



VERMONT COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

## MEETING NOTES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT  
JUNE 3, 2013  
PARAMOUNT THEATRE, RUTLAND

**Notes from Break-Out Session #1**  
**Workforce Development**  
**"Jobs for Vermonters and Vermonters to Fill Jobs"**

Facilitator: John Findlay, Maverick & Boutique

Notes: ZING

**1. What's going on? What are the national, global and local trends that are having an impact on jobs in Vermont?**

Talented young people leaving

Exodus of our young people.

Disconnect between education and business on what skills are needed

Post-secondary education required for good paying job

Resistance to going on to school for young males

Employers like hospitals, schools and other secondary markets are still recovering.

Need for on the job training and how to keep entry level people satisfied until fully trained

We are low and uncompetitive in our wages.

Skills needed for manufacturing in the past are not skills needed for today's jobs

Cost of post-secondary school often causes lack of interest

Brain drain shrinking population aging population globalization outsourcing speed of technological

change automation of entry level and low skill jobs

Need for broadband throughout the state.

Just in time education

As number of possible workers goes down, the pool of workers for unskilled jobs shrinks

Adapt and prepare for the changing work place as a part of the creative economy.

Cost of delivering specialized education programs

Globalization changed business dynamics for hiring and technology changes the jobs that are available

More coops and paid internships

Analyze the permitting process and whether or how much it limits growth.

Cost of doing business is high and unpredictable

Demographics indicate shrinking labor force

Locavores and staying in the forefront of adding value to products.

MOOCs are not free and required motivated learners

College loan debt impacts decisions in job choice and place to live

Students don't want to be talked at. They want engaged learning. Employers say students are learning in school materials but don't know how to apply to real world situation

Limited labor pool for mid-pay & mid skill. Mobility in VT an issue (rural nature of the state makes transportation difficult). Lower unemployment rate. Lack of awareness of job opportunities and job skills needed - disconnect between employees and education. Disconnect between schools (opportunity in mid/high school) and business need

Schools giving the expectation that all go to college

Deal with the exorbitant costs of higher education.

Cost of housing impacts business and job decisions

How do we prepare our children for employers?

Automation/technology. Self-service. So many jobs are becoming extinct. Higher education more a necessity than luxury. More focused knowledge to a particular area. Certain jobs have more intense competition. VT salaries lower but cost of living is not. Tech competes with CA, large cities, etc. Trend

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inside VT & outside of skilled vs non-skilled. Education costs rising faster than salaries making it harder for many families to send kids to college.

Disconnect between education and economic development

**Themes:** High Cost of College Education, need for skills training, disconnect between business community and educators, different skill set needed for today's jobs, mobility of workforce, salaries need to rise, need for alternative training and coops, changing demographics, size of labor pool, educational barriers, need to educate for jobs, how students learn and how they are taught, disconnect between education and technology.....cost, cost and cost

**2. JOBS: Where do we stand? What's working really well that we want to KEEP? What's getting in the way that we want to ABANDON? What could we REINVENT that, if we did, would make a really make a big difference?**

KEEP: Job training

KEEP: Relationship between students and educators

KEEP: Quality of life that is such a large part of our brand.

KEEP: Lifestyle (outdoor activity, clean environment, and community mindset)

KEEP: High tech focus, investment because clean high paying jobs - demand will continue to grow.

KEEP: Internships

KEEP: Small classroom size

KEEP: Post-secondary education system because it provides lots of opportunity for Vermonters and imports students from out of state

KEEP: 12 regional tech centers

KEEP: Tech centers that are involved with their local biz and provide training for employees

KEEP: Applied learning

KEEP: Higher end collaborations with businesses

KEEP: Coop and internship programs, tech centers and direct leaning opportunities

ABANDON: Idea that youth leaving Vermont is a bad thing

ABANDON: Teachers unions

ABANDON: College only focus at high school level

ABANDON: Boring standup teaching content

ABANDON: Disconnect education & business. Need better opportunities & information to high school students for career guidance and exposure to VT career opportunities

ABANDON: High cost of education because it forces workers to seek highest paying job to pay back student loans

ABANDON: Tenure for teachers

ABANDON: Duplication of effort in government and local groups

ABANDON catering to what kids want, and not what VT needs for business growth

ABANDON: Typical high school delivery system

REINVENT: The way public higher education is funded in VT

REINVENT: cost of higher education and training

REINVENT: The permitting processes at state & local levels.

REINVENT: The way businesses communicate the need for education re the positions they offer

REINVENT: The opportunity for youth to return to Vermont (after experiencing the world)

REINVENT: What is credentialing? What does business really need to have students prepared to do the job?

REINVENT: What the High School diploma needs to be

REINVENT: Relationship between business and education

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REINVENT: Encourage businesses to offer loan forgiveness to its employees for them to gain education along a career path that makes sense for the employee and employer

REINVENT: Restructure guidance counseling, applied learning and partnerships with businesses

REINVENT: Forgive portion of student loans if work in VT for # of years after graduate

REINVENT: Internships to make students more excited about entering the work world

REINVENT: Better connection between educational system and business opportunities

REUNVENT: VSC and UVM cost structure and career orientation

REINVENT: Move away from seat time and to competency based measures of performance

REINVENT: High School Guidance to provide matchmaking to Vermont training, coop and paid internships, to publicize them early in a student's high school experience

REINVENT: Internships - apprenticeships style

REINVENT: Traditional business practices balance between work and personal life

REINVENT/EXPAND: Business connection to education establishments and higher education decisions and choices

REINVENT: By expanding VT Hi-tech to be in close collaboration with businesses and with CCV/VSC

**Themes:** KEEP: Quality of life, Vermont brand, vocational-technical education. ABANDON: Traditional delivery of high school education, high cost of higher education, traditional guidance counseling with college only focus. REINVENT: Apprenticeships, internships, connections between education and business, permitting process, re-invent the High School guidance system, reinvent the partnership between higher learning, school and enterprise, incentive to keep college students in the state after school, alternative education, career counseling at all levels, fostering entrepreneurship.

**3. Who cares about Jobs? Who are all the stakeholders who are about Jobs in Vermont? How might we involve them, get them excited and serve their interests and the greater public good, all at the same time?**

Stakeholders are EVERYONE

STAKEHOLDERS - business owners, students, parents, educators, community

Inspire interest in education toward sciences, environmental responsibility to inspire clean, innovative students entering the workforce and becoming entrepreneurs who wish to positively impact our communities

Stakeholders: job seekers, biz community, education, government,

Create greater educational opportunities at reasonable cost for all ages and skill and experience

The big want: Vermonters who can earn a living that allows them to take advantage of the VT quality of life

Business: greater involvement in the school systems & colleges

Employers, employees, customers, vendors, municipalities, labor unions, chambers of commerce, HR departments, visitors from out of state,

Stakeholders: Students, businesses, parents, community, and State. Offer incentive to pay back 50% of student loans over 5 years if stay in job for 5 years with business funding 25%, State funding 25% parents 25% and student 25%; keeps Vermonters in state and builds sense of community

Business: talk to students via career day or assembly

Schools, colleges, students, parents, politicians, employers

**Theme:** Accepting anyone you can think of is a stakeholder. Involving all stakeholders in reducing the cost of higher education. Really early intervention. Career days. Incentives.

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**4. Who/what are some of the extraordinary talents, resources, skills, capacities and unique situations that we could employ to deal with the issues we identified this morning, and how could we use those talents/resources creatively/strategically?**

Problem- Lack of soft skills--Internships with focus on middle school

Resources: Vermont Training Program, VMEC, VTC, Career Centers, Higher Ed internships, RDCs, Apprenticeship programs, retirees with management skills. Creative Uses: mentors, apprenticeship programs expanded, incent in-company training

VT Hi-tech has a proven track record in job training. Their extraordinary capabilities need to be scaled up statewide

Passionate involved communities in agriculture & food sciences, tourism

World class research facilities in medicine especially cardiology, orthopedics and pediatrics

We recognize that there are many resources and extraordinary talents in state but need systematic way of collecting workforce needs information by which we could then connect resources to employers, ID trends, develop policy. Then build relationships with training providers.

Close proximity of higher education to medical school

Citizen scientists that want to contribute to caretaking of Vermont's natural resources - local ownership of the environment

Work with VT Tech Alliance, state & educators to promote engineering careers \ and market VT as having high tech jobs

Labor Dept.

Smallness of the state- access to decision makers

Resources: large number of tech centers and training programs which can and should be leveraged and expanded

Big data firms such as IBM and LORD Corporation that can contribute server space for citizen scientists to archive environmental data to gauge the health of our environment and to involve young people in the sciences (biology, environmental studies, math, big data, etc.)

Wonderful diversity of flora and fauna

Guidance Counselor are resource however better communication with employers change the bias

Career/Tech centers

Beautiful ponds, streams, rivers, and lake (watershed) that sustains us but that can also be subject to flooding and catastrophic events, which can engage the community in science

Employers--

People

Grant opportunities thru universities, etc.

Ski resorts, breweries

SBA, SBDC

Wineries

PTACS

University Resources

International Border

Airport

The use of college classes to provide feedback for marketing for product development efforts

**5. Describe an IDEA/PROJECT we might start today to deal successfully with one or more issues we discussed this morning. Report like this: TITLE: (3-5 word catchy name); DESCRIPTION (50-100 words rich description); SUCCESS: How will we know the project is a success?**

**Comprehensive Paid Internship Training & Clearinghouse:** Leverage the states vast tech center network to institute a VT Hi-tech style internship/training program and market the program through

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guidance counselors and social media with a clearinghouse of current opportunities. Success: increase in total # of internships which result in job placement...or even gain work experience toward another track.

**Workforce Needs Database:** Develop a process for systematically collecting workforce needs from employers. The purpose of the database would be to allow for communication between employers and those organizations who could meet their needs. Success measure: Everyone comes back happy next year. Smiles Everyone, Smiles!

**Company Specific Work Fair:** Expose the local community to the needs of a company. Results are measured by the number of job applicants. Cash awards are made to individuals for applicant referrals.

**Grow our own:** Rather than compete with barge companies for highly skilled software engineers and engineers, VT works to grow our OWN starting with middle school, high school & college thru summer camps, internships, apprenticeships to create our own engineering work force SUCCESS - 4 summer interns and 12 recent graduates (apprentice) placed by 6/30/14. Fill pipeline to colleges with high school students.

**Sow the seeds:** Day in the life - career exploration to middle to early high school to intro careers for jobs in VT/ summer camps avail to all who have the aptitude.

**Paper or Plastic?** Career exploration mandatory for each HS student in order to graduate; success achieved if program implemented at schools and students have a plan for post-secondary future (surveyed)

**VT Green Junior Achievement:** Create VT branded version putting 100 students per year with competition of 5 best business ideas at end to develop entrepreneurial skills

**Vermont Starter:** State of Vermont sponsored Kick-starter type crowd funding-crowd pledging website. Useful for starting businesses ranging from lawn mowing services to Tech startups.

**Refocused Guidance to keep our Trades Alive!** The current labor force for trade jobs is shrinking while demand is increasing. Traditional guidance counselors have focused on college pathways. Raise awareness to the guidance counselors to promote trades jobs as viable career opportunities. Success: Increase in students going to trade jobs and replacing the retiring trades' people.

## 6. Two Line Summaries

Don't know what. Don't know how. Don't know I can. New stuff to learn, new places to go, new commitments to make. On the cuff, I've got the stuff!

Refocused Guidance to Keep the Trades Alive. New Graduates, Old Businesses...GOOD Money!!

Need business starts? Use VT Green JR Achievement Smarts!

Internships lead to careers that will follow you through the years.

Problem: No systematic way to collect or identify workforce needs. Create a statewide, credible, systematic system for collecting workforce needs from employers.

Need production staff? None around? Have a private Work Fair then they'll be found.

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**Notes from Break-Out Session #2**  
**Vermont Brand**  
**“Vermont: More Than a Rad Ride and Yummy Syrup”**

Facilitator: Robin Scheu, ACEDC

Notes: Jennifer Molineaux, ACEDC

**What is the Vermont Brand?**

- Positive – environment, quality of life, beauty, community, maple syrup, agriculture, forestry, working landscape, creative, arts, small town, diversity of businesses, cows, skiing, foliage, water, food products, mountains, beer, hard cider, cheese, apples, honesty, integrity, kindness, positive work ethic, unscripted, social responsibility, progressive, gay friendly, independent – not afraid to go our own way, harbor for those who want to retreat, healthy.
- Negative – tough place to do business, high taxes, rural and small, lack of access to technology, cows are good but what about the internet?, resistance to change, transportation is limited or costly or nonexistent,

But the negatives are the reasons I came to Vermont. We are trying to define the dichotomy – people want to live here, but find it hard to work.

There is a desire to define a business side of our branding which is distinguished from our beauty. There is the craft culture quality of work and people.

**National trends having an impact on our brand:**

- Vermont loses from an economic perspective. We need a different thought process about why people come to Vermont. Other states offer incentives and have the workforce. Part of branding has to be generating a quality workforce – that overcomes a lot of other barriers.
- People outside the North East don't know Vermont.
- We want controlled development, and decisions about that impact our brand.
- Working with companies and building relationships is what gets businesses here.

**Opportunities:**

- Educate students and give them opportunities
- Internet telecommunication capabilities mean that people can work anywhere
- We have the opportunity to clarify and narrow our focus to be doing some things really well.
- Let's leverage the brains (higher education) we have here.
- Let's focus on our assets.
- What makes it hard to do business is working with too many agencies (even though they each do their own business very well.) We need to streamline the government process and help with cross communication. The governor needs to offer leadership towards this cooperation.
- Maintain viable working landscape – Vermont is a laboratory.
- We are surrounded by huge export markets - making it easy to get experimental products out there.

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- We have a high quality craftsman reputation
- “Experience tourism” – people want to DO things, not just BUY things. ie: “The Naked Table” workshops <http://nakedtable.com/>
- How do we bridge the gap between the consumer brand and business brand?
- Opportunity - to be clear that we are friendly to business
- Opportunity - we help people connect at a more intimate scale. (The problem is when we scale up - it is ok to be tech or big?)
- Opportunity - to change the perspective that “made in Vermont” is unaffordable
- Opportunity - to talk about the future not just the past
- Opportunity - to lure young techies to move here as with this website: <http://ucanvt.com/>
- We can emphasize outreach to college students to show them they could have a life here.
- Focus on doing something really well once and let it trickle down.
- How do we choose to distribute our value? Much of Vermont’s goes to quality of life. We don’t want to be Texas or North Carolina. We want our lifestyle and our 8 minute commute.

**What do we want to keep and what do we want to abandon?**

Abandon

- Internal competition
- Lack of ethnic diversity

Keep

- Diverse economy
- Entrepreneurial education for high school kids
- Strong retirement base
- Hook education system to job opportunities
- Business plays a role in creating jobs for 20-somethings
- 20-somethings can come in and use technology to further traditional industries – they can use the web to sell wood furniture.
- But 20-somethings don’t start businesses. They need to learn business first.
- Entrepreneurial minded people – highlight stories of ideas that are coming forth. They deserve the witness to their story.
- We need people to leave, get new ideas and come back.
- We need people to stay who want to maintain natural resources. We need people who care about the land.
- The challenge is the cost of living. We need more moderate priced homes.
- Opportunity – We have employers who complain that they cannot find qualified workers. We have citizens (and potential citizens) who complain that they cannot find good jobs. We have the opportunity to help them find each other. Towns often do not communicate openings beyond their borders. Companies often do not have their job openings posted on their websites.
- Opportunity for cross pollination – ie: tech and green, as in farm-to-table tech. We need a tech solution to connect employees to jobs.

Breakout Session 2: Leveraging the Vermont Brand



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- Our brand will be what the world feels about our incentives and disincentives. The challenges are social, environmental, and political. We can find a fusion of ideas – we want both a wonderful clean environment and to find good jobs.
- Other pieces of our brand sell our products elsewhere.
- We have to be specific and concrete.

**Who and what are some of the extraordinary talents, resources, skills, capacities, and unique situations that we could employ to deal with the issues identified this morning, and how can we use them creatively and strategically?**

- One example of a powerful combination of our assets would be the annual woodworkers/furniture makers fair, the internet, and the Burlington College woodworking school.
- Vermont's leadership on health can be part of making us from a good spot into a great spot. Our home health care system is a leader; we have a unique delivery system. Health will be on the national stage for years to come, and if we use the attention to the issue as a spotlight for our health, (not just healthcare) we can capitalize. What if we stopped teen smoking? What if we solved teen obesity? What if we made the most of those successful stories?
- We are accessible – small is beautiful – in government, in health care reform, in forestry.
- We need analysts to crunch numbers.
- We have food, drink, and tourism – in combination.
- We have food cooperatives, why not equipment cooperatives for farmers?
- Our assets are our natural resources/natural environment.
- We have a vibrant community access television network, with local recording studios around the state, to tell our success stories. Reference to “Middlebury Five-0” a talk show which builds community through interviews with local people, including business owners who tell how they did it: <http://middleburycommunitytv.org/taxonomy/term/76>
- Broadband/wireless expansion
- Education
- Good community college/state college potential
- We could replicate the workforce development model.
- Entrepreneurial culture – “Vermont-preneur”
- We could find a sister city which has solved issues similar to ours, and partner with them.
- Just as there is support for the re-localization of our food network, so we could re-localize our whole economy. Local businesses need to support each other.
- Why aren't our schools producing the dairy plant managers which will be sought after by dairy plants around the country? We should be that training ground.
- We are values driven.
- We have good stories.
- There was a reference to the upcoming TEDx day in Manchester. The theme will be “The Future of Creativity” <http://tedxmanchestervillage.com/>

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**Ideas:**

Describe an Idea or project we might start today to deal with one or more of the issues identified.

Project 1

Title: Good work for a good life - create future success now

Description: Existing businesses go into schools (high school and college) and teach the skills needed to be successful in business now and in the future.

- Leadership skills
- Future planning
- Effective team player
- "VT Strong" values and skills

Success: employer hires, kids stay/return

Project 2

Title: Vermonter-preneur Super Short Film Festival

Description: Hold a contest inviting business owners to submit a short video (4 min max) describing Vermont's extraordinary resources, talents, values, capacities and unique situations. There could be prizes. Videos would be u-tube ready. In schools, kids could vote on their favorite projects.

Success: We'll know it's a success when we go viral – 1,000,000 hits

Project 3

Title: Vermont Quality Means Business

Description: Tell our business success stories. Expand Vermont's branded quality into doing business in Vermont. Talk about: opportunity, environment, infrastructure, resources, access, healthy, value, community, creativity, and investment rewards.

Success: We'll know its successful when we see growth in the usual measures and when we start out-competing other states.

Project 4

Title: Vermonter-preneur Profiles

Description: Vermont appeals to the values of healthy, hearty, and home-grown. Have a marketing campaign to attract/retain business entrepreneurs and potential employees to live, work and play in Vermont. Make a series of interviews in targeted sectors – soft skill strengtheners, tech, and working lands. The interview subjects are Vermont residents working in these sectors. Recruitment sources would be "Vermont Strong" stories, VT alumni, and successful companies.

Targets/outlets – education websites, u-tube, State sites

Success:

Short term – inquiries for information

Long term – actual business start ups, and/or open positions filled and worker retention increased.

Project 5

Idea: Strengthen the Vermont brand from within

Title: What Grows in Vermont Stays in Vermont

Description: Build culture of change that embraces the working landscape and products and services associated with it

Breakout Session 2: Leveraging the Vermont Brand

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Success: Local business increases  
Government commitment to local products  
Educational system integrated with local business needs

**Final Synthesis Project for presentation to the wider summit audience:**

Idea: Vermonter-preneur Super Short Film Festival

Title: “Vermont Quality Means Business” or “Lead differently, live differently, profit differently”

Description: Have a short-film contest which profiles unique, creative, and talented Vermont businesses and values. Such stories available on the internet (on a State website?) would be potential national and international promotion both for our businesses and for the Vermont brand.

There could be different prize categories (the group liked all these categories for different reasons and was not ready to choose between them):

- films made by students (in which students learn recording and editing skills as well as business values)
- films made by the businesses themselves (if they have the skills/time/resources)
- films made with State funding (which would provide a standard production quality)(local community access television studios could be a resource here)

Throughout the day, there was a recurring thought about connecting education to the job market. Our group thought that one possible kind of connection could be that the films about businesses in an area could be screened at local schools. Kids could vote on their favorite, and then a representative from that business could come to the school in person. Perhaps it could lead to business/school relationships, internships, training programs, recruiting etc.

Success: hits, requests for further information, jobs created, #businesses, unemployment decrease, etc.

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**Notes from Break-Out Session #3**  
**Global Competitiveness**  
**"It's A Small World After All"**

Facilitator: Jamie Stewart, REDC

Notes: Ken Horseman, ACCD

**TRENDS**

- Increasing awareness of exports and new markets outside of U.S.
- Tech sector growing in Europe and Asia
- Boutique food exports increasing
- Buy local trend growing, but others need broader focus
- China trade is going to the "next level"
- Ireland huge for ag exports including maple
- Increasingly need more specific data for ongoing analysis
- Increasing export of engineering services -- especially in energy & environment
- Increases continue in energy production
- Cost of grid increasing
- VT becoming more culturally diverse
- VT population declining, diversity increasing -- good for business

**CHALLENGES**

- Tax structure too complex and access to incentives too difficult
- Unpredictability in permitting process
- WORKFORCE! Human capital huge issue
- Need to ramp up STEM efforts starting in elementary grades
- Transportation and moving product difficult
- "Vermont's Drifters" (kids without direction) need attention
- Cost of doing business while maintaining quality of life
- Shortage of global financial expertise
- Difficult and costly to obtain ISO certifications
- Poor export compliance by business
- Need more export marketing resources
- VTP should include export/import training for businesses
- Entrepreneurial resources scattered
- High speed rail with access to Burlington Airport
- Need "get to market" resources AFTER the IP idea
- Better tech transfer availability

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- Focused leveraging of VT/Quebec economic synergies
- Underutilized telecom infrastructure
- Telecom options should be "packaged" better
- Telecom strengths should be marketed more consistently
- VT has no presence at CORNET

Breakout Session 3: Global Competitiveness

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- Leverage and promote out language school resources (Middlebury, et al)
- Workforce housing limited
- Need much closer working relationships between higher education and business
- Promote and leverage smart grid
- Harness the detailed information on weather data in VT
- Refine and improve customer analysis data capability
- VT has no state recruitment resource
- Market value of education to public
- Need a "Return on Investment" mentality in legislature - INVEST to grow
- Poor matchmaking for businesses seeking interns
- Unfocused venture capital resources -- scattered

## **RESILIENCY**

- Enhance entrepreneurial focus in state government
  - Break the "cash out and leave" cycle. "Start/grow/keep"
  - Focus on profitability of businesses
  - Engage companies by connecting with local resources to make it hard to leave
  - Vibrant and flexible training should be widely available
  - Invest in infrastructure (water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, renewables)
  - More TIF's
  - Grow and support EB-5 with more resources for better marketing/administration
- 

The afternoon session focused on solutions in four areas:

1. Government regulation & taxation
2. Workforce training and access
3. Infrastructure needs
4. Collaboration and Networking Systems

## **SOLUTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT REGULATION & TAXATION**

-- Promote regular business roundtable meetings to identify specific local/regional issues and initiatives to address them.

-- "Data mine" the best practices of private sector models for new governmental programs as captive insurance and EB-5 have demonstrated.

-- Develop "single point of contact" models for all program delivery resources.

-- Separate "regulators" from "marketers" within state departments and agencies.

-- Create "one stop shop" resources for local regulators.

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**SOLUTIONS FOR WORKFORCE TRAINING AND ACCESS**

- Development strong business to higher education collaboration for meeting the ongoing and dynamic needs of businesses.
- Development of strong business to tech center programs.
- Market VT brand & education strengths abroad to foreign markets.
- Promote company open houses for VT students.
- INTERNSHIPS and CO-OP opportunities.
- Ramp up co-op education and certificate programs for industry certifications.
- Ramp up language curricula.
- STEM early!
- Make higher education responsive and nimble for business needs.

**INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS**

- Transportation:
  - Market state airports
  - Prioritize "new" vs. "existing" investments
  - Make freight shipping less costly
  - Enhance commercial air service
- Telecom:
  - Cell service needs continued investment
- Utilities (electric, gas, renewables)
  - Continue smart grid enhancements
  - Get VT Gas pipeline to Middlebury and to Rutland
  - Address constrained transmission grid
  - Address volatility of electric rates
  - Invest in renewables

**COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING**

- Promote matchmaking events (PTAC, VAAA, e.g.)
- Create a "sourcing" portal that comprehensively connects buyers/sellers
- Hold annual Economic Development Summit
- Increase resources to more comprehensively promote incentives and technical assistance to VT businesses
- Make government/business/academia focused on creating a "sector development" mechanism

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**Notes from Break-Out Session #4**  
**Infrastructure**  
**“Can You Hear Me Know?”**

Facilitator: Sam Andersen, CVEDC  
Notes: Ruth Wallman, LEIEDC

**Challenges**

Permit Process, especially Act 250, slow, allows conditions that reduce likelihood projects will reach fruition  
Lack Water/sewer infrastructure  
Lack good housing for workforce  
Local government lacks economic development tools e.g. TIF  
Reliance on oil prices which keep changing  
Old housing stock = high energy costs  
Transportation – “can’t get there from here”  
Coordination and alignment re: vision, communication  
Retain adequate workforce, and our youth, that need help paying mortgages, tuition  
Need a business “tool kit” to offer support and assistance  
ANR is 4x larger than Commerce – need to prioritize at the state level  
Need incentives and education with new technologies to be efficient e.g. water, energy  
Lack local capital for development agencies from State or Feds  
Funds may start at the Fed or state level, but projects start locally = disconnect  
Business has to pay for infrastructure if municipality cannot afford, e.g. sewer, broadband  
Airports needed  
Ridgeline issues  
0-based funding creates competition  
Redundancy among various bureaucracies  
If IBM and Husky leave, what is left to ensure that VT’s economy is viable?

**Opportunities**

Permitting – adopt form-based code, more subjective, which will streamline permitting  
We have BB and cell coverage, but it is hard to use it as a recruiting tool in small towns that do not have adequate water/sewer  
The new jobs in NEK will require housing at all income levels  
Energy costs – biomass, geothermal, wind, solar – adopt a variety of energy sources both commercial and residential  
Block grants and capital funders can provide local capital  
Regional entities facilitate fees and flow of funds needed for permits  
Look at solution orientated, intra-agency, integrated approach. Break down silos.  
NEK is doing this with VDTM, VTrans and Dept. of Ed.  
Team approach to problem solving  
Consolidation of agencies to reduce redundancy in the bureaucracies

**What can Fed and State governments do?**

Transportation –Feds provide 80% of funding, but state transportation funds are sent to the General Fund  
Need new as well as repairs, Feds don’t pay for all of it  
Breakout Session 4: Infrastructure

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Use an economic development lens for infrastructure issues; we are punished for energy efficiency in transportation e.g. gas tax. (Need a local fix, e.g. RLF)  
State and Fed need to prioritize and show discipline in funding projects

**What can Regional and Municipal entities do?**

**How do we allocate limited resources for infrastructure while maximizing local and private assets?**

Help entities compete by leveling the playing field

Coordinate facilitation with stakeholders

Prioritize

Identify diverse ways that communities can all benefit from state/fed resources

Goal to complete a permit process in 28 days

Use Farm to Plate as a template = they created a framework, received state funds, and implemented a process that encompassed all stakeholders, example of a microcosm that encompassed land use issues, working landscape, etc.

**IDEAS –**

**Cooperation/working together**

1. Pool resources among small communities; don't pit them against each other in applying for funds
2. Designate growth areas or business locations regardless of town boundaries.
3. Build open regional or statewide BB networks, separate ACCESS from SERVICES
4. Build capacity with stakeholders by region
5. ID tax credits that can be used for small communities; can new market tax credits be tweaked to work more broadly in small towns?

**Need State Economic Development Plan**

1. Commit to implementing it
2. Each region has single agency to deliver services – not just RDC but an A-Team of stakeholders

**Need Workforce housing**

1. Not just affordable, but “good” housing at all income levels

**Permits**

1. Create ACCD Clearing House for 1-stop permitting while breaking down silos
2. Assure predictability at state level, help build a strong foundation
3. Simplify the process and enable people to use the tools
4. Create DASHBOARD to help navigate the state process for permitting – shows the user all the elements of the process in a simple visual and helps them to track their progress through the system. CEDO has a good model for this.

Go Where You Look and Know What You Are Looking AT

5. Create Units of Readiness – so that any project can go forward with all the elements.

**SUMMARY VISION**

**Simplify permitting process**

**Create Team approach to accelerate the processes, use the AOT model**

**Provide incentives in designated development districts and target resources**



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**Notes from Break-Out Session #5**  
**Finding a Prosperous Balance**  
**“YIN AND YANG”**

Facilitator: Pat Moulton-Powden, BDCC

Notes: Joan Goldstein, GMEDC

**Major Points**

1. Need to promote an engaged citizenry: ensure good participation in the decision making bodies at the local, regional and state levels/commissions.
2. Regulatory process/costs:
  - For Small business permitting has a much larger relative impact
  - One size fits all is not a good approach, i.e. consider size of business, capacity of towns, especially outside of Chittenden to try to “spread the economic wealth” around Vermont,
  - Clarity of process, ANR lead time, consistency across district environmental commissions and ANR districts.
3. Rebranding:
  - VT both external and internal, we need to believe our message ourselves and then sell it to the outside world.
  - ANR/Act 250/ Local process. Move toward a collective common goal. Not just compliance but moving toward getting things/ projects done.
  - Change the behavior and we change our reputation.
4. Costs of Development, time, expense, opportunity ( businesses otherwise would put the time and money into productive capacity. )

**Key Trends and Pressures:**

- Difficulty in locating new industrial parks
  - Due to natural constraints, and others
- Lack of built space or appropriate space
  - Costly solutions especially for small businesses, when building new or renovating existing space.
  - Lengthy permitting, especially 250, ANR
- Need to influence/utilize more federal resources
- Need more access to best practices across Vermont and the region

**Workforce:**

- Smallness in our size could be detrimental to broad-based apprenticeship programs
- 40% of HS graduates are not going on to college
  - this leads to lack of preparedness for jobs

**Issues that are preventing and hindering job growth and investment:**

- Need to bring tax stabilization back to local level. Act 68 hampered towns’ ability to act nimbly.
- Young Vermonters leaving state – need to work on attracting them back to state
  - Aging population: retraining for 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> careers
- Net outflow of population – regions
  - Need immigrants
  - Need to grow population

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- We lead in rejuvenation of agriculture. Sector – figure out how to make it work in other sectors. IT property leadership with patent legislation, others?
- Change in housing needs: from larger housing to smaller spaces, with the aging of the population. Old housing stock.
- Close the door mentality: there are many who like Vt as it is, the no change brigade often serve on local planning commissions and zoning boards, and regional planning commissions, this leads to a low growth or declining growth climate. Many plans, local and regional are written as if there is runaway growth when in fact the opposite problem exists.

