

# **COUNCIL ON THE FUTURE OF** **VERMONT**

WEBSITE SUBMISSIONS TO

DECEMBER 20, 2008

The **Council on the Future of Vermont** hosted an online public forum as a part of the two year public engagement process. The following document (160 pages) includes submissions by Vermonters to that online forum at the [www.futureofvermont.org](http://www.futureofvermont.org) website. The answers that they submitted to the website were considered in the Council on the Future of Vermont's process in 2008 and 2009 as one of the inputs to the final report. These notes, captured in this document, are the actual submissions of Vermonters, including their ages and their towns of residence.

These notes are made public here as part of the Council on the Future of Vermont process and one of the appendices of materials used for the final report: *Imagining Vermont: Values and Vision for the Future*. These notes do not represent the opinions of the Council on the Future of Vermont or of the Vermont Council on Rural Development, but are the ideas and views of individual authors.



# **Council on the Future of Vermont**

## **WEBSITE SUBMISSIONS to 12-20-08**

[weathersfield](#)

**Age (if entered):**

69

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A rural farming state focusing on sustainability and home-grown renewable energy, with small clean modern businesses, vibrant towns and villages and contained sprawl. More grassroots and volunteer participation in community efforts and activities

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Rural landscape, love of mountains, small government and schools, independence, guaranteed health care and affordable living

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The challenge of working with a timid governor with no forward-thinking future plan, unable to envision a more sustainable state and lacking compassion for the less fortunate. Opportunities abound at the grassroots level to work for health care for all, production of Vermont-grown food and leadership in establishing Vermont's energy future

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Each town needs to take the initiative for its own energy program: conservation and renewable system(s) and providing local foods for schools and community. It's time to downscale huge houses and large vehicles or face much higher taxes on them

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

We're working on it already - it will take more participation and teamwork

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Submitted by Anonymous on Sun, 12/07/2008 - 6:00pm.

## Marshfield

**Age (if entered):**

57

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Living every day with history, the farms down the road, always aware of landscape, friends on my hill, always looking at sky and seeing weather change, working on my old house, a tomato from my vegetable garden, wild turkeys crossing dirt road, blue mountains always in distance, quiet

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

independence, self-reliance, privacy, sense of place, commitment to living here, strong work ethic, awareness of ourselves as "Vermonters"

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenges: growth under control so that we don't become a cold mini-New Jersey; turn off tv's and get involved; need governor for green energy policy and to wire state.  
Opportunities: small scale, work ethic, creativity, community, values

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

--high-speed internet everywhere --zoning to protect open land --education to foster creativity, entrepreneurship and technology so young people can find work here --affordable healthcare --green energy business leader nationally --protect our Vermont "brand" by protecting agriculture and open land

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

We need better zoning--seems like many houses sprouting up in fields and orchards. More activities for young people (arts, business, sports, mentoring) so they aren't falling into drug use.. We need to GET WIRED to internet- a failure of leadership by Douglas that some Vermonters can't join global business community because they don't have access to highspeed internet.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 12/05/2008 - 9:38am.

## Marshfield

### **Age (if entered):**

33

### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

VT means Home. I've lived in 5 states, 4 countries, and traveled the world. VT's the only place in the world that so closely aligns with my own values as mother, professional, recreationalist, homeowner & citizen. It takes a village to raise a healthy/responsible/happy/ productive steward-citizen. I believe that VT has many resources avail. to help in raising my son to be this person.

### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

VT reflects the values that I believe are foundation for healthy/robust state: apprec. for community, support for communal resources (libraries, community ctrs, health care, plow trucks!), cultural vibrancy (via rich, diverse arts/entertainment), fam. support, democracy (accessible government), acknowledged interdependency with natural lands. I think Vermonters share these values.

### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Chall: 1) Afford. hous, 2) Supp VT biz, 3) Fuel costs, 4) Qual of/access to excel. schools, 5) Adqt transpo opts for VTers, 6) Afford prop. taxes, 7) Conserv/preservation nat. lands/hist props. Opps: VTers are aware of aforementioned challenges. I believe there is a will/desire among VTers to address these issues. Unlike many other states, VT still has the opp to conserve our lands.

### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

The above-mentioned "challenges" make up my list of priorities (although not in order). Above all, however, the number one priority on all levels- community, state and national- should be ensuring our children's health, safety and education. Everyone, parents and non-parents, have a stake in the security of our children.

### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

In supporting the school, library, small businesses, health center, woodlands and other natural areas.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 12/04/2008 - 10:39am.

**Rockingham**

**Age (if entered):**

50

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

It means "Green Mountains" to the French, and that's good enough for me.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

- Individualism. - A love of tromping in the woods, though for vastly different reasons (rednecks for huntin', tree huggers for treehuggin'). - Bafflement with neighboring states.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

- The depopulated Northeast.... how do we make a small-town, non-hip model attractive to our kids and the kids of the rest of the country (the ones who aren't selling drugs, at least)?

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

- small-scale Ag. - large-scale alternative power generation. - alternative education approaches. - replacing strip development with cornfields.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

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Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 11/29/2008 - 6:14pm.

**Glover**

**Age (if entered):**

31

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

home.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

independence, ruggedness, simple courtesy that goes beyond political persuasion

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

rights for same sex couples, employment, ethnic diversity (lack of it), education, rural internet connectivity

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

independence, ruggedness, simple courtesy that goes beyond political persuasion

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Well, because I'm living abroad right now, my community is very far away. But the issues still very much apply. Bigotry and selfishness are a universal challenge.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 11/28/2008 - 2:47am.

**[Manchester Center](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

55

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Green mountains, fresh air, opportunity, community, helping others to help themselves.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Hard work, enviromentally friendly, concern for thier fellow man and passion that all are done right.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The state needs to find a fair, way to tax and pay for education, reaching into one towns pocket so other towns get a free ride is unfair. permitting process less of a chore! helping hand up and not a hand out. Affordable housing should be a hand up to home ownership not a hand out or hand down to a life long of renting.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

repeal act 60 and 68! use a borad based tax like maryland. affordable housing that allows people to buy a home not rent. small bsuiness incubator sites that allow small businesses to own not rent. clean wind energy and tax incentives for homeowners and businesses to install solar and wind power.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

My community has good zoning laws that help to provide a clean, stable environment for business, but the state permitting process makes starting any kind os business an extra challenge here and in all communities in VT My name is Andy Tarantino and I own [www.asafeplace.com](http://www.asafeplace.com)

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Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 11/22/2008 - 6:33pm.

**[Highgate Springs](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

51

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont to me, means family and rural scenic beauty. A slower pace to life and until recently a relatively safe crime free living.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I see a shift of values from my youth. Franklin county seems to be loosing its moral compass.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

We need to reform our social support system. Our elderly and disabled are falling thru the cracks. It appears that we are breeding more generations dependent on the state. Increased efforts on health care, including dental and eye care. Opportunity lies with our youth. Public schools are failing the potential. More \$ are spent are problem children.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Continue health care efforts, including dental and eye care. Preserve our natural resources, become more environmentally conscious. Improve our education system. More financial aid to deserving students. Reform the justice system to be fair and equitable, regardless where your case is heard. Bring a balance of equal justice for all similar crimes.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

My family and I try by our deeds and actions to be the change we wish to see in others. We have raised our son by 1950's values, it was like swimming upstream at times, when our son mingled with others of different values. We are not alone, and a child maybe the change we need. We cling to this hope.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 11/13/2008 - 2:07pm.

**Winooski**

**Age (if entered):**

35

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

I am very proud of Vermont's Natural Community. It is a big part of what makes "Vermont", Vermont to me. I would love to see the continued protection of our wetland, forest, stream, and lake ecosystems. This would allow for our many amazing native tree, bird, amphibian, plant, fish, reptile, mammal, etc, species to survive into the future.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

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Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 11/13/2008 - 2:05pm.

**Bennington**

**Age (if entered):**

56y

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

majestic,colorful,clean,unspoiled,natural.  
openminded,unassuming,logical,frugal,traditional.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

tradition love of the land faith love of country

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

economic opportunity/prosperity healthcare reform energy alternatives social reform

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Providing opportunities for young Vermonters so they do not move out of the state.  
Promote/support more and varied community based programs for the young and old.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I look at my state and it's communities as one. The state has done well, but there is always room for improvement.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 11/08/2008 - 3:41pm.

## **Brattleboro**

**Age (if entered):**

40

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is an appropriate scale for those of us who don't want to be in large or medium cities. Our towns are not overstuffed or uniform. They are charming and user friendly. VT is community oriented and democratic. We figure out challenges and issues by talking to neighbors.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

A love of the landscape, open spaces, green spaces and plenty of trees and relatively undisturbed habitats. Participatory democracy is important to us. We like to have feedback and the opportunity to talk to department heads and elected representatives at every level.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Retaining the character of VT. We need to make sure VT doesn't become another generic place w/ big box chain stores & few local economic engines. Small businesses & cottage industries are important. The creative economy & the arts. We need goods, service and resources ideally made nearby, not trucked in from far away. Keeping VT affordable is also important. Taxes & the cost of living are issues.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

We should look at where our energy comes from and be at the forefront of using decentralized, not polluting energy sources: wind, solar, hydro, biomass, geothermal. Nuclear energy generation is not safe or sustainable. We also need to improve high speed internet and wireless phone reception to remain competitive and able to do work from home.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Brattleboro has some of the elements in place, especially in being known for the arts, but the rest still needs to be fostered and strengthened.

**Dummerston**

**Age (if entered):**

37

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

rural working landscapes, agriculture and forestry, small communities, honest politics, engaged citizens, woodsmoke, colored leaves, farmhouse kitchens

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

love of the landscape and a sense of keeping some distance from the rest of mainstream America. I think people value the fact that life in Vermont is something that you can largely shape for yourself rather than having it composed of a thousand little conformities to the overwhelming world.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

We need to establish such a degree of independence that we can shape our own future in a sustainable way. This doesn't mean not having any relations with the nation or the world, only that we are not trapped by conditions beyond our control.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Protecting the landscape. Building a locally self-reliant state economy based on sustainable agriculture and sustainable energy production.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I am interested and active in working with my community on land-use issues, and I hope to become more active with local groups dealing with local food and energy issues.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 10/21/2008 - 11:53am.

**Bristol**

**Age (if entered):**

51

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Sustainability on many levels: our land, our economy, our relationships to each other

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

A love and respect for the land. A place where growth is seen in the context of human scale as opposed to a corporate vision. A respect for our increasing diversity and a "live and let live" philosophy.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

With the price of fuel rising, we may need to look inward more to sustain ourselves--living closer to where we work, and developing a true transportation infrastructure that gives priority to public transportation/ride sharing; we will need to buy more things locally--which will help keep our dollars circulating within our communities.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Transportation infrastructure--buses, trains Buying locally Single payer health care Continuation of smart growth for our towns/villages

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Supporting the local businesses in Addison County. Riding the bus when I can--helping to keep my town "green." We live in an agricultural community--so I buy a great deal of our food from the local farmers--so keeping the localvore movement alive

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Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 10/09/2008 - 5:42am.

**[Manchester Center](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

16

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

It means community, there aren't many other states out there were no matter where you go, you know someone.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I am one hundred percent serious while I am saying this , real maple syrup, also sort of maintaining vermont's identity, not changing too much, we are a bit ingrained in our ways.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Have more places in the southern half of the state for "young adults" I'm not talking teenagers here but like 20 year olds, I know my much older cousin hates to visit us in "the south" because he says there is nothing to do, but he is from Burlington

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Don't change too much, just enough to help Vermont succeed.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

see above, I also don't want my high school to change but this seems inevitable as there are more and more new students every year.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 10/02/2008 - 10:46am.

**South Burlington**

**Age (if entered):**

57

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

It's the place you move to the second time around, when you're ready to get it right.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Living without compromise, without apology, without having to make excuses. Sure, this comes at a price, but it's worth it.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Keeping Vermonters focused on what they've got, instead of what they think they're missing. I think this applies in particular to younger native Vermonters who don't yet realize how fortunate they are.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

To encourage economic growth that enhances the state's work climate without compromising our core values. To celebrate the aspects of Vermont life that we cherish, so we won't lose them.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

My community is a good example of one that is somewhat out of touch with the core values that brought me to Vermont in the first place. South Burlington could learn a few things from Burlington and Montpelier.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 09/30/2008 - 10:55pm.

### Fayston

**Age (if entered):**

52

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Instead of High Taxes: a place where people contribute more for the common good.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Quiet strength of character. Personal responsibility. Caring about community.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Dislodging the stodgy, accountant based thinking from our State government.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Think about what unique capabilities upon which opportunities for growth and innovation can take root. Belief in the inherent goodness of our culture and that it can serve as an example to others.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

There are more organizations in my community dedicated to making, not only VT, but the world a better place.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 09/29/2008 - 9:45am.

### East Wallingford

**Age (if entered):**

51

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

everything-it is where i truly came to a higher and full cognition of the natural, social, and political world around me and inspires me to fight against right wing, fascist elements that now seek to destroy that world

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

desire for peace and serenity-belief in the Bill Of Rights-self sustainability-neighborliness

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

that they realize for change and improvements to come locally we must first fix what is wrong nationally and globally

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

to reshape ourselves to fit an infinite Vermont rather than reshape Vermont to fit our infinite wants-agriculture, tourism, and cottage industry is what made Vermont strong and unique in the past and is what should be encouraged into the future

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

they are and hopefully will always be the majority opinion

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sun, 09/28/2008 - 10:30pm.

**Tunbridge**

**Age (if entered):**

67

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

High taxes

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

The need to work hard to pay high taxes.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Creating a State where our kids and grand kids can stay and earn a living wage, not from minimum wage but from competitive employers.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Elect a legislature who can lower health care costs, get out of the way of entrepreneurs, reform the permit process so small business stands a chance of succeeding

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

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Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 09/16/2008 - 5:28pm.

**Middlebury**

**Age (if entered):**

31

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

great place to raise a family. simpler way of life. beautiful environment. high taxes

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

preserving the environment; smart, efficient community growth;

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenge: Attracting companies to the state to increase employment opportunities for young people. ACT250 process is broken. High taxes, high cost of education. Keeping young people in the state. Opportunities in green technologies. VT is ahead of most places and can attract and support cutting edge ideas in the green field which can provide good jobs for young people.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Attracting and supporting new business' to maintain and grow the job market to provide young people and families the choice to stay and live in this great state without having to expect less.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Jobs are decreasing in Middlebury as taxes rise forcing families away, a failing downtown. no way to entice young people to stay in Town or Vermont and no way to attract non-vermonters. wish i could work where i lived.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 09/15/2008 - 2:21pm.

**Halifax**

**Age (if entered):**

35

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont means: "The Green Mountain" State... literally. And that is what it means to me. I love that even our license plates are green! When I think of my Vermont home, I think of the natural environment first. When I am asked what state I am from, I am always proud to say "Vermont". This is a free thinking state, and I am grateful to live here.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I think we value the environment and all it has to offer, we also value organic agriculture and the independent farmer, craftsmanship and artistry, and the US Constitution, among other things. These things were my first, most spontaneous thoughts.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

I see a need to protect what we have here: a national treasure. I have witnessed urban sprawl and social decline in other parts of our country, and how they impact the environment: both the broader natural environment and the specific habitat of humanity. Finding a way to keep life affordable and to help Vermonter's thrive economically is very important to the long term future of this state.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Education. Not just in schools, but education as a life long pursuit. Environment. Our natural beauty and organic farms are two of the biggest assets we have. Economics. We must do what we can to foster the growth of small business and livable wages for Vermont Citizens. We must find new and creative ways to consolidate services and reduce the burden of taxes here in this state.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I am concerned about ill-considered development, and the costs of home ownership/living in Vermont. I am extremely concerned about economic conditions deteriorating in Vermont, and how the costs of heating and transportation will impact lower income families living on the edge of poverty, (and poverty gives rise to social and spiritual decline)

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sun, 09/14/2008 - 10:22am.

**Montpelier**

**Age (if entered):**

39

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A reprieve from the repetition of culture found in many other states. An opportunity to be engaged in your local community and in State government - we are still small enough. A place where the landscape - for now - is still the dominant feature rather than human development and engineering

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

A passion for the environment and conservation - however this is slipping into the older generations, was it always so or is this just perception? We all firmly believe that we are different and that Vermont is still different - open while being respectful of difference and personal space.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

We no longer share the same land values. Marking land as personal property and denying others the right to enjoy passive use of the land is on the rise. Lack of forward planning in energy, development and finance, a focus on re-election has weakened our government, and forced scarce dollars to address immediate emergency issues and not invest in our land, conservation, farming and communities.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

To be an example of sustainable living, reducing the gap between rich and poor, pushing forward on renewable energy, alternative transportation, and ending partisan politics.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Living in Montpelier the rythm of the legislature has an impact, and raises awareness of how government is handling issues. Montpelier itself moves slowly, town commissions and committees are not charged with a future vision for Montpelier, as with the State and for easons that can be debated the focus is immediate tactical actions and not a long-term vision.

**Isle La Motte**

**Age (if entered):**

78

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

The Vermont way of life is creative and thinking outside of the box. I hope that it will continue and be encouraged rather than discouraged with negativity. There is a lot of hope for the future within the State. Vermopnters need to be asked to contribute, as they tend to hold back and not talk unless they have something to say. Norma Wales

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

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Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 09/05/2008 - 6:14pm.

**Dorset**

**Age (if entered):**

31

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A safe and undisturbed place. A great place to be born, grow up, and raise a family. Where we are forced to deal with the hardships and the benefits of 4 very distinct seasons.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I think most of us are looking for a quiet spot to call our own. A pace of life that is productive but not hectic.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenges: Declining enrollment in our grade schools. Cost of living too high, and lack of opportunity for younger generations. Lack of incentive and encouragement for small business. The emigration of young, productive, and ambitious adults. Becoming a retirement community for people that can afford to live here. Opp: Very many people still want to live here due to the quality of life.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Maintain the small town feel, but don't ignore the fact that we live in a desirable place where retirees and the wealthy want to live. Encourage businesses to stay, creating opportunity. Focus on creating or maintaining a very high standard of education. Look more closely at how our tax money is spent. Smaller government.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

As a whole the country moves toward a much older average age. No where is this more apparent than in VT, not to mention my community. What do we have to offer that will keep a high school or college graduate from moving to Denver or Phoenix? Our infrastructure is old, our business opportunities limited, our taxes crushing.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 09/04/2008 - 8:35am.

