

West Side Walk Audit Brockton, MA

7/23/2025

In Partnership with the Old Colony Planning Council



OLD COLONY
PLANNING COUNCIL

Purpose of the Assessment

This report presents the findings and recommendations from a comprehensive walk audit conducted on the west side of Brockton, Massachusetts. On June 26, 2025, the audit systematically documented the conditions along critical corridors, including West Street, W Elm Street, Moraine Street, Belmont Street, and Torrey Street. This initiative involved a diverse group of Brockton residents and key stakeholders, including transportation and planning agencies, community-based organizations, environmental justice advocates, youth and labor organizers, educational leaders, local advocates, and municipal decision-makers. By bringing together these voices, the walk audit not only assessed current infrastructure conditions and accessibility challenges but also harnessed the expertise and lived experiences of those working towards safer, healthier, and more equitable mobility options across the city.

About WalkMassachusetts:

WalkMassachusetts is a non-profit organization dedicated to advocating for safer and more accessible walking conditions in Massachusetts. We collaborate with communities throughout the state to enhance walkability, promote walking as a sustainable and healthy form of transportation, and contribute to a more equitable transportation system.

About the Grant

We gratefully acknowledge that this walk audit, along with three others conducted in Brockton in 2025, is supported by the Underserved Communities Traffic Safety Grant through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security's Office of Grants and Research. This grant program is designed to advance roadway safety and equity by providing resources to organizations working in communities that have historically faced disproportionate transportation challenges and health disparities. The funding enables us to engage directly with residents, assess real-world walking conditions, and collaboratively identify actionable improvements for safer, more accessible streets. We deeply appreciate the support of the Office of Grants and Research, whose commitment is instrumental in helping us move roadway safety forward in Brockton and ensure that all residents benefit from a safer, more walkable environment.

What is a walk audit?

A walk audit is a process where a group walks through a specific area, such as a neighborhood or commercial district, to assess its pedestrian friendliness and safety.

During a walk audit, various factors are observed and evaluated, including the condition of sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian signals, as well as the presence of amenities like benches, lighting, and landscaping. The goal of a walk audit is to identify any barriers or deficiencies that may hinder walking as a mode of transportation and make key recommendations to improve the built environment.

The walk audit aimed to identify barriers to walkability, document user experiences (including those of people with disabilities and seniors), and prioritize improvements that foster safer, more accessible, and inclusive streets. Thirteen participants representing local government, advocacy groups, businesses, and residents walked key routes, observed infrastructure conditions, and provided feedback on pedestrian challenges and opportunities

