

# R<sup>3</sup> Randolph Region Re-Energized Town Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held with over 250 Randolph residents and the VCRD Visiting Team on April 10, 2018

*Although the prioritization work of the R<sup>3</sup> Randolph Region Re-Energized Program requires a town to decide what is most important as it moves forward with Task Forces, nothing is lost in the process from the long list of concerns and ideas expressed in early community focus sessions. Many interesting and diverse thoughts are represented here, and are presented as a reminder of issues explored, and a possible foundation for future projects.*

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## Improving Transportation Options for the Randolph Region

Visiting Team: Maura Adams, Jon Copans, Lucy Gibson, Paul Markowitz, Kevin McCollister, Haley Pero, Kate Stephenson, Paul Zabriskie

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### What are the Assets in this Area?

- Railroad.
- Sidewalks.
- Friendly neighbors.
- Stagecoach bus service.
- Close to the interstate.
- Park and ride.
- School buses.
- Parking - possibly? Lots of it – but question of where it is located in proximity to where people want to go.
- Vanpools.
- Recreational biking.
- Repaving of Rt. 14 – good bike lanes.
- Ride Share sites.
- Amtrak station – offers discount for Vermonters traveling within the state.
- Front Porch Forum.
- Park and ride at Exit 4.

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### What are the Challenges?

- Parking – challenge where it is located?
- Biking for getting around the community: concerns about safety; challenge for outer towns due to topography.
- Waiting time for bus.
- Lack of sidewalk up to Floyd – Randolph Center.
- Lack of connectivity to:
  - Shaws via pedestrian
  - Bus stops.
  - Bus transportation to airports and other means to get to key points.
- Airport, Williston.
- Michaels's Craft Shop in Lebanon.
- Truck traffic and access to Beanville Rd. (commercial area).
- Lack of long term parking at Amtrak station.
- Lack of associated infrastructure in certain locations; e.g. water and sewer.
- Only a single bridge in town across the river; can cause bottlenecks.
- 4-way intersection on Elm St./Rt. 66 – causing traffic jams.
- No taxi service.

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### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Car share services
  - Start possible Uber service; flexible ride share service
  - Establish Zip Cars/car share.
- Electrical vehicles
  - Promote electric vehicles.
  - Start up a municipal EVT charging station for Randolph in downtown area (outside of Town Hall); maybe at Gifford
    - Town had a grant at one time but never went through with putting one in.
    - Check with VTRANS re: opportunity to put in EV charging station at park and ride; as well as downtown.
- Public transit:
  - Establish convenient public transit source between Randolph and Randolph Center; increase connectivity.
  - Use school buses for public transit purposes – is there an opportunity to share this resource? Challenge – would need to forego federal funding. Ludlow has an integrated system.
  - Put up covered bus shelters – particularly next to bus hubs at Shaws and Giffords.
- Funding:
  - I am willing to give up my car. I would like to know how much it costs on average to operate a car, and then we could ask people to give up the car and donate a % of the \$\$ they would have spent on their car to help expand public transportation.
  - Green Gas Card: donate \$.10/gallon toward climate friendly projects. Developed by local person, David Cooch from Braintree.
- Education
  - Do-it-yourself way finding website to find out how long it takes to walk or bike from one location to another (Walk Your City).
  - Start a website promoting various forms of alternative transportation; how to get around; all the different ways to get around; using PPF to get around for rides.
  - Promote train schedules and other public transit (Stagecoach).
- Infrastructure

- Redo the striping on the road.
- Look at transportation needs in the broader context of infrastructure needs, e.g. sewer and water, housing for workforce.
- Benches
  - Put up some benches around town; to be able to rest along the way.
  - Benches along the way to Shaws.
- Rail
  - Promote rail service/advertise.
- Bikes/electric assist bikes:
  - Establish place to park bike in town – leave it where it doesn't get stolen.
  - Encourage electrical-assist bikes; expands users.
  - Encourage bicycle taxis in the warm weather; can use electrical-assist bikes.
  - Start bike fixing and/or bike shop in Randolph.
- Taxis
  - Attract a taxi service/van service – help groups of seniors to get around.
- Car rentals

## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Create ease of biking and walking in downtown area; connecting downtown with other commercial areas (e.g. Shaws) should be a priority. Do it safely and in an environmental safe way.
- Put in public charging station.
- Put together on transportation-related guide for various transit services.
- Might be federal funding for some transportation issues.
- Utilize existing assets, e.g. Stagecoach, Amtrak.
- Work with surrounding towns – transportation is a regional issue.
- We (Stagecoach) are open to more people being involved in helping us set our priorities; addressing local needs, expanding the types of services we provide.
  - Stagecoach has limitations due to federal funding, e.g. can't be a charter service.
- Great ideas about making it more walkable, connected; sharing existing resources; starting a local uber-type system.

