

DOWNTOWN WILKES-BARRE AND THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT

April 20, 2022

DCP manages Downtown Wilkes-Barre's designated Main Street program and the Downtown W-B Business Improvement District



DCP's relevant ARPA allocations:



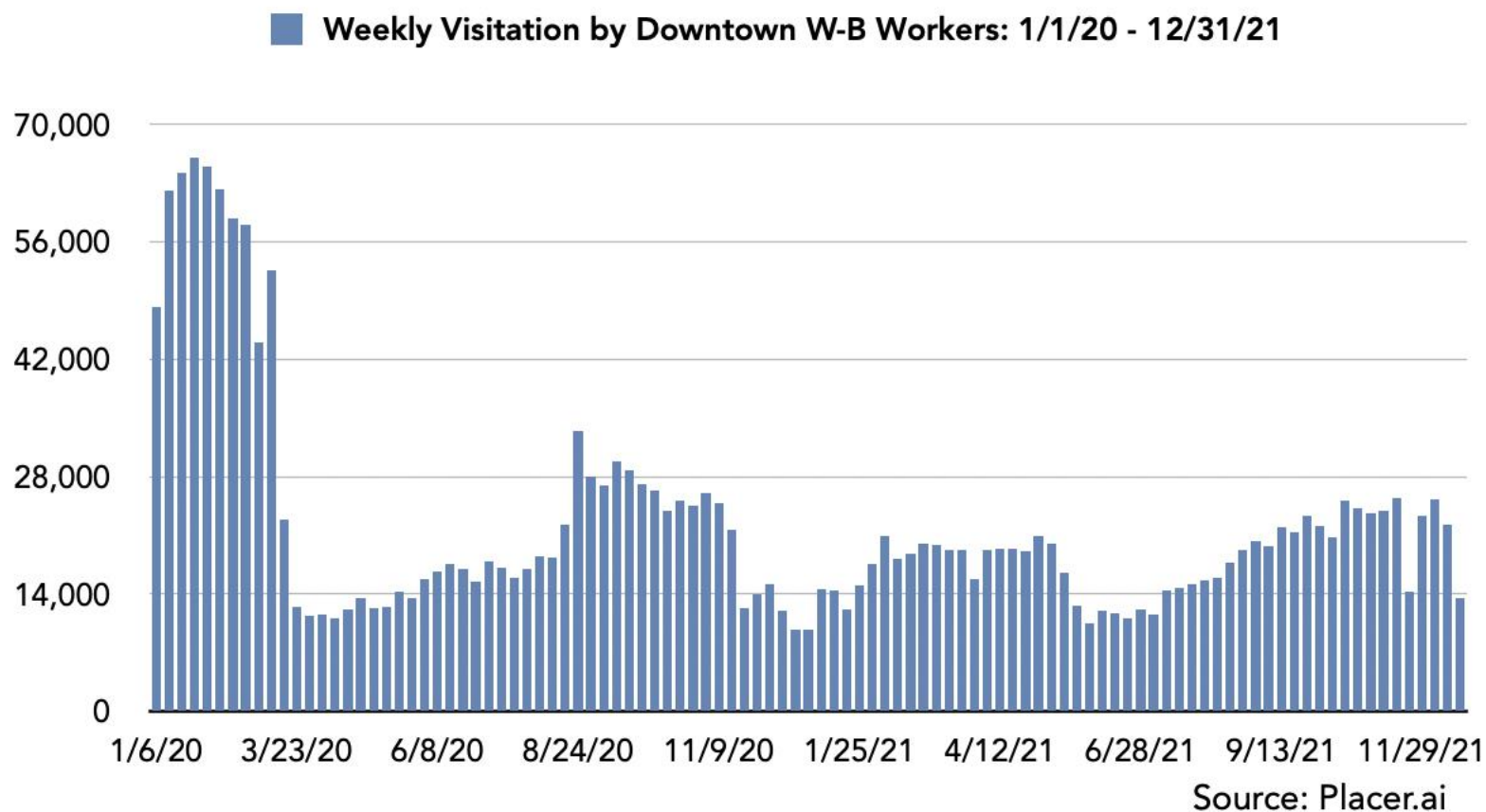
City of Wilkes-Barre:
\$37 million



County of Luzerne:
\$112 million

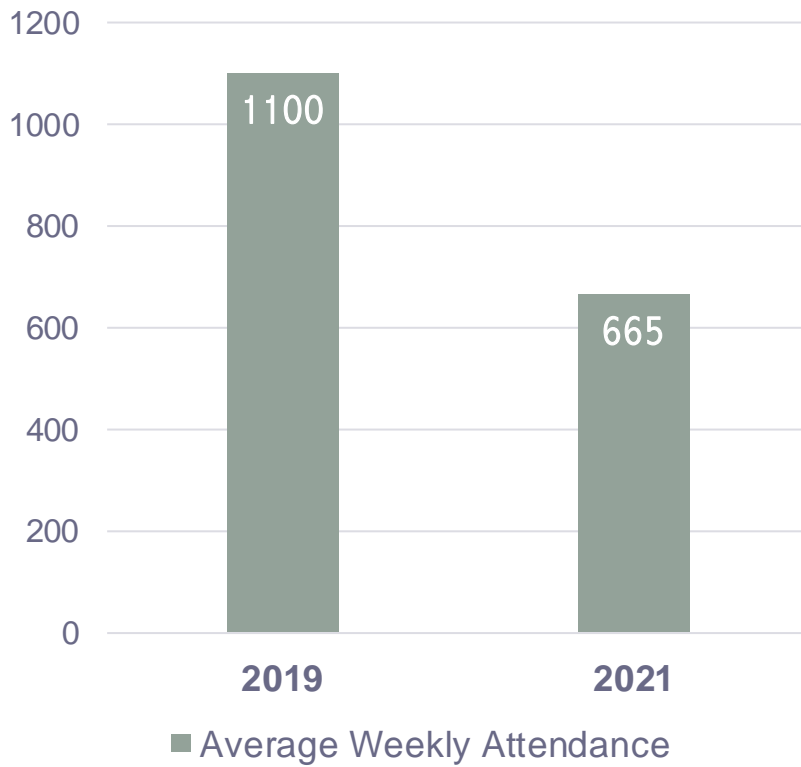
COVID's Impact on Downtown Wilkes-Barre:

Feb. 2020: 249K Downtown worker visits Feb. 2022: 130K Downtown worker visits



COVID's Impact on Downtown Wilkes-Barre:

Farmers Market Attendance:



Overall 2021 Downtown W-B restaurant customer traffic:

68% of 2019 levels

Source: Placer.ai

Downtown storefront retail/restaurant/service closings:

2020: 5

2021: 7

2022 (YTD): 3

DCP's downtown recovery strategy has five pillars:

1. Ensure that Downtown Wilkes-Barre is consistently clean, safe, and attractive.
2. Help Downtown's existing businesses and venues get through this crisis.
3. Improve the product - create lively, interesting, high-quality places.
4. Market those places to the people we wish to attract.
5. Plant the seeds for new economic growth.

DCP's ARPA funding requests are intended to support those five pillars.

