

2020

SNEAPA 2020 Conference Presentation

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Peril and Promise:



*The Impact of COVID-19 on the Streetscapes of Today's Cities and Towns
and the Promise of Social Infrastructure*

SNEAPA 2020 | Thursday, October 29, 2020 | 2:45 P.M. - 3:45 P.M.

Alicia Coleman | UMass Amherst

Jacobien (Corien) Kuiper | UMass Amherst

Michael Di Pasquale, AIA, AICP | UMass Amherst

Stacey Beuttell, AICP | WalkBoston





“COVID-19 has created challenges and opportunities in cities and towns across the world. Inspired by the changes to municipal streets - such as pop-up bike lanes, open streets, and outdoor dining - this session explores how tomorrow’s streetscapes can look different, healthier, and more accessible for all community residents.”



Today:

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Streetscapes of Today's Cities and Towns and the Promise of Social Infrastructure

Introduction

Guest Speaker 1

Guest Speaker 2

Group Discussion

Real-Time Research:

Social infrastructure
Impact of COVID-19

Takeaways:

Framework of social infrastructure
Examples of COVID-responses

Resources:

Review of sources and guidelines
Recommendations

Stacey Beuttell, WalkBoston:

Pedestrian realm Springfield
Challenges and opportunities

Takeaways:

Walk audits method
Virtual community engagement

Michael Di Pasquale, UMass:

Mid-sized Legacy/Gateway Cities
Challenges and opportunities

Takeaways:

New ways to reimagine vacant
spaces in older cities and towns

1. **Social infrastructure in your community?**
2. **COVID-related changes in your community?**
3. **How to support social infrastructure in tomorrow's streetscapes?**

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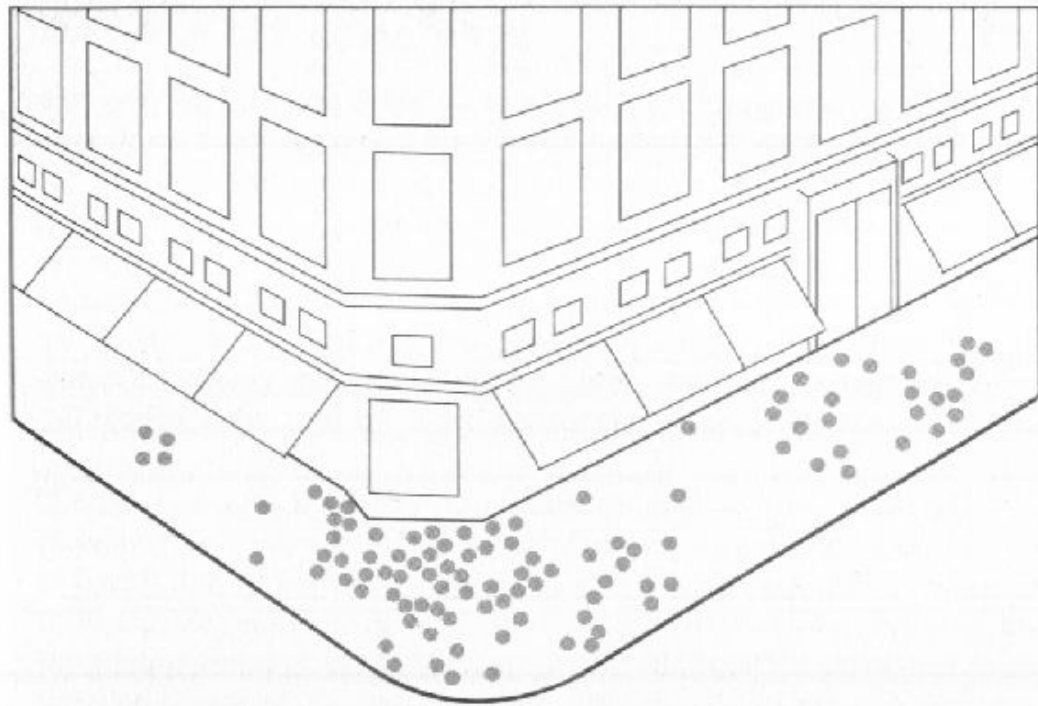
Social Infrastructure

Places that allow:

- People to gather
- A welcoming atmosphere
- Different uses for different people



Matching physical infrastructure with the way a place is experienced



Location of street conversations lasting two minutes or more at Saks Fifth Avenue and Fiftieth Street. Cumulative for five days in June. Note main concentration at corner, secondary one outside entrance.

