

Re-Imagine Johnson

Report and Action Plan

February 2025



Produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development

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Vision for Johnson's Future

Compiled from vision statements shared during Re-Imagine Johnson meetings and supported by the majority of participants at the Resource Meeting and an online survey. The statements represent some of the broad hopes that the majority of responding residents have for the long term good of the Johnson community.

Community members envision a future Johnson:

- ❖ that is thriving and has a strong community and functional downtown area.
- ❖ where people can afford to live, and want to live.
- ❖ where people can engage with the natural environment and the outdoors.
- ❖ that is a thriving community that becomes a destination for travelers.
- ❖ where people born and raised here can afford to stay and build their life here.
- ❖ where residents with different mindsets can get together, have fun, be creative, and communicate.
- ❖ that draws people from all over to study at its fabulous state college then decide to stay because Johnson is a vibrant, connected, beautiful community.
- ❖ with housing in the downtown that is innovative, out of the box, and flood resilient.



I. Introduction

The Town and Village of Johnson sit at the confluence of the Gihon and Lamoille Rivers in Lamoille County, Vermont. In July 2023, December 2023, and July 2024 Johnson saw extreme flooding with three of the top five river levels ever recorded. The downtown and many surrounding residential areas were inundated with flood waters and debris including the post office, town offices, grocery store, and Main Street businesses and homes. The Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) was contacted to support a long-term recovery plan after the 2023 flooding events.

Johnson is a vibrant community filled with farmers, artists, students and people who love their town and village. Normally, the rivers are places for swimming and fishing and are a beautiful complement to the forests, hills and farms in the area. While the flooding is a tragic reason for the community to consider its future, it's not the first time that this town has done so. Twenty years prior, VCRD led a Community Visit process in Johnson that identified Economic Development, Communication and Events Coordination, Housing, Zoning, and Implementing the Main Street Plan as priorities. The full 2004 report is available at: <https://www.vtrural.org/johnson/>.

In May of 2024, VCRD convened a committee of Johnson residents, town and village representatives and regional stakeholders to think together about what Johnson needs at this moment. We heard that residents are still struggling with housing, with food access, and with feeling connected to each other and their community. We heard about heartbreak, despair and frustration. The committee decided to bring the full community together to talk about Johnson's collective future in the face of increased and ever more destructive flooding, naming the process "Re-Imagine Johnson."

Re-Imagine Johnson's goal was to bring together the full diversity of Johnson residents, organizations, business owners and partners in an open, inclusive dialogue to build connections, develop a self-assessment of resiliency, and identify actions for recovery and future efforts. This three-part process, facilitated by VCRD, identified actions and resources and began efforts for the immediate and long-term future of the town and village. In addition, VCRD partnered with Community Resilience Organizations (CROs) to support a Community Resilience Assessment as part of a process.



The three-part process of public engagement and outreach that launched Re-Imagine Johnson required multi-faceted support from many people in Johnson. The effort began with the convening of a core group

responsible for naming the process, planning the kick-off, and broadcasting an invitation far and wide to maximize participation. This planning team formed a backbone for community outreach, spreading the word far-and-wide about the kick-off and using every means available to raise the visibility of the Re-Imagine Johnson process.

The Re-Imagine Johnson process brought community members together in a facilitated and structured process to look at challenges, identify priorities and take action on common goals for the future good of the town. On July 22nd, 2024 over 130 Community members crowded into the Johnson Elementary School gym for the first step in the process to share their ideas for the future of their community. The community shared a wealth of assets, challenges, and hopes for the future.

Many action ideas were identified throughout this process and can be found in the “Opportunities” section of this report along with notes taken at the initial forums. At the second convening on September 10th, careful deliberation around themes identified at the first forum and through online and paper surveys, Johnson community members voted to form task forces around the following priorities:

- **Bring a Grocery Store to Johnson and Increase Awareness and Access to Food**
- **Develop a Housing Strategy**
- **Downtown Reconfiguration and Redevelopment**
- **Capitalize and Increase Recreational Economic Opportunities**
- **Enhance and Strengthen the College/Town Connection**

VCRD and its partners look forward to working with the Johnson Task Forces as they advance these projects. They are already hard at work, please support their efforts or join them by reaching out to their chair or members (find details in the Action Plan section of this report).

As this report is compiled, area residents are stepping forward to lead the task forces focused on the Re-Imagine Johnson priorities. Conversations are underway with potential partner organizations about how best to coordinate efforts and avoid duplication. While area residents hold the keys to the success of this endeavor, VCRD will continue to provide ongoing support, as well as regional partners.

The next phase of the work toward a long-term recovery plan will include the development of a list of actions and projects that include additional core focus areas such as town and village identified infrastructure. This project list will build upon the Re-Imagine Johnson community input to generate a Long-Term Community Recovery Plan for Johnson supported and written by FEMA Community Assistance.

Thanks also go to the entire Re-Imagine Johnson Planning Committee for their advice and guidance along the way. Finally, the Johnson Select Board and Village Trustees have been supportive participants throughout the process.

The Climate Economy Resilient Communities Program is made possible thanks to the financial support of VLITE and Jane’s Trust Foundation. Thank you to each of these funders for making this important work possible.

The Vermont Council on Rural Development helps Vermont citizens build prosperous and resilient communities through democratic engagement, marshaling resources, and collective action. VCRD is prepared to support the efforts of Johnson as it moves forward and to provide follow-up help to the Task Forces as called upon. VCRD will also serve as an advocate for Johnson projects with appropriate agencies and organizations in Vermont. Please call on us, and on Visiting Resource Team members (listed with contact information in the back of this report), when we can be of help.

There are many people to thank for making the Re-Imagine Johnson process possible.

Outreach is an essential component of a successful Community Visit, and many people helped make that happen. Thank you to the many community leaders and organizations who worked together to spread the word about the event and make sure everyone in town was invited and encouraged to participate.

Coordinating the events and outreach was a team effort. Thank you to David Manning at the Johnson Elementary School for the use of the school for the first and second meetings, and Rene Thibault, Director of Marketing and Communication, at the Lamoille North Supervisory Union for assistance with the live-stream.

Thank you to Johnson Works, Foote Brook Farm, Maplefields and Two Sons Catering for the community dinner on July 22nd. Thank you to the Community Oven Committee for feeding the crowds at the Sept. 10th meeting.

We appreciate the help of the UVM Office of Engagement and UVM Center for Rural Studies for producing a briefing profile of data points about Johnson for the VCRD Community Visit Team and scribing assistance in July.

VCRD calls in support from state, federal, regional, philanthropic, and non-profit leaders to participate in the Climate Economy Resilient Communities Program. We are proud of the partners we get to work with, and our gratitude goes to the Visiting and Resource Team members that supported Johnson's first and last meetings. The full list of leaders, agencies, and organizations that offered their expertise can be found at the back of this report.

Getting things done is all about leadership, and we extend our gratitude to all who have participated in the process so far and those who will continue to participate moving forward.

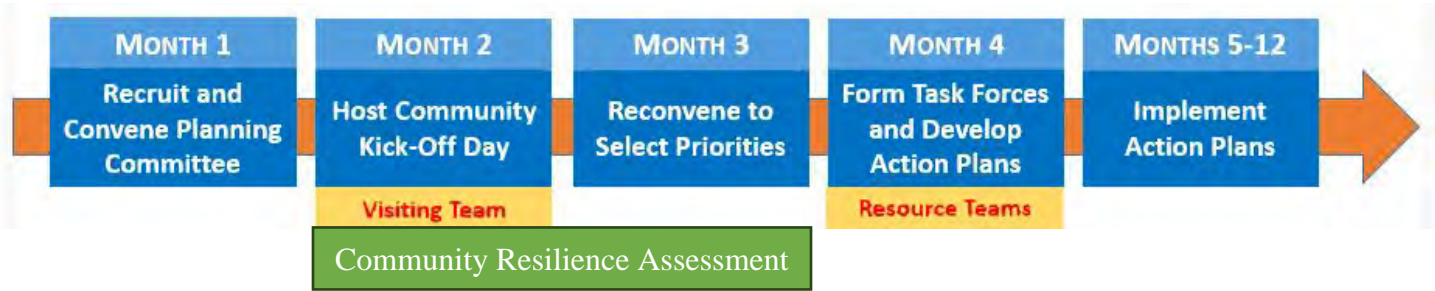
The challenges and opportunities for Johnson are immense, and we are excited by the energy and potential of the task forces to accelerate the transition to this thriving future. We are excited to support and celebrate the energy from these new initiatives and look forward to seeing the good things to come for Johnson.





II. The “Re-Imagine Johnson” Process

VCRD’s Climate Economy Resilient Communities program supports three to five communities each year working on local climate action solutions that help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, lower energy use, increase climate resilience, and/or strengthen the local climate economy. Services are adaptable based on the community’s needs and can include support with community engagement processes, strategic planning, technical assistance, and/or project implementation. The Re-Imagine Johnson process was developed to engage and bring together their residents, do a self-assessment of current resilience, set common goals and directions in a neutral and facilitated structure, and access resources that will help them take action on those goals. **Here is a snapshot of the 5-month process:**



Planning Committee Meeting: May 29, 2024

On May 22, 2024, 13 local community members met to plan for the launch of the Johnson Community Visit process. This group came up with a name for the process – Re-Imagine Johnson – and helped to plan the kick-off. They decided on forum topics and an invitation process. Through calls, e-mails, flyers, banners, and lawn signs this team worked hard to promote the kick-off.

Committee members included: Erik Bailey, GiGi Beach, Jeanne Engel, Carri Ferrari, Beth Foy, Steven Hatfield, Kyle Hill, Lynda Hill, Johna Keefe, Joie Lehouillier, Diane Lehouillier, Sherry Marcelino, Kyle Nuse, Rev. Dr. Wendy Jaine Summers, Randall Szott, Gregory Tatro, Rene Thibault, Paul Warden, Mark Woodward.

Step 1 ~ Kick-Off Forums, Community Resilience Assessment and Community Dinner: July 22, 2024

Re-Imagine Johnson kicked off with brainstorming forums held at the Johnson Elementary School and a free community dinner. Community Resilience Organizations (CROs) facilitated the forums to kick off the self-assessment of community resilience. Over 130 participants shared assets, challenges, and ideas for action. The opening session recording can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DgxEDObZigs>

A robust list of Visiting Team members were present to hear from the Johnson community. The list of participants can be found in the back of this document.

Vermont Council on Rural Development staff included: Laura Cavin Bailey, *Climate Economy Program Manager*, Lauren Brady, *Community & Policy Associate*; Alyssa Johnson, *Community Visit Program Manager*; Jenna Koloski, *Community Engagement & Policy Director (former)*; and Jessica Savage, *Director of Community Collaboration*.

Community Resilience Organizations staff included: Jess Laporte, Lena Greenberg, Sister Sankofa*, and Mindy Blank.

**Sister Sankofa contributed time, talent, and energy to this process. She passed in January 2025, and our hearts are with her friends, colleagues and family.*

Step 2 ~ Community Meeting: September 10, 2024

The second step included an interactive exercise by CROs looking at topics from the Community Resilience Assessment. This set the stage for reflections from participants and grounded the conversation in multi-faceted aspects of community resilience. VCRD staff distilled brainstormed ideas into 16 key areas of action. Over 70 community members joined at the Johnson Elementary School to narrow the list of priorities for community action. After lively dialogue and a dot-voting exercise, 5 action ideas emerged as key priorities:

- Bring a Grocery Store to Johnson and Increase Awareness and Access to Food
- Develop a Housing Strategy
- Downtown Reconfiguration and Redevelopment
- Capitalize and Increase Recreational Economic Opportunities
- Enhance and Strengthen the College/Town Connection

Participants then signed up for task forces that will convene to move these priorities forward. A recording of this meeting can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CybbgAKVVQk>

Vermont Council on Rural Development staff included: Lauren Brady, *Community & Policy Associate*; Alyssa Johnson, *Community Visit Program Manager*; and Jessica Savage, *Director of Community Collaboration*.

Community Resilience Organizations staff included: Jess Laporte, Lena Greenberg, Sister Sankofa, and Mindy Blank.

Step 3 ~ Resource Meeting and Task Force Launch: October 9, 2024

On October 9, 2024, over 50 community members along with facilitators, and resource team members came together to develop action plans, identify resources, and form task force groups that will work in the months ahead to implement the priorities. From here forward, all “Re-Imagine Johnson” action is focused at the task force level.

Resource Team members were present to hear from the Johnson community and provide reflections and resource ideas to move forward. Their contact information can be found in the back of this document.

Vermont Council on Rural Development staff included: Laura Cavin Bailey, *Climate Economy Program Manager*, Lauren Brady, *Community & Policy Associate*; Alyssa Johnson, *Community Visit Program Manager*; and Jessica Savage, *Director of Community Collaboration*; Kaziah Haviland, *Village Trust Initiative Director*, Denise Smith, *Executive Director*.

Additional facilitation was provided by our long-time partner Ben Doyle, *Executive Director*, Preservation Trust of Vermont.



III. Re-Imagine Johnson Priorities

Determined by Johnson residents at the Re-Imagine Johnson Community Meeting
September 10, 2024

Through thoughtful conversation about the future of their community, Johnson community members whittled down a list of 16 action ideas to 5 priorities that offer opportunities to enhance existing resources and strengthen the town. Residents concluded the meeting by signing up for Task Forces in the selected areas.

Johnson residents selected these priorities for future action:

- ▶ **Bring a Grocery Store to Johnson and Increase Awareness and Access to Food** – A task force could form that helps to coordinate, share resources, and expand access to food in Johnson. This group could develop information on existing food infrastructure such as the Johnson Food Shelf and area farms. This group could explore developing a food hub for start-up, value added product development, and connect farms to large volume purchasers such as the college or area resorts. This group could also support intergenerational farming efforts or land acquisition for new and young farmers. This task force could determine where and with what ownership model a grocery store could open and operate in Johnson. Some tasks could include identifying possible locations for a grocery store, developing a list of property owners at those locations, and exploring models for ownership such as a co-op. Possible locations could include in the new light industrial park, at the college, or other non-flood prone locations. This group could research food co-op models such as Springfield Food Co-op, Morrisville Food Co-op, Buffalo Mountain Co-op in Hardwick, and others.
- ▶ **Develop a Housing Strategy** – A task force could be formed to increase housing outside of the floodplain to replace lost units and add additional housing units including senior housing and rental apartments in Johnson. Adding and replacing units would build the town’s grand list and provide housing for those wishing to remain in the community after losing homes or rental units to flooding and buyouts. This group could work with state housing authorities, housing finance agencies and other developers to encourage building in Johnson. In addition, this group could look into mixed use development with businesses on first floors and housing above, extending village water and sewer, and developing incentives for businesses and developers to come to Johnson. This group could pursue additional efforts to improve existing housing through weatherization to increase the affordability for residents, creation of additional rental units, homeshare, or other modes of expanding housing units within existing structures.
- ▶ **Downtown Reconfiguration and Redevelopment** – Through public input and engagement, including property owners and businesses downtown, a task force could create a vision and plan for Johnson’s downtown and core services. In coordination with property owners, town officials, college representatives, residents, and businesses this group could identify and map out flood prone parcels and available land out of the flood zone to relocate services such as the grocery store, library, post office, town offices, wastewater plant, businesses and more. This vision could include plans to enable services to remain open during town-wide emergencies. Some identified opportunities include turning some of the existing downtown footprint into floodplain parks with gazebos, riparian buffers, and river access; relocating the post office and grocery store with additional housing and town operations to School Street, North of the Gihon River, or the college

property. This group could also explore places for public restrooms, informational signage for visitors and residents, and more.

- ▶ **Capitalize and Increase Recreational Economic Opportunities** – Building upon the unique location of Johnson, a task force could work to promote recreational tourism from the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, the Long Trail, the Lamoille River, and the many other trails. This group could encourage tourists to visit Johnson’s downtown, resupply, eat, and stay through collective visioning, signage, promotional material, structured activities and events for residents and some events catered to folks from out-of-town such as a bike or canoe race. Building on the current feasibility study of getting Lamoille Valley Rail Trail users from the trail to downtown, additional signage, bike lanes, and other amenities could be identified and developed. Other recreational opportunities to explore and build out include a garden and historic walks, dog park, adult recreation leagues, a campground, and power sports trails and access points. This group could partner with the Conservation Commission and other local groups and organizations to create new greenspace along the river and increase river access through buyouts and other means.
- ▶ **Enhance and Strengthen the College/Town Connection** – A task force could form to build a stronger connection between the town and college. Representatives from both entities would enable expansion of programming and creative visioning of the existing spaces. Building upon the sports mentor program, additional programming for college students to be youth mentors, interns at businesses, or other connections in Johnson, would enable college students to connect with, and be involved in, the greater Johnson community. This group could also explore existing college building use and creative repurposing of the building into a hostel, grocery store, community center, or other shared town amenities. The group could explore shared use models for existing infrastructure of the theater space and SHAPE fitness/pool center to be profitable and a community asset.

Other Key Opportunities identified by the community:

Along with the chosen priorities, the key opportunities listed below reflect other potential ideas for action that community members shared. 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.

