

# The Valley/Merrimack Street Corridor

July 19, 2021



# Agenda

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- Welcome and Introductions
- The Rapid Recovery Program
- What We Learned (Diagnostic)
- What We Recommend  
(Proposed Projects)
- Discussion

# Local Rapid Recovery Program (LRRP)

- 125 communities throughout Massachusetts
- Designed to help small businesses and communities recover from COVID

## RRP in Methuen

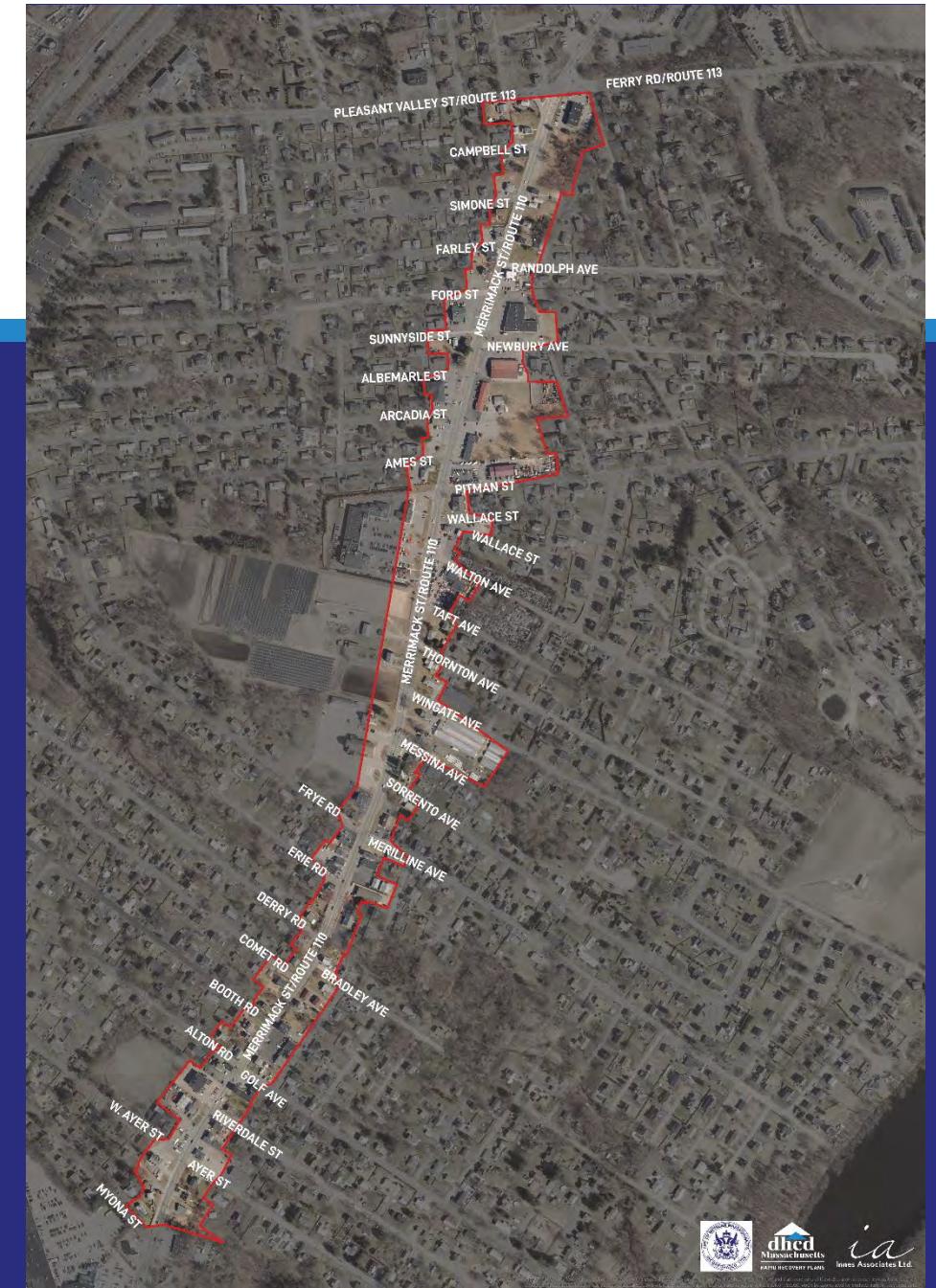
The City of Methuen has chosen to focus on Merrimack Street between from Exit 46 at I-495 and Route 113/Pleasant Valley Street. Innes Associates is the Plan Facilitator.

