

## BUILDING OWNER SURVEY (6/30)

Recently, Rutland's Creative Economy Initiative narrowed down an extensive list of publicly generated ideas to four priorities. One of the four priorities has the possibility of directly affecting downtown merchants and property owners. This priority involves the potential to build an Open Air Market on Center Street and/or expand depot park to include the area where the former parking garage stood.

If realized, the **Central Vermont Open Air Market** will address the following need:

*Many positive social and economic activities currently take place in Rutland, e.g. Art in the Park, Music in the Park, Farmers Market, Ethnic Festival, Sidewalk Sale, Killington Road Rally, 5K Crowley Road Race, Halloween parade, Friday night Center Street closings, Paramount Theater events, community movie nights, etc.; however, basic infrastructure does not exist to support a social and economic synergy of these events and more which can and will:*

- 1. Create various economies of scale and promote sustainable, yet socially responsible engines of economic growth throughout all of downtown Rutland;*
- 2. Attract consumers, tourists and businesses alike to downtown Rutland; and*
- 3. Allow area-based families to fully enjoy the stunning architecture, activities and mountain views the downtown area offers.*

In short, Rutland needs a center point for its cultural, community, and, most importantly, commercial life. An open air mall in the heart of the downtown could deliberately attract tourists, local consumers, and new merchants (retail, food service, professional service, and artisans alike) to the downtown area from as far away as Woodstock, Fair Haven, Manchester and Middlebury. It would also better entice families who drive through Rutland to stop and explore the downtown area.

For this purpose, a committee has been created to investigate the feasibility, location, direction and scope of this undertaking. Although other successful open air models exist in New England, the Central Vermont Open Air Committee has no preconceived notion of what a final product would look like: the extent of physical infrastructure change or the working business hours. Thus, we are open to exploring those ideas and mechanisms that will successfully increase the social and economic life of merchants, residents and building owners alike for the years to come with these same, respective stakeholders.

With this in mind, we need help to determine your preferences, requirements, desires, ideas, etc. By answering the following question, you will aid us in gathering information which will assist us in forming the direction of this initiative, as well as leveraging city, state and federal resources to the downtown area. We thank you for your time. All individual information will be kept confidential.

## Contact Information

Building Name (if applicable)

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Building Address (street and number)

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Most identifiable current store front (for quick reference)

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Name of Building Owner (person or business)

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Building Owner Contact:

Address -

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Phone -

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E-mail

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Web

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Other Contact Person (if different than above)

Name -

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Position -

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Address -

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Phone -

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E-mail

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## Demographics

**How long have you or the company owned the building?**

1. Up to one year
2. 1-5 years
3. More than 5 years

**Type of ownership?**

1. Local individual or family business (Rutland County)
2. Vermont-based individual or family business
3. National or international individual or family business
4. National or international, publicly traded business

**Do you anticipate selling the property within the next year?**

1. Yes
2. No

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## Store Front - Street Level Capitalization

**Your storefronts on the street level are predominantly set up for and/or occupied by which type of businesses? Pick the most applicable.**

1. Retail
2. Food Service
3. Professional office space or use
4. Mix

**General leasing status on the street level**

1. Relatively easy to lease
2. Moderately difficult to lease
3. Difficult to lease

**Please indicate the rental status of all storefronts combined on the street level of your building over the last 3 years?**

1. Full time, 90% - 100% leased
2. Part time, 60 - 90% leased
3. Sporadically, 30 - 60% leased
- 4- Seldom, 0 - 30% leased

## Upper Level Utilization - Capitalization

**Your spaces above the street level are predominantly set up for and/or occupied by which type of businesses? Pick the most applicable.**

1. Retail
2. Professional office space or use
3. Residential
4. Mix w/ residential
5. Mix with no residential

**General leasing status for spaces above the street level**

1. Relatively easy to lease
2. Moderately difficult to lease
3. Difficult to lease

**Please indicate the rental status of all space above the street level of your building over the last 3 years?**

1. Full time, 90% - 100% leased
2. Part time, 60 - 90% leased
3. Sporadically, 30 - 60% leased
- 4- Seldom, 0 - 30% leased

## **Perceptions and Impact**

**How would you describe the current business climate in downtown Rutland, i.e. sales, consumer access, supporting infrastructure, security, ease of leasing property, etc., as it relates specifically to your building?**

1. Best it's ever been
2. Increasing
3. Stagnant
4. Decreasing
5. Unsure

**Do you feel that an Open Air Market on lower Center Street would contribute to the overall economic climate downtown?**

1. Strong chance of benefit
2. Might benefit
3. Might hurt or detract
4. Strong chance of detracting
5. Unsure or no comment

**Do you feel that an expanded Open Air Market or Central Park where the current depot park is and former parking garage was would contribute to the overall economic climate of downtown?**

1. Strong chance of benefit
2. Might benefit
3. Might hurt or detract
4. Strong chance of detracting
5. Unsure or no comment

**In your opinion, which type of Open Air Market, with activities, vendors, and attractions targeting local residents and tourists across Central Vermont, would work for building owners and their merchants?**

1. Full time (all year or every day throughout the summer and fall)
2. Consistent part time, (e.g. weekends, after hours, one day a week, etc.)
3. Only key and special events
4. Not sure
5. None - Do not support any potential change

**Do you think an increased visibility of an Open Air Market would be good for building owners, i.e. marketing to potential merchants or buyers, increased worth of building, expanded opportunities to renovate for a different, more profitable use, increased sales resulting in more profitable and, hence, sustainable lessees.**

1. Yes (benefits would outweigh the detractions)
2. No (detractions would outweigh the benefits)
3. Some benefits and some detractions balancing out
4. Not sure

**Are you aware that Center Street has been closed periodically in 2006 to provide street life entertainment and marketing opportunities for business?**

1. Yes
2. No

**If yes, how would you characterize the impact (if any) of these closings on your building or the relationship between your building's management team and the merchants you lease to?**

1. No major impact
2. Positive impact
3. Less than positive impact
4. Negative impact

## **Wrap**

**Which type of systematic, periodic closing of Center Street, done in cooperation with the Board of Alderman and the Rutland Downtown Partnership, would you prefer in order to test and/or model the Open Air Market idea?**

1. 4-8 closings after normal business hours
2. Only during special events such as the sidewalk sale, ethnic festival, etc.
3. 2-3 test runs on normal business days
4. A mixture of those listed above to assess the true impact and future obstacles
5. Not sure.
6. None at all.

**If proven successful and/or unobtrusive for the overwhelming majority of merchants, would you be willing to publicly support a potential expansion of such events?**

1. Yes
2. No

**Regarding future notification, which might you be interested in?**

1. Committee meetings and special events
2. Permitted street closings
3. Future impact studies of street closings
4. Any and all relevant information
5. None, no need to contact again.

**Thank you for your time and effort.**