## Energy Savings for Homes & Businesses

Visiting Team: Maura Adams, Jon Copans, Paul Markowitz, Kevin McCollister, Haley Pero, Kate Stephenson, Paul Zabriskie

### What are the Assets in this Area?

- GD – Energy Committee.
- Downtown LED Project.
- Weatherize Program with Vital Communities.
- Pete Thoenen – Community Solar Project on South Randolph Road. Self run so costs are extremely low.
- More solar on rooftops and parking lots.
- How do we figure out how to bring back those profits to the community.
- Solarize project – with Vital Communities – contractors bid. More participants = lower price.
- Commercial solar by the landfill. Another one going in on the capped landfill. Some flowing back to the municipality.
- Green energy zones – sales tax off of village heating systems. Selectboard didn't proceed. Loop was the planning – has anybody thought about it lately.
- Catamount Solar. Efficiency Vermont. Integrity Energy. Vital Communities.
- SunCommon also in town. Offerings include heat pumps, storage, parking canopy options, etc.
- Two Rivers RPC.
- A couple great local contractors. Malcolm Gray and 5 star energy.
- Ayers Brook Goat Dairy – solar project with Catamount. Had them out to the property. They did a rooftop project it was great.
- Require rooftops be solar ready.
- 20 MW solar project proposed on the East Bethel Road.
- Rules governing community solar are very different than those governing larger facilities.

### What are the Challenges?

- Access to low income folks.
- Restrictions on community solar. Should be easier to do community solar.
  - New buildings not oriented for solar. Brand new buildings.
- Sometime also not built to energy code.
- New roof engineered so they can't hold solar.
- Change in the PACE program so that participation in community solar can participate even if it isn't on their property.
- PUC State and Legislature.
- How is solar treated on property tax bills?
- Net metering taxes – value on the land underneath the solar array.
- Larger projects – taxed on the capacity
- Education – people don't realize that it is worthwhile to borrow. Lack of awareness.
- No one has applied for the PACE program.
- Price of audit is a barrier.
- Utilities are pushing back on solar. Solar isn't as valuable now that peak has shifted. Batteries is the next opportunity.

- Many houses, also old buildings on Main Street. You can see the heat leaving those buildings in the winter. Savings pay for the work.

- Tesla powerwalls. Residential scale, but also utility scale.

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### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Local tour of the homes that have been weatherized and solar and alternative heating systems.
- House run on photovoltaics and car and thermal.
- Heat pumps for heating home and heating water.
- Cost of appliances (pellet stoves). Not a great differential between price of pellets and price of oil -collaboration with vendors to bring costs down.
- Owner of large downtown building – wants to drill for geothermal.
- Brand new to town – two questions – retired teacher. What about the Randolph schools? Are there initiatives to solarize schools in Randolph or elsewhere?
- St. Albans school project done by Suncommon.
- HS heats with woodchips, no awareness of solar.
- More intentionality around solar and/or pellet installation as part of tech programs or as part of adult learning as part of tech programs.
- Some dispute on pellets and GHG emissions.
- Municipality? Opportunities there?
- Panels on this building and the high schools.
- Improve efficiency with municipal buildings – Recent renovation. Other buildings – have audits but need a lot of work.
- Efficiency Vermont – green Mountain Glove as an example. Sam Hooper wanted to make an upgrade - EVT did a walk-through. Magnificent and accessible partner.
- Home building for Habitat for Humanity – second that.
- VERMOD mobile homes.
- Solatube – room without a window – it is like daylight. Has prisms to take light into a dark room.
- Low-income, disabled, renters, elderly – most impacted by energy costs.

- Long-term loan can be half the cost of the savings.
- Access to financing. Low income folks don't have the credit rating to access the financing. That is why Pace failed.
- No fund to socialize it.
- Loans to low income people.
- Low-income 80% are eligible for WAP. Those in that 80 to 120 window are the challenge.
- Go-Fund me site to fund low income weatherization.
- Make it available for free – for those who aren't Weatherization eligible.
- Town could fund this work.
- Older people don't want to invest in their homes – they won't be around for that much longer – also resistant to change. Educate them.
- Target landlords – Incentive challenge.
- Help people own homes.
- Require it through codes.
- Utility bill disclosure.
- 3E Thermal works with landlords. If more than 50% of hh are low income, they are eligible.
- More business walk-throughs to talk to business owners.
- Paul Zabriskie at Capstone – they did an audit.
- Boston Globe had a prominent story on Baker Administration in MA – promoting time-of-sale disclosure.
- Group working in Upper Valley with realtors etc.
- Green assessors.
- Some kind of state inspection program for homes, like we do for buildings?
- Heat Pump program through GMP.
- Permit to build anything – can check efficiency and code then.
- Incorporate into the certificate of occupancy process.

