



BUSINESS & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Council Report

Kara Alnasrawi, Director

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Burlington, Vermont, taken at dusk or dawn. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The city features a mix of historic and modern buildings, with a prominent church steeple on the left and a modern building on the right. The background shows a dense forest and distant mountains under a twilight sky. The text "UPDATE ON CURRENT SITUATION" is centered in a white, sans-serif font.

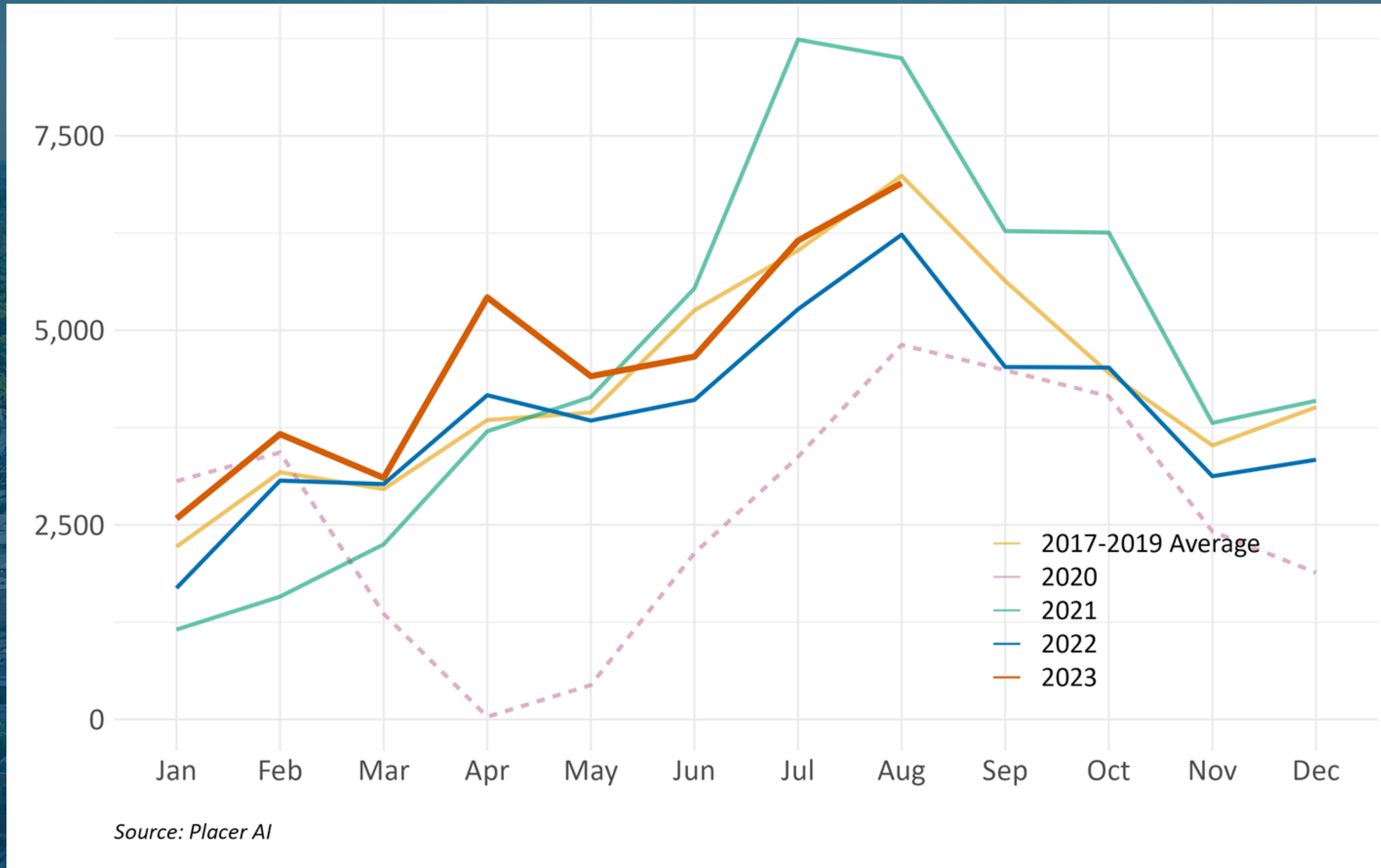
UPDATE ON CURRENT SITUATION

An aerial photograph of Burlington, Vermont, showing a dense urban area with numerous buildings, streets, and green spaces. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text "BURLINGTON'S ECONOMIC HEALTH" is centered in white, uppercase letters.