**[New Haven](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

30

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

VT was such a great place to grow up that I decided to make a go of it here raising my own family. Vt it the most beautiful place I have ever been. It has four distinct seasons, all of which I love. My dad always said..."live somewhere you would want to go on vacation. that way you don't always feel like you need to get away"

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Respect for the environment. A slower "soak it in" pace of life. A common appreciation for the journey, not the destination. An appreciation of the know your neighbor mentality.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Small business' are the heartbeat of VT. without them we would have no small towns. We need to make vt more small business friendly. People who grow up in vt love it here. They leave because of the lack of opportunity career wise.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

healthcare and small business costs (i.e. workers comp). Responsible growth. Growth is inevitable and good. Make sure that it is thought out though to preserve what makes vt unique (the setting, the farms, the small towns). HELP the small farmer. Be a leader on alternative energy sources for the whole state.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Energy, farm land, small business' all fall within New Haven.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 09/03/2008 - 4:51pm.

**[Middlebury](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

30

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A place where people live without much extravagance. People can live very well, but without the need for all of the metropolitan busy-ness. It's a place where you can live comfortably with a beautiful nature kingdom at your front door.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Most Vermonters enjoy nature and spending time outdoors. I also feel like Vermonters have a love for, and feel a responsibility to the environment. It seems that there are a lot of family generations who stay in Vermont, so a love and respect for family is a common value.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Balancing enough commerce to provide people with jobs, at the same time preserving our unique natural environment. I think it's especially tough for the 20/30-somethings just starting out to find a good paying job that will afford them to stay in Vermont and raise their families. It seems that real estate and the cost of living are very difficult to meet with the salaries offered here.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Maintaining the environment and finding ways to provide people with good paying jobs. Also to keep the cost of living, including taxes down.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Our taxes are \$8100 a year which is going to be VERY difficult for us. It means we may not be able to participate as much in recreational enjoyments, such as golf and skiing because of the costs. It's also a struggle to find good jobs in Middlebury, as my husband now has to commute to Burlington for a good paying job.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 09/03/2008 - 2:40pm.

**Burlington**

**Age (if entered):**

28

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

I am new to Vermont. Moved here 1 year ago. Initially I was struck by the "Buy Local" idea. I support this notion- but didn't understand it until now. Vermonters help Vermonters survive. I now work for the City of Burlington and am a full time temp employee making \$15 a hour with no health insurance. I wish the higher level of Vermont (political level) would help this Vermonter survive!

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Keep local industry surviving- sometimes at any cost.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

n/a

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

My demographic can not survive in Vermont- and without us there is no future for this state. I think the industry needs to recognize this and promote earlier retirement and make room for my generation. My friends are overeducated and underpaid and realize that they may not be able to make Vermont home. Vermont needs us.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Fortunately I am work for my community and try to bring benefit and teach the younger generation of Vermont. I work for Burlington City Arts- and have worked hard to combine what I do to all aspects of my life- its exhausting and I feel as if I have very little support.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 09/03/2008 - 2:03pm.

**[South Burlington](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

30

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a truly unique state that provides a home for people who put quality of life and quality of people before material wealth.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Love of their state and care for those in their community.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The biggest challenge is encouraging new and growing businesses who's values match those of our residence and can provide for jobs for the next generation of vermonters. We

are at a critical point, and the policies we set in the next few years will have a dramatic effect on the future of our state.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

First, maintain the quality of life, landscape, and communities. Second focus on bringing in new businesses and growing existing ones who will bring the next generations of "quality jobs". This should focus on those management, design, creative, engineering, technical, and trade opportunities which are less likely to be outsourced in within this global economy.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I see Burlington and South Burlington as a key hub for these "next generation" jobs as it has a close proximity to many existing in-state businesses as well as the airport.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 09/03/2008 - 11:56am.

**[South Burlington](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

25

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont to me is the slow, remote state that it is. It is disconnected to the states nearby when it could be closer to them. There is little stimulation for young people here.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I don't think they share much common values.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

I think gay parenting is a challenge that we will see in the future.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Higher education should be number 1. It is unaffordable for the high quality education that we deserve. We could be giving to ourselves but instead we are giving rich, spoiled

kids from out of state a cheap education here. They bring more drugs, drinking and poor values to our state in the future.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 08/28/2008 - 11:59am.

[winooski](#)

**Age (if entered):**

28

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont, means home, clean air, friendly people, no billboards, local products, a vibrant and participatory community. It also means progressive views, and a strong sense of equality, and social justice for all.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

We value Truth Justice and the american way!

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

There are many challenges, including supporting local farmers, building employment opportunities, and keeping the cost of living affordable, changing to renewable, sustainable energy sources, managing the ever growing correctional facilities problem, and building better socail, and educational services for our state, Easy right!

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

We should focus on what has made vermont great, maintaining sustainable environmental, business, and political practices to keep our state green, clean and progressive. oh yeah an get more economic oppotunities to entice people to live here and contribute to the above mentioned ideas.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

My community is evolving, with a revitalized down town, and additions of a community college and youth center, participation in the community is where all of these ideals

begin. So I think they are all related to participation in structuring our communities to meet these goals

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 08/23/2008 - 2:33pm.

**East Hardwick**

**Age (if entered):**

47

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Home. The most beautiful place in the world.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Love of the land. Input in local community issues and activities. High quality education. Doing things their own way.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Keeping towns small. Keeping the state rural. Costs of education, roads, energy...

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Manage the land. Keep corporate America out. Less sprawl. Focus on education and technology to connect rather than malls.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

People need transportation, jobs, and affordable homes.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 08/22/2008 - 10:57am.

**East Hardwick**

**Age (if entered):**

47

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Home. The most beautiful place in the world.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Love of the land. Input in local community issues and activities. High quality education. Doing things their own way.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Keeping towns small. Keeping the state rural. Costs of education, roads, energy...

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Manage the land. Keep corporate America out. Less sprawl. Focus on education and technology to connect rather than malls.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

People need transportation, jobs, and affordable homes.

**Brattleboro**

**Age (if entered):**

58

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Pristine environment; community life; e-state; strong libraries

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

community life; healthy lifestyles; caring for one another; support literary

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Keeping the state economically viable for young people and families

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

The state is small enough to be an incubator for testing ideas: make health care affordable and universal; keep the environment clean; strong art and cultural centers

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

We are facing difficult economic times which will be difficult to sustain our public services

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 08/21/2008 - 5:15pm.

**GUILFORD**

**Age (if entered):**

72

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Home. A rural state of exceptional beauty but limited economic opportunity.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence. Self-reliance. Friendliness and compassion. Moral integrity. Sense of justice.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Family dissolution is pandemic. (Most legal and social problems originate here.) We need to initiate educational focus on building strong families. Secure, intact families and homes can be emphasized K-12, and special programs for marriage preparation needed for couples considering matrimony: one man and one woman unions ONLY, for the sake of the next and succeeding generations.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Family formation and permanence.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

We have a plethora of single-parent families, welfare cases, and mixed-up kids. There is little hope for better chances among youth, who have identity problems from mild to clinical disorders.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 08/20/2008 - 5:23pm.

### Rutland

**Age (if entered):**

62

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

too much government interference in business and private lives, a legislature enmired in a perverse interest in private sexuality

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

too little -- there are two kinds of Vermonters: those who want to work and do things, and those who want to turn over the responsibility of thinking for themselves over to others

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

cutting government programs, consolidating school districts and other services like road repair to cut waste, better information and resource sharing

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

cut taxes and leave more income in the hands of individuals, restrict act 250 commissions so they do not needlessly hinder development

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

how do we better use our resources -- do we have too many salaried and entitled people and not enough whose income is determined by their own efforts?

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 08/20/2008 - 4:50am.

### Wallingford

**Age (if entered):**

53

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a gem. When you cross the borders into the state you know you are not in anywhere USA. However, Vermont is at a crossroad. Due to increased growth and development, Vermont's traditional values and land use patterns are changing. We are at risk of losing our unique identity and rural character.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

An appreciation for the beauty of the state, the natural resources and working landscape, the smallness, and the community.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The Disneyfication of Vermont--a playground for the rich at the expense of local working Vermonters. Loss of working landscapes, habitat, open space to development. Increasing taxes due to increased property values as a result of out of state pressure on real estate. Lack of health insurance for many Vermonters.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Maintaining Vermont's quality of life, rural character, and working landscapes. Supporting local economies and small businesses. Providing health care for all Vermonters. Maintaining small communities and minimizing partisan politics.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 08/19/2008 - 2:31pm.

[Waterbury Center](#)

**Age (if entered):**

34

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a deep breath. To me, it's one of the last sane places in the union. By that I mean that Vermont exists on a human scale, with human values: you not only know your neighbors, you care about them. You know the owners of the businesses you frequent. You know where your food comes from. And when you disagree, you do so respectfully, and then go out for a beer.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence. A live-and-let-live attitude. An emphasis on community, not conformity. Pride, in our towns, our way of life. A respect for our history, our agricultural legacy. A distrust of centralized/regional land-use planning that, I think, works counter to the other values I just stated (in that it opens the door to the exploitative actions of big-money corporations and developers).

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Biggest challenge: suburbanization and its ills: loss of independence, decline in health/rise in health-care costs, corruption of traditional landscape/settlement patterns, rising taxes, loss of uniqueness. Vermonters say they don't want this, but too many let it happen. Therein lies an opportunity. The buy-local movement, the localvores, high gas prices: people are starting to wake up.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

We need to maintain our town centers and surrounding agricultural fields and forestland. We need to make sure that OUR vision for our state, not some distant corporation's, is what shapes and guides development. We cannot go wrong by investing in our communities, in ourselves.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Waterbury, for all its recent successes, is at a crossroads. Stowe, Burlington, and Montpelier all exert pressure on us, leading to sprawl and rising home prices. We're creating jobs, but we're not providing the village-style, walkable, affordable housing we need to ensure that people can live AND work here. Our biggest advantage is the many dedicated people who love and work hard for this town.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 08/19/2008 - 11:32am.

[Grand Isle](#)

Age (if entered):

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Sanctity. Having traveled extensively throughout the US, I am amazed by how other communities have been redefined with or without their consent. Vermont still serves as a full sensory refuge for me, and I feel inspired to protect it.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I don't know if there is such a thing as a 'Vermonters' in such a homogeneous world. My favorite definitively Vermont value is woodchuck-ism - the desire to learn and perform any skill that will save you a buck, without a care for what the neighbors think.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

I think there's a lot of temptation to study other states' gameplans without recognizing that our needs and strengths are more unique. I'd like to see us booming with cooperative businesses that sustain our communities over generations, and to stop complaining about the lack of big businesses that make their employees miserable - only to lay them off anyway.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Winter Gardens!!! Safe, renewable, and affordable energy. A more localized economy. Better food in schools. A 'just say no to widget factories' campaign. Better use of public spaces - public art, natural habitats, and other brain cell generators.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Grand Isle County is rural and without a major supermarket. We are a 'gas station grocery' community, and therefore the perfect place to strengthen a year round relationship between farmers and residents - this means that farmers should grow winter greens! Enough 'tourist produce'... think outside the tomato! Or maybe homeowners should be trained to garden in winter?

- 

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 08/18/2008 - 5:09pm.

[Burlington](#)

Age (if entered):

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A forward thinking community of people with roots in the past... a gorgeous inspirational landscape. Put the two together and you have a great place to be an artist and to riase a family.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

The environment Individuals rights

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Continuing to foster our small town communities, maintaining the landscape and being stewards for eachother and the earth.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Continuing to foster our small town communities, maintaining the landscape and being stewards for eachother and the earth.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Fits perfectly. Thats why I live here.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 08/18/2008 - 1:42pm.

**Guilford**

**Age (if entered):**

57

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

character,green,mountains,beautiful roads and vistas,small,authentic,it has unique advantageous,friendly,assessable... hard to be politically correct all the time because it creates and promotes the individual...always two sides to every issue...hence Act 250

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

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Submitted by Anonymous on Sun, 08/17/2008 - 1:17pm.

[Worcester](#)

**Age (if entered):**

53

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

inexpensive lifesyle whereby art can flourish, body can see beauty, breath good air, drink pure water, have plenty of firewoods, garden, bird and moose watching, silence

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

most of the above, plus respect for different lifesyles

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

challenges are to cut down consumption of fuel and building fuel efficient homes  
opportunities are sharing rides, working with others, supporting local artists, farmers etc.  
Education about health and preventative care

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

helping artists and young people

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

My husband and I opened an art gallery in Worcester which exposes a rural community to art. Our home was built of stone and local materials. As Vermont expands smaller towns will grow and provide more services so the need to drive far is decreased

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 08/15/2008 - 2:35pm.

## [burlington](#)

**Age (if entered):**

26

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

a place to call home. community. taking care of each other and the environment. making a good meal. maple syrup. cold rivers. apples. green mountains and blue sky. the comfort of clouds, and people who know how to seize a sunny day.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

hard work, endurance, simplicity, respect, community, creativity.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

rural isolation due to cost/availability of fuel --> an opportunity to create a rural public transportation system. lack of availability of non-local food --> learning how to grow sustainable bioregional foods. having to stay put --> being able to call somewhere home.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

teaching people how to grow their own food and build sustainable energy-efficient structures. cultivate systems of non-digital communication. provide safe spaces for people to come and release anxiety and fear through physical, creative, or other meditative therapies.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

it means i have to come home. because we all need to show up and contribute.

## [castleton](#)

**Age (if entered):**

33

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

a unique place where there is a spirit of open-ended possibility and a tradition of resourcefulness

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

tolerance, respect, ingenuity

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

falling victim to corporatization and the mythology of "the market".....

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

preservation of unique character and landscape

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

There is an influx of young people I KNOW "from away" settling here specifically to pursue and help promote Vermont's VERMONT-NESS. These people are interested in preserving traditions and the landscape, while moving forward with progressive ideas about local sustainability.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 08/13/2008 - 10:48am.

**Winhall**

**Age (if entered):**

51

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Freedom and natural beauty

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence from government

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Increased taxes and higher energy costs

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Lower taxes and better fuel efficiency

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I am involved in local activities

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 08/12/2008 - 10:30pm.

**Bellows Falls**

**Age (if entered):**

47

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is my home and a place that allows me to raise my family in a safe and healthy environment

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence and self reliance.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

affordable housing, jobs and education

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

alternative energy and job growth

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

they all apply

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 08/12/2008 - 2:56pm.

## Brattleboro

**Age (if entered):**

57

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

The story is told of the traveler who stopped at the first service station in Vermont on a rainy night to replace a defective windshield wiper. The attendant told him he did not have that type of wiper blade; the station ahead would. The driver asked for a fill up anyway. The attendant said, no, that wouldn't be right to have his neighbor just replace the wiper.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Vermonters remember when community meant neighbors helping neighbors.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

As transplants increase and native Vermonters decrease, the challenge is to maintain the character of the state. There is the story of easterners who moved to desert lands of the southwest to escape the allergens associated with foliage. The first thing they did was irrigate the land and introduce the types of foliage they were accustomed to.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Economic development ought not to come at the expense of community.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Building community is hard work.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 08/11/2008 - 11:43am.

## Brattleboro

**Age (if entered):**

57

### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

Home. I've lived here all my adult life - forty years - and came here to stay with my brother before that. A place saner than a lot of the this country. It's a relatively quieter and safer place than many. We haven't locked our doors in the forty years since I've been here. It means woods, not malls. Though there are exceptions, most people here are pretty accepting of each other.

### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

Most people living here like the beauty of the state and the relative quiet, lack of traffic jams, etc. But there are wealthy second-homers who are oblivious to the struggles of those of us who work for a living, whether they are "natives" or "non-natives".

### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Manufacturing jobs going to China/high cost of fuel. Opportunity in building trades to create renewable energy/retrofit homes. State could provide energy related jobs, insulate homes. Should be wood pellet manufacturers in this state. Share more wine neighbors-rides, tools, gardening, visits. Ways that saving on fuel can bring us back to basic values.

### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Jobs from green energy. Hydropower in small streams. Transportation solutions through trains, buses, carpooling, registered hitchhiking, trolleys. Raise taxes for people with second homes. Use less electricity-figure out how our parents did it & get rid of those gadgets. This will create jobs that can't be shipped to China and are more satisfying in the long run.

### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

2 communities: our neighborhood, our town. Important to prioritize to see how we can use less energy and create jobs around energy usage. Decision makers could hold this as a priority. We need to creatively deal with these changes by working together. Seeing how we can consume less and enjoy the simpler things of life.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 08/08/2008 - 3:19pm.

[Montpelier](#)

Age (if entered):

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont means green mountains, cool summers, long winters, small communities, friendly people, good food, great place to raise kids, environmental awareness, small farms. It also means expensive heating bills, high taxes, cars that rust too quick, low wages, and disgruntled natives. But I love this place, and I can't imagine calling any other place home.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Depends on if you talk to native Vermonters, because I don't think Vermonters share a lot of values with the huge portion of the population that are transplants. That said, I think we all share a love of this land, these rolling mountains and valleys of Vermont, and we all want to see it stay relatively the same.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenges: High cost of living. Why does Cabot cheese, a local Vermont company, cost more at Shaw's than the New York Shaw's brand of cheese? Same with local meats versus Perdue. I can't even afford to support local business on my salary, and yet we have this huge local business moving going on. How can a person on a typical Vermont salary, which is low, afford to support this movement?

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Level the wage gaps, more education, less sprawl.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Montpelier is peculiar in that we have the highest taxes, but most people I know who work decent jobs are struggling with the weight of bills and the high cost of living and childcare. Sure, the schools are great, our community is safe, our downtown is thriving, but I know it is hard to keep it up.

- 

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 08/07/2008 - 11:52am.

