



Rapid Recovery Plan

2021

**Uptown
Foxborough, MA**



Acknowledgments



Foxborough Chamber of Commerce

Foxborough Common Business Collaborative



Town of Foxborough, MA

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Marketing and Web Presence

GOMAN+YORK
ADVISORY SERVICES

Building and Facade Program



Parking Management District

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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The Planning Team would also like to thank the following individuals for participating as key stakeholders throughout the planning process:

ORGANIZATIONS / BUSINESSES

Foxborough Common Business Collaborative

Foxborough Economic Development Committee

INDIVIDUALS

F. Jay Barrows
MA House of Representatives
Barrows Insurance

Leah B. Gibson, Chairwoman, Board of Selectmen

Heather Harding, Chair, Board of Recreation

Michael Webber, Foxborough Cable Access

Cindi Haddad-Drew, Cindi's Diamond and Jewelry Gallery
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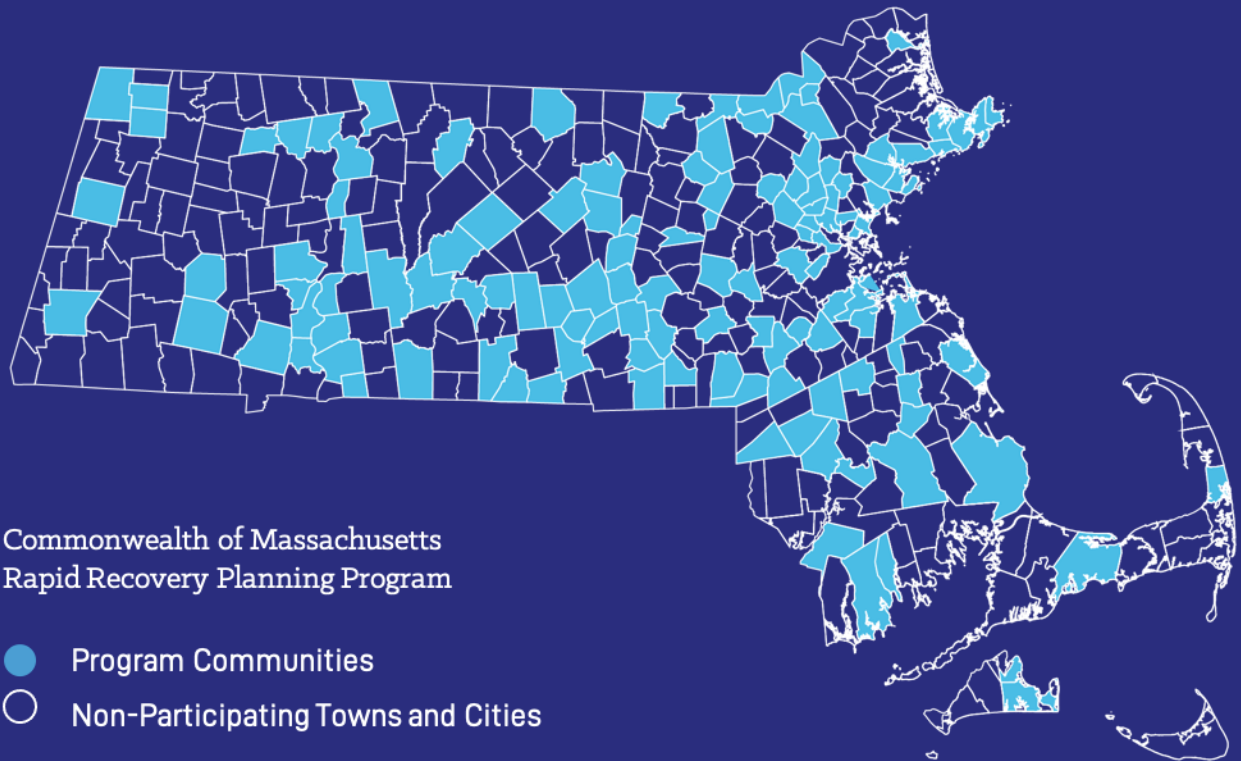
Appendices

- A. Potential Funding Spreadsheet
- B. Compendium of Best Practices
- C. Subject Matter Expert Materials
- D. Public Workshop Presentation
- E. Supporting Research and Studies

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.



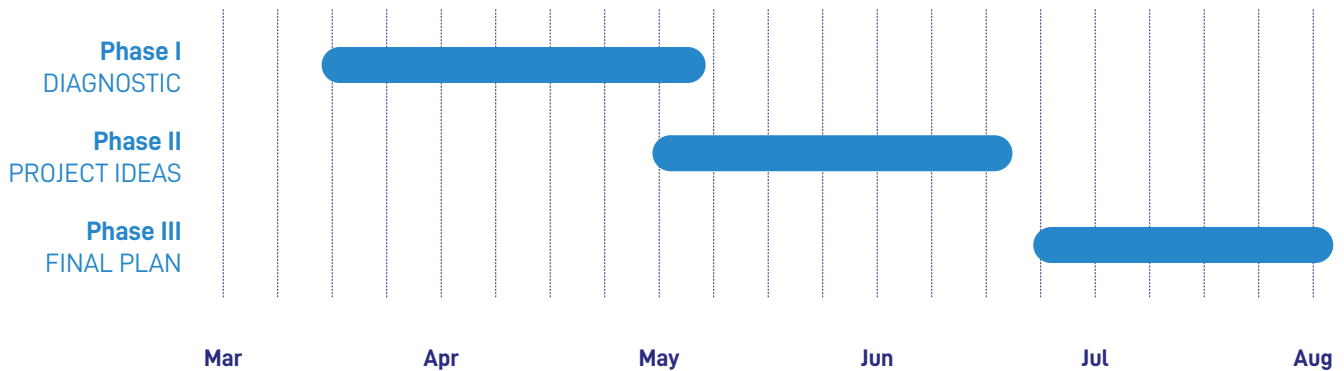
Rapid Recovery Plan (RRP) Program

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



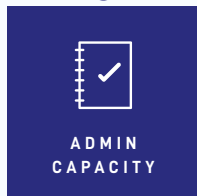
Who are the customers of businesses in the Study Area?



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

2.0 Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Keeping 'Uptown' at the center of it all

The Town of Foxborough is approximately 20 miles both south Metro Boston and north of Providence, RI. Located on Rte. 140, just west of Rte. 95 and North of Rte. 495, with a railroad spur linked to the North-East Corridor, it has been said the Town is the 'Center of New England'. And that may be true in more ways than the Town's geographic location; Foxborough is also home to the World Champion New England Patriots Football Team.

Gillette Stadium and Patriot Place is located four miles north of the Foxborough Common, and is a significant attraction in the community, functioning as village within the larger town. It is source of employment and generator of local business revenue and creates significant traffic congestion throughout Foxborough Center on game days. While outside this study's Project Area, the role of the stadium in the community and relationship to the central business district should not be overlooked.

First settled in 1704, the town is organized in a traditional, colonial New England fashion, around a central green. As the Town grew, the green space likely decreased as the roadway encircling the green increased in size to accommodate traffic moving through town on what was to become Rte. 140. Over time the green, or Town Common evolved as the 'hub' of the wheel, with Rte. 140 aligned north to south through the Common, and other roads radiating outward from the Common in North-East, South-East, North-West and South-West directions.

Historically the very first churches, businesses and houses fronted on the Common. Later build-out and development was then established along the 'spokes' of the roadways that radiate outward from the center 'hub' of the Common. As vehicular traffic levels increased over time, the Common became somewhat isolated from daily commerce as the outlying radial streets were home to many closely spaced, densely walkable and diverse businesses. These radial streets are narrower, thus easier for pedestrians to cross, and offer curbside parking in front of the businesses. As businesses in the downtown prospered parking and traffic congestion became more of a challenge and most infrastructure improvements favored vehicle movements, not pedestrians. As the downtown became more auto centric, the relatively tight development pattern and perceived parking challenges lead to a loss of business, with the core of the downtown area experiencing some decline over the years as suburban development in outlying areas seemingly offered greater convenience with easy and fast in-out access.

The Common and surrounding district was re-branded Foxborough's 'Uptown' in 2017 to define and re-invent the Central Business District. The historic Common has hosted events, concerts, festivals and in recent years the farmer's market. These events draw the public to the green, and bring people to the Uptown area, but that activity to a degree is event and location specific and does not necessarily correspond to increase commerce for the businesses lining the radiating streets. When events on the Common are not underway, the vibrancy and commerce in the Uptown Area slows.

However, several projects are now under construction and are starting to re-frame how the Uptown area is perceived and when on-line will be elevating the level of daily activity and enhance Uptown attractions. The re-opening of the Marilyn Rodman Performing Arts Center and new Shovel Town Brewery are in the process of transforming the North -West corner of Uptown. New businesses coming in and re-lining Central Street are added destinations in the South-East quadrant, and several large housing projects are anticipated to being construction in 2022 which will infuse residents into the walkable core of the Uptown area.

In order build on these ventures and develop a plan for long-term recovery and resiliency for the Uptown area, a vision needs to be established that is broad-based, with an emphasis on the restoration of the balance that historically existed between the attraction of events on the Common itself and the areas of commerce on the surrounding edges and radiating streets that converge at the common.

Creating safe and convenient crosswalks, decreasing crossing distances and slowing traffic are key steps to continuing to establish the Uptown as an inviting area to visit, walk, shop and do business. During this LRRP planning process, discussion often focused on investment and the re-establishment of the walkable Central Business District, featuring an array of goods and services linked with interconnected crosswalks and sidewalks and more organized and evident parking. Investment in the Public realm often incentivizes renewal and infill development from the private sector and there remains good opportunities for private investment in the Uptown.

Discovering Foxborough's 'Un-Common' became an organizing concept guiding this work, with the approach of looking at the edges beyond the central green Common and creating initiatives to build back and expand commerce and reinvigorate the Uptown Area. This Study proposes several diverse projects derived from past plans, data collected during the Diagnostic Phase of this work, as well as from stakeholder interviews, Foxborough Common Business Collaborative meetings, Town Staff and input from the business community and general public.

