



Executive Summary

Economic Development Authority

AGENDA ITEM:	Staff Report - Business Visit
PREPARED BY:	Kevin Larson, Assistant City Administrator
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	No action required

Assistant City Administrator Larson conducted an onsite 30-minute business visit with Spikes & Houles store manager Tonya Kittleson. The intent was to better understand current operations, challenges, and future needs. We walked throughout the store speaking about the current business environment/operations, facility needs, economic trends and the future.

- Staffing: Contrary to other retail chains, Spikes & Houles has shifted from part-time employees to more full-time employees. Part-time schedules have proven to be an obstacle for hours of operation.
- Customer base: There is an avoidance to big box stores and an emphasis on shopping local. Spikes & Houles serves Maple Plain residents and the surrounding cities. Spikes & Houles continue to see foot traffic increase year over year. Customers are asking for an expanded hardware department. Curbside & DoorDash sales continue to grow.
- Supply chain: Supply chain continues to be a challenge. Spikes & Houles retail schedule doesn't align with the larger vendors. Working with large established vendors continues to be an obstacle.
- Expansion or renovations: In 2027, Spikes & Houles is planning on renovating the greenhouses and levelling the parking lot. Parking availability continues to be an opportunity to overcome. They are considering adding additional access to the patio.
- Barriers: Space is a barrier. There is not any room to expand the footprint of the store. Another barrier, east bound Highway 12 customers have difficulty finding the business.
- Where can the city help?
 - When the time comes to renovate the greenhouse and level the parking lot, Kittleson will reach out to the City to help navigate the permitting process.