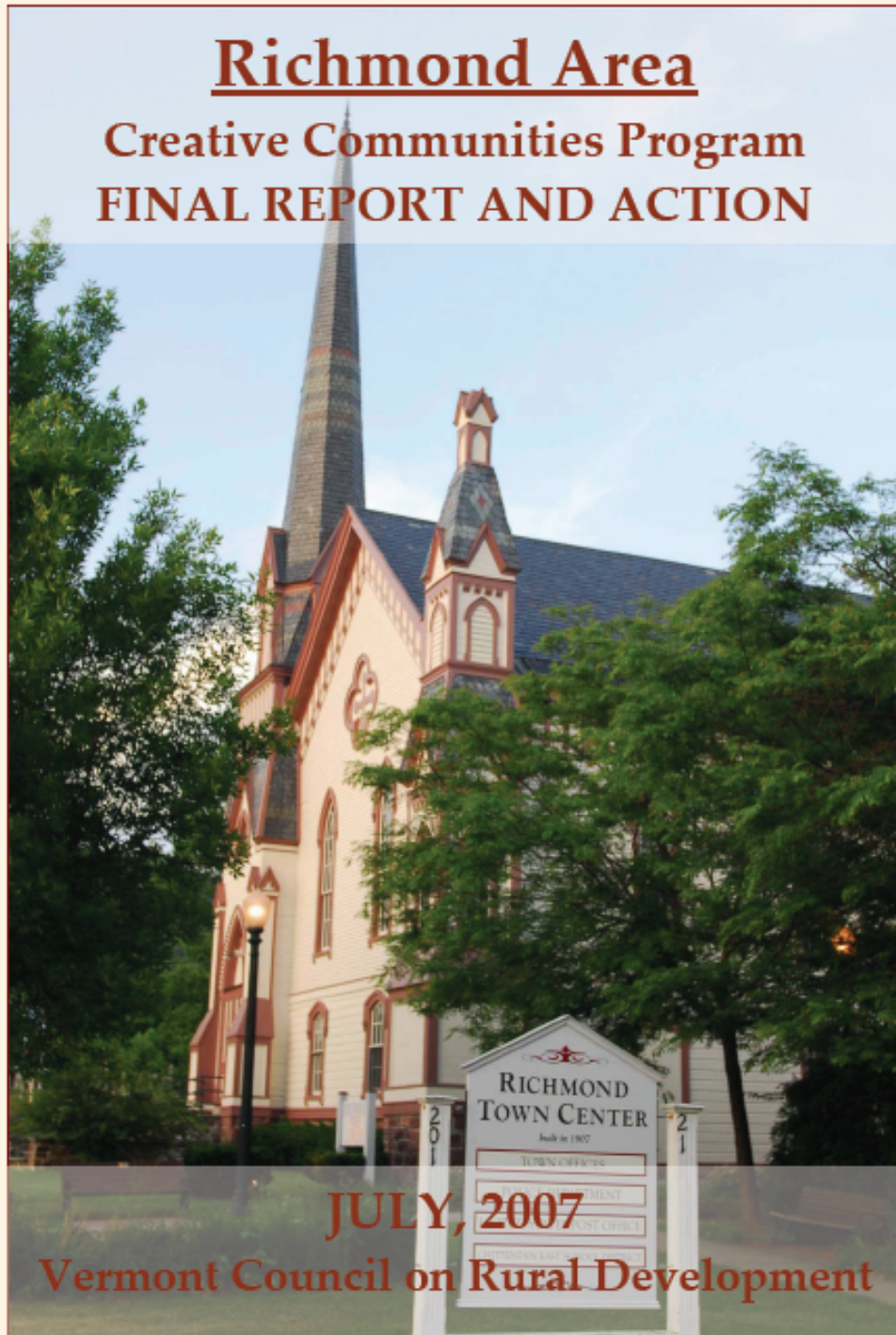


Richmond Area
Creative Communities Program
FINAL REPORT AND ACTION



JULY, 2007

Vermont Council on Rural Development

Richmond Area Creative Communities Program

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For Further Information

Paul Costello, Executive Director
Helen Labun Jordan, Director, Creative Communities Program
Vermont Council on Rural Development
PO Box 1384
Montpelier, VT 05601
(802) 828-6024 or (802) 828-6022
vcrd@sover.net
ccp@sover.net
www.vtrural.org

Introduction

Richmond is in many ways a classic Vermont village, with a vibrant downtown surrounded by rural and agricultural lands. However, this traditional town arrangement is becoming less common as a variety of pressures both reduce the vitality of downtowns and convert rural and agricultural lands to more a suburban setting. Richmond in particular feels these pressures, as it sits only a few minutes drive away from Burlington and Williston. Richmond wishes to celebrate its traditional character while also preserving that character for the future.

Participants in the creative economy forums noted several times that their village center sits precariously close to the “one stop shopping” of nearby Williston. Nevertheless, the heart of their village remains quite active. It houses many small businesses, from a popular bakery to a shoe shop that draws customers from around the region. The local restaurants have gained a statewide reputation for quality. Historic structures, such as the Round Church and Richmond Free Library, add to the sense of heritage. Richmond serves as a commercial center for smaller, nearby towns such as Huntington, Bolton and parts of Jericho.

In addition to its downtown, Richmond is an important agricultural community for Vermont. Viable farms surround the densely built center. New farms continue to take root in the area. Furthermore, key agricultural organizations have headquarters in Richmond, including the Northeast Organic Farmers’ Association (VT division), Vermont Fresh Network, and the Vermont Farm Bureau. Other organizations that support farmlands as part of their mission, such as the Vermont Land Trust and Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, also have local offices. The recently restored Monitor Barn provides a highly visible reminder of the region’s agricultural heritage.

Richmond’s unique character, and high quality of life, can serve as a draw for creative workers. Many artists, craftspeople, innovators and small business owners have decided to locate in Richmond. Community members praised the current diversity of people in town. Citizens represent a range of interests and careers.

As with many other towns that have strong components of a creative economy, Richmond also has concerns about the future for this base. Plans for future development have already caused divisions within the community. It has been difficult to balance an open space and conservation ethic, interest in a compact village center, and need to support new business opportunities. The sprawling development that has occurred nearby intensifies concerns about Richmond’s own development patterns.

A further challenge for the Richmond area is the high percentage of people who commute to other regions for work. This daily movement causes logistical concerns. For example, while Richmond can connect to public transportation from a hub near the Interstate, public transportation does not exist within the local region. Richmond also hopes to provide a rich cultural life for commuting workers to return to in the evening and on

weekends, instead of staying in their work base. Finally, entrepreneurship, innovation, and continued downtown activity ought to create jobs closer to home.



One priority project, **Form an Alliance for Creative Development of Existing Properties**, directly tackles some of the difficult decisions associated with development. The emphasis on existing buildings recognizes the importance of

working first with what the town already has. However, this group also embraces a need for proactive efforts to ensure ongoing activity in the Richmond area. Richmond is a place that can grow without shedding its authentic character. This group's work with infrastructure will also provide a base to support other interests associated with the creative economy, such as an agricultural development center.

A second priority project, **Develop and Market a Richmond Trails System**, approaches both infrastructure and quality of life issues. A clear trail system can provide a way for area residents to reach downtown without using individual cars. At the same time, trails provide a great recreational opportunity in keeping with the outdoors interests of many Richmond residents and potential visitors.

The final priority celebrates Richmond's agricultural heritage through **Holding a Harvest Festival**. The festival will show off Richmond's traditions and, again, appeal to both local residents and visitors. Careful planning for the festival can ensure that it provides an economic boon to Richmond, both through direct sales that day and developing relationships that bring customers back to Richmond and the businesses highlighted in the festival.

