



VEPC public comment relating to the Killington TIF District – January 27, 2022

My name is Lyle Jepson and I am the Executive Director of the Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR). Chris Carr spoke about the housing need from an employer perspective. The need is real. This is not a build it and they will come project. People are visiting and want to stay, but they can't find a place to live. People want to come here to work and enjoy our quality of life but there is no place to go. The infrastructure in Killington was put in decades ago and will no longer support the growing needs of the community and region. But for the TIF, people will go someplace else.

I am here to specifically speak to the issue of housing that is being addressed in the Killington plan. I will reinforce what you have already heard and what you already know. Rutland County needs additional housing stock. Based upon age alone, we have a growing problem. Data from a 2020 Vermont Housing Needs Assessment by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency indicated that Rutland County's housing stock is older than the state-wide average. Approximately, 30% of Rutland's housing stock was constructed before 1940 compared to 26% state-wide. Only 6% of Rutland's housing stock was constructed from 2000-2010, compared to double that figure state-wide. Creation of new housing stock is even less thereafter. New housing is not being brought on-line.

The housing supply in Rutland County is declining over time. Housing stock has decreased .63% from 2010-2017. Growth has been relatively stagnant since 1980. Add to this the recent trend of short-term rentals. From 2015 to 2019 short-term home rental listings in Rutland County rose 10-fold from 108 to 1,112, in essence taking them off the market for long-term availability.

These two trends combined have contributed to increased rental costs. In 2020, 3,372 Rutland County renters paid more than 30% of their income for housing with another 1,694 paying 50% or more of their income for housing. We need to increase the supply to help combat high costs.

There are funds being made available for low-income Vermonters. That is great news. We are in despite need of workforce and market rate options for our Rutland County population. The Killington TIF District proposal will help.

A report was prepared by I Squared Community Development Consulting, LLC in July 2019, specifically for Rutland City. In that report, employers believe that rental housing affordability had



gotten worse over the preceding five years. In fact, “74% of employers believed that rental housing affordability in Rutland City had gotten “somewhat worse” or “much worse” during that time.”

A majority of employers also wanted to see development of new market-rate rental units (52% rating this strategy as “important” or “very important), new condos (63%), and downtown housing options (60%) were highlighted as high need areas.

A majority of employers hiring new workers – 54% - believe that housing costs impact their ability to recruit new workers.” The report went on to say that “43% of employers hiring new workers reported that issues with the quality of housing in the City of Rutland are creating issues for them to attract new workers.” And “30% of employers felt that housing costs are creating issues for them to retain workers.”

This data was confirmed when we (CEDRR) conducted a meeting of area employers including Casella Waste, Killington Resort, Rutland Public Schools, GE Aviation and Rutland Regional Medical Center. The data is consistently confirmed as we entertain questions from individuals and families as they take advantage of our concierge service through our Regional Marketing Initiative. The first question we get is about housing. The first and hopefully only discouraging words they hear about our Region are about housing.

There is demand for housing at all levels. The solution is to increase the supply. The solution is multifaceted and is in our control to resolve. A transformative step forward for housing is the approval of a Killington TIF District. The numbers in the proposal speak for themselves. The TIF is an economic development tool that is needed in Rutland County. I applaud Killington for being innovative and proactive in their planning. We support their efforts and stand with them in requesting your support by approving the TIF District.



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