



# Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

**Town of Millbury**



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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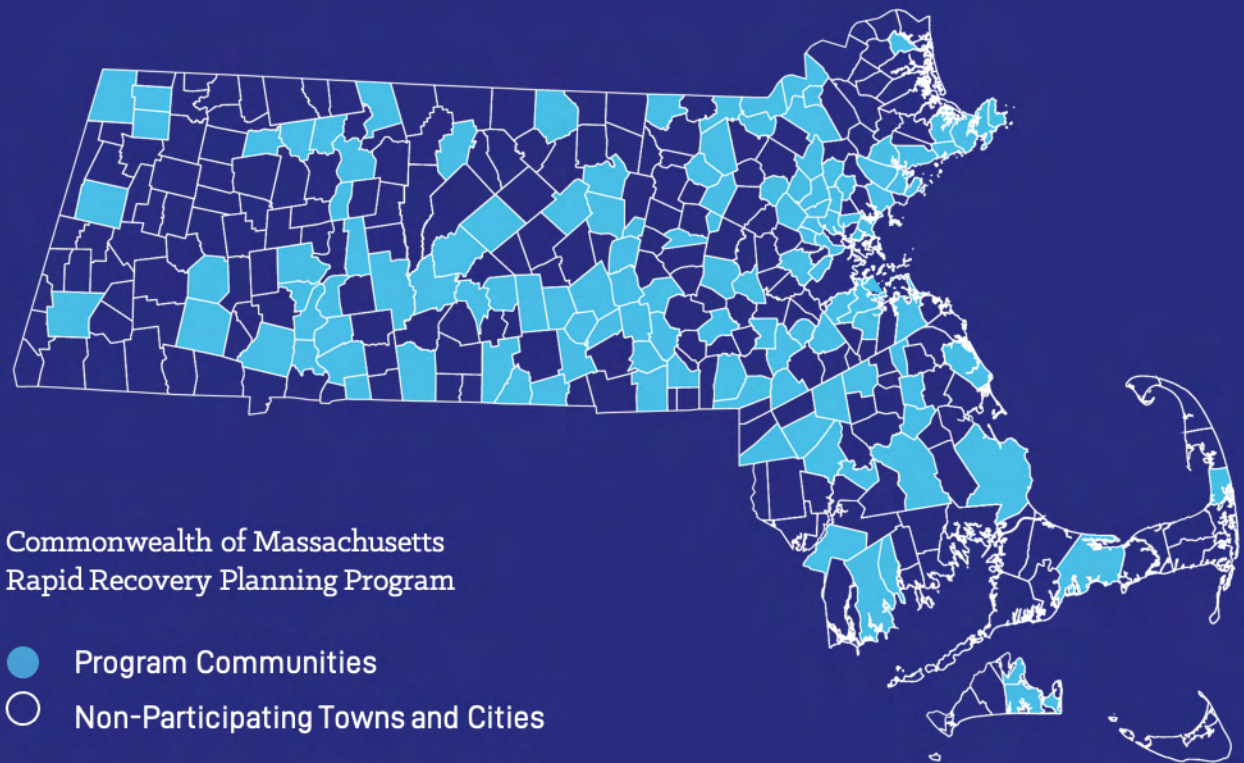
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## 125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

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.



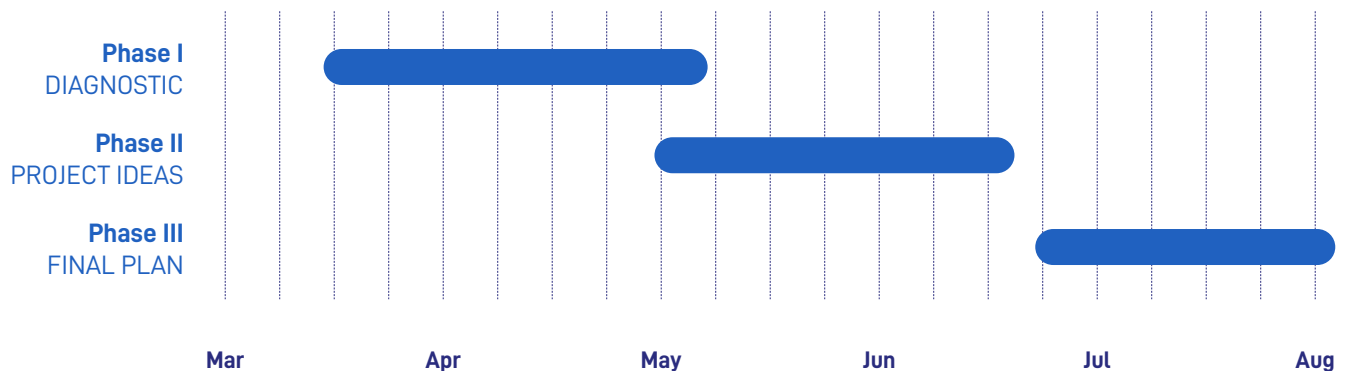
# Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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



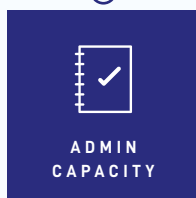
Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?



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

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# Executive Summary

# Executive Summary

## Revitalization of a Former Mill Town

True to its name, Millbury (the Town) has a long history as a mill town on the Blackstone River. In the early 18th century, the first mills were established in Town, with the S & D Spinning wool mill still in operation today. Millbury was also home to mills producing guns, saws and scythes. The firearms mills were owned by Asa Waters II and his brother, Elijah. The brothers also constructed an armory in the Town, for which the Town Center (formerly known as Armory Village) was named. The Asa Waters Mansion, built in 1824, is now a prominent Town landmark. The mansion was saved from demolition in 1995 by citizens wanting to preserve this important and stately part of Millbury's history. It is now owned by the Town and used for both public and private events. The prominence of the Blackstone River to the Town's economy has faded, but remnants of the Town's mill history are present throughout the Town in the way of historic structures, plaques and signage, and referenced in design elements of the Armory Village Revitalization Project. Preserving and recognizing Millbury's history in the future development of the Town Center is an important priority for the Town.

In 2020, Millbury completed Phase I of a four phase, multi-million dollar Armory Village Revitalization Project. Phase I included infrastructure improvements at the intersection of Main, South Main and Elm Streets. These improvements consisted of repaving and striping, reconstructing the upper and lower commons, new traffic and pedestrian signals, decorative street lighting, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant sidewalks and crosswalks, sidewalk bumpouts, street trees, decorative pavers, benches, bike racks and signage. These streetscape improvements of Phase I have transformed this central intersection and Town common area to be safe, accessible for all and an inviting place to spend time. Future phases of the project will extend infrastructure and beautification improvements along Elm Street in both directions and north along Main Street and will include redevelopment of the municipal parking lot.

In addition to the Town-led revitalization project, the Town Center has seen signs of reinvestment in recent years, including the renovation and occupancy of two commercial structures on Elm Street as well as multi-family residential development that is currently under review and under construction. In contrast, there are still major storefront and property vacancies in prominent locations in the Town Center as well as properties in disrepair.

While this new public and private investment in development is encouraging, businesses in the Town Center are still impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. With a significant decline of in-person shopping, dining and services as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak, most downtown businesses noted an impact to their businesses. Of the downtown businesses surveyed, 95% indicated being impacted by COVID-19 in some way, including a decline in revenue, decline in customers, reduced hours or capacity, layoffs, temporary or permanent closures, expenses incurred to adopt necessary safety measures, or changes to a business model or process. Many businesses are still making adjustments to their business operations, capacity, and staffing as a result of the ongoing crisis and changing health regulations.

The goal of this plan is to provide guidelines for the development of projects that will support the Town Center's economic recovery as a result of impacts from COVID-19. While the economic impact of the outbreak was the impetus for the program, this plan provides a holistic approach to economic support for downtown, and considers initiatives that can be expanded and continued to enable the Town and the business community to recover and also to be adaptable in the face of future economic challenges.



*Aerial view of Millbury Center. Photo credit: Town of Millbury*

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## The Town's recovery will depend on building relationships with businesses and community organizations

Many of the projects recommended in this plan are relatively small in scope and cost; however, if implemented well they can have a long-term impact on the revitalization of downtown. The recommendations are meant to be readily achievable in a relatively short period of time. The success of project implementation is dependent upon the Town's administrative capacity to fully engage residents, the business community, property owners, local artists, nonprofit organizations and other groups that can support economic development efforts.

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. Of the businesses surveyed, 64% are microenterprises (five or fewer employees) which were particularly impacted. The effect of the outbreak on local economies and the resulting changes in how we do business has exposed the lack of effective municipal support and organizational structure for the business community as a problem, usually due to limited resources.

At this unique moment, Millbury 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. Millbury has not fully leveraged the resources of community groups and business owners to support and participate in economic development initiatives. Staff capacity for the organization of these important project implementation initiatives and engagement of the community is critical to the long-term success.

Business survey respondents identified improvements to safety, cleanliness, sidewalks and streetscapes to be the most important physical improvements needed in the Town Center. Additionally, respondents noted the importance of recruiting new businesses and attracting visitors to downtown through events and activities. With the recent completion of streetscape improvements and the allocation of federal funds for economic recovery, now is an ideal time to engage the business community in a meaningful way to participate in economic recovery strategies.



*Millbury Federal Credit Union, Main Street. Photo credit: BerryDunn*

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# Diagnostic

# Key Findings



## The Town's downtown population and customer base is growing

With a 12 dwelling unit development under construction on West Street, a 59 dwelling unit development currently under review on Canal Street, and a 52 dwelling unit development under review just outside the Town Center area, the resident customer base for the commercial district appears to be growing. Additionally, there are several vacant parcels within the district that are well situated for redevelopment.

The Town Center has the potential to attract more visitors from afar as well. The nearby Shoppes at Blackstone Valley attract customers from a much broader region to shop and dine at national chain stores and restaurants. While Millbury Center businesses cannot compete with national chain stores for certain shopping needs, unique specialty stores, restaurants, breweries and entertainment businesses could attract shoppers from the mall to downtown (just over a mile away) for a different type of retail experience. Many shoppers come to the Shoppes at Blackstone Valley without any awareness of the amenities of Millbury Center. A coordinated marketing effort could increase exposure for the Town's unique, independent shops, restaurants, and events to attract visitors to downtown.



*Left: Vacant property on Canal Street to be redeveloped. Photo credit: BerryDunn*



*Right: New multi-family construction on West Street. Photo credit: BerryDunn*



## The Town has new businesses but significant vacancies

Millbury has experienced some recent investment in the Town Center by way of significant building renovations for a new café, a new brewery, and a new bakery, all on Elm Street. While this new business development and reinvestment is a positive sign for the future growth of Millbury Center, several vacancies still remain in the district.

Vacant storefronts on Elm Street and South Main Street, by the Town Commons, are a particular challenge to activating the Town Center, despite the recent infrastructure improvements of the Armory Village Revitalization Project. There are also several vacant and underused spaces that pose a challenge to creating a cohesive, walkable downtown. Filling vacant storefronts and activating vacant and underused properties is necessary to create both physical and visual connectivity to encourage sustained economic activity in the Town Center.



*Left: Vacant storefront, Millbury Center. Photo credit: BerryDunn*



*Right: New business, Penny Pinchers Brewing Co. Photo credit: BerryDunn*



## The Town is investing in infrastructure

Millbury is committed to completing all four phases of the Armory Village Revitalization Project. With Phase I completed, residents and visitors can experience the transformative effect that these infrastructure improvements have on the pedestrian environment and the way that users are able to navigate the Town Center.

Design for Phase II has been completed, and the Town is looking to secure funding for implementation. The proposed Phase II project includes an extension of Phase I sidewalk, curb bump outs, and green infrastructure improvements as well as a reconfiguration of the municipal parking lot. These improvements will help to create a cohesive walkable downtown and increase accessibility and connectivity. Future phases of the revitalization project will extend these improvements further throughout the Town Center.

The Town has hosted several public information sessions and community forums to hear from the public regarding the proposed project and to provide information about the project scope, schedule and benefits. The Town should continue to engage the public through the remaining phases of the project and promote the project's benefits to the Town's businesses, community well-being, and environmental health.



## The Town needs additional economic development capacity

While the Town is committed to initiatives to support businesses in economic recovery, staff have found that coordination and engagement of the business community has been a challenge. Building relationships with business owners, landlords and community groups is necessary for effective implementation of community-driven economic development strategies. Building these relationships takes time, and ideally, would involve a dedicated and experienced economic development professional leading the process. It will be important to identify an appropriate person to build and strengthen partnerships with stakeholders and identify community leaders who can assist in managing initiatives and engage volunteers to support these efforts.

Millbury could consider establishing an Economic Development Committee to provide oversight for and coordination of economic development initiatives to ensure that programs are aligned with the Town's overall goals for growth and development. Most of the proposed projects in this plan are relatively low cost and short-term projects. In addition, there are other recommended short-term projects and actions that the Town may consider to support economic recovery. A committee could assist in coordinating these various initiatives and set priorities for economic development activities, considering the Town's broader recovery goals.



## Highlights from the Physical Environment

### AESTHETICS

The combined visual impact of the Armory Village Revitalization Project's infrastructure and beautification features has changed the experience of the Millbury Center's common area. The area is now a more pleasant place to walk or sit and easier to navigate. Decorative lighting, benches, and well-maintained planters provide a sense of a community that people care about and want to invest in.

Several older commercial buildings in the area are in disrepair and appear in striking contrast to the recent improvements. The next phases of the Revitalization Project, along Elm Street and including the public parking lot, will continue to improve the overall aesthetics of Millbury Center. The Town would like to see investment in revitalization extended to the private realm as well.



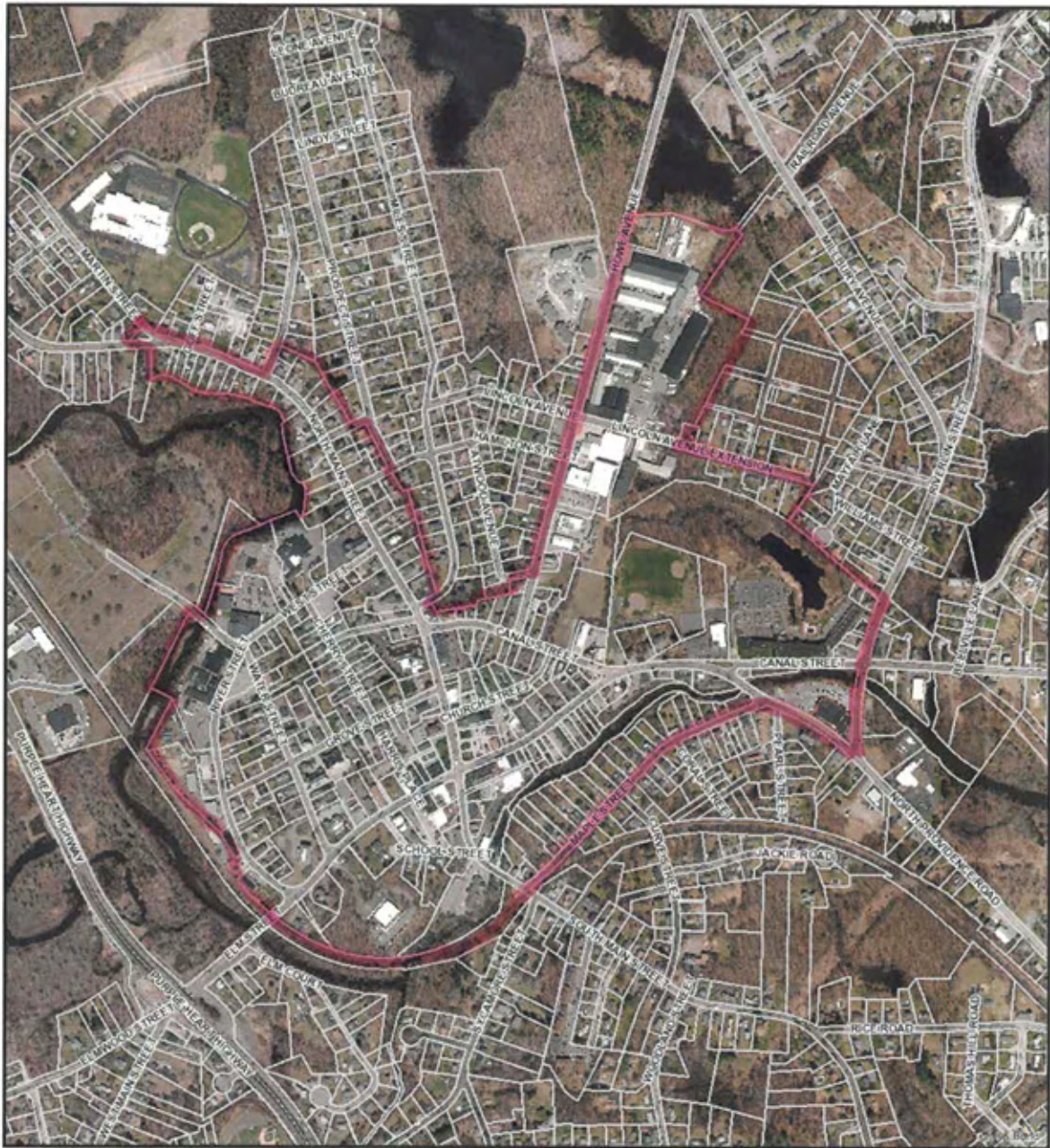
*New sidewalks and renovated Upper Common.  
Photo credit: BerryDunn*

### ACCESS

An important aspect of the revitalization project improvements involves reconstructing sidewalks, crosswalks and curb cuts to be ADA compliant. These improvements along with the curb bumpouts, lighting and benches, make the Town Center safe and accessible for users of all ages and abilities. Future phases of the revitalization project will extend these accessibility improvements, further improving connectivity in Millbury Center.

