

# Franklin Community Voices

Community Visit Report and Action Plan  
June 2024



Produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development

# Table of Contents

I. Introduction.....	1
II. The Franklin Community Visit Process.....	3
III. Priorities Chosen and Other Opportunities .....	5
IV. Task Force Action Plans .....	9
Action Steps, Resources, Task Force Members, Resource Team Recommendations	
V. Forum Notes and Survey Responses .....	20
VI. Community Visit Participants .....	33
VII. Resource Team Members.....	34



**Vermont Council on Rural Development**

PO Box 1384, Montpelier, VT 05601-1384

802-223-6091 | [info@vtrural.org](mailto:info@vtrural.org) | [www.vtrural.org](http://www.vtrural.org)

Laura Cavin Bailey, *Climate Economy Program Manager*

Lauren Brady, *Community & Policy Associate*

Margaret Gibson, *Operations Director*

Alyssa Johnson, *Community Visit Program Manager*

Kaziah Haviland, *Village Trust Initiative Director*

Jenna Koloski, *Community Engagement and Policy Director*

Jessica Savage, *Director of Community Collaboration*

Charlie Smith, *Interim Executive Director*

## Vision for Franklin'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 Franklin community.*

### Community members envision a future Franklin:

- ❖ that is vibrant and inclusive.
- ❖ where the community comes together to exchange ideas and learn from each other.
- ❖ with lots of young people and families, and kids with bright ideas.
- ❖ where people don't have to solve problems by themselves; they can go to others in the community for help.
- ❖ that is affordable for all.
- ❖ where people of all ages - birth to death - are taken care of by the community.
- ❖ that maximizes the potential of Lake Carmi for residents and visitors.
- ❖ that attracts youth and families.
- ❖ with many different types of recreation opportunities.
- ❖ where residents are excited to participate in initiatives and volunteer opportunities.
- ❖ that approaches development thoughtfully; protecting what makes Franklin special while growing the way it wants to.
- ❖ with a vibrant elementary school that is part of the community.
- ❖ that is a great place to live, and a friendly place to be.

# I. Introduction

From the first planning meetings early in the process, it was clear that community members have a special place in their heart for Franklin. The notion of a “Franklin family,” and the desire to incorporate both new and old residents into the fabric of the community was evident throughout the Community Visit process. Visiting Team members and Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) staff were struck by the mutual respect and rapport among Franklin community members. Throughout the process, there was acknowledgement of the wealth of resources and opportunities in the community, as well as challenges. Throughout this, there was a shared sense of searching for solutions that would be the right fit for the Franklin community.

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, Franklin residents voted to form task forces around three priorities:

- **Expand Childcare Options**
- **Improve Communication and Info Sharing**
- **Collaborate for the Health of the Lake**

VCRD and all its partners look forward to working with the Franklin 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 Franklin 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 Franklin 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 Franklin Community Voices Community Visit a success.

We would like to thank the Franklin Select Board who invited this process and provided funds for the town-wide mailing and the community dinner at the first meeting.

We also 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: Dianna Benoit-Kittel, Dave Bennion, Pierrette Bouchard, Yvon Danderand, Allison Franklin, Sarah Gates, Kim Gates Maynard, Emma Gerrard, Stephanie Ho, Lisa Larivee, Mike Lawyer, Tim Magnant, Rev. Jason McConnell, Jen Raynak, Brooks Sturtevant, Josh Worman, Laura Larose, Stacy Godin, Andrew Godin, and Deb Grennon.

Outreach is an essential component of a successful Community Visit, and many people helped make that happen. Thank you especially to Lisa Larivee for helping with the town-wide mailing, to Pete Benevento for assistance with outreach to the Lake Carmi Camper’s Association, and to the Franklin Telephone Company for including flyers for all three events in their bills. Thank you as well 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!

Coordinating the events and outreach was a team effort. Thank you to Dave Benion for his ongoing support in setting up the use of the Franklin Town Hall for the meeting and to Jen Raynak for her expertise with hybrid meeting technology. A special thank you to Rev. Jason McConnell and the Franklin United Church for allowing the use of the church for meeting and childcare space. Thanks also to Jason, Stacy Godin and all others who helped put on a successful Community Dinner, to Uncle John's Band for providing the music at the first meeting. Many thanks to Brooks Sturtevant for helping to coordinate childcare for all three meetings. We appreciate being able to purchase pizza from the Franklin General Store for dinner at the second and third meetings.

The strong support from school staff was evident throughout the process. Thank you to Principal Joyce Hakey at Franklin Central School for all of her support, and to Joyce and Amanda Meleta for providing an opportunity for students at the Franklin Central School to share their ideas. Thank you to Counselor Jennifer DeSorgher at MVUS for coordinating a Youth Forum with middle school students to voice their ideas. The input from all students is included in this report.

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 Franklin for the VCRD Community Visit Team.

Thanks must also go to the funders of VCRD's Community Visit Program who made this process possible: Northern Border Regional Commission, USDA Rural Development, 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, and to Front Porch Forum which serves 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 that supported Franklin's first and last meetings. 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 in the process so far and will continue to going forward, our deepest thanks go to those who've stepped up to serve as chairs of the Task Forces: Allison Franklin for Expand Childcare Options, Jen Raynak for Improve Communication and Info Sharing, and Dianna Benoit-Kittel for Collaborate for the Health of the Lake.

VCRD especially wants to thank Stacy Godin for stepping up to lead this process as the Community Visit Chair. Stacy's history and dedication to the Franklin community were noted by many, and we are grateful for her willingness to take on this new role.

Franklin 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 Franklin.

## II. The “Franklin Community Voices” 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 Franklin:**



### Planning Committee Meeting: February 1, 2024

On February 1, 2024, 20 local residents met to plan for the launch of the Franklin Community Visit process. This group came up with a name for the process – Franklin Community Voices – 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: Dianna Benoit-Kittel, Dave Bennion, Pierrette Bouchard, Yvon Danderand, Allison Franklin, Sarah Gates, Kim Gates Maynard, Emma Gerrard, Stephanie Ho, Lisa Larivee, Mike Lawyer, Tim Magnant, Rev. Jason McConnell, Jen Raynak, Brooks Sturtevant, Josh Worman, Laura Larose, Stacy Godin, Andrew Godin, and Deb Grennon.

### Step 1 ~ Kick-Off Forums and Community Dinner: March 19, 2024

Franklin Community Voices kicked off with 4 hybrid brainstorming forums held at the Franklin Town Hall and the Franklin United Church, with options for online participation. Over 100 participants shared assets, challenges, and ideas for action in the following forum topics chosen by the planning committee: Lake Carmi; Building a Welcoming Community; Recreation & Community Events; and Economic Development: Workforce & Business. Eighteen visiting team members participated, learning more about Franklin and providing reflections to the community.

Visiting Team members included: Richard Amore, *Planning & Project Manager*, VT Dept of Housing and Community Development; Andy Barker, *Program Officer*, Vermont Community Foundation; Tayt R Brooks, *Deputy Secretary*, VT Agency of Commerce & Community Development; Catherine Dimitruk, *Executive Director*, Northwest Regional Planning Commission; Kiera Ebeling, *Agricultural Development Specialist*, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets; Rebecca Ellis, *State Director*, Office of Senator Peter Welch; Natalie Elvidge, *Planning Coordinator*, VT Agency of Commerce & Community Development; Susan Evans McClure, *Executive Director*, Vermont Arts Council; Maxwell Hunter, *Regional Operations Supervisor*, Vermont State Parks; Julie Moore, *Secretary*, VT Agency of Natural Resources; Timothy Smith, *Executive Director*, Franklin County Industrial Development Corp; Shalini Suryanarayana, *Education & Outreach Associate*, VT Office of Racial Equity; Abbey Willard, *Agricultural Development Division Director*, Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets.

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

## Step 2 ~ Community Meeting: April 18, 2024

After the kick-off, VCRD staff distilled the brainstormed ideas into 20 key areas of action. Over 50 community members joined at the Franklin Town Hall and online to narrow the list of priorities for community action. After lively dialogue and a dot-voting exercise, 3 action ideas emerged as key priorities: **Expand Childcare Options, Improve Communications and Info Sharing, and Collaborate for the Health of the Lake.** Participants then signed up for task forces that will convene to move these priorities forward.

## Step 3 ~ Resource Meeting and Task Force Launch: May 14, 2024

On May 14, 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 “Franklin Community Voices” action is focused at the task force level.

Resource Team members included: Mel Auffredou, *ECO AmeriCorps Member*, Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District; Kerry Brosnan, *Natural Resources Planner*, Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District; Joann Hanowski, *Board of Trustees Member*, Greensboro Association; Didi Harris, *Senior Programs Manager*, Lets Grow Kids; Elle O’Casey, *Chief Marketing Officer*, State of Vermont; Dean Pierce, *Senior Planner*, Northwest Regional Planning Commission; Jen Severance, *Business Development Manager*, First Children’s Finance; and Tim Smith, *Executive Director*, Franklin County Industrial Development Corp.

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



Scenes from the Franklin Community Voices process.

# III. Franklin Community Voices Priorities

Determined by Franklin residents at the Franklin Community Voices Community Meeting

April 18, 2024

*Through thoughtful conversation about the future of their community, Franklin community members whittled down a list of 20 action ideas to 3 priorities to through 2 rounds of voting. The 1<sup>st</sup> round narrowed the list to 8 priorities for further discussion: create a community center; expand childcare options; improve communications and info sharing; expand and improve recreation facilities; support and expand Franklin businesses; expand events and entertainment; improve cell phone coverage and broadband access; and collaborate for the health of Lake Carmi. With the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.*

## Franklin residents selected three priorities for future action:

### ► Expand Childcare Options

Create locally-driven solutions to expand access to early childhood care and education. A group could research what has worked in other towns and explore creative strategies such as a program co-located with the Homestead.

### ► Improve Communication and Information Sharing

Create a coordinated system for community communications to advertise events and share town information. Ways of communicating could include creating a newsletter and/or Facebook page, increasing Front Porch Forum presence, maintaining a calendar, using public access TV, creating a community website, and constructing and maintaining bulletin boards. Additionally, the group could improve information sharing and access in the town by addressing language access, creating a “welcome package” for new residents, and appointing ambassadors to help people connect to town and community resources.

### ► Collaborate for the Health of the Lake Carmi

Many groups, organizations, and individuals are leading initiatives to improve the health of Lake Carmi, but residents expressed a lack of coordination and shared understanding of these initiatives and next steps. A group, made up of existing leaders and other volunteers, could form to coordinate the different strategies and develop greater collaboration. The group could identify and implement technical solutions, such as septic solutions, as well as improve communications and community education. The group could also advocate together for more State and Federal investment, resources, and attention to support their efforts.



---

## **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 Center**

Develop a community center, in a new or existing building, that can serve as a location to hold events and offer activities and connection for people of all ages. The space could provide youth-led activities, indoor recreation opportunities, programming for seniors, and a place to access resources and information.

### **Expand and Improve Recreation Facilities**

Franklin residents of all ages expressed a need for improved and expanded recreational facilities. A group could identify community needs and build a plan to improve existing facilities and/or develop new recreational options. Ideas brainstormed by students and adults include an ice-skating rink, a new playground, a shooting range, an ATV/Side-by-side track, a fitness center, and more. The group could also focus on increasing the use of and access to the rec fields.

### **Improve Walking Trails and Paths**

Improve and expand walking trails in Franklin and develop information and maps to share with the community. The group could work on trails such as the walking path at the rec field as well as exploring ways to work with private landowners to create a network of trails in town. In the longer term, the community could also explore connecting Lake Carmi to the Village and/or the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail.

### **Support and Expand Franklin Businesses**

Develop and implement a plan to attract and support local businesses that fit the needs and local character of Franklin. Residents expressed interest in businesses such as more grocery options, a gas station, a bookstore, restaurants, a bar, lodging, a gym, and ice cream shop. The group could develop strategies to support and celebrate existing businesses and entrepreneurs as well as build connections between businesses with a local business network or chamber. Additionally, the group could help to build more connections between youth and local employers.

### **Expand Events and Entertainment**

Expand and advertise local events to bring people of all ages together. A group, with representatives from existing community groups that hold local events, could collaborate to plan and lead these events and enlist volunteers to help. Residents are interested in more music and dancing events, a concert series, regular community meals, theater at the Town Hall stage, crafting events, an adult prom, and more.

