



# Morristown Community Visit

## Report and Action Plan

July 2011

**Vermont Council on Rural Development**

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# I. Introduction

With over 150 people involved in the process, and almost 80 volunteers on the new task forces, Morrisville has demonstrated wonderful commitment to exploring issues and advancing priorities. Now comes the hard part. We commend everyone who has participated in the process so far, and everyone who contributes to the success of the Morrisville priority efforts to make the town a great place to live, work and do business into the future. We look forward to working with the Morrisville Task Forces as these projects advance **a Morrisville Food Coop and Organization of the Foods Industry; Development of a Business Incubator; Redeveloping Downtown Buildings; and Improving Trails and Walkways.**

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The Vermont Council on Rural Development Community Visit Program is a structured process that enables a community to identify and prioritize goals, fosters local leadership, and serves as a catalyst for the development and realization of concrete, achievable action plans. The program in Morrisville consisted of three phases:

1. On the **Community Visit Day** on March 29<sup>th</sup>, Visiting Team members heard testimony from Morrisville residents in nine focus group areas that had earlier been identified by the local steering committee. Notes and issues raised in these sessions are detailed in Part VI. Based on the testimony received, the Vermont Council on Rural Development identified an initial list of the key **Opportunities** before the community (Part II).
2. The second stage of the Community Visit occurred at the Morrisville **Community Meeting** on May 4<sup>th</sup> when VCRD presented the Opportunities list and facilitated the review and prioritization of these issues by town residents. The resulting list of **Morrisville Priorities** (in Part III) were then the focus for the formation of four Task Forces established to build plans that would address them—namely: **Develop a Morrisville Food Coop and Organize the Foods Industry; Organize a Business Incubator; Redevelop Empty Buildings Downtown; and Improve Trails and Walkways and Physically Unify the Town by Building a Pedestrian Bridge.**
3. In the third phase of the Visit, the **Community Resource Day** on June 1st, the Task Forces met with a second Visiting Team to get organized, build Action Steps, and consider state, federal, non-profit, and private resources that may be available to support their work. The resulting **Task Force Work Plans** are listed in Part IV.

**Resource Team Members** (listed in Part VIII) signed on with a commitment to serve as sounding boards and referral agents for the Morrisville Task Forces. Many of these visitors can be partners in the work before the committees, others can be great sources of advice or connection to other resources. **Call on them for help.**

Members of the Resource Team listened closely to the issues brought forward by town residents and have made suggestions in support of Morrisville's efforts in each challenge area. Their **Recommendations** (Part V) **are not prescriptions; community members are in the best position to make decisions about their next steps and strategies.** Recognizing existing local efforts and the

leadership of the Task Forces, these recommendations are offered, rather, as suggestions for next steps, and as lists of potential resources as the Task Forces make their way forward.

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In the end, Morrisville has established solid priorities for action, built something of a new umbrella for coordination and set momentum toward the achievement of short and long-term goals that will lead to a great variety of successes in improving the Morrisville's life and prosperity.

The Vermont Council on Rural Development is dedicated to helping Vermont communities develop their capacity to create a prosperous and sustainable future through coordination, collaboration, and the effective use of public and private resources. VCRD is prepared to support the efforts of Morrisville as it moves forward and to provide follow up help to Morrisville Task Forces as called upon. VCRD will also serve as an advocate for Morrisville projects with appropriate agencies and organizations in Vermont. Call on us, and on Visiting Team members, when we can be of help.

The Morrystown Visit process, as much as any in the history of the Community Visit program, centered on economic development. Residents were far sighted in both setting the topics for forums and, in the end, setting the priorities for action. The goals really centered on the reinvigoration of economic development, building an engine for the economy of the future. In a place with a history of incubating and growing great businesses, people lined up around key ideas for attracting a new generation of risk-taking entrepreneurs around key initiative areas—downtown redevelopment, business incubation, building the coop and supporting food businesses, advancing and connecting trails as a cornerstone for branding and attracting tourists and residents for the future of the community.

To VCRD, it is terrific that the goals of the process and the four priorities are clear, bold and transformative. Success in meeting each of these objectives will leverage success for the others. To get to these priorities, the community evaluated an additional set of ideas—many of which will come into play in the future, even though they weren't set as priorities at this point. All of them are included in this report for present and future review—several of them may serve as next steps in the community's agenda as current goals are met.

VCRD deeply appreciates the time and energy of the Visiting Team and Morrisville community members alike. In the end, it's all about local leadership—state, federal, non-profit and philanthropic resources follow that leadership: it's the squeaky wheel that gets the grease, and it's the towns with organization, direction and consensus that capture resources to make things happen.

We appreciate the leadership of the Selectboard in inviting the process, participating, and encouraging all residents to be part of the effort. Dan Lindley, the town administrator, brought an infectious enthusiasm to the effort—community organizing adds work to the municipality; Morrisville is lucky to have a staff that wants to innovate and steps up to both this process and to advance the community and economic development efforts of the projects developed. We appreciate the lead of Heather Sargent and Susan Titterton who advocated for the project and introduced VCRD to the town leadership. We especially appreciate Steve Ames who as the Community Visit Chair for Morrisville has served as a great ambassador for the effort, and whose leadership and coordination with the Task Forces is crucial to their success and to the momentum that Morrisville has build in this process.

With all the challenges ahead, Morrisville is fortunate in its leaders—and that includes everyone who is on the line for the future of the community. Morrisville is a fortunate town, blessed with great people, an enviable set of leading businesses, a beautiful crossroads location, and tremendous environmental, scenic and natural assets. It's exciting to see the town come together to realize its best future, not one that happens to it, but one it creates.



*Visiting team members listen to residents at one of the "Community Visit Day" forums.*



*Residents vote their priorities at the "Community Meeting Day."*



*Residents form task force groups and are joined by a Resource team for their first meeting on "Resource Day."*

## II. Initial List of Opportunities and Challenges

Identified by Town Forums, March 29 2011

*More than 120 Morristown residents joined with VCRD staff and a 25 member Visiting Team for the Community Visit Day on March 29, filling meeting rooms in the Tegu Building, the Senior Center and the Union Bank Board Room. They took time from their workday and other commitments to attend forums and a spaghetti dinner at the VFW, and to begin to work together in shaping the future of the town. The following issues emerged as initial challenges and opportunities. This list was presented back to community members at the Community Meeting on May 4<sup>th</sup> for voting and prioritization:*

### **Build a Morristown Buy-Local Campaign**

There is tremendous support in Morristown for local agriculture and local businesses, but there is little systematic marketing of local resources. A Buy Local Directory could spur local sales and support the viability of a number of small businesses in town. The directory could point to the agricultural CSA's in town, the diverse agricultural businesses and what is available at each, the Christmas trees, downtown stores, north end businesses and home-based companies throughout the town. This buy local guide could also be online and include a way to purchase products online.

### **Develop a Morrisville Food Coop**

Many residents of Morristown believe that a food coop could become central to the localvore movement and be a key market for local farm products as well as a needed shopping and gathering place for residents from town and neighboring towns. A Task Force could begin the work to plan for and then develop a Morrisville Food Coop.

### **Organize a Business Incubator**

Morristown has tremendous business and manufacturing assets, most of which were developed by local entrepreneurs who started and grew indigenous enterprises. As the community looks to the future, it could build a Task Force to work very deliberately to incubate the next generation of businesses that will be foundations of the future prosperity of the community. This task force could investigate opportunities to develop incubation space and services that will allow new product development and new start up enterprises, particularly micro-businesses. It could explore downtown or industrial park sites for an incubator building, consider ways an incubator space could benefit home-based and cottage industry needs, and explore resources for start up and implementation.

### **Develop a New Industrial Park and Expand Light Manufacturing in Morristown**

Morristown has grown and attracted a diverse set of manufacturers and processors. It has an opportunity today to build on this success, expand its economic base, and increase the number of jobs by developing a new industrial and light manufacturing space on the west side of the Route 100 corridor. A task force could be developed to help the town plan ahead around this potential development and provide shovel ready space to new businesses and new employers for Lamoille County.

### **Organize the Foods Industry**

One of Morristown's unheralded assets is a wonderful array of food businesses producing products from milk and beer to vegetables and syrup. This sector has an opportunity to organize itself, share

resources, expand marketing of its diverse products, support the incubation of new businesses, help the schools expand local purchasing, and build Morristown's brand identity. A Task Force developed to lead this effort could enhance the Farmer's Market, improve and expand the Community Garden and Root Cellar, build an online food marketplace, educate to expand local purchases and also look at co-marketing and distribution to open new shared markets in or beyond Vermont.

### **Redevelop Empty Buildings Downtown**

Derelict buildings in Morristown's downtown threaten the cohesiveness and viability of the downtown as a marketplace and walkable community center. Morristown citizens and leaders could confront the intransigence of landlords and take action in line with public values around redevelopment, the townscape, and opportunities to stir new commerce. A Task Force could build and advocate for clear plans of community action around penalties for poor maintenance, work to implement new tax abatement or other incentives for new development, and explore public action around redevelopment, including potential public purchase.

### **Unify the Morristown Business Community**

North end business leaders say, 'we need the downtown to be strong', and think that downtown leaders need to partner with growing manufacturing and commercial properties to the north and on the Rt. 100 corridor. Many residents call for a business and economic group to unite the entire Morristown community. They believe that an expanded MAC could include a larger leadership team that spans the full community or a new Morristown business partnership could be developed that can expand marketing, and downtown and community development efforts. This Morristown marketing committee would work to establish Morristown as a shopping, manufacturing, arts, tourism and housing destination.

### **Expand Morristown's Tourism Economy**

Morrisville is situated as the recreational crossroad of Lamoille County between two major ski areas. It has wonderful and underused assets, from cross country ski trails to the river. A downtown or Route 15 Visitors Kiosk and a Morristown attractions map could highlight shopping, restaurants, arts and recreational opportunities. A Task Force dedicated to expanding tourism could look to attract new overnight accommodations and help build brand identity around the key assets of the community.

### **Physically Unify the Town by Building a Pedestrian Bridge**

Morristown unity could be physically improved by building a pedestrian bridge over the Lamoille. With a bridge and improved trails and signage, the town could have a new walking corridor linking the north end and the downtown. A task force on this issue could also work to develop signage and streetscape improvements that build a look and feel to Morristown that unites the north and south sides of town.

### **Redevelop and Reuse Empty Downtown Space for the Arts**

Expand on the creative work of River Arts to build the creative economy in Morristown as a key part of the evolution of the downtown area. Make space available for artist studios and make the downtown a center for community events and art happenings. Morristown could become an arts destination in the way that Bellows Falls, Brandon and Brattleboro have, and the attraction of the arts could build downtown foot traffic to support new commerce.



## **Merge the Town and Village**

Most of the functions of the Village of Morrisville have been subsumed into town government. The role of an independent village structure is no longer essential and a formal Village/Town merger would lead to efficiencies and simplify the management of the continuing functions of each municipal entity. A Task Force could work to make that happen.

## **Build a Morristown Vision**

With all its terrific assets, Morristown lacks a defining vision for its future. Residents are unsure about Morristown's "Brand Identity" or even if it wants to have a brand or a vision. In the absence of a general consensus about the future, however, the town might neglect to make strategic investments around the downtown, infrastructure, or community services that residents want, but have not come together around. Morristown could form a task force to survey residents and build a vision statement with input from all parts of the community. Such a vision could contribute to the town plan and document key directions that residents would like to take for the future.

## **Develop Youth Activities**

Young people claim that there is little to do in Morristown. A Task Force could be formed to work with teens to define some of their interests and recreation goals and give them leadership to make things happen. Such a task force could build activities ranging from arts, to dances, to a talent show, and other community events. Some activities could be designed to partner teens with younger children or to provide them with volunteer opportunities to advance community projects (like trails) or to mentor seniors in using computers.

## **Advance Efficiencies and Development with a Town Energy Committee**

Morristown has terrific assets in its own village electric company and hydro operation. Many residents feel it is important to avoid complacency, however, and believe that town-wide efforts to promote municipal, residential, and commercial energy efficiency and expand energy generation and fuel development will be essential to economic and community sustainability for the future. A new Energy Task Force could lead in defining and implementing key action steps around energy efficiency, development and education, and for attracting services (like Efficiency Vermont or Weatherization). It could work to reduce inefficiencies and waste, and explore the development of an energy fund to increase efficiencies or work with the town to adopt the PACE program to spur energy and efficiency investments at the household level. It could also explore potentials for co-generation or a combined heat and power project in Morristown. Such a committee could also involve kids in the schools in educational activism around energy and efficiency.

## **Improve Community Transportation**

Given the rising costs of oil, Morristown residents are interested in expanding public transportation options. A Community Transportation Task Force could develop and market a local Ride Share program for carpooling and commuting. It could work for the development of a commuter parking lot, and build public education around carpooling. This task force could also take the lead in encouraging non-motorized transportation—walking in town and bicycling—both for recreation and commuting—and work to ensure provision for bike lanes and paths to spur this means of transportation. This effort would also look toward infrastructure for the future, like plug in spots for electric cars.

