

Mendon on the Move

Report and Action Plan ~ June 2021



Produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development

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I. Introduction

In 2011, the Town of Mendon was hit hard by Hurricane Irene. Though Irene posed an incredible challenge to the community, few residents dwell on the hardship but rather reflect on the strength and unity the community demonstrated in the face of disaster. The people of Mendon came together that August and rallied to care for each other and support recovery efforts.

Nearly 10 years later, the community has come together again in the face of a global pandemic that has limited gathering and shuttered businesses. Again, the community has demonstrated resilience and a strong will towards recovery. Rather than continue to delay community engagement plans, the Mendon residents decided to push forward to connect around common priorities for the future.

In a series of virtual community forums, residents reflected on why they - both long-time residents and newcomers - choose to call Mendon home. They all praised the quality outdoor recreation, the strong school community at Barstow, the resilience and unity demonstrated by Irene response, the dedicated municipal staff, the proximity to services and amenities in nearby communities and more. They also built a list of concrete ideas to attract new residents, improve safety along the Rt. 4 corridor, create community connection and gathering, expand housing, and other ways to build a stronger and more unified Mendon. Throughout the process, the VCRD staff and Visiting Team were impressed with the strong engagement, the clear priorities that emerged, and the momentum in this small community – Mendon truly is a community on the move.

It is not easy to choose priorities, and there are many other good ideas for action listed in the ‘opportunities’ section of this report that can inform the ongoing work of the Task Forces, but in the end, Mendon selected two priorities for action that will lead to a stronger and more vibrant community and economy for all:

- **Boost Outdoor Recreation**
- **Reimagine and Improve the Rt. 4 Corridor**

These initiatives set challenging but achievable goals. There is a lot of work to do, but task force chairs have stepped up to lead each initiative and a strong base of volunteers have signed on to lead the work forward. With over 100 local people from all parts of the community participating in the process, it is clear that there is great energy in Mendon for forward momentum and progress.

The Task Forces advancing these issues are already hard at work—please support their efforts, or join them by reaching out to their chairs (listed in the work plan section of this report). VCRD is prepared to support the efforts of Mendon and we look forward to providing follow up help to the task forces as asked.

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

We would like to thank the Mendon Selectboard and Economic Development Committee who initially invited this process. We also deeply appreciate the work and leadership of the Steering Committee who helped guide the process from the beginning including Jennifer Bagley, Fred Bagley, Judy Barone, Rich Carlson, John Casella, Sue Clark, Roy Copans, Seward Hawley, Cort Jones, Nicole Kesselring, Justin Lindholm, Danielle Monroe, Mary Ann Reich, Steve Senecal, Ron Sherwin, Ann Singiser, David St. Germaine, Sara Tully, and Dick Wilcox. Thank you also to all of the community leaders who worked to spread the word about the event and made sure everyone in town was invited and encouraged to participate!

Thanks also to the Northern Border Regional Commission, the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and the Vermont Community Foundation who all contributed to make this process possible.

VCRD calls state, federal and non-profit leaders to participate in Community Visit processes. We are proud of the partners we get to work with—and especially the Mendon Visiting and Resource Teams (listed in the back of this report)—they are the best of Vermont’s public servants.

Getting things done is all about leadership, and all of Mendon should be grateful to those who’ve stepped up to serve as chairs of the task forces: Megan Smith for Rt 4 Reimagining and Improvement and Jessica Sardelli for Boosting Outdoor Recreation.

VCRD especially wants to thank Danielle Monroe who stepped forward to lead this process as the Community Visit Chair. Danielle is a capable and experienced leader who will play a key role in coordinating and connecting the work moving forward. From the first time we met Danielle, we knew that she would bring new energy, ideas and vision to the process and are excited that she has agreed to take on an ongoing leadership role.

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



II. Vision for Mendon's Future

These points of vision were compiled from vision statements that were shared during the Community Forum on March 24 2021 and supported by the majority of participants at the Resource Meeting and an online survey. The statements represent broad hopes that the majority of responding residents have for the long term good of the Mendon community.

Mendon residents look to a future for the community where:

- ❖ There's a real sense of community in Mendon where residents work well together.
- ❖ There is a central location in Mendon where the community can come together.
- ❖ The Route 4 corridor is vibrant and contributes to the Mendon community and economy.
- ❖ Mendon's recreation assets contribute to a strong local economy; its businesses support people that come for its beauty and recreation opportunities.
- ❖ The blights of the Route 4 corridor are a thing of the past, its hotels are in productive use, and Route 4 through town is a beautiful drive where people want to stop and be part of the community.
- ❖ Mendon has an historic downtown on the Route 4 corridor.
- ❖ Mendon is a place that people want to go 'to' not just 'through'; it's not just a pass-through from Rutland to Killington.
- ❖ Mendon maintains the rural character of the community while fostering creative and innovative businesses.
- ❖ Mendon has manufacturing businesses and small industries that fit with the character of the town.
- ❖ Mendon has reliable internet that allows us to communicate and be connected to the rest of the world.
- ❖ Mendon's trails cater to all people, including those with limited mobility.
- ❖ Mendon's children feel a sense of community and Mendon is a place they want to return to live and raise their own families.

III. The “Mendon on the Move” Community Visit Process

Mendon is a scenic community with pastoral views of mountains, ridges and open spaces with tremendous outdoor recreation assets that draw residents and tourists alike. Route 4 through town is a major east-west traffic corridor and home to eateries, gift shops, and numerous other commercial enterprises. In the Winter of 2021, the community came together to engage residents in reviewing these and other assets, addressing challenges, and setting and advancing key priorities for the future. Through the Mendon on the Move process, community members identified and prioritized goals, fostered local leadership, connected to resources and developed achievable action plants. **The Mendon on the Move process consisted of two phases:**

Phase 1: Over 75 residents came together virtually for community forums on **March 24th** to review assets and challenges and brainstorm action ideas.

Phase 2: Over 60 residents attended a virtual community meeting on **April 21st** to review action ideas shared in March, discuss what is most important, vote on top priorities, and then build action plans to advance those priorities. At the end of the evening, community members signed on to continue to work in these key priority areas. Local leaders Megan Smith and Jessica Sardelli have stepped up to chair the new task forces.

It is not easy to choose priorities, but in the end, Mendon selected solid priorities for action that will lead to a stronger and more vibrant community and economy for Mendon residents. These initiatives set challenging but strategically achievable goals, and there is much work to do, but Mendon is a town that is ready to take action.

IV. Mendon on the Move Priorities

**Determined by Mendon residents at the Mendon on the Move Community Meeting
April 21, 2021**

Proving that those who live, work and raise their families in a community are best qualified to understand its needs and potential, 60 Mendon community members whittled down a list of 8 action ideas to 2 priorities that offer opportunities to enhance existing resources, and strengthen the town through new ventures. Residents concluded the meeting by signing up for Task Forces in the selected areas.

Mendon residents selected two priorities for future action:

✓ **Boost Outdoor Recreation**

A task force could form to develop and promote year-round recreation in the community. The group could inventory, map, and share current trails and look for opportunities to expand in the future. One opportunity could be to partner with the Forest Service to expand trails in the community. Another opportunity could be an expansion of the Velomont trail through Mendon. The group could also look into expanding accessible walking and biking paths in town, green spaces and parks, a playground, a dog park, or improving parking and access at current popular trail locations.

✓ **Reimagine and Improve the Rt. 4 Corridor**

A Task Force could form to focus on the redevelopment and beautification of Route 4 through Mendon. The group could inventory current buildings and identify strategies for redevelopment and reuse such as new business development, housing, community spaces, or other uses. The group could also identify locations for a park or outdoor gathering place, beautification strategies for signage, plantings and other work to improve the aesthetics of the corridor. Additionally, actions could be taken to improve the safety of the corridor including traffic calming strategies, crosswalks, lights, bump outs, bike paths, and wide road shoulders.