There is currently a senior housing apartment building on the corner of Elm Street and South Main Street as well as an elementary school downtown, on Grove Street. In addition, the Town's senior center is a short walk down Elm Street, near the Town municipal offices and the library. Making the Town safe and accessible to all, including the Town's senior residents and young children, is important to maintaining quality of life and strengthening the sense of inclusivity and community in Millbury.

The outbreak has reinforced the importance of accessible and desirable outdoor public spaces to community and individual well-being. Creating and enhancing these types of public spaces, for people to meet, gather and hold events, will make the Town a more attractive place to live and spend time, and will also make communities and their local economies more resilient in the face of a continuing or new public health crisis.



## Millbury Center Focus Area

12/8/2020 2:14:34 PM

Scale: 1"=800'

Scale is approximate

The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only.  
It is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory  
interpretation, or parcel-level analyses.



Map of Millbury LRRP Study Area. Source: Town of Millbury



*The Blackstone River. Photo credit: BerryDunn*

## The Town has valuable historic and natural resources

### ADAPTIVE REUSE

The Town's rich history as a mill town is evident in the remaining historic mill buildings in the Town Center. There have been two major renovations of historic mills in the district. In 2004, the former Cordis Cotton Mill, built in 1870, was renovated into a 112 dwelling unit apartment building with some commercial tenants, as well. More recently, in 2012, the Felter's Mill, another former textile mill, was transformed into a commercial center with 27 businesses including a mix of retail, personal services and office uses.

In addition, the Asa Waters Mansion was preserved and restored with support from the Friends of the Asa Waters Mansion and is now used as a venue for special events and is home to the Millbury Historical Society Museum. Nearby on River Road, the former rail station is now home to the Millbury Senior Center.

Continuing to prioritize the preservation and reuse of historic structures is important to Millbury and to retaining the Town's character.

### THE BLACKSTONE RIVER

As a mill town, the Blackstone River was once the heart of Millbury. In the decades since most of the mills closed, the Town has largely turned its back to the river. There are currently very few public access points to the river in Millbury Center.

The proposed future route of the Blackstone Valley Bike Path would take users along the river through Millbury Center. Creating more public access points to the river could help attract visitors to downtown and provide an important natural and recreational resource for residents and visitors.



## Highlights from the Business Environment

### ANCHORS/DESTINATIONS

Millbury Center does not currently have many businesses that would be considered destination businesses that draw people downtown from the larger region.

The Felter's Mill has become somewhat of a destination in Millbury, with a mix of retail, office, personal service and food establishments. There is an opportunity to create more of a visual and pedestrian connection between the Mill and the businesses on Elm Street and the heart of the Town Center.

The Shoppes at Blackstone Valley is a retail destination in Millbury, just off of Route 146 and near I-90. The success of the shopping center poses an opportunity for the Town to draw visitors to explore historic Millbury Center while they are in Town.



*Felter's Mill. Photo credit: BerryDunn*

### NEW BUSINESS GROWTH

A handful of new businesses have opened in the Town Center in recent years. Some of these businesses could become destinations on their own. These businesses, including a new brewery, café, and ice cream shop, are they types of establishments that ecourage visitors to explore downtown more.

The Town can continue to promote the new commercial and residential development in downtown as a sign of a growing economy and strong customer base. Many of Millbury Center's assets, including new small businesses, anticipated residential development and historic assets, may not be obvious to potential investors and entrepreneurs.



*Vacant commercial space on Elm Street. Photo credit: BerryDunn*

### VACANT SPACES

While there is some new commercial and residential growth and development in the Town Center, the commercial district continues to be challenged by some significant vacancies. The vacant commercial space on Elm Street adjacent to the Upper Common, formerly occupied by the Reliant Medical Group, is at the heart of Millbury Center and has been vacant for more than two years. This vacancy is a particular challenge to activating the Town Center. In addition, vacant underused properties that are not maintained by owners are a blemish on downtown.







*Underused lot on Elm Street. Photo credit: BerryDunn*

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# Project Recommendations

# 1. Develop a Shared Marketing Strategy and District Brand for Millbury Center

Category		Revenue/Sales
Location		Study Area
Origin		Site visit, business survey, discussion with Town staff
Budget		<p>Low Budget (&lt;\$50,000) – costs to hire a graphic designer and marketing and social media trainer/strategist</p> <p><b>Funding Opportunities</b> (see Funding Table in Appendix F for details):</p> <p>Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds MA Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program</p>
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years) – a brand can be developed within 6 months; marketing strategies can be implemented once a brand is developed; marketing efforts can be ongoing
Risk		Medium Risk – buy in from local businesses; response from the community; administrative capacity by the Town to support the program
Key Performance Indicators		Success of online marketing and social media strategies can be measured by webpage traffic, "likes" and social media responses. The overall marketing strategy can be measured over the longer-term by revenue growth for the Town Center and an increase in foot traffic to participating businesses.
Partners & Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Planning &amp; Development Department</b> – manage the project, assist with hiring a consultant, assist with community outreach and promotion of the project</li> <li>• <b>Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce</b> – assist with outreach to the business community and promotion of the project</li> <li>• <b>Discover Central Massachusetts</b> – assist with promoting the initiative with member businesses and promoting Millbury Center</li> <li>• <b>Business community</b> – participate in the initiative, provide feedback on branding and marketing ideas, and promote the project by using the brand and marketing strategies</li> <li>• <b>Community organizations</b> – provide feedback on branding and marketing ideas, promote the project by using the brand and marketing strategies to promote community events</li> </ul>



*Historic marker on Canal Street.  
Photo credit: BerryDunn*

Of the businesses surveyed, 73% indicated that a marketing strategy for the district is needed, and 89% indicated a need for recruitment programs to attract new businesses.

## Diagnostic

Millbury's downtown businesses are geographically spread throughout the district along Elm Street, Canal Street, South Main Street and River Street. Because of the geography of downtown, many businesses do not have as much visibility as they would in a compact downtown along one main street.

The businesses are trying to recoup their losses in revenue and foot traffic incurred by COVID-19. There have been a few bright spots to the area with the addition of a new brewery, two bakeries and a hair salon – showing the potential for economic growth in the area.

A comprehensive shared marketing strategy could identify opportunities for cross promotion which could help to grow the customer base of participating businesses by leveraging the current customer base of other businesses. The Town already has the draw of a major area shopping center and opportunities to capture some of that traffic would be beneficial to the Downtown district. Marketing efforts can highlight events and activities for businesses as well as the Town and other organizations to create a sense of place and identify Millbury Center as a hub of activity.

A district brand identity would help to open up Millbury Center to potential visitors and ultimately, new businesses. A branding initiative would serve to promote the district as well as specific businesses by linking businesses to the brand. The strategy for this initiative should involve social media, targeted advertising and other relevant media outlets. This brand identity could also be incorporated into a business attraction initiative used by the Town to cultivate, attract and grow new business opportunities.

## Action Items

- **Develop a brand/image for the area** – Armory Village and Millbury Center have been used. History, culture and uniqueness of the area are important and relevant to the branding process.
- **Build on the revitalization that has already been instituted in the area** – people have seen an ongoing transformation and now is the perfect time to brand/rebrand the district.
- **Establish brand recognition** – Once the brand is established it can be used in various applications – this should be seen as a starting point for other projects that were proposed through the LRRP initiative including wayfinding signage, arts initiatives and events, and communications.



*Armory Village Clock in the revitalized Lower Common. Photo credit: BerryDunn*

## Process

### Branding Effort

- **Select a team to work on this effort** – it should be comprised of key stakeholders from the Town – officials, cultural representatives and business owners. This team should work to determine the "Name" and "Look" of the area and consider the various uses of the brand.
- **Hire graphic designer** – consider using a local designer that knows the area and can reflect that in the design that this is a special and unique area of Millbury. The designer should also be able to apply this new look to your marketing efforts – for various applications and for use by the area businesses.
- **Build on and complement what has been done in the area** – wayfinding, streetscapes, etc. Adopt a Banner program is a visual way to launch the new brand and market the area. See if new brand can be incorporated into existing signage improvements.

### Marketing Effort

- Develop a Marketing and Communications Plan – Consider whether it can be done in-house or if there is a need to hire a communications professional. This will affect the project's budget structure. Consider utilizing an intern from a local college or funding this position to both market the district businesses and to market the district to foster economic development.
- This plan will be the roadmap to enhance the Millbury Center brand year-round and should incorporate how you communicate that "you should come to Millbury Center" – 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 Millbury" with a calendar of events, businesses and restaurants. Also consider a section to focus on new business development and attraction.
- This plan will serve as a feeder to events marketing for the area – events that should encourage patrons to explore the Downtown area.
- 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.
- Concentrate on the excitement in the area – Focus should be on new and existing businesses, not what's wrong with the area, but what's great and unique about it and its businesses, history and culture. The revitalization taking place is a start-off point for what's new, what's here and what's to come in Millbury Center.
- 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.
- Enabling businesses with the ability to self-promote and better market their businesses will serve to draw more traffic to the area.
- Marketing partnerships within the district will enable businesses to expand their reach and audience.



*Puffin's Restaurant, North Main Street. Photo credit: BerryDunn*



*Felter's Mill business directory sign. Photo credit: BerryDunn*



Where to S...



Fast Facts



Food & Bev



Top Pics



Quizzes



Takeovers



Polls

POSTS

REELS

IGTV

TAGGED



Source: VisitGreenvilleSC  
Instagram page

## Best Practice

# VisitGreenvilleSC



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

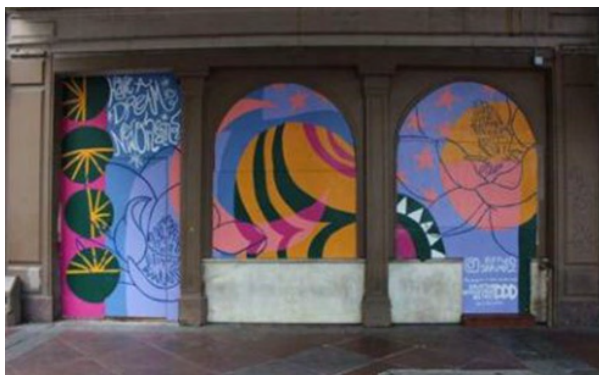
- Develop public, private and nonprofit partnerships to support the marketing initiative.
- Engage the business community by clearly identifying the benefits to businesses of participating in the marketing effort. (I.e., how will promoting the Town help an individual business?)
- Provide information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



Source: VisitGreenvilleSC.com

## 2. Activate Vacant Storefronts and Public Spaces through a Public Art Initiative

Category		Private Realm
Location		Study Area
Origin		Discussions with Town staff
Budget		<p>Low Budget (&lt;\$50,000)</p> <p><b>Funding Opportunities</b> (See Funding Table in Appendix F for details):</p> <p>Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds  MA Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program  Commonwealth Places  Hometown Grant Program  Seed Grants</p>
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years) - initial round of funding can be implemented within one year
Risk		Medium Risk – requires interest and support from private property owners and the community
Key Performance Indicators		Visitors to Millbury Center, recognition of and engagement with art installations
Partners & Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Planning &amp; Development Department</b> – to manage and organize the program</li> <li>• <b>Public Works Department</b> – to provide support for any activities or installations in the public right-of-way. Local artists – to partner with the Town and property owners to create public art</li> <li>• <b>Property owners</b> – to partner with the Town and artist to provide a venue for art</li> <li>• <b>Community groups</b> – to assist with promotion of the program and organize events to support the program (e.g. art walks, community paint days)</li> <li>• <b>Millbury Cultural Arts Council</b> – to assist with the organization, management and promotion of the program</li> </ul>



*Image of Vacant Storefront Program, Downtown NOLA, New Orleans, LA.  
Photo credit: Downtown NOLA*

## Diagnostic

The number of vacant storefronts and underused public spaces throughout Millbury's town center has been a challenge to attracting activity in the district. While the Town has completed Phase I of a significant redevelopment plan, including streetscape improvements and redevelopment of the Upper and Lower Commons, the vacancies downtown continue to be an obstacle to economic growth.

Millbury has been committed to enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the Town Center to increase pedestrian activity in underused public spaces and throughout the district. New infrastructure improvements have contributed to creating a more attractive downtown. Public art installations could further enhance the attractiveness of the district by creating a sense of place with installations, murals, and temporary public art that is unique to Millbury. Additionally, art installations in vacant storefronts could showcase how those spaces could be occupied and invite public engagement and discussion on the future growth and development of Millbury.

Working with artists, community groups, and students can draw new activity to the Town Center, by engaging a diverse group of residents, outside of the business community.



*Underused open space on Elm Street. Photo credit: BerryDunn*

## Action Items

- Identify vacant and underused storefronts and properties and engage owners to participate in the program, focusing on local owners.
- Recruit artists to participate in the program through a call for art or commissioning of a work in a specific location.
- Work with community groups and volunteers to create programming to promote and support the public art initiative and help to ensure the program's success.



*Vacant storefront on Elm Street. Photo credit: BerryDunn*

## Process

### Property Owner Participation

- Identify vacant and underused storefronts that would be appropriate for this project. Focus on locally-owned properties first. There is a higher likelihood of participation from owners who are also community members.
- Consider the location. Activation of storefronts that are in close proximity to struggling businesses will help give those businesses a boost. Activation near thriving businesses will benefit from the already existing foot traffic. Balance the selection of activation locations so that those visiting the locations experience the thriving businesses of downtown and also have the opportunity to support struggling businesses.
- Consider the timing. Recruitment of landlords and storefront owners can happen before recruitment of artists. Knowing what types of spaces are available will draw more place-based response for activation.
- Engage landlords by presenting the project as a partnership in the success of the Town as a whole. Communicate that this is a meaningful way to enhance the reputation of the building/landlord as one who cares about and supports their community.
- Pitch the project as an opportunity to market their leasable/salable space. A successful program undoes itself- the temporary activation boosts foot traffic to the space, generating leads for new tenants and resulting in new leases.
- Provide financial incentives to support the building owners (especially the first one as a proof of concept to attract others). This could include: a temporary use fee or a voucher to artists to procure space to look more like a traditional lease.
- Clearly communicate implementation and management strategies up front so owners feel comfortable.
- Create a low-barrier process for owner participation. Create a submission form requesting contact information and level of access that can be provided to artists.

### Artist Recruitment

- Make sure you have landlords committed to participate before starting the recruitment process.
- Provide support to artists throughout the process. Plan for a three to six month support process from creation through display.
- Art competitions require work in advance of compensation/reward. Best practice requires limited inputs of artist time on the front end (such as submission of prior work and qualifications) and production of new work once the opportunity is secured.
- A stipend for art work should be included in order to compensate artists for their work.
- Seek artists via social media groups, art fair lists, neighboring community art commissions, nearby art schools, etc.
- Directly commissioning a piece may be a better strategy than a competition if there is limited interest. Conversely, working with local schools and their art departments/teachers would also be a possible approach.

### Management

- Create a follow-up plan of regular check-ins with the owner and lessee to ensure the installation is complying with agreed upon parameters. Have a plan to shut down activations that do not follow the rules.
- Determine ways to connect the activation locations. Set up a temporary webpage that has information about all of the storefronts participating and each artist. Create a QR code to put up in each storefront.
- Ideally, art installations should be for at least 60 days to make it worthwhile for the occupant and then have a rolling 30 day expulsion clause for no cause going forward to allow for the space to be rented.

### Other Considerations

- Consider focusing art around a theme. This could include the economic recovery and revitalization of Millbury Center, with storefront activation to share information about the revitalization project and engage the public in a discussion about downtown.



