



Downtown Transportation Fund

2024 Program Description



VT Department of Housing and Community Development
Community Planning + Revitalization

2024 Downtown Transportation Fund Grant

Program Guidance

Program Overview

The Downtown Transportation Fund (DTF) has funding available to help municipalities make a variety of transportation-related capital improvements (within or serving eligible designated downtown or village center districts and supporting economic development, as allowed by [24 V.S.A. §2796 \(c\)](#) pursuant to [§B.1103\(a\)\(1\) & §G300\(b\)\(8\)](#). The DTF is intended to support safe, multi-modal, and resilient transportation systems that reinforce downtown and village center economic development and revitalization efforts.

Eligibility for Designated Village Centers

Designated Village Centers that have participated in the [Better Connections Program](#) administered by the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Department of Housing and Community Development and Designated Village Centers within Chittenden County that have completed a comprehensive downtown/village center/community area planning process with public input, comparable to the Better Connections Program, are eligible to apply. Applicants must demonstrate that proposed projects are the result of such planning processes and provide excerpts from final planning documents. If you believe your municipality does qualify but is not listed as eligible, please contact Gary Holloway, Downtown Program Manager at gary.holloway@vermont.gov or 802-522-2444.

Eligible Designated Village Centers

- Bethel, Brighton, Chester, Danville, Enosburgh, Essex Junction, Fairlee, Hinesburg, Hyde Park, Jericho Riverside, Lyndon, Moretown, Northfield, Poultney, St Albans Town, Underhill Flats, Waitsfield, Warren, Westford, West Rutland

Timeline

- Grant Announcement: December 2023
- State Historic Preservation Review completed prior to application deadline (allow 30 days)
- Application Deadline: February 19, 2024 @ 5:00 p.m.
- Award Decisions: April 2024

Eligibility and Standard Provisions

- Eligible municipalities include:
 - Municipalities with a [State Designated Downtown District](#)
 - Municipalities with a [State Designated Village Center that have participated in the Better Connections Program](#)
 - Municipalities with a Designated Village Center in Chittenden County that have completed a comprehensive downtown/village center/community area planning process with public input, comparable to the Better Connections Program.
- Proposed projects must be on municipally owned land.

- Projects must be within or serving an eligible State Designated Downtown District or a qualified Village Center.
- The maximum grant award for a municipality is \$200,000.
- Eligible costs may include acquisition, demolition, design and engineering, project management, permitting, and environmental remediation when an essential element of an eligible project and cost is incurred after grant agreement is in place. Historic preservation review (building project assessments and archaeological investigations) costs are also eligible.
- Grant funds may **not** exceed 80% of the overall project cost and a 20% cash match is required.
- In-kind costs are an eligible source of matching funds.
- Grant funds may **not** be used to pay for costs incurred prior to the grant award.
- Grants funds may **not** be used for general operating and maintenance costs such as repaving or administrative costs.
- Municipalities are ineligible to receive funding if they have two or more active Downtown Transportation Fund grants.
- Grantees are ineligible to receive funding if they are (a) suspended or debarred by the State or Federal Government; (b) delinquent in submitting their sub-recipient annual reports; or (c) delinquent in submitting their Single Audit Reports (if required).

Funding Alternatives

Additional project funding may be available through the [Vermont State Infrastructure Bank](#) that provides below market rates, currently 1%, to municipalities for qualified transportation related improvements. For additional information please contact the Vermont Economic Development Authority at info@veda.org or 802-828-5627.

The [Designated Downtown and Village Center Funding Directory](#) provides a list of other grant programs and funding sources that can support your community and project. You can also keep up to date on new grant opportunities and initiatives by subscribing to our newsletter [here](#).

Project Readiness

Projects must be under construction within 24 months and completed within 36 months of the date of award. Projects involving Right of Way (ROW) acquisitions or railroad crossings, must provide evidence that necessary permits and property agreements are in place. A list of other required permits necessary for the project and the status of the permits is a component of the application. Applications without clear evidence to prove project readiness will be invited to re-apply at a subsequent application round.