To Ensure that Foxborough has a strong post COVID 19 recovery and continues to move toward greater economic resiliency, the following recommendations have been developed.

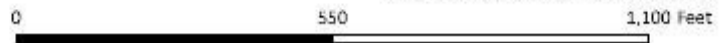
- 1. Re-Invent and Organize Central Street Parking Lot**
- 2. Create Administrative Capacity for Uptown Foxborough Marketing**
- 3. Create a Parking District Management Plan**
- 4. Develop Uptown Collaborative Marketing Portal / Web Based Marketing**
- 5. Conduct Arts and Culture Opportunity and Needs Assessment**
- 6. Create Public Art Installations - 2D Murals**
- 7. Create Public Art Installations - 3D Art**
- 8. Implement Storefront Revitalization and Building Facade Improvements**
- 9. Establish Uptown Foxborough as a Regional Mountain Bike Hub**
- 10. Establish Safety and Walkability Improvements**
- 11. Create Pocket Parks and Related Site Improvements**

Refer to the following page for a map of the Study Area



Town of Foxborough, MA
Local Rapid Recovery Planning Program

Data Source: MassGIS
 Issue Date: April 2021
 This Map is Intended for Planning Purposes Only



A map of the Foxborough study area

3.0 Diagnostic

Key Findings

Introduction

This Section summarizes data collected and creates a framework for recommendations based in input received during the planning process. Foxborough was unique through the first and second waves of the Pandemic, with no permanent or temporary business closures reported due to COVID-19. However, nearly 70% of the businesses participating in the study reported reduced hours and /or reduced operating capacity, resulting in economic loss. Securing reliable staffing continues to be a challenge even in the 4th quarter of 2021 and in many cases days and/or hours of business operation remain reduced.

It is important to note that construction material costs and other uncertainties during 2020 stalled several projects planned to start in Uptown. While outside the study area, the initial 'Fan Ban' and subsequent dramatic reduction in spectators headed to events at Gillette Stadium dramatically reduced traffic passing through the central business district and negatively impacted local businesses, including those in the Uptown area.

While the COVID 19 virus continues to both surge and ebb, Foxborough residents have found ways to re-discover normal routines and activity on the Common and commerce in the Uptown area is being re-established. It is important that this study generates key project recommendations that will bring regular and sustained foot traffic to Uptown and support local businesses. Increased business revenues will directly and positively impact the small business owners and employees.



The Town's customer base is middle class

The community is predominantly white, with approximately 28% of the population between the ages of 19 and 54. The average educational attainment of 78% of the Town-wide population includes some college education and Foxborough's median income ranks eighty-fifth out of the Commonwealth's three hundred Cities and Towns. The median income in the Study Area is \$88,247.00, which is approximately \$6,000.00 greater than the Town's median income.

The Town's customer base is middle class, with diverse interests, equivalent to the business offerings in the Uptown area. The business district has been characterized as still a 'one-stop-shopping' experience where you can walk to the post office, library, and pharmacy and along the way get your hair cut, buy insurance, get a coffee, pick up a new battery for your car, eat lunch and join the Marines.

Specialty businesses such as Cindi's Diamond and Jewelry Gallery attracts customers from across New England, and nearby Gillette Stadium brings local and national visitors into the community on a regular basis. Several new and recently rehabilitated restaurants continue to increase in popularity and increasingly draw more people to the Uptown.

DEMOGRAPHICS	STUDY AREA	TOWN WIDE
Population	240	18,356
At Least Some College	71%	78%
Median Income	\$88,247	\$82,328
Age (0 - 18)	26%	26%
Age (19 - 54)	28%	25%
Age (55 - 84)	27%	30%
Race (Non-White)	48%	48%

Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census Data



Public perceptions about the existing physical environment

The consultant team examined the condition and inventoried features of the public realm during the diagnostic phase of the project. Refer to the table at lower right which depicts the study areas cumulative score of each element examined during the field survey. The Towns sidewalks ranked highest, followed closely by good quality roadbeds, crosswalks and signage. Elements more closely related to the pedestrian experience such as lighting and street trees & benches were inconsistent enough to result in failing cumulative scores for the Uptown area.

In a similar manner the private realm was examined and inventoried as well in a diagnostic process, with 'B' or average scores assigned to element such as Windows, Signage, Façades and Lighting on the buildings in Uptown. The lack of awnings and outdoor display/outdoor dining space throughout the Uptown area was uniform, resulting in failing cumulative scores for those elements as seen in the second table.

In addition to the field work, the Business Survey results received expressed similar concerns, with the following three items identified as areas of dissatisfaction with need for improvement.

- Condition of Private Building, Storefront and Signs
- Proximity to Complementary Businesses and Users
- Access for Customers and Employees suggesting walkability improvements, and changes in public parking availability, management, or policies.

During the study the Town initiated two pilot projects, both designed to slow and better organize the 2-3 lanes of traffic circulating around the Common and make the crosswalks safer, thus enhancing walkability to and from the Common. The Common 'hub' can be considered a green island in the center of Uptown, with fewer pedestrian accommodations, site amenities and landscaping to be found on the surrounding streets. While Uptown attractions and arrangement of businesses around the Common and functional, the team noted a lack of walkability along and between the radiating street 'spokes' with challenging crossings, lack of public seating/dining areas, few benches, limited green space and few street trees outside of the footprint of the Common.

PUBLIC REALM ELEMENTS	CUMULATIVE SCORE
Lighting	NA / FAIL
Wayfinding & Signage Benches	B
Sidewalk	A
Street Trees & Benches	NA / FAIL
Roadbed & Crosswalks	B



Foxborough would benefit from green space and outdoor dining

Uptown Foxborough, the Central Business district is approximately 3.25 mile in size. While organized around the Common, the majority of the Uptown commercial area land mass is positioned between the Common and the existing railroad line east of the common. Several businesses extend beyond the tracks further to the east.

Portions of uptown are tightly framed with businesses lining the sidewalks, such as on Central Street. Other streets such as Mechanic Street, show far less retail/commercial density.

There were some challenges noted regarding uniformity and proximity of businesses, further exacerbated by walkability challenges related to pedestrian safety crossing the streets and sidewalk continuity. However, the overall urban form of the streets and buildings outside the footprint of the Common provide an excellent framework for retail restoration, with diverse buildings, alleyways, shoulder to shoulder businesses, and curb-side parking the area encircling the Common will be at the center of the Town's economic recovery plan.

PRIVATE REALM ELEMENTS	CUMULATIVE SCORE
Lighting	B
Facade	B
Awning	NA / FAIL
Signage	B
Outdoor Display & Dining	NA / FAIL
Window	B



Proven stewardship in support of local businesses

Deeply steeped in history, the community's identity is closely linked to the Common. The leading business advocacy group in Uptown, the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative (FCBC) is organized and lead by volunteers, Town leaders and staff members. The FCBC has taken the lead since 2017 and implemented many initiatives to enhance the Uptown area, and the work and investment is visible throughout the project area. In 2020-2021, the challenges in front of the FBFC are similar to those faced in many communities: many of the businesses have elevated needs and creative and extensive actions are required to attract and sustain commercial activity. The pandemic continues to highlight areas of need in regard to establishing economic resiliency, and in communities without staffing resources the need continues to out-pace the volunteer resources available to coordinate, program, plan and implement initiatives that could help businesses remain viable.

Analysis



PARKING

The complexion of parking in the Uptown area is as diverse as the businesses, consisting of large off street front door parking lots, on-street curbside parking, interior back-of-house surface lots, and some instances, buildings without on-site parking. The Town is part owner of the Central Street parking lot, south east of the Common. There is available parking at Town Hall, west of Market Street and there are plans to construct fourteen new off-street spaces in a new municipal lot.

Recently all hourly parking restrictions were removed and there are presently no restrictions on parking other than in isolated instances.

Over the years several parking studies have been conducted, with an array of recommendations designed to address what most studies characterize as a parking perception problem, and not a capacity problem. However, with new large scale development projects planned for Uptown an update to the most recent study and corresponding action plan to establish a proactive approach on parking in Uptown is warranted.



PUBLIC GREENSPACE

The central organizing feature in Uptown is the Common, which is sometimes characterized as the center of a traffic rotary, as seven roads converge at this location. The Common has a large central flagpole, a bandstand, as well as several memorials. Beyond the Common, the study area was noted to have very little green space and limited pedestrian amenities. The team observed a only a few street trees and benches beyond the perimeter fence of the Common.

Planting of street trees and related greening of areas combined with installation of pedestrian amenities would make the streets more inviting for pedestrians.

SIDEWALKS

The pedestrian environment within Uptown includes primarily concrete sidewalks along the roadways that are generally continuous. The width in some areas such as along Central Street, fronting businesses, the available space is tight, and as currently configured limits sidewalk dining and outdoor retail opportunities. In other areas such as the edges of the Common, there appears to be excessive sidewalk width.

The surface condition of the sidewalks and crosswalk as good and Business Survey respondents indicated satisfaction. Based on field observation, accessibility appears to be inconsistent in some locations, and street crossings challenging, depending on the time of day.

During the course of this work the Town deployed several pilot projects conceived to slow the speed of vehicular traffic and enhance pedestrian safety at the crosswalks.

These pilot projects appeared to enhance overall safety and provided enhanced walkability in the Uptown, and similar approaches to all streets radiating outward from the Common should be considered to help connect retail, business and restaurant destinations.

Analysis



UPTOWN

Foxborough Center (Uptown) is the traditional commercial and cultural center of the town. The architecture is diverse, 19th, 20th and early 21st century construction, consisting of churches, multi family residences, single story warehouse style buildings, one and two story storefronts, some with office space or living space on the floor above. While much of the early businesses fronted on the Common, today the Uptown retail and business attractions line the streets radiating outward from the Common as well. Originally an important crossroads with regional significance due to the railroad line east of the Common, the current arrangement of the buildings, parking and streets around the Common favors the automobile and is not yet ideally suited for more modern shopping experiences.