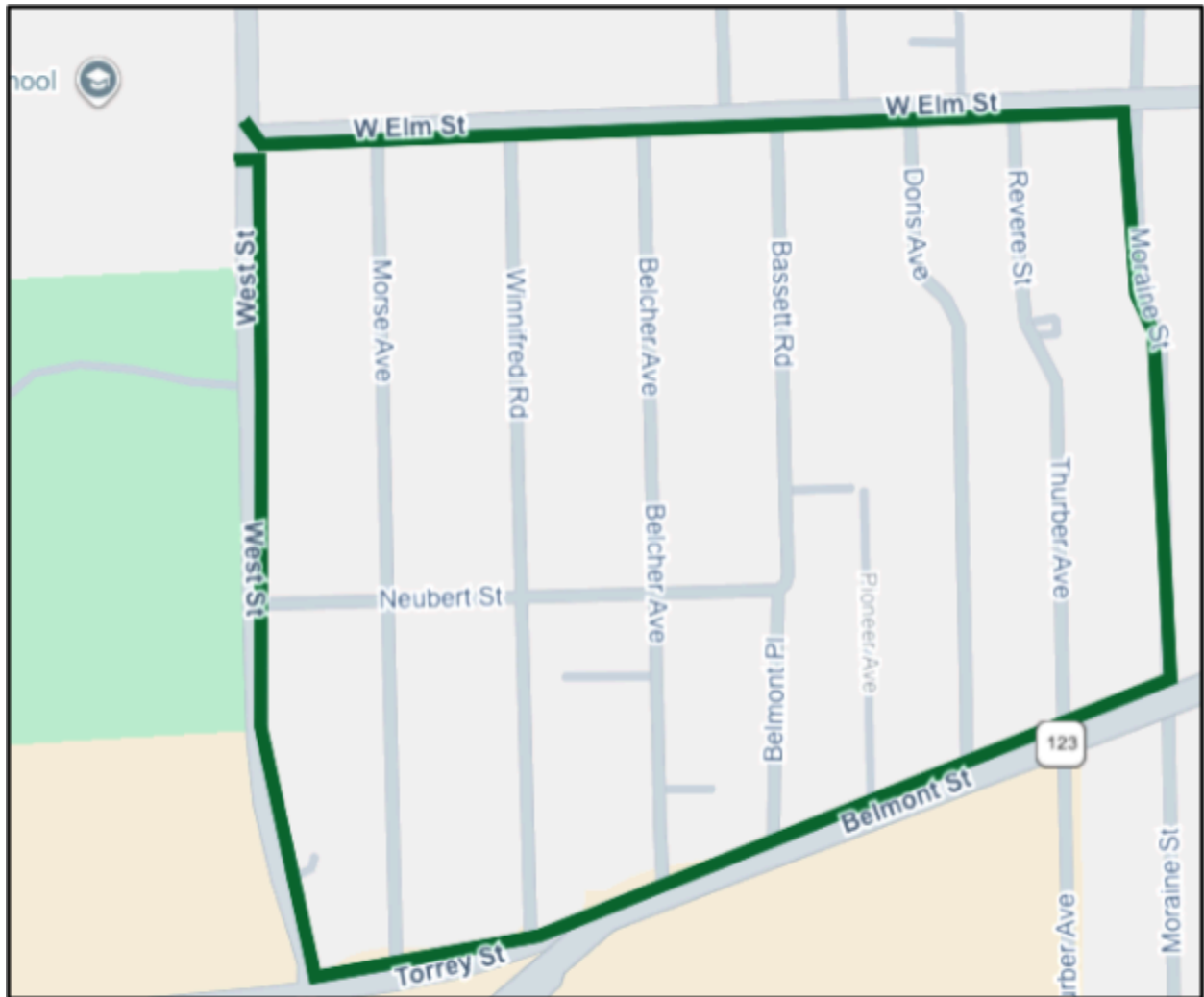
Study Area/Walk Route

The walk audit began at West Middle School, where participants and facilitators gathered to introduce themselves and share their personal and professional motivations for improving walkability in Brockton. This introductory conversation highlighted the diverse perspectives present and emphasized a collective commitment to safer, more equitable streets. The group set out along West Elm Street, where many noted positive features such as street trees providing shade and consistently wide sidewalks that contribute to pedestrian comfort. Turning right onto Moraine Street, participants observed a transition to a residential street with narrower, asphalt sidewalks in need of maintenance and greater investment. The audit continued with a right onto Belmont Street and then Torrey Street—both high-traffic thoroughfares that emerged as priorities for safety interventions, including potential road diets, to better accommodate all road users. Completing the loop, the group returned up West Street to West Middle School, where a debrief session allowed participants to reflect on their observations and collaboratively identify key takeaways and recommendations for improving walkability on Brockton's west side.

To enhance the clarity and impact of our findings, we are providing an interactive map within this report and in our other walk audit reports that displays the audit route, key data points, and geotagged photographs taken by participants at specific locations. Each image is linked to its exact position along the route, visually illustrating the challenges and opportunities—such as sidewalk disrepair, inadequate lighting, lack of ADA-compliant infrastructure, and areas with high pedestrian activity—that informed our recommendations. This map-based approach ensures that stakeholders have access to a spatially accurate and comprehensive visual record, supplementing the photos included in each section and offering a fuller context for planning and decision-making.

