

Saint Paul Restaurant Resiliency Program

Phase 3 Final Report
January 2022

Presented by NCXT
ncxt.co

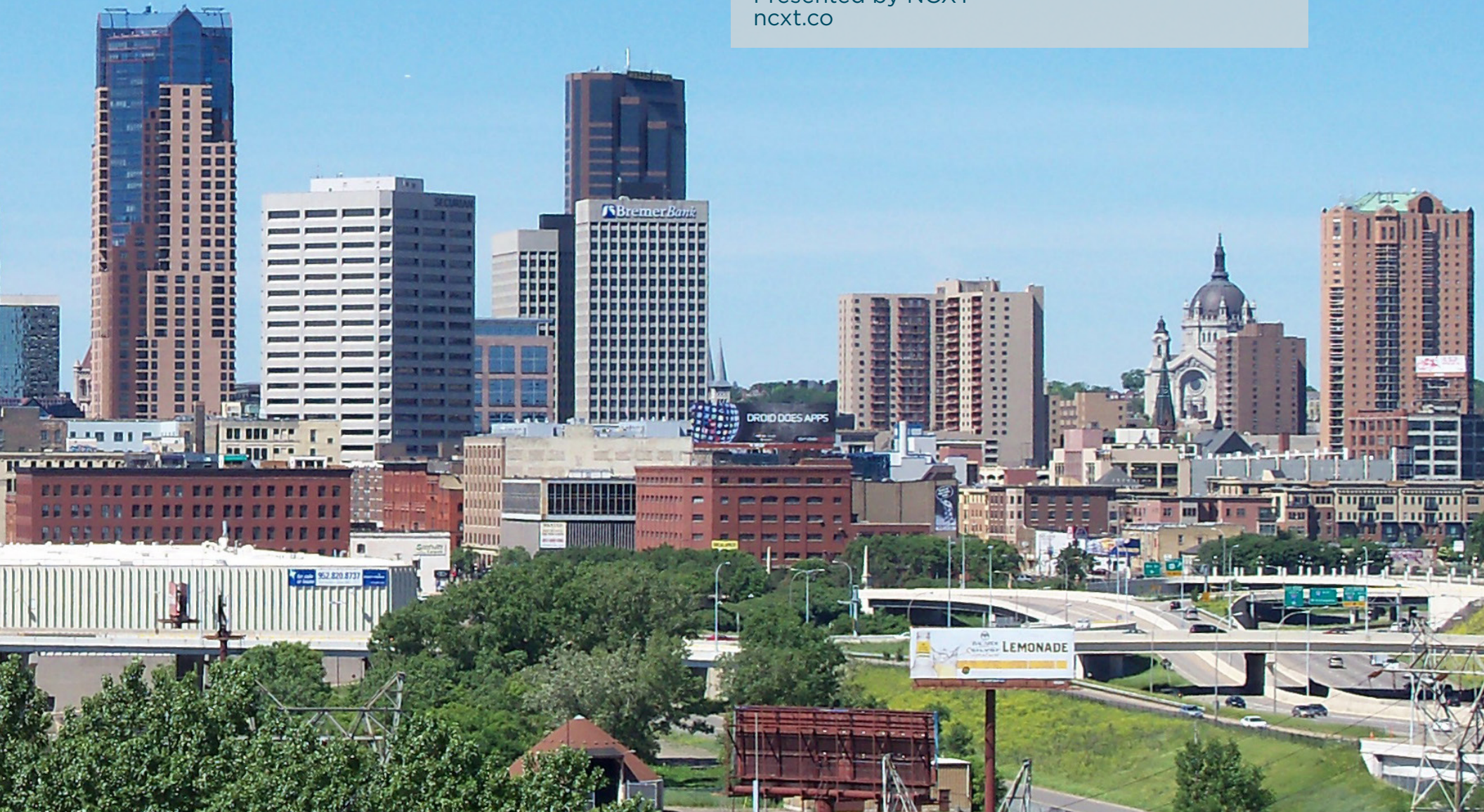


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Executive Summary

Dear Saint Paul team,

It has been and continues to be an honor working with you to support the local restaurants of Saint Paul. It is thrilling to see the restaurants who have received assistance through the program prosper.

