

Independent Auditors' Certification Report for the  
Tax Increment Financing District

City of South Burlington, Vermont

June 30, 2020



*Proven Expertise and Integrity*

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICT FOR THE  
CITY OF SOUTH BURLINGTON, VERMONT

CONTENTS

JUNE 30, 2020

	PAGE
INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' CERTIFICATION REPORT	1
<u>APPENDIX A</u>	
APPENDIX A DESCRIPTION	2
INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' AGREED-UPON-PROCEDURES FOR TAX INCREMENT FINANCING DISTRICTS	3 - 5



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## INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' CERTIFICATION REPORT

City Council  
City of South Burlington  
South Burlington, Vermont

We have performed the procedures enumerated in Appendix A, Independent Auditors' Agreed-Upon-Procedures, approved by the VEPC Board on 9/23/2019, which were agreed to by the Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC) and the Vermont State Auditor's Office (SAO) verifying:

- (1) The original taxable value and annual and total municipal and education tax increments generated;
- (2) Expenditures for District debt and related costs; and
- (3) The current balance of the District fund during the period ended June 30, 2020.

There were no findings to report as a result of the verification process.

See Appendix A for cross references to applicable Vermont statute and TIF District Rules. Management is responsible for compliance with these requirements. This agreed-upon-procedures engagement was conducted in accordance with attestation standards established by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. The sufficiency of these procedures is solely the responsibility of those parties specified in this report. Consequently, we make no representation regarding the sufficiency of the procedures described in Appendix A either for the purpose for which this report has been requested or for any other purpose.

We were not engaged to and did not conduct an examination, the objective of which would be the expression of an opinion on compliance. Accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. Matters, if any, that came to our attention as a result of performing the procedures enumerated in Appendix A have been documented and reported to the City of South Burlington and VEPC. Had we performed additional procedures, other matters might have come to our attention that would have been reported to you.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of City of South Burlington, VEPC, and SAO and is not intended to be used and should not be used by anyone other than those specified parties.

*RHR Smith & Company*

Buxton, Maine  
Vermont Registration No. 092.0000697  
February 15, 2021

## APPENDIX A

Appendix A includes:

- Independent Auditors' Agreed-Upon-Procedures approved by VEPC Board 9/23/2019 for Tax Increment Financing Districts

## **Vermont Tax Increment Financing District Independent Auditors' Agreed-Upon-Procedures**

The procedures below are presented as a guideline to assist independent auditors in their review of a District's TIF Fund as required by Vermont Statutes and further detailed in the TIF Rule, as adopted May 6, 2015. These procedures are for all TIF Districts, except for the Burlington Waterfront TIF District, which has a separate procedures document.

### **24 VSA §1901**

#### **(3) Annually:**

*(A) Ensure that the tax increment financing district account required by section 1896 of this subchapter is subject to the annual audit prescribed in sections 1681 and 1690 of this title. Procedures must include verification of the original taxable value and annual and total municipal and education tax increments generated, expenditures for debt and related costs, and current balance.*

### **TIF Rule (adopted May 6, 2015)**

**1004.1. District Fund in Municipal Audit Cycle:** *Municipalities with an active District must ensure that the entity undertaking the annual municipal audit required by statute on behalf of the municipality is aware of the requirement to include the District fund in the audit. The audit procedures must include, at a minimum, verification of:*

- *The original taxable value and annual and total municipal and education tax increments generated;*
- *Expenditures for District debt and related costs; and*
- *The current balance of the District fund.*

*Because these requirements are not necessarily included in a normal municipal audit, the Council will develop and publish, in cooperation with representative municipal officials and accountants familiar with municipal audits, "agreed-upon procedures" for these audit engagements.*

#### **1. Confirm original taxable value:**

**Note:** *This step only needs to be completed for newly certified OTV's and recertified OTV's (at which point changes will have been made in the NEMRC system).*

- a. Compare the VEPC-certified OTV Property Report to the NEMRC TIF Parcel Value Report as of the date the final Grand List was submitted to PVR (December 31 of the Grand List year).
- b. Verify that the NEMRC TIF Parcel Value Report agrees to the VEPC certified OTV property report.
- c. Compare the current TIF properties included in the NEMRC TIF Parcel Value to the properties included on the VEPC certified OTV property report.
  - i. For those properties not included on the VEPC certified OTV property report, obtain the original TIF parcel map outlining the boundaries of the TIF district and confirm the property is within the original TIF district boundary.
  - ii. Ensure that any of the special situations described below are appropriately reflected in the NEMRC TIF Parcel Value Report. Additional explanation for each is provided in the TIF Rule adopted May 6, 2015.
    - Changes to a property's tax status--taxable to non-taxable or non-

taxable to taxable.

- Separation of a parcel into two or more parcels.
- Combination of parcels.
- Separation of a parcel or combination of two parcels not located wholly within the District.
- Property changes use from homestead to non-residential.
- Boundary adjustments.

