

# What's Possible, Windham?

## Report and Action Plan September 2025



Produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development

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# Vision for Windham's Future

*Compiled from vision statements shared during community 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 Windham community.*

## **Community members envision a future Windham:**

- ❖ That sustains its natural beauty while revitalizing and repurposing town buildings to meet community needs.
- ❖ That embodies a strong community spirit, where residents actively collaborate and support one another.
- ❖ That is committed to the responsible stewardship and maintenance of its many beautiful natural areas.
- ❖ Where people from all backgrounds interact and build strong relationships.
- ❖ With a diverse population that includes young people and is known as more than a senior citizen's community.
- ❖ With engaging activities for all ages where people interact and strengthen community bonds.
- ❖ That is a cornerstone of civility, where every voice is heard and community members feel empowered to participate.
- ❖ With opportunities for local artists and musicians to share their skills and talents.
- ❖ That protects the ecological diversity of natural areas.
- ❖ With affordable housing, where everyone has a decent place to live.
- ❖ Where people of all ages get together in a fruitful environment to connect and play.
- ❖ Where people of all ages can learn and experience this place and its rich history together.
- ❖ With high civic engagement from the community.
- ❖ That holds onto its deep values, while also adding to and growing a diverse population.
- ❖ That maintains its inherent beauty.

# I. Introduction

With its majestic mountain views, quiet town roads, and idyllic scenery, Windham is a town known for its natural beauty and celebrated by its residents for their rich history and culture. Windham Hill Road takes you through the heart of the community, connecting the hamlet-like neighborhoods of North Windham, West Windham, and South Windham like an unclasped pearl necklace. There is nowhere else in Vermont quite like it.

In recent years, community members say that Windham has faced some polarizing issues, such as highly debated wind turbine developments or the elementary school closure. Disagreements around these issues and others have reportedly led to deep divisions in the town. Community members were quick to acknowledge these divisions, and many talked about the need for healing, civility, and restoring the social contract. Despite the challenges, Windham community members shared how they are still able to come together to figure things out, with one saying that “we may not agree about everything, but we’re still neighbors and we still care about each other and our community.” People were quick to note the many assets in town such as the “dark sky” where stars are very visible, the sense of connection that the Meeting House and its programs provide as well as the energetic and dedicated town staff.

During the *What’s Possible, Windham?* community process, VCRD staff and visiting team members alike observed the Windham community coming together and sharing ideas as they worked to address these challenges and find solutions to move forward as one community. Many community members throughout the process expressed a desire to connect with each other and collaborate on efforts for the future of their community. There was enthusiasm for banding together for the strength of the community, and for bringing back existing resources that the community missed, as well as creating new opportunities for the future of Windham.

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

After thorough deliberation and multiple rounds of voting, the Windham community voted to form task forces around two priorities:

- **Expand Housing Opportunities**
- **Expand Community Events, Activities, and Skills Exchange**

VCRD and our partners look forward to working with the Windham Task Forces as they frame and implement these projects. They are already hard at work—please support their efforts, or join them by reaching out to their chairs (find details in the Action Plan section of this report).

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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 Windham 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 Windham projects with appropriate agencies and organizations in Vermont. Please call on us, and on Visiting Resource Team members (listed with contact info at the back of this report) when we can be of help.

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There are many people to thank for making the “*What’s Possible, Windham?*” Community process a success.

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

We also deeply appreciate the work and leadership of the Planning Committee members who helped guide the process by identifying forum topics for discussion, developing the invitation process to start the effort, and helping with outreach at every stage of the process: Ed Brown, Pat Cherry, Liz Dalton, Bea Eliastam, Cathy (Edgerly) Fales, Kate Fellows, Mary McCoy, Pat McLaine, Michael Peloton, Abigail Pelton, Susan Persa, Lisa Robinson, Kord Scott, and Cindy Smith.

Outreach is an essential component of a successful community forum process, and many people helped make that happen. Special thanks go to Cathy Fales, Bea Eliastam, and Michael Pelton for coordinating dinner logistics, assisting with the town mailer, passing out flyers, setting up lawn signs and a banner, coordinating childcare during both meetings, sharing surveys, and posting outreach information online. Special thanks also to Cindy Smith, Susan Persa, Liz Dalton, and Pat McLaine for helping with flyers, lawn signs, and phone calls to invite community members; to George Wichelns and Katy Rogers for assisting with outreach to second homeowners; to Pat McLaine, Pat Cherry, and Neighborhood Connections for coordinating free rides and a shuttle for both meetings, to Susan and the Windham Historical Society for sharing pictures of Windham (for this report and social media outlets), and to the many other community leaders and organizations who worked together to spread the word about the events and make sure everyone in town was invited and encouraged to participate.

Coordinating the event logistics was also a team effort. Thanks goes to Cathy Fales and Maureen Bell for providing access to the Meeting House for both meetings; to Newfane General Store for catering the community dinner and George Dutton for providing apple cider; to Pete Newton, Diane Newton, and Allen Partridge for sharing their musical talents during the community dinner; to Ruthie Wright and Grace Wright for providing childcare; to Family Kitchen and Pizzeria for providing and delivering pizza during the community resource meeting; and to Johnny Gifford and Brian Guerino from BCTV for providing livestream coverage and recording of the Community Resource Meeting.

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

Thanks must also go to the funders of VCRD's Municipal Technical Assistance (MTAP) Program who made this process possible: Northern Border Regional Commission, Municipal Technical Assistance Program, Vermont Agency of Administration, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Vermont Community Foundation, National Life Foundation, and VCRD supporters and donors.

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 Windham's meetings. The full list of leaders, agencies, and organizations that offered their expertise is at the back of this report.

Getting things done is all about leadership, so on behalf of all who have participated in the process so far and will continue to participate going forward, our deepest thanks go to those who've stepped up to serve as co-chairs of the Events & Skill Exchange Task Force: Becky Phillips and Dane Charbeneau. These community members have already demonstrated tremendous leadership in supporting the work of their task forces, and we are excited to see their leadership continue to grow.

The Windham community 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 Windham.



## II. The “What’s Possible, Windham?” Community Visit Process

The town of Windham Select Board requested services from VCRD’s Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) to fund a Community Facilities Assessment and to provide staff to facilitate a community engagement and prioritization process. This process 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 3-month process:**



Windham’s custom facilitation process included two community wide meetings that took place in June and July of 2025. VCRD provided the structure and neutral facilitation each step of the way. The first event (Community Forum Day) focused on community visioning and brainstorming ideas for action. The second event (Community Meeting Day) prioritized actions and launched local task forces that began working with a visiting resource team to build an action plan and list of resources. After the July meeting, all action was focused at the local task force level. Each task force includes a local chairperson (or co-chairs) who will support the group by keeping the community informed and managing meetings to keep the work moving forward.

### Planning Committee Meeting: May 14, 2025

On May 14, 2025, 14 local community members met to plan for the launch of the Windham community process. This group came up with the name of the process – *What’s Possible, Windham?* – and helped to plan the Community Forum Day. They decided on the forum topics and an invitation process. Through calls, emails, flyers, banners, and lawn signs, this team worked hard to promote Community Forum Day.

### Step 1 ~ Community Forum Day: June 17, 2025

The Community Forum Day kicked off with over 60 community members coming together at the Windham Meeting House to brainstorm points of vision and discuss assets, challenges, and ideas for the future of Windham. Following these opening forums, a large community dinner provided by the Town was held that

included live music from the Newton family and catered food and beverages from the Newfane General Store and George Dutton. After dinner, community members broke out into two separate forums, which were “Living Together & Building Connections,” and “Land, Growth, and Sustainability.” These topics were chosen in advance at the Planning Meeting by local leaders. A listening team of federal, state, business, nonprofit, and philanthropic leaders joined the forums and dinner in support of the Windham community.

**Visiting Team members included:**

Katie Buckley, *Director of Municipal Operations Support*, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns

Ben Doyle, *President*, Preservation Trust of Vermont

Natalie Elvidge, *Planning Coordinator*, Agency of Commerce and Community Development

Trey Martin, *Director of Conservation and Rural Community Development*, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board

Mike McConnell, *Senior Planner*, Windham Regional Commission

Laura Sibilia, *Director of Regional Economic Development Strategies and Programs*, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation

**VCRD staff included:**

Lauren Brady, *Community Engagement and Policy Associate*

Dani Parkins, *Technical Assistance Associate*

Jessica Savage, *Director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives*

Denise Smith, *Executive Director*

**Step 2 ~ Community Meeting Day: July 24, 2025**

On Community Meeting Day, over 30 community members came together at the Windham Meeting House to review and vote on vision statements for the future of Windham, discuss ideas for action shared in the June forums, and vote to prioritize those ideas. Through dot-voting, participants whittled a list of 17 action ideas down to two priorities: 1) Expand Housing Opportunities and 2) Expand Community Events and Skills Exchange. Following the priority voting, community members in attendance then signed up to join local task forces and develop action plans for each prioritized idea. With action plans in hand, each task force reported back to the full group the next steps they will be taking to advance these priorities and when they would be meeting again.

**Resource Team members included:**

Katie Buckley, *Director of Municipal Operations Support*, Vermont League of Cities and Towns

Natalie Elvidge, *Planning Coordinator*, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development

Mike McConnell, *Senior Planner*, Windham Regional Commission

Laura Sibilia, *Director of Regional Economic Development Strategies and Programs*, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation

Emma Spett, *Program Coordinator*, Engagement Initiatives, Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships and UVM Office of Engagement

**VCRD Staff included:**

Alyssa Johnson, *Community Visit Program Director*

Dani Parkins, *Technical Assistance Associate*

Jessica Savage, *Director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives*

Denise Smith, *Executive Director*

### III. What's Possible, Windham? Priorities

Determined by Windham residents at the What's Possible, Windham? Community Meeting on July 24th

*Through thoughtful conversation about the future of their community, Windham community members whittled down a list of 17 action ideas to these 2 priorities that offer opportunities to build on existing resources and strengthen the community. Residents then signed up for Task Forces to move them forward.*

#### Windham residents selected these priorities for future action:

##### ► Expand Community Events and Skill Exchange

A task force could form to consider and prioritize actions around the following:

- **Expand Community Activities & Events:** Residents expressed interest in holding more community events to connect with one another. A group could form to support existing events and create new ones such as a "Windham Community Day" or "Windham Fair," sports and recreation activities, concerts, music lessons, winter activities like a lighted tractor parade, potlucks, art shows and lessons, movie nights, holiday events, dances, farmer's markets, and more.
- **Create a Community Skill Exchange:** Community members identified skills to share and learn between all ages. Some of the skills mentioned included gardening, farming, music, canning, basic woodworking, home repairs and weatherization, and preparing for different seasons. A group could form to connect elders and youth through hands-on learning, mentorship, and storytelling. They could also explore creating a Makerspace and offering weekend or evening workshops. People were also excited about the idea of a town fair or homemaker exchange, where residents could show and teach skills like winter preparation, gardening, or cooking.

##### ► Expand Housing Opportunities

Housing concerns were raised by many, especially around high costs, property taxes, short-term rentals, and the need to protect the natural character of the town. A task force could form to explore creative solutions that serve Windham residents. Ideas included building new housing developments such as tiny homes, updating zoning laws, limiting the number of Airbnb's, reviewing property tax structures, expanding the Citizens Advisory Council, and creating accessible housing for seniors or others who are isolated or need more support to live comfortably in town.



