

Poultney Comes Together

Report and Action Plan, August 2019



Produced by the **Vermont Council on Rural Development** and
the **Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development**
In partnership with the **Vermont Community Foundation**

Table of Contents

I.	The Poultney Comes Together Process	1
II.	Poultney Comes Together Priorities.....	3
III.	Task Force Action Plans	6
	Action Steps, Resources, Task Force Members	
IV.	Community Forum Notes	13
V.	Poultney Comes Together Participants	15
VI.	Resource Team Members.....	16

I. Poultney Comes Together

We don't get to choose the conditions or the trials of our time, but we have the opportunity to make the most of our circumstances and battle the challenges that face our communities.

With the closing of Green Mountain College the Poultney community recognizes that it faces a fundamental challenge to its economy and future well-being. Residents of the community have come together to pitch in and advance positive steps forward in community and economic development projects to improve the prospects ahead.

Over 200 residents came together for a community meeting at the Green Mountain College on March 7th 2019 to begin to think together about the impacts of the closing and the power of action of the community. Decisions about the future of the Green Mountain College Campus would be made by the Trustees and by USDA RD which holds a significant mortgage on the property. But what could community residents, working together and in partnership with the town and village of Poultney do to respond to the challenge? **Ted Brady, Deputy Secretary of the Agency of Commerce**, initiated a process at the request of **Governor Phil Scott** to bring the community together and connect key directions from the community with the resources of state, federal and non-profit partners. After this first meeting, the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) agreed to serve as a convening and facilitating partner to help to systematically advance this conversation, ultimately to the plan of action entailed in this report.

While the campus is for sale, and there are a variety of real and potential prospects for the renewal of the campus, the decisions around the campus are a beyond the control of the community. Despite the impatience this causes and the frustration that people feel, residents of the town have come together in good will to consider what actions in the village and town could help lead the community and its economy forward.

It is not easy to choose priorities, but in the end, Poultney selected solid priorities for action, listed in the report below, that will lead to a stronger and more vibrant community and economy for all residents. These initiatives set challenging but strategically achievable goals, and there is much work to do, but Poultney is a town that is ready to take action.

Five key directions have been established for Task Force action and 54 individuals have already signed on to Task Forces to drive them forward:

- ▶ **Expand trails, biking and outdoor recreation opportunities as an economic driver for Poultney's future**
- ▶ **Develop a Poultney co-working space and incubator for new start-up businesses, and invite newcomers to the town**
- ▶ **Develop a Bank**
- ▶ **Improve Broadband Infrastructure**
- ▶ **Boost Poultney Downtown**

Several of these priorities already have strong roots for action and good leadership; the Poultney Comes Together process sets these directions as cornerstone priorities of the community as a whole, with support for implementation from the municipality and all the outside partners who have participated on Visiting Teams to the community (listed at the end of this report).

Local leaders have stepped up to chair the new task forces and serve as a collective leadership team for the community projects. **Cecilia Ward**, who has deep community and economic development experience, has agreed to devote time and energy to help the task forces move forward as the overall chair of the Poultney Moves Forward Task Forces. Cecilia is excited to engage with all five task forces to ensure coordination and collaboration and act as a liaison between the groups and Town and Village leadership. Working with Town Manager **Paul Donaldson** and Select Board Chair **Jeff King**, Cecelia will coordinate efforts with the five strategic Task Force initiatives: **Danny Lang** for the Co-Working Initiative which is an ongoing effort; **Russ Hoffman**, for the Bank Initiative, **Meghan Ohi**, for the Broadband Initiative, **Sylvia Cassano**, with **Gail and Chuck Helfer**, for the Outdoor Recreation and Trails effort (keyed to the progress of the Slate Valley Trails), and **Bob Mitnik**, who will work with the volunteers in support of the progress of the Poultney Downtown.

This team of leaders is geared for action and will be convening each Task Force to begin implementing the critically important goals developed by the community. VCRD and our partners are deeply grateful for their leadership, generosity of time and energy, and dedication to moving this work forward. We also deeply appreciate the strong leadership of the Select Board and Trustees, and the great work that **Paul Donaldson** provides as Town Manager; Poultney is fortunate to have a strong, flexible and responsive town and village government. We would also thank **Tom and Ina Johnson** and the Hills and Hollows Fund for their leadership in support of this effort, the **Vermont Community Foundation**, which stands behind all our work and in support of all the communities of the state, and the **Agency of Commerce** for all their engagement, but especially for the relentless positivity of **Ted Brady** and the ACCD staff in service to rural communities.



On 4/7/19 Poultney community members came together to review brainstormed ideas and select Poultney priorities.

II. Poultney Comes Together Priorities

Determined by Poultney Residents at the Community Meeting on April 4th.

