This study is exciting and there is a lot of information here, but much of the message may be lost if people don't understand the technical language. To be truly useful, city leaders and others need to be able to understand what is being said in the report. There seems to be quite a bit of industry lingo (jargon) used throughout the report – words and terms that may seem obvious to a planner but don't make a lot of sense to the layperson. Text should really focus on clear, easily understood terms with examples to explain what is meant. The goal, I believe, is to implement recommendations but we can't do that if we don't really understand what is being reported.

Page 7: The Visual Preference Survey … They were instructed to place dots on images they felt strongly represented what they would like to see in Downtown Stoughton.

asking people what they would like to see and offering as examples things that don't exist on Main Street - doesn't that set us up for failure? For example: people want wide sidewalks but we don't have wide sidewalks so the takeaway is-we can't give people what they want.

Page 18: Comments included placing murals on all buildings. With only three options to choose from, the fact that such a high number chose installing murals seems more of a function of people choosing what is easiest or most familiar. Choosing an option "work with local artists" is probably something that people don't know what that means or what that would look like in practice. Were examples provided? What I'm getting at is that everyone knows what a mural is so it's easy to choose that option when the other two options are things they are not familiar with.

Painting unpainted masonry is damaging to the masonry and not recommended! This is especially damaging to historic masonry. It is ill-advised to recommend an "artistic treatment" to our historic downtown that would actually be damaging to our historic buildings.

Page 23: Key for downtown's future will be adapting to the changing needs of regional consumers—…describe the importance of adapting to altered consumer behaviors and their implications for ground level uses in downtown Stoughton and nationally.

What do these terms mean? Adapting how? What are the needs? Examples?

Page 26
market geographies – what does this mean?
To effectively compete, downtown businesses will need to match and adapt their operations to changing consumer needs and behaviors, including how consumers use technology. what does this mean? How? Examples?

Sustaining this component of the mix will require concerted efforts to support business growth (programs, expansion, and recruitment) by private and public sector interests. – how do we do this? Examples?
Adapting to changing markets, consumer behaviors, and the real estate requirements for current and emerging uses will serve as the foundation for downtown Stoughton's economic future. Can you provide information about how we do this? Examples? Examples from other communities perhaps? How did they do it? (what were the existing conditions, what steps were implemented, how did conditions improve because of those steps?)

Page 27
In their own way, each major trend represents a seismic shift in how business is conducted, (what does this mean?) changing the nature of work, housing, and consumption. Altered consumer behaviors, technology, and lifestyle shifts (such as? What are these things? Can you provide examples?) will continue to influence the future success of businesses and uses in districts, like downtown Stoughton.

For ground level businesses in traditional downtowns, how they sell (what does this mean?) is now more important than what they sell. Ground level businesses, regardless of use or format, with strong operating characteristics,(what does this mean?, examples?) can succeed in any downtown commercial environment. The ability to respond to rapid market change (how? How would business owners and others recognize these changes? Examples?) will be critical for Stoughton's downtown business community and their major partners in revitalizing downtown.

Technology, Technology, Technology
Internet resilient businesses
Technology as an integrated tool to improve the 'experience' (what does this mean? Can you provide an example?)

Retail Sector Trends
'Goods to people' versus 'People to goods' (what does this mean?)
- Purpose matters to consumers (what does this mean?)
'Clicks and Mortar' and market position (what does this mean?)
Stores as showrooms, event spaces, and delivery mechanisms (what does this mean?)

Page 28

Non-traditional competition—'groceraunts,' theater dining, and 'ghost' kitchens (what do these terms mean?)
'Guest facing' technologies (what does this mean?)
'Morphing' formats for concept testing (what does this mean?)

- Residential Sector Trends
'Rent by choice' (what does this mean?) and affordability

Availability of housing types, such as 'missing middle,' multi-generational, or ADUs (what are these?)

Strategic Implications for Downtown Stoughton
Downtown Stoughton has multiple ground level businesses with strong operations, regardless of use. However, the current mix also includes hobby businesses, undercapitalized businesses, and businesses serving the owner lifestyle versus consumer needs. (this may sound obvious to you but could you explain what these things are?)

