THE CITY OF WATERTOWN
PARKS, RECREATION, & FORESTRY

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Memo

To: Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission
From: Ryan Schmidt, Director
Date: November 16, 2026
Subject: Approval to apply for WEDC Vibrant Spaces Grant

The Parks, Recreation & Forestry (PRF) Department along with the Manager of Economic Development and Strategic Initiatives, Deb Sybell, are seeking approval to apply for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation's (WEDC) Vibrant Spaces Grant. The Vibrant Spaces Grant, an element of WEDC's Community Development Investment Grant Program, is designed to assist communities in creating vibrant and engaging spaces that make it easier to recruit and retain residents, sustain a robust labor force, and enhance local quality of life. Grants in amounts from $25,000 to $50,000 are available to help local communities develop and enhance public spaces.

After an initial brainstorming meeting, two project ideas that are internally viewed as a strong alignment with the Vibrant Spaces Grant were generated. If all necessary approvals to apply for the Vibrant Spaces Grant are obtained City Staff will work with a WEDC representative to select the project the has the best chance at succeeding.

Should the City of Watertown be awarded grant funding, the WEDC Vibrant Spaces Grant requires awarded applicants to provide a 1:1 match of the grant amount. The maximum amount that the City would be required to match is $50,000. The City's matching $50,000 component would likely be funded through 2027 PRF Department CIP funds.