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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 Windham community members shared through community 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.*

**Re-Imagine the School Building:** A group could work with the Selectboard to explore what the next phase of the school building looks like. Some of the many ideas include a coffee shop, after school or educational programs, and community events such as lectures, performances, and other programs. This group could look into the feasibility of renovating and maintaining the building to bring in businesses, programs, events, and other ways for it to serve as a community space.

**Explore Local Business Expansion:** Participants were interested in creating new business opportunities in town such as a coffee shop, a cafe, a local farmer's market, or creating community office spaces. A group could form to survey community members on what businesses they would like to see, find ways to attract those kinds of businesses, and look into other economic development opportunities in Windham.

**Expand Outdoor Recreation Access:** Participants mentioned many outdoor recreation assets and opportunities in Windham. A group could form around identifying and developing key locations for recreation activities such as the school grounds or other spaces in town. Ideas mentioned included community gardens, outdoor swimming areas, trails, recreation fields and facilities, playgrounds, and more.

**Revitalize Community Facilities & Infrastructure:** A group could form to reimagine and revitalize buildings that need restoration, rehabilitation, and repurposing in order to meet the needs of the community. These buildings include the town office, Meeting House, town shed, and town garage. Additionally, this group could look into improving infrastructure such as event parking, accessible pathways to buildings and other public spaces to investigate potential for a community pavilion or additional gathering spaces in key areas of town.

**Increase Green Energy Solutions:** A committee could form to expand access to low-carbon or zero emission energy sources for residents. Ideas were shared such as high-speed electric vehicle chargers, community solar panels or wind turbines, and others, likely in partnership with the energy committee. Ideas included coordinating with partners at the regional and state level and bringing power companies, car dealers, and other area businesses together to explore how to make these ideas work in Windham.

**Support Old Talc Mine Site Redevelopment:** The Town of Windham is in the process of purchasing 70 acres of land at the old Talc Mine. A group could explore the creative reuse of the Talc Mine site, potentially for a swimming area, solar array, affordable housing, a new town garage, or space to host community events.

**Improve Community Communications and Outreach:** Community members identified current and past communication practices that could be expanded or improved. A task force could explore how to revamp "News & Notes" with action items, volunteer opportunities, and celebration of community stories; develop a Windham Community Welcome Packet and local business resource list; and share youth and other activities and achievements more broadly.

**Improve Road Safety:** Participants praised the Windham road crew's high-quality work but noted some concerns with speeding and road safety. A committee could be formed to explore and implement traffic calming and road safety actions like increasing the number of road signs, building speed barriers in the road, increasing police presence, adding crosswalks, and more. This group could also explore how to get more resources for the road crew staff to work with, such as a new salt shed and new town garage.

**Increase Civic Engagement and Transparency:** A committee could form to bolster responsible town governance and civic engagement. The group could promote inclusive participation and community-led initiatives, research and recommend processes for enhanced communication and transparency, and encourage civic responsibility and accountability in all town functions.

**Create a Recreation Center:** Participants mentioned the need for indoor recreation facilities for sports such as basketball, recreational programs and possibly an indoor pool. A group could form to explore what the community needs and desires are for indoor recreation and explore which building(s) in town might be adapted or used for those recreation activities.

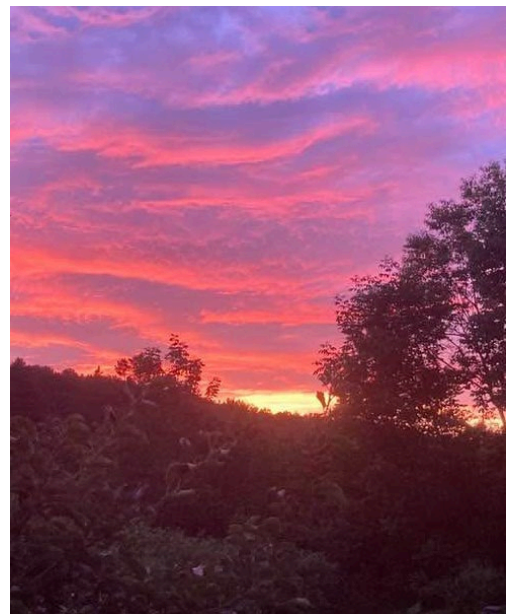
**Expand Food Access:** Community members were interested in food-centered events like pizza nights, expanding a community cupboard, creating a farmers' market, and hosting cooking events. A group could form to partner with gardeners, farmers, and organizations like the UVM Master Gardeners to offer garden tours, seed swaps, and skills-sharing events and events around farming, animals, and land stewardship.

**Increase Elder and Caregiver Support:** Residents identified particular challenges and opportunities around aging in Windham. A committee could form to develop services and programs that support seniors, caregivers, and inclusive aging in place. Ideas to explore include designing social and wellness programs for at-risk seniors and family caregivers, creating multigenerational engagement opportunities to combat isolation, and providing access to local services such as occupational therapy or speech therapy through satellite offices in Windham.

**Promote Sustainable Forest and Land Management:** Many Windham residents shared that the natural landscape, forest areas, the "dark sky," waterways, and wildlife are significant to the town's identity and overall character. A group could form to revitalize natural areas that have been degraded, restore native wildlife, and address concerns about the health and safety of overused natural sites. The group could also develop a sustainable community woodpile for heating in the winter that community members could use. Many of the sites that people are interested in, such as Hamilton Falls or Glebe Mountain, are either State or Federal lands, so this group would need to coordinate with those entities.

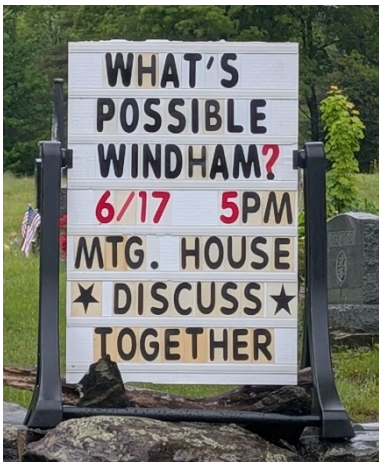
This additional idea for consideration was added at the community meeting on July 24:

- **Expand Activities for Youth and Attract Young Families to Windham**



Photos courtesy of the Windham Historical Society





Scenes from Step 1 – Community Forum Day, June 17, 2025



## IV. Task Force Action Plans

Prioritization and Resource Meeting, 7/24/25

*Windham Task Forces are comprised of community members and an appointed chairperson. Participants 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 Community Events and Skill Exchange

This action plan is a combination of two priority action ideas that were combined by the community during the Community Resource Meeting held on July 24, 2025. Below are the descriptions for each of the priority action ideas:

**Expand Community Activities & Events:** Residents expressed interest in holding more community events to connect with one another. A group could form to support existing events and create new ones such as a “Windham Community Day” or “Windham Fair,” sports and recreation activities, concerts, music lessons, winter activities like a lighted tractor parade, potlucks, art shows and lessons, movie nights, holiday events, dances, farmer’s markets, and more.

**Create a Community Skill Exchange:** Community members identified skills to share and learn between all ages. Some of the skills mentioned included gardening, farming, music, canning, basic woodworking, home repairs and weatherization, and preparing for different seasons. A group could form to connect elders and youth through hands-on learning, mentorship, and storytelling. They could also explore creating a Makerspace and offering weekend or evening workshops. People were also excited about the idea of a town fair or homemaker exchange, where residents could show and teach skills like winter preparation, gardening, or cooking.

Community Co-Chairs: **Becky Phillips** and **Dane Charbeneau**

Facilitators: **Denise Smith**, *Executive Director, Vermont Council on Rural Development*  
**Alyssa Johnson**, *Community Visit Program Director, Vermont Council on Rural Development*

Resource Team Members: **Emma Spett**, *Program Coordinator, Engagement Initiatives, Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships and UVM Office of Engagement*  
**Katie Buckley**, *Director of Municipal Operations Support, Vermont League of Cities and Towns*  
**Laura Sibilia**, *Director of Regional Economic Development Strategies and Programs, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation*

Community Participants: **Becky Phillips, Crystal Corveiu, Dane Charbeneau, Gail Wyman, Jack Beausmans,**  
& Task Force Sign Ups: **Kate Fellows, Michael Pelton, Pat Cherry, Susan Persa, Woody Foster**

## **Current status and overview of the issue today**

- Communication in Windham is a challenge. There is currently a News and Notes Newsletter. There is also a community email list at the town office.
- There is a lack of activities focused on children and families.
- The Pie Auction at the Firehouse is an active event in Windham right now.
- Windham Community Org. does events: Chicken Dinner volunteers
- There is only a small group of volunteers doing the work in Windham right now. It has been hard to draw new folks in to volunteer and keep activities going.
- As new community members, what spaces are available? Right now, there is only the Meeting House, School, and Talc Mine (not available until next year)
- There is a history of potato farming in Windham.

## **Priority Action Steps**

1. Create a welcome basket/program for new residents (things to know, sign up for email, etc.).
2. Big fall event/Old Home Day (specific Windham event).
3. Regular meetup time for families.
4. Improve communications.
5. Skill-share schedule.

## **Other Potential Action Ideas**

- Create a welcome basket or a “Welcome to town bible.” Research other towns.
- Bring back chicken dinner with new volunteers.
- Canning workshop with gardeners.
- Potato bar/history presentation.
- Town Fair / Old Home Day to bring folks together. Specific events seem to work well (e.g. Turnip, Strolling of the Heifers, etc.).
- Windham Community Org does small events. Take folks can build on.
- Big fall event.
- Progressive dinner – Start and end together and split up for dinner.
- Regular meetup time (for families at the playground with breakfast).
- Haunted hayrides / haunted hike.
- Skill-share with botany, etc. Value of one-on-one intersections.
- Garden tour.
- Learning center (not a location).
- Utilize existing buildings/assets.
- Music events, lectures, plays.
- Opportunity to do story-time with school children.
- Multigenerational storytelling.
- Folks left money for summer camp for kids: Windham Summer Camp for Kids.
- Bring back fishing derby.
- Community garden (some small ones at the school).
- Old Timer instruction. How to sugar.
- Sugar on Snow event (happened)? Many courses.



## 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

- Research communication strategies (websites, bulletin boards, calendars, etc.) in other towns to gauge interest and begin inventory of skills
- Inventory of events, groups, and skills available in town. Build a directory that is easy for people to fill in/update.
  - Assemble a list of current/past community events to inventory what already occurs.
- Launch a newsletter that lists events for the next month, resources, and updates
- Consider Prioritizing some of the following action steps as they become relevant to your team's work:
  - Create categories for ideas (ex. recreation, arts/culture, skills/learning, community-wide events, etc.), and organize ideas by category.
  - Group ideas within a category to create a theme if possible. This will help narrow them down and keep focus - ex. Fall Bounty Series: planting & caring for edible crops (gardening), reap what you sow...literally (cooking; healthy meals), "putting it away" (harvest; canning).
  - Create a program calendar to see where ideas might land each month of the year to determine where it is too heavy vs. too light.
  - Evaluate ideas to determine 1). true interest and demand (what is the minimum number of people that would justify the investment of resources) - this might be a survey to drill down deeper and 2). if there is capacity to advance them.
- Consider implementing the following procedures to your team activities and meeting structure:
  - Set realistic, achievable goals and well-thought-out plans to support them; put plans in writing so that others can see them and provide ideas/input to make them better.
  - Create a master volunteer roster with names, contact information, special skills/talents/knowledge, etc. Use this roster in planning.
  - Include a volunteer plan in everything you do; it will help you understand the amount of people you will need and it will help volunteers understand what the expectation is of them (time and attention) and keep them engaged; it will also help curb volunteer burnout.
  - Pace yourself; plan for sustainability (what you will be handing off) and succession (to whom will be handing off) at the outset.
- In year one, aim to achieve the following goals:
  - Plan for 1-2 standing events each month for smaller discrete populations (ex. 1st Sunday of the month = morning coffee hour for parents with kids under age X, 3rd Thursday book club).
  - Plan for 1-2 events each month with discrete topics (Garden Tour, Canning and Preserving, sports, etc.).
  - Plan for 1 community-wide event [ex. Fair or Community Day].
- Start small - small successes help build enthusiasm and momentum and lead to bigger wins!
- Consider a skill inventory: Ask people to host events based on their knowledge.
- You could send the welcome basket to the whole community. Town office keeps track of land transfers (make sure to account for renters in the community).