BURLINGTON'S ECONOMIC HEALTH

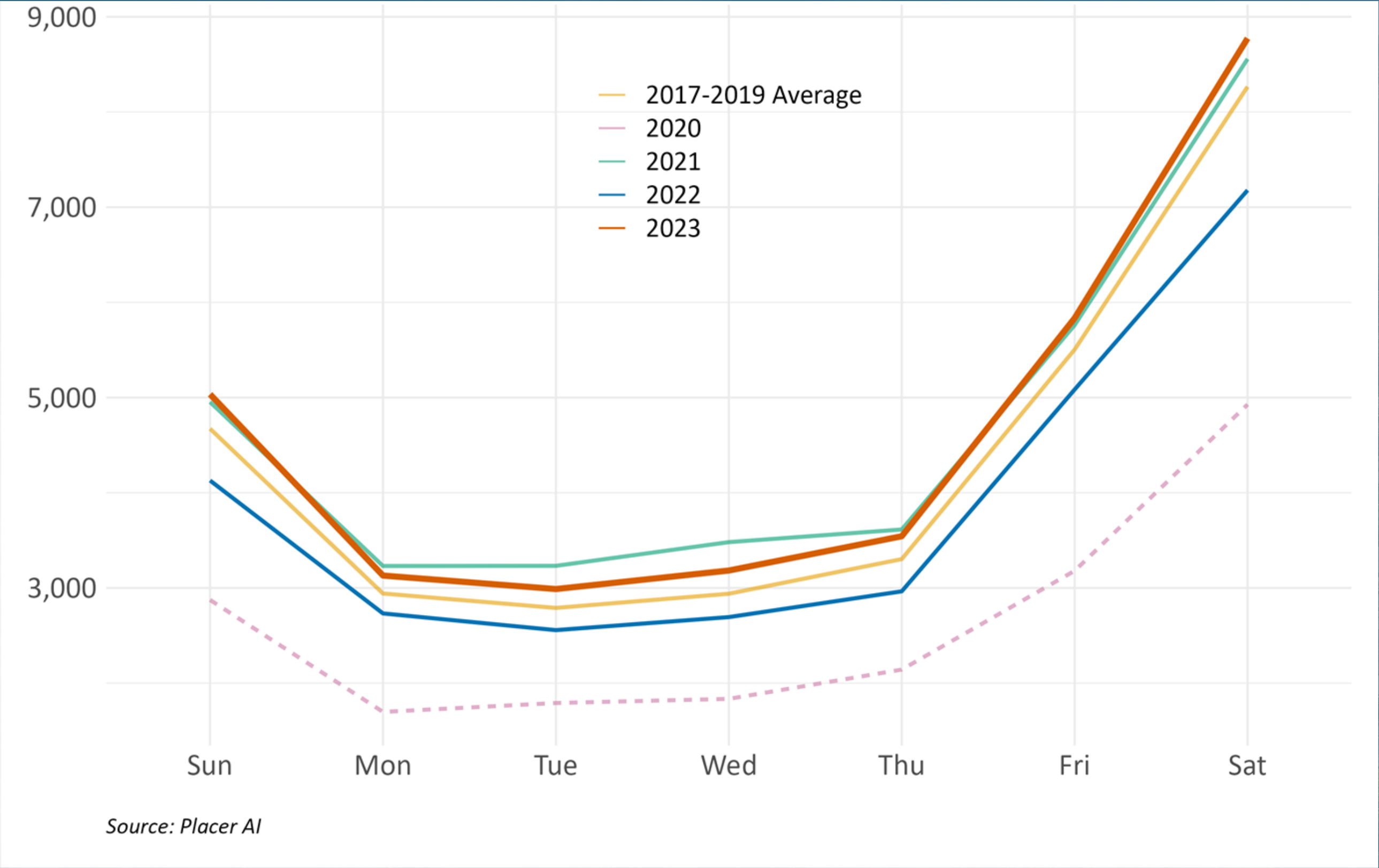
DOWNTOWN ACTIVITY - CHURCH STREET FOOT TRAFFIC

Average daily visitors **by month** shows summer 2023 lower than 2021, but similar to pre-COVID levels.



