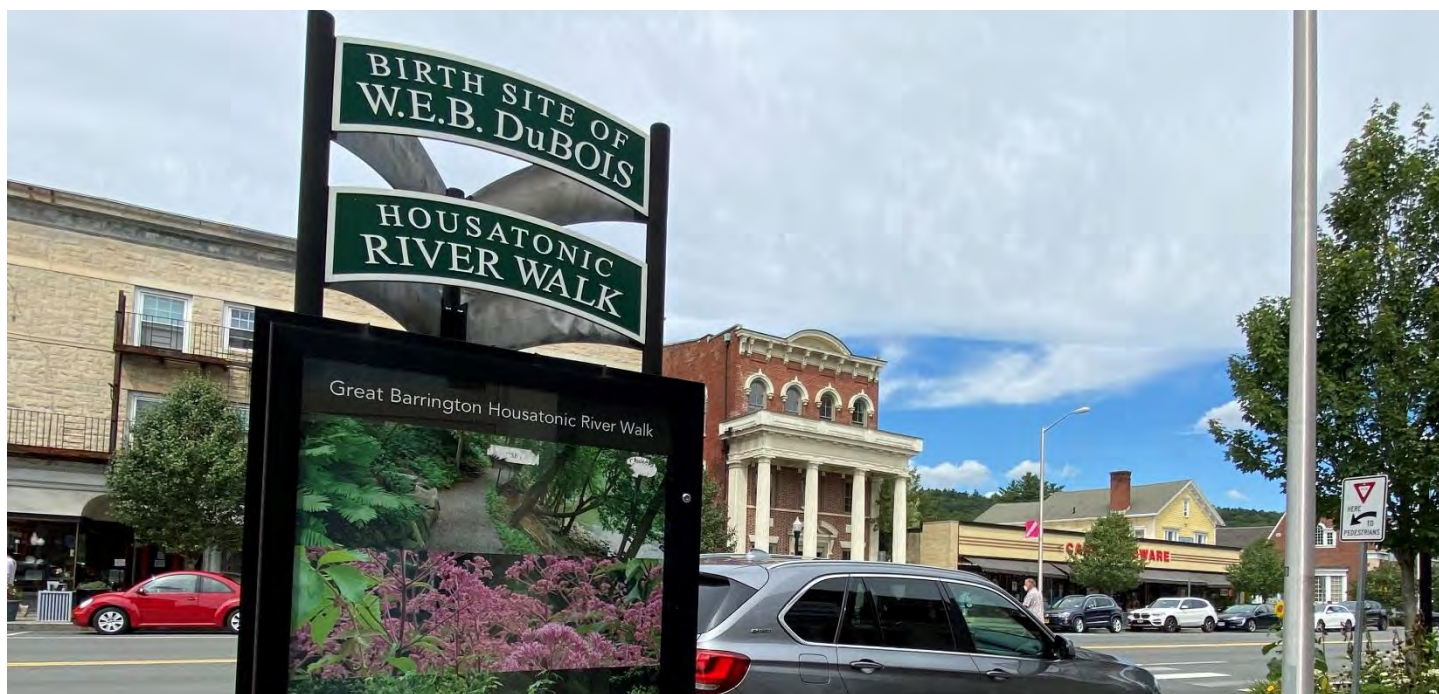
Best Practice Summary

In Chelmsford, previously uninspired and deteriorating streetscapes were contributing to an overall experience lacking in a sense of quality or vitality. Sculptured street furniture honoring a former beech tree on the town common carried forward the existing wayfinding system's theme into benches, bike racks, planters, tree grates and tree trunk guards. Multiple committees provided advice and review, including the Historic Society and Bicycle Commission, among others. Despite a tight timeline for completion, this project incorporated custom fabrication by vendors.

A full description of this Best Practice/Sample Project can be found in Appendix B.

Improved Wayfinding

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Throughout Study Area, with a focus on pedestrians and cyclists
Origin	Business Survey Respondents
Budget	 Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (<5 years)
Risk	 Medium Risk – project must balance need for expanded signage with local regulations and branding expectations, may face resistance without community engagement.
Key Performance Indicators	Increase in pedestrian and cyclist-focused signage, continued usage by visitors and residents
Partners & Resources	Town of Great Barrington Planning Department Funding leads: LISC, America Walks Community Change Grant; MA Downtown Initiative; Lee Bank; Coolidge Hill Foundation; Gendler Family Foundation



Wayfinding kiosk on Main Street in Great Barrington

Diagnostic

Field work by consultant staff quickly revealed a dearth of signage geared toward pedestrians or bicycle users. Existing signage is almost entirely focused on vehicular traffic, and itself is limited to roadway intersections and basic safety instructions. Information about major attractions, outdoor recreation opportunities, seasonal/semi-permanent events or parking is extremely limited. Extant parking signage is outdated, and the few instances of downtown maps show extreme weathering and degradation.

Improved wayfinding will impact the success of several other initiatives, including improved parking management and the launch of a public art program. Successful wayfinding systems will also increase visitor experience satisfaction and have the potential to increase sales and revenue at local businesses.



A weathered A-frame branding sign displayed on Railroad Street

Action Items

- Determine branded approach to wayfinding system to ensure consistency – this may need to tie in with brand identity as expressed on town website and/or other communication channels.
- Identify major attractions, activities, and venues that should be included in wayfinding system.
- Communicate with local business owners to understand wayfinding needs of visitors, ensure that a range of viewpoints are taken into consideration.
- Consider what existing, legacy signs a new wayfinding system may need to replace, and communicate with stewards to ensure a well-received transition



Exterior walls of the Visitor Center display maps and brochures/rack cards

Process

- Consider whether wayfinding should be implemented independent of or in conjunction with the proposed public art program.
- Identify anchor attractions, outdoor recreation assets (including parks and playgrounds), basic amenities (public restrooms, parking) and other landmarks which should be included in the wayfinding system.
- Map locations and orientations of wayfinding elements and share with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Determine if the wayfinding project will necessitate a design firm or other consultant to guide the process.
- Solidify a branded, consistent approach to signs, kiosks, and other wayfinding elements.
- Pursue funding opportunities to support fabrication and implementation.
- Communicate brand guidelines with all town departments and cooperating agencies to ensure consistency across platforms.
- Consider rollout of temporary signs in desired locations to test and tweak as needed.
- Implement system in phased approach, working on elements that can be moved or adjusted first before installing more permanent fixtures.



Outdated parking guide signage at the southern end of the study area



Map and brochure kiosk located at the northern entrance to the study area



Best Practice

Create a way-finding system to help reinforce the downtown experience



Location

Wakefield, MA

Best Practice Summary

In the Wakefield case study, there was no universally accepted brand or wayfinding system prior to their project. In proximity to many popular outdoor recreation sites and other destinations, the community saw an opportunity to draw more people downtown to enjoy an already robust mix of restaurants, retailers, and service providers. This process included its share of disagreement and controversy over design direction and provides some valuable examples of the importance of public engagement throughout a branding process. The end result is an attractive, consistent signage and informational kiosk program with flexibility to adjust over time.

A full description of this Best Practice/Sample Project can be found in Appendix B.



Best Practice

Create a way-finding system based on the community's seaside location



Location

Wells, ME

Best Practice Summary

In the Wells, ME case study, a majority of businesses were spread along a long commercial corridor rather than arranged in a downtown setting. For Great Barrington, this may serve as inspiration to extend a wayfinding system north and south along Route 7 to incorporate surrounding commercial activity into a branding effort. Elements from the wayfinding designs also impacted design of street furniture and other fixtures.

A full description of this Best Practice/Sample Project can be found in Appendix B.

Public Restrooms

Category	 Public Realm
Location	To be determined based on available publicly owned space
Origin	Town of Great Barrington business community
Budget	 Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (<5 years)
Risk	 Medium Risk – project will add maintenance burden to town’s Department of Public Works
Key Performance Indicators	Estimated usage, Visitor survey results
Partners & Resources	Town of Great Barrington land use department, DPW Funding leads: local allocations; Community Development Block Grant; Berkshire Bank Foundation



Example of public restroom construction and configuration in West Stockbridge, MA

Diagnostic

For a downtown that draws many thousands of people on a typical weekend, there are too few public restrooms in downtown Great Barrington. The Town places a portable toilet outside the Town Hall in warmer months, but it is not accessible, it is hidden off to the side of the parking lot, it is not a year-round solution, and it is hardly appropriate for commercial hub like Great Barrington. The only other public bathroom options are the library and the Chamber of Commerce booth, and of course these are not open after hours.

A public bathroom that is conveniently located and accessible can greatly improve a patron's experience of a shopping district. Public bathrooms are especially important for seniors and for parents with young children. Public bathrooms often include a lobby area or posting board outside for tourist information and maps, and other amenities that make it easy for people to enjoy their time downtown, not to mention make it easier for people to spend a longer period of time downtown.

Action Items

- Identify optimal location with access to water, sewer, and electricity, for a permanent, year-round building.
- Identify the preferred style and size.
- Budget for operations costs, including maintenance and security.
- Align project with other public amenity initiatives.



Temporary portable latrine adjacent to Town Hall in Great Barrington



Example of public restroom facility along rail trail in Millerton, NY

Process

- Survey possible locations for facility, documenting available footprint as well as proximity to necessary utilities.
- Review eligible sites with town officials and staff.
- Work closely with Great Barrington DPW staff throughout process.
- Assess potential construction approaches – consider pros and cons of pre-fabricated/modular models as well as on-site construction.
- Identify preferred construction approach based on combination of factors: available designs, cost, ability to withstand regular use in all seasons, etc.
- Present proposal to town officials for review and revision.
- Assess budget to identify any gap in financing (\$100k allocated at Town Meeting in 2021).
- Include ongoing maintenance and security costs in budget considerations.
- Follow any necessary procurement procedures for construction/installation.
- Determine which amenities might be collocated at the bathroom – tourist maps, bike racks, etc.



Example of public restroom facility along rail trail in Millerton, NY

Parking Management Plan

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Throughout Study Area
Origin	Business survey results, public input process
Budget	 Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (<5 years)
Risk	 Medium Risk – project will need to balance the needs of competing stakeholders
Key Performance Indicators	Visitor and business community survey results, overall increase in available public spaces
Partners & Resources	Town of Great Barrington, private lot owners Funding leads: MA Downtown Initiative; Real Estate Services TA; EEA Planning Assistance; MassWorks Infrastructure



Wayfinding kiosk on Main Street in Great Barrington

Diagnostic

Downtown has a good amount of parking—over 1,300 public and private spaces—which on all except the busiest days, serve the business district well. But on busy days the most convenient parking is quickly occupied, and many other spaces, public and private, are not used at all. Poor signage, inconsistent regulations, and large private parking lots that sit empty are confusing, ineffective, and do not support a healthy business district. Double parked cars, employees parked in premium spaces, and traffic that circulates around Railroad Street only in search of the next curbside space are all symptoms of poor parking management. A good parking strategy could make downtown more welcoming and user friendly, less stressful, and could reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. A thoughtful approach could reduce the need for future supply and could free up unused and poorly located parking spaces for more beneficial uses.

Action Items

- Solicit public input, performing outreach often and to as many groups as possible.
- Assess successful elements of the current system and identify pain points as specifically as possible.
- Consider what zoning or other regulations may need to be changed to make improvements.
- Test possible solutions in temporary manner, solicit feedback and adjust accordingly.



Current signage regarding parking on Main Street in Great Barrington

Process

- Define the specific area to be studied and its context within the larger community.
- Establish a working group with a broad range of stakeholders, including business owners, town staff, and members of boards/committees which may have decision making responsibilities for proposed changes.
- Determine the public process to be undertaken, and whether an RFP for professional planning services will be required.
- Collect and review all applicable GIS information, previous studies or changes implemented, as well as ownership information on private properties.
- Confirm number and location of current publicly accessible spots, as well as parking restricted to private use
- Review current parking regulations and cross-check with existing signage.
- Coordinate with private parking owners and management representatives to encourage broader access to underutilized spaces.
- Remove or update any outdated or misleading information, replace with accurate and clear signage.
- Align updated signage with wayfinding system discussed in this plan.



Example of parking signage consistent with branded wayfinding system in Plymouth, MA



Casual exploration of downtown benefits all merchants with increased, slower foot traffic



Best Practice

Undertake a Public Planning and Visioning Process for the Public Realm



Location

Florence, MA

Best Practice Summary

Parking locations and availability are priority topics for business owners in downtown Great Barrington. Solutions will need to be multi-faceted, with flexibility from all sides to make incremental improvements. While a substantial number of parking spaces already exist, many are out of site or controlled by private property owners. Discussions should include an array of possible approaches, including a recognition that parking directly adjacent to businesses will not often be possible in a bustling, vibrant downtown. Considering the high priority placed on this topic, in-depth public engagement will be crucial. Following the example set forth in this Best Practice sample project will help to guide that engagement process.

A full description of this Best Practice/Sample Project can be found in Appendix B.

Town Hall Campus Reconfiguration

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Throughout Study Area
Origin	Town of Great Barrington Planning Department
Budget	 Large Budget (over \$200,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (<5 years)
Risk	 Medium Risk – project will temporarily disrupt access to Town Hall, include significant costs
Key Performance Indicators	Increase in public programming on site, Resident survey results
Partners & Resources	Town of Great Barrington, community organizations Funding leads: MassWorks Infrastructure, MA Downtown Initiative, Commonwealth Places, LISC, local funding allocations including CPA, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation



Town Hall Campus (eastern portion) in Great Barrington

Diagnostic

Aside from the park behind Town Hall and the front lawn of the Mason Library, there is little park space within the core of downtown Great Barrington. Both spaces are actively used and contribute to the vitality of downtown's commercial area. These spaces, plus the Housatonic River Walk, prove that a little green space can go a long way in an urban environment—providing places to rest as well as environmental benefits like shade and air quality improvements.

The Town currently lacks a green focal point or a New England style town common, which serve as community gathering spaces. The park is not handicapped accessible, and the entrance to Town Hall is dominated by driveways and parking. During the Town's Main Street reconstruction, the design team recognized that a reimagined Town Hall campus would present numerous opportunities, but the design was outside the scope of the road project. It is now recognized that transforming the campus into a welcoming green gathering space, highlighting the historic significance and monuments on the campus, calming traffic, and increasing accessibility could benefit the entire business district.



Current vehicular access from northeast corner of campus



Town Hall as seen from Main Street

Action Items

- Develop a landscape design and historic preservation vision for the campus
- Work with the Historic District Commission and relevant town boards
- Identify funding options including CPA open space funds

Process

- Invite a wide range of stakeholders to take part in a visioning process.
- Consider impacts to current site users, including staff, officials, volunteers, community members, and adjacent businesses.
- Review multiple configurations to compare features – is parking increased or at minimum maintained at current numbers? Will traffic flow be improved? Do proposed plans impede upon current uses of existing park behind Town Hall? Will nearby businesses be impacted positively or negatively? Are any safety or other concerns raised?
- Ensure ADA compliance is fully integrated into any designs being advanced for final rounds of consideration.
- Reengage stakeholders to ensure broad community support.
- Research funding sources and identify potential matching funds if needed.
- Contract for final designs and conduct bidding/procurement as appropriate.
- Communicate with stakeholders regarding final design and timeline.
- Implement and celebrate!
- Launch programming made possible by campus reconfiguration.



Town Hall Campus reconfiguration concept, credit Walt Cudnohosky, 2011



Best Practice

Creating Safe Pedestrian Access in a Rural Village Center



Location

Whately, MA

Best Practice Summary

Reconfiguration of the Town Hall Campus in Great Barrington will provide additional open space within the downtown area for public events and gatherings, while preserving existing recreational space at the western portion of the campus. This project will create a visible “town green” atmosphere without reducing the total number of parking spaces. It will also eliminate confusing and potentially unsafe vehicular traffic patterns by eliminating the northeast entrance to campus and routing all cars in a clockwise route around Town Hall. The Best Practice sample project provided demonstrates the value of broad community engagement and strong support for improved access by pedestrians. It also provides inspiration for events co-produced with adjacent properties and businesses.

