

To: **Mayor and City Council**
From: **Nate Burkett, City Manager/Executive Director**
Date: **June 14, 2021**

Economic Development Strategy and Work Planning

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

West. St. Paul has seen a large amount of growth in commercial and multi-family residential development over the last several years. In particular, much of that development has come following completion of the Robert Street improvements. Most of the larger open spaces available for development have now had projects approved and most are in the ground being built at this moment. There remain approximately three or four sites that may be viable for what is considered larger scale redevelopment, what remains are targets of opportunity.

To a great degree we create our own opportunity by knowing what we want, and by being prepared. To that end, an overarching theme of this plan is to be prepared to take advantage when market circumstances make taking action advantageous for the community. This means helping existing businesses expand and thrive, actively recruiting new businesses that “fit” and staying closely connected to real estate and development market conditions.

The plan below is an early draft of a work plan for the Community Development department. It is not intended to be all encompassing, or to be at an actionable level of detail. The request of the Mayor and Council is to review, course correct if necessary, and give direction to the City Manager/Executive Director as more detailed/targeted planning will continue.

1. Smaller, Tailored (Re)development
 - a. Identify redevelopment and bare land areas, prioritize, identify the desired use for each (i.e. residential, mixed use, etc...)
 - b. Actively pursue interests in potential redevelopment sites
2. Existing Businesses Support, Retention and Expansion
 - a. Build partnerships with federal, state, county and non-profit agencies and actively market opportunities to existing businesses
 - b. Develop and implement business appreciation/recognition program(s)
 - c. Identify potential cluster areas (i.e. retail, restaurant, business type) to build on symbiotic business relationships
3. Business Recruitment
 - a. Develop a marketing plan and marketing toolbox
 - b. Build a wish list and a bench of desired businesses/restaurants
 - c. Build and maintain a list of available sites (rental and redevelopment)
4. Housing Stability and Improvement
 - a. Build partnerships with federal, state, county and non-profit agencies to ensure housing stability

- b. Explore housing improvement area options, grants, etc... to maintain/rehab housing stock
- 5. Governance
 - a. Ensure that policies, marketing and actions take in to account demographic changes in the community – align plans toward current and future demographics, identify market gaps that may exist and ensure focus on closing them
 - b. Targeted zoning updates to facilitate walkability, aesthetics, and business retention/recruitment
 - c. Align existing plans (comprehensive, renaissance, parks, etc) with zoning code and day-to-day practices
 - d. Evaluate business subsidy policies and practices

FISCAL IMPACT:

NA

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss and provide direction.