
The Council on the Future of Vermont was a unique project for VCRD. At once a statewide public dialogue and a critical look at the state’s past and present, the Council on the Future of Vermont (CFV) project took two years to complete (2007-2009). VCRD looked back at a history of statewide dialogues in the state and determined that this time in our history was an important time to re-engage Vermonters in thoughtful discussions about what will come next and what we want to keep. From the study by the Commission on Country Life in 1929 to the Commission on Vermont’s Future in 1988, these studies have engaged and united Vermonters, inspired leaders, and initiated practical gubernatorial and legislative initiatives. Such studies have often resulted in major findings about who we are as a people and the evolving assumptions and goals we share. They also have led us, as a state, to articulate a set of values that are embedded now in our special Vermont sense of place, dedication to community, and brand identity. For more information on the Council on the Future of Vermont’s history: CFV Summary Statement [1].

The Council on the Future of Vermont project has completed, but its historic significance is clear. The purpose of the project was to learn from Vermonters about their hopes, aspirations and visions for the future of the state and to report the findings and conclusions back to the people of Vermont, providing an historical marker for Vermont in the 21st century and a platform of common values and priorities from which we can all work into the future.

Reports and Inputs

The structure of the Council on the Future of Vermont was unique. This two year project included:

1. fourteen public forums, one in each county of Vermont (click here for Public Mtg Notes [2])
2. over 100 focus groups with nurses, farmers, teachers, students, seniors, veterans, inmates, low-income Vermonters, business leaders, school board members, advocates and regular working Vermonters.
3. testimony from over 40 state-wide organizations, such as the Center for Independent Living, the Associated Industries of Vermont, the Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility, Refugee and Immigrant Service Providers Network and many others (click here for Organizational Interview notes [3])
5. trendline research from St. Michael’s Center for Social Science Research, Vermont in Transition: A Summary of Social, Economic and Environmental Trends 2008
6. **online input** through the website and in creative partnerships, such as **Art of Action** (Vermont Arts Council) and a **writing contest** with the Young Writers Project.

7. **Vermont: Values and Vision for the Future** is now available. The Council members, chosen for their wide range of experiences, age, work and geography, wrote about what Vermonters want to see for our state in six areas of Vermont life: Vermont Community; Vermont Economy; Youth and Education; Vermont's Landscape and Natural Resources; Health, Transportation and Public Safety; and Vermont's Civic Culture. Each of these areas has specific recommendations for state and local decision makers, philanthropists, business leaders, non-profit organizations, and citizens about how we might make Vermont a special place together. With the publication of this report, the findings of the Council are no longer ours alone. The report is a contribution toward action. It is for the people of Vermont to use to move Vermont forward as they see fit.

All of these materials are available in more depth on the **Project Elements page**.

**Events**

- **In April 2009**, the Council on the Future of Vermont presented the results of the project to Governor James Douglas, Speaker of the House of Representatives Shap Smith, Senate President Pro Tempore Peter Shumlin, gathered Vermonter legislators and the public at the
In May 2009, VCRD hosted the Summit on the Future of Vermont, the culminating conference for the CFV project at UVM's Dudley Davis Center. The Summit on the Future of Vermont had over 500 attendees, including business leaders, representatives from the agricultural community, Governor Douglas, Senator Bernie Sanders, and as keynote speaker, Dr. Garret FitzGerald, the former Prime Minister of Ireland. At the Summit, attendees learned the conclusions of the CFV project and spent the day discussing the strategic directions that current planning, policy and collaborative efforts would have to take to move towards the conclusions reflected from the CFV's Imagining Vermont report. The final report from the Summit is available here.

In June-July 2009, the CFV final results were taken back to Vermonters in each county of the state. Local presentations and community discussions were held in Bennington, Brattleboro, Grafton, Burlington, Rutland, Middlebury, Hyde Park, St. Johnsbury, Newport, Barre, White River Junction, Island Pond, North Hero and Randolph.

Council on the Future of Vermont Members

- Sue Allen, Barre-Montpelier Times Argus
- Faith Brown, Vermont Community Foundation
- Paul Bruhn, Preservation Trust of Vermont
- Tom Debevoise, Woodstock Dairy Farmer (Chair)
- Kara DeLeonardis, RU12? Community Center
- Steve Gold, VT Agency of Human Services, retired
- Chris Graff, National Life Group
- Cheryl Hanna, VT Law School
- Wanda Hines, Burlington Community and Economic Development Office
- Brian Keefe, Central Vermont Public Service
- Ellen Lovell, Marlboro College
- Richard Mallary, US Congressman, VT Legislator, retired
- William McMeekin, TD Banknorth, retired
- Charlie Smith, The Snelling Center
- Emily Stebbins, UVM VP Office
- Greg Stefanski, Laraway Youth and Family Center
- Fran Voigt, New England Culinary School
- Laurie Zilbauer, Northeastern Vermont Development Agency
- VCRD Staff:
  - Paul Costello, Executive Director
  - Sarah Waring, Future of Vermont Program Director

Financial Supporters

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Follow up to the Council on the Future of Vermont
Following the results of Council on the Future of Vermont project, the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) determined the next project areas of its work. The Council determined that each of these areas has critical need in the state today, and VCRD aims to be of use to Vermont through:

1. Revitalizing Vermont communities,
2. Creating a Working Landscape Partnership,
3. Stimulating the need for Broadband across Vermont, and
4. Working with Vermont leaders to forward the results of the Council.

VCRD efforts, including the recent Council on the Future of Vermont process, are contributions to the policy dialogue in Vermont. While we hope the ideas generated can be useful to this dialog, VCRD is a neutral and actively non-partisan organization that does not endorse any political party or candidates.

Source URL: http://vtrural.org/programs/policy-councils/future-of-vermont

Links:
[8] http://vtrural.org/sites/default/files/content/futureofvermont/documents/Top_Award_Winners_YWP_0.pdf