

# Lyndon Community Visit

Report and Action Plan ~ May 2017



TIM KIRCHOFF PHOTOGRAPHY

Vermont Council on Rural Development

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# I. Introduction

Lyndon is a community deeply rooted in its history and heritage as a railroad and manufacturing hub, and with a clear vision for future prosperity and a strong dedication to community life. Located along the Passumpsic River, surrounded by rolling hills and mountains, and dotted with historic covered bridges, Lyndon is a beautiful town offering scenic views and seemingly endless recreation opportunities. The VCRD Community Visit team was impressed by the historic downtown, with village streets lined with cafés, small businesses, the central Village Green, and year-round events and celebrations that point to a culture of community gathering and connectedness. Excellent educational institutions, many opportunities for youth engagement and recreation, and a willingness to come together toward a collective vision demonstrate a drive to set direction for the future. Lyndon is truly the gateway to the north – to all the beauty of the natural and working landscape of the Northeast Kingdom.

The VCRD staff and the Visiting team enjoyed the community spirit in Lyndon, and were impressed with the energy, determination, and hardworking ethic of the over 180 local people that participated in this process. We are inspired by the points of vision shared by participants in the Community Visit process in Lyndon, by the thoughtful and strategic priorities they developed for action, and by the committed leadership that provides confidence for future successes. Community Visits are designed to help communities come together, review major issues, develop priorities and line up for action, but the process also aims to engage more community members, build local leadership, and help to make connections to human, technical, and financial resources from lead agencies and organizations in the state. With over 60 volunteers now engaged in active Task Forces to advance priorities, it is clear that there is great energy in Lyndon for forward momentum and progress.

There is no one silver bullet to community and economic development...except the commitment of local residents to a better future. In democracy, all citizens are called upon to stand up for their neighbors, for community, and for the future; it has been an honor to work with all those dedicated to the common good for this critically important Kingdom community.

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It is not easy to choose priorities, and there are many other good ideas for action listed in the ‘opportunities’ section of this report that can inform the ongoing work of the Task Forces and be a foundation for work in town over time. In the end, Lyndon selected solid priorities for action that will lead to a stronger and more vibrant community and economy. These initiatives set challenging but strategically achievable goals, and there is much work to do, but Lyndon is a town that is ready to take action and has the capacity, drive, and dedication to succeed.

We look forward to working with the Lyndon Task Forces as the priority projects identified in the process move forward efforts to:

- **Build a Unified Lyndon Recreation Program and a Lyndon Recreation and Community Center**
- **Revitalize Downtown Businesses and Storefronts**
- **Build a Formal Schools, College, and Community Partnership**
- **Support Business Growth and Economic Development**

The Task Forces advancing these issues are already hard at work—please support their efforts, or join them by reaching out to their chairs (listed in the action plan section of this report, pgs 12-28).

The Vermont Council on Rural Development is dedicated to helping Vermont communities develop their capacity to create a prosperous and sustainable future through coordination, collaboration, and the effective use of public and private resources. VCRD is prepared to support the efforts of Lyndon as it moves forward and to provide follow up help to the Lyndon Task Forces as called upon. VCRD will also serve as an advocate for Lyndon projects with appropriate agencies and organizations in Vermont. Call on us, and on Visiting Team members, when we can be of help.

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There are many people to thank for making this Community Visit effort possible.

We would like to thank the Lyndon Selectboard and Lyndonville Board of Trustees who initially invited this process. We also deeply appreciate the work and leadership of the Steering Committee who helped guide the process from the beginning including: Ron Aiken, Betsy Bailey, Nancy Blankenship, Kim Crady-Smith, Dan Daley, Dawn Dwyer, Martha Elmes, Marty Feltus, Steve Feltus, Amy Gale, Annie Geratowski, Judi Horgan, Daren Houck, Jen Kirchoff Layn, Sarah Lafferty, Dick Lawrence, Becky Masure, Cheryl McMahan, Jen Mitchell, Steve Nichols, Eric Paris, Justin Smith, Susan Teske, Chris Thompson, Carrie Tonczyk, Jodi Wheeler, Ellen Tierney, and Yiren (Ramon) Qu. Thank you also to all of the community leaders, groups, and organizations who worked together to spread the word about the event and made sure everyone in town was invited and encouraged to participate!

We are very thankful for the use of community spaces for the Community Visit meetings including the Lyndon Municipal Office, the Cobleigh Public Library, Lyndon Institute, and Lyndon Town School. A huge thank you as well to the staff at Lyndon Institute that organized and served the delicious community meal for Community Visit Day.

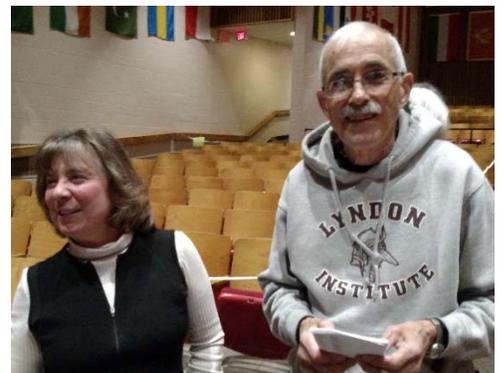
Michael Moser and the UVM Center for Rural Studies are terrific allies in our efforts and we appreciate their help building a briefing profile for the VCRD Community Visit Team.

Thanks must also go to USDA Rural Development, the Community National Bank, and the Northeast Kingdom Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation who all contributed funding to make this process possible

VCRD calls state, federal, and non-profit leaders to participate in Community Visit processes. We are proud of the partners we get to work with—and especially the Lyndon Visiting Team—they are the best of Vermont’s public servants.

Getting things done is all about leadership, and all of Lyndon should be grateful to those who’ve stepped up to serve as chairs of the task forces: Steve Elliott: Economic Development; Adrienne D’Olimpio: Recreation; and Kim Crady-Smith: Downtown Revitalization. The chair for the School and Community Partnership group is yet to be determined.

VCRD especially wants to thank Michael Flynn and Patty Emery for stepping up to lead this process as the Community Visit Co-Chairs. Patty and Mike have been a great team throughout this process helping to rally the community and invite participation and engagement. Mike is a natural leader who, given his history leading the Lyndon Institute pep rally each year, brings energy and excitement to any community gathering. Patty is a strong and



*Co-Chairs Patty Emery & Michael Flynn*

practical leader ready to rally the troops and get to work for the future of the town. We deeply appreciate both Patty and Mike for their willingness to step up in this process and we know that the new task forces are in good hands in the work ahead.

At VCRD, we are so proud each day that we work in a place where community is real and strong, and where local residents work together to get things done to make their communities the best they can possibly be. It was a great pleasure to work with the residents of Lyndon who stand up for the town and who are lined up for the common good and best future for this wonderful community. We are eager to continue following and supporting your success!



*Community Visit Day included 9 focus forums and babysitting provided by Lyndon Institute students*

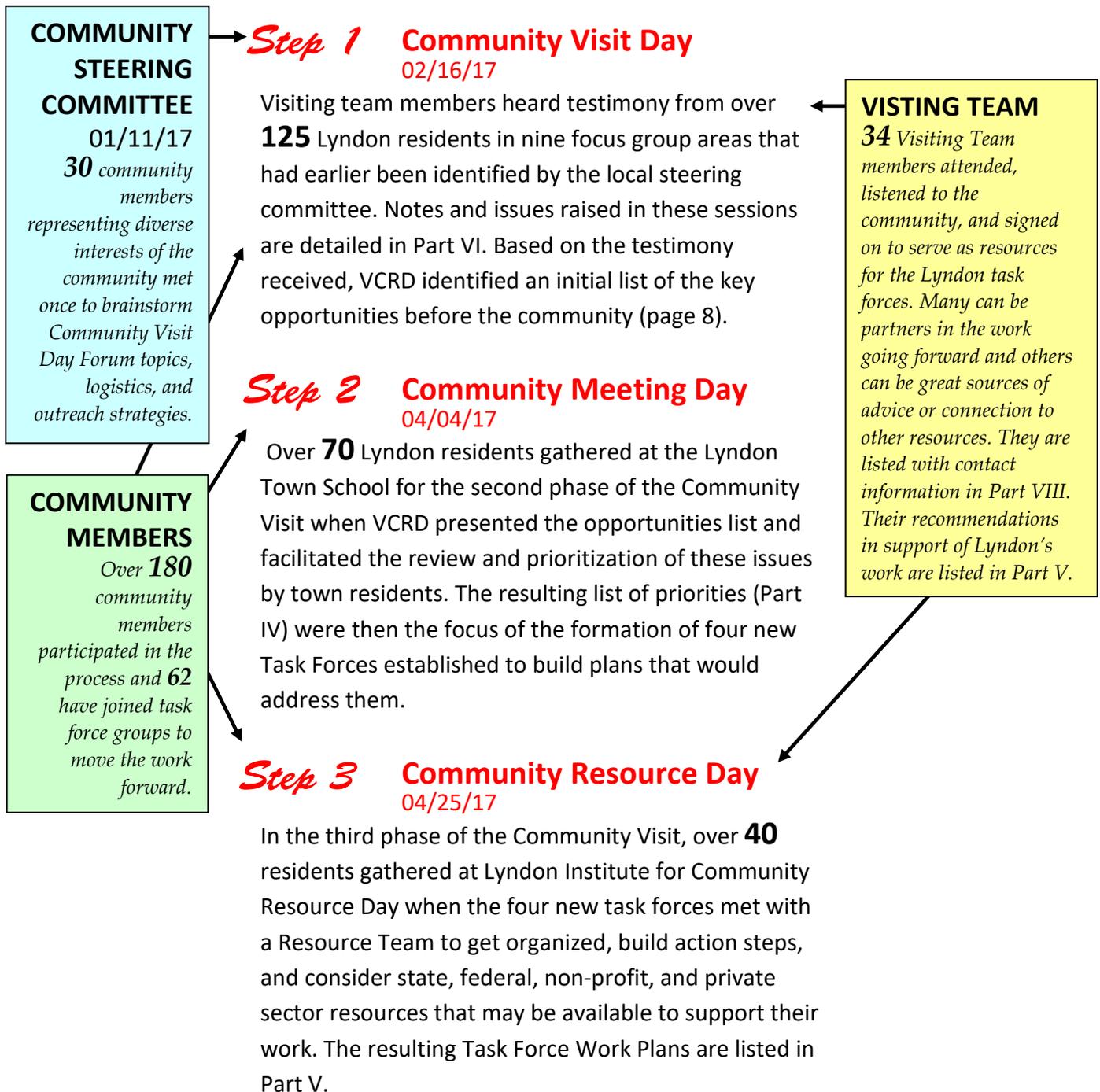


*Lyndon Institute students, Autumn, Sadie, & Lauren Chamberlain, and Tiffany Danville, entertained diners at the community dinner on Community Visit Day*



## II. The Lyndon Community Visit Process

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



### **III. Vision for Lyndon's Future**

*These points of vision were compiled from vision statements that were shared during Community Visit Meetings on February 16<sup>th</sup> and April 4<sup>th</sup> and supported by the majority of participants at the April 25<sup>th</sup> Resource Meeting and an online survey. The statements represent broad hopes that the majority of responding residents have for the long term good of the Lyndon community.*

#### **Lyndon residents look to a future for the community where:**

- ❖ Lyndon is an inclusive and warm community that welcomes new residents. People want to move here.
- ❖ Lyndon is a family town that supports all ages with good educational resources and support for seniors.
- ❖ Lyndon State College and Lyndon Institute work in partnership to offer quality educational opportunities for students.
- ❖ Lyndon is a community of doers; the people in Lyndon are engaged in the community and work for the good of the town.
- ❖ Lyndon is a gateway to the Northeast Kingdom.
- ❖ Lyndon is a hub for recreation and a first stop to all the recreational opportunities in the Kingdom.
- ❖ Lyndon uses resources to support healthy lifestyles and improve the health of its residents. Lyndon creates a quality of life that people appreciate.
- ❖ Lyndon is a connected community; people know about the events and opportunities in town and know how to access the information they need.
- ❖ Lyndon is a sustainable community.
- ❖ Lyndonville is a vibrant and busy downtown; a place with cafes, art galleries, and restaurants where you could spend the whole day and not run out of things to do.
- ❖ Lyndon supports creative and innovative new businesses and services that support residents.
- ❖ Lyndon has a diversified economy; the town supports many small businesses and is not reliant on a single employer.
- ❖ There are good paying jobs in Lyndon so that people can live and work here, or come back to Lyndon to grow their families here.
- ❖ Lyndon attracts and creates businesses that utilize the education resources that are here and capitalize on the NEK work ethic; educational institutions train workers for local businesses and local businesses capitalize on the trained workforce.
- ❖ Lyndon is a great place to grow up and a great place to grow old.

## IV. Lyndon Priorities

Determined by Lyndon residents at the VCRD Community Meeting, April 4, 2017

*Proving that those who live, work and raise their families in a community are best qualified to understand its needs and potential, Lyndon community members whittled down a list of 22 issues through discussion, reasoned arguments and thoughtful reflection. In the end, voting with red and blue stickers, over 70 participants chose four action ideas that offer opportunities to enhance existing resources, and to strengthen the town through exciting new ventures. Residents concluded the April 4th meeting by signing up for Task Forces in the selected areas.*

### **Lyndon residents selected four priorities for future action:**

#### **✓ Support Business Growth and Economic Development**

Lyndon is a town with many economic assets including a scenic location, proximity to year-round outdoor recreation opportunities, high quality education, a local Chamber of Commerce, vacant retail and manufacturing space, and a walkable downtown. An Economic Development Task Force could form to leverage those assets and implement a comprehensive strategy to boost economic development including identifying financing or tax credit opportunities for downtown businesses, attracting industry to the region to boost commerce and create jobs, re-imagining the Route 5 corridor, and marketing to new and diverse businesses. Residents see opportunities for a venture center for outdoor gear manufacturers, a brewery, and a local bar or pub. The group could work with the municipality to explore the opportunity to hire a community and economic development specialist to guide this work forward.

#### **✓ Establish a Unified Lyndon Recreation Program and Build a Lyndon Community and Recreation Center**

Lyndon is a town rich in recreational assets from youth sports programs to outdoor recreation opportunities to diverse art, science, and music programming. Many residents would like to see better coordination of these resources and programs as well as a paid staff person whose time is devoted to coordination, marketing, and improvement of these programs and services. Residents point to RecFit in St. Johnsbury as a model to emulate. A task force could form to develop a unified Lyndon Recreation Program to implement year-round recreation, arts, fitness, music, dance, and other programming for all ages. The group could build a brochure and a website as a hub for recreation resources, advertise programming, and work with the Town to identify funding sources to hire a recreation coordinator.

The group could also build and implement a plan to create a community space for Lyndon residents through either the renovation, repurposing or coordination of an existing building or space, or developing a new space to serve as a hub for community gathering and for educational and recreational programming and social events for all ages.

✓ **Build a Formal School, College, and Community Partnership**

Lyndon residents would like to build a better connection between the area schools, students, and the greater Lyndon community and better coordinate and streamline resources, events, and services. A Lyndon School, College, and Community Partnership could form to include members of the community, students, schools, college leaders, and the Supervisory Union to work to expand students’ learning and community service activities and engage Lyndon residents with the schools to enrich student experiences.

✓ **Revitalize Downtown Businesses and Storefronts**

Lyndonville’s walkable Village Center, lined with local businesses, municipal buildings, and green space is an incredible economic, recreational, and aesthetic asset. A Downtown Redevelopment Task Force could form to better leverage this asset by developing a master plan for future downtown development and identify funding sources to enhance Lyndonville’s village center, as well as build strategies in partnership with the municipal government toward the redevelopment of vacant properties. Downtown improvements could include better signage, collaborating with local artists to enhance aesthetics and marketing, improved infrastructure and sidewalks, boosted business growth, improved aesthetics, river access, student and volunteer engagement, and improved walkability and bike-ability.



