

# New Haven Comes Together

## Report and Action Plan

### February 2026



Produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development

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# Vision for New Haven's Future

*Compiled from vision statements shared during Community Visit meetings and supported by the majority of participants at the Resource Meeting and an online survey. The statements represent some of the broad hopes that the majority of responding residents have for the long term good of the New Haven community.*

## **Community members envision a future New Haven:**

- ❖ that takes care of our open land, wildlife habitat, and beautiful water ways.
- ❖ with a compact, active, vibrant village center where people can gather.
- ❖ where different areas of town are connected and accessible to pedestrians.
- ❖ with open agricultural lands surrounding small, dense village centers / neighborhoods that are connected by public transportation options.
- ❖ that is an agricultural community where we are connected to our working farms.
- ❖ where farm workers are connected and involved with community discussions and decisions and are active members of the New Haven community.
- ❖ that actively supports its farm worker community.
- ❖ where all residents feel like they are part of the community and are actively involved.
- ❖ where people identify as being part of the New Haven community.
- ❖ where we are friendly with our neighbors and look out for each other.
- ❖ with opportunities for connection between young and old community members.
- ❖ where the community gathers and has events in spaces like the Depot Building.
- ❖ with spaces for youth and opportunities for youth to be active members of the community.
- ❖ with affordable housing so people can choose to live here.
- ❖ that is affordable so younger generations can live here and raise their own kids.
- ❖ where our children get high quality education and learning opportunities.
- ❖ that is prepared for the future because it is flood resilient, has alternative fuel options, and has public transportation.
- ❖ with a robust library with lots of fun events for the community.
- ❖ where our rich history is shared and honored in public spaces.

# I. Introduction

The town of New Haven, Vermont welcomes residents and visitors with sweeping views of fields and forests, rolling hills, and the rising peaks of the Green Mountain National Forest. Located just north of Middlebury with Route 7 running through it, New Haven is home to the beloved Addison County Fair and Field Days, the largest agricultural fair in Vermont.

This community is filled with history, beautiful natural places, and engaged residents. Despite its small population size (pop. 1,683), New Haven boasts many small businesses and employers, including gas stations, retail establishments, auto repair businesses, a winery, feed mill, excavation and woodworking businesses, and more. The VCRD Community Visit team was delighted to experience many community spaces in town and meet the people who support them: Beeman Elementary School, the Town Office, the Town Green, the recently relocated Train Depot, and the Village Green Market, which has been in operation for 195 years.

During the New Haven Comes Together Community Visit, New Haven community members expressed a desire for engagement, connection, and to build a community that is welcoming to all. They were also attentive to issues of affordability and sustainability.

Many action ideas were identified throughout this process and can be found in the “Opportunities” section of this report, along with notes taken at the initial forums.

After thorough deliberation, and multiple rounds of voting, New Haven residents voted to form task forces around two priorities:

- Expand Housing Opportunities
- Create Community Gathering Spaces

The VCRD staff and the Visiting team appreciated New Haven’s community spirit, energy, determination, and hardworking ethic, and were impressed by the over 160 local people that participated in this process. Participants shared inspiring points of vision, and thoughtful and strategic priorities for action. With committed leadership and two dedicated task forces, we are confident in New Haven’s future successes.

Community Visits are designed to help communities come together, review major issues, develop priorities and line up for action, but the process also aims to engage more community members, build local leadership, and help to make connections to human, technical, and financial resources from lead agencies and organizations in the state. With over 60 volunteers now engaged in active Task Forces to advance priorities, it is clear that there is great energy in New Haven for forward momentum and progress.

There is no one silver bullet to community and economic development, except the commitment of local residents to a better future. In democracy, all citizens are called upon to stand up for their neighbors, for community, and for the future; it has been an honor to work with all those dedicated to the common good of this Vermont community.

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The Vermont Council on Rural Development helps Vermont citizens build prosperous and resilient communities through democratic engagement, marshaling resources, and collective action. VCRD is prepared to support the efforts of New Haven as it moves forward and to provide follow-up help to the Task Forces as called upon. VCRD will also serve as an advocate for New Haven projects with appropriate agencies and organizations in Vermont. Please call on us, and on Visiting Resource Team members (listed with contact information in the back of this report), when we can be of help.

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There are many people to thank for making the New Haven Community Visit possible.

We would like to thank the New Haven Selectboard, who invited this process, and provided funds for the community dinner at the first meeting, as well as postage for the town-wide mailing about the first meeting.

We also deeply appreciate the work and leadership of Planning Committee members who identified forum topics for discussion, developed the invitation process, and helped with outreach at every stage: Nichole Bambacigno, Ruth Bernstein, Ashley Bessette, Vicki Boise, Kathy Cahill, Kim Callahan, Cody Cyr, Britney Cyr, Marianne Eaton, Chris Granstrom, Marie Jewett, Pam Kingman, Jay Lawrence, David (Dave) Lewis, Mark Livingston, Bruce Many, Alan Mayer, Elise Morton, Aaron Napoleon, Daenen Norris, Stan Wilbur, and Lorene (Rene) Wilbur.

Outreach is an essential component of a successful Community Visit, and many people helped make that happen. Thank you to Pam Kingman for helping with the town-wide mailing, to Kim and Pam for helping with signage and banners in town, and both Daenen and Kim for distributing flyers. Thank you as well to the many other community leaders and organizations who worked together to spread the word about the event and make sure everyone in town was invited and encouraged to participate!

The Town of New Haven was a key partner throughout this Community Visit process. Thank you to Julie Bessette and Pam Kingman for helping to coordinate the use of the Town Hall and Offices for all 3 of the meetings. Thank you to the staff at Beeman Elementary School, especially Stephanie and Kim Estey, for helping with outreach, and allowing the use of their space.

We also appreciate Mount Abe Principal Shannon Warden for inviting us to facilitate a youth forum with students, unfortunately that forum was cancelled due to a snow-related early release and we were unable to reschedule. We were, however, lucky to have the input of a few teens and young adults during the public forums and encourage the task forces to build on that.

Coordinating the events and outreach was a team effort. Many thanks to Ashley Bessette for coordinating childcare. Thank you to Marie Jewett and Kim Callahan for coordinating and setup for the dinner at the first meeting, and to Jim Burns, Noah Hahn and Jeff Pratt for providing the music at the first meeting.

Thank you to Jay at Village Green Market for his ongoing and generous support of this process. Village Green Market prepared and delivered the food at all of the meetings, provided additional strawberry ice cream, and Jay was a wonderful source of local knowledge (and retainer of lost receipts!)

We appreciate the help of the UVM Office of Engagement and UVM Center for Rural Studies for producing a briefing profile of data points about New Haven for the VCRD Community Visit Team.

Thanks must also go to the funders of VCRD's Community Visit Program who made this process possible: Community National Bank, Lintilhac Foundation, National Life Foundation, Norther Border Regional Commission, Porter Medical Center, the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the Vermont Agency of Administration Municipal Technical Assistance Program, the Vermont Community Foundation, the Windham Foundation, and the Wisdom Connection.

VCRD calls in support from state, federal and non-profit leaders to participate in the Community Visit Program. We are proud of the partners we get to work with, and our gratitude goes to the Visiting and Resource Team members that supported New Haven's first and last meetings. The full list of leaders, agencies, and organizations that offered their expertise is at the back of this report.

VCRD especially wants to thank Ashley Bessette, Ruth Bernstein, Kim Callahan, and Marie Jewett for being supportive local contacts and answering all of our questions.

Getting things done is all about leadership, so on behalf of all who have participated in the process so far and will continue to going forward, our deepest thanks go to those who've stepped up to serve as chairs of the Task Forces: Mike Tecca for Create Community Gathering Spaces and Jeff Pratt and Rick Shappy for Expand Housing Opportunities. These leaders have already demonstrated tremendous leadership in supporting the work of their task forces, and we are excited to see their leadership continue to grow.

New Haven is well positioned to move their priorities forward. We are excited to support and celebrate the energy from these new initiatives and look forward to seeing the good things to come in New Haven!



The Planning Committee met on October 8, 2025 to determine forum topics, logistics and outreach for the kick-off event.



**New Haven Comes Together**

Step 3: [bit.ly/NewHavenTogether](http://bit.ly/NewHavenTogether)

Groups are forming to:

- ▶ Expand Housing Opportunities
- ▶ Create Community Gathering Spaces

Work with a team of state and regional leaders to create action plans and identify resources to advance these community priorities.

Free Dinner and Childcare will be provided during the event.  
 Transportation is available. Contact Alyssa at 802-222-6896 or [alyssa@vtvital.org](mailto:alyssa@vtvital.org) to schedule.  
 Interpretation and Accommodations available. Contact [alyssa@vtvital.org](mailto:alyssa@vtvital.org) or 802-222-6896.

**ALL community members are welcome and encouraged to attend!**

**January 15**  
**6-8:30 pm**  
 @ New Haven Town Hall (70 North St)

**Pizza, drinks & desserts will be served!!**

New Haven Comes Together is a month Community Visit process that brings community members together in a neutral and facilitated structure to explore issues, set common goals and priorities, and develop action plans for the future. The program is produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development, a nonprofit organization supporting the locally defined progress of Vermont's rural communities. Learn more at [www.vermontcouncilonruraldevelopment.org](http://www.vermontcouncilonruraldevelopment.org) or contact Alyssa at 802-222-6896 or [alyssa@vtvital.org](mailto:alyssa@vtvital.org).  
 This is an Equal Opportunity Program. Discrimination is prohibited by Federal Law.

**NEW HAVEN COMES TOGETHER**

Help shape the future of New Haven!

**Nov 6  
 Dec 11  
 Jan 15**

ALL are Welcome!

Learn More: [bit.ly/NewHavenTogether](http://bit.ly/NewHavenTogether)

Deep outreach for the process included a mailing to every resident, flyers posted around town, local listservs and phone calls, social media, lawn signs and banners, written and online surveys, and even a custom t-shirt!

## II. The New Haven Comes Together Community Visit Process

VCRD's Community Visit program is a way for towns to engage and bring together their residents, set common goals and directions in a neutral and facilitated structure, and access resources that will help them take action on those goals. **Here is a snapshot of the 5-month process:**



### Planning Meeting: October 8, 2025

On October 8, 2025, 22 local community members met to plan for the launch of the New Haven Community Visit process. This group came up with a name for the process – New Haven Comes Together – and helped to plan the kick-off. They decided on forum topics and an invitation process. Through calls, emails, flyers, banners, and lawn signs, this team worked hard to promote the kick-off.

The Committee included: Nichole Bambacigno, Ashley Bessette, Vicki Boise, Kathy Cahill, Kim Callahan, Britney Cyr, Cody Cyr, Marianne Eaton, Chris Granstrom, Marie Jewett, Pam Kingman, Jay Lawrence, David Lewis, Mark Livingston, Bruce Many, Alan Mayer, Elise Morton, Aaron Napoleon, Daenen Norris, Ruth Shattock Bernstein, Rene Wilbur, and Stan Wilbur.

### Step 1 ~ Kick-Off Forums and Community Dinner: November 6, 2025

New Haven Comes Together kicked off with brainstorming forums held at the New Haven Town Hall. Over 120 participants shared assets, challenges, and ideas for action in forum topics chosen by the planning committee and attended the free community dinner. Forum topics included: Future of Beeman, Youth, and Families; Infrastructure: Fire Station, Emergency Shelter, Public Safety; Community Center: Depot, Library, Community Engagement; and Affordability. Fifteen visiting team members participated, learning more about New Haven and providing reflections to the community.

Visiting Team members included: Alex Armani-Munn, *Executive Director*, Addison County Economic Devel Corp; Ted Brady, *Executive Director*, VT League of Cities & Towns; John Castle, *Executive Director*, VT Rural Education Collaborative; Katie Raycroft-Meyer, *Community Planner*, Addison County RPC; Anson Tebbetts, *Secretary*, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets; Weiwei Wang, *Co-Founder and Executive Director*, Vermont Professionals of Color Network; Sarah Waring, *Executive Director*, Northern Border Regional Commission; Benton Winrich, *Grants Management Specialist*, VT Dept of Housing & Community Development; Mike Winslow, *Assistant Director & Transportation Planner*, Addison County RPC; and Michael Wood-Lewis, *Co-Founder and CEO*, Front Porch Forum.

