
Millers on the Move!

Strategic Priorities for Millers Falls Village Center



A project of the Montague Department of Planning and Conservation, RiverCulture and Millers Falls Community Improvement Association

Endorsed by Montague Selectboard
December 9, 2019

Acknowledgements

This project was only possible due to the contributions of time, information and insights on the part of many individuals and organizations.

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Project Consultant:

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Special Thanks to . . .

Millers Falls Community Improvement Association

All of the Residents and Business Owners who responded to the **Community Visioning Survey**

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Part One

Summary and Project Overview

1. Summary and Project Overview

Summary

The purpose of this project was to assess existing conditions in Millers Falls Village Center and conduct a community-based planning process to develop strategic goals and identify projects and actions to achieve those goals.

Millers Falls has traditionally encompassed both sides of the Millers River (in Erving and Montague). While this study explores the Montague side, this plan recognizes a strong desire for both Montague and Erving to work together to re-establish the identity of Millers Falls as a unified village.

Millers Falls Village Center (MFVC) is a quaint historic commercial center with about a dozen businesses including a grocery market and a pub with deep roots in the community, along with a newer craft brewery/pub, a couple of restaurants and several artists' studios. Although the Center still has several commercial vacancies and underutilized properties, there has been significant recent investment. The process to nominate the district to the National Register of Historic Places is well underway and a local developer has been able to use state historic tax credits to assist in financing several key renovations. The location, real estate, business mix and other situation factors are summarized in **Part 2: Assessment of Existing Conditions.**

Early in the process, we conducted a Community Survey to obtain input from residents about their vision for MFVC. When asked to describe the Center as they would like it to be, the most frequent responses were: vibrant, fun, welcoming, quaint and a destination. The community would most like to see more green space, healthy food options, library services, cultural activities, restaurants and entertainment options. Better access to the river and an improved bus stop are also priorities. More results are presented in **Part 3: Community Visioning.**

Community Planning Session #1 included a “Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities” (SWO) analysis that became the basis for developing goals and project ideas. Location, historic buildings, proximity to the river and a small cluster of eating and drinking places were cited among the strengths. Weaknesses included lack of critical mass, run-down appearance and truck traffic. Renovated spaces available for new businesses, visitor attraction by the brewery and potential for recreation were listed among the opportunities. A summary of the full SWO analysis is available in **Part 4: Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities.**

Using input from meetings with the Core Project Group and Town Staff Project Leaders, along with the SWO analysis and other community input, we prepared a set of Draft Goals and potential projects/actions. At Community Planning Session #2, we reviewed the goals and projects and discussed the prioritization of both short-term and long-term projects.

The goals and projects/actions were revised based on input from the Community Planning Sessions and review and comment from the Core Project Group and Town Staff Project Leaders. A complete account is presented in **Part 5: Goals, Projects, Priorities and Initial Actions.**

The goals and high priority projects are listed on the following page.

1. Summary and Project Overview (cont'd)

Goals and Projects rated as High Priority

1. Make MFVC a more inviting, safe, convenient place where people want to spend more time

- Relocate/improve bus stop
- Address truck traffic issue; provide better signage to direct trucks to Industrial Park
- Address speeding issue; enforce/reduce speed limit
- Improve pedestrian crossing/safety at Main and Bridge Streets

2. Promote community building and strengthen capacity of Millers Falls Community Improvement Association

- Formalize organization and increase membership of MFCIA
- Develop “Millers on the Move” monthly column in Montague Reporter.
- Increase MFCIA facebook followers; grow social media presence
- Create community kiosk/bulletin board
- Address need for community meeting space

3. Increase opportunities to improve health and expand recreation for Miller Falls residents

- Make improvements to Highland Park (e.g., seating)
- Complete Riverfront park improvements (fishing access, path)
- Work with existing grocery store/provide technical assistance to facilitate improvements (e.g., increased selection of fresh food, merchandising)

4. Improve connection among MFVC establishments and to community recreational assets

- Repair stairway/improve link to Highland Park
- Connect Smoke House restaurant to the Center with a sidewalk.
- Provide sidewalk to riverfront park

5. Attract businesses that meet local needs and/or draw people into MFVC; expand eating & entertainment cluster

- Business recruitment program that provides incentives, removes obstacles and markets the area to desired types of businesses
- Retail incentive program to recruit businesses that meet specified criteria (e.g., open full time, generates significant foot traffic, etc.)
 - Consider expanding availability of additional liquor licenses that could only be used for restaurants in the Village Center
 - Network with Franklin County Community Development Corporation Small Business Development Program
- Expand library services, hours and uses

6. Increase events to bring people into MFVC

- Utilize Highland Park more fully – more events (e.g., movie night)

7. Activate underutilized property with uses that would be beneficial to MFVC

- Facilitate activation of vacant land and storefronts
 - Activate unused area near rail tracks (south side of Main) as village green/pocket park, community garden, etc.
 - Consider implementing a Vacant Storefront Strategy

8. Improve physical appearance of MFVC

- Form beautification committee

9. Create/reinforce a positive unique identity for MFVC; develop a sense of place

- Historic walking tour & brochure

10. Increase economic opportunities for Millers Falls businesses and residents

- Increase bus service to UMass and improve bus service on weekends.

1. Summary and Project Overview (cont'd)

Timeframe and Key Players

Timeframe: July – November, 2019

Sponsor: Department of Housing and Community Development, MA Downtown Initiative Program, Emmy Hahn Coordinator

Town Staff Project Leaders: Suzanne LoManto, Cultural Coordinator and Director of RiverCulture and Walter Ramsey, Town Planner

Core Project Volunteer Working Group: David Brule, Terry Eaklor, Kate Martineau, Bob Obear, Rick Widmer, Jeff Warren

