

Town of Topsfield Downtown Revitalization Plan

Scope of Work

This scope of work defines the tasks and deliverables associated with the development of a Downtown Revitalization Plan (DRP) for the Town of Topsfield. This plan will evaluate the opportunities for the Topsfield downtown in a holistic manner that will guide the Town's goals and priorities for the next 5-10 years. Additionally, strong community participation will ensure that any plan that is developed will be used and adhered to by the town.

With funding through the Technical Assistance Program, MAPC will build upon the work the Town has done to date and the work the Town will be conducting currently, including an upcoming parking study to be completed in 2019. MAPC will conduct a market assessment of the downtown to identify competitive advantages for Topsfield, and will engage the community to establish a vision for the downtown. MAPC will then work with the **Downtown Strategic Planning Working Group** to create a downtown revitalization strategy. The approximate timeframe for this project will be nine months, beginning in April 2019 and concluding in January 2020.

Deliverables

1. Update of demographic information, review of downtown, townwide and regional market conditions, and identification of strategic growth locations in the downtown (both geographic and sector-based)
 - a. This analysis will also include analysis of the current customer base (existing residents, employees and visitors) as well as areas for future customer growth based on the existing economic activity and the desired economic outcomes in the future.
2. Development of a vision for the downtown with goals and strategies.
3. Create a five-year work plan that defines where the working group should focus its efforts.
 - a. This could include, but not be limited to
 - i. Business recruitment and retention strategies, including strategies to engage property owners with the goal of rehabilitating and redeveloping key underutilized properties.
 - ii. Customer development strategies, including, if shown by the data,
 1. Recommendations regarding ways to grow the residential customer base
 2. Marketing strategies, including facilitation of connections between the Topsfield Fair and the downtown.
4. Identify best practices amongst public/private initiatives in Topsfield and in other communities in Massachusetts

Project Area Context

Topsfield is located in the North Shore Task Force subregion of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. As of the US Census 2017 American Community Survey, the town of Topsfield had a population of approximately 6,496. Over 86% of town residents have attained a High School degree or higher, and the median household income in Topsfield was \$131,387. The town has approximately 2,271 housing units, of which 85% are single family homes, and 95% are owner-occupied. The median home value is \$566,700.

According to the Town's website, Topsfield is a relatively compact rural community, made up of 13 square miles, with 60 miles of roadways and 25 miles of sidewalks and bike paths. It is located approximately 25 miles north of Boston, with Routes 95 and 1 within one mile of the town. The main shopping center is a ¼ mile village downtown, although there are additional small businesses located primarily along Route 1. The Town also boasts several key recreational resources including the Rail Trail, the Ipswich River and the Town Common.

The Town leadership is committed to revitalizing the downtown as a key amenity for current and future residents, as well as visitors such as those drawn to Topsfield by the Topsfield Fair. Given the significant work the Town, Board of Selectmen and other volunteers have done to date, Topsfield is now poised to develop a vision for the downtown with the goal of designing a strategy to ensure its future growth.

The Town is committed to working with a wide range of stakeholders to create this vision, set goals, develop and prioritize strategies, and create a system of indicators to monitor success. The engagement process would leverage current residents, existing business owners and property owners, Town staff and officials, as well as interested developers, business owners and others who have expressed interest in investing in the Town's downtown.

Given the strong connection between commercial and residential dynamics, this project will involve an analysis of the current residential base, and, if shown by the data, will also explore opportunities for adding additional residential capacity to the downtown, where feasible.

In addition, the Town will begin a parking study, through funding from the Mass Downtown Initiative. The parking study will be done in coordination with this project, and represents another key opportunity to analyze current data to make key decisions about land use and other development issues affecting the downtown.

Partners and Responsibilities

MAPC staff with expertise in land use, outreach and engagement, data analysis, and economic development planning will produce the project deliverables; staff with housing and transportation expertise will provide additional support as needed. MAPC staff will organize biweekly check-in calls with Topsfield staff to maintain regular communication about project process. MAPC will host at least one community visioning event, a targeted roundtable discussion with the business and development community, and one-on-one discussions with key economic development stakeholders.

The format of these meetings will be determined during the stakeholder identification phase of work. MAPC and Topsfield staff will also meet or hold detailed conference calls at least nine times within the course of the project, of which at least four will be in-person meetings.

- Project kick-off meeting: Meet with Town staff to discuss the process for developing project deliverables, potential approaches to addressing challenges towards development in the economic areas, and a walking tour of the economic districts.
- Project deliverables check-in: Debrief the existing conditions and market analysis findings to date. Discuss preparation for the downtown revitalization vision meeting that will be open to the public.
- Project deliverables check-in: Discuss further existing conditions and market analysis information and prepare for business / developer roundtable meeting.

- Review and discuss findings from public meetings and draft recommendations to be incorporated into the Downtown Revitalization Plan.
- Town review of draft deliverables followed by presentation of final deliverables. Meeting to present final deliverables to community, businesses, and other stakeholders.

The Downtown Strategic Planning Working Group would serve as the working group for the process. Its membership is representative of the Town’s business community, residents, developers and key stakeholders, as well as Town boards. Additional community groups and institutions that may also be involved in the planning process include business groups within Topsfield.

The Town Administrator and Community Development Coordinator will assist with the project, in concert with Lynne Bermudez and John Spencer, Members of the Board of Selectmen. Total staff time for the project is estimated at 200 hours. Each volunteer working group member is estimated at 20 hours.