Phased Projects

Phased projects are allowed, provided that each phase of the project is self-contained and does not require completion of another phase to serve the project's intended function. Applications for subsequent phases compete with other applications on an equal basis. When planning a phased project, keep in mind that municipalities are ineligible to receive funding if they have two or more active Downtown Transportation Fund grants.

Historic Preservation Review

The Vermont Historic Preservation Act (22 V.S.A. Chapter 14) requires consultation for projects with state funding, licenses, or permits with the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP). The project review consists of evaluating the project's potential impacts to historic buildings and structures, districts, landscapes and settings, and known

or potential archaeological resources. **To aid in this review, a DTF Historic Preservation Project Review form is a component of the application. The review form, project plans and maps, and site photographs should be submitted to VDHP a minimum of 30 days prior to the DTF application deadline to allow for sufficient review time to identify if an architectural historian or archaeological consultant (qualified preservation consultant) will be required.** Any associated costs should be included in the application project budget. If awarded a grant, final plan review by VDHP or other conditions may be included in your grant agreement if it has been determined that the project has the potential to impact historic resources.

Please note if the project involves federal or other state funding or permitting (therefore subject to Section 106 or Act 250), the historic preservation review by VDHP will need to be coordinated with the appropriate agencies.

Please contact VDHP for consultation and review of your Historic Preservation Project Review Form and include the form (Appendix G) in your application. Please contact VDHP at accd.projectreview@vermont.gov.

Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) Review

Staff from the Vermont Agency of Transportation will review applications after submittal to access project schedule and readiness, budget, and other technical aspects of the project.

Amendment Policy

Minor alterations to the work plan, approved budget, or schedule may be allowed but only upon written request and approval. Substantial alterations are not allowed, and the end product must remain the same. Projects that cannot be completed within the grant period under the terms of the grant agreement will be rescinded. The grant will cover eligible work completed and documented costs, however, ineligible or undocumented costs will not be funded, and associated funds must be returned.

Applicants are encouraged to set up a pre-application meeting to discuss project ideas and eligibility with Gary Holloway, Downtown Program Manager at gary.holloway@vermont.gov or 802-522-2444.

Competitive Scoring Criteria

All applications are scored based on the following scoring criteria that correspond to sections of the program application. Scores for each of the criteria may land anywhere within the range of points (i.e. a max score of 15 for one of the criteria may score anywhere between 1-15 points).

(Max 75 points)

Project Scope (15 points)

The application clearly explains the project scope, how the project will be implemented, and identifies what changes or improvements will be made that benefit the downtown district. The application describes the existing conditions and how the project intends to improve these conditions such as safety enhancements, improved access for pedestrians and bicyclists, fill missing links in transportation networks, expand or improve multi-modal infrastructure, create new streetscape amenities, etc.

0 - Project scope not included in application or unrealistic scope lacking detail on what changes or improvements will be made and how it will benefit the downtown district.

8 - Less-informative project scope, but with some details that explains what changes or improvements will be made and explains how it will benefit the downtown.

15 - Well developed, clear and focused, well-documented project scope with strong description of what changes or improvements will be made and clearly explains how the project will benefit the downtown.

Budget (5 points)

The application provides a detailed budget narrative and work sheet that includes all funding sources and expected expenses including labor, material, contingencies, and other eligible project expenses. The proposed budget matches the scope of the project and budget estimates are based on credible construction costs.

0 - Uninformative and/or unrealistic budget that lacks details on project expenses.

3 - Complete budget outlining expenditures but shows discrepancies and/or project expenses are unrealistic or not clearly documented or explained.

5 - Well developed, well-documented budget that clearly explains all funding sources, project expenses are logical and match the scope of the project.

Project Readiness (5 points)

The application provides a detailed schedule that includes a list of tasks with dates for key project activities like securing funding, municipal authorization, permitting, design, construction, and other project details. The application provides a feasible and realistic project timeline demonstrating the project can be completed within the required time frame. If the project is phased, the phases are self-contained, are logical and well-defined.

0 - Uninformative and/or unrealistic schedule, incomplete items and lacks details.

3 – Fairly well developed and documented with list of scheduled tasks but lacks detail demonstrating project readiness and/or phases are not self-contained.

5 - Well developed, well-documented schedule with a detailed list of tasks with dates identified for key project activities. Demonstrates project readiness and ability to complete the project within grant terms.