### **Revitalize the Rec Field**

A group could form to reimagine and revitalize the rec fields to serve an array of community needs including an improved walking path, a playground, a pavilion to host events, or other recreation opportunities.

## **Develop Housing Solutions**

Develop housing solutions that meet the needs of the Franklin community. A group could work with regional and state partners to assess current needs and explore options including the rehabilitation of local homes, revitalization of old barns into housing, accessory dwelling units, and more. The group could also identify solutions to support residents in making home improvements and repairs and to access information and support in the rental and homebuying process.

## **Start a Local Health Clinic**

Work with local and regional health care providers to create a centrally located health clinic that serves Franklin residents. People of all ages expressed a concern that health care – both urgent and preventative care – is not readily available to all residents of Franklin. A health clinic in Franklin could serve local needs and reduce the need to travel to access quality care.

## **Boost Tourism**

A group could form to take actions to attract visitors to Franklin and provide amenities and information to support a positive experience. Strategies could include the creation of an informational kiosk or local directory to showcase local assets, as well as holding and advertising events. Signage could help welcome people to town and point people to assets, recreation, and local businesses. The group could help to cultivate businesses that serve visitors such as seasonal food trucks, boat and equipment rentals, and campgrounds and other lodging. The group could also advocate for an expansion of hours at Morse's line to allow for more travel across the border.

## **Improve Cell Phone Coverage and Broadband Access**

Franklin residents would like to have better cell coverage and broadband internet access. Franklin could convene a committee to work with regional, state, and federal partners to bring improved cell and broadband coverage to the community.

## **Conserve and Support Farms**

A group could form to create and implement a plan to ensure the protection of farms and farmland in Franklin. The group could lead a discussion on the future of agriculture in the town and identify key properties for conservation, and engage property owners and farmers in exploring potential strategies to further these goals.

## **Explore a Vision for Franklin's Future**

Many Franklin residents expressed a desire to come together as a community to create a proactive vision and plan for the future of Franklin's economy and community. A group could form to develop a process to create a shared vision for the future local identity and economy and then work to integrate that vision into Town and community action.

## **Expand Alternative Energy**

A group could form to share alternative energy information and resources with residents and explore the use of solar or other alternative energy on public and municipal buildings.

## Improve Lake Carmi Access and Use

Franklin residents value the asset of Lake Carmi and would like to see ways to make the lake more accessible to residents. This could include improving parking access, offering town boat lending/rentals, and holding events that draw people to the lake. Additionally, a group could focus on the cleanup and improvement of North Beach.

## Support Biking and Bike Tourism

Improve information availability, amenities, and signage (in French, English and Spanish) to attract and support bikers who are residents or visiting the community. A group could form to build amenities that will increase the likelihood that bikers will stop and rest in Franklin including restrooms, seasonal food trucks, and more. The group could also explore strategies to make Franklin more “bike-friendly” including a bike lane through town and connections to the Missisquoi and Lamoille Valley Rail Trails.

Participants at the April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting added the following ideas:

- **Expand Senior Services and Connection**
- **Build a Local Arts Council**



*At the April 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, community members read the opportunities list together (left) and chose priorities for action in two rounds of dot-voting (right).*

## IV. Task Force Action Plans

Resource Meeting, May 14, 2024

*Franklin 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.*

### ► Expand Childcare Options

Create locally-driven solutions to expand access to early childhood care and education. A group could research what has worked in other towns and explore creative strategies such as a program co-located with the Homestead.

Community Chair Allison Franklin

Facilitator Jenna Koloski, *Community Engagement and Policy Director, VCRD*

Resource Team Members Didi Harris, *Senior Programs Manager, Let's Grow Kids*

Jennifer Severance, *Business Development Manager, First Children's Finance*

Community Participants Allison Franklin, Diane Gates, Kathryn Gates, Emma Gerrard, Deb Grennon,

and Task Force Signups Jay Hartman, and Wesley Kempton

#### Overview of the issue today

- There are many childcare gaps in Franklin including:
  - The afterschool program is only part time and not for all grades.
  - There are only a few local home-based providers and one is moving over to Swanton this summer.
  - There are only 3 other home-based providers in town that can care for up to 10 kids but there is much more need for care than that. Many either don't work or go out of town to find childcare.
  - There are potentially other unregulated providers.
  - There is a pre-k program at the school but the hours are very limited.
  - Only half day kindergarten with no transportation.
  - Summer programming in only for grades 4-6 while other towns offer more options.
  - HUGE gap for afterschool and summer care for kids grade 3 and under.
- The expansion at the elementary school will not open up more spaces, but will allow for dedicated space for the pre-k.
- Without family supports, it is very hard for parents in Franklin to have young kids and be able to hold steady employment – many people decide not to work because it makes more financial sense to stay home with their kids.
- There has been some work done to explore the idea of a childcare site co-located with the Homestead. The next step is to talk to the residents at the Homestead to determine whether they are open to moving forward with exploring this idea.

## Priority Action Steps

1. Conduct a feasibility study to determine the true need and the feasibility of a new childcare business in Franklin (follow examples that other towns have completed such as Bolton and Alburgh who paid a consultant to do the study).
2. Build an effort to increase providers in Franklin (both school aged and early childhood care) using multiple strategies:
  - a. Work with Let's Grow Kids, First Children's Finance, and others to put a call out for interested providers to open programs in Franklin – share information about the new incentives and opportunities through Act 76.
  - b. Reach out to current unregulated providers to provide education, information, and support around scaling up their business to become a regulated provider.
  - c. Connect with the school to discuss options to expand childcare such as partnering with a private provider to extend the day for pre-k.
  - d. Look into partnering with the school or other groups such as Franklin Recreation to identify after school and summer options such as locally run day camps. Also explore transportation solutions for afterschool and summer care.
3. Continue to explore a community-based solution such as a center co-located with the Homestead. Engage with the Board and with residents to explore the idea of moving forward. If residents and the Board are open to it, look into funding and technical assistance to evaluate the needs of the space as well as potential providers to run a program in that space.

## 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

The group could connect with other communities' childcare centers to understand the challenges they faced and solutions they came up with for community support, location, and funding sources. One example are the childcare centers in Middlebury which have recently been expanding thanks to support in seeking funding from Addison County Economic Development Corporation and community-based partnerships.

Consider exploring opportunities for camps and other kid focused events – “childcare” does not need to be solely 5-day-per-week childcare. Kid friendly events, babysitting at a local library or community space, etc. for even short periods of time all allow parents opportunities to work, do errands, and interact with other parents.

The group could investigate the needs of the community and nearby communities, asses what assets Franklin has that could be used as a foundation to the work, and start seeking technical assistance from regional organizations like First Children's Finance, Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation, Vermont Community Foundation, and others.

Consider workplace-based childcare options, such as partnering with the Homestead as one of the largest employers in the area.

## Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations

First Children's Finance helps start, sustain and grow child care businesses by providing guidance, business resources and access to capital. Learn more at <https://www.firstchildrensfinance.org/for-communities/> and contact Jen Severance, Business Development Manager and Resource Team member, at [jennifers@firstchildrensfinance.org](mailto:jennifers@firstchildrensfinance.org)

The Department for Children & Families, Child Development Division is responsible for regulating and licensing child care in VT and administering the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) and could be a thought partner. Learn more at <https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/ccfap> and <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/child-care-connections-agriculture-professionals>

Vermont Afterschool can help strategize about after school and summer solutions. Contact Nicole Miller at [nmiller@vermontafterschool.org](mailto:nmiller@vermontafterschool.org)

Examples of other community-based childcare solutions include the Bridgewater Community Center <https://bridgewatercommunitycenter.org/>, the childcare initiative in Randolph, and in Alburgh.

Northwest Regional Planning Commission could be helpful partners in many aspects of this work. Contact Catherine Dimitruk, Executive Director and Visiting Team member, at [cdimitruk@nrpcvt.com](mailto:cdimitruk@nrpcvt.com).

Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation (FCIC) can help to support local economic development initiatives, and can be a partner on potential grant applications. Contact Tim Smith, Executive Director and Visiting Team member, at [Tim@fcidc.com](mailto:Tim@fcidc.com).

Connect with other regional organizations dedicated to Franklin County youth and families including Northwest United Way <https://unitedwaynwvt.org>, Franklin County Caring Communities <https://www.fcccp.org/>, and the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity. Associate Director Jess Graff, [jgraff@cvoeo.org](mailto:jgraff@cvoeo.org).

VCRD's Vermont Community Leadership Guide includes a chapter on Addressing Childcare Needs in a Community, and can be accessed at <https://www.vtrural.org/guide/>.

## Potential Funding Sources

The Vermont Community Foundation may have small grants to support childcare start-ups; contact Andy Barker, Program Officer and Visiting Team member, at [abarker@vermontcf.org](mailto:abarker@vermontcf.org).

Let's Grow Kids and First Children's Finance can help with an RFP to seek providers to operate a childcare in the homestead space, or other spaces in town. Contact Didi Harris, Senior Programs Manager and Resource Team member, at [did@letsgrowkids.org](mailto:did@letsgrowkids.org).

Nonprofit Security Grant Program provides funding for facilities upgrades focused on safety improvements at nonprofit childcare centers. Learn more at <https://hsu.vermont.gov/homeland-security-unit/funding-opportunities/NSGP>.

Municipal planning grants could support planning towards a new childcare program. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant>.

Lending opportunities may be available through First Children's Finance, Vermont Community Loan Fund, and Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA). Learn more at <https://www.investinvermont.org/borrowers/early-care-and-learning.html> and <https://www.veda.org/financing-options/vermont-commercial-financing/small-business-loan-program/>.

VCRD is an ongoing partner for resources referrals, and has some seed funding through a 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](mailto:alyssa@vtrural.org) or 802-222-6896.

Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) Catalyst Program supports a broad range of economic development activities that create economic opportunity for residents in rural Vermont. Examples of the types of projects the Commission may support include constructing new childcare and healthcare facilities. 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](mailto:kristie.farnham@vermont.gov).

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program through the Vermont Community Development Program can provide planning and implantation funding for projects that support low- and moderate-income Vermonters. In 2023, the Town of Pittsford received a \$450,000 CDBG award to support renovations to a former farmhouse to include childcare space for 26 children. Learn more at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp> and contact Julia Connell at [julia.connell@vermont.gov](mailto:julia.connell@vermont.gov) and 802-828-5215.

USDA Rural Business Development Grants can be used for a variety of purposes to support community and economic development. Learn more at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/businessprograms/rural-business-development-grants/vt>.

If the process involves the development of Community Facilities, the USDA Community Facilities program provides support for a variety of programming. Learn more at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/communityfacilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program/vt>.

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



*On Community Visit Day, a Visiting Team of federal, state, regional, local, and non-profit leaders gathered for an introduction to the Franklin Community Voices process and then joined forums to listen to the discussion.*

## ► Improve Communications and Information Sharing

Create a coordinated system for community communications to advertise events and share town information. Ways of communicating could include creating a newsletter and/or Facebook page, increasing Front Porch Forum presence, maintaining a calendar, using public access TV, creating a community website, and constructing and maintaining bulletin boards. Additionally, the group could improve information sharing and access in the town by addressing language access, creating a “welcome package” for new residents, and appointing ambassadors to help people connect to town and community resources.

Community Chair Jen Raynak

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

Resource Team Members Elle O'Casey, *Chief Marketing Officer*, State of Vermont

Community Participants and Task Force Signups Dave Bennion, Diane Gates, Kathryn Gates, Mandi Gates, Stacy Godin, Stephanie Ho, Ivy Liebmann, Rev. Jason McConnell, Judith McLaughlin, Jen Raynak, Kathi Samson, Wendy Sargeant, Brenna Sturtevant, Brooks Sturtevant, Jeff Teitelbaum, Patty Whittemore, Josh Worman, and Michael Wriston

### Overview of the issue today

- There are existing communication assets in Franklin including:
  - Bulletin boards: located at the Store, Telephone office, post office and town hall, school
  - Town website
  - Town email newsletter (through Lisa)
  - School newsletters (paper and online)
  - Franklin rec website w/calendar, MyRec email list, email and Facebook newsletters
  - Lake Carmi Facebook groups
  - Lake Carmi Camper's association monthly newsletter
  - Billboard at the library the shares information about meetings
  - Front Porch Forum (currently for 3 towns)
  - Weekly church emails and events in the bulletin
  - Franklin Telephone Co. will include some materials in bills or on stickers
  - St. Alban's Messenger print newspaper
  - Town Facebook page (sometimes)
  - Homestead bulletin board, website, and Facebook page
  - Print Historical society summer event calendar
  - St. Albans public access equipment in available, but is rarely used as the channel doesn't come in in Franklin
- The General Store, school, and churches are key for in person connection (a local watering hole would be great too!)
- There is not a formal “welcoming system” for new residents.
- Telephone Co. has the ability to do a digital welcome packet, but it is not yet enabled.
- There was previous conversation about an electronic sign that were not well received.

