West Hartford

Todd Dumais, Town Planner
Town of West Hartford
Where:

- Hartford
- West Hartford
- Blue Back Square
- Farmington Avenue
- The Center

Image Source: Peter Schaller
Where:

The Center

Blue Back Square
What & Why:

• Opportunities for Expanded Temporary Outdoor Dining & Outdoor Retail with a focus on use shared use of public space (mostly streets and sidewalks)

• Critical need to support local business impacted by current health pandemic

• Opportunity for large scale test of tactical urbanism techniques consistent with the Town’s complete streets policy, POCD, and past planning initiatives.
How:

• Working Group created at the direction of the Town Manager

  Challenge: To do something big & bold to best support our businesses


• The Working Group then established three sub groups: Permitting; Design and Public / Business Communication & Coordination.
How: Permitting

- Online Seamless Docs with internal review from Zoning, Fire Marshall, Building, Health, Public Works and Risk Management.
- 43 approved applications for temporary expanded outdoor dining and/or retail.
- Average time from review to approval 2.8 days.
- Total of 1458 outdoor dining seats approved
How: Design

• Engineering, Public Works and Planning Staff developed two plans for expanded temporary outdoor dining: West Hartford Center and Blue Back Square.
How: Design

- On-street Dining / Retail Corrals protected by concrete and plastic barriers.
- Temporary street reconfigurations including lane reductions and conversion to one-way traffic flow.
- Conversion to head out angle parking.
How: Engagement

- Town Manager, Economic Development, Public Relations and Planning
- Created an online survey to gauge expanded outdoor dining interest and sent to all restaurants and all Center retailers.
- Conducted a Zoom Meeting with all Center Retailers and Restaurateurs to seek input and feedback on the design plan.
- Phone calls, emails and letters also went out.
- Plan reviewed at Town Council meeting (webex, public t.v. and streamed on YouTube) and ultimately endorsed.
The Results:

Image Sources: West Hartford Planning Division
The Results:
The Results:

LaSalle Road

Image Sources: West Hartford Planning Division
The Results:

Farmington Avenue

LaSalle Road
Critical Takeaways

• Identify and engage important stakeholders as early as possible
• Communicate clearly and often
• Even temporary improvements cost $$$
• Will not be able please everyone
• Don’t forget to create true public space
QUESTIONS?