[Link to just the photos of the walk audit:](#)

[Use this link to see our interactive map and key data:](#)



Route of 2025 West Side Walk Audit

Walk Audit Participants	
Brendan Kearney	WalkMassachusetts
Iolando Spinola	WalkMassachusetts
Christine Park	WalkMassachusetts
Samira Murillo	Brockton Workers Alliance
John Fay	City of Brockton's Planning Department
Mary Waldron	Old Colony Planning Council
Guoqiang Li	Old Colony Planning Council
Matt Dyer	Old Colony Planning Council
Bryce Germain	XRoadz Inc

Assessment

Throughout the audit, it became apparent that the interest in walkability transcends individual backgrounds. Conversation flourished around the mutual concerns for safety, equitable mobility, and the desire to see Brockton's built environment support a higher quality of life for all. Participants reflected openly on personal experiences navigating city streets, underscoring the ways in which walkability impacts families, seniors, children, and those relying on transit. The audit route itself enabled participants to encounter and discuss real-world barriers firsthand, from sidewalk upheaval and inadequate crossings to speeding traffic and uncomfortable walking conditions due to insufficient shade.

One of the most impactful aspects of the walk audit was the robust dialogue about the disparities in walkability among Brockton's neighborhoods. Attendees who had previously participated in walk audits in Campello and Montello pointed out the stark

contrasts between those areas and the West Side. The differences extended beyond mere infrastructure; the West Side benefited from wider sidewalks and more frequent street tree plantings, while Campello and Montello were described as lacking even the most basic amenities and being long overdue for upgrades. The conversation highlighted a broader pattern of uneven investment and maintenance, amplifying the need for a citywide approach to improving pedestrian conditions rather than isolated pockets of progress.

Participants collectively agreed that walkability should not be a privilege reserved for certain neighborhoods, but a fundamental expectation for all Brockton residents. Many spoke of how the lack of investment in areas like Campello and Montello has led to persistent physical barriers, limited access to key destinations, and ongoing risks for children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Additionally, the walk audit reinforced the importance of addressing infrastructure deficiencies revealed along the West Side route. From surface depressions and overgrown vegetation impacting pedestrian visibility at crossings, to missing or non-compliant curb ramps and a long stretch on West Elm with no crosswalks, participants documented the sorts of hazards that compromise safety and inclusivity. The recurring presence of insufficient amenities like shade or benches further illustrated the challenges facing pedestrians.

Altogether, the walk audit was both an assessment and a networking opportunity. Bringing together individuals who might otherwise approach the topic from distinct vantage points, and generating a richer understanding of the opportunities and challenges that define mobility in Brockton. The experience showcased not just the technical shortcomings of current infrastructure, but also the shared values and aspirations of those who live, work, and advocate in the city. Most importantly, it provided a powerful reminder: meaningful improvement is only possible when the voices and needs of all neighborhoods are heard and addressed through coordinated investment and ongoing public engagement.

Key Recommendations

Short-Term Recommendations

- Install a high-visibility pedestrian crossing on West Elm Street near the bus stop to improve access and safety for transit riders and neighborhood residents.
- Increase tree canopy coverage on the side of West Elm Street that currently lacks shade to improve pedestrian comfort during high heat conditions.
- Initiate a public-private partnership Waste Management project with local small businesses to increase the number and distribution of waste bins, reducing

sidewalk litter and improving comfort along key corridors like Belmont and West Elm Streets.

- Install new and/or maintain existing high-visibility crosswalk markings at intersections with poor delineation, especially at West Elm & West Streets and along Belmont Street.
- Regularly trim overgrown vegetation along sidewalks, focusing on critical corridors such as West Street, W Elm Street, and Moraine Street.
- Improve pedestrian signal infrastructure by installing countdown timers and “no turn on red” signage (with illuminated right arrow signal) at key intersections, especially at West and West Elm Streets.
- Expand enforcement and education around pedestrian right-of-way, including targeted campaigns and signage related to yielding and safe speeds near schools, parks, and residential corridors.
- Repair uneven or damaged sidewalk segments quickly, especially in areas with documented hazards like tree-root upheaval or patchwork repairs.
- Increase street lighting on Belmont and Torrey Streets to improve nighttime visibility and safety.
- Add benches at regular intervals and near bus stops to support older adults, people with mobility limitations, and transit users.