Social Infrastructure

- Abundance
- Diversity
- Accessibility
- Maintenance
- Response







Ten Ways Every City Should Respond to COVID-19 On Its Streets, Compiled by NACTO

Your COVID-19 'Sidewalk Wars' Think Piece is Missing the Point

The novel coronavirus has rapidly changed the way we use our roads. Cities must respond to the emergency — but they have to do it right.

Memo#7: Reallocating Main Street Space to Support Community Wellbeing

THE RECOVERY WILL HAPPEN IN PUBLIC SPACE

PHIL MYRICK | MAY 16, 2020

EQUITY & INCLUSION | LIGHTER QUICKER CHEAPER | STREETS AS PLACES

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The Pandemic Has Pushed Aside City Planning Rules. But to Whose Benefit?

A Necessary Paradigm Shift in How We Use Urban Space

As bike lanes and cafes sprout on streets, marginalized residents wonder when their priorities will get attention.

CITYLAB

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT DURING & AFTER COVID-19: FIVE TAKEAWAYS

'Safe Streets' Are Not Safe for Black Lives

A transportation planner warns pedestrian-friendly street redesigns that happen without diverse public input can end up harming the communities they serve.

Resources and Recommendations



Resources and Recommendations Planning for Social Infrastructure during and after COVID-19



Made available for:
SNEAPA 2020 conference, October 2020

Principal Investigator:
Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Co-Principal Investigators:
MassINC, WabBoston

Resources

Industry Guidelines:

"Key planning recommendations for mass gatherings in the context of COVID-19", World Health Organization
This is a May 2020 document from the World Health Organization titled "Key planning recommendations for mass gatherings in the context of COVID-19". It has been written as a resource for "host governments, health authorities and national or international organizers of mass gatherings containing risks of COVID-19 transmission". The publication recognizes the importance of mass gatherings, and addresses how to mitigate the public health risks of mass gatherings through normative and epidemiological context, risk factor evaluation, capacity to apply prevention, and determination of overall risk.

"WHO mass gathering COVID-19 risk assessment tool - religious events", World Health Organization
The above is titled "WHO mass gathering COVID-19 risk assessment tool - religious events". The document allows for independent decision making for religious communities with the toolkit as follows: instructions, decision tree, risk evaluation, risk mitigation, decision matrix, and risk communication. The toolkit assigns a risk "score" to the event after being provided with the details, which is then used to make the final decision.

"COVID-19 Resources", American Planning Association
This webpage from the American Planning Association is updated weekly with resources in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Organized resources include the topics of planning methods, public participation, economic impacts, equity, federal and state support, housing, infrastructure, land use, transportation, multi-topic resources, as well as the APA COVID-19 guiding principles and response. Each subsection links articles, podcasts, videos, and presentations that are easy to find, but some require an APA membership.

Information Clearing Houses for COVID-19, American Planning Association
The American Planning Association's [Information Clearinghouses for COVID-19](#) serves as a central location for planners to find information from government entities and allied professional organizations regarding the pandemic. The agencies represented in the linked resources include US Interagency on Homelessness, Smart Cities Council, National Recreation and Park Association, International Association for Public Participation and more. A COVID-19 GIS hub, Local Action Tracker, and the latest CDC information can be found here.

New Online Public Engagement Resources, American Planning Association
Available to members, the American Planning Association has curated a [catalogue](#) of over 60 resources for using online public engagement tools. The APA recognizes the importance of public meetings and the resources collected provide background information and policy guidance, and explains how agencies are effectively using online public engagement.

Rapid Response: Emerging Practices for Cities, National Association of City Transportation Officials
"Rapid Response: Emerging Practices for Cities" has been put out by the National Association of City Transportation Officials highlighting best practices for transportation systems. The focus areas include maintaining transportation systems to safely move essential workers and goods, keeping front-line workers safe, assessing pick-up and delivery needs, relieving crowded areas for physical distancing, creating clear messaging of city policies, and supporting unsheltered and vulnerable populations.

