

The Valley/Merrimack Street Corridor

July 19, 2021



ia
Innes Associates Ltd.

dhcd
Massachusetts
RAPID RECOVERY PLANS

Agenda

- 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.

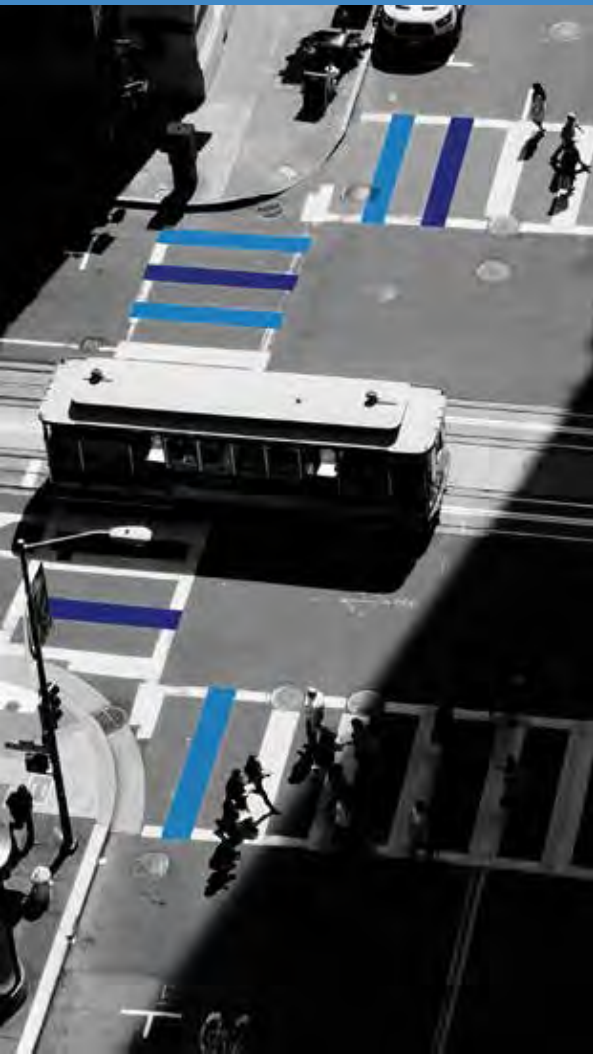
City Goals

- 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

Images: Innes Associates



Existing Conditions: Private Realm





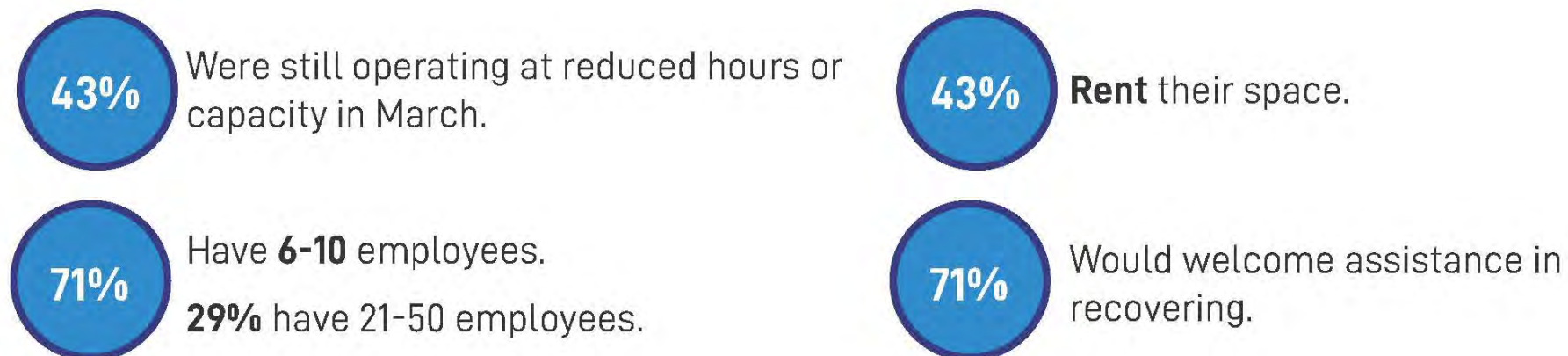