- Explore examples of regular community meals. Connect with Broad Brook Community Center: <https://www.broadbrookcommunitycenter.org/>. The Broad Brook Community Center is available to rent for a wide variety of public or private events from workshops to weddings and everything in between.
- Utilize the Town website to share information about planned community events and skill exchanges: <https://townofwindhamvt.com/town-hall/>.
- Use a Facebook page with a “mayor”/moderator.
- Make posters for your planned events (ask a young person to design).
- Recognize local opportunities- ex: West Townshend Pizza night: <https://westtownshend.org/pizza-night>
- Consider ways to make money: Ticket sales, donate 10% of sales.
- The biggest barrier is who is involved: Stipends? Bring a proposal to Town Meeting to Fund a Coordinator.
- Ask for proposals from folks to run events. This can draw additional interest.
- Include business add-ins for welcome basket.
- Attend the VCRD Leadership Summit held each year: <https://www.vtrural.org/summit/>

## Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations

- **UVM Extension** has master gardeners: <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/mastergardener/extension-master-gardener-program>, maple experts: <https://www.uvm.edu/extension/maple>, etc. Contact Emma Spett: [emma.Spett@uvm.edu](mailto:emma.Spett@uvm.edu).
- Identify locals that have resources in Windham who are willing to provide support.
- Collaborate with other towns: Athens, Londonderry, Putney, Sunderland, Townshend, Westmore.
- If you’re looking for great examples of a community skill exchange, **The Civic Standard** (<https://www.thecivicstandard.org/>) is a nonprofit organization based in Hardwick, Vermont that would certainly share some great insights. In the spring of 2025, they organized a community-wide, multi-day skills exchange event called “Hardwick State” (<https://www.thecivicstandard.org/event-details-registration/hardwick-state>) that allowed anyone in the Hardwick area to share whatever knowledge/skills they had to offer. As they put it, “everyone who knows anything about something or wants to know something about anything!” There were sessions on “Free Range Organic Yodeling,” GIS data mapping, emergency preparedness, microgreen production, health and wellbeing, juggling, poetry, tai chi, and so much more. See the full course catalog here: [https://www.canva.com/design/DAGiA7gZJBs/hMGYY9dp5\\_FOk9PXSWM2Dg/view?utm\\_content=DAGiA7gZJBs&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=viewer](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGiA7gZJBs/hMGYY9dp5_FOk9PXSWM2Dg/view?utm_content=DAGiA7gZJBs&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=viewer).
- **BDCC Get On Board Program**: <https://brattleborodevelopment.com/event/sovt-get-on-board-2025/>. Want to know how to make things happen in your town? Want to be more involved in your community? Are you already involved but want to know more about how things work? SoVT Get On Board will give you practical skills to become an effective and active participant in the civic life of your Southern VT community. Gain big-picture knowledge to inspire and inform, and most importantly, find connections to support you.
- There are several talented facilitation experts who might be able to help members of the Windham community practice holding difficult conversations and move from disagreements to productive conflict. These include the Center for Real Dialogue, Susan Clark, and many others. Contact VCRD staff for more information and to make a connection with someone at [info@vtrural.org](mailto:info@vtrural.org).

- **Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA)** serves residents of Windham County, including Windham, Vermont: <https://sevca.org/>. SEVCA's mission is to empower individuals and communities to reduce poverty and promote self-sufficiency. They offer various programs and services related to housing, heating assistance, weatherization, and anti-poverty initiatives, as well as many other community programs that you may want to explore with them as you look for local partners.
- The **Broad Brook Community Center** in Guilford is a great example of a small community organization that has organized programming and community events: <https://www.broadbrookcommunitycenter.org/>.
- **Pittsford Village Farm** is an example of a project focused on repurposing a building into a community space - and they may be a good contact for discussing resources, process, etc: <https://www.pittsfordvillagefarm.org/>.
- Contact **Front Porch Forum** for additional resources/ ideas: <https://frontporchforum.com/contact>.
- Exploration of a makerspace was mentioned as an interest: Some makerspaces are well established:
  - **Generator Space** in Burlington: <https://generatorvt.com/>.
  - **HatchSpace** in Brattleboro: <https://www.hatchspace.org/>. Consider reaching out for additional information, guidance, tours, etc.
  - **MakerSphere**, a nonprofit organization in Waterbury, hosts a variety of classes, and manages shared spaces for artists, pottery studio, and a woodshop. Learn more at [www.makerspherevt.com](http://www.makerspherevt.com) and contact [makerspherevt@gmail.com](mailto:makerspherevt@gmail.com) or 802-595-9719.
- **Sharon Connects** is a community organization in Sharon that has hosted a Sharon Skill Swap and a number of community communication initiatives: <https://www.sharonconnects.org/>. Their most recent event was held on 2/22/25. To learn more, contact [sharonconnectsVT@gmail.com](mailto:sharonconnectsVT@gmail.com) or call Nic Antal at 802-369-4960
- The Town of Bethel VT created a "**Bethel's Operator's Manual**" with a variety of local resources that could serve as a model: <https://townofbethelvt.com/operator-manual>.
- **Bethel University (BU)** (<https://betheluniversityvt.org/>) is a free annual community pop-up university created by the Bethel Revitalization Initiative (BRI): <https://bethelrevitalizationinitiative.org/>. During the month of March each year, anyone can teach a course on any topic and the courses are free. Contact Lisa Sacks Warhol at [betheluniversityvt@gmail.com](mailto:betheluniversityvt@gmail.com).

## Resources and Potential Funding Sources

Remember that you can rely on the Visiting and Resource Teams from the What's Possible, Windham community process when pursuing grants. In most cases, they can provide letters of support. They are often administrators for many different grants across the State. VCRD can also provide letters of support.

**VCRD's Community Leadership in Action Guide:** <https://www.vtrural.org/guide/>. It has several chapters on advancing community projects, such as "Boost the Arts and Creative Economy," "Expand and Improve Community Communications," "Communicating with the Community" and "Develop Events that Strengthen Community" with ideas and resources relevant to this topic.

**Vermont Community Foundation Society Cohesion Grant:** <https://vermontcf.org/funds/arts-social-cohesion/>. The Community Foundation is seeking Letters of Interest (LOI) for projects and events in the visual, performing, music, and literary arts that create opportunities for positive social interaction, engagement, and collaboration. Projects should strengthen belonging and community cohesion in ways that are likely to persist and grow.

The Vermont Community Foundation also offers the **Spark Connecting Communities grant program** which provides grants of \$500-\$3,000 for "grassroots work that builds social capital": <https://vermontcf.org/funds/spark/>. The Spark program will accept applications from hyperlocal, place-based

projects (applications from a single community or a few towns working in partnership in the same region) or statewide/regional projects that support a community of individuals with a shared identity or interest. VCF aims to support emerging grassroots projects with the potential to build social capital—the connective tissue of our communities.

The State of Vermont has a **Building Communities Grants Program** that consists of five grant programs—with multiple grants connected to each—that were established and funded by the Vermont Legislature to “help communities preserve important historic buildings and enhance community facilities.”:

[https://bgs.vermont.gov/sites/bgs/files/Summary\\_Building\\_Community\\_Grants\\_Summary.pdf](https://bgs.vermont.gov/sites/bgs/files/Summary_Building_Community_Grants_Summary.pdf).

- Community facilities grants: Low barrier, easy application, 1:1 match. Up to \$25,000 that might fund a kickoff town fair or event.
- These grants are competitive but easy – if one of the activities is a farmers’ market (or some other year-round market) that generates revenue then use the Regional Economic Development Grant Program. If it is to seed the creation of an annual Windham Fair then Agricultural Fairs Capital Projects Competitive Grant.

The **Vermont League of Cities and Towns** maintains a **list of active funding opportunities in Vermont** that are searchable by topic: <https://www.vlct.org/resource/open-funding-opportunities>.

**AARP Community Challenge Grants:** <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/info-2025/2025-challenge.html>. The AARP Community Challenge’s focus on tangible projects, community engagement and its quick-action timeline helps selected grantees fast-track ideas and replicate promising practices. Previous projects have demonstrated an ability to garner additional funds or support from public and private funders, encourage innovation, overcome local policy barriers and receive greater overall awareness and engagement.

**AARP Winter Placemaking Grants:** <https://livabilityvt.secure-platform.com/a>. The grants fund quick-action projects that initiate winter placemaking demonstrations focused on creating or reinventing public spaces to improve safety, accessibility, and overall appeal. Examples from the 2025 Winter Placemaking Grants round include community candlelit winter walks (Lunenburg), Ice Block Parties (Northfield), etc.: <https://states.aarp.org/vermont/2024-25-winter-placemaking-grantees-announced>.

**Arts Impact Grant** from the Vermont Arts Council may be applicable to some of your work. These grants support organizations, municipalities, and schools in their efforts to create a more vibrant quality of life by providing equal and abundant access to the arts. Learn more at <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants/organizations/arts-impact> and contact Michele Bailey at 802.402.4614 and [mbailey@vermontartscouncil.org](mailto:mbailey@vermontartscouncil.org).

Vermont Arts Council **Animating Infrastructure Grants:** <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants/find-a-grant/organizations/animating-infrastructure/>. Animating Infrastructure Grants support community projects that integrate public art into community infrastructure. Through this program, the Council strives to demonstrate the positive impact of art in helping communities to meet goals of livability, walkability, safety, economic vitality, and community vibrancy, and to support the creation of unique infrastructure projects where function and art are one and the same.

- The Council’s definition of infrastructure is broad. It includes community facilities and services such as buildings, trails, water or sewer systems, roads, power systems, parks, parking lots, vacant or empty spaces, and more.
- Functional components of infrastructure – such as sidewalks, railings, benches, walls, creative wayfinding, stairs, gateways, tree grates, fences, trellises, water fountains, and more in the built and/or natural environment – have the potential for artistic enhancement that creates unique places where people want to live, work, visit, and play. Note that **VCRD’s Community Leadership in Action Guide** contains a chapter called “Develop Events that Strengthen Community” with ideas and resources relevant to this topic: <https://www.vtrural.org/guide/>.



Vermont Arts Council **Creative Aging Grants:** <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Creative-Aging-FY25-App-Preview.pdf>. Creative Aging grants support skill-based instruction alongside opportunities for social engagement and community building in and through the arts for older adults. Applicants to the Creative Aging grant program are non-profits with 501(c)(3) status, such as arts organizations, area agencies on aging, or social service organizations for example. Organizations may apply for up to \$6,000 to support activities designed for older adults aged 60+ led by experienced teaching artists. Examples of projects include:

- hiring a teaching artist to lead a series of photography workshops with a local senior center
- hiring a teaching artist to lead remote workshops for older adults in their homes, supplying materials, providing opportunities for social engagement, and giving support to caregivers
- hiring teaching artists or mentors to work with older adults to capture and/or create a series of stories or poems at a local library, arts organization, or community center





## ► Expand Housing Opportunities

Housing concerns were raised by many, especially around high costs, property taxes, short-term rentals, and the need to protect the natural character of the town. A task force could form to explore creative solutions that serve Windham residents. Ideas included building new housing developments such as tiny homes, updating zoning laws, limiting the number of AirBnBs, reviewing property tax structures, expanding the Citizens Advisory Council, and creating accessible housing for seniors or others who are isolated or need more support to live comfortably in town.

