

This report provides the results of a business survey conducted during March and April of 2021. The survey is part of a program launched by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development to help communities develop Rapid Recovery Plans for downtowns and commercial districts. The survey was directed to owners or other appropriate representatives of business establishments located in the targeted commercial areas. (For Data Tables, see page 9.)

Brookline

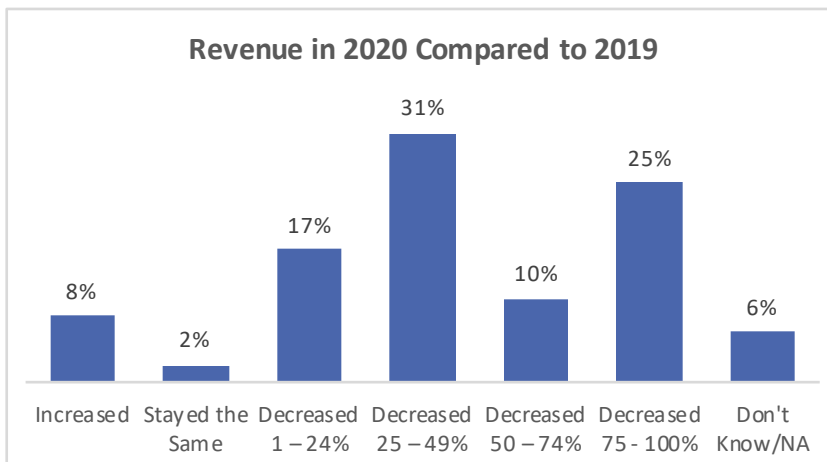
Coolidge Corner & JFK Crossing

Responses: 48

Impacts of COVID-19

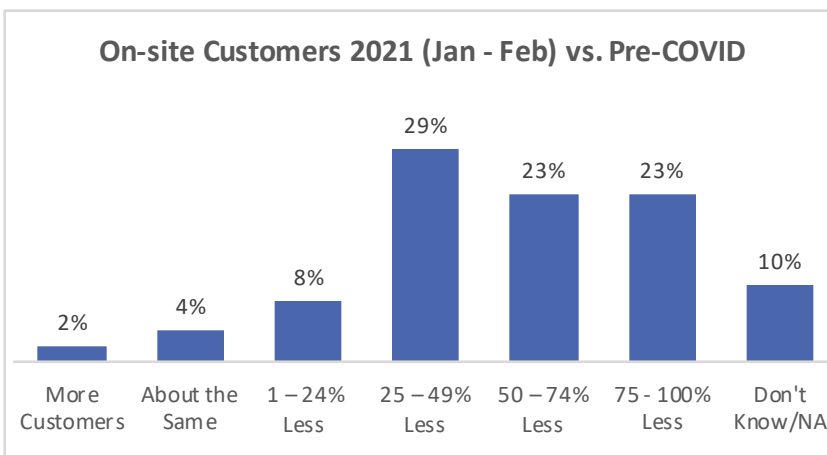
Decline in Business Revenue

83% of businesses generated less revenue in 2020 than they did in 2019. For 66% of businesses, revenue declined by 25% or more.



Less Foot Traffic in Commercial Area

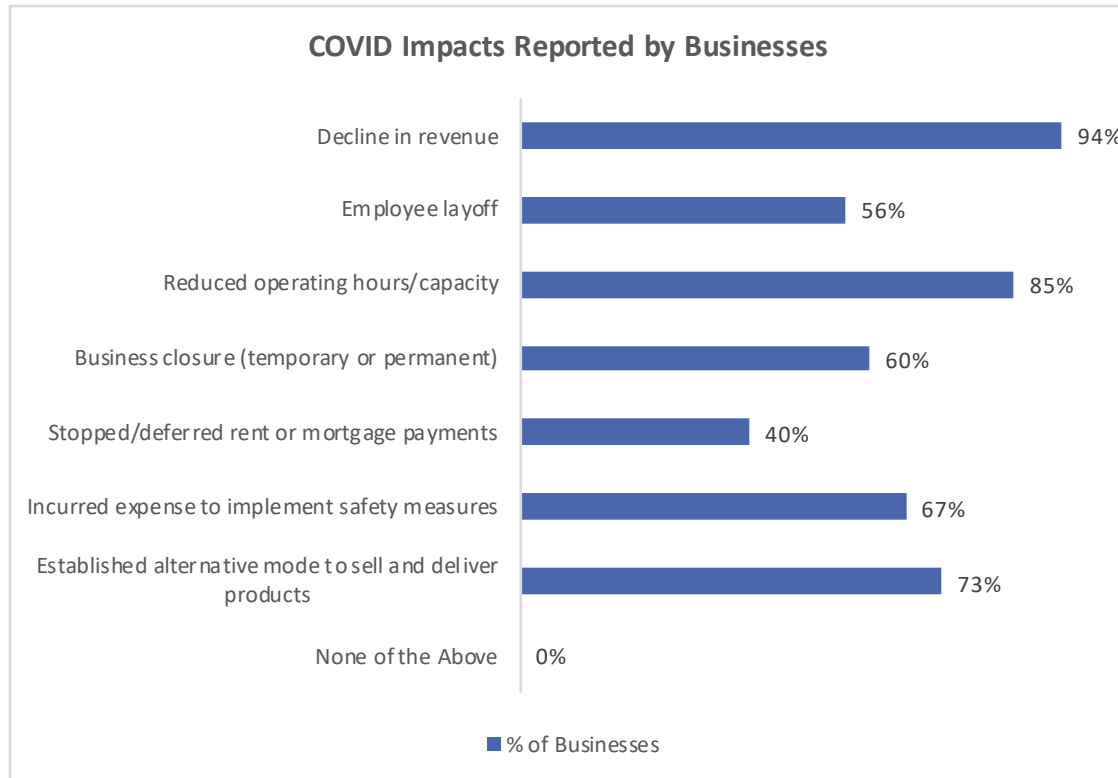
83% of businesses had less on-site customers in January and February of 2021 than before COVID. 75% of businesses reported a reduction in on-site customers of 25% or more.



