



09-4578

RACINE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** The City of Racine Finance and Personnel Committee  
**FROM:** Kristin Niemiec, Community Development Manager  
Racine County Economic Development Corporation  
**DATE:** January 11, 2010  
**SUBJECT:** Commercial Corridor Contract Update

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The purpose of this memorandum is to provide you with an update on the 2009 and 2010 projects underway within the City of Racine Commercial Corridors relative to RCEDC's Commercial Corridor contract with the City of Racine.

**West Racine**

**2009:**

1. RCEDC Staff worked with three potential developers for the redevelopment site at Grove Avenue and West Boulevard.
2. The Clue Group market analysis that will guide the District's attraction efforts for the empty storefronts was completed in October with the final report expected the week of January 18<sup>th</sup>.
3. The Business Improvement District (BID) was approved for its fourth year by City Council in October, which will generate \$21,000 for the District.
4. Continued promotion of the City of Racine façade grant program and RCEDC financing programs.
5. Provided management and technical assistance to the West Racine BID Board.

**2010:**

1. A four month option on the redevelopment site at Grove Avenue and West Boulevard has been granted to Tom Tousis for construction of a gas station convenient store. This proposal will continue through the City's approval process during first quarter 2010.
2. RCEDC Staff along with the West Racine BID Board will begin developing strategies for implementing the recommendations outline in the Clue Group "playbook."
3. Assistance to the BID Board for continuation of the beautification program that includes flower plantings, weed killing, banners and holiday lights. As well as marketing of the Farmers Market and business district.
4. Continued management and technical assistance to the West Racine BID Board.

## **Uptown**

### **2009:**

1. The renovation of 1526 Washington Avenue was completed, the façade of 1418 Washington Avenue began and the roof replacement on 1511 Washington Avenue was bid.
2. Installation of the second public art project, "The Last of Ike" at 1247 Washington Avenue.
3. Confirmation by Art Space, a national developer for the arts, that the Uptown Artist Relocation Program is a viable project.
4. City Council approved the Uptown BID's 2010 Operating Plan, which will generate approximately \$38,000 in revenue in 2010.
5. Assistance in the creation of Tax Increment Financing District #16, providing another financing mechanism for capital improvements
6. The City received a grant of \$500,000 from S.C. Johnson towards the continued revitalization of Uptown.
7. Provided management and technical assistance to the Uptown BID Board and Uptown Improvement Organization Board.

### **2010:**

1. Art Space has recommended conducting a survey of local and regional artists to determine their needs for live/work space. It is anticipated that the survey will be conducted in early 2010.
2. The landscaping around "The Last of Ike" will be completed in spring of 2010 by a partnership between the City of Racine and the Uptown BID Board with the BID Board committing to its ongoing maintenance.
3. Completion of the façade restoration at 1418 Washington Avenue and roof replacement at 1511 Washington Avenue.
4. Determine course of action for 1526 Washington Avenue and 1130 Washington Avenue.
5. RCEDC Staff continues to provide management and technical assistance to both the BID Board and the Uptown Improvement District (UIO) Board of Directors.

## **Douglas Avenue**

### **2009:**

1. City Council approved the Douglas Avenue BID, which generated just under \$70,000 in funds for the revitalization of the District.
2. The BID Board created three new grant programs within the District for lighting, landscaping and design services.
3. In September, the City Department of Public Works applied for a \$16.2 million TIGER grant from the Federal Department of Transportation that if successful would reconstruct Douglas Avenue from 3 Mile Road to State Street with a level of improvements comparable to Sixth Street. RCEDC staff reviewed the application and

provided a letter of support on behalf of the Douglas BID and Douglas Avenue Redevelopment Association (DARA) Boards.

4. Provided management and technical assistance to the Douglas Avenue BID Board and the DARA Board of Directors.

**2010:**

1. The BID requested and City Council approval its continuation into 2010.
2. The TIGER grant, if received, will have a significant impact on the District therefore the BID Board is actively discussing ways to promote the District should major construction disrupt traffic. A decision on the grant is expected in February.
3. RCEDC staff continues to coordinate the technical matters, administrative issues, grant writing, neighborhood outreach and performing liaison activities with the community and government. Public involvement with the Plan was extensive and will need to continue throughout the process to implement the Plan with success.

**State Street**

**2009:**

1. On March 11, 2009, President Obama signed the Department of Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act that included a Neighborhood Initiative grant in the amount of \$950,000 for the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Racine. This grant application was written and submitted by RCEDC Staff.

**2010:**

1. The Neighborhood Initiative grant will be used for the purchase and demolition of blighted properties, street beautification and the restoration of the west platform at the Chicago-Northwestern Railroad Depot. RCEDC has submitted the necessary documentation to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for the grant and upon confirmation, acquisition of properties will begin.