



Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

Uxbridge

This plan has been made possible through technical assistance provided by the Baker-Polito Administration's Local Rapid Recovery Planning program.



The Local Rapid Recovery Planning (RRP) program is a key part of the Baker-Polito Administration's Partnerships for Recovery Plan, the strategy established to help communities stabilize and grow the Massachusetts economy as a result of the economic impacts brought on by COVID-19. The plan invests \$774 million in efforts to get people back to work, support small businesses, foster innovation, revitalize downtowns, and keep people in stable housing.

In addition to the planning program, recovery efforts include a Small Business Relief Program administered by the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation. This program, which concluded in May 2021, provided more than \$687.2 million to over 15,000 businesses across the Commonwealth, with a focus on businesses located in Gateway Cities, among demographic priorities, or operating in sectors most impacted by the pandemic. Cities, Towns, and non-profit entities are using Regional Pilot Project Grant Program funding for recovery solutions that seek to activate vacant storefronts, support regional supply chain resiliency, and create small business support networks. To promote recovery in the tourism industry and support the ongoing My Local MA marketing initiative encouraging residents to support their local economies by shopping, dining and staying local, another \$1.6 million in grants were awarded through the new Travel and Tourism Recovery Grant Pilot Program. Through April 2021, MassDOT's Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program has invested \$26.4 million in municipal Shared Streets projects to support public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce.

In support of the overall recovery strategy, the Administration made \$9.5 million in awards for 125 communities to create Local Rapid Recovery Plans, through the MA Downtown Initiative Program. These plans address the impacts of COVID-19 on local downtowns and small businesses by partnering with Plan Facilitators and Subject Matter Experts to pursue locally-driven, actionable strategies.

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Acknowledgements



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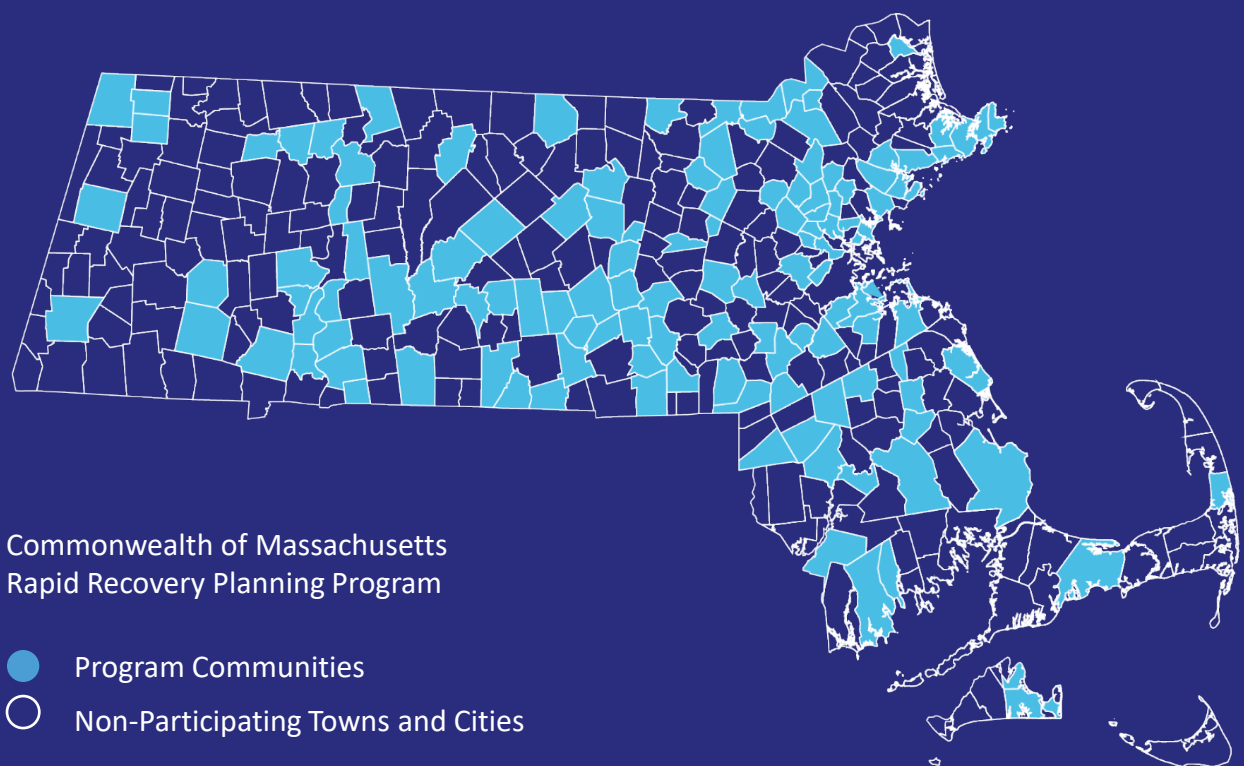
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125 communities participated in the Rapid Recovery Plan Program

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

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



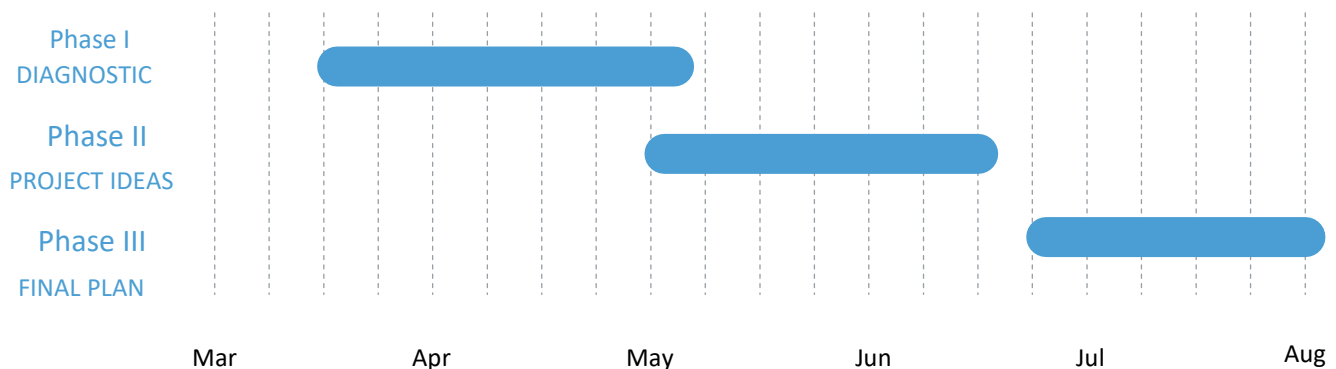
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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

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

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

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



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

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

Rapid Recovery Plan Diagnostic Framework



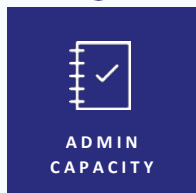
Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?



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



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



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

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



Public Realm



Private Realm



Tenant Mix



Revenue/Sales



Admin Capacity



Cultural/Arts



Other

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The Central Massachusetts Planning Commission (Plan Facilitator), in partnership with the Uxbridge Department of Economic Development and Community Planning, Boston Architectural College, Uxbridge Town leadership and stakeholders from the public and the business community analyzed short-, medium-, and long-term pandemic recovery goals, collected standardized data to demonstrate the COVID-19 impacts on downtown commercial activity, and refined project recommendations based on community consensus and expert feedback.

The economic and personal impact of COVID-19 has been deeply felt by communities in Central Massachusetts. In April 2020, the unemployment rate for the region reached 15.4%, up 12.5% from April 2019 (MA Department of Unemployment Assistance, Statewide Report Labor Force and Unemployment Rate, April 2020). Small business revenue has declined over the course of the pandemic when compared to pre-pandemic levels according to Uxbridge businesses surveyed. Sectors critical to Uxbridge's economy and quality of life have been particularly impacted by COVID-19 from both a revenue and jobs perspective, including the retail sector, accommodation and food services sector, arts and recreation sector, personal care sector, finance/insurance sector, and more.

Amid this crisis, Uxbridge residents are engaged in a process of recovery and revitalization. They are wearing masks, washing hands, physically distancing. They are retooling business operations, lending a hand to neighbors, and frequenting local businesses. They are demonstrating courage, compassion, and creativity in the face of crisis.

The Rapid Recovery Plan will not solve all the complex challenges created or made worse by COVID-19 or replace community-led efforts. Instead, the Planning Team (CMRPC, the Uxbridge Department of Economic Development and Community Planning, the Adaptive team at Boston Architectural College) has developed a set of recommended strategies, on a short time frame, for supporting economic recovery for Uxbridge's Main Street District.

The goal of the Planning Team has been to support and augment community-led efforts, as residents, employers, and public and private sector leaders each have a critical role to play in these complex times. The following principles helped guide project recommendations:

RESOURCE-DRIVEN. The Planning Team focused on strengthening and leveraging local assets, knowledge, capacities, and relationships, rather than focusing on limitations or weaknesses.

RELEVANT. To ensure recommendations were data-driven and locally pertinent, the Planning Team helped promote and distribute the DHCD business impact survey to organizations within the Study Area to gain a better understanding of opportunities and challenges facing local businesses. The survey results are summarized throughout this plan with full results in Appendix A.

RAPID. The Planning Team concentrated on developing recommendations that can be implemented and acted upon within a short-to-intermediate time frame. Some recommendations call upon action by residents while others call upon action by employers and private and public sector leaders. Potential partners and resources are identified throughout the Plan.

RESILIENT. The Planning Team evaluated project recommendations through a lens of public health, inclusion, and resilience included in the Plan. These considerations provide a basis for nurturing Uxbridge's long-term recovery and economic stability.

Executive Summary

STUDY AREA SELECTION

The Planning Team identified a Study Area that reflects the diverse tenant mix in Town. Business zoning districts dominate village centers throughout Massachusetts and are generally clustered around historic mill towns. Additional concentrations of business zones are spread out along the major transit routes, particularly along Route 122. As such, the Study Area is comprised of properties along Main Street.

There are four distinct neighborhoods in the Main Street District illustrated in the maps below. From north to south, these areas include North Main Street, SONO McCloskey, SONO Downtown, and Lower South Main. SONO is a local name for where North Main Street meets South Main Street. It represents the core downtown area of the Main Street District and is the most densely developed area in Town.

Uxbridge was established in 1727 and its early production of textiles was critical in launching the American Industrial Revolution. Named for the Earl of Uxbridge, the Town is home to 375 National Historic Sites including the Farnum House, Samuel Taft House, and the Town Hall. Uxbridge is also at the heart of the Blackstone River Valley and is home to verdant green space and parks including the Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park. Main Street is proximate to or bisected by several major routes that traverse the region (Route 146, Route 16), augmenting the Town's distinction as a destination to people traveling through by car.

PROJECT THEMES

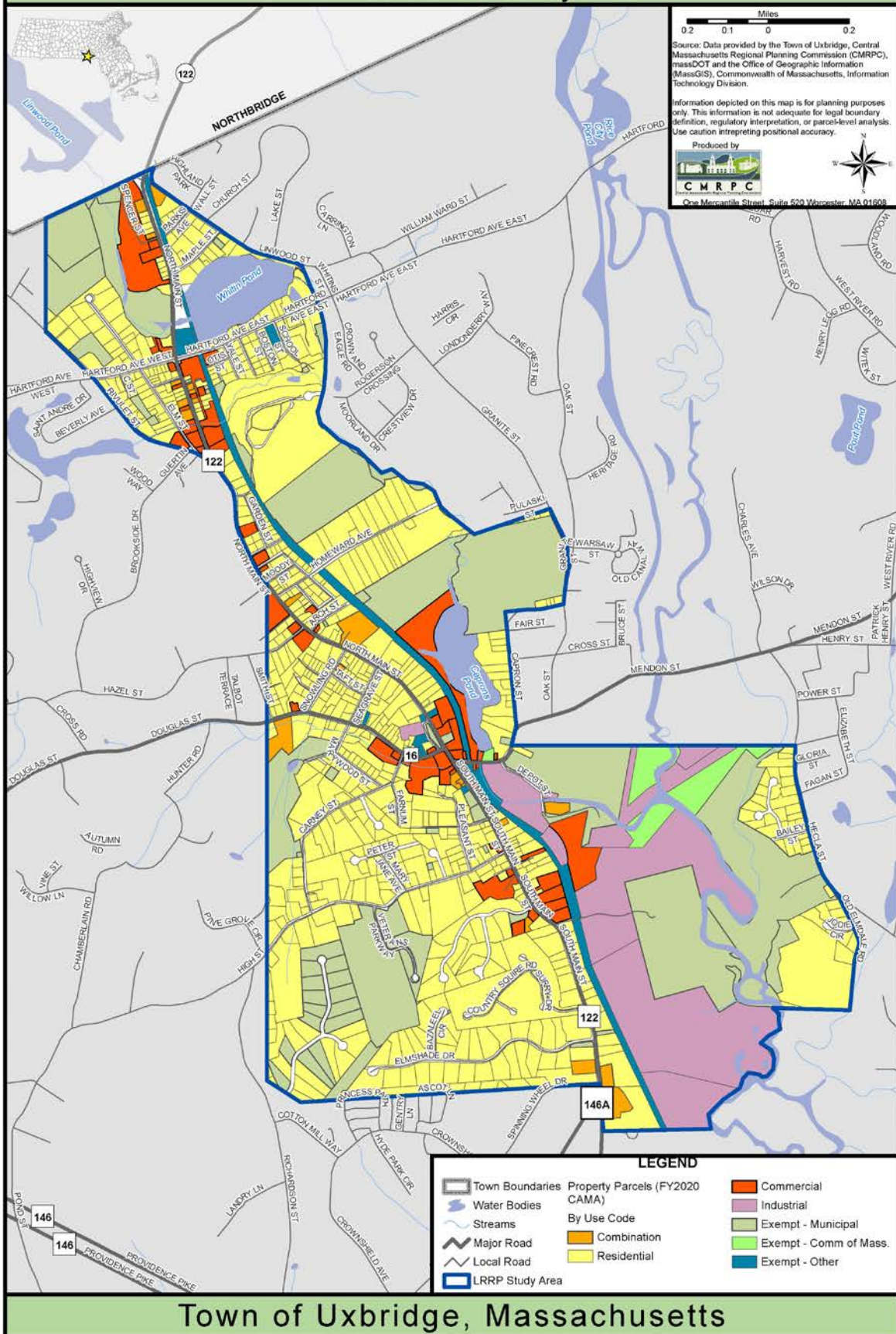
A destination economy is one where most aspects of the economy relate directly or indirectly to the spending of those who visit. Workshop participants noted that Uxbridge is a Town frequented for the passive recreation opportunities offered by the surrounding environmental amenities and the Blackstone River Valley as a whole; to that end, it is important that the Main Street District develop amenities as attractive and well-frequented as the existing regional attractions.

