



DRAFT PLAN

Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

**Village of
Shelburne Falls,
MA**

This plan has been made possible with generous support from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



The Department of Housing and Community Development, through its community and business partners, provides affordable housing options, financial assistance, and other support to Massachusetts communities. We oversee different types of assistance and funding for consumers, businesses, and non-profit partners.

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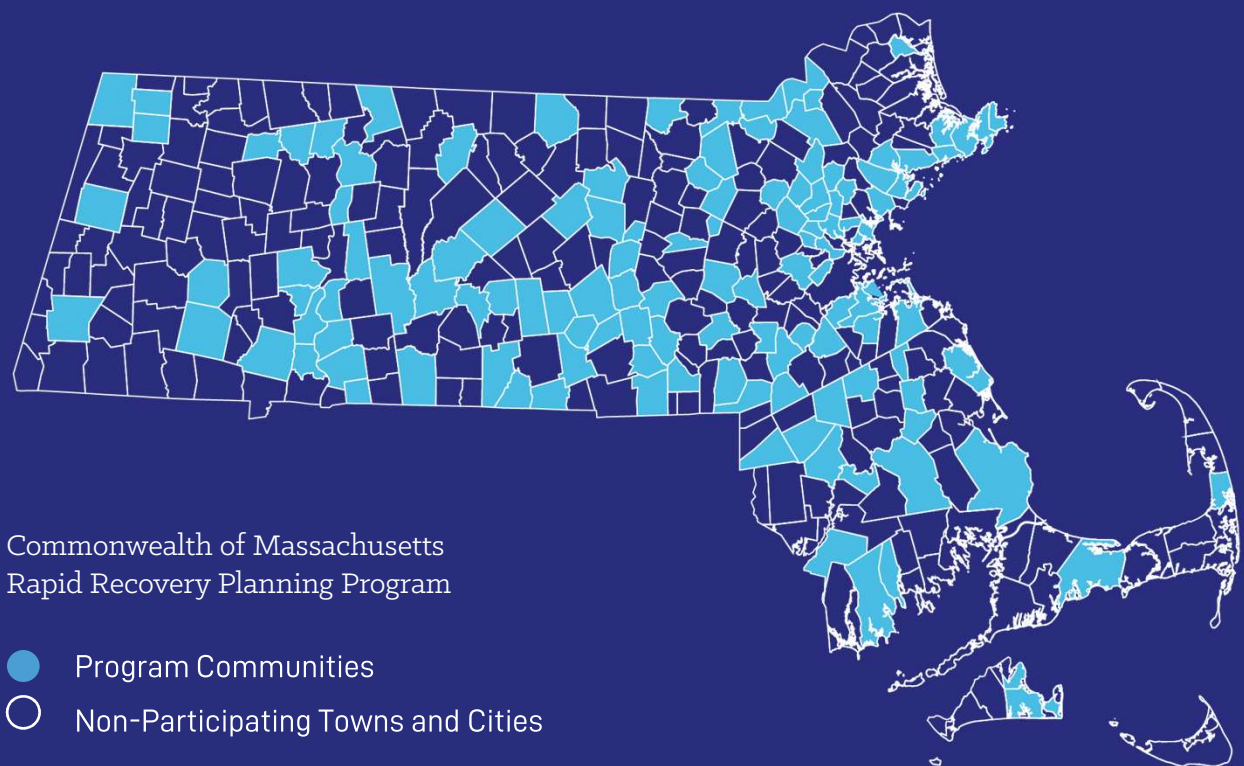
Rapid Recovery Program

Introduction

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.



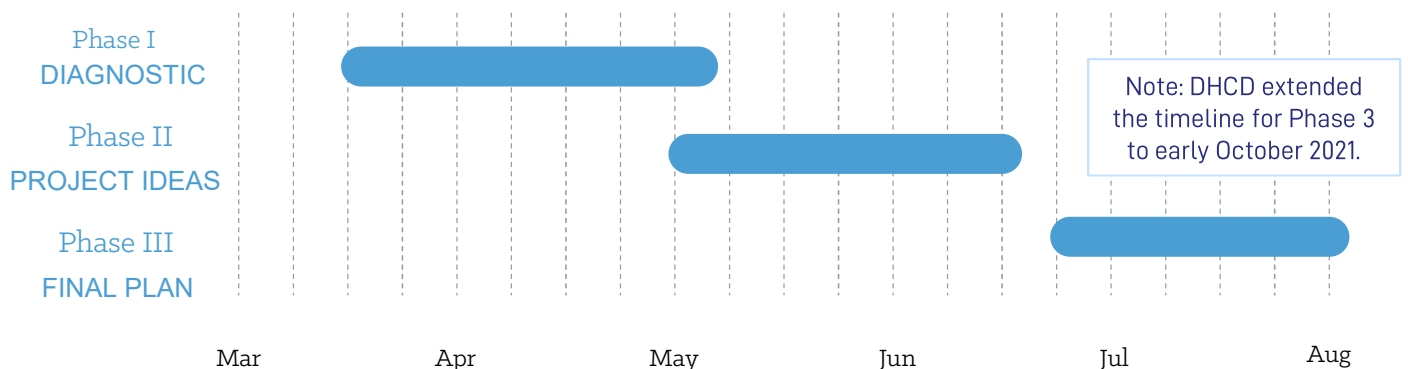
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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.

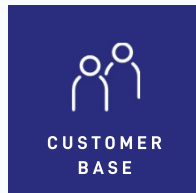
Each Rapid Recovery Plan was developed across three phases between February-August 2021. Phase 1 - Diagnostic, Phase 2- Project Recommendations, Phase 3 - Plan.



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

Overview

The Towns of Buckland and Shelburne, with the Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association as their community partner, applied to and were selected by the MA Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) to participate in the new Local Rapid Recovery Plan program. The purpose of this program is to revitalize downtowns and village centers across the Commonwealth by creating plans that respond to the effects of COVID-19 on local businesses and prioritize implementation projects to support economic recovery. The Franklin Regional Council of Governments was contracted by DHCD to be the Plan Facilitator to guide the creation of the Rapid Recovery Plan for the Village of Shelburne Falls.

The Rapid Recover Plan applies to a defined study area that encompasses the primary commercial district for the Village Center. Data specific to the study area was collected in the Diagnostic phase, including the public realm and private realm evaluations and the business survey. For data not available at the study area level, information was collected at the municipal level, such as for population and median household income. The findings from the Diagnostic phase was presented at a Community Meeting held on June 16, 2021 in the Buckland Town Hall and also on Zoom. The meeting announcement was sent to Village Center businesses, local officials and other stakeholders, included in The Greenfield Recorder newspaper, and posted on flyers in the Village Center.

At the Community Meeting, a process was conducted to select ten potential projects to be further developed and recommended in the Plan. During the summer, six public Zoom meetings were held to review and discuss draft project rubrics of the ten selected projects. At the second Community Meeting held on August 25, 2021 on Zoom, a review of the Plan including the ten recommended projects was presented. Using the framework provided by DHCD, the Plan was prepared and presented for approval to the Buckland and Shelburne Select Boards in late September 2021.

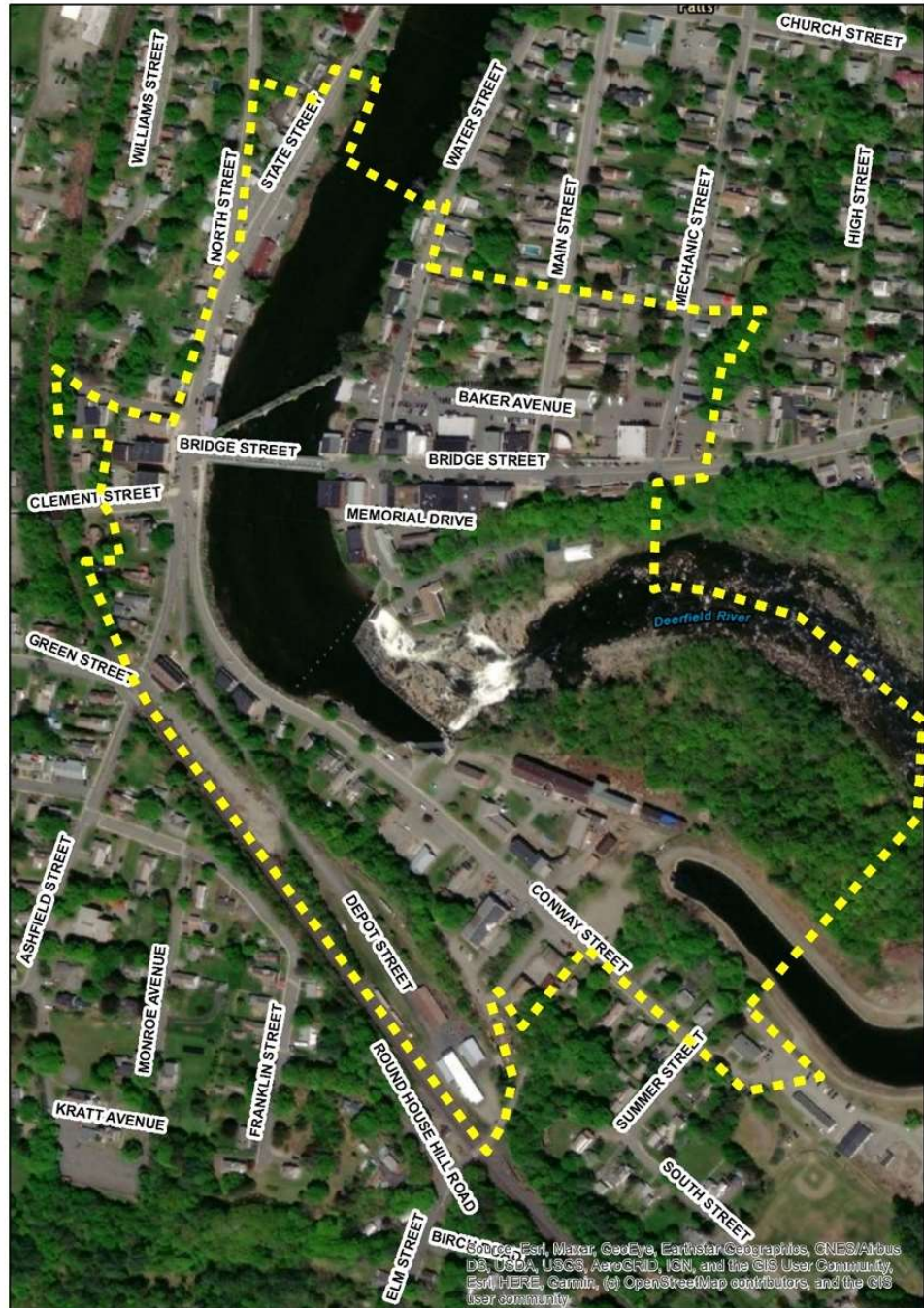
Findings

As revealed by business survey respondents, almost all businesses and organizations in the study area were impacted in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic and 63% reported a decline in revenue from the previous year. Overall the Village's physical environment was in good condition, due to recent and pending improvements being made to the streetscapes, and building owners and business proprietors maintaining their properties well. There are relatively few storefront vacancies or readily developable areas in the study area to host new business ventures.

Business survey respondents indicated there was a 59% decline in foot traffic from the previous year. The Bridge of Flowers, which is a major attraction in the Village Center, had to temporarily close in 2020 due to social distancing requirements. Other attractions and retail and restaurant operations also had to temporarily close or adjust their operating hours to respond to changing conditions due to COVID-19. The biggest challenge for the study area's business community is reversing this decline in customers, and creating conditions to encourage locals and visitors to return to the Village Center and to attract new visitors for the first time. The ten recommended projects included in the Plan each reflect ways to enhance the experience of the visiting the Village Center and supporting the retention and growth of the customer base.

Study Area

The study area for the Village of Shelburne Falls Rapid Recovery Plan is the dense commercial center for the Village.



Village of Shelburne Falls Rapid Recovery Plan Study Area Map.
Map created by Franklin Regional Council of Governments, 2021

Recommended Projects

Ten projects were recommended to help the business community in the study area recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These projects were identified by reviewing past planning efforts and at the Community Meeting held on June 16, 2021. Of the projects discussed, the top ten were determined through a selection process conducted at the meeting. Throughout summer 2021, the "project rubrics", which describe the proposed project and suggested next steps, were further developed at a series of public meetings. The ten recommended projects were then presented at the second Community Meeting held on August 25, 2021 and incorporated into this Plan.



Wayfinding and wayfinding directional signs of attractions in the Village of Shelburne Falls. Image: FRCOG, 2021

Ten Recommended Projects, Listed by Topic Area

Infrastructure Projects

- Design & Construct the Buckland Railyard Parking Area & Outdoor Pedestrian Space
- Structural Improvements to the Bridge of Flowers

Coordination & Arts

- Build Staff Capacity for Project Implementation and Enhanced Communication
- Update and Maintain ShelburneFalls.com Website
- More Cultural Events/Activities

Village Center Spaces

- Create More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining, Selling and Events *[Temporary/Seasonal Space]*
- Improve/Develop Public Spaces with Seating Areas *[Such as a Pocket Park]*
- Establish Publicly Accessible Bathrooms

Village Connections

- Better Connect Locals and Visitors in the Study Area to the Shelburne Falls Farmers' Market
- Advance Walking Trails that connect the Shelburne Falls Village Center to and near the Deerfield River

Diagnostic



Highlights from the Public Realm

The public realm consists of spaces publicly accessible and open to everyone. It includes parking spaces, parks, streets and sidewalks. The Study Area has approximately 430 on-street and off-street parking spaces to accommodate business patrons, visitors, and employees.

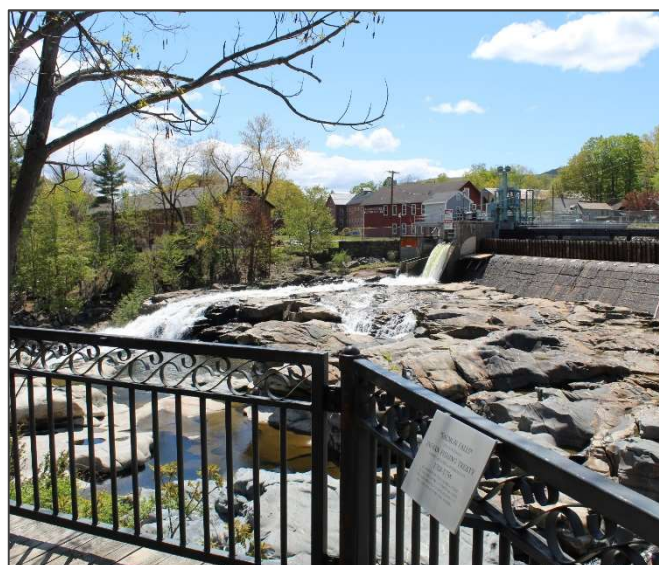
Overall, the elements in the public realm of the study area are in good condition, but there were some select locations in need of repair or improvements. Using a scoring method provided by the LRRP program, the elements of the public realm were evaluated in April and May 2021. The sidewalks, street trees and benches, street lighting, wayfinding and signage, and roadbed and crosswalks scored A/B on a scale of A, B, C, or Fail. Since the evaluation, public construction projects have begun on Ashfield Street in Buckland and Bridge Street in Shelburne.

