



**DOWNTOWN
RUTLAND**
— VERMONT

2023-2024 WORK PLAN



PREPARED BY TIFFANY SALTIS

MAY 2023

Mission of the Downtown Rutland Partnership

The Downtown Rutland Partnership is dedicated to the economic prosperity of the City of Rutland. Our purpose is to manage, market and maintain the Downtown Rutland Special Benefits District and advance activities that improve the vitality of the business community and enhance the cultural and physical climate of the district.

Funding Request

The Downtown Rutland Partnership is submitting a contract request in the amount of \$252,000 to the Rutland Redevelopment Authority for the management and implementation of activities within Downtown Rutland — as described in the following work plan — for the period of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. The expenses are for the following areas:

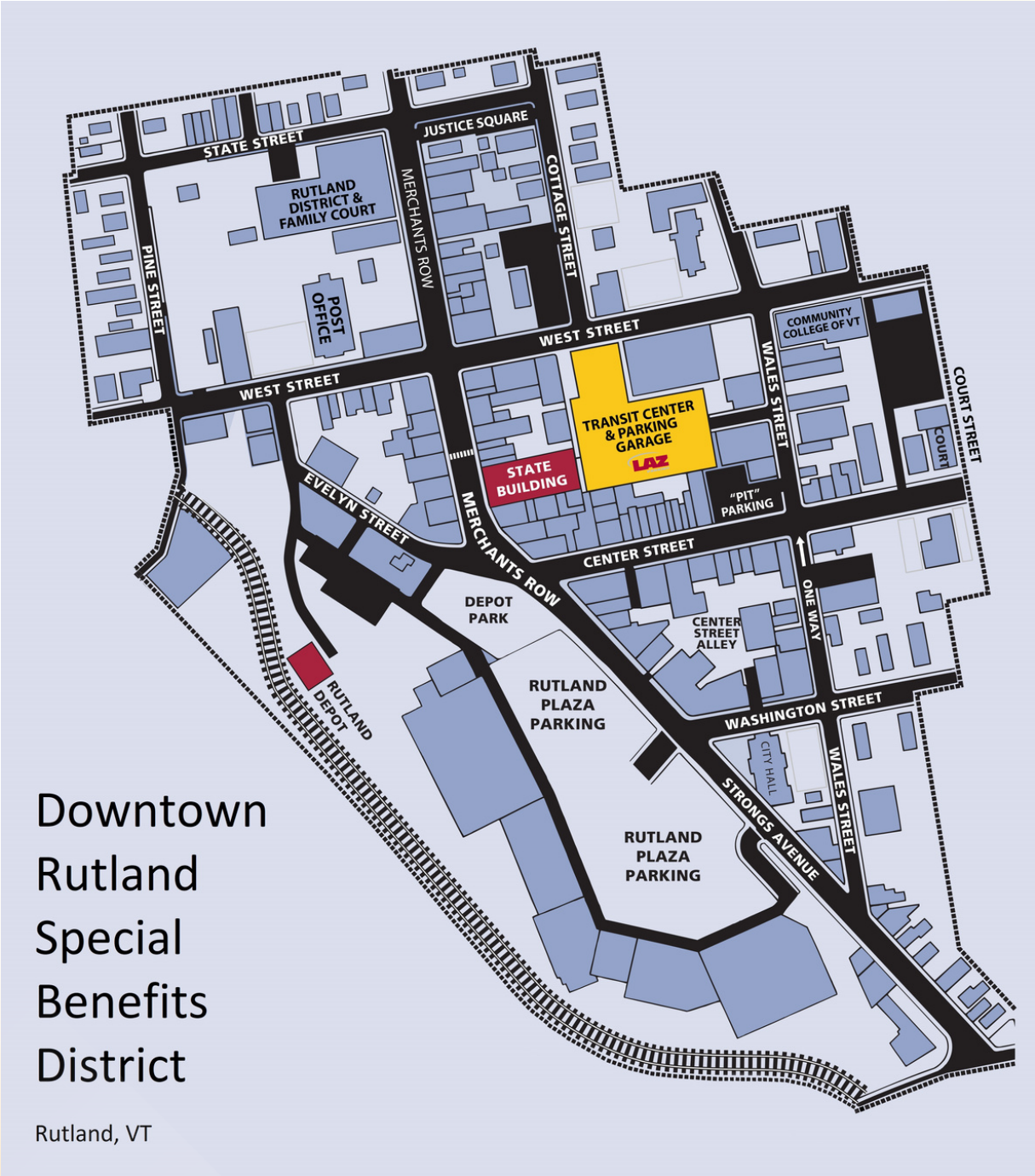
- Payroll and Taxes
- Marketing and Events
- Business Development
- Streetscape beautification
- Office Administration