*Community members read the list of opportunities together on Community Meeting Day, and then took part in a dot-voting exercise to select their top 4 priorities for action*



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## **Other Key Opportunities identified by the community:**

*Along with the four chosen priorities, the key opportunities listed below reflect other potential ideas for action that community members shared on Community Visit Day. Though these opportunities weren't chosen as priority projects through this process, community members may find the list useful as they look to expand on current projects or take on new ones.*

### **Improve Pedestrian Safety and Parking**

Lyndon residents value the walkability of their village center; however, many have safety concerns and would like to see improved walkability, safety, and parking in the downtown and along the Route 5 corridor. A task force could form to identify strategies to implement walk and bike safety improvements such as extended sidewalks for connectivity, improved crosswalks, signage, wide bike lanes, bike racks, and downtown parking areas.

### **Improve Community Communications**

Lyndon is a community with educational, recreational, arts, and entertainment opportunities any town would be envious of. But many residents feel that events, resources, and programs are not well advertised; there are few ways to share information with the community; and, that the town may be missing opportunities for collaboration. A Community Communications Task Force could build a community calendar and drive the activation and adoption of Front Porch Forum, social media, a community e-newsletter, and other ways to share information.

### **Improve Public Transportation**

More transportation options in Lyndon could better accommodate commuters as well as improve access for individuals, families, and students to key services, the downtown, schools, recreation, retail, arts, and events locally and regionally. A Task Force could identify ways to increase public transportation options such as working with RCT to expand routes and services. The group could also explore creative alternatives such as a car sharing or Uber-like model for Lyndon and opportunities to increase pedestrian safety and access.

### **Beautify Lyndon**

A Lyndon Beautification Task Force could form to improve the look and vibrancy of Depot Street, the village center, and the Route 5 corridor from the interstate exit into town. The group could organize work events and community and student volunteers to plant trees, clean up greenspaces, and work with local artists to incorporate sculptures, murals, and other artistic elements to improve the aesthetics and streetscape of the town.

### **Expand Community Events, Concerts, and Festivals**

Events such as the Stars and Stripes festival and parade, the Burklyn Arts Festival, the County Fair, and the Winter Snowflake Festival are well attended, valued and celebrated. A Community Events Task Force could come together to offer support to successful existing events and create new events and traditions such as an expansion of NEMBA fest and GreggFest into Lyndon's downtown, more diverse and frequent music and theater offerings for all ages, an annual lantern parade, and recreation and sporting events.

### **Improve Lyndon Housing**

Lyndon's schools, recreation opportunities, and reputation as a safe and strong community are attracting new residents and families. Some are concerned that adequate and affordable housing is not available and have concerns over the availability and upkeep of affordable student rentals. A housing task force could form to work with the school, the town, Rural Edge, and other experts to quantify housing challenges and identify strategies to improve rental housing, review and update codes to encourage improvements, and provide community education on home repair skills and resources.

### **Expand and Improve Lyndon Trails**

A task force could form to identify strategies and resources to improve and expand trails and walkways, map them, improve signage and increase access and use for residents and visitors alike. The group could work to better connect with resources regionally such as Kingdom Trails to improve access for residents and capture the interest of visitors to the region. Toward that end, it could work with the trail system to consider the development of a Lyndonville Portal with access and parking near downtown.

### **Merge Village and Town Government**

Lyndon has great leadership in its Select Board and the Trustees as well as from a strong Municipal Administrator and Town Clerk's Office. Some residents feel that a merger of the Town and Village governments could provide for improved communications, more streamlined and efficient services, cost savings, and promote more systematic programs and services especially around issues of tourism, recreational programming, and economic development.

### **Expand Continuing Education and Career Training**

Lyndon residents of all ages expressed a desire for more ways to build job skills and connect to career opportunities. Community members are interested in workshops and continuing education while students at Lyndon Institute are eager to engage with local businesses and organizations to explore careers through on-the-job experience and training. A Community Education and Career Task Force could expand community and student learning opportunities, and build a year-round schedule of workshops and training for people of all ages in the arts and trades. The group could also build a career development network, pairing students with skilled mentors, internship opportunities in local businesses and organizations, and other activities such as college fairs, job fairs, and connections with college and tech center programs.

### **Redevelop the Tap and Die Building**

A task force could form to work with regional economic development partners, such as NVDA and NCIC, the municipality, and the community to develop and pursue a strategy to revitalize and redevelop the vacant Tap and Die building for business and/or community use. Opportunities for redevelopment identified by Lyndon residents include an artist cooperative, a business incubator or venture center, a community recreation center, or finding a new business or manufacturing tenant for the space.

### **Advance the Arts in Lyndon**

Lyndon residents are interested in building a more vibrant and collaborative arts community, better connecting local artists, displaying local art, and improving access to education workshop for artists and residents. A task force of volunteers could support the Burklyn Arts Council to bring art and artists more prominently into the community including displaying art in public spaces, integrating art into community events, offering educational programs, and providing opportunities for artists to create together through workshops or cooperative space.

### **Develop a Business Incubator and Co-Working Space**

To encourage entrepreneurs and young people, and to seed its economic future, Lyndon residents are interested in working in partnership with the Foundry, Lyndon Institute, Lyndon State College, and other community and resource partners to build an incubator space for micro and startup businesses. The Incubator would include shared resources and utilities, mutual support, cooperative marketing, and technical assistance from local and regional economic development organizations.

### **Improve and Coordinate Family Services**

Lyndon schools, non-profits, and other service providers offer a wide range of resources to support families. However, some residents have concerns about access, coordination, and communication about these key resources. A task force could form to unite providers, community members, and key leadership to coordinate services and optimize the health, safety, and well-being of Lyndon residents of all ages. The group could build a structure to share information with individuals and families, work closely with the local police on issues of health and safety, provide community and family education and programming, and develop ways to better connect the community and families through neighborhood associations and other public forums.

### **Build Community Gardens**

A task force could form to build a garden to allow all residents the opportunity to grow food together as a community. The group could to identify a good location for the garden, develop a plan for the community garden, and research and access potential funding opportunities.

### **Boost the Working Lands Economy**

A group could come together to strengthen and boost the working lands economy, promote local food production and consumption, and better connect working lands enterprises. Strategies could include attracting local restaurants and breweries, building and promoting agri-tourism opportunities, and connecting working lands enterprises with each other and with local schools, businesses, and institutions.

### **Improve Internet Access**

Many Lyndon residents would like to see improved access to high-speed internet to expand communications and connection opportunities for residents, but also as an attraction for businesses and visitors. A group could form to make Lyndon a regional internet hub that provides access to high-speed internet for residents and businesses as well as a physical space in the downtown that provides Wi-Fi for residents, students, and visitors.

### **Advance Lyndon Marketing and Tourism**

With its beautiful natural setting, the river, trail and recreation resources, and a walkable village center right off the interstate, Lyndon is truly the gateway to the Northeast Kingdom. A task force could work closely with the Chamber of Commerce, recreation, education, and other community partners to better capitalize on that identify by developing a marketing and tourism plan to put town on the tourist's map! The task force could evaluate the opportunity for the Lyndon Chamber to merge with the Burke Chamber to build capacity for a full time staff person to drive promotion of local assets more powerfully than is currently possible. The group could build brand identify that captures key assets of the Lyndon community and implement other key projects to boost tourism such as improving and better staffing the visitor information booth, boosting amenities and local attractions, creating a map of trails and businesses, or walking tours to showcase the town's assets.



*Members of the Visiting Team met to debrief at the end of Community Visit Day*

# V. Task Force Action Plans

Resource Meeting, December 8, 2016

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

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## ✓ Support Business Growth and Economic Development

Chairperson: **Steve Elliot**

Facilitator: **Ted Brady**, Deputy Secretary, VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development

Resource Leaders: **Jon Freeman**, President, Northern Community Investment Corp.

**Dave Snedeker**, Executive Director, Northeastern VT Development Assn.

**Lyndon is a town with many economic assets including a scenic location, proximity to year-round outdoor recreation opportunities, high quality education, a local Chamber of Commerce, vacant retail and manufacturing space, and a walkable downtown. An Economic Development Task Force could form to leverage those assets and implement a comprehensive strategy to boost economic development including identifying financing or tax credit opportunities for downtown businesses, attracting industry to the region to boost commerce and create jobs, re-envisioning the Route 5 corridor, and marketing to new and diverse businesses. Residents see opportunities for a venture center for outdoor gear manufacturers, a brewery, and a local bar or pub. The group could work with the municipality to explore the opportunity to hire a community and economic development specialist to guide this work forward.**

### Priority Action Steps

1. Survey existing conditions, needs, and wants of businesses.
2. Survey residents about desired retailers, manufacturers, needs and wants.
3. Identify and look at gaps of existing technical assistance providers.
4. Create a marketing plan to market Lyndon, attract employers, visitors, you, and young families.
5. Create and market a list of competitive advantages of doing business in Lyndonville.
6. Create a regional partnership to look into a shared brand, and potential shared professional economic development director with neighboring towns like Burke.
7. Utilize the workers assessment from NVDA.

### Other Potential Action Steps

1. Inventory manufacturing and retail space.
2. Increase/improve broadband and internet access and services.
3. Explore an outdoor manufacturing and/or agricultural incubator for Lyndon.
4. Create a Lyndon economic development/marketing newsletter.

## Resources

1. Dave Snedeker at NVDA can be a partner in technical assistance and making connection with potential grant opportunities.
2. Nathan Cleveland is the regional contact for the Vermont Community Development Program and Community Development Block Grant program.
3. The USDA Rural Business Development Grant program could help to fund economic development efforts.
4. The Northern Borders Regional Commission could be a potential funding source.
5. Mike Welch at NCIC could be a key partner in economic development planning and strategy.
6. Visit with other towns that have built successful economic development task forces such as Hardwick, Littleton, St. Johnsbury, Brandon, Swanton, and Johnson.
7. Lyndon State College.
8. UVM Center for Rural Studies could be a resource for surveys and data collection.
9. Local chambers (Lyndon, NEK, Burke, St. J).
10. Private Philanthropy (Vermont Community foundation, Tillitson).
11. Joan Goldstein at the VT Department of Economic Development.

## Task Force Contacts

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## Visiting Resource Team Recommendations for the “Support Business Growth and Economic Development” Task Force

*After Community Meeting Day, Resource Team members, representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, submitted their recommendations for other potential actions and resources the task force might consider as it moves forward. These recommendations encompass their experience, past success, and consideration of the community’s unique assets and needs.*

NVDA and NCIC could be critical partners for this task force to support strategic marketing planning and to apply for grants that will allow the community to hire a consultant around advertising and marketing efforts. The contact at NVDA is Dave Snedeker at 748-5181 x15 or [dsnedeker@nvda.net](mailto:dsnedeker@nvda.net). At NCIC contact Jon Freeman at 748-5101 or [jfreeman@ncic.org](mailto:jfreeman@ncic.org).

Lyndon could consider hiring a dynamic economic/community development director who has experience in building projects and momentum in rural communities. Voters will likely resist wanting to spend their tax dollars on this, so it will be important to make the case that this person will bring in more funding (in the form of grants and sponsorships) than they will receive in salary and that this will breathe new life into the town. Lyndon could connect with other communities who have hired an economic develop director to learn benefits of investing in this position and what that may look like in Lyndon. Consider discussing best practices with Joel Schwartz formerly of St. Johnsbury and now of the Barre Area Development, Inc. at 802-476-0660 or Patricia Sears of NEKTI Consulting and former economic development director of Newport (802) 258-0873 or [trish@kingdomcommons.com](mailto:trish@kingdomcommons.com).

The group could visit some successful small to mid-size communities that have first-hand experience putting a renewed focus on economic development. Dom Cloud, City Manager of St. Albans – a community that grabbed onto economic development and ran with it. Reach Dom at 802-524-1500 ext. 254.

Small business development organizations such as Community Capital of Vermont, NCIC, NVDA or the Vermont Small Business Development Association could be resources in thinking about strategies to cultivate and develop small businesses in Lyndon. They could be invited to the community to help strengthen existing businesses and possibly new start-ups.

The group could coordinate with the Downtown Revitalization Task Force to develop a Downtown Economic Development and Marketing plan. NVDA may be able to provide assistance with this planning effort.

The committee could examine revolving loan fund opportunities available through NVDA (748-5181), Community Capital of Vermont (479-0167), NCIC (738-5101), and Vermont Community Loan Fund (223-1448). Utilizing existing funds may be easier administratively than establishing a loan fund for the town.

Consider developing local incentives to attract and retain businesses such as tax stabilization or offering free or subsidized space.

David White of White and Burke Associates has helped some small and medium sized towns re-envision economic development initiatives. Contact David at 802-862-1255 ext. 13.

Joan Goldstein, Commissioner of Economic Development is a great resource to consult with on economic development planning and strategies. Contact her at [joan.goldstein@vermont.gov](mailto:joan.goldstein@vermont.gov) or at 802-272-2399.

**Potential Sources of Funding for Economic Development Work:**

- VCF’s Small and Inspiring grants might be able to jump start some social capital building. Visit [www.vermontcf.org](http://www.vermontcf.org).
- Lending resources could be NVDA, Community Capital of Vermont, the VT Community Loan Fund, or Opportunities Credit Union.
- Reach out to Katie Corrigan, with ACCD, to see how the Department of Economic Development could help and learn more about the Northern Borders Grant Program and how they might support business and work force development. Contact Katie at [Katie.corrigan@vermont.gov](mailto:Katie.corrigan@vermont.gov) or 802-272-1420
- Reach out to Ben Doyle with USDA RD to learn more about their Rural Economic Development Grants to support economic development efforts and planning. Ben can help to develop a strong grant to fund the formation of a downtown association or to support the existing Chamber of Commerce. Contact Ben at [Benjamin.doyle@vt.usda.gov](mailto:Benjamin.doyle@vt.usda.gov) or at 802-828-6042.



*Task Force groups came together on Resource Meeting Day and built their action plans for the work ahead*

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## ✓ Establish and Unified Lyndon Recreation Program and Build a Lyndon Community and Recreation Center

Community Chair: **Adrienne D'Olimpio**

Facilitator: **Jon Copans**, *Model CE Community Program Director*, Vermont Council on Rural Development

Resource Team Members: **Jessica Savage**, *Recreation Program Manager*, VT Dept. of Forest, Parks & Recreation

**Tim Tierney**, *Executive Director*, Kingdom Trails

**Lyndon is a town rich in recreational assets from youth sports programs to outdoor recreation opportunities to diverse art, science, and music programming. Many residents would like to see better coordination of these resources and programs as well as a paid staff person whose time is devoted to coordination, marketing, and improvement of these programs and services. Residents point to RecFit in St. Johnsbury as a model to emulate. A task force could form to develop a unified Lyndon Recreation Program to implement year-round recreation, arts, fitness, music, dance, and other programming for all ages. The group could build a brochure and a website as a hub for recreation resources, advertise programming, and work with the Town to identify funding sources to hire a recreation coordinator.**

**The group could also build and implement a plan to create a community space for Lyndon residents through either the renovation, repurposing or coordination of an existing building or space, or developing a new space to serve as a hub for community gathering and for educational and recreational programming and social events for all ages.**

### Priority Action Steps

1. Identify and convene representatives from the recreation programs serving Lyndon.
2. Inventory the recreation programs, including a point of contact, programs offered, financial resources, volunteer activities, and participation figures.
3. Utilize the inventory to develop a centralized online hub for community members and visitors to find information about all of the recreation programs offered in Lyndon.
4. Research models that other communities have utilized to deliver recreation services (St. Johnsbury, Cambridge, Littleton, etc).
5. Design and complete a needs assessment that engages the full breadth of the community to collect feedback on existing programs and existing needs.
6. Convene area youth in a focused conversation about recreational opportunities and gaps in Lyndon.
7. Host a community forum about recreation opportunities and gaps in Lyndon.
8. Utilize the inventory of programs, research, and the needs assessment to build a plan and business case for establishing a unified Lyndon Recreation Program with appropriate staffing.
9. Engage surrounding communities to ascertain their needs and interests in Lyndon's recreation programs.
10. Engage potential partners including BurkLyn Arts, Catamount Arts, Lyndon Institute and Lyndon State College in a discussion about the potential for collaboration in delivering and administering recreation programs in Lyndon.
11. Engage the community and the selectboard to build support for community investment in a unified Lyndon Recreation Program.