An advantage in the study area is the presence of amenities, including unique public spaces and public art. The public parks in the study area include: the Bridge of Flowers, the Glacial Potholes Viewing Deck, and Malley Park. There is abundant public art throughout the study area, from the artist elements surrounding the entrances of the Bridge of Flowers, to the town mosaics located throughout the village center.

On average, over 10,500 vehicles a day traveled on Route 2 in Shelburne in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. A year later, the average annual daily traffic volume dropped 27%. Data is not available for traffic volumes in the Village of Shelburne Falls before the pandemic. However, in spring 2021, the average annual daily traffic volume was estimated to be 3,033 vehicles daily on Bridge Street and 1,587 vehicles daily on State Street.

Public Realm Elements	Study Area Score*
Sidewalks	A/B – Sidewalks are mostly clean, well-maintained and accessible to users.
Street Trees and Benches	A/B – Study area has street trees and benches throughout.
Street Lighting	A/B – Street lighting provided to ensure safety of pedestrians and motorists.
Wayfinding and Signage	A – Comprehensive wayfinding system that reflects the identity of the study area.
Roadbed and Crosswalks	A/B – Roads are designed to meet the needs of motor vehicles and pedestrians.

* The evaluation was conducted in April and May 2021, before the start of public construction projects in the Village Center.



Viewing Deck of Glacial Potholes. Image: FRCOG, 2021.

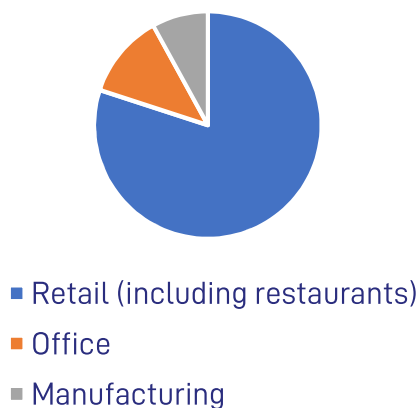


Highlights from the Private Realm

The private realm is the public facing, accessible spaces that are in private ownership. There were 72 storefronts identified in the study area. Of these storefronts, four were vacant in March 2021. There were 67 businesses identified in these storefronts. There was one business that had two storefronts. The tally of businesses does not include a food truck (as it was not in a storefront) and does not include other businesses without storefront access, like those in upper floors or multi-tenant buildings that are unlocked to the public. The total amount of first floor storefront square footage was approximately 122,000 square feet, of which 80% was for retail use, 12% for office use, and 8% for manufacturing use.

In this program, these elements include visible storefront elements, like store windows, outdoor displays/dining, store signage, awnings, facades, and lighting on the exterior of the storefront as well as lighting that illuminates the interior and is visible from the sidewalk. Using a framework provided by DHCD, these elements were evaluated in April and May 2021. Overall, the elements in the private realm of the study area are in very good condition. Using a scale of A, B, C or Fail, the private realm elements mostly scored As.

1st Floor Storefront Square Footage
in Study Area by Use



Source: Parcel data from the Towns of Buckland and Shelburne Assessors Records, 2021.

Private Realm Elements	Study Area Score
Store Windows	A – High percentage of store windows maintain at least 70% transparency with clear lines of sight
Outdoor Display/ Dining	A – Attractive window displays and/or spillover merchandise or dining on sidewalks
Store Signage	A – Signage helps customers identify business' identity and is easily seen
Awning	A – Well-maintained
Façade	A – Well-maintained
Lighting	A/B – Interior and/or exterior lighting that illuminate sidewalks after business hours



Benches and hanging flowers in front of the West End Pub entrance. Image: FRCOG, 2021.

The focus of this Plan is to help reenergize the Village Center retail economy impacted by the reduction in "foot traffic" due to the pandemic. The evaluation and data collection of first floor storefronts is important as it represents what a typical customer may view when they walk around the study area. However, in terms of capturing the full array of businesses present in the Village Center, it is limiting.

The Village Center is home to many businesses and organizations that are not part of these storefronts. Upper floors of the commercial blocks on Bridge and State Streets have apartments as well as offices, artist space and, in one instance on Bridge Street, a lower level restaurant space.

On the Buckland side, there are two multi-tenant commercial spaces that are home to many businesses that are not captured in the first floor storefront data. These business owners, their employees, customers and clients are also part of the customer base for Village Center stores and restaurants.

The Bridge of Flowers Business Center is a collaborative workspace on the third floor of the McCusker's Market building. It hosts many small business ventures and individual remote workers who lease cubicles, workstations and standing desks and use shared facilities, including a conference room and kitchen space. It is a unique asset that can help grow and retain businesses in the Village Center. Some businesses may grow out of the space and seek larger accommodations to meet their needs. It will be important to retain these businesses in the Village Center as they grow.

The Mill at Shelburne Falls is in the renovated historic Lamson & Goodnow Mill complex. The Mill offers over 40,000 square feet of space available for office, studio and workshop uses as well as event space. The Mill advertises that they can provide space from private cubicles up to 2,600 square feet of workshop/maker space. Current businesses include a yoga studio, woodworkers, painters, potters, textile artists and more. The facility is also home to The Handle Factory. Founded by local artisan Molly Cantor, the "community clay center" offers classes and workshops for beginners to more experienced potters.



View of cubicle spaces at the Bridge of Flowers Business Center. Image: BridgeOfFlowersBusinessCenter.com

Original Lamson & Goodnow factory map on the exterior office wall, with a view of the main building of The Mill at Shelburne Falls in the background. Image: FRCOG, 2021.



View of a hallway in The Mill at Shelburne Falls. Image: FRCOG, 2021.

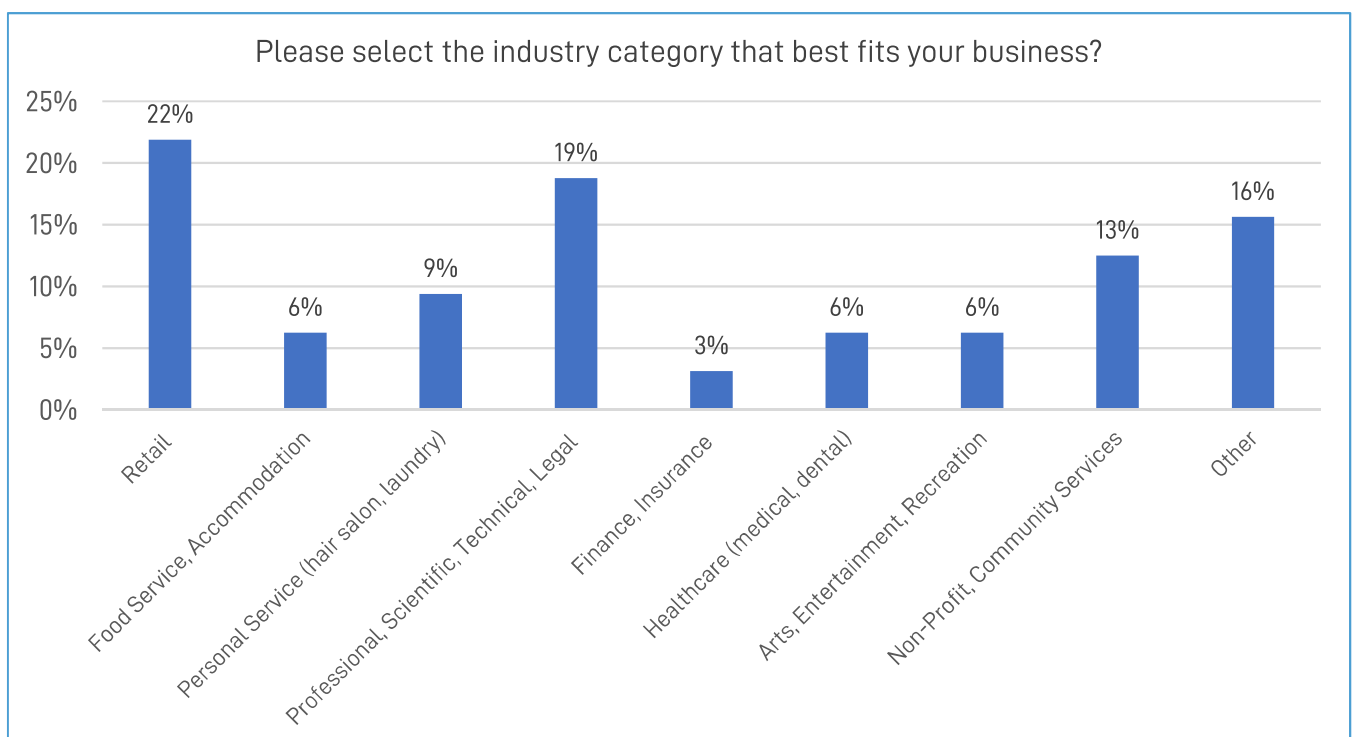
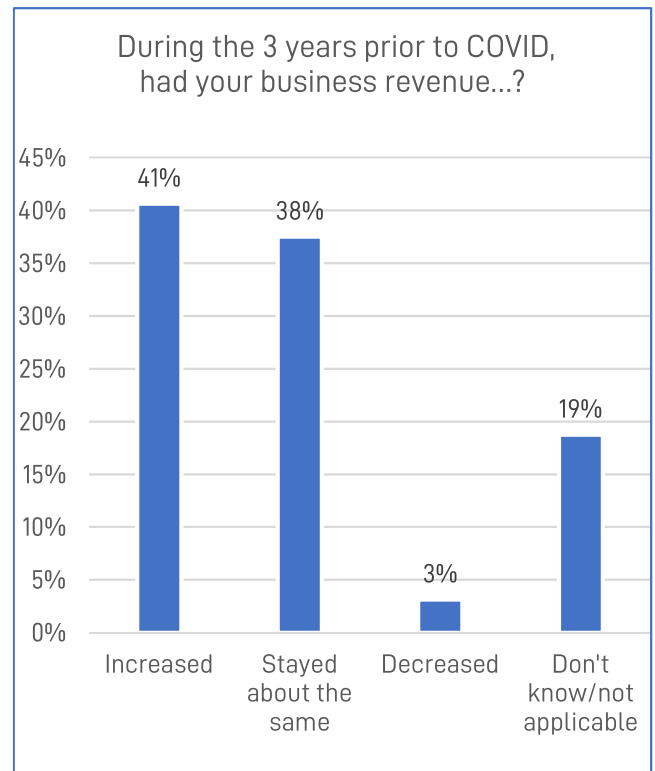
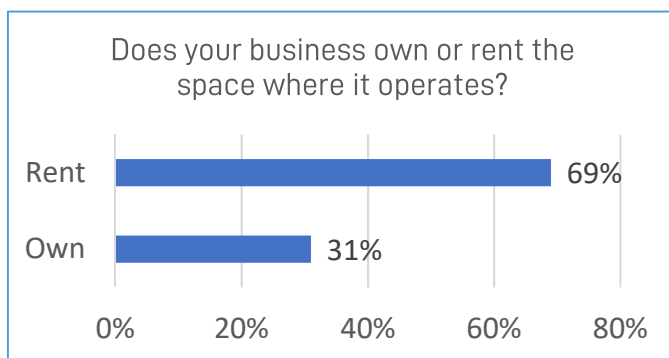




Business Survey: Respondent Business Characteristics

In March and April 2021, a survey of business owners and managers in the study area was conducted using an online survey instrument provided by DHCD. The survey link was distributed to over 100 businesses and organizations located in the Study Area. There were 32 responses received.

The following is a report of survey responses received from business owners and managers on both the Buckland and Shelburne sides of the study area. The Appendix includes copies of the Business Survey Reports for each town, as produced by DHCD.

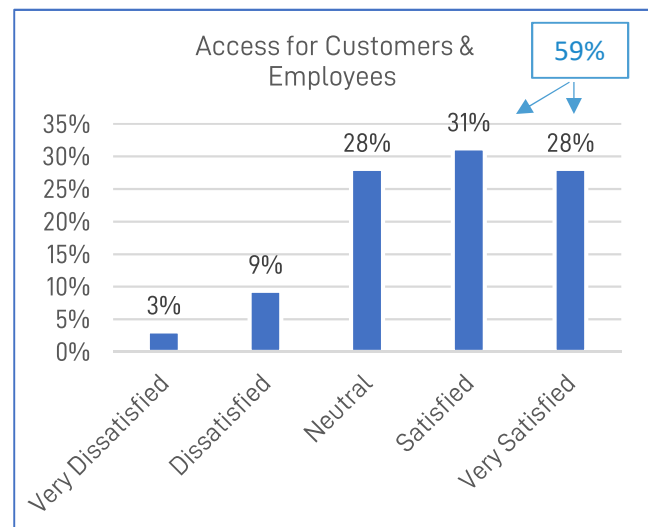
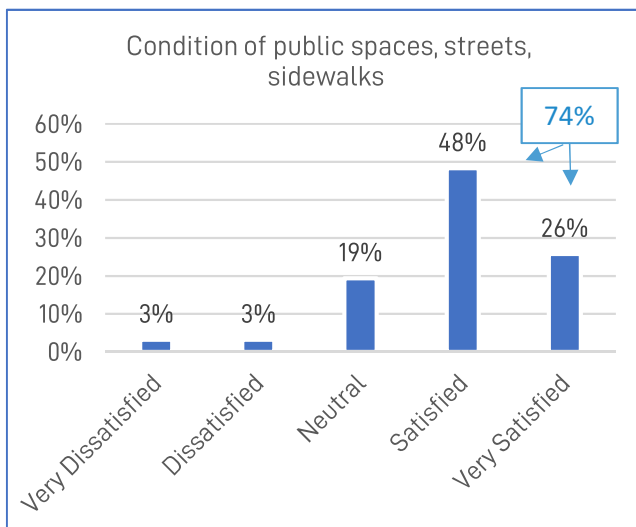
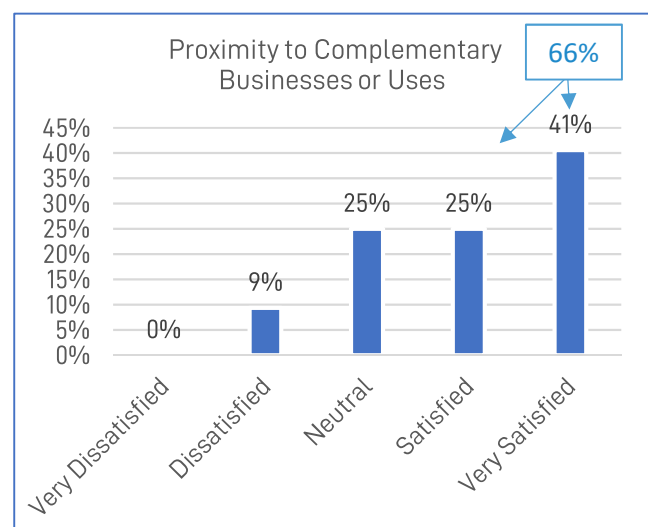
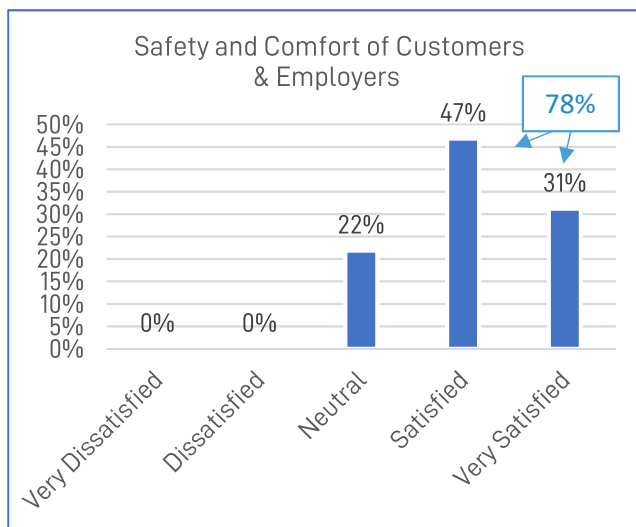
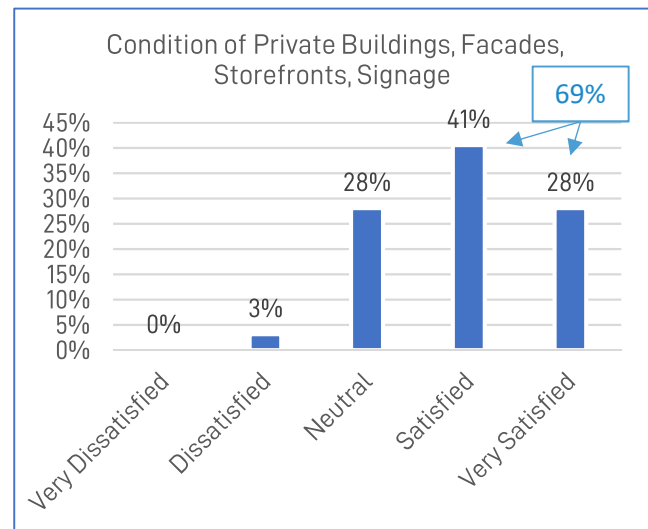




