

Bridport Comes Together

Community Visit Report and Action Plan August 2024



Produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development

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Vision for Bridport's Future

Compiled from vision statements shared during Community Visit 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 Bridport community.

Community members envision a future Bridport:

- ❖ with pride in our community, and a strong sense of belonging and place.
- ❖ that is welcoming to all ages, races, and other types of diversity and vitality.
- ❖ where our young people want to build their lives as adults.
- ❖ whose children and youth attend good local schools.
- ❖ with gatherings, activities, and recreation in our parks and community spaces where neighbors get to know each other and stay connected.
- ❖ where young people are welcomed and involved in gatherings and meetings.
- ❖ that has an agricultural character that supports the livelihood of farmers and farmworkers.
- ❖ with strong support for farmers who explore and develop innovation in agriculture.
- ❖ that appreciates our diverse resources, from agriculture to wild lands.
- ❖ that is resilient to climate change and natural disasters.
- ❖ that is thriving and growing.
- ❖ where local businesses continue to be community hubs.
- ❖ where we appreciate and revitalize our infrastructure.
- ❖ with safe roads for walking or biking, and where drivers slow down to appreciate the landscape and town.
- ❖ where young people and families have the support they need to live here, including childcare, affordable living, and other services.
- ❖ that is an affordable and safe place to live for all: youth and elders, farmers and farmworkers, home owners and renters, families and single people.

I. Introduction

Throughout the Bridport Comes Together Process, there was pride and reflection on all of the incredible assets in Bridport: the community hubs like Pratt's Store and the Volunteer Fire Department, being located on the shore of Lake Champlain, a strong agricultural tradition, the many clubs and activities, and dedicated and caring community members. At the kickoff event in May, nearly 200 residents crowded into the Fire Station for a barbeque dinner served by Fire Department volunteers and catered by Pratt's, while enjoying live bluegrass from local musicians. One resident reflected that one of their favorite parts about Bridport is that, even with political divides, people are willing to engage in tough conversations, find commonality, and discuss complex topics.

This was apparent throughout this process, but especially during the brainstorming phase at the first meeting. Many deeply complex challenges were acknowledged and discussed, and the community brought excitement and enthusiasm to those conversations and generated ideas for new (and renewed) opportunities. Bridport has a strong foundation of caring for each other and finding ways to gather and connect.

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. After careful deliberation, Bridport residents voted to form task forces around two priorities:

- **Advance Housing Solutions**
- **Improve Community Communication and Events**

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

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 Bridport 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 Bridport 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 Bridport Comes Together Community Visit a success.

Thanks go to the Bridport Select Board, who invited this process, for providing funds for the town-wide mailing and the community dinner at the first meeting.

We deeply appreciate the work and leadership of Planning Committee members who helped guide the process by identifying forum topics for discussion, developing the invitation process to start the effort, and helping with outreach at every stage: Marie Audet, Eileen Bearor, Renee Brodeur, Adam Broughton, Chris Gordon, Trish Gordon, Julie Howlett, Tim Howlett, Dusty Huestis, Sheila Huestis, Steve Huestis, Stephanie Pope, Katie Shimel, Jenn Sullivan, Margaret Sunderland, and Kristy Whipple.

Outreach is an essential component of a successful Community Visit, and many people helped make that happen. Thanks to Julie Howlett for helping with the town-wide mailing, to Katie Shimel and Dusty Huestis for helping with signage and banners in town, and to Margaret Sunderland for distributing flyers. Thanks also to

the many other 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!

Part of inviting everyone in town was ensuring that invitations and fliers reached the Spanish-speaking farmworker community. Thanks to Eliana Cañas Parra who translated the invitations, the surveys, and the Ideas for Action and top Priorities. We are also grateful to the organizations who helped distribute those translations: Open Door Clinic, Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, Addison Allies, and Migrant Justice.

Coordinating the events and outreach was a team effort. Thank you to Margaret and the Bridport Congregational Church for allowing the use of their vestry for meetings and childcare space. Thank you to Katie and Julie for their ongoing support in setting up the use of the Community Hall, and to Linda Barrett for helping to coordinate the use of the Bridport Central School for the second meeting. Many thanks to Kristy Whipple and her daughters Katherine, Erin and Alexis for providing childcare for the three meetings.

Thank you also to the Bridport Fire Department and all who helped put on such a successful Community Dinner of barbeque, salads and desserts; and to David Gibson, Amanda Gregg, and Dan Fram for entertaining us all with bluegrass music during dinner. For the second and third meetings, we are grateful to Pratt's for their wonderful catered sandwiches, and for their continued help with outreach and logistics.

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 Bridport for the VCRD Community Visit Team.

Thanks must also go to the funders of VCRD's Community Visit Program who made this process possible: USDA Rural Development, Northern Border Regional Commission, the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Community National Bank, Lintilhac Foundation, National Life Foundation, Vermont Community Foundation, Vermont Humanities Council, and the Windham Foundation. We also appreciate Front Porch Forum for their support as an outreach sponsor for the Community Visit program.

VCRD calls in support from state, federal and non-profit leaders to participate in the Community Visit Program. We are proud of the partners we get to work with and our gratitude goes to the Visiting and Resource Team members for attending Bridport's first and last meetings and for their willingness to continue to support the efforts of the local task forces as they move priorities forward. The full list of leaders, agencies, and organizations that offered their expertise is in the back of this report.

Getting things done is all about leadership, so on behalf of all who have participated so far, our deepest thanks go to those who've stepped up to serve in an ongoing way as chairs of the Task Forces: Al Zaccor for Advance Housing Solutions and Liz Boudreau and Steve Brodeur for Improve Community Communication and Events.

VCRD especially wants to thank Katie Shimel and Trish Gordon for leading this process as the Community Visit Co-Chairs. Katie and Trish's long history and deep dedication to the community were apparent, and we are grateful for their willingness to take on this new role.

Bridport is well positioned to move its priorities forward. We are excited to support and celebrate the energy from these new initiatives, and look forward to seeing the good things to come for Bridport.

II. The “Bridport Comes Together” Community Visit Process

VCRD’s Community Visit program is a way for towns to engage and bring together their residents, 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 in Bridport:**



Planning Committee Meeting: March 26, 2024

On March 6, 2024, 16 local residents met to plan for the launch of the Bridport Community Visit process. This group came up with a name for the process – Bridport Comes Together – 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.

The Committee included: Marie Audet, Eileen Bearor, Renee Brodeur, Adam Broughton, Chris Gordon, Trish Gordon, Julie Howlett, Tim Howlett, Dusty Huestis, Sheila Huestis, Steve Huestis, Stephanie Pope, Katie Shimel, Jenn Sullivan, Margaret Sunderland, and Kristy Whipple.

Step 1 ~ Kick-Off Forums and Community Dinner: May 7, 2024

Bridport Comes Together kicked off with 4 brainstorming forums held at the Community Hall and Congregational Church and a community dinner hosted in the Fire Station. Over 100 participants shared assets, challenges, and ideas for action in the following forum topics chosen by the planning committee: Community Connection: spaces, events, and communications; Businesses & Services: emergency, health, school, and more; Recreation & Tourism; and Infrastructure: housing, water, wastewater, and the Village. Fifteen visiting team members participated, learning more about Bridport and providing reflections to the community.

Visiting Team members included: Ben Doyle, *President*, Preservation Trust of Vermont; Karen Duguay, *Assistant Director*, Addison County Economic Development Corp.; Fred Kenney, *Executive Director*, Addison County Economic Development Corp.; Lindsay Kurrle, *Secretary*, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development; Adam Lougee, *Executive Director*, Addison County Regional Planning Commission; Kate McCarthy, *Program Officer*, Vermont Community Foundation; Katie Raycroft-Meyer, *Community Planner*, Addison County Regional Planning Commission; John Roberts, *Executive Director*, USDA Farm Service Agency; David Scherr, *State Director*, Office of Congresswoman Becca Balint; Elise Shanbacker, *Executive Director*, Addison Housing Works; and Rebecca Washburn, *Director of Lands Administration and Recreation*, Vermont Dept of Forest, Parks, and Recreation.

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

Step 2 ~ Community Meeting: June 4, 2024

After the kick-off, VCRD staff distilled the brainstormed ideas into 17 key areas of action. Over 75 community members joined at the Bridport Central School to narrow the list of priorities for community action. After lively dialogue and a dot-voting exercise, 2 action ideas emerged as key priorities: **Advance Housing Solutions** and **Improve Community Communications and Events**. Participants then signed up for task forces that will convene to move these priorities forward.

Step 3 ~ Resource Meeting and Task Force Launch: July 16, 2024

On July 16, 2024, over 30 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 “Bridport Comes Together” action is focused at the task force level.

Resource Team members included: Richard Amore, *Manager of Place-making and Community Partnerships*, Vermont Department of Housing & Community Development; Fred Kenney, *Executive Director*, Addison County Economic Development Corp.; Seth Leonard, *Managing Director of Community Engagement*, Vermont Housing Finance Agency; Kate Neubauer, *Program Office for Community & Environment*, Vermont Community Foundation; Elise Shanbacker, *Executive Director*, Addison Housing Works; and Jason Van Driesche, *Chief of Staff*, Front Porch Forum.

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

Community members enjoyed a dinner in the Fire Station at the kick-off event in May, and below are scenes from the Community Meeting in June.



III. Bridport Comes Together Priorities

Determined by Bridport residents at the Bridport Comes Together Community Meeting

June 4, 2024

Through thoughtful conversation about the future of their community, Bridport community members whittled down a list of 17 action ideas to 2 priorities through 2 rounds of voting. The 1st round narrowed the list to 8 priorities for further discussion: advance housing solutions; create a community gathering space; expand recreational programming and facilities; explore water / wastewater solutions; increase community and family events; support and boost local agriculture; improve community communications; and boost Village Center vibrancy. With the 2nd round of voting, participants chose the following 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.

Bridport residents selected these priorities for future action:

► Advance Housing Solutions

A group could form to develop an understanding of Bridport’s unique housing challenges and work with experts and innovators to find potential solutions. Many residents expressed a need to focus on a variety of housing solutions specifically including agricultural workers as well as seniors. Solutions could include zoning adjustments, alternative housing models, clustered or co-housing developments, or incentives to encourage affordable housing development.

► Improve Community Communications and Events

Residents expressed desire to improve how community members share and access information, and to increase events for residents of all ages. Part of this work could include a community preference survey to understand what methods are most effective for engaging with residents: including bulletin boards, email, newsletter/newspaper, and social media channels. The group could partner with the Town to share information, upgrade the town website, or offer virtual attendance to meetings to help to improve access to community decisions and updates. Additionally, the group could create a “Welcome Wagon” initiative for new residents. This group could host and coordinate community events such as concerts, a flea market, a scavenger hunt, bingo, movie nights, a block party, big truck day, or a tractor parade. Residents also expressed interest in bringing back past community events, including the Friday night dinners at the Grange and Bridport Day.