## Other Potential Action Steps

1. Develop a physical place to go to learn more about and register for Lyndon recreation.
2. Develop a tool to allow for online registration for recreation programs.
3. Identify/inventory under-utilized facilities in Lyndon.
4. Develop printed materials with information on the programs available in Lyndon.
5. Provide better signage facilitating navigation to the recreation facilities in Lyndon.
6. Develop a web-based app that provides information on Lyndon recreation programs.
7. Engage and capitalize on visitors to the area.
8. Ensure that recreation programs in Lyndon are both accessible and affordable.
9. Explore the use of Lyndon Institute space for community arts programs.
10. Re-purpose an existing building or build from scratch a new facility to serve as a community recreation space.
11. Utilize the information booth in town to serve as a recreation resource hub.
12. Engage a webmaster to build and maintain the online listing and/or web application tools.

## Resources

1. Betsy Terry, Vermont Recreation and Parks Association
2. Other communities/regions with recreation programs (St. Johnsbury, Cambridge, others)
3. Lyndon Institute and other area schools
4. Vermont Department of Forest, Parks, and Recreation
5. Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services
6. USDA Rural Development
8. Kingdom Trails
9. Lyndon State College
10. Local Businesses
11. Burlyn Arts
12. Catamount Arts
13. Area Chambers of Commerce
14. Rotary
15. National Recreation and Parks Association
16. Vermont Community Foundation and other philanthropic resources
17. Hardwick Arts Program – GRACE
18. Vermont Arts Council
19. Trail Finder
20. Northern Vermont Regional Hospital
21. Caledonia North Supervisory Union
22. Eric Berry, Northeast Sports Network

## Task Force Signups

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## Visiting Resource Team Recommendations for the “Establish and Unified Lyndon Recreation Program and Build a Lyndon Community and Recreation Center” Task Force

*After Community Meeting Day, Resource Team members, representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, submitted their recommendations for other potential actions and resources the task force might consider as it moves forward. These recommendations encompass their experience, past success, and consideration of the community’s unique assets and needs.*

The Vermont Recreation and Parks Association (VRPA) could be a resource for learning from other recreation programs around the state and connecting with other volunteers and professionals. Contact Betsy Terry at 802-878-2077 or [info@vrpa.org](mailto:info@vrpa.org). The group could consider joining the VRPA to utilize helpful tools and connect with other recreation programs around the state.

The group could start with an inventory of the indoor and outdoor recreation assets, arts programs and groups, and available facilities in Lyndon as well as in neighboring communities. A community survey of residents, second homeowners, and visitors could be a way to identify recreational interests. Once the survey is complete, an inventory could be conducted to identify whether and where the resources are available to meet preferred needs and develop programs and facilities.

Explore the structure and business model that has worked for St. Johnsbury Academy and RecFit and the Town of St. Johnsbury to offer unified recreation programming. Is it possible to add a Recreation Director to the town?

The Passumpsic River is a great resource to tap into!

The group could use the inventory to build a database/hub to share recreation assets with visitors and locals. One great example of showcasing recreation assets is Stratton Vermont – see their database here: <http://visitstratton.com/> for unified information/recreation.

Perhaps the Lyndon Mountain Recreation Program could be a partner/resource in this work.

The group could look in to starting a local chapter of the Boys and Girls Club that could be based out of the town hall or the library for indoor and afterschool programming. Contact the Brattleboro Boys and Girls Club Director Beth Baldwin for ideas and inspiration at [bcbgbrattleboro@gmail.com](mailto:bcbgbrattleboro@gmail.com) or 802-254-5990.

The UVM Extension 4H program could provide funding and technical support for a range of activities for young people from agricultural programming to dance or martial arts.

The group could visit with recreation centers and meet with recreation directors in other communities that have been successful:

- In Bradford about 8 years ago, a group successfully built a small scale recreation center and programming. Contact Bradford Parks and Recreation Director Bonna Wieler at [recreation@bradfordvt.us](mailto:recreation@bradfordvt.us) or 802-222-4727 ext 310.
- The Vernon Recreation Department is also excellent and director Seth Deyo might be a good resource to help think about how to leverage the school's resources, engage the community, and how to successfully build a committee and volunteers that can support the efforts of a director. Contact Seth at [seth@vernonrec.com](mailto:seth@vernonrec.com) or 802-254-9251.
- Andrew Cappello, the Director of Newport Parks and Recreation, is also willing to be a resource to the group and think about potential ways to partner. Contact Andy at 802-334-6345 or [andrew.cappello@newportvermont.org](mailto:andrew.cappello@newportvermont.org).
- RecFit St. Johnsbury is a great model for a collaboration between the St. Johnsbury Academy and the municipality offering unified programming. Joe Fox is willing to be a resource in support of the group. Contact Joe at 802-751-2305 or [jfox@recfitstj.org](mailto:jfox@recfitstj.org).
- A Task Force in Swanton has been successful in working with the regional planning commission to map trails and develop signage to highlight outdoor recreation assets in town. To learn more about their efforts contact co-chairs Betsy Fournier ([betsy.fournier16@gmail.com](mailto:betsy.fournier16@gmail.com)) and Ron Kilburn ([swanza@swantonvermont.org](mailto:swanza@swantonvermont.org)).

Community events that visit and celebrate the natural resources in the community and Lyndon's recreation assets could be a great way to engage residents in the effort. The group could consider organizing fun outings like the Halloween Bike Ride that Local Motion organizes each year in Burlington. Events could be educational – or just for fun – and feature activities, music, and food. Every day bicycle workshops in collaboration with Local Motion are a great way to engage the community in bike maintenance and participation. Contact Local Motion at 802-861-2700.

The Vermont Trail Finder project, run by the Upper Valley Trails Alliance, is a statewide promotional tool for Vermont trails and all the Lyndon trails could be mapped and promoted through the Trail Finder. <https://www.trailfinder.info/>

The University of New Hampshire Extension office is doing some exciting work around trail development and usage (including phone apps that allow community members to map trails comprehensively online). Connect Extension Specialist Molly Donovan to find out more at 603-862-5046 or [molly.donovan@unh.edu](mailto:molly.donovan@unh.edu).

The VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation is a great resource to contact with questions or technical support, and oversees grant programs that could be useful. They administer grant opportunities including the National Parks Service Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance. Contact Jessica Savage, Recreation Coordinator, at 802-828-1399 or [Jessica.savage@vermont.gov](mailto:Jessica.savage@vermont.gov) or Craig Whipple, Director of State Parks at 802-828-1399 or [craig.whipple@vermont.gov](mailto:craig.whipple@vermont.gov).

The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program provides technical assistance for towns that are protecting, maintaining, or acquiring community forests. Danielle Fitzko is the contact at 802-598-9992 or [Danielle.fitzko@vermont.gov](mailto:Danielle.fitzko@vermont.gov).

The Vermont Mountain Bike Association could be a great resource and partner in bike trail development. They can be reached at 802-342-7568.

#### **Funding Sources for recreation programming or development could include:**

- Vermont Community Foundation Small and Inspiring Grants for community building and civic engagement projects. Visit [www.vermontcf.org](http://www.vermontcf.org).
- Building Communities Grant Program: Recreational Facilities Grant. Contact Judy Bruneau at 802-828-3519 or at [judy.bruneau@vermont.gov](mailto:judy.bruneau@vermont.gov).
- The Northeast Kingdom Fund. Contact the Vermont Community Foundation at [www.vermontcf.org](http://www.vermontcf.org).
- A municipal planning grant, a Vermont Community Development Program grant from the Agency of Commerce, or a USDA Rural Business Development grant could provide funding for planning and feasibility work.
- USDA Rural Development has grant programs that support community facilities improvements. Contact Ben Doyle, Community and Economic Development Specialist, to learn more about how that program might support the town's recreational needs. Contact Ben at [Benjamin.doyle@vt.usda.gov](mailto:Benjamin.doyle@vt.usda.gov) or at 802-828-6042.
- Federally Qualified Health Centers have funds to invest in community wellness. Contact Sean Tester at Northern Counties Health Care at [shawnt@nchcvt.org](mailto:shawnt@nchcvt.org).

#### **Funding Sources for outdoor recreation, biking and walkability could include:**

- New England Grassroots Environment Fund grants for environmental or community organizing (603-905-9915).
- Vermont Housing and Conservation Board Public Outdoor Recreation Grants (802-828-3250).
- Recreation Trail Program grants administered by the VT Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation could be used to assess trail conditions, maintenance and for capital improvements. Contact Jessica Savage at [jessica.savage@vermont.gov](mailto:jessica.savage@vermont.gov) or 802-249-1230.
- The Agency of Natural Resources Land and Water Conservation Fund has grants administered by ANR and Forest, Parks and Recreation. Jessica Savage (802-249-1230) can assist in working towards grants that could help in acquiring land as well as planning and development of new and renovated recreation facilities.
- The USDA Community Forest Program <http://www.fs.fed.us/cooperativeforestry/programs/loa/cfp.shtml>.
- Healthy Places for Healthy People is a new program to help communities partner with community health centers (including Federally Qualified Health Centers), nonprofit hospitals, and other health care facilities to create walkable, healthy, economically vibrant places. Learn how to apply for the Healthy Places for Healthy People Program: <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/healthy-places-healthy-people>.

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## Build a Formal Schools, College, and Community Partnership

Community Chair:

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

Resource Team Members: **Ben Doyle**, *Community and Economic Dev. Specialist*, USDA RD

**Sheila Reed**, *Outreach Representative*, Office of Senator Bernie Sanders

**Lyndon residents would like to build a better connection between the area schools, students, and the greater Lyndon community and better coordinate and streamline resources, events, and services. A Lyndon School, College, and Community Partnership could form to include members of the community, students, schools, college leaders, and the Supervisory Union to work to expand students' learning and community service activities and engage Lyndon residents with the schools to enrich student experiences.**

### Action Steps:

1. Each member of the Task Force will invite two additional people to come with them to the next task force meeting.
2. The Task Force will build a list of key constituencies in the community and leaders in each one: students, business leaders, parents, teachers, and so on, then systematically invite these individuals into the group.
3. The Task Force will build a clearly articulated set of goals for the partnership, building on the priority language (above) supported by the Lyndon community.
4. The Task Force has identified many ways that links already exist between schools and the college and community offerings: it plans to list these links and build educational assets inventory.
5. It would then build a narrative, or the community story of all the great offerings and good things happening, to celebrate what's already working, to educate the public to opportunities, and to build a foundation for progress.
6. The Task Force will invite and engage the community as a whole to have them contribute to goals and strategies to increase educational opportunities and go to different groups—from students to business leaders—to get their ideas directly.
7. The Task Force will work to expand opportunities based on gaps identified and places where coordination between the schools, college, and community can advance community economic opportunities.
8. It will consider putting together special events and potential a common educational space as steps for the future.

### Resources

1. Leadership commitment from each of the schools, supervisory union, college and public.
2. Students
3. Employers
4. Seniors

Then, as projects develop:

5. USDA Rural Development as a funder or community development partner.
6. The Vermont Community Foundation.
7. The Vermont Arts Council could provide funds or support community residencies.
8. VCRD could provide resource and referral services or facilitative support.

## Task Force Signups

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## Visiting Resource Team Recommendations for the “Build a Formal Schools, College, and Community Partnership” Task Force

*After Community Meeting Day, Resource Team members, representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, submitted their recommendations for other potential actions and resources the task force might consider as it moves forward. These recommendations encompass their experience, past success, and consideration of the community’s unique assets and needs.*

One way to support connection between the school, college, and the community is to build physical connection. The Lyndon Walk-Bike Safety Action Plan recommends a safe walking and biking connection from the College through the Institute to the Village. The group could work with local volunteers and outside experts to implement this recommendation.

A liaison team with members from each school/college entity could work to better align current initiatives as well as to see future potential alignment and partnering. This consortium of learning and community development can draw from its strengths to aid in the other priority task forces. The group might want to formalize a structure that systematically connects representatives of each of the institutions (school, community, recreation and business) to coordinate work and to identify the outcomes that all of the partners can agree to.

This Partnership could be a place for an Economic Development coordinator to plug in to ensure coordination between town leadership, schools, and the college.

One way to initiative this work would be to visit with other towns that have private schools and colleges to get ideas on establishing and strengthening these relationships. Find out what works and what doesn’t. It would also give these towns an opportunity to build a network together as many likely share similar challenges.

Monthly breakfast meetings could be a way to stay engaged and invite community members or guest speakers.

Hardwick and Craftsbury have both recently built school community partnerships. Chairs of those groups could serve as a resource for this group as you move forward. In Craftsbury, contact Ceilidh Galloway-Kane at [director@vermontarthouse.org](mailto:director@vermontarthouse.org) and in Hardwick contact Amy Holloway at [amyrholloway@yahoo.com](mailto:amyrholloway@yahoo.com).

The School Board and Institute Trustees may also be important groups to connect with and include in this effort.

A series of community forums on topics of interest could be a good strategy to build awareness and increase participation. Topics could include farm to school, healthy communities, homeschool/school partnerships, and more.

The task force could help spread the word about great work going on in the school and in the community by sharing positive stories with the local press.

The group could develop a shared community calendar so that community events are coordinated and publicized.

The Agency of Education could be a resource. The Secretary could be invited to come to town and be a part of fostering this partnership and improving opportunity for students. Contact Rebecca Holcombe, Secretary of Education at 802-479-1060 or Heather Bouchey at [heather.bouchey@vermont.gov](mailto:heather.bouchey@vermont.gov) or 802-479-1030.

Mobius, Vermont's state-wide mentoring organization, is a great resource. The Executive Director, Chad Butt, has his finger on the pulse of all the mentoring organizations and models working in Vermont. They may also have funding to support mentoring activities. Contact Chad at [chad@mobiusmentors.org](mailto:chad@mobiusmentors.org) or at 802-658-1888.

The Vermont Community Foundation's Small and Inspiring Grants can fund projects that build innovative partnerships between the school and the community. Visit [www.vermontcf.org](http://www.vermontcf.org)

Helen Beattie, a Hardwick local, and Executive Director of UP for Learning is a great resource to help bring young people and adults to the table as partners to design and implement this initiative. Contact UP for Learning at 802-472-5127 or at [info@upforlearning.com](mailto:info@upforlearning.com).

Vermont Afterschool, Inc. could be a great resource to help with afterschool programming and other youth enrichment programs. Executive Director Holly Morehouse can be reached at 802-448-3464 or at [hollymorehouse@vermontafterschool.org](mailto:hollymorehouse@vermontafterschool.org).

Vermont Youth Conservation Corps could be a great partner in finding funding for conservation project jobs in the community and could be a resource in thinking about ways to engage youth in the community. Contact the VYCC at [info@vycc.org](mailto:info@vycc.org) or by calling 1-800-639-8922.

Victor Prussack from the Burlington School District would be a great contact for some advice on connecting schools and the community. Victor is the coordinator of the Magnet Schools for the district and has helped form partnerships with the BCA and the Flynn as well as Shelburne Farms and countless other local organizations. He can be reached at 802-864-8475.

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## ✓ Revitalize Downtown Businesses and Storefronts

Chairperson: **Kim Crady-Smith**

Facilitator: **Jenna Koloski**, *Community and Policy Manager*, Vermont Council on Rural Development

Resource Leaders: **Richard Amore**, *Planning & Project Manager*, VT Department of Housing and Community Development

**Lisa Ryan**, *Field Service Representative*, Preservation Trust of Vermont

**Lyndonville's walkable Village Center, lined with local businesses, municipal buildings, and green space is an incredible economic, recreational, and aesthetic asset. A Downtown Redevelopment Task Force could form to better leverage this asset by developing a master plan for future downtown development and identify funding sources to enhance Lyndonville's village center, as well as build strategies in partnership with the municipal government toward the redevelopment of vacant properties. Downtown improvements could include better signage, collaborating with local artists to enhance aesthetics and marketing, improved infrastructure and sidewalks, boosted business growth, improved aesthetics, river access, student and volunteer engagement, and improved walkability and bike-ability.**

### Priority Action Steps

1. Visit other Vermont village centers that have been successful in comprehensive downtown revitalization or have unique models of community engagement/visioning. Some examples include Vergennes, South Royalton, Hardwick, Bristol, St. Albans, and Johnson.
2. Work with the support of outside experts to develop a downtown master plan. The plan will include public engagement, a vision for aesthetic improvement, physical infrastructure and improvements, parking, and a market/branding/business plan, as well as tools and strategies (such as tax incentives, tax credits, grant programs, or technical support) to achieve that vision.
3. Develop a proposal for a public/private canoe and/or bike rental kiosk, potentially connected to the Northern Forest Canoe Trail.
4. Work to engage key stakeholders including the selectboard, trustees, town officials, business leaders, Burke Mountain, Kingdom Trails, and others in efforts. Some strategies include inviting members to join the group and holding a business/downtown forums with broad representation to have an open discussion about downtown strategy, tools, and incentives.
5. Cultivate a cultural and arts presence in the downtown through murals, capitalizing on the railroad history and heritage, showcasing covered bridges, or developing an arts space/gallery in the downtown.