Business Survey: Satisfaction with Commercial District

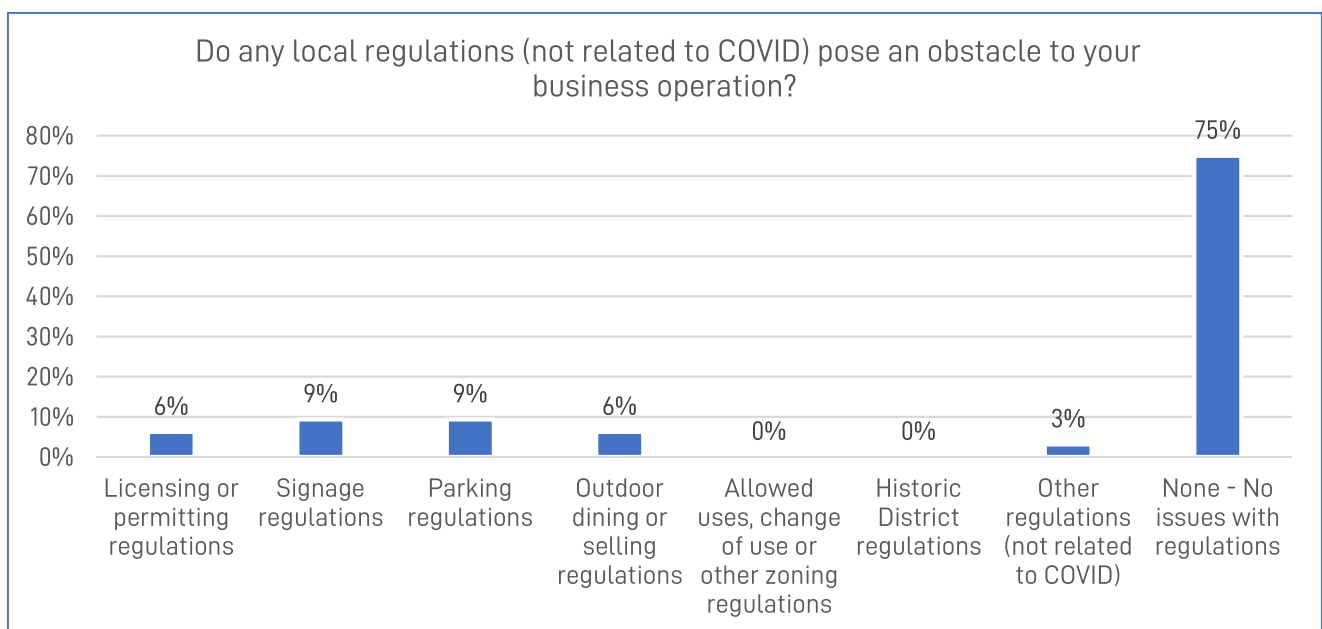
Survey respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of the Downtown, Village Center or Commercial District where their business is located.

Overall, respondents were mostly "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with these aspects. The aspects they were most satisfied with were *Safety and Comfort of Customers and Employers*, followed by *Condition of Public Spaces, Streets and Sidewalks*. They were least satisfied with *Access for Customers and Employers*.





Survey respondents were asked if any local regulations (not related to COVID-19) pose an obstacle to their business operation. The majority of responses indicated there were no issues with regulations. There were two to three responses that were for regulations related to signage, parking, licensing or permitting, or outdoor dining or selling.

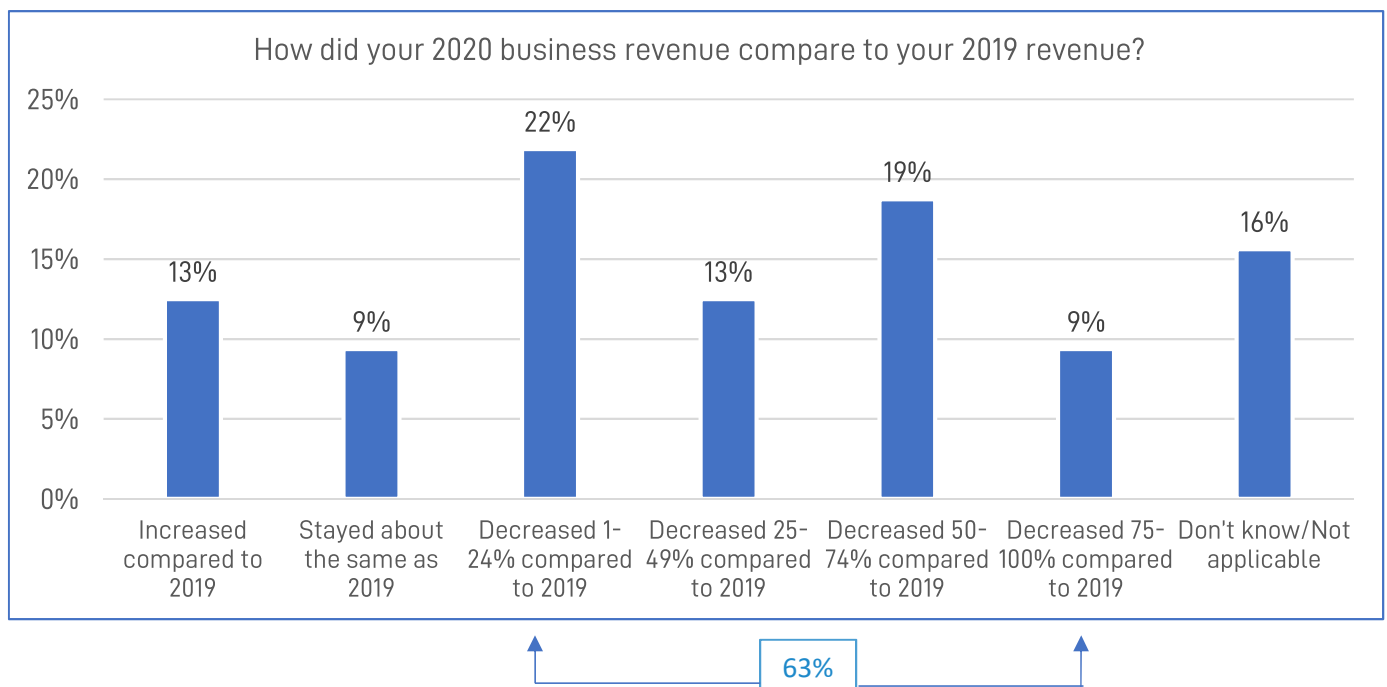
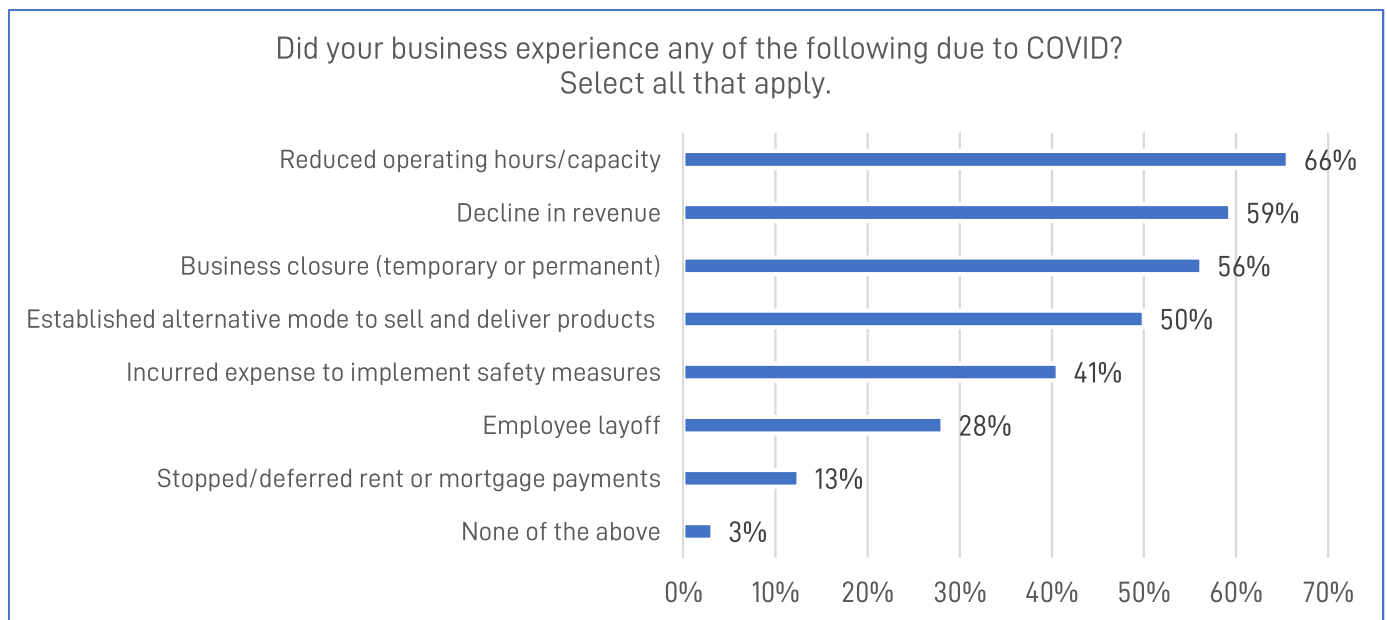


View from Malley Park. Image: FRCOG, 2021.



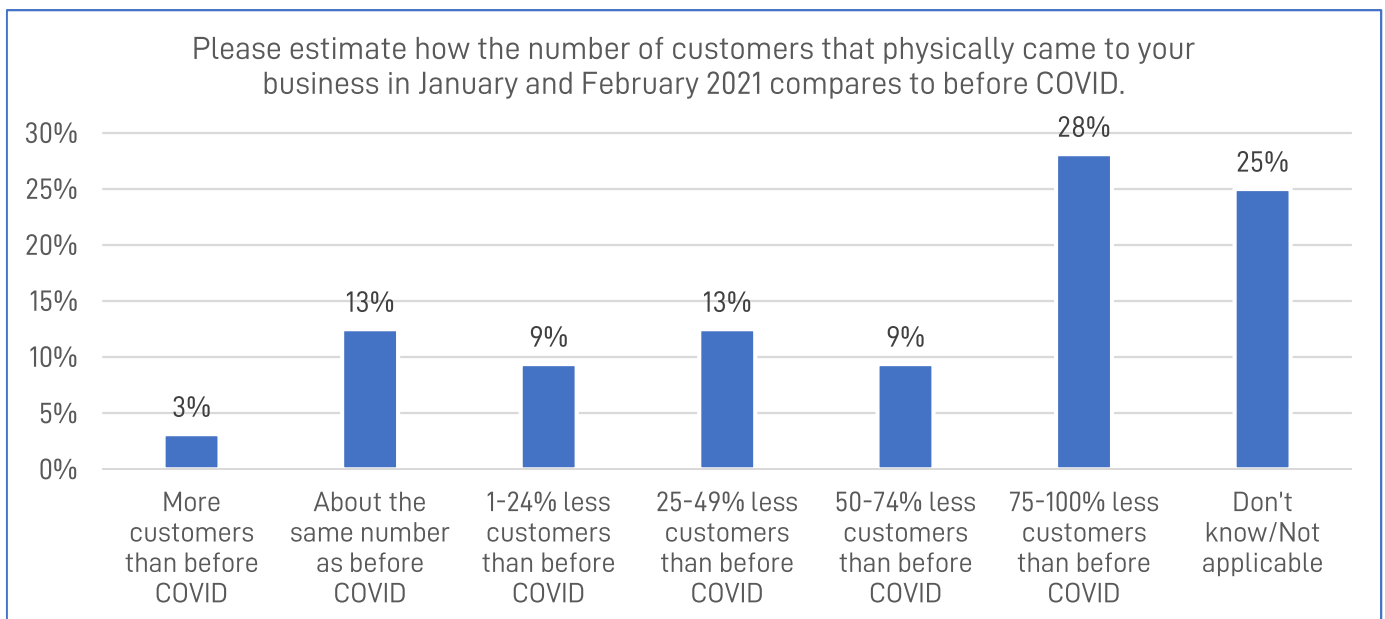
Business Survey: Impacts of COVID-19

When asked about the impacts of COVID-19, 97% of respondents indicated they experienced some impact, as described in the first chart below. Sixty-three percent (63%) reported a decline in business revenue from the previous year.

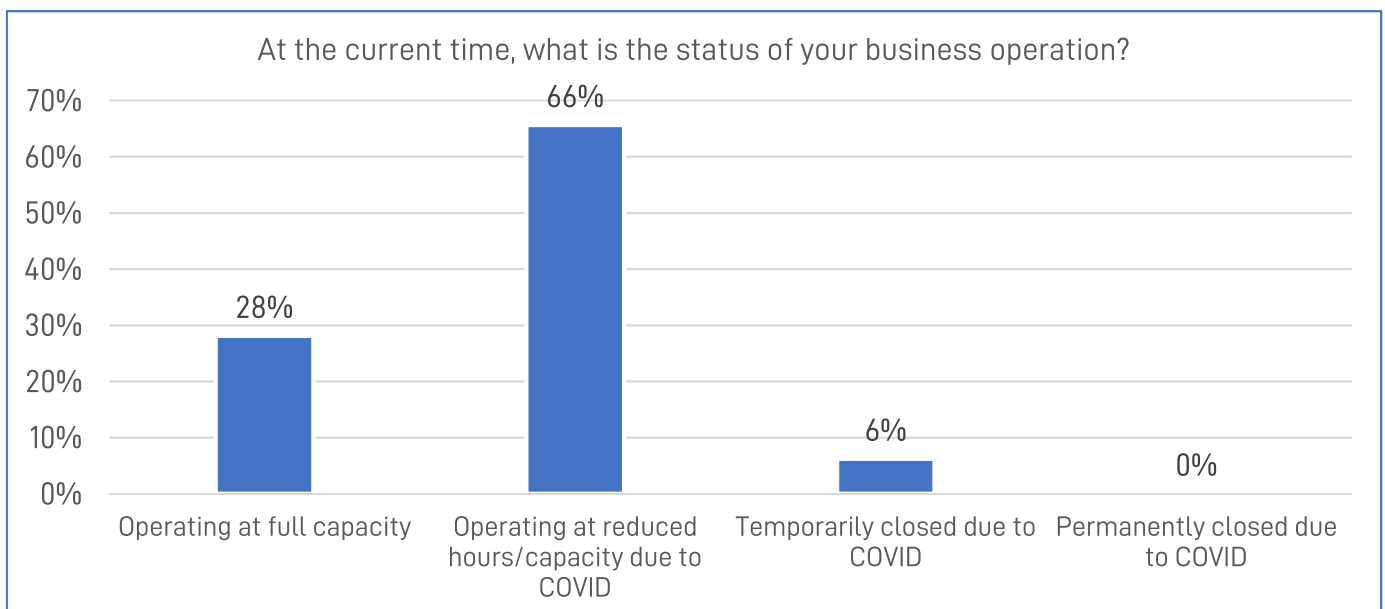




When asked about the impacts of COVID-19, 59% of respondents indicated that they had less foot traffic, and 66% reported that they reduced their operating hours or capacity due to COVID-19.



