



WILMINGTON, VERMONT | May, 2012





"Vermonters have a long tradition of taking care of each other,  
but Irene put that spirit to a new test."

*-Peter Shumlin, Vermont Governor*

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**Dover, Vermont**  
home of mount snow ☀️❄️🍁



Prepared in coordination with FEMA's Long-Term Community Recovery program.

## LETTER OF SUPPORT

Town of  
**Wilmington**

(802) 464-8591 (Voice)  
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[www.wilmingtonvermont.us](http://www.wilmingtonvermont.us)

April 19, 2012

Dear Friends,

Our town was hit hard by Tropical Storm Irene on August 28<sup>th</sup>. There was considerable damage to property and belongings and our safety was threatened. Tragically, a life was lost because of the flooding.

Wilmington's friends responded. Volunteers and professionals helped keep us safe, fed us, and provided shelter. Our roads and bridges were repaired and opened to travel. Businesses have been renovated, restocked, and reopened. These are all steps in the recovery process.

However, Wilmington's Long Term Community Recovery goes much farther than putting things back the way they were. Our community, extended beyond boundaries, came together to envision a Wilmington stronger than before. Our LTCR process involved over 300 people from throughout the Mount Snow Valley. More than 2,000 hours were spent in open houses and steering committee meetings. You described your image of Wilmington in the future and identified the projects that would make it so. Some of you felt so strongly about the importance of the projects that you were willing to work as Champions to promote and implement them. Thank you for all of your contributions - we wouldn't be here without you.

To become a reality, this plan will need your continued involvement and support. There will be setbacks that we couldn't foresee and there will be circumstances beyond our control. Together, we will be stronger, and together we will accomplish great things because together we are Wilmington – Where Amazing Happens.

With our future in mind,



Tom Consolino, Chair  
Wilmington Selectboard

2 East Main Street • Post Office Box 217 • Wilmington, Vermont 05363



# INTRODUCTION

THE TOWN OF WILMINGTON LIES IN THE DEERFIELD RIVER VALLEY OF THE GREEN MOUNTAINS, IN WINDHAM COUNTY OF SOUTHERN VERMONT. ACCORDING TO THE 2010 CENSUS, THE TOWN OF WILMINGTON HAS A POPULATION OF APPROXIMATELY 1,900.

The Wilmington town center was originally settled in the mid 1700s on Lisle Hill overlooking the location of the current downtown. In the mid 1800s, the community moved down the hill to its current location to take advantage of the commerce opportunities at the intersection of the two main roads. From the late 1800s and through the 1920s, Wilmington grew to be primarily a logging town, thanks to a hydro-powered sawmill on the Deerfield River. Beginning in the 1930s, Wilmington's economy shifted toward tourism; when Mount Snow was established in 1954, the town began to cater to the ski industry. Today the community is anchored by a business district along Vermont Routes 9 and 100 that serves locals from surrounding communities and draws vacationers to nearby attractions such as Mount Snow.

## TOWN GOVERNMENT

Vermont is divided into areas known as towns, the most basic form of local government. Counties exist in Vermont, but they are very weak with very few powers and responsibilities.

In Wilmington, the Board of Selectmen (i.e., Selectboard) serves as the town's elected legislative body and the town manager performs duties of the chief administrative officer, implementing policy and overseeing the day-to-day operations of town government. Legislative decisions are made by the Selectboard, with the exception of special issues such as the annual Town Budget that are referred to the Town Meeting for action. Registered voters at the annual Town Meeting decide those questions by votes that are cast orally or by secret written ballot.

## HOUSING

Over 60% of the local housing units in Wilmington are second homes used as seasonal residences. Primary residence values are approximately 75% of the statewide median value. For some time, the community has been struggling with availability of affordable housing, as noted in the *Strategic Economic Development Plan* (known as The Mullin Report) commissioned by the Tri-Town Economic Development Committee in December 2009.



## ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES

The Mullin Report characterized the economy in Wilmington and Dover in this way:

The two towns are not in a crisis at the moment. However, they are in an economic climate of gradual decline that will only continue if they do nothing. They are able to survive recessions and times of severe distress but are unable to regain that which they have lost and are not growing in new areas. The decline is slow and subtle, but constant. They have no choice but to change if they wish to remain vibrant and maintain their quality of life.

Interviews with local innkeepers and business owners underscore the point that Mount Snow, the largest employer and economic force in the valley, generates enough activity to support an economy through the lulls until the next winter. A good ski season from Thanksgiving to Easter usually means quite good revenues. However, in many cases that is not nearly enough – while some businesses are better off than others, very few of them are thriving. Time will tell whether the weak underlying economy can survive the latest economic upheavals.

The economy has remained mostly stagnant for at least the past decade, and is heavily dependent upon the winter ski season. The town's unemployment and poverty rates exceed the state averages, while median incomes are well below the state averages. Consensus in the community seems to be that there is significant opportunity to grow the summer tourist season, heretofore largely untapped.

A considerable challenge facing the valley is the lack of jobs that would entice more young people to stay or move to the valley. Key indicators suggest that the population in the valley tends to be significantly older than average (44% over 50), with a lower percentage of young people relative to the region as a whole. Since 2001, the labor force has remained static; relatively few jobs have been added in either Wilmington (99) or in nearby Dover (29). Thus, over time the Mount Snow Valley population has been growing older as retirees move to the area (often into second homes), with no significant influx of younger people to inject new energy into the economic mix. (U.S. Census 2010)

Economically speaking, there is plenty of good news. The Mount Snow Valley has a list of assets that most other communities only wish they had, including aesthetic beauty, plentiful natural resources, easy proximity to several of the largest US cities, a rich cultural history, a low crime rate and good schools. There is much to like about the area, and very little not to. Just a glance out the window is enough to understand the attraction for city-dwellers throughout the Northeastern U.S. – Vermont offers peace, tranquility, and extensive connection to the outdoors and natural resources.

## TROPICAL STORM IRENE

On August 28, 2011, Tropical Storm Irene dropped up to 15 inches of rain in Wilmington, causing the Deerfield River to rise nearly 27 feet in the downtown, bringing nearly six feet of water onto Main Street and throughout the downtown area.

Flood waters heavily damaged many downtown businesses, many of which occupy historic structures that date back as far as 1836 and are listed on the National Registry of Historic Places. Dot's Restaurant, a Wilmington icon and institution for locals and tourists alike, was moved off its foundation and suffered major damage. Five feet of water destroyed North Star Pizza and Bowling, a popular retreat during bad weather. Anne Coleman's art gallery on West Main Street completely disappeared downstream.

Both of the Wilmington emergency operations centers (EOCs) located at the Police and Fire Departments and their respective communication centers were quickly rendered useless. The Emergency Management Director had no EOC from which to support the incident commanders. Files and stored equipment at the police department office and at the fire station were destroyed. While police and fire vehicles were moved to higher ground before they could be destroyed as well, emergency operations were very difficult without the appropriate communications and logistics support.

The river receded as quickly as it rose, and by midnight was almost back inside its normal channel. The damage had been done quickly, and Wilmington residents saw for themselves what nobody had seen since the flood of 1938.





## THE WILMINGTON LONG-TERM COMMUNITY RECOVERY PROCESS

While devastated communities understandably tend to focus on short-term, response-level issues such as housing displaced survivors, it can be of great advantage to adopt a longer-horizon view as soon as possible. Affected communities generally recover more completely if they begin taking a long-term view soon after a disaster, when there is still considerable attention directed their way. With this in mind, the State of Vermont and FEMA's Long-Term Community Recovery team determined that the Town of Wilmington would benefit from a formal recovery program.

Once engaged in the recovery planning process, the Wilmington Selectboard assumed the role of an oversight committee. However, rather than meeting separately for the recovery planning process, Selectboard members became active participants as recovery sector workgroup members, and reported back to their colleagues on a regular basis during their established bi-weekly Selectboard meetings.

Early on, the Selectboard determined that because it shared a common economy with nearby Dover, the existing Bi-Town Economic Development Committee would serve quite well as the conduit to study economic development issues during the recovery planning process in Wilmington. Representatives from the Dover and Wilmington Selectboards, the Mount Snow Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, the Deerfield Valley Rotary and other community organizations comprise the Bi-Town Economic Development Committee. Thus, the Bi-Town Committee managed the economic development recovery sector for both towns, while the Wilmington Selectboard oversaw the rest.

### RECOVERY VISION

The overall recovery planning process began by finding consensus on a recovery vision that encapsulated what the community hoped to be when it had fully recovered. With input from all parts of the community, the Wilmington and Dover communities agreed upon this statement as their recovery vision:

**Our community enjoys a vibrant, growing, year-round and diversified economy built upon the foundations of limitless opportunity for all ages that also preserves a unique historic, cultural and recreational heritage.**

This vision became the guiding principle, the yardstick to gauge everything else during the recovery process over the next ten to twenty years.

## **RECOVERY GOALS**

The next step was to find consensus on a set of goals that would move the community toward realization of the recovery vision. These workgroups decided on the following recovery goals for their sectors.

### **Bi-Town Economic Development Committee**

- Create Four-Season Economy
- Improve Small Business Climate
- Improve communication connectivity to promote and attract high tech businesses and users that require large bandwidth support

### **The Historic Village**

- Improve pedestrian connectivity, safety, and convenience within the community
- Promote the utilization of, and identify opportunities to enhance, existing community facilities and amenities
- Promote an attractive and vibrant community for the benefit of residents, businesses, and visitors

### **Infrastructure**

- Reduce flood threat throughout the valley
- Improve water and wastewater systems
- Improve public safety

### **Natural Resources & Recreation**

- Increase and enhance recreational opportunities for all
- Improve the recreation-based economy by expanding year-round facilities and activities

### **Community Planning & Capacity Building**

- Attract and retain young adults and youth-related businesses

### **Housing, Health & Human Services**

- Establish and acquire a centralized new or existing location for a coordinated social service system that will support various operations including social services, emergency services, recreational & educational opportunities
- Expand quality income-appropriate housing opportunities (home ownership program, housing for seniors, special needs, workforce)
- Improve the level of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery programs to assure that all geographic areas of the community are accessible and serviced in an emergency

The projects that are described in this Recovery Plan are designed to address ongoing recovery issues that face the town. They provide stepping-stones that will lead to completion of recovery goals.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A central part of the LTCR planning process is an inclusive public involvement program that ensures that the recovery plan incorporates and fully reflects the desires of the entire community. A successful recovery plan will require widespread public support for the various initiatives over a long period of time.

The Bi-Town Economic Development Committee hosted an open workshop in December 2011 to create a list of issues that face the Wilmington and Dover communities during the next several years.

## **COMMUNITY VISIONING — JANUARY 2012**

The Wilmington Selectboard hosted a meeting at the Deerfield Valley Elementary School to introduce the LTCR process and begin building the community's vision for the future. As they registered, residents were asked to list two words they felt best described their vision for the Wilmington community. Those answers were compiled into a diagram that provides a visual reflection of the number of times a word was mentioned.



Questions on boards around the room were organized into recovery sectors including economic development, community development, natural resources & recreation, housing/health/human services, infrastructure, and the historic village. Approximately 175 residents used sticky notes to respond to questions intended to provoke thoughts about the future such as:



- What could make Wilmington a better place to live?
  - What role do the river and other natural assets play in Wilmington's future?
  - How could we attract young people to return to Wilmington to work or start a business?