Public Benefit (25 points)

The application identifies a clear need in the downtown that will have a long-term positive impact on community revitalization and development efforts beyond a singular transportation investment. The project clearly describes the intended transportation related benefits to economic, social, and community impacts.

0 - Poorly developed and does not describe the intended economic, social, or community impact nor its impact on community revitalization and development efforts.

10 - Describes the intended economic, social, and community impact but responses are not well developed or connected to local community revitalization or community development efforts.

18 - Clearly explains the intended economic, social, and community impact and explains the overall impact on local community revitalization and development efforts.

25 - Excellent connection to public benefit that identifies how project will address multiple needs and have multiple impacts and includes data/facts to back up any needs met, or impacts made by the project.

Prior Planning (15 points)

The application clearly describes how this project will implement the ideas and actions identified in other planning efforts or how it will build on previous planning efforts and/or complimentary efforts of activities. Excerpts are provided from prior community planning processes and documents identifying the project as a clear community priority.

0 - Application does not clearly describe how this project implements ideas and actions identified in other community efforts or activities.

8 - Application mentions previous planning and project efforts but relevancy to proposed project is weak and/or previous efforts are over 10 years old.

15 - Application clearly builds off ongoing community efforts and relevant planning efforts. Previous planning document/report excerpts are provided that identifies project as a major priority. There is momentum, a clear sense of direction, and success in past efforts.

Public Outreach (5 points)

The application identifies how the project has and will engage with and serve community members in an equitable and inclusive process that connects with diverse socioeconomic groups, under-served, and under-represented populations in the community. Competitive applications will demonstrate how public outreach demonstrated direct support of the project.

0 - No community engagement or public outreach; or only required public hearings or routine meetings. No mention of equity and/or inclusiveness.

3 - Some community engagement or public outreach; documentation is fair but not convincing demonstrating community support of the project

5 - Active outreach with the community throughout the project lifecycle demonstrating strong support of the project. A clear description of how the project engaged with the community, including under-represented community members, is identified.

Project Partnerships (5 points)

The application identifies the project team, the community partnerships, and supporting organizations working together to advance the project.

0 - Key partnerships are not outlined. Coordination with local stakeholders or partner organizations not mentioned or explained. Local support is weak or not clearly documented.

3 - Partnerships are identified but support or coordination is not clearly defined or convincing.

5 - Partnerships with key stakeholder groups are described and integrated into the project. Coordination efforts with local stakeholders and partner organizations are detailed. Local project support is clearly identified and documented.

Downtown Transportation Fund Grant

2024 Grant Application

Please submit one electronic copy of the complete application to accd.cpr@vermont.gov. The application must contain the following information:

Project Overview

Municipality name: _____

Project name: _____

Total Project Cost: _____

Amount of Downtown Transportation Funds Requested: _____

Match Amount: _____

Primary Contact

Name: _____ Title: _____

Mailing address: _____ Zip code: _____

Email address: _____ Phone number: _____

Project location

Describe the project's location with address, ownership and site control, site conditions, and why this location was selected. Please include site maps or site plans, illustrations, and images to illustrate the project's location in the appendices to the application.

- 1) Is the project located on municipally owned property? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2) Is the project located within or serving a state designated downtown district? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 3) Is the project located within or directly serving a state designated village center that has completed a Better Connections Program planning process? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 4) Is the project located within or directly serving a state designated village center in Chittenden County that has completed a community planning process similar to the Better Connections Program? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 5) Is the project part of a larger capital improvement project? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 6) If yes, please describe the project phasing:

Project Description

Concisely describe the project and explain the project's expected outcomes.

Competitive Scoring Criteria

Project Scope, Budget, and Project Readiness (25 points)

Project Scope (15 points)

Briefly describe the scope of your project. What changes or improvements will be made to improve existing conditions such as safety enhancements, improved access to pedestrians and bicyclists, fill missing links in transportation networks, expand or improve multi-modal infrastructure, create new streetscape amenities, etc.?

Budget (5 points)

Provide a budget narrative below and **complete the detailed budget sheet in Appendix A** that includes all funding sources for the project and expected expenses and costs including labor, material, contingencies, design, engineering and other eligible project expenses. Explain how you developed the costs in your budget and any relevant sources that informed the budgeting process.