Certain tax agreements or exemptions provided for in Vermont statute may affect the education property tax grand list. See 32 V.S.A. §5404a for guidance. If a tax agreement or exemption affects the education property tax grand list, verify that authorization was obtained when required by statute, and review the accounting for the property(ies) in NEMRC to verify that they are treated appropriately in the NEMRC TIF Parcel Value Report.

**2. Verify completeness and accuracy of NEMRC TIF Proceeds Report for tax increment calculation:**

- a. Select 10 properties from the NEMRC TIF Parcel Value Report printed as of December 31 of the Grand List Year<sup>1</sup> on a haphazard basis. If any of the selected parcels are inactive, ensure the current property value is converted to zero in order to make the calculations. ***Do not update the property values in the Grand List module.***
- b. Verify all tax rates used in the tax increment calculations agree with the rates as established by the select board or city council for municipal taxes<sup>2</sup> and per the statutory rates for education (homestead and non-resident<sup>3</sup>). Check that all municipal rates are used in the calculation.
  - i. Calculate the incremental property value by subtracting the OTV property value from the current TIF property value.
  - ii. **Municipal TIF Proceeds:** Multiply the incremental TIF property value by all municipal tax rates and then divide by 100. Calculate the amount retained by the TIF District by multiplying this amount by the retention percentage approved by VEPC.
  - iii. **Commercial TIF Proceeds (Burlington Downtown District only):** Multiply the Municipal Taxable Value by 20%. Multiply this number by all municipal tax rates then divide by 100. Calculate the amount retained by multiplying this amount by the retention percentage approved by VEPC (75%). This amount is the additional Commercial TIF Proceeds retained and should be verified against the workbook used by the City of Burlington.
  - iv. **Homestead TIF Proceeds:** Multiply the homestead incremental TIF property value by the applicable homestead tax rate and then divide by 100. Calculate the amount retained by the TIF District by multiplying this amount by the retention percentage approved by VEPC.
  - v. **Non-Residential TIF Proceeds:** Multiply the non-residential incremental TIF property value by the applicable non-residential tax rate and then divide by 100. Calculate the amount retained by the TIF District by multiplying this amount by the retention percentage approved by VEPC.

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<sup>1</sup> Example: If the Grand List Year is April 1, 2017, use the report printed as of December 31, 2017 which matches the information submitted to PVR as of that date. Reports printed at a later date will reflect more current data in NEMRC and will cause variances in the calculation when compared to the information provided to PVR.

<sup>2</sup> [17 VSA § 2664](#)

<sup>3</sup> State homestead and non-homestead tax rates are located at the Department of Taxes website <http://tax.vermont.gov/research-and-reports/tax-rates-and-charts/education-tax-rates>.

- vi. Compare to amounts in the NEMRC TIF Proceeds report printed as of December 31 of the Grand List Year.

**3. Verify expenditures for District debt and related costs:**

Refer to the VEPC-approved TIF District Finance Plan (for Post-Act 184 District) or the District Reconciliation (Pre-Act 184 Districts) and any Phase Filings or Substantial Change Requests for the following steps. All documents are available on the VEPC website.

- a. Obtain public warning documents and voter results of the public vote required for district financing, including information on related costs and direct payment for infrastructure improvements.
- b. Obtain schedule that lists all improvement costs incurred, including total cost, and a breakdown of the cost factors (design, engineering studies, project management costs, actual construction costs, etc.), how the approved proportionality was applied to the improvement cost, and the amount of infrastructure work (including non-construction costs) that was performed by Vermont firms.
- c. Obtain a schedule of all related costs incurred, including the amount, description, date incurred, and an explanation to substantiate how the cost relates to the creation, implementation, operation, or administration of the district, whether and when the cost was reimbursed or paid with TIF increment, and when the reimbursement or payment was included in a public vote.
- d. Test improvements and related costs
  - i. Select one expense from each of 1) the municipality's improvement projects from the development schedule and 2) the list of related costs to test for allowability.
  - ii. For improvement costs selected for testing, verify that the improvement was approved by VEPC in the TIF district financing plan.
  - iii. For related costs selected for testing, verify related costs were included in the public warning documents and approved by voters.
  - iv. For each item selected for testing review corroborating documentation (invoices, contracts, change orders, etc.).
  - v. Based on review of corroborating documentation and comparison to VEPC or voter authorizations, assess whether expenditures are allowable according to statute and VEPC rules.

**4. Verify debt service payments:**

- a. Verify the debt service payments recorded in the TIF Fund agree and are consistent with the principal and interest payments per the amortization schedules and that these are according to the financing documents.

**5. Review of Prior Year's Findings and Review of Recommendations from Monitoring Visits:**

- a. Obtain a copy of the prior year's AUP report and certification to review any findings.
- b. Obtain a copy of VEPC's monitoring visit report and check the section entitled "Auditor Follow-Up" for any areas that may need review.

**6. Report and Certification:**

- a. Provide certification that the independent auditor has verified: (1) the original taxable value and annual and total municipal and education tax increments generated; (2) expenditures for District debt and related costs; and (3) the current balance of the District fund.
- b. Compile and report on any findings as a result of the verification process.