



# Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

**Chicopee**

**A Plan for  
Chicopee Center**



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.

**For more information, contact DHCD:  
100 Cambridge St, Suite 300  
Boston, MA 02114  
617-573-1100  
mass.gov/DHCD**

# Acknowledgements



Pioneer Valley Planning Commission  
Catherine Ratté, Principal Planner, Section Co-Manager  
Kenneth Comia, AICP, Senior Land Use Planner  
Jacinta Williams, Land Use Planner  
Douglas Hall, PhD, Data Manager/Photography  
Jake Dolinger, Senior GIS Planner



City of Chicopee  
Lee Pouliot, AICP, ASLA, Planning Director  
Patrick McKenna, Assistant Planner



Greater Chicopee Chamber of Commerce  
Julie Copoulos, Executive Director



MassDevelopment  
Transformative Development Initiative  
Andrea Monson, TDI Fellow



Third Eye Network  
Dr. Lomax R. Campbell



Levine Planning Strategies  
Jeff Levine, AICP



BSC Group  
Jef Fasser, AICP, RLA, LEED AP

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City of Chicopee

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Alexander Jansen, Director of Operations

Horsley Witten Group

Nathan Kelly, AICP, NCI, Principal, Principal Planner  
Jeff Davis, AICP, Senior Planner

Rumbleseat Bar & Grille  
The Collegian Court

William Stetson, Owner and President



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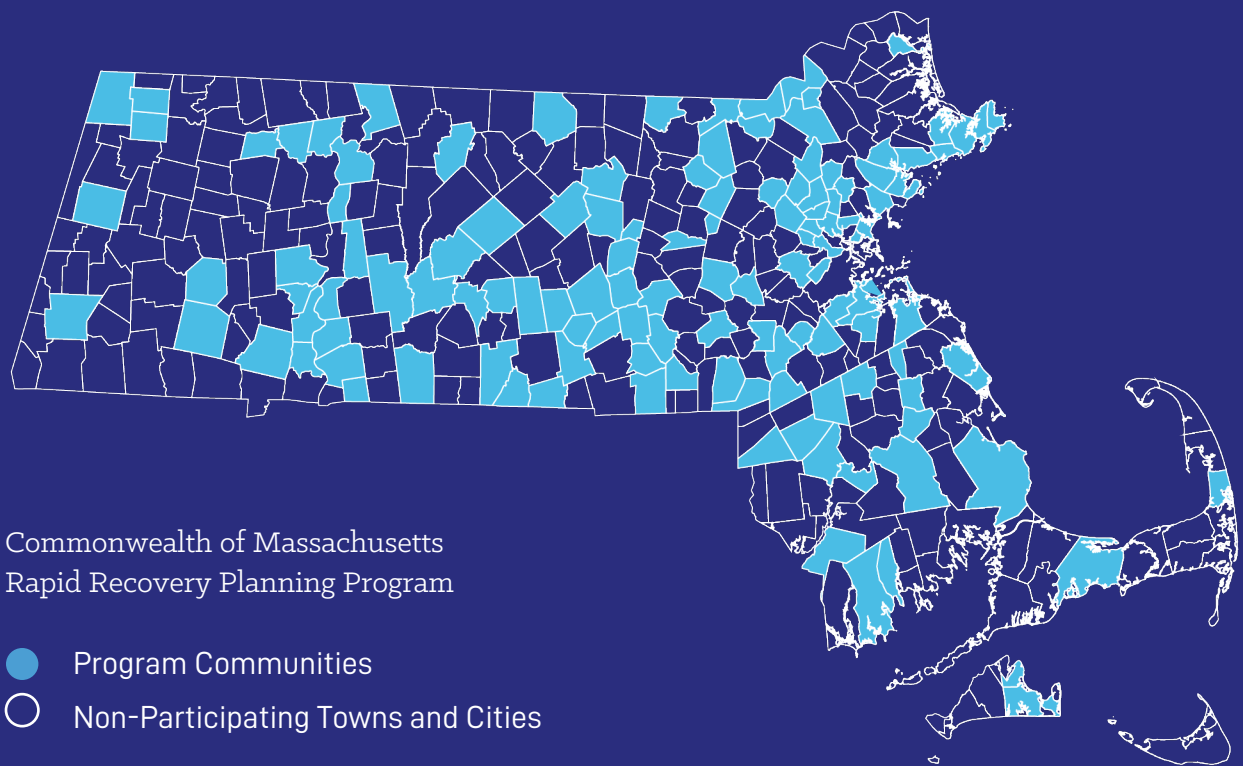
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## 125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

- 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.



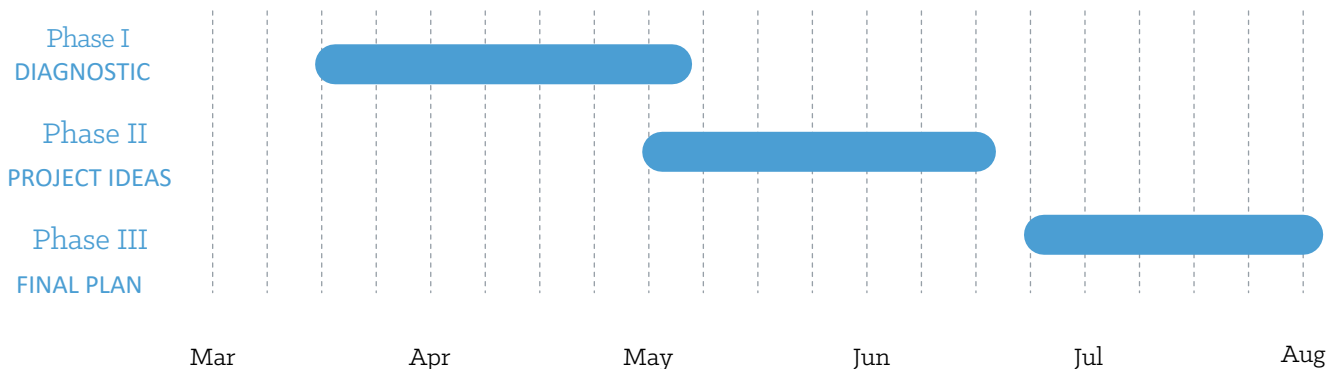
# Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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

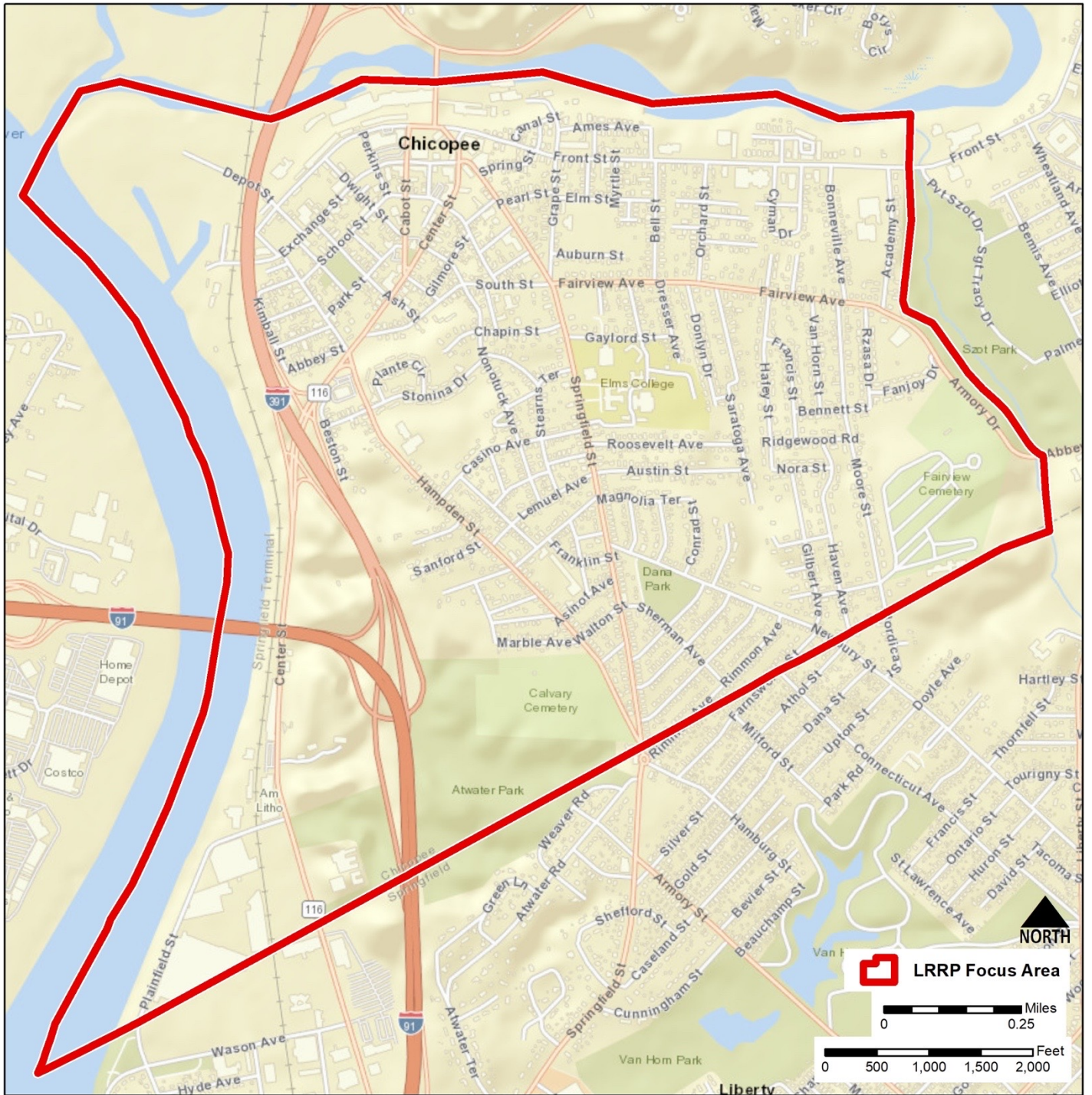
# Executive Summary

## A City Ready for *Live, Work, and Play*

Chicopee's Center District, the traditional downtown for this resurgent gateway city, was shaken by the pandemic but the strong foundation of combined public investment and business development and support provided by both the Chamber of Commerce and the MassDevelopment Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) fellow, mitigated the impact of the mandated shut-downs and resultant drop in customer/client traffic. Fewer than half of the businesses in the district (42%) reported generating less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019, a compelling testimony to the small businesses strength and resilience. In 2019 the city launched its first ever Comprehensive Planning process, **Envision Our Chicopee**; this effort follows several years of robust targeted business support in the district combined with district planning focused on activating public spaces, promoting complete streets—that are safe and comfortable for all users, understanding and improving traffic flow and addressing parking.







# Chicopee, Massachusetts

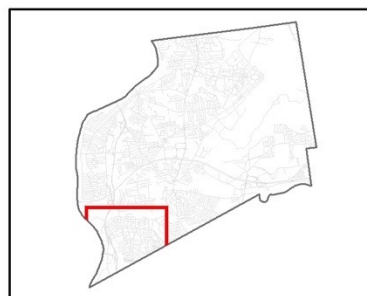
## Local Rapid Recovery Program Focus Area Map

Data Sources:  
 City of Chicopee Massachusetts,  
 MassGIS, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

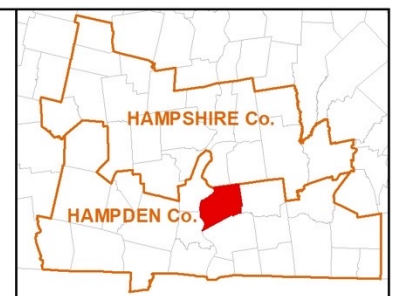
 The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. It is not adequate for legal boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-level analysis without further investigation.  
 Produced by the PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION  
 60 Congress Street - Floor 1 - Springfield, MA 01104-3400  
 413-781-6942 - www.pvpc.org



Municipal Locator Map



Regional Locator Map



This strategic economic development recovery planning process did identify eleven specific projects that will make it easier for businesses to recover economically. The projects have been separated into four categories (Private Realm, Public Realm, Administrative Capacity, and Revenue Sales) with the majority of the projects addressing the need to improve administrative capacity.

At the end of the planning effort, a survey was sent to the stakeholders and wider business community. The survey asked respondents to choose the top five projects. The top 5 projects have been identified in **BOLD**.

## Project Summary

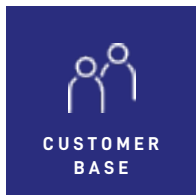
	Project Name	Private Realm	Public Realm	Admin Capacity	Revenue Sales
1	Black and Latinx/Hispanic Business Owners Support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
2	Improving Business Owner Satisfaction with City Permitting & Internal Citywide Communication by Streamlining and Digitizing the City's Development Review and Permitting Processes			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
3	<b>(Re)investing in the Private Realm with Creative Code Compliance</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
4	Reviewing Zoning Ordinances + Regulations			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
5	Improve Parking Access in Chicopee's downtown		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
6	<b>Retail Visioning</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7	<b>Form a Chicopee Center Business Support Organization</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
8	An Additional Code Compliance Officer			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
9	Document and Broadly Publicize the City Permitting Process			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
10	<b>Improve Traffic Flow in the Chicopee Center District</b>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
11	<b>Re-establish Chicopee Redevelopment Authority</b>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	



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# Diagnostic

# Key Findings



## COVID-19 Pandemic Slowed District Transformation but a Confluence of Administrative Capacity and Planning Efforts Yields a Blueprint for Long Term Recovery

Chicopee's Center District has the scale, urban form, and location of a vibrant community, but the pandemic has hurt district businesses and catalytic assistance is needed to re-capture the energy and excitement that had been growing in this district that encompasses the city's traditional "downtown". The district is brimming with potential, conveniently located to major transportation networks, I-391, I-91, I-90, home to all of the city's post-secondary students (1,495 people or 10% of the district population) and 28% of the city's workforce and well served by the Chamber of Commerce and a Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) fellow supported by MassDevelopment. In addition City Hall, historic mills along the scenic Chicopee river lovingly converted to residential living and tree-lined residential neighborhoods provide a steady stream of potential customers, patrons and clients for the 167 total businesses.



## Recent Investments in Physical Environment Yield Results

Chicopee Center is a place where adaptive reuse is best exemplified in the city with brownfield and infill development. The Cabotville Complex will contribute to the growth of the neighborhood both in providing opportunity for new businesses, but also new residents with units targeted to young professionals and empty nesters. Development of this complex and other opportunities in Chicopee Center will create momentum for an improved multimodal streetscape (after the City Council voted to eliminate a pilot program that provided protected bike lanes called the Center Loop in Chicopee Center). The demand coming from new residents will be to increase walking and biking opportunities and infrastructure connecting Chicopee Center to other parts of the city, the Chicopee and Connecticut Rivers and other recreational opportunities.

Chicopee Center is a beautiful neighborhood with a little bit of everything for everyone's taste. A surprising number of trees and other plants, flowers, and green spaces welcome shoppers, residents and visitors alike. The open spaces like Wisniewski Park and Bullens Park have places to sit, there is a ValleyBike electric bikeshare station, a covered bus stop, and window displays representing local pride, are inviting and create a comfortable environment. Signage and wayfinding including distances are being explored. Building facades are well-maintained for the most part on some blocks but could use some attention in other blocks, and most signage is attractive and easily visible. There are no businesses that have merchandise displays outdoors. The Munich Haus has outdoor dining with occasional music, adjacent to a plaza in front of the Old Library which has some programming with the Farmers Market and plays a central role in the Downtown Get Down.



Vehicle flow can be confusing to a visitor as there are many one-way streets in Chicopee Center which can create some unsafe intersections. There was an identified cluster of vehicular accidents at Exchange Street and Cabot Street that led to studies recommending transitioning the one-way streets in to two-way. Business owners surveyed perceive a lack of parking, but the district boasts 964 parking spaces including on street and in surface lots highlighting the potential for parking management and improved publicity of available parking.

*Ames Privilege with the now removed Center Loop protected bicycle lane*



*Intersection of Center, Springfield, and Exchange Streets with Munich Haus in the background*



## *Live, Work and Play*

As can be seen on the map of the district, there are two specific areas (or hinges) as the City Planning Department defines where Exchange, Springfield and Center Streets intersect and where Cabot and Center Street intersect further south which provide corridors and opportunities where activity can occur. The Chicopee Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) District has inventoried and identified opportunities for development and important locations within the Chicopee Center core and has labeled this core area the *Live, Work, Play* District at Chicopee Center. Those hinges include access to the civic and recreation spaces along with restaurants and cafés that line Exchange and Center Streets.

There is prime opportunity with a revitalization of activities at the Rivoli Theater to increase visits by those attending future events there patronizing the restaurants that exist, the Munich Haus, Goodworks Coffee House, the Red Fez Bar and Grille and others, and what will likely be even more restaurants and cafés. In addition to the Rivoli, there is also existing event space at the Portuguese Club, Collegian Court, and Geraldine's.



*Ames Privilege with the now removed Center Loop protected bicycle lane*



Stakeholders mentioned that the district is home to a growing number of Black and Brown owned and women owned businesses, and the mix of commercial, public, and civic uses meets a wide range of needs. There is agreement that the district needs more retail on ground floor with office spaces moving up to the second floors and above, also to fill vacancies especially in this core area of Chicopee Center. Businesses surveyed support all the proposed improvements to the physical environment and are generally satisfied with the condition of the district's safety, accessibility and compatible uses. Businesses are interested in marketing, cultural events, and business recruitment programs.



## A More Transparent Approach to Permitting and Code Compliance

Stakeholders have identified opportunities for the city to be more transparent in permit approvals and related efficiencies, as there is a perception of uneven administration of the building and health codes. A review of the current zoning and other development regulations could provide a public process by which to review the current codes that affect development and redevelopment. Additionally, development and a wide distribution of a permitting guide (in additional languages) both in hard copy and online will ensure that everyone is working off the same set of regulations. Some of these conversations can still be discussed as the the city is undergoing its first comprehensive planning process.



*A resident's sign supporting the Chicopee 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan effort in Chicopee Center*

## Highlights from the Physical Environment

### PUBLIC REALM

Chicopee Center is an existing neighborhood of the city. Its' boundary is the Chicopee River to the north, Szot Park to the east, the Springfield city line to the south, and the Connecticut River to the west. The west side of the Chicopee Center neighborhood has Interstate 91 and Interstate 391 and its highway interchange. Although sometimes identified as Cabotville, the neighborhood was marked by and defined by the predominant nationality of its immigrant occupants, historically largely Polish and French Canadian. There are many instances of yesteryear in the district with staples like Bob's Bakery, the Portuguese Club and the Munich Haus.

A majority of the commercial and civic activity occurs within what has been identified as the Chicopee Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) District, with activity on Center, Cabot and Dwight Streets (north to south) and Springfield, Exchange and Front Streets (east to west). The City is significantly investing in its infrastructure through an ambitious sewer project, currently underway, and it has the opportunity to build off this project to improve the public realm and streetscape throughout the sewer separation project area. Through targeted investments in the district, the City can significantly improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation, the public realm, and the visual perception and experience of Chicopee.

Generally, the district has some storefront vacancies (26, 12%), street amenities, good lighting, maintained roadbeds and crosswalks. Some sidewalks need repair, especially in the area around the mill buildings and in front of the Market Square Plaza shopping complex on the corner of Exchange and Cabot Streets. Trees are concentrated in the public spaces such as the Canal Walk, Bullens Park, Wisniowski Park and the plaza in front of City Hall. Street trees and benches do exist but there are gaps, which if filled would enhance the experience of being in the district, providing shade, reducing the urban heat island effect and offering places to rest and enjoy the space.



*Market Square Plaza*



*Sidewalk in front of Market Square Plaza*  
Source: Ken Comia



There are plenty of parking spaces attributed to standalone businesses which create a lot of impervious surface, mostly concrete that does not contribute to a pleasant physical environment. Road conditions are good, however, the multiple streets serving the urban core and those businesses and civic uses are one-way (Cabot, Center, Exchange and Front Streets), which has been identified in previous city studies and plans as an impediment to a safer, more walkable and business friendly environment.

Signage is sufficient for basic travel needs but does not identify key assets and destinations for drivers. The core of the Chicopee District, also identified as the TDI district, will have branded wayfinding and signage installed that highlight interesting points, and parking lots, throughout the district and the greater Chicopee Center neighborhood. Some pedestrian wayfinding will also be installed and could be expanded to include an App and/or QR code system enabling users to download walking routes, maps, events and locations to park.

## PRIVATE REALM

The area around the City Hall and the Munich Haus and down the Center Street corridor to School Street provides an area that is being activated by events including the weekly Farmers Market and the Downtown Get Down. Other examples of private realm investments abound in the district and should be applauded, encouraged and facilitated. Most building facades are generally well-maintained, and most private signage is attractive and easily visible. There are some storefronts that could improve their outward appearance to better attract customers.

Examples of issues identified include windows cluttered with merchandise, covered by signage and tinted windows. As for "curb appeal," there are no stores that have merchandise displays outdoors or significant visibility into the store. Most stores do not have outdoor lighting that illuminates the sidewalk, and they generally do not have awnings, however the street lighting is uniform and can provide ample visibility in the evenings and late at night.



*Two standalone businesses with large parking lots fronting School Street*  
Source: Ken Comia

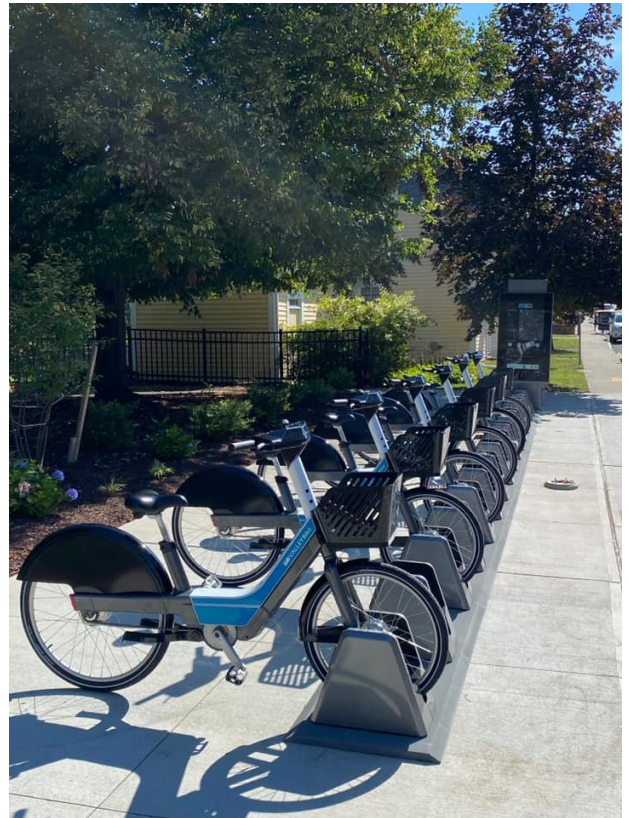


*Cabot Liquor Store*

## ACCESS + VISIBILITY

The Chicopee Center District is accessible by all modes of transportation. Recently, the city installed a temporary protected bike lane in the district, called the Center Loop. It was entirely funded with money from MassDOT's Shared Winter Streets and Spaces grant program to support pedestrians and bikers going through the neighborhood. The Center Loop was to be installed until July 2022, having been initially installed July 2021. The Center Loop was short lived as business owners and residents complained to City Councilors about the loss of on-street parking and the City Council voted in September to end the project. With the Center Loop being eliminated there are now no protected bicycle lanes in Chicopee Center.

The district offers bike parking infrastructure, a newly installed ValleyBike station across from City Hall, a covered bus stop in front of the old library, signalized intersections which are helpful in the area being served with the one-way streets, and ample on street and off-street surface lots.



*ValleyBike Station Across from City Hall  
Source: ValleyBike*



*Center Loop bike lane along Cabot Street*

During the business survey outreach both business owners and customers repeatedly raised the issue of parking—there is a perception that there is not enough parking, with complaints of a lack of parking. In reality there is ample parking on-street and in surface lots amounting to approximately 946 parking spaces.

There are opportunities for improvement, implementing some changes to street direction, changing one-ways to two-ways. Additionally, the monotony of the surface lots and concrete along Cabot Street and can be empty and uninviting. Some storefronts can be improved by removing the blacked-out windows along Exchange Street and the clutter in some businesses windows along Center and Front Streets.



The Massachusetts Rapid Recovery Program requires grading of various aspects of the public realm. In the Chicopee Center District, the grades are: (definitions of grades is in Appendix)

Aspect of the Public Realm	Grade Assessed
Window Grade	A
Outdoor Display/Dining Grade	B
Signage Grade	C
Awning Grade	B
Façade Grade	A
Lighting Grade	A
Sidewalk Grade	A
Street Trees and Benches Grade	A
Lighting Grade	B
Wayfinding/Signage Grade	C
Roadbed and Crosswalks Grade	A

## PARKS, PLAZAS, AND PARKLETS

The Chicopee Center District boasts 9.18 acres of park and plaza spaces. The open spaces include Bullens Park, Wisniewski Park, Canal Walk, the open space at the library, and the new Center Park, which is a 0.28-acre pocket park. Center Park can be used for events and as an alternative space for food truck festivities. It was funded with \$20,000 from MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative and Commonwealth Places programs.

