



Economic Development Working Group Meeting May 21, 2014 from 4-6pm, CVRPC Offices

Purpose: To identify and discuss key challenges and trends in Agriculture and Forestry, to review the Draft Key Challenges and Trends narrative per last meeting's input, and to begin discussion of policies and strategies to support each goal.

Attendees:

- Julie Potter, Town of East Montpelier
- Sam Andersen, Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation (CVEDC)
- John Boyer, Washington County Youth Services Bureau
- Erica Campbell, Vermont Farm to Plate
- Dara Torre, Town of Moretown/Mad River Valley Planning District
- Sasha Bianchi, Barre District Office, Vermont Department of Health
- Don LaHaye, Town of Waitsfield
- Stephanie Smith, CVRPC Staff
- Amelia Norris, CVRPC Staff
- Kim McKee, CVRPC Staff

Summary:

1. **Economic Development Goals:** Staff shared the five overarching goals as revised by the Draft Review Committee at their meeting on May 6. The working group then provided further comments, which are listed below:

- Full employment and the creation and preservation of high quality jobs ~~opportunities~~ in a diverse range of occupations.

The working group suggested rephrasing the goal to exclude the phrase "full employment," because they feel that it's unrealistic. It was also suggested that the word preservation be changed to retention.

- Incomes sufficient to meet or exceed basic needs ~~at a minimum~~ with opportunities to advance and to achieve ~~and maintain~~ financial security.
- Sustainable and viable agricultural and forest lands.
- Dynamic and resilient downtowns, villages, and commercial districts.
- Effective Business retention, growth, and development that anticipate and meet market opportunities.

The working group suggested rephrasing the goal to include more specific language to describe market opportunities (global, regional, local, imports and exports, etc.) and stressed the importance of Central Vermont businesses competing in the global marketplace. Suggestions included “meeting a wide variety of market opportunities.”

Staff will continue to incorporate additional data and information into the Regional Economic Profile based on discussions of key challenges and trends, including: data from the Census of Non-employers (County-level) to more accurately present data on industries represented by sole proprietors and their taxable receipts; and additional data pertinent to workforce development regarding skill level required for existing jobs in Northern Vermont.

Erica noted she will send some additional comments to incorporate into the Agriculture and Forestry profile.

2. **Key Challenges and Trends:** Staff shared the Draft Key Challenges and Trends Narrative and received general comments from working group participants. The working group felt that the challenges and trends should not be numbered because numbers often indicate ranking or prioritization.

Additional comments on particular challenges/trends included:

- Underutilized Commercial and Industrial Sites: It was noted that this issue should hone in more specifically on both Brownfields, which are largely related to certain industry sectors (granite sheds, etc.), and vacant upper floors in older downtown buildings. Blanchard Block in Barre is an excellent example of a success story – required tax stabilization to make the project economically feasible.
- Healthy Community Design: This concept encompasses broader principles than just bike/ped facilities and walkability (access to healthy food, “liquor density,” etc.) and the “key issue” should make a stronger connection to the full definition. Potentially change the title.

Staff also facilitated a discussion of challenges and trends specific to Agriculture and Forestry based on previous input from the Plan Central Vermont Kick-off meeting, regional priorities survey and previous Central Vermont Food System Forums.

See additional document for a summary of this discussion: *Ag & Forestry – Key Challenges & Trends Summary – 5.21.2014*

3. **Policies:** Staff shared draft policies for each goal. Working group members provided feedback, options for revised language and ideas for strategies that may be considered.

See additional document for draft policies incorporating working group feedback with ideas for strategies included: *Plan Central Vermont – draft Economic policies with strategies – 5.27.2014*

4. The next meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2014, 4-6 PM at CVRPC Offices.