

**HINESBURG  
COMMUNITY VISIT  
REPORT AND ACTION PLAN**



**Vermont Council on Rural Development  
January 2007**

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## Introduction

Hinesburg, located just southeast of Vermont's busiest commercial region, is the first Chittenden County town to participate in the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) Community Visit Program. Home to both fertile farmland and high tech industry, thriving local businesses and numerous commuters, Hinesburg is a town with a deep sense of its agricultural roots and historic character whose abundant assets can allow it to face the future with confidence. The VCRD Visit provided a venue for residents to review their values and current accomplishments and to apply their substantial skills, dedication, and volunteer spirit toward shaping the future of the town.

The capacity, clarity of vision, and a willingness to step up of participating residents were hallmarks of the Visit to Hinesburg. Residents were called to address the hard realities brought to bear by the town's proximity to Vermont's urban hub. How can Hinesburg nurture the agricultural roots the community clearly values, while responding to the pressure of a growing population? What will be the town's economic anchor in a commuter culture? How can Hinesburg foster social relationships so that residents – young and old – feel connected and engaged? What does it mean to be a farmer, and what will be required to succeed a rapidly changing sector and benefit from new opportunities, from organic food production to planting energy crops?

Hinesburg residents responded to these questions with foresight and flexibility, setting goals to maximize opportunities that will enhance the community both in the short term, and especially in the years ahead. While acknowledging the challenges presented by traffic, lack of sidewalks and the need for affordable housing, residents recognized that existing committees were already providing effective leadership in these areas. The four priority areas selected by Hinesburg residents reflect a desire to raise the bar, to move ahead and place the town in a strong position around important issues such as energy planning, agriculture and a vibrant local economy.

The **Buy Local and Specialty Farming** Task Force will work to establish an effective marketing strategy and expansion of Hinesburg's locally made products, creative cottage industries, and entrepreneurial network to increase local economic opportunity while reducing commuter impacts. A **Multigenerational Community Center and Teen Center** will provide recreational activities and a unifying structure for all town residents, and could provide mentoring and staffing opportunities for youth and adults. This Task Force will explore both existing sites for activities, and the viability of building a new structure. The **Sustainability and Energy Planning** Task Force is charged with tackling the timely issue of community energy planning, and exploring actions that will increase the town's long-term viability. The new **Farm Conservation** Task Force will work to support, protect and diversify Hinesburg agriculture, provide planning help to farmers and landowners, and build community support for this important sector.

The effectiveness of a Community Visit lies in the efforts of a local community; its ability to assume leadership and willingness to step forward when called. Hinesburg has been an exemplary community in its enthusiastic response and tremendous support of the process.

VCRD appreciates the assistance of Andrea Morgante, Howdi Russell, Robert Bast and other members of the selectboard. The Hinesburg Steering Committee has been the most active and hard-working organizing committee VCRD has encountered, undertaking everything from cooking chili for the community dinner to handing out flyers. Their efforts contributed greatly to the success of the Visit. The Hinesburg process was strengthened when students invited VCRD to conduct a youth forum at the Hinesburg Community School. It was a valuable lesson in civics for the students, and enhanced the Community Visit process by bringing their perspectives to the table. VCRD appreciates the invitation and organizational work provided by Steve Hyde. Thanks are due also to the administration and staff of Champlain Valley Union High School for hosting the meetings. VCRD is grateful to Jean Masseau who generously provided the artwork found in this report and on its cover. Finally, VCRD would like to thank Carl Bohlen, Chair of the Community Visit in Hinesburg, for his exceptional diligence and ongoing leadership throughout the process and into the coming year.

Accomplishments in the Community Visit program result from local leadership and community effort, however VCRD is eager to support implementation. We suggest that you carefully review the Recommendations section of this report for concrete resources and ideas, and that you call upon members of the Visiting Team (listed at the end of this report) and VCRD staff for help.

## **The Community Visit Program**

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

1. **Community Visit Day** - Open to all community members, participants meet in focus groups throughout the day, and provide testimony to Visiting Team Members with expertise in the areas of concern. The meetings result in an initial list of challenges and opportunities. (page 4)
2. **Community Meeting** – Participants review, discuss, and refine their initial list of challenges, and ultimately vote on the top four issues of concern. Community members sign up to work on a task force that will create a strategic action plan for the selected topics. (page 8)
3. **Community Resource Day** – Task Force members meet with a new Resource Team to design action steps, and identify state, federal, non-profit, and private resources that will allow them to advance toward solutions. (page 10)

**Resource Team Members** agree to serve in an ongoing capacity as advisors, referral agents, and liaisons for the Hinesburg Task Forces. Members of the Resource Team listen closely to resident's concerns, and carefully consider opportunities for addressing each issue. Their suggestions are found on page 20.

## **Hinesburg Challenges and Opportunities**

### **Identified in Town Forums on Community Visit Day - October 10, 2006**

More than 150 Hinesburg residents joined with VCRD staff and a 30 member Visiting Team on October 10, filling meeting rooms in the Town Hall and United Church. These first sessions provided important insight into the challenges before the town, and the community's commitment to respond to those challenges. One Visiting Team member remarked, "This is a community at the edge – not gentrified, but no longer anchored in productive farmland. The townspeople see a generational change, and understand the importance of impending decisions." Following is the list of initial challenges and opportunities identified on Community Visit Day.

#### **Traffic Control**

Traffic through and around Hinesburg undermines walk-ability, safety, and the cohesiveness of the village downtown. Traffic impacts everything from historic town structures, to student schedules and the social fabric of the community. Opportunities exist to improve the flow of existing traffic by installing speed bumps and improved crossings in high pedestrian areas, lowering the village speed limit, restructuring roads with curbs and medians, and instituting on-street parking. Safety measures such as better lighting, signage, traffic signals, and strategically placed crosswalks can improve pedestrian movement.

#### **Hinesburg Teen Center**

Young people in Hinesburg would love to have a central place to go in the village center for movies, games, music and food. Teens have suggestions from incorporating sports and recreational opportunities to including an Internet café. Teens would like to work and are interested in helping to staff a center themselves.

#### **Affordable Housing**

All of Vermont is experiencing a struggle to provide affordable housing, and Hinesburg, with its close proximity to Burlington, is under particular pressure. Hinesburg residents are committed to maintaining the economic diversity of the community and building creative solutions for affordable housing, and town's land availability provides opportunities for thoughtful development. The Affordable Housing Task Force should identify opportunities for development, consider implementation of an "accessory apartment" program, think through opportunities for market and affordable mixes, evaluate zoning regulations to encourage density, investigate the idea of a local affordable housing fund, and build partnerships with non-profits and organizations to implement plans.

#### **Improve Mobile Home Parks**

Across the state, mobile home parks provide important affordable housing; they require good maintenance and infrastructure; it is important to integrate them in community planning and development. A working team should be formed to plan for improvement of the town's three mobile home parks. Long term planning on cooperative ownership by residents should be considered in some cases. Community gardens and a public park could be developed in proximity to the mobile home parks.

### **Hinesburg Sustainability and Energy Planning**

A Task Force should be developed to consider the community and economic development sustainability of Hinesburg. The committee would work in community energy planning and consider actions that will enhance the long-term viability and welfare of the town and its residents.

### **Sidewalks and Walking Paths**

Hinesburg has strong assets in place that could be further developed to reduce vehicular traffic. A Walking Task Force could plan to improve the existing sidewalk infrastructure through better connectivity and design to encourage walking. Back lot paths could connect businesses, the library, community school, playing fields, restaurants, mobile home parks, and grocery.

### **Senior Housing Facilities**

A task force should work to build a senior living facility that would allow older Hinesburg residents to stay in their hometown in their senior years. Hinesburg should attract a developer, build relationships with resource providers, and implement a project that includes some affordable units and supports elders with services that allow maximum independence.

### **Bicycle Paths**

Hinesburg residents, both adults and young people, have a deep appreciation for opportunities for bicycling in the Champlain Valley, a task force could develop bike lanes connecting neighborhoods with the village, and bicycling routes connecting Hinesburg with surrounding communities. The delineation of bike lanes on Silver St. and in other areas could also help slow traffic and improve safety.

### **Central Park**

Hinesburg should mark the center of the village by building a new park, a green space for music, gatherings, and as the focal point of a walk-able community. The park could be a nucleus for activities and village design improvements over time. Some Hinesburg residents would like to see a bandstand or gazebo that would be a center for life downtown.

### **Public Safety and Prevention**

Hinesburg residents have concerns about the increasing crime rate and the thin staffing profile of their police department. Residents enjoy a strong and positive relationship with the local police force, and benefit from police officers that are actively involved and deeply invested in the community. A more institutionalized relationship between the community and the force, such as a Community Watch program, and/or a citizen/law enforcement task force could improve communications and clarify perceptions and expectations; such a committee could also monitor service levels and work to expand police presence (making recommendations to the municipality), and investigate opportunities with surrounding towns for regional law enforcement solutions. Residents also see the need for a strong prevention component to support families at risk.

### **Multigenerational Community Center**

A multi-purpose community center could serve as a resource for both senior citizens and youth, and be a unifying structure for the town. Hinesburg could explore the functional viability of existing sites, such as the Community School or Town Hall, or could plan and

build a community center that would provide a variety of activities including films, theatre, music, recreation, and serve as the center for elder services and teen activities. The center could improve communications and build social relationships across generations.

### **Public Transportation**

With 80% of Hinesburg's working residents commuting out of town for employment, the community should set and implement a public transportation plan, and market a solution that includes a solid business case and builds ridership. Opportunities to build a CCTA van route should be investigated as a starting point. Car pooling could be facilitated by the town web site with a Rideshare section and by the town developing a convenient Park and Ride site.

### **Buy Local Campaign**

Hinesburg residents want to support local businesses and the increased production, consumption, and marketing of locally produced products. With a strong agricultural base, creative cottage industries, and intellectual capital, Hinesburg has the opportunity to develop economic opportunities that will reduce commuting impacts, while keeping dollars local. Successful operations such as the farmers market, forest products businesses, cottage businesses, in-town services, and entrepreneurial start ups should be inventoried by a task force, a Buy Local Directory established (with a section for job opportunities in town), and a marketing plan implemented. The campaign would look to support value-added agricultural development in Hinesburg, and support the creative initiative of small home and workshop-based businesses.

### **Economic Development**

An economic development task force should be created to work with the Development Review Board and municipality to assess zoning regulations and create incentives to bring desirable businesses to Hinesburg. One business that residents are eager to attract is a pharmacy. In addition to supporting the many small businesses in the community, the committee would consider ways to attract another strong and environmentally-friendly anchor business like NRG to provide a critical mass for supporting area businesses and build the town's 'brand identity' while providing local jobs.

### **Village Character**

Hinesburg village life is built upon strong connections between people, land, and history. Hinesburg residents are concerned with fundamental questions of affordability, social sustainability, gentrification, and a sense of human scale that can be threatened by a car culture and growth pressures. A task force of residents can work to conserve the integrity of the village by preserving existing structures, implementing proactive zoning, instituting an aggressive traffic control and sidewalks plan, demarking village boundaries with welcoming signs, and evaluating opportunities for the development of a village park area, a common green space defining the village center.

### **Trail System**

Large tracts of working land provide the opportunity for the development of an integrated system of walking paths, cross-country ski trails, horse trails and mountain biking areas. A map of formal and informal trail systems should be developed and promoted as a recreational opportunity for residents and visitors alike. A task force could work with private property

owners to expand the trail system, to ease traffic congestion, support outdoor recreation, and expand non-motorized traffic in town.

### **Community Development Coordination and Staffing**

Hinesburg has strong administration, recreation, and planning offices but lacks staff for community and economic development. The community has developed a tremendous array of enrichment programs and a vigorous network of volunteers. Residents perceive these assets as fragmented, however, and are unclear about all of the opportunities. A task force could evaluate Hinesburg's pro-active community and economic development projects and build a plan to strengthen them through the creation of a Community Development Coordinator position to aggregate, promote, and connect individuals to programs and provide staff support to advance community priorities from economic development to housing. This individual could also improve communication through the town website, newsletter, and the development and promotion of informational and outreach tools for the community.

### **Specialty Farming**

The community is deeply connected to farming; a task force could provide leadership to work creatively to expand and diversify farming and value-added processing in the community. A farm-to-table education program could be developed in conjunction with Champlain Valley Union High School. A business incubator could be developed to house a processing and distribution facility for local produce and agriculturally based, value-added entrepreneurial businesses. This committee could also work to identify or develop space for a local butcher shop for processing animals locally.

### **Elder Services**

A task force on elder services could identify ways to provide bus transportation to outlying communities and build collaboration to consolidate and develop local programs that can provide meals and social activities. Using the strong network of teen community service programs could also promote intergenerational activities.

### **Hinesburg Farm Conservation**

Agriculture plays a defining role in Hinesburg's history and character; a role that residents and farmers believe is threatened today. A Hinesburg Farm Conservation Commission should be established to provide financial information and technical assistance to farmers and landowners as they face difficult decisions around the future use of lands in the town. The commission could work to reform rural zoning and density regulations to preserve agricultural land, build a working definition of farming to include a variety of scales, crops, and diverse value-added foods, fiber and energy production, and rally community support to the development of diverse agricultural businesses.

### **Creative Economy**

The creative economy flourishes in the intersection between culture and commerce, where artists and entrepreneurs are supported and the results of their work stimulates local economic growth. Hinesburg is home to numerous innovative businesses, and a population with the capacity to develop creative enterprises.