There are opportunities to activate these spaces and they already provide both passive and active recreation with trails to walk, bird-watching, areas to sit and enjoy people watching, and playing basketball on the courts at Wisniewski Park. The outdoor public space at the Library on Front Street can be connected to the Canal Walk in future phases, providing a connection to the urban core from the library without having to walk along Front Street. The area in front of the Old Public Library offers public space for the Farmers Market and an area for presenting concerts and staged events when used in concert with the Downtown Get Down.



*Center Fresh Farmers Market on a Thursday during Summer 2021*  
Source: Ken Comia



## Highlights from the Business Environment

The project area includes 213 properties that were counted as "storefronts" under the project guidelines and 167 businesses. Only 32 or 19% of the businesses are retail outlets and an additional 26 or 16% are arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations or restaurant venues.

Private sector anchors identified in this strategic planning process include Munich Haus, Petros, Goodworks Coffee House, CVS and the Fruit Fare. Public and non-profit sector anchors include Elms College, City Hall, the Farmer's Market, the Post Office, the Canal Walk and the Library.

Fruit Fair and Petros are anchors of the Front Street corridor where there are a multitude of different types of buildings that include housing and standalone businesses. The Chicopee Public Library is on Front Street and can be connected to the civic and entertainment uses via an expansion of the Canal Walk.

### NODES/CLUSTERS

The downtown core area which includes City Hall, the Old Library, and the Munich Haus provide a cluster of buildings that create a natural gathering space with benches that can be a meeting space for after an event at Munich Haus or a future revitalized Rivoli. There is a strong cohesion of business owners in the area that are assisted by the TDI Fellow; there is a good concentration of retail, commercial, and restaurants that are locally owned, with the only chains in the core being the bank, the Subway sandwich restaurant, and some of the businesses in the plaza. Across the plaza and along Exchange Street are a couple of beauty supply and self-care businesses.

Reimagining traffic and pedestrian patterns, and slowing vehicular traffic can provide the cohesion for a well-connected and safe pedestrian environment leading to a more welcoming neighborhood.

The district has a broad mix of commercial, public, and civic uses that meet a wide range of needs. There are 167 active businesses, of which more than 19 percent (32) are retail and 16 percent are arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations or restaurants (26).

There were three businesses that permanently closed due to COVID-19, although many did close temporarily and/or have had significant restrictions on operations, especially the restaurants. Some of the 26 vacant businesses in the district at the time of this survey (Spring 2021) have been vacant for several years.



*Storefronts along Exchange Street*  
Source: Ken Comia

## BUSINESS SURVEY

A local Business Survey conducted in April 2021 resulted in thirty-three (33) responses. Highlights from the survey indicated that:

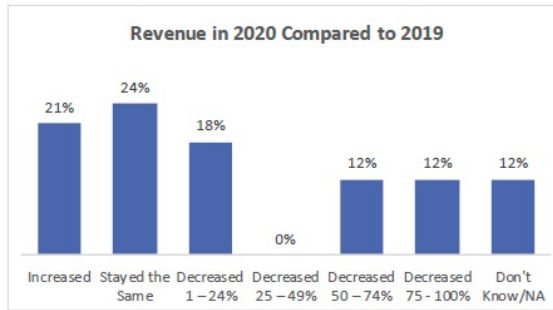
- 91 percent of businesses reported being negatively affected by COVID
- They experienced less foot traffic and had to reduce hours of operation
- Concerns about the district was the condition of private businesses, signs
- Interest in marketing, cultural events, and business recruitment programs.

All survey data collection can be found in the appendix.

### Decline in Business Revenue

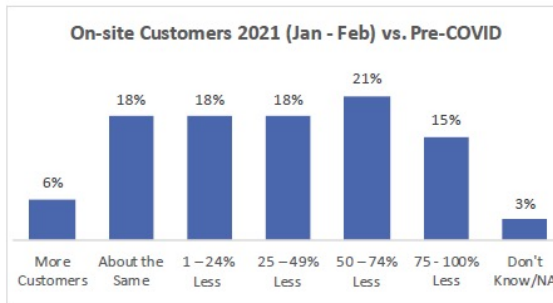
42% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019. For 24% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more.

### COVID Impacts Reported by Businesses



### Less Foot Traffic in Commercial Area

72% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID. 54% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more.







## Highlights from the Market Information

While the City of Chicopee started into the COVID recession with a lower unemployment rate than the overall rate for Hampden County (3.4% unemployment in January 2020, compared with 4.6% for Hampden County), the pandemic hit Chicopee's economy particularly hard. The unemployment rates in each of the counties in the Pioneer Valley, and statewide, peaked in April 2020, Chicopee was no different, hitting a peak unemployment rate of 19.4%.

With this in mind, businesses face an uphill climb given the financial hardships facing such a large share of the local workforce. Focusing efforts to bring consumers into Chicopee from neighboring communities makes a lot of sense given this context.



*Elms College in Chicopee Center*

Chicopee's customer base draws from a city population of 55,000 residents with a median household income of \$56,451, a median age of 40, and 2.3 residents in the average household. The project area includes nearly 15,000 residents with a slightly lower median household income of \$53,233, and a younger median age of 37 years. Twenty-seven percent of the residents in the city and 23% of residents in the district have a high school degree and 10% of residents in both the city and the district have a Bachelor's degree. Five percent of residents in the city and 7% in the district have a graduate degree. Chicopee's residents are comparatively young, with 30% of city residents and 34% of district residents under 25 years of age. Twenty-three percent of city residents and 20% of project area residents are 65 years of age or older.

Chicopee has a fairly homogenous population compared to its neighboring Gateway cities of Holyoke and Springfield, with 86% of residents city-wide and 82% of residents in the district identifying as White alone. At the same time, 24% citywide and 38% of residents in the district identify as Hispanic. People who identify as Hispanic may be of any race.

Chicopee has a substantial workforce of 19,812, 36% of the city population, 5,480 (28%) of whom are located in the project area. The city has a secondary and post-secondary population of 3,943, with all the post-secondary population in the district and 11% of the secondary population.

Indicator	Data
Total Residential Population	14,923
Medium Household Income	\$53,233
Median Age (in years)	37.3
Average Household Size	2.3
Total Workforce/Employees	5,480

*Snapshot of Chicopee Center  
Source: American Community Survey 2015-2019*





## Highlights from the Administrative Capacity

The Greater Chicopee Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1962, focuses on economic development, networking and business development and serves the entire city; however, its presence in the Valley Opportunity Council's Ferris Building makes sure they are felt in the core of Chicopee Center, especially with their sponsorship of the Farmers Market every Thursday afternoon, the promotion of events and public safety collaborations in the district. They partnered with businesses and lent support to the creation of the pocket park on Center Street. The Chamber helps businesses at whatever stage they may be in providing resources and access to training related to outreach, grant writing, and strategic development planning.

The Chicopee Transformative Development Initiative (TDI) District which makes up the commercial, civic, business core of the Chicopee Center, continues to advance activation of vacant buildings to become a hub for high-skilled workers and Chicopee-based entrepreneurs. Since COVID, the TDI Fellow lent her support to understanding the impacts and building back up the enthusiasm for Chicopee Center. The TDI Fellow assisted with the development of a music video that celebrates the businesses and its neighbors in Chicopee Center, including City officials and public safety officers. Chicopee's TDI Fellow continues to engage conversations with the City's business and civic communities to build upon plans for economic development in the West Brownfields Area-Wide Plan and to incorporate wayfinding in the fabric of Chicopee Center.



*Chicopee Police C3 Substation on Center Street*



*A still from a music video celebrating Chicopee Center (Source: Chicopee TDI District)*

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## REGULATIONS + ZONING

A regulatory issue raised by stakeholders interviewed during the district's rapid recovery planning process was the perception that code enforcement and related regulations and requirements are not being administered evenly, with a concern being raised of unfair treatment of Black and Brown owned businesses. At the same time, stakeholders also lifted up the need for and potential benefit of targeted business capacity building and training for the new (and future) Black and Brown owned businesses in the district. These business owners tend to rent their spaces and the need for them to be trained in the requirements of making changes to physical space they do not own was identified. Municipal officials acknowledge constrained staff capacity in code enforcement and the utility of expanded public-facing explanation of the city's development process, including a user-friendly web-site, fill-in the blank forms, videos to learn from, etc.

Stakeholder engagement surfaced concerns that the city's permitting process is unfriendly and confusing highlighting diminished capacity of the city staff to assist with permit applications. The city was quick to adapt to making permit applications easier to submit during the pandemic and has embraced a digital, electronic component to its permitting. The city can go further exploring integration of permitting software so that multiple departments can utilize similar software and create standard streamlined practices.

An additional regulatory recommendation emerging from this planning process is that of the ongoing need to review zoning ordinances and regulations to ensure ease of permitting, licensing and appropriate standards in underlying use and overlay zoning districts identifying any changes that may arise. The Comprehensive Plan process that the city is currently going through provides an opportunity to explore zoning best practices like parking reductions for sustainable and business friendly zoning, allowances for mixed-uses and minimum lot sizes, possibly looking at a form-based code. The last time the Zoning Ordinance was overhauled was in 1978.

It will be important to utilize many strategies that have carried over from previous studies to make Chicopee Center even better. Some of the plans that have addressed development in Chicopee Center include the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Plan in 2019, WalkBoston Audit in 2018, Open Space and Recreation Plan in 2015, West End Brownfields Area Wide Plan in 2012, and the West End Streetscape Study 2019.

The city is working through the Commonwealth's 40R Smart Growth district initiative to advance some of the improvements that could be useful for Chicopee Center. This state sanctioned program allows a municipality to identify a development district and create overlay zoning to permit higher density and mixed-use development, often in concert with public transit services. When approved by the state (DHCD), the municipality is eligible for incentive payments of up to \$600,000 (depending on the number of additional units permitted over and above what is allowed by the underlying zoning) and \$3,000 per new housing unit developed. The 40R funds can only be used for capital projects within the Downtown. The 40R District can coincide with or be a subset of a DIF District or other overlay or development districts. 40R includes a 20% affordability requirement for any new housing created. The applicability of 40R to the downtown development district should be evaluated to determine when and if funding is still available from the state and if the downtown area qualifies. It will be important to revisit how this plays a part into Chicopee Center's revitalization.

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# Project Recommendations



# Black and Latinx/Hispanic Business Owners Support

Category	 Private Realm
Location	Chicopee Center, then Citywide
Origin	Chicopee Chamber of Commerce; City Planning Department; TDI Fellow
Budget	 Medium budget (\$150,000) – Funding sources may include American Recovery Plan Act, additional City and/or State funds.
Timeframe	 Short Term; Possible timeframe can include Year 1: Build Portal – Year 2: Refine portal, increase adoption/utilization, and expand the network of supports – Year 3: Reporting, sustainability planning and additional refinement.
Risk	 Low Risk – stakeholders have found consensus on brand positioning and brand pillars
Key Performance Indicators	Number of businesses accessing the portal and formalizing their businesses, number of mentors and volunteers attracted/retained, net promoter and customer satisfaction scores, newly formalized businesses successfully engaging post-formalization activities by number and volume (e.g., locating in formal spaces, accessing capital, selling to government and corporations, pursuing MWBE certifications.)
Partners & Resources	Chamber of Commerce, City Planning, TDI Fellow, Western Massachusetts Black Chamber of Commerce, Black Economic Council of Massachusetts, Legislative Partners, to provide dialogue on the program mix.  Can explore a future regionalization of this type of service through the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission through its digital services.



Star Mini Mart on Springfield Street



## Diagnostic

The pandemic has exacerbated the existing and long established disparities between so-called mainstream and Black/Brown businesses.

Between February and April of 2020, the number of Black and Brown business owners nationwide dropped by 41 percent.

According to [a report from the Boston Indicators](#), business owners of color in the state already had an unmet financial need of half a billion dollars a year, where additionally, white-owned firms were much more likely to get all of the Paycheck Protection Program funds they asked for.

With state and federal governments allocating unprecedented amounts of aid to businesses during the pandemic, there is opportunity to reshape some of these types of policies and services in favor of providing better access to them for entrepreneurs of color.

## Action Item

Chicopee will create a Black and Brown business owners technical assistance and capacity building program that will be launched in the Chicopee Center district with the goal of expanding city-wide over time to include programs as identified in the Description.

The project should be sustainably designed with a fundraising and partnership development in mind, to include steps of recruiting trainers, navigators/technical assistance providers, and participants might be relevant actions for which to plan.

Dependent on the goals and scope for portal development, Chicopee can plan for \$50,000-\$125,000 just for implementation planning, with annual renewal fees up to \$25,000. Additional costs can be planned for programming like special events, program supplies and other resources, stipends for volunteers/mentors, meals, travel, etc. Philanthropy is a key avenue for support this type of program as well.

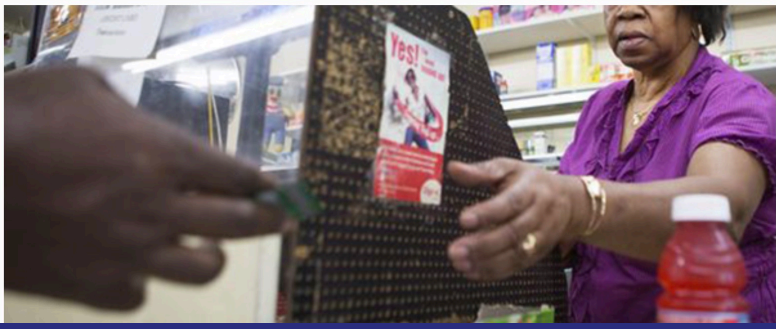
## Process

The project can be implemented by utilizing ARPA funds. Steps include:

1. Form a program development committee.
2. Obtain a formal charge for the committee through typical avenues.
3. Draft and release and Request for Proposals for possible vendor(s).
4. Engage in routine meetings with selected vendors until the program is built out.
5. Create and run the program, ensuring marketing and packaging to the public are also a part of the creation of the program.
6. The metrics aligned to goals and key performance indicators should be developed and measured first.
7. Consider a pilot program to inform program refinement over time.



La Diáspora on Exchange Street



Is your business or organization:

- ✓ Black-Owned,
- ✓ Black-Operated,
- ✓ Black-Oriented?

If so...

**Get Listed! Its FREE!**

# Sponsoring Culturally-specific Portals for Digital Marketing and Promotion






Provided by SME Consultant

Third Eye Network, LLC

Location

Rochester, New York/Finger Lakes Region

Origin	Susu Management Group, LLC <i>(d/b/a Black-owned Business Rochester)</i> Niche Market Insights Foundation, Inc. <i>(501(c)3 not-for-profit organization)</i> InfoWorks Development
Budget	 Portals: \$25k – \$75k ea (implementation); \$12k – \$15k/year ea (maintenance) APIs: \$5k ea (implementation); \$1k+/year ea (maintenance)
Timeframe	 Portals: 3 – 6 months ea (implementation and training) APIs: 1 – 3 months ea (implementation and training)
Risk	 Requires a regional organizational affiliate or sponsoring agency, socio-political will and actively engaged community collaboration; the digital divide
Key Performance Indicators	<b>Engagement Rates</b> <i>(# of niche listings, # of user accounts, # of pageviews, # of new visitors);</i> <b>Community Commerce</b> <i>(# of paid subscriptions, niche market sales, non-niche revenues);</i> <b>Community Impact</b> <i>(funds raised, # of reinvestments, grants awarded, # of businesses/jobs)</i>
Partners & Resources	Dr. Lomax R. Campbell, Matthew T. Bain, The BOB Squad <sup>SM</sup> , and NMI Foundation Board; Proprietary Database, Niche Market Portals, Directory APIs, CalendarWiz API <i>(discontinued)</i>

## Diagnostic

### Backgrounder

- BOB Rochester was launched in late 2014 as an anti-racist response to the untimely deaths of Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Michael Brown Jr., and others at the hands of police; inspired by the legacy of Victor Hugo Green who published *The Green Book* (1936 – 1966)
- By design, it is a community-driven marketing and promotion resource for area BOBs intended to empower Black enterprise, public service organizations and affinity associations; this social enterprise has organically amassed over 700 listings since its public launch

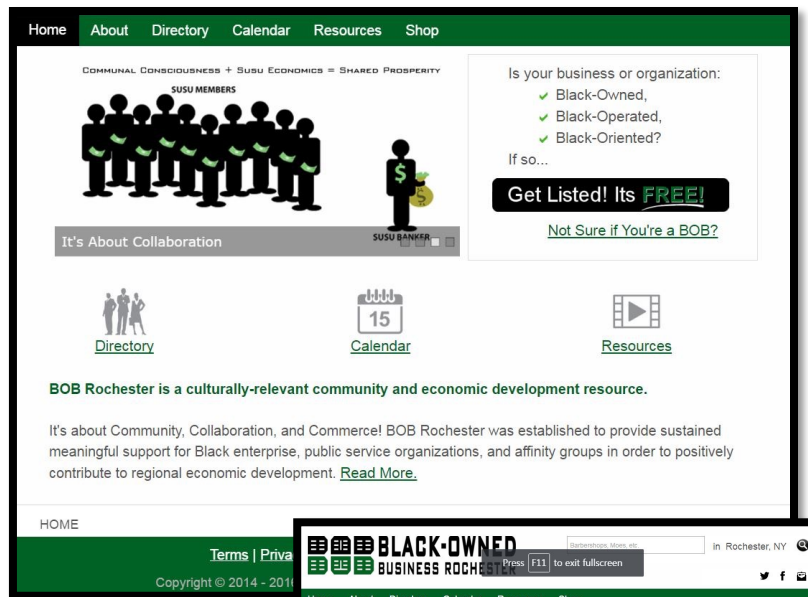
### Pandemic Effects

- Site statistics demonstrate community participation runs parallel with crises (i.e., civic unrest, COVID-19 pandemic)
- Renewed interest in BOBs evidenced by 26.5k in new users (a 723.99% increase) with 36.5k sessions; average monthly pageviews have increased from 1,600 (pre-pandemic) to 6,900 (post-pandemic); pageviews spiked during the summer of 2020: 4.2k (May), 83.2k (Jun), 17.5k (Jul), 6.9k (Aug), 7.6k (Sept)
- Local community gifts surpassed \$50k

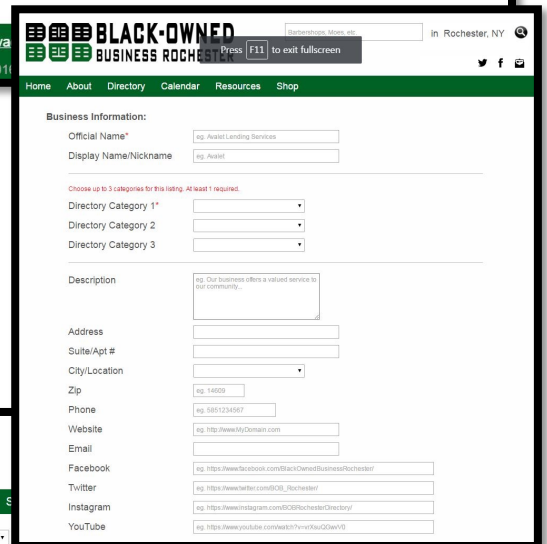
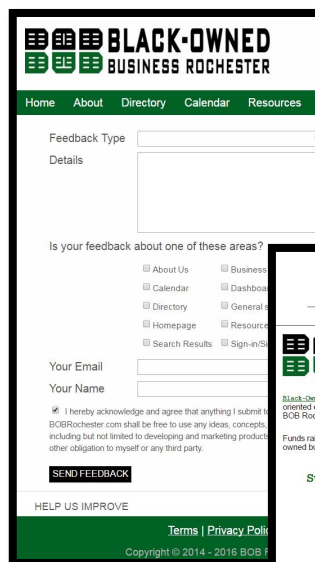
## Actions – Pandemic-related Pivots

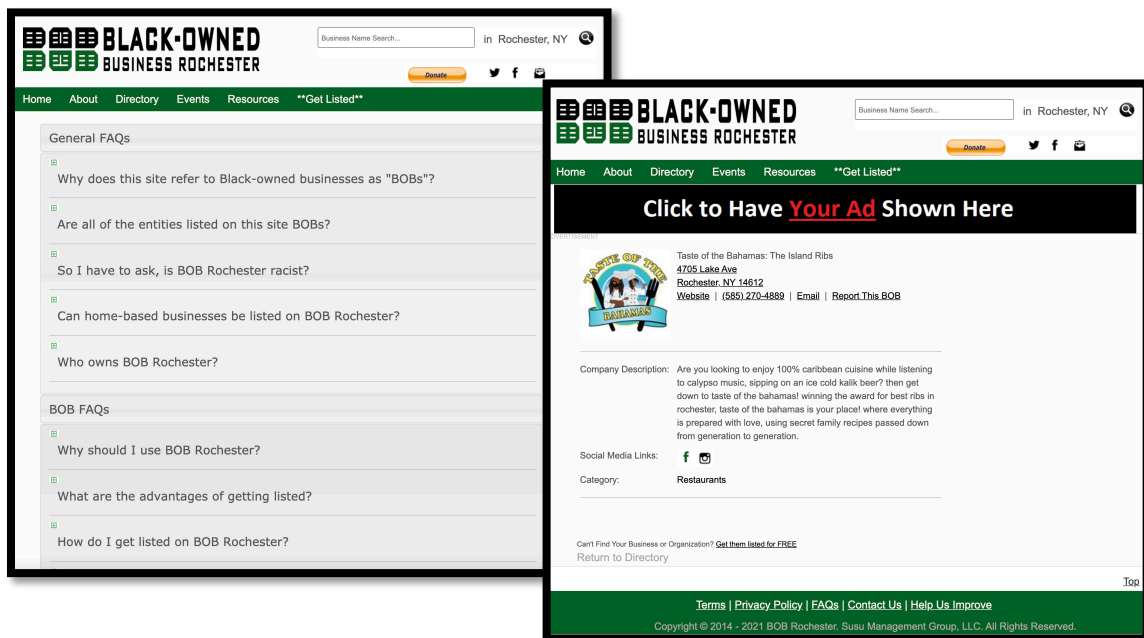
### Platform Development

- Developed an API to expand network reach, BOB promotion, and the data warehouse; allot 1 – 3 months at \$5k
- New brand development is underway, LocalBOBs.com (Fall 2021), for national expansion; allot 6+ months at ≤\$75k
- Create niche-specific platforms centering Latinx-, Asian-, and Native American-owned businesses; can filter by women-, disadvantaged-, LGBT-, and veteran-owned, as well as certification statuses (including MBE, WBE, DBE, LGBTBE, SDVOB/VOSB, and Section 3 businesses); allot 4 months at \$25k – \$75k each and \$12k – \$15k for annual maintenance
- New features will include check-ins, profile administration, crowdsourcing, job boards, ratings, reviews, eCommerce, a request for responses feature, custom APIs, niche-specific reporting, free and paid subscription levels, and more
- Connect a community reinvestment fund



BOBRochester.com screenshots





## Sample Pages Documentation

Ready for technical detail	Page	Description
4/23/20XX	About	Information page. A billboard of sorts to suggest the purpose of the site to the user in greater detail than the Home page.
	Add a BOB	(See Get Listed)
7/18/20XX	Calendar	A calendar display of events entered into the system. These events can be 'downloaded' to a user's device at will.
	Contact Us	A form to allow users to engage BOB Rochester administrators.
2/7/20XX	Directory	Listing of BOBs. Displayed in multiple ways to afford a comfortable user experience.
	FAQs	Frequently asked questions of users.
	Get Listed	A form interface that allows a user to request that a BOB get listed.
	Header (Search)	Used to search for BOB-records in the system by category, name, or tags. This should support partial string search. This page persists across all pages used in the site except for error-pages.
	Help Us Improve	A form to allow users to suggest ideas through the existing website.
	Home	An informational page. A billboard of sorts to suggest the purpose of the site to users, and highlight recent news and upcoming events.
	Privacy Policy	Static governing terms of privacy afforded to users of the BOB Rochester website.
	Resources	A listing of culturally-relevant books, movies, podcasts and other media focused on skill building and cultural community development.
	Shop	A listing of products for sale to support/sustain the efforts of BOB Rochester.
	Terms	Static terms of service provided by BOB Rochester to users of this website and system.
	Page (search results)	Resulting page of search or BOB Directory selection.
10/10/20XX	Profile	Static result of specific BOB listing.
	Media	Links to news articles, audio-visual files, and BOBR press kit items

Sample page documentation list for describing the purpose of each page and managing platform development