A full description of this Best Practice/Sample Project can be found in Appendix B.

Façade Improvement Program

Category	 Revenue/Sales
Location	Primary focus on Main and Railroad Streets
Origin	Consultant field work/observations, public input process
Budget	 Low Budget (under \$50,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (<5 years)
Risk	 Medium Risk – project will necessitate support of private landlords, may be oversubscribed
Key Performance Indicators	Number of storefronts improved, number of applications received overall, visitor survey results
Partners & Resources	Town of Great Barrington, Cultural District, building owners Funding leads: MA Downtown Initiative; municipal ARPA allocation; GFCU; Lee Bank; Grassroots Fund Seed/Grow Grants



Downtown Great Barrington Main Street façades

Diagnostic

While many storefronts and façades in the downtown study area are exemplary and the core area of Main Street is visually appealing, closer examination during field work revealed a range of conditions that included some instances of very dilapidated awnings, window sash, and ground-floor fixtures. Business owners did not note this topic as one of particular concern. However, during subsequent community meetings, participants agreed this may be overlooked and does contribute to both visitor experience and impact sales for merchants.

While there are some instances of structural/architectural concern, many façades could be significantly improved with relatively minor investments in cosmetic upgrades. The proposed project establishes an improvement program granting or lending for minor upgrade investments.



Storefronts on Railroad Street in varying conditions



Unoccupied spaces at downtown gateways impact visitor impressions

Action Items

- Thorough review of existing programs within and outside of Massachusetts
- Determine financial and logistical structures for Façade Improvement Program
- Inventory storefronts in need of cosmetic improvements
- Promote program with landlords and/or ground floor tenants
- Conduct pilot cycle of application acceptance, review, and awards
- Adjust program as needed based on applicant feedback and experiences



Facades adjacent to public parking offer opportunities for the business community

Process

- Extensive research of other communities' guidelines and procedures.
- Based on best practices, create easily understandable illustrated façade improvement guidelines and application materials.
- Consider inclusion of a wide range of possible improvements, including signage, awnings, trim, windows/window sash, plantings, minor upgrades and repairs to architectural features, lighting and up-lighting.
- Establish review criteria and procedures, as well as application materials.
- Develop a suggested Town of Great Barrington color pallet.
- Photo-document good and bad examples of façade elements.
- Circulate draft materials among town staff and applicable boards and committees for review and refinement.
- Announce inaugural cycle of façade improvement grants, publicize availability and communicate directly with landlords and tenants
- Accept feedback on policies and procedures, adjust as needed
- Offer application opportunities on an annual basis at minimum



Improvements to vacant storefront façades can help attract new tenants



An exemplary façade with fresh paint, appealing window display, and plantings



Best Practice

Developing Storefront Guidelines to Energize Downtown



REVENUES
& SALES

Location

Everett, MA

Best Practice Summary

Everett Square, the larger of the two retail districts in this working-class community north of Boston, is the traditional downtown where the public library and City Hall and many amenities are located.

Stores and restaurants are primarily locally-owned, family enterprises. A small minority of Everett's business are national or regional chains.

In a bid to encourage the appeal of Everett's downtown to outside visitors, the year before the pandemic, the Mayor directed the Community Development Director to create a framework to better guide merchants in enhancing their storefronts. A subsidy grant program was being developed to encourage merchant and landlord participation.

In this instance, the intention was to incorporate the new guidelines into the city's Building Code. Such formality may not translate into a voluntary façade improvement program, but the process by which Everett developed their program may lend some guidance.

A full description of this Best Practice/Sample Project can be found in Appendix B.

Appendix A – Business Survey Report

During Phase 1 of the Local Rapid Recovery Planning process, local businesses were offered the opportunity to complete a survey regarding their pre-pandemic experiences as well as changes and impacts to their business model and revenue during the pandemic. This survey was shared during LRRP community engagement sessions, as well as on various social media accounts and in community-based e-newsletters. Results of this survey are shared within Appendix A.

This report provides the results of a business survey conducted during March and April of 2021. The survey is part of a program launched by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development to help communities develop Rapid Recovery Plans for downtowns and commercial districts. The survey was directed to owners or other appropriate representatives of business establishments located in the targeted commercial areas. (For Data Tables, see page 9.)

Great Barrington

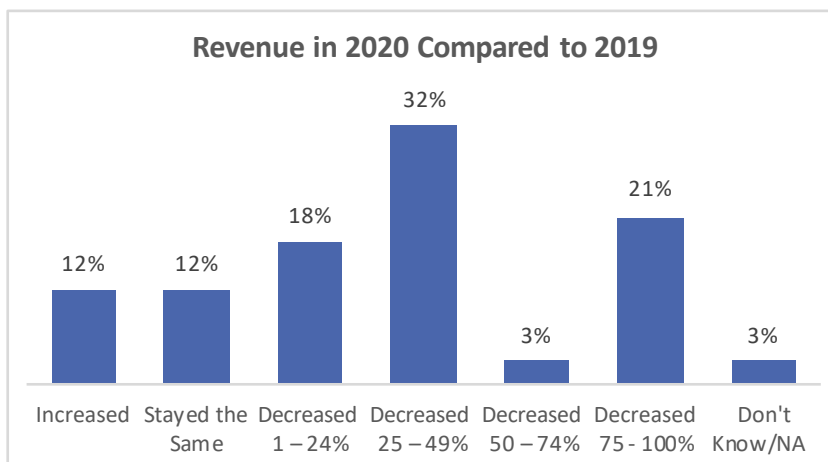
Downtown Great Barrington Business District

Responses: 34

Impacts of COVID-19

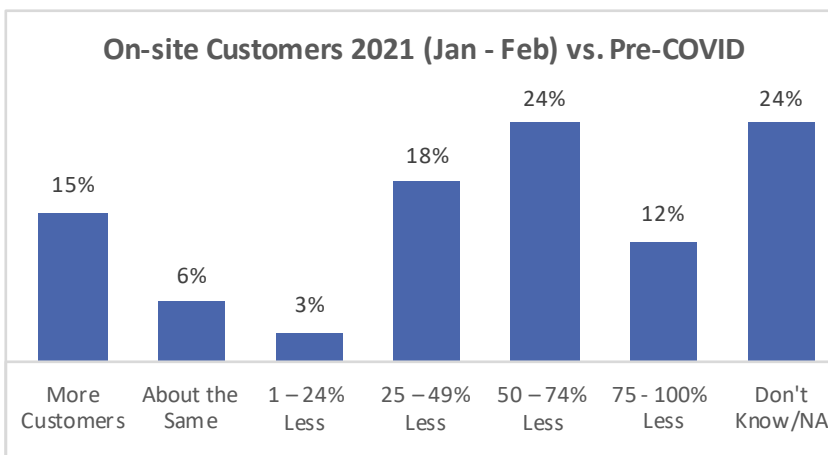
Decline in Business Revenue

74% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019. For 56% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more.



Less Foot Traffic in Commercial Area

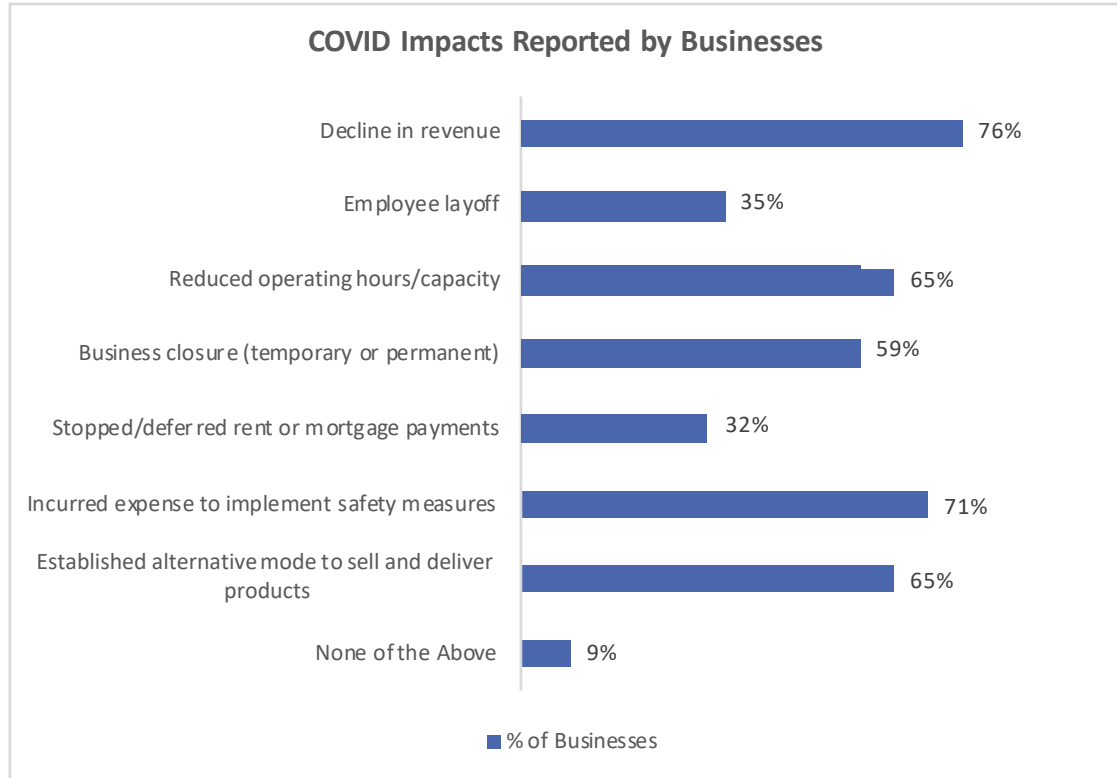
57% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID. 54% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more.



Impacts of COVID-19 (cont'd)

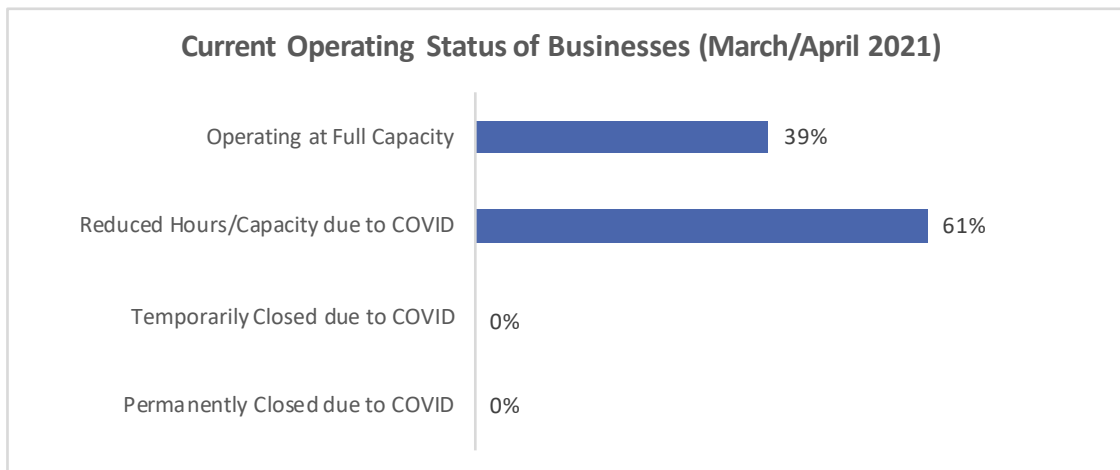
Reported Impacts

91% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID.



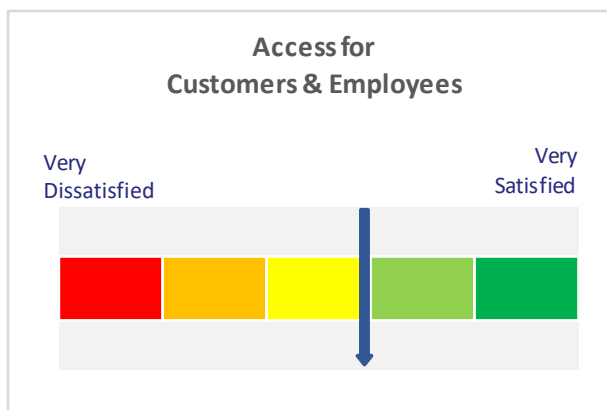
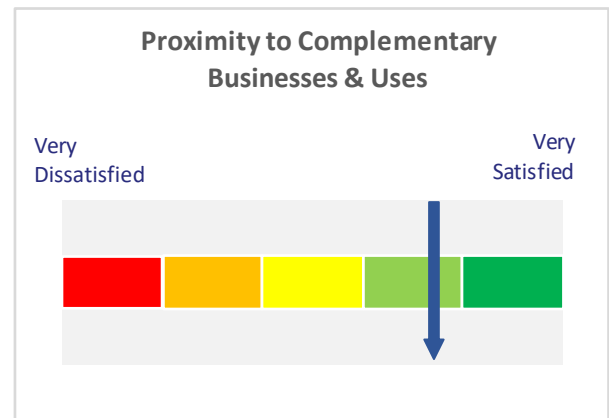
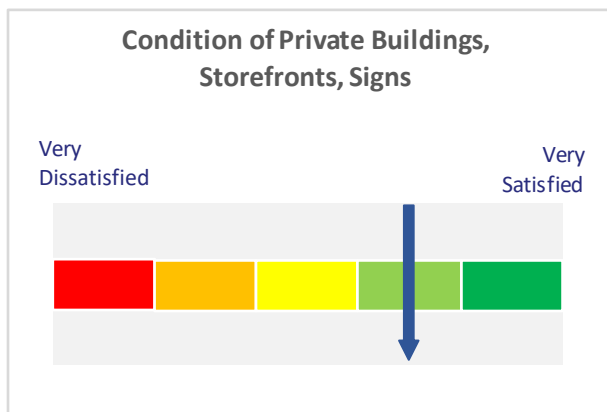
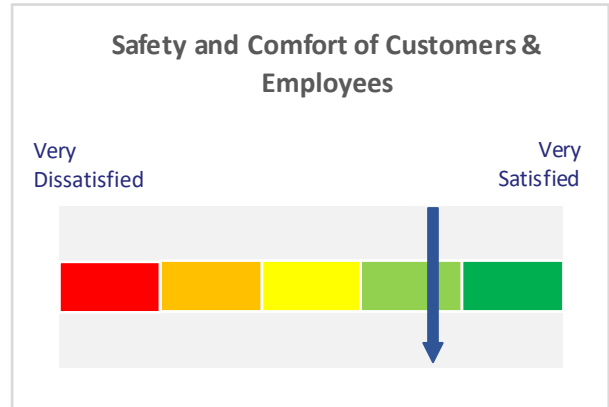
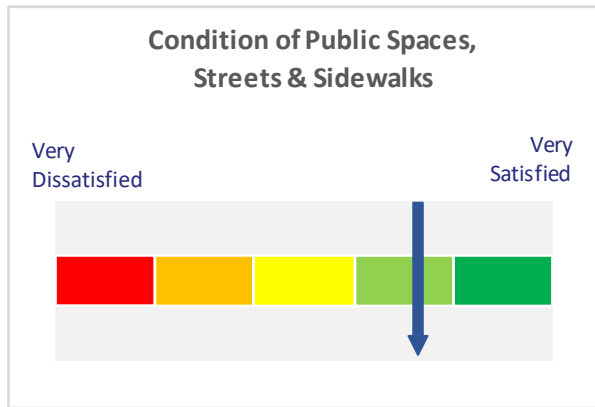
Operating Status

At the time of the survey, 61% of businesses reported they were operating at reduced hours/capacity or closed



