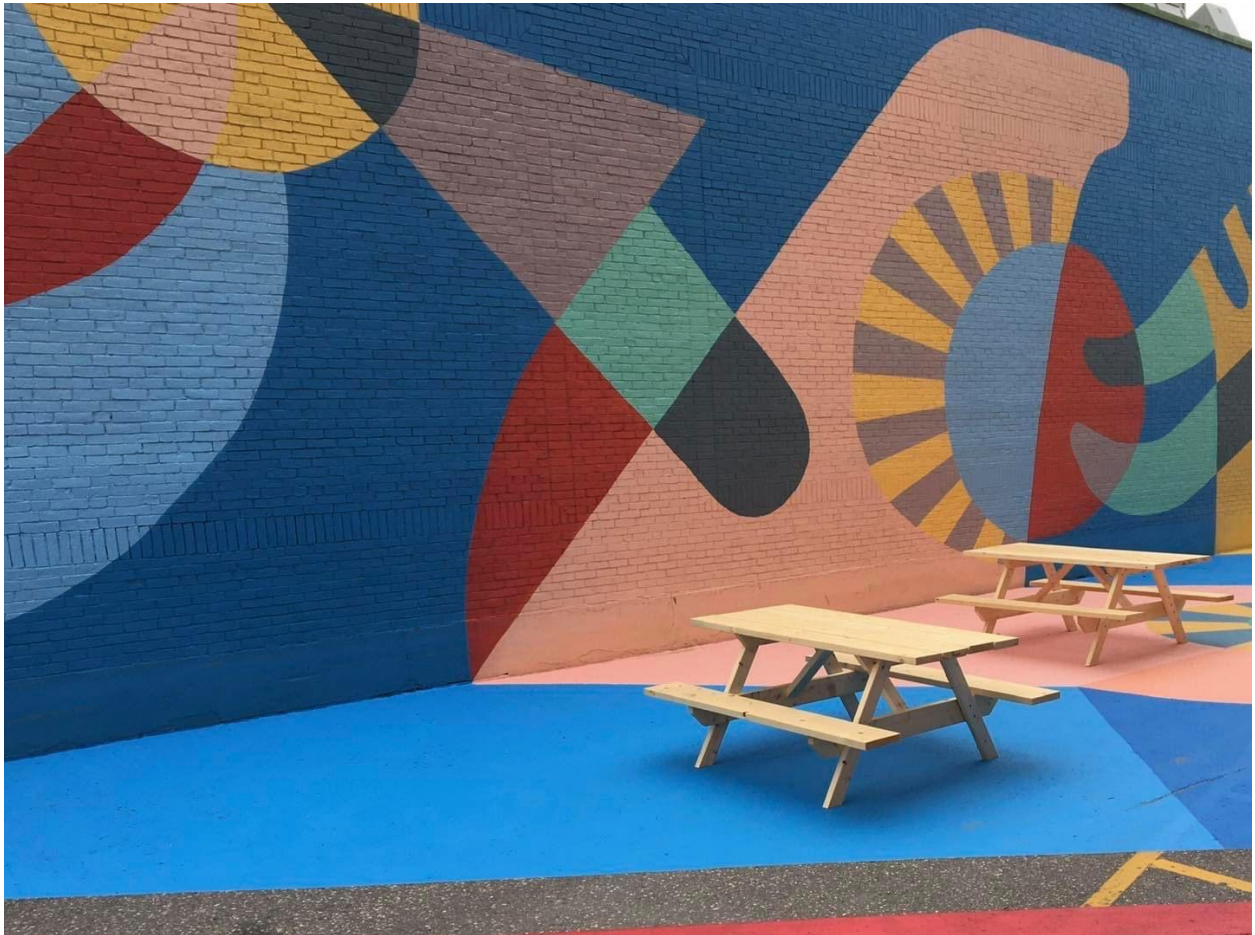


Downtown Summer Traffic Pattern Committee Report

The following is a report outlining the process and recommendations from the Ad Hoc Downtown Summer Traffic Pattern Committee submitted to the Rockland City Council.



