Open Streets: How to Hangout Again

Rockland Main Street

08/12/2020
How we got started

An email chain started on a Sat morning. The future of our downtown was the topic and all ideas were on the table...

“Shut down Main Street to traffic for the summer, create temporary pergolas, fairy lights, outdoor seating, art down the middle of Main Street with side walks for traversing or the reverse, sidewalks used for outdoor seating, art work, music, with Main Street the wide thorough fare. Flowers everywhere. Local musicians, quartets like the DaPonte playing so diners and walkers on our outdoor mall can hear them.”

- Valli Geiger Rockland City Councilor on April 25th
We created a plan

We created a task force made up of city staff, police chief, fire chief, and local business owners on both sides of the idea.

We held a town hall meeting via Zoom and set up one on one interviews with the leadership teams of our downtown institutions and property owners.

We created a communications plan and got the word out.
and got lots of press

Rockland considers closing Main Street to allow merchants

Rockland OKs turning Main Street into walking plaza for ...

Rockland to close vehicle traffic to Main Street this weekend ...

Rockland plan to close downtown Main Street to vehicle traffic gains support - By Stephen Betts

Rockland was the first Maine city to close a downtown street to ...

Rockland authorizes June closures of Main Street; logistics to be determined

Todd Bross and 176 others 158 Comments
It kind of worked...
...and we made some art
Our goals

- Create more community space downtown for outdoor dining and social distancing
- Better integrate vehicles, pedestrians, and parking
- Slow traffic down on Main Street
Time for a new plan
A flexible plan

This is a living design that will be edited in real time based on community feedback over the next few months.

“In this case, the second field test was the charm as what we came up with on paper did not work on the ground. The tower truck got caught up in the intersection and then clipped a cone. Plus the first time I put out the cones, the moment I stepped back on to the sidewalk a massive pickup truck plowed right through the cones and dragged them a short ways down the street. The driver WAS TEXTING!” - Mitchell Rasor
Delivery Trucks

We had to accommodate multiple businesses who receive large delivery trucks on Main Street. These trucks are 48 ft with an 8ft ramp and can take close to an hour to unload.

We set up calls with the businesses owners and the delivery drivers to understand their concerns and review our options.

Delivery zones with movable construction barrels ended up being the safest and simplest solution.
Main Street does not have to look or function like a turnpike construction zone to be safe. It has to be simple, uncluttered, and consistent in components and colors to provide a safe environment for all users.

- Blue paint for 3 caution zones
- Apple green for 14 jersey barriers
- Apple green for 80 mountable bollard
We were able to get the speed on Main Street lowered to 20 MPH. We expect avg speed will be closure to 10 MPH.

The 12’ offset mountable bollards will slow traffic and keep people in their lane.

Per the request of the Fire Department, the mountable bollards shall remain flat against the pavement.

If bollards are used that automatically return to vertical, there is a concern these could catch fire on a hot surface under a vehicle.
Maintain all existing ADA crosswalks and ADA sidewalks

Install ADA ramp in pedestrian zones

The primary "crash" zone locations have DOT approved "tapered" jersey barriers upstream of all pedestrian zones.

This is more protection now than people are afforded walking on a sidewalk.

This is planned as safe or safer than existing conditions because it is one lane of slow traffic, with stops at lights and crosswalks, and maintaining almost all of the on-street parking on the west side. All of these elements combined create a safe environment for all users.
Curb side pick up
A Community Conversation

What does a downtown that's for everyone look and feel like?

MDF grant to provide facilitator training for public engagement conversation.

Working with members of city council, youth organizations, service organizations, and businesses stakeholders to make sure everyone is included.

Identified Public Library as host partner for Zoom conversation on 8/8.