Impacts of COVID-19 (cont'd)

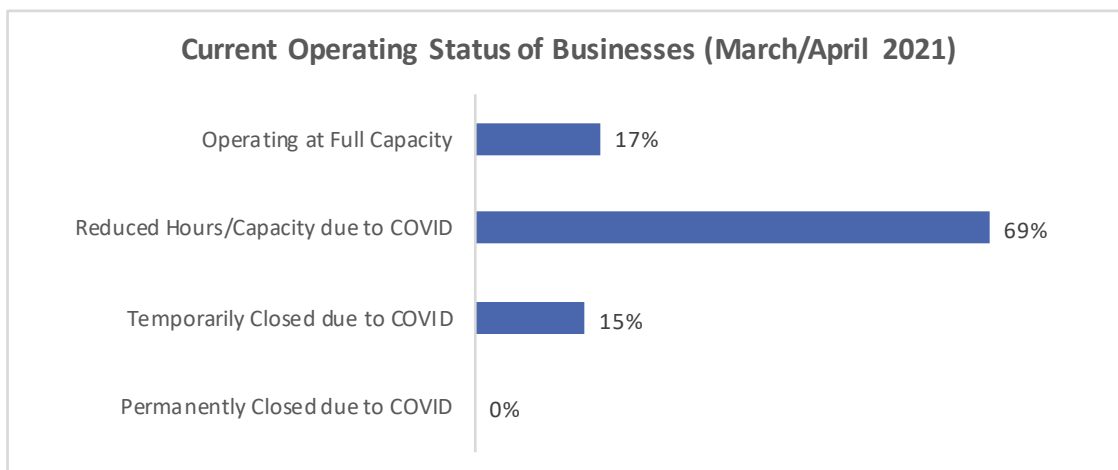
Reported Impacts

100% of businesses reported being impacted by COVID.



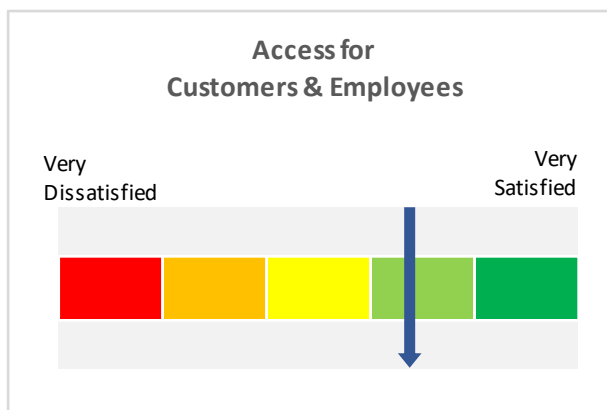
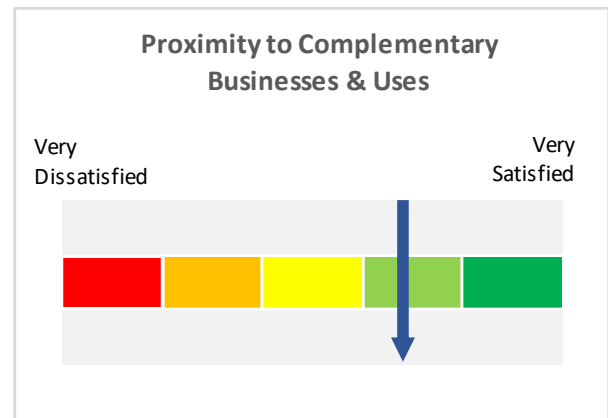
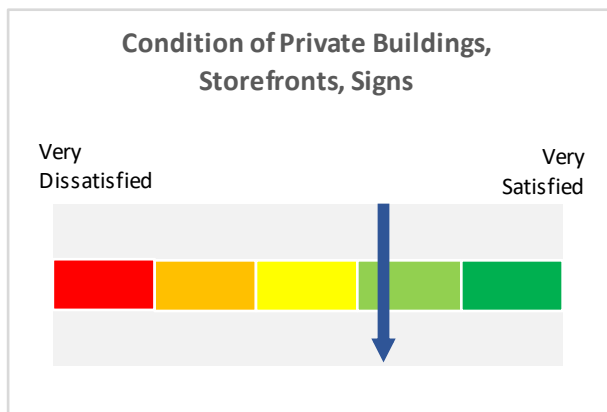
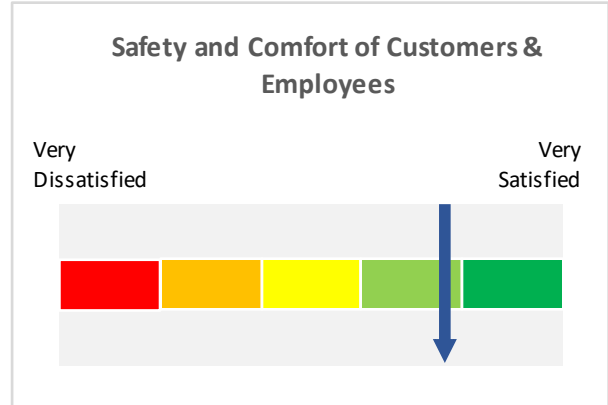
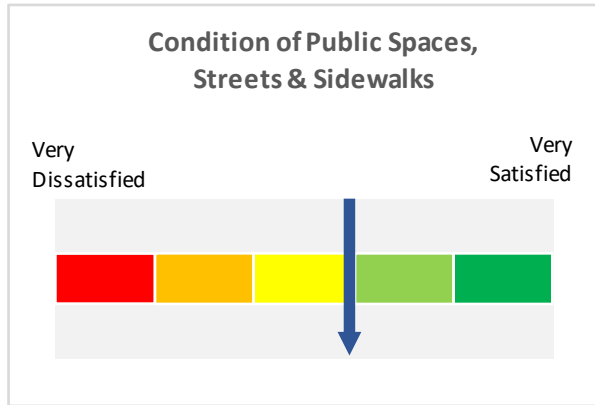
Operating Status