Long-Term Recommendations

- Develop and implement a citywide ADA curb ramp upgrade plan to ensure all ramps meet current ADA standards, are properly aligned, and include tactile and auditory features at high-use intersections.
- Build out a dedicated municipal transportation department or hire a full-time transportation planner tasked with coordinating and advancing citywide mobility projects, walkability, and multimodal planning.
- Adopt a road diet for Belmont Street and Torrey Street, narrowing travel lanes to reduce speeds, and reallocating space for sidewalks, bike lanes, or landscaped buffers.
- Systematically fill sidewalk network gaps—constructing new sidewalks where none exist or where connectivity is lacking, prioritizing links to schools, parks, bus stops, and other key destinations.
- Increase the frequency of mid-block crossings on longer blocks, particularly along West Elm Street and Belmont Street, with pedestrian refuge islands and/or rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs).
- Expand the city’s street tree program to ensure both sides of all major corridors and priority residential streets are planted equitably, with species and spacing designed for long-term shade and resilience in the urban environment.

- Plan and implement consistent bike lane infrastructure across the west side and citywide, prioritizing lanes that are separated or buffered from vehicle traffic and include continuous pavement markings.
- Pursue state and federal grants to support long-term capital investments in walkability, including sidewalk reconstruction, crossing upgrades, and lighting enhancements.
- Launch an annual walkability assessment program to monitor progress, identify emerging needs, and ensure that investments are distributed equitably across all Brockton neighborhoods.

Throughout our walk, participants encountered physical barriers such as uneven or narrow sidewalks, missing or outdated ADA curb ramps, and intersections with limited crossing protection or inadequate pedestrian signals. Overgrown vegetation and lack of shade were particularly problematic near school entrances and high-traffic bus stops, further diminishing comfort and access for those walking to and from school—many of whom are among Brockton’s most vulnerable road users.

It is essential to underscore that vehicle speeds on segments like Belmont and Torrey Streets present a marked threat to pedestrian safety, exacerbated by limited marked crossings and a lack of traffic calming infrastructure. The condition of crossings at major intersections such as West Elm at West Street demonstrated a clear need for improved signage, adjusted signalization (including ‘no turn on red’ indicators), and extended walk times to better accommodate schoolchildren, seniors, and people living with disabilities.

The audit’s findings complement and reinforce the comprehensive strategies outlined in Brockton’s Safety Action Plan, as well as the Old Colony Planning Council’s broader transportation safety initiatives. The West Side’s proximity to schools, parks, and transit points means investments here have amplified benefit; supporting daily access for youth and families while setting a higher standard for neighborhood accessibility throughout the city.

Our recommendations call for both quick-build and long-term infrastructure upgrades: signal and crosswalk improvements at school-adjacent intersections, dedicated sidewalk maintenance programs, expanded tree canopy for shade, street lighting enhancements, public-private partnerships to support waste management, and most critically, a citywide plan for consistent ADA upgrades. These interventions must be prioritized to address existing disparities and ensure every child has a safe, comfortable walk to school, regardless of where they live.

WalkMassachusetts is committed to supporting Brockton in equitably building a city where safe, accessible streets are the norm, and where improvements serve those who need them most. By elevating the voices of youth, families, and all residents during our walk audit process, we reaffirm that the pathway to healthy, vibrant communities starts with safe passage for our youngest and most vulnerable road users—and a shared vision for walkability across every neighborhood.

Brockton Walk Audit Series

This walk audit is part of a broader series conducted across Brockton to more deeply understand the city's walking environment and to identify opportunities for impactful improvements. Our ongoing efforts are closely aligned with the regional vision set forth by our partners at the Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC), whose Safety Action Plan supported by a federal Safe Streets for All (SS4A) planning grant commits to achieving zero roadway deaths and serious injuries by 2045 in Brockton and the wider Old Colony region¹. Through extensive public engagement, rigorous crash analysis, and a strong equity lens, OCPC's plan underscores how Brockton faces some of the greatest roadway safety challenges in the region, particularly for people walking and biking.