## Process

### Regional Integration Strategy

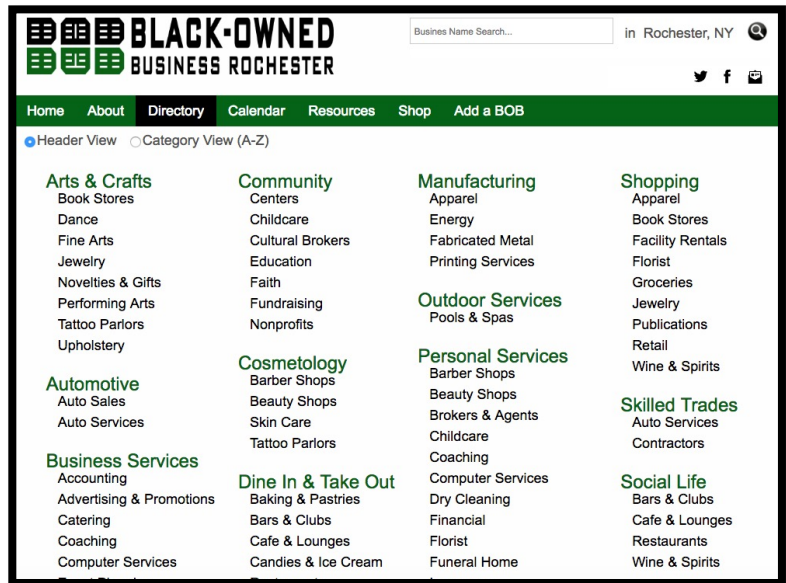
- Decide whether or not to partner with NMI Foundation, Inc. a new national non-profit (501c3) community wealth building organization to support these and related efforts within the regional context
- Identify an economic development or non-profit organization to serve as the *Organizational Affiliate* for the territory or region; they would spearhead network development and implementation with the software vendor and administer the network post-implementation, including onboarding and managing paid staff and/or volunteers (*see the next bullet*)
- Cultivate *Niche Market Ambassadors* (e.g., the BOB Squad<sup>SM</sup>) to perform outreach focused on deepening cultural community engagement through technical assistance and network navigation (budgetary considerations can include stipends, interns or co-ops, part-time, and full-time jobs)

### Strategic Resource Development

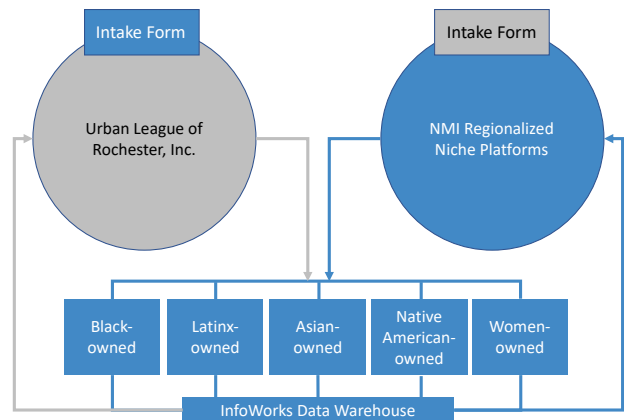
- Conduct outreach to the private sector, government, philanthropy, and the general community to garner financial support for the project; private sector incentives may include tax credits
- Establish a community fund connected to the network for garnering financial support and through which to allocate revenues for community reinvestment

### Platform Implementation

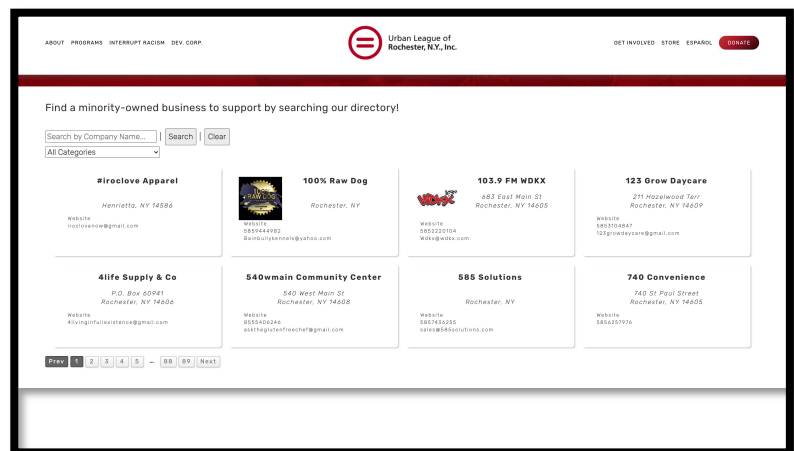
- Determine whether to sponsor one or more integrated culturally-specific portals and custom APIs in support of cultural communities of interest (*keep in mind that prices may vary by vendor, number of counties, population size, and/or features*)
- Select a vendor like InfoWorks and collaborate with the community to determine the desired scope of work
- Form a 3 – 7 person project team and maintain a weekly meeting schedule with the vendor
- Develop site content, create social media pages, pilot site developments, participate in training workshops, and identify niche directory listings with the community; celebrate wins publicly
- Prepare a rollout strategy with actions



Original BOB Rochester directory screenshot in header view



API conceptual model for NMI regionalized platforms and Urban League of Rochester (client)



New LocalBOBs.com API on client's website (www.urbanleagueroch.org)



# Culturally Competent Volunteer and Mentoring for Black Entrepreneurs



Provided by SME Consultant

Jeanette Nigro, Principal – Perch Advisors LLC

Location

New York City

<p><b>Origin</b></p>	<p>Developed by Hester Street in partnership with United Way of New York City and Perch Advisors</p>
<p><b>Budget</b></p>	<p> Development of training and implementation of volunteer/mentorship program cost under \$50,000</p>
<p><b>Timeframe</b></p>	<p> Short Term (Less than 5 years) – Program was developed and launched in less than 6 months</p>
<p><b>Risk</b></p>	<p> Low Risk: Public will was high and the program could be developed, scaled, and replicated</p>
<p><b>Key Performance Indicators</b></p>	<p>Number of volunteers trained on providing culturally competent mentoring; number of volunteers citing a better understanding of implicit bias and historical discrimination; number of businesses supported through volunteer/mentorship programs; exit surveying to determine impacts to improved business performance indicators.</p>
<p><b>Partners &amp; Resources</b></p>	<p>Key partners could include: Municipalities and government agencies offering small business support, neighborhood and business organizations including Business Improvement Districts, Chambers of Commerce, Black business organizations; technical assistance partners offering no-cost services such as federal Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs), PTAC's, colleges and universities, business services organizations serving Black businesses such as Project Hope, Minority Business Development Agency, Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI's), minority business associations, corporate partners with volunteer programs.</p>

**BEST PRACTICE**

## Diagnostic

When the COVID 19 pandemic hit in March 2020, NYC businesses faced immediate and imminent closures. Particularly hard hit were businesses in the retail, services, and hospitality sectors. In NYC, the pandemic was poised to create an extinction level event for Black-Owned businesses, with many concentrated in the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic.

Black-businesses needed help - mentorship and peer support - to pivot their business, navigate loans and grants, and adapt operations to the new normal. But additionally, they needed the type of support that understood the history and lived experience of Black businesses, including discrimination in lending and leasing, and lack of community-based resources in neighborhoods.

The program was developed to train mentors and volunteers on how to deliver culturally competent technical assistance for Black-businesses. Three modules were developed to educate mentors on the history of discrimination of Black business owners, the ways in which implicit bias impact technical support, and how to engage in active listening and conversation. Volunteers and partners were required to complete the entire 3-part training prior to being matched with a business. Post training exit surveys showed a significant increase in understanding of the lived experience of Black business owners in NYC, the ways in which implicit bias could impact how volunteers support businesses, and improved ability to communicate in a non-judgmental and unbiased manner with their future mentees.

## Action Items

Developing a volunteer or mentorship program to provide one on one support for Black and minority businesses requires an understanding of the lived and historical experience of those served through this work. Black and minority businesses have historically been marginalized through community segregation, red lining, bias in bank lending, among other ways that impact not only how they run their business, but often foster a deep mistrust in the institutions designed to help them improve their businesses, particularly during a crisis like COVID-19. COVID has made it even more challenging for Black and minority businesses to trust a system which was neither developed to include nor communicate with them. The sheer volume of information on COVID support and resources, often overwhelming and conflicting, furthered confusion on what support business could access.

Equity and implicit bias training helps volunteers, mentors, and technical assistance providers understand the Black and minority business experience and how it impacts access and use of resources to help them stabilize and grow. Any municipality, community organization, or small business technical assistance provider can take the extra step to develop training that better prepares those who serve Black and minority businesses to provide more thoughtful outreach and service provision.

Initiating equity and bias training could include as many partners as are willing to collectively work together to train their staff and volunteers. It is suggested that an outside consultant with expertise in this area be brought in to align intended outcomes and develop and administer the training. Training can be ongoing and include any partners or organizations seeking to better serve Black and minority businesses in a more equitable and inclusive way.



## Process

- Identify organizations with community and business support experience that can develop culturally competent service delivery training. There are opportunities for smaller municipalities to collaborate to develop shared goals and content in order to reduce costs and
- Research the history of businesses within the community/city/municipality to gain a better understanding of their experience. Consider hiring an expert in the area of cultural competency and inclusion to support the development of training curricula.
- Identify the goals and outcomes intended for the training.
- Survey Black and minority businesses to understand their needs, identify how their needs are defined by their experiences, and in what ways mentors and volunteers can support their journey.
- Identify corporate or community partners committed to both providing mentorship and technical assistance and delivering support in a culturally respectful way. Corporate sponsors with existing volunteer/mentorship programs, technical assistance providers, even municipal staff who support businesses can leverage their existing programs and improve their support to businesses.
- Partner organizations collaborate to review survey data, prioritize training needs for volunteers/mentors, and begin developing training.
- Test training with several organizations; use time within the training to ask questions in small groups; incorporate feedback and iterate training modules to ensure inclusivity and understanding.
- Pilot a small group of business and volunteer matches; observe and survey for impact.

Our mission is to help small businesses thrive across the Finger Lakes Region. We provide entrepreneurs and small businesses with the vital assistance, resources, and information they need. Nexus i90 makes support more accessible to foster equitable growth and inclusiveness and spur economic prosperity for our region.



### The Gateway for Entrepreneurs

We are dedicated to helping connect and grow the entrepreneurial community of the Finger Lakes region.

[Learn more](#)

# Facilitating Inclusive Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Building and Enhancement



Provided by SME Consultant

Third Eye Network, LLC

Location

Rochester, New York/Finger Lakes Region

Origin	City of Rochester – Mayor’s Office of Community Wealth Building Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) Center for Urban Entrepreneurship Rochester Economic Development Corporation (REDCO)
Budget	\$417.5k Digital Infrastructure; \$1.5M Ecosystem Enhancement
Timeframe	28 Weeks <i>[SourceLink Pro Implementation]</i> ; 12 Months <i>[Regional CRM Expansion]</i> ; 24 Months/cohort <i>[Ecosystem Enhancement]</i>
Risk	Requires public and philanthropic investment, socio-political will and actively engaged collaboration among the entrepreneur support community
Key Performance Indicators	Network Collaborations <i>[# of partners &amp; referrals, funds raised, engagement rates]</i> , Community Commerce <i>[# of businesses/jobs created/retained, # and % of goals achieved]</i> , Ecosystem Enhancements <i>[# of new offerings/improvements, impact of policy changes]</i>
Partners & Resources	<p>Collaborators: City of Rochester Mayor’s Office of Community Wealth Building, RIT Center for Urban Entrepreneurship, REDCO, Rochester Public Library Business Insight Center, JustCause, Monroe County Economic Development Dept., Urban League of Rochester, IBERO-American Action League, M&amp;T Bank Foundation, ESL Foundation, Rochester Downtown Development Corporation, SCORE Greater Rochester, PathStone Enterprise Center, Small Business Administration Rochester Chapter</p> <p>Sponsors: Living Cities – City Accelerator Catalytic Capital Grant (\$100k); JPMorgan Chase – Matching &amp; CRM Expansion Grants [\$137.5k, \$180k]; Empire State Development/New York State – Ecosystem Enhancement Grant (\$1.5M)</p>

**BEST PRACTICE**

## Diagnostic

## Action – Facilitating Nested “Hub and Spoke” Model Development

### Strategy Feasibility Planning

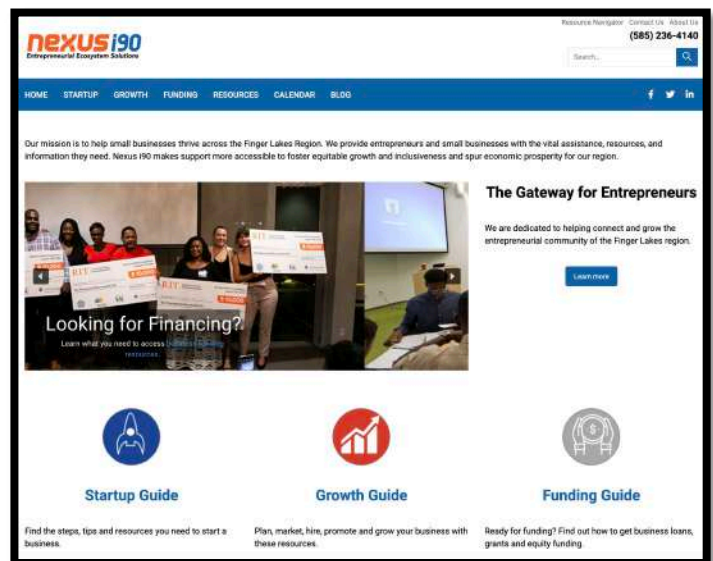
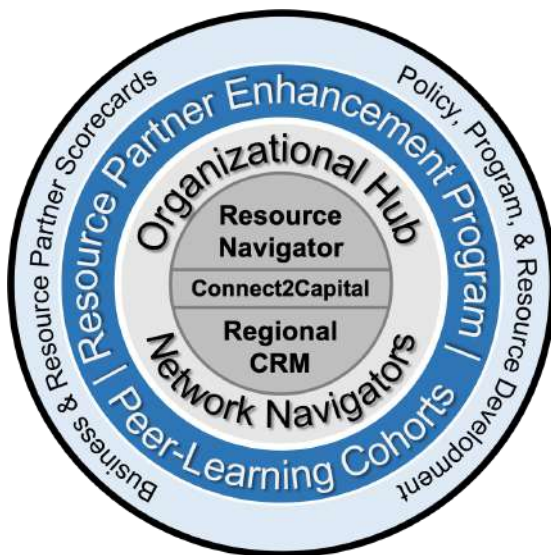
- Biennial small business climate and needs assessment survey; allot three to four months for planning and execution at \$10k – \$15k
- 4 – 5 culturally-specific, peer-led focus groups (*e.g., Black-owned, Latinx-owned, and women-owned businesses, businesses earning over \$100k annually, and those who had prior dealings with the “Organizational Hub”*); 6 to 10 participants per group at \$15k – \$20k total
- Findings: Bureaucracy was a barrier; universal monocultural approaches fail; support resources and pathways were unclear, decentralized, and disjointed; little capital access and know-how

### Anti-Racist Community Building

- Host 3 – 5 three-day Undoing Racism® Workshops with The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond ([www.pisab.org](http://www.pisab.org)) for resource partners, small businesses, influencers, and other stakeholders; allot three to four months for planning and execution at \$13.5k/workshop, when hosting 2 or more
- Attend Kauffman Foundation’s ESHIP Summit, join networks, and invest in related learning materials to plug into the global entrepreneurial ecosystem movement; allot up to \$2k/person
- Co-created the scale of proposed digital asset development activities (consider hyper-local versus regional approaches) with REDCO
- Spearheaded Sourcelink implementation with key collaborators
- Hosted resource partner gathers during project kick-off and launch events
- Prepared and released resource partner enhancement program RFPs
- Selected cohort participants by committee
- Publicly launched and currently administering the inaugural cohort

*Campbell’s Nested “Hub and Spoke” Model for Inclusive Ecosystem Building and Enhancement*

*Nexusi90.org home page*



## Process - Digital Asset Development *(phased)*

### Resource Navigator Implementation (Nexusi90.org)

Select a vendor like SourceLink (joinsourcelink.com), establish a project team, and maintain a weekly meeting schedule to identify and map resources, develop site content, create social media pages and a hotline, participate in train-the-trainer workshops, and convene regional resource partners for project kick-off and pre-public launch meetings; allot four to six months at \$75k for implementation and \$15k for annual maintenance *(prices may vary by vendor, number of counties, population size, and/or features)*

### Custom CRM Development and Platform Integration

Determine the scope of work based on community needs *(Rochester was interested in expanding access to SourceLink's CRM so any resource partner in the region that wanted to adopt the platform as a system of record or integrate their organizational system with the shared platform)*; allot 12 months of planning and execution at \$180k *(future SourceLink clients would not incur this expense)*

Connect2Capital is a collaborative online lending network created by Community Reinvestment Fund USA; allot four months for planning and execution *(in progress)* at an unknown cost due to a third-party sponsor

## Process – Resource Partner Enhancement Program

### Peer-learning Cohort Program

**Program Planning:** Determine target cohort size based on funds raised for the program; prepare requests for proposals for prospective resource partner and organizational coaches cohorts; responses should articulate proposed enhancement plans from resource partners, and demonstrate coaches' expertise and commitment to support the cohort and program; and establish a selection committee and develop scoring rubrics before releasing both requests for proposals, conduct candidate selection and matching processes, and notify program participants; allot six months at \$750k – \$2M total for three to six resource partners *(\$150k – \$200k grants each)* and three to six organizational coaches *(\$100k – \$150k grants each)*

**Program Convenings:** Host two day convenings *(virtual or in-person)* to kick-off and receive major progress updates at the beginning, middle, and end of the program; these events should include culturally-relevant music, soul checks *(check-ins)*, opening remarks from dignitaries and program administrators, a keynote speaker, relevant panels, team presentations, engaging activities, and breakout rooms/groups; allot six to nine months for planning and execution at varying costs based on delivery format *(virtual vs. in-person)*, refreshments and parking fees according to the number of participants, insurance requirements, interpretation and translation service needs, entertainment, decorations, and honorariums; these costs should be equitably deducted from the funds awarded to the resource partners and organizational coaches cohorts

**Program Management:** Resource partners should meet with their assigned coaches at least bi-weekly throughout the program, all coaches should meet with program administration at least once monthly for check-ins, an "all-cohort" meeting should be conducted monthly with both cohorts for updates and cohort collaboration, and resource partners should meet with program administration for an individual onboarding session at the beginning of the program and periodically as warranted throughout the program

**Program Workshops:** All cohort members should be required to participate in an Undoing Racism® Workshop early in the program to inform their work, and principals and tools should be regularly revisited; two to three months for planning and execution at costs equitably deducted from the funds awarded to the resource partner and organizational coaches cohorts



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Resource Navigator Contact Us About Us (585) 236-4140

HOME STARTUP GROWTH FUNDING RESOURCES CALENDAR BLOG

SELLING TO BIG BUSINESS AND THE GOVERNMENT

## Selling to Big Business and the Government

**Selling to the Government**  
Government agencies and large corporations buy the same types of things most businesses do, professional services, supplies, landscaping services and so on. Selling to government agencies can be tricky though, and that's where Procurement Technical Assistance Centers (PTAC) come in to play. PTAC offices provide small businesses throughout the region with assistance in submitting and understanding bidding opportunities and contracts. Often, they also support businesses in gaining certifications for women-, veteran- and minority-owned businesses.

**Becoming Certified**  
Certification programs can help you market your business to both large business and governments. Many large corporations and governmental entities set-aside a percentage of their purchasing contracts for small businesses, minority and/or women owned businesses. Becoming "certified" as one or more of these types of businesses enables a company to bid on contracting opportunities. MWBE.com offers a description of certification.

Photo credit: City of Rochester

**Growth Guide**  
Maintaining Growth  
Marketing to Drive Profit  
Exporting to Expand Sales  
**Selling to Big Business and the Government**  
Hiring and Managing Employees  
Events and Advisors  
Exit Strategies  
Networking for Growth

**Need help? Call Us (585) 236-4140**  
We're here to help you start and grow your business.

Can't find what you're looking for? Have a suggestion? Let us know.

Find local resources to help with procurement by searching the Resource Navigator.

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HOME STARTUP GROWTH FUNDING RESOURCES CALENDAR BLOG

SET FUNDING

## Get Funding

Contrary to popular belief there are only a very few grants available to start and grow businesses.

**Estimate the amount of funding you need to secure financing for your business**  
Start at the beginning: how much money do you need and for what?

- Tips on estimating startup costs (SBA)
- Online startup costs calculator (Bizplans.com)
- Small Business Development Center (SBD) counselors can also help you determine your startup or expansion financing needs

**Determine the Best Source of Funding**

- Overview of business financing (Bizfilings by CT)
- Quick Pick chart of funding sources based on stage of business (Bizfilings by CT)

**Put Together a Business Plan**  
Get more information on specific types of funding:

- Friends and Family Funding
- Types of Loans Available
- SBA/Bank Loans
- Angel and VC Investment
- Technology Grants

**Funding Guide**  
**Get Funding**  
The Truth About Free Government Grants  
Friends and Family Funding  
Types of Loans Available  
SBA/Bank Loans  
Angel and VC Investment Groups  
Technology Grants

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HOME STARTUP GROWTH FUNDING RESOURCES CALENDAR BLOG

## Resource Navigator

To request that your organization be included in the Nexus 190 Resource Navigator please complete this online form.

**Narrow Your Search**

Zip Code or City, State

Distance

Area of Assistance

Specific Need

Opportunity Populations

Business Type

Business Stage

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ADMINISTRATIVE

## Finally, We Have Reached Our Nexus!

By Dr. Lorain B. Campbell | Administrative

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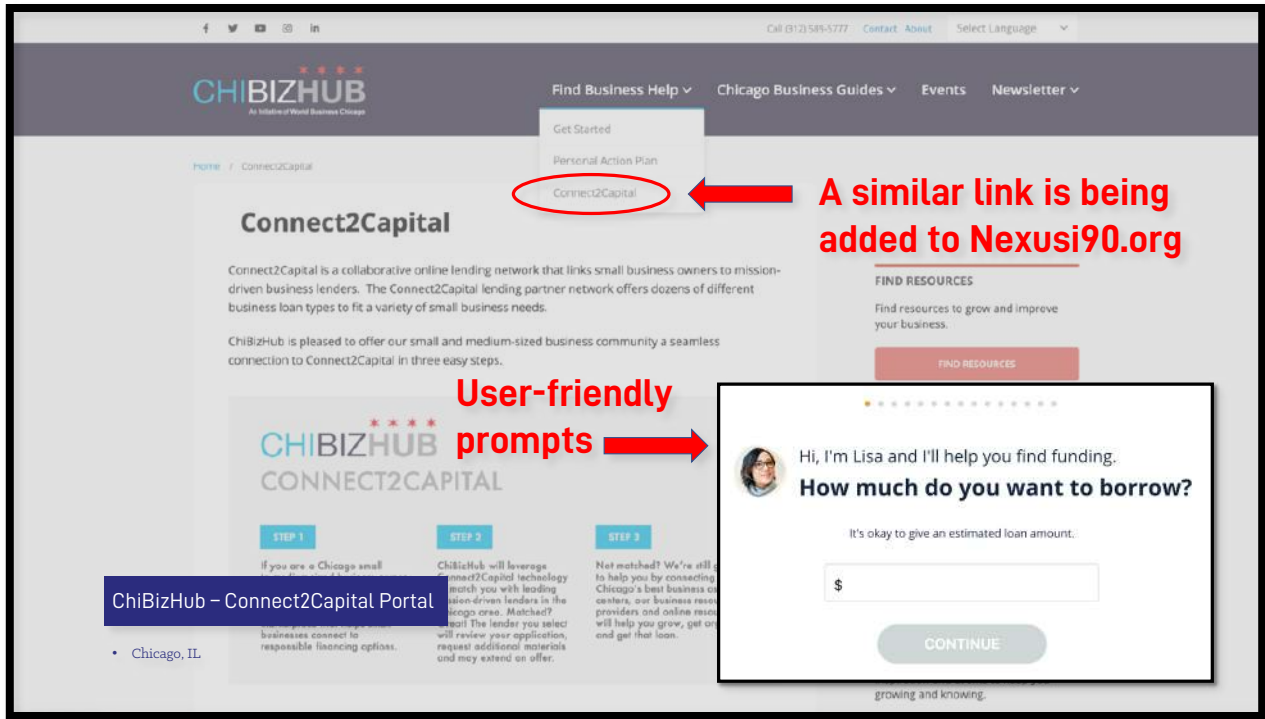
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Resource Partner Enhancement Program – Cohort I Member Organizations



Each Cohort I member above focuses on different entrepreneurial cultural communities: Black-owned, Latinx-owned, Women-owned businesses, low-to-moderate income residents, previously incarcerated and justice system involved residents, and food-based businesses (including new ventures and those who previously operated informally)

# Improving Business Owner Satisfaction with City Permitting & Internal Citywide Communication by Streamlining and Digitizing the City’s Development Review and Permitting Processes

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Category		Administrative Capacity
Location	Chicopee Center, then Citywide	
Origin	Chicopee Chamber of Commerce, TDI Fellow, Business Owners	
Budget		<p>Medium – estimated cost is \$75,000 including the cost of purchasing off the shelf software OR developing an internal electronic special event permit tracking process. Funds can come from American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA), CDBG, State funds via One-Stop portal. Plan for annual updates and their associated costs.</p>
Timeframe		<p>Short-term – City staff are interested in transitioning to electronic permitting for alignment with routine permit applications and for special events and are ready to act</p>
Risk		<p>Low-medium risk, due to political will and bureaucratic processes and constraints. The rapid recovery plan process identified support and enthusiasm from both city staff and stakeholders for this work.</p>
Key Performance Indicators	<p>Increase in permitting and improved timeframes; improved longevity of staff; positive response from customers; longevity of businesses; subjective evaluations by participants and providers</p>	
Partners & Resources	<p>City Staff (planning, building, DPW, Fire, Police, Mayor’s Office.)</p>	
Diagnostic	<p>With COVID mandated shut-downs and limited in person interactions transitioning to electronic on-line permitting becomes even more sensible and the pandemic crisis makes this investment much more affordable given the added public health benefits combined with an improved permitting process.</p>	
Action Item	<p>Chicopee will determine best path forward: a) use their existing vendor, Permitteyes, b) do competitive procurement or c) use the state list of approved e-permitting vendors, to expand electronic permitting services for departments not currently using electronic permitting.</p>	

1. Prioritize Desired Outcomes

- a. Identify and prioritize the outcomes the Planning Department (or identified department leading the electronic permitting charge) specifically seeks to accomplish with this project, and what additional desirable outcomes exist.
- b. Speak to any additional local stakeholders whose experiences and needs factor into this project.
- c. Create a short list of achievable, desirable outcomes.