### Priority Action Steps

1. Create a Franklin Welcome packet for digital and print distribution to new and existing residents, including a list of relevant websites, Town resources, bulletin board locations, organizations that are welcoming volunteers, how-tos for activities in town, etc. This could be similar to the informational guides sometimes found at AirBnBs.



2. Create a shared Franklin events calendar that could host events from multiple organizations. As part of this work, find a sustainable staffing model for the calendar, to ensure there is someone responsible for compiling events.
3. Advance work to install a covered glass bulletin Board at the General Store.
4. Create a Town Organization email distribution list, which would allow for email communication to one representative from a number of different organizations at once with a shared email list.
5. Launch a “Saturday Social” at the General Store to have in person meeting and networking opportunities.

### **Secondary Action Steps**

1. Engage with the Select Board about the Town website content, and the potential to add content and/or consider some reorganization to make it more user friendly.
2. Investigate the need/locations for large format outdoor signage in Franklin. Potentially at the library?
3. Advance the creation of a monthly newsletter, which could be an email format that could also have print copies. As with the shared calendar, create a sustainable plan for creating/staffing the newsletter.

### **Additional Potential Ideas**

- Create a laminated event placemat for use at the General Store.
- Implement the digital welcome packet at the Telephone Co.
- Mail the Franklin Welcome packet resource to all current residents once created.
- Investigate yard signs or reusable banners to help spread information.
- Continue outreach and conversations with residents, especially those who don’t come to events regarding how to share information with them.

### **Visiting Resource Team Recommendations**

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

### **Action Recommendations**

Consider ways of broadcasting and sharing information at ongoing in-person events in the community.

The group could explore creating more opportunities for residents to gather, socially connect, and recreate.

Consider the multiple avenues of communication and needs of the population. Front Porch Forum is an outstanding place to share information, recommendations, etc. Given challenges with cell and internet services, are there public places where information be shared in more traditional ways?

Explore regional, state, and federal funding to create and enhance public spaces, community events, and social gatherings in the village.

Consider identifying a person or small number of people who can be the moderator/owner of communication and information sharing efforts.

### **Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations**

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

Front Porch Forum may be able to offer support and guidance on how to expand engagement. They have a staff person focused on community engagement and connection. Reach out to Jason Van Dreische at [jason@frontporchforum.com](mailto:jason@frontporchforum.com).

The Town of Bethel, Vermont created a “Bethel’s Operator’s Manual” with a variety of local resources that could serve as a model <https://townofbethelvt.com/operator-manual>.

The library could be a valuable partner and resource that is already utilized by the community and has a calendar of library-hosted events. A funding source may be the Sustainable & Resilient New England Libraries Grant – for projects that improve the sustainability and resilience of libraries – including weatherization, energy efficiency, technology and outreach initiatives. Learn more at <https://www.arsl.org/arsl-new-england-libraries-grants>.

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://accd.vermont.gov/tourism/how-we-promote>.

What’s Next Middlesex and Revitalizing Waterbury have some examples of local communication resources: <https://www.whatsnextmiddlesex.org/> and <https://www.revitalizingwaterbury.org/>.

The Vermont League of Cities and Towns can help with information on legal compliance requirements for Open Meeting law. They need to receive inquiries from a Selectboard member or authorized Town staff. Learn more at <https://www.vlct.org/>.

## **Potential Funding Sources**

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](mailto:alyssa@vtrural.org) or 802-222-6896.

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://accd.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://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant>.

Vermont Community Foundation could be a funding partner. If the group is looking to create some kind of local media, contact Kate McCarthy, a Program Officer at the Vermont Community Foundation, [kmccarthy@vermontcf.org](mailto:kmccarthy@vermontcf.org). They also offer the Spark Connecting Communities grant program, which provides grants of \$500-\$3,000 for “grassroots work that builds social capital.” Learn more at <https://vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/spark-connecting-community/>.

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 [mbailey@vermontartscouncil.org](mailto:mbailey@vermontartscouncil.org).

## ► Collaborate for the Health of Lake Carmi

Many groups, organizations, and individuals are leading initiatives to improve the health of Lake Carmi, but residents expressed a lack of coordination and shared understanding of these initiatives and next steps. A group, made up of existing leaders and other volunteers, could form to coordinate the different strategies and develop greater collaboration. The group could identify and implement technical solutions, such as septic solutions, as well as improve communications and community education. The group could also advocate together for more State and Federal investment, resources, and attention to support their efforts.

Community Chair: **Dianna Benoit-Kittel**

Facilitator: **Jessica Savage**, Director of Community Collaboration, VCRD

Resource Team Members: **Mel Auffredou**, *ECO AmeriCorps Member* Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District

**Kerry Brosnan**, *Natural Resources Planner* Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District

**Joann Hanowski**, *Board of Trustees Member* Greensboro Association

**Dean Pierce**, *Senior Planner* Northwest Regional Planning Commission

**Tim Smith**, *Executive Director* Franklin County Industrial Development Corp

Community Participants: **Jes Alexant, Mel Auffredou, Pete Benevento, Dianna Benoit-Kittel, Robert Cormier,**  
and Task Force Signups **Julia Crocker, Rob Evans, Diane Gates, Kathryn Gates, Tom Gates, Nancy Johnson,**  
**David Larose, Diane Larose, Patrick McGovern, Dean Pierce, Ellen Read, Bryant Reynolds, Kathi Samson, Wendy Sargeant, Lauren Weston, and Michael Wriston**

### Overview of the issue today

- Wake boats may be coming.
- Aeration system not getting turned on this year.
- Study out on alum treatment. Still trying to identify funding and other resources.
- UVM Extension working with Ag community on erosion and protection.
- Lakewise and streamwise to engage lakefront owners to do Best Practices.
- Need more attention on our road practices. Up to 10 years ago, the Town used to contribute more.
- Extend the Beach protection
- There's an existing Total Max Daily Load (TMDL) Study monitoring and regulating group with many of the same partners, doing technical works.
- There's a communications problem- these groups aren't keeping the public informed.
- Lake Carmi Campers Association(LCCA) has regular communication with the Selectboard and a regular newsletter, with paper copies distributed.
- Watershed association has talked about septic concerns.
- Challenge with capacity when the summer folks leave.
- Franklin Watershed Committee is funded through grants, some donations from the Town of Franklin and private donations. The Franklin Watershed Committee is not membership organization. The Lake Carmi Campers Association is a membership organization.

## Priority Action Steps

1. Communication with the whole town (print and digital, stories and science) about what is happening regarding Lake Carmi's health and why. Find ways to ensure communication continues to improve as we work on the other action steps.
  - a. Maximize LCCA newsletter (make available to the whole town, make sure that science updates are explained for someone like a brand new resident/a kid/or anyone who doesn't have a science background, tell stories of what's happening around the lake).
  - b. Make info about Lake Carmi easier to access and more visible on the Town Website, and include an annual "State of the Lake" in the Town Report.
  - c. Ensure current groups are represented and their resources are collected and coordinated.
2. Make the part-time watershed position a full-time position: seek funding.
3. Designate a liaison to communicate with the Town, the FWC, and the Communications Group, and others!
4. Explore a community sized Wastewater Management System.
5. Create a grant pool to help camp owners rehab their septic.
6. Collaborate with the State Park on stream walks, other education, when visitors are there.

## Other potential actions

- Work with Lakewise and Streamwise to engage lakefront owners to do Best Practices.
- Bring more attention to our road practices.
- Improve communication via a monthly meeting, email list, etc.
- Share this group's purpose with the TMDL group, and identify systematic ways to share communications.
- Have multiple ways to communicate (not just facebook for example).
- Share work with the Communications Task Force.
- Have personal meetings (not over zoom) to maintain strong relationships.
- Make the Lake Carmi Camper's newsletter available to everyone in town, and include education about the state's reports in layman's terms.
- Have an in-print newsletter as well as an email newsletter, highlight good practices, tell stories (not just science).
- Bring folks together to talk about this work and educate the general public.
- Have a lobbyist to the legislature and governor.
- The State isn't the only partner who can help or who matters. We can bring in Lake Champlain International, Regeneration Vermont, and the Vermont Farmers Alliance.
- Buyout land-owners to curtail septic or runoff issues.
- ANR funding help? All agencies in Franklin get together and ask for a budget for full time positions.
- Regular Event to clean up North Beach (could be a fun social/educational event).

## 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

The group could help support homeowners/camp owners on improving their septic systems through education, technical assistance, and funding.

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is required to write and implement (revising every 5 years) Tactical Basin Plans per the EPA Clean Water Act. DEC does this work with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets (AAFM). That plan is currently up for review so they'll be a public process where people can engage in identifying concerns. This group could work to make the review and public engagement accessible to Franklin community members.

DEC also generates reports on Lake Carmi and this group could attend meetings to review that information and communicate back to the community.

DEC is currently working on a feasibility study to determine whether to do an alum treatment on the lake, and so this group could communicate with DEC to understand that plan and facilitate community engagement.

The group could request grant funding from Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP), potentially through the "Education and Outreach" grant program, to support the Franklin Watershed Committee Coordinator position.

Greensboro implemented several ideas the group could consider including: collaborating with regional partners to create a Watershed Action Plan, hosting septic socials, including a "State of the Lake" in the Town Report, and using Town ARPA funds for a kiosk.

### **Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations**

Northwest Regional Planning Commission. Contact Executive Director and Visiting Team Member Catherine Dimitruk at [cdimitruk@nrpcvt.com](mailto:cdimitruk@nrpcvt.com).

Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District. Contact District Manager Lauren Weston at [info@FranklinCountyNRCD.org](mailto:info@FranklinCountyNRCD.org).

Northwest Region State Parks. Contact Regional Manager Emily White [emily.white@vermont.gov](mailto:emily.white@vermont.gov) and Lake Carmi State Park, 802.933.8383.

Friends of Northern Lake Champlain. Contact Executive Director Bridget Butler at [bbutler@friendsofnorthernlakechamplain.org](mailto:bbutler@friendsofnorthernlakechamplain.org).

UVM Extension St Alban's Office. Contact Administrative Assistant Peggy Manahan, [peggy.manahan@uvm.edu](mailto:peggy.manahan@uvm.edu).

Resource Team Member Joann Hanowski can help connect with folks from Greensboro. Contact her at [joannhanowski@gmail.com](mailto:joannhanowski@gmail.com).

The Tactical Basin Plan from the DEC relevant to the town of Franklin is the Missisquoi Bay drainage: [https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/mapp/docs/2016-12-30\\_MissisquoiBasinPlanFinal.pdf](https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/mapp/docs/2016-12-30_MissisquoiBasinPlanFinal.pdf), and the DEC report on Lake Carmi <https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/restoring/carmi>.

DEC has a dashboard where people can explore projects proposed and past, like the proposed alum treatment, or the now discontinued aeration project: <https://anrweb.vt.gov/DEC/cleanWaterDashboard/>.

DEC created a Clean Water Service Provider (CWSP) model where the NW Regional Planning Commission is working to address any identified projects found on the landscape, collaborating with AAFM wherever possible. AAFM provides grants and resources to partners (for example, UVM Extension, Conservation Districts, Farmers Watershed Alliance, etc.) to help implement the strategies in these plans, and DEC performs the regulatory work to ensure compliance.

LCBP's Dam Removal program which involves significant community relationship building and may be a helpful model. LCBP Grants: <https://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/request-for-proposals-rfps/>.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources' Healthy Home's initiative offered grants to help homeowners improve water and wastewater systems, and provides links to a number of other potential funding sources. Learn more at <https://anr.vermont.gov/special-topics/arpa-vermont/funding-install-or-replace-water-or-wastewater-systems>.

