



TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS

MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

FINAL MINUTES: MARCH 16, 2017

Members Present: Tom Hall ✓ Carlton D. Hunt TBD

Guests: See attachment

People from BSU, Town Executive Office, Town Councilors, boards, commissions, and citizens participated in the brainstorming session for downtown revitalization (see attachment).

The session was opened with a brief presentation of background material (see attached) by the Chair. The objectives for the meeting were identified:

- Identify potential draws for students in a revitalized downtown – think future
- Develop a comprehensive list of potential funding sources for revitalization
- List near- and mid-term actionable ideas

The participants identified the following draws (not prioritized):

1. Improve the visual attractiveness of the downtown – the current conditions work against attracting students, customers and businesses.
 - a. Street scape
 - b. Maintenance improvements
 - c. Infrastructure modernization
2. Establish design downtown standards and review process
3. Encourage entertainment venues
 - a. Arcade
 - b. Bowling
 - c. Dancing
 - d. Julian's like facility aimed at secondary and university students
 - e. Gaming Cafe' with high capacity internet
 - f. Mystery/puzzle room
 - g.
4. Commercial concepts
 - a. Brewery
 - b. Farmers market – use for Music Alley?
 - c. Restaurants and food shops such as Panera or other small, ethnic restaurants
 - d. Health services (particularly for counseling services) – a university need
 - e. Recreational rental center focused on park and river access
 - f. Incubator space
 - g. Community theater
 - h. Shared work space/maker space – Town Hall, new commercial space
 - i. Modern book store concepts – e.g., Amazon book store
 - j. Bridgewater museum highlighting our history



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The participants identified the following funding sources:

1. Paid parking in town owned lots – also in OCPC market assessment
2. Actively encourage 40B housing in CDBG
 - a. Housing Trust
 - b. Private developers
3. Impact fees
4. Business Improvement Consortium
5. Bank investment funds with clearly defined scope - see Beverly, MA information
6. CDBG grants
7. Town funding
8. TIFs
9. Explore Bridgewater's 2014 ETA designation - An Economic Target Area (ETA) is a state designation based on income, unemployment and other economic characteristics of the area that enables a municipality to offer local tax incentives and allows businesses contemplating expanding with an ETA the ability to apply for the EDIP Investment Tax Credit. OCPC market assessment recommendation

The near- and mid-term actionable items include:

1. Better signage for the municipal lot---including clear/consistent time limits
2. Cleaning the municipal lot, re-striping
3. Cleaning and *maintaining* a clean, neat downtown appearance---including down Main Street, Bedford St., South St, Plymouth St., Summer St. and Broad where litter is a continual problem
4. Parking fees
5. Consider Arlington, MA fee process for filling empty commercial space
6. Design review guidelines – Town CED office
7. Assess student climate – i.e., what do they want from the downtown area. BSU
8. Town budget for downtown improvements
9. Visible Town commitment to downtown
10. Reform the Citizen's Downtown Advisory Committee
11. Consider the Beverly, MA model of creating a list of desirable businesses then asking Banks to donate to a fund which would pay the first year's rent for any of those new businesses.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 13, 2017 @ 4PM, Room 201B, Academy Building.

Signed electronically

Submitted by Carlton D. Hunt, Ph.D.