## Improve Trails and Walkways

A Trails Task Force could inventory all existing Trails, build new ones, map pedestrian and bike traffic, and raise funds for signage and for the promotion of corridors. The development of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is central to this work; this task force would take leadership to promote the opening of the trail, and toward the development of local sections and their connection to existing pedestrian and bike ways. Some residents envision a future where the rail trail is linked through Morristown to the Stowe bike path and Morristown comes to be a hub in the local recreational economy connected to walking and biking in Lamoille County. Existing recreational trails should also be improved. This task force would work to make it so.

At the Morristown Community Meeting on May 4, 2011, residents added four additional ideas for consideration of the assembled community members:

- Improve Zoning to Counter Sprawl
- Improve Health and Wellness
- Retake Clark Park
- Housing



*Residents read the list of opportunities together on “Community Meeting Day.”*

## III. Morristown Priorities

Determined by Morristown residents at the VCRD Community Meeting, May 4 2011

*Proving that those who live, work and raise their families in a community are best qualified to understand its needs and potential, Morristown residents whittled down a list of 16 issues through discussion, reasoned arguments and thoughtful reflection. In the end, voting with red and blue stickers, over 100 participants chose four issues that offer opportunities to enhance existing resources, and to strengthen the town through exciting new ventures. Residents concluded the May 4 meeting by signing up for one of four Task Forces in the selected areas.*

### **Morristown residents selected four priorities for future action:**

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#### **✓ Develop a Morrisville Food Coop and Organize the Foods Industry**

Many residents of Morristown believe that a food coop could become central to the localvore movement and be a key market for local farm products as well as a needed shopping and gathering place for residents from town and neighboring towns. A Task Force could begin the work to plan for and then develop a Morrisville Food Coop.

One of Morristown's unheralded assets is a wonderful array of food businesses producing products from milk and beer to vegetables and syrup. This sector has an opportunity to organize itself, share resources, expand marketing of its diverse products, support the incubation of new businesses, help the schools expand local purchasing, and build Morristown's brand identity. A Task Force developed to lead this effort could enhance the Farmer's Market, improve and expand the Community Garden and Root Cellar, build an online food marketplace, educate to expand local purchases and also look at co-marketing and distribution to open new shared markets in or beyond Vermont.

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#### **✓ Organize a Business Incubator**

Morristown has tremendous business and manufacturing assets, most of which were developed by local entrepreneurs who started and grew indigenous enterprises. As the community looks to the future, it could build a Task Force to work very deliberately to incubate the next generation of businesses that will be foundations of the future prosperity of the community. This task force could investigate opportunities to develop incubation space and services that will allow new product development and new start up enterprises, particularly micro-businesses. It could explore downtown or industrial park sites for an incubator building, consider ways an incubator space could benefit home-based and cottage industry needs, and explore resources for start up and implementation.

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## ✓ Redevelop Empty Buildings Downtown

Derelict buildings in Morristown's downtown are eyesores that threaten the cohesiveness and viability of the downtown as a marketplace and walkable community center. Morristown citizens and leaders could confront the intransigence of landlords and take action in line with public values around redevelopment, the townscape, and opportunities to stir new commerce. A Task Force could build and advocate for clear plans of community action around penalties for poor maintenance, work to implement new tax abatement or other incentives for new development, and explore public action around redevelopment, including potential public purchase.



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## ✓ Improve Trails and Walkways and Physically Unify the Town by Building a Pedestrian Bridge

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## IV. Task Force Action Plans

Resource Meeting, June 1 2011

*Morristown Task Forces are comprised of community members and an appointed chairperson. On Resource Day committee members worked closely with a facilitator and small resource teams to develop step-by-step action plans and to devise a list of human and financial resources to help achieve their goals. This final phase of the program marks the time when residents truly take ownership of the work, and begin the exciting process of turning ideas into action.*

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### Task Force: ✓ Develop a Morrisville Food Coop and Organize the Foods Industry

Task Force Leads: **Cheryl Hartt, Darcie Abbene, Tricia Follert**

Facilitator: **Jolinda LaClair**, Deputy Secretary, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Resource Leaders: **Eric Deluca**, Association of Northeastern Food Coops

**Jenny Nelson**, Senator Sanders Office

**Tom Stearns**, High Mowing Seeds and Center for an Agricultural Economy

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#### Action Steps

1. Field trip to other Vermont Coops for a visual and to test assumptions
2. Develop mission, vision, values, blueprint of questions
3. Do a feasibility study
4. Carry out a market study
5. Explore a Morrisville model for a Farm & Food Business Association. Lamoille Regional Chamber of Commerce; Center for an Agricultural Economy; or another new group
6. Explore Farm to School opportunities
7. Explore expanding community gardens; root cellar
8. Explore how agri-tourism could support local food producers as value-added opportunity for farmers. CRBEG, Vermont Farmers Assoc.

#### Resources

1. Erbin Crowell, Neighboring Food Coop Association: [www.nfca.coop](http://www.nfca.coop), 401-419-0381, [erbin@nfca.coop](mailto:erbin@nfca.coop).
2. Eric Deluca at National Cooperative Business Association, 413-854-3428, [deluca.eric@gmail.com](mailto:deluca.eric@gmail.com).

3. Tom Stearns, High Mowing Seeds and Center for an Agricultural Economy: 802-472-6174 x114, [tom@highmowingseeds.com](mailto:tom@highmowingseeds.com).
4. Clem Nilan, General Manager at City Market Food Coop: [cnilan@citymarket.coop](mailto:cnilan@citymarket.coop).
5. Kari Bradley, General Manager at Hunger Mountain Coop: [karib@hungermountain.com](mailto:karib@hungermountain.com).
6. 3 Squares Working Group
7. Community Development Block Grant, Joss Besse: [Joss.Besse@state.vt.us](mailto:Joss.Besse@state.vt.us), 802-828-5212.
8. USDA RD: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/vt/>, 802-828-6080.
9. Copley Hospital
10. Businesses for philanthropic support; Amy Wade Fund, contact Morrisville Water and Light: <http://www.mwlv.com/>, 888-2162.
11. Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, Ellen Kahler: 802-828-1260, <http://www.vsjf.org/>.
12. Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, Gus Seelig: 802-828-3250, <http://www.vhcb.org>.
13. Food Coop Initiative: <http://www.foodcoopinitiative.coop/>, 507-664-2034, [info@foodcoopinitiative.coop](mailto:info@foodcoopinitiative.coop)
14. Vermont Community Foundation: <http://www.vermontcf.org/>,
15. Business Grant, Tara Kelley at Rutland Area Farm and Food Link (RAFFL): 802-775-0871, [tara@rutlandfarmandfood.org](mailto:tara@rutlandfarmandfood.org).
16. Farm to School, Koi Boynton, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets: 802-828-2084, [koi.boynton@state.vt.us](mailto:koi.boynton@state.vt.us), <http://www.farmentoschool.org/VT/>.

## Task Force Signups

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## Task Force: ✓ Organize a Business Incubator

Task Force Lead: **Tim Lybarger**

Facilitator: **Ted Brady**, Senator Leahy's Office

Resource Leaders: **Brian Norder**, Food Business Consultant

**Steve Paddock**, Vermont Small Business Development Center

**Phil Petty**, e-Vermont Community Director

Morristown has tremendous business and manufacturing assets, most of which were developed by local entrepreneurs who started and grew indigenous enterprises. As the community looks to the future, it could build a Task Force to work very deliberately to incubate the next generation of businesses that will be foundations of the future prosperity of the community. This task force could investigate opportunities to develop incubation space and services that will allow new product development and new start up enterprises, particularly micro-businesses. It could explore downtown or industrial park sites for an incubator building, consider ways an incubator space could benefit home-based and cottage industry needs, and explore resources for start up and implementation.

### Action Steps

1. Identify the needs for growing the local/regional economy.
  - a. Identify and interview successful businesses for advice.
  - b. Identify and interview potential clients on their needs and for the kinds of services an incubator could offer.
2. Define the best incubator model for Morristown. This step will help establish the purpose of this task force.
  - a. Review best practices. What has worked? What has failed?
  - b. Build a list of potential services that incubators provide and a study of incubator models.
  - c. Carry out a market study for Morrisville to identify why we are different.
3. Engage key stakeholders to draw best wisdom into the process
  - a. Do a stakeholder scan.
  - b. Involve others in the community and region.
4. Define the best model for Morrisville.

### Resources

1. Local businesses.
2. Look at successes and failures: Successes in Hardwick, Failures in Springfield, Bennington.
3. Small Business Development Center: <http://www.vtsbdc.org/>. Charlie Ininger, Business Startup Specialist, at [cininger@vtsbdc.org](mailto:cininger@vtsbdc.org) and Dave Rubel, Area Business Advisor, at [drubel@vtsbdc.org](mailto:drubel@vtsbdc.org).
4. Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies: <http://www.vermonttechnologies.com/>
5. National Business Incubation Association: [www.nbia.org](http://www.nbia.org), knowledge and networks in business incubation.
6. Heather Sargent, Morrisville Alliance for Culture and Commerce: <http://www.morrisvillevt.org/>, 888-3048.

7. Lamoille Region Chamber of Commerce: <http://lamoillevalleychamber.com/>.
8. Leanne Tingay at the Vermont Downtown Program: [leanna.tingay@state.vt.us](mailto:leanna.tingay@state.vt.us), 802-828-3220. <http://www.historicvermont.org/programs/downtown.html>.
9. UVM's Center for Rural Studies: <http://www.uvm.edu/crs/>.
10. Economic Gardening / Edward Lowe Foundation in Boulder CO: <http://www.edwardlowe.org/secondStage/economicGardening.elf>.
11. National Mainstreet Center: <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-center/>.
12. Incubator Without Walls, Lyndon State College: <http://campus.lyndonstate.edu/iwow/>
13. Other area colleges: Johnson State College, UVM
14. Central Vermont Community Action Council: <http://www.cvcac.org/>
15. EDA – Federal: <http://www.eda.gov>.
16. USDA Rural Development – David Robinson: [david.robinson@vt.usda.gov](mailto:david.robinson@vt.usda.gov), 802-828-6070.
17. Community Development Block Grant, Joss Besse: [Joss.Besse@state.vt.us](mailto:Joss.Besse@state.vt.us), 802-828-5212.
18. Green Mountain Technology & Career Center: <http://www.gmtcc.info/>, 802-888-4447.

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David Silverman	888-6600 x18040	<a href="mailto:dssilverman@comcast.net">dssilverman@comcast.net</a>



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## Task Force: ✓ Redevelop Empty Buildings Downtown

Task Force Lead: **JJ Toland**

Facilitator: **Patricia Coates**, Congressman Welch's Office

Resource Leaders: **Joss Besse**, Vermont Downtown Program

**Robert McBride**, Rockingham Creative Economy Leader

Derelict buildings in Morristown's downtown threaten the cohesiveness and viability of the downtown as a marketplace and walkable community center. Morristown citizens and leaders could take action in line with public values around redevelopment, the townscape, and opportunities to stir new commerce. A Task Force could build and advocate for clear plans of community action around penalties for poor maintenance, work to implement new tax abatement or other incentives for new development, and explore public action around redevelopment, including potential public purchase.

### Action Steps

1. Research the status of buildings and connect with owners about redevelopment.
2. Conduct a market assessment for downtown businesses with an eye toward Morristown as a destination.
3. Work with existing companies to draw them to downtown or establish connections with downtowns.
4. Increase mixed-income residential density downtown.
5. Work to attract a downtown restaurant.
6. Develop a communications plan to celebrate downtown successes and bring community together around this common effort.

### Resources

1. For the market research goal, **Wisconsin Extension Service** has a great volunteer market research tool: <http://www.uwex.edu/>. There are a lot of existing data in the town and region re: market and demographics. The SBDC can also help with market research: <http://www.vtsbdc.org>, 802-728-9101.
2. For the goal of reaching out to building owners: realtors in town may have an inside track. Work with Selectboard to create a list of incentives. There may be brownfields money available for planning purposes.
3. For the Housing goal: state has ample tax credits to develop housing. These will often cover the costs associated with elevators and sprinklers. EB5 may be a good source of investment for housing.
4. The Downtown Program, Joss Besse: [Joss.Besse@state.vt.us](mailto:Joss.Besse@state.vt.us), 802-828-5212.
5. Other towns
6. USDA RD: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/vt/>, 802-828-6080.