Strengthen the Local Emergency Response Plan - A task force could form to strengthen and expand the emergency response plan for Johnson in coordination with the local emergency response coordinator and the local first responders, emergency managers, town officials, health care providers, non-profit organizations, the Lamoille County Planning Commission, LeARN (Lamoille Area Recovery Network) and others. This would include documenting procedures for standing up access to food, backup power and clean water; and locations for residents and pets to shelter safely. Once the plan is clarified, this group could develop an education and outreach strategy and hold practice events for the emergency response for town-led initiatives as well as individual household level response.

Develop a Local Lead Recovery Group / Neighbor to Neighbor Network - A task force could form to build out a neighbor-to-neighbor network that strengthens and builds upon existing connections in Johnson neighborhoods and regions and builds upon the regional long-term recovery group for Lamoille County (Lamoille County Area Recovery Network LeARN). During non-emergencies, this group could support individuals and families but creates the ability to pivot to support individuals during an emergency. In addition, this group could build out a network of local care providers and volunteers that could formally develop a plan for checking in on vulnerable folks in emergencies and also non-emergencies.

Develop and Build Out Local Communication Channels - A task force could form that builds out existing opportunities for community wide communication such as developing a protocol and using the town siren system, a town wide text system, or other local communication tools. In addition, this group can build upon and coordinate with the local emergency response plan, VT Alerts, as well as non-emergency communication around local events and information. This group could also determine a platform to consolidate real time information of road closures and river levels that are in coordination with local level information from emergency responders or other residents and state information such as 511 and river gauges.

Rivershed Understanding, Mapping, Coordination and Communication - A task force could form to collect and compile information from hydrologists, existing river gauges, state agencies that are mapping flood scenarios, longtime residents, and other relevant data sources to build a watershed understanding of the river system. This group would coordinate with neighboring rivershed towns, regional and state groups and organizations in the greater Lamoille watershed to coordinate communication during flood (and non-flood) events and enable up and down river communities to better prepare, plan mitigation strategies and support local emergency response plans.

Advance Local Flood Mitigation and Restoration Strategies- A task force could form to share relevant and accessible information around natural and environmental systems in order to plan local flood mitigation projects. This group could map out existing natural resources in town and develop information and communication around those assets in collaboration with the Conservation Commission. This group should work with local, regional and statewide partners, including other communities along the river(s) to investigate and share ways to reduce the impact of severe storms. Some possible things to explore include identifying flood proofing solutions in buildings, locations for flood barriers, relocating critical services out of the flood plain, and implementing river management activities to slow and infiltrate flood waters. Some river management tactics to explore include floodplain restoration, wetland and beaver habitat restoration and creation, dredging, or other strategies as appropriate.

Support Business Start Ups and Creative Economy Infrastructure- A task force could develop connections and infrastructure to support business start-ups and build upon the existing creative network in Johnson. This group could look into ways to reduce barriers for start-up companies and encourage mentoring or other resource sharing with existing businesses in Johnson with a formalized space or structure for skill sharing and skill building. This group could investigate and develop a maker space including possible resources such as an incubator kitchen, woodshop, ceramic studio, or others. This group could provide information and expand the use of the Johnson Revolving Loan Fund as an avenue for entrepreneurs.

Bike, Pedestrian, and Public Transportation Improvements - This task force could work to improve all modes of alternative transportation including bike lanes and safety, pedestrian sidewalks and connectivity, and improving access to public transportation options. In coordination with Rural Community Transportation (RCT), this group could expand, and increase awareness of, the on-demand transit options. Some possible actions could include a Johnson wide mapping of bike friendly and walkable routes and a walk audit of downtown and the college that would increase bike and pedestrian safety.

Increase Community Events - Building upon the successful existing community events like Tuesday Night Live, field days, and the Community Oven, a task force could build additional seasonal and year-round events such as a Sap Run, community art opportunities, street parties and potlucks, and more. Through an intergenerational and inclusive lens that welcomes young families, seniors, LGBTIA+, BIPOC, and everyone in between, additional events could be generated that foster community spirit, creativity, and energy. This group could develop ideas for additional events through outreach and communication including utilizing the town mailings, or online surveys, in person tabling at existing gathering points in the community, and more.

Create a Community Center - A task force could be developed to identify possible location and services for a community center. This center would be a year-round flexible indoor gathering place for intergenerational connections and programs. The group could identify existing buildings that could pivot to become a community center with amenities such as adequate parking, bathrooms, kitchen, flexible large and small meeting spaces, etc. Through deliberate creation of spaces of youth and teens, cross generational programming such as technology courses lead by teens would promote community connections. Through collaboration with existing events, this group could identify expansion opportunities and build upon the popular current events into year-round programming and opportunities.

Explore Village and Town Collaboration and Shared Services - A task force could form to explore options for collaboration, shared services and administrative capacity and possible merger scenarios of the Town and Village. This task force could research and offer options for the community to consider around cost reduction, shifting tax burdens and other pertinent topics.

IV. Community Resilience Assessment (CRA)

Facilitated and compiled by Community Resilience Organizations (CROs)



Purpose of this Assessment

- Highlight vulnerabilities and strengths
- Demonstrate the many intertwined factors of resilience
- Help towns track progress in building community resilience across sectors and over time
- Collect data about community perceptions of resilience
- Create opportunities for action on local priorities

Note that the Community Resilience Assessment is not designed to give a quantitative score or to make comparisons between communities.

About the Assessment and How to Take it:

- The assessment is divided into four sections: Basic Needs & Services, Environment & Natural Systems, Physical Infrastructure, and Community Connections & Capacity. At the end of each section, you can leave comments or additional information if you like. On average, this assessment takes about 20 minutes.
- In each section, there are categories (such as “Food supply”). Read the factors of a “very resilient system.” Rate where you think your community is at on a scale of 1-5, with a 1 being very vulnerable and a 5 being very resilient (meeting or exceeding the description). Answer the question from the perspective of what you know about your community and from your own experience.
- There will likely be several that you’re not quite sure about. Guess if possible; if that feels impossible, you can skip questions.
- **Note that the categories and factors of a “very resilient system” are brief examples and are not inclusive of all possibilities.** The criteria included gives a snapshot and an indication of community systems in place. Remember: the criteria describe a **very** resilient system. Most communities do not score a 5.



How the CRA was Administered in Johnson:

- The CRA was introduced to participants in the July 22nd Meeting as a part of the Community Visit Process led by Vermont Council on Rural Development. Participants chose 2 breakout sessions to participate in where the assessment was filled out and discussed as a group and facilitated by CROs. Each breakout group completed 1 section of the assessment, so no participants in the July 22nd meeting completed all four sections.

- After the July 22nd event the online form of the Assessment was shared through the same outreach channels as the Community Visit Process and blank paper assessments were available at the Library and Town Hall.
- Paper and online submissions were requested to be completed by August 19th.
- In total we received 114 separate assessments between online and paper submissions. Each individual question had anywhere from 57-78 unique responses. The number of responses is included in the upper left corner of each graph.

This is the 2024 version of the Community Resilience Assessment, created by Community Resilience Organizations. The assessment first launched in 2014 with help from contributors around VT; it's been updated and adjusted for a variety of purposes. Write to info@gocros.org if you're interested in using this assessment for your community or as an educational tool. Visit www.gocros.org to learn more about resilience!

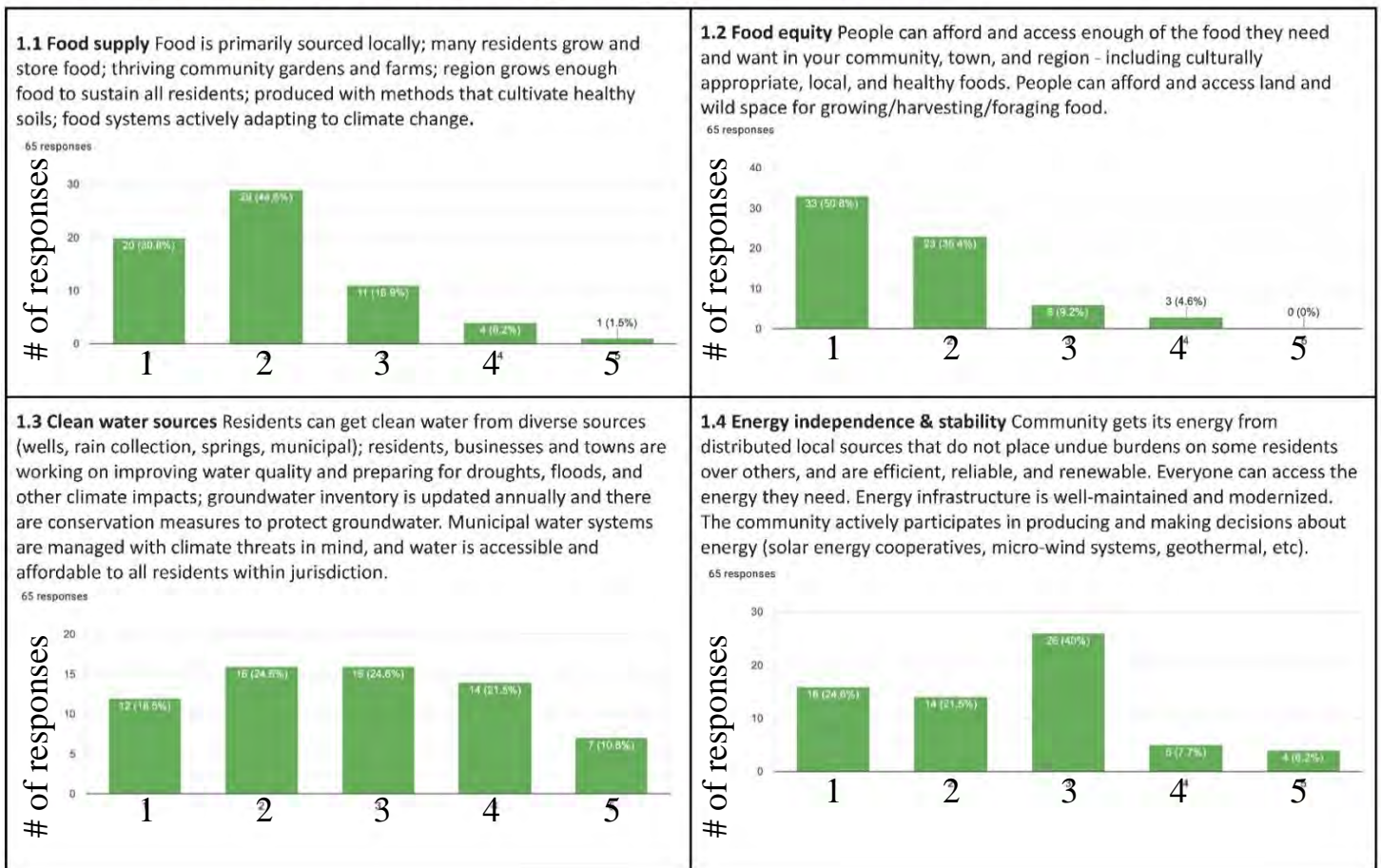
2024 Johnson Community Resilience Assessment Results

Results can also be viewed and downloaded here:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1snfCQgkLf9TivhE7nQg_xsJUqcHrKaH8/view

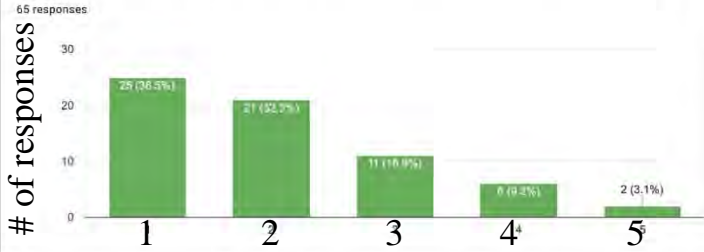
1 being very vulnerable and a 5 being very resilient

Section 1: BASIC NEEDS & SERVICES - Meeting baseline physical and community needs

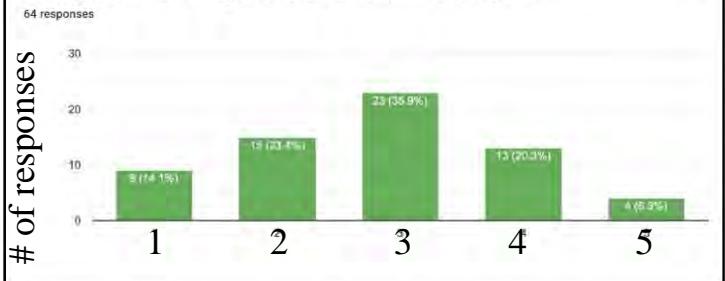


1 being very vulnerable and a 5 being very resilient

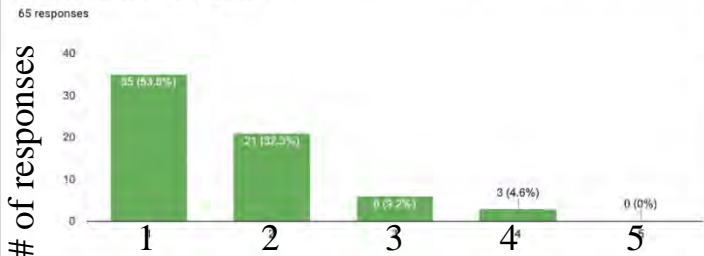
1.5 Health services There is a robust, trusted network of professional providers of care, who follow current CDC regulations, and/or holistic health guidelines, services are available to everyone (regardless of ability and citizenship status); strong knowledge/use of local natural medicines; all residents have access to well-stocked pharmacy with emergency supply of medicine, regardless of ability to pay. Coordinated public and private efforts address climate-related health impacts.



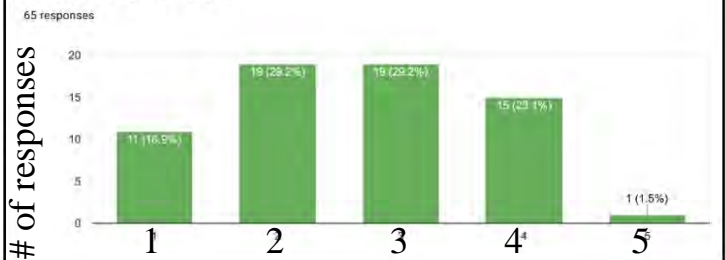
1.6 Inclusive & safe culture Inclusive, accessible and safe community for all residents regardless of economic and social status, race, ethnicity, ability, sexual or gender identity, or age; racial and social justice are actively being addressed at all levels through systemic changes and reparative actions; community utilizes its local powers to treat all people with respect, dignity, and impartiality, and to protect human rights and basic needs of all residents.



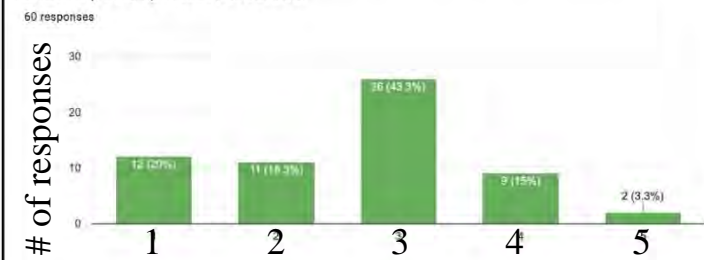
1.7 Housing All residents have safe, healthy housing; homes are weatherized and free of toxins; new housing is built from healthy materials and designed to weather climate impacts; there is a clear and well-known process in place for reporting damages after a disaster; affordable housing is reliably available and protected in town/city plans.



1.8 Public safety Mediation and non-policing methods of crisis management are well-integrated into the community; there are many skilled emergency service responders with advanced training and equipment; there is a directory of residents with emergency skills who can assist in an emergency; residents have emergency plans in place for their home/family/business and are signed up for local/state emergency alert notifications and know how to access town emergency plans and updates; isolated residences and populations are identified and checked on.



1.9 Personal health & well-being Personal/mental/emotional/spiritual health is valued and supported in the culture of the community; people can access a variety of trusted personal health care options for residents with different cultures, backgrounds and approaches; access to religious services, prayer, sanctuary and spiritual resources.

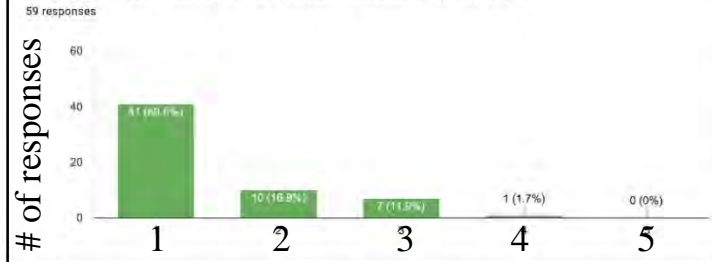


Some comments:

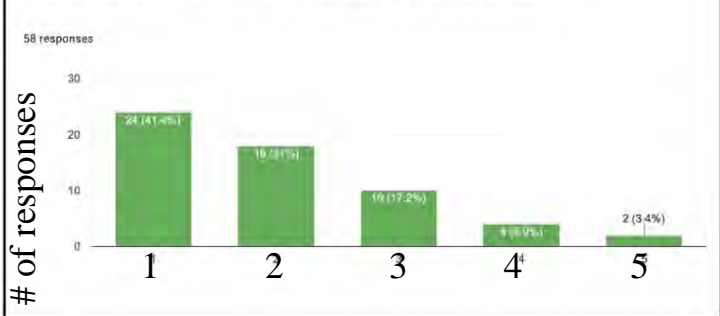
- "Sharing information about preparations the town has already done. No pharmacy. Johnson rental units are not affordable. Better transportation to get people to services, we have the GMT shopper bus but it leaves from the center of town. We can form a partnership with the university to create a community health center free for all residents (gym, pool). More interactions between university and town, good for both. Replace town grocery store plan with a town-run public market, give a spot to sterling market and let the rest be run by local entrepreneurs, produce, dry goods, prepared foods."
- "I would love to see a store that sells mostly local products at AFFORDABLE prices. I should include locally raised vegetables, fruits, meats and dairy products. I would also be great to include handmade, LOCAL household items and products."
- "During the flood seniors displaced from meeting place. We felt this was not a priority with town officials."