At the time of the survey, 83% of businesses reported they were operating at reduced hours/capacity or closed.



Business Satisfaction with Commercial District

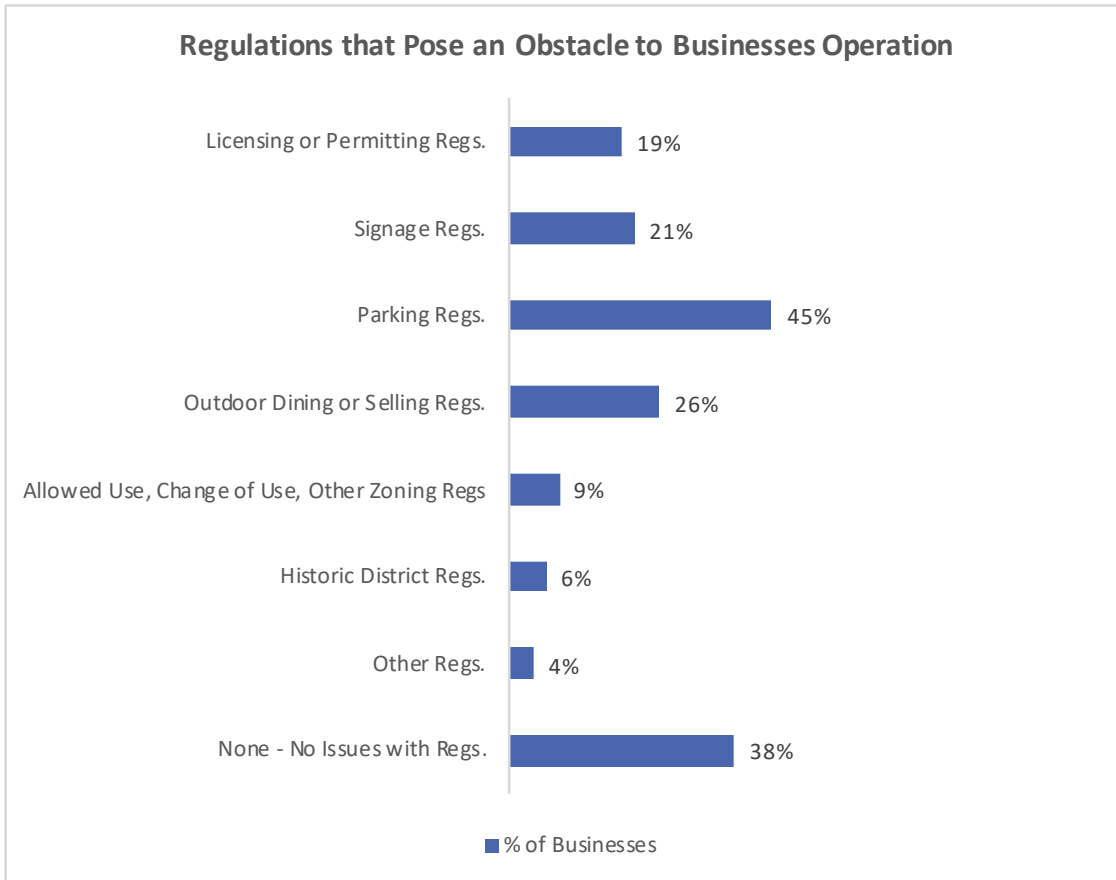
The charts below illustrate the average satisfaction rating among respondents regarding various elements.