Community Partner: Millers Falls Community Improvement Association

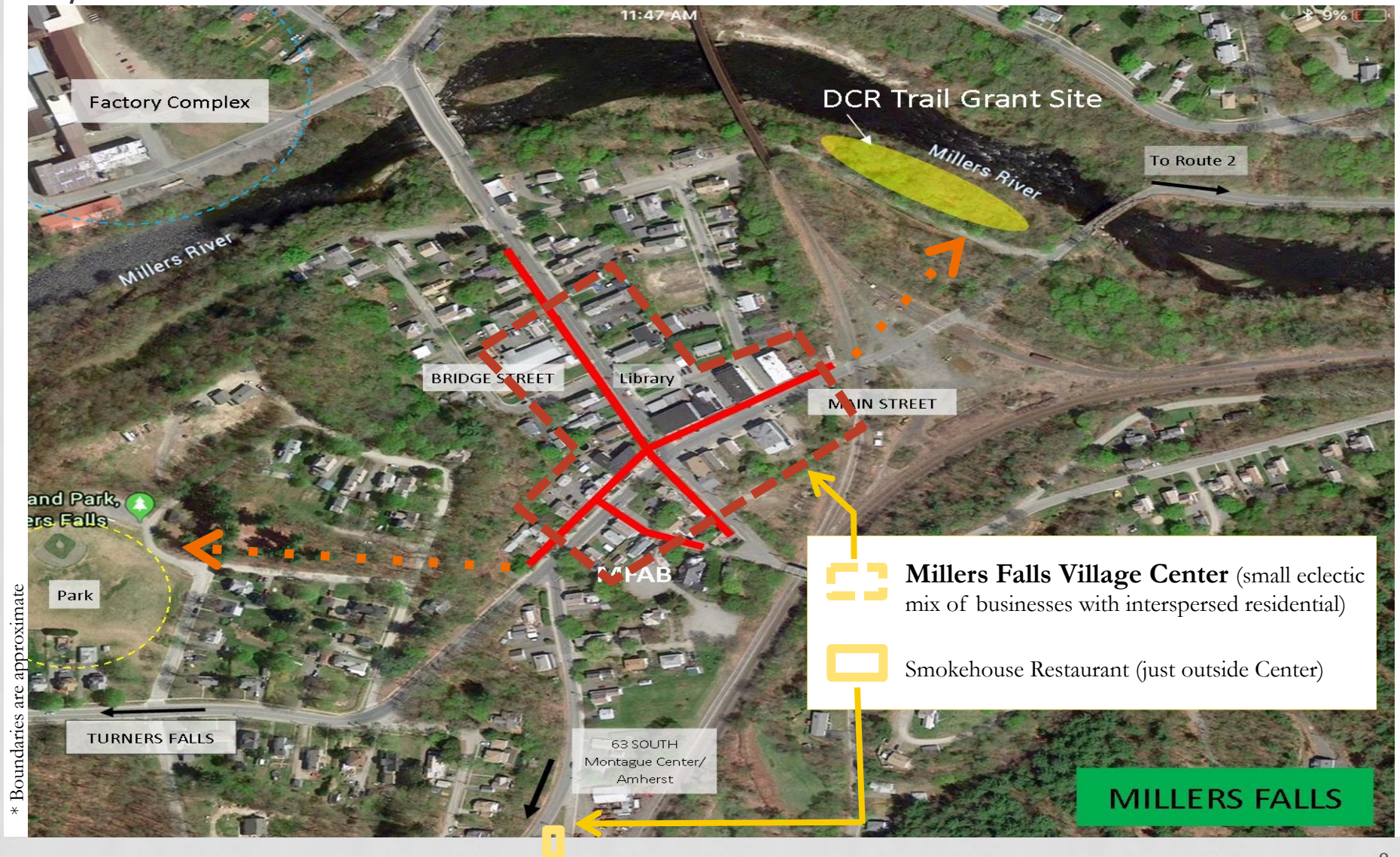
Consultant: Peg Barringer, Partner, FinePoint Associates

The Process

Core Project Working Group Meeting
Assessment of Existing Conditions
Community Survey – Obtain input regarding vision for the Village Center and analyze results
Work Session with Town Staff Project Leaders
Community Planning Session #1 – Discuss survey results, analyze MFVC Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities; begin to look at goals and projects
Community Homework – Think about project ideas; preliminary research on a few identified potential projects.
Work Session with Town Staff Project Leaders
Summarize SWO Analysis Prepare Draft Goals and Potential Projects/Actions
Work session with Town Staff Project Leaders
Community Planning Session # 2 – Discuss potential actions and projects; ascertain community priorities.
Draft Report/Plan Document
Finalize Report/Plan Document - Core Project Group review and comment

