

GREENFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2023

John Zon Community Center/Zoom Hybrid

6:30 pm

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Guin.

CHAIRS STATEMENT: This meeting is being recorded by the City Council and GCTV-17. If any other persons present are doing the same you must notify the chairperson at this time. It was noted that Jon Magee for Shoe-String was also audio recording this meeting. In accordance with MGLc 30A SS 20(g) “No person shall address a meeting of a public body without permission of the Chair and all persons shall, at the request of the chair, be silent. No person shall disrupt the proceedings of a meeting of a public body. If, after clear warning from the chair, a person continues to disrupt the proceedings, the chair may order the person to withdraw from the meeting and if the person does not withdraw, the chair may authorize a constable or other officer to remove the person from the meeting.”

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS: Roll Call was taken. Councilors Desorgher, Gilmour, Helie and Forgey were absent. Councilors Golub, Bullock and Mayo appeared via Zoom.

ALSO PRESENT: Chief of Staff Danielle Letourneau; City Clerk Kathryn J. Scott; Assistant City Clerk Quinn Jacquins; Finance Director/City Auditor/City Accountant Diana Schindler; Greenfield School Superintendent Dr. Christine DeBarge; School Committee Chairperson Amy Proietti; DPW Director Marlo Warner; Community & Economic Development Director MJ Adams; GCTV-17 staff; Mary Byrne, *the Recorder*; and members of the public.

The Pledge of Allegiance was held.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES: On a motion by Councilor Ricketts, second by Councilor Elmer, it was unanimously,

VOTED: TO ACCEPT THE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES OF JANUARY 18 AND JANUARY 25, 2023.

COMMUNICATIONS:

SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE: Superintendent Dr. DeBarge, School Committee Chairperson Proietti reported the following:

- Due to the makeup of snow days, the last day of school was projected to be Thursday, June 22nd, 2023.
- The Greenfield Boy's Basketball and Boy's Hockey, respectively, had won their division championships.
- Food Service Director Greta Shwachman provided a short presentation on the upcoming purchase of a food service truck and submitted a handout to the Councilors (see attached).
- Update on re-envisioning our school facilities and activities, which was still in the investigation stage.

Councilors asked the following questions:

- Number of meals served by the School in the summer and fall.
- Percentage of project covered by a grant.

MAYOR, CITY OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES: Chief of Staff Danielle Letourneau reported the following:

- Invitation to the City Council and members of the public to a small ceremony tomorrow at 10:00 am for a beam raising for the new Fire Station.

- Updates on hiring to the Police Department with four (4) accepted offers for new police officers, which could aide in the shortage to the late shift staffing experienced by the Greenfield Police.
- Thanked the DPW, dispatch, fire and police and other City employees for their response to the snow storm that occurred on Tuesday.
- DPW Director Warner provided an update on the current snow and ice budget.

Councilor asked the following questions:

- Situations that constitute an emergency parking ban during inclement weather.
- Current location of Police Chief Haigh and when he was expected back in Greenfield.
- Was the City paying for the State Police incident command center that was stationed at the Police Department.

OTHER CITY EMPLOYEES AS NEEDED, BY INVITATION: Community & Economic Director Adams, DPW Director Warner and Project Consultant Emily Ennis provided a presentation on the Downtown Revitalization Plan (see attached):

- One of the mills on Hope Street had sold to a new owner who had not yet decided how they would utilize the building.
- It was believed the downtown area was last updated back in the early 80s in regards to code, ADA accessibility, etc.
- The City hired the civil engineering firm of Fuss & O'Neill to oversee the plan for the project including infrastructure.
- Most of the infrastructure on Main Street dated back to 100 years or more, including sewer, drain and water.
- Two water mains would need replacement.
- The project would mainly concentrate on up to date Mass. DOT (Department of Transportation) and the national highway standards.
- Development of the "25 design" plans expected from summer through fall of 2023, at which time the plan would be review by Mass. DOT for approval before the City would move to further design and completion.
- The Main Street project was scheduled to begin in Fiscal Year 2027 and would cover Colrain to High Street and as of this date had an estimated cost of \$7.8 million.

Councilors asked the following questions:

- Percentage of funding paid by the City and monies provided by the State on this project.
- Possibility of the expansion of Chapman Street.
- Use of the Hope Street parking lot for affordable housing.
- Number of available parking spaces on Main Street after completion of the revitalization project.
- Inclusion of sidewalk improvement in the revitalization project plan.
- Would the City be required to borrow funding for this project.
- Possibility of the removal of trees associated with this plan.
- Addressing the "pit" on Chapman Street.
- Timeline for the plans to repurpose Wilson's building.

Director Adams reported on the Cold Weather Plan which addressed the protection of the homeless and unsheltered from health/life threatening exposure to extreme weather:

- ServiceNet provided shelter on Wells Street; however, if no room was available they would connect with the Center for Human Development who operates the hotels in the region to provide accommodations.
- Elliott Homeless Outreach Services meet with the unsheltered individuals and encourage them to seek any shelter they could, as well as concerned Greenfield citizens.
- Effective April 1, Clinical Support Options would take over shelter operations from ServiceNet.

- The State had funded a new program on intake for the four (4) western counties including a staffed phone line 24/7 to be run by the Center for Human Development.
- The Mayor would be meeting with these various services to provide ongoing coordination and communication between the City and the services that assist individuals that were homeless or unsheltered.

Councilors asked the following questions:

- Providing a warming center for homeless/unsheltered individuals this past winter.
- Warming center options were not open during the night.
- Plan in place during a power outage where more people would be affected by colder weather.

