



Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

Town of Wilmington

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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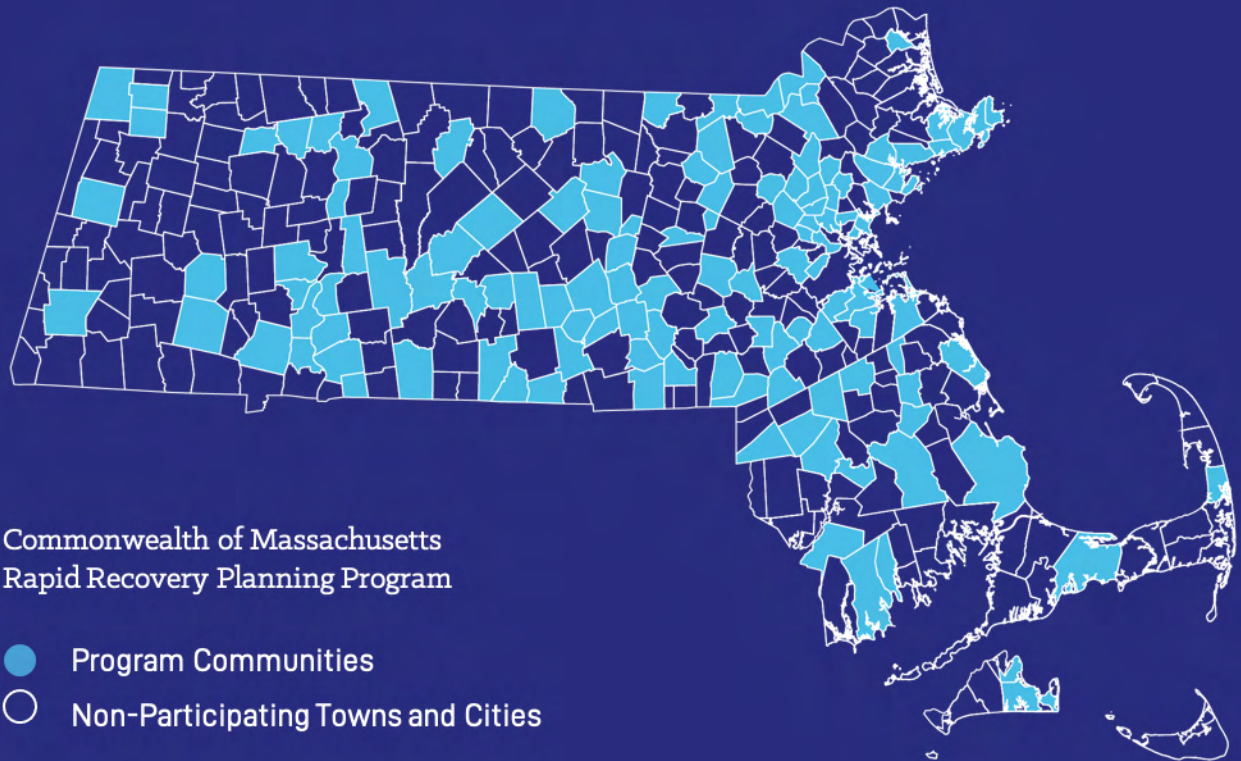
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125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

- 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.



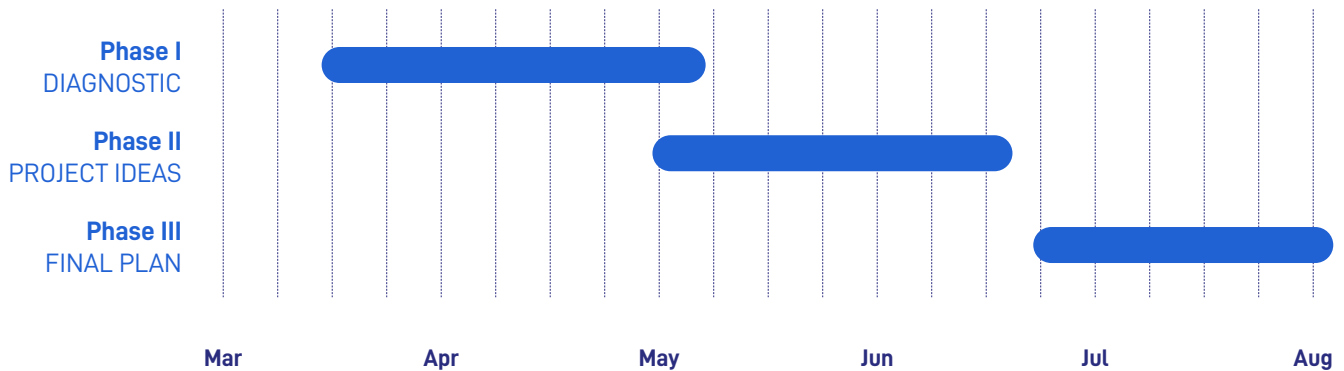
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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



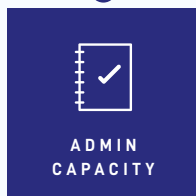
Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?



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



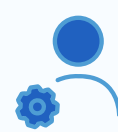
Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Revenue & Sales



Admin Capacity



Cultural/Arts



Other

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Creating a Sense of Place in Wilmington

The Town of Wilmington is a suburban community of approximately 23,000 residents, located 16 miles north of Boston in Middlesex County. The Town's median household income in 2019 was \$125,922 compared to \$81,215 for Massachusetts and \$102,603 for Middlesex County. Wilmington's strong school system, variety of recreational amenities and two commuter rail stations have attracted families with school-age children. Once a rural farming community, Wilmington has become an auto-centric suburb, with a commercial corridor dominated by strip mall shopping centers. Residents appreciate the amenities that make Wilmington family-friendly and the benefits of a small town. However, residents have noted that the Town is lacking a sense of place. There is a desire for the sense of community and public gathering spaces that exist in many other small New England downtowns.

Wilmington's farming history is notable for two very popular products—the Baldwin apple (first identified in Wilmington and, at one time, the most popular apple variety in the U.S.) and hops, which were grown in Wilmington and the surrounding region and transported through Town along the Middlesex Canal. While the farming industry has largely vanished, remnants of the Town's agricultural history still exist in Wilmington. A monument to the Baldwin apple sits at the site where the first tree was discovered in 1740. Additionally, there are portions of the Middlesex Canal that are still visible. The Town's history is not especially visible and may be unknown to many residents, but it could help to guide the community in identifying what makes Wilmington unique and to create a permanent sense of place.

The Town's commercial corridor is a product of decades of auto-oriented planning and strip mall style development. While the resulting infrastructure is a major challenge to creating a vibrant downtown district that the community desires, the Town has many resources that can be leveraged to make Wilmington a destination, including two Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA) commuter rail stations, excellent recreational amenities, a strong manufacturing industry, and active community organizations. Highlighting the Town's assets and community building through public-private-nonprofit relationships will be the key to a successful and equitable growth strategy for Wilmington.



Intersection of Main Street (Route 38) and Route 62. Source: BerryDunn

The Town's recovery will depend on a mix of infrastructure improvements and building community partnerships

As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, economic trends toward more online shopping and remote services have intensified. Businesses that have not been able to quickly transform their business model and who have historically relied on in-person customers, have suffered.

At the same time as people have turned to online shopping, banking and other remote services out of convenience and safety, residents of Wilmington, and many other communities, have identified a need for community gathering spaces. While many people were relieved to have fewer trips to the store or office, they have also recognized the importance of engaging with others and the sense of community that is built through participation in community events, impromptu gatherings and regular social interaction through work, school, and other activities that were on hiatus or very limited due to the outbreak.

Creating community spaces and places where people want to spend time, is critical for the well-being of the community and the commercial revitalization of the district that has experienced some decline and commercial vacancies in recent years. This has been exacerbated by the outbreak, resulting in additional vacancies and leaving small businesses with even fewer resources to grow their businesses and adjust to the changing market.



Source: Town of Wilmington Social Pinpoint public engagement website.

Diagnostic

Key Findings



The Town has a strong community of young families and a large daytime employee population

Wilmington has a relatively high concentration of families with children and a large middle to older working age population. Wilmington also has a significantly higher daytime employment population than surrounding suburban communities as a result of the strong manufacturing industry in town.

Based on survey responses and public comment from residents, there is a demand for more shopping, dining and entertainment options in Wilmington. The data supports this anecdotal evidence. The 2019 Route 38-Main Street Corridor Market Study found a lower concentration of food and drinking establishments in Wilmington compared to Middlesex County and Massachusetts. Wilmington residents also have a higher median income than that of Middlesex County, which is higher than the state median income. Based on this data, there appears to be an untapped market with many residents traveling outside of Wilmington for shopping, dining and entertainment.



The Town's infrastructure is largely auto-oriented

Wilmington's study area is the 3.5 mile commercial corridor along Routes 38 and 129, from the I-93 interchange to Silver Lake. The corridor is auto-centric with relatively high speed traffic and some traffic challenges at key intersections. Sidewalks along the corridor are narrow, in disrepair and, in many places, non-existent. They are also interrupted by extended curb cuts for cars entering and exiting parking lots and intersections with long crossing distances and poorly marked crosswalks.

Many storefronts and signage are dated and in need of renovation. There are also 28 documented vacant storefronts in the study area, including two large commercial buildings, former locations of a Rite Aid and a Walgreens.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, as many communities found creative ways to bring dining and retail activity outdoors, Wilmington's businesses were challenged to take advantage of ideas such as parklets (sidewalk extensions that provide more space and amenities for people using the street) or sidewalk retail displays, but have had the advantage of large parking areas to expand outdoor dining. These large, often underused parking areas present an opportunity to review current parking requirements and reconsider development opportunities in underused or vacant properties.

While Wilmington lacks a traditional compact downtown, it has natural and recreational amenities that are valued by the community. Connecting these resources to the commercial district, through signage, branding and infrastructure improvements, would help to create a sense of community that includes Wilmington's commercial center.



The Town has an untapped market for retail, dining, and experiential businesses

Wilmington has a significant manufacturing industry, with several large employers and industrial areas located off of the main commercial corridor. As a result of the manufacturing industries in Wilmington, the Town has a much higher daytime employee population than surrounding suburban communities.

While there are many service businesses within the commercial study area, there are few businesses that would be considered destinations (sit-down restaurants, entertainment and experiential businesses).

A 2019 retail market study of the Town found that the relatively high commercial tax rate could be a deterrent for new businesses. Additional bureaucratic challenges may exist in the way of the Town's zoning bylaws. Town is actively working on making incremental changes to the zoning bylaws to allow a diversity of business types and to be more accommodating to existing businesses.



The Town has limited staff capacity to support economic development initiatives

Wilmington has several active committees and organizations that drive economic development activity in the Town and region; however, these volunteer committees have limited staff time and resources, and there is a need for a full-time economic development professional to manage and coordinate the multiple revitalization initiatives proposed in this Plan as well as initiatives laid out in prior plans and studies.

Many of the projects proposed in this Plan can be implemented or initial phases begun with very little financial investment from the Town; however, the success of these projects will be dependent upon organizational support including tasks such as coordinating volunteers, promoting events and building relationships with businesses, property owners, and community groups. The Town does not currently have a full-time staff person dedicated to economic development, and the Planning and Conservation Department does not have the capacity to effectively manage the proposed economic development initiatives. A full-time economic development coordinator, or similar position, is critical to project implementation success.

The Town's community-based organizations and resident committees are great resources to assist in leading volunteer groups, building relationships with stakeholders, supporting events, and leading community engagement. The Economic Development Committee and Wilmington/Tewksbury Chamber of Commerce have contributed to this planning process. In addition, tapping resources of the Town's Art Council, Historic Commission, Recreation Commission, Wilmington Farmer's Market, We're One Wilmington, and other community-based groups can assist in building organizational capacity for ongoing revitalization efforts.



Highlights from the Physical Environment

CONDITION

The auto-oriented layout of the Town's commercial corridor is a major challenge to economic revitalization efforts. There are several well-maintained recreational facilities in Wilmington, but the Town's public spaces along the commercial corridor are largely unattractive and, in many places, hazardous to pedestrians and cyclists.

VISIBILITY

Visibility is a challenge for businesses along the Town's busy vehicular corridor, especially for businesses with smaller storefronts in shopping center. An opportunity exists to increase the visibility of the Town, its businesses, and the unique recreational, historic and natural resources in the community through creative digital marketing and collaborative public-private partnerships.



*Main Street, (Route 38) approaching the intersection of Route 129.
Photo credit: BerryDunn*

TRANSIT

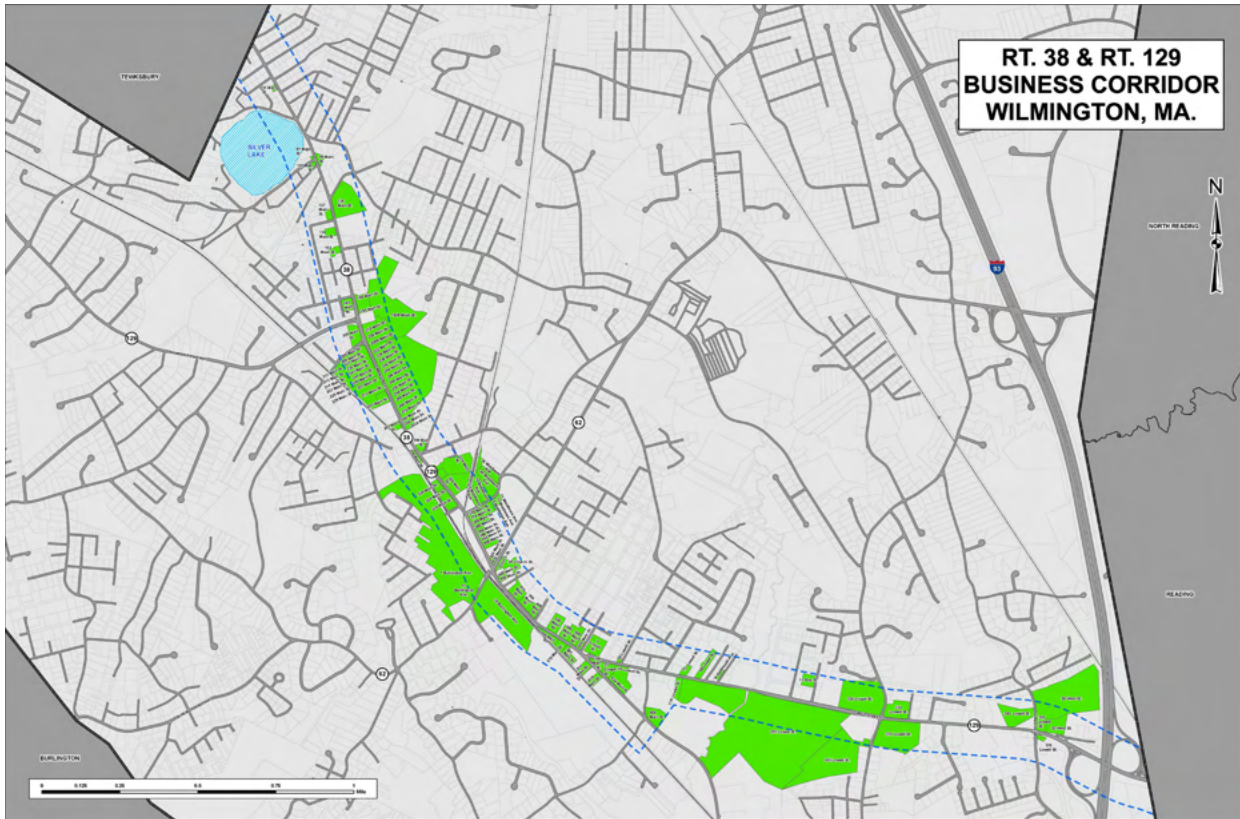
The Town has two MBTA commuter rail stations with one station (Wilmington Station) located within the Study Area, within the Town Center. The existing auto and pedestrian infrastructure is a challenge to creating a more walkable downtown area; however, the proximity to transit is a huge benefit in developing a successful and active district.

UNDERUTILIZED SPACES

As an auto-oriented corridor, Wilmington's commercial district has many large parking lots, with many serving only one business, resulting in vast parking areas that are often empty. Additionally, vacant storefronts and buildings exist throughout the district and offer an opportunity to rethink parking requirements and how land can be developed more efficiently and more sustainably.



Parking lot at Wilmington Plaza. Photo credit: Google.



Map of Study Area. Source: Town of Wilmington

Most “Liked” Public Comments from Online Engagement

*I would love a **downtown square** or corridor where people can walk around local businesses and eat and shop local. We don't have a focal point downtown to **foster community** and without walkable spaces, we'll just have more car traffic.*

*Wilmington is very well positioned with the **commuter rail** stopping right in town to potentially attract many people to this area. However the store fronts around the train station are anything but inviting. Transforming that area into restaurants with **outdoor seating**, a local coffee and ice cream shop, small local clothing/home decor boutiques, green space to gather, **tasteful street lighting** and additional parking would do wonders! It's time for Wilmington to have its own **true center of town!***

*Wilmington lacks a **gathering spot** for the community. There is not one central place to **park once** and meet/enjoy a meal and **spend time outdoors**.*

***Storefronts are really outdated** and lack of available parking really limits any new tenants wanting to come in.*



Highlights from the Business Environment

UNTAPPED MARKET

The 2019 Route 38 – Main Street Corridor Market Study found a lower concentration of food and drinking establishments in Wilmington compared to Middlesex County and Massachusetts.