59%





Business Survey: Possible Strategies

Survey respondents were asked to consider the conditions in their commercial area, and in their opinion, rank the importance of twelve possible strategies or approaches to improve the physical environment or to attract/retain customers and businesses in the study area.

The detailed responses to each question can be found in the Appendix.

The approaches that had the most to least interest were as follows. The percent of respondents that selected the approach as "important" or "very important" is in parentheses.



Most interest...

- More Cultural Events/Activities to Bring People into the District (63%)
- Implement Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District (60%)
- Improvement/Development of Public Spaces & Seating Areas (56%)
- More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining and Selling (53%)

Moderate interest...

- Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks (49%)
- Changes in Public Parking Availability, Management or Policies (47%)
- Amenity Improvements for Public Transit Users and/or Bike Riders (44%)
- Recruitment Programs to Attract Additional Businesses (38%)

Least interest...

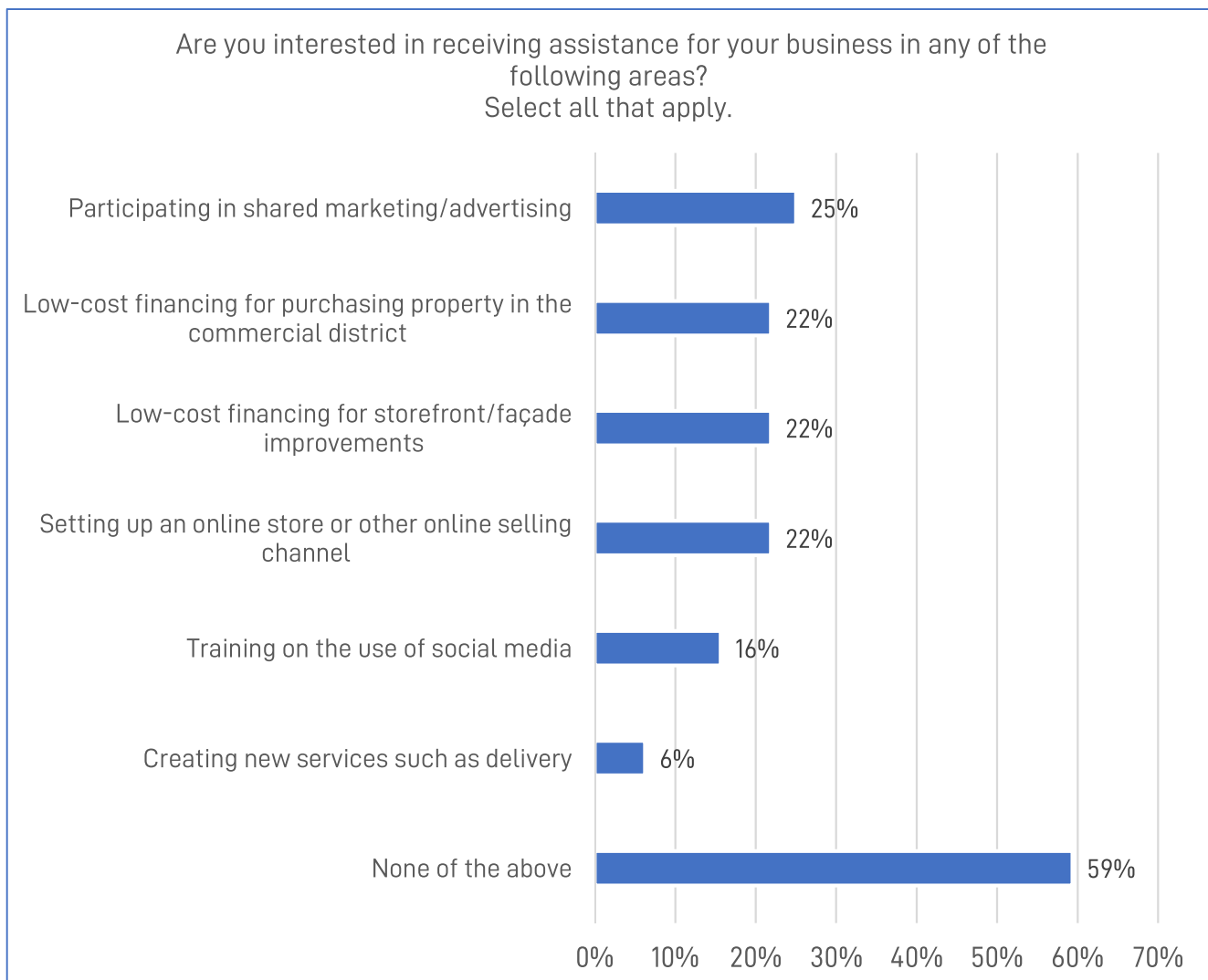
- Renovation of Storefronts/Building Facades (34%)
- Improvements in Safety and/or Cleanliness (32%)
- Creation of a District Management Entity (Business Improvement District or other organization) (29%)
- Changes to Zoning or Other Local Regulations (not related to COVID) (20%)



Business Survey: Assistance

Survey respondents were asked if they were interested in receiving assistance for their business in any of the following areas.

The majority of respondents selected "None of the above". For those that were interested in assistance, the most popular selection was "Participating in shared marketing/advertising."





Potential Customers for Study Area Businesses: Local Residents

The customer base for study area businesses consists of local residents, employees coming to Buckland & Shelburne to work, and visitors.

According to U.S. Census Bureau data, there are approximately 3,600 residents in the Towns of Buckland and Shelburne. The resident population skews older than other areas with 60% of the resident population age 45 years or older, compared to 52% for the county and 43% for the state. When considering surrounding towns, including Greenfield, the local population grows to 32,600 people, of which 53% are age 45 years or older.

Towns of Buckland and Shelburne: Household Data

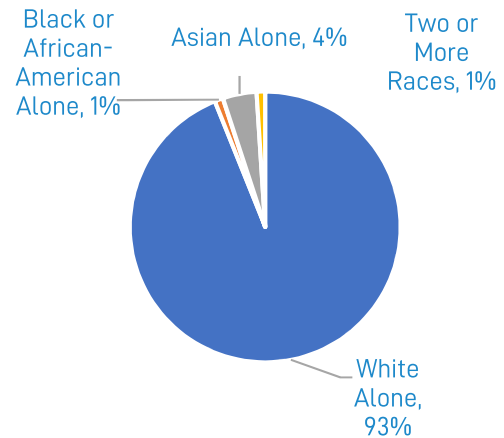
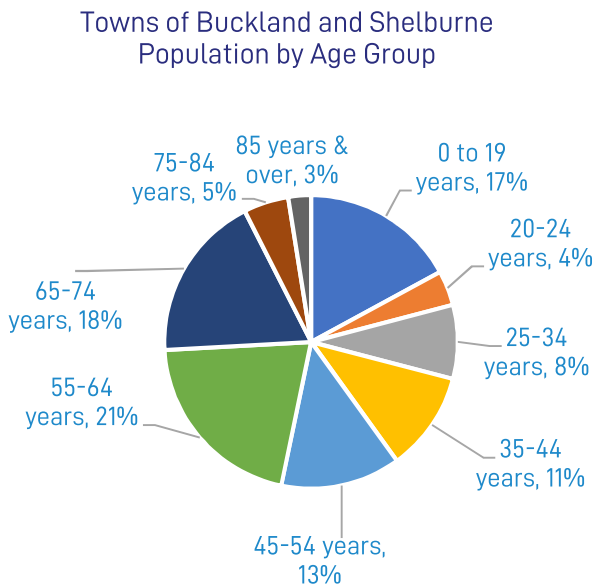
829 total households

69% owner-occupied and 31% renter-occupied

2.18 average household size (Buckland)

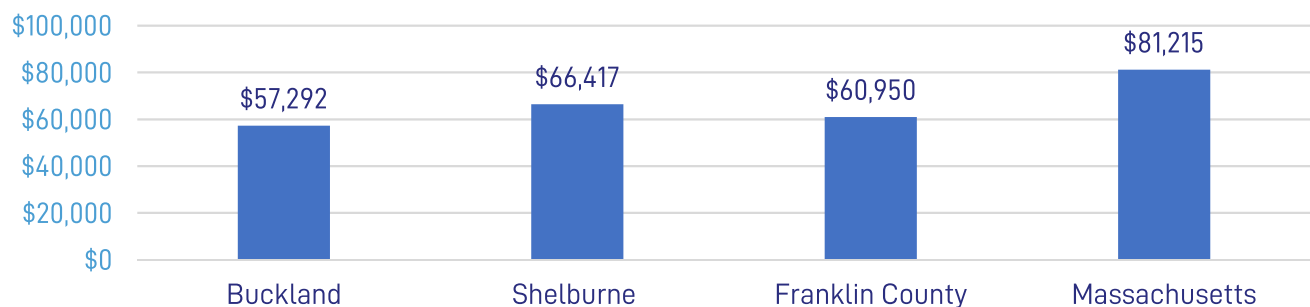
1.97 average household size (Shelburne)

Towns of Buckland and Shelburne Population by Race



0.5% of Population is Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity

Median Household Income



Source: US Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey Five-year Estimates



Potential Customers for Study Area Businesses: Employees and Visitors

In terms of who comes to Buckland & Shelburne to work, an estimated 1,080 employees worked in the towns in 2018. Of which 26% also lived in Buckland & Shelburne, 28% lived in surrounding towns and the remaining 46% from other towns in the greater region.

Of those employees, 25% worked in retail, accommodation and food services, 24% worked in education, and the remaining working in a variety of other industries.

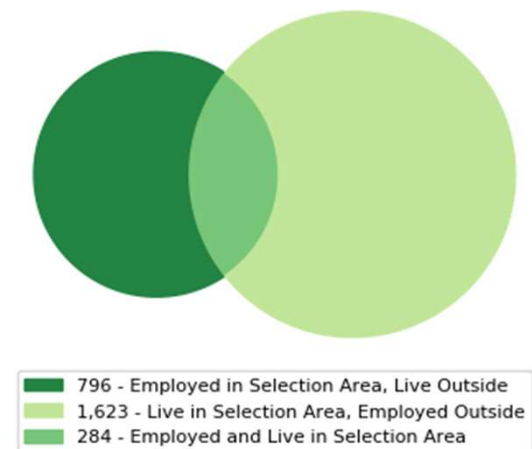
There is no definitive data on the number of visitors to the Village. However, the Village Information Center asks for people to register when they stop by. In 2019 nearly 9,700 visitors registered. The visitors came from 48 U.S. states and 46 different countries.



Entrance to the Village Information Center. Image: FRCOG, 2021.

Inflow and Outflow Job Counts for Buckland and Shelburne ("Selection Area")

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2018



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 OnTheMap data



State Street retail food and beverage operations, including McMusher's Market, Mo's Fudge Factor, and Buckland Pizza. Image: FRCOG, 2021.



Administrative Capacity

Administrative Capacity refers to a combination of leadership, organizational capacity, resources, and regulatory and policy frameworks that enable catalytic investments and improvements to take root.

The Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association (GSFABA) is currently an inactive organization, without a current Board of Directors. It began in the 1990s as a village oriented business organization. Over the years, it grew to encompass a ten-town western Franklin County area. In recent years, funding challenges left the organization unable to hire professional staff. Volunteers and former Board members continue to conduct some tasks with the resources remaining, such as paying for the ShelburneFalls.com webhosting and domain name. There have been some funding opportunities that became available to assist business and promote economic development during the COVID-19 pandemic, through the Commonwealth Places program and a state earmark sponsored by Senator Hinds. However, sufficient consistent funding is not available to rehire staff.

Both the Towns of Buckland and Shelburne have Town Administrators and other professional staff to manage the operations of municipal government and advance infrastructure projects, as resources allows. At this time, there is no capacity at the Town Halls to take on additional economic and community development projects.

The Select Boards of each town and the Executive Director of the GSFABA formed a public-private partnership called the Shelburne Falls Area Partnership. The Partnership would meet periodically to discuss economic development priorities. Both Towns contributed funds to the GSFABA to fund the Partnership. In recent years, the Partnership has discontinued and is no longer active.

As a result, there is not a single organization presently that has capacity and resources available to implement the RRP recommended projects in the Village Center commercial district.

Key Stakeholders and Partners:

- Town governments of Buckland and Shelburne.*
- Former Board members of the Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association* (GSFABA), which is no longer an active organization.
- Village Information Center.
- Individual businesses and community groups located in and around the Study Area.
- Regional organizations, such as the Franklin County Community Development Corporation, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, and Franklin Regional Council of Governments.

** Former member organizations of the Shelburne Falls Area Partnership.*



The Town of Shelburne's Bridge Street Improvement Project as funded by the MA Community Development Grant Program. Top image from July 2021 and bottom image from September 2021. Images: FRCOG, 2021

Project Recommendations

Recommended Projects

Project Selection Process

Ten recommended projects were selected to help the business community in the Study Area recover from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To determine which projects should be a part of this plan, a selection process was undertaken. A list of 20 potential projects were identified from past planning efforts by the Towns of Buckland and Shelburne and the GSFABA, and also from business survey responses.

These potential projects were presented at a community meeting held on Zoom and in-person at the Buckland Town Hall on June 16, 2021. Participants (both in-person and online) were asked if any additional projects should be considered and six projects were suggested.

An exercise was conducted with those in-person and on Zoom. They were asked to pick their top 10 projects to help the study area's business community recover more quickly from the pandemic from the list of 26 potential projects presented. By tallying responses, the top 10 projects were identified.

Project Development

Using the project rubric template provided by DHCD, a draft profile was developed for each project. The project rubric guidance established categories and ranges for budget, timeframe and risk to be applied to each project.

A project rubric follows for each of the ten recommended projects. The project rubrics are grouped into topic areas and are not listed in any order of priority.

These were developed through a series of six meetings focused on topic areas for the purpose of gathering input and refining each project. These meetings were held in July and August, 2021 on Zoom and were open for anyone to attend. Through this process, each draft project rubric was reviewed twice.

At the second Community Meeting held on August 25, 2021 on Zoom, the ten recommended projects were presented for comment. The final project rubrics were then incorporated into the Plan presented to the Shelburne and Buckland Select Boards on September 27 and 28, 2021, respectively.

