TECHNICAL PLANS

**VISION CONNECTION**

* **Safe + Resilient Community:** Camels Hump Middle School is currently the designated building for shelter during a disaster
* **Community for All Ages:** Education is a lifelong process in schools and other settings. Education contributes to culture and the understanding of challenges in our society. Good citizenry, wise decision making about government, and the role of Americans in the world are developed through education.
* **Mobility and Transportation:** The education transportation system insures that all children can get to school. The system has potential to expand to other community members and can be a model for efficiency.
* **Social, Cultural + Recreational Offerings:** The school buildings are the central gathering places for the town. They host meetings, sports events, voting, concerts and other cultural gatherings.
* **Economic opportunity:**  Education prepares young people for careers and retrains adults for new careers. The schools also are a major local employer.

**EDUCATION**

Richmond is a member of the Mount Mansfield Modified Union School District (MMMUSD), including Bolton, Huntington, Jericho, Richmond, Underhill, and Underhill ID. The excellent reputation of the district is a result of dedicated cooperative efforts of teachers, support staff, School Board members, administration, town residents, parent volunteers, and students. The mission of the school district is to provide high quality learning opportunities that are relevant to the needs of students and the community now and in the future. As our national economy has been shifting from manufacturing to a more service oriented economy which is knowledge based, our community and state have an opportunity to lead society by wise investment in education.

In the past few years, there has been significant expansion of community learning opportunities for preschool children and adult continuing education. About 81% of eligible preschool children are involved in preschool through partnership efforts of public and private preschools. There is still a need for a little more capacity and more private providers. The partnership pays for 10 hours per week. Bolton, Richmond, and Huntington have all started school based programs and can offer all day preschool for eligible (low income) students. Kindergarten is now full time in our school district. There is also adult continuing education through the “After Dark” program at the high school and extended programs in the arts.

Richmond Elementary School and Camel's Hump Middle School are located within Richmond, and Mount Mansfield Union High School is in Jericho. One of the significant challenges facing the school district and community is transportation to the respective schools. The district encompasses 200 square miles. Large school buses travel long distances transporting children to and from school. This uses expensive fossil fuel energy and results in long bus rides for children, many in excess of half an hour each way. It is important to examine ways in which energy and time could be saved through a more efficient transportation system. Currently, many parents drive their children to and from school to avoid long bus rides. Shorter bus rides would reduce stress levels for students and drivers and would improve student behavior on buses. Shorter routes may also reduce morning and afternoon traffic congestion in the village center. The potential use of electric buses, smaller buses for centralized or more remote areas, and possible expansion of opportunities for community use of buses could make more efficient use of energy and time.

The current opioid crisis is a growing concern to the school district. Increasing numbers of children are born addicted and live in homes where addicted parents are challenged to care for them. They come to school struggling to learn. Some children are being raised by their grandparents and other relatives. Significant trauma contributes to social, emotional, and learning challenges. School nurses and staff are working hard to meet students' needs, and this extra burden detracts from the general quality of education. The schools need help from the Town-- more community health services and treatment options.

In the mid 1990's, no one would have predicted a decline in student enrollment. However, in recent years, there has been a decline. Therefore, some space is available in the schools which opens up opportunities for other community uses. The school district wants to cooperate with the community in offering space options for additional continuing education, senior citizen activities, and other social, cultural and recreational uses. It is important to maintain the infrastructure of our school buildings as they are needed now and in the future. The schools are central gathering places for voting, Town meetings, sports events, concerts and other cultural events. In times of disaster, they are a hub offering safe haven as an emergency shelter. It is important to encourage the gathering of the community in the school buildings for as many occasions as possible. As people frequently visit the schools for various reasons, they experience pride in the community and are encouraged to support public education which is essential to our future as a town, state, and nation.

Richmond takes pride in our educational system and students. The town is committed to supporting student prosperity and safety. Although the town is a separate entity from the school, the two governments work closely together. Richmond Police Department currently staffs the Camels Hump Middle School Resource Officer, and our town center is the home to the MMMUSD offices.

**GOALS & ACTIONS**

**GOAL 1: Actively support education for all ages and income levels**

**ACTIONS:**

1. Continue to develop more programs for preschool students, including more private providers as partners.
2. Encourage education programs which address the need for new technological training for emerging careers.
3. Encourage the development of more programs which research shows develop the brain, such as the arts.
4. Provide education programs to help solve problems caused by the opiate crisis.
5. Support the expansion of nursing and other social support staff as needed within the schools.
6. Continue to provide venues such as the Community room at the Library and other facilities for recreational and educational programs for all ages.
7. Support policies that improve the mental health and readiness of students such as later start times and shorter bus routes
8. Continue to work with the MMMUSD to staff a School Resource Officer position and implement other safety measures

**GOAL 2: Partner with the school district to seek a more efficient transportation system to benefit students, parents, drivers, and commuters**

**ACTIONS:**

1. Work with the school district to explore the potential of electric buses. Support the school district in their current grant application for an electric bus
2. Consider altering bus routes to use smaller buses for outlying areas, shortening lengths of rides and saving fuel for large buses covering so much distance
3. Consider a shuttle service for students to and from local afterschool activities

**GOAL 3: Partner with the school district to maintain infrastructure and maximize use of the school buildings for educational and other community purposes.**

**ACTIONS:**

1. Support the maintenance and improvement of the building infrastructure with an emphasis on energy conservation
2. Promote efficient use of water within the buildings
3. Seek more early care (birth through age 5) providers for available space within the school buildings
4. Encourage the use of buildings for community arts and adult continuing education programs
5. Continue to support the use of schools for voting, meetings, and other important community group activities
6. Foster community support for education in general by maximizing opportunities to draw the public to the school

(see also Transportation, Utilities & Facilities, Energy, Economic Development, Community Development, Emergency Resilience)