



June 2021

Local Rapid Recovery Planning

Town of Montague, MA



Agenda

Downtown Turners Falls - Montague

Focus Group Stakeholder Meetings

- Local Rapid Recovery Planning (LRRP) Overview
- LRRP Phases & Project Rubric
- Phase I Diagnostic Highlights
 - Business Survey
 - Baseline Data Collection
- Discussion

LRRP Program Overview & Objectives

Turners Falls / Montague

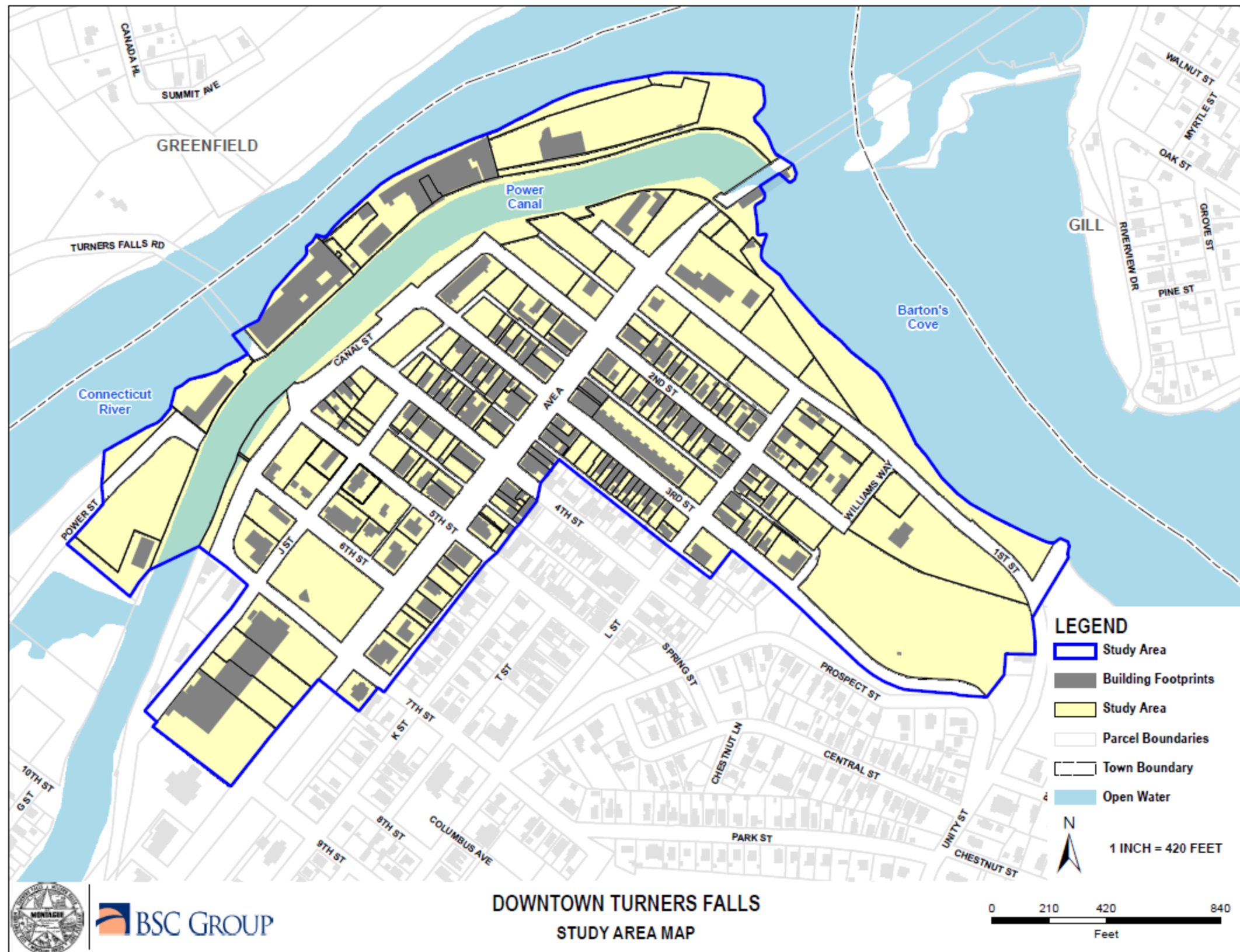
- A set of **actionable projects** that reflect COVID-19 recovery needs, community priorities, available resources and incentives, and the capacity to implement at the local level
- **Primary data** that can be used by town officials to measure COVID-19 impacts on the local business community