We want to extend our sincere appreciation to all residents and stakeholders who participated in these walk audits. Your firsthand observations and engagement are invaluable to shaping actionable recommendations for Brockton's streets. We are also deeply grateful for funding support from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security and the Secretary's Office of Grants and Research, which has made these community-driven assessments possible.

The strong alignment between the OCPC Safety Action Plan and the themes identified through our walk audits—such as the urgent need for high-visibility crosswalks, ADA-compliant infrastructure, enhanced lighting, and comprehensive traffic calming—demonstrates broad consensus on key interventions to make Brockton's streets safer and more equitable. We are optimistic that, together, our shared insights and collaborative efforts will help Brockton secure the resources needed to implement transformative changes, ultimately fostering a safer, healthier, and more accessible transportation network for everyone.

¹ https://oldcolonyplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/OCPC-Safety-Action-Plan_REVISED_DRAFT_4-14-2025.pdf

Appendix: Funding Opportunities

This document provides a brief overview of funding opportunities for walking improvement infrastructure projects in Massachusetts. The following two links provide a more comprehensive compiled list of funding sources for walking infrastructure and transportation improvements: [☰ Funding for Walkability Infrastructure](#) ²

[✚ Transportation Funding](#) ³

A. MassDOT Funding Opportunities

1. [Complete Streets Funding Program](#)

- a. **About:** The MassDOT Complete Streets Funding Program provides technical assistance and construction funding to eligible municipalities. Eligible municipalities must pass a Complete Streets Policy and develop a Prioritization Plan.
- b. **Amount:** Up to \$500,000 in construction funding to implement Complete Streets elements in municipal projects and up to \$38,000 in technical assistance funding in order to develop a Prioritization Plan.
- c. **Limitations:** Only locally owned roads can be included in the Prioritization Plan. This is a 3 step process that requires adoption of a town-wide policy and creation of a detailed prioritization plan, though funds for consultant support are available.

2. [State Transportation Improvement Program \(STIP\)](#)

- a. **About:** The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is a list of projects prepared yearly by The Office of Transportation Planning. This is a 5-year rolling capital plan. The list includes projects such as: sidewalks, bicycle paths, bridges, roadways, transit investments.
- b. **Amount:** Wide variability
- c. **Limitations:** Long project wait times & limited awards given due to typical project scale
- d. **Partners:** Regional Planning Agencies, MassDOT District Office

3. [Capital Investment Plan \(CIP\)](#)

- a. **About:** Programs state and federal funds to pay for long-term improvements to the transportation system. The CIP is usually a five-year plan that is updated annually.
- b. **Amount:** Wide variability
- c. **Limitations:** Long project wait times & limited awards given due to typical project scale

² bit.ly/3TSTPPS

³ bit.ly/46sRgeR

- d. **Partners:** Regional Planning Agencies, MassDOT District Office
- 4. **Chapter 90**
 - a. **About:** Reimburses cities and towns for expenditures on road-related construction projects and pedestrian facilities. Localities have the flexibility to use Chapter 90 funds for the construction and maintenance of sidewalks, curb ramps, shared use paths, street lighting, right-of-way acquisition, landscaping, and design work.
 - b. **Amount:** Wide variability
 - c. **Limitations:** This is a reimbursement program and can only be used on locally owned or accepted roads.
- 5. **Community Compact**
 - a. **About:** The Community Compact is a voluntary, mutual agreement entered into between the Healey-Driscoll Administration and individual cities and towns of the Commonwealth. In a Community Compact, a community will agree to implement at least one best practice that they select from across a variety of areas. The community's chosen best practice(s) will be reviewed between the Commonwealth and the municipality to ensure that the best practice(s) chosen are unique to the municipality and reflect needed areas of improvement.
 - b. **Amount:** Wide variability
 - c. **Limitations:** Must select from a list of Best Practices. Age-Friendly Communities is a listed strategy, and working on walking is an eligible project goal.
- 6. **Community Preservation Act Funding**
 - a. **About:** The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a smart growth tool that helps communities preserve open space and historic sites, create affordable housing, and develop outdoor recreational facilities. Communities have used these funds to develop better walking conditions near senior housing, or to make recreational spaces more age-inclusive.
 - b. **Amount:** Wide variability
 - c. **Limitations:** Must be able to tie walking improvement projects to the goals of the CPA.
- 7. **Safe Routes to School: Infrastructure Funding Program**
 - a. **About:** This component of the SRTS Program facilitates bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements to benefit students who walk, bicycle, or use a wheeled mobility device to get to school. Infrastructure projects seek to improve safety, access, and mobility for students in