The Vermont Council on Rural Development has enjoyed working with everyone involved in the Richmond area's Creative Communities Program. We would like to thank the Town Offices, Richmond Free Library, and Old Round Church for providing meeting space. We would like to especially thank the Outreach Group that worked at a local level to build participation in the forums and Melanie Farr who provided initial forum refreshments. Michael Hampton chaired this Outreach Group and will continue to provide leadership as all projects move forward, for which we are grateful.

Accomplishments in the Creative Communities 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 Resource Team (listed at the end of this report) and VCRD staff for help.

Overview of the Creative Communities Program

By 2003, the idea of the creative economy had become pervasive in Vermont, but few policy makers and local leaders had understanding of how to advance the opportunity of the creative economy systematically in state policy or in practice in towns throughout the state. The Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) convened the Vermont Council on Culture and Innovation (VCCI) to craft a strategic plan that would coordinate the work of statewide leadership, the congressional delegation and state legislature, and provide community leaders with a guide to practical action. The final product, *Advancing Vermont's Creative Economy*, was formally issued at the beginning of the 2005 Vermont Legislative session.

The VCCI report is available online at <http://www.vtrural.org>. It outlines the current strength of Vermont's creative economy and offers recommendations for increasing the contribution that the creative economy can make to the state's overall economic health.

One of the policy recommendations in the VCCI report was to establish a Vermont Creative Communities Program that would jumpstart local creative economy development projects by offering targeted assistance for community-led planning. VCRD received a grant from Jane's Trust to implement this program starting in 2005.

Today, the Creative Communities Program builds on both VCCI's findings and the successful Community Visit program that VCRD has managed for many years. Community Visits offer a way for communities to identify key issue areas and construct work plans for addressing selected public concerns.

The Creative Economy

Organizations around the world, including several in New England, have studied and set their own definitions of the "creative economy." Some definitions focus on the revenue generated by particular creative sectors that fit standard industrial codes, others focus on the individual qualities of creative workers, and still others attempt to pinpoint specific policies that spark creativity in *every* worker.

The Creative Communities Program considers all existing creative economy perspectives and uses a working definition with three key components that are common to most creative economy discussions:

•The Importance of Place:

Our discussion of "place" includes the natural, physical and community environments that form the foundation for creative economy work. Is this a place where people will *want* to work, live, and participate as active citizens? Is there a healthy mix of culture and commerce? Is there a strong community identity that distinguishes this place from any other?

•Creative Partnerships:

The 2004 *Advancing Vermont's Creative Economy* report began to outline the breadth of businesses, individuals, and organizations that contribute to a strong

economy. These contributors include groups that have not traditionally been thought of as business partners, such as arts, heritage, place-based, and other (usually) not-for-profit organizations. They are core partners in economic development discussions. Who needs to be at the table to help build a strong local economy?

•Individuals’ Creative Skills:

Businesses in every field generate a competitive advantage from new ideas and unique skills – how do we increase business’ ability to capitalize on creative contributions? What type of environment attracts and retains today’s top creative thinkers? What inspires creative thinking in *everyone* in a community?

The Creative Communities Process

The Creative Communities Program consists of three public meetings that generate the brainstorming, prioritized projects, and action steps detailed in this report. The goal is to bring a diverse group of community members to the table who are in agreement in their commitment to a strong future for their community and can begin to work together to identify key steps for ensuring that future. The timeline for Grand Isle County’s process was as follows:

May 22nd, 2007 – First Public Forum

In the month leading up to the first forum, a local steering committee helped get word out about the Creative Communities process. The first public forum combined presentations on what the creative economy means with brainstorming about how it applies to the Richmond area and specific ideas for projects to advance local creative economic development. This list (p. 6) formed the basis for the prioritization session in the second public meeting.

June 7th, 2007 – Project List Review and Prioritization

The second community meeting reviewed and revised the list of project possibilities outlined in the first meeting. Through discussion, championing, and voting, participants identified 3 priority areas to become the focus of forming Project Teams and work plans in the third, and final, forum (p. 16).

June 28th, 2007 – Project Team Working Day

In the final meeting run by VCRD, Project Teams for each project set specific strategies, identified available (and potential) resources, and outlined a work plan for the next year around the projects selected in the second meeting. A Resource Team invited by VCRD facilitated the group discussions, offered ideas and resource suggestions and answered questions from their experience. The work plans based on this meeting and recommendations received later from the Resource Team appear in the following pages of this report.

I. First Public Forum on the Creative Economy

Richmond Free Library

May 22nd, 2007

The first public forum in the Richmond Area Creative Communities Program took place on the evening of May 22nd at the Richmond Town Hall. The forum brought in several speakers who have led creative economy work to provide background on the concept. Helen Labun Jordan, Director of the Creative Communities Program, and Paul Costello, Executive Director of the Vermont Council on Rural Development, gave a general description of the creative economy and the Creative Communities Program process. David Lane, Deputy Secretary at the Agency of Agriculture and Joss Besse, Director of the Downtown Program, both provided a statewide perspective on creative economy work. Addy Smith Reiman, Director of the Town House Theater in Hardwick, spoke about efforts in her community, which also participated in the Creative Communities Program (their report is online at <http://www.vtrural.org>).

The introduction moved quickly to facilitated discussion of creative economy projects happening in, or planned for, the Richmond area, what could strengthen these projects, and what new initiatives might be needed. The following notes capture the comments received during that discussion.

What does the creative economy look like in Richmond today? What are the local assets?

- The library is a great space, one that's recently renovated.
- Programs are always happening at the library, for example dances, lectures, music classes, slide shows, etc.
- Many people in the area have home occupations, like computers, graphic design, artists, etc.
- The Round Church is a cultural asset.
- There is a good farmers' market on the town green.
- Many high quality eateries and restaurants exist in Richmond.
- The Green Grocer and Corner Market add to the food environment.
- Area farms bring both tangible and intangible benefits to the area, including a strong sense of place and of the working landscape.
- There is a walkable downtown, which is a place to meet other community members. The downtown Post Office, for example, encourages interaction.
- The thriving downtown keeps storefronts filled in spite of nearby big boxes. One drawback is that there is little room for major renovation & revitalization projects that could draw attention to Richmond as a creative economy center.
- Proximity to the Interstate is both an asset and a threat.
- Businesses in town have a strong community spirit, they support community events / projects.
- The Goodwin Baker Building has affordable office space.
- The Volunteers Park is about to have a bakery open.

- The Vermont Youth Conservation Corps is housed in the Monitor Barn buildings.
- There is a local ski area with historic roots, a unique character, and support for school programs.
- Richmond's geographic layout gives clear edges to the community: a river, railroad, highway, and interstate. This physical environment has discouraged sprawl.
- There is wonderful outdoors recreation – two rivers, the foothills of the green mountains.
- Richmond is known for being environmentally friendly.
- There is a local land conservation ethic. There is an active Richmond Land Trust as well as local offices for the Vermont Land Trust and Forest Watch.
- The Richmond town Conservation Reserve Fund can support local conservation projects.
- Richmond got DSL earlier than other places in the state, opening up the town for workers who need to communicate outside the state.
- Richmond has better than average cell coverage.
- There is a high knowledge base, high human capital locally.
- Many creative people live in this region.
- The Richmond area has great musicians. Practice rooms in the library (including a concert caliber piano) support the next generation of great musicians.
- There are many children around town.
- Richmond is home to the Northeast Organic Farmers Association, VT chapter.
- Diverse people live in the region, although this diversity is now under stress.
- There is a strong, dense downtown.
- Richmond is a central spot, people from surrounding towns regularly travel here.
- Housing and residential neighborhoods exist near the center of town.
- There is a downtown hardware store.
- Richmond offers many services for a relatively small place.
- Many people come to the 4th of July celebration. This celebration brings together many different groups in the community.
- Last year's First Night celebration also brought out many different groups.
- There are good police and rescue services.
- This region has an excellent educational system.
- Local residents support their local organizations.
- The local churches are active, host events, and day care.
- The Richmond area has dirt roads and a real mud season.
- Richmond has a great reputation statewide for its restaurants.
- The Town Hall brings many services together into one place and is an historic building.
- Two metal bridges in town are officially listed as in the top 25 in the state (see also the "challenges" section).
- Barns are part of the working landscape, and 3 barns were recently transformed for new economic uses.
- Richmond and surrounding towns all work well together as partners.

