



Memorandum

Date: May 1, 2023
From: Elaine Wang, Eric Vorwald, Jon Rauscher
To: City Council
Subject: 2022-2023 Policy Priorities and Strategies Update: Economic Vitality

Per the Council adopted 2022-2023 Policy Priorities and Strategies and the accompanying monitoring plan, we present the next goal update on Economic Vitality. Below you will find a chart of the adopted strategies, a narrative of the updates.

Key

= proceeding as planned
 = started but not proceeding well
 = proceeding but slower than planned
 = not started yet

POLICY	ADMINISTRATION		Status
Policy Goal	Priority	Strategies	
Maintain and expand our economic development to ensure long-term vibrancy.	Must Do	Implement specific initiatives identified as part of the Working Communities Challenge Grant Objectives****	
		Redevelopment of 17 Abenaki Way - Finalize design and permitting in coordination with development partners. Work toward construction start date in 2022**	
		Implement grant funded Wayfinding scope (downtown and parking garage) Phase 1 completion - June/July*	
	Recommended	Land Use Code Incentives - Incentives for bonus story adopted. Reviewing incentives that would apply to all districts to include priority housing and may consider parking.*****	
		Develop plan to execute tasks managed by the currently vacant CEDO position***	
		Expand Downtown Designation	
		Update policy, including application and possible Code amendments to address sidewalk use and food trucks. Sidewalk Permits need to match up with Outside Consumption Permit	
		Develop application and process for reviewing retail cannabis applications	

Must Dos

Implement specific initiatives identified as part of the Working Communities Challenge Grant Objectives****

The goal of Winooski's Working Communities Challenge Grant project is to build cross-sectoral collaborations to enhance economic opportunity by advancing equity, especially for our New American

residents. The grantor, the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston (Boston Fed) allows grantees a lot of flexibility to adjust to challenges. Our current challenge is the Core Team, which sets the grant workplans and is supposed to be comprised of cross-sector stakeholders, does not reflect the community the grant is intended to serve. I have paused spending more of the grant until we have a more representative Core Team.

Core Team members, with support from the Boston Fed, have attempted to recruit a more reflective diversity of people to join it. We have not been successful. Our next strategy is to hire a short-term contractor to do that, with the possibility for a longer-term arrangement. We have been discussing the scope and the logistics of the contract. The current plan is for the Family Room to provide the day-to-day supervision of that contractor. This is because the Family Room has more direct relationships with the communities this grant is intended to support.

Redevelopment of 17 Abenaki Way - Finalize design and permitting in coordination with development partners. Work toward construction start date in 2022**

Staff and contractor Echo Financial Products have secured a viable commitment from a lender to fill out the remaining financing needs requested by the development partners and agreed to by Council during their December 5, 2022 meeting. The municipal garage structure contractor has not been secured. The development partners have a request for proposals out. We will have an update for Council during this (May 1, 2023) Council meeting.

Implement grant funded Wayfinding scope (downtown and parking garage) Phase 1 completion - June/July*

No change from [December 5, 2023](#) update.

Land Use Code Incentives - Incentives for bonus story adopted. Reviewing incentives that would apply to all districts to include priority housing and may consider parking.*****

No change from [December 5, 2023](#) update.

Recommended

Develop plan to execute tasks managed by the currently vacant CEDO position***

See the [July 18, 2022 Economic Vitality Goal update](#).

Expand Downtown Designation

No change from [December 5, 2023](#) update.

Update policy, including application and possible Code amendments to address sidewalk use and food trucks. Sidewalk Permits need to match up with Outside Consumption Permit

Staff have revised and implemented the sidewalk permit process to the extent it can be without Council approval for the 2023 season, including increased Certificate of Insurance requirements. About half of the businesses met the requirements, either by increasing their coverage or by not offering outdoor seating. The other half argued they could not afford the increased premiums and needed outside seating to survive. After weighing the various pros and cons, the City Manager decided to allow an exception for this year to the latter. She has informed those who met the increased coverage requirement of this decision.

Staff also received clarification from the City's legal counsel on other questions from Council including the effective date of an updated Municipal Code and an applicant sign-off to indemnify the City. Staff intends to bring the draft changes to the Municipal Code back to Council later this year for consideration of proposed changes. This may also include new language related to food trucks, but Staff is still working with the new Executive Director of Downtown Winooski to solicit input from businesses to determine appropriate changes.

Develop application and process for reviewing retail cannabis applications

Complete. Staff was originally proposing an amendment to the City's Fee Ordinance related to cannabis applications, but it was later determined that any local fees are collected by the State and distributed to the municipality where the application originated. Staff will continue to monitor the applications to determine if incremental changes are needed.