2. Workflow Audit

- a. Develop a hypothetical workflow for the types of business activities you are looking to assist, diagramming what applications are needed and in what order.
- b. Develop an estimated timeframe for each step
- c. Determine which, if any, steps could be completed parallel or in a different order.

3. Product Research

- a. Create a sheet of potential vendors that could provide on-line permitting services and communities that have utilized their services. Outline their product options and any pricing information. Include PermitEyes on this list, both in terms of what it currently provides to the City and what other options it offers.
- b. Research internal IT capacity at the City level to determine if providing an in-house product is an option. Determine if funding additional staffing capacity, if needed, is likely to be cost-competitive with vendors (keeping in mind that in-house products are more likely to be tailored to local needs, but can come with other challenges.)
- c. Be conscious of the end user experience as well as the internal experience using any process.

4. Determine Selection Methodology

- a. Determine whether to (a) issue an RFP/RFQ, (b) negotiate with PermitEyes for any additional services, or (c) develop an in-house product.
- b. If an RFP/RFQ will be issued, outline clear expectations based on workflow analysis and selection criteria based on 1.c. It is recommended to request PermitEyes to bid.
- c. If negotiating only with PermitEyes, keep other options open.
- d. If preferring an in-house option, also keep options open if adequate talent can't be obtained within budget constraints.

5. Select Vendor

- a. Use a strong selection team to choose implementation path, and retain that team in implementation.
- b. Be conscientious consumers, making sure you understand what vendors are offering and for what cost.
- c. Keep at least one backup plan in mind to provide an option to change course and maximize city leverage over vendor.



- d. Be clear with vendor or new staff as to what your top needs are. Avoid being convinced to utilize prefabricated products unless you determine they meet your needs.

## 6. Implement System

- a. Based on workflow audit, determine opportunities to improve the process, through pushing out information about steps and/or streamlining the steps.
- b. Review existing workflow and proposed revisions with business users as well as staff charged with implementing changes.
- c. Use workflow improvements as part of moving a system online.
- d. Consider inviting one or two key users to beta-test a system if possible before full launch.
- e. Maintain the team from 5.a. to manage implementation as it moves forward.
- f. Make sure there is a clear project manager on the City side and maintain active involvement in product deployment.

## 7. Assess Effectiveness

- a. Develop a system to assess product effectiveness, including a business survey.
- b. Be open to changing course as needed based on feedback.
- c. Continue to evaluate project effectiveness on original criteria as much as possible.

# Streamlining Special Event Permitting



Provided by SME Consultant

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

Location

Osceola County, Florida

Origin	Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies, Osceola County (FL) Board of County Commissioners Community Development Department
Budget	 Low-cost, municipal staff engagement
Timeframe	 Short-term, may require changes to municipal review processes
Risk	 Low risk
Key Performance Indicators	Number of permits reviewed and issued, length of permitting and approval process
Partners & Resources	Municipal departments, to include, but not limited to Planning, Police, Fire, Building, DPW, and Health, and Town/City Administration; DLTA funding to assess permitting
Diagnostic	<p>The COVID pandemic has unleashed creativity and permissiveness in municipal special events permitting that cities and towns want to hold onto as society opens up. Elements to be retained include easing the burden of applying for permits and making sure costs reflect the amount of effort necessary to process the permits and do not result in inequitable access by different groups.</p> <p>More efficient and easier permitting processes can lead to quicker turn-around and peace of mind for those organizing these events for the community. Streamlining event permitting can help agencies organizing events to use their resources more efficiently and will result in better events when permitted on a singular parcel as zoning dictates.</p> <p>The following example is a regulatory process taken from Osceola County in Florida that employs best practices for special event permitting: a central repository for application with the ability to submit electronically and follow the permit review process via electronic permitting. Review processes are done transparently and discussed at routinely scheduled meetings in conformance with the local government's regulatory codes.</p>

## Action Item

In order to streamline your permitting process, the municipality should review its permitting powers: who reviews and approves, how much does the permit cost, is there an appeal procedure, etc.

The following Best Practices can be used to improve communication between stakeholders and the community about the local permitting process for special events. For this best practice, the Osceola County Board of County Commissioners utilizes these techniques to ensure an expedient, open permitting process for their special events.

- Single Point of Contact
- Users' Guide to Permitting with Permitting Flow Charts & Checklists
- Clear Submittal Requirements
- Concurrent Applications
- Combined Public Hearings, if needed
- Pre-Application Process
- Development Review Committee (DRC)
- Regularly scheduled inter-departmental meetings
- Physical proximity of professional staff to review

These best practices apply to streamlining special event applications that are allowed in specific areas of a community. In most cases, the zoning district would dictate the type of uses allowed in a community. This particular example permits special events as a type of use in commercially zoned areas and have a limitation of occurrences per calendar year.

## Process

As listed above, streamlined permitting can be realized if a municipality explores the concepts below. Not only has COVID maybe expedited these processes, but it has likely created a more permanent change in the ways municipalities interact with special events.


1. Single Point of Contact. The Community Development Department was the repository for the initial application and would determine if requirements were met leading to the scheduling of a Development Review Committee Meeting.
2. Users' Guide to Permitting and Permitting Flow Charts and Checklists. If a community already has a product like this, the process for permitting for special events can be incorporated into the existing guide. As the government provided an electronic permitting system, following the flow of the permit was easy for the applicant to see what either was missing or if a staff review had occurred.
3. Clear Submittal Requirements. Special event permit applications required documented permission from the property owner, site plan, photos, proof of insurance, and a narrative description of the event. Other documents would be required if necessary.
4. Concurrent Applications. Other required application permits, and their approvals, would need to be furnished as part of the permit approval process. The communication internally would be to ensure those permit approvals were occurring with the County Health Department or Public Safety, if necessary.
5. Combined Public Hearings, if needed. This was not a likely occurrence due to the local regulation, however, concurrent approvals would occur at a designated meeting of the local Development Review Committee.
6. Pre-Application Process. The point of contact for the process was the specific department staff person who would be able to address outstanding issues and questions regarding the permit requirements.

Process (Continued)

Development Review Committee. The administrative approval of the DRC would occur either through a consent agenda or if pulled to be addressed publicly. The DRC included DPW, Buildings, and Planning/Zoning. The Departments of Public Safety and Health and the School District are often attendees at these meetings.

Regularly scheduled inter-departmental meetings. These meetings kept the issues of the specific special event permit in the County's pipeline of coordinated reviews.

Physical proximity of professional staff to review. The County Administration Building housed all departments. The housing of all departments in the building allowed for a One-Stop shop of sorts. Like with other permitting, increased the ability of interdepartmental staff communications with applicants and each other.

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Osceola County Special Event Application</b></p> <p>Osceola County Board of County Commissioners Community Development Department 1 Courthouse Square, Suite 1400 Kissimmee, FL 34741 Phone: (407)742-0200 Specialpermits@osceola.org</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Application No.: _____ Date Received: _____</p>
<p><b>Submittal Checklist</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Property Owner Authorization</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Proof of Ownership</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Legal Description</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Narrative describing the event in detail. Including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sounds which will project beyond the property lines.</li> <li>• Vehicular Traffic and parking</li> </ul> </li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site plan showing:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lot Dimensions,</li> <li>• Location of Special Event (with all details of set-up), Setbacks of set-up from property and right-of-way lines, Driveways, identifying parking and access, roads, tents, signs, portable toilets, and any other structures and setbacks from property lines and any other existing site improvements</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Application Fees \$620.00</li> </ul>	<p>In accordance with Chapter 3, Article 3.8, Section 3.8.1.O of the Osceola County Land Development Code, authorization for a Special Event is issued to:</p> <p><b>Applicant</b></p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Agent/Lessee: _____ Tax ID# _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>Email: _____ Phone: _____</p> <p><b>Event Details</b></p> <p>Address of Event: _____</p> <p>Parcel Number: _____</p> <p>Dates of Event: _____ Hours: _____</p> <p>Event on County property? Yes ( <input type="checkbox"/> ) No ( <input type="checkbox"/> )          If yes provide liability Insurance. The insurance shall have a limit not less than \$1 million per occurrence for the general aggregate.</p> <p>_____</p> <p><b>Details of Event:</b>          (a narrative may be attached to describe the event in detail.)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

An application like this existed both as a fillable paper version and electronically at the county's permitting website.



# (Re)investing in the Private Realm with Creative Code Compliance

---

Category



Private Realm; Administrative Capacity

Location

Chicopee Center

Origin

Chicopee Chamber of Commerce, TDI Fellow, City Planning Department

Budget



Medium – The estimated cost for this project is \$50,000 for the updated code compliance information/website plus \$100,000 to capitalize the fund.

Possible funding sources:

*American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)* – Communities may use ARPA funding for small business assistance, such as to enhance outdoor spaces for COVID-19 mitigation (e.g., restaurant patios) or to improve the built environment of the neighborhood (e.g., façade improvements).

*Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)* – Applicants must meet and adhere to federal requirements and compliance issues. The Massachusetts CDBG Program is a competitive program that is available to all municipalities that are not Entitlement Communities and encourages joint or regional applications. Communities may apply for funds for downtown or commercial district related projects including sign/facade programs.

*Private/Nonprofit/Foundation funding* – Low-interest or no-interest loans or grants from private lenders, often those with a community focus or a small, local bank or nonprofit organization with community interest.

*Historic funding* – Historic preservation and landmarks organizations such as Main Street America receive grant funding from the National Park Service specifically for rural “Main Street” communities.

*Local Municipal Funding (Set-Aside)* – Municipal allocation set-aside from a special revenue stream for a set amount of time (e.g., permit revenues, sales tax set-aside, special fees such as landfill tipping/disposal fees, etc.)

*Special Taxing Bodies* – Business district designation (creating an additional sales tax) or special service area (additional property tax), TIF districts

Timeframe



Short-term – This project can be realized within a year with production of a code compliance tool. The City can simultaneously seek start up monies to capitalize the fund for prospective businesses to take advantage of to assist with paying for code improvements.

Risk



Low-medium risk, due to political will and bureaucratic processes and constraints. The rapid recovery plan process identified support and enthusiasm from both city staff and stakeholders for this work.

Key Performance Indicators

Decrease in number of code violations; faster code compliance response; increased sales at businesses who take advantage of the fund to expand; change in economic activity in the district

Partners & Resources

City Staff Chamber of Commerce, TDI Fellow, City Staff (planning, building, DPW, Fire, Police, Mayor's Office.)planning, building, DPW, Fire, Police, Mayor's Office.)

Diagnostic

District businesses suffered a decline in sales and customers during the pandemic. A quarter of district businesses saw their revenues drop by 25%.

Action Item

A code compliance manual will be prepared for the City identifying required improvements informing business owners of permits and typical requirements. The tool will be visual and easily accessible, online and hard copy.

An inventory of buildings/storefronts that may need significant work to bring into compliance will also be completed along with identification of funding sources to provide monies to property owners/businesses for compliance improvements.

Process

#### Creating a Code Compliance Manual (content for a website)

1. Have a positive view. Present the city's enforcement measures in a positive light by focusing on compliance (rather than noncompliance) and the benefits businesses receive as they come into compliance.
2. Involve the community. Make understanding and compliance a community effort through strategies that incorporate the business community. Survey businesses in the district to identify gaps in knowledge of code enforcement and compliance, and recruit a small number of business owners to serve on an advisory group to assure the new tool meets their needs as well as the city's needs.
3. Take a measured approach. Taking small, incremental steps that slowly grow the zoning and code education program to the right size will ensure the business community can handle more difficult enforcement questions in the future.
4. Start the manual. Start writing your manual by building upon good examples from other communities that answer the questions and issues most frequently raised by property and business owners.
  - a. What is the permit process? The process is generally the same for building wiring and plumbing. In addition, fire prevention and sprinkler permits will also require the input and approval of the local fire department.
  - b. When do you need a permit? Check with departments for other construction activity.

5. Verify code compliance. The manual needs to accurately answer the most common code questions to comply with state laws. Since Building Codes are updated frequently, the manual should be updated on a yearly basis and also provide a link to the current building code.
6. Simplify descriptions and definitions. If an important code requirement seems irrelevant and unmanageable, or if no one within the community can actually understand or interpret the code, it's a pretty good indicator that there is an opportunity for simplification.
7. Launch the Code Compliance Manual (website) and be prepared for additional input, comments and the need to make changes over time.
8. Effective enforcement. The final step is establishing an effective enforcement program. A good enforcement program clearly establishes how the city will identify code violations, bring about compliance, and provide business community benefits. An effective enforcement program educates, offers assistance, prepares property owners for enforcement, and encourages their participation.
9. Consistency of enforcement. Consistent understanding and interpretation is the most important aspect of zoning and code enforcement over time. Before a manual is released for public use, City staff tasked with zoning and code enforcement must be trained to provide consistent interpretation of requirements and guidance to applicants.

#### Getting started

1. City identifies funding source(s) and secures funding;
2. Retain a third-party to work with the City and District Businesses and the Chamber to research and develop the code compliance manual;
3. Launch the new code compliance manual/website providing recommendations and requirements to business and property owners for effective code compliance and store improvements;
4. Assure compliance to required (and recommended) activities; and reimburse those who have made improvements.



Image: Andover

# Develop a façade/storefront/site improvement program



Provided by SME Consultant

Emily Keys Innes, AICP, LEED AP ND, Innes Associates Ltd.

Location

Not Applicable

Origin	Innes Associates Ltd.
Budget	 Low (less than \$50,000)  Medium (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (1-5 years)
Risk	 Medium
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop design guidelines for the façade elements to be improved.</li> <li>• Develop the structure of the program.</li> <li>• Manage the program over time.</li> <li>• Design assistance.</li> <li>• Implementation, including construction.</li> <li>• Displacement protection programs.</li> </ul>

**BEST PRACTICE**



## Potential Sources of Funding

In addition to municipal funds, the following are appropriate sources:

### **Funding Sources for All Façade Improvement Programs**

#### American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Assistance to small businesses includes loans, grants, in-kind assistance, technical assistance, or other services. These funds should cover assistance with the design of façade, storefront, or site improvements when tied to a specific impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Possible impacts are addressed in the sections on **Key Performance Indicators** and **Diagnostic**.

#### Hometown Grants

##### *T-Mobile*

This program will fund up to \$50,000 per town and may be used to rebuild or refresh community spaces, including historic buildings. <https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/hometown-grants>

#### Local Banks and other Community Development Financial Institutions

Local banks with a community development financing program for small businesses may be able to help provide low or no interest loans to small businesses for their share of the improvements, especially for a storefront or sign upgrade. The focus of the program at each bank is different; contact your local bank(s) and discuss how they could participate in investing in the community.

#### Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community One-Stop for Growth

##### *Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (project limit \$25,000)*

All communities are eligible to apply. Some of the funding for this program is reserved for non-entitlement Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) communities. MDI staff will assign a consultant to assist the community with the technical services, which could include creating the program, developing the design guidelines, and providing conceptual designs for improvements, depending on the complexity of the project. This program could be used to develop the design guidelines for the façade improvement program.

#### Business Improvement District or Other Downtown District

Funds from a BID may be used for a façade improvement program.

### **Funding Sources that May be Leveraged**

A façade improvement program may be used to address components of the façade (including awnings and signs), a storefront system, accessibility, the entire façade or façades visible from a public way, and/or components of the site (including signage, planters, restriping for outdoor dining or retail display, or adding more permanent landscaping). However, within a target area such as a downtown, corridor, or other commercial area, some buildings may have more extensive needs. For example, many historic buildings require elevators for access to upper floors. Other buildings may require structural repairs to the façade or interior.

The sources on the next page are examples that can work in tandem with a façade improvement program to address buildings with larger needs.

## Potential Sources of Funding

### Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community One-Stop for Growth: Underutilized Properties Program

#### *MassDevelopment*

As with the historic tax credits below, this funding source is for a much larger project. It could be used to help address larger buildings in a target area that have more significant issues. Bundling this program and a few of the other more specialized grants could help a municipality address smaller properties with the façade improvement program and larger ones with these more targeted funds.

### Municipal Vacant Storefronts Program

#### *Economic Assistance Coordinating Council*

This program will not fund façade improvements. The municipality would form a district. Businesses the district then apply for the funds to address vacant storefronts. This could help reduce the number of vacant storefronts while the façade improvement program addresses accessibility, deferred maintenance, and design issues on the exterior or the site.

### Collaborative Workspace Program

#### *MassDevelopment*

This grant provides another option to address both the exterior and the interior of this space while also helping to support local jobs and job creation.

### Community Preservation Act

This source only applies in those communities that have adopted the CPA. CPA funds may be used to acquire, preserve, and rehabilitate and/or restore historic assets. A municipality could tie this to the design guidelines for a façade improvement program and consider, for example, acquiring a downtown historic building, updating the façade and ground floor for commercial use, and adding an elevator to allow for housing on the upper floors.

### Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund

#### *Massachusetts Historical Commission (project limit \$3,000-\$100,000, depending on project type)*

This is a 50% reimbursable matching grant for preserving properties, landscapes, and sites listed in the State Register of Historic Preservation.

Applicants are limited to municipalities and nonprofits. Many downtown and village centers include nonprofit and municipal anchors. This grant could be used to ensure that all properties in a target area are brought, over time, to the same standard of repair. The program does have limitation on allowable costs. A preservation restriction is required.

### Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit

#### *Massachusetts Historical Commission*

This is available for significant rehabilitation of historic buildings and may help supplement a larger project in a downtown. This is included in this best practice sheet because the guidelines developed for the municipal façade/storefront improvement program could be incorporated into the review of larger projects.

## Risk: Explanation

The risk level depends on the community and the relationships of the property owners with the municipality. The highest level of risk occurs in conversations with property owners; for various reasons, the owners of the most distressed properties may be reluctant to participate. Once funding is secured and a few projects have been successfully completed, this risk level is likely to drop. Early engagement with property and business owners will also reduce this level of risk.

Some communities have indicated that that owners will not want to participate in programs funded by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds because of the number of requirements. Communities using these funds should consider helping with the paperwork and providing a list of local designers and contractors who meet the program's eligibility requirements.

Façade improvements can also be about community values relative to the physical space; a third level of risk occurs within the community conversations around the design standards for the program. In some communities, a façade improvement program may be an implementation step in an earlier planning process. In others, developing a community vision for the area before creating the program will be necessary to receive support for the program.

The final risk is the displacement of smaller businesses as property values, and rents, increase to match the upgrades to the physical environment. Since many smaller businesses are often also local businesses, improvements without protection for those small businesses may result in attractive, but empty, storefronts. Municipalities should consider structuring the criteria for participation in their façade improvement programs to reduce the risk of displacement.

## Key Performance Indicators

Improvements as a result of these programs include safety, accessibility, pedestrian comfort, and aesthetics. Over time, upgrades to façades and sites contribute to a perception that an area is vibrant, safe, and attractive to businesses and their customers. The increase in value attracts investment and contributes to a higher tax base.

KPI for this project could include the following:

- Creation of the program.
- Number of applicants over a specific timeframe.
- Number of façades, storefronts, and/or sites improved within a specific timeframe.
- Maintenance of the improvements after a set number of years.
- Increase in visitors to the target area.
- Increase in sales at the property/business improved and within the target area.
- Ability to extend the program to other commercial areas within the municipality (if appropriate).
- If anti-displacement measures are included in the program:
  - Number of local businesses within improved properties that are still there after a set number of years.
  - Number of new local businesses that have started or relocated to the target area within a set number of years.

## Partners & Resources

- Municipal staff (planning and economic development, building and/or zoning inspector)
- Municipal boards (City Council/Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Design Review Board, Economic Development Committee)
- Property/business owners
- Downtown organizations

## Diagnostic

Reasons for undertaking a façade or storefront improvement program may include one or more of the following:

- Requirements to address the transmissibility of COVID-19, such as new windows, doors, or HVAC system may be unaffordable to a small business owner and/or may have a negative impact on the façade if improperly sourced and installed.
- On-site parking spaces are poorly organized and, if reorganized, can provide room for outdoor dining or retail display.
- Local small businesses do not have the resources (time, money, expertise) to address substandard storefronts.
- Distressed properties have a negative impact on people's impression of the viability and/or safety of a business district and property owners are unable to make the improvements themselves.
- Storefronts are not accessible to those who have problems with mobility, whether temporary or permanent.
- Historic downtowns often have empty upper floors because of the lack of accessible elevators. A major improvement project could provide grants to address both interior and exterior accessibility.
- Historic properties may have been "improved" with inappropriate materials or repairs.

Site improvements that reduce asphalt and add landscape can address public health issues by reducing the heat island effect, planting trees to address air quality, and using low impact design to manage stormwater onsite.

## Action Item

The municipality needs to make certain decisions prior to and during the creation of this program. If the municipality already knows the answers, then staff can proceed with developing the program. If not, the municipality can work the decision points into a scope of work for assistance in development and perhaps managing the program. See **Process** for some of these questions.

If starting from scratch, the municipality will need to accomplish the following:

- Identify capacity within the municipality to guide the program and bring on additional capacity.
- Develop an appropriate level of design guidelines.
- Engage the businesses, property owners, and community to get buy-in for the program.
- Develop the criteria for application, approval, installation, and maintenance.
- Develop the funding and oversight structures.



### Pre-program development

1. Identify who in the municipality will manage this program: municipal staff, existing downtown committee/organization, volunteer committee, or a hybrid.
2. If the municipality does not already have design guidelines for the area that are suitable for this program, then decide how those guidelines will be developed. Will the design guidelines be just for the façade improvement program, or will they be more broadly applicable?  
Note that the entity managing this process does not have to be the municipality. For example, a Community Development Corporation or other nonprofit could sponsor the program.
3. Discuss the potential focus of the program: components of a storefront, the entire storefront, the entire façade, all façades, the site? Will signage, lighting, awnings and other smaller elements be included? Will interior improvements to address accessibility be included? Will the municipality fund the design, all or some of the improvements, or both?
4. Discuss what will not be eligible. Eligibility may also be determined by the funding source (for example, CDBG funds).
5. Discuss the length of time that improvements must be maintained and the enforcement process for ensuring that improvements are maintained. Maintenance requirements could be tied to the length of the tenant's lease.
6. Consider the funding structures. The program can provide grants or loans to property owners/businesses for the improvements. Grants may provide a greater incentive to participate while loans (no or low interest) provide a revolving fund to assist more properties. Forgiving loans after a certain time if the improvement are maintained is another option.  
If the property owners are less interested in the program, the municipality might consider offering grants to the first 3-5 to sign up (depending on resources) or through a lottery process and transitioning later applicants to a loan program. This method would also allow the municipality to assist specific properties as catalysts for the rest of the target area. This would need to be a highly transparent process.
7. Decide whether the guidelines and program will be developed in-house or whether the municipality will seek outside help. The funding source may determine the type of outside assistance; for example, certain programs will assign on-call consultants. For others, the municipality may need to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP).

### Developing the Guidelines

1. If the municipality already has design guidelines that can be used for the façade improvement program, skip to the next section.
2. For developing the guidelines, review the Best Practices for Design Guidelines.