## **Hinesburg Priorities**

### **Selected by Community Vote – November 16, 2006**

Proving that those who live, work and raise their families in a community are best qualified to understand its needs and potential, Hinesburg residents whittled down a list of over 20 issues through discussion, reasoned arguments and thoughtful reflection. In the end, voting with red and blue stickers, over 100 participants chose four issues that offer opportunities to enhance existing resources, and to strengthen the town through exciting new ventures. Residents concluded the November 16 meeting by signing up for one of four new Task Forces in the selected areas.

#### **1. Hinesburg Sustainability and Energy Planning**

A Task Force should be developed to consider the community and economic development sustainability of Hinesburg. The committee would work in community energy planning and consider actions that will enhance the long-term viability and welfare of the town and its residents.

#### **2. Multigenerational Community Center and Teen Center**

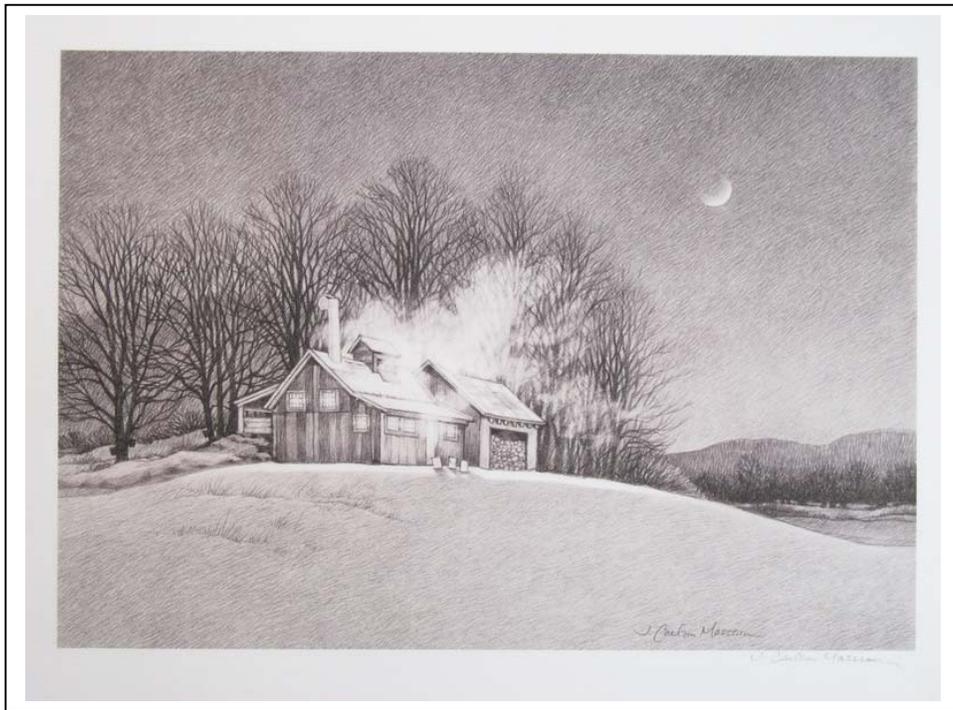
A multi-purpose community center could serve as a resource for both senior citizens and youth, and be a unifying structure for the town. Hinesburg could explore the functional viability of existing sites, such as the Community School or Town Hall, or could plan and build a community center that would provide a variety of activities including films, theatre, music, recreation, and serve as the center for elder services and teen activities. Young people in Hinesburg would love to have a central place to go in the village center for movies, games, music and food. Teens have suggestions from incorporating sports and recreational opportunities to including an Internet café. Teens would like to work and are interested in helping to staff a center.

#### **3. Buy Local Campaign and Specialty Farming**

Hinesburg residents want to support local businesses and the increased production, consumption, and marketing of locally produced products. With a strong agricultural base, creative cottage industries, and intellectual capital, Hinesburg has the opportunity to develop economic opportunities that will reduce commuting impacts, while keeping dollars local. A task force should inventory successful operations such as the farmers' market, forest products businesses, cottage businesses, in-town services, and entrepreneurial start-ups, a Buy Local Directory could be established (with a section for job opportunities in town), and a marketing plan implemented. A task force could provide leadership to work creatively to expand and diversity farming and value-added processing in the community. A farm-to-table education program could be developed in conjunction with Champlain Valley Union High School. A business incubator could be developed to house a processing and distribution facility for local produce and agriculturally based, value-added entrepreneurial businesses. This committee could also work to identify or develop space for a local butcher shop for processing animals locally.

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*“Sugarhouse”  
Jean Masseur, Hinesburg, VT*

**Resource Day/Task Forces**  
**Developed in response to the four Hinesburg priorities**  
**on December 14, 2006**

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

**Hinesburg Sustainability and Energy Planning**

**Co-Chairs:** Dawn Francis, Kevin Francis

**Facilitator:** Paul Costello, *Vermont Council on Rural Development*

**Resource Team Members:** Ellen Kahler, *Sustainable Jobs Fund*

Deb Sachs, *Alliance for Climate Action*

**Hinesburg Sustainability and Energy Planning**

A Task Force should be developed to consider the community and economic development sustainability of Hinesburg. The committee would work in community energy planning and consider actions that will enhance the long-term viability and welfare of the town and its residents.

**Action Steps**

1. Build a common definition of sustainability and identify its key components.
2. Determine Hinesburg's baseline by conducting an energy use assessment.
3. Create a light bulb exchange project to get compact fluorescents into all homes.
4. Identify elements necessary to develop a PR/communications plan, including the newspapers, town web site, speakers, and electronic components like the Front Porch Forum.
6. Compile a set of resources to be housed at an accessible site, such as the library. Resources may include books, videos, and website links.
7. Address issues within the transportation system, including school bus ridership, and end the idling of vehicles. A theme could help promote this: "Hinesburg is no place for idlers." A commuter parking lot could be an eventual goal.
8. Establish a subcommittee in priority areas to research and take action.

## **Additional Steps to be Considered**

1. Provide educational opportunities for committee members and a community to learn more about conservation and sustainability.
2. Create a motto, like “Hinesburg, the Green Town” and build excitement around the issues and the sustainability campaign. Establish a Speakers Bureau as part of the community education effort.
2. Communicate with existing governmental and private organizations by participating in meetings with or individual memberships on the DRB, Conservation Commission and other committees.
3. Conduct an efficiency inventory of town buildings to determine current status and address deficit areas.
4. Investigate existing models of community planning around sustainability and energy.
5. Work to get Energy Star requirements for new building permits. Send a letter as a committee to selectboard recommending this regulation. Provide support around attaining grants or other incentives to help new builders in constructing energy efficient buildings.
6. Connect with youth to utilize their skills and ideas.
7. Set small goals and a yearly goal for carbon reduction in Hinesburg, and celebrate progress every step of the way.
8. Network with other groups and stay informed about the economic and social impacts of actions.

## **Resources**

1. Grants for up to \$2,500 can be obtained from the New England Grass Roots Environmental Fund (NGEF)
2. NRG Systems
3. VT Energy and Climate Action Network/10% Challenge
4. Empowerment Institute
5. Local publications like the South County Sentinel, Hinesburg Record, the town website and Front Porch Forum could be used for public relations.
6. Interfaith Power and Light
7. Efficiency Vermont

8. Contact utilities to help identify key energy users.
9. Hinesburg Businesses and Professional Association, and the Town Plan
10. VT Earth Institute provides a course on climate change that was beneficial for legislators.
11. VT Association of Realtors
12. Chittenden Solid Waste District.
13. Green building information can be obtained from the Renewable Energy Resource Center of VT (which also has incentives funds for solar development), Buildings for Social Responsibility, and the Green Building Network.
14. Contact the University of Vermont to explore placement of an intern.

### **Task Force Members**

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## **Multigenerational Community Center and Teen Center**

**Chairperson:** Bill Neil

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

**Resource Team Member:** Bobette Scribner, *Bradford Community Center*

### **Multigenerational Community Center and Teen Center**

A multi-purpose community center could serve as a resource for both senior citizens and youth, and be a unifying structure for the town. Hinesburg could explore the functional viability of existing sites, such as the Community School or Town Hall, or could plan and build a community center that would provide a variety of activities including films, theatre, music, recreation, and serve as the center for elder services and teen activities. Young people in Hinesburg would love to have a central place to go in the village center for movies, games, music and food. Teens have suggestions from incorporating sports and recreational opportunities to including an Internet café. Teens would like to work and are interested in helping to staff a center.

### **Action Steps**

1. Research and evaluate other community centers, including their organizational structure. The VT Coalition of Teen Centers has general information. Evaluate space, including the Munson House.
2. Commission a planning study and survey.
3. Identify partners and begin building relationships.
4. Create a programmatic wish list that will help to define what the Center could offer.
5. Create teen programming now, that is not dependant on a new location, as a foundation for the future.
6. Identify and execute an effective task force structure. This could include sub-committees with specific assignments and/or designated roles such as taking notes and communication with members.
7. Recruit townspeople to participate on the committee, and to share ideas. Teens have offered to help create a website to get the word out.
8. Identify/contact potential funders.

### **Resources**

1. The Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) has funding available for planning grants.
2. USDA Rural Development has loan programs.

3. Explore the Vermont Economic Development Association (VEDA) and town revolving loan fund programs.
4. Jay Ladd, Winooski, has been instrumental in setting up a teen center.
5. Jim Davis, Derby, Indoor Recreation Orleans County (IROC) (334-8511)
6. VT Community Foundation in Middlebury offers a variety of grants for community projects.
7. Talk to other community based and teen focused programs for funding insight: Department of Justice, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Agency of Human Services.
8. Edgar May of the Southern Vermont Recreation Center in Springfield can provide advice on rallying the community and energizing volunteers. (885-2564) Bobette Scribner can share experience from Bradford's Community Center. (bcdc@charter.net)

### **Task Force Members**

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## **Buy Local Campaign and Specialty Farming**

**Chairperson:** Bill Schubart

**Facilitator:** Greg Brown, *Chittenden County Planning Commission*

**Resource Team Members:** David Lane, *VT Agency of Agriculture*

Helen Jordan, *VCRD Creative Communities Program*

Abbie Nelson, *NOFA of VT*

### **Buy Local Campaign and Specialty Farming**

Hinesburg residents want to support local businesses and the increased production, consumption, and marketing of locally produced products. With a strong agricultural base, creative cottage industries, and intellectual capital, Hinesburg has the opportunity to develop economic opportunities that will reduce commuting impacts, while keeping dollars local. A task force should inventory successful operations such as the farmers' market, forest products businesses, cottage businesses, in-town services, and entrepreneurial start-ups, a Buy Local Directory could be established (with a section for job opportunities in town), and a marketing plan implemented. A task force could provide leadership to work creatively to expand and diversify farming and value-added processing in the community. A farm-to-table education program could be developed in conjunction with Champlain Valley Union High School. A business incubator could be developed to house a processing and distribution facility for local produce and agriculturally based, value-added entrepreneurial businesses. This committee could also work to identify or develop space for a local butcher shop for processing animals locally.

### **Action Steps**

1. Begin a long-term project to create a food processing facility and business incubator.
2. Survey local producers in order to create a directory of food providers of all kinds. This directory could be made available on the town website, and distributed at farmers' markets and other venues to improve access to producers who are not located in a core retail center.
3. Expand the farmers market to become a celebration of local products and merchants. This includes finding a larger location and providing entertainment. Develop regional coordination so that markets don't occur on the same day.
4. Work with both Hinesburg schools to introduce young people to locally produced foods. Develop a summer garden project for students, and encourage them to provide food to the school cafeteria and farmers market.
5. Open farms to visitors through an open studio type of program that would introduce consumers to local producers and artisans.
6. Assess community interest in organizing a producer's cooperative.

### **Additional Steps to be Considered:**

1. Conduct an advertising/public relations campaign to include media promotion of a Buy Local initiative. Include information about where and how to purchase local food.
2. Provide support for people to grow their own food, through education about the benefits of local food. This could also include distribution of recipes from farmers at the farmers market. Invite local chefs to the farmers market.
3. Hold a “Taste of Hinesburg” event where people share their favorite dishes.
4. Develop e-commerce opportunities by using the web to buy local and create a web cooperative.
5. Find a storefront for all local producers.
6. Determine the need for changes in current policies that regulate where and how local items, such a milk and meat, can be purchased.

### **Resources**

1. Many Hinesburg residents participated in the Champlain Valley ‘eat local’ challenge. Residents could start their own similar event.
2. Contact the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics at UVM for assistance with organization and marketing.
3. Explore the Intervale Community Kitchen as a model.
4. The VT Agency of Agriculture can provide information to help develop a Buy Local program. Communicate with the directors of other farmers markets to learn how to expand activities.
5. The Agency of Agriculture may also be able to support acquisition of small-scale individual or cooperative processing equipment.
6. Contact USDA Rural Development for information on grant opportunities.
7. The UVM Extension Service has general information on agricultural initiatives.
8. The Farm Viability program at the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board can assist with business planning. VHCB also has funding for other community projects.

## **Task Force Members**

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## **Hinesburg Farm Conservation**

**Chairperson:** Chuck Ross

**Facilitator:** Chip Evans, *Workforce Development Council*

**Resource Team Members:** Alex Wylie, *Vermont Land Trust*

Michael Snyder, *Chittenden County Forester*

### **Hinesburg Farm Conservation**

Agriculture plays a defining role in Hinesburg's history and character, a role that residents and farmers believe is threatened today. A Hinesburg Farm Conservation Commission should be established to provide financial information and technical assistance to farmers and landowners as they face difficult decisions around the future use of lands in the town. The commission could work to reform rural zoning and density regulations to preserve agricultural land, build a working definition of farming to include a variety of scales, crops, and diverse value-added foods, fiber and energy production, and rally community support to the development of diverse agricultural businesses.

