

Milton on the Move

Community Visit Report and Action Plan
March 2022



Produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development

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I. Introduction

Though Milton is the 8th largest town in Vermont, located near our largest city, it is a place that has held on to the small town and tight-knit community feeling. With strong roots in the farming and dairy industry, today Milton is a vibrant and diverse community that has worked hard over the years to attract commercial growth restaurants, and retail space. At the same time, residents enjoy a wealth of community groups, organizations, recreation opportunities, and the scenic beauty of the surrounding landscape. In the words of the Town Manager Don Turner, Milton is a town that is always “moving forward.” When the steering committee chose to title the process “Milton on the Move” it felt like an appropriate fit for this growing community with so many assets and opportunities to offer.

At the close of the Milton on the Move process, as the task forces are kicking off their work, VCRD staff and the Visiting Resource Team are left with a sense of opportunity. It is clear that Milton is full of hard-working, dedicated, and skilled community leaders and that past work has helped lay the foundation for several of the chosen priorities. Milton clearly has the assets, infrastructure, and leadership to be successful in all the work ahead, and VCRD is excited to work with the all three task forces as they work to make turn vision into reality.

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, Milton community members selected solid priorities for action that will lead to a stronger and more vibrant community and economy for all including:

- **Support and Recruit Local Businesses**
- **Build a Milton Recreation, Fitness, and Community Center**
- **Develop a Downtown Core for Milton**

These initiatives set challenging but achievable goals. There is a lot of work to do, but task force chairs have already come together to frame a cohesive structure and a path forward. With over 200 local people from all parts of the community participating in the process, it is clear that there is great energy in Milton 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 Milton and we look forward to providing follow up help to the Milton on the Move Task Forces as asked.

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

We would like to thank the Milton Selectboard and Town Manager Don Turner 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: Wilmer Chavarria, Matthew Davis, Richard Edwards, Mike Joseph, Ryan Joseph, Jessica Groeling, Caitlin Kenney, Steve Laroche, Chris Mattos, Kim Miner, Lisa Rees, Amy Rex, Will Sanderson, Don Turner, Brenda Steady, Karen White, Kym Duchesneau, Rich Desouza, and Lindsey Ruhl. 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 Milton on the Move 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 Milton should be grateful to those who’ve stepped up to serve as chairs of the task forces: Lori Donna, Recreation and Community Center; Lauren Palmieri, Support Local Business; and William Pikul, Downtown Core.

VCRD especially wants to thank Jessica Groeling for stepping up to serve as the overall chairperson for the Milton on the Move process. When VCRD staff asked around for a potential chair early in the process, Jessica’s name came up often as someone who is organized, motivated, and incredibly passionate about her community. We invited her to chair and she said yes right away – ready to step up for the future of Milton. Throughout the process, it has been a pleasure to work with Jessica. Her positivity and love for her community are contagious and she has been dedicated to the work every step of the way. We are confident that, going forward, she will be a key center point and support as these task forces move the work forward. Thank you, Jessica!

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 Milton 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!



II. Vision for Milton'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 Milton community.

Milton residents look to a future Milton:

- ❖ that is welcoming to all people and businesses
- ❖ with year-round recreational opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities
- ❖ that is safe & walkable, with improved bike and pedestrian infrastructure, particularly for school children
- ❖ that supports families
- ❖ where residents can comfortably age in place
- ❖ with a high level of community involvement
- ❖ with a thriving downtown
- ❖ that attracts new economic opportunities and businesses
- ❖ with strong community connection and where residents can easily connect to services
- ❖ with a fast, accessible internet connection that attracts remote workers
- ❖ with strong and thriving infrastructure



III. The “Milton on the Move” 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 Milton:**



Planning Committee Meeting: October 13, 2021

On October 13, 2021, 19 local residents met to plan for the launch of the Milton Community Visit process. This group came up with a name for the process – Milton on the Move – 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: Wilmer Chavarria, Matthew Davis, Rich Desouza, Kym Duchesneau, Richard Edwards, Jessica Groeling, Mike Joseph, Ryan Joseph, Caitlyn Kenney, Steve Laroche, Chris Mattos, Kim Miner, Lisa Rees, Amy Rex, Lindsey Ruhl, Will Sanderson, Brenda Steady, Don Turner, and Karen White

Step 1 ~ Kick-Off Forums and Community Dinner: November 17, 2021

Milton on the Move kicked off with 6 brainstorming forums held in locations around the town. Over 90 participants shared assets, challenges, and ideas for action in the following forum topics chosen by the planning team: Milton’s Economy; Addressing Individual & Family Needs; Community Engagement; Infrastructure: Broadband, Housing, Transportation; Belonging in Milton; and Things to Do in Milton: Recreation, Arts, & Entertainment. 24 visiting team members participated, learning more about Milton 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; Caitlin Corkins, *Tax Credits & Grants Coordinator*, VT Agency of Commerce & Community Development; Amy Cunningham, *Deputy Director*, Vermont Arts Council; Xusana Davis, *Executive Director of Racial Equity*, State of Vermont; Virginie Diambou, *Racial Equity Director*, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity; Paul Dragon, *Executive Director*, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity; Rebecca Ellis, *State Director*, Office of Congressman Peter Welch; Deb Flannery, *VP Lending*, Evernorth; Christine Hallquist, *Executive Director*, Vermont Community Broadband Board; Jennifer Hollar, *Director of Policy and Special Projects*, Vermont Housing & Conservation Board; Kevin Lambert, *Public Affairs Specialist*, USDA Rural Development; Regina Mahoney, *Planning Program Manager*, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission; Charles Martin, *Field Representative*, Office of Senator Patrick Leahy; Nancy Owens, *Co-President*, Evernorth; Haley Pero, *Outreach Specialist*, Office of US Senator Bernie Sanders; Kathryn Van Haste, *State Director*, Office of Senator Bernie Sanders; and Mia Watson, *Research & Communications Coordinator*, Vermont Housing Finance Agency.

Vermont Council on Rural Development staff included: Alyssa Johnson, *Community Projects Associate*; Jenna Koloski, *Community and Policy Manager*; Nick Kramer, *Community and Policy Associate*; Brian Lowe, *Executive Director*; Margaret Gibson McCoy, *Operations and Communications*; Katie McGrath, *Intern*; and Jessica Savage, *Director of Community Collaboration*

Step 2 ~ Community Meeting: December 14, 2021

After the kick-off, all of the brainstormed ideas were distilled into 21 key areas of action. Over 80 community members joined either in person at the Milton High School library or Zoom on December 14th to narrow the list of priorities for community action. After lively dialogue and a dot-voting exercise, 3 action ideas emerged as key priorities: **Build a Milton Recreation, Fitness & Community Center**; **Develop a Downtown Core for Milton**; and **Recruit and Support Local Businesses**. Participants then signed up for task forces that will convene to move these priorities forward.

Step 3 ~ Resource Meeting and Task Force Launch: January 12, 2022

On January 12, 2022, community members, facilitators, and resource team members came together virtually 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 “Milton on the Move” action is focused at the task force level.

Resource Team Members included: Sam Anderson, *Executive Vice President*, Greater Burlington Industrial Corp; Ilona Blanchard, *Community Development Director*, City of S. Burlington; Laurel Butler, *Business Advisor*, Vermont Tech/VtSBDC; Ruth Henry, *Senior Philanthropic Advisor*, Vermont Community Foundation; Gary Holloway, *Downtown Program Coordinator*, Dept of Housing and Community Development; Regina Mahoney, *Planning Program Manager*, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission; Susan Mazza, *Business Development Specialist*, US Small Business Administration; Bill Moore, *Recreation and Economic Development Director*, Town of Brandon; and Amanda Tingvad, Cambridge Community Center.

Vermont Council on Rural Development staff included: Alyssa Johnson, *Community Projects Associate*; Jenna Koloski, *Community and Policy Manager*; Nick Kramer, *Community and Policy Associate*; Brian Lowe, *Executive Director*; and Katie McGrath, *Intern*.



Participants attended focus forums on Community Visit Day to share assets, challenges and ideas for the future.

IV. Milton on the Move Priorities

Determined by Milton residents at the Milton on the Move Community Meeting
December 14, 2021

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 Milton community members whittled down a list of 21 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.

Milton residents selected three priorities for future action:

► Build a Milton Recreation, Fitness, and Community Center

Develop a facility that could serve as a gathering, events, and recreation space for Milton community members. The facility could include events spaces, an afterschool hub, youth center, coffee shop, makers' space, community kitchen and indoor recreation facilities to help expand year-round recreation and fitness options. These could include a pool, a fieldhouse, pickleball courts, and a fitness center. The space could be available for public use, help to connect across generations, provide a safe place to go after school, and offer activities, recreation and fitness programming to people of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds.

► Develop a Downtown Core for Milton

Form a task force to develop and implement a plan to create a central, walkable, and accessible downtown area for Milton. The group could draw from past initiatives and partner with regional and state experts to create a path towards an inviting and vibrant downtown core. The area could include a town green and walkable businesses and amenities that would serve both local residents and attract visitors. A task force could work to identify public investment opportunities as well as private investors and developers to help execute the community's vision over time.

► Recruit and Support Local Businesses

Develop and implement a plan to attract more small and medium businesses to Milton. 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 to support business start-up or relocation. Milton residents of all ages are interested in seeing a movie theater, more restaurants, local and chain retail, more dining options, lodging options, a café, and more. The group could also consider strategies to support and promote local businesses through community events or campaigns like an "I Love Milton" local business discount card.

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.

Improve Transportation.

Identify and promote ways to increase transportation options, such as expanding local public transportation routes and rides to Burlington. Consider and develop creative alternatives such as a local ride-sharing model as well as EV charging. A task force could explore the idea of a centrally located hub or transportation center to improve access to and use of public transportation options.

Expand Housing Options

Many residents see a crucial need for more affordable, safe, and quality housing for people of all ages and income levels. A housing task force could identify strategies, from new development to zoning changes and/or a housing fund, to create a diversity of housing options in the community including single family starter homes. The group could also consider solutions to address agricultural worker housing and senior housing. A housing fund or trust could be a strategy to support new development or home repair. The group could also conduct a thorough review of the town's current zoning regulations to determine their alignment with desired housing options, and craft recommendations towards policy or enforcement shifts.

Improve and Expand Pedestrian and Bike Infrastructure

Improve walk and bike infrastructure to make Milton safe, accessible, and enjoyable for pedestrians and bikers, with bike lanes, paths and sidewalk improvements, especially along Route 7. The group could explore traffic calming solutions to improve safety and reduce congestion. Increasing E-bike access and charging opportunities could help to encourage more biking in the community.

Ensure Milton is a Welcoming Community to All Residents

A task force could form to focus on building a more welcoming community for newcomers. The group could create a welcoming committee and welcome packet to help connect new residents, strengthen their local networks, and share information. A task force could explore strategies to build a more safe and welcoming community such as creating and sharing equity and inclusion trainings, promoting a more positive and caring reputation for the area, and hosting and supporting dialogue among community members. The group could explore a formal structure and staffing in the long term.

Advance Career Training and Adult Education

Identify opportunities for career advancement and ongoing education for youth and adults. This could include developing training and job placement opportunities with area businesses and manufacturers, free community workshops, and creative work-based learning opportunities. A task force could focus on celebrating the trades and sharing opportunities within the trades and in agriculture – especially with youth. Adult education opportunities could include career and job skills training as well as other learning opportunities around language, music, and the arts.

Expand Access to Out-of-School Enrichment and Programming

A task force could form to partner with the school and other local groups and organizations to identify gaps in out-of-school programming and activities for youth and find ways to fill those gaps and reduce barriers to access. The group could explore recreational programming, mentoring programs, internship and employment opportunities, and other ways to support youth in connecting to the community.

Expand Community Events

Promote current event offerings in a central communications hub and plan an annual series of local events that could help to unify and connect the community. Events could include a town-wide garage sale, a “Taste of Milton” event, a multicultural festival in the park, weekly concerts, a summer music festival with a diversity of acts, hockey on the lake, food truck events, pop up mini golf or other local competitions. Events could help to bring vibrancy to the community, provide more opportunities for community gathering, and connect to youth.

Expand Alternative Energy and Efficiency

Identify ways to improve weatherization and efficiency in Milton and help expand the use of alternative energy. This could include helping residents understand and access existing resources, or finding creative models to bring alternative energy such as community solar to the community. A task force could also work on bringing EV charging stations to Milton.

Improve and Market Milton’s Identity

Some residents shared concerns about Milton’s perception among outsiders and the impacts on community and school pride and ownership. A task force could form to engage the full community in renewing, reviving, and strengthening a Milton identity that shares positive stories and markets community assets. The group could then work to share Milton’s story and assets in order to attract and welcome new community members, investors, and businesses.

Improve Community Communications

Develop a cross-sector and collaborative plan to better communicate information and events with residents. A task force could expand communications resources and avenues to include an online hub, bulletin boards, and a print newspaper or newsletter to keep residents informed and connected about opportunities and events in the community.

Develop an Indoor Hockey Rink

Many residents shared an enthusiastic vision for a Milton Community Ice Rink, and expressed a need for more indoor winter recreation opportunities. A task force could form to explore the construction of a community rink, whether indoor or outdoor, which would serve local residents of all ages and draw area youth and families to Milton.

Enhance Outdoor Recreation

A task force could form to connect and advance outdoor recreation opportunities in the community. The group could focus on the development of hiking and mountain biking trails, lake and river access, and better connecting existing trails and resources. The task force could also develop a map and brochure to better highlight local outdoor recreation resources. Additionally, the group could consider other outdoor recreation opportunities such as paved bike paths, a skate park, a community park near Lake Arrowhead, or events and programs that showcase recreational assets.

Help Connect Individuals and Families to Resources and Support

A task force could form to explore creating a full-time position with the Town or another local organization that could reach out to residents and young families and help connect them to resource and support. The task force could consider establishing programs or events to help build social connections, implementing a “welcome baby” program, or programs to help connect parents to early education and care, family resource and assistance, and parental education.

Beautify Milton

A Task Force could form to beautify Milton with tree and flower plantings, improved signage, and other strategies to enhance the aesthetics of the community.

Support Local Agriculture and Food Access

A task force could form to identify strategies to improve access to nutrition for all Milton residents and enhance local agriculture and local food options. The group could work to improve agriculture and nutrition education, especially for youth, and implement strategies to develop a local CSA and/or food cooperative. The group could also work to support and connect to local agricultural workers and to Milton’s agricultural history.

Improve Broadband Connection

A task force could form to explore strategies to improve internet service. The group could help to collect data on existing coverage options and connect to state and regional resource providers to explore current broadband initiatives and opportunities. This group could help capitalize on the current swell of Federal and State funding available to support broadband expansion, and work to identify local strategies to ensure equitable access for all Milton residents. These efforts could be local, or joined with neighboring towns into a regional effort such as the area Communications Union District (CUD).

Build a New High School

Milton community members, especially students, expressed a need for an updated high school that would better meet the needs of local youth and educators. Students working in an innovation class at the school have already started to work with architects to draft up possible designs that meet student needs including more common spaces, a more aesthetically pleasing building, more light, improved traffic flow, and more. A community task force could form to collaborate with students and school leaders to help carry out the students’ vision.



The community meeting on December 14, 2021 included a dot-voting exercise for participants – both in person and online – to narrow the opportunities list and choose top priorities for action.

V. Task Force Action Plans

Resource Meeting, January 12, 2022

Milton 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.

► Build a Milton Recreation, Fitness, and Community Center

Develop a facility that could serve as a gathering, events, and recreation space for Milton community members. The facility could include events spaces, an afterschool hub, youth center, coffee shop, makers' space, community kitchen and indoor recreation facilities to help expand year-round recreation and fitness options. These could include a pool, a fieldhouse, pickleball courts, and a fitness center. The space could be available for public use, help to connect across generations, provide a safe place to go after school, and offer activities, recreation and fitness programming to people of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds.