Other Key Opportunities identified by the community:

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

Create a Community Gathering Space

Many residents noted that locations such as Pratt's are important places to connect with neighbors, and expressed a desire for additional spaces to meet and mingle in Bridport. A group could consider ways to increase community gathering spaces such as the expansion of existing businesses to include tables and space to gather, attracting new businesses such as a café or restaurant, or other types of community spaces. The group could consider a new building or the redevelopment of historic or other community buildings such as the Grange, community hall, or vacant buildings on 22A.

Improve Lake Access

A task force could work to improve access points to Lake Champlain for Bridport residents. The group could explore signage pointing to access points, as well as improving sites with benches, restrooms, or other amenities. The group could also hold events to celebrate the lake as a local asset and consider other improvements such as a public beach, boat rentals, or lake clean up initiatives.

Expand Recreational Programming and Facilities

A group could form to expand recreation facilities and programming for all ages. Many expressed an interest in new rec facilities including a dog park, tennis courts, a pool, or a recreation center. Additionally, the group could plan events and programming to utilize existing recreational assets and provide fun activities for people of all ages such as youth programs or a recreation club. In the long term, the group could explore a more permanent Town recreation program.

Highlight and Share Bridport's History

A group could form to showcase and celebrate Bridport's history for residents and visitors. The group could create a promotional brochure or a scavenger hunt to highlight the town's history and historic sites and buildings. The group could also explore the creation of a visitor center/museum, and restoration of Bridport's historic buildings.

Explore Water System

A group could form to identify strategies and resources to advance solutions for Bridport's existing water system which is aging and may need repair and upgrades in the coming years. The group could support the Tri-Town Water District in its work by helping to educate and communicate to the three communities what is needed and by holding fundraising events.

Explore Wastewater Solutions

A group could explore the concept of a village wastewater system or other neighborhood-scale solutions. The group could connect with experts and resource providers to understand the unique challenges that Bridport faces and identify potential alternatives or solutions to community-scale wastewater in the future.

Support Local Economic Development

A Bridport economic development committee could form to discuss, identify, and implement a range of community-driven strategies to boost the local economy. The group could engage the community in a setting a vision for the future of the Bridport economy, better understand barriers and limits to development, and build a set of targeted strategies to support existing businesses and attract businesses for the future. Residents expressed interest in specific new businesses including a restaurant and inn, a “brew thru”, ice cream stand, driving range, farmers market, or mini golf. Strategies could include pop-up events or retail space to showcase local products and businesses, the creation of a local development corporation or revolving loan fund to support and attract businesses, and/or paid staff or a consultant to identify resources and pursue key development strategies.

Support and Boost Local Agriculture

Residents value diverse agricultural businesses, ranging from large dairy operations to small farm stands. A task force could convene local and regional partners to support those businesses and to showcase the agricultural history and products. This could include creating a map or guide of Bridport farms, organizing a local farmers market, hosting community meals with local products, or exploring garden sharing. The group could also create a shared retail space to sell Bridport products including produce, dairy, crafts, and other value-added products such as locally made ice cream. The group could also consider strategies to support family farms and ensure that local agricultural workers are supported by and connected to the community.

Develop Childcare Solutions

Residents expressed a lack of accessible and affordable care in Bridport for infants and toddlers as well as after school and summer care and programming. A group could form to identify and implement solutions to filling these childcare gaps for local families.

Support Bridport Seniors

A group could form to support Bridport’s senior community members. The group could coordinate interest in supporting spaces, activities, clubs and programming for seniors as well as looking at long term solutions for housing and care.

Expand Biking and Walking Trails

A group could form to expand awareness of and opportunities for walking and biking trails in Bridport. The group could inventory current trails and resources, create signage and maps for trails, and share these opportunities with the community and visitors. The group could also work with local landowners to expand the network of trails that is accessible to the public. Additionally, the group could identify ways to leverage Bridport’s location on the Lake Champlain Bikeway by providing amenities such as a place to use a bathroom, fill water bottles, access trail information, or find snacks.

Address Invasive Species

A group could form to lead the eradication of and protection against invasive species in Bridport. This work could address milfoil on the lake, as well as other species in the community such as poison parsnip and Japanese knotweed. The group could also lead education and outreach efforts about invasive species in the community.

Build School-Community Partnership

A task force could form to improve coordination and collaboration between the school and the broader Bridport community. The group could help to facilitate stronger and more frequent communication between the school and the community, as well the sharing of resources and spaces. Additionally, the group could coordinate shared events such as a town-wide walk/bike day, a community block party, a “touch-a-truck” event, or other fun events for people of all ages.

Boost Village Center Vibrancy

A Village Vibrancy task force could form to identify and implement strategies to breathe life into the center of Bridport. The group could hold events and activities on the green or at the new pavilion. Additionally, they could work with the community and outside experts to create a vision for the future of the village and build a strategy to realize that vision. The group could consider the walkability and access of the village center as well as the potential for new community spaces, housing, businesses, and more.

Participants at the June 4 meeting added the following idea:

Improve Local Civic Engagement

A group could form to expand participation in community decision making. Residents expressed a desire to make civic engagement more accessible to residents who are juggling difficult schedules or have accessibility needs that aren’t regularly accommodated at meetings. This group might work to expand access to farmers, farmworkers, parents, and seniors through a variety of tools including different communication strategies, making meetings available for virtual attendance, providing Spanish interpretation, or coordinating childcare options. Among other goals, this group might aim to increase voter turnout for ballot elections, boost attendance at Town Meeting, or educate the community about other Town decision making processes.

Community members chose 2 priorities for action through a dot-voting exercise.



IV. Task Force Action Plans

Resource Meeting, May 14, 2024

Bridport Task Forces are comprised of community members and an appointed chairperson. 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. This final phase of the program marks the time when residents truly take ownership of the work, and begin the exciting process of turning ideas into action.

► Advance Housing Solutions

A group could form to develop an understanding of Bridport's unique housing challenges and work with experts and innovators to find potential solutions. Many residents expressed a need to focus on a variety of housing solutions specifically including agricultural workers as well as seniors. Solutions could include zoning adjustments, alternative housing models, clustered or co-housing developments, or incentives to encourage affordable housing development.

Community Chair Al Zaccor

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

Resource Team Members Fred Kenney, *Executive Director*, Addison County Economic Development Corporation
Kate Neubauer, *Program Officer*, Vermont Community Foundation
Elise Shanbacher, *Executive Director*, Addison Housing Works
Josh Slade, *Senior Community Development Underwriter*, Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA)

Community Participants and Task Force Sign-ups Lesley Bienvenue, Christian Bloom, Bug Bloom, Ernest (Buster) Caswell, Denise Corey, Mary Duddles, Kristen Gosselin, Carol Krawczyk, Sharron Macklin, Rep. Jubilee McGill, Donald Moses, Gary Novosel, MaryBeth Novosel, Darwin Pratt, Donald Sapir, Janet Sapir, Amanda Sheppard, Al Zaccor, and Susan Zimny

Overview of the issue today

- Approximately half of the development rights in Bridport have been “sold off” for conservation.
- There is an abundance of heavy clay soils, which are expensive for the development of mound septic systems.
- A lot of highly desirable lakefront properties in Bridport are 2 acres, but the state now requires 10 acres.
- Older folks living in large, older houses.
- Lack of a variety of housing types in Bridport, and a lack of accessory dwelling units.
- There is no subsidized affordable multifamily housing in Bridport, and one shared equity home.
- Some deteriorating and damaged housing units, including older structures with deferred maintenance and concerns about needing to be torn down.
- Bridport is geographically large, and does not have public transportation.
- There is significant regional home buying pressure, and very limited available housing stock.
- The area to the South of the Village is conserved, so it does not seem that there is the possibility to expand the current Village area.
- There is a need for rental housing, as well as variety of housing types to support folks moving through the “housing lifecycle” (renting, starter home, larger home, downsizing to a smaller home, etc.).

Priority Action Steps

1. Determine what housing data is needed to inform the group – what we don't know that we need to know:
 - What is the current housing stock in Bridport?
 - What is the current available State and Federal data about housing in Bridport?
 - Has a housing needs assessment been done?
 - Review current definitions of affordable exist based on area median income.
 - What types of housing at what cost are needed in Bridport?
2. Explore septic options. As septic will likely be a need regardless of the types of housing identified, a group can get to work investigating septic needs and solutions. Specific pieces included:
 - Exploring alternative septic solutions.
 - Look at stock septic planning and permitting, flexibility for alternatives. Middlebury student report done in partnership with Addison Housing Works could be a resource.
 - Support to offset the cost of septic development.
3. Research areas Bridport has control over changing with regards to housing – i.e. zoning and lot size changes.
4. Reach out to other communities including both nearby towns for collaboration (Shoreham, Addison maybe Cornwall), and communities from across the state who have made successful progress on this issue.

Additional Potential Action Ideas

The group discussed several additional ideas including:

- Reusing older areas with homes that are destroyed for new/improved housing.
- Reusing materials to bring cost of housing down.
- Leverage volunteer expertise to reduce the costs of new housing.
- Potential desired outcomes include: increasing housing stock, increasing stock of smaller homes, creating high quality housing, and prioritizing housing while minimizing environmental impact.
- Creating a tiny house Village.
- Supporting the creation of ADUs.
- Explore a planned unit development.
- Utilizing multifamily housing to minimize costs.
- Check the process for creating incentives real estate tax incentives to create incentives for multifamily / affordable housing – like a “current use for multifamily” housing. Parts of this may be included in Act 68.
- Hosting a community design charette for the 80 acres that could be available for housing. What are the options on the site? What might it look like? What are the barriers?
- Explore wind turbines.
- Understand population trends.
- Address farmworker housing.
- State level septic design advocacy.
- Explore sewer viability on 22A/the Lake.
- Look at White River Conservation District water mapping as an example.

Visiting Resources 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

Convene with various “interest groups” in the community, such as seniors or agricultural workers, to understand their needs and develop specific solutions that work for a given group. Develop separate 'right scale' scenarios.

Contact the Addison County Regional Planning Commission to see what relevant data they have. The Vermont Housing Finance Agency also has housing data at the community level.

Work with Housing Works for Addison County to determine if a housing market research study is needed, and to discuss what type of projects would be the best fit for Bridport.

Inventory potential town owned land for public-private development.