This final report contains a comprehensive summary of the goals, deliverables, and program effects over the past five months. An index of the digital audits performed for restaurants is also within this report. Finally, we have included a short list of steps that we recommend taking so this work will continue to help more restaurants into 2022 and beyond.

As the coronavirus pandemic continues challenging the old ways of operation, programs like this one emerge as vital tools in providing support to hard working restaurateurs. The dinner table brings all of us together to laugh, cry, heal, and bond in the company of each other. The restaurants act as pillars of community within Saint Paul, and when community thrives, so does the city.

The positive impacts are not exclusive to the restaurant industry, other areas can benefit from similar programs. We are proud to be a part of Saint Paul's investment into the institutions that invest so much into Saint Paul.

We are incredibly grateful to have this opportunity to serve our community and eagerly look forward to continuing to work with you into the future.



Jonathan Banks
Co-founder and CEO

Objectives and Deliverables

Beginning in August 2021, the City of Saint Paul and NCXT embarked upon Phase 3 of the Saint Paul Restaurant Resiliency Program. The aim of the new phase was to utilize the expansive network of partners, stakeholders, and pro bono professionals established in earlier phases to ensure the program reaches under-served and technologically unprepared communities within the city.

In October, NCXT connected with local organizations to find important restaurants in Saint Paul communities. Over the past three months, NCXT and groups of volunteers from the Land O'Lakes corporation have been auditing restaurants online presence and ordering capabilities. NCXT has met with restaurants and helped teach effective management steps to address broad and specific issues facing each establishment.

At the end of Phase 3, 24 new restaurants have received help from the program.

70+ restaurants

helped over all phases of the Program.

114 hours

auditing and talking to Saint Paul Restaurants.