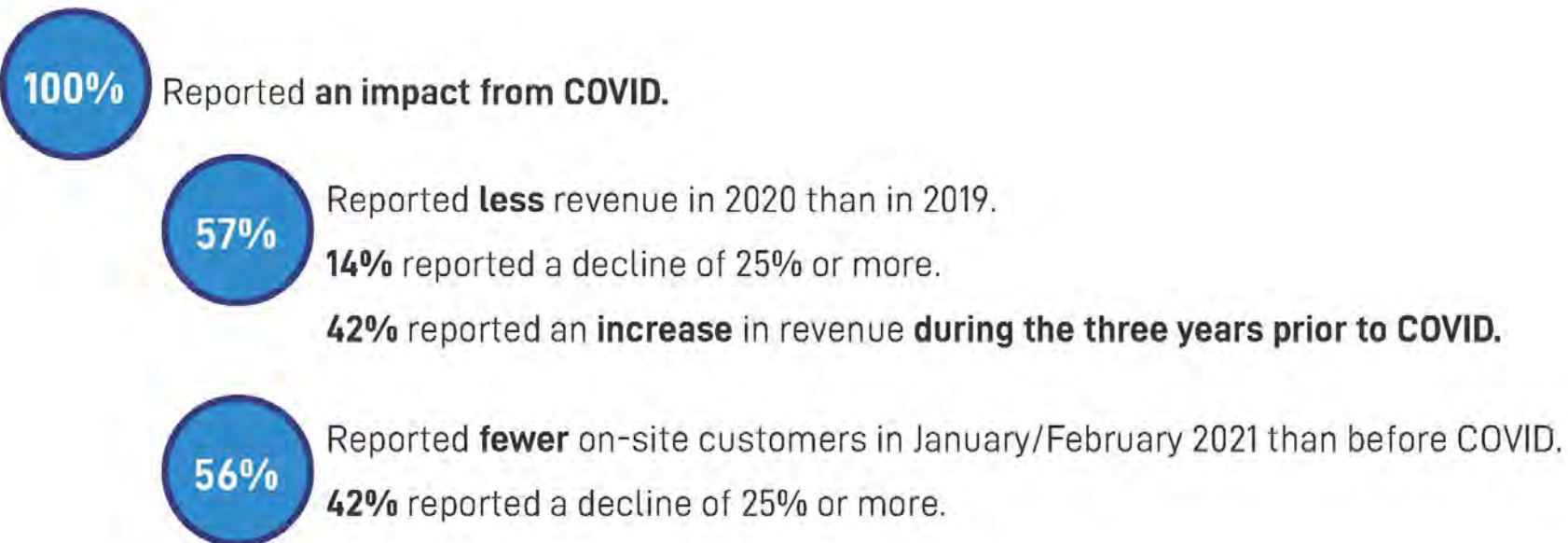
**BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT**



Survey

Key Findings

- 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



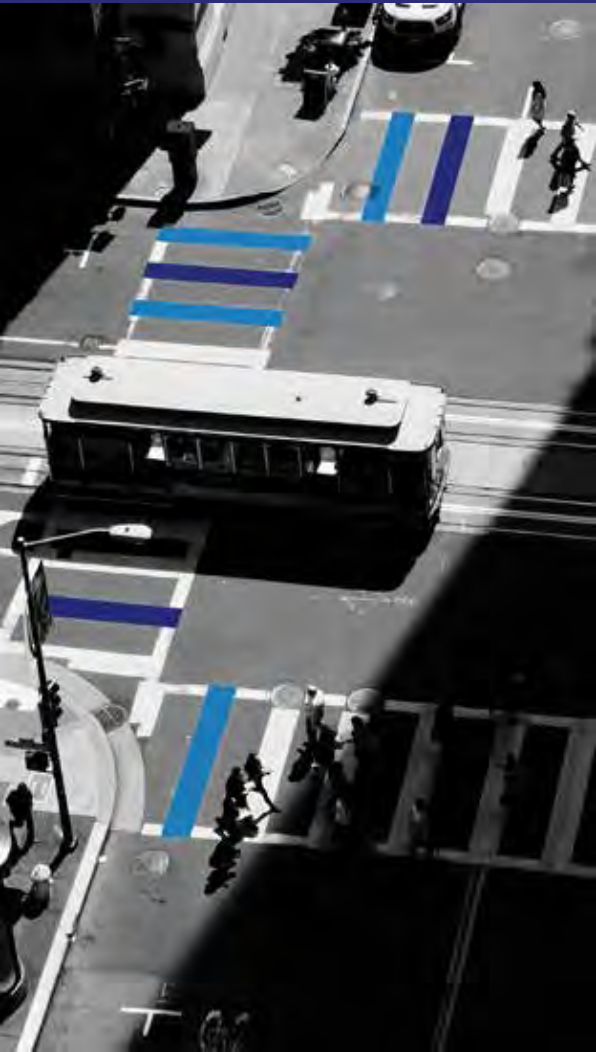
	City	Area
Resident Population	50,282	7,723
Median Household Income	\$77,484	\$76,158
Median Age	40	43
Average Household Size	2.7	2.5
Total Workforce	16,135	113