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### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Lots of great things have happened in Randolph. Many great examples to build upon. We can replicate those efforts and dig deeper. Build upon local resources and finding partners.
- Capstone is low income weatherization program. Also do home performance work and 3 E Thermal. People don't want to buy efficiency – they want the good that comes from it. People are in active denial. They don't want to know. Same reason people don't want to go to the Dr. They don't believe savings claims. Even when we do energy audits at \$0, people are still reluctant. People don't understand that savings estimates are science driven, not sales driven. We do lots of things that aren't cost effective, but apply that math to home improvements. Tell your stories. Share it with your neighbors.

Help people see the possibility. Good financing is out there. Test the building, define what your values are, and then look at the math. Behavioral influence is powerful. Package those stories and share them.

- Not too many challenges. Municipal revolving fund. USDA RD.
- Lots of familiarity to solar. Wood heat should be in the mix. Automated wood heat is a great option too. Encourage more thinking about that. Descriptions
- Community solar project and change to the net metering rule. If enough people talk to their legislators, this can change. We are a small state where that is possible.
- Efficiency First. Do the thermal efficiency before you do the other measures.

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## Agriculture and Food Innovation and On-Farm Energy

Visiting Team: Ben Doyle, Liz Gamache, Gary Holloway, Rita Seto, Chris Saunders

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### What are the Assets in this Area?

- Price of milk production vs sale price is a problem.
- Smaller farms popping up doing alternative farming techniques – small farms are growing.
- Diversification on small farms.
- On farm energy production with solar and wind production – regional and town plans looking to site these well.
- Mandate by PUC, community solar is more difficult to pencil out.
- Potential for farmland to decrease with increase in solar.
- Local food economy needs to have local farms.
- Land conservation has been very active.
- Network for matching land.

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### What are the Challenges?

- 4 farms out of business in last year and a half – what is the common thread? Retiring farmers, transition around agriculture.
- Biodigester – feed stock shortage.
- Food processing capacity and storage capacity.
- Gap in supporting local economy and actually supporting local economy – buy local.
- Regulatory – on farm that don't fall under typical exemptions – agritourism.
- Educate and train to not increase population due to limited amount of food that VT can produce – 7% of food produced in VT.
- Look at regional market not just local market.
- Keep local farmers.
- Losing population is a greater problem than gaining population – schools declining in population, tax impact.
- Not enough money to spend on the products being made – need people to buy.
- Land conservation – how its deemed conserved – prime ag soils get all the funding – many farms not on prime ag soils.
- Education – get youth involved with farms, farm to table, farm to schools – perceived lack of youth involvement.
- Cost of production too high to get locals to buy the food at higher prices – incentives to purchase locally produced foods.
- Disconnect in understanding what sustains us as community.

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### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Group biodigester to share the burden of large capital expense.
- Local investment in land conservation.
- Indoor food hub/farmers market.
- Food venture center – is there enough business in this area – there is an area food packer.
- Local composting – take compost like Intervale so you can get it locally – Act 148 to separate all organics out of trash – will have to eventually.
- Help farms to find energy sources and find new energy sources.
- Distribution efficiency – lots of inefficiencies currently so figure out a better system to increase economic value of farm and consumers.
- Creating community involvement in food hub – community kitchen.
- Look to outside markets – build on VT brand and protect the VT brand to bring cash into area.
- Share farm equipment – inventory of local assets that could be shared.
- Access to qualified labor.
- Farm stays – letting people know where they are and market on farm tours.
- Community compost – grow vegetables in one place and shared.
- More money into back roads to support farms, many are on roads that need to be maintained.
- Sharing land, gardens so that others can lease or use land they need for farming – explore different models that could be used.
- Connect farmers to land owners – develop a system.
- Rely on dairies to keep larger parcels open and maintained – need to keep dairies in business and get creative in how we market milk products – work cooperatively on marketing and processing.
- Shared labor between farms – well trained labor force – make it more affordable to hire someone legally – task force that looks at labor issues.
- Improving access to capital – what businesses can access revolving loan fund and other funding sources.
- Creative project that connects farmers with non-farmers – richness of Randolph – story telling to paint a picture of what farming is really like today in Randolph. Rotating picture of farms. – Identify the Randolph brand as a whole and how is it unique within Vermont – Randolph tour.
- Involve the town and farmers in Gofund campaign.
- Marketing efforts that finds out what leverage point is in Randolph brand and define your own brand – work with VT Tourism.
- Let the history of farming the land in Randolph be known.
- Regulations on small and diverse farm – look at models in Maine to support local food sovereignty.
- Farm to plate goals tied in with targeted goals in Randolph - % of products purchased.
- Town can dedicate land to be solar or do community solar through rooftops of buildings – work with existing local solar companies.
- Maintain zoning that supports rural industrial use, forest products.