**Opportunities which we are not taking advantage:**

- Listen to more success stories, develop best practices.
- Reinventing resorts, i.e. Sedona example, year round center of spirituality, yoga, alt medicine,
- Market to tourists – stay and work here. Merge tourism and economic development.

**Working well:**

- Good private/public partnerships and process powerful collaborations
- Good small business development structure
- Breweries/cheese are having great VT branding recognition and success.
- Quality of state government officials. , no corruption scandals like NYS
- Excellent Access to government: Nimble
- Good Awareness even in smaller communities about economic development, have committees or persons committed to it.
- Vermont State College Structure and attentiveness.

**Need to address/ develop or reinvent:**

- Planning commissions and local businesses need to step up to invest and effect change
- Need to address infrastructure costs especially in small communities
- Lack of strategy and focus at the state and local levels
- Chittenden County concentration for VEPC, need to learn how to spread the wealth
- Disparity of education, housing, income Chittenden vs. non-Chittenden.
- Government's relationship with business community, need to give it more prominence, importance, priority. Instead of a compliance role across all agencies a mindset of how what they do will lead to the creation of jobs and enhancement of revenue.
- Rebranding of Vermont: both internally and externally. Each department of govt must think of Vt as a great place to live and work and this will transcend and travel to outside constituents.
- Approach development in a project management sense, need an arbiter before things become an obstacle to growth. Prior intervention in act 250 for better legal review, on the record review.

**Needs Improvement:**

- Act 250 – although it maintains our sense of place there is room for more balance between economic development and environmental concerns.
- Act 250: Needs some contraction – it has grown since its inception. Also must coordinate with local, state and regional plans. Legislature may move to make it even more restrictive in the next session.

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- Needs more clarity, better coordination plus other ANR permits – long lead time. More predictability will lower costs.
- Improve ANR Brand/eliminate fiefdoms
- Local capacity prevents good planning and development
- Local examples of proactive incentives – carrot vs. stick approach.
- Need holistic approach: some compromise is in order to promote economic development.
- Businesses need access to academia as an R&D resource

**Every Vermonter is a stakeholder:**

- Small and mid-size businesses, businesses of all sizes and shapes.
- Higher education
- Labor representation
- ANR – Govt. Agencies
- K-12 students/faculty – get them to understand applicable skills necessary for success
- Tech Centers
- Non-profit sector
- Ag
- Municipalities

**Possible Initiatives –**

1) “We are minor until we are major”

Act 250 – Projects are labeled minor until it needs to be major. E.g. a party requests a hearing.

- More consistency across commissions – cohesive review of what is minor/major
  - Better coordinated with ANR
  - More proactive
  - Encourage projects as a minor
  - All agencies to be coordinated around economic development
  - Ombudsmen
  - Transportation
  - “What can I do today to help create jobs?”
- Costs – relative valuation
  - Leverage federal tax credits so that construction costs are not over the appraisals.
- Model Manchester – if project passes local rigorous review on record, then it goes to a minor 250 application or if town passes project to the State to avoid duplicative permit process. Reduce costs, time.
- Professional certifications on certain criteria (ANR) move to acceptance
  - Certify the plan and then certify upon completion

2) Have 250 decisions before permits issued by ANR: this is done in some districts but perhaps apply this rule consistently among 250 commissions so that there is a more predictable outcome to the process.

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- 3) Better incentives in growth centers/consistency
  - Relevant data on growth centers, are they useful? Working? What of the growth outside the centers?
- 4) Create shovel ready sites
  - Need Development capital, VEDA? Target labor market areas, in order to prioritize. VHCB collaboration,
- 5) Initiate LEAN/VMEC for permit process across agencies.
  - All agencies' focus on growth targets. What can we do to create a job? Instead of cost cutting initiative across agency lines...a growth enhancement initiative across agency.
- 6) Ease up on details of permits...i.e. Extend expiration dates of permits.
  - Staggered fees – coincide with impact of project.
  - Change culture that state's time is investment rather than paid for by fees
- 7) Vermont Strong is a timeless process
  - VT was nimble when Irene came so let's be more nimble around growing Vermont. We need to instill sense of urgency – we need data to prove the urgency..... Prove this by number of permits issued, number of housing units developed, number of commercial sq. ft. build/ occupied, etc.

**Possible remedies to put forth:**

- But/for VEPC does not apply to non-Chittenden businesses – this addresses the “one size does not fit all” problem. And also the disparity between Chittenden and non- Chittenden area.
  - Prioritize specific sectors: align appropriate incentives and resources, recruitment
    - Ag
    - Tech
    - Special teams to identify sectors.
  - Coordinate/develop a way to work well with VNRC, other preservation groups, at least initiate dialogue and task force.
- 8) Rebranding: Tout the quality of life, spirit, nimbleness.
    - Encourage community spirit/pride
    - At every level
      - State
      - Regional
      - Local
    - Represent can-do spirit
    - Can't just be slogan – need actual redevelopment, H377 helps with blighted sites to make site ready.
    - Market/outreach about Internet coverage at the end of 2013. – “we are the world” spread the good word.

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**Notes from Break-Out Session #6**  
**Innovation**  
**"You Want Money for *What?*"**

Facilitator: Abby Straus, Maverick & Boutique  
Notes: Zing

**1. What's going on? What are the national, global and local trends that are having an impact on innovation in Vermont?**

Low top line profitable growth

Open source collaborative tools; niche value end products.

World economy; younger demographic rise of entrepreneur. Yet WSJ citing risk adverse youth.

Steady loss of younger workforce

Internet capability of networking;

Social media

New type of investment - sources of money - crowd funding

Most companies have no system for innovation and don't know how to truly innovate

Manufacturing coming back - on shoring

Ability to crowd source

Race to the bottom - competition on pricing; internet culture - changes methods of collaboration, purchasing, etc.;

Moocs

Technology, social networking, business plan contests, access to capital for start ups, business incubator facility or online, how to locate individual innovators/inventors, alternative sources of funding,

Trend toward knowing where your food and other goods coming from

Opportunities for Green Technologies and innovations in water sustainability.

Nimbyism at local level inhibits investment. 3-D Printing

Long term decline in mfg has had a negative impact on R&D and innovation

Socially responsible - can make profit too

Broadband Expansion

Slightly more optimism on national economy leading to investment, education of younger entrepreneurs,

Technology

Vermont creates spaces to meet and "bump" into people that you can innovate with.

Educational attainment

Instant info from internet/social media,

Distributed Workforce

Declining mfg profitability reduces investment in advanced technology to keep them competitive

Climate Change and opportunity to innovate - food, energy

Create spaces where businesses don't silo but instead interact

Business requirement to get more results with less cash

Need to break down silos

Working in networks not in isolation

Need for clean, affordable solutions

Renewable energy/ r=innovation, cluster of technology creating buzz

Growth of independent workforce (1 or two people)

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Locovore and more food safety are growing.  
Localvore trend and statewide marketing  
Baby boomers - aging VT and pop decline  
Aging population creating a bottleneck in business transition (acquisition and intergenerational transfer of business)  
Better food...richer experiences  
Telecommuting on the rise. Need to find ways to support these folks- provide a water cooler!  
Gen Y different values  
Increase in broadband  
Groups that develop environmental and green innovation, renewables  
Push for Regionalism  
Capturing leadership in different censoring and monitoring activity  
Status quo of business no longer good enough to ensure future success  
Too much big business....a move to smaller  
Climate change - new migration within workforce?  
Rising obesity and diabetes

**Themes and further conversation:** technology, new ways to finance growth, collaboration/connectedness, MOOCs/education, new kinds of education, food, local as a concept, the rise of social in addition to tech/clustering, social media and how it affects business and bus. networking, youth entrepreneurship, global warming/climate change, change in the nature of workforce, VT scale being small lets us be an innovator and build a brand, affordable energy, more innovation, decline in profitability/manufacturing/top line...decline in personal profitability tied to cost of living, global economy: profit isn't in competing for bottom, but competing for creative edge at the top, increasing cost of higher ed. and student debt...the ability to take on jobs they want, risk aversion...increasing renewable energy and innovation clusters, evidence-based business management/big data analytics. Where is permitting and issue? Manufacturing, real estate development, and any time you're building a new building, energy investment. Low impact isn't an issue. We've been having the same conversation for 20 years. We want to maintain our natural resources and we want development.

**2. INNOVATION: Where do we stand? What's working really well that we want to KEEP? What's getting in the way that we want to ABANDON? What could we REINVENT that, if we did, would make a really make a big difference?**

KEEP: Ability to collaborate, service providers working together, culture that supports entrepreneurs,  
KEEP: Accessibility to Resources/Govt  
KEEP: beautiful natural resource economy  
KEEP: community based approach, community mindedness,  
KEEP: Diversity as an asset  
KEEP: Do Gooders  
KEEP: -do gooders, community-mindedness  
KEEP: Easy access to state govt and leg  
KEEP: focus on VT as great place to live - protect environment  
KEEP: innovation engineering as proven system  
KEEP: natural qualities of VT  
KEEP: Nimbleness and Forward Looking Programs  
KEEP: Strong sense of community<sup>4</sup>  
KEEP: Strong business assistance VTP, VMEC, VtSBDC, VCET etc.

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KEEP: strong sense of community and egalitarian culture  
KEEP: trend toward more networking across the state  
KEEP: Value Added Agriculture  
KEEP: momentum with building a healthy food system  
KEEP: Vermont is a great place to live work and play  
KEEP: VT spirit  
KEEP: Innovation Engineering Management System - increase speed/decrease risk of innovation  
ABANDON: bunker mentality - against newcomers, new ideas  
ABANDON: panel discussion where speakers have only 10 minutes  
ABANDON: notion of wealth creation being a negative  
ABANDON: personal responsibility is a bad thing  
ABANDON: programs without quantifiable metrics  
ABANDON: We have to do it ourselves  
ABANDON: Bunker mentality  
ABANDON: the peanut butter funding, spread to so many, all are impoverished  
ABANDON: Barriers to contracting in the knowledge economy e.g. benefits payments  
ABANDON: the idea that competitiveness is bad.  
REINVENT: way we think about infrastructure  
REINVENT: housing options  
REINVENT: permitting process  
REINVENT: private investment options  
REINVENT: Registered Apprenticeship programs  
REINVENT: State Economic Development Dept so it picks winners and losers  
REINVENT: strategic economic development goals  
REINVENT: the economic support structure to better marry with the future needs. We are stuck in the past.  
REINVENT: How do you do innovation in an UP 2%, DOWN 2% economic environment  
REINVENT: More exporting; more value-added manufacturing  
REINVENT: More innovation in manufacturing - what, how, customers, unique offerings  
REINVENT: Strengthen alignment of Innovation with passions of quality of life  
REINVENT: educational system  
REINVENT: goals (i.e. what are the RIGHT targets that we should strive for; what works for Vermont)  
REINVENT: higher education and the way it connects with businesses  
REINVENT: how funders connect to help businesses grow  
REINVENT: Legislative attitudes toward economic development and innovation  
REINVENT: perception in VT about the great qualities of manufacturing  
REINVENT: Permit system  
REINVENT: Priority focus on manufacturing as economic driver  
REINVENT: retool incentives (i.e., STEM incentives) to get more for the money  
REINVENT: size and process of gov't  
REINVENT: way we integrate innovation and entrepreneur in k-16  
RETOOL: Existing incentives/disincentives for start-ups  
RETOOL: Permitting process related to small business, SEC could be simpler  
RETOOL: Statewide access to first stage funding, VIF model  
RETOOL: assistance with learning how to fail  
RETOOL: myth that failure is a bad thing; increase support for turnaround, financial restructure, etc.  
RETOOL: Risk level- it's ok to fail in pursuit of success/innovation

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**Themes/conversation:** Reinvent how we measure success from one year goals to longer term measures, measuring what's going on, creating good metrics for what's happening, we need to stop treating all businesses equally, strategy for supporting businesses that will be the best fit and allocation of resources based on the strategic vision, re. #9 retool incentives to put money where it should go, strategic alignment for support infrastructure, failing/innovating/learning tied to long term vision of what success looks like, failing. State has no business deciding who wins and who loses, funding...smallest portion in state goes to economic development, need for culture change: towards notion of innovation and entrepreneurship...wealth creation (evil capitalism).

Start in educational system, we all start off with lemonade stands...then what happens. Interesting that health care hasn't come up...it's a big issue, control at local level from a permitting standpoint (planners don't like innovation or biz development). Wal-Mart battles of 15 years ago. Risk taking is very important...failure is part of innovation...needs to be part of our culture. Permitting process...innovation Priorities for what we support as a state. If you don't believe in wealth creation...the opposite is that everything is equal. Adaptive planning is the entrepreneurial way to go. We can use the CEDS process to accomplish this.

Reinvent the way we think about how we address issues. It may not be education/permitting per se. Maybe we should look more individually in terms of who has the skills. How do we innovate around the process for this?

What "sayings" can we gather and talk about and collaborate on. Being forward thinking about the way we work together. How do we take a stand and still be inclusive enough to encompass enough of the stakeholder interests? How do we turn what we do into value added product? We really need the vision of what the brand looks like in order to come up with innovative projects.

Theme from panelists: having a common point person...coordination of resources to get results, navigating systems, making sense of complexity.

How can we overcome the image that we're difficult to do business with? Do we really have a big problem with a 4% unemployment rate? Alchemist, creative quality stuff across food and tech arenas. What is the destiny of rural VT...scale issue, driving the fulfillment of VT's brand? What levers can we pull quickly to get VT back on track with appropriate growth? Manufacturing drives a huge percentage of innovation. We need a balanced approach. Look at market opportunities. For companies already in business in order to develop new markets.

**2. Who cares about Innovation? Who are all the stakeholders who are about Jobs in Vermont? How might we involve them, get them excited and serve their interests and the greater public good, all at the same time?**

- ACCD
- All schools
- All summit attendees
- An
- Any one that wants their kids to stay in Vt
- Anybody in financial sector
- Bankers
- Better ability to communicate services/resources available
- Better marketing of existing or future resources



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- Business owners
- Celebrate innovators successes
- Chambers
- College students expect career 85% - shift in last decade from education for its own sake
- Colleges
- Communities
- Communities
- Community groups as a way to get more stakeholders involved
- Consumers want new things
- Cross functional strategy for providers
- Education at all levels
- Employers
- Entrepreneurs
- Entrepreneurs (people with ideas)
- Entrepreneurs, small business owner, small business recruitment prospect, educational hierarchy
- Equity and risk investors; key stakeholders identified in CEDS projects
- Existing businesses
- Families
- Financial community: bankers, investors (institution and individual), VC, angels, friends and family, community associations e.g. finance corps
- Folks transitioning from prison system
- Funders; capital providers
- Future kids, Lars, Vermont digital economy project
- Government orgs
- Healthcare providers
- I do
- In a way everybody cares - maybe can't articulate
- Investors
- It would be easier say who is not a stakeholder in this...
- Jr high, high school, k-12
- Make it fun!
- Middle aged people....past early fears but before late years conservation

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- More aggressive use of CDBG funding towards innovation
- More networking
- Multi levels of education facilitators
- Nek eb5
- Not earned income people
- Outcome goals from this conference
- People who want to move to Vermont
- People with a stake in the status quo: people who are afraid we're "going to be like NJ"
- Permitting leaders
- Private business, workers, funders (VEDA, etc.)
- Proactive business owners
- Provide case studies about how innovation is critical to their success
- Provide experiences to students
- RDCs
- Reach out to all - check our misperceptions about who would not be a stakeholder
- Retirees
- SBDC, VMEC, VCET, colleges/universities
- Show bankers the value their clients get from being innovative - 2x greater profitability than other business strategies
- Show stakeholder that it's important for survival
- Start up weekends
- UVM
- Teach entrepreneurship
- Teach innovation
- Technicians
- The environment
- The kids....future workers
- The unemployed and underemployed if worked with
- Tourists
- Utilities
- VBSR
- Vt bus round table

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- Vt tech council
- Who's not a stakeholder?
- Youth

**Summary of innovation ideas for presentation:**

- Summation: Fix/update/modify permitting processes at local and state level to assist responsible business development
- The interdependence and interrelationships of the agriculture. Culture around Hardwick. The role of gov't to assist with marketing.
- We need to articulate our strengths
- Attract and grow businesses that match the VT brand. Highlight green, small scale, neighborly business. Organic VT job creation. Create an inspiring brand to attract the business that can thrive in our vision for a sustainable Vermont.
- Rebrand - - - culture of entrepreneurship - - - independent culture/independent small businesses
- Identify and remove friction to starting and expanding business in Vermont
- Grow existing businesses with a strategy and system for innovation.
- Gov't assists with market study adjacent market opportunities
- Encourage entrepreneurship and innovation by established VT business sectors
- Build around the area of clusters
- Develop an "innovation benchmarking" process e.g. way to measure progress toward goals
- Access to capital for entrepreneurs
- Cultivate an operational framework that achieves alignment and flexibility simultaneously
- Single point of contact for business to navigate onerous system
- Leverage goodwill of VT brand by breaking down images of business unfriendly perception.

# Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee

## Minutes of the First meeting, August 5, 2013

### Attendance list

#### Members

Ted Brady, Senator Leahy's Office  
Joan Goldstein, Green Mtn. Economic Development Corporation  
Mike Harrington, Town of Bennington  
Liz Gamache, City of St. Albans  
Janice St. Onge, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund  
Jo Bradley, VEDA  
Melody Burkins, University of Vermont  
Hal Cohen, Central VT Community Action Council  
Dave Thompson, Mylan Technologies  
Issa Sawabini, Fuse Marketing  
Peter Stromgren, Retired  
Joe Fusco, Casella Waste Management Systems  
Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, Marlboro College  
Ben Johnson, Commonwealth Dairy  
Karen Marshall, VTel  
Tim Briglin, Tuckerman Investments  
Cathy Bacon, Freedom Foods  
Bill Stritzler, Smugglers Notch  
John Goodrich, EHV-Weidmann (via telephone)  
Dan Kurtzman, Ethan Allen (via telephone)

#### Agency of Commerce and Community Development representatives

Lawrence Miller, Secretary of Commerce and Community Development  
Lucy Leriche, Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Community Development  
Kiersten Bourgeois  
Fred Kenney  
Ken Horseman  
Ken Jones  
Will Hofmann

#### Consultants

Mark Waterhouse  
Robbie Herold  
Abby Strauss  
Bill Frederick (via telephone)

The meeting convened at 1:05 pm

#### **Introducing the CEDS project for Vermont**

Secretary Miller provided introductory comments noting how the CEDS project will provide Vermont a roadmap for its future economic development

- Lisa Gosselin has been appointed the Commissioner of Economic Development – starting September 3.
- The statewide CEDS process will not displace the existing and on-going CEDS projects
- The state needs to use its resources wisely and that does not mean picking sectors for selective development – rather, we will dedicate resources to sectors that are showing signs of growth.
- The Steering Committee will help identify the kinds of information that is useful.
- The Steering Committee will help in the implementation of strategies identified in this project
- The Steering Committee will identify strategies
- Economic Development needs to develop from our strengths
- Economic Development needs to recognize the full spectrum of economic conditions for our well off citizens and those that have more difficulty in making ends meet
- Economic Development may benefit from appealing to more folks to come to Vermont, either returning to their childhood home or those that want to move here for our quality of life.
- A diverse workforce is important to attract new people and to build economic vitality

### **Describing the CEDS Process**

Mark Waterhouse, of Garnet Consulting Group and the leader of a consulting team hired to help Vermont with the CEDS project provided an introduction to the CEDS project and the presentation is included on the project website.

(Mark's presentation is available on the CEDS website)

Committee members noted:

- The need to characterize the contributions of the non-profit sector to the overall economy
- The need to build off of other projects that were developed from broad participation and that have affects on the future of the Vermont economy
- The value of referring to Quality of Life Studies such as the one completed by the Vermont Business Roundtable
- Please avoid the use of acronyms

The consultants described some of the principles of the decision making that will be used for this project. These principles include

- Assuring that many people are involved
- Zing – a tool to gather perspectives from all participants (not just the loudest)

The group discussed the level of specificity that the project should or could pursue with the interest generally agreed that the specificity should be appropriate to ensure that the project lead to action.

### **Describing the Vermont economy**

Ken Jones, the Economic Research Analyst for the Agency of Commerce and Community Development provided a brief review of economic conditions in Vermont. This presentation is included on the project website.

(Ken's presentation is available on the CEDS website)

Committee members noted

- Capital measures do not capture available liquid capital for investment

- The need to better characterize the contributions from small businesses to the overall economy

- The need to include a characterization of the impact of the arts on the economy

- Include food production when considering the food sector contributions to the economy

- Gross Domestic Product is not a perfect measure of economic activity

Presentations are available on the CEDS website

[http://accd.vermont.gov/business/strategic\\_planning](http://accd.vermont.gov/business/strategic_planning)

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee  
Minutes of the September 12 meeting  
Hartford Municipal Offices, White River Junction

Attendance list

Members

Marlene Allen, Same Sun  
Joan Goldstein, Green Mtn. Economic Development Corporation  
Charlie Baker, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission  
Leon Berthiaume, St. Albans Co-op  
Megan Sullivan, Congressman Peter Welch's Office  
Mike Harrington, Town of Bennington  
Liz Gamache, City of St. Albans  
Janice St. Onge, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund  
Bill Scully, Carbon Zero  
Melody Burkins, University of Vermont  
Hal Cohen, Central VT Community Action Council  
Dave Thompson, Mylan Technologies (by phone)  
Peter Stromgren, Retired  
Joe Fusco, Casella Waste Management Systems  
Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, Marlboro College  
Karen Marshall, VTel  
Bill Stritzler, Smugglers Notch  
Ben Johnson, Commonwealth Dairy (via telephone)  
Matt Thompson, Vermont Refugee Resettlement Center (via telephone)  
Tim Briglin, Tuckerman Capital

Guests

Kris Hughes, Rutland Regional Planning Commission

Agency of Commerce and Community Development representatives

Lisa Gosselin, Commissioner of Economic Development  
Lucy Leriche, Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Community Development  
Ken Jones

Consultants

Mark Waterhouse  
Bill Frederick  
Robbie Herold  
Abby Strauss  
John Findlay  
Leslie Cosgrove  
Rachel Selsky  
Jim Damicis

The meeting convened at 1:05 pm

The August 5 meeting minutes were approved by consent.

After introductions, the consultants initiated a series of exercises.

***1. The context: What are the major trends that are having an impact on VT? Describe the impact of global and national market, economic, social and economic trends? What are some of the local demographic, job, business, education and other trends that we need to be aware of?***

- A U.S. return to nationalism - U.S. no longer superpower / instability globally
- Act 250 can be detrimental to new opportunities.
- Aging population and national and local immigration.
- Awareness that climate change is real and impacting our lives; how do we mitigate risk?
- Business has global increased reliance on IT and broad technologies.
- Buying local / re-localization of our food
- Climate change - impacts VT, but we have water! More resilient.
- Climate change will have an impact on skiing, maple and more increasing food prices and scarcity of water.
- Closing businesses
- Concern about the preparedness of our students for today workforce, the increasing cost, and where that revenue will come from; this includes cost of higher education too.
- Consumer “flight to authenticity” - people want authentic brands and experiences with what they buy
- Consumers are becoming more educated on what they are buying; how it is made, where it is made, is it from a sustainable source...
- Consumers are seeking to know more about what is in their food
- Continue to protect and build upon Vermont’s brand for quality of life, food, environment. The skills are requiring more technology based knowledge.
- Cost of change is untenable.
- Create a separate economic development agency for greater voice and stature.
- Creative destruction of many traditional industries and business models
- Cross border traffic
- Develop technology program to support the few clusters we have and to create new ones.
- Do not mistake community development for economic development.
- Downtown revitalization
- Economic disparity. Access to education is uneven.



- Education costs
- Education system that needs to be redesigned to meet the needs of an economy that does not yet exist
- Energy is shifting and usage is increasing. Globalization of businesses. Locavore movement.
- Energy issue - industry transforming
- Entrepreneurial sense in our youth and their interactions with markets / jobs
- Fed initiatives may actually hurt Vermont initiatives
- Fraying of the social and community fabric
- Freedom and privacy
- Global and national resource scarcity in energy, raw materials and natural resources, weather and climate challenge
- Global economy: cheaper labor elsewhere taking jobs away from VT
- Global trend: EB5 program in NEK will have a positive economic impact on VT
- Global trend: larger companies consolidating could impact VT
- Global/national movement to factory farm food system, positive if VT provides alternative.
- Globalization makes multi-lingual skills necessary, VT needs to do better - not culturally diverse.
- Green Mountain power spending money and effort in establishing presence with community people
- Growing commitment to renewable energies. Opportunities to create a comprehensive energy plan that will create jobs and reduce costs.
- Growing distrust in public institutions
- Growing interest in investing locally (from Wall Street to Main Street)
- Growth in global demand for high quality specialty consumer products, especially including food, VT strength.
- Growth of the entitled. Energy independence vs. Environmental preferences.
- Health and obesity awareness - consumers/communities are changing their attitudes towards food
- Health benefit programs will have effects both ways. Companies will definitely make decisions in reaction to the new structures.
- Health care changes

- Health care costs and complexity
- Health care is an increasing cost and there is uncertainty around where it will go. What will communities look like in 10 years?
- Healthcare reform is creating some uncertainty and potential competitive issues for our businesses.
- Immigration into Vermont as well as a national trend.
- Implications of the internet on social behavior and competitiveness.
- Importance of education especially early childhood. Nothing happens until someone buys something.
- Income inequality is expanding.
- Increased development in northern Vermont
- Influx of populations to cities
- Instability and loss of funding
- Integrity of Vermont workforce attracts investment for some
- Loss of downtowns and shifting of retail economy.
- Loss of small arms
- Lots of available capital for good projects.
- Low income community is not feeling benefits of improving economy
- Low population density - good - all productive mix of natural resource and other economies.
- Lower unemployment rate is positive. Locally (St Albans) things are revitalizing with new businesses.
- More consumer awareness of the negative issues associated with big ag. And too-big-to-fail business - no more green washing
- More jobs will require higher and more specialized education
- Movement to organic farms
- NAFTA impact on manufacturing jobs in the U.S. Southern manufacturing growth causing loss in the North.
- National fear of terrorism is stimulating increased regulatory costs and changes.
- National trend of loss of manufacturing impacting VT
- Need for skilled technology jobs, middle class and higher wages
- Need to grow what we have.
- Need to improve transportation infrastructure.
- New business investment
- New environment - blaming poor for being poor

- Next generation of business leaders. Succession planning. Serial incubation and then selling of companies
- No definition of economic development or its focus. No! Taxes not a major factor.
- Opportunity to increase thermal efficiency
- Opportunity to reduce carbon footprint in transportation sector
- Our businesses are having to deal more with globalization and increasing exports. And some are owned by out of state companies which impacts their decisions and their investment in VT.
- People nationally more divorced from nature - could hurt VT tourism.
- Political environment in Washington is different - lack of efficacy
- Population and job growth has been flat. How do we grow the economic pie and support the increased demand for public services and infrastructure?
- Positive impact of TIF districts
- Power of networked
- Problem with no young people sticking around. Aging population.
- Public safety - health and crime issues related to drugs
- Pushing American Made products
- Recognition of climate change impact on landscape and land use
- Renewable energy movement
- Revitalization that hasn't been seen but still a lot of unemployed. Only certain percent doing well and others struggling
- Sequestration: Washington budget decisions
- Shifts in state workers
- Sky rocketing cost of higher education
- Social entrepreneurship trending up
- Stagnant VT population
- State level regulation of GMO is highly disruptive to markets and potential growth of the Vermont Brand.
- Strong desire for Vermonters to return home.
- Technology and connectedness are changing our youth culture - from learning to social interactions
- The affordability of living in Vermont is an issue relating to housing and education access.
- The contrasting trends of globalization; we are reaching beyond our borders with our economy, but being directly affected
- The definition of community is changing.

- The legislature has become more focused on social issues versus growing our economy
- The population is aging and impacting our supply of labor.
- The population is getting more racially and ethnically diverse. The high cost of housing is still a concern. Energy supply is getting more diverse, but is it affordable.
- TIF
- Tremendous changes in Rutland, retail spaces filling in.
- Trend for higher education required of workers. VT can build on education services.
- Trend towards service economy nationally, away from manufacturing.
- Trends - awareness of energy efficiency
- Trends in how businesses finance their growth is to new/innovative/creative models: crowd sourcing, community supported enterprises, philanthropic activities
- Uncertainty in our costs and source of health care.
- Vermont and national workforce is aging rapidly. There is uncertainty regarding the cost and source of our energy.
- Vermont is a cluster for the creative economy and artists. Vermont is being impacted by climate change -- will our tourism economy and agriculture be affected?
- Vermont is experiencing an aging and mono-cultural workforce combined with an outward migration of educated youth.
- VT aging work force, oldest avg. In U.S.
- VT has no real economic development program including little economic development funds.
- VT tendency to support local businesses keeps capital moving in State economy, good trend.
- Vt. Group think. All voices heard regardless of legitimacy.
- We have become a digital nation: shopping, socializing, business and play are done online.
- We shouldn't lose our focus on commercial agriculture because it provides the infrastructure for many part of our economy.
- With global trade agreements being negotiated the global marketplace is becoming increasingly competitive.
- Women underrepresented in positions of power and leverage
- Work force expertise difficult to match with needs
- World population growth with VT smaller by comparison each day
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**Themes/conversation:** Data show that young people do leave VT to go to college and an equal or greater number come for education and then stay.; Consumers: how their demographics and psychographics are changing, their impact/the internet, etc.; Concern with VT's population and demographics: workforce, who's available, what we can afford, income inequality, seems to be growing; Energy and energy infrastructure, growing awareness of renewable energy and a desire for it (and

sustainable both financially and environmentally); Confusion of economic and community development; You need to have a good economic development program to make things happen; re. consumer awareness around food...buying healthy food and where that comes from...food system includes food manufacturing business are part of community development...; In VT we are seeing people wanting to put community and economic development together to make new things happen; food delivery system in VT is becoming a bigger part of economic development. Economic side of food production company led to community development, the industry partnering with communities to create things they don't have, not an either/or...it is an interdependency.