Photo credit: Newton Community Pride

Best Practice

# WindowART



Private Realm

## Best Practice

WindowART is a public art project, sponsored by a local community organization, Newton Community Pride. The purpose of the program is to repurpose currently vacant storefront windows as a new art venue, to engage pedestrians with works by local artists. Newton Community Pride recognized the detriment to the downtown district that resulted from vacant storefronts and leveraged an opportunity to support local artists.

The program was implemented in partnership with the organization's FenceART program, using a similar process. A public call for art was issued and a jury of professional artists selected works to be featured through the project.

All selected artwork was printed on 3' x 4' vinyl banners, which made for easy installation and consistency of final products. For this project, artists submitted already produced artwork to be printed and displayed.

The greatest challenge in this initiative was gaining support and permission from landlords. Absentee landlords are often not motivated to improve the vibrancy of downtown or the aesthetic appeal of their storefront. Providing a benefit to the property owner as part of the program will help to gain owner participation. Newton Community Pride used local media through press releases, online publications, and social media to communicate information about the program and to issue a "Call for Interested Landlords".

## Key Takeaways:





- Think of empty storefronts as an opportunity for creative artistic expression to energize the commercial area.
- Partners are necessary so that collaboration can take place smoothly among the community organizations, Town, businesses and arts community.
- Publicize the project. This draws community interest, reinforces artists' involvement, and attracts potential landlord to participate.
- Leverage the arts community in the area, including arts organizations, students, makers, and colleges and universities.
- Promote the program's benefits to landlords. This could include a stipend to participate or just the increased positive exposure of the space as a desirable downtown commercial location.



*WindowART, Newton, MA. Photo credit: Newton Community Pride*

### 3. Establish a Downtown Façade Improvement Grant Program

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Category		Private Realm
Location		Study Area
Origin		Town staff, business community
Budget		<p>Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)</p> <p><b>Funding Opportunities:</b></p> <p>Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds            Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)            Mini-Entitlement Program</p>
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years) - can be implemented within one year
Risk		Low Risk – political will, interest from the business community, funding from the Town
Key Performance Indicators		Implementation of beautification and façade improvement projects within the study area and improved aesthetic of Millbury Center.
Partners & Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Planning &amp; Development Department</b> – to manage the implementation and monitoring of the program</li> <li>• <b>Building Department</b> – to provide support to applicants in the permitting process</li> <li>• <b>Planning Board</b> – to provide support for the development of the program and review of applications</li> <li>• <b>Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce</b> - to promote the program to Millbury business members</li> <li>• <b>Business and property owners</b> - to participate in the program and provide feedback on program development and process</li> </ul>

## Diagnostic

The Town of Millbury has been actively investing in the physical revitalization of public spaces in the Town Center. The Town would like to encourage investment in the private realm to enhance the physical appearance of many of the districts older buildings that are in need of renewal.

The goal of these physical enhancements is to create a safe and attractive place to do business and encourage commercial and social activity in Millbury Center. The economic impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak 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 Millbury. Similarly, the appearance of some commercial buildings is a deterrent for potential customers as well. Businesses and property owners would benefit from façade improvements that could attract more customers or new tenants, for vacant spaces.

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 Millbury residents and to maintain the viability of the commercial district. Creating a safe, attractive and walkable district is key to increasing activity and attracting new businesses and customers to Millbury Center.

A facade grant program would support local businesses in making improvements to building exteriors. This program would build upon the Town's investment in downtown infrastructure and prior funding for façade improvements for private property owners. Visible façade improvements throughout the district 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 complement the public infrastructure improvements and will make the Town a more desirable place for new businesses and customers.

## Action Items

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



*Barber shop on Elm Street. Photo credit: BerryDunn*



*Storefronts along Main Street. 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:** 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.
- **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 conserve 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.
- **Program area:** The program can be open to all commercial properties in the Town or limited to the Town Center study area. If the program is limited to a specific area, provide a clear map of the program area.
- **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.



*Calabria Ristorante, South Main Street. Photo credit: BerryDunn*

- **Design guidelines:** The Town should provide general design guidance for applicants, including preferred styles, materials, and examples of desired improvements.
- **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, or microenterprise businesses (fewer than five employees).
- **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).



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

## Best Practice

# Quinsigamond Village Storefront and Façade Improvement Grant Program

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## 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*

## 4. Create a low-stress, engaging bicycle connection between the Blackstone Valley Bike Path and the Town Center

Category		Public Realm
Location		North Main Street (Route 122A), West Street, Water Street and Elm Street, from the Blackstone Valley Bike Path parking area to Millbury Center
Origin		Site visit, discussing with Town staff
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
		<b>Funding Opportunities</b> (See Funding Table in the Appendix F for details): Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds MA Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program Shared Streets and Spaces Hometown Grant Program Commonwealth Places Community Change Grants
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk - requires community support and coordination with MassDOT
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase bicycle usage along the new route.</li> <li>• Install a comfortable, all ages and abilities bicycle route.</li> <li>• Reduce crash rates for all modes along North Main Street.</li> <li>• Patronage by people on bikes to local businesses and attractions in the Town Center</li> </ul>
Partners & Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Planning &amp; Development Department</b> – oversee the project and hiring of a consultant, coordinate the wayfinding signage with the brand development initiative</li> <li>• <b>Department of Public Works</b> – provide guidance and feedback on the design and location of the bicycle facilities, oversee the implementation</li> <li>• <b>MassDOT</b> – provide guidance on complete street design</li> <li>• <b>Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor</b> – assist in promoting the bicycle connection</li> <li>• <b>Community volunteer groups</b> – assist in promoting the bicycle connection and encouraging cycling in the Town, work with local businesses to host events and sponsor promotions related to the bicycle connection</li> <li>• <b>Abutting businesses and attractions</b> – assist in promoting the bicycle connection and encouraging cycling in the Town, work with community groups to host events and sponsor promotions related to the bicycle connection</li> </ul>



*Route 122A, facing north. Photo credit: BerryDunn*

## Diagnostic

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for increasing the presence of safe, connected active transportation infrastructure in communities throughout the Commonwealth. The Town of Millbury has access to many recreational amenities including the Blackstone Valley Bike Path, which terminates on a heavily-trafficked state road approximately one mile north of Millbury Town Center.

The creation of a low-stress, highly engaging bicycle connection between the Blackstone Valley Bike Path and the Town Center would help to increase bicycle utilization along the route. A designated bike lane, where the right-of-way width allows, and/or shared lane markings ("sharrows") paired with signage for wayfinding and speed advisories would establish such a connection between the bike path and the Town Center. Safety improvements to the intersection of Main St. at Martin St. will enable access between the route and Millbury Junior/Senior High School.

While a shared lane section where parking exists on Main Street will provide connectivity to the Town Center for highly confident cyclists, a well-branded, low-stress route on West, Waters and Elm Street would enable access to businesses at Felter's Mill, the Asa Waters Mansion, and the Millbury Public Library. It would also highlight and support the utilization of new roadscape improvements on Elm Street.

Appropriate wayfinding signage at the bike path terminus and along the route, could guide users to Town attractions and make users aware of nearby amenities in Millbury Center.

As a Complete Streets community, Millbury is committed to "creating a transportation network that meets the needs of individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes", and to be inclusive of users "of all ages, abilities and income levels... to efficiently and safely travel between home, school, work, recreation facilities, and commercial venues." This project will directly address the goals laid out in the Town's Complete Streets Policy by creating a safe bicycle route and improving connectivity between the commercial district and bike path as well as the Junior/Senior High School.



*Blackstone Valley Bike Path parking area. Photo credit: Google Maps.*

## Action Items

- Secure funding to hire a consultant to design wayfinding, pavement marking and signage plans.
- Develop pavement marking and signage plans for review.
- Install bike lane/shared lane signs and pavement markings along North Main Street, West, Waters, and Elm Streets between the Blackstone Valley Bike Path trail head and Town Center.
- Install intersection improvements at North Main Street and Martin Street.
- Install wayfinding signs connecting the proposed route.
- Install a digital information kiosk at the trail head parking lot with a map of
- Millbury Center that can be updated with business information, arts and cultural events, and more.



*Intersection of North Main Street and Martin Street. Photo credit: BerryDunn*



*West Street, facing west. Photo credit: BerryDunn*

## Process

### Conduct an existing conditions assessment:

- Assess road width and determine where bike lane markings and shared street markings should be installed.
- Assess traffic speeds on Route 122A and consider options for reducing speeds on, either through a reduced speed limit or signage.
- Consider a truck apron at Martin Street to slow traffic while also maintaining road capacity for large trucks.

### Develop plans, specifications and estimate for pavement marking, intersection treatment and signage.

- Coordinate with MassDOT and Public Works for approvals.
- Engage in a community design and educational process to promote the benefits of the new low-stress route, walking and biking, cultural and recreational connections.

### Develop a signage plan for wayfinding and route marking.

- As part of Project 1, work with a marketing and design consultant to develop graphics for a Town Brand to be used for wayfinding signage to promote Town Center businesses.
- Signage should include route markers as well as directional signage in the Town Center to highlight distances to popular destinations (library, Felter's Mill, Town Hall, etc.)
- Work with the marketing and design consultant to develop a design for an informational kiosk to be posted at the bike path terminus.

### Install pavement markings and signage.

- Install pavement markings, intersection treatment and signage. A green painted lane or marking and bike lane/ shared street signage will increase visibility of the bike lane to motorists.
- Conduct evaluation of the project including testimonials from people riding bicycles, walking, and driving; collect multimodal speed and volume counts, evaluate crash data 1 year, and 3 years post installation.
- Engage the community in the implementation process. Consider opportunities to incorporate participatory arts projects along the route.

### Promote the project and encourage bicycling.

- Engage the business community to promoting the route in their marketing initiatives or participating in a [Bicycle Benefits](#) program, to offer specials or discounts for customers arriving by bike.
- Work with local bicycling advocacy groups to host rides to Millbury or conduct safe cycling workshops.
- Promote the bike route in Millbury Center marketing initiatives and through local cycling groups.



Mock-up of proposed route. Source: GoogleEarth, Neighborways.



Example of bicycle lane marking. Photo credit: Transpo Industries, Inc., [www.transpo.com](http://www.transpo.com).



Photo credit: Kenneth C. Zirkel

## Best Practice

# Navigating the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway



## Best Practice

The Minuteman Commuter Bikeway is a 10-mile bikeway, extending from the Bedford Depot Park in Bedford, MA to the Alewife MBTA station in Cambridge.

The Navigating the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway study was a joint planning effort with the Towns of Arlington, Bedford and Lexington. The goal of the plan was to develop a navigational system for the bikeway, in order to better connect users to the surrounding Towns and amenities and to appeal to a broader range of users.

The study found that there was a lack of consistency in signage and branding of the Bikeway. Additionally, amenities in nearby town centers were often unknown to Bikeway users. The study proposes consistent signage and enhanced trailhead and wayside information kiosks to orient users and show the proximity to popular destinations in town centers.

An important recommendation of the plan is for the collaboration among Town agencies and with local stakeholder groups to install the proposed improvements and to coordinate maintenance and management of the trail. Maintaining a clean and safe Bikeway is key to the success and continued use of the trail.





## Key Takeaways

- Consistent signage, markings and logos helps users identify and navigate the route.
- Information kiosks can help recreational users feel comfortable using the path and help to identify other sites to explore near the path that they might not have been aware of.
- Solicit support from community groups (cycling groups, advocacy organizations, youth organizations, etc.) to help with promotion and maintenance.



*New trail entrance at Lake Street in Arlington, MA. Photo credit: Google*

## 5. Implement Phases II, III and IV of the Armory Village Revitalization Project

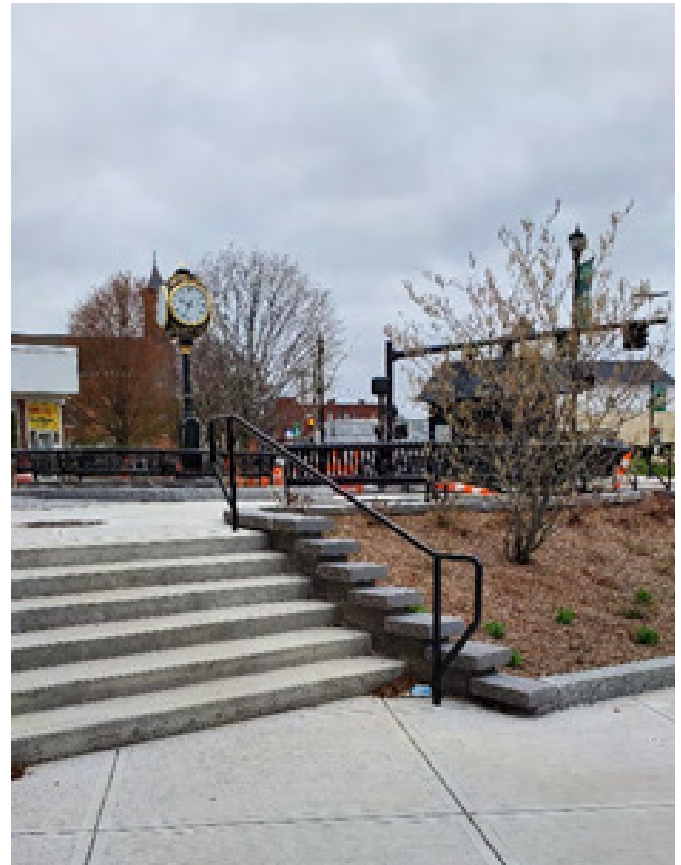
Category		Public Realm
Location		Study Area
Origin		Town staff, Board of Selectmen
Budget		<p>Large Budget (\$200,000+)</p> <p>Funding Opportunities (see Funding Table in Appendix F for details):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds</li> <li>MA Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program</li> <li>MassWorks Infrastructure Program</li> </ul>
Timeframe		Medium Term (5-10 years)
Risk		<p>Medium Risk – funding from the Town, support from elected officials. The Town has already invested in Phase I design and implementation and Phase II design.</p>
Key Performance Indicators		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful implementation of the proposed infrastructure improvements; increase in activity in the Town Center.</li> </ul>
Partners & Resources		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Planning &amp; Development Department</b> – provide oversight for the design, review, and implementation of the project and to lead community engagement efforts</li> <li><b>Redevelopment Authority</b> – assist in the management of the design, review, and implementation of the project</li> <li><b>Planning Board</b> – facilitate the design process and conduct a review of the proposed development plans</li> <li><b>Board of Selectmen</b> - secure and/or allocate funding for the design and implementation</li> <li><b>Department of Public Works</b> - oversee the construction of the project</li> </ul>

## Diagnostic

The Town of Millbury is in the process of designing and implementing the multi-phase Armory Village Revitalization Project. This project is a result of several years of visioning and planning to provide public infrastructure improvements to create a more accessible, sustainable, and livable Millbury Center. Implementation of Phase I of the project was completed in 2020 and includes the following:

- Driveway aprons, crosswalks, ramps, sidewalk improvements and other facilities to improve accessibility.
- Curb extensions, bike racks and a new pedestrian plaza to improve pedestrian and bicycle access and connectivity.
- Bioretention features to improve water quality and reduce stormwater runoff.
- Decorative elements, such as, lighting, landscaping and signage to enhance the appearance of the Town Center and create a sense of place.

Continuing to move forward with the design and implementation of this project is important to the Town and the overall success and recovery for the Town Center. Realization of the completed revitalization project will provide the infrastructure improvements and sense of place that will allow businesses to thrive and make Millbury Center a safe and accessible place for all residents and visitors.



*Renovated Lower Common. Photo credit: BerryDunn*

## Action Items

- Secure funding and identify a timeline for Phase II construction.
- Secure funding for design and engineering for Phases III and IV.



*New sidewalks, curb extensions, plantings, and crosswalk on Main Street. Photo credit: BerryDunn*



*New sidewalks and bioretention features on Main Street. Photo credit: BerryDunn*

## Process

### Phase II – Construction

- Identify potential funding sources for Phase II construction. If necessary, submit grant applications for funding.
- Work with the selected contractor to develop a timeline for construction and identify ways to minimize disruption to navigation of the Town Center.
- Conduct outreach to business owners who may be impacted by the construction.

### Phase III and IV – Design

- Identify potential funding sources for Phase III and IV design. If necessary, submit grant applications for funding.
- Work with the selected design professionals to develop a timeline for the design process including public outreach.
- Early in the design process, solicit input from the community and feedback based on their experience of the Phase I improvements. Offer multiple modes of participation, including public meetings, online and paper surveys.
- Use the existing revitalized spaces to provide demonstrations (how do rain gardens work), presentations, or community information sessions.
- Provide regular updates to the community throughout the design process.
- Identify ways that the community can be part of the revitalization project- expansion of the Adopt-A-Pot program, hosting events at the Town Commons, seasonal decorating of the renovated areas, etc.
- Incorporate the branding initiative in the design of site amenities and wayfinding signage for Phases III and IV.
- Remember to celebrate and promote the project, especially at construction start and completion. Use newly renovated public spaces to bring the community together and promote Millbury Center.