Recommendations

Adapting Streets for Pandemic Response and Recovery in Massachusetts

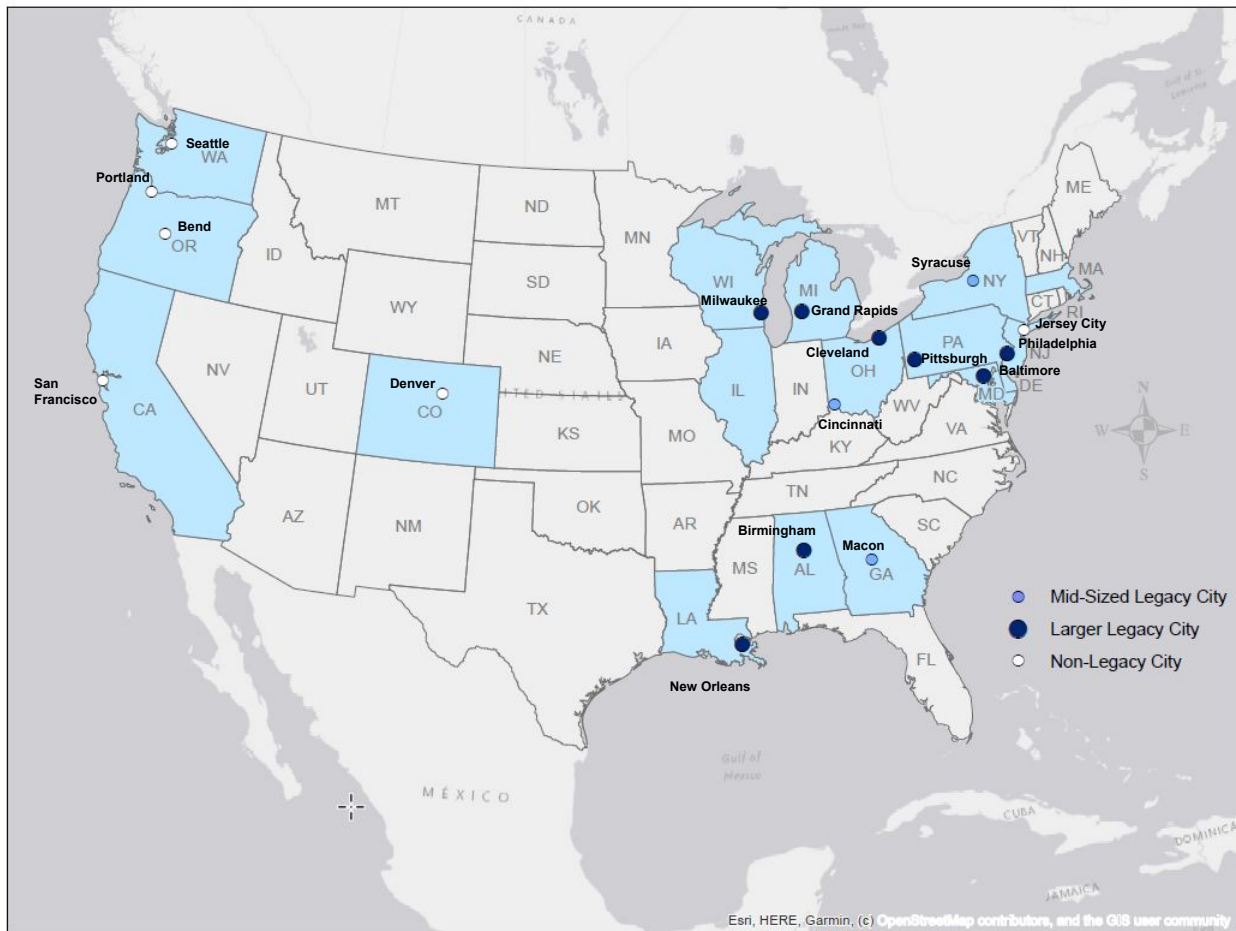
June 16, 2020

As Massachusetts continues moving through its four-phase reopening plan, municipalities across the state will need to make changes to their streets and other public spaces in order to ensure public health and economic vitality. It will be important to support restaurants and small businesses and give people enough space to comply with physical distancing guidelines as they travel to work and other errands, get exercise, and access healthcare. Although Massachusetts has recently moved into a new phase, it's likely that infection rates will fluctuate and we could experience a second wave in the coming months, requiring adjustments to street space and an adaptive approach.