### **Action Steps**

1. Communicate with farmers to learn about their needs.
2. Inventory farms, including horse, maple, forestry, small "hobby" operations and farmland.
3. Research land equity options; ways for farmers to receive equity and the development value of their land in order to keep their property in agriculture. Investigate models including the Land Trust, local tax assessment, current use, and generational transfer.
4. Look at state and federal regulations that restrict opportunities – for example chickens and ditching.
5. Expand the definition of farm types and sizes that qualify for help and tax benefits.
6. Seek assistance and/or support from those who benefit from open land for recreation and other uses. This could be from tax benefits or other contributions.
7. Investigate alternatives to dairy, including alternative farm-related commercial operations, such as meat slaughtering, and processing.

### **Resources**

1. Form a group of volunteers to implement action steps one and two.
2. Matt Baldwin, the UVM Extension Service and the Conservation Commission are good agricultural resources.

3. Create a list of regulations that are most troubling that arise from communication with farmers.
4. Kate Schubart and John Trefrey are good Hinesburg community resources.
5. Contact the Farm Services Agency (658-2803)

### **Task Force Members**

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## Resource Team Recommendations

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

### Sustainability and Energy Planning

The **Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network (VECAN)** recently organized a twenty-one-town roundtable discussion around community energy planning. Two of the towns (Brattleboro and Middlebury) have paid staff working on energy conservation. Others have a group of concerned citizens meeting in living rooms. Projects vary greatly. Some town are working on small-scale hydro (Greensboro, Middlebury, Ripton), others are focusing on making town buildings more energy efficient and converting town vehicles to biodiesel. Brattleboro, Middlebury and Montpelier have signed on to ICLEI, an international association of communities addressing climate change - visit ([www.iclei.org/usa](http://www.iclei.org/usa)) VECAN is sponsored by the New England Grass Roots Foundation. A draft guidebook for community energy planning can be obtained from Deb Sachs at [dsachs@10percentchallenge.org](mailto:dsachs@10percentchallenge.org).

Gina Campoli, Environmental Policy Manager with the **Vermont Agency of Transportation**, is a good resource for general community energy activities around the state. She can be reached at (802) 828-5756.

Small businesses and farms are eligible to participate in the USDA energy program. **Efficiency Vermont** has been a key partner in conducting the technical review component of efficiency projects and also has grant funding to support qualified projects. Contact Paul Lambert, Business Development Specialist, 1-888-921-5990 x 1088 or [plambert@veic.org](mailto:plambert@veic.org)

**USDA Rural Development** supports both grants and guaranteed loans for project that involve energy efficiency and renewable energy generation. Recently funded projects include methane digester development, reverse osmosis efficiency for maple producers, and biomass energy production. Contact Lynn Millhiser at 828-6069 or [lyn.millhiser@vt.usda.gov](mailto:lyn.millhiser@vt.usda.gov). One on one project development works best for USDA programs. Examples of businesses that are high-energy users that could benefit include: grocery stores and small markets, maple sugar producers, dairy farms and machine shops.

**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service** has participated in funding methane digester projects. Vicki Drew is the Vermont State Program manager and can be reached at (802) 951-6796 x242. A portion of methane digester projects may qualify for USDA NRCS EQUIP funding. Contact **NRCS** in Williston at 879-4785.

Businesses and farms can obtain supplemental funding for projects from a variety of banks or other sources. Key funding partners include **Vermont Economic Development Authority**,

828-5627; **Vermont Community Loan Fund**, 223-1448; **USDA Farm Service Agency** 524-6503; and **USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service**, 879-4785.

A Local Development Corporation made up of Hinesburg business people and others might implement local economic development strategies. Randolph is a good example of a town that has developed its own successful community development organization. (RCDC 728-4305)

A substantial challenge is defining “sustainability” and identifying practical components that can be addressed. The **Vermont Earth Institute** helps communities organize study courses on particular topics related to sustainability. Working with them to form a course could help clarify thoughts on sustainability and draw community members into a larger discussion. Their program is described online at [www.vtearthinstitute.org](http://www.vtearthinstitute.org).

**Central Vermont Solid Waste District** has been a resource for sustainable community initiatives. Contact Marge Keough at (802) 872-8100 x 234 or [mkeough@cswd.net](mailto:mkeough@cswd.net). The district has a zero-waste initiative. See [www.cvswwd.org](http://www.cvswwd.org) for more information.

**Casella Waste Management** has innovative recycling and waste management projects – (802) 775-0325. Information on sustainability groups forming in Vermont can be obtained from the **Vermont Peak Oil Network** at [www.vtpeakoil.net](http://www.vtpeakoil.net).

Universities and colleges can be partners in developing strategic plans for sustainability. Contact the **Snelling Center for Government at UVM** (802) 859-3090. **Middlebury College** has student groups working on sustainable systems projects. More information can be found at [www.middlebury.edu/administration/enviro/](http://www.middlebury.edu/administration/enviro/). Jim Merkel is a sustainability coordinator at **Dartmouth College** – [www.dartmouth.edu/~sustain/](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sustain/).

The Addison County Relocalization Network (ACoRN) is designing a local sustainability and energy initiative. Visit [www.willitseconomiclocalization.org](http://www.willitseconomiclocalization.org).

The **Burlington Legacy Project** provides examples of sustainable strategies in action. Contact them at 656-1500.

The **Sustainability Leadership Institute** has offered facilitation and leadership development for the Hinesburg task force start-up meetings. They are willing to partner with VECAN and other local organizations to support task force members in initial steps. Contact the Institute Director, Monica McKenna at 462-2111 or [mmckenna@sustainabilityleaders.org](mailto:mmckenna@sustainabilityleaders.org).

Shanna Ratner at **Yellow Wood Associates** 524-6141 and Chris Paterson at the **Center for Whole Communities** 496-5690 can provide an overview of the Community Indicator field’s efforts, successes and considerations. Two of many web-based resources are [Smart Communities Network](#) and [Sustainable Measures](#)

The Vermont Community Foundation (VCF) has two different grant rounds that may be of use for this Task Force. The ‘Successful Community’ Grant Round funds civic engagement activities which would connect to the idea of getting the whole community engaged in looking at community and economic development. VCF also has a ‘Sustainable Community’

Grant Round, which funds environmental and economic efforts that would tie in nicely with community energy planning ideas. Call 388-3355 or visit [www.vermontcf.org](http://www.vermontcf.org) for more information.

## **Multigenerational Community Center and Teen Center**

A Teen Center helps a community – now and far into the future – by providing good role models. The biggest challenges to having a successful teen center is finding adequate space, yearly funding, and stable volunteer and paid staffing. An excellent resource is the **Vermont Coalition of Teen Centers**, a listing of all Vermont teen centers. Contact Trevor Tait at 229-9151 or [info@vctc.net](mailto:info@vctc.net).

Many communities don't have an intergenerational project because of the different needs of various age groups. To have a successful project, perseverance and creativity are needed, along with patience and a will of steel. Bobette Scribner of the **Bradford Community Center** can provide a wealth of experience and ideas to succeed. She can be reached at 222-5456 or [bcdc@charter.net](mailto:bcdc@charter.net).

**USDA Rural Development** offers financing for community centers through its Community Facility Program, generally through a General Obligation Bond. Sue Hayes, Area Director in Montpelier has information on the funding process, and can be reached at 828-6010. USDA Rural Development specialists with expertise in community centers are Jon Michael Muise, Area Manager at 257-7878 x 106 and Naomi Hatch, Loan Specialist at 828-6067.

**The Southern Vermont Recreation Center** in Springfield is a good example of community mobilization and volunteer efforts. Call them at 885-2104.

Other successful centers are the **Carter Center** in Lebanon, NH (603) 448-6477 – [www.ccba-leb.com](http://www.ccba-leb.com), and the **McClure Multi-Generational Center** in Burlington, VT 658-3585. A key partner in this effort is the **Burlington Economic Development Office** at 865-7144.

Grant funding for community center planning is available through the **Vermont Community Development Block Grant Program**. Their office telephone is (800) 622-4553.

Two nearby projects that could provide examples and ideas are the **Winooski Community Process – Winooski Network** - contact Sr. Pat McKitterick at 847-6534, and the **Mobius Mentoring Program** in Essex at 658-1888

Successful projects require full community participation. Hinesburg has wonderful capacity to support an endeavor of this kind, but strong communications and coalition building will be needed. The Task Force should work hard to communicate with Hinesburg residents and build events to get members of the community engaged.

The **Vermont Economic Development Authority** offers a loan program for non-profit organizations. 828-5627 – [www.veda.org](http://www.veda.org)

## **Buy Local Campaign and Specialty Farming**

A good place to start looking at community food resources is the Food Council project in the **Burlington Community and Economic Development Office**. The contact there is Betsy Rosenbluth. 865-7515

Hinesburg residents mentioned the lack of a strong retail core in downtown as an impediment to selling local products. One way to build a strong customer base could be through existing gathering places, particularly the school. **Vermont Food Education Every Day (FEED)** is an excellent resource for school connections. Contact Joseph Kiefer at FoodWorks 223-1515.

There are plenty of examples of ways to make eating local foods fun, as well as a community building exercise. Perhaps the best recent example of a volunteer-based effort would be the **Champlain Valley Localvores**, who conduct an ‘eat local’ challenge in winter and summer. The contact there is Nicole Carpenter - her website is [www.eatlocalvt.org](http://www.eatlocalvt.org). To find out what localvore groups are doing around the state visit [www.vitalcommunities.org](http://www.vitalcommunities.org).

**Robert McBride** of Bellows Falls, created notebooks highlighting local services, businesses, and attractions so that everyone knew what was available in their town and also had a reference to provide to visitors. He is willing to share the lessons learned in compiling this resource, and can be contacted at 463-3252.

An important thing to remember is that even when people have access to local foods (or other products) they won’t always buy them. A substantial amount of consumer research has been done on what makes people buy a local product. Contact Jane Kolodinsky at the UVM **Department of Community Development and Applied Economics**, 656-4616: she will know of relevant resources.

One thing to keep in mind with expanding local product availability is seasons. If one or two programs could go year-round, for example a collective that orders foods or a winter CSA or even winter farmers market, then it would get people into a habit of buying local that doesn’t stop when cold weather arrives.

The **Local First Vermont** campaign a recently launched initiative to market the concept of buying locally in Vermont. Find out more at [www.localfirstvermont.org](http://www.localfirstvermont.org).

There are many successful models nearby that are willing to share their expertise. Some organizations to contact include:

- **Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA-VT)** 434-4122 [www.nofavt.org](http://www.nofavt.org)
- **Local Foods Plymouth Project**, Plymouth, NH – Sandra Jones (603) 536-5030 [www.plymouthenergy.org](http://www.plymouthenergy.org)
- **Intervale Foundation**, Burlington, VT – Lindsey Ketchell 658-8057 x112 [lindsey@intervale.org](mailto:lindsey@intervale.org)
- **Vermont Fresh Network** 434-2000 – [info@vermontfresh.net](mailto:info@vermontfresh.net)

Sherry Paige of **USDA Rural Development** can provide information on the Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, a grant source that might build a local directory or other practical

support to local business development. She can be reached at 828-6034 or [sherry.paige@vt.us.gov](mailto:sherry.paige@vt.us.gov).

The **Northern Vermont Resource and Conservation Service** provides technical and financial assistance for communities. Beth Ann Finley is the program coordinator and can be reached in the Berlin office at 828-4595.

Two good local agricultural resources are the **University of Vermont Extension Service** 656-3131 and the Steve Justice at the **Vermont Department of Agriculture** 828-3827.

### **Hinesburg Farm Conservation**

The **Northern Woodlands** and the **Center for Woodlands Education** has had success integrating forest conservation issues into the state education standards. A similar effort could help build an education program around farm conservation. They are online at [www.northernwoodlands.com](http://www.northernwoodlands.com) or can be reached by telephone at 439-6292.

**USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service** provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve Vermont's natural resources. The Agency provides cost share and financial incentives in some cases. For more information, contact them at 951-6796.

The **USDA Farm Service Agency** 524-6503, and the **Vermont Agricultural Credit Corporation** 828-5627 can provide technical guidance and financial assistance.

The **Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB)** offers a Farmland Preservation Program focused on retaining the state's quality agricultural land base in strong farming regions of the state. VHCB makes loans and grants for feasibility studies and for the acquisition of land and the purchase of conservation easements. Under their viability program they also provide on farm technical assistance in reviewing and developing business models. For more information on their Farmland Preservation and Vermont Farm Viability Enhancement Program, contact them at 828-3250.

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture can provide support to farmers in transition and advise town efforts. Contact Deputy Secretary David Lane for advice and agency support; 828-2430.

The **Vermont Land Trust (VLT)** seeks to conserve quality farms throughout Vermont. VLT provides legal, technical, mapping, stewardship, and financial support to communities, local, and regional land trusts, and state agencies to help them achieve their conservation priorities. 223-5234

For support with dairy, vegetable and other farms that are either organic, certified or transitioning to organic, contact the **Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA-VT)** 434-4122

The **UVM Extension Service** works statewide, with any kind of farm, including traditional dairy. They collaborate with the **UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture**. 656-3131

## **Town Forum Notes**

Compiled from focus group discussions held with Hinesburg residents and the VCRD Visiting Team on October 10, 2006.

Although the prioritization work of the Community Visit Program requires a town to decide what is most important as it moves forward with Task Forces, nothing is lost in the process from the long list of concerns and ideas expressed in early community focus sessions. VCRD appreciates the excellent work of the University of Vermont students who served as scribes and captured this dialogue. Many interesting and diverse thoughts are represented here, and are preserved as a reminder of issues explored, and a possible foundation for future projects.