Community respondents repeatedly discussed the history of Uxbridge. The Town of Uxbridge has stood for several hundred years, and has been at the forefront of historical events such as the American Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the women's suffrage movement. The Town retains an impressive inventory of historical buildings and places, all of which could be better leveraged and marketed to visitors, so that visitors and residents alike can immerse themselves in the events that have occurred in Uxbridge.

Pedestrian safety along Main Street was the first issue discussed at a community visioning workshop and the issue mentioned most by feedback form respondents. Main Street is not built to accommodate a high volume of pedestrians or cars and trucks. Reducing Main Street traffic is one of the main considerations for moving Uxbridge's municipal hubs to the McCloskey Building. Pedestrians on Main Street should feel safe to move, to pause, and to cross the road, and cars should travel smoothly with easy access to parking. In the future, streets should be more accessible to cyclists as well.

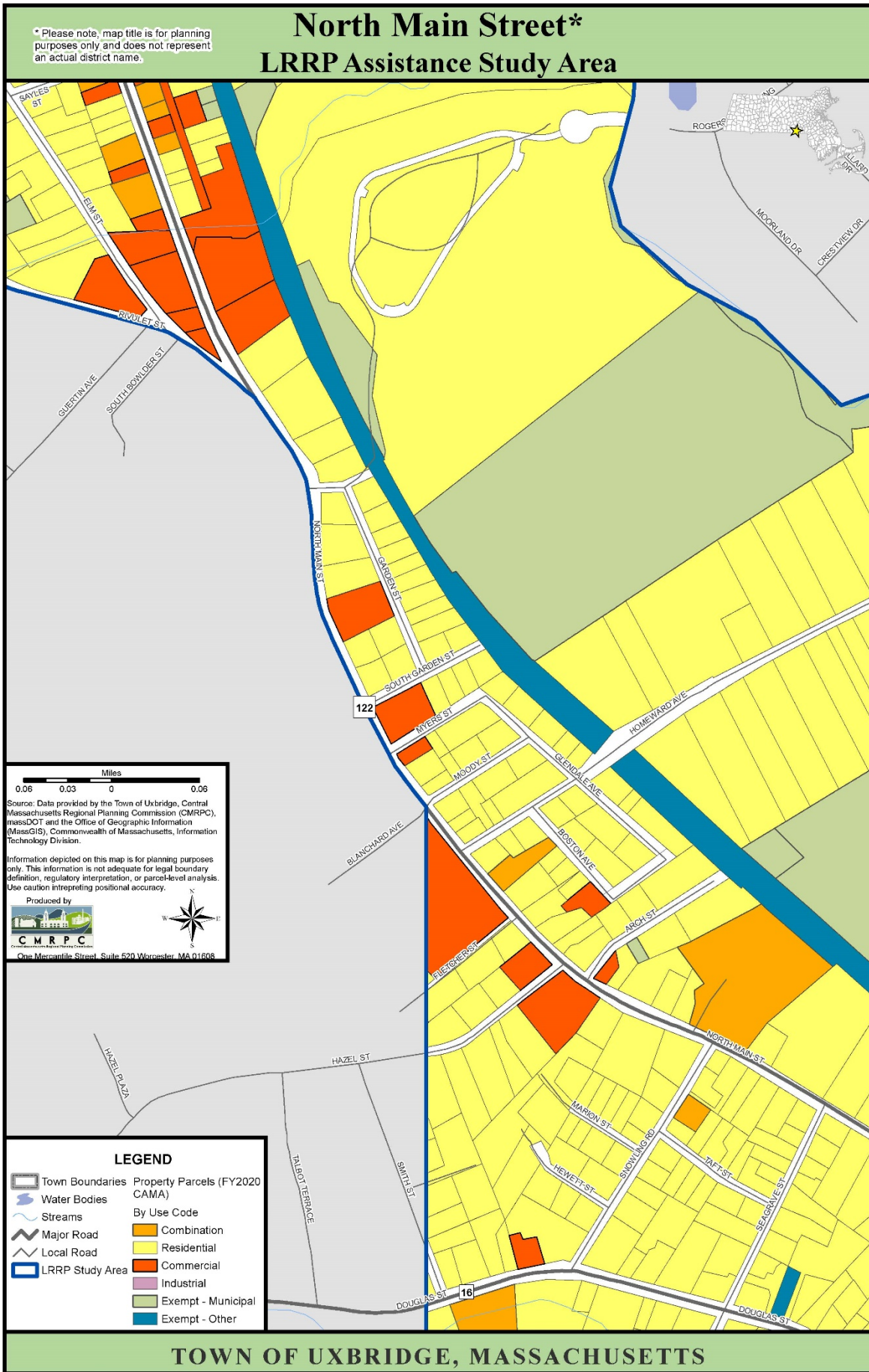
Workshop participants noted that Uxbridge, at the crux of the Blackstone River Valley, is known for its passive recreation opportunities. Uxbridge contains three different rivers and an abundance of green space. Like Uxbridge's history, this is an important asset to leverage while crafting a unique sense of place that would define a destination economy. The built environment and natural assets should be connect, through circulation with the Main Street District and integrated into the regional natural assets.

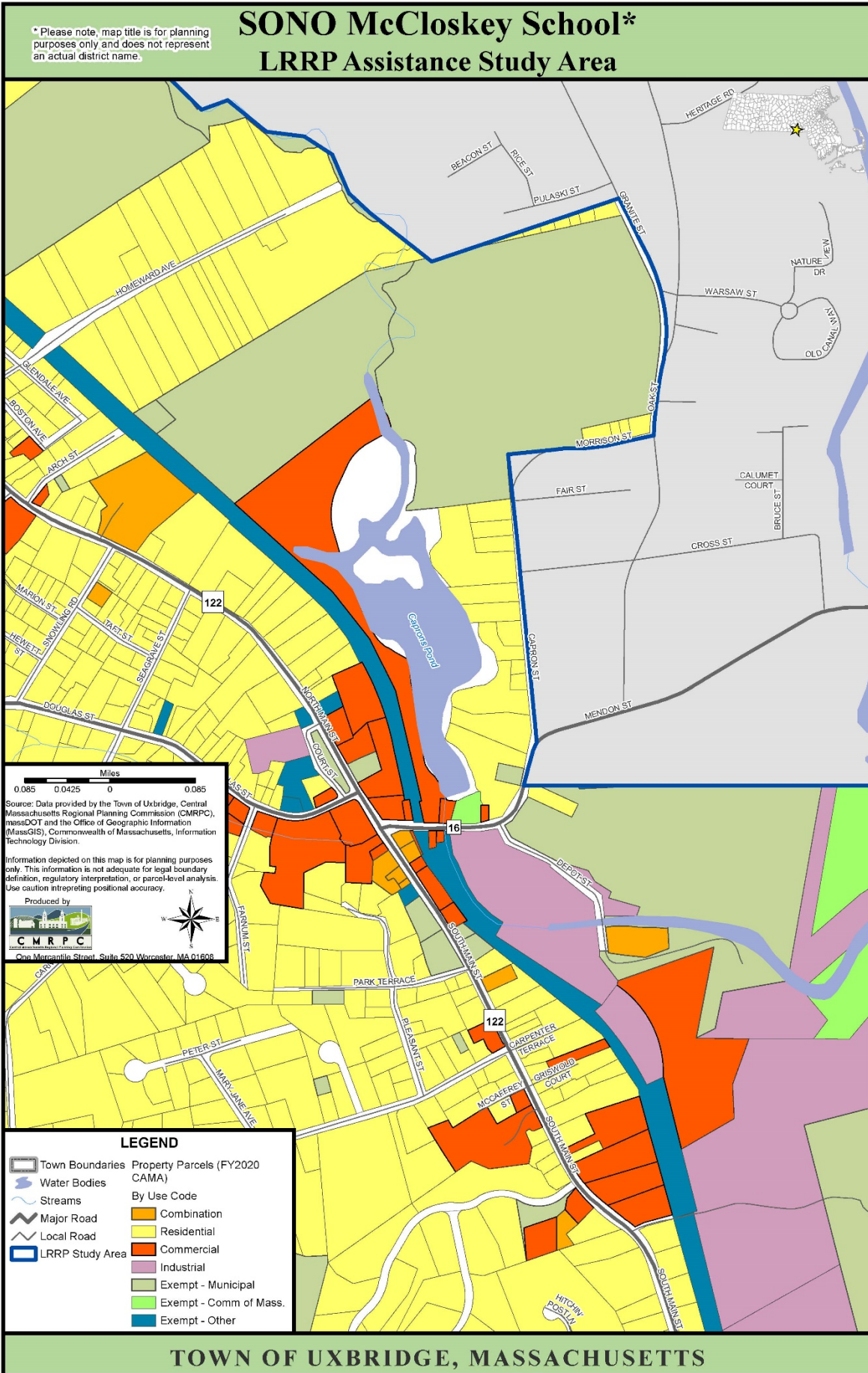
Town of Uxbridge Main Street District LRRP Assistance Study Area

