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February 11th, 2026

Dear Senators Clarkson, White and Major, and Representatives Cole, Hoyt, and Christie,

On behalf of the White River Junction Downtown Business Association, we urge your support for increasing the annual allocation for Vermont's Historic Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit Program from \$3 million to \$6 million in the FY 2026 state budget.

White River Junction provides a clear local example of this program's impact. Over the past ten years, our downtown has received approximately \$776,000 in competitive tax credits, leveraging more than \$31 million in total investment across multiple properties. These projects supported building rehabilitation, weatherproofing, accessibility upgrades, façade improvements, and flood resilience. These are foundational investments that bring historic buildings back into productive use for housing, small businesses, and community activity, while leveraging several times the state's investment in private capital.

Reinvesting in existing downtown infrastructure is one of the most cost-effective ways to grow Vermont's economy. Expanding this program aligns directly with Act 181 and the Legislature's goal of directing growth into walkable, service-rich downtowns like White River Junction.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to support doubling the Historic Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit Program to \$6 million annually. This investment will help Vermont's downtowns continue driving economic growth, housing production, and long-term community vitality.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to Vermont's downtowns and village centers.

Sincerely,

Kim Souza

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Kim Souza,

Chair, White River Junction DBA

Jason Whitney,

Vice Chair, White River Junction DBA