Section 2: ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL SYSTEMS - Waterways, ecosystem health, land use and conservation

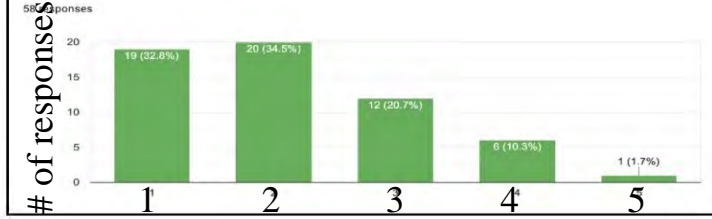
2.1 River corridors & floodplains Waterways are managed through an integrated protection and restoration plan, with regional coordination, and special protections for sensitive aquatic and riparian natural areas. Residents, businesses and towns are educated about and maintain land and water sources to support health of ecosystems; town bylaws protect waterways and prevent development in floodplains; wetlands and floodplains are managed to prevent severe town flooding.



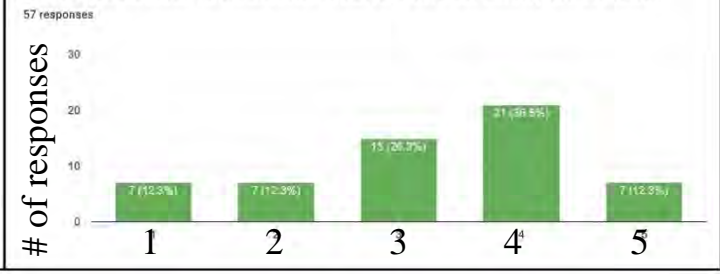
2.2 Sensitive natural areas (clay plain forest, habitat for endangered species, etc.) Holistic inventory and protection of all sensitive areas; cross-sector coordination of conservation and restoration projects in sensitive areas; accessible and effective public education and outreach; sensitive areas are connected with wider protected areas.



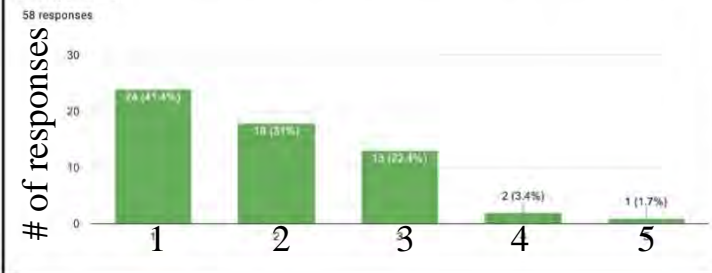
2.3 Agricultural and forested land Public and private lands are stewarded to maximize the health of human and non-human communities. Local and state regulations incentivize businesses and residents to make improvements to soil, water and air quality. All residents have access to land and regenerative education/resources. Farm and forest health and viability are prioritized in town plans.



2.4 Green space & recreation access All residents live within accessible distance of open green space and public recreation areas. Locals are not displaced or deprioritized in favor of recreational tourism. Indigenous people have access to traditional foodways and ceremony on the land.



2.5 Toxics and invasives Toxic chemicals and wastes are minimized and prevented from entering food, water, and soil systems. Invasive species are monitored by integrated public and private control measures, including education, uses and restoration, and invasives are not notably disrupting ecosystems.

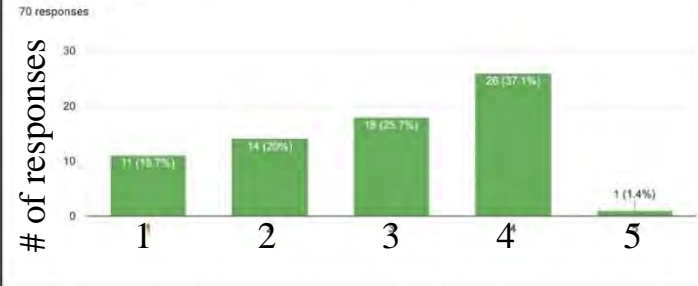


Some comments:

- “For years the college has filled in areas of wetland and paved or created parking lots. Businesses as well - old gas station, laundry, medical clinic, filled in behind it, probably town hall as well. Educate about filling in the flood plain, enforce rules, no more fill!”
- “Consider the whole entire watershed; investment in the ecology of this place; ecology informed management systems”
- “Wetlands as a form of flood mitigation, natural water filtration, providing habitat for native animals such as moose and beavers which are natural damn builders and native fauna.”
- “We need to establish wetlands to mitigate major flooding.”

Section 3: PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE - Roads, bridges, culverts, utilities, facilities and public services

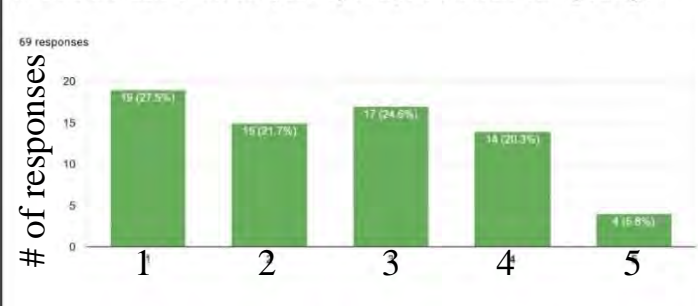
3.1 Roads & transportation Infrastructure is well maintained; public and private culverts, bridges, ditches monitored and well maintained; alternate routes and plans for main roads and vulnerable roads exist if disruptions occur; many accessible and affordable transportation options; holistic bike and walk infrastructure; efficient public transportation.



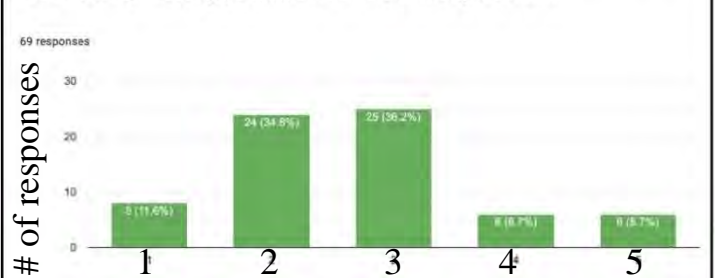
3.2 Emergency resources Emergency protocols are in place, designed in collaboration with the community, and widely known. Supplies for emergencies are centrally located and available to all. Welcoming, safe, and accessible emergency shelters serve all neighborhoods with water, food, a place to sleep, and critical energy sources for at least 3-5 days; options for pets and farm animals included in shelter planning.



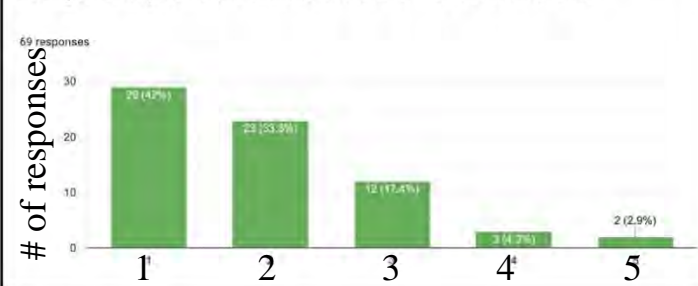
3.3 Cellular service & broadband accessibility Modern telecommunications infrastructure, cell service and broadband are all accessible throughout community; all residents who want to be are connected; free high-speed wireless available downtown; backup hotspots available during outages.



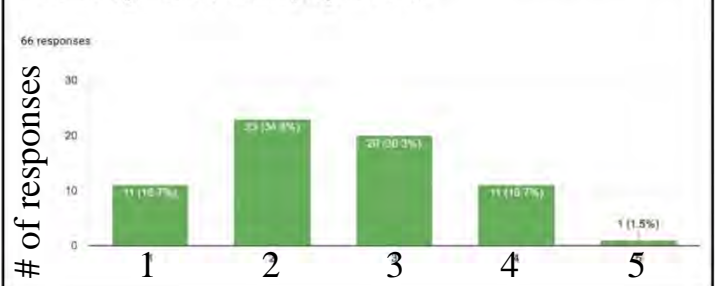
3.4 Public & private facilities Abundant common spaces indoors and outdoors that are free and accessible to residents physically and socially; public areas are safe; facilities are accessible, well-located, and well-utilized; buildings are well maintained, modernized, weatherized and free of toxins; meetings/activities are held in many locations.



3.5 Wastewater management Town has updated waste and stormwater infrastructure, and uses green infrastructure to reduce runoff; residents, businesses and town participate in watershed-wide water management strategies; local and state regulations require new developments to include wastewater reduction and green stormwater plans; wastewater management systems are built to withstand wet weather events.



3.6 Waste management Waste management and reduction systems are accessible and affordable for all residents. Waste systems manage landfill waste, recycling, compost, upcycling and hazardous materials; disposal options are well-sited, public, and properly used; town is meeting goals to reduce waste in all sectors; has neighborhood-scale compost infrastructure; waste management education programs exist.



Some comments:

- "Once fiber is fully deployed we will improve connectivity. Having a public health center would really help the community. Despite high score on roads and transportation we need better public transit and protected bike lanes. Besides flood risk water is available and plentiful. Road grading really good. Move library to permanent spot."
- "There is a lack of maintenance of our roads and buildings. There is a lack of space for large gatherings. I feel that the town and village management have a lack of care of our infrastructure and are wasteful and inefficient."
- "Bike paths needed. Emergency sirens to alert village for floods."

Section 4: COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS & CAPACITY - Relationships, resources, and structures that promote equity and enable residents to thrive together

| <p>4.1 Community planning Clear, updated plans (town plan, hazard mitigation plan, etc.) are being implemented, cross-reference each other, and integrate environmental, social, economic and cultural needs/issues; planning processes are developed with broad community input; vulnerable and historically marginalized populations are integrated into every level of town process and decision-making.</p> <p>78 responses</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th># of responses</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>18</td> <td>23.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>26</td> <td>33.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>22</td> <td>28.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>9</td> <td>11.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>3.8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Rating | # of responses | Percentage | 1 | 18 | 23.1% | 2 | 26 | 33.3% | 3 | 22 | 28.2% | 4 | 9 | 11.5% | 5 | 3 | 3.8% | <p>4.2 Civic engagement & governance Residents engage in public issues/processes in diverse ways; meetings/events are accessible, well-attended and representative; culture of collaborative and proactive volunteerism and problem-solving; leaders actively seek diverse participation, especially from underrepresented groups (such as BIPOC*, LGBTQ*, youth, seniors and disabled people); governance is guided by trust, respect, and collaboration.</p> <p>78 responses</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th># of responses</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>21</td> <td>26.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>25</td> <td>32.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>23</td> <td>29.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>8</td> <td>10.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> <td>1.3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Rating | # of responses | Percentage | 1 | 21 | 26.9% | 2 | 25 | 32.1% | 3 | 23 | 29.5% | 4 | 8 | 10.3% | 5 | 1 | 1.3% |
|---|----------------|----------------|------------|---|----|-------|---|----|-------|---|----|-------|---|----|-------|---|---|------|--|--------|----------------|------------|---|----|-------|---|----|-------|---|----|-------|---|----|-------|---|---|------|
| Rating | # of responses | Percentage | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 5 | 1 | 1.3% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>4.3 Communication & transparency Many communication modes are used (emergency alerts, radio, newspaper, mailings, online forums, bulletin boards, etc.); discussion forums are meaningful, respectful, and accessible; town information and news is posted quickly/broadly in all used languages; emergency communication plans exist at the neighborhood and town levels.</p> <p>78 responses</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th># of responses</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>12</td> <td>15.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>25</td> <td>32.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>30</td> <td>38.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>9</td> <td>11.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> <td>2.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Rating | # of responses | Percentage | 1 | 12 | 15.4% | 2 | 25 | 32.1% | 3 | 30 | 38.5% | 4 | 9 | 11.5% | 5 | 2 | 2.6% | <p>4.4 Crisis & recovery Community members can easily access food assistance, addiction recovery services, emergency housing, and other critical resources. Emergency support resources are well-networked, in coordination with each other, and trauma-informed.</p> <p>77 responses</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th># of responses</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>13</td> <td>16.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>16</td> <td>20.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>35</td> <td>41.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>11</td> <td>14.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> <td>6.5%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Rating | # of responses | Percentage | 1 | 13 | 16.9% | 2 | 16 | 20.8% | 3 | 35 | 41.8% | 4 | 11 | 14.3% | 5 | 5 | 6.5% |
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| 2 | 25 | 32.1% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | 30 | 38.5% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 5 | 2 | 2.6% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 1 | 13 | 16.9% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | 16 | 20.8% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 5 | 5 | 6.5% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>4.5 Community belonging Frequent community-wide celebrations/events help diverse groups meet; community embodies a welcoming culture for all and a shared sense of place; inviting gathering places bring people together; stewardship of common spaces is part of local plans and future development.</p> <p>78 responses</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th># of responses</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>8</td> <td>10.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>15</td> <td>19.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>28</td> <td>33.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>25</td> <td>30.2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>3.8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Rating | # of responses | Percentage | 1 | 8 | 10.2% | 2 | 15 | 19.2% | 3 | 28 | 33.3% | 4 | 25 | 30.2% | 5 | 3 | 3.8% | <p>4.6 Community preparedness Residents, organizations and neighborhoods are prepared and able to help others and themselves in emergencies; vulnerable populations are identified and centered in planning; community has the ability to be self-sufficient during lengthy disruptions in access to outside goods and services.</p> <p>78 responses</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th># of responses</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>11</td> <td>14.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>26</td> <td>33.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>26</td> <td>33.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>12</td> <td>15.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>3</td> <td>3.8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Rating | # of responses | Percentage | 1 | 11 | 14.1% | 2 | 26 | 33.3% | 3 | 26 | 33.3% | 4 | 12 | 15.4% | 5 | 3 | 3.8% |
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| 5 | 3 | 3.8% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>4.7 Community learning Resilience education and skills are integrated into schools; residents share skills and knowledge at neighborhood and town levels; there are ample teaching/learning opportunities in the community.</p> <p>78 responses</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th># of responses</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>19</td> <td>24.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>28</td> <td>35.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>25</td> <td>29.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>6</td> <td>7.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> <td>2.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | Rating | # of responses | Percentage | 1 | 19 | 24.4% | 2 | 28 | 35.9% | 3 | 25 | 29.5% | 4 | 6 | 7.7% | 5 | 2 | 2.6% | <p>Some comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "There are pockets of connectedness. Neighbors helping during flood- then siloing. Pizza oven, Tuesday night live, field days all help feed community as does the library." • "Civic engagement is a constant challenge. Town committee are often made up of the same people. There are many followers but few leaders. Engaging working class and diverse residents is particularly difficult. Existing town plans don't accommodate marginalized communities" • "There are a handful of people always working hard on this." | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rating | # of responses | Percentage | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 19 | 24.4% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| 5 | 2 | 2.6% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

V. Task Force Action Plans

Resource Meeting, October 9th, 2024

Johnson Task Forces are comprised of community members and an appointed chairperson/s. On Resource Day committee members worked closely with a facilitator and a visiting resource team to develop step-by-step action plans and a list of human and financial resources to help achieve their goals.

To join or stay connected to a Task Force reach out to the co-chairs listed in each section which includes their contact information, or see <https://bit.ly/re-imagine-johnson>.

► Bring a Grocery Store to Johnson and Increase Awareness and Access to Food

This group will help to coordinate, share resources, and expand access to food in Johnson. This group could develop information on existing food infrastructure such as the Johnson Food Shelf and area farms. This group could explore developing a food hub for startup, value added product development and connect farms to large volume purchasers such as the college or area resorts. This group could also support intergenerational farming efforts or land acquisition for new and young farmers. This task force could determine where and with what ownership model a grocery store could open and operate in Johnson. Some tasks could include identifying possible locations for a grocery store, developing a list of property owners at those locations, and exploring models for ownership such as a co-op. Possible locations could include in the new light industrial park, at the college, or other non-flood prone locations. This group could research food co-op models such as Springfield Food Co-op, Morrisville Food Co-op, Buffalo Mountain Co-op in Hardwick, and others.

Facilitator: Ben Doyle *Executive Director*, Preservation Trust of Vermont

Co-Chairs: Jesse Whitworth: jessecwhitworth@gmail.com, 978-257-1697

Bill Jaspersohn: billjaspersohn@gmail.com

Resource Team: Lena Greenberg, *Co-Director*, Community Resilience Organization

Jon Ramsay, *Executive Director*, Center for an Agricultural Economy

Jessie Schmidt, *Director of Strategic Initiatives*, Vermont Community Foundation

Drew Waxler, Pomerleau Real Estate

Join the Listserv: "Food Awareness - Johnson, VT" johnson-vt-food@googlegroups.com

Current status and overview of the issue today

Where do you get food today?