Restoring vibrancy in Uptown can be accomplished by continued investment working within the urban street and building pattern that exists, with an emphasis on creating greater density, leading to an enhanced tenant mix, and expanded dining and shopping opportunities. Continuing with wayfinding and enhancing walkability along and, importantly, between streets making street crossings safer, while concurrently making public parking more intuitive will help serve to knit together business attractions scattered across the Uptown and convey a more cohesive, uptown retail experience.



ADMIN CAPACITY

Like most town centers, activity in the Uptown area slowed in 2020-2021. But several large development initiatives have re-started and transformation is coming to the Uptown area, with Shovel Town Brewery presently under construction and a total of one hundred and fifteen housing units planned for construction in 2022-2023.

At this time, expanding the administrative capacity of the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative (FCBC) is important, not only help address COVID -19 economic recovery but to also build administrative capacity toward the future as these new projects come on line and as other infill and redevelopment opportunities ripen such as the potential disposition of excess Schneider Electric property. The FCBC as presently configured has limited capacity and resources to advance the envisioned recovery and resiliency initiatives outlined in this study.

Serving the needs of Foxborough community, the existing businesses and attracting new business and new development to the Uptown area is timely and important now, as the pandemic recovery and other initiatives converge. Establishing the administrative capacity to plan, and guide the implementation of recommendations while increasing events and marketing activities for Uptown will help create future economic resiliency.

4.0 Project Recommendations

4.1 Re-Invent and Organize Central Street Parking Lot

Category		Public Realm and Private Realm
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Phase I Business Survey Public Workshop Stakeholder Interviews
Budget		High \$200,000+
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Medium Risk - Positive outcomes rely on a commonly held vision and public / private partnership
Key Performance Indicators	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Workshop participation and satisfaction among participants 2) Ability to implement a legal framework to manage the parking lot 3) Noticeable Physical improvements to the parking lot 4) Increased revenue for adjacent businesses 5) Establishing the lot as the Center of the Foxborough's Un-Common successful use of the lot for community events (chili cook-off, away game events, seasonal street markets, etc.) <p>Exponential impact – inclusion / integration with larger district improvements</p>	
Partners & Resources	<p>Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Town of Foxborough Abutting Landowners and Businesses</p>	



Existing Conditions



Explore Foxborough's "Un-Common" space opposite the Common and immediately adjacent to area businesses. Above is a Conceptual Study depicting minor improvements to better organize parking, improve lighting add greenery and create outdoor eating areas. Access to the 1st and 2nd floors of abutting buildings could be enhanced as part of this initiative.

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- Proximity and ease of parking were cited as challenges. Formalize and enhance the Central Street Parking Area as expressed through stakeholder interviews and in the Phase 1 RRP Public Meeting
- Sets the stage for expanded and flexible use of outdoor space to allow for revenue generation while enabling social distancing.

Action Items

- Envision and Plan: Through a participatory planning process, develop a program and plan for physical improvements and re-organization of parking on several abutting lots that compose the Central St. Parking Lot. This unified master plan will be geared toward multi-party and public use of the central parking lot area and will include related maintenance strategies. The plan will address mechanism to create improvements, manage shared parking and accommodate flexible alternative uses such as entertainment, events, or dining.
- Reach Agreement: Use this information to write a legal agreement (MOU etc.) for shared use, maintenance, and funding among all pertinent parties.
- Transform and connect: Begin process of resource transformation and plan for inclusion of this revitalized resource in the broader district activation strategy.

Process

- Launch: Determine project lead, secure funding, hire consultants. Identify / confirm landownership as well as all business stakeholders. Determine if translation services are required. Gather relevant planning materials and provide to consultants.
- Hold Community Planning Workshop
 1. Invite stakeholders / project participants
 2. Consider the idea of organizing site visits to relevant properties (such as Bow Market in Somerville) prior to the workshop.
 3. Hold Site-walk / Stakeholder Workshop to develop Master Plan. Decide on needed deliverables and design process to create them.
 4. Plan process to orient participants and state workshop goals. Include vision exercise and explore precedents as precursor to program development

Potential Deliverables

- Intent statements: Covid economic recovery and resilience goals + vision for improvement. Relationship to broader community goals / values / initiatives (including other LRRP projects).
- Map inventory of key resources, uses, access needed, and stakeholders.

- Site utilization plan/program and strategy ("design thinking solutions")
- Placemaking elements, inclusive of preliminary cost estimates / funding strategies. Include both fixed interventions and program pilots designed to generate community feedback
- Work Plan: Public Realm improvements & funding; private realm improvements & funding sources; access - improvements & funding sources. Should also address how/when pilot elements will be integrated.
- Ongoing management strategy: key goals, responsibilities in relationship to each intervention as well as ongoing management and maintenance of areas / resources included. Determine if entity will also be engagement in marketing and event management – or if this will be done separately. Creative funding mechanisms.

Core Content for Legal Framework

- Develop Legal framework / Design physical transformation (likely an iterative process):
- Expand consult with Attorney Re: Formalize legal arrangement to organize land and user groups.
- Create legal structure / license / MOU
- Develop Schematic approach to recycling, trash, etc.
- Develop Schematic Plan for unified and flexible Central Parking Lot.
- Gain consensus and agreement from all invested parties as necessary to formalize management structure
- Create Central Parking Lot Management entity
- Undertake construction / improvements and begin operation strategy:

General Notes


- Brand the revitalized asset as the "Uncommon" and begin events program
- Monitor progress and adjust if need be.
- Celebrate success and acknowledge community creativity & collaboration at every opportunity!

Other

- Re-thinking the parking lot to be more efficient accommodate other uses or be a space to host special events and could expand retail opportunities for adjacent businesses.
- Improving the 'back' of the businesses surrounding the parking lot could include construction of an elevated deck and common elevator to create access to under-utilized second floors for office and business use.

4.2 Create Administrative Capacity for Uptown Foxborough Marketing

HIGH PRIORITY

Category		Administrative Capacity
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Paige Duncan AICP, Planning Director, Town of Foxborough Foxborough Common Business Collaborative
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000) The Town has no budgeted allocation for staffing. Outside funding is necessary
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Medium Risk – Position to be established for a minimum of 3 years
Key Performance Indicators		Anticipated impacts are 1) The development of a more robust and cohesive Uptown Marketing strategy advanced through a specific person. Measurable by <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sales 2) Business participation 3) Uptown Events 4) Web Visits and 5) Sales
Partners & Resources		Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Town of Foxborough Uptown Stakeholders



An example of one type of event for consideration in 2021. All events require coordination for success and they present opportunities to put forth a strong brand for Uptown.

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- Throughout the Rapid Recovery Plan planning process it became clear much of the Uptown Area's marketing and branding is being conducted by a small group of business owners/volunteers and town staff through the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative (FCBC)
- The businesses generally operate as independent entities in regard to marketing ie. Individual 'eggs' within the larger 'basket' of Uptown.
- Business viability during the height of COVID was individual business responsibility of the Business Survey respondents, 78% expressed an interest in receiving some kind of assistance including:
 - Shared Marketing /Advertising
 - Facade Improvements
 - Purchase of Property in Uptown
 - Training on use of social media
- The Business Survey included questions regarding the importance of Attraction and Retention of Customers. Over 71% of the respondents indicated that having more cultural events/activities was either "Important" or "Very Important" to them and 67% noted the same levels of importance regarding the need for Marketing Strategies for Uptown.
- Moving forward to address the Uptown Business Districts needs based on current and projected growth and business interests adequately requires a dedicated, administration and/ or organizational entity to advance the collective business interests of Uptown.

Action Items

- Explore viability of full or part time position
- Secure funding for dedicated staff, expand help for businesses
- Hire staff and establish resources to help move daily operations and initiatives forward: Set aside \$20,000 in a quick access bank account requiring two signatures to become more nimble.
- Develop expanded, structured engagement strategy
- Activate strategy and request sponsorship from banks, large foundations, corporations etc. in support of FCBC as well as specific events and activities.
- Create community calendar of structured Uptown events (three (3) minimum)
- Monitor and confirm results with stakeholders
- Transition FCBC to private sector funding

Process

- Create business and community advisory working group to listen to the community and businesses; obtain feedback to help set level of need and goals.
- Develop organizational structure and job description
- Seek short and long term funding sources

Other





- With an expansion of marketing and programming efforts in Uptown the timing is right to invest in further development of a strong and recognizable Logo for Uptown to correspond with branding initiatives



The Center of Foxborough should not be thought of as a traffic circle, but rather as place where people live and work, with vibrant businesses and engaging public spaces that visitors and residents alike seek out. Advocacy for the Uptown Area requires expanded programming and engagement to reach full potential.

4.3 Create A Parking District Management Plan

HIGH PRIORITY

Category		Public Realm
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		MPAC 2012 Parking Study Paige E. Duncan, AICP Planning Director Foxborough Common Business Collaborative
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000) MassDevelopment's Commonwealth Places, DHCD's MDI Technical Assistance Grant Program, Town funding, Upcoming CARES Act disbursements from the State of MA (TBD), Upcoming ARPA grants (TBD)
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk - 1) Confirm level of need based on updated Inventory, 2) Requires buy-in and cooperation among public and private parties, 3) Development of Town staff support for parking recommendations and implementation, 4) Establishment of sufficient Town capacity to administer / operate an expanded parking management system, 5) Funding - Identifying funding for study and Implementation of recommendations, 6) Long term parking management - Need to determine permanent management and operations practices / capacity
Key Performance Indicators		1) Survey of businesses and public after implementation, 2) Higher level of use for all parking supply, 3) Increased pedestrian activity and use of public spaces at more remote parking areas, 4) Increased parking availability, 5) Increased sales and meals tax revenue
Partners & Resources		1) Foxborough Common Business Collaborative (FCBC), 2) Town of Foxborough, 3) DPW, 4) Police Department, 5) Zoning/Planning Departments, 6) Parking Department/Enforcers (if applicable), 7) Economic Development Committee, 8) Board of Selectmen, 9) Foxborough Common Business Collaborative



Aerial view depicting on-street parking and large central parking lot. Recently installed wayfinding signage has expanded use of the parking lot in 2021.