Ten Recommended Projects, Listed by Topic Area

Infrastructure Projects

- Design & Construct the Buckland Railyard Parking Area & Outdoor Pedestrian Space
- Structural Improvements to the Bridge of Flowers

Coordination & Arts

- Build Staff Capacity for Project Implementation and Enhanced Communication
- Update and Maintain ShelburneFalls.com Website
- More Cultural Events/Activities





Village Center Spaces

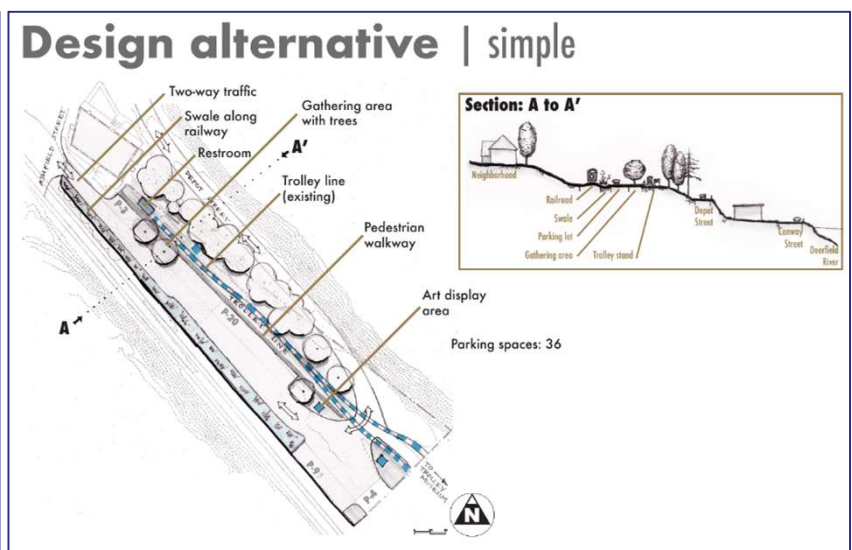
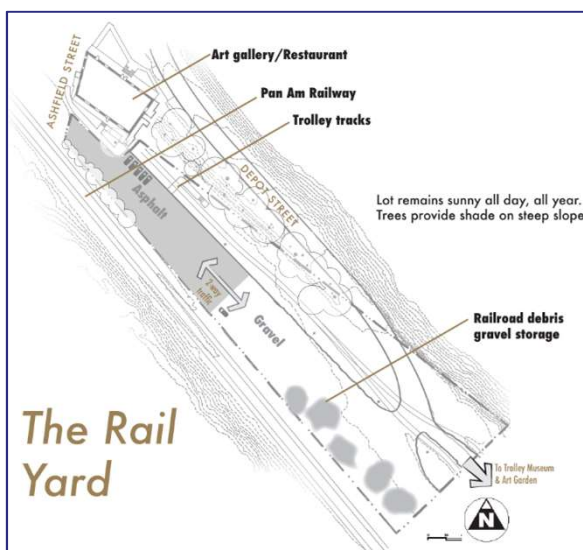
- Create More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining, Selling and Events *[Temporary/Seasonal Space]*
- Improve/Develop Public Spaces with Seating Areas *[Such as a Pocket Park]*
- Establish Publicly Accessible Bathrooms

Village Connections

- Better Connect Locals and Visitors in the Study Area to the Shelburne Falls Farmers' Market
- Advance Walking Trails that connect the Shelburne Falls Village Center to and near the Deerfield River

Design & Construct the Buckland Railyard Parking Area & Outdoor Pedestrian Space

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Freight Yard (off of Depot Street) on Buckland side of Shelburne Falls.
Origin	Town of Buckland with GSFABA. 2017 conceptual designs by the Conway School of Landscape Design.
Budget	 High (\$200,000+ range)
Timeframe	 Medium (5-10 years range)
Risk	 Medium
Key Performance Indicators	Increase in number of visitors to Village. Increase in business revenues in vicinity of project area.
Project Lead & Partners	Town of Buckland. Potential partners include Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum, abutting businesses, and FRCOG.
Diagnostic	Creation of additional parking and outdoor space with amenities are critical to attracting visitors and supporting the businesses in the Village, a key response to address the COVID-19 pandemic.



Conceptual drawings from “Junction. Renewal in the Rail Yard.” By David Grist of The Conway School. 2017. Complete document available online at <https://frcog.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Rail-yard-plan-set-FRCOG-final-comp.pdf>.

<p>Action Item</p>	<p>To improve and expand outdoor pedestrian space and the public parking area for cars and buses that serves businesses and the nearby Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum.</p> <p>Design incorporates Low Impact Development (LID) Stormwater Management techniques and provides an outdoor green space for pedestrians to gather with amenities such as benches, signage, lighting, native plantings and trees, public art, and potentially public bathrooms. The purpose of LID Stormwater Management is to control rain runoff from parking lots, roads and other impervious surfaces that may cause erosion, flooding or contaminate riverways through thoughtful landscape design that allows the runoff to be absorbed on site.</p> <p>The outdoor green space and parking area should support the needs of local businesses for visitor and employee parking and should be compatible with adjacent commercial and residential properties.</p> <p>Consider installing a solar electric photovoltaic (PV) facility over the parking area to reduce carbon emissions and generate revenues to support the maintenance of the area. An additional consideration is to add an electric vehicle (EV) charging station for cars.</p>
<p>Process</p>	<p>Secure funding and conduct a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. If needed, secure additional funding for further brownfields assessment and remediation.</p> <p>Secure funding and hire an engineering or landscape architecture firm to prepare 1-2 conceptual designs, 25% and 75% construction drawings and cost estimates to complete the design and construct the facilities.</p> <p>Secure funding to complete 100% construction drawings and to prepare bid documents.</p> <p>Secure funding and conduct a public procurement process to hire contractor. Execute the contract and construct facilities.</p> <p>Consider a second phase of the project with the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum to expand the parking and outdoor green space onto their parcel. The second phase could include an Art Garden event space and perhaps another solar facility.</p>

Potential Sources of Funding

Brownfields Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Estimate: \$5,000)

- [FRCOG/EPA Regional Brownfield Program](#)
- [MassDevelopment Brownfields Redevelopment Fund](#)

Brownfields Phase II Environmental Site Assessment and Remediation (Estimate: TBD)

- [FRCOG/EPA Regional Brownfield Program](#)
- [MassDevelopment Brownfields Redevelopment Fund](#)

Design, Engineering and Construction Documents for Parking, LID Stormwater Management System and Pedestrian Amenities, and Solar PV facility and EV charging station (Estimate: \$75,000 - \$85,000)

- [Massachusetts One Stop for Growth](#) – MassWorks Program

Construction and Installation of Parking, LID Stormwater Management System and Pedestrian Amenities, Solar PV facility and EV charging station (Estimate: \$300,000-\$400,000)

- [Massachusetts One Stop for Growth's](#) MassWorks Grant Program
- [MA DEP Section 319 Grant Program](#) for LID Stormwater Management System
- [Green Communities Grant Program](#) for EV charging facilities
- [MA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness \(MVP\) Program](#) for solar facilities



View of parking lot from Ashfield Street. Image: FRCOG, 2021.

Structural Improvements to the Bridge of Flowers

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Pedestrian bridge over Deerfield River connecting State Street in Buckland and Water Street in Shelburne.
Origin	Shelburne Falls Fire District initiated a structural evaluation of bridge by Tighe & Bond, Inc. in 2019.
Budget	 High (\$200,000+ range)
Timeframe	 Medium (5-10 years range)
Risk	 Low
Key Performance Indicators	Retail and restaurant sales and number of visitors (assuming Bridge is open during construction) are comparable to previous seasons.
Project Lead & Partners	Shelburne Falls Fire District (bridge owner) is the lead. Partners include: Shelburne Falls Area Women's Club (SFAWC) Bridge of Flowers Committee (stewards of the Bridge of Flowers and oversee day-to-day maintenance of the gardens), Towns of Buckland and Shelburne, and Great River Hydro. Additional stakeholders include the business community and the arts & culture community.



View of the Bridge of Flowers. Image: FRCOG 2021.

Weeding out structural problems

September 10, 2019 | Recorder, The (Greenfield, MA)
Author/Byline: MAUREEN O'REILLY | Page: 4 | Section: News
454 Words | Readability: Lexile: 1100, grade level(s): 8 9 10 11-12

 [Read News Document](#) 

Staff Writer

SHELBURNE FALLS — Tourists moseying up and down the Bridge of Flowers on Monday morning were met with the sight of two men in hard hats among the plants.

"This is a structural assessment. This is not a flower and plant assessment," said Brian Brenner, an engineer with Tighe & Bond, which is assessing the bridge.

In June, the assessment contract was awarded to Tighe & Bond by the Board of Commissioners to the Shelburne Falls Fire District, said Rebekah McDermott, superintendent of the Water Department for Shelburne Falls Fire District. McDermott said the cost of the contract was approximately \$20,000.

Article from The Greenfield Recorder on September 10, 2019 about pending structural assessment study.

Diagnostic

Maintaining and enhancing the appearance of the Bridge of Flowers structure will ensure the longevity of this community and economic asset.

The closure of the Bridge of Flowers and loss of tourism tours during the pandemic due to the public health guidelines were a great loss. Village retail and restaurant businesses experienced significant declines in revenue.

In June 2021, the Bridge of Flowers was able to reopen. However, at the same time a major sidewalk and roadway construction project began in early summer 2021 on Bridge Street on the Shelburne side, creating adverse traffic and parking conditions. Given this experience, efforts to mitigate any access issues during the construction phase of the Bridge of Flowers will be well received.

Action Item

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In June 2021, the Bridge of Flowers was able to reopen. However, at the same time a major sidewalk and roadway construction project began in early summer 2021 on Bridge Street on the Shelburne side, creating adverse traffic and parking conditions. Efforts to mitigate access issues during the construction phase of the Bridge of Flowers will be well received



View of the Bridge of Flowers from the Iron Bridge. Image: FRCOG 2021.

Process

If construction temporarily modifies or limits access to the Bridge of Flowers, actions should be undertaken to mitigate these issues. In addition, programming that continues to engage visitors with the Bridge of Flowers, even during the construction phase, may help. Such activities could include cultural events, like using creative lighting to project onto the structure to highlight stages of the project or having a nearby art show with different views and perspectives of the bridge.

Findings from the structural assessment anticipated in 2021 by Tighe & Bond will inform the estimated total project cost. The cost estimate may need to be adjusted to reflect any changes in the cost of labor or materials during the pandemic.

Begin process to secure funding. FRCOG staff are available to assist in discussing funding opportunities. Funding will be needed to complete engineering, permitting, and procurement, as well as for construction. Depending on the cost of the project, multiple funding sources may be needed.

On going communication among the project partners will be important. In addition, communication, particularly about the project timeline, with the business community and general public will be important. A communication strategy should include periodic updates by email sent to municipal officials and the business community.

Complete the design & engineering and permitting, and prepare final bid-ready documents. Conduct a public procurement process to hire a contractor. Secure all necessary permits. Coordinate with the Great River Hydro to manage Deerfield River water flows, as appropriate.

The hired contractor will initiate the construction phase and provide periodic updates to be shared.

At the completion of the project, an event to celebrate success and promote the Village Center.

Potential Funding Sources

Potential funding sources include:

- \$2 million was included in the [2021 Massachusetts State Transportation Bond Bill](#) for this project. To release these funds, the project needs to be programmed in an upcoming [MassDOT Capital Investment Plan](#) (CIP). To include the project in the FY2023 or FY2024 CIP will require advocacy by local officials and state legislators and coordination with MassDOT to advance the project.
- [MA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness \(MVP\) Action Grant Program](#). The Town of Buckland can be an applicant to this program, as the Town completed a MVP Plan in 2018. The next funding round is anticipated to open in Spring 2022 and will likely requires a 25% cash or in-kind match.
- [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\) grant program](#). An approved Hazard Mitigation Plan is required to apply and both Buckland and Shelburne have approved 2021 plans that include a reference to the Bridge of Flowers structural improvements. BRIC applications are accepted on a rolling basis and require a 25% match.
- [U.S. Economic Development Administration \(EDA\) grant programs](#). The project is in alignment with the 2020-2025 Franklin County CEDS Plan, which is a requirement to apply. The EDA has 2021 ARPA funding opportunities that are open until March 2022, and traditional funding programs accept applications on a rolling basis. Depending on the funding program, a 20%-50% match is required.

Build Staff Capacity for Project Implementation and Enhance Communication

Category	<div>  <div>Administrative Capacity</div> </div>
Location	Towns of Buckland and Shelburne.
Origin	Need for administrative capacity to implement recommendations of Rapid Recovery Plan.
Budget	<div>  <div>Low (Under \$50,000 range)</div> </div>
Timeframe	<div>  <div>Short (Less than 5 years range)</div> </div>
Risk	<div>  <div>Low</div> </div>
Key Performance Indicators	Engaged participation in the proposed Summit and Task Force, and implementation of next steps.
Project Lead & Partners	<p>Towns of Buckland and Shelburne. Potential partners include: former Board members and volunteers from the inactive Greater Shelburne Falls Area Business Association; Committees and staff; Village Information Center volunteers; businesses and community organizations located in and around the study area; as well as regional organizations, such as Franklin County Community Development Corporation, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, Franklin Regional Council of Governments and Mohawk Trail Association.</p>

As defined by DHCD, “administrative capacity refers to a combination of leadership, organizational capacity, resources, and regulatory and policy frameworks that enable catalytic investments and improvements to take root.”

The current need for increased administrative capacity is to:

- Coordinate/support implementation of Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) projects.
- Facilitate communication among village businesses, community groups and municipal officials.



The GFSABA organization is current inactive. The association with the Select Boards of the Towns of Buckland and Shelburne formed the foundation for the Shelburne Falls Area Partnership, which was a public-private partnership focused on enhancing the Village Center for the benefit of residents and businesses.

Diagnostic

Given the declines in revenue experienced by businesses in the study area, there is strong interest in marketing the Village Center commercial district and having cultural events/activities to attract people to the Village Center.

A communication network among the business community could enhance methods for sharing information on funding and marketing opportunities, discussing common concerns, and increasing collaboration.

Action Item

To undertake a process of community engagement that will build the staff capacity (volunteer and professional) necessary to advance projects and activities identified in the Rapid Recovery Plan, and to enhance communication among Village Center businesses, community organizations and municipal officials.

The process will include hosting a summit with specific sessions to clarify projects and activities, and the formation of a Task Force to coordinate project implementation and conduct a study of organizational models that could provide staff capacity.

Process

Staff from the Franklin County CDC and FRCOG will coordinate a Shelburne Falls Summit that is open to the public, with targeted invitations to former GSFABA Board members, businesses, the arts/culture community, municipal officials and regional partners, and other interested stakeholders. At the Summit, sessions will be held to clarify projects and tasks that need staff capacity and discuss models that can provide this capacity. These sessions will inform the work of the proposed Village Center Task Force.

A Village Center Task Force will be formed for the following activities: (a) identify short-term tasks that can be accomplished by volunteer assistance and confirm volunteers who will be responsible for their implementation; (b) oversee a professional assessment of organizational models that could provide needed staff capacity for project implementation; (c) be a point of contact to maintain an email list of Village Center businesses, community organizations and municipal officials to communicate important updates.