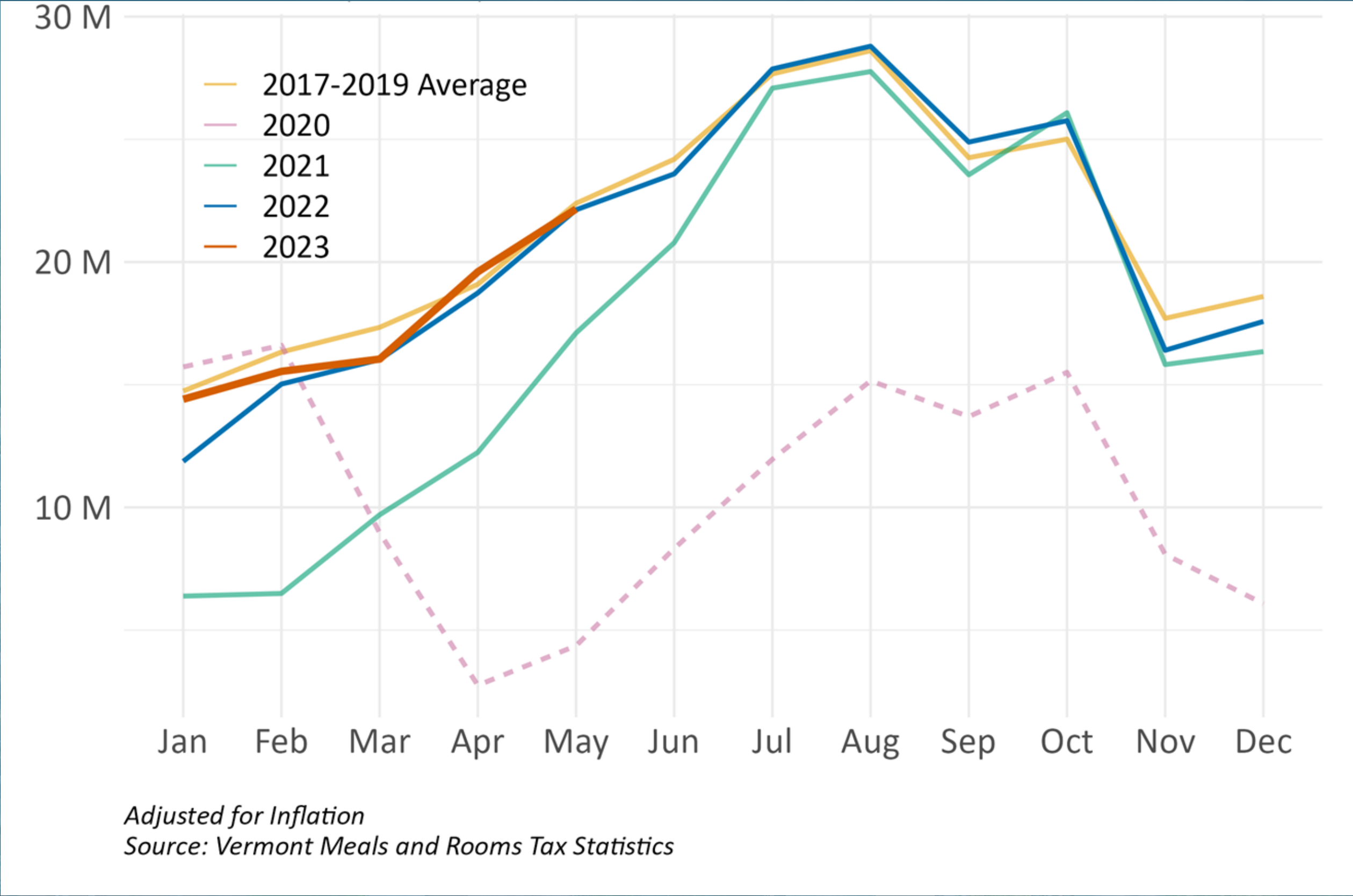
DOWNTOWN ACTIVITY - CHURCH STREET FOOT TRAFFIC

2023 average daily visitors slightly outpacing pre-COVID, but peak day in August 2023 was ~80% of August 2019 peak.