Community Chair: **To Be Determined**

Facilitators: **Dani Parkins**, *Technical Assistance Associate*, Vermont Council on Rural Development

**Jessica Savage**, *Director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives*, Vermont Council on Rural Development

Resource Team Members: **Natalie Elvidge**, *Planning Coordinator*, Agency of Commerce and Community Development

**Mike McConnell**, *Senior Planner*, Windham Regional Commission

Community Participants: Cathy (Edgerly) Fales, Hunt Fales, Bill Dunkel, Sharon Gusick, Pat McLain,  
& Task Force Sign Ups: Kord Scott, Kathy Scott, Ron Phillips, Don Weiskopf

### Current status and overview of the issue today

- Housing needs to happen where it is appropriate.
- There is a need to think about micro-housing. We need to change our mindset about housing - it could be three houses on many acres.
- There is an opportunity for people to expand housing on their property by adding housing or dividing their property, which allows for the characteristics of the town to maintain that rural feeling.
- Workforce housing needs to be considered, as well. If you build it they will come.
- Property values are an obstacle. Properties are so expensive.
- Putney Village is an example of new housing developments in Southern Vermont
- There was a lot of pushback that killed the housing brainstorm previously. Folks raised concerns about inviting others into the community. We have to plan for housing, not against housing. Zoning challenges.
- There is no town water and sewer system. New developments are limited to housing with a septic tank and well, which is a big constraint.
- Community members have raised the idea of putting multiple tiny houses on a lot with a community septic system, and shared resources. This would be against the zoning regulations. Current zoning regulations only allow for single family homes and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on a single lot. There is discussion around changing zoning laws to meet current housing needs. Example: upgrade the status of ADUs to include rental options for 5 years at a time.
- It is currently very challenging to build “starter homes” because the margins are so slim for developers. Housing target goals need to be researched in similar rural communities, as well as with regional/state housing targets, that will inform housing targets in Windham.

## Priority Action Steps

1. Look at the Town Plan and share easy to understand data and information with the community.
2. Do a housing study charrette to generate more information around the potential for various housing opportunities in Windham.
3. Understand what ADU resources are available through the State of Vermont.
4. Explore other communities with good [housing] ideas that were successful.
5. Meet with developers to understand their barriers for building multi-unit housing in Windham.

## Other Potential Action Ideas

- Identify Socioeconomic data related to Windham's Profile.
- Do an economic feasibility study to understand the opportunities for workers + impacts on housing.
- Issues around property taxes: We have the Grand List data and should pay attention to these issues.
- Get developers in a room with us to know more about the challenges and obstacles to building 2, 3, 5 family homes in Windham.
- Get meeting with state to understand resources that are available.
- Understand Windham's housing "targets" (goals) from the State.
- Define what Windham wants for housing and build relationship with the State.
- Expand smaller housing opportunities. Do a planning assessment to determine what our needs and and what is possible for housing here.
- Understand / look into accessory dwelling unit (ADU) regulations and resources with the State.
- Find common ground with state around housing goals. ADU's could play a big part here.
- Old Golf Course property: create multi-unit housing + trails, etc.
  - Attract a developer to do this.
  - Study and remediate this property.
  - Could use as an industrial park.
  - great Wi-Fi.
  - Recreation Center with a pool.
- Do a housing survey / charrette / study for housing in Windham. Get data (like the "Hill Town" process with RPC)
- Have a wider discussion about zoning and planning in Windham for housing. Personalize the housing opportunities and needs.
- Get examples from other places for tiny house developments.
- Create housing and/or elder housing at the old school. Permitted for 45 people on septic.
- Explore house-share/coops/other shared housing for older residents—Including grounds maintenance and care expenses.
- Create a mini water treatment plant | micro-developments.
- Sell Talc Mine property to a developer with stipulation for what we want to see happen.
- Encourage small, multi-dwelling-unit housing systems. Need to attract developers.
- The Town could sell water from the lake at the Talc Mine site to Magic Mountain for snow-making.
- Open up town owned land to anyone who comes to build a house (Kansas example).
- Look at Town Plan and share the most important: "Zoning in Windham for Dummies," as well as general explanations about what/who we are.

## 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

- Develop and distribute a brief survey to understand rising desires and questions about community housing needs. What are the current and future housing needs, including what types of housing will be needed and household size. Analyze existing housing stock to determine what's available and what are the gaps?
- Familiarize with the resources listed below, specifically on the Agency of Commerce and Community Development's Housing website, as there are a number of resources related to planning for housing, grant programs, ADU guidance, etc.: <https://accd.vermont.gov/housing>.
- Locate buildable parcels within town.
- Understand constraints infrastructure has on housing. How does it limit housing growth?
- Understand the current zoning and how that might affect housing development. Consider if changes are possible/ needed?
- Take actions to grow the grand list.
- Form a Housing Committee. The website [housingdata.org](https://housingdata.org) has a variety of resources that are available to you. In particular, there is a webpage on "Housing Committees in Vermont" that you could review to explore if forming a housing committee through the Town is right for Windham: <https://housingdata.org/toolbox/housing-committees>.
- Update zoning regulations to become more housing-development friendly. Apply for a Municipal Planning Grant to update zoning regs: <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant>.
- Approach the Town municipality to explore passing a Local Option Tax on "rooms" (STRs) and use the money generated to advance local housing initiatives. You can review this Local Option Tax info + guidance (<https://tax.vermont.gov/business/local-option-tax>) from the Agency of Administration Department of Taxes to better understand your options when implementing a local option tax.
- Obtain a planning grant to inventory Town owned sites (including the school and the talc mine property) to determine opportunities for housing creation. VCDP-CDBG Planning Grant for housing feasibility on town-owned sites: <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp>.
- Explore feasibility of creating a small village wastewater system on town-owned land for neighborhood development. The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has a Village Water & Wastewater Initiative that is a great resource for accessing technical assistance and funding for small village wastewater systems: <https://anr.vermont.gov/special-topics/arpa-vermont/village-water-wastewater-initiative>.
- Explore the creation of ADU's in existing homes; work with Windham Regional Commission to host a regional ADU workshop for small, rural communities.
- Use the Town's Revolving Loan Fund to help seed housing development.
- Look into businesses that specialize in modular, off site construction such as:
  - Huntington Homes in Montpelier: <https://huntingtonhomesvt.com/>.
  - Logic Building Systems in Brattleboro: <https://www.buildwithlogic.com/>.
  - New Frameworks in Essex Junction: <https://www.newframeworks.com/>.

- Support designation transition and incentives for downtown/village centers and neighborhoods. You can review the “State Designation Programs State Planning Manual” to learn more about using this strategy: <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/designation-programs>.
- Inventory Local Housing Trust Funds to better understand their uses, governance structures, revenue sources. A good example to start with is the Montpelier Housing Trust Fund: <https://www.montpelier-vt.org/1088/Montpelier-Housing-Trust-Fund>.

## Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations

The Vermont Housing and Finance Agency (VHFA), in partnership with [HousingData.org](https://HousingData.org), has developed an extensive housing resource toolbox that you can explore for resources that are available and useful in Windham. Here is a summary list of housing resources and tools provided by VHFA that compliments the housing resource toolbox mentioned above:

[vhfa.org/sites/default/files/documents/Housing101Resources.pdf](https://vhfa.org/sites/default/files/documents/Housing101Resources.pdf). This article from Thriving Communities provides further details and information about the VHFA Housing Resource Toolbox, as well: <https://www.thrivingcommunitiesvt.org/toolkit/>.

There are many communities across Vermont that have active initiatives for expanding housing opportunities in their area. You can read about and connect with some of these communities:

- **Woodstock has a worker housing program**, (<https://www.sevendaysvt.com/news/woodstocks-worker-housing-program-finds-many-takers-42022175/>) as well as a local deeds program (<https://woodstockcommunitytrust.org/current-projects/>). These are great examples of creative solutions to housing that work.
- The **Rutland Regional Planning Commission has developed a housing resource guide** that could be emulated in Windham: <https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:55cff9ce-3b1d-472f-a8aa-141dc466279b>. Given its proximity to Windham, there may also be information resources and funding opportunities that are still relevant to the Windham community within this guide.
- The **Randolph Area Community Development Corporation is working on the development of a “New Net Zero Downtown Neighborhood”** in Salisbury Square that is another great example of a creative housing solution that works: <https://www.racdc.com/SalisburySquare>. Here is a news clip from WCAX3 discussing the new Randolph Housing Development: <https://www.wcax.com/2024/10/16/randolph-housing-development-taking-shape/>.
- As a part of the Working Communities Challenge, **United Way of Lamoille County has developed a comprehensive approach to housing development**, which includes workforce and economic development, resource hubs, and formalized partnerships with key stakeholders of the project: <https://uwlamoille.org/partnerships/working-communities-challenge.html>.

There have been many different guides, roadmaps, and toolkits developed in recent years around accessory dwelling units in Vermont. Take some time to review these documents as a task force, and start curating a list of ideas, resources, and information insights (applicable laws, regulations, operating procedures, etc.) that are relevant for and could be used to support housing opportunities in Windham. The list below is a list of “how-to” docs that are relevant to Windham:

- **Guide to Accessory Dwelling Units:** [https://centralvtplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/CENTRAL-VT-ADU-Guide.docxFinal3\\_25\\_24.pdf](https://centralvtplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/CENTRAL-VT-ADU-Guide.docxFinal3_25_24.pdf). The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission presents this Resource Guide to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). The material in this guidebook was first authored and compiled by the Addison County Regional Planning Commission and we are grateful for their sharing of this information with the Central Vermont Region.