Business Satisfaction with Commercial District

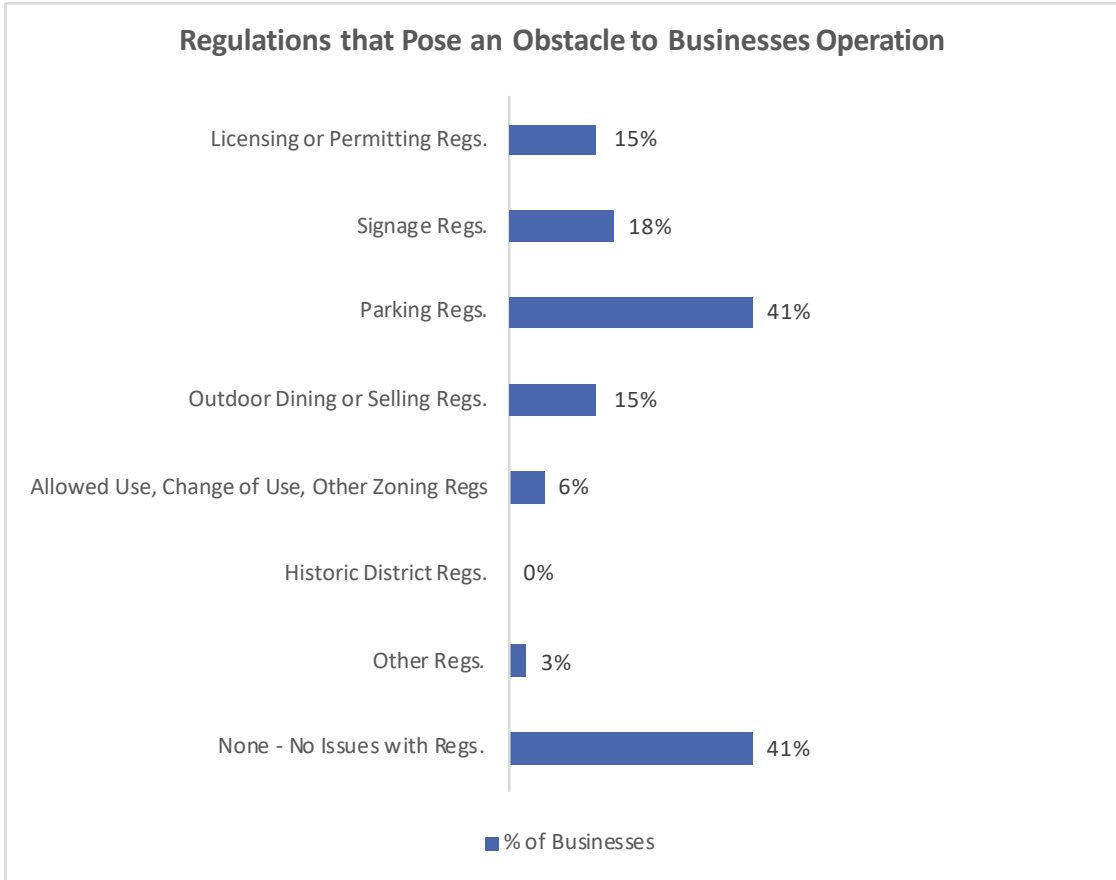
The charts below illustrate the average satisfaction rating among respondents regarding various elements.



Business Satisfaction with Commercial District (cont'd)

Regulatory Environment

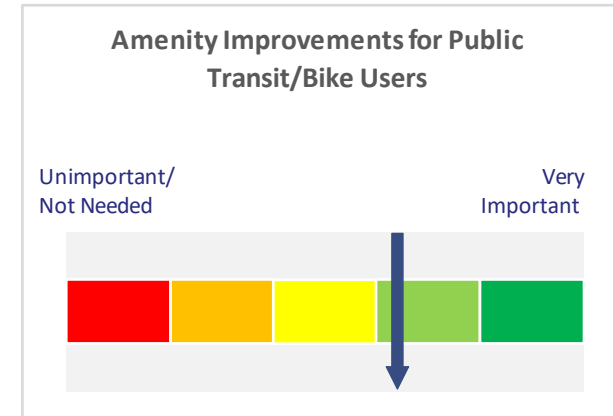
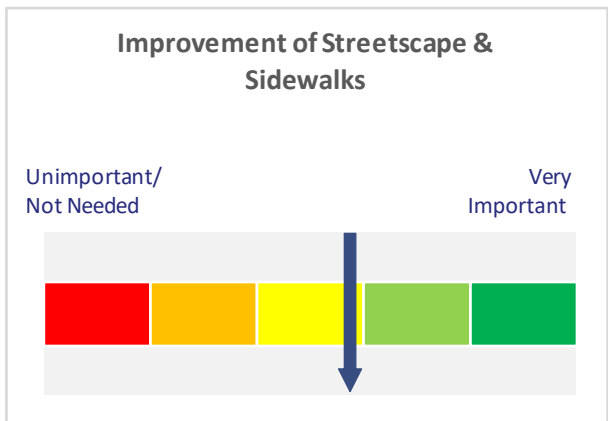
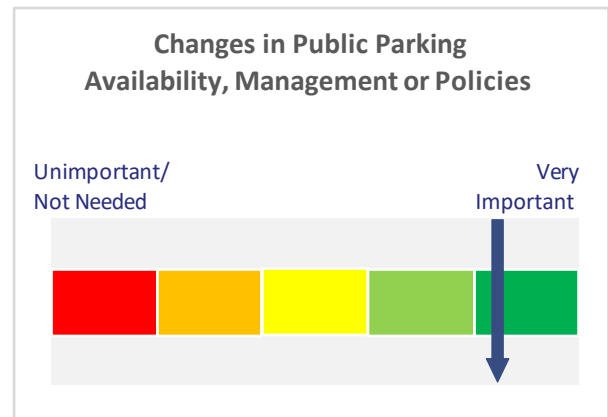
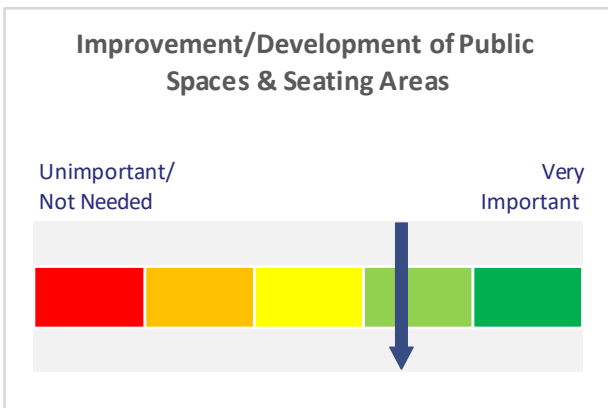
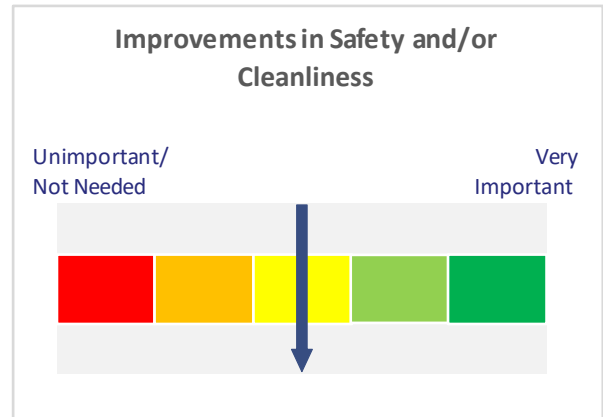
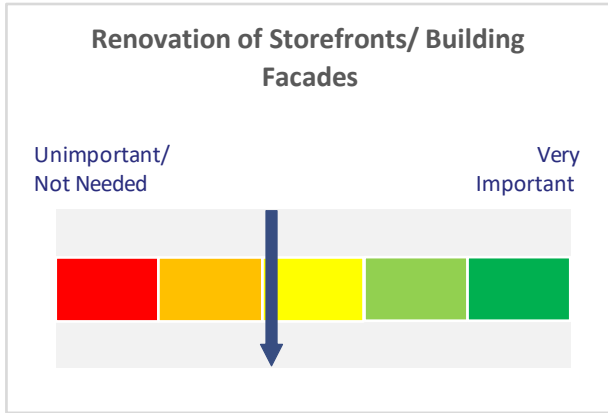
59% of businesses indicated that the regulatory environment poses an obstacle to business operation.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access

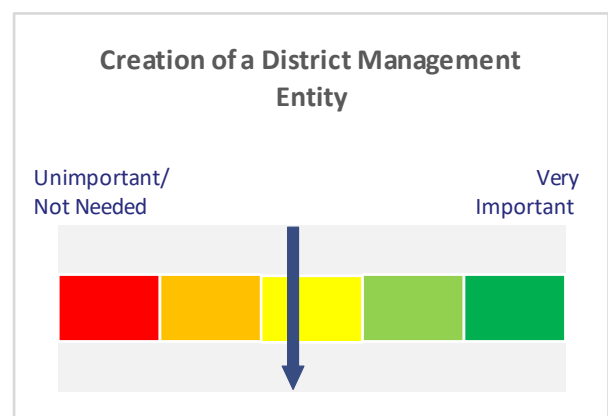
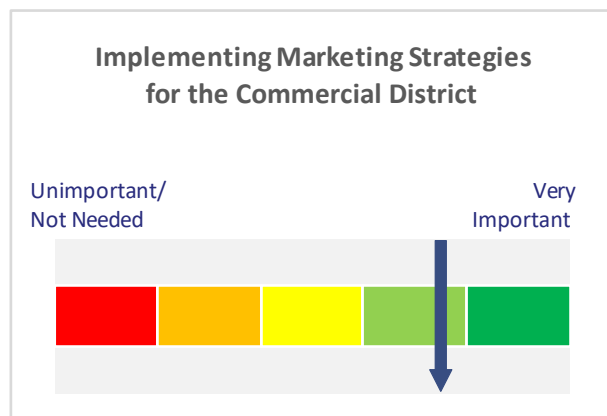
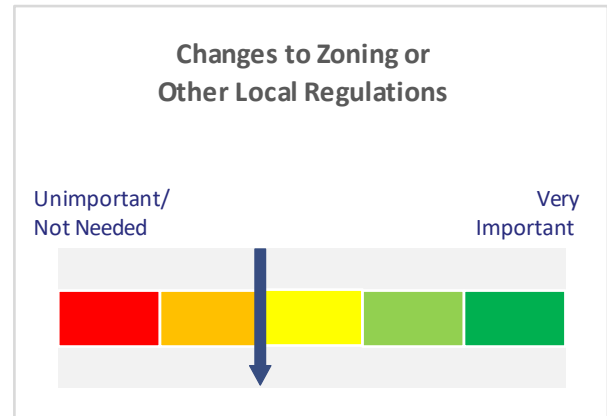
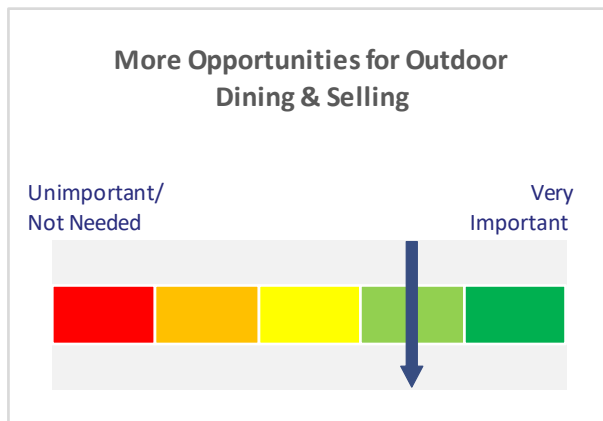
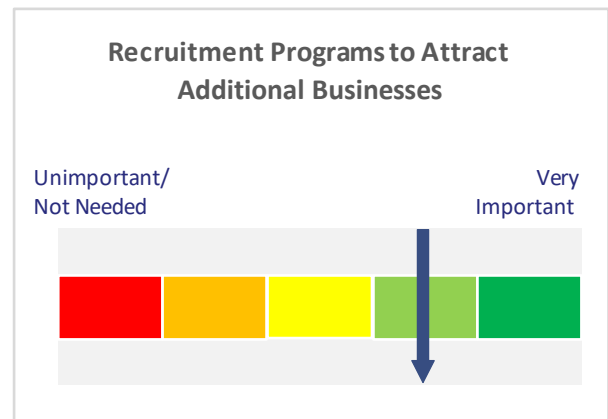
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

Attraction/Retention of Customers and Businesses

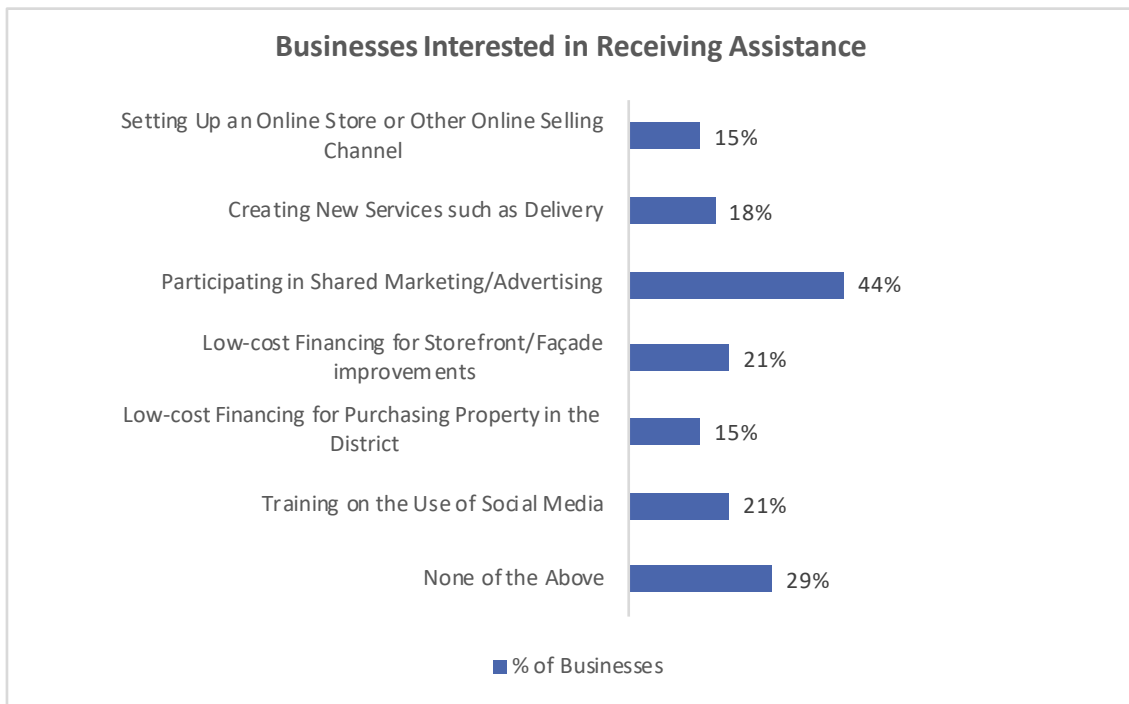
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

Businesses Support

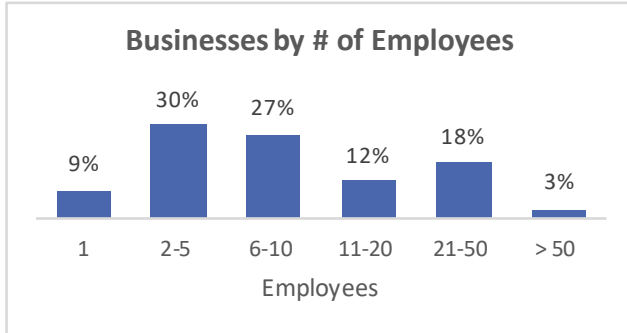
71% of businesses expressed interest in receiving some kind of assistance.



Business Characteristics

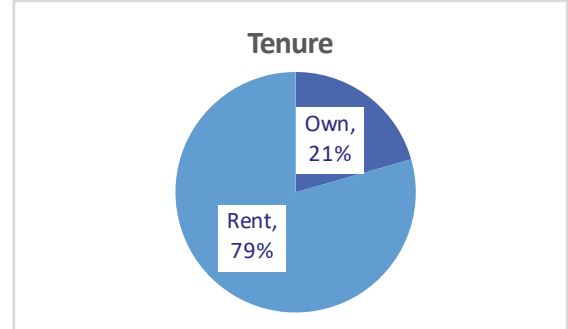
Business Size

39% of businesses are microenterprises (≤5 employees).