### Other potential action steps

- Host community pop-ups to experiment with events, changes, and improvements and engage the community towards implementation of the masterplan.
- Make Lyndon the mural capital of New England!
- Attract a microbrewery or bar to the downtown.
- Implement free Wi-Fi in the entire Village.
- Develop a structure of local tax incentives, abatements, etc. in collaboration with the town to attract business and support local business owners.

## Resources

1. VTRANS Transportation Grants.
2. Northern Vermont Development Association for grant writing expertise and technical assistance.
3. VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development Better Connections Grant and Municipal Planning Grants. Contact Richard Amore for support.
4. Local Motion (walk/bike advocacy group).
5. Ben Doyle with USDA Rural Development.
6. Bethel Better Block Project as an example of “creative placemaking” or pop-up events.
7. Preservation Trust of Vermont will hold a Lake House Retreat in July for community development and revitalization.
8. The Vermont Downtown and Historical Preservation Conference will take place June 8<sup>th</sup> in White River Junction.
9. Northern Community Investment Corporation for help with business technical assistance and feasibility studies.
10. Caitlin Corkins from ACCD can come and educate local property owners on State/Federal Tax Credit Benefits.
11. Buildings and General Services Grants from the State.
12. Forest Parks Reforestation Grants for trees in the downtown.
13. Vermont Arts Council Grant.
14. Annie, the Lyndon Planning Director, will be a key resource.
15. Community Leaders and property owners.
16. Vermont Community Foundation grant programs.
17. AARP supported the Bethel Better Blocks Program.
18. Business donations from local businesses.

## Task Force Contacts

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## Visiting Resource Team Recommendations for the “Revitalize Downtown Businesses and Storefronts” Task Force

*After Community Meeting Day, Resource Team members, representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, submitted their recommendations for other potential actions and resources the task force might consider as it moves forward. These recommendations encompass their experience, past success, and consideration of the community’s unique assets and needs.*

Working with the Vermont Downtown and Village Center program may be a good first step towards understanding the elements of a successful village core and lining up strategies and resources to move forward. Consider connecting with Richard Amore, the coordinator of the Village Center designation program who knows communities around the state focused on village center enhancement. Contact Richard Amore at 802-828-5229 or [Richard.amore@vermont.gov](mailto:Richard.amore@vermont.gov).

Caitlin Corkins at the Department of Historic Preservation could also provide information on both the state and federal tax credit programs which can be used to improve the appearance of historic buildings in the downtown. Contact Caitlin Corkins, Tax Credits and Grants Coordinator, [Caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov](mailto:Caitlin.corkins@vermont.gov) or 802-828-3047

A vibrant downtown is fundamental to securing Lyndonville’s healthy economic future. Investing in the downtown isn’t just about helping businesses or property owners, but also the future of the whole community. Bike and Pedestrian access and safer parking design could be a great start.

In creating a downtown task force, it may be beneficial to include a broad range of stakeholders including community leaders, business owners, and interested citizens.

A committee dedicated to Village aesthetics and enhancement could help to coordinate simple displays with local artists.

Events that highlight the downtown are a great way to engage locals, visitors, and students in the future of the Village center.

An alternative truck route could help to ease traffic pressure in the downtown from Route 5.

The group could develop a Downtown Master Plan to include conceptual designs that develops a vision for the downtown and examines existing physical and market conditions of the downtown. The Plan could identify the amount of vacant/lease-able space, parking, supply/demand, etc. and propose future physical enhancements to improve the downtown and engage the public, business community, town leadership and other stakeholders. The process should be highly community driven to ensure plan recommendations are supported by the community. The plan should also detail action-oriented implementation strategies.

Pop-up demonstration projects throughout the village could showcase strategies for shortening crosswalks, creating seating areas and parklets, and more. One example is the Bethel Better Block program <http://bethelrevitalizationinitiative.org/better-block>. Energetic community consultants like Jeff Bercuvitz (<http://thesparkscenter.org/about/about-jeff-bercuvitz>) could help spark some creative energy to get the downtown jumping. Waterbury’s River of Light Lantern Parade is another example of a great community-building event that uses the arts to bring people into the downtown and foster economic activity. You can contact the event organizer Gowri Savor here: [info@gowrisavor.com](mailto:info@gowrisavor.com)

Coordinate with local artists and other groups to continue to add vibrancy through banners, lighting, trees, and streetscape improvements; integrating arts and cultural identity.

Paul Bruhn at Preservation Trust of Vermont is a state leader in strategizing and lining up resources to revitalize and redevelop buildings in downtown centers. Paul can be reached at 802-343-0595 or at [paul@ptvermont.org](mailto:paul@ptvermont.org).

Members of the task force could visit similarly sized communities in Vermont who have undergone community and economic revitalization efforts over the past 10-15 years, and meet with the key people in those communities who could explain how they accomplished what they have. Some good places to visit as excellent examples include Bristol, Guilford (Katie Buckley, Commissioner of Housing and Community Development 802-828-3080), Vergennes (Bill Benton 802-877-2815), Johnson (Town Administrator Brian Story 802-635-2611 ext. 308) and Brandon.

Doug Morton at NVDA can help to identify VTrans funding opportunities to plan and develop streetscape. Contact Doug at 802-748-1224 or [dmorton@nvda.net](mailto:dmorton@nvda.net).

It may be a great first step to establish or strengthen existing beautification efforts to beautify the downtown with flowers, banners, signs, and other landscaping. The UVM Extension Master Gardner Program requires volunteer hours from its participants and graduates. Consider enlisting volunteer help for landscaping, planting, and streetscape in the downtown. Danielle Fitzko of the Urban Community Forestry Program could help to gain access to technical assistance for street trees, perhaps conducting a street tree inventory, identifying maintenance needs, and obtaining funding for more street trees. Contact Danielle at [danielle.fitzko@vermont.gov](mailto:danielle.fitzko@vermont.gov) or 802-828-1339.

A speaker could be brought in to talk about what makes a great village center. One speaker that discusses “tactical place-making” is Ward Joyce who can be reached at [wardjoyce1@hotmail.com](mailto:wardjoyce1@hotmail.com) or 802-522-0150. He has led place-making efforts including the “pocket park” and Langdon Street Alive in downtown Montpelier.

Private sector consultants could be invaluable in sharing design ideas or even producing charrettes. Bob Stevens of Stevens Associates of Brattleboro has led community redesign efforts in several places in New England (257-9329) and David Raphael of Landworks has led important redesign efforts with Danville, Middlebury and other communities (388-3011).

AARP has a “complete streets” program that helps communities make neighborhoods and village centers more accessible and pedestrian friendly. Contact Kelly Stoddard Poor at 802-951-1313 or at [kstoddardpoor@aarp.org](mailto:kstoddardpoor@aarp.org).

State of Vermont Tourism and Marketing could be a partner in discussing ways to market Lyndon as a destination. Their online itineraries could be an opportunity to look into. Contact Steven Cook at [steven.cook@vermont.gov](mailto:steven.cook@vermont.gov) or 802-522-2896.

**Potential funding sources for a Master Plan may include:**

- The ACCD Funding Directory offers information on funding options including grant timelines, funding specifics, and general eligibility: [www.accd.vermont.gov](http://www.accd.vermont.gov). ACCD can help to navigate grant options and develop a planning needs list.
- Richard Amore could discuss the financial benefits (grants and tax credits) of the Village Center Designation program. Contact his at [Richard.amore@vermont.gov](mailto:Richard.amore@vermont.gov).

- Municipal Planning Grants are available for a Downtown Master Plan or other implementation plan to help support town capital improvement plans and other future planning goals. Contact Annina Seiler for more information at [annina.seiler@vermont.gov](mailto:annina.seiler@vermont.gov) or 802-828-1848.
- The Strong Communities Better Connections Program could fund transportation investments that build community resilience. Contact Jacki Cassino at VTrans at [Jackie.cassino@vermont.gov](mailto:Jackie.cassino@vermont.gov) or at 802-272-2368.
- Community Development Block Grants are federal Planning Grants available through the Vermont Community Development Program. Contact Josh Hanford at [josh.hanford@vermont.gov](mailto:josh.hanford@vermont.gov) or visit <http://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp>.
- Contact Katie Corrigan at ACCD to learn more about the Northern Border Regional Commission Grants that could support a variety of projects that improve the downtown, business development, and infrastructure. Contact Katie at [Katie.corrigan@vermont.gov](mailto:Katie.corrigan@vermont.gov) or 802-272-1420.
- USDA Rural Development offers federal support for towns and villages through a variety of loan and grant programs aimed at enhancing rural quality of life through investing in housing, essential community facilities, municipal infrastructure, and economic development. Contact Ben Doyle at [benjamin.doyle@vt.usda.gov](mailto:benjamin.doyle@vt.usda.gov) or 828-6042.
- The Citizen Institute for Rural Design offers annual technical assistance grants for a three-day design workshop meant to involve/engage the whole community.
- VTrans offers a Transportation Alternative Program to help fund scoping studies and design and implementation for bicycle and pedestrian construction projects. Contact Scott Robertson at [scott.robertson@vermont.gov](mailto:scott.robertson@vermont.gov) or 802-828-5799.
- VTrans also offers a Bicycle and Pedestrian Program that can help support scoping studies and design and implementation of bicycle and pedestrian construction projects. Contact Jon Kaplan at [jon.kaplan@vermont.gov](mailto:jon.kaplan@vermont.gov) or 802-828-0059.

**Potential funding sources for arts and culture integration/improvements:**

- The Vermont Arts Council Animating Infrastructure supports community projects that integrate art with infrastructure improvements. Contact Michele Bailey at 802-828-3294 or [m Bailey@vermontartscouncil.org](mailto:m Bailey@vermontartscouncil.org).
- Arts Impact Grant from Vermont Arts Council. These grants support organizations, municipalities, and schools in their efforts to create a more vibrant quality of life by providing equal and abundant access to the arts. The lead contact there is Sarah Mutrux, Artist and Community Programs Manager. Contact her at 802-828-5425 or [smutrux@vermontartscouncil.org](mailto:smutrux@vermontartscouncil.org).
- Vermont Community Foundation's Small and Inspiring Program. Visit [www.vermontcg.org](http://www.vermontcg.org)

**Other funding/investment sources for downtown improvement/aesthetics initiatives:**

- Potential investment sources could include: Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) or the Vermont Community Loan Fund.
- The Vermont State Infrastructure Bank program, operated by the VT Economic Development Authority in conjunction with the VT Agency of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, is available to assist in the construction or reconstruction of highways, roads, and bridges. Contact VEDA at 802-828-5627.
- Efficiency Vermont Municipal Street Lighting Program.
- The Forest, Parks and Recreation/ANR Community and Urban Forestry Program has Caring for Canopy Grants to support street trees and urban forestry improvements in the downtown.

# VIII. The Town Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held with over 130 Lyndon residents and the VCRD Visiting Team on February 16 2017

*Although the prioritization work of the Community Visit Program requires a town to decide what is most important as it moves forward with Task Forces, nothing is lost in the process from the long list of concerns and ideas expressed in early community focus sessions. Many interesting and diverse thoughts are represented here, and are presented as a reminder of issues explored, and a possible foundation for future projects.*

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## Marketing Lyndon

Visiting Team: Ted Brady, Jon Copans, Paul Costello (facilitator), Pollaidh Major (scribe), Dave Snedeker, Mike Welch

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### What are the Assets in this Area?

- The town is known as the “Home of Covered Bridges” and there is a sign with this slogan at the entrance of town.
- The town is also “The Gateway to the Kingdom,” functionally the entrance to many of the Northeast Kingdom’s attractions.
- Lyndon is on the Northeast Kingdom Byway which can be highlighted with strong signage.
- Lyndon’s anchor institutions include Lyndon Institute and Lyndon State College. The institutions include Lyndonville in their individual marketing but do not participate in a cohesive marketing plan for the town. For example, the college’s communications department highlights the Lyndonville lifestyle (country town with no big box stores).
- The College is an asset to the town. It hosts the incubator and supports the local arts economy, however it could be further integrated into the town. The college also offers services to the town, for example, their marketing program helps develop graphics for local businesses.
- The College hosts the Foundry, a makers space, free classes, and adult education. The College attracts young people to the town.
- The Lyndon Institute attracts foreign and domestic students to town who have means but who are not oriented to the town. There is an opportunity for a business directory and map.
- The Lyndon Chamber of Commerce markets Lyndon. They maintain an intermittently staffed Welcome Center with a town map. Businesses may pay dues to the Chamber, however there is low active participation.
- Town events include Stars and Stripes, the Snowflake Festival, the summer crafts fair, the Caledonian County Fair and the Farmers’ Market.
- Lyndon has, or is in close proximity to, recreational assets. These include the Lyndon Outing Club, a 40-meter ski jump, the Fenton W Chester Arena, waterways for kayaking and tubing, the walking trail around the town, Kingdom Trails, and the VAST trail network. Many of these draw on the natural beauty of the landscape.
- The town has a sports heritage- for example, the football game is a big local event- and the town has produced Olympians.
- The Lyndon Town School has large playing fields that attract people into public spaces.
- Kingdom Trails attracts visitors who travel through Lyndon. The majority of their trails are in the Town of Lyndon and they produce good video footage for marketing.
- Cultural assets include the Lyndon heritage, the bandstand park, Burklyn Ballet, the Caledonian Boar and the lions at the bank, the Chapel on Darling Hill, NEMBA Fest, the Children’s Theater and News 7 from the college.
- Hospitality sector assets include restaurants, proximity to the new Burke Mountain hotel and to the ski area.
- Economic assets include municipal water and sewer, the Tap and Dye building that could be redeveloped into commercial or manufacturing space, a town revolving fund, an industrial park, and a dedicated work force with a good work ethic.
- Rural Edge has refurbished the Darling Inn.

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### What are the Challenges?

- The town has inadequate signage. There are few directional signs so people rely on Google Maps which routes them around downtown. Signs are not permitted on the highway.
- There is a lack of signage to recreational assets, such as to the walking trail or portage sites.
- There are too few portage sites on the river.
- The town’s Business Directory is poorly maintained.
- There are no tourist maps.
- The Chamber of Commerce has low capacity due to volunteer burnout, a lack of human resources, and limited time available to business owners. There is a perceived loss of economic momentum over the last 30 years.
- There are many different communication channels for marketing and lots of different sites to advertise on. This makes a coordinated and impactful marketing effort challenging.

- The Burke brand encompasses many Lyndon assets that are then marketed as Burke, like Darling Hill. One reason is that Lyndon does not draw its own recreational tourists.
- Lyndon does not have a well-defined brand or 'elevator pitch'
- Lyndon does not have a strong connection to St. Johnsbury. There is an old rivalry between the high schools.
- The town has poor internet access. 40% of elementary school children have poor internet access.

### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Build Lyndon's marketing capacity through: making a marketing plan, hiring a marketer, and aligning the marketing efforts of local institutions.
- Use communication tools to promote the town and advance community development. Tools include community calendars, social media, and Front Porch Forum.
- Lyndon should better staff the tourist information booth by engaging new volunteers.
- Build more signage along Rt. 5 to draw in visitors.
- Develop a town e-newsletter that can keep residents and visitors connected to current events.
- Align existing community calendars, perhaps by using the State of Vermont whose website auto populates a calendar from many community calendars.
- Develop a business directory that highlights local businesses and attractions. This book can be distributed to tourists through making it available in hotel rooms.
- Improve community signage. Signs can be in French to welcome French Canadians. Additionally, front desk workers can learn French greetings to make Lyndon a welcoming destination for Canadian tourists.
- Improve the signs for the VAST trail, increase ATV access to downtown with a downtown corridor.
- Use signs to highlight the Gateway to the Kingdom/ Covered Bridge Capital slogans.
- Develop a Lyndon-Burke brand, physically connect the two towns with a bike trail and a ticketed entrance to Kingdom Trails in downtown Lyndon. Create a Lyndon-Burke Marketing Plan where Lyndon supports and supplements the existing recreational assets but does not compete with Burke.
- Merge the Lyndon and Burke chambers of commerce to increase capacity. Burke currently has a part time chamber employee who could be raised to full time.
- Market the town as a family town with good education and good community support for seniors.
- Promote the local food economy. Focus on local food and agro-tourism and attract a brewery capitalizing on the new water and sewer system.
- Strengthen internet connectivity. The town could be an internet hub for the region, and can perhaps utilize the college's t-1 line for premium connectivity.
- Produce events that highlight the town's assets and generate business opportunities, such as the sugar house tour or a First Friday event.

### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- The town could consider utilizing proximity to Burke to capitalize on the joint assets between the two towns. However, recognize that the economy extends outside recreation, Lyndon's economy is a diverse economy, be sure to market the entire economy, to residents, visitors and future generations.
- Lyndon has a brewery, the town can use its water assets to attract the brewery to the downtown. Lyndon can capitalize on being a college town and better integrate the college and the community. The town would benefit from a strong and active chamber of commerce.
- Lyndon can attract families and keep youth. The community, between educational and recreational assets, has ability to do this. The town can develop and promote a common brand.
- As the urban center in close proximity to many recreational assets, Lyndon can develop to provide supplemental services to visitors and residents.
- It would be exciting to link the town to the Kingdom Trail Network and own and share that asset!
- The town can pursue the idea of riding into the Kingdom - tourists can immediately experience the Kingdom from Lyndon. The town can focus on identifying fresh volunteers and pursuing the opportunity of hiring a leader for the chamber of commerce.

## Housing & Transportation

Visiting Team: Michele Boomhower, Katie Buckley, Patricia Coates, Ben Doyle (facilitator), Will Eberle, Jeff Francis, Trisha Ingalls, Elijah Massey (scribe), Sheila Reed, Gus Seelig, Jason Van Driesche, Tracey Zschau

### What are the Assets in this Area?

- Lyndon has a robust rental market.
- Lyndonville is a vibrant and busy downtown. This is good for businesses on the main drag.
- We have a top wedding venue in the summer months.
- Lyndon is a market draw. People want to move here.
- Rural edge is an affordable housing provider/coordinator that is based in town.

- Rural Edge provides supportive services to stay in housing as well as homeowner and budgeting workshops.
- We have a good mix of housing at different income levels.
- Darling inn provides a mix of housing at different levels.
- Annual point in time count gives count of homeless and precariously housed. This is a key resource.
- There is a high demand for subsidized housing.
- Rentals are close to downtown in walking distance to other assets like library.
- Ease of accessory apartment application for homeowners.
- RCT is an asset for transportation, shuttles, and independent transportation arrangements. RCT provides transit to and from college 10 times per day.
- Faith In Action provides transportation.
- Bus schedules are readily available to public.
- There is a committee in place for safer pedestrian traffic.
- We have new bike lanes.
- RCT- 100+ families rely on the organization’s transportation services (shuttles and other sources). Around one half of these are Lyndon residents
- Demand for affordable housing is due in part to quality of local schools and colleges.
- Lyndon is an attractive location as access point to the Kingdom Trails system.
- We have had population growth due to people relocating into the community.
- The Local Highway Department is skilled and doing good work.
- Lyndon Institute is looking to grow its student population, particularly international students. They would like to develop homestays with residents and opportunities for service collaboration in community.
- We have data tools such as the annual point in time count, NBDA housing data, the HS profile initiative, and the Agency of Human Services lists of “Continuum of Care”
- We have a vibrant downtown, busy, used. There are a lot of people moving through downtown.
- Lyndon has a fantastic Police Department.
- Lyndon Institute as a resource for community programs and involving students with the wider community.

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### What are the Challenges?

- We lack of rental properties for elderly residents due to the college rental market.
- Rental homes are in poor condition to college students.
- There are absentee (out of state) landlords.
- Lack of safe, affordable housing.
- Quality of existing rental properties is poor.
- Young families and college students are having a hard time starting out given the condition of housing.
- The demand on housing due to attractiveness of school system and colleges poses a challenge for families and those on fixed incomes.
- There is a waiting list for placement at the Darling Inn.
- There are accessibility issues, especially for older residents during winter months.
- Accessibility is a challenge across all forms of transportation.
- There is a lack of sidewalks in some areas (due to past road widening projects) to accommodate pedestrians.
- Floodplain complicates development.
- Essential services were moved to Broad Street (pharmacies, bank), making them inaccessible by foot from downtown.
- “No-shows” by individuals using RCT services. Programs don’t pay for no-shows, but RCT still has to cover those costs (time and resources).
- The RCT system lacks flexibility to accommodate residents using services to commute to jobs with variable or early/late hours (e.g. restaurant), making it difficult for individuals to maintain employment.
- Childcare pressures experienced by families with parents working outside the community (Montpelier, Burlington) are a challenge e.g. 5am drop-offs.
- Departure of past industries that provided local employment opportunities for residents.
- Lack of public transportation options for college students stymies their integration into wider community and patronage of local business.
- It is challenging for people to get to medical appointments due to lack of transportation. This is especially challenging for elderly patients.
- Not all patients who need a ride to the hospital qualify for the RCT/Medicaid program. If they do qualify, they have to call way ahead.
- Residents parking on the Green and lack of viable parking generally.
- Many rentals lack adequate parking.
- Developing new housing is daunting.
- People in need of immediate/emergency transportation needs lack options.
- There is no taxi service.
- No access point in town to Kingdom Trails.
- Traffic congestion causes people to avoid downtown.
- Car share services hindered by population density and technology issues.
- Winter parking ban compounds parking issue.
- No public transportation is available after bars close (if a bar were to open in town).
- VTRANS proposals are too expensive to town, makes it difficult to move forward with proposed plans and ideas
- Small towns can’t match the needs of larger ones, so the perception is that the needs could be taken care of better here in town than in state/fed govt.

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## Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Get Montpelier off our backs. Let towns run towns. We can't match the needs of large towns (e.g. Burlington).
- Strengthen partnerships between residents and the college community.
- Create a more robust housing code to improve regulation of rental properties.
- Lyndon State College could better enforce on-campus housing rule (1st two years on campus) to assist in relieving housing shortage.
- Information gathering to look at college/town agreements in other Vermont communities as possible models.
- Facilitate ongoing conversation between community and colleges.
- We could renovate housing properties with a multifaceted approach that could include mentorship or youth skill building programs.
- Educate the community about and improve access Federal and State tax credits.
- Increase education for community members on options for increasing housing stock (e.g. apartments).
- Bring a housing task force together to quantify problem of limited housing stock for working families and seniors using available data.
- "See-Click-Fix" needs report generated by community crowdsourcing on community issues.
- Build a community housing toolkit that would include zoning regulations to reflect community's reality.
- Create a housing committee to compare rental rates in Lyndon to other Vermont communities (e.g. Saint Johnsbury).
- Acknowledge congestion and transportation issues associated with downtown as first step in finding solutions.
- Bring Lyndon issues with homelessness to state's attention through the "Balance of State" meeting.
- Acknowledge the issue of drinking and driving perpetuated by residents/college students due to lack of local establishments and related transportation issues.
- Develop an education campaign to bring attention to the housing challenge.
- Foster a more productive and efficient relationship with VTrans.
- We need to be sure we're identifying Lyndon-sized solutions.
- Collaborate with RCT to develop new pick-up spots and broader schedules (early morning/late night).
- Look at existing community resources to leverage them in new ways.
- Look at Jay Peak's approach to ski resort/community transportation solutions and adopt it for use in Lyndon.
- Investigate how VTrans is working with car sharing companies to address rural mobility on demand.
- Utilize Uber or Bridj like services adapted to a more rural setting.
- Town purchase of blighted properties in order to create new parking options

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## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- A housing taskforce could work to understand the market better and develop a code enforcement program.
- There is a lot of power in working with students in service to community.
- It is critical to do the information gathering and know the details of the housing crisis.
- The Town could work with NVDA, the regional planning commission to partner with neighbors to pool resources.
- A positive communication system is important.
- Bringing in "Fresh eyes" to the conversation in the form of resources and folks that can provide support can be helpful.
- Lyndon could work on an improved walking and biking interface. There is an opportunity to build on and spin off the positive work in this area already to identify other opportunities.
- I didn't hear a lack of vibrancy. There is energy here to take next steps.
- Rural Edge is an asset and could be a key resource in next steps.
- Community Development Block grants could be an opportunity to fund housing and transportation initiatives.
- Redeveloping the Main St. property sounds like a key priority
- Tensions with student housing, enforcement of college housing as community opportunity.
- Parking is a key conversation to have in conjunction with affordable housing.
- Morristown is a good example where they removed parking requirements and opened new commercial development.
- College students deal with affordability issues in housing.
- Transportation needs in Johnson State college and Lyndon State college as opportunity to collaborate with the community.

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## Trails and Greenspaces

Visiting Team: Alex Aldrich, Jenna Koloski (facilitator), Sam Lincoln, Anna McAneny (scribe), Michael Moser, Michael Snyder, Tim Tierney, George Twigg

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## What are the Assets in this Area?

- There are two trails in town, the little and big Steven's loops, through a park and by the covered bridge.
- The Lyndon State Forest and the Lyndon State College hiking trail system with great views are a recreational asset.

- Hiking trails are behind Lyndon Institute campus and go down to the river.
- There used to be a trail by the interstate, but since they built the new dorms, it is no longer a clear path.
- Lyndon has the Outing Club with a ski area, skate park, and community gathering spot.
- Powers Park is a kid's park in town, with a path leading to it from the Bandstand, which is not very well maintained.
- Bandstand Park has a farmers market on the green in the summer. Also used to have cross country skiing and ice skating.
- The paths around Lyndon have an accompanying brochure and comprehensive and good signage.
- Lyndon has interconnected dirt roads everywhere, and there have been various projects to map them that have all been incomplete, scattered, or unpublished.
- Kingdom Trails is a regional asset.
- The VAST trail system is broad and connects areas throughout the state, possibly even to the Kingdom trails but is unused in the summer.
- Lyndon has many put-ins for the Passumpsic River, with boating access for canoes and kayaks north of Main Street, by the bridge, and by Red Village Road.
- The Fenton Chester Ice Arena by high school with public access.
- The local hospital has a health and wellness budget that could be used for outdoor activities and community wellness.
- Darling Ridge gives access to biking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, sledding, snowmobiling, and Nordic skiing. There are also nearby pubs and a Tiki bar.
- Island pond is known as the "snowmobile capital" of Vermont.
- The local covered bridges serve as an attraction, and a map of all of them is a highly accessed promotion tool.
- The town recently added new bike lanes along the road. There are some challenges with navigation and safety, but they are a good start.
- There are many summer recreation resources, like the soccer fields by the Lyndon Town School by the fairgrounds, the College fields, and there are trails to connect the town to the College fields.
- The Fairgrounds and Mountain View Park have stages and parking.
- There are scenic tours on the Railroad, both during the summer and as "Polar express" tours in the winter.
- Lyndon has a golf course.
- Justin Smith, the Municipal Administrator, is a great resource and understands the opportunities and challenges.

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## What are the Challenges?

- There had been a plan for a river walk, started with the Lyndon Institute. There are stones and a picnic area already there, but there had been plans for a covered bridge that were interrupted by private property.
- There used to be a river clean up every year that doesn't happen anymore.
- The Stevens loop is dangerous because the road is narrow and drivers go too fast, making it very difficult to navigate around the corner of routes 122 and 5, particularly because there is no sidewalk.
- The town is not pedestrian friendly.
- There is a need for a good path system from town to the Kingdom Trails (KT). A route has been mapped, but got hung up with landowner permission while trying to connect from the soccer field and river put in to the life enrichment center. Two landowners interfered.
- The VAST trail connects to the railroad by the town garage, but you have to cross over bridges to get to Kingdom Trails.
- No one knows that Simpson trails and Lyndon trails exist, or where they are.
- There is a lack of signage on many green spaces and trails.
- There is no snow-making at the volunteer-run Outing club.
- Tourism is limited to the weekend, but never continues during the week. People don't plan week-long trips to visit the area.
- There needs to be interconnectivity between systems, possibly by connecting rail trails and other smaller trails, or by increasing access to Willoughby Beach.
- The center of economic development is in Burke, not Lyndon.
- The places for tourists to stay are not as nice in Lyndon, and are better in Burke.
- The Fairgrounds are only used for the one one-week festival every year.
- There are limited recreation activities for kids, who could benefit from an indoor hub and recreation director.
- Currently, there are three separate positions for recreation, and there is a need for interconnection and organization.
- There is a need to expand educational connections to economic and green space development.
- There is not a lot of public land.
- One participant has lived in Lyndon for two years, and knew nothing about the local resources.
- It is unclear whether the golf course is being utilized.
- There are very few volunteers, and those that exist are very overworked. It would help to get the community involved with recreation, because Lyndon is difficult to navigate compared to the easy, organized system in St. Johnsbury.
- Youth exodus is a challenge, and it is important to try to get young people to move back and have a connection to Lyndon.
- Maintenance and interconnection of paths interfere with safety – there is glass on the bike paths and the sidewalks are broken.
- Many ideas have liability issues. For example, the insurance for the skate park was expensive.
- Cost is a major challenge for many projects.
- People used to be able to walk through the covered bridge, which was – as one resident noted – very romantic!

- Lyndon could use aesthetic improvements, like trees along the interstate ramp.
- Roads and rivers make it difficult for interconnections between trails.
- Depot Street is less popular than it used to be, partly because parking covers the crosswalks and it is dangerous to bike on Depot Street, so there is less local participation and activity

### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Interconnection with the College would be helpful. The College has a recreation major, so the town could encourage training for a Rec Director or work together to host events or to build volunteer opportunities.
- Students in the Graphic Design department could help with community events or to help design maps and trails brochures.
- The sidewalk between town and the College should be extended.
- Depot Street could be revitalized and turned back into a walking street, maybe even being shut down to cars for a few days a year or permanently. Eliminating parking on one side or parallel parking would give more room for bikes and pedestrians.
- Lyndon could implement policies to make it more bike friendly. Clear bike signage and more policing of speeding stop signs would make bikers safer.
- Build bike paths on Depot Street. VTRANS and the Biking Committee could collaborate.
- The community banner could be made more central and visible to advertise events, but there is currently an ordinance against cross-street banners.
- All roads in Lyndon Center could be made safer, which would improve traffic flow.
- Other organizations could use the fairgrounds for more public events, like a sheep and wool festival and a bluegrass festival.
- The crosswalks should be a different color to make it more striking, or beautiful, especially at the intersection at the bottom of LI.
- A connection should be made between the town trails and the Kingdom Trails, and the town could add a parking facility on VAST section. Creating a committee for town trails would help, to design safe routes, make maps of existing trails, and have representatives from all areas.
- Marketing should be improved. The town should market itself as a gateway to Kingdom Trails and Burke skiing communities. It could emphasize a feel-good vibe and capture that energy.
- Lyndon could better build its identity as the covered bridge capital of VT.
- Hanging the bikes created great messaging, and they should spread to increase community marketing.
- It would be important to connect market initiatives to what the Chamber of Commerce is doing, like fixing up the information booth that is used during the summer
- The town could restart the group walk around town, starting a historic walk and a guided history tour, incorporating the river and paths, and even having scientists from schools lead groups and educate tourists and locals.
- More trees can be added along the road coming in to town.
- A Conservation committee could be created to work on trails and green space initiatives.
- It is critical to connect resources from different committees into a central hub, like Seven Days or the Chamber of Commerce. Creating or expanding on a website that has all resources included.
- The college could do a business study to see if a recreation department would be possible, and to investigate grant funding.
- The town could start lunch programs for kids during the summer, and invest in mobile playgrounds.
- Like a Rec Department, a Boys and Girls Club would give more activities to kids.
- Schools should start providing transportation services and bringing kids to ski, swim, skate, and other activities.
- Collaboration reduces competition for grants and increases success and funding.
- A committee could begin by asking other towns how to revitalize downtown.
- Lyndon could add more restaurants.
- People could begin using the hospital health and wellness budget, and Laurel Ruggles could help (as the director of that program).
- The town needs to improve its first impressions and create a citywide cohesive message. Lyndon is more than just Depot Street.
- A Recreation Director could consistently unify volunteers.

### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Lyndon has a large number of people who really care, and they are a fundamental asset to the town. Many people were brought up during the solutions discussion. Increasing connections between these people and assets should be a priority.
- A community calendar could connect different websites, and arts and activities resources.
- Public artists could be utilized, as revitalization is great opportunity to incorporate local art.
- Transportation infrastructure could help revitalize Depot Street, by making the street narrow, adding trees, extending the sidewalk, and adding bike paths and lanes.
- With synergy between trails and outdoor activities, people may be able to stay for week and not just the weekend).

- As a College town, Lyndon could utilize the College's Recreation major and increase contributions to the community.
- Because Lyndon is very close to interstate, it can serve as a gateway and capture visitors on way to Burke – it would be all about marketing.
- Personalization can start anywhere – Cambridge decided on painting silos, and personalized them with actual locals. This served as a statement for visitors. Beautification made the town a destination – and signage could be a great opportunity to personalize and draw people in.
- The meeting had incredible turnout, revealing a dedicated community with many individual assets that just need coordination through an app, community forum, or asset map to connect people with the physical assets.
- The river could be a focal point for history, ecology, commerce, and paddle sports.
- The Victory State Forest and other forests and trails are a great connection to outdoor recreation assets.
- A Recreation Department would be hugely helpful to connect all the assets.

## Economic Redevelopment

Visiting Team: Ted Brady (facilitator), Jon Copans, Paul Costello, Sam Lincoln, Pollaidh Major (scribe), Dave Snedeker, Mike Welch

### What are the Assets in this Area?

- Available commercial real estate.
- A dedicated workforce and VT work ethic.
- We have access to capital through NCIC and NVDA.
- Lyndon has an industrial park, run by NVDA, that will have open lots in the summer.
- Trained youth are exiting from educational institutions in the region.
- The Foundry.
- We have a strong farmers' market.
- The Tap and Dye Building is a commercial space for redevelopment.
- Lyndon has a diversified economy – The town supports many small businesses and is not reliant on a single employer.
- We have a net increase in daytime population.
- Schools are a large employer.
- The hospital is a large employer.
- There are many construction companies.
- Lyndon Institute and Lyndon State College are educational assets.
- Schools have a small class size and close mentoring relationships between students and teachers that help students establish themselves in the community post college.
- Resources for lifelong learning and adult continuing education are available through Lyndon Institute.
- Lyndon State College is a certifying Center for Adobe products and technical education center.
- Schools provide workforce training in coordination with local employers.
- We are well connected to transportation infrastructure: railway, interstate, airport.
- There is steady traffic through town.
- We need a venture center for recreational equipment.
- Close proximity to Canada attracts tourists.
- The tourism sector attracts high tech workers interested in working remotely from Lyndon.
- Proximity to Kingdom Trails and Burke Mountain.
- Working lands in recreational use.
- Hotels and Bed and Breakfasts host meetings and celebrations, bring a different type of traveler to town.
- We have municipal water and sewer.
- Free parking.
- Lyndon has a designated village center.
- The village owns its utility.
- Lyndon is in Rural Development's REAP Zone and so is eligible for additional federal funding through the Department of Agriculture.

### What are the Challenges?

- We need to improve telecommunications.
- Lyndon needs more high tech development so the town can tap into the broader economy.
- Farmers are challenged by new State requirements.
- There are not as many stores downtown as their used to be. Internet sales have hurt downtown retail.
- We need more social gathering places for residents and students, for example, a bar.
- The look of the downtown is a challenge. The doormat to Lyndonville is not appealing.
- The beauty of the park is affected by the parking lot. However, there is not enough parking elsewhere in town.
- The location hurts manufacturers because of high transportation costs.
- Drug use has negatively affected the local workforce.
- There are high taxes and high water bills (high commercial rates).
- Workforce needs include: technology skills, soft skills and math skills.
- Manufacturers and major employers struggle to attract workers because salaries are not competitive outside the region.
- Need a good grant writer to take advantage of resources.

- Growth is constrained by permitting, Act 250 and proximity to the flood plain.
- Public transportation is inadequate: too few busses, too few routes, too infrequent. There is only one taxi. The Route 5 expansion was halted by business opposition.
- There is a lack of cohesive downtown government.
- We need higher paying jobs so people can afford to shop downtown.
- Seasonal dependent businesses are vulnerable to bad weather.
- There is a need for more local leadership.

### **Opportunities: What Should Be Done?**

- Establish a venture center for recreation products.
- Build a support team to help people grow businesses using a community supported business model.
- Motivate people to go downtown on the weekends.
- Develop community-based businesses that capitalize on the friendliness of the local population and are unique from online products.
- Create a space or opportunity to test business ideas during their growth state. A commercial incubator space for the marketing phase.
- Merge the village trustees and town selectboard.
- Reach out to community partners – especially educational – on how to connect students to the downtown. Make young people part of the community with the goal of realizing Lyndonville’s potential to be a college town.
- Run a sidewalk through all of town.
- Improve the aesthetics of the southern entrance to Lyndonville, make Lyndonville an attractive place – tree lined streets.
- Start an economic development committee.
- Promote the workforce prepared by the college. Currently, courses are custom built for local industries, but they are underutilized by the employers.
- Consolidate recreational programs to decrease volunteer exhaustion.
- Increase incentives for downtown businesses.
- Support legislators in building an economic development agenda – ex- economic enterprise zone for downtown communities.
- Establish a co-working space to attract and retain remote workers. Do a survey of who is teleworking to support a supply/demand analysis.
- Improve access to technology repair and support services.
- Capitalize on the working lands, build a network between these businesses to help develop new agriculture and forest products.
- Start an economic development committee to revitalize downtown and attract new employers.

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

- The community could create a physical connection between the village, institute and college and use this link to reinforce Lyndon’s identity as a college town. This would make it possible for students to live in town and knit together anchor institutions.
- Lyndon could highlight accessibility from the interstate. Focus on recruiting essential stores and business training for business owners. Highlight the industrial park because it brings in dollars from elsewhere. Focus on working lands businesses.
- An economic development committee could spearhead and support actions.
- Use the diversity of the economy and the complementary assets each sector brings to the region to strengthen existing and new business.
- The Foundry is an existing business incubator. Take advantage of Burke Mountain’s ability to attract professional skiers.
- You can’t wait for leadership. Can the two municipalities work together to make a committee? Take advantage of the Rt. 5 redevelopment by prioritizing what the community wants.
- Define and promote Lyndon’s identity. Focus on the downtown designation and on all sectors of the economy.

### **Schools, College & Community Partnerships**

Visiting Team: Michele Boomhower, Katie Buckley, Patricia Coates (facilitator), Ben Doyle, Will Eberle, Jeff Francis, Trisha Ingalls, Elijah Massey (scribe), Sheila Reed, Gus Seelig, Jason Van Driesche, Tracey Zschau

### **What are the Assets in this Area**

- We have a Lyndon Learning Collaboration between LI and LSC that recruits and retains students.
- We have many schools in the town including: Little Dipper, Lyndon Town School (LTS), Thaddeus Stevens School, Riverside School, Learn, Lyndon Institute (LI), and Lyndon State College (LSC).
- The Prosper program for 6th grade family support.
- LI and LSC Students are an asset. They engage in community-based projects and are eager to participate and engage with the community. They are great interns.
- The CNS afterschool programs (LSC) serves elementary students.
- The Upward bound program prepares High School students for what’s next,
- Lyndon Economic Opportunity AmeriCorps program (LEAP).

- LI and LSC athletic program coordination and sharing of facilities.
- Lyndon is the second “Promise Community” in Caledonia County. This is an early childhood education initiative funded by Race to the Top Grants.
- There is an early childhood education online program available through LSC which provides flexibility.
- LI career and technical education center. Offers a wide variety of options (welding, automotive, sustainable ag, graphic arts, robotics, engineering, and more) and serves a broad student area.
- The Foundry is an “adult maker-space” on LI campus.
- College graduates stay in the area after completing their degrees.
- College student opportunities for partnerships with regional employers.
- HOPE is an asset - Helping other people every day.
- Educational institutions make physical resources available to wider community such as the Ice rink and other LI facilities.
- We are a model for school and community collaboration in athletic program mentorship.
- LSC and Johnson State College merger.

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### What are the Challenges?

- Integration of institutions’ resources is a challenge. There is potential for duplication of resources.
- Students lack off-campus recreational opportunities in town. They lack a “3rd” space.
- There are no weekend shuttles to Saint Johnsbury.
- Transportation is generally an issue.
- Lack of contact/communication/networking between educational institutions.
- Boards are dominated by elderly residents. How do we foster engagement with younger population? We need to transform and stay current.
- Retention of school employment numbers. LI outsourced jobs to out of state organization. There is a lot of pressure on jobs and wages.
- Outmigration due to cost of living.
- It is hard to start businesses in order to employ college graduates.
- Lack of business diversity.
- It is hard to foster entrepreneurship with existing barriers to small business development.
- We need to better support existing businesses.
- There are talent gap issues and a failure to graduate adequate number of skilled graduates.
- Affordability of secondary education is a challenge.
- There is a lack of adequate housing stock for student and community needs as well as out of state landlords and affordability issues for college acquisition of new properties.
- We need to teach work ethic.
- Recognizing that education models are changing, need to network between new and traditional education techniques
- Colleges and high school as “islands”.
- Structural and economic challenges are a barrier to educational attainment. Limited college resources.
- Infrastructure improvements won’t address methodological issues in education.
- There is an animal shelter in Lyndon, but it is small and there are no opportunities for volunteer or public engagement.
- Free lunch, special education, other support programs are large programs using lots of resources

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### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Create entrepreneur programs and support systems for students at colleges.
- Informal learning spaces like the library should be a pathway to formal like colleges.
- Working with schools on housing issues.
- Extend non-traditional educational opportunities.
- Develop workshops for communities and high schools for financial literacy.
- Bolster programs early on like 4H and Scouts. Connect with the Promise Community Initiative to expand these programs.
- Create a forum for discussion and open communication among organizations in the community.
- Encourage mentorship from local organizations and businesses to create relationships that last through the education lifecycle. This could also include college students.
- Ensure community fosters a desire to stay in the area after schooling.
- Bring businesses onto campus such as food businesses to cater to students.
- Develop a community center hosted by schools to build community.
- Rally community around the colleges.
- Improve walkability, driving safety, bike-ability from school to downtown. Implement and fund projects already planned in this area.
- Work to integrate and combine resources.
- Continue to integrate schools into town meetings and commissions.
- Initiate meetings between community members, educators, staff, on regular basis. “Island Hopping.”
- Utilize programs in place and coordinate them to move forward. Create goals for community to gather around and dedicate an organization to keep that going
- Develop an incubator for new small business development and target local community, college students, and expanding and new businesses.
- Host breakfast meetings with LI administration.

- Find grant opportunities to create a position to talk to community members and connect different actors and resources.
- Encourage events hosted by community organizations to bring all these people together.
- “Break the cycle” through communication
- Bring parents of students into the conversation and involve non-profits in the area as well.
- Access a USDA RBDG grant for tap and die plant feasibility study (speak with NCIC or other organizations to apply).
- Improve the local animal shelter to expand services, revitalize the facility, and engage with the community. Volunteers from the community and from local schools could work together to staff and advertise the program (LI or LSC website with profiles, etc.), care for rescue animals, facilitate adoption, and provide animal/human training. The program could connect closely with local schools through reading programs, volunteer work, educational programming, and community events.

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## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Resources do exist to work on the tap and die plant and for rural development feasibility. NCIC and NVDA could help with this work. Mobius is a great resource around mentoring programs.
- Schools are the fabric of community. We didn’t hear about school choice – is that an issue in this community?
- There are many exciting opportunities for school and community integration as well as a strong desire to collaborate.
- Poverty as a persistent issue.
- There are tremendous resources in Lyndon. This town is asset rich and leadership exists. The challenge is the need to find time for an integrated effort.
- Find equilibrium between assets, challenges and opportunities.
- Some key topics to consider in the future:
  - Assets- capacity in education system, preK-college
  - Resource constraints
  - Modernization- multigenerational contributions by community to challenges
  - Need for systems to better utilize resources
- Some key themes that came up:
  - Island hopping/integration
  - Face to face opportunities to engage
  - A resource portal to better integrate and coordinate
  - Service projects
  - Life-long learning continuum
- Robust talent and resources exist, need to communicate and coordinate.
- Downtown as an opportunity.
- Connect students to community beyond one-time experience.
- Trail marking as opportunity to enhance local natural capital and connect students with community.

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## Entertainment, Events & the Arts

Visiting Team: Alex Aldrich (facilitator), Jenna Koloski, Anna McAneny (scribe), Michael Moser, Michael Snyder, Tim Tierney, George Twigg

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### What are the Assets in this Area?

- Kingdom Trails are a great asset to recreation, community, and the economy.
- The Kingdom All Stars have a music program in school (K-12) and talented musicians who perform.
- The Community Orchestra performs once a week.
- During the summer in Bandstand Park, there are Wednesday night concerts.
- Catamount Arts in St. Johnsbury has a partnership with LI.
- The BurkeLyn Arts Council is a huge resource.
- There is a local auditorium, music club, and arts program, and the auditorium has 650 seats.
- Lyndon Corner has a venue that used to be a church that seats about 100.
- Grindstone café hosts art shows, music from LSC, and is student managed every few Saturdays.
- The local library is accessible to the public.
- Lyndon has access to the Newark Chorus.
- The town is supportive of public art, like the bikes hanging from lamp posts.
- Caledonia County Fair at the Fairgrounds hosts local artists and is very focused on community.
- Lyndon Town School has a K-8 art program.
- Fenton Chester Arena Ice Rink turns into about 15000 square feet of turf in summer, and it used to be a concert venue and a craft show in the fall.
- Main Street streetscape has various forms of art.
- There is a street fair and festival on Depot.
- The Stars and Stripes festival and parade has been happening annually for 37 years.
- The NMBA festival also occurs every year.
- Lyndon State College and arts program has seating for 500 and hosts student run fall shows and spring musicals as well as dance recitals and murder mysteries.
- There are many other local theater groups, like the VT family theater and two high schools that host two shows per year,

the VT children's theater, a theater festival, and the St. Johnsbury Players.

- The Burkelyn Arts Festival occurs twice a year.
- The Townhouse by the football field by LI has a dance program.
- There is a Winter Snowflake Festival in February.
- Lyndon has many talented local artists and authors, from visual and graphic artists to children's and regular authors.
- The fall foliage in Lyndon is natural art.

- The people of Lyndon who want to contribute will give a lot of energy, motivation, and time, and there are many great independent leaders
- The Hospital features local art.
- Lyndon's fun farmers market celebrates its farmers and hosts performances and local musicians.
- Dorian McGowen has art shows at the library, the College, and Grindstone.
- The Foundry makers space at LI is a great artistic resource.

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### What are the Challenges?

- There is a lack of coordination and communication about performances, like plays and dance performances.
- There are no adult classes for artists and a lack of communal studio space. There needs to be a way to for artists to gain momentum.
- LI and the college are the only exhibit spaces.
- "The Stage" is gone, meaning that there is no music venue available.
- There is a lack of funding for artists, so good spaces exist but no one can pay money for galleries, development, and programs, and there is no funding for the performers themselves without the added effort to get grants.
- Everyone works independently (about a dozen organizations), so there is no communication or collaboration for funding.
- There is no recognizable system or calendar for keeping track of events, from where they are, do the events exist, and how to apply. The existing calendar is hard to access because it is difficult to communicate with the Director of Chamber of Commerce.
- There are struggles with communicating with parents and children.
- There are barriers to starting anything new. There is often resistance when people don't know what you're doing, making it hard for new ideas and individuals to get a foothold.
- There is a lack of a volunteer base. The same groups of people are working on every project.
- There is a need for new blood and energy, because of high amounts of volunteer fatigue as the group of volunteers gets smaller and older.
- Lyndon isn't very pretty and has an ugliness problem, so it doesn't have a good first impression. The beautiful areas aren't emphasized, and there is a reluctance to take on new projects. Other towns have flowers on bridges and municipal buildings.
- The problem is inertia: new things will get destroyed, are too expensive, and interfere with existing familiarity. Essentially, a "that's not the way we've done it" attitude.
- There is no community-wide vision for Lyndon.
- Architecturally, Lyndon is boxy and ugly, and everything is brick besides a faded flour sign and a coke sign.
- There has been a gradual loss of charm as old houses are changing into duplexes and businesses.
- There is some confusion about getting into the College museum. Students put out art that people either can't access, or don't realize that they can.
- There is very little public access to art, both for purchase and for enjoyment. There is a lack of coordination to invest in or expand upon streetscape art.
- There is just starting to be a connection between the Foundry (industrial arts) and the community with the college. There is a challenge bringing community talents to Foundry, and therefore in building a connection with students.

