

Highgate Reaching New Heights

Community Visit Report and Action Plan



Produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development

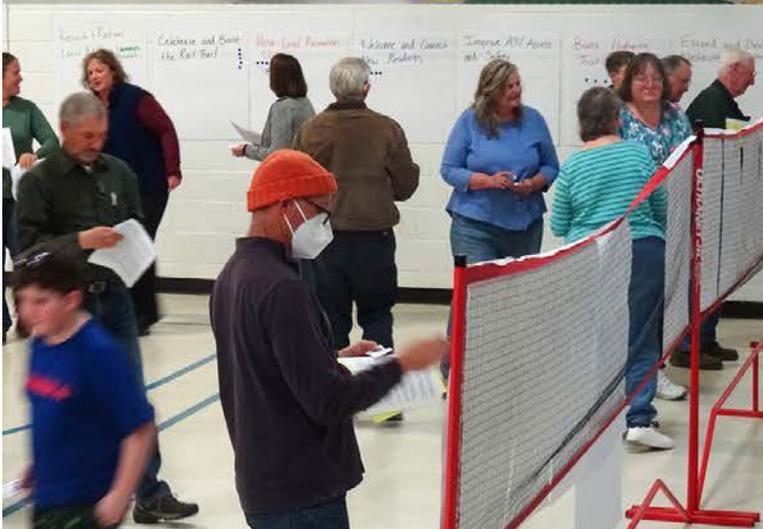
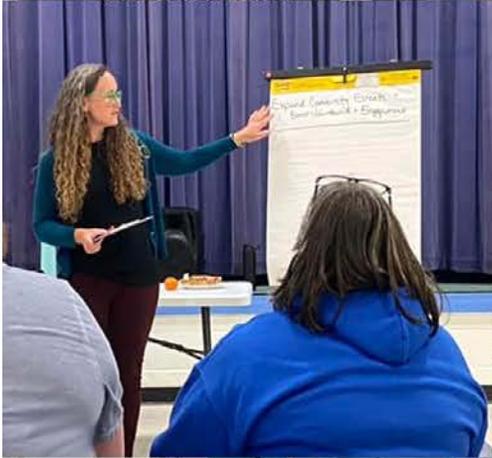
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I. Introduction

Highgate is a community on the move. Deeply rooted in their agricultural economy and tradition, today Highgate is thinking hard about how to leverage their unique assets to best position themselves for the future. As the Town moves forward on major economic development and infrastructure projects, there is clearly deep dedication to local voice and connection in bringing together the full community to ensure that these initiatives are part of a broader collective vision and direction. Throughout the Reaching New Heights process there was a clear theme that, while the community is eager to think forward to what the future will bring, they are also committed to preserving their heritage, culture, traditions, civic engagement, and community connections. Rather than allowing change to happen to the community outside of community input and control, this is a Town ready to seize the reins and advance in ways that embrace the potential for the future and are the right fit for Highgate.

Throughout the meetings in the Reaching New Heights process, VCRD and the Visiting Team were impressed by the community pride, dedication, and forward thinking about needs for the future. There was a great deal of variety in the discussion from volunteerism, and connection to workforce development, business support, and infrastructure. It is not easy to choose priorities, and there are many other good ideas for action listed in the 'opportunities' section of this report that can inform the ongoing work of the Task Forces, but in the end, Highgate community members selected solid priorities for action that will lead to a stronger and more vibrant community and economy for all including:

- **Advance Career Training, Workforce Development and Agricultural Career Pathways/Support and Recruit Local Businesses**
- **Expand Highgate Library and Community Center**
- **Expand Community Events and Boost Volunteerism and Engagement**

These initiatives set challenging but achievable goals. There is a lot of work to do, but task force chairs are coming together to frame a cohesive structure and a path forward. With over 120 local people from all parts of the community participating in the process, and a few other major infrastructure and economic development initiatives underway, it is clear that there is a great opportunity in Highgate for forward momentum and progress.

The Task Forces advancing these issues are already hard at work—please support their efforts, or join them by reaching out to their chairs (listed in the work plan section of this report). VCRD is prepared to support the efforts of Highgate and we look forward to providing follow up help to the Reaching New Heights Task Forces as asked.

There are many people to thank for making this Community Visit effort possible.

We would like to thank the Highgate Selectboard and Town Administrator Heidi Britch-Valenta who initially invited this process. We also deeply appreciate the work and leadership of the Steering Committee who helped guide the process from the beginning including: Sharon Bousquet, Heidi Britch-Valenta, Ty Choiniere, Luc Dupuis, Kevin Dwyer, Hector Hill, Corey McCuin, Richard Menard, Richard Noel, Yeshua Pastina, and Julie Regimbal. Thank you also to all of the community leaders, groups, and organizations who worked to spread the word about the event and made sure everyone in town was invited and encouraged to participate!

Thanks also to the Northern Borders Regional Commission, the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and VCRD members and donors who all contributed funding to make this process possible.

VCRD calls state, federal and non-profit leaders to participate in Community Visit processes. We are proud of the partners we get to work with—and especially the Highgate Reaching New Heights Visiting and Resource Teams (listed in the back of this report)—they are the best of Vermont’s public servants.

Getting things done is all about leadership, and all of Highgate should be grateful to those who’ve stepped up to serve as chairs of the task forces: Amber Machia (community events), Adah DeRosier, Rebecca Manning, and the Library Board of Trustees (library and community center expansion), Beth White and Leeann Wright (workforce/ag career pathways).

VCRD especially wants to thank Rebecca Manning for stepping up to serve as the overall chairperson for the Highgate Reaching New Heights process. When VCRD staff asked folks in town about the right person to be a local centerpoint and touchstone in this process, Rebecca’s name came up as a dedicated and driven community leaders. In addition to her work on the family’s dairy farm, Rebecca plays many other roles in the community so it was an honor that she was willing to step up into this leadership role in the Reaching New Heights process. Throughout the community events and discussions with VCRD, it became more clear every day how much Rebecca loves her community and wants it to succeed. It has been a pleasure working with her and we know that the work ahead will be more successful because of her dedication and drive.

At VCRD, we are so proud to work in places where community is real and strong, where local residents work together to get things done and make their communities the best they can possibly be. It was a great pleasure to work with the residents of Highgate who stand up for the town and who are lined up for the common good and best future for this wonderful community. We are eager to follow your progress and support your success!



The Missisquoi Valley Union High School Jazz Band entertained us all during the community dinner at the Kick-Off!!

II. Vision for Highgate's Future

These points of vision were compiled from vision statements that were shared during Community Visit Meetings and supported by the majority of participants at the Resource Meeting and an online survey. The statements represent broad hopes that the majority of responding residents have for the long term good of the greater Highgate community.

Highgate residents look to a future Highgate where:

- ❖ we maintain and cultivate the best parts of our community and traditions.
- ❖ we are a friendly town when everyone knows and supports each other.
- ❖ our youth want to stay in the community.
- ❖ people want to come to live and raise their families.
- ❖ there are jobs for youth.
- ❖ there is a culture of agriculture, recreation, and entrepreneurship.
- ❖ both longtime residents and newer members of the Highgate community of all ages come together as a community.
- ❖ there are gathering spots for people to connect and come together.
- ❖ we have both indoor and outdoor public spaces that are well utilized by community members and visitors.
- ❖ there are opportunities to share community values with our children.
- ❖ Highgate feels like home and people are real.
- ❖ we maintain the feel of a small town where there is vitality, connection, activities, and events.
- ❖ services and resources are available and accessible to community members.
- ❖ we come together to plan for the future rather than let change happen to us.

III. The “Highgate Reaching New Heights” Community Visit Process

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. **Here is a snapshot of the 5-month process in Highgate:**



Planning Committee Meeting: February 9, 2022

On February 9, 2022, 11 local residents met to plan for the launch of the Highgate Community Visit process. This group came up with a name for the process – Highgate Reaching New Heights – and helped to plan the kick-off. They decided on forum topics and an invitation process. Through calls, e-mails, and flyers, this team worked hard to promote the kick-off.

The Planning Committee included: Sharon Bousquet, Heidi Britch-Valenta, Ty Choiniere, Luc Dupuis, Kevin Dwyer, Hector Hill, Corey McCuin, Richard Menard, Richard Noel, Yeshua Pastina, and Julie Regimbal

Step 1 ~ Kick-Off Forums and Community Dinner: March 29, 2022

Highgate Reaching New Heights kicked off with 4 brainstorming forums held at the Elementary School and the Sports Arena. Over 100 participants shared assets, challenges, and ideas for action in the following forum topics chosen by the planning team: Community Fun: Recreation, Pride, Tourism & Quality of Life; Youth, Education & Career Training; Healthy & Safe Community; and Economic Development, Agriculture Viability & Infrastructure. 14 visiting team members participated, learning more about Highgate and providing reflections to the community.

Visiting Team members included: Ted Brady, *Executive Director*, VT League of Cities & Towns; Tayt R Brooks, *Deputy Secretary*, VT Agency of Commerce & Community Development; Thomas Cheney, *Executive Director*, Advance Vermont; Amy Cunningham, *Deputy Director*, Vermont Arts Council; Catherine Dimitruk, *Executive Director*, NW Regional Planning Commission; Ben Doyle, *President*, Preservation Trust of Vermont; Jess Graff, *Associate Director*, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity; Lindsey Halman, *Executive Director*, Up for Learning; Breck Knauft, *Executive Director*, VT Youth Conservation Corps; Kate McCarthy, *Program Officer*, Vermont Community Foundation; Elisabeth Nance, *Economic Development Coordinator*, Town of Swanton / Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation; Marlena Valenta, *Energy and Climate Planner*, Northwest Regional Planning Commission; Susan Warner Mills, *Scribe*; and Abbey Willard, *Agricultural Development Division Director*, Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

Vermont Council on Rural Development staff included: Margaret Gibson McCoy, *Operations and Communications*; Alyssa Johnson, *Community Projects Associate*; Jenna Koloski, *Community Engagement and Policy Director*; Brian Lowe, *Executive Director*; Katie McGrath, *Intern*; and Kim Rupe, *Development and Communications Associate*.