- Working farms remain at the edge of the village.
- Wildlife remains in the area.
- The Hale and Hearty Club is part of an active senior citizens community.
- The town has good event venues.
- The old cheese factory has potential for redevelopment. The developer who owns it has plans to utilize the building.
- Harrington's offers great retail.
- Richmond has a LINK stop and well-used park 'n ride for people traveling to the Burlington and/or Montpelier area.
- Public transportation could become an even greater asset if light rail develops.
- Schools are within walking distance from the downtown.
- There is an emerging Buy Local movement.
- Jonesville is an underutilized local asset.
- The Richmond Area Business Association is creating a resource directory.

What are some challenges to creative economy development in the Richmond area?

- Parking is limited.
- Some people use Richmond as a bedroom community and don't get involved in community life.
- A major bridge in town is in failure, creating a safety issue and traffic bottleneck.
- Traffic congestion exists at rush hour.
- A Town Meeting survey found widespread distress at the lack of a brew pub.
- Cumberland Farms is an example of a failed opportunity. The town had a chance to utilize that lot, but did not, leaving many people in town upset at its current use.
- Another example of Richmond moving slowly to direct its future is 5.8 acres of commercially zoned space in town that will likely end up unusable for commerce.
- Richmond is polarized into groups who don't want any development and those who do, and these groups often enter into a deadlock – resulting in undirected development that neither side wanted.
- While the Richmond area has many artists, visual artists have limited places to work and display their art.
- There could be more venues for live music.
- New houses are not affordable.
- The sidewalks need upgrading, especially leading to school. A group is working on this problem.
- Although downtown is walkable, there aren't ways for people outside of downtown to get there without driving.
- The trails that do reach downtown are not clearly marked.
- Some significant goods and services, like doctors and a grocery store, are only accessible by driving.
- High taxes are a problem.
- Small businesses struggle. It is hard to invest in new stores downtown when faced with "one stop shopping" in Williston.

- Start-up businesses have a hard time finding assistance in Richmond. There is no one entity to support new business.
- While LINK is a great start for public transportation, it doesn't reach downtown, and more localized transportation systems don't exist.
- LINK is also slow. It would be great to take a train and get to Montpelier quickly.
- The Richmond area is small and needs more power to leverage negotiations on topics like healthcare.
- The teen center has progressed very slowly. Hopefully its new 501(c) 3 status and grant money will jumpstart that project.
- Downtown is disjointed, with segments blocked off by things like the bridge and residential pockets.
- Residential housing is divided by Route 2. It's unclear how expanding business will cut into housing, for example in the Bridge Street area. The lack of a distinction between residential and non-residential space is confusing.
- There is a lack of vacant buildings to renovate for space to bring in new creative activity.
- Richmond lacks cultural diversity.
- There is no senior center.
- Lawnmowers create a noise problem in summer.
- The rest of Richmond overlooks Jonesville.
- An absentee landlord owns several key downtown buildings and has not invested in their upkeep / appearance.
- It's difficult to recruit residents to fill town government spaces.
- There is no community recreation center with programs for all ages.
- The tax base does not have capacity to add more community services.
- Many people saw the film festival in the park as a great community event, others saw it as a nuisance and "not for them." This experience is indicative of the challenges in getting all different groups in the community to come together (see also the assets sections for events that succeed in bringing everyone together).
- It's hard for consumers to easily navigate local shopping and they may simply drive to Williston where they know they can find goods and services.



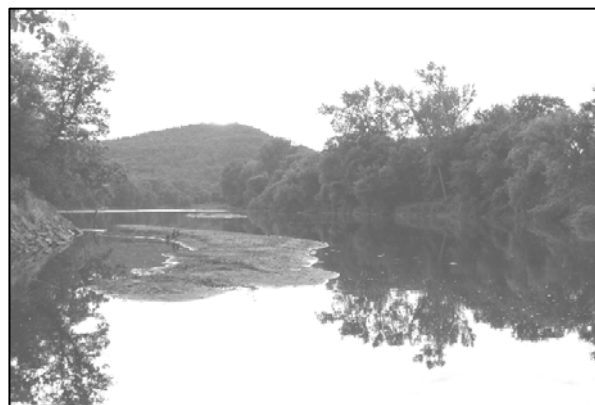
- Home-based businesses don't receive business support.
- The power lines are ugly, they need cleaning up.
- The local focus on children is an asset, but at the same time there needs to be events targeted to the child-free audience.

What projects could strengthen the creative economy in the Richmond area?

- Richmond should establish a local Intervale, using farmland to promote entrepreneurship, including new markets like alternative energy.
- Redevelop the cheese factory into a community center.

- Work with the developer of the 5.8 acre lot to encourage mixed use development.
- Organize as a community to work with developers, be proactive in shaping what the community will look like.
- Provide support for start ups – it takes too long to put together a business plan for a business in Richmond.
- Address the risk of being marginalized as gas prices go up and concern over oil dependence increases. An infrastructure should exist to reach the places residents need without relying on fossil fuels.
- Build a multi-generational community center, including classes, music space, drama, and an art center.
- Hold more performances, perhaps a summer series, in the Round Church.
- Increase participation in the Historic Society to allow more events to happen in historic buildings, like the Round Church.
- Develop trails that connect the village center with people living outside the center.
- Hold more big community events like the 4th of July. One possibility is a harvest market festival.
- Highlight farms to bring in more agri-tourism, and to bring money directly to local farms.
- Make town government less volunteer dependent. Paid employees could help make the volunteer positions more attractive (by reducing the work load). A full time zoning person could make development more efficient.
- The Buy Local campaign should expand. For example, groups of local residents could commit to a 100% local diet, as others have done elsewhere around the country and in Canada.
- Hold a Democracy Fair to get people involved in town government, let residents know about local volunteer positions and what volunteer groups accomplish.
- Start a low-watt community radio station.
- The FCC will have a window for full-power community radio stations to receive a license this fall. Richmond should take advantage of that opportunity.
- Use rails in town.
- Provide business support for micro- and home-businesses. For example an incubator-type location or services like photocopying, mailings or technical assistance.
- Start a community co-operative dry goods store.
- Provide more parking behind downtown buildings.
- Counteract the disjointed-ness of downtown by tying it together visually – for example with hanging flowers, banners, or lampposts.
- Host more public art, especially outdoor installations in public places.
- Host an artist in residence for the year.
- Hold a one-night art hop festival as is done in Burlington's South End.
- Develop a teaching center around environmental technology and skills for sustainability (including sustaining the working landscape).
- Tap skills of area builders and craftspeople for a teaching center.
- Make better use of school buildings outside of school hours. One good use would be expanded adult education.