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Service Area

The geographic area to be served is the Downtown Rutland Special Benefits District as outlined on the map below.



Revenue

Revenue	FY 23-24	% of Budget	FY 22-23	% of Budget
RRA Contract	252,000	67.94%	252,000	78.88%
Sponsorship	20,000	5.39%	12,000	3.76%
General Fund Equity	78,901	21.27%	48,486	15.18%
Paramount Fundraiser 23-24, Brewfest 22-23, Sip & Shop	20,000	5.04%	7,000	2.18%
TOTAL	370,901	100%	319,486	100%

Expenses

Expenses	FY 23-24	% of Budget	FY 22-23	% of Budget
Payroll & Taxes	106,521	28.72%	111,354	34.85%
Office	75,139	20.26%	44,891	14.05%
Marketing & Events	110,500	29.79%	104,500	32.71%
Streetscape	57,741	15.57%	41,741	13.07%
Business Development	21,000	5.66%	17,000	5.32%
TOTAL	370,901	100%	319,486	100%

Payroll & Taxes

\$106,521 | 33 % of Budget

Executive Director

This is a full-time salaried position currently filled by Tiffany Saltis since April 2022.



Events and Business Development & Support Manager

This is a full-time (40 hour) per week hourly position filled by Brian Budrow since August 2022.



Board of Directors

The DRP is overseen by a volunteer board of directors that meet on a monthly basis to receive financial, committee and staff reports, as well as to vote on pertinent issues.

Committees

The DRP has four active committees that meet on an as needed basis. They are chaired by board members and composed of board members, staff and interested downtown community members.

MARKETING & Events

\$110,500 | 35% of Budget

The DRP will generate consistent, professional, and unique marketing campaigns and initiatives that promote Downtown Rutland as a multifaceted destination for both locals and visitors alike. Our efforts will include mixed media advertising with a focus on the outlets that provide the greatest reach, most effective use of funds and ability to track and measure our efforts.

Goal >> Promote Downtown Rutland as the area's premier destination for shopping, dining, and recreation with the intention to boost and sustain economic activity for pertinent downtown stakeholders.

Strategy One: Create marketing initiatives that generate traffic and lasting engagement in Downtown Rutland.

Tactics:

- Create consistent and cohesive digital, print, and display advertisements that showcase the downtown attractions, services, and atmosphere
- Implement more interactive storytelling through dynamic production
- Create a high quality streaming video marketing strategy that promotes our district to our target audience
- Partner with more area opinion leaders to grow credibility and trust

Measurables:

- Reported reach from advertisers
- Open rates
- Website and social media analytics
- Reports from distribution channels

Strategy Two: Continue to grow our digital marketing assets and increase their reach over the next year.

Tactics:

- Share relevant posts and news from the downtown community
- Stay current & utilize trends and patterns that generate higher meaningful engagement
- Continue to populate the website and SM channels with dynamic content: news, information and events for the public, resources for businesses
- Actively add events to our Facebook calendar & press release submissions
- Stay current with relevant key word utilization to improve website ranking
- Refresh website to improve visitor experience

Marketing cont.

