

# Revitalizing All Marshfield and Plainfield: RAMP into the future

Report and Action Plan ~ April 2020



Vermont Council on Rural Development

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# I. Introduction

Though distinct towns with their own unique character, Marshfield and Plainfield share much that binds them together. The Winooski River and the valley it forms, Route 2, and Twinfield School all serve to unify these two places. Both communities also typify the Vermont characteristics of independence and communitarianism. Residents take care of themselves and one-another, and share a commitment to the towns that they call home. Collaboration is common between the towns, including a shared Climate Action Team that came together after strongly worded climate change resolutions passed at Town Meeting 2018 in both communities. The Climate Action Team, along with the Marshfield Energy Committee and Plainfield Energy Coordinator, pulled together to apply for the Vermont Council on Rural Development's Climate Economy Model Communities Program. The idea was to build upon the climate-focused work that has already happened in both towns by attracting the participation of more community members and engaging potential partners more deeply. Longtime leaders Rich Phillips and Bob Atchinson led the charge, joined by the Plainfield and Marshfield Select Boards, area businesses, other community leaders, and students from Twinfield.

In a competitive process, Marshfield and Plainfield were selected to participate in 2019. A local planning team dubbed the process – *Revitalizing All Marshfield and Plainfield: RAMP Into The Future* or *RAMP*. The Model Communities Program is designed to help communities build and implement priority actions that increase economic vitality and affordability in a time of climate change. The goal is to help communities model change by implementing energy efficiency, transportation system transformation, renewable energy generation, working lands development, and entrepreneurship and business incubation to spur economic progress.

Modeled on VCRD's Community Visits, the public engagement process for the Model Communities Program is designed to reach into all corners of a community to mobilize a wide mix of participants. Over the course of the initial four-month phase, the community rallies together to brainstorm, prioritize, and develop action plans. Partners take part as visiting and resource teams to inform the action planning process and then provide support to local task forces as they shift into implementation.

In Marshfield and Plainfield, the outcome of this community conversation was a focus on four key priorities and the gathering of four task forces that came together to move those priorities forward. The task forces of RAMP for the past year have been working to:

- Support and Strengthen Both Village Centers & Improve the Route 2 Corridor Travelling Through Both Towns
- Build a Farm and Food Network in Marshfield and Plainfield
- Improve Transportation Options to Increase Mobility, Reduce Costs, and Reduce Emissions in Marshfield and Plainfield
- Reduce and Transform Energy Use & Increase Renewable Energy Generation for Homes, Businesses, Twinfield School, the Towns, and Other Institutions

Since the RAMP process kicked off in the spring of 2019, tremendous effort has been contributed by participants and partners. Important steps forward have been made with accomplishments and lessons learned. The leadership and initiative of Rich Phillips, Bob Atchinson and the applicant team that rallied together to apply was responsible for bringing the Model Communities Program to these two towns. With the support of the Select Boards, Rich and Bob and the team assembled a compelling application and made a strong case for participation. Throughout the process, and in an ongoing way, Rich and Bob as longstanding leaders served as co-chairs of the RAMP effort.

The four months of public engagement and outreach that launched RAMP required multi-faceted support from many people in both towns. A first key step was the convening of a core team responsible for naming the

process, planning the kick-off, and broadcasting an invitation far and wide to maximize participation. This planning team formed a backbone for community outreach, spreading the word far-and-wide about the kick-off and using every means available to raise the visibility of the RAMP process.

The kick-off included 4 different forums, a pitch session and a community meal occupying an evening on April 30. Twinfield hosted the dinner and forums. Teacher Charlie Wanzer and a team of volunteers provided a delicious meal for participants, and the Cleary family played some great music. 13 visiting team members (listed later in this report) travelled to Twinfield to listen to community members and provide reflections.

The community came back together each month after the kick-off, first to select priorities and then to launch task forces to develop and implement action plans. Twinfield generously hosted the community meeting and the launch of the task forces. At the final large gathering, a resource team of facilitators and experts joined each task force as they built action plans and identified the resources they would need to achieve success.

70 local citizens signed up to serve on the four task forces that made up RAMP and local leaders stepped forward to guide the work of those groups. The volunteers serving on each of those groups and particularly the chairs are putting in countless hours over the course of RAMP as they have worked to implement the ideas prioritized by community members. Jamie Spector, Rich Baker, Elise Magnant, Kagen Dewey, Diana Batzel, Nick Siefert, Bob Atchinson, and Rich Phillips all deserve recognition. The unwavering commitment of this group is a source of inspiration to all who have had the opportunity to work with them. All of these leaders share a deep commitment to their local community and a strong belief that an active group of committed citizens can accomplish big things.

Efficiency Vermont has been a key partner with an ongoing commitment to the work of the RAMP energy task force. They have dedicated tremendous time and resources to the task force focused on energy use. Efficiency Vermont staff Michelle McCutcheon-Schour and Becca White have spent countless hours with the task force as they worked to implement their action plan. And additional Efficiency Vermont Staff worked with Twinfield School, Plainfield's Old Town Hall and Opera House, Twin Valley Senior Center and the Town of Marshfield on specific projects.

The Climate Economy Model Communities Program is made possible thanks to the financial support of VLITE, Jane's Trust Foundation, and High Meadows Fund. Thank you to each of these funders for making this important work possible.



## II. The Process

The Climate Economy Model Communities Project engages a broad swath of the community in gatherings to brainstorm, prioritize, and plan for local climate economy initiatives.



### Planning Committee Meeting: March 18, 2019

On March 18, 2019, 24 local residents gathered at the Twinfield School to plan for the launch of the Model Communities effort. This group came up with a name for the process – Revitalizing All Marshfield and Plainfield: RAMP Into the Future – and helped to plan the kick-off. They decided on forum topics, meeting locations, dinner plans, and an invitation process. Through calls, e-mails, flyers and face-to-face conversations, this team worked hard to promote the kick-off.

The Planning Committee included Bob Atchinson, Richard Baker, Angie Barger, Diana Batzel, Lucy Blue, John Cleary, Eliza Cleary, Rita Copeland, Brett Engstrom, Ed Hutchinson, Ruby Klarich, Peter Lloyd, John Matthew, Drew McNaughton, Anne Miller, Rich Phillips, Pam Quinn, Jaquelyn Reike, Jamie Spector, Sasha Thayer, Jim Volz, Charlie Wanzer, Rebecca Wigg, and Jonathan Williams.





## Kick-Off Forums and Community Dinner: April 30, 2019

RAMP kicked off at the Twinfield School with a series of four brainstorming forums, climate action pitches, and a community dinner. Over 100 community members shared their ideas and were joined by 14 visiting team members who listened and provided reflections to the community. The community dinner was prepared by Charlie Wanzer and a team of volunteers, music was provided by the Cleary Family, and free chocolate came from Nutty Steps.

Visiting Team members included: Jon Copans, *Model Communities Program Director*, VT Council on Rural Development; Paul Costello, *Executive Director*, VT Council on Rural Development; Ben Doyle, *Associate Director*, USDA Rural Development; Nancy Everhart, *Agricultural Director*, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board; Jonathan Harries, *State Engineer*, USDA Rural Development; Rachel Kennedy, *Senior Transit Planner*, Green Mountain Transit; Ross Macdonald, *Public Transit Coordinator*, Vermont Agency of Transportation; Kate McCarthy, *Sustainable Communities Prog. Dir.*, VT Natural Resources Council; Michelle McCutcheon-Schour, *Consultant*, VT Energy Investment Company; Haley Pero, *Outreach Specialist*, Office of US Senator Bernie Sanders; William Powell, *Director of Products and Services*, Washington Electric Co-op; Megan Roush, *VT Housing Specialist and Acting Public Info. Officer*, USDA Rural Development; Tim Tierney, *Director of Recruitment and International Trade*, Agy of Commerce and Community Devel.; Bonnie Waninger, *Executive Director*, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.





## Community Meeting: May 23, 2019

After the kick-off, all of the brainstormed ideas were distilled into key areas of action for community revitalization, transportation transformation, and energy generation. About 80 citizens gathered at Twinfield to narrow the list of priorities for community action. Pizza was provided with a generous discount from Positive Pie. After lively dialogue and a round of dot-voting, 4 key action ideas emerged as the key priorities of RAMP. As participants filtered out of the meeting, they signed up for task forces that would convene to move these priorities forward.



## Resource Meeting and Task Force Launch: June 20, 2019

On June 20 at the Twinfield School, community members, facilitators, and resource team members gathered to form task forces, develop action plans, and identify resources to implement the new RAMP priorities. Pizza was provided with a generous discount by the Marshfield Village Store. After intense 90 minute sessions, everyone gathered to hear reports from each group about their plans and resources needed to make them a reality. From here forward, all action of RAMP was focused at the task force level.

Resource Team Members included:

Richard Amore, *Planning & Project Manager*, VT Dept of Housing and Community Devel.; Dan Currier, *Program Manager*, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission; Brandon Kipp, *Pavement Management Project Manager*, VT Agency of Transportation; Ross Macdonald, *Public Transit Coordinator*, Vermont Agency of Transportation; Michelle McCutcheon-Schour, *Consultant*, VT Energy Investment Company; Zoe Neaderland, *Planning Coordinator Policy, Planning & Research*, VT Agency of Transportation; Erin Parizo, *Highway Safety and Design Project Manager*, VT Agency of Transportation; William Powell, *Director of Products and Services*, Washington Electric Co-op; Bonnie Waninger, *Executive Director*, Central Vermont RPC; Sarah Waring, *VP for Grants and Community Investments*, Vermont Community Foundation.



### III. The Priorities

Determined by community members from Marshfield and Plainfield  
at the VCRD Prioritization Meeting, May 23, 2019

*Proving that those who live, work and raise their families in a community are best qualified to understand its needs and potential, community members whittled down a list of community, energy, and transportation ideas through discussion, reasoned arguments, and thoughtful reflection. In the end, voting with colored dots, over 75 participants chose action ideas that offer opportunities to enhance existing resources, and to strengthen the region through exciting new ventures. Residents concluded the meeting by signing up for Task Forces in the selected areas.*

**Residents formed four task forces for future action:**

#### ► **Support and Strengthen Both Village Centers & Improve the Route 2 Corridor Travelling Through Both Towns**

Downtown Marshfield and downtown Plainfield are key hubs of economic, social, and cultural activity. The health and vitality of both communities depends in part on the vibrancy of these two places. Route 2 also plays a critical role in defining both communities, bringing many visitors and lots of fast-moving traffic. This task force will come together to develop and implement a plan to ensure the long term health of the two community hubs. This task force will also work with Vermont's Department of Transportation and other partners to improve the route 2 corridor with a focus on the well-being and livability of both communities and village centers.