- Morrisville
- Dollar General
- Gas Stations (some items are cheaper at gas stations)
- Eden Store
- Foote Brook Farm (until November), a little pricey
- Food Shelf
 - well stocked but not a lot of choice
 - could be improved and have better shelving
 - underutilized
 - inclusive and welcoming
 - a bit out of town
 - no spike in use after flooding
- perhaps stigma and lack of signage are factors
- Eden and Morrisville residents come more than Johnson residents
- no income/eligibility requirements
- near rail trail
- CSAs- Pete's Greens, West Farm, Deep Roots
- Online order and deliver to people from Price Chopper and Hannaford
- RCT looking into food delivery
- Used to have a farmer's market (gone 10+ years) and a bulk buying club
- Bad coordination with Tuesday Night Live could have caused decline in farmer's market
- Coordination and communication would make a

difference for food access in Johnson

Loss of Grocery Store

- Loss at the center of community
- People aren't connecting with neighbors when they most need it
- You can't just pick something up
- Downtown feels empty
- Loss of one business harms other businesses
- Post office is back
- Without a community connections spot people are missing out on what is happening in the community
- Jenna's Promise and Marsala's Salsa are holding the downtown community center

Pomerleau Real Estate Report

- 7 feet of water in grocery store

- Associated Grocers is not interested in rebuilding market
- Shaws expressed an interest and will come if building is floodproofed
- Building needs to be reinforced - working on internal bracing
- Hydrostatic pressure from flood waters is an engineering challenge
- Looking at FEMA for grant and USDA for financing
- Building is 16,000 sq ft.
- Only help they need from residents is to shop there
- Market has a history of successful retailing operations
- Can't build in a new location even if you got the land for free because construction is so expensive

Priority Action Steps (not in order)

1. Asset Mapping and Gap Analysis
2. Clarifying Communication about what we have (accessible in many formats)
3. Convene meeting to explore alternative ownership and food access models and locations (reimagine the food shelf)
4. Convene a small group around innovative flood mitigation engineering (in Sterling Market site)
5. Community meal all year round (reliable and accessible)

Other Potential Action Ideas

- Find out how we got here
- Poll what people's food needs and preferences are at a polling place
- Share updates from selectboard meetings- can Randall provide regular updates?
- Do an asset inventory of food access assets - map and list, identify gaps, possible funding
- "Food Access Fact Sheet"
- Revitalize the town itself will make the market more viable
- Work to disseminate information about the market
- Shop at the replacement grocery store
- Work with grocery store to stock more local food and bulk food
- Expand Foote Brook Farm Year Round
- Connect Foote Brook Farm to Center for Ag Economy (capital and technical assistance)- is there other capacity to help?
- Coordinate food infrastructure resources for Foote Brook Farm and make accessible by foot from town
- Investigate Coop model - learn about co-ops function
- Host a meeting with co-op staff/directors and general stores
- Convening meeting to investigate alternative models for ownership of grocery store
- Community Meal in Vermont Studio Center
- Community Oven Committee makes the pizza
- Explore Alternative location for the food shelf-downtown, college, (coordinate with other groups)
- Host a farmers market at the food shelf
- Investigate purchasing food from Foote Brook Farm for food shelf
- Investigate Farm to School and bolster it in Johnson Elementary School
- Farmers market and Food Trucks

Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

These recommendations for other potential actions and resources to consider were shared by Visiting Resource Team members representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, and encompass their experience, past success and consideration of the community's unique assets and needs.

Action Recommendations

Talk to people involved with the attempt to get a downtown co-op in Barre, learning from what didn't work. A success story would be Springfield or Hardwick co-ops, which have been around for a while, but have both relocated and updated their business models within the past few years.

(https://www.timesargus.com/news/local/barre-co-op-votes-to-dissolve-ending-hopes-for-granite-city-grocery/article_d2743508-d488-5728-9b5c-cbb96ce3e718.html)

A market study would be useful to determine what potential consumers want and the size of the market for a possible cooperative. If the community decides to pursue a cooperative, a marketing study would be essential for securing funds.

Update marketing and feasibility study for a chain store viability, possibly build upon the Shaw's assessment of Pomerleau's "Sterling Market" location.

Assess potential business locations – Would an off-Rt. 2 grocery store be viable or would transit investment be a cost-effective alternative solution?

Tour existing co-ops. Ask what makes them viable and assess whether the Johnson community has those resources with and without the college.

Resources

- Vermont Community Foundation, keep in touch for funding opportunities.
 - Spark grant at VT Community Foundation for small projects <https://vermontcf.org/funds/spark/>
 - Regional impact grant - \$25,000
- Preservation Trust of Vermont - <https://ptvermont.org/> support on community trust model for general stores, convening, tech support on buildings and implementation, Grants for Physical Plant. Ben Doyle is happy to help connect with other alternative market/coop groups: St J, Morrisville, East Calais, etc.
- Jon Ramsay at Center for an Agricultural Economy (see visiting team list for contact) <https://hardwickagriculture.org/>
- FEMA - Community Assistance – money from disaster supplement bill could fund food shelf upgrades
- Food Co-op Initiative <https://fci.coop/> guidebook on how to start a food co-op and other resources. Food Co-op Initiative, Executive Director, Faye Mack, faye@fci.coop.
- Bonnie Hudspeth, Firebrand, Independent Consultant, bonnie.e.hudspeth@gmail.com, 701-353-8301. Local consultant who can assist with developing a co-op.
- Neighboring Food Co-op Association supports the development of food cooperatives in New England and New York. NFCA has been a key resource for the development of the St. Johnsbury Co-op. <https://nfca.coop/>.
- USDA Rural Business Development Grants <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-business-development-grants>.
- Agency of Commerce and Community Development - Community Development Block Grant (ACCD CDBG) <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp>.
- CDBG Disaster Recovery Funds https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/cdbg-dr
- US Economic Development Administration - Disaster Supplemental planning grants <https://www.eda.gov/strategic-initiatives/disaster-recovery/supplemental>.
- Lamoille Economic Development Corporation - <https://lamoilleconomy.org/>.
- Lamoille County Planning Commission - <https://www.lcpcvt.org/>.

Task Force Update – February 2024

Compiled from conversation at the December and February co-chair meetings.

Projects and initiatives that the task force is exploring include:

- A grocery store, or alternative options, to replace the Sterling Market since that location will not be re-developed.
- Expanding a local bulk food buyer's club to more residents.
- A survey to determine what residents of Johnson want and need.
- Ways to help the Food Shelf reach more families and expand their footprint.
- Running a community meal program to provide food and connection.
- Researching opportunities to form a community center.

In November, the Food Access and Awareness Task Force hosted a panel discussion featuring representatives from local grocery co-ops and community-owned store models, with support from Ben Doyle at the Preservation Trust of Vermont. This conversation helped highlight potential paths, and uncover challenges, for bringing a sustainable grocery option back to Johnson.

To further this effort, the task force launched a GoFundMe campaign to support the development of the Johnson General Store at 201 Lower Main Street East, raising \$4,013 as of February 6, 2025. These funds have allowed the store's owner to purchase essential equipment. Fundraising is ongoing (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/donate-to-michael-mignones-community-grocery-project>.) In December, the proprietor secured a loan from the village's revolving loan fund, a critical step in increasing grocery access in town. Renovations are currently underway, and if all goes as planned, the store hopes to open as early as March, 2025.

Beyond grocery access, the task force is working toward establishing a community meal program all year round. The Vermont Studio Center has offered its dining hall as a gathering space, and group members have visited other towns, including Hardwick, to learn from successful models like the Civic Standard's community dinners. Plans are in motion to host a panel featuring representatives from Roxbury and Marshfield, two towns with well-established weekly free meal programs, to explore best practices for long-term sustainability. The first meal is scheduled for **May 15, 2025**, and attendance and donations will help gauge community interest in making these meals a recurring event.

Another initiative is expanding a local bulk food buying group, which currently serves around 18-20 members. Additionally, there have been discussions with the Johnson Food Shelf, which continues to serve more families despite operating in a space that is increasingly constrained. Exploring potential alternative locations remains an important topic, allowing the organization to expand while freeing up the current location for recreational opportunities alongside the rail trail.

To ensure these efforts align with the needs of Johnson residents, the task force is launching a community-wide food survey this month. The survey will be sent by mail and will serve as a vital tool in understanding food access challenges, identifying gaps, and guiding future initiatives. Responses will be collected through Town Meeting Day, 2025, allowing the task force to incorporate community input into its ongoing work. The survey is also available online (<https://forms.gle/qEnTGIMrqEi26edH6>.)

These efforts reflect a growing momentum in Johnson's food access initiatives, and the task force is eager to keep the community engaged and informed as progress continues.



► Develop a Housing Strategy

A task force could be formed to increase housing outside of the floodplain to replace lost units and add additional housing units including senior housing and rental apartments in Johnson. Adding and replacing units would build the town's grand list and provide housing for those wishing to remain in the community after losing homes or rental units to flooding and buyouts. This group could work with state housing authorities, housing finance agencies and other developers to encourage building in Johnson. In addition, this group could look into mixed use development with businesses on first floors and housing above, extending village water and sewer, and develop incentives for businesses and developers to come to Johnson. This group could pursue additional efforts to improve existing housing through weatherization to increase the affordability for residents, creation of additional rental units, homeshare, or other modes of expanding housing units within existing structures.

Facilitator: Kaziah Haviland, *Village Trust Director*, VCRD

Resource Team: David Bergh, *Interim President*, Vermont State University

Elise Greaves, *Housing Stewardship Coordinator*, Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

Jake Hemmerick, *Planning and Policy Manager*, VT Department of Housing & Community Development

Jess Hyman, *Associate Director*, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity Statewide Housing Advocacy Programs

Marc Mastrangelo, *Assistant Planner*, Lamoille County Planning Commission

Pat Moulton, *Central Vermont Recovery Officer*, Vermont Recovery Office

Randall Szott, *Community and Economic Development Specialist*, Town of Johnson

**If interested in this work in Johnson contact laura@vtrural.org or (802)234-1646*

Current status and overview of the issue today

- Lamoille Housing Partnership (LHP) and Down Street are in the middle of a merger
- 17 Buyout properties in Town
- Wastewater system repair/relocation - received funding for work
- Impacts of Village zoning and uniform building code in town
- There are no floodplain restrictions in the code, they depend on FEMA maps
- Current FEMA flood maps are outdated. Recently updated maps don't include flooding information from 2023 which may delay approval process for new maps.
- Railroad St transition from single family housing to multi-unit
- Vermont State University, Johnson campus, is working with Lamoille Housing Partnership on the sale of a building to be used for senior housing
- University is open to additional partnerships around housing
- Homeowner to rental population is roughly 50/50
- All types of housing are needed: single family homes, rental units, senior housing
- Jenna's Promise: recovery housing and investment in workforce
- Diverse housing opportunities = diverse, welcoming community
- Previous Landlords have sold properties to new ones and rents have doubled
- Most of the single-family homes in the village area have converted to duplexes or apartments
- People have heard that out-of-state developers are looking to buy up property and develop it to make money, not benefit the town.
- Replacement effort on existing mobile homes. This is both positive and negative because some sit in an area where they are at risk for future flooding.

Priority Action Steps

1. Conversation with Lamoille Housing Partnership/Down Street about current activities and long term plans. Making sure efforts aren't duplicated.
2. Conversation with Vermont State College about current activities and future possibilities for housing on campus
3. Fact finding: use of deed restrictions, buyout locations, housing needs assessment, opportunity zones, information on homeownership vs. rental, Infrastructure constraints, floodplain
4. Locate buildable parcels within town
5. Reassess need for Housing Task force (are other organizations already doing this work), what does this task force need to address?

Other Potential Action Ideas

- Investigate Land Bank idea
- Investigate Housing Trust idea. Look at homeownership incentives - they can often pull together a downpayment but then can't afford the monthly payment.
- Understand where buyouts are and how they impact the town
- Understand the use of deed restrictions for affordability and building equity for owners
- Housing needs assessment, Survey of what people are interested in
- Look at economic impacts for the community of homeownership vs rental
 - As data points
 - Qualitative - how does housing diversity add to community
- Look at floodplain restoration and mitigation projects (ANR). Look at flood plain encroachments to ensure we don't lose more housing
- Understand constraints infrastructure has on housing. How does it limit housing growth?
- What can the opportunity zone do for us regarding housing?
- Investigate ways we can increase housing for older Vermonters
- Communications strategy to community

Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

These recommendations for other potential actions and resources to consider were shared by Visiting Resource Team members representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, and encompass their experience, past success and consideration of the community's unique assets and needs.

Action Recommendations

Commission a survey to determine current and future housing needs, including what types of housing will be needed and household size. Analyze existing housing stock to determine what's available and what's at risk, then determine the gaps.

Start with conversations, not a study. What is the primary need/goal for Johnson? Is it more housing units, better housing units, fewer flood-prone units, etc.? Determine who is working in the housing arena (public, private, nonprofit), generally and in Johnson. Ask them about what works/doesn't work, what strategies make the most difference, etc. Develop an Eisenhower-type matrix with quick/lengthy time to accomplish (urgency) and more/less money (importance) as the axis. Develop a realistic sense of what can be accomplished, when, and what level of effort will be involved. Housing solutions are a marathon, not a sprint.

Study if/where there are additional opportunities to build housing.

Determine whether weatherization is a realistic community strategy – What would success look like, i.e. 5, 50, or 150 units weatherized? Is it an investment landlords will make? Are there opportunities to bring in outside funding to buy down the cost of private investment?

Understand and begin planning for community impacts if the state university closes. How will this change the economics – and housing needs – of the community? How have other college towns transitioned?

Consider a quarterly housing investment round table with key partners: housing developers (Downstreet), university leaders, village/town elected officials, LCPC, and others who can help move housing opportunities forward.

Resources

- Housing Partners:
 - Lamoille County Planning Commission <https://www.lcpcvt.org/>
 - Lamoille Housing Partnership/ Downstreet - <https://downstreet.org/> Downstreet – Angie Harbin, Executive Director - 802-477-1335 (office) 503-929-9591 (cell) aharbin@downstreet.org.
 - Habitat for Humanity <https://vermonthabitat.org/>
 - Dept. of Children & Family Services, <https://dcf.vermont.gov/>
 - Lamoille Community House <https://lamoilleshelter.org/>
 - Capstone Community Action Explore lessons learned from Capstone’s weatherization program - <https://capstonevt.org/home-weatherization>.
 - HomeShare Vermont <https://www.homesharevermont.org/>
 - Vermont Housing Finance Agency <https://vhfa.org/>
 - VHFA - local housing committee tool kit. <https://www.housingdata.org/toolbox/home>.
 - USDA Rural Development, <https://www.rd.usda.gov/>
 - Town and Village of Johnson <https://townofjohnson.com/>
- [The Lamoille County Housing Assessment](#) (PDF).
- Agency of Commerce and Community Development – ACCD, <https://accd.vermont.gov/>
- Vermont State College system - <https://www.vsc.edu/>
- Look into Federal Resources
- State Flood recovery office -Pat Moulton (contact in Resource Team section)
- Shared Equity Down Payment <https://downstreet.org/home-buyers/>.
- Green Mountain Home Repair downstreet.org/gmhr.
- 2025 Housing Needs Assessment, which includes a chapter on Lamoille County. https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/Housing/Housing-Needs-Assessment/2025-2029/VT-HNA-2025.pdf.
- Vermont Community Leadership Guide: resources starting on page 92 <https://www.vtrural.org/sites/default/files/TheGuide.pdf>.
- [Homes for All Toolkit](#) (PDF version of printed document, Randall Szott has printed version if needed)
- Evernorth – Kathy Beyer, Senior Vice President--Real Estate Development, KBeyer@evernorthus.org.
- Talk with communities from Southern Vermont College, Green Mountain College and the College of St. Joseph, Vermont Collage of Fine Arts, Marlboro College closings about lessons learned and paths forward.

- How did the community and the municipality engage? What changes did the community experience related to housing and economics?
- Explore Window Dressers program for short-term fixes to existing buildings
<https://windowdressers.org/vermont-community-builds/>.
- Talk to other housing committees around the state and people working on flood recovery housing
 - Jon Copans in Montpelier <https://www.montpelier-vt.org/1456/Montpelier-Commission-for-Recovery-and-R>.
 - Tess Taylor, Homelessness and Housing Liaison in Barre City. ttaylor@barrecity.org.
 - Hinesburg Housing Committee (has been contacted and open to email connections with the Johnson group - Carl Bohlen, larcredsox@gmavt.net).
- Read and connect with other communities working on housing such as:
 - Rutland: <https://www.vermontpublic.org/local-news/2024-10-09/rutland-addressing-common-housing-complaint-cant-afford-modest-home-affordability-availability-housing-log-jam>.
 - Woodstock: <https://m.sevendaysvt.com/news/woodstocks-worker-housing-program-finds-many-takers-42022175>.
 - Local Deeds program in Woodstock: <https://woodstockcommunitytrust.org/current-projects/local-deeds.html>.
- A guide put together by Rutland Regional Planning Commission that could be emulated:
<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:55cff9ce-3b1d-472f-a8aa-141dc466279b>.
- [Vermont](#) Homes in White River Junction
- [Huntington Homes](#)
- Randolph housing development [Salisbury Square- more info](#) <https://www.wcax.com/2024/10/16/randolph-housing-development-taking-shape/>.
- Working Communities Challenge – Lamoille United Way – Saudia LaMont - saudia@uwlamoille.org
 - One housing group in the White River Valley focused on housing and has a pretty comprehensive [website](#) - also connected to the Randolph development above.