Climate change and the impact it might have on the VT economy; Need for structural collaboration between economic and community dev. at the community level, how do we get more for less by broadening the base of collaboration a la Addison County, how do we collaborate regionally and create efficiencies (synergy); Cost of public services, how do we pay for things?

How small VT is compared to the US, to remain outward looking in order to be part of the larger context; Workforce development...advanced tech ed. to meet the needs of employers, access to quality ed.; Cost of living and cost of doing business; Business and research collaborating to compete in global markets, closer access to markets, time compression, virtual markets; Impact of rapid change in technology on econ., community and culture; VT can be the education state.

Higher ed. is not the same as workforce training; 20 years ago we would have talked a lot about transportation road, rail, air, etc. Is this because of our digital mobility? Has there been a vision of what needs to be done vis-a-vis transportation infrastructure? Are there too many projects that we can't pay for?

Availability and access to capital. Trend toward renewable energy and transportation...cars trucks, buses huge energy cost. Thermal efficiency opportunities; Buy local, downtowns, community=VT identity, VT brand. Artists. Transportation is a trend we didn't put up there...one of the largest barriers to steady/full wage employment. Importance of small business/entrepreneurship very important to VT; Health care, rise in telecommuting; Interdependencies is a key theme.

***2. Dynamic SWOT: What are we doing well in Vermont that contributes to our economic, ecological and/or social resilience we want to KEEP? What is an obstacle or barrier to our success that we might ABANDON? What new activities or revised activities are we drawn to INVENT/REINVENT?***

**KEEP:**

- Brand because: Vermont quality means business; good quality creates business
- Collaboration of local organizations and access to state government to minimize duplicate investments and to access available resources.
- Commitment to sustainability.
- Develop and support intellectual property
- Embrace of public participation.
- Energy efficiency.
- Entrepreneurial spirit because little businesses become big; drives innovation; keep us competitive; creates employment

- Environmental ethics
- Environment and landscape build our brand
- Environmental protection. Our character, brand and value all extends from this basic value.
- Equitable distribution of local education dollars.
- Fed govt. influence
- Focus on environmental integrity; b/c it is part of our culture and our brand
- Image
- Innovation/risk-taking/resourcefulness: will invent our future.
- Local focus/local purchasing; b/c it develops the local economy and has multiplier effect
- Our passion for a working and sustainable landscape (keep the cows); b/c it is our brand and it sustains our communities
- Our sense of small-scale leading to connectedness; b/c we get things done and we can innovate
- Quality of life: healthy, well-educated, best early ed., safest
- Responsive government.
- Self conscious focus on social, cultural, ecological quality of life
- Sense of community, belonging: scale.
- The focus on the Vermont brand because it enhances our biz opportunities.
- Transparent and accessible state govt.
- Vermont agree
- Vermont non profits council
- VT brand - identity - means quality, competitive advantage and quality of life
- Working landscape

#### **ABANDON:**

- Aging demographics.
- Barriers to better telecommunication.
- Delusions, be more critical and honest of re: our shortcomings
- High cost of living due to low wages.
- Homogeneity -- need more diversity.
- Image of being unfriendly to business in vt because we lose interest in investors
- Inefficacies and inconsistencies in agency regulations. E.g. Prime ag protection rules. Simplify permit rules.

- Permitting barriers and duplication of municipal and state permitting because it adds costs, time and doesn't encourage the outcomes we desire.
- Poverty - are we more poor?
- Reliance on automobile.
- Sprawl -- keep our identity.

#### **INVENT:**

- Complete the cellular service so that there are no dead zones.
- Fusion of business success and environmentally aware
- Model for virtual operations and office lifestyle.
- Shared resources, third place model. Vermont should be the model location for how this works BEST!

#### **REINVENT:**

- How municipalities finance local infrastructure (water, sewer, etc) to provide capacity for development in our villages.
- Our education system including curriculum, personal learning plans, and connecting with business needs.
- Build on the vt sense of community, for the digital age.
- Local-ism as regional-ism
- Our social safety net, more efficient and equitable delivery of services, should be redesigned to do better for those with real needs and exclude those who abuse the systems.
- Transform local so that it is not \*provincial\* - there are times it is not the only solution and we need to think about the larger world (economically, socially, culturally)
- Balance between economic growth and natural, cultural and community preservation
- Business retention and recruitment
- Education delivery, municipal services delivery. Consolidation of resources to increase efficiency and effectiveness
- Education to make more affordable and flexible to meet true needs of students and employers.
- Impress upon people that the regulatory process is not as difficult as it appears- marketing/education/promotion
- Our education system to reflect how students learn and the realities of state resources
- Our relationships with non-traditional stakeholders; b/c we are missing what that diversity brings to the table - we need to practice more inclusion (example: lending community does not mix with philanthropic community)

- Streamline regulatory process for environmental review (local, regional, state) so we can encourage more business development (right now onerous/expensive)
- Stronger collaborations with our neighboring states to build resilient/diverse food, energy, workforce, funding, infrastructure issues; b/c we cannot do it all alone
- Path to greater median income.
- Tax code to make it more appealing for businesses
- The way we treat all towns in the same way - lack of diverse policies customized to realities of town demographics and geography; b/c one size does not fit all
- VT downtowns - vibrant, community centers.
- Processes to move projects along because too many good projects get lost along the way
- Multimodal transportation.

**3. Projects: What is a project to start today in VT so the state, its businesses, government and community are resilient in the face of change (climate, social, economic, etc)? 3-5 word snazzy title, 25 word rich description. Think about services, systems, roles, methods, governance, funding, etc.?**

1. **Business creates early ed. Opportunity:** Project to have businesses participate in supplying child care to improve societal outcomes like reduced prison population and drug use and higher incomes leads to more community support
2. **Compost Happens:** Create comprehensive statewide system to collect process and distribute organic waste. including education and marketing plan.
3. **LESS EQUALS LESS:** The reduction of the duplication of municipal and educational services, will decrease the burden on the taxpayer. (i.e. Cities and towns with multiple fire districts, police departments and educational boards.)
4. **Moving Easier :** Create long term transportation planning and implement incrementally. Provide loops or patterns that make parts of the state more accessible.
5. **New Roots, Refugees working the Vermont soil:** New farmers and agricultural workers. Provide more opportunities for VT refugee immigrant community to work on a broader range of Vermont and to start their own farms across more of Vermont. Expands the agricultural work force and diversifies ag. economy. Brings diversit to rural VT. A federally funded pilot project jointly under HHS and USDA. Build refugee community hubs in several rural areas and facilitate refugee ag/value added startups.
6. **Next Innovators Institute:** A collaboration among higher ed., private and nonprofit sectors, where students tap all those resources to learn, problem-solve, and create new ideas, inventions, art, businesses, service. Students design own course of study, advised by profs, and real practitioners. Builds on ed. strengths, makes a state-wide community. Makes youth a force for the future; enhances entrepreneurship. Time to incubate ideas tapping multiple resources while earning credentials. VT as a campus!
7. **Strategies, not projects:** 1. Lean Mean and Green State Offices; 2. Super-Networked Capital, Business, and Service Providers .... description for #1..subject state offices responsible for



commerce and development to the same efforts to eliminate waste and redundancy that they ask businesses to do...2. description...education and awareness and event campaign to connect unlikely funding partners with businesses and service providers

8. **THE FAST VERMONT THE NEW GIG CITY:** Vermont has the fastest average speed of connection in the US
9. **THE NEW VERMONT:** New Business Resources, New Marketing, New Educational Approach, New Innovation, New Workforce, New Technology. We do not capitalize on our image enough. Marketing is the only effort in the state that has a positive return on investment, and yet we don't provide enough resources to make it impactful.
10. **VERMONT'S SIMPLE:** Vermont transforms its regulatory system to a State centralized permitting and regulatory function. Offices located in each region and online tracking capable. State permit should be part of the Municipal Permits. Goal to reduce overall cost and increase effectiveness of process. Client service focused.

**2. What does success look like? Craft a 25-50 word news item that describes what's going on in Vermont when our stakeholder's interests are well served and our social and economic systems are running efficiently and effectively.**

- Vermont's wealth increases for residents and businesses and we decrease the per capita cost of government while preserving necessary public services, our environment and quality of life.
- VT IS TOP OF THE CLASS: The state of Vermont is named the best place to live, best place to work and best place to do business. Due to a recent major reinventing of economic, environmental, education and tax policies, coupled with the right size of government services, VT is experiencing an unprecedented occurrence - a waiting list for residency.
- Vermont economic development engine effectively retains and creates environment for new and existing businesses with capital resources and financial supports.. At the same time the VT brand remains strong and standard of living has been raised. Measure: Most Vermonters would rather live in VT than anywhere else.
- Vermont, the rural state known for its economic resilience, environmental beauty, and quality of life has improved its median wage with a livable wage for all citizens and competitive wages in global markets. Vermont is now ranked as one of the top states using Genuine Progress Indicators as a measurement of their economic, social, and environmental vitality. Our citizens continue to rank Vermont education, jobs, and quality of life as the best in the nation.
- VT is most livable state! Measured by livable wage, health, safety, social connectedness, and access to education, health care, culture and environment and recreation. VT highest level of income security in nation. Wages keep pace with COL.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee  
Minutes of the October 22 meeting  
Agency of Commerce and Community Development meeting room, Montpelier

Attendance list

Members

Marlene Allen, Same Sun  
Joan Goldstein, Green Mtn. Economic Development Corporation  
Charlie Baker, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission  
Leon Berthiaume, St. Albans Co-op (by phone)  
Mike Harrington, Town of Bennington  
Janice St. Onge, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund  
Bill Scully, Carbon Zero  
Melody Burkins, University of Vermont  
Hal Cohen, Central VT Community Action Council  
Dave Thompson, Mylan Technologies  
Peter Stromgren, Retired  
Joe Fusco, Casella Waste Management Systems  
Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, Marlboro College (by telephone)  
Patricia Moulton-Powden, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation  
Tim Briglin, Tuckerman Capital

Agency of Commerce and Community Development representatives

Lisa Gosselin, Commissioner of Economic Development  
Ken Jones

Consultant

Mark Waterhouse

The meeting convened at 1:10 pm

Lisa Gosselin announced Joe Fusco as Chair of the Committee. A primary purpose of the Chair is to help with external communication. All Committee members may have interaction with the media, and it will be helpful if Joe is kept abreast of those communications. If there are questions that arise, let Joe know and direct media inquiries in his direction.

The September 12 meeting minutes were approved after changes to the attendance list with Pat Moulton-Powden abstaining.

A major theme of this project is to improve the economic well being of all Vermonters. From this theme, the Committee considered the broader question of CEDS goals.

***What is the overall direction for CEDS?***

This project can be somewhere along the spectrum of

Big Picture direction  
Detailed workplans for ACCD projects

While there is no current resolution to exactly where on the spectrum, the project will fall, there are elements of the big picture that are important and specific guidance for ACCD and other state agencies. In addition, the project will include activities that will require the participation of the private sector.

### ***What are the goals?***

The starting point for this project is the Governor's interest in improving the economy which is translated to economic well being and shared economic prosperity.

From this, the categories of goals may include:

- Capital
- Work Force
- Cost reduction

Some of the language introduced during the discussion included:

- Goals about people (including livable wage)
- Create an Agency of Economic Development to get Econ. Dev. Issues to the Governor's Cabinet
  - Maintain in inventory of businesses and their products
  - Consider the role of UVM, its expertise and technology transfer
  - Businesses need planning help to address the inevitable hurdles that arise with growth
- Creating goals either inductively (leading to actions) or deductively (building from actions)
- Is information gathering going to be critical to the goal and project connection?
- The project needs to lead to game changing actions and not vanilla, make everyone happy actions
- Do we have an inventory of businesses and what they do?

From the list of projects developed during the September 12 meeting and Regional discussions, there are at least two major goal areas that are apparent

- Innovation and encouraging an entrepreneurial ecosystem
- Workforce development

Some secondary goal areas include

- The localvore movement
- Branding
- Moving UVM activities and benefits to other parts of the state

Any changes that will influence economic activity in Vermont need to be "game changers" and not the vanilla amalgamation of lots of disparate (and sometimes conflicting) ideas

A great deal of discussion revolved around the Workforce Development topic

- Young adults need to be educated with basic skills and prepared for lifelong learning
- They need a path to follow for lifelong learning
- They need to be prepared for changing skills requirements
- They need basic skills from high school (math and writing)
- They need flexibility
- Consider the successes of examples like the Champlain College gaming curriculum
- Is our public education system broken? Stuck in a 19<sup>th</sup> century mindset, preparing students for an industrial workplace that no longer exists
- We are trying to fix education to help meet many societal goals

- When considering the basis of failure of poorly trained workforce consider whether it is a failure of competence or commitment

Consider the following:

- Vermont is #1 in a recent survey – “opportunity index”
- Vermont is #1 in drug use
- Median income is declining

How do we address these parts of our economic puzzle?

A great deal of discussion revolved around infrastructure

- “Infrastructure” can be considered to include many things, including education
- However, a broad definition confuses those that think of infrastructure as bricks and mortar
- When considering choices about infrastructure, should this project consider particular industries and sectors, or not. (Shall we pick winners and losers?)

The result of the discussion was the development of four goal areas represented by the one page graphic at the end of these minutes.

When considering capital (another broad topic), a few points arose

- Safety for capital is an important question
- Captive insurance may be informative as a success
- Act 250 may be making capital insecure

The following were other points raised during the discussion

- Another aspect of the overall goal for this effort is resilience
- What is Vermont good at? And can we capitalize on those strengths in this project?
- One way to consider all of these issues is through the use of a “capital absorption” model

The next steps for this part of the project is to have select Committee member’s work on providing more detail to the four goal areas represented in the attached figure.

After the discussion of goals, Mark presented the Committee a template for use in the nomination of projects to consider in the prioritization process. This template is available on the project website.

The following is a link to a list of recent EDA-funded projects

<http://www.eda.gov/>

As we consider projects, we should consider the local and regional projects that differentiate Vermont from other applicants

The group discussed the role of the state in regional projects and the fact that a statewide CEDS is not typical so Vermont will be inventing the state-regional relationship for future projects.

After the CEDS project template, Mark posed the question to the Committee on mechanisms to generate broader support for the CEDS project and product.

- Clarity in project direction (such as many of the items discussed at this meeting)
- Add project detail and data to make ideas (such as the projects developed during the Regional meetings)

- Make the project colorful and compelling

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 pm.

The next meeting will take place on November 20, tentatively in Middlebury  
The following meeting will take place on January 27, location TBD.

### Regional Export/Import Ideas

Burlington, October 17, 2013

*What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? [Export] What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?[Import]*

EXPORT	IMPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A community where you can walk to your job, to your home, to your restaurant but still has a New England feel.</li> <li>• Ability to make things happen here. (Think Bob Miller building spec buildings and filling them.</li> <li>• Access to infrastructure supports business</li> <li>• Benefits from diverse population</li> <li>• Business in other towns helps neighboring communities.</li> <li>• CC is close to Vermont</li> <li>• Clusters in the Creative Economy- software, arts and entrepreneurs working together CHITT</li> <li>• Concentration of resources and assets in selected areas makes sense.</li> <li>• Cooperation between communities.</li> <li>• Critical density of people, ideas, transportation, gigabit city</li> <li>• Diversity (+ but not relative to population outside VT)</li> <li>• Education and tech partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable housing and renovation of older structures and infrastructure, e.g. Bennington</li> <li>• Has avoided sprawl and clustered businesses better</li> <li>• Less regulation more flexibility to try new, creative projects and programs. Don't snuff out innovation.</li> <li>• Leverage business needs around the state</li> <li>• More representative of "Vermont"</li> <li>• Partnerships with a major institution that has woven business into the small town without making the town feel taken over, e.g. Waterbury and GMCR, Middlebury and college</li> <li>• Real understanding of issues facing the working poor</li> <li>• Sense of community is stronger in many smaller communities</li> <li>• Strong interpersonal connections/networks in small towns</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment/Culture to innovate is dynamic and thriving</li> <li>• Experience with growth centers, for good &amp; for bad</li> <li>• Front porch forum</li> <li>• Great, frequent networking opportunities for entrepreneurs</li> <li>• High level of energy created by city business pace and youth. Life is faster here</li> <li>• Higher concentration of higher ed options</li> <li>• Leverage recreation on Lake and mountains.</li> <li>• Multi modal transportation</li> <li>• Positive energy - "wave coolness"</li> <li>• Strong regional sense</li> <li>• Telecom infrastructure (though we still need better)</li> <li>• There's momentum, young people arriving/staying, a positive vibe ...</li> <li>• Tight knit business community</li> <li>• Towns work together because at table often</li> </ul>	
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### Regional Export/Import Ideas

Hardwick, October 17, 2013

***What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? [Export] What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?[Import]***

EXPORT	IMPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult education and continuous learning system</li> <li>• Agricultural marketing assistance through the RDCS</li> <li>• Appreciation of our history</li> <li>• Combined planning/development</li> <li>• Community spirit- tight knit community"</li> <li>• In addition to jay, smugglers notch has taken steps to protect its environmental attributes. Stowe has the arts center. Together, they represent diversification.</li> <li>• Lamoille valley rail trail</li> <li>• Local biz development &amp; sm. Mfg.</li> <li>• Local food movement</li> <li>• Our appreciation of the great outdoors</li> <li>• Pride in cottage industry</li> <li>• The recent successes of jay - four season activities, multiple attractions</li> <li>• The skills associated with the local food movement (e.g. VT food venture center). A part of that is that "competitors" worked together to build their success.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional strong trade, business associations to leverage experiences and strengths</li> <li>• An entrepreneur willing to operate the ice rink in Morrisville</li> <li>• Arts &amp; Culture</li> <li>• Better business focus more on long-term decision making vs. Short term mentality</li> <li>• Better educational opportunities and facilities</li> <li>• Capital investment</li> <li>• Education/workforce development for tourism and manufacturing</li> <li>• Educational expectations, diverse tax base (Commercial), cultural diversity, new talent -skills-experience, better access to mass transit</li> <li>• Examples of collaboration of business supporting agencies</li> <li>• How to better knit local initiatives into a regional economy i.e. More work across community boundaries</li> <li>• Slaughter facility/capacity</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The successful aspects of our manufacturing experiences</li> <li>• The use of EB5</li> </ul> <p>The way our economic development programs/staff work together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The collaborative success of the Mad River Valley in its tourism ventures</li> </ul>
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### Regional Export/Import Ideas

Bennington, October 18, 2013

***What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? [Export] What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?[Import]***

EXPORT	IMPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building a regional network through our CEDS process</li> <li>• Cluster approach to ED-supply chain</li> <li>• Communication and collaboration among regional economic development partners</li> <li>• Export Burlington to NY</li> <li>• Export smaller town mentality to larger population Big difference between "smaller to medium sized population centers" and larger more metropolitan....Smaller areas tend to work together to get "bigger and stronger" while larger areas tend to "maintain" and may not work as effectively. Centers.</li> <li>• Festivals and events to drive tourism</li> <li>• Flood response</li> <li>• Identifying and recruiting excellent young leaders</li> <li>• Laura and Pat (share!)</li> <li>• Maintaining villages and historic downtowns</li> <li>• Paving our roads better in Bennington County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration between local higher education and development</li> <li>• Coolness Factor</li> <li>• Co-working spaces in Montpelier and Burlington</li> <li>• Focus on technology businesses (as per Chittenden County)</li> <li>• From north cooperation experience and models around food</li> <li>• Hardwick's food venture center</li> <li>• Other parts of the state have a greater ability to integrate technical and liberal arts education, tech centers, e.g. Essex Tech. Communication gap with Bennington Tech Center.</li> <li>• Private investment capital</li> <li>• Regional transportation networks, particularly rural-Chittenden, Washington counties</li> <li>• Research capacity in Quebec, New York</li> <li>• Robust local food system</li> <li>• Tech transfer models from out of state</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proximity to 9th largest rail station in USA and international airport</li> <li>• Recognize complex economic relationships between tourism assets and industrial assets</li> <li>• Regional cooperation and networking. Build relationships that extend beyond town boundaries</li> <li>• SE Vermont regional flood recovery</li> <li>• SE Vermont - significant investment in professional private and public sector relationships throughout the region</li> <li>• Seveds regional flood response</li> <li>• Support for manufacturing sector</li> <li>• SWVT region collaborates very well. In addition, this area tends to be very project based. Once a need is identified, collaboration allows for quick action to develop supporting projects.</li> <li>• Tech clustering around the university-i.e. VCET</li> <li>• We are a region of multi state transplants and need to capitalize on this.</li> <li>• We do extremely well with limited resources and infrastructure.</li> <li>• We have capability to influence legislators in Montpelier; local delegation is accessible, seasoned, and respected</li> <li>• We like what we do: we are proud of our work</li> <li>• We practice innovation in program, strategy and connections.</li> <li>• We produce events and experiences well.</li> <li>• We work well with our legislative delegation</li> <li>• We're good @integrating all (old &amp; new) assets/resources (people &amp; ideas) - therefore we are a region of many non-VT immigrants alongside long term Vermonters</li> </ul>	<p>research universities i.e. RPI, MIT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are in center of higher education region VT, NY, MA</li> <li>• We're not as good @defining VT brand and marketing it as Central &amp; Northern VT</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willingness to work together while ability to work autonomously.</li> <li>• Workforce development-getting right people in the room to work together. Employment placement better here.</li> <li>• Working regionally-Bennington and Windham County</li> <li>• World class arts organizations that support the VT brand for excellence</li> </ul>	
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## Regional Export/Import Ideas

White River Junction, October 21, 2013

***What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? [Export] What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?[Import]***

EXPORT	IMPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advising SB about communicating ideas, presentation to Angel/VC funders</li><li>• Awareness of state lines/boarders and the challenges that go with that</li><li>• Effective relationships with all levels of govt.</li><li>• Strong customer service/team approach - strong network</li><li>• The experience of Springfield in finding some successes after the crash of the machine tool industry. There are other industries that have crashed and need to find their 21st century niche.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 24-34 year olds from Chittenden County</li><li>• Apprenticeship opportunities and venture capital to support incubator and developing business</li><li>• Higher education capacity from Chittenden County</li><li>• Social infrastructure for younger population</li><li>• Training programs from other states etc</li><li>• Vibrant retail sector</li></ul>

### Regional Export/Import Ideas

Montpelier, October 22, 2013

***What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? [Export] What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?[Import]***

EXPORT	IMPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to attract manufacturing in Barre area</li> <li>• Because we are small we have access and the ability to communicate with business, and local and state-wide official to facilitate action.</li> <li>• Business community is very entrepreneurial</li> <li>• Creation of recreational opportunities using inactive former industrial assets</li> <li>• Diverse and resourceful business community.</li> <li>• Diverse communities--ethnicity, values, economically, etc.</li> <li>• Downtown revitalization and accessing the necessary funding</li> <li>• Employ and fund local development corporations</li> <li>• Entitlements</li> <li>• Good cooperation within business community.</li> <li>• High level of volunteerism and community commitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to attract financial capital for local investments</li> <li>• Central Vermont could be better at embracing business development in the communities that want it.</li> <li>• Creative economy participation</li> <li>• Greenhouses to extend grow season</li> <li>• How to leverage local and regional assets to address infrastructure (i.e., water, sewer, schools) issues.</li> <li>• Job quality from Burlington area</li> <li>• Local investment in entrepreneurs through local stock market</li> <li>• More bike trails</li> <li>• More higher education opportunity</li> <li>• Natural gas</li> <li>• Software and tech cluster from Chittenden</li> <li>• Strong work ethics</li> <li>• Third season tourism opportunities</li> <li>• VT food venture center--support value-added ag.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Central Vermont, we promote and support tourism, in leveraging our natural resources in a sustainable way.</li> <li>• Inter-agency collaborations &amp; partnerships</li> <li>• Municipal; support for cottage industries</li> <li>• Our drug problem</li> <li>• Reuse of former industrial buildings</li> <li>• Route 2 corridor bus system</li> <li>• Specialty foods</li> <li>• Strong volunteer community</li> <li>• Successful co-working hubs</li> <li>• Use of natural resources</li> <li>• Value added ag. &amp; local foods</li> <li>• Very highly skilled labor</li> </ul>	
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## Regional Export/Import Ideas

Middlebury, October 23, 2013

***What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? [Export] What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?[Import]***

EXPORT	IMPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to retain local VT identity while accommodating out-state visitors/businesses</li> <li>• Career center</li> <li>• College/town collaboration</li> <li>• Creating events that draw visitors to our town (festival on green, bmp events, college events, etc) - we have great entertainment and culture in Middlebury</li> <li>• Good communication and coordination among organizations</li> <li>• Healthy lifestyle</li> <li>• Innovative spirit that exists and is seen in how a variety of organizations operate, they are leaders (adult care, transportation, etc)</li> <li>• Innovative ways of working together- towns, non-profits, business</li> <li>• Integration of agriculture and alternative energy</li> <li>• Intellectual infrastructure through Middlebury college international footprint; work with other parts of the state, region and nation to use those</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better integration among economic development groups</li> <li>• Bike paths for transportation</li> <li>• Broader range of jobs</li> <li>• Capital and the advising/mentoring that can come with capital (investment)</li> <li>• Co-working space</li> <li>• Creative ideas around affordable housing that fit our community</li> <li>• Easy-to-use recreational infrastructure</li> <li>• Eb5 investment</li> <li>• Energy growth and development</li> <li>• Focus on business assistance, development vs. Historical preservation</li> <li>• Home-grown businesses that scale to 100 or so employees (e.g., Gardner's Supply, Chroma Technology, King Arthur flour, Carris reels, etc.)</li> <li>• How to develop without losing character of our town</li> <li>• Improved communication connectivity</li> <li>• Improved infrastructure (vt gas, waste</li> </ul>



<p>resources;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International flavor and diversity</li> <li>• Lack of corruption in government</li> <li>• Local and county groups work very well together - good relationships are recognized as critical for the most part, we work well together!</li> <li>• Local recreation opportunities</li> <li>• Middlebury college community and economic development interest</li> <li>• Middlebury college graduates throughout VT, keep in the state but export them and their energy and ideas</li> <li>• Middlebury college growing connection to local community and supply of resources for entrepreneurial development. Export: value-added agriculture (cheese, beer, wine, cider, granola, etc.)</li> <li>• Organizations that work together well collectively to support those in need</li> <li>• Our ability to connect people and business to resources</li> <li>• Our expertise in ag., value-added ag., supporting the local economy</li> <li>• Our leading edge capabilities...in transportation, child care, adult day care, etc. This reflects an innovative, can do spirit in the county</li> <li>• Promoting value add agriculture: beer, wine, cider, cheese, etc</li> <li>• Public-private partnerships, as in Middlebury town and Middlebury college working on the bridge and town infrastructure</li> <li>• Recreational opportunities (skiing and outdoor recreation)</li> <li>• Sense of community and participatory government</li> <li>• Solve our own problems</li> <li>• Strong community service model</li> </ul>	<p>water treatment, rail)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased use of public transportation</li> <li>• Industry clustering where manufacturing creates retail destinations</li> <li>• Love of books</li> <li>• Marketing the "hipness" of Middlebury - get away from the sleepy reputation</li> <li>• More nightlife, esp. For younger people</li> <li>• More tech oriented companies that can take advantage of intellectual capital that is un- or under-employed</li> <li>• People: we need a bigger critical mass</li> <li>• Rely more on local manufacturing/production; develop workforce with these skills.</li> <li>• Scenic bike paths</li> <li>• Support structure for young entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Tech cluster</li> <li>• Technology based businesses</li> <li>• Telecommuters</li> <li>• Vibrant investment community</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong ecosystem of tele-commuters</li> <li>• Strong focus on building and sustaining personal relationships -- knowing others in the community. Focus on value-added agriculture.</li> <li>• Strong small downtown communities</li> <li>• Strong volunteer community</li> <li>• Strong working relationships, developed by talking to each other and working together</li> <li>• Support and implementation of alternative energy</li> <li>• Town gown relationship</li> <li>• Town to town cooperation</li> <li>• Value-added ag.</li> <li>• Vibrant downtown partnership</li> </ul>	
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### Regional Export/Import Ideas

Swanton, October 24, 2013

***What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? [Export] What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?[Import]***

EXPORT	IMPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practices of workforce investment board - facilitates training for older workers to upgrade their skills and for younger workers, technical center working with businesses to build technical skills;</li> <li>• Disaster readiness and emergency services collaborations</li> <li>• Dual enrollment CCV and tech center</li> <li>• Good development planning that allows a manufacturing base without in-your-face visibility for those looking at our vistas</li> <li>• Our workforce investment board is one of strongest in the state</li> <li>• Spirit of collaboration, network, partnership at both local and regional level</li> <li>• Strong economic development group</li> <li>• We are really good at collaborating among organizations.</li> <li>• We have great coordination among the two economic development offices and regional planning commission, we are lucky</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural infrastructure: processing center, incubator, storage/distribution, slaughter, etc</li> <li>• Best practice infrastructure approaches based on others' learning</li> <li>• Businesses and jobs from Quebec</li> <li>• Community college strategies to respond quickly to needs of area businesses</li> <li>• Easier and more fluid access to Montreal and Quebec; encourage cross cultural/cross-border experiences and collaboration</li> <li>• Government support of tourism initiatives such as the Route de Vins, it would help us attract more visitors to our wineries</li> <li>• Ideas for sustaining farms, i.e. Family farm initiative in Quebec or cooperative farms in NY import lessons learned from Canadian health care and education systems</li> <li>• Money from other places</li> <li>• Municipal infrastructure: \$ for roads, \$ for bridges, energies, etc.</li> <li>• Northwest region needs to replicate the</li> </ul>

	<p>marketing strategies and resources the state is currently spending on promoting skiing to promote our t=resources e.g. Biking, water recreation, agri-tourism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies for making technology widely accessible from other states;</li> <li>• Strategy for bringing value-added ag. Ideas right to the farm</li> <li>• Understanding of importance of buying local, understanding the asset of value added</li> </ul>
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## Notes from the CEDS Regional Meeting

Burlington, October 17, 2013

***1. The context: What are the major trends that are having an impact on VT? Describe the impact of global and national market, economic, social and economic trends? What are some of the local demographic, job, business, education and other trends that we need to be aware of?***

- Aging infrastructure in towns in VT
- Aging of population and the demands on social infrastructure
- Aging populations with young people feeling as if they are "in waiting" for leadership roles.
- Attract / retain citizens though great environment.
- Challenges with regional transportation and lack of domestic options, air, rail.
- Climate change locally and globally
- Colleges students don't stay after school
- Communities in the social media world are no longer tied tp place
- Cost of Living AND doing business is too high to compete
- Co-working and maker spaces are happening throughout STATE and region....huge opportunity
- Defensive strategy to economic development with the F35 situation being a good example
- Entrepreneurship is accelerating across VT
- Growing aging population
- Growing focus on CSR/B-Corp business
- Growing technology skills: work force capability and skills, and capacity
- Higher ed partnerships in innovation and R&D are strong but not as high caliber as competing states (i.e. How enmeshed are higher ed and business?)
- Housing availability and affordability are a problem for most regions.
- Housing is increasingly temporary, with demand for high quality less important than location
- Improving bike access in VT will be big tourist draw - think causeway in Colchester

- Improving multi-modal transportation options.
- Inability to keep an educated workforce here after college
- Increase in globalization ROI Where do we make it?
- Increased focus on sustainability
- Infrastructure -- sewer, water, transportation needs investment in order to sustain and foster economic development growth needed in the state
- Infrastructure challenges from the perspective of funding those needs
- Jobless Recovery and the ability to attract/retain talent in an economic environment with limited lateral opportunities for those seeking jobs.
- JOBS.TRAINING/EDUCATION.
- Low unemployment rates may be misleading on the job quality in light of high cost environment
- Market pressure to grow companies to sell them
- Movement toward the digital space for business, entertainment and communications
- Multiple levels = university, college, career & tech ed, certifications
- Need to align employer needs & expectations with education provider goals at multiple levels.
- Potential for rising interests will impact businesses in Vermont.
- Public funding from Federal and state sources putting significant pressure on local capabilities
- Serious skills deficit in specific areas/disciplines that are growing fastest e.g. Web development/tech
- Shrinking of workforce and impact on economic growth
- Since not every Vermonter goes to college, how can we ensure that all Vermonters have access to training/skills that translate to living wage jobs?
- Small business gathering places in neighborhoods are returning
- State & Local requirements for businesses investing, expanding, or relocating
- STEM focus in education needs to include a place for arts, writing, and critical thinking
- Strong entrepreneurial culture that attracts intellectual type businesses
- Strong university and college penetration.
- Telecommuting is increasingly possible
- Those here actively and socially engaged. Inconsistent cost of living.
- Tight money - limited capital available for start-ups and growth.
- Trends are for higher density economic development centers/population area

- Very tight housing market.
- Wage stagnation
- Workforce challenge retaining skill positions.
- Young adults ARE interested in returning
- Young people are more open to multi modal transportation options and less dependent on single occupant vehicle for daily travel.