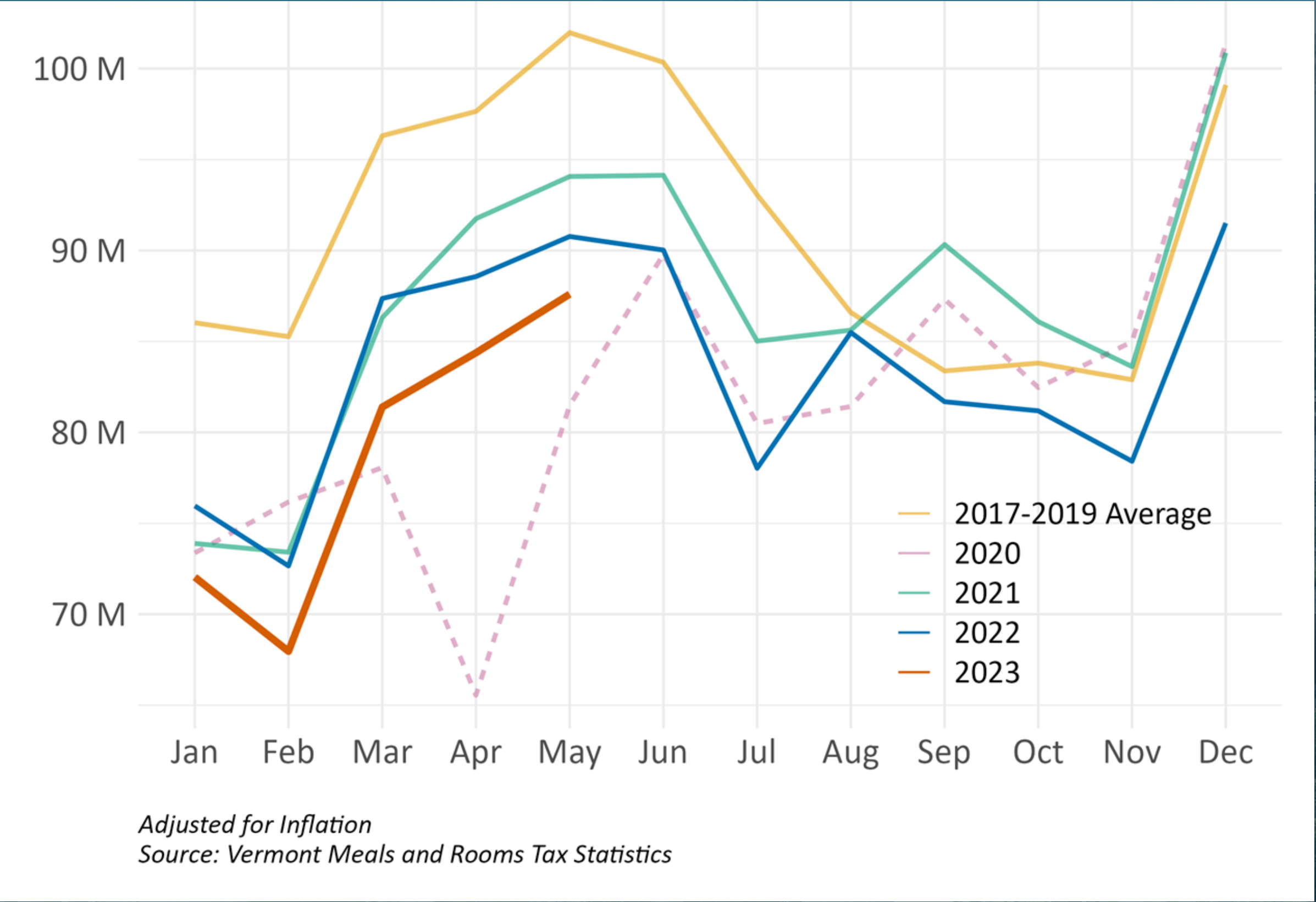
SALES VOLUME: MEALS, ALCOHOL & ROOMS

After significant impacts in 2020 and early 2021, sales volume match pre-COVID averages through May 2023.



SALES VOLUME: GROSS SALES

Gross Sales have been impacted by many factors since 2017; May 2023 is 85% of 2017-2019 average peak.



**BTV-SoBu Metro
had lowest
unemployment
in US in May
2023**

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Burlington, Vermont, showing a dense urban area with various buildings, streets, and green spaces. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. Centered over the image is white text in a bold, sans-serif font. The text reads: "THE OFFICE OF BUSINESS & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT WAS FORMALIZED THROUGH THE FY23 BUDGET PROCESS (JULY 2022)."

THE OFFICE OF **BUSINESS & WORKFORCE**
DEVELOPMENT WAS FORMALIZED THROUGH
THE FY23 BUDGET PROCESS (JULY 2022).

OFFICE OF BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

```
graph TD; A[OFFICE OF BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT] --- B[Church Street Marketplace]; A --- C[Business Development City-Wide]; A --- D[ELI/Workforce Development];
```

Church Street Marketplace

- Full maintenance of the street
- Marketing and promotion
- 100+ events annually
- Incubator business programs
- Community arts & culture programming

Business Development City-Wide

- Microbusiness development
- Revolving loan fund
- Direct training and technical support
- Business recruitment and retention
- Business incubation through multiple annual markets

ELI/Workforce Development

- Scholarship program for low-income parents
- Training programs for childcare workers
- Capacity grants
- Workforce training programs to meet current employer demands



CHURCH STREET
MARKETPLACE

Marketplace Management and Community Events & Programming



Full street maintenance, support, and marketing for over 110 Church Street Marketplace businesses.



All physical street maintenance including trash, recycling, snow removal, salting, repairs, and street decorations



Secured donations totaling over **\$150,000** for FY24 in order to minimize Common Area Fees increases and increase activations



Created and supported over 100 public events so far in 2023. An increase of 122% from 2022.



Received **\$1,000,000** Congressionally Directed Spending for repairs and upgrades to the Marketplace. To be completed in 2024.



Voted **#1 Best Public Square in America** by USA Today in 2022 and became a designate Main Street with Main Street America in 2023.