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- Address public concern regarding safe and convenient parking near desired destinations
- Organize and publicly identify Uptown Parking resources as expressed in RRP Public Meeting
- Building off of new wayfinding signs for the central lot
- COVID-19 has increased the negative perception of parking availability in Uptown Foxborough. While ample available supply exists within a short walk, prime front-door on- and off-street spaces nearest the Common/Uptown Core experience higher occupancy, contributing to negative perceptions when available spaces are not well-known, advertised or incentivized. This condition has worsened with new retail and residential development, impacting the perception that parking availability is constraining the growth of merchant revenues and threatening future development opportunities.

Action Items

- Inventory of both public and private, existing, and proposed parking spaces in Uptown Foxborough
- Compile a review of shared and otherwise obligated parking spaces
- Compare existing and proposed needs.
- Create Uptown Parking Master Plan
- Create structured management
- Developing a parking use, needs and management analysis and recommendations for the Uptown district will require a parking study that recommends a parking management program which the Town and its partners can implement as soon as possible. The study should carefully evaluate previously identified parking patterns (inventory and regulation), regulatory controls, enforcement protocols, off-street regulations and controls, future development impacts and local administrative capacity for the existing district and proposed developments—updating the analysis with recent data, counts and observations if necessary. It should include outreach to Town and private stakeholders, residents,

landowners, merchants, and other key users of the Uptown parking system. The preferred program should address on- and off-street supply, policy, management, controls, regulations and other strategies in a phased approach that considers improved short-term activation of underutilized supply and long-term development of shared parking strategies as parking demand grows. Key outcomes of the study should include:

- Inventory analysis and mapping (building off of the 2012 and 2019 data)
- Use analysis (building off of the 2012 and 2019 data)
- Operations, management and administrative review
- Phased plan for investments in equipment and infrastructure
- Regulatory changes
- Management recommendations
- Marketing, information, wayfinding, etc. improvements
- Formalized shared parking structure
- Pedestrian connectivity to key parking facilities
- Parking technology assessment (for future paid parking and near-term parking wayfinding)

Process

- Define study area: Determine boundary for data collection. Should include primary public parking areas associated with commercial activity and extend a block beyond the limit of associated activity to determine if spill-over parking exists. This should incorporate all parking facilities collected during the 2012 and 2019 inventory and utilization efforts to assess how parking demand and regulations have changed.
- Identify a working group: An oversight committee comprised of municipal staff, volunteer board members, the business community (including the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative), merchants and residents is recommended to define study goals, focus analysis, support outreach activities, and review recommendations.



On-Street parking along central street is typically occupied while spaces in the lot behind the businesses remain open. With the installation of wayfinding signage in 2021 the lot has experienced and increase in use



Cones placed as part of a pilot project to explore reconfigured parking to enhance safety.

- Amass available data: Amassing information about parking activity, parking demand, land uses, multi-modal conditions, etc. in advance of beginning a study will help reduce costs by more clearly defining the need. Demand/use data collected should be compared to previously collected data to understand parking trends in Uptown.
- Scope study: A study sufficient to understand supply, demand and the regulatory, land use and network factors influence parking patterns should include the following steps (outlined in greater detail separately):
 - Establishment of goals for the parking district management plan that guide the analyses and recommendations
 - Detailed parking inventory
 - Parking activity analysis
 - Data Collection Structure Development: create a reporting structure for parking data collection efforts (of inventory and utilization) that includes information such as data collection instructions, and monitoring mechanisms
 - Parking Management Structure Development: analyze existing operational & financial management approach and develop for Uptown
 - Parking demand & zoning analysis
 - This should take into consideration the impact new development has on the existing parking system, and how parking facilities can accommodate new development such as the Shovel Town Brewery, Schneider Electric, and residential complexes on Wall Street, South Street, and Market Street
 - Pedestrian Connectivity/wayfinding analysis
 - This task should address connectivity to more remote parking facilities, such as the Railroad Avenue lot and Town Hall lot as well as identify areas for parking-related wayfinding signage that direct to short and long-term parking facilities
 - Parking enforcement analysis
 - Public engagement process
 - The district management plan team should use this process to present results from the inventory and activity analyses and provide an update from the previous parking planning efforts, as well as collect feedback from the recently implemented wayfinding infrastructure
 - Strategies & recommendations
 - Final plan
 - Identify study lead: While typically a consultant is hired as an outside, objective and professional resource, a parking study can be done by the municipality or a local organization if objectivity and sufficient capacity is available.
 - Study advertising & initiation: For consultant studies, an RFP with the recommended scope should be prepared and advertised, followed by an approved selection process. The start of a study by a consultant or in-house resources should be advertised and promoted to get broad input, especially if public surveys, interviews, etc. are expected.
- Working group engagement and finding a champion: An active working group representing the fully array of parking interests is recommended to participate throughout the study and to provide continuity after the study is complete. Ideally a champion(s) can be found to guide implementation of recommendations and report back to working group members.
- Study Outcomes: A variety of possible outcomes may help Uptown address its parking issues, all of which may be on the agenda for a committed champion. These may include:
 - Changes to on-street regulations, such as adjusting/removing time-limits, adjusting span of regulation/pricing, or changes to pricing;
 - Wayfinding improvements, including static and electronic signs, as well as online mapping for lots, walkways, remote parking, and short & long term options;
 - Parking permit changes, including modifications to on- and off-street residential programs, employee permits, and commuter parking;
 - Supply enhancements, including re-striping on-street spaces, new on-street spaces, lot reconfigurations, and parking garages;
 - Enforcement changes, including adjustment of hours, routes, staffing, handheld technologies, and protocols;
 - Payment technologies, including pay-by-cell, kiosks, smart meters, reservation systems, parking gates, and more;
 - Demand management solutions, such as parking cash-out programs, market-rate parking pricing, transit & bikeshare subsidies, traveler information programs, etc.
 - Integration of future development into parking system, that promotes shared parking and revisits parking standards/requirements
 - Parking access solutions, such as improvements to sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, landscaping, security features, etc.;
 - Parking design improvements, such as landscaping, screening, garage fenestration, walkways, plantings, green infrastructure, and more.
 - Phased supply strategies, including a short-term approach to increasing remote parking lot use through attractive programming and a full-time ambassador on each level of the garage to overcome security concern; followed by a long-term strategy to begin design development, funding strategies and construction of a second garage when parking demand numbers demonstrate its need.

4.4 Develop Uptown Collaborative Marketing Portal / Web Based Marketing

Category		Revenue and Sales
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Paige Duncan AICP, Planning Director, Town of Foxborough Stakeholder Interviews Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Public Workshop
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk - Survey results indicated support of initiative. Requires shared vision and individual business commitment
Key Performance Indicators		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Announce initiative and observe if there is an increase in number of businesses participating in FCBC meetings. 2. Issue and track level of interest / responses to RFP for consultant support and participation in the development of workshops. 3. Count the number of workshop sessions conducted over the course of six (6) months, and track attendance at the workshop sessions. 4. Observe: Within six (6) months is a web page or similar Uptown Commerce portal established?
Partners & Resources		Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Uptown Business

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- In Foxborough there is an existing Uptown Business Association, The Foxborough Common Business Collaborative (FCBC) which, as is typical of these groups, has struggled to maintain membership and energy. The Covid 19 pandemic added to the group's woes as individual business owners struggled to stay afloat- and in doing so by necessity were much less committed to the greater goals of a community organization. Increasingly there have been fewer and fewer participants, and in the last year or so there have been 3 or 4 individuals who have kept the organization moving forward. At this time there is not currently an appetite to establish a more formal structure such as a Business Improvement District, Main Street Organization or similar. As such there is an urgent need to reinvigorate the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative, to establish more direct support for the local businesses, and to expand the work being done to support the business at the next level.
- Consider initially seeking pro bono web management services from high school students, Wheaton College students or local providers. Demonstrate need, and potential, and acknowledge it is OK to ASK for help... even to get things started and set up so that someone else can take over.
- Offer several workshops to retailers to help them be-the-best-they-can-be, post-pandemic. Many know that they lost touch with customers when they could not have their doors open as brick-and-mortar establishments, and many realize that they have not paid as much attention to their brand as they used to... Communicate with the businesses and let them know that you understand this and are putting programs in place to help them will be appreciated and possibly reduce inertia. Remind them "a body at rest stays at rest, but a body in motion stays in motion!"
- Establish business support through workshops designed to help businesses return to strength. Retain a consultant to conduct a 1 ½ workshop and provide 1:1 consultation with business owners to help them determine what they need most, new signage, window displays, interior improvements, promotions (Refer to other Recommendations made within this Study).
- Sessions could also focus on websites, using social media, database instruction, etc. It is important to secure a set location and day. Often Mondays, Tuesdays, or Wednesdays from 8-9:30 are best – assuring business owners that they will be back at their store in time to open. Two possible workshops might be:

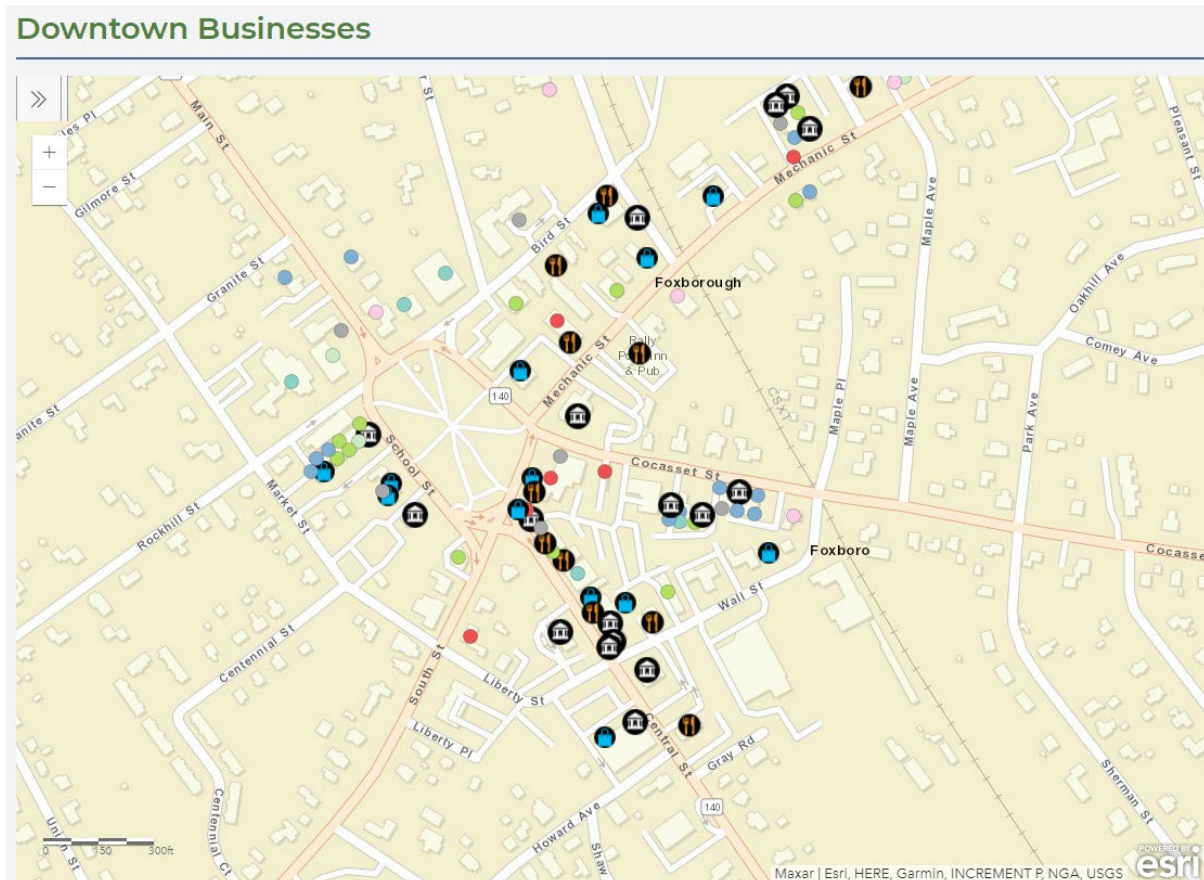
Action Items

- Engage business owners, interested residents and town leaders, etc. to help be ambassadors for this initiative. Administrative support from the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative will add structure and formalize this process. Share the vision that strengthening the FBFC and enhancing the collective branding and web presence of the Uptown Businesses is NEEDED NOW.
 - A collective listing of Uptown Businesses designed to draw increased interest in the Uptown area and help support Foxborough businesses is important to put in place now, and the timing is important to best align and maximize the positive impacts, building on major initiatives that are coming on-line in the Uptown area, such as the new businesses on Central Street, The Shovel Town Brewer, and new residential construction projects in walkable core.
 - Reach out to "Show them the love." Inform retailers, salon owners, restaurateurs, and other small business owners that the town is with them... for one example, adding tabs to the welcome page on the website to help promote local businesses. Link the content in the tab to Foxborough's Uptown Happenings – Facebook page.
 - It is very important to add to add the word Foxborough to this Facebook page /site so that not only "those in the know" can find it; open the door to a broader audience, and then promote it as the place to learn about new businesses, spontaneous events, special sales, etc. occurring in Uptown. The website listings should be more of a directory.
- #1 "Using technology to build and grow business" - with topics like:
- Creating a customer database'
 - Building a website
 - Facebook and Instagram for business
 - Blogs and other social media tools
- #2 "The Power of Presentation" -- with topics like:
- Curb appeal for your storefront – signage and façade improvements
 - Visual Merchandising – in windows and on the selling floor
 - Aligning your website, social and print media with your physical space


Create a Web page showcasing uptown Businesses. Develop a complete directory and links to the business websites.

Process

- Through the Foxborough Common Business Collaborative coalesce the businesses around the goal of creating a Shared Marketing Initiative designed to present a more understandable and uniform web-based presence to the public for all of the Uptown businesses.
- Identify a source of funding CDBG funds are approved for these types of initiatives.
- Seek formal assistance to create a 'road-map' to elevating Uptown's web presence and elevating the web-based offerings as funds permit interview and retain outside expertise in the development of this initiative
- A robust web presence need not translate to web-based commerce, but may in some cases serve to provide more complete information about the business, allow for visitors to the web site to identify synergies and opportunities in the Uptown, and accommodate scheduling of appointments or services, and otherwise open-the-door to enhanced visitation in the Uptown.



4.5 Conduct Arts and Culture Opportunity and Needs Assessment

Category		Culture/Arts
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Paige Duncan AICP, Planning Director, Town of Foxborough Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Foxborough Cultural Commission
Budget		Low less than \$50,000.00
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk - There is an established baseline of interest
Key Performance Indicators		<p>The convergence of history, arts and culture of a community can play a large role in creating an array of interesting attractions and impart vitality in a community. Identifying and making those assets fully expressed is important. The development of an approach to make the cultural and artistic community of Foxborough more visible to the public. Goals include.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct an inventory of resources and publish findings within six (6) months of the issuance of this report 2. Establish a 'trail-map' of identified historic sites within the Uptown area 3. Establish regular open studio events 4. Create a market place for artists
Partners & Resources		Foxborough Cultural Commission Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Town of Foxborough

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- The pandemic threatens arts, culture and community vitality.
- On September 28, 2021 Americans for the Arts released the latest assessment of COVID-19 impacts on the Arts: Over \$17 Billion of financial losses nationally to non-profit arts and cultural organizations. In 2020 across the country nearly 95% of scheduled art exhibits, events, etc. were canceled, and nearly 70% of the organizations studied reported severe impacts. Current data indicates recovery of jobs in this sector lags dramatically behind other sectors.
- Isolation due to the pandemic 'sheltering-in-place' and social distancing has been noted to result in negative mental health impacts. Certain activities such as arts and cultural events may mitigate those impacts.
- Overall community vitality is often expressed through the presence and vibrancy of the Arts Community and Cultural attractions. The arts industry can be an economic catalyst which can accelerate and /or build economic recovery through both in-person and virtual experiences, in both inside and out

Action Items

- Reinforce, bolster or expand existing Arts and Culture Committee if determined necessary to ensure the committee is well balanced and is able to represent all aspects of Arts, Culture, History, etc.
- Develop arts and culture resource inventory
- Identify the top local and potentially regional cultural assets.
- Identify resources that exist to enable the development of a comprehensive heritage and arts tourism plan for Uptown.

Process

- Create a committee to identify community arts and culture resources, include arts educators, artists, cultural organizations etc. Create a committee with a broad cross section of experience and knowledge of resources.
- Identify and list Arts and Culture Assets in the community.
- Identify existing or potential community benefit each arts/ culture resource serves.

Examples of community benefit derived from the assets may be:

- 1) Economic Development
 - 2) Community Livability
 - 3) Arts + Culture Tourism resource
 - 4) Central Business District Revitalization
- Document, record and publicize the results of the inventory process.
 - Create an Action Plan outlining next steps to protect, enhance and expand Arts and Culture resources in the community.







Historic Foxborough Common is an example of colonial era town planning seen in many Massachusetts communities.



Foxborough Common and immediate surrounds visibly showcase history, such as Memorial Hall. Other important historic and cultural attractions remain somewhat out of sight and thus are unknown to the general public.

4.6 Create Public Art Installations / 2D Murals

Category		Culture/Arts
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Paige Duncan AICP, Planning Director, Town of Foxborough Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Foxborough Cultural Commission Public Workshop
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk - There is an established baseline of interest. Requires shared vision
Key Performance Indicators		Anticipated impacts may be measured by: 1. The development of a visible Uptown Arts presence 2. Number of murals created in the Upton Area 3. Increased visitation and visitor retention in the Uptown Area
Partners & Resources		Foxborough Common Business Collaborative, Foxborough Cultural Commission Private Businesses with appropriate host buildings



Before and After mural, photo by Todd Alexander

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- Showcasing talent is a great way to effect change in the urban environment and create buzz and visitation in the Uptown area.
- Personal wellness during the pandemic and sense of safety often necessitated extended outdoor experiences.
- In several locations outdoor seating was established in close proximity to buildings. In some cases the space available is utilitarian.
- Murals create the opportunity to infuse interest, color and visible art into the public realm.