### **Resource Team A**

*Alex Aldrich, Executive Director, Vermont Arts Council*

*Mel Adams, Director of Policy & Planning, VT Agency of Transportation*

*Joss Besse, Director, Vermont Downtown Program*

*Preston Bristow, Vice Chair, Woodstock Selectboard*

*James Saudade, Deputy Secretary, VT Agency of Commerce*

*Fred Schmidt, Director, UVM Center for Rural Studies*

*Brian Keefe, Community Liaison, Senator Jeffords' Office (Facilitator)*

*Corey Beach and Ryan Farran, University of Vermont (Scribes)*

### **I. Village Center**

#### **Challenges in This Area**

- Traffic: Hinesburg has become a commuter run into Burlington. The Department of Transportation does not take it seriously. It is especially dangerous for people that live right on Rt. 116.
- The lack of sidewalks makes it difficult for people to walk from one place to another. It is sometimes necessary to walk on Rt. 116.
- Storm water carrying high levels of phosphorus ends up in Shelburne Bay. It is harming the roads and basements of historic homes that form the core of the village.
- Driving is sometimes the only way to get around in town. It is hard to make left-hand turns into traffic during rush hour.
- Getting across the street into commuting traffic during rush hour is a big challenge.
- The elementary school has the most traffic accidents in town, which is unacceptable.
- Hinesburg is in a major struggle with the Agency of Transportation to “get the village back.”
- There have been studies for a Park and Ride system, but it only allows for about 20 cars.
- It is important to preserve the historic village. The buildings are an asset, but it is a challenge to maintain their condition.

- The town needs to get on the Federal Registry. The village Steering Committee is trying to leverage more federal funds, possibly using the help of St. Michael's College students.
- The town provides enough parking; the challenge is figuring out how it fits with traffic.
- The school has athletic fields that are considered an asset of the community, but children crossing the street are a challenge due to the traffic.
- Although the library and bank are assets, residents have to drive a mile out of the village center to the edge of the greater village to access their services; it's not well connected.
- CVU presents an asset and a challenge in that it is outside the greater village and requires town services but has an impact on traffic, especially from Charlotte.
- Groundwater pollution from the gas station is harming the watershed; environmental concerns are not being adequately addressed.
- Although there is a park with green space by Town Hall, the village does not have a typical Vermont or New England town square, so it is difficult to tell where the village center is.
- There is a local movement to create a band shell on the hillside by the school on Silver Street.
- A challenge is that nobody in town offices provides community economic development services, so the village is not following through on policies and strategies.
- Many people do not want significant development in the village. People are concerned about building in the village. There are mixed feelings about this, as some don't want development in outlying areas either.

#### **Assets and Opportunities: What Should be Done?**

- The village benefits from transportation corridors through Hinesburg, providing a gathering place for economic and social functions. Transportation contributes to that circulation.
- The zoning bylaws help to maintain the landscape. The views from various parts of town are an asset.
- Another asset is the Russell walking trails that conserve lands for recreation on the edge of town.
- Having the village in the middle of a rural landscape includes an agricultural and farming aspect that serves as an asset to the community.
- The IGA grocery store (Lantman's), a full-service supermarket, is an asset serving as a community-gathering place within walking distance of the village center.
- Hinesburg is home to arguably the best hardware store within 30-50 miles.
- Residents have access to videos and takeout food in the village center.
- There is good meeting space in the village
- The cheese factory and NRG are assets in that they support municipal wastewater and provide employment and tax dollars for town services.
- Build sidewalks five feet off the road to increase walking access in the village center.
- Provide parallel parking on Rt. 116 in the village center so people know it is the center of the village.

- It is necessary to build more crosswalks, and provide better marking and signage.
- Institute traffic-calming strategies in the village center. Put speed-monitoring devices in the village. The speed limit in the village center should be reduced from 35 to 25 mph. There is a direct correlation between speed limit enforcement and safety; as speed lowers, crime decreases.
- A multi-use space should be developed for film, theater, and meeting space in town, because the acoustics in the Town Hall are bad.
- Power lines (power, DSL, cable, and telephone) are a detriment to the community in terms of aesthetics, as they cross the street wherever it's convenient for Green Mountain Power.
- Most of town has access to broadband, but the village is a "dead spot" for cell phone reception.
- It would be nice to have more green space in the village center, but where would it be placed? Some CDBG funds would help, assuming the town is eligible for these grants.
- Hinesburg needs a sense of place and community, or an identity. There are not any "Welcome" signs, an effective tool for town recognition, on the outskirts of the village.
- There is an active committee working to decorate town that tried to put a sign up outside Town Hall, but the select board shot it down. Now they are working on "Gateway" signs.
- Is Hinesburg interested in reclaiming the "h" at the end of its name? The town should celebrate its history and tradition, and thus enhance the sense of community, with the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Residents of Hinesburg could search for the missing "h" on the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012.
- Create a historic walking tour of town, but first the village needs safe walking paths and sidewalks.
- Any development that is approved should come with a plan for usable sidewalks.
- Hinesburg is at a critical juncture in terms of size. Residents need to think about what brings people together in the community. Whereas the Farmers Market and Harvest Festival are a start, we need to keep it from feeling like "suburbs." We need both space and energy. For example, the floors in Town Hall are being replaced with wood from the town forest for the weekly contra dance.
- There was a wide range of people at the Harvest Festival; continue to include all generations.
- The town newspaper is an asset, but it needs to be more user-friendly and allow for more lead time for announcements in the calendar.
- The town website should be updated more regularly/frequently. We need a way for employees and employers to connect.
- The vacant parcel of land near the post office would make a nice park for a bike path. The current playing field would also make a nice meeting space or park.
- Use the Community School for the town (separate from CVU).
- There is a wide range of local charities providing plenty of resources to create activity and serve the community.

- Hinesburg could be more biker-friendly, as it is home for commuters to Burlington. Hinesburg should cater to bicyclers just as Vergennes caters to boaters.
- A bike path could also help slow traffic through the village center.
- Bicycling on Silver Street to the village center is dangerous. Narrowing the traffic lanes would give bicyclers more room and slow traffic down.
- Internet access and transportation networks could be strengthened.
- The outdated traffic volume study estimates at least 10,000 cars pass over 116 through Hinesburg in one direction each day. Hinesburg would be a great place for a bus stop. There is not a safe way to bicycle from Hinesburg to Burlington except on Sunday morning.
- The 2004 Crosswalk Assessment should be consulted.
- The Agency of Transportation did not do what they said they were going to do this summer. The select board and agency have reached an agreement, and the projects are ready to go, but they have been delayed.
- Hinesburg is in their short-term transportation planning process. It would be nice if CCTA bus served the town of Hinesburg, but there is a big problem with funding.
- Town needs help in conserving lands, preserving historic structures, and devising economic development strategies. Local leadership should follow the Land Trust Model for community economic development.
- We should conduct a historic inventory of buildings, which would bring in money and be part of the walking history tour.
- Buses need to come into the village to stop at an affordable senior center.

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

- Town residents expressed a need to promote town identity. Celebrate with community events.
- The town website and newspaper could help foster positive momentum more.
- The town has to make traffic-calming decisions but keep traffic flowing as well.
- Sidewalks are a town responsibility just as much as a state obligation.
- Sewer and water issues must be addressed if village growth occurs.
- Use broadband access to entice people working from home to office space in village.
- There are three “*h*’s” that define the town of Hinesburg: *Hub* for the region; *History*, needs to be celebrated; and *Hearing* (communication).
- There is very little discussion concerning business and elders, which could provide infill development.
- It is sometimes necessary to put issues to a town vote so popular opinion prevails. I encourage you all to trust the voters.

## **Transportation and Traffic**

### **Challenges in This Area**

- There is no way to get back and forth to Burlington except by car.
- There are too many cars passing through Hinesburg.
- There are too many people driving through town at high speeds, especially around the schools.
- The Selectboard has recognized Silver Street as a very serious safety issue; however, no funding has been made available to change anything. During the Rt. 7 construction period, Silver Street saw a very high increase in traffic.
- Turning off Charlotte Road during peak traffic hours is nearly impossible and very dangerous.
- There is only one main road that cuts through town.
- In the town center, people slow down to turn left into business parking lots. Impatient drivers behind them go around the turning cars at very high speeds.
- There is absolutely no alternative to using cars to get around. There is no public transportation around town or from town to other places.
- There is a conflict between having a livable village area and a state road running through the center.
- There are not enough crosswalks in town.
- The crosswalk signs have been flattened many times. Also, the crosswalks are not very inviting or well lit.
- Hinesburg has a lot of recreational bike traffic, and the village is not a safe place for bikers to ride.
- There have been a few serious vehicle accidents in town.
- The CVU kids drive too fast. There are a lot of dangerous corners on roads exiting CVU and some kids are riding their bikes home on roads with no shoulders.
- There is a huge increase in the number of parents dropping off their kids at the elementary schools, and a lot of the school buses are nearly empty.
- There is no stoplight at the Charlotte/Route 116 intersection
- Some residents can no longer walk on my dirt road because people are driving too fast and do not slow down.
- The tractor-trailers should not use engine breaks, because there are no hills in town.
- There is no real roadside parking.
- The back lots of businesses in town are not connected
- Transportation studies have been conducted: we have solutions on the table, but nothing ever gets accomplished.

### **Assets and Opportunities: What Should be Done?**

- Building speed bumps where possible would effectively slow traffic down.
- Some of the roads could be narrowed
- Install new stoplights and stop signs to manage traffic flow.
- Communicate with major employers in the area about encouraging flexible work hours to decrease traffic during peak commuter times.
- Employers should try to create incentives that promote carpooling.
- It is important to try to find alternatives to driving.

- Explore options for rerouting certain roads.
- The sidewalk infrastructure needs to be improved.
- It is important to have alternatives to driving. We should try to bring CCTA service to Hinesburg.
- Use the town website to create a rideshare program.
- Owners of companies with 18-wheeler trucks need to be notified that their trucks are sometimes driving on roads that they are not authorized to drive on.
- Greater law enforcement on the roads is needed.
- Park and rides are a good idea.
- If speeding ticket money was used for transportation, that might pay for police officers to patrol the roads.
- Perhaps people could get dropped off in Burlington from the Burlington Tech bus that leaves from the high school every morning.
- There are many options for traffic calming measures: Install traffic monitoring cameras; create a hotline number to report speeders and other reckless drivers; change the texture of the roads; add medians in the middle of the road.
- Add curbing along the roads through town.

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

- On street parking is clearly a strategy to slow traffic down.
- Policing should be increased.
- Consider a Park and Ride for kids going to school.
- Sidewalks will help slow the traffic down and promote walking.
- A 25 mph speed limit in the town center should be considered.
- We in Vermont have a different standard than the rest of the country on highways.
- There are a lot of grant opportunities out there. Local bonding needs to be implemented.
- You have done many studies on transportation in Hinesburg, therefore solving this problem will be an issue of community will.
- Engaging employers to help address these problems is a good idea.
- The problems mentioned need to be addressed at different levels. It is important to figure out which problem fits at what level (local, state, federal).

### **III. Walkability and Connectivity**

#### **Challenges in This Area**

- The school's playing fields need to be connected.
- The town center is too spread out, and should be better connected.
- Frontporchforum.com has expanded to Hinesburg, providing Internet connectivity and neighborhood community through virtual neighborhoods.
- Although the public library is an asset, it is unconnected, as you cannot walk there easily from the village center.
- Restaurants, churches, the grocery store, the bank, and schools are all destinations in Hinesburg.
- Numerous hills and loops for bicycling are inviting, but bike lanes on roads are a challenge.
- Wildlife, plants, and flowers are difficult to maintain and preserve as public access increases.
- Fragmentation and subdivided land present a challenge if private landowners do not allow access.
- How can we find a balance between open spaces and trail access?
- People sharing land can provide benefits, but keeping that in the community is a challenge.
- There are some sidewalks, but they are not well connected. We have struggles in planning for and funding sidewalks.
- Driving through intersections in the village center is dangerous with no lighting, stoplights, or stop signs. The west side of 116 is terrible.
- There is no light on the sidewalk from school to town. In addition, paths to the town beach are needed.
- The problem is that the town has to rely on state funding for changes to Rt. 116.
- There are no bike lanes—or other forms of alternate transportation—on 116 for residents to shop by bicycle.
- It is difficult for seniors and the physically disabled to access services and safely cross streets.
- Online maps provided by the Trails Committee on the town website are wonderful. The challenge is to map the rest of town, especially the private lands.
- The enforcement of traffic laws is a problem. The speed limit in the village center should be reduced from 35 to 25 mph.
- The layout of town is great, but the problem is a lack of connection.

#### **Assets and Opportunities: What Should be Done?**

- There are several publicly owned assets in Hinesburg. The Trails Committee and community want to connect public walking paths so you don't need a car to access the trails. The issue involves more than just sidewalks in the village center. The goal is to expand the trail network outside of the village.
- Mountain bike trails were built by Fellowship of the Wheel.
- Hinesburg has several Class IV roads. Dirt roads are an asset, as they prevent traffic congestion.
- The Land Trust has purchased property for trails.