#### ► **Build a Farm and Food Network in Marshfield and Plainfield**

This task force will work to build a farm and food producer network. This network may work to facilitate sharing of resources, farm-based events, mentorship, land-matching/sharing, shared marketing, re-invigoration of the farmers' market and other opportunities.

#### ► **Improve Transportation Options to Increase Mobility, Reduce Costs, and Reduce Emissions in Marshfield and Plainfield**

Transportation represents a major household expense and a major contributor to Vermont's greenhouse gas emissions. This task force will work to develop new alternatives to increase flexibility while also decreasing costs and emissions. See opportunities section below (pg 9) for action ideas considered by the task force in establishing their work plans.

#### ► **Reduce and Transform Energy Use & Increase Renewable Energy Generation for Homes, Businesses, Twinfield School, the Towns, and Other Institutions**

This task force will work with partners to assist home owners, renters, businesses and community institutions in reducing energy use, using renewable energy, and fuel switching. See opportunities section below (pp 10-11) for action ideas considered by the task force in establishing their work plans.

## **Other Key Community Revitalization Opportunities identified by the community:**

*The opportunities listed below reflect potential ideas for action that community members shared at the Kick-Off Forums. Community members may find it useful as they look to expand on current projects or take on new ones.*

### **Ideas for Community Revitalization Initiatives**

#### **Make Twinfield Union School A Model of Local Food Production and Consumption**

Between food service and available land on campus, there are great agricultural opportunities at Twinfield Union School. A task force could work to cultivate even more farm to school opportunities and to integrate farming and food production in student life and curriculum.

#### **Improve the Availability of Quality Broadband Service**

Many residents of Marshfield and Plainfield do not have access to high quality internet service. A task force could come together with the focus of improving broadband connectivity. The work would begin with an evaluation of existing initiatives and resources as a key step in developing and pursuing a plan of action.

#### **Improve Cellular Coverage**

Cellular service coverage is spotty throughout Plainfield and Marshfield. A task force could convene to devise and implement strategies to facilitate better cell coverage in both towns.

#### **Support and Improve the Plainfield Food Coop**

The food coop is a key local resource providing an important local shopping option and a way to connect consumers with local foods. A task force could convene to work with the coop to improve marketing and the availability of a diversity of food options. A collaboration with the health center could also be explored to help people access healthier foods.

#### **Engage Goddard to Better Use Their Facilities**

A task force could be formed to actively engage Goddard College to better realize the potential of their infrastructure and diverse mix of spaces. This work could include the possible re-purposing of Goddard dormitories that have the potential to serve as an important housing resource.

#### **Improve the Availability of Quality and Affordable Housing**

There is a need for more and high quality affordable and efficient housing in Marshfield and Plainfield. Facilitating downsizing and sub-dividing are two approaches. Inventorying vacant houses and buildings and implementing strategies for rehabilitation and utilization is another. Developing new and affordable housing for seniors, families, and others should also be a priority for a task force focused on creating better options for housing.

#### **Develop and Deploy A Joint Economic Development Strategy Including A Co-Working Space**

An economic development working group could be established to focus on creating and maintaining good paying jobs and a strong economy in both communities. This group could create and promote an annual combined community business fair, resource directory and shop local campaign among other priorities. This group could also work to create a co-working space to provide a place for independent workers to come together and share space and resources including great internet connectivity.

#### **Utilize Onion River Campground**

Onion River Campground is a great resource with great potential. A task force could work to actively promote its various attributes and devise strategies to better-utilize the facilities and the house in front.



### **Create and Support Community Events**

Events serve the dual roles of bringing visitors to the area and increasing the connectedness of those living here. A task force could come together to develop a series of events to bring neighborhoods and the two communities together and to draw visitors. Supporting the existing community suppers and creating more intergenerational potlucks could be included in this work.

### **Improve Outdoor Recreation Opportunities and Marketing**

Both Plainfield and Marshfield have excellent existing outdoor recreation and trail resources and great potential for more. A task force could come together to encourage and cultivate more outdoor recreation opportunities and events, and could brand and market the area as a great place for all types of outdoor recreation.

### **Attract More Visitors to the Area**

Both Plainfield and Marshfield have many attributes natural and cultural that make them wonderful places to visit and to live. A task force could form to entice more visitors to the community through the cultivation of local events and better branding, marketing, and communications. This group could also improve informational resources to serve those coming to the area or already here.

### **Actively Engage Students and Make Twinfield A Civic/Community Center**

Twinfield Union School is a key community center that helps to unify Marshfield and Plainfield. A task force could work with students, faculty, and the administration to capitalize on this important community asset and to make it even more of a hub for community life and gathering for both towns. This task force could also work to actively engage young people in community and civic life including the RAMP process.

### **Develop Deeper Collaboration between Marshfield and Plainfield**

Financial and resource efficiency could be achieved by facilitating greater collaboration between Marshfield and Plainfield. A task force could come together to actively explore and initiate opportunities to share and combine resources both physical and human with the goal of providing equal or better service to residents at reduced cost. This group could also work across both communities to implement joint strategies to achieve energy savings.

### **Form an Arts Cooperative and Maker Space**

Both Plainfield and Marshfield are home to many who are working and participating in the arts. Unifying artists in both communities for networking, marketing, and events coordination could benefit those who participate and the area more broadly. This group could also work to develop a makers space and/or some shared studio space.

### **Attract New Residents**

A task force could come together to organize around attracting new residents to Marshfield and Plainfield. Efforts could be made to become a place where refugees come when they arrive in America. The two towns also can and should prepare for the eventual arrival of people fleeing areas that are suffering drastic impacts from climate change. Multiple strategies could be deployed to make the area more attractive to new residents and to market the great aspects of both communities.

## **Key Transportation and Energy Opportunities identified by the community:**

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*Transportation and Energy task forces selected from these ideas in developing their action plans.*

### **Ideas for Transportation Transformation**

#### **Develop Innovative Ridesharing Initiative(s)**

Uber and Lyft are transforming transportation in urban areas of the country, with both upsides and downsides. The task force could work to develop a rural version of Uber, or could work to develop some other tool or system that facilitates the sharing of rides to fill seats in available vehicles and to increase transportation options.

#### **Increasing Local Options to Reduce Travel Needs**

Area residents often travel to Montpelier and other hub-towns to access goods and services. Increasing the availability of those goods and services locally means reducing the need to travel as frequently. The local task force could work to build support for existing local resources and to cultivate new ones.

#### **Making Marshfield and Plainfield Great Places to Walk and Bike**

The task force could work to improve biking and walking options in Marshfield and Plainfield. These efforts could include developing and improving trails and improving the infrastructure needed to allow residents and visitors to safely walk and bike throughout the area, both for transportation and recreation. The task force could also include promotion of e-bikes as a transportation alternative as part of this work.

#### **Promote Electric Vehicles and Charging Infrastructure**

The task force could actively promote electric vehicles as a way to save money and reduce emissions. This could be done through events, workshops and other promotional activities. The group could also work actively with the two towns and partners to increase the availability of public EV charging stations. The task force could also work with Twinfield to explore participation in the forthcoming electric bus pilot program.

#### **Retaining and Improving Public Transit Service**

The Route 2 Commuter provides a key transportation alternative for those traveling either direction on Route 2 weekday mornings or evenings. GMT also provides important service to Twin Valley Senior Center. The strongest tool to retain and improve transit options is to increase ridership. The task force could work to promote bus ridership and work with GMT to ensure that any changes to service locally are improvements that will make the bus a more viable option for more area residents.

#### **Shared Vehicles**

Between the purchase price, insurance, maintenance costs and gas, AAA estimates that each car costs a household about \$9,000 annually. Shared vehicles are one tool that can free individuals and families from the necessity of owning a first or second car. Shared vehicles can help meet fleet needs as well. The task force could work to develop a pioneering model for sharing one or more vehicles in a rural community.

#### **Coordinate and Share Resources between School Busing and Transit**

There is overlap and a lack of coordination with school bus and public transit options in Marshfield and Plainfield. The task force could work to integrate the school bus and transit bus system to increase flexibility and options while also reducing costs and emissions.



## Ideas for Energy Generation and Use for Buildings

### **Implement an Incremental and/or Do-It-Yourself Approach to Solar and Home Energy Retrofits**

The task force could develop a targeted effort to bring the cost of solar and weatherization in reach for low income households by taking an incremental and do-it-yourself approach. This work could also focus on models such as the window-dressers campaign where volunteers come together to make energy efficient window inserts for their homes and the homes of neighbors.

### **Run a Campaign Focused On Weatherizing Rental and Low Income Housing**

Many low to middle income households struggle to finance energy improvements, and rental housing presents a particular challenge because the building owner often doesn't pay the energy bills. The task force could focus on these related challenges, working with partners to directly assist those households by working both with residents and property owners.

### **Unleash the Power of Neighbor-To-Neighbor Connections**

Storytelling and one-on-one mentorship and connection are important tools to help share the opportunities represented by transforming our energy system. The local task force could implement strategies to share stories of success and provide direct hand-holding to those who are interested in making change but unsure where to start and how to proceed. These efforts could include workshops, one-on-one mentoring, door-to-door or neighborhood campaigns, home tours, use of Front Porch Forum, and other strategies.

### **Design and Implement a Local Modern Wood Heating Campaign**

Modern wood heating efficiently utilizes a local and renewable resource to heat homes and buildings. It also creates jobs here in Vermont for those working to harvest and process timber. Working with partners, a local task force could design and launch a campaign to increase the adoption of modern wood heating and to replace old polluting wood stoves with modern cleaner ones. This campaign could also connect older members of the community who are struggling with the physical aspects of harvesting and utilizing wood with others who are able to assist with these tasks.

