



CHITTENDEN COUNTY RPC

Communities Planning Together

Long Range Planning Committee

Tuesday March 31, 2022

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Remote Access ONLY Meeting via Zoom

Virtual Location: Please join the meeting by clicking: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83164528756>

For those who would prefer to join by phone or those without a microphone on your computer, please dial in using your phone. (For supported devices, tap a one-touch number below to join instantly.)

Dial: +1 646 876 9923; Meeting ID: 831 6452 8756

For supported devices, tap a one-touch number join instantly: +16468769923,,83164528756#

Agenda

1. **Welcome**
2. **Approval of February 8, 2022 Minutes*** (*page 2 of the packet*)
3. **Review the DRAFT Economy Section*** (*page 5 of the packet*)
 - a. Staff overview of this topic and explanation of the organization of the draft document
 - b. Goal & Key Issues
 - c. Indicators
 - d. Strategy & Actions
4. **Adjourn**

Next Meeting: April 12, 2022 at 6pm or 7pm?

Note – Pg. 2 of the agenda includes links to the existing 2018 ECOS Plan for reference

In accordance with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the CCRPC will ensure public meeting sites are accessible to all people. Requests for free interpretive or translation services, assistive devices, or other requested accommodations, should be made to Emma Vaughn, CCRPC Title VI Coordinator, at 802-846-4490 ext *21 or evaughn@ccrpcvt.org, no later than 3 business days prior to the meeting for which services are requested.



2018 ECOS Plan Resources for the Long Range Planning Committee:

- [Summary: 2018 ECOS Plan »](#)
This summary document provides a simplified overview of the ECOS Plan, as well as the three main sections updated in 2018: energy, economy, and transportation. Please note that this overview does not reflect the overall content within the Plan, but seeks to summarize some of the main components and updates.
- [2018 ECOS Plan: Main Document »](#)
This main section includes the vision, goals and collective strategies and actions to address the region's concerns, including CCRPC's top 10 actions for the coming five years.
- [Supplement 1: Process »](#)
Process and public engagement.
- [Supplement 2: Regional Analysis »](#)
Regional analysis, culminating in a list of 31 high-priority concerns.
- [Supplement 3: Regional Plan »](#)
Regional Plan, including a description of the maps, planning areas, Act 250/Section 248 role, and compatibility with municipal and surrounding regional plans.
- [Supplement 4: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy »](#)
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) including a strengths / weaknesses / opportunities / threats analysis and project list of the region's utility and facility needs.
- [Supplement 5: Metropolitan Transportation Plan »](#)
Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) including the 2050 scenario, financial plan and the region's transportation project list.
- [Supplement 6: Energy Analysis, Targets, & Methodology »](#)
Enhanced Energy Planning methodology and data guide.
- The [ECOS Scorecard](#) is where we house the indicators.
- [Annual Reports](#)
- [ECOS online map](#)

CHITTENDEN COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE - MINUTES

DATE: Tuesday, February 8, 2022
TIME: 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
PLACE: Virtual Meeting via Zoom with link as published on the agenda

Members Present:

Annie Costandi, CWAC Rep from Essex
Dana Hanley, Alt Board Rep from Charlotte
Bob Henneberger, TAC Rep
Eric Vorwald, PAC Rep from Winooski
Tracey Delphia, Alt Board Rep from Essex

Staff:

Jason Charest, Senior Transportation Engineer
Eleni Churchill, Transportation Program Manager
Regina Mahony, Planning Program Manager
Melanie Needle, Senior Planner
Charlie Baker, Executive Director

1. Welcome and Introductions

Regina Mahony welcomed everyone at 7:03pm.

2. Approve January 11, 2022 Minutes

Eric Vorwald made a motion, seconded by Bob Henneberger, to approve the January 11, 2022 minutes. No further discussion. MOTION PASSED.

3. Review the DRAFT Water Quality Section

Regina went over the draft schedule to show where other sections of content will come into play. Regina then walked through the draft water quality section that was included in the meeting packet.

Goal & Key Issues comments from the LRPC:

- Why is this section in bullets? The content is lengthy and seems like it should be broken up more.
- Preference for goals to be written as the result of what you are aiming for. The suggestion is to re-word the goal as “Healthy native species habitats, water quality and quantity, and air quality through conservation, protection and improvements.”
- Regarding the regulation bullet, there is likely still a disconnect between the Comprehensive Plans and the zoning regulations; but either way, it would be helpful to emphasize more actionable and implementable plans in this bullet.
- Include incentives for forest and agricultural preservation outside of the Current Use program; farmers sometimes have no other option than to sell their land for development when they want to retire.
- While the state includes alternative septic systems for larger developments, there is little available for single family homes. Alternative systems should be accepted rather than “under investigation” or not mentioned at all.
- The data points are sometimes lost within the large paragraphs of text.
- In the river corridor bullet there is mention of 74% of Vermont’s rivers channelized; what is the Chittenden County data?

Indicators – Regina did not review these in detail, but explained that the impaired waters data is a GIS dataset and will be updated on a map and summarized in the data when we get to the mapping. Comments from the LRPC:

- Regarding the land cover conversion data, do we know where these conversions are in the County, particularly in comparison to our areas planned for growth? Melanie explained that the data comes from a dashboard that has been created; in order to do a GIS analysis we’d have to download all the GIS data. There may be other data sources to get at this more easily. This would be helpful data. CCRPC staff stated that they will look into it.