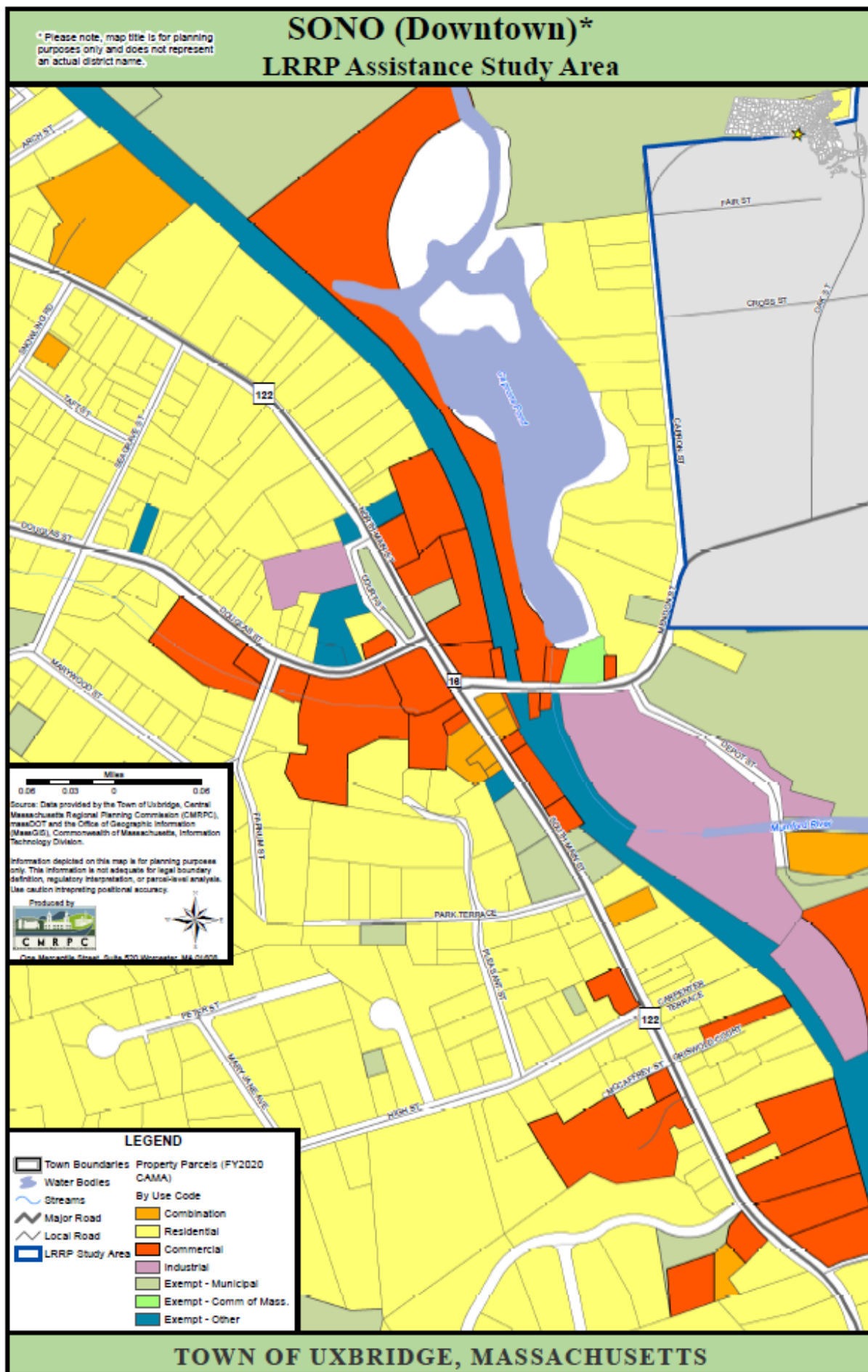


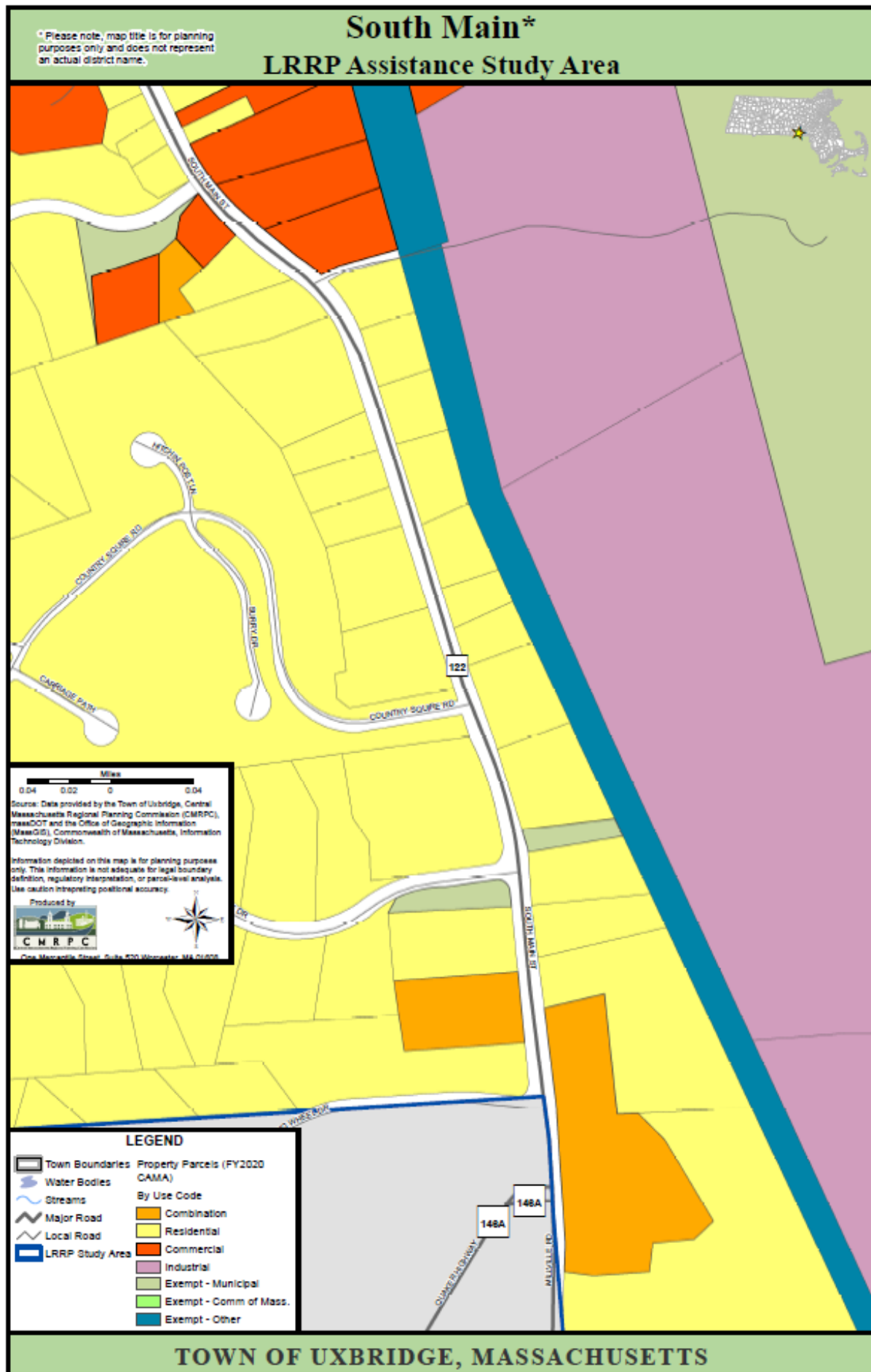
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Executive Summary

DIAGNOSTIC PHASE

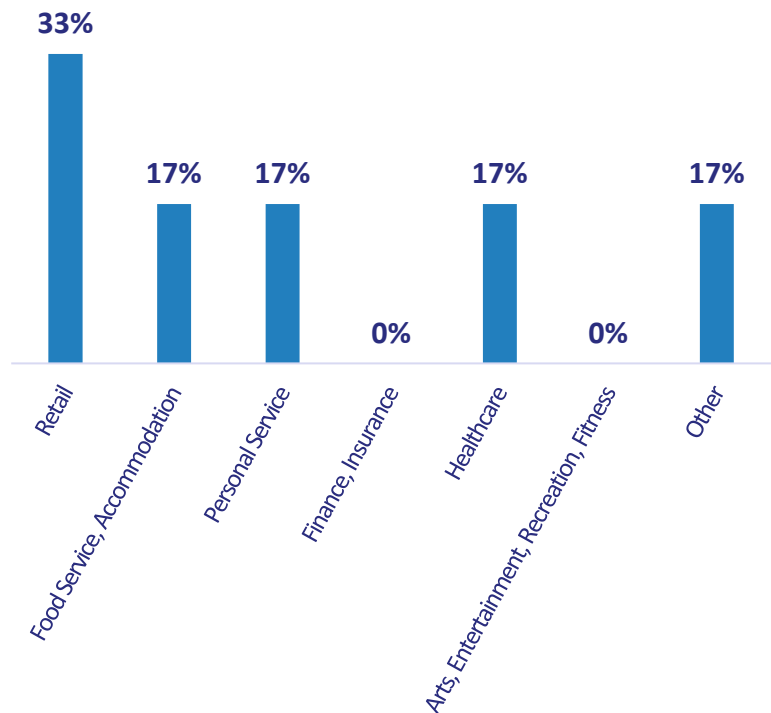
Phase I of the RRP process began in March 2021 and focused on diagnosing current conditions in Uxbridge. During this phase, CMRPC collected and analyzed information to identify findings and conclusions, and then made recommendations. The diagnostic phase is vital to planning as it is imprudent to make ambitious recommendations without fully examining the current situation. When working to guide recovery in Uxbridge, the RRP Planning Team endeavored to start from where Uxbridge is now – by conducting an effective discovery to identify current priorities for change by reviewing data from sources such as ESRI Business Analyst, CoStar, the U.S. Census, the local business survey, and site visits.

The findings of the Diagnostic Phase are summarized in the appropriate category (Customer Base, Physical Environment, Business Environment, Admin Capacity) in the subsequent “Diagnostic” section of this plan.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Rapid Recovery Program developed a survey to gather input from business owners and managers in the Study Area. The survey featured questions about respondents’ satisfaction with storefront locations, the impacts of COVID-19 on business operations, and their opinion regarding potential strategies to support local businesses and improve the commercial district. The survey was developed and summarized using the internet application SurveyMonkey®. The availability of the survey and hyperlinks were placed on the Town website and social channels, the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce website and social channels and was sent via email to businesses in the Study Area when email addresses were available. Flyers advertising the survey were also distributed to businesses in the Study Area. The online survey was available in April and May 2021.

Six (6) surveys were received. All respondents were for-profit organizations.



Survey Respondents’ Business Type.

60% of the survey respondents were microenterprises (≤ 5 employees) and all had fewer than twenty (20) employees.

83% of the responding businesses reported being impacted by COVID, all of whom indicated a decline in revenue. 67% of respondents indicated that they were affected by reduced operating hours and/or capacity and are currently still operating at reduced hours/capacity.

Survey respondents were asked to provide 2020 annual revenue data by indicating the range by which revenue had increased or decreased compared to 2019. 66% of responding businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019, with half of those seeing a decline over 25%.

Respondents also reported less foot traffic in commercial areas, with 83% recording less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID, and 50% reporting a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more.

50% of respondents reported that participating in shared marketing or advertising would be the most helpful to their organization followed by Training on the use of Social Media (33%).

More business survey input related to possible strategies is referenced in the “Project Recommendations” section of this plan. Responses related to business satisfaction with the Study Area is interspersed into the subsequent “Diagnostic” Plan Report sections as appropriate.

Full survey results are attached as Appendix A.

Executive Summary

MAIN STREET DISTRICT SURVEY

In Spring 2021, CMRPC conducted a survey of residents, business owners, and employees in Uxbridge regarding the Main Street District. Questions regarded the economic development of the district, the built environment of the district, and reuse of municipal buildings such as the McCloskey Building.

The survey brought in 313 responses, 97.1 percent of whom are residents, 10.5 percent of whom are employees in Uxbridge, and 3.2 percent of whom are business owners in Uxbridge. 35.2 percent of respondents have lived or worked in Uxbridge for ten or fewer years, while 64.8 percent of respondents have lived or worked in Uxbridge for more than ten years.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

When asked broadly about what they like and dislike about Downtown Uxbridge, survey respondents had clear answers that fall in line with the rest of the survey results. They enjoy the small town feel, and describe the downtown positively as “quaint”, “cute”, and “historic”. Complaints and desires for downtown are clear: a lack of parking along with a need for destinations and events. Those destinations are reflected when asked about appropriate development. Top picks for respondents are: sit-down restaurants, parks & open space, outdoor recreation, personal services, retail, and mixed-use development.

Responses vary when asked about affordability, many said Uxbridge is affordable, relatively, while other complain of high taxes and water bills. This mixed response indicates room for improvement, and increasing the tax base and access to housing could be beneficial for Uxbridge. While housing remains generally unpopular, the least controversial option of all the choices, is mixed-use development, which would compliment the desire for dining, personal services, and retail.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT RESULTS

While further housing development scored negatively among survey respondents, mixed-use development did well. When asking about various elements of the built environment, every single category was reviewed poorly. The lowest rated elements were bicycle infrastructure and road maintenance.

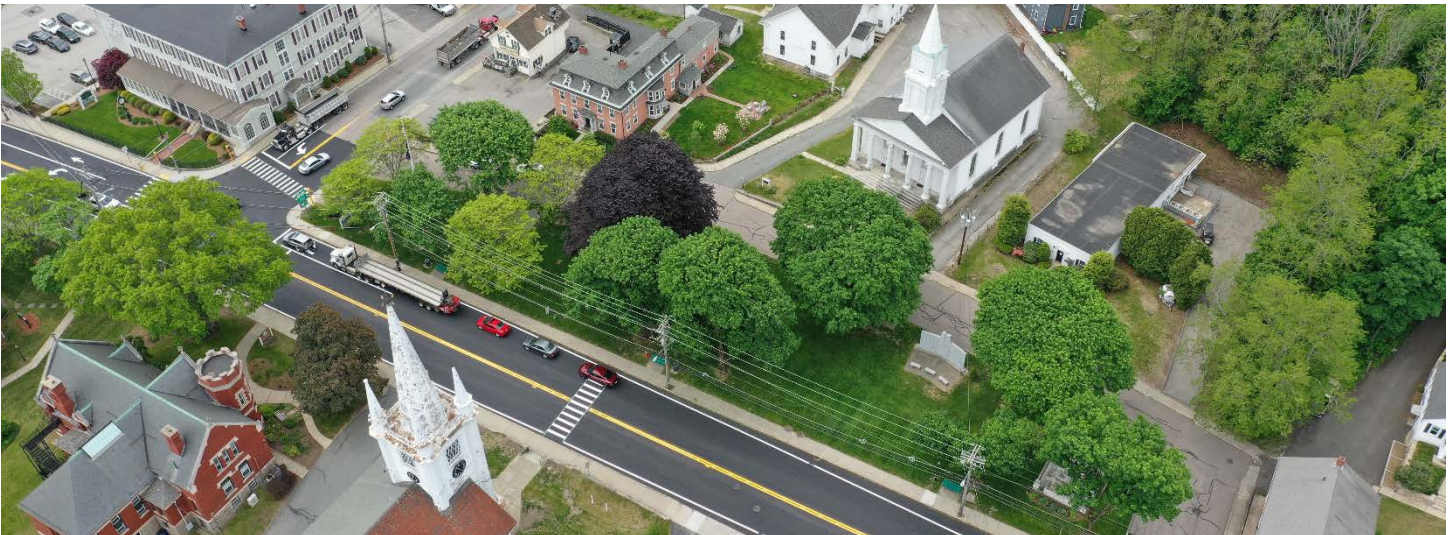
When asked about transportation options, respondents' top three choices were pedestrian infrastructure, expanded parking, bicycle infrastructure, and access to taxis and rideshare services.

MUNICIPAL REUSE RESULTS

When asked about priorities in development to the McCloskey Building, three options scored at the top, proving uncontroversial with scores above 4. These were: “The reuse is accessible”, “The reuse revitalizes the district”, and “The reuse is financially feasible for the Town”

Looking at the next top options, we get more specific desire for the space, such as: “The reuse fosters open space for the community”, “The reuse provides additional public amenities”, and “The reuse manages traffic impacts”

In line with those desires, the top specific uses are “Community Center”, “Indoor Market with Vendors”, “Indoor athletic space”, and “Performance space.” The top municipal use for the McCloskey Building is the Senior Center, which due to its current small size could easily be accommodated by the McCloskey Building . Based on these results, the McCloskey Building could become a multi-use municipal space, utilized for community events, performances, and maintaining the indoor athletic space in the Memorial Gym for public use. The McCloskey Building could also house the Town’s administrative headquarters, leaving the Town Hall and Senior Center open to alternative uses, as discussed later in this report.



Diagnostic

Key Findings



There are myriad recreation and tourism opportunities within or proximate to the Study Area.

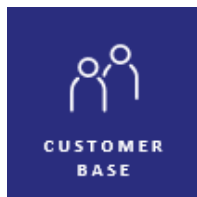
Uxbridge has a rich manufacturing history that has established the Town not only as a regional destination, but with its inclusion in Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park, potentially a national one. The Town landscape is also dotted with natural resources, farms, and recreational opportunities that pull locals and visitors alike toward the historic Downtown. The Town can leverage their striking historic building stock and inclusion in the Blackstone River Valley National Historic Park to attract new visitors and businesses to the Downtown. Area parks and field present an opportunity to draw younger patrons into the nearby Study Area, as well as to capture out-of-Town visitors participating or spectating at youth sports events.



Study Area businesses want to improve streetscapes, customer access, and condition of private buildings, storefronts, and signs.

Site visits and stakeholder meetings rated the condition of facades, streetscapes, and signage as needing improvements. Branding the District would help create a more uniform and inviting environment and help to build the destination economy Uxbridge is eager to develop. New funding sources, especially those from the federal level, may be instrumental in launching these improvements.

Key Findings



The Town’s customer base is middle-aged and well-educated.

According to Esri data, in 2020 the median age in the Study Area was nearly 43. Like most communities in Central Massachusetts, that number is projected to continue to trend upward in coming years, with expected declines in the under nineteen age cohort, and growth in the 65+ cohort.

An aging population can be an opportunity for economic growth by prompting new business formation and existing business expansion to match the needs and interests of the customer base. Age-related shifts in product and service offerings may diversify the tenant mix in the Study Area. Targeted marketing based on the existing or desired customer base, as well as augmented e-commerce could spur recovery and grow customer bases outside the geographic footprint of Uxbridge and surrounding communities.



Uxbridge permitting requirements are business-friendly.

Respondents to the business survey indicated that the permitting process was not burdensome and it does not appear to be inhibiting development. That being said, there may be a benefit to zoning changes and design guidelines in the Main Street District. This is discussed in more detail in the recommendations section of this report.



Public and Private Realm Physical Environment Ratings

During the diagnostic phase of the RRP process, CMRPC collected and analyzed information from numerous data sources, and made several visits to the Study Area to evaluate existing conditions and rank physical environment features. Based on site visit observations, CMRPC planners assigned letter grades from A – FAIL for features of the Study Area physical environment including sidewalks, street trees and benches, lighting, wayfinding and signage, roadbeds and crosswalks, windows, outdoor displays and dining, awnings, and facades.