- There is a fair amount of accessible, undeveloped land under private ownership and some good natural areas: The Fred Johnson Wilderness Area is a good resource; Hinesburg is accessible from the village center to the woods (Russell Farm); the Laplatte River is undeveloped; there is a vast network of trails for cross-country skiing; and dirt roads and trails in the town forest are used for recreation by bikers and hunters.
- Traffic should be reduced and slowed down. On-street parallel parking should be provided on 116 to eliminate the “highway mentality.”
- Traffic-calming measures such as speed bumps and roads that are narrower in width need to be implemented. As a village, Hinesburg needs 11-foot traffic lanes with 4-foot shoulders.
- Current transportation/infrastructure projects include installing a stoplight at the Charlotte Road intersection, flattening the Silver St. intersection, completing the sidewalks, and building a bike path from the post office to the library. There are two other projects pending funding.
- Residents should apply pressure on the state to lower the speed limit through town and put pressure on police to enforce speed limits. The DRB should only approve projects that provide sidewalks.
- Create a local bond or apply for grants to complete the sidewalk infrastructure around town. This is a huge issue for people retiring and seniors.
- Silver Street and Charlotte Road need to be improved. The west side of Rt. 116 needs improvement.
- Preliminary engineering studies for sidewalks have been conducted for the area between Mechanicsville Road and Firehouse Plaza, and between Lyman Meadows development and the center of the village.
- Pedestrian markings/signage is needed in front of the fire station and automotive place.
- Mechanicsville Road needs to connect to the library for the high school kids.
- As a safety issue, the sidewalks should be wider - 6 or 8 feet instead of 4.
- The path from Lyman Meadows to Lampman’s is informal. There are opportunities to connect similar multipurpose routes within and outside the village.
- A conflict exists between cars and bicycles. Do bicycles belong on roads or sidewalks? We need to get people out of their cars.
- People take “the path of least resistance,” or the shortest distance between two places. We should build sidewalks that directly connect places rather than along the roads.
- It is possible to have sidewalks off roads so you don’t have to deal with traffic. Use trails and sidewalks for walking.
- Richmond Road is dangerous to walk on. This is a priority of the Village Steering Committee.
- Connect paths that are isolated from the village center.
- The town needs to work with landowners, who should be compensated for allowing access.

- There are several areas for positive communication: meet with the Trails Committee and Village Steering Committee; consult recommendations from various studies on town website; attend Planning Commission meetings.
- Use a school bus as a public transit shuttle between Lake Iroquois and the town beach.
- Connect Hinesburg to adjacent towns with a bike path.
- Commit to spending money, as public projects require grant money and/or tax dollars. Wide paths are part of the public infrastructure in Switzerland.
- Look at rivers and streams as viable methods of transportation.
- Create safe ways for seniors, who want to stay in Hinesburg, to travel.
- Create direct bicycle routes connecting Hinesburg with Shelburne, Starksboro and Bristol.
- Private landowners cannot be held liable if others are injured while using their land.
- Create a park and ride system.
- The Conservation Committee needs to know where to look for connections between dirt roads and trails. The mapping process currently underway can be used by Planning and Zoning as development occurs.
- Establish a “Connectivity” Committee to focus on where and how to connect trails with sidewalks in town.
- Energy is a problem. We need to think further ahead. Sustainability, walkability, connectivity, and transportation are all connected.

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

- Keep up the momentum and work for credibility. Trails and bike paths are issues in other towns, such as Woodstock, as well.
- The turnout (resident participation) is exceptional, which bodes well for the future. Get more public input and involvement for more buy-in to the process.
- Put the master plan for projects down on paper to work from for the next five to ten years. The planning for traffic calming is not clear.
- Vermont is bigger than Hinesburg. The Department of Transportation can help with limited resources, but cannot move Hinesburg to the top of list of priorities. This is a local issue; don't only rely on the state.
- The strength is in getting the community to coalesce. Trails and youth issues pull towns together.
- The traffic problem is too important to wait for state funding, which is not guaranteed. Go after the “low-hanging fruit,” such as grant money for modification to buildings, sidewalks, and facilities according to ADA requirements. The state's matching program is a possibility, though it may not match the capital 100%.
- Create a five-year capital budget to meet physical and political needs. Develop one big map of the town's resources.
- The Champlain Valley is a very desirable location for bicyclists.
- Develop and adhere to a timeline for action.
- Get more lighting on the streets. (This resource team member almost hit a pedestrian while returning from dinner).

## **Resource Team B**

*Captain Al Buck, Troop Commander, Vermont State Police*

*Jane Helmstetter, Regional Director, Agency of Human Services*

*John Hall, Commissioner, VT Department of Housing & Community Affairs*

*Steve Kerr, Secretary, VT Department of Agriculture, Food and Markets*

*Robert McDonald, Housing Program Director, USDA Rural Development*

*Charlie Smith, Executive Director, Snelling Center for Government*

*Hal Cohen, Executive Director, Central VT Community Action Council (Facilitator)*

*Patrick Wood, University of Vermont (Scribe)*

## **I. Affordable Housing**

### **Challenges in This Area**

- Cost is a challenge. The price has got to come down. Surely there should be alternatives, like .25 acres, a garage, and a small 2 bedroom ranch. We need smaller alternatives.
- The housing stock out there is too expensive. One participant stated that she was at this discussion because it is too expensive for a couple making \$40,000-\$50,000 to purchase a home.
- There need to be incentives for developers of affordable housing.
- The town is running out of sewer capacity. The beautiful La Platte River can only take so much more.
- Traffic is a challenge. Affordable or not, if you keep adding housing the intersections will get backed up.
- There are so many people passing through. They are commuting from more affordable homes in south.
- Most people who need affordable housing are coming from Bristol, Lincoln, and other towns. There is a lower cost of living there.
- There are some myths about affordable housing in this town. There is not much resistance to the idea of more affordable units.
- From the major growth center of Burlington, Hinesburg is next in line after Williston. There is major development pressure to open space. That causes land values to increase. We're next. The wave is hitting but it hasn't broken yet. Land prices right now are incredible.
- There is plenty of land, but it is really expensive.
- Hinesburg is dealing with Burlington's affordable housing issue. This is a regional, even statewide issue.
- Young people want to live in Hinesburg. Commuting costs are huge, and transportation is an issue.
- The "Triple L" mobile home park is very dense. There is a serious septic issue. Each mobile home has its own septic system. It is privately owned, and so old the regulations are grandfathered in. It is a great location, and a lost opportunity
- People in the mobile home park are paying too much for what they are getting.
- The back section is in good shape. Behind the main road through park is good. They have yards that back up to the woods. The front section is very dense.

- People don't want to have trailer parks because they consider those people to be poor. But people making \$40K - \$50K live there.
- Managing affordable rentals is tough for developers.
- Developers need to begin with that in mind. Before putting money down they need to plan to keep costs down so rents can be affordable.
- Without subsidies developers can't build something new that anybody would want to live in. It takes a phenomenal amount of money especially when towns get their hands into things with all the various fees.
- The "perception" of affordable housing is a challenge. People want their kids to live in town. Many people live in affordable housing as they wait to move into house. "Can we make it so people who live in town get affordable housing first?"
- After the town/village "charettes" happened, after all those meetings, the perception was that we need more affordable housing. Does the town really think we need more affordable housing?
- As somebody who lives in town I'm truly amazed at the discussion and interest in affordable housing. I don't know if our kids will be able to buy a house in Hinesburg. That is the impact of being in a high growth community.
- Is there any rental affordable housing in town?
- Yes, across from the Post Office there are 24 rental units. There are 16 rental units behind the phone company.

#### **Assets and Opportunities: What Should be Done?**

- The town affordable housing committee is trying to lower costs by increasing density. Changing the two-acre zoning is a solution.
- We should use zoning regulations to promote infill in the existing village before spreading out and out. This should be applied to Burlington. The more open land you keep close to Burlington, the more you force development out. If you provide growth close to Burlington you won't be forcing sprawl out as much. The Land Trust can help with this.
- There is a need to fix up the "Triple L" mobile home park to improve the quality of life for the families and children that live there.
- The Hinesburg Select Board recently authorized a committee on affordable housing.
- This town seems is more willing to work together than other towns.
- There is economic diversity in town. It is a place for everyone.
- Space is available. There is developable land.
- Condominiums make good starter homes. Langdon Meadows is in town. The condos cost \$150K-165K. They are about 20 years old. There are about 78 units.
- The American dream is to own your own home. But affordable can also be rental. There is Section 8 property in town for seniors called Kelly's field, with 20-30 units.
- "Block grants" would be good for the village center. What is considered the village center is pretty developed, or at least already planned for. The plans need to be expanded to include affordable housing.
- Proximity to Burlington is an asset. The opportunity for jobs is an asset. But it does create transportation issues.
- Hinesburg has good sewer and water infrastructure.

- Utilizing the land trust is a solution. People can buy the place for \$150K and get a grant through the land trust for \$50K. Then if the house appreciated by \$50K they would pay that back to the land trust.
- It is easier for the land trusts to rent affordable housing units.
- In a rental situation there needs to be a larger amount of units to make it affordable for the renters. Increasing the density per unit lowers the cost of land.
- Density can cut down the cost per unit, but what if Hinesburg is the only noble community that increases density? Costs will continue to go up and up if there is not enough housing in the whole Burlington regional area. We must have planning. We need a coordinated regional effort.
- The town sewer policy gives a bonus to having sewers. Can we promote density by changing this, and promote septic systems?
- The typical formula used in Vermont includes grants from the Vermont Housing Conservation Board and/or federal agencies. Usually for rental housing they require affordability to receive subsidies.
- The advantages of the non-profit groups are that their interest is not in making profit. They can deal with restrictions and deeds in order to keep rental units affordable.
- Can we change the town sewer allocation and make it geared towards affordable housing?
- Is inclusionary zoning possible? For example if someone builds 10 units they must make one affordable.
- The affordable housing committee approved by the select board is trying to make efforts in zoning.
- Based on the town growth rate about 300 more units over time with 10 percent of that affordable would satisfy the demand, but that depends on regional planning.
- There is a new development south on Rt. 116 on Munson hill. It is made up of clustered, single family, green built homes. They are selling for \$400K. It is mostly people wanting to move to smaller places with smaller lots. They are downsizing to \$400K.
- The new development in the village is selling houses for \$219K-\$280K.
- “Is it possible to recycle the trailer parks?” The Triple L mobile home park is for sale.
- It is a challenge to develop the north end of town like CVU corners. It is zoned as an agricultural district. It should be rezoned in future. The current zoning is for single story buildings. We must zone for multi-use and affordable housing. Having apartments over businesses is a great idea.
- The current zoning districts extend from Patrick Brook south to the old village district, and from Patrick Brook north to Falls Road.
- There are existing opportunities within the village core. If we created a three-story height limitation it would encourage growth within the village. We could replace older buildings with multi-story buildings.
- There is a current limit of two-story zoning.
- There is also pressure to preserve the rural nature of the town.
- “I know people want to preserve the rural nature, but who is really farming? They are mostly playing around with it.”
- NRG wants to build housing. They currently have 60 employees. They will have 100 in a couple years.
- One resident declared, “I’ve got 400 acres and you’re not getting it”

- Hinesburg has zoning to allow accessory apartments in people's homes.
- It is a challenge to define what is affordable. Is it 80% of median income? That limits all mobile home park people.
- According to the Vermont Housing Authority the only people eligible are under 80% of median income.
- If the will is in the community to have affordable housing, the opportunities are there. Developing consensus is the hardest part.
- People who are looking for affordable housing need to be directed to a network of people who are trying to help. People have very little knowledge of the options that are available. It isn't easy unless they have help.
- Educating the community on what it takes to get affordable housing and what it takes to access affordable housing could be helpful.
- South Burlington, Shelburne and Colchester have tackled the problem. It is time for Hinesburg to tackle it.
- Hundreds of units are needed in Vermont. We need education for the town to develop the ability if people want to do it. Maybe our zoning is not making it easy. We could partner with the non-profit groups, and mix a little of several different strategies. Now we are doing nothing.
- Maybe the ultimate solution is to pay a little bit through property taxes to go into a fund for affordable housing. It could be seed money to get projects started.
- "Do you want to get shot?"
- Every year at Town Meeting people propose to conserve land and other uses for tax money why not for this?

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

- I'm impressed at the will of the people to tackle the issue with an open mind. I suggest you target the problem. Bracket the need. Bracket the goal. Goals change over time. It is helpful to refer back to the original goals.
- If Triple L is for sale, and if it is too tired maybe it is time to rethink what is built there. The solution could result in more units, or in some other way make better use of the location.
- Congratulations on getting right to the point of having an affordable housing committee. You have identified all the right things. Density bonuses, inclusionary zoning, regional planning should all be part of the mix.
- Montpelier has a housing task force working on accessory zoning.
- When communities raise a housing trust fund it shows funders that the community is serious about having affordable housing.
- It is important to have consensus on where the community should grow. What size should it grow to? Where? In designing what will happen a host of issues come up.
- Transferring development rights to conservation is an option. There is a continued appetite to conserve open space. You can transfer densities to where you want to build to control development.
- There is no reason Hinesburg shouldn't make its case and get in line. The Housing Conservation Board would want to hear Hinesburg. That would help to make a case to the state government.
- What do people in town make for income? You would probably need rental units to be part of the mix.