Task Force Update – February 2025

Compiled from conversation at the December and February co-chair meetings.

The task force has met with representatives of Evernorth and Downstreet, two local non-profits that are involved in the development of affordable housing in Vermont. (Lamoille Housing Partnership has recently merged with Downstreet).

Like the Downtown Reconfiguration and Redevelopment Task Force, the Housing Task Force will utilize the Lamoille County Planning Commission's flood modeling results; and rely in part on the outcomes of the College/Town Connection Task Force's conversations with Vermont State University regarding the potential for sharing or disposal of underutilized buildings or land for housing development.

The February 18th Selectboard meeting will be hosting the State Treasurer Mike Pieciak to discuss economic and resilience opportunities, and a future selectboard meeting will host the Commissioner of Housing. The group and any residents are encouraged to attend and show their support for housing in Johnson. The industrial park has been approved to be mixed use including 8-10 homes.

► Downtown Reconfiguration and Redevelopment

Through public input and engagement, including property owners and businesses downtown, a task force could create a vision and plan for Johnson's downtown and core services. In coordination with property owners, town officials, college representatives, residents, and businesses this group could identify and map out flood prone parcels and available land out of the flood zone to relocate services such as the grocery store, library, post office, town offices, wastewater plant, businesses and more. This vision could include plans to enable services to remain open during town-wide emergencies. Some identified opportunities include turning some of the existing downtown footprint into floodplain parks with gazebos, riparian buffers, and river access; relocating the post office and grocery store with additional housing and town operations to School Street, North of the Gihon River, or the college property. This group could also explore places for public restrooms, informational signage for visitors and residents, and more.

Facilitator: Alyssa Johnson, *Community Visit Program Manager*, VCRD

Co-chairs: Adrienne Parker, adiestevson@gmail.com, 314-598-7226

Paul Warden, pwarden@townofjohnson.com, 802-371-7814

Resource Team: Mindy Blank, *Community Resilience Organization*

Gary Hollaway, *Program Manager*, State of Vermont Downtown

Melissa Manka, *Regional Planner*, Lamoille County Planning Commission

Bonnie Waninger, *Federal Funding Program Specialist*, Vermont League of Cities and Towns

Randall Szott, *Community and Economic Development Specialist*, Town of Johnson

Current status and overview of the issue today

- Lamoille River is there!
- State regulations w/ river
- Evaluating future of wastewater treatment plant – potential hardening plans
- Library grant – move historic building to Legion field (undergoing evaluation – hope to move next May)
- Several storefronts *that have* recovered and that *have not* recovered
- Unused Woolen Mill Space (open to input)
- Pomerleau – flood hardening grant
- Municipal building repaired but in floodplain
- New Woolen Mill restaurant
- Village designation
- Light industrial park bond passed Fall 2024
- Arboretum
- LVRT -Lamoille Valley Rail Trail
- Form based code
- Rec Plan
- Lamoille County Planning Commission working on Hazard Mitigation Grant

Priority Action Steps

1. Approach SB + Trustees regarding a professional staff planner position (job description needed) and seek town/resident input
2. Funding resources for prof planning support
3. Resiliency case study & resource research
4. Connect with other task force groups

Other Potential Action Ideas

- Check into resources for keeping current downtown
- Food/restaurant – breakfast/lunch customer base
- Move to School St.

- Hostel for bikers, incubator, coworking ideas @ Woolen Mill
- Brewpub – beer/meal, not monthly
- Test kitchen rotating space
- Parking lot at former Sterling Market, become a park/dog park
- Branding/social media presence
- Beautification Committee: Mini grants, Public art, Flowers
- Downtown-wide sculpture park that was walkable
- Rain garden, grants with Conservation Commission
- More defined community garden plus veggies
- Youth/community center: music art, tutoring
- Find out what is happening with grocery store
- Recruit the Gemy
- Rice/cranberry patties
- Comprehensive asset mapping/strategic planning e.g., library moving
- Visibility/engagement w/ SB & trustees
 - Temporary City Planner position/mapping
- Simulating different scenarios
- Promoting flood resilience
 - Individual buildings
 - New construction and retrofits
- Town plan map/visual
 - Canals, rain garden, flooding
- Pavilion structure w/ rotating vendors
- Advisory committee for planner
- Rail Trail Committee
 - Campground @ Homes Meadow for overnight camping
 - Purchased & SLR is doing flood modeling
- Talk with Rec Committee Grocery Store/Food group
- Make a list of desired business (hardware, pharmacy)
- Downtown zoning
- Pizza place, Co-op (Community-oriented smaller deli/grocery)
- Reach out to established brands
- Mapping places for water to be held
 - Looking @ buyout areas, lowering floodplain
- Green energy
 - solar, hydro etc.

Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

These recommendations for other potential actions and resources to consider were shared by Visiting Resource Team members representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, and encompass their experience, past success and consideration of the community's unique assets and needs.

Action Recommendations

Have an engineering scoping study done to determine optimal locations for flood plain restoration or other flood mitigation projects in Johnson. Other Vermont communities (Northfield, Brattleboro) have been successful at identifying places where flood plain access could be restored, reducing flooding in other parts of the community.

Connect with other communities in the watershed on flood mitigation with an eye toward reducing flood levels.

Explore the possibility of securing a downtown or new town center designation from the state which can open up tax credits for business and housing development, priority access to grants, and can reduce Act 250 permit requirements for housing development in the downtown.

Explore developing a downtown program to support local businesses. This is a required part of a downtown designation.

Learn about lessons learned from past community buyouts. Ask FEMA where full community floodplain buyouts/relocations have occurred. Ask those communities what worked, what didn't, and what they'd do differently. The 1993 Midwest floods have some interesting lessons learned in the short- and long-terms.

Work with Lamoille County Planning Commission and allied partners to scope a project that will explore development opportunities/constraints with a focus on connecting spaces (streets), lots and areas for new

development visions to apply for a Municipal Planning Grant in early 2025. Focus consulting services on visual development scenarios to help the community, college, and landowners explore different designs and opportunities. Use collaborative design methods and conversations to integrate visions across task forces and support implementation in the municipal/village plans, form-based code, college plans, nonprofit housing investments, state transportation improvement plans/bike-ped funding, local capital investments and any outside assistance. Move from visions that jumpstart new projects to fueling Johnson's future with people power.

Resources

- Look at the Hardwick as an example
- Lamoille County Planning Commission (via town/village) <https://www.lcpcvt.org/>
- Grants for planning, municipal planning grant
- Ensure that planning includes conservation and access. It could be linked with the conversation about recreational access. Friends of the Winooski owns a lot of stream bank parcels on the Lamoille and could be consulted as part of this work. <https://winooskiriver.org/>
- The Municipal Vulnerability Index developed by ANR could be used to inform decision making. <https://climatechange.vermont.gov/mvi>
- Agency of Commerce and Community Development – ACCD, <https://accd.vermont.gov/> CDBG-DR, etc.
- Tropical Storm Irene cases studies (VDAT)
- Bob Stevens, architects, engineers
- Business pitches
- Current EDA grant: identifying low risk areas for economic development
- VNRC Small Grants for Smart Growth – for visioning <https://vnrc.org/small-grants-for-smart-growth/>
- MTAP grant - \$\$\$ for a consultant
- Grassroots organizing!
- To get grants, you need to know what you want to do! Turn it into a project – Vermont League of Cities and Towns coaching via town/village
- Human capital/clean-up
- USDA funding – through nonprofit/town
- \$ vs. effort mapping
- Vermont Urban & Community Forestry grants (applications open now, due January) <https://vtcommunityforestry.org/>
- VOREC Community Grant Program <https://fpr.vermont.gov/about/grants>
- River conservation and restoration projects
 - Vermont River Conservancy <https://vermontriverconservancy.org/> The conservancy has played a key role in other successful flood plain restoration projects in downtowns.
 - Vermont Land Trust <https://vlt.org/>
 - Watersheds United <https://www.watershedsunitedvt.org/>
- NRCS Watershed and Flood Plain Operations Program. This program can be used to scope out potential projects for flood plains, buffers and other flood reduction strategies, engineer the project, and then construct it, as long as 20% of the benefit goes to a farm. Given the number of farms downstream of Johnson that would be an easy requirement to meet. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/watershed-protection-and-flood-prevention-operations-wfpo-program>
- Lake Champlain Basin Program. Although LCBP's primary work is on water quality, reducing flood impacts benefits water quality. LCBP has funding for both planning of projects and implementation. <https://www.lcbp.org/>
- Leahy Institute at UVM, - <https://www.uvm.edu/ruralpartnerships>
 - Pitch a project
 - Ask for research help for the community relocation.

Task Force Update – February 2025

Compiled from conversation at the December and February co-chair meetings.

This task force's goal is to work with the flood model being developed by the Lamoille County Planning Commission's consultant to develop a plan that helps the community understand the impacts of the buyouts and how the downtown could be reconfigured to improve its resiliency through mindful redevelopment and mitigation. They are gathering resources from other area partners such as the Lamoille County Conservation District, ANR databases, etc.

The Task Force's goal is to create a Downtown Reconfiguration and Redevelopment Plan, that includes an Essential Facilities Relocation Plan (retail, post office, town offices, library, grocery store, wastewater plant, commercial, etc.) and a Downtown Repurposing Plan (floodplain parks, riparian buffers, and river access).

A part of the task is to plan for the redevelopment of the downtown in a way that the reconfigured downtown is coherent, serves commerce, has a well-designed public or civic space, and a strong sense of place, integrated with the new open spaces along the river.



This group paused meetings to receive the updated flood plain mapping from Lamoille County Planning Commission (LCPC) and will meet in February to review a list of items as priorities and potential topics for future grant opportunities. LCPC received a small downtown focused visioning grant and are determining the path forward to implement. There are also many uncertainties of the buyout timeline and process that the group is aware of and noted as relevant. Mark Leese from FEMA Community Assistance is developing some downtown maps and will review with this group.

► Capitalize and Increase Recreational Economic Opportunities

Building upon the unique location of Johnson, a task force could work to promote recreational tourism from the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, the Long Trail, the Lamoille River, and the many other trails. This group could encourage tourists to visit Johnson's downtown, resupply, eat, and stay through collective visioning, signage, promotional material, structured activities and events for residents and some events catered to folks from out-of-town such as a bike or canoe race. Building on the current feasibility study of getting Lamoille Valley Rail Trail users from the trail to downtown, additional signage, bike lanes, and other amenities could be identified and developed. Other recreational opportunities to explore and build out include a garden and historic walks, dog park, adult recreation leagues, a campground, and power sports trails and access points. This group could partner with the Conservation Commission and other local groups and organizations to create new greenspace along the river and increase river access through buyouts and other means.

Facilitator: Jessica Savage, *Community Collaboration Director*, VCRD, jessica@vtrural.org

Co-Chairs: Kathy Black, kathyblack789@gmail.com, 730-3949

Diana Osborn, digosborn@gmail.com, 802-635-2911

Resource Team: Andy Barker, Program Officer, Vermont Community Foundation

Jackie Dagger, Program Manager, Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative

Shaun Fielder, Community Programs Specialist, USDA Rural Development

Victoria Hellwig, Regional Planner, Lamoille County Planning Commission

Randall Szott, Community and Economic Development Specialist, Town of Johnson

Keagan Tierney, Director of Field Programs, Green Mountain Club

Current status and overview of the issue today

- Grade school rec committee that existed about 20 years ago – and it is in existence currently – they are looking for a new chair? Director?
- Has the new Rec Director has been hired in town?
- Kids sports seem to be in a pretty strong space – opportunities to connect with college?
- Conservation commission – lots of overlap with the tree board started an arboretum – “Checkerberry Field”
- Business along the rail trail that rents bikes and leads tours – Lamoille valley bike tours
- Johnson has a rail trail committee – 8 members (Doug is the chair)
- College offers some opportunities that don't get a lot of town attendance: pickleball, hiking, disc golf (18 holes), pool,
- Another disc golf course exists on hogback
- Skate park
- Lots of gravel biking opportunities in Johnson

Priority Action Steps

1. Develop an inventory of recreational assets (facilities, programs, town & college) in town.
2. Talk to other groups in town that are already involved in recreation planning/management and recreation economy (rail trail committee, town rec committee, college, adjacent businesses like Lamoille valley bike tours and Moogs).
3. Review/research what analysis/recreation planning has already been done in town that may be sitting on a shelf gathering dust.
4. Complete a recreation gap analysis.
5. Communicate the recreation opportunities that exist at the college and invite people to participate – reciprocate by inviting college students into town.

Other Potential Action Ideas

- Condensing the broad group mission to something that is specific and attainable
- Ability to market the desirability of Johnson to future residents and prospective college students/student athletes
- Develop and build-out and inventory of recreational assets that exist in Johnson
 - Talk to the people that are running the businesses in town that are serving these assets/communities
- Develop a list of resource needs in town i.e.
 - finish building out a sidewalk network
 - a sidewalk network that connects with trails and paths
 - develop a public camping opportunity
 - learn about camping options at Holmes Field
 - identify other public lodging opportunities that are nicer than camping – hostel, Airbnb's
- Consider building communication bridges:
 - communication recreation opportunities at the college for the community
 - develop external communication and marketing opportunities for drawing in people from outside of Johnson
 - explore a town marketing materials
 - review town website to see what exists there to market recreational opportunities – or expanded e-media presence on the town or stand-alone
- Connect with the rail trail committee to learn what they have been working on – they are building out a map currently
- Interview other resources in town to see what they have as opportunities and ideas
- Get a list of all the property that is potentially getting bought out by FEMA
- Planning commission, once upon a time, developed a trail inventory and vision of a town wide trail system
- How to attract long trail hikers into town and keep them here to spend some money
- Develop an insta-cart or grocery delivery option for college kids, hikers, and other recreation users
- Identify opportunity for shuttle services to other destination areas – for hikers, students, others
- Brownfields plan: Look into making the talc mill and/or the former Parker & Sterns for a recreation hub
- Tap into the Johnson town recreation committee for partnership
- Partner with Johnson Campus of the Vermont State University for running events and other activities (ex: 5k run)
- Bring lighting into the old mill park ballfields
- Figure out activities to bring people out to old mill park
- Trunk or treat
- Attract recreation adjacent businesses:
 - brewery/bar
 - café/coffee shop
 - talk to Moogs owner to see if he would be interested in another business opportunity that is recreation adjacent
- Create adult leagues for sports
- What are the low hanging fruit for phone apps that can connect people to recreation opportunities?
- Build out more opportunities for music – develop opportunities for a venue
- Festival/arts/music opportunities at recreational spaces- explore multi-use opportunities for recreational spaces
- Put old mill park on google maps.
- Read your recreation chapter in the town plan – do it as a book club
- Read recreation plan on your town website
- Set small achievable goals

Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

These recommendations for other potential actions and resources to consider were shared by Visiting Resource Team members representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, and encompass their experience, past success and consideration of the community's unique assets and needs.

Action Recommendations

Set a strategy. What is most important to develop now – recreation opportunities for locals or recreation-related economic opportunities? Visitors bring additional money to the community; locals recycle money already in the community. Recreational opportunities can foster or strengthen a sense of community. Who are the recreational resources for – most mentioned in the description are higher income opportunities. What opportunities do village residents want?

Talk with communities that have done this successfully, especially those with a trail end that is outside the village center

Conduct trail user interviews and observational user counts – who is currently bypassing the village (and why), who is currently going to the village (and why), what do visitors want/need and what do local users want/need?

Map what exists now. The map can be simple. Ask residents, including youth, where they recreate now and what's missing. Calendar of events of the things happening in the community can be a huge benefit.

Does your inventory of assets look the same for local folks and those who are coming from elsewhere – What are your pinch points, what is preventing your recreation economy from flourishing; Is there opportunity to get a national level event/race/etc., to base in Johnson (Tough Mudder, triathlon).

Explore ideas for a high-profile event (locally-led or part of a national 'circuit' - e.g. triathlon) that brings people into town to discover/re-discover Johnson.

Build an outreach plan to key audiences - engaging those audiences in the design of the Calendar (e.g. students, towns folk, tourists, nearby towns, niche groups (e.g. cyclists, disc golfers)).

Review the town website, existing town plans and documents to learn from what others have planned to do. <https://townofjohnson.com/documents/plans/> Johnson Municipal Plan Recreation chapter specifically. Johnson "Area Wide Plan" has some conceptual plans and next steps for brownfield properties in town to become recreational hubs.

Keep in touch with Randall Szott about the Recreation Economy for Rural Communities assistance that the Town applied for.

Communication across groups will be a helpful role, including other task forces and town committees. Stronger communication and awareness within the community will be an important outcome! Consider strategies for social media, FPF posting, mailings, tabling/one-page handouts at local events and the College. A community calendar.

Continue to explore "private" opportunities, in addition to opportunities in public places. The public process is very slow!