VCRD staff included: Lauren Brady, *Community Engagement and Policy Coordinator*; Kaziah Haviland, *Village Trust Initiative Director*; Alyssa Johnson, *Community Visit Program Director*; Jessica Savage, *Director of Programs & Strategic Initiatives*; and Denise Smith, *Executive Director*.

## Step 2 ~ Community Meeting: December 11, 2025

After the kick-off, VCRD staff distilled the ideas brainstormed by the community in November into 22 key areas of action. On December 11, over 70 community members came together in the Town Hall to narrow the list of priorities for community action. After lively dialogue and a dot-voting exercise, two action ideas emerged as key priorities: 1) **Expand housing opportunities** and 2) **Create community gathering spaces**. Participants then signed up for task forces to move these priorities forward.

VCRD staff included: Lauren Brady, *Community Engagement and Policy Coordinator*; Alyssa Johnson, *Community Visit Program Director*; Jessica Savage, *Director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives*; and Denise Smith, *Executive Director*.

## Step 3 ~ Resource Meeting and Task Force Launch: January 15, 2026

On January 15, over 45 community members along with facilitators and resource team members came together to develop action plans, identify resources, and form task force groups that will work in the months ahead to implement the priorities. From here forward, all New Haven Comes Together action is focused at the local task force level.

Resource Team members included: Alex Armani-Munn, *Executive Director*, Addison County Economic Development Corp; Danelle Birong, *Community Planner*, Addison County RPC; Katie Buckley, *Director of Municipal Operations Support*, VT League of Cities & Towns; Kati Gallagher, *Sustainable Communities Program Director*, VT Natural Resources Council; Nicole Gratton, *Field Service Representative*, Preservation Trust of Vermont; Jessica Hyman, *Associate Director*, CVOEO Housing Advocacy Programs; Kevin Lambert, *Public Affairs Specialist*, USDA Rural Development; Nathan Lantieri, *Housing Research Coordinator*, VT Housing Finance Agency; Elisabeth Nance, *Grant Programs Specialist*, VT Dept of Economic Development; Katie Raycroft-Meyer, *Community Planner*, Addison County RPC; Benton Winrich, *Grants Management Specialist*, VT Dept of Housing & Community Development; and Mike Winslow, *Assistant Director & Transportation Planner*, Addison County RPC.

VCRD staff included: Lauren Brady, *Community Engagement and Policy Coordinator*; Kaziah Haviland, *Village Trust Initiative Director*; Alyssa Johnson, *Community Visit Program Director*; Jessica Savage, *Director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives*; and Denise Smith, *Executive Director*.





Scenes from Step 1 forums and community dinner, November 6, 2025

# III. New Haven Comes Together Priorities

Determined by New Haven residents at the New Haven Comes Together Community Meeting on December 11, 2025

*Through thoughtful conversation about the future of their community, New Haven community members whittled down a list of 22 action ideas to these two priorities that offer opportunities to build on existing resources and strengthen the community. Residents then signed up for Task Forces to move them forward.*

## **New Haven residents selected these priorities for future action:**

### **► Expand Housing Opportunities**

A group could create more housing opportunities in New Haven. Ideas include rehabilitating old barns for housing, partnering with Habitat for Humanity, creating a housing trust, supporting clustered housing and infill near the village centers, increasing senior housing, and pursuing zoning changes to allow more multi-family housing.

### **► Create Community Gathering Spaces**

Community members are interested in spaces for all ages to gather. Residents noted existing spaces such as the town hall, churches, library, school, and depot. Additional ideas include a coffee shop, event space, history museum, pub, or maker space, and recreational ideas such as space for roller-skating, bowling, or ping-pong. A group could evaluate how to better use the existing spaces for community gathering or create a new space to meet community needs.

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

*Along with the chosen priorities, the key opportunities listed below reflect other potential ideas for action that New Haven community members shared through community and student forums, and an online and print survey. Though these opportunities weren't chosen as priority projects through this process, community members may find the list useful as they look to expand on current projects or take on new ones.*

### **Elevate Youth Voice and Leadership**

New Haven adults and youth could work together to bring more youth into leadership roles for community events and decision making. Ideas include a youth council, youth representation on school and town boards, having more youth spaces and programs in town, and other ideas.

### **Advance the new Fire Station and Emergency Shelter**

Efforts have begun to advance a new fire station and emergency shelter in New Haven. A group could provide support through community engagement, fundraising, or other ideas. This work would need to be done in conjunction with the Selectboard.

### **Enhance Community Communications**

Residents noted the town newsletter and Front Porch Forum are useful ways to share information with the community. A group could boost the use of these tools, and explore additional ways to spread the word, such as bulletin boards, partnerships with the new radio station, and more.

### **Bolster Flood Resilience and Conservation**

A group could advance conservation and flood resilience efforts in New Haven. Participants noted the importance of wetlands, green spaces for humans and wildlife, and a need to connect with other communities for greater resilience. The group could partner with neighboring towns on the New Haven River and others in the watershed to address flood resilience.

### **Launch Cooperative Purchasing and a Lending Library**

Participants suggested various ways to build community and lower costs of goods and services like electricity and heat. Ideas included cooperatively buying fuel oil or food, a collective energy back-up system, sharing property maintenance, creating a lending fund or mutual insurance, community solar on barns, and more. The group could also create a lending library for community resources, tools, and more, and could explore a resource coordinator to help with the lending library or cooperative purchasing.

### **Expand Recreation Opportunities and Trails**

A group could form to increase recreational amenities and programs in New Haven. Residents expressed interest in birding, river access, walking and bike trails, disc golf, exploring a rail trail between New Haven and Bristol, activities on the Village Green, and more. A group could form to promote existing trails or create new and expanded trails and outdoor recreation activities and access in the community.

### **Engage in School Connection and Beeman's Future**

Many residents want a better relationship and more engagement with the schools and school district, including the career and tech center. Community members would like to better understand the current experience of teachers and students, and the possibility of consolidation in the district, especially for Beeman Elementary school. Suggestions included holding open forums for the community to discuss pros and cons of school closure, identify areas of agreement, and consider what is possible for the future of the building.

### **Explore Shared Municipal Services and Equipment**

New Haven could partner with neighboring communities to explore sharing services or equipment. Community members noted that this model could help with the cost of large town equipment, such as fire trucks, or shared contracts with service providers like law-enforcement.

### **Increase Intergenerational Connection**

A group could work on providing more learning and skill-sharing opportunities across all ages. Suggestions included creating a maker space in the community, hosting classes, a skills directory, and more. Community members also shared a desire for more intergenerational connections. Ideas included cross-generational mentorship or tutoring for skills like using digital devices or how to fix things, a volunteer fair, and more.

### **Make New Haven a Destination**

Residents described New Haven as a “drive through town” and wanted to create more opportunities for people to stop and explore what is already here. A group could promote existing assets such as the Tri-Town bike trail, farms, local businesses, and other destinations in New Haven.

### **Expand Community Events**

A group could host or organize events for the community. Residents expressed interest in dances, concerts, plays, music clubs, open mic nights, a farmer's market, ethnic festivals, potlucks, townwide yard sale, and more. The community expressed appreciation of the town events committee, and this group could join or partner with them in this work.

### **Explore Septic and Wastewater Solutions**

A group could form to explore wastewater options for New Haven. This could include improvements for individual homes, such as composting systems and mound systems. The group could also explore the potential of a shared wastewater system for the village.

### **Increase Community Connection and Welcoming**

Participants are interested in boosting community connection in New Haven, especially for new residents. A group could create opportunities for "New Havenites" to connect, bond, and support each other. Ideas include creating a welcome packet, hosting events, and more. Participants also want to foster diversity in town, and this group could support efforts to invite and include community members of all backgrounds.

### **Support and Recruit New Haven Businesses**

Participants highlighted current businesses in New Haven, and expressed interest in bringing additional businesses to town, especially on Route 7. A group could research ways to promote and support existing local businesses, support local employees in gaining skills, and draw more businesses to New Haven. The group could recruit businesses from industries with historic ties to the area including metal working, woodworking, and textiles.

### **Increase Transportation Options**

A group could expand transportation options available in New Haven to improve community members' access to jobs, activities, and services in town and in nearby communities. Ideas include creating a carpool network, launching a bus for afterschool activities, and additional stops for the existing bus and train routes.

### **Advance Land Use Planning**

Residents noted that New Haven has two village centers, and there is potential for development on Route 7. A group could work to determine where the community would like to grow, and what strategies to pursue. The group could also explore road and trail connectivity, septic constraints, strategies for housing that fit the community, and other ways to achieve the community's goals.

### **Improve Road and Pedestrian Safety**

Many community members want to see road safety for vehicles and pedestrians improved. A task force could form to pursue tactics like speed enforcement, speed humps, flashing speed signs, traffic calming measures such as street narrowing, flags at crosswalks, safe crossing options, traffic lights on River Road and Route 7, and more.

### **Connect with New Haven Farms**

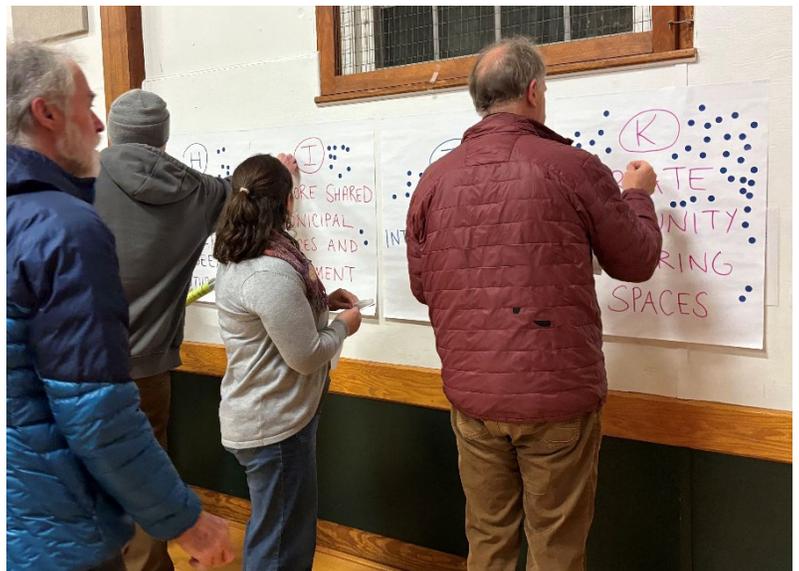
Many participants noted the many farms in New Haven, and the importance of the town's farming history. They connect the community with fresh food and a strong economy and culture. A group could build on these strengths by organizing farm tours, a farmer's market, or other events to celebrate New Haven's farms and make it easier for everyone to enjoy local foods.

## Increase Youth Programs and Events

A task force could create programming and events for youth. Ideas include movie nights, ping pong tournaments, or other arts and recreational options. The group could also work to support youth who want to find employment, participate in community service, have greater independence with afterschool transportation through a bus or carpool, and create their own spaces and events.

## Boost Civic Engagement and Volunteerism

Residents noted that the community has many active groups where people can volunteer. Examples include the events committee, the Library board, and various Town committees; however, these groups could use more support from local residents. A task force could share information about Town government and explore ways to encourage more community members to volunteer their time.



*At the Step 2 meeting on 12/11/25, participants read the opportunities list aloud together, engaged in a dot-voting exercise to choose their top 2 priorities, and signed up for task forces to take action on the chosen priorities.*

## IV. Task Force Action Plans

Resource Meeting, August 13, 2025

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

### ► Expand Housing Opportunities

A group could create more housing opportunities in New Haven. Ideas include rehabilitating old barns for housing, partnering with Habitat for Humanity, creating a housing trust, supporting clustered housing and infill near the village centers, increasing senior housing, and pursuing zoning changes to allow more multi-family housing.