### During Construction

- Maintain communication with the public about the ongoing construction. Host public meetings to provide updates on the construction, timeline, and any other unforeseen conditions. Keep information up to date on the project website.
- Maintain communication with impacted business owners. Keep businesses and property owners informed of the construction timeline and planned disruption to access and utilities.
- Work with owners to identify solutions to minimize disruptions to their business and access to their storefronts.
- Provide temporary signage for wayfinding, where pedestrian routes may be disrupted and locational signage for businesses whose visibility may be limited during construction. Incorporate the Town's brand in the temporary signage.
- Post renderings of the future improvements in public spaces (Town Hall, library, Town Commons) to engage the public and make residents and visitors aware of the coming improvements.



*Municipal parking lot to be configured as part of Phase II.  
Photo credit: BerryDunn*



*New pedestrian crossing signal. Photo credit: BerryDunn*



Best Practice

## Broughton Streetscapes Project



## Best Practice

The City of Savannah, Georgia is in the process of implementing a multi-phase streetscape improvement project on Broughton Street, in downtown Savannah. The project is intended to provide a more cohesive look and feel and to create an active street that is accessible to users of all ages and abilities, while preserving the historic integrity of Broughton Street. The improvements include a festival zone for two blocks of Broughton Street, which will include brick pavers that will be elevated to sidewalk level. This area will be used for special events. The project also involves significant work to underground utility infrastructure.

The City of Savannah, has been proactive in reaching out to the community for feedback and anticipating potential challenges during construction. The City hosts regular biweekly community meetings via Zoom, to update interested community members on the construction progress. These presentations are then shared publicly on the City's project website. A survey was also developed to gather feedback from business owners and residents on the impact of construction and to address any questions or concerns.

The City has been proactive in supporting businesses that are impacted by the construction and working with owners to minimize construction impacts to the extent possible. Pedestrian access to Broughton Street and all businesses will be maintained throughout the duration of construction. In addition, the City worked with the design team to create temporary signage for the construction area. Directional signage guide pedestrians to alternate routes. A business directory sign shows the location of businesses along Broughton Street.

The City has maintained open and honest communication about construction timelines, utility service interruptions, and unforeseen issues during the course of the project, allowing businesses and residents to plan around the construction schedule. This open communication is important to ensuring support of the project and its overall success.



Business directory sign. Source: [www.savannahga.gov](http://www.savannahga.gov)



Broughton Street construction. Source: [www.savannahga.gov](http://www.savannahga.gov)

## Other Initiatives to Consider

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STAFF CAPACITY

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 small communities, including Millbury, 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. Adding staff capacity, including an Economic Development Coordinator and a Grant Writer was a recommendation in Millbury's Comprehensive Master Plan, completed in 2019. The need for this additional capacity has increased as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and the recovery efforts necessary to create a more sustainable Millbury Center. While a full-time permanent staff person is desirable, this position could be temporary, in order to support the development of the projects outlined in this plan, and could be funded with local American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds through December 2024.

The impact of the outbreak on local economies and the resulting changes in how small businesses operate has exposed the lack of support and organization from municipalities for business communities, usually due to limited resources. At this unique moment, Millbury 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.

### REGULARIZE ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH TO SMALL BUSINESSES IN THE DISTRICT

All of the projects outlined in this Plan have community and business outreach as an important part of the project process. Spending time to build relationships with business and property owners is an important first step in a successful economic development and recovery strategy. Business owners who know and trust Town officials and who have experienced the benefits of Town-led programs, will be more likely to participate in future initiatives, provide in-kind support or donations for community events, and encourage fellow business owners to work with the Town.

Rather than having to canvass for participation for each initiative, having a regular group of trusted stakeholders in the business community can facilitate the process for Town Center projects. Consider hosting a monthly or bimonthly meeting, or, if a meeting is too time consuming, sending an email and/or print newsletter with updates on economic recovery programs, new development coming to the Town Center, and funding opportunities for businesses. The current moment, with the focus on economic recovery and numerous funding opportunities, is an ideal time for both business owners and the Town to benefit from collaboration.



Lower Common, Millbury Center. Photo credit: BerryDunn

## IMPLEMENT SHORT-TERM POP-UP ACTIVATION IN VACANT AND UNDERUSED SPACES

One project outlined in this Plan involves activation of vacant spaces through public art installations. It is recommended that the Town consider strategically implementing pop-up placemaking activation projects to support this public art project. 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. Providing pop-up activation demonstration projects could provide residents with an opportunity to envision a different future for Millbury Center and to think differently about development in their Town. Additionally, coordinating these activities and demonstration projects with the public art initiative will have an overall greater impact on successfully activating the Town Center.

### Short-Term Activation:

Activating parking lots for temporary events can spur foot traffic to existing businesses and generate momentum to drive redevelopment. Recommended locations include the lot and green space across Main Street from the Upper Commons and the parking area adjacent to the Lower Commons. Collaborate with community organizations about the potential to move events to this space as a strategy to activate spaces downtown (e.g., church picnic, school concert, pop-up market, holiday events, etc.).

### Medium-Term Activation:

Activating vacant and underused green spaces can make the pedestrian experience more human scale by filling in gaps in the urban fabric. When activating a broad open space, consider opportunities for enclosure by breaking down larger spaces to create more intimate settings. Create softness using murals, plantings, lighting and colorful seating and other features. Creating a gateway experiences, such as a canopy or pergola, will highlight the space and draw attention from the street. Consider what types of activities would be well received by the community, including movie nights, fire pits, swings or other play structures, temporary skating rink, or a dog run.

Any activation project requires building relationships with property owners and other community members who can provide support in implementing the project. Starting with a small project will allow the Town to gauge interest from the community and build a network of volunteers and community groups who can support future projects.

- [TBK Bank Plaza - Dallas, TX](#)
- [Pop-up community events, supported by the Musicant Group](#)
- [The Corner Spot - Ashland, MA](#)



Photo credit: The Corner Spot, Ashland, MA, [www.cornerspotashland.com](http://www.cornerspotashland.com)

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## Appendix A: Phase 1 Data Collection

Indicator	Required	Municipality	Study Area	Specific Site/ Location within Study Area	Type of Data	Recommended Data Sources	Other Potential Data Sources	Data	Complete (Y/N)?	Notes/Comments
Traffic (2019 or earlier) - Primary Street	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Mass DOT Traffic Volume	-	8189	Y	Required. Canal Street (2019)
Traffic (2019 or earlier) - Secondary Street	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Mass DOT Traffic Volume	-	12085	Y	Required. Summer Street (2019)
Average Annual Daily Vehicular Traffic (2020 or more recent) - Primary Street	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Local estimates (Interviews)	-	12170	Y	application for 19 Canal Street. Intersection of South Main and Canal (point 4)
Average Annual Daily Vehicular Traffic (2020 or more recent) - Secondary Street	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Local estimates (Interviews)	-	8190	Y	Traffic Study from 2021 development application for 19 Canal Street. Canal Street and Church Street (Point 2)
Total No. of Parking Spaces (On-Street and Off-street)	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Town parking maps (typically available for parking benefit districts)	Field survey during site visit; Aerial survey (Google Maps)		Y	Optional. No parking maps exist for the full study area.
Average Annual Daily Pedestrian Traffic (2019 or earlier) - Primary Street	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Downtown/commercial district organization pedestrian counter data (if available)	MassDOT Mobility Dashboard		Y	Optional. MassDOT Mobility Dashboard does not have pedestrian information for specific streets in the Town. Data is at the Townwide % change level.
Average Annual Daily Pedestrian Traffic (2020 or more recent) - Primary Street	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Downtown/commercial district organization pedestrian counter data (if available)	Mass DOT Mobility Dashboard		Y	Optional. MassDOT Mobility Dashboard does not have pedestrian information for specific streets in the Town. Data is at the Townwide % change level.
Average Annual Daily Pedestrian Traffic (2019) - Secondary Street	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Downtown/commercial district organization pedestrian counter data (if available)	Mass DOT Mobility Dashboard		Y	Optional. MassDOT Mobility Dashboard does not have pedestrian information for specific streets in the Town. Data is at the Townwide % change level.
Average Annual Daily Pedestrian Traffic (2020 or more recent) - Secondary Street	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Downtown/commercial district organization pedestrian counter data (if available)	Mass DOT Mobility Dashboard		Y	Optional. MassDOT Mobility Dashboard does not have pedestrian information for specific streets in the Town. Data is at the Townwide % change level.
Total Open/Public Space Area—parks + plazas	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (SF)	Town Open Space Map	Aerial survey (Google Maps)	242,188	Y	Town Common (0.4545 acres), Lower Town Common (400sqft), Veteran's Park. 4,200 sqft
Sidewalk Grade*	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (A, B, C, or Fail)	Site Visit	-	B	Y	
Street Trees and Benches Grade*	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (A, B, C, or Fail)	Site Visit	-	B	Y	
Lighting Grade*	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (A, B, C, or Fail)	Site Visit	-	B	Y	
Wayfinding/Signage Grade*	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (A, B, C, or Fail)	Site Visit	-	B	Y	
Roadbed and Crosswalks Grade*	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (A, B, C, or Fail)	Site Visit	-	B	Y	

Total No. of Storefronts	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Downtown/Commercial District organization database	Aerial survey (Google Maps)	121	Y	On-site count, follow-up Google Earth/Maps survey
Total Ground Floor Retail Space	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (SF)	Municipality land use maps (GIS), Municipality tax assessment, CoStar	Aerial survey (Google Maps)	136755	Y	Manual research into assessing database and Google maps
Total Ground Floor Office Space	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (SF)	Municipality land use maps (GIS), Municipality tax assessment, CoStar	Aerial survey (Google Maps)	44612	Y	Manual research into assessing database and Google maps
Total Ground Floor Manufacturing Space	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (SF)	Municipality land use maps (GIS), Municipality tax assessment, CoStar	Aerial survey (Google Maps)	37489	Y	Manual research into assessing database and Google maps
Window Grade*	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Qualitative (A,B, C or Fail)	Site Visit	-	B	Y	
Outdoor Display/Dining Grade*	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Qualitative (A,B, C or Fail)	Site Visit	-	B	Y	
Signage Grade*	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Qualitative (A,B, C or Fail)	Site Visit	-	B	Y	
Awning Grade*	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Qualitative (A,B, C or Fail)	Site Visit	-	C	Y	
Façade Grade*	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Qualitative (A,B, C or Fail)	Site Visit	-	C	Y	
Lighting Grade*	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Qualitative (A,B, C or Fail)	Site Visit	-	B	Y	
Total Resident Population (Current/2021 estimates)	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	Whole number)	Paid Proprietary Data Platforms including ESRI Business Analyst Online, PolicyMap, Social Explorer, Claritas	Municipality- level: US Census	1025	Y	From Esri Business Analyst. 2020
Median Household Income (Current/2021 estimates)	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Paid Proprietary Data Platforms including ESRI Business Analyst Online, PolicyMap, Social Explorer, Claritas	Municipality- level: US Census	55133	Y	From Esri Business Analyst. 2015-2019 ACS Estimate.
Median Age (Current/2021 estimates)	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Decimal)	Paid Proprietary Data Platforms including ESRI Business Analyst Online, PolicyMap, Social Explorer, Claritas	Municipality- level: US Census	43.6	Y	From Esri Business Analyst. 2020
Average Household Size (Current/2021 estimates)	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Decimal)	Paid Proprietary Data Platforms including ESRI Business Analyst Online, PolicyMap, Social Explorer, Claritas	Municipality- level: US Census	2	Y	
Population by Educational Attainment (Current/2021 estimates)	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Paid Proprietary Data Platforms including ESRI Business Analyst Online, PolicyMap, Social Explorer, Claritas	Municipality- level: US Census		Y	From Esri Business Analyst: Population 25+ Educational Attainment

Less than High School						101	Y	Assumed less than high school graduate (includes some high school)
High School Graduate (or GED)						260	Y	
Some College, No Degree						159	Y	
Associate Degree						88	Y	
Bachelor's Degree						188	Y	
Master's/Professional School Graduate Degree						63	Y	
Population by Age Distribution (Current/2021 estimates)	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Paid Proprietary Data Platforms including ESRI Business Analyst Online, PolicyMap, Social Explorer, Claritas	Municipality- level: US Census	Y  From Esri Business Analyst
Age 0-17						185	Y	
Age 18-20						8	Y	Esri has 18, 19 separately. 20-24 is grouped. Estimate based on assuming equal number by age.
Age 21-24						44	Y	Esri has 20-24 grouped. Estimate based on equal number by age.
Age 25-34						141	Y	
Age 35-45						139	Y	Seems to be an error. Assumed the high range should be 44 (45 appears twice)
Age 45-54						157	Y	
Age 55-64						146	Y	
Age 65-74						115	Y	
Age 75-84						56	Y	
Age 85+						34	Y	
Population by Race/Ethnicity (Current/2021 estimates)	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Paid Proprietary Data Platforms including ESRI Business Analyst Online, PolicyMap, Social Explorer, Claritas	Municipality- level: US Census	Y  From Esri Business Analyst. 2015-2019 ACS Estimate.
White Alone						1108	Y	
Black or African American Alone						10	Y	
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone						3	Y	
Asian Alone						8	Y	
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone						0	Y	
Some Other Race Alone						14	Y	
Two or More Races						39	Y	
Hispanic or Latino						69	Y	
Not Hispanic or Latino						1113	Y	
Total Workforce/Employees (2018 or more recent)	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Census Bureau OnTheMap	-	Y  Esri Business Analyst

Total Secondary/Post Secondary Student Population (2019 or more recent)	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Massachusetts Dept of Education	<a href="https://profiles.do.mass.edu/search/search.aspx?leftNavId=11238">https://profiles.do.mass.edu/search/search.aspx?leftNavId=11238</a>	526	Y	Optional. Not able to locate study area specific informaton. BerryDunn is continuing to look for this data. Note: National Center for Education Statistics were not current.
Total Annual Visitors (2019 or more recent)	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Annual report of cultural institutions; Tourism Bureau/Visitor Center data	-		Y	Optional. No study-wide numbers
Total No. of Businesses (March 2020) – by NAICS categories*	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Paid Proprietary Data Platforms including ESRI Business Analyst Online, PolicyMap, Social Explorer, Claritas	Downtown/commerial district organization database	137	Y	Esri Business Anaylst. 137 as of January 2020
Total No. of Businesses (Current/2021) – by NAICS categories*	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Site Visit	Downtown/commerial district organization database	153	Y	Detail on second tab.
Total No. of Business Closures (Since March 2020) – by NAICS categories*	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Local business surveys	Local estimates (Interviews); Downtown/commerial district organization database	4	Y	Comparison from 2019 and 2021 business lists, trimmed for the study area. Confirmed via email with Laurie and MDI clarification on count approach
Total No. of Vacant Storefronts (Current/2021)	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Site Visit	CoStar	11	Y	From site visit (18), reduced after clarification that interior and second floor vacancies should not be counted.
Vacant Space (Current/2021) - including office, retail, and manufacturing	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (SF)	Site Visit	CoStar	30488	Y	Estimated from Google Earth and assessor database
Average Asking Rent for Ground Floor Retail Space (Current/2021)	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (PSF) (Decimal)	Local estimates (Interviews)	CoStar	\$14/sf/year	Y	Input from call with Chris Naff (Board of Seletmen). Cell: 508-277-6275. CNaff@townofmillbury.net. Commercial Real Estate Broker
Average Asking Rent for Ground Floor Office Space (Current/2021)	TRUE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (PSF) (Decimal)	Local estimates (Interviews)	CoStar	\$17/sf/yr	Y	Input from call with Chris Naff (Board of Seletmen). Cell: 508-277-6275. CNaff@townofmillbury.net. Commercial Real Estate Broker
Is there a viable organization* acting as a steward for the study area?	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative	Site Visit and Stakeholder Interviews	-	No	Y	organization (Millbury Improvement Initiative). Was an all volunteer organization started in ~2002. Feel apart. Worried about staffing capacity to support this type of organization. There is a regional chamber (Geni Armstrong), they have a relationship with some
Annual Budget of District Management Organization	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	Quantitative (Whole number)	Site Visit and Stakeholder Interviews	-		Y	N/A

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## Appendix B: Business Survey Report

## Massachusetts DHCD Rapid Recovery Plan Program 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.)

### Millbury

Millbury Center

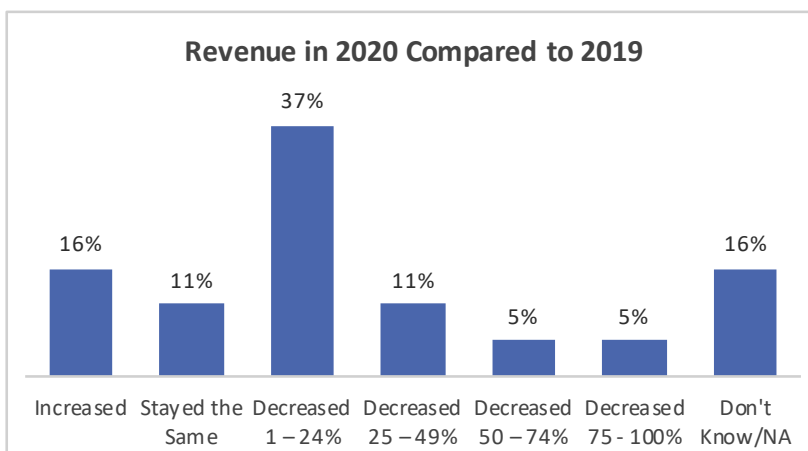
Responses: 19

### Impacts of COVID-19

#### Decline in Business Revenue

58% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019.