Step 2 ~ Community Meeting: April 26, 2022

After the kick-off, all of the brainstormed ideas were distilled into 18 key areas of action. Over 40 community members joined either in person at the Highgate Elementary School or on Zoom to narrow the list of priorities for community action. After lively dialogue and a dot-voting exercise, 3 action ideas emerged as key priorities: **Advance Career Training, Workforce Development, and Agricultural Career Pathways***; **Expand Community Events and Boost Volunteerism and Engagement**; and **Expand the Highgate Library and Community Center**. Participants then signed up for task forces that will convene to move these priorities forward.

*Note that “Recruit and Support Local Businesses” was also selected as a priority but when the task force met at its first meeting, it decided that what is most needed to support local business is action on workforce development, so it merged with the “Advance Career Training, Workforce Development, and Agricultural Career Pathways” task force.

Step 3 ~ Resource Meeting and Task Force Launch: May 24, 2022

On May 24, 2022, community members, facilitators, and resource team members came together to develop action plans, identify resources, and form task force groups that will work in the months ahead to implement the priorities. From here forward, all “Highgate Reaching New Heights” action is focused at the task force level.

Resource Team Members included: Thomas Cheney, *Executive Director, Advance Vermont*; Catherine Delneo, *State Librarian, Vermont Department of Libraries*; Elizabeth Gamache, *Chief Development Officer, United Way/Former Mayor of St. Albans*; Kathy LaVoie, *Special Projects for Economic Recovery, Northwest Regional Planning Commission*; Misty Sinsigalli, *Area Director, USDA Rural Development*; Timothy Smith, *Executive Director, Franklin County Industrial Development Corp*; and Sarah Waring, *State Director, USDA Rural Development*.

Vermont Council on Rural Development staff included: Hannah Carpino, *Community & Policy Manager*; Alyssa Johnson, *Community Projects Associate*; Jenna Koloski, *Community Engagement and Policy Director*; and Jessica Savage, *Director of Community Collaboration*.



Highgate Reaching New Heights kicked off on March 29th 2022 with brainstorming forums; this one held at the Highgate Sports Arena.

IV. Highgate Reaching New Heights Priorities

Determined by Highgate residents at the Highgate Reaching New Heights Community Meeting
April 26, 2022

Proving that those who live, work and raise their families in a community are best qualified to understand its needs and potential, more than 80 Highgate community members whittled down a list of 18 action ideas to 3 priorities that offer opportunities to enhance existing resources, and strengthen the town through exciting new ventures. Residents concluded the meeting by signing up for Task Forces in the selected areas.

Highgate residents selected three priorities for future action:

► **Advance Career Training, Workforce Development, and Agricultural Career Pathways**

A task force could form to develop a comprehensive strategy to better connect youth and local businesses and improve access to practical training in the trades, agriculture, education, and more. In particular, the group could focus on celebrating and cultivating the long tradition of agriculture in Highgate, and encourage and foster the next generation of dairy, beef, and diversified veggie farms and value-added producers in the community. The group could partner with area schools, businesses, and regional organizations to developing training, mentoring, and job placement opportunities with area businesses and manufacturers and creative work-based learning opportunities. The task force could also host school and community events to better celebrate the trades and agriculture and highlight a diversity of alternative career pathways and training opportunities. In particular, training and educational opportunities offered could focus on jobs that may emerge as a result of airport expansion. Note that “**Recruit and Support Local Businesses**” was also selected as a priority for future action. When the task force met at its first meeting, it decided that what is most needed to support local business is action on workforce development, so they decided to merge with this task force.

► **Expand Community Events and Boost Volunteerism and Engagement**

A task force could form to plan an annual series of events to unify and connect the community and offer entertainment and fun for all ages. Events could include an annual tree lighting, concerts, a Village celebration, and ice cream socials. Events could help to bring vibrancy to the community, provide more opportunities for community gathering, and engage youth. In addition to event planning, the group could work to build and implement a campaign to enlist more community volunteers and help to foster a culture of volunteerism and civic engagement in Highgate. The group could actively share, promote, and recruit for community volunteer needs – from event organizing to municipal leadership and emergency services. Additionally, the group could work with schools to better share volunteer roles and the benefits of civic engagement with youth in the community, and provide opportunities and incentives for youth volunteerism.

► **Expand the Highgate Library and Community Center**

Many residents shared a need for expanded space and services at the Highgate Library and Community Center. Work is currently underway to build a plan for a new, expanded building that could include a plan for some kind of community gathering space. A group could form to work in support of the Library staff and trustees to engage community support, identify and access funding sources, and help to move forward a major library and community center expansion initiative.

Other Key Opportunities identified by the community:

Along with the three chosen priorities, the key opportunities listed below reflect other potential ideas for action that community members shared on Community Visit Day. 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.

Expand Housing Options

A housing task force could form to identify strategies, from new development to zoning changes and/or a housing fund, to create a diversity of housing options in the community. Particular focus could be on the needs of young or new families looking to relocate to or stay in the community.

Improve and Expand Pedestrian Safety and Walkability

Highgate residents are concerned about speeding on the roads and the safety of pedestrians of all ages. A task force could form to, in collaboration with the Village Core committee, explore traffic calming solutions to address these issues through improved sidewalks and walkability, speed bumps or other deterrence measures and enforcement strategies.

Improve Community Communications

A task force could form to expand communications resources and avenues to include an online hub, bulletin boards, mailings, signage, increased Front Porch Forum participation, and a print newspaper or newsletter to keep residents informed. The group could survey the community to determine the best channels for communication and use that input to create a comprehensive communications plan.

Address Crime and Improve Enforcement

Highgate residents are concerned about the lack of follow through and enforcement when it comes to speeding, vandalism, or other dangerous activities in the community. A task force could come together to address these issues by both improving local strategies such as a neighborhood watch-type effort or by working with local and State officials to encourage improved enforcement and follow through.

Recruit and Support Local Businesses

A task force could work with experts to develop a recruitment plan with strategies to attract businesses and investors, opportunities to highlight and market town assets, and incentives and technical assistance to support businesses. Highgate residents of all ages are particularly interested in seeing more restaurants, lodging, a café, and outdoor gear shop to build on river and bike trail assets.

Develop a Community Resource Hub

A group could form to develop a hub, perhaps at an expanded library or other community space, that could host a variety of services to ensure all residents have what they need to thrive. Services could include the provision of substance use support, mental health assistance, adult ed programs, career services, telehealth support, help with connection to health and dental care, and more.

Expand and Clean Up Parks, River Access, and Green Spaces

A Task Force could form to plan a series of volunteer days to clean up river access and picnic areas in Highgate. Additionally, the group could identify opportunities to expand parks and green spaces or identify new opportunities to create outdoor space for public use and gatherings.

Extend and Develop Wastewater Infrastructure

A Task Force could form to work in support of the Town and the Village Core Committee to expand on local wastewater infrastructure to better serve the economic future of the community. A recently approved initiative will help to expand wastewater out to the Airport development, but other opportunities remain to extend that infrastructure for future business growth and/or to develop water and sewer in the Village. Local volunteers could help to boost public support and connect to technical assistance and funding for these initiatives.

Boost Highgate Tourism

A Tourism and Marketing task force could form to attract visitors and potential new residents to the community to support the local economy. The group could focus both on targeted marketing efforts to share local assets as well as building amenities, activities, and opportunities to attract and serve visitors from the region, the US, and across the border. This could include showcasing local events, boosting agritourism opportunities, highlighting local assets such as Lake Champlain, the Rail Trail and other recreation, or the development of a small welcome center or kiosk to share information for a variety of audiences. The group could consider strategies such as a “Highgate Passport” that would encourage visits to community businesses, farms, and other landmarks.

Improve ATV Access and Safety

A group could form to focus on identifying ways to improve access to places to ride ATVs that work for everyone in the community. They could identify designated areas to safely ride while also offering educational and fun activities for youth and adults interested in getting involved. The group could explore policy changes such as opening up certain roads or other areas to ATV use and also amenities such as a local ATV shop for parts and repair.

Welcome and Connect New Residents

A group could form to develop strategies to better welcome and connect new Highgate residents. Some strategies may include a “Welcome to Highgate” packet, a community directory and guide, and identifying existing residents willing to partner with new residents to help answer questions and welcome newcomers to the community.

Host Local Recreation Clubs

A task force could form to develop a series of local recreation clubs, events, and social activities to help to connect community member and provide opportunities for recreation, health and wellness. Clubs could include running, canoeing, skiing, adult recreation leagues, and more.

Celebrate and Boost the Rail Trail

A task force could form to better capitalize on the Rail Trail. The group could focus on celebrating the Trail through events and activities, and also identifying strategies to improve amenities and trail connections. A strategically placed pit stop, snack bar, bike shop and/or info kiosk could help to attract bikers to stop and visit the community and local businesses. Improved lodging options could help to make Highgate a Rail Trail destination. The group could then work to promote the Rail Trail and local amenities to attract users to the community.