Other Key Opportunities identified by the community:

Along with the two 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.

Expand Housing

A Housing Committee could work with regional and state partners to assess current needs and explore options including new development or the redevelopment of vacant buildings along Route 4. Additionally, the group could focus on a review of zoning, incentives, and other regulations to improve housing development opportunities and access.

Market Mendon to Visitors, Businesses, and Residents

A Task Force could form to identify and implement strategies to document, showcase, and market Mendon's assets, amenities, and attractions to draw visitors, businesses, and new residents to the area.

Support and Foster Local Businesses

A Task Force could form to identify and implement ways to attract, boost, and support local businesses. Residents shared ideas for attracting businesses to town including a grocery store, a café, a retail outlet for local artisans, outdoor recreation businesses, and more. The group could consider strategies to incentivize and attract businesses and offer support to businesses such as networking, collective marketing, or a small business advisor.

Develop a Community Center

A Task Force could form to develop a community center in Mendon that would offer a space where folks could come together for community events, classes, concerts, and senior and youth programming. Other ideas for the space could include a satellite book lending library, a food shelf, childcare, an indoor gathering/meeting space, and more.

Develop a Coworking Space

A Task Force could form to evaluate the feasibility and explore the development of a local coworking space with shared office space and training and resources for area business owners, remote workers, and entrepreneurs. The group could also work to attract remote workers to the community.

Improve Community Connection and Events

Mendon residents expressed a need to better connect with neighbors and find ways to get together more often. A Task Force could form to plan community events and develop a communications strategy to improve connection. Events could include a flea market, an annual Town celebration, concerts, programs for families and children, community meals, and more.

V. Task Force Action Plans

Action Planning Meeting, April 21, 2021

Mendon Task Forces are comprised of community members and an appointed chairperson. On April 21st community 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.

✓ Boost Outdoor Recreation

Community Chair: **Jessica Sardelli**

Facilitator: **Jenna Koloski, VCRD**

Resource Team Members: **Tyler Richardson**, Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region
John Sinclair, US National Forest Service
Kevin Wiberg, Vermont Community Foundation

Task Force signups: Jeff Baran, Dennis Charles, Larry Courcelle, Gail DesRoches, Cort Jones, Nicole Kesselring, Holly Knox, Mary Kraus, Chris Mattrick, Cameron Sardelli, Jessica Sardelli, Bryan Sell, Andy Weinberg

A task force could form to develop and promote year-round recreation in the community. The group could inventory, map, and share current trails and look for opportunities to expand in the future. One opportunity could be to partner with the Forest Service to expand trails in the community. Another opportunity could be an expansion of the Velomont trail through Mendon. The group could also look into expanding accessible walking and biking paths in town, green spaces and parks, a playground, a dog park, or improving parking and access at current popular trail locations.

The Issue today

- There are many existing forested areas in Mendon
- We have a Mendon recreation area
- In the process of building the new National Forest headquarters. There are trails behind there on the national forest. There were some initial concerns around parking and safety but something that could be reconsidered in the future – would take a new environmental analysis.
- The most significant current challenge is safe access through the town from one trail access to the other. It is hard to access everything in the woods on the east side from the west side of Rt. 4 without going on Rt 4 which people feel is busy and dangerous.
- There are existing concerns about parking and access.
- The Historical Society has made trail maps and those are available at town office and maybe on town website as well.

Action Steps

1. Inventory what is needed and wanted today
 - a. Develop an inventory of existing trails and natural areas in town
 - b. Look at what Mendon has control over and what is state/federal/private land
 - c. Conduct a community survey to determine community needs/interests/desired uses
 - d. Look at the current gaps (access and safety for example)
2. Take steps towards shorter-term projects that could have immediate results. These projects could include:
 - a. Work with Vermont Forest Parks and Rec to look into improving parking access at Aiken State Forest. Encourage the community to get involved in the public comment process and work towards expanded parking across from the current lot to meet increased use.

- b. Look into improving the town-owned road at the end of Old Turnpike road for use
 - c. Look into developing the original stagecoach road off Wheelerville where the current Bucklin Trail is – work with the Town of Killington.
 - d. Reach out to Chris Mattrick at the Green Mountain National forest to get plugged in with the current environmental review process and look into extending that process or working together in the future to look at trail expansion in Mendon.
 - e. Improve signage for rec area and trails
 - f. Improve mapping and access to maps for trail users and visitors
3. Engage in longer term planning towards multi-use trail expansion
- a. Cooperate with other communities such as Rutland Town and Killington to expand trails and draw visitors
 - b. Identify a strategy to improve access west to east across Route 4. This may be collaborating with the Rt 4 committee for bike lanes and other safety improvements or looking in to opportunities for trails and paths as an alternative.
 - c. Expand multi-use trails in the community – make sure to keep the focus multi-use including hiking, biking, snowshoeing, hunting, fishing, etc.
 - d. Look at opportunities for more accessible recreation such as picnic areas for families or flater, accessible trails
 - e. Reach out to regional and state groups to collaborate on potential projects.

Resources

- Contact GMNF District Ranger of the Rochester Ranger District Chris Mattrick at christopher.mattrick@usda.gov.
- VTrans could help think about the future of the safety of Rt. 4 and access across it and discuss “complete streets.” Contact Joe Segale at joe.segale@vermont.gov.
- In the Governor’s recovery plan there is a lot of opportunity for shovel ready projects in outdoor recreation. They want to fund outdoor rec and they reference parking – a lot of resources coming to VT. Connect with your local representatives to help understand the current status of funding for communities.
- Understand the regional plan and whether this meets a priority. Contact Ed Bove at the Rutland Regional Planning Commission to coordinate and see if they can help with mapping or planning trails. Contact Ed at ebove@rutlandrpc.org.
- VT Community Foundation has small grant programs that encourage community engagement and social capital such as connecting to youth, families to volunteer and improve rec resource. Contact Kevin Wiberg at kwiberg@vermontcf.org.
- The VOREC grant program for community-based outdoor recreation initiatives will likely receive a significant boost this year. To learn more contact Becca Washburn at Forest, Parks and Rec at Becca.washburn@vermont.gov.
- The Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region is part of a regional marketing campaign and could integrate Mendon’s assets. Contact Tyler Richardson at tyler@rutlandeconomy.com.
- Reach out to groups like VT Outdoor Business Alliance. They support services for VT outdoor businesses. <https://www.vermontoutdoorbusinessalliance.org/>
- RASTA is a community-based outdoor recreation initiative that has been incredibly successful and secured the first round of VOREC funding. Contact Zac Freeman to learn more. <https://www.rastavt.org/zac@jsfreeman.com>
- Slate Valley Trails in Poultney is another excellent example. Contact Silvia Cassano to learn more. <https://slatevalleytrails.org/> silvia@slatevalleytrails.org.

Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

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

Action Step Recommendations:

Reach out to learn from other communities and organizations that have been promoting outdoor recreation to discover what strategies worked well and how might they inform Mendon efforts.

Coordinate with any existing outdoor recreation organizations. Identify what resource information already exists and what needs to exist i.e. kiosks, maps, web links and signage.

Consider a short-term goal which can provide motivation and a celebration point for the community - signage off Route 4 directing the public to current recreation points of interest (consider not immediately signing the "over-used" or "stressed" recreation points to avoid further crowding and potential resource damage.)

Consider whether any of the abandoned properties along Route 4 provide the opportunity for a green space, park, or playground, etc. as these likely already have existing parking and possible utilities. This could involve partnership with the other task force.

Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations:

For examples of other successful Vermont Outdoor recreation initiatives, check out:

- Rochester/Randolph Area Trails Association (RASTA) <https://www.rastavt.org/>
- Fellowship of the Wheel (Chittenden Co.) <https://www.fotwheel.org/>
- Kingdom Trails (NEK) <https://www.kingdomtrails.org/>
- Catamount Trails Association <https://catamounttrail.org/>

Connect with Ed Bove ebove@rutlandrpc.org at the Rutland Regional Planning Commission to learn more about an existing initiative to create a community asset map for Mendon that includes outdoor recreation. The group could work collaboratively with the RPC to further this work.

Connect with Chris Mattrick christopher.mattrick@usda.gov, Green Mountain National Forest District Ranger, who has responsibility for the National Forest lands in and surrounding Mendon. Also connect with Becca Washburn becca.washburn@vermont.gov, Vermont Forests, Parks, and Recreation. Both are key Federal and State contacts with access to broader community networks.

See VCRD Community Leadership Guide pages 101 to 103 for more resources on developing outdoor recreation <https://www.vtrural.org/leadership/guide>.

Potential Funding Sources:

USDA Rural Development's Rural Business Development Grants could possibly be a resource for funding some of these items. Contact Susan Poland Business Programs Specialist 802-828-6002 or email susan.poland@usda.gov.

The Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC), which works to support the outdoor recreation sector, has recently been appropriated a considerable amount of funding, and could be a resource in furthering this work. <https://fpr.vermont.gov/VOREC> Contact the new VOREC program Director Jackie Dagger at jackie.dagger@vermont.gov.

✓ Reimagine and Improve the Route 4 Corridor

Community Chair: **Megan Smith**

Facilitator: **Paul Costello**, *Executive Director*, VCRD

Resource Team Members: **Lyle Jepson**, *Executive Director*, Chamber & Economic Dev. of the Rutland Region
Jon (Max) Muise, *Vermont Area Director*, USDA Rural Development
Ed Bove, *Executive Director*, Rutland Regional Planning Commission
Joe Segale, *Policy, Planning & Research Bureau Director*, VT Agency of Trans.
Jacob Hemmerick, *Planning and Policy Manager*, VT Dept. of Housing & Comm. Dev.
Alyssa Johnson, *Community Projects Associate*, VCRD

Task Force Signups: Hannah Abrams, Candice Alinovich, Fred Bagley, Jerry Barbaro, Deanna Briggs, Mary Camilleri, Avery Chipka, Roy Copans, Teri Corsones, Vinoth Jagaroo, Andrea Johnson, Nicole Kesselring, Patti Lancaster, Susannah Loffredo, Adam Loffredo, Chris Mattrick, Carolyn McBain, Danielle Monroe, JoAnn O'Hagen, Jessica Quesnel, Ann Singiser, Megan Smith, Greg Smith, Alvin Wakefield, Brett Yates

Priority Description: A Task Force could form to focus on the redevelopment and beautification of Route 4 through Mendon. The group could inventory current buildings and identify strategies for redevelopment and reuse such as new business development, housing, community spaces, or other uses. The group could also identify locations for a park or outdoor gathering place, beautification strategies for signage, plantings and other work to improve the aesthetics of the corridor. Additionally, actions could be taken to improve the safety of the corridor including traffic calming strategies, crosswalks, lights, bump outs, bike paths, and wide road shoulders.

What work has already been done in this area?

- Mendon had an Economic Development Committee that was active for a year. The group created a tax stabilization policy that was adopted to encourage property owners to improve businesses and receive tax incentives. The incentive is for commercial property redevelopment, not residential properties or new development. The Committee did outreach to some of the blighted properties about the tax stabilization policy. The group has been on hold due to COVID and wanting to know the outcomes of the community visit.
- The redevelopment of the former Cortina Inn into senior housing facility by a private developer was a significant undertaking.

Action Steps

1. The Town and Committee should do some visioning, and consider the type of businesses the community wants to attract to Mendon.
2. Divide the Route 4 corridor up into "Planning sections." Look at areas with distinct characteristics (sections with more or less development, former town center, etc.) and create a goal/vision for each section.
3. Meet with VTrans and understand the parameters and limitations around the Route 4 corridor to so planned initiatives are realistic and achievable. Specifically understand what is possible within the Right of Way (ROW) – because of historic development patterns, there is a lot of land in the ROW in Mendon, and it is important to understand restrictions in this area.
4. Research potential grants and funding sources, including funding from the American Rescue Plan (ARPA). Learn from other communities that have done this type of work.
5. Consider opportunities to combine multiple community priorities in one project – such as transforming a blighted hotel into community center with a coworking space.
6. Assess the status and ownership of properties along the corridor to figure out what property owners may be interested in engaging in redevelopment efforts.

7. Conduct outreach to surrounding communities to ensure efforts are not duplicative or competitive with other regional initiatives.
8. Look at beautification efforts, particularly around signage. Mendon has nice signs – do something with plantings and lighting so that folks can see them more clearly and begin to give a sense of identity. Consider grants to businesses to accomplish similar work. This can build visibility and momentum quickly, and draw attention from both residents and visitors.
9. Consider adding flag poles along Route 4 in Mendon to identify the community, like those in Killington.
10. Host a “COVID is over” Beautification launch and potluck painting party! Bring the community together to celebrate the end of COVID and the launch of the Route 4 initiative. Provide fun opportunities for families and youth through partnership with Recreation folks.
11. Consider developing one or more pocket parks where folks can stop, like those in Killington.
12. Evaluate and improve bus stop safety and aesthetics. There are stops at all of the hotels going up the mountain, and many people commute to Killington and Rutland to work.
13. Consider the creation of a signature welcome area with an outdoor playground or other attraction for families (inspired by a welcome center with restrooms on Route 87 with an outdoor playground). This could be combined with a general store or business or Information Center.
14. Consider how housing and affordable housing development or redevelopment can be incorporated into the Route 4 corridor.

Additional notes

- We are in a time of transformation investment!
- Some blighted properties are individually owned, while other are commercial properties.
- The delinquent tax list is extremely short. Many blighted properties aren’t delinquent on taxes.
- Bridgewater as a potential model for multi-use building
- There is planned to be an information center at the new Forest Service headquarters. The community has requested parking and trailhead at that location, but it is not yet finalized.

Resources

- The Rutland Regional Planning Commission (<https://www.rutlandrpc.org/index>) can provide a variety of support, including:
 - Mapping assistance, for inventories and creating the sections noted in the action steps.
 - Brownfields assessment work, for sites with potential contamination or perception of contamination.
 - Grant writing.
 - Planning and zoning support as development opportunities are identified.
 - Coordination with VTrans around the management of the corridor.

Contact Ed Bove, Executive Director, at EBove@rutlandrpc.org or (802) 775-0871 x 208.

- The state designation programs can make Mendon projects grant priorities, and gaining Village Center designation could be a potential option for a cluster of historic buildings.
 - Learn more about the Village Center designation at <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/designation-programs/village-centers>.
 - Richard Amore, Planning and Outreach Manager, at the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, can provide additional information. He can be reached at richard.amore@vermont.gov or 802-585-0061.
 - Amanda O’Connor at the RPC may also be able to assist with an application. She can be reached at Amanda@rutlandrpc.org or 802-775-0871 x 202.

