

RRA QUARTERLY REPORT



October 1 – December 31, 2023

Important Dates

2Gen Whole Family Center

Ribbon Cutting – date TBD

HUD Distressed Communities

Site Visit – January 30&31

CEDRR Legislative Breakfast

February 12

Rutland Winterfest

Feb. 16-22

Main St. Park/Downtown

Town Meeting

March 5 - City Polls

AARP Community Challenge

Grant deadline - March 6

East Creek Commons

Public Hearing - March 18

VCDP Application

Application due - April 9

Dick Corcelle Joins RRA Board

On November 6 the Board of Aldermen unanimously approved the nomination of Dick Courcelle to the RRA Board. Dick serves as CEO for Rutland Mental Health Services. He was the original Executive Director of the Downtown Rutland Partnership in 1990 and was instrumental in how the DRP functioned, as well as, the success of Downtown for many years. He brings a wealth of historic knowledge to the Board and a strong forward-thinking attitude.



RRA Adopts Strategic Plan and Revised Employee Manual

The RRA Board adopted the Strategic Plan 2023-2028 and is making plans to incorporate the goals identified. The plan was facilitated by Melissa Levy of Community Roots. It has spurred the creation of an annual work plan that will support the future City/RRA Agreement for Services.

Grant News

The RRA assisted the Rutland City Recreation Department in applying for a \$400,000 VOREC grant to fund the gap when bids came in over the budget. Phase 1 of the project, the gazebo, is slated to start in the spring. Award announcements are expected in late February.



The RRA worked with Planning and Zoning staff to apply for a Municipal Planning Grant through the Department of Housing and Community Development. The City received an award of \$19,800 to be used to develop a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). According to statute, the Rutland City Planning Commission is charged with creation of the CIP

The City was awarded a \$10,000 award from the Vermont Community Foundation in response to the Equitable & Inclusive Communities application. These funds will be used to support implicit bias trainings and other diversity, equity and inclusion work in Rutland. The Mayor and Board of Aldermen will provide program administration and the RRA will provide the grant administration.

Grand List and Job Development

The RRA assisted four applicants through the BIAP process and the Aldermen approved the following grants/loans:

- \$10,000 loan to Head Over Heels Gym
- \$10,000 loan to Bueno Burrito
- \$10,000 loan to Ana's Empanadas
- \$10,000 loan to Avanti Unisex Hair Salon

Barbara continues to work with potential BIAP applicants and responds to all inquiries.

Following extensive research of the BIAP recipients since 2017, the success of this program is evident. There have been 21 \$10,000 loans executed, of which only one business closed due to extenuating circumstances. Of the 28 \$5,000 grants, 9 businesses closed or moved out of the City. Seven of those nine businesses closed during COVID.

These numbers reveal a 95% success rate for the \$10,000 loans and a 68% success rate for the \$5,000 grants. However, post COVID the success rate for the grants is: 89%.