- Maintain weight limits that will allow products to be transported on roads.
- Regional partnerships to support goals.
- Existing farmers market with mixed success – move to Guilford medical facility may have been wrong move – don't reinvent the wheel – think small, look for partnerships.
- Education – field trips, lunch program at schools, coordinator that is helping to link.
- Why is product more expensive? Education needed – another entity to support with this effort.
- Finding a synergy with arts and culture, farming.
- Do a stronger marketing effort to brand Randolph not Woodstock.
- Establish a farm commission to help address a variety of issues.
- Community engagement is huge and decreasing the disconnect amongst the community.

### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Local regulations – maintaining what you already have – farm committee.
- Improving marketing and web presence.
- A ton of assets and huge turnout – diversity of attendees.

## Lodging, Tourism, Recreations and the Arts

Visiting Team: Ben Doyle, Liz Gamache, Lucy Gibson, Gary Holloway, Rita Seto, Chris Saunders

### What are the Assets in this Area?

- The Chandler Arts center draws people from all over. It was built buy the town—great representation of what Randolph can do.
- Great restaurants. Fantastic Thai place. New restaurants draw people to town.
- Great trails network—most of interconnected.
- Lots of outdoor recreation activities: glade skiing areas, snowmobiling, golf, disc golf.
- Wonderful library.
- Art bus is a great community asset.
- There are two campgrounds that attract about 1900 customers. Brings people here.
- There are a variety of non-traditional boarding options: bed and breakfasts, Air B and B, yurts, etc.
- A recent feasibility study showed that there is enough demand to support a 65 room hotel near the interstate.
- VTC brings people/families into town.
- Rural landscape is what attracts people/keeps them here.
- Randolph is centrally located.
- There is an assisted living facility in town allowing some people the ability to age in place.
- Great medical facility in Gifford Hospital.
- Vibrant amateur sports scene (but Randolph lacks needed fields and facilities).
- Good local papers.
- Number of artists and artisans.
- Good transportation infrastructure: Amtrak/bus service/close to the interstate.
- Great recreation department.
- Beautiful landscape.
- The floating bridge in Brookfield.
- Lots of open land/space (maybe for tiny houses).
- RASTA trail system.

### What are the Challenges?

- We don't have a place to stay.
- January through April the inns/rooms aren't completely full.
- No hotel.
- Feasibility study doesn't support hotel in the downtown.
- Conferences can't happen in Randolph and there isn't any place to stay.
- Can't have weddings (no place to stay).
- "Lot of NIMBYs" about hotels.
- No handicap accessibility for people who need to stay overnight.
- Government is perceived by some as anti-business and that impacts downtown.
- Lack of local venues for music.
- Trail closures have limited snowmobiles. Lack of understanding of snowmobile riders and their economic impact.
- Shortage of volunteers.
- Real lack of childcare.
- Missing a bike repair shop (popular one closed).
- Family friendly activities—tough to find a place for kids to have fun.

### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Market to RV users—it's a emerging market.
- Increase trail connections to other Vermont communities.
- Allow dirt bikes to drive downtown (it's worked in NH).
- Revisit snowmobile trail issue with specific landowners.
- Open the old community ski hill.
- Better branding effort—get Randolph on the map (when you Google it, Woodstock comes up).
- Identify working group to form Randolph brand.
- Build a shared community space.
- Need better usage of FPF to ensure folks know what's up.
- Empower local officials/select board to make decision that will move Randolph forward.
- Generational divide should be bridged to support local families. Create vital community from within.

- Encourage marketing and mapping trail investments: it leads to other forms of investment.
- Share Mel Adams video about Randolph and update.
- Canvas the neighborhood and ask them what priorities they would like the task forces to focus on. Develop survey. Do that on town meeting day.
- Develop local music infrastructure (venues/promotion).
- Develop vacant stores into shared/cooperative space. Bring a few different activities into shared space.
- Open the hall in East Randolph.
- A local group is doing a survey (RAEDC) about what available community space.
- Look at building on Bethel's success and run a similar initiative.
- Focus on improving childcare situations.
- Event: hold a town walk.
- Improve signage and parking to recreational assets.
- Build wifi hotspots for the downtown.
- Support local efforts for recreation center. One is hoping to open next year (Looking to build trail head near rec center, start teen nights, and be a safe place for young kids). Need community support for sponsorship (spontaneous applause).
- Select board could "get after the state" to improve signage.
- Designate the community as a "walking town." through a national organization.
- Share information with transportation partners to increase tourism.
- Work with Amtrak to ensure folks can bring bikes on the train.
- Continue the great work at Randolph Fall Festival. Perhaps bring back winter carnival.
- Get a big ball of string (it would be a tourist attraction).
- Hold a community yard sale.

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### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Increase communications. There's plenty of low-hanging fruit.
- Increase signage.
- Found overlap between stuff for away and stuff from here.
- Fantastic energy. Look to make sure the priorities are inclusive and for everyone.
- Foster connections between different sectors.