Developing a set of business support and growth resources (such as? Examples? One example was provided below: succession planning, but is there anything else?) to assist new and existing downtown businesses represents one aspect of addressing turnover. Among these business growth resources should be assistance with business succession planning to ensure that downtown's strong, established businesses can transition to new owners.
Downtown's private sector, given the large percentage of owner-occupied buildings, can improve their buildings to enable downtown business, employment, and residential growth. (I am uncomfortable with the vagueness of this phrase. Especially in an historic downtown, "improvement" often means restoring, repairing, caring for historic materials and features. Retaining historic materials and features ensures an authentic downtown and buildings that have a pleasing appearance. Some however, may interpret this to mean: replace all the windows, cover the cornice with siding, remove brackets, take our prism glass, etc. and doing so would have the opposite effect – an unpleasing, disjointed, cheap appearance.)

Page 29

Could you explain or provide examples for the terminology used on this page?

Investment (does this mean money?)

Approaches and attitudes must change (what are the attitudes? What are the approaches? What are alternatives to strive for?)

Become more forward thinking (what does this mean? examples?)

Downtown's businesses need to recognize that national trends, particularly for retailers, apply to their present and future, and these businesses need to continuously adapt. This adaptation includes 'omni-channel' marketing and sales. (help us understand what these trends are, what do these terms mean?)
• Too many hobby businesses and unsustainable businesses (again, this may seem obvious to you, but what do these terms mean? Can you help by providing some examples? What makes a business unsustainable?) locate in downtown Stoughton. This negatively affects neighboring businesses and has contributed to recent business closings. (this sentence is buried in the text but I think is a surprising and critical piece of information to understand! Can you explain how

this has played out in Stoughton? It's really important for city leaders to understand what is happening here so that they can try to address it.)

Page 30

Downtown Stoughton needs new ideas and fresh approaches to increase downtown business revenues and to improve downtown for the future. (Don't we know this already, and the reason why this study was commissioned? Some guidance for developing new ideas and fresh approaches would be helpful)

Rents in leased storefronts are described as 'very high.' (Is this a misperception? If so, can the reality of rent levels be explained in the next sentence to help people understand this distorted thinking?)

Currently available local incentive programs need to be modified. These incentives do not match the needs of downtown's property owners. (can you provide examples? What are the programs? Why are they deficient? How might they be modified or are entirely new programs needed?)

Page 31

Roles and responsibilities for the private and public sectors require definition. (are you going to provide those definitions of roles and responsibilities?)

Becoming more welcoming will be key to a successful downtown future. This encompasses multiple efforts and actions—from welcoming diverse people and families to downtown, to permitting visitors and families to access restrooms, and to understanding what new downtown businesses need to succeed. Ultimately, being welcoming is the basis for all attraction efforts, whether for new residents, businesses, current residents or employees, and visitors.
(can you elaborate on these terms and phrases highlighted in yellow? What does this mean, how, examples?)
• The private and public sector roles in downtown's improvement need greater definition. (are you going to provide these definitions?) These defined roles will establish the context for collaboration. The City and Stoughton's RDA can examine their processes, regulations, and approvals to support this plan's implementation and downtown's economic success. The private sector needs to strengthen their operations, (how/in what way?) including customer attraction to their individual businesses and downtown, and to ensure quality improvements to their historic buildings to enable better appearance (similar comment to my page 28 comment above. This is really important. Recommendations about "improving" building exteriors need to clearly explain the importance of preserving the historic appearance, materials and features. Even on the interior: wood floors, high ceilings, plaster walls and pressed metal ceilings should be retained. These are the features that signal to people that they are in a special place and not a box store).

Page 32
Can you draw or provide the connections regarding the rent data? For example, "These annual rents equate to $15 and $24 PSF, respectively." Is this up from existing rents?

Generally on this page: what does this data mean? What are the conclusions? Are there recommendations for healthier rents/sales numbers?

Page 33

Important opportunities exist to improve downtown business and real estate economics. While downtown's overall sales are currently challenged, improved operations by downtown businesses can support incremental growth and reinvestment. (These terms seem vague; what does this mean? Can you provide examples?)

Page 40
How are "pop-ups" and "temporary uses" different? Isn't "temporary" one of the defining characteristics of a "pop-up"?