



Massachusetts Downtown Initiative





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Program Description

DHCD's Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) offers a range of services and assistance to communities seeking help on how to revitalize their downtowns. The primary mission of the MDI is to make downtown revitalization an integral part of community development in cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

MDI's guiding principles are that the most effective approach to downtown revitalization is a holistic one; that it addresses economic and community development needs; and that it provides a framework of interrelated activities that promote positive change in a downtown to keep it healthy and prosperous.



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MDI Technical Assistance Grants –

- District Management
- Creative Economy
- Design
- Economics of Downtown
- Housing
- Parking
- Small Business Support
- Wayfinding
- Walkability



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2013

Winchester- feasibility analysis for the creation a Business Improvement District.

Concord- a wayfinding plan for the downtown.

Spencer- a housing study for the town center.

Wareham- development of a parking management plan for the Village of Onset.

Walpole- *implementation of a retail retention program in the downtown.*

Easthampton- concept plans for the Union Street corridor in the downtown 40R District.

Essex- a design plan for the Town Landing as a cultural and economic focal point.

2014

Great Barrington- creation of a petition for implementation of a Business Improvement District.

Reading- a cultural district plan for downtown Reading.

Westminster- conducting a design charette for the downtown.

Wakefield- implementation of a retail retention program in the downtown.

Maynard- a downtown market study.

Harwich- a downtown parking plan.

Amesbury- a way finding plan for the downtown.

Ipswich- a wayfinding plan for the downtown.



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Workshops-

- Wayfinding/Branding
- Makerspace Series last Spring
- Parking Conference(Co-sponsor with MAPC)
- Placemaking
- More to come.....



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TA Connector- coming soon.....



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Goal:

The goal of the Technical Assistance Connector is three-fold:

- 1) coordinate concurrent and planned technical assistance
- 2) facilitate cooperation between municipalities for regional development
- 3) to stimulate effective, long-term economic development and improved planning through expanded local capacity and tactical interventions.

Primary Partners:

- MA Downtown Initiative & Office of Sustainable Communities
- MassDevelopment
 - Real Estate
 - Regional Teams
- Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies
 - One designated contact per RPA, minimum



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COMMUNITY BENEFIT DISTRICTS (CBDs)

AN ACT RELATIVE TO CREATING COMMUNITY BENEFIT DISTRICTS (CBDs) HD1019 & SD1285

Sponsored Rep. Brendan Crighton and Sen. Eileen Donoghue

PURPOSE OF THIS BILL

This legislation would provide cities and towns with the opportunity to create Community Benefit Districts (CBD), each of which is a public/private/nonprofit partnership that provides supplemental services and management of important areas including downtowns, town centers, “Main Streets,” villages, or urban squares.

A CBD provides a mechanism for sustaining a district’s revitalization efforts and allows communities wide flexibility over its purposes and activities while maintaining strong local independence and accountability.



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Parking Benefit Districts

AN ACT RELATIVE TO PARKING ADVANCEMENTS FOR THE REVITALIZATION OF COMMUNITIES (PARC)

Sponsored by Senator O'Connor Ives (SD1113) and Representative Linsky (HD372)

PURPOSE OF THIS BILL

Passage of this legislation would make it clear that cities and towns have the tools they need to use parking strategies to revitalize neighborhoods and spur economic development. Many communities are looking at their parking policies as tools for economic development, and this bill would ensure that state law does not interfere with these goals and strategies.