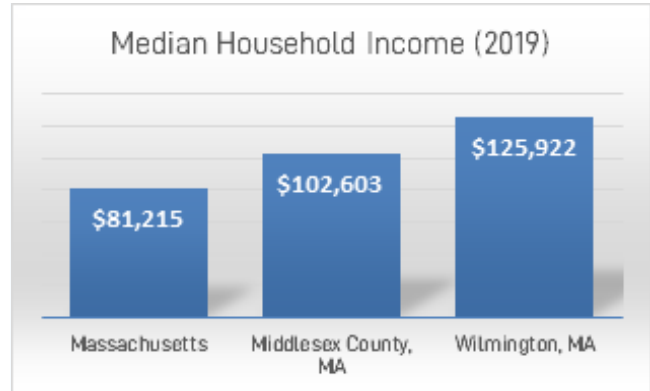
The comparatively high median income, education level and homeownership rates in Wilmington are indicators of a potential demand for higher end retail and restaurant establishments.

Why is there an untapped market in Wilmington? There are several factors that may be affecting the Town's business growth including the relatively high commercial tax rate, zoning and site plan regulations, and the unattractive physical appearance of many of the Town's commercial storefronts.

VACANT STOREFRONTS

Vacant storefronts, especially large retail spaces, are a challenge for the Town's economic growth.

In some instances, property owners may not be financially motivated to fill vacancies. For some vacant spaces, the lack of building maintenance and upkeep of the exterior of the property is a challenge for property owners looking to attract potential tenants. Additionally, the number of visible vacant storefronts in the Town (28 total in April 2021) can be a deterrent for potential new or relocating businesses.



Median Household Income, 2019. Source: US Census Bureau



Vacant commercial property. Photo credit: BerryDunn

Project Recommendations

1. Develop a Town Brand and Brand Guidelines





Category		Revenue/Sales
Location		Town wide
Origin		Economic Development Committee, site visit, discussion with Town project team
Budget		<p>Low Budget (<\$50,000) - with brand deployment</p> <p>Funding Opportunities (See Funding Table in Appendix D for details):</p> <p>Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds MA Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program</p>
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk – requires buy-in from the business community
Key Performance Indicators		Social media tags, number of businesses and community organizations to use the Town branding graphics in their marketing efforts
Partners & Resources		<p>Economic Development Committee – oversee the brand development initiative and consultant selection process</p> <p>Wilmington/Tewksbury Chamber of Commerce – assist with engaging the business community, provide guidance on the overall brand development process</p> <p>Board of Selectmen – provide support for the initiative, solicit public input and approve a final brand design</p> <p>Business community – provide input on brand development and how to market the Town in a way that will best support local businesses Community organizations – promote the initiative and engage the community</p> <p>Real estate professionals – provide input on brand development and how to market the Town</p> <p>Planning & Conservation Department - provide support and oversight for the project</p>



Photo credit: Welcome to Wilmington video, Town of Wilmington.

100% of businesses indicated the need for a downtown brand in a business survey conducted by RRP.

Diagnostic

Wilmington has active and engaged residents and businesses, but the lack of a physical downtown center and gathering area has created a challenge to building a sense of community in the Town, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses are spread out along the Route 129 and Route 38 corridors, and in some instances, set back from the main road, decreasing their visibility to passing motorists. The local business community would benefit from an established Town brand identity through a branding initiative. Wilmington is often perceived as a pass-through community, which is a challenge for many small businesses in the Town. As with many communities, Wilmington experienced a downturn in in-person customers and traffic through the Town during the COVID-19 pandemic. A consistent Town identity and greater visibility for local businesses would help business owners to attract customers and encourage residents to return to businesses post-pandemic.

Without a distinct downtown district brand, Wilmington lacks a defined identity that is visible to residents and visitors. Driving along the Town's commercial corridors, there are no physical indicators to welcome you or to indicate that you are in Wilmington.

A branding initiative would provide physical cohesiveness, through signage and other infrastructure, as well as a coordinated marketing message for the Town, businesses and property owners to use online and in print media to highlight the Town as a place to live and work.

It is important to develop a brand that stands out. Wilmington's history of hop farming and nickname of "Hop Town" is a unique feature of the Town's history. The Town could build upon this history and the growing craft brewery industry to market the Town as an ideal location for breweries as indicted by a study done for the town and a recent change in the zoning by-laws to accommodate brew-pubs.

Action Items

- **Create a brand identity** that will serve to distinguish Wilmington from neighboring communities and help to create a sense of place along the Town's main commercial corridors.
- **Create a brand that can be used in multiple scenarios**, including: marketing, social media, promote awareness, promote economic development of the corridor. The end product for the project will include print and digital graphics of the Town brand/logo.
- **Create a brand that will drive the Shared Marketing Strategy of Project 2.**
- **Develop a plan to strategically implement the branding initiative** – specifically how, where and when this brand is used.
- **Develop guidelines** for how businesses and organizations can effectively incorporate the Town brand into their marketing initiatives and appropriate usage of the brand graphics.

SAN MARCOS

DISCOVER LIFE'S POSSIBILITIES



Mock-up of San Marcos brand and wayfinding signage. Source: City of San Marcos, California, Brand Identity Guidelines.



Examples of a variety of application of a Town brand. Source: Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, Florida, Branding Guidelines.

Process

Branding Effort

- **Select a team to work on this effort** – the team should be comprised of key stakeholders from the town - officials, cultural representatives, business owners (small and large) and residents. This team should work with the graphic designer and host meetings to gain input to determine the "Name" and "Look" of the area. It will be important that they consider the various uses for the brand.
- **Identify brand champions** who can participate in the process and grow support for the brand. This could include business owners, student groups, community organizations or other stakeholders.
- **Hire a graphic designer** – consider using a local designer that knows the area and can reflect in the design that this is a special, vibrant and unique area. The designer should also be able to apply this new look to marketing efforts for various applications and for use by the area businesses. Utilizing the hops & "Hop Town" reference is a unique starting point for developing the brand for Wilmington.
- **Use the brand to build on and complement what has been proposed and is being done in the area** - wayfinding, streetscape improvements, banners, advertising, social media, website, etc. As the brand is being developed, recognize that it is the visual that will launch the brand and market the area.
- **The Town has begun to develop a video to promote Wilmington** – it is important to incorporate the brand into the video and any other Town promotional initiatives.
- **Create brand guidelines** – the designer will create a template and guidelines to ensure that the brand is used correctly and consistently in all uses by the Town and businesses.
- **Implement the branding initiative** – With the brand developed, the next phase is to utilize it to promote Wilmington.
- **Develop event programming to support the brand roll-out** and to get residents and the business community excited about the new Town identity.



Entering Wilmington, on Route 38, from Tewksbury. Photo Credit: Google.

Fuquay-Varina - A Dash More



Location

Fuquay-Varina, NC



Source: www.fuquay-varina.org

Best Practice

Fuquay-Varina is a town in southern Wake County, North Carolina, and is one of the fastest growing towns in the state. The Town has grown from just under 4,000 residents in 1985 to over 30,000 in 2019. With such rapid growth and development, the common perception of Fuquay-Varina as a quiet, sleepy town no longer fit the current reality of the community.

The Revitalization Association (Fuquay-Varina Downtown) Board of Directors wanted to develop a brand that accurately reflected the fun, modern and lively community that respects its history and is creating a dynamic future.

Developing the Brand

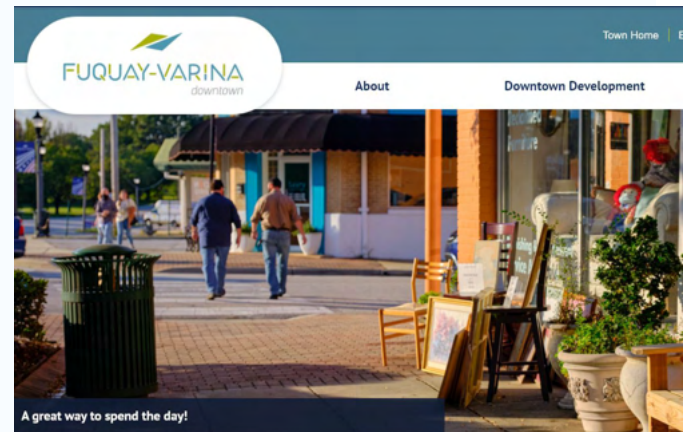
The Town worked with Clean Advertising & Design to conduct research and gain input from stakeholders through a survey and focus group. The community's high level of engagement played an important role in defining the Town's identity and in supporting the rollout of the brand.

The final brand tagline identifies Fuquay-Varina as a unique and innovative community and the triangular imagery of the logo represents the Town's history in the merging of two Towns coming together as one strong community.

Promoting the Brand

The brand rollout has occurred over several years, including a website redesign and rebranding of existing events and programs run by Fuquay-Varina Downtown.

Later phases of the brand rollout involved engaging the community through programming and encouraging residents to share the Town brand and support for their community. Bumper stickers with the new logo and tagline were provided to residents at Town Hall and other community buildings. The Town created a contest to offer prizes for those caught displaying a bumper sticker. The Town has also encouraged the community to share photos of the Town on social media to be entered into a weekly drawing. The Town also incorporated the new logo and tagline into a [promotional video](#).







Town Fuquay-Varina's redesigned website, www.fuquay-varina.org.

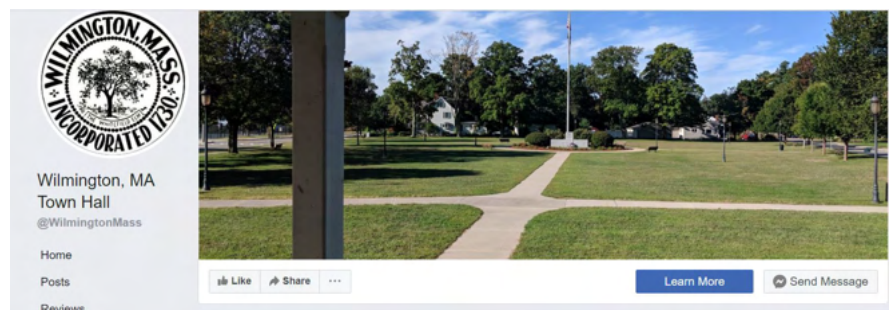


Town of Fuquay-Varina Instagram post, promoting a downtown event using the Town's new brand.

2. Develop a Comprehensive and Collaborative Marketing Strategy

Category		Revenue/Sales
Location		Study Area
Origin		Site visit, discussion with Town project team
Budget		<p>Low Budget (<\$50,000) – costs to hire professional assistance</p> <p>Funding Opportunities (See Funding Table in Appendix D for details):</p> <p>Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds MA Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program</p>
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years) - Can be implemented within one year, though the efforts will be ongoing
Risk		Low Risk – requires input and buy in from the Town officials, residents and the business community
Key Performance Indicators		Success of online marketing and social media strategies can be measured by webpage traffic, "likes", and social media response. The overall marketing strategy can be measured by revenue growth and an increase in foot traffic to participating businesses.
Partners & Resources		<p>Economic Development Committee – oversee the project and the hiring of a marketing and communications professional</p> <p>Planning & Conservation Department - oversee the project and the hiring of a marketing and communications professional</p> <p>Wilmington/Tewksbury Chamber of Commerce - provide support for the project and feedback on marketing strategies</p> <p>Business community - provide support for the project and participate on marketing efforts</p> <p>Board of Selectmen - provide support for the project</p>

Source: Town of Wilmington Facebook page



Diagnostic

Wilmington lacks a cohesive physical downtown commercial area. The businesses are spread out along the Route 129 and Route 38 corridors with some set back from the main road decreasing visibility. The local business community would benefit from an established Town identity through a branding initiative. As with many communities, Wilmington saw a downturn for its local businesses and traffic during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the past, Wilmington has been in a reactive versus a proactive mode and would like to see this changed to foster growth for the local businesses and to portray to potential businesses and customers that Wilmington is not just a "pass-through" community.

Many of Wilmington's small businesses could take advantage of social media and other marketing strategies that would share/coordinate efforts to promote their businesses and the Town to create a sense of community and support local businesses.

Shared marketing efforts, both traditional and social media, could greatly increase visibility of the many local businesses, create a cohesiveness to the corridor and introduce potential customers to businesses and services that they may not have been aware of.

The Town has begun to develop a Town video to promote Wilmington as a place to do business and to highlight Wilmington's resources. The Town would like to coordinate these types of marketing efforts to leverage technology resources and social media to reach a broader base of customers, business owners and those who may consider opening a business in Wilmington.

When the spread of COVID-19 caused most businesses to close to in-person customers temporarily, many small businesses suffered additionally due to the lack of an updated website, social media platform, or other digital marketing presence. While the use of most social media platforms is free, many proprietors do not have the knowledge to effectively use these sites to market their products and services in order to reach a broader audience. A collaborative strategy and guidelines for best practices for social media marketing will be a valuable resource for business owners.

Action Items

- **Develop a marketing strategy to identify and reinforce the brand awareness of the community.** In order for this project to be successful it must be undertaken with Project 1 – Developing a Town Branding Initiative. With that brand established for the community, the marketing strategy kicks in to utilize and market the new brand for Wilmington.
- **Provide the Town of Wilmington with a Marketing Strategy that can be used two-fold:**
 - To promote existing businesses
 - To promote economic growth
- **Provide local businesses with a platform, training and opportunity to join in a shared marketing initiative** through both traditional promotional print materials aimed at drawing visitors to the Town and increasing visibility for local businesses, as well as a comprehensive social media strategy.



*Route 38 facing north, adjacent to Wilmington Station parking lot.
Photo credit: BerryDunn*

Process

Marketing Efforts

Develop a Marketing, Communications and Media Plan –

Consider if this is done in-house or if there is a need to hire a communications professional. This will affect the budget structure. Wilmington may consider utilizing an intern from a local college or funding this position to both market the district businesses and to foster economic development.

This plan will serve as a feeder to events marketing for the area - events that should encourage patrons to explore the Downtown area.

Create New Brand Awareness - This plan will be the roadmap to enhance Wilmington's brand year-round and should incorporate how to communicate that "Wilmington is a great place to be" – i.e., develop hashtags for social media, what sources can be utilized for messaging for businesses, to the public and the surrounding communities.

Consider linking to and expanding the Town website with a tab or section that features "Visit Wilmington" with a calendar of events and business directory. Also focus on new business development and attraction.

Determine what media outlets – social and traditional – will be used. Is there a need to enhance the Town's current Facebook and Twitter feeds or to develop a #VisitWilmington separate from or in support of the Town's existing sites? This may warrant engaging a social media coordinator.

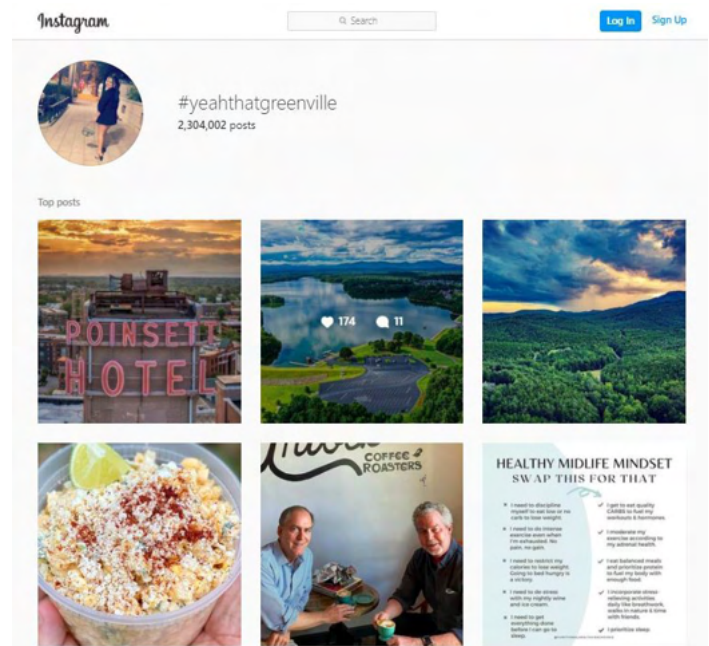
Build on and complement what has been done in the area – New and current businesses, culture and amenities of the area should be highlighted in marketing and social media efforts.

The Town has begun to develop a video to promote Wilmington – it is important to incorporate the branding and marketing into those efforts to raise the brand awareness

Concentrate on the excitement in the area – Focus should be on new and existing businesses, what's great and unique about Wilmington and its businesses, history and culture. Is there a platform for events that would showcase the businesses – e.g., Farmer's Market, music or cultural events?

Provide training and support for local businesses for marketing their businesses individually and in a shared format – social media, geo-targeted advertising, sales and events marketing programs will serve to enhance promotion of the district.

- Work with the Chamber of Commerce and local professionals to provide/host training workshops.
- Create templates for local businesses to use.
- Enable businesses to self-promote and better market their businesses which will serve to draw more traffic to the area.
- Identify opportunities for local businesses to engage in shared advertising and promotions.
- Reach out to the business community to gain support and buy-in for the project.
- Identify and communicate with businesses that would like to participate in a shared marketing initiative to highlight, frequency, and types of promotional activity (sales, product spotlights, collaborative events, etc.).
- Identify and reach out to other Town civic and nonprofit organizations that could participate in cross-advertising for local businesses and for the Town in general.



#yeahthatgreenville. Source: Instagram.



Where to S...