PUBLIC COMMENT: The following members of the public spoke:

- Susan Worgaftik, Forest Avenue, spoke to the lack of leadership displayed by Police Chief Robert Haigh and should step down or be terminated from his position.
- Pamela Goodwin, Greenfield, spoke to her support for bike paths in downtown Greenfield and encouraged the use of Hope Street parking lot for low income housing.
- Wahab Mirhas, Davis Street, spoke to the need for more open forums and dialogue with regards to the downtown revitalization planning and addressed his concerns with drug use/dealings and homelessness in the downtown area.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: Councilor Bottomley read the public hearing:

PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with Home Rule Charter, the Greenfield City Council will hold a public hearing on Wed., March 15, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. at John Zon Community Center, 35 Pleasant St., and Zoom:

<https://greenfield-ma-gov.zoom.us/j/91062568654?pwd=QThVWDlXV1l3VnlWOS81TFdmSm04UT09> Meeting ID 910 6256 8654, to receive public input on the following:

- Appropriate \$200,000 from borrowing to Pay Costs of a Lead Service Line Inventory and Replacement Plan Program.
- Approve Payment of invoice for Connecticut Business Systems of \$104.00 from FY23 Veterans Various Paper Products.
- Transfer \$16,865.78 from the FY23 01001320.5781 Reserve Fund to the FY23 Library account 01006100.5241 Building & Grounds Maintenance

The City Council may consider the same on Wed., March 15, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. at John Zon Community Center, 35 Pleasant St., and Zoom: <https://greenfield-ma-gov.zoom.us/j/91062568654?pwd=QThVWDlXV1l3VnlWOS81TFdmSm04UT09> Meeting ID 910 6256 8654 . Materials can be obtained from the City Clerk's Office, 14 Court Sq. from 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Mon. - Fri. or phone 413-772-1555, x. 6163.

Daniel Guin, Greenfield City Council President

President Guin opened the public hearing at 8:21 pm and asked if anyone wished to speak at the public hearing. Seeing none, he closed the public hearing at 8:22 pm.

Councilor Bottomley read the second reading:

City Council – Second Reading- March 15, 2023

- Approve Payment of invoice for Connecticut Business Systems of \$104.00 from FY23 Veterans Various Paper Products.
- Transfer \$16,865.78 from the FY23 01001320.5781 Reserve Fund to the FY23 Library account 01006100.5241 Building & Grounds Maintenance.

It was noted the appropriation for \$200,000 to pay costs of a Lead Service Line Inventory and Replacement Plan Program had been withdrawn by the Mayor as it was no longer needed.

President Guin called for a 5 minute recess at 8:23 pm.

President Guin resumed the meeting at 8:29 pm.

MOTIONS, ORDERS, AND RESOLUTIONS

Order no. FY 23-101

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Bottomley, second by Councilor Ricketts, it was,

MOVED: THAT THE GREENFIELD CITY COUNCIL RESCINDS THE FOLLOWING ORDER VOTED DURING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 18, 2023:

Order no. FY 23-077

***On January 18, 2023, the Greenfield City Council, on a motion by Councilor Forgey, second by Councilor Desorgher, it was unanimously,
Voted that it be ordered,***

UPON RECOMMENDATION OF MAYOR WEDEGARTNER AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, THE SUM OF \$16,865.78 BE TRANSFERRED FROM THE FY23 01001320.5781 RESERVE FUND TO THE FY23 LIBRARY ACCOUNT 01002440.5200 BUILDING & GROUNDS MAINTENANCE.

DISCUSSION: It was noted the Library Account number was incorrect when it was voted on by the Council.

It was unanimously,

VOTED: TO APPROVE ORDER NO. FY 23-101.

Order no. FY 23-102

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Bottomley, second by Councilor Terounzo, it was,

MOVED: THAT IT BE ORDERED THE CITY COUNCIL, UPON RECOMMENDATION OF MAYOR WEDEGARTNER AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS, THE SUM OF \$16,865.78 BE TRANSFERRED FROM THE FY23 01001320.5781 RESERVE FUND TO THE FY23 LIBRARY ACCOUNT 01006100.5241 BUILDING & GROUNDS MAINTENANCE.

DISCUSSION: Councilor Bottomley reported the Ways & Means Committee forwarded a unanimous positive recommendation.

It was unanimously,

VOTED: TO APPROVE ORDER NO. FY 23-102.

Order no. FY 23-099

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Bottomley, second by Councilor Mayo, it was,

MOVED: THAT IT BE ORDERED THE CITY COUNCIL, UPON RECOMMENDATION OF MAYOR WEDEGARTNER, APPROVE THE PAYMENT OF PRIOR YEAR INVOICE FOR CONNECTICUT BUSINESS SYSTEMS (CBS) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$104.00, TO BE PAID FROM THE FY23 VETERANS VARIOUS PAPER PRODUCTS, ACCT #0100.543.5453.

DISCUSSION: Councilor Bottomley reported the Ways & Means Committee forwarded a unanimous positive recommendation.

It was by roll call, 9 yes, 0 no,

VOTED: TO APPROVE ORDER NO. FY 23-099.

Order no. FY 23-109

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Bullock, second by Councilor Ricketts, it was,

MOVED: THAT IT BE ORDERED THAT THE GREENFIELD CITY COUNCIL, PURSUANT TO CHARTER SECTION 2-10, AFFIRMS THE FOLLOWING APPOINTMENTS BY THE MAYOR TO THE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS:

Victor Moschella, Term to expire June 30, 2025.

Mark Maloni, Term to expire December 31, 2025.

DISCUSSION: Councilor Bullock reported the Appointments & Ordinances Committee forwarded a unanimous positive recommendation.

It was unanimously,

VOTED: TO APPROVE ORDER NO. FY 23-109.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND SIMILAR PAPERS None.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES None.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

OLD BUSINESS: Councilor Elmer noted the Planning Board meeting to discuss the new proposal of the French King Highway rezoning amendment would be held tomorrow at 6:00 pm.

Councilor Bottomley stated that Councilor Desorgher encouraged Councilors to watch the upcoming FY2024 Capital Budget meetings for Ways & Means as well as the FY2024 Operating Budget meetings so Councilors would be more informed when voting the budget.