The attendees organized into sector groups to discuss the most important issues facing the community. For over 45 minutes they compiled lists and then reported back to the rest of the attendees. They also signed up to serve on workgroups, selected sector leaders, and set times and dates for regular meetings.

## **PROJECT PRIORITIZATION OPEN HOUSE – FEBRUARY 2012**

The recovery sector workgroups sponsored a project prioritization meeting on February 11, 2012 at Memorial Hall in downtown Wilmington. The open house was held on a Saturday in an attempt to broaden the audience to include second home owners and those who could not attend in the evening during the week.

Boards surrounding the room displayed 57 projects that had been identified by the groups working on six recovery sectors (Infrastructure, Historic Village, Natural Resources & Recreation, Housing, Health & Human Services, and Economic Development). Sector workgroups had been developing potential project ideas based upon the issues identified during the January vision meeting.

Approximately 125 community members placed sticky dots next to the five recovery project ideas that they deemed most important to the community's recovery. The open house also provided an opportunity to discuss projects and ideas in greater detail.



### **On-Line Project Prioritization**

An on-line survey allowed those unable to attend the open house (including a very large base of second home owners) to participate in the recovery process. A link to the survey site was sent via e-mail to a database of second home owners and local business owners, and remained on-line for approximately 10 days. Results were added to results from the open house.

Results from the prioritization process are not scientific and are not in any way binding, but they do provide a useful representation of public support for a given project.

### **Twin Valley High School**

Marlboro College offered a class that focused on disaster response and recovery. Two students in that class, one of whom is also a senior at Twin Valley High School in Wilmington, undertook a project to involve Wilmington's youth in the recovery process. The two students discussed the community recovery process with the TVHS English classes, and then held an open house at the school on February 13. Approximately 75 students and faculty prioritized recovery projects with sticky dots in the same manner as at the January community open house.

For the most part, the students had perspectives similar to older residents. However, they were clearly more concerned about education, the availability of broadband internet, and the improvement of recreational activities in the valley.





## **RECOVERY PROJECTS BY SECTOR**

## PROJECTS

The process of developing an LTCR plan requires the community to think through its recovery from many points of view. The projects that follow all address an issue that was identified by the community as a recovery priority. They are all parts of a coherent, comprehensive approach to reaching recovery goals that then fulfill the community's vision for the future.

Specifics of the projects outlined in the plan will evolve considerably as more details become known and circumstances change. However, while it is important to remain flexible, it is equally important to remain consistent with the community's recovery vision and the overall principles that are reflected here.

The feasibility of each project within the plan depends on:

### PROJECT CHAMPIONS

A project champion is a person or entity who takes ownership of a project to ensure it keeps moving through the process and that each subsequent step is taken in a timely fashion. Energetic and interested project champions are critical to the success of every recovery strategy.

### ONGOING COMMITMENT

Ultimately a community's long-term recovery depends on the focus and drive of those who live and work there. Many of the projects and processes necessary for a full recovery take time, sometimes many years, and it is imperative that the community remain resolute in its commitment to long-term recovery.

## FUNDING

Financing is essential to a real and complete recovery. While Wilmington officials and residents will be the primary users of this plan, the document is also helpful to the state and federal agencies, private foundations and companies whose financial support will be so central to making these projects a reality. Many funding sources will look for a coherent and coordinated approach to solving problems for which the funds are being sought. This plan serves that purpose as well, demonstrating that the community is serious enough to have thought through its issues and has developed a plan to address them.

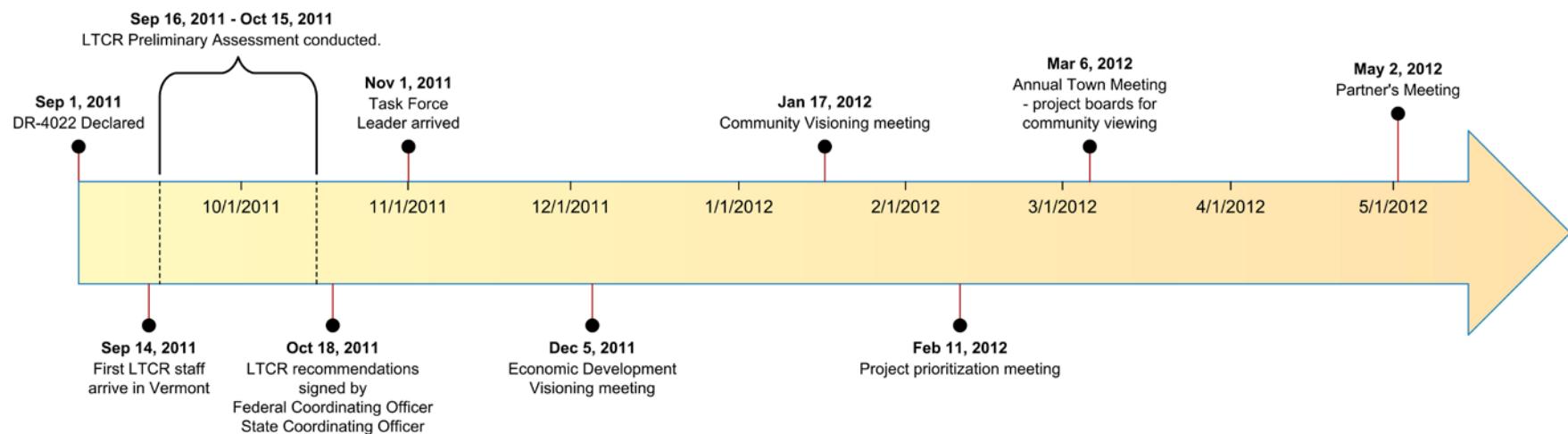
## COLLABORATION

Communication and collaboration are imperative to a successful recovery. A community's recovery is a very complex process that involves a multitude of government agencies, non-profits, and the private sector. Each decision that is made will have repercussions for others yet to be made, and each action will change the overall landscape of the recovery. Because of this, it is vital that all interested parties remain informed of all ongoing activities.

## NEXT STEPS AND ACTION PLANNING

Each project description that follows includes a list of action steps and potential resources that can help bring the project to fruition. Many projects will need to be implemented in phases, coordinated with each other, and managed according to funding process timelines. Specific timeframes will need to be set, and ongoing regular coordination meetings must be established to ensure that all the stakeholders will remain informed of changing circumstances.

Thus, this plan is an outline of Wilmington's community vision and how it can get there. It is up to town residents to "put flesh to those bones" in a manner that best suits their particular circumstances.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Since the opening of the Mount Snow ski area in 1954, the Mount Snow Valley economy has relied on the winter ski season. In addition to being the primary economic engine, Mount Snow is by far the largest employer in the valley, ranging from 240 employees during the summer to more than 1200 during ski season.

Tourism in general remains the primary sector of the economy in the valley. More than twenty inns, numerous restaurants, and retail outlets provide the support services for tourists throughout the year, but especially during the ski season. Second home owners buy food, entertainment, clothing, maintenance services and more during their weekend and holiday week visits.

Unfortunately, the “vibrant, growing, year-round and diversified economy” as stated in the community’s recovery vision statement does not yet exist. Economic data shows that the Mount Snow Valley economy is largely dependent on long-time visitors and second homeowners. The fall leaf season has historically been good, and some degree of weekend tourism throughout the year helps, but the vast majority of business occurs on weekends from Thanksgiving to April, with big weeks during the Christmas Holidays and Presidents’ Day week when schools are on vacation.

With a weak economic foundation, few businesses were likely in a financial position to weather the effects of Tropical Storm Irene. Most businesses hurried to re-open in hope of recouping some of their recovery costs. Unfortunately, snowfall was much lower than normal, leading to a lackluster ski season that exacerbated the lingering effects of Irene. As a result, many business owners are left with very little capacity to survive another catastrophe.

There is widespread consensus throughout the valley that the economy needs to be addressed with newfound vigor. Recovery meeting attendees identified marketing programs to stimulate the economy as some of their highest priorities. As one prominent resident put it, if a more robust marketing effort is not undertaken, “our valley will be seen as damaged goods.”



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Marketing and Branding Program

The marketing program would have the multiple goals of diversifying the economy, expanding the tourism base, and creating a vibrant community in which to live and work. It would help achieve the recovery vision by ensuring that both towns and their newly energized businesses will deliver their message to potential visitors. There is widespread belief in the community that the valley has a great product as articulated in the vision statement – it just needs to do a better job of selling it.

The Wilmington and Dover communities must develop a brand that will communicate the many outdoor recreation offerings and commitment to quality. The Mount Snow Valley Long Term Marketing Development team will survey the market to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the Mount Snow Valley economy and businesses. They will then develop a comprehensive marketing program to maximize visits by tourists and second homeowners, and to encourage buying locally.

The Wilmington LTCR recovery sector workgroups identified the following projects that would become parts or phases of the marketing program:

### **Market Research Program**

Conduct market research program to clarify the needs/wants of residents, visitors and businesses.

### **Branding Program**

Create and sustain an effective branding program which unifies the interests of Wilmington, Dover, the Mount Snow Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the Mount Snow ski resort under a common brand.

### **Year-round Marketing Program**

Develop marketing program that improves the image/reputation of the valley as a year-round recreational vacation and residential destination and expands awareness of outdoor activities including fishing, hiking, biking, horseback riding, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing.

### **Buy Local Marketing Campaign**

Develop a “buy local” marketing campaign that encourages people to buy within the valley and for businesses to supply goods and services that the community wants – “Keep it in the Valley.”

The marketing program must be collaborative with Mount Snow, West Dover, various chambers of commerce, the state, and anyone else currently doing any marketing that brings people to the valley. It would provide a unified, coherent framework to help all marketing efforts become more effective.

### **CHAMPION:**

ADAM GRINOLD

### **RESOURCES:**

Town of Wilmington, 1% sales tax revenues

Town of Dover, 1% sales tax revenues

U.S. Commerce Department, Economic Development Administration



#### ACTION STEPS:

- Identify current and historical marketing efforts of the Towns of Wilmington and Dover, the Mount Snow Valley Chamber of Commerce, Mount Snow, and other entities to determine gaps and identify needs.
- Conduct market analysis to determine the valley's current market position in relation to the competition, market trends, product differentiators, history of the valley economy and recovery vision.
- Conduct a brand identification exercise to establish a common brand for the valley that is aligned with the valley's strengths and assets, addresses gaps or needs, and positions the valley for economic improvements in the desired direction.
- Develop consensus and buy-in of the new brand from as many stakeholders as possible.
- Develop a marketing strategy and communication plan for delivering the desired messages to the appropriate audience at the most effective time, place and manner.
- Identify partnership opportunities throughout southern Vermont in order to broaden the scope of a marketing program and highlight four season outdoor recreation opportunities, as well as significant unique and high quality arts and entertainment opportunities.
- Identify and develop sustainable funding streams that can grow over time and support the program well into the future.
- Implement a marketing program and track results to determine effectiveness.



#### COST ESTIMATES:

Costs will be determined based upon marketing objectives. Brand identification and development program, one of the necessary first steps, should cost no more than \$50,000.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Business Assistance Program

The Wilmington community has expressed support for a major effort to promote business both in terms of a local program that is affiliated with the Mount Snow Valley Chamber of Commerce, and a broader based business resource center. Both initiatives would initially focus on activities to help existing businesses continue recovering from Irene. Over time, the business assistance program will be driven by an overall marketing and branding effort that is designed to help existing businesses in the valley and improve the opportunities for new businesses.