Franklin Natural Resources Conservation District creates an annual guide for agricultural and forestry producers in collaboration with Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (AAFAM) and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). <https://www.franklincountynrcd.org/agproducersguide>.

## Potential Funding Sources

The Vermont Community Foundation might be a source for project funding. VCF's nonprofit capacity building grant could support strategic planning with multiple stakeholders. <https://vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/nonprofit-capacity-building/>.

If a specific pilot or project emerges that has a community and economic development angle, a Regional and Local impact grant from Vermont Community Foundation might be a fit. Learn more at <https://vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/regional-and-local-impact-rali/> contact Andy Barker, a Program Officer and Visiting Team member, at [abarker@vermontcf.org](mailto:abarker@vermontcf.org).

Agency of Natural Resource's Recreational Trails Program and Land and Water Conservation Fund grant [are competitive programs that can provide matching funds for recreational and other improvements](#). Learn more at <https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreational-trails-program> and <http://fpr.vermont.gov/land-and-water-conservation-fund>.

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 kick start feasibility or implementation work. 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](mailto:alyssa@vtrural.org) or 802-222-6896.

Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation has small grants (5K) and have access to other grants (NBRC and Building and Services Grant) and an equipment grant, maybe the milfoil harvester tune-ups). Tim Smith, Executive Director and Resource Team member at [Tim@fcidc.com](mailto:Tim@fcidc.com).

Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) Catalyst Program supports a broad range of economic development activities that create economic opportunity for residents in rural Vermont. The Catalyst Program supports a broad range of economic development initiatives that modernize and expand water and wastewater systems; revitalize transportation infrastructure; establish workforce development programs and facilities; grow outdoor recreation infrastructure and economies; and construct new childcare and healthcare facilities. 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](mailto:kristie.farnham@vermont.gov).

Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services has matching grant programs for Recreation Facilities and Regional Economic development projects. Learn more at <https://bgs.vermont.gov/commissioner/buildingcommunities-grants> and contact Judy Bruneau at [judy.bruneau@vermont.gov](mailto:judy.bruneau@vermont.gov) or (802) 828-3519.

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board has a program that can pay for grant writers to help write grants such as the federal grants listed above. This program is called REDI or the Rural Economic Development Initiative. Learn more at <https://vhcb.org/redi> and contact Mariah Noth at [mariah@vhcb.org](mailto:mariah@vhcb.org) or 802-828-1098.

# V. Franklin Community Voices Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held with over 100 Franklin community members and the VCRD Visiting Team on March 19, 2024, a youth forum, and through a paper and online survey.

*Although the prioritization work of the Franklin 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.*

---

## Lake Carmi

Visiting Team: Alyssa Johnson (FACILITATOR), Jessica Savage (SCRIBE), Richard Amore, Andy Barker, Catherine Dimitruk, Natalie Elvidge, Maxwell Hunter, and Julie Moore

---

### What are the Assets in this Area?

- Location to a major metropolitan area: Montreal, largest city 40 miles north of us.
- All working toward a better feel and water quality (WQ) situation.
- Nice community, generational, great place for neighbors and families.
- Picturesque.
- LC is one of the most precious natural resources in VT, 4th largest lake, great fishing, home for largest VSP.
- What sets Franklin apart from other towns in county – the beautiful lake that we all get to be a part of!
- Campers Association has a great newsletter and communications.
- State Park: recreational activities, rail trail, St. Albans, Enosburg foodie town.
- Relationships: residents of Franklin and seasonal population, community as whole has grown stronger, appreciate the community and warm feeling that the full time residents give the seasonal population.
- Generational longevity, lots of people in Lake Carmi and Franklin, and always a generational draw, move away and come back.
- We have an active Lake Association, active watershed committee and work very well with town, reinforce what has been said about relationship.
- Thank the camp owners around the lake which have always been a big part of opening our community, local rental opportunities for visiting families etc.
- 4 season playground: boat, ice fish, land your plane in winter, hike and bike around it, so many things you can do.
- Lake Carmi brings a major contribution to local economy.

---

### What are the Challenges?

- Challenging ideas and thoughts and positions with stakeholders with WQ.
- WQ: only lake in the state that has been designated in crisis: leveraging all of our resources and personnel to address WQ, if we don't leverage all those resources all the good things will degrade over time.
- Communication: unless you're on the Franklin telephone network, cell phones don't work, state park is a place of solitude but have to be a place to be able to communicate: broadband and internet access isn't happening, connectivity internet and cell.
- Future of farming and open land and its importance, and that industry: private and community challenge, and a WQ challenge.
- Primary problem with Lake Carmi is blue green algae blooms, and we need to eliminate those and address their cause.
- Summer community in VT, season is short, amazing opportunity to use the lake that everyone can use, but the algae blooms make it even shorter times we can use it, can't use the lake and go in the water.
- Water Quality: kids used to learn to swim, people swam a lot in spots and now you can't.
- Financial impact: if we don't get this right, taxes property value or people not going to park, if we don't get this right we'll lose income.
- Planning commission has had it as an agenda item for a long time: septic challenges, year round residents, people not in compliance.
- Property value with all these challenges has been affected.
- Bringing community together that is so different: camp owners and people who aren't, residents and those who specifically use the lake. Agriculture, residents, people who don't use the lake, how to bring all those people together.
- Over the years even since crisis designation, has been challenge to keep this in the forefront of legislators and state agency, capacity challenges, hard to do this work on volunteer effort, struggled to get expertise from state.
- How do we blend all the people, sometimes with all our passion on both sides with how to protect the lake, there has been animosity and finger pointing, and some misplaced authority with "the town better fix this" when it's the state's issue.

---

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

- Find solution to algae blooms and pay for those.
- Need to fix communication: figure out a way to get legislators involved to break up monopolies of communication companies, can't expand Franklin phone service because the bigger companies can't "lose" Local advocacy, or advisory board to selectboard.
- Advocacy piece: money, non homestead taxes of campers, people in village are getting benefits from campers, advocacy from village and government, both groups need to advocate strongly for treatments that are feasible to save the money that the lake generates.
- North beach: in the past it hasn't been as accessible, town has worked hard to clean it up: open it up so more things can happen there, and possibly businesses there.
- Town, government, people, landowners and watershed committee, are working together to help solve the most pressing problem of blue green algae, progress has been made in correcting some problems, but we need to redouble those efforts and continue this combined effort.
- Advocate to local and state level delegation: lots of work on WQ and lots that can still be done, any way that we can continue to advocate for the work that needs to be done would be a strong effort.
- Do really well from a camper lake association getting together during the summer, but we could do more during the rest of the year and staying informed during the rest of the year about what is happening in town the rest of the year.
- Keep seeing things get worse, gets depressing when you look at all the volunteer work you do and we feel we've done all we can to help this lake, feel out of ideas.
- Doing a lot of work towards WQ, have lots of programs ongoing with DEC, and Franklin NRCD, Lake Wise and shoreline management, and streamwise program to ensure we don't add sediment, UVM extension is helping, gotten funding to help with private roads: need to augment that, need to make those projects permanent staples and continue them every year, we have to continue these and augment them. We need to continue the funding for those projects: example: roads, private dirt roads, they need to be drained properly, done some but need more, management of roads properly is an example, other areas with all the other work they're doing, all of that should continue, more funding each and every year to do that.
- Encouraging septic system upgrades for camp owners: hard to find funding for or you can't afford it, having some venue to support those upgrades.
- All those different areas of actions: have been some successes and we haven't been good about communicating successes, capture some successes and share them and keep them encouraged and engaged.
- Aerators not working properly: sucking the pond out and remove phosphorus (?).
- We have a program with watershed committee to offer to issue rebates for pumping out septic systems, if we had more money we could offer more rebates.
- Create Community septic system at lake: 10-12 camps on one septic system.
- Ways to test septic systems and see which ones are in or out of compliance and then address that.
- You can do a dye test and not expensive to hire a company to do that, but then you need to be prepared if it doesn't go well: you might need to hire them and put in a new site, and sometimes its not cheap especially near the lake.
- Lake is used for other events: fireworks, summer kayak event: maybe more opportunities to use the lake as an asset, make it so you can do ice skating, offer a polar swimming event, hockey games, recreational use.
- Septic: 60-70% probably wouldn't pass test, but everyone is afraid to even make it a little better because if you get state involved then it costs a lot, state should give more money to support small changes, if you could do a few things right you can't ask the state anything or they want you to do the big thing.
- Lake Wise: you can have your property evaluated and nothing to do with state, they can help identify ways you can do these small things, free to property owners, some things are available to help. Thru campers association you can get access to this: communication piece is huge: not one place to tap in and know about all the things. We need people to set up and man this committee and we need a lot of people to make a difference, and wish the state would pay for it all.
- Franklin County NRCS, Lake Wise: we can help. Trees available for pick up.
- Septic challenge is there are grants available for public systems but not for private systems: you can't apply to state if your septic failed. We would need 4-5 different septic systems to reach whole lake. Feasibility study done but soils aren't great.
- Go back to state and ask them to truly define a lake in crisis: what does that mean, declared in 2017, TMDL since 2008, tell us what that means and what will happen, maybe that declaration isn't doing what it is supposed to.
- Lake being in crisis, lots of attention in Montpelier, got a grant, suggest that we put it towards a camp that was failing, try a pilot and prove that it works, .
- Have seven ponds on property, 4 of which are green, 3 are crystal clear. Dropping lake level: monitor the amount of water coming in to the lake, not enough fresh water coming in, so maybe drop lake level.
- Base everything off models instead of reality: aeration system was based on model, but the way the system being used in reality, had proof it wasn't going to work, we do a lot of work that isn't effective, stop doing the wrong work.
- Plant more trees anywhere they can.
- Franklin is and always has been a wonderful community, one of the things that has made it wonderful is the lake, it's been in trouble for many years, finally the attention of the state has been gained, including money support from state, prospects for solving blue green algae and WQ in general are good. It's not automatic, not going to happen unless we continue to do what we are doing and cooperating, everyone with a vested interest, right now the fate of Lake Carmi is resting on the people of Franklin and the state government to make the



investment that is necessary, it is a big investment and if we don't make it the lake is in jeopardy.

- We all know that Lake Carmi is a tremendous natural resource and there was an alum treatment study done and the state is reviewing it. We all have to work together to identify the best means to solve the problem, and provide resources. We have to act now and find a way to work together to do that now.
- Ultimate problem is nutrient overload in lake, 200 ppm in lake, aeration system was supposed to be an answer. Have to stop the flow however the state wants to do it, they have to stop

the flow, everyone in watershed, need the state to do that work. Certification for septic systems in watershed.

- In meetings feels like every time we're starting the conversation over again: lots of people who don't have the history or information, lots of people who are passionate about solutions, and people who are just learning, starting conversations over and over again, as a community, staying on top of this topic with meetings, webinars or newsletter/publications would be helpful.

---

## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Heard a group of community members who love their community, lots of positive things happening and all the actions that people are taking, lots of small things that can add up to make a big difference. I know the lake can be made better with pride of community.
- Seem like an educated and engaged community: tried and taken a lot of chances to try to improve the lake, should be applauded, trying to figure out what's next which can seem frustrating but lots of ideas and energy.
- Carmi is all inclusive within the town of Franklin: lots of pride in that, everyone can do a part, we've talked big picture, everyone can do things with their property, yes there is a bigger conversation about community actions, used to have a camp with a septic concrete with cover, got pumped out every couple of years, in compliance as long as sewage isn't surfacing its ok.
- Pride is noted, also heard a lot of fear about things you love about the lake will go away if WQ doesn't improve, guarded

optimism that there are still things to be done, heard you need money, and flexibility in rules so that you aren't afraid as a camp owner so that you have a partner.

- Need to continue to think big and take risks, not all things work as envisioned, expanding Lake Wise and watershed scale of that, healthy homes program provides grants to low and moderate income Vermonters to replace failing septic systems, modest progress but anytime we are attempting to work with a complex ecosystem, it will respond in ways we can't always understand, commitment to monitoring here is great, one of the best walleye fisheries in state.
- Even with all these different interest groups, people are looking to working together.
- Tremendous level of engagement and knowledge, incredible asset, challenge around finding the right kind of incentives, need to make it easier to do the right thing, need more funding: people cannot be expected to make the right.
- People power is needed as well.