**Themes:** aging population, skills gap, entrepreneurship is accelerating, shift from former industry models to new models (structural change), cost of living in VT is getting too high for many to stay, a lot of options for where you work, infrastructure, need for inter-agency alignment (need for different groups to align with each other and better working together at every level among groups, challenge keeping an educated workforce in VT, Infrastructure is being challenged.

**2. Dynamic SWOT: What are we doing well in Vermont that contributes to our economic, ecological and/or social resilience we want to KEEP? What is an obstacle or barrier to our success that we might ABANDON? What new activities or revised activities are we drawn to INVENT/REINVENT?**

**KEEP:**

- Access to centers of influence for employers (i.e., small state, reachable resources)
- Close-knit communities
- Economic gardening versus recruitment mode
- Focus on developing city, town, and village centers
- Focus on the job creators and entrepreneurs capable of moving the needle
- Foster and develop entrepreneurship spirit and focus
- High quality of life
- Quality environment and small business focus in communities that make them great places to live
- Quality of life is a tremendous asset
- Recreational industry
- Shift towards a growing technology base
- Social engagement, culture, ethos for environmental quality, let perfect be enemy of good, rather than take action we work in theoretical
- Spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation
- Tourism and money it brings to economy
- Working landscape and small historic towns

**ABANDON:**

- Cost of living and cost of doing business
- Diffused, underfunded, underskilled and less than contemporary programs...end the disconnection and fiefdoms
- Inability to leverage and scale good experiments, particularly in education
- Inconsistencies in permitting and regulations for businesses
- Lack of diversity
- Lack of diversity
- Notion that economic growth=sprawl development!
- Process and regulation that is one-sided (too environmental, too growth-oriented)
- Tend to over-study without a mandate to act
- Wage/cost of living disparity

**INVENT:**

- A better way to engage young people in civic processes and challenge the traditional assumptions around development
- Affordable living options in urban areas matching with jobs that we want
- Concentrate our investment and focus on building industry where we have a competitive advantage.
- Effective balance between growth and "that Vermont thing"
- Encourage more private/public partnerships
- Find ways to engage and activate the "silent majority" in contentious issues.
- Help VT Legislature understand "investing" in business and jobs
- Infrastructure - road conditions, rail, airport needs more direct flights
- Keep attract skilled workforce while still embracing experienced population
- Micro business lending sources...remove any barriers
- More networked spaces for makers, innovators, start-ups and remote workers to collaborate, connect and create
- Permitting processes that are consistent, clear, and business-friendly
- Solutions for homeless and drug situation



## REINVENT:

- Financing for small and growing companies
- Sources and amounts of risk capital for entrepreneurs.
- Regional economic development is now required. State borders don't matter.
- Streamline the permit process with more local focus - think more one-stop permitting in appropriate areas (i.e. growth centers).
- BTV permitting process
- Spreading and sustaining a unique brand and sense of place (i.e. what makes a place special)
- State and local incentives
- Career development in higher ed institutions.

**Themes: Keep:** quality of life, entrepreneurship, recreation and tourism, "That VT Thing!", **Abandon:** high cost living/doing business, Reinvent: infrastructure for business support, delivery system, workforce, leveraging scale, permit reform.

***3. What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?***

## EXPORT:

- A community where you can walk to your job, to your home, to your restaurant but still has a New England feel.
- Ability to make things happen here. (Think Bob Miller building spec buildings and filling them.
- Access to infrastructure supports business
- Benefits from diverse population
- Business in other towns helps neighboring communities.
- CC is close to Vermont
- Clusters in the Creative Economy-software, arts and entrepreneurs working together CHITT
- Concentration of resources and assets in selected areas makes sense.
- Cooperation between communities.
- Critical density of people, ideas, transportation, gigabit city
- Diversity (+ but not relative to population outside VT)
- Education and tech partnerships
- Environment/Culture to innovate is dynamic and thriving

- Experience with growth centers, for good & for bad
- Front porch forum
- Great, frequent networking opportunities for entrepreneurs
- High level of energy created by city business pace and youth. Life is faster here
- Higher concentration of higher ed options
- Leverage recreation on Lake and mountains.
- Multi modal transportation
- Positive energy - "wave coolness"
- Strong regional sense
- Telecom infrastructure (though we still need better)
- There's momentum, young people arriving/staying, a positive vibe ...
- Tight knit business community
- Towns work together because at table often

#### **IMPORT:**

- Affordable housing and renovation of older structures and infrastructure, e.g. Bennington
- Has avoided sprawl and clustered businesses better
- Less regulation more flexibility to try new, creative projects and programs. Don't snuff out innovation.
- Leverage business needs around the state
- More representative of "Vermont"
- Partnerships with a major institution that has woven business into the small town without making the town feel taken over, e.g. Waterbury and GMCR, Middlebury and college
- Real understanding of issues facing the working poor
- Sense of community is stronger in many smaller communities
- Strong interpersonal connections/networks in small towns

**Themes: Export:** energy, diversity, dynamic, clusters of businesses, benefits to density, education (clusters), higher ed, infrastructure, medical center, airport, downtown Burlington **Import:** Small towns and their advantages, Vermont, better clustering/sprawl avoidance, more flexible/less regulated,

**4. Projects: What is a project to start today in VT so the state, its businesses, government and community are resilient in the face of change (climate, social, economic, etc)? 3-5 word snazzy title, 25 word rich description. Think about services, systems, roles, methods, governance, funding, etc.**

1. **Business Council:** CEOs, CFOs and HR leaders to form a group of 30 or so to address challenges statewide. Using business as a primary tool for change (biz roundtable?)
2. **Summer Science and Technology Camp:** A camp dedicated to provide early learning experiences in science based education from grades 7-12 to encourage workforce development in growth areas for Vermont (a la California...that fits with sectors we want to grow, could use idle facilities and the natural environment in VT, Governor's Institutes of VT GIV.org)
3. **Crowd Funding Initiative:** Adapt captive insurance experience to promote financial innovation such as crowd funding and Kick-Starter (more sources of \$\$ and people can invest in their local communities, Shelburne guy who went to CA)
4. **Marketing VT's Story:** The breadth of opportunities within VT is not clear to our youth and those out of State.
5. **Mind The Gap:** Aligning Employers & Educators. Identify gaps & resources at multiple levels; establish communication channels; adapt curriculum to needs; connect workforce to relevant ed/training options; connect ed/training to career pathways
6. **Keeping Vermont Employers Competitive and Resilient:** Focus a project on the top 10 or 20 employers. Analyze those employers through a collaborative process involving state, local and regional resources. This planning should anticipate growth potential and possible crises, such as job reductions and shut downs. We should NOT invite negative thinking, but at the same time, should plan for both positive and negative outcomes and involve all the relevant actors.
7. **Start-Up/Innovation Camp:** A series of weekend workshops to qualified emerging businesses where VTs successful entrepreneurs and visionaries and investors share their expertise on business growth and funding. (include Champlain College BYOBIZ, etc.)
8. **Incubate & Innovate:** Fun, functional space for small business. Professional support, hi-tech access, shared resources. Funded with seed capital, research grants. Directly connected to higher-ed with access to government and business leaders. Returns - job creation, taxes, money into economy.
9. **Workforce Housing Development:** Multi-pronged approach to holistically manage and develop affordable housing for economically valuable middle income earners. Leveraging in-fill opportunities and recreating financing programs to aid both developers and homebuyers in achieving this. (VHFA etc. reinventing financing programs and eliminating issues for developers.)

***5. Systemic issues: Thinking about how we might go about developing and implementing these projects, what changes might we make to the system re: how we organize, work together, provide leadership, coordination and what kinds of new skills, approaches etc. might we need to consider?***

- Better coordination between agencies. Public/private partnerships. Better leveraging. Creating incentives to grow affordable workforce housing options. Recreate VHFA type financing programs targeted towards middle income & young people to achieve housing ownership. Reduce permitting cost and streamline permitting process for this type of housing developments. Reassess ordinances and zoning codes that are barriers to this type of development. Creative parking strategies to mitigate development cost
- Fundamental change in perspective on investment. Investment not viewed as a line item expense but as a way to develop our future. Invest behind programs in businesses to incent business to come to Vermont and attract employees and employers. Be recognized outside Vermont for this as a leader.
- Identify a way to elevate the interests of business leaders to take a more active interest in participating in solutions to state and local community challenges reexamine the business roundtable and broaden membership?
- Leadership: Moving an economic development agenda requires dynamic and vocal leadership capable of producing a common vision and move to action.
- Project Funding: If we are adding new initiatives, it will like require additional funding. Adding funds to the economic develop world will require leadership to bring the legislature along and build consensus and focus.
- Solutions Stack: crowd-sourced inventory of outcomes/solutions; description of process; assessment/review/commentary; searchable db open to all
- Use Irene Recovery Office experience in Project Management to address significant needs/barriers to economic development solutions. This would involve the use of a "bottoms/Up" approach versus governmental driven approach. Move away from the "tribal" approach for areas such as energy, telecommunications, etc.
- We have many all organizations all doing similar work across the regions and state. Find a way to take inventory of what they are doing, leverage common points and encourage collaboration with the end goal of simplifying and streamlining.

## Notes from the CEDS Regional Meeting

Hardwick, October 17, 2013

***1. The context: What are the major trends that are having an impact on VT? Describe the impact of global and national market, economic, social and economic trends? What are some of the local demographic, job, business, education and other trends that we need to be aware of?***

- Age of our workforce
- Aging pop.
- Aging population
- Build/maintain infrastructure i.e. Roads, technology-broadband that vital, healthy systems may be based on; trend-disconnect between what we want as citizens, communities and what we are able to/willing to pay for/afford
- Buying local is a trend nationwide
- Changing values about community involvement
- Climate change
- Cost of education, quality of education
- Dairy farms are disappearing.
- Demographic changes
- Diversifying of agriculture
- Drug trade/quality of life, safety, etc. Infrastructure-roads, schools
- Economic gap is increasing
- Energy questions
- Environmental degradation
- Gen X & Gen Y focus on simple healthier lifestyle
- Global Economy- don't understand this new business climate
- Global warming changing the way we do business
- Global warming is threatening the future of the VT ski industry, no snow, no skiing and boarding, no winter visitors

- Globalization
- Globalization makes it harder to establish a niche before it is available to others.
- Health care
- How do we continue to support local businesses?
- Impact of regulatory changes
- Improving broadband
- Increasing use of tech
- Lack of technology infrastructure
- Local food movement provides opportunities for high quality farm products
- Major change in ways we interact, connect with each other, relate
- Many people want to help their neighbors stay in business and are committed to "buy local" when they can
- Many vibrant collaborative partnerships underway, developing which may help to solve common problems, manage change
- Mills closing which changes the demand for wood supplies.
- More collaborative visioning
- Natural Gas.
- Not competitive in world education race
- Out migration of youth
- People are geographically detached from their work places
- People are will to pay more for local products, but not everyone can
- People identify at state/local vs. national level
- Political polarization
- Post 9/11 mentality - simple lifestyle
- Restructuring of the economy has had a serious impact on tourism, especially the real estate component of tourism.
- Shrinking fed \$\$
- Small family farming vs. Corporate farms
- Social trends - the internet is providing more and more of our needs. We have a wider net of social contacts than ever before. We have less 'face to face' time and more 'electronic time' with people.

- Some new ag. Products and local food.
- Technical - going mobile, away from desktop.
- Technology in productivity - changing employment needs. E.g. Robotics.
- The future of wind.
- The need for students to be prepared in a way that is different than when we educated to a career.
- There's a lack of manufacturing work base.
- Uncertainty-personal, social, age of tremendous change, subject to world, national events
- Underprepared grads
- Understanding how these changes impact various systems: education, government, business development, etc.
- Unfunded mandates and ever increasing taxes are frustrating and even debilitating.
- Vermont has an aura of quality - reputation.
- We know what lots of our friends are doing all the time.
- We need to train the work force for the business environment.
- Wealth-gap & stagnant middle class
- With change comes opportunities-what are they?

**Themes:** Aging workforce, global interconnection, support for local enterprise, lack of tech. infrastructure, adjusting to change: everything's changing so fast and we're trying to adapt...future shock, different demographics: aging, different generations, workforce development/preparedness, education: how do we educate people to be prepared for work? Value of local, transition of traditional agriculture to new opportunities, global warming impacts, increasing use of technology, how we communicate is changing/has changed.

Individual choices to shift to simpler lifestyle, we try to simplify complexity by living more simply, threats to resource based enterprises like forestry, collaborative partnerships to help us manage/deal with change, collaboration is easier, regulation: impact on us both pos. and neg., affects the cost of doing business

**2. Dynamic SWOT: What are we doing well in Vermont that contributes to our economic, ecological and/or social resilience we want to KEEP? What is an obstacle or barrier to our success that we might ABANDON? What new activities or revised activities are we drawn to INVENT/REINVENT?**

**KEEP:**

- Access to decision makers is much more direct here. And it makes a difference.

- Advancing tech infrastructure/usage
- Although it's not systemic, communities support local businesses
- Dynamic food enterprises that are creative, innovative that use local ag products.
- Economic diversification
- Environmental initiatives
- High value placed on recreation and quality of life
- Improving healthy food and lifestyle options
- Large resorts, and beautiful scenery that tourists come expect.
- Neighborhood networking, small town feel, connectedness with our neighbors
- Open land working
- Our authenticity, old ways that people elsewhere don't know about and what to learn about.
- Our youth in the state, attract youth to the state
- Proud of our brand; collaborative culture
- Small town feel, few degrees of separation; genuine communities - people and architecture
- Social, political, natural environments - quality of life attracts talent, fights brain-drain
- Something about our people, sincere, honest, concern for others, intelligent problem solvers
- Something VT does well is to think about and consider the individual while moving the community forward
- Stewardship of the land- support outdoor recreation, natural beauty, agricultural industry
- Sustainable ag/forestry;
- The look of our landscape; quality of air; water quality; access to our land
- The natural environment that attracts businesses and people to come to VT and stay.
- Trend toward more place based learning i.e. Experiential learning, Internship
- Value-added/local economy
- Vermont Brand of excellence
- Work on local level between people, organizations to collaborate, work together to develop new ideas

#### **ABANDON:**

- Burden of property taxes of property owners to support the state govt.



- Exploitation of politically weak regions;
- High cost of permitting for development
- Internal competition across districts, regions for the overall health of VT
- Local control only mentality
- Negative attitude towards change
- Oil dependency; barriers to small business -regulatory environment, costs of insurance, transportation, access to market
- State policies that inhibit local projects (hydro power)
- Tea party
- The idea that rural is backwards - we are now connected to the rest of the world and their ideas.
- The label of being not friendly to business
- The mantra that Vermont is bad for business
- The way the price of milk is set. Let the price of dairy products rise and our farmers can stay in business

#### **INVENT:**

- Alternative tourism business models to support the working landscape and enhance the resort base
- Distributed energy systems;
- Free statewide mass transit
- The statutes and regulations that prohibit the awarding of recognized certification for tech center training.
- Train travel - romantic getaways to scenic Vermont
- Usable single-payer healthcare system

#### **REINVENT:**

- Attract youth from urban areas to provide the unique rural and vibrant lifestyle that will complement their urban upbringing (and some of our youth can head to the cities to share that experience)
- Decision-making based primarily on finance
- Find ways to attract our educated children back to the state

- In order to keep our working forests, we need to do something different - we can learn from farm-to-plate.
- Resorts have been based on real estate transactions, develop alternative models that are not real estate driven.
- Understand best practices, model programs and look for ways to export to other areas of VT

**Themes:** **K:** small town feel, natural environment, our youth, agriculture, brand of excellence, local food/economy, access to decision makers **A:** neg. attitudes toward change, VT and business; top-down decision making; difficult regulation **I:** mass transit, new models for tourist business, the energy systems and distribution

***3. What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?***

**EXPORT:**

- Adult education and continuous learning system
- Agricultural marketing assistance through the RDCS
- Appreciation of our history
- Combined planning/development
- Community spirit- tight knit community"
- In addition to jay, smugglers notch has taken steps to protect its environmental attributes. Stowe has the arts center. Together, they represent diversification.
- Lamoille valley rail trail
- Local biz development & sm. Mfg.
- Local food movement
- Our appreciation of the great outdoors
- Pride in cottage industry
- The recent successes of jay - four season activities, multiple attractions
- The skills associated with the local food movement (e.g. VT food venture center). A part of that is that "competitors" worked together to build their success.
- The successful aspects of our manufacturing experiences
- The use of eb5
- The way our economic development programs/staff work together

## IMPORT:

- Additional strong trade, business associations to leverage experiences and strengths
- An entrepreneur willing to operate the ice rink in Morrisville
- Arts & Culture
- Better business focus more on long-term decision making vs. Short term mentality
- Better educational opportunities and facilities
- Capital investment
- Education/workforce development for tourism and manufacturing
- Educational expectations, diverse tax base (Commercial), cultural diversity, new talent -skills-experience, better access to mass transit
- Examples of collaboration of business supporting agencies
- How to better knit local initiatives into a regional economy i.e. More work across community boundaries
- Slaughter facility/capacity
- The collaborative success of the Mad River Valley in its tourism ventures

## ***4. Projects: What is a project to start today in VT so the state, its businesses, government and community are resilient in the face of change (climate, social, economic, etc)? 3-5 word snazzy title, 25 word rich description. Think about services, systems, roles, methods, governance, funding, etc.***

1. **Keeping our Warmth Local:** Develop an initiative to market and encourage the use of locally produced renewable energy. Wood or Pellet. Set a goal for participation and educate the community of the environmental and cost benefits of renewable solid fuel. (40% of homes in VT have wood/biomass heating, we can rely less on foreign fuel. Wood stoves are no longer dirty. There are no lobbies in DC that support the wood burning industry. Excellent pellets come from VT.)
2. **Energizer Bunny:** an effort to improve how we communicate and solve problems together - to develop and practice these skills before they are needed; bring together community, regional and state-level perspectives - govt., business, education, diverse ages, etc.; combination of local, state and private funding
3. **The Great Post-Secondary Alliance:** Bring together the Adult Tech Education and Vermont Post Secondary institutions to create portable, recognized Training and education certification. (Many students have to leave the state to get associates degrees in things like HVAC, also Vets

can't use their benefits at tech centers. Have colleges to recognize what we do and partnerships to make it happen.)

4. **Back to the Land 2.0:** Food security for Vermonters, the ability to feed ourselves sustainably while creating and expanding to outside markets. We need to take care of ourselves AND bring in the moola from outside. Support our farmers with Tax Breaks, Price Supports for little farmers (right now price supports are for the big guys only). Make local produce more available to low income Vermonters with Double Coupon Dollars for local produce. Mandate that state govt. buy local foods. Develop EB-5 agricultural workforce.
5. **Workforce Development:** Place Based Learning for All Vermont Students: creating meaningful opportunities students to get out of the schoolhouse, into the community, using existing skills, learning new ones, becoming more informed about career and educational opportunities
6. **P1-Local distributed renewable energy systems (TOWN POWER).** Stand-alone Energy generation is close to end user, Town chooses resource mix, ability to interconnect w/other TOWN Power systems, requires ability to store power locally.
7. **Work to live. Don't live to work:** campaign to attract business owners to the state. Focus on the quality of life and paying more to do business in the state is justified by a safe healthy environment. Focus on Gen X & Y business owners... "Vermont- rich in history, pro-active in its approach to make the modern business environment one that includes both at work and off-work values of equal importance..."

***5. Systemic issues: Thinking about how we might go about developing and implementing these projects, what changes might we make to the system re: how we organize, work together, provide leadership, coordination and what kinds of new skills, approaches etc. might we need to consider?***

- Face-to-face campaign to develop trust in local government and decision making process.
- Financing: there's a challenge around this including taxes, generation and distribution. How do we get the money compiled to advance the good ideas. How might state leadership help us reorganize taxes: take \$\$ out of towns and allocate it back on a per capita basis to allow communities to implement plans?
- It will require the involvement of multiple state agencies to implement the projects. These agencies need to work together and align to make it possible to do this.
- Project: get more business voices in the process. Make the right thing easy and the wrong thing difficult. What would make it easy for business to participate in the process?
- Thinking/communication skills so people can get together to make things happen. Many people don't participate...lots of reasons why they don't. Has to be a compelling reason to participate.
- Trust and consensus: How do you involve people from the beginning to be involved. There isn't a lot of trust in the decision making process.

- We need short as well as long term results: prototyping, feed what works. Time to move the needle.
- What I really wanted was people...money is good but we really need people who can coordinate and project manage, making personal contact and greasing the wheels.
- Why aren't the business people here at this meeting? How do we support business people in engaging in the process? Personal invitations work. Businesses are here because we like it here. It's our responsibility to help make it a better place for businesses to be. Bring small businesses together and ask them what they need. Involve them in creating projects that serve businesses and communities.
- You need to have achievable increments so you can celebrate success along the way.

## Notes from the CEDS Regional Meeting

Bennington, October 18, 2013

***1. The context: What are the major trends that are having an impact on VT? Describe the impact of global and national market, economic, social and economic trends? What are some of the local demographic, job, business, education and other trends that we need to be aware of?***

- Ability to accept diversity-financial and cultural
- Ability to attract young families to community
- Ability to get funding for higher education
- Advances in telecommunications leading to new methods of interaction.
- Aging housing stock.
- Aging infrastructure
- Aging of the workforce nationally
- Aging population.
- Arts as economic driver
- Big misconception in terms of the types of opportunities this area has to offer.
- Buy/shop local
- Citizen access to government at all levels
- Climate Change affects tourism
- Competition for talent and capital
- Declining manufacturing. However, opportunities to re-shore and grow
- Declining resources: personal, local govt. , state govt., federal govt.
- Demographics changes-aging population/workforce
- Difficult land use and environmental choices and regulation
- Diversity changing in the US but not necessarily in VT
- Economic disparity

- Economic stagnation, Energy reduction (less is more - quality vs. Quantity), exodus of youth, graying of VT, greater self-dependence
- Education focus on top tier and special needs at expense of middle majority
- Energy constraints and development of new energy resources.
- Energy costs impact bus +/- transportation/travel close/far
- Flat wages
- Flat/declining population
- Focus on startup companies rather than sustaining current companies
- Global marketplace
- Globalization of the economy
- Growing diversity
- Growing focus on local resources and sustainability
- Growing generational gap between newer members of the workforce and existing philosophies of business. Newer generations prefer to work more autonomously while existing business does not always allow for that. At some point, need to meet in the middle.
- Growing mismatch between employer skill demand and potential employee skills
- Growing option for renewable energy
- Growing percentage of population whose income is not dependant on success of economy (derived from wages)
- Immigration-potential positive impacts to the workforce
- Importance of education how to retain and attract the best forecasting and aligning job needs for tomorrow
- Increase challenges in funding education k-20
- Increased energy needs
- Increasing economic gap
- Internet is a double edged sword (depletes local purchase power/ opens global mkt)
- Internet's impact on commerce
- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of models of success
- Lack of opportunities for recent college graduates
- Legacy insurance opportunity

- Locally - lack of affordable housing
- National trade policy superseding VT law
- New investments in telecommunications infrastructure
- Perceived growth in individuals on entitlement programs
- Political uncertainty leading to financial uncertainty and instability
- Property taxes
- Proximity to pop center & mkt reach
- Quality of life
- Rapid pace of technology change+
- Restriction in capital lending
- Returning of manufacturing from abroad
- Shift in the types of manufacturing growth in the area - impacts- employers require higher entry level skills - still a gap between employer expressed workforce needs and interest of existing labor force to fill those needs.
- Slow population growth
- Sound fiscal policy and commitment to a solid financial management: strong banks, fewer foreclosures
- Stagnate population and age gap
- Stagnation in school performance...perhaps decline relative to nation
- Strength of VT brand
- Strength/weakness: VT is small, insular, obscure
- Strong sense of community in Vermont
- Technological innovations in manufacturing
- Treasured Vermont values superseding policy promoting economic growth
- Trend toward VT food brands
- VISTA2
- We should be health/recreation state (fresh air/clean water/Mt views) healthy life style education/quality
- Widening education gap US and VT vs. Global
- Working landscape
- Youth disillusionment and its ramifications



- Youth flight
- Youth flight - leave @20 return @30yrs

**Themes:** demographic workforce theme: aging, skill gaps, youth retention/attraction, both/and across issues, workforce housing continues to be a sig. issue, impact of technology: both/and pos and neg, energy and climate change: opportunities and also concern about the impact of changing climate on mountains, etc., opportunity to prove that the ed. system is an economic driver, declining workforce population in VT (which is a crisis)..must resolve this...acute in southern 4 counties...a crisis for our employers who are generating the taxes needed to sustain the values that VT cares about...worker friendly environment. You're not going to stay if the environment isn't friendly for workers: wages are a big issue. People are leaving because there are not jobs that match their skills...because there are opportunities elsewhere.

**2. Dynamic SWOT: What are we doing well in Vermont that contributes to our economic, ecological and/or social resilience we want to KEEP? What is an obstacle or barrier to our success that we might ABANDON? What new activities or revised activities are we drawn to INVENT/REINVENT?**

**KEEP:**

- Ability to actually impact government by participating
- Access to all levels of government
- Access to government. Helps differentiate us
- Accessible legislative environment
- Arts and cultural ethic
- Brand and that which preserves it (natural resources, etc / individualism - ability to incubate, quality of product)
- Continued cross discussions between WFD and ED projects.
- Creative and dynamic arts and culture sector
- Dedicated and involved citizenry
- Focus on local resources, businesses, opportunities;
- Higher education infrastructure - keep and enhance
- Keep and enhance our physical and social infrastructure
- Keep and evolve our planning framework-want to protect or landscape and small towns AND enable appropriate growth-provide more carrots in the regulatory system
- Keep and Invent more incentives to attracting and keeping youth
- Keep and protect Vermont Brand because it is easy to monetize, increasingly unique

- Lifestyle/quality of life
- Locally functioning communities, democratic process
- Low impact, high return, highly recognized global success i.e. Captives
- Natural beauty
- Place
- Preservation & promotion of downtowns as assets
- Quality of Life as part of brand - healthy life style, ed, arts, individuality is tolerated & given room to thrive
- Quality of natural environment and outdoor recreational opportunities
- Safety
- Strong sense of place, strong communities
- Strong social networks
- Tax base from second homeowners, collaboration between local groups and access to state resources & investments, aesthetic integrity, VT Branding,
- VDOL programs and services that help employers grow/expand and WF develop.
- VT as a home to captive insurance. VT is haven for these.