It is worth noting that overall grades were determined by averaging the rankings recorded at 116 data points throughout the Study Area. As such, there are properties located in Downtown Uxbridge or along Route 122 that would individually be ranked either higher or lower than the average grades memorialized in the table below. The “Grade Description” column in Table 1 describes the specific conditions that resulted in the given ranking.

Study Area physical assets and opportunities are further described in the subsequent RRP section.

Physical Environment Feature	Public Realm Grade	Private Realm Grade	Grade Description
Sidewalks	B	N/A	About 50% of sidewalks in the study area are well-maintained.
Street Trees and Benches	B	N/A	Although street trees and benches are available across the study area, these amenities have not been cleaned or well-maintained, and require improvements.
Lighting	B	C	About 50% of the study area is serviced by street lighting that supports pedestrian visibility and safety. More than 25% of storefronts do not have lighting.
Wayfinding/ Signage	B	B	Wayfinding in the study area is primarily geared towards directing motorists across the study area. There is limited signage to identify key assets and destinations to pedestrians. About 50% of storefronts have clear signage that reflect basic business information and can easily be seen from adjacent sidewalks.
Roadbed and Crosswalks	B	N/A	Roads are designed primarily to move motor vehicles across the study area efficiently, with limited crosswalks for pedestrians.
Windows	N/A	B	About 50% of storefront windows maintain windows with at least 70% transparency.
Outdoor Displays/ Dining	N/A	C	More than 25% of storefronts have spillover merchandise display and outdoor dining that pose challenges to the pedestrian experience.
Awnings	N/A	C	More than 25% of properties in the study area do not have awnings and/or have awnings that are unusable or have not been cleaned or maintained
Façades	N/A	C	More than 25% of properties require significant building façade improvements, including power washing, painting, and structural enhancements.

Table 1. Uxbridge Main Street District public and private realm physical environment grades based upon CMRPC site visit observations.



Asset: History

Community members excitedly discuss the history of Uxbridge. The Town has endured for hundreds of years and has been at the forefront of several cultural movements, including the Revolutionary War, the Industrial Revolution, and the women's suffrage movement. This history remains in the Town's impressive inventory of historical buildings and place.

There are over 375 National Historic Sites in Uxbridge which include residential, religious, industrial, and other commercial, non-commercial structures. Some notable historic sites are the Farnum house, where the first Town Meeting took place, the Samuel Taft house, where the President George Washington stayed during his inaugural tour in 1789. Movies including *The Great Gatsby* (1974) and *Oliver's Story* (1978) were filmed here, and productions continue to use assets such as the McCloskey Building for shoots. The first women to vote in the history of America, Lydia Taft was also from Uxbridge. The city has also seen a few fire incidents, the Bernat Mill (2007) and the Bank Building (2013)

The Town of Uxbridge is part of the John H. Chaffee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor that extends from Worcester to Providence, RI and remembers New England's industrial heritage. Very recently (July 2021) Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland established the boundaries of the Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park which tells the story of the birth of America's industrialization and its impact on the U.S. The canals that fueled the region's growth led to the development of mills, mill housing, and waves of immigrants across the region.

Uxbridge has a wealth of historical buildings and locations. Looking towards the future of Uxbridge as a regional hub, it is vital that resources should be better maintained and made more evident to visitors, so that visitors and residents alike can immerse themselves in the events that have occurred in Uxbridge.



Uxbridge Unitarian Church; Photo Source: CMRPC



Cornet John Farnum Jr. House; Photo Source: CMRPC

Asset: Natural Resources



Capron's Pond and Blackstone Heritage State Park, Capron's Dam. Photo Source: CMRPC

Uxbridge sits in the heart of the Blackstone River Valley, known as the “Birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution” as the river ran the nation’s first water-powered cotton mills. This National Heritage Corridor) is surrounded by several state parks and natural amenities. Douglas State Forest, the Purgatory Chasm State Reservation, Taft Memorial Park, The Blackstone Gorge, The Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park, Cormier Woods, the Quisset Wildlife Management Area and the partially developed Blackstone River Greenway all surround the Town.

The Town’s location provides residents and visitors ample opportunity for access to outdoor activities - hiking, toe paths, bike trails, canoeing, horseback riding, farm visits, historical tours, nature tours, landscape watercolor groups, and camping.

WATER BODIES

The Mumford River, a tributary of the Blackstone River passes through the Uxbridge Main Street District, providing a scenic dam at Capron Falls and Capron’s Pond, and providing the potential for a river walk connected to the downtown area. The Falls are now on the edge of Effingham Capron Park, a small park which overlooks the pond. The Blackstone River itself and the West River, another tributary, run through the Town, lending the name “Tri-River” to a Family Health Center in Town. Developing these rivers as natural assets is a clear way to contribute to a strong Main Street District.

PARKS AND PUBLIC LAND

Arthur Taft Memorial Park

Established in 1917

A 24.5 acre park established as a donation from the Taft family estate, in memory of Arthur Reed Taft. The park is a narrow parcel of land with open fields, woodland with walking trails, and Waterhouse Pond.

Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park Built in 1824

Where the American industrial revolution was born. The River Bend Farm Visitor Center provides a convenient gateway to canoeing, fishing, trails, and snowmobiling or cross-country skiing access.

Prospect Hill Cemetery

Established in 1795

The oldest cemetery in the Town. Some of the names that recur through Uxbridge’s history - Aldrich, Farnum, Taft, Wheelock, Capron, Willard, Chapin - are buried here.



Opportunity: Public and Private Improvements

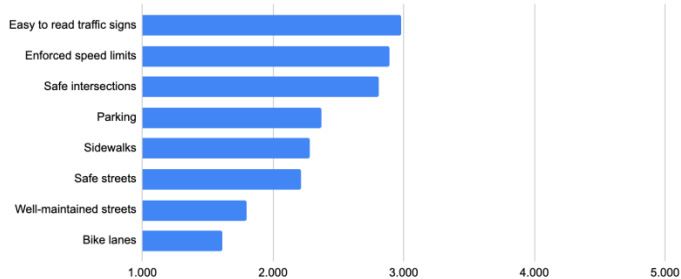
In both the LRRP Business Survey and the CMRPC Uxbridge Main Street Survey, the condition of the built environment was clearly an area for improvement.

Every category regarding streetscapes in Uxbridge scored below a “Fair”, with well-maintained streets and bike lanes each scoring poorly.

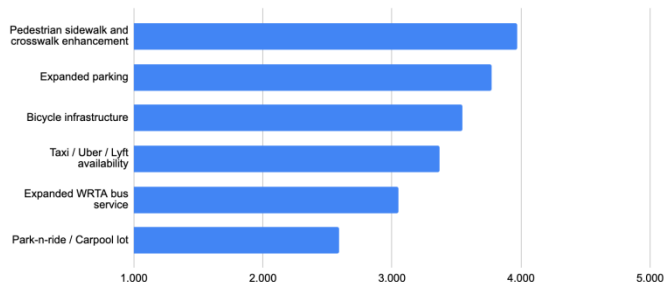
Similarly, of all the transportation options presented to Main Street Survey respondents, while most scored well, “Pedestrian sidewalk and crosswalk enhancement” scored highest, along with expanded parking and bicycle infrastructure.

On the LRRP business survey, “Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks” scored highly.

Would you rate your community as excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor on the following?



What transportation options are appropriate in the Uxbridge Main Street district?



Other Built Environment factors scored as important improvements in different surveys. The physical diagnostic conducted as part of the LRRP process had Uxbridge scoring fairly, with consistent Bs, the business survey showed that nearly every Physical Environment, Atmosphere, and Access strategy scored as “Important” or “Very Important”, with Renovation of Storefronts and Building Facades scoring highest along with streetscape improvements.

In additions to these conditions issues, the Community Visioning Workshop conducted by BAC cited several more physical and connectivity issues, including:

- “Main Street not connected to parks or waterways
- “Lack of connection to environmental assets, passive recreation.”
- “Lack of cultural, environmental, and historical attractions”

Several of the recommendations are relevant to these concerns, including:

- **Develop a Façade Improvement Program**
- **Main Street District Zoning and Design Guidelines**
- **Gateway and Wayfinding Improvements**
- **Mumford River Access and Improvement**
- **Cultivate Public Art Programming**

Additionally, **Municipal Building Repurposing** could serve to mitigate traffic in downtown Uxbridge and open up space for some of these amenities and improvements.



Opportunity: Municipal Building Reuse

The most significant and unique opportunity in the Uxbridge Main Street District is the presence of the currently disused McCloskey Building, a former public school under municipal ownership with several options for reuse.

Potentials include utilizing the property for municipal services, commercial uses, or as residential units. Any of these uses would enable the Town of Uxbridge to accomplish key goals related to economic development and housing construction

Transitioning existing municipal services at the Senior Center or Town Hall would open those properties for development as commercial, residential, or civic uses, and redirect traffic during business hours towards the McCloskey Building.

The building's existing athletic, performance, and kitchen facilities enable it to take on a number of commercial and civic uses.

Generally, respondents to the CMRPC Main Street District survey want to see this space take on community and civic-oriented uses.

Based on the results below, the McCloskey Building could become a multi-use municipal space, utilized for community events, performances, and maintaining the indoor athletic spaces for town uses. If the space and accessibility exists to accommodate the Senior Center, the Senior Center could be converted into dining or retail, or the land could be used for a new mixed-use development.



CMRPC Drone Picture of the McCloskey Building



Opportunity: Destination Economy

When asked broadly about what they like and dislike about Downtown Uxbridge, respondents to the CMRPC Main Street District survey had clear answers that fall in line with the rest of the survey results. They enjoy the small town feel, and describe the downtown positively as “quaint”, “cute”, and “historic”.

Complaints and desires for downtown are clear: a lack of parking along with a need for destinations and events.

Those destinations are reflected when asked about appropriate development. Top picks for respondents are: sit-down restaurants, parks & open space, outdoor recreation, personal services, retail, and mixed-use development.

Similarly, during the BAC forum, concerns included the following:

“Lots of cultural, environmental, and historical experience that is not integrated into the Main Street Corridor”

“Need official designation for some historic sites”

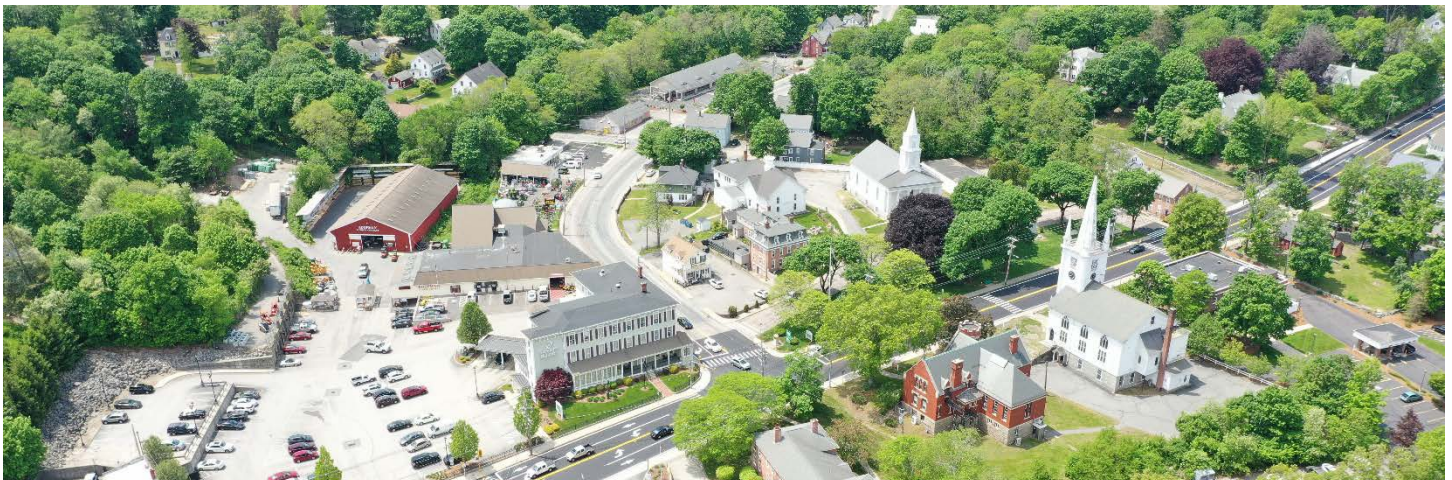
“Need to complete the planned bike trail through Uxbridge”

“Not enough businesses and restaurants in the downtown area:”

Uxbridge has a unique opportunity, with a compact and developed historic downtown core in proximity to regionally important roads and environmental destinations, to become a regional hub., Commercial and dining along with live entertainment and events at the McCloskey Building will help bring attention to Uxbridge.

Several of the recommendations correspond with this opportunity and will help Uxbridge develop this.

- **Municipal Building Repurposing**
- **Develop a Façade Improvement Program**
- **Main Street District Zoning and Design Guidelines**
- **Leverage historic resources**
- **Gateway and Wayfinding Improvements**
- **Encourage Business-to-Business Relationships**
- **Mumford River Access and Improvement**
- **Cultivate Public Art Programming**
- **Increase Cultural Programming and Special Events**



Project Recommendations

Municipal Building Repurposing

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Uxbridge Main Street District
Origin	Town of Uxbridge Department of Economic Development and Community Planning, Public Stakeholder Meetings, Public Survey, CMRPC, Kuhn Riddle Architects, Boston Architectural College
Budget	 Large (>\$200,000) McCloskey Building Repurposing Initial Estimate \$40M
Timeframe	 Short Term (<5years)
Risk	 Medium Risk - While the Town is well-positioned to make a large financial investment, we cannot know with certainty that this will pave the way for private investment in the Main Street District. This can be addressed by seeking to building relationships across sectors at each step of the process, so that by the time the Town has determined a preferred course of action, it will be easier to broadcast the opportunities through regional networks and engage interested parties in the projects. Hosting a developers' tour that covers the entire district and puts key buildings in context prior to issuing any RFPs can also be a way to draw general interest in the district.
Key Performance Indicators	In the short term, a positive public workshop experience reported by participants and voter approval at Town Meeting. Medium term indicators are successful redevelopment of the McCloskey Building, Town Hall and Senior Center. In the long term, this repurposing would be a success if it contributes to Uxbridge's Destination Economy, builds community, and stimulates growth in the Main Street District.
Partners & Resources	• Town of Uxbridge • Senior Center • Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce • MassDevelopment • Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission • To be named private sector (or non-profit) developers/operators. • Mass Cultural Council (potentially)



Diagnostic

This project would address many of the Diagnostic findings as it would be an overhaul of three significant public buildings in the Main Street District. Their façades would be improved, utilizing the large parking area at the McCloskey Building would free up spaces for use by other entities downtown. Above all, this project would create community gathering space for events that people have come to value after the isolation they experienced during COVID.

