

Key Themes in Stimulating and Supporting Future Economic Development



A Report on the Public Engagement Process to the Commission on the Future of Economic Development

October 2008

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the spring and summer of 2008, The Snelling Center for Government designed and implemented a robust public engagement process on behalf of The Commission for the Future of Economic Development (CFED). The goal of the engagement process was to gather information and feedback critical in the development of a strategic statewide economic development plan that reflects the experiences of 12 distinct regions of Vermont. The Regional Development Corporations were essential partners in identifying and recruiting participants, planning and hosting the events in their regions to ensure that this process reflected both the depth and diversity of the region.

The engagement process included focused discussions with local employers and businesses, structured dialogues with economic development and community stakeholders, and open public meetings. This three-part process sought to: identify assets and existing innovative approaches that currently bolster economic development; determine key issues and challenges facing communities and employers; and gather a wide range of perspectives and expertise regarding strategic investments and priorities for the future.

This report provides a summary of the key themes that emerged from the engagement process as participants described current conditions and offered suggestions for the future. Documentation of the participants, process and materials used can be found in the appendices.

Key Underlying Factors Participants in each of the three segments and throughout all regions of the state spoke of a three important factors that influence current success and future prospects for economic development. These factors need to be considered in the formulation of future economic policies.

- Vermont's scale must be used to our advantage
- Quality of life is essential to entrepreneurial interest in business development, workforce recruitment, and commitment to keep jobs here
- Current demographics pose challenges to workforce, service demands and civic participation

Employer/Business Themes Employers were fairly consistent in their recommendations for strategic investments and policies that would support businesses and therefore promote economic development.

- Invest in businesses committed to being here
- Focus on small business
- Create predictable and streamlined permitting process
- Invest in multi-generational workforce development and match training with growth opportunities
- Invest in and build basic (physical) infrastructure needed
- Encourage (workforce) housing development
- Address key costs of doing business– Energy, Health Care, Workers Compensation, Taxes

- Continue technical assistance support given now through regional economic development partners and state programs
- Recognize vitality and needs of manufacturing

Stakeholder Themes The stakeholders spoke of many of the same issues as the employers. The themes above therefore should be considered as the baseline for the stakeholders as well. Following are additional themes culled from the 12 sessions with economic development stakeholders:

- Align Policies and Resources to Support Downtown, Village Centers and Growth Centers
- Consider More Sensible Regionalization of Infrastructure and Services to Support Economic Development
- Improve Efficiency and Consolidate Expertise at the Regional Level
- Support Higher Education
- Recognize Social Infrastructure Contribution to Economic Development

Public Themes The themes heard in the business and stakeholder session were often echoed in the evening public sessions—this is likely attributable, in part, to the open invitation and the participation of employers and stakeholders in the evenings. Below is a quick review of the key themes which were either of primary importance and/or unique to the evening public sessions.

- Focus on Economic Development Ideas and Sectors that are Related to VT Values—green technology, energy efficiency and alternative energy, sustainable agriculture, creative economy
- Be Cautious in Rely on Tourism
- Create Jobs Accessible to all Residents
- Provide (Social) Infrastructure Needed To Support Workers And Families
- Invest in K-12 Education: The First Workforce Investment

Tensions + Potential Paths for Moving Forward

As we move forward, it may be particularly important to pay attention to the following themes where contrasting viewpoints were offered. Direct acknowledgement of these differing viewpoints will be important in the formulation of future policy directions.

- Economic Development: Positive or Negative
- Strategic Direction: Focus on Small Business, Invest in a Few Large Employers, or Pick the Winners
- Invest here or recruit outside?
- Education and Workforce Investments: Where to Focus?
- Key Sectors for the Future: Green Economy, Energy, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Second Home Ownership (Positive and Negative), Tourism (Positive and Negative)

Regional Themes

In large part, the themes noted above were echoed in each of the regions. Differences among the regions tended to be based on historic land use and economic sectors, access to natural resources, and geography. Interestingly, almost all regions defined their

geographical areas based on their proximity to business markets and infrastructure beyond the state's borders (e.g. Canada, NH, airports). Future economic development plans should recognize opportunities and obstacles beyond Vermont's borders.

Moving Forward. A basic path emerged from the conversations for developing an economic plan that reflects the insight and experience shared in the outreach process:

- Create A Shared Vision And Definition of “Economic Development”
- Focus “Economic Development” action and message on “creating the good we want”
- Address Tensions and Areas of Differing Opinion
 - Path Forward:* Create incentives for the kind of development we want (e.g. workforce housing, critical infrastructure)
 - Path Forward:* ensure diversity in VT's portfolio of business sectors to weather changes in broader economic environment
 - Path Forward:* Don't use limited financial resources to “woo” outsiders but do make it easy for those who want to come to get established and grow here
 - Path forward:* Enhance linkages between educational system and curriculum with the skills needed by employers and future job opportunities
 - Path forward:* Ensure that the mix of economic sectors reflect the values, history and unique assets of Vermont.
- Create a Positive Story about VT –Perception Matters

This executive summary has attempted to consolidate the wealth of information and ideas gathered through the engagement process into a set of themes. We encourage readers to look beyond the thematic headings and review the wealth of ideas offered by over 600 participants in the engagement process on how to create a robust and vibrant economy that recognizes Vermont's scale and builds on our unique assets.

I. INTRODUCTION

During the spring and summer of 2008, The Snelling Center for Government designed and implemented a robust public engagement process on behalf of The Commission for the Future of Economic Development (CFED). The goal of the engagement process was to gather information and feedback critical in the development of a strategic statewide economic development plan that reflects the experiences of 12 distinct regions of Vermont. The sessions were designed to:

- Identify assets available through the community, region and state to support/bolster economic development
- Determine key issues and challenges facing communities and employers
- Identify innovative approaches to economic development that are already underway in the various regions of Vermont
- Consider strategic investments and priorities

The public engagement plan included a full day of events in each of the 12 regions. The day began with a focused discussion with local employers and businesses. This discussion was followed by a facilitated dialogue with key area stakeholders charged with providing services, supports and resources to businesses, employers and employees. The day finished with an open public forum with discussion among members of the public and CFED Commissioners about future economic conditions, opportunities and policies. A link was added to the CFED website to an on-line survey for public comment from individuals unable to attend one of the events to encourage continued engagement. A full outline and script for each segment of the day is in Appendix D. Information about the individuals engaged and the design of the process can be found in Appendices B and C.

The Regional Development Corporations and other regional stakeholders (see list in Appendix A) were critical partners with The Snelling Center in identifying invitees, publicizing the event through local media, and promoting continued interest and feedback through media interviews and post event releases asking for more input through on-line submission of comments.

This report outlines the key themes that emerged. This report begins with an outline of three key contextual issues affecting the current success of businesses and economic development and future prospects for economic development. The report of themes follows the same structure as a day of engagement. The themes outlined below therefore begin with employers. Many of the key issues identified by employers were echoed in the sessions with stakeholders and the public therefore, only additional issues and themes from the stakeholders and public are noted in those sections. The summary concludes with the identification of issues where participants voiced differing values, visions or strategies. CFED must be prepared to address these differences and articulate a rationale for the recommended course of action. A path for moving forward is offered in the final section of the report.

II. KEY UNDERLYING FACTORS AFFECTING BUSINESSES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Participants in each of the three segments and throughout all regions of the state spoke of a number of contextual factors influencing current success and future prospects for economic development.

