

Administration

To: Common Council, CC: Mayor McFarland

From: Mason Becker, Strategic Initiatives and Development Coordinator

Date: November 4, 2024

Subject: WEDC Small Business Development Grant application

Background

As alders are aware, the City has been preparing for the 2028 reconstruction of Main Street. As part of that process, the Downtown Main Street Task Force has identified and taken steps to help ensure our downtown businesses are ready when that project occurs. One major topic of consideration has been ensuring that residents and customers will still have appropriate access to downtown businesses and properties during the reconstruction. With that, the Executive Director of the Watertown Main Street Program has proposed applying for a grant through WEDC and creating a local Back Door Accessibility Grant program, which downtown property owners will be able to apply for, to improve accessibility, safety, or appearance of back door spaces, alleys, and loading zones.

As according to WEDC staff, a municipality must be the official applicant, the City of Watertown would be applying for this grant, and the Main Street Program will be a collaborator and administrator of the program.

Budget Goal

Promotes and fosters innovative approaches for community development and growth

Financial Impact

Grant award will be for up to \$250,000.00. The Watertown Main Street Program will administer the Back Door Accessibility Grant, if this grant application is successful. There is no expected direct financial impact to the City, though businesses and residents will benefit from the results of this grant program.

Recommendation

At its meeting on October 21, 2024, the Finance Committee moved this resolution to the Common Council for final approval, with a provision that the SIDC and Main Street Director check

on the wording of the application submission. The attached email from Jason Scott at WEDC confirms that the language used in the application was acceptable.