Poultney community members whittled down a list of ideas through discussion, reasoned argument and thoughtful reflection at a community meeting on April 4th. In the end, participants chose five action ideas that offer opportunities to enhance existing resources, and to strengthen the town through exciting new ventures. Residents concluded the April 4th meeting by signing up for Task Forces in the selected areas.

Poultney residents selected five priorities for future action:

- ✓ **Expand trails, biking and outdoor recreation opportunities as an economic driver for Poultney's future.**
- ✓ **Develop a Poultney co-working space and incubator for new start-up businesses, and invite newcomers to the town.**
- ✓ **Develop a Bank**
- ✓ **Improve Broadband Infrastructure**
- ✓ **Boost Poultney Downtown**

Other Key Opportunities Identified by the Community

Along with the five chosen priorities, the key opportunities listed below reflect other potential ideas for action that community members shared at the initial community meeting. Though these opportunities weren't chosen as priority projects through this process, community members may find the list useful as they look to expand on current projects or take on new ones over time.

Build a community team to implement the Poultney 2020 study and work plan.

Create a Town Community and Economic Development Officer to lead town efforts for a strong downtown; bringing in and sustaining businesses in this transition period.

Compile a resource library with work of the GMC faculty and staff.

Establish a Center for water quality excellence on Lake St. Catherine.

Advance downtown beautification, planting, and streetscape design.

Reopen the Coop.

Develop a Poultney buy-local and re-localization campaign.

Market Poultney to new businesses.

Build a local coffee shop.

Ideas for the Future of the GMC Campus: Results of an Advisory Vote

*Attendees also reviewed and voted on potential ideas for the future of the Green Mountain College Campus. Priorities in this area can serve as **advice** to the Board of GMC, to the Poultney Select Board and Village Trustees, and to potential developers, on preferred potential uses and hopes for the future of the Campus.*

Offer as incubation space and a satellite location for high profile research institutions and colleges—attract UVM, Middlebury and others to use the facility for a satellite site.	95
Develop a national center of education and innovation on climate change, resilience, and green economic development.	86
Advance an agricultural, sustainability, environmental education, & culinary and food institute in partnership with USDA and potentially UVM.	82
Attract or develop a trade college.	72
Develop a multipurpose facility and conference center including education and programming around agriculture, language, meditation, and writing.	66
Build housing and support/medical services for Veterans.	52
Advance Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) education for high schoolers.	50
Create a multi-use business and/or manufacturing park.	42
Develop a Mental Health Facility. Utilize local education and healthcare workforce.	35
Develop a high school or boarding school that could draw national, international, and prep school students.	31
Develop an artist retreat / residency center.	26
Approach the Brattleboro Retreat about their expansion needs and offer the use of the GMC campus, potentially as a center to address the statewide opioid epidemic.	25
Create a new State correctional facility at the campus.	25
Continue to maintain the invaluable Welsh collection and alumni archives.	21
Utilize the campus to take advantage of the growing hemp and CBD market in Vermont.	21
Train firefighters and police.	19
Create a small scale mill to process local grains grown in the region, by local farmers, for the burgeoning industries of baking, brewing and distilling.	9
Recreate the campus as a center to welcome and accommodate refugees and immigrants.	19
Maintain open access for the community to the playing fields, library and sports facilities.	18
Develop a casino.	14
Develop a strategic plan and support the “Save GMC” effort.	13
Develop a senior housing complex.	10

Develop a school that focuses on non-traditional/alternative learning for people with learning challenges.	9
Maintain the Campus in the interim.	8
Create a Makers Space and youth entrepreneurship retreat at the site.	8
Transfer management of the GMC library to the Town library.	8
Utilize the GMC campus for Town events, recreation, and gatherings.	5
Utilize campus for equestrian training and barrel jumping.	3
Attract or create a small seminary or Buddhist retreat center	3
Make the GMC campus a community-owned educational hub.	2
Build workforce housing on the campus.	1
Combine school from 3-4 districts to share the campus.	0



III. Task Force Action Plans

Action Planning Meeting, May 30, 2019

Poultney Task Forces are comprised of community members and an appointed chairperson. At the May 30th action planning meeting committee members worked closely with a facilitator and a visiting resource team to develop step-by-step action plans and a list of human and financial resources to help achieve their goals. Next, residents will truly take ownership of the work, and begin the exciting process of turning ideas into action.