Community Chair: **Lori Donna**

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

Resource Team Members: **Amanda Tingaud**, Cambridge Community Center

Ruth Henry, Vermont Community Foundation

Community Participants Jazmin Averbuck, Diane Barrows, Mindy Bessette, Meredith Breiland,

and Task Force Signups: Emily Cook, Sophia Donforth, Lori Donna, Kym Duchesneau, Victoria Herman, Sara Kattam, Andrew Knapp, John Lindsay, Jeff Manley, Nicholas Mark, Joe Mester, Sarah Metcalf, Bobbie Moser, Dave Nappi, Bonnie Parenteau, William Pikul, Amy Rex, Lauren Rolandini, Lindsey Ruhl, Al Russell, Irfan Sehic, Rick Sharp, Jessica Summer, Michael Thompson, Jenna Tucker Eugair, and Jennifer Wilson

Status today

- A lot of interest in expanded recreation, especially in the winter
- Want space for community groups, For example, Milton community band rehearsal space
- 2 years ago, the town had a committee working on a study of the Bombardier property - intersection of bombardier and middle road. The study committee's top recommendation was a community center. Selectboard has heard it and some initial goal setting was done.
- There is a master plan for recreation adopted by SB 2 years ago. Among the projects in that plan is a swimming pool. Could this effort dovetail with what the town is already looking at?
- A rec center is in the master plan and in capital improvement now but there is no funding. Is one of the top 2 priorities - pool and rec center.
- We have blueprints for a couple of different ideas for the rec center. Jenna Tucker Eugair would be happy to share.
- The study recommended phases - first was to put in a labyrinth and trees, phase 2 a few years later. Last stage would be the recreation building.
- Hockey rink was privately owned for a year or 2 and then closed. Couldn't make it work financially.
- Currently the Milton Family Community Center has their own separate (derelict) building they are fixing up. There have been conversations about colocation with some other agencies and partners.
- Milton Community Youth Coalition (MCCYC) is interested in colocating too.

- One of the previous plans did have MCYC and Family Center moving into one location and perhaps youth sports with their own office there. Maybe senior center. All in one location.

Action Steps

1. Pull all of the past work together first and review together as a committee. Previous master plans, blueprints, surveys, etc. A lot of work has been done already to explore this idea. The task force could then use what they learn to structure the next steps.
2. After we look at blueprints and look that has already been done, come to a group decision around a vision of what we want to see there. In order to develop a business plan or conduct a feasibility study, the group needs to have a sense of what they are aiming for. To do this, connect with other organizations and community members interested. This could be through one-on-one interviews, a survey and/or a forum of stakeholders and partners. Sophia can share a list of folks she has been talking to around colocation and collaboration.
 - a. Need clarity on whether this is one big idea or a couple of related projects
 - b. Does it include other groups and orgs or just fitness and community space
 - c. Other groups should have the opportunity to present why they would want to be included in this.
 - d. What is missing? What are the questions we need to ask here? Other organizations that should be a part of the conversation (could ask these questions in a forum or group conversation)
 - e. Could conduct a survey - in way that asks the right questions about costs, willing to pay, etc. also What is your idea of a community center?
3. Once this preliminary review and vision development is complete, the group can steer towards longer term planning. This may include a feasibility study that would help refine the plan and understand the community demand/willingness to pay/the market. The group would also aim to develop a business plan - both for the initial project development and the ongoing cost and maintenance.

Other Action Steps

- Location is a main step if we're thinking about all of these uses. This would be a large facility. Have to have enough property to expand over time. Identify and analyze multiple locations.
- Develop a business plan for the ongoing cost. There is the upfront cost, but need to look at the long term staffing and business plan over time. Need to be able to present that plan in order to garner support.
 - Reach out to other recreation and community centers around the region to see their cost analysis.
 - Look at the Woodstock hockey and community center as an example
- We should leverage that it does get cold and have an indoor turf space. Should add that to our list of uses.
- We could use one starter ideas as a building block for some of the bigger community ideas. Start with an "anchor" use and then add components in phases. Can create a flexible space that can be versatile initially.
- This is really launching a business. There is a formula for that. Should require market analysis. Ways to start looking at the market, competitors - analysis for who this is serving and what is sustainable. Need to ask people but ask it in a way so they know how to answer - cost, timing, etc. How you phrase things is very important.
- Virtual or physical visits to other centers - the Cambridge center, Middlebury, etc. to get an idea of what can fit into a possible starter building.
- Note from Cambridge: think about versatility - the most sports that can take place on the surface in the most efficient space (for example, the rubber floor coating rather than turf or regular gym floor) can cover with carpet to hold other community events. Community support is critical - foster support from Town leadership early. It is important. Started building to get attention and moved forward from there. In Cambridge, youth usage has increased tenfold during covid.

Resources

- VCRD could help with facilitation of a stakeholder forum. Contact Jenna Koloski at jenna@vtrural.org.
- USDA Rural Development Community Facilities program - loan eligible. Alyssa Johnson to help as a technical assistance support. Contact Alyssa Johnson at alyssa@vtrural.org.
- The Recreation Department will be a key partner and resource in compiling all of the past work that has been done.
- Vermont Community Foundation could be a resource depending on the purpose and goals of the space. Resources for community focused projects, art initiatives, etc. Resources will be tied to purpose. Contact Ruth Henry at rhenry@vermontcf.org. VCF could help identify some key donors and funders that could help once the vision is fleshed out.
- A Municipal planning grant could help support the planning phase. Contact Jenni Lavoie at jenni.lavoie@vermont.gov.
- RiseVT could have small grants for community health initiatives.
- UVM has a pot of money available for community health initiatives. Due in February. Focus for next cycle is for youth mental health. First year designed as planning grant and next 3 as implementation. Will go back to purpose and programming in the space.
- Compile a list of businesses that may be able to help that are located in town. Doesn't have to be financial - could offer support in other ways - many businesses with a national or regional foothold have regional foundations that you could apply for grants through.
- In the for-profit world, VT Small Business Development Corporation could help with a business plan <https://www.vtsbdc.org/>. If this is a nonprofit initiative, could work with someone with expertise to develop a strategic plan and budgeting process.
- AARP community challenge grants for building communities that are accessible for all ages: <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/>.
- VCRD's Community Leadership Guide has a chapter focused on the development of a community center as well as chapters on some skills and tools that could help with other aspects of this work: <https://www.vtrural.org/leadership/guide>.
- BGS - Recreation Facilities Grants for concrete pieces of this plan: <https://bgs.vermont.gov/commissioner/building-communities-grants>.

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

Engage with leaders from different groups that you are hoping to serve to generate ideas and begin to refine priorities for what this center would be (older adults, youth, small business owners, outdoor recreation leaders, creatives).

Figure out if there are ways to partner with the other task forces (Develop a Downtown Core and Recruit and Support Local Businesses) for joint projects, initiatives, grants or outreach

Potential first action steps could include:

- 1) Build a subcommittee tasked with investigating the possibility of building a community center

- 2) Catalogue all the existing “community center” services occurring in the community and invite representatives from each organization to share how they offer services and whether they need additional space / would like to co-locate
- 3) Build a coalition of community organizations interested in a community center
- 4) Determine your top goals for the Community Center. Brainstorm a list of what the space could offer, determine 3 to 5 must-haves.
- 5) Talk to other communities that have successfully built or operated a community center

Consult recreation and teen-services experts in other communities, as other projects could help spur ideas and provide insights to fundraising and financing. See list of peer connection recommendations for additional information.

Research & planning: draft the initial project report by collecting data, fundraising figures and more input from the community: What is the dollar figure we need to shoot for? What’s pie-in-the-sky and what’s doable? What do most people really want to see?

Consider creating a website with information and education, surveys, contact info and idea sharing, and create a social media presence to kick off the campaign. Simple platforms to use include Google Sites, Wix, Weebly, Squarespace.

There are two key components to many community centers - the facility and the programming. Often organizations spend a lot of energy and time on the facility. The pros of this approach are that it’s tangible and brings people together. The cons are that it can suck up all the energy, when it may be easier to use existing facilities and focus on the programming instead.

Identify locations that allow people to participate in the community center even if they do not, or cannot, drive.

Talk to more people who’d be potentially accessing this type of a Center to make sure it doesn’t turn into a place catering to only middle-class people, make sure that the site is physically accessible (in all parts of the space) to people with disabilities, and on the bus route for more people to be able to get to the space. Involve more people in the planning, young people. Really making sure this is an idea in which people will show up and use vs just a great idea.

Have a plan for operations and maintenance before the space is created. Capitol funds for renovations and constructions are available. Operations and maintenance funds primarily are community based.

Welcoming spaces: Ensure that this Community Center (and the recreational facilities, events, initiatives, funding, that it hosts) is physically accessible to all, AND truly welcoming to all. This means taking it seriously when signage is vandalized with hate symbols. It means physically building spaces that can be accessed by seniors, small children, and people who use mobility aids like wheelchairs. It means fairly issuing permits and allocating event space for events celebrating various communities, not just the mainstream or dominant ones.

Ensure that the Task Force (and the meetings, documents, and funding that it produces) is physically accessible to all, AND truly welcoming to all. This means ensuring broad representation through diverse membership, and not expecting one person to speak on behalf of an entire demographic group. It means ensuring meetings can be attended by people who may have trouble getting to in-person locations. Perhaps do hybrid meetings, and make sure your virtual meeting platform has the option for subtitles/translation. Find decision-making models or consensus-building models that center people’s needs, not just “the process.” Ensure that there are ways to hold the Task Force itself accountable if there are decisions made that are inequitable. Consider not only the needs of the community who is currently in Milton, but also the community

members you want to attract and retain in the future. At the outset of the Task Force's development, devise a leadership structure that shares and rotates power, instead of hoards it.

Consider how much space would be ideal, as well as what location is ideal for community-wide access.

Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations

There is a group in Montpelier moving forward with development of Recreation center on site of old Elks' lodge (recent press coverage at <https://montpelierbridge.org/2021/11/recreation-and-community-center-plans-announced/>). Learn more at <https://www.thehubvt.org/> and contact Ethan Atkin, Board Chair at ethanatkin@thehubvt.org.

Bill Moore, Town of Brandon, is an excellent resource who is a community recreation manager and economic development expert. Contact: bmoore@townofbrandon.com.

Marty Parichand, Owner of Outdoor New England (ONE) in Franklin, NH, brought the idea of a whitewater park to city officials and is making it happen with vigorous community support: <https://www.wmur.com/article/whitewater-new-hampshire-mill-city-park/35984845>. Contact 603-671-7028 or info@outdoornewengland.com.

Riley Harness, The Hub - Teen Center in Bradford, VT. www.bradfordteencenter.org Contact: director.thehub@gmail.com.

Ken Russell runs a community center in Montpelier called Another Way, and can be reached at ken@anotherwayvt.org.

The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) can help connect you with similar projects done in other communities. They also can be a key support for researching and/or applying for funding resources, and may have some of their own funding. Contact Regina Mahoney rmahony@ccrpcvt.org and visit <https://www.ccrpcvt.org/>.

Vermont Afterschool can help with afterschool programming and other youth enrichment programs. They are a resource for youth centers, and may have advice on starting one. Visit <https://vermontafterschool.org/> and contact Holly Morehouse, Executive Director, at hollymorehouse@vermontafterschool.org, or 802-448-3464.

Connect with existing local and regional social service agencies, such as the Milton Family Community Center or Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) - maybe there is a way connection and sharing of resources. For CVOEO, contact Paul Dragon or Virginie Diambou, pdragon@cvoeo.org and vdiambou@cvoeo.org.

Waterbury conducted a community Center feasibility study using Community Development Block Grant funding, which may be a useful reference. The study is available here: https://www.waterburyvt.com/fileadmin/files/Town_clerk_files/Waterbury_Community_Center_Feasibility_Report_2020-04-24_RFS.pdf.

This is an example of a Community Center feasibility study from Rural Alaska: http://www.forakergroup.org/layouts/forakergroup/files/documents/resources_research/Foraker%20Community%20Center%20Study%202013.pdf.

Potential Funding Sources

Spark Connecting Community Grant through VT Community Foundation: <https://vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/spark-connecting-community/>.

AARP Community Challenge Grant provides small grants to fund quick-action projects that can help communities become more livable for people of all ages: <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/info-2022/2022-challenge.html>. Contact Kelly Stoddard Poor at 802-951-1313 or at kstoddardpoor@aarp.org.

VNRC Small Grants for Smart Growth provide seed money for community-based initiatives related to smart growth. Learn more at <https://vnrc.org/small-grants-for-smart-growth/> and contact Kati Gallagher at kgallagher@vnrc.org.

Community Development Block Grants from the Vermont Community Development Program require some matching funds, but could be used for planning or implementation work. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp>.

The USDA Community Facilities 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.

Municipal Planning Grants are available for to help support town capital improvement plans and other future planning goals. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant>.

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>.

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.



*One of the forums on
Community Visit Day.*

► Develop a Downtown Core for Milton

Form a task force to develop and implement a plan to create a central, walkable, and accessible downtown area for Milton. The group could draw from past initiatives and partner with regional and state experts to create a path towards an inviting and vibrant downtown core. The area could include a town green and walkable businesses and amenities that would serve both local residents and attract visitors. A task force could work to identify public investment opportunities as well as private investors and developers to help execute the community's vision over time.

Community Chair: **William Pikul**

Facilitator: **Brian Lowe**, Vermont Council on Rural Development

Resource Team Members: **Regina Mahoney**, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
Iona Blanchard, City of South Burlington

Gary Holloway, Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development

Community Participants: Agnes Barsalow, Mary Ellen Barsalow-Pittes, Henry Bonges, Bob Brisson,

and Task Force Signups: Reg and Mary Godin, Jessica Groeling, Cymone Haiju, Emily Hecker, John Lindsay, Nicholas Mark, Joe Mester, Lauren Palmieri, Nick Papaseraphim, Sotos Papaseraphim, William Pikul, Kelly Revenaugh, Rick Sharp, and Jenna Tucker Eugair

Action Steps

- 1. Define an overriding vision for what the downtown core will be** – this will shape the zoning, land use requirements that follow. What are some related action steps a task force could take on?
 - a. Meeting with South Burlington – they are willing to host a meeting with Milton TF leaders in the future to discuss what worked well/what hasn't worked well
 - b. TF should explore Explore Better Places grant in February; potentially also through CCRPC or AARP placemaking or charette grants (note, CCRPC requires 20 percent match and application due end of January)
 - c. Looking for small pop-up grant options (Arts Council, AARP)
 - d. Undertake market assessment – what can the area actually support in terms of foot traffic / business viability?
 - e. Take feedback about what the community is seeking (through something like a design charette // some kind of input process focused on community ideas and also the intersection of public and private interests).
- 2. In addition to longer term goals, identify short-term projects** that are feasible and give the community a sense of what a walkable downtown could be like.
 - a. Pop up locations – where? What to do with a pop-up? Food trucks? What property owners interested in engaging?
- 3. Identify what part of the town should be a downtown core** with some additional precision:
 - a. Could be centralized or along Rt. 7 (similar to Brandon). The area bordered by Bombardier Park to the South and Hannaford's to the North was also suggested – this area has developable land, great walkable potential for much of the Milton population. Also, the area right in front of the post office area may be the new "core"
 - b. Some kind of public input process likely necessary, engagement with town planners.
- 4. Identify property owners who might be interested in engaging and why.** At least two significant property owners joined the call and expressed interest in working with the task force.

5. **Conduct some broader assessment**, perhaps with consultant support, about needs, uses, demographics, and community interests that could generate a better mix of traffic in Milton to sustain businesses, allow foundation for additional businesses (sporting events or fairs, etc.); maybe look at taking advantage of aging demographic trend to become a core piece of local business focused on retirees.
6. **Identify hurdles to a downtown core** – zoning (height restrictions, mixed use requirement, density, first floor commercial requirements); evaluate current mixed-use requirement impacts on mix of commercial and residential; consider mixed zoning approach in a downtown area of commercial “nodes” and residential areas (similar to South Burlington).
7. **Explore partnership ideas with Milton Artists Guild or Arts Council or competition** around wayfinding that creates a unique aesthetic in Milton’s downtown.
8. **Consider bringing a consultant on board who can think through the form of new development in a way that can be flexible** ... to keep a new downtown core walkable, having commercial on the first floor may be important and exactly how that looks, interacts with streetscape will matter in drawing people in especially along Rt. 7; it maybe you want some zoning flexibility for first floor commercial in different areas of a new downtown.
9. **Consider, in addition to business recruitment, creating incentive for local business development** – for example, coops or mixed business in same space (café-coffee shop-bar sharing a space at different times of day, etc.)