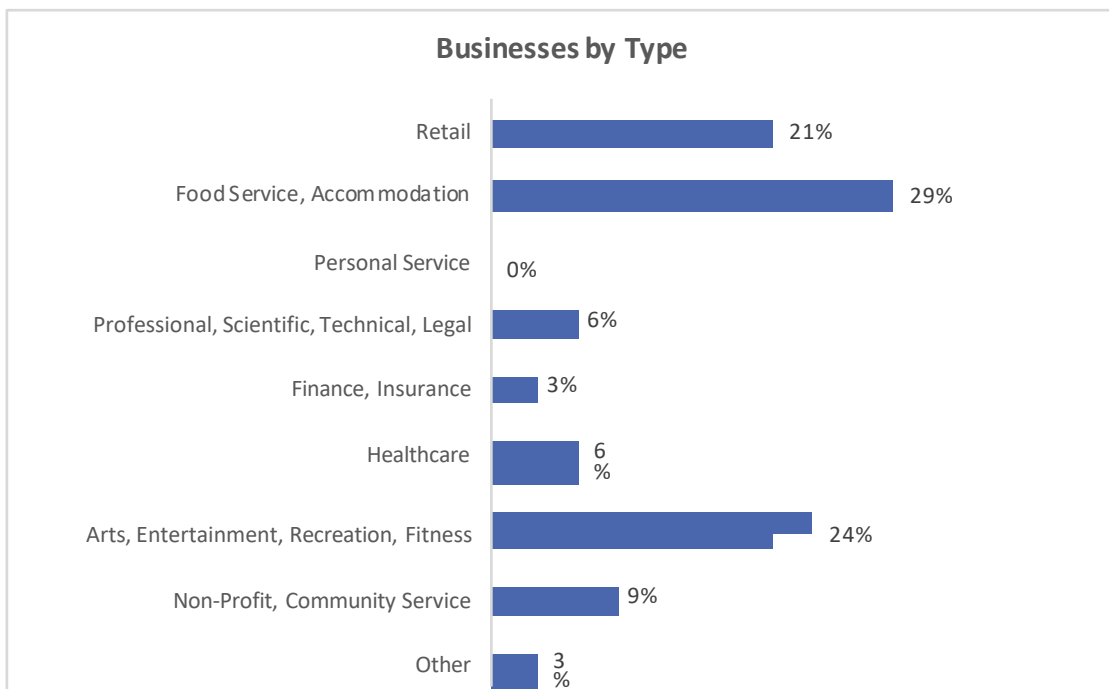
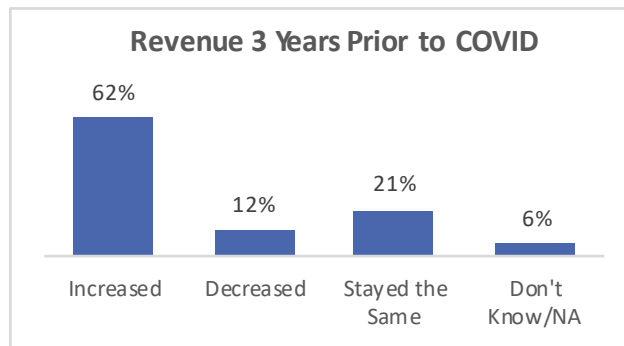
Business Tenure

79% of businesses rent their space.



Revenue Trend Prior to COVID

62% of businesses reported increase in revenue during the 3 years prior to COVID.



Business Survey Results - Data Tables

Community Where Targeted Downtown or Commercial District is Located

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

Great Barrington	34
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Business Characteristics & Satisfaction with Commercial Area

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

1	3	9%
2 to 5	10	30%
6 to 10	9	27%
11 to 20	4	12%
21 to 50	6	18%
More than 50	1	3%
Total	33	100%

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

Own	7	21%
Rent	27	79%
Total	34	100%

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

Increased	21	62%
Decreased	4	12%
Stayed about the Same	7	21%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	2	6%
Total	34	100%

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

Retail (NAICS 44-45)	7	21%
Food Service (restaurants, bars), Accommodation (NAICS 72)	10	29%
Personal Service (hair, skin, nails, dry cleaning) (NAICS 81)	0	0%
Professional Scientific, Technical, Legal (NAICS 54)	2	6%
Finance, Insurance (NAICS 52)	1	3%
Healthcare (medical, dental, other health practitioners) (NAICS 62)	2	6%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Fitness (NAICS 71)	8	24%
Non-Profit, Community Services	3	9%
Other	1	3%
Total	34	100%

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

Condition of public spaces, streets, sidewalks

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	2	6%
Neutral	5	15%
Satisfied	21	62%
Very Satisfied	6	18%
Total	34	100%

Condition of Private Buildings, Facades, Storefronts, Signage

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	3	9%
Neutral	6	18%
Satisfied	20	59%
Very Satisfied	5	15%
Total	34	100%

Access for Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	1	3%
Dissatisfied	7	21%
Neutral	6	18%
Satisfied	19	56%
Very Satisfied	1	3%
Total	34	100%

Safety and Comfort of Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	1	3%
Neutral	3	9%
Satisfied	26	76%
Very Satisfied	4	12%
Total	34	100%

Proximity to Complementary Businesses or Uses

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	1	3%
Neutral	5	15%
Satisfied	22	65%
Very Satisfied	6	18%
Total	34	100%

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

Licensing or permitting regulations	5	15%
Signage regulations	6	18%
Parking regulations	14	41%
Outdoor dining or selling regulations	5	15%
Allowed uses, change of use or other zoning regulations	2	6%
Historic District regulations	0	0%
Other regulations (not related to COVID)	1	3%
None - No Issues with regulations	14	41%

Impacts of COVID

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

Decline in revenue	26	76%
Employee layoff	12	35%
Reduced operating hours/capacity	22	65%
Business closure (temporary or permanent)	20	59%
Stopped/deferred rent or mortgage payments	11	32%
Incurred expense to implement safety measures	24	71%
Established alternative mode to sell and deliver products (on-line platforms, delivery, etc.)	22	65%
None of the Above	3	9%

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

Increased compared to 2019	4	12%
Stayed about the same as 2019	4	12%
Decreased 1 – 24% compared to 2019	6	18%
Decreased 25 – 49% compared to 2019	11	32%
Decreased 75 - 100% compared to 2019	1	3%
Decreased 50 – 74% compared to 2019	7	21%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	1	3%
Total	34	100%

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

More customers than before COVID	5	15%
About the same number as before COVID	2	6%
1 – 24% less customers than before COVID	1	3%
25 – 49% less customers than before COVID	6	18%
50 – 74% less customers than before COVID	8	24%
75 – 100% less customers than before COVID	4	12%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	8	24%
Total	34	100%

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

Operating at full capacity	13	39%
Operating at reduced hours/capacity due to COVID	20	61%
Temporarily closed due to COVID	0	0%
Permanently closed due to COVID	0	0%
Total	33	100%

Strategies for Supporting Businesses and Improving the Commercial District

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

Renovation of Storefronts/Building Facades

Unimportant/Not Needed	7	21%
Of Little Importance or Need	8	24%
Moderately Important	9	26%
Important	9	26%
Very Important	1	3%
Total	34	100%

Improvement/Development of Public Spaces & Seating Areas

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	6%
Of Little Importance or Need	2	6%
Moderately Important	9	26%
Important	13	38%
Very Important	8	24%
Total	34	100%

Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks

Unimportant/Not Needed	4	12%
Of Little Importance or Need	6	18%
Moderately Important	7	21%
Important	8	24%
Very Important	8	24%
Total	33	100%

Improvements in Safety and/or Cleanliness

Unimportant/Not Needed	4	13%
Of Little Importance or Need	9	28%
Moderately Important	8	25%
Important	5	16%
Very Important	6	19%
Total	32	100%

Changes in Public Parking Availability, Management or Policies

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	6%
Of Little Importance or Need	2	6%
Moderately Important	1	3%
Important	5	15%
Very Important	24	71%
Total	34	100%

Amenity Improvements for Public Transit Users and/or Bike Riders

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	3%
Of Little Importance or Need	6	18%
Moderately Important	10	29%
Important	7	21%
Very Important	10	29%
Total	34	100%

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

More Cultural Events/Activities to Bring People into the District

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	6%
Of Little Importance or Need	4	12%
Moderately Important	8	24%
Important	11	32%
Very Important	9	26%
Total	34	100%

More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining and Selling

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	9%
Of Little Importance or Need	0	0%
Moderately Important	8	24%
Important	13	38%
Very Important	10	29%
Total	34	100%

Implementing Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	6%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	9%
Moderately Important	5	15%
Important	7	21%
Very Important	17	50%
Total	34	100%

Recruitment Programs to Attract Additional Businesses

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	3%
Of Little Importance or Need	4	12%
Moderately Important	8	24%
Important	8	24%
Very Important	12	36%
Total	33	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	9%
Of Little Importance or Need	16	50%
Moderately Important	6	19%
Important	5	16%
Very Important	2	6%
Total	32	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	4	12%
Of Little Importance or Need	8	24%
Moderately Important	15	44%
Important	3	9%
Very Important	4	12%
Total	34	100%

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

Setting up an online store or other online selling channel	5	15%
Creating new services such as delivery	6	18%
Participating in shared marketing/advertising	15	44%
Low-cost financing for storefront/façade improvements	7	21%
Low-cost financing for purchasing property in the commercial district	5	15%
Training on the use of social media	7	21%
None of the above	10	29%

15. Please list any specific suggestions or ideas for possible projects, programs or actions that could help support businesses and improve the commercial district. (Optional)

Comments

Creating a permanent pedestrian mall, such would bring the community to a focal retail / hospitality / business area in our town
—
Coordinated flowers paid for, planted, and maintained by the town in the designated areas
—
Wheeler & Taylor Inc
Expand our local Cultural District to businesses that lay just outside the current boundary so more businesses would be included in its benefits
More public parking! Remedy traffic congestion
—
Berkshire Cooperative Association dba Berkshire Food Co op
—
—
—
—
—
—
Southern Berkshire Ambulance
More benches (for capacity overflow), more public bathrooms, more police presence for traffic/pedestrian safety
Clinton Church Restoration
—
improved parking, pedestrian walkways, outdoor eating,
—
—
—
Invest in a physical facility for public restrooms- not port-a-potty style.
Live entertainment (music, poetry, dance, etc.). Close off all downtown including Main Street and have events planned.

Appendix B – Best Practice Sample Projects

For each of the Project Recommendations listed in this report, we have included at least one corresponding Best Practice example project within this appendix. In some cases, sample projects aligned well with more than one of the proposed projects for Great Barrington. Please refer to the list below for additional guidance.

Proposed Project	Best Practice Sample Project(s)
Public Art Installations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a Public Art Program • Activate Alleys: Attract People to Under-Utilized Spaces
Expanded Outdoor Seating and Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Social Zones & Shared Streets” • Beech Tree themed street furniture
Improved Wayfinding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a way-finding system to help reinforce the downtown experience • Create a way-finding theme based on the community’s seaside location
Public Restrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a Public Planning and Visioning Process for the Public Realm
Improved Parking Management Plan	
Town Hall Campus Reconfiguration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating Safe Pedestrian Access in a Rural Village Center
Façade Improvement Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing storefront guidelines to energize downtown



Launch a public art program



PUBLIC
REALM

Provided by SME Consultant

Selbert Perkins Design

Location

Melrose, MA

Origin	City of Melrose, MA
Budget	 Medium Budget (\$70K) - with full build-out
Timeframe	 Short Term (1 years)
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Number of survey engagements and art commissions far exceeded expectations.
Partners & Resources	Mayor, City Manager, Planning Department, DPW, Local Arts Organizations, Local Businesses, High School Students
Diagnostic	<p>Selbert Perkins Design collaborated with the City and community stakeholders to develop a wayfinding and creative placemaking master plan for the City of Melrose including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wayfinding Analysis • Preliminary Design Concepts • Art Opportunities • Call-for-Art • Art Program Logo <p>The entire project, including was conducted during Covid-19 with over 700 participants. Community engagement was conducted in partnership with Civic Space Collaborative.</p> <p>In February of 2020, the City of Melrose extended a solicitation for quotes regarding a wayfinding study & design services. The scope of work discussed in the solicitation described development of a multi-modal wayfinding system that speaks to the city's past and present that will provide wayfinding for pedestrians, cyclists & vehicles. The City of Melrose received funding from the Massachusetts Marketing Partnership & the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism for this effort.</p> <p>Selbert Perkins Design, in collaboration with Civic Space Collaborative, won the bid with the City of Melrose in March of 2020. The proposal submitted to the City of Melrose met all the conditions of the original solicitation and was modified after being awarded to include a larger outreach effort to the city's residents. In addition to the amplified outreach, public art would be an important element of the placemaking and wayfinding effort.</p> <p>In late March, the COVID-19 virus became a global pandemic. The project team adapted to the crisis, pivoting to web-based resources for interviewing city residents, project meetings, committee and focus group meetings, as well as a virtual community meeting with the City's residents.</p> <p>"The selected art projects are unique and diverse and will enhance the vitality of the City's public spaces and promote economic development, which were goals of the initiative" says Mayor Brodeur. "I am excited to showcase and support the amazing talent in our community through this effort."</p> <p>Working closely with Mayor Paul Brodeur, the Planning Department, and project committee, we were able to successfully complete the project in 9 months.</p>

Action Items

Recommendations for signage and wayfinding include:

- Develop additional wayfinding as a placemaking element in Melrose to help residents and visitors find their way around the city.
- Create a signage pilot to roll out less expensive sign types throughout the city.
- Earmark funding for implementation over the next 1-2 years.
- Prioritize directing visitors and residents to downtown to support the local Melrose commerce.
- Install trail signage to help residents and visitors successfully utilize trails and greenspace in Melrose.
- Include walking distances on major signage to encourage walking as a method of transportation.
- Initiate outdoor seating, street narrowing, and other measures to support small business in the downtown and other commercial areas.
- Partner with local organizations to help envision and manage these programs to further support Melrose commerce.
- Consider a regular "open main street" program, closing streets to car traffic to encourage outdoor activity and support local downtown businesses.

Process

- Understand who the stakeholders and decision-makers will be.
- Form a committee to oversee the process.
- Visit the site to audit of existing conditions.
- Conduct a Wayfinding Analysis including: multi-modal circulation, main decision points, and key destinations.
- Research the history of the place, uncover stories that might inspire the design.
- Identify opportunities for art/placemaking.
- Engage with stakeholders and the public to understand needs and preferences. If possible, create a survey and/or focus groups to get feedback from a larger cross-section of people.
- Develop project goals and a positioning statement to guide design efforts.
- Design concepts for brand and wayfinding elements.
- Develop the preferred design into a family of sign types with materials, colors, etc.
- Provide a sign location plan and order of magnitude budget.
- Create public art criteria and develop a call-for-art to identify qualified public artists.
- Release the call for art or bid and select artists/vendors.
- Oversee installation.
- Celebrate!



Stakeholder engagement event outdoors



Activate Alleys: Attract People to Under-Utilized Spaces



Provided by SME Consultant

Neighborways Design

Location

Frost Alley Somernova Campus, Somerville, MA

Origin	Rafi Properties LLC / Somernova Campus, Neighborways Design, Principal Group
Budget	 Phase 1 and 2 - Labor Budget: \$30,000 Materials Budget: \$20,000
Timeframe	 Phase 1: 2 to 6 months Phase 2: 6 months to 2 years
Risk	 Coordinate approvals with private public partnerships for traffic flow changes, Fire department access, parking impacts
Key Performance Indicators	Use: event registrations to track repeat visitors, non-event use to track how people use alley Modal split: increase walking and biking mode share Economic Impact: evaluate event and vendor profits User Feedback: Intercept surveys to capture user perceptions and feedback
Partners & Resources	Somernova tenants, abutters, City of Somerville Traffic and Fire Departments, Somerville Groundworks (watering / maintenance) Green and Open Somerville (Native Plant Experts), Local nurseries

Diagnostic

Frost Alley is a 10-minute walk from one of Somerville's most active business districts, Union Square, and for years has been a desolate cut through dominated by vehicular traffic.