## Developing the Program

1. Decide the following:
  - a. Grant, loan, or hybrid
  - b. Which elements will the program fund and which are the responsibility of the property owner?
  - c. What are the eligibility requirements for participating in the program?
  - d. What is the length of the program?
  - e. How long will property owners be required to maintain the improvements?
  - f. What is the enforcement procedure for maintenance? (This could be repayment of a grant or a lien on a property.)
  - g. Will the responsibility for maintenance transfer to a new owner if the property is sold?
2. Differentiating between the responsibilities of the tenant (often the small business) and the landlord (the property owner) is critical – a small business may be enthusiastic about the assistance, but the landlord may not. The municipality may need to consider parallel outreach processes.
3. Decide on the application process and how applicants will be evaluated. Are certain property types or improvements given priority over others? Make sure the process of choosing participants is transparent.
4. Develop the forms and train the people who will be evaluating the applications.

## Implementation

The program can provide grants or loans to property owners/businesses for the improvements. Grants may provide a greater incentive to participate for reluctant property owners, while loans (no or low interest) provide a revolving fund to assist more properties. Some communities have indicated that requiring a match from the property owner may create longer-term support of the program.

If the property owners are less interested in the program, the municipality might consider offering grants to the first 3-5 participants to sign up (depending on resources) and transitioning later applicants to a loan program. This method would also allow the municipality to assist specific properties as catalysts for the rest of the target area.

Education of all people involved in the program needs to be an ongoing component. A municipality that is short on project management resources should consider hiring a dedicated staff member or consultant to manage this program.

Finally, the municipality should consider streamlining approvals of projects under this program to reduce the time needed for implementation.

### Example 1: Sign & Façade Improvement Program

Ashland, Massachusetts

#### Town Contact

Beth Reynolds  
Economic Development Director  
breynolds@ashlandmass.com

#### Funding by:

Home Rule petition for annual appropriation and Home Rule petition for revolving fund – both approved by Town Meeting.

#### Structure

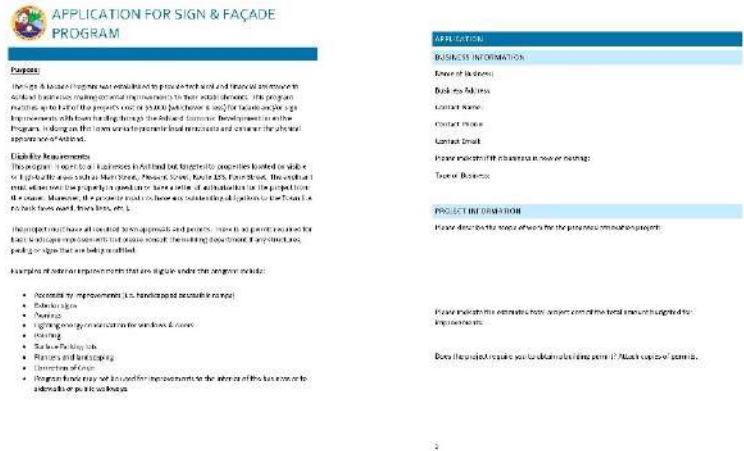
50% match up to \$5,000

#### Characteristics

- Preferred target area (high traffic streets) but is open to all businesses in Ashland.
- Includes building improvements (accessibility, signs, awnings, painting).
- Includes site improvements (parking lots, planters, landscaping)

<https://www.ashlandmass.com/669/Business-Incentive-Programs>

**Note: Many existing programs use CDBG funds. Examples 1 and 2 both use municipal funding sources. Examples 3 and 4, which are both Main Streets Programs, provide a model for using historic preservation funds.**



Courtesy of the Town of Ashland

### Example 2: Storefront Improvement Program

Cambridge, Massachusetts

#### City Contact

Christina DiLisio  
Project Manager  
cdilisio@cambridgema.gov

#### Funding by:

Municipal capital funds

#### Structure

Tiered matching grants based on improvement type

#### Characteristics

- Includes increasing accessibility to the store (part of their Storefronts-for-All program) and improving or replacing windows and doors to address COVID-19 restrictions.
- Also recommends tax credit programs to address accessibility, historic preservation, and energy efficiency

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/econdev/smallbusinessassistance/smallbusinessprograms/storefront>



Courtesy of the City of Cambridge

### Example 3: NPS Main Street Façade Improvement Grant

Main Street America

<https://www.mainstreet.org/ourwork/projects/spotlight/facadeimprovements/npsgrant>

- Main Street America announced a façade improvement grant program using funds from the Historic Revitalization Subgrant Program, now the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants Program. This grant is sponsored by the National Park Service.
- This example is not given as a funding source, rather, it is an option for using historic preservation funds, such as CPA funds, to create a façade improvement program that would address the historic buildings in a target area. This option is provided because some communities were looking at non-CDBG sources for a façade improvement program. This may be a useful model for a local program.
- The site provides a link to each of the communities chosen for this program. The awards are expected to be \$25,000 per project, and the site has the preservation covenants, grant agreements, and two webinars which may be useful.

### Example 4: Historic Commercial District Revolving Fund

Main Street America

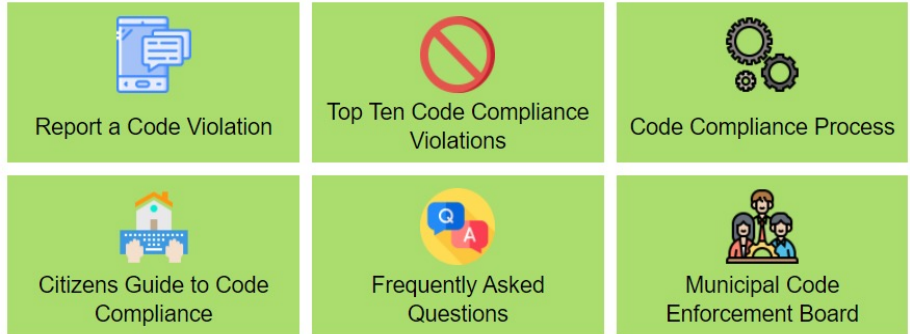
<https://www.mainstreet.org/ourwork/projects/spotlight/facadeimprovements/hcdrf>

- State-by-state program – in 2016, it was Texas and in 2019, it was Maine.
- This is not a funding source, but an example of a program that could serve as a model for communities with a significant number of historic buildings in their commercial centers.
- The Texas program includes a PDF of before-and-after pictures, the scope of work, and the cost for each building.
- This program also serves as a reminder that historic photos of a downtown can be used to as a base for developing design guidelines for the program, reinforcing characteristics specific and unique to each community.



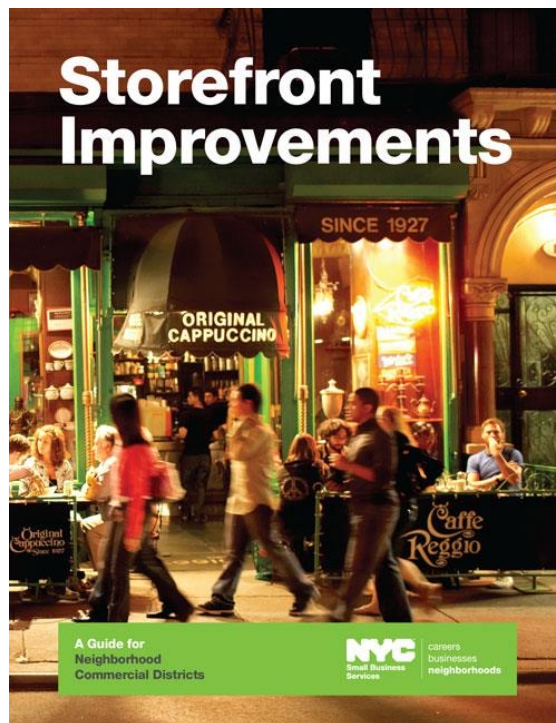
### Code compliance manual

Code Compliance: A Citizens Guide to Code Enforcement (City of Clearwater)



<https://www.myclearwater.com/home/showdocument?id=1256>

Storefronts Improvement: A Guide for Neighborhood Commercial Districts



[http://www.nyc.gov/html/sbs/downloads/pdf/neighborhood\\_development/storefront-guide.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/sbs/downloads/pdf/neighborhood_development/storefront-guide.pdf)





### Funding for improvements

“Rent Escrow Account Program” (REAP) – Los Angeles, where when an owner falls out of compliance for a certain time, tenants may pay reduced rent (set by City). Paid to owner or escrow account. City may be able to undertake repairs by placing a lien on the property.

Emergency Repair Program (ERP) – NYC, where Housing Code Enforcement Agency may fix violations and bill owner. If owner fails to pay, a tax lien will be placed on the property.

# Reviewing Zoning Ordinances + Regulations

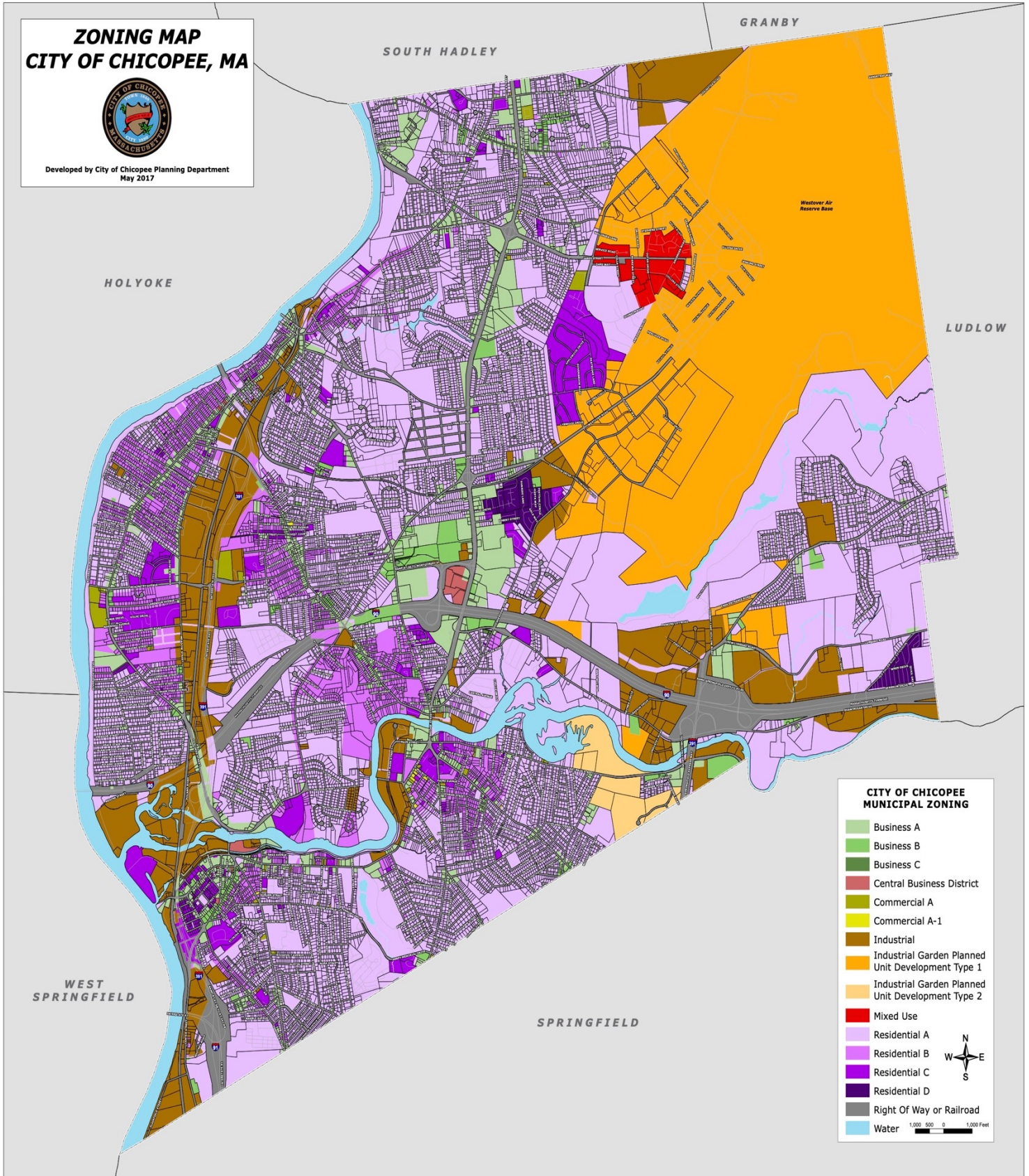
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Category	 Administrative Capacity
Location	Chicopee Center
Origin	City Planning Department, City Building Department, Chicopee Chamber of Commerce
Budget	 Medium, dependent on scope \$50,000-\$75,000. American Recovery Act, City Funds, District Local Technical Assistance, Community Planning Grant, Land Use Planning Assistance Grant through the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Timeframe	 Short-Medium when funding is secured.
Risk	 Medium, Planning Board and City Council will need to act on behalf of the City with determining whether or not changes are appropriate.
Key Performance Indicators	Success is measured by tracking the ease of filing and obtaining a permit; how quickly permits are issued; and the ratio of permits issued versus permits denied. Additionally, how many zoning ordinance and/or regulations are adopted is a measure of success.
Partners & Resources	City Planning, Building Department, Volunteer Board Members, City Council
Diagnostic	During the pandemic and likely prior, there has been a sentiment regarding regulatory mechanisms not being administered based on code. Additionally, there have been discussions about certain regulations that should be explored again to take into account changes due to COVID.
Action Item	Communities across the Commonwealth worked quickly during COVID to adapt or modify some of its rules and regulations to support the business community.

**ZONING MAP  
CITY OF CHICOPEE, MA**



Developed by City of Chicopee Planning Department  
May 2017



**CITY OF CHICOPEE  
MUNICIPAL ZONING**

- Business A
- Business B
- Business C
- Central Business District
- Commercial A
- Commercial A-1
- Industrial
- Industrial Garden Planned Unit Development Type 1
- Industrial Garden Planned Unit Development Type 2
- Mixed Use
- Residential A
- Residential B
- Residential C
- Residential D
- Right Of Way or Railroad
- Water

N  
 W E  
 S

Chicopee Zoning Map



## Action Item (continued)

An exploration of the following regulations can be initiated by the City or requested by the business community and then approved and adopted by the City.

- Waiving time limits for permits to minimize the need to reapply to continue an approved action already identified in the Special Permit.
- Explore joint meetings to expedite approval process.
- Improve municipal website and outreach to business community, maybe through the Chamber or TDI Fellow, to explain current and prospective changes to the City's regulations.
- Encourage Planning Boards to either grant the or give the Department(s) administrative approval to relax requirements like:
  - Temporary or permanent reduction in parking requirements, possibly to provide additional outdoor dining and gathering in parking spaces.
  - Relaxed signage requirements to allow temporary signs to promote outdoor sales and dining.
- Explore a relaxation of signage code and/or requirements for improvements to portions of the right of way.

## Process

1. Recruit stakeholder group - members of City staff (Fire, Building, Planning, DPW, etc.), members of the Planning Board, ZBA, and Conservation Commission to understanding current permitting.
2. Set up parameters (what is the city trying to achieve - an overhaul or individual regulations - and timeline of zoning ordinance and regulatory review.
3. Find and research best practices with assistance from a consultant or PVPC.
4. Have community meetings to educate and engage public on effort to improve the intent of zoning and regulation.
5. Proceed through public hearing processes both at Planning Board, Ordinance Committee, and City Council level.
6. Celebrate and advertise your new zoning ordinance or regulation!





# Improve zoning, licensing, and permitting interactions






Provided by SME Consultant

BSC Group, Inc.

Location

Various locations – subject matter is about processes not a location-based project

Origin	Multiple municipalities – Examples are not site/community specific
Budget	 Low budget (Under \$50,000)
Timeframe	 Short term (Less than 5 years) – many achievable in days to weeks
Risk	 Low risk
Key Performance Indicators	Municipalities needed to modify permitting requirements/procedures to meet the needs of businesses who needed to change/modify business practices to respond to COVID and public health concerns and regulations. This included actions by municipalities to expedite permitting processes. Success is measured by tracking: the ease of filing and obtaining a permit; how quickly permits are issued; and the ratio of permits issued vs. permits denied.
Partners & Resources	Municipal Departments, Boards and Commissions such as: Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, License Commission Health Department, Police, Fire, Department of Public Works (DPW) Business support organizations such as Chamber of Commerce, Business Improvement Districts (BID's)

**BEST PRACTICE**

## Diagnostic

The COVID-19 pandemic required municipalities to rapidly adapt their regulatory processes through an evolving public health crisis to help businesses survive. Though challenging, a crisis such as COVID presented communities and businesses with new opportunities for improved and streamlined operations.

When COVID-19 impacts reached Massachusetts in the spring of 2020, public health precautions quickly initiated a transition to less in-person contact for retail transactions. To adapt and remain in business, retailers sought approval for new actions such as: increased delivery service; short-term parking for take-out and curbside pickup; alcohol to go; and a transition from indoor to outdoor dining, fitness, shopping and recreational activities.

These changes required municipalities to consider new regulatory procedures, adaptation of prior regulations, and taking advantage of the state's relaxation of certain requirements. Throughout Massachusetts, municipalities and businesses met the COVID challenge by taking chances, being flexible, pivoting business models, and thinking creatively and "outside the box." Critical to the success was the transition to online permitting processes, permits and approvals for new approaches to deliver products/food to customers, leniency for outdoor eating and drinking, and other unique and creative solutions.

## Action Items

Municipalities worked to quickly adapt or modify rules and regulations to support the business community, knowing that time was of the essence. The following actions were proven to be successful. These actions were either initiated by municipalities or requested by business owners and then approved by municipalities.

- Waive time limits for permits to minimize the need to re-apply to continue an approved action
- Encourage Boards and Commissions to hold joint meetings to expedite and streamline certain permitting processes
- Improve municipal websites and outreach to businesses to explain current as well as changes to the regulatory framework
- Encourage Planning Boards to either grant the following or gave planning staff the ability to provide administrative approvals to relax certain zoning requirements such as :
  - Temporary or permanent reduction in parking requirements to provide additional outdoor dining and gathering in areas currently used for parking.
  - Relaxed signage requirements to allow temporary signs to promote outdoor sales and dining
- Establish procedures for police, fire and public works to easily review/approve requests to block-off on-street parking spaces or portions of streets to be used for outdoor dining/events
- Create requirements describing how to safely block-off portions of a roadway or on-street parking with rigid and visible barriers to allow them to be safely used by pedestrians/customers.
- Waive some permitting requirements and fast-track others for a more efficient permitting process to allow businesses to quickly take advantage of a more flexible regulatory framework.

## Process

### Promote associations who can speak for the greater good

- form new or strengthen existing business associations who speak for all the businesses in a commercial area to advocate for permitting and regulatory changes to benefit all businesses. This minimizes pitting the interests of one business versus another and provides a unified voice in promoting change.

### Make it easier for businesses to find the information they need

- Municipalities should consolidate all relevant business information in a single location on the municipality's website including permitting and regulatory items. Streamlined permitting and joint meetings of permitting boards is also encouraged to expedite permit requests.

### Propose that successful temporary regulations to become permanent

- Where permitting changes made to accommodate COVID have proven successful, municipalities should consider making temporary changes permanent.

### Roll-over permits

- Some municipalities who issued permits in 2020 for COVID related accommodations have agreed to allow those permits to "roll-over" to 2021 through a written request from the business, and therefore avoiding a full permit re-application.

# Improve Parking Access in Chicopee’s downtown

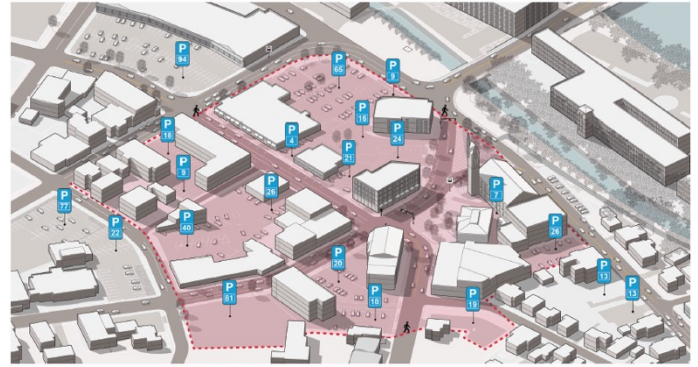
Category



Public Realm; Private Realm

Location

Chicopee Center



Origin

Chicopee Department of Planning & Development, Chicopee Chamber of Commerce, Center District businesses

Budget



Medium (\$50K) American Recovery Planning Act (ARPA) with focus on bringing customers back to Chicopee Center while making it as easy as possible to park, CDBG, State funds Community One Stop for Growth

Timeframe



Short Term – start immediately and roll out Public Information Campaign in the Fall—could coincide with the removal of the controversial bike loop that was identified as taking away parking spaces and advance improved parking management practices over time when funding is secured.

Risk



Low

Key Performance Indicators

Increased sales at district businesses; increase in number of customers at businesses in the district; increased satisfaction with Chicopee’s Center District; decrease in complaints about the unfriendliness of the city’s downtown

Partners & Resources

City Transformative Development Initiative (TDI), MassDevelopment, Chicopee West End Streetscape Study Report, Building Department, Volunteer Board Members, City Council

Diagnostic

42% of businesses surveyed in the district reported less revenue generated in 2020 than previous years. 54% of businesses had less on-site customers in early 2021 than before COVID. Business owners, customers and city staff affirm there is a perception of a lack of parking in the district combined with some challenges in traffic flow (addressed in a separate recommendation). Diagnostic findings refute the lack of parking. City staff and stakeholders support a multi-pronged approach to educate shoppers, residents, visitors and workers about the many parking options available encouraging people to park once and walk.



## Action Item

City Planning & Development staff, the Chicopee Chamber staff, or a funded Consultant to convene a meeting with key Business leaders to launch a Public Information and Education campaign combined with improved parking management. The information campaign is aimed at residents, visitors and Center District business owners and their staff to explain the abundance of parking available and encourage people to park once and walk in the Center District. The working group will also explore whether or not a Parking Benefit District makes sense and who can work together to improve parking management. The goal is to better utilize parking in the “core” for multiple purposes through shared parking management; connecting parking lots behind buildings with attractive cut-through alleyway short-cuts; introducing visible directional signage and parking lot identification signage, and assuring clearly designating on-street parking.

## Process

1. City Planning & Development staff, Chicopee Chamber staff, the TDI Fellow or a funded Consultant facilitator convene interested parties to assign roles and responsibilities and affirm work process.
2. The City can play an active role in brokering agreements, as well as permitting private entities to work together to share parking
3. Secure an estimated \$25,000-\$50,000 ARPA and/or other funds for cost of public information and education campaign focused on educating people about the number of parking spaces available in a range of options from on street to surface lots to covered parking structures with details on distance to key destinations and time it takes to walk from parking to shopping/dining.
4. Determine which entity will engage a consultant to assist with the Public Information and Education (PI&E) campaign.
5. Working Group determine who can assume responsibility for improved parking management.
6. Entity engages consultant team and group works with consultant to design PI&E campaign.
7. Working group also reviews the pros and cons of creating a Parking Benefits District for the Chicopee Center District (or a portion thereof). Through the creation of a Parking Benefit District (PBD) funds from meters in a set zone could be allocated to expenditures used to improve parking management and create improvements that continue attracting visitors and businesses including accessibility improvements to sidewalk infrastructure; public art, and parking and traffic operational improvements.
8. Integrate this parking improvement project with District pedestrian way finding.
9. Launch Public Service Announcement style television, radio, social media and print campaign.
10. Evaluate success.
11. Ongoing implementation of improved parking management in the district.



Source: Wickedlocal

## Establish Parking Benefit District to Better Manage Parking Resources and Enhance Village Vitality

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PUBLIC  
REALM

Provided by SME Consultant

Stantec Consulting, Inc.

Location

Brookline, Massachusetts

**BEST PRACTICE**

<b>Origin</b>	Town of Brookline
<b>Budget</b>	 <p>Low – No cost to the Town to establish a Parking Benefit District (PBD) and supporting committee. Administrative responsibilities are conducted by existing departments/employees.</p>
<b>Timeframe</b>	 <p>Short Term (&lt;5 years) – The establishment of the Parking Benefit District and formal allocation of meter funds took approximately one year.</p>
<b>Risk</b>	 <p>Medium Risk – Political buy-in and support from local businesses and public for increase in parking prices</p>
<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>	Net new parking meter revenues
<b>Partners &amp; Resources</b>	Parking Benefit District Advisory Board, Department of Public Works, Arts Commission, Select Board, Transportation Board, Local Businesses
<b>Diagnostic</b>	<p>The creation of the PBD was intended to help Brookline respond to the commercial decline of Brookline Village and an increase in vehicle congestion. Through the creation of a PBD, funds from meters in a Parking Meter Zone could be allocated to expenditures and Town budgets used to create improvements that continue attracting visitors and businesses, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility improvements to sidewalk infrastructure</li> <li>• Public art recommendations from the Arts Commission</li> <li>• Parking and traffic operational improvements (related to needs identified by the Transportation Board and/or DPW)</li> </ul>
<b>Action Item</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Brookline Parking District Advisory Board was established and is comprised of local businesses and residents.</li> <li>• The BVPBDAB defined the area of the parking benefit district.</li> <li>• The BVPBDAB ongoing tasks include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommending an annual budget;</li> <li>• Reviewing and adjusting parking rates, as necessary, and expenditures in the PBD to the Select Board for approval; and</li> <li>• Making recommendations related to parking/traffic operations and temporary or permanent physical changes to the Transportation Board and/or DPW as appropriate and making recommendations related to public art to the Arts Commission.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## Process

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

The Town approved the article to create a PBD in Brookline Village and an associated Brookline Village Parking Benefit District Advisory Board (BVPBDAB). The BVPBDAB is composed of nine members appointed by the Select Board, at least five of whom shall be business/commercial owners and managers in the district.