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## Education and Workforce Training

Visiting Team: Ted Brady, Paul Costello, Bob Haynes, Megan Sullivan, Kevin Wiberg

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### What are the Assets in this Area?

- Vermont department of education office.
- Welding at RDTC?
- Norwich, VTC.
- Tech Center career and college training for 12<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Cooperative ed at VTC where kids can be placed to learn a trade (100 community placements).
- Preschool education. Gifford runs a wonderful childcare program.
- VT Tech solar program (solar and efficiency).
- Chandler.
- Good restaurants.
- Hospital and train station.
- Dual enrollment with area higher ed institutions.

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### What are the Challenges?

- Finding affordable child care.
- Resources are scattered physically and communications.
- People trying to get training are already working.
- Low level of education among local workforce.
- Lack of workforce soft skills, low employability.
- Broadband is hot and cold, unreliable.
- Gap on HS student interest in STEM.
- Green mountain gloves. Extremely skilled labor a month to train.
- Low volume of students.
- Profit margin in farming is so low, how can we create opportunities with a financial burden to farmers.
- Introduce a sense of vocation at a younger age.

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### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Teach coding at school (starting next year in schools).
- Makers Fair.
- Maker space similar to Generator in Burlington, with mentors, shop like classes with sophisticated equipment, member model with sliding scale dues.
- Coworking space with good wifi for small business.
- Making Randolph the goat capital of Vermont.
- Something like Amazon Hive, have packages go through Vermont.
- Some sort of distribution centers.
- Governor's Institute on Entrepreneurship.
- Ready to Work programming.
- Career Readiness Certificate from CCV.
- Existing industries offering summer internships to train kids in specific skills set.
- Flexible Pathways Initiative.
- Improve elementary/middle school education.
- Increase awareness of the opportunities that are out there.
- More community partners and businesses start working with middle schoolers.
- Engaging parents in helping their kids learn these skills and offer encouragement. Family support services.
- Reserve capacity to work with smaller groups in enhance training.
- Expand workplace learning in high school and expand it down to at least 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

- Stronger linkages and data sharing between workforce development resources. Workforce business exchange center, etc.
- Marketing all the good stuff about Randolph. Good educational system. HS educators extremely educated.
- A mentoring program for hs, tech, and young adults – one to one connection with a personal mentor to teach soft skills.
- Use schools as HUBs, kids are already there, create living/learning centers. Beyond the regular school day.
- Commuter rail development.
- A combination of attracting new people and motivating locals.
- Hotel/Motel accommodations.
- VTC has facilities available particularly in the summer to host trainings, etc.
- Reaching out to those who are ready to settle down and start a family, to come back to Randolph.
- Reliable broadband.

## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Love the idea of goat assets. The central question, what is the Randolph difference. There is a unique proposition for Randolph. Schools, employers. Ability to train from cradle to career in a 10 mile radius. A vibrant employer network. A transportation network. Don't be every other town.
- Randolph is motivated. New town manager. Randolph is mobilizing. A great collection of assets and wonderful opportunities.
- Congress Welch is inspired by home many people are turning out for community conversations. A quilt of ideas/opportunities and have residents to help stitch it all together. Community level work is critical. Telecommunications Committee – expand broadband.
- Impressive turnout whole family, two generation approach. Not just attracting from away, but working on how to build up the local workforce.
- Participation is incredible. The human capacity is Randolph is impressive. The Randolph brand is a real story. Working land and tech combined. The momentum of change with sharing a common direction.

## Growing Jobs and Entrepreneurship

Visiting Team: Ted Brady, Paul Costello, Bob Haynes, Megan Sullivan, Kevin Wiberg

### What are the Assets in this Area?

- Restaurants.
- VTC.
- Gifford.
- Railroad and industrial park.
- 18 hole golf course.
- Interstate.
- Pragmatic resourceful workforce.
- Chandler.
- History of growing entrepreneurship.
- Local newspaper.
- Businesses embracing clean technology.
- Diversity of interesting people. Many working multiple jobs. A variety of skillsets and life experiences.
- Healthy farmland. Highest concentration of farms in the state.
- Lots of entrepreneurial activity.
- Forestry products.
- Bus services/public transportation.
- In a year we'll have a state lab at VTC.

### What are the Challenges?

- Closure of the variety store.
- More people are employed outside of town.
- Housing in general, inventory quality and affordability.
- Communications, lack thereof, not everyone's on the same page.
- Policies that prevent asset sharing in Randolph.
- People need to have jobs to support the local economy. Not enough people to keep the store open.
- More money going out of town than coming in.
- Vermont reputation for high property and income taxes.
- Having students stay interested in the area, Randolph sense of place.
- Lack of available space for expansion.
- High cost of commercial real estate.
- Infrastructure limitations.
- Internet infrastructure is a real problem, broadband throughout. Need fiber access.
- Poor Fiber coverage in downtown. Competition with cable.
- Lack "springboards"—to help launch kids into jobs and entrepreneurship.
- Better coordination.
- Perception that kids are leaving and not coming back.
- Never see college students in downtown. Is this a transportation issue.
- Do we have the stuff that attracts younger people downtown.
- Not enough money here to support entrepreneurs and local economy.
- Drugs.
- People who can't drive.

### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Maker spaces and coding education.
- Another ice cream establishment.
- Free Wi-Fi.
- Junior Achievement – a model of students form little companies and "sell stocks"; modeling business practices for youth.

- Need to do a better job of telling our story and selling the Vermont brand.
- Have Pop Ups to attract students to downtown.
- Vermont tech cows. Where's the milk go? Bring it into Randolph as a local commodity to support entrepreneurship.
- Shuttle system to bring students downtown.
- Time to embrace entrepreneurs and zoning/permitting process.
- Leverage corporate/business assets to come up with a value add for new business.
- Business websites.
- Targeted marketing campaign for RHS alumni.
- Taking more risks to engage teenagers.
- Linkages with local employers to connect employees/patients with local services and businesses.
- Shipping container agriculture.
- Wood pellet production. Bulk pellet delivery. Railroad for transport.
- High performance buildings, energy farm, building a more livable/workable spaces.
- Growing medical marijuana.
- More use of the railroad.
- More specialty shops.
- Nurturing co-location and incubation strategies. Meet up groups for entrepreneurs.
- Teachers working with local expertise to engage students and teachers in curriculum development and implementation.
- Adding businesses that students can apply what they've learned.
- Think ahead! Not just following current trends.
- Central location is ideal for distribution center to local, regional, state and others markets beyond.
- Uber hitch hiking.

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### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- A tremendous crowd for this time of day. Capacity in Randolph is unprecedented.
- Engaging younger voices in community conversations and solutions.
- It's clear that people are engaged in Randolph and making connections between assets and opportunities. Great to see the diversity in attendance.
- Strong assets here, hospital, chandler, college.

## Community Brainstorming Session

Over 100 Randolph community members shared their ideas for action in this evening session on April 10, 2018

- Social corporation – a sustaining non-profit. Profits go back into the organization. It might be a good structure to use for funding a community project that is self-sustaining.
- Farmers markets and events like brew fest, bike fest. A lot of land has come up for sale in and around the town. Maybe the town could acquire some to centralize the events into a space. Create a town fairgrounds.
- Hope leadership will provide us with a mission statement and vision so all the ideas can work together – a “road map” for where this region is going that we can get behind and work together from.
- Vital part of this project is creating the vision and also a town office or resource that centralizes for tracking projects, and to help coordinate and to market as you go.
- Infrastructure is important. Marketing is huge.
- More daycare options in Randolph helps support the larger goal of more jobs.
- Sidewalk to Shaws.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of 2 South Main is good for downtown hotel location with Merchant's Row next door.
- Rochester Randolph area non-motorized recreation – mountain bike, back country skiing, trails around town. Low impact. Get involved and get outside.
- Involve youth – middle school and up – where they are doing the work and invested and taking an active part in the process.
- What towns around the globe have done fun or important things to revitalize their own towns? A lot of good ideas can come from what others have done and lead to a fun world of ideas.
- Goat capital of NE. need for a single economic development point person that knows the ins and outs, the process for permitting a new project, and responsible for branding the town so businesses would be inclined to settle here.
- LED manufacturer here – highlight that by having a street scape with mood lighting. A cool LED town.
- Craft fair.
- Childcare and youth voice involved. Have a chance for youth to participate in the conversations. Look online to see how Randolph comes up so we know how it's seen already.
- Brookfield, Braintree and Randolph inventory of resources and meeting places – for dance recitals, craft fairs, events. Note that faith communities offer their space for community use as well. Use resources to benefit everyone.
- White River Valley Chamber of Commerce has been a regional Chamber. Doors are open. Would like to serve as the hub. Welcome to use conference room. May have office space that could collaborate with this organization. Great video about Randolph in the “Downtowns of Distinction” series with Terry Bradshaw. See video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vHZR9EfDIO>.