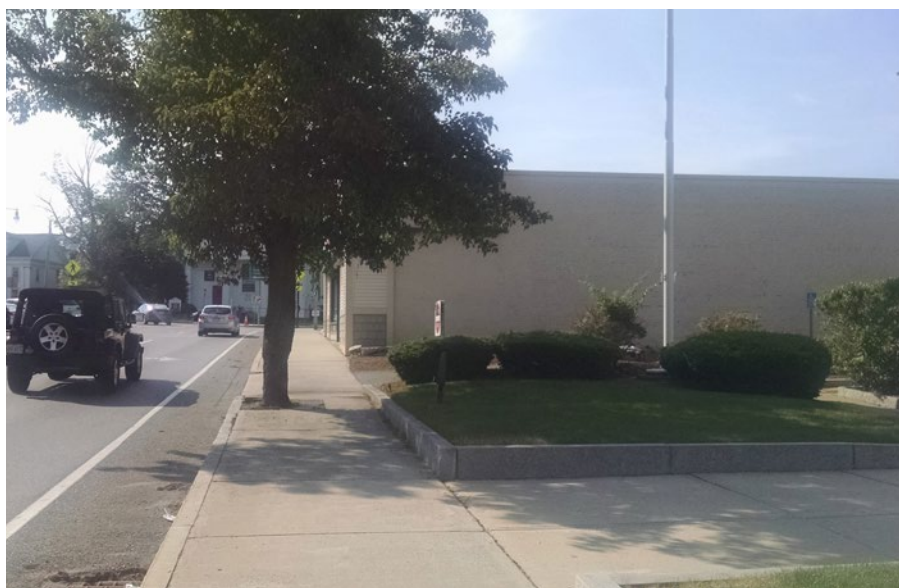
Action Items

- Establishing walkable, outdoor destinations helps encourage mobility during the pandemic. An array of murals and visible art in the community attracts interest and promotes walking within the Uptown business district.
- Create evaluation criteria and "call for entries", RFP or similar
- Establish selection team to review mural proposals, coordinate with building and business owners

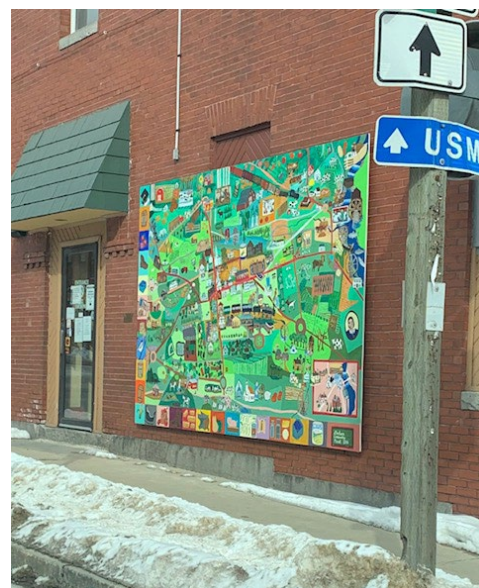
Process

- Obtain funding (Grants, Sponsorship, Community Partners)
- Identify appropriate building facades

- Develop a "Mural Master Plan" of potential sites
- Meet with Landowners/Businesses to confirm sites
- Evaluate potential of community mural that would allow for broad community participation
- Develop "call for entries" / RFP for art work based on space available on the selected buildings
- Review, assess, and assign Artists to mural locations
- Coordinate and facilitate implementation of murals
- Develop Mural Map and Branding program
- Invite the press to observe installations
- Develop and Distribute Media Kit promoting the mural project.
- Consider including public input and/or awards for enhanced recognition of pieces.



Within Uptown Foxborough several prominent blank building facades were identified as potential sites for murals. Projects require consent and coordination with landowners



An example of a mural that was created as an illustrative map of the community and highlights areas of interest

4.7 Create Public Art Installations / 3-Dimensional

Category		Culture/Arts
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Paige Duncan AICP, Planning Director, Town of Foxborough Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Foxborough Cultural Commission
Budget		Medium Budget (\$50,000-\$200,000)
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk - Aligns with Arts and Culture Initiative to make art more visible in Uptown. Requires shared vision
Key Performance Indicators		1) Development of a visible arts presence. 2) Number of installations of Art in Uptown. 3) Increased visitation and visitor retention in Uptown.
Partners & Resources		Town of Foxborough Foxborough Common Business Collaborative, Foxborough Cultural Commission Private Businesses with suitable sites



x

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

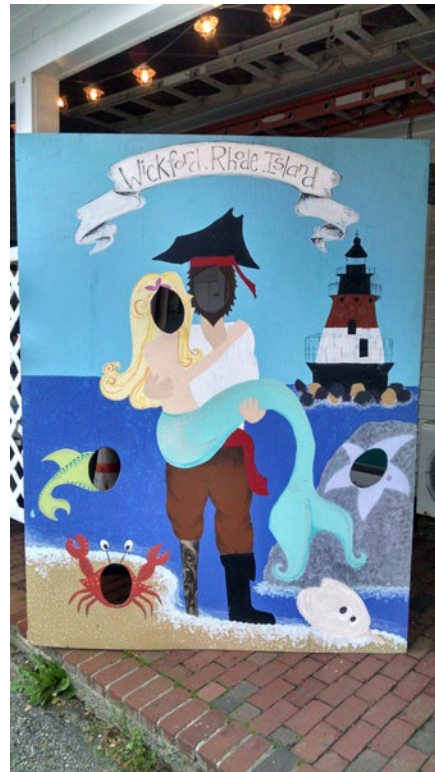
- Returning to more familiar routines include more activity in outdoor settings. As the COVID -19 pandemic continues to ebb and surge it is foreseeable that indoor gatherings will remain less well attended as many people are more comfortable participating in events in open-air settings.
- Creating an array of 3-D art installations throughout the
- Uptown is anticipated to attract visitors while allowing for social distancing. Outdoor attractions will foster visitation to Uptown, and it is anticipated that several installations will promote walkability and commerce in Uptown, with opportunities for corresponding health and wellness benefits to the community.

Action Items

- Identify both public and private sites that could host pieces of art
- Establish Town policy and approval structure
- Coordinate and put in-place any necessary agreements
- Create "Call for Entries"/ RFP or similar for new site specific work
- Evaluate possibility of leasing or renting existing art work to display
- Establish Selection Team to review art work proposals, coordinate with Landowners and Business owners.

Process

- Identify Potential Sites
- Secure rights to display art work at sites
- Develop Master Plan of sites
- Confirm / Secure art pieces for specific locations
- Facilitate installation of art work



Example of 3-D art that is 'interactive' and inspires selfies



Example of a sculpture inspired by nature and represented realistically with modern materials.



Example of large scale abstract modern sculpture constructed on a concrete foundation. Some communities have found rotating exhibitions (1 year turn-over) on fixed bases in set locations to work well for encouraging return visitors.

4.8 Implement Storefront Revitalization and Building Facade Improvements

Category		Private Realm
Location		LRRP Study Area – Uptown
Origin		LRRP Diagnostic Survey Results Public Meeting
Budget		High \$200,000+ Funding Sources: - Build Back Better, MA Downtown Initiative Program - Establishment of a BID/TIF District to fund projects - Tax Abatements/Incentives programs as incentives
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years), - Planning: 1-2 years, Implementation: 3-5 years, - Program, ongoing - Ideally a key project can be utilized as the face of the initiative and the full program can then be phased in.
		Medium Risk - Risk associated with collaboration among Town and property owners. - Funding for program - Private Interest needs to balance with available budget
Key Performance Indicators		- Participation in a storefront façade, signage, lighting, etc. for private realm revitalization in a formal program that would help to enliven downtown - Current property owners subscribing to the idea and implementing any aspects of the redesign - Future property owners ready to invest understanding the additional requirements that they would be required to implement Track number of applications to program received
Partners & Resources		- Town of Foxborough - Foxborough Common Business Collaborative (FCBC) - Foxborough Cultural Commission

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- Uptown Foxborough businesses lost momentum during Covid-19. With foot traffic to businesses down, business owners were looking for creative ways to draw in customers in the safest possible ways.
- The business survey that was conducted in Phase 1 of the LRRP program indicated that 50% of businesses expressed interest in sign and façade improvements as a way to raise awareness of their businesses to customers, this was further expressed in LRRP public meeting. As indicated in discussions, there are opportunities to make improvements to the Uptown that would create a cohesiveness to the district – this could be transformative when coupled with other projects in the area, such as the new apartments and possibly the resurrection of projects that lost momentum due to Covid-19.
- There is strong need to get a consensus and buy-in of property owners and businesses for the project to be successful. This will mean direct meetings with property owners, assessments of buildings and storefronts and other factors to make the program a success.

Action Items

- Create a Storefront Revitalization program with guidelines that allows for improvements to the private realm in the form of enhancements to buildings that includes signage, lighting, façade treatments and door and window upgrades.
- Identify funding to incentivize business owners and building owners to make investments in the Uptown area. This can be approached in multiple ways: grants, tax abatements/incentives, low interest loans.
- Create an incentive program to encourage current and future property owners to participate in the Storefront Revitalization program.
- Develop a regulatory process that enables grandfathering of current buildings and provides for long-range control and revision to the fabric of the Uptown study area as buildings change hands and new opportunities present themselves to increase the "critical mass" of the new vision.

Process- Program Planning

- Identify Town staff and / or FBFC individuals to administer the program
- Inventory and assessment of the Uptown study area buildings
- Identify eligible applicants: Businesses and Property Owners
- Identify shovel ready opportunities
- Prioritize and rate buildings during the assessment process

Budget/Funding

- Identify / budget for cost for typical façade rehabilitation and new signage
- Research and obtain funding source(s)
- Retain Architectural Consultant(s) to design the Guidelines for the program
- Develop a Marketing the program to create awareness of and promote the program.

Conceptualize Various applications within the program

- Conceptualize low to moderate applications
- Arts / Cultural – 2D Murals
- Lighting
- Planters
- Signage and business wayfinding

Conceptualize higher cost/structural applications

- Rehab facades
- Replace windows and storefronts
- Build dumpster enclosures
- Regrade, resurface and re-stripe parking lots
- Rebuild upper floors on buildings that were designed to accommodate them and / or previously had them
- Reconfiguring the parking area within the "triangle" and refurbishing the rear building facades to create a dual approach and increase use potential

Process

- Establish eligibility, application process and approval system.
- Provide initial Architectural Consultation
- Define scope and budget for each project.
- Define how the funding and process is structured
- Who pays for what
- How are payments and incentives structured
- Prepare design(s) of improvements.

- Establish a clear list of eligible improvements and / or rehabilitation. Activities, to include paint / exterior finishes, doors, windows, lighting as well as signage.
- Define approval process from application through build-out to payments
- Architectural Design solicitation / obtain proposals to construct the work.
- Construction of sign / façade / lighting improvements
- If art or murals are used the Cultural Commission should be involved (i.e. – Fresh Paint Springfield program is a good example)
- Consider expanding buildings up to create a more livable Uptown area (creating housing above storefronts)
- Know what projects are in the pipeline that may effect this program

Conceptualize Global Connectivity

- Connecting the "Common" and the "UN"-Common (Central Street triangle)
- Integrating adjacent parks and sidewalks
- Strengthening the "edge" of the Common
- Providing for the new pedestrian traffic
- To be generated by current multi-family housing projects under way
- To be re-directed through the new way-finding structure

Program Evaluation

- Reporting and evaluation on program participation and need for program improvements or modifications
- Conduct survey of businesses / owners that participate to determine any improvements or adjustments to the program
- Goman+York Compendiums on Storefronts and Business Assessments
- Downtown Manchester CT Storefront Guidelines as reference for document Link- Final Manchester ADG May 2019.pdf (townofmanchester.org)
- Attach photos and renderings of storefronts prepared as reference for improvements

Other notes from meeting

- The storefront program can also be utilized for the rear of buildings where people either park or access businesses from the rear
- More involved and transformative building upgrades should enhance access. Consider common elevator concepts to permit expanded use of second floor spaces that are presently underutilized.