Business Satisfaction with Commercial District (cont'd)

Regulatory Environment

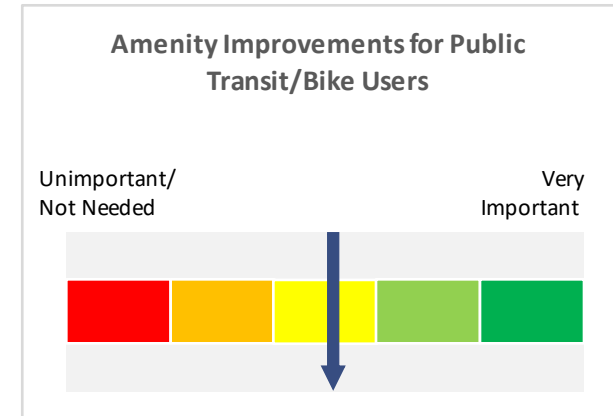
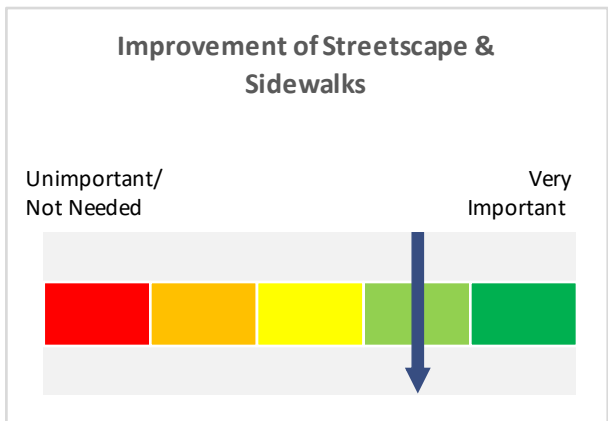
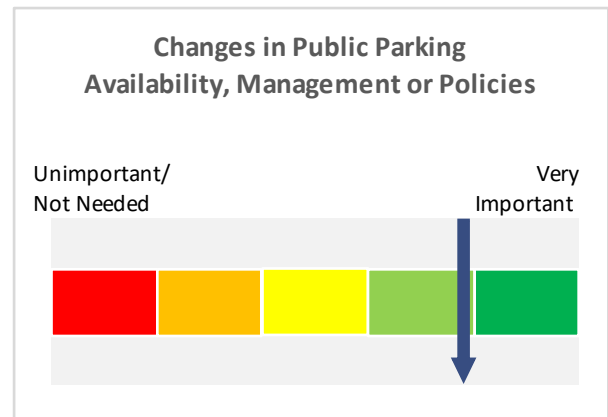
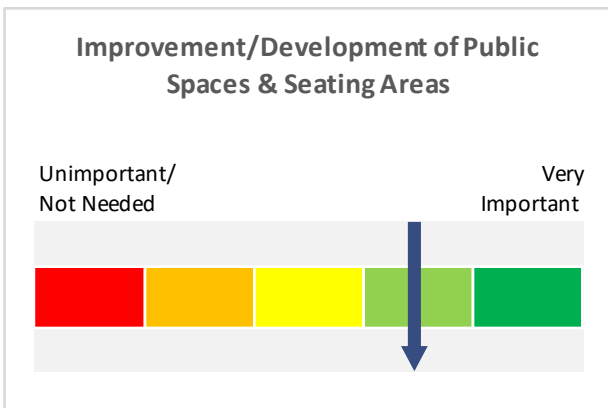
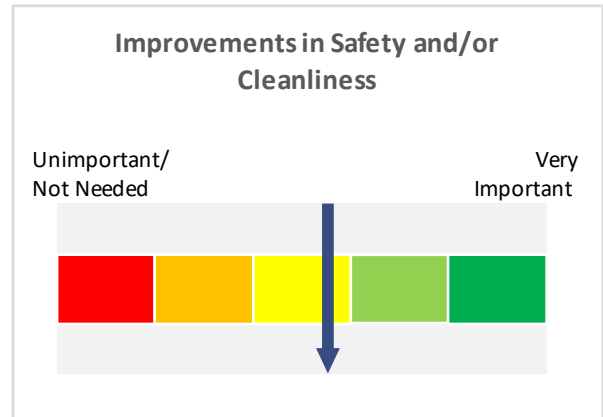
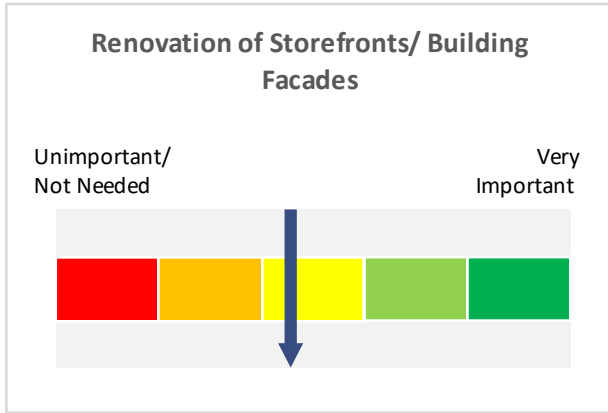
62% of businesses indicated that the regulatory environment poses an obstacle to business operation.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies

Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access

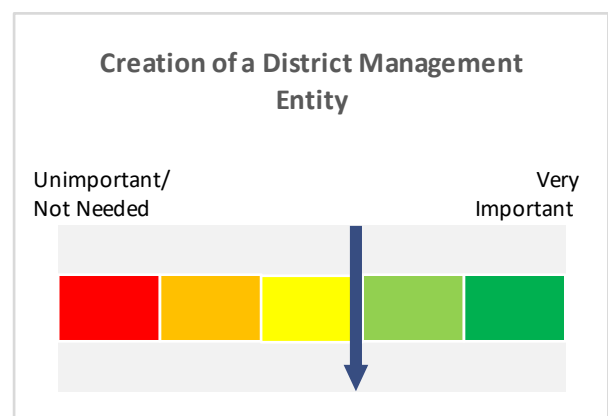
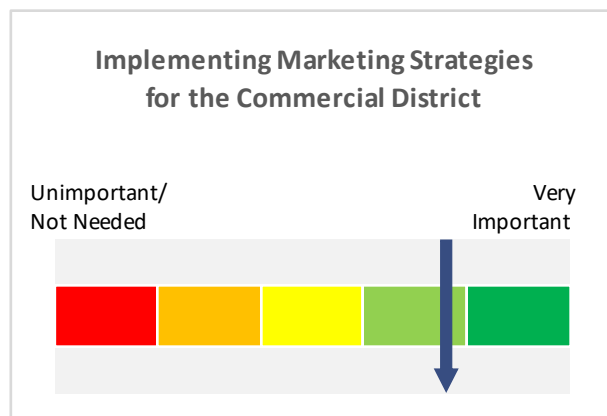
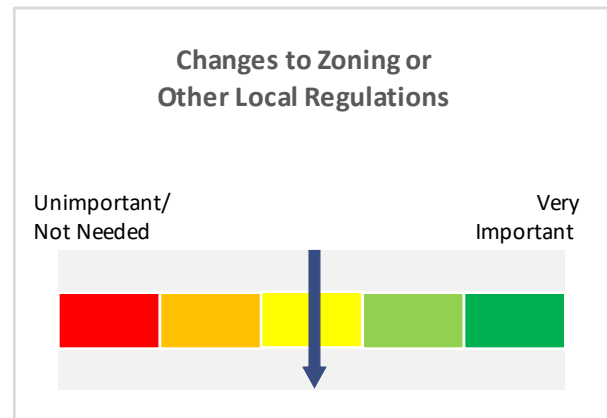
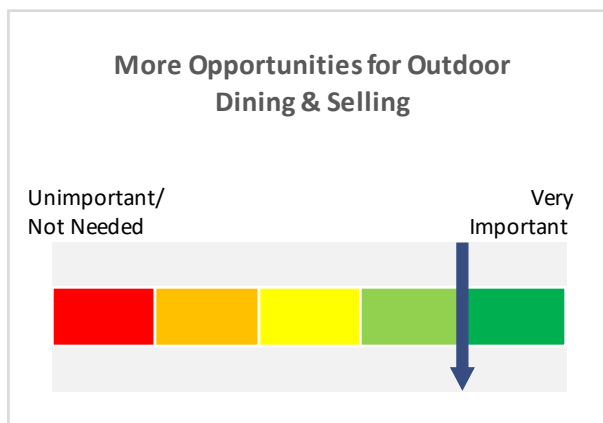
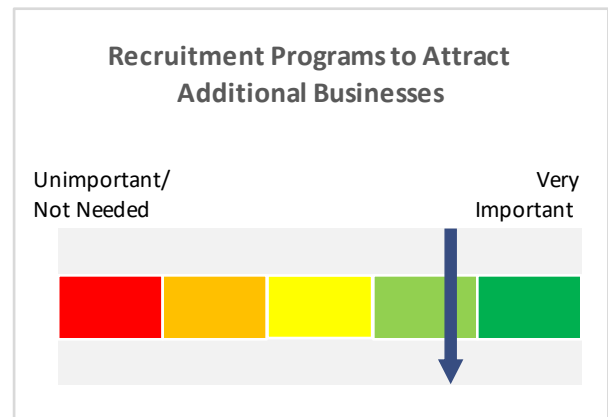
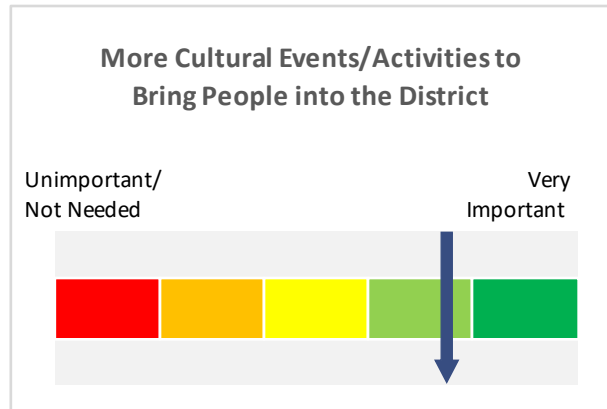
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