1. Summary and Project Overview (cont'd)

Study Area





Part Two

Assessment of Existing Conditions

2. Assessment of Existing Conditions - Location and Demographic Overview

Millers Falls Village Center Location

Zip Code: 01349, Town of Montague, Franklin County, MA

8 minutes east of Turners Falls Center

17 minutes east of Greenfield Center

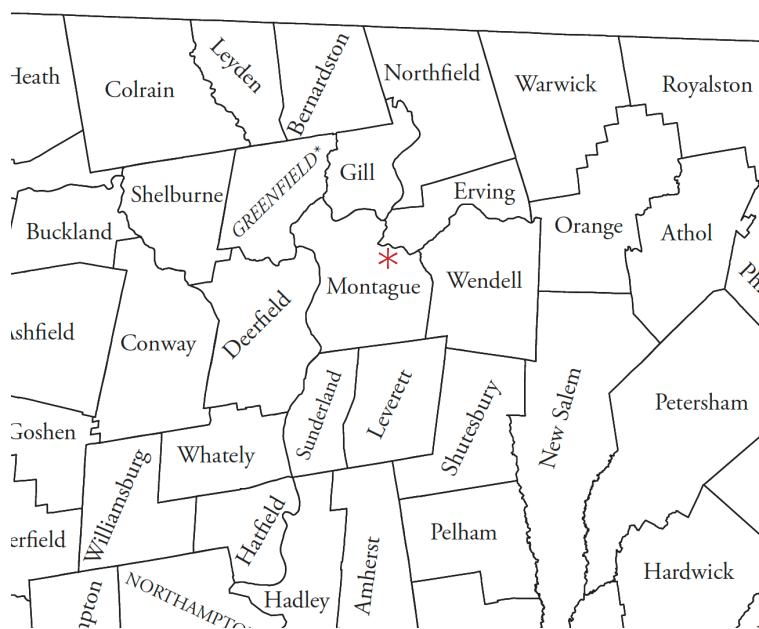
25 minutes north of UMass Amherst

35 minutes north of Northampton

50 minutes north of Springfield

33 minutes south of Brattleboro, VT

70 minutes northeast of Worcester



Population

Population of Millers Falls Zip Code (01349): 1,231

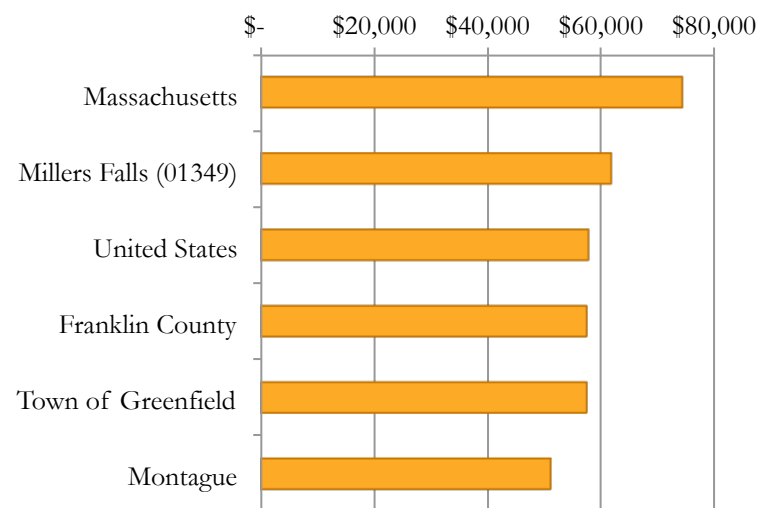
Population of Montague: 8,311

Franklin County: 70,926

Income

Millers Falls Zip Code Median Household Income: \$61,630

Median Household Income
Compared to Parent and Nearby Geographies



Population and Income Source: 2017 ACS 5-year estimate

2. Assessment of Existing Conditions - Real Estate Overview

Millers Falls Village Center is a quaint historic commercial center comprised of one, two and three story buildings, many dating back to the turn of the century. There are several mixed-use properties with storefronts on the first floor and apartments above as well as single-use commercial (e.g., Carroll's Market) and single-use apartment buildings. Current zoning in the Central Business District (CBD) requires commercial use on the first floor.

Although there remains commercial vacancies and underutilized properties, there has been significant new investment in the area and many changes are occurring. Recently, a private development company, Obear Construction Company, purchased property on Main Street that the Town had acquired due to nonpayment of taxes. A couple of key renovations have already been completed and others are in process.

The procedure to nominate the Village Center for listing on the **National Register of Historic Places** is underway. (The developer has been able to obtain State Historic Tax Credits for the renovations.)

There are approximately 16 commercial units in the Village Center. Approximately 5 units were vacant as of June, 2019 and one more is likely to be vacant soon. Tenants have been identified/planned for 2 of these units.

A former church building, previously used by Millers Falls Art Bridge for art residency and other programming, is currently underutilized and in need of repairs. The owner applied to MassDevelopment for a collaborative workspace grant but was not funded. The future use of this building is undetermined.



Real Estate Overview (cont'd)



Mixed Use Buildings on Main Street



Single Use Commercial



Single Use Commercial



Mixed-use converted to entirely residential.
Current zoning now requires commercial use
on the first floor in CBD.

Real Estate Overview (cont'd)



Renovation - Before



Renovation - After



Opportunity: Renovation Currently Underway. Barber Shop is planned for lower level (entrance on side street).



Renovation Recently Completed

Real Estate Overview (cont'd)



Opportunity: Recently rehabilitated storefronts are an opportunity for new businesses.



Opportunity: Previously used by Millers Falls Art Bridge for art residency and programming, currently needs repairs and is not being used. The future use is undetermined.

2. Assessment of Existing Conditions - Business Mix

At the time of the assessment (June 2019), there were approximately a dozen establishments in the Village Center (including the nearby Smokehouse Restaurant). Plans were underway for 2 additional businesses, a barber shop and a tattoo shop.

The small business mix is eclectic with an emerging dining and entertainment cluster. Millers Falls has also begun to attract artists and there are a few artist studios/art-related uses in the Village Center.

Some establishments do not have walk-in trade or are only open by appointment (i.e., bridal shop, art studios). When these types of businesses are located in key storefronts, it can create a sleepy appearance for the area that may dissuade people from visiting. Typically, a commercial district benefits when there is a critical mass of storefront establishments that are open to the public and clearly look open during regular hours to add life to the street and create a welcoming image.



Establishments with no Walk-in Trade/Open by Appointment

Food & Beverage

Carrolls' Market (liquor and some groceries)

Restaurants & Entertainment

Element Brewing Company*

North Village Smokehouse* (just outside Center)

Miller's Pub*

Whistle Stop Café

Personal Services

Barber Shop (coming soon)

Millers Falls Laundry

Tattoo Shop (coming soon)

Civic/Community

Millers Falls Library

Covenant Church

Clothing

The Bridal & Tux Boutique*** MOVING

Construction Services

Obear Construction Company***

Art-Related

Eric Grab Art Studio ***

Millers Falls Arts Bridge***

New Story Studios ***

Home-based Business

Gretchen Wetherby, LMT***

(Other home-based businesses may be present)

* Occasional live entertainment

*** No walk-in trade/open by appointment

2.3 Business Mix (cont'd)

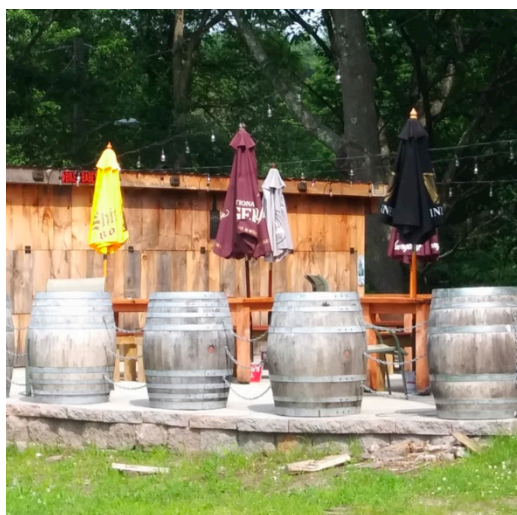


Emerging Dining and Entertainment Cluster

There are four eating and drinking establishments that comprise a tiny emerging cluster including a craft brewery pub, traditional pub, barbecue restaurant, and a breakfast and lunch café. Three of the establishments offer occasional live entertainment which expands the offerings in the Center and gives customers a reason to stay longer.