- The Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) funding may be a good fit for gateway treatments and signage. *“Grant funding can be used for a variety of purposes with the result being a community(ies) that can show measurable success supporting and growing their local economies through leveraging outdoor recreation.”* Learn more at <https://fpr.vermont.gov/VOREC> and <https://fpr.vermont.gov/vorec-community-grant-program>.
- The ACCD Municipal Planning Grant could fund research, planning, and/or implementation for a variety of projects. Application information will be available in July 2021. <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant>.
- Planning is an essential for funding! Developing partnerships with the regional planning commission and regional development corporation so they understand what you are you working on and you are aware of their efforts is **essential**. Ed and Lyle put together lists of what priorities are regionally and what projects are ready to go. Stay in touch with updates!
 - Ed Bove, RPC Executive Director, EBove@rutlandrpc.org or (802) 775-0871 x 208
 - Lyle Jepson, CEDRR Executive Director, lyle@rutlandeconomy.com or 802-773-2748
- American Rescue Plan (ARPA) dollars will availability directly to the municipality and competitively for projects.
- The Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Regional is a resource for consultation and support. It has a \$700,000 revolving loan fund that can be used to support businesses through last resort lending (willing to take risks) and they can connect to the Vermont Small Business Development Center and other partners. General information at <https://rutlandvermont.com/> and loan fund information: <https://rutlandvermont.com/lending/>. Contact Lyle Jepson at lyle@rutlandeconomy.com or 802-773-2748
- VTrans does maintenance agreement with communities for sidewalks and plantings within the Right of Way. They have a ROW Hub website, which displays the ROW boundaries. (<https://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/survey>). Someone from VTrans could do a walk/drive through the corridor with the team. The Better Connections Grant Program at VTrans could fund concept plans to set the ground work for other funding.
 - Contact Joe Segale at joe.segale@vermont.gov or 802-477-2365.
 - More information on the Better Connections program at <https://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/projects-programs/better-connections>. It is atwo-yearr grant cycle.
- USDA has a Rural Business Development Grant that could potentially support websites, branding, and marketing and programs for community facilities grants.
 - Contact Jon (Max) Muise at Jon.Muise@usda.gov or (802) 689-3026.
- EDA Smart Growth money that the Planning Commission can apply for may be of interest.
- The Vermont Arts Council could be a funding partner, especially for beautification projects.
 - The animating infrastructure grant program could be a potential fit: <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants/organizations/animating-infrastructure>
 - Contact Michele Bailey at mbailey@vermontartscouncil.org or 802-402-4614.
- AARP Vermont has had an interest in supporting improvement to bus stops, as well as general placemaking and smart growth efforts. Contact Kelly Stoddard Poor, AARP Vermont Associate State Director, kstoddardpoor@aarp.org or Office: 802-951-1313 and Cell: 802-393-9187
- VCRD is an ongoing partner and resource, and can provide grant writing, facilitation and coordination assistance for community facilities projects. Contact Alyssa Johnson at alyssa@vrural.org or 978-760-1238.

Visiting Resource Team Recommendations

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

Action Step Recommendations:

Consider applying for Downtown or Village Center designation, which will open the town to additional funding opportunities.

Inventory and assess existing underutilized buildings along the corridor. The group could propose multi-disciplinary uses that would spur refurbishment – vacant hotels could provide avenues to address multiple issues and ideas in the community while strategically utilizing limited resources. Clustering facilities into “ready for use,” “refurbishment needed,” or “demolition” categories could be helpful in identifying which might be used by community within 6 months to those that are providing future greenspace.

Consider dividing the approximately 6-mile corridor into segments. Each segment could have its own purpose, vision and common characteristics. The segmentation could consider: the future land use plan in the Town Plan; characteristics of the roadway (like total pavement width, posted speed, traffic volumes); surrounding land (open, commercial, residential, mixed, more developed/less developed, important destinations like Town office or access to trails); and other strengths and opportunities like views, opens space, and other natural resources. Distinguish areas where the Town would like to encourage pedestrian and bicycle activity by lowering highway speeds from areas where it makes sense to maintain US 4's current speed limit to support its purpose as a state and regional connector. Appropriate action (traffic, calming, establishing gateways, driveway management) will vary based on these segments. The task force could pursue a Municipal Planning Grant to focus on one of the segments to develop a more specific plan and recommendations.

The group could decide to establish subcommittees to address and lead in particular areas in the work. Examples of subcommittees could include:

1. Beautification
2. Buildings/economic development
3. Community Space
4. Safety and Traffic Calming

Actively market the Town's Tax Stabilization Policy: <https://www.mendonvt.org/mendon-tax-stabilization-policy/>.

Technical Assistance/Peer Connection Recommendations:

Look at EPA smart Growth planning funds. See <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-small-towns-and-rural-communities> and contact the Vermont Association of Planners (<https://www.vapda.org>) for good local examples of planning and funding for the corridor. For instance: <https://www.stevens-assoc.com/portfolio/putney-road-master-plan/>.

The group could reach out to the VT Arts Council (<https://www.vermontartscouncil.org>) Michele Bailey m Bailey@vermontartscouncil.org to evaluate the corridor and examples from around state that are transferrable to the Mendon situation.

The Rutland Garden Club could be of assistance in creating a Mendon affiliate. <https://www.vermontfgcv.com/members>.

Reach out to Rutland Regional Planning Commission (<http://www.rutlandrpc.org>) Ed Bove above@rutlandrpc.org and Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (<https://rutlandvermont.com>) Tyler Richardson tyler@rutlandeconomy.com to understand what they may be able to assist with as well as what work may already be done. They can also help connect to current property owners and make them aware of potential resources for revitalization <https://thinkvermont.com/>.

Contact Neighborworks of Western VT (<https://www.nwwvt.org>) Ludy Biddle lbiddle@nwwvt.org and Vermont Housing and Finance Agency (<https://www.vhfa.org>) regarding programs that may be able to assist with acquisition of properties and programs to re-develop them.

Identify a Tax Attorney who may be able to evaluate the property donations to a non-profit for revitalization.

For more resources on the for development of community spaces see page 107 of the VCRD Community Leadership Guide <https://www.vtrural.org/leadership/guide>.

The Agency of Transportation (<https://vtrans.vermont.gov>) Joe Segale joe.segale@vermont.gov can be a resource for understand the regulations and limitations of action in the corridor.

Google maps, the Agency of Natural Resource's Resource Atlas (<https://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/anra5/>) and Vermont Parcel Viewer (<https://maps.vcgi.vermont.gov/ParcelViewer/>) are all excellent online mapping tools. The Rutland RPC can provide paper maps of the corridor which the Task Force could mark-up.

Potential Funding Sources:

Investigate a Town Designation (<https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/designation-programs>) to open up funding streams such as the Better Places Program found here; <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/better-places> For more information contact Richard Amore at richard.amore@vermont.gov.

The Downtown Transportation Fund is a financing tool which assists municipalities in paying for transportation-related capital improvements within or serving a Designated Downtown. Past projects include streetscape improvements, bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements, parking facilities, rail or bus facilities, utility relocation, street lighting and wayfinding signage. <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/downtown-transportation-fund> Contact Gary Holloway at gary.holloway@vermont.gov.

The Town could apply for a CDBG Planning Grant for projects such as: Conduct feasibility studies and marketing plans, produce architectural and engineering plans, etc. <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/vcdp> Contact Cindy Blondin at cindy.blondin@vermont.gov.

The Town could apply for a Municipal Planning Grant for planning and feasibility studies. <https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant> Contact Jenni Lavoie at jenni.lavoie@vermont.gov.

VIII. Mendon On The Move Town Forum Notes

Compiled from focus group discussions held with over 75 Mendon community members and the VCRD Visiting Team on March 24 2021, and through a paper and online survey.

Although the prioritization work of the Mendon On The Move 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.