Strategy & Actions – provided an overview of each of strategy and the actions. Comments from the LRPC:

- Action 1.b – is there a minimum standard bridge and culvert infrastructure should be built to for aquatic passage? If so, the standard itself could be referred to in the action. Regina stated that it might be more place based, but she will ask Lewis Creek Association if there are standards to reference.
- Action 1.f.i & ii – suggestion to footnote the “see constraint tables...” language.
- Action 2.b – there is a lot in this action, perhaps it should be broken into two? Regina added that one solution could be to reconfigure this with 2.d as some of the text seems to be redundant.
- Action 3 – seems very different than 1 & 2. There doesn’t appear to be an action association with #3.
- Overall the actions are hard to follow with too much descriptive text.
- Regarding infrastructure actions, does it make sense to integrate ARPA funds in the plan? While only relevant for 1 or 2 years it may make sense to discuss it; and it may make sense to incorporate the infrastructure funds too as they might have a longer timeframe.

4. Adjourn

The next meeting is set for March 8, 2022. We are planning to discuss the Economy Strategy, and four associated goals and key issues: Economy, Household Financial Security, Working Lands and Art, Culture and Recreation. The meeting adjourned at 7:51pm.

Respectfully submitted, Regina Mahony

Prosperity - Build the region's capacity for shared and sustainable improvements in the economic wellbeing of the community through support of both local and globally competitive initiatives.

X. ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATION

Arts, Culture and Recreation Goal: Increase access to, and participation in, arts, culture and recreational opportunities.

Key Issues/Trends/Insights

[Data in this section drawn from the [Vermont Arts Council](#)]

- Use of arts in education is a critical pedagogical tool for developing critical thinking, math, and science skills, insights on cultural diversity and the human experience, and building self-esteem through self-expression. There is a diminishing amount of time in school dedicated to arts and recreation; while offered in after school programs these programs are not accessible to all.
- Programs and events should attract and engage residents from diverse backgrounds, ages and income levels. To increase participation in arts, culture and recreational activities by underserved populations, organizations need to remove barriers to participation (including transportation, costs, and cultural differences).
- Arts, culture and recreation are a major contributor to the quality of life of residents and visitors. They are a key factor in attracting businesses who see arts, culture and recreational opportunities as key elements to attracting and retaining a talented workforce. Participation in arts, culture and recreation activities also contributes to a strong sense of shared community.
- The CreateVT Action Plan is focused on implementing projects to increase access, infrastructure, education, and engagement in the creative sector.
- The Vermont Arts Council's CreateVT Action Plan includes the following key findings:
 - 7% of jobs in Vermont are in the creative sector. This is higher than the nationwide percentage (5.1%).
 - Almost 50% of the workers in the creative sector in VT are self-employed or freelance.
 - Employment in "creative industries" in VT grew 8% from 2010 to 2018. This lags behind the U.S growth (14%).

Key Indicators

- 66% of the Chittenden County population resides within 1/2 mile of parks or publicly accessible natural areas in urban areas and 1 mile in rural areas. (Source: Park, Open Space: CCRPC, Population, U.S. Census (2010))

Commented [RM1]: Update

X. EDUCATION, KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Education, Knowledge, and Skills Goal: All Chittenden County children and adults have the education, skills and opportunities necessary to meet their full economic and social potential and well-being.

Key Issues/Trends/Insights

[Data for this section drawn from references as incorporated below.]

- Chittenden County requires a well-educated workforce to attract good employers and livable wage jobs. Our region's economic and cultural well-being depends on educational attainment through a continuum of accessible and affordable educational opportunities from the early years through adulthood.
- The first five years of life are critical to a child's lifelong development. Research shows that children who are not performing proficiently in reading by the end of third grade are at very high risk for poor long-term outcomes, such as dropping out of school, teen pregnancy and juvenile crime. (National School Readiness Indicators Initiative).
- Childcare costs and availability remain significant issues in Chittenden County. Availability of childcare for infants is lacking. Though improved since 2018, approximately 43% of infants in Chittenden County do not have access to child care services according to Let's Grow Kids' 2022 Report.¹ Access to care for toddlers and pre-school age children has improved since 2020. Childcare availability is especially lacking for parents that work the third shift or non-traditional hours. While the U.S. Agency of Health and Human Services' Department for Children and Families recommends childcare costs be no more than 7% of annual income²; 20% of median household income³ is spent on childcare in Chittenden County with average market rate full time licensed child care costs of \$15,000/year⁴. Also the Let's Grow Kids' 2022 Report describes that early childhood educators are expected to be educated, trained and licensed; yet the average annual salary for an early childhood teacher is \$38,870 compared to \$55,580 for a kindergarten teacher. This low salary can keep these educators out of early childhood education. The VT Department of Health and Human Services continues to study how to finance high quality child care that remains affordable to working families.
- Library facilities are well distributed across the region and residents benefit from reciprocal agreements among all of the libraries in the County with the exception of Burlington (an additional fee is charged for non-Burlington residents). Only three municipalities in the region do not have a library: Bolton, Buel's Gore and St. George. These communities do not have any current plans to build a library and the residents use the libraries in surrounding communities. All libraries in the region offer high speed internet access.