✓ Boost Poultney Downtown

Community Chair: **Bob Mitnick**

Facilitator: **Ed Bove**, *Executive Director*, Rutland RPC

Resource Team Members: **Paul Bruhn**, *Executive Director*, Preservation Trust of VT

Maura Carroll, *Executive Director*, VT League of Cities and Towns

Josh Hanford, *Commissioner*, VT Department of Housing and Community Development

Gary Holloway, *Downtown Program Coordinator*, Dept of Housing and Community Development

Priority Action Steps

1. Support existing businesses and organizations.
2. Improve mapping/marketing/promotion of Downtown assets and evenings.
3. Build streetscape improvements and focus on the arts to create a sense of place and attract residents. Utilize street art, poetry, public murals, and theater.
4. Create a Community Supported Enterprise (CSE) shop/gathering space such as a coffee shop.
5. Create physical space in the downtown to connect with the trail network users.
6. Create gathering spaces for events along Main Street.
7. Improve communications – promote the town on social media. Create a community calendar to better publicize events.
8. Provide financial incentives for Downtown Businesses such as rent forgiveness by the municipality, incentives to relocate downtown, or tax stabilization for downtown businesses.

Other Potential Action Steps:

- Attract/Open a good destination restaurant.
- Create unique assets such as a brewery.
- Be friendly to tourists.
- Utilize the park on Main Street.
- Distribution Center in empty buildings.
- Partner with other towns (Fair Haven, Castleton) on events.
- Utilize the green in East Poultney.
- Utilize land use regulations to restrict locally unwanted land uses.
- CBD/Hemp processing like what is happening in Pawlet and Fair Haven could be an opportunity.
- Create places to serve existing residents.
- Encourage Shaws to open a pharmacy in its Poultney store.
- Reuse GMC for a museum.
- Conduct asset mapping.
- Promote available space in the Downtown.
- Ensure top-notch broadband.

Resources

- Town of Poultney Selectboard will be important supporters/partners.
- The Rutland Chamber of Commerce could be marketing and business support partners.
- The Poultney Downtown Revitalization Committee.
- Potential new Town employee focusing on economic development.
- Rutland Regional Planning Commission – contact Ed Bove at bove@rutlandrpc.org
- Town of Poultney Planning Commission
- Vermont Community Development Program. Contact Josh Hanford at josh.hanford@vermont.gov and/or Gary Holloway (Downtown Program Director) at gary.holloway@vermont.gov
- Preservation Trust of Vermont. Contact Paul Bruhn at paul@ptvermont.org
- Rutland Economic Development Corporation. Contact Tyler Richardson at tyler@rutlandeconomy.com
- Vermont Community could be a grant funding source. Contact Sarah Waring at swaring@vermontcf.org

Task Force Members

Steve and Valerie	Broughton	valeriesfour@yahoo.com	236-2790
Wendy	Cadieux	bodyshopblond@yahoo.com	287-9562
Joe	DeBonis	jdebonisjr@yahoo.com	
Ruth Ann	Fischer	rafischer49@yahoo.com	954-815-4298; 287-4782
C.B.	Hall	cbhallvt@gmail.com	287-5267
Gerri	Harrison	gphvt@comcast.net	
Burnham	Holmes	burnham.holmes@castleton.edu	
Doug	Langdon	drl@douglaslangdon.com	287-9645
Susan	Loomis	seloomis5@yahoo.com	287-9739
Mariah	Lovejoy	mariahlovejoy@gmail.com	
Patricia	McWilliams	hermithill12@gmail.com	287-5757
Suanne	Ohl	mrssuzy12@yahoo.com ; ohl.suanne@yahoo.com	
Charlene	Rapinz	raggedtime@aol.com	
Kristen	Ross	guayabitogirl@gmail.com	287-4656
Kim	Rupe	kim@rutlandeconomy.com	287-0444
Dawn	Sarli and Kyle Calahan	dawn.sarli@gmail.com	
Ina	Smith Johnson	inajsmith@gmail.com	287-0580
Julie	Sperling	nagabake@vermontel.net	
Burke	Walker	walkerburke@yahoo.com	
Cecelia	Ward	cward@jiconsultinginc.net	954-815-4298
Chrispin	White	chrispin.white1@gmail.com ; whitefamily635@comcast.net	287-0976

✓ Improve Broadband Infrastructure

Community Chair: **Meghan Ohl**

Facilitator: **Ted Brady**, *Deputy Secretary*, Agency of Commerce and Community Development

Resource Team Members: **Ben Doyle**, *Associate Director*, USDA Rural Development

Clay Purvis, *Director*, VT DPS Telecommunications and Connectivity Division

Chris Recchia, *Managing Director*, ValleyNet/EC Fiber

Action Steps

1. Review the Department of Public Service maps of existing service. (Clay Purvis will send).
2. Review the telecom sections of town and regional plans.
3. Invite Consolidated Communications/Comcast/Wireless providers to present availability and teach the committee about available options (fiber, wireless, DSL, etc.)
4. Survey the existing 1,693 households about their needs.
5. Educate the community through online materials on town websites.
6. Identify and survey unserved households.
7. Convene a regional discussion on the future of Broadband.
8. Determine focus of the committee – (wire or wireless)