Measurables:

- Website visitors
- Social media analytics
- Newsletter subscribers
- Website visitors
- Number of event app downloads
- Social media engagement
- Responses from event surveys

Strategy Three: Use unique outlets to effectively and strategically market Downtown Rutland.

Tactics:

- Maintain downtown website and social media channels as described in strategy two
- Advertise in surrounding states to encourage visitors
- Collect and utilize data to expand outlets to new states & territories
- Research regional and national opportunities to spotlight Downtown Rutland
- Develop and maintain a stronger relationship with Vermont Tourism
- Arrange for ads and displays in Vermont Welcome Centers
- Collaborate with Rutland Magazine to maintain a downtown Rutland spread in each quarterly publication
- Attend area business shows and in-person marketing opportunities

Measurables:

- Reported reach from advertisers
- Reported visitors at welcome centers
- SM demographic analytics

Strategy Four: Maintain a strong downtown brand to build recognition and awareness.

Tactics:

- Use consistent colors, fonts, logos in all marketing materials and ads for a cohesive experience
- Maintain a consistent and appropriate voice for downtown in all our writing
- Keep the downtown brand fresh and relevant
- Co-operate the DRP office as a downtown visitors' center, the first point of contact with the downtown identity

Marketing & EVENTS

During a typical year, the Downtown Rutland Partnership strives to maintain a full calendar of events that drive traffic into downtown. We do this by organizing and expanding our own series of events while also serving as a valuable resource and partner for groups organizing their own.

Goal >> Downtown Rutland is considered a destination that leads to increased traffic and sales for downtown businesses.

Strategy One: Provide high quality events for businesses and the community, including three Friday Night Lives, the Holiday Stroll, two Sip and Shops, and a fundraising event.

Tactics:

- Book three national acts to lead the Friday Night Live series
- Utilize interactive components to increase engagement
- Encourage businesses to find ways of participating
- Partner with local groups to add mutually beneficial value
- Solicit quality and event-appropriate vendors to build the professionalism of our events
- Organize event vendors around restaurant parklets to encourage outdoor dining when appropriate
- Increase sponsorship outreach to provide more vibrant events for attendees
- Create a high quality, entertaining fundraising event open to the public to be hosted at the Paramount theatre

Measurables:

- Estimated attendance
- Ticket sales
- Number of participating vendors and businesses
- Success in running the events safely
- Reported sales at retail establishments and restaurants
- Reported attendance via Facebook
- Sponsorship and fundraising revenue

Events cont.

Strategy Two: Look for opportunities to support downtown events outside of the organization.

Tactics:

- Co-sponsor events, when/if applicable
- Highlight and amplify existing community events hosted by outside organizations or community partners
 - Assist with downtown logistics when appropriate e.g. share knowledge on special event permit, parklet information, etc.

Measurables:

- Number of attendees
- SM analytics
- Reported business sales

Strategy Three: Maintain a vibrant calendar of events.

Tactics:

- Research upcoming events
- Request information on events, when needed
- Conduct environmental scanning to see which types of events spur the most engagement
- Encourage event organizers to create Facebook events
- Keep the calendar current and accurate
- Encourage downtown businesses to share their event calendars

Measurables:

- Estimated attendance
- Number of participating organizations, businesses, and vendors

Strategy Four: Serve as a knowledgeable resource for downtown event organizers, by responding to and meeting with requests for advice and guidance for planning an event in downtown.

Tactics:

- Direct organizers to our downtown events guide
- Make suggestions on vendors and resources
- Share event information with downtown
- Advise businesses on event marketing strategies

Business Development

\$ 21,000 | 7% of the budget

The business development focus area is an important aspect of how we help support our downtown businesses. Currently, a major way in which we do this is through providing grant awards to new and existing businesses. We want to continue to ensure that businesses understand the many ways in which we can assist them and view us a valued and unique resource located downtown. A full-time staff member is dedicated to events and business development, thus increasing the organization's business development outreach. This role informs new & existing businesses of support available to them, including grants and the Downtown Revolving Loan Fund.