¹ https://letsgrowkids.org/client_media/files/FinalSATS2022.pdf

² Let's Grow Kids' 2022 Report

³ [Median household income | HousingData.org - Directory of affordable rental housing](#)

⁴ [Market Rate Survey 2019 full-final.pdf \(vermont.gov\)](#)

- There are currently 19 school governing bodies operating either as, or under, the 3 Supervisory Unions and 6 School Districts. The County has 51 public schools, 18 independent schools (reported for SY16), and 6 colleges/universities in the County (see the ECOS Map Viewer for locations).

Commented [TN2]: Update

FIGURE 17 – NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS OR UNIONS

SCHOOL DISTRICTS OR UNIONS	# OF GOVERNING BOARDS	# OF SCHOOLS	TOWNS SERVED
BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	9 SCHOOLS	BURLINGTON
CHITTENDEN CENTRAL SUPERVISORY UNION	3	6 SCHOOLS	ESSEX, WESTFORD, ESSEX JUNCTION
ESSEX TOWN SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	1	3 SCHOOLS	ESSEX
CHITTENDEN EAST SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	7	9 SCHOOLS	BOLTON, BUEL'S GORE, HUNTINGTON, JERICHO, RICHMOND, UNDERHILL
CHITTENDEN SOUTH SUPERVISORY DISTRICT	6	5 SCHOOLS	CHARLOTTE, HINESBURG, SHELBURNE, ST GEORGE, WILLISTON
COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	5 SCHOOLS	COLCHESTER
MILTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	3 SCHOOLS	MILTON
SOUTH BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	5 SCHOOLS	SOUTH BURLINGTON
WINOOSKI SCHOOL DISTRICT	1	3 SCHOOLS	WINOOSKI

- K-12 school enrollment in Chittenden County is steady. In 2011, county-wide enrollment was 21,823 students. Enrollment decreased to 21,601 students by 2021. The intervening years saw enrollment generally between 21,000 and 22,500 students.
- Vermont boasts a solid K-12 system which benefits from strong community support, small class sizes, yet high school graduation rates are now below the national average. Only 85% of VT high school students graduated on time in 2018-2019 according to the National Center for Education Statistics (National average – 86%). The graduation rate is dramatically lower for black high school students (71%).⁵
- A high-quality public education can be the “great equalizer.” However, student achievement measures show clear performance gaps for low-income and students of color. All our youth need the skills and education to participate as future economic drivers of our region. By ensuring equity we can provide opportunity for all members of our community to reach their fullest potential while ensuring a more inclusive, prosperous, and sustainable region.

⁵ <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/coi>

- Vermont ranked 43th in the country in college-going rate in 2018 (55%).⁶ Rates in some Chittenden County High Schools have historically have exceeded 70% according to the VT Department of Education. However, rates lag below the state average in Winooski and Burlington school districts.⁷
- Out of Vermont's 25 fastest-growing occupations as of 2018, 15 occupations require an advance degree or post-secondary education certifications.⁸

Key Indicators

- Percent of Chittenden County's students scoring proficient or above on 2011-2012 state Assessments

FIGURE 19 - STUDENT PROFICIENCY BY RACE

SUBJECT GRADE	READING		MATH		SCIENCE
	4	11	8	11	11
All Students	78%	76%	69%	43%	44%
Female	83%	83%	68%	42%	46%
Male	72%	69%	70%	44%	43%
Hispanic or Latino	85%	75%	68%	32%	42%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	*	*	*	*	*
Asian	65%	61%	59%	45%	40%
Black or African American	59%	33%	29%	7%	11%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*
White	80%	79%	72%	45%	46%
Not FRL	87%	84%	79%	51%	53%
FRL	57%	44%	39%	16%	14%
ELL	20%	9%	8%	7%	5%
Not ELL	80%	79%	72%	45%	46%

Based on 2011-2012 testing year. Reading and Math tests evaluate prior year's learning.

* = data suppressed because of an N<11

Source: VT Dept. of Education

Commented [dh3]: Update when new schoolyear data comes out

⁶

<http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?submeasure=63&year=2018&level=nation&mode=data&state>

⁷

<https://education.vermont.gov/data-and-reporting/educational-performance/post-secondary-enrollment>

⁸

<http://www.vtlmi.info/projlt.pdf>

- Cohort Drop Out Rates - % of students who do not complete high school

2018 Cohort Drop Out Rates		
School	Four-year Drop Out Rate	Six-year Drop Out Rate
Burlington Senior High School	30.22%	16.9%
Champlain Valley UHS #15	3.99%	2.58%
Colchester High School	9.64%	9.63%
Essex High School	13.35%	4.85%
Milton High School	6.3%	6.56%
Mt. Mansfield US #17	2.22%	3.3%
South Burlington High School	5.53%	4.74%
Winooski High School	35.38%	35.0%
Total	13.33%	10.45%

Note: Students are considered dropouts if they left high school permanently at any time during the four-year, or six-year period prior to receiving a regular diploma, GED or other completion certificate. Source: VT Dept. of Education

- Highest level of education attained for those 25 and over.

FIGURE 21 - HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED (25+)


	Vermont	Chittenden County
Percent high school graduate or higher	93.1%	93.3%
Percent bachelor's degree and higher	38.7%	51.4%


Source: 2019 ACS 1-year⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾


Additional indicators can be found on the ECOS Scorecard. Note: will likely reduce some of these.