## Sponsorship

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

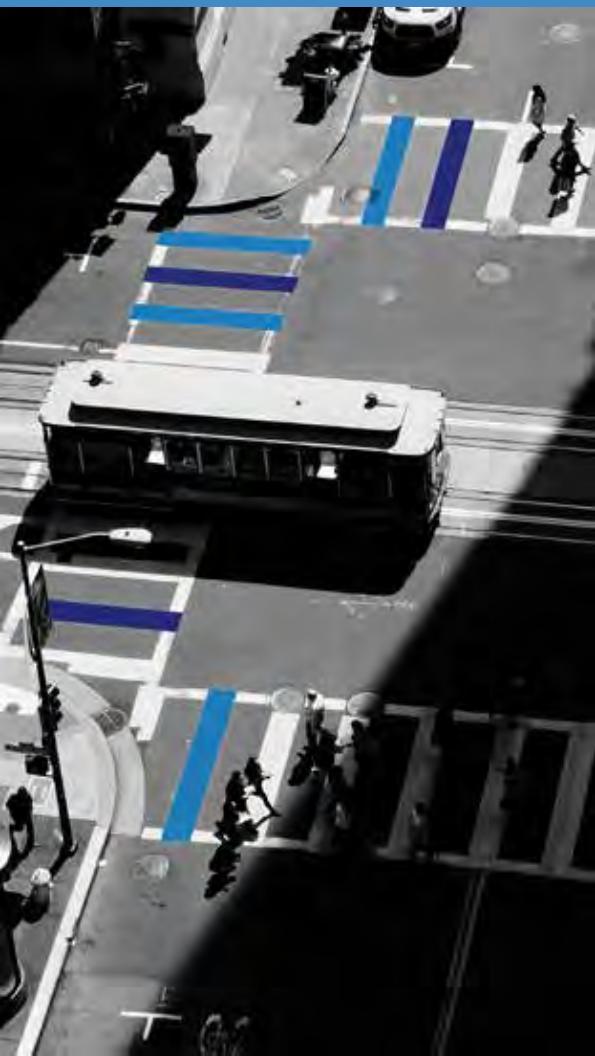
## City Goals

- Improve business visibility through upgrades to storefront façades and sidewalks.
- Install traffic calming measures and equipment.
- Install new signalized sidewalks.
- Create wayfinding signage to identify businesses.
- Connect businesses with pedestrian pathways (sidewalks, crosswalks, ADA ramps, and shared pathways).
- Increase green space, pocket parks, and sidewalk furniture.
- Create a neighborhood business association and business directory for this area.





PHYSICAL  
ENVIRONMENT

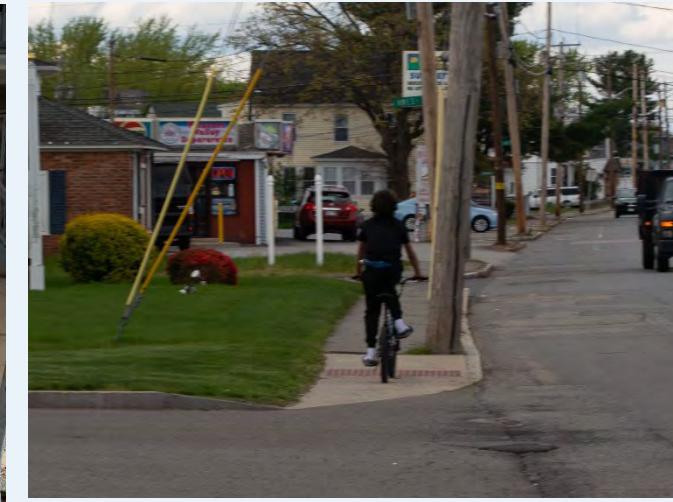
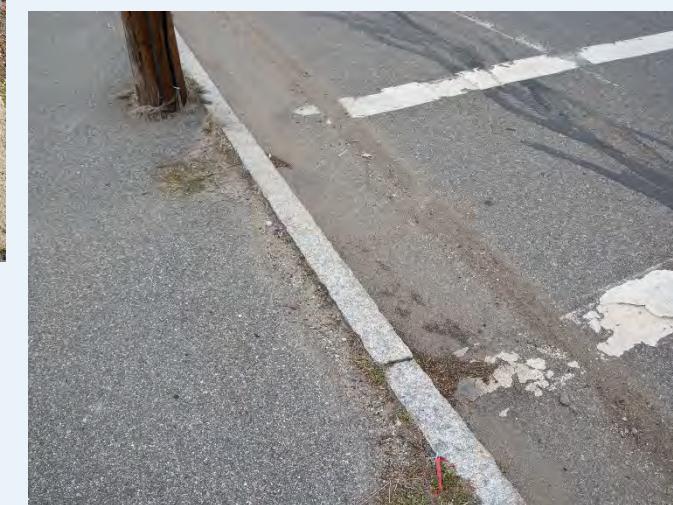