Commonwealth

- Ensuring that communities have **data-driven plans** to aid in COVID-19 recovery efforts
- **Standardized data** to demonstrate COVID-19 impacts at the State-level
- Ability to understand on-going needs to **inform efforts to allocate public and private resources** in support of COVID-19 recovery



Downtown Turners Falls Study Area





LRRP Phases

Important Milestones

- **6/11/2021** - Last Date for Community Presentation of Phase 1 Findings by Plan Facilitators to Applicant Communities
- **7/30/2021** - Last Date for Agreement between Plan Facilitators and Applicant Communities on Draft Project Recommendations List
- **9/15/2021** - Final Plans Submitted

Project

An action-oriented statement, e.g., make temporary outdoor dining permanent

Budget

Estimated total project cost and a high-level breakdown of costs

Timeframe

Estimated timeline of project implementation

Partners and Resources

List of public/non-profit/private entities needed to implement project and specify any roles

Risk

Potential risks to the project such as political will, community interests, or financing limitations

KPI

Key Performance Indicators, i.e., project's anticipated impacts

Action Item

Concise description of project and key actions that will be taken

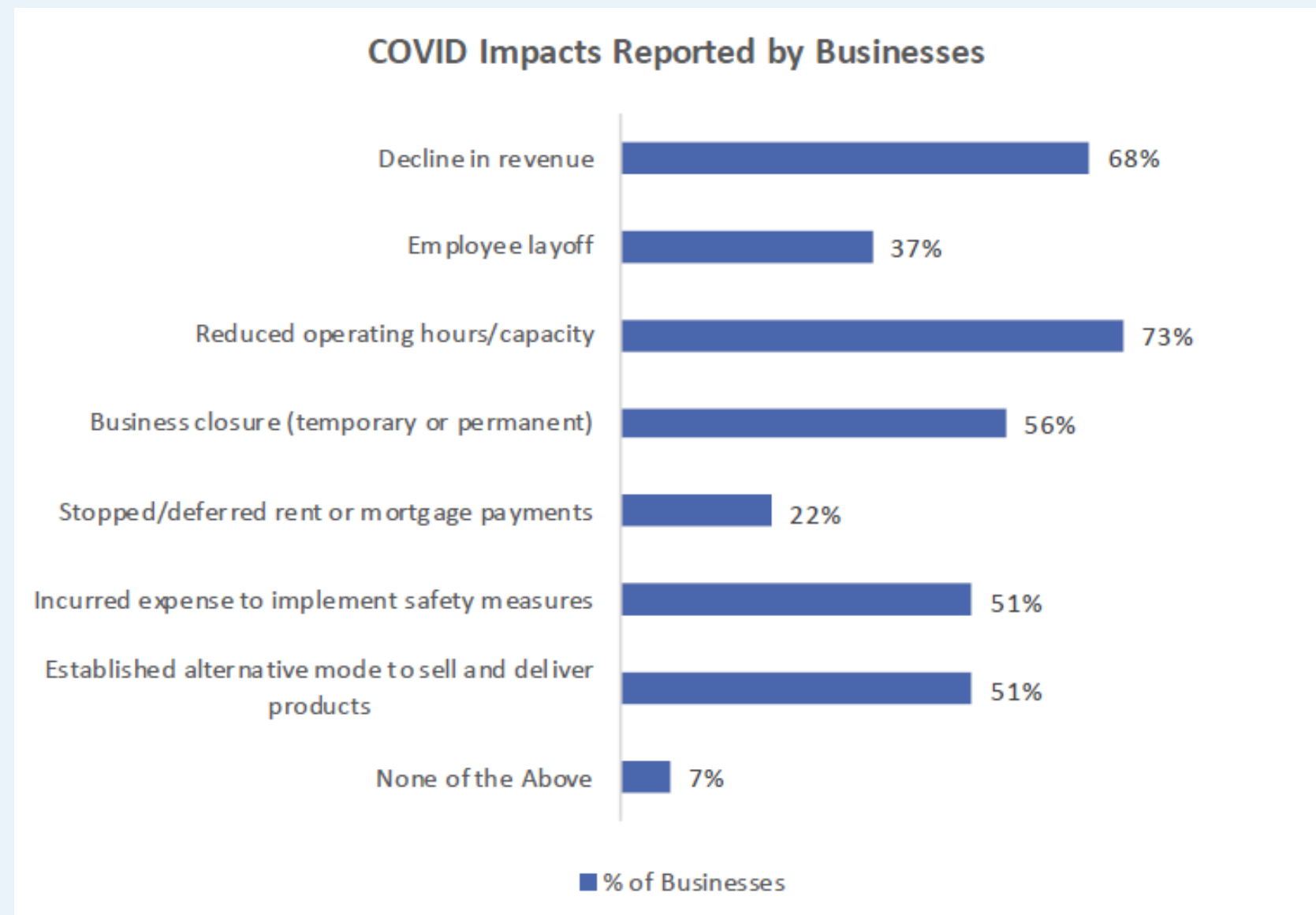
Process

List of chronological steps to implement the project, e.g., training, property/land purchase

Business Survey Highlights: 41 responses, mostly from restaurants, retail, non-profits

Impacts of COVID

- 93% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID
- 80% of businesses reported they were still operating at reduced hours/capacity or were closed



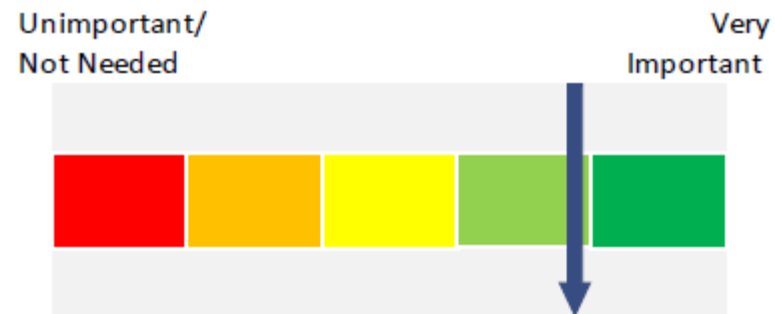
Business Survey Highlights, Continued

Strategies for Supporting Businesses
and Improving the Commercial District

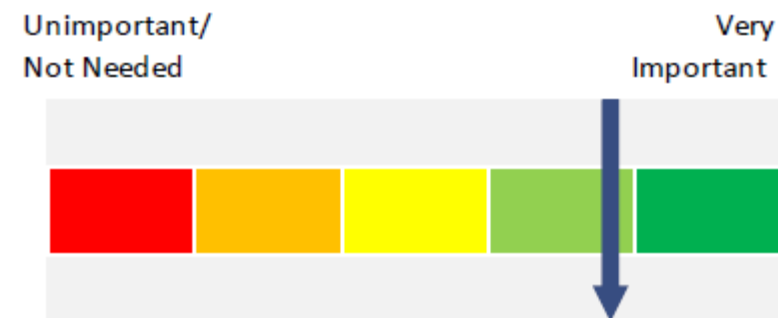
Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access

These charts illustrate the average rating
among respondents regarding importance of
various strategies