Indicator	Location
Percent of Kindergartners Ready on the Ready for Kindergarten! Survey (R4KIS), Chittenden County, 20016-2017	Scorecard
Percent of All Chittenden County Students in Grade 11 considered proficient or above in Math on the Smarter Balanced Assessment, All Students, Free and Reduced Lunch, and Non-Free and Reduced Lunch 2015-2017	Scorecard
Percent of All Chittenden County Students in Grade 11 considered proficient or above in Science on the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) test, 2014-2017, All Students, Free and Reduced Lunch, and Non-Free and Reduced Lunch	Scorecard
Percent of All Chittenden County Students in Grade 3 considered proficient or above in Reading on the Smarter Balanced Assessment, 20015-2017, All Students, Free and Reduced Lunch, and Non-Free and Reduced Lunch	Scorecard
Percent of Chittenden County Students Proficient or Above in Math at Grade 11 on the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment, 2016	Scorecard
Percent of Chittenden County Students Proficient or Above in Language Arts at Grade 11 on the Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment 2016	Scorecard
6-Year Cohort Drop-Out Rate for All Chittenden County High Schools, 2010-2015	Scorecard

Percent of Adults (25+) with High School Degree or Higher in Chittenden County, 2007-2016	Scorecard
Percent of Adults (25+) with Bachelor's Degree or Higher in Chittenden County, 2007-2016	Scorecard
Opportunity Index, 2011-2015	Scorecard
Number of regulated care and education programs (registered and licensed) in Chittenden County	Scorecard
Percent of regulated care and education programs (registered and licensed) of high quality (4 & 5 Stars level) in Chittenden County	Scorecard

 Vermont Agency of Education, School District Data Tool, 2021, <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/governance-district-data-tool>

 Vermont Agency of Education, Ready for Kindergarten! Survey (R4KIS) Report, 2020-2021, <https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-early-education-ready-for-kindergarten-report-2020-2021.pdf>

 American Community Survey, Educational Attainment of Vermont, 2019: ACS 1 year tables, https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=Educational%20Attainment&q=0400000US50&tid=ACSST1Y2019_S1501

X. ECONOMY

Economy Goal: Retain and support existing employers and job growth, grow target sector employers and entrepreneurs, and work to attract a greater diversity of employers and employees.

Key Issues/Trends/Insights

[Data in this section drawn from **Supplement 4 – CEDS**; and West Central Vermont website]

- Chittenden County contains only 26% of Vermont's population, yet 33% of Vermont's total jobs (covered employment) are located in the County according to the 2020 Census. Per the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the county accounted for 35% of the state's GDP in 2019⁹.
- Per the VT Department of Taxes in 2020, the County provided the State 35% of total income tax revenues, 24% of rooms/meals tax revenue, and 35% of non-internet sales tax revenue generated in the State. Four of the 5 highest retail sales tax revenue generating municipalities in Vermont are located Chittenden County (Colchester – #1; South Burlington – #2, Williston – #3; and Burlington – #5).
- Total covered employment has not fully recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019, there were 102,705 jobs in the County. In Quarter 3 2021, covered employment

⁹ US Bureau of Economic Analysis

equaled only 99,483 jobs. Prior to the pandemic, the County continued to see slow, yet steady job growth each year after the economic recession of 2008-2010.

- Per 2014-2019 ACS data, Chittenden County's employment base is concentrated within the Health Care and Education supersector (28% of county jobs – 28,734 total jobs). This is followed by Trade, Transportation and Utilities (19% and 19,067), Government (16% or 16,578), Professional and Business Services (13% and 13,650), and Leisure and Hospitality (11% and 11,471).
- The largest employers in Chittenden County are the University of Vermont Medical Center and the University of Vermont. While there has been concern that our large employers are not in the private sector, these institutions are an advantage to Chittenden County and our economy is not overly reliant on them. Both entities are net dollar importers and are highly stable institutions.
- The unemployment rate in Chittenden County, as of December 2021, is low (1.6%) compared to statewide (2.5%) and national rates (3.9%). However, the labor force participation rate, a measure of how many working-age people are actively employed or seeking employment, has dropped consistently since 1999 (73.4%). The rate in March 2020 (65.6%) declined sharply during the pandemic to a low of 59.7% in February 2021. This rate has since recovered to only 60.7% as of December 2021.¹⁰ There are multiple reasons for decreased labor participation including the County's aging population and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Growth in total nominal wages has risen off its sharp decline in 2009, and average wages were 11.4% higher in 2016 than they were in 2010. However, manufacturing, one of the sectors with the highest average wages in Chittenden County, has seen wages decrease by 2% since 2009.
- Wages and incomes tend to be higher in Chittenden County than the rest of Vermont. Per ACS data, median household income has increased from \$59,878 in 2010 to \$73,647 in 2019. This exceeds median household income growth in Vermont over the same period (\$51,841 to \$61,973). Income increases have not necessarily been distributed evenly during this period and there are significant differences in income growth across occupations.
- Employment in technology and technology-related fields is growing and becoming a key part of Vermont's economy. Twenty-five percent of Vermont's jobs are either in tech industries, or are tech jobs in other industries. These jobs pay 63% more than the average wage in Vermont, and each tech job creates two additional jobs.
- As of 2016, most permitted industrial parks are approaching full build out. However, there is still land available in industrially zoned areas. Having adequate industrial space is as much about having a wide variety of spaces as it is vacant square footage. GBIC

Commented [RM4]: confirm

Commented [RM5]: Is it important to keep and update this bullet?