Explore the idea of a new concept for manufactured home parks, designed with energy efficient/ sustainable homes, common space, porches, community gardens.

Consider applying for a grant to determine physical and communal wastewater solutions.

Work with the Regional Planning Commission on an assessment of the current landscape for housing - opportunities, challenges, and ideas. This might include providing an opportunity for people to tell their stories about housing needs, experiences, and hopes, to show that this is a shared challenge with shared solutions.

Consider whether there are opportunities to promote clustered housing that might align with conversations about the future of the water district.

Update bylaws to allow for increased housing opportunities in the Village Center. Consider a Bylaw Modernization grant or Municipal Planning grant (see additional information in “Resources” below).

Inventory what land is available, especially what is in perpetual easements. Many farms that are conserved are limited as to where they can build worker housing. See if there are mutual gains for several farmers to work together, maybe a cooperative model, in providing a worker housing complex. While this could have challenges, it is worth exploring.

Consider whether there are landowners with extra land who could pilot accessory dwelling units, or smaller home designs for aging in place, as a proof of concept for the community. Sometimes showing how new housing can fit in, and be compatible with existing places, can go a long way. Promoting this type of small scale development, and building the bench of small scale developers, can be a great way for communities to add housing.

Create a small or a couple of small focus committees to organize and develop a plan for what the town would like to become, including what types of housing, business opportunities, infrastructure needs, etc.

Evaluate the status of all Tri-Town Water extensions within the village area.

Explore zoning that allows for dense housing development. For example, the McKnight Lane development in rural Waltham has a density of 7 dwelling units per acre, or a minimum lot size of just 6,000 square feet. It still offers residents a bucolic setting with a yard, community garden, and greenspace, consistent with the character of Bridport and the amenities many potential Bridport residents would seek.

Evaluate whether current zoning discourages Manufactured Housing Communities (MHCs). MHCs offer a very likely path forward for Bridport to develop affordable housing that also has the advantage of offering one-level living suitable for seniors and families alike.

Adjust zoning to make multifamily housing of 4 or more units (including MHCs) a by-right use in all residential zoning districts, instead of a conditional use, or require simple sketch plan review that can be approved by the Zoning Administrator instead of coming before a Development Review Board. This will create a more predictable process which will help encourage small-scale development.

Ask for visits to consult with and access technical assistance from the VT Housing Finance Agency (VHFA), Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), and Addison Housing Works (see contact information below).

Technical Assistance / Peer Connection Recommendations

Addison Housing Works, the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), and the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) could be helpful partners to identify and apply for resources, and have been involved throughout the Bridport Comes Together process. Contact Elise Shanbacker, Executive Director, Addison Housing Works at elise@addisonhousingworks.org, Fred Kenney, Executive Director, Addison County EDC at fkennedy@addisoncountyedc.org and Adam Lougee, Executive Director, Addison County RPC, alougee@acrpc.org.

Ask Trey Martin, Gus Seelig, or Jenny Hyslop from Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) to come visit and think about the intersection of conserved land and housing. VHCB is a key partner in both spaces, and has worked with numerous kinds of communities. Contact Trey Martin, Director of Conservation and Rural Community Development at t.martin@vhcb.org or 802-828-2425 or Gus Seelig, Executive Director at gus@vhcb.org or Jenny Hyslop at jenny@vhcb.org. VCRD can also help make connections if needed.

Addison County Regional Planning Commission can help with zoning recommendations as well as funding to pursue zoning bylaw modernization. Contact Visiting Team Members Adam Lougee, Executive Director, alougee@sover.net and Katie Raycroft-Meyer, Community Planner, kraycroftmeyer@acrpc.org.

Engage with Middlebury College Privilege and Poverty interns who are studying potential for affordable cluster development in Cornwall, which faces some similar challenges to Bridport. Addison Housing Works is happy to share resources pertaining to the Cornwall cluster development study. Contact Addison Housing Works Executive Director and Visiting Team Member, Elise Shanbacker, at elise@addisonhousingworks.org.

Gather what information you can from the Tri-Town operator for free to understand their needs. Connect with the Agency of Natural Resources about what funding is available to understand and fix the needs identified. Contact Lynnette Claudon at lynnette.claudon@vermont.gov.

Peter Schneider at Efficiency VT can speak to the quality of new manufactured homes built to Advanced Manufacturing Standards to the extent that the community encounters any reluctance to trying to promote MHC development. Contact him at 802-488-0916.

Resources and Potential Funding Sources

Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) maintains <https://www.housingdata.org/>, which includes a Community Profiles section. Nate Lantieri is a resource for using this site, and can be reached at NLantieri@vhfa.org.

VHFA has a Housing-Ready Toolbox geared towards municipalities, including a local strategies section. Visit <https://www.housingdata.org/toolbox/steps-for-municipalities>.

The Homes for All Toolkit includes designs for smaller-scale development that are compatible with Vermont communities. The Toolkit also provides checklists and a how to guide for small scale developers:

<https://accd.vermont.gov/homesforall>.

Vermont State Zoning Atlas: This shows what types of development are possible based on current zoning:

<https://www.zoningatlas.org/vermont>.

The Vermont Natural Resources Council Community Planning Toolbox has briefs on different types of zoning, and how they do (or do not) support housing: <https://vnrc.org/community-planning-toolbox/>.

CVOEO's Striving for Equity Project is a program of the Fair Housing Project that assembles resources for local housing committees, and provides support: <https://www.cvoeo.org/get-help/striving-for-equity-project>.

Bridport is already familiar with the State-Designated Programs. The town should continue to foster and support these programs because they unlock opportunity. Learn more at

<https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/designation-programs>.

The State offers a variety of information and resources to support housing. Learn more at

<https://www.accd.vermont.gov/housing> and <https://www.accd.vermont.gov/community-development>.

Specific relevant programs may include the Vermont Housing Improvement Program,

<https://accd.vermont.gov/vhip>, Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program,

<https://accd.vermont.gov/housing/funding/MHIR> or Vermont Community Development Program,

<https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp>. Contact Alex Farrell,

Commissioner, Dept. of Housing and Community Development, Alex.Farrell@vermont.gov.

The Municipal Planning Grant (MPG) program through Department of Housing and Community Development encourages and supports planning and revitalization for local municipalities in Vermont. Awarded annually, the MPG program works to strengthen Vermont by funding local planning initiatives that support statewide planning goals. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant>.

There are many unique grant opportunities available once a plan is created. This could include Congressionally Directed Spending, and well as Northern Borders Regional Commission grants meant to stimulate economic growth in rural regions for housing infrastructure. Learn more at <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/vermont> and <https://www.nbrc.gov/content/Catalyst>. The state contact is Kristie Farnham, kristie.farnham@vermont.gov.

USDA Rural Development offers a variety of loan and grant programs to support housing and specifically agricultural housing. Learn more at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/multi-family-housing-programs> and <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-programs>.

VCRD is an ongoing partner for resources referrals, and has some seed funding through our Northern Border Regional Commission grant that could be used to conduct feasibility work or kick start planning for implementation. Applying for the funds requires a description of the work to be completed and how it advances the work of the task force. Contact Alyssa Johnson at alyssa@vtrural.org or 802-222-6896.

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board has a Rural Economic Development Initiative, or REDI program, which can pay for grant writers to help pursue grants such as the NBRC grants listed above. Learn more at <https://vhcb.org/redi> and contact Mariah Noth at mariah@vhcb.org or 802-828-1098.



► Improve Community Communications and Events

Residents expressed desire to improve how community members share and access information, and to increase events for residents of all ages. Part of this work could include a community preference survey to understand what methods are most effective for engaging with residents: including bulletin boards, email, newsletter/newspaper, and social media channels. The group could partner with the Town to share information, upgrade the town website, or offer virtual attendance to meetings to help to improve access to community decisions and updates. Additionally, the group could create a “Welcome Wagon” initiative for new residents. This group could host and coordinate community events such as concerts, a flea market, a scavenger hunt, bingo, movie nights, a block party, big truck day, or a tractor parade. Residents also expressed interest in bringing back past community events, including the Friday night dinners at the Grange and Bridport Day.

Community Chair	Liz Boudreau and Steve Brodeur
Facilitator	Jenna Koloski, <i>Community Engagement & Policy Director</i> , VCRD
Resource Team Members	Richard Amore, <i>Manager of Place-Making and Community Partnerships</i> , Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development Jason Van Driesche, <i>Chief of Staff</i> , Front Porch Forum
Community Participants and Task Force Sign-ups	Susie Barrett-Dykema, Eileen Bearor, Lesley Bienvenue, Steve Brodeur, Renee Brodeur, David Bronson, Suzanne Buck, Laurel Casey, Craig Duddles, Paula Fleisher, Chris Goodrich, Kristen Gosselin, Heather Hodsden, Rebecca Huestis, Zachary Kent, Steve Koller, Jolene McKay, Gary Novosel, MaryBeth Novosel, Sherry Ouellette, Deborah Ploof, Corey Pratt, Jackie Prime, Susan Sheets, Katie Shimel, Robyn Stattel, Jenn Sullivan, Margaret Sunderland, Del Thompson, Jill Vickers, Barb Wagner, Kristy Whipple, and Irene Zaccor

Overview of the issue today

- The Bridport Fire Department 75th was a successful event! Some people missed the communication about it, but overall, many people heard about it and showed up.
- There used to be popular community suppers but they fizzled after covid. The challenges were a lack of volunteers to share the work and a lack of a space to hold the suppers.
- It can be challenging to find a space to hold events. The Grange is no longer useable and using the school can be tricky. The Community Hall is a great space with a kitchen and the church vestry is available for use as well. The new principal and superintendent are an opportunity to try and address the school space challenge.
- The new pavilion is a great space for community events!
- There are not a lot of opportunities to see music and other entertainment.
- Flyers at Pratt’s are the most effective way to get the word out.
- Front Porch forum is well used. It is a shared forum now but FPF plans to pull the forums apart so Bridport will have their own but will still see posts from neighboring forums. Right now there are 533 members in Bridport.
- The Addison Independent is a good way to get the word out – but getting things published can be tricky.
- There is a Town Facebook, Town website, and a calendar.
- The Sandwich board in the Village is a great way to share information for people that drive that way.
- There is a bulletin board at the Town Office.

- Each year Bridport holds a successful yard sale and holiday craft sale.
- There is a historical society that holds events, a senior group (bone builders) that holds events. Other events and groups include a book club, a speaker series at the church, a regular paint and sip, a PTO potluck, and yearly meetings of the Addison Bridport Horse Thief Detective Society.
- The town used to have a Bridport Day event that fizzled.