Councilor Ricketts stated she participated in a ride along with an officer from the police department on a night shift Friday. If any Councilor would be interested in a ride along they should contact the Police Department. She was also present when the new candidates were interviewed.

NEW BUSINESS: Councilors Terounzo held the following first reading:

City Council – First Reading- March 15, 2023

- Appropriate \$116,684 from Water Retained Earnings to FY23 Water Debt Service Accounts.
- Transfer \$375,000 from Contract Stabilization Fund 8403 to Greenfield Public Schools Salaries and Wages Accounts to fund settled contracts.
- Transfer \$206,850 from Free Cash to Greenfield Public Schools Salaries and Wages Accounts to fund settled contracts.
- Community Preservation Fund Reserves (1 order)
 - ❖ Reserve \$144,537.19 from FY2022 Community Preservation Fund Revenues for FY2022 Community Preservation Fund Purposes (FY22 Annual Budgeted Reserve).
 - ❖ Reserve \$20,648.69 from FY2022 Community Preservation Fund Revenues for Open Space.
 - ❖ Reserve \$20,648.69 from FY2022 Community Preservation Fund Revenues for Historic Resources.
 - ❖ Reserve \$20,648.69 from FY2022 Community Preservation Fund Revenues for Community Housing.

- FY2024 Capital Budget (18 orders)
 - Appropriate \$470,000 from borrowing to purchase Ambulance.
 - Appropriate \$575,000 from borrowing for Upgrades to the Police Station.
 - Appropriate \$186,238 from borrowing for Three (3) replacement Police Department Vehicles.
 - Appropriate \$62,180 by transfer from Fund 8402 Capital Stabilization for replacement of Police Department Vehicles.
 - Appropriate \$200,000 by transfer from Fund 8402 Capital Stabilization for Sidewalk Replacement Program.
 - Appropriate \$200,000 by transfer from Fund 8402 Capital Stabilization for Highway Fund.
 - Appropriate \$150,000 by transfer from Fund 8402 Capital Stabilization to purchase Large Area Mower.
 - Appropriate \$55,000 by transfer from Free Cash for mill and overlay paving of Legion Avenue Parking Lot.
 - Appropriate \$290,000 from borrowing to purchase a Road Treatment Truck.
 - Appropriate \$160,000 by transfer from Fund 8402 Capital Stabilization to replace membrane roof at Old Library.
 - Appropriate \$30,000 by transfer from Free Cash to install roof over back stairwell at Police Station.
 - Appropriate \$185,000 by transfer from Fund 8402 Capital Stabilization for Rocky Mountain/Highland Trail Wayfinding Map Development.
 - Appropriate \$80,000 by transfer from Free Cash for installation of Beacon Park Bocce Courts.
 - Appropriate \$195,068 by transfer from Fund 8402 Capital Stabilization for Greenfield Public Schools Energy Recovery Units.
 - Appropriate \$300,000 from borrowing for Sewer Inflow and Infiltration Repairs and Replacement.
 - Appropriate \$230,000 by transfer from FY23 Sewer Retained Earnings to replace Dump Truck #37.
 - Appropriate \$400,000 by transfer from FY23 Water Retained Earnings for Water Main Replacement.
 - Appropriate \$45,000 by transfer from FY23 Water Retained Earnings for Millbrook Well #2 Rehabilitation.

MOTIONS FOR RECONSIDERATION: None.

ADJOURNMENT: On a motion by Councilor Ricketts, second by Councilor Elmer, it was unanimously **VOTED:** TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:48 P.M.

A true copy,

Attest: _____
Kathryn J. Scott, City Clerk

GREENFIELD CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

John Zon Community Center/Zoom Hybrid
 Regular Meeting
 March 15, 2023

	Attendance	FY23-099				
1. Golub, Katherine	Y	Y				
2. Guin, Daniel President	Y	Y				
3. Desorgher, Virginia	N	----				
4. Bottomley, John	Y	Y				
5. Bullock, Marianne	Y	Y				
6. Gilmour, Sheila	N	----				
7. Lapienski, Jasper	Y	Y				
8. Mayo, Douglas	Y	Y				
9. Helie, Derek	N	----				
10. Elmer, Philip	Y	Y				
11. Forgey, Christine Vice - President	N	----				
12. Ricketts, Penny	Y	Y				
13. Terounzo, Michael	Y	Y				

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*Received & handed out @ 3.15.23 Council Mtg
from Greta Shwachman*

Greenfield Public Schools Food Truck Project

The GPS Food Truck was 80% funded through the state's Food Security Infrastructure Grant (FSIG) Program.



Purpose & Use

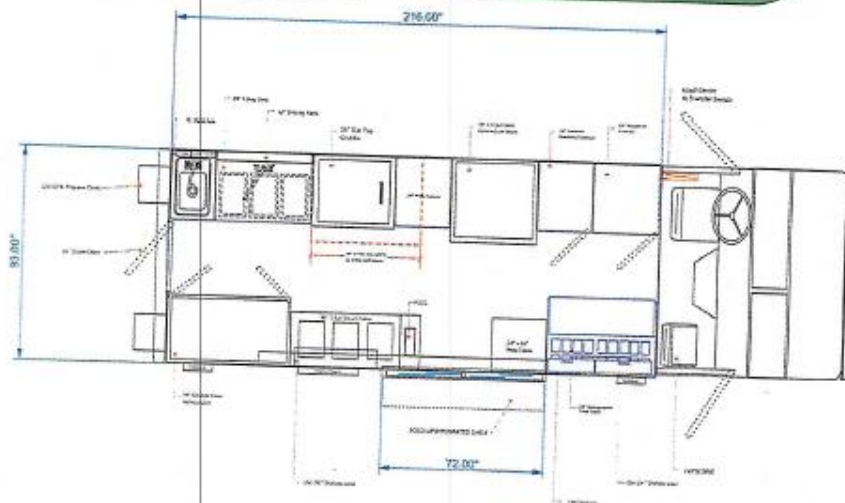
- School Year (NSLP & SBP)
 - Field days
 - Outdoor lunch in spring and fall
 - Special celebrations
- Summer (SFSP)
 - Mobile meal site
 - Kick off event
- Community events
- Catering opportunities
- Potential for "new" after school supper program next year

Truck Features

- Equipment for flexible cooking, serving, & storage: flat top, oven, deli fridge, steam table, hot holding cabinet, refrigerator, freezer
- Retractable awning
- Illuminated menu board
- Green Wave design and fresh "real food" branding
- Bluetooth speakers
- Generator, A/C, Fire Suppression System, etc.