Recognize and Use VT Scale to Our Advantage

- Recognize VT scale in developing economic development strategy – do not try to replicate successes of other much larger entities
- Recognize VT scale in developing state programs – we are smaller than many large cities; our state governmental infrastructure should reflect this scale
- VT scale is a positive → access to decision-makers and ability to be “a big fish in little pond” → VT should be nimble and flexible – policy should be able to be very responsive
- VT businesses benefit from easy access to decision-makers
- Need to figure out how to turn scale to an advantage in more than tourism—e.g. attract young creative entrepreneurs to VT
- Other societies have leveraged this – Iceland, Switzerland, Ireland

Quality of Life is Essential to Entrepreneurial Interest in Business Development, Workforce Recruitment and Commitment to Keep Jobs Here

- Commitment to place and life in Vermont is compelling to those who choose to be here; not as compelling to larger/external owners that use a different metrics for decision-making
- Access to outdoors/natural environment, community life and public safety are positive in recruiting and retaining workforce
- Rural communities can be a tough sell in recruiting and retaining workers who are looking for more than a job – looking for a lifestyle

Current Demographics Pose Challenges to Workforce, Tax Base and Civic Engagement

- Number of youth leaving → impacts availability of the next generation of workers, entrepreneurs, and business developers; gap in 18-34 year olds
- Aging population → loss of experienced workforce, increased demands on health care and social services
- Small population → lack of tax base and revenue for public programs and businesses operating in the state
- Small population with limited spare time/\$ → decrease in civic participation, volunteerism, social capital

III. KEY THEMES

The report of themes follows the same structure as a day of engagement. The themes outlined below therefore begin with employers. Many of the key issues identified by employers were echoed in the sessions with stakeholders and the public therefore, only additional issues and themes from the stakeholders and public are noted in those sections. The summary concludes with the identification of issues where participants voiced differing values, visions or strategies. CFED must be prepared to address these differences and articulate a rationale for the recommended course of action.

A. EMPLOYER AND BUSINESS THEMES

Invest in Businesses Already Committed to Being Here

- Focus on existing businesses and those who have already made a commitment to VT rather than spending \$/effort trying to recruit new businesses.
- Successful locally owned businesses will lead to the creation of additional businesses—multiplier effect.
- Continue incentive programs and eliminate the “but for these incentives, this activity would not happen” clause which is helpful mainly to larger enterprises that would/could operate anywhere and not helpful to those which will remain in VT

Focus on Small Business

- Fits well with the culture and attitude of Vermonters
- Fits well with the infrastructure and resources available in the state—including hard/technical infrastructure and employee/worker base

Create Predictable and Streamlined Permitting Process

Current conditions

- Permitting system currently out-of-sync with business planning cycles; Takes too long to get things done; areas change before projects get completed and projects are redundant to the needs of the community
- Discourages new entities -- # of separate permits, differences among agencies, lack of predictability
- Two levels of approval a challenge— things may pass at a local level before being stymied at the state level
- At the state level agencies can disagree with each other – no coordination
- Projects that can get completed quickly are hampered by extraneous time and resource drain
- Long approval process means businesses may look out of state for easier and quicker path
- Lack of predictability means entrepreneurs may be hesitant to start
- Constant changes through rulemaking make it difficult for business to plan ahead and ensure compliance;

Desired outcomes

- Permitting predictability and elimination of “surprises”—businesses want to know that if they follow the process/rules then they will get approval for their projects.
- An integrated approach to permitting – complimentary and certainly not contradictory –state/state and state/local
- Permitting process that strikes a balance between being “green” and easy access for ski industry, tourism and manufacturing

Potential solutions offered:

- Eliminate two-step process—give authority to either local or state but not both
- Develop clear written guidelines/rules for approval and use them to reduce unpredictability – include scenarios for clarity
- Start with Act 250 and once “social” approvals are received then get other technical permits (currently the opposite) --Rutland
- Invest in creating pre-approved designated growth centers with all permits in place then recruit tenants/businesses (“turn key”)
- Establish “fast track” system for government to support businesses; government needs to be able to move as fast as business (3 month start up time)

Invest in Multi-Generational Workforce Development and Match Education/ Training with Growth Opportunities

Current Conditions

- Dedicated, loyal and hard working employees are VT’s greatest asset
- External recruitment is difficult due to income taxes, lack of housing, lack of jobs for partners/spouses plus, lower wage scale compared to other parts of the country
- “Quality of life” a main asset in recruiting and retaining employees
- VT’s demographic forecast is foreboding for the workforce of the future
- Disconnect between many educational institutions (9-16) and local businesses
- Skills gap noted especially for high tech (information and sciences) and key manufacturing positions
- Tech Ed Centers, VT Technical College and in-state colleges all have good track records in turning graduates into future residents and employees
- businesses are happy to provide on-the-job training young and transitioning workers if they have “soft skills”

Desired Outcomes

- Workforce development and training is multi-generational and not just not just focused on the young with primary attention to the college-bound population
- High school students get knowledge and skills which can be utilized in the local economy and local businesses are able to fill openings with local recruits
- Education and training programs are matched with growth opportunities (e.g. manufacturing, engineering, health care)

Strategies Offered

- Create additional institutions or programs for college level technical education

- Create internships, apprenticeships and on-the-job training for workers with supports to schools (e.g. tech centers or guidance offices) and incentives to employers to provide these opportunities
- Address laws that limit interns from working in real business situations-workers comp and liability insurance deter this.
- WIB essential and under-funded
- Next Gen money is being put to very good use; need to find ways to continue and expand

Invest and Build the (Physical) Infrastructure Needed → Foundation of Vibrant Economy

- **Telecom/broadband** needs to be world class if we are going to be able to work in a national/global economy
- **Transportation** of people
 - Lack of public transport a major problem for low-wage workers faced with long commutes and high gas prices
 - Expand commuter options: expand use of private land for park and ride spaces; support employer-sponsored transportation, consider use of school buses as commuter as well
 - Rail would offer a lot for tourism if connected to NYC and Boston
- **Shipping** options
 - Trucking regulations hinder intra- and inter-state shipping
 - VT's geography works against us for a distribution center – moving out inventory; high cost of warehouse/industrial space – challenging
- **Water and sewer** capacity limit growth/expansion and new developments
- **Industrial parks** – fully permitted with necessary infrastructure to support new enterprises

Encourage Workforce Housing Development

Current conditions

- Challenge to develop housing that Vermonters can afford
- Limited supply for workers (at all levels of pay scale)
- Linked to growth centers and infrastructure critical issue

Desired outcomes

- Partnership between gov't and industry
- Integrated approach to permitting to speed up process, reduce start up costs and lower risk
- Process to avoid NIMBY hold ups

Strategies offered

- Consider bank rates according to affordability –e.g. Fed home loan
- Build housing for employees with agreement that they can only realize a certain amount of gain/profit

- Expand programs such as those managed by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board

Address Key Costs: Energy, Health Care, Taxes and Workers Compensation

- Energy costs are a critical factor in “the bottom line”; reliability and predictability are necessary for pricing/planning; cost-containment is essential for competition with other states
- Health care access and cost control are essential both for workforce and business bottom line
- Employers are also residents and therefore personal taxes are as important as business taxes; this is especially true for entrepreneurs and small business owners
- Taxing capital equipment/personal property is problematic
- Workers compensation is a major expense for employers; perceived as higher than other states and possibly higher than necessary to provide adequate worker protection

Continue Technical Assistance Support Given Now through Economic Development Partners and Programs

- Through technical assistance providers (e.g. RDC, RPC and SBDC)—these are critical partners and supports for local businesses
 - Support and TA through the permitting process
 - Developing sound business plans
 - Identifying and accessing financing and capital
- Chambers of Commerce cited for excellence in connecting businesses to one another and in marketing
- Through various programs—Efficiency VT, VEGI, VEDA, SBA, Rural Development etc.
- Peer to Peer Collaborative (VSJF)

Desired outcome:

- Maintain these critical resources which help business navigate through the business start up and development process