MPC Chair



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Participants

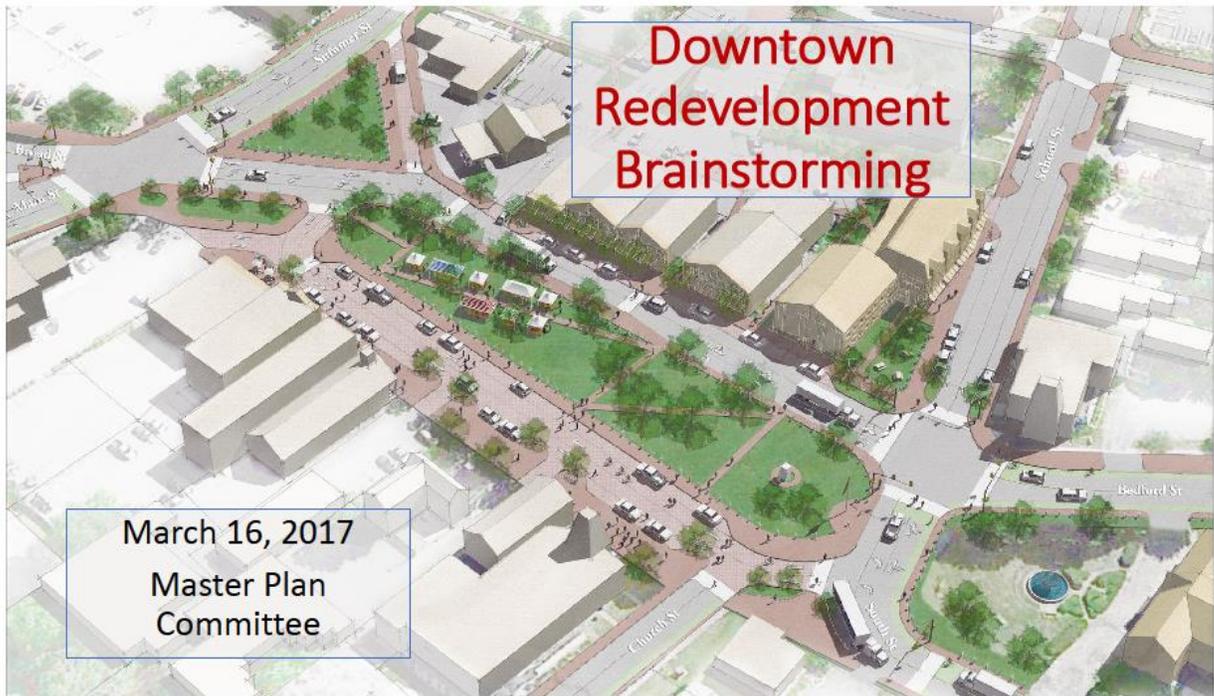
1. Hank Estabrook
2. Tom Perkins
3. Melissia Desjardin
4. Susan McCombe
5. Andrew DeIonno
6. Marilee Kenney hunt
7. Curtis Markley
8. Kelsey Keefe
9. Patrick Driscoll
10. Peter Colombotos
11. Kevin Mandeville
12. Carlton D. Hunt



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Background



Brainstorming Topics & Goal

- Identify potential draws for students in a revitalized downtown –think future
- Develop a comprehensive list of potential funding sources for revitalization
- List near-and mid-term actionable ideas

Background

- This effort is an outcome of meetings with BSU regarding coordination of needs and ideas for downtown revitalization.
- Meetings with the Town/BSU were suggested by the CED Director as a way to gain traction on actions that are of interest to both organizations

2014 Downtown Revitalization Plan

- Pedestrian & Traffic Improvements
- Suggestions for increasing downtown activity
- Farmers market
- Holiday market
- Outdoor performances ✓
- Dances
- Open air cafes and restaurants



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•Café in the Common (Park café)

- Gazebo
- Façade & Signage Improvement Programs (FSIP)
- Massachusetts' provides matching grants to building and business owners in designated districts, such as the Downtown Central Business District), that are targeted for revitalization.
- See page 11 of the 2014 report for eligible actions
- CDBG funds; loans

OCPC 2015 Market Assessment

- Downtown Bridgewater retail uses are primarily in the Campus Plaza on Broad Street and in Central Square.
- 122 businesses identified that includes a range of retail, restaurants, service and professional offices.
- The business composition of the Downtown is unbalanced,
- retail establishments accounted for approximately a quarter of all business establishments
- service-based establishments accounted for almost half of all businesses.

OCPC 2015 Market Assessment

- The Retail Opportunity Gap Analysis showed that
- \$33.4 million is leaking from the 1 Mile Trade Area and
- \$280.2 million is leaking from the 5 Mile Trade Area.
- Specific retail opportunities in the 1 Mile Trade Area include home furnishings, electronics, and clothing and accessory stores.
- Specific retail opportunities in the 5 Mile Trade Area include the aforementioned stores as well as food and beverage, health and personal care, and sporting goods stores, as well as bars and restaurants.

OCPC 2015 Market Assessment

- Estimated potential demand for new retail and restaurant space within Downtown Bridgewater's local market (5 Mile Trade Area) is 1,315,790 square feet.
- A capture rate of 10% of the local market spending would potentially translate into 131,578 square feet of new retail space and
- A capture rate of just 5% would translate into 65,789 square feet of new retail space in Downtown Bridgewater.
- There are approximately 32,285 workers within the local market (5 Mile Trade Area)
- If the Downtown could capture another 10% (3,229) of these workers and assume they would spend just \$10.00 a week Downtown, additional spending of \$1,679,080 annually could be realized.



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OCPC 2015 Market Analysis Recommendations

The analysis found disjointed retail shopping areas, a lack of housing options, a limited business mix, being situated on heavily travelled roadways, and a lack of pedestrian amenities BUT a strong asset base.

Market analysis recommendations include strategies that address:

- ☒ business retention and expansion,
- ☒ businesses development and recruitment,
- ☒ continued engagement and collaboration with BSU, v
- ☒ marketing and promoting the Downtown,
- ☒ improving the appearance of the Downtown.