Unique location – but there are examples to draw from both successes and failures.

A lot of visioning and planning work has been done in the past – establishing a path forward with professional help can help get over the initial hurdle of putting lots of this ‘ideation’ into action.

Leveraging resources through partnerships – town and ...college, rail trail committee, outside recreation organizations.

Prioritizing recreation inventory is really important.

Tourism is something that you potentially already have that you could pick off as low-hanging fruit (long trial, college, LVRT) – marketing and fostering the existing opportunities that you already have.

Power of information is critical – making sure people know how to get to places, use places, providing information to potential users to make them feel welcome and safe.

Resources

- Local/Regional community groups to connect with include: Johnson Rail Trail Committee, Skatepark Committee, Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Tree Board; Randall Szott, Johnson Community Economic Development Specialist (contact listed in the Resource section); Tuesday Night Live/Pizza Night group, great opportunity for communication; Wolcott Community Forest Committee; Cambridge Trails Committee (perspective/advice on their experience & process); Lamoille Regional LVRT Committee.
- Vermont Urban & Community Forestry grants <https://vtcommunityforestry.org/>
- VOREC Community Grant Program – funded through 1-time state funding so it comes and goes <https://fpr.vermont.gov/about/grants>
- River conservation and restoration projects - Vermont River Conservancy <https://vermontriverconservancy.org/> and/or Vermont Land Trust <https://vlt.org/> and/or Watersheds United <https://www.watershedsunitedvt.org/>
- Potential planning assistance National Park Service Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program technical assistance (staffing, potential planning consultant, community engagement), <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/index.htm>
- EPA Recreation Economy for Rural Communities Program, <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/recreation-economy-rural-communities> (Town of Johnson applied Fall 2024)
- Vermont Outdoor Recreation Community Grant Program <https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/recreation-grants/vorec-community-grant-program>
- Regional and Local Impact grant at VT Community Foundation for larger projects <https://vermontcf.org/>
- Arts & Social Cohesion grant at VT Community Foundation for arts-related activities <https://vermontcf.org/>
- Hip Camp <https://www.hipcamp.com/en-US> could be a potential camping solution on private lands where folks are willing to host
- Recreation economies for rural communities program – technical assistant program similar to what VCRD is doing but more details and focused on recreation - <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/recreation-economy-rural-communities>
- Northern Border Regional Commission has invested in RERC and is committing to funding 4 towns <https://www.nbrc.gov/>
- Better Places programs through the state – community match program <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/better-places>
- Vermont Recreation and Parks Association <https://www.vrpa.org/>
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (large scale projects and heavily bureaucratic). <https://lwcfc coalition.org/>
- Rural community transit operating in NEK – example of an opportunity to learn from. <https://www.riderct.org/>
- Synergy between recreation/food/new ideas can go a long way.

- Vermont Community Foundation, keep in touch for funding opportunities.
 - Spark grant at VT Community Foundation for small projects <https://vermontcf.org/funds/spark/>
 - Regional impact grant - <https://vermontcf.org/funds/regional-and-local-impact/> \$25,000

Task Force Update – February 2025

Compiled from conversation at the December and February co-chair meetings.

This task force is dedicated to identifying and promoting recreational economic opportunities within Johnson. This group continues to hold space to think big around the Recreation Economy supporting Johnson’s ability to thrive. The Conservation Commission, Rail Trail Committee, and Johnson Recreation have regular overlapping group members in attendance, along with representation from VTSU and several recreation focused organizations and businesses, both from Johnson and from neighboring communities

The task force is reviewing existing plans and resources and working on an inventory of current recreational assets with a goal of organizing the information for inclusion on a variety of websites (such as the town’s with the Selectboard’s consent or Vermont Tourism or Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economy) There is also progress with development of a recreation economy website through forming a 501c3 non-profit, which will include all recreational assets in Johnson. A task force mission is to improve communication within and beyond Johnson residents.

The next step in the inventory is connecting with even more of the stakeholder groups to better understand the breadth of recreation opportunities as well as future needs. The final goal will be a gap analysis to determine what is missing. Then the task force will then identify immediate, short range and long term projects such as identifying and making logical trail connections or perhaps lighting at the ballfield or organizing an event.

The group wants to partner with others doing similar, and tangential, work and determine what is most important to advance collectively to effectively enhance the recreational and economic opportunities without over stretching the community.



► Enhance and Strengthen the College/Town Connection

This group's goal is to build a stronger connection between the town and college. Representatives from both entities would enable expansion of programming and creative visioning of the existing spaces. Building upon the sports mentor program, additional programming for college students to be youth mentors, interns at businesses, or other connections in Johnson, would enable college students to connect with, and be involved in, the greater Johnson community. This group could also explore existing college building use and creative repurposing building into a hostel, grocery store, community center, or other shared town amenities. The group could explore shared use models for existing infrastructure of the theater space and SHAPE fitness/pool center to be profitable and a community asset.

Facilitator: Laura Cavin Bailey, *Climate Economy Program Manager*, VCRD, laura@vtrural.org

Co-Chairs: Sonja Kivela, slk06150@vsc.edu, 802-557-8107

Emma Fernandez

Resource Team: Katie Buckley, *Federal Funding Assistance Program Director*, Vermont League of Cities & Towns

Amy Cunningham, *Deputy Director*, Vermont Arts Council

Allison Neal, *Co-Chair*, Northfield-Norwich Partnership Task Force

Randall Szott, *Community and Economic Development Specialist*, Town of Johnson

Current status and overview of the issue today:

- SHAPE is a jewel, purpose: athletics, education (less now), and community: Tiered memberships, Community / Shared Use
- Dibden Center for Arts, Events
- Dining Hall connections are not well advertised but open to the public.
- Free home athletic events
- Library on campus
- Land + Building + Dorms
- Martinetti Hall close to town and could be repurposed.
- Broader campus trails + public art installations
- Connected to municipal water + wastewater
- Guest speakers
- Really nice movie theater, 35 seats
- Faculty/expertise
- Students, volunteer + internships
- Art center + resources, sculpture, studios, equipment, etc.
- Classrooms
- Athlete/JES mentorship is happening now.
- Staff spread thin
- Updated disc golf course, 18 holes, free to use, many locals and visitors use it.

Priority Action Steps

1. Define Groups Mission + Goals
 - mutual goal to attract and retain students + residents
2. Connect w/ college representatives, deepen relationships + tour/assess spaces
3. Develop a list of low-hanging fruit this group could take on.
4. Create a story of Johnson, maps + rebranding
5. Town + College coordinate calendars, *mutually beneficial

Other Potential Action Ideas

- Johnson resident rate for campus facilities use
- Postings info of events on Front Porch Forum (FPF)
- Community day/open house
- Regular transportation to town/college
- Ride share app
- Public library check out day pass

- Day pass for tourists available at locations in town
- Marketing conversation w/ college marketing dept.
- Around town physical posting locations for flyers
- Student volunteers to flyer town
- Generate consistency 1 FPF/week sharing opportunities on campus “News from the Hill”
- Johnson Elementary School newsletter add events at the college that goes out digitally to all students/parents
- Studio center communication w/ leadership to share opportunities + strengthen artist events @ VSC
- Explore Tuesday night live year-round, move to campus when weather turns colder
- Open mic night, Stern performance space could happen any night of the week
- Friday night movies in the theater
- Task force tour and get an assessment of campus spaces from campus staff
- Town mentors + develop opportunities to connect w/ students and share knowledge
- Students/town meet + greet w/ new students
- Develop a town welcome wagon
- Alumni support \$\$\$, art, or music
- Grant writing to fund ideas
- Connect w/ Rec opportunities, rail trail, branding, etc.
- Learning/clarification of vacant space on campus
- Attend SB meetings
- Town signage – kiosk with information
- Develop structure within group for communications
- Pick a big idea (grow task force) to do early
- Align interest of group w/ low hanging fruit to gain energy
- Draw on personal strengths
- Thing big, start small
- Knit in college + business w/ plans
- Municipality, community, college, opportunity to lock step
- The group can move on low-hanging fruit
- Weekly communications exist, grow flyers
- Cohesive marketing opportunity
- Make splash to get attention of leadership

Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

These recommendations for other potential actions and resources to consider were shared by Visiting Resource Team members representing a wide array of professionals from across the state, and encompass their experience, past success and consideration of the community’s unique assets and needs.

Action Recommendations

Talk to Bennington about their plan to convert old high school into housing

[\(https://www.mychamplainvalley.com/video/vermont-town-commits-to-converting-old-high-school-into-housing/8997261/\)](https://www.mychamplainvalley.com/video/vermont-town-commits-to-converting-old-high-school-into-housing/8997261/)

Build realistic expectations about community impact. Understand how the community can impact the university’s decision making, and how it cannot. What roles can the community or the municipality play? Are there national examples of community interaction changing the long-term outlook for educational facility closure?

Explore opportunities for existing businesses to expand into unused college spaces. Is the university interested in having the community play matchmaker?

Create an All Community Calendar and find a way to keep it updated and accessible on the web. Build an outreach plan to key audiences - engaging those audiences in the design of the Calendar (e.g. students, towns folk, tourists, nearby towns, niche groups (e.g. cyclists, disc golfers)).

Resources

- Use a VT CDBG Planning Grant to talk with communities from Southern Vermont College, Green Mountain College and the College of St. Joseph, Vermont Collage of Fine Arts, Marlboro College closings about lessons

learned and paths forward. How did the community and the municipality engage? What short- and long-term changes did the communities experience related to housing and economics? How can Johnson start preparing in advance of a campus closure, and what steps can it take that are beneficial whether or not closure happens? https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/cdbg

- Spark grant at the VT Community Foundation for small projects; Regional and Local Impact grant at VCF for larger projects; Arts & Social Cohesion grant @ VCF for arts-related activities. <https://vermontcf.org/funds/spark/>
- Story of Johnson municipal planning grant work w/ town – many assets.
- Power of arts to bring people together Vermont Arts Council - Animating infrastructure grant design + implementation. <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/>

Task Force Update – February 2025

Compiled from conversation at the December and February co-chair meetings.

This task force is dedicated to forging and maintaining a stronger connection between Vermont State University students and faculty and residents of the town and village of Johnson.

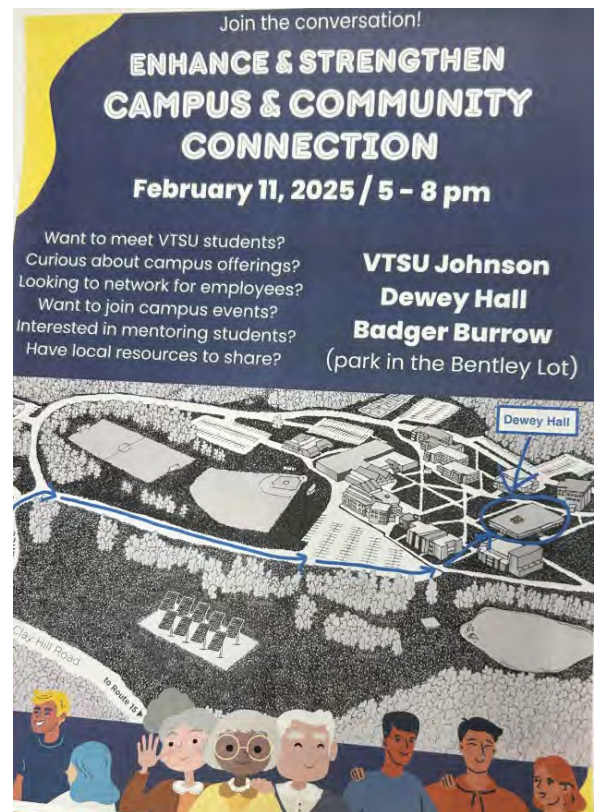
The task force is working on two main initiatives:

First, strengthening connections between students and the town by encouraging their participation in local events, fostering mentorship opportunities with residents, and partnering with local businesses for community service engagement. As part of this effort, the task force will be developing a structured approach within Fall orientation to introduce students to these opportunities, providing them with clear options and resources to help them intentionally contribute their time to the community.

Second, bringing the community up to the college by identifying ways to draw town residents to campus events. A key part of this effort is the weekly “Happenings on The Hill” post on Front Porch Forum, which informs the town about upcoming events on campus. The task force is also working with the Student Government Association (SGA) to identify events that can be open to the community and improve communication about these opportunities. Additionally, the task force is collaborating with the college to explore ways residents can access or share key campus facilities, such as the pool at Shape, the trails around campus, and the small movie theater.

The task force is in communication with Vermont State University leadership on planning efforts and future repurposing of buildings and land on campus—the college is in the process of determining which facilities could be shared or sold and repurposed. There is a lot of potential for connecting with other task forces and town efforts at the opportunities arising on campus.

The group has been meeting bi-weekly and will be hosting their first town/campus event on February 11th from 5-8 pm at the VTSU Johnson, Dewey Hall Badger Burrow. It will be a time to connect, share resources, and build relationships. New student members have been attending via word of mouth. The group is always open to community members interested in joining ([contact information available here](#)).



VI. Re-Imagine Johnson Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held with over 150 Johnson community members and the VCRD Visiting Team on July 22, 2024 and through a paper and online survey

Although the prioritization work of the Re-Imagine Johnson 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.

Opening full community conversation

What are the Assets in Johnson?

- College overall is a great asset to Johnson
- Johnson's college also provided food and beds during flooding last year.
- Businesses in Johnson
- Community members and how quickly they responded during flooding coming together and supported one another
- Neighborly love, neighbors really care for one another and support one another and this was demonstrated during the 2024 flooding
- Roll out of Fiber internet
- Community Oven and providing free pizza
- Volunteer fire department and their willingness to engage and step by step communications
- VT alerts from the State
- People sharing on Front Porch Forum
- Studio center
- Outdoor recreation in Johnson, Long trail, Lamoille Rail Trail, Lamoille River
- Beautiful river and rail trail
- Volunteer efforts when the original floods happened, people came together to get things done quickly
- Purchase of the Woolen Mill and Jenna's Promise
- New shops in town and other businesses
- The Café and library
- Elected officials at state and local level, selectboard and village trustees work hard to help this town and set an example
- Relocating the library quickly to enable youth consistent opportunities and sense of normalcy for young people, and the librarians
- Tuesday Night Live

What are the Challenges?

- Not having a grocery store in town.
- Environmental challenges – mitigating flooding.
- System solutions that don't stop at the town boundaries - we need to not just push the water down the river and can't solve problems in Johnson alone, need watershed approach
- Location of downtown and prone to flooding
- Climate information especially when it relates to the future of Johnson.
- NOAA hydrology not accurate for local scale
- Mapping and road challenges, it's difficult to find one place for all road closures, state and town have separate systems
- Housing inequities and exacerbated housing inequalities
- FEMA buyouts and the loss of community and those that remain making up the missed tax revenue from bought out houses
- Social issues, friendships lost when people leave town
- Lack of generational turnover – Who is the next group? GenX being left out of leadership
- Johnson's college – low enrollment, lack of sustainability
- Local emergency response teams make decisions but are not trained in hydrology/stream gauges, engineering, architecture, structural engineering, etc.
- Don't have a map of where vulnerable folks like, or know where to send vulnerable people and especially elders in times of need
- Lack of information about climate change
- No early warning systems for river flooding in Vermont
- Resources that provide residents with information for climate action.
- Loss of jobs and how that contributes to poverty.
- Village sewage treatment plan is in peril
- Taxes are high and becoming unaffordable
- Need infrastructure so people enjoying the outdoor recreation also visit and spend time and money in Johnson
- No place for visitors to stay overnight

Opportunities: What Should Be Done / What Action Can Be Taken by the Community?

- Closing the gap between the college and the town
- Build a transportation system for Johnson.
- Increase wetlands and beaver habitat
- Low lying areas changed to parking or flood plains.
- Build water infrastructure that is environmentally friendly.
- Upstream and downstream watershed solutions.
- Mapping all rivers tributaries for the whole watershed
- Working up a map or design of which towns are related, creating a plan similar to the Tennessee Valley to deal with the whole watershed.
- Wetland creation to mitigate flooding

- Startups helping people create livelihoods, skill building, catering, etc. and creating opportunities
- Youth camps and after school programs - get college athletes to be youth role models to work in these programs.
- Getting college students more involved in the community as role models
- We need more trails
- Dredge the river and look at other communities that have dredged their rivers
- Capitalizing the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail with hostels, food, bed and breakfast
- Map gravel roads for bikers
- Make trails traversable for all kinds of bikes
- Support and build comradery for youth in Johnson and create a sense of place for teens.
- Comradery of community members and organization.
- Make an evacuation plan that shows how folks can evacuate from flooding
- Plan and to re-design our desired “new town” with community input
- Group/committee to rethink and re-configure Johnson downtown.
- Put a canal system in to redirect water into holding places and around buildings.
- Enhance and expand the working partnership between town and the college – for example local farmers supplying the college food instead of big corporate farmers
- More involvement between town and college- facilities, pool, etc.
- Make a community center at the college
- Grocery store owned by community members and managed by them (like a co-op).
- Purchasing agricultural land upstream
- Connect farms and food hubs
- Have seasonal events like sap runs and use the planning commission more
- Move critical infrastructure (grocery store, post office) away from flooding
- Dog park
- More art in the community
- Adult recreation groups/leagues
- A Gazebo for activities in Johnsons and can be used for meetings when there is a flood.
- Access to land, “room to roam”. Where people can get off trail and access food and water from a local farm.
- Better warning system for floods etc. Also, it has to provide timely information.
- Merger between the Village and Town to help the tax issue
- Better sources for consolidated information, crowd source flood data and citizen science opportunities
- Reduce taxes.
- Accessible information for road users in Johnson.
- Build more housing for low to middle income households, work with management companies to develop
- Working with RCT to improve public transportation
- Better utilize the revolving loan fund used to create and support businesses
- Town website could provide live updates and more information
- More community connection (like Tuesday Night Live)
- Property owners involved in redevelopment of downtown
- Johnson could ask the college to redesign and make it an art center
- A village center at the college with housing around the perimeter of the loop to help with affordability, access to services, power generation from the hill, connecting it to the village
- Skill share place
- Incubator kitchen, support venture capitalist

Basic Needs and Services

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Gardens and farms provide food in the summer
- Access to farm raised local meat
- Health clinic. Focus a lot on people in recovery but open to everyone.
- 15 minutes away from a hospital
- Strength that Morrisville and Jeffersonville are nearby
- Energy independence- two power companies that serve Johnson- one for town and one for village
- Village power is cheap and reliable
- Access to water- really appreciate the spring
- Johnson has a contract with VT county sheriff’s dept, handled incidents of racism well
- Johnson Farm and Garden for supplies

What are the Challenges?