---

## Building a Welcoming Community

Visiting Team: Jenna Koloski (FACILITATOR), Lauren Brady (SCRIBE), Tayt Brooks, Kiera Ebeling, Rebecca Ellis, Susan Evans McClure, Tim Smith, Shalini Suryanarayana

---

### What are the Assets in this Area?

- The library serves everyone, and it's in the center of the community, has a lot of different programming for all ages.
- Our school is a draw because of its excellent reputation, excellent teachers who stay, it draws young people.
- This is a nice place to live, good recreation, feel safe and included.
- Good recreation department including people of all ages, they use Facebook well.
- Have a winter carnival, eclipse event coming up, town meeting, events that happen at the town hall, and parades.
- Viable general store with coffee, prepared food, and tables to eat at, it is a gathering place.
- Soon a pub!! if all the permitting and licensing works out.
- The lake plays a big role.
- Walkable village with access to all the major institutions.
- Sidewalks being redone this spring.
- We have sunshine.
- Strategically within an hour of Montreal which is a big population center, also an hour to Burlington.
- Being on the border and close to border towns that share families and mutual aid in emergencies.

- Get a lot of bikers who bring in a lot of money, could tap that resource more maybe.
- People can work in Canada and live here.
- Local border crossing at Morse's Line allows for good movement easily.
- Lake Carmi State Park draws tourism.
- The Homestead retirement community, they prioritize opening apartments to Franklin Residents.
- Mill Pond Campground which also brings in tourism and income, and the owners themselves are an asset because of their involvement in the community.
- Franklin Telephone Company, they've put fiber in! And it's great to have our own telephone company that responds to the town.
- Small town, quiet atmosphere and close-knit community.
- Proximity to local ski resorts like Jay Peak and Hard'ack Recreation Area, for skiing, hiking, mountain biking.
- The Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, and the VAST all run within 5 miles of Franklin.
- The historical society helps us maintain all we see around us that would otherwise be lost.

- The church brings a solid foundation of community support.
- Post office is an asset we had to fight to keep.
- The town is a lot of big extended families which can be a challenge but also offers a lot of support.
- Great St. Albans public access tv.
- Municipal water in the village.
- The FELCO Room at the Homestead is a community space, also the dining room.
- The school is a community hub of connections, also engages with the senior community.
- The church holds regular breakfasts and other events that are open to all and a good place to socialize.
- The rec department events are really good family-oriented.
- Spirits of Franklin is a big annual community event based on a Halloween event, has grown into a theater activity looking at 8 characters from Franklin's past.
- We have a wonderful band in our town of community members.
- The rec dept holds a craft and vendor fair in November.
- The library has space for different artists to display, and sometimes has arts events which have high attendance.

### **What are the Challenges?**

- The empty family farms, only a handful of working farms still in the community.
- Lack of local businesses that can offset the cost of living.
- No sewer system.
- Cell service is a challenge, hard to work from home or do jobs that require traveling in the area.
- Franklin Telephone doesn't reach the whole town, and startup cost for StarLink is expensive.
- Lack of diversity, how does that feel for people considering coming here.
- The town is a lot of big extended families which can make new community members or people who aren't part of the families feel like outsiders or they may not have as much support.
- Employees have a hard time finding a place to rent locally due to lack of affordable housing for rent.
- Lack of businesses and jobs in the area, it's hard to find a job.
- Lack of childcare, there are only 2 daycares that are licensed and they are full with overfull waitlists (were 3 but one moved to Swanton).
- There's not really a community space open at odd hours for finding community resources or services.
- FELCO Rm is 30 years old and showing wear and tear, also kind of cold/sterile space.
- Feeling that most community events are for families, or that there are many opportunities for non-parents to socialize, so they either travel for activities or they move out of town.
- Internally we feel like a strong community, but change often ruffles feathers and that's unwelcoming (including change to events, leadership roles, and other aspects).
- Rising taxes in the community.
- If you feel uncomfortable in a church, it might be hard to get involved with the basic community events since the church is such a social center.
- Transportation because it's 20 minutes to anything by car including a gas station.
- Difference of perception about how welcoming the community is.
- Lack of businesses catering to tourism, surprising that there's no boat rental, for example.
- Empty barns, but the land is all being rented by big conglomerates so it's hard to imagine other land use.
- Empty gas station that's been vacant for years, it's an eyesore and an environmental hazard.
- Library meets the needs of elders and of young kids, but not the middle school and the high school kids or young adults so much. Also true for other local institutions, nobody is catering to teens and young adults.

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

- We should put more solar panels on our roofs, if the town put a solar farm on some town-owned land, that could help offset taxes or utilities, could put solar on the town hall, the school, the homestead etc.
- We could create a welcome package for people who come to town: all the resources, community places, how to connect.
- We could have a town community website (in addition to the municipal website), maybe even pulling together all the disparate community institution websites (historical society, library, recreation department, general store and other businesses, and others).
- A public Franklin Community Forum on Facebook.
- Utilize the local access tv for community events more! great St. Albans-based public access tv we should connect to more to publicize local events and record and share what's happening in town.
- Clear the railroad bed that goes along rte. 120 and use it to connect Franklin to Lake Carmi and to the MVRT and LVRT.
- Make sure Town has certain key services for tourists/bikers like a clear open bathroom for the bikers (Mill Pond does this, and the church has done this).
- Could connect the town or businesses to the apps and forums that Bikers use to communicate.
- Signage for tourists/ppl new to town, maybe at the store to point to the main attractions, maybe the town website could say something about main attractions and how to get around town too. Make it fun, for example, Montgomery's signs say "smile you're in Montgomery".
- Think Vermont program for attraction of businesses and people to town.
- Community Resource Center and/or someone in the Town Office who can help people connect to support and social resources, a Town Liaison, maybe they could also connect us to the congressional representatives.
- Put an ad on TV to attract people to come here! Social Media too.

- Having town info and other services in multiple languages, increasing accessibility more generally.
- Start daycare at the homestead for intergenerational connection.
- Would be great to have a gas station back in the place where the current empty station is. Noted that has been a hard thing that the select board and planning commission have been working on.
- Convert empty barns to multi-family housing.
- Love to see an ice cream shop in town, the general store may be working on that.
- Maybe a working group to talk with the kids about what they'd like to see in this town.
- Having an ice-skating rink or pond (Richford has one).
- Summer concert series, something down in our rec fields, an undercover area maybe a tent or pavilion, near the walking path.
- Pedestrian easements around town through a program to encourage xc skiing and hiking and so on to connect the pedestrian resources.
- Our town hall has wonderful stage, could be a great opportunity to bring in entertainment.
- We could find a way of connecting more with the VAST trail and maybe try to connect with the Rail Trails.
- How do we welcome people into this community, and how do we communicate that we are trying to do that to people outside of the community.
- Need a space for 15-20 people and local resources like age well and humane society info where everyone can access more than 40 hours/week.
- Franklin could look into encouraging more tourism or doing a better job of tapping into existing tourism so that there are more businesses or activities that would keep tourism dollars in town.

---

### Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Rebecca — amazed by the number of strengths, small town feeling, lots of connections, it's heartwarming here. There are a lot of little ideas that are very doable, and maybe some of them will start, through the process or not. The process will give you opportunities for digging in deeper on bigger issues. The middle and high school students are a really special group to talk to about how to make a welcoming community.
- Kiera — great to hear about the library and the land use ideas. Lots of great ideas, and it's just about bridging the gaps in the challenges that you've identified.
- Shalini — really enjoyed hearing from everyone, never been to Franklin and didn't know what a warm community she'd be visiting. Really keyed-in to equity questions, really appreciated that someone brought up diversity and there's room there to think about different kinds of diversity. One way to ask the question, "When someone who's different from the majority of the community show's up, are we ready to welcome them?" Note disability accessibility as well as racial diversity. Exposure to diversity young can make it easier to engage in a diverse community and workforce in the future. Loved what a great job the church does of creating local events, that's another place you could infuse diversity maybe with an around-the-world themed meal series. You're well placed to grow people's interest and engagement with diversity. The Think Vermont program could help this town connect to bringing new people to town.
- Tayt — exciting to hear the energy and ideas that are percolating. Heard discussion about business in town, you've got the village designation which provides tax credits (Highgate is moving forward with wastewater for example). Brownfield remediation is possible through ANR and ACCD. Seeing Outdoor Recreation as a real opportunity with the rail trail and bringing ppl in from Canada. Maybe signage in French? Housing Improvement Program, makes money available to private landowners for addressing older properties and adding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs).
- Susan — Such a great atmosphere, now she wants to move to Franklin! Inspired by community connections, commend you on the broad range of ages in this community event/meeting. The community seems to be right at the edge of an interesting conversation about changing demographics, and acknowledging that can be a hard conversation. The visiting team is here to support. There are really actionable opportunities on the table here, and there are answers to those challenges and resources to make it easier. There's an application open to Arts Council Funding this week!

---

### Recreation & Community Events

Visiting Team: Jessica Savage (FACILITATOR), Alyssa Johnson (SCRIBE), Richard Amore, Andy Barker, Catherine Dimitruk, Natalie Elvidge, Maxwell Hunter, and Julie Moore

---

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

- Light parade well attended, other towns attend Franklin's light parade (Christmas).
- This is in conjunction with a polar express. Kids attend. Community members put on show, wagon rides, library gives away books (light parade is after).
- Different community groups that run events throughout the year.
- Halloween trunk or treat and a haunted forest.
- Fireman's chicken BBQ.
- Memorial Day parade.
- Senior lunch at school (well over 100 seniors attended). Every classroom participated in serving, singing and dancing.
- Rec Department triathlon.
- Town Hall events (often through library).
- Valentine's day family dance.
- Community Dinner (outside with band).
- Ice cream social with a band.
- Library puts on events geared toward families.

- Contra dance at the town hall and a Kaylee(sp?) (music together).
- Vineyard in town (due north), band plays there in the summer as benefit for library.
- Zumba at town hall.
- Rec. sports – affordable option for kids who can't pay to go down to Burlington.
- School has crossroads summer program (some is sports, but a lot is hands on creative activities). 4 week camp.
- Field hockey clinic – free, put on by Emma.
- Lake as a physical asset. Two boat launches.
- Minister Hill – easy hike. You can see Montreal on a clear day. (public access on private land).
- Ice fishing on the lake.
- State park – a lot of opportunities around trails and lake.
- Bog (rare moth is in the bog).
- School and Library has snowshoes people are allowed to use for free.
- Library has free passes to children's museum, echo, state park.
- Hill owned by town is a nice walk, nice view of town, good for cross country skiing. Its and open meadow.

---

### What are the Challenges?

- As a rec department, try to be mindful of including entire community. Struggle to find activities that garner interaction with adults and older adults in community.
- More activities 20-45. Engaging older folks is a challenge.
- Rec department could include more community members in putting on events, they put a lot on themselves, needs more volunteers and more funding.
- Communication for events is not as good as it could be.
- Rely a lot on Facebook and social media – this doesn't reach everyone. Email blasts only go to people who are on the website.
- Lack of cell service down at the rec fields.
- Feels like it is more remote than it is (tied to cell service comment), part of school district and teams feel like it's far away for a game.
- Roads around town feel unsafe to ride bike on at night, especially for children.
- Condition of the Lake.
- Large amount of bird poop at the lake beach at state park.
- Rely too much on library and rec.
- Town calendar is underutilized.