Commented [TN6]: UVM RDC data?

Commented [TN7R6]: Still need to update this.

¹⁰ <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/LBSNSA50>

reports that most industrial operations have very specific requirements for what size and configuration of space they need to begin or expand their business. If the right kind of space is not available in the county, GBIC has found that some companies choose to expand elsewhere rather than reconfigure or build new space in Chittenden County. However, because there is still land available in industrially zoned areas, and the ECOS Plan calls for reuse of previously developed land, and development of land that is already served by existing infrastructure, this plan does not recommend expanding the amount of land zoned for industrial space. GBIC plans to conduct a longevity analysis (Action 1C) to determine when new industrial space is needed. If a need becomes clear in the future, this issue will be revisited in the next CEDS.

Commented [TN8]: Tighten. Waiting on response from GBIC.

- Protection of both the rural and downtown/village character must be reflected in economic development efforts. There is significant economic impact of downtowns, growth centers, and village centers - dense, livable areas create places where workers can live close to their jobs and where a diversity of businesses can thrive.
- In a 2021 survey of employers in the West Central Vermont region, the lack of affordable housing was identified as a barrier to economic development, and a key piece of infrastructure worthy of future investment, in order to attract and retain additional workers to the region, including Chittenden County.
- The County is generally well-served with utilities and telecommunications services. However, there are pockets of little to no cell phone service in rural areas, and areas with no broadband service. Areas with no broadband are small neighborhoods located throughout the County. These so called "orphaned neighborhoods" have not been served because it's expensive and hasn't proven financially feasible to providers. In addition, the majority of the County has broadband via cable service at speeds of 25/3 Mbps. This is commonly understood to be inadequate, particularly considering our digital future. Broadband via fiber at speeds of 100/100 Mbps to all homes and businesses is essential to maintaining our economy.
- Organizations such as the Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies, Exelerate Essex and the HinesburgHUB co-working space are key to the region. Encouraging the creation and growth of small, "home-grown" businesses is key to diversifying the economy, increasing resilience to changes in large employers, and investing in future employment as companies grow.
- CCRPC and GBIC have collaborated with RPC and RDC partners in Addison County, Central Vermont, and Rutland County to develop the West Central Vermont CEDS. Upon adoption these groups may seek to create an Economic Development District (EDD). Creating an EDD would open up additional funding from the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) to support economic development related work within the region.

Commented [MN9]: Confirm if Exelerate Essex and HinesburgHub are still operational. Reach out to conduct Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce and HULA to see what else needs to be added.

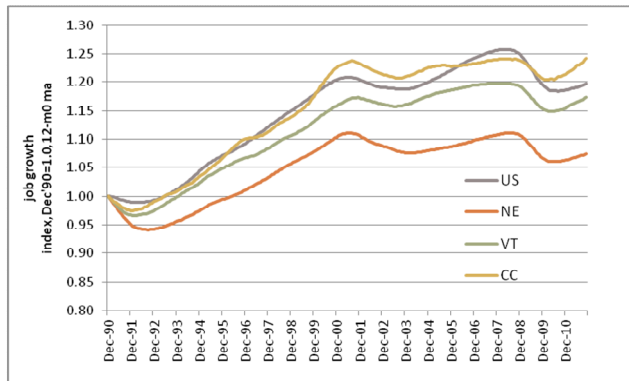
Key Indicators

Commented [RM10]: Indicators will be updated to align with West Central VT CEDS indicators.

Recent Chittenden County job growth has been stronger than the U.S., New England and Vermont.

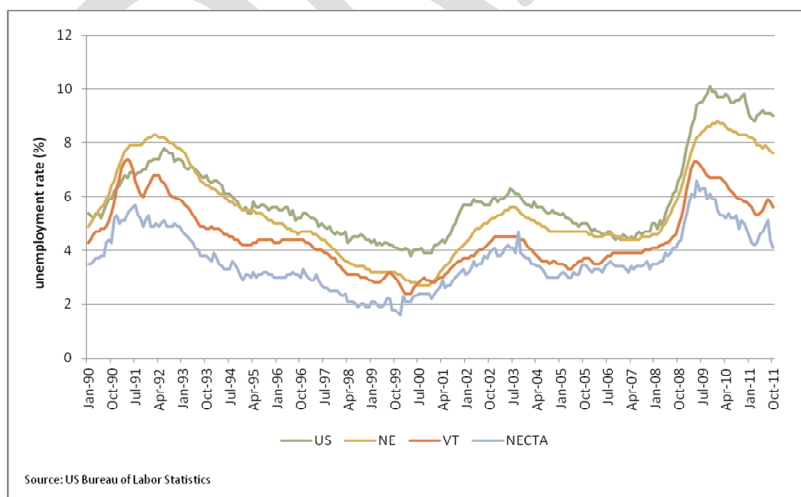
Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics

FIGURE 26- RECENT CHITTENDEN COUNTY JOB GROWTH, SINCE 1990



- **The unemployment rate in the greater Burlington area** (Burlington New England City and Town Area (NECTA)) has declined faster than the New England and US rates over the past two years.

FIGURE 27 – UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN THE GREATER BURLINGTON AREA



Additional indicators can be found on the ECOS Scorecard.