The community has further determined that a local business assistance program should focus on attracting technology-based start-up companies to the valley. The establishment of an ongoing business assistance program which concentrates on the needs of existing and emerging businesses will provide support and linkages to grow a vibrant and diverse local economy.

The Business Assistance program would engage in the following initiatives:

- Within the framework of a larger overall marketing program, focus on attracting technology based start-ups and emerging internet based companies to the valley.
- Develop incentive programs such as deals on tax-reverted properties and working capital loans from the revolving loan fund (as proposed in the Business Recovery and Resource Center project).
- Establish super high band width internet at available office locations to serve technology-based businesses.
- Establish a program to encourage young “creative class” people and students to visit the valley and experience its natural beauty and recreational opportunities.

- Identify ways in which the municipalities can engage volunteer organizations to assist the towns in pursuing grants.
- Provide relevant data to the media and Selectboards on the current state of the local and regional economy on a quarterly basis. Obtain economic forecast information to update the local economic development strategy.
- Maintain a constant social media presence that encourages young visitors to think about how they could work, play and settle in the valley.
- Identify new and improved opportunities to produce and market agricultural and renewable natural resource products in the region.
- Develop a mentorship program for new business owners from the pool of local experienced business owners. Allow this program to be a two-way street with new entrepreneurs to share their knowledge with established businesses.

### CHAMPION:

ADAM GRINOLD

### RESOURCES:

Town of Wilmington

Town of Dover

U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration

U.S. Department Agriculture, Rural Development

**ACTION STEPS:**

- Continue existing chamber programs that support local businesses
- Participate in the proposed marketing program, using the marketing data to further focus the program
- Determine how to fund a part time business assistance professional
- Establish program objectives, outside resources, management structure and measures of success

**COST ESTIMATES:**

- Part time employment professional at a cost of approximately \$50,000 per year

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Business Recovery and Resource Center**

In the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene, rebuilding required a significant investment of cash and/or debt. Because the ski season is the peak of economic cycle in the valley, the hospitality industry was hoping for a strong ski season to help recoup some of the recovery investment. Unfortunately, the limited snowfall during the winter of 2011-2012 exacerbated the disaster's impact on tourism related business. Ongoing assistance to existing, expanding and new business operations is now even more vital to the long-term recovery of the economy of the valley.

A business resource center could prove to be an extremely useful tool for supporting a stronger economy. The components of a business resource center would have different implementation timetables. The mentoring and assistance component of such a program already exists. A more formalized and structured program could be developed in a short timeframe. Potential facilities within Wilmington might include the high school, the Honora facility, a portion of the renovated Barnboard plant, etc.

### **CHAMPIONS:**

BRUCE MULLEN, GRETCHEN HAVRELUK

### **RESOURCES:**

Vermont Small Business Development Center

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)

Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation

Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategy

State of Vermont Economic Development Corporation

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development

U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration

Strategic Economic Development Plan for Dover and Wilmington, VT  
(Dec. 2009)



#### ACTION STEPS:

- Create mentor programs and partnerships to support local business
- Create a business incubator to develop and support Vermont branded businesses
- Create a fund to support new and expanding business and foreign investment
- Use the tax stabilization program to attract new business
- Attract technical and internet based companies
- Develop incentive programs to attract young people, especially technologically savvy professionals
- Assist local businesses with broadband and cellular service issues
- Modify and further develop projects to be consistent with the marketing strategy
- Develop a means to evaluate the success of project efforts



#### COST ESTIMATES:

Approximate preliminary estimates:

- Incubator program startup cost – \$50,000
- Incentive program for technology-based business – \$150,000
- Managing a fund to support new business and expanding business and foreign investment – \$18,000

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: “Keep it in the Valley” Campaign

Following Irene, there was a concerted effort by many in Wilmington to “buy local,” especially during the holiday season. These efforts had significant positive impact on businesses that were open and, at least to a small extent, mitigated the economic impact of Irene. Because businesses were closed, residents became even more aware of everyday items that were no longer available at local stores.

The flood and the recession have led to the closing of some popular businesses and others looking at making changes in their business model. Any efforts that could encourage improvements in the local economy will benefit the entire community.

The project consists of several activities that dovetail to encourage more spending at local businesses:

- Survey primary and secondary residents to find out what goods and services are not available in the valley and to learn what other road-blocks (e.g., price) inhibit people from supporting local businesses.
- Encourage local businesses to supply goods and services that people want
- Encourage locals to start businesses to fill needs
- Conduct a “buy local” public relations campaign to increase awareness of the impact of buying locally on local businesses
- Encourage local businesses, non-profits and municipalities to adopt local purchasing policies

More than simply a buy local campaign, the name of this project “Keep it in the Valley” reflects an increased potential for success, because buy local connects goods and services with the need for them, at the local level, addressing both sides of the equation – the supply of locally-produced goods and services and the increased demand for them by residents.

### CHAMPIONS:

NICKI STEEL, ARLENE PALMITER, GRETCHEN HAVRELUK

### RESOURCES:

U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration  
Vermont Department of Agriculture  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
Local foundations

**ACTION STEPS:**

- Evaluate and pursue potential funding assistance
- Acquire workspace, preferably donated
- Acquire office equipment donations
- Recruit program workforce volunteers
- Identify suitable social media outlets
- Identify potential business participants
- Implement Program

**COST ESTIMATES:**

Estimated \$20,000, including technical assistance to create, disseminate, and collate well-written surveys and to create and market a buy local campaign. Further technical assistance will be needed to develop a plan for disseminating the information on goods and services (e.g., web site, Facebook updates, etc.). There will also be other costs associated with creating and maintaining a list of local businesses.

SPRING 2012	IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING FUNDING	
<i>Apply for funding.</i>	<i>Begin survey process.</i>	<i>The project will be maintained on an ongoing basis.</i>

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Improved Broadband and Cellular Service

Mount Snow Valley residents and tourists would benefit long-term from the availability of high capacity internet service in mountainous residential locations. During the recovery planning process, the following goals were developed to address these issues:

- Expand and improve broadband and cellular coverage throughout the valley
- Install wireless zone areas for residents and visitor access
- Establish ultra high speed broadband capabilities to attract high tech business users

Meeting the expectations of visitors and tourists has proven to be essential to the success of the valley. High quality hospitality services, restaurants and retail establishments have long become the norm in the valley. In the last few years, it has become clear that visitors also expect the same level of cell phone service and broadband internet service in the valley as they have at home.

In order to meet the expected level of service, it has proven necessary to provide incentives and subsidies to encourage private service providers who have been reluctant to serve a seasonal market in a rural community. The State of Vermont has targeted much of its federal funds in this effort. Within the valley, the Town of Dover has spent more than \$300,000 to improve available broadband service to its business and residents.

Quality high-capacity broadband and cellular service is also essential to K-12 education, technology based businesses and the management of large scale events. High speed broadband and cellular service would significantly increase the productive capacity of the valley.

### CHAMPIONS:

KEN BLACK, MEG STREETER

### RESOURCES:

Duncan Cable  
Fairpoint Communications  
Sovernet Communications  
Vermont Telecommunications  
Town of Dover  
Town of Wilmington  
State of Vermont  
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development  
U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration



#### ACTION STEPS:

- Expand the efforts of the Town of Dover to include a focus on the entire valley and coordinate local efforts with the recent initiatives elsewhere in southern Vermont.
- Develop a strong working relationship with all private service providers. Develop a detailed understanding of the current infrastructure.
- Communicate the unique service needs of the valley to the State and USDA Rural Development.



#### COST ESTIMATES:

- It is anticipated that a minimum of 4-6 cell towers are needed to complete coverage in the area. At approximately \$150,000 per tower, that equates to \$900,000.
- Increasing broadband internet performance to a point of 15 Mbps down and 1 Mbps up to every residential area that is currently underserved will cost \$175,000.
- Providing similar bandwidth to residential areas that are not served at all will cost \$360,000.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Community Recovery Coordinator

Through the Long Term Community Recovery process, Wilmington residents have developed numerous projects and programs needed to fully recover from the impacts of Tropical Storm Irene. The community is poised to accomplish a number of projects that have been contemplated for years, as the process has generated newfound levels of support and enthusiasm. However, momentum can diminish over time, especially in the face of yearly grant application and appropriation processes. A sustained long-term recovery will require continued support and technical assistance to develop and implement successful projects and programs.

To that end, the Town should recruit a recovery coordinator with the skills to manage implementation of the Wilmington Long-Term Recovery Plan, who can juggle multiple activities, and inspire the project champions to see their projects to completion. The role will require developing working relationships with other agencies that can assist Wilmington in its recovery efforts, including non-government organizations, utility companies, and tourism organizations. An advisory committee consisting of the Town leadership, the business community, and other key organizations would oversee the program. On a regular basis, they and the recovery coordinator should review the plan to measure progress and make adjustments as required.

The position should be funded for a minimum of two years to ensure continuity. Recovery work will probably evolve into an ongoing community development program that uses a project development process to build Wilmington's resiliency.

### CHAMPIONS:

*Wilmington Selectboard*

### RESOURCES:

Town of Wilmington Selectboard

Town of Dover Selectboard

U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration

**ACTION STEPS:**

- Conduct selection process and hire qualified candidate – immediately
- Coordinate regular meetings with recovery project champions — immediately and ongoing
- Focus first on projects that will have the most impact on the community's recovery when completed, for example projects that can be completed quickly, have significant public support, and are easily funded — 2012
- Focus next on further developing additional projects and establishing the contacts and relationships needed to implement ongoing programs and projects that are not easily funded – 2013
- The coordinator should develop a mechanism to evaluate progress of the Long Term Community Recovery program

**COST ESTIMATES:**

Preliminary estimated cost is \$80,000 per year for two years.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE: Combined Facility for Police, Fire and Town Records**

Wilmington's existing Fire Headquarters has been impacted by flooding three times since it went into service in 1960. During the flooding of Tropical Storm Irene, it was necessary to move all the department's vehicles to higher ground. The remaining equipment, valued at \$210,000, was lost, and the building sustained \$40,000 in damages.

The Wilmington Police Department occupied a portion of Town Hall at the intersection of Route 100 and Route 9. During the flooding, Police Headquarters was inundated and rendered inoperable. The department sustained \$151,000 in physical damages and the loss of \$178,000 in supplies and equipment. As of April 2012, Police Headquarters is still located in a temporary facility.

The project intends to construct a new combined facility for the Fire and Police Departments. The facility would provide administrative offices, storage space for portable equipment and town records, and vehicle bays for storing and maintaining the departments' vehicles. The new facility would enable more efficient operation of the departments on a daily basis and enhanced coordination during future disasters.

### **CHAMPIONS:**

KEN MARCH, JOE SZAREJKO, AVI AZOULAY, JIM BURKE

### **RESOURCES:**

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) 2012 Preparedness Grant Program

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

FEMA Public Assistance (PA) Program, Section 406

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program



#### ACTION STEPS:

- Determine the space needs of the Police and Fire Departments and for Emergency Management functions by surveying other communities and departments and by following the recommendations of an experienced facilities architect
- Evaluate potential building locations (including the former town maintenance building site)
- Solicit, interview, and evaluate prospective architectural/engineering firms to determine their capability to design and oversee construction of a combined facility
- Evaluate and pursue potential funding assistance
- Solicit bids and construct the new facility
- Choose a firm and interact with them throughout the project to produce a viable building that would stay within the municipal budget for this project



#### COST ESTIMATES:

A preliminary cost estimate for the combined facility is \$4,000,000, and is based on the Town of Wilmington's Letter of Intent to the State Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Officer. The architecture firm chosen to carry out the project will estimate the actual cost.