#### **ABANDON:**

- Balkanization of school system
- Current drug laws and invent tougher restrictions and punishments
- Either/or of youth/aged dilemma and figure out how to make it work for us in context of workforce
- Excessive emphasis on imported food
- Fantasy that Vermont is the edenic locale to which all people will necessarily be attracted
- Fear of change, i.e. Wind turbines/renewable energy
- Financial regulatory system
- Flatlanders and natives mentality
- Hostility to industrial activity
- 'In perpetuity' is a very long time. Our preservation policies need to be rethought at a very deep level.

- Mismatch between available educational opportunities in southern VT and workforce development needs...i.e., not enough technical educational pathways such as engineers, etc.
- Negative comments that we don't have a trained and educated workforce and/or the misconceptions of such.
- Parochialism-gets in the way of regional thinking and problem solving
- Reliance on imported energy
- Strict adherence to 18h cent governance structure
- Vermont gets fascinated with trends and can't make long term strategic choices or investments
- Vermont's perceived hostility towards business

#### **INVENT:**

- Better ways of sharing best practices: workforce, econ. Dev. Within state and from out of state
- Consistent definition of sustainability for VT
- Intermodal transportation to sovt
- Model that promotes/demands movement from social welfare environment to a productive/economic lifestyle
- Regional workforce systems
- Strategy to introduce diversity, ethnicity and nationalities
- Strong and consistent brand image for VT and our southern region
- Think outside the box. Not everything is impossible
- Vermont's brand towards business

#### **REINVENT:**

- Better balance of people vs. Business
- Boundaries put on education...why don't we have more blended course and training offerings.
- Collaboration w/ other states and border regions
- Development borders
- Economy deliver on VT brand promise
- Education system
- Environmental protections that value economic development

- Higher education, particularly public higher education, needs to be fundamentally re-thought and redeveloped in Vermont to drive value creation
- Interregional cooperation and coordination
- New economic development model
- Non motor transport path locally
- Policy creation process: need data, research, discussion and action for the long term
- Policy generation process
- Protecting the environment has become a shibboleth against which all policies or ideas are broken. We need to change the balance between change and preservation.
- Public education k-12
- Stem education
- Techniques and incentives for concentrating growth in downtowns and village centers
- The conception that Southern VT is not part of the rest of the state.
- Transportation in VT: rail alternatives
- Vermont's downtowns and commercial properties are dying for lack of investment. We need a capital and redevelopment policy and system

**Themes:** KEEP: strong educational system, access to government, financial reg./captive, small towniness, ABANDON: distaste for industrial development, suspicion that wealth creation is not good, reliance on imported energy and food, the idea that everything only happens in central VT, 2-tiered government. structure...we lack regional government...lack of regional decision making. INVENT: a state flood/disaster response fund...a local FEMA. Feeds into the regional piece. A+R the idea that preservation creates economic value, public policy is an inaccurate tool...too large a scale to deal with local requirements. Structure and flexibility...difficult for state gov. to do this. REINVENT: whole economic development model, STEAM, VT brand for business, have a product that supports our brand promise, education, workforce education, our economic boundaries across state lines and within the state, transportation infrastructure and alternative energy methodologies, our workforce: workforce is changing who, how, where.

***3. What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?***

**EXPORT:**

- Building a regional network through our CEDS process
- Cluster approach to ED-supply chain

- Communication and collaboration among regional economic development partners
- Export Burlington to NY
- Export smaller town mentality to larger population Big difference between "smaller to medium sized population centers" and larger more metropolitan....Smaller areas tend to work together to get "bigger and stronger" while larger areas tend to "maintain" and may not work as effectively. Centers.
- Festivals and events to drive tourism
- Flood response
- Identifying and recruiting excellent young leaders
- Laura and Pat (share!)
- Maintaining villages and historic downtowns
- Paving our roads better in Bennington County
- Proximity to 9th largest rail station in USA and international airport
- Recognize complex economic relationships between tourism assets and industrial assets
- Regional cooperation and networking. Build relationships that extend beyond town boundaries
- SE Vermont regional flood recovery
- SE Vermont - significant investment in professional private and public sector relationships throughout the region
- Seveds regional flood response
- Support for manufacturing sector
- SWVT region collaborates very well. In addition, this area tends to be very project based. Once a need is identified, collaboration allows for quick action to develop supporting projects.
- Tech clustering around the university-i.e. VCET
- We are a region of multi state transplants and need to capitalize on this.
- We do extremely well with limited resources and infrastructure.
- We have capability to influence legislators in Montpelier; local delegation is accessible, seasoned, and respected
- We like what we do: we are proud of our work
- We practice innovation in program, strategy and connections.
- We produce events and experiences well.
- We work well with our legislative delegation

- We're good @integrating all (old & new) assets/resources (people & ideas) - therefore we are a region of many non-VT immigrants alongside long term Vermonters
- Willingness to work together while ability to work autonomously.
- Workforce development-getting right people in the room to work together. Employment placement better here.
- Working regionally-Bennington and Windham County
- World class arts organizations that support the VT brand for excellence

#### **IMPORT:**

- Collaboration between local higher education and development
- Coolness Factor
- Co-working spaces in Montpelier and Burlington
- Focus on technology businesses (as per Chittenden County)
- From north cooperation experience and models around food
- Hardwick's food venture center
- Other parts of the state have a greater ability to integrate technical and liberal arts education, tech centers, e.g. Essex Tech. Communication gap with Bennington Tech Center.
- Private investment capital
- Regional transportation networks, particularly rural-Chittenden, Washington counties
- Research capacity in Quebec, New York
- Robust local food system
- Tech transfer models from out of state research universities i.e. RPI, MIT
- We are in center of higher education region VT, NY, MA
- We're not as good @defining VT brand and marketing it as Central & Northern VT

#### ***4. Projects: What is a project to start today in VT so the state, its businesses, government and community are resilient in the face of change (climate, social, economic, etc)? 3-5 word snazzy title, 25 word rich description. Think about services, systems, roles, methods, governance, funding, etc.***

1. **Better Policy Development:** Invest in a public-private partnership to do research, generate data, and form policy for legislative consideration (no adequate policy generation process around economic development)

2. **Product Management:** develop a description of the deliverable product of living and working in Vermont
3. **Better government models:** create new ways for local and regional governments to establish priorities and focus investments
4. **Better driving:** double the width of Rt 9
5. **Productive Internet:** develop business development systems around our broadband infrastructure (there are huge opportunities around our broadband infrastructure)
6. **VEMA:** VT Emergency Mgt Agency
7. **Regional Marketing of So VT arts and culture resources. Arts resources are under utilized and not well** organized. Central investment could return well in cash and community health. 9 proposal that is part of Seveds)
8. **Goal Formation:** Make real and realizable goals for productivity, wages, and population--then execute
9. **Waste water for all:** figure out how to facilitate waste water systems for small towns like Newfane
10. **Education as recruitment:** better leveraging of the enormous investment in K-12 education to produce equitable opportunities and high outcomes and use a better aligned and high quality education system to recruit entrepreneurs, businesses and workforce
11. **Make UVM useful:** motivate UVM to see itself as part of the economic development engine of the state (UVM doesn't play well with others. We're missing an opportunity.)
12. **VanGogh!** Van services to allow our aging dispersed population to access arts and other resources in our hub communities. (How can we market cultural assets using space that is vacant much of the time?)
13. **Recognize conflicts:** Deal with essential Vermont issues of cognitive dissonance-like preserving all farms and working lands, and having a supply of good jobs.
14. Build the "STEAM" engine (Capitalizing on STEAM across a broad range of ages)
15. **Abandon the Fantasy:** that we are a sustainable economy. Vermont grew rapidly in the 80's and 90's and is no longer growing
16. **Develop regional capacity:** develop or ability to act, plan and respond regionally. Admit you have a problem, begin to practice thinking regionally, and then either rewrite the Vermont constitution or establish regional government
17. **"The Pulse":** A system of which identifies needs and continually monitors success and effectiveness of ED/WFD projects.
18. **Future now Education:** Goals; Increase grad rate...increase career readiness...increase earning potential..increase students performance..By leveraging technology, revamping delivery model,

revamping curriculum, revamping governance, revamping student engagement...increasing focus on needs of full student body..,

19. **See the movie:** Build the picture of the Vermont that we want to see in 10 years
20. **Think about the young people:** stop thinking about the comfort of our older population, and our non-working population--focus on the young entrepreneurial people.
21. **"Integrating Technology":** Blending of technologies in education/training courses. Technology is "not going away"...if anything, it is more integrated into our daily lives with 94% of all VT'rs having home access to internet.
22. **CCE:** a Center for Creative Entrepreneurship (its all about interaction) - enabling communication between all different sectors: business, legal, social, cultural, thereby enabling creative industries viability
23. **Arts Ed VT:** Connect our arts assets and education assets across institutional boundaries
24. **Green Mountain National Park:** Goals: increase utilization of state's natural resources...attract recreationers from out of state...drive ancillary business develop (hotels, outdoor sports, restaurants). Park would be within 4 hrs drive of 60 million people... How: compete study and obtain congressional approval. VT needs to invest in supporting road, trail, camping areas, viewing platforms, infrastructure.
25. **A forward looking risk/opportunity assessment and management "system":** that asks the "what ifs' at the macro level of risks to our economy and way of life: financial, economic, physical, etc. impacts. With people and resources focused on this singularly. For both threat and opportunities and for communities, counties, and the state. Local governments and state governments. For Business and organizations, i.e. Disaster preparedness and response 'guides' but starting broader than that and moving it down.
26. **Diversity of jobs:** that lift the wages in our communities, with corresponding reduction in poverty, and aligned with a Vermont brand (focus on multiple sectors)

***5. Thinking about our projects: what one change to the system (how we do things in VT) might make all the difference?***

- A robust and ubiquitous career exploration system within education
- Acknowledge our deficits, deal with them and move forward
- Continue this type of meeting/workshop format around the state in an ongoing way/roundtables
- Create a worker/business coalition to create wealth
- Developing best practices system



- Effective regional communication. We love small towns where we can work face to face. This can be limiting. How might we enable communication that keeps what we love and is more effective?
- Looking at VT through a magnifying glass and a projector
- Making sure that there is good communication among different entities, to learn and not recreate the wheel
- Re. The arts: they are a true economic driver. VT has always attracted artists. Let's embrace that and encourage it.
- Recruitment strategy. Talent as well as biz
- Stop siloing, which locks up wisdom
- The best social program is a good job.
- Using our sig. Social investments as recruitment tools.
- We need outside investment.

## Notes from the CEDS Regional Meeting

White River Junction, October 21, 2013

***1. The context: What are the major trends that are having an impact on VT? Describe the impact of global and national market, economic, social and economic trends? What are some of the local demographic, job, business, education and other trends that we need to be aware of?***

- Access to angel funding
- Access to capital is a problem
- Aging demographics
- Artisanal products are high in demand/ this also bodes well for small producer industry
- "Bowling alone" - lack of community
- Brain drain
- Brain drain
- Challenges in retaining and enticing young workers
- Cheap labor
- Demographics, very young and very old
- Dysfunctional federal govt.
- Education system - cost/quality
- Expanding career and technology centers
- Expensive infrastructure and few incentives for new business.
- Exporting of jobs, technological challenges-no broadband service
- Fallout from healthcare implementation
- Generational poverty
- Global economy
- Globalization and accompanying job export.
- High cost of living in VT
- High energy costs

- Highest cost for transportation to work
- How to combine lifestyle with 21st century global business models?
- Importance of maintaining the VT lifestyle while fostering new economic ventures---how?
- Innovation development
- Internationalization of the world and the influx of population to urban areas. We have to work harder to compete for talent.
- Labor market has tightened possibly due to increasing demands from employers and technologies that allow people to do more with less
- Lack of consensus between legislature and private sector on policy issues
- Lack of skilled and unskilled labor
- Lack of state vision for economic development
- Less people spending time getting involved in volunteer board
- Locally grown movement and food awareness
- Lost opportunities
- Need for less expensive education/training opportunities for youth
- Need for skilled workers
- Need to expand broadband beyond urban & educational centers
- Reduction in infrastructure funding
- Sequestration - lack of funds for VT
- Shrinking youth population
- Slow food movement impacts VT in a positive manner.
- Small population
- Taxes are very high
- Technological advances throughout the world but Vermont is still not fully wired with proper broadband. As a result VT risks being left behind.
- Vermont is impacted by globalization and the exporting of jobs. Therefore we need to better compete for talent.
- VT/NH border - policy differences
- Weather and mud impact

**Themes:** tech and not enough broadband coverage; we need skilled labor, globalization of the economy, lack of not young-not old people to make the economy function; access to capital...lack of this; interplay bet. the state and what's going on in DC; lack of infrastructure investment; artisanal products and slow

food being good for the state; important to take the negative into the positive; we are past IBM days and need now to look to small businesses; we have to figure out what infrastructure we want...we may not have the best of everything unless we prioritize that will attract investment and opportunity; disconnect bet. ed. and WFD; lack of community...fewer people getting involved in the community..is this a function of the new economy?

**2. Dynamic SWOT: What are we doing well in Vermont that contributes to our economic, ecological and/or social resilience we want to KEEP? What is an obstacle or barrier to our success that we might ABANDON? What new activities or revised activities are we drawn to INVENT/REINVENT?**

**KEEP:**

- Community minded population
- Community spirit
- Easy access to govt.
- Local control
- Local food movement
- Our capacity to be resilient based on our scale, our history of being interdependent
- Small Business assistance, lifestyle
- Small businesses successful
- Strong social/human services
- Taking care of the environment
- We do small businesses well

**ABANDON:**

- Attitudinal problems with permitting
- Distrust of business incentives/workforce training funding
- Silos in state government - We are too small to not work cooperatively
- Some towns still have machinery/equipment taxes
- The insular and inward looking view...i.e. Along the border towns need to incorporate NH into the conversation.
- We are so gracious in our social services that we may discourage better wages, "living wage" for fear of not being able to sustain a family.

**INVENT/REINVENT:**

- Find ways to prioritize our opportunities and our needs so workers can provide for themselves. We need payroll options that go further than selling the idea of eating trees, that VTimage is enough to get you by.
- Make incentives easier to access/utilize
- Permitting process so that applicants do not need to undergo local, regional, and state-wide regs. When in conflict where should the applicant turn? Does the town have ultimate control?
- Permitting process/minimize duplication
- State procurement to focus on small businesses within vt
- Tax free downtowns

**Themes: Keep:** focus on small biz; lifestyle; ability operate at small scale and access to govt.; **Abandon:** silos; parochialism; overly gratuitous social services programs; barriers to making use of state incentives for WFD, difficult for Biz to access them **Reinvent:** align social services with workforce initiatives/career path; permitting processes to make them easier to use

***3. What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?***

**EXPORT:**

- Advising SB about communicating ideas, presentation to Angel/VC funders
- Awareness of state lines/boarders and the challenges that go with that
- Effective relationships with all levels of gov't
- Strong customer service/team approach - strong network
- The experience of Springfield in finding some successes after the crash of the machine tool industry. There are other industries that have crashed and need to find their 21st century niche.

**IMPORT:**

- 24-34 year olds from Chittenden Cty
- Apprenticeship opportunities and venture capital to support incubator and developing business
- Higher education capacity from Chittenden County
- Social infrastructure for younger population
- Training programs from other states etc
- Vibrant retail sector

**4. Projects: What is a project to start today in VT so the state, its businesses, government and community are resilient in the face of change (climate, social, economic, etc)? 3-5 word snazzy title, 25 word rich description. Think about services, systems, roles, methods, governance, funding, etc.**

1. **Stay'ducation:** Every VT high school graduation would receive a free college education or perform 2 years of community service (after which they could access higher ed.), which would incorporate internships, co-op experience, based on business needs.
2. **Grow Beyond Vermont:** Program to cocoon businesses with mentors and technical assistance. Goal is to increase business value, revenue, job development.
3. **Destination Education:** A project that encourages mid-sized companies to train employees in return for contracted length of employment post training.
4. **Regional Cooperation across State Boundaries:** Fostering cooperation in economic development by viewing the upper valley as an economic region with strengths and weaknesses on both sides of the river which can be leveraged to the benefit of all.
5. **WILL WORK FOR FUN!:** Create small environments in the community and the office to encourage volunteer and community service options. From these perhaps synchronous interests will emerge, networking might result, and respect for others, their interests, and their business motives will grow.
6. **Tax Free Zone:** An area along the VT/NH border that is exempt from sales & use tax to stimulate retail development.

**5. Thinking about our projects: what one change to the system (how we do things in VT) might make all the difference?**

- Collaborate and graduate: set priorities so that things get done. Find an issue where you can get consensus. The major issue is getting to implementation because they don't have the \$\$\$.
- How do we define wealth creation? Can we get consensus that wealth creation is desirable at the bottom end? What are the positive impacts of ED on the lower end? Can we get consensus there?
- How do we get a sense of something besides the towns we live in?
- Local control over what? WE have a bunch of hot button issues where we don't want to give up control, but there may be other issues where we could combine forces on a regional basis. We have regional solid waste/police...economic conditions are going to be such that we will be driven in this direction. People still want to have a community voice, and they can.
- Political boundary between NH and VT (and VT and Burlington)...need involvement at the governor's level, task force to implement change, change in thought process (silos/territory). Is there consensus that wealth creation is a good thing?
- Regional orgs. should be the conveners because we are not parochial. We also need the authority to make something work to show success.

- Risk aversion: after Irene talked about resiliency and haven't done much. Lots of meetings. Haven't taken the political risk to do the things that need to be done.
- Significant challenge re. sense of community. We're lockstep in the community mode...we don't do much except talk regionally. We plan, but that doesn't go very far. The very notion of VT is village and neighborhood, which is a hurdle, particularly re. investment in one area but not another.
- We have a strong community sentiment but have we really applied it when striving for economic goals? Working across boundaries to get things we all want as a community.
- We have the opportunity and the challenges in VT because one strong component in our govt. is that we're apolitical in town govt. and legislature. There are no partisan initiatives...little that is directed by political initiative. We can do many things because there is little from this sector.
- We lack the [political leadership to make drastic change...at all levels of govt. and that this works down to mid-level folks who might feel threatened by change. WE are risk averse when it come to certain types of change.
- What kind of common or shared elements can be determined regionally to get agreement on economically? Come up with some kind of common number that compares one town to another on a shared scale.
- What needs to be regional, e.g. fire/rescue...no mandate to create change? Opportunity for towns to get together regionally but it hasn't worked.

## Notes from the CEDS Regional Meeting

Montpelier, October 22, 2013

***1. The context: What are the major trends that are having an impact on VT? Describe the impact of global and national market, economic, social and economic trends? What are some of the local demographic, job, business, education and other trends that we need to be aware of?***

- Aging population
- Air traffic is incredibly expensive and difficult for business. Need to expand bus and train service
- Beautiful landscape
- Bigger storms and climate change
- Broken mental health system
- Bus service increasing3lack of public transportation in rural areas
- Buy local mentality
- Care of aging & housing
- Consolidation of firms i.e., banks and retail
- Education system has failed to keep pace with workforce development needs.
- Environmental awareness is increasing nationally and globally. Vermont has a growing renewable energy industry sector.
- Expansion of access to technology
- Getting older as a society.
- Global Con = International mistrust affecting markets
- Global Con = Poor global economy
- Global pro = Technology opening opportunities to new markets
- Growing income & wealth inequality. Climate changes--more extreme weather. Increase in local food system
- Growing local ag. economy
- High taxes



- Impact of social media: creating more qualified applicants
- Life style choices: people choosing where they're going to live by values vs. Economic decision
- Local con = Brain drain
- Local con = Propensity for companies to expand in Chittenden County instead of elsewhere in states
- Locavore
- Losing wealthy residents
- Losing youth
- Love for down towns
- Low birth rate
- Major changes in health care delivery and payment are unknown
- Making strides in improving broadband and cellular access, but need more
- Mature high quality timber base, globally demand....but will we be able to capitalize?
- Millennial generation
- More invasive plants
- More supporting local economy
- National con = Govt. Inability to compromise
- National Con = Workforce getting older; baby boomers moving into retirement, thus causing further financial strain
- National pro = increasing, albeit slower than we'd like, access to capital
- Need to keep up infrastructure investments, broadband, roads, bridges, public facilities
- Organics: In VT big movement to supply organic food to people.
- Outdoor recreation opportunities
- People with skills doing better and converse
- Predict future climate impacts and identify changes to cope
- Public transportation: more is needed
- Region, state and nation have aging populations. This presents challenges as well as opportunities, particularly related to workforce and business ownership issues.
- Sequestration, budget deficit hinder economic development.
- Shrinking birth rates and fleeing youth will result in severe labor shortages,, low unemployment, and less total consumption

- Slow to develop technology, such as broadband connectivity, yet some very innovative small technology companies in Vermont.
- Smaller world, closer markets, more competition
- Socialism - trying to take care of everyone, even those who are not trying to help themselves.
- Solar energy: Increasing renewable energy biz in state
- Strong citizen participation
- Tax and spending trends...affordability issues.
- Technology facilitates global contact and new markets and culture.
- Under 60 transportation difficult
- Urban attitudes threaten traditional rural economies.
- Vermont is strong in community engagement, environmental consciousness.
- Vermont, nation and world are thinking about the effects of climate change and how to mitigate its impacts.
- Vermonters are independent and want to make their own choices Acceptance of same sex unions
- Water & Sewer has capacity yet we don't develop
- Young people are leaving the state

**Themes:** globalization and how that's affecting VT's ability to compete and the need to keep up with globalization; aging pop; young people are leaving; the environment and care for it; citizen participation...people are engaged with their communities; tech providing connectivity; lots of govt.; high cost of living overall; education of young people for higher tech jobs; more public transportation in and out of state, particularly that addresses our rural nature, e.g. every community getting a park-and-ride; climate change, explosion of govt. programs; climate change; businesses have difficulty finding people who want to work; health care and changes; growing inequality: the smallness of our average business puts them at a disadvantage as we increase regulatory requirements.

**2. Dynamic SWOT: What are we doing well in Vermont that contributes to our economic, ecological and/or social resilience we want to KEEP? What is an obstacle or barrier to our success that we might ABANDON? What new activities or revised activities are we drawn to INVENT/REINVENT?**

**KEEP:**

- Access to government
- Accessibility to our state govt. And maintain citizen participation (i.e., town meeting)
- Attractive environment to attract visitors and residents
- Caring for all our citizens

- Decisions based on local considerations
- Energy conservation
- Environmental protection
- Environmental stewardship - vermont's brand as clean, fresh, and natural
- Farming and local markets and value-added ag. Business
- Granite quarries viable.
- Jobs for our youth
- Keep and strengthen working lands.
- Land open and good for tourism.
- Local economic focus
- Our landscape beautiful
- Protecting the environment
- Quality of higher education
- Rural nature of state
- Rural nature of the state and robust downtowns
- State fiscal responsibility; we're a tax and spend state, not a borrow and spend state, thus we more resilient (sorry California)
- Support for independent businesses
- Tech centers, community colleges and universities. Good for the economy and job training for job seekers.
- The quality of our higher education
- Tourism
- Tourism promotion; brings in millions each year
- Vermont branding
- VT brand promotion; known worldwide for quality and purity

#### **ABANDON:**

- Bloated, growing government
- Constant conflict between local and state control on development.
- Energy generation and transmission subsidies

- Financial policies for welfare; huge drain on economy and private companies perception of workforce
- Governments intrusion into the health care system
- High cost of energy
- High cost of living
- Mega corporations running (ruining) our lives and health
- Over regulation
- Prebate program: assets need to be considered
- Regional prejudices

#### **INVENT:**

- Better alignment of local and regional visions and collaboration on resources and programs.
- Encourage development in cities - grows our economy and creates jobs, keeps rural areas rural
- Governmental nimbleness
- Local vs. State community funding
- Make taxes more progressive
- Rural public transportation systems

#### **REINVENT:**

- Accessible travel to and from VT by Air, bus, and rail
- Education
- Education for older (not senior0 workers
- Governmental programs
- How we fund education
- Incentivize the Entrepreneurial spirit
- Infrastructure
- K - 12 education system to better prepare the workforce
- Local investment opportunities
- Mental health system
- More buses on higher traffic Routes

- Permitting inefficiency
- Process to encourage pro-active land use policies at state, regional and local levels
- Public schools to encourage life-long learning
- Public transportation
- Refocus permitting from State to Local; state permits are ineffective, local permits respond to local conditions
- Restructure the prebate program
- School funding & school choice
- Tax system
- The way government is funded
- Workers comp

**Themes: Keep:** branding, landscape, tourism, quality nat. resources, higher ed., high quality education  
**Abandon:** government, poor fiscal policy, energy subsidies, high cost of living, liberal social services, anarchy, corporate welfare, **Fix:** tax structure, pub. trans, public ed., infrastructure, investment, permitting system, **Reinvent:** education finance, health care system, mental health care system, the way we leverage our assets (local, regional state interface), create new ED tools that work

***3. What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?***

**EXPORT:**

- Ability to attract manufacturing in Barre area
- Because we are small we have access and the ability to communicate with business, and local and state-wide official to facilitate action.
- Business community is very entrepreneurial
- Creation of recreational opportunities using inactive former industrial assets
- Diverse and resourceful business community.
- Diverse communities--ethnicity, values, economically, etc.
- Downtown revitalization and accessing the necessary funding
- Employ and fund local development corporations
- Entitlements
- Good cooperation within business community.

- High level of volunteerism and community commitment
- In Central Vermont, we promote and support tourism, in leveraging our natural resources in a sustainable way.
- Inter-agency collaborations & partnerships
- Municipal; support for cottage industries
- Our drug problem
- Reuse of former industrial buildings
- Route 2 corridor bus system
- Specialty foods
- Strong volunteer community
- Successful co-working hubs
- Use of natural resources
- Value added ag. & local foods
- Very highly skilled labor

#### **IMPORT:**

- Ability to attract financial capital for local investments
- Central Vermont could be better at embracing business development in the communities that want it.
- Creative economy participation
- Greenhouses to extend grow season
- How to leverage local and regional assets to address infrastructure (i.e., water, sewer, schools) issues.
- Job quality from Burlington area
- Local investment in entrepreneurs through local stock market
- More bike trails
- More higher education opportunity
- Natural gas
- Software and tech cluster from Chittenden
- Strong work ethics
- Third season tourism opportunities

- VT food venture center--support value-added ag.

**4. Projects: What is a project to start today in VT so the state, its businesses, government and community are resilient in the face of change (climate, social, economic, etc)? 3-5 word snazzy title, 25 word rich description. Think about services, systems, roles, methods, governance, funding, etc.**

1. **Why reinvent the wheel? Just inflate the tires:** Comprehensive assessment of economic development tools that WORK in other states that are likely to be successful in Vermont. Assess every state and every tool to see what we might use in VT.
2. **Dirt Road Stock Exchange:** where local businesses & investors come together to identify capital needs & investment opportunities. Need legislature to establish enabling laws & change DFR rules. Modes exist in Oregon & a few local communities. When an investor comes in to give expertise, it helps business expand knowledge base.
3. **Small scale local energy projects:** support our communities, not GMP to produce and utilize locally micro-hydro, biofuel, roof top solar, windmills, etc.
4. **Higher level food processing plants to continue growth of specialty foods.** This would help local folks produce a greater volume of product to create more jobs and more food.
5. **Go Local:** Create state-supported, locally-led economic initiatives directed to public and private interests to meet CUSTOMIZED community need.
6. **Vermont companies get transportation bids** (not out of state companies that bid lower) keep money in state
7. **Adult vocational academy:** Help people become more qualified for higher-tech jobs, particularly incumbent workers as well as young people
8. **Taxes Aren't Us.com:** This project lays out a plan to eliminate state income taxes for any working Vermonter under the age of 26. This would help keep our talent in the state and attract new talent at the same time. Coming to a state without an income tax is like getting a raise or receiving a signing bonus. It's easy to administer.
9. **Prepared, Productive & Proud:** Transform K through 12 education system so that our kids are taught how the theory they learn in the classroom is utilized in the real world. Provide them with opportunities to practice those skills so they develop real-world problem-solving skills.
10. **Region-wide school choice,** including vouchers for private schools.
11. **Livable wage for all,** not based on skill level, every worker has value
12. **The Grand Pool:** Explore how we can regionalize workers' comp with neighboring states to create a large pool to reduce risks and costs.
13. **Conference Center & Hotel:** Capital Plaza is the largest facility but not large enough to attract some of the events we'd like to host.
14. **Locally create sustainable energy technology:** (Another) manufacturer of renewable energy (solar panels?)
15. **Youth Tech Corps:** Expand concept of VYCC to tech industries. Bring together tech companies, high schools, tech centers, state colleges; hands on tech training & internships
16. **No Change Zone:** How can we maintain our rural lifestyles and address poverty issues?
17. **Support real health:** Support program to help those eat better and exercise. Food, exercise, mental, environmental - programs for jobs that are non-toxic.

- 18.
19. **I'm from A&R - How can I help you?** Train permitting officials in customer service and instill and ethos of project management and customer service that produces the same results more quickly. Many newer employees and other permitting officials get it but not all do.
20. **Career Externships:** A new program for both students and faculty (high school level), required for students to graduate; one externship every 3 years for faculty. This program partners with employers (private, public or non-profit) to develop a new addition to our children's curriculum. We will need support from schools, parents, employers and volunteers. This will require a new way to view our education process that will help prepare students for careers and be self-supporting members of our communities.
21. **We love logistics:** provide incentives and tools for businesses to improve technology. Promote scalable business start-up and growth to create vibrant, low environmental impact companies. Provide small business with the tools to leverage technology to compete in the world-wide economy.
22. **Pathways from Poverty:** workforce development--hard & soft skills training, job placement, on-the-job training, internships, apprenticeships, child care subsidies and child care statewide
23. **Implement WIRED program:** married tech schools with business with state workforce program Incentivized training for specific industry sectors
24. **Find a means to help and develop entrepreneurs growth in Vermont.** There are "incubator" programs for manufacturers. Let's develop something similar for aspiring minds that want to create business but don't know where to turn. Help business grow and succeed.