Indicator	Location
Total (Covered) Employment-Chittenden County	Scorecard
Total Number of Businesses	Scorecard
Unemployment Rate, Chittenden County, VT, New England, US (2004-2016)	Scorecard
Average Wages by Industry Sector	Scorecard
Employment by Place of Residence (Total Labor Force) in Chittenden County	Scorecard

X. HOUSEHOLD FINANCIAL SECURITY

Household Financial Security Goal: Improve the financial security of households.

INTRODUCTION: Levels of income and wealth are key determinants of individual or family wellbeing. Economic standard of living involves a complex combination of factors such as income, living costs, and household size and composition.

Key Issues/Trends/Insights

[Data in this section drawn from [Vermont Basic Needs Budget](#)]

- Income inequality is increasing in Vermont. Between 2007 and 2019, average income in Vermont has stagnated, rebounding slowly from the Great Recession, hovering at around \$60,000 for the past decade. According to the Public Assets Institute's State of Working Vermont 2020 "half of all Vermont's income was in the hands of 20% [of the population]". The report also found: "Average income for the top 20 percent of households had increased more than 8 percent since 2007, after adjusting for inflation. For the bottom 20 percent, average income was down more than 7 percent."ⁱⁱ
- Vermont's Basic Needs Budget determines the hourly rate a worker would need to make to pay for their "basic needs," ranging from food and housing to childcare and insurance. This rate is known as the "livable wage," and it is calculated differently depending on household size/makeup and rural or urban location. For full time workers, the Vermont minimum wage is only 82% of the average living wage. However, this varies significantly by household composition and location. For example, the Vermont minimum wage is only 52% of the living wage for two working parents with two children in

an urban area, and only 30% of the living wage for a single parent with two children in an urban area.ⁱⁱⁱ

- In 2016, lower income Vermonters reported higher rates of depressive disorders, poor mental health and chronic conditions, such as obesity, asthma, heart disease, stroke and diabetes. While data on addiction were not available broken down by income, some substance uses, such as using marijuana or tobacco, were higher among adults with lower incomes. Data from 2013 showed similar trends in Chittenden County.
- Lack of financial resources can also cause food insecurity. When people experience economic insecurity, or lack financial resources, the impact on their food budgets can be severe. No one should have to choose between purchasing groceries or paying their rent or mortgage, and yet this is a decision many low-income people are confronted with. Currently, 1 in 5 people in Vermont are food insecure; this is double the rate of food insecurity prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. There are programs that mitigate food insecurity for families and individuals, including 3SquaresVT (SNAP), and school meals.
 - Number of 3SquaresVT Households: 7,343
 - Number of 3SquareVT Individuals: 12,839
 - Number of people in Chittenden County at or below 185% FPL: 37,479
 (Source: VT Department of Children and Families, Economic Services Division, November 2021)
- Food insecurity is also linked to obesity, as “unhealthy,” high calorie foods tend to be cheaper in terms of “calories per dollar” compared to “healthy” food like fresh produce. According to the Vermont Agency of Education, to be eligible for free school meals a families’ income must be at or below 130% of the Federal poverty line. Also, family income between 130% and 185% of the federal poverty line qualify for reduced lunch. In Chittenden County, 4,267 or 10% of all families with or without children, and 37,479 individuals^{iv}, have income below 185 percent of poverty level.
- Lower income households, making less than a livable wage, are more likely to experience housing insecurity.

Commented [RM11]: Update: NOTE: update from this report:
https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/3-4-50_Statewide%20Data%20Brief_Low_SES_011718_HS_final_2.pdf

Commented [RM12]: Confirm the family v. individual data.

Key Indicators

Additional indicators can be found on the ECOS Scorecard.

Indicators	Location
Median Household Income, Chittenden County, VT., US	Scorecard
Median Household Income by Race	Scorecard
Percentage of Families whose Income in the Last 12 months is Below Poverty Level, Chittenden County, VT. US	Scorecard
Housing + Transportation Costs for Median Income Family	Scorecard

STRATEGY

X. IMPROVE AND STRENGTHEN THE ECONOMIC SYSTEMS OF OUR REGION TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR VERMONT EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES.

Economic development is about building a community's capacity for shared and sustainable improvements in the economic well-being of residents. Providing access to good jobs that can support an adequate standard of living for all residents of a region or community; continuous and sustainable improvements in the internal functioning of the economy, where its structural underpinnings are made stronger without sacrificing long-term quality of life; and providing the means and the continuous processes to strengthen the foundation of our communities.

Actions

1. **Attract New Workers and Expand Labor Force** - Attract new workers of all skills sets, training, and expertise to the region, and remove existing barriers to workforce participation for existing residents, to combat the state-wide labor shortage due to the impacts of COVID-19 and an aging population.
 - a. **Housing.** Implement actions that support increases in housing supply through the development of perpetually affordable, workforce, and market rate housing in geographic areas designated for growth and located near public transit. Strive for 75% of Chittenden County workers to live in the region. See Strategy 2, Action 3 for detailed actions related to housing.
 - b. **Child Care.** Ensure that children ages (0-5) have adequate access to high quality and affordable early learning and education programs. Work with stakeholders in the child care field (e.g. Building Bright Futures, existing childcare providers, school districts) and potential funders (e.g. VCDP, NBRC, EDA) to identify existing sites that could support a child care facilities (particularly for infant care) and assist with accessing grant/loan funds for costs associated with business start-up, associated workforce development, and construction.
 - c. **Marketing.** Seek grant funding to support on-going marketing efforts by project partners and local employers to attract new workers to the West Central Vermont region.
2. **Equity** - Facilitate equitable economic development planning that benefits all workers and focuses on increasing economic opportunity/advancement for communities that have been traditionally underrepresented and undervalued in the regional economy.
 - a. **Board Representation.** Require representation from a women-owned business and BIPOC-owned business on any future Economic Development District Board of Directors covering the West Central Vermont Region (which includes Chittenden County).
 - b. **Data.** Ensure that all data collection conducted by a future WCVT EDD includes information about race and gender to more accurately understand and report on economic development efforts and populations served/impacted.
 - c. **Education, Training, and Support.** Support creation of a BIPOC Business Enterprise Commission, as recommended by the Vermont Partnership for