Resources

- Successful towns – talk to Mike Birnbaum with Kingdom Fiber (ask about Craftsbury’s work), and Evan Carlson in Lyndon
- Department of Public Service – Clay Purvis clay.purvis@vermont.gov. Broadband infrastructure grants could be available
- The Vermont Economic Development Authority could be a loan source
- USDA Rural Development could be a funding source. Contact Ben Doyle at Benjamin.doyle@usda.gov or 828-6042. Ask about the Rural Business Development Grant Program and the ReConnect Program.
- The Northern Borders Regional Commission could be a funding source. Contact Tim Tierney at ACCD at tim.tierney@vermont.gov.
- Municipal Planning Grants at ACCD could provide a funding source. Contact Cindy Blondin at cindy.blondin@vermont.gov.
- The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) could provide grant writing assistance. Contact Liz Gleason at liz@vhcb.org.
- The Rutland Regional Planning Commission could be a key implementation and planning partner. Contact Ed Bove at ebove@rutlandrpc.org or 775-0871 x208.

Task Force Members

Robin	Chesnut-Tangerman	talisman@vermontel.net	
Douglas	Gifford	douggifford7@gmail.com	287-9986; 918-505-9850
Tom	Johnson	teepeejay@aol.com	287-1558
Meghan	Ohl	meg.ohl1987@gmail.com	201-414-0444
Kristen	Ross	guayabitogirl@gmail.com	287-4656
Betsy	Sinnott	betsysinnott@comcast.net	884-8175; 914-356-0220
Ina	Smith Johnson	inajsmith@gmail.com	287-0580
MaryJo	Teetor	ferncliff@comcast.net	287-5836

✓ Develop a Poultney Co-working space and incubator for new start-up businesses, and invite newcomers to the town

Community Chair: **Daniel Lang**

Facilitator: **Tyler Richardson**, *Executive Director*, Rutland Economic Development Corporation

Resource Team Members: **David Bradbury**, *President*, VT Center for Emerging Technologies

Dimitri Garder, *President*, The Lightning Jar (and CEO, Global-Z International, Inc.)

Chris Saunders, *Field Representative*, Office of Senator Patrick Leahy

Action Steps

1. Network to experienced residents & organizations
2. Explore additional community partners
3. Conduct a survey of local interest and need
4. Visit other spaces
5. A resource map of area expertise to support new/small businesses – a public appeal/invitation in newspapers, Front Porch Forum, etc. to identify skills and resources
6. Use of Chamber of Commerce website
7. Articulate the “What” and the “Why” of the group
8. Formalize regular open houses for the existing makerspace

Resources

- Federal grant programs – USDA Rural Development; the Economic Development Administration, etc.
- Connections to similar spaces throughout the region
- Regional marking initiative participation
- SBDC/REDC/CWE/area mentors for small businesses and emerging entrepreneurs
- Other facilities to visit could include:
 - Local64 in Montpelier – contact Lars Torres at lhtorres@gmail.com
 - The Space on Main in Bradford – contact Monique Priestley at mepriestley@gmail.com
- Coworking in Vermont 101 – is a white paper that gives the basics that can be found here.

Task Force Members

Doug	Freilich	nagabake@vermontel.net	
Daniel	Lang	langd@greenmtn.edu ; turnedupwoodworx@gmail.com	845-633-6922
Jaime	Lee	jaime.m.lee.vt@gmail.com	287-6007
Jamie	Lerner	jamison.lerner@gmail.com	585-991-8660
Henry	Piccolo	80 College St	287-4253
Bruce	Taylor	brucejtaylor333@gmail.com	978-973-1197

✓ Develop a Bank in Poultney

Community Chair: **Russ Hoffman**

Facilitator: **Paul Costello**, *Executive Director, VCRD*

Resource Team Members: **Mike Pieciak**, *Commissioner, VT Dept of Financial Regulation*
Wright Preston, *VP Commercial Lending, Northfield Savings Bank*

Action Steps

1. As an ongoing pre-condition, work with other Poultney Task Forces to do all we can to boost businesses in town.
2. Poultney's downtown has an existing banking facility that is for rent at a potentially affordable rate; the task force looks to 'court' a bank to move into town, potentially into that space.
3. To do so, the Task Force will start gaining information to make its case; first by surveying existing businesses about where they do their banking.
4. At the same time, the task force looks to interview the leadership at Citizens Bank about why they felt the need to close their Poultney office.
5. Then, the group will connect to other potential banks and/or credit unions by interviewing the presidents of the First National Bank of Orwell, Heritage Family Credit Union and VSECU about what they would need for deposits, loans, levels of rent, etc., to be profitable opening a branch in Poultney.
6. The team would then survey the amount of deposits that Poultney residents and businesses, schools, municipality and other partners would make, and the potential for loans and mortgages if a bank committed to being **the** bank for the Poultney community.
7. Since a bank will need to run a feasibility analysis at some expense, the Task Force could reach out to state and philanthropic partners to potentially fund that analysis.
8. Then the Task Force could work with other committees on leveraging positive communications about Poultney and the future of the regional economy.