Outdoor dining can significantly add to the atmosphere in a commercial center. It adds vitality to the street and can help provide a festive atmosphere. It also adds a social element by allowing visual interaction between diners and pedestrians.

Three establishments offer at least some opportunity for outdoor dining, although Whistle Stop Café has only one small uncovered table outside (narrow sidewalk on Main Street to accommodate dining).



2. Assessment of Existing Conditions - Infrastructure, Transportation and Parking

- Attractive streetscaping and pedestrian scale lights; sidewalks in good condition
- No public seating (e.g., benches) or public gathering space for events
- No sign identifying Village Center or wayfinding signage (historic markers?)
- Diagonal on-street parking on E. Main Street, parallel on-street parking on Bridge Street
- The Village Center is served by Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) bus routes 23 and 32. The north and south bound bus stops are located on Bridge St. near Crescent St. There are no benches or bus shelters.



Walk Score
41

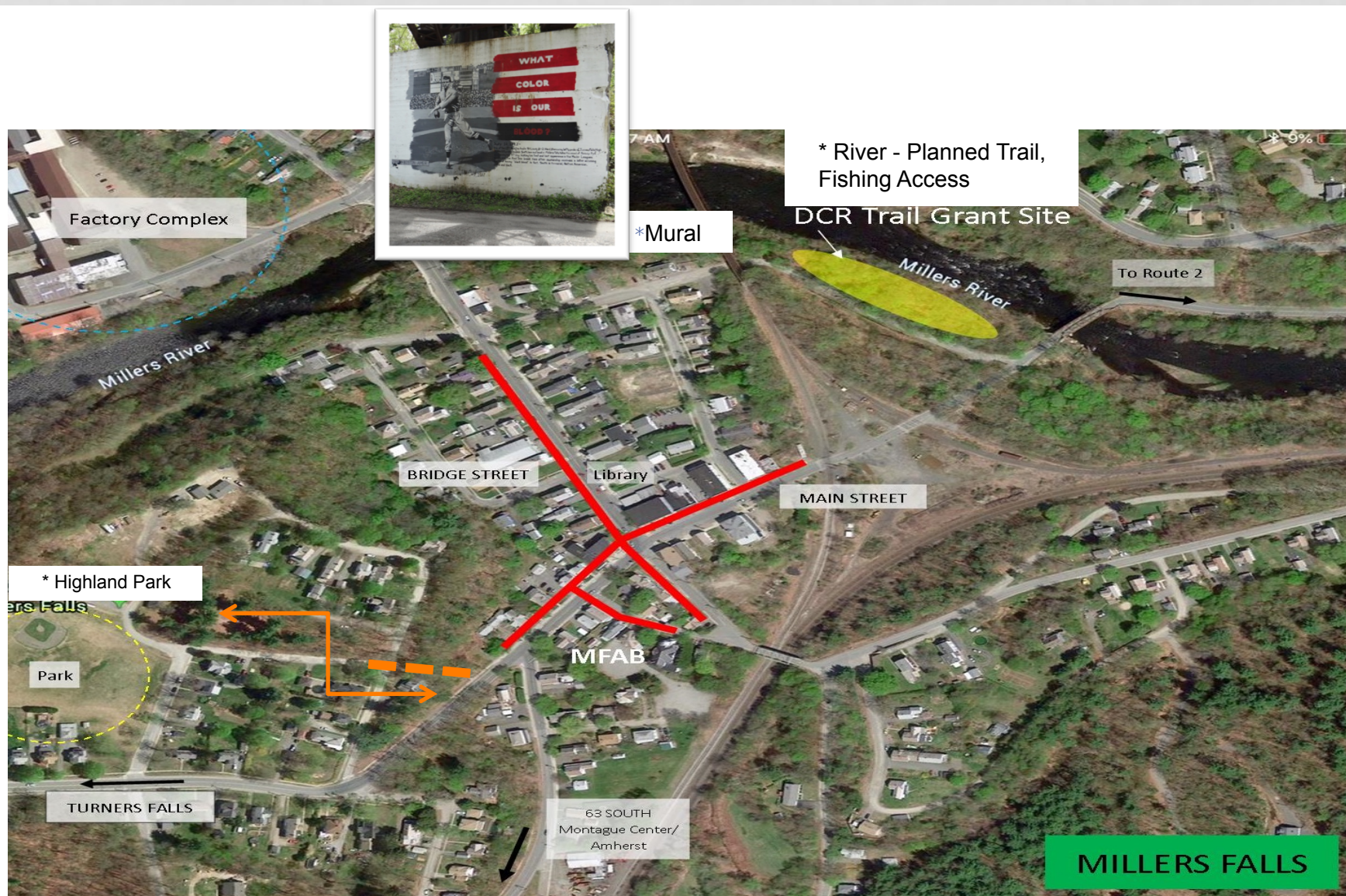
Car-Dependent
Most errands require a car

Bike Score
36

Somewhat Bikeable

* Source: *WalkScore.com*

2. Assessment of Existing Conditions - Other Features



2. Assessment of Existing Conditions - Events and Organizations

Small Number of Events

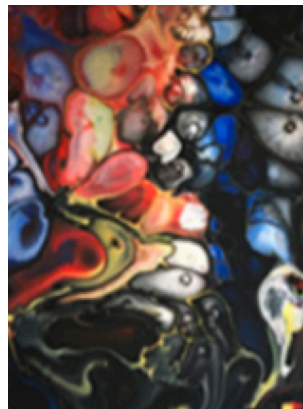


Millers Falls Art Happening April 27, 2019

Fly Robin Art Retreat
July 18-21, 2019

Figure Drawing,
Eric Grab

Paint Pouring,
Marisa Shuron Harris



Millers Falls Community Improvement Association sponsors periodic art and community events.