The Vitality of Our Economy

Visiting Team: Jenna Koloski (facilitator), Brockton Corbett (scribe), Ben Doyle, Lyle Jepson, Jon Muise, John Sinclair

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Orchard, sugar and spice
- Thriving businesses on Rt. 4.
- Mini-golf
- People resources
- Surrounding assets improve town (Killington, Pico)
- Young leadership represented at the local level
- Opportunity to capture some of the traffic coming through town
- Alpine Pipeline (sewage disposal)
- Cortina, Vista senior living
- Vermont Inn
- Commercial stock: Casella, VTrans, Allen pools, neighborhood developments
- Not currently 'known' for something, opportunity for marketing
- The Long Trail
- Mendon town plan
- Snowmobile trail, across from Killington Condos
- The brook parallel to route four could be a huge asset
- Room for new businesses that mesh with the town
- The Bus
- Trout Fishing
- Coffee Place

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- Killington has a certain draw/marketing allure
- Mendon as a pass through for Rutland and Killington
- Blight along the rt. 4 corridor
- Ugliness lingering from Hurricane Irene (THE BOULDER)
- The Bus, safety concerns crossing the road
- Lingering (abandoned) sugaring operation, lowered visibility/scenic value
- Unmoving AOT on their Right of way, diminishing opportunity to do things about the town center

Ideas for Action

- Opportunities to market Mendon as a town for remote work
- Form a committee to try to handle ideas moving forward
- Boost existing committees with new membership
- Create a place where craft people can show their work
- Blighted hotel properties may not be relevant anymore, opportunities to use that space for new purposes, affordable housing.
- Create a tax incentive to get rid of blighted properties
- Remote working spaces, office space
- New small businesses that utilize the natural assets, kayaking, etc.
- Create a weekend flea market
- Determine the wanted population and businesses and market to them
- An entity that advises local businesses for small improvements
- Revitalization will be more difficult without any outside input
- Actively recruit Vermont ANR to Mendon

Visiting Team Reflections

- Mendon is an interesting community; it has incredible and unique assets and challenges. More conversations to be had to see what kind of future Mendon sees for itself. In order to develop and economic vision have to decide what you want to be. Redevelopment of Route 4 and new kinds of businesses or manufacturing? Bedroom community? Only you can decide. Rule would be you can chase smokestacks or can grow what you have. Have incredible recreation assets could be leveraged. Rural economies have to regional. Food economy, creative economy and synergies between sectors. Up to you who you want to be.
- Excited about sewer, alpine pipeline giving businesses a chance to expand and come to the community. Also asset of traffic and how to use it to your advantage. Get the traffic to add to the vitality of economy. Identity, opportunity to figure that out. Blank slate is exciting but takes expertise to help

develop that. Have a town plan with good info. This process can energize that. Have transportation, bus, other communities wish they had that. Reuse of buildings. Good things are happening and will happen. Real estate may not be as in high demand in future and may go to housing. Attracting businesses. Taking natural and built assets you have and attract the businesses that complement those. The Boulder is a challenge and an opportunity. Talk with VT Arts Council for ideas, creative. Attract and invite agency of transportation to future sessions so they have a front row seat to see the issues.

- Diversity of assets is incredible: existing businesses, new businesses opening, outdoor recreation, alpine pipeline, # of thru travelers are potential customers to the economy. Shown lots of success in redesigning and repurposing property. Have town plan, have transportation. All provide a foundation and on the cusp of turning it over. Lots of communities don't have that. Challenges in many cases are the assets. Route 4 corridor, state right of way, safety of public transportation,

through travelers, abandoned commercial property that can be repurposed. Have economy development committee looking for new lifeblood. Have a model already there with reusing and repurposing. That property is there for other uses you can decide what you want for it. It's in your control. Tax incentives, other aspects to get property owners to do something. Deciding how you want to move forward and how you want Mendon to be seen by those traveling through.

- Tap into the traffic, turn into an asset, may need to slow it down. Are there times you can't fix it, just need to take it down. Co-working spaces. Economic development team is ready, just want a boost of support, talk to Lyle about the regional marketing initiative. Town identity, Vermont craft center, small businesses that can cater to outdoor recreation, tax incentives to have people move there, broadband, asset mapping, wayfinding signage. A lot of assets, ready to go and a lot of people ready to help.

The Future of Recreation in Mendon

Visiting Team: Jenna Koloski (facilitator), Brockton Corbett (scribe), Ben Doyle, Lyle Jepson, Jon Muise, John Sinclair

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Fishing, hunting, walking, biking, back-country skiing, apple picking, a lot to do in the town.
- Mountain biking opportunities, close proximity to Rutland.
- Established Hiking trails.
- Close proximity to Killington and Pico, the recreation they offer.
- The Long Trail.
- Long Trail Inn.
- Already have a whole network of trails, plenty of opportunities there.
- Snowmobiling, as an opportunity for trails.
- Town recreation area: Ballfield, with dugout; multipurpose court; trail network; bald mountain.
- The Aitken State Forest Bald Mountain Trail attracts folks.
- Buckland Trail.
- Wheelerville Road.

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- Route 4 makes it challenging to do community celebrations.
- Main roadways lack a safe zone for running, community safety risk.
- Lack of streetlights, bus stops causing fatalities.
- Have to get into car to get to recreation opportunities safely.
- Trails don't connect to other communities, access challenges.
- Design of route 4, natural assets aren't apparent.
- Overuse/crowding of trail on Wheelerville Road.
- Rutland doesn't want more people in the watershed, barrier to more parking and trails.

Ideas for Action

- Implement speed limits/improve safety on the Route 4 corridor through town.
- Make parking areas available on heavily used trails.
- Dog Park at the recreation field.
- Brochures, maps, and/or signage to communicate what trails are available.
- Utilization of regional assets information.
- Find a way to make the town more accessible to pedestrians.
- Safe main passageway through mendon that connects to Rutland and Killington.
- Velomont trails just north from Killington to Stowe.
- Creation of a land recreation group.
- Opportunity with the forest service coming in for add'l trails.
- Bike trail network like Rochester has.
- Rehabilitate blighted properties for those "everyday" recreation opportunities for increased access.
- Development of a local playground.
- Become a more welcoming place, trails for those with disabilities.
- Lobbying for safety measures, lights, crossing mechanisms.

Visiting Team Reflections

- People talked about the moving here so we could be spread out, but we want to get connected, and get connected safely and lots of ways to do it. Connecting mountain bike trails, ways to add safety measures like flashing lights in certain places, easy recreation access for some members of community, connectivity and access, investigating grant opps and the asset piece the RPC is doing, connect our neighborhoods somehow safely, wayfinding signage, connecting to each other and having a place to go to do that. A community hall or place with playground, easy access and

parking. Came down to relationships between people in the community.

- Connection to outdoors was a major asset, various recreation activities, organized sports, ball fields, etc. some challenges about the fact that assets well used and stresses the assets but other assets are unknown and underutilized. How to balance the use to protect the resources and allow better use. Safety came up a lot. Lack of knowledge where places are for people traveling through. Mendon could draw people in. better road signage, messaging, ideas, opportunities, how to communicate the info regarding assets for better balance use. Speed limits, transportation and using technology, enforcement. Multi-use or reusing resources, dog parks, or connect from recreation area. Commercial lots could be transitioned to rec activities for low impact opportunities that aren't found locally currently.
- Can do almost any outdoor activity you wish – hunting, fishing, biking, skiing, walking, etc. many communities would die for even 1 or those opportunities. Passion and talent in the community is a great asset. Real opportunity to capitalize off of its location – Mendon is between other activities and things

going on that draws people to them. Signage could be improved, upgrading assets like parking, signage, access, promising opportunities. Liability of Route 4 is concerning. Suggestions on how to mitigate some of those issues. Lots of promising activities that the community could have success with through this process.

- Lots of communities struggle with the how to identify where it is as people drive through. Danville implemented a great strategy. Vernon after closure of VT Yankee looked at reconstructing a village center. Desire not to just be a pass-through community. Think of selves as a hub. Perfectly situated to be a hub for recreational activities. Think regionally and leverage what's happening in Rutland or at Killington. People can stop to recreate in Mendon. Lots of available resources, like Better Connections grant. Other communities to learn from: East Burke leveraging recreation for their economy. Also in NH, Tillotson Fund great work in terms of human-powered recreation and econ development in coordinating all of the assets.

Community Connection, Identity & Sense of Place

Visiting Team: Nick Kramer (facilitator), Alyssa Johnson (scribe), Ed Bove, Trey Martin, Tyler Richardson, Kevin Wiberg

What are the Assets in this Area?