Priority Action Steps

1. Develop a communications plan and process that will help to better share information and connect to more people in the community. The plan could include outreach to the community (online, through a mailer, and at events) to determine how people would most like to receive information and to collect signups for a communications list. The group would then determine key volunteers who would help to collect and share information. As part of this plan, the group could also create a quarterly newsletter to share information and have it available in print and online and shared through identified communications avenues. This work would also include a campaign to enlist more Front Porch Forum subscribers.
2. Inventory and gather existing groups and events together and serve as a convener and collector of events and information to better share with the community. This would also include an inventory of events spaces – and working to improve the availability and access of spaces in the community.
3. Create a seasonal calendar of big events for the full community including a “Bridport Day” type event, events on the green, music, winter events at the ice rink, and more. A summer event could include music, a farmer’s market, family activities, and other ways to showcase Bridport assets and bring the full community together.

Visiting Resources 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

Start with 2-3 events that are doable and focus on doing those well before growing or expanding the number. Many types of events are possible: bring in food trucks and live music once a month in June, July and August with yard games and raffles, tractor parade through town, etc.

Consider if there are school events that could be leveraged to increase community participation (even for folks who don't have kids in the system).

Form a committee to restart the Bridport Community Dinner. Use that event to gather support and volunteers to keep it running.

The group could explore create a community event/recreation department, and staff with volunteers for specific events. This could lead to potentially hiring a director, or sharing one with another town.

Test out different approaches to communicating. It's ok if one doesn't work out; see what sticks!

Start an event newsletter that is mailed, available for pick up and on line.

Consider identifying a person or small number of people who can be the moderator/owner of communication and information sharing efforts. The group could also see about creating a part-time position (3-5 hours a week) to support the town with communications and events. The budget could be under \$5000/annually and

that amount likely could be raised via fundraising if the town didn't want to make it part of the budget. A small volunteer group could assist the paid position.

Form an ad hoc committee that includes people of all ages and backgrounds to take a deeper dive on what people want and need for communication. This group could also issue the community preference survey.

Calculate how much it would cost to mail a newsletter or postcards to residents X times/year, and see if it can be considered in next year's budget, or fundraised another way.

Set up one email address to which anything that needs to be communicated can be sent. This includes things like club meetings, events, groups, anything "news related." An alternative to an email address would be a Google form that lives on the website that anybody who has info to share can fill out and it gets sent to the town. Assign a dedicated person to check that email and then push out the info consistently. It could be weekly or every other or even monthly if info is that sparse. The person can create a simple one sheet list of event that week/two weeks/month and print a few copies to post in places that are heavily trafficked (i.e. Pratt's). And, then figure out where to post digitally and do it at the same time and in the same places: Front Porch Forum, Facebook are good places to start. Consistency and a dedicated person doing it are the key pieces.

Explore Better Places or Vermont Community Foundation funding (see additional detail in the "Resources" section).

If someone could collect transcripts from public meetings like the Planning Commission, Select Board, and School Board meetings, they could be fed into an AI summarizer tool and then posted on whatever the community preference communication tool is. The town could also consider an AI tool plug-in for their Zoom account to create meeting summaries automatically for any town-hosted meeting.

Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations

The Bridport Fire Department and Ladies Auxiliary are building blocks to help with event planning, invitation, and fundraising.

The new leadership at the school and school district would be key partners and a resource to work together with, including the Friends of Bridport Central School group.

Commissioner Heather Pelham of the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing would be a great resource to learn more about events, and funding to support events and promote events. She is also knowledgeable about where "welcome wagons" have been installed around the state and could connect you with residents to get an idea of what works well. Contact heather.pelham@vermont.gov.

Several neighboring towns in Addison County of upgraded their websites in the last couple of years, so check with them as they might have useful ideas and information as to how they went about it.

Connect with the Civic Standard in Hardwick about how to build community engagement. Learn more at <https://www.thecivicstandard.org/>

The team at Front Porch Forum can help to build a plan for outreach and increasing membership on the local forum, and with maximizing the use of Front Porch Forum as a communications tool. Contact Chief of Staff and Visiting Team Member Jason Van Driesche at jason@frontporchforum.com.

Secretary Anson Tebbetts is a valuable resource for making connections in the realm of Agricultural events. Visiting Team member Lindsay Kurrle can help with an introduction. Contact Lindsay Kurrle, Secretary, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, lindsay.kurrle@vermont.gov.

Margot Caufield runs Cavendish Connects which might be an exemplar of a local info source integrated with social media: <https://www.cavendishconnects.com/>.

Contact Richard Amore at the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development to hear examples of what other towns have done and to inquire about state funding resources including the Better Places program. Contact Richard at richard.amore@vermont.gov.

Contact Gary Holloway, also at the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development, to share challenges and goals and see what he suggests for ideas to communicate better or, more broadly, to engage more residents. Not only is he in this role for the agency, but he is actively involved in Montpelier Alive and has seen what works and what doesn't. Contact Gary at gary.holloway@vermont.gov or 802-522-2444.

Connect with other communities that have built successful communications strategies and held successful community events including Craftsbury Block Party (organized by the Genny), Wallingford Day, Vershire pizza nights, Huntington "Over the Hump" concert series, and others. VCRD can help to make connections if needed. Contact Alyssa Johnson at alyssa@vtrural.org or 802-222-6896 or Jenna Koloski at jenna@vtrural.org.

Town clerks know most everyone and most everything about their community. Consider how to leverage your Town clerk's expertise for this group.

A community preference survey and setting up some communication tools and protocols sounds like a great project for an intern. Andrew Brown is an MPA professor at UVM with some MPA students looking for municipal projects occasionally. Contact Andrew.Brown@uvm.edu.

Resources and Potential Funding Sources

There are many generous local businesses that could be event partners and sponsors including Pratts, Broughtons, Roberts Energy, Huestis Farm Supply, and others.

There are potential individual donors in the community who have been generous in the past.

Vermont Community Foundation could be a funding partner, and their Spark grant program may be particularly relevant to some of the action ideas identified. Spark Connecting Community grants can be a great way to try out gatherings and other activities that help bring people together. While websites and newsletters typically aren't funded through this program, community events can be, especially if you are trying something new! <https://vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/spark-connecting-community/>. Contact Visiting Team member Kate Neubauer, Program Officer, VT Community Foundation, kneubauer@vermontcf.org.

AARP has winter place making grants and other potential funding opportunities including their community challenge grants. Find out more here: <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/>.

The DIY Community Cookbook has a lot of great ideas and "recipes" for ways to bring the community together and identify collective ideas and values. Find it here: <https://www.communityworkshopllc.com/diy-community-cookbook>.

The Vermont Natural Resources Council has small grants that can help with community engagement. Find information here: <https://vnrc.org/small-grants-for-smart-growth/>.

VCRD has some seed funding through our Northern Border Regional Commission grant funding that could be used for one time expenses to help support the work of the task force. Applying for the funds requires a description of the work to be completed and how it advances the work of the task force. Contact Alyssa Johnson at alyssa@vtrural.org or 802-222-6896.

The Vermont Department of Tourism & Marketing works to promote the state, and has resources such as the VermontVacation.com website and an event calendar where locals can share events that hope to draw tourists. Learn more at <https://acd.vermont.gov/tourism/how-we-promote>.

Agency of Commerce and Community Development's (ACCD) Better Places funding is a "community matching grant program empowering Vermonters to create inclusive and vibrant public places serving Vermont's designated downtowns, village centers, new town centers, or neighborhood development areas. The program provides one-on-one project coaching, local fundraising support, and two to one matching grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$40,000 to make your community-led placemaking ideas happen." Learn more at <https://acd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/better-places>. Additional information and project examples can be found at: <https://www.patronicity.com/BetterPlacesVT>.

ACCD's Municipal Planning Grant might support a village revitalization/improvement plan for public spaces. Learn more at <http://acd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant>.

Vermont Farm to Plate has a number of resources for food systems news and events. Learn more at <https://www.vtfarmtoplate.com/events-news-jobs>.

An Arts Impact Grant from the Vermont Arts Council may be applicable to some of your work. These grants support organizations, municipalities, and schools in their efforts to create a more vibrant quality of life by providing equal and abundant access to the arts. Learn more at <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants/organizations/arts-impact> and contact Michele Bailey at 802-402-4614 and m Bailey@vermontartscouncil.org.





V. Bridport Comes Together Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held with over 100 Bridport community members and the VCRD Visiting Team on May 7 2024, and through a paper and online survey.

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

Community Connection: spaces, events, and communication

Visiting Team: Alyssa Johnson (FACILITATOR), Jessica Savage (SCRIBE), Karen Duguay, Kate McCarthy, Katie Raycroft Myer, David Scherr, Becca Washburn

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Great park and ride parking lot.
- New pavilion!
- Volunteer fire dept.
- Own post office.
- Irene does a good job communicating everything.
- Church vestry: church is glad to let people use it, accommodates about 60 people.
- Fire dept. Paint and sips.
- Firefighters BBQ: Father's Day.
- Pratt's deli is central place where [people get news, see each other, really the hub.
- Coffee at Braughton's.
- Tennis courts and pickleball courts being refurbished: new fencing, tennis and pickleball and basketball courts (on town property: Tennis Court, town recreation).
- On Lake Champlain: 4 public access ramps and they are wonderful.
- School in town is an asset.
- Bridport Grange Hall (needs to be refurbished but could be an asset: \$400-500k, could accommodate 100-120 ppl, community suppers were great assets): water damage from 22a.
- State roads that run thru town.
- Historical society is active.
- They have their own building.
- Also have two other historic buildings: old one room school house (privately owned but open to public) and 100-year-old hearse house.
- Park space that's right outside.
- Only one Bridport USA!
- Great neighbors.
- Excellent dump: talk to people and it's really great!
- Own post office, graded school and two churches.
- Rural farmland, undeveloped space.
- Lake!
- Fishing tournaments.
- Recreation and boating.
- Amazing views.
- Conserved land owned by state and TNC.
- Lemon Fair flats: lots of land open for hunting and wildlife-based stuff.
- Age Well: Tuesday mornings, if someone can get lunch or supper you can get it free.
- Age Well free exercise program twice a week.
- Have a town wide garage sale: asset but challenging for some.
- Town hall, Pratts and Braughtons are the places to get information.
- Grocery stores, two garages, fiber optic coming to town.

What are the Challenges?