The BVPBDAB recommends an annual budget, parking rates, and expenditures in the PBD to the Select Board for approval. The Advisory Board will also develop and propose recommendations that will be funded by the PBD fund.

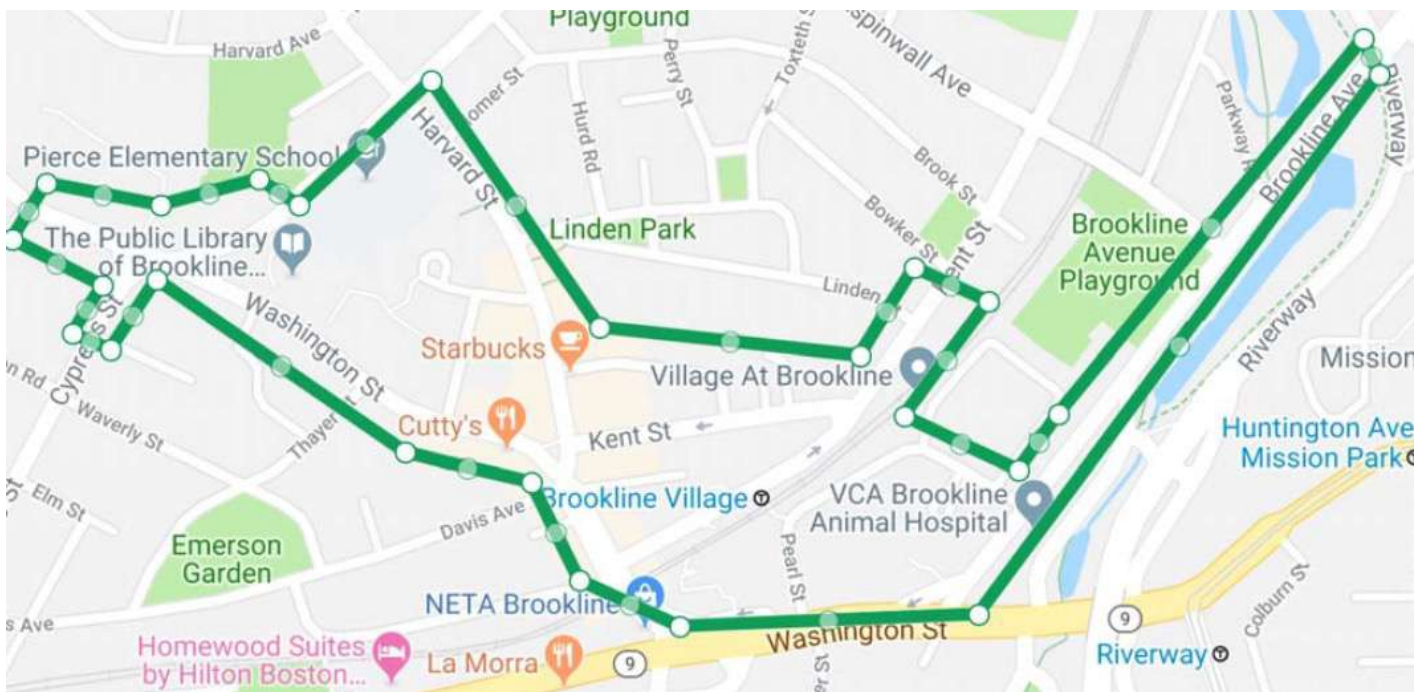
Once the area had been defined, a portion of parking meter revenues only is transferred into the Parking Benefit District Revolving fund.

Fund revenues are the increment above previous parking revenues, which continue to flow into the General Fund. Incremental increases in revenue are based on a parking pricing rate increase from \$1.25 to \$1.50/hour. This does not include revenue from parking violations or parking permits.

## Success Story

Since the establishment of the PBD, \$1M has been invested to support a range of improvements and associated administrative oversight.

Brookline was awarded a MassDOT Shared Streets & Spaces Grant and installed many temporary dining areas, drop-off zones, and bike lanes. The Town intends to use PBD funds to make many of these improvements permanent.



Brookline's PBD Map. Source: May 2019 Annual Town Meeting





Source: Arlington

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




Provided by SME Consultant

Stantec Consulting, Inc.

Location

Town of Arlington, Massachusetts

**BEST PRACTICE**

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



## Process

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

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

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

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

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

## Success Story

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

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

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

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

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

**ARLINGTON CENTER  
BUSINESS OWNERS**

*Join Us For a Meeting about*  
**NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS**  
from parking meter income  
Wednesday March 1st at 8:30 am  
Regent Underground, 7 Medford Street

RSVP to [acarter@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:acarter@town.arlington.ma.us)

TAKE THE ONLINE SURVEY:  
[SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/GVP2XFS](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GVP2XFS)

Save the date for the community  
meeting March 30th at 6pm

Public engagement flyer for PBD. Source, Arlington.



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

# Retail Visioning

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Category



Private Realm; Revenue and Sales

Location

Chicopee Center

Origin

Chicopee Chamber of Commerce, Business Owners



Budget



Low; \$2,000-\$3,000 for consulting fees per business

Timeframe



Short-Term; Site Visit(s), consultation, evaluation. Recruit members of city staff and funding partners to identify parameters of funding program and service September 2021-December 2021; Launch program January 2022; Evaluate ongoing project with milestones to be set by city staff and retail consultant

Risk



Low risk due to recruiting for retailer participation when time and budget constraints are a challenge

Key Performance Indicators

Successful implementation of recommended improvements, more retailers asking to be involved in next session/opportunity

Partners & Resources

City staff, Chamber, TDI Fellow, Property Owners, Business owners



Diagnostic	<p>Many businesses attended to a decline in business while navigating the pandemic. Some may have been in the process of improving business storefronts prior to shutdowns, so there was a lengthening of time were buildings and storefronts remained neglected.</p>
Action Item	<p>BID/City Economic Development team will identify business owners who are in need of assistance to boost sales and customer satisfaction. Grant funding will be secured to provide consulting services to interested business owners. Contextualize program to help business update their businesses utilizing design consultant and providing funds to applicant if building or storefront is improved.</p>
Process	<p><u>Pre-program development</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify who in the municipality will manage this program: municipal staff, existing nonprofit committee/organization, volunteer committee, or a hybrid.</li> <li>2. Decide whether the design guidelines will be just for the façade improvement program or more broadly applicable.</li> <li>3. Discuss the potential focus of the program: components of a storefront, the entire storefront, the entire façade, all façades, the entire site? Will lighting, awnings and other smaller elements be included? Will interior improvements to address accessibility be included? Will the municipality fund the design, all or some of the improvements, or both?</li> <li>4. Discuss what will not be eligible. Eligibility may also be determined by the funding source (for example, CDBG funds).</li> <li>5. Discuss the length of time that improvements must be maintained and the enforcement process for ensuring that improvements are maintained.</li> <li>6. Consider the funding structures. The program, once established, could provide grants or loans to property owners/businesses for the improvements. Grants may provide a greater incentive to participate, while loans (no or low interest) provide a revolving fund to assist more properties. Another option is to forgive loans after a certain time if the improvements are maintained. The Town might consider offering grants to early adopters (depending on resources) or through a lottery process and transitioning later applicants to a loan program. This method would also allow the municipality to assist specific properties as catalysts for the rest of the target area. This would need to be a highly transparent process.</li> <li>7. Decide whether the guidelines and program will be developed in-house or whether the municipality will seek outside help. The funding source may determine the type of outside assistance; for example, certain programs will assign on-call consultants. For others, the municipality may need to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP).</li> </ol> <p>Education of all people involved in the program needs to be an ongoing component. A municipality that is short on project management resources should consider hiring a dedicated staff member or consultant to manage this program. The municipality should consider streamlining approvals of projects under this program to reduce the time needed for implementation.</p>

## Retail Visioning

### Best Retail Practices

[https://www.readingma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1116/f/file/file/retailvision\\_brochure\\_v3.pdf](https://www.readingma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1116/f/file/file/retailvision_brochure_v3.pdf)

### Is Your Business The Best It Can Be?

The Town of Reading's Economic Development Committee and Community Services Department invite all of the town's retailers, restaurateurs and storefront business owners to attend a **free workshop** that will help you answer "yes!"

Learn how to improve your store's appearance, attract more customers, sell more product, and improve your bottom line.

**Key benefits of the program include:**

- Tips, tools and tricks of the trade
- Low cost, Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ideas & resources
- A FREE retailer's self-assessment booklet that will help you start improving right away!



"Christine brings lots of DIY ideas for the business owner, and I hope all Reading businesses will take advantage of this workshop! "

– Jean Delios  
Town Planner  
Town of Reading

### Program Details

**Best Retail Practices** is a two part program that begins with a 2-hour workshop in which visual examples of best practices in retailing today are shared. Ms. Moynihan will go over some helpful tips, focusing on the tools available, and give insight on the tricks of the trade.

Many of the types of improvements to be discussed are low-cost, DIY ideas so the business owner will not be faced with significant cost barriers.

In part two of the program, as part of the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative, qualified businesses are encouraged to apply to receive a **one-on-one, in-store brainstorming and consultation session\*** with Moynihan – **at no cost to the business owner!** These businesses will receive a written report with specific ideas and recommendations for improving their businesses now and for the future.

Applications for the one-on-one consultations will be available at the workshop and **must be returned to the Community Services Department by September 18, 2012.**

\*Eight consultations will be awarded.



### Workshop Information

**The workshop will be held on Wednesday, September 12 from 8-10 a.m.** in the Community Room of the Police Department at 15 Union Street.

For more information on the workshop and consultations offered by **Best Retail Practices** and **to register for the workshop** please call Staff Planner Jessie Wilson at **781-942-6648** or via email at **[jwilson@ci.reading.ma.us](mailto:jwilson@ci.reading.ma.us)**. While all are invited, seating is limited and registration is recommended for this highly popular program.

Christine Moynihan is a former VP Retail Marketing for Clarks (footwear), co-founder of *Best Retail Practices* and principal of RetailVisioning, a consulting company focused on helping independent retailers be their very best.

Reading's Best Retail Practices Program is funded by the MA Downtown Initiative.

(Sample photos only. Not active applications.)



# Form a Chicopee Center Business Support Organization

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Category



Administrative Capacity

Location

Chicopee Center

Origin

Chicopee Chamber of Commerce, City Planning Department, TDI Fellow, District Businesses



Fruit Fair on Front Street can be a business that can join a future business support organization

Budget



Medium \$50-200,000, American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA); State monies via Community One Stop for Growth portal, Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) Grant for Technical Assistance

Timeframe



Short-Term

Risk



Low; While the city is served by a Chamber of Commerce; there is consensus among city and Chamber staff that a Business support entity in the Center District would also be useful.

Key Performance Indicators

Improved sales for businesses in the District; number of employees retained; number of customers/clients served; number of businesses engaged and supported by the new Business Support Organization; increase in Chamber membership; decrease in turnover of businesses and business closures.

Partners & Resources

Chamber of Commerce, TDI Fellow, City staff

Diagnostic

58% of businesses surveyed expressed interest in receiving assistance with the greatest interest (42%) in participating in shared marketing and advertising, the kind of work Business Support Organizations facilitate. 42% of businesses surveyed in the district reported less revenue generated in 2020 than previous years. 54% of businesses had less on-site customers in early 2021 than before COVID.

Action Item

City staff and/or the Chamber staff/TDI fellow will take the lead after funds have been secured to procure a Consultant to facilitate the process of creating a new Business Support Organization in the Center District.

Process

1. Secure funding and engage lead to advance project
2. Identify the needs of the business community in the Center District.
3. Establish the business support organization.
4. Create a webpage explaining how businesses can take advantage of the support services available.
5. Provide training and capacity building sessions as appropriate.
6. Secure technical assistance and/or utilize the TDI fellow to form a working group (or utilize business/property owners currently in conversation), community engagement - to include survey and/or community meetings, discuss models of organization, build consensus





# Determining a District Management Model for Downtown Reading




Provided by SME Consultant

Ann McFarland Burke , Downtown Consultant

Location

Reading, MA

Origin	Town of Reading, MA
Budget	 <p>A Massachusetts Downtown Initiative grant provided Technical Assistance. The Town provided staff support and early coordination.</p>
Timeframe	 <p>The process took approximately 18 months. This timeframe was expanded due to the pandemic and extensive community education undertaken as part of the process.</p>
Risk	 <p>Political , property owner, tenant and other stakeholder consensus for preferred organization model is required to successfully establish a downtown organization</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Establishment of a sustainable downtown organizations with a real defined program , sustainability model and appropriate staff support.
Partners & Resources	Town of Reading, downtown advisory and steering committee and other downtown stakeholders

**BEST PRACTICE**

## Diagnostic

The creation of a downtown management organization was intended to establish a dedicated organization that would provide supplemental programs, services and advocacy for the downtown. The downtown organization would undertake activities to attract businesses, investment, customers and residents to downtown. These could include marketing, placemaking, business development and advocacy.

Determining the appropriate downtown management organization model was a unique process for the Reading community, downtown property owners and businesses. The process included extensive outreach and community education to explore program priorities, financial sustainability, organizational models and champions from both the private and public sector.

## Action Item

Economic Development Plans for downtown Reading had included the recommendation to establish a sustainable downtown organization to support the economic and social health of the downtown. The Town of Reading spearheaded activity to launch the process of community and property owner engagement to explore what model would be appropriate for downtown Reading. This included:

- Identification of staff and financial resources
- Creating a Community Outreach and Engagement Strategy
- Research to identify community priorities / recommendations
- Peer learning from other communities
- Consensus building among stakeholders
- Transition of leadership to private sector

## Process

- **The Town of Reading secured Massachusetts Downtown Initiative Technical Assistance funding** and committed staff to initiate and support
- **A large broad-based community advisory/working group** was formed to provide input and feedback
- **A survey** was widely distributed to community residents, businesses and other stakeholders - 1600 responses were received providing insight into program priorities and community preferences

## Process (Continued)

- **Community Outreach Event - A Pizza/ Ice Cream Social** brought over 150 residents to provide input
- **3 Community Forums** – Panels featuring executive directors of different types of downtown organizations described their programs, challenges and models.
- **Working sessions with Advisory committee** to discuss specific model alternatives / cost and benefits
- **One on one conversations** with key stakeholders
- **Consensus building** with stakeholders and recommendation of preferred model and next steps.
- **Transition from city led effort to Steering committee** comprised of property owners, businesses, and other stakeholders to lead organizational effort. City staff continued staff support. TA support continued through additional MDI grant.
- **BID Steering Committee.** BID organizational process underway

Town of Reading Sponsored Pop-Up Event

### ReImagine Reading Pizza and Ice Cream Social



September 18th from 6 pm to 8pm  
Pleasant Street Center  
49 Pleasant Street

A pop-up public event to help launch a downtown organization  
Featuring local businesses, free pizza, ice cream, photo booth and more  
Please RSVP on Eventbrite by 9/16: [https://ice\\_cream\\_social.eventbrite.com](https://ice_cream_social.eventbrite.com)

ALL ARE WELCOME!

For more information, please contact Andrew MacNichol, Staff Planner at [amacnichol@ci.reading-ma.us](mailto:amacnichol@ci.reading-ma.us)



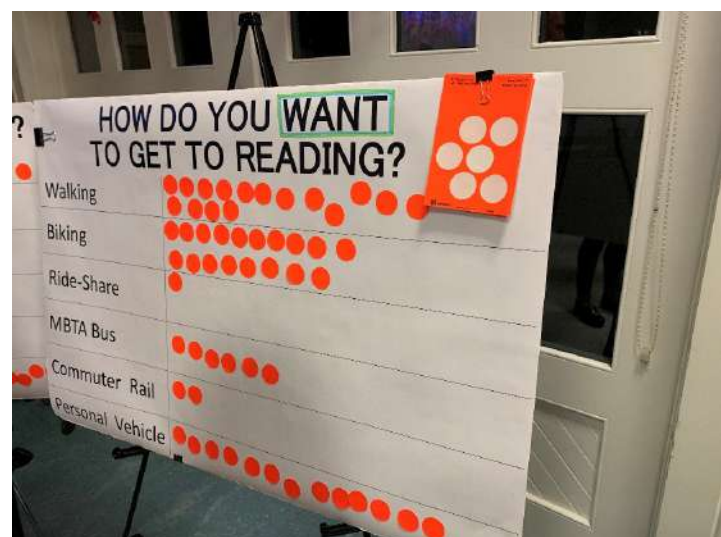
## ReImagine Reading SURVEY!



Or by web: <https://www.readingma.gov/reimagine-reading>

Scan QR Code with your phone camera to take the survey

More Info on back 



Stakeholder engagement process



# An Additional Code Compliance Officer

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Category



Administrative Capacity

Location

Chicopee Center

Origin

Business Owner, Building Department



Budget



Medium (\$80,000-\$100,000). American Rescue Plan Act, City funds, CDBG

Timeframe



Short-Term

Risk



Medium, consensus for 1 new FTE in Building Department

Key Performance Indicators

Number of completed business storefront and property improvements

Partners & Resources

City staff



## Diagnostic

With vacant properties and storefronts due to COVID, the ability for the city to be proactive in providing service to prospective business owners and entrepreneurs needing spaces in Chicopee Center, could be accomplished with additional capacity in the building department.

## Action Item

Actively recruit or train from within a municipal employee or a team of employees who are knowledgeable with regards to code compliance laws and mandates so they may be able to assist and guide local businesses and first-time small business owners throughout the code compliance process and address blight as directed by the Building Department and other city departments.

## Process

As identified in the Action Plan, the process to instate a code compliance officer should begin with placing someone or some persons in the position to properly and fairly assist small businesses in Chicopee to implement the upgrades to their businesses as needed without creating a disincentive for making sure their businesses are safe and accessible for all.

Questions to consider:

1. Is the prospective person or team well-versed in the code compliance laws and regulations for Chicopee?
2. Are they familiar with the challenges small business owners are facing in a COVID-affected economic climate?
3. Are there supporting laws and regulations in place to ease the economic burden of adhering to the requirements of the Creative Code Compliance?
4. Are there other resources and support systems in place for small business owners to lean on throughout the code compliance process (i.e., additional funding assistance; communal small business pot of funds that allocates funds according to need to members who contribute to the fund; etc.)?

# Document and broadly publicize the City permitting process

---

Category	 Administrative Capacity
Location	Chicopee Center
Origin	Chicopee Chamber of Commerce, TDI Fellow
Budget	 Low; \$15,000-\$20,000. Consultant or staff time to prepare a public document and educational tool. Possible funding programs include District Local Technical Assistance provided by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.
Timeframe	 Short-term, can be completed in a year
Risk	 Low risk due to project being completed through grant programs and in house
Key Performance Indicators	Successful documentation the city permitting process; ease of permitting processes and satisfaction of applicants
Partners & Resources	Chamber of Commerce, City Planning Department, TDI Fellow, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
Diagnostic	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic required municipalities to rapidly adapt their regulatory processes through an evolving public health crisis to help businesses survive. Though challenging, a crisis such as COVID presented communities and businesses with new opportunities for improved and streamlined operations.</p> <p>There is a perception that COVID possibly changed some of the permit approval processes creating an uneven administration of the ordinance and regulations. Ensuring that a guide for permitting is published will create a trust between applicants and the city approvals.</p>
Action Item	City and Chamber team will identify business owners who are in need of assistance to boost sales and customer satisfaction. Grant funding will be secured to provide consulting services to interested business owners. Contextualize program to help business update their businesses utilizing design consultant and providing funds to applicant if building or storefront, or interior is improved.

There are tips and tools that are available in the Western Planner <https://www.westernplanner.org/2017publishedfeatures/2018/6/27/code-compliance-difficulties-and-ideas-for-small-towns>

### How to Structure a Manual

Chicopee wants a manual that is available online, as a hard copy, and in different languages. The following is an outline taken from the Town of Franklin web site that provides information online as well as an outline that Chicopee could use to start their hard copy manual.

#### *What is the permit process?*

The process is generally the same for building, wiring and plumbing. In addition, fire prevention and sprinkler permits will also require the input and approval of the local fire department.

#### *When do you need a permit?*

Permits are typically required for the following, but remember to check with the department as some towns require permits for other construction activity.





Additions	Prefabricated Structures
New Construction	Fireplace/Wood Stoves
Alarm Systems	Roofing/Siding
Parking Areas	Insulation
Decks/sheds	Swimming Pools
Plumbing/Electrical Systems	Mechanical Systems
Demolitions	Temporary Structures

### Steps to efficient and successful project permitting

1. Step One: Schedule a preliminary meeting with City officials to encourage discussion and review of what you propose to do.
2. Step Two: Submit the application and documentation to the appropriate department. You may need to consult with other town departments and boards and committees for their approval.
3. Step Three: City's then reviews and considers applications, documents, and plans against all applicable codes, rules and regulations.
4. Step Four: Decision from the City inspector. Your application may be approved or denied. There are There are appeal processes that will be explained to you if denied.
5. Step Five: Once the work starts, the City will Inspect the work in progress. Each phase must be inspected for completeness and for compliance with the construction documents and State Building Code.
6. Step Six: Final acceptance and/or the issuance of occupancy permit, if required.
7. Construction is now complete!

# Improve Traffic Flow in the Chicopee Center District

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Category		Public Realm
Location	Chicopee Center	
Origin	Chicopee Comprehensive Plan Consultants and West End Streetscape Planning Study completed by Utile Design	
Budget		Medium, ARPA, Community One Stop for Growth, MassWorks
Timeframe		Short-term
Risk		Medium Risk - While traffic flow in the Chicopee Center District has been a long-standing concern for some in the city, there has not been consensus on action
Key Performance Indicators	Improved satisfaction of frequent drivers in the Center District; improved satisfaction of business owners/managers in the Center District; increase in sales over time; decrease in traffic congestion	
Partners & Resources	Chamber of Commerce, TDI Fellow, City staff, Chicopee West End Streetscape Study Report	
Diagnostic	42% of businesses surveyed in the district reported less revenue generated in 2020 than previous years. 54% of businesses had less on-site customers in early 2021 than before COVID.	
Action Item	Currently the street circulation pattern of the downtown core of Chicopee encourages pass-through traffic due to the one-way street pattern on Cabot, Center and Exchange. To catalyze economic recovery of the businesses in the Chicopee Center district the city and collaborators want to implement recommendations in the 2020 Chicopee West End Streetscape Study Report, converting Cabot, Center and Exchange streets to two-way traffic.	



## Process


- City staff identify funds to conduct a traffic study about the proposed design recommendations to convert Cabot, Center and Exchange streets in the Chicopee Center District to two-way streets
- City staff work to allocate local funds and staff time or secure grant funds to engage a Consultant to implement the conversion.
- Convene a working group to oversee the project.
- Engage Consultant.
- Implement “Short-term Paint options” first to assure business and community acceptance of the street conversion.
- Evaluate implementation and refine as needed.
- Implement permanent two-way streets.



Rendering of street and traffic improvements along Center Street at Union Street  
Source: Utile Design



Rendering of street and traffic improvements in front of Chicopee City Hall  
Source: Utile Design



**THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO**  
 RECORDING REQUESTED BY:  
 THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
 AND WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO:

(THIS SPACE IS FOR RECORDER'S USE ONLY)

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**SHARED PARKING AGREEMENT**

This SHARED PARKING AGREEMENT ("Agreement") is entered into and effective \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, by and between \_\_\_\_\_ and the City of San Diego.