[Vernon](#)

Age (if entered):

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

+ An independent, rural state with a great sense of community and helping your neighbors.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

There's not enough Vermonters left to state what common values are shared. Values such as trust have been replaced with locked doors and security systems. Helping one another has been replaced with state and community institutions.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The biggest challenge of all is creating an environment where our children can remain in Vermont and have decent jobs with wages.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Attract some of the larger business that can pay well keep our children in Vermont, and take some of the pressure of the education tax off homeowners.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 08/04/2008 - 5:14pm.

**[Hartland](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

28

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

There should be a park and ride in White River Junction. You have interstate 89 and 91 both entering into the community. I think many Vermonters would use it and help our green state.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 08/01/2008 - 4:53pm.

**Shelburne**

**Age (if entered):**

49

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is home. Vermont always means more to me inside when I return home then when I left. Vermont is worth the effort.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Other then our heightened awareness of common sense, I think the common values shared amongst Vermonters are similar as those shared by Mankind. Value judgements about people from one state vs. another are in a way a prejudicial statement about out-of-staters. That being said...I'd like to think we here in Vermont are a little ahead of the curve on a lot of different issues.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Energy, the economy and global warming. Reducing our carbon footprint because it will save money. We need to cease shipment of our retirement and our kid's inheritances to Middle-Eastern countries for their oil.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Facing the writing on the wall with a realistic view of knowing our problems are going to happen. Searching for and coming to decisions about some value changes as far as not in my back yard goes. Planning for responding now to these coming changes is paramount.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

We moved to our community for it's diversity and education. Many of my thoughts and concerns about these issues are shared in our community being actively discussed. Business here seem to exude the inventor spirit and timely in their embrace of appropriate technology.

- 

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 07/31/2008 - 8:19pm.

### Jericho

#### **Age (if entered):**

49

#### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

Rural, agricultral, small town, safety/low crime, should be leaders in the "green" movement

#### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

appreciation for the land, ability to do for themselves and innovation

#### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenges -- sprawl, too much traffic/pollution; high prices for staples -- food, heating fuel, etc... and with the grain being needed for fuel, I can't understand why VT is leading the country in production Opportunities - come together to solve problems

#### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

clean environment through alternative heating and fuel resources -- WIND power a must!, safe communities and job opportunities for all (a livable wage) and state of art educational system for ALL -- including children and youth with special needs

#### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Not sure I understand the question ... what are we in jericho doing about the above? we are writing grants for sidewalks so more walking can occur (healthier and less fuel dependent), school boards work on above issues for school community .. more can be done

## Ferrisburgh

### **Age (if entered):**

65

### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a beautiful, accepting and safe place to be who I really am. It is a place to connect with other people who are caring of the environment, community and family, people who share my concerns and values. Vermont is my home.

### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

Vermonters share a sense of place and love of this land. A desire to maintain close ties with family, and a willingness to accept newcomers who respect the traditions and ways of this place. A strong work ethic, honesty and integrity. We mean what we say and we stand by our word.

### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenges: Being able to offer a future to our young people here in Vermont without giving our state over to the growth and sprawl. Opportunities: being an environmental leader once again in developing alternative energy, growing more of our own great local food, being a beacon to the country as a way of life that is not about having more things, but about sharing what we have.

### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Be inclusive of all groups. Make sure everyone has a voice, especially those who have been here for generations, but include newcomers, too. Use this as an opportunity to educate each other and to learn from each other and to work together to meet common goals.

### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Food, shelter, energy, healthcare. All very basic needs. How can we ensure that all of these needs are met at the local community level. My community is a place where people live, but don't work. There are few jobs here. With networked telecommunications, more people could live here and work from home.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 07/23/2008 - 8:30pm.

**South Royalton**

**Age (if entered):**

66

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

high taxes, to many entitlements, can't afford to stay here

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

none

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

who they are going to fleece next once all the natives are priced out

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

less taxes, less government, fewer entitlements, no gay marriages

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

People are leaving to expensive and liberal

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 07/23/2008 - 3:51pm.

**West Bridgewater**

**Age (if entered):**

60

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

It's a SANE place to live. It's still rural with a self-sufficient ethic that has allowed us to live reasonably sustainable lives.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

We value self-sufficiency, hard work, caring about our neighbors, towns and state.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Keeping food on the table is hard. The economy needs more help.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Keep taxes and regulations to a minimum. Cut state spending and state jobs. Make Act 250 more friendly and streamlined. Fix our roads and bridges.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Don't know.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 07/18/2008 - 9:07am.

**[Montpelier](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

58

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Being a fifth generation Vermonter, Vermont means quality to me, a sense of neighborliness, genuiness and independence. These hills cradle the lives of people who strive to be in contact with nature as well as others and their work. I believe it is this relationship with nature that sets Vermont apart from other states.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Vermonters share values of honesty and independence. Vermonters used to do business on a handshake knowing that honesty was one of the highest values one could possess and was apparent throughout the state. We are a hard working, genuine, independent people.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

School taxes/property taxes is a challenge. I believe that the educational system needs a clean sweep with an eye toward lowering costs. I think this is an opportunity to look at how we can "reinvent" education delivery to our children and come up with cutting edge ways rather than the traditional regional school design.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Coupled together are education reform and tax relief. More public transportation to the rural areas. Trains are an affordable means of transportation. Trains once connected our towns. Alternative energy could be the focus for our jobs growth.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

There are challenges which my community faces, namely the tax situation. How that is going to play out is anybody's guess. Overall, though, I think that Montpelier has a vision for the future and is working toward that vision.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 07/14/2008 - 8:40am.

**Montpelier**

**Age (if entered):**

48

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Livable wages and a cost of living that is affordable for those other than people who have moved here with money. The average person cannot afford to maintain a life here. Until we can support ourselves and our families, we really don't care about solar panels at bus stops. We need to be able to make enough money to survive and not have to give it all away to taxes!

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 07/11/2008 - 3:10pm.

## Randolph

**Age (if entered):**

66

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

I enjoy my anonymity and the privacy that Vermont provides me. I love being able to step out of my home and into the forest and hear nothing but the babbling brook at the bottom of the hill, the critters, and the rustling of the trees.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I think there is a dicotomy between woodchucks and flatlanders and as such there are really no common values per se. I think Vermonts do tend to fool themselves and think that they have a corner on common sense and world matters, but I find that they are very provincial in their outlook and not well informed on matters that do not pertain to their country and the world in general.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

You have to get control over the property tax situation because those that you are hurting the most seem to be those native born Vermonters you cherish most.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

You need to get over the fact that Vermont's character is not going to be able to remain the same. You have to have reasonable adjustments to your expectations that in order for this state ot survive you are going to have to attract & retain businesses, retain skilled labour, lower taxes, and build your infrastructure to support a vibrant economy.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

They really do not. Randolph is going to implode with the level of taxes for schools, new projects for the town, decaying infrastructure, and the apparent disinterest of the local citizens to take a stand to bring about change. Just look at the voting turn out on any issues. Folks just don't seem to care.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 07/11/2008 - 7:57am.

## Berlin

**Age (if entered):**

40

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

1. not too-far-gone already in terms of sprawl -- we can still be smart about it 2. excellent access to, and infrastructure for, outdoor recreation 3. very good attitude towards community 4. excellent attitude towards preservation of small towns 4. excellent natural beauty

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

1. realize importance of natural beauty 2. realize importance of small towns (and community spirit that goes with them) 3. generally development is NOT the only answer

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

1. provide better health care. 2. provide better incentives for Vermont youth to STAY in Vermont 3. provide more incentives for renewable energy. 4. provide more public transit. Put a commuter train along the midway of I-89. State gov't should incentivize it -- for builders and for commuters.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

1. Reduce carbon emissions. Incentivize energy conservation and renewable energy. Wind power and solar energy. 2. affordable universal health care. 3. more public transit. 4. clustered-pattern development for new subdivisions.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

1. better public transport inter-city. 2. bike and pedestrian ways along major roads. E.g. Paine turnpike. (similar to Plattsburgh main road). battery-powered bicycle rickshaws for up/down hill; hire students to drive them. could be XC ski in winter also.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 07/10/2008 - 9:52am.

**Milton**

**Age (if entered):**

28

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont means a place where my values are the same as those people around me ... ecological stewardship, community spirit, respect for basic rights and freedoms. And a slower way of life with the conveniences of urban areas nearby.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Ecological stewardship -- to some that means abstaining from development; to others, development done responsibly. Community Spirit -- valuing your neighbors and your community. Respect for basic rights and freedoms -- everyone feels passionately about this subject, but yet there are wide interpretations about what this means.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Maintaining a rural feel while keeping up with the rest of the nation technologically. Sourcing renewable energy that everyone can agree on. Affordable post-secondary education.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Energy and education. We need to find a clean, affordable way to power our homes, business, and transportation. Additionally, education funding is too complicated for PreK-12 students, and too expensive for college students.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Milton is notoriously tight on its school budgets, we're going for our third vote this month. Sometimes it's more a battle of egos than real dollars. But when push comes to shove, we pull together as a town. We support our local farmers, and have a small (but growing) farmer's market. And the town does support free rec paths, parks and natural areas.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 07/09/2008 - 8:52pm.

**[Middlesex](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

61

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A beautiful place to live mostly unspoiled by suburban sprawl, big box stores and malls. A citizenry more committed to community and a sense that we're in this together, while respecting individuality, than the rest of the U.S.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

A citizenry committed to community and a sense that we're in this together, while respecting individuality. Work ethic.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The rise of a U.S. culture that "you're on your own," that there's no such thing as community, just individuals and their families. Rising inequality. The impact of neo-liberal economics and neo-liberal globalization undermining local self-sufficiency and a sustainable Vermont economy.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Rebuilding social infrastructure: making local democracy more powerful, e.g. town meetings making quality health care a human right livable wages and viable local businesses affordable public higher education and job training

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

making local democracy more powerful, e.g. town meetings local energy self-sufficiency

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 07/09/2008 - 4:39pm.

[montpelier](#)

**Age (if entered):**

58

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a special place. It means freedom, tolerance, consideration for neighbors, care for children and stewardship of the land and natural resources.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

respect for diverse opinions and ways of life, contributing to society, open dialogue.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

take forefront in progressive environmental programs, clean energy and organic farming. increase clean industries such as health-care, education, human services.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

healthy lifestyles/healthy environment

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Montpelier is in process of evaluating how best to preserve the special qualities of the city while expanding economic and housing opportunities.

**Age (if entered):**

60

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Though it's rapidly changing, it's rural dairy country like where I grew up (which is gone), small towns, neighboring farms, knowing our neighbors and most townspeople, good local racetracks. Town meetings are essential.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenges: keeping rapid changes in check:development, esp. on our mountains; low service wages (tourism); lack of public transit,increasing heat. Opportunities: current use; income sensitivity for taxes; tech.ed. for good trades jobs,always needed & well paid.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Individual responsibility for climate-change needs; massive public education re invasives which are devastating our natural habitats; buy USA/VT for jobs; shop locally, keep profits in our towns, not in huge corporations.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I've always lived in mountains, farmlands, mostly changed now. People stay here because they love mtns/views, then build houses high in mtns., clear trees for views, and we have to look at them. Strict, far from ridgeline/building limits essential.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 07/09/2008 - 9:52am.

### Burlington

**Age (if entered):**

50

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Independent, industrious, frugal, agricultural, environmentally aware, proactive and cautious.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Community, self reliance and determination.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Energy, diversity, job growth and opportunities. Safe, local, reliable food water source.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Increase opportunities for small business. Energy efficiencies and independence. Health care for all Vermonters - focus on wellness - preventative care incentives.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

The old north end of Burlington - we need job opportunities, job training and education to obtain jobs that pay a livable wage. We need education about life style choices that affect our health. Energy efficiency to reduce living expenses.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 07/08/2008 - 11:00am.

### Essex

**Age (if entered):**

53

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A chance to live a good life, among other independent-minded people who are willing to cooperate when the going gets tough. Vermont represents the opportunity for responsible stewardship of natural resources, creative problem solving, and progress toward a future that benefits current residents and preserves a world worth handing to our children.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Concern for an appreciation of Vermont's natural resources; frugality and independent-mindedness; the ability to pull together; willingness to bicker with your neighbors and then sit down together afterwards to a bowl of hot chili (town meeting; social capital).

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Energy prices will continue to rise as demand outstrips supply, pressuring the economy, impacting jobs, resulting in continued price rises in food and other necessities. Opportunity lies within the crisis itself: relocalize, revitalize our communities, and develop resilience by doing so.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Invest in locally generated and distributed energy and energy efficiency/conservation. Decentralize jobs; revitalize communities. Fully fund public transportation. Increase sustainable agriculture. Implement universal health care.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Essex: fully preserve and utilize agricultural land for agricultural purposes. Develop transit-oriented design, taking advantage of link to CCTA, rail, carpool options (there is no park and ride in Essex to date), and biking for commuters. Develop local job market. MUCH more could and should be done to encourage sustainability.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 06/30/2008 - 4:24pm.

[Hardwick](#)

**Age (if entered):**

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont means clean air, friendly neighbors, safety, environmental awareness. Vermont is a place that visitors escape to, and residents are happy to come home to. It means care - for each other, for the land, for our civil liberties, human rights and social justice. That is the ideal, though we have some work to do.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Most folks value family, and work hard to provide for those families; taking care of the environment, of conserving and recycling. Most Vermonters support their community by supporting neighbors, rather than sitting on boards and councils. I hope this project finds a way to reach those neighborhood heroes, because they are the heart and soul of this state.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenges: Affordable housing for working families. Family violence Employment Transportation Health Care/Insurance Transitioning youth to adulthood successfully Economic disparity/inequality; social classes Opportunities: We need to bring all people to the table; this project is a great start, but it will be important to note whose voices are missing as well as whose are heard.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

People need to feel safe, warm, cared for. They need to feel self-worth. If we empower families, recognize individuals' value, and work together to find genuine ways for each to contribute to solutions, our systems will be stronger, and our communities will thrive.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I have wonderful neighbors in Hardwick, but I know that there is pain there, as well. Finding ways to bring people together in a non-threatening and purposeful way will help. I wonder if this can be done almost by neighborhood. As far as priorities: for the short term, we have got to find a way to pool resources to make sure people are fed and warm this winter.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 06/28/2008 - 8:22am.

[Lowell](#)

**Age (if entered):**

41

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont means home to me. I have only lived away from here for 7 years of my life and never intend to leave again. When I was very young growing up on a dairy farm in Weybridge, Vermont meant community, family & cooperation to me. There was safety & security in knowing your neighbors and sharing a common caring for the community & state we lived long side each other in.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I am not sure that Vermonters these days share many common values anymore. However, I think if Vermont is going to weather the current challenges it faces, Vermonters must come to share the common values that are defined in our state constitution and accept a lot more personal responsibility and tolerance& respect for the inherent rights of others.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Much of Vermont's challenges stem from our state's dependence upon federal funds & acceptance of federal mandates, even when neither is in the best interest of Vermont and it's people. We must maximize the many opportunities we can create to become a more self sufficient state, provide more jobs and opportunities for Vermonters.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

To provide the means for Vermont to become self sufficient in as many areas as possible. Vermonters can do it, if we all come together...not just a few elite Vermonters, as has been, but all Vermonters, as it should be.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I see many communities suffer from lack of citizen involvement. Many small, rural communities such as Lowell are plague by generations of the same families holding the power within the town. Many wish to get "new blood" in, but because there are several generations related to these individuals, it is nearly impossible to do so.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 06/27/2008 - 3:22pm.

[East Montpelier](#)

**Age (if entered):**

73

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Progressive thinking people. Rural living. Smallness.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

An energy challenged future. An opportunity to relocalize.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Working toward a more energy efficient, sustainable life style.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Our challenges will be more successfully addressed in our local communities.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 06/27/2008 - 1:42pm.

[Middlebury](#)

**Age (if entered):**

44

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a special state - small, rural, with some of the best natural beauty in the country. People look out for one another and the majority care about their community. It is a place where you can really become involved at any level, whether it be politics or a local organization.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Respect for the natural environment and each other. Concern about the well-being of each other. Vermonters overall are generous with their time and money.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Biggest challenge is how to apportion taxes so that we can provide basic education and services for all Vermonters. There's a big income gap and the majority of Vermonters are paying as much as they can afford, yet there are unmet needs. Wealthier Vermonters need to contribute more so we can all benefit from living in this beautiful state.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

We're facing an energy crisis in this country and VT is particularly hard hit because of the higher heating costs and greater distances traveled for work. We need to increase subsidies for home insulation and energy efficiency for those who can't afford it in order to reduce annual costs and demand. We need more renewable energy. We need better public transportation so people can use less gas.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Middlebury already has advantages but there are still many here needing help. We're all in this together - we should think on a state level rather than community by community. The wealthier communities need to share with the less fortunate communities in the state.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 06/24/2008 - 7:37pm.

**[Burlington](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

34`

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont means tolerance and respect for all living things. Vermont means independence and leadership. Vermont means a high quality of life for all.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Priorities --A high quality of life for all by protecting the environment and open space; by making sure there is affordable housing in city and village centers; fast and reliable public transportation such as high speed train throughout our region; universal healthcare; energy efficiency and renewable clean energy options.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

We need high speed, reliable public transit, we need much more affordable housing in the city center and close to the center of the city that is in diverse socioeconomic neighborhoods. We need to make sure that parks and open space throughout our county and the rest of Vermont are preserved.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 06/19/2008 - 3:07pm.

**Burlington**

**Age (if entered):**

57

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Creative; tolerant; community-oriented; small; forests; familiar; settled; beautiful; hills; cold; neighborly; meetings; slowly changing; snow; water; historic.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

belief that our natural and built environment is closely linked; belief that we can still work together to keep our part of the world sane.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

challenges: how to integrate change into the existing framework of Vermont; how to stay Vermont while being part of a national and global economy; how to deal with changing demographics and new immigrants from around the world; how to keep our politics civil.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

1. provide for growth and development that doesn't change Vermont's essential character.
2. provide for Vermonters' needs in health care and housing.
3. deal with global warming by reducing our dependence on oil -- especially important to change our transportation policies away our over dependence on cars; and our land use policies to enable this.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

For Burlington, need to allow for more housing and population, while maintaining the basic character of the city and its natural areas and open space. Also need to foster active citizen partnership and "civic engagement."