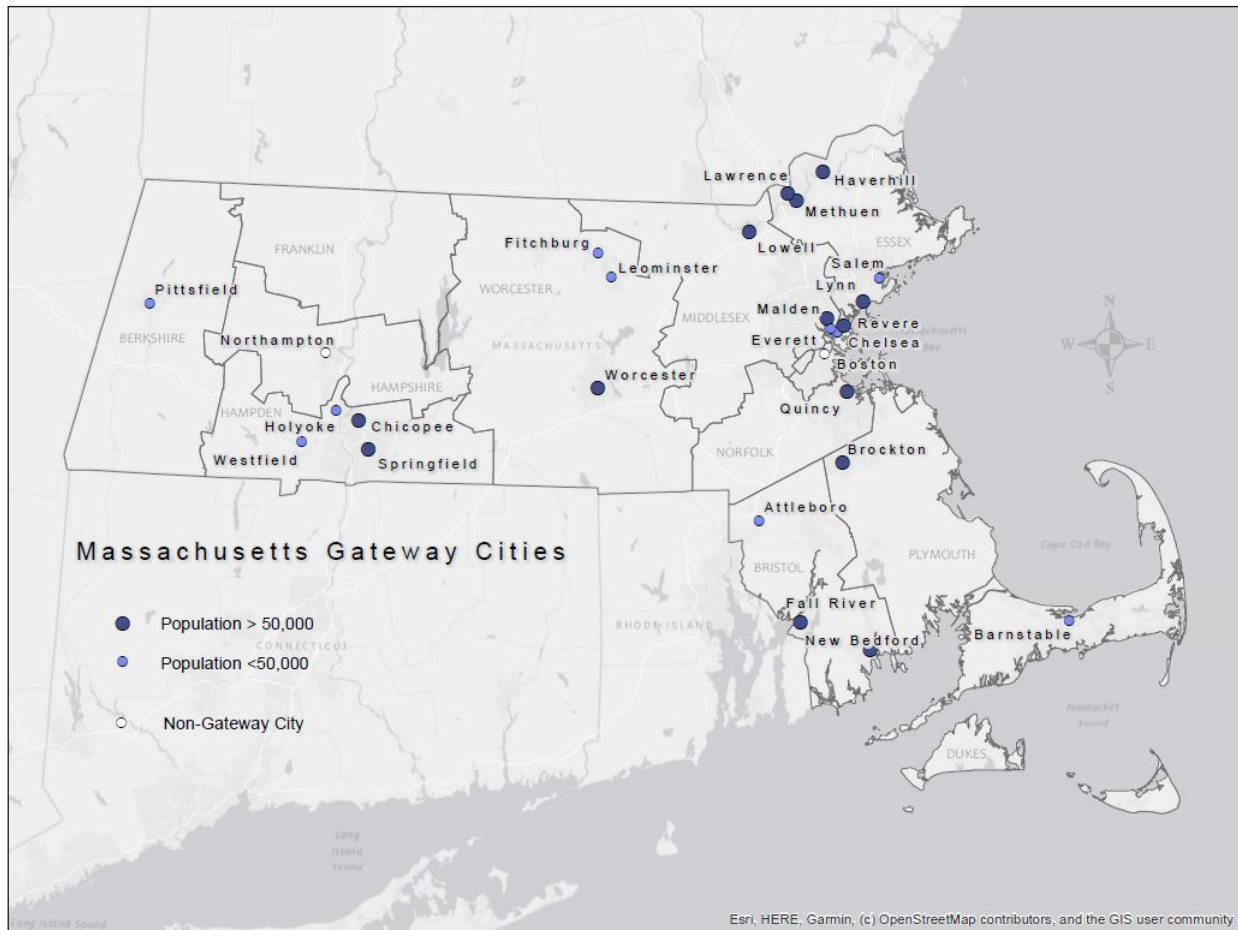
Many municipalities are experiencing budget constraints due to the impacts of the pandemic, highlighting the importance of creating a careful and clear process for the prioritization of projects. This pertains to the necessary balancing between quick-build, rapid response strategies for recovery and already planned capital improvement projects. Additionally, prioritization should ensure that support is provided first to the people who need it most, taking into account systemic inequalities, unequal levels of risk and exposure, and disparate financial and social resources available to people.