kindergarten through eighth grade, while also encouraging more students to walk and bicycle to school. The SRTS Program facilitates such improvements by providing funding for infrastructure projects.

- b. **Amount:** Up to \$1,500,000
- c. **Limitations:** To be eligible for SRTS Program's infrastructure funding, schools must build a partnership with the SRTS Program's non-infrastructure program that involves education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation activities. Applicants must be a partner for at least six months prior to applying.

8. **Safe Routes to School: Signs and Lines Grant Program**

- a. **About:** The SRTS Signs and Lines Program will provide design services and construction funding to a selected municipality for a low-cost infrastructure project around a public elementary or middle school. The goal of these projects is to eliminate small barriers that students encounter when walking, bicycling, or using a wheeled mobility device to get to school. Examples of a Signs and Lines Project could include the purchase and installation of new signage or pavement markings.
- b. **Amount:** Up to \$10,000
- c. **Limitations:** Must be a SRTS partner school. This is a reimbursement-based funding program; MassDOT reimburses the municipality for eligible spending after the project is complete.

9. **MassDOT Shared Streets & Spaces Program Funding**

- a. **About:** Established in June 2020, the program provides funding to municipalities and public transit authorities to quickly implement improvements to plazas, sidewalks, curbs, streets, bus stops, parking areas, and other public spaces in support of public health, safe mobility, and strengthened commerce.
- b. **Amount:** Up to \$250,000
- c. **Limitations:** This is a quick-build grant program focused on projects that are easily implementable. Applicants must demonstrate that proposed projects can be implemented within 1.5 years, in order to be considered eligible.

10. **Transportation Management Association (TMA) Program**

- a. **About:** This grant opportunity provides funding to established Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) in Massachusetts to support a variety of activities, including the operation of new and/or existing bus, shuttle, and transit services and marketing activities to promote transit and non-single occupancy vehicle travel, among others.
- b. **Amount:** Wide variability

- c. **Limitations:** Funds will be provided through reimbursement on a monthly or quarterly basis.
- 11. **MArtap Scholarship**
 - a. **About:** The purpose of this grant is to offset costs associated with the professional development of staff of rural and small urban transit service providers.
 - b. **Amount:** \$1,000
 - c. **Limitations:** The total amount of a scholarship can be no more than \$1000 per scholarship. This includes one day and multi-day conferences and community-based training opportunities. Eligible private nonprofit organizations and Councils on Aging will be reimbursed 100% of eligible expenses up to \$1000 per conference/training, per person. Eligible Regional Transit Authorities and their contractors will be reimbursed 90% (up to \$1000) per conference, per person. A minimum 10% local match is required.

B. Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

- 1. **MassTrails Grants**
 - a. **About:** MassTrails provides matching grants to communities, public entities and non-profit organizations to design, create, and maintain the diverse network of trails, trail systems, and trails experiences used and enjoyed by Massachusetts residents and visitors. Applications are accepted annually for a variety of well-planned trail projects benefiting communities across the state.
 - b. **Amount:** Grant amounts are dependent on the project and its needs, but the maximum for “local” projects is often about \$100,000, with grants of up to \$500,000 awarded to projects demonstrating critical network connections of regional or statewide significance.
 - c. **Limitations:** Eligible grant activities include project development, design, engineering, permitting, construction, and maintenance of recreational trails, shared use pathways, and the amenities that support rails. MassTrails grants are REIMBURSABLE, meaning grantees must first pay for expenditures themselves and then submit for reimbursement using the required documentation. MassTrails grants are MATCHING grants and require that proponents provide a minimum of 20% of the total project cost. Projects with higher match commitments will be given greater consideration.