Project Readiness (5 points)

Provide a brief narrative of the project schedule demonstrating readiness and ability to start and complete the project within the grant terms. If you are managing multiple projects, please describe how you intend to manage the project to ensure project quality and completion within the grant period. **Please complete the project schedule in Appendix B** and provide a list of tasks with dates for key project activities like securing funding, public outreach, partner organization activities, permitting, design, construction, and other timeline details.

Public Benefit (25 points)

Please describe how this project addresses an identified need in your community and will have a long-lasting positive impact on the downtown or village center. Explain how the project will improve the downtown experience for residents and visitors to the downtown or village center area and have a positive economic impact on businesses and the community. Competitive applications will demonstrate how the project will have a greater community impact beyond a singular transportation investment and help further local revitalization efforts.

Prior Planning, Public Outreach & Project Partnerships (25 points)

Downtown transportation projects are more successful when there is thoughtful planning and public outreach demonstrating strong community support, and when they are done in partnership with organizations outside the municipal government when appropriate. Competitive applications will demonstrate how prior planning and public outreach demonstrated support of the project leading to recommendations for implementation.

Prior Planning (15 points)

Please describe how this project will implement the ideas and actions identified in other planning efforts or how it will build on previous planning efforts and/or complimentary efforts or activities. Include excerpts from planning documents such as downtown master plans, Better Connections reports or other planning documents and studies that clearly identifies the project as a community priority.

Public Outreach (5 points)

Please describe public outreach efforts to engage with and serve community members in an equitable and inclusive process. Explain how you have or will connect with diverse socioeconomic groups, under-served, and under-represented populations in the community.

Partnerships (5 points)

Please describe project partner involvement and/or support of the project. Describe the involvement of other partners in the project both public and private who are either directly involved or in support of the project and describe what role they are playing.

Attachment Checklist

- ☐ Budget Worksheet
- ☐ Project Schedule
- ☐ List of Required Permits
- ☐ Project Site Plan
- ☐ Conceptual Design
- ☐ Color Photographs
- ☐ Municipal Resolution
- ☐ Project Review Sheet
- ☐ DTF Historic Preservation Project Review Form

Date Submitted: _____ VDHP Review Received: _____

Financial Management

Please note that responses to the following questions will not impact the competitiveness of your application and will be used for grant administration purposes only.

Does your municipality have an accounting system that will allow you to completely and accurately track the receipt and disbursements of funds related to the award?

- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

What type of accounting system does your municipality use?

- ☐ **Automated** ☐ **Manual** ☐ **Combination of both**

Required Attachments

The application must contain the following attachments:

Site Plan, Design and Photographs

- ☐ Attach a project site plan that includes the [boundary of the downtown or village center district](#), buildings, streets, and the location of the project clearly marked. You can search your designated area boundary here. (See Appendix C for sample site map.)
- ☐ Attach a conceptual design that details the scope of work. The conceptual design must be created using CAD or other professional design tool that shows specific details pertinent to the project and must be to scale. (See Appendix D for sample conceptual designs.)
- ☐ Attach labeled, color photographs of the project site and surroundings, especially adjacent or nearby buildings impacted by the project. If the project involves or impacts historic resources (buildings and sites), include photos of elements or materials that will be removed, altered, or repaired. Photographs should be labeled with the project name or description, location/address, and the view (e.g., Streetscape Extension Project, Main Street, SW.jpg).

Construction Schedule and Budget

- ☐ Complete the detailed project schedule (See Appendix B) that demonstrates that the project will be under construction within 24 months of the date of award and completed within 36 months of the date of award. (See Appendix E for a sample project schedule.)
- ☐ Complete the detailed budget worksheet (See Appendix A) itemizing the scope of work and the sources and amounts of all project funds. Indicate the unit cost and total cost of each item in the budget.