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 06/19/2008 - 3:02pm.

**Colchester**

**Age (if entered):**

32

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Knowing my neighbors, room to stretch, green politics, living in paradise, hiking up mountains, using my brain

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Respect for individual rights, freedom of religion, care for the environment and respect for nature

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

pollution, economic collapse, loss of downtowns, education education education

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Education, education, education. More than anything else, giving opportunities to our young is the best way to ensure a bright future.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

School budgets and property tax arguments are really short sighted. I am embarrassed when my community can't pass a school budget. I am embarrassed that we treat teachers like second-class professionals. Also: I would like to see alternative energy options, including wind power, all over Vermont. We should be leading the way for this country.

## Colchester

**Age (if entered):**

52

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

I think we have a conflict in a couple of key values. One is our independence, the other our desire to "do the right thing." For example, we're all for renewable energy, but we want the independence to do what we wish with "our" land, regardless of what's in the interests of the common good.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

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Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 06/19/2008 - 12:25pm.

## Essex

**Age (if entered):**

58

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A place with a rich and proud history, plenty of forest and water for recreation, and open-minded, generally progressive people. It is also a place under attack by developers out to make a quick buck.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Most Vermonters care about the environment and maintenance of our dairy and sugaring heritage. There are fewer blindly patriotic people here than elsewhere in the country, but enough to make war a divisive issue, and memorials to the fallen the most common form of public art (rather depressing given all the inventive and creative Vermonters of the past 2.5 centuries).

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Global warming and declining fossil fuels will pound Vermonters during the next few decades- we need to adapt. Especially important will be increased public transportation, greater use of rail, greater centralization of villages (less suburban sprawl), increased local agriculture and small businesses. The benefits will be closer, more friendly communities and less stressful lives.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Vastly expanding public transportation and bike paths; discouraging further suburbanization; creating urban parks and gathering areas to relieve the need to drive into the countryside; finding alternative energy sources; reserving land for market agriculture or family garden plots.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Essex Town may be the worst example of a Vermont town on the wrong track. While the Town plan is progressive, it is ignored by Town governance, which is obsessed with promoting development and economic growth at any cost. Farm and forest land is being turned into suburbs and almost no one has a sense of Town history. Residents work and recreate elsewhere.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 06/19/2008 - 11:21am.

**Burlington**

**Age (if entered):**

25

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

It means the place where my family is, the place I hope to live for the rest of my life. It is the physical landscape and it is the communities.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence (this may not serve us well in the long run!) Commitment to Education  
Community wellbeing (including an emphasis on Service to the Community)  
Appreciation of the Natural Environment

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The way our land use patterns have evolved is not appropriate for a world where transportation is expensive. The most economically/socially disadvantaged people in the state will be negatively effected by the increasing cost of fuel in the coming years, and I am worried that we do not have plans for how to help them.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Increasing employment opportunities in places like the NE Kingdom in the green technology sector, protecting access to farmland for a new generation of producers.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I see members of my community struggling with making sustainable lifestyle, purchasing, and business choices. They are frustrated because even though they are clear on their values, they do not have access to information that will help them to make choices they are sure are in accordance with those values.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 06/18/2008 - 7:59pm.

**Winhall**

**Age (if entered):**

73

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A politically active state that has lost its compass as to what provides for the needs of its people - government or jobs.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Previously an independent spirit of self dependence. Generally now, a dependence on government largess for the many, by the few.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenge of convincing the general population that the state needs to truly support employment that provides jobs and income. To stop copping out for "Attractive Poverty".

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 06/18/2008 - 3:57pm.

[Burlington](#)

**Age (if entered):**

42

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a small state where small changes have a big impact. It's a state where community involvement is encouraged, where there is a forum for your voice to be heard by your neighbors and government. It's a place with the potential to make brave choices and influence the nation (e.g. civil unions).

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I think many Vermonters value community involvement, citizenship and stewardship of the land. They also are willing to accept a high cost of living for the safety and beauty of the State.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Maintaining town meeting and other forums for civic involvement. There has been an upswing in crime and a weakening of the economy, both challenges I think will grow if not addressed aggressively. Environmental impacts of sprawl need innovative solutions.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Keeping the lines of communication open between residents and their government. Innovation in energy and environmental protection. Leadership in health care reform and offering universal health care. Addressing crime problems swiftly and pioneering new strategies for prevention and remediation.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Burlington needs to address all these issues. From the exponential rise in graffiti visible around the City to the increasing number of empty storefronts, challenges to keeping Burlington a "most liveable city" abound. Growth of the suburban population and the diversity of people moving to the area present several opportunities and challenges.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 06/18/2008 - 2:37pm.

### St.Albans, Vt.

**Age (if entered):**

66

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont means a great deal to me. I was born in Vermont it is a beautiful state. I always look forward to showing off Vermont when I get company from out of town. I have traveled some but find I just love taking back roads in Vermont and enjoy the lakes, brooks, rivers etc. Vermont is an excellent place to take the time and smell the Roses.  
Peg Crowley

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 06/18/2008 - 9:41am.

### Burlington

**Age (if entered):**

55

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont has an (ineffable) integrity manifested in its natural geography and, historically, how it was developed:. I can feel a difference when I cross the border into neighboring states. There is something intrinsically nurturing about Vermont, some thing so complete.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Appreciation for the environment, a desire to live more simply, and, traditionally, there has been a very strong sense of tolerance.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

- 

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 06/18/2008 - 9:02am.

**Grand Isle**

**Age (if entered):**

61

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

As a native Vermonter, I do not want the state to lose the rural character and sense of community I experienced growing up here. I think we are experiencing more urban problems (like drugs and gangs), and that's too bad. Also, we are becoming a State of the very rich and the poor. I feel the middle class is shrinking. We are being taxed to death.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

We used to be a hard working, ethical, conservative people. There are still many hard-working and ethical people here, but we are now one of the more leftist/ liberal states in the nation. Socialism (read Progressiveism)is a bad form of government for freedom-loving people, and we are creeping toward it here.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Our taxes are too high. We have too many people who work for the State here. We need to encourage a more private-business-friendly and lower-tax environment. We must grow

private business, and discourage government dependency. No nation (read State) ever taxed itself into prosperity.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Lower taxes. Reform school funding. Shrink the size of state government. Encourage the growth of private businesses and jobs. Reform the cumbersome permit and regulatory process. Remember the strong conservative and religious roots of the State. We are drifting away from all of these.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I think we are moving into a one-party system of government in this state: socialism. I do not recognize the Democrat party I was a member of growing up. It is now hard-left-socialist, and even the Republicans are moving left. This bodes ill for the future prosperity of our state. We need a balance, and we no longer have that.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 06/16/2008 - 9:37am.

**[Grand Isle](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

60

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A strong work ethic and a love for the environment. I do think, however, that we are less considerate of each other than we used to be. I hear more foul language and experience more rudeness in public places.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 06/16/2008 - 9:10am.

### Burlington

**Age (if entered):**

76

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A great place to live

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

intelligence

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Too much growth; keeping the youngsters home in VT

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Clean air and water; keeping jobs here; getting rid of the Bush mess

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

they do

### Lunenburg VT

**Age (if entered):**

30

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

I grew up in NH and moved to VT a couple of years ago. The amount of culture that is here is amazing. I feel that the people in Vermont care more about their surroundings and are more proactive than in my former state. I love that.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

strong work ethic, a sense of community

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

peace

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

everyone benefits

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 06/11/2008 - 11:32am.

**Morrisville**

**Age (if entered):**

17

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a place where I can live peacefully. A place where no matter where you look all you can see is the green mountains. Vermont is my home!

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Community Involvement, Volunteer, Be part of your Community

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

I think in order to save Vermont's environment we need to shut down Vermont Yankee and turn to alternative energy sources.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 06/09/2008 - 3:11pm.

## Weathersfield

**Age (if entered):**

61

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

It is a chosen place to live because of the beauty of the landscape, the sense of community and the people whom , as different as we can be, pretty much accept one another.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

I fear that younger people cannot find jobs and leave the state and don't return. It bothers me that Vt may become a solely aging state. The ideal is to create intergenerational supportive communities so all ages can be part of the solution.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

The fastest growing aging population needs to be considered for more housing options. Planning for sidewalks and a return to less compliance on driving distances for our basic needs. Supporting farmers markets which are more elder friendly.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Ironically, our town is building a new elementary/middle school at a time when the number of children is decreasing. Nonetheless, we need to plan together to make the communities meet everyone's needs.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 06/09/2008 - 1:55pm.

## Rutland

**Age (if entered):**

64

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

. A clean and beautiful environment. Semi isolation from the masses of urban problems and population. General safety. Absence of massive traffic jams. A generous and caring population.... particularly in smaller towns and cities.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Strong heritage of sturdy and adaptable residents capable of surviving the best and worst of times,.... added to by a significant population of more affluent newcomers attracted for sports, retirement, second homes..... but, generally NOT for jobs or economic opportunity. The latecomers are more likely to be overprotective. The "natives" are more likely to want opportunity.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The need to redefine downtown areas and find ways to make them functional. Incentives to rebuild, repopulate and develop closer to the core, rather than more strip development. Stop urban sprawl. Find tax and development incentives for more cluster housing, as opposed to chewing up 1-100 acre lots for a single house.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Create incentives for those wishing to produce jobs..... clean jobs.... factories that blend into the greater plan of more centralized communities. Improve communications and transportation systems. Continue to promote a healthy environment, health care for all, mass transit... the things that matter most to people.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Totally.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 06/07/2008 - 4:31pm.

**[Burlington](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

25

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is, well, the green state. It is environmentally friendly and consistently works to sustain that. Vermont is a natural state with many outdoor activities and getaways. What Vermont means to me: fresh air on a warm, sunny day!

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Vermonters tend to be friendly to those they know and with that they are helpful. Native Vermonters, especially farmers, tend to be hard-working and dedicated to their profession. Many Vermonters are family oriented, especially in the Burlington areas, as you can observe in various family community projects.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Vermont's influx in diversity: Some communities appreciate the diversity as learning opportunities, while others reject it because it is "different". Vermont's nature provides a huge opportunity to draw nature enthusiasts from around the country (and the world)- both as tourists & as residents who appreciate & want to preserve the natural environment.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Priority 1: Preserve and protect land from development. Keep Vermont natural! Priority 2: Create a plan to welcome young people into Vermont. This can be done through the job market - especially the hiring of young teachers just out of college. It can also be done by lowering the cost of state colleges and universities.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Burlington has a wonderful mix of city and nature. Church Street Marketplace is no more than a 10 minute drive for most, and the bike path is highly accessible, not to mention our beautiful lake. Diversity is accepted and there are many opportunities for families. As for keeping young people in Vermont, Burlington needs to create more jobs for college graduates.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 06/06/2008 - 4:07pm.

[Charlotte, VT](#)

Age (if entered):

50

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a rural area that allows diversity while maintaining many of the Old New England values. There are many small towns that are still communities that work together and care about everyone in it.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Community, sharing, hard work, good ethics, a sense of fun

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Maintaining the sense of community and caring as bigger business and more people from outside the state move here.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Vermont needs to help its own expand their businesses and help them create jobs that exemplify all that is Vermont. Keep agriculture important. Help small towns keep their sense of community.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

They need to look at creating more community and working to bring people together rather than splitting them. Help create more space where people can come together. Trails, bike paths, parks, and recreation bring old and young together and help you to know your neighbors and create more community.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 06/04/2008 - 10:09am.

**[burlington](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

39

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Sensible, character-driven ideals crafted through ingenuity, integrity and common experiences. Small, local-driven communities shaped by hard-work, artistic and fun-loving sensibilities that appreciate and embrace the landscape. An understanding and acceptance of certain realities and determination to deal, and not live in denial of them.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Kindness and caring for those within and around our communities with a mind that we're all in this together. See first answer...

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

We HAVE to deal with the impending implosion of the cheap-gas economy NOW, with increased investment in rail and mass transit services. We CAN NOT continue investing in any way shape or form in dislocated, isolated, auto-dependent communities or it will make the obvious and eventual dependence on higher fuel costs unbearable.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Energy and infrastructure that moves us away from the gluttonous consumer culture that destroys local communities We also have to keep our water sources in better shape, both above and below ground as clean, fresh water will be the primary resource in the coming years. Having a stronger and solid telecommunications infrastructure will also be imperative in refocusing our economic priorities.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Here in Burlington, we have a good focus on greater energy efficiency, on community supported agriculture, and on driving less. Suburban communities are going to wither and die under 8to10 dollar gas so we can either live in denial of that eventual reality or deal with it now before it becomes more a matter of survival and less of a choice.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 06/03/2008 - 9:40am.

**Franklin**

**Age (if entered):**

43

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Open space and safe living

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Honesty, commitment and a strong work ethic

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Taxes. We need to get school spending under control and look for a better way to fund the school system. Act 60 is destroying us with out of control school spending What are we. We are at a cross roads. We need to deicide if we want to be a society of farmer or have industry.Currently we have trying to be the farmers with the big business tax base.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

We need to get school spending under control and capped. Then our tax rate will drop. We need to get industry into the state to attract workers to add to our tax base.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Again taxes are killing us.

- 

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 06/03/2008 - 8:18am.

**Orwell**

**Age (if entered):**

33

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

It means a state of natural beauty and home! I have lived here all of my life and will cherish it forever. Vermont is a very unique State. People are much closer here and value their home more than people of other States (in my opinion). Vermont also means a State that respects forests, wildlife, and other natural beauties.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Love and respect for nature, space (meaning less of a city life), keeping things natural. Most Vermonters I have known are very hard workers and dedicated to their careers, although their jobs may not pay well.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The rising costs of living seem to be the biggest challenge. I think that our economy relies mostly on tourism and of course at this time when things are toughest, we will and

should have to ride out the storm. Opportunities...Buy local and support ourselves internally until the economy improves.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Stick with who we are. We just need to ride this out. If we start trying to come up with crazy ideas to change Vermont, we won't be the same as we used to be. The things that have made us the 'unique' state that we are, will eventually pay off again. We don't always have to figure out what's next or what to change when times seem hard. Just wait and let time take its course.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Orwell is a farming town, my family were farmers and teachers. Orwell is a town of people who don't care about how much money they make and I am proud to have taken a piece of that with me. Yes the economy affects them but I think if I asked them these questions they would think as I do,ride it out, remain the people we have been and don't over think things.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 06/03/2008 - 12:09am.

**[Rochjester](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

72

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

I would leave tomorrow if I could sell my home

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

isolation

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

too much time being spent on social and environmental issues, ie , same sex marriages and Act 250 . Little time on economic issues , heating our homes ; we are not business friendly and state and local taxes are killing us . '

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Vermont is dead ! Not only economically but culturally as well . If we can get beyond the "green" mentality we can rejuvenate .

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Rochester is a blue collar community being hood winked by the school system and tax structure . I may sound bitter but Vermont has been going straight down the tubes since I retired here in 1993 .

**plainfield**

**Age (if entered):**

64

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

small, independent, humane, progressive, lots of support for all kinds of creativity. cool-cold. Not a lot of racial, cultural diversity Hidden poverty. some of the housing i have been in in Barre is shockingly inadequate and dangerous. We are lucky to border on another country. People are a little reserved (too much sometimes for my tastes.)

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

independence and cooperativeness and interdependence. Representatives are accessible so we tend to believe we have a right and obligation to speak up.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

I think we have an opportunity to be leaders in America. By demonstrating forward thinking about climate change, health care, humane rehabilitative criminal justice system (we have a long way to go in regard to our jails that tear people down instead of healing them.) Because we celebrate our creativeness in all aspects we can be national leaders.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Health care for all!!! Alternative energy. Reducing consumption without worrying about hurting businesses outside of vermont. We can teach each other how to have different values re consumption. For example, why do we feel a need to have lawns that look like

golf courses? We need to heal people that are in our jails. Affordable public transportation.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Our school, Twinfield, is on the right track working to foster community, celebrate our citizens, and teaching love instead of hate. need a public transportation system. need better communication between selectboard & citizens. a web page that has detailed notes and agendas.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 06/02/2008 - 4:46pm.

**Berlin**

**Age (if entered):**

33

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Localism, friendly neighbors, melting pot, respect for one another, respect for one's privacy and individualism, community centered.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Community minded yet still private and independent. Socially conscious and concerned about the environment.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Skyrocketing fuel prices will bankrupt families. My husband presently commutes from Berlin to Morrisville and it costs around \$56 every 4 days that he commutes. We have put off having a family to become more financially secure, however with food and fuel being so costly we are back to not being able to save.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Sustainable living - local and government focusing on the unique needs of Vermonters and moving away from the federal government that seems to have it's priorities backwards. Focus on making living affordable - reasonable public transportation, bike programs in cities with downtowns, better roads.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

People are doing what they can to get by. Not a day goes by that you don't hear people concerned with the economy, fuel prices, and cost of living in general. Everyone is just trying to keep their heads above water.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 06/02/2008 - 8:52am.

**Montpelier**

**Age (if entered):**

52

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

my chosen home/state and good quality of life. no place else I would want to live.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

independence, freedom, democracy, community, family, helping those most in need

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

both (i.e., both challenges and opportunities): affordable housing infrastructure, (particularly for those most in need), affordable education (i.e., primary and secondary) as well as the mechanisms of how it is paid for, health care financing & service provision, setting up & maintaining statewide broadband, public transportation infrastructure as well as roads & bridges

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

affordable housing infrastructure, (particularly for those most in need), affordable education (i.e., primary and secondary) as well as the mechanisms of how it is paid for, health care financing & service provision, setting up & maintaining statewide broadband, public transportation infrastructure as well as roads & bridges

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

get back to core basics of what actually works & is more sustainable over longterm, downsize state govt where & how it truly matters most, cut the fat where the fat is, not

direct services, which means less chiefs, more indians, paying the indians better & more: e.g., do more with AHS field services at the local level & do \*not\* do away with the field service specialists positions, etc.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 06/02/2008 - 3:50am.