The McCloskey Building transformation following COVID-19 would be particularly impactful. The building was used as a regional vaccination site for the Blackstone Valley, playing an important public health role for a broad community. The McCloskey Building already has a large performance space, a commercial kitchen that could be used for ongoing free meal programs, as well as a gym that could be upgraded to include more active recreation space, and a senior center large enough for increasingly popular programs.

For many, remote work and work-from-home practices have continued due to the persistence of COVID-19 as well as changes in work culture and use of supporting technology that the pandemic has ushered in. As a result, Uxbridge, which was already experiencing growth pre-Covid as a “bedroom community,” now has the potential to renew its role as a vital town center where its residents not only live but also work and play. By providing conveniences of small-town life anchored in a unique and historic setting, Uxbridge can build a more connected, more social community – in turn, creating a more robust local economy capable of responding to ongoing pandemic restraints and equipped to be more resilient in the future.



ActionItem

Hold a Community Planning Workshop to Drive Redevelopment of Underutilized Properties (McCloskey Building, Town Hall, and Senior Center) and Transform Downtown Uxbridge.

Use workshop ideas to bring vision and clarity to the potential financial impact of site redevelopment and to enable the development of a detailed preliminary pro-forma. Confirm suitability of potential financing mechanisms (presumably a combination of municipal bonds and potential grant funding). Forecast the economic impact of the proposed reuse, including consideration for revenue from new businesses.

From the preliminary pro-forma, determine best course of action for project approach and sequencing. Present at Town Meeting, hold developer' tours and create RFPS, if applicable.

Process

Hold A Program Development Workshop – On Site If Possible:

Plan a community engagement process that builds upon prior planning efforts and the community memory / nostalgia for the McCloskey Building while keeping people focused on the future. Preface that this is intended to be a “crush the box” approach, where all are encouraged to think creatively about the sites’ redevelopment potential and to be aspirational about the future of Uxbridge. (“A new City Hall is a one in 100-year opportunity.”)

Include stakeholders, plus representatives from town staff, CMRPC, Boston Architectural College and eventually Kuhn Riddle Architects for programmatic design.

Consider also inviting knowledge holders who can shed light on specific redevelopment programs (technical assistance and special project lending/funding programs). This may include the Mass Development regional representative, local lenders, someone knowledgeable about current demand for performing arts venues, and any other business owners or service provider who might be interested to lease or operate part of the campus or other the sites to be vacated, and/or tax credit specialists, for instance. The goal is not only to tap knowledge, but also to build relationships that lead to project partnerships down the line.

Refine Program Post-workshop:

Town staff, CMRPC and Kuhn Riddle Architects organize and refine workshop ideas to develop a set of program alternatives that fit the actual available space. From this information, each function or space modification can be assigned an assumed categorical \$/SF cost based upon 3-4 grades of redevelopment complexity (A, B, C, D) and construction costs to move toward ballpark estimating of costs. Similarly, all spaces can be given a \$/SF or lump sum/hr for revenue generation as well as operating costs, based upon comparable real estate and operating models. Phasing alternatives can then be developed, based on program ideas, site access for construction, market conditions and access to funding.

Develop a Preliminary Pro-forma To Build Scenarios:

Structure the pro-forma (in excel) to allow the ability to break out costs by type / building / funding sources and phasing. Potential content includes:

- Planning costs, including community engagement processes and grant writing
- Financing costs and schedule (inclusive of pro forma development)
- Tax credit or grant applications and reporting requirements
- Design / Engineering, inclusive of add costs for documentation, assessment, code review, etc.
- Permitting
- Demolition
- Capital Construction, inclusive of permitting and contracting
- Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment
- Operating and management costs
- Expected revenue and debt service

Use the preliminary pro forma information to evaluate costs versus benefits for distinct scenarios of the McCloskey Building Redevelopment: town acting as the primary redevelopment entity; pursuing a joint venture partner; releasing part of the site for redevelopment under a request for development; and/or release an RFP for operating services for a portion of the site. Similar, but less detailed versions of this process can be used for the existing Town Hall and Senior Center sites.

Following this analysis, choose a path and prepare to present it to citizens at Town Meeting. If approved, move to the next step (RFP development, etc.). If not, consider revisiting other alternatives explored. If the site(s) are to be made available for redevelopment via RFP, provide preliminary pro-forma information to applications, but structure the RFP process to ensure enough flexibility for applicants to develop their own pro-formas based upon their own market insights and approaches. Have them then present that information back to the Town for evaluation. [The point in developing a preliminary pro-forma is not to be exhaustive – especially given rapidly evolving market conditions -- but instead to establish defensible threshold financial expectations that can be considered alongside other types of returns on investment, including environment and social benefits to the community, etc.]

Project Subject Matter Expert:
Luarie Zapalac, PhD
Zapalac Advisors



ZAPALAC ADVISORS
REAL ESTATE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Best Practice

Lights on Chicopee is a six page, first person testimony shared at a community event. Should Uxbridge choose to rent any portion of their municipal buildings, they should consider marketing the properties to potential businesses.

The flyers developed in Chicopee include information on the Zoning District, utilities, square footage, location, construction, and who to contact for more information.

Through the programming process, Uxbridge will need to be strategic about which sections of which buildings would lend themselves to commercial or retail use. These partnerships would not only help to defer the cost of the project and make the buildings financially sustainable, they would bring new tenants and inject excitement into the Main Street District.

FOR RENT

43-57 Springfield Street
(former Rivoli Theater Building)
Zoned: Business A

Chicopee - Property Profile

PROPERTY OVERVIEW

- 20+ Spaces For Lease
- Office, Retail and Restaurant Ready Spaces
- Downtown Location
- Adjacent to City Hall
- Very Walkable (85 Walk Score)
- Daytime Foot Traffic
- High Ceilings
- Refinished Wood Floors
- Kitchen Facilities
- Historic Building

PROPERTY LOCATION



CONTACT

Jeremy Casey
(413) 505-9010
jcasey@srcommercial.com



DESCRIPTION

SRCommercial Realty is pleased to offer this beautiful mixed retail/office space for lease in the center of downtown Chicopee. Available spaces include a fully built and furnished first-floor cafe and 18 fully renovated offices. Many of these offices have spectacular views of the city. Located minutes from all major area highways and Chicopee retail/dining establishments. Only ten minutes from downtown Springfield. Call today to take a look at this gorgeous building!

LIGHTS ON CHICOPEE

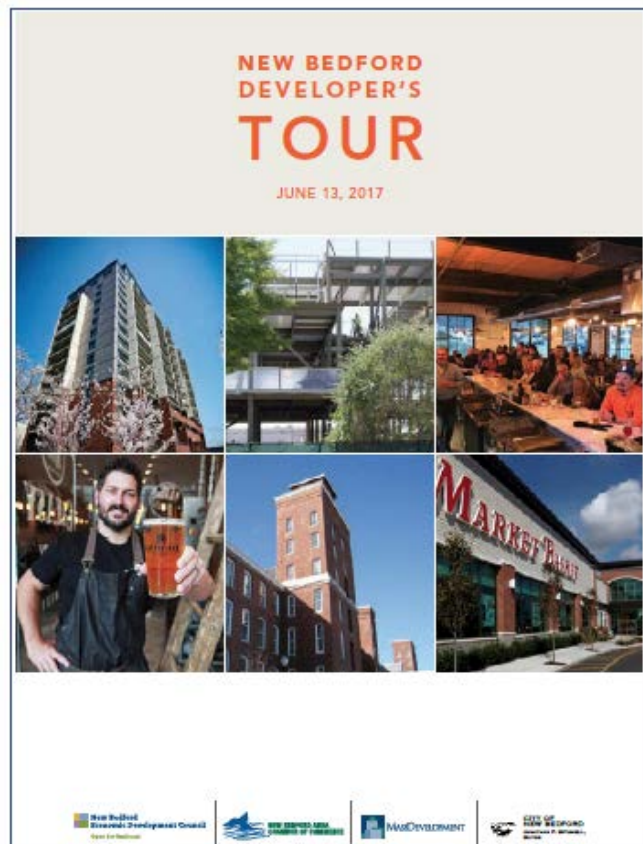
A Historic
New England
Mill City
Defines
LIVE-WORK-PLAY
On its
Own Terms



Best Practice

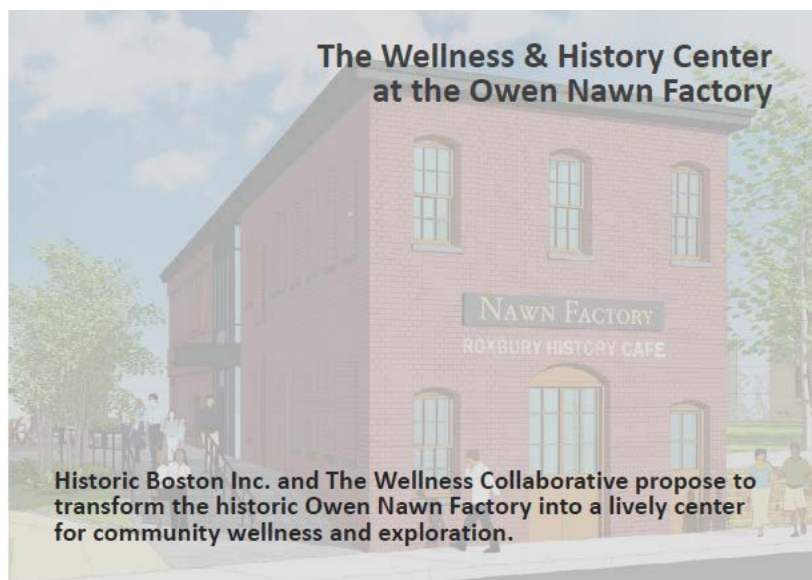
New Bedford's Developer's Tour includes introductions from MassDevelopment and the Mayor and describes a tour day program with property profiles and maps. There is also summary information about New Bedford including history, industries, culture, and contact info.

These materials and the tour were organized by NBEDC and TDI Fellow, Jim McKeag, in coordination with a graphic designer.



The **Owen Nawn Factory in Roxbury** used an Request for Proposals process using an Oversight Committee to evaluate proposals for the building.

The RFP and relevant presentations can be found here:
<http://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/plan-nubian-square>



Main Street District Zoning and Design Guidelines

Category



Public Realm

Location

Main Street District

Origin

Town of Uxbridge Department of Economic Development and Community Planning

Budget



Low Budget (<\$50,000) - Operating Funds, Massachusetts Downtown Initiative, MassDevelopment Technical Assistance, District Local Technical Assistance

Timeframe



Short Term (<5years)

Risk



Low Risk – Some political risk of delayed passage or cause modifications

Key Performance Indicators

New businesses relocating to the Main Street District. Number of design components incorporated into new developments.

Partners & Resources

Municipal Boards and Committees; Residents, Property owners, Employers, Institutions; Municipal Planning Staff



Diagnostic

The COVID-19 pandemic required municipalities to become creative around strategies for using the public and private realms in our downtowns. This included outdoor dining, retail display, expanded outdoor seating, and small events.

Development standards integrated into a zoning ordinance or bylaw can address aspects of the public realm that became critically important during the pandemic, such as public plazas for outdoor eating or seating and appropriate pedestrian and bicycle connections from a private development to amenities, such as open space, goods, services, jobs, and housing. Development standards can also address future crises, such as climate change, by requiring the integration of stormwater management, resource efficient architecture, and energy-generating systems.

The key to development standards is to tie them to the ability of a developer to finance the construction of both the development and the required amenities while still making a profit sufficient to justify the investment. Without such analysis, communities with high standards may not see the development they anticipate because the cost of meeting those standards is too high.

Action Item

Use community engagement from LRRP Process and Re-Imagining Main Street Process to draft zoning bylaws and design standards. Zoning changes incorporated development standards should match community values for new development and provided a menu of options for encouraged design standards. Such a menu allows for a flexible response from projects of varying sizes, densities, and uses. Use drafts to launch additional community engagement and education.

Process

The post-study implementation process are as follows:

- Develop the draft zoning language (see Process, below).
- Discuss draft language with appropriate land use boards and modify as needed to address concerns.
- Submit the draft language to the municipal approval process which will vary by municipality but will include the Planning Board and either or Select Board/Finance or Bylaw Review Committee/Town Meeting.
- (If the zoning change is successful) Publicize the new zoning broadly prior to new applications for development.
- Track and evaluate the applications and which public realm components were most successful in terms of implementation. Evaluate whether the development standards need to be modified to address changing conditions.



Example 1: Town Center Design Guidelines

Sterling, Massachusetts

Town Contact

Domenica Tatasciore

Town Planner

dtatasciore@sterling-ma.gov

Consultant

Innes Associates Ltd./Harriman

Cost

\$15,000 (Massachusetts Downtown Initiative)

Characteristics

- Advisory
- Applicable to Town Center only
- Includes discussion of design elements for public right-of-way
- References historic buildings as context for new development



Courtesy of the Town of Sterling, Innes Associates, and Harriman

Example 2: Residential Design Guidelines

Arlington, Massachusetts

Town Contact

Jenny Raitt

Director

Department of Planning
and Community
Development

jraitt@town.arlington.ma.us

Consultant

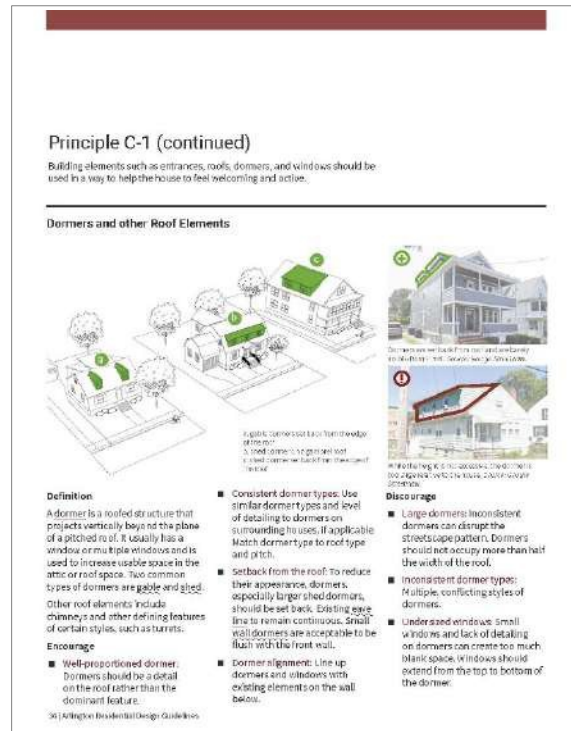
Harriman

Cost

\$49,000

Characteristics

- Advisory
- Applicable to Residential zoning districts
- Included analysis of neighborhood characteristics
- Included in-depth public outreach



Courtesy of the Town of Arlington and Harriman

Example 3: Dedham Square Design Guidelines

Dedham,
Massachusetts Town

Contact
Jeremy
Rosenberger Town
Planner
jrosenberger@dedham-ma.gov

Consultant
Gamble
Associates

Cost
\$30,000

Characteristics

- Advisory
- Applicable to Dedham Square and gateway streets
- Includes discussion of design elements for pocket parks and connections to open spaces.
- References historic development patterns.