Improvements in Safety and/or Cleanliness



Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks



Renovation of Storefronts/ Building Facades



Improvement/Development of Public Spaces & Seating Areas



Amenity Improvements for Public Transit/Bike Users



Changes in Public Parking Availability, Management or Policies

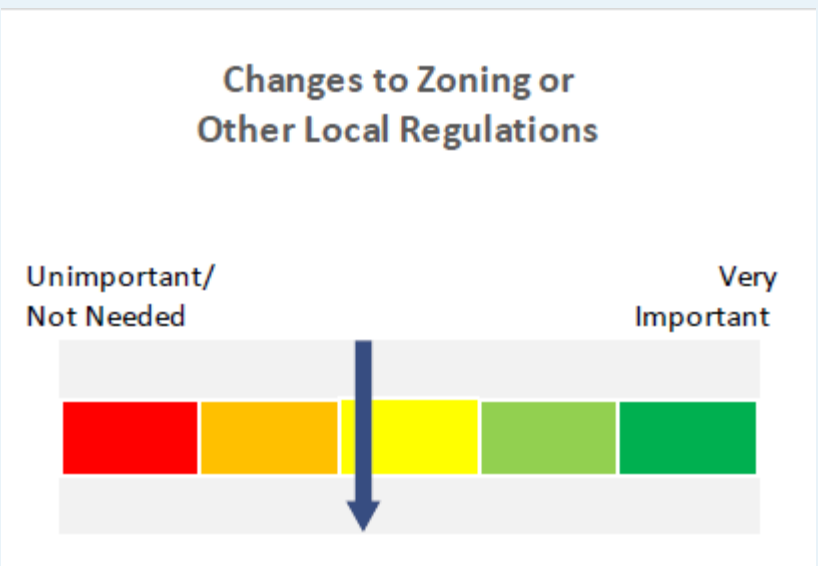
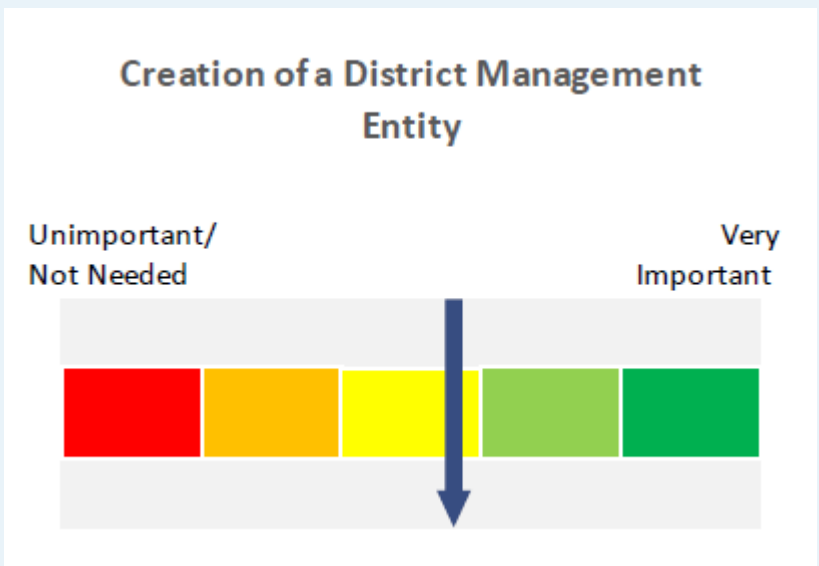
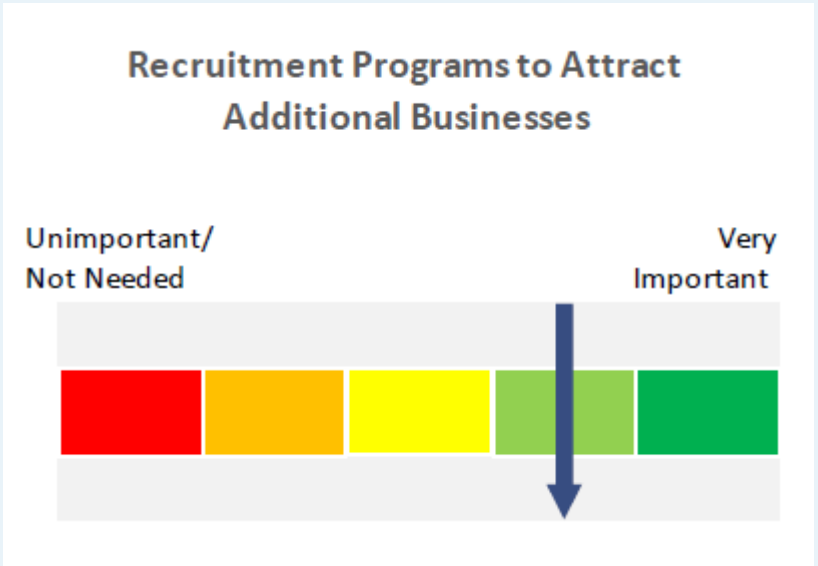
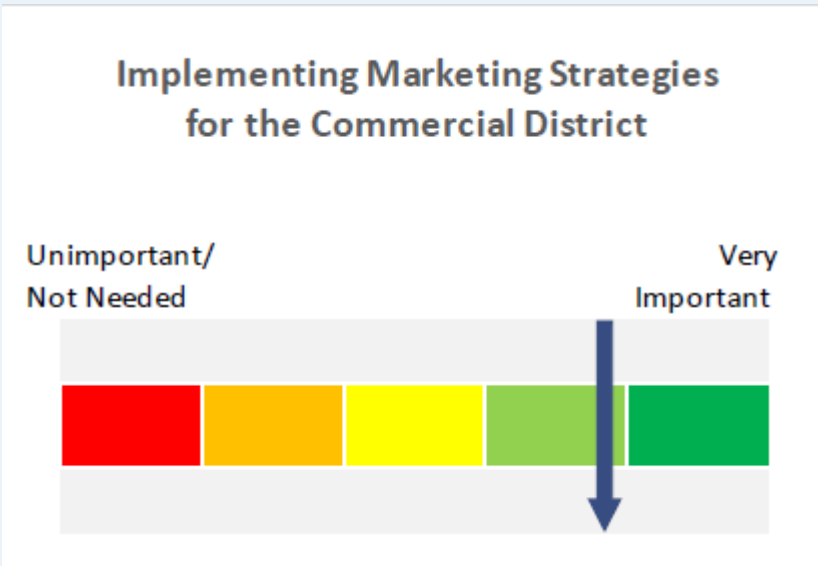
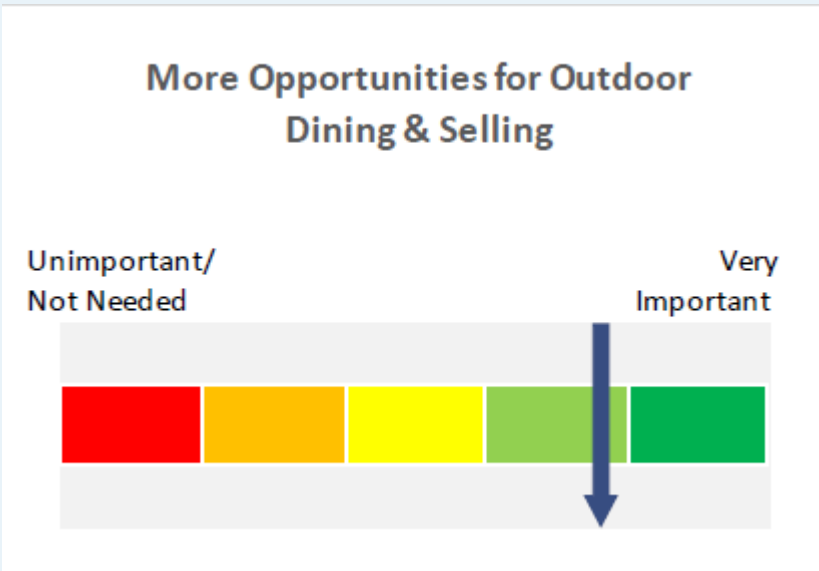