Recruit and Retain Local Education Providers and Leaders

[added on community meeting day]

V. Task Force Action Plans

Resource Meeting, May 24, 2022

Highgate Task Forces are comprised of community members and an appointed chairperson. On Resource Day 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. This final phase of the program marks the time when residents truly take ownership of the work, and begin the exciting process of turning ideas into action.

► Advance Career Training, Workforce Development, and Agricultural Career Pathways

A task force could form to develop a comprehensive strategy to better connect youth and local businesses and improve access to practical training in the trades, agriculture, education, and more. In particular, the group could focus on celebrating and cultivating the long tradition of agriculture in Highgate, and encourage and foster the next generation of dairy, beef, and diversified veggie farms and value-added producers in the community. The group could partner with area schools, businesses, and regional organizations to developing training, mentoring, and job placement opportunities with area businesses and manufacturers and creative work-based learning opportunities. The task force could also host school and community events to better celebrate the trades and agriculture and highlight a diversity of alternative career pathways and training opportunities. In particular, training and educational opportunities offered could focus on jobs that may emerge as a result of airport expansion.

Community Co-Chairs: Beth White and Leeann Wright

Facilitator: **Sarah Waring**, USDA Rural Development

Resource Team Members: **Tom Cheney**, Advance Vermont; **Kathy Lavoie**, Northwest Regional Planning Commission

Community Participants and Task Force Signups: Sharon Bousquet, Joseph Depatie, Kevin Dwyer, Scott Fitzstephens, Marie Clair Laroche, Jim Messier, Richard Noël, Dan Palmer, Mary Pickener, Julie Regimbal, James Sullivan, Beth White, and Leeann Wright

Current Status

- There are two existing programs with a focus on agriculture: 1) Agriculture program at MVU and 2) Northwestern Career and Tech Center (NW Tech). Each program has a respective career pathway staff person and collectively serve 1,500 students.
- All students are engaged in career exploration. While required, there is not strong excitement from students.
- Personal Learning Plan and Flexible Pathway options are great, but not well coordinated.
- Education still struggles with “college only” messaging for students.
- Jobs exist!!! There are lots of opportunities for full time work.
- Youth are NOT accustomed to workplace culture – expectation of work, work ethic, cell phones, deadlines.
- Internships are a GAP. How to show youth what it’s like in real work situations.
- Need more overlap between employers and youth – BOTH students out and employers in.
- Local employers have significant investment in new employees (e.g. Airport).

Action Steps

1. MVU and NW Tech (Julie Regimbal and Leanne Wright) can coordinate as a workforce/career development hub to do outreach together and connect more closely with local businesses. Businesses need more coaching and orientation regarding what schools want and how to talk to kids. This hub could be a central clearinghouse for businesses to access schools and resources/training/coaching.
2. Engage parents with more resources and support to engage in the workforce/career development process (Kevin Dwyer).
 - a. A parent contract to bring parents together in support of youth training/workforce development and support.
 - b. A potential parenting class to support local parents and equip them with resources they may need as they support their students.
 - c. Consider parent-teacher conferences as a way to engage in conversations about career pathways and education.
 - d. Develop parent resources/infographics/educational opportunities.
3. Develop more mentoring opportunities to connect students with employers in the community (Julie – in connection with business leaders in the community or others that can help to design and build a valuable mentoring program for Highgate youth)

Additional higher priority action ideas

- Financial literacy day/banking day.
- Loaned executive program, United Way.
- Engage with Middle School, 5-7th grade.
- Open employer day for 5th grade.
- Coordinated approach to reach out to businesses – new positions have been created in St. Albans and Burlington
- Bring back Industrial arts – volunteers or community members could teach
- Rethink FFA and 4H to spur more interest
- Alumni + “Home Day” – Bring home successful alums
- Improve communication with employers and educators
 - Can companies commit an individual?
- Engage parents!!
 - Can we bring pride to the good jobs that are here?
 - How can parents start to be aware of and supportive of CAREER pathways?
- Explore ways to embed more career exploration throughout the grades.
- Consider opportunities for mentoring and business mentoring.

Other potential action ideas

- Middle school outreach form for career and tech center; Again in 8th grade.
- Tech and engineering day for all middle schools.
- Intro to trades. Explore the potential for workforce development to help alleviate challenges with staffing this program.
- Afterschool program could be more flexible with adults.

Resources

- Vermont Business Roundtable, <https://vtroundtable.org/>. Look into committee on businesses and schools.
- Vermont Talent Pipeline, which is created by the VT Business roundtable, has resources for students and employee, <https://www.vermonttpm.org/>.
- Vermont Department of Labor positions in St. Albans and Burlington.

- Mentor Vermont – Ask about career mentoring. Contact Chad Butt, <https://www.mentorvt.org/> and chad@mentorvt.org and 802-658-1888.
- Vermont Internship Program – database from VT Businesses for Social Responsibility (VBSR) and Department of Labor.
- St. Albans CCV – Intro to careers course – bring it here.
- Center for An Ag Economy – Contact Jon Ramsay at jon@hardwickagriculture.org.
- Vermont State University. Pat Moulton is coordinating workforce programs for the State University system.
- Advance VT will participate with PARENTS nights.
- Farm to School.
- Farm to Plate.
- Grants (need to be simpler) – NRPC building grants database for education.
- The VCRD Community Leadership Resource Guide has resource and ideas for community outreach and engagement: <https://www.vtrural.org/leadership/guide>.
- It may be worth looking into whether Town ARPA funding could be available for this project.

Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

After Community Meeting Day, Resource Team members, representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, submitted their recommendations for other potential actions and resources the task force might consider as it moves forward. These recommendations encompass their experience, past success, and consideration of the community's unique assets and needs.

Action Step Recommendations

It may be beneficial to include youth on this task force. Ask young people what they are interested and what would excite them; empower them and give them real seats at the table.

Combine learning with hands-on projects that matter to the community. For example, do the local town offices need to be weatherized? If so, have this be part of the local tech centers curriculum. If the local tech center can't take this on, contact ReSOURCE to see if they could offer a Weatherization 101 course in the area.

The group could consider adding compensation for students in any project budget. This could make it a job experience to be involved.

Consider looking at models throughout the state (Milton Innovation Center, Spaulding, etc.) that are addressing these same goals and how they engaged community (youth and adults) in the process.

Connect with the Northwest Career and Technical Center to identify existing programs in the area that could be better connected to Highgate employers. Invite the Vermont Department of Labor to a meeting to understand the resources and initiatives they are running and proposing to run that might help Highgate launch an initiative.

Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations

Milton Town School District. Learn more at https://mhs.mtsd-vt.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1489737&type=d&pREC_ID=1677087 and contact Christina Reider at creider@mymtsd-vt.org or (802) 893-5396.

Spaulding High School. Learn more at <https://www.spauldinghs.org/academics/flexible-pathways> and <https://shswbl.weebly.com/>.

ReSOURCE. Learn more at <https://resourcevt.org/> and contact Bethany Johnson at bjohnson@resourcevt.org and 802-857-4348.

Northwoods Stewardship Center. Learn more at <https://www.northwoodscenter.org/wordpress/> and contact Dusty May at dusty@northwoodscenter.org or 802-723-6551 x304

Generator. Learn more at <https://generatorvt.com/>

Sarah Buxton, State Director of Workforce Development (802) 828-4343, sarah.buxton@vermont.gov;

Dustin Degree, Deputy Commissioner, Vermont Department of Labor, dustin.degree@vermont.gov;

Tom Hark, Civilian Conservation Corps and founding director of the Vermont Youth Conservation Corp, thomas.hark@cccusa.us

Kathy Lavoie, former Executive Director, Franklin Grand Isle Workforce Investment Board and NWRPC Special Projects director, klavoie@nrpcvt.com

NOFA VT, VT Land Trust, VHCB all have ‘farmer training’ programs and resources that are very robust. They may be the option for partnership for Jim (the ag teacher) OTHER than the institutes of Higher Education. Perhaps NOFA to come or VHCB farm business advisors could and do some of the ag training/teaching.

The McClure Foundation’s “Most Promising Jobs” report (<https://mcclurevt.org/most-promising-jobs/>) is a snapshot of what jobs will be in demand in the next ten years, what training is needed (many require a certificate or technical training), and what wages someone can earn.

Potential Funding Sources

CCV, in partnership with the McClure Foundation, is now able to offer free Associate’s Degrees to people participating in Early College: <https://ccv.edu/freedegree/>. This program can help students who hadn’t considered college or additional training to do so without worrying about cost.

For Community Engagement and other work, consider a Spark Connecting Community Grant through VT Community Foundation: <https://vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/spark-connecting-community/>.

Recruit and Support Local Businesses

A task force could work with experts to develop a recruitment plan with strategies to attract businesses and investors, opportunities to highlight and market town assets, and incentives and technical assistance to support businesses. Highgate residents of all ages are particularly interested in seeing more restaurants, lodging, a café, and outdoor gear shop to build on river and bike trail assets.

On May 24th, a group met to discuss actions on the “**Recruit and Support Local Businesses**” opportunity that was selected as a priority at the April 26th community meeting. Those in attendance on May 24th, decided that what is most needed to support local business at this time is action on workforce development, so they decided to merge with the “Advance Career Training, Workforce Development, and Agricultural Career Pathways” task force. Note that, as with other opportunities that didn’t emerge as a top 3 priority for action today, community members may choose to loop back to the elements in this idea over time. The notes from the May 24th meeting are listed below along with recommendations from the Resource Team.