Working with the development team at Rafi Properties, the Alley Activation project aims to create a more inviting, artistic, and lively space for people walking, biking, and wheeling, and as a destination for events and enjoyment.

Using traffic calming, placemaking, and programming, the team has been engaging in planning and design efforts with abutters to vision the space.

Phase 1 involved existing conditions assessment, planning, and installing self-watering planters in the summer of 2020. In 2021 working with Green and Open Somerville, we planted over 200 native plants in self-watering planters. Branded as native Nova, the planters serve as an educational tool to encourage native pollinators and community engagement in ecological gardening.

Temporary public art was sprinkled on the pavement to celebrate Earth Day and create an engaging place for a pop-up market, Somerville Open Studios. The alley hosted over 20 vendors that would have otherwise not had a space to share their artisan crafts due to COVID-19.

Next steps are under way to engage local artists to implement unique and detailed art on the many blank walls and boarded up windows in the alley. Movable seating and an urban disc golf course will be installed to encourage activity and create a destination to spend time in, rather than pass through.

A youth design competition organized by a Groundworks Somerville, will engage high school students and offer prizes to the best design of custom planters.



Before



Concept Rendering



Phase 1: Traffic Calming via Self-Watering Planters, 2019

Diagnostic

Somerville's most active business districts, Union Square, and for years has been a desolate cut through dominated by vehicular traffic.

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Action Items

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Youth design competition organized by a Groundworks Somerville, will engage high school students and offer prizes to the best design of custom planters.



Before



Concept Rendering



Phase 1: Traffic Calming via Self-Watering Planters, 2019

Process

1. Project Initiation and Planning: Establish project goals, define success and how to measure it. Conduct fieldwork and "negative space" assessment to determine available space to program with traffic calming and placemaking. Coordinate master planning efforts for area.
2. Community Design Process: Conduct feedback listening sessions to address challenges and vision opportunities for the future. Based on community feedback develop concept renderings and design plans for a phased implementation. Consider a range of finishes and cost options. Consider ways to involve the community including community design contests engaging students and local artists.
3. Implementation: estimate quantities and procure materials. Meet onsite for installation and assemble DIY self watering planters and plant native plants. Hire local artists to install unique art pieces in the alley.
4. Programming: Plan for temporary street closures and events in the alley. Consider hosting existing events in the space and plan new events such as pop-up markets, concerts, performances, walking tours, urban frisbee golf, food truck festivals, and rotating art installations.
5. Ongoing Monitoring / Maintenance: hire people to maintain and water planters to ensure plants survive.
6. Iteration and Evaluation: conduct before and after analysis including quantitative (e.g., speeds, volumes, revenue of businesses) and qualitative (e.g. photo, video, conversations, surveys) measures.

Lessons Learned

Keys to success: invest in an iterative public engagement strategy that provides multiple opportunities for engagement.

- Conduct door to door canvassing and flyerng
- Host online community feedback meetings
- Work to find a win-win when there are competing interests – clarify needs vs desires.

DIY self-watering planters to reduce maintenance and save on costs. Featured planters cost approximately \$250/ea with labor and materials vs similar sized planters can range in cost from \$500- \$700.

Challenges / Lessons Learned:

- Provide multiple opportunities and advanced notice to engage the community
- Vandalism and theft are opportunities to bring the community together and iterate improvements.



DIY Self watering planter construction.



Temporary painting and native pollinator garden installation



“Social Zones & Shared Streets”






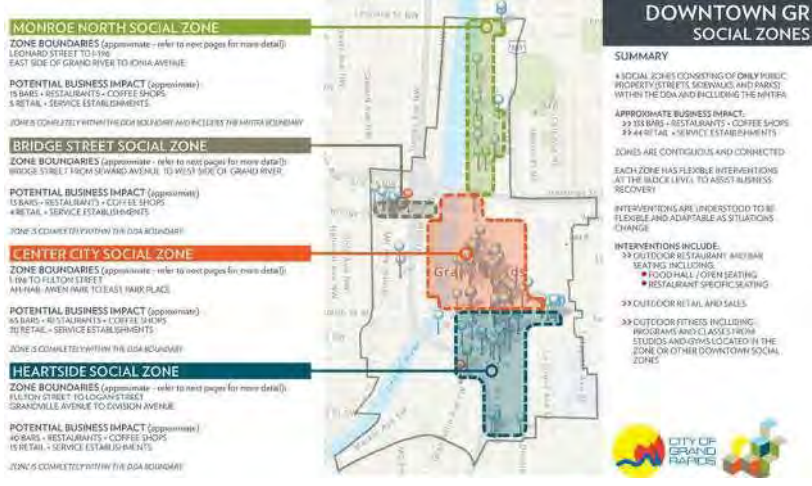
PUBLIC
REALM

Provided by SME Consultant

Bench Consulting (from Patricity)

Location

Grand Rapids, Michigan (and other communities)

Origin	City of Grand Rapids
Budget	 <p>The total cost to implement is minimal depending upon how much you want to activate your street. Tables and chairs are necessary but nicer street furniture, turf, games, artwork and landscaping will make the space more comfortable and inviting.</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Setup takes only a few days and can last most of the year.</p>
Risk	 <p>Outdoor alcohol consumption can have its inherent risks and you'll have to gauge your public's stomach for altering vehicle access and parking. Is it an actual "parking problem" or a parking perception problem.</p>
Key Performance Indicators	<p>The number of attendees at different events and pedestrian counts in downtown. Area business increase on days of events or activations. Increase in restaurant sales. Measure public perception of downtown and use patterns.</p>
Partners & Resources	<p>Area small business support groups, local chambers of commerce, designers, landscapers, contractors and community groups.</p>
Diagnostic	<p>Downtown Grand Rapids piloted a number of outdoor "social zones" last year on a rapid implementation basis in response to the impacts of the pandemic. The goal was to get visitors downtown and provide a safe outdoor space for people to spend time and consume food and beverages. With the success of last year's installations, the City and State pushed forward with language allowing broader outdoor social zones which allow patrons to purchase AND consume alcohol in these designated areas, some of them being as long as the City block itself. The idea is that encouraging people to visit the district, stop and stay longer while making it not just an errand but also an experience, solving for some of the issues facing brick & mortar retail pre pandemic.</p>
Action Item	<p>These types of programs aren't new around the country but are being more heavily adopted by cities as a response to the difficult conditions created by the pandemic and issues driving sustained foot traffic into our downtowns.</p> 

Process

1. **LOCATE:** These types of interventions are best suited to commercial settings. Typically they will involve reclaiming some street space for people and you'll want to be strategic about the type of street treatment that makes the most sense for your community, whether that's shared street, or a full open street or a part time open street.
2. **PARTNER:** In Grand Rapids downtown BID was the project lead while city officials supported with municipal resources and area pedestrian and cycling organizations stepped up to ensure these spaces were fully adopted and supported by the community with "adopt a social zone" campaigns. In addition, more than 150 artists were paid a stipend to paint the barricades, support the creative economy during a difficult time.
3. **PLAN:** Planning for an initiative like this involves an extensive array of program partners, from the state level to change the liquor licensing laws to local partners to close the street and support of businesses and restaurant community to ensure all changes work well for everyone and police to ensure security for attendees and the City. Ensure vehicle access levels.
4. **IMPLEMENT:** DPW and other local contractors supported the installation while area restaurants were given the ability to spruce up their shared spaces. In addition "adopt a social zone" programs created volunteer groups able to clean and maintain the spaces, taking some of the onerous off the City, BID and restaurant.
5. **ITERATE:** After a very rapidly deployed year 1 of the Social Zone experiment which occurred during the pandemic, year two features some changes to the layout and demarcation of the downtown social zones as well as an expansion into over a dozen social zones across the rest of Grand Rapids to encourage support of other neighborhood business districts without drawing too much business away from those districts by focusing on Downtown only.





Beech Tree themed street furniture: community branding through functional public art






CULTURAL/
ARTS

Provided by SME Consultant

Mark Favermann, Favermann Design

Location

Chelmsford, MA

Origin	Town of Chelmsford's Community Development and Planning Department
Budget	 Medium (\$80,000 - \$100,000)
Timeframe	 Short – planning and implementation in 6 months
Risk	 Medium- DPW limited capacity to install and warehouse
Key Performance Indicators	Residential and visitor use of the furniture for comfort and function
Partners & Resources	Funded by Mass Legislative Earmark + support from Bicycle Commission, Historic Commission and Economic Advisory Commission of Town of Chelmsford

Diagnostic

Previously uninspired and the deteriorating older streetscape for the Town of Chelmsford, MA Downtown Historic District was in great need of added vitality, visual quality and places for rest and contemplation. It was a hard landscape that needed softening. After thoughtful study, it was determined that a "family" of themed sculptured street furniture was needed that provided benches, bike racks, planters, kiosks, tree grates and tree guards.



Town of Chelmsford Beech Tree Leaf Metal Planter

Action Item

Working with the Town's administration including the Community Development Director, the Planning Board, the Historical Commission, the Bicycle Commission and the Department of Public Works. Due to the rapid turnaround because of the Legislative earmark funding source, planning, design, review and fabrication took place over a five (5) period.

T-GT

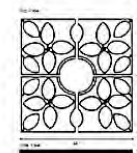
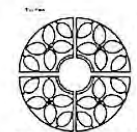
TREE GRATE

STRUCTURE

Overall Dimensions: 48" x 48"
Material: Cast Iron or Aluminum
Powder coated: Black
Paint applied to all sides, must have 10 year guarantee

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

of Holes: _____
Custom Artwork: _____
Material: _____
Frame Option: _____



Beech Tree Leaf Tree Grate and Tree Guard

Process

The confirmation of this project's funding was made in early February. This meant that everything had to be completed by June 30. Basing designs on very popular thematic wayfinding sign detail of a leaf pattern, our firm created a series of thematic street furniture elements. Considering the elements as functional public art pieces, they were shared at public meetings including the Town's Planning Board Economic Development Committee, the Bicycle Commission and the Historic Commission. Once reviewed and refined, the designs were developed into a specifications package that allowed for vendor review and cost proposals. The fabrication/installer vendors were asked to give costs in a 10 day period. After the contract was delivered by the Town, fabrication commenced. It was decided to save funds that the Chelmsford DPW would be the installers.



Themed benches being fabricated.



Part of the 20 themed bicycle racks that were blessed by the Bicycle commission.

Process – Strategic Decisions

- To use street furniture as a key Downtown Historic District Enhancement too.
- Decision to use Beech Tree Leaf as sculptural motif.
- To create a themed family of street furniture
- To apply sculptured street furniture elements throughout the Downtown Historical District
- To seek advice and review of the Historic Society
- To seek advice and review from the Bicycle Commission
- For the Town's DPW to be the project installer
- Appeared at a series of public meetings that included the planning board, the historical commission and the Select board
- Worked with an expedited schedule to meet very restricted time constraints
- Developed a set of specifications for bidding and fabricating by vendors
- Site visit to chosen vendor during fabrication



Inspiration for the brand came from a famous former beech tree on the Town Common. A granite marker commemorates the tree's long life and Town's admiration for it.



Town of Chelmsford's themed sculptural street furniture installations throughout the Downtown Historic District strategically added interest, visual and material texture and comfort to the previously rather barren, hard environment.



Create a way-finding system to help reinforce the downtown experience



Provided by SME Consultant

Mark Favermann, Favermann Design

Location

Wakefield, MA

Origin	Town of Wakefield
Budget	 <p>Medium—approximately \$80,000 (kiosk only; additional elements to cost \$30,000)</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Short – planning and implementation in 3-1/2 months</p>
Risk	 <p>Medium --political will, lightning caused devastating fire, unjustified NIMBYism and lack of community transparency</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Continued use by visitors and residents
Partners & Resources	Wakefield Main Streets, Town of Wakefield, Mass Legislature, Wakefield Police Department, Wakefield Public Library, Wakefield Historical Commission and Wakefield DPW

Diagnostic

The Town of Wakefield is a north of Boston middle-income suburban community. Most residents work outside of Wakefield and commute to work. There are two MBTA Commuter rail stations in Wakefield—Wakefield Center and Greenwood.

There was no universally accepted brand or wayfinding system for the Town of Wakefield.

On the edge of Wakefield Center, Lake Quannapowitt is a popular setting for walkers, joggers, bikers, and in-line skaters off Route 128 in Middlesex County. It is the site of many organized races from 5Ks to Ultra Marathons. However, rarely do outside visitors travel beyond the lakeside the 200 yards to the Town of Wakefield's Downtown. This is a lost opportunity to support restaurants and shops in the Downtown.

With a vital mix of restaurants, goods and services, the downtown appeared robust. However, things could be improved by an effort for better direction and more on-street communication. Here was an opportunity to build on the downtown's commercial base and solidify Wakefield as a Northshore destination.

The Town's administration allotted funding to design a branding and wayfinding system. Seven months later a Massachusetts Legislative Earmark was granted to the Wakefield Main Streets Program for the design and fabrication of informational kiosks.

Action Item

The two overlapping programs took two different paths.

- Over an eight-month period, the branding and wayfinding design process went through a series of group meetings with a large Advisory Group of 24 representatives.
 - A month after the town landscape-based brand was approved by the Advisory Committee and presented in the local daily newspaper and to the Town Council, a devastating lightning-induced fire burned down the majestic church steeple. The loss of the church set back the discussion of whether or not the approved image should be brought forward as a historical image or changed to reflect the current conditions.
 - The designs and branding and wayfinding program were put on hold.
- Overseen by the Wakefield Main Streets Board of Directors and invited Town officials, the kiosk design program was mandated to have only 3.5 months to complete design, design review, put out for bidding and start implementation.
 - The kiosk program went fully ahead.
 - However, some community members felt left out of the design and placement of the project elements. Their concerns had to be integrated.



Joggers and runners around Crystal Lake, a target audience of non-residents as potential patrons to the downtown.



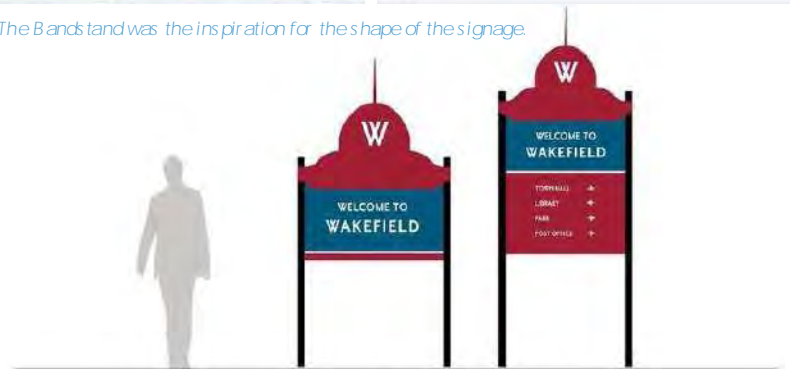
Old Band Stand adjacent to Lake Quannapowitt in Wakefield, MA

Process

- After a number of kiosk design alternatives were presented to the Wakefield Main Streets Board, one design was chosen to develop, locate and specify.
- Three (3) of the kiosks were to be two-sided and analog; the fourth was to be digital and four-sided. The digital one would be set closest to the lake.
- Historical town images and commentary was developed to fit around as a border around a business directory for one side of the directory.
- Set in an airtight locked Plexiglas window, this information could be easily changeable on the two-sided kiosks. On the opposite side was space for timely event posters and community announcements.
- The digital kiosk was designed to have a screen/monitor that was programmable from the town hall.
- There was much criticism around the placement and look of the digital kiosk. The town council eventually addressed the public and took a stand that the location, size and look of the kiosk was the best possible solution.
- Kiosk-opposing residents were invited to an expanded Branding and Wayfinding meeting to assist with eventual sign element placement on maps.
- Favermann Design was then hired by the Town administration to create a style guideline to reflect the iconic kiosk toppers.
- After a period of about four months the guidelines have resulted in the establishment of a consistent Town of Wakefield visual brand for internal communication, the official website, e-mails, business cards, interior town hall signage, newsletters and even drop boxes.
- These guidelines were in place during the Covid-19 pandemic, and further thought was given to the on-hold wayfinding program. It was decided that a new approach should be taken that abandoned the problematic landscape and instead visually reflected the kiosk and style of the Town of Wakefield.
- Utilizing the new design approach, plans are going ahead for a new directional sign for the Greenwood neighborhood. A test will take place during the Summer of 2021 to see how wayfinding can connect the Lake with downtown.