Community Co-Chairs	<b>Jeff Pratt and Rick Shappy</b>
Facilitator	<b>Denise Smith</b> , <i>Executive Director</i> , VT Council on Rural Development
Resource Team Members	<b>Alex Armani-Munn</b> , <i>Executive Director</i> , Addison County Economic Development Corporation <b>Danelle Birong</b> , <i>Community Planner</i> , Addison County Regional Planning Commission <b>Kati Gallagher</b> , <i>Sustainable Communities Program Director</i> , Vermont Natural Resources Council <b>Jess Hyman</b> , <i>Associate Director</i> , Housing Advocacy Programs, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) <b>Ben Winrich</b> , <i>Grants Management Specialist</i> , Department of Housing and Community Development, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development
Community Participants and Task Force Sign-ups	Kathi Apgar, Lili Boenigu, Tim Bouton, Harry Chaucer, Phoebe de Noronha, Eva Doane, Rachael Horn, Allen (Al) Karnatz, Alex Layn, Pam Marsh, Susannah McCandless, Gardner Merriam, Cheryl Mitchell, Ava Murphey, Christine Negra, Florian Oberhuber, Jeff Pratt, Kathleen Ready, Erin Ruble, George Russell, Rick Shappy, Susan Smiley, Pamela Sonn, Sansea Sparling, and Michael (Mike) Tecca

### Current status and overview of the issue today

- Addison Housing Works serves the county as an affordable housing provider.
- New Haven has no water/sewer infrastructure.
- There is some bus service, but it is limited.
- There are community members living in large old houses that may need less space.
- There are potential challenges and opportunities for subdividing existing houses.
- New Haven has large amounts of clay soil, which are challenging for septic development, with pockets of sandy soils.
- There are State wastewater permitting requirements, with septic requirements per dwelling unit.
- The Town of New Haven owns a 10-acre parcel on N. Street.

- New Haven’s Town Plan and zoning regulations were recently updated. The Town Plan will be on ballot at Town Meeting for approval.
- There is ongoing State regulation changes/incentives to support housing, including Act 181, which includes comprehensive land use planning updates. The includes options for Towns to opt into Tier 1B to receive Act 250 exemptions for certain projects.
- There is increasing openness to mobile/prefab/manufactured homes, such as those in Vergennes. There are also new technologies for tiny homes. State permitting questions?
- There is the potential for single family homes to be changed to duplexes if there is sufficient wastewater capacity.

## Priority Action Steps

1. Get on the same page about goals, scale, and who the group is serving. Questions to consider include:
  - Are there specific groups the task force is focusing on serving? e.g. elderly, families?
  - A definition of affordable: What does that mean? What does that mean in New Haven?
2. Conduct research on the current state of housing in New Haven. Areas for research include:
  - How many bedrooms are there in the community? (Listers)
  - Affordability: explore what housing current exists, and its cost.
  - Reach out to builders about what the hurdles are (Rick).
  - Engage with a college student and/or State of Vermont regarding rural sceptic.
  - Explore regional demand for housing.
  - Case studies from folks involved in this (Rachel can share 4 bedroom costs).
3. Proactively reach out to the community members to involve them in this work and build a community engagement plan. Proactively recruit younger folks, farm workers and others, and get them involved in the work. Consider the groups’ goals and benefits, and how to share them with the broader community.
4. Identify funding opportunities to support housing creation.

## Other Potential Action Ideas

- Investigate partnership between land New Haven owns and entrepreneurs.
- Develop a cost fact sheet specific to New Haven (e.g. a mound system cost \$30-40k years ago).
- Identify opportunities for shared infrastructure, collaboration, and resource sharing.
- Create a comprehensive list of stumbling points for constructing a house and/or splitting homes, renting rooms: permits, excavation, septic, legal, etc.
- Creatively inventive towards goals, such as with the Woodstock “Lease to locals” program.
- Research cohousing – there are examples in Bristol and Charlotte.
- Explore the school as potential future housing opportunity, including finding a lawyer to review the deed restriction.
- Identify consultants/resource team folks who can help support this work.
- Explore Village Center designation benefits.
- Create another Village Center.

## Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

*These recommendations for other potential actions and resources to consider were shared by Visiting Resource Team members representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, and encompass their experience, past success and consideration of the community's unique assets and needs.*

### Action Step Recommendations

Recruit input, support and more participants via the New Haven Front Porch Forum.

Identify potential properties that could be used. Current structures and possible land that could be used to build housing. An inventory would be a first step.

Review zoning and subdivision guidelines with the New Haven Planning Commission.

Town plan is vision for the community; may have action steps the group could consider.

Engage with residents with undeveloped/under-developed land; connect to local small developers.

Consider meeting with the Planning Commission and Selectboard about potential Tier 1B designation.

Let people know about Homesharing, which utilizes current housing stock in the community. Learn more at <https://www.homesharevermont.org/>

Consider a co-housing project. There are several to tour in Vermont.

Reach out to partners in the resources and technical assistance section.

Identify high priority sites that offer the best opportunity for developing housing in the near term. Process should consider property ownership/availability for acquisition, current zoning, classification under Act 181 Future Land Use maps, access to utilities, proximity to the village center, and "shovel-readiness." Once potential sites have been identified, the Town should pursue funding for a feasibility study or other pre-development work to guide future development. Addison County Economic Development Corporation is here to assist.

The municipality could formally create a housing committee. See resources from VHFA in the "Resource" section below.

Explore the feasibility of community water/wastewater systems.

Review Silver Maple "achievable" manufactured homes as a potential housing solution for the community.

Consider conducting a Housing Needs Assessment. This type of assessment can cover who might want to move to New Haven.

Addressing public will is crucial for this work. Just building more homes doesn't mean they are inclusive or welcoming. Consider tactics to bring people on the same page. Consider who else isn't in the room or doesn't live in town yet.

Learn about Local Housing Trust Funds to better understand their uses, governance structures, revenue sources. Montpelier Housing Trust Fund is one such example. Learn more at <https://www.montpelier-vt.org/1088/Montpelier-Housing-Trust-Fund>

### Technical Assistance / Peer Connection Recommendations

Agriculture plays a critical role in the community--important to connect with that sector because they own a tremendous amount of property that's in active agriculture and recreation.

Addison Housing Work could be an important partner. See <https://www.addisonhousingworks.org/> and contact Elise Shanbacker, Executive Director, [elise@addisonhousingworks.org](mailto:elise@addisonhousingworks.org) and 802-877-2626, ext. 101.

Addison County Regional Planning Commission can be a resource for grant application assistance; trainings regarding land use and municipal plans; Act 181 education; and more. Contact Visiting Team Member Danelle Birong, Community Planner, Addison County RPC, [dbirong@acrpc.org](mailto:dbirong@acrpc.org), 877-2134; 578-2740. Community Planner Katie Raycroft-Meyer, [kraycroftmeyer@acrpc.org](mailto:kraycroftmeyer@acrpc.org), 802-388-3141 x5 and Mike Winslow, *Assistant Director & Transportation Planner*, [mwinslow@acrpc.org](mailto:mwinslow@acrpc.org), 802-877-6586 were also part of the Visiting Team for the New Haven Comes Together process.

If the Town forms a housing committee, then they could schedule time with Bonnie Waninger & Katie Buckley, VLCT, to discuss housing development and the Community and Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP). Contact Visiting Team member Katie Buckley, [kbuckley@vlct.org](mailto:kbuckley@vlct.org), 802-229-9111. If the group chooses to pursue CHIP, the Vermont Economic Progress Commission (VPEC), which administers the program, could also be an important resource.

VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development is a resource. Contact Benton Winrich, Grants Management Specialist, VT Dept of Housing & Community Development, [benton.winrich@vermont.gov](mailto:benton.winrich@vermont.gov).

Consider consulting with Champlain Housing Trust. They can be a resource for farmworker housing. Learn more at <https://www.getahome.org/vermont-farmworker-housing-repair-loan-program/>.

Addison County Economic Development Corp can be a resource. Contact Visiting Team member and Executive Director Alex Armani-Munn at [AArmani-Munn@addisoncountyedc.org](mailto:AArmani-Munn@addisoncountyedc.org) and 802-388-7953.

HomeShare Vermont is a resource. The organization screen (background and reference checks) and match those with room in the house with people seeking an affordable place to live. Learn more at <https://www.homesharevermont.org/>.

## **Resources and Potential Funding Sources**

Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) runs <https://housingdata.org/>, which provides a wealth of housing related data. For questions or help using the site, contact Nathan Lantieri, Housing Research Coordinator, at [NLantieri@vhfa.org](mailto:NLantieri@vhfa.org)

VHFA has Housing Resource Toolkit (<https://housingdata.org/toolbox/>), which includes a “Housing Committees in Vermont” section (<https://housingdata.org/toolbox/housing-committees>).

CVOEO supports housing committees around the state, meet with others. Contact Visiting Team member Jessica Hyman, Associate Director, CVOEO Housing Advocacy Programs, [jhyman@cvoeo.org](mailto:jhyman@cvoeo.org), 802-861-4769.

CVOEO also offers trainings for landlords and tenants, which can particularly relevant if folks convert homes to duplexes and becomes landlords. Contact Jessica Hyman (see above).

Addison County Regional Planning Commission has a Resource Guide to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Learn more and access the guide at <https://acrpc.org/2023/07/acrpc-resource-guide-to-accessory-dwelling-units/>.

Vermont Housing Improvement Program 2.0 (VHIP 2.0) is a resource that provides forgivable loans for a variety of projects that support housing rehabilitation and creation. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/vhip>.

Small Grants for Smart Growth Program at the Vermont Natural Resources Council may be a potential funding source. Learn more at <https://vnrc.org/small-grants-for-smart-growth/> and contact Visiting Team member Kati Gallagher, Sustainable Communities Program Director, VT Natural Resources Council, [kgallagher@vnrc.org](mailto:kgallagher@vnrc.org).

VCRD is happy to write letters of support for grant applications. Contact Alyssa Johnson at [alyssa@vtrural.org](mailto:alyssa@vtrural.org).

Vermont Community Foundation Spark Connecting Community Grant program funds projects that strengthen community connections and build social capital. The program offers \$500-\$5,000 grants and the deadline for the 2026 grant round is **March 31**. Learn more at <https://vermontcf.org/funds/spark/>.

The Homes for All program from Dept. of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is well suited to assist communities like New Haven. The program began with the release of the phase one Homes for All toolkit meant for communities to begin exploring the idea of infill development and missing middle housing in their towns. The Homes for All toolkit can assist a potential housing task force with a plan forward to supporting housing development in New Haven.

The second phase of Homes for All is a series of small-scale developer training courses launching soon, designed to assist and educate Vermonters interested in developing housing in their communities. The developer training program is broken into three levels:

- The first level is the Small-scale development 101 workshops, which are standalone one-day, in-person events that are meant to provide an introduction to small scale development. DHCD will be running this workshop four times with the first taking place in Montpelier on February 21st then again in Middlebury in April, Brattleboro in June, and Lyndon in September.
- The second level is the Homebuilders Bootcamp, this is a 6-week online course designed to help developers work through their own projects and tackle issues like site plans, Pro formas, and pitching your project to lenders/investors. DHCD will be offering the bootcamp courses three separate times. Dates for the Bootcamp course are not set yet but will be released soon and will likely follow a similarly spaced out schedule as the small-scale development workshops so no need to register for the first available course if it does not suit your schedule.
- The last level is 1-on-1 technical assistance which is provided by Helm Construction Solutions. Technical assistance will be administered through an application process and offer up to 20 hours of technical assistance for a specific project.”

VLCT has a resource titled “Funding Opportunities for Enabling Housing Development”:  
<https://www.vlct.org/resource/funding-opportunities-enabling-housing-development>.

VLCT has a Grants & Funding Chat/Webinar on Housing from 12/2/2025:  
<https://www.vlct.org/resource/grants-funding-chat-recordings-and-resources>.

Link to spreadsheet of funding sources for drinking water:  
<https://www.vlct.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2023-sources-drinking-water-vlct-v2.xlsx>

Spotlight on Wastewater Funding: <https://www.vlct.org/sites/default/files/uploads/2025/2025-01-14-spotlight-wastewater.pdf>.

The Walter Cerf Community Fund at the Vermont Community Foundation funds projects in Addison County. Learn more at <https://vermontcf.org/funds/the-walter-cerf-community-fund/>.

Northern Borders Regional Commission. Contact Visiting Team member Sarah Waring, Executive Director, Northern Border Regional Commission, [swaring@nbrc.gov](mailto:swaring@nbrc.gov) , 603-369-3001.

Vermont Community Development Program may be a resource for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp>.

USDA Rural Development has a variety of potential funding sources relevant to housing. Learn more at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/vt-nh>.

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) has a Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) which can pay for grant writers once you’ve identified funding sources. Learn more at <https://vhcb.org/redi> and contact Mariah Noth at [mariah@vhcb.org](mailto:mariah@vhcb.org) or 802-828-1098.

## ► Create Community Gathering Spaces

Community members are interested in spaces for all ages to gather. Residents noted existing spaces such as the town hall, churches, library, school, and depot. Additional ideas include a coffee shop, event space, history museum, pub, or maker space, and recreational ideas such as space for roller-skating, bowling, or ping-pong. A group could evaluate how to better use the existing spaces for community gathering or create a new space to meet community needs.