Facilitator: **Alyssa Johnson**, VT Council on Rural Development

Resource Team Members: **Tim Smith**, Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation

Community Participants Ty Choiniere, David Desorcie, Kyle Lothion, Rebecca Manning, Ryan Maskell, Mary Pickener, Kellie Uzell

Current Status and Initiatives

- There is strong support for local businesses.
- Appreciation from local residents around tangible and intangible benefits provided by local businesses, especially those that may not be available with larger and more distant ownership.
- The town purchase a property.
- There is not a lot of vacant property in Franklin County, which could allow for the potential for businesses if there was interest.
- Strong local representatives in the legislature.
- There is interest in moving to the community from some businesses, but workforce continues to be a challenge.
- The need for increased wages can also be a challenge.
- Potential need for parking for the rail trail, and arena.

Action Steps

Before working to recruit additional businesses, it is important to support the businesses in the community. The most pressing issue facing local businesses is the need for additional employees. Workforce development solutions are most poised to address these challenges. Specific tactics for improving workforce development could include:

1. Increasing agricultural and career training. (It was noted that this is the topic of one of the other action groups, who will develop a more detailed action plan.)
2. Decrease the stigma for not going to college.
3. Increasing financial literacy.
4. Collaborating with guidance counselors.
5. Exploring the potential for policy changes to support more varied employment opportunities, especially for youth.

Additional Potential Action Steps

- Consider a grocery store model like the NOTCH in Richford.
- Work with Associated Grocers to see about opening a store in Highgate.
- Focus workforce efforts around those age 12-15.
- Support additional housing development.
- Consider ways to develop additional senior housing, as well as a possible café.

Resources

Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation. Contact Tim Smith at tim@fcidc.com.

Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

Action Step Recommendations

Continuing to build a culture of business support and entrepreneurship, and improving town amenities and assets, is a great way to solidify and recognize what you have before putting energy into recruitment.

The task force could apply for a USDA Rural Development Rural Business Development Grant to create a recruitment plan and marketing plan for attracting businesses to Highgate. Use a portion of Highgate's Local Fiscal Recovery (ARPA) Funding as match to the RBDG grant.

Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation is an important partner for supporting and promoting Economic Development in Highgate. Work with Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation to

evaluate ways other communities in Franklin County have addresses this issue - from creating loan funds, to offering free rent, to marketing. Contact Tim Smith at tim@fcidc.com

Vermont Small Business Development Center offers robust services including business advising, training and workshops, and additional resources. They can assist with business plan development and business support. Visit <https://www.vtsbdc.org/>.

Potential Funding Sources

USDA Rural Development has a variety of resources that could be available for planning and project implementation. Rural Business Opportunity Grants can help economic planning, cluster planning and with groundwork to spur economic development. Rural Business Enterprise Grants can support the progress of particular enterprises and might be especially useful if an incubator project is developed. Visit <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-business-development-grants/vt> for grant information, and find contacts here: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/contact-us/state-offices/vt> or 802-828-6000. For Rural Business Development Grants, contact Susan Poland, susan.poland@usda.gov

Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services has a Regional Economic Development grant program that or capital costs associated with major maintenance, renovation, or planning related to the development of facilities reasonably expected to create or retain job opportunities in Vermont communities. Contact Judy Bruneau at judy.bruneau@vermont.gov or (802) 828-3519. Visit <https://bgs.vermont.gov/commissioner/building-communities-grants>.



On May 24, 2022, community members, facilitators, and resource team members came together to develop action plans, identify resources, and form task force groups that will work in the months ahead to implement the priorities.

► Expand Community Events and Boost Volunteerism and Engagement

A task force could form to plan an annual series of events to unify and connect the community and offer entertainment and fun for all ages. Events could include an annual tree lighting, concerts, a Village celebration, and ice cream socials. Events could help to bring vibrancy to the community, provide more opportunities for community gathering, and engage youth. In addition to event planning, the group could work to build and implement a campaign to enlist more community volunteers and help to foster a culture of volunteerism and civic engagement in Highgate. The group could actively share, promote, and recruit for community volunteer needs – from event organizing to municipal leadership and emergency services. Additionally, the group could work with schools to better share volunteer roles and the benefits of civic engagement with youth in the community, and provide opportunities and incentives for youth volunteerism.

Community Chair: **Amber Machia**

Facilitator: **Jessica Savage, VCRD**

Resource Team Member: **Liz Gamache, United Way/ former Mayor of St. Albans**

Community Participants and Task Force Signups: Sharon Bousquet, Angela Carr, Beth Choiniere, Liza Comiskey, Chevon Cooper, Alice Sue Cota, Luc Dupuis, Jane Lothian, Amber L. Machia, Rebecca Manning, and Therese Tucker

Current Status and Initiatives

- COVID has created a lot of fear and anxiety about the future.
- Concerns about mental health of residents, isolation.
- Some populations can be difficult to reach- lack of internet access, lack of connections to neighbors.
- Word of mouth has been successful for some events.
- Turnout has been slowly improving at recent events- Memorial Day bake sale has been going well.
- Successful tree-lighting ceremony during the winter.
- Working to boost volunteerism.

Action Steps

1. Identify and catalogue existing resources and “point people” for different key organizations: create a list of organizations and contact information for who is already creating and/or posting events and volunteer opportunities. Reach out to them and let them know what your task force is and your goal: invite them to join a meeting to learn more.
2. Appoint “switchboard operators”- people to act as a central point of information for town residents, local groups: the idea is for the task force to become the hub for all community event listings and opportunities.
3. Reach out to local event listers/creators/groups to send all upcoming events to committee. Explore how the task force will get the word out about these events: ideas to consider include a town webpage or website, a newsletter (digital and hard copy) which could be sent to residents by email/mail and/or through schools, and a town email address for soliciting feedback and ideas from residents.
4. Identify events that the committee can host: focus on intergenerational events and creating meaningful ways to engage and recognize volunteers. Ideas could focus on intergenerational events where seniors, children, families can collaborate such as Bingo Night where kids could volunteer to staff the event and run games and

seniors could come play, Highgate Town Celebration Day, where community can come together and events that cater to town interests- fish and wildlife, hunting, ATVs, outdoor recreation/farm events etc.

5. Establish communication channels for town information: see number 3 above for ideas.

Other potential ideas for action:

- Other event ideas to consider: flea market, Barn Dances, “Dime-A-Dip,” town game nights and events on the Choiniere Farm.
- For harder to reach residents, consider in person or personalized outreach techniques.
- Some groups have been successful at providing community services (church suppers were one example): consider connecting with those groups and learning about how they make it work and if there is potential collaboration opportunities.
- Recognizing and appreciating volunteers is important to the goals of this group: consider asking for business sponsorships for small, meaningful tokens of gratitude (t-shirts, hats or other items).
- Businesses could be natural partners for sharing event information and/or event sponsorships. Desorcie’s Market has an active Facebook page and was one idea to consider for collaboration.

Resources

Librarians have lots of information on community events, and interface with the town residents frequently.

Schools:

- Some school groups – like the Honor Society – require volunteer hours for its students- connecting with them could help with volunteer base for events.
- Sending home communications, flyers with students to reach more families.

Community service organizations (faith-based groups, Honors Society).

United Way can help with volunteer placement, and potentially connect the committee with the Senior Corps of Volunteers. Contact: Liz Gamache, United Way.

ARPA funding- Highgate has ARPA funds dedicated to community events, mental health that could be used by this committee.

Sponsorships from local businesses through ad placements on flyers/handouts/newsletters.

Town recreation department.

Fire department.

Creating merchandise- hats and t-shirts with committee name and design.

Hunting, fishing, wildlife groups who do advocacy or events.

VASA (ATV organization). Contact: Timothy Joyal, president.

Hockey events.

State recreation-based groups. Contact: Jessica Savage of the Vermont Council on Rural Development: jessica@vtrural.org.

Northern Forest Canoe Trail goes through Highgate.

Public music performances starting up this summer through recreation department- “Summer Sounds.”

Choiniere Family Farm:

- Currently working to establish trails, working with VMBA, RiseVT.
- Hoping to start up movie nights, summer race series.
- Hoping to become community hub, host events for residents.

Vermont Community Fund has grant opportunities for recreation programming.

Connecting to agritourism resources and existing businesses for advice.

VMBA chapter in St. Albans, “Franklin County Mountain Bike Club.”

New bike shop in downtown St. Albans – Bootlegger Bikes.

VCRD leadership guide: <https://www.vtrural.org/leadership/guide>.

Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

After Community Meeting Day, Resource Team members, representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, submitted their recommendations for other potential actions and resources the task force might consider as it moves forward. These recommendations encompass their experience, past success, and consideration of the community’s unique assets and needs.

Action Step Recommendations

The group could engage youth in the event planning process. Find someone who the students trust and admire. The group could create a school-community partnership to work together and perhaps local teachers can be close partners and champions of the initiative.

Strive to include voices that aren’t usually at the table i.e. Abenaki voice.

Invite any active community-based organizations (church groups, volunteer groups, recreation department, etc.) that are or have historically worked to bring community groups together for events to create a calendar, then identify some “open times” and recruit these groups and others to begin planning new community events.

Consider a Battle of the Bands type of competition (and invite the high school band that played as part of the Community Visit!).

Research if there are spaces for marginalized groups. Is there a space for LGBTQ+ folks to gather and contribute? The group could reach out to Outright Vermont to learn more.