Attraction/Retention of Customers and Businesses

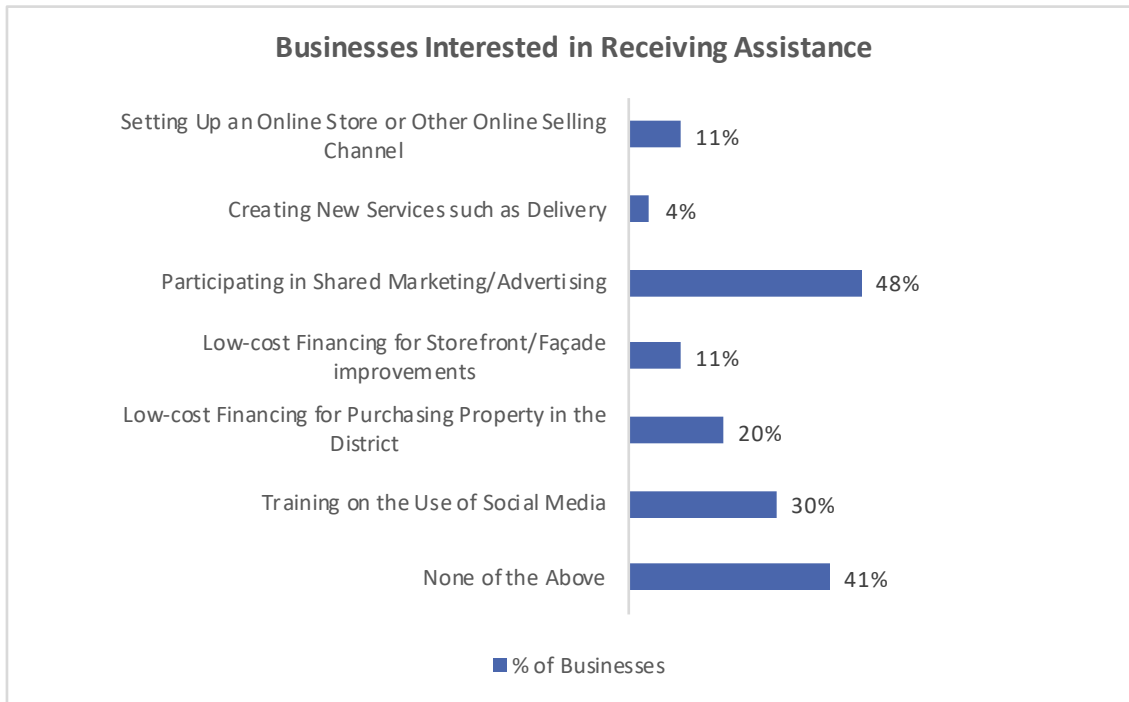
The charts below illustrate the average rating among respondents regarding importance of various strategies.



Business Input Related to Possible Strategies (cont'd)

Businesses Support

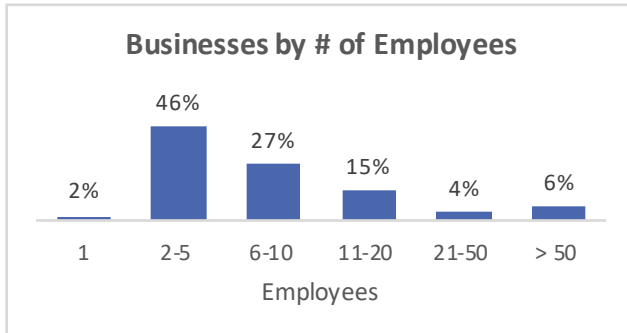
59% of businesses expressed interest in receiving some kind of assistance.



Business Characteristics

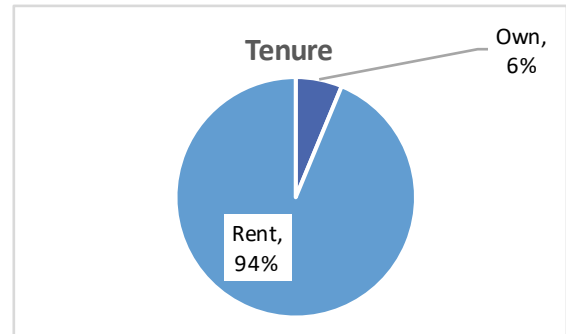
Business Size

48% of businesses are microenterprises (≤ 5 employees).



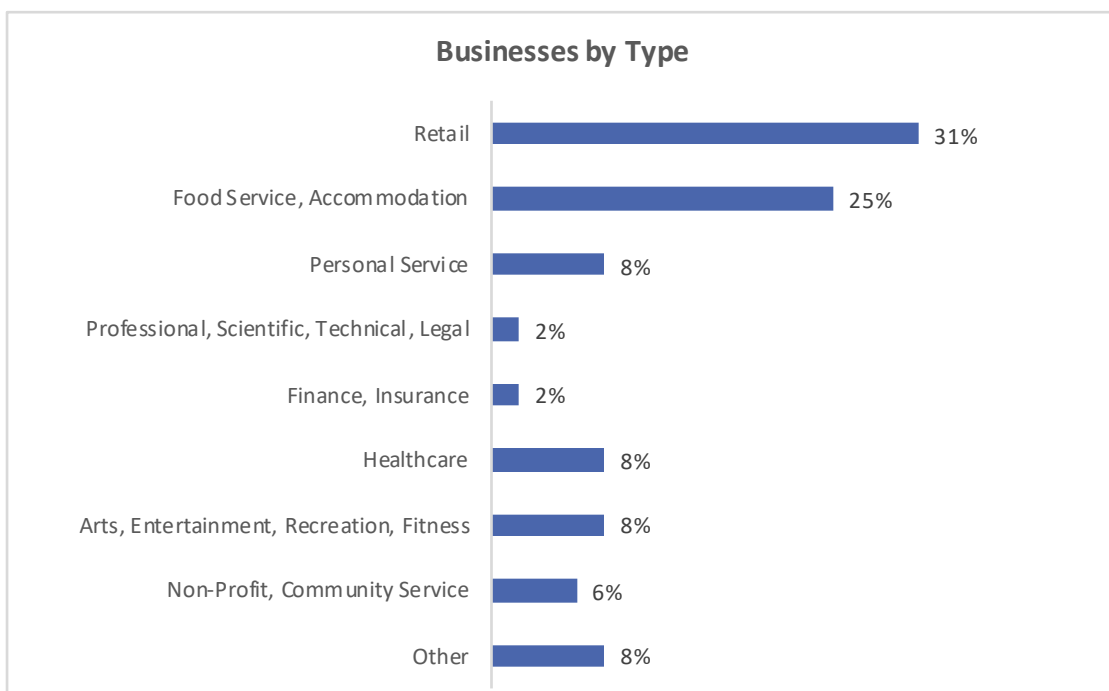
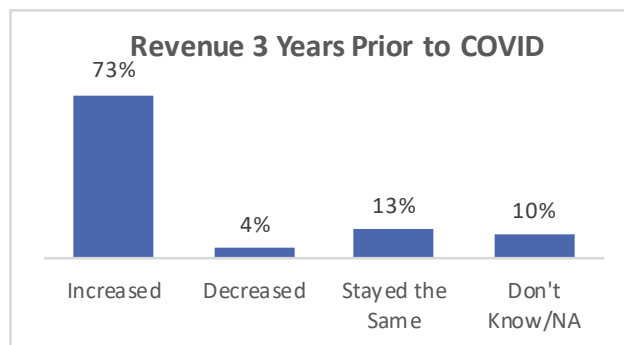
Business Tenure