Background

Following the Rockland City Council's *Downtown Summer Traffic Pattern Workshop* on January 27, 2021, the Council established the **Ad Hoc Downtown Summer Traffic Pattern Committee** on February 8, 2021. The Council charged the Committee with developing recommendations to advise Council on a 'plan for road and sidewalk usage in the downtown area, infrastructure and beautification improvements that can best support Rockland businesses, enhance public access, and serve our community during COVID-19 and in the future.'

Over a 8-week period, the Committee held eight public meetings to address the following topics and received relevant input & data on each: 2/11 Kick Off; 2/18 Public Safety; 2/25 Economic Vitality; 3/4 Traffic & Pedestrian Patterns; 3/11 Parking and Deliveries; 3/18 Public Access; Communications, Signage, Downtown Beautification Improvements; 3/25 Review and Summary; 4/1 Proposal Review. The Committee established an online portal and website for the public to provide input and to view Committee meeting minutes, presentations, and resources.

The Committee's work focused on supporting efforts to strengthen the downtown, preparing the city for the warmer months during the COVID-19 pandemic, achieving positive community input and engagement from city residents and businesses, and ensuring successful outcomes that benefit the entire community.

Committee Process and Actions

- Committee Meeting Process:
 - The committee meetings agendas included presentations/discussions on each topic and relevant research, group discussion and affirmation of committee insights and conclusions, and the identification of next steps and recommendations. Public comment was held at the beginning of each meeting.
 - Supplemental to the eight public meetings, the Committee conducted surveys to gather information from the committee and downtown business stakeholders and created www.RocklandDowntown.com for committee members and community residents to provide feedback, submit resources, and stay up to date on the timeline, past meeting minutes, slides and processes .
 - The committee prioritized opportunities to identify creative solutions and a consensus-based approach to the development of recommendations.
 - Issues that were unresolved or requiring further input/guidance from the Council were flagged and highlighted in the footnotes of the recommendations.

- Committee high-level priorities:
 - The committee prioritized public safety concerns in the development of solutions that strengthen the community and downtown businesses
 - The committee also identified solutions that are feasible and can be implemented in the Summer 2021, while also capturing issues that could be addressed by Council and longer-term city planning in the future (see appendix 2).

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- The committee prioritized community resilience and finding compromises and solutions that bolster economic vitality and address concerns, while also trying to maximize benefits for all stakeholders

Committee Recommendations

As the Committee reviewed the insights from our meetings and community input, it became clear that any recommendations for the 2021 season needed to maintain a two-lane solution for traffic on Main Street. Public safety was a key driver across all stakeholders and is central to each Committee recommendation. With this understanding, the committee proposes to Council the following recommendations related to how to support economic vitality, prioritize safe outdoor seating and vibrant public spaces, improve signage and downtown beautification, increase pedestrian safety, and ensure adherence and awareness of Main Street's speed limit:

- **Maintain Main Street as two-lanes**
 - This recommendation is based on public safety recommendations and community input (including feedback from summer 2020)
- **Increase Economic Vitality¹**
 - Implement a Parklet Program to support downtown businesses:
 - Allow parklet spaces in dedicated areas for outdoor dining (see map, appendix 1)
 - Coordinate w/Rockland Main St. to establish a clear application process, guidelines for participation, and coordinate consistency of design
 - Integrate public safety elements (i.e. jersey barriers) and DOT requirements
 - Prioritize public, community access of the parklets during the day (when restaurants are closed, i.e. benches)
 - Create & Enhance Public Pocket Parks to provide more safe, community space
 - Establish guidelines for use of public pocket spaces (i.e. Winter St² & Oak St)
 - Implement programming to activate space and make it inclusive/welcoming
 - Ex: public seating, engagement activities, pop-ups, etc.
 - Add additional trash/recycle/food waste cans

¹ Members of the committee suggested Council could consider future ways to support COVID-related investments in the downtown.