# Public and Private Realm

## Existing Conditions: Public Realm

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Images: Innes Associates



## Existing Conditions: Private Realm





BUSINESS  
ENVIRONMENT

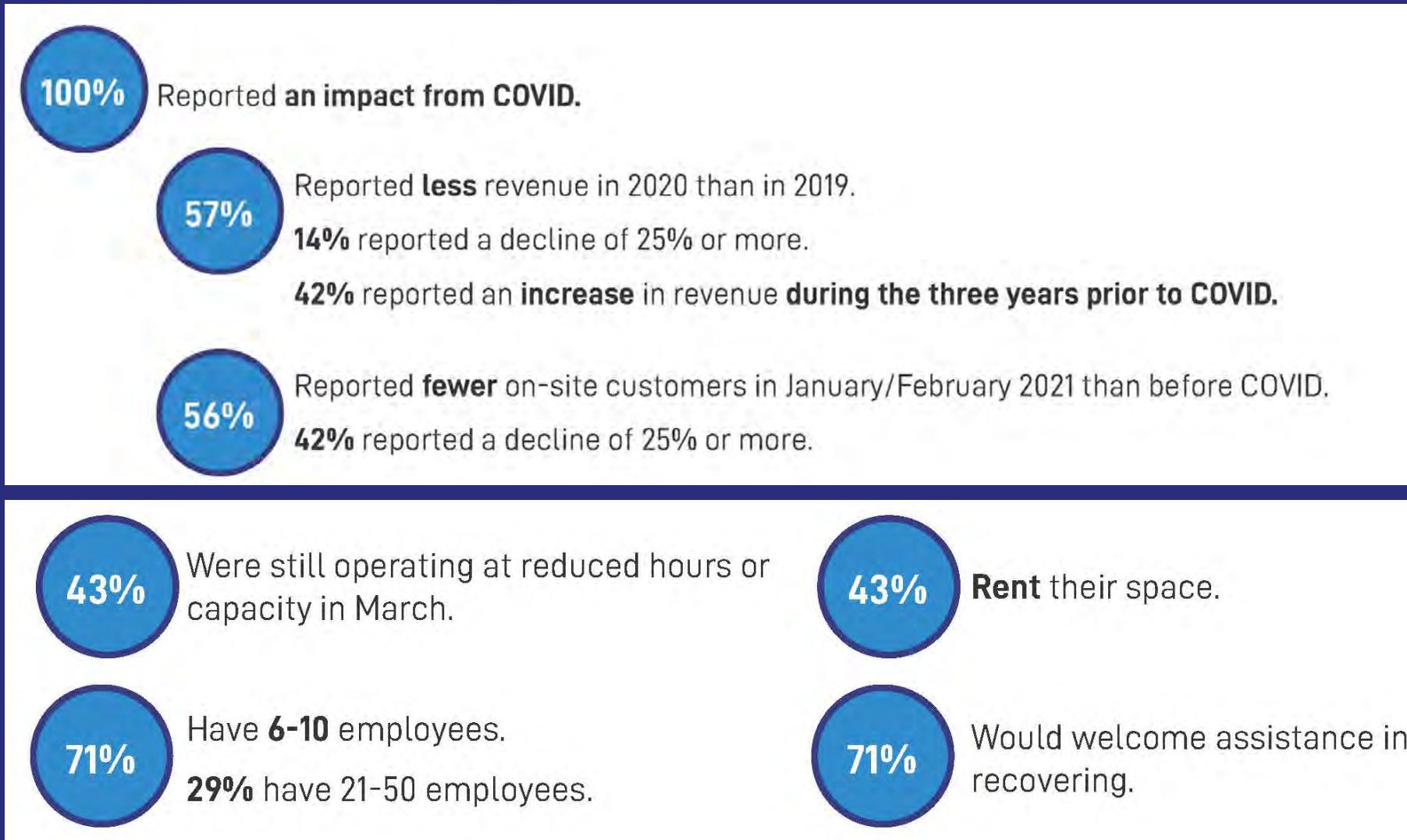


# Survey

## Key Findings

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- Seven businesses responded to the state-wide online survey.
- Businesses in the Valley were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.





**CUSTOMER  
BASE**



# Data Collection

## Key Findings

- Businesses in the Valley were significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Strategies will focus on three categories: Public Realm, Private Realm, and Revenue and Sales



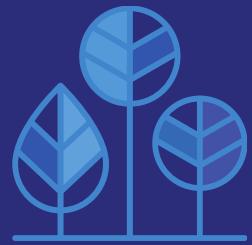