Resources

- Chittenden Regional Planning Commission – funding to support a visioning process for the downtown to get community input, pulling together work that has been done recently.
- AARP – resources to support placemaking, pop-up placemaking.
- Dept of Housing & Community Development “Better Places” program can match local dollars with state dollars.
- Neighborhood approach to engage developers and town as partnership around visioning exercise through incremental development alliance (bellows falls as a recent example, partner to talk to, with Brattleboro DC lead).
- VT Data Center at UVM Center for Rural Studies will compile data for the community if helpful in understanding the downtown or applying for grants.
- Assess local resources through the task force – take on projects you can do.
- Engage the Arts Council to help get art into infrastructure projects (wayfinding, etc.) and often downtowns are a priority.
- Explore Milton tax credit eligibility.

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:

Members of the task force could visit similarly sized communities in Vermont who are working on or have recently undergone downtown core development over the past 10-15 years, and meet with the key people in

those communities who could explain how they accomplished what they have. See the list of Peer Connection Recommendations for additional information.

Present the proposal to municipal leaders in Milton to determine if there might be funding to support a feasibility study of what it would take to establish, expand and modify existing water and surface infrastructure.

Approach a municipal engineer to get an early indication of cost, process and timing.

One way to start would be to hold a community meeting with potluck desserts to discuss the community's vision for a Downtown Core, and also survey residents to see what the Downtown core should include.

Brainstorm an area for consideration and draft a rough proposal with signatures of influential backers.

Figure out if there are ways to partner with the other task forces (Build a Recreation, Fitness and Community Center and Recruit and Support Local Businesses) for joint projects, initiatives, grants or outreach.

The task force could create a clear vision of what the Downtown Core could look like in 10 years. What types of businesses are there? What jobs are available? What are the pedestrian elements in the town, and what does the riverfront look like? This sketch could be used to then determine the strategies and tasks that would need to occur to reach that vision. A budget could be developed for the level of investment needed for each aspect of this vision which would serve as the foundation for a funding strategy. It will be important to work with the Planning Commission to include points of vision in the town plan.

One approach could be to plan a workshop and charrette with planners and architects to advance community planning for the Downtown Core. This would include reimagining currently used spaces to make them more user friendly and utilizing creative placemaking techniques. The workshop could be a fun and interactive event that might include an outdoor component and indoor drawing session. This process could be used to identify the priorities that are most in need of further development and that require the services of planning and design professionals.

Bring in an artist to sketch ideas at a community event. Have initial sketches on display at the library and other community spaces. Use sketches and ideas to design an aesthetically relevant center at the "heart" of Vernon. A more developed/involved design could include solutions that deal with power and water to a gazebo for performances and gatherings and space for community supper, picnics, holiday celebrations, farmers markets, and more.

The Task Force could hold a panel discussion open to the public with local experts on what makes a great community core. Bring in design and landscape architect experts, but also leaders from other communities that have successfully revitalized their villages and downtowns.

Consider engaging students from the local school to prepare photo inventories, record observations, and share ideas.

A market study could help to determine the need for housing, commercial, and other services in potential village center and incorporate study into the plans.

Consider gateways, "placemaking," streetscape enhancements, and wayfinding (directional signage) to enhance the area and draw attention to the town as folks pass through.

The group's action plan could include both short-term and relatively low-cost improvements as well as longer term enhancements that may require more substantial investment funding to show immediate improvement, action, and momentum as you work towards larger goals.

Think about climate impacts of focusing on creating a strong Downtown Core – perhaps a town energy committee could work on action items that encourage people to gather in the village rather than traveling away or shopping in sprawl areas.

Start with activities and not buildings. Build the social capital in the existing spaces that can then be the reason for enhancing the center.

Host an inaugural potluck or picnic at the site to kick off discussion about next steps.

Developing ways for the entire community to contribute to town transformation could be powerful. Some ideas include volunteer work days to clean up or small community fundraisers to restore or improve downtown green with new plantings, benches, or picnic tables.

Review other communities that have successfully undertaken these efforts (see list of communities in the following section).

Consult the town plan to see what goals and action steps may have been identified for this need. Talk with the town planning office.

Community Workshop LLC and AARP teamed up to create a DIY Community Cookbook – a free, hands-on guide to do-it-yourself projects that can lead to big improvements for towns and neighborhoods. Find it here: <https://www.communityworkshopllc.com/diy-community-cookbook>.

Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations

The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) will be a key resource for planning and implementation, including connecting with and assisting in grant applications. Once a vision is in place, the town could continue to work with the Regional Planning Commission to explore grant opportunities. With adequate funding, a Request for Proposals could be developed for planning and design services. Contact Regina Mahoney rmahony@ccrpcvt.org and visit <https://www.ccrpcvt.org/>.

Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC) staff can be an important partner for business engagement and recruitment. Contact Sam Anderson at sam@vermont.org.

Gary Holloway, the Downtown Program Manager at ACCD, gary.holloway@vermont.gov or 802-522-2444.

The City of South Burlington is actively involved in Downtown Core development. Contact Ilona Blanchard at iblanchard@southburlingtonvt.gov.

The Town of Berlin is working on developing a Town Center. Learn more at <https://sites.google.com/view/berlintowncenter/home> and <http://www.berlinvt.org/>.

The following could be potential contractors/engineers to work with in planning and design:

- Aldrich & Elliott 802-879-7733 x 103 welliott@aeengineers.com.
- American Institute of Architects 802-448-2169 sarah.odonnell@aiavt.org.
- Dubois & King Engineering 802-728-3376 jashley@dubois-king.com.
- Hoyle Tanner & Associates 802-860-1331 jreilly@hoyletanner.com.
- Stone Environmental 802-552-1077 bmartin@stone-env.com.
- Tata & Howard 802-473-3159 dceppetelli@tataandhoward.com.
- Tilson Tech 802-793-5439 ccampbell@tilsontech.com.

Local Motion is a statewide organization with an interest in making Downtown Core more bike and pedestrian friendly, and by extension promoting stronger downtown cores with fewer opportunities for sprawl. You can

connect with Local Motion for both technical assistance and financial advice. Contact Jonathon Weber, the Manager of the Complete Streets Program at jonathon@localmotion.org or 802-861-2700 x104.

A speaker could be brought in to talk about what makes a great gathering space. One speaker that discusses “tactical place-making” is Ward Joyce who can be reached at wardjoyce1@hotmail.com or 802-522-0150. He has led place-making efforts including the “pocket park” and Langdon Street Alive in downtown Montpelier.

Potential Funding Sources

VNRC Small Grants for Smart Growth helps community members organize, gather information, conduct studies, etc. that promote smart growth goals. Learn more at <https://vnrc.org/small-grants-for-smart-growth/> and contact Kati Gallagher at kgallagher@vnrc.org.

Municipal Planning Grants are available for a Downtown Master Plan or other implementation plan to help support town capital improvement plans and other future planning goals. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant>.

Spark Connecting Community Grant through VT Community Foundation: <https://vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/spark-connecting-community/>.

AARP Community Challenge Grant, which can fund permanent physical improvements, demonstration projects, and new or innovative programming or services. Visit <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/info-2022/2022-challenge.html> Contact Kelly Stoddard Poor at 802-951-1313 or at kstoddardpoor@aarp.org.

AARP has a “complete streets” program that helps communities make neighborhoods and village centers more accessible and pedestrian friendly. Contact Kelly Stoddard Poor at 802-951-1313 or at kstoddardpoor@aarp.org.

The Citizen Institute for Rural Design offers annual technical assistance grants for a three-day design workshop meant to involve/engage the whole community. Learn more at: rural-design.org/local-design-workshop.

The Vermont Arts Council Animating Infrastructure supports community projects that integrate art with infrastructure improvements. Contact Michele Bailey at 802-828-3294 or mbailey@vermontartscouncil.org.

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.

Community Development Block Grants from the Vermont Community Development Program could be used for planning or implementation work. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp>.

If the process involves the development of Community Facilities, the USDA Community Facilities 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.

The Better Connections Program could fund transportation investments that build community resilience. Learn more at <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/projects-programs/better-connections>.

VTrans offers a Transportation Alternative Program to help fund scoping studies and design and implementation for bicycle and pedestrian construction projects. Contact Scott Robertson at scott.robertson@vermont.gov or 802-828-5799.

VTrans also offers a Bicycle and Pedestrian Program that can help support scoping studies and design and implementation of bicycle and pedestrian construction projects. Contact Jon Kaplan at jon.kaplan@vermont.gov or 802-828-0059.

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) Funding Directory offers information on funding options including grant timelines, funding specifics, and general eligibility <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives>. ACCD can help to navigate grant options and develop a planning needs list.

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

Potential investment sources could include: Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) or the Vermont Community Loan Fund.

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

The Better Places Program: <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/better-places>.

The Vermont State Infrastructure Bank program, operated by the VT Economic Development Authority in conjunction with the VT Agency of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, is available to assist in the construction or reconstruction of highways, roads, and bridges. Contact VEDA at 802-828-5627.



Task force groups came together online on January 12, 2022 with support from a visiting resource team to begin building action plans and identify resources to support implementation.

► Recruit and Support Local Businesses

Develop and implement a plan to attract more small and medium businesses to Milton. 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 to support business start-up or relocation. Milton residents of all ages are interested in seeing a movie theater, more restaurants, local and chain retail, more dining options, lodging options, a café, and more. The group could also consider strategies to support and promote local businesses through community events or campaigns like an “I Love Milton” local business discount card.

Community Chair: **Lauren Palmieri**

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

Resource Team Members: **Sam Anderson**, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation
Laurel Butler, Vermont Small Business Development Center
Susan Mazza, U.S. Small Business Administration
Bill Moore, Town of Brandon

Community Participants and Task Force Signups: James Ballard, Seth Duchesneau, Alek Fleury (Milton Independent), Joe Mester, Tony Micklus, Lauren Palmieri, Nick Papaseraphim, Lisa Rees, Kelly Revenaugh, Terri Sabens, Rick Sharp, Mary Jane Stinson, and Kari Stoakes

Current Initiatives

- There is an Economic Development Commission made up of business owners and residents. The group has explored sending out mailings and talking with current businesses, but had some challenges. Communicating with businesses is difficult, as folks don't answer unknown numbers, and it can be challenging to get through to the right people in a business.
- Commission members heard from some prospective businesses that Milton “Doesn't have the right demographic”, despite having a wealth of resources and favorable demographics. It's frustrating to try to have to educate and overcome inaccurate assumptions.
- Milton High School is converting their wood shop to make a Milton Innovation Center/Makerspace, and the Milton Artist Guild is partnering to create mentorships.
- Town has a variety of recreational and historic resources.

Action Steps

1. Work to develop a “quick win,” “low hanging fruit” type project, such as a brochure, that showcases existing businesses and/or other resources in Milton. Work to create AND market the guide so that people know that it exists.
 - a. Emphasis for this type of project should be on the things the community does well and the resources that exist.
 - b. Could consider creating an “Angie's List” for Milton – resources and what they do can be listed. While resources such as FPF, and the town Facebook page exist, it could be a source for “one stop shopping.”
 - c. Tourism related businesses would be interested in a brochure to hand out to people who visit the park that includes other businesses as well as other recreational opportunities.
 - d. The EDC is working on a brochure, and could be a potential partner in this work. They have encountered barriers with cost, but the more businesses that sign up, the cheaper it is.
2. Begin exploring the potential for a paid position that can be a point person for all business support efforts. This may be a long-term effort, but is an important priority.

- a. The Town of Brandon has a lot of similarities – the community rallied around its artist’s guild and Route 7 with a committee, and then moved toward a part time person to start. While volunteer boards are great, having a staff person was essential. This person could “beat the street” to develop relationships with business owner and advocate for municipal priorities. Even a part time person can develop relationships with other asset partners so they can leverage partners when an opportunity arises.
 - b. Similarly, volunteer boards in Milton have struggled to find volunteers, so funding and a dedication position would be very valuable.
 - c. Resource Providers find that this staff capacity is an essential conduit to connect their programs and the community to ensure businesses are able to take advantage of resources.
3. Work to shift the paradigm and story of Milton. Consider what is the value proposition or “why” of Milton. Make a list of amazing things. Don’t argue the old story is wrong – show what the good story is, and work to make it visible. This initiative as will likely require marketing expertise.
 - a. “Leak the positive stories” – These are the stories you can control, and have the ability to amplify.
 - b. Milton Independent – put things out showcasing businesses and events in the community.
 - c. Press releases are still a valuable tool, and can be shared beyond just the Milton Independent.
 - d. Seven Days has the opportunity to do paid posts.
 - e. Also working on the image **within** the community – sometimes residents don’t realize the preconceived notions they have.
 - f. Work to develop a theme/packaging for the message. It helps to have someone to put the story together and then share it out consistently – perhaps an economic development staff person.
 - g. Consider a more full-fledged marketing campaign, which will take additional resources. This could include images, a slogan or logo for the town.
 4. Collaborate with existing resources, including the Economic Development Commission.

Additional Potential Action Steps

- Work on ways to build historic tourism and highlight the historic landmarks in the community. The historical society and museum could be key partners in this work.
- Develop additional recreational opportunities and infrastructure. Milton has a number of recreational opportunities, but there is a need to connect them. This could be a resource for locals and visitors.
 - Focus on a bike path to connect important places. The potential to go from the Sharp Park to artist guild to town offices without Route 7 would be incredible. Could also build a path along Route 7 to connect to the snow tubing facility. The causeway in Burlington is an example of the impact of this type of transformation project that has had and continues to have an enormous impact on the community
 - Dog parks are another amenity that has been highly successful in communities.
- Explore a coupon program and/or program that creates reciprocity between businesses.
- Milton diversity and equity committee is working to create a culture of belonging. It is important businesses feel that they belong here, and to consider positive actions we could do to make people feel welcome. Part of the business support initiatives could be belonging and creating a welcoming community.
- Explore ways to do “exit interviews” with businesses, and even more importantly “stay interviews,” where folks reach out to every business. The interviews could help provide a support system so folks know the community is invested in their success, and there is ways to help integrate new businesses and provide support for those that may be struggling.
- Explore ways to improve communication to newcomers in the community- perhaps some sort of welcoming program
- Consider ways to connect with and involve youth in this work.
 - Working with schools (elementary, high school, technical center) to help with taking Pride in Milton (Art teachers/History Teachers) educating citizens about the Milton specific history and other points of pride.

- Use Milton Innovation center as a springboard – showcase things that have already happened, like the work at the Hannaford Center to redesigned signs.
- Build out a marketable campaign to keep kid in communities. Generate some enthusiasm to build pipeline of workforce.
- Explore if there are ways for businesses to partner with internships or other educational opportunities.
- Some landowners have shown less investment in appearances (e. g. lawns not cut on Route 7). Consider if there is something the Planning Commission can do to raise the standard Current regulations have no “teeth” to make people comply.

Resources

- Economic Development Commission can feature individual businesses at future meetings to let folks know about your business.
- GBIC has been a partner for and is willing to help wherever possible. Their services are free and confidential.
- GBIC has a program that provides opportunities to assist with marketing for a business, such as a website, which could help with low hanging fruit projects. There will be more details available at the end of January.
- Alek is a new reporter at the Milton Independent and would be happy to be a resource for news reporting. He can be reached at afleury@ourkemediagroup.com.
- Municipal planning grants can be a resource for some planning funding.
- SBA is a resource to help businesses to grow, and has a wealth of resources they can bring to the table.
- Small Business Development Center also has a wealth of resources to support businesses.