- Grange hall: difficult to get money, not 501c3 which eliminates some opportunities: where can we come up with \$500k?
- Also, we need more parking there, and at post office too.
- Land trust land can be not accessed for ideas that go into the future: lots of that kind of land which is good but presents challenges.
- Ice skating rink: but not that many people know about it or go to it, somehow, it's not the gathering place that it could be (next to new courts): horseshoe area, could be nice rec area but it's not being used.
- No communication that it's there.
- Communication is real challenge: lots of things going on here that no one tells me about, need solutions so we know what's here.
- Town used to provide all the phone numbers in town, haven't done that lately: i miss it, if people were willing to add cell phone numbers.
- Still using the old one but we need it!
- No gathering place: challenge if we want to do something, no kitchen, wish we had a restaurant or coffee shop: no place to just meet up with people.
- Pratt's and Braughtons are central places, but no place to really connect or a social hub, or a place you could take that time to connect.
- Challenges to get to Middlebury if you don't have a car: no one uses park and ride, no bus.
- Lack of community events.
- No more Bridport day.

- Only if Irene invites them do people show up to community events!
- Hard to get volunteers to be in offices in town.
- Elementary school: great space but it's really hard to use the building: have to have insurance, fill out forms etc.
- Challenge is a particular business with no trespassing signs and beware of dog signs: hard to see that and that image issue is a problem.

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

- Want it to be a bigger community: create some more housing.
- Create more of a center of town with businesses, a breakfast spot etc.
- Create a pop-up space: Bristol example where people can do a meal, have a CSA pickup, used for different purposes, not a really high bar for entry.
- Bridport could create a privately-owned pop-up space where people can rent or lease it and use it for business and events.
- Empty space on 22a: could approach owners and investigate possibilities.
- Could create town newspaper.
- could explore using Addison Independent to have a Bridport section.
- Could create an email list/newsletter.
- Could create a community bulletin board to put up town information.
- Appreciate seeing town fly flag at half-mast when people in Bridport died and having a bulletin board or kiosk where that information is listed.
- Tri-Town water sends out messages about water service: re-create that kind of notification system.
- Use sign ins for forums to create a town email list.
- Bridport FD has FB page and lots of information on it put up by Ladies' Auxiliary: could use this to get the word out.
- Could create a town website or town social media: hard to put up an announcement so that people can see it.
- Could send out a survey and ask what people's preferences are for communication.
- Could use constant contact to get people to sign up/subscribe.
- More community/family events on the town park space.
- Could have a rotating series with different places.
- Family movie nights: could find a way to do this or yoga, kickball.
- Have a committee to do events.
- Have more musical events in pavilion: be nice to have at least 3 a year.
- Could have a flea market too and combine with music.
- Would be great to have a committee and designated helpers for events who can coordinate all the activities and ideas for using the town park and greenspace.
- Lake access: we could put a bench, garbage can, porta-potty, signage.
- Same with ice skating rink area.
- Getting a new superintendent: might change accessibility to school.
- Awesome playground at school and pavilion: could explore using those spaces as well.
- Jones Dock Road, Crown Point Road, Witherell Landing, Champlain Side Drive: 4 lake access areas: Bridport could improve all these areas.
- Would love a nice waterfront restaurant.
- Would love to see Miss Portis House turned into Inn and restaurant.
- Would like a town pool that can be indoor too.
- Would love to see a space that could be used for multiple things: a multi-use room.
- Indoor tennis court that could be used year-round.
- Create a defined town center: Vergennes has a developed a nice town center that has attracted businesses. Create sidewalks, parking, businesses that cater to visitors and locals, gathering places and community event places.
- Library can serve many purposes (but we're surrounded by them).
- Bring back Friday night community supper at Grange.
- Create group to take that on and get businesses to donate.
- Lincoln has Hill Country Holiday: parade with teams that walk thru town, people come out and socialize. Maybe a parade here maybe not, create community events that will draw people together.
- Bridport Day: put on by PTO in past but could bring it back.
- Bridport FD having big celebration on Father's Day weekend, parade, fireworks, etc. Whole weekend of events: people could show up for this and do this as a community.
- Could create an EV charging station; have automat (for food).
- Brew thru: get beer, wine, snacks: beer caves: create one.
- Get more people to shop at Pratt's: could encourage people to do that (how?).
- Make a downtown area and attract businesses to get people here to do things.
- Create a parks and recreation department: paid staff: they could coordinate the rentals, and event coordination.
- Beverage castle: drive thru (several votes for this!).
- Create a restaurant or coffee shop" could recruit an entrepreneur to start one of these!
- Need childcare in Bridport: Bridport kids can now go to Shoreham for afterschool care until 5 but it's cost prohibitive.
- Bridport could look into childcare for infants, toddlers and after school care.
- Bridport could look into summer camps at spaces in town.
- Could investigate how to work with Vermont State Parks and work on something locally.
- Could create a better kitchen at community center.
- Knock down the house and the building down next to grange hall, create better parking and use it for restaurant, community center (also creates more parking for post office).
- Create a movie night at pavilion, next to fire house: libraries and schools have rights to movies: could look into a solution for movie nights.

- Create a visitor center or museum: learn about deep history here, get people oriented here. History could be highlighted as an asset.
- Could do movies at church vestry: have some licenses to stream certain movies.
- Could create potluck dinners, sporting events and kids' art activities: need to get the word out.
- Could create a coordinator of volunteers for the top priorities.
- Could do a town mailing for \$118: leverage every door direct.
- Find a way to communicate that might work across town in different ways.
- Wonderful that this many people showed up for this!

Businesses & Services: emergency, health, school, and more

Visiting Team: Lauren (FACILITATOR), Jenna (SCRIBE), Ben Doyle, Fred Kenney, Lindsay Kurrle, Adam Lougee, John Roberts, Elise Shanbacker

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Bridport planning commissioner: 1 planner and 1 selectboard are on a steering committee for this process??
- Prat store is a huge asset; community center; everyone agreed.
- Awesome fire department. Many young members; great recruitment and training.
- Park is a great asset. New building; use it more; get music in there. Park is beautiful with nice pavilion.
- Active first response squad, but getting older. Need new blood.
- Great open spaces miles of fields. But lost the village dinners. Need to consider bringing them back. They stopped during Covid.
- Being at the crossroads is an asset.
- Active historical society. Beautiful cemetery.
- Active PTO looking to extend to more families.
- Women's auxiliary is doing great things in support of the fire department.
- Auxilliary does a retreat and some meals and events; barbecue; 75th anniversary, poker; etc.
- Used to have 2 breakfasts per year for fundraisers (for what?).
- Many a tivities that aree not town based.
- Some activities need new leadership – church dinners, etc.
- Asset – tennis court and ice rink, Horseshoes, Pickball.
- Lady does a craft sale every year.
- School is an asset – but constant pressure to close the small schools.
- Could get more use from the building.
- Book club meets once a month.
- Exercise group sponsored by Council on Aging.
- Waterfront access. Also bridge which gets to the Adirondacks.
- Waterfront view and access are huge value.
- Town beach. Multiple public access.
- Active 4H group.
- School includes Pre-K.
- Pre-school is full but it's a big space. Serves multiple towns.
- School asset: kitchen, gym, stage, pavilion, playground, library.
- Grange hall.
- Used to be a walking path. Winds around the town.
- People with lots of skill sets: construction, plumbing, etc.
- Businesses: Broughton's underutilized. Prices are as good as box stores!
- Pratt's contributes beyond just a store. Support services like the fire department.
- Farmstands! Cheese makers.
- Municipal water.

What are the Challenges?

- Insurance was a problem for certain events.
- Need to pay for school services like janitorial which gets in the way of using it for broader community purposes. Event logistics are more difficult than in past.
- Hurdles are bureaucratic. School could be a community center.
- Flexible use of the building would be excellent.
- Irony. Affordable housing for young people. Young people have children. Cost contradiction.
- Various opinions about keeping school open.
- School is under Middlebury's control. Not local any more. Rules are from outside.
- Tension – lack of transparency about what the district is planning. Town has no agency.
- Former teacher – stated that Bridport kids are the sweetest, kindest and most considerate of anywhere!!
- Getting young people involved in the community. Engaged in events.
- Walkability of town is hard. No sidewalks or street lights. Pavement is getting broken.
- Road speeds are dangerous.
- Aging infrastructure. Tri-town water is aging infrastructure. Constrains housing development. Lack of access to water hurts development.
- Kitchen and bathrooms are old and undersized in some of the community spaces.
- No wastewater in the village.
- No after school care is a barrier. Also lack of home childcare facilities.
- New members / volunteers, etc. need to be welcomed into events and an openness to new ideas and approaches.
- Wastewater is huge problem in part due to clay soils.
- Mosquitos are a challenge.
- Small farms have gone out of business. Kid population is shrinking.
- Conserved lands obstruct housing development.
- Snowmobiles and four wheelers were disrespectful of farmer's fences.

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

- Focus on housing. Entire town center is surrounded by conserved land!!!
- Wastewater for the village.
- Bicycle / walking trail.
- Address milfoil and invasive species. Form task force to address milfoil. Stopped because too expensive.
- Address poison parsnip. Hotline to spotlight blooms that can cut plants before they go to seed and spread.
- Town website needs to be kept up to date and used more.
- Lots of talents and knowhow in the town – psychiatrist, carpenters, etc. there to be harnessed – volunteer pooling of knowledge.
- Partner with other towns that have problems communicating with the school district to have a louder voice.
- Big towns dominate the school board representation.
- How does information flow on schools? Who has the power?
- Set up recreation program. Rec activities in Shoreham. Disappointing that the field isn't used for T-ball, etc.
- Could go back to hiring the sheriff department for speed control.
- Gain cooperation of farmers to put in trail.
- Need to get creative about insurance.
- Post speed limit signs.
- 49 kids in pre-k thru 6th grade.
- Promotional brochure to promote Bridport activities.
- Conserved land helps farmers but it inhibits development.
- Welcoming committee for the town.
- Learn from successes of neighboring towns.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Real culture of community exists; real sense of place; gathering places.
- Be really strategic about using the resources – bring superintendent to the next meeting!!
- Roberts: question of broadband access? Getting better!
- Great use of ARPA funds.
- Lots of successful farmers in the town.
- Great opportunities to bring community together. Outdoor recreation, school as a venue, etc.
- Agreed with coalition with other towns with similar issues.
- Diverse skill sets that are available for volunteer work.
- Take advantage of knowledge of the visiting team and other resources! Grant writing, rights of way, insurance, etc. Technical assistance.
- Liked idea of forming recreation group / walkability / bike path / access.
- Asset of great kids: invite some of the kids into the task forces.
- Housing – no one mentioned forming a housing group.
- Loved the welcome wagon.
- Loved to hear about Bridport. Loved the passion around the school. Sure there is productive way to harness. Housing committee could be supported by RPC and RDC.
- You control local roads. Speed bumps and one lane on Saturdays.
- Adam – heard of many social groups 4H, women's auxiliary, etc.