Fast Facts



Food & Bev



Top Pics



Quizzes



Takeovers



Polls

POSTS

REELS

IGTV

TAGGED



Source: VisitGreenvilleSC Instagram page

Best Practice

VisitGreenvilleSC



Revenue & Sales

Location

Greenville, SC

Best Practice

VisitGreenvilleSC was created as the sales and marketing organization for the Greenville, South Carolina region. It is a membership organization that is responsible for promoting Greenville as an attractive place for business and leisure travel and to showcase the area's businesses to potential visitors.

The VisitGreenvilleSC website is thorough and easy to navigate. It includes a compilation of all resources that a potential visitor to Greenville would need, including background information about the City, lodging resources, restaurants, events, services, maps, and travel information.

VisitGreenvilleSC worked with a marketing company to develop a brand logo and tagline, "yeah, that Greenville", highlighting the uniqueness of Greenville, SC, and distinguishing it from other communities of the same name. Consistent and appealing social media marketing has helped to draw attention to Greenville and residents, visitors and businesses have spread the word about the City and its businesses using the hashtag, #yeahthatgreenvillesc.

Concurrently, with the brand rollout, VisitGreenvilleSC has maintained a broad range of marketing initiatives, including promotional videos, a print and digital visitor's guide, logo merchandise, and merchandise developed by local artists to celebrate Greenville and promote the City's brand.

Key Takeaways

- Develop public, private and nonprofit partnerships to support the marketing initiative.
- Engage the business community by clearly identifying the benefits to businesses of participating in the marketing effort. (I.e., how will promoting the Town help an individual business?)
- Provide information in multiple formats and make this easily accessible.
- Use multiple advertising platforms, including print, television, and social media.



Source: VisitGreenvilleSC.com

3. Revise Sign Bylaws and Create Sign Design Guidelines

Category		Administrative Capacity
Location	Town wide	
Origin	Economic Development Committee, business survey, discussion with Town project team	
Budget		Low Budget (Under \$50,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk – this project wil require political support and support and input from the private sector
Key Performance Indicators	Streamlined sign application review process; improved aesthetic of the commercial corridor as a result of new signage	
Partners & Resources	<p>Planning & Conservation Department – oversee the sign bylaw review process and development of design guidelines</p> <p>Economic Development Committee - provide guidance on bylaw review process and development of design guidelines</p> <p>Planning Board – provide guidance on bylaw review process and development of design guidelines</p> <p>Wilmington Voters – review and adopt proposed sign bylaw revisions at the Town Meeting</p> <p>Business community - provide feedback on existing sign bylaws and recommendations for revisions</p> <p>Sign industry leaders – provide feedback on existing sign bylaws and recommendations for revisions</p>	

Diagnostic

The current sign bylaws are vague and difficult to understand, and the sign approval process can be lengthy. For signage that does not comply with the bylaws (e.g., that is larger than allowed or for more signs than permitted by the bylaws), Planning Board approval is required. Stakeholders and survey respondents also indicated that physical improvements to enhance the appearance of storefronts and public spaces are needed. There are several storefronts in the Town that are in need of façade improvements and much of the Town's public spaces need maintenance and streetscape enhancements (street trees, benches, lighting) to be more pedestrian-friendly. The current physical environment may detract potential businesses from locating in the commercial district.

The physical layout of the Town's commercial district as an auto-oriented corridor rather than a compact downtown increases the importance of clear, attractive, well-maintained facades and signs that are visible to passing vehicles as well as customers arriving by bicycle or on foot. Revising the sign bylaws and requirements for review will make the process easier and less costly for business owners opening a new business in Town or those who would like to improve their storefront appearance with new signage. Over time, the implementation of simplified sign requirements and clear guidelines for sign design will significantly enhance the overall appearance of the Town's commercial corridor.

The current sign bylaws and sign approval process was noted as a challenge to businesses by both the Economic Development Committee as well as several business survey respondents. Developing bylaws that are easier to understand and guidelines with recommendations for sign design that complies with the bylaws will facilitate the review and approval process for businesses owners. Addressing sign design will also serve to enhance the physical appearance of the community by setting standards for materials and placement and providing recommendations for colors and style.

Action Items

- Rewrite the sign bylaws to be clear and concise, and to reduce the number of special permit requests by writing bylaws that allow for flexibility in sign design, while also encouraging more aesthetically appropriate signage.
- To support the sign bylaws and provide guidance to business owners, sign guidelines should be developed. Guidelines should be predominantly visual with examples of appropriate signage.



Above: Existing building signage in Wilmington. Photo credit: BerryDunn

Process

- **Establish a Task Force** or Committee responsible for reviewing the current bylaws and providing recommendations for revisions.
- **Identify Town goals** specific to the appearance and character of the commercial corridor. Refer to the Town's master plan, design guidelines or other planning documents for guidance.
- **Solicit feedback from stakeholders** on the effectiveness of the sign bylaws and proposed regulations. Public participation should be included throughout the process and should involve multiple opportunities for involvement in a variety of platforms. Specifically, reach out to sign companies for their feedback on the current bylaw and review process.
- **Review the existing bylaws** against the Town's goals and identify how the bylaws serve to implement Town plans and policies, as well as State and federal laws. Consider recent legislation on signage regulations, especially as it relates to free speech.
- **Evaluate the structure, organization, clarity and consistency of the existing bylaws.** Consider the challenges in interpreting and enforcing. Consider terms that should be defined in the revised bylaws.
- **Research other sign bylaws** and ordinances, best practices and sign design guidelines. Consider new technology and materials when drafting regulations.
- **Consider establishing a Design Review Committee** to review sign applications in order to streamline the review process.
- **Draft a revised ordinance** that reflects the Town's current goals and vision for the future character of the Town.
- **Present the draft** to the appropriate boards and the public for input and review prior to adoption.
- **Develop a sign guidelines document**, based on the revised bylaws, with graphics, examples, and design recommendations to support the bylaws and provide a visual reference to specific attributes of the regulations. This document could also include a guide to the sign application and approval process.
- After the adoption and prior to going into effect, **publicize the changes** to residents, businesses and the development community.



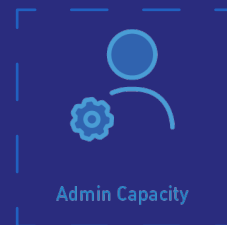
Above: Existing signage in Wilmington. Photo credit: BerryDunn



Medway Public Library. Source: Minuteman Library Network, www.minlib.net

Best Practice

Sign Bylaw Review



Admin Capacity

Best Practice

In September 2015, the Town of Medway, MA initiated a review of the Town's sign bylaw. A Task Force was established to review the current bylaws and provide recommendations for a new sign bylaw. The Task Force consisted of a business owner, Town resident, and members of the Planning and Economic Development Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Design Review Committee, Economic Development Committee, and Medway Business Council.

The Task Force began by reviewing the current bylaws and identifying areas that were confusing or inconsistent with the Town's Master Plan and other planning goals and initiatives. Sign bylaws of other municipalities were reviewed, public forums held, and interviews were conducted with Town officials, business owners and sign companies.

The Town has a Design Review Committee which is tasked with reviewing sign applications and site plan applications in accordance with the Town's Design Review Guidelines. After reviewing a sign application, the Design Review Committee provides a letter to the applicant with written recommendations. This letter is then submitted with the permit application that is submitted to the Building Department.

The Town maintains Town-wide Design Review Guidelines which also includes guidelines for signs. The guidelines provide photo examples of signage design as well as clearly described recommendations for legibility, scale, color, materials, lighting and compatibility with the building. The guidelines are meant to facilitate the design process for applicants, while encouraging signage that is compatible with the goals of the Town and that clearly and attractively presents each business.



Source: Metro Sign and Awning



Source: Lexington Signs & Graphics



Source: Lexington Signs & Graphics

4. Establish a Facade Improvement Grant Program

Category		Private Realm
Location	Study Area	
Origin	Economic Development Committee, public comment from residents, site visit, discussion with project team	
Budget		<p>Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000) -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$150,000 - \$200,000 minimum is recommended depending on the funding structure of the program and funds available. <p>Funding Opportunities (See Funding Table in the Appendix D for details):</p> <p>Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Private/Nonprofit/Foundation funding</p>
Timeframe		<p>Short Term (<5 year) - less than one year to implement a first round of funding. The program could continue with additional rounds of grant awards depending on funding availability and interest in the program.</p>
Risk		<p>Low Risk – Political will, interest from the business community, funding from the Town</p>
Key Performance Indicators	<p>Implementation of beautification and façade improvement projects within the study area and improved aesthetic of the commercial corridor.</p>	
Partners & Resources	<p>Planning & Conservation Department – manage the implementation and monitoring of the program</p> <p>Economic Development Committee – assist in the development of program requirements and participation on the review committee</p> <p>Wilmington-Tewksbury Chamber of Commerce – promote the program to member businesses and assist with outreach to the business community and property owners</p> <p>Planning Board – assist in the development of program requirements and participation on the review committee</p> <p>Building Inspector – provide guidance to applicants on the building permit and inspection process</p>	
		
<p><i>Vacant storefront. Photo credit: BerryDunn</i></p>		

Diagnostic

A goal of the Town of Wilmington is to enhance the physical appearance of the main commercial corridors to be a safe and attractive place to do business. The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have left many businesses with fewer resources to invest in renovations, new signage, landscaping, and other physical improvements to their properties and businesses. Many buildings and individual storefronts are in need of updating.

With several commercial vacancies in Town, the condition of the Town's commercial buildings is likely discouraging potential businesses from locating in Wilmington. Similarly, the appearance of the commercial corridor is a deterrent for potential customers as well.

As the pandemic has shifted shopping habits and resulted in a significant decline in in-person customers for most businesses, the Town is hoping to attract more destination businesses, including sit-down restaurants, specialty retail and food stores, and entertainment venues, to meet the needs and desires of Wilmington residents and to maintain the viability of the commercial district. Improving the physical landscape of the Routes 38 and 129 corridor is essential to attracting new businesses and customers.

A facade grant program would support local businesses in making improvements to building exteriors. Visible façade improvements along the main commercial corridor will enhance the overall appearance of the Town and encourage other tenants and property owners to make improvements. Ultimately, an overall improvement in the physical appearance of the commercial corridor will make the Town a more desirable place for new businesses and customers.

Action Items

- Develop a façade grant program that is easy for the Town to implement and accessible for businesses and property owners to apply for.



Vacant Property. Photo credit: BerryDunn



Ironclad Center. Photo credit: BerryDunn

Process

- Conduct outreach to the business community to identify interest in a façade and beautification program and to understand the types of projects that will likely be proposed.
- Establish a committee that will oversee the program and be responsible for reviewing applications and selecting awardees.
- Determine the types of projects that the Town would like to see as a part of the grant program—large projects (full façade renovations) small projects (painting, new signage, window/door replacement, etc.) or a combination.

Establish the terms of the grant:

- **Funding:** Depending on the source of funding, the program can be structured as a grant or a loan. A grant program would incentivize more participation and would be more accessible to smaller businesses. A loan program with a revolving fund would enable future funding cycles upon payback of initial loans.
- **Disbursement:** Grant funding can be disbursed at the time of selection or as a reimbursement grant to be paid after completion of the work, in accordance with approved plans. A reimbursement grant will help ensure that projects are implemented as proposed and in a timely manner; however, providing upfront funding for a project may be a challenge for smaller businesses.
- **Grant categories:** If the program is intended to target both small and large projects, then two separate categories may be appropriate, one for full façade renovations and another for small improvement projects. Different funding structures may be considered for different grant categories, depending on interest and funding availability (e.g., a loan program for full façade renovations and a grant program for small projects up to a certain dollar amount).
- **Matching requirement:** At least a small percentage of applicant matching is recommended in order for applicants to have some ownership over the project (10 to 25 percent). For small businesses, a larger matching percentage may not be financially feasible. If the program is funding full façade renovations, a larger matching amount (up to 50 percent) may be appropriate, in order to allocate funds for more projects.
- **Eligible projects:** Consider including site improvements, such as landscaping or repaving a walkway, as eligible projects. Projects should be limited to exterior improvements facing a public street or way. Typically ineligible improvements include HVAC, interior renovations, non-permanent fixtures, security systems, and equipment.
- **Program area:** The program can be open to all commercial properties in the Town or limited to the downtown study area. If the program is limited to a specific area, provide a clear map of the program area.



Wilmington Crossing. Photo Credit: BerryDunn

- **Design guidelines:** The Town should provide general design guidance for applicants, including preferred styles, materials, and examples of desired improvements.
- **Maintenance:** Grant awardees should be required to maintain façade and beautification improvements for a minimum amount of time (typically 3 to 5 years). Monitoring and follow-up to ensure maintenance of projects should be included in program development and resource allocation.
- **Review criteria:** The selection committee should consider the overall aesthetic benefit/impact of the proposed project to the streetscape as a whole, the historical or architectural significance of the property, the condition of the existing structure, the consistency with the design guidelines, and the level of investment by the applicant.
- **Priority projects:** The Town could consider prioritizing certain types of projects, including specific locations, historic buildings, business preferences (micro enterprises, minority and women-owned businesses, income status), or type of improvement.
- **Disqualifying factors:** Applicants who owe taxes or have outstanding violations should be disqualified. The Town may also consider disqualifying applicants who have previously received funding through the program.
- **Architectural services:** The Town may want to allow a certain dollar amount of the grant award be used for design services. This can help to ensure the quality of proposed projects as well as compliance with design and building code requirements. For full façade renovations, plans prepared by a licensed design professional could be a requirement.
- **Application:** Applicants should submit plans, material lists, cost estimates (bids may be required for larger projects), photos of existing conditions, and owner consent (if the tenant is applying).

Developing Design Guidelines

Design guidelines should be provided as part of the program in order to assist applicants in developing projects that will address the goals of the program. Guidelines will also provide a standard by which a review committee can base award decisions. The following design elements and features should be considered and visual examples provided for clarity:

- Storefronts with greater opacity (clean and transparent windows and doors) create a more inviting storefront.
- Signs should be compatible with the building exterior, placed in a sign band, and externally lit with architectural lighting fixtures.
- Landscaping and site improvements should enhance the pedestrian experience, including pedestrian scale lighting, accessible walkways, and landscaping.
- Proposed improvements should reflect the building's architecture and surrounding building context.
- Quality materials should be used, to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the building and help to ensure the longevity of the improvements.

Challenges and Other Considerations

- Early engagement with property and business owners and soliciting input into the program requirements, may diminish any reluctance or concerns from the business community.
- Smaller businesses may have limited capacity to manage paperwork. A streamlined, easy application process and assistance from the Town in navigating the program will increase participation.
- The funding source may come with implementation hurdles that are less flexible and have additional programming and reporting requirements that may make the program more challenging to administer.
- Applicants may have a hard time finding a contractor to do the work. Consider providing a list of pre-qualified contractors to ensure quality and timeliness of approved work.
- With investment in façade improvements, there may be a concern about increases in property values, taxes and rents. This concern should be addressed when developing program requirements (e.g., referring to examples of programs where improvements have resulted in an increase in sales, which would cover the minimal increase in taxes).
- Particularly related to the impacts of COVID-19, improvements to address health and safety related to the outbreak may be considered as eligible for funding (e.g., replacement of doors and windows, outdoor seating structures, walk-up window installations, etc.)
- Involve stakeholders early in the process and solicit feedback during and after the first round of funding to make adjustments based on small business needs.



Main Street at Grove Avenue. Photo Credit: BerryDunn



Photo credit: Greater Ravenswood Chamber of Commerce, www.ravenswoodchicago.org



Quinsigamond Village, Worcester, MA. Photo credit: Google Maps

Best Practice

Quinsigamond Village Storefront and Façade Improvement Grant Program



Best Practice

The City of Worcester established the Storefront and Façade Improvement Grant Program for the Quinsigamond Village commercial district. The goals of the program included providing a unified approach to improving the visual quality of the district, enhancing and restoring buildings to encourage economic growth, achieving a high standard of design and workmanship, and providing an incentive for small businesses to invest in their property.

The program included two tiers of funding. The Full Façade Improvement Grant covers 75 percent of the project cost up to \$30,000, for full façade renovations. The Storefront Improvement Grant covers 75 percent of the project cost up to \$15,000, for smaller scopes of work to repair and enhance storefronts, including painting, awnings and signage, window and door replacement, and exterior lighting.

Both programs are reimbursement programs in which grant funding is paid to applicants upon completion of the project and verification that the work is in compliance with the approved design. The applicant is required to maintain the improvements for a period of three years following the completion of the façade or storefront improvements.

To help ensure compliance with the City of Worcester's Design Guidelines and to provide guidance to applicants in the design process, the City contracted with an architect to provide a free preliminary scope of work, cost estimate, and rendering for interested applicants. These items were required to be submitted with all applications and following a grant award, applicants were required to contract with an architect or licensed contractor to complete final plans and specifications. This cost could be included in the grant amount, up to \$2,500. While these requirements resulted in added cost to the City and applicant, it has helped to ensure that the projects implemented are of a high quality and in compliance with the Design Guidelines.