- Bring people into town for the mountain bike trails. Connect downtown Richmond to a regional network of trails. This attraction could showcase the town, as happened in Burke.
- Draw in more young people who have sought higher education in the Richmond area. One strategy would be to start Richmond's own higher education center, for example around alternative energy and the building trades.
- Use the rivers. Provide boats for rental – perhaps to float down river and then be brought back to the starting point.
- Encourage more participation in the 4th of July parade. Encourage more community groups, businesses, and neighborhoods to enter floats.
- Build more partnership with the Monitor Barns, which currently house the VYCC.
- Use the barns as a learning center.
- Start a Quest program, which develops discovery trails that tour local highlights.
- Work with the recently started Richmond Climate Action Committee on climate change projects.
- Provide assistance for bringing money into committee projects, particularly federal funds.
- Form a consumer group to support local businesses.
- Create food-specific incubator space with a commercial kitchen, light processing facilities, and space for community canning. Jonesville is a potential location.
- Provide support for home-based food producers.
- Start community composting – there is a local sand pit that might be a good spot.
- Choose a historic preservation project as a centerpiece of creative energy. The old hotel or creamery are two options.
- Help save the barn across from the Round Church.
- Build an educational component into all projects.
- Reorient the bandshell to improve its use, so that it doesn't compete with traffic.



II. Initial List of Project Possibilities

The May 22nd forum produced stacks of notes from enthusiastic discussions. The Vermont Council on Rural Development looked through these first forum notes to pull together the first draft of a projects list. The projects listed express the specific ideas presented in February, combining very similar ones and adding in considerations that came up during the background discussion. They block out ambitious concepts that could provide a starting point for project teams to research and refine. VCRD did not filter projects based on feasibility or how closely they relate to the creative economy. Instead, this process simply organized the notes, combined small ideas into larger ones, and connected general observations to concrete project possibilities.

Revisions to the initial list occurred at a public meeting, on June 7th, where participants added new projects, rearranged the grouping of smaller topic ideas, and made corrections to each proposal. This public process produced the following, final proposed topic list.

Establish a Learning Center for Agriculture and Sustainability-Related

Skills: Richmond should establish an educational center that offers hands-on learning experiences in agriculture and sustainability (such as green building, alternative energy, etc.). This learning center could include farmlands for experimentation and community services such as community composting; some of this activity could lead to opportunities for new farm-based businesses. Developing a local learning center not only responds to local interests but also attracts young people who may eventually settle in Richmond. This project could begin with tapping area residents to teach their skills and hold the classes in school buildings after-hours.

Form an Alliance for Creative Development of Existing Properties:

Richmond has great creative energy and potential for community, cultural, and business enterprises. This Project Team should thoughtfully address the issue of how existing physical structures can provide the infrastructure to make good ideas into a reality. One immediate question for this team to address is how to support future development of the Creamery property. A longer-term issue is how this project can set the stage for an agricultural learning center and/or farm business incubator. This effort would clearly demonstrate how an alliance for property development serves as a foundation for other project ideas developed during the first creative economy forum.

Provide Assistance for Start-Up and Home-Based Businesses:

While the Richmond area can be attractive for start-up businesses, it lacks a central place for information to help the process of starting a business in town. Prospective business leaders should receive more assistance with locating in Richmond. A similar situation exists with the many home-based businesses that may not be new to the area, but which could make use of technical assistance, services, shared office space or other resources. This Project Team should look carefully at how Richmond can meet the needs of these start-up and home-based enterprises.

Restore Area Barns: Richmond’s agricultural heritage is a strong part of its character. However, some of the barns that made up the infrastructure for this heritage have fallen into disrepair. At the same time, the Monitor Barns, which now house the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, provide an example of what is possible with barn restoration. This Project Team should work with barn owners to identify buildings that can be restored and possible end uses.

Expand Use of Historic Buildings: Richmond is well known for its historic Round Church, but more volunteers are needed to promote conservation of other buildings (potentially the Old Hotel and Creamery) and to make it feasible to host events in these buildings. This Project Team should work with the Historical Society to identify physical projects needed for preserving historic buildings as well as what can be done to increase usability of existing building space. These types of projects should be used to flag Richmond as a place where things are happening – making it attractive to businesses while preserving historic structures where businesses might some day locate.

Develop a Multi-Generational Community Center: The number of activities happening in Richmond outpaces the space to house them. For example, groups such as the Hale and Hearty Club provide senior activities, but there is no senior center. At the same time, Richmond lacks a recreation center and a community center. This Project Team should create a space to meet these community needs.

Launch a Buy-Local Campaign: Richmond’s location presents particular challenges and opportunities. It has retained a distinctive village center with viable businesses, but at the same time the “one stop shopping” of Williston and Burlington draws potential customers away. This Project Team should launch a campaign to make purchasing from local merchants and service-providers as simple as possible. A first step might be a directory of local goods and services. The Project Team could also provide buy local publicity, for example about local families committed to eating local foods or shopping locally. If some key shopping components are entirely lacking from the Richmond area, then this Project Team should explore creative solutions such as a cooperatively owned store to bring these goods into town.

Open an Incubator Space for Food Businesses: Richmond area home-business owners and community members would benefit from a commercial kitchen space to develop food-based businesses. This space could include canning and other preserving equipment for community members to use with their own homegrown foods. This next step of turning raw ingredients into new products is a key part of developing the Richmond area’s food-based economy.

Reduce Town Government’s Dependence on a Small Group of Volunteers: Richmond increasingly has difficulty filling offices and board / commission vacancies. Partially, this difficulty results from having too much work for too few people. One participant suggested a full-time paid zoning position. The burden could also be reduced through bringing in more volunteers, for example with a

Democracy Fair highlighting local volunteer opportunities. The 4th of July Parade is a center point of community spirit that this group could both promote and build from. Finally, a focus on the support structure for community projects could lead to a system for seeking grant funds to channel to local projects.

Start a Community Radio Station: A community radio station could tie together the Richmond area. One option is a low-watt radio station. Another option is to take advantage of an upcoming FCC window for applications to start community stations at a higher power. A radio station will help get word out about what's happening in the community and also be a way to invite *everyone* in the Richmond area to share their ideas and talents over the airwaves.

Tie Together Downtown Visually and Functionally: Richmond's village center is disjointed. Sometimes visitors aren't clear where it ends. Visual cues, like flower baskets, lampposts, etc. can tie together all pieces of the downtown. Enhancing walking and bike paths and creating more parking set back from the main street would make downtown easier to navigate. A more ambitious goal for the Project Team could be to arrange a public art installation that draws people into, and through, the village center.

Make Richmond a Public Transportation Hub: While Richmond has an excellent Park & Ride and stop for the LINK Express (Montpelier → Burlington), many pieces are missing from the transportation system. This Project Team should look at ways to bring travelers from the Park & Ride to downtown Richmond, connect directly with Chittenden-county points outside of the LINK's downtown Burlington stop, and bring residents outside downtown Richmond into the downtown. The last goal should help alleviate parking, traffic congestion, and delays caused by Bridge Street's single lane.

Highlight Arts in Richmond: Richmond has many great artists who don't always receive recognition. This Project Team should raise the profile of arts in the Richmond area. One specific suggestion is to hold an annual Art Hop that celebrates both arts and businesses through open houses. Another suggestion is to host an artist in residence as a learning opportunity for the community.

Develop and Market a Richmond Trails System: Richmond area residents have multiple needs for non-automobile trails. Some want a clear way to reach town on foot. Others want to use hiking trails and mountain biking trails for recreation. This Project Team should establish what trails exist, where the right-of-ways exist, and where more trails (for example connecting to the downtown) need to be developed. Furthermore, these trails should be clearly marked and some, like mountain bike trails, made known / available to visitors. This group can go one step past marking and develop local discovery trails highlighting points of interest in the Richmond area. Finally, this Project Team should not overlook the river as a potential recreational trail.