## Task Force Signups

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## Task Force: ✓ Improve Trails and Walkways and Physically Unify the Town by Building a Pedestrian Bridge

Task Force Lead: **Bonnie Waninger**

Facilitator: **Bonnie Waninger**, *Lamoille Regional Planning Commission*

Resource Leaders: **Mike Smith**, *Rutland Pine Hill Park Developer*

**Sherry Winnie**, *VT Dept. of Forests, Parks & Recreation*

Morristown unity could be physically improved by building a pedestrian bridge over the Lamoille. With a bridge and improved trails and signage, the town could have a new walking corridor linking the north end and the downtown. A task force on this issue could also work to develop signage and streetscape improvements that build a look and feel to Morristown that unites the north and south sides of town.

A Trails Task Force could inventory all existing Trails, build new ones, map pedestrian and bike traffic, and raise funds for signage and for the promotion of corridors. The development of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is central to this work; this task force would take leadership to promote the opening of the trail, and toward the development of local sections and their connection to existing pedestrian and bike ways. Some residents envision a future where the rail trail is linked through Morristown to the Stowe bike path and Morristown comes to be a hub in the local recreational economy connected to walking and biking in Lamoille County. This task force would work to make it so.

### Action Steps

1. Inventory what we have, identify short-term improvements we can do, and get the word out about both.
2. Advocate for constructing the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail through Morristown first. Talk to the Town about maintenance of this section.
3. Work on the Stowe-Morristown connection first mile with Sonny and the full connection with Lamoille County Planning Commission.
4. Develop a verbal and visual case statement of the group's choices and advocate to the Selectboard.

### Resources

1. The Morristown Trails map is a great start.
2. Lamoille County Planning Commission can assist with the mapping inventory, adding parcel boundaries, conserved lands, on-road routes, etc. Contact Bonnie Waninger: 888-4548.
3. The group is the knowledge resource.
4. Googlemaps can be used to create a simple, 3-D image to help people imagine the future. A knowledgeable student might be interested in helping create this.
5. Local Motion, a Burlington-based nonprofit, advocates for the Colchester-South Hero connection and can help us advocate for the LVRT: <http://www.localmotion.org/>, 802-861-2700.
6. Many grants are available for study, design, and construction of trails and bike-ped connections: Recreation Trails, Transportation Enhancement, Lamoille County Planning Commission, etc.
7. The Town web site, Front Porch Forum, News & Citizen, and Union Bank gazebo are potential resources for getting the word out.

## Task Force Signups

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### Action groups include:

<b>Inventory</b>	<b>LVRT</b>	<b>Stowe-Morristown Connection</b>	<b>Case Statement</b>
Steve Rae	Steve Rae	Steve Rae	Steve Rae
Ron Stancliff	Sam Guy	Sam Guy	Kate Whitehead
Ed Wilson	Paul Trudell	Paul Trudell	Duffy
Bob Budliger	Sonny Demars	Sonny Demars	Rachel Duffy
Kate Whitehead	David Polow	Ed Wilson	
Rachel Duffy	Richard Sargent	Betsy Perez	
Charles Cooley		Amanda Holland	
Peter Bourne			

## V. Resource Team Recommendations

*Resource Team members represent a wide array of professionals from across the state, and agree to serve as partners and advisors to the Morristown Task Forces. Their recommendations below encompass their experience, past success, and consideration of the community's unique assets and needs. It is hoped that community members will turn frequently to these pages for concrete ideas, resources and support. Resource Team members are eager to support the Task Forces as they begin their work.*

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### ✓ Develop a Morrisville Food Coop and Organize the Foods Industry

#### POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS

First the Task Force needs to explore options for the Coop. It could seek start-up advice from food coops in communities of similar size; meet with their board/manager/staff. Also learn from coop closures, like in Randolph.

As the team explores, it should engage local farmers, the Morristown Farmers' Market, restaurants, existing grocery stores and markets, and other stakeholders to develop a collaborative and unified approach. How can Morrisville's efforts be linked to Johnson, Hardwick, and other nearby communities?

Ultimately, the Task Force should consider performing a feasibility study that includes but is not limited to the following:

- 1) Inventory of site requirements. Review building size, proximity to downtown area, related services, access to parking, utilities access, truck loading, visibility etc.
- 2) Evaluation of associated costs including; real estate purchase, development costs, and operations costs.
- 3) Demand/market analysis – understand who and where customers are.
- 4) Inventory of available real estate properties – within the current market locate properties appropriate for the project given the site requirements (item #1 above).
- 5) Funding options – review all potential public & private funding sources for the project.

In planning for the Coop, the Task Force could contact: David Robinson or Sherry Paige at USDA RD (802-828-6011) to apply for an RBOG (Rural Business Opportunity Grant) to provide the resources needed to develop a business plan.

Determine if the Task Force needs to hire a planner to design a facility and business plan and apply for a USDA RBEG (Rural Business Enterprise) grant for financing and facility build out.

Plan a town-wide event that features many of the distributors expected for the coop, benefiting the construction of the coop and celebrating the idea.

As things evolve, the Task Force could apply for a VT Community Development Planning grant or loan linked to all 3 economic development efforts: a food coop, business incubator, & redeveloping downtown buildings.

As the Task Force begins work on the larger idea of building a food network of farmers and food related businesses, it should visit other food hubs or “Regional Food Systems Centers” like the Center for an Agricultural Economy in Hardwick, the Intervale in Burlington, RAFFLE in Rutland, Foodworks/ Two Rivers Center for well-developed, ongoing programs.

The Committee should stay in touch with the effort of the folks organizing the Lamoille Valley Food Cooperative in the Town of Johnson; their feasibility work is in process, and collaboration may succeed better than competition. Dave Hallquist at VEC is one of the committee leads. Yellowwood Associates is completing the study.

## RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE FOOD COOP AND INDUSTRY TASK FORCE

### Coop Development

In Starting a Food Co-op the Task force could work with Erbin Crowell, Executive Director of the Neighboring Food Co-op Association [erbin@nfca.coop](mailto:erbin@nfca.coop) to arrange a series of field trips for diverse food co-ops in the region.

Other resources to support this effort include:

- Clem Nilan—General Manager of City Market in Burlington [cnilan@citymarket.coop](mailto:cnilan@citymarket.coop)
- Kari Bradley— General Manager of Hunger Mountain in Montpelier [karib@hungermountain.com](mailto:karib@hungermountain.com)

The following organizations and individuals are knowledgeable about cooperative development, including finance and Feasibility Study and Market Analysis

- CDS Consulting Co-op: Marilyn Scholl [marilynscholl@cdsconsulting.coop](mailto:marilynscholl@cdsconsulting.coop)
- Food Co-op Initiative: Stuart Reid [stuart@foodcoopinitiative.coop](mailto:stuart@foodcoopinitiative.coop)
- Bill Patrie in North Dakota is a national co-op leader regarding feasibility studies [bill@cedc.coop](mailto:bill@cedc.coop)

When starting a Food Co-op, the Food Co-op Initiative (FCI) can provide extensive online resources related to all aspects of starting a food co-op at [www.foodcoopinitiative.coop/resources](http://www.foodcoopinitiative.coop/resources). Once you’re further along, CDS Consulting Co-op provides comprehensive resources for food co-op operation and governance [www.cdsconsulting.centraldesktop.com/cbld/doc/3154572/w-Library](http://www.cdsconsulting.centraldesktop.com/cbld/doc/3154572/w-Library).

Look for opportunities where Morristown’s **e-Vermont Program** could assist in this area by building an on-line dialogue, polling, or organizing an e-worksite to advance the effort. Phil Petty, Morristown e-VT Director, can be reached at 223-6098.

Harry Hunt Architects has performed feasibility studies for similar projects. Contact Harry Hunt 802-253-2374, email-harry@harryhuntarchitects.com.

John Ryan of Development Cycles: [jryan@devcycles.com](mailto:jryan@devcycles.com) would be an excellent consultant to engage in this process. He is based out of Montpelier.

## Food System Network

As the team looks to build a **Food System Network** it could look to the advice of others who have been successful. Start with Monty Fischer at the Center for an Agricultural Economy in Hardwick at 472-5840.

- Organic Valley (CROPP Cooperative) functions as a network for dairy farmers that provides marketing, as well as diverse support and technical assistance.
- John Cleary [john.cleary@organicvalley.coop](mailto:john.cleary@organicvalley.coop) works closely with farmers in the Vermont area and has access to Organic Valley information and additional contacts.
- Meg Klepack, Local Food Coordinator at City Market in Burlington. [mklepack@citymarket.coop](mailto:mklepack@citymarket.coop) maintains regular contact with diverse producers and other food system stakeholders.
- Heather Darby, University of Vermont Extension, Agronomist and Nutrient Management Specialist  [\(802\) 524-6501 ext 437](tel:8025246501), [heather.darby@uvm.edu](mailto:heather.darby@uvm.edu) is experienced at convening multiple stakeholders in a value chain for collaborative network development, for example with locally grown grain.
- The National Good Food Network from the Wallace Center at Winrock International creates diverse, high quality resources including webinars. Recent webinar topics include Local Food in Retail: Two Models, One Goal (which included a food co-op general manager as a presenter), and Food Hubs: Viable Regional Distribution Solutions.
  - [ngfn.org](http://ngfn.org); [contact@ngfn.org](mailto:contact@ngfn.org)
  - [www.wallacecenter.org](http://www.wallacecenter.org); [wallacecenter@winrock.org](mailto:wallacecenter@winrock.org)
  - [www.winrock.org](http://www.winrock.org); [information@winrock.org](mailto:information@winrock.org)
  - They have also created a Food Hub Hub [www.ngfn.org/resources/food-hubs/food-hubs](http://www.ngfn.org/resources/food-hubs/food-hubs)

Lamoille County Planning Commission may have resources to assist with a study or can help pursue grant funds that could be available through USDA RBEG and RBOG Merck Foundation, Vermont Community Foundation or High Meadows Fund. The Vermont Council on Rural Development could also be helpful with contacts and advice (Paul Costello at 223-5763).

### Additional Recommended Potential Resources:

Consider how Morristown Development Fund and Lamoille County Revolving Loan Fund can support these initiatives.

Foster involvement from area schools: Lamoille Union High School, People's Academy, Green Mountain Tech, and Johnson State College. Consider structuring projects for which the students can get academic credit.

Involve Johnson State College faculty and students in developing online food marketplace or as supporters.

USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant for any of the following: feasibility studies, branding, marketing. (Applicant should be the Town or a non-profit, and to be most competitive, it should be a first-time RBEG recipient.)

USDA Community Facilities loan/grant program is available for farmer's market infrastructure, root cellar, community garden infrastructure, community kitchens or other local food systems infrastructure. Eligibility will vary, but there is potential for up to 15% grant funding with the remainder of the project financed by low interest loans. Contact them at 828-6080.

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## ✓ Organize a Business Incubator

### POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS

The Task Force could perform a feasibility study that includes but is not limited to the following:

- 1) Inventory of site requirements. Review building size, proximity to related services, access to parking, utilities access, truck access etc.
- 2) Evaluation of associated costs including real estate purchase, development costs, and operating costs
- 3) Demand/market analysis – understand who your potential lease holders are and what kind of overhead they can support Inventory existing resources. What’s already available to businesses of various sizes and shapes? What could be co-located? What do the businesses need?
- 4) Inventory of available real estate properties – within the current market, which properties are appropriate given the site requirements (item #1)
- 5) Funding options – review all potential public & private funding sources for the project.

Look at and visit similar models in other Vermont communities.

Seek advice / assistance from local businesses, Chamber, established manufacturers – learn from their challenges, successes, failures and vision.

Attract business and manufacturing that best meets local needs, best fits with community values, existing community resources and assets.

It will be important to consider the need before you consider the space. Is the need for office or manufacturing space? Is business counseling required? Is there a particular cluster of businesses that need incubator support?

Early on it will be important to define what is meant by “incubator.” Is it just shared space? Or a location that provides support services to the businesses? What kind of businesses do you want to incubate? Will you require graduation? Is there a pipeline of businesses that are willing to rent rather than own their site? Incubators have the greatest chance of success if there is a clear concept supported by a marketing plan from the beginning.

### RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE BUSINESS INCUBATOR TASK FORCE

LEDC has a brochure that would provide a good basis for the inventory.

Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation has a highly successful manufacturing incubator space in Swanton (Call Tim Smith for info at 524-2194).

Check out the *incubator without walls* concept. Lyndon State has an existing one. Talk with Bob Whittaker at LSC (802-626-6200) about the Incubator without Walls and their many partners. Jim Black at Johnson State College (802-635-1298) recently submitted a grant proposal to develop one for Lamoille County.



Center for an Ag Economy, Vermont Food Venture Center program Director George Keener might be a useful reference.

Talk with Steve Patterson at NVDA (748-5181) about the Charlie Carter Incubator building and how that works.

Harry Hunt Architects has performed feasibility studies for similar projects. Contact Harry Hunt 802-253-2374, [harry@harryhuntarchitects.com](mailto:harry@harryhuntarchitects.com).