Before and after façade improvements: Village Pizza in Quinsigamond Village, Worcester, MA. Photo credit: Google Map

5. Develop a Placemaking and Programming Plan for the MBTA Station Plaza and Downtown

Category		Public Realm
Location	Wilmington MBTA station and public right-of-way	
Origin	Discussion with project team, input from community members	
Budget	Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)	
		<p>Funding Opportunities (see Funding Table in the Appendix D for details):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Community Change Grants MA Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program Commonwealth Places Shared Streets and Spaces Hometown Grant Program Grassroot Fund Seed Grants
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years) - less than one year to develop a plan and begin implementation, but implementation efforts can be ongoing.
Risk		Medium Risk – community engagement, financing limitations, coordination with MBTA and MassDOT
Key Performance Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the visual appearance and sense of place in and around the Wilmington commuter rail station. Establish a sense of place and clearly identify Wilmington as a destination and place to shop, gather and live, to rail passengers and those traveling along the Route 38 corridor. Promote the Town brand identity through a consistent branding approach in design and programming. 	
Partners & Resources	<p>Planning & Conservation Department - manage the project</p> <p>Economic Development Committee – assist in managing the project, selecting a consultant, and engaging the community</p> <p>Public Works Department – provide support and oversight for installation projects in the Town right-of-way</p> <p>MBTA- provide support and oversight for installation projects on MBTA property</p> <p>MassDOT – provide support and oversight for installation projects on state managed roads and right-of-ways</p> <p>Arts Council – provide support for the project and assist with outreach to the arts community for participation</p> <p>Business community – promote the project and participate in pop-up events</p> <p>Local artists – respond to calls for art for public art installations; lead community art installation projects</p>	

Diagnostic

The Town of Wilmington has a strong sense of community with active community groups, committees and organizations, recreational events and youth programs; however, the Town lacks a physical center or downtown for the community to gather. The Wilmington commuter rail station is an ideal location to add physical beautification, placemaking, and branding to establish the Town's identity as a place to visit, live, shop, and connect with community.

Residents have commented that the Town lacks a sense of place and indicated a desire for a walkable downtown and community gathering space. While a transformation of the commercial corridor into a pedestrian-friendly district will take many years and significant regulatory changes, there are easily achievable features that can be implemented strategically to make the district more inviting and to begin to create a sense of place.

Creative placemaking incorporates art and design into initiatives to transform public spaces through a collaborative process and community partnerships. Small placemaking projects can have a significant impact on bring activity to an area, highlighting existing resources, helping residents envision possibilities for their community.

The goal of this project is to create safe, accessible and memorable public spaces to provide a foundation for longer-term physical, social and economic changes. This plan provides a framework to engage the Town's historic, cultural and arts resources.



Entrance to Wilmington MBTA station. Photo credit: BerryDunn

Action Items

- Create a plan for implementing a series of beautification and placemaking features including some permanent and some temporary installations with coordinated programming, focused around the Wilmington MBTA station and town center.
- Implementation of features should be coordinated with the Town's seasonal events and new programming and events should be developed to bring activity to the town center and create opportunities for residents and visitors to connect with the community.

Wilmington MBTA station. Source: Google Maps



Process

- **Select a consultant** to develop a placemaking, beautification and programming plan using the Town branding materials (see Project 1) for any proposed signage or promotion of programming.
- **Engage the community** in the design and installation process. Consider public participatory art projects.
- **Develop an arts, culture and placemaking plan** centered on the MBTA station and downtown.
- **Coordinate with local stakeholders** including the MBTA, MassDOT, Public Works, local businesses, artists and community organizations to develop an implementation and maintenance plan. Prioritize local contractors.
- **Promote the plan** through the Town website, Town events and the business community's marketing initiatives (see Project 2).
- **Install placemaking features** and develop ongoing programming.
- **Coordinate programming** to highlight installation and generate ongoing support for the placemaking initiative.

Placemaking and beautification ideas

- Consider installing banners to promote the Town brand and identity.
- Consider initiating a Call for Artists to create a public art installation on the median along Main Street.
- Consider painting the crosswalks in and around the MBTA station and the intersection of Main Street and Route 62 to identify the area as the Town's center and to help calm traffic.
- Consider using sidewalk art or murals on nearby structures to add color and interest to the area.
- Consider installing landscaping and temporary furniture and lighting to the small green space at the north end of the MBTA parking area to activate the space and create a space for programming of events related to the placemaking initiative.
- Consider organizing a Town-wide participation in Park(ing) Day. Work with property owners to take over one or a few parking spaces to transform into a parklet and gathering space for the nationally celebrated Park(ing) Day. This event can be used as a platform for long-term considerations of how to revitalize the Town through reuse of underused parking areas.
- Consider hiring a consultant or economic development staff person to manage the project and work to build support for ongoing programming and future growth of the initiative.



North end of Wilmington MBTA station parking lot. Photo credit: BerryDunn



Route 38 facing south, adjacent to the Wilmington MBTA station parking lot. Photo credit: BerryDunn



The Corner Spot, Ashland, MA. Photo credit: www.thecorner-spotashland.com

Best Practice

The Corner Spot



Best Practice

The Town of Ashland found an opportunity for placemaking at a small vacant lot between the center of Town and the MBTA station. The Town had experienced a number of storefront vacancies in the downtown area and there was a need to bring activity back to downtown. The project involved the reuse of a vacant space to create a public gathering space with seating, games, and activities and a small structure to accommodate pop-up stores and events. The goal of the project was to create a "town square" like atmosphere for the community and also to create a place for small businesses to gain exposure and grow their customer base.

The Corner Spot is intended to stimulate economic activity in Ashland by creating a space for the community to come together, draw more people to downtown, and support new and existing small businesses.

The project involved the reuse of a vacant space to create a public gathering space with seating, games, and activities and a pop-up store to accommodate small businesses on a rotating basis. The store front structure is a 300 square foot building that offers businesses the opportunity to operate and test the market with the hopes of finding permanent space in Ashland. The goal of the pop-up store is to assist entrepreneurs who may be experiencing barriers to entry into the market through a traditional downtown commercial space. This temporary space at the Corner Spot gives businesses the opportunity to test their business plan, gauge interest, and engage with customers.

The project has had continued success through engaging the community and businesses and consistently having a variety of programming in the space, including pop-up stores, children's story time, festivals, dance performances, open mic nights, and much more. Events and programming at the Corner Spot are highlighted on social media.

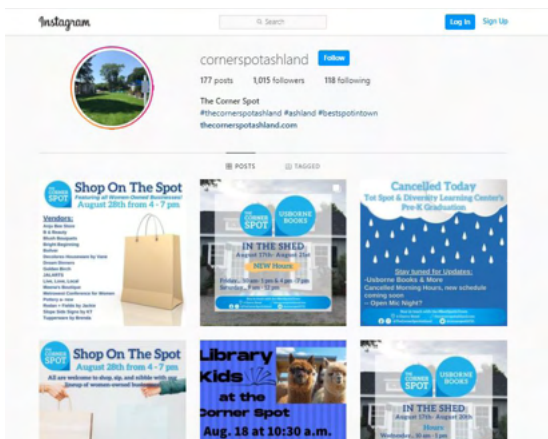
Ashland's Economic Development Director has managed the project, but has the support of a committee, local sponsors, and in-kind support from local designers and community groups.



The Corner Spot, Ashland, MA. Photo credit: www.thecornerspotashland.com

Things to Consider

- Find a space that is centrally located and within walking distance of other commercial opportunities.
- Identify a strong base of supporters to help plan, implement and maintain any placemaking project.
- Develop a vision for the site based on the goals of the project. Consider ADA accessibility needs, required permits and licenses, and insurance on the site.
- Hire local contractors, designers, artists and others to implement the plan.
- Continue to solicit feedback from visitors and stakeholders about how the space can better fit their needs. Use a combination of electronic and inperson survey tools to engage constructive feedback.
- Continue to build upon the project by adding new components and new types of events based on requests of area businesses and residents.



Source: [cornerspotashland Instagram page](https://www.instagram.com/cornerspotashland)



The Corner Spot, Ashland, MA. Photo credit: www.thecornerspotashland.com

Other Initiatives to Consider

ZONING

The Town has been actively reviewing the Zoning Bylaws and making incremental revisions to address specific issues, such as the recent revision to allow brew-pubs in the Town. Continuing to review the Zoning Bylaws to identify and update areas of the code that are inconsistent with the Town's economic development and recovery goals is critical. As part of this review, the Town should consider ways to streamline the development review process and to eliminate site plan review for some uses. The cost of a lengthy development review process or site plan review for a small business looking to occupy existing commercial space, can be a deterrent to building or locating in Wilmington.

For the longer-term, the Town should consider the zoning restrictions that have resulted in the current built environment and how these could be changed to allow for more sustainable development patterns. Specifically, parking requirements should be reviewed and opportunities for shared parking or reductions for mixed use development or development adjacent to transit could be considered.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STAFF

Municipalities, especially LRRP participants, currently have an opportunity to take advantage of state and federal funding for local economic development and recovery. Municipalities have a great amount of latitude to determine how much of this funding is used to best support local economies. Planning and organization is key to successful economic development initiatives, as has been reaffirmed by Subject Matter Experts providing guidance to communities throughout the LRRP process. Many communities, including Wilmington, do not currently have a full-time staff person dedicated to economic development. A full-time economic development coordinator, or similar position is necessary to manage projects, conduct outreach, apply for grants, and build community relationships. This position could be temporary, in order to support the development of the projects outlined in this plan, and could be funded with Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds through December 2024.

The impact of the outbreak on local economies and the resulting changes in how we do business has exposed the lack of support and organization from municipalities for business communities, usually due to limited resources. At this unique moment, Wilmington is working toward recovery and reinvestment in the commercial district to create a more sustainable local economy in the face of future unexpected events and changing market trends. Staff capacity for the organization of these important initiatives is critical to project implementation long-term success.

PLACEMAKING

While this plan provides suggestions for placemaking and beautification in and around the Wilmington MBTA station, it is recommended that the Town consider strategically implementing placemaking initiatives in other areas along the commercial corridor. Placemaking through a [tactical urbanism](#) approach, involves temporary measures that are inexpensive and quick to implement, but that have a substantial visual and experiential impact to build safer and more connected communities. The purpose of these initiatives is to engage the community and to provide demonstrations of more people-friendly uses of public spaces. Public feedback from Wilmington residents has called for more gathering spaces and a walkable downtown area. Wilmington's current commercial corridor is dominated by vehicles and seen as hostile to pedestrians. Providing pop-up demonstration projects could provide residents with an opportunity to envision a different future for the Town and to think differently about development in their Town.

Some potential project ideas:

- Create a park in an underused section of a parking lot. Paint the pavement in bright colors and include games, seating, food trucks, or host a movie night. Examples: [Park\(d\) Plaza, Long Beach, CA](#), [Croydon South Pop-Up Park, Maroondah, Australia](#).
- Engage local artists and/or students for a public art project to paint parking spaces. Example: [Paint the Parking Lot, Virginia Beach, VA](#).
- Paint intersections, crosswalks, and bump outs to calm traffic at key intersections. Example: [Paint the Town, Tampa, FL](#).

NEW BUSINESS GUIDE

Wilmington currently has a business guide available in PDF format on the Town's Economic Development Committee webpage. This includes information regarding necessary Town permits and approvals and the appropriate contacts. It is recommended that a New Business Guide be incorporated into the Town's website in order to be able to regularly update this information and add information as it becomes available. A New Business section of the website could include the Town's promotional videos, additional general resources for starting a business, grant and loan programs, information about vacant properties. An easy to use guide with a variety of helpful resources will be valuable to entrepreneurs and help to present Wilmington as a business-friendly community. Examples: [City of Stamford Business Portal](#), [Town of New Castle Doing Business page](#).



Franklin Street, Allston, MA. Photo credit: Neighborways Design

Appendix A: Business Survey Report

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.)

Wilmington

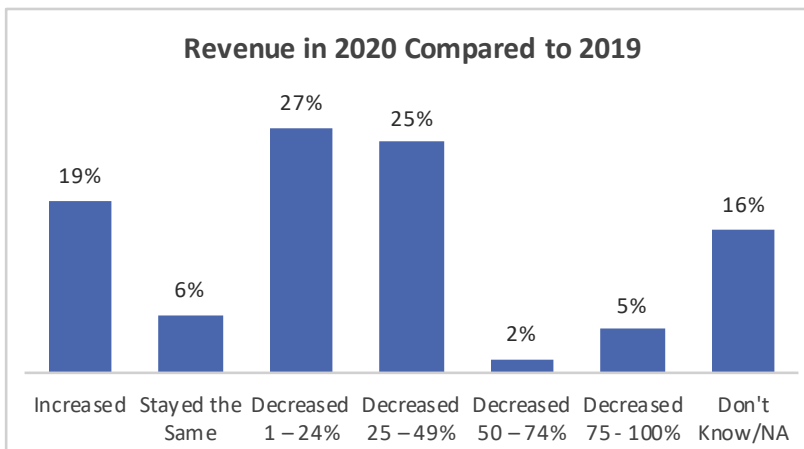
Rt. 38 Main Street and Rt. 129 Lowell Street Corridor

Responses: 64

Impacts of COVID-19

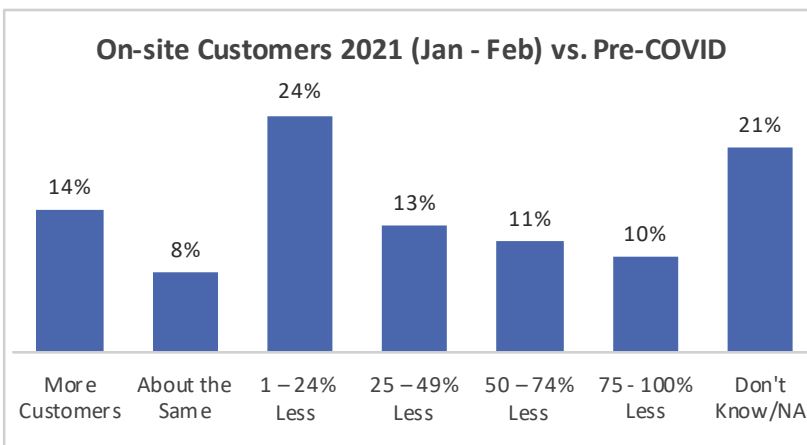
Decline in Business Revenue

59% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019. For 32% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more.



Less Foot Traffic in Commercial Area

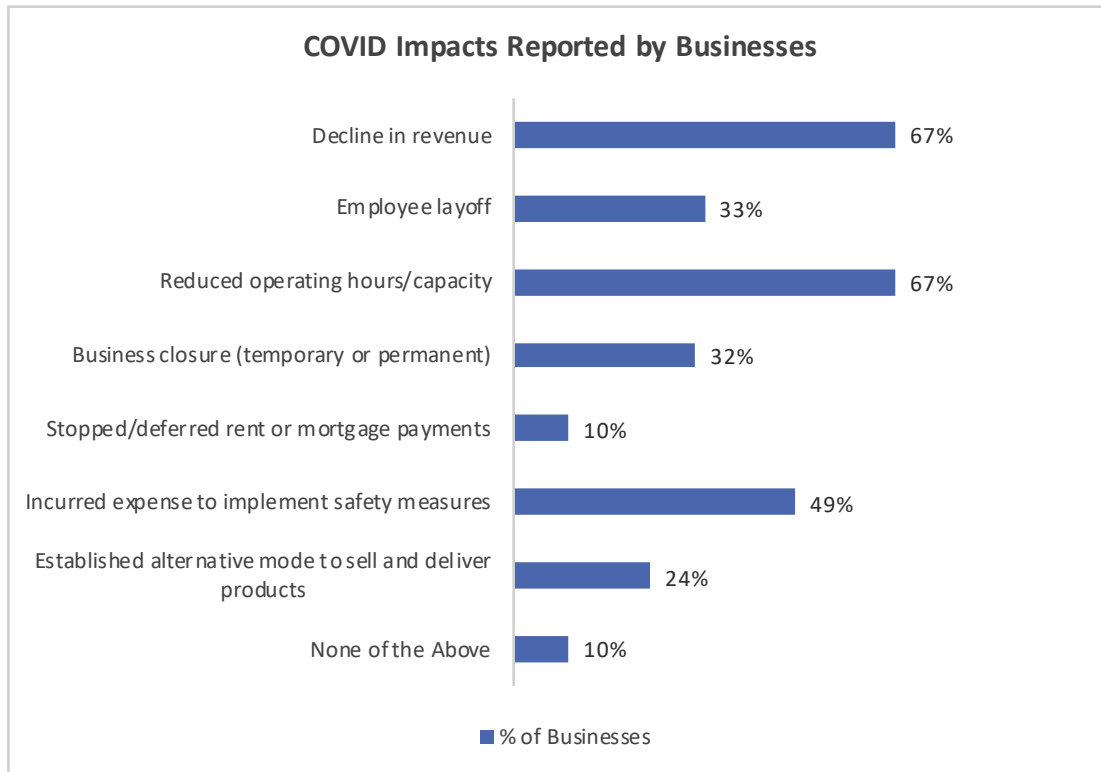
58% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID. 34% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more.



Impacts of COVID-19 (cont'd)

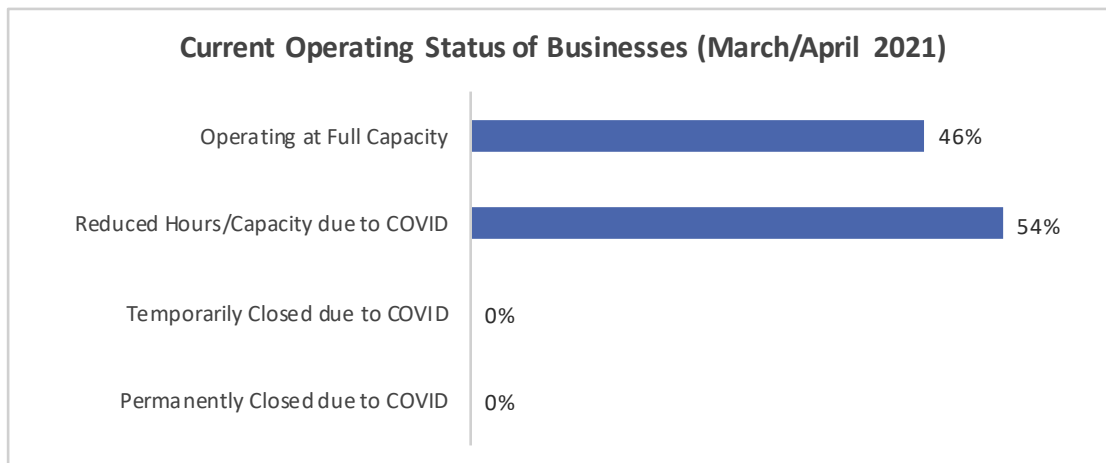
Reported Impacts

90% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID.