Number of Storefronts	31
Ground Floor Retail Space	46,399 SF
Ground Floor Office Space	18,567 SF
Ground Floor Manufacturing Space	0 SF
Number of Businesses in a 1-mile radius	254



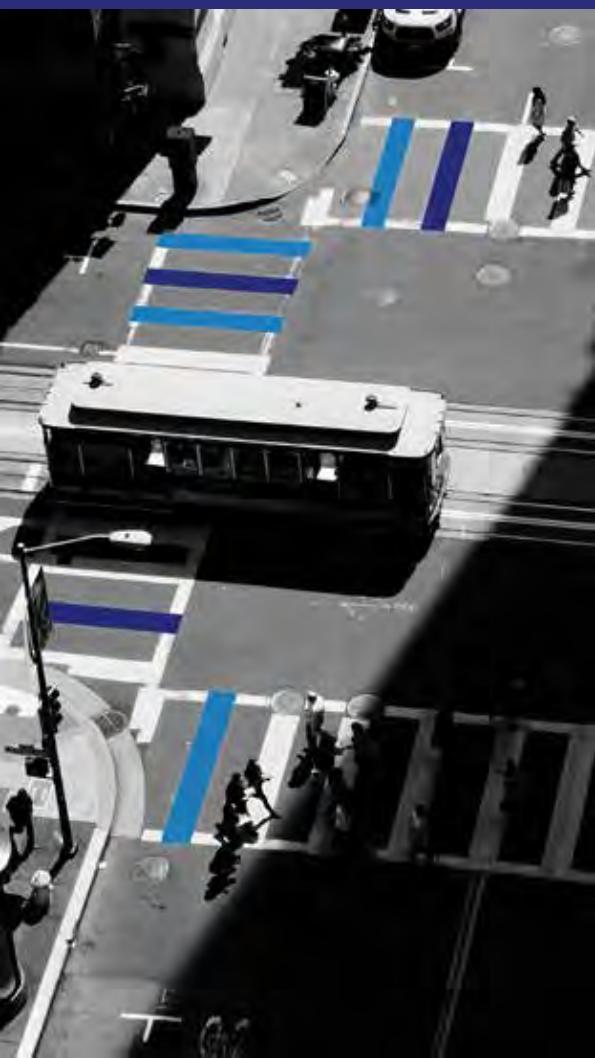
	City	Area
Resident Population	50,282	7,723
Median Household Income	\$77,484	\$76,158
Median Age	40	43
Average Household Size	2.7	2.5
Total Workforce	16,135	113



Sidewalk	C
Street Trees and Benches	Fail/NA
Lighting	C
Wayfinding/Signage	Fail/NA
Roadbed and Crosswalks	Fail/NA
Window	C
Outdoor Display/Dining	Fail/NA
Signage	C
Awning	Fail/NA
Facade	C
Lighting	C



PUBLIC  
REALM



# Recommended Projects

## Project

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### Reconfigure Merrimack Street for pedestrian and bicyclist safety and attractiveness.