There are a number of experts who could be consulted: Vermont State Colleges (especially CCV Morrisville, Johnson State College), Vermont Small Business Development Center, Vermont Department of Economic Development, Vermont Department of Labor, Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center (Bob Zider), Vermont Tech Technology Extension Division (Jay Paterson), Vermont Technical College Enterprise Center (Jack Daniels), Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies, Vermont Economic Development Authority, and e-Vermont (Phil Petty, 223-6098).

Consider how the Morrystown Development Fund and the Lamoille County Revolving Loan Fund can support these initiatives.

USDA Intermediary Loan Program funds are available through Vermont Community Loan Fund and VEDA. Vermont Community Loan Fund also has technical assistance funding (marketing, accounting systems, etc.) available (funded by a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant).

Foster involvement from and partnership with area schools: Lamoille Union High School, People's Academy, Green Mountain Tech, and Johnson State College. Consider structuring projects for which the students can get academic credit.

Involve Central Vermont Community Action Council and Vermont Small Business Development Center to provide business planning and counseling for potential incubator businesses.



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## ✓ Redevelop Empty Buildings Downtown

### POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS

It will be important to work closely with the Morristown Alliance for Culture & Commerce (MACC) and the town-planning department. Implementation of these goals can occur through revisions to the town plan, zoning regulation revisions, the definition of an urban renewal district as required in the downtown designation application process, community reinvestment agreements, and capital improvement plans.

The Task Force will need to work with the property owners, so it will be important not to call their buildings “eyesores” and the owners “intransigent.” It will be important to come up with a more collaborative vocabulary.

Seek out and ask for a meeting with each of the owners – ideally accompanied by someone in town who is known and respected by the owner. Find out with their motivations are. Ask what their ownership goals are. What prevents them from improving the building and generating more income? How can you help these owners move forward? Following the meeting, set up a workplan for each owner/building to move forward.

There was discussion during working sessions about doing market analysis. This may be beyond the immediate needs of dealing with these buildings, but there are ways to do this: first, review the market analysis done in the early 2000’s – some elements may be a bit dated but much may still be useful. Other parts may need some updates. If the community wants to move forward, there are models for doing a volunteer-driven downtown market analysis available. If this is to be done, it could potentially be done within MACC – this is part of what a downtown organization does.

The task force could discuss specific approaches with planners and Executive Directors of other designated Vermont downtowns who have achieved success in these areas—like Springfield, Bellows Falls and Brandon.

The group may want to consider the development of a Master Plan as a guiding document. Development of this plan is likely to require involvement of a qualified professional planner/landscape architect/urban design specialist. The City of Newport was able to accomplish this level of planning at reasonable cost through leveraging of the R/UDAT program. R/UDAT is offered by the American Institute of Architects through their Communities by Design program.

The Task Force could consider developing a community investment structure for vacant downtown space. For example, the redevelop of the Arthur’s building will only happen if a commercial tenant can be identified. A community investment entity could master lease the Arthur’s first floor space, and sublease it to commercial tenants who are not quite financially ready to take on a long-term lease structure.

### RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS TASK FORCE

MACC – Morristown already has a downtown organization, recognized by the state as part of the community’s “Downtown Designation.” Activities to move forward with this agenda could be housed within MACC. This is not to suggest that everything should be dumped on to MACC to take care of –

the VCRD visit is generating more activity than MACC could possibly do. But new volunteers and new initiatives would fit comfortably within the existing structure of MACC, and doing so would help keep these revitalization efforts coordinated.

Vermont Downtown Program – the VDP is already working with MACC on a variety of downtown revitalization matters, and is available to help on both the vacant buildings issue and the market analysis. Other communities within the VDP’s “downtown network” have dealt with difficult buildings and owners, and could be helpful. But Morristown first needs to understand what the owner’s plans are and what the issues are. Are they stuck on brownfields issues? Code improvements? Restricted access to capital? Regulatory issues? Difficulty finding tenants? Once the issues are known, it would be easier to direct you to communities which have successfully dealt with these issues, as well as resources and other contacts who can help. Call the Downtown Program for a consultation at 828-5212.

Preservation Trust of VT is an active leader in the redevelopment of heritage structures in downtowns statewide. Call Paul Bruhn for his advice at 658-6647.

Contact Joan Goldstein of the Green Mountain Development Corp. (295-3710) and ask about the building renovations in White River along the river’s edge.

If Morrisville looks to build a community investment strategy, it should contact the community investor folks who developed Claire’s Restaurant space in Hardwick (Linda Ramsdell at 472-5533).

Ask St. Albans what it did in the 1980s to address this issue. Jane Kiser, Community Development Coordinator, 524-1500.

Robert McBride, Rockingham, Trish Sears, Executive Director Newport Renaissance Corp., Paul Dreher, Newport City Planning & Zoning are recognized state leaders that could counsel folks in Morrisville about dealing with deteriorating properties.

Federal dollars flow through the CDBG program and are managed at the Agency of Commerce – call them for more info at 828-5204.

If renovation or new construction is undertaken by the Town or a non-profit providing essential community services, USDA Community Facilities program can fund up to 15% with a grant and the remainder of the project with low interest loans. These applicants can lease out up to 25% of space to an unrelated entity. For non-profits that do not provide “essential community facilities,” including incubators, USDA Rural Development can potentially provide up to a 90% federal guarantee of a bank loan. If renovation or new construction is undertaken by a for-profit entity, USDA Rural Development can provide up to an 80% federal guarantee of a bank loan. If renovation or new construction is undertaken by a for-profit entity, that entity can access USDA Rural Development’s energy program for energy efficiency or renewable energy projects. Towns or non-profits cannot access this program, but can potentially fund energy projects under the regular Community Facilities program, as long as the project does not produce more energy than the applicant uses over the course of a year. You can reach USDA at 828-6024.

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## ✓ Improve Trails and Walkways and Physically Unify the Town by Building a Pedestrian Bridge

### POTENTIAL ACTION STEPS

The group may want to consider forming a non-profit entity to implement this process. This type of effort has the potential to benefit from broad based community support. Active members, grant receiving possibilities and lots of volunteer manpower will facilitate greater levels of success.

The group may want to consider the development of a Master Plan as a guiding document. Such a plan would consider non-motorized corridors at all levels including sidewalks, bike-paths, trails, etc. Other influences such as the proposed by-pass would also be evaluated during the planning process. Signage & project phasing would be included as sub-components of the plan. Development of this plan is likely to require involvement of a qualified professional planner/landscape architect/urban design specialist. The City of Newport was able to accomplish this level of planning at reasonable cost through leveraging of the R/UDAT program. R/UDAT is offered by the American Institute of Architects through their Communities by Design program. Contact Harry Hunt for more info on this group at: 253-2374.

The community must decide how trails, walkways, bike paths should be used and promoted – are they primarily a resident resource / amenity or does Morristown wish to promote their recreational and landscape resources to non-residents? How do Morristown’s trails, walkways, bike paths, scenic resources fit into the town’s goals for economic and community development?

Strong collaboration will be key to success: it needs to happen between the Morristown Recreation Committee, Conservation Commission, Water and Light, LCPC, the Selectboard, LVRT/VAST and State Legislators, Chuck’s Bike Shop, Steve Rae and River Arts, local proponents for developing the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, local bike, pedestrian and hiking enthusiasts, naturalists, paddlers, and local park supporters.

It will be important to foster involvement from area schools: Lamoille Union High School, People’s Academy, Green Mountain Tech, and Johnson State College. Consider structuring projects for which the students can get academic credit and put in sweat equity.

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps might help to build trails; they know the funding sources for these projects. Tom Hark, their director, can be reached at 434-3969.

Ask the Lamoille County Planning Commission to map existing sidewalks, trails, and other bike-ped infrastructure.

Bring students and seniors into the discussion. Usually, sidewalks and trails are built where active adults want to walk/bike.

Define what locals want related to walk/bike resources, and then think about the tourism draw.

The bridge concept needs a feasibility study. Is the need for a bridge or is the need for a pedestrian link and loop?

Define a special identity that sets this LVRT stop apart from other communities along the trail. Identify Morristown/Morrisville's hook – the thing that entices LVRT users to stop here rather than somewhere else. For instance, Johnson is known for art and can use that hook along the trail to bring people into the village.

Host workshops on “becoming a bicycle friendly business.” Lake Champlain Bikeways used to host some in the Champlain Basin. Taking advantage of the LVRT is about increasing sales at local businesses as well as building trail connections and adding signs and benches.

Invite representatives from the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, Beebe Spur, Stowe Rec Path, and other Vermont/New England trails to come talk about what they've done. What's worked/not worked and why?

Explore short and longer-term activities. You can make minor changes that create a big improvement while working on larger projects, such as the bridge connection.

## **RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE TRAILS AND WALKWAYS TASK FORCE**

Lamoille County Planning Commission has extensive resources that can help with this discussion, including funding for studies, experienced transportation staff, familiarity with grant sources, grant writing skills, facilitation skills and mapping services. Bonnie Waninger, Executive Director, 888-4548 or [bonnie@lpcvt.org](mailto:bonnie@lpcvt.org).

Lamoille County Planning Commission has a grant to explore the feasibility of the Morristown-Stowe link. Work will begin this summer. Contact Amanda Holland at 888-4548 or [Amanda@lpcvt.org](mailto:Amanda@lpcvt.org).

Explore the VTrans Safe Routes to Schools program. Aimee Pope, VTrans Safe Routes to School Coordinator.

A plethora of grant programs exist to help fund construction activities – transportation, recreation, health. Some will fund studies and other activities. Talk to LCPC and the Fit & Healthy Council when you're ready to explore grants.

Heather Furman – Executive Director Stowe Land Trust, Heather has initiated a Trails program at SLT. For more information on the R/UDAT contact Joel Mills 202-626-9040 or Harry Hunt 802-253-2374.

Contact Will Wiquist of the Green Mountain Club for assistance at 244-7037.

Swanton was recently successful in linking a new rail trail to a pedestrian bridge. A good contact who could tell the story is Catherine Dimitruk from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (524-5958) or Ron Kilburn at the Town of Swanton.

Other groups that might lend aid include the NRCS, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, communities like Stowe, Colchester, Burlington, Middlebury, Barre that have created bike paths, trails, walkways, the Vermont Outdoor Guide Association, Catamount Outdoor Family Center, Kingdom Trails, Mad River Path Association, Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, Island-Line Rail Trail, Vermont Mountain Bike Advocates, Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition, Vermont AOT, VAST, Green Mountain Club, Appalachian Trail Club, federal delegation VT staff and State Legislators.

# VI. Town Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held with Morristown residents and the VCRD Visiting Team on March 29, 2011

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

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## Sustainable Agriculture

**Resource Team:** Jolinda LaClair (facilitator), Kate Ash (scribe), Joss Besse, Kathy Beyer, Elena Gustavson, Scott Merriam, Jenny Nelson, Andrew Perchlik, Gus Seelig

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

#### Assets

- Although its development is slow, Morristown community members see the presence and support of the Farmer's Market as vital.
- There is much prime agricultural land near Route 100 that is still active with a type of mixed soil that helps support a wide variety of crops.
- Clean water.
- The people of Morristown.
- The town holds great beef, pork, and goat farms, as well as an ethnic slaughter house.
- Agrifarm is very diverse, including raw milk, organic cheeses from local farmers, soaps and honey, localvore dinners and out own local stores.
- Woodlots produce their own wood for energy use, as community members hope agriculture will work as its own sustainable resource through biofuel.
- Old farms still exist today; such as one family, who moved in 1942 from Sterling at VT's lowest point in farming, to open 160 acres of producing land for their very own dairy farm in Morristown.
- Markets such as Green Top and Bailey House sell local produce.
- In this area there is a huge support for buying local products and selling it to our own.
- Basic equipment and mechanic assistance are available for farmers.
- Greenhouse is an asset in assisting others in providing their own foodstuffs.
- Rock Art Brewery.
- Over 50% of the local maple crop is processed in Morrisville.
- Maple business is growing dramatically, which is a positive contribution to sequestration because there is a negative carbon footprint.
- The second home community that resides in Stowe is a population that you see a lot at local agribusiness.
- There are a lot of resources for education, including CCV, UVM Extension, the local senior center, and public schools.
- There are at least a dozen CSAs.
- Christmas trees provide a good source of income for some locals.

- The Current Use System because it helps us with local zoning and local land trust.