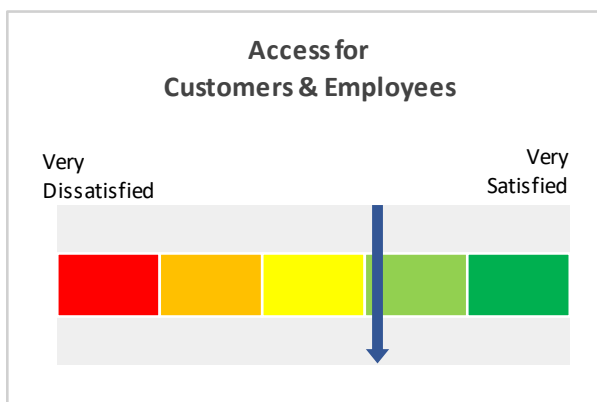
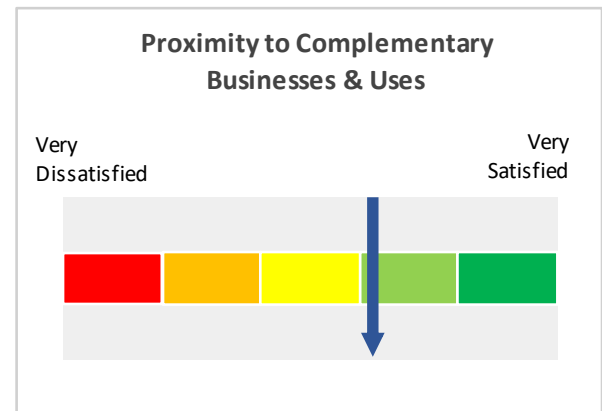
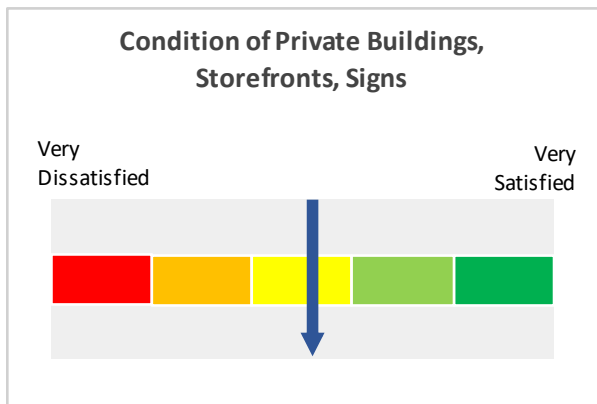
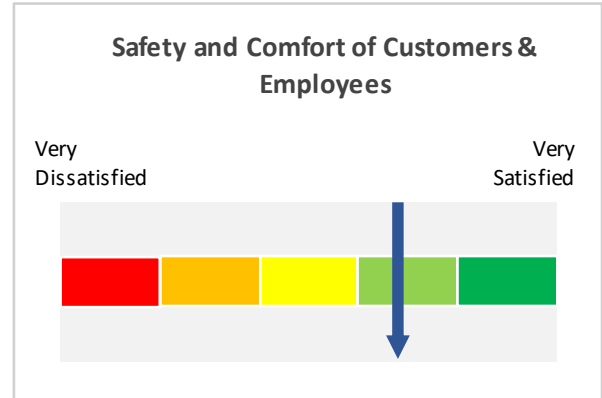
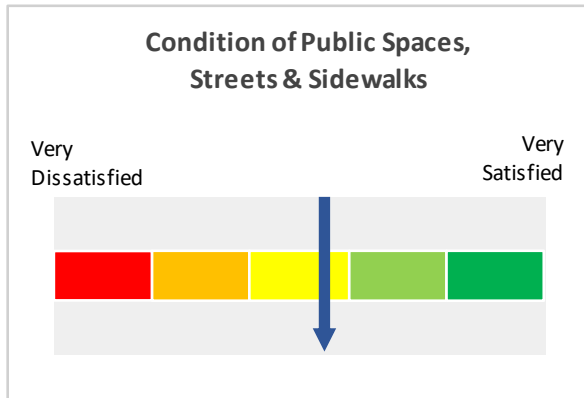
Operating Status

At the time of the survey, 54% of businesses reported they were operating at reduced hours/capacity or closed.



Business Satisfaction with Commercial District

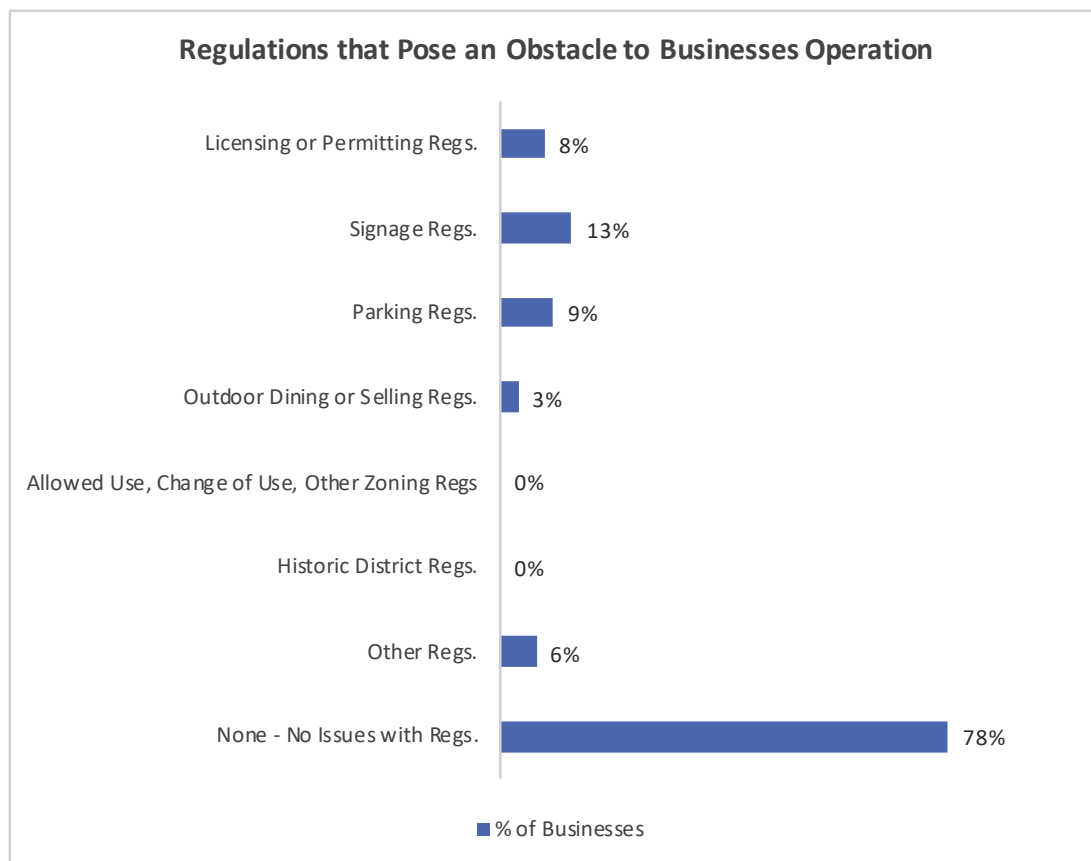
The charts below illustrate the average satisfaction rating among respondents regarding various elements.



Business Satisfaction with Commercial District (cont'd)

Regulatory Environment

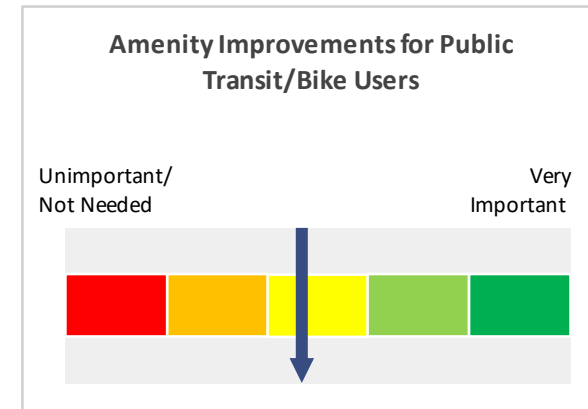
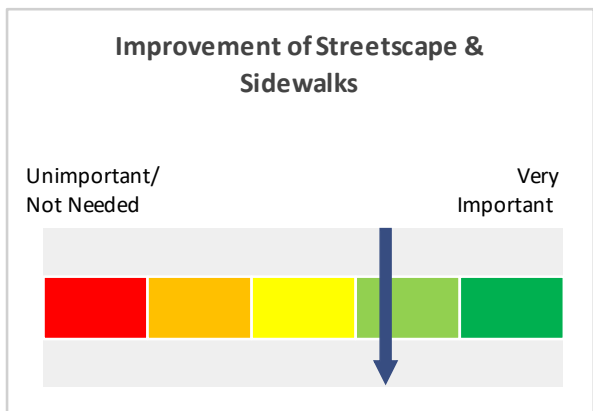
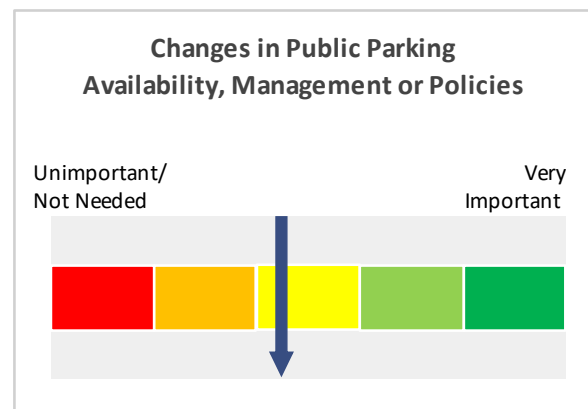
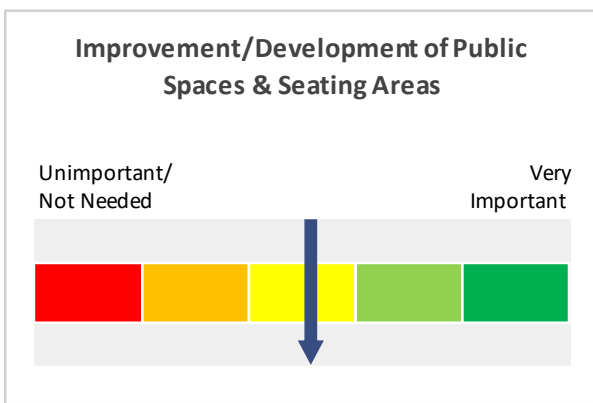
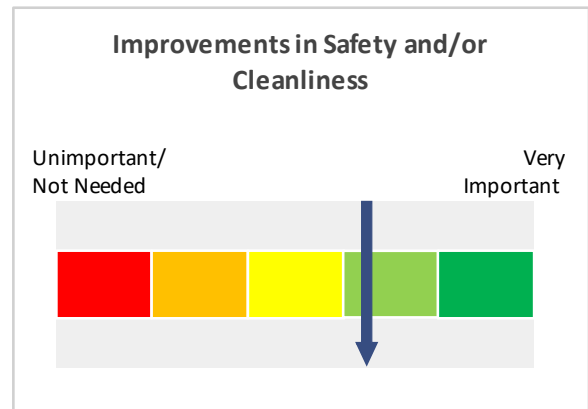
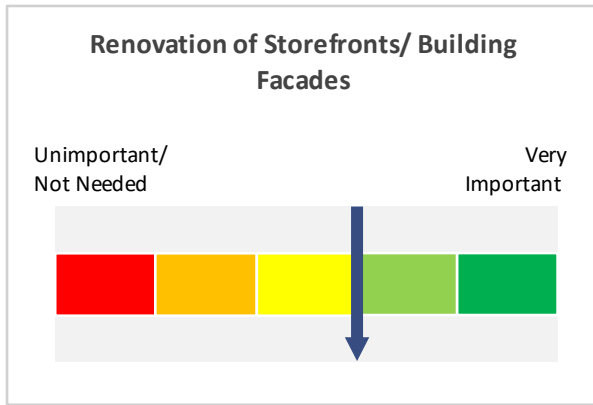
22% of businesses indicated that the regulatory environment poses an obstacle to business operation.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access

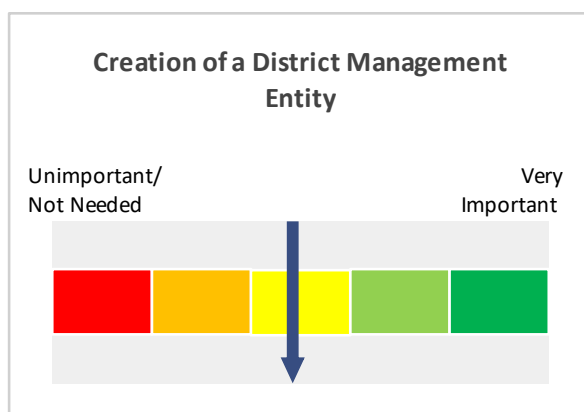
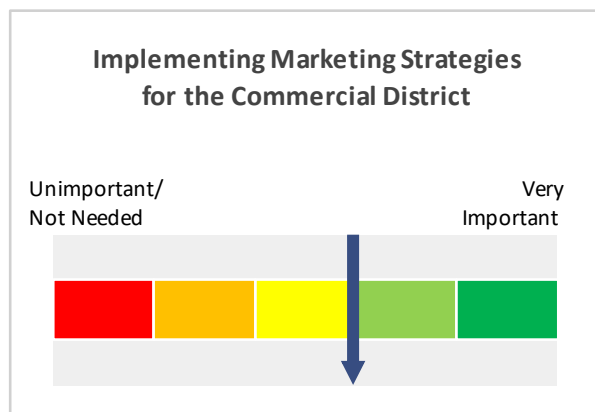
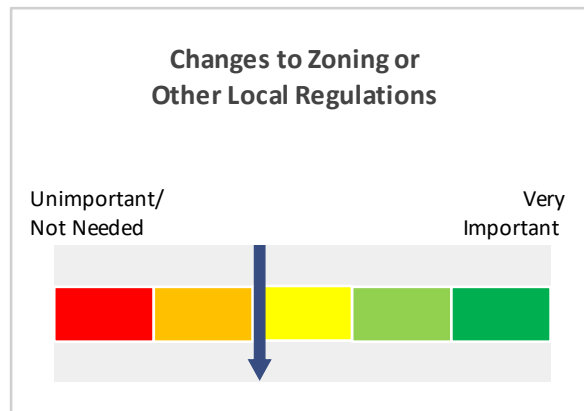
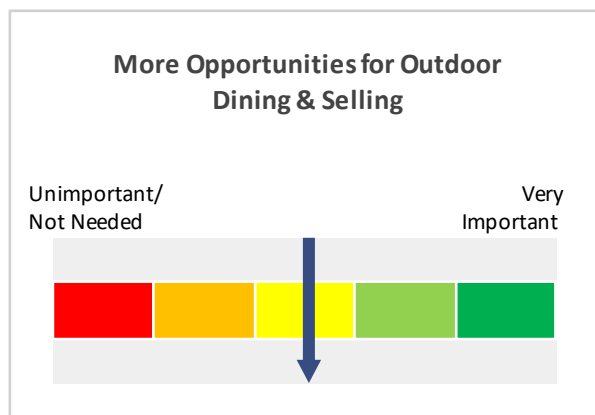
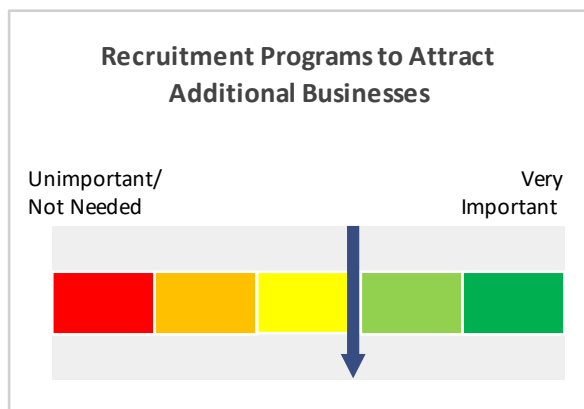
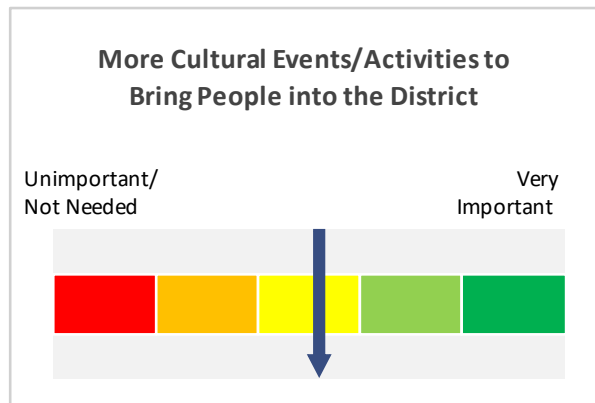
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