C. Executive Office of Economic Development

- 1. **Community One Stop for Growth Grants Program**

- a. **About:** The Community One Stop for Growth is a single application portal and collaborative review process of community development grant programs that make targeted investments based on a [Development Continuum](#). This process streamlines the experience for the applicant and better coordinates economic development programs and staff on engagement and grant making. For the FY25 Round, twelve programs will be administered through the Community One Stop for Growth - one application door to access programs offered by the Executive Office of Economic Development, Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, and MassDevelopment.
- b. **Amount:** Funding varies depending on program
- c. **Limitations:** All types of public entities are welcome and encouraged to submit a One Stop application. Municipalities and other public entities such as local housing or redevelopment authorities will have access to all grants administered through the One Stop process. However, non-municipal applicants are encouraged to open a discussion with their municipal leadership to ensure coordination and local support. Requires registration through the IGX system.

D. Executive Office of Housing and Community Development

1. [Massachusetts Downtown Initiative \(MDI\)](#)

- a. **About:** DHCD's Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI) offers a range of services and assistance to communities seeking help on how to revitalize their downtowns. Planning and design funding, technical assistance.
- b. **Amount:** Consultant service funding limited to \$25,000.
- c. **Limitations:** Capital funding is not provided.

E. Local Funding Opportunities

1. Municipal budgeting strategies:

- a. Include new sidewalk construction in municipal budget (can come from Chapter 90 funding)
- b. Include sidewalk repair and replacement in municipal budget (can come from Chapter 90 funding)
- c. Include snow and ice removal in municipal budget
- d. Include crosswalk re-striping in municipal budget
- e. Funds received from fines for handicap parking violations can be spent on accessibility improvements (eg curb ramps, sidewalk repair, etc.): [General Law - Part I, Title VII, Chapter 40, Section 22G](#)
- f. Local sponsorship programs to purchase benches through municipality or chamber of commerce

- g. For participating communities, utilizing TNC fees from Uber & Lyft to fund mobility improvements
- h. Leveraging and applying for Regional Transit Authority discretionary funds - which can be used for purchasing benches, shelters, and making improvements around bus stops (crosswalks, sidewalks, curb ramps)

F. Private Funding Opportunities

1. AARP Community Challenge Grant

- a. **About:** The AARP Community Challenge grant program is part of the nationwide AARP Livable Communities initiative that helps communities become great places to live for residents of all ages. The program is intended to help communities make immediate improvements and jump-start long-term progress in support of residents of all ages.
- b. **Amount:** Varies depending on grant type (Flagship grants: up to \$25,000; Capacity-Building Microgrants: combinations of \$2,500 grants with other resources; Demonstration Grants: up to \$25,000)
- c. **Limitations:** Visit grant website for more information on eligible project types. Funds will not be provided for any for-profit company/individuals.

2. Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation

- a. **About:** The Foundation supports community-based organizations that serve those in Massachusetts who are economically, racially, culturally, or socially marginalized.
- b. **Amount:** Varies depending on grant program area
- c. **Limitations:** The Foundation does not accept applications from religious institutions, for-profit institutions, or individuals.

3. The Boston Foundation

- a. **About:** In concert with their grantmaking work around 1) Nurturing Strong Beginnings, 2) Building Economic Opportunity, 3) Advancing Community Wealth and 4) Amplifying Community Leadership, a portion of the the Boston Foundation's grantmaking funds are distributed through programs or initiatives that seek to address a well-defined issue, need or area of the community. These programs are created when the Foundation, often in partnership with other funders, sets aside resources to address specific, pressing issues, frequently over a multi-year period.
- b. **Amount:** Varies depending on grant type
- c. **Limitations:** The funding criteria and application processes vary by program and funds are often, but not always, distributed through competitive requests for proposals.