#### Challenges

- Finding a way to convince the community at-large that we are all relevant. There is no shortage of talented, educated people who want to participate locally, but they continue to go to larger stores such as Price Chopper, which don't support local.
- Creating some sort of educational process for the community to create value in the mindset of becoming a local consumer.
- There has been bickering since the 1970s about zoning regulations, which makes people uneasy about developing as the regulations continue to change.
- Things changed when the interstate came through.
- One must learn a new way of eating vegetables.
- The average rent in Morrisville is expensive, meaning that you need a higher wage job. However, since there are no jobs in Morrisville with this kind of income, commuting to work is the only option, and with little to no public transportation in and out of town, sustaining that kind of lifestyle can be very hard. In order to have sustainable agriculture in Morristown, you need to have sustainable housing, transportation and employment.
- Regulations threats on farm slaughtering are not well known.
- As soon as workers who are willing to work in slaughter leave the community, there are very few educated or interested young people who are willing to do the job.
- Finding laborers who are interested in weeding.
- Although Stowe is on our asset list, there is a disconnect or cultural divide between the towns on issues including working Vermont farms, water quality, and runoff. Residents of Stowe are not always aware of how these issues affect our smaller villages.
- Advertising is a huge struggle. There are millions of dollars being spent to lead people to "Easy, fast and convenient" products, when really that is not sustainable. Local farmers here being able to market themselves to these larger competitors is really hard, particularly for older generations.

- The ripple effect is being felt here for things like shipping costs for wood shavings, hay, and farming equipment. Although it provides more opportunities for other sustainable energy sources in long term, in the short term, it is a significant challenge.
- Access to internet for rural areas, challenge for hand count of 5).
- Lack of respect for local farmer initiatives.
- Access to information on price requirements and regulations.
- The population in Morrisville and Lamoille County may not sustain what we would like to see as a large self-sustaining agribusiness such as a co-op.
- Access to equipment to add value to products becomes hard for local farmers, particularly for elderly farmers.
- There has been a lot of expressed interest from community members to incorporate localvore in both elementary and secondary schools, but the schools are not very cooperative.
- Local prices are just too high.
- There were 12 dairy farms in Lamoille County in 2001, now that count is unknown.

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

- We need more definition and user-friendly training of farming regulations + loosening up the regulations a little bit. The display of state regulations on farming by Agriview was key.
- Farmers are happy on their farms, but community members believe they must go out to people to be successful.
- There is a maple resource in Morristown that is not fully utilized. There are a lot more trees that could be tapped for local production and income.
- People in sustainable agriculture need to get to the table to discuss access to internet. When e-Vermont came to Morrisville, sustainable agriculture was not heavily pushed on the issue. If people had access to high speed Internet, marketing and education on our products might improve. The internet might or might not improve my business... but what is key is going back to localvore, getting the local community to realize the value in the products that are in the community.
- Creating a coupon reward system with local famers that would be linked with larger businesses in order to connect the two.
- There is no Farm To Plate commitment; the commitment to famers' market by farmers is very weak.
- There is plenty of water and good soil, which gives us opportunity to use our great market and our brand identity to send away our hard work to bring in some income.
- People consider VT and our products here as local in places such as Massachusetts where they may not be able to produce it.
- In a web world, they don't care about fresh eggs and veggies, so we need to learn how to better market what we do have.
- The creation of an online buyer's club, such as in Charlotte's community, to combine efforts of local farmers and community members.
- The creations of a local tri-state HUB for local produce drop offs and local personnel to aggregate.
- With land sharing, there may be an opportunity for farmers to work together to combine products for shipment.
- Recreation, cross country skiing, fishing, and walking as agritourism.
- Mount Mansfield Creamery is local and has given inspiration to community for this sort of development.
- There is a group in Morrisville who are very interested in developing a co-op. For many years, Stowe had a fabulous health food store and due to mishandle it went under, but those folks now drive to Morrisville to shop, which could mean a good market for health food here in Morristown.
- Community Garden and Root Cellar are used very well, which could be expanded.
- Local grains are being used primarily in Rock Art Brewery, there are conscious consumers who wonder how else this produce could be used.
- Courses on sustainable agriculture, energy resources and other environmental portions at People's Academy.
- Creation of a community garden.

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

- The village pattern of development, particularly near the interstate highways may provide some opportunity for Vermonters to be forwarded towards the brewery, cheese train, and other tourist attractions
- This community has a huge amount of energy, but it is not yet pulled together. Your energy can be transformed into creating a much larger idea of "local" with some of the opportunities you talked about today, and also by marketing and incorporating it into the locale here in the village.
- You discussed that there is little understanding of the importance of local foods in the schools, how Stowe does market this localvore in schools, however, Morristown does not. There is most certainly a connection that can be made here. You also have little to attract people to Exit 15A and the hidden secrets of your community.
- There are many building blocks; we have only scratched the surface talking about the variety of agribusiness today. It strikes me, the connection between the branding market of Vermont products and this sustainable agriculture in this community = perhaps there is a great opportunity in a market modeling that one of Hardwick.
- You are at a geographic crossroad, yet have a loss of opportunity. Successful co-ops can exist in small towns, and I think it is very important for your local sustainable agriculture movement.
- I had similar reflections, but my overall feeling is optimism tempered with discouragement over the years. There is lots of opportunity and you should be proud of what has been done.

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## Vibrant Downtown

**Resource Team:** Joss Besse (facilitator), Kate Ash (scribe), Kathy Beyer, Elena Gustavson, Jolinda LaClair, Scott Merriam, Jenny Nelson, Andrew Perchlik, Gus Seelig

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

Note: North End is where the grocery stores are, while the village and downtown may be considered the same (according to MAC specialist)

#### Assets

- River Arts
- Library
- Cinema
- Schools
- Recreational Facilities
- Beautiful Historic Buildings
- Rich History
- Route 115 and Route 100 – “It’s like being on a river, the traffic goes both ways”
- Hockey Rink
- People
- The River
- Sidewalks are well maintained, making this a very walker-friendly village.
- Bees Knees
- 2 large grocery stores with very high number of patrons.
- Restaurants
- Hospital
- Passionate people who care about their community.
- Copley Country Club
- There are many businesses who are willing to pitch in with fundraising even during the very hard times.
- We have a unique location within Vermont and the county, which should give us an ability to become a focus of our state.
- Vibrant and active Chamber of Commerce.
- Great social services exist in Morristown, including a mental health agency, Lamoille Family Center, United Way, dentists and chiropractors that reside downtown, WIC, RSVP, Home Health, Meals on Wheels, etc.
- People donate their time to beautify the town year-round.
- MAC (the downtown organization).
- Historical Society
- “Beauty Spot” near the police station.
- Dying lake that is unused.
- Farmer’s Market
- Worldwide-known businesses who reside all over town.
- Beautiful views within the village of Morrisville.
- Really great sports teams in student population.

#### Challenges

- Parking is a challenge. There is plenty of it, but during times when it is heavily populated, parking is tough.
- There is a lack of space to set up vendors for farmer’s market and thus, business is lost.
- Alleviating current traffic during peak hours of the day. The creation of a bypass would have a great effect on the downtown vibrancy by alleviating current traffic, although

- some see this as a concern because it would drive away traffic (and business) from the downtown
- The buildings where businesses lie are very inefficient
- Morrisville has resources; however they are not publicized or utilized to full potential by even community member who have been here for years.
- There may not be enough common value behind the public domains (parks, sidewalks, etc) to keep them up to standard.
- Empty buildings. MAC has struggled with keeping businesses alive in the downtown region since the purchase of these buildings has become too expensive for renovation. According to regulations, the empty buildings must first be torn down before being repaired and rented to buyers or leasers.
- Out of town landlords who may or may not have ties to the community.
- Downtown buildings are a safety concern.
- Traffic flow is very heavy between police station and traffic light, and there is much side street congestion. The geographic layout is difficult to maneuver.
- There is little place or recreational area to bike, and the sidewalks are not safe for bicycle use.
- Current zoning does not allow certain businesses to develop in Morristown due to building regulations.
- There is little vision about what people want to see Morristown look like due to poor attendance at major town meetings and outreach events.
- “We don’t want more eateries, more Chinese food, hair dressers or real estate agents. There is much that we don’t want to see, but there is little diversity in what we do have to offer.” – One community member.
- Connecting the Price Chopper and Hannaford’s area of Morristown to the downtown portion of the village for shopping purposes.
- “We are knee deep in junkies here.”
- There is little to do for teenagers in the area, and that’s where all the trouble starts. Although there is a teen night in the bottom of a church once a week, most teens do not want to attend.
- Little recreation for elderly
- Flood plains and landowners have posed as challenges to village space that could prove opportunity for recreational space.
- Stowe acts as a challenge to Morristown, people from Stowe don’t want to come to Morristown.



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## Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Enhance the beautiful views seen from Morrisville.
- Much opportunity with the way the town is shifting towards zoning regulations, which will allow more fluidity with the business sector in the downtown area.
- Former connection of the walk bridge from downtown to upper portion was lovely.
- The creation of a suspension bridge from the old creamery may create more synergy between town and village portions.
- Morrystown Development Fund established from old revenue sharing could help folks develop their industries or be used as a fund of last resort.
- Many asked: What space do we have before we begin to create new spaces?
- Folks would like to see independent films at the cinema.
- The creation of a town bypass as a way to re-think the entire town and make it what we want it to be.
- We are located between 2 major ski areas. It would be great to develop a business to attract and utilize that tourism for income sake.
- Hotel/motel development (only 1 exists).
- Rail Trail is an opportunity that is sitting and waiting to be developed.
- Art community through River Arts to make downtown river-friendly.
- Reuse in current buildings for more art space for Morrystown to become an artist's destination. Brattleboro is a strong example of what has been done with an old city to create vibrant, recycled main streets.
- Oxbow is well placed for a community space and expansion.
- If businesses could be a showcase for products of the industrial park and factory stores.
- Attraction map for Morrystown such as other Vermont villages.
- Chamber of Commerce kiosk to showcase locals.
- Full occupancy
- Creating a sense of downtown Richmond, VA, we must ask ourselves, "What is the asset of this community?"
- People love it here, but it's just not accessible. Johnson, Hardwick, and St. J are more attractive.
- Students are not traditional learners in Morrystown, as they work to seek internships at People's Academy. Students with this new type of educational infrastructure can become a part of this new vibrant energy – they can be the new front.
- More pictures! The creation of 1000 faces, 1000 scenes of Morrisville to show people see who we are and to recreate history.
- Drinking fountains
- Quick cart selling local produce
- Library parking lot redesigned
- Sculpture space
- Creating additional town support for students and their sports teams, wrapped specifically around their school system.

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## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- There was no mention that Morrystown has its own energy system, and that the hydro plant exists here, which are both monumental assets. These things will ultimately be of huge benefit to this community and those surrounding it in the coming years as the energy costs begin to rise.
- The one thing that comes to mind is how prideful you all are of you community. This has been one of the greatest turnouts we have seen, and perhaps one of the most optimistic and asset-filled.
- I think what we have realized here is that you as a community are tremendously rich in resources, which you did not realize as both long term and short term advantage in your development.
- I had similar reflections; however, it is clear that there are many options for how you all want to create a downtown and village feel for your community. You have mentioned other town and city models, which are a great start. The challenge is now, how to choose the strategy to developing the vision that you have for your town.
- You have much opportunity, but there is still always more need for communication and the need to research what makes a village of this size vibrant and well-oiled.

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## Sustainable Energy

**Resource Team:** Jolinda LaClair (facilitator), Kate Ash (scribe), Joss Besse, Kathy Beyer, Elena Gustavson, Scott Merriam, Jenny Nelson, Andrew Perchlik, Gus Seelig

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

#### Assets

- Hydro plants, we are looking forward to the vote to create more efficient hydro power within the region.
- People's Academy is powered by wood pellet boilers.
- Human capital regarding energy is very strong. Many business owners are interested and eager to participate in the green movement.
- There is great energy about locally-produced energy. The population is aware of the issues and there is a good level of consciousness of sustainability.
- Town is installing LED lighting in town.
- Local landowners are trying to be self-sufficient via wind power.
- Additional installation of solar panels.

- Dump covered 20 years ago near substation.
- Rural county transportation system for local transportation.
- Many people in this area are equipped and knowledgeable about working in the woods.
- Two town forests
- Conservation Commission is working to expand town woods.
- Sugar making is saving many people 80-85% of their own energy through reverse-osmoses.

### **Challenges**

- Hydropower can be wasteful.
- Trying to integrate new technology into many of the old buildings in town proves to be a challenge.
- There are community concerns regarding new energy technologies, since there is little education about how to properly use these sources.
- Builders do not have experience or knowledge of how to implement new technologies.
- Local utilities are not as receptive for innovation energy ideas.
- Incompetence of local municipal utilities

- Funding
- There is no town energy committee, it is overseen by the trustees.
- There is much information for residential and community-wide projects, however this is little offered beyond those projects for production based energy. We need tech assistance because sustainable energy needs are quite variable between schools vs. industrial vs. residential.
- Heat is one of the greatest expenditures, and in Morristown there are so many old buildings, it makes it very difficult to be efficient.
- Air pollution as a byproduct of wood burning in the valley.
- Cost of energy in residential capacity is a challenge, state assistance does not meet needs of all individuals.
- Many commute over 30 miles for work, that kind of mass transportation is big issue to many people.
- Lack of state density makes mass transportation very difficult.
- Energy is about 16 cents/watt.
- Due to valley topography, there are very few possible wind sights. People also have concerns about the noise.