- US Route 4 – gateway to NH, MA and ME/NJ.
- New National Forest headquarters –an opportunity for the community and as an economic base.
- Concern about what is going on with Nature Here (Blue Ridge mountain). Huge change in the nature in the last 20 years. Used to be many bats and critters that aren't here anymore. Challenges with bushes and gardens as well.
- Natural beauty and ecosystem – important to protect moving forward. If we lose that, what are we?!
- Fish and Wildlife facility with 50 or 60 people will bring tremendous benefit to the community. Concern about the houses surrounding the facility and the impacts on their properties.
- New, vibrant, centrally located town hall.
- Good housing stock – “bedroom community.” Prices holding their own and increasing.
- Quality elementary school – attractive to young families.
- Bedroom community – sweet, quiet, noncontroversial town.
- Fairly diverse people.

- Proximity to Killington and Rutland.
- Mendon Historical Society kiosk at the town hall – discusses history, geology and hiking trails.
- Hiking trails are outstanding – and in the process of building more.
- School choice at the high school level is an asset – attracts a lot of people.
- Though it is declining, there is a historic center. Both a challenge and an asset that can be rising.
- Recreation center.
- Good fire and police protection.
- Mendon is ideally placed between Killington and Rutland – ideal to go either direction.
- 45 mph speed limit – took an act of god to get it down to 50. Had a death on Route 4.
- A lot of wonderful resources in the historical society – so many historical spots, have taken hikes around them. Perhaps could integrate them into recreation?
- The people of Mendon are an important resource!

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- No one knows where Mendon is – I say I'm from Rutland. Lack of sense of place.
- You can go rip-roaring through town – it may not be as quiet.
- Profound changes in nature itself. No insects- woodpeckers aren't happy.
- Different change with forest animals on the side of Blue Ridge mountain – see a lot more of them. Not staying in the woods as much as they used to.
- More wildlife last year – drought driven? Drought had an impact on plants and ponds.

- After TS Irene, felt a great sense of place – over 250 volunteers came to assist from surrounding communities, and support from neighbors. Want to find a way to bring that sense of place back. Want to have the connection even without the disaster.
- Route 4 is an economic engine, but cuts through the center. You have to drive to go somewhere in Mendon.
- Lack of a meeting area in the community – it is struggle every year to find a place for town meeting. Had to ask a motel in the past. Garage is a nice place for a garage but not for a town meeting. Need a facility.

- Having a central meeting place could solve many ideas – would create the identity that is needed, be a place to have meetings, etc.
- As newcomers, Mendon was paradise – close to Rutland and some degree of shopping, but would never know it. In the

other direction, could go to Pico, or if you really wanted Killington. Transitioned to becoming full time residents.

- Could the forest headquarters be of use to the town if they have a meeting space?

Ideas for Action

- Consider the idea of joining a forest center and community center together – rather than trying to construct a whole new space, explore partnerships. In France, every community had a cultural center. Nothing like that here.
- Some place where you could have birdwatching.
- Mendon community church as an asset – have plays there or concerts.
- If we want economic development/controlled economic development vs. businesses deciding on their own, take the lead and identify the types of businesses we want and offer incentives for those businesses to be here.
- GMNF is undergoing their bidding soon- meeting space for 70 people maybe. Rec center on South Mendon road?
- Community church as an asset > Former Methodist church
- Not too late for a community center!!
- Indoor play space for the kids at the rec center.
- Housing stock along route 4 that is vacant – have it donated or acquire at a reasonable price. Also consider land that was explored as locations for the town office.
- Abandoned motel/Former Econolodge? – Is there a way to leverage this? Should it just be condemned? Has parking, big but not too big. Could be used by the community in some fashion? Same side of the street as the GMNF property. Have it be used for hikers instead of sitting empty.
- Places that are eyesores – are there ways to leverage them?
- Land near where you come into Mendon on the right by the orchard – 2 acres for sale. By the road and could have a lot of parking. Could it happen??
- Economic development – look for what we want here. With economic development, a community center will evolve, sight ways will be improved – like gateways in Rutland with gardens. A lot of other benefits for ED. Lost a million dollars or more in real estate revenue for vacant buildings. Saw a significant drop in property values of hotels over the past 15 years.
- Interaction between people – less so about spaces. Story circles with the VT Folklife Center after Irene were a great model – tape recorder and people telling stories. The stories we could all tell could be enormously – would be wonderful to have a way to share stories.
- Marketing campaign not even to draw people/businesses in, but for the local community. Could tie to community center or sense of identity.
- Two children at Barstow – school does a lot with PTO/parents/students from two towns. There is a big gap between the people of the historical society and the families.
- Mini golf is an asset – brings summer visitors, as does ballfield.
- Helping hands group at Barstow – visits the senior center. Also have a school garden. Have a lot of open land at apartments and hotels- great way to use them. People by the apple orchard aren't considered in Mendon – want folks to stop more. Something to bring people in beyond just mini-golf. Have somewhere for music – Barstow has a marching band, kids could perform.
- Easier to build off of what you have already then create something new. Would be helpful to know why people come here in the first place – why do they decide on Mendon? If we know them, how do we optimize those things for market and promotion.
- Recreation center – what is happening with families and young people moving the video with kids? Who is under 30?
- Barstow school board – want to show that Barstow is an asset to Mendon. But the school is in Chittenden, and a lot of the activities are Chittenden-based – separates young families from the rest of the Mendon community.
- Countryman's pleasure Building still in good shape — serving dinners – large enough area that people could meet there? Space that is already identified.
- Small manufacturing business (Larry Gold). "Manufacturing around the technical area" – could take over a motel on Route 4. The concept of having folks working in offices within the town limits – even remote work space – could be valuable.
- Emigrated from Rutland town because of the elementary school. Turning Mendon into a destination in some part – love that people don't know where it is! Can be at the K-1 in 15 minutes. Folks know by Sugar and Spice. People with kids looking for sense of place – more family type of events to get together and get to know each other could grow a lot. Want to have events – start with events not the room.
- Outdoor amenities are amazing – have our own community in our neighborhood.
- A lot of empty buildings – no one enjoys driving by them. Shrubs growing makes you want to fix them!
- As people we have a lot to offer each other.
- Does Mendon have an online bulletin board? Any interest in online meetings places or apps that can be used to facilitate in-person community meetings?
 - The Town of Mendon has a Facebook page. We also encourage people to be part of Front Porch Forum which is actually a Mendon/Killington forum & bulletin. The town is currently conducting town meetings via Gotomeeting.

Visiting Team Reflections

- Very strong emphasis on natural assets, and how to take advantage of them while also protecting them. Route 4 is also

a central issue, and finding ways to calm traffic and encourage folks to take a break and visit Mendon.

- A sense of place came up a lot in the conversation, particularly the lack of sense of place. BUT there are also folks who move to Mendon, and articulated why. Natural assets are huge part of the town and part of what you have to promote. The huge growth in remote work that may happen wasn't mentioned – open to grow the community. What is the third place to gather? A lot of opportunities to align with folks interested in living here. Employees will want coffee shops and restaurants. Important to identify targets for the community and figure out how to incentive them.
- Dance between economic development and rural in nature, and what does that economic development looks like. Huge

opportunity for places to be redeveloped around the blight. Heard more than anticipated about the historic village center – has the pieces for a village center by statue designation. Lot of cars/dollar bills going through the town – if going too fast can't capture, if going too slow folks are upset. VTrans District 3 office is in Mendon – could there be some owkr on a corridor plan? Smart development, preserve nature, revive historic center in that one part of town. Towards the mountain. Place to do a retail leak analysis and use it to backfill.

Quality of Life & Supporting Families

Visiting Team: Paul Costello (facilitator), Alyssa Johnson (scribe), Ed Bove, Nick Kramer, Trey Martin, Tyler Richardson, Kevin Wiberg

What are the Assets in this Area?