Recognize Vitality and Needs of Manufacturing

Current conditions

- Each region has companies with strong manufacturing operations that are expanding
- Many have capital investments that make it hard to move but costs to stay competitive make it hard to stay—lack of political support also hurting

Desired Outcomes

- Focus on small-scale specialty manufacturing
- Need to counter negative perceptions
- Invest here; don’t overlook manufacturing sector in development of strategy that focuses on new or high tech companies

Recognize Importance of “Vermont” Brand to Some Businesses

I think the Vermont brand is exceptionally important even in a business such as mine. We find that Vermont is an entrepreneurial state. There are businesses sprouting up all the time. Businesses that have a commitment to the state and to their employees who exercise socially responsible business practices - this all builds the Vermont brand. And it also means that we have perhaps the most productive and loyal employees of any state. –Montpelier Employer

Current condition:

- Includes “Green” protection of the environment + Vermont ethos, friendly small scale and accessible; robust civic life
- Tie to quality in craftsmanship and integrity – important to marketing/sales
- VT brand is important to commodity business and for tourism
- Brand building and association is strong within the state but may not carry much weight out of state or out of New England
- VT brand not important to many businesses and can be a detriment to some (e.g. innovative, entrepreneurial and high tech) if the brand promoted is isolated, rural, 1940’s

Desired outcome:

- There was no strong voice for state action/emphasis

B. STAKEHOLDER THEMES

The stakeholders spoke of many of the same issues as the employers. The themes above therefore should be considered as the baseline for the stakeholders as well. Below are additional themes culled from the 12 sessions with economic development and community stakeholders—institutions, agencies, and organizations charged with providing services, supports and resources to businesses, employers and employees and community infrastructure for successful economic development.

Align Policies and Resources to Support Downtown, Village Centers and Growth Centers

Current conditions:

- Land use policy focuses now on more density to keep open space; but this focus conflicts with lack of policy to invest in the infrastructure to support density
- Growth center policies positive (regions decide where/what, identify resource areas, planning/permitting became streamlined because already in place) but need infrastructure to support transportation, police, etc.
- Affects air emissions so need to plan for continued attainment with Clean Air Act (especially important to Chittenden County)

Desired outcomes:

- Alignment between policies for growth/development and infrastructure investment

Strategies offered:

- State grants for infrastructure to growth centers
- Expand upon existing perks for village designation (tax credits, attention to housing)
- Centers for development of new businesses - enterprise zones that are a joint venture between private and public entities, with private handling the money.

Consider More Sensible Regionalization of Infrastructure and Services to Support Economic Development

Current condition

- Disconnect between local – regional and state economic development processes
- Competition among towns for businesses, for customers, for tourists, for second home owners
- Boundaries of regions differ according to state agency and boundaries often do not align with actual economic use/development/patterns of the people and businesses in communities.

Desired outcome

- Regional approach to infrastructure to prevent town competition, help connect the dots, get more attention and alleviate isolation
- Regional state offices that are aligned with one another (e.g., offices with regulatory functions, RPCs and RDCs), adequately funded, and staff that work in concert with one another.

Strategies suggested

- Instead of geographic regions perhaps strategize by economic base: town center, resort, etc.
- Instead of current regional designations consider population centers as “orbits; or centers of gravity
- Align all state offices in a region with one another

Improve Efficiency and Consolidate Expertise at Regional Level

Current condition

- The RDCs and RPCs serve as a critical intermediary between town and state processes
- These groups, which serve the purpose/function of county government, are understaffed and under-funded
- RPCs and RDCs are differently organized, different mandates and could be seen as competing or duplicative when economic development could be considered a component of planning or vice versa

Outcomes Desired

- Improve efficiency and consolidate expertise – easier for businesses and stakeholders if technical assistance is in one place –e.g. regulatory compliance
- Regional institutions (e.g. RDC, RPC, Chambers of Commerce) that work with one another to provide technical assistance to businesses, link programs, etc.

Strategies offered:

- Balance funding between regional planning and regional economic development so the latter can build its capacity
- Press for joint planning; fund collaboration
- Consider consolidation of institutions/functions; combine RDCs and RPCs for common purpose

Support Higher Education

- Important for workforce development, entrepreneurial attraction, and economic development
- Student aid dollars should be focused in state; stop exportability out of state

Recognize Social Infrastructure Contribution to Economic Development

“We’re only as good as the well-being of our employees”

—Burlington employer

Current condition:

- Health and well-being of workforce critical to business success
- Worker retention and productivity depends on worker QOL = wages, health care, child care, housing
- Small businesses do not have the resources or capacity to provide all QOL/benefits

Desired outcomes:

- Health care access and cost control

C. EVENING SESSION/PUBLIC FORUM

The themes heard in the business and stakeholder session were often echoed in the evening public sessions—this is likely attributable, in part, to the open invitation and the participation of employers and stakeholders in the evenings. Below is a quick review of the key themes which were either of primary importance and/or unique to the evening public sessions.

Focus On Economic Development Ideas that relate to VT Values—Energy Efficiency, Green Technology, Agriculture, Creativity

(especially true in Brattleboro and Burlington)

- Energy efficiency and weatherization as training grounds for low-wage earners
- Renewable and alternative energy as cornerstone for green economy which preserves our environment and creates new high wage jobs
- Green tech – silicon valley equivalent
- Local agriculture— historic backbone + niche/organic as the future; makes sense given cost of fuel and anticipating future climate change policy
- Creative economy as contributor to vibrant downtowns and tourism

Be Cautious in Relying on Tourism

- Grow the economy for VT businesses and for VT residents first
- Reliance on tourism and second home ownership can increase prices for Vermonters and lead to decrease in civic participation, volunteers for fire departments, support of local/community organizations, etc.
- Tourism is dependent on fuel prices, therefore it may not be a wise future strategy

Create Jobs Accessible to all Residents

- Train/retrain underserved/undereducated
- Create partnerships to connect people

Provide (Social) Infrastructure Needed To Support Workers and Families

- Childcare support
- Transportation options and lower costs
- Training/retraining
- Health care

Invest in K-12 Education: The First Workforce Investment

- Not just college, but k-12 and tech education important;
- Education is the basis for workforce development

D. TENSIONS WITH A POTENTIAL PATH FORWARD

As we move forward, it may be particularly important to pay attention to the following themes where contrasting viewpoints were offered. Direct acknowledgement of these differing viewpoints will be important in the formulation of future policy directions. In each case, participants offered a sensible path forward.

Economic Development: Positive or Negative?

- Business successes contribute to VT's quality of life
 - If there aren't businesses here succeeding, then people are going to leave because they need to make a living
 - In order to lower property taxes, need to expand number of businesses that are paying taxes
- Don't "grow" if "economic development" is at odds with ecological and community sustainability
- Perception of some that "economic development" = tax incentives for growth and profit of the few at the expense of the community, environment, etc.

Path Forward: Create incentives for the kind of development we want (e.g. workforce housing, critical infrastructure)

Strategic Direction

Focus on Small Business + Local Assets

- Fits well with the culture and attitude of Vermonters

- Fits well with the infrastructure and resources available in the state—including hard/technical infrastructure and employee/worker base

Invest in a Few Large Employers

- The next big thing – strategic investment to support intellectual capital to develop the VT Silicon Valley (based on green economic sector)
- Replicate the success of Captive Insurance

Pick the Winners

- Pick the winners and invest heavily; don't spread the investments so thin they are meaningless
- State uses competitive grant systems to identify stars, determine strategic investment, etc. but businesses, local gov't and RPC/RDC see them as creating additional competition (rather than cooperation) and as a drain on limited resources (time of personnel)
- Picking winners leaves some “losers” behind

Path Forward: ensure diversity in portfolio to weather changes in broader economic environment

Invest here or recruit outside? *“Don't bother trying to recruit people who have no connection to VT; they need to be born here, go to school here or fall in love with someone here”*
-- Burlington employer

Invest here (show us you care)

- Focus on existing businesses and those who have already made a commitment to VT rather than spending \$/effort trying to recruit new businesses.
- Successful local businesses will lead to the creation of additional businesses.
- Incubators for new businesses, loans for upgrading existing – “It costs a lot less to keep a customer than to get new ones”

Recruit Outside

- Need new intellectual capital
- Need to bring money in, not just churn what we have

Path Forward: Inside and Outside Don't use limited financial resources to “woo” outsiders but do make it easy for those who want to come to get established and grow here

Education and Workforce Investments: Where to Focus?