## Middlebury

### **Age (if entered):**

46

### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is thoughtful, cranky, full of spectacular scenery. Sadly its full of residents who are sometimes bitter and antagonistic towards differing opinions.

### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

love of history and open spaces; interest in tradition and an entrepreneurial attitude; desperate need for equality

### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

weak business community poor management of fish and wildlife exhaustion of community volunteers and donors exorbitant property and income taxes lack of will to implement important changes , willingness to close smaller elementary schools and supervisory unions to save money.

### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Identify areas of common ground such as the desire to support Vermont's wildlife and clean up its waterways. Eliminate outdated methods for managing these- such as only having the hunting and fishing community only on the FWL commission. Tap into private sector for suggestions about how to handle challenges such as issuing Garvey bonds to pay for improvements to our roads and bridges.

### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Our current elected officials are weak, have substantial conflicts of interest and often choose the path of least resistance but usually run unopposed because everyone else is working 2-3 jobs or is working and raising a family. I would like to have some young

residents/students run for office to bring some light and freshness to the work of running our county and town.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 05/27/2008 - 8:27pm.

### Fairlee

#### **Age (if entered):**

65

#### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is imbedded in forest with sufficient rain to be a good filter for air and supports agriculture. The sparse population helps keep us self sufficient. We less corrupt so far, but fading fast. We need a strong code of civil conduct and the local support structures to maintain the community members regardless of infractions.

#### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

Not so sure.

#### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

With the energy cost-shock, great adaptation is required. Will Vermont be allowed to adjust as required? Vermonter have no leadership which understands the principles of the Basic Community Unit, and does not know what the 12 basic functions are to be upgraded, nor how to organize around them. This is not comforting.

#### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Learn about General Theory of Living Systems, the Basic Community Unit, to support a population at a sufficiently reduced cost as to be sustainable. The 12 essential function are: (1) Energy, Nutrition, Finance; (2) Education, Employment, Recreation; (3) Governance, health, Judicial (4) Transportation, Communications, Structures. Use these systems to provide a highly efficient society.

#### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I am working with our district school system. They are clueless, just as our government is. It is scary. We are all acting like everyting is as usual, and it is not. The organization of

the Basic Community Unit should be used as a tool to get the organization necessary to sustain the population with greatly increased costs of energy, food, and financing.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 05/27/2008 - 6:30pm.

## Burlington

### **Age (if entered):**

25

### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is where I grew up and came back to live, at least for now. Vermont is a very beautiful place, and is also livable.

### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

Participatory democracy at the local level, some amount of land-sharing, ie non-posted land, though this is changing. Commitment to political issues as complex and as personal.

### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

I fear too many second home owners coming to Vermont - driving housing prices up and posting their land. I don't think Vermont should put all its eggs in the basket of promoting tourism. I think there is a big opportunity to attract young people with new agricultural ideas and programs. I see the ski industry tanking, and I don't want to replace it with year-round resorts!

### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Smart and anti-sprawl development. Fostering walkable and bikable downtowns and regions. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION! Commuter bus ridership is already way up! Offering opportunities beyond the service economy for young people. Not expecting tourism to save us. Better internet access everywhere, including the Northeast Kingdom! More local food, more food security.

### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

As a young person in Burlington, I know many other young people who feel trapped in the service economy and want real job opportunities. I'd also like more encouragement

from state and city for young entrepreneurs. Burlington is fast becoming so diverse and that's a real opportunity to foster some anti-racism in Vermont, which it really needs.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 05/24/2008 - 8:38am.

## Berlin

### **Age (if entered):**

52

### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is the place of my birth; and that of my father's ancestors. I have lived and worked outside of Vermont, but New England and especially Vermont has always been the center of the universe as far as my family. I returned here to have my kids and raise them.

### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

Vermonters share values for plain talk, green spaces, honesty and personal freedom. Nearly all of us enjoy the outdoors, "creamies," and maple syrup. We value mountain scenery, privacy and approachable Legislature and Governor. we appreciate WCAX TV and are proud of Shelburne Museum, Green Mountain Coffee and whether or not we agree with their politics, Ben and Jerry's ice cream.

### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

We take our forests for granted We stick pinkies in the development dam with UVA, but the attraction of wood for energy, the aging of forest landowners and neglect in planning for our landscapes increase the need for citizen understanding participation for orderly growth,affordable housing, dependable power and transportation.

### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Protect and enhance natural resources, watersheds, wildlife habitat and open spaces. Work on health care issues for inclusion, cost containment and wellness Work with communities to support planning, encourage participation of all citizens and effective governance. Improve energy efficiency, conservation and reliability for homes, transportation, institutions and businesses.

### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Berlin is a town in transition, needs to look beyond retail and medical offices, and pay attention to affordable housing, riparian area protection and forest retention when permitting development. They should spend less time attracting a post office and more on reducing stormwater run off and planting street trees!

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 05/23/2008 - 10:01pm.

### Charlotte

#### **Age (if entered):**

58

#### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

It is a lovely rural place with an incredible resentment toward anyone who has not grown up in VT, even though statistics show that those moving into the state have a higher annual income than natives. It is a state that seems to believe it can afford anything, It also has a substantial and deep-rooted negative attitude about business.

#### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

It depends on income class. Most place a high value on keeping VT as it has been.

#### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Unaffordable housing. A lack of quality rental properties. Poor roads. An aging population. Very few high paying jobs.

#### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Rid the state of its anti-business attitude. Offer job training to those who need it.

#### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Charlotte has a lack of affordable housing, a lack of quality rental stock, restrictive zoning. One has to drive to Shelburne to buy most anything. The higher income of its residents isolate many from the state's economic realities.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 05/23/2008 - 8:06pm.

## New Haven

**Age (if entered):**

62

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is the State of my birth and choice of residence.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Enjoyment of our natural setting

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Respect for political and social views that distinctly Christian and simple rural life based.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Create at least one new Nuclear Power Plant to generate low cost electricity for us and to export.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I live in an anti-business climate community where our taxes are too high and schools too inefficient.

- 

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 05/23/2008 - 6:22pm.

## Burlington

**Age (if entered):**

42

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Openness, independence, alternatives, acceptance, vibrancy, bright prospects.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I find that most Vermonters value their immediate neighborhood/town community.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Mainstream corporate culture. Protecting and nurturing what makes VT special is hugely important and challenging.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Unite vs. divide. Protect and maintain the great things we already have, like Town Meeting and function village centers. We need services like Front Porch Forum that help people across the spectrum meet and converse frequently.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Lots of ways...

**Castleton**

**Age (if entered):**

58

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Getting 'green products' industry to move into our state producing new jobs and getting the state to provide free high quality child care for all residents!

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

- 

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 05/23/2008 - 1:01pm.

## Newbury

**Age (if entered):**

63

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is home, a place to work, and a place to share with others who are willing to commit to a simpler life style and who value the independent spirit. It is a beautiful place that offers relaxation after a hard day at the office, in the fields, or at school.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Faith in God, love of the land, honesty, integrity, frugality, and spirit of independence in decision making.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Keeping our law makers from spending worthless time making laws that are unconstitutional and ultimately unenforceable. Too much time and money is spent by lawmakers in Montpelier making laws to impede the landowner and adding expensive bureaucracy to a State budget that they may not even understand.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Let local governments decide what their priorities will be in spending money and investing in our future and our children's futures, if by chance they decide to make the sacrifices to stay in VT. If our children who are our future are educated effectively, they will be prepared to be critical thinkers and continue the Vermont tradition of independent thinkers and business men and women.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

We need to focus our efforts on education for our children. We need to invest in smaller schools in our communities to bring communities together. Local governments controlling budgets benefits all by allowing careful examination of what values in the community are important to the general population.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 05/22/2008 - 6:49am.

## Ludlow

**Age (if entered):**

40

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A place where most of the people know no bounds for what's an appropriate place for their politics - please, keep you lefty politics out of the classroom. A place that is on the fast road to financial disaster. A place where the best and brightest leave and the stoned under achievers flock.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

A long long time ago Vermonter's used to have a mind your business and I'll mind mine attitude. They didn't much care what other people did so long as others minded their own as well. Today, this whole place has gotten preachy. Not everybody is gay, or an environmentalist, or a Marxist so please, try not to indoctrinate in law your individual secular humanist beliefs.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Collapsing economy, ballooning taxes, fleeing young people, and a government that is hell bent on making sure nobody does anything to stop it.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Work together? Does you butcher cut your bacon because he's altruistic? Or, does he do it because it serves his needs? We don't need some centrally manage plan on how all of us can cooperate. The markets works just fine doing that. The state needs to simply stop meddling in something it can't understand and that can't be managed.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Half the houses owned by vacationers and the other half are owned by ex-vacationers - its not much of a community. Nice views and lots of trees but the community left a long time ago. Today, we have a pristine cartoon version of a community absent any deep personal connections replaced by lots of unfriendly nosy neighbors. Its just like living in a city but without the conveniences.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 05/19/2008 - 11:43pm.

[Randolph](#)

**Age (if entered):**

40

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A beautiful state to raise our family. A place where the average person's voice still counts.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I fear that we are becoming more and more divided, but I believe that we do still share a basic love for the land and people. While some are fighting to save babies by ending abortion, others are working hard to end domestic violence. All these people oppose violence & cherish life, but they too often see themselves as enemies of each other.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Sadly, the issue of gay marriage has the potential to divide us further, and education funding has never been solved to most people's satisfaction. We would have more opportunities if we became more business friendly, but because of our size we do have opportunities not available to people in large cities such as contact with our representatives.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

We need to be more open to business!!! We need to cut back on our government programs. We also need to get tougher on crime. Right now, Vermont is a great place to be a child molester.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Our local school does not run background checks on volunteers and sex offenders have ended up in the classroom. Also, Randolph just had another employer (Clear Source) close its doors.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 05/19/2008 - 4:56pm.

[Williamstown](#)

**Age (if entered):**

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

I have seen many changes, many for the worse. Vermont means a safe place where teachers, parents and public officials are respected - not anymore. Where the rural nature of VT is not snuffed out by development and "tourist attractions." Where legislators know that doing the right thing is more important than re-election.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

As a Vermonter I value supporting a healthy, moral and safe lifestyle. I support a constitutional amendment to maintain marriage as a union between one man and one woman. I support laws that ban late term abortions. I support a ban on marijuana and other regulated drugs (except for prescriptions). I support an individual's right to pray when and where he/she wishes to - but not required prayer.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

a challenge giving our kids a proper education. Not just financially, but rounding their education to include all facets of learning and moral behavior. I see a need for schools to have stronger codes of dress and behavior among their students; to foster more respect for themselves, their peers & authority; and to teach about living responsibly: saving, working, etc.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

work with other states and federal gov'ts to get a handle on our fuel supplies and costs. Get a handle on health care issues. Creatively encourage saving for homes, cars, etc., and encourage more responsible spending in gov't, eliminating a lot of the waste.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I see all of my thoughts above relevant to the State, Williamstown, and the Country as a whole. We have allowed a very liberal press, legislature and government in general to undermine the moral fabric of our country. All our towns suffer from this. Our challenge is to work on restoring trust, honesty and respect.

- 

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 05/19/2008 - 10:03am.

[Fairlee](#)

**Age (if entered):**

63

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is home as I grew up here. It means less government intervention, conservative principles, communities, common sense solutions, freedom. That is not what it has become and I am very distressed about the shift to liberal, government controlled ideals.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence, religious freedom, Town Meeting, frugality, strong communities, less government intervention, pride.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Returning to the strong values that Vermonters have always stood for. We need to stand up and say what is important rather than let liberal newcomers speak for us. Long time Vermonters are reticent to speak out about issues. This needs to change.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

By reducing the negative impact of over regulations, high taxes, the NIMBY principle and allowing Vermonters be who they are we can improve the economy. Instead of looking a new ways to pay for a very expensive education we should be looking at ways to reduce the costs. The NEA has us in a stangle hold and we need to reduce that control.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 05/19/2008 - 9:16am.

[Rutland](#)

**Age (if entered):**

55

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is my little life boat in a sea of national insanity.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence, Intelligence, Skepticism, Generosity, Stubbornness, Honesty

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

In-State-based energy independence. Mass transportation (people and goods). The drug trade and the jail-them-all industrial complex. Affordable education for the masses. Reasonable, single payer based health care (Read: Get us out of this for-profit insurance racket).

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Increase public mass transit with an emphasis on smaller vehicles fueled by locally produced bio-fuels. Re-vitalize (yes...Subsidize) our rail system. Re-emphasize the blue collar and technical trades at our highschool and adult education levels. Throw our support behind locally produced, organic farming.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 05/19/2008 - 7:25am.

**MONTPELIER**

**Age (if entered):**

65

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont's physical nature is one of it's greatest assets. Balanced political nature. Low population rate and it's small communities are wonderful. Healthy climate appeals to me. Low pollution rates .Our acces to our federal, state and local representatives is a real asset as you get to feel you are involved.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

A general appreciation of the physical landscape and the enjoyment of same seems to be universal. Some have a sense that our federal government is out of control, unresponsive to us and does not refelect the values that we would like the USA to refelect.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Meeting costs.Maintaining and improving environmental controls.Housing needs and the costs thereof, especially for seniors and the disabled.Making medical services available to all.Attracting tourists.We have a great opportunity to be an even greater bastion for small businesses.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Dealing with the aforementioned.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Downtown business space is overpriced for startup businesses.The city should be tapping the rivers to create energy.Housing is very limited and getting out of reach in price.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 05/10/2008 - 7:23am.

**[Isle La Motte](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

78

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

I just attended the annual meeting of the Preservation Trust of Vermont held in Brandon. The auditorium was filled with positive exciting people from all walks of life. They have preserved and renewed towns all over Vermont, with both wisdom and a sense of humor. Thanks go to all who are in love with this State and doing something about it. Norma Wales

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 05/03/2008 - 6:31pm.

## Barnet

**Age (if entered):**

58

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Best place in the world to live, freedom and community, clean, beautiful, organic

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Common sense, value of work and health, citizen power vs. corporate power

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

We can lead towards real solutions to global warming--decentralized energy, local agriculture, communities having control over their own resources. Challenges are from increasingly globalized corporate and financial system, excessive federal power verging on fascist control (see Naomi Wolf, The End of America).

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Maintaining as much local control as possible. Incentives for small, decentralized energy and food production.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

My thoughts reflect the way I've lived my life here for the past 30+ years, and are shared by many in my community--one reason it's the best place in the world to live.

## Pittsford

**Age (if entered):**

68

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

open land, clean air and water and traditional values

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Care for one another; a sense of community; sensitivity for the environment

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Affordable housing; an educated workforce; jobs that will attract an educated workforce; affordable and universal healthcare; an opportunity to turn our values and appreciation of the our landscape into a sustainable place that fosters a creative economy

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Education, education, education...nothing else will be possible if our young do not possess the skills required of the 21st century. Without the skills we will not have the opportunities for young people and we will become a land for the old and the poor.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

The thoughts shared above reflect the challenges and hopes that we have in Pittsford. I do not think Pittsford is unique in any way.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 04/30/2008 - 11:03am.

**Lyndon**

**Age (if entered):**

17

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

One issue that I feel needs to be addressed is the lack of tourism and funding that Vermont historic sites receive. There are around 13 state historic sites and many more parks. These sites need to be preserved for future generations. Vermont has many amazing historic sites they just need our help.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Vermonters need to realize how important their history is and that it is worth saving. Many different historic sites around the state of Vermont need help financially. These sites are either lacking funding or no one knows about them. We need to act now to preserve these sites for future generations.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 04/29/2008 - 10:16am.

**Middlebury**

**Age (if entered):**

59

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont means a place where good citizenship, common sense, hard work, neighborliness, individualism and a free-spirit are common values; where voicing your choice may make a difference. It's a beautiful landscape of woods, fields, mountains, hollows, where resilient, resourceful people are figuring out mundane or creative ways to make a living.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I hope Vermonters share the common values of simplicity, self-reliance, responsibility, healthy families, and love of land and nature.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenges: The decline, or too high a price, of fossil fuels Alternative transportation Caring for an aging population Enough meaningful work for everyone An ever more diverse population Opportunities: All of the above! Plus, new state leadership with vision!

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Renewable fuel sources. Transitional Towns (UK as guideline). Responsible growth and development. Utilizing VT resources (and values) in addressing issues. Greening houses, both existing and new. Educating for, and supporting, responsible farming practices. Creating and supporting local businesses/economies.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I am moving from Middlebury to N. Ferrisburgh in a month, and I don't know yet about the issues facing my new town. But I do know it is a fine agricultural resource, and I expect it is facing (as most VT towns are) the pressures of sprawl. I look forward to learning more.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sun, 04/27/2008 - 6:43pm.

**Danville**

**Age (if entered):**

65

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

The variety of town/city/rural sizes are definitely attractive to me as well as the differences in altitude and proximity to Canada.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I think Vermonters love the different venues in entertainment, education, and health care. However, the employment sector sucks.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

We have a definite opportunity to remain a very progressive state in many ways, including but not limited to wind and solar energy. I disagree with developers who insist that wind turbine towers need to be 400 feet high. There is a tower on the Danville School property that is definitely NOT 400 feet high. I have also seen a portable tower on a sailboat. Needless to say it was NOT 400 feet high.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

We need to work together including with government to attract business as well as network with existing employers on the broadcasting of jobs as they come available. One other thing - whenever a business developer promises jobs, we need to know that they will be hiring Vermonters and not importing employees from other areas.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Danville is a good place to raise children and those of us who are young at heart. Our existing challenges of not enough jobs, high petroleum and food costs as well as high housing costs will remain the same in the future. I have heard thta in 10 years only the very wealthy and the very poor will be able to afford Vermont.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 04/25/2008 - 9:41am.

### Mount Holly

#### **Age (if entered):**

18

#### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a place I call home, it is a peaceful, green, and non-industrial state.

#### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

Their love of nature. Most Vermonters cannot stand large cities and love living almost in the wilderness.

#### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Our cities are starting to get larger and look like what citizens from other states would call 'real' cities. Citizens from other states are starting to buy land and build houses in Vermont because it seems untouched by urban life. The more 'outsiders' that come to Vermont, the more urban Vermont becomes.

#### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Preserving the vast wildlife of Vermont. There may not be as wide a variety of species as in some areas, but we have a larger population:land ratio than most states for many of the animals that life in Vermont.

#### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

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Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 04/22/2008 - 4:28am.

### White River Jct.

**Age (if entered):**

43

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

They love and care about their community.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The challenge that Vermonters face is low-income housing.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

We have many homeless families who need low-income housing.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 04/21/2008 - 3:12pm.

[Newport](#)

**Age (if entered):**

56

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A place where my parents brought me to escape New York City. Its a place I call home and will call home for the rest of my life.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence. Vermonters think of themselves as independent and this is reflected in our politics. We elect not by party but by person. This is especially true with the election of Bernie Sanders and the changing of parties by Jim Jeffords.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Here in the Northeast Kingdom alcohol and drug addiction are rampant. A state liquor inspector once told me that the NEK consumes almost as much alcohol as the entire rest of the state. This is very concerning. Also the lack of jobs and depressed wages and benefits.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Jobs and education should be priority one and not just any kind of job. Jobs that pay decent wages and benefits something I have not had since I moved to the NEK in 1998.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I am totally out of touch with our community since my community seems to think that it can keep electing the same tired politicians and that things will actually change. People dont vote and dont want to be involved. This needs to change.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 04/21/2008 - 1:47pm.

**Burlington**

**Age (if entered):**

24

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Returning here after living in Arizona for ten years gave me a sense of how valuable real Vermont honesty, trust, and freedom are. Vermont means community and life. It also means the health of nature, which needs to be respected.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

As I've seen it, this really depends on the Vermonters. The most common values have been the need for freedom, sustainable/affordable living, and the availability of healthy choices.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The tax rate continues to rise, as do gas prices. Promotion of careful spending and alternative transportation. Ensuring the return of affordable living and better health choices. I'm very proud of Burlington for not having a McDonald's anymore.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

As always, housing and gas prices, that continue to rise. Also, balancing Lake Champlain, and all water areas. We need these areas for the balance of nature and for recreational uses.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I'm graduating college soon and will be living in the general community again. I think the only way to make changes happen is to create that change. If people understand what needs to happen and why, I believe they can change.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 04/21/2008 - 9:51am.

**Lyndon**

**Age (if entered):**

56

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

green mountains, fresh air and lo stress lifestyle

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

hard to say, i dont agree with the "don't change anything mentality"because i will see a lioght or windmill, but there still has to be growth or we all die, we can't all be framers, enviornmentalists or 100% green

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

SMART growth . . . but grow. the current population #'s cannot sustain the roads, birdges, schools etc. without going bust. we need to stop giving away everything to the "poor" and put them to work.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

SMART Growth

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

again hard to say, but to just let the regulators run rough over the folks who do want the town to grow is not working

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 04/21/2008 - 8:50am.

**Moretown**

**Age (if entered):**

75

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

The comments at your forum in connection with Arts Achievement Day seemed to have an unmentioned underlying reality – an important part of what makes VT special is the absence of hordes of people! Keeping it that way is vital. 250 characters guarantees nothing substantive.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

**RANDOLPH**

**Age (if entered):**

32

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Natural beauty, remote, unique, either way ahead of its time or out of touch--not sure which. perhaps both.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

practicality, thrift, independence, helpfulness, integrity

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

As an out of stater, it's difficult to make a living and afford to live here, even with some major lifestyle concessions. I think a lot of people would be willing to compromise some convenience for what it so special about Vermont--but you need access to jobs and affordable housing in order to do that.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Continuing to follow the sustainable and green impulses, while strengthening the economy in a sustainable way

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 04/16/2008 - 12:06am.

**[Montpelier](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

60

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

My home, my children's home, a state with people - conservative, liberal, young, old, who care deeply, passionately, totally about this little patch of hard scrabble earth that is rich beyond words. where we have hope that our future will not be mainstream America's future,

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

A community poised on the cusp of possibilities, a citizen base that is building a 21st century culture that is rooted in Vermont values of "freedom and unity" self-sufficiency and can do and will do for ourselves first, tapping global resources when necessary, but caring for ourselves first, a model of a social/economic, environmental system that is fair, just, healthy for all.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Allowing mainstream corrupt Vermont - be energy self-sufficient - embrace and implement renewable energy, be food self-sufficient by making the main stay of our diets seasonally driven and agree that chocolate, spices and other ingredients are extras we are willing to swap for, and find, strengthen and keep the collective will to be different in the face of becoming faceless in a global society.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Create a decentralized and distributed energy system, move to a Vermont Food System that grows and produces the core of our diets - commit as Vermonters to buy Vermont First...and devote private, public and non-profit sector work to put the infrastructures in place to support these consumer desires. Continue to protect open lands, and continue to direct growth to our villages and town centers.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Friends and fellow citizens in Montpelier are actively protecting affordable housing, supporting a vibrant farmer's market, choosing the food coop over the larger commercial grocery stores, working on energy independence from many angles - local energy committee, high school students trying to get their building off the grid - all reinstating local, community first in our lives.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 04/14/2008 - 5:40pm.

**BRIDGEWATER CENTER**

**Age (if entered):**

64

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

VERMONT LETS ME BE ME!

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

THE WEATHER- IT TAKES A CERTAIN MENTALITY TO PUT UP WITH IT. THE WEATHER WEEDS OUT THOSE WHO ARE WEAK MENTALLY-

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 04/11/2008 - 8:00pm.

[Newport](#)

**Age (if entered):**

39

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Rural, and 10 years behind the times in technology. Fishing great areas, nice Summers, horrible Winters. Low paying employment for the same skill set paying more elsewhere.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

None. There can never be common values that everyone shares. There are needs and wants that many people would like, such as roads but there are others who would say the potholes on their dirt road keep the traffic down to a good speed. If anything, summarized elsewhere: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Zone better. Leave the rural and make the current cities workable and put in the stores people are driving miles and miles to go for. Establish green buffer zones outside various cities. Build up the roads to the cities.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Schools and better libraries and infrastructure. Business development, especially technology. Our whole state is more like a big city when it comes to issues and future. Study a city like Philly with a higher population that the whole State of VT. They face the same issues.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

The bottom line is our State is a whole entity with many resisting eventual change. The State itself must be zoned and then grown else little by little things will change with no plan and allot of fighting. (Windpower and boxstores for example) I also propose putting toll roads on all the bridges to NH so we can keep/get some of that money that is going over there every day by our citizens.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 04/11/2008 - 3:25pm.

### Brighton

**Age (if entered):**

47

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

it means a safe place for my family

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

we are facing job crunch our children grow up here and move away because no work we need industries

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

keeping Vermont "Vermont" don't turn every town into a city where you can't breath the fresh air

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

well i think i was talking about my town with my answers i feel that we need to get the old Ethan Allen building up and running so we have local jobs i do not want to see big buildings being put in (no shopping malls) i'd like to keep it small and a safe place for my family and others

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 04/11/2008 - 8:26am.

### Glover

**Age (if entered):**

62

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

small can be beautiful but challenges remain. skilled workforce lacking. rural portions of the state lacking liveable wage employment. fuel costs prohibitive even for middle class.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

an idea of independence but no longer much clarity regarding what that means

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

energy costs, energy infrastructure needs investment. water and wind and transportation and affordable housing these are both challenges and opportunities. political will to invest in necessary change lacking at present

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

see above

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

we are beginning the conversation and research re energy and food sustainability

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 04/10/2008 - 7:04pm.

**Barnet**

**Age (if entered):**

56

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Good question. I am not sure. I have lived here for nine years. I plan to stay

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Good question. I am not sure. I am a flatlander living here for nine years. However, I do not share most of the demographics of my fellow flatlanders. I actually moved to Vermont without a trust fund or a pension. What was I thinking?

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Planning for the closure of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. Local communities can explore ways to create electrical power locally utilizing a distributed grid system

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Replacing the electrical power from Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant with a distributed grid system utilizing small local sources of electrical power and universal net metering.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

The local community could make a serious effort to look for ways to provide electrical power locally beginning with town offices. This could include small-scale combined heat and power generation; solar applications; small-scale hydroelectric; grass or wood pellets.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 04/10/2008 - 10:45am.

**Washington**

**Age (if entered):**

71

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Rural landscapes, progressive values, small communities, future oriented people, a place for wildlife as well as people.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Becoming sustainable communities that will flourish without fossil fuels.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Bring people together to share information and ideas.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

We are not talking as a community.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 04/10/2008 - 10:02am.

**Bridgewater**

**Age (if entered):**

50

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Beautiful safe friendly well cared for

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

quality of life excellent education high quality accessible health care peacefulness safety

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

dealing with global warming=technology/jobs accessible health care IN VT-I go to NH (DHMC) Better schools/lower dropout rate=fewer jails High property taxes. at least we have access to legislators. failing infrastructure=jobs

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

energy schools health care infrastructure

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

not sure - I just moved here

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 04/09/2008 - 11:09am.

## Burlington

**Age (if entered):**

62

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A dynamic place to live, raise a family and know many people.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

We care about our families, the environment, who and how we govern.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The lack of ubiquitous communication statewide IE. lack of consistent cell coverage and broadband access. Less federal assistance to support roads, special education, housing. Best opportunity - get rid of Bush and Douglas.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Consider county government. Four year terms for Governor, constitutional officers and Legislature. Stop giving away the bank (tax credits) and focus on companies that have already made the investment in Vermont. ALWAYS TAKE CARE OF YOUR NEIGHBOR!

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Pretty consistent

## Weathersfield

**Age (if entered):**

66

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

The best place in the country to live. There is a connectedness with other Vermonters, farmers, people in different walks of life. The arts are easily accessible. There are some very good social services. We can try things out on a small scale and be an example for the rest of the country. We have a great impact politically on the rest of the US. Outstanding care for children and elders.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Open fields and beautiful mountains. Freedom to chose how to live one's life. Accepting of other people who have different ideas, beliefs (generally speaking). Peace. Pride in our heritage, i.e. early ban on slavery. Education, health and healthcare.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

To promote buying locally; educate people about the value of what we have and about our past; continue to promote small business, self-employment. Keep the rural aspect of most of VT. Encourage people to engage in local, place-based activities e.g. farmers' markets, Valley Quests, vacationing in VT, outdoor environmentally sound activities.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Include various viewpoints. Respect for one another. Keep communities informed of what's going on. Share responsibility for our food supply and other necessities. Protect natural environment. /Be sure everyone has access to healthcare and medications.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Get to know neighbors. Would like to see central neighborhood location for equipment sharing e.g., power tools, farm equip, mowers) instead of each household having their own. All community should support farmers - that's where our food comes from.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 04/05/2008 - 1:27pm.

**[Weathersfield](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

51

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Democr.can actually work, at least sometimes. Small enough to know your legislators/officials. Unspoiled landscapes. Love of outdoors, small farms, forests, wildlife, small vibrant cities, downtown revitaliz. Need better public trans, afford. hsing, univers. healthcare. For many it's hard to earn a living. Most are frugal. Some move here from away and try to change what is good

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

community, love of family, respect for hard work, love of the land, common sense (for the most part), desire for self-determination, wanting to keep the best things from the past while carefully planning for the future.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Ironically we can spoil what attracted many of us here. We're on the cusp - we must be careful how we grow. The interest in buying local, local ag, is a great oportunity for us. While becoming 100% self-reliant is probably not achievable, perhaps not desirable, I think we should become less dependent on getting food and goods from outside VT and move toward maximum sustainabilty.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Preserve the environment. Be sure everyone has enough food, affordable housing and health care. Support small-scale local agriculture and socially responsible businesses.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

"My" community,the Upper Valley, includes NH - I prefer VT's politics but have friends on both sides of the River. I like idea of VT reclaiming its independence from the US b/c the US has become an empire;the federal govt violates the Constitution rather than "preserve, protect and defend"-ing it. I worry about what this would mean for the rest of New England. it.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 04/04/2008 - 10:23pm.

**Danby**

**Age (if entered):**

21

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Independence, freedom, & diversity, this is what Vermont means to me. Vermont contains the best of two worlds, meaning that it is both charmingly historical, and yet it is also helping to lead the United States into the 21st century. Vermont is aiding in the movement that is pushing for equalizing the rights of all people, not just some.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

It seems to me that all Vermonters share the values of acceptance, dignity, hardwork, independence, and preserving our beautiful state.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

I think that some of the challenges are ;trying to maintain Vermont's historical charm while allowing new businesses to take root and provide more people with jobs. Another being that we are trying to provide everyone with the same rights, regardless of what others may think. However, it will draw more people into it, which means we must be prepared to undergo more changes regarding economics.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Equalizing the rights of everyone, lowering the tax rates for all Vermonters, reducing the prices of land and maintaining the beauty and simplicity of this rural sanctuary.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I know that because Danby is such a small and tight-knit town, that everything I already mentioned will only aid it in its attempt to increase it in size.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 04/03/2008 - 6:11pm.

**[East Montpelier](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

73

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

We must become self sufficient in food and energy. A study has shown that we can feed our current population with the land available. Another study has shown that we can produce enough biofuels to heat all of our homes. With necessary changes in our agriculture (weaning ourselves from largely a dairy base), becoming self sufficient in heating energy and food is possible.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

The transformation described above will create many job opportunities as other jobs are made obsolete (buying, selling home heating oil). These new jobs will be closer to home. This will help us to return to a more local community based existence.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

The changes mentioned above will encourage the steps EM has already taken to strengthen community ties.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 04/03/2008 - 11:42am.

**Jericho**

**Age (if entered):**

65

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

I love this state, and it's the only place in the USA I'd want to live. The scenic beauty and the climate (yes, the winter too) are pleasing to me, and I think there are an incredible number of interesting people here - people of integrity who care about the environment, the state, the world.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence, tolerance (usually) for those who think differently or represent other races, etc. A love of the outdoors. Interest in governance and a desire for fairness. Many people share "liberal" values.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

How to achieve universal health care. How to preserve farming and thus the landscape we say we treasure but which is rapidly disappearing. How to fund education. How to

preserve small communities and the downtowns. How to preserve the middle class (ie raise those in poverty) and prevent the state from becoming a 2nd home for the wealthy.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Universal health care. Preserving farms and the open pasture/field landscapes. Vermont will become totally wooded if we allow farming to die. Develop alternative energies like wind and solar.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

It all applies to my community, especially since we are feeling a great deal of pressure to "grow" from the Burlington area.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 04/02/2008 - 1:36pm.

**Norwich**

**Age (if entered):**

61

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

I feel very lucky to have lived in Vermont for almost 30 years. Outside of Hawaii, it is as close to heaven as you can get. I feel safe and appreciated here, which (as a member of the LGBT community) is wonderful.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

honest, hard-working, caring for the environment, appreciative of Vermont's great beauty, sense of community and helping others

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Maintaining or even improving our pristine natural environment, working hard to raise those living in poverty to a high standard of living, spreading our good way of life beyond VT's borders, continuing to improve the quality of life for Vermont's minorities (especially LGBT folks) and most of all LOWERING OUR TAXES!!!!!!!!!!!!

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Affordable taxes for the middle class!!!!

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Not sure what this question means. All the above apply to my community--that's where each person can start. Everyone needs to be involved.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sun, 03/30/2008 - 6:11pm.

**South Burlington**

**Age (if entered):**

58

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a bucolic, safe, independent, liberal, beautiful, tolerant and interesting place to live. The scale of life is small enough to manage comfortably.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence, thrift, tolerance, community, stewardship of the land

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Preserving our way of life - maintaining small communities, strong local governments, open spaces and natural areas, farms, forests, a clean environment, safety, and a steady economy.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Protecting our environment.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

South Burlington is under great development and growth pressure and city leaders do not seem attuned to protecting natural areas and open spaces that make our community special.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sun, 03/30/2008 - 4:44pm.

**Warren Gore**

**Age (if entered):**

^^

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A once great state that has built an obscene bureaucracy to resist inevitable change to the point of absurdity.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Being the big fish by keeping the pond small.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Inevitable change than we refuse to address but must.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Start by Fixing our communication system--WiFi and cell phone service. My new Apple iphone has NO SERVICE in Vt.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Refusing to accept change (reality) is not a virtue.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 03/27/2008 - 3:29pm.

**Essex junction**

**Age (if entered):**

18

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A place with rich heritage and beauty. a place where the typical strifes that commonly found in other states, are much milder here.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I believe vermonters all share the belief of preserving the heritage and beauty of the state, and creating more opportunities for this state to become better than it's neighbors.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The severe gap between high income families and low income families. the plight of the family farmers, high taxes. commercial or residential developments that threaten open lush forested lands that vermont is famous for.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

- 

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 03/26/2008 - 1:55am.

**South Burlington**

**Age (if entered):**

55

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

This is my home. A place that is safe, honest, full of integrity in business, and where things get done.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Not certain at this time.....it seems there are less values everywhere including Vermont - Time to get back to the basics in life, community.....

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Bring back into focus basic values in the community and State.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Education, Workforce, Values, Safe Environment

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

They all apply -

**Burlington**

**Age (if entered):**

38

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a small, safe, beautiful state with a strong sense of community. Vermonters are proud to be independent and to swim against many of the mainstream currents of American society and politics. I often think of Vermont as a green island of sanity in an increasingly crazy world.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Native-born or flatlander, all Vermonters are proud of our state's independent ideas and actions and our sense of community and interconnectedness. Most Vermonters welcome new people and ideas from all over the world, but sadly some have embraced hate instead (the "Take Back Vermont" crowd).

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Vermont is uniquely positioned to be innovative in the agricultural and renewable energy sectors, and most Vermonters strongly support such efforts. However political courage and leadership are often lacking on this issue! Our biggest challenge will be to remove that obstacle to opportunity.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

We need to become as energy and food-independent as possible. This will ensure our security in an increasingly crazy world and will also make Vermont a uniquely attractive place to live, work, and invest. But in order to get ourselves into this strong position we have to invest heavily in R&D \*now\*!