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

- We could visit the older homes and town buildings in order to make them more efficient. Organizations like Efficiency Vermont have great options; they may be able to help.
- Landfill may be a potential energy source.
- What is the possibility of having a cogeneration plant to supply electricity?
- Given the rising cost of oil, we have the opportunity to develop carpooling and commuting opportunities.
- The creation of a county-wide rideshare program that could be transmitted via cell phone.
- Rideshare
- Community members could register with Front Porch Forum to talk about community projects or search for experts in energy.
- Utilizing the volunteers that we do have.
- There is a lack of human capital for the wood that is delivered by United Way, we need to find more abled people to help with those deliveries.
- There needs to be a variety of approaches to sustainable energy that fit each individual.
- Creating a town position such as an Energy Coordinator, who could advise individual homeowners and business owners on forms of alternative energy and oversee municipal energy use.
- Kids taking an interest in renewable energy.
- Educating young people! Local schools are offering classes such as AP Environmental and other sustainability-focused courses that could act as requirements.

- Lack of public transportation to/from school.
- Creating a program over the summer educating students by hands-on experience with renewable and sustainable energy sources.
- Education on overall waste used by residents.
- We need to prepare ourselves as a community before the NEED for renewable energies is here.
- Reducing our known inefficiencies
  - Creating an energy fund that may be of assistance to those who were interested in reducing inefficiencies.
- As fossil fuels and other power sources increase in cost, there are many possible opportunities – we have to be open to it at some point.
- Solar is used for domestic water, a common interest, however it does not work very efficiently in Vermont.
- There is a Renewable Atlas of Vermont on the Sustainable Jobs Fund site with lots of information to assist individuals on gaining information about how to become more self-sustaining. We need to make it more available.
- Commuter Lot!
- Bicycle recreation and widening roads to encourage bikers.
- Utilize UVM students to aid the community with their expertise.
- Create public transportation education.

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

- There seems to be a fair amount of development in energy and efficiency in this region. I am wondering if there is an ability to have a concentrated effort to review planning funds that you do have for some of the

- opportunities that you have discussed. Consider the Community Development Block Grant.
- During this focus session and previous ones from the day, we are all asking what it is going to take to have a competitive business for you community. It seems to me

- Having a town energy committee would be beneficial, considering you have your own municipal energy source. You may be able to network and combine efforts in order to offer services to the community and areas surrounding you. Get out there and do some research on what you see

and what you can do independently towards these efforts.

- Students, you have a real ability to do research and to work with adults to be involved in these community efforts towards sustainability. Cabot is a productive example of this effort.

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## Recreational Facilities and Trails

**Resource Team:** Patricia Coates (facilitator), Amanda Holland (scribe), Alex Aldrich, Ted Brady, Carlen Finn, Jeff Francis, Harry Hunt, Catherine Kalkstein, Phil Petty

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

Note: North End is where the grocery stores are, while the village and downtown may be considered the same (according to MAC specialist)

#### Assets

- Clark Park – Owned by Water and Light – areas have been filled and park has been damaged, now currently serves as a parking area.
- School Nordic ski area/track used by school.
- Duhamel property – jointly owned by Town and private owners – trails for biking/hiking; Land serves as gravel pit for town but remainder of parcel used for recreation.
- Town parcel near Sterling and Mt Mansfield State Forest.
- Human resources assets – private property owners, community members interested (trail builders, planners, etc) and assist in recreation maintenance activities.
- Little league fields near pond.
- Green Mountain Arena, ice rink, on Bridge Street.
- Copley Country Club, 9 holes.
- School resources: tennis courts, playgrounds.
- Beaver Meadow – hiking trails accesses the Long Trail.
- Many have access to private land w/ landowner permission.
- Long trail system – 2-3 camps with overnight facilities; White Face shelter – side trail to long trail that goes along ridge.
- Catamount trail – opportunity since access points convenient; trails maintained by volunteer effort; since 1984.
- Molly Bog and Morristown Bog – great places but not very accessible; no maps available to discourage impact.
- Swimming hole – Terrell Gorge.
- River Arts – provides dancing and art classes.
- Road biking is an activity with a big draw.
- Future project under consideration is a multi-use path to connect Morristown and Stowe's trails.
- Lamoille River provides fishing, swimming, kayaking.
- Grout Observatory at Peoples Academy.
- Young people/Students mostly use School resources.
- Recreation Committee – more activities based (school summer camp, etc) and focused on young students; have a grant to assist with these activities.
- Town plows sidewalks in winter for walkers.

#### Challenges

- Oxbow Park poorly designed and abused by users.
- Slow movement of trail building
- Want access to recreation or trail opportunities trails for spare time use
- Town resources are not all in one place (no 1 map or resource) or central group as leader in recreation; only the Morristown trail map by Conservation Commission & LCPC
  - Other resources to find info –
    - Hunt VT; guide to fishing; Fishing map – lists all streams with the type of fish avail in VT
    - Northern cartographic – trail maps
    - Century 21 maps
    - Prior map of class 4 roads; potentially from VTrans
    - Could make available via website, town office
- Need a management and development plan for recreation
  - Study of town properties and identify access points
  - Need inventory of existing places
  - Plan needs to be made available to public
  - Challenge – commitment from town to maintain plan and focused group
- Maintenance mostly done by single volunteer(s) no organized effort.
- Recreation Committee is not focused on public land and trails.
- Funding to put together a map on these resources.
- Getting info out to public – ex Conservation Committee map of trails is several years old but many don't know about
  - Could market through school system – provide parents with maps during open house
- Conservation Committee conducted survey on how people felt about resources and many people didn't want all trails public.
  - Mainly due to maintenance/management shortfall; ex town forests managed by 1 person and may degrade use; VAST has support of businesses and main group.

- Balance between town use vs higher volume tourism use
- Need to identify which trails to market to manage use
- Need for long-term or consistent resource for volunteers vs single event.
- Sidewalk – condition varies good and bad but Town is working on improvements.
- Few facilities near trails (bathrooms, shops, etc).
- LVRT project/trial development slow; trail will provide several economic development potentials.
  - Town actions – send letter to vast in support of project and will assist with fundraising
- Some roads have been narrowed – stagecoach rd – difficult for bikers.
- Underutilized places, such as Nature Center, available for use as an educational service but no way to get students there; could serve as connection to community trail.
- Duhamel property – Condition ok but number of users are increasing, leading to trail deterioration from biking/walkers.
- Copley Country Club challenge to get young golfers involved.

### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Link into technology for outreach/connect to kids.
- Build community ties and relationships.
- School District Committee – conducting study of current and longterm use of school facilities and resources; will be completed soon and made avail to community.
- Utilize available resources if move forward with resource planning – Conservation Commission/Steve Rae; LCNRCD; LCPC.
- 1000 faces/1000 places window display.
- Would like town to get more involved in rail trail effort.
- Get more biking/walking on main roads.
- Kids effort to try and get a state park in town; should be advertised.
- Level sidewalks – issues is flooding that occurs due to frost heaves.
- Walk to School in October; could use community involvement in activity.
- Service learning projects.
- Maintain or establish a minimum 6ft shoulder along well used roads such as Rte 100.
- Implement a tax bill for rail trail ex \$50 annually to assist with raising funds.
- Oxbow park – dog poop problem.
- Widen Randolph road to prior status when repaved.

### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Inventory of places and interest groups (school/town/businesses); plan to share information between groups; id which resources should not be made public/marketed.
- Walking/biking trails – many resources avail – lots of community passion; but have community members that are resources on this topic having a discussion to talk about these issues (ex CC, Bike Shop, Trail builder consultant, etc).
- Community has interest in commonality in trail resources; don't have a strategy for managing assets or resource for how used. Asset management; resource utilization; safety and betterment of community; how to order work to work collaboratively and work with community members to develop.
  - Enigma – what to do with rail trail? Need to stay connected to VAST and legislators
- 1-Human resources – enthusiastic and committed but need an effort to bring together a volunteer committee. 2-how are school resources integrated, how to bring this together both facilities and young people, ex – service learning project.
- Theme - want more outdoor rec multi-use trails whether forest or sidewalks in town. If get organized with plan, ideas

can come to fruition. Ex Johnson Main Street Project and other examples with actions from these community visits.

- Many resources but challenge is organizing selves into action and translate into plan; organize the management and stewardship of resources, what avail to visitors and resources avail as economic driver for community.
- Youth as a resource (trail maintenance, use); community map of assets – could be a tool of resources and mapping process could be start of discussion for other issues (what to be public, when to use, how to manage).



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## Morristown Identity

**Resource Team:** Jeff Francis (facilitator), Amanda Holland (scribe), Alex Aldrich, Ted Brady, Patricia Coates, Carlen Finn, Harry Hunt, Catherine Kalkstein, Phil Petty

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

#### Assets

- Authenticity about community, Vermont town
- Entrepreneurship
- Access to village and open space/rural environment.
- Library – in heart of village, good access to schools, community support.
- Need to maintain identity – ex buy business need to keep same name and good policies.
- Community respect – ex bike shop leaves merchandise outside.
- Community involvement/education link.
- School – community involvement in sports/plays/etc. brings people together.
- Healthy/educated community members – utilize rec resources; old-school movie theatre.
- Rooted year-round community.
- Health care (hospital avail close by) and economics (large employer).
- Town doesn't brand itself loudly but when look see: hospital, live music, CCV, diversity (economic, backgrounds, etc); sneaks up on you.
- People always willing to connect; diversity w/o barriers.
- Avail recreational activities/opportunities.
- Outsiders – hard to see community resources/identity. How to find recreation or shopping.
- Hidden treasures known to people who live here.
- Close to rural environment – access to farms, sugar bush, recreation.
- Multi Service Community – hospital, businesses, fire/police/ems services, not just a grocery store for adjacent town/Stowe. Social services.
- Can lead a sustainable lifestyle – easy access to needs (walkable).
- Feel could live here someday – beautiful views, big but not too big – economic opportunity, good location (access to airport, capital, etc), feels like community can grow up in.
- Location – access to other resources – jobs, recreation.

#### Challenges

- Empty spaces in downtown
- Bypass and spot light in town – will it bring change to development in town; need to serve small businesses.
- More here than what people know, assets not visible; not enough resources tell story.
- Overshadowed by Stowe – accept a 'stepchild' mentality; "what can we do"
- How to make assets more visible but not 'gentrify' town/make it seem to 'gingerbread'
- Schizophrenia – Morrisville or Morristown? Need consensus.
- Post office in Morrisville so all addresses Morrisville, no one "lives" in Morristown.
- Transient housing w/ rentals.
- Youth hangout around Cumberland, look like "up to no good"
- Due to access to social services/hospital and people get care; opportunity for a population of more transient/"problem" people (unemployed, drugs).
- Feel town is 'clicky';
- Lack of transparency in schools.
- Hard for retailer to come into downtown vs north end; due to 1-places rundown, 2-dealing w few landowners that own much of property, 3- traffic due to town becoming bedroom or pass through community to get jobs elsewhere.
- Historic district designation – may limit some activities (both asset and liability).
- Walkability and accessibility of resources an asset but challenge empty spaces...zoning passed to assist with this; have a pressure to sprawl to get businesses to work.
- How to get past ease of just starting fresh elsewhere.
- How to not ruin recreation resources by this sprawl.

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### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Appearance of downtown – attractive, trees, improve appearance by no trucks in downtown (bypass).
- Make a green in downtown (option at old furniture store).
- Jerry's place should be cleaned up (consignment shop by Bridge St).
- Recognize what have here with a printed resource beyond website - Stowe magazine or restaurant guide good models.
  - Don't want it to be a tourist town but more like the best kept secret
- Downtown/vacancies – need to decide the direction town should go in so get the right businesses; shopping, music.
  - Get a better sense of what to do
  - If box stores come in, let town decide what to look like, not business

- “Park” by power plant, great res walkable to town but few know about. Should be a town park.
- If going to brand need to know what to call ourselves (town or village).
- Signs/gateways that welcome people to center, and inform people of res.
- Use current facilities more to welcome people in ex churches, senior center.
- Arts – Bees Knees well known but may not get a large audience for music.
  - Farmers market
  - Avail but not promoted
- Seasonal differences in community – winter quiet/summer vibrant.
- Bedroom community of artists; River Arts brings opportunities but challenge is that it does not have street presence since located in back of parking lot; Can this area be made more visible/attractive (lights, planters)?
  - Need consistency for Arts – where to go to see beyond Bees Knees; Art festivals/fairs occur occasionally.
  - Good ex – Johnson and Waterbury – river of arts, bring in kids.
  - Street festivals.
- Box stores – part of identify in Morristown is that these services are available; need to keep blend of corporate and local.
- Need to identify what is unique here for Morristown in arts, not to try and copy Johnson.
- Duality of services and arts to grow together.
- If brand want to brand as Morrisville, b/c businesses here.
- Based on trail res – promote as crossroads for trail access.
- Bees Knees/River Arts – great but need to be made more aware b/c they likely do not receive lots of public support to keep them going; if they leave it will be hard.

### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Known as Morrisville to outsiders; similar issues as Barre/Montpelier; as an outsider think positively about community (businesses/hospital, etc) but community may think differently – so a disconnect.
- Need commerce in downtown; need to encourage entrepreneurs within or bring w/o; how to bring in business – health care, workforce not transient, schools; majority of town encompasses beautiful working landscape.
- Best kept secret; how to communicate essence of what is here and what to share; need to determine who to bring in – business wise.
- Biggest strength is difference from Stowe; year-round community, hidden secrets, ‘for people who are willing to take the time to find out about it’.
- People/community strength – ‘you could live here someday’ ‘you wish you could live here someday’ as a motto; good assets but may not need to exploit all.
- Community – pride in schools/assets, that this is enough; ‘not to big/not to small’ town for goldilocks; baseline of commitment from members to work on issues; would be good to hear from youth – what do they treasure, what do they need.
- ‘real vt’; mirrored in statistics, have 4% seasonal resident rate/statewide 15%; town can get over complex of Stowe b/c bigger – have services; don’t need a phrase but should review/flesh out in town plan the vision statements.

## Supporting Kids

**Resource Team:** Patricia Coates (facilitator), Amanda Holland (scribe), Alex Aldrich, Ted Brady, Carlen Finn, Jeff Francis, Harry Hunt, Catherine Kalkstein, Phil Petty

Topic considers both “kids” (birth-12) and “youth” (13-19)

Data VT Health Dept conducts Youth Risk Behavior survey available on Voices for VT Children website.

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

#### Assets

- Library
- Involved community
- Relationships between organizations – school – family center
- Community playground
- Walk-ability of resources in village for kids
- Afterschool program for middle/high school (transportation provided if needed) – “Unbound”; 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant funded program.
- Teen Center available 3 days a week.
- Ample opportunity for youth sports development; youth soccer program strong; also softball, basketball, ski program; Dirt Divas – bike group.
- Downhill Sunday program (\$100/8-10wks on Stowe Mtn Resort).

- Teen night at ice rink.
- Local social services – hospital, etc.
- Free backpack program since 2009 lead by a local non-profit; 1<sup>st</sup> year had 900 signed-up but could only serve 400. Needs community support to be successful
- Outdoor/rec opportunity

### **Challenges**

- Need services during breaks/vacations for older children; ex when afterschool program or teen center closed; activity opportunities for kids; ex Friday/weekends
  - For all income levels low and middle income
  - To alleviate boredom
- Lots of options but sporadic and seasonal
  - Limited by availability, expense, age group
- Not sure reaching kids on margins – economically and socially – or those less active due to choice and cost
- Congregation without purpose
- Homeless, there are a number of young people in this category w/o funds or opportunities to engage in community
  - Barriers – transportation and affordable housing
  - No homeless shelter w/in 50 miles; battered women’s shelter nearby
- Teenagers have a hard time finding work

- Help new mothers to create good habits to pass to children; pre-natal care
- Child care availability
- Availability of pre-k is limited and focuses on children required to serve; Partners with other orgs
  - Fewer opps than other regions/districts for pre-k
- Kids on fringe; fewer kids have sense of belonging b/c more are struggling with basic life essentials
- Poverty and its effects on access to education
  - School supplies
  - activities
- Drugs/alcohol – pattern of family substance abuse – hard to address;
- Kids less scared of taking dangerous risks and more scared of healthy risks like trying out a new situation
- See high school graduation as terminal point and not thinking or planning for beyond
- New technology makes secrecy ‘easy’; need to communicate w kids more
- Many great programs may be available but hard for working parent to transport kids to programs if during work hours; need to support families.

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

- Continue/strengthen/broaden interagency/organization opportunities (ex library – free wifi, computer access, etc)
  - Traveling library
- Improve pre-k services
- Professional development for Child Care providers; improve access to web/professional development to enhance their services and grow their business (move up in ranked system)
- Activities for kids to support each other – talent show; arts; (Boosters had ones)
- Partner older and younger kids
- Johnson State College – youth/foster care event (?) to highlight positive and provide a local case study
- Community events – 4<sup>th</sup> of July event
- Technology – could be an entry point for approaching; ex computer use at library
  - Market an event with newspaper/fliers but also technology such as texting or facebook, etc
- Kids w disabilities – how to let them join the discussion; get them to showcase their talents
- Inventory
- Look at school budget to id where cuts may be taking place; are we cutting social services, etc; what are we

- doing to support outreach? Are we adversely impacting group trying to reach?
- Students after graduation struggling with jobs or loans for school. Identify how to reach and check-in; many don’t have goals for what’s next; school does some career counseling
  - Access to jobs – what’s available for those w HS diplomas?; not a lot in region
- Change message on why kids think they are going to school; value of education
  - Change marketing for education – what will education bring you; (Kids reasons – b/c parents want to; b/c have to)
  - Event with adults/recent grads sharing stories; example Alumni Dinner event
- Provide kids with message that college is not the only answer; need tradesman, etc
  - Area does provide good variety of education options (trade school, curriculum options)

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## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Tend to go to what we know – dedicated school system and community resources; try to pick a piece out and conduct ex July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration; Arts a good resource for engaging kids; need to get the message from youth of what is missing
- No big solution, need to keep trying; build up with small steps and successes
- People are always trying to find one solution, but community was able to find many options; interplay with agencies and school provide opportunities; challenging time in economy with availability of services;
- Connections – how they can be strengthened and supported for kids; how to get adults/kid talking; older/young kids; schools/communities work together; - for all issues came back to how to connect for solutions – hope for finding improvements
- Conversations today same as occurring at state level ex pre-k, restoring 55 spots for childcare; find a community based solution to one of these problems – a success from other visits
- Ways to get kids think/dreaming about what to do next; alumni/abroad experience sharing; connecting to community and outside world
- Concrete solutions (pre-k, child care); but think of youth as a resource! Create their own events, give them experiences (event planning, trail building, revitalize downtown); Alumni event – video tape and put on web for wider audience; use youth!

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## Business Community Unity

**Resource Team:** Paul Costello (facilitator), Melinda Scott (scribe), Noelle Mackay, John Mandeville, Janice St. Onge, Brian Shupe, Tammy Surprise, John Tracy, Bonnie Waninger

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

### Assets

- MAC – Morristown alliance for culture and commerce – focused on the downtown
- Lamoille Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Northend Development Association
- 4/gallon gas would encourage local shopping
- Union Bank, town offices
- Are any businesses in Morristown taking advantage of the internet for sales – Concept 2 is
- Vision - More people using the downtown, living in town and taking advantage of the global economy
- Group that focuses on specialty food niche in surrounding towns – very informal, no name yet – discussions about joint distribution and marketing
- Food related businesses – Butternut Mt Farm, Elmore Mt Farm, cheese-making? Rock Art Brewery
- Manufacturing businesses – 12 or 15 big businesses that any town would love to have
- River Arts – art , culture
- Use these things as a stepping stone to get discussions going about unity
- linking of businesses through town directory on town website
- 2 farmers markets – one in village, one in north end
- film house – great place for to families go to on weekends
- hockey rink
- recreational trails

- lake – but has become a swamp, more and more invasives – Morristown missing out on an opportunity to do something with lake – electric department working to replace boardwalk and possibly dredge the lake (ANR issue) – it’s an underutilized resource
- We have a lot of assets here, we just don’t toot our horn – assets are hidden, hard to access.
- Elmore State Park and another privately owned campground
- library
- school

### Challenges

- The village is more pedestrian friendly – is a good place to shop for the basics, but lacks recreation and dining opportunities.
- Lake – but has become a swamp, more and more invasives – Morristown missing out on an opportunity to do something with lake – electric department working to replace boardwalk and possibly dredge the lake (ANR issue) – it’s an underutilized resource.
- Village is separate from the north end of Morristown- how can we bridge the two?
- More traffic needed to the businesses downtown – we need to increase the number of transactions per day, as there’s been a gradual decline over the years.
- We want to have a viable downtown, currently it is not.



- Things that should be here that are not – clothing (department store closed), mom and dad that need clothing basics have little choice in this community.
- Loss of Arthurs (was a family business for years) represents the loss of a cornerstone, loss of a place to buy clothes, , loss to the soul of this community.
- Marketing is the key to getting people to shop in Lamoille county , but there has been no unity in marketing effort for the last several years.
- Social media needs to be utilized in a unified way.
- Who are considered residents? People who live in Lamoille County or people who live in Morrisville? People from Hardwick, Jeffersonville, Cambridge all shop here but some go the other way to Chittenden County instead.
- The town currently lacks a whole spectrum of goods and services – people in the village in wheelchairs go all the way to the north end to shop because they can't get what they need in the village.
- The village's appearance is not inviting – it does not make you want to drive through town.
- Some developers say that there is too little parking to support business growth.
- Proposed by-pass may divert potential shoppers from downtown.
- Retail has changed so dramatically during the last few years – the increase in internet shopping reduces retail traffic in town because people can get goods cheaper online.
- The downtown lacks restaurants.
- There are some safety concerns – people don't feel safe riding a bike after dark.
- Regulation is a huge burden here for businesses and would-be businesses.

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

- The town has to step up and give tax advantages to developers to encourage improvements.
- Realtors buy a page or two pages in the paper for the purposes of cooperative advertising. Can other types of businesses do this?
- What divides the two areas of town? Railroad tracks and the river divide, but what are the links that pull people together? Neither area of town can afford to have the other fail. There needs to be an entity that devotes itself to marketing this place as a destination
- Stop calling the village separate from the town. The governments of the village and town should join. The fact that there are two separate governments is confusing.
- There is no non-profit solely focused on Morrisville – maybe we could start one – Could MAC refocus its mission to encompass the entire town?
- Establish a pedestrian bridge to cross the river and connect the two parts of town.
- The lack of availability of kid-friendly places to occupy kids during a shopping trip forces parents to go elsewhere to shop where there are kid places – toy stores, etc. A toy store would get business from last minute shoppers, particularly impulse shoppers.
- Have there been conversations related to bringing in a department store that has some of these things in it – clothing, toys, etc.? Only conceptual discussions so far.
- Is there anyone who thinks a big box store is the answer? (A few hands raised)
- Littleton, NH got a big box – their downtown is more viable than ever.
- A big box store in Morrisville would decimate the downtown.
- Bring more residents into town by developing apartments in the upstairs of downtown buildings, while businesses occupy the ground floors.
- Chamber of Commerce doing a study in the north end to figure out where to put sidewalks to make the north end more pedestrian friendly.
- Website is needed where all businesses are listed
- Develop grants or contests to beautify properties – use the carrot approach rather than the stick.
- Business owners often choose to build a new facility elsewhere because the rehabilitation costs are so expensive for buildings in the downtown – public monies/action/tax incentives are needed. Use municipalities' ability to borrow at low rates to purchase some of these buildings and lease them out to businesses
- Currently the local business advocacy organizations are fragmented – collaboration needed, incubation center for business developers to resource, one single place to go to develop business ideas.
- We need to find a brand for the community. How can we make Morrisville stand out from Stowe? What makes it unique, what makes it "real" Vermont? Has there been a brand study? 1 and ½ years ago a study was done, but it's not known what was done with the results.
- Envision the village and north end an integrated pedestrian oriented community with pedestrian pathways.
- Small high-tech businesses can't hire locally because the locals don't have skills – this highlights the need for skills training in this area.
- There is no industrial space to put in a high tech light manufacturing plant that a business can own. Much land is held in few hands, and the industrial park has very little space.

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## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- The internet is knocking down local commerce – this poses a huge challenge. But how do you turn this into opportunities?
- There is a need for a unified front on these issues.
- Is public action necessary to invest in the downtown?
- There is a focus on problems with the downtown centered on retail not healthcare or manufacturing.
- There is only limited support for a big box store because of the recognition of the potentially negative impacts on local business.
- The internet was initially presented as a challenge, but it also brings an opportunity for business development and to bring the business community together.
- People care a great deal about this community and what's happening neighbor to neighbor. But there is also fear about what could happen to businesses in the future. Then the conversation shifted to the assets of the town – what we have here and how businesses can use those assets.
- The primary challenge will be how to take the existing assets and make them work for today's economy.
- There is currently an us vs. them division between the village and the north end –people who live here are aware of the division but people who don't live here are unaware of the division. Unify the town and village by getting rid of that artificial division.
- The pedestrian friendly nature of Morrisville is an opportunity for people who want to slow down. There are lots of recreational assets and challenges, lots of opportunities for a diverse demography.
- There is a recognition of the profound impact of the internet and the change that it brings to retail – this is recognized as a weakness and an opportunity.
- The definition of business needs to be broadened from retail to include professional service, hospitals/health care and manufacturing in order to promote unity.
- There are organizations to help out new businesses, but how well do they collaborate? There is an opportunity for them to collaborate.
- Morrisville is a destination for whom? This needs to be defined more clearly.
- There needs to be a marketing effort to promote to the business community the services that are available to help them.
- Groups often get together, just not in an organized way. However, this can be very effective in garnering resources
- Work towards a mixture of markets – both local and non-local.
- Think about the design aspects of physical features and how you can design them to promote unity in the town.
- Unity is here, but has not been tested and not been fully enacted in the way that it could be. There are tremendous opportunities, but no vision for an identity.