Hold a Harvest Festival to Celebrate Local Agriculture: Existing community celebrations, such as the 4th of July parade, provide an important rallying



point for different groups in the community to come together. Residents feel a need for more such events that integrate many different groups, including from areas outside of the downtown. At the same time, several people spoke of the need to support local farms through agri-tourism and visitor dollars. These two goals can be combined in an annual Harvest Festival to celebrate local agriculture.

Create More Performance Venues: Richmond has capacity for more performance venues. Music performances, in particular, are a way to provide activities for young people without children who often don't fit into the target audience for other community activities. Some simple changes could improve available performance space, such as reorienting the band shell away from the road. This Project Team should identify spaces available, identify what spaces *could* be available with a few changes, and then determine if new space needs to be created, perhaps through one of the building-oriented project ideas such as barn restoration or historic preservation.

Ensure that Parking Does Not Limit Growth: Many of the project ideas listed in the community forum emphasize maintaining a vibrant, distinctive downtown. However, parking is an increasing community concern that could limit possibilities for downtown activity. This Project Team should ensure that parking availability supports the growth of activity in the downtown.

Launch an Intervale-style Agricultural Business Incubator: Richmond can support both creative local businesses and conserve its working landscape through developing an agricultural business incubator, similar to the program that exists in Burlington's Intervale. This incubator could provide both technical assistance and access to land for area residents interested in starting their own agricultural business.

III. Priority Topics **Selected June 7th, 2007**

The second community meeting for the Richmond area brought participants to the historic Old Round Church. This meeting is the center point of the democratic decision-making that takes place through the Creative Communities Program, where residents select priority areas that will become the focus of yearlong project teams. This is a forum where ideas flow freely, arguments are offered, perspectives shared, and people have the opportunity to champion their beliefs and then vote their priorities.

The first step in the evening was to review the list of ideas drawn from the initial forum in May. Participants revised this list and added new ideas to develop the final version listed in the previous section. Discussion then led each participant to mark their first choice from the list, a decision that started the process of considering priorities and removed some low-priority items from discussion. Finally, a combination of championing favorite projects and voting led to the final three priority projects:

Form an Alliance for Creative Development of Existing Properties:

Richmond has great creative energy and potential for community, cultural, and business enterprises. This Project Team should thoughtfully address the issue of how existing physical structures can provide the infrastructure to make good ideas into a reality. One immediate question for this team to address is how to support future development of the Creamery property. A longer-term issue is how this project can set the stage for an agricultural learning center and/or farm business incubator. This effort would clearly demonstrate how an alliance for property development serves as a foundation for other project ideas developed during the first creative economy forum.

Develop and Market a Richmond Trails System: Richmond area residents have multiple needs for non-automobile trails. Some want a clear way to reach town on foot. Others want to use hiking trails and mountain biking trails for recreation. This Project Team should establish what trails exist, where the right-of-ways exist, and where more trails (for example connecting to the downtown) need to be developed. Furthermore, these trails should be clearly marked and some, like mountain bike trails, made known / available to visitors. This group can go one step past marking and develop local discovery trails highlighting points of interest in the Richmond area. Finally, this Project Team should not overlook the river as a potential recreational trail.

Hold a Harvest Festival to Celebrate Local Agriculture: Existing community celebrations, such as the 4th of July parade, provide an important rallying point for different groups in the community to come together. Residents feel a need for more such events that integrate many different groups, including from areas outside of the downtown. At the same time, several people spoke of the need to support local farms through agri-tourism and visitor dollars. These two goals can be combined in an annual Harvest Festival to celebrate local agriculture.

IV. Action Plans **June 28th, 2007**

On June 28th, community members from throughout the Richmond region organized into Project Teams to implement the ideas generated during the earlier strategic planning sessions. Each Project Team has a chairperson to run sessions for the next year. At the first team meetings on June 28th, committee members worked closely with facilitators and resource teams to develop step-by-step action plans, and to devise a list of human and financial resources to help achieve their goals. The Resources appear in the Resources & Recommendations section.

This final phase of the program marks the time when residents begin the work of turning ideas into action. The Resource Team members, listed at the end of this report, are available to lend ideas as the projects move forward. Their initial recommendations are in the following section.

I. Form an Alliance for Creative Development of Existing Properties

Richmond has great creative energy and potential for community, cultural, and business enterprises. This Project Team should thoughtfully address the issue of how existing physical structures can provide the infrastructure to make good ideas into a reality. One immediate question for this team to address is how to support future development of the Creamery property. A longer-term issue is how this project can set the stage for an agricultural learning center and/or farm business incubator. This effort would clearly demonstrate how an alliance for property development serves as a foundation for other project ideas developed during the first creative economy forum.

Project Team:

Larry	Bohen	lbohen@audiobooksonline.com
Chris	Brown	brownbuilders@gmavt.net
Francis	Churchill	francis.churchill@uvm.edu
Ann	Cousins	ascousins@cs.com
Marcy	Harding	danmarcy@gmavt.net
Tom	Hark	thomas@vycc.org
Scott	Ingalls	ingallsbuilder@yahoo.com
Katherine	Long	klong@gmavt.net
Amy	Lord	alord@gmavt.net
Bob	Low	bob.low@uvm.edu
Jeanette	Malone	jmalone@gmavt.net
Don	Morin	donmorin@accessvt.com
Joe	O'Brien	filmbuzz@madriver.net
Betty	Prestow	
David	Sunshine	david@vtsunlaw.com
Fran	Thomas	dtft5171@gmavt.net
Kathryn	Wysockey-Johnson	kdwyjo@gmail.com

Action Steps:

1. Set a name and clear expression of purpose

The overall goals for an alliance on creative development of existing properties are:

- Publicize what is being done and why.
- Present a long-range plan
- Find uses of buildings in order to preserve them
- Preserve historic and cultural heritage of our community in a way that strengthens the village center and preserves buildings
- Raise money for investment in work.
- Create a Committee to oversee, inform and activate

2. Review and Finalize the Criteria Used in Evaluating the Need & Potential for Development Projects

The preliminary list of criteria is:

1. Ownership: Who owns the property? Private individual, investment group, in or out of town owner, etc.
2. Infrastructure: What are the infrastructure needs and what exists there now in that regard.
3. Location: is this property located in the center of town? How important is its location?
4. Other facilities like parking, etc.
5. Zoning
6. Does this property and the development of it fit into the existing town plan?
7. Does this property and the development of it address a need?
8. Can arts be introduced into this property in some way?
9. Why consider this property? Does it fit into this filter: “Preserves our rural nature while embracing the needs of the community. Is this project helping Richmond to ensure controlled and sensible development and growth?”

3. Review Possible Properties for an Initial Project

Currently, the greatest interest is in evaluating the following projects:

- ❖ Monitor Barns: Prominent location on Route 2 with high visibility from the Interstate. One is restored and houses the Vermont Youth Conservation Corp. The other one is in the process of being restored. Properties include land and other buildings nearby. There could be networking for uses, for example:
 - East Barn (VYCC): could host and tie-on other creative communities projects such as the Harvest Festival and the Trail system.
 - West Barn: When it is rehabilitated and preserved it can house more businesses related to agriculture such as NOFA. Could be a place where a replication of the Intervale Foundation model of gardening could be supported. Other agricultural related businesses could be encouraged to relocate there.

- ❖ Creamery: This property has approximately 30,000 sq. ft. of commercial space and 18,000 sq. ft of residential space. There is an investment group developing this property at this time. They are using the 2002 Town Plan as a basis for some of their decision making.
- ❖ Betty's Barn: Historically preserved barn near round church. It is privately owned. Interest in working to get preservation funds to restore its roof.
- ❖ Bender Bakery Building: Located in the downtown and is in serious disrepair. Owned privately by disinterested landlord. There are planning grants available through rural development that could help to determine the best uses for this building.
- ❖ Plant & Griffiths Building in Jonesville: Discussion about potential development and uses for that structure.