- Barstow Memorial School.
- School choice.
- Playground and ballfields on South Mendon Road.
- Sugar and Spice and Mendon mini-golf as family destinations
- Family-friendly hiking trails – right off the back of the baseball fields at the town park.
- Convenient to Rutland City and Killington/Pico – mid location
- Pico ski club- family mountain. So close to a family mountain and Killington.
- Living in nature.
- Lots of animal species.
- Not too many people.
- Community itself is an asset. Neighbors interested in meeting folks and hosted welcoming party in the neighborhood.
- Now REALLY in the greatest neighborhood. Communication group if people need pliers, a ride, see a moose – tremendous

sense of community on cream hill road. If every neighborhood did what the communities.

- Neighborliness.
- Rec league for sports – most through Rutland Rec. All Mendon kids can play – most are through Barstow.
- BYC – Barstow Youth Club – for all Mendon and Chittenden residents.
- Play at Pittsford or at Northwood – the rec facility folks mention
- Kemp pond – renamed Wakeville Nest pond – hills, valleys, pastoral scenes.
- Roads have their own ambiance.
- Wild animals.
- Rutland library – runs great kids programs.
- Wonderfleet children's museum

What are the Challenges in this Area?

- You need a car to be a good parent here.
- More transient families are not able to stay at the school because we don't have good lower income housing options and transportations. They may work on the mountain, and the bus can take them to work or shopping, but can't deal with parent teacher conferences or soccer practice. Not a lot of in-town together options with kids. Need one more playground with kids – intergenerational family bent. Months of mediocre weather – need indoor ability for grandma.
- Very different impression of Vermont from Route 4 and back roads. Not as much in Mendon, but exists in Chittenden. They are not the folks on this call – don't participate and have access. Group of folks missing.
- Certainly... our friends are in Chittenden right next door pregnant with 1st child and just got a quote for internet at \$10,000.
- Attracting businesses – some people move here for the school and the nature, and don't want to see development.
- If there were houses available in Mendon, people would buy them. There is a shortage of housing for families!!!!
- Transform blighted hotels into family housing – would fill up immediately and add to tax base.
- Another set of town playground/trails on that side of Route 4.

- Lack of places for families to congregate.
- If houses for sale, Mendon still has appeal as best bedroom community.
- Community center/rec center.
- Events – Barstow has a beginning of the year thing – in Mendon for the year – for Barstow but not at the school. Not at the rec center – yearly events. Would help support families.
- BYC is going to have clean up day at the Rec fields – two years ago, got a flyer in the mail for a “Mendon day” with hotdogs, etc.
- Used to have a town picnic at the ball fields – Jennifer Baglet organized it.
- NO committee that works on events or is responsible for it
- Divided pick-ups and drop offs between high school and elementary is really hard – especially if you participate in after school activities.
- Sure we're no different than other communities in terms of drug use – this highlights shiny communities.
- Good point on the transportation however those challenges are in most communities in Vermont.
- There isn't a cluster of poverty area in Mendon? Route 4 corridor in more affordable/less great place to live.

Ideas for Action

- Events – yearly events. Rutland/Johnson built Friday/Thursday night live. Incredibly fun and unifying.
- Meeting place – marching band at Barstow – have a place for families and older residents getting to know each other. Unused hotels? Making all communities accessible for all families. Housing costs are high. Community day is high. Rec field is the only place. Need to figure out where, how much, and who is in.
- Affordable housing development – where are the first places to work. Econlodge- just to the west of where the new Forest park. Has been gated off for years. Smaller hotel construction workers are parking at. Edelweiss is very idle. Vacant restaurants (snow angels sign).
- Would need alpine pipeline/liens/back taxes and some repair.
- Inventory of Route 4 assets for redevelopment – did some work on an inventory when updating the town plan, but could be done more formally. Wasn't directly funded.
- What Mendon needs does not need to be very large – mostly for town meeting, small groups etc. Small, simple community center that can be used with maybe a natural playground that works for families and limited mobility people. An asset that could attract folks from Rutland to drive for a nice natural playground as well.
- Vision for community – space for BYC to meet to get more Mendon families involved, senior citizen class, art classes, historical society. Doesn't need to be fancy. Indoor and outdoor component could be used more.
- Preschool/early childhood education – preschool at Barstow – not ideal > 10 hours a week at odd times. Unfriendly for working families.
- What is the littlest lambs age group that just opened?
- Associated with the Little Lambs center in Rutland, it's for infants and toddlers.
- Library – satellite book share room or food pantry – things have folks go to Rutland for.
- Building would get used – a lot of things go to the grange or library in Chittenden for fundraising events – only space that is available.
- Incubator space for small businesses – one person shop could communicate around the world dependably – wired properly . Significant federal investment.
- Very active senior group in Mendon would utilize it
- Become a wellness community.
- People came to Rutland county for the waters.
- Mendon is safe. Houses on the market are sold right away. Families of all age demographics a place where they can run into each other – not a town center or area with shops to bump into people not on your street. How do you manufacture opportunities to meet people from the other end of Mendon. Post office, transfer station is in Rutland City, school is in Chittenden. Pub or coffee shop?
- Types of businesses you would like to support? Gas station? Other amenities?
- A country store/market.
- General store – where everyone sees everyone in Chittenden! Small deli and coffee from a cafe and see everyone.
- Mendon Country Store – Jesse Bridge owned for a while. Coffee shop now, but not open as much. > Paulo coffee shop. Not an everything stop store – combine things?
- Bridge's Country Store.
- Grocery store – why didn't we shop there as much? Nearest shopping is in Killington? Place to get daily needs and coffee could also be a gathering spot.
- Need to keep tabs on things that are already happening.
- Tough to have critical mass
- Always had cake for voting.
- Other towns add on to Green Up Day.
- On town meeting day have a potluck? But has been hard to find space.
- Chittenden has the grange, so far away from everything – a lot of things that could be mimicked. Spaghetti supper – opportunity for multi-generational time. Annual fireworks fundraiser.

Visiting Team Reflections

- Similar themed conversations – So many assets, especially around proximity to Killington, Rutland, and natural assets and vibrant community.
- Small young family population. Curious about housing statistics. How can you stop people and make folks an attractive place – so people stop before they get to Killington or Pico. What things could families stop to do?
- A very small portion of community is developable – might make some of those assets nicer/more inviting – not going to make a huge town center. Plenty of built environment to break to folks.
- Housing theme and redevelopment. Alpine pipeline – sewer line that comes down from Killington/Pico is a huge asset and could be utilized more.
- Fresh air and clean water everyone – everywhere is the hiking trails! Roads and woods – you're already there. Not just in a specific space.
- Wheelerville road – water out the side of the mountain in a glass.
- Very small community – statistics for small communities are not very reliable.
- Connection to a wonderful community and parts of Vermont.
- Route 4 infrastructure – infrastructure is there. Doing an inventory of what is there, who owns it, taxes seems relevant.
- Motels are well suited for redevelopment.
- Restaurant – could invest for gathering space, processing of food, renting to others.
- Theme around events, meeting people bringing people together – the desire is there. Route 4 is coming up over and over again – want a community center and affordable housing

and properties to redevelop – opportunity to redevelop. A lot of opportunities for leadership in the community – if there are events and folks will show up for them. Repurposing buildings on Route 4 is a heavy lift over a long time – need sustained leadership. Resources follow coordinated work.

- Who owns the properties on Route 4, who owns them, what is happening, what is the power of the municipality, set of

underused assets. What is the strategy. Affordable housing, a lot of opportunities. We can rebuild communities – power to rebuild communities across the state – builds momentum and energy – Federal and state agencies and others want to be part of it and support it. When there isn't local initiative, nowhere for folks to intersect. We see towns which organize, become transformed.