Permits, Project Review Sheet, Historic Preservation Project Review Form and Municipal Resolution

- ☐ Provide a complete list of all required permits and the status of each.
- ☐ Provide a completed Project Review Sheet. The form can be filled out online by visiting <https://vermont.force.com/permitnavigator/s/>. Please note that the Project Review Sheet is for Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) related permits only.
- ☐ Attach a copy of the municipal resolution showing the project and application are authorized by the municipality. (See Appendix F)
- ☐ Provide an approved DTF Historic Preservation Project Review form. (See Appendix G)

Appendix A

Budget Worksheet

Complete the budget form, itemizing the scope of work and the sources and amounts of all project funds. Indicate the unit cost and total cost of each item in the budget. Please indicate the status of each funding source. For larger projects, clearly identify the portion of work that this grant will be applied to.

Note: The amount requested may not exceed 80% of the total project cost. There is a required 20% match. Local, federal and in-kind costs may be used as part of the match requirement as long as they are not being used as any other funding match.

Itemized Project Budget

[illegible]

Funding Sources

Funding Source	Status of Funding	Amount
Downtown Transportation Fund		
Total		

Appendix B

Project Schedule

Complete the project schedule form with dates of completion for items such as permits, funding decisions, design, RFP, construction, and other important project details. (See Appendix E for a sample project schedule.)

[illegible]

List of Required Permits

Provide a complete list of all required permits and the status of each.

Permit Description	Status	See Attachment

Appendix C

Sample Site Map



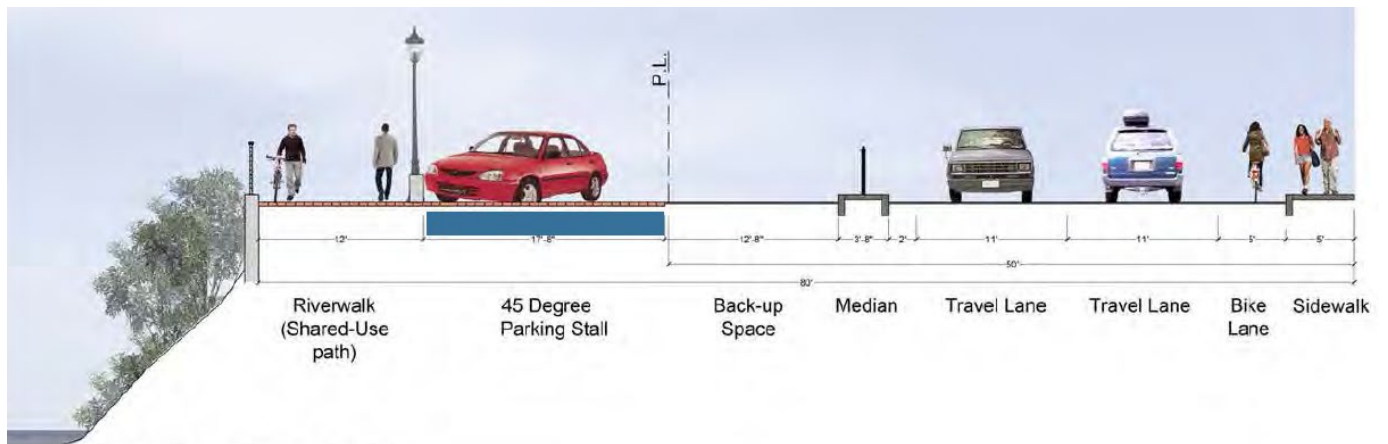
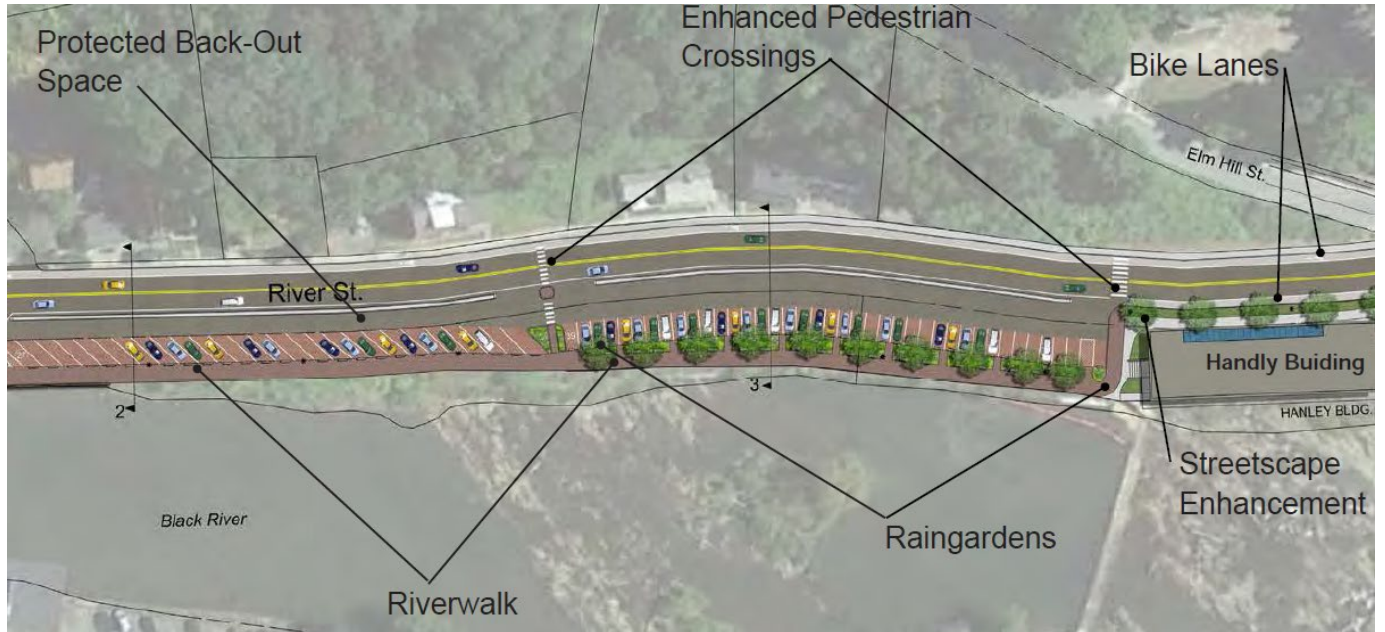
Appendix D