Recreation & Tourism

Visiting Team: Jessica Savage (FACILITATOR), Alyssa Johnson (SCRIBE), Karen Duguay, Kate McCarthy, Katie Raycroft Myer, David Scherr, Becca Washburn

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Hiking snake mountain.
- Central location – near several mountain ranges, skiing.
- On the Champlain bikeway and soon North Country hiking trail from Killington to Iowa.
- Lake Champlain.
- 125 and 22A and vehicle traffic and people you might want to attract for tourism and recreation.
- Lake Champlain – the town owns some access points to the Lake – 4 owned by the town.
- Vermont Wedding Barn – they have alpacas and people get married there.
- Reconstructing our court facility this summer – new pickleball court – tennis, basketball and pickleball.
- Town green with new pavilion and gazebo.
- Historical Society – they have a building, and a lot of folks who come to learn about the history of the area.
- Fair amount of mileage of VAST snowmobile trails – and folks stop off (if there's snow...).
- Breakfast on the Farms, open farms.
- A lot of maple sugaring in the area – could be a more developed tourist thing.
- Some great home businesses that are selling things – Bridport creamery for curds at the stand, flower farm that has a CSA for flowers – a few places like that.
- A lot of farm stands – but very elaborate “not just some cucumbers” – freezers loaded with meat. Vegetables and eggs.
- Different artisans – folks who make porcelain pottery, have their own businesses – usually see them at the Middlebury market on Thursday notes – something to promote that.
- Pratt's Store – well known beyond this town, have a tourist draw as a store – known for sandwiches and products.
- Book club open to anyone, has 10-15 folks “I want to learn about that Alice” Book: “Maybe you should talk to someone” – more interesting patients.
- Strong 4-H in Bridport.
- State Land – state owns a huge part of Lemon Fair – reserved for bird watching and state trails. Get a lot of birders in Town – folks come from different parts of the state to look for Birds.

- Lemon Fair sculpture park in Shoreham – really cool.
- Fireman’s Chicken barbeque on Father’s Day – been in town 53 years, haven’t missed one yet!
- Craft fair Friday and Saturday after Thanksgiving.
- Garage sale weekend – had everyone driving around – weekend after fields day – 3rd weekend in August – one person spearheads it.
- Really good nighttime sky viewing because there is very little light pollution – especially along the lake, really incredible night sky view.
- “Do people come for that – only for an eclipse.”
- Bridport sunsets are spectacular – they travel and they don’t get any better.
- Vermont Wedding Barn – host a lot of people at Barn and Airbnb – some people from New York leave because it is too quiet – but a lot of people love that – it is draw (quiet and dark!).
- Getting groups together – having yoga or pilates – we drive to CVU to see some classes – need a community hub and person to do that. Bridport is spread out – Lake, mountain, farmland – small community on a big area.
- Fire department hosts events that bring people together.

What are the Challenges?

- Moved here in August 2020 “ugh, welcome to my club” – first time hearing about almost all of this – great things are happening but people don’t know “I know about fire department because it’s in our back yard” – communication and information sharing challenges.
- Lack of organizations – some organizations promoting recreation for the kids, but not based here – Tball in Middlebury, Shoreham has a recreation committee – surrounding areas have assets, have to go out of town.
- Moved back to Bridport in the past year – in Middlebury, you got a folder with the TAM – would be great to get a map with the boat accesses etc.
- Middlebury has the Trail Around Middlebury (in Addison), plus Snake Mountain – but a lack of trails to walk on in Bridport.
- Lack of place to ride horses.
- Lack of bicycling – trails or anywhere safe to bike – “Lake Street is fine, but you have to get to lake street.”
- Lack of welcome wagon and outreach from Town – first friendly face to let people in the know.
- The schools – problem of less and less young kids – used to be baseball, T-ball, Little League – things that don’t exist anymore – not sure if it’s the lack of energy OR lack of kids – 49 K-5 at the school, plus 15 in pre-K (65ish total) – plus homeschooled folks.
- Less children to engage in activities – and not knowing if there’s other issues contributing to folks not participating.
- We are in the middle of a lot of activity possibilities – distance is a challenge – Snowball is a way away – if you don’t have a buddy to go with you, not inspired to make the trip – have to do a lot of driving to get to activities.
- Lack of children – underlying issues of lack of affordable housing and job opportunities to stay in town.
- Tax base in town is very high compared to other towns – if could fix those issues, would have more kids in the school.
- Community, children, distance – big fan of carpooling – trying to connect with other families – unless there’s another family in the grade, hard to find folks to connect with – want to build community, and maybe offer a ride to someone who couldn’t other.
- Biking and trails – a lot of farmland that has been conserved – development for housing and building is not possible in those areas.
- If there was the ability to use edges for trails, could get from here to there with hiking, biking and riding. Seem to be a lot of people who are closed down and don’t want to share their edges – a lot of old fear and concern about allowing folks on land (and other challenges).
- Four access points to the lake – at least a couple of them – resistance about getting to the Lake from adjoining landowners.
- Communication is always a problem with getting the word out to everyone, not just folks that stumble across it.
- Cross country skiing – what is state and Federal land that might be utilized? Find out more about what VAST does.
- SENATE PERSON HERE BINGO (Leister?).
- Regulations and permitting along the lake – especially with Lakeshore development. Prohibitive to expand space and stay within the rules.
- Boat launching in some places when the water gets low – Private land with public right of way – extension of Market Road toward the lake.

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

- In the last group, we talked a lot about the historical society. Would be so fun if there was a scavenger hunt of spots to see in the community – earn a patch/badge.
- Having a farmer’s market in town – tables at the pavilion. I don’t think you want to compete with Middlebury (when/how).
- Recreation club that rotated around by season – skiing and cross country, summer mountain biking, etc.
- Having a group be organized helps it not just be one individual weird person coming into use their land – understand it is an organized group coming in to use your land.
- People know other people in Town – rec club could be your neighbors (a mile or so away).
- Help folks help each other in a way that is respectful and helpful.
- Bike trails around the country where you can fix your bike, fill your water bottle, EV charger – something to encourage folks to fill up tires, fill the trails –.
- have to be able to find the trail – signage and maps > this is the best way to share land – this is how to follow it.
- Using the resources we have re: communication – Front Porch Forum, Facebook, Town website to get the information out there e.g. could have a map to download.

- Bags new residents could pick up – utilizing infrastructure that already exists.
- Lack of public land in this Town – tool the Town could use to work with the town for EPA grants to improve the water quality to Lake Champlain and improve the water quality of Lake Champlain.
- Have a lot in adjoining towns – what is in adjoining towns – centered around Bridport, but include some other areas – highlighting some of the reasons to stop by.
- Hyper local fun things to do list – not country wide. Folks want to be reached in a lot of different ways – don't have a single way to reach out.
- Someone enters our vicinity – send a notification about assets – stop in on a trail, farmstand etc. Sometimes folks just passing through on their way from place to place.
- If there was a group of people to get together aka rec club – could get in out in multiple different ways. There was a Facebook page that was used but now isn't used. Got notifications in the mail for this. If there was an interested group so work would be shared, could get the word out in multiple ways.
- Facebook group – this whole meeting was on there – Julie will put anything folks ask on there. This first showed up on the Facebook event in my feed. The Town doesn't always have things going on and things to say – not a complaint page – information only. Whatever folks give Julie she will share.
- Neighboring communities have the Maple Run or events like that which bring folks to the area for a race. Etc. Is there the possibility of doing something like that in Bridport? Bringing other folks into the area for that event – larger scale something like that.
- AS a newcomer, folks drive all over town – like the scavenger hunt idea for new families OR fun run, etc – great way to get out and see the entire town.
- Place to just sit down together – diner or brew pub or some location that we can just stop in –.
- Talk about Pratt's about what they might see (would be a perfect spot to add tables, but they don't have space) – they have discussed it, but things have to fall into place, properties have to sell.
- Pratt's is the diner in a community equivalent – hear about diner things at Pratt's – get the chocolate milk, it may be made in Shoreham – Miss Lyndonville Diner is the meet and greet place for older folks to eat out, etc.
- Surrounded by cafes and microbreweries – bring something that is going to draw people.
- Days gone by – Tom Broughton Auction – the place was packed – he is retired, but brought folks in from over the space – explore the next generation.
- “On behalf of my wife in the other meeting” – we don't have a homemade ice cream stand – if developed into an entity, people would come here from other spaces. People that have big dairy farms (Julie?!) – get some local ice cream in a stand. She wants homemade hard scoop ice cream (Olsen's is Wilcox).
- Charge a toll at the crossroads.
- Live music – concerts at the pavilion? Golf course?
- Fran Broughton would take her to Orwell to listen to a band – Wednesday's in Bristol.
- Once a month would be more than we have.
- Local band from Bridport – the roadrunners – every Friday night. Will be at the fireman's picnic.
- Cornwall has a once a month Contra Dance.
- Group of gardeners to do seed sharing and that type of thing – Seniors do a plant sale the first weekend in July – only for them.
- Expand on existing plant sales happening.
- Would like to see more trails – how do we go down the path to a multiuse trail system – “how do trails happen – do you call the government?”
- Sounds like you'd like to explore adding more trails in Bridport – more different types of trails – even four wheelers, shared use trails – exploring how all those things can happen in a safe and good feeling way.
- Trail to the school for kids to access the school safely.
- Dog park – always a good place to meet people – fun for people too!
- The Lake – would be great to have a conservation committee that would organize landowners along the lake about water protection so the lake is a resource for decades to come.
- Tell the people where the existing access is – what is the locations, limitations are.
- Could do more events on the lake – a boat parade, tournaments. I see the fishing tournaments – once and then over – more of a spectacle – is there a good place to watch “yeah by backyard.”
- The Town owns the land around one of the access points – was previously very disrespected – the Town has put a porta potty on the shore and it's a big hit, boaters stop by from off the lake. See 4-5 vehicles and then folks want their own space – respect for the land has been much better.
- Tim and Julie's is wide and paved and most popular – see if some could be walking only access, etc.
- “That's all money – she told us to dream.”
- “A lot of New Yorkers come – they only see sunrises.”
- Meteor shower viewing in the park – put out blankets, etc.
- Teacher – 40 something kids in the school district isn't the lot – but easy to do things. Close several roads – even once a month – close roads and let kids ride bikes – kids and adults would like that – some people would just walk them, others would bike back and forth.
- Things for kids of all school ages – chance for sense of community – sense of doing things that is a draw for multiple kids instead of having to go to Middlebury – don't forget the kids.
- Pool – place where families can get together.
- Event – local folks that have a food truck for an event with a flea market to expand a little bit – different things that are complimentary.
- Rec center and pool – how you bring a town together.
- Day during the summer where the kids can climb on the fire trucks – open house is Saturday – I haven't heard – communication!
- Ton of big trucks and vehicles.