Head Over Heels Gym



Ana's Empanadas



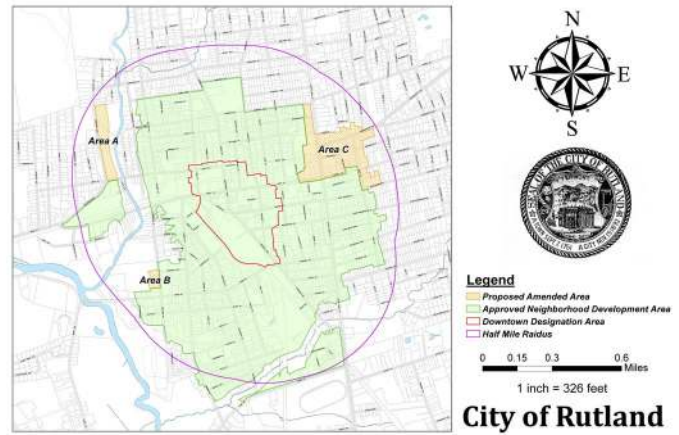
Avanti

| BIAP Awards 12/1/2022-12/31/2023 | Businesses Created/Expanded | #Jobs Created |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| \$10,000 | Avanti Unisex Hair Salon | 2 |
| \$10,000 | Ana's Empanadas | 5 |
| \$10,000 | Bueno Burrito | 2 |
| \$10,000 | Head Over Heels Gym | 3 |
| \$10,000 | Kizmet Kitchen | 3 |
| \$10,000 | Nail'd It | 4 |
| \$5,000 | Tacitly Inc. | 1 |
| \$10,000 | Mad Rose | 3 |
| \$10,000 | Loose Loona Tea House & Gifts | 3 |
| \$10,000 | Speakeasy Café Expansion | 4 |
| \$10,000 | Euphoric Hair Experience LLC | 10 |
| \$5,000 | DownValley Bikes | 2 |
| \$10,000 | Taco Fresco | 6 |
| \$10,000 | Autism Advocacy & Intervention | 4-10 |
| \$5,000 | Giuseppe's Italian Market | 4 |
| \$5,000 | LT's Little Dog Camp | 2 |
| 140,000 | 16 | 58-68 |

Planning Initiatives

The RRA and City Planning and Zoning staff are amending the Neighborhood Development Area (NDA) Boundary to incorporate three new areas of the City, including the US7 and US4 intersection. The purpose of the amendment is to allow for the inclusion of high-redevelopment potential areas to NDA, which could potentially serve as an Act 250 exemption area. The new boundary will also match the proposed Tax Increment Finance (TIF) district.

Proposed Amended Neighborhood Development Area



Date Created: 01/05/2024

RRA staff continue to assist the Planning and Zoning staff with the update of the Land Development Regulations. The public hearing process for bylaw adoption is scheduled for spring 2024.

The Center on Rural Innovation's Placemaking Plan for the city of Rutland is in draft form, but scheduled for adoption in spring 2024. The RRA participated in the working group and editing of the initial drafts. The plan will provide goals and action items for public and private organizations to take to create more energy in Downtown by activating public spaces.



Forest Street property proposed for market rate RLF funding.

Housing Initiatives and Blighted Properties

The RRA has taken on the leadership role of the Ad Hoc Housing and Tax Increment Finance (TIF) working groups which meet every other week.

The Ad Hoc Housing group completed a housing priority list for the Rutland Delegation and was instrumental in getting the Neighborhoodworks of Western Vermont market rate housing RLF out the door. Out of the 10 expected awards from the program, five have been proposed for two properties in Rutland City.

The TIF working group has identified private and public projects to be included in the TIF district and continues to prepare components that will be required for an application to the Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC) in May 2024.



Moving Forward

- Develop an Annual Workplan to refine goals of the recently-adopted RRA Strategic Plan.
- Reevaluate the BIAP program and determine funding levels.
- Redesign the RRA website and logo.
- Implement new marketing strategies for RRA resources, including the BIAP, SBD RLF, Maples RLF etc.
- Hire a part-time assistant and work with a potential UVM intern.
- Send TIF Letter of Intent to Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC).
- RFP for Rail Gateway Project.
- Update Ad Hoc Housing Committee *Housing Action Plan*.
- Application to HUD Thriving Cities Technical Assistance Program.
- Assist the Planning Commission with the adoption of the LDR and work on the Master Plan.
- Track legislative bills with potential impacts on RRA initiatives.
- Work with City of Rutland DPW on street projects.
- Participate in City-Owned Properties Committee.
- Homes 4 All infill design toolkit release with selected Rutland City property - 104 South Street.
- Plan a mixer for newly elected Aldermen following March election.
- Work with development teams on site specific projects brownfields assessment work.
- Assist the Mayor with the Rutland 2050 Vision document.
- Participate on the Architectural Review Committee.
- Assist Board of Aldermen Committee work, as needed.