Existing Conditions



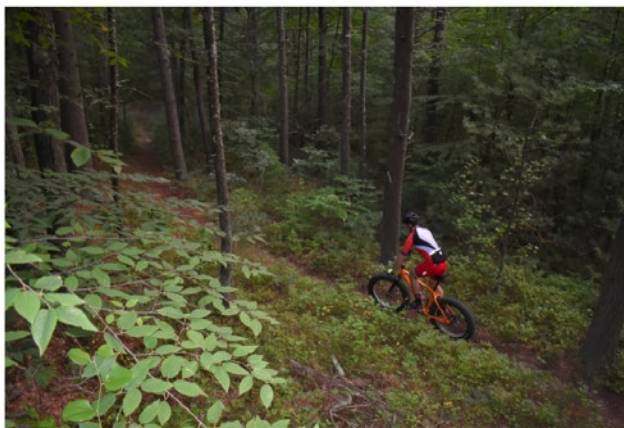
Conceptual study depicting how a existing facade may be able to be modified to engage the public.

4.9 Establish Uptown Foxborough as a Regional Mountain Bike Hub

Category		Other
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		2015 Town of Foxborough Master Plan Public Workshop Business Survey-Written Comments
Budget		High \$200,000+
Timeframe		Medium (5 -10 years)
Risk		Medium Risk - ^T here are established entities with common interests but many moving parts: Initiative requires a coordinator in order to sustain.
Key Performance Indicators		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of written initiative and formal plan to develop outreach and events strategically aligned to draw a connection between nearby F. Gilbert Hills State Forest mountain biking trails and the Uptown Area. 2. Establishment of a committee charged with the implementation of this initiative. Create outreach and build relationships with organizations such as the New England Mountain Bike Association, the local SE MASS NEMBA Foxboro group, and the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation in pursuit of formalizing gatherings and events. 3. Plan and conduct two (2) events within one (1) year of this report.

Partners & Resources

Town of Foxborough
Local Businesses
Mountain Bike / Cycling Businesses
Uptown Food and Beverage Businesses



F. Gilbert Hills State Forest is less than a half mile from the Uptown Businesses (Photo Credit, NEMBA)

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- In 2020 a measurable surge in bicycling occurred, with ridership in all age groups expanding and cycling emerging as one of the most popular forms of recreation during the Pandemic. Bicycle riding emerged as a way to be outside and safely interact with others while maintaining social distancing
- Nearby the 800+ acre F. Gilbert Hills State Forest continues to be a popular destination for cyclists. In 2015 the Town's Master Plan sought to establish a more recognized the State Park and Forest and neat Uptown attractions
- Developing a stronger relationship between the recreational activity at F. Gilbert Hills State Forest and the Uptown area will draw visitors and commerce to nearby Uptown
- Expanded use of the state forest may put increased pressure on roadways, trail heads and parking facilities. Current data suggests that outdoor recreation activities will remain prioritized and popular in post-pandemic recovery and beyond.

Action Items

- Identify potential team of businesses, cyclists and Town representatives to advance this initiative
- Create written plan to engage cycling community
- Develop coordinated and specifically timed events that are built around cycling in the State Park and link to the Uptown

Process

- Assemble Committee and build outreach network
- Based on written plan, raise awareness of the link between the park and the Up town, plan and conduct events that emphasize the connection between the park and conservation land and Uptown
- Conduct needs, opportunities and constraints assessment to create a framework for physical improvements that facilitate and make safer cycling to Uptown.
- Develop a master-plan with recommendations for potential improvements such as way-finding signage, roadway paint / sharrows / striping, trail-head information/ kiosk, parking etc.
- Develop partnership with DCR to coordinate and pursue implementation of plan elements that would include work at State Land
- Plan and Implement an initial event such as a race or technical course challenge with local sponsors.
- Consider temporary closure of some streets to allow for the finish line or an awards ceremony in Uptown.
- Explore real-time video feed from trail cameras to Uptown restaurants or a community viewing area.
- Monitor outcomes form event and plan subsequent events



Access to F. Gilbert Hills State Forest is from Granite Street which is narrow and winds through steep terrain. The introduction of modest bicycle accommodations such as painted sharrows would enhance bike safety and use. Cyclists should be encouraged to connect to Uptown via Market Street.



The F. Gilbert Hills State Forest has a network of fire roads, footpaths and single-track trails. Installation of kiosk(s) at trail heads could educate, inform, and establish a link between Uptown attractions. Addressing and improving trail head parking would organize use and improve safety.

4.10 Establish Safety and Walkability Improvements

Category		Public Realm
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Paige Duncan AICP, Planning Director, Town of Foxborough Stakeholder Interviews LRRP Diagnostic Survey LRRP Public Meeting
Budget		High \$200,000+
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Low Risk - Safety, access to off street parking and Pedestrian mobility are Town priorities
Key Performance Indicators		<p>The urban center street pattern is a series of streets that radiate out from the center, Foxborough Common. Creating safe, interconnected, walkable linkages between points of interest, parking areas, businesses and civic spaces is important for activating and connecting all areas of Uptown outside the Common. Measurable by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of Uptown walkability improvement plan that identifies an array of specific improvements such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Crosswalks, b) Sidewalks c) Pedestrian wayfinding d) Areas to create road 'diets', e) Street trees, f) Ornamental lighting 2. Components of the plan that are implemented

Partners and Resources

Foxborough Common Business Collaborative
Town of Foxborough



Existing alleyway connection between Central St. and the interior parking lot. This is the most direct access point to and from the lot and is a link to the Common.



Conceptual sketch depicting how the alleyway might appear and function if vehicular access were eliminated and the space was dedicated to pedestrians only. Lighting, table and chairs and planters enhance the link and set the stage to explore the "Un-Common" in Foxborough.

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- During the inventory phase, the team noted the sidewalks to be in generally good condition physically throughout the Uptown area. At least 50% of the Business Survey Respondents ranked Improvement of Streetscape and Sidewalks as "Very Important". As part of the same survey, 56% of respondents gave Improvements in Safety and /or Cleanliness the rankings of either "Important" or "very Important".
- Other input from the businesses reflects significant (76% ranked as "Important or "Very Important") interest in the creation of more opportunities for Outdoor Selling and Dining and 72% of Business Survey respondents expressed it was "Important" or "Very Important" to have more cultural events to bring people into the district.
- The assimilation of data and subsequent scoring of the Public Realm elements resulted in a Sidewalk grade of A, with Crosswalks, Road Bed and Wayfinding signage assigned a grade of B. The inventory revealed that elements such as Lighting, Street Trees and Benches were so few in number as to be effectively absent and thus failing for the Uptown area.
- Attracting and retaining visitors in Uptown as part of realizing identified business objectives along with the 115 units of new housing slated to be constructed in the Uptown area will result in more pedestrians on the sidewalks and crossing the streets
- The two pilot projects the Town conducted during this study illustrates the attention being given to pedestrian safety and enhancing accessibility.

Action Items

- Identify Funding sources
- Identify Private sector partners for expanded beneficial impacts

- Create agreements for improvements outside public R.O.W.
- Develop Master Plan of desired projects and obtain approvals
- Align Projects with related initiatives such as signage & art

Process

- Create working group of Town and business representatives to coordinate areas of need, places of opportunity and include goals of the Town's ADA transition plan.
- Develop a Master Plan outlining potential project areas, types of project being considered (ADA compliant access, Safety, Ornamental Lighting, Curb neck-downs, sidewalk widening, Enhancements, etc) and look for areas of overlap.
- Coordinate and link project identification with other recommendations such as the installation of public art and locations for such installations.
- Ensure the planning effort encompasses the portion of Uptown east of the Rail Road to fully provide for connection to the existing businesses as well as the Schneider Electric Campus and parking area made available through recent agreements.
- Rank the potential projects and systematically develop plans to develop an inter-connected and related improvements that link uses like parking areas with retail destinations.
- Conduct field walk to review types of projects with stakeholders.
- Finalize Master Plan



Several businesses in Uptown are fronted by large surface parking lots which emphasize the automobile and disrupt the visual cohesiveness and walkability of the Uptown area.



Roadway edge improvements such as curbing, street trees, and sidewalks in this location would help create a sense of Gateway and arrival to Foxborough Center.



Under ideal conditions, improvements should enhance the pedestrian experience and promote walkability. People enjoy being able to walk side-by-side and converse while shopping in town centers.



Some existing sidewalks are narrow and limit pedestrian movement between destinations. People walking from various locations and parking areas in Uptown to top local attractions like Shovel Town Brewery and the Marilyn Rodman Theater will utilize this sidewalk. Expanding sidewalks and improving crosswalks between and along radial streets outside of the Common will enhance pedestrian activity in Uptown.

Ornamental / Accent Lighting throughout

Enhanced wayfinding / gateway

Public / Private pocket park / seating area

Extend grass strip with street trees

Construct and extend concrete sidewalks

Granite Curbing



Concept Sketch for possible enhancements to Mechanic Street. This corridor is a Gateway to the center of Uptown and features attractions and businesses. Improving walkability, adding street trees and related amenities will restore scale and make the two blocks physically appear more consistent with the Uptown areas. Partnering with the landowners would allow expanded treatments and inclusion of elements such as a pocket park. Future changes anticipated at Schneider Electric could elevate activity greatly in this part of Uptown.