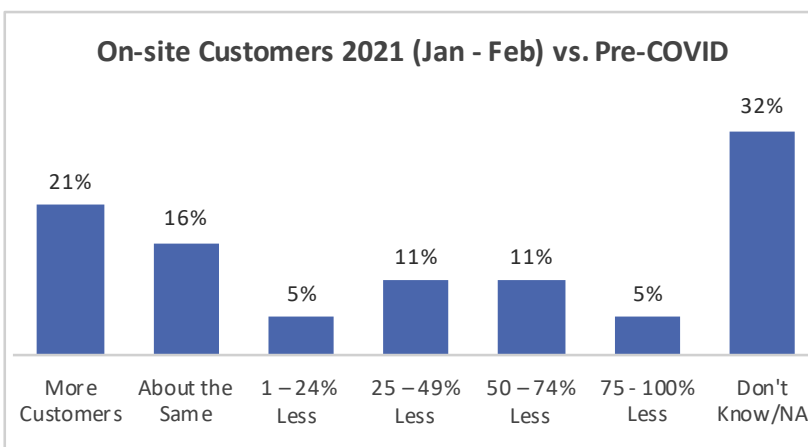
For 21% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more.



#### Less Foot Traffic in Commercial Area

32% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID.

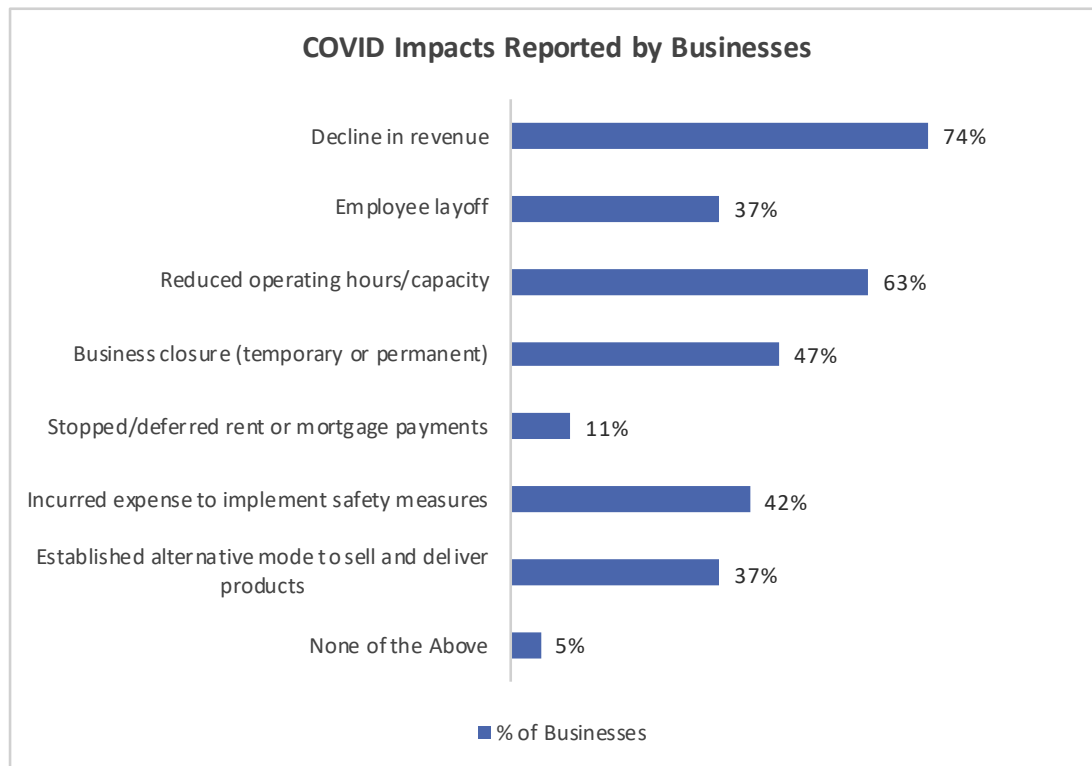
27% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more.



## Impacts of COVID-19 (cont'd)

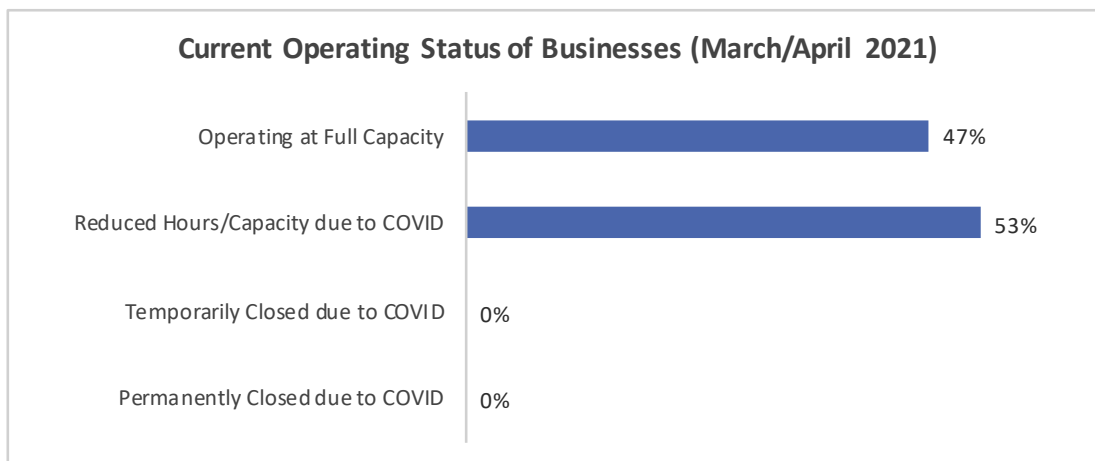
### Reported Impacts

95% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID.



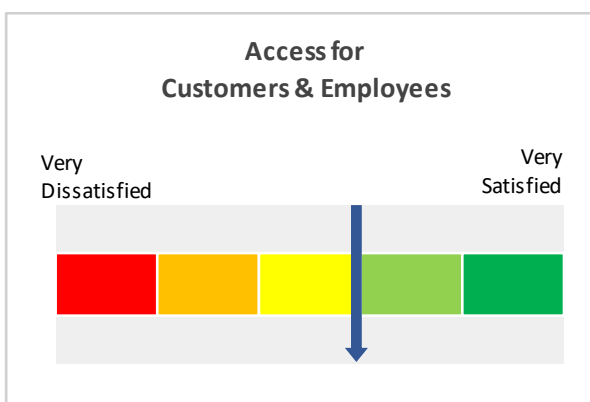
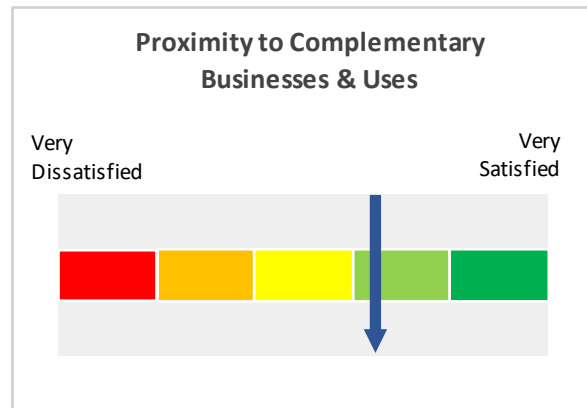
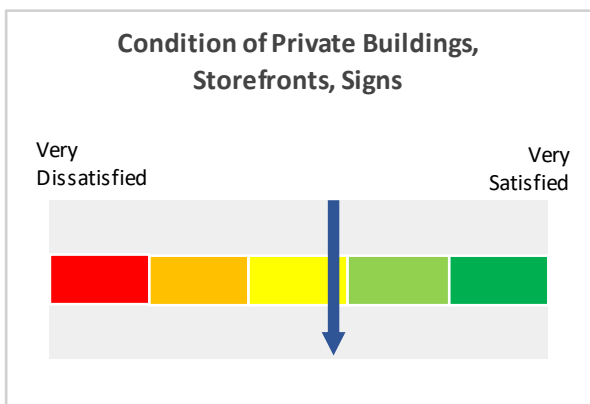
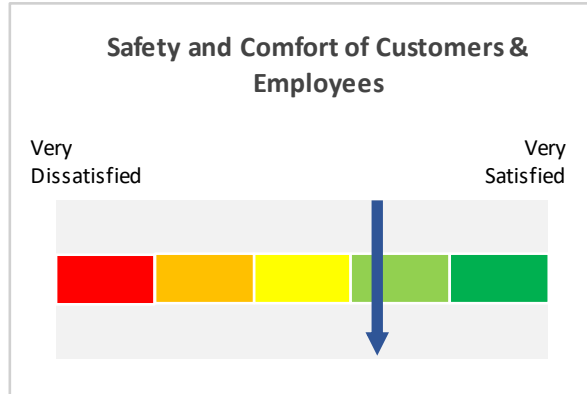
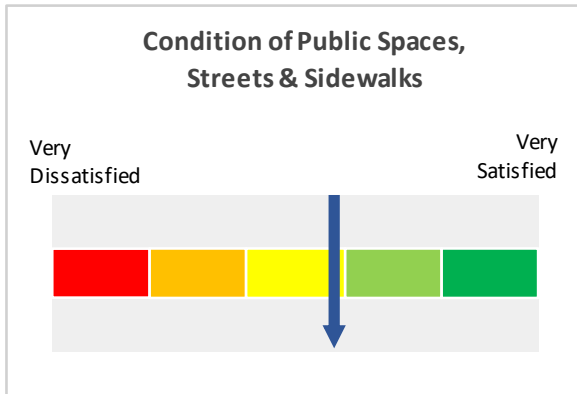
### Operating Status

At the time of the survey, 53% of businesses reported they were operating at reduced hours/capacity or closed.



## Business Satisfaction with Commercial District

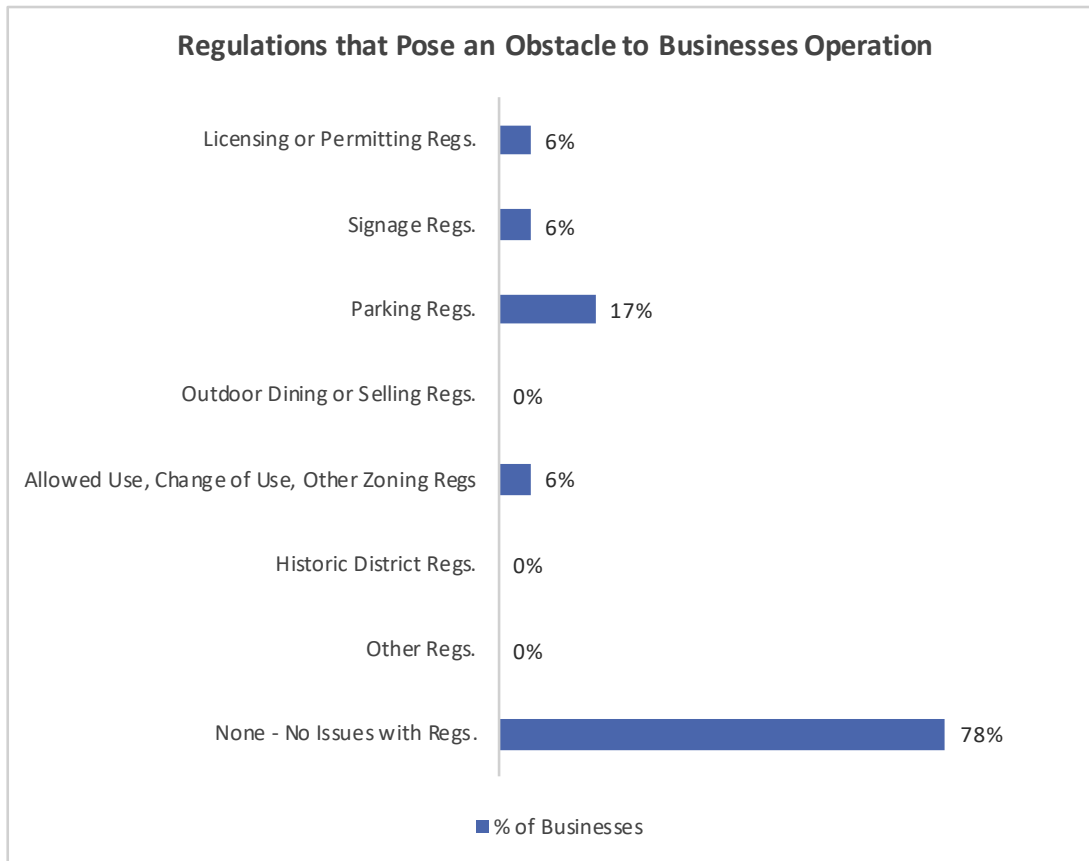
The charts below illustrate the average satisfaction rating among respondents regarding various elements.



## Business Satisfaction with Commercial District (cont'd)

### Regulatory Environment

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

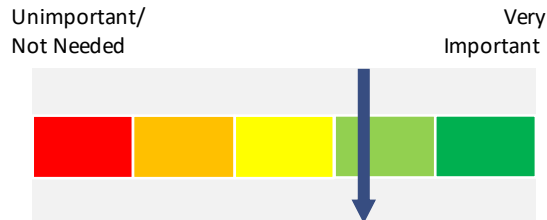


## Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

### Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access

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

#### Renovation of Storefronts/ Building Facades



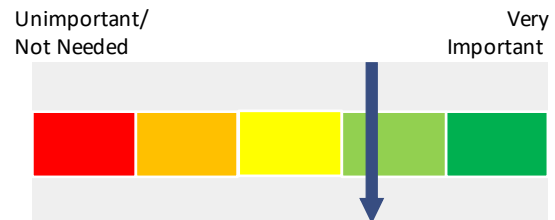
#### Improvements in Safety and/or Cleanliness