### **Engage Area Youth in Promotion of Energy Opportunities**

Young people represent a key constituency with energy and passion. The task force should work to actively engage younger members of the community in efforts to improve the efficiency of our buildings and increase local renewable energy generation.

### **Increase Local Utilization of Existing Energy Transformation Financing Tools and Programs**

The Heat Saver Loan, Home Performance incentives from Efficiency Vermont, the woodstove change-out program and utility incentives provided as part of Vermont's energy transformation program all are tools to help Vermonters finance energy improvements to their homes and businesses. The task force could work to promote these various programs and to connect area residents and businesses to the financing option(s) that serve them best.

### **Community Solar**

As the cost of solar has steadily dropped, more Vermonters have made this investment to generate their own electricity and secure long term and stable rates. Not all Vermonters live in places suitable for solar. The task force could work to develop one or more community solar projects that enable more members of the Plainfield and Marshfield communities to partake. The project could be structured specifically to enable low income households to participate.

## Develop New and Innovative Financing Tools for Home Retrofits

The task force should work with partners to develop innovative financing tools to bring home weatherization and other energy-related projects in reach of more households. PAYS is an example – this model finances home retrofits based on the savings achieved and is paid for on the utility bill and tied to the home rather than to the resident.

## Tackling School and Municipal Energy Usage

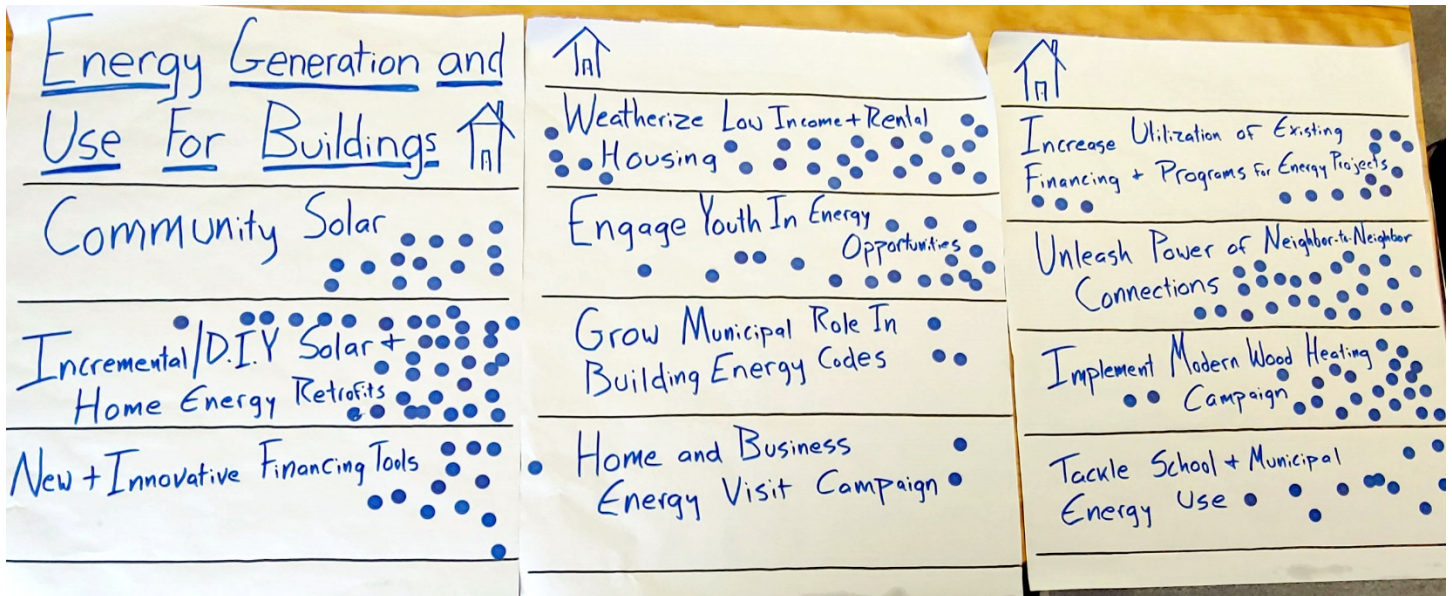
Both Twinfield and the towns of Marshfield and Plainfield have made significant strides forward in reducing energy use and generating their own electricity. Because all area property tax payers carry this burden, the benefits of these efforts flow to all. There is always more to be done, both in terms of heating, electricity, and transportation fuels. The task force could work actively with both municipalities and Twinfield to document energy usage and to devise and implement strategies to transition away from fossil fuels and to bring down costs.

## Grow the Municipal Role in Supporting Compliance with Building Energy Codes

The towns of Marshfield and Plainfield can play a role in making sure that new buildings and additions/improvements meet or exceed Vermont's building energy codes. The towns can also ensure that anyone building or improving a home has access to all available expertise and resources to meet these standards. The task force could work with both towns to implement strategies that put this idea into practice.

## Work With Efficiency Vermont to Run Home and Business Energy Visit Campaign(s)

As part of this program, Efficiency Vermont can provide a set number of free energy visits provided by their staff to both homes and businesses in Marshfield and Plainfield. The visits usually last about an hour and result in a set of recommendations for energy savings opportunities. The task force could partner with Efficiency Vermont and others to promote these visits and cultivate as many sign-ups as possible.





## IV. Task Force Action Plans

Resource Meeting, June 20, 2019

*Revitalizing All Marshfield and Plainfield: RAMP Into the Future Task Forces are comprised of community members and an appointed chairperson. At the Resource Meeting, committee members worked closely with a facilitator and small visiting resource teams to develop step-by-step action plans and a list of human and financial resources to help achieve their goals. This 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.*

### ► Support and Strengthen Both Village Centers & Improve the Route 2 Corridor Travelling Through Both Towns

Community Chair: **Jamie Spector** (Plainfield) and **Rich Baker** (Marshfield)

Facilitator: **Richard Amore**, *Planning and Project Manager*, VT Dept. of Housing and Community Development

Resource Team Members: **Dan Currier**, *Program Manager*, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission  
**Brandon Kipp**, *Pavement Management Proj. Mgr.*, VT Agency of Transportation  
**Erin Parizo**, *Highway Safety & Design Proj. Mgr.*, VT Agency of Transportation

Downtown Marshfield and downtown Plainfield are key hubs of economic, social, and cultural activity. The health and vitality of both communities depends in part on the vibrancy of these two places. Route 2 also plays a critical role in defining both communities, bringing many visitors and lots of fast-moving traffic. This task force will come together to develop and implement a plan to ensure the long term health of the two community hubs. This task force will also work with Vermont's Department of Transportation and other partners to improve the route 2 corridor with a focus on the well-being and livability of both communities and village centers.

#### Action Steps

1. Inventory, document, and map existing resources including recreation, businesses, pedestrian facilities, parking, vacant properties, use, available housing, etc. (resource mapping/visual mapping)
2. Market the existing resources, make improvements where needed, and create new facilities to fill gaps.
3. Improve the quality of the housing stock in both communities.
4. Develop an overall marketing plan with actionable goals to capitalize on local assets.
5. Implement a marketing campaign that includes better signage and wayfinding, print and web material that highlights the community's recreation assets, businesses, and cultural offerings.
6. Continue and improve coordination with VTTrans to improve the streetscape/Rt 2 corridor, and key intersections in both communities.
7. Share existing resources to community members – through distributing information to residents via their tax bills, and hosting a resource meeting to promote existing state, local, and regional resources.
8. Improve recreation and pedestrian resources – through understanding and marketing what exists, explore current gaps, and develop strategies to improve current and new facilities/infrastructure.
9. Explore creating a "Twinfield Byway" as a main street connecting both communities

## Other Possible Action Steps

- Develop an inventory of properties documenting ownership, cost, use/vacancies
  - Resource Mapping/Visual Mapping
- Create Twinfield Byway – main street for both communities
  - “Blue Line” – Connect Destinations
- Railbed to Recreation Path – Connect Destinations
- Connect to River – improve access – beach, kayaking, biking
- Plainfield Area Business Association
  - Develop list of businesses, lodging, restaurants
- Support food access and acquisition
- Improve/Add Signage along Route 2 to Highlight Local Assets
- Include more businesses on “discovery map.”
- Resources for residents – promote existing resources
- Build on local assets, including but not limited to:
  - Coop, College, healthcare facilities, radio network, and religious and recreational opportunities
- Market the recreational opportunities in both towns (market boat access)
- Create destination playground (4 – 10 year olds)
- Improve the State Park and Lake
- “Rec Place” gathering areas, including expansion of programming/events
- Improve access and viability of Plainfield Town Forest
- Promote Age-friendly recreation (young, middle aged, older) – include benches and accessibility
- Address Housing – both senior housing and affordable housing
- Capitalize on traffic to support local businesses
- Capitalize on the opera house, theater, school, and community center
- Involve youth – build capacity – advance the next generation of leadership – perhaps by having high schoolers involved in local governments – serving on volunteer boards.
- Support struggling businesses including the coop and positive pie
- Create a parking map
- Support opportunities with the spiritual community – collaborate and market
- Develop a vision and/or goals for our communities
- Capitalize on Groton State Forest
- Improve Connections/collaborations and communications between two towns
- Create a Two-Community Resource Guide – market events, assets, libraries
- Lack of cellular and broadband coverage is a challenge
- Market and connect better to Spruce Mountain
- Cross-promote our local businesses
- Improve better signage to village and businesses
- Inventory pedestrian facilities, both off and on road

## Resources

- Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, for byway mapping, inventory, signage
- Vermont Arts Council – Signage and Public Art – Animating Infrastructure Grant Program and Cultural Facilities Grant Program
- VTrans Bike/Ped Grants and Transportation Alternative Grants
- Agency of Natural Resources Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) Community Grants, Recreation Trails Program Grants, Land and Water Conservation Fund