***5. Thinking about our projects: what one change to the system (how we do things in VT) might make all the difference?***

- Come to some sort of agreement around what projects to implement.
- Commit.
- Measure outcomes.
- Minimize government intervention.
- Rebrand the state. To promote business, we need to include people and technology. We already promote tourism and now we need to rebrand it as a cool happening place that will grow business. Little high-tech businesses are here and working and we need to promote ourselves as a both/and state. More than cows and ice cream.
- There should be one place that is coordinating action to fix redundancy...transparency and accountability.
- We need millennials and other young people. Bring more of these stakeholders into the conversation.



## Notes from the CEDS Regional Meeting

Middlebury, October 23, 2013

***1. The context: What are the major trends that are having an impact on VT? Describe the impact of global and national market, economic, social and economic trends? What are some of the local demographic, job, business, education and other trends that we need to be aware of?***

- #1 in nation in Opportunity Index (but still pretty low)
- Aging population
- Agrarian - Industrial- Knowledge - Connected
- Alternative energy - increase in
- Can do spirit - of working together, a willingness to do it ourselves - not looking to congress for solutions
- Changing labor market and technology. Robotics and 3-D manufacturing. Distribution system.
- Climate change
- Climate change, financial stability and instability, increase in substance abuse, pervasiveness of social media, aging population/struggle to attract and retain young people
- Competition is Global
- Concern. Aging Workforce. Addison and State.
- Continued growth in value-added agriculture
- Continuing commitment to community
- Dairies struggling for two reasons - worldwide economic conditions and weather
- Develop local workforce
- Development vs. Preservation
- Digital exports or marketing
- Down Trend - out migration based on economic opportunities
- EB5 investment impact on State
- Engagement and activism to address community issues

- Entrepreneurship
- Focus on preparing young people to enter the workforce
- Growing start-up culture
- Improved access to technology internet, etc.
- Increase in EBD children and youth and kids with special needs
- Increasing cost of living and decreasing k-12 enrollment
- Increasing income gap, decline of the middle class
- Increasing regulatory requirements
- Increasing taxes
- Internet: Ability to communicate with others around the world and to work anywhere (telecommuting) and the rise of free lancing. Estimate that by 2020 50% of people will be working outside of organizations. Impact on Vermont. Liberal arts graduates having more difficulty getting employment quickly out of college.
- Lack of accessible affordable housing is barrier to attracting workforce
- Lack of daycare
- Lack of rural county job growth impacted by Chittenden County development.
- Limitation on business size before external investment and/or purchase
- Locavore movement with particular focus on local foods and products
- Locavore trend, development of local products
- Losing workforce as 18-30 year olds emigrate and our immigrants are in the older years
- Middlebury Colleges continued community action and support.
- More young people coming into Addison County
- Need for high quality employees
- Need for more manufacturing jobs.
- Not in my backyard trend
- Out migration of young people
- Pace of technology - managing change
- Positive trend Growth in agriculture foods and markets systems approach.
- Positive trend in entrepreneurship
- Progressive approach to social issues (legalization of gay marriage)
- Questioned trend. Impact of health care reform?

- Renewable and more efficient energy is a national trend that and Vermont is leading the way
- Rising cost of living (healthcare, energy, education)
- Rural school populations declining, costs increasing, consolidation concerns
- Second home population both taking away from and adding to state
- Small biz scalability
- Smaller families postponing fertility
- Social issues, such as substance abuse impact ability to get good employees; need for more local substance abuse treatment.
- State doesn't contribute as much to higher ed as other states
- State Level Econ Dev = lack of horsepower (understaffed)
- Strong community commitment
- Strong environmental culture
- Strong food/ag. Culture with new, young farmers coming along<sup>3</sup>
- Strong nonprofit sector
- Technical graduates are quickly employed (95% within 3 months). Schools might get together to create an educational process that is more valuable for in-state students and would be attractive to those outside the state. Learn skills necessary to survive in changing economy. State is known for alternative/off-season education processes. Implement at secondary level. Don't ignore the 3 R's but augment with technological skills.
- Technology is allowing Vermont based businesses to operate worldwide but it depends on infrastructure for continued growth
- Telecommuting and remote work capabilities
- The ability of people to live anywhere means they will locate based on quality of life
- Thriving downtowns
- Trend of increased telecommuting to businesses outside the state or area of residence
- Trend toward localized economy which is supporting development of small scale business but what is the long term sustainability of this?
- Unemployment vs. Under Employment (VT is the latter)
- Urbanization of resources and population drawing people away from rural environments
- Value added agricultural businesses
- Vermont brand with national appeal
- Village infrastructure (digital, water, wastewater)

- VT Brand= quality (slow food, handmade, etc.)
- VT has one of lowest donation rates to nonprofits per capita
- Young professionals starting to build connections and networks

**Themes:** youth are leaving the state; demographics tough...flight of youth; strong entrepreneurial spirit with value added agriculture; telecommuting trend...people living here and working out of their homes; practical education; need for digital infrastructure; impact of social issues on WF...housing and/or substance abuse; VT brand; as a small state, we have a limited tax base and rely on Fed. Govt. programming; uncertainty re. health care reform; need for outside investment...EB5...reaching a certain level then not being able to grow more; school pops are declining but the critical needs of the students are increasing; we're not doing a good job with lower income children...these folks can't afford to leave...numbers of kids living in poverty are increasing; see pathways from poverty; diversity of agriculture in terms of business and changing farm scene; lack of good fit between people know how to do and what employers need; getting the fit between skills and needs; climate change; sobriety and "show up on time"...personal and soft skills needed.

**2. Dynamic SWOT: What are we doing well in Vermont that contributes to our economic, ecological and/or social resilience we want to KEEP? What is an obstacle or barrier to our success that we might ABANDON? What new activities or revised activities are we drawn to INVENT/REINVENT?**

**KEEP:**

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture - want to keep and continue diversification. Challenge is marketing; need additional resources for this. Local foods are more costly -- continue focus on the benefits in terms of health and economic benefit to the local community. Investigate new ways for marketing -- role of social media? -- How to do this effectively. Continued and more focus on attracting younger people to agriculture.
- And strengthen current use program
- Community support structures
- Continue to develop a robust transportation system, as an economic tool (annual cost \$7-8k) - need to develop further, enhance
- Diversity of business we have in AC
- Downtown development
- Easy access to government
- Education resources
- Emphasis on agriculture and food systems. We are recognized nationally and world wide for our efforts. When France asks us for help with cheese. We are doing something right.
- Entrepreneurship

- Environmental commitment
- Environmental ethic
- Good elementary school system; relatively good K-12 system; need more investment
- Improving and maintaining the environment
- Improving Education
- Individuality
- Local culture and community
- Locavore trends and ag. Diversity with a focus on quality products. High-end products.
- Natural environment.
- Public safety, i.e. Facing drug problems
- Quality recreational opportunities; which goes to good health and wellness
- Recreational orientation
- Sense of community
- Small scale
- Small scale provides opportunity for sustainability
- social responsibility
- Strong and unified relationships with colleges and universities - leverage education and prepare right skills. And keep up with technology trends
- Strong communities
- Strong focus on high quality public education, while Reinventing the cost efficiency and realistic and sustainable growth
- Support of young entrepreneurs, startups. (Can enhance this)
- supporting and developing a local work force
- Sustain and enhance the symbiotic relationship between the college and the town of Middlebury/Addison County
- The Vermont Brand.
- The Vermont Brand. Open landscape. Clean air and water. Recreation and life style
- Trend in value added ag. As a base of local economy -
- Value added ag. To maintain working landscape
- Value added agriculture - provides focus for our farmers and agriculture community and leverages what we have always done well

- Vermont housing and conservation board
- Working Lands - 97% of Vermonters say this is important.

#### **ABANDON:**

- Anti-everything mentality - only opposition to change, offering no alternative strategy
- Attitude of anti-growth. People don't like change
- For profit businesses having overwhelming involvement in community development
- Inconsistent, expensive and unpredictable permitting regs. And processes. Businesses need predictability and timeliness. We can do this in ways that support both business and the environment. We need to be open and accepting of businesses that fit with the vt scale and culture
- Negative talk about VT as a place to do business, point to metrics and real data...open for business
- No growth attitude
- Notion that change is contrary to traditional values
- Some of the unnecessary bureaucracy that gets in the way of good projects and is cumbersome and ultimately gets spun as vt being unfriendly to business
- Traditional definition of place-based education

#### **INVENT:**

- Better balance between being business friendly and environmentally committed
- Better pre-k childcare system
- Bridge to larger market (scale up from local/Vermont markets)
- Bridges to local and export market to scale companies
- Create a good database and measurement system for knowing what is going on in our state in economic activity (what new businesses, what do they do, how long in business, etc.)
- Create greater transparency and access to information on economic development, etc., e.g., make the results of the CEDS process available to anyone with Internet access
- Focus on innovation based economic development.
- Greater discussion around school choice/consolidation and other k-12 issues
- Higher ed.

- Incentivize cross collaboration of state and local non-profit sector to increase service delivery
- Integrate formal education with employment (e.g., German model of apprenticeship; Danish model of ed/empl./ed cycling process)
- Statewide high speed internet and cell phone service

#### **REINVENT:**

- Access to national and international markets and opportunities; why? Global competition and connected economy. Feeble here in Vermont compared to other states; also strong play for Middlebury given the College.
- Economy such that it meets the needs of all
- Few voices have big impact on ability and cost of permitting and broad-based economic development activities
- How business and industry work with educators in order to prepare youth/students for the changing needs in workforce
- More hands-on support for growing businesses - especially those trying to move from Stage 1 (2-9 employees ) to Stage 2 (10-99 employees) this is where significant growth and jobs occur<sup>3</sup>
- Our current educational emphasis on college prep. We need to put the focus on Pre-k and Career and college readiness. Every child should come to school prepared and every child should graduate with the ability to 'Put Beans on the Table'
- Taxation systems to attract more capital and wealth, while maintaining ethos of sustainable development and diversity

**Themes: Keep:** working landscape; contradiction on ed., some think it's good, some not...all of the above; also tension between focus on culture and working landscape and international markets; sustainability, small scale; environmental ethic; strong relationship bet. Colleges and towns; non-profit community action in our communities; **Abandon:** anti-growth attitude; unnecessary regulation; perception that VT's a bad place to do business **Invent/Reinvent:** Education!; an economy that benefits all; tech infrastructure

**3. What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?**

#### **EXPORT:**

- Ability to retain local VT identity while accommodating out-state visitors/businesses
- Career center
- College/town collaboration
- Creating events that draw visitors to our town (festival on green, bmp events, college events, etc) - we have great entertainment and culture in Middlebury
- Good communication and coordination among organizations
- Healthy lifestyle
- Innovative spirit that exists and is seen in how a variety of organizations operate, they are leaders (adult care, transportation, etc)
- Innovative ways of working together- towns, non-profits, business
- Integration of agriculture and alternative energy
- Intellectual infrastructure through Middlebury college international footprint; work with other parts of the state, region and nation to use those resources;
- International flavor and diversity
- Lack of corruption in government
- Local and county groups work very well together - good relationships are recognized as critical for the most part, we work well together!
- Local recreation opportunities
- Middlebury college community and economic development interest
- Middlebury college graduates throughout VT, keep in the state but export them and their energy and ideas
- Middlebury college growing connection to local community and supply of resources for entrepreneurial development. Export: value-added agriculture (cheese, beer, wine, cider, granola, etc.)
- Organizations that work together well collectively to support those in need
- Our ability to connect people and business to resources
- Our expertise in ag., value-added ag., supporting the local economy
- Our leading edge capabilities...in transportation, child care, adult day care, etc. This reflects an innovative, can do spirit in the county
- Promoting value add agriculture: beer, wine, cider, cheese, etc
- Public-private partnerships, as in Middlebury town and Middlebury college working on the bridge and town infrastructure
- Recreational opportunities (skiing and outdoor recreation)



- Sense of community and participatory government
- Solve our own problems
- Strong community service model
- Strong ecosystem of tele-commuters
- Strong focus on building and sustaining personal relationships -- knowing others in the community. Focus on value-added agriculture.
- Strong small downtown communities
- Strong volunteer community
- Strong working relationships, developed by talking to each other and working together
- Support and implementation of alternative energy
- Town gown relationship
- Town to town cooperation
- Value-added ag.
- Vibrant downtown partnership

#### **IMPORT:**

- Better integration among economic development groups
- Bike paths for transportation
- Broader range of jobs
- Capital and the advising/mentoring that can come with capital (investment)
- Co-working space
- Creative ideas around affordable housing that fit our community
- Easy-to-use recreational infrastructure
- Eb5 investment
- Energy growth and development
- Focus on business assistance, development vs. Historical preservation
- Home-grown businesses that scale to 100 or so employees (e.g., Gardner's Supply, Chroma Technology, King Arthur flour, Carris reels, etc.)
- How to develop without losing character of our town
- Improved communication connectivity
- Improved infrastructure (VT gas, waste water treatment, rail)

- Increased use of public transportation
- Industry clustering where manufacturing creates retail destinations
- Love of books
- Marketing the "hipness" of Middlebury - get away from the sleepy reputation
- More nightlife, especially for younger people
- More tech oriented companies that can take advantage of intellectual capital that is un- or under-employed
- People: we need a bigger critical mass
- Rely more on local manufacturing/production; develop workforce with these skills.
- Scenic bike paths
- Support structure for young entrepreneurs
- Tech cluster
- Technology based businesses
- Telecommuters
- Vibrant investment community

**Themes:** E: Middlebury college; communication and relationships; value added ag. ; cooperative spirit; local recreation I: capital; bike paths; critical mass of people; tech biz; stronger local marketing/branding; infrastructure; nightlife; co-working space; alt. transportation

**4. Projects: What is a project to start today in VT so the state, its businesses, government and community are resilient in the face of change (climate, social, economic, etc)? 3-5 word snazzy title, 25 word rich description. Think about services, systems, roles, methods, governance, funding, etc.**

1. **Vibrant Sustainable Villages:** a definitive financial commitment to creating water, waste water and telecommunication infrastructure in Vermont's villages to form a strong community foundation on which they can grow and prosper. Biggest impediment to growth in Addison County is infrastructure to support that growth
2. **Build passenger rail system** to allow for easy efficient and affordable transportation along existing rail corridors and to major metro areas: Montreal, Boston, New York. (Connect western corridor as well)
3. **Incubate Addison County:** Tie together a system of business development, capital, mentorship, idea sharing, co-working, peer to peer support and training/classes that foster strong business connections and relationships

4. **21st Century Education Project:** Retaining kids and attracting others to Vermont is high value. Convene higher ed and high school educators to talk about how education can help create a more robust, attractive, integrated educational process to enhance the economy.
5. **Economic Gardening: Grow Your Own.** A sophisticated TA program customized to each business that uses a Nat'l Strategic Research Team to provide assistance with Core Strategy, Market Research, GIS, Social media and SEO, and senior mgmt skills and roles. A proven strategy in other states that creates jobs, increases the tax base and does so without expensive incentives.
6. **Financing our Kid's future:** Idea is to harness local capital for local investments. With the advent of natural gas in Addison County (maybe), propose a voluntary program by which we take the small percentage of the energy cost savings (from fuel oil to natural gas) and apply it to future job training. A 5 percent contribution on those savings, for example, could raise millions annually. Put that into educational training (robotics, for example, or any skills needed to compete in tomorrow's world).
7. **Entrepreneurial Acceleration System Project.** Based on the Gallup EAS program, this would train experienced business and nonprofit leaders to serve as 1 to 1 mentors of promising startups, develop a system for vetting candidates for funding, and contribute to a startup community. Based on applied behavioral economics and other scientific principles. (e.g., Lean Startup, etc.)
8. **Jump on the train!** Reinvent rail transportation to increase connectivity, build redundancy in the transportation network and increase sustainability including passenger and freight service
9. **VT Global 2020** - by 2020 greatest number of tech related jobs per capita in the country; this will require leading edge tech infrastructure and will demand improved transportation infrastructure, need to be mindful of all socioeconomic classes and how this would include trades and more blue collar; but acknowledges that the future is a tech future, to compete we must focus (tech jobs would be broadly defined=infrastructure, telecommuter, marketing, etc) This would also drive ed. initiatives across the spectrum.
10. **Addison County Community Technical College.** Using the combined resources of PAHCC, CCV, and VTC, we would develop a technical community college model. This model would focus on workforce development and provide industry recognized certificate programs. These certificates would be associated with local businesses. ie Agriculture, hospitality and tourism, health care, and manufacturing. information technology, transportation and STEM. These certificates would be recognized toward AA and BS degrees. ("college" isn't necessarily the last word, develop the resource within k-12 system, mascot is the tree frog!)
11. **Revive manufacturing in Springfield:** to use natural Vermont materials and high end wood products as a cost-competitive products. (Ag incubator project for a full spectrum of products...lots of empty manufacturing space in Springfield...bring people who grow stuff together to figure out how to make stuff from it based on a new kind of materials. Also need infrastructure, transport and sewer.)
12. **Higher Ed Hiring:** Partnership of Vermont College and businesses, utilizing apprenticeship models, work force entry support, small biz incentives and mentorship to attract and retain a young, tech workforce

13. **Agricultural incubator project** that would provide space and equipment for value added ag and forestry products for a full spectrum for products from manure to wooden forks to frozen dinners
14. **Supportive infrastructure for Projects:** Consider transportation, housing, education, etc. when implementing projects. Need to bring these groups in at the beginning. Think holistically... systems perspective for projects.
15. **As a corollary to any project,** suggest we think about the definition of a livable wage...such that we address the disparity of income...
16. **Create a Business Metric System:** This would create a publicly available database of information about the various businesses that have been formed in a given time, what they do, how long they've been in business, etc. If I want to come to Addison County to start or move a business, there is currently no place to go to get information on other businesses in the area. Same for the state as a whole.
17. **Housing the middle class:** working with collaborative teams to build affordable housing for middle class families, young professionals, forward-thinking entrepreneurs. Affordable by design - sustainable materials that will perform highly and last, leading the way to improving building design at the same time as housing a declining class that VT is trying desperately to attract
18. **Working Landscape Entrepreneurial Center:** Addison County is the center of agricultural growth, manufacturing, warehousing and wholesale and retail distribution. Raw products are grown locally, sent to a regional manufacturing facility where a variety of processing systems can accommodate food and/other ag.-based product production. Warehousing and distribution centers will work with numerous producers, with cooperative logistic channels. This center will support retail sales and agritourism. (...A la Woodsville, WA (Woodsville is wine)...could Addison county become the Napa Valley of the cider industry..would need to be a tie-in to education to produce skills for production, marketing, etc.
19. **Vermont Open for Business:** Comprehensive model that incorporates substantive educational and training skills development for a work ready workforce. Development of transportation and communications infrastructure. More meaningful and helpful governmental involvement and fewer regulations that present obstacles. Good, solid economic development that benefits all aspects of the community. (How do we change the image of what VT has been historically re. being open for business. Whatever type of business we want to establish, we need a good permitting system.)

***5. Thinking about our projects: what one change to the system (how we do things in VT) might make all the difference?***

- Different attitude among elected officials toward ED, specifically for rural areas. More inclusivity for rural areas. Focus on the entire state, transparency, removing prevailing anti-growth attitude...raising the importance of ED and the interconnected issues by leadership, requires a different mindset than what the state has applied so far, no matter what you're doing, you need

a great attitude...culture shift otherwise all the good ideas we come up with won't have the participation and support of the government.

- Economic Gardening Framework: reliable, good to adopt for state, clear metaphor, easy to use to create change
- Getting the legal infrastructure right, e.g. Livable wage/min. Wage with cost of living adjustment built in. Other laws to look at to the extent that they help or hinder us in our efforts.
- Growth: 1. Bring in industry or a business 2. Also growth from within. Things we can grow, produce, harvest in the state that can be used by the whole world. We can do things that help us and also help the rest of the world. Growth from within as opposed to growth that ultimately isn't good for us.
- Having a really well designed, easy to use website. People are distributed and it would be good to have a central online resource. More people would be engaged.
- Important to know who's in charge and to have clear accountability. Ultimately, someone needs to be responsible for implementation.
- More people focused on historical preservation than on economic growth.
- One thing to help the process: allowing more people to be part of the process. Going through the outreach steps to invite everyone to be part of the process...taking ownership and ind. Responsibility leading to greater sense of community responsibility.
- The legislature has to make the same shift that the Governor has made to make the state friendly to growth.
- This process allows counties at the local scale to develop ideas that tie into the state. Identify projects, players and commitment. The state can't help us if we don't have ideas, plans and commitment locally.
- Two projects have struggled because of lack of systemic thinking: gas pipeline and recreational center. Both started without thought about process and involvement in order to either make them work or can them. Both of them have caused a lot of unproductive fallout, which might have been avoided.
- VT really likes local control. Then we expect the state to pay for what we make decisions about...disconnect that causes difficult situations, e.g. Schools. "Education is going to collapse under its own weight." It drives everything, creating social disparity. Economic development is vitally connected to our K-12 delivery model. Cost of taxes, which is primarily about our schools. The folks making the decisions are not the folks paying the bills.

## Notes from the CEDS Regional Meeting

Rutland, October 23, 2013

***1. The context: What are the major trends that are having an impact on VT? Describe the impact of global and national market, economic, social and economic trends? What are some of the local demographic, job, business, education and other trends that we need to be aware of?***

- Advantage of value of "small." We can act much more quickly than others and deliver success. Capitalize on existing clusters of enterprise.
- Aging population
- Aging population
- Banking industry - holding on to the money
- Bring resources here to enable fast growth opportunity with high quality teams of experts and local resources.
- Build a world access business portal that enable high quality of life for residents while bring opportunity to our doorstep. Expand tech connectivity, market connections, high value business services and training/education. Maintaining the Vermont Brand to attract tourism business (ski resorts, leaf peepers)
- Clash of cultures of rural Vermont and urban aspirations
- Declining school population causes out-of-state home buyers to decline to purchase or build new homes reducing tax revenue/driving construction trades elsewhere for work as well
- Decreasing discretionary income
- Economic inequality in a have- and have-not society
- Empty nesters losing key skills and workforce as population ages
- Face to face and real communities may be threatened by virtual communities
- Farm to table and alternative energy are growing national trends and two sectors that Vermont has grown in past 5 years
- Growing health consciousness
- Growing income gap/shrinking middle class
- Increasing drugs and related crime

- Influence of technology on communications
- Lack of community involvement with improving Vermont made products.
- Lack of new housing in Rutland County.
- Lack of senior housing and services
- Lack of transitional housing/rental housing for people moving to the state.
- Locavore movement
- More collaboration on the Farm to Table concept especially in light of the GMO...to improve the rising costs of health insurance.
- Negative trends: High drug addiction with increased criminal activity. Nationally - debt and reduction of services
- Organic / farm to table food
- Political polarization
- Positive - Farm to table...more people are concerned about the food they are consuming. Vermont is in front of the trend in this area.
- Positive - getting away from war efforts is bringing home a workforce that has skills in areas that are in demand.
- Positive - more participation between education and industry. Businesses are working with educational facilities to train and recruit workforce.
- Positive trends - fuel economy is creating a sense of responsibility for consumption
- Proliferation of renewable energy;
- Push on tourism.
- Reasonable energy prices drive regional skiers to stay local
- Resurgence to expand manufacturing here in the US
- Speed and volume of communication and the build out of the infrastructure that demands Connectivity is demanded not just by business but by society
- Technology: Less funding in technology -local no employment opportunities
- The extremely high taxes in the county and especially in the city . .of which most is allocated to education. . R these dollars really being used to educate our kids or just high salaries for administrators

**Themes:** food: natural home grow, no GMO, by local, farm to table; continuing tech advance and access across different platforms, drug addiction and crime, alternative energy: people are using and demanding it more; housing: lack of affordable housing also enough for people who would move here to work; nobody carries cash...paid on their cell phones...tech and communications

Aging population: empty nesters and elderly increasingly the pop; smallness and connectedness of small state, local enterprise and the ability to access people; large number of Asians at Killington; nationally, diversity is a huge trend, but not in VT; no difference in diversity by a campground owner; cultural adaptation necessary for those from other countries; climate change

***2. Dynamic SWOT: What are we doing well in Vermont that contributes to our economic, ecological and/or social resilience we want to KEEP? What is an obstacle or barrier to our success that we might ABANDON? What new activities or revised activities are we drawn to INVENT/REINVENT?***

**KEEP:**

- Ability to maintain social connection from the traditional Vermont community incorporating new technologies.
- Authentic practice what we preach
- Billboards away
- Broadband and telecommunication access
- Carries to deliver a quality experience, a quality product
- Clean and pure Vermont Brand
- Continue expansion and development of the local airport
- Enthusiasm for rail development both commercial and pleasure
- Expanding train airport and other transport options
- Farming. Put more money and time into bringing young farmers to the state.
- Focus on long term sustainability.
- Local food but reinvent ways for local restaurants to utilize it
- Preserve the landscape and pastoral experience
- Renewable energy in order to decrease need for foreign fuels.
- Renewable energy/solar
- Support for farmers, VT Branding, support for Arts
- Support local vendors aka Barnard General Store

**ABANDON:**

- Cumbersome permitting process for business investors
- Drugs and welfare
- Good old boy network



- Lack of cell and internet, i.e., lack thereof in most rural areas
- Micro managing the school systems by having too much admin
- Short term reactive business practice.
- The thought that we are a manufacturing state!
- Town structure and go with county but keep sense of community keep expanding tech education

#### **INVENT:**

- Improved public transportation system including increased train and air access for out-of-staters
- Job opportunities

#### **REINVENT:**

- Act 250
- Capital gains tax structure for real estate and land sale to 3 year holding period (not 7 years)
- Connecting the cities and towns by interactive sharing to improve enough of "this is my sandbox u can't play in it"
- Cultural diversity can be created by bringing events and activities to the area to promote it
- Education funding system which is stifling growth of tourism towns
- How towns and regional organizations collaborate
- Improve farm to table/buy local
- Maintain and enhance the economic viability of agriculture. Continue to support small farms support while allowing effective expansion to allow competitive profitable modern farms.
- Transportation systems in order to get people from one end to the other.
- VT's image that we are slow and earthy...

**Themes: Keep:** transport, support for farmers, communication and internet improvement, natural landscape, social cultural milieu, VT brand, slow, love thy neighbor, sense of community **Abandon:** the thought that we're a manufacturing state...not everyone agrees with this; parochial community ties and failure to collaborate; **Reinvent:** capital gains laws; reinvent our negative attitude about the place we live (more positivity); reinvent the VT tax structure so that we are competitive with NH; Act 250; reinvent the idea that everything about VT is Burlington and Essex; education funding system; economic viability of ag.; cultural diversity

***3. What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?***

**EXPORT:**

- Ability to focus all resources on difficult problems.
- Awareness of the rich history and culture born of Rutland: present in our housing , physical structures
- Farmers markets
- Full engagement of business, government, nonprofit and sectors through collaborative teams (e.g. WIB, Rutland business partnership, REDC, RRPC)
- Manufacturing
- Resilience of the people
- Rutland farmers market
- Sense of true partnership and collaboration.
- Stafford tech center training and job placement

**IMPORT:**

- Affordable housing and rental communities
- Air service expansion
- Apprenticeships and ways to learn new skills needed for changing work needs
- Arts and culture
- Buyers for our fabulous affordable housing stock
- Champlain College BYOB (bring your own business) program and incubator programs for tech and other small business
- Communal living-working-recreating space in abandoned commercial property
- Entertainment and cultural (arts) opportunities.
- Entrepreneurs and startups and support networks for new and growing businesses
- Foreign Trade Zone activities
- Improved shopping and retail
- Jobs to take advantage of extensive established infrastructure and historic manufacturing base
- Lake Champlain

- Manufacturing
- More bike and pedestrian paths
- More vibrant downtown
- Quaint Vermont village
- Quality jobs
- Rail support services
- Real broadband and connectivity
- Ski village
- Tech programs for high level skills: robotics course replaced by hair =dressing class
- Technology based companies who require limited infrastructure investment and are often swayed by choices relating to lifestyle
- The Burlington airport
- The idea of downtown Burlington
- Work ethic for underemployed

**4. Projects: What is a project to start today in VT so the state, its businesses, government and community are resilient in the face of change (climate, social, economic, etc)? 3-5 word snazzy title, 25 word rich description. Think about services, systems, roles, methods, governance, funding, etc.**

1. **Employment Success:** Evaluate the culture in which you were raised and how it formed your belief system which has led you to the choices you make and then teach ways to alter that belief system to a more positive end.
2. **Rutland Tech Valley: An** Area that is concentrated in good & services at the edge of technology i.e., hovercraft, VERY low cost fabricated off the grid housing, etc. Federal energy funding, housing included in wages, shopping and agricultural surrounding the Valley to support the projects.
3. **Up RICH aka /Vermont towns:** . . .To implement a system that is fair and equitable on a COUNTY level which will impact housing, tax structure, jobs, wages, education, affordable housing, ie: unify and strengthen each county.
4. **It Takes A Village....:**This program brings together families, government, community programs that put the power back on parents to raise their children into stable, tax-paying citizens, and supports ways to keep the family together.
5. **Education funding reform:** the current system has placed huge tax burdens on tourism towns which have dramatically limited capital reinvestment and marketing for businesses, which are the drivers of one of the economic pillars of the state - tourism. A recent study commissioned by the legislature showed that while per Pupil spending has increased 1505 over the last 15

years, by 149%, student performance has remained flat or declined. The current education funding system is not increasing performance &...