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## Infrastructure

**Resource Team:** Paul Costello (facilitator), Melinda Scott (scribe), Noelle Mackay, John Mandeville, Janice St. Onge, Brian Shupe, Tammy Surprise, John Tracy, Bonnie Waninger

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

### Assets

- Health care – hospital, nursing home, mental health agency, health and wellness practice, home health – robust health centered community
- Village electric has adequate utility infrastructure, 18% electricity is locally produced, they have the ability to expand infrastructure to areas of business development, this has already been permitted by Act 250, there is plenty of water available.
- Village and town work well together involving infrastructure.
- Morrisville has a great portfolio – electric hydropower, very green.
- School is close to town and there is a large amount of acreage for recreation.
- The senior center is very active.

- Expanded library
- Highway network, local airport.
- Centrally located at junction of two highways, accessible to truck traffic, a lot more convenient than people think.
- Four banks, one that's headquartered here.
- Rescue squad and reasonably large volunteer fire dept.
- Morrisville is geographically central to the county
- The police department is centrally located.
- A new reservoir with plenty of water.
- Green Mt Transit bus system, loop and commuter bus to Waterbury.
- Gravel resources – there are several good gravel pits in town, and Manosh is building a concrete plant this summer.

### Challenges

- Money is lacking.

- Unreliability of internet, electricity, telephone. Businesses lose power a lot or have frequent brown-outs – this makes employee management difficult.
- Sidewalks are in disrepair, which makes it very difficult for people to get around. However, the town did just receive a grant to repair and add sidewalks.
- A lot of people cycling on the roads – the roads need to be expanded and shoulders widened to be made more cycle friendly.
- Sewer infrastructure is lagging, and a lack of money is preventing the expansion of sewer infrastructure.
- Expansions of sewer that have been done were done without state or federal funds because the town can do it

- much cheaper and faster. However, this puts a large burden on the community.
- There is not universal broadband coverage in town and none in the rural areas. This places a burden on businesses. This is true across the entire state of Vermont.
- Asphalt will be affected by future shortages and price increases in crude oil.
- The town is lacking space to put light industrial businesses for business owners who want to own their property.
- Limits of growth are defined by sewer system capacity.

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

- Get the by-pass done as quickly as possible to accommodate truck traffic.
- Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) is sitting idle and should be advanced. We need volunteers to go out and work on it. However, this is far more complicated than people realize. VAST voted to suspend efforts on it, putting it at a complete standstill. LVRT could be an incredible economic/recreational resource, and it's very frustrating to have it at a standstill. A spur trail has been proposed that would connect to the Stowe Recreation Trail, and this could be done.
- Vermont Yankee – yes or no? Rates will go up. Cost of electricity is a significant economic development issue. How much pressure do we put on rate structure to achieve infrastructure goals? Study was done on increasing capacity of hydropower, which could bring the current 18 percent of local electric generation up to 35%.
- Provide space for local businesses to expand so they can provide local employment opportunities. There is a strong group of local entrepreneurs ready to act.
- The village utility is not as innovative as it could be in encouraging people to produce their own electric power, but can we continue to subsidize this? The town must build the same capacity to support people who lose their own power. Therefore, the general public, through their electric bills, are subsidizing those who make their own power.
- We need to take a good, hard look at what it would take to develop a town industrial park. We need the sewer infrastructure expanded out to those areas, and the cost of real-estate is a challenge. Bishop-Marshall is one potential area, but there are other areas that could use that type of infrastructure. To provide incubator space for light-industrial businesses would be a huge opportunity. The town could develop the park and sell off or lease pieces of it to businesses.
- Mapping broadband – LCPC has mapped broadband, but the coverage needs to be verified. VTEL is planning 4G

- coverage to rural areas, possibly using fiber. The challenge is the last mile – it's too expensive to run high-speed fiber to those areas. However, stimulus money is targeted to those areas, so there's pressure on those companies to go forward. Close attention to those contracts is necessary to ensure that they are doing this.
- Increase bandwidth to residential customers – speed is important for local businesses and telecommuters.
- As areas get 4G, DSL will become too slow.
- None of the broadband initiatives address cell-phone coverage – how is coverage? Coverage is good in Morristown but bad in areas outside of town.
- Potential merger of Stowe/Morristown schools– how does this affect the quality of the schools and education?
- Need more recreation space for kids and there is specific infrastructure that schools need.
- The high school track has been decertified for interscholastic events, basically unsafe, but no repairs are in the current budget. However, school wouldn't allow any private fundraising to upgrade the track.
- Village parking is an issue – too limited, especially in snowstorms. If someone wants to redevelop the Arthur's building, lack of parking will become an issue.
- What infrastructure will help Morrisville become a destination? Trails maps we have; lights, sidewalks, plans for pedestrian connector trails to railhead, more signage is needed to direct people to downtown.
- Lamoille Family Center – childcare is infrastructure, and many childcare centers have closed. This is a big issue for working families.
- Town should take over the development of LVRT

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## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Infrastructure is much more broadly defined than sewer, water, electricity, and roads to include healthcare, childcare, elder care and recreational infrastructure.
- Make sure that your voice is heard in support of the LVRT.
- There are impressive assets in this town – with regard to healthcare, communication, sewer/water/electric
- FQHC - Team approach to health care; the benefits of a locally owned utility are evident; airport, human infrastructure are great assets.
- Morristown is doing more with less; coordinating land use planning with sewer infrastructure; broadening the definition of infrastructure. Morristown's problems and the challenges it faces are similar to those across the state and state funds could be used to help solve them.
- There is more of an industrial/manufacturing focus in this session vs the last session which was focused more on retail business – this presents an opportunity to communicate together. The pieces are here and in place, or are planned to be in place.
- Lack of available move-in industrial space or shovel ready space limits the expansion of business and economic development.
- Morristown takes a lot of pride in its infrastructure assets – both natural and manufactured. Those assets need to be taken advantage of, added up to incorporate/encompass a vision – how much consensus is there to take action?

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## Economic Development

**Resource Team:** Paul Costello (facilitator), Melinda Scott (scribe), Noelle Mackay, John Mandeville, Janice St. Onge, Brian Shupe, Tammy Surprise, John Tracy, Bonnie Waninger

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

#### **Assets**

- We still have a downtown.
- Morrisville is a great location, as it's far enough away but close enough to larger cities.
- There is a lot of local traffic through town because of the school and the hospital.
- Morrisville has set the stage with zoning – has opened up enough to allow economic development.
- A strong culture of entrepreneurship exists– there is a lot of self-employment and strong businesses – 10 or 12 that would be desirable for any town.
- Cultural resources such as the library and River Arts.
- The Rail Trail has the potential to bring a lot of revenue to the town.
- River, beautiful historic buildings.
- Morrisville has its own power, water, sewer that is competitive in price.
- 9-hole golf course.
- Opportunity to draw revenues from outside of town.
- There were community meetings in 2000 to discuss economic development, resulting in the development of River Arts, trails projects, and the conservation commission.
- Morrisville is close to ski areas such as Stowe and Smuggler's Notch; it is at the crossroads for ski area traffic, and this potential for business is not fully realized.

- People really care about the community and are willing to put time into it and tap into their passion for this town.

#### **Challenges**

- Keep commercial growth restrained so as to not ruin the ambiance of the town – reduce/limit sprawl. Zoning in town is adequate for this but not outside of town.
- Quality of economic development is as or more important as quantity – we don't want to look like a Williston. We need economic development that provides good wages – retail does not provide this, manufacturing does (for example, Concept 2).
- Curmudgeons who refuse to sell their buildings – don't want to let go of their property – stores that have been empty for 10-15 years and are becoming dilapidated.
- Is Morrisville's identity high end boutique or blue collar? We lack an identity
- Some want taxes to increase to see better services and others don't want to pay higher taxes – two strong views that are hard to reconcile.
- Towns like Hardwick that have businesses that draw people into the town can serve as a model.
- The by-pass presents opportunities and challenges – it may create more sprawl, but it may also divert some of the heavy traffic outside of town. It may also hurt businesses.

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## Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Old buildings – find a way to reuse them or tear them down. They are not viable and they are too costly to rehab. Are they bad enough to be condemned? Neither the owners nor the town has the money to tear them down.
- There are incentives for owners to either tear down or renovate – other states have done this and it is being looked into, but it would require changes to the town's ordinances.
- There is paralysis around dealing with the buildings – how do we move beyond this?
- There's no opportunity for outlet stores in Stowe, whereas there is here because there's no square foot limit in Morrisville.
- Stowe doesn't have a competitive pharmacy – identify the gaps in businesses that are lacking in Stowe and take advantage of these.
- A food COOP would be an asset in Morrisville – there is a market for this here.
- Years ago Morrisville had a food coop, which lasted only five years. Food for Thought in Stowe went out of business as well. Uncertainty about the viability of a food coop and whether it would work here.
- Hidden recreational assets need to be made more visible. Morrisville is not organized to help tourists – a centrally located information kiosk is needed with maps, guides and information about tourist and recreation attractions.
- Small Business Development Center and the Chamber of Commerce are organizations to help business start-ups.
- There is a need for incubator space for new businesses.
- The lack of available move-in industrial space or shovel ready space limits the expansion of business and economic development; business owners are forced to lease instead of building equity from their property.
- Town-owned industrial park was proposed.
- Micro- business incubator space proposed
- A place where people who work from home can cooperatively lease a space to work outside of the home – a cooperative of sorts.
- Many communities offer tax incentives to buy under-utilized buildings and to fix them up – this has attracted artists in some communities.
- Bellows Falls redevelopment is an example of this – Housing Vermont, Vermont Community Loan Fund (others?) were involved in funding the redevelopment.
- Health care pays well, are there any business opportunities here? May be risky, because of the tenuousness of future health care funding.
- Could the unoccupied downtown buildings be utilized as retirement communities, with businesses on the first floor and residences on the second floor?
- There is a need for good restaurants in this town.
- What if skiers stay in Morrisville? This is an opportunity for the hospitality industry.
- More tourist dollars are spent in summer than in winter; skiers stay put more than the summer tourists.
- There are lots of recreational/tourist resources – is anyone adding those up? Chamber of Commerce is working on this.
- There are not many places for people to stay in Morrisville – we need more hotels.
- Hunting and fishing bring in more tourist dollars than skiing – there is a lot of potential here. AWARE – shooting event to benefit women's groups brought in thousands of dollars years ago.
- Can wood pellets be made locally? One company in VT makes them. As the price of oil increases, this could be an opportunity.
- Start-up cheese, soap companies – light manufacturing opportunities.
- Are we courting light manufacturing? Lack of building space is a challenge.
- Economic development needed not to promote sprawl, but to promote high-value employment.
- Continue to develop in a controlled way.
- Six entities own viable business property in town, but no cooperation or leadership exists to make anything happen.
- Sewer line to the business enterprise district – landowners waiting to hear about the by-pass before taking action.
- We have the infrastructure for tourism; tourism might attract people to move here as permanent residents, and some of them would start new businesses.

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## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Everyone in this room wants to see development happen – in contrast to many other places where negativity is expressed with regard to development.
- There is an incredible number of and agreement about assets in this community; but there's no shared vision of the future of development.
- Level of citizen engagement, commitment to developing the community is strong; but lacking a strong vision. There is more recognition of natural assets in this session than in others – capitalizing on this is a long-term investment but will pay off. Many businesses are started by people living in the community who want to live there and are creative. Bring landowners of business property into the conversation.
- Market Morristown on its own, not just as a part of Stowe.
- There are lots of different perspectives that create a bigger picture – look at the whole picture, figure out where the gaps are and the obstacles and focus and prioritize those needs.
- Different focuses are not necessarily exclusive – they can work together. Tourism, light manufacturing, local food, and a vibrant downtown. World class businesses as well as world class leadership are here who can support entrepreneurs starting up – don't forget about them. Workforce development is needed – educational opportunities for people to stay and work in Morrisville. Instead of waiting for leadership, make some hard decisions about the vision for the future. They won't be perfect, but you'll be moving forward. Not acting is a decision too. Recreational and tourist assets need to be added up.



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Front cover photo: Ben Gould  
Back cover photo: Francis Favreau  
Photos on inside pages: VCRD  
Printing by Minuteman Press