



City of Methuen, Massachusetts

Department of Economic & Community Development

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City of Methuen to Host Walking Tour of Merrimack St for Local Businesses & Residents on June 3rd

Mayor Neil Perry has announced that the City of Methuen is participating in the Massachusetts Local Rapid Recovery Program (LRRP) to help communities develop Local Rapid Recovery Plans for targeted downtowns and commercial districts. The Merrimack Street commercial district has been targeted for this program, which will encompass Merrimack Street between exit 46 at I-495 to Route 113 intersection of Merrimack Street and Pleasant Valley Street.

"The Valley is a critical commercial corridor for the City," stated Mayor Perry. "The business owners there, and throughout the City, have struggled through the pandemic and it is our responsibility to identify any initiatives, big or small, that can support their recovery," he added.

The City's Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD) received the technical assistance grant from the state Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) to help small businesses along the Merrimack Street Business Corridor recover from decreased business during the Covid-19 pandemic. DECD is working with Emily Innes of Innes Associates, an urban planning and design firm, to create a physical plan to assist businesses in returning to pre-pandemic levels of business activity. Emily Innes stated "This state-wide program is assisting local businesses and communities to recover from the toll of the last year. Community voices are critical to understanding the needs for this corridor."

The City conducted a survey and walked the corridor during March and April to begin soliciting input from the businesses of the Merrimack Street commercial district. Input from owners is crucial for the long-term success of the commercial district and the response from the businesses was very positive.

The next step for outreach to develop the plan is a walking tour. The Pleasant Valley Walking Tour is scheduled for June 3, 2021 where local business owners and residents can meet to discuss current challenges and identify opportunities within the business corridor for growth and revitalization.

The City's hopes the program will identify some short-term and long-term strategies to foster a vibrant commercial district on Merrimack Street. According to DECD Director William Buckley, the results of the plan could make way for new infrastructure improvements, streetscape improvements, signage and other improvements to improve business opportunities.

"Merrimack Street businesses offer so much to our community and many are destination locations for the region. A plan to add infrastructure and streetscape improvements to the area could have dramatic impacts on the future success of these small businesses," added Buckley.