Promote events through local media, bulletin boards, in mailings that go home with students in the schools, on Front Porch Forum, and elsewhere.

Members of the task force could visit similarly sized communities in Vermont who are working on or have recently expanded events over the past 10-15 years, and meet with the key people in those communities who could explain how they accomplished what they have.

Potential Funding Sources

Consider the Spark Connecting Communities Grants from the Vermont Community Foundation: <https://vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/spark-connecting-community/>. These grants are all about building connections and social capital. The next application round goes from June 6th to July 18th, 2022. This program could be a way to test out an idea you have about bringing the community together.

Arts Impact Grant from Vermont Arts Council. These grants support organizations, municipalities, and schools in their efforts to create a more vibrant quality of life by providing equal and abundant access to the arts. Learn more at <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants/organizations/arts-impact> and contact Meredith Bell, mbell@vermontartscouncil.org, or 802-402-4478.

► Expand the Highgate Library and Community Center

Many residents shared a need for expanded space and services at the Highgate Library and Community Center. Work is currently underway to build a plan for a new, expanded building that could include a plan for some kind of community gathering space. A group could form to work in support of the Library staff and trustees to engage community support, identify and access funding sources, and help to move forward a major library and community center expansion initiative.

Library Leadership: **Adah DeRosier** and **Rebecca Manning**

Facilitator: **Jenna Koloski**, VT Council on Rural Development

Resource Team Members: **Catherine Delneo**, *Vermont Department of Libraries*;
Misty Sinsigalli, *USDA Rural Development*

Community Participants and Task Force Signups: Heidi Britch-Valenta, Caroline DeLoreto, Adah DeRosier, Scott Fitzstephens, Virginia Holiman, Mary Pickener, and Melanie Thompson

Current Status

- In 2017, a municipal planning grant funded a vision and architectural plans for a library building – both one that includes a senior center space and one that is separate from a new senior center space
- The vision and plan drafting are based on one location – the Machia property which is within walking distance of the Village center, school, and arena, and is already owned by the Town.
- The library has done some fundraising for an expansion initiative and do have a capital contribution from the town of \$25K each year.
- The Town and library are currently waiting to hear back about another Municipal Planning grant to do final design work
- There is currently work going on to develop wastewater infrastructure to that village site as well
- The quik-stop may want to expand into current library space as they have expanded septic needs
- There is a Friends of the Library group, but more volunteers are needed. The library has planning an event to drum up some interest.
- Some community members have expressed interest in rehabbing the existing building on the Machia property for library use. There are questions whether it is actually salvageable.
- Some do question the need for library expansion, but there appears to still be broad community support.
- People have over and over again expressed the need for a meeting room or gathering space. A place to host a community meal or event.

Action Steps

1. Continue to follow up on the design work. Once hearing back from the Municipal Planning Grant, develop a plan to take next steps towards final design. Identify the total costs of the final design.
2. As a part of the final design work, engage in outreach, education, and visioning to make sure that the final design meets community needs.
 - a. Utilize community volunteers, trustee engagement, and the Friends of the Highgate Public Library to build a team that would lead community outreach and visioning.
 - b. Develop surveys, events, and other opportunities to identify what the community wants/needs in the final design. Connect with other groups and organizations to determine their needs.
 - c. At the same time, engage the community in education and discussion to boost community support and buy-in.
 - d. Use that input to inform the final design.

3. Once design work is complete and a total cost is determined – develop a detailed timeline of the project and a plan for fundraising. Develop a sense of what will be needed from the Town vs. What will be able to be raised from other grant and/or loan sources.
4. Ongoing – continue to work towards the current wastewater process. This initiative may need to come to voters for approval/funding and may need to come first before we come to voters about the library project.

Other potential ideas for action

- Throughout the design and bidding process, prioritize local contractors and materials to support local economy. This could help with buy in especially among business leaders.
- Create a local “bank” of volunteers and folks with experience in the trades or other skills that could help to contribute to building efforts and/or programming in an ongoing way.
- Some ideas for what the space could include (could share examples to get public input): meeting space, kitchen, private meetings rooms for mentoring/telehealth/etc.)

Resources

Local community groups to connect with:

- Recreation commission – hockey, little league, etc.
- Selectboard, Planning Commission, Development Review Board.
- School – teachers and youth.
- Families – could capture video or share info and collect input at library events.
- Other Reaching New Heights task forces.
- Churches.
- Local “hangouts” like gas stations in the morning.
- Historical Society.
- Agriculture – FFA.
- High schools and Tech Center – could help with design and visualization.

The Aspen Institute has a guidebook and framework for community outreach. Find that guide here:

https://csreports.aspeninstitute.org/documents/ActionGuideFINAL_7_12_17.pdf.

The VCRD Community Leadership Resource Guide has resource and ideas for community outreach and engagement: <https://www.vtrural.org/leadership/guide>.

Alyssa Johnson, on the VCRD team, can help to connect to resources and also could support grant-writing and other assistance for a community facilities project. VCRD also has a small amount of funding to help support consulting services/studies. Contact Alyssa at alyssa@vtrural.org.

Christine Graham is a fundraising consultant who could be helpful in developing a funding plan for this project. Find her services at <https://www.cpgfundraising.com/christine-graham> (she may be able to help identify local or regional benefactors that could support a project like this).

VHCB REDI funds are available to support grant writing assistance or hire someone like Christine Graham (above) to develop a funding plan. Find out more at <https://vhcb.org/redi>.

It may be helpful to visit other libraries that have completed expansion or new building projects. Some examples include:

- Brandon library (which includes rental apartments).
- South Hero.
- South Burlington.
- Hardwick.

It may be worth looking into whether Town ARPA funding could be available for this project.

The group could look into income-generating activities that could support ongoing funding needs.

USDA Community Facilities grant program could be a key funding source. To learn more contact Misty Sinsigalli at misty.sinsigalli@usda.gov.

The Northern Borders Regional Commission could be a funding source. Find out more at <https://www.nbrc.gov/>.

The Department of Libraries can be a resource and has books and resources to share. Contact Catherine Delneo, State Librarian at catherine.delneo@vermont.gov. This is still pending, but they may end up with funds through ARPA to be distributed to libraries.

Some State funding is available such as Community Development Grants or Community Facilities grants through the Department of Building and General Services. For the Community Development grants contact Patrick Scheld at patrick.scheld@vermont.gov. For information on the BGS grants visit <https://bgs.vermont.gov/commissioner/building-communities-grants>.

Next Steps

Adah will work on setting a meeting that would bring together a team to focus on community outreach and vision development. This team would include leaders from the Trustees, Friends group, and community volunteers. We will then work to identify a point person for that group to help convene that effort and serve as a liaison to the trustees and library staff.

Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

After Community Meeting Day, Resource Team members, representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, submitted their recommendations for other potential actions and resources the task force might consider as it moves forward. These recommendations encompass their experience, past success, and consideration of the community's unique assets and needs.

Action Step Recommendations

Conduct a survey of various local and regional groups regarding the specific needs for space and the likelihood that they would use it. This would help inform the design of the space and provide a realistic view of demand.

Take the time to gather community input on what they would like to see be part of this new community space. Make sure final design takes into account suggestions as much as they can - have architect prepare preliminary architectural report that outlines final design and associated cost, with suggestions on how to value engineer the project in case cost is too high. Once you have a final design and associated cost, then it is time to work with someone to develop a fundraising/capital campaign. The capital campaign and time line will allow the community to get behind the project, fundraise, apply for grants and decide if there is going to be an ask for money from the Town.

Consider (if you haven't already) how the library can become a space for multi-generational use. This could be a way to garner buy-in across the town for the efforts.

Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations

Connect with communities like Hardwick that have used the community visit process to focus on expanding their libraries.

The Department of Libraries has a number of resources on the topic of library construction projects available at: <https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/public-libraries/new-librarians/building-construction>

The book **Checklist of Library Building Design Considerations** by William W. Sannwald is a potential resource. This title is available to libraries to borrow through the Department of Libraries' collection.

There are additional resource on the Department of Libraries website here:

<https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/public-libraries/strategic-planning>

Vermont Library Association - <https://www.vermontlibraries.org/>

Potential Funding Sources

Carefully watch the 2022 Legislative session to see if funding for library improvements is included - there may be some funding related to the ARPA Capital Projects Fund and expanding access to broadband services at libraries.

The Vermont Community Development Program includes a Planning Grant subset. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp> and contact Patrick Scheld at patrick.scheld@vermont.gov

The USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program provides support for a variety of programming. VCRD can provide additional support for developing and submitting an application. Learn more at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program/vt> and contact Alyssa Johnson at alyssa@vtrural.org or 978-760-1238.

Potential investment sources could include the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) or the Vermont Community Loan Fund. Learn more at <https://www.veda.org/> and <https://www.investinvermont.org/borrowers/vermont-borrowers/>.

Northern Borders Regional Commission could be a potential funding source. Learn more at <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/economic-infrastructure-development-investments>.

Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding might be a good resource to use here.

The [REDI \(Rural Economic Development Initiative\) Program through VHCB \(Vermont Housing and Conservation Board\)](#) can potentially provide grant writing and funding support. Learn more at <https://vhcb.org/redi> and contact is Mariah Noth at 802-828-1098 or Mariah@vhcb.org

USDA RD Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants. Learn more at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/telecommunications-programs/distance-learning-telemedicine-grants>

Federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding might be a good resource to use here.

Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services has a Building Communities grant program that can fund community facilities projects. Contact Judy Bruneau at judy.bruneau@vermont.gov or (802) 828-3519. Visit <https://bgs.vermont.gov/commissioner/building-communities-grants>.

Highgate Reaching New Heights Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held in-person and virtually with over 100 Highgate community members and the VCRD Visiting Team on March 29, 2022, and through a paper and online survey.

Although the prioritization work of the Highgate Reaching New Heights Community Visit 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.

Healthy and Safe Community

Visiting Team: Jenna Koloski (facilitator), Susan Warner-Mills (scribe), Catherine Dimitruk, Amy Cunningham, Jess Graff, Kate McCarthy

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Bike path is one of the best things in Highgate.
- Fire department, all first responders are assets.
- Rec department just received grant last year for bikes and paddle boards to be checked out.
- Rec dept and library have collaborated to bring opportunities to kids in the community so they can learn to appreciate the outdoors.
- Concerts in the park (started up again post-covid) are one of the ways the community comes together
- The arena and other sports opportunities for the kids are all assets.
- Partnership between the arena/rink and the schools has been really important.
- Being able to use the rink 12 months a year helps keep the kids busy and off the street.
- Highgate is moving in the right direction: arena, schools' use of the arena.
- We have home health services.
- Even with substance abuse and other challenges, Highgate is a safe place, a safe place to raise kids; this is because of the people here.
- Grouping of houses and businesses in town center is an asset.
- Planned VT Tech nursing program will bring better-paying jobs in Franklin Co.

What are the Challenges?

- Many people are hoarding (partly due to pandemic, part of people's lack of resources or places to dispose of trash)
- Lack of police presence is a problem (currently a contract service from St. Albans 24 hrs/wk)
- Parents aren't doing their jobs as parents—they provide kids vehicles that go 90 mph with no supervision
- When police are able to intervene, the consequences are not sufficient—enforcement has no teeth
- Our judicial system is inactive (13 properties damaged with a stolen vehicle; landowners were not compensated and the child experienced no consequences).
- People are not being cited for extreme speeding (animals and people have been killed). Again, enforcement is insufficient.
- Pedestrians are not safe (one participant's cousin was killed in 1980—she was walking, heading to the arena).
- Insufficient engagement by community members in volunteering, especially fire department and first responders, even with the great number of different volunteer opportunities.
- The town government needs volunteers as well.
- There isn't adequate primary care—even in the entire county.
- Northwestern Medical Center has pulled out of primary care.
- There is insufficient public transportation (or transportation for those who don't have their own)
- Illegal immigrant workers are a problem.
- There is a lack of mental health services or support for substance abuse or mental health issues.
- Broadband connection is insufficient.
- Drug use is rampant (children are finding needles).
- DARE is not in this school district. (The topic is included in curriculum in different ways in different districts.)
- Fentanyl has replaced heroin, and it is much more dangerous, more powerful, and poses much greater risk of O.D. (Drugs are brought in from NY and Philadelphia).
- Too many young people are reported in the obituaries to have "died unexpectedly"—these kids have no place to get help. There is too high a percentage of kids with serious home/family issues.
- Mental health and substance use is partly a function of a lack of community connections.
- It is very hard for newcomers to make connections here in Highgate.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done / What Action Can Be Taken by the Community?

- Implement telehealth to help with lack of primary care.
- More volunteer and community participation opportunities will help address the lack of connection that gives rise to mental health and drug abuse issues.
- Wrap some needed services into existing local orgs, such as library (if it expands) or a community center (services such as VT Adult Learning, mental health services, community development, career services, etc.). This would be especially useful for those without transportation.

- Enforce existing laws and regulations, and improve follow through.
- Install speed bumps or other traffic calming measures.
- Implement deterrence measures such as neighborhood watch—ways to deter the action before it happens (especially given that law enforcement is only here 24 hrs/wk).
- Use the library more actively—expanded library may allow for more programming.
- Expanded library is needed even more now (post covid) than ever. (Progress is being made on the funding; working through the technical details is the current focus.)
- Provide age-relevant activities (from children to seniors—dances, music, bingo, etc.)
- Library will be “Library and Community Center”—this is an important addition (see above suggestions).
- Need focus groups and surveys to ID what people do with their time; use that info to design new activities and reinforce existing ones.
- Perhaps the schools could help provide community awareness, paths to volunteerism and participation, service learning, etc., especially in middle and high-schools.
- Recruiting volunteers goes back to parenting and bringing children up to have a sense of community and service.
- Schools need to teach it as well; they could require students to contribute a certain number of volunteer hours.
- Implement cooperative learning programs (high school and college levels)
- Bringing in “Kids on Fire” program to involve kids as volunteers in the fire dept. will also get the kids acquainted with the adults who are involved and the kids will convey their excitement to their parents.
- Young people need to learn the value of paid work. (You can’t hire troubled kids if they’re not 18 yet.)
- Try setting up internships or apprenticeships to help young people learn the value of paid work.
- Since the kids aren’t old enough, involve them in fund-raisers for things such as the arena/ice rink.
- Provide benefits for young volunteering (e.g., free equipment, snack bar vouchers).

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- It’s fun to see the community come out like this and actively participate. This is a community that has as many assets as it does challenges. List of ideas is longer than both of those other lists! This holds real promise for progress in Highgate in the next few years.
- It’s encouraging to hear people discuss mental health in such an open way (quite different from how it was in the past when it was not spoken of). There was a real theme of connection to each other and of the community on one hand but also the theme of lack of connection, causing problem youth behaviors and mental health and drug issues. This provided a real reflection of the community and what’s important to participants.
- So many serious issues were brought up—from mental health to law enforcement. The conversation kept coming back to connection and building community, whether through recreation or cultural events. This group naturally pulled these ideas together, whether mentorship, volunteerism, or community assets such as the library and skating rink. The things people here are thinking about are really important and significant; they have real potential for making positive change.
- Drawing together threads of what others said, there are really profound challenges (substance abuse, mental health and disruptive behaviors). Yet people identified all kinds of community connections and hope to help address these issues. People here already are making these connections—bikes and paddle boards, collaboration between rink and school, etc. Two key ideas were service/cooperative learning and the idea of a resource hub. Other communities have started to do that, and they can serve as models and resources.
- VRDC team will be meeting with youth next week, which will be great since so many of the ideas raised here have to do with the youth of the Highgate community. It would be great to make the youth connection with the schools.

Youth, Education & Career Training

Visiting Team: Brian Lowe (facilitator), Marlena Valenta (scribe), Tayt Brooks, Tom Cheney, Ben Doyle, Lindsey Halman, Breck Knauft, Elisabeth Nance, Abbey Willard

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Airport expansion brings a lot of potential, high paying jobs.
- Kids that are passionate about the area, love the land.
- Ag program at the high school that is important to community.
- Enthusiasm about gardening, program at the library and with after school.
- Work study programs, allow kids to work in the community.
- Tech centers.
- Ag tech class that serves a lot of students.
- Training directly for the companies and jobs that exist in the town/region.
- Local businesses that want to work with the school for training.
- Highgate Arena and its programs.
- Students with hunger for mentorship, a lot of young self starters.
- Entrepreneurial spirit.
- Adult training at the Northwest Tech Center.
- Rail Trail/ outdoor trails/ nature.
- Good highway connections, generally well placed for being a hub (border, Jay, I-89).
- Lots of young people in the sugaring industry, learning the trade.

What are the Challenges?

- Getting the funding for programs to improve/expand to meet the need of students, finding out what the industries really need, training students to provide that.
- Finding teachers for technical positions, there's a gap between people in the field and people who want to then get a teacher's license.
- Teaching licensing not transferring from other states, really hard to get a VT teaching license.
- Lack of access to resources because of transportation.
- Kids want to do job placements but lack transportation.
- Transportation to work is a problem across ages.
- There are not always pathways for young people to go into ag.
- Difficult to pay a livable wage to farm workers.
- Liability is an issue for farmers to hire workers.
- Lack of housing.
- Ag is only focused on cows, should be diversifying and focusing on other types of farming and value added ag.
- False narrative about lack of jobs and opportunity in the region.
- Tech centers lacking outreach, no budget for the job.
- Hard time finding people to volunteer in general.
- Kids are told too often to just go to college.
- We have had a lot of great programs but they don't always have sustainability.
- Not sure what happened to personalized learning plans that would help students understand how their classes connect to opportunities (was in the legislature, is this happening?).
- How can we find relevant ways to help students find what they want to do earlier?
- How can regular people volunteer or offer expertise at the school?
- There isn't the capacity to do in depth mentorship, it needs to be organized regionally.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done / What Action Can Be Taken by the Community?

- More money to develop job training programs.
- Peer reviewed accreditation program for teachers.
- Opening up the peer review system to technical workers.
- Focusing training on airport jobs being developed.
- School outreach for alternative ag jobs.
- Value added ag production education (cheese and soap making).
- Assessment with industry leaders to see what skills are needed, what gaps need to be filled.
- Creating a region wide approach to tech centers, coordinating so that each center focuses on certain skills and doesn't cover the same stuff.
- Hiring a combined outreach coordinator for all the tech center/ grant writing also?
- Summer passport from Swanton Rec Center and other types of passports that highlight available opportunities in the region.
- Teach our students about the importance of volunteers and where they can volunteer in their communities.
- Adding volunteer opportunities through elementary/ middle school.
- There isn't the capacity to do in depth mentorship, it needs to be organized regionally.
- Open house to connect students/parents and employers.
- Educating parents about what's out there and what's offered.
- Recent graduates doing mentoring and getting to talk to students about what has worked/hasn't worked, how they've gotten their jobs.
- Individuals can volunteer for the school and offer expertise (afterschool? rec centers?).
- Training offered by employers (customs has a yearlong program).