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

Explore ways to coordinate with the Develop a Downtown Core group, especially since local businesses may be an important part of the core, and the Core itself could offer a prominent incentive to anchor in downtown Milton. Early support and sponsorship of the project from businesses that want to locate or relocate could be very important, so getting the word out early and building support from businesses could be an important first step. Partnership with the Build a Recreation, Fitness and Community Center task force could be another potential partnership.

Consider appointing a creative professional who will develop the marketing content for project awareness and education throughout the small-business community.

Design promotional assets that highlight the proposed project with color-popping calls to action, and send to businesses to gauge reaction and support. This includes fact sheets or flyers.

Create a project-management spreadsheet of businesses contacted and their attitudes toward the idea.

For all these ideas, media attention will be important. Consider reaching out to individual reporters early in the process and ask them if they’d like to follow it from the beginning. Appoint one person to be the media contact. Determine your target audiences and media goals. Research which reporters with which media are

reaching that audience and reach out directly to them. Have a news hook - what's new and interesting? Weekends can be a good time to get media attention - especially Sunday. Not much is going on.

Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations

State of Vermont Tourism and Marketing could be a partner in discussing ways to market Milton as a destination holistically and for individual businesses. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/tourism> and <https://accd.vermont.gov/tourism/promote-your-business>.

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/> and contact Laurel Butler at lbutler@vtsbdc.org.

Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC) is an important partner for supporting and promoting Economic Development in Milton. Contact Sam Anderson at sam@vermont.org.

Contact communities that have existing Economic Development staff to learn more about the development of a staff position, how it is funded, etc.:

- Brandon: Bill Moore, Economic Development Coordinator, bmoore@townofbrandon.com, 802-247-3635 x213.
- Randolph: Joshua Jerome, Director of Economic Development, joshua@randolphvt.org, 802-728-5433 x13 or cell: 802-431-5385
- St. Albans City: Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning and Development, c.sawyer@stalbansvt.com or 802-524-1500 x259
- Waterbury: Mark Pomillo, Jr., Economic Development Director, Revitalizing Waterbury, mark@revitalizingwaterbury.org and 802-793-6029 Ext. 3

David White, of White and Burke Associates, has helped towns re-envision economic development initiatives. Contact: 802-862-1255 x 13.

Joan Goldstein, Vermont Commissioner of Economic Development is a great resource to consult with on economic development planning and strategies. Contact: joan.goldstein@vermont.gov or 802-272-2399.

The US Small Business Administration (SBA) can help guide and support businesses in the region. Contact: Darcy Carter or Susan Mazza at darcy.carter@sba.gov and susan.mazza@sba.gov and 802-828-4422 x203.

Potential Funding Sources

USDA Rural Development has a variety of resources that could be available for planning and project implementation. Rural Business Opportunity Grants 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 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.

Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC) can help support applications to state funding programs. Contact Sam Anderson at sam@vermont.org.

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>.

VI. Milton on the Move Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held in-person and virtually with over 90 Milton community members and the VCRD Visiting Team on November 17, 2021, and through a paper and online survey.

Although the prioritization work of the Milton on the Move 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.

Milton's Economy

Visiting Team: Jenna Koloski (facilitator), Brian Lowe (scribe), Tayt Brooks, Christine Hallquist, Jen Hollar, Regina Mahoney, Charles Martin, Nancy Owens, Mia Watson.

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Lot of good volunteers in the community – welcoming for talent and time
- Changing and growing community
- Hard workers - strong family values and work ethic
- Community-minded
- Proximity to Burlington without being in Burlington
- Structure of downtown – zoning causing consolidation of banks, vet, funeral home, town services all within a quarter mile
- Very walkable - for services, not for restaurants
- Lots of natural resources – town forest, Mallet's Bay in close proximity (underutilized)
- Best rec facility in the area with the playing fields and paths – music and sports in the park, community & music event series.
- Local Milton Artist's Guild with positive economic impact.
- Businesses – 350+ at Husky, could hire more, high paid skilled jobs; industrial park with Charbois, Boves.
- Sewage disposal – excess capacity for water, sewer, etc.
- Strong planning focus around transportation.
- Export energy from dam, windmills, solar, looking at a local resiliency plan based around the town landfill (maybe working with GMP around possible microgrid) led by energy committee.
- Relatively affordable, number of houses sell quick and above market

What are the Challenges?

- Rt 7 corridor heavily trafficked; congestion driven by I-89 exchange (agreement from others).
- Concern about walkability especially for older residents; need to balance growth with tradeoffs for mobility challenges.
- Affordable housing shortage (i.e., market not supplying sufficient # homes; specific concern re: Act 250).
- Housing compounds job shortage.
- Something that draws people to Milton – a downtown area, see a show, walk around, restaurant...have to leave Milton. Draw people for jobs and for recreation. (Hannaford's is a serious draw).
- Same size as St Albans but no Taylor Park, downtown core, businesses, with a center point.
- Insufficient commercial tax base, not enough industry in town to support the growth of a restaurant core.
- Agreement around St. Alban's comparison - place to go, destination with the downtown, something to do grab a cup of coffee ... no focus point & no place to stay if you do come (no hotel)
- Hannaford's is always short on food because it's the only place to get food, no restaurants.
- Return again to emphasis on no downtown core. There are three areas that have a "downtown" consolidation, but it's really not a downtown (Village Center district on Main St; no other downtown designation but there is a TIF district).
- Missing starter homes in the market - no place to start out.
- Location – not close enough to Burlington, not close enough to St. Alban's, not right on the interstate; makes it hard to become a destination.
- Lots of investment in the infrastructure, but no identified "catalyst" yet.
- Loss of the Milton Independent / loss of a local paper, both in terms of connection and also as a way to evaluate what's happening in the town (i.e., service needs, future growth challenges).
- Milton self-image- rich history, should be source of pride. Milton gets a bad rap on the news, there is a negativity, most conservative part of Chittenden County.
- Legacy of problems building up over time, haven't been the best at solving our problems. Lots of good assets, but no time to pat ourselves on the back, time to face our problems and we've got some resources to do it.
- Infrastructure – some real broadband challenges, some parts fully linked up, others not.
- Around schools we have some opportunity; time to really lean on our advantages.

- No old-time buildings, no good design for what the CORE of the City looks like, i.e., storage unit on Centre St isn't the right fit, need to take a look at the design of our downtown core.
- 40 percent community won't support school budget.

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

- Employment potential with local high-school & Husky relationship? Is there a way to think through curriculum with local employers?
- PR type opportunity as a way to showcase what we have as a community – tremendous assets to show and real urgency to overcome the negative perception.
- Consider effort to proactively plan downtown core.
- Consider building a trades curriculum within the schools, show kids what is possible and create partnerships/internships. Need to build a trades-based pathway, some kind of trades guild; elevate trades careers, Milton has Husky looking to hire starting at \$30/hr.
- Trades program separate from the schools so that it isn't seen thru the lens of school budget.
- Open areas for some potential development – looking at some early starter homes built around a downtown core in some areas thoughtfully chosen, do the analysis to figure out can we really provide housing here.
- Need a developer willing to take a risk on Milton. Ernie or someone on the market-rate side for commercial development; in combination with Evernorth or CHT (Redstone?).
- Indoor aquatic center with some county or regional public dollar support alongside restaurant / indoor hockey facility would be perfect compliment.
- Movie theater
- Brewery would be awesome and helpful, there are a lot of folks coming to the new winery.
- Rec / community center space, what came out of the old community study 7 years ago.
- Holding our local representatives accountable to what the public has made clear, lots of individual landholder decisions happening without a broader vision. We need the will to partner with private entities and make a clear story, what we as a community want to get behind, 32 acres next to soccer field, Brault Property
- Image change in part rests on ability to follow thru on rules and regulations, enforcement on properties that aren't following rules. Zoning is not enforced and this erodes core image.
- Spend the money to do it right, don't avoid zoning conflicts/lots of agreement on this in the room around need to actually invest and actually enforce decisions.
- Need to own our reputation → time to face our problems; it's time to act, we can do it but the real thing is to step forward with commitment to enforce our regulations. Lot of hard work and commitment from the community, we can do it, Brandon and St. Alban's have done it, and now is the time.
- Action on the road is already in motion.
- Empower the Zoning Enforcement capacity.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Water, wastewater capacity.
- Not a negative association with Milton.
- Build housing in cooperation with business (Winooski and St. Albans followed this path).
- Husky is an incredible asset – most towns don't have job options.
- What is holding Milton back? The assets are incredible.
- Now is the time – excellent resources in the community
- Labor resources will be an enduring problem
- Attracting people (reflected in self-image question and how people see us, but also about how to create an energy in the downtown) ... you have the answers and the resources of proximity to jobs and affordability at least relative and good infrastructure ... where will you bring that attention and energy.
- Asset: Milton's Town Core is outside of the floodplain. It is a downside to not have a historic, traditional Main Street. But a lot of those are also in a floodplain. So it's a real upside to not have to worry about that with increasing storm events into the future. It's kind of an obvious one, but I wish I thought to mention it last night, as another reason why Milton is well poised to grow.
- Challenge: The desire for more commercial, and a downtown/main street area came up a lot last night. And I thought it might be helpful to share - it has been difficult to decide how much to hold the line on mixed use buildings (commercial on the first floor and residential up above) in Milton; and if you are going to hold that line, where along that huge stretch of Route 7? Particularly in today's environment when we really aren't seeing new commercial, and housing is the big need. I think the real crux of the issue is how can you achieve both in an incremental, evolutionary kind of way? Or maybe it isn't helpful to be thinking about the challenge in this way, and how you frame the issues might be a lot more productive!

Addressing Individual and Family Needs

Visiting Team: Alyssa Johnson (facilitator), Katie McGrath (scribe), Xusana Davis, Virginie Deambou, Paul Dragon, Rebecca Ellis.

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Community outreach program with the Howard Center (new)
- Milton family community center, where food shelf resides, daycare and family resources
- Many nonprofits working on interesting projects.
- Milton Community Youth Coalition – youth empowerment, mentorship program with strong pair matching and virtual opportunities newly forming. Starting a new STEM mentorship program.
- Trying to re-open farmers market next summer.

- Milton Senior center and Age Works
- Meals on Wheels
- Lots of youth programs like 4-H and boy/girl scouts.
- Parks and Rec provides great programming.
- Churches, many come to the church for help with mental health and addiction. Also a basketball court and place for youth to come that's not school.
- Caring community, people know how to come together when the need arises.
- Community has supported the school a lot during COVID.
- Leadership, they care a lot and work hard for the community and focus on inclusion.
- Dory Demers, school nurse working hard on getting school-based clinic.
- Food service director Steve Marnelli gets food for people who need it.
- Jennifer Saunders serving as homelessness liaison, outreach and services for those in need.
- Lots of people who care and work hard to make good things happen.
- Events like Trunk or Treat, community dinners, music in the park, Fourth of July, celebrating and honoring veterans.
- Disc golf course is new and being used, may be a mountain bike trail in the works.
- Milton Town Forest is beautiful.
- Memorial walking trail has gotten more use since COVID.
- Subaru race car manufacturing center, prior history of racing and racetrack that the town was built on.

What are the Challenges?

- Mental health and stigma, connection to resources.
- Bringing together and showcasing services and resources.
- Siloed nonprofits, not as inclusive or communal, competition for resources.
- Only so much a church can do, hard to connect folks with other resources to help.
- No connection point/person who knows which resources to connect folks with to bring it all together.
- Pride and hesitancy to ask for help for worry of judgement, feel like they have to hide.
- Money, how can we spend new funds from ARPA to get biggest bang for the buck, but what does that look like long term without sustainable funding? Want to spend funds in a way that helps the community the most.
- Isolation and reaching those who are more hidden.
- Information gap, not current or accurate information on demographics and needs.
- Growing elder population and younger generation, but missing the middle portion.
- Building viable budget that folks can understand, not a high level of understanding of what needs really are.
- Affordable housing, hard for people to find and is a stressor for a lot of families in the community.
- Not feeling a part of Chittenden County, transportation is really tough and paying for resources through taxes that aren't accessible.
- Adolescent treatment of mental health. Availability of resources is extremely scarce, many kids going to emergency room because they have nowhere else to go but even then, it's not enough.
- Divisiveness at the national level makes it harder to have conversations as a community and what's best for the community.
- Social media's impacts on youth, time spent online rather than engaging with other activities in the community. Ties in with mental health challenges youth are facing. Increase in access cyber-bullying from social media.
- Hard for youth to gather and connect since COVID
- It's tough for outsiders.

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

- Would love to see a teen center with cooking space for classes, could have community dinners, a place for kids to go outside of school for "third space".
- Place to access services like counseling that's not in school.
- Some spaces in the family center building that are being considered.
- Point person who is familiar with services and knows how to connect folks with the right people.
- Coordination can improve to make more efficient use of existing resources.
- Bring kids into the conversation and hear their needs.
- Would be great to have a place to gather for the community, lots of people talk about a pool
- Community center that has space for all members of the community indoors, kids can come do homework, nonprofits can work from there.
- More variety of dining so you don't have to go to Burlington.
- The town has a lot of land, lots of opportunity to do something with those properties.
- Outreach program, for example going door to door to welcome new members move to the community but also ongoing wellness checks and conversation building.
- Welcome Baby program like in North Carolina, when a new child is born they provide resources for the parents.
- A downtown, Milton is spread out without a real town center to anchor the community.
- Connect and expose adults who don't necessarily have kids in the school.
- Creating a welcoming community to outsiders.
- Opportunities for seniors, more assisted living in the core part of town.
- More affordable housing and housing models that work for Milton residents not just developers/landlords. Building responsible housing that works for all income levels.
- Recruit more businesses, hire a consultant with expertise to help build the future and plan responsibly.
- Could be more bike friendly.

- Connecting folks to assets like town forest (for which transportation is needed to get to) or walking trails that people don't know about.

- Milton's history of racing, incorporate into identity – Milton on the Move!

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Public health service that goes door to door really does exist in other parts of the world, so could potentially be adapted to town level.
- Leverage number of nonprofits and bring together, could invest in a town position like Resource Coordinator. Can justify new position to community by potential cost savings through better resource coordination.
- Can lobby the state to have someone come have more a presence that's outside of Burlington.
- Working on connecting Milton to resources like CVOEO and other programs they may not know about.
- Tie together the spread-out community with biking and walking routes. Knitting the fabric of the community together.
- Leverage regional planning commission for resources.
- A need for connection on many levels, need for streamlining of resources and promotion of all the services and assets.
- Sense of belonging and identity, how to serve more diverse youth cohort and bring older population to understand why investing in resources is important.
- Visiting team was really impressed with the participation from the group even though group was small.

Community Engagement

Visiting Team: Jessica Savage (facilitator), Kevin Lambert (scribe), Ted Brady, Amy Cunningham, Caitlin Corkins, Haley Pero.

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Dance and theater programs are strong. These are two things in the community that should continue.
- Recreation. A lot of little people are active and playing sports.
- Hybrid options for meetings has been helpful. If I can be home and zoom in and participate, it's easier than packing up and leaving. We have a good internet signal in Milton.
- Arts and crafts festival. Milton craft show, arts fest collaborates with several other organizations for fun, festive events. Good atmosphere; people really enjoy it.
- There are four venues for the craft fair. The festival is spread throughout town and a lot of people came out.
- National Night Out supports police and fire departments.
- Farmer's markets and big community dinners at school, and events between rec and youth departments are popular, and are staples the community looks forward to.
- The Haunted Forest was a blast. The people who put it on had more fun than the people who came. There was little or no publicity but maybe 600 people came.
- Great 4th of July— best fireworks in the area!
- Solid camp programs through rec center. Good days camps for ages 6-12.
- Lively Facebook page for the town, and there's a good online forum for engagement: Milton Independent.
- The weekly report from the town manager gives a good synopsis of what's happening with each department, and what's coming up with events.
- Milton rec. dept does a great job of running events. Home and business decorating, getting people involved with different activities.
- Rec. department is always up for collaboration with other orgs, such as the Historical Society. Co-events are well-received, and social media is a great way to share news.
- Collaboration for VCRD visit was good, and wide-ranging.
- A lot for elderly to do that's nearby. The town is working well to coordinate all that.
- One campus with public services all in one place is a good layout.