#### Improvement/Development of Public Spaces & Seating Areas



#### Changes in Public Parking Availability, Management or Policies



#### Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks



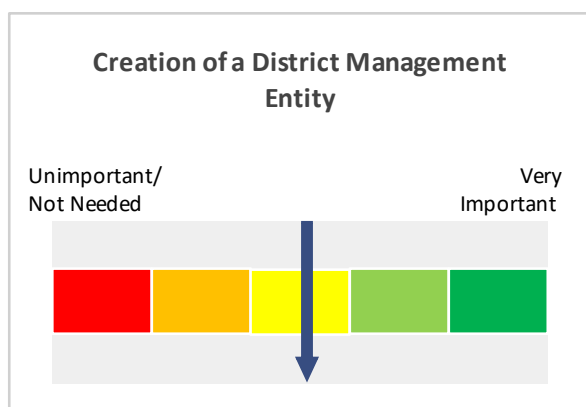
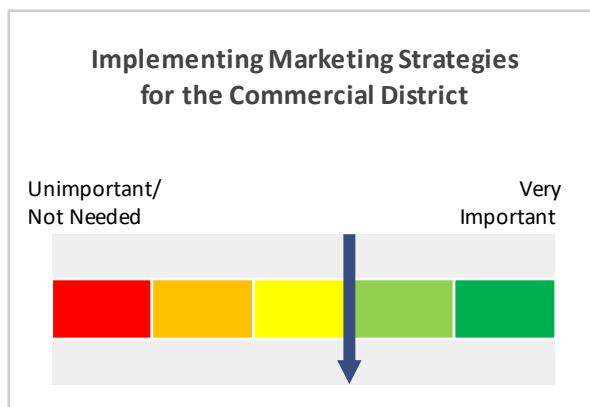
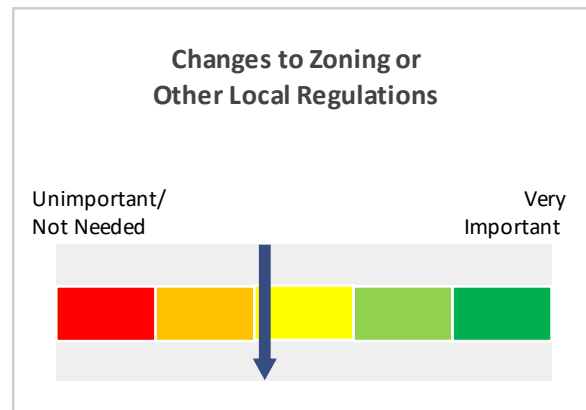
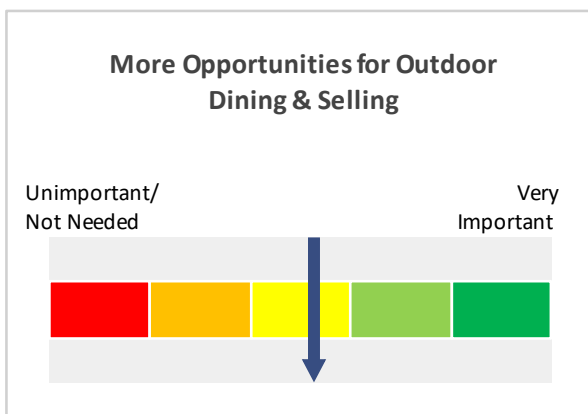
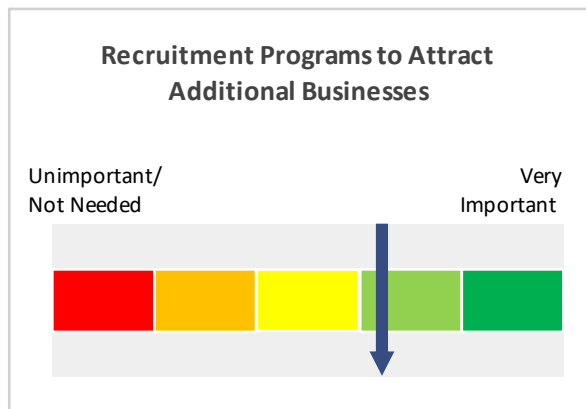
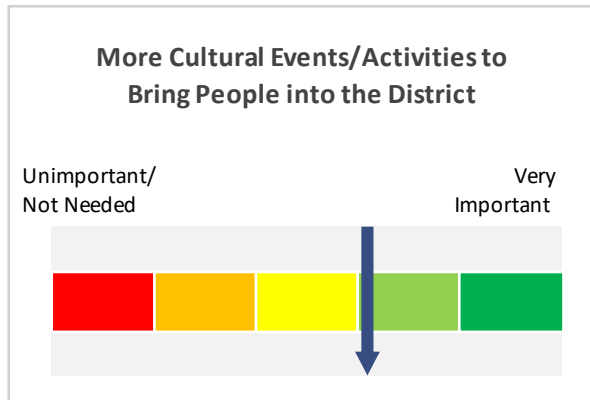
#### Amenity Improvements for Public Transit/Bike Users



## Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

### Attraction/Retention of Customers and Businesses

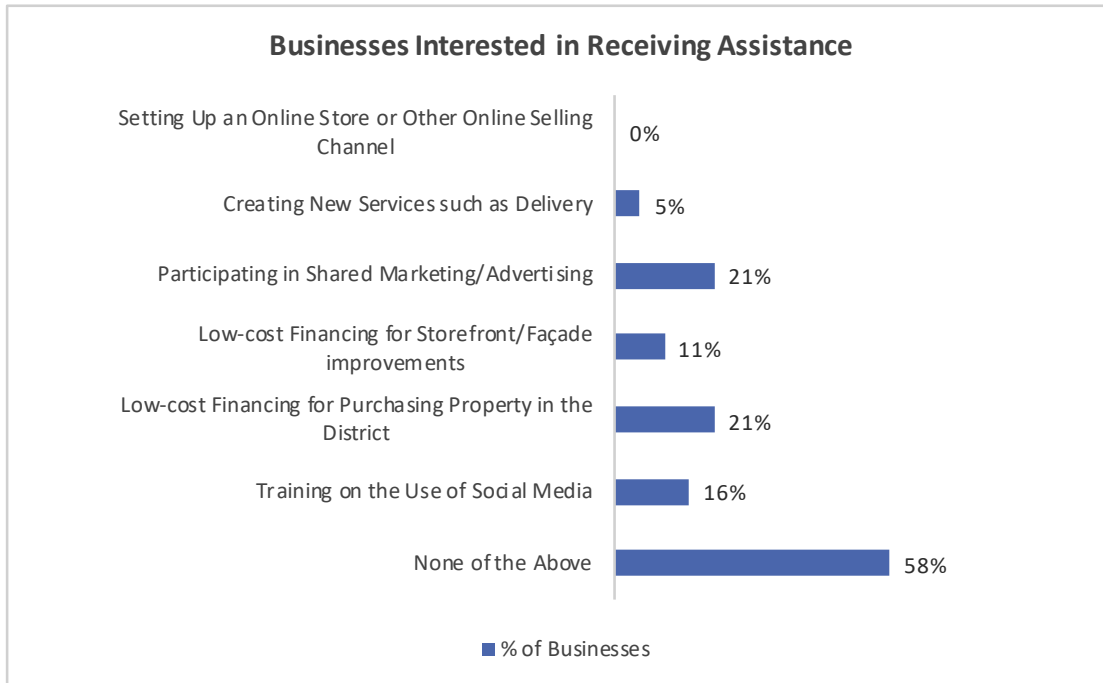
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



## Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

### Businesses Support

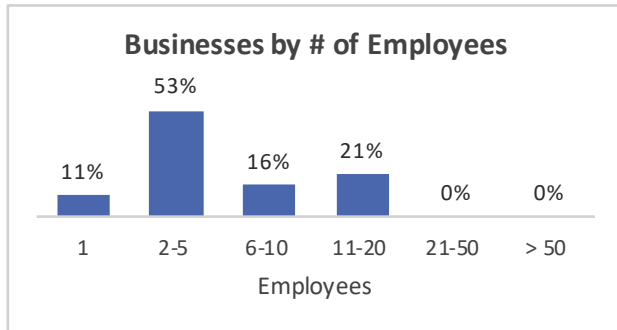
42% of businesses expressed interest in receiving some kind of assistance.



## Business Characteristics

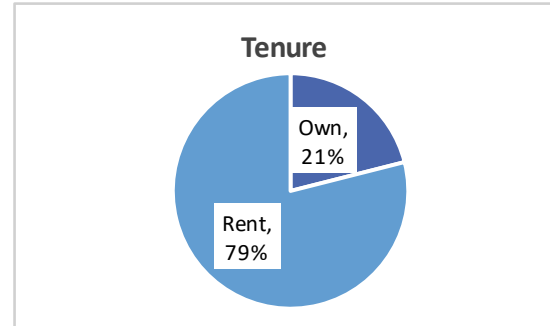
### Business Size

64% of businesses are microenterprises ( $\leq 5$  employees).



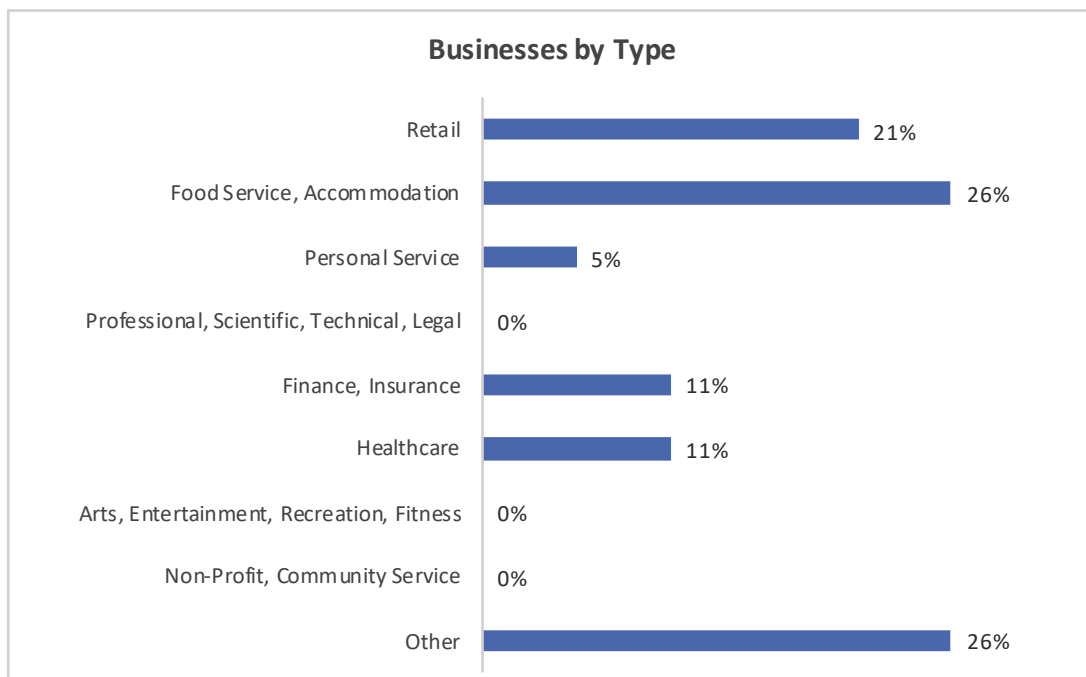
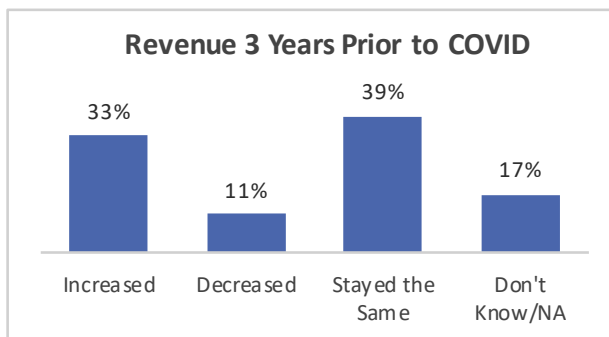
### Business Tenure

79% of businesses rent their space.



### Revenue Trend Prior to COVID

33% 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.

Millbury	19
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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	2	11%
2 to 5	10	53%
6 to 10	3	16%
11 to 20	4	21%
21 to 50	0	0%
More than 50	0	0%
Total	19	100%

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

Own	4	21%
Rent	15	79%
Total	19	100%

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

Increased	6	33%
Decreased	2	11%
Stayed about the Same	7	39%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	3	17%
Total	18	100%

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

Retail (NAICS 44-45)	4	21%
Food Service (restaurants, bars), Accommodation (NAICS 72)	5	26%
Personal Service (hair, skin, nails, dry cleaning) (NAICS 81)	1	5%
Professional Scientific, Technical, Legal (NAICS 54)	0	0%
Finance, Insurance (NAICS 52)	2	11%
Healthcare (medical, dental, other health practitioners) (NAICS 62)	2	11%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Fitness (NAICS 71)	0	0%
Non-Profit, Community Services	0	0%
Other	5	26%
Total	19	100%

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

**Condition of public spaces, streets, sidewalks**

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	4	21%
Neutral	6	32%
Satisfied	8	42%
Very Satisfied	1	5%
Total	19	100%

**Condition of Private Buildings, Facades, Storefronts, Signage**

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	4	22%
Neutral	6	33%
Satisfied	7	39%
Very Satisfied	1	6%
Total	18	100%

**Access for Customers & Employees**

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	3	16%
Neutral	8	42%
Satisfied	6	32%
Very Satisfied	2	11%
Total	19	100%

**Safety and Comfort of Customers & Employees**

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	2	11%
Neutral	5	28%
Satisfied	9	50%
Very Satisfied	2	11%
Total	18	100%

**Proximity to Complementary Businesses or Uses**

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	0	0%
Neutral	8	47%
Satisfied	8	47%
Very Satisfied	1	6%
Total	17	100%

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

Licensing or permitting regulations	1	6%
Signage regulations	1	6%
Parking regulations	3	17%
Outdoor dining or selling regulations	0	0%
Allowed uses, change of use or other zoning regulations	1	6%
Historic District regulations	0	0%
Other regulations (not related to COVID)	0	0%
None - No Issues with regulations	14	78%

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

Decline in revenue	14	74%
Employee layoff	7	37%
Reduced operating hours/capacity	12	63%
Business closure (temporary or permanent)	9	47%
Stopped/deferred rent or mortgage payments	2	11%
Incurred expense to implement safety measures	8	42%
Established alternative mode to sell and deliver products (on-line platforms, delivery, etc.)	7	37%
None of the Above	1	5%

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

Increased compared to 2019	3	16%
Stayed about the same as 2019	2	11%
Decreased 1 – 24% compared to 2019	7	37%
Decreased 25 – 49% compared to 2019	2	11%
Decreased 75 - 100% compared to 2019	1	5%
Decreased 50 – 74% compared to 2019	1	5%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	3	16%
Total	19	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	4	21%
About the same number as before COVID	3	16%
1 – 24% less customers than before COVID	1	5%
25 – 49% less customers than before COVID	2	11%
50 – 74% less customers than before COVID	2	11%
75 – 100% less customers than before COVID	1	5%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	6	32%
Total	19	100%

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

Operating at full capacity	9	47%
Operating at reduced hours/capacity due to COVID	10	53%
Temporarily closed due to COVID	0	0%
Permanently closed due to COVID	0	0%
Total	19	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	1	5%
Of Little Importance or Need	2	11%
Moderately Important	5	26%
Important	6	32%
Very Important	5	26%
Total	19	100%

**Improvement/Development of Public Spaces & Seating Areas**

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	11%
Of Little Importance or Need	4	21%
Moderately Important	4	21%
Important	7	37%
Very Important	2	11%
Total	19	100%

**Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks**

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	1	6%
Moderately Important	7	39%
Important	6	33%
Very Important	4	22%
Total	18	100%

**Improvements in Safety and/or Cleanliness**

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	0	0%
Moderately Important	5	28%
Important	8	44%
Very Important	5	28%
Total	18	100%

**Changes in Public Parking Availability, Management or Policies**

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	11%
Of Little Importance or Need	1	5%
Moderately Important	5	26%
Important	5	26%
Very Important	6	32%
Total	19	100%

**Amenity Improvements for Public Transit Users and/or Bike Riders**

Unimportant/Not Needed	4	21%
Of Little Importance or Need	4	21%
Moderately Important	7	37%
Important	3	16%
Very Important	1	5%
Total	19	100%

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

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	11%
Of Little Importance or Need	2	11%
Moderately Important	5	26%
Important	5	26%
Very Important	5	26%
Total	19	100%

**More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining and Selling**

Unimportant/Not Needed	4	21%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	16%
Moderately Important	2	11%
Important	7	37%
Very Important	3	16%
Total	19	100%

**Implementing Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District**

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	11%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	16%
Moderately Important	5	26%
Important	4	21%
Very Important	5	26%
Total	19	100%

**Recruitment Programs to Attract Additional Businesses**

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	11%
Of Little Importance or Need	0	0%
Moderately Important	7	37%
Important	5	26%
Very Important	5	26%
Total	19	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	16%
Of Little Importance or Need	5	26%
Moderately Important	6	32%
Important	5	26%
Very Important	0	0%
Total	19	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	11%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	17%
Moderately Important	6	33%
Important	6	33%
Very Important	1	6%
Total	18	100%

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

Setting up an online store or other online selling channel	0	0%
Creating new services such as delivery	1	5%
Participating in shared marketing/advertising	4	21%
Low-cost financing for storefront/façade improvements	2	11%
Low-cost financing for purchasing property in the commercial district	4	21%
Training on the use of social media	3	16%
None of the above	11	58%

**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**

—
ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE ACCESS TO PUBLIC PARKING AND PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY AREAS
J.E.P. Contracting Inc
MORE PARKING                      UTILITY POLES GREATLY AFFECT BEAUTIFY OF DOWNTOWN    waisting money
—
RAY'S TRUE VALUE
—
Better access to parking
—
—
—
National Gallery
—
—
local business association to help advertise local business by hosting local events
—
Mclaughlin's service Inc.
reduce restrictions on exterior signage.
Christopher's Homemade Ice Cream, LLC

[illegible]