The Bandstand was the inspiration for the shape of the signage.



Besides interested citizens, town officials including the Town Planner, Police Officer, City Counselor, and Main Street board member are making decisions regarding locations.

Local Press Coverage of Controversial Town Council Meetings Occurred due to Kiosks

- Though carefully announced by the Main streets Board, controversy was caused by residents feeling left out of the process.
- Several Town council meetings addressed the size, content and location of the kiosks, especially the proposed digital one adjacent to the lake.
- All kiosk locations are on Town property and are at the best decision-point locations possible.
- The "waters" were eventually y calmed and the process continued until a successful implementation of the program.

Previous Historical Landscape Design for Wakefield's Branding and Wayfinding Shelved

- Below is an image of the previous design that was affected by the destructive church fire.
- The "new" simpler design has found favor in the community.
- The Town of Wakefield is now creating a fully consistent "look" for all its official elements.



Community Meeting and Open House: Hurd School future options

WAKEFIELD – The Town Council and Town Administrator will hold a public meeting and open house to discuss future options for the Hurd School building. The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, June 23, at the school. The open house will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, June 24, at the school. The meeting will be held in the auditorium at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, June 23, at the school. The open house will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, June 24, at the school. The meeting will be held in the auditorium at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, June 23, at the school. The open house will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday, June 24, at the school.

Stolen credit cards reported
WAKEFIELD – A Winthrop Drive woman called police at about 11 a.m. yesterday to report that her credit cards had been stolen. The woman reported that the cards were missing over the weekend but was not sure when they were taken. Police said that fraudulent charges were made using the credit cards at Home Depot in Danvers and Target in Stoneham. The cards have been cancelled.

At about 3 p.m. yesterday, a caller reported that a UPS truck took down some wires at the corner of Oak Street and Orchard Avenue. Police confirmed that they were cable wires and made sure they were replaced.

Kiosks coming to downtown

Town Council notebook
By MARK SARDELLA
WAKEFIELD – As part of the ongoing effort to revitalize the downtown area, four new kiosks will be installed at various locations offering "way finding" and other useful information for visitors and residents. The Town Council approved the installation of the kiosks, one of which will have a digital component, at their meeting last week.
Bob Mailhot, president of Wakefield Main Streets, appeared before the Town Council along with Mark Faverman of Faverman Design to discuss the project. The kiosks will be paid for by Wakefield Main Streets through their private fundraising efforts. Faverman Design has been retained by the town to develop a branding and wayfinding program for the town's business districts.
Two of the free-standing, two-sided kiosks will be located on sidewalks in the Square and will be placed at Main and Water streets and Main and Albion streets. A third two-sided kiosk will be placed near Veterans Field on North Avenue. The digital kiosk will be three-sided and will be placed at the southern end of the Lower Common, near the corner of Common Street and Lake Avenue. One side of this kiosk will be digital and have a changeable screen. Faverman talked about the design of the kiosks, which will incorporate the look of the iconic Bandstand, including a red top that

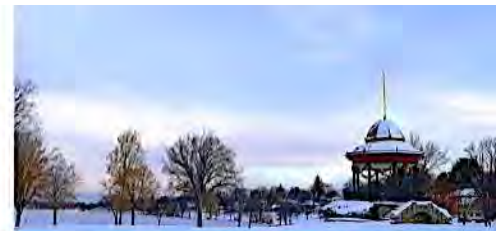


Kiosks like this one will be installed at four key locations around town to help promote the downtown area. Conceived by Faverman Design, the kiosks will incorporate the look of the iconic Bandstand.





STYLEGUIDE



WINTER 2021

UPGRADED DROP BOXES AT TOWN HALL



With safety a top priority for Town Hall employees and guests, residents are strongly encouraged to conduct their Town transactions virtually. Payments can be made online at www.wakefield.ma.us/online-payments for many services, including taxes, water bills, white-goods stickers, refuse bags, cemetery services, and more. Many forms and applications can also be accessed on the Town's website www.wakefield.ma.us.

Town Hall has installed new drop boxes to make submitting documents to staff quick and easy. These boxes are clearly marked and located near the accessible parking spaces and sidewalk ramp, to the left of the Town Hall entrance.

DATES TO NOTE

- Tax Collector**
- Third-quarter actual real estate bill due: February 1, 2021
- Third-quarter actual personal property bill due: February 1, 2021
- 2021 motor vehicle excise bill commitment #1 issued February 4, 2021 | Due March 8, 2021
- Assessing Department**
- Abatement applications due: February 1, 2021
- Statutory exemptions due: April 1, 2021



In 2015, Wakefield lifted its December-to-April on-street parking ban and now enforces parking limitations on an emergency basis.

When preparing for a snow event, the Town often initiates a temporary restriction of on-street parking. This allows plowing crews and public safety vehicles to safely access the roads and perform curb-to-curb cleanup. Parking ban announcements and other emergency notifications are made via our CodeRED e-alert system.

All parked cars must be removed from the roadways during a parking ban. If your residence does not have a driveway, connect with your landlord for parking options or coordinate with a neighbor who has extra driveway space. Vehicles that interfere with snow operations or emergency-vehicle access may be towed.

1 Lafayette Street Wakefield, MA 01880 | wakefield.ma.us

The Town of Wakefield "branded" elements and strictly adhered to style guidelines demonstrate how programs can build upon and even improve each other to reinforce a sense of place, a sense of arrival and a sense of shared experience.



Create a way-finding theme based on the community's seaside location





Provided by SME Consultant

Mark Favermann, Favermann Design

Location

Well, ME

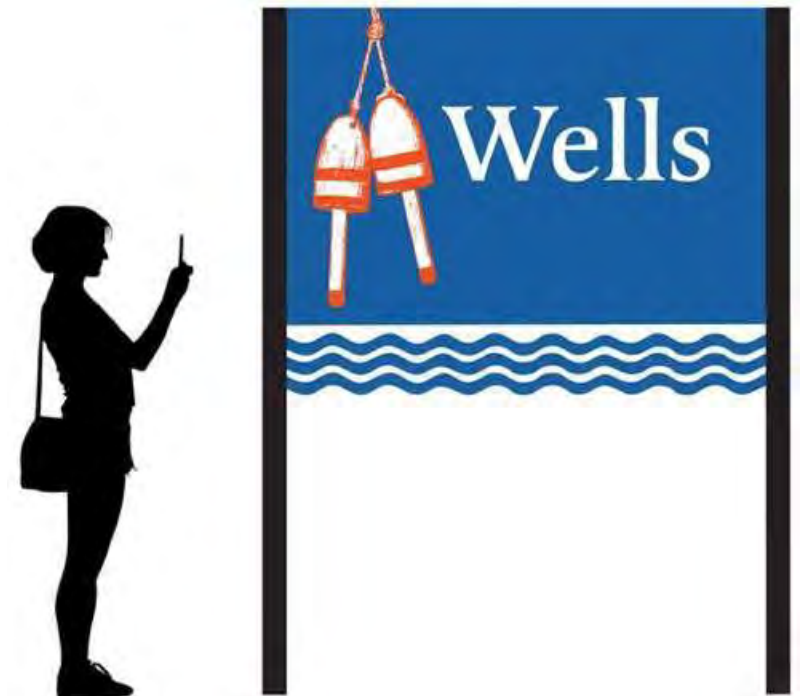
Origin	Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen
Budget	 Medium—\$30,000 design fee + \$80,000 for implementation
Timeframe	 Short- 8 months for design and planning
Risk	 Low
Key Performance Indicators	Installation and use of signage, Functionality of signage
Partners & Resources	Town of Well, Maine

Diagnostic

- Wells, Maine is a seaside community in Southern, Maine. It is located between the two more affluent communities of Ogunquit and Kennebunkport.
- Besides being a summer seaside resort, it is a fishing village and lobster boat harbor as well as being the site of the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge.
- There is no concentrated downtown area. Instead commercial businesses are spread along US Route 1 or Post Road in Wells.
- The town administration felt that the town needed a branding and wayfinding sign system that also had applications for internal communications and even street furniture and public art.
- A national competition was administered, and Favermann Design was designated the consultant.
- Our firm did a visual survey of the various parts of the community including ways to the beach, commercial activities and feeder streets and roads.
- Historic buildings, structures and various types of estates and campuses were reviewed.
- An advisory committee was appointed by the town administrator to discuss and review project components.

Action Item

- Meetings with the Advisory Committee were scheduled over the next four (4) months.
- Utilizing existing conditions, community history and natural areas, each meeting looked at another aspect of the program.
- Locations were explored in terms of decision points and directional element considerations.
- After assessing needs, street furniture design versions were explored.
- Public art was looked at as potential focal point and visual markers.
- Local capability for fabrication was reviewed and discussed.
- New and existing public buildings, signage needs were considered.
- Colors were tested and explored.



Precedent: Lobster buoys.

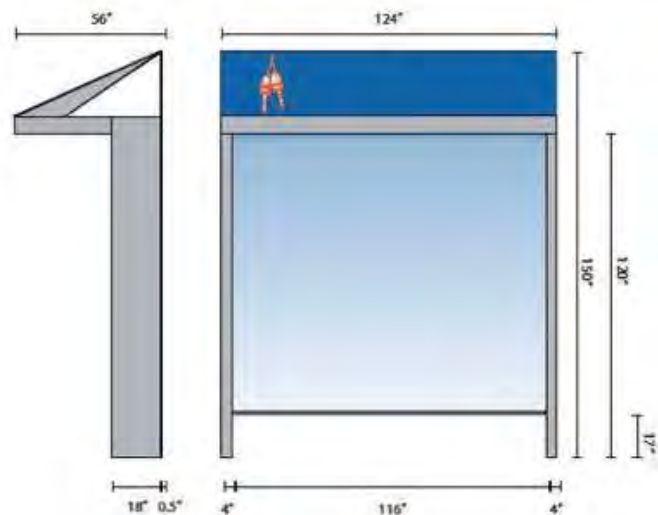
Process

- After photo documentation, a comprehensive community design alternative element presentation was made to the advisory committee.
- This was followed up a few weeks later with a presentation of past case studies created and developed for other communities.
- An *Ideation Exercise* followed a few weeks later that thoughtfully looked at ways to describe the "brand" of Wells by words and phrases.
- The Advisory Committee fully participated in this ideation exercise. It fostered a sense of ownership by the participants.
- From the *Ideation*, a number of alternative designs were created. These were then presented to the Advisory Committee for review and refinement.
- Once a couple of design directions were approved, Creative development proceeded for a number of sign element examples including for "beach rules" and a number of studies for street furniture.
- Beach Rules included pre-season regulations that restricted activities that could endanger the threatened Plowing Plover who lays their eggs on the Wells' beaches in the Spring.
- Dog regulations and horseback riding rules were also included in Beach Rules. Symbols were set parallel to word descriptions.
- Photoshopped versions were set in place for discussion of signage, street furniture and public art markers.
- Street furniture explorations included themed benches, kiosks, bike racks and trolley stops.
- Design options were developed into families of elements.
- A vendor list was developed based on appropriate fabricator / installers in both Maine and Massachusetts.
- Cost estimates were developed in collaboration with fabricators/installers.
- Public art suggestions were scrutinized by the Advisory Committee.
- A map of locations for sign element placement was created in collaboration with the Advisory Committee.
- A full set of sign element and street furniture pieces fabrication specifications were created for bidding.



Favermann Design | March 2019

Plowing Plover bird on Wells Beach in the springtime next to the beach rules on the sign.



The trolley stop between Ogunquit and Kennebunkport.

Process – Strategic Decisions

- The decision by Town of Wells to start the process
- The appointment of strategic stakeholders to the Advisory Committee representing a cross-section of strategic interests
- Review of commercial sign program sponsored by State of Maine found program uneven, not maintained and detracting from the environment/landscape
- The graphic design chosen by the advisory Committee was two lobster buoys set on the left side of the panel.
- The colors chosen for the system of wayfinding elements were a turquoise and a Cadmium Red.
- Street furniture and gateway/entrance sign elements was to have wavy elements symbolic of the ocean.
- Sculpture was to be made from polished aluminum or steel.
- The designs were shared in the Town administrator's weekly newsletter to residents and businesses.
- A presentation was made to the Wells Select board for discussion and final approval of the total design package.
- Recommendations were made for branding to be applied to Wells' internal communication including newsletter, stationery, agendas, etc.
- A decision was made to develop elements that connected with the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge and significant historic structures in town.
- Discussion was held about a phased implementation of the Wayfinding and signage system.
- A thoughtful decision was made to use Maine-based vendors.



J INSTRUCTIONAL

GRAPHICS

Dimensions: 40" x 60"
 Material: Aluminum panel 2mm thick (or per suggestion of fabricator)
 Print: Full color print on adhesive vinyl
 All major white vinyl lettering is reflective
 Anti-graffiti coating
 Colors: Red (Pantone 172C), Blue (Pantone 302C), Light Blue (Pantone 205C)
 Font: Latienne Pro Medium, Bicyclette Bold

STRUCTURE

Posts: 3" square posts metal capped
 Baked Enamel Finish: Pantone Black C
 Paint applied to all sides; must have 8 year guarantee
 Sign Fabricator to make recommendations on installation to adhere to MaineDOT standards and specifications
 Must verify overall dimensions and orientation in the field
 Vendor will make recommendations to affix panel to posts
 Footings to be recommended by installer



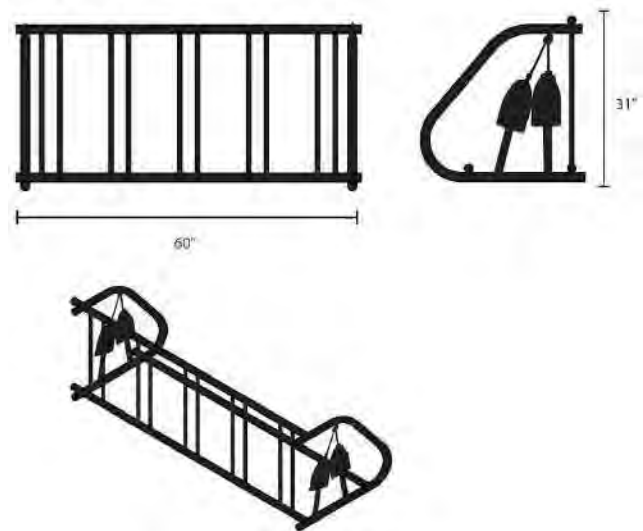
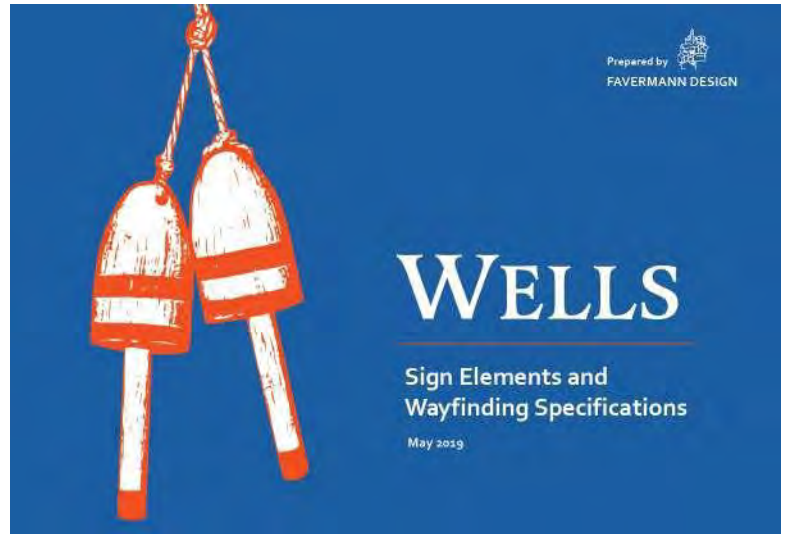
To meet overall activation goals downtown, two locations were targeted for public space events and activities.