- Tractor parade – a traffic jam is a tractor and two cars trying to get by.
- Rec center – uses part of the day/month for seniors – a lot of Towns have senior centers to increase socialization – rec/community/senior center – maybe using the school building because it’s underutilized – need a building, a school has a lot of things there.
- Friday night suppers were at the school – restrictions on what to use, and how to leave things. But great for parking and seniors – but made very difficult.
- Made Bridport a fair and festival - Block party with everything shut down the roads with games, cornhole, prizes.

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Thinking broadly about what rec is – book club, biking, skiing – great way to be inclusive and draw folks in as a mindset.
- Things were in three categories: 1) community focused events (closing streets, weekly music) – things that would be points of community pride and folks would remember as a long time; 2) Regional draw – ice cream, contra dances, yard sale – other events known more broadly; 3) Taking what you have and packaging - Things that exist but maybe have the ability to be knitted together – outing club, farm-based businesses – series of assets that could be knitted together.
- Really enjoying hearing all of the great ideas – seeing how these ideas might reemerge in future planning processes – impressed by how many folks showed up.
- How to bring tourists into town, folks in off the lake, use Instagram culture for sunsets. Does Bridport want to be this – Important question for the community. There are a lot of recreational assets and need for organization around that. Volunteer group that holds and builds consistency and organization, staff or volunteer group to hold. Agritourism is a huge opportunity for Bridport. Consistent communication and organization needed.
- Don’t spend a lot of time on this side of the state – agriculture, lakeshare, LemonFair, mountains – the way the diversity of those assets can play together.
- Agritourism is so Vermont to build and capitalize on – a lot of low hanging fruit ideas that could be cultivated – water, biking, agritourism – often a community just has one or two of those.
- Communication themes – offsite communication – where do you go to learn about opportunities BEFORE you hop on your bike and go explore – making things more accessible to more folks. Wayfinding and other tools.
- Community with remarkable assets – well beyond ordinary – easy to forget when you live in a place – great roads, great access – really valuable, and not everyone has.
- Looking forward toward opportunities two big categories – what can we do better with what we have AND what else do we need – events and information sharing – more things that attract people and more communication about what is happening – overlapping with first session.
- Great ideas around trails, thinking creatively around lake access – could be a community hub at the school, rec center etc – a lot of community focus for that and interesting opportunities – what else can we do with what we have.
- Two themes that I was feeling – thirst for vibrancy and energy in the Town – buckets of types of activities – very local activities – stepping up the scale to attract folks to come here, brand Bridport etc – events that would be fun – softball tournament? Brewery, etc. Burlington example.
- Scale – everything in Vermont has a scale problem – so tough to get things to succeed.
- Third theme – longer distance travelers – Why – how do you get there, get them to get here – you are a crossroads.
- Wanting to attract younger families – scale issue and school – push and pull of attracting families and barriers like housing but wanting school. Etc.
- Connectedness to types of issues – build the critical mass of the T-ball Team.

Infrastructure: housing, water, wastewater, and the Village

Visiting Team: Jenna (FACILITATOR), Lauren (SCRIBE), Ben Doyle, Fred Kenney, Lindsay Kurrle, Adam Lougee, John Roberts, Elise Shanbacker

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Tri Town Water, allows us to have cows!
- Downtown Bridport includes all the way to Pratts and Broughtons, there’s a strip that’s a mix of things, post office, etc. all part of the designated.
- Highways, the roads are in good shape, wonderful highway department!
- Highway department also plows off the ice rink! The ice rink is a resource.
- The bridport transfer station (used to be the dump).
- Biggest and best fire department in the county, the community really supports them too. It’s a backbone of the community and major avenue for helping your neighbors.
- Agricultural suppliers and resources right in town (Broughtons and Huestis’s) that even other farmers in the area drive here for. We’re an ag hub.
- The phone company has set town up for broadband.
- Pratt’s Store.
- Local clubs, historical society, the bone builders club, the book club, 4-H, formerly the community suppers (Friday nights for 13 years of winters).
- Town Office has great hours, they’re friendly and they give good info.
- People in town help each other out, we’ve got a lot of the things we need right here.

- At school we have a huge generator to power the school in case of a long-term outage.
- The people, any time you need a hand, someone is always there, and everyone is super friendly.
- So close to the bridge to NY, access to their rec opportunities, and it brings people this way too. And lots of people commute to and from.
- The Champlain bridge is a major asset, we know how hard it is when it was gone.
- The Lake, people move here for it – taxpayers, there are four public accesses though some of them are small and not advertised, Adam knows where they are (lots of access is privately owned).
- The lake moderates our climate keeping it warmer in the cold months and cooler in the warmer months.
- The farmers, they'll lend a hand around town including when there's too much snow to pass.

What are the Challenges?

- Our wonderful water system is 65 yrs. old and needs repairs, maybe needs to be shifted, etc.
- Payments on Tri-Town Water updating the systems.
- We don't have central wastewater treatment, very expensive to put in a septic in these soils, so it's costly for owning a home or developing any home building, upgrading, etc.
- There're a lot of non-conforming lots down by the lake because they're grandfathered septic systems, it's cost prohibitive to change anything.
- Haven't been able to really explore the cost and logistics of wastewater completely.
- State of Vt crippled any kind of reasonable building, there are systems that would be even better than a mound system, but they aren't allowed by the legislature/state of Vermont.
- There's so much land conserved that can't develop at all, the housing can't increase capacity (see the wastewater problem).
- 27-30 septic systems that would work in Addison County, but they were lying about mound systems??
- Elise noted that Housing Works will have an intern working with Cornwall to explore the options.
- The state is killing off composting systems for toilets because the permitting process is prohibitive.
- Feeling that the statehouse doesn't want growth in rural areas, only in populated areas, maybe the only way to change that is voting.
- Our kids want to stay here, but it's getting harder and harder.
- Barriers to infill in the village.
- Municipal sewers have big costs if there's deferred maintenance.
- Lack of access and affordability to housing, lack of interest in development or lack of partnership and collaboration.
- Housing shortage for agricultural workers.
- Teachers were hired but had to turn down the job after they couldn't find anywhere to live.
- Our kids can't stay here to raise their families.
- Lack of various types of housing to allow smaller households to live here.
- Housing got gobbled up during COVID and it's a waiting game to.
- Lot of the land is owned by farms, can any of those be subdivided and/or pulled out of conservation.
- Zoning is such that the smallest lot is 2 acres.
- Farmers put land into conservation because of "right to farm" they're contending with folks who move here and don't want the smell of manure. They have to raise the money to its protection for the farmers.
- The farmers are heavily regulated about how they use fertilizers and pesticides, but the homes along the lake aren't regulated and they put fertilizer on their lawn... and then farmers still get blamed for the algal blooms.
- Lack of cell service.
- Feeling that going to municipal meetings is pointless.

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

- Public beach.
- Address the water system's aging pipes.
- Neighborhood wastewater systems, need help with costs for sure.
- Rest area in Sharon has an alternative wastewater system (greenhouse of plants processing the water).
- Collaboration for housing especially for agricultural workers.
- Pull land out of conservation.
- Change the zoning to smaller lots or Make it possible to do clustered housing where you still have open space and you have shared water, wastewater.
- Profit is a big motivation, so we have to make it profitable to build affordable housing.
- Keep up general involvement and engagement to understand the limitations and possibilities—the meetings are on the Town website, on the fire depts calendars, and you can ask at Pratt's Store.
- Education around the municipal water system, join the tritown water meetings, the selectboard and planning commission meetings (listed on the town website).
- Look at what development would be profitable how can we support and encourage development coming into our town. What are the barriers and what would make it possible. Development committee.
- There's a lot of talent in this room and we really care about our own town. Maybe we could create a building business, development corporation, housing committee, something??
- Figure out what we mean as a town when we say "Growth" and what do we really want in terms of development so that we're all on the same page and can pull together to effectively get the growth and development we want. We need to keep up the community engagement in that conversation. Maybe this is timely because Bridport is about the redo the Town Plan.

- Having a village district and being able to visualize the different zoning districts and having some more charettes to try to see what the different options could all look like.
- April is Fair Housing Month, event on YouTube, come together on NIMBY and Fair Housing, you need committees to help grow our homes and schools. So, a local fair housing committee.
- Maybe some kind of newsletter from the town with updates and info from the various committees and events that are happening in town.
- Resources: Pratts, Broughtons, the green, the school, etc but there's no sidewalk people drive too fast, so think about connectivity and accessibility of those elements and that will make it a better place for us and a better place for new families.
- Cooperation between the school and the community.
- Look at the whole picture of what will bring young families into the town.
- Make the town meetings accessible over zoom, give another way to access the meetings. Communications and updates around meetings.
- Together in this room we can come up with some good ideas and we can do it, but we feel like we're running into a road block with the state on development. VCRD can't solve that, but we are a connector and we will connect you to leadership at all levels, and to the right resources and technical support.
- To overcome funding barriers, so have a person who plays the role of seeking resources and seeking technical assistance, maybe that could be shared with another town?

Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- If you've seen 1 small town in VT you've seen 1, the differences between successful and failing towns is collaboration and relentlessly optimistic, no one is coming to save you and so you've got to go after the issues and make your plan and bring it to Montpelier.
- Be thoughtful and realistic and break down your ideas into the size or element that your town can handle (maybe you can start with a elder housing facility).
- Addison Housing Works is pretty familiar with these issues, yes you have to be relentlessly optimistic, there are some avenues despite the barriers, you have a water department already so you have a body of staff responsible for similar work, but a community group would give them the energy and support needed.
- You've started down the path of knowing what you want for growth in your town, prioritize the solutions you can take on locally, there are resources for these issues. Take a look at what other towns are doing.
- Coordinate yourselves so when you go to Montpelier or when you go to access the resources you present a united front. If you bring your collective voice with a clear plan and vision of what you want (growth or housing or water), Lindsay's agency and all these others will do their best to help you navigate. They have VHIP program and it will provide you opportunity to get grants or forgivable loans for disrepair units or something that wasn't even housing already or for Accessory Development Units. Bring small scale housing units into town. What do you have in town in terms of structures, units, who are the talented people who can pull together to get these up and running, and then ask for help from the right agencies. Many of us want to see repair as well as new growth. Also maybe Champlain Housing Trust agricultural housing?
- Coming together is the main thing, chunk it up into achievable and projects you can agree on, choose your battles. Be optimistic, yeah, Washington and Montpelier are black holes, but it is actually doable but it does take time, work, and enthusiasm.
- Land conservation for farmers keeps it as working farmlands which helps farmer and environment, maybe decisions from years ago about conserving land right to the edge of the village now feel like the wrong decision, but it was made for a real reason.