- **The Vermont Homes for All Toolkit** ([https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Workgroups/Senate/Economic Development/Reports and Resources/W~Department of Housing and Community Development~Homes for All -Annual Report~1-17-2025.pdf](https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Workgroups/Senate/Economic%20Development/Reports%20and%20Resources/W~Department%20of%20Housing%20and%20Community%20Development~Homes%20for%20All%20Annual%20Report~1-17-2025.pdf)) and community engagement process re-introduced Missing Middle Housing (MMH) to Vermont by focusing statewide attention on small-scale gentle infill and incremental development as a strategy to address Vermont's housing and affordability crisis.
- **Need to Know Housing Legislation** is a document that addresses key changes to Act 250, State designations, regional planning, and local regulations: <https://vhfa.org/sites/default/files/documents/NeedToKnowStateHousingLegislation.pdf>.
- **Your Four Key Takeaways from Act 181 to Spur Housing Creation** is a presentation document that provides up-to-date information about the changes to housing development laws (specifically Act 250) in Vermont: <https://www.vlct.org/sites/default/files/uploads/resources/documents/town-fair-four-key-take-aways-from-act-181-slides-desk-copy.pdf>. While exploring the zoning regulations in Windham, this document, and others like it, will be an important resource for you to reference.
- **This Legislative Update to Planning and Land Use for More Homes in Vermont** report was developed by the League of Cities and Towns and is another resource for reference when exploring what's possible in Windham around new housing opportunities: [https://www.vlct.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Document-Library/act-181\\_p-z-forum\\_gill-hemmerick\\_20241017-1.pdf](https://www.vlct.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Document-Library/act-181_p-z-forum_gill-hemmerick_20241017-1.pdf).
- Shelburne VT has compiled their own list of **Accessory Dwelling Unit Resources** that you can use to better understand the practical use of ADUs, as well as the benefits that they provide in a community: <https://www.shelburnevt.org/511/Accessory-Dwelling-Unit-Resources>. A few of the resources listed that are worth noting here are a chart outlining the ADU approval process, AARP guides for ADU designs/development plans, and zoning applications.
- The Rockingham Planning Commission has compiled a **list of resources for accessory dwelling units to reference**: <https://www.therpc.org/RHNA/accessory-dwelling-units>. You can use this document to compare regional/local approaches to ADUs, as well as for complimentary information related to other ADU resources listed in this report.
- **State Permitting Considerations for ADUs** are outlined in this document, which could be used to develop considerations specific to Windham: <https://colchestervt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1002/Accessory-Dwelling-Units>.
- Review the State of Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development webpage about planning for Accessory Dwelling Units: <https://accd.vermont.gov/adu>.
- **Enabling Better Places: A Zoning Guide for Vermont Neighborhoods**: [https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD\\_Web\\_Docs/CD/CPR/Planning-Your-Towns-Future/CPR-Z4GN-Guide-Final-web.pdf](https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/Planning-Your-Towns-Future/CPR-Z4GN-Guide-Final-web.pdf). This Guide is structured to enable a planning department or local government to address those topics that have the most significant impact on the affordability of housing in Vermont. Many of the recommendations can be used throughout the state, but they have been developed specifically for village and town centers and nearby neighborhoods because these areas have the most potential for providing more housing options, and new homes in these areas can benefit communities by increasing the number of rate payers for existing utilities and by raising property tax revenues.
- The Addison County Regional Planning Commission developed their own **guide for ADUs in Vermont**: <https://acrpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/ACRPC-ADU-Guide-Appendices-2.pdf>. Great document to reference in conjunction with other regional ADU guides. You can also find more information about ADUs on the ADCRPC website: <https://acrpc.org/2023/07/acrpc-resource-guide-to-accessory-dwelling-units/>.



- The Northwest Regional Planning Commission has a **Guide to Creating Accessory Dwelling Units**, as well: [https://www.nrpcvt.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/NRPC\\_ADU\\_Guide\\_Appendices10.14.24.pdf](https://www.nrpcvt.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/NRPC_ADU_Guide_Appendices10.14.24.pdf).
- **How-To Checklist for ADU's (pdf)**: [https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD\\_Web\\_Docs/Housing/Accessory-Dwelling-Units/ADU-Checklist-AUG-2021.pdf](https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/Housing/Accessory-Dwelling-Units/ADU-Checklist-AUG-2021.pdf). This how-to checklist, developed by the Department of Housing and Community Development, outlines the considerations when developing and ADU so you can be sure you are moving through the process with confidence.
- **ADU Brochure for Homeowners (pdf)**: [https://ehq-production-us-california.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/7c33d08671407d357d6b0205c4d98cb02508ccb1/original/1675353949/79a877e9e72eae\\_d5d3250201b89c1248\\_ADU\\_brochure\\_VT\\_DHCD\\_2021pdf.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIA4KKNQAKIJHZMYNPA%2F20250828%2Fus-west-1%2Fs3%2Faws4\\_request&X-Amz-Date=20250828T162134Z&X-Amz-Expires=300&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=d58eecf970406c1a156c5054b7b709beac24434941c22a3ad13f9a6a690dc59d](https://ehq-production-us-california.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/7c33d08671407d357d6b0205c4d98cb02508ccb1/original/1675353949/79a877e9e72eae_d5d3250201b89c1248_ADU_brochure_VT_DHCD_2021pdf.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIA4KKNQAKIJHZMYNPA%2F20250828%2Fus-west-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20250828T162134Z&X-Amz-Expires=300&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=d58eecf970406c1a156c5054b7b709beac24434941c22a3ad13f9a6a690dc59d). This tri-fold, developed by the Department of Housing and Community Development, provides a high-level overview of what an ADU is, the permitting process, and your responsibilities as a landlord.
- **Brattleboro Area Affordable Housing (BAAH)**: <https://baahvermont.org/>. BAAH provides technical assistance to homeowners in Brattleboro and Bellows Falls who want to add an apartment to their house. This organization has assisted in the creation of more than 50 new apartments.
- **Mad River Valley Housing Coalition (MRVHC)**: <https://mrvpd.org/housing-resources/>. Serving the towns of Fayston, Warren, Waitsfield, Moretown, and Duxbury, MRVHC published a Guide to Creating & Renting Accessory Apartments in the Mad River Valley.
- **New Hampshire Housing**: <https://www.nhhfa.org/housing-challenges-solutions/accessory-dwelling-units/>. Publishes ADU guidebooks for homeowners and municipalities for residents of that state that includes many helpful ideas for design, construction, and budgeting as well as resources. Note that the statutes and regulations cited are not applicable in Vermont.
- **Vermont Natural Resource Council (VNRC)**: <https://vnrc.org/community-planning-toolbox/tools/accessory-apartments/>. This webpage includes a Community Planning Toolbox for persons interested in developing an ADU. Here is another resource from VNRC that provides guidance on **planning and hosting a Design Charrette**: <https://vnrc.org/community-planning-toolbox/tools/design-charrette/>. This resource, as well as the previous one, has been pulled from a much larger “toolbox” of resources on the VNRC website. It would be worth your time to review this toolbox more fully and see what other resources you may find useful: <https://vnrc.org/community-planning-toolbox/>.

**HomeShare Vermont** is all about people helping each other. Each compatible homesharing “match” we arrange is unique and based upon the needs, interests, and lifestyles of the individuals involved. With over 40 years of experience, skills, and knowledge, HomeShare VT helps residents find just the right person to share their house with. Comprehensive screening assures a great pool to select from, but it is always up to the people in the program to decide who they want to live with. Find out more at <https://www.homesharevermont.org/>.

**Sharing Housing Inc.** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization promoting shared housing as a viable and enjoyable answer to the joint crises of housing affordability and loneliness facing our society through education and advocacy. Shared housing is an ancient method of survival and wellbeing that can be adapted to modern life. <https://sharinghousing.org/our-mission/>.

**A Vermonter's Guide to Home-sharing** is designed to make home-sharing possible for people of all ages: <https://homeshare.org/wp-content/uploads/DIY-Homeshare.pdf>. It contains information on how to decide whether home-sharing is right for you, how to find the right home-sharer, and how to make home-sharing work. Throughout this guide, fill-in-the-blank questionnaires and checklists help the reader through the process.

**Keys to the Valley** is a website developed through a collaborative effort between the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Planning Commission, and the Mount Ascutney Regional Commission: <https://www.keystothevalley.com/about-us/whats-kttv-about/>. Combined, they seek to better understand the housing situation in Vermont by developing a data-driven regional housing study, which will quantify where residents live and work, how long their commutes are, the value of their homes, and other essential data points critical to grasping the scope of the problem. This information has become the foundation from which to engage communities in open and honest conversations about the issues that impact housing and possible solutions, such as – development costs, environmental impacts, health indicators, location, regulations, infrastructure, financing, and transportation.

**The Windham Windsor Housing Trust** is a great organization to consult with about housing ideas: <https://www.homemattershere.org/>.

Contact the **Vermont State Housing Authority** for assistance and as another member of your team: <https://www.vsha.org/>.

**Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity** is more than just a home building organization: <https://vermonthabitat.org/>. They provide resources for housing, information about housing development, and also provide direct services to local community members.

## Resources and Potential Funding Sources

**The Vermont Community Development Program** offers grants to support planning, infrastructure, housing and economic development: <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/town-future>. Community Development Block Grants are federal Planning Grants available through the VCDP.

**Small Grants for Smart Growth** provides seed money for catalyzing, community-based initiatives that are grounded in or help to support smart growth: <https://vnrc.org/small-grants-for-smart-growth/>. Projects might involve advocacy for better land use, by getting involved in the “nuts and bolts” work of municipal planning, regulations, or a permitting process. A project could also be a town or local group effort to promote downtown or village center revitalization and historic preservation; to develop a plan for better sidewalks or paths; to identify ways to support housing choice and affordability; or to plan on conserving land for agriculture or forestry.

**The Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) 2.0** provides grants and 0% interest loans up to \$50,000 per unit to property owners to create affordable rental units: <https://accd.vermont.gov/housing/funding>. The program is flexible and allows for several ways to bring rental units online including rehabbing units with code violations, converting non-residential structures to residential units, and building new structures with up to 5 rental units. Apartments and homes funded with VHIP 2.0 must be available as long-term rentals at an affordable rate, and the property owner must provide a 20% match of grant funds. You can also use VHIP to help fund the creation of ADUs: <https://accd.vermont.gov/vhip#VHIP%20Funding>.

**Rapid Response Mobile Home Infill Program (MHIP):** <https://www.affordablehomes.vermont.gov/>. As part of a comprehensive response to Vermont's housing affordability crisis, compounded by recent flooding, a Mobile Home Unit Task Team was assembled to oversee the Rapid Response Mobile Home Infill Program (MHIP) to jumpstart and fast-track Mobile Home lot improvement and home placement within participating Mobile Home Parks to foster affordable homeownership.

**The Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair (MHIR) Program** is currently closed for 2025 but may open back up in 2026 if base funding is secured: <https://mhirprogram.vsha.org/>. In its current form, the MHIR program provides funding in the following ways:

- Infill Awards are available to park owners to assist with small-scale capital needs to infill vacant lots and cover associated expenses up to \$20,000.
- Home Repairs Awards offers homeowners funding to cover the costs of repairing existing homes to prevent displacement.
- Foundation Awards can help prospective and current homeowners to pay for a foundation and related expenses in preparation for siting a home, up to \$15,000.

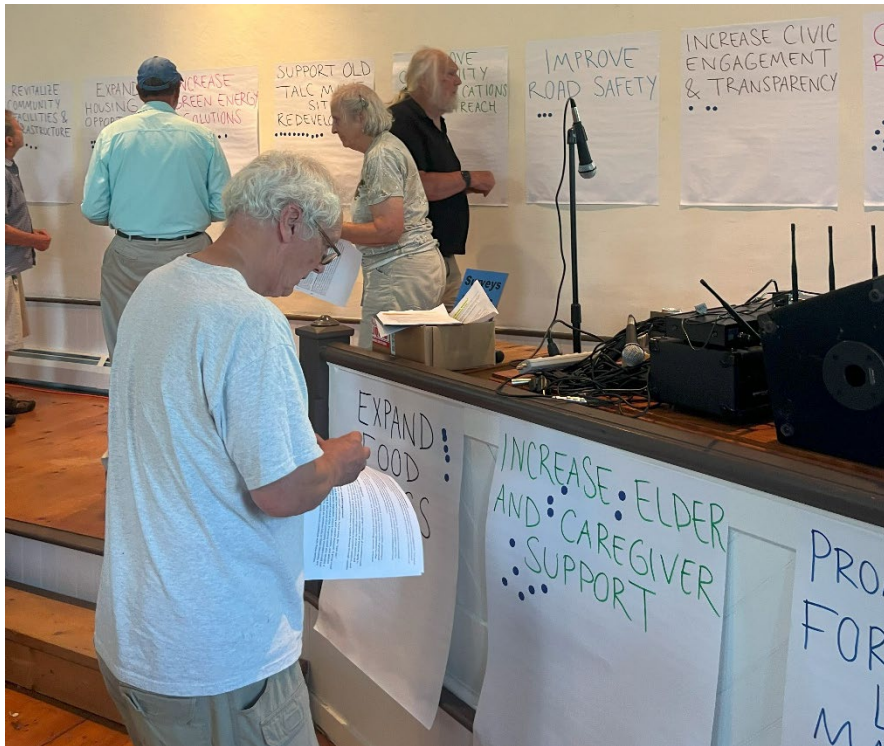
**Northern Border Regional Commission grants:** <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/program-areas>. The Catalyst Program supports a broad range of economic development initiatives that modernize and expand water and wastewater systems; revitalize transportation infrastructure; establish workforce development programs and facilities; grow outdoor recreation infrastructure and economies; and construct new childcare and healthcare facilities. The Forest Economy Program supports the forest-based economy and assists in the industry's evolution to include new technologies and viable business models across the 4-state NBRC region. Many of these grant programs have annual funding opportunities, so even if they aren't accepting applications right now, try to find out if there will be future opportunities to apply.