To hire a consultant to conduct a professional assessment of organizational models, FRCOG staff can work with the Buckland and Shelburne Select Boards to help secure grant funding. The Task Force will develop the scope of work, assist with the procurement of process to hire a consultant, and provide guidance to the selected consultant. Findings from the assessment will be presented to the Task Force at a public meeting for discussion. The Task Force will then pursue the model that is determined to most feasible.

Potential Funding Sources

There are no anticipated costs for the Summit facilitation by the Franklin County Community Development Corporation and FRCOG, or for volunteer participation in the Task Force.

The estimated cost to hire a consultant to assess staff capacity models is \$20,000-\$30,000.

Potential funding sources for consultant services include:

Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP) can fund grants for participating municipalities (Shelburne) or the MTWP region (i.e. western Franklin County and northern Berkshire County) that promote natural resource-based economic development. Funds could be applied for to hire a consultant to conduct a study to evaluate different business models that could support staff capacity and implementation of projects identified in the Village of Shelburne Falls Local Rapid Recovery Plan. The last funding round offered up to \$20,000 for municipal proposals or up to \$60,000 for regional projects. The next application round will likely be Spring 2022.

Apply to the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) program for “District Management” assistance. The program awards professional consultant services valued up to \$25,000 through the One Stop for Growth application portal. An application could fund the development of a strategy to create a volunteer-based organization or a formal district. The next round for applications will likely be Spring 2022.



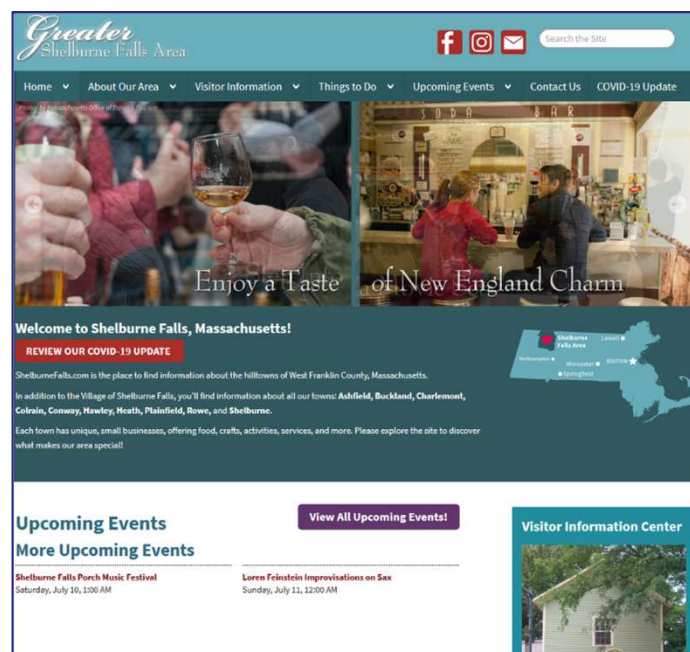
One-way directional signage to guide pedestrians across Iron Bridge, so as to maintain social distancing during COVID-19. Image: FRCOG, 2021.



A Community Development Block Grant funded construction project to repair water and sewer infrastructure and to replace sidewalks and curbing on Bridge Street began in summer 2021. Signage was set up to let potential customers know that businesses were open during construction. Image: FRCOG, 2021.

Update and Maintain ShelburneFalls.com Website

Category	 Administrative Capacity
Location	Village of Shelburne Falls and greater area.
Origin	GSFABA created and maintains the website. However, as GSFABA is no longer a staffed organization, the website is not regularly updated.
Budget	 Low (Under \$50,000 range)
Timeframe	 Short (Less than 5 years range)
Risk	 Low
Key Performance Indicators	Regular updates to website. Increase in number of website visitors.
Project Lead & Partners	Former GSFABA Board members, local businesses and community groups, and volunteers.



ShelburneFalls.com website.

Diagnostic

An updated and maintained website supports the strategies to market the Village Center and encourage visitors to attend cultural/arts events and activities and shop at local establishments. These strategies will then support retail, restaurant, accommodation, arts, entertainment & recreation businesses that experienced declines in revenues and reduced foot traffic in 2020.

Action Item

To assess status of current website and establish how it can be updated to provide timely information to prospective visitors.

Process

ShelburneFalls.com was created and actively maintained by the GSFABA. Once GSFABA organization became inactive with no day-to-day staff, management of the website became inconsistent. The GSFABA continues to pay for hosting of the site and ownership of the domain name. Access to the website and the associated email address has transitioned to volunteers. The associated Facebook account is actively managed by a volunteer and the Instagram account has been inactive since 2018.

The website features a calendar of events that is largely not updated and has other information in need of updating, such as the COVID-19 information from Spring 2020 and broken links. A decision needs to be made by the former GSFABA Board members whether to engage volunteers to more regularly update the website and/or make elements of the website static (such as general information).

As there is no official individual assigned to actively update the website, occasional updates could be made if there are volunteers willing to undertake these tasks and who are empowered by the former GSFABA Board members to do so.

The most recent GSFABA Board members should make the determination of how to proceed with the website and associated social media accounts. Volunteers should be identified and empowered to do updates by the former Board members. The volunteers could be trained by the website hosting company for a small fee and scheduled to share the work load. Platforms to link social media content (like Hootsuite) can be explored to expand presence with little added effort. A point of contact and protocol to submit updates (such as events) could be shared with businesses and community groups, so they can submit events to the calendar.

Potential Funding Sources

Volunteer time will continue to be used to maintain the website and social media accounts. Some funding will be necessary to train volunteers in how to update the website. Funding to continue to host the site and maintain the domain name will be needed once GSFABA funds are exhausted.

Develop More Cultural Events and Activities

Category	 Arts/Culture
Location	Village Center of Shelburne Falls.
Origin	Rapid Recover Plan Business Survey responses and June 16, 2021 Community Meeting.
Budget	 Low (Under \$50,000 range)
Timeframe	 Short (Under 5 years range)
Risk	 Low
Key Performance Indicators	More events/activities. Increase in number of residents and visitors attending events/activities. Increase in business revenues.
Project Lead & Partners	Buckland and Shelburne Cultural Councils, Shelburne Falls Cultural Council, municipal officials and volunteers from businesses and community groups.



Images of the mosaics located throughout the village. Image from ShelburneFalls.com.



Image from a past Iron Bridge Dinner event. Image from J. Atwood.



Image of "Fred's Fish & Game", a fictional storefront used as part of TV production set in Spring 2021. image:FRCOG, 2021.

- Significant presence of arts/cultural businesses and organizations.
- Public art throughout village, including hilltown mosaics, Bridge of Flowers, and sculptures and decorative benches.
- Village used as a film location for movies and TV.
- Popular Village Center events include: Iron Bridge Dinner, Bridge of Flowers Road Race, and Moonlight Magic.
- Village was designated a Cultural District by Massachusetts Cultural Council in 2012.
- Village was designated as a "Great Place in America" by the American Planning Association in 2018.

Diagnostic	<p>From the Business Survey, 63% of respondents thought the strategy to have “more cultural events/activities to bring people in to the district” was important or very important.</p>
Action Item	<p>To coordinate and hold more cultural and art events or activities that will reengage local residents and attract visitors to the Village Center to enjoy and encourage them to spend money at local businesses and attractions.</p>
Process	<p>As part of Shelburne Falls Summit have a session focused on cultural and art events/activities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inventory on-going and pre-COVID cultural events/activities in the Village Center. ▪ Inventory unique assets that relate to having cultural events/activities in the Village Center. ▪ Brainstorm potential events/activities – from the simple (create an online scavenger hunt map to find the Hilltown mosaics) to more elaborate (such as a festival). Identify other potential opportunities, such as a significant anniversary or other reason to celebrate. ▪ Narrow down the inventory and brainstorm lists of events/activities to select the top priorities to pursue in the next 18 months and over the long term. ▪ Identify/confirm event/activity coordinators, review potential funding sources and discuss support needed to successfully implement the events/activities. ▪ Discuss how to best communicate with municipal officials, businesses and community organizations about the proposed events/activities being planned and to encourage their support.
Potential Funding Sources	<p>There are no costs for the Summit facilitation provided by Franklin County Community Development Corporation and FRCOG, or for volunteer participation.</p> <p>There may be costs associated with the individual events and activities that are proposed.</p> <p>Potential funding sources to support implementation of events and activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For cultural or art events/activities that have a community benefit and meet the MA Local Cultural Council guidelines, artists and event organizers can apply for funding to Buckland and/or Shelburne Cultural Councils during their funding cycles. ▪ For a cultural or art festival, the Mass. Cultural Council Festivals Program has a grant program for \$1,500 that is open to municipal entities, non-profit organizations or groups with a fiscal agent. ▪ The MassDevelopment Commonwealth Places program supports community placemaking activities through a combination of grants and fundraising. The program is currently closed but could be recapitalized.

Create More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining, Selling and Events [Temporary/Seasonal Space]

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Village Center of Shelburne Falls. Locations to be determined. Potential sites may be on Bridge St, Main St or Deerfield Ave in Shelburne, and State St, Conway St, Ashfield St or Depot St in Buckland.
Origin	Identified as important by Business Survey respondents. Exploring options for a public park/picnic area was identified in the 2014-2021 Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan.
Budget	 Low (Under \$50,000 range)
Timeframe	 Short (Under 5 years range)
Risk	 Low
Key Performance Indicators	Increase in sales receipts for businesses. Increase in number of visitors.
Project Lead & Partners	Towns of Buckland and Shelburne. Potential partners include: local businesses and community groups, Mohawk Trail Regional High School and FRCOG.



There are some existing areas in Shelburne Falls for business patrons to eat or shop outside.

Should be there more?
If so, where?



Images: FRCOG, 2021.

Diagnostic

Creation of additional outdoor dining space and selling spaces are important to increasing sales revenues of restaurants, artisan and retail businesses, a key response to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action Item

To create a new temporary, seasonal public space for patrons of local businesses to use for outdoor dining and/or to hold pop-up shopping experiences or cultural events/entertainment.

Process

DHCD is in the process of creating a toolkit to help communities create more outdoor dining, which may be a useful reference to help streamline the process. For updates, go to: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rapid-recovery-plan-rrp-program>

- Identify a point of contact to communicate with municipal officials, businesses and community groups about the creation of a temporary public space, and to advance the project.
- Identify one or two potential locations that would be safe for pedestrians to access, provides separation from traffic and parking, and is in convenient proximity to businesses.
- Determine the potential layout of the space and minimum elements necessary to secure the space (such as fencing, jersey barriers and/or planters).
- Work with municipalities and other partners to determine security, any insurance requirements, daily maintenance and trash removal schedule, and where to store street furniture or other equipment when not in use.
- Request proposals from businesses and community members to determine the function (e.g. dining areas with tables and chairs, pop-up shopping space/kiosks, performance space, etc.) and design of the space. Form a committee to select a proposal.
- Secure funding to pay for the materials and equipment needed to create the space, such as paint, picnic tables, bistro sets, trash receptacles, planters and flowers, traffic barriers, etc.
- Work with volunteers to create the space and set-up street furniture or other equipment, and at end of the period.

Potential Funding Sources

Estimated cost to purchase materials and equipment: \$2,000-\$10,000.

In-kind time of volunteers or municipal employees for security, maintenance, and moving of equipment.

Potential funding sources to support implementation of events and activities include:

- The [MassDevelopment Commonwealth Places](#) program supports community placemaking activities through a combination of grants and fundraising. The program is currently closed but may be recapitalized.
- The [MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces](#) program provides grants to municipalities to fund the improvements to sidewalks, curbs, parking areas and other public spaces to make them safe and enjoyable environments for pedestrians. It could be a source of grant funds for tents, tables & chairs, or other outdoor dining or equipment. The next funding round is anticipated to open in January 2022.
- Other potential funding sources include contributions from the “Dexter” production company to the Towns and grant funds allocated to the Towns from the federal 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).



Floodwater Brewing Company used parking spots in front of their storefront to create a temporary outdoor seating area to be used when they are open for business. Image: FRCOG, 2021.



Bridge Street Bazaar created an outdoor space with views of the Deerfield River and Bridge of Flowers for customers and visitors to enjoy in their rear parking area. Image: FRCOG, 2021.

Improve/Develop Public Spaces with Seating Areas *[Such as a Pocket Park]*

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Village Center of Shelburne Falls. Specific locations to be determined.
Origin	Identified as important by Business Survey respondents. Exploring options for a public park/picnic area was identified in the 2014-2021 Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan.
Budget	 Large Budget (\$200,000+)
Timeframe	 Medium (5-10 years)
Risk	 Medium
Key Performance Indicators	Increase in sales receipts for businesses. Increase in number of visitors.
Project Lead & Partners	Towns of Buckland and Shelburne. Potential partners: FRCOG, The Conway School or UMass Landscape Architecture, local businesses and community organizations.

Examples of areas of open space in the Village.



Privately owned lot at corner of Bridge St. and Deerfield Ave.

Privately owned lot on Bridge St. with a food truck.



Behind the Arms Library at corner of Bridge St. and Main St.



Images: FRCOG, 2021

Diagnostic

Creation of additional outdoor green space and seating areas are critical to attracting visitors and supporting the businesses in the Shelburne Fall Village, a key response to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action Item

To confirm a location and create a permanent outdoor space for public use, with seating areas and other pedestrians amenities.

Process

- Secure Funding for a Conceptual Design Study to Identify Potential Locations for Outdoor Green Spaces such as a Pocket Park with Seating Areas.
- Determine the best way to proceed with the project as some potential locations may be in private ownership. Negotiate and finalize legal documents for any necessary property agreements.
- Secure funding to hire an Engineering and/or Landscape Architecture firm to prepare conceptual designs, 25% and 75% Construction Drawings for 1-2 outdoor spaces, prepare cost estimates to complete the design and construction of the outdoor spaces and seating areas including pedestrian amenities and plantings.
- Secure funding to complete the 100% Construction Drawings, prepare Bid Documents, conduct Procurement.
- Construction and Installation of outdoor green spaces and seating areas including plantings and other pedestrian amenities to create attractive outdoor spaces.

Potential Funding Sources

Estimated project cost: \$300,000 to \$400,000

- Identify 1-2 potential locations for a small outdoor publicly accessible green space with seating areas or “pocket” park. Conduct a Conceptual Design Study to depict potential layouts and prepare cost estimates. The Study could be coordinated with other projects, including the *Create More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining, Selling and Events* project and the *Establish Publicly Accessible Bathrooms* project. The estimated cost to work with graduate students from The Conway School or UMass LARP is \$5,000-\$10,000.
- Select the location(s) to establish the park. If the proposed location(s) are not under public ownership, work with the private owner(s) to acquire or to establish a legal agreement for access to the property.
- Create design, engineering and construction documents for proposed site improvements. The estimated cost to create these documents is \$50,000-\$75,000. A potential grant funding source is the MA Community One Stop for Growth’s [MassWorks Infrastructure Program](#).
- Construct and installation site improvements to create park. The estimated cost is \$200,000+. Potential funding sources include the MassWorks Infrastructure Program and the [MA Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities](#) (PARC) grant program. To be eligible for a PARC grant, an up to date Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is required. The Buckland OSRP is approved through April 2028 and the Shelburne OSRP expired in March 2021.
- Other potential funding sources include contributions from the “Dexter” production company to the Towns and grant funds allocated to the Towns from the federal 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Establish Publicly Accessible Bathrooms

Category	 Public Realm
Location	Village Center of Shelburne Falls.
Origin	Long-standing issue in the Village Center that was identified in previous planning efforts.
Budget	 Medium (\$50,000 to \$200,000 range)
Timeframe	 Short (Under 5 years range)
Risk	 Low
Key Performance Indicators	Increase in number of visitors. Increase in sales receipts for Village Center businesses. Increase in number of outdoor events.
Project Lead & Partners	Towns of Buckland and Shelburne. Potential partners include: local businesses and community organizations, local building owners.