40+ meetings

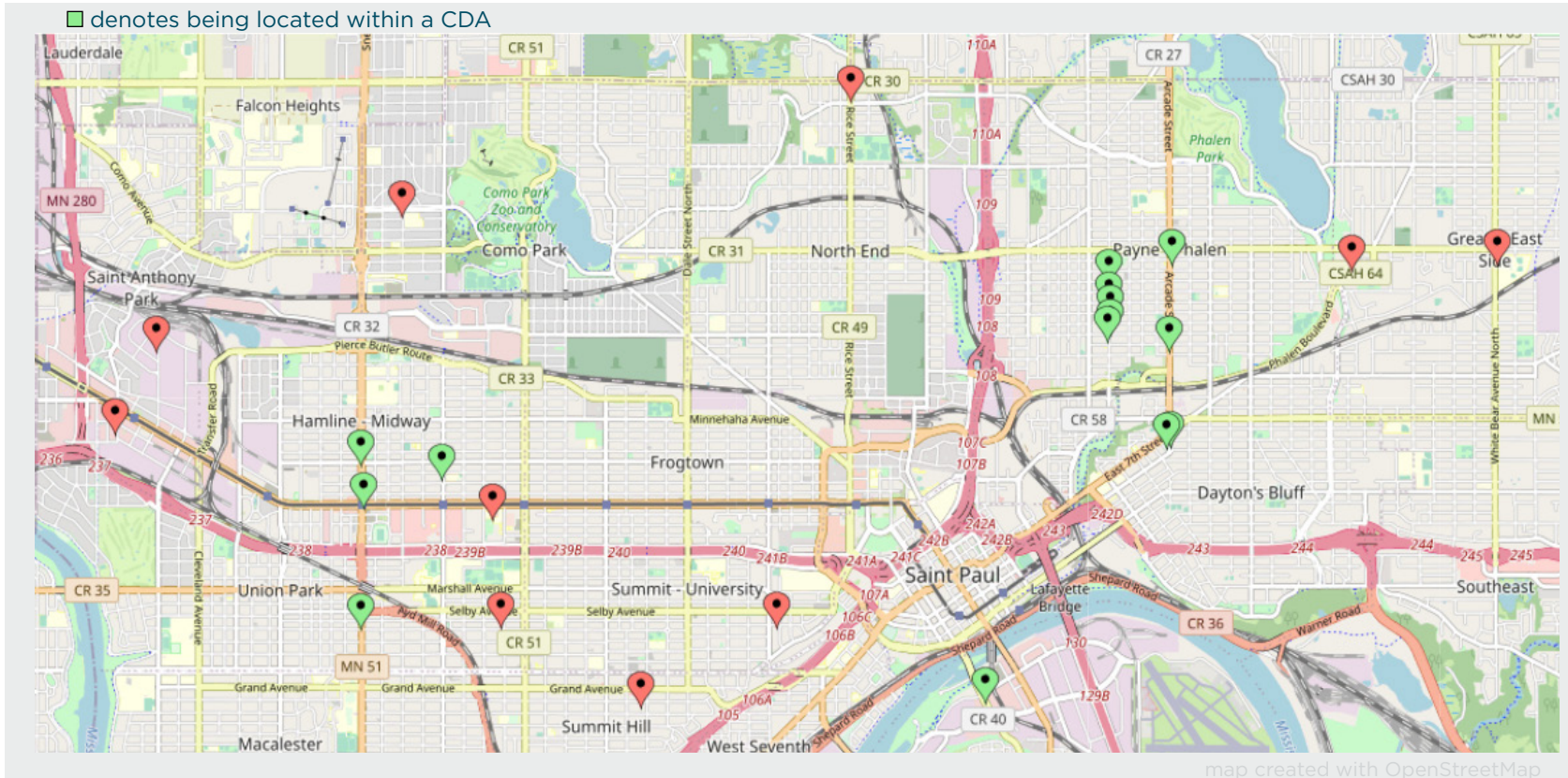
with Saint Paul restaurants.

227 calls

to Saint Paul restaurants.

Program Impacts

NCXT worked with 24 restaurants during Phase 3. 14 of these restaurants are located within cultural destination areas (CDAs). Program participants include: breweries, taquerias, bakeries, and cafes. These restaurants represent a wide range of price points — the program has shown use if you charge under ten or over thirty dollars for a plate.



Program Impacts

Phase 3 set out to avoid perpetuating existing disparities within undeserved and technologically unprepared communities. With this goal in mind, special attention was paid to enrolling restaurants within cultural destinations and civil unrest impact areas within St. Paul.



Restaurants located within cultural destination areas



Restaurants serve culturally significant food to the area (both CDA and non-CDA)

■ denotes being located within a CDA

Bole Ethiopian Cuisine	■ Far East Bar & Restaurant	Moscow on the Hill	■ Sui Yep Cafe
■ Catrinas Mexican Grill	■ Groundswell	Nepali Kitchen	■ Taqueria El Buen Gusto
■ Cora's Best Chicken Wings	Hodma	Pappys Chicago	■ Taqueria Los Paisanos
Destiny Cafe	India House	■ Rose Street Patisserie	■ Tongue in Cheek
Dual Citizen Brewery	■ La Michoacana Purepecha	■ Sabrina's Cafe & Deli LLC	Urban Growler Brewing Co
■ Eastside Pizzeria	■ Magnolia's Restaurant	■ Snelling Cafe	Yellowbird Coffee Bar

“I had no opinion about how the city felt about small businesses, until working with the Saint Paul Restaurant Resiliency Program. NCXT created a plan and kept us accountable to a schedule for our follow ups. They did the leg work to help us understand how to leverage the many features of Toast Point of Sale system for marketing and online ordering. They also helped us steer clear of costly mistake by guiding us to better vendors. It’s clear that NCXT and The City of Saint Paul are invested in business like ours, and they have been incredibly helpful during these difficult times.”