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



Photo: Windham Historical Society





Scenes from Step 2 – Community Meeting Day, July 24, 2025

# V. Windham Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held with over 50 Windham community members and the VCRD Visiting Team on June 17, 2025 and through a paper and online survey.

*Although prioritization work 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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## General Forum for Windham Overall

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### What are the Assets in Windham?

- Road maintenance.
- People show up in Windham.
- Taking care of the community to improve the community.
- Tap into the energy in Windham.
- People care about Windham.
- Buildings that are maintained and access to the library.
- Cemeteries are well maintained.
- Community members stewarding the lands.
- The atmosphere at the town office is very welcoming and a pleasure to be a part of.
- We have the best range of experience and talent in this town.
- There are lots of opportunities to get involved.
- There is not a power structure in town to bar people from being part of something.
- People come out for good music.
- We continue to see each other as humans.
- A quiet, dark town (no light pollution).

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### What are the Challenges?

- Children/families have had to seek community outside of Windham.
- Not many people.
- Division that happens around specific issues like wind turbines.
- Judging and labeling people.
- There is an amount of not seeing the best in each other.
- Not a divided town but there are some divisions within our town.
- Community Members who have a suburban mentality.
- Community members slandering each other.
- Community members not speaking to their neighbors.
- Irrational behavior. When things get ignored, it makes people feel alone in the community.
- Burn out: Same people volunteering for various committees.
- No succession planning.
- The school closing down.
- Something went wrong in town, and I hope we can move forward.

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

- Make a plan to solve the most important issues identified with resources behind it.
- Bring the school back.
- Honor our past, integrate it with where we want to go.
- Multi-purpose room in the school with a playground, gardening, and musical instruction. Turn the school back into an educational facility.
- Maintain our buildings, and share our knowledge. Young people are leaving because of jobs. Buildings can be saved and how to save them can be passed on. Develop a structural way to pass that knowledge on.
- Skill sharing in the community.
- Community Events: Start doing things together as a community to come together to enjoy, have fun, and share what we know.
- Mentorship from the elders in this town to swap skills.
- Multigenerational opportunities.
- History lessons.
- Close down the falls/natural area that has been ecologically degraded.
- Drain pond and use nutrients as fertilizer to give to farmers.
- Restore/Bring back native birds.
- People used to party together and square dance monthly.
- Concerts in the Community Hall.
- Use a Community Tiny Home project/model to support affordable housing in Windham.

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## Land, Growth, & Sustainability Forum

Visiting Team: Jessica Savage (FACILITATOR), Lauren Brady (SCRIBE), Laura Sibilia, Mike McConnell, Trey Martin

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### What are the Assets in this Area?



- Do something with the large land mass that is undeveloped.
- Beautiful historic buildings and a local passion for taking care of those resources.
- Support the ecosystem and wild lands.
- Two new opportunities: purchased the School building and the Quarry land just today! Two new assets that don't have plans yet, but these are potential bright spots.
- Road crews are out of this world and do a great job in town, it should be the envy of others in VT and New York! The roads are reliably in good shape and any problems are fixed immediately. Richard and Kirk are like artists and they do so much hard work and really care about getting it right.
- Ed Brown's property is something I really like and it totally represents Windham with the farm and the art installations and it's inspiring to others.
- Real appreciation for the natural beauty, the quiet, and the forested landscape. Really know how fortunate we are to have this natural environment.
- Cathy and the Selectboard have raised a lot of money through grant writing and we have some momentum now. Now we have a chance to direct this and plan for the future.
- Like driving around and not seeing commercial buildings. Plenty of nature and neighborhood buildings.
- Quiet and mellow dirt roads where drivers are going slow and people can walk their dogs safely.
- We don't have the franchise/ chain stores that you see in every other town, this town is unique.
- School building is an asset, there's lots of potential for community space there.
- There's a big reserve on the mountain currently: Glee Mountain conserved by Nature Conservancy.
- Clean Well water and fresh air.
- The fire department are great people and a great asset and they are going to get a new building.
- Utilizing the school building is exciting, we need to do something with it, the playground is great and is pretty new.
- Great relationship with WRPC.
- Town Office Email listserv as a communication tool, Town website, News and Notes, bulletin boards here town office, school and fire department, and sandwich boards.

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### What are the Challenges?

- Affordability so people can live here.
- Have to grow and make space for people, but how to do that without destroying what we value including the woods and the pond on the mountain.
- Concerned about the problems that might come with the school and the quarry property.
- Use to be skate ramps and hockey rink at the school building.
- Weakness of the zoning regulations and what the Planning Commission is doing, it's not exciting but it's important for the community to know because it's not the Commission's zoning, it's the whole community's zoning.
- Have very complicated planning goals, the goals are great but we aren't anywhere near meeting those goals and we haven't figured out how to get there, we need more concrete action planning and doing. There are going to be tough conversations and decisions to have there.
- Hard to talk about the big issues in town without people getting really concerned about the scale. The community needs help having those conversations and figuring out what the right scale for this community is.
- Hard time getting public engagement at the Planning Commission and the Selectboard Meetings, really want that public engagement, but have a hard time getting people to show up even over zoom, but then when people don't show up they get upset about the decisions that were made.
- Communication, how do people find things out? We don't have TV channel that everyone can watch, how do we get communication out to everyone?
- Don't feel that there's accountability of the people who work in the town government. There have been some times that people in government released confidential information, which town gossip blows out of proportion or turns into misinformation.
- Climate change is increasing, places like Windham are going to be a place people move to escape from places that are impacted worse by climate change. Current administration in Washington isn't going to help us so we have to get serious about it ourselves.
- We have a lot of traffic volume from Weston, Londonderry, and other towns, and they are speeding too. That's going to be an increasing problem in the future.
- Hard to own and operate an electric car in Windham (the nearest charging stations are Brattleboro, Springfield, and one getting built in Winhall. There's also a level three charger at Grace Cottage, but it's very slow.

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

- Bring other people in to appreciate what we have here.
- Sustainable land management, especially forest management.
- Could have a market, would be great to have some more local businesses, want to think about how to zone it to encourage local businesses without drawing franchises and chain stores.
- School could be a non-profit coffee house or small scale restaurant and a community meeting place for casual gathering, getting to know each other, hearing the gossip, and building relationships.
- We could have lecturers and artisans visit the school building in a community space.
- Town engagement around Glee Mountain changing ownership to the Silvio A Conte Reserve.
- Making the town zoning laws approachable.
- Increase community solar panels in Windham. We could maybe build on the existing solar field in town and maybe add some windmills, so that we have renewable energy right in town.



- Make a plan to address climate change in relation to increasing populations in our town and in neighboring towns.
- Hire professionals to help the community think about what the building could be. It could be a park, there could be a pavilion, but it would be great to have professionals help us think broadly and long term and then the town can decide.
- Invest in community solar. Mike Simons and Mac have built some community solar on their land. We could build on that. We have lots of land and our energy committee has information and data on the potential solar sites (south-facing and already cleared) but it will take a concerted effort to develop those, and we will need help from the state. The energy committee has been trying to get this done in town for 10 years and has faced a lot of challenges but has some solar developers that are interested. Need to tackle bringing phase 3 power from Magic Mountain and coordinate the partners who would need to be involved at the regional and state level, including Green Mountain Power. A group of Windham Residents could get the state folks together and advocate for town solar and windmills.
- Have a coffee shop in town, or maybe revitalize a gathering space like a grange where people can get together.
- What if we take the old talc mine and have a swimming area and park in one section, then maybe we could put a solar panel field in another section, maybe we could put in some affordable housing, and we could (we must reward our town Road crew) so we could build a town garage.
- “BOOP BOOP” keypad idea: In the school building, have a place where you can buy a coffee, look at the town history and find out about local assets and what’s special. Then have a section of the school with a special keycode (Boop Boop) that is just for community members: basketball club, teach community classes, have social clubs in one of the classes. The logistical coordination could be taken on by the expanded Meeting House Committee.
- Everyone in this circle brings someone with you on the 24th and really get people invited so that we can double the attendance.
- Hamilton Falls and Burby Pond get a lot of traffic. There’s been parking issues infringing on private property, concerns about health and safety in those spaces, and concerns about the ecosystem there and the wildlife. The diversity of species has been going down because of eutrophication - sentiment filling in the pond and increasing insects and disease vectors.
- All town staff/elected officials should sign a code of conduct and the community could develop accountability measures if they violate.
- We could draw electric cars by getting auto dealers, GMP, WRPC in the room and figure out a way to get electric chargers in town.
- Zoning ordinance so that new buildings could get a tax reduction if they oriented the building for ideal solar panel array.
- Address the speed of traffic with a solar operated sign that uses radar to tell you how fast you’re going relative to the speed limit. Put these in each of Windham’s villages. Could have funny comments (like the one in Manchester). Work with the Selectboard and the Sheriffs department to figure out what to do about it and drive community engagement to address this problem.
- Use News and Notes more intentionally: we could put “Action Items” on the front page and draw lots of attention to how people can get involved.
- Energy Committee has done a volunteer energy efficiency window dressing each year and would like to get more people involved. The committee would like to activate the young people in the community to help with the volunteer effort. Could build lots of relationships with young people and adults and give all a sense of accomplishment.

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## Visiting Team Reflections

- The zoning, school, talc mine, and community meeting place came up more than anything else. There’s a tremendous amount of community spirit and passion in the local community and the folks who volunteer. Encouraged the community to pick up the phone and call the folks at WRPC and other regional groups and agencies. Real people will pick up the phone and be eager to help.
- People really want to maintain the things they love about town and there are a couple new assets that the town can take advantage of. Noting that the town has a home-improvement lending fund serviced by a selectboard committee which is unusual but fantastic and could be a great asset to the community if publicized more or used for some of the big issues that the town wants to tackle. Definitely people value the community that they have here. The school is purchased and has had a feasibility study done which is a great first step for transforming that into a community asset. Although participation may feel low to you, it looks fantastic to those of us visiting.
- There has been some division about the school closure, about the wind project, and people still have some hurt. But most communities don’t gather and say that out loud, so this community is already working on addressing that hurt. There’s been history of division but people still came back together and are able to honestly say that we may not agree about everything but we’re still neighbors and we still care about each other and our community and that’s a huge asset. Trey says a huge congratulations to this community because it’s tremendous to be able to disagree with each other and still work together.
- You also have one of the most amazing natural blocks of streams and forests and wildlife. But note that preservation without access or without some kind of sustainable use plan. How do you think about your forest resources in a way that’s conservationist so that you can use your wonderful land. Think about what scale of use and potentially what scale of commercial or tourist draw you might want. There’s a lot of room for finding the right scale for your town between overuse and getting swamped by tourists and doing absolutely nothing with it and keeping everyone off the natural areas you have.