Courtesy of the Town of Dedham and Gamble Associates

Example 4: Kendall Square Design Guidelines

Cambridge,
Massachusetts City

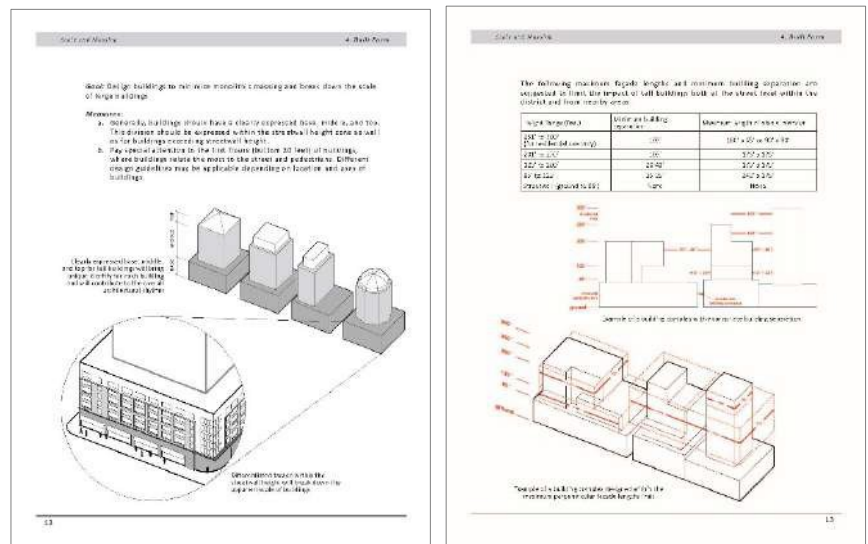
Contact
Jeff Roberts
Zoning and Development
Director Community
Development Department
jroberts@cambridge.gov

Consultant
Goody
Clancy

Cost
Unknown (part of larger project)

Characteristics

- Tied to zoning, including special permit and PUD applications
- Applicable to Kendall Square
- Addresses different building uses, including residential and academic buildings.



Courtesy of the City of Cambridge and Goody Clancy

Addressing Truck Traffic

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Main Street District
Origin	Town of Uxbridge Department of Economic Development and Community Planning, Public Stakeholder Meetings, Public Survey, CMRPC, Boston Architectural College
Budget	 Medium – High Budget (\$50k to over \$1 million): The recommendations provided in this letter require significant design, permitting, and additional study. Some require significant investment from public and/or private sources.
Timeframe	 Mid to Long Term (2 years to over 5 years): The recommendations provided are complex and will require a long timeframe to implement due to the necessary involvement of many stakeholders.
Risk	 Medium to high risk: The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is currently working on Route 122 and the project does not address truck traffic issues. Some recommendations may require extensive feasibility studies and expensive design/build processes. Some recommendations may require extensive environmental permitting and a long public process.
Key Performance Indicators	Reduction of truck traffic crossing Main Street, improved safety in Downtown Uxbridge.
Partners & Resources	Town of Uxbridge Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) CMRPC Private developers and local property owners State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Massachusetts Shared Streets and Spaces Grant Program MassWorks funding (in conjunction with any future development projects in Uxbridge) ARPA funding sources



Project SME
BSC Group, Inc.
Michael A. Santos, PE



Diagnostic

The intersection of North and South Main Street (Route 122) with Douglas Street and Mendon Street (both designated as Route 16) carries significant truck traffic. Route 16 is a primary east-west route between the regional highways of Route 146 to the west and Interstate 495 to the east. The intersection of Route 122 at Route 16 in Uxbridge Center is signalized, with both legs of Route 16 offset, creating a dog-leg style intersection. Due to the geometry of the intersection, trucks have difficulty navigating Route 16, creating additional congestion and creating a deterrent for people that might want to visit Uxbridge Center. Route 122 and Route 16 are under Town of Uxbridge jurisdiction at the intersection. MassDOT's jurisdiction begins along Route 122 approximately 1,400 south of the intersection and 2,600 north of the intersection. MassDOT's jurisdiction along Route 16 begins approximately 2,000 east of the intersection. West of the intersection, Route 16 is completely under Town of Uxbridge jurisdiction. Route 16 provides the easiest and most direct east-west route between Route 146, which connects Worcester and Providence, and I-495 in the Town of Milford, which has significant industrial activity. Using Route 16 via Route 146 is the optimal route for trucking activity between Providence and Worcester and Uxbridge and surrounding communities such as Mendon, Hopedale, and Milford.

Action Item

This section is intended to be used as a general roadmap to successfully implement pedestrian improvements. Depending on the size and scope of any selected project, some steps may not be necessary.

1. Create a steering committee to discuss existing concerns, visions, and needs for improvements to truck activity through Uxbridge Center. The committee should have one person acting as the chair and should consist of local stakeholders such as business owners, residents, public safety and public works officials, and a representative from MassDOT.
2. Use in-house staff or a consulting firm to provide an assessment of the primary concerns and identify issues to help facilitate the planning process.
3. Develop an assessment report to document existing issues and input from stakeholders. This report should clearly state well-defined goals and objectives for improving truck traffic (e.g. reducing truck trips through Uxbridge Center, reducing overall levels of congestion, etc.)
4. Develop a list of conceptual ideas to implement. This document will present some recommendations in the next section that can be incorporated into this step of the process.
5. Select the preferred concepts that will be moved forward into the design stages.
6. Develop conceptual plans and supporting documentation with an appropriate level of detail that can be used for grant applications. This step will vary based on the level of funding and the funding source that will be pursued.
7. Determine how the project will be funded. Potential funding sources will be provided in a section later in this document.

Process

1. The reduction of truck traffic and/or improvements to overall congestion within Uxbridge Center should be the highest priority for this process. These objectives will also improve pedestrian walkability, on-street parking, safety, and will enhance the overall character of the downtown area. The following are recommendations to consider to address truck traffic through Uxbridge Center:
2. Minor upgrades to existing geometry: The existing off-set geometry of the intersection requires difficult turning maneuvers for heavy vehicles traveling through on Route 16. A review and upgrades to existing curb radii, location of stop lines, and roadway widths should be conducted to determine if there are any short-term geometric improvements that can be implemented.
3. Review traffic signal timing and phasing: Due to the geometry at the intersection, the traffic signal phases for Route 16 must operate as "split phasing", meaning that both Route 16 approaches can not operate at the same time without creating many conflicting turning maneuvers. Split phasing typically lends itself to additional congestion, longer queues, and inefficient operations. An operations analysis of the signal timing and phasing should be undertaken to optimize both the signal timing and to determine if the phasing can be improved. Specific elements to review are the overall cycle length and the timing required for vehicles to fully clear from the internal link between the two legs of Route 16. Shorter cycle lengths can help to reduce queues for some approaches, but they may also lead to longer delays for the overall intersection. The internal segment of Route 122 between the legs of Route should have the ability to operate as a single lane in both directions to accommodate large trailers making turning maneuvers, which will require updating the timing plan for the traffic signal.
4. Implement truck prohibitions: The Town can seek to prohibit heavy vehicles traveling through the intersection. Prohibitions can be absolute or they can be dependent on the time of day. If truck traffic is not an issue throughout the entire day, it is recommended that the Town seek to implement time-of-day restrictions (e.g. no trucks between 7 – 9 AM and 4 – 7 PM). This measure may be difficult to implement and enforce, as it could create truck routing issues elsewhere.
5. Access management improvements: There are several curb cuts at the intersection and between the two legs of Route 16. Land uses include a convenience store with a gas station and a bank with a drive-through. Each land use has multiple curb cuts, creating many conflicting vehicle maneuvers at the intersection. One of the bank driveways forms the fourth leg of the southern part of the intersection, creating additional challenges due to the need to accommodate exiting traffic within the signal timing and phasing plan. Measures should be taken to eventually close some of the access points and to create an entrance-only operation for the bank driveway along Route 122. By eliminating exiting vehicles from the bank property onto Route 122, it will allow the traffic signal to operate more efficiently.
6. Intersection realignment: A long-term measure could include the realignment of the intersection to eliminate the offset geometry. This could include realigning the western leg of Route 16 through the private property along the south side of the intersection. A realignment would create a more standard four-way intersection that may be able to accommodate truck traffic and reduce congestion. This measure is only recommended should there be a major redevelopment project in Uxbridge Center that would be amenable to these improvements. This recommendation would also create a radically different Town Center that has the potential for creating additional public open space or other developable parcels. Based on discussion with the Town, this option is unlikely due to existing property owners that would be impacted and should only be viewed as a very long-term recommendation should the opportunity arise.
7. New interchange at Route 146/Hartford Avenue West: Hartford Avenue East and West is a secondary east-west route between the Route 146 corridor and the Town of Mendon, where it connects with Route 16 via North Uxbridge. By creating a new interchange, it would open up a new route for trucks that does not travel through Uxbridge Center and the offset intersection along Main Street. A new interchange would have several alternatives including a standard diamond format similar to the interchange at Route 16 or the construction of a frontage road between Route 16 and Hartford Avenue West with fewer new ramps. Hartford Avenue would need to be significantly upgraded for its entire length to accommodate the increase in truck traffic. Hartford Avenue serves mostly residential properties, and this option would likely experience major public concern. This option would also require significant study, design, permitting, public outreach, and coordination with MassDOT.
8. Coordinate with local regional businesses that use Route 16 for trucking purposes: The Town should look to coordinate their concerns with local and regional businesses that use Route 16 for trucking routes to determine if there are other alternative routes that could be used without creating too much disruption to their operations.

Enhance Gateways and Wayfinding

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Main Street District
Origin	Town of Uxbridge Department of Economic Development and Community Planning, Public Stakeholder Meetings, Public Survey, CMRPC, Kuhn Riddle Architects, Boston Architectural College
Budget	 Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000) – Adjustable budget based on improvements. Should include branding
Timeframe	 Short Term (<5years)
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Increased pedestrian use, total no. of signs installed
Partners & Resources	Highway Department, Local landscape companies, local fabricators, local craftspeople and artists to help design and build components of project.



Diagnostic

The Main Street District is lacking in the sort of amenities that attendees at stakeholder meetings wanted to see such as landscaping, lighting, decoration, and signage.

While there is some signage for pedestrians in the Main Street District, there is no universally accepted brand or wayfinding system in Uxbridge and most signs are intended for vehicular traffic.

Respondents felt that the Main Street District needed to capitalize on its identity by using branding and design in a more coordinated way.

Action Item

Gateway and wayfinding improvement strategies should start with adopting an overall community theme, or a specific cultural theme. Potential improvements include the installation of brick paver stones instead of concrete sidewalks, decorative trash receptacles, benches, flower pots, pedestrian information/location signs, decorative street and traffic signs, uniform property information and address signs, and/or decorative lighting. Even hanging baskets or banners from gooseneck streetlamps can add to a sense of place.

Process.

- The Town should consider hiring a design or marketing firm to develop branding and a style guide for signage.
 - A consultant should seek public input on the character and identity of the Main Street District
- Alternatively, the Town could host a design competition and open it to the public.
- With a design in place, the Town purchase and install news signs and banners.
- The Town should also consider decorative items like flower boxes, hanging plants or murals in key areas. Partnerships with a local landscaping company or nursery would be beneficial here
- The Town should continue to implement infrastructure improvements, taking advantage of grant programs like Complete Streets and Shared Streets.



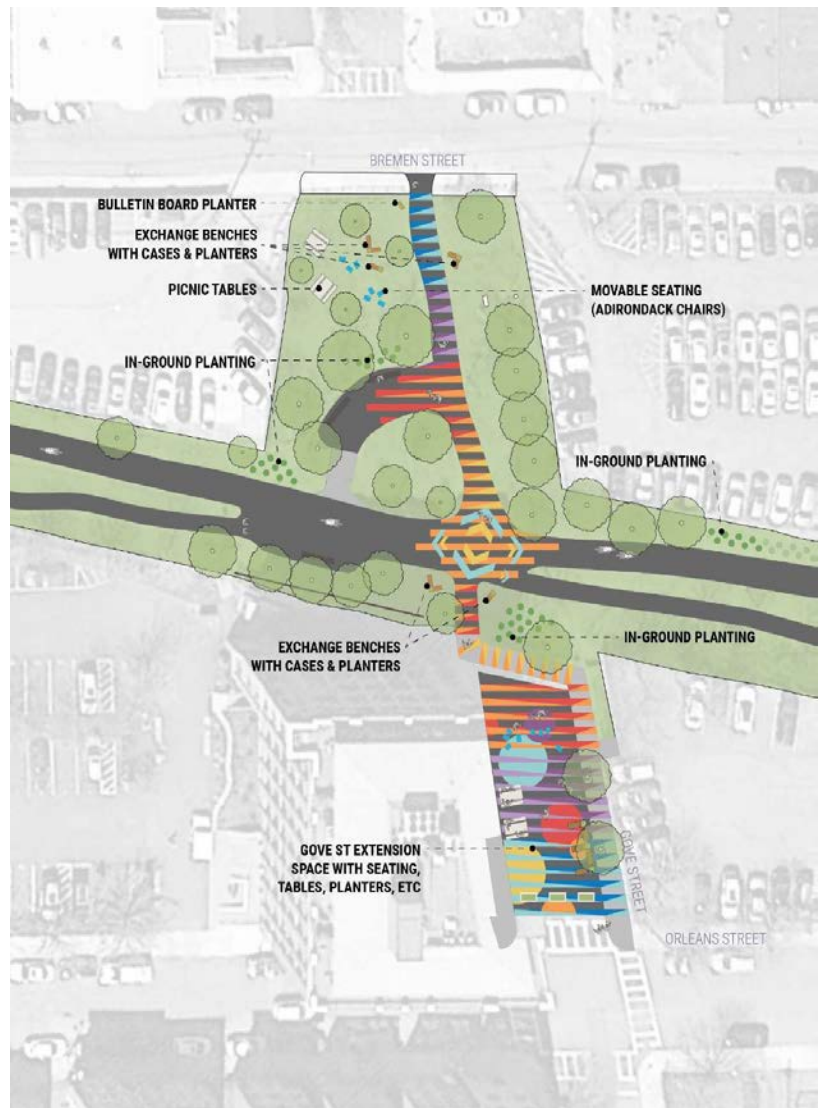
Best Practices

The Friends of the Mary Ellen Greenway (FoMEWG) worked with the Boston Society of Landscape Architects (BSLA) to host a design competition for the Gove Street section of the Mary Ellen Greenway in East Boston. A 12-member jury selected Toole Design to work on a seasonal installation.