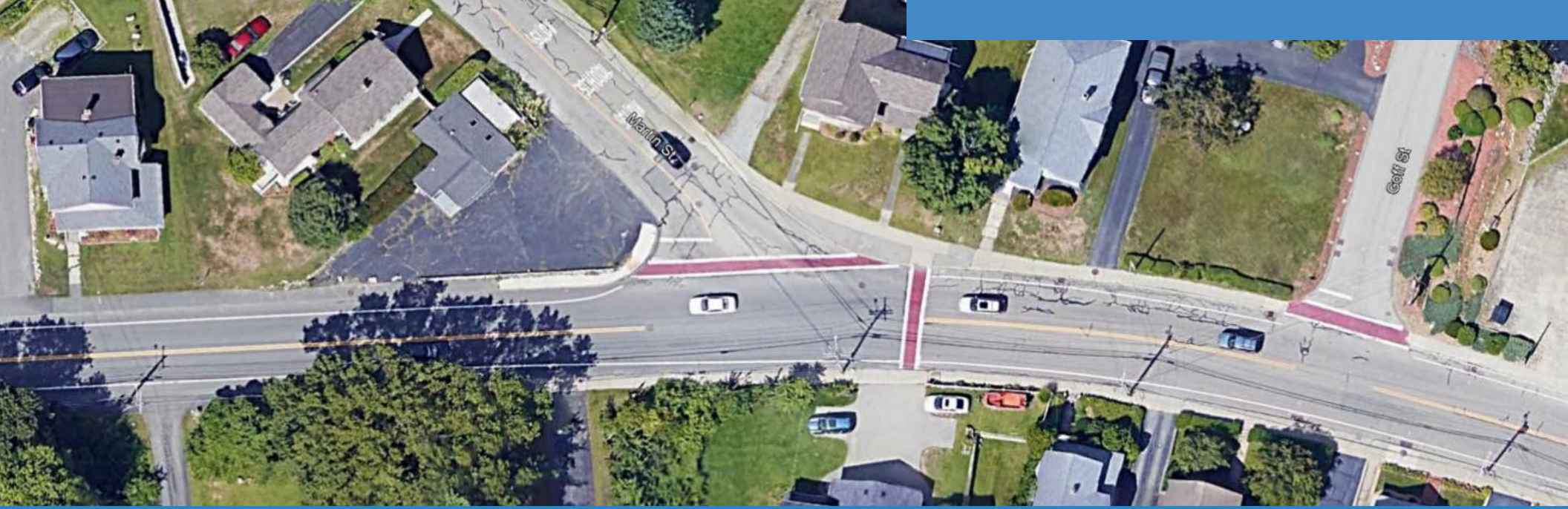
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## Appendix C: Community Engagement Comments

Type	Comment	Up Votes	Down Votes
Revenue & Sales	More on and off street parkingfor Puffins	0	0
Public Realm	Clean up the River and a a launch for canoes, kayaks and row boats	0	0
Private Realm	Additional deck for outdoor seating by the river. Turn existing deck into a three season dining area by adding a roof and non permanentsides	0	0
Revenue & Sales	Would we ever consider adding a sign on 146 that highlights some of the local businesses and driving prospective customers to Elm Street and the main Area? Businesses that want to be featured can chip in?	0	0
Public Realm	I'm not sure who's space this is, I've heard the church? It is quite the eye soar with the overgrowth weeds and the dirty wall. Wondering if we could so something to the space to help match the rest of the beautiful down town area. Happy to help chip in to fix it up. Could this be converted to a public space with picnic tables creating an outdoor space for patrons to sit?	0	0
Public Realm	With all the wonderful things that have been updated, the stretch of sidewalk past our business is still in rough shape. If the planters in the sidewalk aren't utilized, can we take them out? They are a tripping hazard for anyone that parks along this side of the road.	0	0

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## Appendix D: Subject Matter Expert Reports - Neighborhoods



## Town of Millbury

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Create a Bicycle Connection from the  
Blackstone Valley Bike Path to the  
Town Center

neighborwaysdesign

# Mission

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

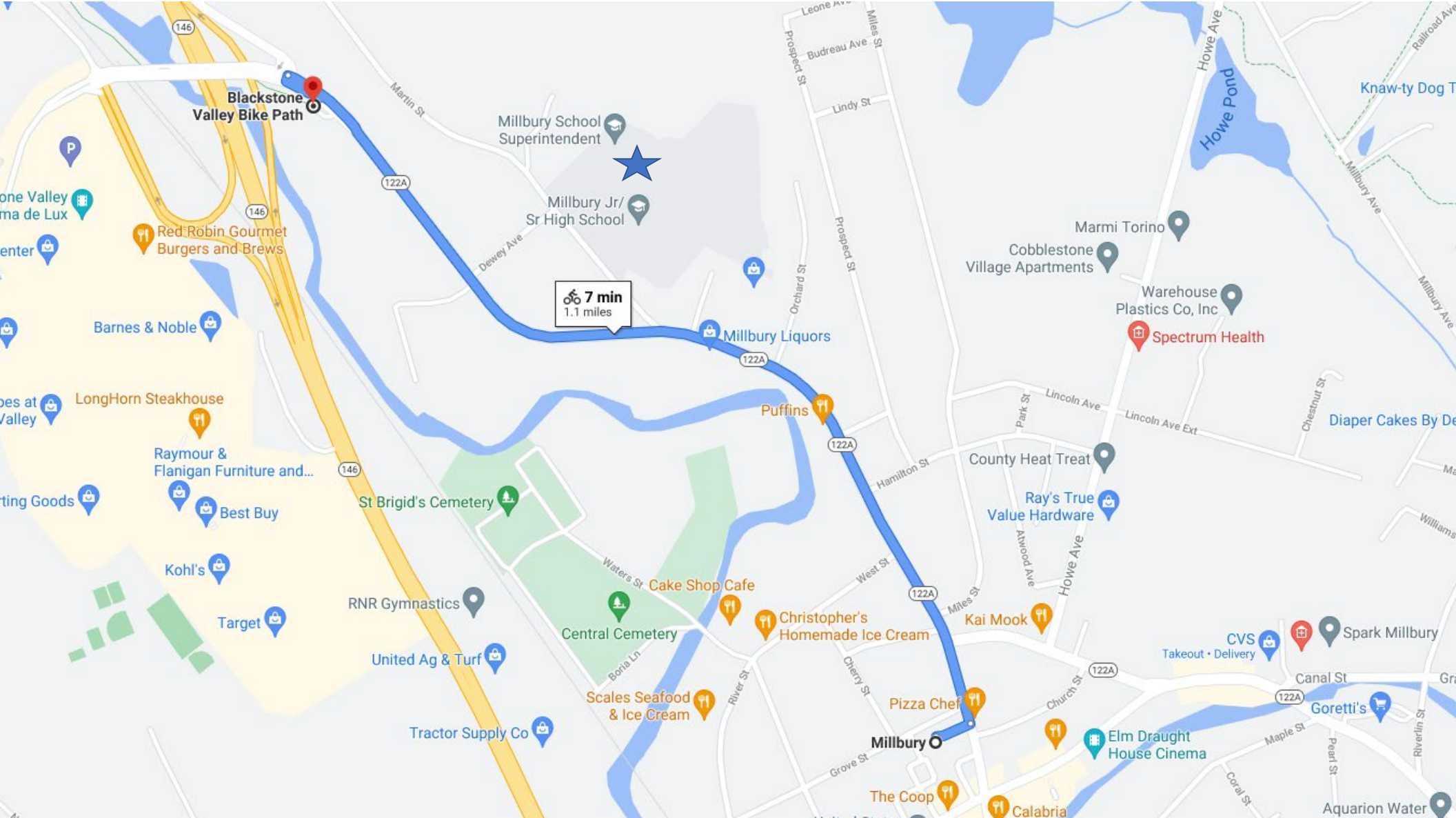


neighborwaysdesign

*Connected Neighbors*

*Beautiful Neighborhoods*

*Slow Streets*



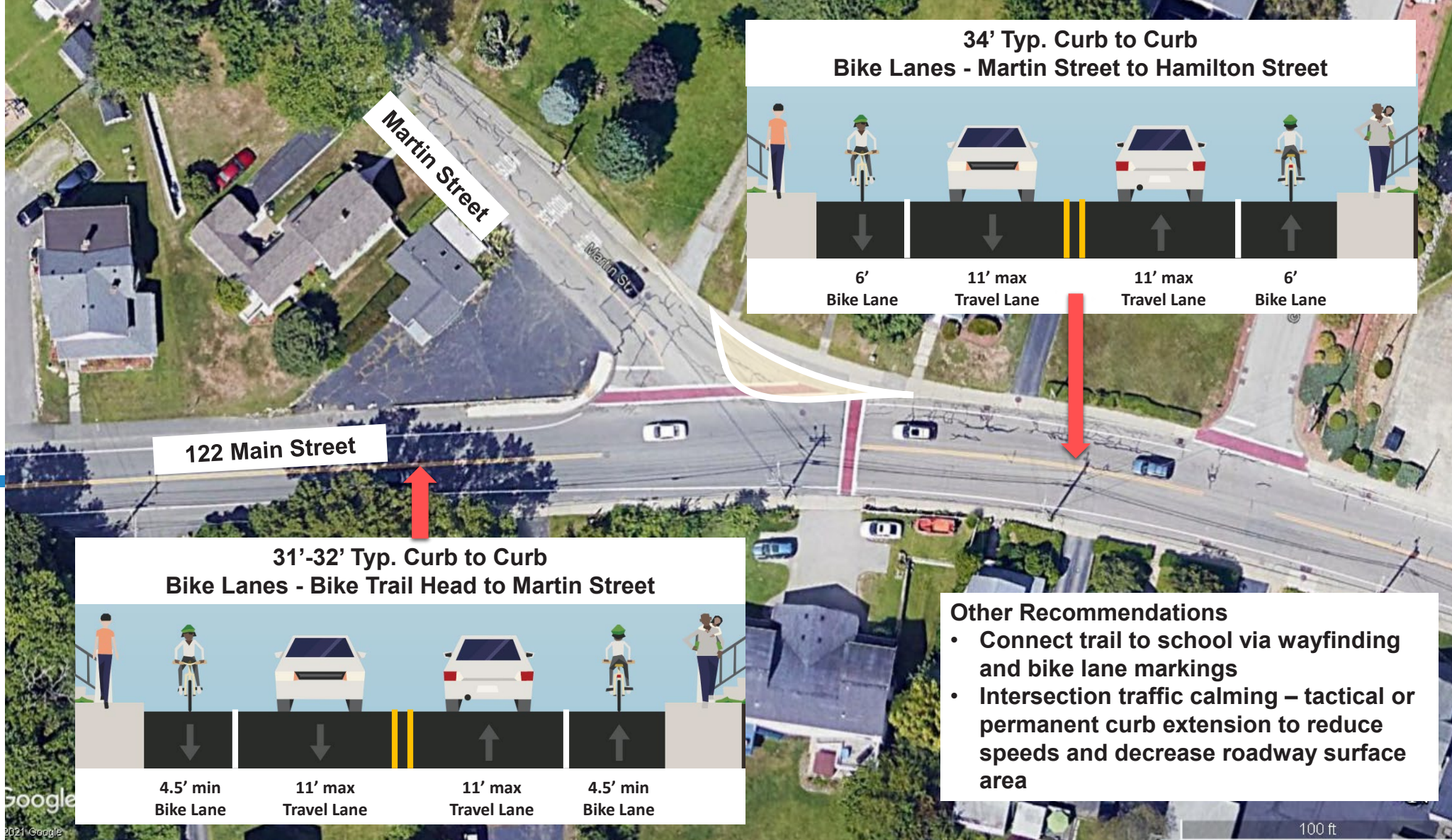
## Goals / Performance Indicators

- Increase people biking
  - *Install a comfortable all ages and abilities bicycle route connecting the bike path to downtown Millbury*
  - *Reduce crash rates for all modes along North Main Street*
-

# Partners and Resources

- Partners
    - Local bicycle advocacy and trail groups
    - Main streets businesses / associations / chamber of commerce
  - Economic value of connecting trail to downtown via on street
    - [Bicycling Mean Business: The Economic Benefits of Bicycle Infrastructure](#)
  - [MassDOT](#)
    - [Statewide bicycle and pedestrian plans Update](#)
    - [Path Benefits](#)
-



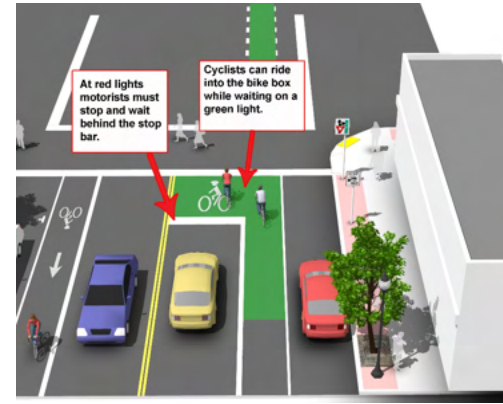




*Corrugated truck apron*



*Protected Bicycle Intersection*



*Bike Box at Intersection*

## Examples of Roadway treatments for Traffic calming at intersections

*Image Sources: Google Maps; Streetsblog SF; BikePGH*

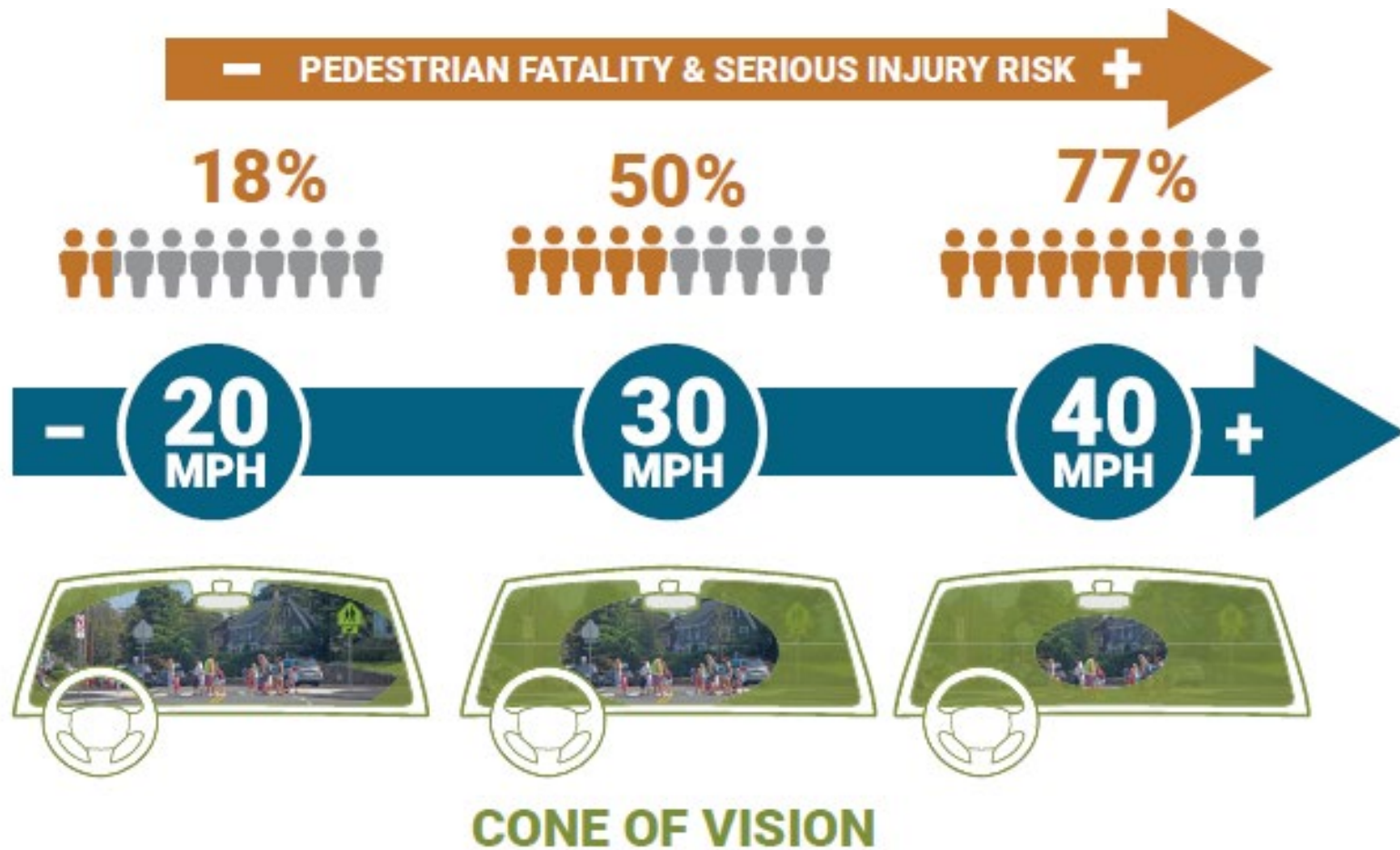
## Bicycle Connection Recommendations

Wayfinding   
Bike Lanes   
Shared Lanes 

- Match shoulder width on town-owned ROW to state-owned ROW, adding bike lane markings to each
- West, Waters and Elm Streets offer a low-stress alternative for users of all ages and abilities to enjoy local businesses, attractions and civic services
- Add posted speed limit signage (20 mph wherever possible)