---

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

- Rec department could include more community members in putting on events – delegate parts of the events.
- Central area to learn what is going on and when – franklin website that is all inclusive of what is happening in Franklin.
- Community Calendar.
- Create pedestrian easements – provides safer places for people to walk/ride.
- All organizations could work together better – buddy up to make all programs better and collaborate on events and dates. Coordinate/collaborate.
- Create other councils (like an arts council) that could shoulder some of the load.
- Historical society puts out calendar of what is happening in the summer, expand this to year round.
- A bar or place for adults to meet.
- Contra dancing – folk music band with a caller.
- Adult prom.
- 24-hour dance marathon/dance off.
- Outdoor ice rink – accessible to people at all hours.
- Pavilion down at the field – picnic tables and concrete slab. Place for people to have birthday parties etc.
- Gazebo in front of town hall used a lot, refurbished, with a roof. Put some power there.
- There is a walking trail at the rec fields, could be updated/upgraded.
- Indoor space for people to socialize, hang out and play games. Mostly at churches and Felco room.
- It would be great to see a rec center in the town. Some modern “edifice” where people can gather that has more amenities.
- Rec center/community center would also help to be a solution that keeps teenagers engaged in town.
- No cell phone towers – in some sense it is a deficiency, but it can also be a blessing. It is good to have a place they can go where kids can't get on their phones. Make people more inclined to do old fashioned socializing and recreating.
- Catholic church is divesting itself from St. Mary's - it has amenities that it could be turned into a community space easily.
- What do bikers want as tourists - Public bathrooms? Place to eat their sandwiches.
- Way to make the rec fields more accessible. Can we close them to vehicle access, but allow pedestrian access? Fence the field not the entire space.
- Place for people to drive side by sides not on the main road – off road option.
- Accessibility for a nice hike, don't want to push on land owners of ministers to make a parking area etc.
- Have more knowledge of town properties where people can walk and explore.
- Regarding the hill above town, “before the grass gets too tall but after the mud dries” go take a walk up. Great for cross country skiing (man speaking said he could create some trails, i.e. formalize trails).
- Maybe we could get town to mow consistent path, mowers are right at the bottom of the hill at the town garage. It is leased for hay, but cant imagine a 4' path would be a problem.
- Boy scout wants to work on eagle scout project to make mountain bike trails – just a few features for novice.
- Painted bike lane through the downtown – could attract more bikers, makes biking more accessible and attractive locally.
- Bikers make a loop using the two border crossings.
- Rec Department website could be used to list other community events and links to other resources like Historical

Society events or library events. Swanton Rec website is an example of this. (chat comment).

- Create Community Forum (not necessarily on Facebook) – if we are creating trails etc. so people can come help or tell people you are going for a walk up minister hill if people want to join. People could add hoc add. Front Porch Forum isn't well used.
- Town bulletin board for events so you don't even have to be online to find out what is going on.
- Community meals in basement of churches – do it more regularly. It has been great. Extend it beyond the church, especially in the wintertime.
  - Nancy passed a few years ago and was a pillar of community. She had the hope to have regular community meals. Everyone has to eat dinner anyway. Added bonus of childcare was great. Community supper series with childcare!
  - Maybe each organization takes a month to host a dinner.
  - Seasonal vs. monthly – there are already a lot of events based on food (fireman's BBQ, etc) so fill in the gaps.
- General Store did thanksgiving dinner this year – was great. It was takeout. You could eat there if you want to. But this could change to eat there. They do it for Easter too.
- Town boating cabin at the lake – gentleman is looking for a rowing scull. People could use publicly accessible boats. Not rent, but borrow. This could be fun for when you have people visiting, or for groups.
- Lakes could have docs that people in wheelchairs could use to get themselves into kayaks and canoes. There are two state boat launches. Perhaps explore town owned one.
- Enosburg has town boats – allows people to get out on water. Easy to operate. Just get a key.
- Ways to engage older folks could include:
  - Felting group at the library was successful and fun. Library events are more geared toward older people.
  - Paint and sip – did before, and attendance dropped off. Several week event?
  - Game night – they have card nights at the homestead.
  - Trivia nights – but they are sporadic. In the Felco room at the homestead.

---

## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- Max – opportunities around recreation and a lot of events. Theme was accessibility, little to no financial barrier. There are a lot of active groups and committees that are looking to collaborate more. Get information centralized.
- Julie – ANR has VOREC and Recreational trails program money, MTAP from VCRD provides funding through the RPCs. VTRANS has bike ped grants. Reach out to RPCs for information.
- Richard – blown away by the connections and bond within community. Better places grants could allow some of these ideas to move forward. Also, capitalize on Canadians who come down. Use planning grants to improve connection and visitor attractions. Would apply this to lake as well.
- Andy – amazed by the number of events in town. Heard a lot of comments about places. This could be on "things to invest in" list. Seems like there is a lot of potential for physical build environments. There is a critical mass of engaged citizens that could make these projects successful. Spark Grants from Community foundation. Are there resources outside Franklin you could tap – UVM professor does a topic on a theme, VT symphony orchestra come and do a quartet performance. Big draw in other cities is food trucks, could something similar be incorporated into an event.
- Jenna – This town feels very ready to take next steps. Franklin is on the edge of creating some really great things. There are resources that if you can access them at this moment when there is a ground swell of excitement, could be really successful. She is excited for next steps.
- Capacity is often a constraining factor in what towns can do and that does not seem to be a problem here.

---

## Economic Development: Workforce & Business

Visiting Team: Jenna Koloski (FACILITATOR), Lauren Brady (SCRIBE), Tayt Brooks, Kiera Ebeling, Rebecca Ellis, Susan Evans McClure, Tim Smith, Shalini Suryanarayana

---

### What are the Assets in this Area?

- The general store.
- The people of Franklin are our biggest asset.
- Rural atmosphere, not too busy, getting to know your neighbors, get to see the stars and hear the birds.
- Large population centers not too far away (Burlington, Montreal, and big towns in VT and just over the border).
- The lake is a destination.
- Franklin is on the way to nowhere so if you come to franklin you're not passing through, you're stopping here.
- The Town Clerk, the Recreation Committee, and the Library are all great.
- About 300 camps around the lake.
- The camps around the lake are an asset because there is a lot of connection between them and the town, and they are mostly out of state owners who pay a lot of taxes.
- Border crossings which allow business and movement.
- The physically beautiful qualities of the buildings, clean air, clean water, natural landscape.
- The Homestead and Carriage House which helps our elders stay in their community and is an employer too.
- Franklin people have a work ethic and willingness to do things. A lot of us were farm kids and today's youth are still involved; our elders stay busy as workers and volunteers.
- We have lots of volunteers.

- Back to nature feeling of living here, our kids are more outdoors and active.
- It's quiet here.
- Our schools are doing really well, academically and financially.
- Lots of big community events: Memorial Day parade, concerts on the green, ice cream socials.
- Really strong church community.
- Local and strong telephone company.
- Several sugar makers.
- The Mill Pond campground.
- Lake Carmi State Park.
- The remaining Family Farms.
- There's a lot of self-sufficiency, unique businesses like car repair, forestry, farming, popcorn maker, pet groomer, vineyard.
- The road crew is great.
- Bert Franklin is a jack of all trades who does about half the jobs in town, and Kim does the other half of the jobs.
- Reliance on extended family for support, especially childcare.
- Fiber service around much of town.
- Popcorn made here in town and other local specialty products.
- Bouchard Farm is doing maple syrup and maple seasonings, and other small home businesses. Those things make their way to the general store and the camp store.
- General store working to add more local products.
- Highgate airport development (making the runway longer and other industrial development).
- Franklin has had some growth, there have been new houses constructed in town every year for the last three years.

---

## What are the Challenges?

- When you hear about what's happening in the world today, we're not taking care of everyone like the lonelier and older folks who live far down the back roads.
- We live in a childcare desert. Parents have to bring their kids to work sometimes. There are two childcare facilities in town, but they are so full that they aren't even taking people on the waitlist. For all ages, toddler and infant but also for school age children. There used to be a third facility in town, but it moved to Stanton.
- Infant and toddler childcare doesn't make a profit.
- Excellent afterschool programs for school-age children but it has gaps, it doesn't line up with the school calendar and only so many spots available, so you have to sign up 3x per year. There isn't an afterschool program for young children.
- Housing is really limited in town which means people in the workforce are not adequately housed. There isn't affordable or any kind of housing locally. People aren't going to drive here from St Albans, so if we want to fill jobs here, we have to have housing here.
- The businesses in town always have "Help Wanted" signs up.
- Cell phone reception, for people working from home or jobs that travel around town or the area, it can mean you aren't getting calls about work or calls about family health situations. Getting better coverage is even harder here than most places because of the closeness to the border with Canada because there isn't an option for international cell coverage.
- Internet access is also a challenge, local fiber doesn't serve the other side of the lake.
- Not many jobs in Franklin so lots of people commute pretty far. Especially lacking jobs that support a family with kids. One person has been looking for a job in the area (as far as St Albans) since 2020 and haven't been able to find one, and there's a huge expense. Even the jobs in St Albans aren't necessarily going to support a family.
- We don't have many businesses, we've never talked about how to attract businesses and what kinds of businesses we want to attract (what's appropriate for the scale and character of Franklin).
- Childcare and schools are a regional issue, the union school, the regional lack of childcare, so that feels even more challenging. Franklin didn't want it's elementary or middle schools to join MVU.
- High electric bills.
- The border crossing at Morse's Line is only open for 8 hours a day which makes it less of an asset to commuters and tourists. It used to be 8am to midnight and after COVID started, the Town had to fight to get the hours back to 8am-4pm. Although there are other crossings, this limitation means that there is less tourism and economic give and take for Franklin. Now those same people are spending their money in other towns. Limits economics (strawberries and vineyards) and fire mutual aid.
- Septic is not available, it's a big expense for the town and for each private individual, this adds a challenge to development both from cost and bureaucracy perspective.
- Some residents find the local and state zoning difficult to navigate which limits development.
- There was a potential real estate development, but it got fought down because of septic.
- The family farms have gotten taken over by conglomerates.
- Concern that the rate of growth increasing could cause more problems.
- Hard to get employees here because of low pay but high cost of living (health insurance, childcare, etc.).

---

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

- This is a great time to start a childcare business, the community could have the conversation further, maybe a partnership with the homestead. First Children's Finance Vermont is a potential partner.
- Community solar and individual (there is a solar company that offers free solar panels) maybe a group to work on getting solar on town buildings and town land, maybe some info sharing about assistance programs and how it lowers your bill, there's no maintenance cost, etc.
- How do we further support telework? We have great internet but low cell reception. This is a growing area, not a lot of brick and mortar these days, and there seems to be a big opportunity here. Developing more cell coverage and maybe

another choice for getting internet, would provide redundancy in the workforce.

- Preserving open space, passing a farm to a new family rather than selling to conglomerates, supporting the remaining farms, or helping new farmers get started.
- Look into whether we can get Morse's Line up to 12 hours rather than 8 hours.
- How can we take greater advantage of the bikers, campers, hikers, skiers, and other seasonal tourists? Those folks stay here, but have to leave to buy anything (gas, food, events, and so forth).
- Look into getting a gas station in town.
- Seasonal folks asking for more seasonal businesses (snacks, boat rentals, bowling alley, food truck, movie theater).
- Look into using the empty barns, potentially for housing (short- or long-term rentals).
- Develop more Accessory Dwelling Units, there's funding for that kind of stuff, what could Franklin do to encourage it? Might offer private income, greater workforce, and might be able to contract local labor and materials!
- Franklin could take another look at its zoning, and there could be a campaign to help people fill out the forms and follow the process to develop on their land.
- There was an investigation of how septic could be improved, reach out to the watershed, and pull together a group to figure out next steps.
- Town could have the discussion of how much development we really want to have in Franklin; what's the vision, what are people willing to do, what do people want to see two or three generations from now? The small-town feel is really important, do we want to grow? How do we want to grow?

Growth will happen, this is our opportunity to influence how it will happen and keep it intentional and sustainable.

- The community could have a conversation about town identity; we were a farm town, what do we want to be in the future? Maybe incorporate this conversation into the town plan rewrite happening this and next year.
- There is a growth and economic development conversation, and there is a cultural conversation, both should happen and consider how those two things might change with growth, stasis, or shrinkage.
- How does Franklin help community members find temporary housing and childcare if they don't have the family supports already in place but are new or in a rough patch? Create a welcoming committee and a Town Citizen's manual.
- Let's deal with the problems we've got and not get ahead of ourselves or we might create more problems. Rehabbing existing housing around the village, childcare, septic, rather than developing or bringing in new stuff.
- Assist the folks looking to rent or buy in town as there are houses for sale and houses empty that could be revitalized.
- Do more of what's working well. How can we better support our small businesses to grow or how can we encourage the creation of more small businesses that can happily happen here like crafts, brewing, etc. Maybe a Chamber of Commerce? Maybe that's too big, maybe a Closet of Commerce or a Small Back Room of Commerce? Jokes aside, note that there are already some great businesses and there are seasonal opportunities.
- How do we attract people into our workforce? Maybe some high schoolers would be an appropriate connection.