Community Chair **Mike Tecca**

Facilitator **Jessica Savage** and **Lauren Brady**, VT Council on Rural Development

Resource Team Members **Katie Buckley**, *Director of Municipal Operations Support*, Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT)

**Nicole Gratton**, *Field Service Representative*, Preservation Trust of Vermont

**Kevin Lambert**, *Public Affairs Specialist*, USDA Rural Development

**Elisabeth Nance**, *Grant Programs Manager*, Department of Economic Development Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development

**Mike Winslow**, *Assistant Director & Transportation Planner*, Addison County Regional Planning Commission

Community Participants and Task Force Sign-ups Kathi Apgar, Lili Boenigu, Tim Bouton, Harry Chaucer, Phoebe de Noronha, Eva Doane, Rachael Horn, Allen (Al) Karnatz, Alex Layn, Pam Marsh, Susannah McCandless, Gardner Merriam, Cheryl Mitchell, Ava Murphey, Christine Negra, Florian Oberhuber, Jeff Pratt, Kathleen Ready, Erin Ruble, George Russell, Rick Shappy, Susan Smiley, Pamela Sonn, Sansea Sparling, and Michael (Mike) Tecca

### Current status and overview

- The Village Trust Initiative is supporting New Haven's Community Trust starting in 2026. The Depot building is the first project the Community Trust will work on to serve the community, and will likely continue with other projects in years to come. VTI program will help through engagement and financial resources so that the community can come together and decide on that building. There could be overlap between the taskforce and the hope is that the Trust will live on beyond the project. Work together to help get the Depot done.
- Noted in previous meetings that the community has many important but perhaps underutilized spaces such as the Town Hall, School, Village Market, Congregational Church, Library, Depot, and Village Green especially for holiday events.
- The community is quite geographically spread out with a wide range of demographics.
- The Town Office has a map and all kinds of resources.
- The Town collects and sends out a monthly newsletter from NewHavenVT.com – email the Town Clerk to share info for the newsletter or to ask to join the list.
- The Lincoln Peak Vineyard is hosting community Coffee Hours that are free on first Saturday mornings, come meet your neighbors.
- The school has a garden.
- Union church of New Haven Mills – on the national register. Has amazing acoustics – great for summer concerts.

## Priority Action Steps

1. Inventory of community groups, events, and spaces (who to contact, how they are used, and what facilities are available). Map the data or make accessible for folks to use.
2. Create subcommittees to focus on a few top priorities – create welcoming committee, promote existing events, and plan a Summer on the Green event (see other ideas below). Attend to and support other community initiatives like the Depot project, Fire Station project, and Library expansion project.
3. Promote use of existing communication methods - the Town newsletter, website, and Facebook plus the developing radio station.
4. Community Survey to identify what the community wants in a community gathering space, what events they are interested in, and resources they can share like space or volunteer hours/skills. Noted that the task force could work with the Community Trust and potentially other community groups to create a single survey that can provide info to multiple groups.

## Other Potential Action Ideas

- Map of town showing the public or semi-public spaces and how they can be used.
- Ask what will draw folks to spaces and what are they interested in doing?
- Organize a comprehensive masterplan for developing community spaces. Work toward longer term ideas that can generate an income stream.
- Make crossing Route 17 safe so the village center isn't divided.
- Expand or create free & open "drop in" spaces like the Vineyard and the Library.
- Sit-down coffee shop space or similar space to sit and get to know people – explore potential at Village Green Market or Lincoln Peak.
- More support for the Library – volunteers and expanding their space.
- Reconfigure the Church with flexible and comfortable seating to make the space more useful for many types of events.
- Host Open Gym, Volleyball, and Community Dance events in the Town Hall/Gym, could tie to Library story hour.
- Create or develop a recreation center and event space. Desired rec spaces include: swimming pool, roller rink, bowling alley.
- Possible components of a Summer Event to host on the Village Green.
  - Regular Concerts on the Green; Annual potluck or BBQ; Frisbee games; Food trucks; Local makers and local groups host booths with activities.
- Promote and build on existing events.
  - like pancake breakfasts, coffee hours, town yard sale, or holiday events on Green.
  - could add fishing events, frisbee games, cocktail hours, community dances or showcases (called dances, stories, performances), farmers or makers markets.
- Promote existing communications and create new ones to get the word out to people who don't join events/meetings.
  - Support town website and newsletter, raise awareness to get more subscribers.
  - Bring users to Front Porch Forum, Facebook to share events & happenings.
  - Create neighborhood email listservs.
  - Raise awareness of and add to the new Community Radio Station.
- Share the progress of this group in the Town Newsletter and other places to share ideas/efforts and get feedback/support.
- Make the old Bristol railroad a rail trail or pathway - one of the prettiest throughways.
- Sustaining volunteer recruitment and retention. Perhaps hire a paid Events Coordinator.
- Build on Business-to-Community partnerships for events or spaces such as Vineyard coffee hours or Village Green catering these events. Win-win for both.

- Create a Welcoming Committee to greet new neighbors and a Resident's Manual on how to get connected and what to expect from governance and events.
- Create a community garden and connect it with the food shelf.
- Gather a list of local artists and coordinate a rotation of their work in the Town Office.
- Get rid of the Australian Ballot and go back to Town Meeting.
- Promote the Community Dinner on Town Meeting Day to hear from many voices.

## Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

*These recommendations for other potential actions and resources to consider were shared by Visiting Resource Team members representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, and encompass their experience, past success and consideration of the community's unique assets and needs.*

## Action Recommendations

Inventory of gathering spaces is a great start, consider also doing an inventory of gathering events. Can do multiple community surveys, and incentivizing input for surveys is important.

Create a spreadsheet (workbook) to inventory physical spaces AND current community events. After the building inventory is created, evaluate the buildings? Example - will the elementary school close in the next 1-2 years? If so then what could the use of that building be? Could the Library relocate into the school instead of the cost of expanding the current building? If then could the Historical Society take over the Library building if the Library moves into the school?

- Tab #1 - Community Spaces: create a sheet in the workbook for the current community spaces and include columns for: Building Name, Physical address, Primary Current Use, Who owns it (municipality, private owner, community group, etc.), Capacity per code?, Does it currently have functioning community space available?, What is the cost to rent the space?, Who manages the rental?, Bathrooms, Heat, Electricity, Water, Sewer/septic, Kitchen facilities, ADA Accessible entrance, ADA Accessible bathrooms and internal spaces, Age of building (best guess), Known issues (ex. needs a new roof, rotting sills, foundation issues, drainage issues, unstable porch, etc.).
- Tab #2 Events/gatherings: create a second sheet for the existing events and include columns for: Event Name, Who is the host?, Frequency (monthly, annually, weekly, quarterly, first Friday, etc.), Target audience (children 5 and under, parents of middle school age children, residents over 55 yo, etc.), Is there a fee to participate?

Consider focusing on spaces that will foster ongoing recurring activities such as book clubs, adult classes, rec leagues, maker clubs, etc., rather than hosting one-off events.

Aim to have regular and predictable community events.

Other communities have also created Welcome Packages or Committees – see resource ideas below.

Partnerships are key – think about how you can partner with other groups in your community, and maybe with groups or organizations in your region. Stay tuned into the work of the New Haven Community Trust. Work with the fire department if they plan on building new station--possible multi-use facility attached to fire station.

Consider how you organize existing human resources. You have an Events Committee, willing support from Town Staff, several Community Groups that are interested in this type of work and will be ready partners. It will be important to organize these groups efficiently and communicate well so you can work together. Within this large new task force, you could give subcommittees actions, tasks and deliverables.

Try to bring people in as you go through the process. Start with some really achievable events or tasks to give yourself some wins and show neighbors what you are doing.

Use these resource contacts, our whole job is to serve you and your community. We are excited to pick up the phone or get your email. If we don't have the information we will find the person who does.

VLCT has a tax calculator on their website which may be useful if there are projects that require Town funding like hiring a town events coordinator. This tool will help you show the "bang for your buck."

As you apply to grants, be clear about the purpose of the funding and the purpose of your project; how do those two things align? Grants often are interested in projects that support economic development, health and well-being, and community improvement.

New Haven Front Porch Forum might be a good way to solicit ideas, support, planning volunteers, and more. Then plan for an ongoing outreach campaign, this kind of thing takes ongoing maintenance.

The group might want to ask itself some questions early on to define the goals, or ask these questions within the subcommittees:

- Are we focusing on an event(s) or an event space?
- Do we want town funds to go toward this effort?
- How many residents do we want to reach this initiative?

Consider engaging Bill Sinks and the Russell Brothers, as they are local property owners who are actively developing or seeking to develop new commercial and public spaces that serve the New Haven community.

## **Technical Assistance / Peer Connection Recommendations**

Addison County Regional Planning Commission can support the community in connecting you with other resource providers, applications to relevant grants, walking you through any large-scale planning efforts for physical spaces, village center traffic or pedestrian safety, and so forth. Contact Visiting Team Member Katie Raycroft-Meyer, [kraycroftmeyer@acrpc.org](mailto:kraycroftmeyer@acrpc.org), 802-388-3141 x5.

Addison County Economic Development Corporation can also support applications to grants, connecting the community with local and regional business partners or developers, and more. Contact Visiting Team Member Alex Armani-Munn, Executive Director, 802-388-7953, [aarmani-munn@addisoncountyedc.org](mailto:aarmani-munn@addisoncountyedc.org).

Preservation Trust of Vermont can support an inventory of the buildings with engineers and architects. Generally, they can provide Technical Assistance in knowing a building better, developing a strategy for rehabilitation, ADA and Code upgrades, exploring funding opportunities, meeting with other funders, etc. Contact Nicole Gratton, Field Services Community Support Specialist and Visiting Team Member, at [nicole@ptvermont.org](mailto:nicole@ptvermont.org).

Department of Commerce and Community Development can share more information about the kinds of grants or structural support that New Haven could be eligible for. Contact Gary Holloway at [gary.holloway@vermont.gov](mailto:gary.holloway@vermont.gov)

Vermont Humanities Council may be a resource. Contact Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup at 802-262-1351 or [christopher@vermonthumanities.org](mailto:christopher@vermonthumanities.org).

Vergennes Opera House and Board President Gerianne Smart. Learn more at <https://vergennesoperahouse.org/> and contact [info@vergennesoperahouse.org](mailto:info@vergennesoperahouse.org) and 802-877-6737.

Ripton Community Coffee House (former) - Richard Ruane. Learn more at <https://www.rcch.org/> and contact [rcchfolks@gmail.com](mailto:rcchfolks@gmail.com).

Northern Border Regional Commission may be a resource. Contact Sarah Waring, Executive Director and Visiting Team member, at (603) 369-3001 x2 or [SWaring@nbrc.gov](mailto:SWaring@nbrc.gov).

State of Vermont Agency of Buildings & General Services has grant programs that may be relevant. See additional information below and contact Shaina Lyon at 802-828-3519 and [Shaina.Lyon@vermont.gov](mailto:Shaina.Lyon@vermont.gov).

State of Vermont Department of Parks and Recreation may be a resource. Contact Nate McKeen, Director of State Parks, at 802-777-0814 or [Nate.McKeen@vermont.gov](mailto:Nate.McKeen@vermont.gov).

Vermont Community Foundation can share about potential grant resources and how to keep them updates. Contact Andy Barker and Jessie Schmidt, [abarker@vermontcf.org](mailto:abarker@vermontcf.org) and [JSchmidt@vermontcf.org](mailto:JSchmidt@vermontcf.org).

Vermont League of Cities and Towns can be a resource for how to support municipal capacity, supporting the municipality with insurance for events, and other examples of towns working with community groups. Contact Visiting Team Member Katie Buckley at 802-343-6323, [kbuckley@vlct.org](mailto:kbuckley@vlct.org).

Connect with municipal officials in Johnson about how they use Legion Field - a community gathering space where they moved the town library to.

Contact or visit the Old School Community Center in Wilmington and meet with the Old School Enrichment Council to learn how this grassroots non-profit organization started. Learn more at <https://www.osccvt.com/> and contact Meg Streeter, Vice Chair at [megstreeter.realestate@gmail.com](mailto:megstreeter.realestate@gmail.com).

Contact or visit Hardwick and learn how the community rallied around turning Atkins Field into a community gathering space for all sorts of community gatherings.