- preK and higher ed are lower in our per cap spending; very high in K-12—Is this longstanding policy serving us best?
- Should focus be on broad education, life skills or basic work skills?

Path forward: Enhance linkages between educational systems and curriculum with the skills needed by employers and future job opportunities

Key Sectors for the Future

The green economy, creative economy and manufacturing were all consistently and positively mentioned as future key sectors. Second home ownership and tourism, two existing sectors, received varied reviews.

- Energy efficiency and weatherization are potential growth industries and could dually serve as training grounds for low-wage earners
- Renewable and alternative energy sectors are a cornerstone for green economy which preserves our environment and creates new high wage jobs
- Green technology could be VT's silicon valley equivalent
- Local "value-added" agriculture is growing
- Creative economy is a contributor to both vibrant downtowns and tourism
- Small specialty manufacturing is strong
- Second home ownership
 - Pros = tax revenue, retail sales, some increase in permanent population w/funds, experience and expertise, essential to ski areas
 - Cons = increase cost of housing, increase property values/taxes for local, decreases permanent population which impacts school population and volunteerism, attitude of "keep it as it is", increase demands for "luxuries"
- Tourism
 - Pros = a large contributor to the economy (revenues, jobs, etc.)
 - Cons = pressure on infrastructure, low-wage jobs

Path forward: Ensure the mix of economic sectors reflect the values, history and unique assets of Vermont.

IV. REGIONAL ATTRIBUTES

In large part, the themes noted above were echoed in each of the regions. Differences among the regions tended to be based on historic land use and economic sectors, access to natural resources, and geography. Interestingly, almost all regions defined their geographical areas based on their proximity to business markets and infrastructure beyond the state's borders (e.g. Canada, NH, airports). A full reporting of the key features of each region as noted by participants can be found in Appendix A.

V. MOVING FORWARD

We should focus on the choices of infrastructure that will attract what we might want, where we want it. Focus on the jobs that are growing here in places that Vermont can support; give support to the training and education that will serve these areas and locate people close to where the jobs are and with the transportation that will link them to it.

– Middlebury stakeholder

A basic path emerged from the conversations for developing an economic plan that reflects the insight and experience shared in the outreach process:

Create a Shared Vision and Definition of “Economic Development”

- Need specific direction from a state vision with flexibility to the regions in pursuing future economic development
- Need to develop a definition of “sensible” development that resolves the environmental/infrastructure debate
- Create a set of broad goals that is measurable, outcome based – not program based
- Create benchmarks for state investments – create measures to demonstrate how this investment will expand tax base, grow jobs

Provide Flexible Direction to Regions:

- Let the regions and towns know the overall vision and strategy but allow them to determine their own development strengths and opportunities
- Stop setting up programs that create competition. It is not strategic to make towns and regions compete.
- While solid state decisions and policies are needed, we should also leave flexibility for regional action and guidance. Keep a regional focus.

Focus “economic development” action and messages on “Creating the Good We Want”

We need a strong economy to allow us to continue the strong social agenda we have as a state – St. Albans evening session

- Note the positive connections between economic development plans with ecological and community sustainability, elimination of racial and economic disparities

Address Differing Opinions

Path Forward: Create incentives for the kind of development we want (e.g. workforce housing, critical infrastructure)

Path Forward: ensure diversity in portfolio to weather changes in broader economic environment

Path Forward: Don’t use limited financial resources to “woo” outsiders but do make it easy for those who want to come to get established and grow here

Path forward: Enhance linkages between educational system and curriculum with the skills needed by employers and future job opportunities

Path forward: Ensure that the mix of economic sectors reflect the values, history and unique assets of Vermont.

Create a Positive Story about VT —Perception Matters

- “Most participating companies noted they are able to maintain stability or are growing and are often “cautiously optimistic” despite the grim picture portrayed in current media and given in reports by stakeholders

- “VT is bad for business” – creates negative image/story that impacts new business development and workforce recruitment
- Recognize existing businesses for their success and positive contributions to the quality of life in Vermont; builds loyalty and pride
- Focus on the assets, create positive story and then develop the policy to back it up
→ VT can be and is a great place to do business for many

Over 600 participants offered their insights and ideas in the engagement process. Many of the themes that emerged echo the findings of other initiatives, past and present, seeking to create a vision and plan for Vermont’s future. This consistency offers a strong foundation for a plan to create a robust and vibrant economy that recognizes Vermont’s scale and builds on our unique assets.

VI. ADDENDUM/APPENDICES

A. Regional Attributes

B. Regional Partners/Hosts

C. Participants in the business/employer focused discussions

D. Participants in the stakeholder focused discussions

E. Discussion guides and kiosk questions

APPENDIX A. REGIONAL ATTRIBUTES

Bennington

- Capitol District—NY-VT-MA
- Lack of east-west connectivity a barrier to recruiting employees from Springfield + other communities to the east
- No single major employer → strength in diversity
- Manufacturing investments paying off; manufacturing the fastest growing sector
- Southern VT College looking toward increasing placement of graduates in VT businesses and initiating new entrepreneurship program

Brattleboro

- Geographic advantage with 3 interstate exists and 2 border states
- Creative economy strong
- Mission and value driven development important – green economy, sustainability, social and economic equity
- Second home ownership eclipsing local residents – home values, tax base, school and volunteer support
- Distance from Montpelier and Burlington → not part of state consciousness or considered in state plans

Burlington

- Really part of a 5 county NW region + Burlington downtown as major center
- Innovative, high growth, large job providing companies are in Chittenden County – examples: Vermont Teddy Bear, IDX, etc.
- Attracts entrepreneurs, innovators, start ups
- Unlikely to attract sympathy and support of other regions in the state if looking for special legislative attention
- Lots of capital in Vermont; find investors and create opportunities for local investments (requires some policy shifts)
- Rural state trying to accommodate urban values
- Lots of non-profits supporting workforce development – ReCycle North, Youth Build, VT Works for Women
- Burlington Telecom is essential infrastructure – world class – need more of it in VT; Need to advertise its availability of world-class fiber optics

Grand Isle

- Four distinct populations: permanent population work on-island, permanent population works off-island (60%), second home owners and tourists
- Disparities between outer and inner island population
- Economy tied to Chittenden County and Franklin County—both for those who work off-island and for day-trippers
- Strong independent communities within each island; perhaps less self-identification as a region
- Canadian market HUGE for both second home owners and tourism –VPR a great asset as signal goes north

- Lack of public water and wastewater infrastructure a major impediment to development
- Lake underutilized for events: boating, fishing, ice sports
- Lots of farming land going into conservation trusts → decrease in working population
- Lack of high school translates into lack of sense of community among young
- Active historical societies
- State can help with Lake Champlain Byways designation; federal agency money is available

Middlebury

- Middlebury College clearly a central force and contributor to local economy—keenly aware of potential intellectual capital grown and then potentially lost as college graduates leave state
- Agriculture a major economic force in Addison County
- Large non-profit sector (including Middlebury College, Porter Hospital, gov't) leaves small property tax base