Goals

- Increase participation
- Foster community collaboration
- Provide access to free or low-cost meals that are nutritious, delicious, and locally sourced
- Generate revenue for our program through reimbursable meals, a la carte sales, catering, and events



The truck was custom-built by a company in NY. It is now complete and we are preparing to take delivery by mid-May, just in time for the start of Summer Eats! We hope to see you at our Kick-Off event!

For more information, contact Greta Shwachman, Food Service Director, at greshw1@gpsk12.org or 413-772-1335



DOWNTOWN GREENFIELD REVITALIZATION PLAN

DRAFT March 2023

Acknowledgements

Mayor Roxann D. Wedegartner

City Council Members

Philip Elmer, At-large
Christine Forney, At-large
Penny Rickerts, At-large
Michael Tentounzo, At-large
Katherine Golub, Precinct 1
Daniel J. Guin, Precinct 2
Virginia DeSorgher, Precinct 3
John Bottomley, Precinct 4
Marianne Bullock, Precinct 5
Shella Gilmour, Precinct 6
Jasper Lapienki, Precinct 7
Doug Mayo, Precinct 8
Derek Helle, Precinct 9

Downtown Greenfield Alliance (DGA)

Al Bresciano, Greenfield Savings Bank
Timothy Grader, Downtown Property Owner
Margo Jones, Jones Whitsett Architects
Isaac Mass, Greenfield Garden Cinema Owner
Amy McMahon, Mesa Verde Owner, Planning Board
Hannah Renschowaffen, Sustainable Greenfield Implementation Committee
Charles Roberts, Planning Board
Rachel Roberts, Greenfield Business Association
Jeff Sauser, Greenspace Cowork, Downtown Planner
David Singer, Zoning Board, Former City Councilor
Grady Vigneau, YMCA
Roxann Wedegartner, City of Greenfield
Otis Wheeler, Greenfield Redevelopment Authority
John Williams, Franklin Community Co-op
Anthony Worden, Greenfield Cooperative Bank

City Staff

MJ Adams, City of Greenfield
Christian LaPlante, City of Greenfield
Anna Ottman, City of Greenfield
Caitlin von Schmidt, City of Greenfield

Contents

- 1 About the Process
- 2 Community Input
- 3 Implications
- 4 Draft Priorities for Future Actions



Prepared for the City of Greenfield
Prepared by Innes Associates Ltd.

1 ABOUT THE PROCESS: Background

In 2020, the City of Greenfield sponsored a community forum to help revitalize its Downtown. This initiative was called "A Deliberate Downtown: Growing by Design."^{*} The public portion of this process was slowed down by the COVID-19 pandemic, but that did not slow the City's planning for the Downtown.

Summer 2020 saw efforts by the City to support small businesses, including grants, technical assistance, and allowing outdoor dining.^{*}

In 2021, Massachusetts DHCD sponsored state-wide program to assist communities and small businesses with the efforts to recover from the pandemic. FinePoint Associates LLC, along with Brevitz Community Planning & Design, assisted the City with Greenfield's Rapid Recovery Plan: *The Deliberate Downtown*, published in August 2021.

In February 2022, the City of Greenfield kicked off a community forum called "Downtown Greenfield: The Deliberate Downtown." This forum provided an update on the previous activities and previewed several changes that will be happening to the Downtown over the next few years. Other known improvements at the time included the Main Street Improvement Program, the opening of the Community Justice Support Center for Franklin County (Spring 2022), the new Fire Station (Fall 2022), the Skateboard park (June 2023), the new library (Spring 2023), the Pike Avenue Pocket Park (2022), and the Court Street Redesign (ongoing).^{*}

In late 2022, the City kicked off a process to engage the public about the future of the Downtown, knowing that many of the anticipated changes would be complete by early 2024. The City hired Innes Associates to assist with a process of engagement that included the members of the Downtown Greenfield Alliance, an in-person public forum, and an online questionnaire. This presentation is the result of that engagement effort.

The public forum was held on January 19, 2023 and the survey was open from then until February 6, allowing people attending the Winter Carnival to participate. Also in February, a parking study, led by Stantec, and the MassDOT Main Street Improvement Project (with Fuss & O'Neill) had their first meetings.

Also in 2020, the City received technical assistance from the Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) which is sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The assistance was for an assessment of the economic conditions of the Downtown. FinePoint Associates LLC produced the *Greenfield Downtown Business District Assessment and Market Analysis* in January 2021.

The City continued to experiment with outdoor events in the Downtown in Summer 2021. Court Square was the site for the ongoing Farmer's Market and the LLBean Boot Pop-up shop and a temporary pedestrian plaza and Food Truck.^{*}

Also in 2022, the MDI program sponsored technical assistance for a storefront-to-storefront design guide that would supplement the City's planned streetscape program. Innes Associates Ltd. assisted the City with the *Downtown Storefront to Storefront Strategy*, completed in September 2022.

The City was able to announce the purchase of the Wilson's building at the forum on January 19.