What are the Challenges?

- The same group of people attend the events and volunteer. Town meeting day sees the same group of people in the crowd. Folks don't show up to select board meetings. It's usually the same volunteers and same people participating.
- Teenagers don't have anything to do here. Not everyone does dance and sports. Adults can do whatever they want. What is there here for young people to do, especially in winter?.
- We don't reach everyone. Elderly are not included, nor people who are in the social-economic lower sections. We're not getting their input. Not everyone's on social media.
- We don't have a printed paper. There's something about that sense of community that is missed. Moving to online newspaper has decreased traffic and engagement.
- It's hard to visit every website to find out what's going on. Having things be inclusive of people with special needs is important. Autistic kids don't get to do everything because it's hard to attend functions. We need more and better access for the disabled and behaviorally challenged.
- Social media presence is based on same sights, that's why the same people volunteer and are on committees. By including younger folks on a committee, messaging would spread more effectively, and more young people would want to take part in the community.
- We're missing a big portion of young adults. When kids graduate, not all of them are going to school. Where do they go, what do they do? What are the supports in Milton to help them after high school?
- Geography – there's no real town center. No central place to find things or gather as a group.

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

- An expansion of the recreation center to include a skating park; an outdoor rink for ice skating in winter and roller skating in summer.
- More support for parents with kids who need help. Doing something after school with kids in small groups, through a dedicated program, so they can feel included and have something to do. Sensory-friendly activities, and more collaboration with schools to help kids get value out of summer programs. We need paraprofessionals and better training for staff to help kids with behavioral issues. A grassroots organization of social activities for everyone. After-school engagement among kids with similar interests—people could organize those interactions.
- Natural resources are impressive, such as the Milton Town Forest and Bombardier Woods, and we could use more programs oriented around outdoor activities like cross-country skiing, hiking and running. One of the ways to do that is to find some way to get older kids involved with mentoring.
- We need more funding at the next level to support the rec. department and community the way we want to, like having resources for children and more community activities. How can we get it? Do we need a spokesperson? It always comes down to money. How do we go from sitting in a room talking about it to getting it to reality?
- Print newspaper. Upcoming events could be managed by the town, by the school, by residents. Find out what people really need, and what they want to hear about.
- A paper should involve the school district; kids will bring it home and parents will read it.
- Increased, better transportation for people who need it. Transportation in general. Getting a Lyft or Uber service into Milton. That's a doable thing to do.
- Continue and complete the town green initiative. This will make the area known as a town center.
- More youth, teenagers and young adults in community initiatives would make more people want to be engaged. If an initiative is identified, push for people to move on projects by cultivating youth involvement. Under a certain age, stuff on Facebook doesn't connect. We need to assess how information is spreading, and how the town wants to accomplish this.
- When the school has an 'all-call', people turn their heads and listen to the message. If there as an 'all-call' for the community, there would be more ability to spread the message on great things going on in town. Little things that are meaningful; having that warm & fuzzy would be nice.
- Bingo!
- Verbal invitations to community events are more effective than robo-calls. We tend to forget that.
- Something like the Arts Fair, but for LIFE! We need to help people transitioning out of school become contributing members of society. Apprenticeships for kids getting out of high school who are not going to college—an event like that would be perfect. Life skills for young adults: How do you manage your finances? Cut the lawn? Cook? Check the oil? Road safety?
- A youth and teens hangout. Not just activities but a coffee shop type of atmosphere too, where you can spend some leisure time and have conversations. The library has its purpose, but we need a public place where people want to go and hangout.
- A partnership to link people in need with people who can. A bulletin board with a central location to encourage a sense of place in the community. Who needs help and assistance? Young people can handle these things and engage with neighbors.
- Having a central hub for community that's not virtual is important. 'Milton helping Milton' on the town website is a good thing, but we need something more.
- Big brother program for kids with special needs, and matching similar interests.
- Pool and a taco truck!
- We need a restaurant that doesn't serve beer and fries and the same American fare. Diverse dining options would be nice.
- More music. Talent night. Bands, singers, more live entertainment.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Values Mapping event in Monkton used roadside succession signage—a passive technique—that was useful in spreading the word to rural residents, and didn't rely on digital outreach.
- A newspaper run by students for the community would be a great way to engage people and get kids involved.
- Many of the demographic indicators say that Milton is average to above average in a lot of areas; the question is how to turn these positives, and the energy of the community, into tangible results.
- A texting platform and program would be ideal for messaging.
- Growing a mentoring program is a solid step for youth development.
- Youth engagement in the community is a chicken vs. egg conundrum: getting them interested vs. having things for them to get interested in.
- Community newspaper is a wonderful tool. Having it in print could also supplement the social media aspect.
- How do we bring more people in, and make the community more accessible in general? That's a great place to be starting from, and not 'Why aren't they coming?'
- I've been a mentor in my life and it's been a very rewarding experience; there is room to build that up and give more energy there.
- Coffee shop, band shell, building new assets and creating accessibility are all worthwhile initiatives.
- Struck by the positivity of the room.
- Hybrid meetings during pandemic was the silver lining of people being involved; looking forward but keeping that idea in mind of taking new tech and connecting with each other. Maybe the current way isn't working but there's a willingness to try other avenues.
- Milton Helping Milton- brought to mind in central VT the Onion River Exchange: People who do with people in need. Perhaps that could be a model to expand on Milton Helping Milton.

Zoom Forum 1

Visiting Team: Nick Kramer (Facilitator), Susan Warner-Mills (scribe)

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Building affordable homes in Milton—just opened up a new senior housing facility.
- Having public forums and discussions for the community.
- Statewide—Vermont Housing and Construction Bd is working on a new project for a new non-profit to address affordable housing association with agriculture.
- Access to recreational and natural resource opportunities—also bring people to Milton.
- Good (or improving) infrastructure.
- Parks (Rec Dept).
- Schools, people working for and supporting them.
- Central location related to Chittenden County—both bedroom community but opportunity for more commerce.
- Locations and infrastructure available for new business
- Good transportation--Location of community on Rte. 89, ferry from NY, access from the tourist destinations to the east—need to capitalize more on these.
- Local agriculture—new vineyard, direct small farm marketing helps keep agricultural roots.
- Active historical society and historical assets.
- Great volunteer base—support education, recreation, the arts, other community activities.
- Parks, town forest.
- Very supportive of bike-ped.
- Milton Family Community Center.
- Having local access to UVM resources.
- Diversity of events and projects put on by recreation dept to engage community.
- Lots of additional opportunity for growth.
- Nice big grocery store despite rural nature of community—good for residents and good draw for possible new residents.
- New agricultural processing facility.
- Farmers market in summer, community garden (and opportunities for teen involvement).

What are the Challenges?

- *Missing link of affordable housing for agricultural workers (**mentioned in 1st section*).
- *Need more business to support local housing and other community offerings.
- *More bike connections to longer trails.
- *More stop lights needed.
- Need bike and sidewalks extending farther, e.g., along Rte. 7
- Traffic—only one way through town and traffic is very heavy (esp. beginning and end of day). Need more routes through/around town.
- Need a bigger grocery store.
- No obvious “center” of town.
- No obvious lake access.
- Lack of childcare for Milton-based rec/parks, especially for people out of town.
- Inadequate messaging or “brand” of what opportunities *do* exist. (Childcare assoc. with rec.).
- Milton is huge (61 sq. mi.).
- Safe activities for 11-14 year-olds, especially after school and on weekends.
- Main St. Milton is not on Rte. 7—should be recognized and promoted more.
- More local food stores offering natural foods, using local agriculture products.
- Need other kinds of stores to support grocery store—basic clothing, shoes, other retail, more restaurants (or a bigger store like Target that fills some of these needs).
- Need jobs that support these kinds of businesses; professional services to create more jobs for people who now need to leave Milton to work.
- Need a guiding principle/town identity for all the different programs and activities in Milton.
- Agree about road access—need more than the one major N-S artery (Rte. 7) then E-W (Rte. 15). Esp. Rte. 7 needs to be expanded.
- Need a sense of who Milton wants to be moving forward.
- Affordable housing.
- Broadband.
- Transportation for people for whom cars are not a reliable option.
- Access to mental health care.
- More activities for children and teens.
- More high-quality spaces for childcare that are open more hours.
- People to staff them.
- The after-school program “Mask” does not have sufficient openings to meet demand.
- Sophia mentioned that there are spaces at Mask, but problem is staffing.
- Agree need for after school programs and day care.
- Need more choices for grocery stores.
- Need more roads through town.
- Milton is experiencing growing pains associated with recent growth in Milton.
- Need to find ways to better support agricultural workforce—both year-round residents and the migrant workforce.
- Need more ways to safeguard clean water and other local natural resources.

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

- Capitalize on good transportation--location of community on Rte. 89, ferry from NY, access from the tourist destinations to the east.
- We should teach our kids to get involved in agriculture, encouraging them to stay in VT and continue VT's agricultural legacy. (E.g., FFA)
- Need a way to grow in a way that's comfortable both for long-timers and newer residents.
- Get us a swimming pool/fitness center—builds community!
- Place for kids to go doing useful things and keeping them from hanging out and making bad choices, e.g., possibly volunteer opportunities—anything other than hanging out at the park or staring at a screen.
- Second the idea of the benefit of creating volunteer opportunities—historical society, rec dept., library.
- More local bike paths, including ones connecting to longer area paths.
- Increasing opportunities for getting around Milton other than by car (bike/ped).
- More opportunities to get to Burlington via public transportation—better transportation network.
- More discussions like this yield opportunities that people may not have been aware of.
- Increase access to local food.
- Address affordable housing needs through the VT affordable housing community.
- Milton could be one of first communities in Chittenden County to build housing specifically for agricultural workers. (e.g., 20 multi-family homes). These could support Milton farm workers and those in surrounding communities.
- Take advantage of river access, Lake Arrowhead—collaborate with UVM, use for local teams (rowing).
- Address issue of needing teen activities: support private businesses to serve those needs—e.g., bowling, “maker space” on a pay basis to learn new tools needed for jobs in the future (this exists currently in Burlington).
- Create a “Maker Space” that teaches teens metal working, wood working, tools for the future.
- High School Maker Space is on its way.
- Create a community garden (sustainable).
- Increase number of e-bike charging stations.
- Create a way for kids to grow food and then sell it, e.g., in a restaurant or market.
- Use synergy among different orgs and groups to implement some of these ideas.
- Use ideas generated in 2000 at Milton in the Millennium.
- Make sure not to lose momentum for this process (as happened with Milton in the Millennium).

Infrastructure: Broadband, Transportation, Housing

Visiting Team: Brian Lowe (facilitator), Jenna Koloski (scribe), Tayt Brooks, Christine Hallquist, Jen Hollar, Regina Mahoney, Charles Martin, Nancy Owens, Mia Watson.

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Main road – Route 7. If you want to come here you can get here.
- Housing is somewhat affordable relative to the greater Burlington area.
- We moved here because you can get more space than Burlington area.
- The Town keeps our roads in pretty good condition.
- Hardworking, dedicated employees and people. Our road crew is very good.
- We have 10 miles of Lakeshore on Lake Champlain.
- The bus from Burlington is an asset. Reaches parts of Milton. 5 round trips a day.
- Good sense of humor!
- Vermont Sports car – a \$1.5M Subaru sports car - Travis Pastrana.
- Soon a new marijuana manufacturing facility. Will bring a lot of jobs.
- Award winning schools.
- We have a new winery open.
- Arrowhead Lodge provides jobs.
- We have a couple of park and rides.
- Good Utilities with spare capacity. Sewer has plenty of room.
- We have good parks for recreation.
- Miles of sidewalks.
- The Town Forest is pretty great.
- We have several companies who pay very well if you want to work.
- Decent jobs in Milton – just drive down the Rt. 7 corridor. Manufacturing jobs, tech jobs, electrical – Husky covers all of the trades and professional jobs.
- We have an expanding industrial park. We have space available and we have people taking advantage of that.
- Location is an asset – between St. Albans and BTW. Gateway to the islands.
- Milton is a net energy exporter.
- People in the community willing to volunteer – good community support.
- Eagle Mountain.
- Broadband is not available somewhere.

What are the Challenges?

- Very uneven Broadband access.
- The cost of broadband.
- The cost of the water sewer is very expensive to hook onto. A product of the excess capacity.
- In the rural area, we don't have access to hook onto the water and sewer. I wish we could hook on.
- We are 1 mile that is not connected to Comcast and it would cost tens of thousands of dollars to hook up. The cost is prohibitive for some.
- I have already paid for Starlink but still waiting for it to show up.
- Route 7 congestion
- Public transportation is limited and expensive.
- The bus only comes 2 or 3 times a day. Great for working in Burlington but not for getting around town.
- It would help a lot to have a center core. A transportation center or waiting area.
- I would like to see a Train route from St. Albans to Milton.
- The Conservation Law Foundation put restrictions on the sewer hookup limiting hookups in certain areas – sewer line runs by but the town is not allowed to hook up.
- Regulatory and environmental limitations around wastewater infrastructure.
- Housing is too expensive.
- We have been dealing with supply for about a year now. Just not enough housing out there in general.
- We have a need for housing like every other community but we need to do it in a way that is in line with the growth of services and needs. If you grow housing, have to consider emergency services, schools, etc. Whole system will need to grow and we need to be careful about how much we burden taxpayers. We don't have enough commercial taxes to support.
- We need more single-family homes in addition to multi-family units.
- The reputation of Milton in the rest of Chittenden County is a challenge. It is hard to change. There should be people and businesses wanting to move here, but reputation is a limitation. The reputation doesn't match the reality.
- We have fought the reputation for years. A lot of it is media driven. We take a bad rap from the media. This town has more to offer than how we are portrayed.
- We have a lot of open lots available for development. But if you are a new startup or want to leave Burlington – not only are you going to have to relocate, but you'll have to build a new space. There isn't a space available. There is an upfront cost hurdle.
- The schools have a negative reputation that is incorrect.
- The age of the school buildings is a challenge. Leads to high maintenance costs.
- There isn't a lot to do here. When people come to visit, we go other places.
- You need more than one spot where people can come and spend a day here. People want to do things and go out and enjoy themselves.
- There is nowhere to stay in Milton.
- The winery is a great wedding venue but you have to bus people to St. Albans to stay.
- There aren't good connections between our outdoor recreation spaces. There isn't recreation in the core – a bike path.
- There is no central downtown location.
- Our downtown closes at 8:30.
- There isn't any retail here. No place where you can go store to store. Have to go to Burlington. I would love to be able to put more money into Milton.
- We have talked about attracting these businesses for years – the challenge is that we are not attractive to hotels/chains. The reputation of the town impacts that. Our challenge is getting businesses to want to come here.
- When we have had restaurants here in the past, we don't support them as much as we should. If we want restaurants here we need to support them. It can be a two-sided thing. We need to face the problems we have. Some of our problems are self-inflicted.
- You can't take an Uber back here from Burlington – it's \$80 or more.
- We need housing that is affordable for young people. Get the people here who will support the businesses.
- Residents are picking up the tab for more than they should – the balance is 85% to 15% residential to commercial
- Taxes. Other communities have more support from commercial tax base.

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

- We should build a recreation center with a hockey rink, pool, etc. Hold tournaments. Build a hotel, put a brewery next to it. Need to have something to attract businesses to begin with.
- When I wanted to move my business here people didn't think it would work, but we have to do it.
- Removing some of the roadblocks for water and sewer.
- We should develop a plan for expanded housing, road expansion, etc.
- The zoning reflects the desires/allowed uses and we have maps but the zoning is not enforced. We have limited staff capacity for that enforcement and planning.
- We need to continue looking at our interstate exit as well as more east and west road ways. We need to look at how we handle the new thoroughfare through neighborhoods.
- We need an intermodal transportation center. We are a perfect location for public transit. A central destination for transportation.
- We should look at the Creamery as a perfect spot for a transportation hub.
- We need electric vehicle charging. It's a long drive from Burlington to St. Albans and people coming from Canada – give them a place to stop. It creates a destination. Newport VT has 4 charging stations.