Attraction/Retention of Customers and Businesses

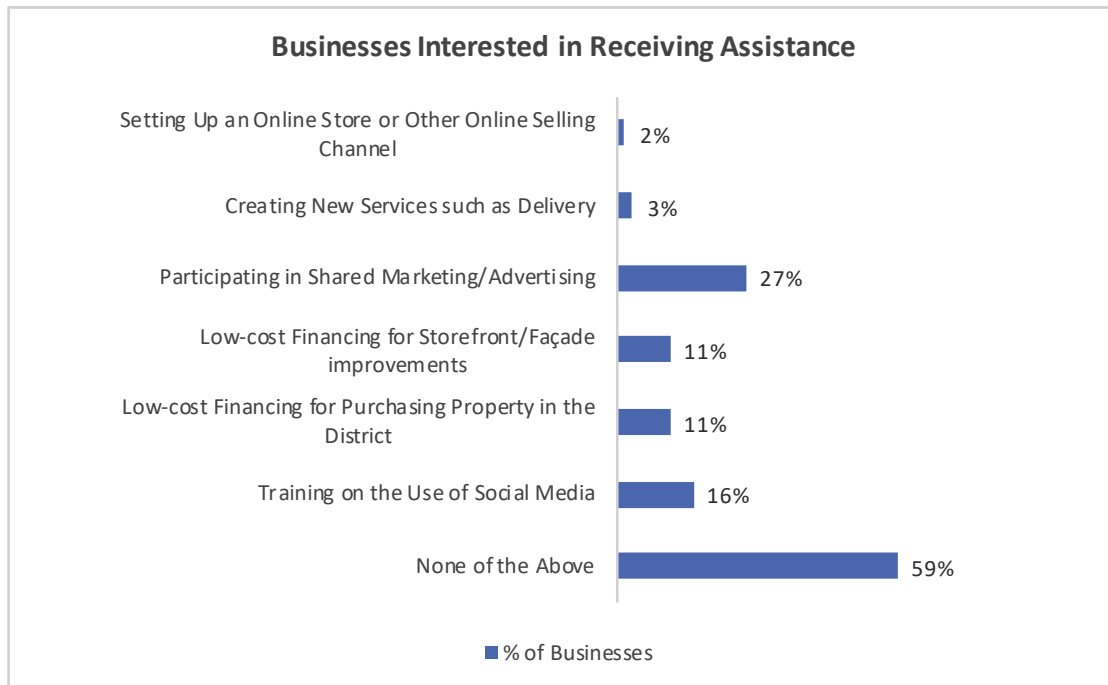
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

Businesses Support

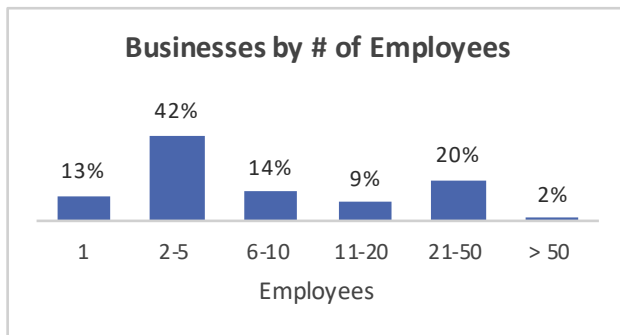
41% of businesses expressed interest in receiving some kind of assistance.



Business Characteristics

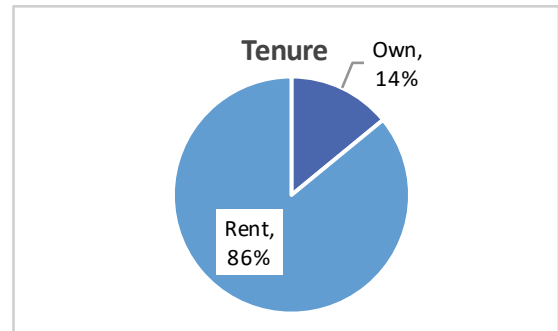
Business Size

55% of businesses are microenterprises (≤5 employees).



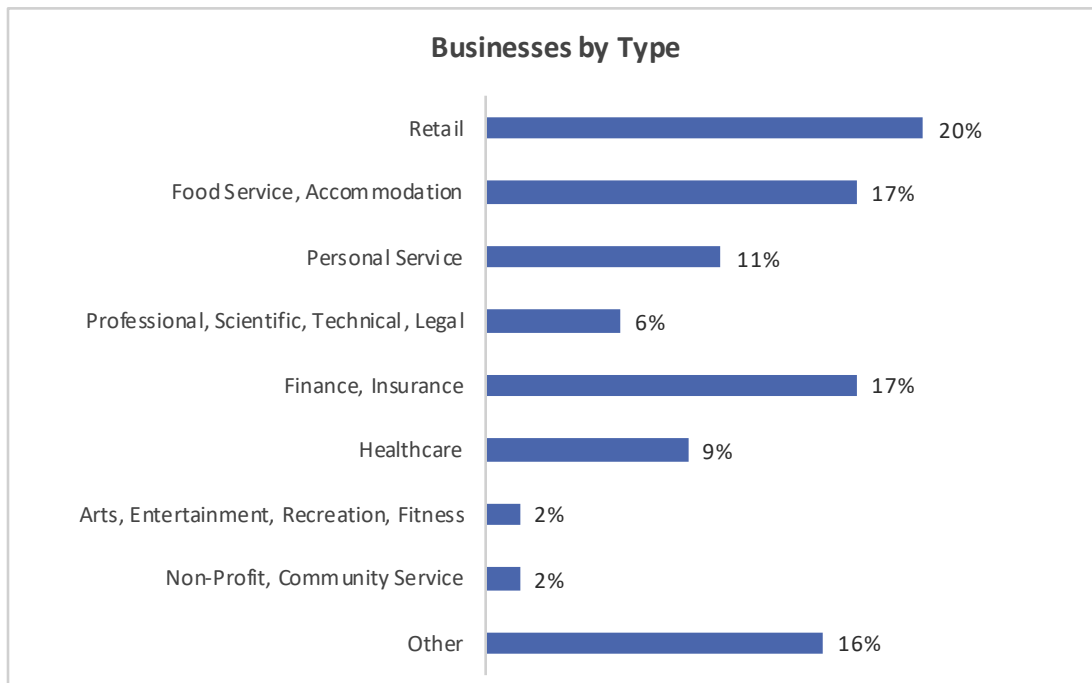
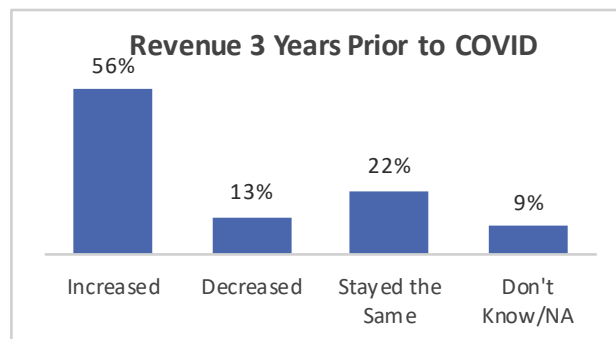
Business Tenure

86% of businesses rent their space.



Revenue Trend Prior to COVID

56% 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.

Wilmington	64
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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	8	13%
2 to 5	27	42%
6 to 10	9	14%
11 to 20	6	9%
21 to 50	13	20%
More than 50	1	2%
Total	64	100%

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

Own	9	14%
Rent	55	86%
Total	64	100%

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

Increased	36	56%
Decreased	8	13%
Stayed about the Same	14	22%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	6	9%
Total	64	100%

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

Retail (NAICS 44-45)	13	20%
Food Service (restaurants, bars), Accommodation (NAICS 72)	11	17%
Personal Service (hair, skin, nails, dry cleaning) (NAICS 81)	7	11%
Professional Scientific, Technical, Legal (NAICS 54)	4	6%
Finance, Insurance (NAICS 52)	11	17%
Healthcare (medical, dental, other health practitioners) (NAICS 62)	6	9%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Fitness (NAICS 71)	1	2%
Non-Profit, Community Services	1	2%
Other	10	16%
Total	64	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	5	8%
Dissatisfied	11	17%
Neutral	20	31%
Satisfied	22	34%
Very Satisfied	6	9%
Total	64	100%

Condition of Private Buildings, Facades, Storefronts, Signage

Very Dissatisfied	3	5%
Dissatisfied	17	27%
Neutral	21	33%
Satisfied	18	28%
Very Satisfied	5	8%
Total	64	100%

Access for Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	2	3%
Dissatisfied	10	16%
Neutral	15	23%
Satisfied	28	44%
Very Satisfied	9	14%
Total	64	100%

Safety and Comfort of Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	1	2%
Dissatisfied	4	6%
Neutral	17	27%
Satisfied	32	50%
Very Satisfied	10	16%
Total	64	100%

Proximity to Complementary Businesses or Uses

Very Dissatisfied	3	5%
Dissatisfied	5	8%
Neutral	20	32%
Satisfied	27	43%
Very Satisfied	8	13%
Total	63	100%

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

Licensing or permitting regulations	5	8%
Signage regulations	8	13%
Parking regulations	6	9%
Outdoor dining or selling regulations	2	3%
Allowed uses, change of use or other zoning regulations	0	0%
Historic District regulations	0	0%
Other regulations (not related to COVID)	4	6%
None - No Issues with regulations	50	78%

Impacts of COVID

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

Decline in revenue	42	67%
Employee layoff	21	33%
Reduced operating hours/capacity	42	67%
Business closure (temporary or permanent)	20	32%
Stopped/deferred rent or mortgage payments	6	10%
Incurred expense to implement safety measures	31	49%
Established alternative mode to sell and deliver products (on-line platforms, delivery, etc.)	15	24%
None of the Above	6	10%

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

Increased compared to 2019	12	19%
Stayed about the same as 2019	4	6%
Decreased 1 – 24% compared to 2019	17	27%
Decreased 25 – 49% compared to 2019	16	25%
Decreased 75 - 100% compared to 2019	1	2%
Decreased 50 – 74% compared to 2019	3	5%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	10	16%
Total	63	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	9	14%
About the same number as before COVID	5	8%
1 – 24% less customers than before COVID	15	24%
25 – 49% less customers than before COVID	8	13%
50 – 74% less customers than before COVID	7	11%
75 – 100% less customers than before COVID	6	10%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	13	21%
Total	63	100%

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

Operating at full capacity	29	46%
Operating at reduced hours/capacity due to COVID	34	54%
Temporarily closed due to COVID	0	0%
Permanently closed due to COVID	0	0%
Total	63	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	4	6%
Of Little Importance or Need	10	16%
Moderately Important	16	26%
Important	21	34%
Very Important	11	18%
Total	62	100%

Improvement/Development of Public Spaces & Seating Areas

Unimportant/Not Needed	9	15%
Of Little Importance or Need	12	20%
Moderately Important	15	25%
Important	16	26%
Very Important	9	15%
Total	61	100%

Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks

Unimportant/Not Needed	7	11%
Of Little Importance or Need	7	11%
Moderately Important	6	10%
Important	25	40%
Very Important	18	29%
Total	63	100%

Improvements in Safety and/or Cleanliness

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	5%
Of Little Importance or Need	8	13%
Moderately Important	14	23%
Important	23	37%
Very Important	14	23%
Total	62	100%

Changes in Public Parking Availability, Management or Policies

Unimportant/Not Needed	8	13%
Of Little Importance or Need	21	34%
Moderately Important	15	24%
Important	12	19%
Very Important	6	10%
Total	62	100%

Amenity Improvements for Public Transit Users and/or Bike Riders

Unimportant/Not Needed	8	13%
Of Little Importance or Need	20	32%
Moderately Important	14	23%
Important	12	19%
Very Important	8	13%
Total	62	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	7	11%
Of Little Importance or Need	14	22%
Moderately Important	19	30%
Important	13	21%
Very Important	10	16%
Total	63	100%

More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining and Selling

Unimportant/Not Needed	14	23%
Of Little Importance or Need	9	15%
Moderately Important	14	23%
Important	11	18%
Very Important	14	23%
Total	62	100%

Implementing Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District

Unimportant/Not Needed	9	14%
Of Little Importance or Need	7	11%
Moderately Important	15	24%
Important	15	24%
Very Important	17	27%
Total	63	100%

Recruitment Programs to Attract Additional Businesses

Unimportant/Not Needed	5	8%
Of Little Importance or Need	14	22%
Moderately Important	12	19%
Important	18	29%
Very Important	14	22%
Total	63	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	14	23%
Of Little Importance or Need	17	28%
Moderately Important	14	23%
Important	8	13%
Very Important	8	13%
Total	61	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	12	19%
Of Little Importance or Need	15	24%
Moderately Important	10	16%
Important	17	27%
Very Important	9	14%
Total	63	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	1	2%
Creating new services such as delivery	2	3%
Participating in shared marketing/advertising	17	27%
Low-cost financing for storefront/façade improvements	7	11%
Low-cost financing for purchasing property in the commercial district	7	11%
Training on the use of social media	10	16%
None of the above	37	59%

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

Beautification projects, streetscape, create more of a downtown atmosphere, fill vacate storefronts
Karen M Saporito CPA
—
—
Boston Partners LLC
Asphalt or cement sidewalks from Woburn St to Woodland Rd would help
—
—
—
—
—
—
—
—
TL Southmayd Insurance Agency
Pediatric Dental Care
Using marketing strategies to help fill the large vacant commercial spaces in the area. Food and entertainment should be a top priority so that consumers will spend more time in the district.
—
—
The Wonder Years Learning Cent
—
Remove Covid restrictions
—
Longwood Travel
—

—
—
—
Cookes skate supply
—
—
A better walkable downtown area in wilmington would be so great! It would also be great if towns would start enforcing mandatory upkeep of the outside appearance of the buildings.
—
—
EXIT Family First Realty
Road improvements and traffic
sidewalks on RT 129, also trash thru out 129.
InLine Mechanical
—
—
—
—
—
—
—
—
—
There is a serious lack of sidewalks along Rt 129 in the vicinity of Lucci's Market, particularly in front of 226 & 230 Lowell St in both directions.
None
—
All Floorz
—

Appendix B: Community Engagement Comments

Wilmington Ideas Wall Comments

Type	Comment	Up Votes	Down Votes
Public Realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tremendous overgrowth of weeds and trees all along the route •Sickening amounts of TRASH along the entire route •No sidewalk from the former Textron site to the intersection of Lowell and Woburn Streets •Sidewalks that ARE there are in poor condition – dangerous to walkers. •Yentile Park began as a very attractive park. Why is it not maintained?? Notice the pile of sand/dirt at the beginning of the driveway – left hand side. It's been there for the good part of a year.	0	0
Public Realm	The entire stretch starting from the intersection of 129 and 38 through the entire rt 38 area needs better traffic flow and ability to turn into/out of the various businesses along the way.	1	0
Tenants Mix	Hi I currently work in Lynnfield Building Dept and one of the things that has been done with the new Development of Market Street is that they try not to leave an "empty building" at times they put in a "temp occupant" and for some it has turned into to a continued full occupant, it gives them a chance to see if the teant will do well and also not have another empty spot. I also do not understand why for instance the empty Walgreens Store had to be so big, maybe scale some things down	0	0
Public Realm	Traffic for me to get to Market Basket plaza from Butters Row is difficult. I will often choose to wait and do my shopping when I go to work (in another town) because if I don't time it right, I spend more time sitting in traffic than actually shopping	1	0
Private Realm	Completely agree - many of the storefronts, especially near the train station, are in desperate need of a facelift (some probably need to be considered for a complete tear down and rebuilt)	4	0
Tenants Mix	As many people express whenever there is an open commercial space, I would love a Trader Joe's in town. I would also love a bagel shop and a place to get ice cream.	4	0
Private Realm	Storefronts are really outdated and lack of available parking really limits any new tenants wanting to come in	14	0
Private Realm	The intersection of 62 and 38 needs some clean up. It's time to ask people who own properties along 38 to make them look nicer. Better landscaping needed!	5	0
Public Realm	Before moving to Wilmington, I was told W had no "sense of place". I've found that to be true, but enjoyable to live in. I still equate Wilmington to Wilmington Ford; but there's not much to give as an identifier of Wilmington today. While it's great to live in a "nothing happens here" place, it's also great to be able to point to something that identifies the place where you live. I've been told there's incredible history here. That fabric has become invisible.	4	0
Public Realm	I'd like to see Wilmington take some pride in the Rte 38 area. Retailers could mow their lawns/sidewalk grass, plant some flowers, hang community flags, etc. I especially dislike driving through town during the summer as many things are overgrown and not taken care of.	12	0
Private Realm	Can someone take down the now defunct NE for Trump sign that is still out there. That whole building section needs a cleanup/facelift. Thank goodness for the Abominable Snowman and his ever changing outfits to put a smile on your face!	3	0