Below, we've outlined several short-term recommendations for improving the way our streets can work in this new context, to keep people safe and aid our economic recovery. Throughout, it's important to keep in mind the following overarching approaches:

- **Health and Safety:** Municipal and state staff and the public need to rimily respond to changes that may be needed to keep people safe - whether from COVID-19 or traffic crashes.
- **Equity:** Prioritize those who are most burdened by COVID-19, including older adults, essential workers, Black and brown people, and Environmental Justice communities.
- **Partnership:** Resource community groups, Main Streets organizations, and the private sector to support municipal responses.
- **Community engagement:** Consult with community members and groups to determine the right solutions for each neighborhood, and ensure outreach is done in multiple languages and via both online and offline methods.
- **Build on what we know:** Resource plans and processes that already exist to make progress quickly. Many municipalities already know which streets are the most dangerous, where older adults and children may need special consideration, which corridors are important for commuting, and which business districts need support.
- **Rapid response:** Use quickbuild and tactical methods that are inexpensive and fast (including cones, barrels, planters, saw horses, and flex posts).



Data collection: examples United States



Data collection: examples Massachusetts

Data collection categories for every example in our database

EXAMPLE

Location: **Country, City, State, U.S. Legacy City?**

Meta-data: **Source, Official Source, Date?**

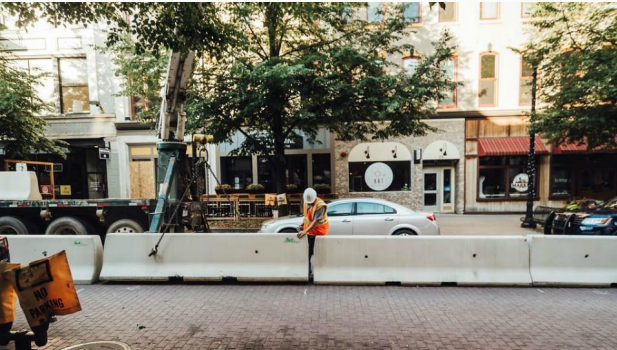
Measure: **Design Treatment, Temporary or Permanent, Motivated by COVID-19, What, Why, Where?**

Details: **Who, By Whom, Community Engagement, Project Status, Process, Outcome**

Analysis: **Overall Theme(s)**

Findings (1)

By far, most interventions were installed to benefit restaurants, and then businesses, more generally.



Concrete barriers in Grand Rapids, Michigan
WOOD, updated June 19, 2020



Outdoor dining in Boston, Massachusetts
Boston Globe, June 11, 2020



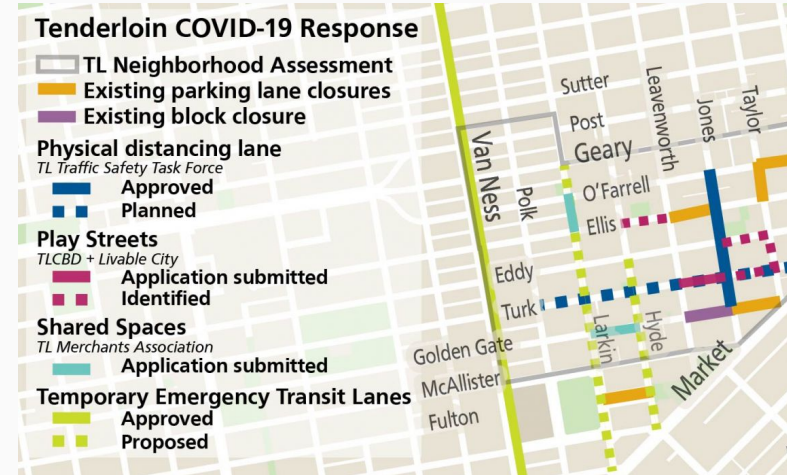
Outdoor dining in Portland, Oregon
KOMOnews, June 21, 2020

Findings (2)

Although less common, 41% of cities made changes to infrastructure that did not directly benefit businesses.