OCPC 2015 Market Analysis principles

When either rebuilding or reinvigorating a neighborhood retail center, the Urban Land Institute's *Ten Principles for Rebuilding Neighborhood Retail* listed below should be taken under advisement.

- Great Streets Need Great Champions
- It Takes a Vision
- Think Residential
- Honor the Pedestrian
- Parking is Power
- Merchandise and Lease Proactively
- Make It Happen
- Be Clean, Safe, and Friendly
- Extend Day into Night
- Manage for Change

Draft Downtown Vision Statement from 2014 MP update effort

Downtown's Economic Vitality-Bridgewater has a vibrant downtown core consisting of municipal services, locally-owned shops, an interesting variety of restaurants, student-oriented businesses, and residential apartments and condominiums. Downtown is safe and welcoming for pedestrians and bicyclists, is loved by residents and students, and is a destination for shopping and dining. Traffic on downtown roads is calm because much of the through-traffic, including trucks, is diverted to avoid downtown. In addition, student traffic has been minimized and parking downtown is tastefully designed and easy to find with an excellent wayfinding signage system.

The long-running façade improvement program has rehabilitated most of the downtown storefronts with attractive signage, lighting, and façade renovations, particularly to enhance the historic features. The façade program, together with major streetscape improvements including accessibility upgrades and green infrastructure, has spurred significant private investment and redevelopment to integrate mixed-use buildings that include ground-floor commercial space with residential units above.



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Brainstorming -Potential draws

- Ideas from initial meetings with BSU
- Improve overall attractiveness of downtown
- Wellness center to serve student needs
- Game rooms
- Offsite meeting spaces for faculty and businesses
- Food business known to attract students
- Dinner theater
- Book store ideas

OCPC 2015 Market Analysis Strategies

- Businesses Retention and Expansion
- Implement Business Development and Management Training Programs
- Create a Business Recognition Program
- Create a Buy Local Campaign
- Business Development & Recruitment
- Create a Bridgewater Business Guide
- Create a Webpage with Information on Available Properties in Downtown Bridgewater
- Develop Business Recruitment Materials
- Create a Business Expansion and Assistance Team (BEAT) Program
- Consider Establishing a Redevelopment Authority
- Consider Creating a Business Improvement District (BID)
- Consider Creating a District Improvement Financing (DIF) Program

OCPC 2015 Market Analysis Strategies

- Downtown Bridgewater Plan
- Utilize Bridgewater's Designation as an Economic Target Area (ETA)
- Consider Establishing a Revolving Loan Fund
- Consider Creating a Downtown Organization
- Maintain a Database of Prospective Tenants Interested in Locating to the Downtown
- Contact Specific Business Organizations to Assist in Business Recruitment
- Engage in Shared Promotion & Marketing
- Consider Alternative Business Models
- Activate Empty Storefronts

OCPC 2015 Market Analysis Survey



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- What additional types of businesses and services you would you like to see in Downtown Bridgewater? Respondents indicated the following:
 - sit down restaurant (56.2%),
 - specialty food store (32.2%),
 - book and music store (30.5%),
 - clothing/accessory store (30.0%),
 - hardware/garden store (24.1%),
 - café/bakery (23.1%), and
 - a bar/lounge/sports pub (21.2%).
 - Respondents indicated the major advantages of shopping or doing business in Downtown Bridgewater are convenience (79.5%) and the desire to support local businesses (54.6%).
 - Respondents indicated the major disadvantages of shopping or doing businesses in Downtown Bridgewater are traffic (70.0%), the poor selection of goods and services (55.5%) and a lack of parking (53.1%).

OCPC 2015 Market Analysis Survey

What additional types of businesses and services you would you like to see in Downtown Bridgewater? Respondents indicated the following:

- When asked what merchants could do to improve their stores, the most common responses were to improve their appearance (49.7%) and to improve their selection (43.3%).
- The desired identity or image most respondents would like to see for Downtown Bridgewater is that of a small New England-style town center that is both charming and quaint.

OCPC 2015 Market Analysis Strategies

- Continued Engagement & Collaboration with Bridgewater State University (BSU)
- Partner with BSU on the Development of a Business Incubator
- Partner with BSU to Create a Makerspace
- Undertake A Student Marketing Campaign
- Marketing & Promotion
- Develop a Market Identity/Brand
- Establish a Web Presence
- Appearance Improvements
- Focus on Upkeep & Maintenance
- Incorporate Streetscape Elements
- Incorporate Wayfinding Signage
- Improve Traffic Signage
- Undergrounding of Utility Wires
- Consider Implementing a Façade Improvement Program



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Brainstorming -Potential Funding Sources

•CDBG grant for façade improvements

•Historic preservation grants

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•Private investors

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Actions to take

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