- We need to get our newspaper back. People need to know what's happening in town and have access to information. We need more inter-community communication. This is especially true for seniors.
- Classes for older people using electronics. Need to have online sources for younger people in town as well.
- There aren't a lot of great walkable areas in town. You're generally driving in you're going one place to another. We need to improve walkability.
- Create a dense "downtown" area that is more walkable and connected.
- We should clean up Milton a bit. Beautification. (example of the Food Truck rental space – clean it up to make it more attractive).
- We need to identify ways to access grant funding for the Broadband infrastructure improvements. We hear about money coming in for it but how do we access that?
- We need to make sure that the options provided are affordable and that we have options.
- We could bring Comcast in and pay for it, or we can work with Consolidated to update their system.
- Explore either putting together a plan for the Town to work with a private service provider or could join the NW Communications Union District or wait for consolidate (Christine can check with Consolidated to see).
- Build a list of complaints from businesses and from the school to build the case for the need here.
- We need a branding and marketing campaign. Promote the good things that happen in the schools or youth program
- We should hold community events – hockey tournament on the pond with food trucks!
- We should target the type of businesses that we want and reach out to them. Highlight and share the development assets. We should "shop" for businesses but we need to also make sure we have the locations/buildings here or someone ready to invest to develop. We need a developer ready to take a risk on us.
- We need to look at the Milton corridor and really think about the most attractive locations for a business to come into town. You have to create a space that will be attractive for people to come to. Have to consider parking if you have businesses on the bottom and housing on top. Have to consider consumers.
- Find something that we can establish in Milton to make Milton a destination.
- A large community center here on the Bombardier property that welcomes in people of all ages. Bring people together. Children to senior citizens.
- Target developers. Make the business case for developers.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Consolidated is going to put fiber wherever there is cable. Fiber is the way to go. The State has plans to build this out – Consolidated has plans for some, the state plans to take care of the rest. We have the money to do it - \$350M. It would cost \$1B to get every home connected in the state. Private enterprise will cover half of that and we have \$350M of the \$500M. The business case doesn't add up. The problem is solved. Now we need to talk about what the social impacts are to VT. Once everyone has fiber we will be a very attractive place to come to. We need to plan for this future. The timeline for this roll-out is 5 years for the last address to get fiber in VT.
- This makes me think how exciting the future is for this area. What you have before you with broadband expansion, attracting an "entertainment" district or destination. There may be a tension with finding workers to fill those jobs if you already have jobs that you're struggling to fill. Something to consider – what are the catalysts to bringing people to support that industry. Really heard that you need housing for everyday people and should be tied in to that desire to improve that "district."
- Housing desires (starter home, affordable, etc.) is something that everyone is looking for. That type of housing just doesn't exist today. It doesn't mean it can't be done – it just can't be done at that price. What the town can do – you can look at incentives to encourage developers to take risks. There are examples throughout VT of towns that are doing that. There is great opportunity in the infrastructure you have described. How do you deploy that to create the attractive environment for the developer?
- I would encourage folks to really think big. Focus on an area and really try to get people in and hold to that land use pattern to make things closer and tighter. It is a dense and compact area that drawn a lot of activity in that area. A lot of what you see on Rt 7 is underutilized. It can really be something different than what it looks today.
- Really interesting to think about the recreation assets that were named and ways to connect those to the downtown core that people hope to create. You have a hidden asset here in the shared equity homes – that will help to secure affordable housing over time. There are these opportunities sprinkled through the community and people may not know where they are. More of that could happen.
- I think you have a tremendous amount of assets here. From the point of view of businesses looking for a location and from a residential standpoint. These assets perhaps haven't been advertised. You have incredible attributes that you can share. There is a lot of capacity and a strong foundation.
- I'm hearing a high level of systems thinking here. Infrastructure and planning are so essential. Don't want to lose sight of how important housing is in that. When you think about your growth plans think about where can we make smart investments in businesses and also can we have everyone who wants to live here be able to? I was really struck by how connected folks in this room are. It would be a good step for Milton to start a housing committee to make sure there is a focus on housing and how it connects. Housingdata.org has a lot of data and a toolbox to start a housing commission.
- You're a fun town! I can tell right away. That is a great foundation. When I was in Johnson I participated in a committee that set a vision and transformed itself. St. Albans – turned themselves around. Something things are hard and take time. This is an awesome town and it's possible. Stay on it.

Belonging in Milton

Visiting Team: Xusana Davis (facilitator), Katie McGrath (scribe), Virginie Deambou, Paul Dragon, Rebecca Ellis.

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Very involved community with people who care about Milton.
 - Youth are doing a lot of great work around uplifting voices and creating intentionally inclusive environment.
 - Wonderful small businesses with a variety of services.
 - Good youth programs that get kids involved in groups.
 - Parks and rec programming with a variety of services that are accessible with inexpensive and funded scholarships.
 - Great camp program.
 - Community is diversifying, number of students and families of color are increasing in the school district.
 - Relatively easy to tap into government structures.
 - School board and select board meetings more accessible because of online streaming and recording.
 - Community has continued to find ways to come together even through COVID and make it accessible despite restrictions.
 - Community is very supportive of youth, whether it be sports or plays, etc.
 - Town leadership “walks the walk,” drawing attention to inclusiveness and welcoming.
 - Don the town manager is really positive leader that’s brought in consultants around DEI and bringing about action in the community through trainings etc.
-

What are the Challenges?

- Connecting services to people.
 - Many folks don’t feel welcome here or feel belong.
 - Staffing challenges in schools and ability to provide adequate support for kids.
 - Need more inclusivity and support for those who are in marginalized communities.
 - Mental health challenges and isolation among kids from the pandemic.
 - School staffing is predominantly white and may lack skillset to address issues of diversity, many things don’t seem harmful yet are.
 - School calendar centers around dominant cultural Christian holidays and isn’t inclusive of all children’s backgrounds.
 - Small things in school curriculums, discipline, and culture that make children feel like they don’t belong.
 - School system capacity is lacking, often reactionary and not proactive. People doing their best but don’t have the resources they need.
 - Engagement and how to reach different portions of the population.
 - Challenges around knowing how to communicate with different parts of the community.
 - People are nervous about communicating issues of diversity and worry about saying the wrong thing in this climate.
 - Many members of older generations grew up in homogenous populations and don’t know how to communicate with people who are different from them.
 - Not understanding or feeling alienated by discussions of division, confusion around why this is an issue.
 - As welcoming as Milton is, there are still those who don’t feel welcome and there are gaps to be filled.
 - Large elderly community but not much for them beyond the senior center.
 - Isolation and lack of connection especially with the pandemic and social media.
 - No “third space” to gather that isn’t home or work, cost barriers for many spaces.
 - Very little public transit and accessibility to both inside and outside of Milton.
 - People are stretched thin and don’t have as much time as they’d like to volunteer.
-

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

- Workshops for adults to better understand issues of diversity
- UVM program Prosper to help families that are struggling and help them in conjunction with the school.
- Building a culture of engagement and reducing barriers to community participation, lower opportunity cost, example of paying students to participate in programs and clubs.
- More opportunities to have conversations with folks who have had different experiences.
- Community center that brings folks together and offers place for people to gather and access resources – there’s already a piece of land the town has its eye on.
- Welcoming committee for folks who are new to town, used to have one and could re-boot it.
- Create a Volunteer Bank that connects people to causes they care about, engages folks with the community and people around them.
- Create a town position that is dedicated to coordinating and connecting people to services, opportunities to volunteer or work with organizations and initiatives.
- Bring programming to the school to meet kids where they’re at.
- Increase transportation opportunities, maybe have force of people who could offer rides to those in need.
- Bring in experts to support and share ideas and learn from other towns on how to be more inclusive.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Touched by compassion for the children of the community
- Neighborhood celebrations and potluck sponsored by the town to build community and a sense of belonging and connection, “neighbors day” exists already in Vermont, town “eating” day.
- Engagement and volunteering spirit strong.
- No Milton residents of color attended so would be great to get their perspective.
- Opportunities to bridge generational gaps will be important.
- Continuing conversations around making people feel welcome and like they belong in Milton.
- Echoes prior discussion on importance of a community resource center to bring folks together opening opportunities for people to connect.
- Connection and bridging divides with youth and making sure they feel like they belong.
- Hunger for more workshops and opportunities to bring in more diverse member of the community in ways that aren’t tokenizing.

Things to Do in Milton

Visiting Team: Nick Kramer (facilitator), Jessica Savage (scribe), Ted Brady, Kevin Lambert, Haley Pero, Amy Cunningham, Caitlin Corkins

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Whole town events (4th of July, Trunk or Treat): community events are good.
- Youth sports: lots to choose from and lots of people involved, lots of spaces to have them like Bombardier Field
- Milton Woods, Bombardier: camping, snowshoeing, skiing, all kinds of possibilities if someone puts that together.
- Artist Guild: good hub for local artists, social and economic wealth.
- Arrowhead Running Series: been going for a decade, 5k events.
- Running club: Arrowhead lodge every week on Tuesdays.
- Milton Artist guild has live music and artists.
- Dog Park is huge asset.
- Milton Public Library: kids, teens, adults, passes to local places, telescope, snowshoe.
- Trail systems: Milton Woods, River Trail, Eagle Mountain: volunteers keep the trails up really nicely, parking lot at Milton Woods is great.
- Bonnie and Brian Pease (neighbors to Milton Woods): maintain the trails (everyone applauded them!).
- Lots of people using the trails during COVID: ppl came from all over.
- Pond in woods is well loved and well used.
- Disc Golf course.
- Mountain Bike trail.
- Arrowhead Lodge is fun place to go on Friday night.
- Winery (new?).
- Arts night at Arrowhead Lodge: paint while drinking at bar.
- Haunted Trail.
- Historical Society does a great job especially considering size and resources: museum is being rehailed with new look, programs having people bring in historical/art exhibit, history walks.
- Pickleball on courts: very popular.
- Sand Bar State Park, Niquette Bay State Park.
- Lake in town with lots of fishing access.
- Playground/pavilion/fields/restrooms at rec facility are all really nice.
- Ski and Ride program.

What are the Challenges?

- Youth is underserved: need a big recreation building space for kids to have things to do, they need somewhere to go with something to do.
- Generally no space to do things recreationally.
- Seniors are underserved in community.
- Car/transportation barriers to get to town forest: Milton/Westford Road is dangerous for biking/walking.
- Tennis Courts need repair: almost dangerous. Don’t include pickleball courts and should.
- No weekend nightlife: nice restaurant, concerts, nothing to do at night.
- Always drive to Burlington to hang out, would be nice to have more night activities to do.
- Lacking in indoor nightlife, indoor entertainment: have nothing to draw people into town.
- No pool: need swimming facilities.
- Nothing for kids to do with behavioral challenges in summer: camps aren’t accessible to kids with different needs.
- Need better notification system for what is happening in town: lack of accessible information.
- Lots of information methods but only accessible to certain audiences.
- Lack of access to lake: no good boat access.
- GMP owns the land around the lake: nowhere to park.
- Funding is too small for rec budget.
- Lack of community engagement: so hard to get new people involved in community.
- Lack of communication.

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

- Get more youth involved in helping with community: projects where youth can help. Ex.: get them to help with pool project.
- Community service projects in HS.
- Younger age: schools promote events/ways to get involved.
- Working more in collaboration with resources that are available: work with Howard Center, school, use the resources from the parents to give education to people who are providing programs to kids.
- Make arrangements with businesses in town to have local bulletin board space to post event flyers/posters (Arrowhead Lodge, Hannaford's, etc.).
- Sign people up for town robocalls re: events.
- Schools/rec dept. provide other opportunities for kids to do other things: disc golf, pickleball, rec area being used in positive way.
- Community members organize and provide training for activities: pickleball, fishing, etc. and get kids involved, Noncompetitive activities.
- Summer music festival over a weekend in Bombardier Park: serve locally produced wine beer and spirits.
- Contest with trebuchets on dams and sink pirate ship.
- Pop up mini golf course: 9 holes sponsored by local businesses.
- Game night: outdoor/giant games (soccer pool, giant Jenga).
- Town wide flea market/garage sale.
- Ethnic food places in town, welcoming to new Americans: get some new restaurants.
- Get to Burlington without needing to drive: shuttle on the hour (evening hours).
- Increasing the amount of rideshare opportunities in Milton (uber, etc.) greencab, shared bike/e-bike program.
- Giant paddleboat on lake: stay away from dam because of the pirate trebuchets (haha).
- Train station!
- Music series: coordinate a series and coordinate information about it.
- Town could have a communication page that is more accessible.
- Front Porch Forum.
- Opt to get texts/robocalls about events.
- Milton calendar isn't complete: getting one place for all information could be a full-time job.
- Hotel space could bring other franchises.
- Restaurants/places to hang out for longer periods of time in the evenings.
- Natural areas/trails in town are really wonderful: use these to attract people and to get people to draw more people in.
- Hillbilly Olympics: wood stacking, hay baling, etc.
- Brochure/map/communication about all the great natural areas and where they are/how to find them.
- Bike/rec path in town and be able to access places in town.
- Economic incentive to bar/restaurant: liquor license cost is covered by town and goes down over time is one example.
- Build pool.
- Youth running program.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Milton is a lake town.
- Milton Artist Guild: Milton is a creative economy town.
- Town prom: Montgomery example.
- Programming matters, space comes after programming
- Rec dept wants to meet your needs.
- Invite a friend to next session and advocate for what you want to have happen: those things happen!
- Great and silly ideas do pull people together so do some of them!
- Charlie Hancock in Montgomery: one of those people who brings people together: it's going to take someone like that to get out there and get the messaging out there. Need to engage people and make calls to your friends.
- What's the "there" there? Where's that place people come together? Where can you gain that identity? Sounds like you are looking for a physical place, like a center/flea market/farmers market: how do you pull that together?
- Ex. Of Hinesburg Public House: people pitched in to buy/fund this place and then get individual buyer.
- People have an appreciation for the natural assets.
- People don't know about those assets: real opportunity there.
- Community/rec center: buildings in town that could maybe serve as a place for these centers: combination of places even: survey what the assets are out there.
- Pickleball: yes because tennis courts get filled up otherwise.
- Social and economic prosperity of this town: outdoor recreation, cultural events, these are economic drivers as well (live and visit here).
- Need for the centralized calendar/information hub is the holy grail problem that so many communities face.
- Many towns which have changed the face of their towns with music events: building on creative placemaking.
- Central physical place for info is good one.
- Enthusiasm and pride for Milton: what can we do for the people of Milton and for the people who are here.
- Map of outdoor rec assets, annual event list.
- Interest in showcasing those assets: one day field day/game day showcasing assets.
- Engaging local businesses is great.

Zoom Forum 2

Visiting Team: Alyssa Johnson (facilitator), Susan Warner Mills (scribe)

Focus and interest in housing, homelessness and racial equity/diversity among most attendees.

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Hiking opportunities—town forest, Beagle Mtn.
- Second for hiking options—Lamoille path, and also the parks and playgrounds
- School system (“pleasantly surprised”—elem sch and preschool).
- Milton Rec is great—caters to a lot of age groups.
- Library.
- Rec Dept. is really engaging—puts a lot of effort into involving community with a variety of programs to engage residents.
- Sidewalks and rec paths (esp the traffic light on Rte 7 & Cherry St.) Encourages people to walk and not always drive.
- Bus going from Milton to Burlington (SSTA—Special Service Transp’n. Assn.) for people with disabilities.
- Proximity of high-quality grocery store (including access to organics and other healthy foods).
- Comcast high speed internet service availability.
- Many agricultural assets, including new agricultural processing facility in the business park.
- Assets to involve young people in agriculture and sustainability.
- Mix of town and rural land.
- Access to Lake Champlain.
- Farmers Market.
- Dog park (several seconds were voiced).
- Madelaine’s Bakery.
- Milton Artists’ Guild (Supports local artists, provides programming for kids).
- Realtors’ support for high reputation of local school system.
- Milton Family Community Ctr. provides food shelf, counseling, child care, etc.
- Milton is not Burlington or St. Albans (a plus), but you can still reach those easily (added benefit).
- All the churches in town.