Slow Streets in New Orleans, Louisiana
[City of New Orleans, update July 7, 2020](#)



Play Streets and Shared Spaces in San Francisco, California
[SFMTA, accessed September 3, 2020](#)

Stay Healthy and Keep it Moving Streets in Seattle, Washington
[Seattle.gov, updated August 14, 2020](#)

Findings (3)

Lack of community engagement.

**SOHO
AL FRESCO.**
LET'S GO OUTSIDE...

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WE DID IT. YOU DID IT.

We're delighted to let you know, with your support, our campaign to persuade Westminster City Council to allow the temporary pedestrianisation of Soho this summer has been successful!

This means that our rich tapestry of restaurants, bars, cafés and pubs are 'al fresco' until the end of September.

Come and enjoy Soho as you have never seen it before.




Findings (4)

Almost all interventions were planned as temporary measures at the time of our data collection.

LET'S TALK!

Stay Healthy Streets can only be an asset with input and support from the people who live along and use them. Over the next few weeks, we'll launch outreach to gather input on making them permanent. Our efforts will center race and equity, discuss how to respect the cultural significance of neighborhoods to those that live there and how to evolve the streets into the neighborhood fabric, share the type of treatments we could use to replace the current Street Closed signs, and collect potential locations for expansion. We'll also discuss creating a possible ambassador program, similar to adopting a traffic circle.

We are currently designing the engagement plan and expect to start conversations in the next couple of weeks. We'll look to the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods and community leaders to identify good forums for talking to you, as well as providing online opportunities. In the meantime, you can express your interest by emailing StayHealthyStreets@Seattle.gov .

From temporary to permanent measures?

CORONAVIRUS

NYC Open Streets, Open Restaurants to Become Permanent, Year-Round Initiatives


Published September 25, 2020 • Updated on September 25, 2020 at 11:32 pm

News

Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker doubling funding for Shared Streets and Spaces to \$10 million; Program helps businesses adapt outside spaces amid coronavirus

Updated Sep 10, 2020; Posted Sep 10, 2020

Next Phase of Boston's 'Healthy Streets' Will Make Downtown Bike Lanes Permanent, Advance Projects in Outlying Neighborhoods

By Christian MilNeil | Aug 19, 2020 |  0 COMMENTS



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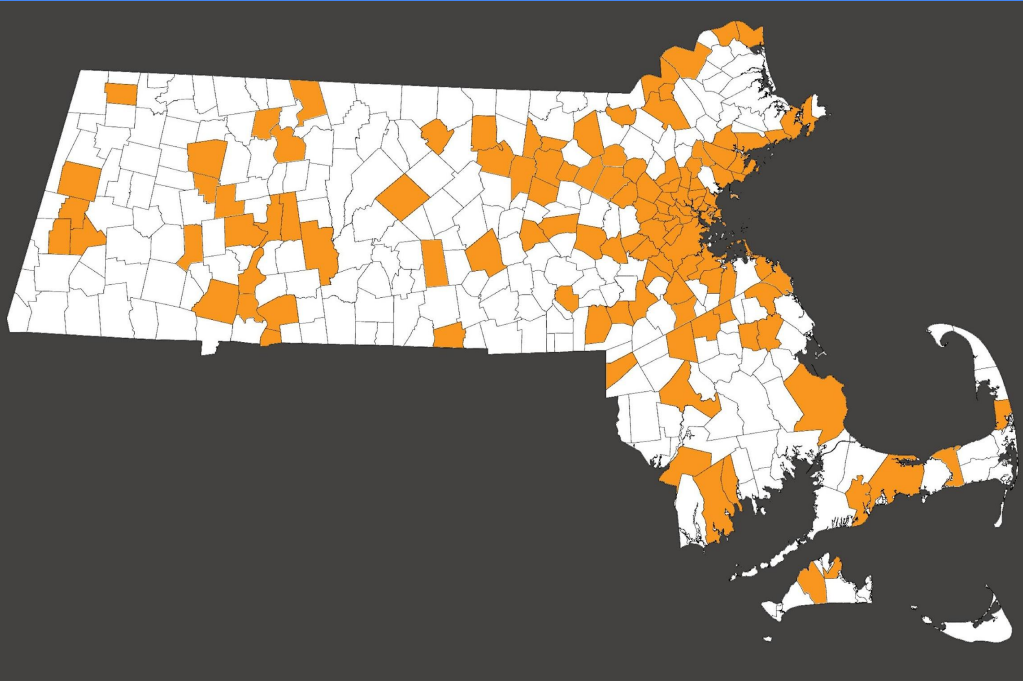
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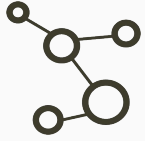
Walk audit methods
Virtual community engagement