- Understand your zoning regulations. Is there a 2-3 acre minimum outside the village? Is it smaller in the village?
- South Burlington planning commission has worked with similar problems in the South East quadrant of town. There was a 1.5 acre zoning minimum. We asked where we want to have density. Do we want to have pockets of it? We decided to allow the transfer of development rights. The developer can acquire land rights in open space and use them to develop elsewhere to a higher density.
- We have zoning up to 8 units per acre in some places. Developers get bonuses for affordable housing - up to 25% affordable units. We have density bonuses and inclusionary zoning bonuses happening at the same time.
- Once you decide on a plan, communicate it to the people of the town yourselves. Don't rely on the news or anybody else. Lots of misinformation can happen with plans like this. It torpedoes things.
- I work with the incarcerated women's initiative. Housing is a huge issue there.
- Renovation of existing properties is a good idea. There are opportunities for federal funding, and tax breaks by creating small apartments on a property.
- The state has a new growth center law. The point of it is about density, because of the basic land cost. A development seems to run counter to the notion of rural landscapes, but rural land and dense villages go together in lots of places.
- Sticker shock is often huge on unit costs especially when dealing with the renovation of historic buildings.
- Affordable housing is embarrassingly behind in the state. Land values continue to rise.
- Any new buildings must be as energy efficient as possible to keep costs down.
- Montpelier promotes accessory apartments. There is money in it for individuals. You can get a \$1500 grant to design and plan the construction with regard to sewer and water issues if you can prove you will rent affordably.

## II. Police

### Challenges in This Area

- The expectations of the townspeople are a challenge.
- What people see the police department doing, as opposed to what the police department is actually doing behind the scenes is very different.
- The town's growth rate is a challenge. It is difficult for the Hinesburg Police Department to keep up. There are about 5000 people with only 3 police officers.
- The Community Police Department public relations are difficult. People expect them to be present for everything. There is a difference between what the town's people perceive as important vs. what is actually important. This is a communications issue.
- "What is the town's perception? My assumption is that they are off doing important stuff and thus not dealing with my vandalized mailbox."
- There is a lot of behind the scenes work, such as restraining orders.
- A number of residents were unclear about the role of the town police force. "I don't know what the police force does."
- Some participants asked about overnight police protection. There is currently a rotating shift, however the community doesn't know about it.
- The local police chief advised that from 10 pm – 6 am the State Police are in charge. Police are on occasionally at night until 2 am. This is not publicized within the community.
- The community feeling is that night coverage is needed, but currently there are not enough resources.
- We can't always put the ball in the Police Chief's court. We can't be saying, "You should be here just in case."
- It is a challenge for the community to understand that they have the ability and the responsibility to approach the police. It is the responsibility of the community to be their eyes.
- There is a difference between what people think they should be getting, versus what they are getting, versus what they are paying for.
- The crime rate is going up in the county but also in town. The 15% crime rate is going up in the county.
- Thefts are the biggest crimes. There are virtually no shootings. Crime is a very small factor compared to big cities.
- Most robberies are related to drugs.
- One week ago the DEA shutdown a multi-million dollar marijuana operation. Years ago there was a seizure of 2.5 lbs of cocaine. There are serious things happening beneath the surface.
- Drugs drive crime and criminals.
- Domestic issues are significant around the state. Everyone is working hard on domestic issues. If there is any sign of actual physical abuse the police must arrest. That takes police off the street for many hours.

- There is a sense that in the last 3-4 years crime has been rising. There have been many car break-ins.
- People would prefer to pretend that there is no crime. They would prefer to pretend that it is a peaceful community.
- People don't want to participate in the discussion. There is community denial and a lack of support. People want to pretend that Vermont is safe.
- Numerous residents expressed the belief that the size of the police force needs to be increased.

### **Assets and Opportunities: What Should be Done?**

- Most people don't think about the police department until town meeting day. We should be asking what does the town need, what does the police department need?
- This could draw out a direction the police department could take. It is like a third party research vehicle for suggestions down the road.
- There has been a dramatic change in the last 4-5 years. Law enforcement is often adversarial. It's great that the Hinesburg Police Department is not like that. It's hard to quantify internally. It's hard to get people to say they did a good job.
- The training police have received in emergency medicine is an asset to the fire department. The police have moved from guys with guns to guys with training in emergency medicine. There are now six more people to help the fire department.
- The police are visible and a part of the community. They attend all community activities, not just as police but also as people both personal and professional.
- We have Buck, the police dog.
- There are two police dogs, two full time police officers, and four part time police officers. The police dogs create a niche. The dogs find drugs, track people in buildings with fire alarms, and find people who run away. They are called on to help other departments in other towns.
- There is strong community support for the police department, which makes the department more effective both to individuals and other organizations like the fire department and the state police. The community is a force multiplier.
- The police recently did an in-house evaluation. They concluded they had a good relationship with the public.
- We have relatively low turnover with people in a small department.
- Hinesburg has a very low crime rate when compared to national statistics.
- The Hinesburg Police Department is only on duty 80 hrs p/wk. To the state police quality life crimes are a low priority. For example, busted mailboxes and barking dogs. When the Hinesburg police department deals with such issues it gives the state police significantly more time.
- The chief's use of email is an asset.
- The Hinesburg police department needs more people, more funding, and more resources.
- One resident observed that more night coverage was needed, while another stated that an increased presence in general, not necessarily at night, is required.
- We need more funding and more people. Several years ago Jim Walton, the public safety commissioner, conducted a survey. He concluded that in the first year

Hinesburg needed to add a half time police person. Then in the next year add one full time person. Small things take up manpower and money. We need to keep up with growth and to keep people from outside of town from coming to prey on the town's residents.

- We need solutions that don't cost money, or at least solutions that cost less. It would be good to differentiate between the law enforcement that the police department does and other activities that a different agency could handle. For example social service related activities and prevention activities. We need a clear idea about what the resources are going towards. What they are providing versus what they are expected to provide?
- The solution is awareness. We need to have a better understanding of what is happening on a regular basis. Maybe have an open meeting every six months.
- This is a small community. One thing that is great about a small town is that the police department is one agency that can be called for almost anything to solve a problem. That's not the official role of the police department. It would be sad to lose that aspect of a small town.
- My understanding is that it takes a minimum of fifteen officers to provide 24-7 minimum coverage given annual training, sick leave, military service, and other staffing issues, like vacations. The police department staff couldn't take their vacations over the last couple years.
- There is never more than one person on duty at a time. Having to go a crime scene with only one officer is eye opening for a resident.
- The police department is aware that the population in town is too high. That's normal. There are plans to try to add an officer but that will not drastically change things.
- Looking at neighboring towns like Richmond and Shelburne would help. Looking at regional options, regional resources, crime prevention units or the option of joining forces could help.
- From a citizen's perspective having regional programs that share officers seems like it could work. That is already mostly done with the sheriff's departments. Some towns, however, would be worried about getting their fair share. There would be problems of local control.

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

- There is rapid growth and there are currently not resources to support the need. It seems like this hasn't been discussed on a community level. You need to talk about what the issues are and what can be done to address them.
- From my experience in human services the police are often involved. It would help to educate the community on what happens on a call in face-to-face discussion.
- Ask yourselves what are the priorities that we want from police? Are those realistic? Compare that with national per capita ratio of officers to residents and compare what it would cost to achieve that.
- There is never enough time at town meeting to have discussions such as this.
- You have a small department and you have great access to them. If people had a better understanding of that access, that would help.
- I suggest you have an open house with the fire department before budget time.

- There is not enough coverage because of the location in Chittenden County. Crime doesn't stop in this community at 2 am. Most nights are busier than the day shift and more violent activities occur at night. The state police often send only one officer to respond to a call.
- I suggest you work with the town manager. You need to put resources into this agency. This is a proactive department that does a good job with three people and a couple of part timers. The community needs to put resources back into the department.
- There is a misunderstanding and miscommunication between what people expect and what the police department can offer. Educate the public.
- You have a sensitive and thoughtful police presence. It seems that you are conservative in what you are asking for because of taxes.
- Part timers are cost effective because they don't get benefits.
- There is trust, appreciation and confidence. The community is truly with the police department. Those are important assets and appear to be well earned. The services that the department can extend are very special.
- I like the regional idea but I am not an expert. It also sounds like there is already good teamwork.
- It's important to be open to new creative ideas. Look to the community and the select board to brainstorm those ideas. It seems like there is a lot of pressure on the Chief's shoulders and it would help to get the community as a partner.

### **III. Wellbeing of Youth and Seniors**

#### **Challenges in This Area**

- Transportation is a huge problem for young people in town. It's hard for students to stay for after school activities and to get back for events in the evening.
- Transportation is also a problem for seniors. The town is so spread out and people are not able to walk on roads because they are too dangerous.
- It is dangerous to bike to school because the roads are so heavily traveled.
- We need sidewalks, bike paths, and multi-use trails.
- Isolation is a problem for youth and seniors. For seniors there are no neighbors close by to help you shovel. On roads there are no sidewalks and people who live in the trailer park cannot walk to town easily.
- The transportation issues for kids keep them very dependent on their parents. Middle school students are especially isolated. They have no independence to set their own agendas.
- When kids get older and team sports become more serious and competitive kids with disabilities have nothing to do unless they go to Burlington to use the services there.
- Because of security issues at the school, it is not inviting and doesn't make you feel like you are in an open community. Little things like keeping the school doors locked create a culture of fear. The kids are growing up with the sense that there are lots of scary things out there.
- At the Hinesburg Community School the younger students are often intimidated by the 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- The Hinesburg Community School has an absurdly small indoor athletic facility. Sports practices are sometimes happening at 9pm.
- Domestic violence is an issue for youth.
- At the elementary school there are cigarette issues during recess and after school before sports. There are drug and alcohol issues in the elementary schools.
- A fairly substantial percentage of the population is low income. People try desperately to get those people to come to community places but a lot of their kids go directly to day care and are not involved in sports. It is a challenge to get those people involved.
- Day care for seniors and respite care for children with disabilities is an issue. There are times when parents have to go places and a trained person is not available.
- Day care is expensive for young children. There is adequate daycare for toddlers and preschool but not enough infant care.
- The school buses are an issue. Kids have to walk long distances to the bus. It is easier to drive them to school than to drive them to the bus and leave them at an intersection in bad weather.
- We need sidewalks and shoulders for several miles around the town center.
- Speeding enforcement needs to be better from the police. The speed limit needs to be reduced all over town, not just on 116. People are not slowing down through town.
- Kids are waiting for the school bus for twenty minutes, but they could be in school in five minutes if they were driven.
- Decisions get made but are not communicated. People don't feel like they are part of the decisions. People feel like they are shut out. There needs to be more dialogue. For example the decision to have only one door open at the Hinesburg Community School.

- Some small towns have a YMCA that serves as a community center. There is a lack of that in Hinesburg.
- There is a need for multi generational centers or places that can be used by both youth and seniors.
- It is important to understand the demographics and aging trends in the community, so we have a better sense of need.
- Affordable housing is an issue for seniors. There is not enough senior housing. There are people of all sorts that have assisted living needs.
- It makes a big difference in the lives of the elderly when they are at home as opposed to when they are at assisted living. People's lives are very based in place.
- There are opportunities for communication through the CVU website, but the challenge is in using the CVU website for Hinesburg, because the school belongs to four towns.

### **Assets and Opportunities: What Should be Done?**

- The walk to school program is an asset. It happens weekly. Hinesburg is one of the first in the state to start this program. Wednesday mornings kids and parents meet at the post office and walk to school. It was started as an obesity reduction program. It's an amazing program because it brings together the Department of Education, Department of Health and the Department of Transportation. Expansion of walking programs would be great but we need more sidewalks.
- We could build bus shelters, but that would cause security issues. People wouldn't want to drop their kids off unsupervised.
- The Hinesburg Community School Viking newspaper is a place where people could advertise events, although non-school activities aren't published. We should encourage the school to open up.
- A funding source to explore for a multi-purpose center in Burlington is Lois McClure, someone from Chittenden County who donates lots of money for such things. The Charlotte Senior Center is beautiful and was endowed by one person.
- The Community School has potential as a multi-generational center. CVU is a big facility that has a lot available or that should be available. We have a town hall and the United Church is expanding. The facilities exist but we need someone to coordinate the facilities.
- This may be a radical viewpoint. There is a big population in the Triple L Mobile Home Park and the Sunset Village. Maybe we could build a neighborhood park nearby, maybe at the bottom of Texas Hill Road. The majority of the population lives in that part of town and that would also help the whole connectivity situation. Maybe there is space on the corner of Richmond Road and North Road.
- There are good programs in place for youth. We have a mentoring program, there is a weekly play group for under school aged children and their parents, and there are sports through the Parks and Recreation Department
- We have Access C.V.U. That is night classes for the community at the school that covers all sorts of subjects. People give classes on anything and everything for all ages.
- There is a strong Boy Scout and Girl Scout program and a strong 4-H program.

- There is Key Club where people reach out to the community. There is a buddy program at Hinesburg Community School and CVU where youth and seniors engage in mentoring activities.
- At CVU there is a drug prevention program called Connecting Youth and it works to promote a safe and drug free school. Additionally, there is substance abuse money at CVU.
- For seniors in Chittenden County there are day services in Burlington and Williston. The Visiting Nurse's Association organizes a bus that picks people up here. There's a bus that picks people up for senior meals on Friday at noon.
- Churches are the biggest support for seniors.
- The community room at Kelley's Field is an asset. It is small but people have birthday parties there. Kelley's Field is subsidized housing for seniors and people with disabilities. There are twenty-four units and there is a waiting list to get in there. There are currently people from Shelburne waiting to get in. It is privately owned and has been there since around 1987. It is funded by HUDD.
- A swimming pool would be great for people with disabilities, like a therapy pool. Stowe has a great indoor community pool, but Stowe also has lots of money.
- It is important to promote programs like Home Share, Meals on Wheels, and the Visiting Nurse's Association.
- Some consolidation of community service staff and programs could occur. At Burlington High School there are community service requirements and certain clubs do community service. A community service coordinator position could be created to respond to needs like rides for medical issues.
- Collaboration could be developed between regional volunteer organizations like the United Way and the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program.
- We need to increase subsidized housing for the elderly. An assisted living place could be created.