94% of businesses rent their space.



Revenue Trend Prior to COVID

73% of businesses reported increase in revenue during the 3 years prior to COVID.



Business Survey Results - Data Tables

Community Where Targeted Downtown or Commercial District is Located

1. Please select the community where your business is located.

Brookline	48
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Business Characteristics & Satisfaction with Commercial Area

2. Including yourself, how many people did your business employ prior to COVID (February 2020), including both full-time and part-time?

1	1	2%
2 to 5	22	46%
6 to 10	13	27%
11 to 20	7	15%
21 to 50	2	4%
More than 50	3	6%
Total	48	100%

3. Does your business own or rent the space where it operates?

Own	3	6%
Rent	45	94%
Total	48	100%

4. During the 3 years prior to COVID, had your business revenue . . . ?

Increased	35	73%
Decreased	2	4%
Stayed about the Same	6	13%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	5	10%
Total	48	100%

5. Please select the category that best fits your business.

Retail (NAICS 44-45)	15	31%
Food Service (restaurants, bars), Accommodation (NAICS 72)	12	25%
Personal Service (hair, skin, nails, dry cleaning) (NAICS 81)	4	8%
Professional Scientific, Technical, Legal (NAICS 54)	1	2%
Finance, Insurance (NAICS 52)	1	2%
Healthcare (medical, dental, other health practitioners) (NAICS 62)	4	8%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Fitness (NAICS 71)	4	8%
Non-Profit, Community Services	3	6%
Other	4	8%
Total	48	100%

6. Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects of the Downtown or Commercial District where your business is located.

Condition of public spaces, streets, sidewalks

Very Dissatisfied	2	4%
Dissatisfied	6	13%
Neutral	16	34%
Satisfied	19	40%
Very Satisfied	4	9%
Total	47	100%

Condition of Private Buildings, Facades, Storefronts, Signage

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	4	9%
Neutral	19	40%
Satisfied	16	34%
Very Satisfied	8	17%
Total	47	100%

Access for Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	6	13%
Neutral	11	23%
Satisfied	21	45%
Very Satisfied	9	19%
Total	47	100%

Safety and Comfort of Customers & Employees

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	2	4%
Neutral	8	17%
Satisfied	22	47%
Very Satisfied	15	32%
Total	47	100%

Proximity to Complementary Businesses or Uses

Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
Dissatisfied	7	15%
Neutral	11	23%
Satisfied	17	36%
Very Satisfied	12	26%
Total	47	100%

7. Do any local regulations (not related to COVID) pose an obstacle to your business operation?

Licensing or permitting regulations	9	19%
Signage regulations	10	21%
Parking regulations	21	45%
Outdoor dining or selling regulations	12	26%
Allowed uses, change of use or other zoning regulations	4	9%
Historic District regulations	3	6%
Other regulations (not related to COVID)	2	4%
None - No Issues with regulations	18	38%

Impacts of COVID

8. Did your business experience any of the following due to COVID? Select All that apply.

Decline in revenue	45	94%
Employee layoff	27	56%
Reduced operating hours/capacity	41	85%
Business closure (temporary or permanent)	29	60%
Stopped/deferred rent or mortgage payments	19	40%
Incurred expense to implement safety measures	32	67%
Established alternative mode to sell and deliver products (on-line platforms, delivery, etc.)	35	73%
None of the Above	0	0%

9. How did your 2020 business revenue compare to your 2019 revenue?

Increased compared to 2019	4	8%
Stayed about the same as 2019	1	2%
Decreased 1 – 24% compared to 2019	8	17%
Decreased 25 – 49% compared to 2019	15	31%
Decreased 75 - 100% compared to 2019	5	10%
Decreased 50 – 74% compared to 2019	12	25%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	3	6%
Total	48	100%

10. Please estimate how the number of customers that physically came to your business in January and February 2021 compares to before COVID.