Resources

- Preservation Trust of VT could lend advice on the site and potentially act as a feasibility partner.
- The Vermont Department of Financial Regulation could support research, could facilitate the discussion with Citizens Bank, and could potentially help set up or facilitate meetings with other banks.
- The Town of Alburgh has successfully attracted a local bank and the Task Force could consider the steps they took.
- The Rutland Economic Development Corporation could be an ally, advocate, or even facilitative support to the group.
- The Rutland Regional Planning Commission
- The Poultney Downtown Committee
- Commissioner Josh Hanford at the Department of Housing and Community Development at the Agency of Commerce and Community Development
- The Poultney Chamber of Commerce
- Local Philanthropy
- The Slate Quarry Group

Task Force Members

Doug Freilich nagabake@vermontel.net

Daniel Lang langd@greenmtn.edu; turnedupwoodworx@gmail.com 845-633-6922

Jaime Lee jaime.m.lee.vt@gmail.com 287-6007

Jamie Lerner jamison.lerner@gmail.com 585-991-8660

Henry Piccolo 80 College St 287-4253

Bruce Taylor brucejtaylor333@gmail.com 978-973-1197

✓ Expand Trails, Biking and Outdoor Recreation Opportunities as an Economic Driver for Poultney's Future

Community Chair: **Sylvia Cassano**, *Director of Slate Valley Trails*

Facilitator: **Jenna Koloski**, *Community and Policy Manager, VCRD*

Resource Team Members: **Erica Campbell**, *Policy and Outreach, Senator Bernie Sanders Office*

Zac Freeman, *Founding Member and Board of Directors, RASTA*

Jennifer Hollar, *Director of Policy and Special Projects, VHCB*

Becca Washburn, *Director of Lands Administration and Recreation, VT Dept of Forest, Parks, and Recreation*

Priority Action Steps:

1. Address Rail Trail access – contact Lisa Thornton at Forests, Parks and Recreation to identify how to move forward with improvements to the Rail Trail through the Downtown and to Rail Trail access. Identify funding to support signage, improved access, parking and a better connection to Downtown Poultney.
2. Expand outdoor recreation events for youth and adults. Build a volunteer base that can work in support of events such as youth mountain bike nights, race events/series (running, biking, and triathalons), and educational programming. Identify local businesses who could sponsor and help to promote outings, events, and activities.
3. Improve marketing and promotion of trails. Map trails and build a directory for Poultney Outdoor Recreation. Make the directory available in print at local locations and online for visitors and locals. Better connect information to the town and Chamber websites and the Visitor Center.
4. Coordinate with local businesses to sponsor events and to better promote the trails and events and share maps and trail information with visitors.

Other Potential Action Ideas:

- Develop a partnership with Stone Valley Arts to create an arts and exploration trail for children.
- Put history markers on trails to highlight the history of the region.
- Work with landowners to better connect trails to the downtown and the lake.
- Explore keeping the State Park open longer in the year.
- Explore options for trail access and use on the 4,000 acres of conserved State land in Poultney.

Resources

- Lisa Thornton at Forest, Parks and Recreation will be a key contact to work on the D & H Rail Trail and the wildlife management area in Poultney. Contact lisa.thornton@vermont.gov or at 802-777-7480.
- The VT Community Loan Fund could be a resource to help support local businesses.
- Rise-VT or Come Alive Outside can help to frame this work around community health and wellness.
- The Killington Valley Marketing Initiative through Rutland Economic Development Corporation could help to market Poultney with a focus on trails. Contact Tyler Richardson at tyler@rutlandeconomy.org.
- The Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative could be a funding source. There will be \$200,000 available this year. Contact Becca Washburn at Becca.washburn@vermont.gov for details on this year's grant round.
- The Vermont Community Foundation Spark Grants could be a funding source or they could know of other sources such as local funds (Hills and Hollows) that could support the work. Contact Sarah Waring at swaring@vermontcf.org.
- National Life Group in Montpelier has a Main Street Grants program that could potentially support connections to Downtown or Rail Trail work. <https://www.nationallife.com/Our-Story/Main-Street-Grants>
- The Northern Borders Regional Commission could be a potential grant source.

- USDA Rural Development could be a funding source through their RBDG or community facilities program. Contact Ben Doyle at Benjamin.doyle@usda.gov or 828-6042.
- Local businesses such as GE or the Slate Industry could support events and provide community service hours.
- The group could work to build on the current donor relationship to expand the work and increase the reach of the trails and efforts.
- The Vermont State Department of Buildings and General Services offers recreation grants to communities. Learn more here: <http://www.bgs.vermont.gov/sites/bgs/files/FY2020%20Building%20Communities%20Grants%20Announcement.pdf>.