# Safety and Speeds



Source: FHWA's [Achieving Multimodal Networks Applying Design Flexibility & Reducing Conflicts](#), 2016



*Shared Lane Marking with Green Box*



*Buffered Bike Lane where previously stopping lane*

## Examples of Roadway treatments for cycling facilities

*Image Sources: Google; Corvallis (OR)*



*Digital Version*



*Corrugated Plastic (2-4 years)*



*Aluminum (Permanent)*

## Examples of Wayfinding Signage (12" x 24")

*Image Sources: Civic Space Collaborative; Ball Square Main Streets*

## Case Studies

- [Navigating the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway](#)
- Lexington MA – Across Lexington Trails
- [Assabet River Rail Trail – Maynard and Hudson](#)



*Wayfinding to Downtown at the Minuteman Bikeway Trailhead in Bedford*

*Image Source: Google Maps*

Accessing  
Conservation land  
Recreation areas  
Open space  
Schools and  
Streets in **Lexington**



## Assabet River Rail Trail (ARRT) – Maynard & Hudson

- Incremental steps have been taken to complete the ARRT's routing immediately adjacent Downtown Maynard and Hudson
- Demonstration routes on strategic routes can help residents and key decision makers to envision potential impacts on active transportation, placemaking and economic development



*Approaching Downtown Maynard on the ARRT (Source: ARRT Facebook)*

# Final Steps of SME Consultation

1. Comments on rubric
2. Send this presentation
3. Share additional resources from discussion if any

Karl@neighborways.com

neighborwaysdesign

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## Appendix E: Subject Matter Expert Reports - Musicant Group



# ACTIVATE VACANT STOREFRONTS AND PUBLIC SPACES THROUGH PUBLIC ART SME CONSULTATION

By: The Musicant Group for the City of Millbury

**To:** Keri Ouellette, Plan Facilitator  
**From:** The Musicant Group  
Ella Rasp, Project Manager  
Linda Spohr, Senior Project Manager  
**Re:** SME Consultation

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you and the Town of Millbury on the activation of parking lots, vacant lots and vacant storefronts. Our notes and recommendations from the call are below. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or would like to work with The Musicant Group further on implementing any of these initiatives.

## Recommendations

### Short-term/Pop-Up Activation Ideas for Parking Lots

Examples of parking lots that could be activated as pilots for future improved land uses were the lot across the street from the Upper Commons to the east and adjacent to the Florist to the south. Parking lot activations can fulfill goals for temporary events that spur foot traffic to existing businesses or as momentum drivers for redevelopment.

- Outdoor Events - talk with community organizations about the potential of moving some of their events to this space for a year as a strategy to activate spaces downtown.
  - Church picnic or food event (a la chili cookoff, Halloween candy hand out)
  - School concert
  - Musical Performance
  - Petting zoo
  - Small pop-up market (farmer's market or craft market)
  - Pavement art
  - Lawn game tournament
  - Central hub of a downtown scavenger hunt
- Activations - simple setup of a space for people to use on their own, not related to events, can be an effective way to activate an empty parking lot. Ideas include:
  - Roller skating or skateboarding - just set up a sign to let people know this space isn't for parking. It is a skate park!
  - Kid's bike park - building simple ramps with plywood and putting down a few cones is all you need for a fun kid bike park.

## Medium-Long Term Activation Ideas for Vacant Parcels

Examples of vacant parcels that could be activated would be 114 Elm Street and 21 Canal Street. These activations have potential to spur momentum for redevelopment or serve to make the pedestrian experience more human-scale by filling in gaps in the urban fabric.

- In large empty lots, seek to create a more human-scale experience. Add elements that bring down the scale of the space and create softness to balance out the hardscape.
  - Break down vast open spaces. Create opportunities for enclosure and prospect. When placing seating or creating activity areas, remember that people would prefer to have something behind them (like a building, tree, or a low wall) and look out towards a larger more active area (like the street, pathway, or active space).
  - Create softness and interest in grey concrete landscapes. This can be achieved in many different ways, such as murals, plantings, lighting and colorful seating.
  - Use light to frame areas of congregation. Not everything should be lit to the same degree, use pools of light to frame areas of congregation. String lights are also an easy, cheap, and effective way to add festive boundaries and framing to a street, public space, building or room.
  - Create gateway experiences - such as a canopy or pergola as an entryway.
  - Outdoor Art - think interactive! Can kids climb on it, make sounds with it, or take pictures beside it?
  - Seating - movable seating is most welcoming and often comes in bright colors that add a lot to an empty area.

Ideas for activation include:

- Movie nights - blow up screens are inexpensive and usually only require either a battery projector or an external battery/generator to run. Some generators can be loud though, so test ahead!
- Concerts in the pocket-park - highlight local musicians. Can't book any? Host a karaoke-style sing-along with dancing.
- Fire pits and chairs for a winter smores party.
- Swings - for adults and kids.
- Skating rink - create a floodable space in the winter for daily use. Combine with occasional events, like the smores party.
- Dog run (with a fence and seating added)

## Implementation Guidance

### Estimating Timelines to Implement New Programs

There are five main buckets of activities that go into creating a new pop-up program. Each of these can be as simple as a one meeting conversation and some follow up documentation for a short, pop-up activity to a six month recruitment and negotiation process for a more complex, long-term use of space. Plan for less time if you have an existing relationship or precedent in the community. Plan for

more time if you need to build relationships or are looking to support/entice inexperienced or sensitive stakeholders.

1. Building relationships with owners
2. Building relationships with artists/activation creators
3. Legal/regulatory details
4. Finalizing agreements
5. Implementation

## Vacant Storefronts for Civic Engagement

- Tie in storefronts/artists to support civic engagement with other initiatives such as district branding and redevelopment plan.
- Work with artists to create window displays that convey information and opportunities to give input on new projects.
- Creating a collective build process that activates downtown spaces.
- Work with a lead artist that sets the vision. Community participation.
- See implementation guidance section below for process guidance.

## Vacant Storefront Uses

- Exterior: Local Business spotlight - monthly local business highlight in store windows (owner, store history, etc.) This could be free advertising, or charge for it as a revenue stream. This helps local businesses and fosters community pride.
- Exterior: Use facade/windows to connect to a city development initiative (public or private). Show large-scale project concept drawings and ask for public feedback (mailbox, website?)
- Exterior: Create a connected piece that tells a story or is a riddle/scavenger hunt that gets people to walk the length of the town, visiting each of the storefronts.
- Exterior: Holiday-based or event based window decorations. Get people back to see the updates each season.
- Interior: Home businesses in need of space to assemble their goods or test out a physical sales location.
- Interior: Fitness clubs or social clubs (see example of Freespace below in Resources): a space for people to have micro gatherings, concerts, game nights, music lessons, indoor winter “park” space, lending library, movie nights with \$3 popcorn sales, etc.

## Overcoming Capacity Limitations for Vacant Storefronts

- Use City staff capacity to host a workshop and then implement using mini-grants to hire a third party to administer the entire program. Pay them to organize micro events in the vacant storefronts.
- Find a community member, such as a motivated property owner, that could be part of the program as well as lead the program for other storefronts. This volunteer could lighten your workload and take the lead on community engagement and recruiting other storefronts.
- If running internally, extend the duration of set-up and activation in order to lessen your hours load.

### **Recruiting owners and selecting locations for a vacant storefront program**

- **Go Local:** Focus first on locally-owned properties. There is a higher likelihood of participation from owners who are also community members.
- **Consider Location:** Pop-ups in storefronts that are in close proximity to struggling businesses will help give those businesses a boost. Pop-ups near thriving businesses will benefit from the already existing foot traffic. Balance the selection of activation locations so that those visiting the pop-ups experience the thriving businesses of your downtown, as well as support the struggling businesses.
- **Timing:** Recruitment of landlords and storefront owners can happen before recruitment of activations. Knowing what types of spaces are available will draw more place-based responses for use. There is the added benefit of getting an early understanding of what landlords are willing to host.

### **Increasing landlord and property-owner buy-in**

- Encourage property owners that we are all in this together. This is a time for them to demonstrate that they are a true partner in the success of the City as a whole. Communicate that this is a way to meaningfully enhance the reputation of the building/landlord as one who cares about and supports their community.
- Pitch it as marketing their leasable/salable space. A successful program undoes itself - the temporary uses boosting foot traffic to their space, generating leads for new tenants and resulting in new leases. The value statement to them for why they should allow low or no-cost use of the space is that this use does not preclude them from seeking out permanent tenants and activates a space that wouldn't have been generating revenue during this time anyway.
- Provide financial incentives to support the building owners (especially the first one as a proof of concept to attract others), such as:
  - \$500+ temporary use fee for the first landlord
  - waiving the fees of any permitting
  - voucher to artists/entrepreneurs to procure space to look more like a traditional lease
  - Cultural Council Grants
- Clearly communicate implementation and management strategies up front so owners feel comfortable.
- Create a low-barrier process for owner participation. Create a submission form requesting contact information, level and type of activity they are interested in (such as will they need a closed storefront or open to visitors, how many hours, time of day, days of week, etc.)

### **Recruitment and Selection of Activations**

- Make sure you have landlords committed to participate before starting the recruitment process.
- Explore community needs through a survey: what are missing amenities/activities and see if those could be built into vacant spaces?
- **Curation:** Consider this an opportunity to curate your downtown, balancing the mix of offerings to increase the types of goods and services that are provided. Don't have a hardware

store in the area? How about a pop-up tool library, or a fix-it clinic. If there is success, maybe you will draw a business in.

- Consider the pop-up types and how they will complement existing businesses. You may want to avoid direct competition with nearby stores. Consider this an opportunity to curate your downtown, balancing the mix of offerings to increase the types of goods and services that are provided. More people will come to the area if there is more variety of things to do/buy.
- Simply upgrading the facade can have a big impact on the overall feeling of a street. A full activation is not always necessary. Colorful paint is probably the biggest ROI for a facade, window displays, art, and decals also are effective. If there is space for outdoor seating, that would also be a high ROI investment. (This applies to both vacant storefronts and existing struggling businesses.) Outdoor space improvements provide dual benefit to the business and the community streetscape, which drives more foot traffic and thus more business.

### **Artist Recruitment**

- Support throughout the process. Plan for a three-six month support process from creation through display.
- Art Competitions require work in advance of compensation/reward. Best practice requires limited inputs of artist time on the front end (such as submission of prior work and qualifications) and production of new work once the opportunity is secured (ideally with compensation).
- An alternative strategy to a gallery approach which still generates positive activity could be to focus on having the vacant spaces used as artist studios. There is often a large unmet need for quality and affordable space for artists to make their wares, vs a very limited need for them to have space to display them. If Athol does not have many working artists in need of space they should promote it to neighboring communities and also consider providing micro grants to artists to set up their studios within the vacant spaces.
- Seek artists via social media groups (facebook, reddit, next door), art fair lists, neighboring community art commissions, etc.
- Directly commissioning a piece may be the better strategy than a competition given the lack of interest. Conversely, working with local schools and their art departments/teachers would also be a possible approach.

### **Third Party Role**

Given the low revenue generating potential, consider a third party management entity to hold a master use agreement or lease for the vacant properties and use their existing insurance capacity.

- The third party should enter into use agreements with the users of the vacant spaces that defines rules and regulations, but does not put the logistical or insurance burden on the landlord/owner.
- The third party could also cover utilities to lessen the burden even more for owners.
- The use agreement should stipulate a minimum and maximum of operational hours. (Though to start and when you are trying to build demand, being more flexible is probably best.)
- The use agreement should have clauses about what would trigger immediate termination of the agreement, such as uses you want to prohibit.

- The agreement should also define what the landlord will provide (access to the building, utilities, any FFE) and what the master agreement holder and end user will be responsible for providing.

## Management

Create a follow-up plan of regular check-ins with owner and lessee to ensure the use is complying with agreed upon parameters. Have a plan to shut down activations that don't follow the rules.

Determine ways to connect the storefronts together. Set up a temporary page on your website that has information about all of the storefronts participating. Create a QR code window cling to put up in each storefront.

Timing: Ideally you should be able to promise at least 60 days to make it worthwhile for the occupant and then have a rolling 30 day expulsion clause for no cause going forward to allow for the space to be rented.

## Regulatory/Permitting Considerations

The time burden of a difficult regulatory process can prevent efforts like these from getting off the ground. From the city's perspective, they should look to create as easy of a process as possible that ensures people's safety. Whatever permitting that is needed should be blanket on the front end - ie once it's done at the start, that should cover everything for a while rather than having to pull permits throughout an engagement.

If using a third party, make sure as much of the burden falls on the third party who is holding the master use agreement/lease.

Food based businesses are more challenging to activate short term because of additional layers of permitting

There may be two broad categories of use: exterior and interior.

- It can be challenging to use a vacant building that does not have a certificate of occupancy. If that is the case, target this location as an exterior-only activation (facade improvements through art, community messaging, local business owner highlights, etc.)
- If owner/landlord is looking to rent space but can't because of Covid/economy, a short-term internal use can be a win for the landlord and the community.

## Resources

The Musicant Group - Friendly Storefronts Toolkit - <http://www.musicantgroup.com/free-ideas.html>

*This toolkit provides ideas for activating occupied storefronts, but the tactics for tactical improvements are applicable to pop up spaces too!*

Freespace Toolkit - San Francisco - <http://freespace.io/toolkit/>

*This toolkit is based on a project with a wealth of creative culture to build from, but the structure of how they approached finding and utilizing their space may be helpful as you go down this path.*

Better Block Wikiblock tactical furniture designs - <https://www.betterblock.org/wikiblock>

*This free online resource for street furniture and pop up elements can streamline your production process- just select what you need, send the plans to a local fabricator and they can produce!*

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# Appendix F: Funding Table

Funding Program	Administering Organization	Summary	Amount	Who Can Apply?	Deadline
<a href="#">Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds</a>	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.
<a href="#">MA Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance Program</a>	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.
<a href="#">Commonwealth Places</a>	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.
<a href="#">Shared Streets and Spaces</a>	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.
<a href="#">Hometown Grant Program</a>	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.
<a href="#">Underutilized Properties</a>	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.
<a href="#">Seed Grants</a>	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

<a href="#">Grow Grants</a>	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
<a href="#">Capital Grants Program</a>	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
<a href="#">Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Mini-Entitlement Program</a>	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
<a href="#">Regional Economic Development Organization Grant Program</a>	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
<a href="#">MassWorks Infrastructure Program</a>	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

<a href="#">Community Compact IT Grant Program</a>	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	Applicatoion period: September 15, 2021 - October 15, 2021
<a href="#">Urban Agenda Grant Program</a>	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
<a href="#">Community Change Grants</a>	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
<a href="#">Our Town</a>	National Endowment for the Arts	Creative placemaking grants program for projects that integrate arts, culture and design activities into efforts that strengthen communities by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes.	\$25,000 - \$150,000	Partnerships of at least two primary partners including a nonprofit organization and local government entity	Closed for 2021; Details for 2022 funding have not been provided yet

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## Appendix G: Additional Project Resources

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# Additional Project Resources and Best Practices

## **Project 1: Develop a Shared Marketing Strategy and District Brand for Millbury Center**

Best Practices:

- Lake Oswego, OR - [Lake Oswego Strategic Marketing Plan](#)
- Milford, MI - Milford Downtown Development Authority, [Annual Media Report - 2020](#)
- 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: Activate Vacant Storefronts and Public Spaces through a Public Art Initiative**

Resources:

- San Francisco Arts Commission - [Art In Storefronts Toolkit](#) - guidance for municipal agencies, artists, and property owners
- Project for Public Spaces - [Design and Review Criteria for Public Art](#) - guidance for implementing a public art program
- Portland, ME - [Utility Box Art Project](#)

## **Project 3: 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 4: Create a low-stress, engaging bicycle connection between the Blackstone Valley Bike Path and the Town Center**

Best Practices:

- Lexington, MA - [ACROSS Lexington trail network](#)
- [Assabet River Rail Trail](#)

Resources:

- National Association of City Transportation Officials - [Bike Route Wayfinding Signage](#)

## **Project 5: Implement Phases II, III, and IV of the Armory Village Revitalization Project**

Best Practices:

- Savannah, GA - [Broughton Streetscapes Project](#)