- It was beautiful to see the kids here and hear their voices. The aging demographic is a threat to the vitality of town, and to the farms and forests in town, and to the volunteering in town. How do you think about family resources like childcare, family events, gathering spaces, and the connections between generations in town and plan for coordinating.
- Encouragement to dream big and tackle the big perennial issues because that's what this process is hear to help you figure out and also help bring those state resources and regional connections to you to help gain traction.
- Great to hear you all saying that you want to retain who you are, but you want to figure out what's the right scale for development in your town. Great to hear you thinking outside the box!
- If you want to know what the youth want, ask them what they want! Then they will get involved, you can work with them and give them money and then they will engage and feel ownership.
- Think about zoning as a puzzle and make it into a game to get more interaction and make it playful.

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## **Living Together Building Connections**

Visiting Team: Dani Parkins (FACILITATOR), Denise Smith (SCRIBE), Katie Buckley, Ben Doyle, Natalie Elvidge

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

- Active church in South Windham. Children activities, potlucks, church dinners, quilting bees, etc.
- People showing up at places, despite being a second homeowner.
- Vermont is in our hearts.
- The Windham News and Notes newsletter.
- Welcoming community.
- Town office is a little community.
- Library open on Wednesdays and an active book club.
- Passes to Vermont State Parks.
- Passes to Historic Sites.
- Historical newsletter and family storytelling.
- The Windham Community Organization, a nonprofit that organizes community events and helps people in need.
- The pie auction, regular auction, and children's activities on Halloween.
- Volunteer Fire Company.
- Spaces: Talc Mine Property, Meeting House, and School House can host amazing community events.
- Town garage for road maintenance.
- Neighborhood connections - free transportation and lots of resources for social needs.
- Program 'Enough' that helps people with firewood.
- School has ski and snowshoe equipment.
- Citizens Advisory Committee – housing/rehabilitation fund. This committee has been issuing grants since 1985.
- Bill Dunkle window dressing at the Community center - how to build storm windows.

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### **What are the Challenges?**

- Inactive programs.
- Build up neighbors helping neighbors.
- Volunteer organizations are no longer working.
- No funding for emergency needs.
- Transportation and access to food, resources, groceries, etc.
- Aging in Windham - getting sick - how would you get to the hospital?
- Distance and elevation can cause isolation.
- The weather is weird.
- Deterioration of the social contract after your kids graduate.
- Different burbs in Windham - "the twain will never meet."
- The resistance to bringing new people in.
- Fallout from COVID.
- The historical reason for the "burbs" was related to being able to take care of each other in the burbs, but now people don't connect with others outside their own burb as much.
- Losing younger people.
- Geographical challenges.
- People are finding community elsewhere because of the loss of our youth and services tied to youth.
- History of opinions and allegiances on two town issues and other local issues that have created real divisions that impact people's ability to come together.
- People making assumptions and not asking questions or asking others what they might need.
- Funding for projects is limited.
- Taxes and housing costs are too high.

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

- Get everyone together and do a barn building.
- Bring back 'Enough' or another organization like this.
- Start having more multigenerational activities that bring people together. There needs to be inclusion of generational differences.
- Bringing people up to the mountain as they see our beacon of hope.
- We need to have activities outside of partisan meetings that have nothing to do with any town committee.
- Have more events with food, children, and music.
- Start a Windham Community Day.
- Plan a Windham Fair.
- Build a swimming pool and recreation center or have more recreation activities using the school as a place to host them, i.e. basketball.
- Have more programs for at risk seniors and care givers.
- Highlight our history of Potato farming in this area.
- Highlight 55 Civil War Veterans from Windham.
- Start more community gardens.

- Develop satellite offices for OT and Speech therapists in Windham.
- Restore the athletic fields near the school.
- Develop a recreation program using the school as an asset with adjustable basketball hoops.
- Plan more activities that have inexpensive play options for families and youth.
- Build a pickleball court.
- Organize skill-share events around animals, farming, and gardening.
- Tap into town expertise.
- Promote Garden Tours.
- Include every gradient of the Windham community.
- Organize music programs, concerts, etc.... including quartet.
- Enable children to take music education lessons.
- Plan more winter activities for kids.
- Organize music events and potlucks.
- Put on Art shows and have art lessons for youth.
- Have a movie night at the Community Center with classic movie showings.
- Have a Town Fair highlighting people's skills, talents, and the Town's assets.
- Have more activities celebrating community. An example could be the Brattleboro Art Walk.
- Form a committee to organize art beyond West Townsend.
- Catalog where someone can find resources that are already here and develop better communication practices to raise awareness and make things more accessible.
- Create a Windham Garden Club or tap into other garden clubs or UVM Master Gardeners Club.
- Do events on evenings or weekends and not during the workday to include people who work FTE.
- Have more winter holidays, i.e. lighted tractor parade. 4th of July event. Halloween.
- Bring back the resource list of local businesses in Windham - who can do what in town?
- Windham Community Welcome Packet.
- Letter if you sell or buy to send to the town.
- Expand Windham Citizens Advisory Committee role and mission statement.
- Remember our history and pull that into what we envision for our future. The future is here - it is not waiting for us.
- Value of a social contract with Windham residents.
- Homemaker skill exchange, canning, gardening, winter prep, etc.
- Develop a Maker's Space.
- Have a Community Cupboard.
- Plan multi-generational storytelling events and make connections with NPR.

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### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Fun to listen to. Treasures are the people in this community. So much that unites you. Thinking forward and planning for the school and all the exciting things that could happen there. Everyone is thinking in that direction. Town office is the heart and special place. Coordination and communication will help knit it all together. So many great things and being able to tie it all together.
- Windham is actually growing and getting younger. You are bucking the trend! There's more capacity for growing. The median age is 46. Opportunity for younger people moving back to town. Focus on community building that is low cost. Don't wait for a grant. Don't ask for permission. Check out the Town of Middlesex and their town handbook. The Bethel
- "pop-up University" is another good example to investigate. They are teaching classes on various things. It's Windham's 230th birthday soon - town picture day is possible. Remember that the Squeaky wheel gets the grease. FPF - come help us fix this in a positive community building way. Westford community center, and Yorkville Meeting House in Lyndonville.
- Listening to all the different voices and perspectives was great. Heard a lot about challenges tonight. What we saw while observing is a lot of Laughing, head nodding, and idea sharing. Healing is happening. We are planting seeds tonight. From small things, big things grow. There is hope in this room.

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### Online Forum and Livestream

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#### What are the community's assets? What's working now, what's going well?

- So lush and beautiful and quiet and sweet. The atmosphere is wonderful.
- Our neighbors - friendly with old timers (Crystel).
- Have a large property that is undeveloped - 96 acres.
- Windham is a really beautiful space - pond spread and distance. A great place to live. I moved here 7 years ago. One of the only people from the Boston area. I love to live where there are more trees than people.
- Grove and ponds on property are more common - more trees than people.
- Cousin Billy in Dummerston says Windham "looks therapeutic."
- I have owned a home in Windham for 50 years, and have lived here full time for 20 years. It's a small community, but it's growing. People here volunteer to get things done for the community. I see this all the time when I work with the fire company. People will help us out with the fundraisers. People will be happy.
- The Library is a great place for committees. People volunteer.
- WCO: Windham Community Organization is a group of mostly women that raise money for folks who need a credit card, or who need a dump pass, and money to get to places if needed.
- The WCO can always use more volunteers - call Ellen.
- The rummage sale around Memorial Day, ice cream social, chicken barbeque (working with Scouts now).

- Perfect town, perfect size. So many things to do: Meeting House has so many things with a library, a tag sale, exercise classes, and game day on Wednesday.
- The kindness of people in town: I had a neighbor with a red van that was bad in the snow. Someone picked him up and gave him a ride when he was walking in the snow.
- Police presence on 121 in Windham. The county cop car on 121 slows people down.
- The Town Declaration of Inclusion. A few years ago, there was a declaration that the state of Vermont is a welcoming state.

The Governor made the decision that the second week of May will be "inclusion week." The Town of Windham wanted to do the same, and with a smidge of pushback we passed that declaration: just hung a framed copy in the town offices on 162<sup>nd</sup>.

- Windham has a FABULOUS road crew. When I drive on Sunday mornings to Grafton. You can tell on 121 when you pass into Windham. Road crew deserves all the praise in the world because they do a fabulous job.
- Road crew is amazing! One reason we bought the property.

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### What are challenges? What are the issues or problems to be addressed?

- Runner: I run up and down 121, which can be dangerous with cars speeding. The town imposed a 40-mile-an-hour speed limit. Not everyone follows it. Sometimes people aim for you as a runner on the road. I run marathons and others in town do, too.
- Windham Hill Rd is beautifully maintained in the winter, but speeding is a challenge. People are not paying attention. It's obvious that children are around, and people are still going really fast.
- It's weird how people tailgate in this area on Rt 30 and on Windham Hill Rd, even in bad weather. Usually, I try to pull over and let them pass.
- I'm new to Windham, myself a bit. I am just getting to know people. For me, the only challenge so far is the traffic.
- The Person I live with is Black and we have had encounters with racism, which really floored me as a New Englander. Bothers me that there are racist people.
- Challenge in Windham: speeding issues. I have two boys who like to build jumps in the road.
- I was at a Meeting House conversation that was challenging: The Town is divided about 50-50 about whether the school should remain operational or not, which put people against

each other to the extent I was removed from a school Board meeting by state police. There were even Lawsuits filed. There has been a lot of animosity between community members about the school being open or closed. I still speak to people who were at odds with things done to me or my children because I wanted the school closed. As a community, we are cordial with each other and spend time with people who have treated you poorly.

- There was also a big "to-do" with the windmill project: I still hear a lot of gossip about what people did about windmills and that was another issue where the town was split about 50-50. Not a positive experience for the community. I think this was about 2014-2015 maybe? People will still tell "you I'm not going to Town Meeting because I don't want to be in a room with that person."
- I want to add emphasis on Wren's comments about racism and diversity. I lived in the Burlington area for many years. Surprised me to bring see that in Windham and it needs attention. The LGBTQIA community, too. My hope is to live here for the rest of my life and live here in a peaceful way. This is something that is really important for the community.
- "Welcome Yolanda, glad that you're here."

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### What should be done? What ACTION could be taken by the community?

- We need a Town compost site.
- I would like to pull 'heating capable' firewood to a landing on our place for community use.
- If we want to 'convert' part time families to full time, there should be a focus on inclusive activities. (have the ice cream social on Saturday afternoon, not Sunday, for example). Promote activities that include children on weekends. Establish a business center where people can print and scan documents (my printer is so rarely used, I'm afraid it won't print). This should not be a profit center.
- Establish a system of hiking and ATV trails by willing landowners. I give anyone who rides by with an ATV a trail map of my 2-1/2 miles of trails. They help keep my trails open because they know they're welcome.
- We need to find ways to make 'flatlanders' (like me) feel welcome.
- I like the idea of a community garden or activities to attract a younger generation. To help the community thrive.
- We need to find a way to allow businesses to function in town to give people jobs. I say this as a person from the family who had the only previous 'loud' business next door. We put up

with the noise and explosion debris hitting our buildings because we knew it was giving residents jobs.