Desired Outcomes

- A full set of detailed fabrication specifications was created for vendors to make proposals and to fabricate wayfinding and sign elements as well as street furniture units.
- The wayfinding elements included sculpture as "landmarks" in a Kevin Lynch way that were to serve as external reference points.
- The themed street furniture also had sculptural qualities marrying form and function with aesthetics.
- The notion of the Wells brand was to make the town more of a destination than just a pass-through place on the Southern coast of Maine.
- The Wells brand visually spoke to the hominess of the community and hard-working residents.
- Signs were designed to be durable, easily maintained and cost-effective. Replacement if damaged was easily done as well.

Add-ons

- The "brand" could be applied to many saleable objects such as T-shirts, mugs, sweatshirts, caps, etc.
- Revenue from the sale of these items could pay for the system of wayfinding and sign elements and/or maintenance.
- An expensive, but "brand" reinforcement piece could be a "Beach Pass" for residents. This would replace existing less colorful beach passes.
- Signs recognizing the line between Kennebunkport and Ogunquit and Wells could be strong identifiers for the community.
- A gateway sign leaving the Maine Turnpike and entering Wells would welcome and visually embrace visitors.
- The Wells branding and wayfinding and sign element program is only constrained by budget and community follow-through.





Undertake a Public Planning and Visioning Process for the Public Realm



Provided by SME Consultant

Dodson & Flinker

Location

Florence, Massachusetts

Origin	<p>Planning and visioning is a common function of community planning departments, regional planning agencies, and their consultants, and there are many great examples. Those included here are drawn from the experience of Dodson & Flinker and our client teams in Northampton, Turners Falls and Williamsburg.</p>
Budget	<p> Low Budget: (Under \$50k) depending on size and extent of project area and the goals of the project.</p>
Timeframe	<p> Short term: (less than 5 years) a typical master-planning and visioning process can be accomplished in less than a year, but the time frame needs to fit the community's specific needs and challenges relative to our reach, public involvement and consensus-building.</p>
Risk	<p> Low to Medium: With careful preparation and inclusion of all interests and community stakeholders, most people can be brought to the table. Forging a consensus among them is the point of the process.</p>
Key Performance Indicators	<p>Public support for necessary zoning and regulatory changes; increased funding and public investment in improvements and infrastructure; physical and policy changes adopted to implement the vision.</p>
Partners & Resources	<p>Downtown residents, landowners, businesses, government agencies, boards and commissions, non-profits, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Association.</p>

Diagnostic

The typical public realm planning process starts with a desire to improve physical and aesthetic conditions to bring people downtown, to make the area safer and more accessible, to accommodate new uses, or all of the above. Often there is a real or perceived conflict that arises when different groups of people need to share a limited space. Landowners and businesses that have invested in a place may need parking and amenities for their tenants and customers, while residents and visitors may have other needs.

Often the varied stakeholders in a village or downtown setting have little to do with each other until there is a conflict, or when that conflict comes before a local board, commission, council or town meeting. Along with creating a physical plan and action strategies, the purpose of the planning and visioning process is to bring diverse stakeholders together to have a conversation about the future; to build a shared understanding of the facts of the matter; to evaluate alternatives and their resulting costs and benefits; and to forge a consensus in support of that alternative that will achieve broad and lasting improvement for the whole community.

Action Item

The actions required to develop a plan or vision for the public realm follow the traditional planning process of inventory, analysis, exploration of alternatives and selection of a preferred approach. Each step requires a level of public involvement and review appropriate to the specific location and issues at hand, but the most durable plans are usually rooted in a shared consensus that cannot be achieved in a vacuum. Typical steps in the planning process include:

1. Define the specific study area and its planning context.
2. Establish a steering committee and determine the means of organizing the public process, either through a representative working group, a series of open public meetings, or some combination of the two.
3. Collect and review all relevant topographic surveys, GIS data, publicly available and proprietary data, previous reports and other materials relevant to the project area.
4. Prepare a detailed survey and analysis of existing conditions, including dimension of streets and sidewalks, architecture, use patterns, materials, etc. as appropriate to the scope of the effort.
5. Prepare an analysis of trends and likely future conditions, based on zoning, demographics, real estate market, business conditions.
6. Develop and visualize alternatives for redesign and redevelopment of the public realm within this larger physical, economic, social and environmental context.
7. Evaluate alternatives within a robust public discussion and build consensus in support of a preferred alternative.
8. Document the preferred alternative within a final masterplan and/or design strategy and prepare an action plan to implement it.

Process

Implementing the plan begins with a detailed action strategy that should be part of the plan itself. The best action plans detail realistic and achievable objectives and list the specific actions necessary to achieve them. The description of each action includes the time frame, needed resources (whether funding or staff time), and most importantly, the party responsible for carrying out that action. If that party has not accepted that responsibility, at least on a preliminary basis, that action should not be included in the final plan.

Implementation of a typical public realm plan includes using staff or volunteers to identify and apply for grant funding (or secure town funds) to pursue detailed design and construction, but it can also include zoning and regulatory changes, establishment of formal or informal improvement organizations, and partnerships with local institutions, landowners, non-profits and developers. Even after changing zoning to enable redevelopment, in many places the potential rental rates will not support private redevelopment efforts. Some form of direct investment or subsidy by government or institutions may be required to overcome these inherent economic challenges.

Get Public Input Early and Often

Getting public input on existing conditions, problems and opportunities in the study area sets a strong foundation for further planning. Establishing a shared understanding of facts and asking residents and businesses to weigh in on "what's working well" and "what needs to be fixed," builds trust in the process and ensures that the planning and design process addresses the most important issues.



Images from public workshops in Florence and Williamsburg

Ask "What's Working?" "What Needs to be Fixed?"

Given the right tools, local residents and business owners can quickly identify the most important issues – saving time and ensuring the focus is on the key problems and opportunities.



Participants used stickers and notes to identify positive and negative aspects of existing buildings and street elements in Florence.

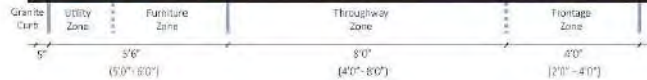
Reach out to Town Staff, Residents and Business Owners

Walking the study area with residents, business owners and town staff is a great way to gather information while forging the connections that will be critically important for further planning and implementation.



Document How the Public Realm Works Today

Streetscape design and other planning concepts can be confusing to a layperson. Simple maps, photos and diagrams help to communicate key concepts using examples that are familiar to local residents and business owners.



Celebrate What's Working Well

There are usually some successful elements within the existing public realm, or as in this case, within the private frontage adjacent to the sidewalk. These examples illustrate the goals of the planning process and can serve as models for continued investment in other parts of the study area.



Take Stock of What's Not Working So Well

Without pointing fingers, it's useful to analyze why some uses need to be improved or replaced. Often, as in this case, the approach succeeded in providing parking or meeting other needs but failed to account for how that use impedes the success of the surrounding area.



Test Alternatives and Get Public Feedback

The growing popularity of Tactical Urbanism strategies demonstrates the value of testing out potential improvements on a temporary basis. Whether applying paint striping for a period of months, or demonstration projects lasting a day or a week, this method of testing alternatives is guaranteed to prompt immediate engagement and feedback from those most affected by the potential changes. As in the Williamsburg example, temporary installations can be combined with local festivals and other events that bring people downtown.



Images from Park(ing) Day in Florence, involving taking over a parking space for a day to create a "parklet." This is an annual event started by Rebar in San Francisco in 2005 and sponsored locally by members of the American Society of Landscape Architects.



"Burg Revelation Day" in Williamsburg, combined a festival atmosphere with temporary markings for a new multi-use path and a "ribbon-cutting" ceremony to celebrate envisioned future improvements (project by Dillon Sussman while at Pioneer Valley Planning Commission).

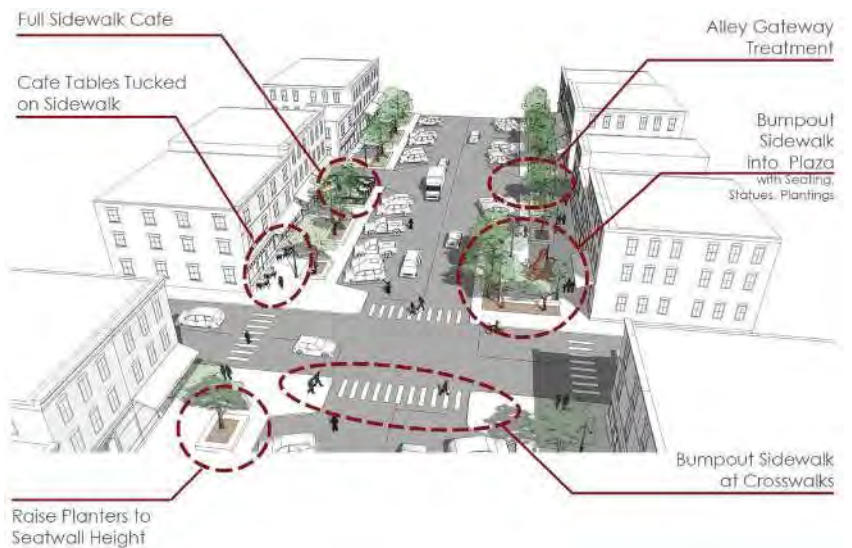
Visualizing Alternatives

Sketchup and other modeling tools allow for the creation of simple models and diagrams that help participants understand how various streetscape improvements fit together. In these views from the Downtown Turners Falls Livability Plan, a view of existing conditions on Avenue A is contrasted with a diagram showing a range of potential Complete Streets improvements and pedestrian amenities. The project laid the groundwork for creation of a sidewalk plaza, lighting upgrades, rebuilt sidewalks and other improvements.

https://www.montague-ma.gov/files/Downtown_Turners_Falls_Livability_Plan_2013.pdf



Digital model showing existing conditions along Avenue A in Turners Falls.



Digital model showing potential Complete Streets improvements and streetscape amenities.

Visualizing Alternatives

Rendered models helped stakeholders in Florence understand alternatives for redeveloping Main Street, including the potential for new mixed-use buildings within the private realm and potential improvements to the public realm.

A key benefit of the digital approach is allowing for multiple alternatives to be turned on or off. This helps make choices clear, while showing how public and private realm improvements can be coordinated within an overall masterplan. It also helps show the potential phasing of improvements over time – allowing participants to see how public investment in new sidewalks and street trees can help set the stage for private redevelopment efforts.



Digital model showing existing conditions on Main Street in Florence.



Model view showing potential Complete Streets improvements and tree plantings in the Public Realm.



Model showing potential infill development and a new park within the private realm.



Creating Safe Pedestrian Access in a Rural Village Center





Provided by SME Consultant

Franklin Regional Council of Governments

Location

Whately, MA

Origin	The project was envisioned in a master plan for the Whately Center Historic District.
Budget	 <p>Medium Budget (\$50,000 - \$200,000) for construction Design and engineering funded by the Town of Whately Additional public participation process and construction funded through Massachusetts Complete Streets grant</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Short Term (Less than 5 years)</p>
Risk	 <p>Medium Risk</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Measures of the positive impacts of the improvements are an increased number of events, visitors, and restaurant receipts as well as a reduction in traffic speeds.
Partners & Resources	Municipal committees focused on the target area and technical assistance providers, including a landscape architecture school and the regional planning agency.

Diagnostic

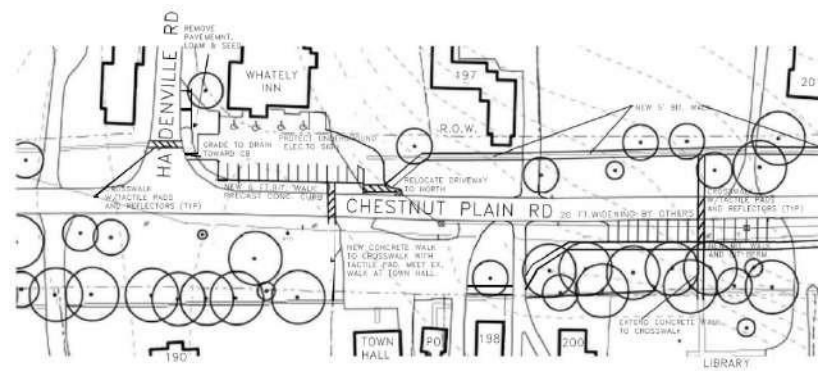
Chestnut Plain Road has a wide linear town common layout and is an integral part of the character and landscape of the town center historic district.

Creating safe pedestrian access in the village center was identified as a priority during the development of the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan that was part of the town's participation in the Mass DOT Complete Streets Funding Program. The Complete Streets Prioritization Plan was developed through a comprehensive public process. A committee comprised of representatives from the Selectboard, the Planning Board, the Historical Commission, and the Finance Committee, a Library Trustee, a resident, the Town Administrator, and the Highway Superintendent worked with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments staff to compile a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan and seek implementation funding for the project. Public outreach for the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan included a series of meetings of the committee to review and prioritize the projects, an input meeting with the general public, and a meeting of the Whately Selectboard to review and endorse the project rankings.

Therefore, to move forward, this project needed to have broad and strong community support. The project was successfully implemented because public outreach and an engaged planning process had taken place during the town center master planning process before the initiation of the final design and implementation of the improvements.



BEFORE: Google Maps aerial image of the Whately Inn at the corner of Chestnut Plain Road and Haydenville Road. A major renovation of the old Town Hall completed in 2019 resulted in a new community center and history museum across the street from the Whately Inn. With no crosswalks or sidewalks, the pedestrian pathway connecting these two attractions was not well defined.



Engineering plan created by Sara E. Campbell, PE, consulting civil engineer, for the project area of Chestnut Plain Road near Haydenville Road.

Action Items

The The Whately Historic District Complete Streets project included the construction of new sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure on the town's main street, Chestnut Plain Road— e.g. construction of a new section of sidewalk in front of the Whately Inn, a vibrant local restaurant, where there was no sidewalk. Some of the parking for the Whately Inn was located next to the road in the space where a sidewalk would be located. The town worked cooperatively with the Whately Inn to redesign and relocate the parking area to allow for the construction of a sidewalk. By relocating the entrance to the parking area, additional parking was created and the sidewalk was constructed. Site ownership at a location where there was no sidewalk has the potential to pose an obstacle to the successful implementation of a continuous sidewalk through a project area. By the town and the Whately Inn communicating and working collaboratively this project was a success.

The project also improved pedestrian connections between the Whately Inn and the recently renovated old Town Hall, which is now a community center and local history museum. As in-person events begin to be held again at the old Town Hall, residents and visitors can safely and easily park and walk to and from the Whately Inn and the event.



AFTER: With new crosswalks and sidewalks, pedestrians have safe access to the Whately Inn as well as the new community center and history museum, Post Office and public library across the street.



AFTER: The well defined parking area in front of the Whately Inn provides space for both parking and a seasonal tent for outdoor dining.

Process

- Completion of a conceptual design process that included broad participation.
- Adoption of a Complete Streets Policy.
- Development of a Complete Streets Prioritization Plan, facilitated by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments.
- Approval of Complete Streets Prioritization Plan by the Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program so that the community is eligible to apply for complete streets implementation funding.
- Application to the Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program for project implementation funding.
- Approval of implementation funding through the Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program for the project.
- Completion of the final design for the project which includes collaboration with businesses and abutters so as to address needs for parking, outdoor dining, and pedestrian facilities.
- Temporary construction or permanent easements were identified and sought
- Conduct procurement process to hire contractor.
- Contractor completes project construction.

Importance of Public Engagement

Early in the project development the interests, concerns, and perspectives of many residents were considered through a master plan development process. Concerns related to the preservation of the historic streetscape while updating the sidewalks and crossings to improve accessibility for pedestrians was a challenge. Specifically, a robust public outreach process was completed that included a solicitation of input from those who would be impacted by the project. Two major considerations/challenges to implementation were making sure to preserve the historic double row of trees and to avoid damaging the root systems and also making sure that any signs did not detract from the historic character of the neighborhood. The project involved balancing pedestrian and motorist safety while also not detract from the historic qualities and feel of the area.