Pre-pandemic, bathrooms were available to the public in the two Town Halls, the Visitor Information Center, and to restaurant patrons. Due to COVID-19 public health restrictions, access to these facilities became very limited. To accommodate needs, the Visitor Information Center provided a porta-potty outside of their building.



Visitor Information Center's porta-potty during COVID-19 pandemic. Image: FRCOG, 2021.



Examples of prefabricated composting toilet facilities, if a proposed location does not have connections to public water or wastewater system.



Diagnostic	Public restrooms are needed to support local businesses and cultural events; particularly if businesses are only open for outdoor selling, take-out food service or other outdoor activities where indoor access is restricted such as during public health emergencies (e.g. COVID-19 pandemic).
Action Item	Identify potential locations, secure funding to purchase, construct and install public bathrooms, and identify and secure a source of funding for regular maintenance.
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify one to two potential locations in the Village Center that could be suitable for publicly accessible bathrooms that would be available on weekends and evenings as well as regular business hours. The facilities could be stand alone buildings or located within an existing structure. Coordinate potential bathroom locations with conceptual design work that may be part of the <i>Create More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining, Selling and Events</i> project and the <i>Improve/Develop Public Spaces with Seating Areas</i> project. Secure funding to purchase installation of one to two public restrooms, which could be regular toilets or composting toilets if in a stand alone building. Identify the entity responsible to fund the costs of regular, ongoing maintenance of the public restrooms. Construct and install public restroom facilities.
Potential Funding Sources	<p>Estimated project cost: \$45,000 to \$65,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Municipal officials identify 1-2 potential locations for publicly accessible bathrooms. Coordinate with the conceptual design work for the <i>Create More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining, Selling and Events</i> project and the <i>Improve/Develop Public Spaces with Seating Areas</i> project. Secure funding for the installation of 1-2 public toilets (regular or composting). The estimated cost is \$40,000 to \$60,000 for two toilets. A possible funding source is the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP) Implementation Grants, which the Town of Shelburne is eligible to apply for. The project could also be incorporated into the grant applications for the <i>Improve/Develop Public Spaces with Seating Areas</i> project. Identify funding source and entity responsible for regular, ongoing maintenance of the bathroom facilities installed. Examples of funding sources range from municipal government to a fee per use mechanism. Other potential funding sources include contributions from the “Dexter” production company to the Towns and grant funds allocated to the Towns from the federal 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Better Connect Locals and Visitors in the Study Area to the Shelburne Falls Farmers' Market

Category	 Revenue Sales
Location	Area from Bridge and Water Streets to the Farmers' Market, located at the corner of Main and Water Streets in Shelburne.
Origin	Project suggested for consideration and selected as a priority project at the June 16, 2021 Community Meeting.
Budget	 Low (Under \$50,000 range)
Timeframe	 Short (Less than 5 years range)
Risk	 Low
Key Performance Indicators	Increase in the number of patrons visiting the Farmers' Market. Increase in the number of vendors selling at the Farmers' Market. Increase vendors sales revenues.
Project Lead & Partners	Shelburne Falls Farmers' Market Committee, Trinity Church (property owner), Town of Shelburne, and other community groups that use the property.

The Shelburne Falls Farmers' Market is held on Fridays from 2:00-6:30 p.m. from May through October (plus an Autumn Market in late November).

The Farmers' Market is managed by a volunteer Committee that leases the seasonal use of the lot from the property owner, the Trinity Church. Other community groups also lease the lot for events and activities.



Current signage at the Farmers' Market.



Temporary signage in front of the Arms Library.



Distance from Bridge Street to the Farmers' Market is 0.2 miles or a 5-minute walk.

Aerial Image: MassGIS

Images: FRCOG, 2021

Diagnostic

The Farmers' Market is a weekly outdoor event that includes vendors and entertainment, like live music. Increasing the visibility and guiding people to its location at Main and Water Streets will attract more residents and visitors to the Farmers' Market. It further establishes the Market as an attraction in the Village Center. As more patrons enjoy themselves and purchase products, this increases the revenues of the participating agricultural small businesses and will encourage more vendors to participate in the Market. Ensuring a successful seasonal Farmers' Market also improves people's access to fresh, local food.

Action Item

To develop ways to inform visitors on Bridge Street and on Water Street near the Bridge of Flowers entrance, and to remind residents in the Village Center of the presence of the Shelburne Falls Farmers' Market at the corner of Main and Water Streets during its season of operation.

The Trinity lot works well for hosting the Farmers' Market. Vendors are able to back up their vehicles to easily unload/load their set-ups and products. There is space for entertainment activities and additional vendors. There is also sufficient parking for patrons. The market's location is also near existing facilities that residents use (like the Post Office).

Image: FRCOG, 2021



Eric Goodchild of Barberic Farm at the Shelburne Falls Farmers' Market. Image: FRCOG, 2021

Process



Wayfinding sign post with directional signs located on Bridge Street, across from Main Street. Image: FRCOG, 2021



Examples of sidewalk stencils. The above stencil was in front of the Arms Library in Spring 2021. The other is a stock image from a vendor. Image: FRCOG, 2021

Identify other ways to promote the Farmers' Market during the season in addition to their weekly advertisements in The Greenfield Recorder, their Facebook account posts, and referrals from the Village Information Center.

Current Shelburne Zoning Bylaws (section 9.5.5) allow the Farmers' Market to have a portable sign on the premises and up to five portable signs off-premises during its season of operations. Presently, the Farmers' Market Committee has a sandwich board sign and posts portable signs around the Village.

Potential options to further promote the Farmers' Market include:

- Explore with the Town of Shelburne if an additional directional sign pointing to the Farmers' Market could be added to the wayfinding sign post on Bridge Street (across from Main Street). The estimated cost and fabricator for the sign would need to be confirmed.
- Explore with the Town of Shelburne if a permanent post and sign could be installed in the vicinity of the Bridge and Main Streets intersection. It would be a year-round sign for the Farmers Market and would need to indicate the seasonal nature of it, such as stating "Friday afternoons from May through October". The Greenfield Farmer's Market has such a year-round, wood sign on their Town Common.
- The Farmers' Market Committee could work with the property owner (Trinity Church) to have a permanent sign post installed on the lot that allows for a single sign to be hung from it. The Farmers' Market would fabricate their own sign to hang throughout the season, with the owner's permission. When not in season, the Trinity Church would have their own sign on the post. Other community groups that regularly lease the lot for events could have the option to hang a sign to promote their event. The signs for the Farmers' Market and any other groups leasing the property would need to adhere to design specifications and timeframes determined by the Trinity Church leadership. Permission to hang the sign could become part of the lease agreement for using the lot.
- Create creative chalk drawings on the sidewalk near the intersections of Bridge and Main Streets and Bridge and Water Streets. They could be created with stencils that say "Shelburne Falls Farmers' Market", have directional arrows, and/or are of vegetables or other products. On the day of the Market, spray chalk could be used with these stencils on the sidewalk to quickly create temporary signage. The Committee should work with the Town of Shelburne to confirm that this is an allowed activity.

Possible Funding Sources

Estimated Project Cost: \$150 to \$1,000

The cost estimate also assumes that there would be a labor cost for any permanent signage installed and assumes that municipal highway staff time would be used to install a directional sign on the wayfinding post.

A cost estimate for a permanent post and sign would range from \$200 to \$800, depending on the size and the materials used. The cost of wayfinding directional sign is to be determined.

The cost estimate assumes in-kind volunteer time to apply sidewalk stencils weekly during the season. To create sidewalk stencils would cost approximately \$100 to \$250, depending on the size and number of stencil designs purchased. Spray chalk would cost less than \$50 for the season.

Advance Walking Trails that connect the Shelburne Falls Village Center to and near the Deerfield River

Category



Public Realm

Location

In Shelburne, the route of the proposed River Trail in Shelburne has been conceptually designed. The proposed trail would travel from Deerfield Ave. on an old road along the river from the Village Center. The proposed project is primarily on land that is already owned by the town. The trail will not have legal access to the river and will not have physical access to the Potholes.

In Buckland, there is a connection from Gardner Falls Road to the Deerfield River. While there is a trail that exists, further developing this access point is in the conceptual phase.

Origin

A goal of the 2014-2021 Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan is to “ensure that the Town of Shelburne maintains and improves the quality, quantity, and accessibility of its recreational resources to best serve the needs of its residents,” with an objective of “look at the feasibility of developing hiking trails that originate in the village.” The Town of Shelburne Open Space Committee has been working to identify a potential route, facilitate the design, complete necessary permitting, and solve access issues.

A recommended action of the 2021-2028 Buckland Open Space & Recreation Plan is to “improve recreation rivers access from publicly owned land or private lands with trail easements.” Trail enhancements are proposed to better connect the village residential area to the Deerfield River and provide access to a spot for fishing. This project is in a pre-conceptual stage and the components of the project have not been defined. While there is an existing trail determining what improvements are needed is in the next step.

Walking trails identified propose to connect the Village Center to views of or access to the Deerfield River. On the Buckland side, the trail is on an existing trail in need of improvements. On the Shelburne side is a proposed trail mostly on an old road but the final route has not been determined.



Trail bridge that connects Gardner Falls Road to Deerfield River on the Buckland side.

View of Deerfield river from end of Deerfield Ave. parking area on the Shelburne side.



Images: FRCOG, 2021

Budget	 Medium (\$50,000 to \$200,000 range)
Timeframe	 Medium (5 to 10 years range)
Risk	 Medium
Key Performance Indicators	Number of users on new or improved trails. Increase in number of visitors. Increase in business revenues.
Project Lead & Partners	Open Space Committees and Recreation Committees for the Towns of Buckland and Shelburne; Buckland Shelburne Trail Alliance, Deerfield River Watershed Association, Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership, Franklin Land Trust
Diagnostic	The creation and improvement of recreational trails that connect or are in view of the Deerfield River will be assets for both residents and visitors. Increased access to outdoor activities originating from the Village Center will bring people into the commercial hub and increase the number of potential customers at local businesses.
Action Item	<p>In Shelburne, to advance planning to create a River Trail from the Village Center with scenic views along the Deerfield River.</p> <p>In Buckland, to advance planning to improve access to the existing trail that connects the Village Center to the Deerfield River.</p>

Action Items in the 2014-2021 Shelburne Buckland Open Space & Recreation Plan:

- "Look at feasibility of developing hiking trails that originate in the village." (page 9-28)
- "Explore access to the rivers for recreation activities." (page 9-30).

Action Items in the 2021-2028 Buckland Open Space & Recreation Plan:

- "Identify and map potential access points to river frontage on the Deerfield River and Clesson Brook and work with local groups to create public waterfront access and trails leading to the Deerfield River in town, including at Deerfield No. 3 powerhouse behind Lamson and Goodnow, and at the end of Creamery Ave." (page 9-3)
- "Promote walking and bicycling through year-round maintenance and creation of sidewalks and trails in town." (page 9-4)

Process

In Shelburne:

- Work with property owners, abutters and community members to build consensus for completing the trail.
- Obtain needed easements or access permission.
- Complete wetlands permitting through the Town of Shelburne Conservation Commission.
- Complete other necessary permitting and permissions/approvals through Town Boards and Commissions.
- Secure funding for construction.
- Complete the construction.
- Pursue ecosystem restoration through invasive species treatment.

In Buckland:

- Work with the local trail committee to define the project components.
- Solicit community input on the project.
- Work with property owners, abutters and community members to build consensus for the proposed project.
- Determine if any access permissions are needed.
- Obtain needed easements and/or access permission.
- Complete other necessary permitting and permissions/approvals through Town Boards and Commissions.
- Secure any funding for completion of project elements.

Possible Funding Sources

For the Shelburne trail project, the scale of the estimated budget is “medium” (\$50,000 to \$200,000 range).

For the Buckland trail project, the scale of the estimated budget is “small” (under \$50,000 range).

These cost estimates do not include volunteer time of Committee/Board members and partnering organizations.

Potential funding sources for trail development and construction include:

- [MassTrails](#) Program is a competitive state grant program that can fund project development, design, engineering, permitting, construction and maintenance of trails. Grants generally range from \$5,000 to \$100,000, but can be up to \$300,000. The program requires a minimum 20% match commitment.
- The Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP) grant opportunity can be used by participating municipalities for projects that support natural resource-based tourism including activities like hiking or fishing. Shelburne is a participating MTWP municipality.
- Other programs, like the [Massachusetts Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities](#) (PARC) and [Local Acquisition for Natural Diversity](#) (LAND), can fund municipal outdoor recreation projects. A current Open Space and Recreation Plan is required to apply. For reference, the 2021-2028 Buckland Open Space and Recreation Plan has an extensive list of funding programs.

Appendix

List of Resources

In each Project Rubric, potential funding sources are identified. Below is the list of the sources cited with their websites for more information.

Funding Program	Website
FRCOG/EPA Regional Brownfield Program	https://frcog.org/program-services/economic-development-planning/
Local Acquisition for Natural Diversity (LAND) Program	https://www.mass.gov/service-details/local-acquisitions-for-natural-diversity-land-grant-program
MA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program	https://www.mass.gov/service-details/building-resilient-infrastructure-and-communities-bric-flood-mitigation-assistance-fma-grant-programs
MA DEP Section 319 Grant Program for LID Stormwater Management System	https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality
MA Green Communities Grant Program	https://www.mass.gov/service-details/green-communities-grants
MA Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program	https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-mvp-program
MA Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Program	https://www.mass.gov/service-details/parkland-acquisitions-and-renovations-for-communities-parc-grant-program
Massachusetts Cultural Council Festivals Program	https://massculturalcouncil.org/communities/festivals/
Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) Program	https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massachusetts-downtown-initiative-mdi
Massachusetts One Stop for Growth – MassWorks Program	https://www.mass.gov/guides/community-one-stop-for-growth
MassDevelopment Brownfields Redevelopment Fund	https://www.massdevelopment.com/what-we-offer/financing/grants/
MassDevelopment Commonwealth Places Program	https://www.massdevelopment.com/what-we-offer/real-estate-services/commonwealth-places/
MassDOT Shared Streets and Spaces Program	https://www.mass.gov/shared-streets-and-spaces-grant-program
MassTrails Program	https://www.mass.gov/guides/masstrails-grants
Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP)	http://www.mohawktrailwoodlandpartnership.org/about.html
US Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant Programs	https://eda.gov/funding-opportunities/

Business Survey: Additional Charts and DHCD Reports for Buckland and Shelburne

In March and April 2021, a survey of business owners and managers in the Study Area was conducted using an online survey instrument provided by DHCD. The survey link was distributed to over 100 businesses and organizations located in the Study Area. There were 32 responses received.