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

- The town has lots of assets. I've heard a lot of transportation issues that pose challenges to young people. Some people can get there, some can't. That issue spans the ages. You need to figure out how to improve the transportation networks in town.
- Improve the communication of local information to people in town.
- There is an incredible amount of volunteer energy.
- There are lots of assets but they seem fragmented. That could be a result of the large group in this meeting. There needs to be some way to bring them together.
- Sidewalks and bike paths can really bring the community together. Calming traffic could help. Traffic makes the community feel fragmented.
- There is no place for elders to grow old and there is a general lack of services for seniors.
- The town seems really set up for youth. There are lots of assets for them but there is very little for seniors. Look more towards those assets, and then join the two together.
- You need to stop youth boredom. If you give them a program they'll work on it.
- Traffic lights are a big issue that takes a long time to get the state to move on, however, changing speed limits is often easier than you think to accomplish.

- There are major issues trying to physically build a community center. I suggest a virtual community center. Consider funding a position rather than brick and mortar. Plug into resources outside the community.
- Use the 2-1-1 system. If you dial 2-1-1 you can find out about any program that exists in the state. They are open until eight on weekdays and five on weekends. They will soon have interpretive services.
- Try to find out about other things that other towns are doing. South Burlington just started having school later in the day. It took a lot of work but they did it.
- Do an assessment of the Meals on Wheels program. When you stop to drop off food check in to see if someone needs some extra assistance. Expand the amount of time for delivery people.
- It's usually better to bring services to people where they are comfortable and where they already are.
- There are lots of youth services. There are lots of positive things for youth. It doesn't seem like there are the drug issues that you usually hear about with youth.
- The town center doesn't feel like a town center. CVU is a place with lots of assets that is not far from the town center. If you are going to build sidewalks and light them you need to be sure that the sidewalks lead to somewhere. Having a coordinator of the community resources is a great idea.

## **Resource Team C**

*Greg Brown, Executive Director, Chittenden Regional Planning Commission*

*Ed Delhagen, Deputy Director, VT Sustainable Jobs Fund*

*Brennan Duffy, Economic Development Specialist, VT Dept. of Economic Development*

*Helen Jordan, Director, VCRD Creative Communities Program*

*Gil Livingston, President, Vermont Land Trust*

*Monica McKenna, Regional Director, Sustainability Leadership Institute*

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*Dan Smith, Vice President, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation*

*Paul Costello, Executive Director, VT Council on Rural Development (Facilitator)*

*Jessica Hyman, University of Vermont (Scribe)*

## **I. Sustainability and Jobs**

### **Challenges in This Area**

- The town has changed over the years from being agriculture based to being a bedroom community.
- There is no pharmacy, but there is a delivery service.
- Some cottage businesses rely on broadband, which is not necessarily available.
- Many boutique/cottage businesses have started and failed because of lack of critical mass of consumers.
- It is difficult to attract new industry in town.
- The town needs to reach a certain level of large employers, in order to eliminate the need to commute.
- What are our basic needs that can be met within the community? How can we produce as much food as possible for local consumption?
- What qualities are needed that will attract an employer into Hinesburg to provide decent-paying jobs? Without that people will have to go out of town for work.
- The town sewage plant is close to capacity, but there are expansion plans in the works. A bond vote will likely be held in March.
- The biggest challenge is economics, making resources affordable to everyone in town.
- Traffic affects everything we talk about in town. It's not just people coming to and from town, but people passing through.
- Being a bedroom community puts pressure on the land base, especially for residential development.
- The assumption is that the only way to get to Burlington is by car. Hinesburg needs more efficient mass transportation, but there isn't the base to support mass transit. It would need to be subsidized, making it unsustainable.
- Even if more services and industry move to Hinesburg, there's no guarantee that Hinesburg residents will get those jobs.
- There is no economic development committee in town. The Village Steering Committee doesn't work on attracting businesses.
- Local regulations hinder what is allowed in town. There is too much micromanagement of projects. It takes too long to get permits.
- Planning is based in the past. We need to throw out past rules, and start fresh.
- The nature of Saputo cheese factory is contradictory: All the cheese produced at the factory leaves town and most leaves the state, yet the milk comes from around the

Vermont and beyond. The scale of the business isn't sustainable, and they don't pay living wages. It's based on a huge consumption of fossil fuel.

### **Assets and Opportunities: What Should be Done?**

- The growth of NRG and the Saputo cheese factory shows the evolution of jobs in Hinesburg.
- Lantman's grocery store is a key business in town. It serves as a center of the community and is a good training ground for youth.
- Other key businesses in town are Aircorps Manufacturing, Hinesburg Sand and Gravel, the hardware store, restaurants, Giroux Body Shop, Merchants Bank, the sawmill, and sugar makers.
- Several participants observed that the town has a thriving cottage industry, including photographers, artists, computer consultants, furniture and cabinetmakers. Many contractors who work throughout the county live in town.
- The farmers market is thriving. It attracts vendors from outside town.
- Champlain Valley Union High School is a big employer.
- There is a tourism economy that people tend to ignore, including Cedar Knoll golf course, trail networks for mountain biking and walking, bed and breakfasts, gardening tours, and Lake Iroquois. The area is also a major cycling route.
- The underlying resources in town are good agricultural soil, a development policy that avoids building on those soils, potential for forest products and people in town who know about certain industries.
- The town's land-use regulations are designed to control sprawl as much as possible. The Town Plan was readopted in 2005 and zoning regulations are being rewritten now. The Conservation Commission is working on an open space plan.
- The town is trying to make it less expensive to develop in the village and within the boundaries of the wastewater system than outside.
- Hinesburg needs an anchor business complemented by smaller businesses that come from the creative population. If there were more jobs in town, fewer people would have to commute out of town.
- That anchor business should be more like NRG than Saputo.
- There is a need to attract skilled workers who commute back to town.
- 80 percent of residents should work in town to make the community sustainable.
- It's not just about the number of jobs, but whether the jobs are sustainable. Are the businesses environmentally, socially and economically responsible? A good resource about this concept is "Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered" by [E. F. Schumacher](#), 1973
- A sustainable model must include jobs that pay enough to live in town and offer opportunities to spend money in town. Saputo cheese factory doesn't pay livable wages. 20 percent of NRG employees live in Hinesburg.
- Attract another business like NRG or other sustainable business that would build a critical mass for downtown shopping and encourage cottage industry.
- We can't talk about sustainability unless we face the fact that most energy consumption comes from cars and change the paradigm. We have to find a new way based on sustainable models, not incremental change based on car culture. Several participants

observed that the community should focus on how much people need to go outside the community.

- Several people also noted that sustainability can't be just economic, but must add a human and social model, and look at how the population is changing.
- The town must invite businesses to come and enlarge commercial zones.
- Use the Development Review Board and zoning regulations to create incentives and facilitate bringing businesses into town, rather than being an obstacle.
- Aim for environmentally friendly commercial and residential development.
- The town should promote a self-sufficiency model like an Amish village. Instead of looking to bring in big employers in to town, find ways to live, work and consume within the community.
- Create a way to identify existing business in town, especially cottage industries and make a directory or Web site where local businesses can post jobs.

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

- Hinesburg hasn't quite figured out what future it wants. There's an opposing desire to preserve what's special about Hinesburg now with a paradigm shift to what's sustainable. Paradigm shifts are seductive, but can be messy and take time. You don't always end up where you planned to.
- Look to non-traditional kinds of employment.
- Hinesburg has impressive human capital. Many towns struggle with capacity to think forward in this way.
- The question of sustainability is based on a sense of the future. There is a question of how to grow the creators of the next entrepreneurial business.
- There was discussion about buying local and energy concerns.
- What is Hinesburg's motto?
- Hinesburg's situation reflects an emerging trend across the state of questioning where energy, food and jobs are coming from and where they will come from in the future.
- What is the balance between bringing people from the outside as opposed to growing our own?
- Local boards have a lot of control, and it would be good to see decisions spread out.
- Opportunities for lower-income jobs may not be a perfectly green way to develop.
- There is a need to make Hinesburg an attractive place for people to live as well as for businesses to grow.
- A self-sufficient community is a great idea, but it's not realistic. The community needs to decide what kind of model it wants to use: self-sufficiency or sustainability; Hinesburg as the center or Hinesburg as outlier with Burlington as center.
- Look at business owners and entrepreneurs rather than jobs.
- Change requires leadership development. Any plans must include ways to develop leadership.
- Hinesburg has an abundance of resources. Entrepreneurs should take advantage of these local resources, as well as UVM and other colleges.

## **II. Character, Diversity and Growth**

### **Challenges in This Area**

- We can define diversity as different views involving community use of resources, views and priorities.
- Hinesburg's income diversity makes it different from surrounding towns.
- Gentrification is a threat to the character of the community. The town's proximity to Burlington results in an increase in property values and land costs.
- We don't want a community where people can't afford to live.
- There is a pressure on open land for housing.
- Growth is both a threat and an opportunity. The rate of growth causes divisions because people forget that we're a community.
- A proposal for a new interstate exit is a cause for concern. Increased access to Hinesburg would bring new development pressures.
- Traffic is a huge concern. Vermont 116 goes right through the town center, and Charlotte Road, Pond Road and Silver Street get congested during commuter times.
- The state Agency of Transportation keeps postponing road and sidewalk improvement projects.
- The traffic cuts the town in half. One resident said she's lost touch with her neighbor across the street because it's too difficult to cross.
- The non-elite residents are disenfranchised. The lower middle class has been displaced.
- The economy for lower wage earners is not moving. These people get stuck.
- There is little affordable housing in town. Land is more valuable to people for other uses.
- Three mobile home parks provide affordable housing, but their conditions need to be improved.
- In the past two years, 130 units of housing have been approved (or are in the approval process). None of these are affordable. This will increase the problem of people having to move out of town.
- Residents expressed concern about the challenge of building consensus on issues.
- There is concern about the length of time it takes to agree on a vision and implement it. Residents voiced worry that things will "happen to us" or be "done to us," that the town will lose control of where and how fast growth occurs.
- Some people don't feel included in community decision-making and don't participate in the process.
- The "elephants in the room" are affordable housing and public trails. People say they want them but not in their back yards.

### **Assets and Opportunities: What Should be Done?**

- Town assets include scenery, agriculture, diversity of land formations, warm relations between town management and residents, high level in volunteerism and community involvement, good teenagers (not troublemakers), rural character, connection between

people and land, working landscape, an active library, water quality, dirt roads, an active arts community, and town forest.

- A key asset is the willingness of landowners to share their land through not posting, and to establish or allowing trails and conservation easements. Large tracts of land help maintain a working landscape.
- The Selectboard recently authorized an affordable housing committee.
- It is important to determine what assets to hold on to, such as agricultural heritage. What is needed to keep agriculture uses? Traditional agriculture (i.e. dairy) hasn't been sustainable; what is the next stage?
- There is a desire to retain dirt roads. Paved roads result in increased speed, and decreased safety.
- A map of informal and formal trail systems in town should be created.
- Increase awareness of Champlain Valley Union High School's continuing education program. Seventy options are offered three times a year and the total number of people attending access programs exceeds the number of students.
- Make connections with people who did not attend Community Visit discussions. Find out what the challenges are in getting them here.
- Integrate affordable housing into multi-use developments. Incorporate affordable housing into the town plan.
- Make efforts through the schools to encourage people to buy from local producers.
- Look at open, agricultural land and see what it's most suitable for.
- Look to the success of the farmers' market and cottage industry as an example of how the town can promote buying local.
- Although cost is an issue - local eggs cost twice as much as conventional eggs - there is a long-term cost of not making changes.
- Promote community gardens in mobile home parks to educate and encourage healthy living.
- Develop more housing and resources for seniors.
- As student population decreases, the community school will get less use. Use part of the school as a senior center.
- Establish a community center that would be open to teenagers, families and seniors. A center has been discussed in town for more than 25 years, but has not happened.
- Expand the Hinesburg Community Resource Center. The program provides volunteers to give rides to seniors, and operates the food shelf.
- Increase awareness and outreach of the Friends of Family program.
- Speed up the process for implementing road and sidewalk projects. Work out kinks between agencies of Transportation and Natural Resources.
- Preserve the integrity of the village by keeping houses along Vermont 116 intact. Protect the village character through zoning.
- Include handicapped accessible components into development planning.

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

- People are worried about fundamental questions of affordability and issues relating to teens and seniors.
- Towns and villages in Vermont grew up with a sense of human scale interrupted by car culture. There must be ways for the community to retain social sustainability.

- The fact that Hinesburg is self-aware is a tremendous asset. People are able to step back and take stock of what's going on. A learning community creates possibilities for new relationships.
- Housing is a key issue. New families can't relocate to Hinesburg because of taxes and land value.
- The Community Visit is a good opportunity for people who say they are frustrated by slow progress.
- There are links in the community between people and land, good will and generosity. This sociability extends to new residents.
- What practices do people engage in to keep the connections and how do you transfer that connectivity to other people? Does that need to be institutionalized?
- There is a social connectivity in town despite the fact that the post office, grocery store and town offices are spread out. Rather than focusing on physical structures, consider building on the distributed nature of society.
- Connect with resources outside Hinesburg.
- It sounds like Hinesburg is embracing growth, yet wants to preserve character, agriculture and recreational opportunities. These elements tend to be important to moderate and upper income families. The town can be a stronghold for attracting people.
- The working landscape is important to the community, and there is a need to determine how to use the landscape productively.
- Several communities have successfully developed multigenerational facilities and mixed income housing.
- Stay focused on preserving physical things that are important to you.