Sample Conceptual Design



Appendix D

Sample Conceptual Design



Appendix E

Sample Project Schedule

July 2023

- Purchased subject property (Completed).
- Submitted brownfield application (Completed)
- Submitted Environmental Review documents as required for the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recover II grant (CDBG-DR2) (Completed)

September 2024

- Draft contract to develop construction and bid documents integrating both the civil and environmental elements (Completed)
- Finalized negotiations with Vermont Rail and V-Trans Rail Division for land swap agreement (Completed)

March 2024

- Municipality (with assistance from the downtown organization) submits application to CDBG-DR2 for \$1M for site clean-up and reconstruction of project area
- Municipality applies for a \$100,000 Downtown Transportation Fund (DTF) grant through the Vermont Downtown Program
- Anticipate decision from DTF regarding grant application

May 2024

- Construction/Bid documents ready
- Submit permit applications (Municipal, Act 250, Section 106)

June 2024

- Anticipate decision from CDBG-DR2 regarding redevelopment grant

September 2024

- Anticipate final permit decisions

November 2024

- Distribute bid documents

December 2024

- Receive bids and select contractor

May 2025

- Begin street reconstruction

September 2025

- Complete construction

Appendix F

Municipal Resolution for Downtown Transportation Fund

WHEREAS, the Municipality of _____ is applying for funding as provided for in the State of Vermont FY 2024 Budget Act and may receive an award of funds under said provisions; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Housing and Community Development may offer a Grant Agreement to this Municipality for said funding; and

WHEREAS, the municipality has agreed to provide local funds for a downtown transportation grant.

Now, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

1. That the Legislative Body of this Municipality enters into and agrees to the requirements and obligations of this grant program including a commitment to match funds of 20% of total project cost;
2. That the Municipal Planning Commission recommends applying for said Grant;

(Name of Planning Commission Chair)

(Signature)

Passed this _____ day of _____, _____.

LEGISLATIVE BODY*

(name)		(signature)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESOLUTION FORM

- A. The Legislative Body of the Municipality must adopt this resolution or one that will have the same effect. This Form may be filled in or the adopted Resolution may be typed on municipal letterhead, filling in the name of the municipality and the Legislative Body (e.g., Board of Selectmen).
- B. Following formal adoption, the Resolution must be signed by a majority of the legislative body. The Chair of the Planning Commission must also sign upon endorsement by vote of the Planning Commission.
- C. This form must be included in the grant application e-mailed to accd.cpr@vermont.gov.

