



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
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Baker-Polito Administration Announces Downtown Revitalization
Awards

Awards will enable 20 communities to implement strategies to strengthen downtown districts, support small businesses, and attract residents

TOPSFIELD – February 7, 2019 – Today, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito and Housing and Community Development Undersecretary Janelle Chan joined local officials to announce \$300,000 in awards to 20 communities through the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI). The Massachusetts Downtown Initiative provides communities with \$15,000 grants to pursue projects that support downtown development and encourage growth. Since 2015, the Baker-Polito Administration has awarded more than \$1 million to over 30 communities through the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative.

“Vibrant downtown districts that support housing, small businesses and amenities help to strengthen communities by driving local economies and attracting talent,” **said Governor Charlie Baker**. “Through programs like MDI, we’ve seen the impact a successful downtown district can have on cities and towns and the importance of enhancing existing programming as well as developing others, to create new resources for municipal officials to utilize.”

The Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) provides municipalities with resources to engage expert consultants on downtown revitalization. Consultants may provide technical assistance in one of seven areas, including district management, design, downtown economics, housing, branding & wayfinding, downtown mobility, and small business support. Communities may undertake a number of eligible activities through this grant program, including planning exercises, parking management strategy development, and new branding and signage to enhance their downtown.

“Last fall, I joined municipal officials at the 2018 Downtown Summit, and was thrilled to see the momentum building in both small towns and larger urban centers investing in their downtown districts,” **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito**. “Our administration is committed to partnering with

our municipalities, and providing powerful tools to help communities plan and execute on projects that will fuel long-term growth through walkable, lively downtown spaces.”

In October, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative hosted the [2018 Massachusetts Downtown Summit](#) in Lowell. The event brought together local officials, technical experts, and stakeholders to share best practices related to downtown revitalization and development. Workshops and panels explored successful strategies that cities and towns have used to promote downtown districts, and attracted nearly 200 participants.

More recently, the Baker-Polito Administration has also proposed [a new downtown district coordination grant program in the FY20 budget proposal](#). This proposal would promote regional cooperation among cities and towns undertaking revitalization efforts, building on MDI to provide enhanced technical assistance to municipal officials.

“Massachusetts depends on strong cities and towns to fuel our collective success, and through flexible programming like MDI, MassWorks, our Collaborative Workspace program, and more, we support projects that leverage private investment and local commitments,” **said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Mike Kennealy**. “I want to congratulate all 20 of today’s awardees for their work in planning for the long-term success of their communities, and engaging with our agencies and consultants to pursue these high-impact projects.”

“Dynamic downtown districts are more than one restaurant, or one store -- they are the heart of a community, providing a place for neighbors to live, gather, work, and thrive,” **said Housing and Community Development Undersecretary Janelle Chan**. “Through MDI and other technical assistance, we are eager to partner with communities to promote new housing production, small businesses success, and smart-growth strategies in their downtown districts to benefit all residents.”

“The Town of Topsfield is very appreciative for this State grant from the Downtown Initiative Program as it will accelerate the revitalization of the town center that began with the renovation of our 146 year-old town hall,” **said Topsfield Town Administrator Kellie Hebert**.

“Topsfield is a small town with big city pride. Residents delight in its open public spaces with the convenience of suburban rural living but have grown concerned over the deterioration of the downtown business district.” **said Selectman Lynne Bermudez**.

“Thriving communities depend on the ability of consumers to navigate vibrant downtowns,” **said Senator Joan Lovely**. “I am grateful to the Baker-Polito Administration for providing assistance through the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative to Topsfield so that the town can have increased capacity to manage its parking, which will help Topsfield do an even better job of meeting the economic needs of residents and businesses alike.”

“I want to thank Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, Secretary Kennealy, and Undersecretary Chan for their commitment to our communities,” **said Representative Brad Hill**. “This award will help Topsfield revitalize our downtown and attract new visitors and businesses.”

The administration has awarded close to \$275 million in MassWorks grants to support 138 projects in 106 communities in the same time period. These programs, in addition to affordable housing awards, the Housing Development Incentive Program, the Collaborative Workspace Program, the Economic Development Incentive Program, and further technical assistance programming provide communities with a suite of tools to further local development goals.

The Massachusetts Downtown Initiative is administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development, and funded by the Community Development Block Grant program.

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About the Department of Housing and Community Development

The Department of Housing and Community Development oversees funding and resources to help people in Massachusetts live affordably and safely. DHCD, through its community and private-sector partners, provides affordable housing options, financial assistance, and other support to Massachusetts communities. DHCD oversee different types of assistance and funding for consumers, businesses, and non-profit partners.

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2019 Massachusetts Downtown Initiatives Grant Award Winners

Town of Athol

Athol will pursue a Parking Management Strategy for the downtown district.

Town of Auburn

Auburn will implement a Wayfinding/Branding Strategy in Drury Square.

Town of Bedford

Bedford will hire a consultant to provide small business support to strengthen existing businesses and revitalize the shopping district.

Town of Billerica

Billerica will implement street design improvements to facilitate traffic in the town center.

Town of Dracut

Dracut will hire a consultant to implement a Design/Placemaking Strategy in the Navy Yard neighborhood.

Town of Groveland

Groveland will conduct a review of the economic conditions and assess the potential for new businesses.

Town of Hudson

Hudson will implement Wayfinding/Branding Strategy in their downtown district.

Town of Lexington

Lexington will use consultant services to undertake a Retail Strategic Analysis to improve the town center's retail climate.

Town of Lincoln

Lincoln will implement a Parking Benefit District Strategy in their downtown district.

Town of Milford

Milford will undertake a Housing-Focused Zoning Study for a defined downtown corridor targeted for redevelopment.

Town of Montague

Montague will pursue an Economic and Cultural Revitalization Strategy for the Miller's River town center district.

City of Newburyport

Newburyport will use a consultant to design a wayfinding strategy and analysis for implementation in the downtown district.

City of North Adams

North Adams will implement a Parking Management Strategy in their downtown district.

Town of Reading

Reading will leverage consulting services to assist in forming a district management entity to further downtown revitalization efforts.

Town of Shelburne

Shelburne will implement a wayfinding signage design to better manage parking in the Shelburne Falls Business District.

Town of Shrewsbury

Shrewsbury will implement a Wayfinding/Branding Strategy for the downtown district.

Town of Spencer

Spencer will employ a consultant to conduct an analysis of current and future downtown parking needs to better connect existing parking facilities.

Town of Stoughton

Stoughton will use consulting services to provide an analysis for three town-owned properties in the town center and identify potential uses.

Town of Topsfield

Topsfield will implement a Parking Management Strategy in the downtown district.

Town of Wayland

Wayland will implement a Wayfinding Strategy for the Boston Post Road/Route 20 Corridor.

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