- Universal broadband, fiber optic to the home. It comes close on 2 sides and already has several hundred customers in Randolph. It's a 24 town consortium working to bring fiber to homes. An actionable item but need a higher help.
- Comprehensive website with links to recreation activities, private businesses, etc all aspects of the community.
- Brunswick School mission to have kids be un-plugged with no cell phones as part of their education. Embrace the students and engage them in the ideas coming up.
- Saranac Lake NY town. Community started a community department store where profits go back into the community.
- Bottlenecking our region. Opening up the road from W. Braintree to Rochester Valley. Just north of W. Braintree. Making a way for the 18 wheelers to cross the tracks by Montague Club so they aren't going through downtown Randolph. The beautiful homes are a feature and could attract people to live there without the trucks.
- Wood pellet manufacturer through town. Have district heating.
- Join the Randolph Energy Committee – we're little but mighty.
- Places and spaces assessment. The focus stems from hope to establish community center. After the fire at the fire house, bonding was a hopeless objective. Now thinking in terms of open public space being a community center in itself. We are doing a research project on the spaces of the 3 towns that are part of it.
- Bike lanes between Brookfield, Braintree, and Randolph on main roads.
- Great ideas. Combine economic power into a new fund to provide seed capital to invest locally.
- Look at weatherization for low- to moderate-income residents.
- Bike/foot path from VTC to downtown Randolph.
- Feature the river and fundraise to start a disc golf league to bring visitors from the outside.
- What to do with landfills that are filling? Before take stuff to recycling center and dump it in the dumpster. What can you make out of recyclables in town? Lot of resources that could be utilized.
- More events going on locally. Another way to grow the economy and drive folks to our town. Create fun cool events.
- Act 148 is being phased in about separating organics from recycling. BBR (Brookfield, Braintree, Randolph) is own solid waste district. Handle it creatively. Have compost that is saleable.
- Feed school children locally-produced food.
- Train from Randolph to Burlington.
- Hospital, VTC, Chandler – tourism has to be part of the picture. Lodging, motel, hotel. Need lodging. What is the best place to have lodging to bring people into Randolph? What brings people to Vermont? The quaintness of small towns. What is quaint about Randolph? Don't have a town green...
- A community greenhouse for small scale gardeners to come together and maybe a root cellar. Share equipment. Currently one on School St.
- Add something for skiing. Have skiing by the highway, not a hotel. Bring hotel closer in.
- Local farmers work hard to keep land clear and open. It's beautiful. When grow crops, a way to let people know healthy offerings. Open communication area to plug into. The local computer shop has a list of local restaurants. Maybe help to facilitate people finding out what's going on locally.
- Create a "Solar Fest" event in Randolph. Show the state how it's done.
- Alternatives to solar in terms of energy generation.
- Farm to Plate Randolph. Train. Downtown park across from where solar company is. Garage there now. Might be possible to get the piece of property (triangle next to train) as a garden for the town.
- Take out derelict properties. Buildings are a blight on the community. Have to figure out how to get the money to get rid of them.
- Amtrak comes through town – would be fun to do a mass planting of giant sunflowers so people see us as the train goes through town. Randolph would stand out.
- Partner with Amazon or a tech company. Get a hive for drone delivery. Needed in every region. Have a train, highway, open space where we could build a hive. Ag and tech field in one.
- Fruit trees planted in town for beauty and food. Edible landscape.
- Accentuate the art in town.
- Lot of talk about branding, advertising, outreach. Different age ranges focus on what they know best. Need to hit everything, all print and social media to have well-rounded ad campaign.
- Keep land open, production Ag costs are high. Rely on state funding for land conservation. Local conservation of land is good investment for the town.
- Community dances. Come on out for fun, laughter, reenergizing. Even if we don't have money or solutions.
- Revisit the concept of district heating system. Comprehensive food waste collection system. Collect the massive amount of food waste and turn it into energy.
- Small commercial grade grain mill. Yankee magazine story about one going on in Maine. Local flour feeds us locally and we export the rest.
- Vision for town that might make it a smart city. Work with VTC, implement new technology, without changing the character, but attract young people and entrepreneurs.
- Get a brewery downtown.
- Mentoring for students and students working in the community. Learning how to take care of their homes. If hire someone, maybe they could bring someone young with them. Partner with youth and build those mentoring relationships.

# Youth Forum Notes

Compiled from a youth forum held with Randolph Union High School students and VCRD staff on March 23, 2018

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## What is great about this community?

- Trying to improve amount of things that teenagers can do like bike ramp in town, add to park area for things to do in summer, skate park
- Small, so you know a lot of people
- Stores are close together, park one place and walk around to all the stores
- Skating rink for the winter, pool and tennis courts right in town
- A lot of outdoorsy things to do any season (pool, ice rink, etc.)
- Not a very scary town to live in -- not a lot of scary or sketchy people that live around here, nothing to worry about, feel safe
- For the most part people are respectful
- We have the hospital really close, the college just up the hill, lots of students can take advantage of that (go take classes)

## What are some things that need improvement?

- Very homogenous group, lack of racial diversity at RUHS
- Not a very tolerant group, want everyone to be white, straight, conservative
- Heroin is a huge problem in town, don't know a lot of high school students but it is a problem to be around
- Little roads aren't good; they paved it during the summer but it is still terrible with lots of potholes
- Could do more community based things with youth like football game Wednesdays at the park to get people together
- Lack of local businesses; those that are here are going under; need vibrant downtown that attracts people to come to support the local economy