6. **STEM Education opportunities.** Do hands on learning.
7. **Need to Brand our Region uniquely** from other areas of Vermont (Central Vermont). Lovely, peaceful community, educated and internally accessible. How do we capitalize on this. Health and wellness is the theme. (Wellness...why did we choose VT? Independence and urban atmosphere while preserving rural experience and values.)
8. **Increase Vermont State Tourism:** promotion to keep pace with our competitors (NH, ME, CO, UT, CA) who are outspending VT by 4-50x. Strategy to keep pace with competitors.
9. **Destination VT:** Create a grant program to support improve tourism infrastructure, add additional amenities, and enhance offerings - thereby improving the visitor experience and viability of VT destinations
10. **Vermont=Health:** A Vision for the Future. Create incentives for high-risk populations to participate in those activities that will facilitate a healthy lifestyle. "Spa-Vermont"...state-wide in multiple locations. (e.g. demonstrate healthy behaviors in exchange for food stamps; people need places to come for rehab who have had joint operations, etc. Health destination idea. Positive feedback loops to reward healthy behavior.)
11. **Center Rutland Gateway:** program (W/S, Business incentives and main street capital investment funds). Rail services development with a vision to the future use of Rutland as Vermont's central rail hub. (Systemic, future oriented funding decisions. Building on existing infrastructure. We have huge access to people needing nurture..."coming back to the Green". Very important aspect of our brand. "The new life")

***5. Thinking about our projects: what one change to the system (how we do things in VT) might make all the difference?***

- Change 2-year election cycle which doesn't give politicians enough time to make change without worrying about elections. Have state adopt a longer term vision and then be willing to stay with it. No consistency of vision. People want to put a stamp on their own things.
- Considerable frustration about over planning and lack of action. Change has to come from the bottom up without waiting for the government. We have to begin to live it. The RSVP program has done a really good job. Also, bone builders program, which is populated by seniors who are helping seniors to be healthy.
- How can we bring new people to the table to get different results?
- Project to help people start their own projects. How might we support that?
- There are a lot of ongoing activities and projects that touch on what we've talked about. How do we understand what's already going on so we collaborate and don't recreate the wheel.
- We need to align the stated goals and objectives that come out of this process at the state and local level. This will be the rubric by which \$\$ will be allocated. How might we actually deliver on

these good intentions? The CEDS needs to be integrated with regional plans, regions driving the boat.

- Whatever ideas we bring in should be affordable for the people who live in VT. There is a huge indigenous pop who cannot afford VT.
- Why are we looking to government for solutions?

## Notes from the CEDS Regional Meeting

Swanton, October 24, 2013

***1. The context: What are the major trends that are having an impact on VT? Describe the impact of global and national market, economic, social and economic trends? What are some of the local demographic, job, business, education and other trends that we need to be aware of?***

- Aging demographic, which impacts available workforce
- Aging population
- Aging population
- Aging population - ability to retain our youth
- Aging population and oldest state in the nation. We need to retain youth for viable work force.
- Aging service industry: who will be our next plumbers, electricians, funeral home operators, etc.?
- Challenges around acquiring permits for business
- Changing climate
- Degradation of lake Champlain
- Demand for higher tech skills and strong work ethic
- Demographics
- Differing goals between various segments of small communities: those who have lived there long time compared to new folks moving in - differing visions - balancing those.
- Drug abuse
- Dwindling external funds for much-needed infrastructure improvements
- Economic progress passing us by - due to high taxes, aging workforce aging out of their jobs
- Energy Costs
- Expansion of Jay peak and travel and tourism
- Focus on STEM courses can limit creative problem solving
- General population of high school students apathetic

- Global economy
- Global Economy - outsourcing of jobs
- Growing local/small energy trend, with various implications. But also a new pride and energy growing in the county
- High cost of and increasing number of social programs
- High cost of living cultural conflicts
- High property tax
- If we can't have everything, at least take the most advantage of being a Mecca for tourism, Locavore, skiing, lake recreation, etc.
- Increase of Franklin County manufacturing
- Increasing cost and regulation to maintain the environment
- Insufficient technical infrastructure
- Jobs going overseas and how do we keep them here?
- Lack of access to high speed Internet everywhere
- Lack of Funds
- Lack of stability in government policies
- Loss of people getting into agriculture but growth of added value agriculture
- Lower unemployment rate than rest of country
- More businesses moving across the border from Canada to US
- Moving towards more sustainable energy sources
- Need for public transportation around region and to Chittenden Co.
- Opiate abuse and related crime and barriers to employment
- Opportunities related to North American energy development - passing through us but not stopping here
- Opportunity to develop solar energy projects could help cost of energy
- Perception of a high regulatory environment
- Quality of life - attracts individuals
- Rising cost higher and public education. High electrical / utility / energy cost.
- Rising costs of all education
- Rising cost of healthcare
- Rising cost of public ed.

- Rural nature of our community, leads to higher cost of living, challenge in distribution of services, and creates transportation issues
- Still developing rural internet availability.
- Still effects of economic downturn, exacerbated by past/current reliance on commuting to Chittenden County.
- Transportation
- Uncertainty in healthcare system and healthcare costs
- Water quality - struggle to clean up the Lake on which many businesses are dependent
- We can take advantage of the interest in organic and local food
- Willingness to deal with wastewater issues. Water treatment, culverts, etc.
- Workforce development - High school technical training

**Themes:** aging demographics, money: high costs of living; maintaining the environment, limiting pollution, permitting, etc.; need improvements to infrastructure; getting motivated skilled workers; balance between protecting the environment and growing at the same time; energy...cost of, need for, etc. ; drug use leads to crime and you can't get a job if you don't test clean; degradation of the quality of the lake; different opinions between long-time residents and new arrivals...different view of everything; cost of health care in VT and nationally.

Differing culture: how much control should be in place in terms of development, home control; used to having services; new comers wanting school choice; many of the choices that an aging population have made/voted in has made it hard for younger people to afford to live there; people who have moved here have lived in places where they have observed major social and environmental issues..have "died and gone to heaven" in the VT environment...there is an outside perspective that newcomers have re. preserving what is really great about the state; the people who like to visit the islands want access to all the comforts of home, but they don't want to see it.,

Entitlement is a US problem and also a large part of the state budget. Same numbers still receiving welfare as 10 years ago. How can we help move the needle and get people going independently? The value of every young person in VT. The inverse perspective to the negatives; Older people are valuable as well and can be mentors for younger people.

**2. Dynamic SWOT: What are we doing well in Vermont that contributes to our economic, ecological and/or social resilience we want to KEEP? What is an obstacle or barrier to our success that we might ABANDON? What new activities or revised activities are we drawn to INVENT/REINVENT?**

**KEEP:**

- Commitment to environment and renewable energy and efficiency
- Commitment to maintain Vermont way of life.
- Downtowns and village centers that have things for people to do and buy



- Environment - quality of life, economic value
- Farms
- High tech jobs in county
- Incentives for investing in Vermont - VIDA - VEPC
- Open spaces
- Our ability to compromise and understand the other point of view and work together. We do so now because we are a small state and we know each other.
- Promoting the vt brand keeps money in the local economy and encourages a stronger community.
- Public interest in cleaning up the lake, interest in local foods
- Quality of life, which is based on the beauty of our environment, keeping our money here, keeping our youth, maintaining access to local networks and accessibility/transparency of govt., and population size
- Small community and small state give us access to decision makers, government at highest levels. There is a heightened awareness of how our actions affect others.
- Strong work ethic - basis of economic development, innovations
- VT brand

#### **ABANDON:**

- Culture of poverty and the related problems (drugs, crime, teen pregnancy)
- Disparate regulatory focus on point sources for lake pollution
- Drug abuse to improve health, reduce crime, increase employability, etc
- Fear of change.
- Federal partisan gridlock to get bickering out of our way
- Naiveté that people will "play well together"
- Parochial attitude of select board members who don't support creative solutions to town issues, e.g. Parking, wastewater, tourism-friendly development
- Perception that working on environmental sustainability is in opposition to growing the economy.
- Spending more than we take in - is harmful to economic growth;
- Visceral reactions to changes in routine

**INVENT:**

- Helping to make local foods more affordable
- State programs that help students coming out of secondary or post-secondary education students transition into the workforce through internships

**REINVENT:**

- Agri-tourism capitalizes on our local farms and orchards and vineyards, and brings in people to learn and enjoy our ag. Resources
- Approach to federal carrots based on one size fit all directives driving policy here rather than what might be best in our situations
- CCV and its availability, capability and local economic development role.
- Commercialize the production and distribution of local food products - coop, transport of goods to larger markets, build local facility that would include production as well as store front, create brands that can be used to market regional goods
- Concept of government: need a structure that is more aligned with the actual size of the population
- Current commercial/industrial spaces, brownfields and underutilized urban/village areas. Funding and assistance with more money and less red tape
- Focus on the average students - not some much focus on the gifted
- Funding and delivery of education at all levels, building on existing strengths
- Justice system to balance with mental health service and hit the right cost benefit balance
- Permitting process...re. Act 250..district commissioners who are put in place for life...local administrative rules that may be helpful or restrictive, it can take years to change one item
- Public transportation to increase access to jobs, services, etc
- Rail connection to Montréal
- Relationship and connection with Québécois tourists and businesses.
- Social programs to ensure those who need help get it and can become independent and others do not abuse the system
- Vermont brand to go beyond skiing and foliage to include a thriving economy so not all jobs are service jobs
- We do not have wastewater capacity in the islands which is a barrier to all development
- Working on making permitting easier would encourage more investment in VT.

**Themes: Keep:** environment, downtowns, VT brand, jobs, ag., local networks and feel, tourism  
**Abandon:** drug use, federal gridlock, pro-sprawl regulations., size of govt.; poverty **Invent/reinvent:** justice system; brownfields, govt. social assistance programs; connections with Canada and how we think about moving people, who and how should they be coming in...how might we increase movement across the border and encourage tourism...regional program for international tourist site via bike path around the lake...got dropped for political reasons (immigration/terrorism, etc.), mandate that everyone learn French. Border relationship is dependent on Fed. Govt., border crossing has increased and staffing has decreased. We need to reinvent the VT brand because we need to create jobs with living wages, educational system; *Note: Report of bicycle tourism creating more revenue for VT than maple syrup...*commercialize the activity in the islands to export to other areas

**3. What unique capabilities, resources, skills, approaches etc. does Your Region have that could be replicated/applied elsewhere in VT? What might Your Region learn/apply from other parts of VT that would make a big difference to your future?**

**EXPORT:**

- Best practices of workforce investment board - facilitates training for older workers to upgrade their skills and for younger workers, technical center working with businesses to build technical skills;
- Disaster readiness and emergency services collaborations
- Dual enrollment CCV and tech center
- Good development planning that allows a manufacturing base without in-your-face visibility for those looking at our vistas
- Our workforce investment board is one of strongest in the state
- Spirit of collaboration, network, partnership at both local and regional level
- Strong economic development group
- We are really good at collaborating among organizations.
- We have great coordination among the two economic development offices and regional planning commission, we are lucky

**IMPORT:**

- Agricultural infrastructure: processing center, incubator, storage/distribution, slaughter, etc
- Best practice infrastructure approaches based on others' learning
- Businesses and jobs from Quebec
- Community college strategies to respond quickly to needs of area businesses

- Easier and more fluid access to Montreal and Quebec; encourage cross cultural/cross-border experiences and collaboration
- Government support of tourism initiatives such as the Route de Vins, it would help us attract more visitors to our wineries
- Ideas for sustaining farms, i.e. Family farm initiative in Quebec or cooperative farms in NY import lessons learned from Canadian health care and education systems
- Money from other places
- Municipal infrastructure: \$ for roads, \$ for bridges, energies, etc.
- Northwest region needs to replicate the marketing strategies and resources the state is currently spending on promoting skiing to promote our t=resources e.g. Biking, water recreation, agri-tourism
- Strategies for making technology widely accessible from other states;
- Strategy for bringing value-added ag. Ideas right to the farm
- Understanding of importance of buying local, understanding the asset of value added

**4. Projects: What is a project to start today in VT so the state, its businesses, government and community are resilient in the face of change (climate, social, economic, etc)? 3-5 word snazzy title, 25 word rich description. Think about services, systems, roles, methods, governance, funding, etc.**

1. **Putting Real Teeth into the State's Land Use Vision:** Give ACCD the authority and charge to evaluate all State programs and State-administered Federal funds and regulation in light of the State's STATUTORY land use vision, which is urban and village centers surrounded by working landscape. Ensure that ALL funding, technical assistance and regulation favor the revitalization and reuse of current commercial/industrial areas and cease to encourage digging up more greenfields on the fringe. (MS4 is a great example fed. program by DEC. Requiring res. areas to spend more \$\$ on storm water. Not enough attention paid to "unseen" causes of pollution.)
2. **Inventory and project** where jobs will be in next 10 years and build skill training programs based on regions.
3. **Vermont Career Apprenticeship:** Pair recent secondary/post-secondary graduates with technical, trade, or business professional, and provide incentive to stay in state and work. Continue on Vermont trade traditions.
4. **Community Connections:** Facilitate individuals within a community to get to know one another and build relationships that will enable them to work through disparate visions for the community and reach a shared vision for a collective future .. informal group dinners, events, conversations, etc, moving towards work sessions, etc. (The best way to get things done is to have people meet informally...keep bringing people together in an ongoing way to get to know each other.)

5. **Two-Wheeled Tourism:** Infrastructure, integrated collateral for excellent enhanced marketing internationally, training for employees in retail and hospitality, developing bike-friendly services, e.g. bike racks, Portalet, pocket parks. Develop a first-class, integrated mobile app. Economic benefits: to hospitality, expands shoulder seasons, potential increased employment for bike rental, lodging, restaurants. Supports local use of alternative transportation, offers opportunities to develop integrated itineraries with agri-tourism, e.g. farms, wineries, orchards, farmers markets. Supports community by providing outdoor recreation for citizens. Inexpensive, for all ages. Businesses making the items that people use, e.g. bikes, canoes, et.
6. **21st Century Governance:** In order to improve the efficiency of government and eliminate duplication of administrative costs in addition to conflicts over land use and services, create a system for the coordination of services and governance between St Albans city and St Albans town. (Address emotional/cultural issues we have inherited from past arguments. Also, education governance. City has problem of redevelopment, rural has land for development...sprawl/centralization...preservation AND growth. How might we be incentivized to focus constructively on redevelopment...this is an issue for cities and towns to merge...how do you have resources dedicated to redevelopment? How do we get groups to the table?)
7. **Addressing Income:** focus on low income levels as it impacts school costs, social program costs, healthcare costs, etc. Focus on workforce skills, wrap around services, etc.
8. **Boost Biking:** Capitalize on the completion of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail -- build a bike center in Franklin County tied to the trails, create a biking/kayaking center in the Islands and on the lake -- and tie into the existing resources of hotels, shops, restaurants -- and fill in the missing niches of bike repair, meeting spaces, etc.

***5. Thinking about our projects: what one change to the system (how we do things in VT) might make all the difference?***

- Allocation of \$\$\$
- It's not all about change. How do we appreciate what we already have and also create change?
- More understanding/sharing between regions.
- Nationwide opportunity index: [www.opportunityindex.org](http://www.opportunityindex.org)
- Organization of governance
- Overcoming parochial interests, especially governments
- Book: [\*What's the matter with Kansas?\*](#) How do you get people to understand their own self interest so they can make the "right" decisions?
- You have to have constructive conversation among participants about how it might happen.

## Notes from the Cabinet Workshops

November 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013

### **Business Environment and Capital**

From the Tax Department – Recent improvements include the creation of a Tax Advisory Board and a Technical Working Group.

Perception that Vermont is a High Tax State – due to high marginal rates

Ideas for tax reform

- move from AGI to Taxable Income (KJ note, this overstates the actual difference between Vermont and other income tax states)
- Change education funding as the property tax rate continues to increase (but the real solution may be in controlling costs)

Looking at a revenue neutral way of setting up the tax code so it is more transparent. More in line with other states. Budget hole this year, especially in education. Looking at how to control costs.

From Department of Public Service

Evaluation of energy savings accounts (for bigger companies not wanting to pay energy efficiency charge). Few companies take advantage of it. Looking to find ways for business to take advantage of it so they get more for every unit of energy they buy.

Farmers and digesters

Wood energy (potential to utilize low value wood)

Electric vehicles

Reduce the importation of fuel oil and propane from other states, although that is a business on which existing locals depend. Efforts on thermal efficiency of buildings, create construction jobs and get that sector growing.

From Agency of Admin

Don't forget that public sector jobs are an important portion of overall employment

From Agency of Natural Resources

Parks are a "big driver" in the economy 450,000 out of state visitors

Parks are now self-funded

Parks are accessible, provide outdoor recreation opportunities

Fish and Wildlife contributes to wildlife viewing as well as hunting (VT turkey hunting is some of the best)

Forests and wood products, also related to flood prevention and carbon fixing

Forests are threatened by fragmented ownership

Green infrastructure

Brownfield redevelopment in partnership with ACCD

Universal recycling (including organics) is on its way and will require the start of new businesses

LEAN process for permit efficiencies

Vermont is the first state to require removal of organics from streams.

ANR challenges

Water and wastewater – aging infrastructure – constraint to new hook ups

TMDL for L. Champlain soon, Conn R., later - will constrain new development re: stormwater

From Ag

Dairy processors up from 13 in 2008 to (58 or 100+?) really taking off.

Meat processors doubled in 18 months

The goal is to get the food to populated markets (VT is not big enough)

7000 farms, aging manure pits, need to be rebuilt or re-aligned. Need training programs to support farms as they move into something different.

Ag tours are a tourism stimulus

43 new exporting companies

Working lands

Ag challenges

As more farms move to value added, it changes their regulatory status as traditional farms

Key issue is to provide safety protections, food inspections in parallel with growth/change of type/scale of production.

Dairy milk supply is constrained (related to price controls)

Huge demand for goats milk, have to import goats milk. Difficult to expand goat farms.

Beef, pork, and poultry supplies are limited (due to the need for long term decision making in the environment of short term pricing fluctuations)

Food Safety Modernization Act challenges Vermont farming

Marketing audits need consistency and lack of duplication

Maple industry is growing faster than we can keep up with

Non profit partners plus AAFCM to help with regulatory oversight but there is a training gap. For example, there are about 1,000 dairy farms and many have expiring manure pits

Need succession planning as farmers approach retirement

Vermont not supporting energy efficiency activities as did the feds

Slaughter capacity?

New tougher food safety regulations may cause some producers to not grow and exit the business.

Need to expand regulatory jobs to enable farm/farm manufactured products sector to expand

From DMV

DMV has a culture of getting permits out quickly

Shipping permits need the same culture so that transport companies don't have to wait

From DFR

VT banks are well capitalized. Did not do the bad stuff during the crisis.

Vermont is a possible destination for additional insurance business

When comparing the regulated DFR businesses – insurance is happy, securities is not happy (a belief that there is fraud under every rock)

Legislation to allow establishing insurance “closed box”

- Need gold standard regulations
- Need CPAs (well paying jobs)

New licenses for banking

Possibilities with respect to energy investments, especially alternative energy

DFR employees are above state position wage rate because of the market

There is a surge of applicants from young women wanting stable home due to small children

DFR challenges

IT infrastructure

Tax structure (there is proof of older Vermonters fleeing based on the structure of products that companies are bringing in to DFR for licensing)

Notes from the discussion about the Base Economic Analysis

Educators and Health are supported by public dollars and are relatively high wage

We have an Ag policy that is based on farming as “a way of life” - is that economically realistic?

The key for permitting is predictability (for the outcome) and timing

### **Workforce Development and Education**

Reach Up

To increase the potential worker pool, some people need support such as:

Transportation assistance

Child care

Expanding access to health care beyond employer-based premium support also opens up options for people to consider their employment and entrepreneurial options.

Public education is not always meeting the need to develop school age children into a productive work force – the Next Generation report states that 1/3 of graduating students (the third not going on to higher education) are not ready for work.

AHS, generally

Expanding on the list discussed from Reach Up, AHS identifies the following support functions that help individuals to be productive workers

- Child care
- Reducing the benefits cliff
- The achievement gap for younger children without adequate pre-K education
- Mental health needs



- Substance health
- Health Communities initiatives such as those in San Diego “Live well San Diego”
  - Windham County is taking the lead in merging healthy communities work with Econ. Development
- Creative workforce solutions
- Sustainable housing options
- Re-entry from Corrections

A discussion about the aging workforce and their role in entrepreneurship suggests looking more closely at the trends in aging worker participation.

The Committee on Successful Aging has done some work that needs to be considered for this topic.

VTA is developing a clearinghouse of tools to strengthen digital literacy (and libraries may be a vehicle for delivery)

#### Department of Labor

The Department of Labor provides the following

- Industry-based skills experience
- Licensing
- Wagner Peyser training program
- WET fund as an employer-directed training program
- Career Readiness Certificate
- Workforce Investment Act
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Programs for veterans
- Voc/tech capacity for adults and teen students
- (Virginia public schools require students to gain certification in two industry skills
- DOL in partnership to support workforce needs in the Kingdom
- Reemployment eligibility in Unemployment insurance program
- Clients accessing the Labor Market Information base can use computers at the Regional offices to build those computer skills

#### Forestry initiatives

Forest trade employers may not be skilled at articulating the needs in their workforce. Therefore, Department of Forest, Parks and Rec, in cooperation with ACCD are reaching out to those employers to help trainers better understand those needs. Mismatch between what employers are looking for and what the training programs are producing.

Reach Up has the worker/case worker support but they are looking for job openings

Lumber mill operators are an example where they have some openings but do not work well within the Reach Up model. And SBDC doesn't work for them, either.

An interesting idea

Because seniors are a growing population, considering them as consumers may be valuable.

Are there apps for seniors to help them with assisted technologies?

We could set up focus groups to test the possible apps.

Other issues

Stable housing necessary for people coming out of corrections. It is important to re-establish connection into community.

Aging, fastest growing segment of the community. In the past we tended to think of this age group as a drain on resources, but actually are able to make a major economic contribution. Lot of aging professionals, professors, teachers etc. We are not creating the right environment to tap into their entrepreneurial spirit. What are the appropriate kinds of jobs?

Libraries are shifting their roles. People have to be able to use a computer, the internet which goes hand-in-hand with broadband availability...libraries have a major role in this. Also, helping people develop their resumes, providing community health information, creating maker spaces e.g. 3D printing, developing design/robotic skills, and lathes to support small/cottage manufacturing. Supporting creative endeavor, especially writing, performance, problem solving. Libraries providing innovation, incubator and community meeting spaces, supporting community decision making with facilitation support. Critical issue is training librarians to become community facilitators.

For some talented people, issues with difficulty in gaining US credentials. Some are under-utilized because their degrees/certification is not recognized as there are barriers to entry. Need a better process for their certification/integration into workforce.

Older people don't want to go to senior's centers. Might find the library or knowledge commons as a more exciting/acceptable alternative – has positive connotations.

Many kids are in rural areas have not gone to college. Their outlook for jobs is fairly narrow. Do not have a broad enough vision of what they could become. How do we engage them early so they do not end up in the substance abuse line?

Difficulty retraining/retaining employees, without repetition. We can hire them, because we can't retain them at an increasing rate of pay, to make them more employable. Need a retention strategy.

Housing costs an average \$1042 per month. Minimum wage of \$8.60 is not enough to afford housing.

## **Physical Infrastructure**

### Transportation

CEDS has a possible role in transportation infrastructure. For example, the Burlington rail yard and the Champlain Parkway

Maintaining roads and bridges is a primary goal for VTrans → new development may require increased capacity for maintenance

VTrans “Fair Share” program

TIGER grants for rail improvements

Transit expansion is important to consider for an aging population

We have 10-11 airports (Newport is seeing some airport-directed redevelopment)

305 state owned rail miles with a current upgrade on the west side of the state

Rutland to Burlington (\$9 million available, another \$23 million needed)

Rutland to Bennington

(Excursion trains are not VTrans projects)

### Water quality

The soon to be released TMDL for Lake Champlain and the TMDL for the Long Island Sound (Affecting the Connecticut River valley) will pressure downtowns on storm water and waste water. It could result in future development being moved into greenfields.

Municipal officials need the capacity to access and utilize federal funds

Local permitting is a “crap shoot”

There is the possibility of rural communities getting environmental justice consideration

### ACCD

- There is a need for more capacity at the local level
- 200 town plans coming from 5,000 volunteers
- 24 Designated downtowns
- 6 growth centers
- 108 Village centers

Chicken and egg – redevelop the infrastructure before there is demand?

Federal budget restrictions will halt new programs

Re. “Vermont Diaspora”: many young ex-Vermonters want to come home. They are a talented group and we must be ready to meet their needs.

## Health perspective

Health resilience is related to roads and water – improved infrastructure supports public health outcomes → how to make the link between public health and water/sewer stronger

Evidence comes from a survey of the vectors of food borne disease

But, still the biggest factor supporting health is economic dislocation

Public health infrastructure is its 12 District offices

Sometimes, it is difficult to get services to clients (one possible solution is telemedicine, but that has low reimbursement rate problems)

[Distributed health services may be a job opportunity]

Relationship between water treatment and energy use. Wastewater facilities are high energy users. Distributed energy supplies may decrease transmission costs.

## BGS

Installing charging stations for e-cars

Solar installations outside of Corrections facilities

Visitor Centers managed partnering with VTrans

When siting state buildings, downtowns are given a preference – recent example in St. Albans

## Ideas

All developments pay an impact fee based but not based just on local impacts. This will provide a fund to ensure that downtown infrastructure is supported even when development takes place outside of downtowns.

GIS (Geographic Information System) is well developed, with inputs from agencies, townships etc. State wide land parcel mapping is currently being undertaken. The GIS can be powerful way to help communities undertake joint planning, within and across communities. Will be able to identify permitted activities by land parcel. 911 caused problems, as feds asked the state to remove lots of information such as the location of wells. State-wide land parcel data is important for research to evaluate programs. Right now you can't identify parcels and their histories. (Michigan broke the state into regions to implement projects).

## Other issues:

Some of the permitting problem could be solved by getting better proposals. Many are deficient. VT has a few big engineering firms who work on big dollar projects, but many projects are too complex for many smaller local firms who are more used to working on rural/domestic issues. Also, many local boards do not have the skills to deal with complex issues, and they have part-time staff. The complexity of the process is beyond their capacity to perform effectively. Local permitting is the biggest issue.

Environmental justice issues. Low income/refugee communities. EPA has a hard time figuring out how that fits in Vermont. E.g. Town of Washington where each person who lives there qualifies for EJ funds. Most communities in the state qualify on an income basis, but they don't perceive themselves this way. Same problem as "how do you give funding to homeless people." Need good partner organizations, and capacity for handling federal funding. Need capacity for the building of resilience, technical assistance. Same with FEMA money. Tiny towns had to receive federal money with no regional government.

Wastewater and storm water is the big issue in Vermont. Existing infrastructure is ancient and new is needed as well.

USDA is a really strong partner with the ability to provide on the ground technical assistance to small communities. They also fund wastewater projects.

How do you get enough people locating in downtowns? Huge housing demand in downtowns, but oldest housing stock in the country. Quality lacking and low vacancy rates.

Most important is getting commuter where they need to go for jobs. Could we try to implement job-to-work pilots for the CEDS? Also, non-fixed route travel?

Big challenge getting rural people to the services they need or getting services to them. (Note: perhaps an extension of mobile/home care/district nursing service. Potentially lots of new jobs in terms of creating alternative forms of health care.

Electricity generation (like waste water) is very industrial. Vermont has been able to get by without really owning it e.g. Hydro Quebec/Vermont Yankee. Note 100 per cent of 1900 generation is 1 per cent of current use. Vermonter's not used to industrial activities going on around them

Niche manufacturing with rail transportation to market, will can/attract businesses. Buildings around rail lines abandoned. EDA would love to attract businesses to abandoned buildings.

BGS required to consider location in a designated downtown center. More expensive in downtowns. Multiple uses for locations in downtowns drives traffic. Partner with private sector/others to underpin redevelopment. Parking issues.

Issues around location of solar i.e. cheap, wet land with other environmental challenges. Some being located on government land, e.g. correctional facilities.

### **Working Lands and Tourism**

Intro to Working Lands Enterprise Initiative  
Almost \$1 million per year

Results Based Accountability pilot

Building a relationship to Vermont branding

How to leverage/target investment (seeking the primary leverage points)

Note link to ag and culinary tourism \*

Outdoor recreation \*

\*Current targets of VDTM

Higher education food system consortium is established → aiming to be the epicenter of food system education. Big education component in Ag and CT. Six of VTs higher education organizations will be collaborating.

(A question – what is the ripple effect from establishing such epicenters)

Cautionary note: The food hubs need a market and soft skills

Multi-dimensional projects across agencies and

Issue: You need to create the demand before you build it.

Can learn from others. See Orlando FL project re hospitality education consortium. Finger Lakes region of NY. We do not need to reinvent the wheel.

Forestry perspective

Each sector (foresters, mills, value add) has its unique needs

Recreational services at ANR

(Recreation is a forest product) Note KJ presentation to Forestry annual meeting

Public lands 300,000 acres

Privately held lands –much greater

Back country skiing and mountain biking have significant \$ value per participant

Status of economic data ?

Biking may bring in more money than maple

Climate change also has vast economic impacts

Fish and Wildlife as outdoor recreation

Data from US F&W re: economic activity

Vermont is #1 in lower 48 in Fish and Wildlife participation

125,000 Fishing licenses 75,000 hunting licenses (10-25% out of state)

Regarding marketing and promotion, Maine puts more \$ and energy, NH more energy but not more \$. We don't do much to advertise it, whereas New Hampshire has 13 full-time public relations people.

(Seven Days has a VDTM video – a line related to the discussion “still honoring the past”)

We are protecting our lands while others are building casinos.

Talk about hunting in a way that honors the past while addressing new demographics. Women are the fastest growing demographic in hunting.

Hunters and anglers spend more per visit than skiers.

F&W was able to hire some people for marketing and PR, for in-state promotion. Do not have the resources to grow the out-of-state business. No effort to market out of country. There is always an opportunity to market with a partner e.g. Cabot cheese, a brewery.