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Solar installation, weatherization, ev mechanics, regenerative agriculture workforce development could be so helpful at the tech center level, ensure students are prepared for future job opportunities.
- The conversation is really well developed and there have been a lot of great programs in town, there needs to be a move towards sustaining these programs, seizing this process can really benefit and create long term change.
- Missing the young person's voice in the conversation, what do they need/ want to stay there.
- Looking at the culture, looking at what there is for fun, for mental health care, for making sure young people are fulfilled and want to be here.
- Airport is very important, focusing on that and the border, the connection between Montreal and Connecticut, work with the school and aerospace industry to provide opportunities and training for students.
- Young people care about social issues, social equity, living in a fair and kind place, so that will be a key to making sure they stay.
- The community knows there is a connection between education and career and that's wonderfully important.
- There has to be a change of conversation around education, away from high school to college pipeline and towards lifelong learning and more personalized approach.
- Human connection creates sustainability in programs, mentorship is part of that.
- Piloting the statewide program of internship/apprenticeship in agriculture, engaging with places like VT Tech who have great environmental programs and are withering.
- We know what we need to do, it's finding the money and the people and the momentum.
- Really need to hear from youth more in depth.
- The energy, innovation in the community is so wonderful and powerful.
- Look at the Milton Innovation Center, what if the school really becomes a place for the community, businesses come in, the building is in constant use, every school needs a fleet of vans to take students out into the community.
- Ag is only focused on cows, should be diversifying and focusing on other types of farming and value added ag.

Community Fun: Recreation, Pride, Tourism & Quality of Life

Visiting Team: Jenna Koloski (facilitator), Susan Warner-Mills (scribe), Ted Brady, Catherine Dimitruk, Amy Cunningham, Jess Graff, Kate McCarthy

What are the Assets in this Area?

- We have the right people running the library and rec.
- We have a good select board. They do a wonderful job.
- The rail trail is a real asset.
- The arena/skating rink—is a unique asset.
- Movies and music in the park in the summer are assets.
- Public ice skating is also a great asset.
- Fire dept. gets kids to sled on Carter Hill in the winter.
- Bake sale for Memorial Day has been a great fundraiser. Money goes back to the community for the Memorial in the Park.
- Rec dept puts on amazing parades.
- Our volunteers are one of the best things in Highgate.
- Agrotourism and school events are great assets.
- Maple house open houses are special in Highgate.
- Library is amazing for its size, draw and programming.
- People here know and support each other and the community.
- McCewan's Hardware Store is a key local hub.
- Highgate Historical Museum—run by volunteers.
- High School band.
- Elementary school is a huge asset for the community.
- Tyler Place brings people in and is great for tourism. So is Highgate Springs.
- So is the Northern Forest Canoe Trail.
- Library and Rec board are collaborating to loan out paddle boards and bikes.
- Village celebration three years ago reflected the best of Highgate.
- Farm to Table project is an asset.

What are the Challenges?

- Pickle ball and tennis courts (used to be used for ice skating in the winter).
- Rail trail should be providing the chance to ride or xx ski by having campgrounds and/or B&Bs/inns or other facilities. Highgate is a perfect spot for that.
- There is not enough public awareness of the existence of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail.
- There is a lack of independent recreation (as opposed to team sports)
- There is insufficient communication of community assets out to the public (especially rec dept offerings).
- We lack spaces for family picnics, reunions, etc.
- There is a lot of trash at the power plant bridge (otherwise it could be good for picnicking).
- Lake algae is an underappreciated problem.
- There are many new families in the area and people aren't as connected as they used to be.
- More tenant-occupied housing may keep people from feeling like they're part of the community.
- There is a general lack of personal motivation.
- ATVs are a big problem.
- There are not enough recreational activities for teens.
- Since this is a tightknit, insular community, it is hard for newcomers to find out where they fit in. They need to be asked to join in and welcomed by old-timers to find niches for themselves. It is really hard to break in.
- The big families who have lived here for generations make it hard for newcomers to find jobs, activities, friends, etc.
- There aren't opportunities for activities where people (especially new people) can just show up and meet people.
- Rec dept. has such activities but don't have enough people attend (communication issue plus Covid).
- In sports, there is a deficiency of pride in the community, in being part of the local team.
- There is a very strong pride of community here.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done / What Action Can Be Taken by the Community?

- Rail trail is really missing chance to ride or xx ski without driving to the trailheads and without campgrounds and/or B&Bs or inns. Highgate is a perfect spot for that.
- Power plant bridge could be a nice picnic area (but a lot of trash there).
- Put on another village celebration.
- Re-instate ice cream socials.
- Create places to keep the ATVs off the road.
- Have town publish a newsletter on its website where info and events could be shared. (And/or use Front Porch Forum.)
- Open a bicycle shop on the rail trail and offer pit stop, snack bar, etc.
- Use new ways to improve communication—conduct surveys asking what kind of communications would work for people.
- Put announcements in the mail—old fashioned but possibly more effective in reaching people.
- Create a community bulletin board.
- Encourage clubs, e.g., bike, canoe, kayak, running clubs.
- Hold a running program with a social afterwards.
- There are many resources out there, so have an awareness campaign to get the word out.
- One participant already serves as a town messenger and expressed willingness to continue and expand services.
- With information overload, information about activities (e.g., rec activities) needs to be targeted.
- Put up signs in the post office.
- Hold community events not just in the summer but at other times during the year.
- Hold lake and dam lake clean-ups.
- We need to get more volunteers involved in planning and implementing suggested activities
- Implement "Welcome to Town" measures (welcome package with flyers, places to visit, maps, etc.)

- Publish a community guide with activities, job postings, help wanted ads, local contractors and other resources.
- Publish a tourism guide for visitors, residents, etc. including recreation opportunities, places to stay, restaurants, etc. (Rec dept has a plan for a flyer/guide to put up on rail trail and other town locations.)
- A welcome center could have bathrooms, snacks, tourism guide, etc.
- Create a program of organized community services (e.g., 1st Saturday of the month) such as planting flowers, working in parks, things people could see and appreciate. This would help improve community pride.
- Shift sports activities away from “needing to be the best” back to just having fun.
- Encourage more regular activities/celebrations that people participate in as a community. (Christmas tree lighting, parades, choir performances, etc.)
- Reconnect families with other community members whose kids have left.
- Encourage parents to involve their kids in their own activities (like these forums) so that the kids’ involvement becomes part of their life experience.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Highgate has such an incredible sense of community. They want to come together more—there is a pent-up demand for doing so. This is the size of community that can do it. Also, it was a surprise that Lake Champlain, Canada and agriculture were topics that didn’t come up. Outdoor rec is popping everywhere, so definitely work is needed to make it pop here. One piece of advice: this is the start of the process, and if you like one or two ideas, bring more people to the next meeting, make it a priority for this process, and work together to get it done.
- It was really interesting that in this group (more than in the previous group) there was a huge desire to connect, to be part of things, to help fill the need for more volunteers. There is also so much pride in this community around the positives offered by Highgate and so much drive for even more of a sense of community.
- On the theme of engagement, logistical challenges exist and targeted communication is needed. Traditional challenges include the need for volunteers and pent-up demand, but also the perception, if not the reality, that it is difficult to get involved. So, it will be important all along to ask who is not being included, who is not at the table, and make sure they are invited and welcomed. There seems to be some swirling around some of the recreational activities and the need to coordinate them with the business goals. Overall, there is so much to love here, so many wonderful events—music, snowshoeing, ice cream. Build on that sense of celebration, even if it’s just a question of making some of them happen on a regular basis.
- “If I can’t actually move here, I want a library card!” The Highgate library has so many activities and programs, so the expansion will be so important. What has been said tonight—the deep community roots, the desire to be welcoming—all these are so inspiring. There are serious issues to address that are often faced by lots of small communities (e.g., around communication), but there is a lot of low-hanging fruit, lots of really doable ideas and suggestions that Highgate is poised to accomplish.
- Half of the Health and Safety list also had to do with FUN! So, this community obviously wants to have fun. And this post-covid time is the right time for this to happen. Also, the list of ideas in this Fun group is a bit shorter than in the Health and Safety group. This indicates that people are tired of the pandemic, but that makes it even more important to get people to work together to implement their ideas.

Economic Development, Agriculture Viability, & Infrastructure

Visiting Team: Ben Doyle (facilitator), Marlena Valenta (scribe), Tayt Brooks, Tom Cheney, Lindsey Halman, Breck Knauff, Brian Lowe, Elisabeth Nance, Abbey Willard

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Airport (development, businesses that will be brought in because of it).
- Waste water development.
- Old sandpit is being developed into industrial park.
- There are a lot of businesses interested in moving into the area.
- We are on the corridor between Montreal and Connecticut.
- Small businesses in the region, very community focused, donate and participate.
- Arena is a focal point, draws a lot of people and business in.
- Rail trail brings in a lot of business.
- Lake Champlain.
- FCIDC, NRPC, other supporting organizations.
- Location, route 78, I-89, the border.
- Agriculture helps to support the broader economy.
- Our school, our ag program, industrial program.
- Swanton electric rates are low.
- High power electrical lines.
- Small, independent farms, steady market for their goods.
- Farm to School, Farm to Plate, Healthy Roots, The Abbey buys a lot of local food.
- Watershed mentoring, high schools’ work based learning coordinator.
- Working bridges.
- CUD has reached a contract to bring high speed internet to the entire region.
- Working Communities Challenge full time NRPC staff to work on affordable housing.
- Northern Forest Canoe Trail.