**RECITALS**

WHEREAS, pursuant to sections 142.0535 and 142.0545 of the Land Development Code, the City of San Diego specifies criteria which must be met in order to utilize off-site shared parking agreements to satisfy on-site parking requirements.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the recitals and mutual obligations of the parties as herein expressed, \_\_\_\_\_ and the City of San Diego agree as follows:

- \_\_\_\_\_ the owner of the property located at \_\_\_\_\_, agrees to provide \_\_\_\_\_ the owner of the property located at \_\_\_\_\_ with the right to the use of ( ) parking spaces \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ as shown on Exhibit A to this Agreement on property located at \_\_\_\_\_.
- 1.1 Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Co-Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Assessor Parcel No: \_\_\_\_\_ Assessor Parcel No: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Legal Description: \_\_\_\_\_ Legal Description: \_\_\_\_\_
- The parking spaces referred to in this Agreement have been determined to conform to current City of San Diego standards for parking spaces, and the parties agree to maintain the parking spaces to meet those standards.
- The Parties understand and agree that if for any reason the off-site parking spaces are no longer available for use by \_\_\_\_\_ will be in violation of the City of San Diego Land Development Code requirements. If the off-site parking spaces are no longer available, Applicant will be required to reduce or cease operation and use of the property at Applicant's address to an intensity approved by the City in order to bring the property into conformance with the Land Development Code requirements for required change for required parking. Applicant agrees to waive any right to contest enforcement of the City's Land Development Code in this manner should this circumstance arise.

Although the Applicant may have recourse against the Party supplying off-site parking spaces for breach of this Agreement, in no circumstance shall the City be obligated by this agreement to remedy such breach. The Parties acknowledge that the sole recourse for the City if this Agreement is breached is against the Applicant in a manner as specified in this paragraph, and the City may invoke any remedy provided for in the Land Development Code to enforce such violation against the Applicant.

Continued on Page 2

Printed on recycled paper. Visit our web site at [www.sandiego.gov/development-services](http://www.sandiego.gov/development-services)  
 Upon request, this information is available in alternative formats for persons with disabilities.  
 DS-267 (03-09)

Page 2 of 2 City of San Diego - Development Services Department - Shared Parking Agreement

- The provisions and conditions of this Agreement shall run with the land for those properties referenced in paragraph 1 of this document and be enforceable against successors in interest and assigns of the signing parties.
- Title to and the right to use the lots upon which the parking is to be provided will be subservient to the title to the property where the primary use it serves is situated.
- The property or portion thereof on which the parking spaces are located will not be made subject to any other covenant or contract for use which interferes with the parking use, without prior written consent of the City.
- This Agreement is in perpetuity and can only be terminated if replacement parking has been approved by the City's Director of the Development Services Department and written notice of termination of this agreement has been provided to the other party at least sixty (60) days prior to the termination date.
- This Agreement shall be kept on file in the Development Services Department of the City of San Diego in Project Tracking System (PTS) Project Number: \_\_\_\_\_ and shall be recorded on the titles of those properties referenced in paragraph 1 of this document.

In Witness whereof, the undersigned have executed this Agreement.

Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Deputy Director \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Business and Process Management, Development Services \_\_\_\_\_  
 Party/Parties Supplying Spaces \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: ALL SIGNATURES MUST INCLUDE NOTARY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS PER CIVIL CODE SEC. 1180 ET SEQ.

### Cary, NC Shared Use of Off-Street Parking Agreement

1. SHARED USE OF OFF STREET PARKING FACILITIES

Per Section 7.8.2, Town of Cary Land Development Ordinance (Off-Street Parking Space Requirements), Lessor is required \_\_\_\_\_ off-street parking spaces and has \_\_\_\_\_ existing off-street parking spaces, which results in an excess of \_\_\_\_\_ off-street parking spaces. Lessee is required \_\_\_\_\_ off-street parking spaces and has \_\_\_\_\_ existing off-street parking spaces.

Lessor hereby agrees to share with Lessee a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ off-street parking spaces associated with Lessor's Property, which is described in more detail on Attachment 1, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference ('Shared Spaces').

Lessee's interest in such parking spaces is non-exclusive. The Lessee's shared use of parking shall be subject to the following:

*[describe the time, days etc of the use and the nature of the shared use, limits on time vehicles may be parked, etc.]*

2. TERM

This Agreement shall be effective upon execution by both parties and shall be accepted by the Planning Director and shall not be amended and/or terminated without written consent of both parties and the Cary Planning Director, or his/her designee.

3. SIGNAGE

Directional signage in accordance with Chapter 9, Town of Cary Land Development Ordinance and the written approval of Lessor may be added to direct the public to the shared parking spaces.

4. COOPERATION

The parties agree to cooperate and work together in good faith to effectuate the purpose of this Agreement.

5. SUPPLEMENTAL COVENANTS

No private agreement shall be entered into that overrides this agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement as of the Effective Date Set forth at the outset hereof.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Lessor) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Lessee) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Planning Director) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA  
 SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

(Official Seal)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Notary Public \_\_\_\_\_  
 My Commission Expires \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA  
 SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

(Official Seal)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Notary Public \_\_\_\_\_  
 My Commission Expires \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: Administrative Staff, Cary Planning Department, P.O. Box 2008, Cary, NC 27512-8005

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
 COUNTY OF WAKE

**SAMPLE Shared Parking Agreement**

This Shared Parking Agreement ("Agreement") entered into this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_\_\_\_, by and between \_\_\_\_\_, whose address is \_\_\_\_\_, ("Lessor") and whose address is \_\_\_\_\_, and Parcel Identification Number (PIN) is \_\_\_\_\_, and Parcel Identification Number (PIN) is \_\_\_\_\_ ("Lessee").

- To relieve traffic congestion in the streets, to minimize any detrimental effects of off-street parking areas on adjacent properties, and to ensure the proper and uniform development of parking areas throughout the Town, the Town of Cary Land Development Ordinance ("LDO") establishes minimum number of off-street parking and loading spaces necessary for the various land uses in the Town of Cary; and
- Lessee owns property at \_\_\_\_\_, Cary, N.C. ("Lessee Property") which property does not have the number of off-street parking spaces required under the LDO for the use to which Lessee Property is put; and
- Lessor owns property at \_\_\_\_\_, Cary, N.C. ("Lessor Property") which is zoned with the same or more intensive zoning classification than Lessee Property and which is put to a use with different operating hours or different peak business periods than the use on Lessee Property; and
- Lessee desires to use some of the off-street parking spaces on Lessor Property to satisfy Lessee Property off-street parking requirements, such shared parking being permitted by the Town of Cary LDO, Section 7.8.3; and
- Town LDO requires that such shared use of parking spaces be done by written agreement.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises and the information stated above, the parties agree as follows:

Town of Cary Shared Parking Agreement Page 1 of 3 July 1, 2008      Town of Cary Shared Parking Agreement Page 2 of 3 July 1, 2008      Town of Cary Shared Parking Agreement Page 3 of 3 July 1, 2008

# Re-establish Chicopee Redevelopment Authority

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Category	 Administrative Capacity
Location	Chicopee Center, then Citywide likely later
Origin	City Planning Department
Budget	 Medium (\$50,000 - \$100,000); Likely needed for consultant work on an Urban Renewal Plan
Timeframe	 Short-term, discussions underway with appropriate city staff and elected officials to lay groundwork
Risk	 Medium; political will to reengage a Redevelopment Authority and identify Urban Renewal projects
Key Performance Indicators	Number of activities included, which can include real estate acquisitions or dispositions, rehabilitation or demolition of structures, etc.
Partners & Resources	Redevelopment Authority, City Council, City Planning Department, Mayor, TDI Fellow, Chamber of Commerce
Diagnostic	COVID has exacerbated businesses and buildings falling out of disrepair after of years of trying to leverage private investment within Chicopee Center and elsewhere. There are opportunities within Chicopee Center that have suffered from long-term disinvestment and with the pandemic continue to do so, allowing for an authority like a Redevelopment Authority to revitalize the neighborhood is an option under MGL Chapter 121B.
Action Item	Redevelopment Authorities are particularly effective in large scale and complex redevelopment projects and assembling large land parcels. It is a benefit that Redevelopment Authorities are exempt from M.G.L. Chapter 30(b), the Uniform Procurement Act, when they are engaged in the development and disposition of real property in accordance with an urban renewal plan. This exemption, along with possessing eminent domain powers, makes Redevelopment Authorities powerful tools for commercial revitalization, industrial park development, infrastructure improvements, facilities renovation and brownfield site remediation.

## Action Item (continued)

The development and approval of an urban renewal plan is necessary for a Redevelopment Authority to undertake specific projects, and therefore exploration of an urban renewal plan. A Redevelopment Authority is an independent political body, corporate and is not an agency of a municipality and has more autonomy to planning and implementation of redevelopment and revitalization projects.

The project would begin with identifying and engaging partners across the spectrum to establish support for a Redevelopment Authority and its powers revitalizing land uses and encouraging growth under Chapter 121B to:

- Establish rehabilitation and design standards;
- Assemble and dispose of land, including the taking of real estate through eminent domain;
- Relocate businesses and residents occupying urban renewal sites;
- Demolish and/or rehabilitate substandard structures;
- Participate in real estate development and commercial revitalization;
- Issue bonds, borrow money and invest funds;
- Receive grants and loans;
- Accept gifts or requests.

## Process

Launching this project requires an initial planning session in which the constituency groups and their key spokesmen are identified, along with the initial timeline and objectives.

- Explore engaging assistance on an Urban Renewal Plan, utilizing key findings and inventories of brownfields and properties in the West End Area-Wide Plan.
  - There are required components in an Urban Renewal Plan which will allow for a community-wide discussion on key strategies to revitalization building support through community engagement.
- A municipality must first establish the need for a Redevelopment Authority through a vote by municipal officers or at town meeting. In a city, four members are appointed by the mayor or city manager and confirmed by the city council. The fifth member of the board is appointed by DHCD.
- Board member terms are staggered over five years. Following these steps, the Secretary of State will issue a certificate of organization.

**The development and approval of an urban renewal plan is necessary for a Redevelopment Authority to undertake specific projects.**

See "[What is Urban Renewal?](#)" Fact Sheet as provided by the Commonwealth.



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# Appendix

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.)

**Chicopee**

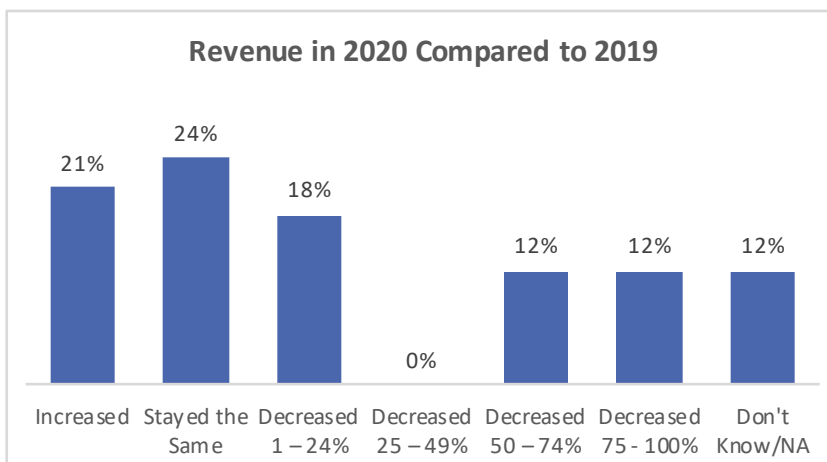
Chicopee Center

Responses: 33

**Impacts of COVID-19**

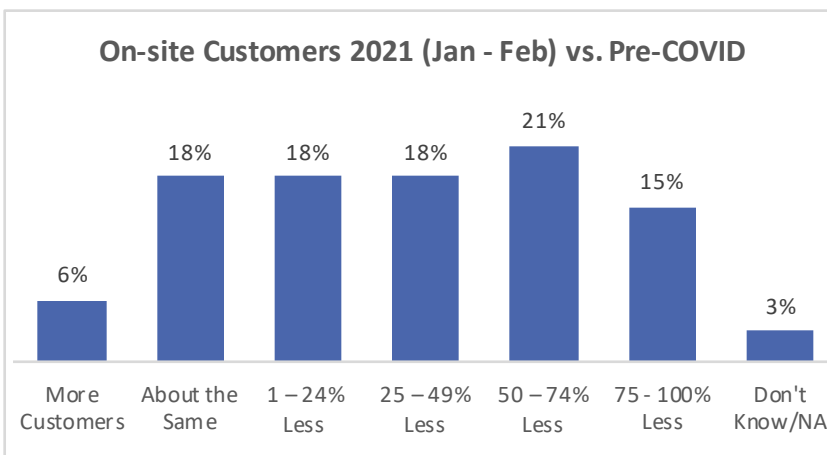
**Decline in Business Revenue**

42% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019. For 24% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more.



**Less Foot Traffic in Commercial Area**

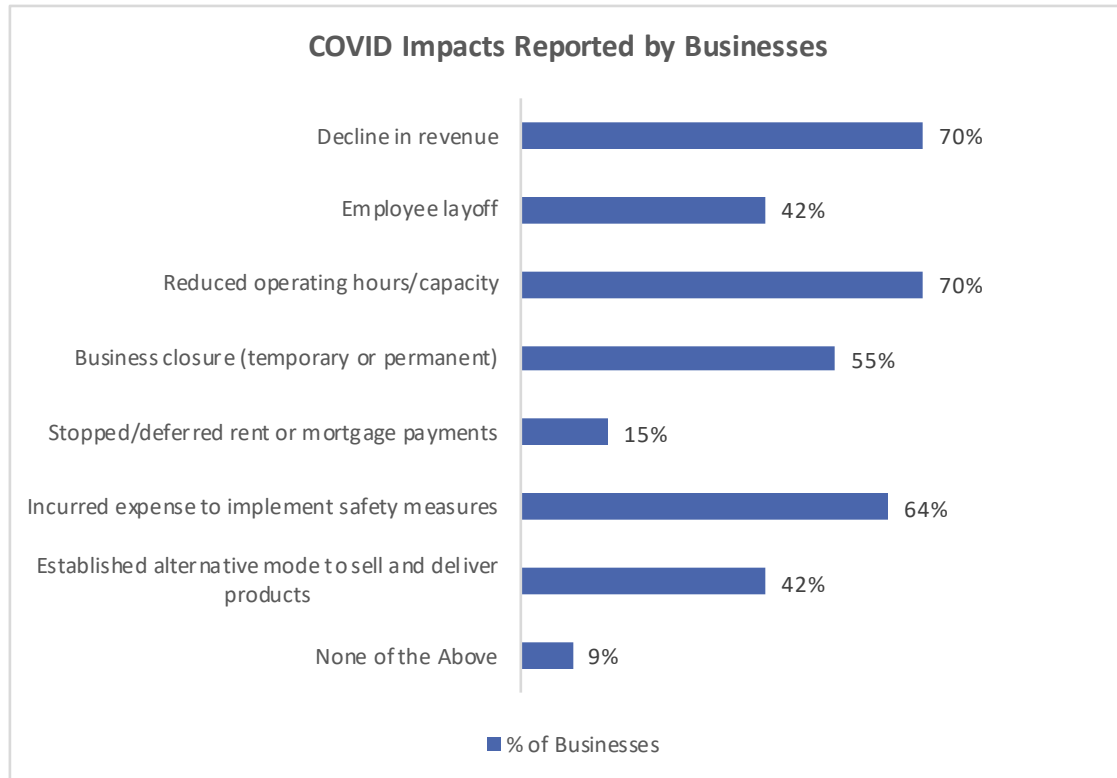
72% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID. 54% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more.



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

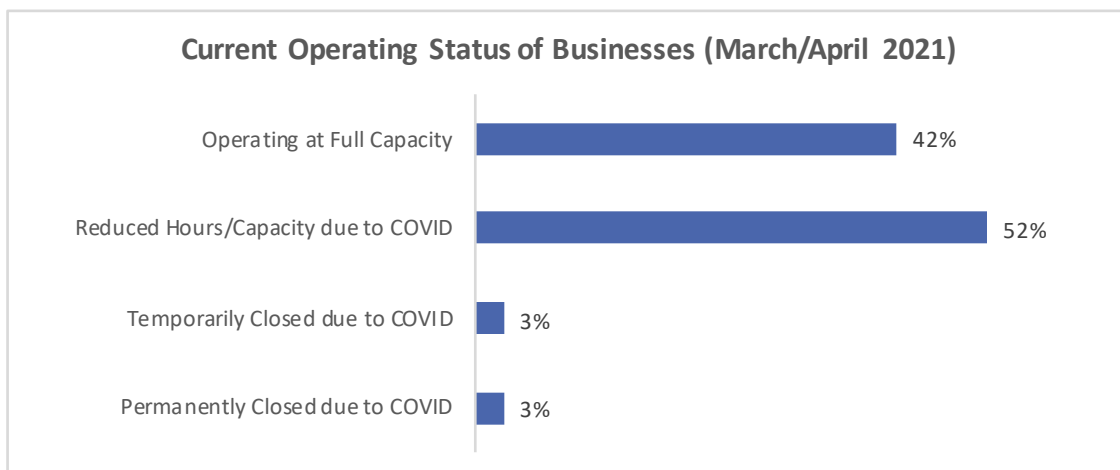
### Reported Impacts

91% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID.



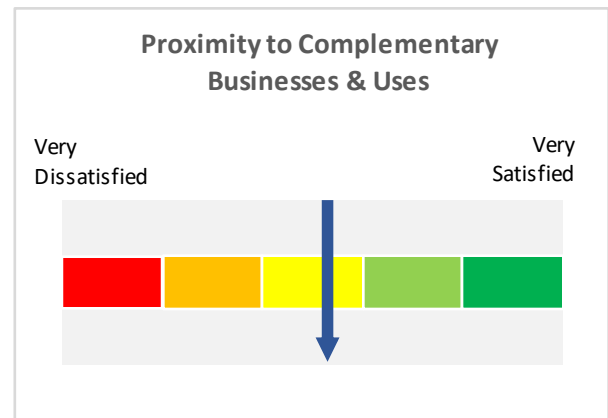
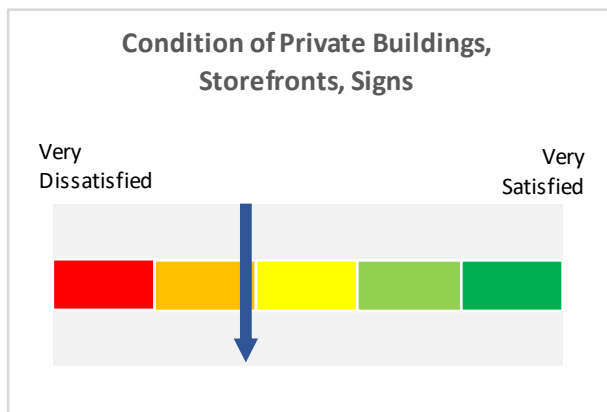
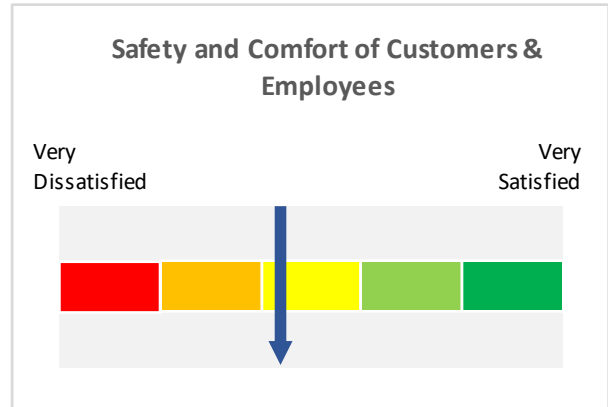
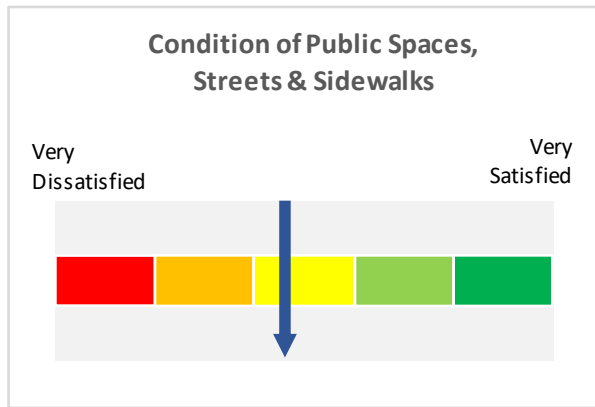
### Operating Status

At the time of the survey, 58% 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.

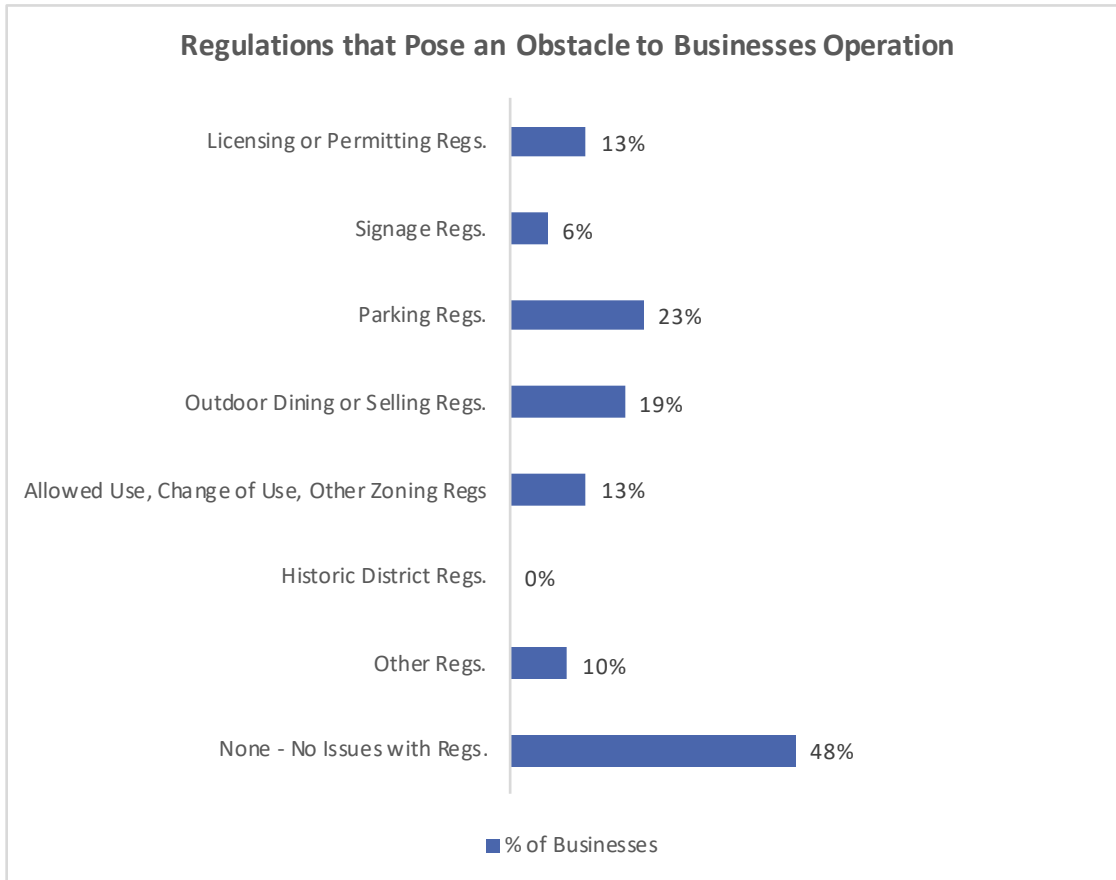




## Business Satisfaction with Commercial District (cont'd)

### Regulatory Environment

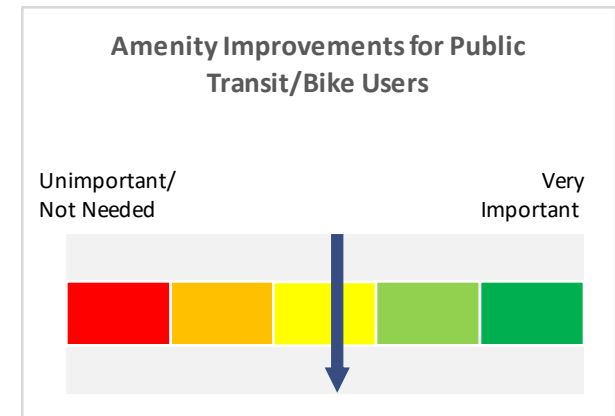
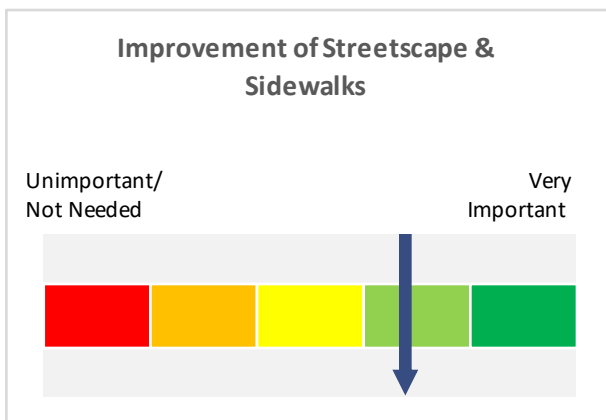
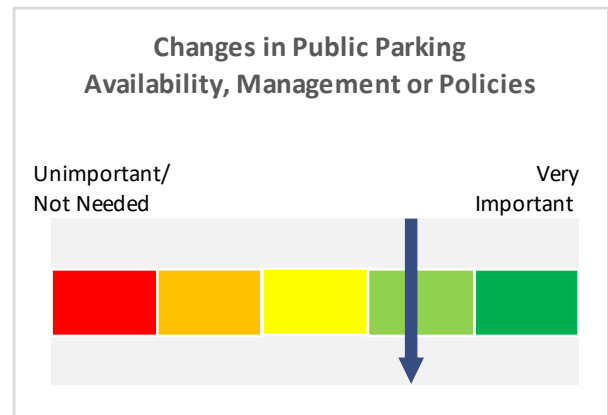
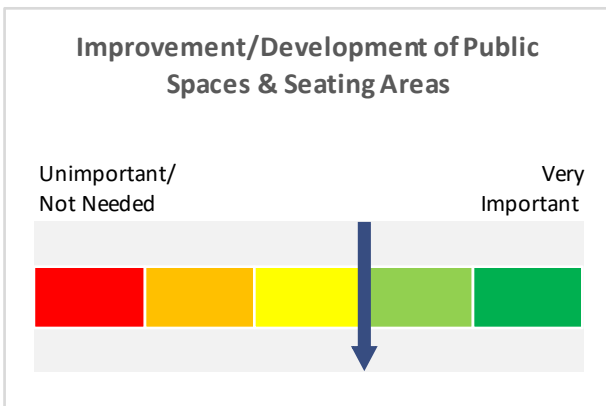
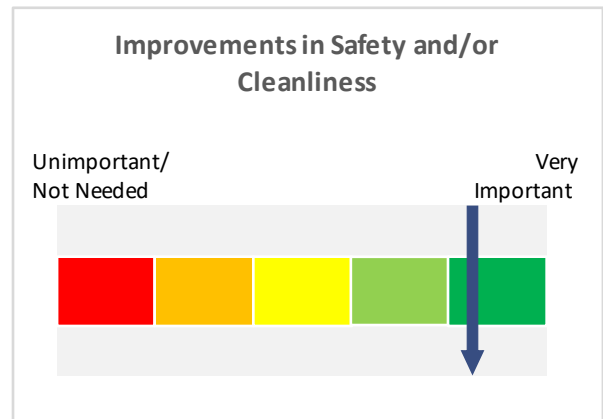
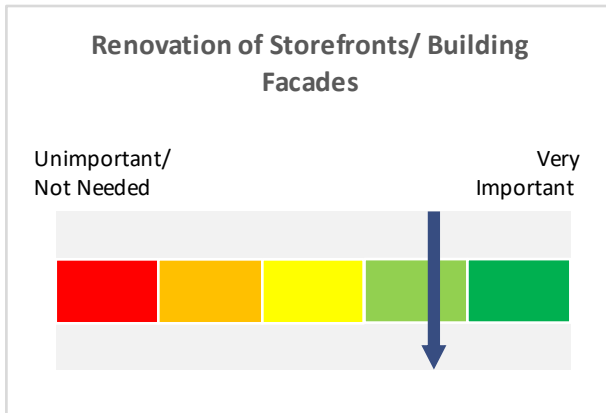
52% of businesses indicated that the regulatory environment poses an obstacle to business operation.



## Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

### Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access

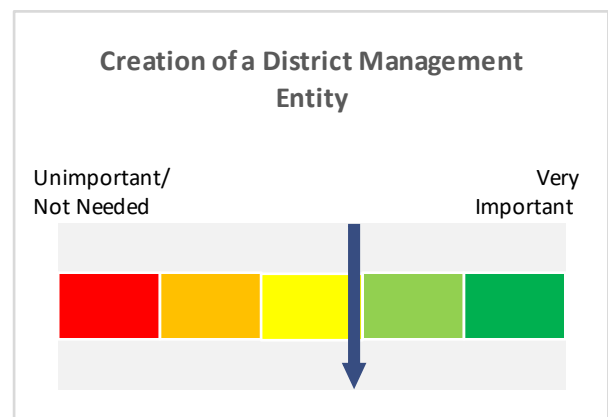
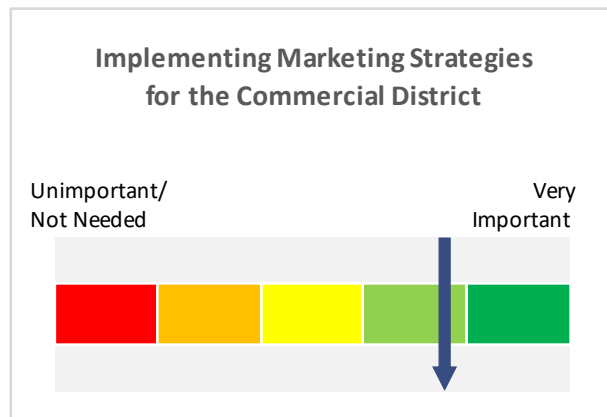
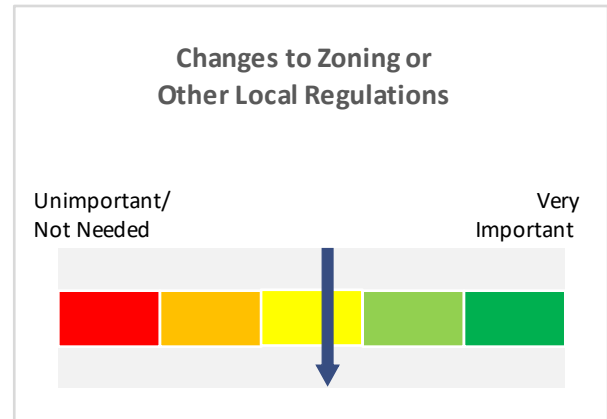
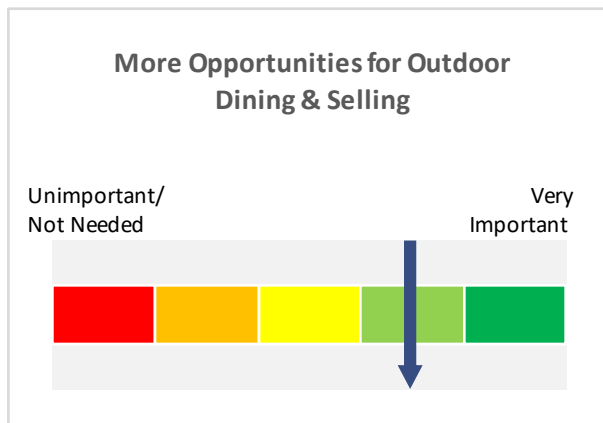
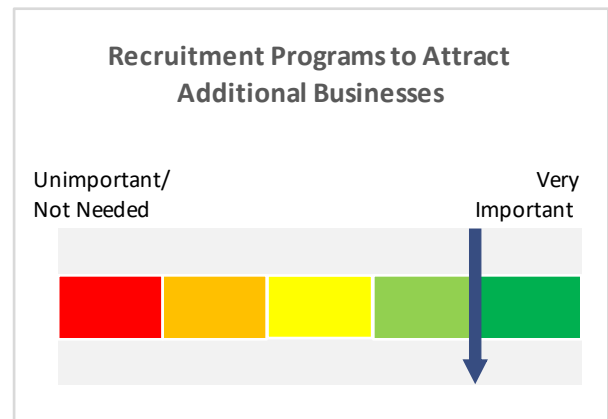
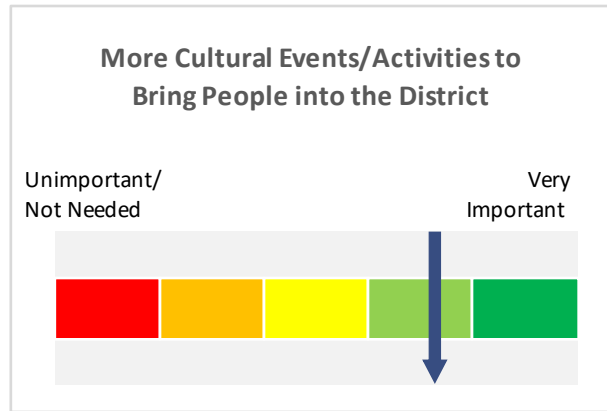
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



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

### Attraction/Retention of Customers and Businesses

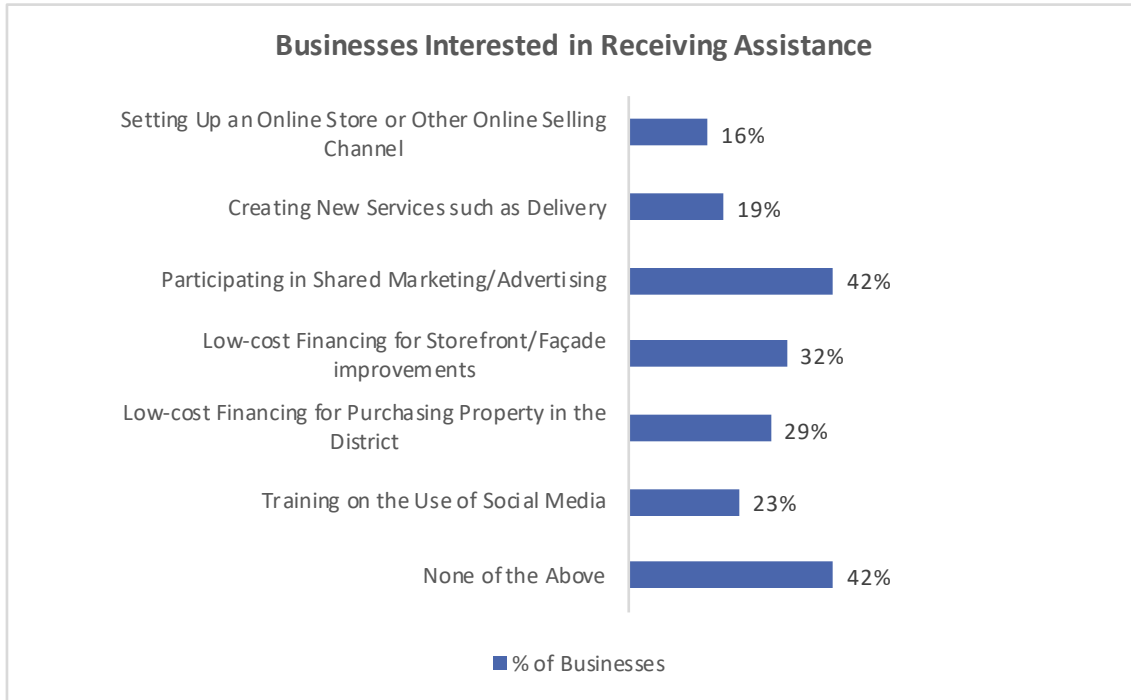
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



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

### Businesses Support

58% of businesses expressed interest in receiving some kind of assistance.

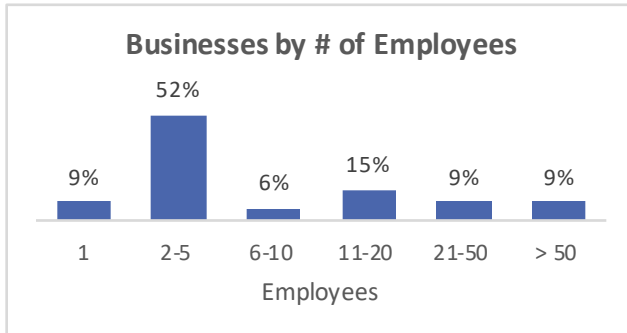




## Business Characteristics

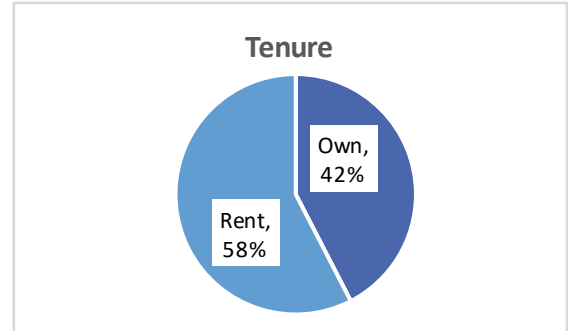
### Business Size

61% of businesses are microenterprises ( $\leq 5$  employees).



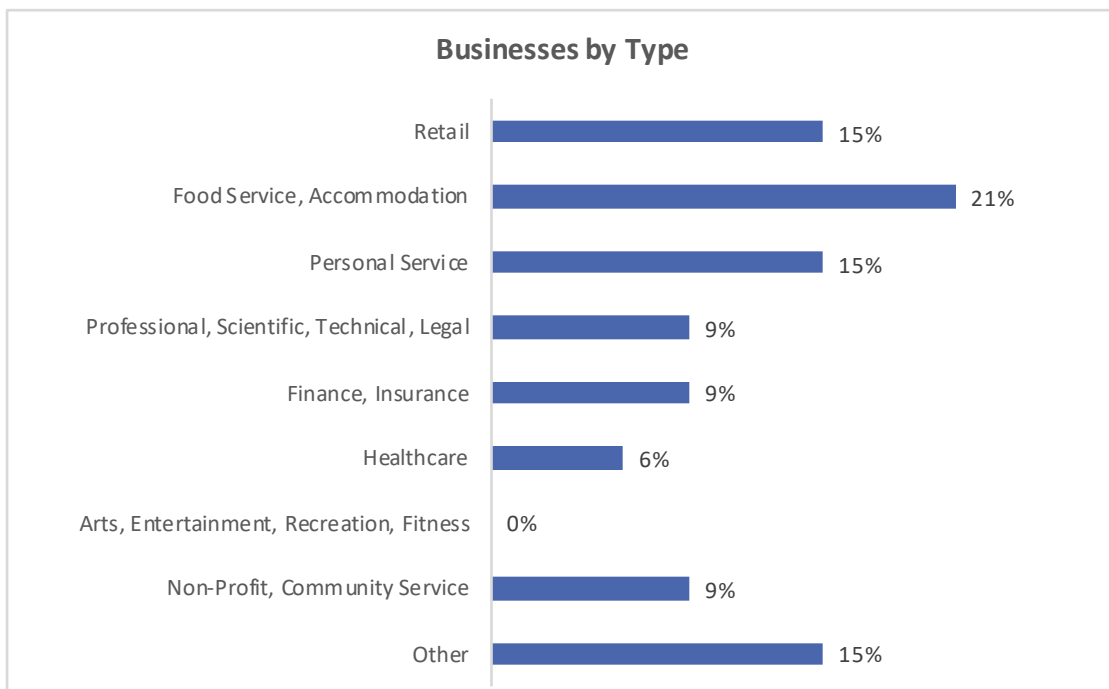
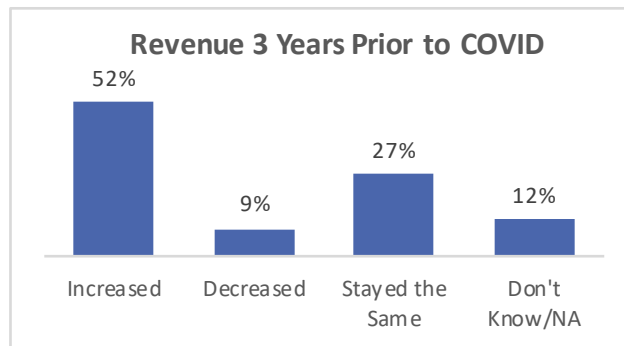
### Business Tenure

58% of businesses rent their space.



### Revenue Trend Prior to COVID

52% 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.

Chicopee	33
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### Business Characteristics & Satisfaction with Commercial Area

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

1	3	9%
2 to 5	17	52%
6 to 10	2	6%
11 to 20	5	15%
21 to 50	3	9%
More than 50	3	9%
Total	33	100%

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

Own	14	42%
Rent	19	58%
Total	33	100%

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

Increased	17	52%
Decreased	3	9%
Stayed about the Same	9	27%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	4	12%
Total	33	100%

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

Retail (NAICS 44-45)	5	15%
Food Service (restaurants, bars), Accommodation (NAICS 72)	7	21%
Personal Service (hair, skin, nails, dry cleaning) (NAICS 81)	5	15%
Professional Scientific, Technical, Legal (NAICS 54)	3	9%
Finance, Insurance (NAICS 52)	3	9%
Healthcare (medical, dental, other health practitioners) (NAICS 62)	2	6%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Fitness (NAICS 71)	0	0%
Non-Profit, Community Services	3	9%
Other	5	15%
Total	33	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	3	9%
Dissatisfied	12	38%
Neutral	6	19%
Satisfied	9	28%
Very Satisfied	2	6%
Total	32	100%

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

Very Dissatisfied	3	9%
Dissatisfied	16	48%
Neutral	9	27%
Satisfied	4	12%
Very Satisfied	1	3%
Total	33	100%

**Access for Customers & Employees**

Very Dissatisfied	3	9%
Dissatisfied	9	27%
Neutral	9	27%
Satisfied	10	30%
Very Satisfied	2	6%
Total	33	100%

**Safety and Comfort of Customers & Employees**

Very Dissatisfied	6	18%
Dissatisfied	8	24%
Neutral	8	24%
Satisfied	10	30%
Very Satisfied	1	3%
Total	33	100%

**Proximity to Complementary Businesses or Uses**

Very Dissatisfied	2	6%
Dissatisfied	7	21%
Neutral	11	33%
Satisfied	11	33%
Very Satisfied	2	6%
Total	33	100%

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

Licensing or permitting regulations	4	13%
Signage regulations	2	6%
Parking regulations	7	23%
Outdoor dining or selling regulations	6	19%
Allowed uses, change of use or other zoning regulations	4	13%
Historic District regulations	0	0%
Other regulations (not related to COVID)	3	10%
None - No Issues with regulations	15	48%

**Impacts of COVID**

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

Decline in revenue	23	70%
Employee layoff	14	42%
Reduced operating hours/capacity	23	70%
Business closure (temporary or permanent)	18	55%
Stopped/deferred rent or mortgage payments	5	15%
Incurred expense to implement safety measures	21	64%
Established alternative mode to sell and deliver products (on-line platforms, delivery, etc.)	14	42%
None of the Above	3	9%

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

Increased compared to 2019	7	21%
Stayed about the same as 2019	8	24%
Decreased 1 – 24% compared to 2019	6	18%
Decreased 25 – 49% compared to 2019	0	0%
Decreased 75 - 100% compared to 2019	4	12%
Decreased 50 – 74% compared to 2019	4	12%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	4	12%
Total	33	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	2	6%
About the same number as before COVID	6	18%
1 – 24% less customers than before COVID	6	18%
25 – 49% less customers than before COVID	6	18%
50 – 74% less customers than before COVID	7	21%
75 – 100% less customers than before COVID	5	15%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	1	3%
Total	33	100%

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

Operating at full capacity	14	42%
Operating at reduced hours/capacity due to COVID	17	52%
Temporarily closed due to COVID	1	3%
Permanently closed due to COVID	1	3%
Total	33	100%

**Strategies for Supporting Businesses and Improving the Commercial District**

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

**Renovation of Storefronts/Building Facades**

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	3%
Of Little Importance or Need	2	6%
Moderately Important	7	21%
Important	11	33%
Very Important	12	36%
Total	33	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	6%
Of Little Importance or Need	6	19%
Moderately Important	8	25%
Important	9	28%
Very Important	7	22%
Total	32	100%

**Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks**

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	3%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	9%
Moderately Important	6	19%
Important	16	50%
Very Important	6	19%
Total	32	100%

**Improvements in Safety and/or Cleanliness**

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	0	0%
Moderately Important	4	12%
Important	12	36%
Very Important	17	52%
Total	33	100%



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

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	3%
Of Little Importance or Need	6	18%
Moderately Important	7	21%
Important	6	18%
Very Important	13	39%
Total	33	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	3	9%
Of Little Importance or Need	6	19%
Moderately Important	11	34%
Important	9	28%
Very Important	3	9%
Total	32	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	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	9%
Moderately Important	9	27%
Important	9	27%
Very Important	12	36%
Total	33	100%

**More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining and Selling**

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	6	19%
Moderately Important	5	16%
Important	11	34%
Very Important	10	31%
Total	32	100%

**Implementing Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District**

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	1	3%
Moderately Important	8	24%
Important	13	39%
Very Important	11	33%
Total	33	100%

**Recruitment Programs to Attract Additional Businesses**

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	9%
Moderately Important	3	9%
Important	11	34%
Very Important	15	47%
Total	32	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	3%
Of Little Importance or Need	11	34%
Moderately Important	9	28%
Important	5	16%
Very Important	6	19%
Total	32	100%

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

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	3%
Of Little Importance or Need	7	21%
Moderately Important	12	36%
Important	6	18%
Very Important	7	21%
Total	33	100%

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

Setting up an online store or other online selling channel	5	16%
Creating new services such as delivery	6	19%
Participating in shared marketing/advertising	13	42%
Low-cost financing for storefront/façade improvements	10	32%
Low-cost financing for purchasing property in the commercial district	9	29%
Training on the use of social media	7	23%
None of the above	13	42%

**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**

Improve condition of the Canal Path. Beautify/brighten up downtown with flowers, lights, outdoor seating
—
—
—
—
Hems Express N More Sewing
The Munich Haus Restaurant
—
See to it that the remaining old mills get renovated and used. Keep improving walkability\sidewalks.
Eliminate one way traffic.
Chicopee Eyecare
—
Better handicapped parking on the street
—
—
Opportunities to purchase buildings from owners not engaged in the recovery.
—
—
traffic speed and parking improvements
More parking, more police presence, less activists
—
—
—
Clean up downtown



# Report for City of Chicopee Local Rapid Recovery Plan Priority Survey

## Response Counts



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Totals: 11



1. Below are the list of Projects currently being considered for Chicopee's RRP. Please select your top five from the list below.

Value	Percent	Responses
Black and Latinx/Hispanic Business Owners Support Creation and maintenance of a cultural specific business support program including a web-based portal for Black and Latinx-owned businesses.	9.1%	1
Improving Business owner satisfaction with city permitting & Internal Citywide Communication by Streamlining and Digitizing the city's development review and permitting processes E-govt services focusing on special events and economic development but expand to all city government functions	18.2%	2
(Re)investing in the Private Realm with Creative Code Compliance Numerous older buildings that are far out of code. Landlords don't improve them because it triggers a chain of costly updates. When businesses realize the liability will fall on them, they either move out or choose to set up shop elsewhere.	45.5%	5
Reviewing Zoning Ordinances + Regulations Continued review of zoning to ensure ease of permitting, licensing and ensure appropriate standards in underlying use and overlay districts —changes to existing regulations.	9.1%	1
Fixing Parking Perception Address feeling of lack of parking. Wayfinding can help with this perception.	18.2%	2
Retail Visioning Professional retail consultants working with business owners to help retailers attract customers and improve the overall look of downtown.	54.5%	6
Form a Chicopee Center Business Support Organization When the TDI Fellow finishes her time with Chicopee Center another organization should be explored to keep the energy of TDI.	63.6%	7
Additional Code Compliance Officer A full-time code compliance officer can assist with proactive business-friendly permitting and interacting with property owners with blighted properties/nuisances who do not live in the area.	36.4%	4
Improve traffic flow in Chicopee Center Review West End Streetscape Planning Study completed by Utile Design; Implement strategies identified, like two-way streets	63.6%	7

**Value****Percent Responses**

Re-establish Chicopee Redevelopment AuthorityA  
Redevelopment Authority would allow for the city to act as  
an urban renewal agency - eliminate and redevelop  
substandard, decadent or blighted open areas for industrial,  
commercial, business, residential, recreational, educational,  
or other purposes.



63.6%

7

2. Are there any other projects or ideas that are missing that can help Chicopee recover post-COVID?

## ResponseID Response

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3 Chicopee Falls potential athletic complex with brewery needs work done to update a city sewer line.

5 Utilize what we already have downtown so people can enjoy activities outside-maintain the cleanliness of the Canal for walkers, bikers, runners. Utilize Center Street "park" for food trucks, music, outdoor events, etc. Beautifying downtown with lights, plants, color, vibrancy!



8 A way to attract new businesses to the center. Targeted approach.

9 Yes- the city needs some beautification; nice planters strategically placed throughout the center- with a cohesive and reoccurring color scheme. This is not extremely costly and makes for a unified Center Facelift. (See downtown areas in Lowell for example)

10 I believe that, if possible, some of the funds that are going to be available should be put to use to help revitalize some of the City's parks, especially Szot Park. That is supposed to be an anchor for the City's Parks and Rec Dept, but it is falling more and more into disrepair. A new pool and expanded spray park would help bring people to the area and improve the look and reputation of our City's parks as a whole

11 I work with kids- a lot of my clientele is not comfortable coming into the downtown area due to the homeless - wish this could be addressed and taken care of.

3. Of the choices listed below, how would you most readily identify yourself within the landscape of the city of Chicopee? Choose all that apply.

Value		Percent	Responses
District Business Owner		81.8%	9
Stakeholder		18.2%	2