Organizations

- Millers Falls Arts Collective – group of approx. 10 local artists
- Millers Falls Art Bridge
- Millers Falls Community Improvement Association



Part Three

Community Visioning

3. Community Survey - Visioning

Conducted: July, 2019

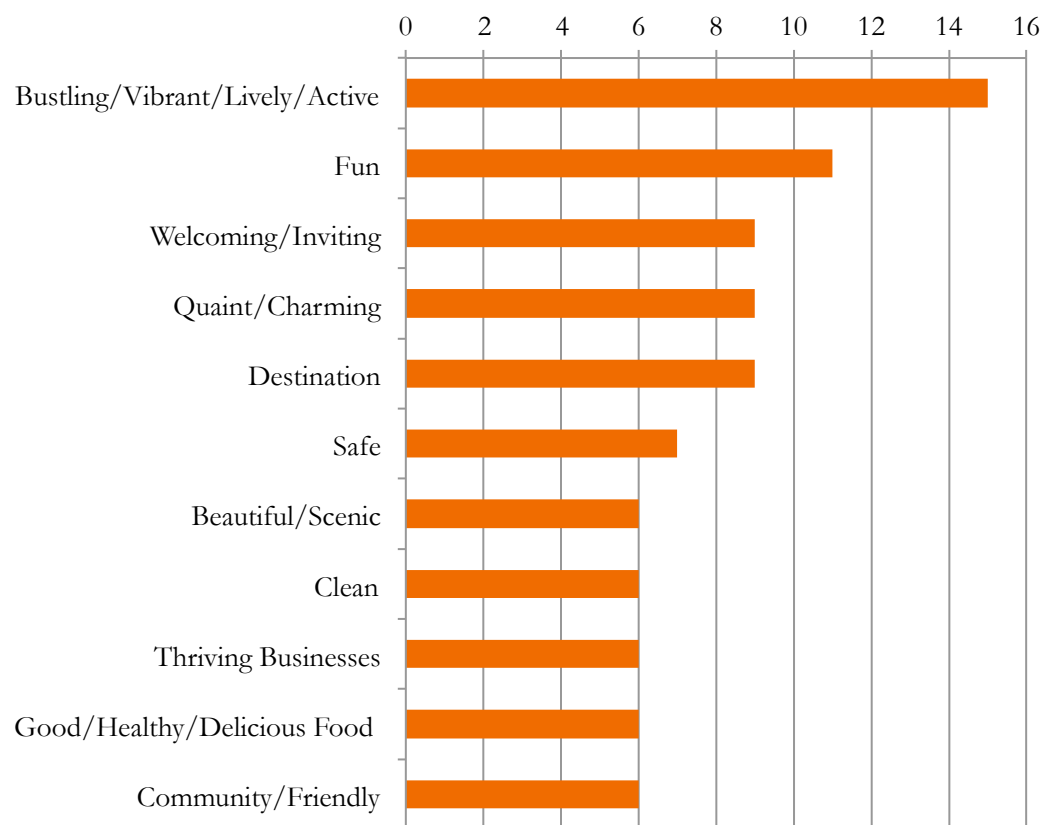
Responses: 71

Top Responses

1. Bustling/Vibrant/Lively/Active
2. Fun
3. Welcoming/Inviting
4. Quaint/Charming
5. A Destination

Vision for Millers Falls Village Center

Future Village Center as You Want it to Be
(most common responses)



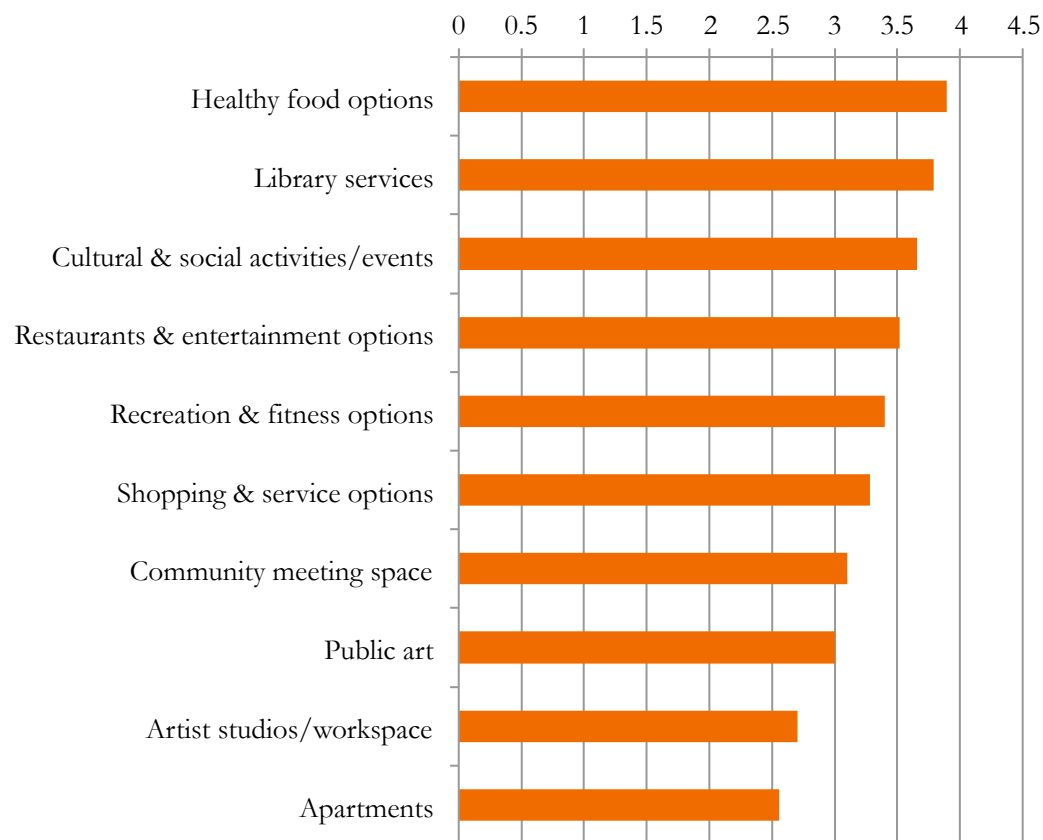
3. Community Survey – Visioning (cont'd)

What uses would you like to see more of in the Village Center?