DCP's Priorities for 2022:

Economic Vitality:

- Continue to facilitate downtown business recovery.
- Expand District Clean & Safe Services.
- Address Social Service Issues with Agencies and City.
- Expand Downtown College Ambassador program.
- Partner with Chamber and City on SPARK/business recruitment.
- Target business recruitment around key customer segments (downtown residents, college students, young professionals, arts/culture/dining patrons)

Design:

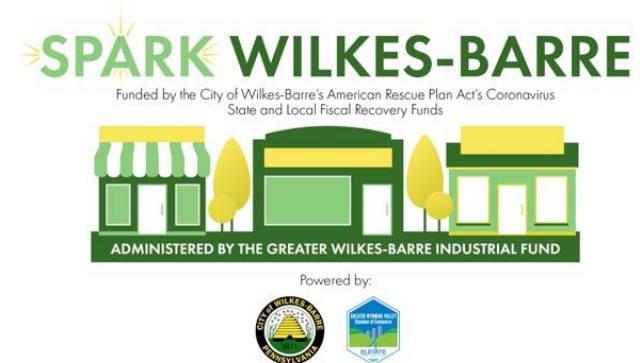
- Initiate next steps of plan for Public Square renewal.
- Finish West Market Street Gateway A/E and determine next steps.
- Focus on targeted placemaking - specifically retail “curb appeal” — in conjunction with business recruitment efforts.
- Develop opportunities for additional public art (murals, sculpture, architectural lighting).

Image/Promotions

- Continue “Downtown Rebound” events to reanimate district and support storefront businesses.
- Implement a focused marketing initiative to sell downtown to the region.
- Create Arts/Culture Working Group.
- Hold Focus Groups with downtown residents and young professionals to determine opportunities and unmet needs.
- Revisit Party on the Square for college students.