Current marketing activities

The F&W calendar

The number of news stories in traditional media about hunting is increasing

The Department of Health has a bow hunter on one of its series of public health posters

Related to Health outreach are the health facts of VT

- Vermont is the healthiest state in the country
- There are significant health disparities
- Public health uses a health metrics toolkit

(The state web site needs some help to promote this understanding)

Marketing challenges and opportunities

The Conti Refuge and Mississquoi refuge are significant assets with limited exposure

There is a lack of marketing for working lands in the same scale and approach as is used for tourism (note the private sector partnership with VDTM that supports those marketing efforts)

The challenge in marketing (limited resources available) also effects employment recruiting

Vermont is as flood resilient as we are because we have this working landscape. Critical for the viability and public safety of people who live in downtowns and village areas. 1927 hurricane much worse because forest cover was much less. Protecting land is an economic benefit and also creates access to open land. If protecting lands is a winner how can we grow the investment dollars? Especially around flood resilience, biodiversity, How do we tap private dollars, philanthropy etc?

Gund Institute to put a dollar value on the value of conservation lands. Look at the economics of conservation, e.g. what are the wetlands worth between Rutland and Middlebury. How can we get an annual income from the land rather than a crop every 20-25 years.

Huge number of buildings in hazardous areas. Right now we rely on municipalities to decide about how to regulate growth. New strategies needed for supporting communities to do good planning. How can you look towards the river where it makes sense (from a social/business point of view,) and pull away from the river when it makes sense from a safety point of view. How might we look at rivers as an asset for drawing people to downtowns. Water is a huge draw.

Bristol greenway. Buyout of structure that have been hit repeatedly. What should this new land be used for? We could be looking at the funding strategically, perhaps with a view to economic development. \$40 million by the end of the current round – CDBG

Groups of land-owners get no financial incentives for doing something of economic value together. They may be land rich, but operate the same way as cash poor.

### Status of the working lands

75% of VT is forest, 85% of that is privately held, 50% of that is in Current Use.

The total acres under current use therefore, dwarfs the rest of formally “protected” forest

The continuing support of land owners to assure that today’s forest land is maintained as forest requires some revenue stream represented by the Forest Products economy.

Wood demand is increasing but the market is weak

(See presentation from KJ to Forest and Parks annual meeting)

As with the general working lands discussion, there is potential in complementarity of marketing (beyond the high end wood products)

Keeping privately owned forest as a forest is a primary goal.

We have skilled loggers, informed landowners and very accomplished woodworkers in the state.

The majority of products are only sold into the upper 5% of the market. What about getting products into other segments/places?

Think of recreation as a forest product

### Ag

One thrust is to enhance agricultural literacy through programs such as Farm to School

Health: VT has been ranked the healthiest state, part of our brand. The health department has interest in this kind of this work. The Health Disparities of Vermonters report. The built environment, what impact that has on people’s health. Have a variety of toolkits to help deal with key issues. Access to care and transportation, supply of health professionals around the state. How you can help your community have better access to local, fresh foods, better physical activity. Also working landscape. Worksite wellness guide for bigger businesses. One of the obstacles in marketing the state energies initiatives is the behind the times virtual tools/websites, etc. Making things more mobile friendly.

### State parks

4.5 million visitor days – \$75 million in revenue (half from day visitors, half from overnight campers)

(A significant portion of the visitors are Vermonters). 52 State parks

The Library could serve as a hub of information for regional coordination and the host of activities such as “fab labs”.

- There are 183 public libraries in the state
- VT is #1 in libraries per capita
- The VT libraries have recently gained Google sponsored interactive sites. New video conferencing network in 13 libraries around the state with a grant from Google.



- Good libraries enrich communities and contribute to overall ED of communities. 4.5 mil visits to public libraries, incl. summer residents. Many visitors are looking for good library services.
- Program with state parks and historic sites. Library facility as a point of community engagement could be very powerful. Difficult conversations can happen in a neutral environment like a library. Rich Harwood. Data bases...free to state employees. Universal class 500 free online classes. Librarians moving from curators to being facilitators. Third place where innovation happens...entrepreneurial development. Health centers in libraries. Laundromat, instant early literacy program. Cheese and wine tasting connected via teleconferencing.
- Working landscape Pod as unique.
- Library as community anchor. Ag and working landscape doesn't have a formal entity in every part of the state. How might the library serve this function?
- Vermont woodworking school: incubator space that allows the community to come in and do things with. Fab Labs. Maker spaces.

Library purchases database for business, agricultural resources etc.

## Notes from the November 20, 2013 meeting of the CEDS Committee

Killington Town Hall

### **Attendees**

Bill Stritzler  
Melody Burkens  
Ken Geiger  
Charlie Baker  
Janice St. Onge  
Tim Briglin  
Bill Scully  
Mike Harrington  
Pat Moulton-Powden  
Joe Fusco  
Joan Goldstein  
Ellen McCullough Lovell  
Ben

### Staff and Consultants

Lisa Gosselin  
Ken Jones  
Rachel S.  
Jim Damicis  
John Findlay  
Abby Strauss

The meeting convened at 1 pm.

Minutes from the October meeting were approved (Motion by Pat M-P and seconded by Charlie B.)

The question was raised regarding the discussion of cost of living in the CEDS and a livable wage, with a focus on the differences for different age cohorts.

Jim Damicis provided a presentation on the cluster analysis

- One response was to note that the definition of the sectors largely determines the size of that sector – fairly restricted definitions are small while broad definitions lead to large sectors.

- Related to the relationship between size and definition is the consideration of the food system. When including all of the value added portions of the food system, it is large, when restricting the food system to one tier of production, it is smaller
- Another discussion revolved around the relationship between a “top occupation” and occupations that should be a focus for state activity.
- Higher education is not included in the presentation – and could include the traditional colleges and universities as well as the athletic-based academies (e.g. skiing and hockey)
- One reason to consider other sectors is their contribution to meeting other state goals
- Energy is not on the list – and should be.
- Construction is the source of high performance buildings
- When considering target industries – try to incorporate the specific skills that Vermont workers bring to the table.
- When considering the broad topic of “financial services”, consider the specifics of captive insurance

We will need to develop a system for considering priorities.

The group agreed to accept the cluster analysis with some edits. The vote was unanimous with one abstention (Ellen McCullough-Lovell)

John Findlay gave a presentation on the goals structure for the project. This includes the general structure of:

Advancing the Business Environment  
Workforce and Education  
Infrastructure  
Capital

There are cross boundary issues that cut through all four of the topics.  
Vermont Brand

Working Lands cuts across the buckets and could be established as a “fifth” bucket area. The same is true for Innovation – it could be a 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> bucket area.

There was a discussion about how to incorporate the social infrastructure necessary to support the economy.

Each of these had presentations from the working groups with respect to their progress.

The Innovation “bucket” had its own presentation to tee it up as a possible sector target area. “Innovation” may not be the best title for the topic because the discussion also included encouraging emerging sectors such as energy and food systems.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Is there some way to reflect the need to act quickly either to respond to an emergency or to jump on fleeting opportunities?

Discussion around the definition and application of concepts around “affordable” housing.

We need to be clear about the difference between “initiatives” and projects.

## Notes from 12-4-2013 Meeting and Consultant Team Recommendations

**Present at meeting:** Lisa, Ken, Shelley, Abby, Mark, John, Jim

### Restatement of the Primary goals of the CEDS project

- Increase number/quality of jobs and wages.
- Decrease or maintain cost of living
- Create measurable outcomes (1-5 years)
- Projects/initiatives should move the needle for the whole state

**PLEASE NOTE: All deliverable dates below are highlighted in yellow. Missing dates and task owners are highlighted in pink.**

### Administration:

1. In future, communication and information between ACCD and the consulting team to be shared following these principals:

- Email: Keep the subject the same in each thread; change the subject line when appropriate
- Collect ideas/bucket them and deliver them once/week so we keep email flurries to a minimum
- We will use Sharepoint (Abby meets with Shelley to setup/discuss 12-9)

2. Abby to be the main point person for the consulting team and Lisa the main point person for ACCD. Others may join the meeting who have something to contribute or an issue to be resolved.

### Review of documents by the Consulting Team

1. Review team needs to be faithful to the documents, with close attention to the Advanced Manufacturing Plan, Council on the Future of Economic Development, and Farm to Plate work plan.

2. Bill/Jim/Mark to refine the review of docs: by 12-20-13

3. Our best thinking around the data is required, Deeper level of analysis is expected. ACCD has seen some of the data before. Lisa had hoped that the consultants would be able to build analysis and/or new information that would help inform the strategic direction. For example, the consultants reasoning

about what leads to the selection of particular sectors should be better articulated. In some targeted sectors: giants are tipping the scale.

4. Ken made the point that some current work being done by agencies or expert groups e.g. the energy plan, is very comprehensive. It is important to be aware of that work and to plan accordingly to a) integrate the CEDS work with it and b) develop projects that address other issues as appropriate rather than reinventing the wheel.

#### **CEDS Committee:**

1. Lisa/ACCD to send next communication to CEDS Committee **by Wed. 12-11 to include:**

- a) Update of where we are (including report from cabinet meetings)
- b) Recognition that we've heard their frustrations
- c) Clarify what the committee is expected to do by when including completing the goal groups task and reviewing the regional workshops task force list to a fewer number (4-5) and providing them to John and Ken, who have joint responsibility for developing robust project concepts, by **December 20.**
- d) Abby will be the consulting team point person for the CEDS committee and goal groups (akstraus@gmail.com).
- e) Abby to contact the leader of each of the goal groups, ascertain the status of their work, and determine what assistance they need to help complete the tasks **by Wed. 12-11**
- f) Target Industries and Competitive Analysis data will be presented at a Webinar on January 21 by Jim, Mark, Rachel and Bill, which will also be open to cabinet and other parties.

**Note:** In view of this change in plan regarding the presentation of the data, is a CEDS committee meeting now necessary in January *besides the webinar*, or will that suffice?

- g) Process to be put in place to develop two additional goal areas: Innovation and Working Landscape and the Vermont Brand. **By whom by when?**

2. New process for having the CEDS committee be part of criteria and scoring for EDA projects **By whom by when?**

3. Shelley will get information to Abby re. contact information for CEDS committee by **Monday 12-9**

#### **Process for the development of EDA projects**

- 1. Ken and Lisa will craft a document to send to the cabinet requesting EDA project suggestions
- 2. Jim will provide forms and criteria by end of day **12-9**

#### **Process for development of Initiatives**

- 1. Lisa observed that the more focused and tighter the group, the more that gets done

2. John and Ken to be responsible for the development of initiatives for the CEDS process. John and Ken to discuss and finalize criteria and process by Monday 12-9
3. The initiatives are primarily high impact cross-boundary projects that deal with one or more critical issues or capitalize on the unique capacities of Vermont and Vermont citizens, businesses, agencies etc.
4. The initiatives to be sourced from:
  - a. Cabinet workshops on December 16 and 17. Facilitators: John and Ken. Lisa also wishes to attend. Mark will also attend December 17th.
  - b. Refinement/combination of the 100+ project concepts from the regional workshops
  - c. The reduced list of initiatives being developed by the CEDS committee
  - d. An innovation workgroup comprising representatives from universities, creative economy, etc. (when??) VCET. Ken is meeting with the VT tech alliance in January 6.
5. John to confer with members of the consulting team regarding potential initiatives that are suggested by both the data, the cabinet inputs and the regional meetings (Bet. 12-20 and 1-10, 2014)
6. John and Ken to add and further refine initiatives to a consolidated list that Ken began with suggestions from private sector sources. Initial draft concepts by 12-13

**New recommendation:** Suggest that a Innovation/Creative Economy cabinet/industry group be assembled on the morning of December 16 or the morning of December 18 to work on initiatives for that goal group. January 6 is too late to be starting.

**New recommendation:** Ken has suggested that a separate group be established to look at capital issues, for business, projects etc., quoted below:

*Lisa has invited Bill Dunnington to this topic and he and I talked and he raised a couple of questions.*

- *Is there a way to characterize the capital accessibility for different sectors in Vermont?*
- *Can we establish goals for the capital topic that can gauge our progress in capital accessibility?*

*Bottom line is that for this topic (quite independent of the work for the business environment), Bill, Janice, Dave Thompson and Susan Donegan (Commissioner of Financial Regulation) are going to take the lead. While I hope that you, John and Jim, can add a bit, I want to see how far they can go and what additional partners they can recruit to move this "Initiative" forward.*

*I think it is our responsibility to schedule their meeting for the week of December 16 and to let them go at it. If we have some material from the Competitive Assessment, great.*

### **Discussion at meeting re. cabinet meetings to develop initiatives**

- Business Environment/finance: Tax, VEDA, treasurer's office, VCET, SBDC (identification of people...some of the people will direct some of the ideas) Bring agency people together first before you bring in the business people. Relationship bet. small biz and finance. (Start up NY)
- Working lands/tourism: OK as is
- Infrastructure: OK as is
- Workforce/education (key education people missing) –human services/labor/ACCD unsuccessful in working with education. 12-18 months for the private sector to work with the education community. CCV/VEtech. Jim: post secondary focus incl. community colleges, VT state colleges and CCV

### **January 27 initiative development workshop:**

- Team for meeting: John, Ken, Abby, Mark, Lisa, Rachel.
- Briefing notes instructions for the workshop to be sent out two weeks in advance, i.e. by January 13 or 14. 3-4 robust initiatives to be developed, prioritized and selected for each of the six goal areas (the current four and the new two) by early January.
- Potential participants from CEDS committee, cabinet and regions to indicate in advance which goal area and projects they wish to contribute.
- John to develop the workshop process and draft briefing notes by 12-15 (not including the initiatives which will be added later when they have been developed). The process to also include clear criteria for the development of the initiatives and the template for completing them (in terms of the content required for the CEDS). John and Ken to develop some examples of completed initiatives.

**New recommendation:** We suggest that some time be allocated for each of the groups to further refine the goal statement for their goal area.

### **Draft plan review**

- Instead of regional workshops, we will recruit targeted groups by goal area to review the CEDS plan. Let regional people join in (SBDC).
- What professional groups are missing? Whom should we include in future meeting to evaluate the plan?



- Replacement events that might be topic specific to evaluate the plan. We need people to become engaged with the plan. Who might work well together? Who might we connect for new synergies?
- Ken/Lisa will get contact names and phone numbers to Mark by ???
- Issue personal invitations to these meetings where necessary.

#### **Other items:**

- Clear path/methodology for scoring of projects by the CEDS Committee by ???
- Appeal to RDCs/RPCs for projects/initiatives by whom by ???
- Once goal, objectives, projects and initiatives are assembled in final draft form, consultants will provide details on how to measure performance, including measurements and process.

Dates that are out of the running re. the holidays:

- Dec. 23-28
- Dec. 30-Jan 3

#### **Critical dates:**

In order to complete the tasks for developing initiatives and having them ready for January 27, we need to sort out some delivery dates. Our suggestions are below:

December 16 and 17: Workshops to develop cabinet initiatives

December 20: Receive recommendations from CEDS committee for 4-5 initiatives per goal area

January 7: Receive recommendations from data team about additional initiatives ideas

January 7: Final date to receive any further ideas for initiatives from cabinet

January 9: John and Ken to deliver final drafts of initiatives for consideration by the team in preparation for the 27th

Week of January 13: For ACCD and Consultant Team to review initiatives: either in person or virtual

January 13: John and Ken to finish compiling initiative ideas from Regional Workshops

January 14: Send out briefing notes to participants in January 27 meeting. Participants to indicate first and second choices for goal areas to work on at the workshop.

January 21: Webinar on overview of data- Target industry and competitive analysis

By January 22: A participants to goal areas and initiatives and advise them.

January 27: Conduct workshop

## **Notes from the Cabinet Workshops**

**December 16 & 17, 2013**

### **1. Working Landscape and Tourism**

#### **A. Critical Issues for the Sector and Vermont**

- Capital costs for start-ups
- What are we willing to pay for education and training?
- Entrepreneurial capacities - need to take it up to the next level
- Funding for new projects
- Infrastructure, especially roads
- Limited marketing resources
- Perception of being unfriendly to business
- Technology - not good enough yet, e.g. gaps in internet coverage
- Too parochial – don't work across boundaries well
- Transportation costs

#### **B. Unique Capacities**

- Access to government and services
- Authentic
- Being a good model
- Brand ourselves appropriately
- Community based
- Diversity of products
- Focus on wellbeing, health and happiness
- Good at local aspects of the economy
- Good at prioritizing
- Good test site, size, scale
- Regions have to work together

#### **C. Initiatives**

- Farm and Forest production viability
- Seasonal Work Combination Careers
- Toolkit for forest-based visitation

- Vermont Center for Fermentation and Microbiology

## **2. Infrastructure**

### **A. Critical Issues for the Sector and Vermont**

- Aging Infrastructure
- Concern by regulatory agencies about housing, infill development and, overall density
- Conflicting goals
- Difficulty planning across jurisdictions
- Hard choices for funding
- Inability of locals to do long-term planning, and lack of capacity to deal with complex projects - 8,000 volunteers
- Lack of housing that is affordable
- Lots of things causing the housing shortage - high incomes don't have a problem, nor do low income, it is people in the middle.
- Perception that there is a lot of planning, but not enough implementation – the issues on the list of critical issues from the public workshops, actually requires more planning.
- Need to increase incomes - especially in the middle
- Non-point source pollution: Lake Champlain and Long Island Sound. Have tried to do it in Chesapeake Bay, but this is still a work in progress, with much unresolved.
- Some funding for waste water from USDA
- The solutions are bigger than the local-scale
- Unsophisticated developers - especially re brownfields
- Varying capacity of towns/villages to pay for the necessary infrastructure improvements/raise bonds
- Volunteer nature of community leadership, which changes - need considerable technical assistance
- Water/sewer quite old; cost a lot to just stay where we are
- Watersheds don't line up with the boundaries of the RPCs

### **B. Unique Capacities**

- Great sense of community - character
- Quick response – nimble government staff, but do not have enough staff, or the right skilled staff, so may be overcommitted
- Small size, also an issue
- Strong community based housing network + conservation
- Trend setting, small business focus
- Vermont has large intact rail network and 13 airports

### **C. Initiatives**

- State SWAT teams applied to community infrastructure needs
- Site redevelopment - Brownfields for All

- Inventory of rail/airport opportunities - Development along rail lines and at 13 airports - abandoned buildings (why would people want these instead of other buildings?)
- Plug-in investment opportunity around energy plan

### **3. Business Environment and Capital**

#### **A. Critical Issues for the Sector and Vermont**

- Access to capital - especially for new economy companies
- Affordable, reliable sustainable energy
- Different retail tax policies, competition with New Hampshire
- Lack of information skills - leads to poaching employees
- Need a more user-friendly business registration process
- Need to think of data as an asset, which we do not at the moment - collect and share
- Perceived anti-business structure - is it correct?
- Stronger emphasis on other economic sectors, besides working landscape
- Tax code and other processes are not simple, transparent and consistent

#### **B. Unique Capacities**

- Business service infrastructure - intellectual capital
- Captive Insurance Market, been very successful, trusted, adaptive, fast moving,
- Government willing to take risks - be the leader
- Hard working and get-it-done approach
- Made in VT brand - how to expand it?
- Nimble government
- Proximity to those you need to know, especially in government, get things done
- Public-private partnerships, wealth of networks
- Vermont takes advantage of available access to government fairly well

#### **C. Initiatives**

- Better access to capital
- One-Stop Shop Portal For Business Starts and continuing operations
- Replace sales tax with VAT
- Increase IT skills
- Study of the top networks and what makes them successful, learn from this/replicate
- Open data across agencies

### **4. Education and Workforce Development**

#### **A. Critical Issues for the Sector and Vermont**

- 12 years of education (current requirement) not enough
- Better technology skills needed - digital literacy
- Child care and early education - critical to future success (child care is not early education)

- Disabled workers
- English proficiency (ESL)
- Experience vs. academic education
- Funding - VT education administration mostly funded with Federal dollars, tied to their initiatives
- Inadequate business/worker/trainer linkage
- Internet access for education, often limited, not accessed by schools, variable
- Lack of basic business skills - small business
- Limitations on the vocational education track - also stigma
- Local control of education
- Need for apprenticeships
- Older workers getting in the way of younger workers, occupying positions where they once started out
- Poverty - benefits cliff
- Tax policy to support workforce
- Traditional education vs. new programs – competition for funding and support
- Transportation for workers

## **B. Unique capacities**

- Broadband access - not fully used
- Collaboration - the New England Consortium
- Community college system - but uneven quality
- New proficiency standard/assessments tools
- Passing along the key elements of Vermont's culture and character to future generations and newcomers
- Vermont education periodically revolts against Federal requirements – Vermont doesn't just go along with everything
- Rally around good ideas
- Regional career centers
- Robust non-profit sector support
- Small and transparent
- Standardized test scores - VT is trying to focus on broader range of higher level skills

## **C. Initiatives**

- Early childhood project
- Raise Digital Literacy
- Six Magnet schools
- Staged voucher - career readiness and training - support employers to take on chronically unemployed via a staged process of awareness, etc.
- Training collaborative - linking education and business
- Working landscapes traditional work skills training



# Notes from the Initiatives Workshop

Jan 27, 2014

Sugarbush Inn

75 + Vermonters gathered at the Sugarbush Inn to describe in more detail the path for Vermont's Economic Development future.

After introductions, Ken Jones provided some targets to consider for the next five years.

These targets include an increase in the dollar value of the Genuine Progress Indicator of 1% above Vermont's historic link to national economic growth. To get there, Vermont will work to increase the effectiveness of its workforce through education and training, increase access to private sector capital and improve the development of public infrastructure projects. In addition, the Vermont public and private sector will strengthen their partnership to provide networking and assistance to businesses in order to improve the success rate of startups and the growth of maturing companies.

After the presentation, working groups were created and focused on the following topics:

- Workforce development
- Private finance
- Public infrastructure
- Business environment
- Innovation
- Working Lands and Tourism

The purpose of the groups was to identify the critical pieces necessary to move forward towards the ambitious goals set forth in this project.

Over the next two months, the work plans and partnerships necessary to move each of the initiatives forward will form the early draft of Vermont's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

A webinar will be scheduled to present the initiatives. Date: TBD

## GOALS

The group felt that goal #1 (500 new jobs annually needs amendment. We felt it might be low, and should be broken out regionally rather than a single statewide goal.

***(To be clear, the goal of 500 additional jobs is in addition to the approximate 20,000 new jobs that growing businesses already produce. This may not sound like much, but if indeed, the 500 jobs are in addition to “normal” growth, we will have an additional 1% private sector, Vermont employment by the end of the five year planning period.)***

## INITIATIVES

We consolidated them into three broad initiatives.

### 1 -- Create Cost Reform Program

Pursue EDA funding for a comprehensive analysis of cost factors for doing business in Vermont including, but not limited to taxes, utilities, workers comp, unemployment insurance, healthcare and permitting with policy options to address both the reality and perception of Vermont as an “unfriendly” state in which to do business.

Steps:

- Get good data and distribute

- Pursue incentives to reduce costs (e.g. new construction)

### 2 -- Enhance and Improve the Technical Assistance Delivery System

Pursue EDA funding to build a “One Stop Shop” web portal including a study to brand Vermont’s Business, Retention and Expansion delivery system.

### 3 -- Develop a statewide entrepreneurship effort

Promote the statewide use of the SBDC REAL program in all Vermont high schools, and promote development of a higher education degree path for Innovation Engineering in the state colleges. Pursue EDA funding for an “Innovation center” study examining models including Quebec and Connecticut to assist entrepreneurs in taking concept to market.

## **Notes from Finance Discussion**

**March 24, 2014**

### **Modify the Goals**

The topic needs a baseline, the goal should be a 10% increase beyond the baseline

Another goal is to increase the number of transactions (connections between businesses and funders)

Diversify the investor base (the Angel investor network is aging)

### **Prioritization of Initiatives**

#### **Possible projects (to pursue federal funding)**

### **Other key points**

#### **Relationship to innovation**

What friction exists between people with money and those needing money

What's keeping money from flowing into Vermont

Better connect/market existing financial mechanisms

Incentive deal flow

More opportunities to vet ideas and harmonize market signals



## **Notes from Infrastructure Discussion**

**March 24, 2014**

### **Modify the Goals**

Improve from the ASCE grading system

The grade does not tell us where the \$ is flowing – Close the loop

Go beyond the Designated Growth Centers

### **Possible initiative addition**

Expansion of Natural Gas Distribution (as part of expansion of access to affordable energy resources)

### **Possible project**

Improve the Building availability database – pursue money to get a link to key data

## **Notes from Innovation Discussion**

**March 24, 2014**

### **Points made**

The Innovation topic underlies each of the bucket areas.

In general, the key is to encourage and incentivize innovation

To focus – How do we attract innovators

How do we attract \$ for innovation

How do we move innovation beyond Chittenden County

Can we establish an innovation fund?

Possibly as a prize-based effort

**Notes from Workforce/Education Discussion**  
**March 24, 2014**

**Change to goals**

**Priority Initiative**

The Workforce Needs Assessment is the starting point for many activities

- For students in public education

- For improving training programs

- For developing a public communication strategy

**Possible projects (to pursue federal funding)**

**Other key points**

## **Notes from Working Lands Discussion**

### **March 24, 2014**

#### **Priorities**

Keep the Vermont Brand Initiative (but maybe lose the “Vermont Thing” language)  
“Vermont Brand” should be consistent with “Made in Vermont”

The Market Access for Farm and Forest initiative is a priority  
Use Trade Show Assistance

The integration of seasonal workers needs a lead “Seasonal Work Combination Careers”

#### **Other points**

Ensure good communication

Provide technical assistance for towns re: Forest, Parks and Recreation

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee  
Minutes of the June 11, 2014  
Three Stallion Inn, Randolph

Members:

Joan Goldstein, Green Mtn. Economic Development Corporation  
Charlie Baker, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission  
Mike Harrington, Town of Bennington  
Janice St. Onge, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund  
Bill Scully, Carbon Zero  
Melody Burkins, University of Vermont  
Hal Cohen, Central VT Community Action Council  
Dave Thompson, Mylan Technologies  
Peter Stromgren, Retired  
Jamie Stewart, Rutland Economic Development  
Bill Stritzler, Smugglers Notch  
Dan Smith,  
Bob Zider, VMEC  
Peter Gregory, TRORC  
Robin Scheu, ACEDC  
Joe Fusco, Casella Waste Management Systems  
Patricia Moulton-Powden, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation  
Tim Briglin, Tuckerman Capital  
Tim Smith, FCIDC  
Karen Marshall, Vtel  
John Fischer, Agency of Education  
Dave Thompson, Mylan Tech

Agency of Commerce and Community Development Representatives:

Lisa Gosselin, Commissioner of Economic Development  
Ken Jones  
Shelley Pembroke

Consultant:

Mark Waterhouse

Overall: Make the following points clearer to general public:

- What this document is and how it will be used. It is strictly as a high-level, strategic goal-setting road map, not a work plan. Initiatives and projects mentioned will only be acted upon if agencies and partners in the private sector make them priorities and find the funding to implement. These are not in general, items that will go to the legislature or ones that will have any guarantees of state funding.
- Clarify what the difference is between a strategy (how we think a goal can be achieved), an initiative (ideas that will help us make progress toward that goal) and projects (projects that have been planned, have leadership and are either underway or awaiting funding).
- Projects are listed here for the purpose of improving prospects for federal funding and as a requirement of EDA for CEDS documents.
- A short-form Executive Summary will be created that will be aimed at communicating to the general public the key findings.
- Include Innovation Index and other benchmarks for innovation

#### Capital & Financing

We recognize the inconsistency between the overall finance goal which is aimed to help all businesses with access to appropriate forms of capital and the targets which were established because the baseline exists and they are easier to communicate. One of the objectives noted in the document is that a more comprehensive measure for access to capital will be used after we get a better handle on the baseline.

Energy – We will add hydro in the list of renewable electricity sources that currently only includes wind and solar

Make sure to point out that measurement areas are not the total investment strategy – they are there to demonstrate the goal is achievable.

Three examples given seem to be for large projects. Much gain will come from many small projects.

#### Workforce & Education

Need metric for reduction of poverty. We will strengthen the language that a primary purpose behind our workforce and education strategies is to reduce the incidence of multi-generational poverty.

Need better statistical modeling for future understanding of our progress in addressing target populations

Suggestion: A finer target on getting more high school graduations might be to target the most at risk population, young men in poverty, and help them pursue higher education.

Does not recognize the importance of increasing costs as a deterrent to the pursuit of post secondary education and how to combat those.

#### Comprehensive Infrastructure

Doesn't include regional projects right now. These will need to be submitted by region to the Municipal Swat Teams.

As with the finance section, hydro will be included in the list of renewable electric generation sources with solar and wind.

#### Business Environment

State that the 4% increase by 2020 is over the baseline

Add something about continually working on improving the business environment

#### Target Sectors

No particular comments

#### Resilience

Some good national metrics available. *We will see what we can measure.*

#### Questions

What % of population is carrying what % of costs in VT? *Ken- Vermont has most progressive tax policy in US*

Need to explain how the Tax Foundation calculated the tax burden for the states. Is it the total of all tax payments to the state as a portion of all earned income by state residents? Not clear what the basis for the tax percentages is.

*The tax slide is not intended to be a part of the presentation of CEDS. During the coming year, ACCD and other state agency partners will begin the discussion about the role of taxes in economic development. As our discussion pointed out, there is a great deal of interest and conflicting perspectives regarding the role of taxes. We are not going to introduce the can of worms in this document or future presentations.*

Initiatives in PowerPoint differ from those in handout. Still seems to be inconsistencies – some places we have Initiatives, some places we have projects, some places we have strategies.

Action Area	Handout	PowerPoint
Capital & Financing	4	5
Skilled Workforce & Education	10	6 Masters of Biotech
Physical Comprehensive Infrastructure	10	3
General	3	
Telecom	1	
Industrial Sites	2	
Housing	3	
Wastewater/Stormwater	1	
Business Environment	7	6

Sector Specific	8	
Advanced Mfg/Biotech	3	3
Finance & Insurance	1	1
Food, forest, tourism	3	3
Healthcare	1	1