WalkBoston makes walking safer and easier in Massachusetts to encourage better health, a cleaner environment and more vibrant communities.



Walkability



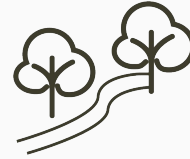
CONNECTIONS



DESTINATIONS



SAFETY



COMFORT



ACTIVITY



Connections: Get people to where they need to go



Streets and sidewalks balance walking, biking, transit with cars
Paths and crosswalks are where they are needed

Destinations: Include a variety of land uses



Mix of offices, shops, restaurants, parks, and residences

Lots of destinations that appeal to people of all ages, abilities, and income-levels

Safety: Provide safe crossing and smooth walkways



Signs and crosswalks alert drivers to potential walkers

Walking surfaces are smooth and well-lit

Walking paths are well-shaded and walkers are separated from vehicles

Comfort: Foster inviting walking environments



Welcoming building facades

Walking environment is maintained year-round (snow, trash)

Places to sit and rest

Shade

Activity: Attract people



Banners and art contribute to civic pride

Installations activate street life

Festive lighting encourages evening activity year-round



Para **español**, visite: <https://sites.google.com/walkboston.org/walkboston-springfield-espanol>

Virtual Walk Audit

This mini-site has been created to help WalkBoston & MassInc organize the feedback of participants' self-led walk audits, which will be used to develop recommendations for improving walking conditions in the Union Station area in Springfield.

Thanks for your interest in making your community more walkable!

Session 1 (Zoom):

Ped 101 workshop and walkability discussion

Self-led walk audit:

Walk on their own and record photo, video and written observations

Session 2 (Zoom):