UNDERWAY	JUNE 2012	SEPTEMBER 2012	SEPTEMBER 2013
<i>Visit co-located facilities in other municipalities to evaluate space needs.</i>	<i>Evaluate potential locations.</i>	<i>Choose Architect/Engineer firm (depending on funding).</i>	<i>Construct the new facility (depending on funding).</i>

## **INFRASTRUCTURE: Water District and Wastewater Department Merger**

Three water commissioners govern the current Wilmington Water District, which was founded in 1959. A clerk and a water operator staff the Water District as permanent employees, but the District must also rely on an engineer, who is hired as a consultant, to perform many of the management and reporting functions required of the Water District. This lean staffing arrangement does not provide the Wilmington Water District with the capacity to keep up with the regulations and mandates set out by state and federal governments. The Water District also has no office space and no central location where customers can obtain information. Water rates for homeowners have nearly doubled in the past few years because of such inefficiencies in the organization.

Merging the Water District into the town government will provide much more reliable customer service, and will save money by providing additional resources and reducing labor costs. The town already has personnel who monitor and address state and federal requirements on behalf of the Wastewater Department. After the merger, the town Selectboard would have direct involvement in the operation of the water system and in the decision-making process regarding upgrades and expansion.

Water and wastewater systems are integral assets of a community that not only ensure the protection of public health, but also generate private investment and thus increase a community's property tax base. Availability of capacity for water and wastewater is required to accommodate any future growth in the community. Improvements should be made to both systems.

- Research the value and feasibility of installing an emergency shut off valve in the main water line from the reservoir to prevent the entire reservoir from draining, as it did during Tropical Storm Irene.
- Evaluate the Wastewater Facility and all six lift stations to find out what can be done to reduce the threat of severe damage from future flooding. If warranted, make modifications as soon as possible.

### **CHAMPIONS:**

JOHN LAZELLE, GEORGE HOEKIR

### **RESOURCES:**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Clean Water Act,  
Section 319 Grants  
State of Vermont Legislature



#### ACTION STEPS:

- Develop a plan for the merger
- Secure services of a qualified attorney with experience in similar mergers
- Water District Commissioners and Wilmington Selectboard members must vote to move forward with the merger
- Seek approval of the Water District voters and Wilmington Residents
- Seek approval from the state legislature if needed



#### COST ESTIMATES:

The only anticipated cost to realize this merger is for legal services, which are estimated to be less than \$10,000. The Town will then have to incur additional costs to bring the water system into compliance with applicable standards, which could represent more than \$1 million dollars. Improvements are estimated to cost approximately \$100,000.

2013		TARGET COMPLETION: JULY 2013
	<i>Complete all necessary votes, merger plan, etc., and take to the legislature (if needed) in early 2013.</i>	<i>Completed merger by July 1, 2013.</i>

## INFRASTRUCTURE: Flood Mitigation

The Town of Wilmington is soliciting technical assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), and other entities to perform engineering analyses of the Deerfield River and its tributaries. The goal will be to determine measures to protect the town and its residents from future flooding.

The engineering team will assess stream beds, channels, and potential obstructions and constrictions that occur from debris, bridges, or other sources. The analysis will be made on each of the following rivers and tributaries in the watershed: the North Branch of the Deerfield River, Blue Brook, Ellis Brook, Cheney Brook, Negus Brook, Meadow Brook, Hall Brook, Bill Brook, Haystack Brook, Cold Brook, and Beaver Brook. Oral and written reports on observations will be provided to town officials, and will include possible remedies and next steps.

This project is a follow-up to a preliminary site visit and presentation on ice jams in February 2012 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. It will provide a more comprehensive analysis and possible steps to help mitigate future flooding incidents. Late in February 2012, the town sent written requests for technical assistance to the Army Corps of Engineers and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

### CHAMPIONS:

BARBARA COLE, GARY HENRY, LYNN MATTHEWS

CLARE RILEY, KATHLEEN WALLACE, JIM BURKE

### RESOURCES:

US Army Corps of Engineers, Technical Assistance

US Army Corps of Engineers, Emergency Stream Bank  
and Shoreline Protection

US Army Corps of Engineers, Small Flood Control Projects

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Technical Assistance

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Flood Reduction Measures

Town of Wilmington, Labor and Equipment for Stream Modifications

Federal Emergency Management Agency, Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program

Federal Emergency Management Agency, Flood Mitigation  
Assistance Program (FMA)

US Department of Agriculture, Emergency Watershed Protection

US Department of Agriculture, Watershed Protection & Flood Prevention



#### ACTION STEPS:

- Seek professional assistance to understand federal and state water quality rules and regulations and learn how to perform remediation as recommended, which might include such activities as creating trash racks, removing debris, and stabilizing river banks
- Investigate steps taken by other communities during flood recovery to help formulate ideas
- Determine new action items based on federal and state site visits and analysis
- Help the rivers recover to a level that supports healthy fish populations



#### COST ESTIMATES:

- The next site visits by the Corps of Engineers and the State ANR will be at no cost to the community
- Some detailed studies by the Corps of Engineers will require a cost share of 35%, though in-kind services from the town might meet these requirements
- If appropriate, some work could be accomplished using town equipment and labor

WINTER 2012	SPRING 2012	TARGET COMPLETION: 2013
<p><i>A written request for the next site visit and analysis was sent to the New England District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during the week of February 27th, 2012.</i></p>	<p><i>Liaison work with Vermont ANR is ongoing and a site visit will occur during Spring 2012, possibly after the spring snow melt.</i></p>	<p><i>Coordinating with other communities with similar flood threats may begin immediately.</i></p>

*The possibility of widening the North Branch Deerfield River in town has received a favorable oral response from State ANR. True costs have yet to be determined, but are likely to be very high. If the Town can budget or otherwise receive funding for this project, it will be possible to begin work as soon as funding and permits have been secured.*

## **INFRASTRUCTURE: Multi-Tiered Emergency Alert System**

Although the arrival of Tropical Storm Irene was well publicized as it made its way up the Eastern Seaboard, the flash flooding that resulted from the rain caught much of Vermont's population by surprise. Some residents who were out of town during the storm and not tuned into the news were unaware of the dangers until notified by friends and neighbors. Fortunately, casualties were limited to a single death and minor injuries, but the storm revealed the need for a better early warning system.

This project would develop a multi-tiered early warning system to help ensure that the entire community is aware of threats regardless of where they are or what they are doing. The system would include:

- A Reverse 9-1-1 program capable of sending recorded messages via telephone, text message, and email about developing and/or imminent disasters
- A siren system to provide warning to people who are away from radios, TVs, and computers
- An information packet to be distributed to current and new residents and throughout the local school system to educate residents about the warnings, and what to do in the event of an emergency

### **CHAMPIONS:**

KEN MARCH, JOE SZAREJKO, AVI AZOULAY, JAMES BOGARD

### **RESOURCES:**

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) 2012 Preparedness Grants

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

FEMA Public Assistance (PA) Program, Section 406

FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grants

Local Business Support



#### ACTION STEPS:

- Get feedback from the community on what has not been effective in the past to help decide what products and services will be appropriate for the town
- Determine features and limitations of various reverse 9-1-1 programs and siren systems, including meeting the needs of Deaf residents
- Evaluate costs and options
- Acquire, install, test, and deploy systems(s)
- Develop and distribute educational materials to schools, businesses, and residents



#### COST ESTIMATES:

The estimated costs of this project are:

- Reverse 9-1-1 program – \$3,000 to \$5,000 annually
- Acquisition and installation of siren system – \$8,000 to \$12,000
- Development and distribution of educational material – \$5,000

#### TARGET COMPLETION: JUNE 2012

*Wilmington residents have already begun better preparing themselves for a potential future emergency by increasing communication and efficiencies among emergency response agencies. Work on the multi-tiered Emergency Alert System could start at any time. However, the system would preferably be in place by the start of the 2012 Hurricane Season on June 1.*

## INFRASTRUCTURE: Deerfield Valley Transit Association Facility

The Deerfield Valley Transit Association (DVTA), operator of the MOOver, is the public transit provider for six towns in southern Vermont, including Wilmington, Dover, Wardsboro, Whitingham, Halifax, and Readsboro. Started in 1996, the DVTA provides free "deviated fixed route" public transit service 365 days a year to Wilmington, West Dover, Brattleboro, Readsboro, and East Dover.

Five additional routes operate during the winter months to serve the Mount Snow ski area, connected inns, lodges, and condominium complexes near the ski resort. The DVTA will add an additional route in May 2012 that will connect the towns of Wilmington and Bennington, which will provide transit service across the full span of Southern Vermont for the first time since the 1980s, when Greyhound discontinued its service in the area.

The MOOver supports the valley community's economy and creates economic opportunities by helping provide access to employment, education, shopping, medical facilities, recreation, etc. During the winter months, the area's largest employer, Mount Snow, employs an average of 175 international workers housed throughout Mount Snow Valley. These workers rely almost exclusively on the MOOver for all of their transportation needs. The DVTA also provides transportation for the elderly and disabled with specialized door-to-door demand/response service to adult day care, senior meal sites, shopping, and medical appointments.

The DVTA's offices are located in West Dover, and the maintenance garage, operations, and bus storage are located seven miles away at the Barnboard factory site within the Town of Wilmington.

The DVTA:

- Has the third largest fixed route ridership in Vermont
- Has one of the highest percentages of local funding
- Is among the state's best in rides per bus, rides per hour, cost per ride
- Has an office staff who are all Certified Community Transportation Managers, and all have Commercial Drivers Licenses
- Has in-house PASS, Smith, Defensive Driving trainers
- Provided its three millionth ride in January 2012

The project proposes the construction of a 16,000 square foot building on the Barnboard site in Wilmington. The DVTA owns the 9.5-acre site adjacent to the Wilmington Village. The building will house the DVTA's operations, maintenance, and administrative functions at a single location. The maintenance area will include three working bays, an equipment storage bay, a wash bay, parts storage, and mechanic offices. The administrative area will include offices, a conference room, lunchroom, and drivers' facilities.

The new facility will replace a dilapidated factory with an environmentally-friendly, state-of-the-art mass transit facility. The new bus wash system will recycle wash water. Fuel tanks will have a containment system, and two large storm water trenches will treat storm water runoff. The new facility will supply emergency training, shelter, fuel, maintenance, and support functions to the community in the event of another disaster.

Furthermore, because the MOOver site is prominently visible from Route 9, construction of the new facility will provide clear evidence of recovery and progress for the community.



#### ACTION STEPS:

- Finish architectural design (begun Nov. 2011) and secure remaining two permits – May 2012
- Complete USDA loan application process, secure approval – May 2012
- Projected acceptance of SGR application, notice to proceed, and closing of USDA loan and key bank financing – July 2012
- Procurement of DVTA fixtures and equipment, construction bid specifications solicited – August 2012
- Complete contract negotiation, award, ground-breaking – September 2012
- Complete building shell – before first snow 2012
- Complete interior work – Winter 2012-13
- Take occupancy, complete outside work – Spring 2013



#### COST ESTIMATES:

Project budget estimated at \$ 3.7 million, with some costs already covered by donations and grant funds.