Over three months, Toole Design worked to refine the design by engaging East Boston residents. The final design and project included:

1. a pop-up plaza on Gove Street next to a residential apartment building, and
2. a seasonal installation on the Greenway.

Both designs included a pavement graphic and seating. The FoMEWG hosted several programs at the pop-up plaza.



WINTER 2021

UPGRADED DROP BOXES AT TOWN HALL



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

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

DATES TO NOTE

Tax Collector

Third-quarter actual real estate bill due:

February 1, 2021

Third-quarter actual personal property bill due:

February 1, 2021

2021 motor vehicle excise bill commitment #1

Issued February 4, 2021 | Due March 8, 2021

Assessing Department

Abatement applications due:

February 1, 2021

Statutory exemptions due:

April 1, 2021



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

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

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

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

Mumford River Access and Improvement

Category	 Public Realm with Potential Private Partnership
Location	Main Street District
Origin	Town of Uxbridge Department of Economic Development and Community Planning, Public Stakeholder Meetings, Public Survey, CMRPC, Boston Architectural College
Budget	 High Budget (>\$200,000)
Timeframe	 Medium Term (5-10 years)
Risk	 Medium Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Use of the Boat Launch or visitors to the river site.
Partners & Resources	Property Owners (especially Bernat Mill), Municipal Boards, Committees, and Staff



Diagnostic

Community stakeholders repeatedly mentioned the natural resources that serve as a major draw to Uxbridge, especially the Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park. During the pandemic, regional tourism increased, especially for outdoor attractions. These assets are front and center in terms of building a destination economy. Currently, Mumford River and the pond right next to the downtown area are somewhat underutilized even though there is a national heritage park right next to the bridge downtown. The park is in need of improved pedestrian access that connects it to Main Street and to additional outdoor recreation space.

Environmental Improvements

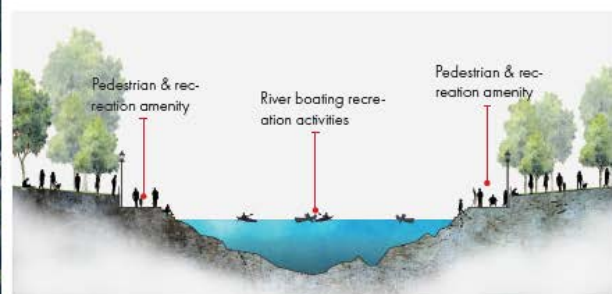


Action Item

Creating an accessible path at the boundary of the pond to maximize the natural resource and increase the connectivity to the neighborhood while installing a ramp to improve access. Creating grass corridors with the trail would encourage people to appreciate the natural environment within the Main Street District.



SA.3a: Activating River & Pond edge for public use



SA.3b: Activating River edges and waterways for public recreation



SA.3c: Providing public amenities

Process

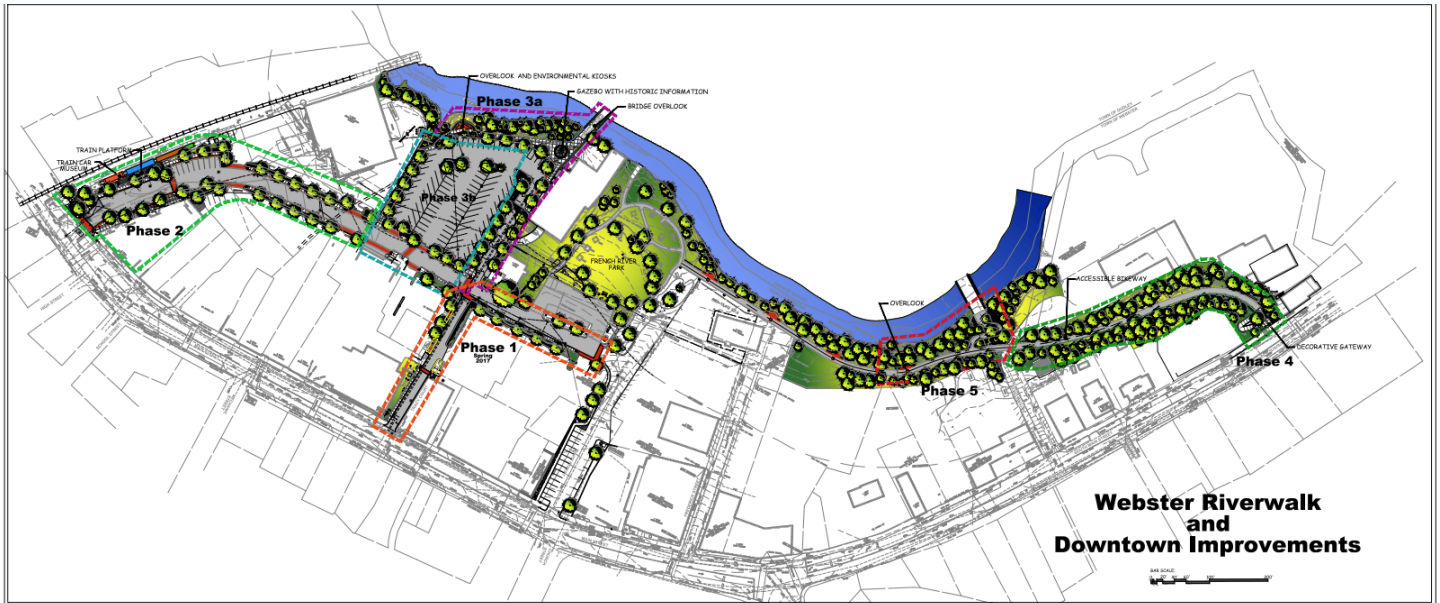
- Further planning is needed to create partnerships with property owners and abutters.
- Design and Mapping of the proposed path
- Determine the most advantageous combination of funding sources. This could include American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Local Banks and other Community Development Financial Institutions, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community One-Stop for Growth, and local funds
- Phased construction could ensure the project makes steady progress.

Best Practice

Webster Riverwalk

While the French River Connection is a much larger project connecting many towns, the Webster portion makes key connections to businesses, parks, sidewalks, and parking.

<https://www.frenchriverconnection.org/riverwalk>



Best Practice

Mill City Park

Franklin, New Hampshire, another mill town, is creating a 13-acre park where visitors can whitewater raft, surf, bike, and camp. Construction begins in July on Mill City Park at Franklin Falls, billed as the first whitewater park n New England.

Connections to the wider community are strengthened by it being within walking distance of downtown Franklin and other nearby parks and by providing a place for Franklin residents to participate in a Community Garden.

<https://www.millcitypark.com/>



Develop a Façade Improvement Program

Category



Private Realm

Location

Main Street District

Origin

Town of Uxbridge Department of Economic Development and Community Planning, Public Stakeholder Meetings, Public Survey, CMRPC, Kuhn Riddle Architects, Boston Architectural College

Budget



Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)

Timeframe



Short Term (<5years)

Risk



Medium Risk



Potential Sources of Funding

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.

Key Performance Indicators

Successful completion of asset inventory. Foot traffic on any walking trail. Increased visitors at historic sites like the Farnum House.

Partners & Resources

Municipal Boards and Committees; Residents, Property owners, Institutions; Municipal Boards and Staff

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

Community respondents repeatedly mentioned the prodigious history of Uxbridge. 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.
- Consider connecting artists, entrepreneurs, and makers/ crafters with landlords to fill vacant storefronts and change Main Street image

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. 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? Discuss what will not be eligible. Eligibility may also be determined by the funding source (for example, CDBG funds).
- 3 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.
- 4 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.
- 5 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.
- 6 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).
- 7

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. Develop the forms and train the people who will be
4. 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.

Increase Cultural Programming and Special Events

Category



Revenue and Sales

Location

Main Street District

Origin

Town of Uxbridge Department of Economic Development and Community Planning, Public Stakeholder Meetings, Public Survey, CMRPC, Kuhn Riddle Architects, Boston Architectural College

Budget



Low Budget (<\$50,000) Town staff time (planning, economic development). \$0

- Marketing/branding to highlight program and spaces – social media, signs/banners, possible sidewalk signs. Up to \$1000
- Events manager, part time.
- Payment for musicians, performers, other contributors to event.
- Marketing materials (banners, flyers, social media manager)
- Materials for temporary events such as sidewalk chalk and pavement paints, rentals, etc. \$10,000 - \$25,000

Timeframe



Short Term (<5years) and ongoing

Risk



Low Risk – most risk is regulatory and could be addressed with streamlined permitting for these events. There may be a risk that events provide short-term vitality to the downtown but don't contribute to increased business revenue or new businesses. Careful planning of the location and type of events, as well as involvement of local businesses can mitigate this risk. If events are held on privately-owned property, private owners may be concerned about liability and the Town should consider if it can provide a blanket liability protection for these situations or indemnification agreement.



CivicMoxie, LLC
Susan Silberberg,
Principal and Project SME

CivicMoxie

Key Performance Indicators

- Number of events
- Number of participants at events
- Increased sales and store/business visits by customers during the events
- Increased foot traffic in the Main Street District (over the long-term)
- Increased “stickiness” of the district (ability to create customer and visitor loyalty for repeat visits)
- Number of social media likes, impressions, forwards of events
- Number of collaborators for project (businesses, nonprofits, arts groups, etc.)

Partners & Resources

- Town of Uxbridge
 - Economic Development and Community Planning Department (lead oversight)
 - Transportation, DPW, public safety, alcohol permitting
- Uxbridge Local Cultural Council
- Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Artists
- Uxbridge Public Schools (art and music departments, theatre initiatives, etc.)
- Senior Center
- Historical Commission
- Large local employers
- Banks
- Discover Central Massachusetts

Diagnostic

In the Spring 2021 Phase 1 LRRP Survey of Main Street businesses, cultural events and activities were listed as a top priority. In that same survey 83% of businesses reported a drop in on-side customers compared to pre-covid conditions and of these, 50% said the drop was 25% or more.

The impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Uxbridge require a recovery plan that improves the image of the Main Street District and provides a magnet for customers. Because of its length and sprawling nature, the Main Street district struggles to present a natural unified hub of activity and needs an overall public space activation strategy that supports businesses by encouraging increased foot traffic and providing public activation strategies to help overall vibrancy along Main Street.

Action Item

Create a cultural and events strategy and implement the same. The events/cultural activation strategy would be guided by a paid coordinator guided by an events committee. This project will require significant collaboration and coordination, particularly regarding partners and sponsors, marketing efforts (including an online events calendar and regional efforts through the Blackstone Valley visitor portals), and business partnerships to ensure that both goals are met: activation and improved image of the Main Street District and increased revenues for businesses (and new business locations).

Process

1. Form an Uxbridge Events Working Group to guide and advise the Town on this process. If other projects require a group or committee, we recommend that one working group be formed for all the project recommendations for the LRRP plan, particularly projects related to highlighting historic assets, connecting Main Street to nature trails and amenities, and initiatives to grow the visitor economy. Group should include:
 - Town of Uxbridge
 - Economic Development and Community Planning Department (lead oversight)
 - Representatives from Town departments such as Transportation, DPW, public safety, alcohol permitting
 - Uxbridge Local Cultural Council
 - Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce
 - Artists
 - Uxbridge Public Schools (art and music departments, theatre initiatives, etc.)
 - Senior Center
 - Historical Commission
 - Large local employers and Main Street businesses
2. Graphic design and branding work is needed to create an overall brand or name for the events program (Uxbridge Live!, Meet us on Main Street, etc.). Develop logo, and project graphics.

Process Continued

3. Using the details in this project recommendation, create a succinct PPT presentation with overall goals, images/best practices of relevant event programs, information on Working Group members and roles, timeline, and budget. Include expected benefits for the Main Street District and for the community.
4. Using the Town maps and a Working Group walking tour, identify locations for events and activities. Consider the following types of spaces:
 - a. Parking lots
 - b. Open space and parks
 - c. Streets than can be closed periodically to vehicular traffic
 - d. Publicly accessible plazas and building setbacks (public and private ownership)
 - e. Vacant ground floor spaces (while not the focus of this project, identifying these spaces can be helpful for a future pop-up or vacant ground floor activation program)
5. Using Town Assessor data, contact owners of private properties and spaces on the map. Clarify use restrictions or permit procedures for streets (MassDOT or local) and any public parks or other open space owned/managed by other entities. Provide information on the project (PDF of PPT) and request that they participate in the project (or invite them to participate in an informational zoom meeting with other property owners/managers). Be clear about the Town's "ask" and outline how liability might be addressed for using their spaces for public events.
6. Update working map of spaces in the Main Street District. Prioritize use of spaces using two main criteria:
 - a. What is suitable for the space. Consider a range of uses:
 - Music performances
 - Outdoor market
 - Temporary art event
 - Walking/cycling event
 - Food event
 - Theatre
 - other
 - b. Location criteria:
 - Is the space near existing businesses (allowing spin-off benefits from events)?
 - Is the space highly visible and allow opportunities for those passing through Uxbridge to easily park and attend an event located there?
 - Will music or loud noises disturb adjacent residential areas (which may dictate alternative uses or limit time of day/week for events of this type)?
 - Is electric service available or will generators be needed for some events?
 - What is capacity of available adjacent parking?
7. Make fundraising pitches to get sponsorship for events. It is Recommended that events be branded under a single theme and that sponsors make commitments for the overall season of events. See #2 above. Apply to the Uxbridge Local Cultural Council for grants as appropriate. Make a list of other possible grant sources and requirements/deadlines/funding available for each.
8. Develop a plan of possible events and highlight the best spaces for same.
9. Hire an events coordinator (part-time) to move forward with work, overseen by the Town and Working Group. Job description should include:
 - a. Creating events calendar and recruiting uses, entertainment, etc.
 - b. Overall events planning
 - c. Oversight of marketing efforts (either by coordinator or by others) including social media posts, promo materials).
 - d. Soliciting sponsorships and identifying grant opportunities (with assistance from Working Group and others)
 - e. Monthly reporting to Town and Working Group
10. Make presentations as necessary to garner support and get feedback and ideas throughout this project. (Town Select Board, Community, Main Street businesses, etc.).
11. If needed, develop an MOU for Town and property owners focused on use of outdoor spaces for events and activation, including seating areas, food trucks, pavement murals, and weekend fairs.
12. Measure metrics (see above metrics for success) at events and compile ongoing summary of progress (number of events, money raised, estimated impacts on businesses and quality of life enhancements, visitors, etc.)