- VTrans/ACCD Staffing Resources for technical assistance
- Local Resources – revolving loan fund, volunteers, and local leaders
- Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation – for business support
- Central Vermont’s Regional Planning Commission Transportation Advisory Committee
- ACCD’s Municipal Planning Grants to support planning projects to support the village vitality
- VTrans and ACCD’s Better Connections Grants for planning that align land use, transportation and community revitalization with transportation investments.
- Plainfield and Marshfield are state-designated Village Centers which provide special incentives, grants, tax credits, and assistance to support village revitalization
- Downtown and Village Center Tax Credits - State tax credit for qualified historic rehabilitation, façade and upgrades for properties thirty years old located within a state designated downtown or village center.
- State Historic Preservation Grants – to support repair and restoration of historic buildings
- Preservation Trust of Vermont offer support for historic buildings and historic preservation efforts
- Vermont Building and General Services Building Communities Grants for education facilities, recreation, and economic development
- Agency of Natural Resources Caring for Canopy Grants to help communities care for tree canopy and address the Emerald Ash Borer.
- Vermont Community Foundation – offers grants to improve environmental sustainability, cultural heritage, social justice, historic preservation, and vitality of Vermont communities
- USDA-Rural Development offers many grants for infrastructure, community facilities, and economic and community development
- Vermont Community Development Program – offers grants to support planning, infrastructure, housing and economic development
- Northern Borders Regional Commission – offers grants to support marketing, economic development, workforce development, infrastructure, etc.
- Downstreet Housing – provides assistance in affordable housing
- Vermont Housing and Conservation Board – supports housing and conservation efforts



## **Progress Report**

In Marshfield, the community has identified needed improvements to Route 2 as it passes through the Village. The select board has supported these improvements and a description has been submitted to VTrans with the expectation that they will be incorporated in a planned Route 2 re-paving in 2022/2023. Task force members from Marshfield have also reached out to owners of under-utilized commercial properties with the hopes of providing support for new businesses. In Plainfield, much discussion has focused on plans for the blinking-light intersection. There is a strong desire to see the project completed, shared with concern about the disruption and local cost the project would entail. Efforts have also been made to identify and address vacant or run-down residential properties in the Village Center. Different strategies are being initiated to address these properties. Folks in Plainfield may also identify other Route 2 improvements to advocate for as part of the major re-paving coming in 2022/2023.



## ► Build a Farm and Food Network

Community Co-Chairs: **Kagen Dewey and Elise Magnant**

Facilitator: **Sarah Waring**, *Vice President for Grants and Community Investments*, Vermont Community Foundation

Resource Team Members: **Dana Glazier**, Greater Cabot Working Lands Network  
**Erin O'Farrell**, Intern, USDA Rural Development

This task force will work to build a farm and food producer network. This network may work to facilitate sharing of resources, farm-based events, mentorship, land-matching/sharing, shared marketing, re-invigoration of the farmers' market and other opportunities.

### Priority Action Steps

- Make improvements to the farmer's market
    - Research SNAP eligibility
    - Communicate with other task forces about a possible location move
    - Look into creating events at the farmers market
    - Volunteers: Kagen, Elise, Graham
  - Complete Survey of the Local Food Web / Ecosystems
    - Design Survey, look for template from Center for Ag Economy and Vt Farm to Plate
    - Develop form and outreach of the survey (email, paper, distributed with utility bill, etc?)
    - Compilation and analysis – potential for college class that designs and carries out the survey
    - Volunteers: John, Les, Sarah, Andy
  - Communication
    - Combine Facebook Groups for Marshfield and Plainfield
    - Create Alternatives to FB (list serve email, field notes, radio, website, newsletter)
    - Adapt Front Porch Forum to Ag. Needs
    - Volunteer: Nancy
- \*\*SPECIAL REMINDER:** Plainfield Coop is calling on community members to help determine its future – expand, shrink or close. This is a key resource and residents should know they are being asked to join the conversation and solution!

### Other Action Ideas

- Community Garden – accessible to folks without land
  - Mentor gardeners
  - Partner w/Food Pantry
- Farm 2 School – greenhouse, chicken coop
  - Kitchen use for homesteaders, print Field Notes, Goddard College use of greenhouse and chicken coop for Twinfield students
- Field Trips to Local Kitchens to create baseline – what exists for food producers? What are the costs of running a community kitchen? Are farm businesses using them, or are they for local home gardeners?
- Food and farm based communication for consumers- create a way for shoppers to know what's available and where to go.
- Event/Weekly – similar to Field and Feast, or Summervale – music, community, etc.
- Plainfield Coop – Future Uncertain! Raise awareness locally that the Coop is looking for the community to help make a decision about closure.
- Forest Farmers – Big Sugarhouse looking for local food restaurateur – event space, also willing to host Farmer's Market or an event, pending regulatory hurdles
- Network with local non-profits and municipalities

## Resources

- Town/School/Communications Partners
- Town Maps
- Town Plans
- Americorps Member @ School
- VYCC
- Farm to Plate
- Sample/Past Surveys
- Who are your network neighbors? What can they bring?
- Plainfield Health Center and TAX BILL
- Tech Help for website, current facilitation of farm website
- VT Agency of Ag. and Farm Markets
- Grant opportunities
  - Organic Valley
  - VAAFM/DOE
  - Community Fundraising
  - VCF, VHCB, local banks or institutions
  - NOFA – Farmers Market Help
- Goddard Leadership
- Connections to Institutions
- Plainfield Coop – Vision for future
- Town Conservation Commission

## Current Landscape

- Lots of farms in both towns
- Farmers Market is not well attending and lacking vendors
- Coop needs help
- Plainfield Coop is central
- Twinfield School – there is a need to connect
- Robust group of gardeners, homesteaders, chickens
- Facebook and FPF, but no other way to share info
- Conserved Ag. Land
- Needs more connection between younger farmers and aging farms/farmers
- How to include consumers?
- Not many commercial-scale farms
- Direct sale opportunities exist but a potential to get to markets
- Lack of marketing? Centralized outreach/market?
- Is collective root crop storage possible?
- Marshfield has a town plan with agricultural focus
- Marshfield General Store, no farmers market in Marshfield
- Community Kitchen – rentable space?
- Marshfield Town Forest
- Could there be a local extension service
- Both – Homesteaders encouraged and re-inforced AND access to commercial markets and consumer awareness
- What fits for economic development
- Stay aware of water quality
- Could be more value-added cheese, maple, meats
- Anchor Ag. Business?
- Survey food producers, gardeners, etc to establish a baseline
- Ag land, size, markets
- Food insecurity – 1 in 5...
- Marshfield food pantry and summer lunch program
- Proximity to:
  - Vermont Food Venture Center
  - Montpelier, Barre, Hardwick
  - Goddard College
  - WGDR
  - Cabot Creamery
- Plainfield Storage – LUCKY DAY



## Progress Report

This task force focused initially on the Plainfield farmers market, working with the manager over the summer to make it more active and inviting. Steps are being taken to include the farmers market in the statewide program organized by NOFA-VT that would enable the acceptance of EBT cards for purchases. The task force has also designed and are distributing a survey with the goal of building a comprehensive list of both farmers and food producers as well as larger scale consumers in the area.

# ► Improve Transportation Options to Increase Mobility, Reduce Costs, and Reduce Emissions in Marshfield and Plainfield

Community Chair: **Bob Atchinson**

Facilitator: **Bonnie Waninger**, *Director, Central Vermont Regional Planning Comm.*

Resource Team Members: **Ross MacDonald**, *Public Transit Coordinator/GoVermont Program Manager, VT Agency of Transportation*

**Zoe Neaderland**, *Planning Coordinator, Policy, Planning & Research, VT Agency of Transportation*

Transportation represents a major household expense and a major contributor to Vermont's greenhouse gas emissions. This task force will work to develop new alternatives to increase flexibility while also decreasing costs and emissions. Based on the preferences of those gathered at the Community Meeting, this task force will focus on:

- Developing innovative ridesharing initiative(s)
- Increasing local options to reduce travel needs
- Making both towns great places to walk and bike
- Promoting electric vehicles and charging infrastructure
- Retaining and improving public transit options

## Action Steps

1. Learn more about existing mobility programs and actions (see – “In The Works”).
2. Determine why more people aren't using existing programs.
3. Determine how the Task Force should/can work to support/promote existing efforts.
4. Identify existing venues for outreach and how best to use them.
5. Assist to recruit volunteer drivers.

## Other Possible Actions

- Driverless vehicles – people who can't drive can use them
- Micro-transit – vans, jitneys for night/weekend hours and connection shuttles
- Train-plane connections & last mile service
- Communication-technology for where bus is, what's available and where
- Marshfield to Barre public transit
- Hitchhike system (like DC Carpool), online bulletin board or call-in service
- Taxi system - dispatch service for volunteer rides
- Communication System – Front Porch Forum is not time sensitive enough
- Indoor waiting spot for transportation, especially for early times – heated, bathroom...
- Night time transportation to get home – bi-directional, especially to Montpelier.
- Increase rail bed use for biking, esp. transportation, with lollipops connections off of it
- Widen/enhance Route 2 shoulders
- Weekend and evening bus service
- Land use/transportation connection and access management – how the town develops affects what transportation services are available (density creates more transit and bike/walk opportunities)
- School bus use by public
- Carpooling..... have a drive by location to link riders and drivers
- Traffic calming in Marshfield village, especially near Rte 215/Rte 2 intersection
- Plant trees along Rte 2 – VTrans setback policy makes this difficult
- Electronic signs at transportation hubs in Montpelier, Barre, Burlington airport for bus arrival
- Connect Maxfield and Gonyea Rds, possibly using the Town's Right-Of-Way
- Used bike fleet – grab and go
- Railbed to Rte 2 connectors and signs for where you are
- Water sources (spigots), benches, bathrooms or guide to where they are



## In The Works

- Go VT – automated carpool system
- Go VT – Multi-modal connection
- Front Porch Forum Ride Board – Coming soon
- Uber/Lyft - Rural version
- Car Share VT pilot – adapt for personal car sharing with others
- Micro-Transit in Montpelier (on demand service)
- Phoenix hitching post for people collection (“organized” hitchhiking)
- Van leasing by municipality
- Van pool for job access links to wider ridership

## Existing Landscape

- Online rideshare board (website)
- US Rte 2 Commuter
- Rail bed for biking/walking – Cross VT Trail/Landowners
- Electric Vehicle Charging Station in Plainfield
- Volunteer Drivers and the Ticket-To-Ride Program
- Senior Center Transportation – GMT and the Council on Aging
- Taxi – based in Montpelier/Barre
- School buses and schools
- Plainfield Town Forest Trails
- Route 2 for bicycles – some shoulders
- Riders in Plainfield/Marshfield – for Mountain Bikers
- Ambulance Services
- Class 4 Roads
- Goddard College Trails
- VAST Trails



## Progress Report

This task force has deployed a public information campaign to promote existing and new transit resources including the new commuter buses running down Route 14 to Barre. Marketing efforts include the publication of a new information sheet listing the various resources available in the two towns (shown right). The group has also worked to bring new “Hitching Post” locations to both towns to facilitate more ride-sharing. The Marshfield location will be at Old Schoolhouse Commons, and in the Village in Plainfield. This task force also helped to host an event featuring electric vehicles, providing a chance for EV owners to connect with those interested in learning more about this efficient alternative to traditional internal combustion automobiles.