#### CHAMPIONS:

RANDY SCHOONMAKER

LINDA ANELLI

#### RESOURCES:

Vermont Agency of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration,  
State of Good Repair Grant Program (SGR)

U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development Grant Program

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

American Public Transportation Association

## HOUSING, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Damage from Tropical Storm Irene isolated the Town of Wilmington. The flooding washed out roads in every direction, in many cases taking out the phone and cable lines that typically lie along the rights-of-way. As a result, communications were completely disrupted; first responders were relegated to using their short-wave radios and cell phones. Like so many other places across the region, Wilmington was completely cut off from outside help, and local responders were quickly overwhelmed by the community's needs. Even the National Guard had difficulty getting into the area.

With the community left on its own, citizens, local emergency services, and town officials did their best to maintain adequate services without proper equipment. Volunteers took the initiative to fill the roles of emergency support personnel by directing and coordinating the response to their community's needs.

The Town of Wilmington had designated the local high school as its emergency shelter, but the high school lacked much of the standard equipment and resources necessary to operate in that capacity. Local residents

organized an impromptu community emergency response team consisting of volunteer nurses, doctors, mental health providers, emergency service personnel, Red Cross trained volunteers, and citizens. The volunteers set up the shelter, located and set up cots, and provided any other services that were needed. Because the Medical Reserve Corps was unable to get to the area, a makeshift triage area was set up in a school and staffed by medical volunteers who ran the kitchens, monitored the sleeping areas, and provided first aid.

Of particular concern during the weeks following the flood was the coordination of volunteers that appeared from everywhere, mostly unannounced. A spontaneous volunteer resource position was designated to coordinate unaffiliated volunteer assignments and dispatch equipment to areas of need. The volunteer resource coordinator coordinated efforts with incident command. Volunteers proved to be a significant asset in responding to and recovering from the emergency situation.



## **COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROGRAM**

The objective of the Community Resilience Program is to increase the level of community preparedness for extreme events so that residents will be able to be self-sufficient for up to 72 hours during a major disaster, and will be able to assist and/or augment emergency personnel and activities needed during response and recovery phases.

The Community Resilience Program will attempt to fulfill the following objectives:

- Provide orientation, guidance, and the necessary training to make volunteers effective disaster preparedness leaders able to aid their neighbors prior to an emergency, as well as respond during a disaster
- Establish administrative tools, programs, and materials to effectively support the administration and coordination of preparedness and recovery training by emergency service agencies
- Establish communication among participating organizations
- Recruit and train volunteer leaders from the community
- Develop partnerships with local agencies that deal with tasks such as law enforcement, fire, rescue, medical, evacuation, relief, and shelters, and inform them about other programs, facilities, and resources available during emergencies
- Expand and strengthen local social services and access to medical services

The Community Resilience Program will strive to bring together government, community leaders, and citizens in an all-hazards emergency preparedness effort to prepare the most realistic and complete plan possible.

The projects listed in this section will build upon existing strengths and assets while striving to establish a comprehensive community-based emergency preparedness, response, and recovery program.

## **HOUSING, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES: Standard Operating Guidelines**

The goal of the Standard Operating Guidelines (SOG) project is to develop an emergency preparedness, response and recovery program that includes plans, procedures, training, and coordination to assure that all geographic areas of the community are accessible and adequately served in a future emergency.

The project will use an integrated planning approach to maximize resources, minimize duplication of services, and coordinate more effective and efficient emergency response and recovery operations. Trained emergency response personnel, experts from supporting agencies, and community volunteers will be responsible for preparing these SOGs. The SOGs will help delineate and structure the activities of participating agencies surrounding the use of resources – personnel, equipment, and supplies – when preparing for and responding to an emergency.

SOGs will be developed for the following areas:

- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) operations, roles, and responsibilities
- Shelter activation and operations
- Volunteer and donations management, including activation of a Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) and Spontaneous Volunteer Management techniques
- Communications plan
- Supply chain management, including the acquisition, storage, distribution, and management of necessary supplies

### **CHAMPION:**

JEANETTE TORO-LINNEHAN

### **RESOURCES:**

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding

Vermont Emergency Management, Department of Public Safety

**ACTION STEPS:**

- Review examples of SOGs from other communities and emergency response agencies
- Research SOG needs for the community
- Solicit assistance and coordination from the emergency response agencies that will use the Standard Operating Guidelines
- Draft, review and implement the SOGs
- Maintain, revise and publish SOG on a regular basis

**COST ESTIMATES:**

In-kind costs of volunteer and administrative time.

**WITHIN 3 MONTHS****WITHIN 5 MONTHS****WITHIN 6 MONTHS**

*Create framework for cooperating agencies to prepare and implement SOGs.*

*Research and draft the SOGs.*

*Implement the SOGs.*

## **HOUSING, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES: Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)**

This project focuses on recruiting and training citizens in emergency preparedness, response and recovery practices. The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program is a nationwide effort to educate citizens about disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact their area, and to train them in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.

Using the training provided in the classroom and field experience acquired during exercises, CERT members learn how to assist others in their neighborhood or workplace following an event, especially when professional responders are not immediately available. CERT members are also encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in their community.

CERTs are not intended to replace a community's response capability, but rather to serve as a supplement to it. When deployed, CERTs can complement and enhance first-response capabilities in neighborhoods and workplaces by ensuring their own safety and that of their families, their neighborhood or office, until first responders arrive. CERTs can then assist professional emergency response personnel as directed.

### **CHAMPION:**

JEANETTE TORO-LINNEHAN

### **RESOURCES:**

Wilmington Fire Department/Emergency Management

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding

Vermont Emergency Management, Department of Public Safety

**ACTION STEPS:**

- Establish the CERT program within the Wilmington Fire Department
- Create partnerships with existing emergency and medical service agencies
- Establish program basics
- Evaluate & pursue funding sources
- Educate community about & promote program
- Recruit members/volunteers
- Secure training dates & materials
- Provide training and exercise volunteers (basic, advanced and continuing education)

**COST ESTIMATES:**

- Initial costs for start-up
- On-going costs for program maintenance

WITHIN 3 MONTHS	4-6 MONTHS AND ONGOING	WITHIN 8-12 MONTHS	WITHIN 9-12 MONTHS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish the CERT program within the Fire Department</li><li>• Assess community needs and identify gaps</li><li>• Apply for funding</li><li>• Establish program and secure trainers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recruit volunteers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop training materials</li><li>• Market the program</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Train new recruits</li></ul>

## **HOUSING, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES: Community Volunteer Resource Program**

During disaster response, spontaneous volunteers must be carefully managed to ensure that their time and skills are used in the most effective manner possible. Wilmington response agencies would benefit from a Community Volunteer Resource Program (CVRP) with two components, a Volunteer Management Database and a Volunteer Reception Center (VRC).

The web-based database will help organize pre-registration information and coordinate community volunteers for emergency and non-emergency activities. The Wilmington Emergency Response Agency can use the database to register volunteers and keep track of their areas of expertise, training, and availability. Social service agencies and others responsible for providing post-disaster assistance can also use the database to match client needs with suitable volunteers.

During an emergency, a Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) would help process and deploy both spontaneous and pre-registered/affiliated volunteers in an organized fashion.

### **CHAMPION:**

PATTI BURKE

### **RESOURCES:**

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Vermont Emergency Management

United Way of Windham County



#### ACTION STEPS:

- Survey what services and skills are needed both during non-emergency times / emergencies
- Evaluate and pursue funding sources
- Find appropriate web-based volunteer management software
- Create viable partnerships with community and faith-based organizations, businesses, and schools to promote the program and recruit volunteers
- Work with Wilmington's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and community leadership to develop potential funding, collaboration, project development and implementation opportunities
- Develop and implement a marketing campaign that, promotes the website and markets volunteer opportunities
- Establish and implement a "Volunteer Service Award" event to serve as a community-wide celebration of volunteerism



#### COST ESTIMATES:

- Cost for the volunteer management software depends on whether freeware is chosen or whether a contract with a data management firm or agency is pursued
- Cost for a VRC will be low if facility space is donated

WITHIN 3 MONTHS	WITHIN 6 MONTHS	WITHIN 9 MONTHS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish relationships with community leaders and organizations to promote the Community Volunteer Resource Program</li><li>• Research and apply for funding opportunities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research and choose appropriate volunteer management software along with primary and secondary facilities for the VRC</li><li>• Market new program, launch website</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Train initial team on procedures for activation and management of the VRC</li></ul>

## **HOUSING, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES: Centralized Social Services**

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Wilmington's median household income is 90% of the average across the State of Vermont, while the median home value is six percent higher than the rest of the state. Because the economy is so seasonal, many Wilmington residents have a hard time making ends meet throughout the year. Thus, there is a strong need for the safety-net of social services, despite the relatively small population.

Over the last several years, Wilmington has experienced a loss in the number of consistently available social services and does not have a regular facility to house service providers. The providers based in Brattleboro and Bennington are no longer able to justify satellite locations due to budget cuts. At the same time as service delivery was being decreased, a gradual slowing of the tourist economy led to an increased need for services in the area. Achieving acceptable levels of social service provision in Wilmington will require new levels of cooperation and coordination.

This program will focus on enhancing collaborative partnerships to improve the quantity, quality, and delivery of social services. An efficient social support system will require effort and resources from a wide variety of agencies and organizations. This program has two components:

- 1) Preparation of a Resource Guide
- 2) Establishment of a Social Services facility

The first component addresses the community's need for a comprehensive and accurate listing of programs and services. The Resource Guide will contain information regarding all the services available within the community. The guide will include descriptions of the services offered, eligibility criteria, times available, costs, and contact information. This guide will be updated regularly and will be available to the community in print and online.

The second component includes the acquisition of an appropriate central location where social services can be made more accessible and efficient for community members by coordinating and co-locating services. Such a "one-stop shop" would improve case management and inter-agency communication, reduce duplication, and decrease overhead costs.

### **CHAMPIONS:**

MARY JANE FINNEGAN, ELIZABETH MCEWEN

### **RESOURCES:**

The Agency of Human Services (AHS)  
Vermont Health & Human Services  
United Way of Windham County  
Windham Regional Commission



#### **ACTION STEPS: Resource Guide**

- Identify or create an organization responsible for collecting and updating information on service providers, including descriptions of the services offered, eligibility criteria, times available, any costs, location, and contact information
- Solicit community input and financial support to create, update, and publish the Resource Guide

#### **Central Location**

- Identify current local social services providers already working within the community and identify any gaps in service
- Research program models and identify the best approach for the community
- Determine necessary size and specifications, and identify potential locations/properties that can be used for a co-location space
- Develop an organizational framework for project administration, including a staffing and management plan for the facility, and an oversight board including job descriptions for the administrator and any support staff needed
- Develop partnerships and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with agencies that will share the space
- Identify available funding sources including in-kind donations for space, supplies, marketing material, start up costs, and fundraising opportunities



#### **COST ESTIMATES:**

- Resource Guide costs include staff time to conduct the information-gathering inventory, compile the information, and lay out the information for publication (print and web)
- Central location costs include in-kind staff time to explore co-location opportunities and time to negotiate MOUs and occupancy agreements.