Other possible projects for evaluation (and reasons for interest) follow. These are not currently priorities:

- Peete's Barn: Could a future youth center
- Library: Potential expansion.
- Town Hall: New uses, expansion
- Round Church: The local historical society manages the Round Church, assistance for the Historical Society could help modernize / make more useable for events.
- Parking: Parking is an "issue" in the immediate downtown. Any and all projects in this area should include discussion of parking solutions. There is a three phase parking solution in the mix already.

4. Set Specific Plans

Set plans based on information learned about the buildings through evaluating their potential with the established criteria



II. Develop and Market a Richmond Trails System

Richmond area residents have multiple needs for non-automobile trails. Some want a clear way to reach town on foot. Others want to use hiking trails and mountain biking trails for recreation. This Project Team should establish what trails exist, where the right-of-ways exist, and where more trails (for example connecting to the downtown) need to be developed. Furthermore, these trails should be clearly marked and some, like mountain bike trails, made known / available to visitors. This group can go one step past marking and develop local discovery trails highlighting points of interest in the Richmond area. Finally, this Project Team should not overlook the river as a potential recreational trail.

Project Team:

Chris	Brown	brownbuilders@gmavt.net
Brad	Elliott	bradge@comcast.net
Lauren	Esserman	esserman@gmavt.net
John	Hamerslough	hamerslo@gmavt.net
Bob	Low	bob.low@uvm.edu
Jeanette	Malone	jmalone@gmavt.net
Michael	Marciel	mjm369@juno.com
Martha	Marciel	myn76@juno.com
Dan	Martin	danmarcy@gmavt.net
Wright	Preston	wright.preston@tdbanknorth.com
Ian	Stokes	ian.stokes@uvm.edu
Julie	Waite	jwaite03@aol.com
Ben	Weber	mithrilBalrog@yahoo.com
Lars	Whitman	ghoul98@hotmail.com
Doug	Wysocky-Johnson	kdwyjo@gmail.com

There are many needs for trails in the Richmond area. The lists below present priority projects along with future project ideas. Some identified common needs for trail development are:

- Route trails to avoid sensitive natural areas
- Provide good access to trailheads, with adequate parking
- Provide clear information to help people find / navigate the trails
- Use trails to improve linkages between different areas in Richmond & neighboring towns.
- Investigate the economic impact a trail network can have on Richmond.

Action Steps

1.) Finish the Johnny Brook Trail

Possible Resources: VTRANS Enhancement Grants, consult CCMPO, the Green Mountain Club, the Vermont League of Cities & Towns, the Richmond Land Trust, the Richmond Conservation Commission and the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps

2.) Build a biking /hiking trail for both commuters and recreation, parallel to Rt.2 Heavy traffic on Rt.2, the Hinesburg Road and the Huntington Road make them unappealing and possibly unsafe for bikers and pedestrians – this project can help mitigate that problem. It will also tie into the larger idea that a good trail system can reduce air pollution and global warming.

Possible Resources: VTRANS Enhancement Grants, consult CCMPO, the Green Mountain Club, the Vermont League of Cities & Towns, the Richmond Land Trust, the Richmond Conservation Commission and the VYCC

3.) Build a trail from Richmond Village to the Winooski River.

Possible Resources: Same as #1 and #2

4.) Develop a plan for recruiting and organizing volunteers and resources for trail maintenance.

Possible Resources: Richmond Conservation Commission, Richmond Land Trust, Richmond Recreational Trails Committee.

5.) Prepare a vision for the Richmond Trail network and use this vision in an educational program for landowners, parents and kids.

There are several areas that require more information & education. These include:

- Making information available about existing and future trails in town.
- Ensuring close cooperation with landowners when a trail crosses private property, both in terms of permission and addressing specific owner concerns.
- Educating landowners about liability issues related to public trails on their property.
- Discovering historic reasons for why trails are where they are.
- Developing information for interpretative trails that integrate a trail system into community life, strengthening residents' connections with their region.

Possible Resources: Richmond Recreational Trails Committee.

Possible Future Projects:

- Build a footbridge across the Winooski River to connect trails so people don't have to use roads.
- Create a trail or path from the village to the school.
- Develop a safer way to bike from Richmond to Hinesburg and Huntington.
- Build connectivity in the Richmond trail network to networks in Jericho and Williston and learn more about their networks and trail programs.
- Establish hiking trails to Huntington and Hinesburg.
- Develop a mountain bike park in Richmond as an attraction not just for townspeople, but for others as well.
- "Find the Pink Flamingo"
- Create a ridge trail parallel to Cochran Road
- Create an interpretive path from Richmond Village to the Johnny Brook Trail.
- Build linkages among paths within the Village

III. Hold a Harvest Festival to Celebrate Local Agriculture

Existing community celebrations, such as the 4th of July parade, provide an important rallying point for different groups in the community to come together. Residents feel a need for more such events that integrate many different groups, including from areas outside of the downtown. At the same time, several people spoke of the need to support local farms through agri-tourism and visitor dollars. These two goals can be combined in an annual Harvest Festival to celebrate local agriculture.

Project Team:

Kirsten Bower	kbower@gmavt.net
Melanie Farr	mfarr@gmavt.net
Anne Goudreau	agoudreau@ra.org
Michael Hampton	mhampton@gmavt.net
Mary Houle	
Ken Nussbaum	kmnspn@hotmail.com
Linda Parent	lparent@gmavt.net
Debra Weinstein	blueseal@gmavt.net

Action Steps

1.) Host a Small Event in Summer 2007 to Announce Plans / Start Developing Local Interest in a 2008 Festival.

Either connect with an existing event (such as the close of the farmers' market, see "Background" list at end) or hold a separate event to announce the intention of holding a Harvest Festival in 2008. Invite interested people to help with the planning and start small-scale fundraising.

2.) Invite Other Groups to Participate in the Festival & Planning

Some groups that should receive an invitation to help plan the festival and/or run an event within the festival include:

- Historical Society
- RABA
- Farmers
- Land owners
- Farmers' Market
- Maplewind Farm
- NOFA
- VFN
- Green Grocer
- Land Trusts
- Teen Center
- Senior Center
- Emergency Services – could hold a fundraiser at festival
- Chittenden East Community Partnership
- VT Youth Conservation Corps
- Library
- People with Event Organizing Experience

3.) Set Activities that Establish Richmond as Unique in Chittenden

County. A primary goal of the festival is to give visitors a reason to return to Richmond – and help residents appreciate why they live in the area. Other identified goals include:

- Bring local groups together
- Educate around:
 - Farming in Richmond – then, now, and future
 - Land use
 - Sustainability
- Generate income at the event

Some brainstormed reasons *why* people would return to visit Richmond after the festival:

- Cochran’s Ski Area
- Village green
- Canoeing / Kayaking
- Restaurants
- Library Activities
- Other events – 4th of July, Celtic New Year
- Landmarks – Round Church, Monitor Barns
- Foliage Loop
- Shopping – John’s Shoe Shop, wines at Richmond Beverage, antique store.
- Bakery at the park
- Huntington Gorge
- Bike Rides
- Earth Day

Some possible activities at the festival include:

- Coupon book for future use
- Picnics at farms
- Tour of interesting farms
- Demonstrations / workshops at farms
- Fun Run
- Scavenger Hunt for ingredients – and station where you learn to cook something interesting from them and/or learn to use unusual ingredients.
- History Mystery – scavenger hunt & trivia around local landmarks
- Music
- Marketplace
- Farmers’ Market Cooking Challenge – recipe contest for public, winner gets dish featured in local restaurant.
- Make up a “person in history”
- Pancake Breakfast
- Evening Activities – Full Moon Festival
- Dance
- Cardboard Regatta
- Pumpkin Carving
- Selling local bottled water (fundraiser)
- Taste of Richmond

4.) Review Event Concept and Proposed Dates with Other Groups to Avoid Scheduling Conflicts.

