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# Planning for Land-Use & Economic Development Post-COVID-19

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Dimitri Kaasan Stull, Njoya Chomilo

15 December 2020



# Agenda

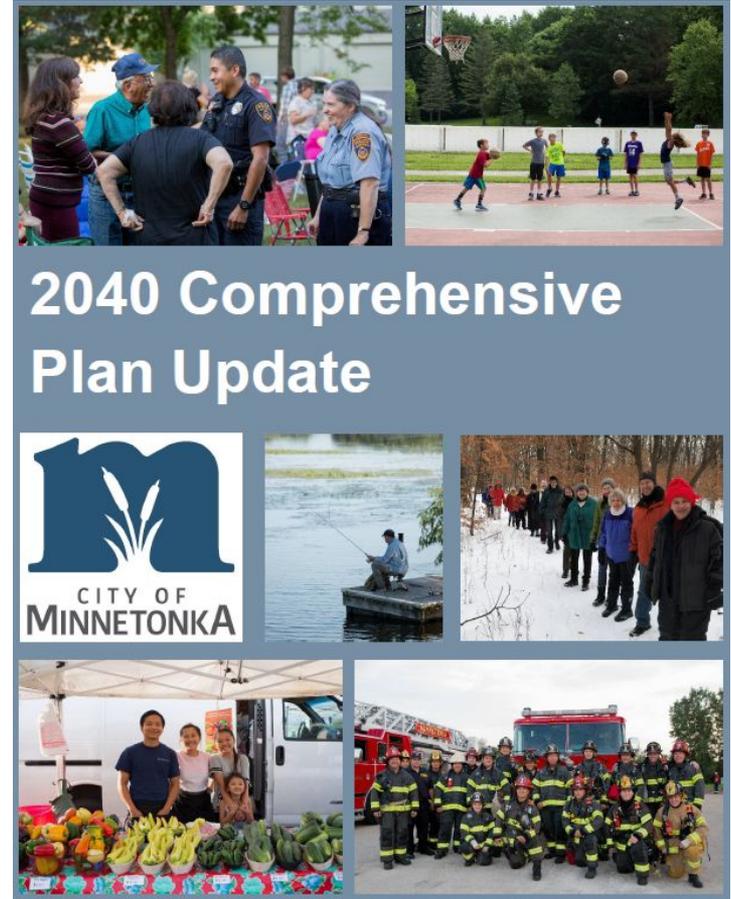
- Background
- Research Questions
- Methods
- Results
- Preliminary Takeaways
- Conclusions
- Q&A



# Background



- **Partnership between:**
  - Our research group
  - Resilient Communities Project
  - Planning and Community Development Office of Minnetonka
  
- **Goal:** To better understand the struggles currently facing businesses within the City of Minnetonka and unique opportunities for city collaboration specifically within the context of future pandemics and economic shocks and the 2040 Land Use Plan.





# Literature Review Findings



- Most SMEs have **< 2 weeks** of cash on hand (Bartik et al., 2020).
- SMEs suffered several **economic shocks**: supply shocks, demand shocks, uncertainty around government response, lack of access to capital markets/liquidity (Adian et al., 2020).
- SMEs and small cities must find **innovative funding strategies** to provide short-term emergency funding (Dzigbede et al., 2020).
- There is emerging evidence that local governments can play a key role in **facilitating mutual aid support network** (Crick and Crick, 2020).



# Research Questions



1. How can the city government provide **immediate assistance** to make businesses more **resilient**?
2. What is the role of the City of Minnetonka in **facilitating collaboration** between businesses?
3. How much influence do they (business owners) believe the city exercises in **helping** businesses weather challenges?
4. What **dimensions of equity** are explicitly part of the city's economic development agenda, and how do these translate to policy its implementation, particularly during times of economic stress?



# Methodology: Scope, Sample, Interviews



- Defining scope and “*resilience*”
- Interview Design
- Mid-project review: client conference
- Sample: All SME, mix of stand-alone and commercial clusters
- 24 initial (+ additional requested = 30), 40 snowballed, 7 completed



# Analysis



- Hybrid Analytical Approach
- No software
- Interpretation through group discussion



# Key Themes



Retail independents need/appreciation for **zoning** creativity, timeliness, and flexibility.

*“Small policy tweaks can help businesses in times of need. One example is the parking lot patio areas. The city allowed parking spaces to have seating in order to get people to restaurants.”*



Crisis increases need for reinforcing **civic norms of behavior**

*“Just maintaining retail activity and an inviting environment can be difficult, there is a sense of division and tension in the community is palpable, adding, No one is smiling!”*

# Key Themes



Businesses value **financial support** the most during Covid, but at times out of sync with on-the-ground needs.

*“I got a small disaster loan to help reorganize with my suppliers. Minnetonka sent out a link to the grant from an organization (non-profit) for women owned small businesses. That grant was a lifesaver.”*



Limited business peer **networking**.

*“You can’t expect us to collaborate with Caribou and Lunds.”*

*“We have some collaboration. But it’s not strategic or financial. It’s more about awareness for the residents.”*

# Knowledge Economy vs. Retail

Some disparities present

## Online-Transition

Some businesses found this  
harder than others.

## Employees

Some businesses could lay off  
workers and other could not.

# Interactions



- City of Minnetonka and businesses interactions **limited** to certain communications and help with bureaucratic processes
- City helped **secure** PPP
- Business districts are **fragmented** in the city
- Businesses used to meet and talk, now **limited** communication
- Little to **no knowledge** of 2040 Land Use Plan



# Recommendations



- The City of Minnetonka as a **convening authority** within the community villages.



- **Convene** specific meetings for business owners/community to discuss the Land-Use Plan & other topics.



- **Planning** for public transit options.



- Prioritize **e-commerce** development within 2040 Plan.



- **Reduce** 'red-tape' around zoning adjustments.



# Limitations



- **Occupied** business owners
- **Limited** technology use for some
- Role as **government vs. business** freedoms and privacy
- **Difficulty** working with state regulations and guidelines
- **Limited** government resources
- **Isolated** small businesses within districts
- **Cooperation** of outside resources



# Conclusion



- Underdeveloped public transit system **limits** business development.
- **Expand** business “advocacy” role
- There is a broad desire in the business community for the city to **facilitate** networking/community building opportunities.
- Emergency funding **disproportionately benefited** the “knowledge-economy” sector over the retail sector
- Restrictive funding **limits** benefit to businesses