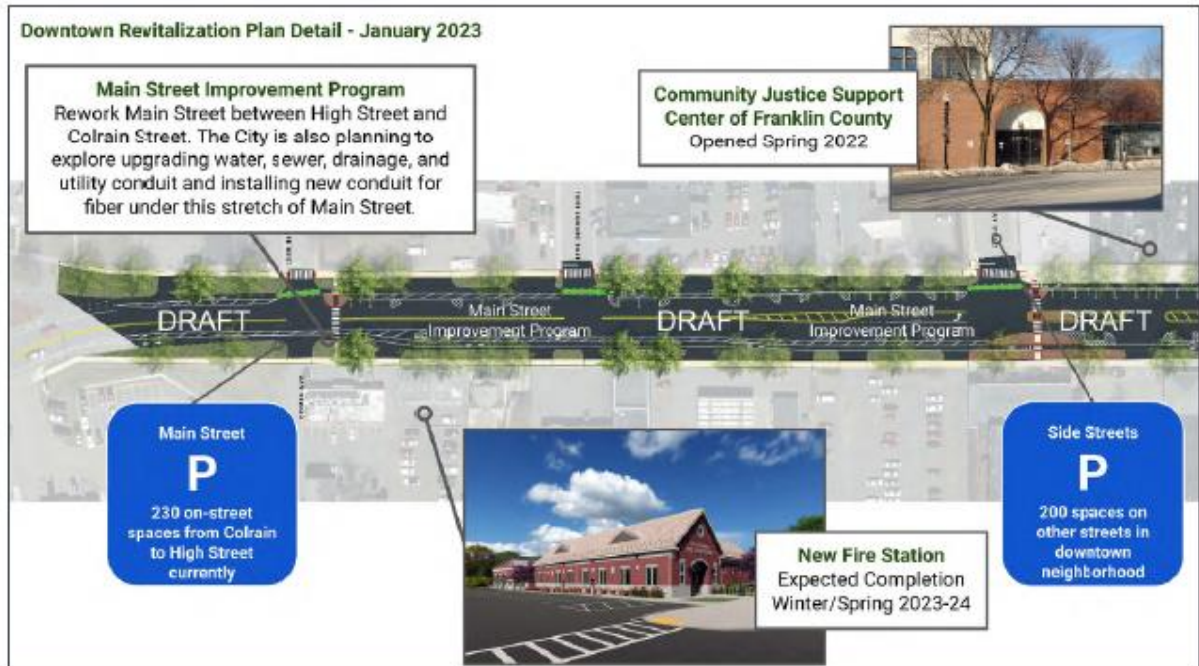
During this period, members of the DGA provided input about the Downtown, including public perceptions and additional ways to engage people in discussion.

The next four pages show the known projects at the time of the forum and their anticipated completion dates.

^{*} Summarized from *Greenfield: A Deliberate Downtown 2022*, presented by the City of Greenfield, February 7, 2022.

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1 ABOUT THE PROCESS: Known Projects



Graphic Courtesy of the City of Greenfield

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1 ABOUT THE PROCESS: Known Projects



Graphic Courtesy of the City of Greenfield

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1 ABOUT THE PROCESS: Known Projects



Graphic Courtesy of the City of Greenfield

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1 ABOUT THE PROCESS: Known Projects



Graphic Courtesy of the City of Greenfield

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2 COMMUNITY INPUT: Overview

Community input can be divided into four sources:

- Input from members of the Downtown Greenfield Alliance over four meetings: on December 15, 2022, January 3, 2023, February 7, 2023, and March 7, 2023.
- Questions and comments from attendees at the public forum on January 19, 2023.
- Questions and comments from respondents to the online questionnaire which was open from January 19 through February 6. The City hung boards from the public forum in the Wilson's windows so people who did not attend the forum could also participate. The Greenfield Report also published notices of both the forum and the questionnaire.
- Comments from City Councilors at their meeting of March 15, 2023. (Note, this meeting has not yet happened – this document is an initial draft for city Council review and comment.)

A

Public Forum (January 19, 2023)

- Held at the Jon Zon Community Center.
- 38 people signed in.
- Participants listened to a presentation, asked questions or provided comments during a Q&A session, and then made comments on boards with questions for them to consider (see the next two pages).
- The focus of the questions was on the following:
 - Understanding participant's **experience** of the Downtown
 - Exploring the **identity** of the Downtown as the participants see it and as they think others see it
 - Identifying what participants saw as current **challenges** in the Downtown
 - Asking for thoughts on how to better support Downtown businesses.

B

Online Questionnaire (January 19 - February 6, 2023)

- The questionnaire platform was SurveyMonkey.
- The City received 41 responses (including one paper survey that was entered by hand).
- The survey questions were based on the boards from the forum, but respondents did not need to see the boards in order to respond.
- 77.42% (31 people) did NOT attend the January workshop (most because they either didn't know about it (42.86%/9 people)) or because they heard about it too late (23.81% or 5 people)). 6 people (28.57%) had another commitment.
- Just over half (53.55%/16 people) had heard of the Deliberate Downtown Initiative before January 2023.

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COMMUNITY INPUT: Boards for Public Forum and Online Questionnaire