## Resources

- Ross MacDonald at VTrans
- Green Mountain Transit
- Volunteer Drivers (experience)
- Front Porch Forum
- Rita Copeland – Twin Valley Senior Center
- VT Center for Independent Living – Peter Jonke

**NEED TRANSPORTATION**  
IN GREATER PLAINFIELD & MARSHFIELD, VT?

This is your transportation resource to get you to your doctor's appointments, workplace, shopping or job interview. We help you get to where you need to go – bike, bus, taxi, or carpool.

**DOWNLOAD THE TRANSIT APP FROM THE APP STORE TO TRACK & SEE YOUR TRANSIT OPTIONS**  
Need a bus ride? Let us help you plan your trip. Ask **Green Mountain Transit** for a ride: 802-223-7BUS (7287)  
For all other transportation options: visit [connectingcommuters.org](http://connectingcommuters.org) or call 800-685-RIDE (7433)

**Meeting your travel needs!** We are working to get you where you need to go.

**BUS**  
Green Mountain Transit offers service in Central Vermont, Franklin, Grand Isle, Chittenden, Lamoille and Washington counties. For a specific schedule and route information: [www.ridegmt.com](http://www.ridegmt.com) or call 802-223-7BUS (7287)

**transit Token Transit**  
TRACK YOUR BUS OR BUY A PASS

**CARPPOOL & VANPOOL**  
Go! Vermont partners with Agile Mile and Commute with Enterprise, to provide no cost and low cost carpool and vanpool options. Check out the ride referral service at: [www.connectingcommuters.org/getting-around/ridesharing/](http://www.connectingcommuters.org/getting-around/ridesharing/)

**TAXI**  
Capital Car Service: 802-505-0316 or [www.capitalcarservicevt.com](http://www.capitalcarservicevt.com)  
Payless Taxi, Barre: 802-476-4097  
\*No Medicaid Approved Drivers on Central Vermont

**WALK AND BIKE**  
• Find trails and multi-use paths through this statewide **Trail Finder**: [www.trailfinder.org](http://www.trailfinder.org)  
• Find eAssist and electric bike resources and assistance through **vBike**: [www.vbikesolutions.org](http://www.vbikesolutions.org)

**VELIFT**  
A volunteer program giving Veterans a Lift:  
[www.connectingcommuters.org/velift/](http://www.connectingcommuters.org/velift/)

**SHOP**  
Walk, bike and/or bus. All Green Mountain Transit and LINK buses accept bikes. Carpool and taxi, too.

**SENIOR & MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**  
Contact Green Mountain Transit for guidance on bus and special travel options: 802-223-7BUS (7287)  
GMT and The Health Center in Plainfield, offer a FREE Shuttle for doctor, dentist, and other essential medical services. The shuttle may accommodate locations beyond the indicated service area as the schedule allows. To schedule a ride, call: 802-223-7287

**Twin Valley Senior Center**: GMT provides transportation services to meal sites, shopping, non-Medicaid medical appointments, critical care, and basic transportation needs. For more information, please call: 802-223-7287

**VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED**  
Volunteer Drivers are a critical element to increasing the capacity of rides offered to Central Vermont residents. Be a part of the solution and become a driver volunteer. Call Green Mountain Transit: 802-223-7BUS (7287)

**SCHOOLS AND DAYCARE**  
• For local bus service contact Green Mountain Transit: 802-223-7BUS (7287)  
• ReachUp provides reimbursement transportation services to families and children: 800-479-6151

**PARK & RIDE**  
Looking for a convenient place to park for the day? Find a complete list of state listed park and ride locations: [www.parkandrides.vermont.gov](http://www.parkandrides.vermont.gov)

**GMT** For more transportation options, call Green Mountain Transit at 802.223.7287, visit [connectingcommuters.org](http://connectingcommuters.org), or call 800-685-RIDE (7433) **VERMONT**

**OTHER TRAVEL CHOICES**

- City-to-City Bus service—connect to other counties and major cities, like NYC, Boston or Hartford, CT: [www.connectingcommuters.org](http://www.connectingcommuters.org)
- Amtrak—intercity passenger train service, for schedule: [www.amtrak.com/home](http://www.amtrak.com/home)

**GUARANTEED RIDE HOME**  
If something comes up and you need to get home, Go! Vermont will reimburse your travel expenses, up to \$70. [www.connectingcommuters.org/guaranteed-ride-home-benefit/](http://www.connectingcommuters.org/guaranteed-ride-home-benefit/)

**US2 COMMUTER**

Map showing route from Montpelier to St. Johnsbury with stops 1-16.

**MONDAY – FRIDAY EASTBOUND SCHEDULE**

Stop	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
AM	6:17	6:20	6:25	6:35	R	6:45	R	6:55	7:10	R	7:30	-	-	-	-	-
PM	7:28	7:32	7:35	7:40	7:50	R	8:00	R	8:10	8:27	R	8:45	9:00	-	-	-

**MONDAY – FRIDAY WESTBOUND SCHEDULE**

Stop	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
AM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**DOWNLOAD GO! VERMONT, TRANSIT, AND TOKEN TRANSIT APPS TO STAY CONNECTED AND PLAN TRIPS.**

Go Green and Earn Rewards When you Choose To Carpool, Vanpool, Bus, Bike or Telecommute  
**JOIN TODAY! FREE, EASY & FUN**

**GMT** For more transportation options, call Green Mountain Transit at 802.223.7287, visit [connectingcommuters.org](http://connectingcommuters.org), or call 800-685-RIDE (7433) **VERMONT**

## ► Reduce and Transform Energy Use & Increase Renewable Energy Generation for Homes, Businesses, Twinfield School, the Towns, and Other Intentions

Community Chairs: **Diana Batzel and Nick Seifert**

Facilitator: **Jon Copans**, *Program Director*, Vermont Council on Rural Development

Resource Team Members: **Michelle McCutcheon-Schour**, *Consultant*, Efficiency Vermont  
**Bill Powell**, *Director of Products and Services*, Washington Electric Coop  
**Paul Zabriskie**, *Program Director*, CAPSTONE Weatherization Program

This task force will work with partners to assist home owners, renters, businesses and community institutions in reducing energy use, using renewable energy, and fuel switching. Based on the preferences of those gathered at the community meeting, this task force will focus in on:

- Implementing a campaign to promote modern wood heating
- Working with Twinfield School and both municipalities to make them models of energy efficiency and renewable energy usage
- Developing and implementing incremental and do-it-yourself approaches to bring home retrofits and solar generation within reach of more residents
- Weatherizing low income and rental housing
- Unleashing the power of neighbor-to-neighbor connections to promote energy alternatives and provide support to those who are ready to proceed

This task force may also work on engaging youth, increasing utilization of existing financing and programs, developing one or more community solar projects, and exploring new financing tools.

### Priority Action Steps

The group decided to focus on two key action areas to start, with a third to soon follow. The group also will work to engage youth throughout this set of priority action areas, and to implement aggressive and creative outreach and education efforts including the leveraging of neighbor-to-neighbor connections. Effective and compelling communications will be deployed across all of the task force efforts, with an emphasis on describing and sharing the great work and positive results that have already happened in both towns around energy efficiency and renewable generation.

#### The first two priorities for actions are:

- Work with Twinfield School and both municipalities to make them a model of energy efficiency and renewable energy generation
- Implement a community campaign to promote modern wood heating and to take advantage of the woodstove change-out program and other incentives

#### A third priority is:

- To facilitate the weatherization of homes for low and moderate income members of the community and for rental properties.

### Resources

#### For the wood heating campaign, key resources for success include:

- Burn Right Vermont
- Rich Phillips
- Nick Siefert
- Bob Atchinson
- Chimney Contractors
- Emma Hanson, VT Department of Forest, Parks, and Rec.
- Plainfield Hardware

- Andrew Perchlik, Clean Energy Development Fund
- Wood and pellet suppliers
- Wood Stove Dealers
- WGDR
- Woodstove manufacturers – Hearthstone and VT Castings
- Bourne Energy
- Renewable Energy Resource Center
- Tim Maker
- Maura O’Connell – Northern Forest Center
- Suncommon – (how to run a community campaign)

**For the Twinfield School effort, key resources for success include:**

- Vermont Energy Education Program (VEEP)
- Green Mountain Power
- Efficiency Vermont
- Facilities staff at the school including the school electrician
- Rich Phillips
- School Energy Management Program
- Norm Etkind
- Solar Land Owner (potential host of a solar project)
- Revolving Loan Fund
- Paul Zabriskie (Rumney example)
- Contractors

## Progress Report

This task force designed and implemented a wood heating campaign including support and special pricing from local wood stove dealers and promotion of existing incentives. Because a large portion of households in both towns already heat with wood, a focus of the effort was making the transition to cleaner and more efficient modern wood and pellet stoves. A successful workshop featured Emma Hanson of the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation. This task force also has successfully connected Efficiency Vermont with Twin Valley Senior Center, Plainfield’s Town Hall and Opera House, and Twinfield School. Twinfield is in the process of completing a large energy-savings project with Efficiency Vermont covering the full \$115,000 cost, and nearly \$10,000 was provided from Efficiency Vermont for weatherization of the Town Hall. Marshfield is also exploring options energy improvements of town buildings. On the ongoing agenda for this task force is the promoting free home energy visits provided by Efficiency Vermont, and continuing to work with Twinfield to explore solar electricity opportunities.



**RAMP Energy Task Force**

### Do you want to stack less wood?

A new woodstove uses 1/3 less wood than a stove made before 1988. Come to a workshop to learn more about modern wood heat and the great incentives to replace your old wood stove or to switch to wood from oil or propane.