Task Force Members

Ted	Barnett	theombarnett@gmail.com	941-773-4998
Sadie	Brown	sadiebrown110@gmail.com	
Pamela	Burlingame	pamela@vlt.org	287-4136
Chuck	Helfer	helperphoto@gmail.com; chuckngail@yahoo.com	287-9190
Gail	Helfer	gailrickh@gmail.com	287-9190
Vicki	Loomis	802vickiloo@gmail.com	342-7255
Caitrin	Maloney	caitlin.maloney@gmail.com	279-1281
Tom	Mauhs-Pugh	tommauhspugh@msn.com	287-5527
Mary	Pernal	marypoodledog@gmail.com	287-4338
Chris	Smid	christophersmid@gmail.com	558-3383
Julie	Sperling	nagabake@vermontel.net	
Joel	Tilley	jptilley50@gmail.com	598-2583

IV. Poultney Comes Together Community Forum Notes

These notes reflect the concerns and ideas expressed in the group discussion of over 200 Poultney residents at the March 7th community meeting. Many interesting and diverse thoughts are represented here, and are presented as a reminder of issues explored, and a possible foundation for future projects.

Describe the Challenge

- Concerns about how the college will be maintained after June 30. Will there be security? How will buildings be heated?
- What happens if the campus goes empty for an extended period of time?
- \$7M in payroll loss
- What happens to downtown businesses when customers leave?
- Downtown already suffering and the infrastructure is old. Local lister says the actual values of downtown buildings are not as high as people think or policy makers claim.
- Inadequate high-quality downtown space for entrepreneurs.
- Concerns about ripple effect to towns who see Poultney as a hub.
- Concerns about uncertainty for downtown businesses.
- Concerns about who decides if GMC is sold what the final price will be.
- Need volunteers to fill capacity to do work of revitalizing town and finding a solution.
- Water/sewer rates will increase at least 30%. GMC paid a lot of that cost.
- Nervous about fewer young people coming to town to go to college and stay in Poultney afterwards. Will vibrancy end?
- Concerned about amount of properties for sale and that tax base will go down. Infrastructure and schools may not be supportable. Real estate prices are going down.
- Faculty and staff live in town and will be leaving. People who depend on rental income may suffer as demand for housing decreases.
- State needs to pay attention to Southern Vermont / Poultney.
- Concerns about books and artifacts of Welsh culture. How will they be handled and stay safe and accessible?
- Concerns about the best use for the farm going forward.
- Loss of GMC volunteers in community organizations.
- Student body leaving will change demographics; median household data in presentations is way too high.

Strengths of the Community

- Large community of GMC alums in area.
- New efforts in town to create a maker space, youth education center by local entrepreneurs.
- Recreational assets: state park, 30 miles of trails; financial commitment to build out these trails over 5 years. Can link with other trail systems.
- There are organizations supporting Poultney that are siloed and don't overlap—want to see them work together.
- Passionate community.
- Emerging arts community anchored in GMC alumni (Stone Valley Arts)
- The main asset is the people in Poultney.
- The Slate Valley Park group will be breaking ground on new project downtown.
- Community support of high school and college
- The nearby lakes and lake communities
- Strong volunteer base
- Natural environment and food growing environment (no water shortages!)

Brainstorm of Action Ideas

- Likelihood of a single new purpose for campus is slim. Think about multiple uses.
- Repurpose parts of campus including dorms into mental health facility (town has strong education and healthcare workforce).
- Create a youth retreat.
- Focus on serving veterans with the campus including housing, rehab, dining, education. Bring in a VA hospital.
- Work closely with entire region, including Washington County New York.
- Utilize the campus to advance Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) education in high school.
- Combine education systems: maybe 3 or 4 districts can share the campus.
- Create a senior housing complex.
- Use parts of campus for equestrian training and barrel jumping.

