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# Mayor Miro Weinberger Announces Next Steps for Memorial Auditorium

**Burlington, VT** – Today, Mayor Miro Weinberger made several announcements regarding the future of Memorial Auditorium:

- The City will not be moving forward with any of the respondents to last October's [Memorial Auditorium's Request For Proposal \(RFP\) process \(/RFP/adaptive-reuse-of-memorial-auditorium\)](/RFP/adaptive-reuse-of-memorial-auditorium).
- The Mayor anticipates that the City will release a new RFP for Memorial Auditorium and the municipal parking lot west of the building in the coming months. The new RFP will have narrower goals and objectives to encourage more responsive proposals. This next step will include public engagement through the Parks, Arts, and Culture Committee.
- The City is in the process of carrying out the stabilization work recommended to reduce the potential for further weathering or structural failure over the next 3 to 5 years. This is to reduce the potential of injury to people in and around the building and enhance the feasibility of a potential renovation to occur in the future. The roof structure stabilization has been completed and the masonry stabilization will be put out to bid this spring.

"Memorial Auditorium has been vacant since 2017, and we have had only a surface parking lot on the key corner of Main Street and Winooski Avenue for decades. We need to find a way to generate more public value on this critical city block, but we will have very limited City funds for achieving this, because building a new 21st century high school is the priority," said Mayor Miro Weinberger. "I continue to think that there is path forward through a partnership with a redeveloper that has the skill, experience and capital to deliver. Our hope is that by opening the RFP process for a second round with broader parameters and greater flexibility, we will find the right partner to realize a great vision for this key block of our downtown."

## Background

- Memorial Auditorium, located at 250 Main Street, was designed and constructed as a public auditorium and civic center in the heart of downtown Burlington in 1927.
- Since the 1990s, the building suffered from deferred maintenance and unable to make the investments needed to address structural and safety concerns, the City closed the building in 2016. More information about the history of the building and past project updates is available [on the City's website \(/CEDO/Physical-Condition-Required-Repairs2\)](/CEDO/Physical-Condition-Required-Repairs2).
- In 2018, the City undertook an extensive community engagement process to determine goals for the future adaptive reuse of the building using public investment. However, with the onset of the pandemic, other priorities took precedence, and following the November 2022 citywide vote to approve nearly \$200 million in bonding for a new Burlington High School, it is no longer possible to move forward with public financing to implement the 2018 vision.

- In October 2022, the City released a request for proposals for the adaptive reuse of Memorial Auditorium, seeking a public-private partnership that retained the public's access to the building and met a number of community goals.
- Two proposals were responsive to the RFP, and a committee who reviewed the proposals recommended Babaroosa for selection. Following initial due diligence by Babaroosa prior to entering into a License Agreement and Feasibility phase, they withdrew their proposal. The Administration has chosen not to move forward with the Hawthorne proposal due to feasibility concerns.

**Press Release Date:**

04/07/2023

**City Department:**

Mayor's Office

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