---

## Reflections of the Community Visit Team

- The assets that help make this a welcoming community are also economic assets. Community events attract people, and a Chamber of Commerce or business partnership, or something like that could help get the word out about how great Franklin is, that's an interesting opportunity for cross border marketing. Sounds like Morse's Line is a big deal!
- A lot of the named community challenges are a bit bigger than Franklin, perhaps there's an opportunity for a regional collaboration process.
- Brave to start having community conversations about what you want for your future around some of these specific issues so that you are in the driver's seat.
- Northwest Regional Planning Commission is going to be working with Franklin on the Town Plan, so let's have those conversations about what you want for the future, how you want to grow, what you want to encourage and discourage. Struck by the intentional focus on the scale of economic development to suit the community you're so proud of. Think about the scale of infrastructure that you want to develop.
- When you talk about businesses you've got some categories: Services (school, daycare, house-cleaner, property-care, elder-care); Home-based (sugaring, popcorn, car-repair); Tourism; and Agriculture which has changed quite a lot, and the impacts of that on the high-tech Telework business.
- Thinking about Telework, there's the VT Community Broadband program that helps promote fiber and might help increase access generally.

- VT Department of Environmental Conservation has a community-wide septic program and VT Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) operated through CHT would help with other infrastructure.
- How do we get people to work in our summertime service-economy? Youth might work for existing businesses, but is there room to teach the students how to create their own businesses and support them in developing their entrepreneurial skills?
- Such a collaborative and friendly session embodying what the culture of the Franklin community is. Great focus on problem-solving and the phrases: "solving the problems of today" and "doing more of what's working" are great ideas to stick with. There's so much happening and opportunities to take advantage and you all are asking the right questions to move forward in ways that will benefit your town.
- Franklin's identity as a farming community and the impact of losing farms seems important to give more attention to. Consider the statewide context of the same problem and how others are facing it by consequently diversifying. There are a lot of really foundational assets already in place and that means that this is the right moment to intentionally envision what comes next and how to grow.
- Another plug for VHIP and how appropriate that solution seems to this community.

---

# Ideas from Franklin Youth

Shared by middle school students at Missisquoi Valley Union on March 28, 2024

---

## What do you love about Franklin?

- The elementary school is good and it's a draw for new people to move to town.
- There's a bowling alley/community space in East Franklin.
- It's a supportive community.
- Close knit community, you know you can rely on each other.
- Lot of woods which is good for hunting, sugaring, walking.
- Lake Carmi is good for fishing and spending time with friends and family.
- I have a lot of friends in Franklin.
- Not a very busy place, it's nice and quiet.
- General Store, Library are really important to the town.
- The School isn't very big so people are really close.
- Small community, I feel like I know a lot of people in town.
- Everybody knows everyone so you feel safe and recognized and welcomed.
- The Rec. Department holds good events like Christmas, Winter Carnival, Community Dinner, and used to do Pancake Breakfasts.

## What is something you worry about or don't enjoy about living in Franklin?

- The only lake is wicked toxic so you can't swim in it.
- No cell service, have to have a landline, and the wifi is bad or non-existent.
- Only one telephone or broadband service provider.
- We lose power a lot and then we are just totally off the grid and have no communication.
- Poorly maintained dirt roads.
- Everyone who lives in town is pretty old.
- There are only 8 last names in Franklin, there isn't a lot of diversity or new people.
- Major internet challenges.
- There's nothing going on in Franklin.
- It's a half hour or more drive to school, gas, the grocery store, entertainment, shopping, services.
- Really isolated, everything is far away.
- No gas station in town.
- Not the best sports fields- they're small fields and they flood frequently.
- The only basketball court is at the school.
- Existing businesses are generationally passed down, they don't adapt, and they aren't open to new ideas.

## What ideas do you have to make Franklin a better place to learn, live, and play?

- More walking trails.
- Stock largemouth bass in the lake.
- More research and outreach/education about keeping the lake clean.
- Bring a gas station and a grocery store to town.
- Bring a dollar general/walmart/target to town.
- More plows and more road crew staff to keep the roads clear in the winter.
- More road maintenance, especially on back roads where most people live.
- Start a Community Fitness Center, have a gym and a pool, a basketball court.
- Improve the recreation fields so they don't flood and then have bigger/better maintained fields.
- Attract more workforce, especially younger people.
- Expand access to cell service and broadband internet to all of town and attract another service provider.
- Bring back car dealership and repair shop.
- Change the old dealership/mechanic to a gas station, or revive the old gas station.
- Attract new businesses like a grocery store, a gym, some entertainment, and a gas station.
- Create a local electric power solution that could help at least some of the town have more reliable power. Use solar or wind energy.
- Hire more electrical grid crews to maintain and fix the local grid.
- Create a ski trail at Minister's Hill.
- Bring in a restaurant, that would be really nice.
- Bring in a McDonalds.
- Start a Drive-In Movie Theater.
- Encourage more seasonal businesses that would make it a more fun place to live for half the year and would bring in more jobs.
- Start a free community space that is open late for kids to spend time at.
- Bring in a bookstore.
- Doing these things will bring more new people to town.



---

## Shared by Franklin 5th and 6th grade students to guidance counselor Amanda Meleta

---

### What do you like about Franklin?

- The elementary school is really nice.
- Good town, low crime, safe.
- Lots of trees, nature, camp sites. It's scenic and peaceful.
- Not a lot of buildings, not too crowded.
- We have everything we need here.
- We all live kind of close to each other. Easy to get together with friends.
- Being close to the border is nice.
- Small town— most people know each other and the people are kind.
- Many farms.
- Geocaches.
- Small community with lots of nice people. It feels like you know everyone and everyone feels welcome
- No natural disasters
- Woodlands, nature areas
- Having the Franklin General Store
- My family has been living here for a long time
- The town library
- Low crime
- Good church community
- Dirt roads
- Clean, less litter
- Small population.

---

### Are there things you don't like about living in Franklin? What would you change?

- Rebuild the gas station.
- Trash cleanup. We could have a small group that does this (all ages welcome).
- Getting the auto shop back.
- Bait shop— maybe have at the gas station.
- Adding more parks and playgrounds for kids to play at.
- People speed making it unsafe.
- Not having other people at Jay Peak when we take our ski trips = more funding for the school ski program.
- Stores/ Resources to Add:
  - Need a gas station (#1).
  - Small sporting equipment store (to get basic items).
  - Farm market.
  - Pet shelter w/ adoptions.
  - Veterinarian.
  - Restaurant.
  - Hardware store.
  - Clothing or shoe store (walmart, tj maxx).
  - Music store.
- Adding a Sports Center and Recreation Center to include:
  - A hockey rink.
  - Community pool (like hard'ack).
  - A dog park.
  - Football field + add a franklin recreation football team.
  - Archery area.
  - Hunter safety course.
  - Gymnastics.
  - Skate park.
  - Ice skating.
  - Mountain bike trails.
  - Regular bike path.
- Long winter.
- Too many people speed:
  - Increase police presence in town.
  - More speed limit signs.
- Musky to be added to lake Carmi (type of fish).
- More employment opportunities.
- More farms.
- On the roads, make a wider shoulder for people who need to pull over.

---

### What are your ideas for things that we could do to make Franklin a better place to live?

- Boat wash station for the lake when entering and leaving.
- Boat fuel station at lake Carmi.
- More parking at lake Carmi.
- More playgrounds spread out. Tree houses at the playground would be fun.
- Keep our farmland, not building houses and stores.
- More small businesses:
  - Chick Fil-A, McDonalds, 7 Eleven.
  - Vermont made breakfast/dinner place.
  - Vehicle shop / auto body.
  - Gas station and bait shop.
- Cleanup around lake Carmi (the point), there is an abandoned house? and in the lake to keep it clean.
- Not building new buildings, but using buildings we currently have that are not being used— add onto them if necessary.
- Farm to Table program or farm market.
- Community pool or a pool at school.
- Track field at the school with a football field.
- More churches spread out.
- More houses. But build where there are no trees.
- Fixing the roads, fill the potholes, dirt roads are disappearing (due to lack of maintenance).
  - Less paved roads, dirt roads reduce people speeding.
  - Maintaining road equipment and have staff to do the road work.
- Cops and border patrol, make it safer, reduce speed.
  - Speeding is a major concern. Speed bumps?
- Clean up lake Carmi— clean the lake itself.
- Clean up litter and put trash cans around town.
- Community shelter areas in case of emergency.
- More campgrounds in wooded areas.
- Shooting range with a hunter safety course.
- More parks and playgrounds besides the one at school.
- Bottle deposit/ redemption area.
- More road maintenance— dirt and paved.
- Paid fire department.
- Specific trails for ATVs.
- Local dr office.
- Paintball, airsoft.

---

## Do you want to live in Franklin when you grow up? (7 yes, 15 maybe/no)

### Yes

- Carry family traditions.
- Live in family house, around family across border.
- I don't like to travel, close to family when I grow up to raise my own kids.
- Lake Carmi.
- I don't want to live in a populated place.
- The school is good for a future family.
- My family house/ land is here.
- We get to enjoy all 4 seasons.
- Scenery, nature.
- Good place to raise family.
- Safe community.
- Where I grew up.
- Low crime.
- Familiar with the area.
- Fire department is close to my house.
- Small town feel.
- Stay close to family.

### Maybe

- Good town to live in, safe.
- It's just the same thing that you see. Nothing new.
- Have a home here to visit but live most of the time in another state. Here for skiing.
- Want to explore other places and travel.
- I didn't grow up here, we just moved here.
- I want to move to a bigger area (more populated, more stores).
- Be closer to my family and friends that live in other areas.
- Too cold, want a winter that is a little bit shorter.
- Want to live by the ocean.

### No

- Not a lot of job opportunities.
- I want to explore more.
- Move somewhere warmer.
- Move out of state.
- Family in other states.
- Move somewhere smaller, getting too populated.

---

## Additional Action Ideas

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

- Number one priority is the improvement of Lake Carmi. The lake hosts the state's largest state park, and it serves as focal point for the town of Franklin and neighboring communities.
- I manage Franklin Homestead and Carriage House. I see a major crisis for our seniors. Franklin County has lost several level three care homes in the past few years, and although we have LOTS of people who would like to move to the Carriage House, where they can receive supportive services, many cannot afford to move here without a subsidy. We need more subsidies to meet the needs of our local seniors. Our buildings are also aging, and we have not been able to find good funding sources to make needed repairs and improvements. We have resorted to fundraising, but realize many folks are tiring of our fundraising efforts.
- There is a lack of daycare in town. We have three employees that have often had to bring children to work when there is no school. There is no local daycare accepting children right now; only wait lists.
- Housing for our employees is also difficult. I have an employee whose landlord wants to move into the house she is renting, and she would like to stay in Franklin, but has not been able to find housing.
- Pave the roads at the lake, stop adding dirt and phosphorus to the lake through road adjustments.
- The water quality and health concerns around Lake Carmi need to be solved ASAP!
- Lake Carmi is the 4th largest inland lake in Vermont and home to the largest State Park in the Vermont. It is a cherished natural resource. We cannot let it die. We need to stop Blue Green Algae Blooms on Lake Carmi and make the lake a desirable destination for all to enjoy. The lake is a vital, driving force in the Town's economy and must be protected and preserved. Blue Green Algae is noxious. It makes the lake an unhealthy place to reside or recreate. It drives people away from Franklin. We must find a means to end the Blue Green Algae blooms now.
- Continue with events that draw people to Franklin. Ensure safety of bicyclist with additional signage and education, Highlight activities on the lake, especially at the State Park and at the North Beach whenever possible. Assist Franklin General, possibly with a grant of some sort, with fixing their entry so it is handicap accessible (not only is the ramp not up to code, the door swing the wrong way!!! Utilize the beautiful town hall more often! Increase recreational activities for locals and continue to add activities at the library. Continue to bring people to Franklin! People come from all over to go to the Phoenix House in Berkshire. Let's bring that same enthusiasm to Franklin!
- I would love to see the North shore re-activated as a community area for swimming and swim lessons. That, of course, needs a cleaner lake, and funds to accomplish. I would love to see grants made available to help camp owners with older camps renovate the septic systems or be on a community system/line. My camp was built in the 50's and the zoning rules were quite different back then. While the tank maintenance is/has been done all along I can't move it.. I can't improve the location... the cost is prohibitive. I do everything I can as a summer resident, my mother was raised in Franklin, and I can speak for all those who moved away but still feel the love for the town and the lake. We come back every summer,

or every chance we get, and contribute financially, physically and emotionally to the town, the people and lake property. The lake is so vital and needs more help than just the campers can manage. Climate change is working against us so we need science to work for us.