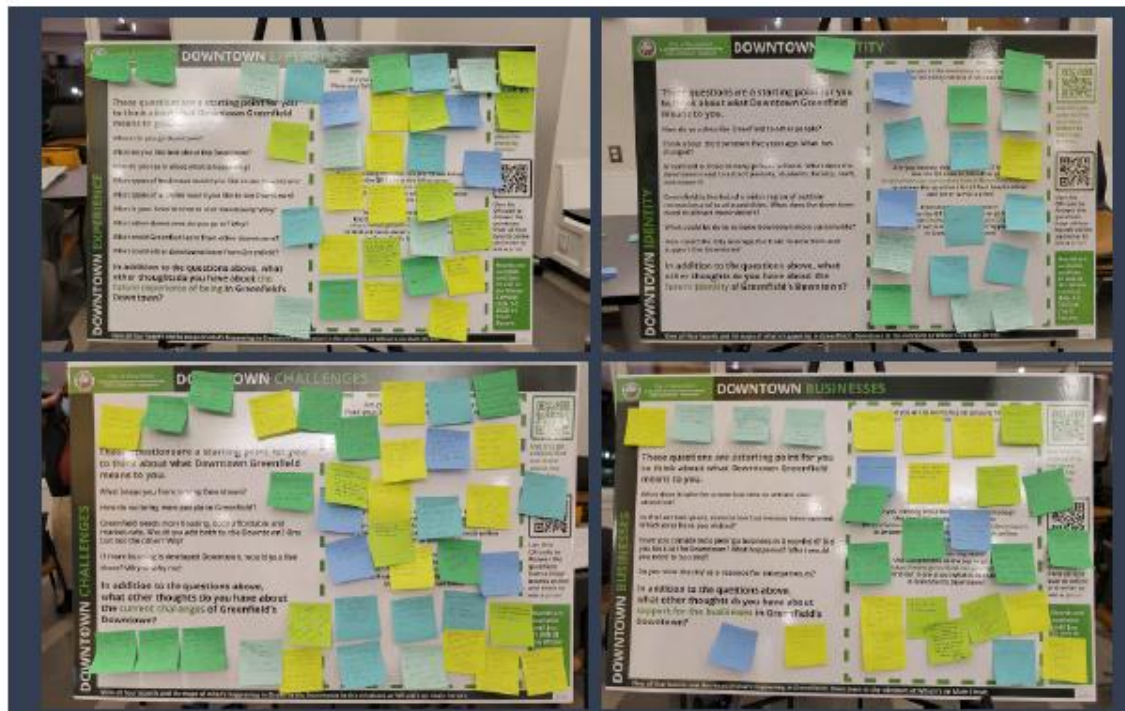
Images of boards used at the public forum on January 19, 2023, and posted in the Wilson's windows.

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COMMUNITY INPUT: Boards for Public Forum and Online Questionnaire



Images of boards used at the public forum on January 19, 2023, and posted in the Wilson's windows.

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COMMUNITY INPUT: What Did We Hear?

A

Summary of Key Input from the Public Forum

What does Downtown Greenfield mean to you?

Some comments have been moved to a different topic from the original post.

Identity

How do you describe Downtown Greenfield to people?

- Greenfield's identity is different from nearby Amherst and Northampton: it is more working-class, with a lot of "heart." The City has a more "small-town feel."
- It feels a little "fancier" than it used to, but a holistic vision for the Downtown seems to be missing.

Challenges

What keeps you from coming Downtown? How do we bring more people Downtown?

- A mix of both market-rate and affordable housing is needed to bring more people downtown.
- Housing needs to be suitable for older people.
- Downtown needs to be more accessible to a wider variety of incomes, including options for shopping, restaurants, and no fees to use community spaces/ third places.
- Downtown needs to be more accessible to people of all ages, including sidewalks that are friendly to wheelchairs and strollers, more handicapped-accessible parking spaces, and better snow removal.
- Amenities such as bike lanes, shade, parks, places to sit, and better sidewalks are important.
- Addressing poor behavior, such as drug use, drinking, and loitering, would help people feel safer.
- Addressing the poor condition of some storefronts would also help people feel safer.

I love that downtown is a vibrant mix of civic + commercial functions, and that it's public space (unlike shopping centers).

Experiences

Where do you go Downtown and what do you like to do?

- Participants would like the following to enhance the experience of being Downtown:
 - More outdoor events/festivals that are coordinated.
 - Public restrooms.
 - Places to sit/ outdoor seating/ gathering spots.
 - Bicycle stands.
 - Public art.
 - Trees.
 - Activities open later in the evening.
 - Maintain/support local businesses, including stores and restaurants.

Businesses

How do we better support businesses Downtown?

- Ideas to support businesses downtown include the following:
 - More al fresco dining.
 - Apply pressure to property owners to maintain and repair store fronts.
 - Extra taxes on empty buildings to give landlords and incentive to fill spaces.
 - Increase the variety of business types.
 - More housing in the Downtown.
 - More flexible zoning to add business types (including cub/music/dancing, light industrial).
 - Address accessibility for businesses and parking.

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COMMUNITY INPUT: What Did We Hear?

B

Summary of Key Input from the Questionnaire

Some comments have been moved to a different topic from the original answer.

Identity

- "A real town, not a wannabe town."
- "Small, gritty, walkable, pretty, but with a sizable number of poor or homeless people and sometimes feels a bit sad."
- "Equitable variety socio-economically."
- "A small town that has improved in the last decade or so."
- "Rough around the edges but has potential."
- "Troubled but healing."
- "A nice town that's always on the verge [of] becoming better."
- "A diamond in the rough."
- "Rough around the edges, but good overall."
- "Neglected."
- "Nicely situated New England town that hasn't seen an economic boom since the heyday of the railroad."
- "Low income, largely working place that feels very welcoming to new people and makes it wonderfully easy to be meaningfully involved and have an impact."
- "Cool little town that punches above its weight in terms of many amenities."
- "A great place to live but not a destination"

It's not a tourist town, and it's not a college town, it's just a town where people live, and I love it.

What could be more financially and economically sustainable than facilitating engagement, investment, and growth right here?

Experiences

- Respondents listed many local businesses: one respondent noted " ...as I list them, I'm realizing how many excellent small businesses and gathering places already exist in downtown Greenfield."
- When people go downtown varies:
 - "I only go downtown during daylight hours due to safety concerns."
 - "I like to go downtown any time."
 - "Mostly, it is after hours to visit restaurants and bars."
- Some notes the ability to run errands/ go to multiple businesses at once.
- Others noted the lack of affordable options.
- Other than business owners, no one mentioned working downtown. One respondent noted the lack of well-paying jobs.
- Events/experiences such as the Winter Carnival, farmer's market, and pedestrianized Court Square are a draw.
- Lack of coordination among businesses for opening hours is a negative.
- Another negative is the empty stores and dirty front windows.
- One respondent loved the views provided by the topography of downtown.
- Respondents identified what is missing:
 - Different business types, goods, and services.
 - Green spaces and places for children to play.
 - Additional outdoor activities (including more outdoor dining), especially in the summer evenings.
 - Link to the historical and natural assets of the Green River.
- Many respondents would like to see a strong focus on supporting local businesses for local needs.