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Burlington's Intervale is a great start – we need more of the same. How about a city-wide initiative to put windmills/solar panels on houses and more support for urban gardening? We need major upgrades in public transport, both for people and foodstuffs, to protect the city when the oil crunch hits.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sun, 03/23/2008 - 2:17pm.

## Proctor

### **Age (if entered):**

40

### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is my home. This is where I was born and raised. I feel protective of Vermont and want it to retain the look, feel, and the values that make it special.

### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

A concern for the environment. A responsibility to take care of our earth and our communities. And the initiative to help - the concept that one person can make a difference. I think Vermont has one of the highest concentrations of these types of people as there are anywhere in the world.

### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenges: maintaining a livable lifestyle for Vermonters at the middle and low income levels. It feels at times like our state is a haven for those in higher tax brackets, and that the gap between the high and low income is getting larger and larger. Opportunities: using our commitment to our communities and our environment to fix that gap.

### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Making sure that all income levels of vermonters are feeling welcome and supported. Making sure that we don't become a haven for the wealthy and lose what makes Vermont special.

### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Proctor is viewed as an "elite community" in our area because we maintain all our services (elementary and HS, garbage pick up, town water and sewer, recreation

facilities) we are viewed in the immediate area as being snobs. I see the difference in income levels from both sides - the gap is large and we need to take care of everyone with losing Vermont.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 03/21/2008 - 9:45am.

## **Burlington**

### **Age (if entered):**

61

### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

homeland; standing on the shoulders of all those who came before me; being rooted in politics&traditions back to 16th century; one is judged&appreciated for what s/he does-for self, family, neighbors-& contributes-to community-not by \$ or what's prestigious elsewhere; appreciation of other cultures even in smallest towns.

### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

1.appreciation&inclusion-which goes BEYOND TOLERANCE! b/c tolerance assumes one's own superiority; 2.independence(individuality&leaving others alone) & interdependence 3.love of learning; 4.VT wit; 5.respect of others&environment; 6.small scale; 7.[social] honesty(lack of corruption)

### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

challenges: poverty; racism; loss of civic experience & knowledge; phys. & emot'l violence especially in homes/schools; increased economic disparity; difficulty of going it alone (v. the strength of the fed govt & culture, the global economy). Opp'ties: every challenge can be turned into an opportunity through the strength & hard work of this "indominatable people" [Coolidge].

### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

linking the present (challenges) to the past (strength of our heritage) (so more and more people "get it" about how to solve problems "the VT way"

### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

1. keep neighborhood schools&make each elem.sch. vibrant. 2. actively fight classism&racism in all schls. 3. involve local people in local solutions. 4. All Vermonters deserve a livable wage. 5. affordable, single payer Healthcare for all. 6. affordable housing. 7. mentor programs

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 03/20/2008 - 8:03pm.

## Ripton

### **Age (if entered):**

29

### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

It means a quiet environment of acceptance and strength. Majestic beauty blended with cold (25 degrees?!?) reality. The environment and people working together, almost Utopia (except that we're all broke and can't afford healthcare).

### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

A desire to keep Vermont clean and somewhat "bullshit" free; we don't want Billboards, Big box stores, or any more violence/drugs to take over our towns.

### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

I think we all like to be self-sufficient and strong, but are driven by poverty to be needy and dependent on a system that isn't really working for everyone. Someone can do a better job raising their children on welfare than they can working and paying for health care and food themselves.?! The system encourages dependancy. People are moving here for the welfare benefits- did you know that?

### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Different types of energy (wind, geothermal, etc) also better prison and court processes... counseling not condemnation. It's cheaper and better for all the people involved.

### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I think a lot of people try to ignore the problems, and there is a sense of overwhelming pressure when it comes to money issues (umbrella over healthcare, transportation, home buying etc) this makes people tense and stressed so it affects everything.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 03/20/2008 - 3:52am.

[Cabot](#)

**Age (if entered):**

53

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

a place where people care about their neighbors, other species, and the land itself--here and world-wide; a place where people can lead a more natural, simple, healthful, and sustainable lifestyle; a place where people can lead a less material consumptive lifestyle with less exposure to environmental and social poisons...

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

love of nature, self-responsibility, altruism, democracy

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

challenges are to resist submission to immoral corporate interests and decisions based on fear; opportunities include implementing pioneer and model programs for environmental sustainability and progressive social justice

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

environmental sustainability; marriage equality for same-sex couples; reduction of income disparity among citizens; equalizing of education and employment opportunities among citizens....

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

not sure....

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 03/19/2008 - 10:40am.

[N. Ferrisburgh](#)

**Age (if entered):**

47

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Safety, happiness, natural beauty, freedom.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Maintaining and growing all of the above (safety, happiness, natural beauty, freedom)

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Civil rights (next step - marriage equality for our gay & lesbian neighbors), alternative energy sources development, the whole range of progressive freedoms that the USA was founded upon.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

We live in a fairly conservative area, but even there people respect each other and value freedom and the beauty around us. Everywhere I see the environment being despoiled, though, either with ugly building and thoughtless development. How to regulate that without curtailing freedom? Difficult.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 03/19/2008 - 9:22am.

**[Sheffield](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

40

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Good family values, a peaceful and serene place to live and communities of caring individuals

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Vermont faces a lack of job challenge and economic issues which surround the economy. The opportunities are there for stronger community connections to help all those in need.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Our priorities should lie within our children. Since our children will be our leaders someday, we should focus on teaching good values and equality. Promote community connectedness as a strength to bring everyone together as a team.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Community is where it all begins. Promoting a strong community involvement with each resident offers help to those who are in need. By helping each other in our communities it fosters bonds between all of us who share the same rights to be Vermonters living in a place where equality is righteous.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 03/19/2008 - 8:29am.

**Barre**

**Age (if entered):**

57

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Coming from the midwest, I enjoy the "identity" Vermont stands for world-wide, whether it is the view of wholesome milk & ice cream in wonderful mountains, or being a leader in education and a preserver of town government.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

The state motto "Freedom & Unity" first comes to mind in a live and let live sort of way. I like how most (still not all by any means) Vermonters - transplants or native born - were the first to establish a civil union law, Vermonters began and still practice good environmental ways, exhibited through Green Up Day.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Keeping enough employment "action" in the state to hold on to young people once they graduate. Accepting and encouraging more diversity within the borders so our youth don't grow up "narrow minded".

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Education, education and education.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I feel Barre is an "up and coming" community ready to spring back from economic woes. Many folks here are working hard to bring back Main Street and establish a sense of community, through our schools, through the recent Flower Show, through performances at the Opera House, and through LACE working with local farmers.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 03/18/2008 - 9:59pm.

**Cornwall**

**Age (if entered):**

60

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

I experience Vermont as a thoughtful state that is invested in governing with common sense and preserving the natural environment. It is also sometimes slightly isolated from and out of step with the larger country. I am proud of civil unions but ready for gay marriage.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I think Vermonters value resourcefulness and helpfulness. I think most Vermonters are concerned about the common good, that is, considerate of one's neighbor and looking out for future generations.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

We need to think of Vermont children as OUR children and educate them equally. We need to include everyone in health insurance and health care. We need to address issues of class and equality.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

We must create local and sustainable economy. We must invest in renewable energy, education, health care, and infrastructure. Our public radio is a valuable resource. We should support all families.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

My rural community has no public transportation or natural sources of energy other than wind or solar. Our K-6 school needs to consolidate with other small, rural schools. We rely on institutions and organizations in Middlebury for just about all services.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 03/18/2008 - 6:38pm.

**Clarendon**

**Age (if entered):**

38

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont means community. Vermont means neighbors helping neighbors. I value my privacy but am always willing to help someone in need.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I think all Vermonters share a respect for others and value diversity.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

We need to make sure that all Vermonters are valued equally under the law. We need to make sure all Vermonters have equal rights and responsibilities.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

**Rochester**

**Age (if entered):**

63

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a beautiful place where people are free and equal.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Vermonters value respect for individual liberty, respect for all people, embracing creativity and diverse hearts and minds.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

We need to protect our natural environment, maintain its magnetism as a destination, and welcome all people of good will. We have the opportunity to acknowledge the equality and liberty of same-sex couples by making "marriage" available to all, not "civil unions", which is a put-down.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Liberty, equality and justice for all.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

My community has gay and lesbian citizens who are as much a part of our town as anyone is. They should have access to legal marriage, the same as anyone else.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 03/18/2008 - 4:53pm.

[Rutland](#)

**Age (if entered):**

31

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont means a beautiful state with open minded forward thinking just people.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Community is important and so valuing each member and treating them equally. Equal access to marriage, health care and housing.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Lack of financial growth and opportunities for future generations to stay and prosper in Vermont.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Attract more green business, legalize gay marriage, provide quality health care to all, and affordable housing.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

They all do!

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 03/18/2008 - 4:51pm.

**Richmond**

**Age (if entered):**

30

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

individual freedoms yet cohesive communities, property rights yet open landscapes, making a living yet paying low prices, family farms yet low-cost food, small towns yet suburban neighborhoods, church street marketplace yet big box stores, clean environment yet driving all over, open space yet 5 acre zoning, swimming in the lake yet ample parking lots

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 03/18/2008 - 4:38pm.

[Cabot](#)

**Age (if entered):**

57

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont means a unique place to live, a community of neighbors, people, who value each other and the talents each of us have to bring to our communities balanced with a love to maintain the land.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence, tolerance, acceptance and a quirky way of taking leaps socially such as the civil union passage in 2000

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

To totally become as our constitution guarantees, equality for all citizens of Vermont by taking the next step and allowing gay marriage.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 03/18/2008 - 4:16pm.

[westminster](#)

**Age (if entered):**

48

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Life

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Hard work for real vermonters

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Being able to afford living here

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Good jobs

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Can not afford to live here, taxes!

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 03/18/2008 - 12:34pm.

**Hartford**

**Age (if entered):**

42

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

It's a pretty state with a nice simple life if only I could get a job paying more than 8 dollars an hour.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

People like to keep to themselves but are willing to help when they can.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

We need to get wages in line with the cost of living. We need to rely less on tourism and the negatives of tourism so we can sustain better jobs & economy.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Make it a place younger people want to stay and contribute to. We need to have more for the youth to do or they will find drugs, alienation. Also, there needs to be more for everyone to do, especially newcomers in small towns.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I just moved here 6 months ago. I find it a struggle to get used to the weather and the alienation and the way prices do not match wages.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 03/18/2008 - 6:55am.

**Addison**

**Age (if entered):**

51

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Independence

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Keeping development in urban areas and not rural areas.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Keeping the rural areas of VT rural while allowing for sensible development.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Down country money talks and Vermonters walk.....

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 03/17/2008 - 6:10pm.

## Rutland

**Age (if entered):**

44

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A beautiful place with a comfortable way of life. Less conspicuous consumption and more appreciation of what we have. Vermont means home to me. It is not my state of birth; it is the state I gratefully adopted and love contributing to.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence, self-sufficiency, privacy, and diversity acceptance. My fellow community members may not be effusive, but I trust them and work with them on many issues of importance that we share.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Need clean-energy public transportation; Sustainable, vibrant economy w/o big-box/chain stores & housing developments that do not fit the landscape. Opportunities: Vibrant regional economy through agriculture (food & other essential items); develop strong community cohesion.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Interdependence. Education that prepares Vermonters to contribute to the state's needs. Renewable, locally-produced energy. Support for small agriculture and regional economies (and less influence from large, powerful corporations). Much more community participation in the process.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Rutland's developing local food movement creates priceless wealth to benefit everyone. Rutland challenges: Need much more diversity consciousness; Diverse & green economy; Be friendlier to pedestrians & bicyclers & discourage driving everywhere; Renewable energy needs a big jump-start.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 03/17/2008 - 4:21pm.

## Westford

**Age (if entered):**

57

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is truly a state of mind -- a collective mind that believes in freedom, community, inventiveness, courage and hope.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

See question #1.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Preserving a way of life at the same time we must accommodate change.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Vermont first; keep the feds at bay.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

My community has worked hard to preserve the town in much the way it has existed for decades. Yes, there is more development, but the town plan respects the will of the community to engage in thoughtful solutions to the push & pull of encroaching populations and preservation of its historic ecology.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 03/17/2008 - 4:00pm.

**Brandon**

**Age (if entered):**

64

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A peaceful life, an appreciation of four seasons, a style of government where individuals can be heard, a great place to raise children.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Conservatism, simplicity of life, security, hope for the future.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Developing a business climate that will bring businesses to the state that benefit the goals of the state and help with the tax base. Work toward the Governor's affordability program.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

New businesses, affordable housing, education, a plan that will encourage our young people to stay, work, and live in VT.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Brandon is a progressive community. We still have the issues of affordable housing. Education is good. We have a reasonable tax base but reluctance to change is preventing other businesses from locating in Brandon and the unfriendly business environment in VT in general is a deterrent.

**brandon**

**Age (if entered):**

50

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Great quality of life...great community spirit...

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

independence

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

aging population, taxes too high for size of economic population, not enough rental properties everyone forced to own a home so that property taxes are too high and a prebate rebate system is required

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

work on bringing industries here that can work in a green and friendly manner....train our students for those green jobs...get rid of our teachers union...NEA there is no place for it here in a state our size.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

we need our state roads better maintained for starters....the state construction budget needs to be better funded to keep pace with aging schools, the state needs to fund the health services sector so the education budget is not forced to carry their burden under the "education" umbrella

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Submitted by Anonymous on Sun, 03/16/2008 - 2:51pm.

**S. Burlington**

**Age (if entered):**

47

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A place that is concerned about the environment and where I can live with my partner in the hope of someday soon being able to MARRY.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Open mindedness when educated to social issues

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Keeping younger people here due to lack of competitive jobs. Integrating people of color into communities. Making Gay marriage legal

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Work toward making state GREEN, pass legislature for GAY marriage

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

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Submitted by Anonymous on Sun, 03/16/2008 - 12:05pm.

eden

**Age (if entered):**

68

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

I came to Vermont to earn my living connected to the woods. I have seen my neighborhood swamped by people who are opposed to almost every element of earning a living from our woodlands. I no longer know what Vermont means.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

As people try to control how I use my land, what kind of business I run on my own land, how much water I can use, even what temperature I can store the hot water in my own home, whether I can get cell phone service, whether a road can be straightened, I have come to doubt whether we do share any values whatsoever.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

If the basic creativity of our own people could be unleashed and set free from the dead hand of the past which so many people among "the brightest and the best" now support; if the genius of Vermonters could be released, I think Vermont has a very bright future.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

First is to reduce the taxes which drain capital from young entrepreneurs precisely when they most need it, and secondly eliminate the endless regulatory second guessing which constantly cripples innovation and development of human capital.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Eden is burdened by lousy regulation, lousy infrastructure, lousy tax policy, and lousy government policies. Fifty years ago two thirds of the population were employed in town. Today, absent the school, only about 5% is. That change resulted from deliberate government policies at all levels -- and it has destroyed Eden as a community.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Sun, 03/16/2008 - 7:39am.

## Newport City

**Age (if entered):**

62

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Rugged, independent, beautiful, progressive, democratic, creative, innovative, resourceful, but politically dysfunctional

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Years ago I would have said "community" but I think interest in "community" has weakened significantly. We have become much more polarized and and partisan, with the result that we don't get the best and brightest to enage in community and politics.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

We have a huge problem with the separation between the haves and the have nots, even in Vermont. Similarly, we have not figured out how to build community among native Vermonters and newcomers, with both groups largely suspicious of each other.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

One of the most divisive issues in Vermont and nationally is the whole pro choice vs pro life debate. We need leadership that works to bring the two sides together by working on the underlying issue - preventing unwanted pregnancies in the first place.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Our community has lacked good leadership for years, in both the municipal arena and education. For some reason we have been unable to attract the strong leaders in the community into public service and other forms of civic engagement. I attribute most of the problem to rampant partisanship, a lack of civil discourse, over regulation and undue public scrutiny

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Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 03/15/2008 - 5:36pm.

## burlington

**Age (if entered):**

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

"Vermont's State/Local Tax Burden Highest in the Nation During the past three decades Vermont's state and local tax burden has consistently ranked among the nation's highest. Estimated at 14.1% of income, Vermont's state and local taxes are currently the highest in the nation, well above the national average of 11.0%."(<http://www.taxfoundation.org/research/topic/62.html>)

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence - fine - but not in fragmenting the state's education "system" into far too many tiny school systems with inadequate resources and low teacher salaries.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenge: rising fuel costs, plus low tax base, make Vermont one of the most expensive states as far as basic living costs. Fewer tourists, second homes, retirees. Opportunities: got to realize potential income sources of the landscape and geography.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Increasing tax base, lowering fuel costs, standardizing educational cost and delivery structures across the state.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I live in Burlington: very high city and state taxes, and fuel costs during the winter. Yet, the school system doesn't even pay for an earned doctorate.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 03/15/2008 - 2:20pm.

**Brattleboro**

**Age (if entered):**

37

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont means HOME to me. I was born and raised here, and I'm fiercely proud of our state for so many reasons. Vermont and Vermonters have such a tradition of independent thinking and open-mindedness. Vermont means small town warmth at its best.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I believe Vermonters share a common value around preserving the quality of life in our state. I believe Vermonters hold "independent spirit" as a common value and take pride in our state's often quirky record in this arena. For the most part, I think Vermonters share a common value around the dignity and worth of all humans, and appreciating the value of diversity.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenges for Vermont include the everpresent loom of sprawl, and the increasing environmental and energy demands it represents. A central challenge this state faces is that our young people graduate and move elsewhere, while people moving into Vermont tend to be past the age of entering the workforce in an entrylevel or journeyman level, creating workforce issues.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

I would see our priorities as maintaining that historical focus on preserving quality of life and what makes Vermont special and unique, restricting development on natural lands, moving forward and then keeping pace with technological growth, and continuing a focus on small businesses and specialty agriculture.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I believe my community tries hard on a number of these values and challenges that I mention in my thoughts. My community works hard for a vibrant downtown, preservation of natural lands, and encouragement of small business.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 03/14/2008 - 4:10pm.