~Jill Pavlik, Urban Growler



photo from Urban Growler's website

Taqueria Los Paisanos

“My website did not accept online ordering and I couldn’t update it to get it working. The Saint Paul Restaurant Resiliency Program met with me several times. They helped me plan out a new website that I can update on my own, with online ordering that actually works. Their advice on training my team about coronavirus restrictions prepared me to keep my customers happy, and to keep the regulars coming back.”

-Alinda Suraez, Taqueria Los Paisanos



photo from Taqueria Los Paisanos' Facebook page

La Michoacána Purepecha

“Staffing has been so difficult it’s made us get creative and think about ways to keep our business operating. NCXT helped us consider adding kiosks for customer self service and how we can share staff between our different locations because we want to expand. We’re thankful for their expertise and for help from the Saint Paul Restaurant Resiliency Program.”

-Ricardo Hernandez,
La Michoacána Purepecha



photo from La Michoacána Purepecha's Facebook page

Every restaurant has unique needs and strengths. The NCXT team and Land O'Lakes volunteers performed a digital audit for each restaurant enrolled in the program to reveal each restaurant's ability to serve and reach customers through digital means, along side informing customers on the best ways of dining.

The methodology used a standard form and criteria rated one to five, with one being the lowest or no and five being the highest or yes. NCXT consultants, supported by Land O'Lakes volunteers, completed audits for all of the restaurants. The data was combined and normalized to assess overall readiness across program participants.

Out of 24 restaurants...

9

restaurants were advised to display satisfactory reviews and/or testimonials on their website.

14

restaurants received consultation to improve their Google and Yelp online identities, implementing solutions like locl.io.

15

restaurants were directed toward low-cost online ordering services that improve their profit-margins.

Restaurant Readiness

The collected data shows the greatest need for restaurant support within three key areas: websites; google and yelp presence; and online ordering.

Customer testimonials proved to be the most overlooked facet of participant websites. Several strong testimonials creates confidence in new customers through the past patrons celebrating great experiences. Patrons take a risk when choosing to dine at an unfamiliar restaurants, and testimonials serve to replace hesitation with appetizing curiosity.

Claiming a restaurants Google and Yelp page is free and accessible to all, but many restaurants have not taken this step. Participant must use these important digital spaces to project their brand to new and existing customers. Uploading pictures, videos, logos, menus, and other assets creates an alive profile patrons see when looking up a restaurant. Without this upkeep, the restaurants image left to the public. Loclio is a powerful tool to simplify this process for a busy restaurant operator.

The immense variety of online ordering methods created difficulty in distinguishing which participants were performing well and which were in need of help. Collectively all the restaurants struggled in regards to website addresses, testimonials, and branding on online ordering platforms. Nine of the twenty four restaurants excelled through online ordering by using low-fee ordering options.

Next Steps

The Saint Paul Restaurant Resiliency Program has continued to make positive impacts in its third phase. The work done by the program has reached over 70 restaurants within Saint Paul and has produced a variety of resources to assist restaurant operators in adapting to the continuing challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.

NCXT recommends the Saint Paul Restaurant Resiliency Program continue into a fourth stage where a large scale digital audit of restaurants is performed. The digital audit performed during Phase 3 of the program illuminated common issues restaurant operators face in a digital space. By utilizing the wide network of stakeholders and professional volunteers, the program could conduct an audit on a large scale. The results would provide vital insight into the common issues facing restaurants. The audit could be done in a shorter period of time as each individual restaurant does not need to be engaged.

Once the large scale audit is complete, NCXT recommends capitalizing on the gathered data. The bevy of information will clearly illuminate areas which support is needed and act as a framework for further action.

Thank You

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