

Theresa Utton-Jerman

Subject: Supporting VT Downtowns

From: BFDDA

Sent: Thursday, February 10, 2022 10:20 AM

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As Executive Director of the Bellows Falls Downtown I support the initiative of the VT Downtown Coalition, because our Downtown's are one of Vermont's most precious resources. Currently my organization is able to pay me 15 hours per week and that money comes from Rockingham taxpayers. Much of what we have accomplished in 2021 was due to our volunteer support.

We organized and rallied at least ten volunteers per month to start our Keep BF Beautiful campaign where we've done incremental clean-up and greening projects around the Downtown Square.

Thanks hugely to an ACCD Community Block Development Grant in 2020, we started Light Up BF which brought lights in the downtown trees and festival lights above the streets and leveraged many donations to grow our reach of lights on to the Island and to decorate the trees in the new Brown-Fuller Fireman's Memorial Park.

If we can do all of this in just 15 hours per week and over a thousand volunteer hours, I look forward to the possibility of doing twice this amount with your support of this funding for the VT Downtown Coalition and our Downtown Organizations.

We are asking for:

- 1.
- 2.
3. *Funding of \$485,000:*
- 4.

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- *\$20,000 for each of the 23 downtown organizations and*
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- *\$25,000 to support the Vermont Downtown Coalition.*
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- 1.
- 2.
3. *Funding would support marketing, content development and increased digital reach for downtown organizations, individually and*
4. *collectively.*
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
8. *Expand the ability of the downtown organizations to educate, guide and partner with businesses,*
9. *non-profit and community organizations to strengthen downtown models, and leverage state funding to incentivize broader*
10. *participation.*
- 11.

- 12.
- 13.
14. *Support communication within the coordinated effort of these state mandated organizations to leverage*
15. *successes.*
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
19. *Increase the successful downtown and village center tax credit to A\$5M and Expand the program to existing Neighborhood Development*
20. *Areas (NDA)*
- 21.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Betsy Thurston
Executive Director
Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance
bellowsfallsvt.org