

2009-2010 Economic Restructuring Committee Work Plan

Overall Objective for Economic Restructuring Committee:

To serve as a catalyst for strengthening existing downtown businesses while developing additional downtown business and residential opportunities.

Objective 1: Develop and implement business retention and recruitment tools.

- Continue to implement business recruitment/special opportunity package using Welcome to Waterville brochure, including targeting specific businesses.
- Continue efforts to recruit new businesses in conjunction with Waterville Development Corp., Central Maine Growth Council and other economic development organizations.
- Publicize availability of Business Retention Team and revisit Team composition.
- Develop special outreach effort to downtown property (versus business) owners to facilitate productive use of vacant space.

Objective 2: Develop and maintain baseline data of building and business inventory.

- Maintain a list of current downtown businesses as well as a list of known vacancies.
- Provide information on available downtown space to potential new tenants.
- Collaborate with area economic development organizations to maximize resources and share information on available space and potential new tenants.

Objective 3: Develop opportunities to strengthen existing downtown businesses.

- Work with City and WMSt staff to develop guidelines, mechanics and criteria for disbursement of CDBG Downtown Improvement Funds (Façade Improvement Grants, Micro Enterprise Grants and Housing Assistance).
- Implement and reexamine Downtown Business of the Year award process.
- Identify downtown's strengths and weaknesses and analyze business community needs on an ongoing basis with surveys and focus groups. (*2009-10 survey: Consumer Survey of Users & Employees*)
- Regularly visit downtown businesses to discuss relevant business issues and share information on WMSt projects and activities. (To be conducted in cooperation with Promotion Committee, WMSt Board and Chamber Business Retention Committee)
- Continue to deliver and enhance programs, such as Mystery Shopper, Meet 'n' Greets, Grand Opening package

Objective 4: Work with the City Administration to improve downtown access

- Continue to work with the City on plans for parking and traffic calming.
- Be a voice for downtown merchants in ongoing discussions with the City about snow and ice removal, cleanliness, and other related matters.
- Launch a renewed effort to educate downtown business and property owners, as well as downtown customers, about downtown parking availability and rules.

Objective 5: Develop a strong ER Committee that has a sustainable future.

- Continue efforts to identify and recruit a strong cross section of people from existing businesses, real estate professionals, banking professionals, developers, property owners, the educational community, and economic development organizations that are eager and excited to make a difference in downtown Waterville.