



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

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Office of Business Resources
Office of Real Estate Services

Memo: Healthy Retail Access Work Group Funding Recommendation – *Go-oh Groceries*

Date: Tuesday, March 9th, 2021

To: Madison Food Policy Council Members

From: George Reistad, Business Development Specialist – Food Systems and Members of the Healthy Retail Access Work Group

Members of the Madison Food Policy Council,

The Healthy Retail Work Group met with Kaba Bah, Jerreh Kujabi (Owners/Reps – Go-oh Groceries) and Amy Bruner Zimmerman (Consultant, UW Small Business Development Center), on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 to discuss their proposal seeking \$125,000 in Healthy Retail Access Program (HRAP) funding. This funding would assist them in the acquisition, renovation, and opening of a small community grocery store in the former Visions Night Club building on East Washington Avenue. This proposal requests funding for costs related to equipment, renovations, and building acquisition.

The Hawthorne, Truax, and Carpenter-Ridgeway neighborhoods have distinct geographical challenges as it pertains to residents' access to healthy food. There is a full-service Hy-vee Grocery store a half-mile away from the proposed Go-oh Grocery store site. However, for residents of the neighborhood, particularly for those without reliable access to a vehicle, it is a somewhat daunting task to get to that store because of the necessity to cross East Washington Avenue or Stoughton Road (and in some cases both). Go-oh Groceries, while intending to have a larger trade area than just these adjacent neighborhoods, will offer a safer and more convenient food retail choice to residents of these neighborhoods. It also has the added benefit of taking what many in the neighborhood and city considered to be a somewhat troubled location that conflicted with the typical structure of an established residential neighborhood, and converts it into a community asset providing healthy food options to a diverse clientele.

Members of the Healthy Retail Access Work Group believe that the applicants have the business experience and community support required to open a successful food retail business within the neighborhood. Work Group members highly recommend that the requested \$125,000 in HRAP funding be awarded to Go-oh Groceries to assist with the start-up costs related to opening a community grocery store serving the Hawthorne-Truax-Carpenter–Ridgeway neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "GR" followed by a horizontal line.

George Reistad
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