Leverage Historic Resources

Category



Administrative Capacity

Location

Main Street District

Origin

Town of Uxbridge Department of Economic Development and Community Planning, Public Stakeholder Meetings, Public Survey, CMRPC, Kuhn Riddle Architects, Boston Architectural College

Budget



Low Budget (<\$50,000)

Timeframe



Short Term (<5 years)

Risk



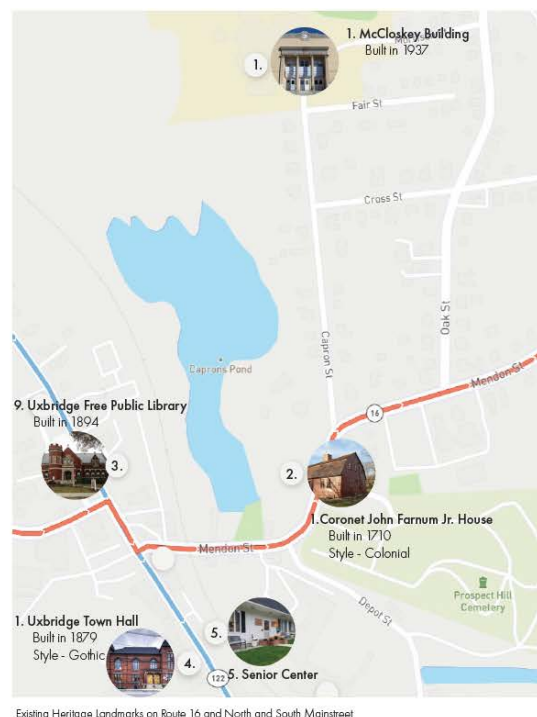
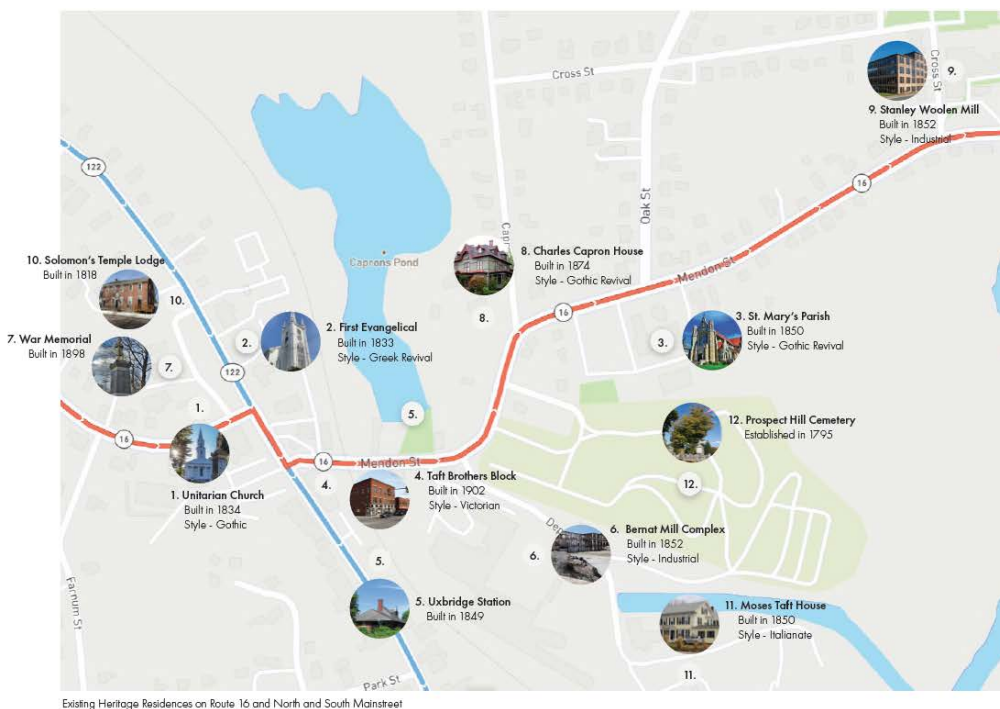
Low Risk

Key Performance Indicators

Successful completion of asset inventory. Foot traffic on any walking trail. Increased visitors at historic sites like the Farnum House.

Partners & Resources

Municipal Boards and Committees; Residents, Property owners, Institutions; Municipal Planning Staff



Diagnostic

Historic sites and natural sites in Uxbridge are an underutilized resource. Community respondents repeatedly mentioned the remarkable history of Uxbridge. The Town has been at the forefront of several cultural movements including the Revolutionary War, the Industrial Revolution, and the women's suffrage movement. This history remains in the Town's impressive inventory of historical buildings and places. During the pandemic, regional tourism increased, especially for outdoor attractions. These assets are front and center in terms of building a destination economy.

Action Item

Community respondents repeatedly mentioned the prodigious history of Uxbridge. The Town has endured for hundreds of years and has been at the forefront of several cultural movements - to name three, the Revolutionary War, the Industrial Revolution, and the women's suffrage movement. This history remains in the Town's impressive inventory of historical buildings and places.

Process

A complete asset inventory is currently being undertaken by the Community Development and Planning Department. Once this is complete, a more extensive map and branding of a walking loop would draw people to the Main Street District. The Town should also consider branded signage along the walking loop.

Best Practices

Parramore-Callahan Neighborhood Project

The goal of this effort was to 'spread awareness of the cultural value of Orlando's Parramore District by creating an immersive experience that presents the area as a cultural, educational, and tourist destination.' The Project has addressed the on-site experience, developing a mobile app that guides visitors through historical markers using augmented reality and digital storytelling and 3D printing plaques to place on the buildings themselves. They have also addressed the off-site experience, collating lesson plans, oral histories, and documentaries that will allow electronic visitors to immerse themselves in Parramore's history as well. Check out their work at <https://parramore-callahanneighborhoodproject.org/>

Mount Pleasant Heritage Trail

This is one of several heritage trails in Washington, D.C. Visitors are led through a self-guided 90 minute tour by trail maps and 17 posted large city signs with maps, information, and historical photographs. Like Uxbridge, Mount Pleasant's relevant history spans several notable periods and demographics. Like Salem, they make a point to include local businesses and restaurants along the trail, referencing some as heritage destinations or community landmarks, and have partnered with these businesses, having them hand out trail maps and advertise the heritage trail to visitors.

Maxey-Crooms House

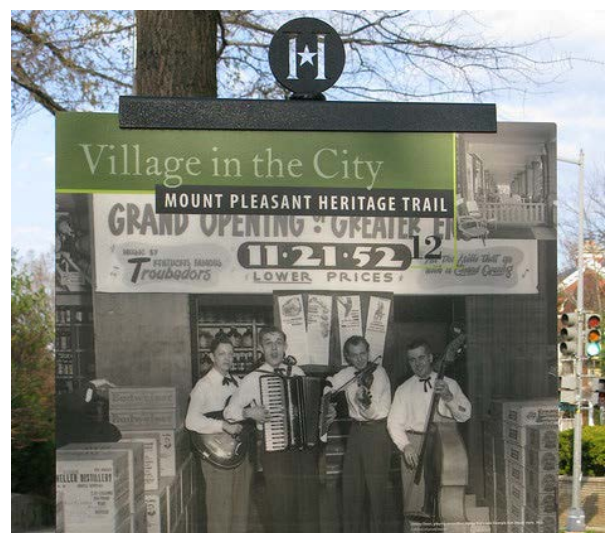


The Woodford James Maxey House reflects the development and evolution of the local African-American community both in architectural merit and in status gained by the original owner.

Tinker Field



The original field and buildings at Tinker Field were built in 1922 and the ballpark was dedicated on April 19, 1923. On March 6, 1964, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his only speech in Central Florida, "Integration Now".



Encourage Business-to-Business Relationships

Category	 Tenant Mix
Location	Main Street District
Origin	Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
Budget	 Low Budget (<\$50,000) - Workshops can range from \$1000+ to tens of thousands for workshop series. TA costs vary depending on the nature of work, number of hours, and which staff are assisting them.
Timeframe	 Short Term (<5years)
Risk	 Low Risk – Some political risk of delayed passage or cause modifications
Key Performance Indicators	Workshop attendance, either live on Zoom, live on Facebook, or those that view the recording afterwards; number of new small business owner relationships, number of businesses that reach out for one-on-one TA.
Partners & Resources	Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce, Business owners, Employers, Institutions, Municipal Staff
Diagnostic	Businesses have had to pivot constantly throughout the pandemic in order to comply with COVID standards and customer expectations. Business survey respondents mentioned many of the same challenges. Educating themselves on topics public health or e-commerce can be a major undertaking. The ability to learn from other businesses is extremely valuable and can lead to other partnerships that benefit the community and their bottom line.
Action Item	Direct business-to-business relationships have a number of benefits including sharing knowledge and support; creating relationships and new relationship opportunities; developing new business opportunities; creating investment opportunities; improving communication skills; and opportunities to gain new business associates and employees. The Town could organize B2B events or forums in which businesses directly share resources, information, and experience with one another on topics relevant and timely for the business community. Based on survey results, topics could include creating a safe working environment; accessing financial assistance; marketing; and e-commerce, among others.
Process	The Town could work with the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce to encourage or coordinate events. The Town could make this program more robust by issuing an RFP and hiring a consultant to host workshops and provide technical assistance.

Best Practices

Revby LLC conducts Workshop on topics important to Food & Restaurant businesses.

Pre-Covid:

- How to write a business plan for Food and Restaurant businesses
- One-on-One TA for early-stage food businesses that want to scale up their operations

During Covid:

- Working safely during COVID-19: Restaurants and Food Service Businesses. Included topics such as a presentation of CDC guidance, MA sector specific protocols and best practices, including social distancing and hygiene, ventilation; info on the COVID-19 virus and biosafety; staff training

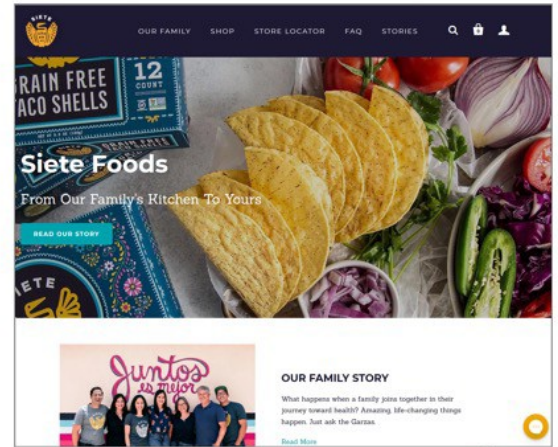
Other Activity during COVID-19:

- Promotion of minority-owned restaurants and how to order delivery from local businesses
- Provided a map of nearly 300 restaurants across Boston that have added temporary outdoor seating.

An Online & Wholesale Food Business Example

- ✓ Story
- ✓ Mission: "journey toward health"
- ✓ Distinct Value
- ✓ Clear knowledge of a market and customer segment

Source: <https://sietefoods.com/>



Slide from a business and marketing planning workshop for food service and restaurant businesses

Marketing Technology / Resources

Website: Custom

POS System: <https://www.toasttab.com/>

Email Marketing Platform: <https://www.toasttab.com/> (Marketing Service)

Facebook Ad Manager: business.facebook.com/
<https://www.facebook.com/business/tools/ads-manager>

Social Media Manager: <https://buffer.com/>

Design Tool: <https://www.canva.com/>

Print Marketing Resource: <https://vistaprint.com/>

Freelancer website: [upwork.com](https://www.upwork.com/)

toast Products Pricing Solutions

Built to make your restaurant better

Restaurants using Toast's full point of sale platform outperformed their peers during the pandemic.*



Excerpt from business and marketing work for a one-on-one TA food business project

Example 1: Sign & Façade Improvement Program

Ashland, Massachusetts

Town Contact

Beth Reynolds

Economic Development Director

breyolds@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.

Cultivate Public Art Programming

Category	 Cultural/Arts Realm
Location	Main Street District
Origin	Town of Uxbridge Department of Economic Development and Community Planning, Public Stakeholder Meetings, Public Survey, CMRPC
Budget	 Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe	 Short Term (<5years)
Risk	 Low Risk
Key Performance Indicators	Number of installments and visual improvements to the Main Street District
Partners an Resources	Planning Department, DPW, Local Arts Organizations, Local Businesses, High School Students



Diagnostic	Stakeholder meetings, a public survey, and the business survey both indicated that residents desire improvements to public spaces, calling out underutilized spaces and properties that could benefit from murals or public art to make the built environment more inviting and visually appealing. Electrical boxes, sidewalks, benches, and empty walls are potential locations.
Action Items	Identify areas where murals or art installations would be beneficial. Coordinate with property owners to allow art installations as needed. Host a “Paint Main Street” event in partnership with local students, arts organizations, and volunteers.
Process	• Understand who the stakeholders and decision-makers will be. • Form a committee to oversee the process. • Audit existing conditions. • Identify pedestrian decision points and key destinations. • Engage the Historical Society to share stories that might inspire the design. • Engage with stakeholders and the public to understand needs and preferences. If possible, create a survey and/or focus groups to get feedback from a larger cross-section of people. • Develop project goals and a positioning statement to guide design efforts. • Create public art criteria and develop a call-for-art to identify qualified public artists. • Release the call for art or bid and select artists/vendors. • Oversee implementation at a “Paint Main Street” event in partnership with local students, arts organizations, and volunteers.