The City of Wilkes-Barre's initial ARPA Plan:

- Grants to nonprofit human service agencies in city (via United Way of Wyoming Valley): \$1 million
- SPARK occupancy grants for new businesses in city fund (via Greater Wyoming Valley Chamber): \$1 million
- \$300 in assistance for every income-qualified resident household (via Commission on Economic Opportunity): \$3.5 million
- Grants for owner-occupied home improvement (via City of Wilkes-Barre): \$750,000
- Grants for homebuyer closing costs and down-payment assistance (via City of Wilkes-Barre): \$750,000
- City stormwater, sewer infrastructure, and park projects
- Additional programs to benefit residents:
 - Reduction of city garbage bag prices
 - Reduction of parking meter rates
- Business recovery assistance (via Diamond City Partnership): TBD



\$55,000 in City ARPA funds paid for a new synthetic ice rink on Public Square:



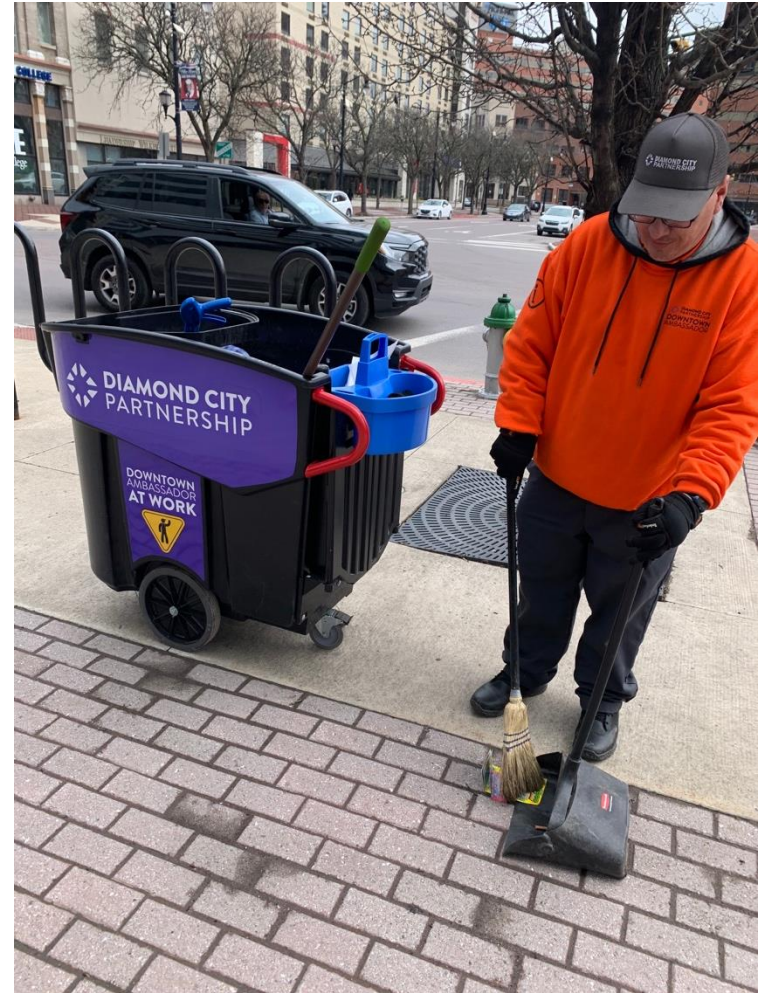
DCP's ARPA Request to City of Wilkes-Barre:

- Focused DCP marketing initiative to sell Downtown W-B's assets and attract regional visitors to offset the loss of downtown workers.
- Support for DCP College Ambassador Program (one-on-one student marketing, digital media, and design technical assistance to downtown storefront business owners).
- Funding Request: \$300,000 (\$100,000/year for 3 years)



DCP's ARPA Request to Luzerne County:

- Funding to expand DCP's Downtown Ambassadors by adding new uniformed, unarmed "Safety Ambassadors" to combat issues created by the sustained decrease in Downtown worker and visitor volumes.
- The new Ambassadors will support DCP's existing clean team while providing hospitality support, performing business checks, helping to connect at-risk individuals to services, and providing new "eyes and ears" on the street.
- Funding Request: \$1,200,000 (\$400,000/year for 3 years)



Supporting other ARPA requests to Luzerne County:

- Development of permanent facility to serve homeless and at-risk individuals:
 - Addressing needs identified by Downtown Social Issues Task Force
 - Initiative led by social service agencies
 - Envisioned components include day program, vocational training, and transitional and permanent housing with wraparound services for individuals and families.
- Recapitalization of countywide COVID business assistance grant program:
 - Effort led by chambers of commerce
 - Initial requests tabled by Luzerne County Council

Questions?