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
Façade	C
Lighting	C



**PUBLIC
REALM**



Recommended Projects

Project

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

Action Item

Budget

- Large Budget (\$200k+)

- Conduct traffic study to Identify appropriate Intersections/areas for signalized crosswalks.

Timeframe

- Mid-term (5-10 years)

- Facilitate community conversations/conversation about the right-of-way with property owners.

Partners and
Resources

- City and MassDOT

- Design roadway improvements.
- Install traffic signals at appropriate cross streets.
- Install signalized crosswalks with ramps, bump-outs, and planted areas.

Risk

- Medium

- Widen and replace/repair sidewalks with consistent materials.

KPI

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

- Install ramps at all street crossings.
- Install street trees.
- Place utilities underground as part of full road reconstruction.

Recommendations: Public Ream



Images Courtesy of Federal Highway Administration



Recommendations: Public Ream



Images Courtesy of NACTO





PRIVATE
REALM



Recommended Projects

Project	Façade and site improvement program.	Action Item
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium (\$50,000-\$200,000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a façade and site improvement program. Help businesses landscape areas not needed/used for parking.
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-Term (less than 5 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help property owners reduce area used for curb cuts.
Partners and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City, business owners, property owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage pedestrian-oriented improvements such as landscaping to differentiate parking from sidewalks, outdoor dining areas, or seating areas.
Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium to High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforce clean-up of trash generated by private businesses.
KPI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased differentiation between curb cuts, sidewalks, parking areas, and street. Improvement in overall building and site maintenance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with businesses to allow public art installation on private property.

Recommendations: Private Ream



Images: Innes Associates





REVENUES
& SALES



Recommended Projects

Project	Integrated marketing strategy tied to corridor identity.	Action Item
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium (\$50,000-\$200,000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategy to promote the historic identity of “the Valley.”
Timeframe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-Term (less than 5 years) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate signage, public art, historic trail, and street banners into a Valley-wide identity and promotion.
Partners and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City, business owners, property owners. Historic Commission, local arts community, Merrimack Chamber of Commerce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.
Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium to High 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage businesses to form a neighborhood businesses association. Create a neighborhood business directory.
KPI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased traffic to businesses. Better recognition of the Valley as a destination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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



Image: Innes Associates



Image Courtesy of Todd Anderson



Image Courtesy of DennisMAPanningDept.Wordpress.com



ADMIN
CAPACITY



Recommended Projects

Project

Update Zoning.

Action Item

Budget

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

- Promote outdoor dining and retail display.

Timeframe

- Short-Term (less than 5 years)

- Require landscaped buffers.
- Require minimal curb cuts; encourage shared parking.
- Control outdoor storage.

Partners and Resources

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

Risk

- Medium to High

KPI

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

Project

Actively search for appropriate tenants.

Action Item

Budget

- Low (<\$50,000)

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

Timeframe

- Short-Term (less than 5 years)

Partners and Resources

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

Risk

- Low

KPI

- Change in mix of businesses.

Thank You!

Q&A