Montpelier

- State capital, state agencies & employees
- Large non-profit sector and self-employed population
- Norwich University and Medical Center are growing
- Economy highly dependent on ski industry
- Vibrant cultural and intellectual communities; highly educated pop.
- Lots of low wage jobs but little affordable housing → workforce travels great distances to get to work

Morrisville

- Differing needs between towns and ski resorts
- Federal guest worker program is a huge barrier (Stowe Resort)
- Creative economy important and supported both by Johnson State and tourism
- Manufacturing remains strong
- Green Mountain Technical Center an excellent resource
- People in Partnership –an emerging collaborative to focus on community vibrancy is gaining traction

Newport

- Lake Memphremagog an underutilized asset
- Highly conscious of lack of Canadian opportunities –sending raw materials north but no finished products, sales opportunities
- Newport Renaissance + St. J 100% occupancy in downtown
- Manufacturing still an important sector – Metal Flex, Lydall thermal acoustical, radiatec, forest products
- Increasing law enforcement (customs, border patrol, immigration)
- Diverse educational institutions

- Lack of profitable mills (lumber) a significant issue in accessing a potential value-added natural resource
- Strong positive brand recognition for North East Kingdom for geo-tourism
- NEK also a “federal Hub” zoned for priority to do business with federal government; SBDA can help businesses get registered
- St. J Catamount Arts (partnership w/ tech education and state colleges)—stimulating the creative economy and training in the trades
- Lyndon State has great track record in educating Vermonters and placing them in Vt-based work situations—40% of graduates stay in the Northeast Kingdom / 66% stay within Vermont; includes mandatory requirement for internships

Rutland

- Creative economy growing
- Energized local foods/agricultural products sector
- Railroad important – crossroads effect
- Hampered by lack of access to highway system
- Health care costs increasing faster than other parts of state → challenge in recruiting and retaining employees; impacts bottom line of employers
- Lingering “Rutland” vs. “Mountain” split needs to be remedied; need a coordinated plan that benefits and utilizes the strengths/advantages both
- 4 colleges in county – 2nd only to Chittenden – Brings big business and has a high multiplier effect
- Stafford Tech based on a public/private partnership with a direct tie to business development and workforce development

St. Albans

- Looking north to Canada and Quebec as a logical customer base and trading partner; support trade with Canada, ease border crossing, maintain Canadian studies programs
- Agriculture/dairy remains a defining industry – wants to be treated as a business rather than land use
- Lack of retail and cultural center hampers ability to get new residents—could be a good place for retirees but nothing for them to do
- Recent growth has been as a commuting town to Chittenden County

Springfield

- Brownfields redevelopment critical to continued economic vitality; appreciate investment but concerned about the need to be “squeaky clean” and the perception of a shifting “goal line”
- Historic preservation can be a barrier to redevelopment—too long and costly to renovate
- Trucking restrictions and bridge repair a major impediment to distribution and manufacturing and possible deterrent to new business development
- Springfield and surrounding area are a “social desert” making it hard to attract new recruits
- Retail competition w/big box across the river

- Tech Center is a great community resource in connecting employers and employees with skills
- Successful housing partnership

White River Junction

- Region is the 3 towns: Lebanon, Hanover and Hartford; need to create political infrastructure that supports cross-border issues—“Vital Communities” a cross-boarder non-profit is a good start
- Proximity to Dartmouth creates strong health care research and high tech sectors
- Hampered by need for a “Park and Ride”
- Software developers’ alliance (WRJ) is a positive example of connecting businesses to create a new vibrant sector
- Growing creative economy
- Many in the area are interested in discussing the notions promoted in “Small-mart” conversation

APPENDIX B: REGIONAL PARTNERS/HOSTS

Host Community	Regional Hosts
Bennington	Bennington County Industrial Corp.
Brattleboro	Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation Windham Regional Commission United Way of Windham County Building a Better Brattleboro Windham Regional Career Center
Burlington	Greater Burlington Industrial Corp. & Cynosure, Inc. The Champlain Initiative United Way of Chittenden County
Grand Isle	Lake Champlain Islands Chamber of Commerce
Middlebury	Addison County Regional Development Corp.
Montpelier	Central Vermont Economic Development Corp.
St. Albans	Franklin County Industrial Development Corp.
Morrisville	Lamoille Economic Development Corp. & The Small Business Development Center Lamoille County Planning Commission Lamoille Valley Chamber
Newport	Northeastern Development Association
Rutland	Rutland Economic Development Corp. Rutland Regional Planning Commission
Springfield	Springfield Regional Development Corp. Vermont Small Business Development Center Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission
White River Jct.	Green Mountain Economic Development Corp. Vermont Small Business Development Center

APPENDIX C: DISCUSSINO GUIDE AND PARTICIPANT LIST FOR THE BUSINESS/EMPLOYER FOCUSED DISCUSSIONS

Goal: to gather information and feedback critical in the development of a strategic statewide economic development plan that reflects the experiences of 6 distinct regions of Vermont

Objectives:

- Identify assets available through the community, region and state to support/bolster economic development
- Determine key issues and challenges facing communities and employers to inform understanding of the health of the region and state
- Identify innovative approaches to economic development that are already underway in the various regions of Vermont
- Consider strategic investments and priorities

Method: Focused conversation/meeting with employers/businesses (2 hrs)

Welcome: We are interested in learning about your experiences (both positive and negative) in creating and maintaining a business or serving as an employer in this region. Specifically, we are hoping to identify key systems, policies and programs that currently support employers and businesses and are critical assets in this region. We also interested in your thoughts on how state policy can help or hinder your business or institution. Last, but not least, we seek your ideas for future supports or policy changes to improve your ability to succeed and for the region to sustain existing and create new jobs.

Introductions

- (around the inner table) Briefly, can you introduce yourself, the name of your business/institution, years of operation, size (either revenue or # of employees)?
- (for observers) Please state your name and affiliation only

Key Questions

Q1: Would you say that your business and prospects are growing or shrinking?

- What factors are influencing your projections for the future?
- Which of these factors are specific to this region or state?

Q2: Let's spend some time talking about the **positive aspects** of operating a business in this region:

- What are some of the competitive **advantages** you feel you have by operating in this region and state? What gives you an edge?
- What local, state and other **supports** are available to you and have assisted you as an employer and in the start up/growth/maintenance of your business?
- What innovative approaches exist for business support and development in this region? What is happening here that may not be happening elsewhere?

Q3: Now we can talk about some of the **challenges**; what are some of the key challenges you face in operating a business in this region and in Vermont?

Q4: What (additional) **infrastructure** do you think is necessary to support economic development in the region? Possible probes (from CFED workbook):

Telecommunications

Transportation (safe, efficient transportation system)

Housing

Jobs

Wages

Children (childcare)

Vibrant communities (Growth Centers, Village Centers and Designated Downtowns)

Regulations

Workforce development

Higher education institutions – expansion to attract research and technology firms

Q5: Given the experience of your existing business, what **state policies** would you say most notably help or hinder economic development in the region?

- Let's start with those that help. What policies have been useful to you and the community?
- What about any state policies that you think hinder your success and/or economic development in this region?

Possible probes:

- current tax policy
- business incentive grants
- permit and regulatory assistance
- Direct incentives for business development
- Indirect supports – those that support employees or community development which in turn support business development

Q6: What areas, business sectors or specific businesses, do you foresee for **future growth** in this region? What’s the next economic engine? (May fit with Q#1)

Q7: Given all we have discussed today, what would you like to **highlight** for consideration by local and state policy makers in order for your business and community to thrive in the future? (Imagine you have 30 seconds with the Governor)

Logistics and Arrangements:

- Anticipate approximately 10 participants with up to 20 observers (including project staff, CFED Commissioners and stakeholders invited to part two). The room therefore, needs to accommodate: a) a central circle of 10 ideally in board room set up; and b) comfortable seating for observers.
- Facilitator will sit at the table and will bring a recording device to be placed on the table to capture discussion. Therefore, she will need a table top for the recorder plus a nearby electrical outlet.
- Lunch to be served from 12-12:30 in the room; discussion to begin at 12:30.