- No pharmacy
- Primary source of food is dollar general
- Food supply is low in the winter
- Local meat is not affordable or don’t have transportation to access it
- Public transportation is lacking
- Affordable rental units are hard to find
- Haven’t done enough to support landlords and business owners
- Hit hard by the floods, weren’t provided with FEMA assistance
- Only option was to accrue more debt
- Challenge of depreciation after disrepair
- People think of affordable housing and stigmas at the same time
- Mental health challenges have increased
- Overdose rates have increased in Johnson in last two years
- Green Mountain Transit leaves from the center of town, and the town is large, difficult to access.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done / What Action Can Be Taken by the Community?

- There is a plan somewhere that has emergency protocols, there is a plan for how to rescue people.
- We can also support emergency services and law enforcement through embedded social workers in police forces (Morrisville is doing the same)
- Test the spring water with publicly posted results
- Efficiency VT charge on utilities bill is a regressive tax on working people “sunset Efficiency VT”
- Excellent experiences with Efficiency VT, had home weatherized with grant money
- Notification of the river levels
- Develop protocol for using the Emergency siren system in town

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Incredibly valuable as a learning experience to hear what Johnson residents are experiencing with respect to affordable housing
- Heard special concern about small landlords in Johnson and wanted to point out that Johnson does have 55 affordable apartments
- Real asset because they are in three different places around town, and will be affordable rentals for a long time
- More renters than the average VT community
- Some state programs that exist that can help small landlords:
- Energy efficiency utility programs offered through VEIC
- VT Dept of Housing + Comm Dev
- VHIP
- VHFA weatherization repayment
- Asset is the people
- Love for the community
- Listening and conversation and forward thinking and community support
- Focus is on making government work for everyday Vermonters, rural Vermonters
- Trust and confidence in each other is the most inspiring thing
- Climate Action Office is committed to community engagement, hearing from Vermonters
- So many assets in the town, unique to the village
- Work with RPC to create other tools
- Craft a document out of these meetings for disaster recovery
- Greatest resource is the community
- Seeing discrete projects that will come out of this

Physical Infrastructure:

What are the Assets in this Area?

- High fiber networks going in as we speak
- Bike path, Lamoille Valley Rail Trail
- Biking, walking, XC skiing
- College is outside the floodplain
- So grateful for the road crew this entire year
- Paving all of downtown Johnson
- Two covered bridges (still!)
- Selectboard and road crew are very forward thinking through plans
- Johnson has the best roads
- Composting facility attached to transfer station
- Field days bring in folks from community inside and outside
- Awesome volunteers and donations that run the pizza oven - run it every week
- Tuesday Night Live
- Beautification committee keeps the flowers nice
- Fields in town are physical things we use
- Trails at the college
- New arboretum
- Elementary School
- Johnson was ahead in renovating the school
- Food shelf and the role it plays for community members
- Jenna’s house where seniors can exercise, do yoga, etc
- Hiking in general around Johnson, including the long trail
- Green Mtn Technical Center
- Meals on Wheels
- Love TNL, pizza oven, rail trail, journey’s end, beard swimming hole, Jenna’s coffee shop, Marsala Salsa
- Located between three ski resorts
- 15-20 Airbnb’s have brought a lot of business
- People are particularly friendly
- 7 picnic tables added to the rail trail
- Gen Z- personally interested in volunteering in Johnson
- There are younger than 30 yr olds wanting to get involved

What are the Challenges?

- Sand on roads is an issue, dug more ditches, rebuilt road surfaces
- Major concern during flooding- people were bringing pets to the shelter -Currently animals aren’t housed in emergency shelters. Farm animals would be a no-go
- Wastewater system flushes down the river every time there’s a flood
- Accessible and affordable transportation is nonexistent
- Losing more houses to fire and flood, middle income suffering the most
- A lot of gray hair in the room
- Income disparities between renters and homeowners
- Town needs to attract businesses
- No communication between the town and the school
- Hard to figure out how things work in the town/dynamics

Opportunities: What Should Be Done / What Action Can Be Taken by the Community?

- Need to move the library away from the floodplain and next to the school
- Previously had “the Johnson connection” public wifi, no longer exists
- Need public restrooms and water fountains
- Need a charter change so government can push ahead road changes
- Free activities for teens
- A place during an emergency where pets and farm animals can go.
- Develop an affordable way to deal with waste post-flood
- Speedier process for town/village offices to get back online
- Rail trail is amazing, but a bit separated from the town. Doesn't encourage people to drive through the town, no signage about town and food. Need to better incorporate the rail trail into town.
- Need a safe route from the trailhead into the village-scoping study in progress
- Pull in younger people into the community
- Need an agent to work with Pomerleau to resolve the area downtown
- Need to build the bridge for communications to town and school spaces
- Community gardens in town, take what you need model
- Senior housing could enable older folks to sell their houses if there was a place to go in town to stay in their community.
- Bigger community health center (pool, gym)

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Theme of municipal capacity and getting more people involved
- We ask a lot of our town governments on the backs of volunteers
- Love the idea of activating younger people in civic engagement
- Community development block grants -Funded Jenna's Promise
- State has the money, don't know where to spend it
- Communities need to step up and tell the state what they want
- People are assets
- Are the young people engaged?
- Events draw people
- Bring students in regarding events
- Thinking about creative use of spaces of the college
- All kinds of opportunity to hear the thoughts tonight and what we can do together
- Work with town and village governments
- Communication is key
- Generational change and volunteering
- How do we engage people
- Both of these are about communicating with different generations
- Struck by earlier forum and how there is a lot of energy for actions
- Johnson wants to do things
- Johnson wants to enable people to do things
- Challenges are empowering the next generation
- Partnership between town and university
- Might draw more people to Johnson
- Getting young people involved
- Need to make people feel welcome for them to stay
- Just ask people to volunteer
- Important to have a town plan
- Need to buy out the property downtown and rebuilding a store with a parking garage underneath

Environment & Natural Systems – Waterways, ecosystem health, land use and conservation

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Local volunteer groups.
- Data on water toxicity and other issues available.
- Rail trail.
- Neighborly connections.
- Wetlands are natural sponges and releases the water slower
- Planting more native plants and partnering with colleges

What are the Challenges?

- Where will the funding for all these green spaces be?
- Housing is aimed for designated downtown where the floodplain is? How can we change this?
- Bureaucracy around re-building and mitigating the risk is out of the reimbursement. The reimbursement policy is restrictive. The system is flawed.
- Flooding, more taxes and not being able to get reimbursed all = less resilience. What can the state officials do for this decreased resilience?
- Toxicity in the water in Johnsons.
- Gaps in communicating the natural resource information and how to get the information to the right people
- Issues of using the same language in outreach and education.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done / What Action Can Be Taken by the Community?

- Opportunities for information sharing around natural and environmental education.
- Town city person and environment emergency people and invite them to forums.

- The Conservation commission has meetings, training etc. More information is available including fishing and wildlife.
- Money available for floodplain restoration. These are long term plans that take time. The funds are available for private landowners.
- Need for relevant and accessible public information – there is a need for community buy-in.
- Mapping and inventory of town natural resources but there is no communication channel for this work.
- Face the river concept – take responsibility and ownership which translates into stewardship by Vermont River Conservancy and work with the regional planning commission e.g. work with “Polls meadow”.
- Opportunity for accountability for past wrongs and support for restoration projects.
- Lack of farming and farming equipment leading to the loss of farmers – Need for community learning that assists in intergenerational farming that is sustainable.
- The Conservation Commission has land that can be used for recreation projects.
- Water harvesting rainwater which is also a recreation space – an example of the Netherlands can be a goal.
- Building new green spaces and recreation spaces to augment the rail trail activities and tourism.
- Demolished and dilapidated houses can be used for green spaces and thereby turn negative to a positive. _ “A new railroad street” and a park.
- The lack of public land means that private land has to come up and contribute. If such land is available, it is important to share.
- Gathering non-biased environmental information

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- The State shares the rage, frustration and understands the sense of abandonment.
- There are immense efforts to move FEMA and will keep pushing.
- Encouraged by Johnson’s attendance this evening.
- Loss of the tax base is a big question. How do we design other alternative and existing livelihoods?
- There is a need for a big plan for the whole watershed, not just for Johnson.
- The difference is visioning collaboratively with leadership. The squeaky wheels get greased.
- There is a need to believe that Community resilience can be achieved.
- Use volunteer spirit and volunteers, including library trustees. There is a need for more people to step up.
- Integrated, cross-sectional skills required. Skills are there but lack integration and collaboration.

Community Connections & Capacity

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Robust volunteer groups
- Tuesday night live
- Community Oven
- Rail trail
- Youth that are tech savvy

What are the Challenges? What are the Gaps?

- Communication gaps between agencies, organizations and community members. There is no tool to communicate well with the different groups. “I wish we can fix the Vermont Alerts and we need a communication tool that does communication blasts”.
- There is a need for a network defined and categorized based on different locations and responsibilities.
- Need for bi-directional communication tools. There is some tool that works for the schools and should be tested for the town.
- Use the communication system used by VCRD communication tools that were low technology but were effective.
- Used Tuesday night live and set up a booth to collect contact details and create Johnson’s email listserv.
- Extend Tuesday night live and we need to consider equity issues as some people do not have access to the event because of transportation issues.
- Have an emergency hotline and test it. And emergency email chain.
- Also, we need to use all the resources we have including identifying community leaders and informants that chat with others.

Opportunities: What Should Be Done / What Action Can Be Taken by the Community?

- Events and developing the spaces for people to come together more.
- Johnson’s is in the middle of the rail trail, building more transportation systems and alternatives, e.g. biking trails.
- Legal public camping sites and we should use the rail trail for sure.
- Johnson’s has beautiful public parks and fields. There is a need for strategic plans around these.
- We do have a community Pizza Oven, and the same people come in again and again. There is an opportunity for improving the attendance of the local people. It happens on Thursday nights. (when, where?). Also, the Pizza oven can be delivered to residents directly.
- Opportunity for tourism using the rail trail.
- Opportunity to be whoever we want. Use uncertainty and calamities.

- The large pool of volunteers in Johnson's and "we could use this opportunity to bring new community in" and need to find ways to communicate.
- The grocery store drew diverse groups, and it offered a place to communicate by hanging flyers etc. But we can use the front porch etc.
- Extend events that are for the summer only to be all year round.
- Camping hostel dorms at the college.
- Multipurpose the current investments.
- Current feasibility to scope how we can get the trailers to stop and experience Johnson's. An RFP is out for bidding for this scoping study.
- The town knows how to reach taxpayers, and we should use this system, and we can send a quick survey collecting contact details for building communication. This communication tool should be bi-directional to give volunteers an opportunity to give back to their community.
- Opportunities for Youths to teach others how to use their tech gadgets.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Willingness to re-envision the new Johnson's
- People asking about the community space or "spot". How many community spots are in Johnsons?
- There is a need for a communication plan for the town.
- The thought of a new downtown in the light of climate change.
- Johnson's needs a grocery store. It's time to demand for the grocery store. It brings everyone in.
- There is a need to come up with a specific goal for a grocery store.
- There is a need for another spot for a grocery store.
- The need to use free marketing on the rail trail. Get opportunities to get these tourists to stop in Johnson.
- Use the opportunity to access a revolving fund if one comes out with the opportunity that takes advantage of the rail trail. These
- Need an emergency plan that is sustainable and adaptive.
- We need to think about how to communicate without phones etc so that it is done in an equitable way.

VII. Online Survey and Community Resilience Assessment

Comments

- For the VTSU campus - repurpose peripheral buildings and some of acreage to build and renovate to create a variety of styles of starter home. Populate with a creative community in partnership with Vermont Studio Center and town following the model of what they're doing in Fitchburg, MA. VSC could take on PR to get applicants. Could help solve demographic cliff for VT.
- For town amenities Move grocery store up on hill to campus as well. Move library and post office and town offices by school. make field by school town center. use current village green to build a flood resistant commercial building with housing above. Move sewage treatment to area where it won't flood (current town offices?)
- Rte 15 relocate housing and businesses on lower railroad street and Rte 15 east of there up hill by campus. Instead make that area pocket parks and floodplain? Or a dog park or pump track or...?
- get the college to not only invest in nursing but recovery and addiction counselor training (in partnership with Jenna's) and maybe textile design (VT Woolen Mill). double down on visual arts and add writing MFAs in partnership with Vermont Studio Center. Bring back hospitality - Johnson is in the Stowe work shed (and Smuggs and Jay).
- Get college to become THE college for early college students - have an entire program from Vermonter high school seniors and make the rule be that they are residential.
- Ensure Johnson has back up power generation capacity for businesses, homes, and municipal buildings. as the grid will go down.
- Commercial Park, assisting farms to promote agrotourism, being open to power sports and supporting all outdoor recreation.
- To have a grocery store, a pharmacy, Farmers Market, connect with the College and Vermont Studio Center, promote the local businesses. Make Johnson an attractive town to be a destination place for travelers. Promote the Village Office and Jenna's House as a community Center for seniors and the community to gather and to workout. The Library sponsors Jenna's House for Yoga classes and Thai Chi. Promote Jenna's Coffee House, Jenna's Promising Goods Store, Jenna's Roasting Coffee, The woolen Mills, Marsala Salsa Restaurant, Butternut Farm, Johnson Farm and Garden, Forget Me Not Retail store, Mud and Lace Children's Boutique, the Studio Store.
- It will be ideal to merge the VILLAGE AND THE TOWN to prevent us from paying village and town property taxes. The people that live in the town of Johnson pay one property tax, the residents of the village of Johnson pay town and village taxes.
- move the village to the college property. room for PO, market, library, housing, health care...
- build walls higher so water does not go over, more transportation, get homeless off streets more housing for them.
- public transportation.
- use center of town (sterling parking) for Tuesday night live, fairs, craft/farmer markets.
- use land (dew H. Property for 10 single family) home lots.
- let's capitalize on our amazing natural resources - the rail trail, the rivers, the long trail to encourage more tourism in our town which will bring in \$ and businesses from outside over cash-strapped town.
- network of local health care providers who can be called upon in emergencies.
- a network of caregiver volunteers who can che3ck on vulnerable people and families in an emergency.
- a community maker's space where amateurs and professional artists and crafters have access to supplies and equipment for painting, ceramics, woodworking, metal work, etc. managed as a cooperative with members paying dues and making decisions.
- Create a network of housing for bike trail and Long Trail riders, including house rentals, apartments, and rooms for let. Will bring more tourists to town and create more income for residents.
- A mapping system that shows all open/closed/compromised roads for flooding and torrential rain/road washout - this is for physical safety and ability to carry on with life; more water gauges upstream and improved hydrograph predictions; systematized communication/evacuation for those most vulnerable to being flooded or trapped by floodwater; improved emergency services planning for flooding and washouts, for those most vulnerable to being flooded or trapped by water; moving the grocery store and other amenities away from main street - exploring moving them onto VTSU-J campus.
- Utilize, promote, and expand the recreation/outdoor economy/facilities.
- Let side by sides leave from their homes (All Terrain Vehicles drive on town roads).
- First we need to get help to fix Lamoille River from flooding our town, so we can build our community!
- I think it of utmost importance to use funds of all types, especially flood recovery and/or mitigation for the benefit of the municipality as a whole, rather than to benefit private interests or commercial enterprises. Roads, yes. Streetscapes, yes. Water treatment plant, yes. Municipal buildings, in old or

new locations, yes. Town owned property, especially near the river or in watersheds, yes. Developing a light industrial park in a non-flooded area for private businesses and becoming an invested landlord, no. Private homes, no. Flood mitigation for a business, even Sterling Market, no. These public dollars should not be used to invite anyone to stay where they are at risk or rebuild in the areas that are prone to flooding. The river will win. It's a waste of resources to fight nature. It is also terribly unfair to other businesses when public dollars are channeled to one or even a few. When Mr. Pomerleau finally concedes that his property is worthless and gives up on it, will he reimburse the government for all the flood mitigation grants? Grants are not "free money". Let's use any grants very wisely, to benefit as many as possible, not the well-resourced, already successful, businesses. It doesn't even feel ethical, although it may be legal, for the town to be the intermediary for public dollars/grants destined for private (albeit non-profit) enterprises, like Jenna's Promise. The equity in the building is now so high there is no way that any "normal" business could buy the building and run a cafe there. When Jenna's Cafe pulls out, as every coffee shop that's ever been there has had to do, when Main St. dies even more or the road is relocated and the beautiful building is sold, will Mr. Tatro pay back the grant or will he pocket the proceeds? The tens of millions of dollars invested 20 years ago created a lovely, but empty downtown. Businesses were forced to close. In my case, I can say it was due partially to four straight years of construction on Main St. in front of my shop with very poor town communication about the events and partially to the failing economy and change in the way people shop. Whatever work ends up being done needs to be well announced and done by consensus not decree. People love the idea of local economy then fail to support what is there, but moan and complain when the businesses close. It is time to keep the good things that a "Main Street" brings to the community but remove the focus on businesses. Perhaps reimagining could refocus on everything other than businesses? Walkable routes, complete with connected sidewalks and linked to the Rail Trail and Long Trail? Resupply, transportation and lodging for travelers and tourists? Schools, libraries, playgrounds, natural areas for all ages? Reintegration between the college and the village and full utilization of all existing resources such as housing, gym, and theater (while respecting that the college really is just another business not something that Johnsonites can control.) Reinvigoration of public spaces like the arboretum, senior center, recreation fields, fishing/boating access, maybe add a true community center? And definitely address water treatment. As far as community goes it just seems to be a cycle. For example, out of the forum 20 years ago arose the Communication Committee that evolved into events like TNL, methods like the market bulletin board, and eventually birthed Johnson Works (as a chamber of commerce specifically for the businesses.) Now Johnson Works wants to disband and focus on events, since there aren't enough businesses involved to need a "chamber." All the people and details change but the goals remain the same and nature is in charge, not the selectboard. Let's not waste time reinventing but really listen and learn from past experiences.