- There needs to be an emphasis on what is best for the community as a whole. Stay away from the attitude of "What is in it for me."
- Sorry to be on a rant. I think more people need to focus on the long-term survival of our town. Example - If there is a way to make better use of 'Timber Ridge' without severe affects on the community that would be a good thing. I think the summer concert is good.
- I can hear it, don't care for the music, but still like the idea of bringing people in.
- In Wardsboro, they have an indoor pool. On Sheldon Hill, they have an indoor pool. It would be nice if Windham had an indoor pool. It could have a membership or WCO could.
- Have a space where people could utilize a pool.
- Have a place to play basketball for kids.
- Baseball and softball fields, too.
- We need to address speeding: create barriers in the road? More street signs?. The Town only pays for so many policing hours: We can contact the Selectboard and Kord can arrange for the police officer to sit where there are specific issues.



- Too many people use cruise control/autopilot. Police flash their lights and people slow down.
- Maybe I can do the chicken barbeque, if I get help. No one volunteered last time, and I'm not willing to take it on alone.
- Use the school property for events. If we had a barbeque, we would want to do it at the old school. We could have yard games like a big chess game, outdoor movie nights, and dance party type things. Yolanda moved up and heard they were going to put in a dance floor and have parties.
- Dancing brings people together – we do square dances here; the kids don't do square dances.
- We could use the Meeting House where the tag sale is. We could do dancing there. People are creative: if there's not enough room, people could move outside. Maybe a room at the school, instead? Like an all-purpose room. Parking at the Windham meeting house is hard.
- Park at the school and carpool to the meeting house
- We're not a huge town, but we're a neat Town. We can get things done.
- West Townsend hosts a pizza night twice a week where there is a meal in the building. It happens every Friday night from Memorial Day weekend until October on Indigenous People's Day: There is a pizza pavilion all year round, even when it's 10 degrees out. The Farmer's Market in Townsend is a real community event. I see kids running laps that could go to the Olympics, toddlers trying to run with the big kids. They are very community focused events. Different breads, crafters, performers. Just good community.
- Wren has a table there, even as a Windham resident.
- A night out without driving really far: that is the one community event that I have known about and participated.
- Community events that create an equalizing space: friends from other parts of the area come. Also helps with diversity and inclusion. Dancing is one of the most incredible ways to incorporate everyone.
- We need to help facilitate more dancing. Dancing is a great idea and a community equalizing situation.
- I am part of a group that is keeping close track of the Emerald Ash Borer: We are keeping really close track of that and are protective of our trees.
- Utilize the community email: a lot of people are interested in what the kids are doing because we don't have a school. Have been writing an article once a month for the Windham News and Notes.
- We put on plays in the Dutton gym. Our first was Aladdin! It was a great event that more people can go see. The boys just did Shrek in Nov, and we did Mama Mia, as well. There was almost no Windham participation. We need to find a way to get that information out to the community. The softball team just went to the state championship game. People want to know that stuff, but the only Windham presence was Crystal.

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## Additional Action Ideas

**Here are the ideas community members contributed through a paper and online form.**

- I've been thinking about the closing of the school in Windham and how that caused fissures. I had dinner recently with some folks who live just over the line in Townshend who were sad the school closed. It was interesting to hear their thoughts. It seems to me that people have a wide range of reasons they may be disappointed in the school closing, and some resentments, some of which I believe are misinformed. With effort, I believe these can be healed, but we need to first know more. I have a suggestion (rough draft, naturally): Now that the school closing is in the past, what if the community created a survey, to be anonymously filled out by each individual in the community, asking the question(s): Windham community survey Members of our community have expressed a wide range of feelings about the closing of the Windham school. This survey hopes to look to our shared future, to discover what you personally feel the school brought to our community, what you miss, and how those needs may possibly be filled in the community by other means. Together, we can explore the possibilities you suggest. School consolidation is a process occurring throughout the state of Vermont, but each community is very different. Windham has unique needs that may have previously been filled by the school. Please write as much or as little as you like, and feel free to dream. Additional sheets/questions/suggestions are welcome. 1. What contributions did the school bring to the community? 2. What aspects of the school in #1 do you feel are not being filled by other institutions? 3. What aspects of the school do you think could have been improved? 4. Do you have suggestions for how the community can fill some needs the school filled?
- I want Windham to always be a welcoming community for people of all incomes and identities. I think we need to take action to create more affordable housing here and to limit the number of properties that can be bought and used as vacation rentals. Some older folks here see Windham as a "retirement community." While we have many older people here and their needs should be addressed, our main focus needs be on creating a diverse community. We also need to preserve and honor the history of Windham as a place where people share a love of this incredibly beautiful land, while also using that land as they have in the past as a source of income production. We need to find ways to create jobs here, and not just jobs done by working people that provide services for our retired people. What cottage industry might we create? One possibility is to cater to tourists who want to visit our new wildlife refuge or our new Trout Meadows. How about a place for them to get something to eat? Buy a memento? Learn about Windham? Although I don't want to see our town full of Airbnbs, I understand the need to visit a beautiful, natural environment. Having lived in big cities for years, I kept my sanity by visiting state parks and other lovely, rural places. I'm all for helping others maintain their sanity. Let them come here, spend

money here, support jobs here, and spend the night somewhere else.

- Windham is quiet, I'd like to keep it that way. I'd like to keep school choice, and offer the existing school building to the fire department. Lastly, it is my opinion that the town of Windham should be increasing property tax rates on the second home owners and Airbnb crowd, and not on full-time hard-working residents. Otherwise you leave me alone and I'll leave you alone.
- I am personally concerned about drawing too much attention to our quiet little town. We are out of the way and are not overrun by tourists and I like it that way. I am concerned about increased traffic and crime, we have been fortunate so far and I hate to see that jeopardized.
- We need better communication on events and happenings in our community. For example, yoga started at the schoolhouse - no reminders sent before each session and then it just stopped without notice. It would be helpful if we could get a reminder the day before the library opens.
- 1. Stop the hate! 2. Make select board more proactive--Get rid of "Parking Lot" 3. Abolish school board if possible 4. Assist fire Co. in getting active members 5. Do we need the School Building? Town support of activities is very minimal. Already have Meeting House.
- Our deep and rich history is priceless. If the objective is to bring more people to Windham, we need attractions. One example would be a walking trail through the woods connecting Burbee Pond to Hamilton Falls. Thanks.
- Universal School Choice; All Day Australian Ballot for all Town Meeting votes, Cut back on all non-essential (non-operational) budget items, lower property taxes, encourage business and enterprise in Windham.
- There used to be a brown-bag lunch group that met at the Meeting House once a week. It was a good way to connect with other Windhamites. Easy to restart, I think.
- Keep Windham Rural and agriculturally based, maybe a co-op for farm products? encourage a next generation of farmers and products.
- Restore, maintain and continue to use the historic Meeting House for community events.
- Create commerce.
- Our deep and rich history is priceless. If the objective is to bring more people to Windham, we need attractions. One example would be a walking trail through the woods connecting Burbee Pond to Hamilton Falls. Thanks.
- A town where neighbors respect others by maintaining a neat, clean, property and follow dog ordinances, etc.
- A town where Select + School boards listen to people and treat them with respect and follow up with comments/suggestions.
- Probably best to bulldoze the school and use the land as a play area + park. Maybe build a small place for meetings, social gatherings, etc. Town members do the work.
- Survey all about what activities they would like to see made available. Include timing (day/night/weekend) and would they volunteer to help?
- Have constables respond to complaints and take positive corrective action if ordinances are being violated.
- Organize bike/motorcycle tours of area (fundraiser).
- Look at dredging Burbee Pond to make it better for fishing and boating.
- Create a Community Center for all ages at and day care the Windham Elementary School. Apply to become a DarkSky Community certified by DarkSky International <https://darksky.org/?s=dark+sky+community>.



Photo: Windham Historical Society

## VI. What's Possible, Windham? Community Visit Participants

Michael Bazinet	Alan Drewry	Valerie Leclerc	Perry Ryan
Jack Beausmans	Bill Dunkel	Tom Lynch	Kathy Scott
Buddy Behrendt	Chris Dunkel	Yolanda Mapes	Kord Scott
Maureen Bell	George Dutton	Imme Maurath	Frank Seawright
Vance Bell	Rebecca Dutton	Margaret Mazer	Laura Sibia
Craig Beryless	Margaret Dwyer	Jim McCandless	Michael Simmonds
Bob Bingham	Bea Eliastam	Mary McCoy	Cindy Smith
Kermit Blackwood	Mark Emmons	Beth McDonald	Chris Smith
Andrew Blanchard	Leila Erhardt	Polo McDonald	Jennifer Smith
Bridgette Blanchard	Dennis Fahey	Ellen McDuffie	Barbara Specht
Colin Blazej	Cathy Edgerly Fales	Phil McDuffie	Kassy Standard
Amanda Bourque	Hunt Fales	Jessica Mcgrath	Randall Stannard
Dawn Bower	Kate Fellows	Jeff McGraw	Lori Stanton
John Boynton	John Finley	Al McLaine	Paul Stapleton
Nathan Boynton	Maureen Fitch	Michael McLaine	Meredith (Nancy) Tips
James Bright	Robin Foster	Pat McLaine	McLaine
Tan Bronson	Woody Foster	Leigh Merinoff	Alison Trowbridge
Ed Brown	C Franklin	Joseph Monroe	Wren Watts
Sue Brown	Brett Friedli	Diane (Dee-on) Newton	Don Weiskopf
Naomi Bugbee	Asa Goodband	Pete Newton	Andrew Weitzel
Bob Butera	Clara Goodband	David Osborne	Rick Weitzel
Brandon Canevari	Jon Gordon	AJ Partridge	George Wichelns
Keith Cartnick	Emily Goyette	Rep. Carolyn Partridge	Alden Wicker
Bill Casey	Kyle Goyette	Abigail Pelton	Eileen Widger
Dane Charbeneau	Deborah Greene	Michael Pelton	Tom Widger
Rep. Tom Charlton	Kathy Griffin	Caitlin Persa	Mary Lou Woodruff
Gary Cheney	Mark Griffin	Doris Persa	Walter Woodruff
David Cherry	Sharon Gusick	Emmett Persa	Katherine Wright
Pat Cherry	Rory Gustafsson	Susan Persa	Jan Wyman
Marcia Clinton	(Rosselot)	Tony Persa	Gail Wyman
Ron Cohen	Sharon Hannah Lorri	Becky Phillips	Paul Wyman
Brenda Coolbeth	Senator Wendy Harrison	Ron Phillips	Ralph Wyman
Bridget Corby	Senator Nader Hashim	Barbara Jean Quinn	and many more...
Crystal Corveiu	Sidney Hodder	Deborah Quinn	
Mary Ann Costabile	John Hoover	Skip Raymond	
Julia and Weston Cotts	Sally Hoover	Lisa Robinson	
Dave Crittenden	Margaret Hussem	Katy Rogers	
Ginny Crittenden	Louise Johnson	Brett Roland	
Chris Cumings	Tom Johnson	Joe Ross	
Joyce Cumming	Kathy Jungerman	Tanya Ross	
Russ Cumming	Keith Jungerman	Daniel Roth	
Liz Dalton	Bob Kehoe	Carolyn Rubin	
Sally Newton Danahue	Cindy Kehoe	Jeff Rubin	
Barbara Davis	Erin Kehoe	Sharon Rulpich	
Cecilia Detrich	Joseph Lamson	Antje Ruppert	

## VII. Visiting Resource Team Members

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Photo: Windham Historical Society







Windham in Winter painting by A.T. Hibbard, courtesy of Windham Historical Society



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