(Rated 1 to 5, from "Not a Priority" to "Very High Priority")

High Priority

1. Parks/green space
2. Healthy food options
3. Library services
4. Cultural & social activities/events
5. Restaurants & entertainment options



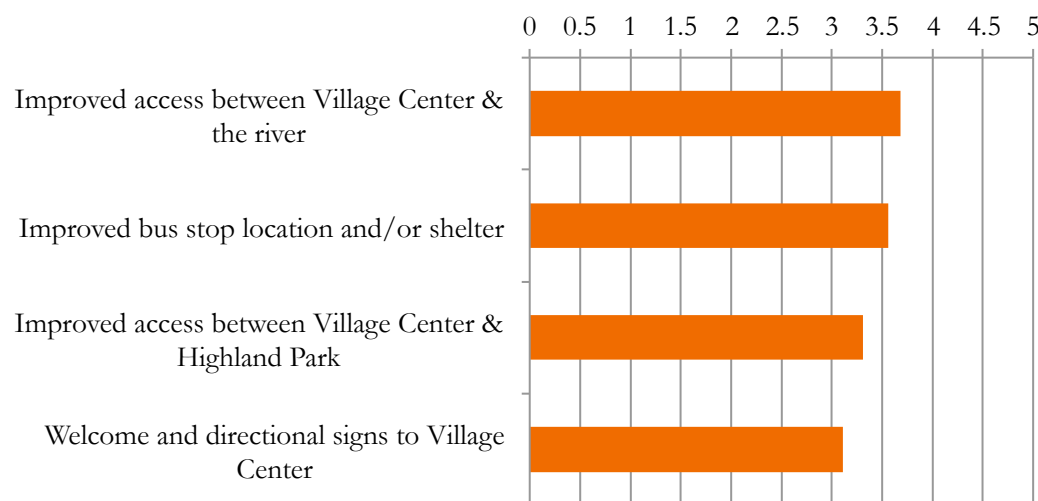
3. Community Survey – Visioning (cont'd)

What infrastructure improvements are needed in the Village Center?

(Rated 1 to 5, from "Not a Priority" to "Very High Priority")

High Priority

1. Improved access between Village Center & the river
2. Improved bus stop location and/or shelter Parks/green space





Part Four

Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities

SWO ANALYSIS

S

STRENGTHS

1. Location, access to Rt. 2, 63, 91, Amherst/UMass,
2. Existing small cluster of eating & drinking places
3. Proximity/access to river/ views/natural beauty
4. History/historic buildings
5. Compact layout/ walkability
6. Community/committed people/friendliness
7. Small town charm, atmosphere, quaintness
8. Library
9. Highland Park
10. Presence of artists

Findings from Community Forum & Survey

W

1. Lacks critical mass of appropriate businesses/uses/things to do
2. Run down appearance
3. Traffic - large trucks, bad intersection
4. Perceived lack of parking
5. Concentration of low income housing/ problem tenants
6. Poor healthy food shopping selection
7. Lacks community/kids space
8. Limited community organization, capacity, resources
9. No common "green", seating
10. Lacks identity as village/village ctr.
11. Small local population
12. Poor signage/way finding
13. Residents feel forgotten, lower priority
14. Public property needs maintenance
15. Limited bus service (weekends, UMass)
16. Have tried to revive MF - limited results

WEAKNESSES

Millers Falls Village Center, Montague, MA

O

OPPORTUNITIES

1. Increase recreation/river access, create trails/park
2. Promote and expand eating & entertainment cluster
3. Spaces available for new businesses/uses
4. Brewery attracts visitors from outside the area
5. Vacant land between railroad tracks & old hotel
6. Unused former St. John's Church & large parking lot
7. Strengthen collaboration/ partnership with Erving
8. Increase community/family events/activities
9. Library open limited hours (well used when open)
10. Art/public art

4. Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities

Strengths

1. Location, access to Rt. 2, 63, 91, Amherst/UMass, Greenfield, Brattleboro, Gateway to Montague
2. Existing small cluster of eating & drinking places
3. Proximity/access to river/views/natural beauty
4. History/historic architecture/buildings
5. Compact/walkable layout/walkability
6. Community/committed people/friendliness
7. Small town charm, atmosphere, quaintness
8. Library
9. Highland Park
10. Presence of artists

How can we protect and enhance the strengths?

(Discussion Comments)

- Improve bus service to UMass (UMass is large employer. Bus service would offer access to higher paying jobs for residents. If students could commute by bus, Millers Falls would be a desirable place to live.)
- Enhance walkability and pedestrian environment - connect Smoke House restaurant to the Village Center Core with a sidewalk. Connect Highland Park to Center. Provide sidewalk to riverfront park. Support planting new shade trees.
- Protect library (well used when open, popular music and movement program, only community space/institution in Village Center). Expand hours and uses. It might be difficult for Millers Falls to maintain village identity without library/community center. (Millers Falls library users will use both Erving and Millers library. The two libraries coordinate hours.)
- Highland Park is an asset but not fully utilized – increase events
- Greater engagement/volunteerism (especially at/with the library)

4. Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities (cont'd)

Weaknesses

1. Lacks critical mass of appropriate businesses/uses/things to do
2. Run down appearance
3. Traffic - large trucks, bad intersection
4. Perceived lack of parking
5. Concentrated low income housing/problem tenants
6. Poor food shopping, lacks healthy options
7. Lack of community/kids space
8. Limited community organization, capacity, resources
9. No common "green", public seating, limited greenery
10. Lack of identity as village/village center
11. Small local population, competes with Turners Falls and Greenfield
12. Poor signage/wayfinding
13. Residents feel forgotten, lower priority to Town than Montague Center or Turners Falls
14. Public properties need better maintenance (mowing, plowing, etc.)
15. Limited bus service (weekends, UMass)
16. Efforts to revive MF in the past - limited results

How can we overcome/address weaknesses?

