



Vermont Council on Rural Development

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## What's New at VCRD: Community Visits



Vermonters across the state know that local action makes our communities vibrant. But local

action often needs support from regional, state and even federal levels to achieve goals for prosperity. To respond to this need in Vermont, the Vermont Council on Rural Development provides local leaders with the resources they need to build capacity for their communities as they look to the future through our [Community Visit Program](#) [1].

One of the most exciting things about VCRD's 2013 schedule is that we are conducting two Community Visits this year. We held the public participation phase of our Community Visit project in Manchester on March 11. Called Manchester Vision and Action 2020, the visit process brought together a diverse group from the greater Manchester area to identify priorities and create a plan to address those priorities.

More than 250 people participated in nine different discussions around the future of Manchester: Tourism and Transportation, Housing, Downtown, Poverty, Expanding Economic Opportunity, Working Landscape, Food and Sustainability, Defining Authentic Manchester, Opportunities in Education, and Arts, Recreation and Nightlife.

The entire VCRD Visit Team was greatly impressed by the energy and resources of the greater Manchester Community. The combination of the town's assets and the participants' ideas and passion should help Manchester leverage the inspirational landscape and community pride to get things done. The follow-up Team Visit in April will facilitate participants in selecting the key projects and ideas that will leverage all of the rest to make a difference in Manchester.

VCRD's Community Visit program is a way for towns to engage and bring together their residents, set common goals and directions in a neutral and facilitated structure, and access resources that will help them take action on those goals. The program, initiated in 1996, is provided at no cost to communities and gets citizens engaged in working for their communities. We have conducted [over 20 Community Visits](#) [1], from the northern border in Troy and Jay, to Pownal on our southern tip.

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