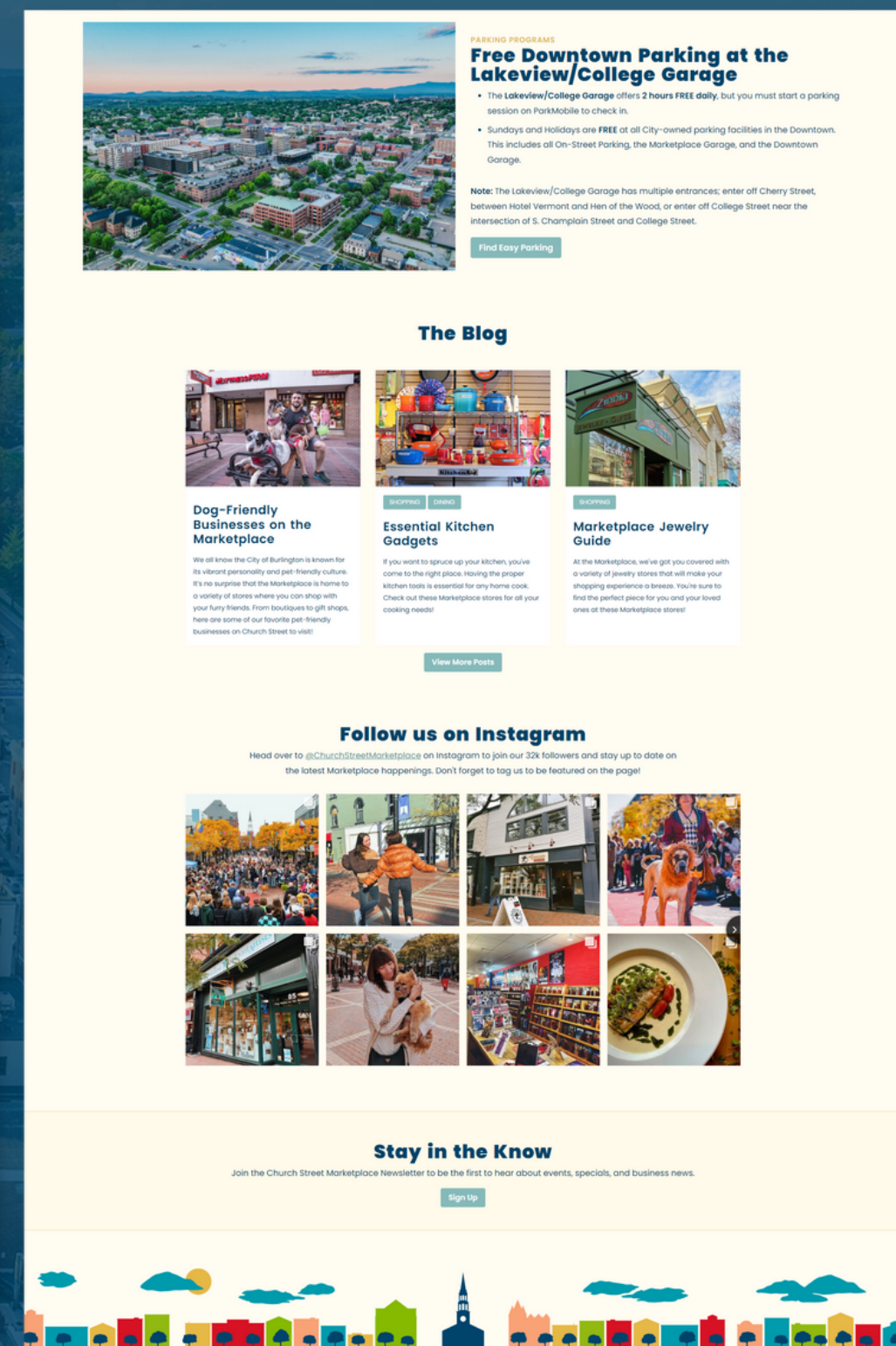
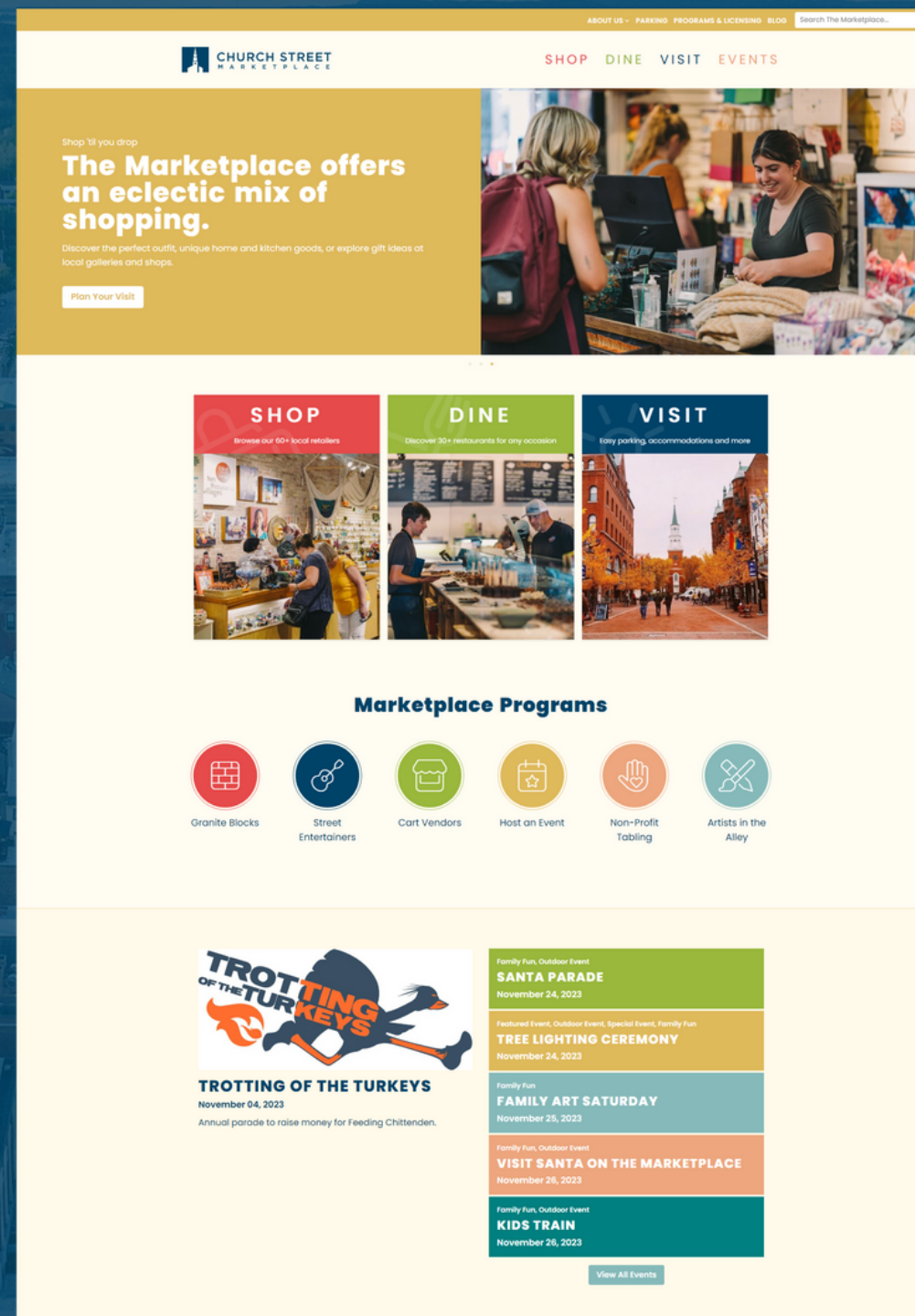
CHURCH STREET MARKETPLACE

Launched new website with over **99k new visitors** in the last year, with **53%** coming from organic searches.