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COMMUNITY INPUT: What Did We Hear?

B

Summary of Key Input from the Questionnaire

Some comments have been moved to a different topic from the original answer.

We can do so much better than a downtown where the only things to do are shop and eat.

Challenges

- Conditions that keep people from coming downtown include the following:
 - Need for more spaces or activities that don't require money to participate or just gather.
 - Need for benches on the side streets.
 - Lack of services for low-income or limited mobility tenants (such as a grocery store).
 - Negative behavior.
 - No public restrooms.
 - Limited business hours/ no night life.
 - Payment required for parking/ parking garage feels unsafe.
 - The downtown is run-down and the appearance "gives the impression of economic struggles."
 - Lack of lodging for people to come to a show and stay the night.
- What the City could support to address these challenges:
 - More activities: community gardens, chess boards or other games, activities in the parks.
 - Add more housing, including market rate, affordable, non-traditional (co-housing, ADUs and tiny houses), means-tested, and pathways to homeownership.
 - Coordinate new housing with eateries, shops, recreation.
 - Good transportation options.

Businesses

- Businesses that would attract the respondents include the following:
 - Those with a diversity of offerings.
 - Those with interesting window displays and a "welcoming face."
 - Those that encourage art/culture.
 - Those with more hours of operation, especially later in the evenings.
 - Those that have products/services that are desired by the community, including different levels of affordability.
 - Those that serve families and young adults.

What the City can do to help businesses:

- Encourage the following businesses:
 - Arts/creative businesses
 - Business incubator
- Hold landlords accountable for addressing poor building conditions including vacancy and vandalism.
- Create conditions that will support more foot traffic.
- Take an active role through financial incentives and/or regulatory requirements to create a sustainable business community with physically accessible spaces for all.
- Provide marketing support and other resources to small businesses.
- One business owner was extremely positive about the City as a resource for entrepreneurs; others were less positive but only one cited a specific experience.

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Implications

This section is focused on what the City can do to continue its support for the transformation of Greenfield's Downtown. It is critical to recognize that the changes anticipated for 2023-24 may address some of the concerns expressed by the public about a lack of activity or visible investment in the Downtown.

Key projects include the completion of the new public library and the skatepark, which will draw a variety of age groups and interests to the downtown. Adding Court Square as a permanent green space will help complement the City's investment in the Fiske Avenue Pocket Park and the existing Energy Park. Both will help support the outdoor activities that are a strong draw for many people.

The prospect of the redevelopment of the former Wilson's department store as housing will jump start the process of adding more people downtown throughout the day. The relocation of the Green Field's market to this building will support a local business and retain an important anchor in the Downtown.

Existing buildings with available space offer opportunities to add some of the uses identified by the public. The Leavitt-Hovey House (former library), the former downtown center of Greenfield Community College, the Armory, the former First National Bank, and the Hope Street Parking lot are all options for redevelopment that could meet needs identified in this document.

Tools

What options does the City of Greenfield have to continue its investment in Greenfield?

- Land Control
- Regulations
- Enforcement and Support
- Programming
- Communication
- Facilitation
- Implementation
- Continued Planning

Each of these tools are described below, with options for City action that draw on the comments made by the public at the form and as responses to the questionnaires.

Land Control

A City has control over the land that it owns, including the public rights-of-way that form the streets and sidewalks, city-owned parks and parking lots, and city-owned buildings. As noted above, the City has made significant investments in new buildings and small parks in the Downtown. It is also making significant investments in streetscapes, including the current planning process for the MassDOT project for Main Street and the current parking study. Parking was certainly an area of concern as was the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. The City has public toilets at City Hall and is also adding a Portland Loo – a public toilet that will help address concerns about the lack of public toilets in the Downtown.

Underutilized City properties should be evaluated for suitability to address uses identified through this process. A recurring theme was the need for housing to address a variety of needs and create demand for local businesses.

What else can the City do?

- Add more benches along side streets to support walking to the Downtown for nearby residents who are less physically able.
- Install bus shelters and benches at bus stops to make public transit more visible and accessible.

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3 Implications

Regulations

The City can change its zoning to allow more uses Downtown. The Downtown is currently zoned as Central commercial (CC). Current uses are relatively flexible, but not specific. Some communities are beginning to define desired uses as a method to encourage business owners to expand or relocate to their communities.

In 2020, the City added Makerspace and Craft Workshop and Light Assembly with Related Retail to its list of uses. Many of the uses identified in the public comments are allowed either as-of-right or by special permit (hotel, indoor entertainment). Arts-specific uses other than theatre, are missing, but might fall under one of the larger categories in the permitted use.

What else can the City do?

- The City should consider adding additional uses, especially those that support experiential retail, arts-related retail and activities, and expanded entertainment uses, either in the permitted uses for the CC District or as a guide to potential business owners that those uses are permitted under the larger definition. For example, the City has permitted co-working under Business and Professional Office; co-working could be added as a use in the zoning or identified as a use in City business development materials.

Enforcement and Support

Enforcement of building and health codes is critical to preventing conditions of blight, but enforcement cannot work if the property owner does not have the resources to address the problem. Some communities are evaluating programs that pair increased inspections with information and resources for addressing problems.

Concerns identified during this process include long-term vacancies (especially ground-floor), deteriorated storefronts and facades, old flyers in windows, and vandalism. The City should require property owners to address these conditions and could provide a combination of fines and incentives for compliance.

What else can the City do?