**WEDNESDAY | OCTOBER 9 | 7:00P - 8:30P**  
Old School House Common, 122 School Street, Marshfield

Presentation provided by Emma Hanson, Wood Energy Coordinator with the VT Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation



RAMP Energy Task Force Modern Wood Heat Campaign CURRENT WOOD HEAT INCENTIVES			
Wood or Pellet Stoves			
Offer	From	Eligibility	Website
Wood Stove Changeout Program: \$1000 towards purchase of a pellet stove or \$800 towards purchase of a wood stove when you turn in a non-EPA certified (pre-1988) wood stove.	Clean Energy Development Fund	Must turn in an old pre-1988 woodstove to qualify. New stoves must meet efficiency and emission levels.	<a href="http://www.rercvt.org">www.rercvt.org</a>
\$650 rebate on a new EPA certified wood stove or pellet stove, no old stove turn-in required, but there is an \$100 extra rebate for change-outs.	Efficiency Vermont	New stoves must meet efficiency and emission levels	<a href="http://www.efficiencyvermont.com">www.efficiencyvermont.com</a>
50% labor discount for woodstove change-out or a new installation	Chimney Sweep	Marshfield/Plainfield residents who purchase their wood or pellet stove at the Chimney Sweep.	<a href="http://www.chimneysweepshop.com/">www.chimneysweepshop.com/</a>
15% discount on any wood or pellet stove. Customer must find a different participating installer to receive the CEDF or EVT rebates.	Montpelier Flag and Stove Works	Marshfield/ Plainfield residents who purchase their wood or pellet stove at Montpelier Flag and Stove Works.	<a href="http://www.stoveandflagworks.com">www.stoveandflagworks.com</a>
\$250 rebate to members for the purchase of a wood or pellet stove	Washington Electric Coop	WEC customers	<a href="http://www.washingtonelectric.coop">www.washingtonelectric.coop</a>
Centralized Heating Systems (Boilers or Furnaces)			
Offer	From	Eligibility	Website
\$3,000 rebate for automated wood pellet boilers or furnaces	Efficiency Vermont	All residential and commercial	<a href="http://www.efficiencyvermont.com">www.efficiencyvermont.com</a>
\$3,000 rebate for automated wood pellet boilers or furnaces	Clean Energy Development Fund	All residential and commercial	<a href="http://www.rercvt.org">www.rercvt.org</a>
\$1,000 rebate for automated wood pellet boilers or \$500 rebate for automated wood pellet furnaces for WEC members	Washington Electric Coop	WEC customers	<a href="http://www.washingtonelectric.coop">www.washingtonelectric.coop</a>

Brought to you by the RAMP Energy Task Force in collaboration with Efficiency Vermont and the Vermont Council on Rural Development



## Energy Innovations for your Home

A FREE Efficiency Vermont workshop

**February 27th, 2020**  
7:00pm – 8:00pm  
Old Schoolhouse Common (Library), Marshfield

Join the RAMP energy committee for an informative and exciting presentation on Smart Home innovations and new technology for home energy savings!

CO-SPONSORED BY:  
**Efficiency Vermont**

This is a two-part presentation, featuring:

- New smart home products (think connected devices!)
- WEC pilot program on hot water heaters as an energy storage unit

It's free! Snacks will be provided.

One lucky attendee will win a smart thermostat (Ecobee) to take home.

For more info:  
Contact Becca White at (802) 540-7798





# VI. RAMP Into the Future Community Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held with over 100 Marshfield and Plainfield residents and the VCRD Visiting Team on April 30, 2019

*Although the prioritization work of RAMP requires the towns to decide what is most important as they move forward with Task Forces, nothing is lost in the process from the long list of concerns and ideas expressed in early community focus sessions. Many interesting and diverse thoughts are represented here, and are presented as a reminder of issues explored, and a possible foundation for future projects.*

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## Growing local foods and a working landscape while preserving healthy forest, waters, and ecosystems

Visiting Team: Paul Costello (facilitator), Ben Doyle (scribe), Megan Roush, Kate McCarthy, Nancy Everhart, Tim Tierney

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### What are the Assets in this Area?

- The Plainfield coop is committed to buying local food—vehicle that gets food into the community.
- Great bookstore.
- Community health center.
- The Plainfield opera house.
- There are lots of trees in this community—they are working to soak up CO<sup>2</sup>. They are on a mix of public and private land. Large town forest in Marshfield. 25 acres in Plainfield.
- Lot of local producers, Baltic farm, Robinson Hill (beef), Cleary Family Farm, East Hill Tree Farm, Nob Hill, Newton Farm.
- Hollister Hill Farm does raw milk.
- Distillery (technically in Cabot).
- Kimchi producer.
- Lot of maple syrup. Forest farmers (large new producer). Bottle drink sap.
- Limited amount of hunting and fishing.
- Immense assets in wildlife, wetlands.
- People have land and want to keep it welcoming for wildlife. Using cedar woods to select harvest trees and produce affordable housing.
- There is a sustainable ethic. Lot of producers.
- Trail system in the Groton State Forest. Outdoor recreation.
- Lots of trails on in the town forest. Rail bed trails.
- Washington Electric Coop is very active.
- 20 to 30 minutes to food hub, 30 minutes to USDA processing facility.
- Plainfield farmers market.
- Lots of under-employed or retired folks in the communities.
- There are opportunities for regenerative agricultural process.
- The coop is convening a conversation to aggregate crops for sale.
- Tremendous existing wisdom in old-time Vermonters, but how to share it.
- Earthwalk nature program.
- Route 2 is an asset (plenty of traffic).

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### What are the Challenges?

- Hard to know how to manage smaller tracts of land for carbon sequestration.
- Exposure to pesticides specifically things like Round-up.
- High cost of land makes it hard for young to start farming.
- People who have land who want it farmed.
- Invasive species. Wild parsnip, honey suckle, ticks, ash trees and the butternut.
- Young people are pushed out because of looking for land.
- How can a young farmer get an equity stake in a farm that works for both them and the existing owner?
- Zoning is a challenge. There is a push to expand the residential district.
- Lack of market opportunity and market coordination / communication.
- Lack of coordination around logging (it's all happening at the same time). We need to respect wildlife coordinators.
- High cost of living (taxes, electricity, retail).
- Unclear if zoning impacts ag producers.
- Educational system—tough to connect kids to the working landscape.
- How much has the dairy industry changed? Definitely fewer farms.
- Cheap food system makes it tough for a young family to actually make it as farmers.
- The villages seem emptied out—there needs to be a bigger draw for people so they don't have to go to Montpelier.
- Trouble to source wood locally—tough for smaller value-added producers.

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### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- There should be an economic development group that can focus on the well-being on both towns.
- More people should buy at the local coop. Help people see that the coop's success is critical to the larger towns.
- Look to more stable markets than high-end value-added (coop responsible grazing for examples)—a broad land sharing opportunity.
- Encourage opportunities for wilderness/outdoor recreation.

- Continue trail development to market to young people.
- Get better broadband/cell service to increase attractiveness for young people.
- Build a bike path that could connect towns to Montpelier.
- Split farmers market so that it switches every week between towns.
- Build connections to the school to help foster the working landscape. Continue to foster programs like farm to school program, Green Team, school garden, eco club. The school is on 80 acres. More could be work.
- Increase local foods in the school cafeteria.
- Make connections, build resources, for making connections between consumers and producers.
- Bigger agritourism/beer/spirits with visibility on Route 2.
- Ag producers come together to share their wares—this existed but seems to have gone away. Could it happen again?
- Bring generations together through mentorship programs—this could be similar to a home share or age well.
- Have a celebrate Marshfield and Plainfield day. Do more advertising to let people know.
- Build a farm-based event—with trail races etc.
- Build an arts cooperative for the creative economy—build a makerspace.
- Emulate Cabot’s cooperative land sharing model.
- Foster working affinity groups (farmers, woodworkers, etc.). Build networks and skill share opportunities—utilize existing knowledge.
- Develop CBD market.
- Activate the onion river campground so that its resources could be better used. The house in front could be used more successfully.
- We should ban poisons in the community (pesticides).
- Build regional approach (include Cabot, East Montpelier, etc.) to have a greater impact.
- Have a way to invite people into the community—how to communicate coordinate more successfully. Who could do this work?
- Make the kiosk in Plainfield more visible.
- Leverage the success of the community suppers. Have people buy shares to support a local restaurant.
- Brand community for outdoor recreation.
- Increase awareness around the weaving school and build the opportunity for school of traditional schools.
- More opportunities for teenagers. Every project should bring in teenagers.
- Build some kind of entity that could mediate disputes in the community (if it’s bigger than anything in the community).
- Support the farm stand that will be opening on Route 2.
- Build more energy generation (are we looking at rivers).
- Lobby the state for traffic calming on Route 2.
- Have a combined community business fair.
- Have more places where people could “bump into each other.”
- Resource directory.
- Goddard has so much infrastructure that could be more successfully used. The library (which is open to the community) isn’t utilized.
- The local radio station is an asset.
- Make stronger connections between agriculture and the climate economy.
- Build a land coop or land matching program.
- Old maple valley is an asset. Build microbrewery.
- Support maple valley. Build a community that brings people.
- Turn school into civic/community center. Look to expanding.

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### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Build sharing opportunities/infrastructure.
- Implement strategies to slow traffic.
- Build access to trails between two towns. Build that connector. Develop great asset. Develop recreation assets.
- Great asset in diversified ag. Lots of appreciation for forest land. Take a look at zoning to see if there is proactively a way to ensure zoning works for you (and acceptable uses). Develop the business through the economic development committees.
- Build a more structured way to share the existing assets—what are the structures or systems that could make that happen. Increase public participation on community committees. The school is such an asset for community building but there needs to be other ones too for people to come together. The best asset in town is the people. They pitch in.
- Community is not network. Has old structures for organizing. Great opportunities for network building. Plainfield is going to be the land of milk of honey when the world ends. We have a responsibility to the soil as patriots.

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### Developing vibrant communities

Visiting Team: Paul Costello, Ben Doyle (facilitator), Megan Roush (scribe), Kate McCarthy, Tim Tierney

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#### What are the Assets in this Area?