What are the Challenges?

- Need to expand sidewalk system
- Need to expand bike paths
- Lack of teen activities for after school, especially provide volunteer opportunities
- Need more opportunities for kids
- Need to expand sidewalks especially near RR crossings. Very dangerous. (End of Barnum)
- There should be sidewalks within a mile of school
- Milton needs more senior housing/graduated care (including independent and assisted living)
- Need a bagel shop and/or café and/or coffee house—place other than bars to hang out and meet up with friends
- Affordable housing is really scarce, especially housing with broadband access.
- Lack of affordable housing for agricultural workers
- Lack of information to know how to improve things like affordable housing, esp. for farm workers.
- Need to balance school budgets while continuing to attract great teachers, families, etc.
- Public relations—outsiders’ view of Milton. It has improved, but more needs to be done.
- New construction going on needs to include trees and nice landscaping—helps PR for Milton because these would make it more welcoming.
- No clear downtown, and more needs to be done to make the entire downtown more visually appealing.
- Better public transportation—bus ride from Milton to Burlington is a really long commute.

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

- Add more biking opportunities.
- Improve accuracy of scheduling for bus from Milton to Burlington (esp. the option from Park & Ride).
- Opportunity to include everyone involved in any way in agriculture in plans for the community.
- Create an FFA.
- Support needs of agricultural workers.
- Capitalize on Realtors’ support for high reputation of local school system and encourage others’ support (e.g., retailers).
- Explore opportunities for senior/independent housing (Cathedral Square collaboration?).
- Build housing targeted specifically for agricultural workers.
- Bike paths.
- Swimming pool.
- More after-school opportunities for those too old for daycare but too young to work.
- More opportunities for those kids to contribute to and feel part of community.
- Structured volunteer opportunities for those kids (e.g., to help seniors, rec dept., etc.) Publicize what’s available, and also what’s needed.
- Offer incentives (some kind of credit) for kids who contribute in these ways.
- Positive promotion of Milton—realtors, other retailers, etc.
- Ice skating rink.
- Sledding and tubing hill.
- Build a separate middle school.
- TJ Max (more retail).
- CSA opportunities (organic veggies and foods).
- Food retail like Coop, City Market, Healthy Living.
- High quality medical care.

- More alternative medical care—chiropractors, naturopathic, PT, etc.
- Another auditorium or performance center for drama, plays, presentations, etc.
- Spruce up the area, esp. where speed limit is reduced when coming from Burlington.
- Preserve quality of local natural resources (lake water) and parks/rec areas.
- Bring more solar and alternative energy opportunities.
- Bring back the ice rink/hockey rink.
- Connect some of the needs and their solutions (e.g., teen volunteers for sprucing up activities).
- Plant more trees.
- Rail access—put a stop in Milton.
- Rail access to Burlington (probably unlikely—currently goes to Essex, though even to Essex might be helpful) (Use Infrastructure Bill money).
- Alternative would be to improve bus access to Burlington.
- More opportunities for music lessons and learning different languages for all ages. Maybe some kind of cultural center.

Additional Action Ideas

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

- I live on Duffy Rd, and do not have access to Broadband cable internet. This makes it very difficult working from home via Cell Service casting. It amazes me that Milton doesn't have Cable internet available to all residents. I know there is available funding from the state. and also part of the US Infrastructure bill recently passed. Can our representatives help the citizens of our community so that we can proactively work from home, and have our children attend virtual classes when Covid prohibits in person class.
- I'd like to suggest improving our current Pickleball courts and creating indoor Pickleball courts. Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in America which I have personally witnessed in Chittenden and Franklin County. Our online scheduling system grew from 33 members in 2019 to over 700 members today. This is great news but it also adds growing pressure for more courts. Especially indoor courts. Pickleball has many benefits. It can help: Boost your mood and overall mental health, get exercise and burn calories, improve balance and agility, reduce health risks, make social connections. Bonus: it's easy to learn and ALL ages can play. There are few things that provide as many health/social benefits to a such wide range of people as Pickleball. Plus, it's just plain fun! Dedicated outdoor courts and new indoor courts would improve the quality of life for the people of Milton and the surrounding communities. References - add'I info: courtreserve.com/top-7-health-and-social-benefits-of-pickleball/, and columbiaassociation.org/blog/pickleball-the-fastest-growing-sport-iamerica/
- I would love to see an adult education center built, preferably a college satellite, but can be independent. Of course, as in any "college" setting there needs to be a Starbucks next door. Both would be beneficial for the community of 18-50+. In addition to college courses, offerings should include college courses for seniors 65+. In an ideal word, a fine arts portion would exist for intimate performance purposes with that option for wine and fine spirits. This offering would encourage the population of 20-60 year old residents that leave town for work and stay in the Burlington area, to return home.
- Most of my relatives of all ages enjoy the lake and all that it has to offer. In order to access the lake, we use state-owned parks or travel into other towns to access the water, to dine, purchase tackle, picnic, swim, rent equipment, etc. Can the town of Milton gain access to the lake? Can we use the lake to our benefit as other towns do?
- To expand on the hockey rink idea, add an indoor field space, this would be a HUGE draw for Milton. I've run club lacrosse in the past and finding indoor field space is always a challenge. There are basically 3 places to rent now UVM, Fairgrounds, Shelburne Field House. All of these are south of use and nearly impossible to get into between the club soccer demand and other sports. If Milton added 2 or 4 indoor fields and a hockey rink or two it would put us on the map for HS sports rentals, rec and club sports, and adult leagues. Louis the owner of GAME ON VT has been looking to build a facility for years now to support this need, but hasn't been able to nail down the right location. I believe that could be here in Milton.
- Housing - What if we setup a housing trust of sorts. It helps developers ease the cost of development and gets homes into a target price range, then when those homes are sold some of the sale goes back into the program to keep costs low as mentioned last night.
- Continue to upgrade public areas such as Bombardier park and recreation area. Repurpose the current town works department building at the dam on River Street as educational center of some sort for both young and old.
- Cafe/coffee shop.
- An electronic sign by Hannaford notifying residents of upcoming events and important notices. I had no idea that I had to be a member of front porch forum or go looking for the events on the town webpage to know what is going on. I'm embarrassed to say that a tree lighting has been happening and I complained during the community session that I miss it! Also, if a new town center is in the works, when will it occur? Can the project be sped up? Could a sign be there assuming the town center is visible from route 7?
- I live in a community of 72 homes on Westford Rd. When working from home, the internet is spotty and worsened by multiple users. If I attempt to use zoom I lose connection, lately this even happens when a phone call comes in while on zoom. I have yet to make it through a full conference or meeting without interrupted service. This is magnified when

- moved to fully remote and all students in my neighborhood and in the town are also remotely learning. As you move further from the town center, such as Mars Hollow Rd, Hard Scrabble Rd or Devine Rd the situation is even worse. These students are unable to learn using the internet and hot spot benefits are largely exaggerated, and for these folks, completely useless. I have contacted Xfinity several times, they report nothing unusual, however, technicians sent to investigate report that our lines attached to poles are grossly outdated and poorly working.
- Get a handle on improving education in Milton schools. Milton has a long history for having poor student proficiency along with high property taxes. The solution could be to focus school spending on education instead of expansion of services and administrators. Poor education and high tax burdens discourage people from wanting to live here or stay here in the future.
 - More amenities for families in and discipline the tweens causing problems.
 - Indoor/outdoor recreation and community complex to include tennis and pickleball courts, pool/rink and especially including small and large meeting spaces since the free use of school spaces are off limits to taxpayers' community organizations which don't have their own buildings. Consider corporate sponsorships and grants for funding.
 - Road resurfacing - catch up with town roads that are overdue for new surfaces instead of patching holes.
 - We need broadband internet on Bear Trap Rd.
 - It would be great to have more restaurants with healthy food choices. I would love to see more restaurants and coffee places, bagel shop would be great!
 - I will soon be looking for child care and hope to be able to find that locally.
 - Post pandemic it would be nice to attend social events throughout the community. Keep up the great work of concerts in park, rec dept and library events.
 - Stop building housing units and build individual homes - they bring in more taxes. Also a hotel would be beneficial. I know of athletic teams that stay in Plattsburgh because it's too expensive for them to stay anywhere near Burlington. Also a brewery, a decent restaurant that doesn't serve just fried food and a community center that could provide activities for Milton and other areas for a fee would bring more people in town.
 - More options for shopping, dining out, and gathering.
 - Enriching the in-town experience of the residence; adding to the robustness of the recreational opportunities and facilities
 - Continuing to build and grow mountain bike trails and mountain bike community, including a jump line and pump track. Aside from bombardier/cobble hill, are there other areas that could be explored (private land if people are willing does work). Fellowship of the Wheel has already started work here, but is a great resource for anything MTB related.
 - Skatepark.
 - More local restaurants, including a brewery/brewpub (would love to explore this more with others in the area who are interested).
 - Ice rink.
 - Adult sport programs/leagues.
 - We live in an area between train tracks (off east road). We are unable to get high speed internet, or even the school bus. This is extremely frustrating as the bus stop on Mars hollow is not safe. dozens of car accidents occur by this train bridge every year etc. So, if the town cannot help provide services (incentives for Comcast to come, or bus services) could you please cede this track of land to Colchester?? Their bus comes down this way.
 - Quality of Life. We should create a Green space and park in the Ice House road space near Lake Arrowhead. This is the nicest part of Milton with beautiful views on the lake and there are sidewalks everywhere. This could be a space where families can gather and food trucks could come on the weekends as it is near Arrowhead Lodge.
 - Food. We need more restaurants that are not diners! Maybe a bagel shop or more ethnic cuisine like New Red Panda.
 - Kindness. The leadership of the town is not very diverse. Kids at school are often mean to others. Leadership should model being open minded and welcoming to ALL.
 - Boys and Girls club style facility to provide a safe place for children, especially those of low income, to play learn and grow. Increase funding to EMS and PD to keep doing the good work they do.
 - I would like to see the existing tennis courts upgraded and made into pickleball/ tennis courts with lights. Also, a recreational center for seniors and teens with indoor pickleball courts included. I believe both these groups are under served and need more opportunities for healthy exercise.
 - Removing the people currently holding positions in Milton's government is necessary to ensure forward progress.
 - It would be nice to have a walkway across the Lake on Rt 7 toward Lake Road! This would connect that part of town with a walk or bike route! Also, it would be great to be able to use the water along there to use and more accessible! It is a great body of water! Maybe paddle boats, kayaking, boating, etc.!
 - It would be awesome to attract businesses to our town!
 - Milton needs an indoor pool/family fitness center and a coffee shop. Sidewalks along rt 7 all the way to the Milton Beverage and Diner to make it safer for pedestrians.
 - Stop building condos and apartments. They don't produce enough tax income but eat up resources. Build house that pay taxes. Bring in businesses not used car lots or car repair shops. We need a chain store or restaurant that will attract folks to our area.
 - I set up a committee of business owners local and look at how to attract chain businesses into our town something that separates us from others we need to look at Essex center and how they grew their town. We also need to stop burdening locals with tax increases. If we do it right we should be able to lower taxes on locals. I would also like to see money go towards the senior center in town to help our elderly in our community.
 - Need new road outlet for the end of Poor Farm Road housing areas. Only one way in/out currently. Safety issue.
 - Police Dept vehicles need some type of overhead protection like a metal roof lean-to style structure at a minimum.

- The open field bordered by Lake Rd and Poor Farm Rd should be purchased for public use. All Milton recreation is located in one area, but that does not serve the outlying areas of the town.
- Dedicated Pickleball Lighted Courts
- Senior housing.
- Milton needs more Housing, jobs and restaurants/entertainment. Also, a walkable town center with community space for gatherings.
- More activities especially for children. A pool and also more community space and events. More food service in the area, especially something for quick breakfast in the morning, like bagels and more sit-down restaurants.
- Milton also does not really have anything that draws people into town from elsewhere. People go to St. Albans, Essex, Williston and Burlington for food and recreation and shopping. We do not have those type of spaces in town. This brings businesses and cash flow into the town; we currently really only have local people spending local dollars in our businesses -- no outsiders.
- Milton in general isn't kind to outsiders -- it doesn't welcome them for recreation, business, or even to live here. Milton needs to have ways for new folks in town to meet others and network, especially those running for public office. I have lived here 20 years and do not know the current board of selectpersons or school board trustees. I find this a very unfriendly place to live and raise my kids.
- Milton does not have a central area of town to gather for events.
- There is not a recreation space for clubs, scouts, or other activities. We share our gym space with the schools. The pavillion and the clamshell at bombardier have become this space in spring, summer and fall, but we need a winter-accessible space in town. The grange is not large enough nor safe enough (mold) for these activities.
- Education: Make education priority. Passing the school budget the first time, without painful cuts is an investment in the future of our town. People have to understand why it's important. Tangibles.
- Community: The outdoor spaces that we have are wonderful, Bombardier Park, dog park, stage, trails, forest. Add more value for families with a skate park and splash pad. Milton needs indoor community center space for groups like the Scouts, or after school clubs to meet. An indoor gym space so kids can have basketball practice more than once a week on Saturday, and meet to play in the winter. The outdoor courts are always busy in warm weather. It's hard to build community programs without attractive, functional spaces.
- Curb appeal: Relocate the people living in the decaying motels on route 7 to adequate housing. Knock them down and create attractive housing or retail space. Those buildings right on the main drag do not portray Milton as a desirable location to build business or raise a family.
- Access: Increase the sidewalks in Milton. There are several developments within a few miles of downtown that would benefit from sidewalks. For example, Route 7 is dangerous to ride bikes or jog. Extend sidewalks down to the Ledges so getting to town is safer.
- Marketing: I feel like Milton has a lot to offer. We need someone to put together a marketing campaign to attract more young professional families. Show off all the highlights. We are a suburb of Burlington.
- Food: All I can say is Tacos please! We really don't need another burger and fry place.
- We need better infrastructure. An additional exit off of 89 would help access and therefore improve quality of life. We need more things for families to do (splash pad, hockey rink) to stay competitive with other communities, and more businesses- a place to get a burger, bagel, etc. our community doesn't have the curb appeal to attract the right businesses. We need to get the wrong image off of our main road, and bring in shops, plazas, etc.
- Fundraisers.
- There needs to be more for teenagers to do. A skatepark, a teen center hangout with an adequate number of adults to help supervise. There also needs to be safer housing and more affordable options for single parents.
- Affordable housing that will be the buyer's primary residence and reasonably priced retail space for small businesses.
- Love to see some of the tax monies used to build the school support systems as well as community options like a community pool.
- Increase support to Milton's established organizations, such as the Milton Rec Department, The Library, MCYC, MFCC, and so on. Doing so will allow growth and development that would cover so many of the topics and issues brought up at the meeting we attended.
- An I89 exit at W Milton Road is desperately needed to encourage development in Milton. This additional exit would allow for the more efficient flow of traffic reducing commute times and fuel consumption.
- I live in Fairfax, but I work in Milton. I am interested in more childcare options in Milton. We just moved to the area this past Summer, and we have two children, one of which is 2.5 years old. He is currently enrolled in a facility in Essex because it's the closest facility we could find with available slots. I prefer an actual childcare facility over an in-home daycare, but we haven't been able to find anything closer to home or work with any availability. Driving that extra distance makes it difficult to make it to work on time, and I hate that we are so far away if anything were to happen.
- I think we need some sort of recreational or entertainment attraction to bring in residents from neighboring towns. This will help with Milton's economy and hopefully allow some of our current businesses to make a more sustainable profit. Thinking strategically about things that Colchester, Essex, St Albans residents travel to other towns/cities (like Burlington) for would be smart. Pre-pandemic I would have suggested a movie theater but I'm not sure those are doing well. Breweries are quite popular these days.
- Milton discount card for supporting Milton-based businesses or discounts at locally owned places. Businesses who want more traffic can become a part of the "portfolio" or group and only at those businesses will people get discounts when they flash the card. Maybe call it the "I Love Milton Card" - something small like 5% discounts for supporting small