- Repurpose campus for firefighter training and VT police academy.
- Work with USDA to use campus for agricultural work.
- Utilize the 650-bed capacity of the existing facility.
- Attract or create a trade college.
- Repurpose the college as a multipurpose facility and conference center, including a language academy, institute of sustainability, farming program, meditation center, writing retreat, PHD or fellowship retreat, and/or trade college.
- Create more town uses of property including open access for town to the playing fields and other assets.
- Town library take over management of the GMC library.
- Celebrate the Welsh heritage of area by continuing to maintain the Welsh collection.
- Attract or create a small seminary.
- Approach the Brattleboro Retreat about their expansion needs and potentially attract them to the GMC campus.
- Create an environmental engineering and STEM school.
- Create a unique educational environment that creates satellite locations for high profile research institutions and colleges such as MIT, Cornell etc.
- Implement Poultney 2020 study/work.
- Create a paid position to focus on community and economic development in town.
- Create a model of rural innovation that is replicable in other rural areas.
- Important to keep an open mind; GMC a leader in sustainability; so is VT. Can we keep doing it here, make it a national model?
- Compile a resource library of the work of GMC faculty and staff to preserve the mission of the college in Poultney.
- Create a multi-use business park out of the campus.
- Establish a center for water quality excellence on Lake St Catherine.
- Expand recreation opportunities in community, including working with other stakeholders to improve experiences, like keeping the state park open during leaf peeping season.
- Utilize the campus to take advantage of the CBD boom—including using acreage to grow hemp.
- Engage the entire town behind efforts.
- The town should purchase the campus and make it the educational hub of the town.
- Utilize aspects of the campus to provide the town with larger gathering spaces.
- Potentially rehouse inmates being sent out of state on campus by creating a new correctional facility.
- Create a school or attract a school that focuses on non-traditional learning (like Landmark).
- Repurpose portions of the campus for workforce housing.
- Create a center to welcome and accommodate refugees and immigrants.
- Focus on creating more attractive downtown/streetscape by putting more plants around town.
- Focus on reopening the coop.
- Focus on the unique opportunity / value of rural areas and create a replicable model of new ruralism.
- Ask for specific assistance from the State of Vermont.
- Engage Vermont's most prominent asset – seniors – in whatever opportunity emerges.
- Connect the senior center and resources on campus (like the dining room) more.
- Consider how the campus could be used to help address the shortage of nurses.
- Buy local and build a movement of community relocalization to bolster Poultney's downtown.
- Fully support the Save GMC effort.
- GMC has a strong mission of sustainability, and the community should commit to solving the problem and pooling their minds to solve the problem together.

V. Poultney Comes Together Participants

Bob Allen	Ian Culh	James Johnson	Suanne Ohl	Neal Vreeland
Mary Alma Noonan	Gerry Dankowski	Susan Johnson	Mary Pernal	Burke Walker
Marcia Angermann	Kirsten Davenport	Tom Johnson	Siobhan Peters	Cecelia Ward
Annelle Arnold	Ryan Davenport	Cail Johnstone	Henry Piccolo	Peter Waring
Katy Arnold	Sherry Davis	Brenda Jones	Henry and Marita	Guy Warman
Sharon and Paul	Joe DeBonis	Jeffrey King	Pietrtah	Dick Weis
Aubin	Dan Declercq	Mike Kirk	Melanie Potter	Chrispin White
Hardy Avery	Ernie DeMatties	Linda Knowlton	Henry and Marita	Wilda White
Richard Balit	Kerry Devlin	Samantha Kowalski	Purrolo	Kristen Whitman
Diane Bargiel	Carl Diethelm	Christina Krueger	Charlene Rapinz	Anna Wilkonson
Ted Barnett	Charlene Doane	Brandon Labate	Herberta Ritchie	Jan Williams
Jonathan Beaudry	Lilly Driscoll	Peter Labate	Linda Roberts	Lorraine Williams
Renee Beaupre	Glenn Dunn	Bill Landwsman	Kristen Ross	Robert Williams
White	Jan Edwards	Daniel Lang	Anne Ruby	Richard Williams, Jr.
Lara Bitler	Ruth Ann Fischer	Doug Langdon	Kim Rupe	
Nancy Blair	Whitney and Grace	Jaime Lee	Cy Ryan	
Barbara and Fred	Fordham	Judy Leech	Arthur Sabin	
Borchers	Doug Freilich	Jamie Lerner	John Saltis	
Ed Bove	Bill Gage	Steven Letendre	Dawn Sarli and Kyle	
Steve and Valerie	Raymond Gibbs	Katarina Lisaius	Calahan	
Broughton	Douglas Gifford	Susan Loomis	Joan Sawyer	
Sadie Brown	Jan Gifford	Vicki Loomis	Norm Scribner	
Joarden Buche	Alan Gombosi	Mariah Lovejoy	Cecelia Sharon	
Carol Bunce	Jackie Gordon	Mike Luciano	Erica Siclari	
Bill Bunker	C.B. Hall	Scott Maclachlan	Betsy Sinnott	
Janet Burchett	Doris Hall	Caitrin Maloney	Anne Slonaker	
Pamela Burlingame	Oliver Hall	Tom Mauhs-Pugh	Brad Slonaker	
Alan-Glen Burnell	Michele Harmon	Patricia McWilliams	Chris Smid	
Cindy Bushey	Gerri Harrison	Lynne Meyer-Gay	Rod Smith	
Wendy Cadieux	Mark Haskins	Pam and Rich	Ina Smith Johnson	
Ryan Carr	Michelle Hayes	Mikkielsen	Hilary Solomon	
Kimberly Carter	Chuck Helfer	Mandy Mitnik	Julie Sperling	
Katie Casey	Gail Helfer	Andrea Molt	Mark Stackpole	
William Casey	Pat and Don	David Mook	Carol Stierle	
Sylvia Cassano	Hemenway	Richard Munch	Hans Stoneberg	
Robin Chesnut-	Maureen C. Hill	Kerri Munro	Mary Jane	
Tangerman	Seti Hoffman	Khanti Munro	Stoneberg	
Carol and Jonas	Russ Hoffman	David Munyak	Bruce Taylor	
Ciejillo	Mary Holland	Jenny Talke Munyak	MaryJo Teetor	
Thomas Clark	Burnham Holmes	Glenda Nelson	Deborah and Mike	
Julie Cogswell	Tom Hughes	Lisa Nelson	Tefenda	
Richard Coley	Tanya Humphreys	Roy Newton	Lara Thompson	
Tom Colutti	Trevor Humphreys	Sheila Nichols	Bill Throop	
Chuck Colvin	Daniel Ingraham	Kerry O'Furlani	Joel Tilley	
Elizabeth Cooper	Kris Jacoby	Meghan Ohl	Dianne Tindall	
Nina Corbin	Ida-Mae Johnson	Melvin Ohl	Maritza Vega	