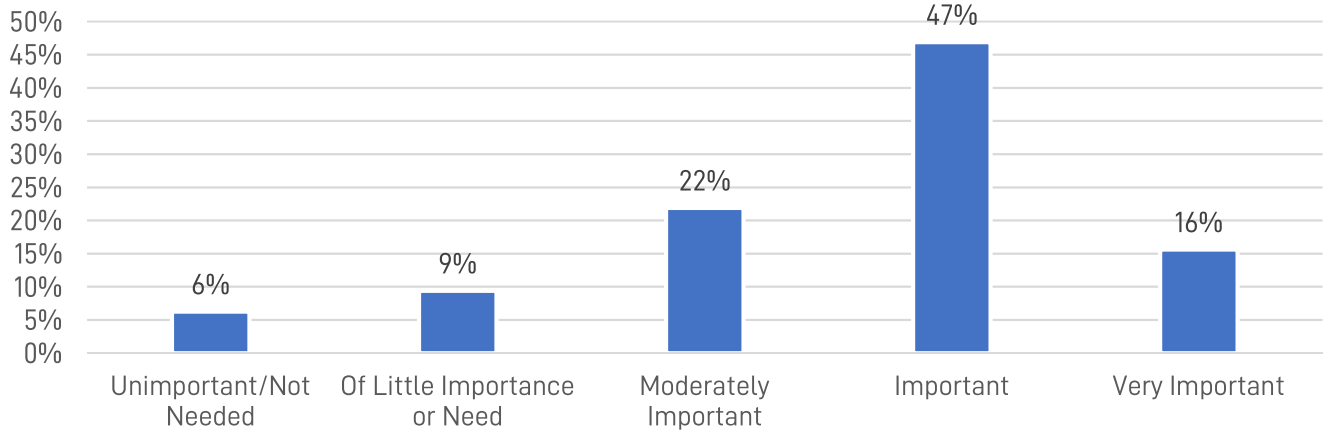
As referenced previously, survey respondents were asked to consider the conditions in their commercial area, and to rate the importance of strategies to improve the physical environment or to attract/retain customers and businesses in the study area. This Appendix includes a chart of responses for each of the 12 strategies presented.

Survey responses were gathered by DHCD, which provided individual reports for responses from the Town of Buckland side of the study area and for the Town of Shelburne side. Survey results were combined to encompass the entire study area and included in the Diagnostic section of this Plan. For reference, this Appendix also includes the individual reports created by DHCD for each town.

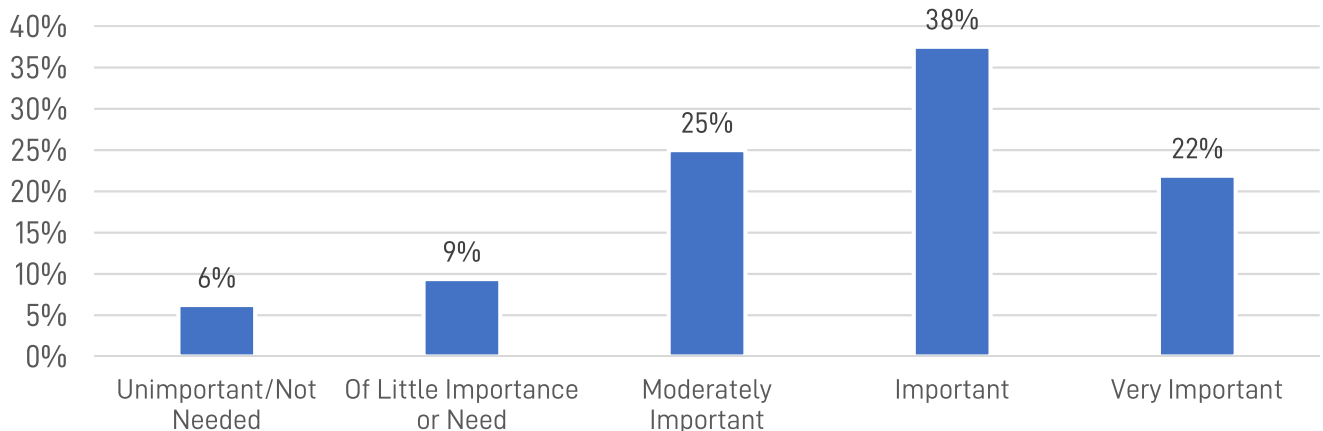


Business Survey: Responses to Each Possible Strategy/Approach

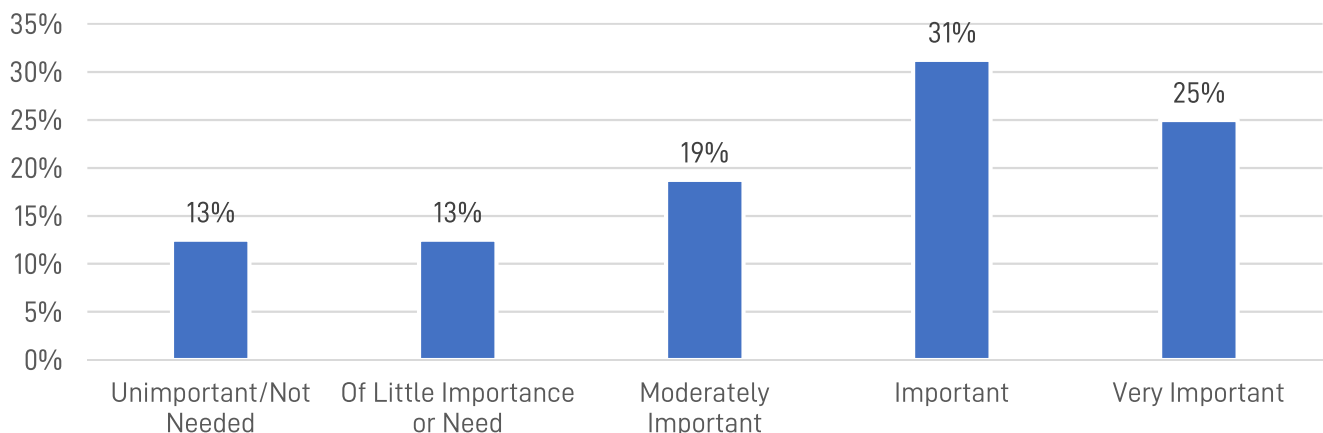
More Cultural Events/Activities to Bring People into the District



Implement Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District

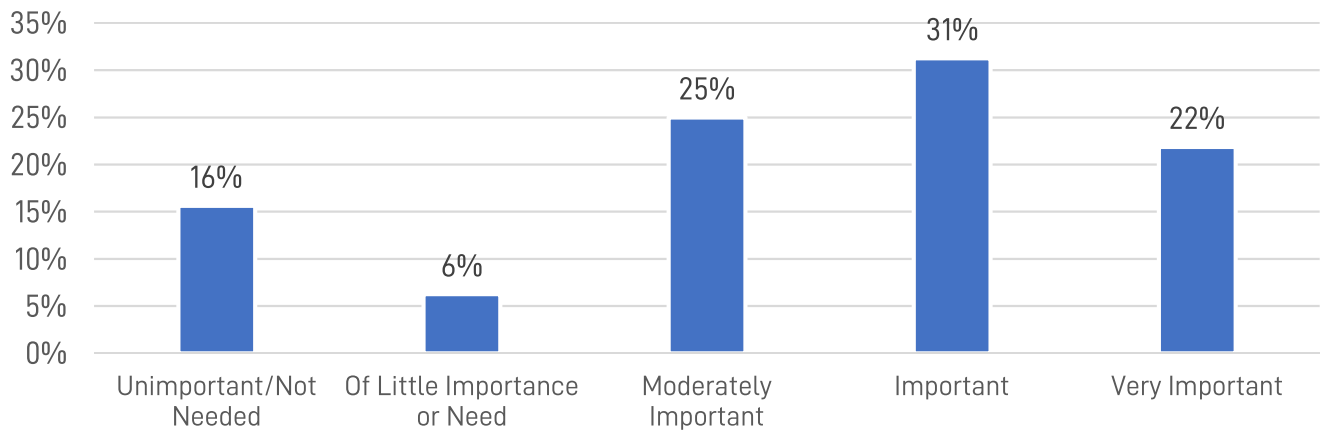


Improvement/Development of Public Spaces & Seating Areas

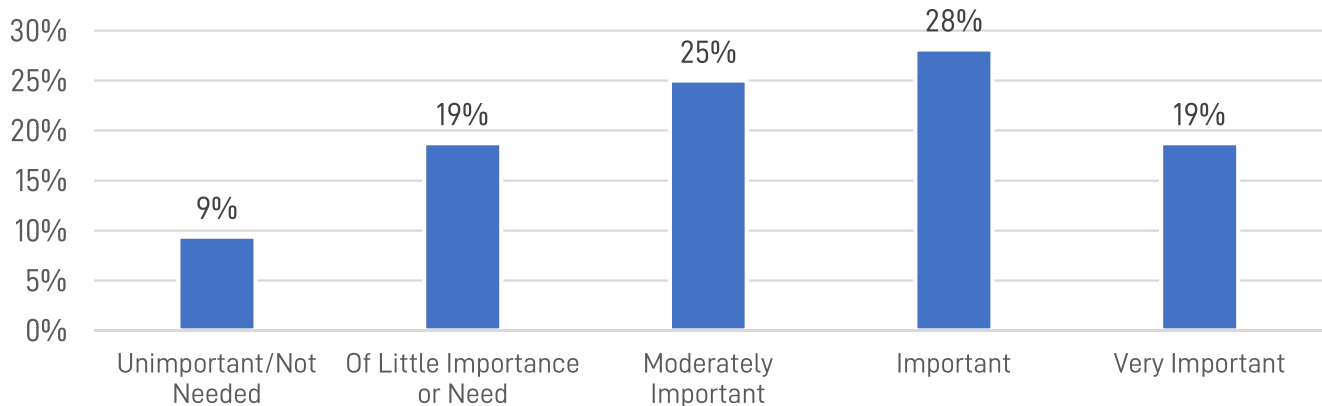




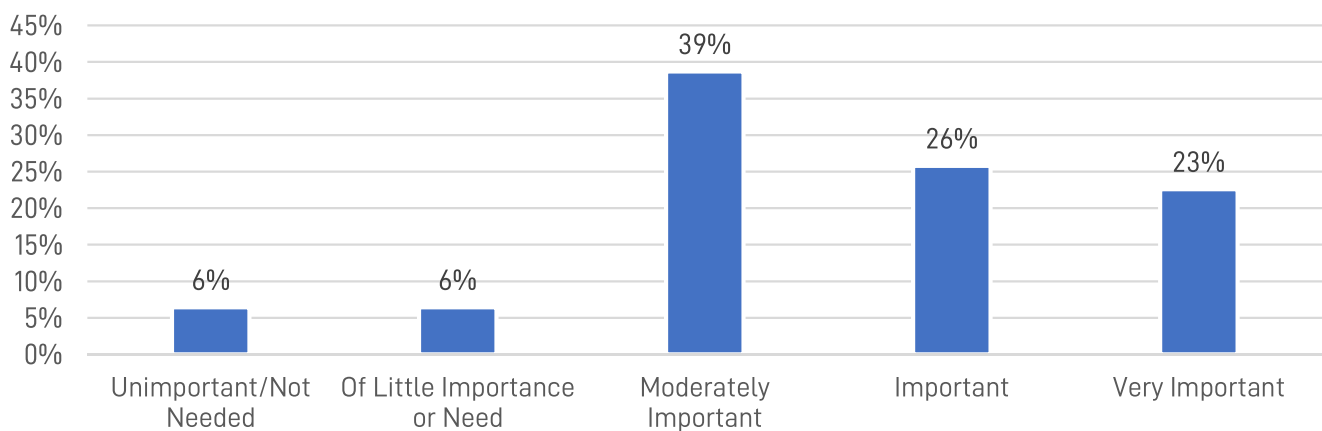
More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining and Selling



Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks

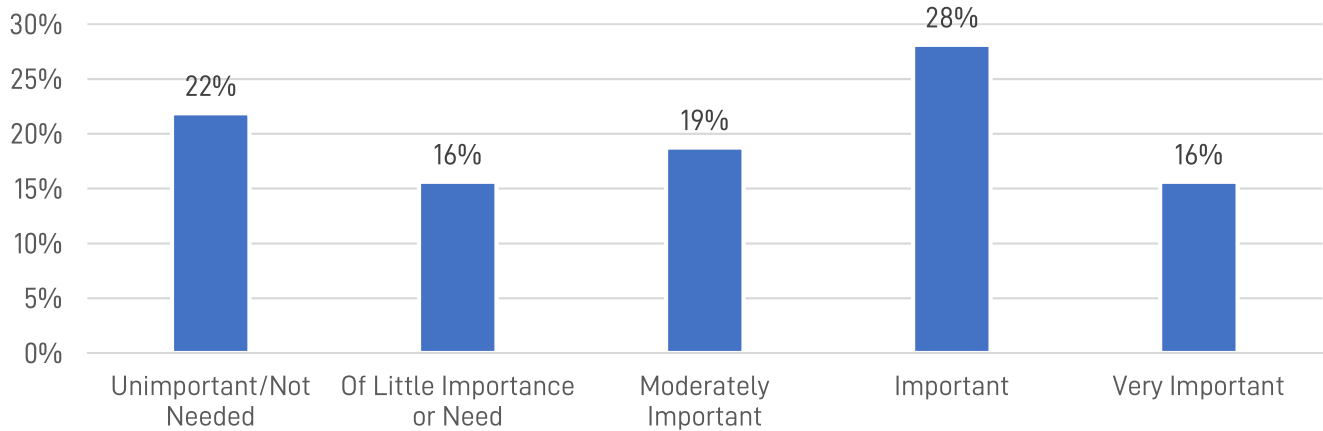


Changes in Public Parking Availability, Management or Policies

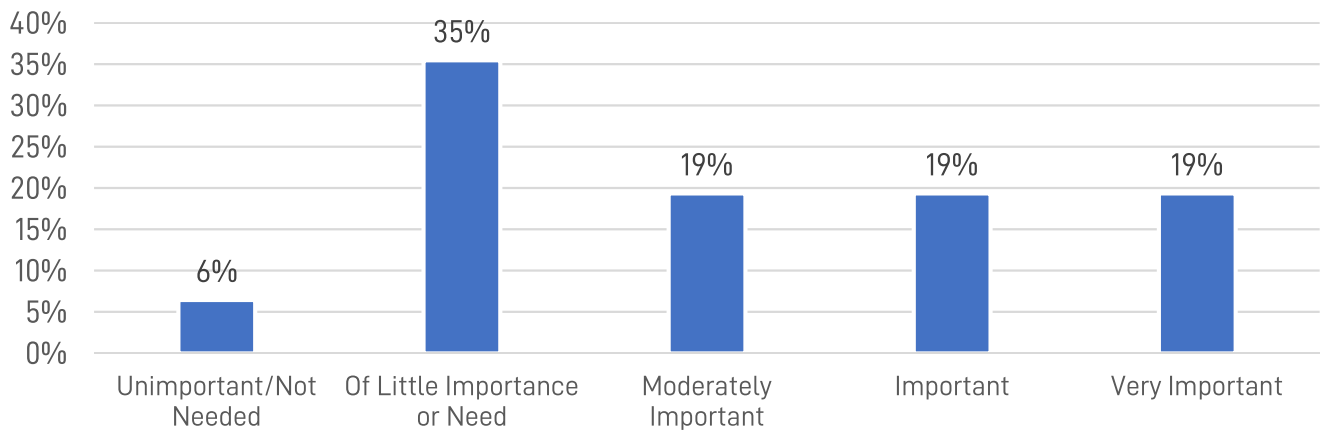




Amenity Improvements for Public Transit Users and/or Bike Riders



Recruitment Programs to Attract Additional Businesses



Renovation of Storefronts/Building Facades

