

RRA Quarterly Report, January 2020

The following report will serve as the quarterly status update as stipulated in the Agreement for Services between the City of Rutland and the Rutland Redevelopment Authority. In accordance with the Agreement these status updates will be made to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen following the conclusion of each quarter of the year and will provide an update on the RRA's progress in regards to: A) Grant Administration, B) Grand List and Job Development, C) Housing Initiatives and Blighted Properties.

- A) Grant Administration – Please see the attached spreadsheet for details on completed, current, and future grant administration projects.

- B) Grand List and Job Development – The RRA is participating in several current projects which could lead to improvement to the Grand List and increased jobs within the City.
 1. RRA continues efforts to promote Rutland City as a business destination and to market the BIAP program with a BIAP award made to a new restaurant, Little Haveli, in November and to Jupiter Rising Bakery in December.
 2. The RRA continues working in collaboration with RRCC, REDC, DRP and other regional stakeholders on managing the ongoing Regional Marketing initiative. RRA ED continues to serve on a steering committee providing guidance for the overall initiative. Currently the vendor, LIFT, has completed a phase 1 of their new campaign with more focus on capturing potential leads for relocation and begun a phase 2.
 3. RRA members continue to serve on a committee assisting the RPC and Zoning Administrator on an update to the City's zoning bylaws. The revised by-laws initiative has remained in the draft stage for many months. A successful grant application to complete this initiative was submitted and awarded in December.
 4. RRA continues working to facilitate the disposition and redevelopment of several underutilized industrial or commercial sites. The former Hearthside Restaurant at 37 N. Main Street has been demolished and redevelopment of that site is nearing completion. Starbucks has signed a lease as the anchor tenant for this location with plans to open in the first quarter of 2020 and Chipotle Mexican Grill was announced as a second tenant.
 5. RRA continues to work towards a productive re-use of the Berwick site and is currently trying to facilitate progress with DEW Construction Corp. on a downtown hotel development. The NMTC allocation process and the property acquisition has been delayed with expectations that a 2020 NMTC allocation round will be announced in the second quarter of 2020 which will determine if the required project funding is available through this program.
 6. RRA is working collaboratively with REDC, RRCC, DRP, and other regional and City ED stakeholders towards the planning and facilitation of several regionally focused economic development initiatives supporting entrepreneurship, marketing, and recruitment. Currently the RRA and City are “core-stakeholders” in an initiative to find funding for the Rutland Region via the Federal Bank of Boston's Working Communities Challenge Planning Grant Application being led by REDC and the RRPC.

7. RRA continues working to promote and support the federal economic development program Opportunity Zones created as part of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. Three of Rutland's four census tracts have been approved by the Treasury Department. State and local EDO's are working on developing strategies for leveraging this new program. Currently a Rutland City Opportunity Zone prospectus has been created in collaboration with VT Innovation Commons and REDC with a focus on seeking investors for potential City projects.
 8. Utilizing a Downtown Transportation Fund grant improvements to the West Street gateway at Main Street Park and the MVMMTC have been completed.
 9. RRA and DRP have been facilitating an updated Downtown Strategic Plan initiative which is currently underway. Vendor, Camoin Associates, held an initial public stakeholders event in November and is currently working on data analysis. The updated study is expected to be completed in March, 2020.
 10. RRA and other stakeholders continue to pursue an initiative focused on enhancing multi-use trail connections between Killington and downtown Rutland. A request to the Northern Borders Regional Commission program for grant funding was unsuccessful and plans for another application for funding of this initiative are underway.
 11. RRA and DRP have formed a joint steering committee to focus on downtown investment and redevelopment. Currently the committee will be overseeing the upcoming Downtown Strategic Plan process as its key focus.
 12. With the announcement that the Diamond Run Mall would be closing in October RRA and DRP staff visited the mall to speak with merchants about assistance in re-location. To date several merchants have relocated to downtown locations.
 13. With the loss of accreditation at College of St. Joseph RRA and other stakeholders are working with CSJ leadership to facilitate a future plan for the college and campus. The RRA has committed funding to help support a feasibility study conducted by CSJ and Vermont Innovation Commons. The feasibility study has been completed with a favorable conclusion and the current status of the CSJ property is being determined.
- C) Housing Initiatives and Blighted Properties – The following progress has been made towards the remediation of Rutland City's vacant and blighted properties and focus on improving City housing.
1. RRA continues to work with the Rutland County Parent Child Center as they strive to overcome issues before beginning their planned implementation rehab work at 16 Chaplin Ave. Project is currently seeking funding through USDA Rural Development with a feasibility study being required before a loan will be offered.

2. Phase 3 of the Hickory Street Project is complete with an additional and stand-alone initiative to develop two single family homes on that site underway by Housing VT/Rutland Housing Authority. Phase 3 close-out is complete.
3. RRA continues working with RRPC on brownfield remediation initiatives with the RRA director serving on the brownfield steering committee.
4. RRA continues to facilitate the city owned property disposition process with ongoing review and recommendations and the RRA ED and Board President serving on the steering committee reviewing and recommending applications for the purchase of city owned properties.
5. RRA continues to oversee the City's Vacant/Blighted Residential Property Tax Stabilization program with one prospective applicant submitting a request in the last quarter.
6. RRA is working with the RPC to update the 2015 Rutland City Master Plan. An updated version was compiled by RRA and approved by RPC in November with additional updates and edits being compiled by the RPC members for public review and then final review and BOA adoption by June 2020.