Vermont Community Development Program maintains the Community Development Consultant list which the community could contact folks for grant writing and technical assistance as needed. See <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp/applicant-guidance/community-development-consultants>. There are some grants that can pay for consulting time. Contact Julia Connell at [Julia.Connell@vermont.gov](mailto:Julia.Connell@vermont.gov) for more info.

## Resources and Potential Funding Sources

Vermont Community Foundation Spark Connecting Community Grant program funds projects that strengthen community connections and build social capital, and first time grant seekers are encouraged to apply. The program offers \$500-\$5,00 grants and the deadline for the 2026 grant round is **March 31**. Learn more at <https://vermontcf.org/funds/spark/>.

The Walter Cerf Community Fund at the Vermont Community Foundation funds projects in Addison County. Learn more at <https://vermontcf.org/funds/the-walter-cerf-community-fund/>.

VCRD's *Community Leadership in Action Guide* contains a chapter called "Develop a Community Center" with ideas and resources relevant to this topic: <https://www.vtrural.org/guide/>.

Municipal Planning Grants and Vermont Community Development Program planning grants can help the community get started with identifying a space and/or identifying updates needed once a space has been identified. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant> and <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp>.

The State of Vermont Buildings and General Services Communities Grant program has regional economic development and recreation facilities grants that may be relevant. Learn more at <https://bgs.vermont.gov/commissioner/building-communities-grants>.

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) has a Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) which can pay for grant writers once you've identified funding sources. Learn more at <https://vhcb.org/redi> and contact Mariah Noth at [mariah@vhcb.org](mailto:mariah@vhcb.org) or 802-828-1098.

USDA Rural Development Rural Business Development Grant: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-business-development-grants-8#>. Contact Dianne Drown, Community Programs, (802) 424-3159.

VCRD is happy to write letters of support for grant applications. Contact Alyssa Johnson at [alyssa@vtrural.org](mailto:alyssa@vtrural.org).



# New Haven Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held with over 120 New Haven community members and the VCRD Visiting Team on November 6, 2025 and through a paper and online survey.

*Although the prioritization work of the New Haven Comes Together Community Visit process 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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## Future of Beeman, Youth, and Families

Visiting Team: Lauren Brady (FACILITATOR), Kaziah Haviland (SCRIBE), Alex Armani-Munn, John Castle, Katie Raycroft Meyer, Weiwei Wang, Michael Wood-Lewis

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### What are the Assets in this Area?

- It's a small town and I come from a dairy farm from the '50s. I feel very much at home even though I've only been a resident for 14 years. I love Front Porch Forum and how it connects us. I don't know who is asking for my rhubarb, but it's great to meet them when they show up. It's a very friendly place.
- I serve the migrant community and the people I serve feel safe here.
- I love the library. It is so open and welcoming.
- I live way out but to know that people live here (center of town) and their kids can walk to school or walk to the store is wonderful.
- I love that you can volunteer for a committee. It's a great way to serve community and get to know people. Thanks to those on the school board or select board who get yelled at all the time.
- I lived here for 7 years. I didn't feel like part of the community until my oldest went to school here. We are kind of a drive through town, but there are good things here. The space between the school and the library is really nice. To have the pancake breakfast or other activities is great.
- On the southern side we have access to the trails around Middlebury. I take my kids. You don't have to drive far and they have great kid-friendly hikes. Don't have to go far to get in touch with nature.
- I went to Beeman and my kids went to Beeman. The store and the church play a big part in our community. They all provide things for kids to do. They build community.
- Events committee has been really instrumental in bringing people together. PTO is also instrumental in this. In terms of quality of life for us who are raising children – watershed is great. Bristol Rec is great. Mount Abe runs the afterschool sports bus which is a great asset. Love access to the playground and soccer field where families can come on weekends and after school to be together.
- Multi-generational aspect – having those people to rely on and their input. The older generation has created a community where we all feel welcome.
- I appreciate our close community. I see people I know at the store.
- I love the amount of open land. I have a horse that I love to ride around New Haven.
- Elders who are really connected to storytelling.
- Farmer in me likes to see the open agricultural land. You can either have housing and solar panels OR ag land, and we still have a lot of ag land.
- Love our open land. Not many towns where your kid can learn to harvest their first animal in their back yard.
- I can walk them down the street and know they are safe.
- I've never experienced such a can-do helping hand group of people. Whether it's fixing a bolt on a tractor wheel or figuring out what to do about the school to do the best for our kids.
- Town green and the events that happen there.
- The library is great. I use it all the time.
- It's really beautiful here.
- I love the history. I've learned so much from my neighbors on the history of the buildings and families. It (the history) is very honored and present.
- I like bragging about what our kids get to do at Beeman (skiing, the apple orchard, the circus came). I really appreciate what is happening at our school and the teachers that are willing to do these things with our kids. Worry that with a bigger school we couldn't do these things.
- I felt so safe raising my kids and grandkids here – my kids were raised feral. They went into the woods and did their thing and were safe. My grandkids walk the ¼ mile to my house and they are safe. It's so good for kids to be able to do this and not be sheltered.
- Great afterschool programs.
- Diverse set of people.
- Big small town with a central location.
- Mentor program.

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### What are the Challenges:

- There has been a change in our community as far as who can afford to live in New Haven. I wouldn't be able to buy a property here now. We don't have young kids coming into this community and our numbers are getting incredibly low.

- I was on a maritime museum hiring committee and half of the applicants had to opt out due to lack of affordable housing.
- Food insecurity and many families who don't want to be identified as being food insecure. Strong sense of pride that affects people's ability to ask for services.
- We are a drive through town. If we were more of a destination we might have a bigger village center, more businesses, and a restaurant.
- Uncertainty about what is going to happen with Beeman.
- Not a regular stop for Tri Valley – have to call them.
- We don't have town water which makes it hard.
- We still have zoning laws that work against building up the community.
- I moved from out of state to Bristol and it was easy to meet people because of the walkability and street life. That is a challenge here, the school is how I was welcomed into this community.
- I have 3 kids and they don't go to Beeman. Having small numbers creates problems because there is only one class per grade and no support staff and that creates unsafe situations if kids can't be in the same space together. There are no options to separate them.
- There is a big change in the education they are getting – the teachers are awesome and they are working under a system that is very strained. Kids are getting hurt, there is not enough support, not enough supervision because there isn't the staff. The change in curriculum makes it hard to have a multi grade classroom. I want to see Beeman thrive, but I also want my kids to get the best education possible.
- Youth voice – I loved Beeman. I had a fairly good class. Learning was hard because I was always in a combined class. When I was in the upper grade it was easier and I would ask for more work and now I feel like I am ahead at my new school. I got super close to everyone in my class.
- I went to Beeman and am a teacher and have worked in schools all over (Addison County). I love Beeman and am biased. I have seen a lot of not supporting teachers from administrators. I have seen a lot of good teachers in this district move to Vergennes or Middlebury to get support and they have great things going on there. Considering not having my 4-year-old go here. I would love to see that change – more bodies in classrooms, better wages, administrators who remember what it was like to be in the classroom. Teachers are in the trenches trying to make the best of what they have.
- Speaking as a parent not a board member – part of the reason I got on the board is I have ongoing concerns about our kids education. My kids are all over (Middlebury, Mount Abe). If you don't do sports or you aren't in a play, you are lost. I'm less happy about where our kids go after Beeman.
- I'm concerned about two silent majorities in this community – 1 – people who don't have and income to keep up with living here, 2- kids and families who are at the tech center because they don't stay in New Haven. There is no engagement with the community and the Tech Center.
- Number of parents with kids in the system raised hand vote – 1/3 of participants, Grandparents – a few, a few teachers.

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

- We have 10-acre zoning – maybe using a few 10 acre plots can be used to put housing central so that most of the open land stays open. Keep clusters of houses close to the town center. – with that comes affordability.
- We are not going to get more kids in town if you can't afford to live here. We need houses that people can afford to buy. I can only live here because my parents had land I could live on.
- I don't want us to lose the open space that makes this beautiful but I also don't want to lose the people who will keep the town going.
- People of an older age are still living in 3-4 bedroom homes, if we left those homes that would open more, bigger homes, for families. If we could use Beeman for senior housing that would be helpful. Though Beeman can only be used for school associated purposes by deed.
- About 1/3 of us are parents of kids. It is hard to get kids in the school system and their parents to engage in conversation.
- I live on a beautiful road, our neighbors are fantastic, I work in Middlebury and am from Vergennes. Those are my towns. I have found it really hard to get into the community. We don't even have a sports team. It's lovely but also lackluster in what is available.
- Village youth council and funding for leadership development – opportunities for community service and creating programming for them. Youth knowing what youth want!
- We have a challenge with childcare. It's hard to be a full-time working parent and a dedicated mom and community member. We need to find ways to support families and provide quality care for their kids with hours for working families.
- When you come to a town where you didn't grow up – the only way I knew how to find information was to join the PTO. How do we connect to each other outside of having kids in school or the internet?
- Some sort of afterschool bus to pick kids up and relocate them to other places in the area.
- We have a lot of seniors – and maybe there are people who have more time on their hands. If there is a way to connect people who aren't working with families who have childcare needs. My kid just started the mentoring program and has a wonderful woman named Kathy who is just there to know her. If we can get some of the older community to foster relationships with the youth that would be great.
- A tutoring program for people who may need more help with school. There is not a lot of time in the day for each curriculum so having more time afterschool for learning.
- Have open forums where people can stand up for what needs to happen at Beeman. Usually it's only the teachers advocating. Sharing out opportunities for forums where parents can also support needs is helpful.
- Community can be found at the Library. Ruth does so many cool programs. It would be amazing to have more space where more programming can happen. Community space for more meetups.

- Build inter-generational connection– maybe a town picnic to bring people together.
- We need to think about what the solution is going to be if closing Beeman comes up on the ballot again. We need to talk about it as a community, not individualized. Figure out pros and cons, educate community.
- People can look at the district website and Truex Cullins assessment of the school on the Mount Abe school district. We will be hosting public forums. We are at the starting line of some very big decisions, and it is our intention to be very transparent and open. We are there for questions.
- Important to look at that report. There is a lot of data there. It's also important to understand what is happening right now is not sustainable. We want to get ahead of decisions that may be imposed on us by the state. It is really important to read that report. If there is interest, we can get something together outside of our normal meet and greet to talk things through.

You can also watch the board meeting online after. (MAUSC.org).

- Redistricting task force meeting next Monday 9:30-3:30. Public comment is at the end.
- Senator – There are hard choices we have to make; I want to protect schools and don't want to see schools close. Schools are vital but they don't make a community a community. You can still be New Haven. Solution is community to realize the problem – come together to make a decision, not on feelings but on the well education of your child and affordability.
- Silver lining is if Beeman closes, using Beeman to encompass what we have said – library, mentorship, Arts center, all services in one building.
- Personalized learning – opportunity to bring more families into community if kids can explore what they are interested in. Do it at the elementary school level.

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### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- The number of people in this room who are committed to this community, different ages, generations, families – is incredible. School is an anchor in the community, and it really brings people together. You create community around the school. Something I have a curiosity about is your bringing up the migrant community, and how they feel safe here. Are there opportunities for them to participate or other voices who aren't here tonight. How do we hear their voices?
- Prevalent take away is one common thread between assets, challenges and solutions – People are all of these, people are an asset, the need for support staff as a challenge, and solutions revolved around people. If you look around this room you had a difficult conversation and no one fought, people worked through this together. What you did tonight is not so simple and easy everywhere you go. You are on the right path, you have the tools, the people – keep them at the center of this.
- Someone talked about clustered homes in terms of building up your community and balancing that with the beautiful country and the beautiful landscape. There are ways to grow your center without losing the beautiful landscape and vibrancy of your community. There is a community in Bristol

that is a multigenerational cohousing community. That plays a part in revitalizing and building up your community.

- You care about your school very deeply. It's great to see so many people come out and talk about how to best serve your children. You are in a precarious situation, especially with act 73. There are already things that have been established that won't go away. All of this will make small schools even more tenuous in terms of their viability. It will be a challenging conversation over the next several years. All of your community needs to be part of that conversation. You have a vote at the end, but you need to make tough decisions about what is going to be best for your children.
- Not education expert but I am a parent. My kids went through public schools. I heard parents saying things changed in school. This is what I have heard about other schools too. Parents are looking for solutions – but solutions I am starting to hear are beautiful about building connections after the pandemic – in the face of big tech trying to isolate us, having real connection – beautiful ideas (town picnic, intergenerational mentoring). We need to reinvest in connection and community.