First	Last	Affiliation	Region
James	Brown	Bank of Bennington	Bennington
Frank	Cody	Fish Reed & Love	Bennington
Albert	DeCiccio	SVC	Bennington
Karen	Gross	SVC	Bennington
Tom	Lyons	Bennington Subaru	Bennington
Dan	Maneely	Plasan USA	Bennington
Mary	Muckle	Rehm-Brandt's Design	Bennington
John	Bramley	Windham Foundation	Brattleboro
Paul	Millman	Chroma Technology Corporation	Brattleboro
Peter	Moore	The Moore Company	Brattleboro
Gail	Nunziata	Brattleboro Arts Initiative	Brattleboro
Rob	Simpson		Brattleboro
Randi	Solin	Fulcrum Arts	Brattleboro
Meri	Spicer	Mount Snow	Brattleboro
Phil	Steckler	CBI	Brattleboro
Matt	Yakovleff		Brattleboro
Daniel	Yates	Brattleboro Savings and Loan	Brattleboro
Ted	Adler	Union Street Media	Burlington
Joe	Carton	Marriot Burlington Harbor	Burlington
Ted	Castle	Rhino Foods	Burlington
Paul	Frascoia	Fab-tech	Burlington
John	O'Kane	IBM	Burlington

Kevin	Owen	Select Design	Burlington
Beth	Sachs	VEIC	Burlington
Dotty	Schnure	GMP	Burlington
Bill	Schubart	Resodirect	Burlington
Tim	Volk	KSV	Burlington
Dave	Winslow	EPIK one	Burlington
Christine	Allard	Merchants Bank	Grand Isle
Bob	Camp	Hero's Welcome General Store	Grand Isle
Bill	Champagne	A&B Beverage	Grand Isle
Ohmer	Corbin		Grand Isle
Mark	Elvidge	VT Nut-Free Chocolates	Grand Isle
Mary	Harwood	The Islander	Grand Isle
Kim	Kinney	Kinney Insurance	Grand Isle
Ruth	Wallman	LCICC	Grand Isle
Alan	Beebe	Goodrich	Middlebury
David	Bowles	Bowles Corp.	Middlebury
Catherine	Caum	Bowles Corp.	Middlebury
Jim	Daily	Porter Medical Center	Middlebury
Bob	Foster	Foster Bros Farm/VT Natural Ag Products	Middlebury
Bob	Huth	Middlebury College	Middlebury
Bill	Kenerson	Beau Ties LTD	Middlebury
Dave	Logan	Autumn Harp	Middlebury
Mac	McLaughlin	Bread Loaf	Middlebury
Joel	Melnick	Nathaniel Group	Middlebury
Tony	Neri	Anthony J. Neri	Middlebury
Mark	Perrin	Green ?	Middlebury
Michael	Rainville	Maple Landmark	Middlebury
Paul	Ralston	Vermont Coffee Company	Middlebury
Jim	Sullivan	Co-operative Ins Co	Middlebury
Bill	Townsend	JP Carrara & Sons	Middlebury
Morgan	Wolaver	Otter Creek Brewing	Middlebury
Josh	Fitzhugh	Union Mutual	Montpelier
Kevin	Lord	EF Wall	Montpelier
Don	Mayer	Small Dog Electronics	Montpelier
Burr	Morse	Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks	Montpelier
Mark	Nicholson	Nicorn Coatings	Montpelier
Win	Smith	Sugarbush Resort	Montpelier
Ed	Townley	Cabot Creamery Cooperative	Montpelier
John	Wall	Wall Goldfinger	Montpelier
Richard	Wiswall	Cate Farm	Montpelier
William	Brown	House of Troy	Morrisville

Kenneth	Gibbons	Union Bank	Morrisville
David	Hallquist	Vermont Electric Cooperative	Morrisville
Garrett	Hirchak	Manufacturing Solutions, Inc.	Morrisville
Dave	Kuhfahl	Hearthstone Stoves	Morrisville
Linda	Markin	Concept2, Inc.	Morrisville
Robert	McEleney	Stowe Mountain Resort	Morrisville
Bob	Mulcahy	Smugglers Notch Resort	Morrisville
Melvyn	Patashnick	Copley Health Systems	Morrisville
Dana	Wildes	Country Home Center	Morrisville
Dave	Balduc	RadianTec	Newport
Tim	Clark	Metal Flex Welded Bellows	Newport
Glenn	Foster	Columbia Forest Products	Newport
Chet	Greenwood	Ethan Allen	Newport
Robert	Guyer	Metal Flex Welded Bellows	Newport
Andrew	Kehler	Jasper Hill Farm	Newport
William	Perket	North Country Health Systems	Newport
Grant	Spates	Spates Construction	Newport
Frank	Szendrey	Lydall Thermal Acoustical	Newport
Geof	Brown	Vermont Country Store	Rutland
Blair	Enman	Enman Engineering	Rutland
Dan	Fermer	GE Aviations	Rutland
Rick	Gile	Kalow Technologies	Rutland
Christie	Harris		Rutland
Rolf	Hirschmann	Hirschmann Windows and Doors	Rutland
Zoltan	Horvath	McKernon	Rutland
Jack	McKernon	McKernon	Rutland
Russ	North	Siliski & Buzzell	Rutland
Dale	Rocheleau	CVPS	Rutland
Steve	Selbo	E2M Partners	Rutland
Chris	Smit	New England Slate Co.	Rutland
Rick	Bibens	Bibens Ace Hardware	Springfield
Steve	Birge	Black River Produce	Springfield
Ted	Chivers	All Seasons Construction	Springfield
Alan	Cummings	Seldon Technologies, Inc.	Springfield
Al	DiBella	JELD-WEN	Springfield
Brent	Karner	Clear Lake Furniture	Springfield
Doug	Priestley	Lovejoy Tool	Springfield
Mark	Sanderson	Springfield Printing	Springfield
Ken	Smith	Hancor	Springfield
Mike	Walker	Newsbank	Springfield
Jean	Bonko	Energizer	St. Albans

Patrick	Calecus	Community National Bank	St. Albans
Theodore	Church	Superior Technical Ceramics Corp.	St. Albans
Richard	Feeser	Superior Technical Ceramics Corp.	St. Albans
Kathy	Find	Mylan Technologies Inc.	St. Albans
Monica	Greene	Vermont Precision Tools, Inc.	St. Albans
Dan	Handy	Handy Toyota	St. Albans
Peter	Hofstetter	Northwestern Medical Center	St. Albans
Lura	Jacques	Union Bank	St. Albans
Douglas	Low	New England Central Railroad	St. Albans
Daniel	Luneau	Handy Toyota	St. Albans
Karen	Luneau	Handy Toyota	St. Albans
Richard	Manahan	Peoples Trust Company	St. Albans
Kevin	McGinn	Energizer	St. Albans
Lois	Pigeon	Union Bank	St. Albans
Michael	Posternak	Peoples Trust Company	St. Albans
Sam	Rougiano	Rougiano Industries	St. Albans
Rachel	Smith	S.R. Smith Real Estate	St. Albans
Samuell	Smith	S.R. Smith Real Estate	St. Albans
Bart	Tatro	St. Albans Cooperative Creamery	St. Albans
Michael	Thibault	KeyBank	St. Albans
James	Van Orden	TD Banknorth	St. Albans
Paul	Gallerani	Farmway	White River Jct.
Royal	Laroque	The Royal Butcher	White River Jct.
John	Mann	Datamann, Inc.	White River Jct.
Sarah	McGinley-Smith	King Arthur Flour	White River Jct.
Richard	Parkin	Bradford Veneer and Panel Co.	White River Jct.