## RESOURCE GUIDE

WITHIN 3 MONTHS	WITHIN 6 MONTHS	ONGOING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Identify all social services available to Wilmington locally and non-locally</i></li><li><i>Gather information on service providers including location, dates, hours of operation, costs, requirements, contact information, etc.</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Develop a Resource Guide with all community social services listed</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Publicize the Resource Guide via community website, Deerfield Valley Health Clinic, and other means</i></li></ul>

## CENTRAL LOCATION

WITHIN 3 MONTHS	WITHIN 6 MONTHS	WITHIN 9 MONTHS	WITHIN 6-12 MONTHS	ONGOING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Establish relationships with community leaders and organizations to discuss the benefits of expanding and centralizing social services</i></li> <li><i>Identify potential facilities for the co-location of social services</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Establish Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with organizations/identified parties that will offer services and share space</i></li> <li><i>Research and apply for funding</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Acquire a facility, finish renovations, and co-locate agencies</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Employ a Social Services Coordinator</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Promote the centralized location for social services to the public</i></li> </ul>

## HOUSING, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES: Deerfield Valley Medical Health Center Expansion

Because Irene washed out roads throughout the Wilmington area, local rescue services had a difficult time responding to emergencies. Deerfield Valley Rescue (DVR) was unable to transport to Brattleboro Memorial Hospital or Southern Vermont Medical Center (SVMC) in Bennington and had to transport through back roads to North Adams Hospital, which under normal circumstances is approximately 33 miles, 52 minutes away.

This project would expand SVMC Deerfield Valley Campus /Deerfield Valley Rescue (DVR) to provide enhanced 24-hour/7-day medical services to Wilmington and surrounding communities, including routine care, urgent care, acute care, advanced life support, and stabilization for transport to appropriate higher level medical facilities.

**Phase 1: Expansion of existing routine and Urgent Care Services to include Saturday and Sunday hours.** This will allow easier access to healthcare on weekends, rather than a more expensive emergency room visit. By simply providing routine office visits on weekends, it is likely that the preventive medicine effect will improve overall community health.

**Phase 2: Expansion of Emergency and Acute Care Services to include 24/7 coverage.** Of the many different ways of approaching this issue, one idea is to have medical personnel (an MD, NP, or PA) on duty 24/7 at the SVMC Deerfield Campus. Many communities now respond to cardiac issues and other life threatening emergencies with a team led by an EMT-paramedic. An on-duty, 24/7 paramedic, with an EMT partner ready to respond immediately with a medical center telemetry connection, also represents an effective approach to service expansion.

Current services at the SVMC Deerfield Campus and Deerfield Valley Rescue are excellent, but limited in terms of availability. Expanding medical services beyond the existing model will require hiring and training of additional medical personnel and a method to fund increases in non-personnel expenses. Capital expenditures will be limited to additional life support equipment and the expansion of the existing DVR facility for training purposes.

### CHAMPIONS:

W. SCOTT ERICKSON, HEIDI TAYLOR, PAUL AND MARY TONON

### RESOURCES:

Deerfield Valley Health Center

Southern Vermont Medical Center/Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center

Deerfield Valley Rescue, Vermont EMS District 12

Windham Regional Health Care Commission

Vermont Department of Health

**ACTION STEPS:**

- Develop MOUs with surrounding community partner organizations
- Meet with appropriate Regional Health Commissions
- Meet with District 12 representative to coordinate DVR-SVMV-SVMC Deerfield Valley Campus

**COST ESTIMATES:**

Extended hours of operation at the SVMC-DVC could be self-supporting if the program generates additional revenue at SVMC by increasing the number of patient referrals/visits and reducing unnecessary emergency room visits.

## HOUSING

Tropical Storm Irene flooded a portion of Wilmington that largely provides rental housing for seasonal hospitality workers and other low to moderate income residents. As a resort community, Wilmington faces some unique challenges with respect to housing. Seventy-five percent of home sales are to second home owners, which pushes prices beyond the range of local residents, especially first-time home buyers. Seasonal rentals tend to reduce the number of year-round rentals that are more commensurate with local incomes. Also of concern is the decline in the younger working age population in Wilmington due to the lack of economic opportunities. This has caused a large gap between the current low wages paid in the area and the high cost of housing.

In 2008, the Wilmington Housing Advisory Commission engaged consultant John Ryan to assess housing needs in Wilmington. The assessment followed guidelines set out in the Vermont Housing Needs Assessment Guide and prepared by the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont and the Vermont Housing Finance Agency. The assessment looked at the housing needs of families, seniors, and those with special needs. It identified the following housing implications:

- Housing for single individuals, young families, and seniors needing special attention
- Twenty percent of respondents were individuals/families between the ages of 21 and 40. More information is needed on the number of households with young children, including income levels and housing needs
- Fifty-seven percent of the respondents had a person 65 years or older and/or disabled as part of their household
- The largest group of respondents was between the ages of 51-70, a group that is typically facing changes in their housing needs due to retirement, children leaving home, and increasing health issues

With limited resources available in the community, there are significant challenges to providing appropriate housing for populations with disabilities. The town must find a way to create independent living options.



## **HOUSING: Diversified Housing Options**

The program will focus on creating community housing opportunities for seniors, those with special needs, local workers, and young families.

This program will evaluate the ability of the following housing components to fill the gaps in the community that were identified in the Needs Assessment:

- Reasonably priced units within renovated properties, rather than newly constructed units
- Home-ownership support
- Housing for seniors, including independent living and supportive housing programs
- Workforce housing

The objectives of the Community Housing Options Program include development of the following:

- 25 good quality, income-appropriate rental housing units for households earning less than 60 percent of the Adjusted Median Income (AMI)
- 4-5 units/year of good quality, income-appropriate owner-occupied housing units for households earning under 80 percent of AMI and costing no more than \$150,000
- 8-12 units of need-based, owner-occupied housing units for older seniors covering a range of prices
- Capacity to provide 6-8 existing homes with improved accessibility upgrades for residents with mobility impairments

### **CHAMPIONS:**

MEG STREETER, BOB PELOSI

### **RESOURCES:**

USDA Rural Development Agency/VT Rural Development Agency

Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program (HUD)

Foundations which specialize in affordable housing and/or innovative senior living arrangements

Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) (feasibility studies)

Vermont Housing Finance Agency (FHFA)

Vermont Community Development Program

Vermont Center for Independent Living (seniors and disabled residents)

Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA)

Efficiency Vermont

Council on Aging of Southeastern Vermont

Windham Regional Commission

State of Vermont Agency for Housing and Community Development



#### ACTION STEPS:

- Assess local resources and capacity necessary to achieve housing program objectives
- Investigate the need and level of support for a rental property rehabilitation program within the Town of Wilmington
- Investigate the need for rehabilitation of existing rental units impacted by the flood
- Research local options and support for controlling rental rates resulting from resort community market pressures
- Research the availability of funds for a rental rehabilitation program that would provide incentives for property owners to repair or rebuild properties in exchange for offering affordable rental rates
- Investigate funding sources to assist with the establishment of loan/grant programs for seniors, those with special needs, local workers, and young families



#### COST ESTIMATES:

An initial assessment of local resources can be completed using local capacity. Based on the findings of this initial assessment, detailed project costs can be developed.

IMMEDIATELY	WITHIN 1-3 MONTHS	WITHIN 3-6 MONTHS
<p><i>This project needs to begin as soon as possible, based on available staff time and funding.</i></p>	<p><i>The first phase of the Housing Program will be the initial assessment of local resources and capacity.</i></p>	<p><i>Following the initial assessment, the Housing Program could be expanded with additional elements based on findings and available funding. For example: gap analysis and support for the rehabilitation of rental units should begin 3 to 6 months after the initial assessment.</i></p>

## HISTORIC VILLAGE

The Town of Wilmington is a tourism-based community located in the Mount Snow Valley. Starting in the early 19th century, the village grew along the banks of the North Branch of the Deerfield River. The earliest industries were lumber and farming, but by mid-century Wilmington, with its lakes and mountains, began to develop as a summer tourist destination.

The Historic Village of Wilmington now lies at the crossroads of Route 9, the major east/west corridor in central New England, and Route 100, a scenic north/south corridor running the length of Vermont's Green Mountains. Route 9 is also known as the Molly Stark Trail (after the wife of their Revolutionary War hero General John Stark who fought at Bennington) and is a Vermont Scenic Byway.

Many of the community's tourism-related businesses, the primary base of the local economy, are located along these roads. Not only do visitors come for the scenic beauty the area offers, but also for the history of the Village with its unrivaled diversity of 19th century architectural styles. Route 9 and Route 100 pass through Wilmington, providing visibility that supports these businesses. However, this traffic presents challenges for creating a calm and pedestrian-friendly shopping and dining experience in the Historic Village.

The deluge from Tropical Storm Irene tore through the center of the Wilmington Village, taking buildings off their foundations and flooding the streets to a height of seven feet. All the buildings in the designated Historic District were inundated. Two buildings on West Main Street were swept downstream. Streets, sidewalks, and landscaping were heavily damaged as well. Business was effectively destroyed for the remainder of the summer and the foliage season. Following a lackluster winter, several businesses remain closed and several more are for sale.



## RECOVERY GOALS

During the Long-Term Community Recovery planning process, the Historic Village working group determined that the flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene offered an opportunity to create a better-linked, more pedestrian-friendly Village. They identified the following goals in support of the town's recovery vision:

1. Revitalize Wilmington's Historic Village center by strengthening the social, physical, and economic value of the Central Business District. The primary goal of the revitalization effort is to improve the quality of life in the community through improved connectivity, beautification, and enhanced economic development.
2. Enhance the Village experience by providing safe pedestrian access and new parking areas so that economic growth will be stimulated in commercial and residential spaces.
3. Improve connectivity, safety, and convenience within the community.

The vitality of the Historic Village is largely dependent on attracting visitors to the many shops and businesses that represent the largest base of employment within the community. Thus, by encouraging visitors to shop in the Village, the community as a whole will benefit financially. Further, improving and enhancing the financial solvency of the Village will enable businesses and employees to be better positioned in the event of a future disaster and subsequent recovery process.



## HISTORIC VILLAGE: Downtown Designation

The State of Vermont has established a Downtown Program to provide technical assistance and training to help communities develop skills and strategies for downtown revitalization efforts. The Vermont Downtown Program is an affiliate of the National Main Street Center, a division of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which has worked in over 1,400 communities nationwide, revitalizing and redeveloping "Main Streets."

The Downtown Wilmington program will seek opportunities to fully use existing State of Vermont programs promoting downtown revitalization. This will include an investigation of the following options:

### Village Center Designation

This project option will explore opportunities to more fully realize the benefits of the existing Village Center designation that the Town of Wilmington currently has from the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation. The designation provides tax credit incentives to revitalize historic properties within the designated area, including significant rehabilitation, façade improvements and building code improvements.

### Downtown Designation:

This option will investigate using the Main Street strategy as a framework for organizing various recovery projects and programs within the Historic Village area of Wilmington. If determined appropriate, the town will apply to the State of Vermont Downtown Program for designation of part or all of the Historic Village of Wilmington as a downtown district.

To qualify, towns must develop a comprehensive revitalization strategy for the downtown district and demonstrate broad-based community support. The strategy must involve a long-term commitment to enhancing economic

opportunities, preserving historic buildings, and improving public spaces and infrastructure in the commercial district. If successful, the designated portion of Wilmington would be eligible to receive a number of benefits including tax credits, loans, and grants from various state agencies.