Public Realm	<p>Wilmington lacks a gathering spot for the community. There is not one central place to park once and meet/enjoy a meal and spend time outdoors. Incorporate more parks/green space. Place for families and residents to get an ice cream, dine outside (lunch/dinner). Look to neighboring towns for desirable locations (park once, enjoy a meal/coffee/playground/ice cream/meal/etc).</p> <p>Do away with neon/backlit signs.</p>	22	0
Public Realm	<p>Overall the sector needs to be more aesthetically pleasing to the eye. Many of the current storefronts are just not welcoming. There is no real town center to speak of, just the intersection of 62 and 38/129. Change that by putting in modern buildings that entice people to want to go to the destination. Add some unique dining options to fill the space rather than chain restaurants. A real steak house in town would be nice. An in an ice cream shop as a draw for families. Allow for a craft brewery</p>	12	0
Revenue & Sales	<p>Route 38 has ALWAYS been congested with backed up traffic so I'm not sure what can be done about that. As far as attracting people to Wilmington we are desperately in need of a "square" one that has a feeling of community where people enjoy shopping. There are practically no small business shops, the restaurants are few. I can only think of one that everyone likes and that's Tremezzos. I see many people have posted the same. We could also use a more choices on fast food.</p>	4	0
Public Realm	<p>Agreed. The town has very little leverage with existing commercial land owners. Properties can only charge rents that businesses will pay and the demand is not sufficient to charge rents that will pay for improvements. Possible tenants cannot make sufficient profit given the current population.</p>	2	0
Tenants Mix	<p>Areas like Lynnfield Marketplace or Downtown Andover there is green space/area for kids to run around in a very close/safely walkable location from restaurants/dining. It seems we have an abundance of the same types of places (pizza, dunkin donuts, casual chain restaurants) but not enough of the following (these things we'd leave wilmington to seek out): Nicer "diner" with beer/wine/brunch, brewery, space for food trucks, dining venue with live music, mom and pop type restaurants, ice cream.</p>	5	0
Tenants Mix	<p>a greener, cleaner space where it is comfortable to walk; better water drainage as currently "bad" splash zone for those who walk to commuter rail with cars driving past and splashing walkers during/after rain. nice to have shops at the commuter rail, but very difficult to drive, park and exit onto street due to traffic/intersection with Church St. A bike path; maybe even a bike shop</p>	2	0
Revenue & Sales	<p>The aging population of Wilmington does not bode well for the prospects of any business to do well in Wilmington regardless of its aesthetics. Without denser development (and the requisite transit improvements) this project is a waste of time.</p>	4	0
Culture & Arts	<p>I would love to bring in a cafe/listening room to attract artists and the public to a welcoming space that is set up for comfort and listening during evening performances. The arts are an important part of a well balanced offering and I really think we need a space for that to flourish.</p>	6	0
Public Realm	<p>I would second everything here. When we moved here I was struck by the lack of a commercial town center with that combination of retail/food, walkability, green space, etc. A safe area for kids to walk/bike to for pizza and ice cream, something like that.</p>	1	0

Public Realm	It would be great to have more running/walking trails, similar to the one around the pond at Rotary Park.	4	0
Public Realm	The Rt 38 corridor as well as 129 are on high traffic congested roadways. I do not see much that can be done on that front. With limited parking on these roads it has forced the building of strip mall type property. Privately owned property can charge what they want for rent, that is what I see as a major obstacle in our community as it relates to new stores and restaurants. We cannot spend millions on redesigning / creating a town center. Town needs to find a way to work with property owners.	3	0
Public Realm	I would love a downtown square or corridor where people can walk around local businesses and eat and shop local. We don't have a focal point downtown to foster community and without walkable spaces, we'll just have more car traffic. We need boutiques and restaurants people want to go out to. We have far too many big chain stores and grab and go pizza shops. I'd love to see a central hub with boutiques, cafes, and sit down restaurants.	11	0
Revenue & Sales	Honestly I know that it's a bit of a joke on the Community Board but why not push for Trader Joes or a Whole Foods to sit in the Walgreen's space? You would get people to come in and shop there. Let's get something a little more "name brand" that would attract people to shop in Wilmington and then they would be more likely to stop in and shop at other local businesses. Why do we "allow" the company that owns and is paying rent in the Walgreens space to leave it vacant?	6	0
Revenue & Sales	We have many desirable options (2 commuter rail stations, several highway exits (easy access), traffic from other closeby communities. I think with improvements there can be a bigger 'draw' for Wilmington. Yentile park draws families from other to communities to the fields/parks. But there are not other options to keep them spending \$ in town. What things can be done to enable other businesses to do 'pop ups' and create more of a community feel in open spaces -leverage yentile, rotary, lake etc	0	0
Public Realm	What can be done to minimize and prevent vacant businesses? Especially with preventing long term vacant business like the rite aid and walgreens locations? Also consider what can be done to make the main area more pedestrian friendly (I would opt to drive across from starbucks/dollar tree rather than cross the street to Market Basket/Mcdonalds/etc.)	0	0
Public Realm	The traffic from the intersection of 38/129 to Market Basket is so bad I avoid it, especially late afternoon weekdays. The commercial area around the Wilmington train station could use some tenants that attract commuter business (like convenience store, breakfast/bagel shop, etc.) No more car washes, and definitely no more second hand/thrift stores in our town! We need to fill the vacant storefronts with less chains and more small businesses, like pet store, gift shop, ice cream shop, etc	2	0
Revenue & Sales	We need to fill the empty buildings in town. I heard that the business tax in Wilmington is much higher than in surrounding towns. If this problem is not resolved, we will not be able to attract new businesses and we will lose the ones we have. As these empty buildings get older and are not used, they become eye sores. I don't think anyone wants any of those buildings in their town.	8	0

Tenants Mix	A casual family friendly restaurant would be a great addition to town. I'd love to see something unique like family style dining like Wright's Chicken Farm. I think that could attract visitors from other towns but might be too expensive to build something like that in this area/time.	1	0
Tenants Mix	I grew up here in Wilmington, married a fellow "townie", and raised two children here. Our town has not had anything that sets it apart from any other in the local area since Wilmington Ford and Sweetheart Plastics. I believe the town needs to attract and encourage some more diverse and upscale retail and dining. We have enough pizza, burgers and donuts. There are several vacant spaces that could be used for specialty food stores, ice creameries, bakeries, or entertainment.	5	0
Public Realm	Completely agree. Our entire Route 38 needs an update: Repave, Granite curbs, concrete sidewalks, trees, landscaping.	1	0
Tenants Mix	I'll be honest I don't do much in Wilmington. I love the town, we have 2 young kids and don't plan to move but I do ALL my shopping, nights out, etc. in Burlington. They have better grocery options(wegmans, Trader Joe's) and wayyy better/more dinner options. We have plenty of takeout dinner options, dry cleaners, coffee shops, etc. Maybe try and bring in more sit down restaurants for date nights out or breweries, wine tasting options, live music venues, etc.	14	0
Tenants Mix	We need significant light and traffic reconfiguration. Most people in town are looking for specific types of shops stores restaurants I would love to see any of those. The hurdles to this is most chain or box stores what to be close to an on or off-ramp and they will not be in a bank of stores with Savers	3	0
Public Realm	The traffic on 38 and dangerous intersections discourage me from visting businesses on 38. It is very dangerous turning across 38, particularly at Savers/Market Basket intersections so I avoid or plan my route to take a right into those at peak times. Left turn only lanes there might be helpful so that you only have to turn across one lane of traffic. I often go up to Tewksbury because there is more variety of businesses and it's easier to return home after.	2	0
Culture & Arts	How about bus service. More like trolley service to get around town since the traffic is terrible . How about a craft store, or a shoe store (both to buy and repair) Better restaurants instead of fast food chains. Specialty stores.	1	1
Revenue & Sales	TRADER JOES PLEASE GIVE THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT!!	1	1
Culture & Arts	This town doesn't have any places for people to go out and do things. We could use some entertainment in town like bowling, mini golf, ice cream, rock climbing gym, art shops (think plaster fun time). These types of places along with upscale retail stores and sit down dining restaurants would really change the town and make it more attractive. I'd also love to see the side walks and brush along 38/129 get cleaned up maintained regularly. The train station could use some cleaning up.	6	0
Public Realm	Wilmington needs more attention to detail and make the public spaces more attractive. Here is a photo of down town Woburn which has gone through an amazing transformation over the years. Note the street lights, the attention to aesthetics. IN a addition, Wilmington should approach the state and look into making RT38 into a one lane road in most parts with parking on the street. Otherwise we will never have the down town we all want.	2	0

Public Realm	Trees, we need to get some nice trees on that stretch, it looks barren. The investment in trees today will be amazing for the landscape in the future.	9	0
Public Realm	Wilmington does not really have a "downtown". Towns like Melrose, Wakefield and Woburn have a more urban type of downtown with businesses close to the street and parking in the back. An area with zoning that would allow for this type of development with wide sidewalks, bike accommodation and street amenities such as lights and trees (think Lexington) would be a big change to the Town.		
Public Realm	Attracting business that complement each other would be great. entertainment mixed with dining.	7	0
Culture & Arts	I agree. I also think it would be helpful to have some specialty stores/restaurants (think boba/bubble tea) that might be a draw for people to shop in Wilmington instead of the other neighboring communities.	0	0
Public Realm	How about some real senior housing! Not 55 and older but for Senior citizens and the disabled!!!! Presently there is Deming Way but that's not enough. Need a building with apartments that are ADL assessable, with elevators, and nearby (walking distance) shops & restaurants.	0	0
Public Realm	Agreed, just some basic lawn maintenance will make a huge difference.	0	0
Revenue & Sales	I think it would be helpful to have some sort of town calendar or opt in weekly newsletter (maybe this sort of already exists on patch?) where residents could get updates on events and promotions from local businesses. This would also give businesses another opportunity to advertise to the people who they most want to reach.	0	0
Culture & Arts	The town does not really have much in way of promoting culture and arts. The Library and the Arts Council are the public entities but here needs to be more in the private sector. Maybe an Art show venue at the Town Common with food trucks or local tables. Newburyport does this all the time and it is a big hit!	1	0
Culture & Arts	Completely agree! I've long wanted a local ice cream shop, but some type of activities, especially family friendly would be great!	0	0
Revenue & Sales	Wilmington does not take advantage of its location and the 2 train stations. Middlesex Ave and Church St are nice streets that could link 2 economic centers, North Wilmington and Town Center. Both have train stations .	2	0
Public Realm	Wilmington should invest in more open space to make the town more attractive to home owners and increase visitor. Everyone leaves town for passive rec opportunities. Trail systems are small and under utilized. Great for local neighborhoods but not good destination places. Wilmington should be investing in more benches and expand on tree and landscape planting. Donate a bench/tree in someone's honor is a great way to fund such an endeavor. Adopt a public place is another great way to offset cost	2	0
Tenants Mix	It would be really nice to have a place with some restaurants and shops. Woburn village just underwent a huge transformation and looks amazing. The town lacks shopping and sit down restaurants as well as entertainment venues. There are limited places to take kids as well, no bowling, no ice cream, no mini golf, no splash pads. Families have to go to surrounding towns for all the amenities.	2	0

Public Realm	Maybe we clean up the roads, invest in safe sidewalks, maybe a few more cross walks. nice lamp posts for lighting at night, landscaping; people would be more apt to stroll if it feels safe and clean, bringing more foot traffic makes it more desirable for business. We should also make it a safer area - lower the speed limit or strictly enforce what we have. Instead of people flying thru town on the way to something else - they might stop and take note, that it's not just a drive thru town	3	0
Public Realm	You do that, or you do what I chose to do, go to other towns for shopping / supermarkets.	0	0
Public Realm	The open spaces here are unused / unmaintained and just trying to drive from one side of town to the other has become enough of a hurdle, I don't see any value in staying in town to do anything. I've lived here 30 years and I am really itching to go somewhere where the traffic doesn't dictate what I do.	0	0
Revenue & Sales	It would be nice to have some food trucks (preferably healthy) at Yentile on weekends in the spring/summer/fall.	2	0
Public Realm	A left turn lane/signal into the Wilmington Crossing . Left turn signals at that interception would be very helpful.	0	0
Private Realm	Require commercial owners to enhance and green their properties. Colonial Park Mall is a prominent eyesore with nothing but asphalt and piles of rocks for "landscaping." It looks the same as when I worked there in the 70s! All buildings in town with the mansard-shingle design are way past due for updates. And Wms Sign Erection was an eyesore 50 years ago -- encourage them to move to Ballardvale or someplace. The Plaza development was well done. Time to bring the rest of town up to par.	3	0
Culture & Arts	Agree!	0	0
Private Realm	I completely agree with this post. The entire corridor is old, dilapidated and (as the author posts) an eyesore.	0	0
Revenue & Sales	Second this suggestion. There are too few restaurants and those that we have aren't very interesting or different.	0	0
Public Realm	This isn't really true. The town could offer improvements that they pay for and do with the permission of the land owner. I'm sure there would be willing participants in that.	0	0
Public Realm	Wilmington is very well positioned with the commuter rail stopping right in town to potentially attract many people to this area. However the store fronts around the train station are anything but inviting. Transforming that area into restaurants with outdoor seating, a local coffee and ice cream shop, small local clothing/home decor boutiques, green space to gather, tasteful street lighting and additional parking would do wonders! It's time for Wilmington to have it's own true center of town!	11	0

Wilmington Study Area Map Comments

Type	Comment	Up Votes	Down Votes	Geo Address
Revenue & Sales	Wilmington could use a YMCA or a Boys and Girls club. Our town lacks recreational opportunities that are accessible and inclusive. This would be a great spot!	2		1 50 Melrose Ave, Tewksbury, MA 01876, USA
Public Realm	This entire stretch of traffic choked roadway makes me avoid any and all businesses along it. I now travel to Billerica for such simple things as Market Basket. I don't see how you improve a business climate without fixing the main issue for me.	3		0 510 Main St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Revenue & Sales	Run down and could use updating. The stores in this area are outdated and does anyone even go there? Add restaurants or relevant shopping boutiques.	6		1 458 Main St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Revenue & Sales	This is a total eye sore and such wasted space. The first thing visitors to our town see is a run down dumpy building with overgrown trees. It's a disgrace and gives a poor initial impression to our town. I would love to see some type of shopping center, similar to a Market Street in Lynnfield or something like a 3rd Ave or District Ave in Burlington. Bring a reason for people to come to Wilmington and make it look nice in the process. Put Wilmington on the map!	5		0 50 Melrose Ave, Tewksbury, MA 01876, USA
Public Realm	I agree completely. It causes the neighborhoods that can be used as cut-throughs to be more heavily congested. I don't live in this area and I'm thankful for that.	1		0 510 Main St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Revenue & Sales	The store fronts are terrible and outdated. It's across from a train station and a major intersection in the town. If nothing else, clean up the building and signage. Even something administrative is a good use of this location. Just make it look nice.	7		0 8 Church St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Public Realm	Crazy accident potential and history here. Please fix visibility with lights - there must be something that can be done.	1		0 26 Butters Row, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Revenue & Sales	Who rides the train anyway? This parcel is tiny, lacks parking and really just needs a rejuvenation.	0		0 8 Church St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Public Realm	What is going on with the delay in fixing the bridge finally?	1		0 I-93, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Public Realm	The sidewalks here (especially on the southbound side of the road) are in very poor condition and are barely passable with a stroller or other assistive device	3		0 121 MA-38, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA

Tenant Mix	It would be great if we could get a craft brewery or something similar in this space or the empty Walgreens spot. We have a lot of chain stores/restaurants and it would be great to see something locally owned	4	0 208 Richmond St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Public Realm	How about a Market Street type of area? This section has been an eye sore for years - Housing demand in Wilmington is soaring - people want to live in Wilmington - and we have acres of parking lot and deserted structure. Imagine what kind of revenue a shopping/restaurant district would bring to this town.	3	0 201 Lowell St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Revenue & Sales	Is it possible to start an Adopt a Sidewalk program in which local clubs could maintain/control the weeds/green spaces, or support businesses in the beautification of the space in front of their businesses. A little landscaping love would go a long way in making our town look better! And help cool these hot stretches of sidewalk.	4	0 490 Main St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Revenue & Sales	This is across between revenue/sales and public realm but one thing that might be nice to potentially ease some of the traffic concerns in this area and also open up another business opportunity could be to add bike rentals or a blue bike like bike share system and some bike lanes along this stretch to make it feasible to get from place to place without a car. Especially if we are introducing a Lynnfield Marketstreet like place here and want it to be accessible from the train station.	1	0 144 Lowell St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Public Realm	Agreed! The intersection of Lowell St/Rt 129 and Woburn St needs improvement. No safe way to cross for pedestrians to cross. A center turn lane would be terrific.	0	Lucci's Supermarket, 211 H Lowell St, 0 Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Public Realm	This is a dangerous intersection for bikers and pedestrians. Also would be nice to have the sidewalk continue going towards Burger King/Red Heat Tavern/Mobil. It is a very dangerous street to walk on in the parts with no sidewalk.	3	Lucci's Supermarket, 211 H Lowell St, 0 Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Revenue & Sales	I think the restaurant here has been closed so this would be a nice location for another town restaurant or entertainment venue of some sort.	2	0 110g Lowell St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Revenue & Sales	The storefronts are privately owned so hard to make owners spend \$\$\$\$ 😊	1	0 8 Church St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA

Public Realm	I so agree with the statement of the crazy congestion. The road is too narrow and the sidewalk is iffy.	0	0 510 Main St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Tenant Mix	Sounds good	0	0 208 Richmond St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Public Realm	How about some real senior housing! Not 55 and older but for Senior citizens and the disabled!!!! Presently there is Deming Way but that's not enough. Need a building with apartments that are ADL assessable, with elevators, and nearby (walking distance) shops & restaurants.	0	0 203 Lowell St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Revenue & Sales	There's too much congestion in this area already. How about some real senior housing! Not 55 and older but for Senior citizens and the disabled!!!!	0	0 50 Melrose Ave, Tewksbury, MA 01876, USA
Public Realm	Desperately need to invest in cleaning up sidewalks and roadways. So many tall weeds and trash. It's not pleasant or inviting to drive through. At least allow volunteers to take care of certain sections.	1	0 498 Main St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Tenant Mix	This has such great potential to be a central hub of business and nice residencies. Nearby beach and water access, main road, easy access to public transportation.	2	0 96 MA-38, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Revenue & Sales	Invite a craft beer garden/simple food outdoor space to come in and set up shop during the spring summer and fall. Creates an outdoor destination for groups and families to go to and hang out. Will bring more business to the area.	2	0 271 Main St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Public Realm	I do not understand the traffic build-ups here in the evenings. Sometimes 10 minutes to make it through this intersection. How come? Can we reconfigure the traffic lights at Lowell/West intersection?	3	0 259 MA-129, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA
Revenue & Sales	This area is far too unsafe to ride a bike around. I don't even think I'd ride one along the partial sidewalks here.	0	0 144 Lowell St, Wilmington, MA 01887, USA