Additional Action Ideas

Here are the ideas residents contributed through a paper and online form

- I would like to see senior (income based) housing similar to the Commons in Middlebury for those who can or do not wish to remain in their homes, but do not want to leave Bridport.
- I believe we should see about a Farmers Market maybe even hold it during the Bridport Town Wide Garage Sale. Maybe we could see if Tom Broughton will lend us his parking lot. Also, the fire dept could sell hot dogs, etc.
- Part of what makes Bridport so special is the small tight knit community. I have lived many other places and spent about six years out of Vermont and chose to come back to where I grew up because of the sense of community it holds and I want that for my son and family. With that being said I think that Bridport could benefit from a few things to bring a little more life to the community however have it be done in a tasteful way so it doesn't lose its charm and roots and build on what Bridport means the most for the residents and not on what tourist want. As tourists come and go and we want to keep our residents happy, healthy and encourage them to want to stay. I feel like this can be done while also attracting some tourist to the area to help the economics of the town and local businesses. I think using the agricultural advantage we have here in town would be a good start to bring to the community while attracting tourist off our busy advantage of 22A. So many farms, farm-stands locals offer different products they sell at Pratts, on Facebook, their own small farm-stands down their backroads. Why not bring it together

monthly annually from mid-May to end of September? I understand that is ALL farms busy months but I am sure they could all find a friend, family member or someone to help support them to have their products be a part of the event. I think hosting a Monthly Farmers Market/Craft fair with a few kids' activities food selling from Pratts could benefit all within the community for something to do, economically, and bring both community and travelers together! I would love to organize and get this going! Keeping in mind to make a profit to either donate to a local family in need, give back to Bridport such as our fire department etc... But also keeping in mind to not have things like vendor fees and event tickets to be too high that it deters people from being a vendor or a spectator. I think it would be easy to host a Monthly family night with a movie on the green as well and use the old backstop at the canvas and play a movie and have families join and sit to watch the movie with a small fee or have popcorn and candies, drinks for sale also. One of the best things I remember to this day was the street dance Bridport used to host I would love to see that come back as well. I think Bridport could benefit from a town funded child care center I know being in the "middle of nowhere" or having to drive your child to daycare 20-30 mins away deters people from wanting to move here. I think it could also benefit from after school clubs. When I went to Bridport they offered SO many different clubs at the school and I truly feel like kids these days are missing out on that part... I remember being part of Sewing club with Janet Piper – she taught me to sew and I use that skill to this day, Cooking club with Joyce Sunderland and Janet Piper I remember being so proud of learning to cook something and being given the ingredients to take home to cook it for my family, Make a difference club where we would do things out within our own community such as serving at the town grange for community dinners and weeding the community garden. I remember doing these things and looking at something I did in the club that I felt so proud and good about myself for doing selfless acts just because it brought me happiness. I participated in book club. I struggled with reading as a kid and this gave me the extra practice and confidence to be able to read better. I did the knitting club that I still enjoy doing 20 years later. The point is that it gives kids hobbies and skills they can enjoy for a lifetime. It also gives parents help with after school childcare so they are able to work more and provide a little more for their family. I think the town website has come a long way from even a couple years ago however I think a lot of the younger generation rely on social media and digital advertising via Facebook events and Instagram I think it would be great to communicate through the community via social media however we also have many folks in the community that don't use social media or not very often so I think it would be a good idea to mail out to residents a quarterly update with bullet points and dates of events and such that is happening within the community along with often times Pratts is willing to hand out the information as well. I think the Fire department could benefit with updating equipment, trainings and have more EMT like volunteers even if that means sending people interested in doing emt courses to become certified could really benefit our

community. Don't get me wrong the fire department is a staple and rock of the community but I think if we can get them where they need to be with the appropriate equipment and such they are the literal life savers of this town. For tourism and recreation, I think Bridport could make a profit from a driving range/ Mini golf course! Couples, families, singles, tourist you name it could enjoy the activity and it would bring something to do! Maybe also include a snack bar here? I know many people from surrounding towns that would also utilize this with their families. As Lake Champlain becomes dirtier and more contaminated with spills and such it would be great if we could get a water tower and change our drinking source to a "healthier not so treated water." It would also be nice if Bridport could offer to the majority of the town, Town sewage that could be treated. I think often times when people move from places having a well and septic scares then if they aren't used to it. I think it would be great if the town grange could be renovated and or something done with it so it isn't just rotting in the middle of the town. Could we host community suppers at the elementary school and use part of the proceeds to give back to the school (if you look at their playground it has seen better days). I believe in one hand washes another and it truly takes a village to keep a community going and I think it would be great if we could also do a second hand store where those giving items to the shop could make a small profit but those shopping at the store could get essentials like shoes, clothes etc. at a low cost because there are many families in a low socioeconomic status within the community and so many could benefit from this! I would be willing to help with marketing, planning, grants, donations and whatever it takes to see most of these ideas come through as I truly believe they could benefit the community of Bridport and would make Bridport stronger all around.

- Bike trail and community center / coffee shop.
- We need to try to engage more younger people to be involved in what's going on in Bridport.
- School should closed/consolidated - building used for community or elder care wish we could capitalize on our lakefront - with public access to swimming, etc. septic system seems the key to any increase in development and or increase in property values.
- Come more together as a community and know who lives here, we could celebrate the birth of our town and have a wide town BBQ, band/dance, car/truck/motorcycle/ tractor show etc. I feel the town should hold a bingo night twice a month for the community and if this is held at the school it can help raise money for both the school and town (fire department, EMT and town events) I don't mind being the coordinator for this as I have helped run the American Legion Post 27 Middlebury bingo before. I wouldn't mind even holding it once a week! This would definitely be beneficial for our elderly neighbors. I don't think having town sewer is a good idea. Especially for the elderly because they don't need another monthly bill to pay! They already pay taxes for school when they no longer have kids in school. I think town events that are held on the Green would be great to bring the community together.

- We also have a great seasonal greenhouse, Shallow Rock Farm. And wonderful sky-scapes!
- It would appear that Bridport needs more family farmers to preserve positive qualities of the community (e.g., open space, connected community, robust elementary school, etc.). A possible solution would be to encourage and support several immigrant farmers who possess farming experience. The question is, would Bridport accept and support people/farmers/families) that are most likely not of the same ethnic heritage?
- develop a tool library – residents can share tools with other residents.
- Bridport Could promote the Champlain bike way and make it safer and add a lane.
- Bridport could look into the future hiking trail from Killington to the Champlain Bridge North Country.
- A store like Pratts that you can “hang out” in. Maybe have some little boutiques, with handmade crafts. Tidy up the corner of 125-22A.
- the community here has been here for generations. It is hard for growth when everything is family owned. housing in Bridport would be a game changer.
- a Farmer’s Market.
- Mike’s Fuels is a very good local business with a lot of community service. Now it has sold to an out of town business due to the over-whelming regulations put on by fossil fuel nonunderstanding.
- Bridport Residents are old! Need more support for elderly, provide care, transportation, help for aged. Love flowers, share lilac shoots, other growing things. Share veggies, etc.
- Rehabilitate the historic Bridport Grange Hall.



VI. Bridport Comes Together Community Visit Participants

Marie Audet	Linda Forbes	Steve Koller	Corey Pratt
Dinah Bain	Jenny Foshay	Carol Krawczyk	Darwin Pratt
Charlie Bain	Lew Garofano	Marc Lapin	Darwin H Pratt
Susie Barrett-Dykema	Mary Garofano	Michelle Lilly	Jackie Prime
Eileen Bearor	Donna Gibney	Jen Lome	Sally Rigg
Lucy Bernholz	Doug Gibney	Pam Love	Linda Riley
Lesley Bienvenue	Walt Gilbert	Sharron Macklin	Jen Roberts
Janet Bishop	Sam Gilbert	Vicki Major	Josh Robinson
Bill Bishop	Richard Goeke	Andrea Manning	Kate Rothwell
Christian Bloom	Chris Goodrich	Andrew Manning	Donald Sapir
Bug Bloom	Debbie Goodrich	Marianne Manning	Janet Sapir
Steve Brodeur	Chris Gordon	Judd Markowski	Jared Sayles
Renee Brodeur	Trish Gordon	Nancy Maxwell	Robin Scott
David Bronson	Kristen Gosselin	Rep. Jubilee McGill	Rick Scott
Francis Bronson	Alice Grau	Jolene McKay	Susan Sheets
Adam Broughton	Kurt Gruending	BJ McKay	Mike Sheets
Tom Broughton	Peter Guender	Greg MckKenney	Amanda Sheppard
Nick Brown	Ellwood HanRahan	Barbara Mercier	Katie Shimel
Suzanne Buck	Heather Hodsden	Jason Mercier	Justin St. Louis
Eliana Cañas Parra	Keith Hodsden	Paul Miller	Robyn Stattel
JoAnna Carter	Tim Howlett	Donald Moses	Matthew Stattel
Lindsey Carter	Julie Howlett	Sarah Moses	Jenn Sullivan
Laurel Casey	Rebecca Huestis	Marie Murphy	Margaret Sunderland
Ernest (Buster) Caswell	Sheila Huestis	Cindy Myrick	Del Thompson
Eric Conroy	Steve Huestis	Silas Myrick	Amber Trudo
Wanda Conroy	Dusty Huestis	Mary Myrick Paquette	Jill Vickers
Denise Corey	Robert Huestis	Deb Nels	Barb Wagner
Pete Damone	Morgan Huestis	Gary Novosel	Paul Wagner
Dottie Damone	William Huestis	MaryBeth Novosel	Kristy Whipple
Scott Darling	Wendy Hunt	Fran O'Connell	Gabe Whitbread
Marcy DeGray	Linda January	Kelly Otty	Stephen White
Merry Duclos	Guthrie Johnson	Sherry Ouellette	Al Wilkinson
Craig Duddles	Karen Johnson	Edward Payne	Harley Williams
Mary Duddles	Jonny Johnson	Dennis Piper	Al Zaccor
John Dykema	Zachary Kent	Janet Piper	Irene Zaccor
Victoria Fix	Paul Kenyon	Deborah Ploof	Susan Zimny
Paula Fleisher	JoAnne Kenyon	Stephanie Pope	and many more...

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