➤ Includes business listings of **110 Church Street Marketplace businesses** with categories of retail, services, dining, and lodging with filters such as locally owned, BIPOC, woman-owned, and dog-friendly.

Launched monthly newsletter highlighting events with average opens of **6.8k**.

Grew Instagram and Facebook followers for a combined total of **45k**.





CHURCH STREET MARKETPLACE

Holidays 2023



Events

- Tree Lighting Ceremony
- Santa Parade
- Menorah Lighting Ceremony
- Visit Santa
- Kids Train
- Santa's Mailboxes
- Shopping and Dining Guides
- Free Hot Chocolate
- Window Decorating Contest
- Holiday Parking Program
- Employee Discount Week



Marketing & Advertising

- Newspaper ads
- Posters
- Counter Cards
- Sandwich boards
- Street Banners
- Window Decals
- Email newsletters
- Paid social media
- Dedicated webpage
- Radio ads across Chittenden County



Launching fourth season of the
BTV Winter Market in collaboration with BCA

- 2022 season supported **78 small businesses**
 - 54% women owned
 - 20% BIPOC owned
 - 22k attended



An aerial photograph of Burlington, Vermont, showing the city's layout, green spaces, and the waterfront with numerous boats docked. A semi-transparent blue overlay covers the top half of the image. Three callout boxes are positioned over the overlay: an orange box at the top left, a teal box at the top right, and a light blue box at the bottom center. Arrows point from the orange box to the other two boxes.

**— LOVE —
BURLINGTON**

MARKETING

**BUSINESS SUPPORT
CITYWIDE**

— LOVE — BURLINGTON

Business Support



Manage ARPA Funds & Economic Recovery: **\$27M** was administered/distributed by BWD



Interdepartmental policy initiatives to deploy funds, structure large grants to community partners, and support federal reporting.



Created Burlington Revolving Loan Program
4 loans | \$135,000 total



Established Relationship with Kiva
7 loans | \$46,500 total



Designed **\$1M** non-profit ARPA grant program and distributed grants to 25 Burlington organizations.



82+ Burlington businesses & micro-businesses supported with technical assistance



Distributed **\$10,000+** in micro grants to **34** small businesses



Assisted **6** BIPOC owned businesses in opening downtown



Worked extensively with North Winooski Ave businesses during removal of parking



Created **11** business education resources including How-to guides and hosted **5** classes



Created and co-hosted **7** speaker series connecting local entrepreneurs with the community



Supported launch of cannabis industry. **10** businesses opened thus far.