Additional Action Ideas

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

- While there may be many “action ideas” that I can propose, I humbly suggest that ALL ideas proposed at the March 24th forum be categorized and distilled – with the goal of first determining what may be acceptable to the people of the town. I understand that some novel ideas may be introduced which could then gain traction, so there is value to proposing action ideas. However, it will add facilitative structure to the process if some overarching considerations are first addressed:
 - Are the townsfolk fully aware of the State’s broader proposals – as laid out in Gov. Scott’s Jan 7th address? If so, let’s identify areas where the town may be aligned with the state in terms of a larger plan for the re-imagining the state.
 - Is there the will on the part of the residents or an agreement in terms of economic/business expansion in the town, and if so, what kind of businesses? For example, if shop fronts or restaurants (likely not impactful nor innovative), then to what extent is the town willing to see Rt. 4 undergo more development? If different kinds of business, such as emerging industries, then how will these be dictated by availability of an appropriate skills base/labor force?
 - The essential question of potential transformation should not shy away from the discussion of demographics. Revitalization need not necessarily, but, in this day and age is likely, to also involve a change of demographics to the town. And, what will that look like? Is the town open to highly skilled Chinese, Indians, Koreans, etc., having a robust and economically impactful presence in the town? Where is the balance between keeping the character of Mendon (a prerogative that must be respected) while also trying to be remain viable in the current world – it seems that this is an essential question, and while more implicit than explicit, it is one of the key questions at the heart of the discussion. It is a question that arises when talking of “Identity & Sense of Place” and when discussion “The Vitality of Our Economy.”
- “Mendon in the Move” is a fantastic initiative. Thank You!
- Develop a unified branding plan with the goal of making Mendon known statewide for “something” or multiple things that we agree:
 - Will physically enhance the town landscape;
 - Attract more and more visitors for a special repetitive annual event;
 - Make our town famous in a positive way.
- IDEAS TO CONSIDER:
 1. MULTIPLE PLANTINGS OF ROADSIDE DAY LILLIES, PURPLE LILACS, LUPENS, OR SMALL CRAB APPLE TREES... choosing one and doing up the whole town or choosing all and doing up one choice in different areas of the town so that the multiple same plants make a big statement in gross.
 2. Stage and Host an annual MENDON TOWN PUBLIC INVITATIONAL IN RECOGNITION OF THE BEAUTY OF THIS PLACE celebrating with an annual STATE WIDE: fiddling contest, a country square or line dance party attracting vendors with ice cream from Stewarts; a volunteer annual rhubarb bakeoff; and barbeque pig Roast.
 3. Designate corporate that will draw outside interest giving them an annual advertising venue at the Celebration. Come up with a category of businesses such as: VT Beer and Whiskey Making; VT Skiing, Boarding, Hiking, Riding and Biking BUSINESSES and Enthusiasts; Health, Wellness and Healing BUSINESSES and Enthusiasts; antique or other car enthusiasts... “
- As a health care professional, I was pleased to see the interest in a town hall/meeting space and accessible trails to encourage movement, health, and perhaps group fitness. I also loved to hear about the interest in cleaning up the buildings and re-acquiring (if possible) some of the run-down structures on Route 4. I often think, “if I have money” and one of the things I dream of is turning a building into a group exercise/fitness area. While that might not be most beneficial to Mendon, a close second would be a multi-purpose meeting space.
- While I have never been on a board or planning commission, as a young adult in this area with hopes of raising a family when the time comes, I do hope to help plan and aid in this process.
- Develop and implement a branding plan to ultimately put Mendon on the Map with the goal of making Mendon recognized and famous for ‘something’, at least as a cared for and physically beautiful community, if not more.
- Install and upkeep gross plantings of one kind* in each of the following areas: On Rt 4 above the bridge to the town line; Around the Town Office to Town Line Road; and, Along Town line Road...: The goal is to get everyone’s attention and wake everyone up to the fact that Mendon’ beauty’ on its mind.
- *Daylilies; Lilacs, Lupins, Crab Apple Trees....
- I do believe we could benefit from a multi-purpose community building and grounds. It does not need to be brand new or

- fancy. But does need to be mobility accessible with good parking. Any recreation around it should be useable by folks of all ages. The building could house a mini-version of a take/leave book lending library, a food pantry, and a gathering room.
- While we starting using front porch forum...I think we could benefit from something even more town specific for communication. Perhaps beefing up our town Facebook page to include curated /admin-controlled postings (turn off commenting) and ask residents to submit photos from around town would be a start.
 - We could stand to beautify our rt 4 corridor by razing vacant property. Just wild grass would be prettier than what is there decaying.
 - We do need to focus on safety issues for rt 4. If you do the research, between hit and runs and car accidents...many people have died in Mendon on rt 4 in the last 13 years.
 - We would benefit from more family housing. Perhaps an incentive from our town taxes to raze vacant properties in exchange for building family homes could help.

- We have great restaurants/ Inns we could have a restaurant specific tour to promote their business. Wine/ specialty food tour month. Or a summer town food cook off.
- Walking and biking paths near roads but not on the road.
- Amend zoning and specifically sign regulations to promote utilizing existing properties in more diverse uses and promote people stopping in Mendon instead of driving through.
- Create or develop playgrounds/parks for children to play and adults to gather in the outdoors.
- Pursue a community center for a place to gather and hold events.
- Consider a bike path/walking path to connect developments starting possibly with Townline Road.
- A bike path accessible to people of all ages that is safe and not too hilly, close to where the majority of Mendonites live.

VII. Mendon on the Move Community Visit Participants

Hannah Abrams	Uday Dholakia	Kenneth Lindquist	Mayra Sandoval-Cooper
David Alberico	Steve Dolphin	Susannah Loffredo	Cameron Sardelli
Candice Alinovich	Carol Gates	Trey Martin	Jessica Sardelli
Nikki Aponovitch	Larry Gold	Chris Mattrick	Michel Scott Susina
Fred Bagley	Jim Harrison	Carolyn McBain	Bryan Sell
Jennifer Bagley	Seward Hawley	Kevin McEntee	Steve Senecal
Jeff Baran	Jerry Hegarty	Amy Merrill	Ron Sherwin
Jerry Barbaro	Vinoth Jagaroo	Donald Messenger	Ann Singiser
Judy Barone	Alexander Johnson	Carol Mickiewicz	Greg Smith
Deanna Benner	Andrea Johnson	Danielle Monroe	Megan Smith
Jesse Bridge	Cort Jones	Chris Murphy	Cassandra Sourdiff
Deanna Briggs	Mary Kalich	Margaret Murphy	David St Germaine
David Brooks	Scott Kaufman	Amanda O'Connell	Elizabeth Swartz
Mary Camilleri	Rebecca Kerns	Dennis O'Connell	Val Taylor
Rich Carlson	Nicole Kesselring	JoAnn O'Hagen	Joe Thyer
John Casella	Mariann Kiraly	Kevin O'Hagen	Leslie Tschaikowsky
Dennis Charles	Arnold Kirbach	Michael Patch	Michael Tully
Avery Chipka	Holly Knox	Jessica Posch	Sara Tully
Sue Clark	David Kraus	Jessica Quesnel	James Alvin (Al) Wakefield
Roy Copans	Joe Kraus	Lacey Ramage	Andy Weinberg
Laura Coppola Zmurko	Mary Kraus	Mary Ann Reich	Kevin Wiberg
Teri Corsones	Laura Kukulka	Daniel Reilly	Dick Wilcox
Larry Courcelle	Patti Lancaster	Carol Robbins	Susan Wilson
Virginia Creighton	Marc Latzky	James Ruth	Brett Yates
Steve Crossmon	Sue Leroux	Mary Ruth	Laura Zmurko
Gail DesRoches	Justin Lindholm	Lynn Sandage	Matt Zmurko

VIII. Visiting Resource Team Members

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