### **III. Farming and Land Use**

#### **Challenges in This Area**

- There has been a steady decline in the number of farms in town.
- Several residents expressed the concern that land is disappearing and fields are going to waste. Keeping agricultural soils intact is a high priority, but people can't make a living farming the land. Land can be conserved, but if it isn't being farmed, it goes to waste.
- One sheep farmer with 99 animals expressed frustration over not being recognized as a farm when a horse farm with one foal can meet the acreage requirement and be considered a farm.
- The town looks out for the municipality, not for the farmers. All the rules and regulations drive farmers to sell their property.
- The common perception is that farms have to get big or get out.
- What is happening in Hinesburg is happening around the state and the state Department of Agriculture doesn't have the answer. Vermont is beginning to "get it," though, and develop a more European system of agriculture with smaller, value added businesses.
- There is no network in place to help people develop specialty farm businesses.
- Contrary to observations made in the previous session, one participant stated that too much land in Hinesburg is posted. People buy large tracts of land and tell others they can't use it. Landowners are stewards and shouldn't tell people to stay out.
- Open land is becoming scarcer, which brings more people to the land that is open. Farmers post land to protect it from damage.
- Federal regulations contradict what the community wants. For example, much of the soil in town is clay. Measures necessary to improve soil, such as ditching and tiling, aren't acceptable to government agencies.
- Sometimes conserving land limits its viability. When development rights are sold, you can't build new barns.
- USDA regulations make it difficult for farmers to process their crops for value-added products. Everything has to go through a middleman, including profits.

#### **Assets and Opportunities: What Should be Done?**

- Hinesburg has three operating dairy farms, one farm that raises replacement heifers, two large vegetable operations and one person raising cattle with the intent to start a dairy farm.
- There are a number of value-added agriculture businesses, including the Saputo cheese factory and maple sugaring operations.
- The community is connected to its agricultural essence. This gives a sense of place. People are saddened by the loss of farmland and grateful to farmers who sell to land trusts instead of developers.
- The outlook toward farming needs to be changed so that it is viable for someone with 5 acres to be recognized as a farm.
- Several participants expressed the need for a broadened definition of what constitutes a farm, in order to recognize diversified uses of farmland.

- Work creatively on ways to preserve agricultural land despite low milk prices and high land prices.
- Farming is connected to a sense of community. When land is lost, opportunity is lost and the fabric of the community disappears. A town has to decide before it is too late if it wants to preserve farms, not just preserve land. If saving farms is a priority, find a way to make them economically viable.
- Create more tax abatement for farmers.
- Balance landowner and community interests. Have respect for farmers making their own decisions about their land.
- Identify land that should be preserved for agriculture and what parts are good for development. It's naïve to think that development won't happen, but we can be creative and proactive.
- Focus on recreation, tourism and energy generation when looking at ways to use land to generate income on parts of farms that aren't suitable for agriculture.
- Establish area-based conservation zoning that doesn't require farmers to make huge decisions all at once as in current zoning.
- The town Conservation Commission is working on a rural plan to be proposed to the Planning Commission. This would be followed by reform of rural zoning and density regulations.
- Change can come from regulation or local and state incentives such as the current use program.
- Expand the definition of farming to include keeping land open for recreational use.
- Establish a local butcher facility so animals can be processed locally.
- Create a farm conservation commission to help farmers decide what to do with land, assist new farmers, offer financial consultation and other technical assistance.
- Look to sustainable solutions, not the creation of a false economy.
- Promote farm-to-table education. Create agriculture classes at Champlain Valley Union High School to educate children about where their food comes from and help them be good stewards of the land.
- Create a local food processing facility where small and medium size farmers could bring a truckload of apples or other items to turn into value-added products. It also could provide distribution and processing resources.
- Start a business incubator program like the Intervale Center.
- The town should provide assistance to farmers.
- Key landowners are making decisions right now about their land. It's time to take action. The town needs to help people do things with their land while respecting landowners and helping future generations.

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

- Agriculture plays a powerful role in Hinesburg and the community feels it is threatened.
- A diversity of people who are not involved in agriculture are intensely supportive and searching for ways to preserve it.
- There is much expertise here, from the farmers and people in the community. Community members and local leadership can make changes.

- It is important to consider the market. Who is the customer and how do we create markets for the products?
- In the midst of a global economy, there must be a strong intuition about what it will take to sustain Hinesburg into the future.
- Farmers work very hard and Vermont dairy products are well known. Creative business planning is necessary to find ways to sustain agriculture.
- There are many farms that make money. Focus on what's right instead of just what's wrong.
- Successful farmers are successful entrepreneurs. They need to be supported in that capacity.
- People have a visceral connection in this community to farms. They are interested in consuming local products and they care where their food comes from.
- Affordable access to farmland and stable, long-term tenure is important.
- Several communities, such as Brattleboro and Starksboro, have farm committees.
- Try to sustain a balance between those trying to make a living on the land and those looking for new ideas.
- The diversity of operations and proximity to markets lend themselves well to value-added production.
- There is technical assistance out there (food venture center in Fairfax, Vermont Fresh Network, Vermont Cheese Council, etc.). State government and agencies need to know how to bring the resources to Hinesburg.

# Hinesburg Community Visit Youth Forum

Compiled from discussions held with the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students of the  
Galaxy and Infinity Teams at the Hinesburg Community School.  
November 14, 2006

Teachers/Scribes – *Barbara Spaulding and Steve Heany*

## I. Village Center

### Challenges in This Area

- There is no central gathering spot in the village.
- An increase in people and businesses will change the character of the village. This is both a negative and a positive thing.
- A green space – a park or grassy area – is needed in the center of town.
- We can't be too worried about the character of the town, because then we won't be able to change. We would like to preserve Hinesburg, but still grow.
- There is so much traffic passing through the center of town.
- We need alternatives to driving.
- Truck traffic makes riding bikes difficult.

### Opportunities – What can be done?

- Cluster businesses in the center of town, but retain the rural areas around it.
- A coffee shop, rather than a full restaurant in town would be good. It would allow for socializing, be inexpensive, and would provide jobs.
- Build a youth center downtown. It could be a place with computers, games, music and movies.
- We could utilize existing space, such as the industrial park.
- Build an Internet café, using donations of old computers from the school.
- A teen center doesn't have to be a huge space. Could it be funded with a portion of taxes?
- Build a village center gazebo or bandstand.
- It would be great to have indoor recreation in the winter.
- A movie theater would be great.
- There should be a central place, like a kiosk or bulletin board for communication.

## II. Jobs

### Challenges in This Area

- The growth in Hinesburg has created a need for more jobs.
- We need more technical jobs, as opposed to traditional or agricultural jobs
- More businesses that employ young people are needed.
- Young people don't want to stay and work in Hinesburg. The town needs to be more attractive to retain youth.
- There are few places for teen to work, although there are lots opportunities for adults.
- There should be more professional or career-oriented jobs in town.

### Opportunities – What can be done?

- One student noted that her mother works at home. There should be increased opportunities for people to do this.
- We need jobs that help set up wind turbines, solar panels and environmentally safe power.
- Students would like job opportunities and would love to see some kind of bulletin board posting local job opportunities for youth under 15 – baby sitting, yard work, shoveling snow – perhaps as an electronic posting at the town web site.
- It would be good to have job opportunities for people interested in the medical field. A hospital or medical facility could be opened.

## III. Connectivity

### Challenges in This Area

- There are not enough sidewalks. Sometimes we need to walk in the road.
- The sidewalks are all centered in town; none of them go up the hills.
- Route 116 is the main artery for other towns. We need other roads that bypass the center of town.
- Lantmans and Charlotte road need a traffic light so that traffic can enter from Mechanicsville Road.
- The traffic makes getting to school in the morning difficult.
- A trail system that is used by everyone, including hikers, mountain bikers, and hunters could be a safety hazard.

### Opportunities – What can be done?

- Improve the conditions of dirt roads, but don't pave them. We need to protect rural characteristics
- Install speed bumps to slow traffic.
- Roadsides need to be cut back to provide better visibility for motorists.
- Consistent road maintenance is needed.
- Install more traffic signs.
- Connect areas of town, especially from Lantmans to the High School.
- Widened roads and bike lanes are needed, as well as more crosswalks.
- A trail system could connect business, recreation and entertainment venues.

- A bus system could connect youth to Burlington and other neighboring cities.
- Young people would like to have a way to sign up for community service activities such as visiting seniors and doing volunteer jobs that help people in the community.
- There are no community service requirements in the school, but many students would like to help out.

#### **IV Wellbeing of Youth**

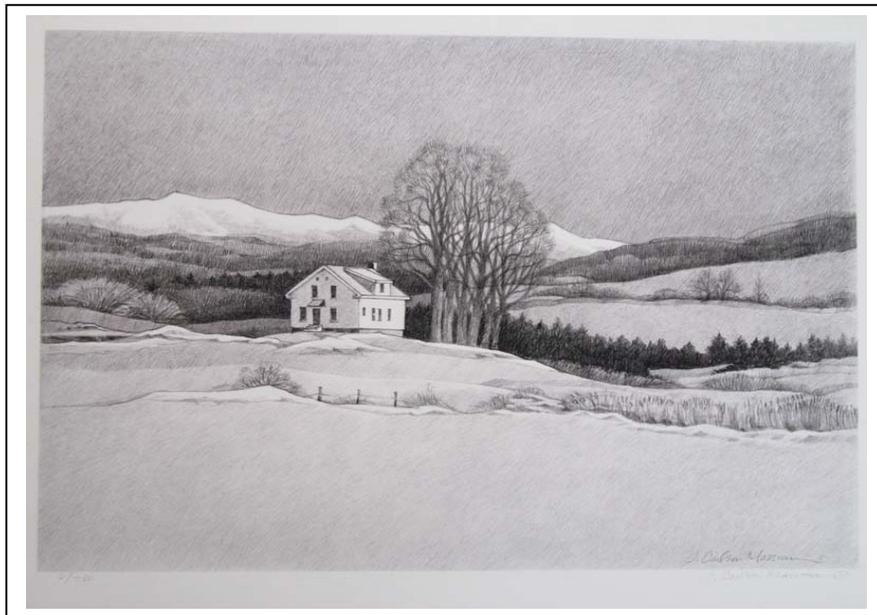
##### **Challenges in This Area**

- Safety is a concern because there are not enough sidewalks, and it is hard to get around safely.
- One student expressed concern about safety at school, due to an open door that allowed access to the school.
- It is hard for a young person just learning to drive because of the traffic.
- The roads in some mobile home parks are dangerous.
- There is a lack of both activities, and space to hold activities for youth.
- There are some activities, but people don't know about them. Activities need to be made more visible.
- Increased growth in Hinesburg will affect our rural character. We want some growth, but not too much.
- People's perception of Hinesburg is a challenge. Kids at CVU think Hinesburg is a farm town.
- We lost the skate park. There used to be drug activity there.
- Students would like to see an improved lunch program at the school; attempts to work with the faculty on the issue have failed and students would like a systematic way to discuss it with school leadership.
- Students complain there is no soap in the bathroom.
- Students wish the athletic fields could be improved (there is gravel on the baseball diamond) and wish the old field across the road was still available. They also feel badly sometimes that their sports uniforms are worn out compared to other teams in the area.

##### **Opportunities – What can be done?**

- Continue and improve recreation programs.
- Create a recreational center, with ping-pong tables, batting cages, arcade, sports track, and dirt biking.
- The sports fields and equipment need improvement.
- Create adult/youth sports teams through a multigenerational center.
- Another student supported a youth only area.
- A café would provide a place to meet and create jobs.
- Return the skate park to a location behind the police station for better safety.
- Create events even if there is no center and offer movie nights or teen barbeques at the town hall or other location.
- Build a sports and fitness center – a good basis for a multigenerational center.
- Focus on natural resource activities such as trails for skiing, biking and hiking.

- Develop and expand communication about teens and activities by contributing to the town website, writing a youth section in the Hinesburg Reporter, and developing a student newspaper.



*Baldwin Road – looking to Mt. Ellen  
Jean Masseur - Hinesburg, VT*

## Participants

Bud	Allen	Amy	Hugo	Janice	Osgood
Sara	Armstrong	Jennifer	Hunter	Donald	Palmer
Matt	Baldwin	Maxamed	Ibrahim	Cheryl	Park
Dan	Baldwin	Jean	Isham	Renate	Parke
Al	Barber	Carol	Jenkins	Judy	Parker
Sue	Barden	Sue	Johnson	Wendy	Patterson
Robert	Bast	Ray	Keller	Morgan	Pell
Erol	Bayer	Larry	Ketcham	Wendy and Mike	Pelletier
Dick	Bell	Mack	Ketcham	John	Penoyar
Nancy	Bell	Micki	Ketcham	Kris	Peritt
Kathy	Beyer	Rolf	Kielman	Kristy	Perlee
Michael	Bissonette	Jonathan	Kleinman	Steve	Pierson
Carl	Bohlen	Betsy	Knox	Julie	Pierson
Julie	Bourger-Pierson	Wendy	Koenig	Phil	Pouech
Paula	Brennan	Roger	Kohn	Peter	Regan
Clifford	Brody	Frank	Koss	Sally	Reiss
Sally	Brody	Laura &	Richard Lagasse	Evan	Reiss
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Dennis	Delaney	Rhonda	Mace	Harry	Russell
Carolyn	Delaney	Judith	Maculan	Howard	Russell
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Andrew	Dennison	Pat	Mainer	Sarah	Schmidt
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Emily	Dignan	Pam	Marks	Kate	Schubart
Tom	Dillon	Rocky	Martin	Beth	Sengle
Joe	Donegan	Evan	Masseau	Ed	Sengle
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