- Work with property owners who have received notices of violations to identify local and state resources to address deteriorated conditions.
- Programs the City has now or has used in the past include:
 - Commercial facade improvement program.
 - Vacant Storefront District.
 - Targeted use of CDGB funds to address blighted conditions.
- Massachusetts programs that can be leveraged with City funds include:
 - Site readiness and vacant properties (MassDevelopment).
 - Historic tax credits (Massachusetts Historic Commission).
 - Energy efficiency grants (Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources)

Programming

Many of the respondents requested more outdoor activities in the Downtown. These requests included activities that were:

- Seasonal
- Family-friendly
- Affordable to a wide range of incomes
- During the evening (especially in the summer)

The Fiske Avenue Pocket Park, the planned redesign of Court Square, and Energy Park will help provide space for additional activities. People mentioned the Winter Carnival, the Farmers' Market, Bee Fest, the Arts Walk, and the temporary seasonal use of Court Square.

What else can the City do?

- Members of the public suggested the following additional activities/spaces (with a desire that they be free or affordable to a broad range of incomes):
- Community building for all ages with activities and food.
 - Busking/outdoor musicians.
 - Places to sit/eat outside.
 - Additional beautification.
 - Classes/workshops.
 - Play areas.
 - Food truck Fridays (or similar).
 - Activities that build on Greenfield's reputation for sustainability.

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3 Implications

Communication

One of the most interesting outcomes of this planning process was understanding how people receive their information about what is going on within the Downtown and the entire city. People who participated in this process receive their information in a variety of ways:

- The Greenfield Recorder
- GCTV webcast
- Email
- Other City meeting
- City website
- Instagram
- Windows at Wilson's (for the questionnaire)

What was also clear is that some respondents were unaware of recent City planning efforts, new businesses that had located in the Downtown over the past 2-3 years, and the timeline for completion of the projects described earlier. The redesigned City website should also help with communication.

What else can the City do?

- Communicate frequently and in a variety of media.
- Continue to celebrate the successes of the Downtown, especially as new buildings/outdoor spaces come online.
- Focus on the details of trash pickup, street sweeping, addressing poorly maintained buildings. The physical appearance of the Downtown is also a communication tool.

Facilitation

The City is not the only entity responsible for the Downtown, and one important role for the City is continuing to facilitate conversations among the different stakeholders. The members of the Downtown Greenfield Alliance identified several options for further explorations, including the following:

- Continue to support the creation of housing Downtown to add activity.
- Support cross-marketing efforts among local businesses and attractions.
- Identify ways for Greenfield to capture regional visitors looking for a place to stop for lunch or a break.
- Leverage the Amtrak train to New York for both residents and as a draw for visitors.
- Support Downtown as a community center in addition to a commercial center.
- Hire an Arts Coordinator to leverage the existing music and arts community and plan additional programming.
- Leverage the skatepark to draw related businesses (perhaps along Chapman Street).
- Add year-round programming to Court Square.
- Create a one-stop place for social assistance so people can get the assistance they need more efficiently.
- Work with MassDOT and Eversource to upgrade the electrical system so Downtown buildings can add solar power.

Implementation

The focus of this update on public engagement does not invalidate the City's recent planning efforts. Recent reports and studies, listed below, contain additional specific recommendations that should be coordinated with the comments in this section.

- Greenfield Downtown Business District Assessment and Market Analysis
- Rapid Recovery Plan: The Deliberate Downtown
- Downtown Storefront to Storefront Strategy

What else can the City do?

- Review the recommendations from each report and the complete documents from the public meeting, questionnaire, and meetings with the DGA for coordinated actions.
- Identify options for next steps in terms of actions, policies, or additional studies.

Continued Planning

Some participants in this public process identified additional areas for exploration that would require further planning studies. These include the following:

What else can the City do?

- Look for ways to connect the Downtown to Energy Park and the Green River.
- Identify appropriate pedestrian and bicycle connections from Main Street to the neighborhoods and identify needed amenities

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Draft Priorities for Future Actions

Priorities depend on timing, and this public engagement process identified some actions the City could take over the next ten years to build upon the significant investment it has already made in the Downtown.

NOW!

- Continue to publicize recent and anticipated changes to the Downtown across a variety of media.
- Coordinate pedestrian amenities, such as benches and bus shelters, and bicycle amenities, such as bike racks and repair stations, with the Main Street Improvement Program.
- Begin addressing the small details that many participants identified as concerns:
 - Ask property owners to remove out-of-date flyers from walls and windows and address vandalism promptly.
 - Identify property owners who might be eligible for the commercial façade program and ask how it could be improved to encourage more participation. Enroll more owners/businesses in the program.
- Develop a staff position of either Arts Coordinator or Downtown Coordinator to facilitate programming.
- Share public input with new property owners to see if their plans could include some of the uses identified as desirable.
- Encourage businesses to coordinate late opening hours once a week.

1-3 Years

- Evaluate zoning to see if there are barriers to the types of businesses identified as desirable by the participants.
- Continue to support the development of both market rate and affordable housing in the Downtown.
- Continue to engage the public in the development of programming ideas and experiment with different events, times, and locations.
- Work with local arts groups, businesses and property owners to identify complementary clusters (food/music, skateboard/equipment/ clothing, artists/art supplies/galleries, food trucks/commercial kitchens) and consider target marketing of empty spaces.
- Develop branding for the Crossroads Cultural District.
- Identify appropriate spaces for social services that do not take up valuable storefront space along Main Street but are still accessible to those they serve.
- Continue to evaluate the recommendations of previous plans and implement as relevant.
- Address concerns about safety at the Olive Street Parking Garage.

3-5 Years

- Begin planning process to link the Downtown to Energy Park and the Green River.
- Expand pedestrian and bicycle improvements and amenities to connect the surrounding neighborhoods to Main Street.
- Evaluate programming of local spaces to see if the anticipated audience is attracted to the Downtown.
- Continue to develop programs to support small local businesses.
- Continue to evaluate City-owned underutilized properties for development to meet needs identified in this report.

5+ Years

- Measure the change in population, the demographics of that population, and the change in businesses since 2023.
- Identify areas for improvement. For example, has the balance of market rate to affordable housing shifted? Is there a change in the types of businesses in the area? Are Downtown events still effective in drawing local people?

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