Business Survey Highlights, Continued

Strategies for Supporting Businesses
and Improving the Commercial District

Attraction/Retention of Customers and Businesses

The charts below illustrate the average rating among
respondents regarding importance of various strategies



Physical Environment

Public Realm, Private Realm, Access + Visibility

Total No. of Storefronts

- 42 Storefronts (includes retail, restaurant, bank, office)

Average Annual Daily Vehicular Traffic

- 7,683 - Primary Street

Source: MassDOT Road Inventory Database

Private Realm Scoring

- Window Grade (C)
- Outdoor Display/Dining Grade (B)
- Signage Grade (B)
- Façade Grade (C)
- Lighting Grade (C)

Public Realm Scoring

- Sidewalk Grade (B)
- Street Trees and Benches Grade (C)
- Lighting Grade (A)
- Wayfinding/Signage Grade (F)
- Roadbed and Crosswalks Grade (C)



Business Environment

Tenant Mix, Anchors/Destinations, Vacancy

Total No. of Businesses

- 64 (Site Visits March/May 2021 and ESRI Business Analyst)

Total No. of Vacant Storefronts

- Seven (7) as of May 10, 2021

Total Ground Floor Retail / Office Space

- 198,021 SF Retail
- 19,172 SF Office

Source: Town of Montague Assessor's Office, site visits

Mix of Businesses*

- 22% Retail Trade
- 16% Other Services
- 14% Accommodation & Food Services
- 8% Health Care & Social Assistance

*Per ESRI Business Analyst and site visits



DISCUSSION

In your wildest dreams, what would Turners Falls look like?

- **Physical Environment** – What are major challenges and opportunities across the public realm, private realm, access + visibility? Do you have specific projects or improvements in mind for Downtown Turners Falls?
- **Business Environment** – Is there a certain business mix driving the local economy? Is there an opportunity to attract certain kinds of businesses to make downtown a more attractive place to visit?
- **Marketing, Events, Arts/Culture** – Is there an opportunity to better brand or promote the downtown district and make it even more of a destination? Are there events or arts/culture that you would like to enhance or create to help draw residents and visitors to downtown?
- **Administrative Capacity** – Are there ways to enhance the capacity of RiverCulture, the town of Montague and other stakeholders to support downtown (businesses, marketing, development, events, etc.)?

DISCUSSION

DRAFT – Possible Project Ideas for Downtown Turners Falls

- Funding to accelerate Avenue A streetscape improvements
- Downtown Parking Management Plan – to address issues such as unlimited parking on Ave A, winter lots for snow/plowing, etc.
- Signage and wayfinding – gateways, parking, attractions, etc.
- Façade and storefront improvement program/funding
- Canal District Master Plan, redevelopment feasibility and financing
- Downtown infill development opportunities – prioritize sites?
- Enhance collaborative marketing for downtown Turners Falls businesses
- Additional resources/capacity for downtown business support and/or RiverCulture
- Prioritize high-visibility arts projects for downtown – concrete tower, murals, lighting, gateway art?

DISCUSSION

Next Steps for Turners Falls LRRP

- **Conduct community/stakeholder focus groups in mid-June to gather more input, ideas and help prioritize projects** – targeted at residents, businesses, property owners
- **Develop draft project list** – working with Montague's planners, start drafting project ideas and determining where we should seek subject matter expert (SME) support from the state/DHCD
- **Stakeholder survey** – conduct an online survey of Turners Falls stakeholders to gather feedback on project priorities
- **Detail specifics for proposed projects to position for funding** – apply the state's project template to provide required details to help position projects for anticipated funding and complete draft LRRP report

Thank You!

