

## RRA Quarterly Report, DRAFT October 2022

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. The RRA continues working in collaboration with CEDRR, RRPC, DRP and other regional stakeholders on the ongoing Regional Marketing initiative with the RA ED serving on a steering committee which provides guidance for the overall initiative. During the past quarter a successful “Weekend Getaway” event was held. This event was designed to bring interest and attention from prospective transplants for a hosted weekend of activities and events and included five households from all around the country.
  - 2. RRA staff have continued to serve on a Zoning By-law Advisory Committee assisting the RPC and Zoning Administrator to develop additional Bylaw language and process for a comprehensive rewrite. RPC has a proposed timeline of finalizing a working draft before March 2023.
  - 3. RRA continues working to facilitate the disposition and redevelopment of several underutilized industrial or commercial sites.
  - 4. The RRA and other regional ED partners have continued ongoing discussion and facilitation around the redevelopment of the former CSJ campus site. Over the past year a working group of Economic Development and Housing leaders including RRA, CEDRR, RRPC and HTRC, have convened to work towards facilitating next steps for redevelopment, which has led to City funding for a site planning study. During the past quarter the study's information gathering process, including several public engagement steps, has taken place. It has also been determined that the site's main campus parcel is to be sold to Casella Waste Systems to be used for temporary workforce housing and training facilities for their corporate activities. At the time of this report a decision on how best to proceed with the study, in light of this new development, is being determined.
  - 5. The RRA and other regional ED partners have been involved in ongoing discussions with the VFFC leadership on ways to redevelop and enhance their current campus and abutting properties. During the past quarter a City funded study including M&S Development and Kulas Consulting continues working towards a reuse plan and funding matrix. The study results are expected to be released sometime in October.

6. The seasonal Center Street enhancement infrastructure has been largely successful over the summer months. Plans for dismantling and storing the five separate “parklet” areas has been coordinated, with the continued support and assistance from the Rec and Parks Dept., and DPW. Removal is currently planned for mid-October.
  7. The initiative to pursue a permanent implementation design/plan for the Center Street enhancement saw continued progress during the past quarter. In late September a scoping study presentation was made by the consultant, Dubois & King, to the City. The proposed design calls for a one-way traffic configuration and significant new pedestrian space. Next steps for further sub-surface infrastructure analysis and identifying future funding mechanisms is currently under discussion.
  8. The RRA and DRP continue work on the Downtown Pedestrian Wayfinding Sign initiative. After some delay the 15 individual signs and the large Depot Park kiosk sign were successfully installed in September.
  9. In the past quarter RRA reviewed and recommended, and BOA approved, a BIAP grant for Mountain Girl Cannabis, Inc.
  10. As part of the City’s ARPA funding process the RRA provided a request for funding of a local “Business Plan Competition” initiative which was funded \$125,000, and a Market Rate Housing initiative, which was funded \$300,000. Planning towards the implementation of both of these initiatives, with appropriate community partners, is currently underway.
  11. The Rutland Station Area Revitalization Project saw progress over the past quarter with the City selecting Steffanie Bourque of the RRPC as the municipal project manager (MPM) for the project. A VTrans approved contract for these services is being crafted by RRPC, and following the successful execution of this, the next step will be to create and issue an RFP for design/engineering services.
- 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 help facilitate the city owned property disposition process with ongoing review and recommendations and the RRA ED and Board Chairman serving on the steering committee.
  2. RRA continues to oversee the City’s Vacant/Blighted Residential Property Tax Stabilization program. There were no applicants in the past quarter.
  3. RRA supported a VCDP application proposed by Hale Resources to redevelop a currently vacant and blighted building at 120 Maple Street. Following much discussion throughout the public review process, the City ultimately supported the project and the application was submitted for review at the November 10<sup>th</sup>, Board Meeting. Applicant is seeking approximately \$650,000 in VCDP funds towards their total project costs.
  4. Preliminary discussion with prospective City housing projects interested in potentially accessing VCDP funding has occurred over the past quarter and the RRA has begun planning for the timing of review and recommendation for the next funding round.

5. Discussion about improving market rate rental housing inventory in the City/region continues to be an important topic. During the past quarter progress was made on crafting a NWWVT managed revolving loan fund program to serve this market. It is anticipated that a draft RLF policy will be presented to the BOA in October or November for release in early 2023.
6. The initiative for creating a future TIF District in the City saw continued progress in the past quarter. The consultant, White + Burke Real Estate Advisors, has continued to work on vetting potential project sites and projects with assistance from the City's working group. The current thinking is that there may be two viable areas which could be used for a future TIF District application, one focusing on the area directly around Center Street in the heart of downtown, and one focusing on the VFFC campus area and the 10 Cleveland Ave/Dress Factory property, just outside of the downtown.
7. Following prior collaborative discussion around regional housing issues, a group of stakeholders including RRA, CEDRR, NWWVT, HTRC, RHA, RRPC, Hale Resources, and others will be re-convening to discuss future housing related goals, objectives, and strategy. Initial meeting will be hosted by RRA in October.