

## Administration

To: Finance Committee, CC: Mayor Stocks

From: Mason Becker, Manager of Economic Development and Strategic Initiatives

Date: August 11, 2025

Subject: RDA Citywide Sign Grant Program

## Background

The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Watertown has been discussing for some time the possibility of a citywide signage improvement program. Recognizing that signage for a business can be a major expense, the idea of creating this program generated support among the RDA board.

As proposed, this program would cover the entire city, except for the historic downtown district, which is already served by the Façade and Sign Grant Programs offered by the Watertown Main Street Program.

Previous discussion at the Finance Committee regarding potential uses of the remaining portion of City funds from Tax Increment District (TID) #4 included this program as an option for funding.

The RDA Executive Director worked to draft wording for the program application, which was reviewed by then City Attorney Steven Chesebro. RDA Chair Ryan Wagner also provided input.

At the July 16, 2025 RDA meeting, the RDA board approved moving forward with the program, with some minor wording changes that have been incorporated into the application document. One of these changes removed the previous request for the RDA to receive a small administrative fee for facilitating the program.

## Budget Goal

Fosters community growth by assessing opportunities, stakeholder input, environmental needs, and modern code and policy priorities

## Financial Impact

Funding has been proposed to come from closeout funds remaining from TID #4. Signage improvements to public property may serve an economic benefit to the community and help increase property values.

## Recommendation

Recommend that the Common Council approve the RDA Citywide Sign Grant Program and allocate \$25,000.00 of TID #4 closeout funds to the program.