Appendix C:
Subject Matter Expert Report -
Neighborways



Town of
Wilmington

Install beautification features around
the MBTA station plaza

neighborwaysdesign

Mission

To help communities rapidly transform streets into safer, more beautiful places for everyone.



neighborwaysdesign

Connected Neighbors

Beautiful Neighborhoods

Slow Streets

Goals / Performance Indicators

- Establish a sense of place and identity – View Wilmington as a place to visit and stay vs travel thru
 - Safety and security
 - Choices / variety (food, drinks, shopping, work, social connections, things to do)
 - Access (walking, biking, driving, transit connections)
 - Unique / memorable / beautiful
- *Improved look and feel of area – to create momentum*
- *Become a destination / places to gather*
- *Public engagement and participation – tap into local creativity, arts and culture?*
- *Consistent Design – establish a design for downtown*
- *Fill vacant store fronts – get more business*
- *Lights – holiday / year round?*

Install beautification features around the MBTA station plaza

Install **placemaking**, beautification, and **programming** features around the MBTA station plaza

Origin / Stakeholders

- Economic Development Committee
- Planning & Conservation Dept.
- DPW
- MBTA / MassDOT
- *Non-government stakeholders (programming/property)?*

Location

- Around Wilmington MBTA station
- *Consider Neighborhood walking and biking connections to station?*

Budget

- Low Budget (under \$50k)
- *Sources explored? Consider expanding / phasing?*

Timeframe

- Short (less than 5 years)
- *Demonstrations, Pilots, pop-ups*



Challenges / Opportunities

- Auto-oriented / dominated space
- TOD / pop – up markets near station
- Local partnerships – internal champions, external advocates, organizations, leaders
- Funding sources / prioritization / phasing of projects
- Connectivity – Install and upgrade walking / biking infrastructure – prioritize 1-5 mi from station
- Traditional and digital wayfinding / branding / welcome signs and kiosks

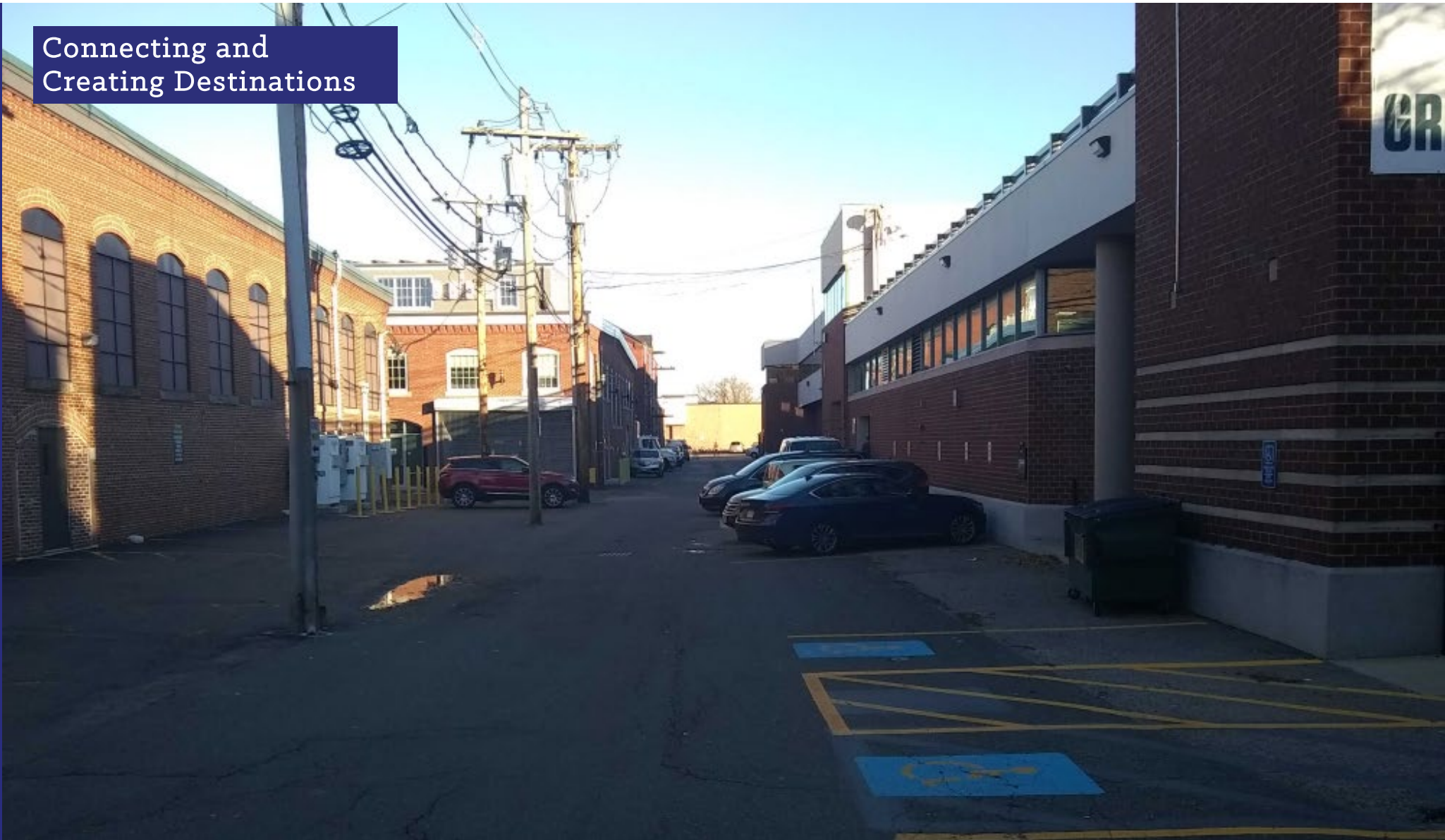


Somerville, MA

Case Study: Somernova Alley, RAFI Properties

neighborwaysdesign

Connecting and Creating Destinations



DIY Self Watering Planters



Art, Trees, Pollinator Gardens



Programming



Case Study

Attracting People to Under-activated Districts and Spaces in Downtown:
Frost Alley Somernova, Somerville, MA



Risks



Key Performance Indicators

Case Study

- **Partners:** Somerville Groundworks (watering / maintenance) Green and Open Somerville (Native Plant Experts, Local nurseries)
- **Covid-19 Impacts:** Cancelled Earth Day 2020 and 2021, Open Studios carefully planned



Partners + Resources



Covid-19 Impacts

Attracting People to Under-Activated Districts and Spaces

Activation Strategies

Engagement

- Outreach and engagement with City, abutters, tenants
- Online and In-person

Traffic Calming and Placemaking

- Greenery
- Art
- Temporary Closures

Programming Potential

- Art Markets
- Urban Frisbee Golf
- Meetups
- Movie Nights



Having fun in the process! (Source: Somernova)

Sense of Place = Human-centered design = Walkable, Bikeable, Livable

Other project opportunities to support placemaking

- Neighborway / Neighborhood Greenway Connections
 - Walking / biking wayfinding and traffic calming connections to train station
- Ry 62 @ Rt 38 - Multimodal intersection Safety Improvement project
 - Pavement marking and signage retrofit – low hanging fruit to reallocate excess space for more comfortable walking / biking facilities
 - Tactical pilot with flexposts - shorten crossing distances / narrow turning radii
 - Bike lanes / bike boxes
 - Traffic Signal Capacity analysis – shorten signal cycle lengths to reduce delay for all
 - ADA accessibility assessment / construction
- Rt 62 – 30-32' wide – install bike lanes / climbing lane and shared lane where too narrow
 - Bike lanes – 5' bike lane | 11' travel | 11' Travel | 5 bike lane
 - Climbing lanes – 5' bike lane in uphill direction | 11' travel | 14' shared lane
- Rt 38 south of Rt 62 – 32' wide – install bike lanes corridor wide
 - Bike lanes – 5' bike lane | 11' travel | 11' Travel | 5 bike lane
- Rt 38 north of Rt 62 - 50' wide – 4 to 3 lane road diet feasibility study
 - Parking and Bike Lanes - 7' parking | 5' bike lane | 11' Travel | 11; two-way left turn lane | 11' travel | 5' bike lane
 - Two-way SBL - 13' two way separated bike lane | 11' Travel | 11; two-way left turn lane | 11' travel | 4' shoulder

* All widths measured in Google Earth – for concept planning purposes only

Final Steps of SME Consultation

1. Comments on rubric
2. Send this presentation
3. Share additional resources from discussion if any
 1. Comparable case studies pop up markets, art – Arlington arts council
 2. Sample corridor simple phase 1 beautification

Jessica@neighborways.com

neighborwaysdesign

Suburban Placemaking Resources

- What is placemaking - <https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/four-types-placemaking>
- Downtown Lynn – Beyond Walls – art case study – see video on homepage <https://www.beyond-walls.org/>
- Arlington Arts Council – Window Poetry- <http://artsarlington.org/programs/heights-haiku/>
- Books [Retrofitting Suburbia](#) and [Case Studies in Retrofitting Suburbia](#) by Ellen Dunham-Jones and June Williamson,
- [LRRP Resources](#)
 - [Best practices compendium for Public Realm](#)
 - Webinar with a good suburban case study – The Corner Spot Ashland MA
 - [Slides](#)
 - [Recording](#)

Appendix D: Funding Table

Funding Program	Administering Organization	Summary	Amount	Who Can Apply?	Deadline
Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds	American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)	Local recovery funds disbursed by the federal government and administered by local governments, through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.	determined by municipality	N/A	Funds must be under contract by 12/31/2024.
MA Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program	MA Department of Housing and Community Development	To provide technical assistance in the form of consultant services for downtown revitalization projects, including: design, wayfinding/branding, economic studies, housing plan, small business support, parking analysis, etc. Consultants are selected by MDI staff from a list of pre-qualified consultants.	\$25,000 maximum	All municipalities in the Commonwealth	Closed for FY 2022. Information on future funding rounds has not been announced.
Commonwealth Places	MassDevelopment	To support locally driven placemaking projects in commercial districts, including seed grants (for engagement, visioning and capacity building) and implementation grants.	\$7,500 maximum for seed grants; \$50,000 maximum for implementation grants	Nonprofit and community groups	Closed for FY 2022. Future funding is anticipated, but has not been announced.
Shared Streets and Spaces	MA Department of Transportation	Eligible projects include: repurposing infrastructure to facilitate outdoor activities and community programming; safe street design; pedestrian crossing modifications; pedestrian and bike network facilities; environment and streetscape improvements.	\$5,000 - \$200,000	All municipalities and public transit authorities in the Commonwealth	Closed. Future funding is anticipated, but has not been announced.
Hometown Grant Program	T-Mobile, Smart Growth America, Main Street America	To build, rebuild or refresh community spaces that help foster local connections in small towns.	Up to \$50,000	Towns with populations <50,000	Applications are accepted on a quarterly basis.
Underutilized Properties	MassDevelopment	For capital projects necessary for occupancy or increased occupancy of buildings, including predevelopment services for vacant or underutilized buildings or properties.	No maximum, but typical awards range from \$50,000 to \$2,000,000.	All municipalities, municipal agencies, economic development agencies, non-profit entities and private-sector entities in the Commonwealth	Closed for FY 2022. Future funding is anticipated, but has not been announced.
Seed Grants	Grassroots Fund	Seed grants to support community groups who are launching new projects or starting to significantly change the direction of an existing project and who represent a broad range of voices in their community and who are not being reached by other funders.	\$500 - \$1,000	Community groups doing local, grassroots work in CT, ME, MA, NH, RI or VT.	Rolling

Grow Grants	Grassroots Fund	The Grow Grant program is geared toward groups who have some experience implementing a project in their community. The Grassroots Fund's work focuses on environmental justice with specific attention to shifting power in decision-making, equity in participation, access to resources, and integrating ecological and social justice in community visioning.	\$1,000 - \$4,000	Community groups doing local, grassroots work in CT, ME, MA, NH, RI or VT.	Third Tuesday in March and September
Capital Grants Program	Mass Cultural Council	Matching grants to assist with the acquisition, final-stage design, construction, repair, renovation, rehabilitation, or other capital improvements or deferred maintenance of cultural facilities in Massachusetts.	Maximum grants in the range of \$200,000 - \$250,000	Nonprofit cultural organizations; municipalities that own cultural facilities; public or private institutions of higher education that own cultural facilities	Closed for 2021; Details for 2022 funding have not been provided yet
Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Mini-Entitlement Program	MA Department of Housing and Community Development	The Community Development Fund/Mini-Entitlement Program funds projects that help to develop viable, urban communities by providing decent housing and suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons: planning, housing rehabilitation and development, economic development, rehabilitation of downtowns, infrastructure, construction or rehabilitation of community facilities and public social services.	\$9,075,000 (total FY21 allocation for Mini-Entitlement Program)	All MA municipalities that are <u>not</u> Entitlement Communities as identified by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.	Closed for 2021; Details for 2022 funding have not been provided yet
Regional Economic Development Organization Grant Program	MA Office of Business Development	For regionally-based efforts that will improve upon the region's economic competitiveness and support businesses in the region.	\$6,000,000 (total FY22 allocation for REDO program)	Regional economic development organizations as defined in M.G.L. Chapter 23A, Section 3K.	September 30, 2021
MassWorks Infrastructure Program	MA Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development	Most flexible source of capital funding for public infrastructure projects that support and accelerate housing production, spur private development, and create jobs throughout the Commonwealth.	unknown	All municipalities in the Commonwealth	Closed for 2021; Details for 2022 funding have not been provided yet
Community Compact IT Grant Program	Community Compact Cabinet	To support the implementation of innovative IT projects by funding related one-time capital needs such as technology infrastructure or software. Incidental or one-time costs related to the capital purchase, such as planning, design, installation, implementation and initial training are eligible.	Up to \$200,000	All municipalities in the Commonwealth	Applicatoin period: September 15, 2021 - October 15, 2021

Urban Agenda Grant Program	MA Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development	For local partnerships, to implement projects that are based on creative collaborative work models with the goal of advancing and achieving economic progress.	Up to \$100,000 (\$2,500,000 total available funds)	All municipalities with priority given to urban communities with a median household income less than 90 % of the state's average income.	Closed for 2021; Details for 2022 funding have not been provided yet
Community Change Grants	America Walks	For innovative, engaging, and inclusive programs and projects that advance safe, equitable, accessible, and enjoyable places to walk and move. Funding for projects that demonstrate increased physical activity and active transportation in a specific community, work to engage people and organizations new to the efforts of walkability, and demonstrate a culture of inclusive health and design.	\$1,500	All municipalities, agencies and community organizations	September 30, 2021

Appendix E: Additional Project Resources

Additional Project Resources

Project 1: Develop a Town Brand and Brand Guidelines

Best Practices:

- Joplin, MO - [Branding Guidelines](#)
- Ashland, VA - [Brand Standards](#)
- Oshkosh, WI - [branding and strategic marketing initiative](#)
- Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, FL - [Branding Guidelines](#)
- San Marcos, CA - [Brand Identity Guidelines](#)

Project 2: Develop a Comprehensive and Collaborative Marketing Strategy

Best Practices:

- Lake Oswego, OR - [Lake Oswego Strategic Marketing Plan](#)
- Milford, MI - Milford Downtown Development Authority, [Annual Media Report - 2020](#)

Project 3: Revise Sign Bylaws and Create Sign Design Guidelines

Resources for developing sign regulations:

- Dedham, MA - [Review and Analysis of Existing Sign Code and Related Zoning Bylaws](#)
- Winchester, MA - [The Sign Book: An informational guide for businesses merchants and landlords](#)

Project 4: Establish a Façade Improvement Grant Program

Grant program examples:

- Bangor, ME - [Façade Improvement Grant Program](#)
- Greenville, SC - [Façade Improvement Program](#)
- LISC Indianapolis, IN - [Small Business Façade and Property Improvement Program](#)
- Saco, ME - [Downtown Façade Grant Program](#)

Façade design guidelines examples:

- Brookline, MA - [Sign and Façade Design Review Guide](#)
- New York City Small Business Services - [Storefront Improvements: A Guide for Neighborhood Commercial Districts](#)

Project 5: Develop a Placemaking and Programming Plan for the MBTA Station Plaza and Downtown

Placemaking resources:

- [Local Initiatives Support Corporation \(LISC\) Creative Placemaking Toolkit](#) - interactive online tool to guide placemaking projects through every step of the process including developing partnerships, hiring artists, drafting contracts and agreements, evaluating impacts, and documenting the project.
- [American Association of Retired Persons \(AARP\) Pop-Up Demonstration Toolkit](#) - how to create a successful pop-up demonstration project to influence permanent change
- [Tactical Urbanist's Guide](#) - examples of tools and materials to use to implement tactical urbanism and how to approach short-term action to achieve long-term change