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Fairness and Diversity, by the Vermont legislature to advance opportunities for education, training, and support. Capitalize on the entrepreneurial spirit of recent immigrants and ensure that they are a cornerstone of economic development policy and actions, and incorporate strategies as appropriate.

- d. **On-going Partnership.** Develop a working partnership between a future WCVT EDD, VT Professionals of Color Network, Vermont Works for Women, and other organizations focused entrepreneurship and professional development of BIPOC and women workers, to continually assess and address the needs of these underrepresented communities.
- e. **Funding.** Organizationally prioritize seeking economic development-related grant funding and technical assistance to support the needs of BIPOC and women-owned businesses.

3. Job Creation and Business Development – Support job retention and growth at existing high wage employers, expand economic diversification, and create a supportive ecosystem for entrepreneurs to create and grow their business within the region.

- a. **High wage employers** – The primary goal of any economic development strategy is retaining and growing the already existing high wage jobs within the economy. The region should increase economic diversity by identifying and supporting businesses in sectors with high location quotients (a higher concentration in the region compared to the country as a whole). Providing support and connecting available resources is critical to ensuring that this economic base remains vital and is able to grow. The high wage sectors in which Chittenden County expects to drive our economy are: Information Technology, Communications and Media (including Information Technology, E-Commerce, and Digital Media); High Value-Added Manufacturing; Higher Education; Clean Tech/Green Tech; and Health Care and Wellness (see the Target Sector Analysis Report).
- b. **Innovation and Entrepreneurial Development** – Promote and expand the support ecosystem for entrepreneurs: providers, programs, and services available in the State to create an economic system of resources that is easily navigable at all stages of the innovation and entrepreneurial continuum. This support ecosystem must aggregate and address services such as finding capital, mentorship, prototyping, commercialization, etc.

4. Workforce Development and Employee Retention - Assist partner organizations in delivering workforce training to Vermonters who have left the public education system, in improving employee retention, and in providing professional development opportunities for career advancement.

- a. **Emerging Workforce Needs.** Connect the skills development infrastructure of our institutions of higher education, vocational programs, and technical schools with the direct needs of the Vermont workforce. Seek funding in cooperation with

Community College of Vermont (CCV), and other partners, to support CCV's work to develop courses/curriculum to address emerging workforce needs in the West Central Vermont region.

- b. High School Tech Programs. Allow Career and Technical Education Centers to be accessible either full or part-time starting in the 9th grade. Offer credit-bearing, structured, 40-hour internships subsequent to a 20-hour pre-employment skills segment, and tied to a high school learning outcome (e.g., the Linking Learning to Life TIPS (Training Interns & Partnering for Success) model for structured internships).
- c. Retain College Seniors.
- d. Non-profit Sector Support. In cooperation with Common Good Vermont, seek funding to support workforce development efforts, business planning, and training specifically targeted to the needs of the non-profit sector.
- e. Weatherization.
- f. Nursing.
- g. Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Assist regional non-profits and governmental entities that seek to fund programs that provide mental health support and substance abuse-related services to regional workers in order to employee retention and positive economic outcomes for all parties.
- h. Encourage co-working spaces, generator spaces and business incubators to provide low-cost space for new business + innovation.
- i. Provide training and support for people who are leaving incarceration.
- j. Elementary School Readiness – Improve access and funding for pre-kindergarten programs so that children are ready to learn by the time they begin kindergarten. Ensure that our young children are nurtured by knowledgeable and capable caregivers by: increasing the capacity, knowledge and skills of parents to nurture their young children; providing families access to high quality early care and education settings; and, supporting the ability of early care and education providers to develop the skills and knowledge needed to care for children.

5. Infrastructure and Resilience - Actively participate in the planning, funding, and construction of infrastructure projects that support equity, smart growth principals, and economic resilience.

- a. **Rural Development Corporation (RDC) Priority Project List.** Annually update RDC priority project lists, incorporate priority projects lists into the CEDS, and seek funding to plan and implement projects.
- b. **Public Infrastructure and Project Lists.** Adequate funding for public infrastructure is necessary to maintain and expand our economy. See the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the ECOS/CEDS Project List for more details on critical projects. These lists include some of the projects necessary to support the region's economic development: The Metropolitan Transportation Plan Project List includes transportation infrastructure projects and the CEDS Project List includes other infrastructure and utility projects.