Appendix G

DTF HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROJECT REVIEW FORM

Vermont Division for Historic Preservation Downtown Transportation Fund – Community Planning & Revitalization Division

The Vermont Historic Preservation Act (22 VSA chapter 14) directs any agency, department, division, or commission to consult with the Vermont Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (VACHP) before demolishing, altering, or transferring any property that is potentially of historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural significance; and states that the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), through the administration of Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP), shall cooperate with state agencies in the planning and conduct of specific undertakings affecting historic properties and preservation objectives. The VACHP delegated to VDHP the authority to consult with Community Planning & Revitalization Division (CP&R) of the Department of Housing and Community Development within the Agency of Commerce and Community Development to review and resolve any impacts to historic resources (buildings and sites) in accord with state law.

The Downtown Transportation Fund (DTF) is a financing tool that assists municipalities in paying for transportation-related capital improvements within or serving a Designated Downtown and eligible Designated Village Centers. Investment in the infrastructure of public spaces stimulates private investment and creates a sense of identity and pride in Downtowns and Village Centers across Vermont.

For questions about the historic preservation review process please contact VDHP at accd.projectreview@vermont.gov. For questions about the DTF program and application please contact Gary Holloway at gary.holloway@vermont.gov.

To start the DTF historic preservation review process, please complete this form and submit it, with the information requested below, to VDHP at accd.projectreview@vermont.gov.

1. Applicant Contact Information:

a. Name:

b. Organization:

c. Email address:

d. Phone number:

2. Building/Project site information:

a. Project/Building name:

b. Property owner:

c. Address:

d. GIS Coordinates (when available):

3. Please provide a short description of the proposed project:

4. Project information:

- a. Project involves ground disturbance: Yes ☐ No ☐
- b. Building is more than fifty (50) years old: Yes ☐ No ☐
- c. Historic Resource is listed in the State or National Registers of Historic Places (check [Online Resource Center](#)):
Unsure ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ In Historic District ☐
- d. Project involves other public funding or permitting: Yes ☐ No ☐

Please list other federal or state agencies involved in the project:

5. Type of review requested:

- a. ☐ Preliminary/conceptual review
- b. ☐ Final documentation review

6. Please also submit:

- a. ☐ Project location map (can be annotated google map or similar)
- b. ☐ Site map (including proposed ground disturbance)
- c. ☐ Project design plans
- d. ☐ Photographs of project area and historic resource(s) when applicable/available please submit
- e. ☐ Material Spec sheets
- f. ☐ Archaeological Reports
- g. ☐ Architectural Reports

Please email this form and supporting materials to ACCD.ProjectReview@vermont.gov

TO BE COMPLETED BY VDHP:

- ☐ Determination of Eligibility
- a. SHPO determination of eligibility for State Register of Historic Places
- Yes ☐ Individually Yes ☐ In Historic District No ☐

Date of DOE and Staff: _____

Comments:

- ☐ No Historic Properties Affected
- ☐ No Historic Resource Present in Area of Potential Effect
- ☐ Work will have No Effect on Historic Resource
- ☐ Historic Properties Affected
- ☐ Qualified Professional Historic Preservation Consultant will be required
- ☐ Qualified Professional Archeological Consultant will be required
- ☐ Archeological Resource Assessment (ARA) required
- ☐ Phase 1 archeological investigation required
- ☐ No Adverse Effect
- ☐ Conditions: _____

DATE: _____

- ☐ Adverse Effect
- ☐ VACHP consultation required
- DATE: _____
- ☐ Project MOA or other agreement docs executed
- DATE: _____
- ☐ Grant Conditions: _____

DATE: _____

- ☐ Concur with Final Design Plans and/or completed conditions

DATE: _____

Comments/Justification Related to Requirements:

☐ Preliminary/conceptual Approval

☐ Final Documentation Approval

**any project changes not included as part of this review must be evaluated by VDHP prior to construction/implementation*

X: _____
For: **Vermont Division for Historic Preservation**