Some groups to be sure to coordinate with are:

- Area Festivals (check tourism website)
 - And keep local festivals informed – eg Celtic New Year
- Farmers' Market
- NOFA
- VFN
- Schools
- Library
- Churches
- Recreation groups

5.) Assign People / Committees to Handle the Following Tasks

Marketing (locally & outside region)

- Develop overall marketing plan
- Ensure that a broad demographic is invited to the event
- Talk with local businesses about the event – both for help promoting and so that shops can plan for visitors
- Keep Richmond area residents informed / engaged with developing festival
- Brochure – including map of events that can be used day of festival

Coordinating Events

- Set agenda of events and make sure that each event has clear leader
- Identify set-up needs for each event (coordinate with logistics person)
- Ensure enough food options (quantity & variety)
- Kid-friendly measures (coordinate with Day-Of volunteers)

Logistics

- Work with police & town to ensure safety
- Purchase insurance
- Set locations – including rain options
- Places to park
- Toilets
- Handicapped Access
- Trash / waste disposal
- Coordinate with Events around supplies for activities (e.g. tables, chairs, etc.)

Fundraising

Day-Of Needs

- Recruit & coordinate volunteers to run day
- Ensure kid-friendly environment
- Central place for information, questions, lost & found
- Direct set up / take down
- Visible signage

- Direct traffic – both parking & people

6.) Plan Ahead for Long-Term Sustainability & Growth

As the organizing committee sets plans for 2008, it should also plan for how these short-term activities can set the stage for long-term sustainability and growth. This planning will include follow-up (thank you's, local feedback, etc.) to the festival.

Background (Existing groups / events connected with the “Harvest”)

- Active farms, CSA's and a successful farmers' market – and new farms starting
- Northeast Organic Farming Association – including new pizza oven.
- Vermont Fresh Network
- Vermont Farm Bureau
- Monitor Barns
- Rainforest Alliance
- Grange
- Reputation for good restaurants, chefs, caterers
- Owl's Head Blueberries
- Vermont Land Trust & Richmond Land Trust
- On the Rise Bakery
- Green Grocer
- Snaffle Sweets
- Chicken Pie Supper
- Earth Day

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 Richmond area Project Teams. Their recommendations encompass their experience, past success, and consideration of the Richmond area'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 Project Teams as they begin their work. Call on them for help (contact information is found at the end of the report). The following are recommendations compiled from the Resource Team's comments.

Form an Alliance for Creative Development of Existing Properties

When discussing currently-owned buildings, it's important to have a clear vision for what the building *could* become. The owners are participating in projects, or selling their building, because of opportunity – not because someone disapproves of a current use. There are many examples of this process:

- **Vergennes** is a commonly used example of community groups involved in building restoration. A group of interested citizens restored the local Opera House (located in their town office building) in 1997 and that sparked several other building restoration projects. Contact Gerianne Smart at (802) 877-2262. An LLC of local investors recently also purchased the Basin Block for revitalization. The contact there is Jeffry Glassburg (877-0019). Ed Biello (210-819-4951) put together a positive proposal for the A&P building and it is now used by a local engineering business.
- **Bellows Falls** began creative economy work with restoring the downtown Exner Block for a combination of affordable housing, studio space and art galleries. Since that time, buildings throughout the downtown have been returned to active use. Contact Robert McBride (802) 463-3252 or Richard Ewald (802) 463-3456
- **Hardwick** is focused on redevelopment of the Centennial Building in downtown, with possible uses including arts, business, and start-up business space. The contact for this project is John Mandeville (802) 748 8235.
- **St. Albans** is considering options for creating a community arts facility. Contact Mike Curtis (802) 524-9000.

USDA Rural Development's Community Facility direct (or guaranteed) loan program may be able to assist in delivering capital related to construction costs. More information on this program is available at:

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/VT/vtnhcf.htm>.

Some of the potential uses for existing properties could be eligible for USDA grants specific to market studies. **Hardwick** applied for these funds in connection with its Centennial Building. A USDA Rural Development **Rural Business Opportunity Grant** (RBOG) might be able to fund a comprehensive development planning activity. These grants can exceed \$40,000 and could serve as a starting point for a

development strategy around assisting emerging businesses. Contact Rhonda Shippee at (802) 828-6033.

Early discussions should be held with the **Agency of Commerce and Community Development** (Molly Dugan – (802) 828-3211) to determine if there is a role that Community Development Block Grant money can play in this project. The village of Richmond would likely be the "applicant" should CDBG money become involved. Understanding the priorities of CDBG and what synergies would make the application stronger (i.e. downtown designation, low-moderate income benefit, etc.) should all be explored.

The **Preservation Trust of Vermont** can help get work started on historic structures. The amount of money available depends partially on how much a place has already received, so Richmond may not be eligible. The village could still benefit from the knowledge and experience of the Preservation Trust. **Ann Cousins** can be contacted at (802) 434-5014.

The **Vermont Community Loan Fund** will lend to projects that include community facilities, small business support, and agriculture. Loans are tailored to meet the needs of the group receiving the funds. Contact **Will Belongia** at (802) 223-1448.

When this group reaches the project component specific to agricultural entrepreneurship, there are several groups that could provide information:

- **Vermont Agency of Agriculture** (<http://www.vermontagriculture.com>)
- **Intervale Center** (<http://www.intervale.org>)
- **Food Venture Center** ((802) 849-2000)
- **Hannah Grimes Center** (<http://www.hannahgrimes.com>)

Hold a Harvest Festival to Celebrate Local Agriculture

This committee is starting at the perfect time to do research into successful harvest festivals around the state. **Shelburne Farms, The Intervale, Vermont Fresh Network, and Danville** all have sizeable Harvest Festivals. **Manchester, VT** and **Keene, NH** have both competed for the size of their pumpkin carving events. In early summer you can visit Vermont traditions like the **Strolling of the Heifers (Brattleboro), Maple Festival (St. Albans)** and **Dairy Days** in early June. Also, talk to people who have started new festivals. The **Heart of the Islands Open Farm / Open Studio** tour introduced participants to Grand Isle County agriculture (contact Jim Holzschuh at holzschuh@aol.com) and many of the new Localvore groups have started their own local foods celebrations (see the regional contacts list at <http://www.localvoreproject.org>).

It is also important to work with general events planners to be sure that the date you choose avoids conflicts and can get onto their calendars early. The **Richmond Area Business Association, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, Stowe**

Chamber of Commerce and the Vermont tourism website www.vermontvacation.com are all places to check in with.

Several statewide organizations will have early deadlines for publishing festival information. Check with the **Vermont Department of Tourism & Marketing**, **Vermont Chamber of Commerce** and **Vermont Life Magazine** to find out what their schedules would be. If you're hoping to attract visitors from out of state, talk to the **Vermont Agency of Agriculture** (see Resource Team) and **NOFA-VT** (Meg Klepack – 434-4122) to find out if they could promote the event at conferences they attend. Again, this outreach would have an early deadline for information.

As noted in the action plan, ongoing involvement from area farmers is crucial to planning a successful day, one that meets the needs of both festival-goers and the businesses the festival is meant to support. Technical assistance may be available to help farmers prepare to open their business for visitors. **NOFA-VT** has already been mentioned. The **Vermont Farm Bureau** (www.vtfb.org) could also assist. **UVM Extension** often works with farmers on how to run successful workshops and/or presentations. Beth Holtzman will know the best options at UVM (802) 223-2389.