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- c. **Tax-Increment Financing.** Expand the Vermont Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District Program for more municipalities to take advantage of this to support smart growth development.
- d. **Water and Wastewater Planning.** Work with municipalities, VT ANR, and USDA-RD to plan for future water and sewer needs and to complete preliminary engineering reports (PER) which are necessary to make informed municipal decisions regarding project affordability and required to enable access to State and Federal funding sources for final design/construction.
- e. **Water and Wastewater Funding.** Advocate for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund Intended Use Plans, and RDC Priority Project Lists, to provide greater priority to projects focused economic development and community development. This includes projects located in “smart growth” locations, areas with unmet housing need, areas housing costs are misaligned with area median income, or in communities with active community development efforts underway.
- f. **Electric Transmission and Distribution Infrastructure.** Work with VELCO and distribution utilities to adequately plan, and seek grant funding, for upgrades to the electric transmission and distribution system to ensure a resilient, renewable, and low-carbon electric grid that supports a vibrant renewable energy-related economy and low energy costs.
- g. **EV Charging.** Work with municipalities and relevant stakeholders to plan for local EV charging networks that support regional “destinations” (e.g. downtowns, villages, resorts, tourist sites) and along major regional transportation route.
- h. **Broadband.** Assist existing service providers to accomplish universal 100/100 Mbps broadband access to all homes and businesses within the region.
- i. **Transportation.** Cooperate with municipalities, VTTrans and other stakeholders to plan, engineer, fund, and construct “Complete Streets” transportation improvements in areas planned for growth that can enable economic development and housing development.
- j. **Remove Zoning Barriers to Housing.** Work with municipalities to implement practices in the Zoning for Great Neighborhoods Guide to incrementally remove zoning barriers to housing development in areas planned for growth.
- k. **Brownfields.** Seek funding from the EPA to establish a Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to specifically serve brownfield cleanup in the West Central Vermont region.
- l. **Innovation Hubs.**
- m. **Data.** Cooperate with the EDA University Center at the University of Vermont (Office of Engagement), and other statewide and regional economic development organizations, to develop an “Integrated Data and Research Infrastructure” in order to create the “capacity for the state of Vermont to have extensive access to data across scales and sectors.”
- n. **Funding.** Investigate ways that a future EDD could access grant funding, and/or develop funding programs, to assist with the planning, engineering, and construction of infrastructure projects within the region.

6. Quality of Life - Balance economic development goals and growth with the importance of retaining key elements of our high quality of life in West Central Vermont (e.g. ample access to outdoor recreation, high quality K-12 public schools, compact settlement surrounded by rural countryside).

- a. Land Use. Implement the land use goals and policies from partner regional plans that plan for housing and economic development in our areas planned for growth and for conservation of our working lands for use in agriculture, forestry, and outdoor recreation.
- b. Act 250 Reform. Advocate for the removal of Act 250 permitting jurisdiction, and release from existing Act 250 permits, within state-designated centers and existing industrial parks.
- c. Permit Reform. Advocate for the removal of duplicative Federal, State, and local development review processes.
- d. Farm to Plate. Cooperate with stakeholders to implement projects identified in the 2021-2030 Vermont Agricultural and Food Systems Strategic Plan (Vermont Farm to Plate) that will support continued growth of the local farm, food, and forestry economy within the region.
- e. Outdoor Recreation.
- f. Creative Economy and the Arts – Arts and the creative economy are what drives a large and diverse amount of economic activity in our region (e.g. local foods, design, technology, media, craftsmanship/fabrication, arts, emergent media, music, dance, festivals, education, and recreation). This portion of the economy is fundamentally unique in that it is a significant contributor to the culture in our region. Support creative economy and arts programs and efforts.
- g. Tourism – Continue good efforts in tourism including VT Convention Bureau, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, and Lake Champlain Byway. Ensure that tourism materials are available in languages besides English, especially French. Support the work of the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative, a task force created by Governor Phil Scott in 2017, to strengthen and expand Vermont's outdoor recreation economy.

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7. Economic Development Coordination – Work with the State of Vermont to implement the 2020 Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Coordinate with West Central Vermont CEDS partner organizations and pursue creation of an Economic Development District (EDD). Cooperate with Northwest Regional Planning Commission on their economic development efforts due to the proximity and economic ties between regions. Support municipalities in local economic development efforts.

8. Industrial Site Locations – With only a few years supply of existing buildings or permitted sites left for high wage industrial or manufacturing businesses in the region, additional sites need to be identified and carefully planned to ensure a smooth permitting process to be ready for employers' needs for expansion or relocation in Chittenden County. The most likely employment sectors with this need are high wage, technology-

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based and other types of manufacturing. The best opportunities for these sites are on vacant portions of land owned by current major employers, within close proximity to - or already connected to - existing infrastructure services for long term efficiency.

- a. CCRPC and GBIC will work with ACCD to have business/industrial parks recognized as benefit locations in state designation programs. (Funded by GBIC and CCRPC. No direct additional employment is expected, but this would help to create future opportunities.)
- b. Rather than re-zoning land for industrial development, development should be prioritized on land that is already zoned for industrial uses, or that has been used for industrial processes in the past. This will ensure that industrial development is concentrated in areas planned for growth. To advance this, CCRPC will continue the strategies discussed in Strategy 2 of this plan.
- c. Prepare a "longevity analysis" to project when additional fully-serviced and permitted land should be added to the regional inventory (GBIC action).

ⁱ Source: Vermont Arts Council 2020 CreateVT Vision and Action Framework

ⁱⁱ [SVVT2020.pdf \(google.com\)](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ Source: Vermont Basic Needs Budget And Livable Wage 2021 Report

^{iv} Source: VT Department of Children and Families, Economic Services Division, November 2021