² CMCA raised concerns and would like to achieve outdoor seating without a full closure of Winter Street.

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- Prioritize options for multi-use of community space throughout the day
 - Enhance currently underutilized spaces for public use
 - Ex: Thorndike loop, Farnsworth sculpture garden, CMCA courtyard
 - **Increase Pedestrian Safety:**
 - In order to improve adherence to the speed limit on Main Street, especially during the high-traffic tourist season, work with Public Works to implement the following traffic calming strategies:
 - Increase signage for pedestrian crosswalks
 - Integrate street art
 - Add speed limit signs/awareness in the downtown (i.e. at Tilson traffic light and between Tilson and Summer Streets)
 - **Improve Signage in the Downtown:**
 - Work with Public Works and Rockland Main Street to clarify signage on use of public spaces
 - Public Parking - uniform, consistent signs
 - Pocket Parks - emphasize community space and clear guidelines
 - Better Designate Curbside Pickup Locations
 - *Clarify signs in Custom House Parking lot that permit only during 8am-5pm so opens up parking in evenings and weekends*
 - **Communication and Execution:**
 - Press release
 - Website
 - Landing page for map and parking
 - List of programming and events
 - Input and suggestions
 - Social Media
 - RMS to create social posts that can be shared by all stakeholders
 - RMS to fund paid media campaign at launch of season
 - Coordinated communication strategy with City and RMS
 - Committee to be convened as needed to address executional concerns

Respectfully submitted by the Ad Hoc Downtown Summer Traffic Pattern Committee

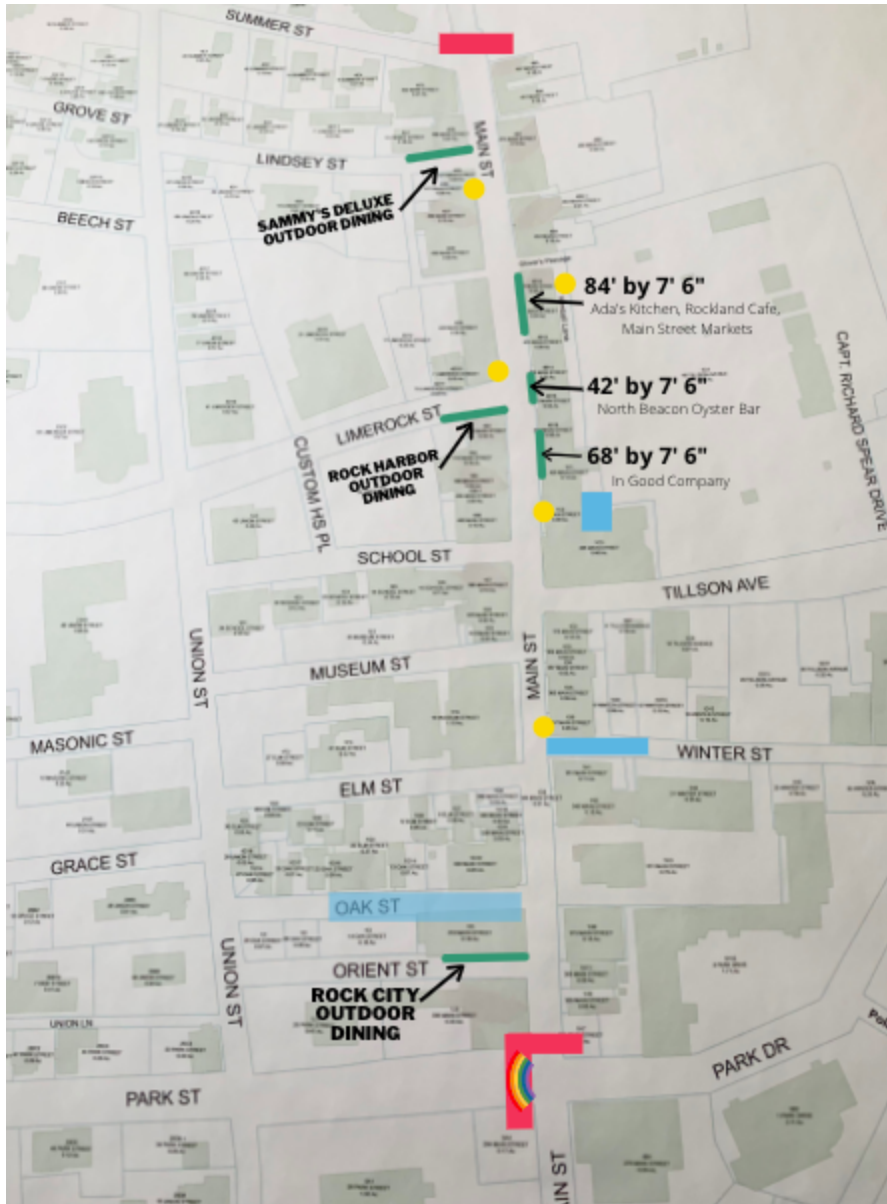
Ad Hoc Committee Members:

Louise MacLellan-Ruf (Co-chair and Councilor); David Gogel (Co-Chair); Dan Benson, Steve Carroll, Benjamin Dorr (Councilor), Connie Hayes, Caleb Lincoln, Karen Littlefield, Tom Luttrell (City Manager), Fletcher Smith McNaboe, Heidi Neal, Kathy Bourque Parker (Public Works Director), Dan Pease, Hope Percy, Jennifer Rockwell, Chris Whytock (Fire Chief), James York, Chris Young (Police Chief)

Appendix 1 - Map

Appendix 2 - Future Ideas for Improving Rockland Downtown

Appendix 1. Map



KEY:



Parklet



Pocket Park

● Curbside Pick Up Locations



Street Art

Appendix 2. Future Ideas for Improving Rockland Downtown

- Route 1 to be rerouted
- Desire for a long term, comprehensive look and study for traffic patterns, electric car charging places
 - Possibly get a grant to look at the interweaving and interconnected relationships that come with considering various traffic patterns, rotary loop that is route 1, etc
 - Significant changes that deserve long term look
- Better looking, comprehensive, attractive, and universal signage
- Permanent sidewalk cut outs - particularly in front of North Beacon, providing a pinch point for traffic to slow down and wider sidewalk
- Cleaning up the back of Thorndike Loop - what Ada's began to do
 - Outdoor seating
 - Future food court
 - Perhaps use TIFF building to develop these areas with building owners
- Coordinated, ongoing music presence downtown
- Take the intersection of Main Street and Tillson and make a curb cut that leaves front of Curator across to Archipelago to be able to stop that whole intersection for a chunk of time to allow people to cross
 - Create a stopped block for people to cross at any direction at any time, and then allow traffic to resume afterwards
 - Could have traffic calming effects, could be an interesting design thing
- Continuing ways to slow traffic, even though it can flow
 - Creating more pinch points, snake left and right through Main Street so need to slow down
- Long look at the shade trees that we have - have these be well maintained, trimmed, pruned, etc., so attractive and don't block vision
- More benches, places to sit year round
- Program of street musicians
- Giant chess board, life size figures
- More spots where children can play with fun games, hop scotch, etc
- More food trucks
- Public piano
- Harbor trail should have more signage to lead people off Main Street
- More bike racks
- Park on Tillson near the wastewater treatment plant that is underutilized - any way to connect that, create more signage, there are some picnic tables - could be good for families to gather
 - Promote that better

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- Picnic park area by the schooners and along the harbor trail - more signage for all of that
 - Need to have a graphic designer team up with Kathy for signs - clean and inviting, easy to read, uncluttered way to welcome people
 - Real threshold of where we enter Rockland, know our gateways
 - Revisit/consider having traffic officer downtown to direct traffic