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### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Handouts, calendars, seasonal calendars, and a Facebook page would really help people make connections.
- Like the Stars and Stripes Parade during summer, it would be nice to have something similar to the Waterbury Lantern parade in the winter with children's art, or a snowflake/pre-holiday festival instead.
- Artists could use free or low-cost workshops at the Foundry, the hospital, or at the local schools and businesses. These could be run by visiting artists and locals. They could also be focused on the summer and pre-snowflake festival.
- Workshops would be fun at the summer fair and parade. These could include decorating bikes for families. Accessible workshops would only need cheap supplies like jars and tissue paper or streamers for bikes, but would have a huge effect on increasing personal investment in festivals.
- Lyndon could host a lantern festival where all students could make lanterns. The town could shut down streets and parents could all bring their kids. This would bring the community together with "living art."
- The town should reinstate the cross country ski race in the Band stand park. People would dress up in costume, and beer would be provided at different checkpoints. Local artists could take and post pictures. This would build community spirit similar to Crested Butte, CO.
- The community should revive river cleanup.
- The town should have more festivals and add more to existing festivals.

- All projects should be based on existing events and assets, like the Kingdom Trails.
- Trunk or Treating in the park on Halloween could include art projects.
- Adding an art component to Snowflake Festival could involve art classes, and snow sculptures.
- The bikes on Main Street are excellent, but it would be great to add on. Local artists could make them and put them up. This would tie the trails to the arts. People will want to take pictures with the bikes, making it easy to develop an identity.
- Branding could even be more individual to Lyndon, rather than Burke, and instead of hanging bikes, it could be snowshoes or skis.
- First Fridays could be expanded upon, including theater vignettes, mini art galleries, and incorporation of the farmers' market.
- The Outing Club could use the venue as an art gallery or music/festival venue with the fireplace.
- There needs to be one big idea to get attention to the park – by using the Kingdom Trails to get attention, there could be increased participation that would get small and large scale attention to the town and to local organizations.
- Connecting the towns in the Passumpsic River Valley in a way similar to the Mad River Valley could involve expanding the trail system to Lyndonville from Burke, and connecting to the existing identity by increasing the number of Air B+B's and hotels.
- The banner across town could read, "Welcome to the Mountain Bike Capital"
- The town either needs to connect to existing success or formulate an independent identity.
- Dave Tamic constructs massive metal sculptures that are all down back roads and hard to see – it would be great to purchase and centralize his art.
- The painted bikes could continue from the poles to the bridges, or there could be other paintings and art on them.
- An artist could add a Montreal-style mural on the side of the Electric Department.
- The chamber website is very effective, so it would help to encourage people to post on the website to gather more interest.
- Many businesses are connected through the Burkelyn Arts Council. Businesses should put up student art as well as professional art to help hook the parents of local students and increase exposure to more art, increasing investment and participation. This could be through arts education programs at schools and Burkelyn Arts Council.
- Beyond the Chamber website, a Lyndon Arts and Recreation Facebook page could increase accessibility. People could post what is going on and when, reduce competition and duplication with other organizations, advertise auditions and volunteer needs, and allow groups to communicate.
- Front Porch Forum could also be helpful in a similar way, but it is relatively unknown in Lyndon.
- Primarily, the goal should be connecting existing resources.
- Lyndon should host an Art Walk. High school kids have activities and presentations at end of the year, so Depot could be shut down so that businesses and schools could partner to display art specifically of local artists and kids. There could be a festival at the end at Bandstand Park.
- Businesses and the town should find a way to pay local artists instead of hiring outside artists, and reach out to locals as well for volunteer artists and musicians.
- There is an age-friendly communities' project through AARP, involving community walks to identify problems and challenges. Lyndon could consider historical places, locations for art and sculpture, and discover and note what has been taken for granted.
- The Catamount should offer evening classes so that they are available to working people.
- Lyndon should address parking because there are great events with nowhere to park to access them.
- The Fairgrounds have very specific restrictions that prevent people from using it.
- It is critical to be cautious about parking lots so that the town can maintain and expand natural beauty.
- Lyndon could bury the power lines.
- The town should embrace its history of Prohibition Gangsters and Hell's Angels, possibly through historical tours or themed Clam Bake at the college.
- The Ski-a-thon at the track could be a fundraiser.
- A permanent co-op gallery space, or even a seasonal one, would be helpful – it seems as though existing spaces (Foundry, LI Art Center, and Municipal Buildings) already exist but are underutilized.
- A rehearsal space for dancers, singers, and bands would be helpful. A snack bar could offset costs.
- A Recreation department with space could be a multiuse facility to expand the audience to artists and musicians.

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## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- A priority seems to be connecting arts and events and entertainment to and through other aspects, like florists, farmers, the LI, and the College, with a downtown emphasis.
- There is a need to expose people to art and increase the vibrancy of the town with artists and art that already exists.
- There should be a focus on streetscape enhancement and green infrastructure. This could mean a tie to the Urban Community Forestry Program and reaching out to use the technical guidance and resources.
- Craftsbury had very similar challenges and found creative ways to address those challenges through the arts. With an arts signage project, they were able to address road safety while connecting with the college, youth, and other organizations in town. This solved multiple problems at the same time, and created a beautiful, inviting town with a sense of place.

- Students at Lyndon Institute have ideas that align with community ideas – hosting concerts at the Bandstand with music people actually want to see. There is a real opportunity to connect.
- Planning and zoning can help with artistic development too, it doesn't just have to be through grant dollars – zoning helps work towards a cohesive future plan.
- A cross-country ski race with beer drinking would gain huge participation across the state. By diversifying from all other activities in the region, Lyndon could find a niche and be a companion, adjacent community rather than a secondary, gateway community.
- Hardwick began a local food movement, not based on an inherent quality of the town but on stakeholders that were dedicated to the mission.
- An arts council should unify the assets of the community.
- Streetscapes could serve as a catalyst to bring in business by improving first impressions.
- The community needs initiative to get past inertia and contentment, and to allow for engagements at the planning and zoning commission and city council.
- Starting over is an opportunity, so Lyndon should propose everything before everything is torn up so it is ready when change comes.
- Widening streets would help pedestrians and bikes, and limit the need for parking.
- So many artists are in Lyndon, the challenge to bring them forward. Temporary public art installations could be an opportunity to try public art and change people's (artists and the public) minds about it.

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## Downtown Revitalization and Gateways

Visiting Team: Ted Brady, Jon Copans, Paul Costello (facilitator), Sam Lincoln, Pollaidh Major (scribe), Dave Snedeker, Mike Welch

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### What are the Assets in this Area?

- We have many cultural assets including:
  - Victorian Homes
  - Covered bridges
  - Grandstand Park, Powers Park, and additional greenspaces
  - Lyndon's history and heritage
- We are the gateway to the NEK.
- Shores Memorial Museum is owned by the town but not utilized to its full potential.
- We have the Lyndon photo contest during the snow festival.
- The Library is an asset.
- We have Depot Street, which is walkable.
- Stable and usable infrastructure.
- Route 5 runs through town.
- The railway.
- Interstate 91 and two highway exits make the community easily accessible.
- We have an International airport.
- There is a lot of traffic traveling through town.
- We have a wide main street.
- The bookstore and Grindstone Café are business assets in the downtown.
- There is available commercial space.
- We have a Farmers market in the Bandstand Park.
- Whites Market downtown attracts people to town, and the deli has an entrance on Depot Street.
- Maple city brewery is coming soon.
- We have a hospitable business environment.
- The Lyndon Outing Club is a recreational asset as well as the skateboard park.
- Fairgrounds and Caledonia County Fair are in town.
- Railroad with no passenger line but a Santa trip in the winter.
- The river.
- Senior housing is available at the Darling Inn.
- Zoning-mixed use residential and commercial.
- Broadband access.
- We have new water and sewer infrastructure.
- Locally owned electric company.
- We have a small downtown board.
- Aesthetic streets including hanging bicycles, beautiful plants and lights.
- Perceived low rents in comparison to St. Johnsbury.
- Village Center designation.
- We have beautiful educational campuses.
- The town of Burke is next door.
- Town's identity: 'the small town that everyone wants to be in'

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### What are the Challenges?

- Downtown is lacking key businesses. There are no banks on Depot Street and there is no pharmacy within walking distance of the Darling Inn.
- The traffic is hard to navigate because there are few stoplights
- The first impression of town is dampened by the strip development on the south end of town.
- Downtown could be more inviting. There are empty storefronts, unoccupied and derelict buildings on the edge of town, a lack of trash receptacles, dim street lights, strip development coming in to town, a lack of parking, the power lines restrict urban trees.
- The town needs a visual center.
- There is a lack of activity in town, the street life needs to be reinvigorated: no night life, few restaurants, little to 'do' on weekends.
- The town needs more community life and a well utilized community center.

- There is a divide between the town of Lyndon and the Village. There is a lack of cohesive analysis of challenges and opportunities and a need for a joint visioning effort.
- The Route 5 project is scheduled for 2020 or 2022. It's a legacy project, the town needs to revisit the vision for the project.
- The Google Analytics search for Lyndon shows people want "Shopping."
- The town needs more access to high-speed internet to support a technology sector.

### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- The vision for the town includes: stronger zoning, more color, trees, life on the street, restaurants, local entertainment.
- Establish a bike trail to Kingdom Trails through the covered bridge. Enhance the bike lanes on local roads to connect St. Johnsbury, Lyndon and Burke via a bike friendly road network.
- Establish an incubator for entrepreneurs and small businesses.
- Support businesses like local crafters and retailers to reduce traffic through town and keep money in Lyndon and reduce waste and pollution.
- Subsidize rents for vacant storefronts to offer up commercial space to startups as a way to invest in the future. Occupied commercial spaces will be more saleable. Contact storeowners about how to make this work.
- Hire an economic development coordinator for the downtown to connect businesses and landlords. Create a website to connect businesses and landlords.
- Coordinate with businesses and the community to come up with a design proposal for RT 5 redevelopment. This effort could be supported by a paid chamber of commerce employee or other downtown employee.
- Create a downtown outdoor mall on Depot Street by closing it down to traffic or close part of it because it is very wide.
- Survey local businesses, the student population, visitors and anchor institutions to determine what they need out of the town.
- Improve Lyndon downtown by creating downtown photo opportunities, like gateway murals, hanging local artwork in vacant storefronts, revitalize store fronts with façade improvements.
- Start a community newsletter that goes out with the electric bill to draw interest to community events.
- Form a Downtown Association - do a masterplan for the town, tap into student expertise to develop marketing materials.
- Build a task force to design a community vision
- Market downtown to Lyndonville to existing downtown businesses
- Engage a committee for service learning at the college to involve students in improving the community
- Analyze what worked in other towns.
- Welcome center is needed to help to build the gateway. Change the Cumberland Farm building.
- Create a co-working space.

### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Focus on branding the community. Build the relationship between the village trustees and the selectboard. Leverage the transportation assets and engage in the Rout 5 redevelopment process.
- Lyndon needs people to invest their time and energy in its development.
- Lyndon could look at the Better Blocks pop up project recently done in Bethel, do it with trees in pots, what would it be like if we brought the trees back?
- Small retail spaces are an asset, good idea to look to mature businesses that are looking to expand. Focus on getting people to stop by and stay all day. Invest in your community for your children.
- Many challenges arose during this session, it could be helpful to focus on prioritizing the challenges.
- Many people are dedicated to this town. If citizens can identify priorities, no matter how outrageous, and create a focused vision, then the resources will follow. A few successes or positive steps will raise the spirit of the whole town.
- Lyndon is a unique town with unique assets including lots of people coming through, youth, infrastructure and a beautiful sense of place. Lots to work with.

### Supporting Strong Families

Visiting Team: Michele Boomhower, Katie Buckley, Patricia Coates, Ben Doyle (facilitator), Will Eberle, Jeff Francis, Trisha Ingalls, Sheila Reed, Elizabeth Schumacher (scribe), Gus Seelig, Jason Van Driesche, Tracey Zschau

### What are the Assets in this Area?

- The variety of schools provide options for families to collaborate and the array of schools provide extensive services for the community such as special needs services.
- There are strong connections and interactions between Lyndon Institute and Lyndon Town Schools sports programs and coaching.
- There is an array of festivals, movie nights, activities and programs provided for families within the community through the various schools.
- The involvement of the schools towards supporting community services and promoting volunteering options for the community's families and students.

- Powers Park is a place for congregation and activities for the community and families and serves as a hub for summer camp programs.
- The student center, which is open 7 days a week throughout the school year, provides a safe and nurturing environment for students to study, relax, and interact with peers.
- HOPE, which administers clothing, household goods, and scholarships for families in needs with collaboration from the schools and community.
- Lyndon youth sporting programs and an asset.
- There is a strong collaboration and connection among the church and the community.
- The North East Kingdom learning services helps schools help families and children in their community.
- The Umbrella program, which is based out of St. Johnsbury provides services to empower and support women and families.
- The extensive biking paths within the community serve as a healthy family activity.
- The prosper program partnership with UVM extension, which helps cultivate healthy strong communities by promoting positive youth development.
- The contagious spirit among the community members and the schools.

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### What are the Challenges?

- The general lack of access and communication to the resources listed above restricts the prosperity of the initiatives.
- Within the community, there is economic stress for families - especially those living in poverty to access these programs as well as supplementing adequate food and nutrition as a result the community sees children coming to school hungry and therefore struggle to fully focus on their education.
- The issue of generational poverty often leading to a lack of confidence in pursuance of post-secondary education. To some members of the community they see post-secondary as non-attainable and or not necessary. Overall, there is a lack of understanding and or effort towards post-secondary education.
- The lack of access to transportation means and hence lack of access to the resources and programs provided due to inadequacy of transportation.
- There is a lack of funding for transportation to provide for elementary education after school programs and during the summer time.
- There is a lack of transportation to provide children with the opportunity to partake in enriching summer programs.
- The high cost of community involvement for youth programs makes it difficult for lower income families to participate, specifically the cost of Powers Park which is around \$85 to partake in the programs.
- Some families within the community are isolated by location and a traditional mindset of disengagement. This particularly occurs in families of abuse as well in connection to the lack of adequate transportation, which can contribute to isolation.
- Resources are not communicated and or coordinated well which contributes to a lack of involvement for community and family events. Often resources and programs fall through or are repeated and lack efficiency.
- There is a lack of resources for families with substance abuse problems to support and mend the problems.
- How to support the aging population is becoming a problem for many families of all income levels.
- Lack of affordable housing leaves families economically stressed and can lead to the loss of their homes, which in turn adds stress to children as they are uprooted from their environment.

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### Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- Improve communication among families to find out what they need and connecting them to the services available and to engage more families with the community.
- Increase communication among programs and congregations so there is more connection and collaboration and less duplications of events.
- Increase the connection among families through a stronger neighborhood association by increasing community events such as family picnics and movies in the park.
- Build a recreational center in the town where people could connect and have a safe space to spend their time.
- Improve police presence to address crime and substance abuse.
- Build community gardens to provide sources of food for low-income families and as a gathering space to come together and grow food.
- Foster cross-generational activities to connect and empower citizens of all ages.
- Welcome open forums for families to assess the community and to figure out what they need to improve on to build a community that best fits their needs.
- Establish a day in Lyndon for community partners to share resources, access to free activities and promoting unity among the community.
- Promote vocational programs and creating more diverse and better paying jobs so families are not limited to college and the debt that corresponds as the main prospect for post-secondary education.
- Educate adults and parents in the community about interviewing and professional skills.
- Create a town Facebook page with a calendar of events as well as a growth in the promotion of the Front Porch Forum to make communication within the community easier.

- Designate people to certain responsibilities and leadership positions to increase the communication.
- Build a relationship with the federal and state government to advocate for more health care professionals and general practitioners to Lyndon.

### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Lyndon is rich in resources and institutions but there needs to be an increase in coordination, collaboration and leadership for the community to capitalize on their utilities.
- The manifestations of poverty is something that needs to be addressed through human services and public policy. There is a separation within the community, being neighborly is an aspect that people need the most. Following this step the community can address more complicated matters such as transportation and a recreational center.
- There is a divide between the community and a need for human connections and relationships as well as improving systems to hold people accountable to maintain the collaboration.
- Education is the key to resolving some of these matters through higher education and increasing vocational training through the institutions.
- Making the elderly more of a resource and using their life experiences to connect to multigenerational members of the community.
- Creating a housing and labor committee to address the issues of getting good jobs for those who do not go to college, creating a community that produces good jobs, reducing the loss of housing and the rise in cost of housing and housing maintenance.
- Increasing communication within the families of the community to figure out what success is for them, positive energy is infectious and is one of the community's tools to success.
- Finding a way to engage the assets the community has with members of the community through increased communication.

### Recreational Opportunities

Visiting Team: Alex Aldrich, Jenna Koloski (facilitator), Anna McAneny (scribe), Michael Moser, Michael Snyder, Tim Tierney, George Twigg

#### What are the Assets in this Area?

- East Burke and the Kingdom Trails are available to residents of Lyndon.
- The track at Lyndon Institute is open to the public.
- The Outing Club, including the park, has 62 acres of land that includes a ski tow, a skate park, a baseball field, hiking, biking, snowmobiling, the river, paths, and a lodge for community use.
- The lodge at the Outing Club is a great event space for graduations, winter carnival, boy scouts, funerals, birthdays, etc. and has an 80 person capacity.
- Powers Park has tennis courts, bike paths, a pool, a playground, and swimming lessons in the summer.
- There is ice climbing, kayaking, and boating at Willoughby.
- Bandstand Park is available to the community.
- Lyndon has a shooting club.
- 4H is a great resource for kids.
- There is a farmers market with live concerts.
- The library is available year round and has specific summer programs.
- The ice arena also converts to turf in some seasons.
- Soccer fields are available for public use.
- There are trails, a swimming pool, and a workout center at the college, but the membership is expensive.
- The LI campus by the river has both soccer and football fields, and public rec teams, summer camps, and ultimate Frisbee competitions use them.
- The College has outdoor Frisbee golf, a rope course, and indoor climbing.
- The VAST trail has public access.
- The local country radio station gives free airtime.
- Lyndon has many areas for hunting and fishing.
- A great fair happens every year at the fairgrounds and pavilion.
- Babe Ruth, Little League, and other baseball teams use Fisher Field.
- There is an abundance of youth programming.
- Soccer is available for kids K-8, baseball programs exist for kids from Tee ball to Babe Ruth, basketball is available for kids K-6, and hockey for kids ages 3-15.
- Vermont Children's theater has free activities for kids 8-18 over the summer.
- The Townhouse has dance programs.
- There are local cheerleading programs.
- There is an afterbell programs for arts, science, and robotics are available through local schools and the College.
- The Community Orchestra is open to all ages
- Intro to Flying course is available for free through the airport.
- Kingdom All-stars is a local theater nonprofit.
- Lyndonville has a band.
- Many different gyms are available with membership.
- The College offers different theater performance programs.
- Biking programs are available for women and children at the mountain biking trails.

- There is also a local square dance club.
- The Foundry is at the LI but is open to the public as a “maker’s space.”

- Yoga studios, knitting clubs, and book clubs are all available in town.
- People do Tai Chi in the park with the motto, “Stronger every day.”

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## What are the Challenges?

- There is no snowmaking for local skiing at Outing Club because there isn’t funding for it, so local kids go to larger mountains because of the “cool factor” and discounts.
- Management agreements involve town ownership and individual group management that makes maintenance of recreation infrastructure expensive and interferes with grants.
- There are structural organizational challenges in coordinating all of the recreation facilities and activities between all entities and the Village/Town.
- It is difficult to gain volunteers, and keep them for long enough so that they are trained and effective long-term support.
- All fundraisers target the same businesses, so businesses feel stressed, and the same volunteers are competing for money for different organizations.
- It is a challenge to get participation and attendance at events that are already happening.
- There is not enough integration between schools and the community.
- Because there are separate websites for all events – different chambers all with different information – all advertising is

localized in a way that the community doesn’t get all the information.

- Few organizations use social media, so visitors and locals can’t find events and activities online. For example, no activities come up on a search for “What to do in Lyndonville.” Beyond just advertising, there is very little communication outside of friends.
- The internet service is unreliable and there is no town Wi-Fi.
- Misconceptions about the Outing Club keep people from going, because they think it is just for kids or that there are membership fees.
- Voluntary bikers are dissuaded by the lack of bike racks.
- There is no widely recognized community center.
- Fewer young people hunt or fish, and the family culture is dying out.
- People in the economically depressed region can’t afford activities or transportation.
- The Fairground is not used to full potential.
- Activities and buildings are often inaccessible for disabled and elderly people.
- Outdoor locations are difficult to access – wheelchairs on baseball fields, etc.

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## Opportunities: What Should Be Done?

- To increase the College presence in town, there should be a physical location where students come, whether for coffee and Wi-Fi or for classes that take place in town.
- Cheap busses and transportation would help with access.
- Improving signage for river access could also involve improving access for elderly people, people with disabilities, and kids.
- Build community gardens.
- A central community youth based recreation center could be a physical space running programs from it, similar to a YMCA. This would improve volunteer communication and collaboration, and help to cross promote programs and store all equipment in a central location.
- The old factory is vacant, so it could be renovated and used as a community space, and it has a parking lot already.
- A recreation director could coordinate activities in the central recreation department. There was huge success with this in St. Johnsbury with RecFit. This director/coordinator should be a community development specialist.
- Lyndon can access external resources, like Ben Doyle, to help people apply for grants to fund a program/position.
- The Recreation Major at the college could provide candidates for a recreation director, and the 450-hour internships would involve students working for free.
- Promise Community gives grant money for opportunities to support children under five.

- The Outing Club already exists, but could be turned into a real community center. College students do community service there already, so that could be helpful for expanding the usage of the OC by students and other residents. The OC could host more events in the building and the park, and there is also the possibility for agriculture in the area.
- A mentoring program for kids entering ski industry could help keep kids working on the home mountain.
- Unique events could draw in more people, like a Color Run, the Stars and Stripes Parade, the Mountain Bikers, NMBA fest, the theater groups at Powers Park, or an outdoor concert series at the fairgrounds through Catamount Arts during the summer. Connecting to big entertainment names would draw in people, and the events could be staged at different locations through the summer.
- The Foundry should be more heavily advertised to increase access.
- A professional grant writer with the skill, expertise, and time to lead efforts would help with these projects.
- There needs to be a publicly accessible resource about how to access the fairgrounds, what the liability issues are, how to unlock it, and what demands there are for users.
- A steampunk-themed event could connect to a new audience.
- The service-learning component with the day and boarding school at LI could be a huge volunteer resource.

- The recreation program in St. Johnsbury was funded by real estate one time transaction tax.
- Recreation opportunities would open doors for older people in the community, possibly through an exchange/collaboration program, like an intergenerational mentoring program between a day care and retirement home.
- There needs to be an increase in parking or bike racks, because cars currently park on the green.
- Increasing bike racks in town would make the town accessible for bikes beyond just the trails and lanes. Volunteers or local artists could make the bike racks and get permission from the town to place them.
- People need to join the board for the Outing Club to help diversify and to get more voices and ideas, particularly from student leaders.
- The town should develop pamphlets for what to do in Lyndon, expanding advertising beyond the library, like with physical bulletin boards or with increased social media. People are online, but resources (like a recreation Facebook page) are not.

### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- There is a very clear desire for a recreation director!
- The Outing Club is already getting volunteers from the college, integrating resources, and storing equipment – it is a great model.
- The need for grant writing could be filled by utilizing college students, using their time and energy to help seek out resources.
- Reaching out to large institutions would allow for collaboration for free resources, like a director.
- Social media could serve as a placeholder for a rec director. High school students are digital natives, and the community service programs could connect students with programs. Volunteers and student interns could do research for grants, improve web use for restaurants, arts, and social calendars. The Catamount Arts Center ties local events to state calendars through the Vermont Arts Calendar.
- The unused dorms could house visiting artists, bring students back, and give them employment experience and housing.
- Creative development of bike racks could create a distinctive Lyndonville.
- Mapping and signage would increase road biking and mountain biking, and dirt roads could be used for access. Marking, signage, and mapping would increase access by providing routes for people.
- A rec director could be effective, but the success would be reliant on the contribution and infrastructure of the community. It would be critical to have specific directions and demands to ensure that the director does the work the town wants. Set realistic expectations for changes and outcomes the position would deliver, and avoid thinking of it as a silver bullet.
- There are separate challenges for making people within community more aware of events – internally, including the town and the college, and externally, for people visiting Burke and the Northeast Kingdom.
- Springfield did a Steampunk Festival, so that would be helpful to reference.
- Local passion, enthusiasm, expertise in recreation
- Only good things happen with increase in rec: health, economic, social benefits
- The Outing Club seems to be a strong center of recreation enthusiasm and expertise, and could be a great mechanism to get the ball rolling.
- There weren't many conversations about swimming, about the river or pools. Bikers love swimming holes, so that could be another great marketing tool if access was improved.
- The expertise of faculty and students is a valuable resource.
- Think beyond Lyndonville: take advantage of the unique identities within a larger community as a gateway to Burke.
- The volunteer ski hill is a part of unique Vermont history, and could be a way to increase the "cool factor." The town should decide why the community wants a ski mountain to begin with – for history or for development.
- Bring the community together to define the identity and to build pride in local resources.

# Youth Forum Notes

Compiled from a youth forum held with Lyndon Institute students and VCRD staff on January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

## Assets. What's working in Lyndon, what do you like?

- Sense of community, everyone knows everyone and cares for each other. People will help you – they'll go out of their way to help people in need.
- Great restaurants: pizza places, China Moon, Miss Lyndonville diner, Dunkin Donuts, bagel place, wing night. Some of the sports teams like hockey and indoor track go out to eat as a team. Indoor track goes out every Monday.
- Team breakfasts at the diner every Saturday before our indoor track meets.
- Powers Park has pump track for biking.
- Powers Park has youth programs like baseball, softball, basketball, soccer. For a small town, lots of opportunities to participate in activities.
- Students volunteer to coach teams.
- When students come to Lyndon Institute, they already know each other because of the youth sports programs that draw people from surrounding towns.
- School choice is an asset. St. Johnsbury Academy and Lyndon Institute are choices.
- Always growing with our community. There is a new sled hockey program for paraplegics.
- Vail Student Center at L.I. is doing a lot of community revitalization projects. Independent school task force, revitalizing businesses in town. We talk to administration and local businesses.
- J term at L.I. includes options like classes to certify for umping, and dance to encourage a more active lifestyle.
- The J term exhibition is open to the community.
- Stars and stripes parade in the park.
- Farmer's market at the park.
- The Grandstand Park is a central gathering place. Live music on Thursdays. Band concert night on Wednesdays.
- Movies in bandstand. Done it for a couple summers.
- Street fair, blocked off Depot Street. Vendors, bouncy houses, food, live entertainment.
- Community runs. Hope Color Run.
- Multi-cultural Day at Lyndon Institute is open to the community.
- Pep rally is open to community.
- Free skating at the school.

## Challenges. What are the challenges you see and what could be better?

- Have to go to another town to do anything. Littleton, St Johnsbury for bowling, movies. Never stay in Lyndonville – it's not a hangout sort of place.
- Wish there were more small business owners. It feels empty downtown. More diversity of businesses would attract more people into town.
- Not much diversity in the town.
- There are lots of necessity stores like grocery stores, but it's not a place that small businesses can thrive. It's a poor area. The Grindstone Café is struggling to pull in people. People don't have extra money to spend on things other than necessities.
- Not a lot of programs for HS age kids. There are lots of sports activities for the younger kids but once they reach high school age there aren't a lot of programs.
- One store on Depot St has had clever small business ideas, but they don't stay open long.
- Trash on Depot Street. It doesn't look nice.
- The Grindstone Café hours aren't complimentary to students because they close at 4. Even though their prime audience is intended to be students, doesn't work with our schedule.
- Not a lot of businesses know about the foundry. Need place for startup companies to grow.
- Burke Mountain, Kingdom Trails are great but have to go to Burke to get on the trails so hard to access.
- Paths around Lyndon (PAL). Walking trails. There are signs that show where to go, but not well used.
- Some houses are well kept, some are falling apart. Some families can't afford to make improvements.
- Don't have a homeless shelter.
- People wish it was better, they know they have to get involved to make it better, but no one gets involved because they know no one else will either. Then businesses come and go. Wonder how often businesses and events get feedback from the community about what it wants. With events, how can we fix the stigma that no one goes, so I won't go?

## Ideas for Action. What can the community or student do?

- A lot of assets in Lyndonville that we're not aware of. Would be nice to have a website or brochure of activities to know about the opportunities for recreation.
- Need place for startup companies to grow.
- Making the downtown look pleasant. Could have people and students volunteer to clean it up, paint murals on sides of brick buildings, and make the buildings look nicer. Once it's more welcoming and more enjoyable, it would attract more people and more tourists. Other things would follow once it looks better.
- Beautify L.I. Day students come together to make campus look better. Could do that for the whole community. Have a town-wide beautification day.
- Make it affordable for families. That would be the first step. The Polar Express comes through town, but it's too pricey for families with many kids so they don't do it. It's not affordable to go out and do things. The cupcake shop went out of business in 6 months. Expensive there.
- Too many hair salons on one street. Need a better order of what goes in there instead of another hair salon.
- Diversified music in Grandstand Park would be nice – can only listen to so much brass in one summer. Use as a platform to showcase student bands and local talent. Plenty of talented students. Sing, guitar, drums.
- RTC transportation bus go to more places to help people get to places for entertainment.
- After elementary school not many programs. Open a facility like a YMCA with low membership fees with a gym, basketball court. RecFit in St. Johnsbury is a recreation/community center that is a partnership between the school and the community. It offers all kinds of recreational activities, summer camps, and events for all ages. St. J kids can go to the field house for free.
- Kingdom Trails is an amazing opportunity. The dorm program doesn't take the students to bike on it. Would be great to have more Lyndon community involved in it. Making it more available to the schools would be a great opportunity – maybe a discounted student pass to access them.
- The track team runs a loop around Lyndonville. It encompasses the whole town. Would be a good walking, biking trails for the whole town to use.
- Way for dorm students to see the local culture. Get the schedule form RTC to see where the bus goes so dorm students have places to go, not just stuck here.
- The Grand fest at the college is a music festival. Expand it out of the college into bandstand and incorporate local businesses. They do stuff like that in Saratoga or Oreno. Get someone like the McLovin's to play.
- Connect it to Darling Hill.
- There are a lot of little events that with some coordination could get a big turnout. Small numbers of people go to several events, but if get all the communities involved and coordinated could get more people: L.I., Lyndon College, etc.
- There are lots of service type jobs at places like Whites, McDonalds, Burke, Subway, Restaurants. But no variety and especially in the career area students want to pursue.
- Internships during J term tries to connect people to career opportunities, but it's a challenge.
- We want a diversity in jobs and we want a diversity in local businesses. Small businesses could offer internships to students for a lower cost. It would allow a small business to open and have employment options for less that it would cost to hire an employee, and it would allow the kids that want to do something else have a place to do so. Allow more radical businesses to open and have a work force. Create mentor opportunities between businesses and students.
- Have a career center with incubator, job fair, shared office space.

## VIII. Lyndon Community Visit Participants

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Jen Botzjorns	Jelena Gervais	Harry Morrison	Shawn Tester
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Catherine Boykin	Melissa Hall	Jill Nichols	Ellen Tierney
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Sylvia Dodge	Andrea Kane	Dawn Powers	Darlene Wilson
Adrienne D'Olimpio	Cindy Karasinski	Jim Proctor	Janet Youkeles
David Dumais	Bonnie Kirchoff	Yiren (Ramon) Qu	
Catherine Dwyer	Tim Kirchoff	Kate Renner	
David Dwyer	Jen Kirchoff Layn	Joe Riendeau	
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