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### Community Center: Depot, Library, Community Engagement

Visiting Team: Denise Smith (FACILITATOR), Kaziah Haviland (SCRIBE), Ted Brady, John Castle, Sarah Waring, Mike Winslow, Michael Wood-Lewis

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

- Library and the events and programming that is being put on there is fantastic.
- The event committee puts on great events for all the holidays and just did a great Halloween event. 2 events and 3 seasonal decorations: 4th of July, Halloween, Christmas. All the organizations come together to do it.
- Family wide celebrations on the green several times a year because of the work the events committee put in.
- We moved the depot – just got a fairly large grant to do something there.
- The church runs the food shelf which is being used more and more. The outside pantry is emptied every day at the New Haven Congregational Church. They also do monthly events giving away food and meal kits as need is increasing.
- Village Green Market – great place to connect. See people as you go in and out all the time. Huge asset.
- PPF is a huge asset for New Haven.
- We have internet for the most part.
- The town newsletter. – sign up on the town website. It was a paper newsletter until last year. We miss it being mailed. But Digital still exists.

- Great librarian and the town offices are very welcoming if you have questions.
- Abigail does a new moon circle every month (meditative session).
- Congregational church does thanksgiving dinner and other times they will have community dinners. They often have a craft to do as well.
- New Haven Neighbors have had a few events – most costly journey and celebration. Meal here at school when a young lady came to speak to kids about why she traveled and why she is here.
- Fire department used to do chicken BBQ on the green. During Covid it became pick up. New Haven Neighbors then hosted music on the green so people could bring their dinners over there.
- New Haven Historic society has been around since 1996 – have great collections of archives and artifacts.
- Fire department does pancake breakfast in the winter every month for a few months.
- Been to a number of the firemen pancake breakfasts in Addison and New Haven is the best!
- Conservation committee has various speakers that come from mid-winter to early spring. Armchair naturalist speaker series. Also have field days. We had a grant that we were able to purchase trail cameras for check out.
- New Haven Community Pollinator garden – also hosts workshops.
- Field days – we can use the fairgrounds and facilities.
- Great group of volunteers as a whole – Fire Department is amazing. They are volunteers and show up in force.
- New Haven always decorates the Green.
- Church in Newhaven Mills that is the oldest conserved Greek revival meeting house in the state. 1777 or 1851 (is the date on it, but it was earlier).
- Very conscientious postmaster. Very helpful. As well as the carriers. They are all really nice.
- Depot Day was really fun – community celebration that was organized to celebrate putting the roof on the depot.
- Trash/recycling pick up for \$5 a bag on Saturdays near the school.
- Green up day is very active.
- Tri town bike route.
- Community wide (5 town) radio station.

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### What are the Challenges:

- Communication could be better. We don't mail newsletter anymore.
- Didn't know how to find connection until I joined the school. How do we get people to show up like they did tonight.
- Food is important.
- Geographically very spread out. It makes connection difficult. Two state highways that intersect it.
- Most drivers are courteous when walking on south street, but there are a few vehicles that fly on that street (60mph). There is no shoulder.
- A lot of discussion about south street, striping, speed bumps etc. in the other session.
- We are a community where people live but don't work.
- Drive through town.
- There are relatively few things people would come for as a destination. We are so lucky to have the market.
- The new paved road is great, but it had a lot of potholes before. People drive faster on smooth roads.
- Susceptible to flooding along the New Haven river.
- I don't work here and don't have the time to get involved in a lot, and if it wasn't for PTO I wouldn't know anyone.
- Because we are so spread out, people on the other side of rt 7 go to Vergennes, south side go to Middlebury, people on this side go to Bristol. Feeling of not being connected is due to convenience of being able to go to neighboring communities with a lot to offer.
- We could use town meeting time more effectively – it's not as well attended as it could be. It's an opportunity for community engagement that we are not maximizing.
- It feels like we don't have a true town center. We have pieces that are all separate. We don't have a larger building that houses more like an arts center. No connective fiber.
- Bristol is my town but I live in New Haven. I love New Haven but I don't know what that means exactly.
- Echo the above, but feel like the Library has become a great place that is open to events and committees. It is such a welcoming place, but we need more space.
- It's a small community so the tax base isn't large to support a real community center. We are small and rural and don't have a tax base to support a gym or arts center.
- There are two VT's that exist in neighboring orbits. It's hard to get everyone and there are always people who feel left out.
- There are a lot of new people in town and people are disconnected with our land and our Farming – They don't appreciate what is going on around them from a farm perspective. If you come to a rural place and want to appreciate the people around you and what makes it what it is.
- Some people may seem new but because we don't have events, they just haven't met.
- There should be better walking trails. Watershed is the only one. Need more places to walk.
- Historically this is the center of the town. New Haven Junction is almost the same size and number of services. Two centers that are a mile or so apart.

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

- There could be a cork board to enhance communication.
- I organize the tour de farm – we could do a mini thing specific to New Haven (Livingstons, Misty Knoll, four hills) Open house – open farms.
- Really like the idea of "get to know a farm" – bio security issue but could do something.
- Welcome to New Haven – welcome committee and people show up with a basket or information.

- Depot is a huge opportunity – there was talk about renting it out to a bank and that would be a big mistake. It is a unique New Haven thing – needs to have plays, speakers, event space.
- New Haven is lacking trails outside the designated park. Would be great to understand where the old railroad line went from Bristol to New Haven and revive that ending at the depot. There are all kinds of opportunity when you invite people from away to enjoy New Haven.
- Join the historic society – there are already committees in the community, we need to grow the volunteer base.
- The old corridor is all privately owned now.
- A way to make New Haven more of a destination instead of passing through.
- A solution to two town centers – someone who owns the acreage who is looking for ideas for development.
- Walking rail trail is a great solution.
- We already have a tri town bike route that could be connected – it's not advertised. Need to advertise it more and it needs to be connected (pieces aren't paved) Vergennes, Bristol, New Haven, Middlebury, Weybridge. Mapping. Promoting. Fixing. Annual event and do it as a group.
- Rollerskating rink and a bowling alley.
- Disk golf course.
- ½ the room feeds birds in their yard – I would love it if more New Haven residents share what shows up at their feeder, organize field trips, learn bird songs, identify what is nesting. Everything is connected to everything else – first law of ecology but applies beyond.
- BIRD WALKS WITH CRAIG.
- Second disk golf and bowling alley.
- Migratory bird count – everyone gets together and does a walk.
- Do we have an active relationship with the Addison county extension office – They have external funding.
- Get kids and other populations together around birding.
- Development stuff on route 7 – we talked about not having enough of a tax base, but this development may allow us to do a few things that we want in town.
- Really like the birding idea and involving kids and all they can lead to – Kathy offered up her hayfield.
- Brought here 50 years ago as the pastor of the church – that allowed me to meet a lot of people. Tech is doing away with a lot of this, but there were groups who quilted, play poker, drove cars over the dips – is there a way to encourage groups of people to think of themselves as New Havenites vs talking about a sports game or tv show. Create groups that make people more cohesive. People used to get together to raise a barn or fix something and we don't do that anymore.
- On Saturday there is a benefit for the new community radio station that will broadcast to 5 towns. It is for the community. You can ask your child to interview their grandparent, you can have a show to talk about cars. The benefit dance is this Saturday. Soft launch is April 26th.
- Do dances upstairs with the New Haven rambles.
- Disk Golf between Beeman's property and the field around the depot is enough space for disk golf.
- Basement full of instruments and recording equipment – kid will join, a friend will join to play drums, but if you say hey, want to go do this, play music I will go do that. Music club. Open mic night.
- Lived out of state for a while and where I lived there was a music gym – people were members and could come play.
- Does a lot of event planning for her job – Depot is a place people can really pull together – arts, open mic nights. We used to have chocolate night over at the vineyard. Food out nights. Depot could have the vibe.
- Maker space for the Depot – could be kid focused.
- Coffee shop in the Depot.
- Being here there is such a connection, and people have said things that have really sparked my interest and I want to connect like this.
- What about your youth – we don't have a tremendous amount of youth – could something be done to provide youth a space. Ping pong tables, movie nights.
- Youth – Bristol has their hub, that would be really fun to have in New Haven, kids could go to the hub.
- Town hall is available if someone wants to sponsor a youth group – its free if you want it.

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## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Struck by the fact that New Haven is an antidote for a national crisis. You can gather 40 people in a room and political division doesn't come up. You focused on social connection the entire time. This is the anti-social century. In 2023 the surgeon general issued a report on the epidemic of loneliness. Scary numbers. This town wants to solve the epidemic of loneliness – and you have practical ways to do it. Get hung up on the fact that you want to solve loneliness.
- I heard a real craving for social interaction and the opportunities that already exist. What you need to think about now is how you leverage those events to develop smaller groups (birding, music) all of this can be built around the new opportunities that exist with the Depot space. Ripton coffee house, contra dances. What can New Haven do to make it a destination.
- The list of local institutions from the market to the depot, historical committee, event committee. There is a lot here. Challenges with the spread-out nature of the town – The solutions I heard, in our work what we have come to recognize that any form of connection is beneficial and good, and there is an increasing scale of value. At the top are the things that cause people to gather together on a recurring basis to accomplish something. Week after week, month after month, similar group of people – that is the gold standard of connectiveness.
- I got a chance to work with small rural communities in the Rocky mountain west and elder said – the only thing that is going to grow here is the cemetery. I didn't feel that tonight. Even though there are big or difficult changes, it didn't feel hopeless. Two things – 1 – you started by talking about these great volunteers, don't let them burn out. Join them. 2 – There

are actually a lot of new and different takes on what could bring people together. You don't stay still, every community always changes. Maybe the focus shifts, maybe events change – and that is OK.

- Swanton – there was a group of artists who came together and they started the arts council. It wasn't even in the report. It starts with – anyone else out there.

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## Infrastructure: Fire Station, Emergency Shelter, Public Safety

Visiting Team: Jessica Savage (FACILITATOR), Denise Smith (SCRIBE), Ted Brady, Anson Tebbetts, Sarah Waring, Ben Winrich

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### What are the Assets in this Area?

- Snow removal – good job with applause. Road crew.
- New culvert on south street.
- Old railway station - depot.
- Village store is really impressive.
- Village green is in the village center and did a great job with decorations – the town events committee.
- Library and train station town offices.
- Active church is very involved with the community and participates with the people. New Haven Congregational church.
- Bus service, EV charger, park and ride.
- Dedicated fire department.
- Monthly community newsletter.
- Tasteful development along route 7.
- Office and the vault to keep all the records.
- Road quality is good.
- Open space because of the farms – working lands.
- Active food pantry.
- Excellent roads for cars and pavement and gravel for biking.
- School building.
- Good bike roads: Monger, sawyer road, south street, north street.
- Gravel pit.
- The people!! People want to talk to come together.

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### What are the Challenges:

- No flashing crosswalks lights.
- People don't stop for pedestrians.
- Speeding.
- People ignoring the sidewalks.
- Need a new fire station and emergency shelter.
- Unpaved portion of Plank Road.
- Library is too small for the capacity of people.
- Quarry road is a bad road for bikes and walking.
- Activity around town green/park. But there is no parking, sidewalks, crosswalks to get around etc.
- Undesignated dirt roads and can't crush stones more. The dirt roads are maintained for cars.
- 8-10 years may run out of stone and that will increase the town's budget.
- NO public water or sewer for increasing development – everyone is on their own for septic and water.
- Wells dried up this summer.
- North and south street are straight-away.
- No lines on the roads.
- No idea what to do in the event of an emergency.
- Firehouse has an emergency shelter but it is not up to par.
- 17 crossing. Speeding on north street.
- UPS and FedEx zoom by at 90s.
- Monger street is speedy.
- Communications lack of around emergency services.
- Need to work with a state highway because it is a route 17 – state road.
- Soils are the problem for the septic.