APPENDIX D: DISCUSSION GUIDE AND PARTICIPANT LIST FOR THE STAKEHOLDER FOCUSED DISCUSSIONS

Goal: to gather information and feedback critical in the development of a strategic statewide economic development plan that reflects the experiences of 6 distinct regions of Vermont

Objectives:

- Identify assets available through the community, region and state to support/bolster economic development
- Determine key issues and challenges facing communities and employers
- Identify innovative approaches to economic development that are already underway in the various regions of Vermont
- Consider strategic investments and priorities

Method: Facilitated meeting with economic development stakeholders (2 hrs); the format will vary according to size of the group; if 12 or less then hold as a discussion whereas a larger group may require break out groups. Questions will be identified that could be handled in break out groups without compromising the group thinking and interaction.

Welcome: We are interested in learning about your experiences (both positive and negative) in creating and maintaining economic development and in this region. Specifically, we are hoping to identify key systems, policies and programs that currently support businesses and are critical assets in this region. We also interested in your thoughts on how state policy helps or hinders your efforts. Last, but not least, we seek your ideas for future supports or policy changes for the region to sustain existing and create new jobs. While we recognize that many factors may be beyond our control, we believe we can influence the development of local, regional and state policies to support economic development and/or enable resiliency and flow with external influences.

Introductions

- Briefly, please introduce yourself, the name of your organization/affiliation and your connection to economic development in this region? (around the room)

Key Questions

- Q1. What would you say are some of the **distinguishing features** of this region?
- In what ways would you say these features affect (+ or -) economic vitality and opportunity?
- Q2. Which sectors of the regional economy are **growing** and which are **declining**?
- Areas of growth? (chart this)
 - Areas of decline? (chart this)
 - What are your predictions for the future—10 years out? What early indicators are there of newly emerging sectors?

- Q3. What's working now in **supporting** or fostering economic stability and development in this region? Please be specific.
- Are there any particularly **effective or innovative initiatives** you can point to that support businesses and development that you think should be continued?
 - Are there any which might be replicated in other parts of the state?
 - Is this unique to your area/region or is this endemic throughout the state?

- Q4. What (additional) **infrastructure** do you think is necessary to support economic development in the region? (chart this)

Possible probes (from the economic workbook):

Economic

Telecommunications

Transportation (safe, efficient transportation system)

Housing

Jobs

Wages

Children (childcare)

Vibrant communities (Growth Centers, Village Centers and Designated Downtowns)

Regulations

- Q5. What **public policies** most notably help or hinder economic development in the region? Possible probes:

- current tax policy
- business incentive grants
- permit and regulatory assistance
- investment in workforce development
- higher education institutions – expansion to attract research and technology firms
- infrastructure development – especially transportation and telecommunications

- What components currently work well and should be retained and reinforced?
- What components pose challenges or hinder economic development and will need to be addressed to ensure a vibrant economy in the future?

- Q6. Closing statement: Given the need to be **strategic**, in the next 3-5 years, where do you think investments—either political or financial—should be focused and why? (Round if small group; call out if large)

Logistics and Arrangements:

- Anticipate approximately up to 20 - 30 participants plus 5-8 observers (including project staff, CFED Commissioners). The room will be set so that everyone can see one another.

Facilitator will need a flipchart and wall space to post written recordings.

First	Last	Affiliation	Region
Nelson	Brownell	Rensselaer	Bennington
Rex	Burke	Bennington County Regional Commission	Bennington
Nancy	Burzon	Workforce Development Partnership of Bennington County (WDP)	Bennington
Charles	Crowell	SVC	Bennington
Bob	Hartwell	Senator - Bennington District	Bennington
Jay	Hathaway	Manchester Chamber	Bennington
Chris	Herriman	VT SBDC	Bennington
Lee	Krohn	Town of Manchester	Bennington
Cinda	Morse	Town of Shaftsbury	Bennington
Peter	Odierna	BCIC	Bennington
Mike	Oltedal	Town of Dorset	Bennington
Phylis	Porio	Shaftsbury Development Review Board / Shaftsbury Econ. Development Committee	Bennington
Rob	Raffone	BCIC	Bennington
John	Shannahan	Better Bennington Corp.	Bennington
Julie	Smith	SVC	Bennington
Wendy	Woods	United Way of Bennington County	Bennington
Tom	Buchanan		Brattleboro
Richard	Ewald	Town of Rockingham	Brattleboro
Rod	Francis		Brattleboro
Betsy	Gentile		Brattleboro
Konstantin von	Kreusenstin		Brattleboro
Burl	Penton		Brattleboro
Bob	Rusten	Town of Wilmington	Brattleboro
Chris	Ryan	Town of Putney	Brattleboro
Barbara	Sondag		Brattleboro
Lisa	Sullivan		Brattleboro
Rick	Hopkins		Brattleboro
Jim	Hayssen	Bradford Machine Company	Brattleboro
Pamela	Corbett		Brattleboro
Sheila	Humphreys		Brattleboro
Gretchen Horton	Kuebler	Windham Child Care Association	Brattleboro
Lee	Bouyea	Fresh Tracks	Burlington

Greg	Brown	CCRPC	Burlington
Frank	Cioffi	GBIC	Burlington
Jon	Crystal	VT Employee Ownership Center	Burlington
Kelly	Devine	Burlington Biz Assoc.	Burlington
Cheryl	Fatnassi	Opportunities Credit Union	Burlington
Scott	Johnstone	CCMPO	Burlington
Barry	Lampke	Champlain Initiative	Burlington
Jim	Leddy	AARP	Burlington
Traven	Leyshon	AFL CIO	Burlington
Mary Paul	Loomis	VT Adult Learning	Burlington
Laura	Marlow	Community Foundation	Burlington
Ethan	Maurer	VT Adult Learning	Burlington
Colin	Robinson	Liveable Wage Campaign	Burlington
Kenn	Sassarossi	Housing VT	Burlington
Tim	Shea	LCRCC	Burlington
Minner	Hobbs	South Hero Land Trust	Grand Isle
Jane	Lendway	VT Historic Preservation	Grand Isle
Meg	Pond	CIDER	Grand Isle
Pat	Rainville		Grand Isle
Marilyn	Savoy	Northwest Technical Center	Grand Isle
Ruth	Wallman	LCICC	Grand Isle
Bonnie	Waninger	Northwest Regional Planning Commission	Grand Isle
Donna	Bailey	Addison County Parent/Child Center	Middlebury
Mark	Ciociola	Voc Rehab VT	Middlebury
Lynn	Coales	Hannaford Career Center	Middlebury
Gail	Freidin	Middlebury Business Assoc.	Middlebury
Adam	Lougee		Middlebury
Andy	Mayer	Addison County Chamber of Commerce	Middlebury
Terry	McKnight	Addison County Trust	Middlebury
Steve	Paddock	VT SBDC	Middlebury
Linda	Rossi	VT SBDC	Middlebury
Nancy	Slater-Cobden	Hannaford Career Center/WIB	Middlebury
Jamie	Stewart		Middlebury
Ryan	Torres	VT Community Action Foundation	Middlebury
Kate	McGowan	United Way of Addison County	Middlebury
Fred	Dunnington	Town of Middlebury	Middlebury
Laura	Asermily	Middlebury Energy Coordinator	Middlebury
Janet	Bullard	Vermont Commission on Women	Montpelier
Hal	Cohen	Central Vermont Community Action	Montpelier
John	Fairbanks	VHFA	Montpelier
Sue	Kruthers	Central Vermont Medical Center	Montpelier
Denis	Labounty	VT State Labor Council AFL-CIO	Montpelier
Carol	Leech	Vocation Rehab	Montpelier