4.11 Create Pocket Parks and Related Site Improvements

Category		Public Realm
Location		Uptown Foxborough
Origin		Paige Duncan AICP, Planning Director, Town of Foxborough Stakeholder Interviews Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Written Comments - Business Survey Respondents
Budget		High \$200,000+
Timeframe		Short Term (<5 years)
Risk		Medium Risk - to be most effective requires private landowner involvement
Key Performance Indicators		The development of other pockets of green space within the Uptown area to promote pedestrian activity and support outdoor gathering and eating in areas other than the central Foxborough Common. Measurable by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of pocket park locations identified, 2. Diversity and distribution of locations 3. Number of parks constructed.
Partners & Resources		Foxborough Common Business Collaborative Private Landowners/Businesses Town of Foxborough.



View of the south-facing Marilyn Rodman Performing Center Arts.



Planting a few trees strategically and adding site furniture such as tables and chairs would add green and provide shade to make the space more comfortable for theater go-ers.

Diagnostic / COVID-19 Impacts

- More than 82% of the businesses inventoried reported less foot traffic and fewer on-site customers in the Uptown Area.
- Creating destinations for walking in the Uptown area as well as places to sit and eat beyond the footprint of the Common would help foster walking, particularly if tied to recommendations regarding the installation of Public Art.
- Small parks could be locations for fitness equipment to be installed as stations within the Uptown, potentially expanding health benefits and number of walkers / joggers in the Uptown area at any given time.
- Generally Businesses gave the physical conditions of the Public spaces, streets and sidewalks high marks, however in responses targeted at establishing areas of emphasis, Improvements to Safety and / or Cleanliness and Improvement / Development of Public Spaces and Seating Areas were scored as "Important".
- Support was given in the Business Survey to continue the Banner / Wayfinding initiative in Uptown
- The same notation of "Important" was given by respondents in regard to creating more opportunities for outdoor selling and dining.

Action Items

- Create a Vision Plan for the Uptown of potential sites that could support small scale park type improvements. Prioritize creating a network of locations through the entire Uptown area

- Assimilate and incorporate recommendations from other plans into this master plan
- Identify specific types of improvements by location
- Identify areas of desired improvements that may require work outside the public Right of Way work to coordinate with landowners to determine options such as license agreements, or easements, and possibilities for shared improvements / services between the Town and Landowners.
- Create a committee or similar entity to advance this initiative.
- Identify funding sources and partners

Process

- Create a team to advance this initiative
- Be sure the group includes Town and business stakeholders as well as arts/culture representatives.
- Develop Master Plan of desired improvements, with levels of improvements that allow for incremental implementation yielding visible change in the near term.
- Finalize Master Plan and gain approvals
- Strategically implement improvements by prioritizing areas in Uptown outside the Common.



Site improvements to this area of Railroad Avenue would enhance parking and could help promote walkability to Uptown Businesses East of the train tracks. A 3-D public art installation here or in a location near to Schneider Electric would add great interest. Improvements here also set the stage for future expansion of uses such as shared-use path along the tracks.



Informal seating spaces that encourage outdoor gathering should be considered as part of any new greenspace. Outdoor spaces where people can sit and eat continue to gain in popularity as fewer people are choosing to 'dine-in'

5.0 Funding Sources

5.0 Funding Sources

The following funding sources are anticipated to be available specifically for COVID-19 impact-related project recommendations.

Typical funding sources include federal and state grants dedicated to economic development, community revitalization, and municipal revenue. Many municipalities work with a consortium of interested parties, including local banks, that contribute to the pool of funds. Application fees can be utilized to circulate additional funding through the target area. Occasionally large institutions or private developers may join the team administering the program in an effort to revitalize the corridor and community around a campus or mixed-use development. Local institutions and developers should be contacted to determine if they would contribute to a pool of funding for a storefront facade revitalization program. No dollar amount is too small to contribute, but a specific range of choices should be agreed upon prior to engaging them. A bronze, silver, and gold level would enable their name and logo to be included on construction fencing, flyers, or project web sites. Investigate the MA Downtown Initiative in the spring under the One Stop portal offered by the Commonwealth, Community Development Block Grants, and Main Streets programs.

American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA)

ARPA provided roughly \$385 million to be split between 313 Massachusetts communities with populations under 50,000.

- **Foxborough is slated to receive \$1,815,163**

The Baker Administration received the first 50% of that money on May 28, 2021 and shortly after sent a letter to municipalities that includes details on how they can get their ARPA money deposited into local coffers. It appears that ARPA funding can be used for small businesses and COVID-19 related economic impacts. ARPA Funding can be used for direct relief related to COVID-19 impacts through the use of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CLFRF) in the following five core areas:

1. **Respond to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19 or its negative economic impacts** - this includes COVID-19 mitigation efforts, medical expenses, behavioral health, and certain public health and safety staff
2. **Economic impacts of the public health emergency** - these include efforts to mitigate economic harm to workers, households, small businesses, affected industries, and the public sector
3. **Lost public sector revenue** - payments may be used to fund government services to the extent of revenue

reductions from the pandemic

4. **Premium pay for essential workers** - funds may be used for additional support for those who have faced the greatest health risks because of their service in critical infrastructure sectors
5. **Water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure** - recipients may invest to improve access to clean drinking water, support wastewater and storm water infrastructure, and expand access to broadband Internet:
 - » Wide range of eligible water and sewer infrastructure projects – specifically, all that would otherwise be eligible to receive financial assistance through the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) or Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)
 - » Broadband projects must provide service to unserved and underserved households and businesses. Eligible projects are expected to be designed to deliver, upon project completion, service that reliably meets or exceeds symmetrical upload and download speeds of 100 Mbps

Potential eligible uses within these five core areas include the following expenses:

- Direct COVID-related costs (testing, contact tracing, etc.)
- Public health and safety staff
- Hiring state and local government staff up to the number of employees to pre-pandemic levels
- Assistance to unemployed workers, including job training
- Assistance to households
- Small business assistance
- Nonprofit assistance
- Aid to impacted industries
- Expenses to improve efficacy of public health or economic relief programs
- Survivor’s benefits
- CLFRF funding cannot be used to:
 - Replenish a “rainy day” fund or other reserve fund
 - Make a deposit to a pension fund

Additional Funding Sources for Public and Private Realm Improvement Projects

The following funding sources were included specifically for recommendations generated as part of this ongoing planning study. The list can be applied to a wide variety of public realm and private realm improvement projects.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant Program is a federally funded, competitive grant program designed to help small cities and towns meet a broad range of community development needs. The Community Development Fund (CDF) awards grants to communities throughout the Commonwealth. This program helps eligible cities and towns to meet a broad range of community development needs in housing, infrastructure, revitalization, economic development and public social services. It supports CDBG eligible activities and encourages applicants to develop coordinated, integrated and creative solutions to local problems. Mini-entitlement communities through on a formula calculation based on a high statistical indication of need, poverty rate and size. Eligible CDBG projects include but are not limited to:

- Housing rehabilitation or development
- Micro-enterprise or other business assistance
- Infrastructure
- Community / public facilities
- Public social services
- Planning
- Removal of architectural barriers to allow access by persons with disabilities

“Programs focused on commercial properties are usually administered and staffed by a municipality’s planning, community development, or economic development office; a Main Street organization; a business improvement district, or other government-affiliated entities.”

<https://plannersweb.com/2013/10/how-facade-improvement-programs/>

Massachusetts Downtown Initiative

*Commonwealth of Massachusetts Community One-Stop for Growth
Department of Housing and Community Development*

All communities are eligible to apply. This program provides technical assistance and design services for a variety of downtown improvement elements. MDI staff will assign a consultant to assist the community with the technical services, which could include studying and generating a range of design options and offering a blueprint for how to move forward. The next application round opens in the spring. In 2018, Foxborough, North Chelmsford, and Winchendon received grant awards for wayfinding.

Commonwealth Places Program

MassDevelopment

This competitive grant advances locally driven placemaking projects in downtown and neighborhood commercial districts in eligible communities throughout Massachusetts. The aim of Commonwealth Places Resurgent Places is to help community partners prepare public spaces and commercial districts to best serve their population during COVID-19 social distancing and the phased reopening of the economy.

- Seed grants available from \$250 - \$7,500
- Implementation grants available up to \$50,000
- Successful examples of this grant include:
 - » Marlborough received \$15,000 for wayfinding and branding strategy development
 - » Greenfield received funding used by the Greenfield Business Association for reimbursing restaurants to purchase outdoor dining furniture

Alternative Funding Programs

The following funding programs are grouped as alternative because they either do not stem directly from a local or regional agency or governing body or they do not directly fund the type of proposed improvement projects recommended in this report.

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.

Business Improvement District (BID) or Other Downtown District

Funds from a BID may be used for planters, trash and recycling receptacles, sanitation and maintenance staff, graffiti removal, storefront facades, windows, doors, and sign maintenance, and a variety of other elements.

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. The guidelines developed for the municipal façade/storefront improvement program could be incorporated into the review of larger projects.

Collaborative Workspace Program

MassDevelopment

This grant provides owners and operators of collaborative work spaces up to \$100,000 for new equipment or building improvements. Alternatively, seed grants of up to \$15,000 to plan for new co-working spaces are available. This grant is an opportunity to address the exterior and the interior of a building while also helping to support existing local jobs and create new job opportunities.

Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund

Massachusetts Historical Commission

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.

Summary

The above funding sources may be used to fund a variety of public and private realm improvement programs, maintenance, and streetscape improvements. While many of the above funding sources could be leveraged in combination with other funds to develop a façade improvement program, the list in general was developed with a wide variety of improvement projects in mind.

See funding spreadsheet in the Appendix for comprehensive list of possible funding sources provided by Department of Housing and Community Development.

Appendices

- A. Potential Funding Spreadsheet
- B. Compendium of Best Practices
- C. Subject Matter Expert Materials
- D. Public Workshop Presentation
- E. Supporting Research and Studies

SEE PART II OF THIS REPORT FOR APPENDICIES