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

- Show up!! Really happy to see everyone come out. And to speak.
- More opportunities for people to come together.
- Support the planning commission – looking for grants to solve the traffic/crosswalk issue around the park and on route 17.
- A building dedicated to town history including the arrow head collection to document the history of the beautiful country bucolic town. Museum, historical society – possibly use the Depot Building.
- NEW Fire station and clarity on what we are trying to do. Town purchased the land. Fire dept. has been exploring other departments and are now working with the same architect who did the Castletown fire dept to make it fit New Haven. All on one floor to accommodate people, emergency shelter, etc.... planning to pull together a proposal to have all the plans together for the Town.
- Open conversations about County-wide/regional infrastructure development for more sustainable communities.
- Engage/work with Regional planning commission on county infrastructure.
- Share equipment and tools among road crews and fire departments.
- People are not aware of what is going on in town. Call the office or email and ask to put in the newsletter.
- Be sure you are on the email list for the newsletter.
- Outrageous and diverse fundraising activities – think bigger.
- Village Trust Initiative (VTI) grant to work on the DEPOT! Great news! Historical society is essential and will have a home.
- New Haven could practice watching their speedometer to slow down in town.
- Speeding enforcement to help people slow down.
- New Haven's own police department.

- Hire Sheriff's department for speed enforcement.
- Safe crossing options.
- Create a big parking lot.
- Stop light/sign.
- Speed humps.
- Flashing speed limit sign.
- Traffic calming measures i.e. Street narrowing.
- Children at plan.
- Possible Roundabouts.
- Eligible School zone speed limit around Beeman.
- Flags at the crosswalk.
- Rocks/bricks at the crosswalk.
- Technology to capture speeding with cameras.
- Traffic light on river road and route 7.
- Joint water systems in neighboring communities – tri-county water.
- North Dakota – rural water that went a long way.
- Look at the study from the 1960s about water development.
- Explore a small septic system or waste water treatment system for the village area for village center in-fill development and current houses.
- The town could explore ideas for sewer treatment facility.
- Consider the Beeman school for community housing.
- Explore senior affordable housing or move the library to Beeman.
- Explore educational purposes at Beeman.
- Explore selling the school.
- Explore composting toilets as alternative to septic and waste water treatment system.
- Get together with New Haven River towns to participate in flood resilience. Working with river neighbor communities.
- Join the hazard mitigation committee.
- Explore More development along route 7 to broaden our tax base.
- 24-hour readathon in the library as a fundraiser.
- Get ideas from people from New Haven residence the town for development along Route 7 (south of State Police Barrack). (Multi builders' developer). Deer View Commons.
- Van and carpooling for kids to go to school.
- Explore energy backup power system.
- Explore researching companies that might provide innovative solutions for some of our greatest challenges.

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### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Speeding problem, fire stations in communities. Incredible community – great new tool Community housing Infrastructure program (CHIP). Authorized and unauthorized leaders coming together.
- Two things – 1. Agreement on the things that might need to come first – concept of traffic safety, concept of what are we going to do with our buildings? Lay out those steps and keep the information transparent. Come to a moment like this and realize there is a problem.
- CHIP being a tool for smaller communities to access TIF funding for large infrastructure problems for development in these communities.
- Texting with the Secretary of Transportation – Joe Flynn. 1 contact of this email from this meeting to move Route 17 cross walk. Meet each week as a team to solve problems. Recreation to spur economic development. Need water and sewer for development. 3-year adventure with Act 250 – communicate with your legislators.

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## Affordability

Visiting Team: Alyssa Johnson (FACILITATOR), Jessica Savage (SCRIBE), Alex Armani-Munn, Anson Tebbetts, Ben Winrich, Weiwei Wang

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### What are the Assets in this Area?

- Looking for a home in the VT/Burlington area and it was more affordable than other areas, close to Middlebury Coop, lovely community, high-quality, good-natured folks.
- This is the relative but the house we were able to get was in good condition compared to other areas in VT.
- Their house was the higher hand house for my grandfather's farm and the cost of it rose astronomically over time (neutral statement).
- Incredibly beautiful town, high and wide, agricultural, two rivers, woods.
- And people in New Haven are good people.
- Frustrating that we can't have more of an impact on affordability for others.
- Moved here in part because of the location, was working in Shelburne, husband in Salisbury, and route 7 was right there, transportation, bus route going to Vergennes and Middlebury, junction made it easy to get on route 7.
- Impressed by fiber internet here, better than any big city we lived in.
- Affordable fiber internet, didn't raise rates.
- See bobcats, turkey, deer all kinds of wildlife coming through.
- In the country but close to more urban areas like Middlebury, Vergennes, etc.
- Location is great to be 40 mins south of Burlington, close to Middlebury and Vergennes, love how rural it is but accessible.
- We have access to a lot of fresh food, produce, meat, local on our road.
- Glacial valley, both mountain ranges on both sides, really fertile soil.
- Village Green: \$1 hot dogs, pizza, sandwiches, Jiffy Mart, only 5 minutes away.
- Location again, but being close to Middlebury College in Middlebury, benefits of the arts and those offerings for the public, very active fine arts groups.
- Gem of Lake Champlain is very close and most gorgeous lake in the world.
- Mention of wildlife which is so entertaining and important to protect their travel corridors.

- New Haven River and fishing there, river is important, New Haven River Angler's Association looks after it, if they're still active.
- Organizations that support around different topics.
- Being in Champlain Valley is great, a little more temperate than the rest of VT (the banana belt).
- We have a huge resource in agricultural soils which is not the case in all of VT, Addison County has this presence, active community of farms, supported young people to start ideas because those farms are available, making those initiatives take off, some challenged by being in flood zone but still trying.
- Townspeople have a reputation of supporting its buildings, town buildings, Beeman, population has supported initiatives to keep these things in place.
- Forward taxing, funds that are built up to do something, not asking people to bond every year.
- Field Days: Addison County Field Days, world's prettiest cows.
- Number of nonprofits, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum also our archeological history, in this region.
- Grew up here but left and came back: appreciated that there are people that have been here their whole lives and people who have come here, not really a tension of outsiders vs. insiders.
- Very little light pollution, need to watch for Northern Lights, supermoon!
- Lots of activities in the area around New Haven, live music, festivals, farmers markets, hiking.
- Library does a great job of outreach and supplying things.
- Misty Knoll and their many donations to the town.
- Misty Knoll manages the place really well.
- Some of the best poultry around in all the fancy restaurants.
- Lots of people volunteer a lot of their time to this town and don't even know about it.
- Like biking to my grandma's house.
- Pretty nice public transportation with the bus.

### What are the Challenges:

- Building more housing without ruining all the things we just talked about: lakes, river, land, soil.
- Haven't lived in cold areas much but energy bills are very high.
- School one as well; in the affordability of housing, getting the old people out of their big houses so young people can move in.
- Keeping a school in a small community, but we don't have a tax base to do what we want to do.
- Keeping our young people in the community and not have to leave the state to live and work.
- Taxes have gone up every year since I've lived here.
- Not affordable to take land out of land use to build new housing.
- Keeping land open with farming going out and not having a way to get a tax break on your land, and hanging on to it and keeping Vermont this way.
- Finding a place to live, grew up here, moved away for 10ish years, got my dream job and was able to move back but only able to afford a place to live because of my parents, salary has gone up and it's getting better, but when first back I wasn't able to afford a place to live.
- Childcare was very expensive and was hard to come from a universal PreK to one without one, and only have the part time subsidy, breeds inequity across VT because some have access and some don't have it.
- Maintaining roads and infrastructure, keeping up with what we already have.
- Purchasing equipment for town road and fire crews, prices are increasing every year, price of trucks has gone up, town truck was \$450-500k, fire trucks are pushing \$1 mil.
- Attracting employers in New Haven that we know and love.
- Lack of real public transportation that crosses all socioeconomic strata, just not here.
- Can't call an uber!
- No Instacart.
- Access to healthcare, universal thing in the country, Porter is maxed out, doctors have too many patients.
- Attracting employees: not sure if road crew is fully staffed now, but for a long time it wasn't.
- 5 months wait to get to a Primary Care Physician.
- Health care premiums are very high, too many barriers for providers to get in.
- Once you have a house, then if one of you gets a new job, need to commit to a long commute, options around here might take a while to open up, ex of a person living in Rutland and commuting to Essex, people are committed to living here you're looking at a long commute.
- Getting more people to volunteer for things: good strong core of people who volunteer but we need more.
- Limited diversity, and some of the people such as Mexican employees aren't here at these meetings because they're scared and rightfully so.
- Challenge to maintain all the utilities individually: my driveway, my well, my septic: not the community, the burden of that on a household is challenging.

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

- Lincoln has a housing trust which they started to keep seniors in the community, New Haven could do that.
- Could volunteer your time and your car to give people a ride in your car, reimburse people: Tri Valley Transit, New Haven could do it through Front Porch Forum.
- Rideshare in Burlington example.
- Love to see us use Beeman as affordable elder care, downstairs childcare.
- Loosen regulations and the price so we can do those things.
- If we're all maintaining personal wells and septic, service calls are expensive, maybe we could coordinate annual inspections to get a deal and market it to plumbers as well.
- Create a fuel oil "cartel" (coop).
- Save all our old barns, turn them into housing, obsessed with house shows, where they convert barns, have all these gigantic buildings, convert them to housing.

- Solar panels in a place that is not invasive visually, how else could we support the community with energy costs? Solar panels on barns, if we thought of this in our town we could come up with this.
- More regional resources, regional road crews, fire departments things like that where multiple towns come together for cost savings so we don't all have to buy expensive equipment, build on mutual aid for fire departments.
- Home bases where more specialty equipment could be stored and shared: does every town need a road grader or can those be shared among towns? Only used one day a week in one town.
- Shared services possibility?
- Repurposing dairy barns: the big one across from the BBQ place, was the town involved? When they put the solar panels in and the town required certain things such as maintaining the barn: could do more of this.
- Idea of lending system here for tools: tool library, something that would cost a lot of \$ like a leaf blower.
- Lots of people selling lots of stuff to have a different lifestyle: collect donations of tools.
- Have someone come from career center to teach how to use the tools.
- Put them in the barn!
- Look at businesses and see what critical skills they will need in future and get those upskills in college/schools.
- Having a directory of people with certain skills in community: a who does what directory.
- More housing in this village, more density in village, creating more roads in village, face the problems of water and sewer not just say we can't do them.
- Non-mound system septic: state allow more systems that are out there, we have the chance to lead the way with new technologies.
- New Haven could look into using swamps as a way to clean water.
- Lost a lot of wetlands to development already, conserve and maintain our wild spaces and wetlands.
- Could both go together? Can we invent it?
- Make priority to protect wetlands, and how we can protect wildlife corridors, conservation committee is looking into that: might come down to purchasing land so that amphibians can go where they need to go, or for wildlife corridors.
- Cooperative purchasing for items people needs.
- Train coming through, but not conducive to a work schedule. Maybe we could get people to live here and work in city?
- Talk with Burlington, Rutland and Amtrak about a different schedule.
- Come together as a larger county and look at personal and property insurance to get savings.
- Have a coordinator for all these ideas: library is headquarters for lending, but all these ideas, need a resource coordinator.
- Have a community center which is what I'm hearing across forums, with a coordinator: make the one we have more.
- Have a lot of locations already, depot, school, town hall, church basement with complete kitchen used: could use all these spaces much more efficiently.
- Community lending, come together and give out loans to people at low rates.
- Incentives for local businesses and entrepreneurs to start businesses here.
- Great having New Haven neighbors doing events, assets of orgs, but all need volunteers, something to attract people could invite all the orgs who need volunteers and be aware and businesses to share who they are, something with ice cream!
- Find a way to encourage more diversity in New Haven and in Vermont, thinks it is a hard thing to do and don't really know how but I think we need to.
- Could we do a farmer's market and ethnic festival: barre has a heritage festival.
- More of an observation, 95% of people are over the age of 60 (excuse me??? They said!) very little social opportunity for younger folks, could have more events for younger crowd, most young people can't afford to live here or get childcare.
- Wonder about giving land to organizations that build houses that are affordable: I think Middlebury has done quite a bit of that, housing remains affordable when people move out, town owned land beside Depot, discuss how to use that, zoned for more development.
- Habitat for Humanity could be a good option for that; New Haven could work with groups like that.
- Middlebury example of building 4 units near college.
- Concert venue, bigger space that could generate revenue, community center rec center.
- Could have a sewer treatment plant and sewer lines, and water just for here in village.
- Taxing the leaf peepers, focus on surge of tourism in September.
- Set up coin drops, free for VT residents but charge tourists.
- Really love a pub around here, convert community center into a pub, Depot Pub!
- Transportation needed for that.
- 5 town radio station has put in a lot of effort to hear from people, eager for program ideas, and people to be on the radio: community building with WVVV.org: could connect with them. Monkton, Bristol, New Haven.
- Civic education: I don't know I we're maximizing New Haven Junction, don't know if we're maximizing state police in town, state garage, are we leveraging all of our resources for larger resources.
- VT used to be well connected to all of the small towns, would be a dream to put that back: depot used as train station again, bring back Bristol spur.
- Depot as self-driving car depot.
- Due for a reappraisal here, long overdue, affecting school taxes, could see a lot of income if we complete that, been a three-year process, will be done in 2026.
- Heard this type of event doesn't happen every year, nice to know we're all here, not alone, advocate for doing this every year: could do more events like this, potluck around town meeting, do more of that.