- Pop up taco stand.
- Four libraries.
- Open town meeting.
- Food Coop.
- State and town forest.
- Recreation field.
- Plainfield opera.
- Music in opera.
- Radio station on Goddard campus.
- Good walking, winter walking, vast trail.
- Snowmobile trails.
- XC skiing.
- Unique and beautiful land.
- Clean forests.
- Plainfield is a compact walkable village, and everyone looks after each other.

- Cool parades and community festivals – Halloween, Old home days (need more members), and foliage day.
- Plainfield community space – above Coop and it's not very expensive to rent.
- Community meals happening with both communities.
- Summer music at Goddard College Thursday nights.
- Plainfield Farmers market.
- Hay barn field – Goddard College.
- Coop Vermont – Youth in Central Vermont summer camps and day camps.
- Both towns have an interesting and amazing collection of people that are active within the community.
- Town identity.
- Health center.
- Schools offer reading programs and renaissance program which allows children to study anything they want if they have a mentor for it.
- Artist/writers/craftsmen.
- Weaving School.
- Farms – Littlewood, Allen, Pig.
- Yoga Center – Riverside
- Churches (Christ Covenant) offers play group every Wednesday morning, movie series, and knitting group.
- Twin Valley Senior Center located in Montpelier but services both towns.
- Small Businesses.
- Public transport that links to everywhere.
- Gamelan – Indonesian instruments and music.
- Spruce Mountain.
- Positive Pie.
- Cemetery.
- Playground.
- Stone wall in village by the bookstore is a nice meeting place.
- Each town has a post office.
- Old growth forest.
- Vermont Neighbors Day in June.

### What are the Challenges?

- Under seen and underutilized trails.
- Vacant houses and business on Route 2 (4 houses beyond repair in Plainfield). How do we find a way to restore homes? Challenging to draw people in when town looks dilapidated.
- No affordable housing.
- Marshfield has one of the highest child poverty rates in Washington County.
- High water costs.
- There is a challenging and dangerous intersection in Plainfield.
- Both towns have no control over route 2 because state highway.
- Unsafe walking in villages.
- Winooski river – Flood and evacuation issues. Goddard Hay Barn is the evacuation location and you can't get to it from across the river once it's too high.
- Boundaries between towns. People are living in Plainfield and Marshfield – Pay taxes in one but they care about voting in the other town because they feel like they are more a part of that town.
- Not a strong sense of unity between towns.
- Aging population and lack of families moving in.
- Schools are shrinking.
- Trying to find the recreational activities/opportunities within the town. There is a lack of maps, signage, online resources. They are mostly found by word of mouth.
- Lack of senior housing – No senior housing where people can age in place.
- No full-time public pre-kindergarten. No full-time private pre-kindergarten. They are currently unaffordable.
- No paper or communication within towns. No newsletter anymore and Front Porch Forum is only one channel that doesn't fit everyone needs.
- Older folks don't have access to computers.
- School population has gone down 100 students.
- The towns are losing kids in high school. They are changing schools.
- Strip of stores in Marshfield are empty.
- Maple Valley has been foreclosed upon.
- Coop having serious financial challenges.
- Town meetings overlapped so you can't attend both.
- People who live in the neighborhoods don't know each other.
- Many introverts in the towns because people love their space.
- Demographics.
- No kids in school because we are all old.
- Goddard College is dealing with a lot of challenges.
- Town offices not well staffed.
- Towns lack civic participation.
- There is a need for more outdoor recreation.
- Struggling families – how to identify without identifying and get them help.
- Not enough diversity – don't come and don't stay.
- No conventional products or affordable products within towns.
- Coop is competing against Walmart.
- There is a need for traffic calming.
- Only grocery is the Coop and there is nothing affordable.
- Who's working on economic development? No one?

### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Become a refugee resettlement community.
- Take in climate refugees – how do we incorporate them while also keeping space that people want?
- Broadband keeps people here.
- People talk about individual issues and tonight we are talking about issues across the board. We need a committee to address these issues. There is a need for a comprehensive community committee.
- Housing and building vacancies. Privately owned? There is a need to find out inventory of vacant properties and the vacancy rates.
- Larger buildings could be turned into apartments.



- Friends of the town hall is in bad condition and is going to be knocked down. A farmers market could go there.
- Hay bales to slow down traffic.
- Coop still needs some good PR and more conventional products. Town can put into coop sweat effort/equality to make it work.
- Maplefields put covenants on town so no other food/grocery stores can be in the community.
- Affordable food.
- Buying club – buy a pallet of food and get into the town.
- House center – prescription for food – Connect them with the coop?
- Bring income into town by building downtown, restaurant events, Pop up events, Creative space, Farm to table dinners in town hall, church and community center.
- Expanding to know your neighbors and town by creating events, celebrating more together.
- Monthly events – hiking, kickball, etc.
- Communication – field notes (town newsletter from the past that could be started again).
- Dormitories at Goddard college – turn dormitories into multifamily housing – communicate with Goddard help them survive.
- More business to employee people. Take an inventory of businesses.
- Towns need a holistic committee which discusses housing, business, and development.
- Look into why some businesses aren't zoned industrial.
- Tool library – where people could borrow tools from other towns people.
- Inventory of skills that people have in the towns to connect people looking for help or offering help.
- Committee to blend communities so that we can share and identify all the assets that both towns have.
- Plainfield's town plan has expired. The new town plan is a great opportunity for to be a part of the planning process. Zoning implement's the town plan. They will be meeting two times a month and it's on the town calendar if anyone wants to join.
- More intergenerational pot lucks.
- Create a group to lead us to a vision. And then back that up with data and give good suggestions. The hospital doing a study now to gather data.

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### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- This town is home to one of my favorite signs – coop/gun sign. I like the diversity within the towns. Usually economic development committee will help the town.
- Reaching out to the college to plan events can help bring the younger generation into the town and maybe recruit them to stay for a longer term. Assessing the housing inventory will be important in addressing next steps.
- Community only works when you own it and it's organic to the values and the natures of the place. Democracy is an experience. The community will make choices on what they want to do. This is an engine. Set a direction and use the power. There are some really good ideas. All ideas you can evaluate together. When you start this and then you can have momentum to do many things.
- Both towns have a diverse ecosystem of activities. Housing raised as an important issue. Aging in place and aging within the community. Cultivate what you have for housing. Economic and community development a can be whatever you want. Nurture your community. Maybe you're not a regular but join the meeting. The process brings people together.
- I enjoyed your focus on both the physical and personal aspects of the communities.

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### Improving local infrastructure and transportation options

Visiting Team: Jon Copans (facilitator), Jonathan Harries, Rachel Kennedy, Michelle McCutcheon-Schour (scribe), Bill Powell, Bonnie Waninger

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#### What are the Assets in this Area?

- Commuter bus that goes from St. Johnsbury to Montpelier that stops in Plainfield.
- Both towns have water and wastewater in their villages.
- Rail bed that connects the two communities and to Montpelier.
- Plainfield's electric vehicle charging station.
- Roads (maybe a mixed bag) some are state, and others are under the town.
  - Town roads are in good shape; state roads less so.
- Winooski River.
- Side question: How do people get to school?
  - Mostly via buses.
- They have an opera house, park and ride, libraries, town solar in Plainfield.
- Co-op; Marshfield Village Market that gives people access to local produce without travel.
- Multiple electrical utilities; Green Mountain Power & Washington Electric Co-op.
- Town committees and governance are strong.
- Senior center that is in East Montpelier but it serves the towns.
- Radio station.
- Food shelf in Marshfield.
- Large waterfall.
- Good groundwater.
- 600 acre town forest.
- Lots of parks:
  - Community center in Plainfield.
  - Town forest in Plainfield as well.
  - Covered bridge and park.
- Vast trail network

- Side walk in the village really helps seniors get around.
- Route 2 brings people to the community – if they didn't have it, they wouldn't have as much business.
- School is a massive asset.
- Motels for visitors .

## What are the Challenges?

- Route 2 is a challenge:
  - A lot of volume.
  - Amount of traffic along with the speed of the traffic & weight of the vehicles breaks down the road; safety is a big concern; speeding trucks.
  - Riding a bike on route 2 is super dangerous;
  - People get hit – someone shared their own experience with being hit about 18 years ago on Route 2.
  - The road floods.
  - The surface is very dangerous; you can't ride a bike on it; when you drive you are swerving to avoid pot holes; people go very fast.
  - Almost no shoulder which doesn't leave room for walking or biking.
- Both towns lack cell coverage; they need a tower.
- Connectivity (cellular and access to the internet):
  - People can't work from homes because access is bad.
  - Some people simply can't get internet.
  - The Motel has cell access because they are on Route 2.
  - Once you get off Route 2 and on the secondary roads you don't have many options.
  - Even if you have access, the reliability of the electrical infrastructure makes it difficult.
  - Makes it hard for the hotels (because people want to be able to call).
- Both towns are small – cost of taking care of the infrastructure can be a lot for small towns.
- Lots of vacancy (buildings that have gone empty) in town; lots of properties not being taking care of.
- Lack of affordable housing.
- Drop in the number of people actually makes it hard to maintain the wastewater.
- Wastewater system is aging; especially the parts that they can't see.
- Inadequate town parking in Plainfield.
- Public transportation:
  - GMTA was trying to cut back routes but the public's advocacy stopped that; GMTA is no longer going to cut back on the route.
  - You need to leave before 7 am if you want to use the bus.
  - Even those who want to be aware of their environmental impact can't use it.
  - You can't go from P/M to Barre on public transit; would like to request adding times to those schedules.
  - It's hard to take the bus because there are long wait times between transfers.
  - What if there was more service – would more people take it?
  - Maps on the GMTA website are hard to read.
  - Service seems to be focused on people who work in Montpelier.
  - You can't get from P/M to the airport – easier to go down to Boston then get to Burlington.
  - The roundabout should be a hub for GMTA.
  - Even if they up the routes it may be unlikely that people will take the bus; it will also be costly to add those routes; don't think looking at GMTA for everything is the solution.
  - In the winter you are stuck on the street because things aren't open.
  - Ridership on the morning route is low.
  - Why can't you have smaller buses that don't use the same amount of fuel?
  - Ride share doesn't mean much if you don't have anything to share – For non-drivers sharing the ride is hard.
  - If you live off public transit, there is no night or weekend service; makes the elderly and disabled more isolated.
- Neither town has a laundry matt
  - Because the water hook-up is super expensive
  - Price is based on state regulation

## Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Uber type app for town.
- Create a sharing economy – rides, tools, farm equipment, car, scooter, bikes, etc.
- Integrate school with transit options; why can't the public ride the school bus?
- Getting the trail off Route 2; there is currently a bike path that connects the towns can we get that off route 2 and connect it to Montpelier?
- Rail bed could be legitimized
- Some network that would get people to urgent care that isn't ambulance – like Urgent Car
- Can we come up with a system to make hitchhikers visible and marks them as a credible rider – I'm a safe driver; maybe we can connect people.
- Can Uber and Lyft come to town?
  - Cultivate Uber/Lyft as an alternative.
  - Limited by communication.
  - Quebec used to have a system; a call center where people could call in for rides.
- Caution to do it in a Vermont way:
  - Concerned with the people who are trying to make a living from providing rides.
- Commuter rail. Is it feasible?
- How will the younger generation want to transport themselves:
  - How do we attract younger people?
  - What are models that aren't based on private vehicle ownership?
- Can we increase charging infrastructure? The more electric vehicles that come the harder it gets to find a charger.
- More localized resources.
  - Move away from having to drive everywhere for things.
- Community solar for town energy.
- Think about how we can change to attract younger families.
- There are \$10k grants in Brattleboro to change their house into apartments:
  - Montpelier is thinking about doing the same.
  - Creating more duplexes rather than private homes.