Assisted **14** businesses with finding commercial space in Burlington

Bedidi *

Burlington Trolley Tours *

Café Dim Sum *

Jilib Jiblets

King St Laundromat *

Mas Comida *

Mawuhi African Market

Maya's Kitchen

North Country Kettle Bells

NU Chocolat

Posh Nails *

The Cake Stand

Tight Squeeze

Wilder Wines *

*50% new businesses



Annual Marketing & Promotion Plans

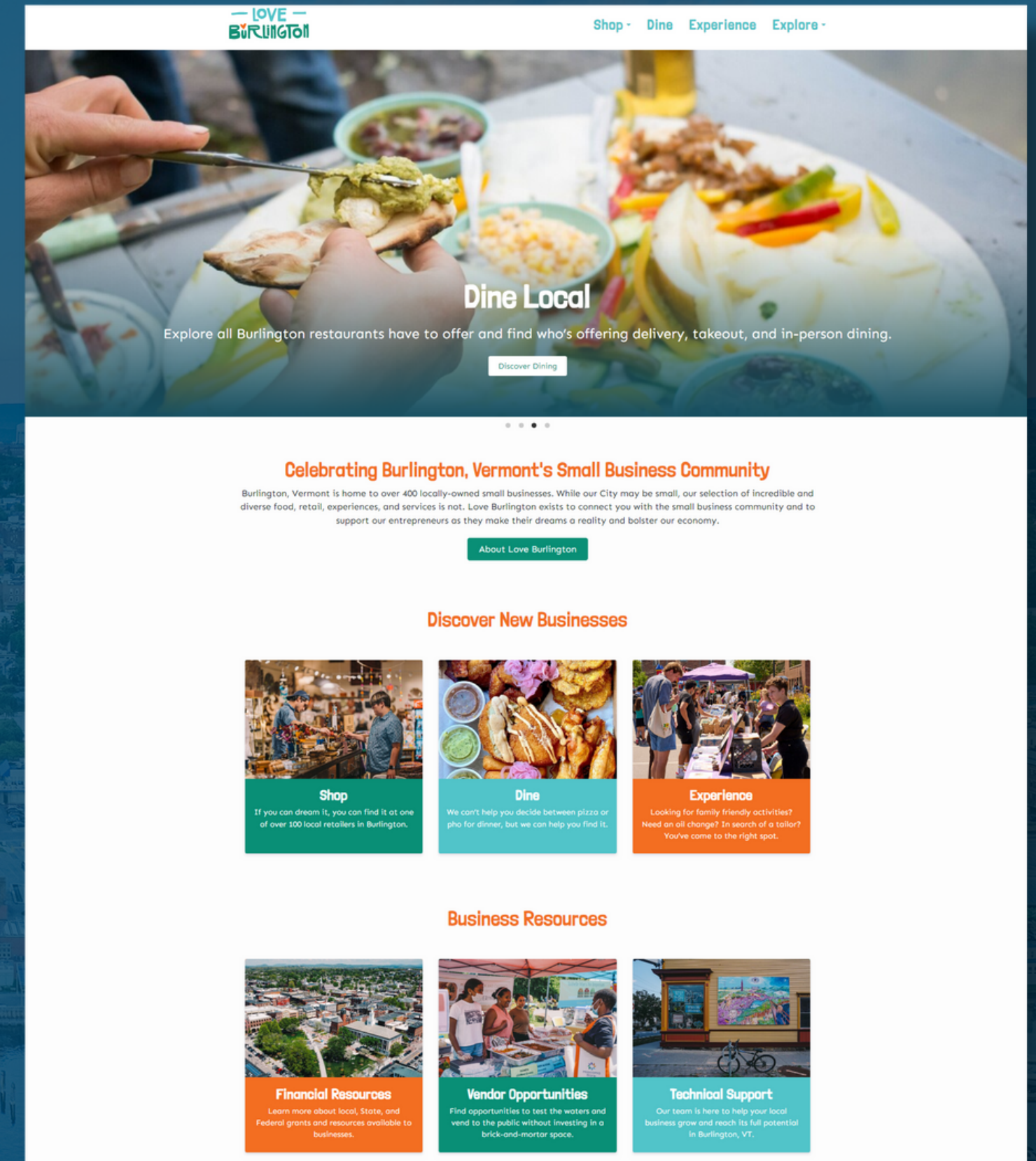
✓ Marketing for over 560 Burlington businesses (website listings, annual advertising, social media features, newsletter & blog)

✓ Launched new website with over **64k new visitors** in the last year, with **69%** coming from organic searches

➤ Includes business listings of over **560 Burlington businesses** with categories of retail, services, dining, and lodging with filters such as locally/women-owned, BIPOC, dog-friendly

✓ Launched monthly newsletter highlighting events with average opens of **7.4k**

✓ Grew Instagram and Facebook followers for a combined total of **over 15k**





Business Support & Collaborations

✓ Over 30 annual opportunities to participate in events and vendor markets

✓ Created, in collaboration with Burlington City Arts, the **BTV Market**
(18 weeks each summer in City Hall Park)

➤ 2023 season supported **130 small businesses**

- 65% women owned
- 35% BIPOC owned
- 40k attended

✓ Launching fourth season of the **BTV Winter Market**
in collaboration with BCA

➤ 2022 season supported **78 small businesses**

- 54% women owned
- 20% BIPOC owned
- 22k attended



Outreach & Workforce Training ELI Scholarships & Capacity Grants



Workforce Development

- Applied for 4 regional and federal grants
- Managing RAISE workforce development grant (\$1.5M)
- Launched First Steps Training Program to increase licensed childcare and home-based childcare providers



Cultivated relationships with community partners for workforce development

- Fourbital Factory, ReSOURCE, Vermont Works for Women, Generator, Vermont Adult Learning, Burlington Tech Center, Community College of Vermont (CCV), Northern Lights at CCV, Vermont Talent Pipeline, and Vermont Workforce Development Board



Testified to the Vermont Senate Committee on Health and Welfare in February 2023 regarding the Early Learning Initiative model



Representation on the Adult Education Council



First Steps Scholarship Program

- **Doubled** scholarships over last 5 years
- **50% increase** in partner programs (23 in 5 towns)



\$103,000 ELI Capacity Grant to support ONE Arts School open



ELI accessibility efforts

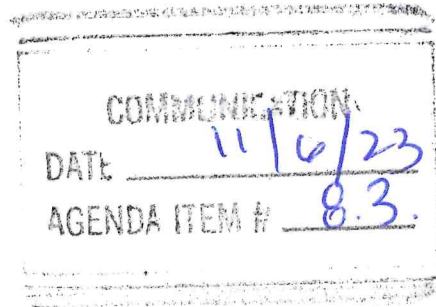
- Fully translated website, paper/online applications, translation services including ELI Language Access Grant

NEW BUSINESSES - OPENED/OPENING SOON

- New Northfield Savings Bank Marketplace office
- Sanitago's
- Monelle has been rented to Vermont Eclectic Co.
- LOI for Slate space has been signed
- New restaurant coming into Penny Cluse Space
- Nomad bakery coming to old Red Onion space
- Convenience store coming into old Perky Planet
- The Tinkering Turtle (Echo toy store on College St.)
- New Bar coming to Main St. (next to Mr. Mikes)
- Restaurant coming to the old Majestic car rental spot near the rotary
- Almost Full Asian Market - almost open

An aerial photograph of a city at dusk, showing a dense urban area with various buildings, streets, and green spaces. The sky is a deep blue with some light clouds. The word "QUESTIONS?" is overlaid in the center in a white, sans-serif font.