As a part of the downtown designation process the Town of Wilmington must identify an organizational structure capable of sustaining a comprehensive and long-term downtown revitalization effort, and the funding and resources necessary to fulfill the Community Reinvestment Agreement. To that end, the municipality is required to make a commitment to implement at least one of the following four options:

1. A special assessment district
2. A tax increment finance district
3. Tax stabilization agreements
4. Other multiple-year financial commitments such as general municipal funds, membership dues, multi-year donations or grants, sponsorships, or event income

### CHAMPION: TOM CONSOLINO

### RESOURCES:

Town of Wilmington

Windham Regional Commission

Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation

Vermont Downtown Program Development Board



#### ACTION STEPS:

- Development of local support (legislative and public)
- Outreach and engagement of downtown stakeholders (businesses, property owners, users)
- Coordination with Windham Regional Commission and Vermont Downtown Program Coordinator
- Development of required components, including the formal authorization of the municipality and development of a Community Reinvestment Agreement
- Submission of completed designation application



#### COST ESTIMATES:

Downtown designation is very time consuming and generally involves professional staff. The cost estimate covers \$15,000 of Town staff time.

**Timeline:** The Vermont Downtown Program follows a comprehensive revitalization process that will evolve over time, as the organization grows and local participants develop skills to take on more complex revitalization projects. A typical local revitalization experiences three phases of development:

#### CATALYST PHASE:

#### GROWTH PHASE:

#### MANAGEMENT PHASE:

*During the first one to four years, the organization is formed and its major challenges and opportunities are identified. A strategic plan is developed, program members are learning the basics, and small but visible high-impact projects are undertaken.*

*By the fourth or fifth year, the local program reaches a growth phase that will last about five years. The organization uses the skill it has developed in the Catalyst Phase to tackle bigger issues, such as small business development and redeveloping vacant or abandoned buildings.*

*By year ten, most of the large-scale projects will be accomplished, but continuous maintenance of the physical environment should continue. The need for the local organization does not go away. It must continue to manage the programs that have made the downtown successful.*

## **HISTORIC VILLAGE: Revitalization through Circulation Plan (RCP)**

The project will explore opportunities to improve connections and pedestrian circulation to benefit the social and economic vitality of the community. Previous town plans and studies will be carefully reviewed, including the Townscape Analysis prepared by the University of Massachusetts in 1976. Selected elements will be used to develop a Revitalization Plan for the downtown Village.

Part of this plan would also support the “Riverwalk” concept developed in April 2001. Plan elements will include the creation of new pedestrian circulation paths, connections to existing trails, and “way-finding” to points of interest (signage program). This may include the development of pedestrian pathways that would circulate around and through the Village.

The Circulation Plan will encourage new business development outside the flood zone, and thus will contribute to Wilmington’s resiliency. The promotion of micro-businesses in key areas of the Village will aid in the revitalization and usage of existing green spaces. This project will take advantage of synergistic effects from the increase of available parking and the completion of the proposed Riverwalk and bridge, which are essential to a coherent circular pathway around the Village.

### **CHAMPIONS:**

MARY WRIGHT, RENÉE GALLÉ

### **RESOURCES:**

Town of Wilmington

Wilmington Trails Committee



#### ACTION STEPS:

- Secure rights-of-way from owners of residences on East Main Street
- Develop potential micro-business incubators on Church, Beaver and Shafter Streets
- Create micro-business opportunities in and around the village
- Investigate the possibility of having a pedestrian-only zone
- Seek permission for a mural on the FairPoint building
- Collaborate with the Trails Committee on the Riverwalk Plan to create links from Shafter Street to West Main Street via two bridges
- Establish signage for paths and areas of interest, design brochures with new maps showing pedestrian routes
- Insure the overall cohesiveness of Wilmington's vision and to help ensure follow through and completion



#### COST ESTIMATES:

\$100,000 to design and implement pedestrian pathways and pocket parks complete with wayfinding system leading to an expanded business district.

#### PHASE 1 COMPLETED BEFORE FALL 2012

#### PHASE 2 COMPLETED BY THE END 2014

#### PHASE 3 COMPLETED ON OR BEFORE 2017

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Seek rights-of-way from owners of residences on East Main Street</i></li><li>• <i>Design maps showing pedestrian route</i></li><li>• <i>Establish signage for paths and areas of interest</i></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Maintain and beautify the downtown village and its grounds</i></li><li>• <i>Create micro-business opportunities in and around the village</i></li><li>• <i>Build 3 parks</i></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Develop micro-business incubators on Church, Beaver, and Shafter Streets</i></li><li>• <i>Develop pedestrian-only zone in downtown</i></li><li>• <i>Seek permission for mural on the FairPoint Communications building</i></li><li>• <i>Build Riverwalk bridges</i></li></ul> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## HISTORIC VILLAGE: Parking and Greenspace

The Parking and Greenspace project will stimulate the community's economic recovery by providing viable infrastructure that serves visitors and businesses. The many empty buildings resulting from flood devastation has created an image of questionable economic viability. The development of parking that is functional and attractive to visitors will demonstrate the commitment to rebuild our community to both existing and potential business owners. Attractive, visible, well-signed parking will allow travelers on Route 9 to see where they can safely park.

The Parking and Greenspace project includes the three following elements:

1. Development of a 70-space parking area, including disabled parking, behind the commercial/retail buildings on West Main Street. This will abut the proposed Riverwalk and include plantings along the river to stabilize the riverbanks and prevent erosion
2. Enhancement of the current municipal parking lot to support the development of business on South Main Street and along Shafter Street
3. The identification of new parking areas above the floodplain in the Shafter Street/MOOver area, as well as on East Main Street

Pedestrian safety will be enhanced by providing access to parking on either side of the major access roads, requiring fewer pedestrian crossings, and by providing clear access to off-street parking through good signage and unobstructed views of entrances to parking areas. Business development and growth will be promoted by adding parking capacity at regular intervals along the new circular route.

### CHAMPIONS:

CAROLYN PALMER, LILIAS HART, SUSAN SPENGLER

### RESOURCES:

Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans)

Town of Wilmington

Private property owners



#### ACTION STEPS:

- Identify parking sites to be developed, including parking entrances, sidewalks, and crossings for public safety
- Identify area maintenance plans, snow removal, and disposal plan
- Define greenspace/pocket parks near parking areas, dog walk areas
- Obtain Selectboard approval, town lease agreements for properties, and state permit for sidewalk cut

This project will be undertaken collaboratively with other town recovery committees to achieve maximum impact from cross-development efforts.



#### COST ESTIMATES:

- Phase 1: Materials and town road crew labor – \$35,000
- Phase 2: Lighting and plantings – \$30,000
- Phases 3 and 4: Parking and Trolley system will require further study--estimated \$120,000

PHASE 1:	PHASE 2:	PHASE 3:	PHASE 4:
<i>West Main Street parking lot construction.</i>	<i>Lighting and plantings to reduce soil erosion on all secured parking areas.</i>	<i>Exploration of parking south of the river and on East Main Street.</i>	<i>Long-term linkage of parking areas and a possible trolley system.</i>

## **HISTORIC VILLAGE: Short Term Enhancements (Benches and Trash Receptacles)**

The short-term enhancement project will install benches and trash receptacles throughout the Historic Village of Wilmington. The benches and trash receptacles will enhance the basic comfort and beauty of downtown and create an incentive for people to stop, look, and shop. The proposed installations are two elements of a developing revitalization and beautification effort for the village.

### **BENCHES**

Bench locations and installations will encourage all visitors (including the elderly, disabled, tourists and shoppers) to take time to really enjoy downtown Wilmington. The project will encourage the use of locally-designed and constructed benches to further stimulate the local economy and promote more cost-efficient purchases. Benches will be constructed of durable materials and properly weighted and installed to discourage unwanted movement. Benches will be ergonomically-designed to encourage use.

### **TRASH RECEPTACLES**

Program development includes replacing trash receptacles lost during Tropical Storm Irene's flooding and potentially adding new ones. Installed trash receptacles will be animal-resistant and will discourage the deposit of large household trash bags, diapers, or boxes.

### **CHAMPION:**

ALICE GREENSPAN

### **RESOURCES:**

Town of Wilmington Selectboard  
Wilmington Beautification Committee  
Chamber of Commerce



#### ACTION STEPS:

##### Benches

- Inventory possible sites for benches. Determine whether sites are private or publicly-owned
- Obtain necessary signed permission to place benches in chosen locations
- Review design of benches from various sources
- Determine price of benches under consideration
- Develop draft plan for public review and adoption, integrate public comments into plan
- Determine funding for benches. If funding is private, determine how to solicit donations for benches. Identify funding sources including non-profit organizations and public-private partnerships

##### Trash Receptacles

- Inventory possible sites for trash receptacles, obtain necessary permits
- Identify a suitable trash receptacle product and price
- Integrate public comments into plan, obtain official review and approval
- Identify funding sources, including non-profit organizations and public-private partnerships

Coordination has begun with the Circularization, Parking and Greenspace, and the Sidewalk and Lighting project groups.

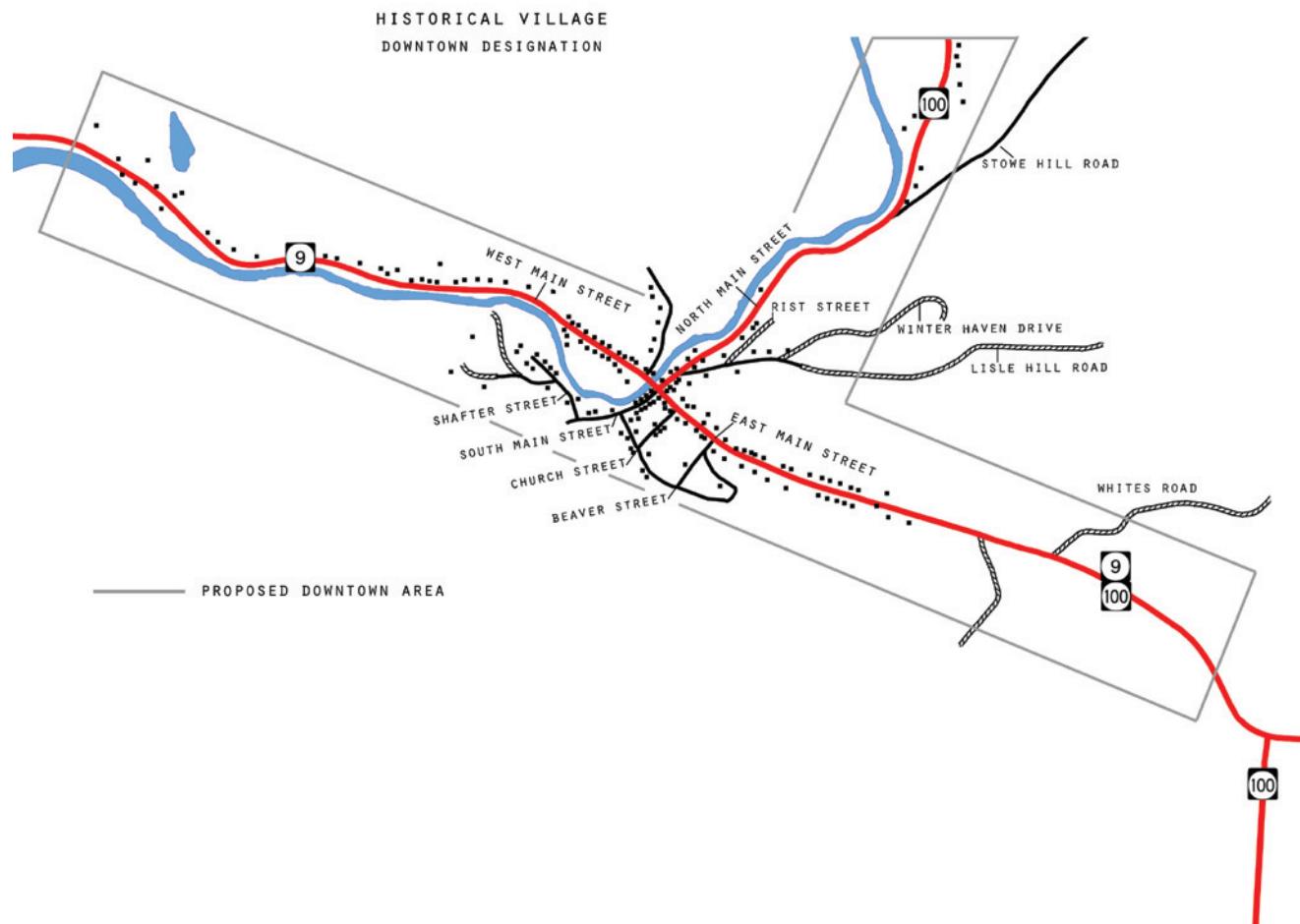


#### COST ESTIMATES:

Specific unit and installation costs for benches and trash receptacles are currently being developed. Garbage collection service pricing and options are currently being researched and considered. It is anticipated that private funding in the form of donations will be used to fund the majority of the project.

