

Memorandum

To: Mayor Lott and City Council
From: Heather Carrington, Community and Economic Development Officer
Date: June 15, 2020
Re: FY20 Policy Priorities and Strategy Update: ECONOMIC VITALITY

Per the Council adopted 2019-2020 Policy Priorities and Strategies and the accompanying monitoring plan, we present the third goal update on Economic Vitality. Below you will find a chart of the adopted strategies, a narrative of the updates, as well as actions the Council can expect over the next few months.

Council Priorities

Key



= proceeding as planned

= proceeding but slower than planned



= started but not proceeding well

= not started yet

POLICY		Implementation - Effort or Intended Outcome	
Area	Policy Goal	Priorities	Status
Economic Vitality (EV)	Maintain and expand our economic development to ensure long-term vibrancy.	Implement wayfinding plan	Green
		Strengthen Parking operations *Develop a Parking Operations Manual to include "free parking" policies for events *Improve communications of parking options	Yellow
		Implement Legacy Campaign (SHCP)	Red
		Execute a Development Agreement with Hotel Developer	Green
		Utilize Opportunity Zone designation	Green
		Historic Preservation planning (H)	Green



		*Identify funding and commence an inventory of resources we are trying to preserve	
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Municipal Covid-19 Emergency Response to Support Economic Vitality

In response to the mandatory business closures under Executive Order 01-20, the City undertook several immediate and mid-term actions to support business as follows:

- Created Winooski Small Business Emergency Loans
- Suspended Parking Enforcement
- Suspended Sidewalk Permit Fees
- Resolution Temporarily Suspending Action on Outdoor Consumption Permits
- Currently working with businesses to develop a plan to make public outdoor space available for outdoor restaurant and bar service

Update on Priority Economic Vitality Efforts

Implement wayfinding plan – Plan completed

City staff applied for and was awarded a Municipal Planning Grant in the amount of \$22,000 for the purpose of hiring a consultant to develop a wayfinding plan. The consulting firm, LandWorks, presented the draft plan to City Council on May 18, 2020 and delivered the wayfinding plan to City staff at the end of May 2020. The grant documentation and final payment requisition have been submitted to close out the grant.

With a completed wayfinding plan in hand, the City can now move into fabrication and installation of signage. Staff applied for a Downtown Transportation Fund grant for this work, and the City was awarded \$36,750 in May 2020. In addition, last year the City of Winooski was awarded just under \$10,000 in grant funds by the Downtown Transportation Fund. Matching funds for signage implementation have been included in the FY2021 budget, and fabrication and installation of wayfinding signage has been included in the Policy Priorities and Strategies for 2021.

Strengthen Parking operations

*Develop a Parking Operations Manual to include "free parking" policies for events



The Parking Team has started to discuss the development of an Operations Manual. This will be a lengthy process where we review other community's policies, fine-tune them for Winooski, and put into place new systems. This work has been impacted and delayed by the pandemic, and will be ongoing as part of the Policy Priorities and Strategies for 2021.

A free parking policy for events was adopted in 2016 as part of the overall Use of City Property for Events Policy. The policy was developed following guidance provided by Winooski businesses during outreach meetings. The specific language related to free parking is as follows:

"Event sponsors should consider locations that have sufficient parking options. With the exception of the Festival of Pumpkins, Waking Windows, St. Patrick's Day and New Year's Eve, the City will not provide free parking for events."

Should City Council wish to reevaluate the existing policy, staff would be happy to revisit the conversation with stakeholders and draft language for Council review. Otherwise, the existing policy will be referenced in the Parking Operations Manual.

*Improve communications of parking options

Winooski's parking app, ParkMobile, was launched in August 2019. By February 2020, ParkMobile had processed 33,853 transactions in Winooski. During that time, an average of 6,372 monthly Winooski parking transactions went through ParkMobile, although January transactions hit 7,300. The level of usage indicates that communications about the ParkMobile option have been successful in reaching users.

Implementation of the wayfinding signage plan will further strengthen parking operations with improved guidance to finding and accessing parking. The consultant delivered a draft wayfinding plan to staff at the end of May, and grant funding has been secured to begin the fabrication and installation of new signage.

Implement Legacy Campaign

In the coming months and years, and leading up to our 100-year anniversary in March 2022, the Legacy Campaign will feature stories about Winooski community members, places, and traditions. The campaign is broadly owned by the Winooski community, and we envision all being welcome contributors at the Legacy Campaign Team meetings, led and coordinated by an Executive Committee. The Legacy Campaign Team will recommend potential people, places, and traditions for the campaign to highlight, and will help to coordinate and plan Legacy Campaign events.

At the last Economic Vitality update, staff presented a vision and a framework for production of Legacy Campaign materials, collateral, and events. In addition, a preliminary production schedule was established.



The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted the planned methods for engaging our community in guiding and contributing to the campaign. Staff is now developing a new approach that allows community participation while maintaining recommended physical distancing practices.

Execute a Development Agreement with Hotel Developer - Agreement executed

Winooski Hotel Group (WHG): City staff continue to work with Winooski Hotel Group (WHG) on the potential for a development project in Winooski. We regularly discuss sites with them and they recently completed a Phase I environmental assessment on Lot 8 funding by the CCRPC Brownfield Fund. They have recently pivoted away from looking at Lot 8 for potential development. As they advance development plans, we stand at the ready to assist them.

Nedde Real Estate: With WHG's focus shifting away from interest in Lot 7D, staff released an RFP for Sale and Redevelopment of this city-owned parcel at 17 Abenaki Way (Lot 7D) on July 22, 2019. In November the Council authorized staff to move forward in negotiating a Development Agreement with Nedde Real Estate to for the location of office space and a hotel on 7D. These negotiations resulted in a fully executed Development Agreement dated April 7, 2020.

Redstone: Since the last update, Redstone has also submitted a permit application to locate a hotel on East Allen Street.

Utilize Opportunity Zone designation

As discussed at the previous Economic Vitality update, while it is very likely that there are Opportunity Zone projects in Winooski, the program does not require any municipal reporting so we have no means of reporting on whether the Opportunity Zone status has resulted in projects.

Historic Preservation planning – Grant secured, consultant hired, planning underway

In mid-September, staff submitted a Municipal Planning Grant application to support hiring a consultant to conduct an historic resource inventory, facilitate a community dialogue about preservation priorities, and develop recommendations for a preservation bylaw. Winooski was awarded the grant in December 2019. An RFP for historic preservation consultant services was released in February 2020, and the City awarded the contract to VHB. The consultant has commenced work on the historic resource inventory as planned.

Upcoming Council Roles

- Consider and approve design for Lot 7D development
- Consider and approve future agreements with the Winooski Hotel Group
- Participate in consultant-facilitated public dialogue to determine community preservation priorities



City of Winooski

Vermont's Opportunity City

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- Continue to consider and approve Winooski Small Business Emergency Loan applications as they are received