Post-walk discussion and built environment change recommendations

Springfield Walk Audit: Social Infrastructure



Comfort: Outdoor seating



Safety: Road design



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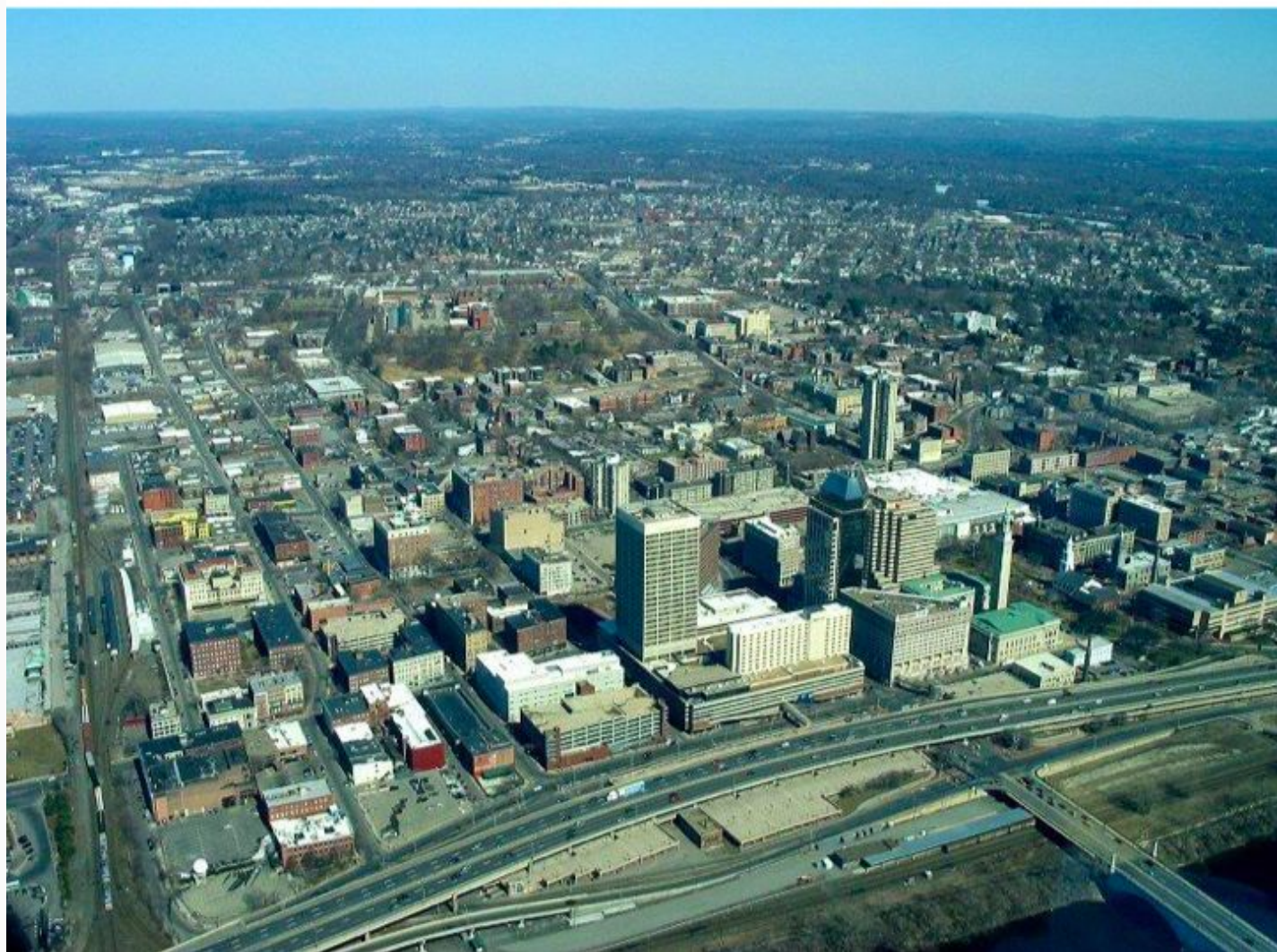
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1920



2019



Loss of Social Infrastructure

Eric Klinenberg
“Heat Wave”







Stearns Square Concept Drawing
UMass Design Center
January 28, 2016







COVID-19 Pandemic/Research

Public Space/Outdoor Space/Shared Streets

Do something/Experiment

Keep Businesses Open

Funding available

















What did we learn?

How are cities benefiting?

Challenges

Diversity/Equity

Long-term funding

How do we keep it going/winter

Uncertain longer term impacts of Pandemic

How do we translate lessons to long term change?

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2. **COVID-related
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community?**

3. **How can we support
social infrastructure in
tomorrow's
streetscapes?**

Group Discussion

1. **Social infrastructure in your community?**

- What are some examples of common and unique social infrastructure(s) in your community?
- What can support or constrain the development of social infrastructure?

2. **COVID-related changes in your community?**

- How did your community address challenges related to COVID? What worked, what did not work?
- What new challenges impact old priorities?
- What are obstacles to implement different tactics more permanently?

3. **How can we support social infrastructure (for everyone) in tomorrow's streetscapes?**

- What works to prioritize these needs? (Funding, zoning, ...)
- What scale (neighborhood, city/town, region)?
- Who benefits and who does not?

Thank you! Questions? jdevrieskuip@umass.edu



COVID-19 murals express hope and help envision urban futures

June 3, 2020 10:45am EDT

Rather than blank boarded-up storefronts, artists in Vancouver have created murals to offer inspiration, public health messaging and beauty during the coronavirus pandemic. This one is by Will Phillips. (Eugene McCann), CC BY