- Affordability is everything!
- Home sharing and smaller footprint.
- Employment opportunities. Currently the school is the largest employer.
- Can we combine the town garage; share some muni resources?
- If there was really good internet access, then those who would like to live here and could work from here.
- Community work space where people who are self-employed can access internet and community.
- Is there legislative access that can be taken to build cellular access? Are there any road blocks that they should consider?
- Seniors need housing. Need to think about how to solve that.
- Project citizen:
  - Twinfield kids would generate ideas.
  - How to use the kids as resources to come up with ideas.
  - Engage youth to solve problems.

## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- VTrans is trying to do the most it can with the \$8 million budget. Launching many online options. VTrans wants to work with the towns!
- There are a lot of assets: Water/wastewater, railbed can attract tourists.
- Plainfield has broadband and AT&T service.
- Broadband opens the door to so many things.
- Access to utility poles and how to solve that? Washington Electric owns the poles.
- Communications Union District (CUD) has been solved south of here. 16 local towns have created a CUD.
- Working on a new municipal entity to bring fiber to the area and help members get fiber in the home. Helps with long term financial investments. Community members will be asked if they want to pay into it.
- There are grants for connectivity.
- Town of Cambridge was very successful in working with the provider. They worked with the provider to prove that there is enough people to sign up.
- You get transit two ways: through advocating and riding the bus! Cost per person goes down when more people are on the bus.

## Energy generation and efficiency

Visiting Team: Jon Copans (facilitator), Jonathan Harries, Rachel Kennedy, Michelle McCutcheon-Schour, Bill Powell, Bonnie Waninger (scribe)

### What are the Assets in this Area?

- Molly's Falls Dam generates power as a peaking plant; it could be more than that.
- Goddard Collage's biomass heating plant is an asset and was controversial.
- Marshfield completed energy efficiency upgrades to its municipal buildings and installed solar to serve them.
- The school has a pellet boiler and installed efficient lights. It still needs sealing at the eaves.
- We have a robust forest that can be a material source for wood heat.
- The owner of a biofuel company lives downtown. The biofuel is used mostly for heating.
- WEC is 100% renewable!
- The Park and Ride solar array powers the municipal building.
- Plainfield has a public EV charging station.
- Ridership is increasing on the Rt. 2 commuter bus.
- We have a local supplier of cord wood.
- Our farmland could be used to grow biodiesel crops for on farm use.
- Medical needs can be handled locally at the Plainfield Health Center.
- We could generate power by installing a turbine at the old Batchelder Mill dam site in Plainfield Village.
- Lori Barg, a hydropower specialist, lives in Plainfield.
- The Plainfield Coop is local food store.
- We can buy local at farms and wood-based businesses, which keeps our money in the community.
- The Plainfield Farmers Market!
- Local businesses are skilled at energy projects, such as installation of insulation, heat pumps, and pellet wood stoves and complete energy audits.
- GMP's incentives programs now serve people who have installed their own energy generation devices.
- The WEC Button Up program funds for weatherization and other devices, and its Tier III energy transformation program focuses on building conservation (heating, cooling, water needs) to help people transition off fossil fuels.

### What are the Challenges?

- Financing of efficiency improvements can be challenging generally.
- People without taxable income, such as low income households, cannot use tax credit rebates to help them finance efficiency projects.
- Energy projects can be more expensive when a roof must be upgraded to install solar panels.
- It is difficult to move people from energy audits to project implementation. Saving money isn't enough to move people to take action.
- It can be daunting to sift through all the information about energy. Learning how to do projects is difficult and time consuming.
- EV charging stations use different apps for payment. There is a learning curve when driving an electric vehicle. With the charging Apps, you spend time downloading them when you want to pay.
- The cost of fossil fuel is missing externalized costs. If those costs were incorporated, it would not be the cheapest fuel.
- Technologies are costlier when they are new, making it difficult to be an early adopter.



- It's hard to cut your own wood as you get older. This forces you to change to other fuel sources.
- Pellet boilers are twice as expensive as fuel oil boilers, making it difficult for homeowners to buy into their upfront costs.
- People perceive that alternative, non-carbon program activities can only be done by wealthy people, in part because of how state and federal incentive programs are structured.
- Rebates are not offered or are too low for do it yourself actions.

### **Opportunities: What Should Be Done?**

- Local education, such as hearing from neighbors about projects that work, can help people take action.
- Financing programs such as Pay As You Save (PAYS) and To The Meter can increase the number of improvements.
- We can encourage or help low income residents buy a solar panel or install one efficiency measure per year rather than promote full installations or renovations only.
- We can promote a micro solar program to install a 6x6 foot solar panel on every house.
- We can invite Electric Vehicle owners to a share-and-learn event at the library.
- We can structure programs that help the to grow better by thinking about the Air BnB model, which made renting your home accessible to more people.
- We can bring young people into this conversation; they want to solve problems.
- We can bring model technology, like the Penn State Fuel Nugget, to our town. The Fuel Nugget converts waste plastics into fuel with minimal emissions.
- We can set up a mentoring program that connects residents with experience to residents who want to do projects – a hand-holding support network to help people through the steps.
- We can connect local expertise with local needs, similar to Efficiency Vermont's pilot program in Northfield.
- We can host home tours that focus on a particular technology or whole homes so that people can meet their knowledgeable neighbors.
- Bob Atchison, Ed Hutchinson, and Rich Phillips were early adopters and can provide coaching.
- We can implement new programs and make people aware of existing programs that encourage change, such as requiring energy audits when older homes are transferred to new owners or reminding people that the Zoning Administrator must be provided with a builder certification that new home construction meets the law.
- We can provide funding and resources to assist people to help people.
- We can work with the school to incorporate programs to assist children to learn about efficiency and how to achieve it.
- We can update our creative economy program list of people in town with talents and knowledge they can share.
- Can we work with the Spaulding Tech Center program to learn efficiency?
- We can build a program similar to Putney's transition town movement. 60 people meet regularly, and they identified skilled people to help.
- We can promote financing and incentive programs, such as VSECU's small loan program and Efficiency Vermont's Do It Yourself program.
- We can design small projects that can be done with small-loan money.
- We can create challenge programs, such as a solarize challenge or wood heating challenge. These programs implement ideas like district heating or having people make energy changes at the same time. They usually help people take advantage of an incentive program simultaneously.

### **Reflections of the Community Visit Team**

- Plainfield and Marshfield have a lot of assets (resources, knowledge, initiatives completed). Water and sewer is often the biggest user of electricity and can be an energy generation source. If efficiency is a community priority, USDA has funding programs that can support it.
- Resiliency of the aerial electric system is key. To maintain what we have, cleaning the right of way of trees is essential.
- Take advantage of work others do (communities, utilities) by using them as a resource.
- Convince people to think of their kids and the long view.
- WEC can be helpful if you want to bring the network of contractors together.
- Build on the enthusiasm of neighbor to neighbor learning.
- Help Efficiency Vermont connect their programs to low income residents.
- If you find your local people (resources), the regional planning commission will help you create publications that make neighbor to neighbor connections.
- Reach out to your neighboring communities to ask about their successes with financing projects and special events. Vital Communities in the Upper Valley's template was successful.
- The Clean Energy Development Fund's wood heating program is a good investment to help people stop using fossil fuels for heating needs.
- Be a catalyst for action!

## VI. RAMP Participants

Susan Abbott	Margaret Campbell	Rich Gouge	Amos Meacham	Debra Sioufi
Gail Africa	Renee Carpenter	Ben & Adrienne	Julie Medose	Baylen Slote
George Africa	Rae Carter	Graham	Alice Merrill	Ross Sneyd
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Bob Atchinson	Allen Clark	Tracey Hambleton	Joan Marie Misek	Beth Stern
Lori Baker	Jess Clayton	Jean Hamilton	Seth Mullendore	Deb Stoleroff
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Bobbi	Tammy Farnham	Elise Magnant	Andy Robinson	Rebecca Wigg
Brimblecombe	Michael Farrell	Zachary Maia	Dennis Ross	Jonathan Williams
B Buchman	Joseph Gainza	Jim Malloy	Carl Rovetto	Scott Williams
Doni and Sara Cain	Sarah Galbraith	John Matthew	Lisa Ryan	Betsy Ziegler
Justin Campbell	Angella Gibbons	Tracey McNaughten	Nick Seifert	Laura Ziegler
	Dana Glazier	Drew McNaughton	Diane Sherman	

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*The transportation task force organized a hands-on event for community members to check out and learn about electric cars and e-bikes.*





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The RAMP Into the Future Initiative is part of the Vermont Council on Rural Development's (VCRD) Climate Economy Model Communities Program – a community-driven process with local leaders, VCRD, Green Mountain Power, and Efficiency Vermont to cultivate economic development, innovation and affordability in the face of climate change.