Project Work Plan: Tasks, Budget, and Timeframe

Phase	Task	Hours	Timeline
Existing Conditions Review	Workforce / Resident Demographic Profile Update: Conduct analysis of resident and workforce composition by sector, occupation, wages, education level, race / ethnicity.	10	April-June
	Topsfield and regional market conditions and comparison: Conduct research of comparable communities’ Economic Development efforts.	45	April-July
	Housing existing conditions and market analysis: Review of current housing market strengths and challenges and conduct housing analysis.	45	April-June
	Existing Business Composition Analysis: Geographic analysis of businesses by type and employment density, to include potential business clustering, and review of current public/private initiatives.	15	April-June
	Economic Development SWOT Analysis: Identify strategic advantages of Topsfield (incl. business districts) in terms of business growth.	15	April-July
Economic Development Vision	Identify stakeholders: Identify local economic development groups, organizations, boards, commercial and residential realtors, property owners, business owners, housing developers, other social networks that would be affected/ interested/impacted by a downtown revitalization plan.	5	June-August
	Create and conduct outreach strategy: Create and conduct outreach strategy to engage with these groups on downtown issues. Design public meetings, charrettes, etc.	10	June-September
	Stakeholder interviews: Engage/interview key stakeholders and determine which forms of Economic Development best benefits each.	10	July-September

	<p>Public Meeting Kick Off Event & Visioning: Session to begin forming a vision for the downtown. Identify the types of commercial development residents are interested in seeing in Topsfield, by industry type, service vs professional. This will also include development preferences and economic development issue prioritization.</p> <p>Outreach for the Visioning event will begin in August.</p>	65	August-September
	<p>Outreach intake: Intake, clean and synthesize data and comments gathered during outreach phase</p>	15	September-October
<p>Business Engagement - Challenges to growth, expansion, retention</p>	<p>Identify stakeholders: Businesses, developers, property owners and other stakeholders.</p>	4	June-August
	<p>Create and conduct outreach strategy: Create and conduct outreach strategy to engage with these groups on eco dev issue areas including design of roundtable discussion.</p>	4	July-August
	<p>Business / Developer Roundtable: Roundtable to engage with businesses and developers on issue areas. Discussion will be informed in part by SWOT analysis and stakeholders experiences. Learn what barriers they find when working towards development and recommendations on how to overcome those barriers.</p>	12	July-August
<p>Strategic Planning</p>	<p>Work with town officials to propose structure, staffing, resources, and goals for Downtown Strategic Planning Working Group : Throughout the project, the MAPC team will work with Town officials to development a strategy and implementation plan to achieve the goals developed in the downtown vision.</p>	12	April-November
	<p>Incorporate housing strategies to final plan: Create strategies to support the preservation, rehabilitation and development of, and access to, affordable and workforce housing, and to support economic opportunities for lower-income families.</p>	30	October-November
<p>Final Deliverables</p>	<p>Final Presentation of Findings: Presentation of findings, community feedback, and recommendations. Opportunity for final review and sign off from community.</p>	15	December
	<p>Final Report Development: A Downtown Revitalization Plan to be inclusive of updated demographic analysis for the town, a local and regional market assessment, specific recommendations for growth in the downtown, an outline of short-, mid-, and long-term initiatives, goals, opportunities. The Plan will also outline a strategic plan for a future working group focused on economic development strategies for the Town, with goals and action items for a 5-10 year plan.</p> <p>The plan will be presented to the Board of Selectmen and MAPC staff will meet with the Working Group and Town Staff to discuss implementation.</p>	30	November - January
<p>Project Management</p>	<p>Project management and communication with Topsfield representatives: monthly check in calls, 4-5 in person meetings and coordination of MAPC staff.</p>	30	March-January

Non labor costs: Travel, supplies, food, misc.	
Total Budget, Hrs. and Costs	

Project Objectives

Pursue economic development that encourages equity, small business development, and job opportunities for a range of residents and vibrancy in the downtown. Combined with the Town’s housing efforts, this economic development planning process would help encourage the development of new small businesses and could lead to additional housing and economic opportunities for a range of residents.

MetroFuture Goals

#4 Businesses will readily relocate to and expand in the region thanks to consistent and predictable economic development policies set by an informed public sector.

#10 Growth in the region will be guided by informed, inclusive, and proactive planning.

#14 An increasing share of the housing in each municipality will be affordable to working class families and fixed-income seniors.

#35 Small business owners and entrepreneurs will play a major role in the region’s economy and innovation

#36 businesses will grow expeditiously thanks to consistent and predictable economic development policies set by an informed public sector

#37 a strong supply of educated and skilled workers – of all ages – will encourage businesses to locate and expand here

#39 more workers will participate in the labor force, earning a living wage through secure employment

MetroFuture Strategies

Strategy 1A: Municipalities should develop district plans for locations suitable for compact housing growth and economic development

Strategy 5E: Increase vitality of existing centers

Strategy 11C: Support small businesses and entrepreneurs

Process Benchmarks

- Turnout of at least 40 people to the community visioning meeting, with attendees representing different segments of the Topsfield community.
- Engage with at least 25 businesses and developers to discuss challenges to commercial growth in the Topsfield economic areas and potential interventions to address challenges.
- Majority of residents feel that they have the opportunity to provide meaningful input throughout the planning process.

Desired Project Outcomes

- Creation of an updated demographic analysis for Topsfield, zoning, land use and constraints analysis, and a local and regional market assessment.
- Formulation of a strategic plan to be implemented by the Town of Topsfield.
- Establish a work plan for the economic development working group to begin incorporating at the completion of the project.

Scope Approved:

Topsfield Town Administrator

Date