

# CITY OF WASHINGTON

## PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairman Howell and Economic Development Commission  
FROM: Jon R. Oliphant, AICP, Planning & Development Director  
SUBJECT: January 2021 Meeting Items  
DATE: January 18, 2021

Here is a summary of the items we plan on discussing at the next EDC meeting on January 21:

- **2020 Summary and Review.** The last four years have seen very consistent building permit totals. There were 17 new residential permits issued in 2020 and 15 commercial/industrial permits. New residential growth has had little variation with anywhere from 17 to 19 permits issued annually since 2017. Non-residential expansions/renovations/new construction has also had consistent activity, with 13 to 17 permits issued per year since 2016. These totals are in line with a general reduction in new construction across the region for several years. Among the more prominent projects within the city limits are those for Beck Oil and Sunrise Roofing.
- **2021 Planned Projects.** The City was awarded a Statewide Planning and Research grant from IDOT to pay for 80% of the Comprehensive and Collaborative Land Use, Economic Development, and Transportation Plan. The City's last comprehensive plan was completed in 2001, though the future land use and thoroughfare plan maps were updated in 2009. There has been substantial growth during that time and with a few significant capital improvement projects on the horizon, this is a great time to undertake such a plan. It is anticipated to be completed in early 2022. Focus will be given to three particular sub-areas: Nofsinger Road/US 24, Business Route 24, and Freedom Parkway/Lakeshore Drive. Additionally, the City's Square TIF District is currently set to expire at the end of 2021. It was extended for 12 years in 2009 following the support of the impacted taxing districts and the approval of State legislation. The same process is required for a second extension and staff has been reaching out to each of the taxing bodies to see if they would be supportive of having this tool in place through 2033.
- **Washington Business Grants.** A variety of funding programs have been made available at the federal and state levels over the past year to address the impact on businesses from COVID-19. The Payroll Protection Program offers loans to help businesses keep their workforce employed during this time. The Downstate Small Business Stabilization program provides 60 days of working capital for small businesses that are considered non-essential by the Governor's Executive Order. The Business Interruption Grant program has had two rounds of funding aimed towards helping business expenses such as payroll, rent, utilities, and other operations. The Hospitality Emergency Grant Program was aimed at offsetting working capital expenses at bars, restaurants, caterers, and hotels. Finally, the City received an Economic Support grant from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to establish a local grant program that provided funds for eligible bakeries, bars, caterers, and restaurants for reimbursement for occupancy and/or utilities. These programs have all been established very quickly and it is feasible that there may be new programs rolled out in 2021 to address continuing impacts from COVID.
- **City Marketing Plan.** The City has partnered with Business Building Marketing since mid-November to help digitally promote the business community. The initial focus is on advertising through Facebook and Google. The rollout prior to the holidays helped drive traffic during a vital shopping period while the first quarter of any new is typically a much slower time for many businesses. This will establish a standard, consistent marketing foundation that will then allow for expansion of the digital footprint. This is intended to be compatible with the Chamber's marketing, which is more focused on print and broadcast media. Further advertising may include the creation and dissemination of multiple videos on a variety of topics.