- businesses in the area. We can sell the card inexpensively like \$5 and proceeds go to putting on events for hosting a site where we can advertise more of the cards and invite other businesses to join the “portfolio.”
- More business, stores, a more walkable community and more places to gather inside year-round.
 - Having an afterschool program that is open to the general student population and allows latchkey kids a place to stay. I would love to see a taco place in town. I do not want the town managers to give developers big tax breaks to “get people housing’ (e.g., by McDonalds) without factoring in the impact on the school. We should have a town pool and more things for people to do in town.
 - One pet peeve that I see in towns and cities is that they are encouraging building of new places close to the sidewalks and streets. That leaves no parking in front of a business. It also limits the ability to widen a road or street as needed. If traffic needs increase, you can’t widen a street by an additional lane or two to accommodate the increase in traffic or a left turn lane. It is also encouraged or required to have small businesses on the lower level and residences on upper levels. There can be only so many small businesses, so you might not get anybody to move into those commercial spaces. Some people require first floor access to residences due to mobility issues, but they are not available to them.
 - Side streets might be necessary in some areas to access businesses or residences. This is especially true when one cannot park on the street to access these places, and side street access can cut down on turning traffic on busy streets.”
 - I would love it if we could entice some new restaurateurs to open places in Milton. Having more variety in the type and quality of food will help in continuing to grow this community, and improve the quality of life of all its residents. I wonder how feasible it would be to attract new places through a tax subsidy, development loans, and/or business planning advice offered by the town. Having moved to the town this past summer, I think this is truly the only thing the town is missing. How did we end up being one of the few towns in this area without a brewery? What roadblocks exist now that prevent new places from opening, if any?
 - It is great to see the expansion of sidewalks downtown. I believe, when new businesses move in, it would be beneficial to have the entrances located closer to the sidewalk, with the parking on the sides, or in the rear of the building. Pedestrians wouldn’t have to traverse as many parking lots when making multiple stops. Not only would it shorten their walk, but would be safer. It would be a draw for the elderly housing units and for anyone moving to town who is trying to drive less.
 - High-speed internet - especially important for people moving here from out of state who work from home. We moved here in August from Portland, Oregon. My husband and I own two businesses, work from home, and rely on Internet. Where we are we can only get DSL, which is inadequate but serviceable. If Milton is to continue to modernize, high-speed accessible Wi-Fi is a requirement. I’m happy to talk more about this.
 - A coffee shop would be a great add to the community.
 - A community pool, increasing businesses such as breweries/small business shops
 - Get a decent restaurant.
 - I would like to see more restaurants and options for shopping..
 - Clinics for doctor’s appointments and dentist appointments available at schools
 - Creating a public transportation option in Milton to help young adults and people without transportation access jobs and resources within the community
 - Milton Innovation Center- a flexible hands on space for youth and community members to explore career pathways
 - More renewable energy - solar fields, EV stations - anything to support renewable energy.
- Building a new town garage is a great idea. It is definitely needed and would be better not to have it next the waterway.
- My hope is that a plan will be in place for reusing the existing site, A park would be great!
 - We should improve our Milton schools by increasing student proficiency. Could you imagine how many parents would want to live in Milton if our student proficiency went from 30 percent to 100 percent. If Milton had the reputation of teaching students all of what they are supposed to learn at their grade level, Milton would be the choice location for any parents who care about their children’s education.
 - In addition, taxpayers would feel that their taxes were worthwhile
 - Enforcement of profanity laws, or if they don’t apply to private property let’s expand them. I’ve gone from being an involved member of the community to feeling very alienated by the amount of “Fuck Biden” I see everywhere – on flags, signs, decals across car windshields...I’m not a fan of the Trump signs that are still up or the new “Let’s Go Brandon” variations either, but at least those don’t automatically feel aggressive or present the same kind of problem for parents. A few years ago, even during the election, I still felt we could have open conversations and was at ease around town regardless of political differences – now? Not so much, and I’m reminded of that by all these hateful signs I see EVERYWHERE that make me wonder if maybe I am not actually welcome here.
 - Focus on the kids. Their school experience (bullying, distractions from kids that need extra help, quality of their education, etc.). Providing options inside of Milton for said kids – such as a town pool, hockey rink.
 - At our meeting we didn’t discuss energy savings plus installation of energy generation methods. We as a community need to have some goals to combat image change. We need a plan for EV charging stations and much more.
 - Repurpose Arrowhead Lake town maintenance building property into a community park on the water with concession spots, food, rec areas, small boardwalk along the lake. Town could lease to small businesses. Eventually build a building that could be an innovation hub or rec center.

Ideas from Milton Students

As shared in a group conversation with 16 Milton High School students on 12/1/2021

What are the Assets in Milton?

- We have a lot of nice hiking trails here. Nice recreational outside activities.
- We have a nice basketball court with lights. Four-square, Frisbee golf.
- The town was responsiveness to a request about roads and potholes. That was nice.
- We have a good sense of community. When we go to the store, people are warm and nice to each other.
- We have a lot of neighborhoods which is nice. It is a small town feel in the neighborhood. It gives a sense of belonging and comfort.
- We have a lot of community events, which I appreciate. There are concerts during the summer, dinners, and other events.
- We feel like we know our neighbors.
- We have good law enforcement in our community. They are very engaged. Over the summer, when they saw youth making positive choices they would give them a free donut.
- The public school has a lot more diversity – more of a culture. Milton handles it pretty well.
- The teachers here are pretty great. Very supportive.
- The pandemic has been hard but the teachers are very understanding and there for extra help. We haven't had a normal math class since 9th grade.
- As a senior I want to learn more about what I want to do when I graduate. The school has given opportunities to mentor freshman, sit in classes, learn what works for them and what doesn't.

What are the challenges / things you would like to change?

- We don't have many indoor recreational opportunities.
- We don't really know what is going on at the municipal level. We are not super engaged.
- The Milton economy could be better. We could use more stores or shopping around here. We should bring more money in to the Milton community.
- You tend to have to leave to do something fun or go shopping. (though we need to be careful with traffic concerns)
- Youth don't have many options for a place to go or things to do.
- Boys and Girls club in Burlington has a lounge area and place to hang out and have fun together.
- Before the pandemic Milton had activities, but they were lightly advertised and no one knew about them. In other towns, it seems like those opportunities are more visible.
- We mostly hear about things from other people and social media. There is one Milton community page that my mom follows, but if she doesn't tell me I don't know.
- We don't know what is going on in town.
- Bombardier Park isn't used as much as it could be.
- Bombardier Park isn't well maintained. It is cleaned up once a year, but then not more often throughout the year.
- The stage in the park is old and in disrepair.
- We have some kids that refuse to go to class and cause disturbances and they don't get the support they need. It's a hard environment to learn in.
- There is a lot of stigma about being from Milton. Only the bad stuff spreads. We are doing so much work inside our school to make it better that people outside don't really see it.
- There is a lot of effort to make this place better. Clubs for equality and new ideas coming out. Student voices are heard.

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

- Indoor recreational opportunities for the winter.
- Develop a youth center in Milton for extra support and activities after school.
- Our school is very outdated. It is dark and not a good place to learn.
- A lot of students right now are doing work to build a new school in an innovation class. We have met with architects and building a center within the school to improve work-based and hands on learning. We are taking steps but not enough support and voice for that. Working with the principals to share more about the innovation class to promote the initiative.
- The outside of the school looks like a jail. It is a lot of brick. We should paint a mural on the outside of the school to improve a welcoming environment. Working with Milton for Social Justice.
- The traffic getting out of the school is really hard. We only have one exit getting in and out. In the case of an emergency it would be unsafe. It takes us 40 minutes to get out of school.
- We want more common areas in the school for students to hang out. The library space gets packed really fast.
- We need an ice rink in town. It is hard to go to MVU.
- We need a movie theater.
- The fieldhouse would be something beneficial for Milton. We need to drive really far for year-round activities – all the way to Shelburne. We have a lot of athletes in our town.
- We should have more walking or hiking trails.
- We need more restaurants. There is fast food, but if you want to go out to dinner there aren't any options.
- We need a coffee shop in town.
- Build a community pool.
- We need more businesses in general. There are only a few places where you can reliably get a job. You have to drive pretty far to get a solid job.
- If we had more transportation opportunities we would have more access to jobs in town. Kids don't always just want to work at Hannaford so transportation for others jobs would be helpful.
- We only have one bus station and we never see people using it. It's hard to get to. The times are also very limited and specific. Mostly for commuters.
- Improve sidewalks for walking and running outdoors. You can't walk and run on Rt 7.

Ideas from Milton Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

As shared in a focused group conversation with 12/9/2021

What are the Assets in Milton?

- High school age - After school opportunities (athletics, band, chorus, drama, clubs). Milton youth committee coalition. MASK.
- Town Recreation department - conducted an audit recently and have been expanding programs. Improvements to parks and physical facilities.
- Educational programming at MTSD, student supports, VSAC, guidance counselors.
- Great outside spaces and natural features - some outdoor spaces are newly opened for access and have growing accessible spaces
- People in leadership position are trying very hard to be welcoming. Personal commitment to make the community a welcoming place for all.
- An extremely caring community - when there is a crisis or someone is in need the outreach is fast and furious. Community support is strong.
- MTSD (particularly EL teachers) do an amazing job ensuring the needs of families are well served. We have amazing MTSD employees.
- Small events like music in the park.

What are the challenges / things you would like to change?

- Milton is moving in the right direction with respect to equity and diversity but what is the process/venue? How do we disagree without being disagreeable? How to change the town culture to support the work? End goals are not entirely clear.
- Need to grow appreciation for the agricultural background of the community. There can be friction with change. Chittenden county vs Franklin county perception/tension of where Milton fits in. Lack of individual voice unless you have lived in Milton for a long time.
- How to build a feeling of belonging in the community especially if you do not have children in the school system.
- Are there places of worship for LGBTQ individuals? Are there places of worship for same sex couples to marry? For some these add to reasons not to live in Milton
- Particularly at school budget time there is an information gap - need to educate the community as to how best to disperse resources to meet the needs of diverse students. Student needs are changing and increasing. There is a generational gap for older community members in terms of how schools function and serve all students.
- Older community members are well intentioned but truly believe that there are not people in Milton that don't feel as though they belong. It makes some community members feel dismissed.
- There seems to be members of the community who live in Milton but work elsewhere. Property is more affordable in Milton. They tend to leave Milton on Friday nights and do not consider Milton their community. How do we grow the community vibe?
- There's no place in Milton to make connections with others. Currently you have to leave the town to do anything.
- For older community members, Milton is fighting the fears of the future. For younger community members how to keep the interest in moving forward?
- Hiking trails and outdoor access is great, but they are not community building spaces. There are no recreational gathering spaces that encourage groups of people to congregate.
- Need for more in your face welcoming efforts for new community members or diverse community members.
- Not enough activities/spaces for teens to go to gather and congregate. Hockey rink with arcade was fleeting.
- Need spaces for youth to gather, find friends, build identity - town facilities needed - pool, rec center, etc.
- Transportation is a challenge in Milton - young kids rely on the school bus and on parents

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

- Need to create both opportunities and access for youth
- Welcome packets to families new to the community that includes resources for families, best places to have a burger, etc to help families know where to go what to do.
- Connecting the village center families with those that live further out in the Milton community - it's a large land mass and many live on the outskirts.
- Increase busing/transportation opportunities. Currently there are no cabs/Ubers.
- Multigenerational community center - currently each center is separated and spread out.
- Multicultural Festival in the park, new ideas for events, Taste of Milton food festival
- More outdoor rec opportunities - basketball courts, skate park.
- Partner families for new community members - team to sustain the community organization to continue the work. Not just individuals.
- Need to build community capacity - not just relying on school, police, fire, Selectboard to take lead each time.

VII. Milton on the Move Community Visit Participants

Darren Adams	Joseph Duquette	Chris Mattos	Rick Sharp
Jazmin Averbuck	Garrett E	Buddy Meilleur	John Sharrow
Matthew Bagdy	Richard Edwards	Joe Mester	Paul Somerville
James Ballard	Stacey & Patrick Endres	Jeremy Metcalf	Lori Somerville
Jennifer Banacos	Garrett Eugair	Sarah Metcalf	Kathryn Stankiewicz
Debra Barbieri	Frank Fahey	Kim Micklus	Brenda Steady
Diane Barrows	Frandine Feldhousen	Tony Micklus	Marty Steinheisen
Agnes Barsalow	Jim Feldhousen	Tony Miehl	Mary Jane Stinson
Mary Ellen Barsalow-Pittes	Deborah Flannery	Kim Miner	Kari Stoakes
Mindy Bessette	Alek Fleury	Ron Moore	Karen Stout
Lauren Blume	Tom Frank	Rod Moore	Jessica Summer
Henry Bonges	Carol Gaboriault	Michael Morgan	Sean Tatro
Nancy Bouffard	Katie Gallichon	Bobbie Moser	Michael Thompson
Erik Breiland	Barry Genzlinger	Louis H Mossey III	Amanda Tingaud
Meredith Breiland	Crystal Gingras	Ben Nappi	Nancy Tomczak
Bob Brisson	Reg and Mary Godin	Dave Nappi	Denise Tougas
Michael Brodfuehrer	Kathi Goodell	Lauren Palmieri	Roger Tougas
Vickie Brown	Jessica Groeling	Nick Papaseraphim	Kary Towne
Ann Brunell	Cymone Haiju	Sotos Papaseraphim	Brittany Tradup
Kim Burbo	William Heath	Bonnie Parenteau	Tammie Trivento
Jeanette Burke	Emily Hecker	Jada Payea	Jenna Tucker Eugair
Steve Burke	Victoria Herman	Bonnie Pease	Don Turner
Cathy Cabe	Sean Houghton	Brian Pease	Karla Ummarino
Maike Camp	Courtney Jarecki	K Perry	Laura Webb
Janice Campbell	Zach Jerome	Joel Pfanstiel	Karen White
Casey Carpenter	Mike Joseph	Rebecca Pikul	Jennifer Wilson
Aubrey Carpentier	Ryan Joseph	William Pikul	and many more...
Ernest Caswell	Bill Kaigle	Casey Primeau	
Lori Charash	Sara Kattam	Lisa Rees	
Wilmer Chavarria	Caitlyn Kenney	Christina Reider	
Thomas Chittenden	Matt King	Kelly Revenaugh	
Karen Ciechanowicz	Tabatha Kittson	Amy Rex	
Nancy Clodgo	Andrew Knapp	Ed Robinson	
Kevin Cofelice	Celeste Lang	Derek Rolandini	
Nicole Colantoni	Steve Laroche	Lauren Rolandini	
Emily Cook	Kevin Leary	Stephanie Romero	
Cindy Cota	Karen Leary	Lindsey Ruhl	
Amy Crawford	Katherine Leung	RoseMarie Ryea	
Jill Crawford	Larissa Liddle	Al Russell	
Pauli DeBono	John Lindsay	Terri Sabens	
Robert DeCicco	Robert and MaryLou	Will Sanderson	
Rich Desouza	Lombard	Morgan Sanderson	
Ben Deutsch	K Long	Jen Saunders	
Sophia Donforth	Jeff Manley	Rich Saunders	
Lori Donna	Lynne Manley	John Schnader	
Sam Dorrance	Jeremy Margi	Pamela Scott	
Kym Duchesneau	Nicholas Mark	Irfan Sehic	
Seth Duchesneau	Louis Massey	Heather Selleck	

VIII. Visiting Resource Team Members

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Christine Hallquist, *Executive Director*, Vermont Community Broadband Board

Ruth Henry, *Senior Philanthropic Advisor*, Vermont Community Foundation, rhenry@vermontcf.org, 802-388-3355 x280

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