What are the Challenges?

- Loss of agriculture.
- Waste management, lack of waste water system.
- Blue green algae, damage to tourism and property value.
- Lack of workforce.
- Workforce challenges in relation to ag/physical labor.
- Cellphones, young people's lack of soft skills like not using their phone during work hours.
- Missing trade schools.
- Aging population, aging out of the workforce.
- Young people moving out of the state.
- Young people being incompetent at their jobs.
- Schools aren't teaching full skills, a little bit of lots of different things.
- Kids not growing up on farms anymore, not getting that basis of skills.
- Families are moving out, lack of retaining families.
- Lack of broadband, lack of cellphone service.
- Housing shortage.
- Winter is really tough.
- Cost of living.
- Broken families, lack of parenting skills.
- Challenges in communication between generations.
- Regulations around tradespeople stop capable people from doing it.
- Not all companies have people who can pair with students to teach them, mentoring programs need more organization and development.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done / What Action Can Be Taken by the Community?

- We need to encourage young people to get involved, tell them they're capable, they will meet expectations that are set for them.
- Change regulations around tradespeople.
- How to match mentors with younger people, how to work with other people, introducing kids to organic farming.
- Expanding leadership development for small businesses.
- Better connection between business owners and CTEs.
- Train the trainer! FCIDC provide training.
- How to make our land, businesses, and people all work together and benefit in multiple ways (farm with trails for recreation and fundraisers).
- Kids getting involved in tree planting, volunteering, hands on projects in the community, things small businesses could request.
- Get the wastewater into the center of the town, develop the library and community center.
- Sidewalks, walkability, town centers.
- We as a community need to decide do we want growth or do we want to keep our ag land?
- wastewater and economic development.
- Young people want smaller housing in the centers of towns.
- Increased recreation, restaurants, bars, things to do to attract young people.
- Contribute to new housing committee.
- Planning is important to keep landscape and have increased housing.
- Community trails on farms so people can see what local ag does.
- Creating food hubs.
- More small destinations for young people, niche businesses, weekend trips.
- Promote the Rail Trail, it will be the longest in the world when finished!
- Rail Trail businesses coming to it for a day of promotion, set up along side.
- Craft beer capital, growing hops, diversifying, value added agriculture. Collaborative learning, building relationships with schools and residents and professionals
- Community education about the importance of
- How do we communicate with the select board? How do we give them feedback? How does the town better communicate?

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Highgate has a lot to celebrate, has opportunity around open space, transportation, ag, industrial development, we have opportunity for growth and shaping
- People share the value of agriculture
- Acknowledge the tension of how we are going to transition, the group was brave to acknowledge this tension
- Young people need empathy, they are growing up with broken systems, a broken world. We need to give them a sense of belonging and a sense of purpose
- Highgate is the first stop from Canada, really capitalize on that
- Encourage community members, see the good in each other, lift each other up, find the solutions instead of focusing on the problems, bring people in.
- Keeping traditions while moving forward
- Really think about what kind of community you want to be before the next step in the conversation
- Changing the narrative around education after high school, making sure kids know all their opportunities
- Building capacity to connect careers and education
- Business leadership development
- Address the factors behind broken families: mental health, addiction
- How do you thrive as a community? What does that look like? Focusing on quality instead of quantity when it comes to growth.

Ideas from Highgate Students

As shared in a group conversation with 30 Missisquoi Valley Union High School students on 4/5/2022

What are the Assets in Highgate?

- Mold out of the Highgate school.
- Close community and friendships.
- Plenty of places to ride.
- Lot of fishing spots.
- Beautiful scenery.
- Not many people.
- Somewhat clean bathrooms.
- Lot of back roads.
- There are gas stations (3).
- There is a library.
- Desorcies sells the best stuff ever.
- Ice rink is better than it used to be.
- Fishing in Lake Champlain.
- Gagne maple and creemees.
- Hunting.

Challenges, worries, areas for change

- Dislike the St Albans police on patrol.
- E Coli in the water system.
- Ice rink could use a tune up.
- The back roads are in bad shape.
- Remove speed bumps.
- Fix the MVU driveway and parking lot.
- Highgate school parking lot (they might not realize that it has been fixed).
- Ceiling in the Highgate elementary school.
- Sections of Lamkin St/Cassidy Road.
- Concerns about location of border patrol (and interactions with 4 Wheelers).
- Location of the gun store near a school.
- Blind turns are dangerous.
- Concerns about BLM flag and pride sidewalk at MVU.
- Sides of the roads have a lot of trash on them.

Ideas for the future of Highgate

- ATVs (and similar vehicles) legal on the roads.
- Bigger library.
- Pond.
- Truck pulls/tractor pull.
- Riding on the rail trail for ATVs.
- Own police station (jail).
- Straighter roads.
- Spring deer season.
- Registered ATV trail and any roads/ any road is legal for registered 4 wheelers.
- A McDonalds (restaurants-listed lots of chain recommendations).
- 4-Wheeler shop.
- Lower gas prices.
- Boat landings.
- Open up sand pits to ATVs.
- Another gun store with less expensive ammo.
- Drive ATVs to school.
- Parts store.
- Bigger park (lots of them didn't know that there was one).
- More participation in Green Up Day.
- Better bridge.
- Clean up the center of Highgate, houses are worn down.
- Build a lake in the center of town, expand the frog pond.
- Clean up the Highgate quarry (black water).

Additional Action Ideas

Here are the ideas residents contributed through a paper and online form

- Provide technical assistance to help develop and implement successful strategies for health and wellness.
- Better connect employers and youth both before and after graduation Better communicate about existing options for tech education, apprenticeship and work based learning opportunities
- Hope there will be a cafe/restaurant in Highgate in future.
- A car wash would be a great revenue for Highgate. A nice family restaurant would be nice to have in Highgate too.
- have the tenants at the top of Mill Hill Rd clean up their yard. Maybe provide some help. Police the area down by the dam a bit more, as its secluded location makes it ideal for shady dealings.
- Stop wasting money on things like useless sidewalks, put money into maybe nice little diner, someplace people can sit have coffee and a bite of food. Keep Highgate rural stop trying to make it a city. The country factor is what gives it the charm it used to have. And for God's sake make the people who live in back of the park clean up that property, it ruins the looks of the park.
- I feel that the kids should have strong education in our basic subjects. Reading, writing, math and science. We should put money into STEM.
- Annual Christmas tree lighting in the park.
- Use some money to tear down the house the town purchased that is across from desorcies.
- Increase recreational opportunities.
- We need business that would bring in tax revenue and make jobs for people (factories to bring in jobs).
- Integrate local legislators and community members to serve as mentors.
- Get the post office to deliver the houses down the dam road! Most the residents are older and it's a lot to drive and get mail daily.
- Need to keep the unique quite way of life that Highgate has always had. Don't try to make Highgate like where you moved here from. We do need a sit down eatery not one of those fancy bistros but a nice dinner/bakery coffee shop.
- I didn't get to go to event, don't know if anyone suggested having a place for young people to go and have fun, like pool tables, game tables, arcade or a place like Get Air, something to keep the kids off the streets and a place to have fun.

VII. Highgate Reaching New Heights Community Visit Participants

Chris Agan	Renick Darnell Martin	Evangeline La Rocque	Mary Pickener
Kate Barcellos	Caroline DeLoreto	Diane Laroche	Keith Ploof
Devan Bevins	Joseph Depatie	Marie Clair Laroche	Henry Rainville
Dianne C. Beyor	Adah DeRosier	Janice LaRocque	Marianne Rainville
Amy Bouchard	Jodi DesLauriers	Jeremy LaRocque	Henry Rauntt
Art Bousquet	David Desorcie	Kathy LaVoie	Julie Regimbal
Sharon Bousquet	Terry Dragon	Kevin Loomis	Woody Rouse
Heidi Britch-Valenta	Nicole Draper	Louise Loomis	Merry Souza
Angela Carr	Luc Dupuis	Jane Lothian	James Sullivan
Chelsea Charbonneau	Kevin Dwyer	Kyle Lothion	Adam Taft
Claude Chevalier	Daniel English	Amber L. Machia	Disa Tatro
Donna Chevalier	Diana English	Rebecca Manning	Ken Thompson
Beth Choiniere	Scott Fitzstephens	Ryan Maskell	Melanie Thompson
Matt Choiniere	Karen Gagne Fortin	Corey McCuin	Therese Tucker
Ty Choiniere	Mark Gilbert	Richard Menard	Chad Tyler
Renee Cioffi	Julia Hatch	James (Jim) Messier	Kellie Uzell
Stephen Colley	Hector Hill	Beth Ann Miller	Beth White
Don Collins	Vayne Holiman	Clarence Miller	Leeann Wright
Tim Comings	Virginia Holiman	Debbie Miller	and many more...
Liza Comiskey	Lise Howrigan	Richard J. Noël	
Ralph Comiskey	Joanne Johnston	Audrey Palmer	
Chevon Cooper	Andy King	Dan Palmer	
Alice Sue Cota	Miranda King	Yeshua Pastina	



On March 29, Community members enjoyed a free community dinner catered by the Phoenix House Restaurant.

VIII. Visiting Resource Team Members

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Members of the Visiting Team.



Cover photo: GREG CROMER, americafromthesky.com



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