More customers than before COVID	1	2%
About the same number as before COVID	2	4%
1 – 24% less customers than before COVID	4	8%
25 – 49% less customers than before COVID	14	29%
50 – 74% less customers than before COVID	11	23%
75 – 100% less customers than before COVID	11	23%
Don't Know/Not Applicable	5	10%
Total	48	100%

11. At the current time, what is the status of your business operation?

Operating at full capacity	8	17%
Operating at reduced hours/capacity due to COVID	33	69%
Temporarily closed due to COVID	7	15%
Permanently closed due to COVID	0	0%
Total	48	100%

Strategies for Supporting Businesses and Improving the Commercial District

12. A few approaches to address Physical Environment, Atmosphere and Access in commercial districts are listed below. Considering the conditions in your commercial area, in your opinion, how important are each of the following strategies?

Renovation of Storefronts/Building Facades

Unimportant/Not Needed	8	17%
Of Little Importance or Need	10	22%
Moderately Important	16	35%
Important	6	13%
Very Important	6	13%
Total	46	100%

Improvement/Development of Public Spaces & Seating Areas

Unimportant/Not Needed	5	10%
Of Little Importance or Need	4	8%
Moderately Important	5	10%
Important	17	35%
Very Important	17	35%
Total	48	100%

Improvement of Streetscape & Sidewalks

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	4%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	6%
Moderately Important	12	25%
Important	16	33%
Very Important	15	31%
Total	48	100%

Improvements in Safety and/or Cleanliness

Unimportant/Not Needed	4	9%
Of Little Importance or Need	11	23%
Moderately Important	12	26%
Important	11	23%
Very Important	9	19%
Total	47	100%

Changes in Public Parking Availability, Management or Policies

Unimportant/Not Needed	2	4%
Of Little Importance or Need	2	4%
Moderately Important	6	13%
Important	16	33%
Very Important	22	46%
Total	48	100%

Amenity Improvements for Public Transit Users and/or Bike Riders

Unimportant/Not Needed	9	19%
Of Little Importance or Need	8	17%
Moderately Important	9	19%
Important	15	31%
Very Important	7	15%
Total	48	100%

13. A few approaches to address Attraction and Retention of Customers and Businesses in commercial districts are listed below. Considering the conditions in your commercial area, in your opinion, how important are each of the following strategies?

More Cultural Events/Activities to Bring People into the District

Unimportant/Not Needed	1	2%
Of Little Importance or Need	2	4%
Moderately Important	10	21%
Important	17	36%
Very Important	17	36%
Total	47	100%

More Opportunities for Outdoor Dining and Selling

Unimportant/Not Needed	4	8%
Of Little Importance or Need	1	2%
Moderately Important	2	4%
Important	16	33%
Very Important	25	52%
Total	48	100%

Implementing Marketing Strategies for the Commercial District

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	2	4%
Moderately Important	13	28%
Important	13	28%
Very Important	19	40%
Total	47	100%

Recruitment Programs to Attract Additional Businesses

Unimportant/Not Needed	0	0%
Of Little Importance or Need	3	6%
Moderately Important	11	23%
Important	16	34%
Very Important	17	36%
Total	47	100%

Changes to Zoning or Other Local Regulations (not related to COVID)

Unimportant/Not Needed	6	13%
Of Little Importance or Need	12	26%
Moderately Important	12	26%
Important	9	19%
Very Important	8	17%
Total	47	100%

Creation of a District Management Entity (Business Improvement District or other organization)

Unimportant/Not Needed	5	11%
Of Little Importance or Need	7	15%
Moderately Important	10	22%
Important	15	33%
Very Important	9	20%
Total	46	100%

14. Are you interested in receiving assistance for your business in any of the following areas? Select All that Apply.

Setting up an online store or other online selling channel	5	11%
Creating new services such as delivery	2	4%
Participating in shared marketing/advertising	22	48%
Low-cost financing for storefront/façade improvements	5	11%
Low-cost financing for purchasing property in the commercial district	9	20%
Training on the use of social media	14	30%
None of the above	19	41%

15. Please list any specific suggestions or ideas for possible projects, programs or actions that could help support businesses and improve the commercial district. (Optional)

Comments

—
Zana Corporation
—
—
—
Coolidge Corner Theatre Foundation
—
Village Family Chiropractic of Brookline, LLC
—
Provide more parking space
—
We could make some streets one way to help with outdoor seating.
—
Improvement of sidewalks to make a reasonable patio area and over improvement of outside appearance. Advertising with other local businesses could also be opportune.
—
—
Specifically helping small businesses that are not banks open and do business in the area
—
Bundling projects for gifting. Bounce-back offers to drive foot traffic.
Sidewalk sales - restaurant week
—
—
—
We've been here since 92 and our business has never been this bad before. No one want to walk around a bunch of banks. There's been a lot of small businesses going out.

I believe allowing and promoting more sidewalk displays and seating will bring more customers to the area and benefit all businesses.
—
—
—
—
Catering by Andrew
—
permanant outdoor stage, hold regular outdoor movie nights or outdoor music events;improve outdoor lighting
—
Towns needs to do a parking needs study. Too many people hink its ok to take parking away, or we don't need as much parking as we currently have.
—
—
More green space a s outdoor seating options
digital directories/interactive maps , improved cross promotion at T stops
—
A multi-level parking structure in Coolidge Corner is desperately needed to bring the tour of business and vibrancy increase we need/want.
More designated outdoor seating in parks, on sidewalks, use of common areas.
—
—
more and longer outdoor dining, better bike lanes, pedestrian areas, beautification of neighborhood (flowers, etc.)
—
Coolidge Corner Community Chorus
—
—