- Affordable senior living for elderly people who want to age in the state without compromising on Vermont's way of life. Take advantage of underutilized college infrastructure, flood-resilient portions of Main Street, local outdoor recreation destinations to make this the most inviting and cost-effective place to age as a Vermonter. Proximity to one of the best hospitals in the state is another important asset, as is the work of Jenna's Promise and other local nonprofits. We are very fortunate to have a primary care office in our village. Health care and long-term care are huge needs for our community and our state, and a potential bridge to state and federal dollars that will be needed to continue thriving. All of this should be balanced with maintaining a community that is welcoming to younger families. Priority must be given to living within our means, especially as state government's profligacy risks landing us all in deep trouble as tax increases outpace economic growth. If we want local government to do more, we need to accept development that will grow the tax base, and we will need to advocate for that development at the state level, where many lawmakers are out of touch with the realities of making a living in communities like ours and more influenced by deeper pockets.
- A significant challenge for Johnson is the inability of the Village Trustees to work with the town Selectboard. This has been going on for years and has required a mediator to be used for any decisions to be made. The problem has been exacerbated recently by the quality of candidates serving in these positions. Fewer community members are running for these positions and the situation is made worse by the personalities and politics of the incumbents.
- Merging the Village with the Town would help to remove this impediment and, hopefully, improve the quality of leadership for the Town of Johnson.
- Relocate the Village Center main services to include Market & Post Office outside of Flood Areas.
- Economy - Let's face it, two things drive this community - one is pretty consistent, the other faces uncertainty.
- The consistent driver is recreational tourism - Johnson is located in one of the most beautiful areas of a beautiful state. We are at the crossroads of two major recreational paths - the Rail Trail and the Long Trail. We need to leverage that to the maximum extent possible, because no other community in the state has that distinction. We have a wide range of year-round activities within a 30-minute drive from the village, and must provide the infrastructure and motivation required to draw visitors from these areas to our local businesses. These businesses provide jobs for their employees, as well as jobs for those who build and maintain these businesses. They also broaden the tax base for the town to develop infrastructure without increasing the burden on residents.
- The uncertain driver is the University. It's true it will never be the same kind of institution it was decades ago - the old ivory tower models have become too ossified to adapt to a rapidly changing education environment. However, there's an opportunity for it to continue its education mission while increasing service for the community. I appreciate the

challenges faced by the VTSU trustees to meet state budgetary mandates while consolidating five campuses in the face of declining enrollment. But I believe they are overlooking some creative solutions to provide these services and possibly offset some their financial burden.

- An example is the SHAPE facility - it's a great resource to both the school and the community that isn't being leveraged effectively. My wife is an avid swimmer and loves the state-of-the-art soft water pool, as do many others as it draws swimmers from Hyde Park to Underhill. We pay a fee to use the pool, but the fees aren't collected routinely and the pool is under staffed and only available on an unpredictable schedule. I wonder if the VTSU trustees have a model for what it would take to make the pool (and the SHAPE facility overall) more financially viable? Clearly the devil is in the details of such a model - for example, how to make it sustainable while being available across all income ranges. But the longer it sits in its current state of underutilization, the more entropy sets in and the harder it will become to implement a sustainable model going forward.
- In addition, the University could expand the range of affordable extension, continuing and life-long learning offerings. There are a number of workable models down that path, depending on where the University wants to focus its efforts. Also, I understand the trustees are looking to get events back into Dibden Center - this is a great venue and it needs a funding stream - the sooner, the better!
- Community - Two drivers here - recreation (see above) and the arts.
- Vermont is one of the best states in the US for working artists, and Johnson has no shortage of talent. Clearly, the Vermont Studio Center is a centerpiece of the community and makes Johnson a destination for a wide range of artists and writers. The question is - how to fund publicly viewable art to allow Johnson to display its identity proudly to visitors without leveraging the cost on residents and businesses? I give the Johnson Beautification Committee credit for the work they've done to date. Unfortunately, the town will never have the budget required to transform public spaces to allow the village/town to proclaim its artistic identity. There is a range of public and private approaches to fund this, but for the most part the recipient organization must be a 501(c)3 organization. Could VSC serve this function? If not, who, and how would it coordinate with the village/town? Once again, there are pathways to achieve this, it just takes determination, focus and coordination.
- Quality of life - Much of the above affects the quality of life in Johnson. However, the key to improving the quality of life here is ensuring services and infrastructure needed by residents and businesses are resilient to increasingly frequent extreme weather events. We need post offices, town halls, libraries, grocery stores, and water treatment plants to be sustainable. Insofar as possible, they need to get out of the flood plain. Hundred-year floods are becoming decadal events, and the town was largely built around the assumption that extreme flooding is very rare. There are no easy answers here, but the reality is that businesses, public facilities and residences in the flood zone will face increasing risks over the next several decades. Levees can help temporarily, but dumping rocks along the river banks is at best a short term solution. The town must consider long-term, "run out" costs for the decisions it makes. Over the next 30 years, is the repeated application of band-aid solutions cheaper than biting the bullet now to reduce costs over time? Once again, this comes down to money - it's not clear how this could be funded, but the town at least should have a plan.
- Actual flood mitigation: Flood proofing, Catchment flood modelling, Flood barriers (dikes, dams, floodwalls, floodgates, levees, and evacuation routes), Structural and non-structural flood mitigation measures, including and up to sending excavators into the rivers around Johnson to dig out sediment that has built up from the previous floods to a more manageable level.
- Reduce regulation, using the opportunity zones in Lamoille as an example, make the township of Johnson easier to create businesses and cottage industries.
- A how-to program with information on why building water catchment and ponds on your property is a benefit to the community (mostly for residents who own larger tracts of land / sugar bushes on the more mountainous areas.
- If the low lying areas in Johnson can be reclaimed as non flooding land that would be a huge benefit to the town, and reduce anxiety around the several recent floods.
- A last resort would be moving the town into the college campuses or other suitable higher ground. I would consider this a move of last resort to "save the town". This be too expensive to pay with taxes on the local population though and needs federal funding or grants to accomplish.
- Wetlands and rain gardens as a form of flood mitigation, filtration of water and habitats for animals such as beavers that are natural damn builders; and native fauna.
- river clean up of human made debris, assessment/analysis, and ongoing communication about quality of river water in Johnson.
- create anti-displacement policies and local emergency housing plans (this should be done at the state level! If not, what can we do here?)
- We need to address the downtown situation with flooding. It's difficult to develop the downtown with housing projects or recruit businesses into the area with the recent flooding.
- I have lived in Johnson all my life. The one thing that has become difficult in the past few years is a place we can use for gatherings, workshops, meetings, dinners and any function that requires a big open space. I belong to a number of guilds and craft groups and we have been able to use the municipal building in the past. Since the flooding we have lost the use of that building and have gone to the United Church for our gatherings. I would love to see a facility that we can rent for a small fee to help pay for the maintenance of the building. It should be big enough for 50 - 100 people and can be divided with some kind of privacy walls when a large space isn't needed or if there are two different groups meeting at the

- same time. I believe the senior group should have a space to gather as well that is separate from the rental space. Whether it's a separate building or part of another building, it should have adequate parking, bathrooms, a kitchen, plenty of tables and chairs, great lighting and outlets.
- Reduce tuition and revitalize the college. Move the grocery post office and library to Legion Field and make the current space a green space. Relocate pizza oven and TNL to Old Mill Park. Create affordable housing (not using a standard formula, but using one that reflects the actual work our community members do).
 - Find a developer for a new grocery store to anchor the new light industrial park.
 - Actively partner with housing finance agencies to build affordable rental apartments in Johnson.
 - Actively partner with housing finance agencies and other stakeholder developers to buy and develop mixed use properties in the non flood zone sections of the village. Businesses on first floors and affordable and market rate housing on upper floors.
 - put limits on the number of Airbnb short term rentals can be held per owner within the village and town.
 - extend village water and sewer to increase utilization.
 - Actively court, incentivize, invite etc... businesses & developers into the new light industrial park.
 - Move municipal bldg, library and post office to VSU-J campus. Move WWTP to municipal bldg site - infrastructure is important and must be protected o/w we will just keep spending time and money on the same issues.
 - Consider a land swap with Pomerleau - we give him the Light Industrial Park to develop and the Town takes the Sterling Market property in trade. LIP is of higher value, so Pomerleau pays for demolition and removal of store bldg. TOJ then seeks funds to create greenspace for recreation and specifically to improve flood resiliency of the village area.
 - Grocery store - in Light Industrial Park? Short-term: attract a small village grocery store like Hanley's in Jeffersonville into a non-flooding portion of the Village.
 - Improve trails around town to attract mountain bikers, gravel bikers and walkers.
 - Improve hospitality options in the village area - public bathrooms, food options (cremees and craft beer should be available!).
 - Create 1 or 2 major events per year specifically designed to attract out-of-towners - road race, bike race, canoe race, music festival, open studio art festival... galvanize town, provide economic boosts, help put Johnson on the map.
 - Create 1 or 2 event per year directed at Johnson residents - close School Street one evening for a massive pot luck dinner, local art (painted pig fund-raiser in Brandon), etc. - to foster community spirit and energy.
 - Move the village as much as possible. Do a lot-swap deal with Pomerleau (he gets a lot, removes the buildings and asphalt) to move the grocery store and garage to the new light industrial park; use a shuttle or volunteer drivers to get people there if practical. Fix that problem once and for all. Make the present store location a nice greenspace with a riparian border, canoe access, trees and a gazebo. Move the municipal building to the Legion Field next to the Library. Move the post office into the Smoke Shop and tastefully paint the exterior. Make the remaining village into an attractive, traditional Vermont village. Put zoning in place in order to attract business other than drug-related. Talk to NVU about using some of their buildings for senior housing (McClellan would be perfect), clinic on Main St., other buildings that are in the flood zone. The college is failing; we ought to take advantage of their needs and the town's together.
 - I think the future of Johnson lies in moving the commercial center of the village away from the river. The current location of the former (and greatly missed) Sterling Market would be better used as a town park/green space that could also help absorb flood waters. One of the most important actions we can take as a town is to identify a new location for a market and come up with a plan to make it happen.
 - I would like to see a new market and post office building built outside of the flood plain on the property that the town owns. I would like to see Pomerleau involved - he has been a good landlord in the past, and will likely lose his current property in the flood plain. There should be a way to give him the property that the town owns which would get it on the tax list, and turn the Sterling Market property into a community park. I realize there are a lot of details to be worked out....I would like to see Union Bank remain in Johnson as well. I would also like to see the current aggression between well meaning volunteers in the community and our elected town officials stop. The flower boxes should all be put back where they belong.

VIII. Re-Imagine Johnson Community Participants

| | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Kenneth Allen | Jan Gearhart | Rob Maynard | Donna Sherlaw |
| Kate Audette | Kim Gellatly | Dave McAllister | Bobby Shulman |
| Rick and Pam Aupperlee | Luke Gellatly | Dave Meyer | Lynn Sibley |
| Barbara Backus | Debby Gillen | Scott Meyer | Mary Sladyk |
| Erik Bailey | Tyler Gillen | Mike Mignone | Shayne Spence |
| Jae Baisilere | Kim Goodell | Douglas Molde | Jackie Stanton |
| GiGi Beach | Kim Goodell | Linda Molde | Monica Stearnr |
| Sophia Berard | Rachael Goulet | Amy Murphy | Greg Stefanski |
| David Bergh | Michelle Graham | Alexalee Nadeau | Adrienne Stevson |
| Arlo Bickford | Jon Gregg | Floyd Nease | Hope Sullivan |
| Jessica Bickford | Nate Haberern | Emily Neilsen | Rev. Dr. Wendy Jaine |
| Janeice Bidwell | Peter Hammond | Mark Nielsen | Summers |
| Kathy Black | Kate Harney | Gregor Novakowski | Daniel Suter |
| Don Blais | Conrad Harris | Daniel Noyes | Diane Suter |
| Andrea Blaisdell | Ken Harvey | Eric Nuse | Randall Szott |
| Mindy Blank | Duncan Hastings | Ingrid Nuse | Jodi Tallman |
| Colin Bradley | Steven Hatfield | Kyle Nuse | Dawn Tatro |
| Caroline & Jeff Butler | Cynthia Hennard | Diana Osborn | Greg Tatro |
| Aaron Calvin | Sarah Henshaw | Ron Osborn | Gregory Tatro |
| Gail Carpenter | Sarah Henshaw | Athena Parke | Rene Thibault |
| Melanie Carpenter | Greg Hill | Adrienne Parker | Ken Tourangeau |
| Geoff Casey | Kyle Hill | Blake Parker | Vanessa Tourangeau |
| Mary Con Kopas | Lynda Hill | Etta Parker | Valerie Valcour |
| Kevin Contino | Travis Hill | Kevin Parker | Brian Vandorn |
| Alberto Della Torre | Bill Hoag | Eben Patch | Colin Vandorn |
| Lando DePaulo | Asa Hunt | Meg Paul | Kelly Vandorn |
| Erin Desautels | Bill Jaspersohn | George Pearlman | Louise Von Weise |
| Erin DeVries | Kari Jaspersohn | Laurel Persico | Aubrey Wagner |
| Josh Dodge | Pam Jaspersohn | Lauren Philie | Margo Warden |
| Noel Dodge | Sam Jaspersohn | Kelly Player | Paul Warden |
| Michael Dunham | William Jennison | Walter Pomroy | Finnegan Watson |
| Kim Dunkley | Seth Jenson | BJ Putvain | Drew Waxler |
| Jacob Durell | Alfred Johnson | Marty Quinlan | Glo Webel |
| Greg Eckman | Johna Keefe | Deb Ravenelle | Richard Westman |
| Sandy Ellaw | Dorigen Keeney | Alexa Reber | Sheila White |
| David Ellerbee | Sonja Kivela | Charlotte Reber | Jesse Whitworth |
| Ken Elred | Mary Lou Kopas | Steve Reber | David Williams |
| Jeanne Engel | Daniel Langevin | Gene Richards | Peggy Williams |
| Emma Fernandez Roca | Mary Langevin | Kate Riley | Charles Witherell |
| Carri Ferrari | Lynn Lehouiller | Rob Rodriguez | Mark Woodward |
| Charles Flaum | Diane Lehouillier | Howard Romero | Partner: Sam young |
| Morna Flaum | Joie Lehouillier | Lotty Roozekraus | Jasmine Yuris |
| Beth Foy | Dean Locke | Tim Ryan | Jenn Yuris |
| Pat French | Sue Lovering | Joseph Salerno | Molly Zapp |
| Lois Frey | David Ludt | Lindsey Sammons | Natalie |
| Melissa Frye | Jim MacDowell | Barb Scheren | Shayde |
| Cheryl Fuller | Kristen MacDowell | Ray Scheren | and many more... |
| Tom Galinat | Melissa Manka | Marion Seasholtz | |
| Charlie Gallanter | David Manning | Matt Seasholtz | |
| Nicky Gardner | Sherry Marcelino | Neil Shepard | |

VIV. Visiting and Resource Team Members

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Sister Sankofa she/her, Community Resilience Organizations, facilitated at the September convening and contributed time, talent, and energy to this process. She passed away in January 2025, and our hearts are with her friends, colleagues and family.

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