



Support, grow, and strengthen Vermont's historic downtowns

Dear Chair Lanpher and Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

We are writing on behalf of the Downtown Coalition, an alliance of the 24 designated downtown organizations that have organized to support, grow, and strengthen Vermont's historic downtowns. We are a key part of the Vermont Downtown Program established by the legislature.

Firstly, we wish to express our appreciation for the stability afforded to the designated downtown base funding within the Governor's base budget. This decision underscores a shared commitment to sustaining the vibrancy and economic health of our communities.

However, there are two areas that we want to bring to your attention:

1. **Better Places Program Funding:** We support the House Commerce Committee's recommendation to remove the sunset clause for Better Places. And we also support the proposal from the House Committee on Energy and Environment to allocate dollars to the program but their recommendation of \$250k falls short of the program's demonstrated needs and its potential for transformative impact. Considering this, we are advocating for maintaining the program's funding at last year's level of \$750K, to ensure its continued success in enhancing public spaces across our communities.
2. **Enhancement of the Downtown and Village Tax Credit (DT&V):** The Governor's suggestion to increase the DT&V tax credit by \$2M is a smart step towards continuing to invigorate our downtowns and villages through strategic investments. We believe this increase is imperative for catalyzing significant economic development and revitalization efforts within our communities.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your dedication to the prosperity of Vermont's communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Tracie Lewis
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