- Promote the alum treatment solution to rid the cyanobacteria.
- As you know, Lake Carmi is the 4th largest inland lake in Vermont and hosts the largest State Park in the State (revenue for State). It is a potentially beautiful natural resource. I don't want to be witness to the death of Lake Carmi. We need to stop the Blue Green Algae and cyanobacteria blooms on Lake Carmi and make the lake a desirable destination for all Vermonters and tourists to enjoy. The lake is a vital, driving force in Franklin's economy and must be protected and preserved. Blue Green Algae and cyanobacteria is noxious. It makes the lake an unhealthy place to reside or recreate. It drives people away from Franklin. We must find a way to end the Blue Green Algae and cyanobacteria blooms now.
- A clean lake and a vibrant lake community is necessary for the future of Franklin. It seems alum may be the best solution to the clean lake. Let's finish the feasibility study and find the financing.
- Without a clean lake, Franklin will fail to exist. For twenty years the issue of Eurasian milfoil has been unsolvable. Now that pales in comparison to toxic blue green algae. Camps will become unsellable and taxes will plummet.
- The alum treatment program must be number one priority. Let's finish the study and find the money.
- Help in getting the lake back to a high standard.
- I believe that our first order of business needs to be making a decision about what kind of town we want to become. Do we want to attract tourists? Businesses? Young families? Older adults? Do we want to maintain things just the way we are and simply make some more minor adjustments?
- Does anyone have data projecting future population trends for Franklin County? If we are on the cusp of an increased population pressure we ought to try to get ahead of the trend with some wise planning. Maybe we want to amend zoning

regs. to create more intense village development or decide that we're okay with large land tracts being broken up into 10 acre parcels.

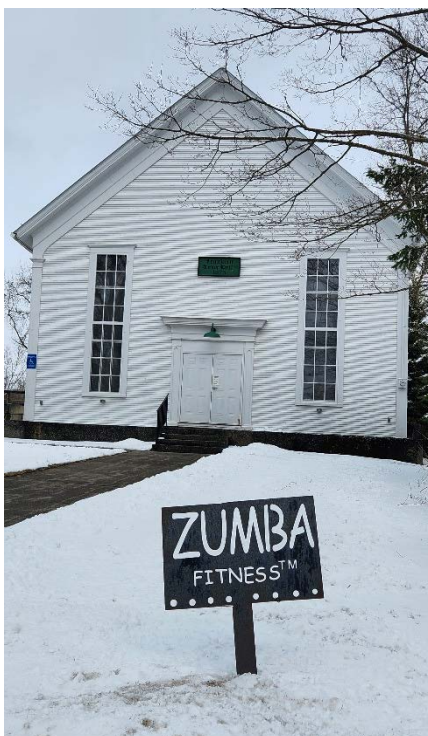
- If we can develop a shared vision about the kind of town we want to be, we will be better able to take actionable steps toward that end. If not, we'll likely develop in the same haphazard, piecemeal way that we're witnessing in neighboring communities.
- Please fix potholes and pave more roads. It would be great to have at least one gas station in town.
- Clean up Lake Carmi immediately! It is an important part of Franklin as many visitors (both daily use & overnight camping) come to the lake which adds a tremendous amount to the Town's economy and it's vibrancy.
- Lake Carmi is a key piece to the quality of life here in Franklin. I moved here because of the lake, and close proximity to the State Park. I no longer use either, because of the toxic cyanobacteria blooms that begin in the spring and go into the winter. The aeration system failed. We were told that the State hired the experts in the field on aeration. Now, we hear that there are some who want to use alum. Again, we will be told the State will hire the experts in the field - and it is hard to trust their judgement.
- Being so, why would the state pour MILLIONS into failed experiments, when they should be using State funds to PURCHASE the leased farmland around the lake and stop the flow of nutrients into the lake. At the very least, the state should prohibit the IMPORTATION OF NUTRIENTS into the watershed. Most farmland around the lake is leased, by property owners who do not farm.
- Action Idea: Purchase leased farmland, create a larger state park/conservation area, and stop the flow of nutrients into the lake. Otherwise, the State is simply gaslighting the residents and users of the lake into believing the State is serious about our "Lake in Crisis."
- Accessibility And Accommodations Services For Cows cellular services on Wheels To Help With cell phone connectivity for connectivity economics.



*Community members shared their ideas for Franklin's future in a hybrid forum on Community Visit Day, March 19, 2024.*

## VI. Franklin Community Voices Community Visit Participants

Amy Adams	Robert Cormier	Emma Gerrard	Laura Larose	Ellen Read
Travis Adams	John Costa	Stacy Godin	Jessi Lasly	Bryant Reynolds
Jes Alexant	Nilah Cote	Andrew Godin	Mike Lawyer	Carole Richard
Mel Auffredou	Johanna Crane-	George Godin	Matthew LeFluer	Jean Richard
Bryce Bachelder	Godin	Mike Grant	Ivy Liebmann	Millie Richard
Devin Bachelder	Julia Crocker	Deb Grennon	Jacquie Luce	Jeffrey Richards
Grady Bachelder	Yvon Danderand	Joyce Hakey	Pete Magnant	Kathi Samson
Lissy Bachelder	Jerry Delollis	Rep. Lisa Hango	Tim Magnant	Wendy Sargeant
Ashley Bachelder	Amy Demetrowitz	Jay Hartman	Senait Mareligne	Sue Sartwell
Karen Bates	Jim Dewing	Linda Hartman	Rev. Jason	Joanne Shea
Amy Beauregard	Alison Dezotelle	Seth Herman	McConnell	Stacy Silloway
Cecile Beauregard	Karey Edele	Stephanie Ho	Jennifer McConnell	Luke Slomba
Celina Beauregard	Vawn Edele	Suzanne Hull-	Patrick McGovern	Chad Spooner
Dan Beauregard	Rob Evans	Casavant	John McHugh	Corinna Stanley
Pete Benevento	Wayne Fiske	Nancy Johnson	Judith McLaughlin	Jim Stiles
Dave Bennion	Ashley Flood	Joanne Johnston	Loraine Mercy	Brenna Sturtevant
Dianna Benoit-Kittel	Allison Franklin	John Johnston	Senator Robert	Brooks Sturtevant
Pierrette Bouchard	Rob Franklin	Wesley Kempton	Norris	Jeff Teitelbaum
Kerry Brosnan	Robert Franklin	Dorothy Kinney-	Joanne Peduzzi	Kevin Thayer
Tracey Brown	Polly Gadbois	Landis	Al Perry	Annie Wagner
Greta Brunswick	Sheryl Garala	Ruth Ann Krayesky	Dean Pierce	Lauren Weston
Jordan Bushey	Diane Gates	Peter Lafley	Sue Prasch	Patty Whittemore
Karen C	Kathryn Gates	Lisa Larivee	Alyson Racine	Rick Willever
Doug Capsey	Mandi Gates	Rep. Wayne	Mark Racine	Josh Worman
Laura Capsey	Sarah Gates	Laroche	Matthew Rainville	Michael Wriston
Doug Clark	Kim Gates Maynard	Diane Larose	Rolland Rainville	and many more...
Sue Clark	Tom Gates	David Larose	Jen Raynak	



## VII. Visiting Resource Team Members

**Richard Amore**, *Planning & Project Manager*, VT Dept of Housing and Community Development, 802-585-0061, [richard.amore@vermont.gov](mailto:richard.amore@vermont.gov)

**Mel Auffredou**, *ECO AmeriCorps Member*, Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District, 802-528-4159, [mel@franklincountynrcd.org](mailto:mel@franklincountynrcd.org)

**Andy Barker**, *Program Officer*, Vermont Community Foundation, [abarker@vermontcf.org](mailto:abarker@vermontcf.org)

**Lauren Brady**, *Community and Policy Associate*, VT Council on Rural Development, 802-227-2673, [lauren@vtrural.org](mailto:lauren@vtrural.org)

**Tayt R Brooks**, *Deputy Secretary*, VT Agency of Commerce & Community Development, 802-828-5218 [tayt.brooks@vermont.gov](mailto:tayt.brooks@vermont.gov)

**Kerry Brosnan**, *Natural Resources Planner*, Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District, [kerry@franklincountynrcd.org](mailto:kerry@franklincountynrcd.org)

**Catherine Dimitruk**, *Executive Director*, Northwest Regional Planning Commission, 802-524-5958, [cdimitruk@nrpcvt.com](mailto:cdimitruk@nrpcvt.com)

**Kiera Ebeling**, *Agricultural Development Specialist*, VT Agency of Agriculture, Food, & Markets, [kiera.ebeling@vermont.gov](mailto:kiera.ebeling@vermont.gov)

**Rebecca Ellis**, *State Director*, Office of Senator Peter Welch, [Rebecca\\_Ellis@welch.senate.gov](mailto:Rebecca_Ellis@welch.senate.gov)

**Natalie Elvidge**, *Planning Coordinator*, VT Agency of Commerce & Community Development, [natalie.elvidge@vermont.gov](mailto:natalie.elvidge@vermont.gov)

**Susan Evans McClure**, *Executive Director*, Vermont Arts Council, 802-828-5420, [sevensmclure@vermontartscouncil.org](mailto:sevensmclure@vermontartscouncil.org)

**Margaret Gibson**, *Operations Director*, VT Council on Rural Development, 802-223-6091, [margaret@vtrural.org](mailto:margaret@vtrural.org)

**Joann Hanowski**, *Board of Trustees Member*, Greensboro Association, [joannhanowski@gmail.com](mailto:joannhanowski@gmail.com)

**Didi Harris**, *Senior Programs Manager*, Let's Grow Kids, 802-343-7450, [didi@letsgrowkids.org](mailto:didi@letsgrowkids.org)

**Maxwell Hunter**, *Regional Operations Supervisor*, Vermont State Parks, [maxwell.hunter@vermont.gov](mailto:maxwell.hunter@vermont.gov)

**Alyssa Johnson**, *Community Visit Program Manager*, VT Council on Rural Development, 802-222-6896, [alyssa@vtrural.org](mailto:alyssa@vtrural.org)

**Jenna Koloski**, *Community Engagement & Policy Director*, VT Council on Rural Development, 802-232-2513, [jenna@vtrural.org](mailto:jenna@vtrural.org)

**Julie Moore**, *Secretary*, VT Agency of Natural Resources, 802-828-1294, [julie.moore@vermont.gov](mailto:julie.moore@vermont.gov)

**Elle O'Casey**, *Chief Marketing Officer*, State of Vermont, 802-760-9967, [Elle.OCasey@vermont.gov](mailto:Elle.OCasey@vermont.gov)

**Dean Pierce**, *Senior Planner*, Northwest Regional Planning Commission, 802-524-5958 x124, [dpierce@nrpcvt.com](mailto:dpierce@nrpcvt.com)

**Jessica Savage**, *Director of Community Collaboration*, VT Council on Rural Development, 802-227-2790, [jessica@vtrural.org](mailto:jessica@vtrural.org)

**Jen Severance**, *Business Development Manager*, First Children's Finance, 802-341-0338, [jennifers@firstchildrensfinance.org](mailto:jennifers@firstchildrensfinance.org)

**Timothy Smith**, *Executive Director*, Franklin County Industrial Development Corp, 802-524-2194, [tim@fcidc.com](mailto:tim@fcidc.com)

**Shalini Suryanarayana**, *Education & Outreach Associate*, VT Office of Racial Equity, [Shalini.Suryanarayana@vermont.gov](mailto:Shalini.Suryanarayana@vermont.gov)

**Abbey Willard**, *Agricultural Development Division Director*, Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets, 802-272-2885, [abbey.willard@vermont.gov](mailto:abbey.willard@vermont.gov)



photo: GREG CROMER, americafromthesky.com



**Vermont Council on  
Rural Development**

PO Box 1384, Montpelier, VT 05601-1384  
802-223-6091 | [info@vtrural.org](mailto:info@vtrural.org)

<http://vtrural.org>

This is an equal opportunity program. Discrimination is prohibited by Federal Law.