VI. Visiting Resource Team Members

Seth Bongartz, Hildene, seth@hildene.org, 363-3996

Edward Bove, *Executive Director*, Rutland Regional Planning Comm., ebove@rutlandrpc.org, 775-0871 x208

David Bradbury, *President*, Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies, david@vcet.co, 253-6843

Ted Brady, *Deputy Secretary*, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, ted.brady@vermont.gov, 828-3080

Paul Bruhn, *Executive Director*, Preservation Trust of Vermont, paul@ptvermont.org, 658-6647; 343-0595

Erica Campbell, *Outreach Representative*, Office of Senator Bernie Sanders, erica_campbell@sanders.senate.gov, 862-0697

Maura Carrol, *Executive Director*, Vermont League of Cities and Towns, mcarroll@vlct.org, 229-9111

Paul Costello, *Executive Director*, VT Council on Rural Development, pcostello@vtrural.org, 802-223-5763

Ben Doyle, *Assistant State Director*, USDA Rural Development, Benjamin.doyle@usda.gov, 802-828-6042

Rebecca Ellis, *State Director*, Office of Congressman Peter Welch, Rebecca.Ellis@mail.house.gov

Zac Freeman, RASTA, zac@jsfreeman.com, 272-6214

Dimitri Garder, *The Lightning Jar*, Bennington. Dimitri@lightningjarVT.com, 321-3070

Josh Hanford, *Commissioner*, Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development, josh.hanford@vermont.gov, 828-3080

Michael Harrington, *Deputy Commissioner*, Vermont Department of Labor, michael.harrington@vermont.gov, 828-4100

Jennifer Hollar, *Director of Policy and Special Projects*, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, jennifer@vhcb.org, 828-5865

Gary Holloway, *Downtown Program Coordinator*, Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development, gary.holloway@vermont.gov, 828-3220

Jenna Koloski, *Community & Policy Manager*, VT Council on Rural Development, jenna@vtrural.org, 225-6091

Katarina Lisaius, *Outreach Staff*, Office of Sen. Bernie Sanders, Katarina_lisaius@sanders.senate.gov, 862-0697

Brett Long, *Deputy Commissioner*, Vermont Department of Economic Development, brett.long@vermont.gov, 461-9353

Elizabeth Marx, *Senior Philanthropic Advisor*, Vermont Community Foundation, emarx@vermontcf.org, 388-3355 ext 241

Nancy Owens, *President*, Housing Vermont, nancy@hvt.org, 863-8424

Michael Pieciak, *Commissioner*, Vermont Department of Financial Regulation, michael.pieciak@vermont.gov, 082-828-3301

Wright Preston, *Northfield Savings Bank*, wright.preston@nsbvt.com, 871-4415

Clay Purvis, *Director Telecommunications and Connectivity*, Vermont Department of Public Service, clay.purvis@vermont.gov, 371-9655

Chris Recchia, *Executive Director*, EC Fiber, chris.recchia@valley.net

Tyler Richardson, *Executive Director*, Rutland Regional Development Corporation, tyler@rutlandeconomy.com, 770-7067

Chris Saunders, *Senator Leahy's Office*, chris_saunders@Leahy.senate.gov, 863-2525

Tim Tierney, *Agency of Commerce and Community Development*, tim.tierney@vermont.gov, 505-5496

Becca Washburn, *VT Department of Forest Parks and Recreation*, Becca.washburn@vermont.gov, 793-3432

Thea Wurzburg, *Office of Congressman Peter Welch*, thea.werzburg@mail.house.gov, 652-2450



Vermont Council on Rural Development

PO Box 1384, Montpelier, VT 05601-1384

802-223-6091 | info@vtrural.org | www.vtrural.org