(Discussion Comments)

- Increase membership of MFCIA.
- Increase activities/events to build community and draw people into MFVC.
- Lack of healthy food - Grass-roots efforts with existing businesses (previous community work with Food City could be a model). Work with existing market/provide technical assistance to encourage expanded selection, more fresh produce, less snack food, assistance with merchandising/display. Would it be possible/feasible for local farmers/producers to offer products at store (e.g., local farm produce, Diamand Farm frozen food, etc.)? Get feedback from customers - provide suggestion box in store. Establish a community garden.
- Lack of identity - improved wayfinding to let people know they have arrived. Interpretive/interactive historic exhibit to help build sense of place (more things like the baseball mural).
- Better bus service, weekends and connection to UMass
- Greater communication between neighbors. More events and social interaction opportunities.
- A central way to communicate that is NOT social media

4. Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities (cont'd)

Opportunities

1. Increase recreation/river access, create trails/park
2. Promote and expand eating & entertainment cluster
3. Spaces available for new businesses/uses (e.g., renovated commercial spaces)
4. Brewery attracts visitors from outside the area
5. Vacant land between railroad tracks and old hotel (was a playground a long time ago)
6. Unused former St. John's Church Building with large parking lot
7. Strengthen collaboration/partnership with Erving (riverfront development, IP Mill redevelopment will impact both sides of river)
8. Increase community/family events/activities
9. Library currently open only limited hours (well used when open)
10. Art/public art

How can we take advantage of opportunities?

(Discussion Comments)

- A public history/art project could help build community, sense of place. Could be tied in with pending historic district nomination
- Could land near railroad be used for green space, community garden, pocket park? Town sold the land to developer with hotel building, but it is currently not being used. (note: active rail line, 2 trains per day, would have to be fenced).
- Strengthen partnership with Erving - IP Mill redevelopment may have large implications on Millers Falls -- whether it is a place of employment or housing. Currently people have no reason to go to Erving. Historically, the partnership was much stronger. Newer residents don't think of both sides of the river as "Millers Falls".
- Look at/coordinate waterfront improvements with other communities (Erving received \$500k from state for interpretive signs, board walk, etc. Kayaking in the area is tricky due to fast moving water and rocks, may be limited to only very skilled kayakers, however nature trails can be widely enjoyed.
- Would like to see Village Center as a place that serves local needs and has "destination businesses".
- Open house events to build community and public support (Community is interested to see redeveloped properties on East Main Street.)



Part Five

Goals, Projects, Priorities & Actions

5. Goals, Projects, Priorities & Actions

Goals

1. Make MFVC a more inviting, safe, convenient place where people want to spend more time
2. Promote community building and strengthen capacity of Millers Falls Community Improvement Association
3. Increase opportunities to improve health and expand recreation for Miller Falls residents
4. Improve connection among MFVC establishments and to community recreational assets
5. Attract businesses that meet local needs and/or draw people into MFVC; encourage expansion of eating & entertainment cluster
6. Increase events to bring people into MFVC
7. Activate underutilized property with uses that would be beneficial to MFVC
8. Improve physical appearance of MFVC
9. Create/reinforce a positive unique identity for MFVC; develop a sense of place
10. Increase economic opportunities for Millers Falls businesses and residents

*MFVC = Millers Falls Village Center

5. Goals, Projects, Priorities & Actions

1. Make MFVC a more inviting, safe, convenient place where people want to spend more time

	Projects	Priority	Time Frame	Initial Actions/Notes
1.1	Relocate/improve bus stop	***	long	Place item on agenda for upcoming MFCIA meeting. Contact local FRTA Representative and write a letter from MFCIA to get discussion started about moving the bus stop. (FRTA might pay for a shelter but Montague would have to bear cost for concrete footing.)
1.2	Address truck traffic issue; provide better signage to direct trucks to Industrial Park (and not miss Route 63 turn off and jack-knife in VC)	***	short	Make request to DPW for large well-placed signage and other strategies.
1.3	Address speeding issue; enforce/reduce speed limit	***	short	Speed indicator trailer has been discussed.
1.4	Improve pedestrian crossing/safety at Main and Bridge Streets	**	short	Update the Complete Streets Plan to include this.
1.5	Support planting of new shade trees	*	short	Coordinate with Tree Committee to identify planting locations & tree maintenance strategy.
1.6	Repair potholes on road near river	*	long	Raise concern with DPW.
1.7	Provide bike rack near library	*	short	
1.8	Provide lighting in alley near library	*	short	
1.9	Provide benches/seating in Village Center		short	Possible project for Commonwealth Places Funding; requires matching funds from community members.

5. Goals, Projects, Priorities & Actions (cont'd)

2. Promote community building and strengthen capacity of MFCIA

	Projects	Priority	Time Frame	Initial Actions/Notes
2.1	Formalize organization and increase membership of MFCIA	***	short	Work with RiverCulture to determine if RC could serve as umbrella organization/fiscal agent for MFCIA. Work toward establishing organizational structure (e.g., Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer) and membership form. Hold regular meetings with agendas and meeting notes.
2.2	Develop “Millers on the Move” monthly column in The Montague Reporter.	***	short	Identify point person/team. During same week that monthly naturalist article comes out about Millers River, add announcement about MFCIA’s next meeting and updates on what’s happening in Millers Falls.
2.3	Increase MFCIA facebook followers and grow social media presence	**	short	Cross promote with RiverCulture social media.
2.4	Create community kiosk/bulletin board	**	short	Create in connection with library; enlist library to assist with keeping up to date. Identify with Millers Falls name that could help with place-making.
2.5	Address need for community meeting space	**	long	The town should address any new development proposals based upon how they address this need.
2.6	Establish community center facility		long	Organize a committee and seek funding for feasibility study that could be in the neighborhood of \$50,000 to start.

5. Goals, Projects, Priorities & Actions (cont'd)

3. Increase opportunities to improve health and expand recreation opportunities for MF residents

	Projects	Priority	Time Frame	Initial Actions/Notes
3.1	Make improvements to Highland Park (e.g., seating)	***	long	Create a committee dedicated to this cause; work with Parks and Recreation Department to complete a Master Plan.
3.2	Complete Riverfront park improvements (fishing access, path)	**	short	The town was awarded an initial grant. It was suggested that Montague should look at what Erving is doing for example and compatibility. (Erving received a \$500k for river trail/ boardwalks, signs.)
3.3	Work with existing grocery store/provide technical assistance to facilitate improvements (e.g., increased selection of fresh food, merchandising)	**	long	Build relationship with store owner. Try to make store aware of the preferences of the neighborhood to buy healthy products.
3.4	Establish a Community garden in MFVC	*	short	Select point person/organization, Identify location, research type of gardens and materials needed
3.5	Establish Farmers Market in MFVC	*	long	Investigate viability of additional farmers market. Turners Falls market sometimes struggles to get enough vendors and critical mass of customers.
3.6	Walking trails/fitness loops with markers around village		short	Establish contact with FRCOG to map out a walking trail and publish a map.
3.7	Consider creating a small children's playground downtown		long	Identify specific location and funding sources. Could overlap with community garden project.