QUESTIONS?



To: City Council
From: Kara Alnasrawi, Director of Business & Workforce Development
CC: Mayor Miro Weinberger
Katherine Schad, Chief Administrative Officer
Date: November 6, 2023
Re: Funds for Downtown Support

At their meeting of 11/6/23
the Burlington City Council voted to
Approve the motion as
Attest: *For Ollery*
amended (see attached)

Background: After the end of the state-run motel housing program in June, and in conjunction with the impacts of the national Fentanyl crisis, Burlington's business community is experiencing serious challenges. Recognizing that over 90% of Burlington's businesses are locally owned, the Office of Business & Workforce Development (BWD) understands the urgency of supporting these community members and the jobs they create in Burlington. While some indicators of economic health have returned to robust, pre-pandemic levels and we are working to support another strong winter season, BWD recognizes that these challenges can negatively impact commercial activity in our City. For many local businesses, a strong holiday shopping season and first fiscal quarter are critical to the ongoing strength and success of their business.

Financial Support: In response to concerns raised by local businesses, President Paul requested that the Administration identify \$50,000 for small business support and secured a \$50,000 match donation from the Pomerleau Family Foundation to fund increased initiatives by BWD that support small businesses in Burlington during the winter season. BWD has managed the City's economic recovery via the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars and was able to identify \$50,000 in reserved ARPA funds that would be eligible for new programs to support our downtown. The eligibility centers around guidance from the US Treasury Department in the [State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule](#). This guidance enumerates that funds may be used to address the negative economic impacts from the Covid-19 pandemic-related increase in crime and drug use.

Proposed Use of Funds: BWD recommends a two-pronged approach to the use of these combined funds totaling \$100,000:

- **Public Relations/Marketing Campaign:** BWD proposes to engage a PR firm to discuss a campaign encouraging the public to continue to support local businesses and to continue to visit Burlington's Downtown. Such a PR campaign is well beyond the normal marketing budget housed in the Marketplace and BWD's "Love Burlington".
- **Better Lighting for Downtown Workers:** DPW generously provides [free parking](#) for all downtown restaurant and retail workers and all City staff, however, BWD frequently hears that the walk from places of employment to the garage can be intimidating at night. As a result, multiple businesses have communicated difficulty hiring staff to work evenings, resulting in shorter hours and reduced revenue.

City Council Motion:

To authorize the Director of Business & Workforce Development to accept a donation of \$50,000 from the Pomerleau Family Foundation and to reallocate \$50,000 in ARPA funds for the use of a PR/Marketing campaign and downtown lighting and security project. The purpose of which is to support economic activity in downtown Burlington and stabilize worker retention.



to authorize the Director of Business & Workforce Development to accept a donation of \$50,000 from the Pomerleau Family Foundation and to reallocate \$50,000 in ARPA funds, and to authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to execute budget amendments up to a full amount of \$100,000 to support public safety initiatives and economic activity in downtown Burlington, and stabilize worker retention, while considering input from downtown workers and businesses, the Church Street Marketplace Commission, and the Burlington Business Association, among other stakeholders.



CHURCH STREET MARKETPLACE COMMISSION

Date: November 15th, 2023

Resolution Title: Addressing Public Safety Concerns in the Church Street Marketplace and Downtown District

Whereas, the Church Street Marketplace is a vital economic and cultural hub within our city, serving as a destination for residents and visitors alike, offering a wide array of shopping, dining, and entertainment opportunities.

Whereas, a vibrant downtown district is essential for our community's well-being and economic prosperity, and it should be a place where all members of the public feel safe to shop, work, and play.

Whereas, the Church Street Marketplace Commission is deeply concerned by the growing reports and feedback from merchants, residents, and visitors who have expressed feeling unsafe in the Church Street Marketplace and the broader downtown district.

Whereas, the Church Street Marketplace Commission recognizes the acute rise in crime and safety concerns that have been expressed, and believes it is necessary to address these issues promptly.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by the Church Street Marketplace Commission:

1. The Church Street Marketplace Commission acknowledges the pressing public safety concerns affecting the Church Street Marketplace and downtown district.
2. The Commission calls upon the Public Safety Committee and the City Council to take immediate and concerted action to address these concerns.
3. The Commission requests that the Public Safety Committee and City Council collaborate with law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and stakeholders to develop and implement strategies to enhance public safety, reduce crime, and create a more secure environment in the Church Street Marketplace and downtown district.
4. The Commission urges the Public Safety Committee and City Council to allocate resources, including personnel and funding, as necessary, to support these public safety efforts.
5. The Commission calls for regular reporting and updates to be provided to the Commission and the public on the progress made in improving public safety in the Church Street Marketplace and downtown district.
6. The Commission further encourages the public to participate in ongoing discussions, share their experiences and concerns, and collaborate with local authorities in enhancing safety and security.

Be It Further Resolved: This resolution shall be communicated to the Public Safety Committee, the City Council, and all relevant city departments for their consideration and immediate action.

This resolution underscores the Church Street Marketplace Commission's commitment to addressing public safety concerns in the downtown district and its dedication to creating a safe and secure environment for all those who visit, work, and shop in this vital community space.

Adopted by the Church Street Marketplace Commission