With the approval of the Select Board, the Whately Historical Commission formed an ad hoc committee to focus on the Whately Center Historic District. The ad hoc committee included a broad range of representation. They engaged the Conway School of Landscape Design to facilitate a visioning process and create conceptual designs for a Whately Center Historic District master plan. Since the visioning took place early in the project development, many interests and concerns were considered and incorporated into the conceptual designs that helped communicate proposed improvements.

Later, during the development of the design plans for the Chestnut Plain Road sidewalk, representatives of the Whately Inn were also consulted to discuss and brainstorm a solution to the parking issue. The solution was developed that improved the access to the parking lot and the configuration of the parking to allow for the construction of the sidewalk. The Inn donated towards the construction costs to compensate for a portion of the project that was on their property.



Developing storefront guidelines to energize downtown




Provided by SME Consultant

Mark Favermann, Favermann Design

Location

Everett, MA

Origin	Mayor, City of Everett
Budget	 Low - \$35,000 for design fee + program to subsidize implementation for \$25,000
Timeframe	 Short- 10 - 12 months
Risk	 Low
Key Performance Indicators	Level of participation by landlords and merchants
Partners & Resources	City of Everett, Everett Building Department and Community Development Department, and landlords and merchants.

Diagnostic

The City of Everett is a primarily working class community just north of Boston. It has a large share of Brazilian, Latino and Italian first- and second-generation residents.

In the last few years, a very large casino has located there that gives the city some needed donations and fees for public improvements. There are two major retail enclaves in Everett: Everett Square and Glendale Square.

Everett Square, the larger of the two, is the traditional downtown where the public library and City Hall and many amenities are located.

Stores and restaurants are primarily locally-owned, family enterprises. Only a minority of Everett's business are national or regional chains.

In a bid to encourage the appeal of Everett's downtown to outside visitors, the year before the Pandemic, the Mayor directed the Community Development Director to create a framework to better guide merchants in enhancing their storefronts. A subsidy grant program was being developed to encourage merchant and landlord participation.

The Mayor also felt that a more restricted approach to storefront design be adhered to with similar sign details and limited awning colors. As study was commissioned to develop Guidelines for Signage and Storefronts. Following this, the guidelines were to be translated into the City of Everett's Building Code.

Action Items

- Photo-documentation of all commercial blocks and stores in both Everett Square and Glendale Square.
- Creating a panoramic view each block showing "existing" and "proposed."
- Thorough review of existing storefront improvement programs throughout the United States and Canada to recognize applicable precedents and best practices.
- Development of a City of Everett Guidelines format while exploring various cases for refinement and review.
- Drafting distinct pages referring individual aspects of storefronts. These included wall signs, blade signs, awnings and window treatments.
- Review the drafted pages with Everett's planning staff, Building Department and representatives of the Mayor's office.
- Final approval of Storefront Guidelines.



Everett Square

Applicable Commercial Areas

The Everett Storefront Sign and Design Guidelines are applicable to any storefront located in the Everett Square neighborhood and the Glendale Square Neighborhood.

Everett Square

Everett Square is a prominent commercial corridor in the city center running along Broadway Street between Hancock Street in the north and Revere Beach Parkway in the south. The center of Everett Square is at the intersection of Broadway and Chelsea/Norwood streets.



The high number of vacant storefronts contributed to lack of vibrancy downtown.

Process

- Extensive research of other cities and towns' guidelines and procedures.
- Based on best practices, create easily understood and illustrated storefront component pages that reference City of Everett regulations.
- Establish storefront element criteria through including specifically referenced dimensions, materials and placement.
- Photo-document good and bad examples of storefront elements.
- Create a City of Everett color pallet.
- Show by illustration approved and not approved ways of applying storefront elements.
- Circulate among town staff the drafts individual guideline pages for review and refinement.
- Organize whole Storefront Guidelines set of pages.
- After completion of Storefront Guidelines, during the Covid-19 shutdown, work with the Building Commission to rewrite Everett's Building Code to reflect the clearer storefront criteria.
- Others involved in the rewriting of Building Code include the city attorney and community development director.
- This sentence by sentence intense exercise gave focus to the Building Code while doing away with unnecessary zoning code criteria.
- This Collaboration made a tedious set of tasks quite reasonable to complete.
- This process allowed an opportunity to address sign issues throughout the City such as non-conforming uses, public/private garages, etc.

Signs

Signs

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

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



City Ordinance/Regulation:
Section 12.5(F)(j) of the City Ordinance further regulates the number and size of signs. See Technical Requirements for more information.

24

Signs and Technical Requirements

Awnings

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

City Ordinance/Regulation:
City Council Rule 74.B further regulates awnings.
Awning signs are also further regulated in City Ordinance Section 12A.



Awning Signs - Material

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

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



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

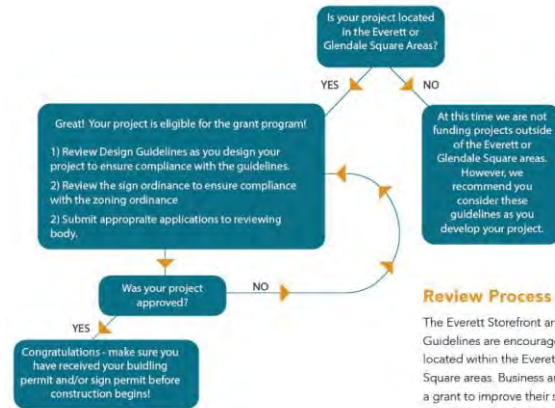


This awning is made of shiny vinyl and is not encouraged.

The block party was a near-term, easy action item in the overall implementation plan and was intended to support a good image for this area of the downtown and set up for larger and longer-term action items such as building redevelopment, wayfinding, and business recruitment for ground floor spaces.

Process- Strategic Decisions

- City of Everett deciding to create storefront guidelines
- Building Commission desiring to match new guidelines to City's Building code.
- Creation of a digital set of storefront criteria for use by merchants, landlords and fabricator / installers.
- Use of panoramic photo-montage to establish existing conditions.
- Use of photo-montages to act as baseline show proposed conditions using new storefront criteria.
- Collaboration between strategic City departments for ownership of the guidelines and shared development of the review process for design and grant applications.
- Creation of easily understandable and illustrated storefront criteria.



Review Process

The Everett Storefront and Facade Design Guidelines are encouraged for any storefront located within the Everett Square and Glendale Square areas. Business and property owners seeking a grant to improve their signage or awning shall demonstrate compliance with these guidelines and any applicable zoning regulations. This flow chart is meant to help you understand the process to get your project approved.

Review Process and Grant Application

Everett Square

Before



After



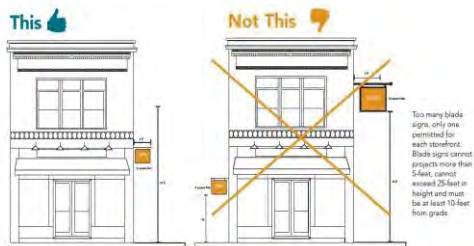


Window Signs
Window signs and graphics are a great way to add visual interest and character to a storefront. Window signs are applied directly to the window and are meant to supplement other signage. Generally, these graphics are printed as vinyl transfers and placed as a band along the display windows. It is a great way for business's to state their hours of operations, services, or phone number.

City Ordinance/Regulation:
There are size and coverage requirements for window signs in Section 12A of the City Ordinance.

Projecting/Blade Signs

Projecting/Blade signs should be limited one to a business entrance and should not contain more than two faces. To maintain the pedestrian feel of the corridor, projecting/blade signs cannot project more than 5 feet from the building or be larger than 8 square feet. The sign should also not be placed higher than the following (whichever is the lowest): 25 feet above grade; the top of the sills of the first level of windows above the first story; or the height of the building at the building line.



Too many blade signs, only one permitted for each storefront. Blade signs cannot project more than 5 feet, cannot exceed 25 feet in height and must be at least 10 feet from grade.

Wall Signs

Wall Signs - Height

The top of wall signs should be higher than any of the following, whichever is lowest:
1. 25 ft above grade;
2. top of sills of the first level of windows above the first story; or
3. the height of a building at the building line

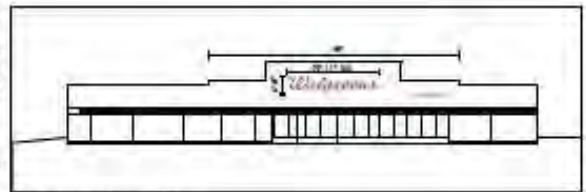


The wall sign is not compliance since the wall sign is located 25 feet above grade.

Everett MA Signage Case Study

The following depicts how signage is applied based on current and proposed regulations. The proposed regulations are depicted in Example 2. However, two additional renderings were provided to show alternative sign sizes.

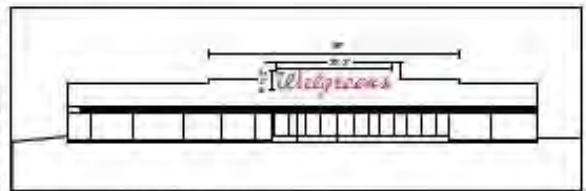
Example 1
Allowed Under Current Regulations
Based on Sign Permit Documentation
Max Sign Size = 395 (158ft x 2.5 = 395, per sign permit)



Main Sign As Shown = 199.77sq ft

Note - square footage is split up between the two signs "Walgreens" & "Pharmacy"

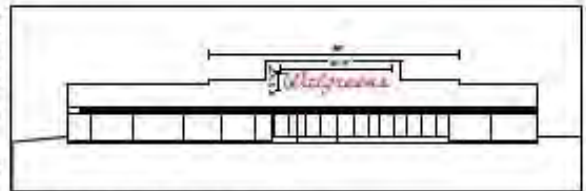
Example 2
Proposed Regulations
4 square ft per linear foot of wall which pertains to the sign, for facades set back more than 100-feet from the centerline of the road
Max Sign Size = 354 sq ft



As shown = 354 sq ft
Dimensions = 39.25' x 9.04'

Note - proposed regulations would not permit two wall signs on the same facade, therefore this example using all allotted sign size to the single wall sign.

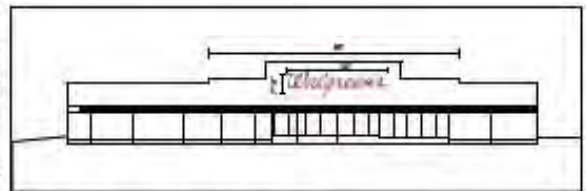
Example 3
Comparison
3.5 sq ft per linear foot of wall which pertains to the sign, for facades set back from than 100-feet from the centerline of the road.
Max Sign Size = 311.5sq ft



As shown = 311.12sq ft
Dimensions = 36.75' x 8.47'

Note - proposed regulations would not permit two wall signs on the same facade, therefore this example using all allotted sign size to the single wall sign.

Example 4
Comparison
3 sq ft per linear foot of wall which pertains to the sign, for facades set back from than 100-feet from the centerline of the road.
Max Sign Size = 267sq ft



As shown = 266.30 sq ft
Dimensions = 34' x 7.83'

Note - proposed regulations would not permit two wall signs on the same facade, therefore this example using all allotted sign size to the single wall sign.

Appendix C – Funding Digest

This section includes summary information on grant programs and foundations mentioned as a funding lead under the projects listed in the plan. COVID-related relief programs, particularly those funded through the American Rescue Plan Act, are not described in this Appendix, as guidelines and specific authorized uses continue to evolve. However, it is likely that some portion of the projects listed here would be eligible for support through the Town’s allocation of ARPA funds, and/or may be suitable for pending sub-grants of the ARPA allocation to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The list that follows focuses on promising leads identified through a variety of sources. DHCD also compiled a set crowd-sourced lists organized around the Recovery Project categories defined during the LRRP process. These much more comprehensive lists can be found at the following links:

Public Realm:

<https://airtable.com/embed/shrh5rVQMbVbpYLKF/tblk00qQMPM2JPpie>

Private Realm:

<https://airtable.com/embed/shrhYPjzJxaDNALd/tblk00qQMPM2JPpie>

Tenant Mix:

<https://airtable.com/embed/shrRjd2TKWvkesvB8/tblk00qQMPM2JPpie>

Revenue/Sales:

<https://airtable.com/embed/shrGwkcX0JeOOUwDW/tblk00qQMPM2JPpie>

Administrative Capacity:

<https://airtable.com/embed/shrIcJ9EmP9PAW6JD/tblk00qQMPM2JPpie>

Arts/Culture:

<https://airtable.com/embed/shrGt0Q6HzMWergit/tblk00qQMPM2JPpie>

Overall program resources may be found here:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rapid-recovery-plan-rrp-program#resources->

America Walks Community Change Grant

The Community Change Grant program supports the growing network of advocates, organizations, and agencies working to advance walkability. Grants are awarded to innovative, engaging, and inclusive programs and projects that create change and opportunity for walking and movement at the community level.

Berkshire Bank Foundation, Inc.

Subjects of interest include community and economic development as well as community improvement. Support strategies encompass building and renovations, capital and infrastructure, general and program support.

Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation

BTCF prioritizes Educational Attainment, Community Engagement, Economic Opportunity, and Philanthropic Stewardship. A wide range of competitive grant programs can be searched on their website, including programs for non-profits and individual artists.

Commonwealth Places

MassDevelopment's "Commonwealth Places" is a competitive opportunity to advance locally driven placemaking in downtown and neighborhood commercial districts in eligible communities throughout Massachusetts. This program requires crowdfunding to match grant investments. Awards range from \$5,000 to \$300,000.

Coolidge Hill Foundation

Coolidge Hill Foundation is based in Lee, MA, and indicates an interest in funding arts and culture as well as community and economic development.

Deann Dylandale Foundation

Deann Dylandale Foundation is located in Sheffield, MA, and indicates an interest in funding arts and culture. Grants showing on Foundation Directory online also indicate community and economic Development as well as public/private ventures, festivals, parks, and playgrounds.

Grassroots Fund Seed/Grow Grants

Grassroots grants are aimed at building an inclusive movement by shifting power at the community level. Seed funding generally applies to projects and coalitions that have been underway for less than a year. Grow grants further established projects following the Guiding Practices of the Grassroots Fund.

Gendler Family Foundation

Based in Great Barrington, MA, subjects of interest include community improvement, natural resources, performing arts, and recreation.

Greylock Federal Credit Union

GFCU provides community support through grants to certified 501c3 organizations and schools, in certain priority areas including economic development and arts and culture. Partnership with an established non-profit would be required for consideration.

Jane and Jack Fitzpatrick Trust

Based in Stockbridge, MA, subjects of interest include community and economic development, historic preservation, arts and culture. Support strategies encompass building and renovations, capacity building and technical assistance, infrastructure, equipment, and general program support.

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

LISC invests in an overlapping set of program areas including creative placemaking, economic development, financial stability, and sports and recreation, among others. LISC receives funding from banks, corporations, foundations and government agencies. In turn, they use that funding to provide financing (loans, grants and equity) and technical and management assistance to local partners and developers.

Lee Bank

Lee Bank's grant and sponsorship recipients range from arts and culture organizations to grass-roots groups focused on food security, literacy, job readiness, economic development and other initiatives benefiting area families and children.

Mass Downtown Initiative (MDI)

The primary mission of the MDI is to make downtown revitalization an integral part of community development in cities and towns across the Commonwealth. All communities are eligible to apply. Some funding is reserved for only non-entitlement Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) communities. The consultant used to deliver the technical assistance will be chosen by MDI staff from a list of pre-qualified consultants. Maximum award is \$25,000 to the chosen consultant. Offered annually through the Community One Stop for Growth Portal.

MassWorks Infrastructure

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program is a competitive grant program that provides the largest and most flexible source of capital funds to municipalities and other eligible public entities primarily for public infrastructure projects that support and accelerate housing production, spur private development, and create jobs throughout the Commonwealth. Offered annually through the Community One Stop for Growth Portal.

T-Mobile Hometown Grant

T-Mobile's Hometown grants are focused on helping small communities thrive. Partners include Smart Growth America and Main Street America. Up to \$50,000 will be awarded to up to 100 towns per year.