5. Goals, Projects, Priorities & Actions (cont'd)

4. Improve connection among MFVC establishments and with community recreational assets

	Projects	Priority	Time Frame	Initial Actions/Notes
4.1	Repair stairway/improve link to Highland Park	***	short	Create a petition letter and get signatures; send letter to Town requesting appropriation of \$ to do repairs (Initially, there was some confusion about whether or not the use of Town funds would trigger ADA compliance and render the project infeasible -- It was determined that limited repair but not replacement could be done.)
4.2	Connect Smoke House restaurant to the Center Core with a sidewalk.	***	long	Update the Complete Streets Plan to include this and then request funding to get into the Town queue.
4.3	Provide sidewalk to riverfront park	*	long	Update the Complete Streets Plan to include this and then request funding to get into the Town queue.

5. Goals, Projects, Priorities & Actions (cont'd)

5. Attract businesses that meet local resident needs and/or draw people into MFVC; encourage expansion of eating & entertainment cluster

	Projects	Priority	Time Frame	Initial Actions/Notes
5.1	Business recruitment program that provides incentives, removes obstacles and markets the area to desired types of businesses	**	long	
	5.1.1 Retail incentive program to recruit businesses that meet some or all of specified criteria (e.g., open for business full time, generates significant foot traffic, etc.)			Consider creating a program that provides financial incentives to help attract businesses that would be beneficial to the Village Center. Examples include: 1) Initial Commercial Rent Assistance (e.g., Taunton), 2) Low Interest Loan Program (e.g., Beverly) 3) Business Plan Contest Contest with Financial Assistance Prize.
	5.1.2 Consider expanding availability of additional Liquor Licenses that could only be used for restaurants in the Village Center			Consider applying to the state for additional liquor licenses for restaurant use in defined target area (e.g., Stoughton received several licenses specifically for their downtown)
	5.1.3 Network with Franklin County Community Development Corporation Small Business Development Program			Develop relationship with FCCDC. Provide information about Millers Falls and the type of businesses targeted for recruitment. Ask for referrals to business that might be a good fit for the Village Center.
5.2	Expand library services, hours and uses	**	long	Coordinate request for expanded services with library.
5.3	Food Truck event nights or weekend days		short	Partner with local businesses, coordinate with RiverCulture.
5.4	Little Free Library book exchange receptacle		short	Select a volunteer to make and a volunteer to maintain.

5. Goals, Projects, Priorities & Actions (cont'd)

6. Increase events to bring people into MFVC

	Projects	Priority	Time Frame	Initial Actions/Notes
6.1	Utilize Highland Park more fully – more events (e.g., movie night)	**	short	Coordinate with MFCIA, RiverCulture and businesses.
6.2	Establish events committee/subgroup to coordinate with RverCulture	*	short	Coordinate with MFCIA, RiverCulture and businesses.
6.3	Annual event connected to MFVC in addition to Art Week celebration (e.g., festival, fun race, etc.)	*	long	Coordinate with MFCIA, RiverCulture and businesses.
6.4	More activities/ celebrations, family events, block parties		short	Coordinate with MFCIA, RiverCulture and businesses.

5. Goals, Projects, Priorities & Actions (cont'd)

7. Activate underutilized property with uses that would be beneficial to MFVC

	Projects	Priority	Time Frame	Initial Actions/Notes
7.1	Facilitate activation of vacant land and storefronts	**	long	
	7.1.1 Activate unused area near rail tracks (south side of Main) as village green/pocket park, community garden, etc.			Work with existing owner. This could be a possible project for Commonwealth Places Funding (requires matching funds from community members).
	7.1.1 Consider implementing a Vacant Storefront Strategy			Vacant storefront strategies can be comprised of regulatory and/or incentive components. For example . . . The Town of Arlington created a bylaw that requires property owners to pay a fee to register vacant spaces and describe the efforts they are making to fill the space. Fee can be waived under certain conditions. The State has a Vacant Storefront Program that allows municipalities to apply for designation of a Certified Vacant Storefront District and then businesses occupying vacant storefronts can apply for EDIP tax credits. The program requires local matching funds.
7.2	Build community support for development with open house events at redeveloped properties	*	short	Request that developer have open houses to show the community newly renovated buildings.
7.3	Activate unused St. John's building for uses that would enhance arts and culture uses in MFVC.	*	long	

5. Goals, Projects, Priorities & Actions (cont'd)

8. Improve physical appearance of MFVC

	Projects	Priority	Time Frame	Initial Actions/Notes
8.1	Beautification committee, add flowers	**	short	Identify a point person. Request donations from businesses.
8.2	Storefront/sign improvement program	*	long	Prioritize Storefront/sign improvement program to be funded through CDBG program

9. Create/reinforce a positive unique identity for MFVC; develop a sense of place

	Projects	Priority	Time Frame	Initial Actions/Notes
9.1	Historic walking tour & brochure	**	short	Identify point person/committee, (e.g., Library, Historic Commission or other) prepare content, RiverCulture could print.
9.2	Public art exhibit/project (e.g., outdoor art sculpture exhibit)	*	long	Identify point person/committee. A rotating biennial exhibit was suggested. Identify large sculptures that have no home.
9.3	Interpretive/interactive historic exhibit	*	long	Could be tied in with pending historic district nomination. Identify point person/committee, (e.g., Historic Commission or other)
9.4	Create signage to identify place as MFVC		long	Identify point person/committee, (e.g., Historic Commission or other)

5. Goals, Projects, Priorities & Actions (cont'd)

10. Increase economic opportunities for MF businesses and residents

	Projects	Priority	Time Frame	Initial Actions/Notes
10.1	Increase bus service to UMass and improve bus service on weekends.	**	long	Send village representative to participate in Transportation Justice Franklin County meetings.