Traven	Leyshon	VT State Labor Council AFL-CIO	Montpelier
George	Malek	Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce	Montpelier
Avram	Patt	Washington Electric Cooperative	Montpelier
Eric	Peterson	Central Vermont Workforce Investment Board	Montpelier
Dave	Rubel	Small Business Development Center - CVT	Montpelier
Phil	Susman	Norwich University	Montpelier
Nancy	Zorn	Green Mountain United Way	Montpelier
Dawn	Archbold	United Way of Lamoille County	Morrisville
Steve	Bousquet	Lamoille Valley Chamber of Commerce	Morrisville
Duncan	Hastings	Town of Johnson	Morrisville
Ellen	Hill	Johnson State College	Morrisville
Tom	Jackman	Town of Stowe	Morrisville
Laura	Jacoby	Building Bright Futures	Morrisville
Heidi	Krantz	Morrisville CD Specialist	Morrisville
John	Mandeville	Small Business Development Center	Morrisville
D.J.	Masi	State of Vermont - VocRehab	Morrisville
Bill	McKone	Smugglers Notch Chamber of Commerce	Morrisville
Craig	Myotte	Village of Morrisville	Morrisville
Sharon	Neeley	CV Community Action Council	Morrisville
Jen	Olsen	Vermont Dep't of Labor	Morrisville
Dave	Pelletier	Lamoille County Planning Commission	Morrisville
Rita	Pitkin	Lamoille Housing Partnership	Morrisville
Ed	Stahl	Stowe Area Association	Morrisville
Joe	Teagarden	Green Mountain Technology Center	Morrisville
Laurie	Walsh	Lamoille Economic Development Corp.	Morrisville
Jim	Black	Johnson State College	Morrisville
Rep. Howard	Crawford	Tech Ed @ St. J. Academy	Newport
William	Davies	NVDA Board	Newport
Linda	Fogg	St. Johnsbury Works	Newport
Jon	Freeman	NCIC	Newport
Jennifer	Hopkins	CCV / The Fund / Bus Owner	Newport
Rep. Robert	Lewis	Derby	Newport
John	Mandeville	IWOW @ LSC	Newport
Julie	Mulroy-Evans	Building Bright Futures	Newport
Joel	Schwartz	St. Johnsbury EDO	Newport
John	Ward	Newport City Manager	Newport
Bob	Whittaker	Lyndon State College	Newport
Don	Welch	Northeast Kingdom Community Action	Newport
Dan	Hill	Town of Lyndon	Newport
Nancy	Sheltra	Rural Community Transportation	Newport
Peter	Amons	Rutland City Public Schools	Rutland

Ellen	Atkinson	Marble Valley Regional Transit District	Rutland
Mark	Blucher	Rutland Regional Planning Commission	Rutland
Nancy	Burzon	WIB	Rutland
Joe	Carmel	Vermont Achievement Center	Rutland
Timothy	Donovan	CCV	Rutland
India	Farmer		Rutland
JoAnn	Graffam	REDC	Rutland
Kim	Harris	Killington Chamber of Commerce	Rutland
Chris	Herriman	Vermont Small Business Development Center	Rutland
Gary	Jaquith	Voc Rehab	Rutland
Tom	Macaulay	Rutland Redevelopment Authority	Rutland
Teresa	Miele	Career Choices and GRAPE	Rutland
Traci	Moore	Vermont Achievement Center	Rutland
Donna	Nobrega	VT Department of Labor	Rutland
Kathleen Swinington	Ramsay	Town of Pittsford	Rutland
Michelle	Rock	BROC	Rutland
David	Sagi	Voc Rehab	Rutland
Chuck	Sharp	United Way of Rutland County	Rutland
Kathleen	Wanner	Wood Manufacturers	Rutland
Lynn	Boyle	VT Agency of Human Services	Springfield
Patty	Chaffee	Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce	Springfield
Gladys	Collins	Building Bright Futures	Springfield
Bob	Flint	SRDC/WIB Co-Chair	Springfield
Gary	Fox	Connecticut River Transit	Springfield
Marji	Graf	Okemo Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce	Springfield
Bob	Herbst	VT Department of Labor	Springfield
Tom	Kennedy	Southern Windsor County RPC	Springfield
Betty	Kinsman	Springfield Area Parent-Child Center	Springfield
Carl	Mock	River Valley Technical Center	Springfield
Shane	O'Keefe	Howard Dean Education Center	Springfield
Jeff	Staudinger	Rockingham Area Community Land Trust	Springfield
Connie	Burns	FCIDC	St. Albans
Gary	Champy	Transit Network	St. Albans
Catherine	Dimitruk	NW Regional Planning Commission	St. Albans
Hib	Doe	VT Dept of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living	St. Albans
Sally	Girard	Department of Labor	St. Albans
Marilyn	Grunowab	Franklin Supervisory Union	St. Albans
Christopher	Kaufman	VT Community Foundation	St. Albans

Claire	Larose	Economic Services Division	St. Albans
Ron	Larose	Franklin County Regional Chamber of Commerce	St. Albans
John	Mandeville	SBDC	St. Albans
Jeff	Moreau	Franklin/Grand Isle United Way	St. Albans
Susie	Posner-Jones	Franklin/Grand Isle Community Partnership	St. Albans
Dirk	Reith	USDA Farm Service Agency	St. Albans
Marilyn	Savoy	F-GI Workforce Investment Board	St. Albans
Tim	Smith	FCIDC	St. Albans
Rita	Weisburgh	USDA Rural Development	St. Albans
Stuart	Arnett	Arnett Development Group LLC	White River Jct.
Neal	Fox	GMEDC	White River Jct.
Joan	Goldstein	Small Business Development Center	White River Jct.
Peter	Gregory	Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee R.C.	White River Jct.
Roger	Hawk	Hawk Planning Resources	White River Jct.
Lori	Hirshfield	Hartford Planning & Development	White River Jct.
Joan	Hudson	US Small Business Administration	White River Jct.
Deborah	Jones	Randolph Area Chamber of Commerce	White River Jct.
Jill	Lepisko	GMEDC	White River Jct.
James	Masland	Workforce Investment Board	White River Jct.
Pat	Menduni	Vermont Community Foundation	White River Jct.
Bernie	Villemarie	US Small Business Administration	White River Jct.
Mark	Blanchard	VT SBDC	White River Jct.

APPENDIX E: KIOSK QUESTIONS FOR PUBLIC FORUM

Future Concerns

What concerns do you have about the future for jobs, economic opportunity, and business activity in your region? ... in the state?

What do you predict will be the biggest challenge facing young members of the community as they prepare for jobs or opportunities in the region?

What do you think the biggest challenges to future success are for local businesses and employers?

In what ways is your local community limited in being able to create more opportunity for workers and employers?

What should be highest priority for the state in creating policies or making investments to address your concerns about the future?

Future Opportunities

What makes you optimistic about the future for your job, your business or the local economy in general?

What opportunities do you see for future growth?

What are the most promising opportunities that you see for future jobs in the region?

Which types of businesses and employers do you think might experience growth in the future in this region?

What community actions or programs are working well in supporting future workers, job creation, and economic development in this region?

Vermont's Public Policies and Programs

What public policies and programs are needed in the future to support workers, create jobs and promote economic vitality?

Which public policies and programs are currently working well to support job creation and economic development?

Which public policies and programs seem to be working against job creation and economic development?

What do you think is **the most important** investment or program the State of Vermont could make in supporting workers, creating jobs and keeping the local economy healthy?