Goal  Maintain and increase the downtown's inventory of diverse and complimentary businesses to create economic growth and opportunity.

Strategy One: Award \$21,000 in grants to new and growing downtown businesses.

Tactics:

- Promote availability of grants to all businesses
- Meet with interested applicants to help them through the application process
- Ensure the application process is straightforward and accessible
- Follow up with applicants to increase their chance of success
- Leverage stories of previous award winners to encourage new applicants

Measurables:

- Number of grant applicants
- Amount of grant dollars awarded

Strategy Two: Provide workshops on relevant and important topics to starting, growing, and maintaining a small business in Downtown Rutland.

Tactics:

- Find experts in various fields to lead the trainings
- Look at relevant training topics offered in other communities
- Organize the logistics of the workshops and promote the community opportunity
- Utilize or educate DRP staff to lead trainings, as/if needed

Business Development cont.

Measurables:

- Number of workshops offered
- Number of attendees

Strategy Three: Ensure the business community is aware of the expansive ways the DRP can support their businesses and provide multiple outlets for businesses to learn and engage with our services.

Tactics:

- Sign businesses up for our email newsletters
- Grow the resource section of our website to better reflect our range of services
- Meet with new businesses to provide an overview of how we can help
- Provide print materials to remind businesses of services
- Invite businesses to participate in events
- Encourage new business development by keeping an accurate list of available downtown properties on the DRP website with pertinent information

Measurables:

- Number of meetings and conversations with businesses.
- Visits to the resource section of our website
- Number of businesses signed up for newsletters
- Number of businesses taking advantage of our services

Strategy Four: Keep updated with resources and knowledge needed to professionally assist small downtown businesses by participating in local, state, and national trainings, meetings and conferences that are relevant to the work of downtown organizations.

Tactics:

- Work with the RRA to always have a current understanding of the needs of the district
- Keep informed of educational opportunities
- Report back useful information and find ways of applying to downtown
- Use new information and research to shape DRP programming

Measurables:

- Number of trainings and conferences attended
- Number of new ideas or strategies put into practice

Streetscape

\$54,250 | 17% of the budget

Our Streetscape services to the downtown are achieved through a collaborative approach by working with various organizations, such as the Department of Public Works and acting as support for Rutland Recreation and Parks Department. We also work with volunteers, including the Rutland Garden Club, who maintain several gardens throughout the downtown, student groups who assist with cleanup activities and local high school and middle school students that take on specific projects throughout the year.

Goal >> Help maintain the beauty, décor and character of Downtown Rutland that continues to make it a desirable location to visit, live and work.

Strategy One: Work with the Parks Dept. to improve the downtown pedestrian experience.

Tactics:

- Provide auxiliary financial support to Parks Department in '23-'24
- Identify and communicate hazardous areas downtown in need of attention
- Maintain an accurate list of businesses on downtown signs and wayfinding signage
- Communicate volunteer/community service projects happening downtown
- Assist Rutland Recreation and Parks Department when applicable

Strategy Two: Maintain seasonal decorations, parklets, plants and branding throughout year.

Tactics:

- Order hanging baskets and planter greenery for downtown district
- Oversee the installation of seasonal elements, such as corn stalks, snowflakes and holiday decorations
- Work with city organizations to rollout and store downtown restaurant parklets

Office & Organizational Overhead

\$75,139 | 24 % of the budget

The office of the Downtown Rutland Partnership is located at 48 Merchants Row in Downtown Rutland until June/July 2024 when the DRP will be located at 28 Center Street. New and/or increased costs will be associated with the new office. The new office location will function as a welcoming and informational visitors' center as well as a professional office.

Under the category of office and organizational overhead, we account for the necessary costs for running a nonprofit organization, including rent, utilities, office supplies, copier, postage, liability insurance for staff, board and officers, phone and internet services, tax preparation services, bookkeeping services, dues, subscriptions, education, and travel expenses. We continue to contract a bookkeeper that is closely monitored by our board treasurer. There are audit costs reflected in the FY 2024 budget.