## Budget

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- Large Budget (\$200k+)

## Timeframe

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- Mid-term (5-10 years)

## Partners and Resources

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- City and MassDOT

## Risk

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- Medium

## KPI

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- Reduction in number of accidents.
- Increased pedestrian traffic from neighborhoods to local businesses.

## Action Item

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- Conduct traffic study to Identify appropriate Intersections/areas for signalized crosswalks.
- Facilitate community conversations/conversation about the right-of-way with property owners.
- Design roadway improvements.
- Install traffic signals at appropriate cross streets.
- Install signalized crosswalks with ramps, bump-outs, and planted areas.
- Widen and replace/repair sidewalks with consistent materials.
- Install ramps at all street crossings.
- Install street trees.
- Place utilities underground as part of full road reconstruction.

## Recommendations: Public Ream

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Images Courtesy of Federal Highway Administration

## Recommendations: Public Ream

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Images Courtesy of NACTO



PRIVATE  
REALM



# Recommended Projects

## Project

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## Budget

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## Timeframe

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## Partners and Resources

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## Risk

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## KPI

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## Façade and site improvement program.

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

- Short-Term (less than 5 years)

- City, business owners, property owners

- Medium to High

- Increased differentiation between curb cuts, sidewalks, parking areas, and street.

- Improvement in overall building and site maintenance.

## Action Item

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- Establish a façade and site improvement program. Help businesses landscape areas not needed/used for parking.
- Help property owners reduce area used for curb cuts.
- Encourage pedestrian-oriented improvements such as landscaping to differentiate parking from sidewalks, outdoor dining areas, or seating areas.
- Enforce clean-up of trash generated by private businesses.
- Partner with businesses to allow public art installation on private property.

## Recommendations: Private Realm

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Images: Innes Associates



**REVENUES  
& SALES**



# Recommended Projects

## Project

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## Budget

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## Timeframe

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## Partners and Resources

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## Risk

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## KPI

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## Integrated marketing strategy tied to corridor identity.

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

- Short-Term (less than 5 years)

- City, business owners, property owners. Historic Commission, local arts community, Merrimack Chamber of Commerce

- Medium to High

- Increased traffic to businesses.

- Better recognition of the Valley as a destination.

## Action Item

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- Develop strategy to promote the historic identity of "the Valley."
- Incorporate signage, public art, historic trail, and street banners into a Valley-wide identity and promotion.
- Develop a marketing campaign to brand the businesses as being part of the Valley and promote them, especially as clusters (example, food-oriented).
- Consider integrated website and social media to support marketing campaign.
- Encourage businesses to form a neighborhood businesses association.
- Create a neighborhood business directory.
- Sponsor a job fair to connect local businesses with potential local employees.
- Encourage local arts and history groups to become involved in branding and public art installations to showcase local talent.

## Recommendations: Identity and Marketing

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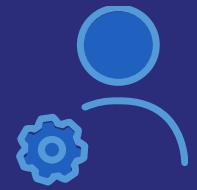
Image: Innes Associates



Image Courtesy of Todd Anderson



Image Courtesy of DennisMAPlanningDept.Wordpress.com



ADMIN  
CAPACITY



# Recommended Projects

## Project

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### Update Zoning.

## Budget

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

## Timeframe

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- Short-Term (less than 5 years)

## Partners and Resources

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- City, business owners, property owners, Historic Commission, local arts community, Merrimack Chamber of Commerce

## Risk

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- Medium to High

## KPI

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- Increase in pedestrian safety.
- More foot traffic to businesses.

## Action Item

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- Promote outdoor dining and retail display.
- Require landscaped buffers.
- Require minimal curb cuts; encourage shared parking.
- Control outdoor storage.

## Project

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### Actively search for appropriate tenants.

## Budget

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- Low (<\$50,000)

## Timeframe

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- Short-Term (less than 5 years)

## Partners and Resources

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- City, landlords, Merrimack Chamber of Commerce, Merrimack Valley Planning Commission

## Risk

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- Low

## KPI

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- Change in mix of businesses.

## Action Item

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- Work with Merrimack Chamber of Commerce and local commercial brokers to identify businesses that support existing clusters when spaces become vacant.

# Thank You!

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## Q&A