[Burlington](#)

**Age (if entered):**

69

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

They value individual liberty and social responsibility for a diverse community. They also value the environment and participatory government and a rich cultural life.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The rapidly rising cost of health care is driving the costs of government services which is putting pressure on both individuals and local businesses. The lack of gubernatorial leadership in addressing the problems of the state out of a false sense of 'affordability' is imperiling the environment, the infrastructure, the economy and responsible development in the State.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Health care for all the election of a progressive minded governor who is proactive and not a roadblock to creative solutions to our problems.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Burlington needs to elect another progressive person to the State Legislature to help achieve enough votes to override the Governor's veto of any solution that might work. Solving the health care crisis will alleviate the pressure on city government's lack of financial resources to deal with a range of postponed problems

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Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 03/14/2008 - 2:27pm.

**[Winooski](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

57

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a relatively safe place to be and it is beautiful. I could not move because I've gotten used to having most of the same civil rights as everyone else and it would be extremely difficult to give that up.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I'm not sure we are homogeneous enough to answer. Values I hope we share are honesty, doing your share, live and let live.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Roads, sewers, water treatment, energy resources. How do we respect freedom of religion when some people's religion deny others freedom If IBM can self insure, why not Vermont. If we taxed fairly, would rich folks leave? What effect? Small businesses benefit all.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Renewable energy. Protect our water supply. Fair taxation. Education reform.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Our sewers are a mess. We don't know what's in our water since we drink what we urinate. Energy and food costs are through the roof. Our community does not support the school.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 03/14/2008 - 2:06pm.

**Pawlet**

**Age (if entered):**

23

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont means ancient rolling hill, waving hay, judging the seasons by the shape of the cornfields, the occassional whiff of dairy-cow, fishing, hiking, friends and family.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

We value the land, our neighbors, our democratic rights, and the Green Mountain Boys.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Flatlanders.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

We need to think-out our environmental initiatives better. Cow-Power increases factory farming, CFLs contain Mercury and Ethanol will raise the price of land beyond what the richest woodchuck could afford. We need to grow sustainably, re-organize around town centers, support our local farmers and keep our state's values intact.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Pawlet is a brilliant town, with gorgeous natural resources, well-run farms, smiling neighbors and an up-beat little downtown. Supporting local goods is easy at Mach's general store, where local products abound.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 03/13/2008 - 3:26pm.

**Weybridge**

**Age (if entered):**

65

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

"A faux 19th century agricultural theme park for wealthy strangers." Martin Harris

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Hmm. Not many. There are two strongly conflicting cultures and sets of values here: loony left and sober realism. The kids, always perceptive and creative, used to label members of these two cultures "preps and rednecks."

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The lunatics are in charge of the asylum here--leftist ideology trumps application of common sense to find practical approaches to difficult problems: we are in economic and demographic crash mode, but the lefties don't seem concerned; too busy impeaching the president, encouraging sexual deviance, etc.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Lower taxes, jobs and homes for young families.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Weybridge is a classic retirement home for rich lefties from elsewhere. God help us.

**Isle La Motte**

**Age (if entered):**

63

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont has become a state where most of the politically active population envy wealth and spend their time trying to arrange to get a piece of what they didn't earn.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

I have no idea - Most politically active Vermonters have no values worth sharing.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The challenge is to provide an easy to understand, level playing field that will allow Vermonters to quickly and without "red tape" exploit economic opportunities.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Working together is less important than achieveing something on your own -  
Togetherness is the problem - not the solution.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

It is irrelevant to talk about us - Vermont should be rebuilt on its history of individual self-sufficiency. We talk a lot but most Vermonters will wait for someone else to do something and the obstacles in place for the "doers" are not worth the effort to overcome.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 03/10/2008 - 6:44pm.

**Sheldon**

**Age (if entered):**

79

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Need economical power and facilities for industry in Franklin County, and to find the right industry. If raw materials could be brought in and product shipped out, we would have a better quality of life with a shorter commute for labor. This has been happening to some extent with Enosburg Industrial Park, but to no avail so far.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Our Route 105 is loaded with commuters going somewhere else to work. How many are going just to St. Albans, Georgia, or Swanton I don't know. It would be nice if more industry could come to northeast Franklin County to use some of the labor force. A 2-hour ride on each end of the work day doesn't seem very enjoyable to me.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 03/03/2008 - 9:52pm.

[Winooski](#)

**Age (if entered):**

57

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

An independant way of life, with an oppportunity, to live life to it's fullest.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

To many on line forums and not enough country picnics.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Support The Families of middle income america, the back bone of any economy.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

School Choice, real choice for everyone, for any school. To include free college to our citizens. Mass transportation around the towns we live in, from small busses to trains. County wide government supporting county wide highways and roads.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 03/03/2008 - 1:15pm.

**Fairfield**

**Age (if entered):**

48

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A state of great natural beauty, rich heritage, and ideals of both tolerance and community spirit that are sometimes in conflict. Huge potential for developing solutions that could be replicated elsewhere. Small enough that each person matters. Big ideas.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Many Vermonters share an optimistic hands-on attitude that insists that problems are fixable, and that we are the ones to fix them- if we could only agree on how...but for many, basic survival is taking up most of our energy and time, so their voices aren't often heard.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Life is keeping families so busy, and funding issues are keeping non-profits so busy, that there isn't enough communication between different groups and organizations. We're small enough to make it work- we could be a model for larger places.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Communication between groups and with the community at large is the key- we can't afford to waste resources by re-inventing the wheel in each program or town. The larger issues are all related- let's take a broader, community-wide approach to solving them.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

If we could create better means for communicating across Franklin and Grand Isle counties, we could accomplish so much more- the economy, the environment, health, education, youth and age- these should not be worked on as though they were separate issues

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 03/01/2008 - 2:15pm.

**Montpelier**

**Age (if entered):**

33

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Historic downtowns & village centers as centers of business; locally grown products; quality public schools; clean mountains, fields, lakes, & rivers; open & green space free of billboards; limited strip mall development & sprawl; snow

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

A commitment to much of the above & independence.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenges - sprawl; keeping downtowns/village centers vibrant & diverse; retaining small & quality schools; childcare for infants/toddlers/pre-schoolers; elder care; informing tourists about places of interest without billboards. Opportunities - the many places of interest in VT, farmers markets, downtown businesses, 3rd stories of buildings to put back in use; small schools.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Think of ways to diversify the state's reliance on tourism for its revenue while trying to boost tourism (from residents within the state & out of state); focus not on new housing construction but rehabilitating older homes & helping elders find ways to live & age in

home (either their current home or a smaller home/apartment); retaining ag land & find ways to put land back into work.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

<Montpelier does a great job keeping its downtown vibrant. Luckily it's geography prevents a lot of sprawl, but it could do a better job encouraging the use of 3rd floors as housing. Hopefully the voters will continue to approve school budgets to keep and improve the quality of its schools. A preschool would be great too!

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 02/28/2008 - 5:33pm.

**Bradford**

**Age (if entered):**

60

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A New England state that offered varied seasons with wonderful, local characters to entertain us all while remaining self supporting individuals. Today it means, high taxes, too much government, poor education, social services that are out of control run by people who moved here to have the old Vermont and changed it.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

True Vermonters appreciate individuality. They are kind to their neighbors, tend to their own business, invest countless hours in their community and never gossip.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The need to clearly define what is productivity - not attending a meeting - and reducing all groups - government, non profits etc. that are funded by tax dollars to ones that can demonstrate how the funds are used and that the funds provide benefits which are not duplicated in other programs and reach lots of citizens.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

<To make Vermont a State where all can live and work with a decent income. Giving money to the poor hasn't worked. Find a way to bring back pride to the poor, provide

them with the same education the 'good' people get and reduce government so new businesses will offer reasonable jobs.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Our community has approximately twice the state average for free and reduced lunches - in a self study more than twice the state average of 8th graders ours stated they use alcohol - the social services provided in our community run up \$100,000s of thousands of dollars of expenses every year and for what - the systems aren't working and they need to be repaired.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 02/27/2008 - 3:34pm.

**Wolcott**

**Age (if entered):**

37

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

a place where rural livelihoods are still possible, having space to do my own thing without a lot of people around, a variety of wild animals and plants, a place where nature still has some breathing room, a community of people who care about the land, proud of our stance on gay rights

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

respect for land desire to hold onto traditional livelihoods live and let live, don't interfere in others' lives self-sufficiency and independence

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

breaking down social and ideological divisions a class divide that people don't talk about keeping rural livelihoods viable getting everyone on board for environmental initiatives creating small scale local economies, more self-sufficiency

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

economic justice - better jobs and better work conditions conserving the working landscape improving environmental health strengthen communities

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

My community has a long way to go. Very divided, bedroom community. I'd like to see more engagement here across ideological and political and class divides. I wish our town had more of a center and had more viable businesses. I wish there was work for me nearby.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 02/27/2008 - 12:55pm.

**Franklin**

**Age (if entered):**

32

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

The way of life, quiet and content! A great place for children to be raised and values to be instilled.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

The small town communities. Neighbors helping neighbors!

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Keeping our children in the state for well paid careers.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Education, Jobs and pulling all communities together ~ working together.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

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Submitted by Anonymous on Wed, 02/27/2008 - 12:25pm.

**Hyde Park**

**Age (if entered):**

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont ~ beautiful to the eye, peaceful to the soul, once a farming state, a place to raise families, hard working men & women dedicated to the love of Vermont, willing to fight for it. Now, most of that is lost by outsiders coming in and bringing what they supposedly wanted to leave behind. Too much gov't control, yankee pride has been stripped away Headed toward socialism.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

True Vermonters are scarce. They would share all they had. Each community was like a large family getting together for a community supper, chatting, laughing. Today people keep more to themselves and values have changed.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Short changing our youth. Too many non-essential subjects being taught consequently they are not prepared for their future. The 1-10 student/teacher ratio is appalling. High costs of education is not producing better students. Grades are down standards are down. We put far too much emphasis on the buildings rather than the quality of care. Our priorities are in the wrong places.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Education where students are in the 80 - 85 percentile, jobs available for local people not "imported" ones, producing more from the land instead of importing our essentials from foreign countries. We have become concerned with tourism than meeting the needs of our people that grew up here and want to stay here. There needs to be more of a balance.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

We have become a bedroom community for people working outside the area. We have no real industry here. Short of a court house, post office, a small grocery store, a bank, a couple schools, a library and a few farms left a couple bed & breakfasts that is it. There is no real revenue coming from within yet taxes continue to rise.

- 

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 02/26/2008 - 5:38pm.

[South Burlington](#)

**Age (if entered):**

34

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont means community. A place where people come together to support one another by growing and purchasing fresh, local food and other products. Vermonters also share an open voice for positive change within the State & the country. The State is like no other, and I'm proud to live here.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

A sense of community and support for other Vermonters.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

maintaining vibrant communities and concentrating growth in urban areas, and limiting our dependence on cars.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

1. Implementing smart growth principles in community centers. 2. Focus on buying local, supporting Vermont made products. 3. Examine alternative transportation options throughout the State. 4. Examine ways to reduce carbon emissions within each household.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

They are all extremely necessary throughout all of Chittenden County.

**Richmond**

**Age (if entered):**

39

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

I was born here and appreciate the high quality of life, four seasons, and wonderful geography. Unfortunately the state has been taken over politically by trust fund utopian

minded fiscal liberals who have created a socialist state. The upper middle class is being driven out of the state by high taxes.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

The true Vermonters value fierce independence, freedom, and the environment. The new Vermonters (the imported trust fund liberals) value socialism and regulation cloaked as concern for the environment.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Our young people are leaving at 4x the national average due to high taxes and lack of good career opportunities with larger companies. The opportunity is to create a pro-economy political agenda and incent growth of responsible business to drive our economy and our tax base. Create an affordable lifestyle for people to thrive rather than spread entitlements.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Enhance the economy, strengthen the tax base, lower the tax burden, create opportunities for young people to thrive (18 to 35 year olds that we are among the lowest in % of population). Create affordable housing.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

All of them apply in spades. Richmond is full of imported trust fund liberals and there are no good jobs and no affordable housing for 18 to 35 year olds. Why would they stay here?

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 02/26/2008 - 9:35am.

**Colchester**

**Age (if entered):**

68

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Convene 6-8 of Vermont's best thinkers from any walk of life. The thinkers should leave their agendas, but not their values, at the door and spend a month of intensive preparation and research, considering likely outcomes. They should collaborate for several days to develop two or three most likely scenarios and the resulting snapshot of Vermont in 5-7 years.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 02/25/2008 - 9:15pm.

**Burlington**

**Age (if entered):**

48

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A place where people have political agency and an corrupted place to live.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Do unto others, protect the landscape, balance the forces of capitalism with common sense.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

To be a model for the nation/ world.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Protect our environment, Local decision making, Power of people to determine their future

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

This is getting harder to do in Burlington.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 02/25/2008 - 5:55pm.

### North Bennington

#### **Age (if entered):**

60

#### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a place where people respect and enjoy each other, let people live as they choose, and are helpful with those who have few choices. We are mostly a modest, reasonable group of people with opinions and are more positive about our State than most Americans. We think Vermont has character and we want it to stay that way.

#### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

#### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

The aging population is going to stress Vermont more than any other issue in the next decades; we do not have the resources or facilities to care adequately for aging, ill, disabled or troubled people in great numbers. Our challenge is too keep the quality of interpersonal respect, caring and tolerance when we face these issues of age and decline.

#### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Improve education and job opportunities for the young, particularly in higher paying, technology, and education-oriented work; make certain new populations are welcomed and encouraged; communicate the character of Vermont so our new residents understand what we value here.

#### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

I live in two communities in Vermont, one very small, one Burlington. These issues are equally important in each. I suspect the larger towns will have an easier time managing challenge but are also more endangered in losing their Vermont character. Personally, as I get older I'd prefer to live in the small town and enjoy my neighbors and neighborhood.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Mon, 02/25/2008 - 12:49pm.

## [Bennington](#)

**Age (if entered):**

75

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont has been my home for 75+ years. It is a beautiful rural state.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Vermont's beauty and its rural nature.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenges: High living costs, youth leaving Vt, permitting process too long. Medical care controls restrict care givers and hospitals. Doctors just out of school can not afford to practice in Vt. Opportunities: Develop energy resources, such as wood chip heat, wind; hydro; plan to keep operating Vt Yankee. Manage our wood lands. Better job in training our youth in job skills.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Relax some and streamline the permitting process, promote teaching and training of our youth for a productive life. encourage new ideas, promote responsibility for each individual and their families.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

For the most part, what is good for Vermont is also good for Bennington.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 02/21/2008 - 1:18pm.

## [Marlboro](#)

**Age (if entered):**

25

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A welcome step back from the rest of our country gone mad.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Knowing (not thinking) that less is more, thinking ahead about energy issues, appreciating solitude.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Vermont's rural landscape and old school mindset leave us without many tech jobs or the atmosphere to attract young professionals. This leaves our beautiful state quaint and charming, but left behind and aging. As for opportunities, Vermonters live the old cliché, "thinking outside the box." We may be the breath of fresh air the US desperately needs, that is if anyone will listen.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Maintaining values while joining the 21st century.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Marlboro even has a four-year college, but the kids scam at graduation. It's a beautiful, special place that I will always call home, but it's not where I can work and live.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Fri, 02/15/2008 - 1:18pm.

**Johnson**

**Age (if entered):**

44

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

A state with a unique personality, apparent as soon as the border is crossed. My home; shared with everyone else connected to Vermont.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Sense of place Schedule governed by the seasons Interdependence Hard work

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Crumbling infrastructure (roads, bridges, buildings.)The opportunity to invent a better way will never be a reality because it would mean doing things differently.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

Consider new and better versions of everything from governance to taxation. Reach consensus on generally agreed upon outcomes and design steps to reach them instead of changing plans &quot;midstream&quot; when we aren't having success.

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Vermont, as a state, is my community. Too many don't see the forest (state) for the trees (localities).Ideally there would be a trickle up effect, but why not use gravity and try more of a trickle down approach?

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Submitted by Anonymous on Thu, 02/14/2008 - 2:26pm.

**[ST Johnsbury](#)**

**Age (if entered):**

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Home. Hills trees water family and community. Strong honest congressional delegation.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Energy and the untapped labor force in the undereducated and welfare populations

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

energy and food independence

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

St Johnsbury is a thoughtful and diverse community with a good handle on moving forward intelligently.

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Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 02/09/2008 - 2:17pm.

### Montpelier

#### **Age (if entered):**

50

#### **What does Vermont mean to you?**

Home, family, hard work, great friends, landscape and environment connected to people directly (like firewood and gardens), etc

#### **What common values do Vermonters share?**

Independence, town meeting and decision making in communities. Local control, small scale, and willingness to help, with a yankee stubbornness and self-reliance.

#### **What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Challenges: taking care of Vermonters in the midst of global and national trends and in-state problems. Opportunities: basing plans on our assets and resources, especially those in our wider region.

#### **What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

To have all business, education, and government focus on community service. Programs that develop an innate sense of volunteerism and support for our neighbors throughout our lives in VT.

#### **How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

Montpelier should have a welcoming way of introducing newcomers to the communities' assets and events and so on.

•

Submitted by Anonymous on Sat, 02/09/2008 - 1:44pm.

## Montpelier

**Age (if entered):**

40

**What does Vermont mean to you?**

Vermont is a place full of beauty and charm, but also realities of life, hard work and poverty. It suffers from all the ills that other places do, but there's a working knowledge of those hardships, in many cases.

**What common values do Vermonters share?**

Vermonters seem to have a common awareness of being in this particular place. They seem to have agreed to be identified with this place, and there is often a high sense of volunteerism, or participation.

**What challenges and opportunities do we see for our communities and state?**

Global and national trends; global warming, peak oil, international relations and war. Local trends; maintaining infrastructure, supporting the poor, maintaining a balance for working class and costs of services.

**What should our priorities be as we work together to prepare Vermont for the future?**

locally owned businesses with community service education that is complementary w/locally owned and creative economic strategies energy efficiency and environ. benign economic development development and fostering of local agriculture

**How do your thoughts about Vermont's values, future challenges and priority issues apply to YOUR community?**

These priorities should be echoed and agreed upon by different elements of our business, government, non-profit and philanthropic communities