## What do you think downtown is missing?

- Brightness, something that says "come here"
- Video game arcade
- Population -- numbers are decreasing over the years, eventually won't have enough people to run the school, maybe even the school (Chelsea and Rochester shutting down)
- Marketplace to get fresh produce, meat, bread accessible to town (Chef's Market is too far out for people to easily access)
- Shaws is walkable, but if no car it is more challenging (people do it out of necessity)
- Need sustainable business for everyone of all socioeconomic statuses, long term
- Ideally serve community and visitors to the community
- Randolph and VT are 2nd home, people are only here certain time of year, so businesses don't make adequate money to survive
- Agreement that online shopping is diminishing local business
- Used to be bookstore on main street, but Amazon and Kindle are so much easier and cheaper, tough to compete, convenience
- McDonalds just hired people because order on touch screen, bring food - no longer need cashiers, jobs taken over by technology
- No one in the room has a license, not excited to get license, "nowhere to go"
- If live here, can walk to everything so no need to have car
- Shift from driving for driving's sake vs to get to destination
- In summer, more options (drive-in, Silver Lake, state parks, places that are farther away and only open ½ year), probably friend or family member that can drive you.

## Ways to improve getting around in this community?

- Within town, transportation that is not a car is extremely difficult – no real bike path, sometimes telephone pole right in the middle of it; limits people who casually ride bike
- Make more accessible to use alternative transportation in the community
- Personally bike most of year to school, making people more aware of bikes on road is important; have to ride through sketchy area or close to hitting car which is not safe
- Teaching people how to ride properly in the road to alleviate tension between drivers and bikers
- Day activity open to full community to teach, could be mandatory in schools, a week of gym classes or one Saturday for a few hours; once ingrained in younger children, keep teaching and they'll remember for whole life, will become habit; also bring community together, everyone coming for class
- Used to do bike licenses @ Gifford with a class, teach how to ride on roads for all ages
- I ride in summer, faster to get to pool but now use penny board (small skateboard), turns easier, ride on sidewalk
- People with penny boards have to sometimes ride on the road because of how bumpy the sidewalk is
- Bike idea – limits transportation if have to go through licensing process first
- Ride skateboard on sidewalk, cop stops and says to get off the sidewalk; when go on street feels unsafe – where are you supposed to use it?

- Maple St (road with hospital) has three different types of sidewalk; nice by hospital, none at opposite end, middle section with broken cement chunks
- Randolph has to accept that living in a rural area, people are going to rely on fossil fuels to get places; encourage youth to carpool, get rides with friends, roller blade or bike
- Maybe health class curriculum should teach how to live a healthy, sustainable lifestyle (nutrition, exercise, how decisions and habits now impact for rest of life), more nurturing outlook; our health is linked to the health of our community
- On Grove St. there's a bunch of houses where kids leave and cars are always speeding extremely fast down hill; dangerous for kids, scary for safety
- On Pleasant St. there are people, teenagers, who go up and down and circle around to go 80mph back and forth even though there are signs that say slow down
- In residential areas, speed limit should be 25mph
- Skateboarding – it doesn't make sense to limit alternate transportation
- Drinking and driving is a big problem in our community - picking up trash, all alcoholic beverage bottles on the side of the road, likely means people are throwing them out the window while drinking them
- Biking - if we ride in the road, people honk at you; on side of road no room between sidewalk and side of road; if ride on sidewalk get yelled at by police and pedestrians
- No place to get bikes fixed in town; place in White River for some repairs, or Lebanon, or Barre
- Casual bike rider, not likely to put in that maintenance, too much trouble and cost to get it fixed
- Expensive gas just to go get it fixed

### **One thing that you would like to see in this community (a positive change)**

- Appealing downtown - Church St in Burlington, pedestrian friendly, stores up and down; when we have the New World festival, block off a section of Main St; maybe close off a section every weekend with a market to bring people into the center of town.
- Long term sustainable businesses that are viable; there's nothing here to make me want to stay for the rest of my life right now (lack of opportunity).
- Make it so alternate transportation is safer.
- Accepting alternative transportation.
- Pick up trash.
- Better transportation, safer.
- Stagecoach - a father takes to Montpelier.
  - Perception: bus in town for other people?
  - Two years ago, I wasn't allowed on the bus and neither was anyone other than seniors.
- New sidewalks and paving.
- Bicycle lanes.
- Problem: expensive to live here.
- More restaurants.
- Bike path like in Stowe.
- Alternative transportation opportunities for youth; on roads are parents, new drivers, and bikers, need predictable safe environment.
- Improving sharp corner turns where you can't see around
- Transportation safety.
- More stuff to do, like restaurants, places to go and meet up.
- Bed and breakfast.
- Trail management behind 3 stallion inn to keep accessible.
- Church St idea – way to promote local businesses; not a lot of attention drawn to businesses; like summer Market but with local business orientation and activities to attract families.