Another useful group for information and advice is others who do public events on a tight budget. Seniors and church groups are veterans of these events. **Rose Wilson**, who participated in the Windsor creative economy program, is an excellent resource. She has organized both town events and events for businesses. She can be contacted at Rosalie.Wilson@earthlink.net.

Many different options exist for funding a Harvest Festival. Area businesses might sponsor in return for advertising. Larger statewide organizations, like the **Agency of Agriculture**, might be partial sponsors. Some places charge entrance fees or suggested donations. There can be fundraisers at the event itself. A small fee could be charged for sellers if there is a market. In-kind donations can also cover some costs.

Finally, and most importantly, learning about what has worked for other groups doing public festivals should not distract from the work of finding a unique hook for the Richmond event. The theme should be well established. The plan of activities should tell potential visitors that this event will be different from all the others that compete for attention throughout the summer and fall.

Develop and Market a Richmond Trails System

The action plan notes for this topic listed specific resources for action steps. The list below outlines other organizations and ideas for general support.

The action plan covers a lot of possible projects. It would be helpful to start by generating a town map with all of the existing paths and trails on it as well as desired trails. This document could then be processed through town officials for review and approval and become part of the town plan.

Developing an overall map and creating specific implementation plans for priorities such as the Johnny Brook trail may require outside assistance. It will be important to find someone to work with who doesn't simply complete the project, but also builds a team within the community. Talk to **Lou Bresse** at Lake Champlain Bikeways (802) 652-BIKE, to navigate this question.

Rutland took on a trails system as a key part of its creative economy work a year ago. They will have initial ideas about what works and what doesn't. Contact **EJay Bishop** at the Rutland Recreation Department: 773-1822x14.

Springfield has a frequently used riverside trail. A visit to Springfield and to talk with the group that put that trail together could be useful.

Two groups local to Richmond support trail development. **Chittenden County's Regional Planning Commission** created a master plan for paths that could serve as a model, contact **Chapin Spencer** at Local Motion, (802) 652-2453. The **VT Youth Conservation Corp** may be able to help build, clear, and clean up trails and access points. Call (802) 434-3969.

Working with landowners and gaining rights to use their land can be the most difficult part of a trail project. The **Vermont Center for Geographic Information** (<http://www.vegi.org>) might be able to assist with mapping parcels. This could also be a graduate student project for UVM. Rutland (see above) did extensive background work with property owners.

The **Vermont Recreation Trails Grants Program** of the **Agency of Natural Resources** may have funding. Matching grants are offered for maintenance of existing trails and the construction of new trails on state, municipal and private lands where there is a recreational need. They can also help prepare and print trail maps and more. Contact Sherry Smecker, grants administrator at 241-3690; she can also advise you on additional resources.

Funding for outdoor recreation and trails is available through the State of Vermont **Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation**. For details, explore their site at <http://www.vtfpr.org/recgrant/trgrant.cfm> and <http://www.vtfpr.org/reclwcf/index.cfm>.

The VT Agency of Transportation (VTrans) administers a Bicycle/Pedestrian program that provides advice and connections to grant resources. Amy Bell is the coordinator: 828-0457.

The **Bikes Belong Coalition** (BBC) assists local organizations in developing bicycle facility projects with grants of up to \$10,000. Bikes Belong Coalition, 1368 Beacon St. Suite 102, Brookline, MA 02446-2800, (617)734-2800 tim@bikesbelong.org.

The **National Park Service** Rivers & Trails Program helps plan and implement local trail, greenway and river protection projects. Contact Jennifer Waite, VT Projects Director, NPS Rivers and Trails, PO Box 178, Woodstock, VT 05091, 802-457-3368, Jennifer_waite@nps.gov.

The **National Recreation and Park Association** has recreation funding ideas. Betsy Orselet of the Vermont Recreation and Parks Association can provide information: orselet@adelphia.net or visit the website www.calcaminedesign.com/vrpa

If part of a trail system includes conservation projects near rivers, then you can also check with the **Natural Resources Conservation Service** which works with farmers and landowners to do stream bank erosion work. Contact Bill Forbes at NRCS (802) 775-8034 for information. You could also check with your local **Watershed Association**.



Participants in the Creative Communities Forums

Bryan Agran
Eric Berliner
Larry Bohlen
Greg Brand
Logan Brown
Jody Cole
Ann Cousins
Barry Cousins
Lyz Cromer
Lauren Esserman
Melanie Farr
Erik Filkorn
Jeff Forward
James Garris
Cathleen Gent
Sue Glennon
Polly Tobin Goddard
Anne Goudreau
Bob Goudreau
Norine Grant
Bill Haddock
John Hamerslough
Michael Hampton
Marcy Harding
Kristen Hayden-West
Mary Houle
Scott Ingalls
Pauleta Irish
Kary Kent
Billy Keyworth
Cara LaBounty
Laura Lacaille
Siobhan Liberman

Gil Livingston
Katherine Long
Amy Lord
Bob Low
Jeanette Malone
Bob Marquis
Brett Maxwell
Lisa Mazzariello
Kristen Miceu
Don Morin
Ken Nussbaum
Susan Nussbaum
Joe O'Brien
Linda Parent
Lorna-Kay Pearl
Pennie Rand
Guy Roberts
Curran Robinson
Rebecca Schwarz
Brian Smith
David Sunshine
Mark Sylvester
Fran Thomas
Marie Thomas
Kim Thompson
Julie Waite
Tom Walters
Ben Weber
Debra Weinstein
Eliza West
Tim Whiteford
Tyler Wilkinson-Ray
Kathryn Wysocky-Johnson

Resource Team Contact Information

Joss Besse
Division for Historic Preservation
National Life Building, Drawer 20
Montpelier, VT 05620-0501
802-828-5212
joss.besse@state.vt.us

Andy Broderick
Housing Vermont
123 St. Paul Street
Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 863-8424
andy@hvt.org

Curt Carter
Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation
60 Main Street
Burlington, VT 05401
(877) 686-5253
curt@vermont.org

Hans Jenny
Fellowship of the Wheel
hans@fotwheel.org

David Lane
Agency of Agriculture
116 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
(802) 828-2430
david.lane@state.vt.us

Gerianne Smart
Smart Communication
P.O. Box 283
Vergennes, VT 05491-0293
(802) 877-2262
gerianne@getsmartvt.com

Lou Bresee
Lake Champlain Bikeways

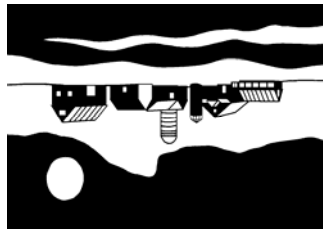
Greg Brown
Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
30 Kimball Avenue, Suite 206
South Burlington, VT 05403
(802) 846-4490
gbrown@ccrpcvt.org

Paul Costello
VT Council on Rural Development
P.O. Box 1384
Montpelier, VT 05602
vcrd@sover.net
(802) 828-6024

Helen Labun Jordan
Creative Communities Program
P.O. Box 1384
Montpelier, VT 05602
ccp@sover.net
(802) 223-3793

John Mandeville
Northern Community Management Corporation
P.O. Box 432
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
(802) 748-8235
john@ncmvt.com

Anson Tebbetts
Agency of Agriculture
116 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
(802) 828-2416
anson.tebbetts@state.vt.us



Vermont Council on Rural Development
89 Main Street, P.O. Box 1384
Montpelier, Vermont 05601-1384

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