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## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Been in VT in this position since February, every single conversation where affordability and housing comes up, always excited to have these conversations. Context: our affordability crises was self-inflicted, which means we have the ability to create solutions. Urgency breeds action: not really any more time to not act, seems to be. Did not hear one new novel pie in the sky idea: all has been done before, all the ideas and solutions have been done and can be done here. Project based TIF, Homes for All program: solutions put in action elsewhere, VT is creating incentives and regulatory framework changes to address these challenges. If folks have been exposed to VT Futures Project, goal is to raise our population to 802,000 by 2035, 2% growth per year, restoring historic populations. Don't Jersey Vermont: 12,000 people per square mile vs VT with 70 people per square mile.
- Couple things: got some great assets in town, Field Days used only a week, beautiful venue for partnerships and income, people are loving experiences now: festivals, opportunities for families, can have fun with it. Barn issue: Jonah Richards is doing that in VT, worth having a conversation with. State program for restoring barns, AAFM, \$9000 grant to paint their barns. Collective buying fuel group out of Williamstown: these exist, lock in prices and usually works out pretty well.
- This is an incredible community, hearing all of you participating in this community, lots of pride in the community. Heard a lot of needing to have parent's support to be able to live here, VTPOC is part of a grant through the dept of tourism, people interested in looking at VT, could talk about New Haven, housing is a huge issue for people, Homeshare VT: doing a lot to support young people as well as older folks, rental income, build community. So many people have lots to share about history of New Haven: So, Burl Parks and Rec are hosting Park and Brew, go to different parks and drink beer with young people. Lending library is totally possible. Everything is so possible and exciting.
- New Haven has a ton of community assets, know how great is area is. Tackling housing: New Haven is not alone in a lot of these challenges or these solutions. Embracing alternatives is important. Regional Planning commissions, RDCs, communities themselves can look inward and see how that can impact affordability, town land reaching out to affordable housing developers to build more housing. Jonah Richards is a Rockstar and is not an anomaly. If interested in small scale community development, he has a running blog: Brick and Mortar.

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## Additional Action Ideas

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

- Lower property tax.
- My one suggestion would be the paving of Lime Kiln Road from Leduc Cross Road to Elgin Spring Farm/Plank Road. This is a heavily traveled road and is often full of potholes. Maybe paving would help to alleviate the constant attention it needs.
- Use Beeman as an elder housing / childcare facility like Burlington Children's Space.
- Bring back the townwide Yard sale and expand it to include vendors on the green and some food trucks. Yard sales draw people from other towns, and this could be an opportunity to utilize the green and allow local vendors to have an opportunity in town to sell or show their goods. Or even people who would rather have a flea market type table on the green.
- Turn Beeman into low-income housing; get a grant writer (maybe share with other towns); find \$ to help low income people with huge energy bills to weatherize their homes to lower energy costs and make homes more comfortable; get grants to put solar on rooftops and in parking lots with parking below; work to get TriValley Transit to increase routes and times.
- Make a handout with brief details and contacts for every organization or group in town that welcomes new members or needs volunteers to be available at the town office and library. When events are planned, invite the organizations to participate somehow so they may recruit new members or volunteers.
- Invite retired educators to support, mentor, and consult with Beeman faculty and administrators.
- More community interaction with the elementary students. Could go back to having the "grandparents for a day" event for the seniors and kids in our town.
- Paid town community events planner.
- Town mental health clinician for the youth.
- Where are the numbers that decisions like # of students in class sizes are based on? I feel like there isn't much data on rural schools & data is coming from urban & suburban schools.
- Formal conservation of wildlife habitat and wetlands, including the swamps and vital wildlife travel corridors.
- We should have the band play once a month and have a dinner at Town Meeting to draw out more people.
- School Bus drivers are a part of education. Please get them more included. They have to deal with children, parents, school closings etc.
- Dong Jin Kim, chairman of the Homer Hulbert Society from Korea has fascinating history to share. Visit the website <http://en.hulbert.or.kr/esub1.php>. They want to erect and cover all costs for a memorial on The New Haven Green. I think that would put our little town on the historic map. I would like to see family cooking classes along with other family events. Having a farmers market on The Green weekly is another option to explore. A band concert in the summer months would be a great way for our community to get together as well.

- We need an ADA compliant fire house/emergency shelter & community space for meetings and meals- how are we going to pay for it?
- I feel we should consider moving our students to Bristol Elementary School If we can reduce our tax burden AND give the students better opportunities. Does 6th grade become part of the middle school at Mt. Abe?
- Important to finish the train depot and consider an occupant that pays rent to help maintain the building going forward.
- Community events are important and I appreciate the small group who makes those happen.
- At some point, we will lose access to the gravel pit in Bristol. How do we move forward with expense of paving more dirt roads so we won't need the gravel pit?
- How will the town hall be used in the future if Beeman is no longer a functioning school?
- The deed to Beeman restricts use of the building, must be school related. Could the entire superintendent's office move into Beeman and reduce their rental expense in Bristol? Of course this is all up in the air, depending on State involvement with reducing the number of school districts - which I think makes sense.
- Budget outside of State government norms.
- Beeman could be a recognized independent school & stay open.
- Community fund to rehab old barns for housing (the state, ACCD, etc. would totally fund that).
- Retired educators could consult and support local teachers.
- Sometimes community members use the school soccer field to play soccer games in the summer.
- Affordable housing, improved infrastructure.
- For community building - to draw young parents together /before/ Beeman, a small playgroup on the green? A playgroup weekly? Depot Center becomes a children's playspace, makerspace, something that draws people from other towns as well.
- Bring back the summer BBQ in a diff capacity - Friends and Neighbors tried to do this the last couple of years coupled with the way the Fire Dept Chicken BBQ which it used to work great with and draw large crowds. It did bring out people in the community for the music so it does seem that the community does want to do this again. Maybe create a Summer Celebration as its own thing now on the green more like it used not as part of the BBQ. In the 90's and on, there was the BBQ, but also the church sold pies and a local sports team had a dunking booth and games. Much more that I can't remember.
- Town pays to install big mound systems at several locations that would be good for clustered housing.
- We explore converting Beeman into an educational community center that would include child care, perhaps an independent school, lifelong learning for elders, shared space for clinicians and public health folks to use, studio and maker space open to the public.
- Zoning laws change to allow conversion of single family homes into multi-family dwellings.
- Tri Valley makes New Haven a regular (not on demand) stop. The event committee gets a larger budget and Village Green Market is paid to cater a few more events each year.
- Why do we have 3 superintendents for Addison County? Maybe we should consider consolidating those offices before schools.
- It is top on my list - a thing that may seem trivial to people who do not live in the village - but people come up with ideas and don't consider the people who actually have to live 24/7 with a change. The thing is the street lights. We had street lights that politely turned off around 9:30 pm. Then we got LED lights installed. They are brighter and NEVER cease all night long. This has robbed me of my sleep. I have barricaded 4 windows trying to contain the glare. Because I live within the path of 4 of these things it is a lot of night light. Then the leaves fall and even more light hits my windows. I can no longer go out and do the most ancient of things - go outside and see the stars. I have to drive out of town to really see the sky. And now that we are all more aware of the importance of pollinators, I am conscious of the plants and creatures around my house that do not get any experience of the night anymore. We have one village neighbor who has planted a green wall of thuja. I hate to have to do the same. But between the obnoxious light and the street noise, I understand why it is there. Please, please, please, can we turn the streetlights off at a reasonable hour, like 10:00, or get hoods installed on the ones by people's houses so we can have healthy sleep patterns.
- Formal conservation of wildlife habitat and wetlands, including the swamps and vital wildlife travel corridors.
- My one suggestion would be the paving of Lime Kiln Road from Leduc Cross Road to Elgin Spring Farm/Plank Road. This is a heavily traveled road and is often full of potholes. Maybe paving would help to alleviate the constant attention it needs.
- Affordable housing, improved infrastructure.
- We should have the band play once a month and have a dinner at Town Meeting to draw out more people.
- More community interaction with the elementary students. Could go back to having the "grandparents for a day" event for the seniors and kids in our town.
- Sometimes community members use the school soccer field to play soccer games in the summer.
- Lower property tax.
- For a potential new fire station, make the building as energy efficient as possible, make it EV and electric storage ready, and, if possible, put solar on the roof or run the building on geothermal. We don't need any more fossil fuel pollution. We do need energy independence rather than spending our energy money on out of state fuel oil providers like Canada and other U.S. states. And Vermont Gas is a Canadian company and the gas also comes from Canada and out of state. Local renewable energy is reliable, is more cost stable, produces no greenhouse gas pollution, and provides energy independence.

## VI. New Haven Community Visit Participants

George Apgar	Phoebe de Noronha	Liz Marcotte	Susan Smiley
Kathi Apgar	Abigail Diehl-Noble	Pam Marsh	AnnaJo Smith
Keith Audy	Eva Doane	Denise Martin	Donna Smith
Nichole Bambacigno	Maggie Eaton	Alan Mayer	Harvey Smith
Shauntell Barnum	Marianne Eaton	Beverly Mayer	Sara Smith
Kathy Barrett	Kim Estey	Susannah McCandless	Ilana Snyder
Chris Bataille	Peter Fournier	Ed McGuire	Pamela Sonn
Kevin Bednar	Edorah Frazer	Doug McKain	Sansea Sparling
Margaret Benn	John Garn	Gardner Merriam	Samantha Sturtevant
Ruth Bernstein	Lynn Goldsmith	Cheryl Mitchell	Stephanie Sumner
Ashley Bessette	Andrea Gordon	Sujata Moorti	Kristin Swartzentruber
Binti Bessette	Chris Granstrom	Elise Morton	Ingrid Tecca
Julie Bessette	Michaela Granstrom	Leanne Morton	Michael (Mike) Tecca
Melanie Bessette	Jen Grilly	Jane Moulton	Haley Thomsen
Taylor Bessette	Jen Guimaraes	Ava Murphey	Barbara Torian
Lili Boenigk	Shannon Hart	Nancy Myrick	Laurie Vincent
Eric Boise	Sen. Steve Heffernan	Aaron Napoleon	Chris Wagner
Tamara Boise	Katie Heinecken	Marilyn Napoleon	Cathy Wall
Vicki Boise	Kim Heinecken	Christine Negra	Jim Walsh
Nicole Borgione	Art Hendrickson	Daenen Norris	Ann Watson
Andrew Bouton	Lauren Higbee	Rep. Rob North	Lorene (Rene) Wilbur
Tim Bouton	Tillien Higbee	Florian Oberhuber	Stan Wilbur
Candace Boyd	Ed Hilbert	Megan Ooms	Janet Wiseman
Jodi Brown	Ron Hill	John Palmer	Deborah Young
Susan Bruhl	John Horn	Sirl Palsra	Craig Zondag
John Bull	Rachael Horn	Ruth Penfield	and many more...
Anne Caban	Becky Hutchins	Annie Perkins	
Kathy Cahill	Marie Jewett	John Perkins	
Mark Cahill	Dald Jr	John Peters	
Kim Callahan	Willa Kaeck	Zach Piper	
Carol Charbonneau	Allen (Al) Karnatz	Jeff Pratt	
Harry Chaucer	Cindy & Brian Kayhart	Mary Pratt	
Joye B Coarrow	Pam Kingman	Kathleen Ready	
Steve Crimy	Jay Lawrence	Adam Rice	
Darcy Cummings	Alex Layn	Erin Robinson	
Britney Cyr	Susie Leonard	John Roleau	
Cody Cyr	David (Dave) Lewis	Margo Roleau	
Rodney Cyr	Patty Lewis	Amos L. Roleau III	
Dawn D'Angelillo	Diane Livingston	Erin Ruble	
Amy Danforth	Mark Livingston	George Russell	
Karen Danyow	Phil Livingston Sr	Daniel Seals	
Polly Darnell	Sarah Louer	Rick Shappy	
Josie Davis	Larry Maier	Josh Shaw	
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