***Timeline:** The nature of the project offers the flexibility to install benches and trash receptacles as funding allows.*

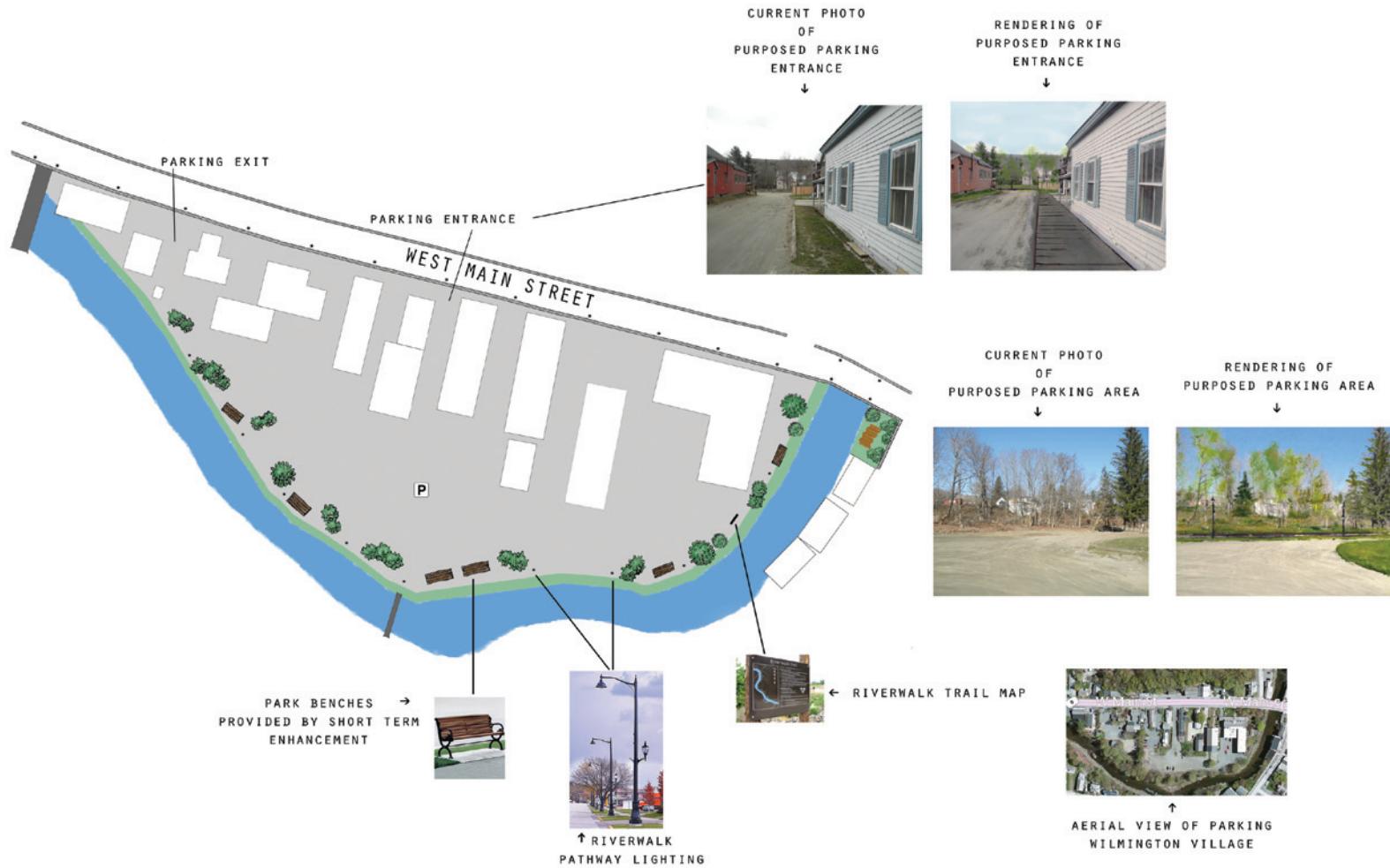
## DOWNTOWN DESIGNATION



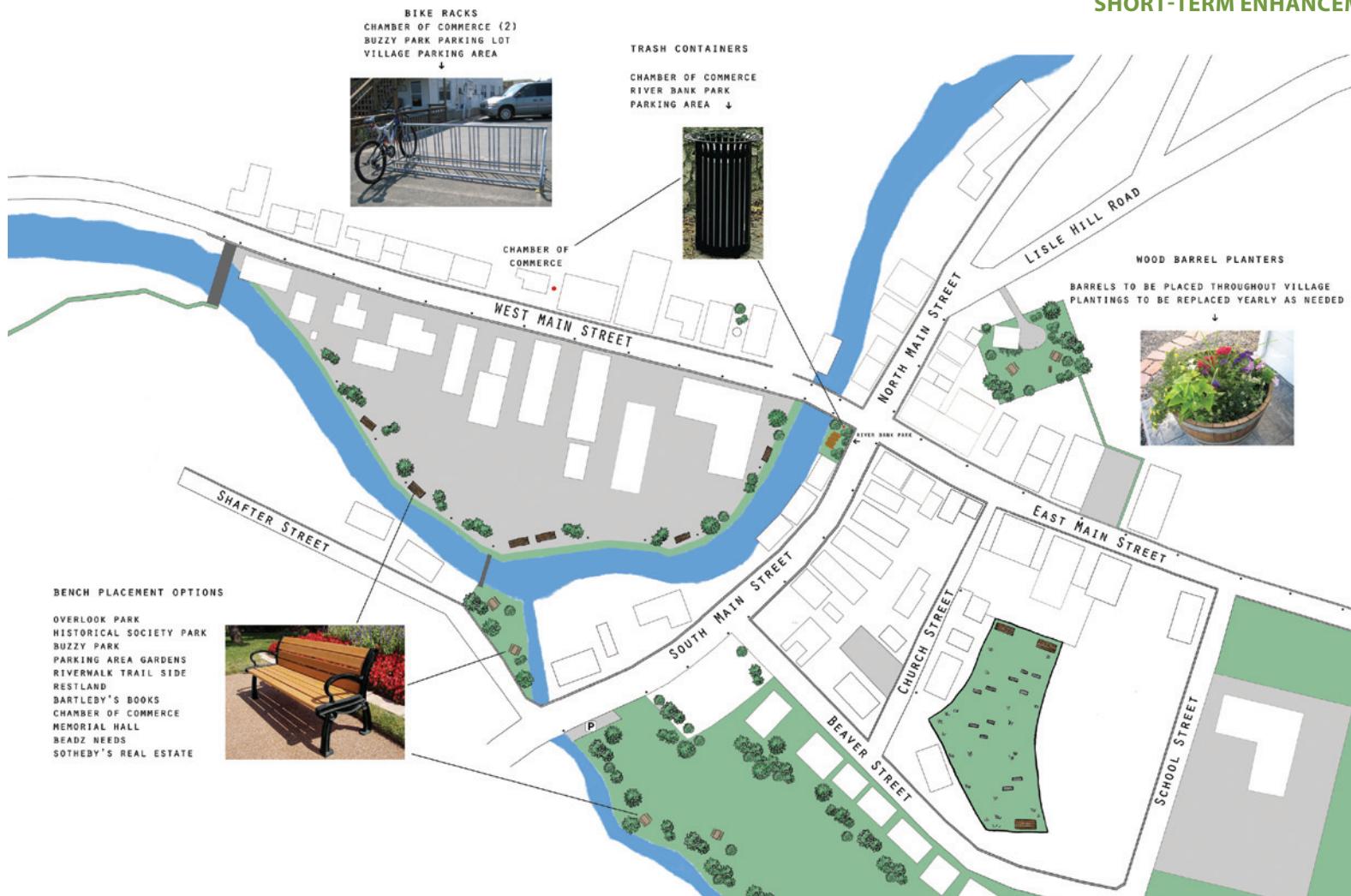
## REVITALIZATION AND CIRCULATION



## PARKING AND GREENSPACE



## SHORT-TERM ENHANCEMENTS



## HISTORIC VILLAGE: Sidewalks and Streetlights

This project proposes the development of a sidewalk and lighting plan, to enhance the safety and convenience of the pedestrian system of the Historic Village Center and to contribute to the charm and attractiveness of the village. The project will identify pedestrian needs, define the projects, and establish a funding program for the rehabilitation and enhancement of pedestrian walkways and access points.

The preliminary study will identify sources of grant/match funds for the expansion and enhancement of the sidewalk and lighting systems in the village. This project will be coordinated with other working groups' projects that focus on the Historic Village.

### Sidewalks

The sidewalk element of this project will install missing sidewalk segments and repair or replace damaged segments in the Historic Village. The sidewalk project will create a safer pedestrian environment in the Wilmington Village and encourage greater levels of visitor traffic to the many shops and businesses located there. The new and replacement sidewalk pieces being considered are 5' wide concrete, with the option of coloring and stamping styles that are more in keeping with the village architecture. The scope of the sidewalk project includes Route 100 (north/south) from Old Red Mill to Après Vous and Route 9 (east/west) from Shaw's Grocery to the Wilmington Inn.

### Lighting

The lighting element of the project upgrades and expands street lighting in the Historic Village to create a safer and more welcoming environment and encourage greater levels of visitor traffic to the many shops and businesses. Under consideration is the replacement of the existing light fixtures with pole-mounted street lighting fixtures that are more consistent with the village architecture. The scope of the lighting project includes Route 100 (north/south) from North Star Bowl through to Shafter Street and Route 9 (east/west) from Shaw's Grocery to Austin Books.

An overall project plan will need to be developed with the assistance of consulting engineers, landscape architects, and building contractors. It will be reviewed by Federal, State, and local government to assure the smooth permitting process in order for implementation to proceed.

### CHAMPIONS:

SUSAN LAWRENCE (*Sidewalks*), CLIFF DUNCAN (*Streetlights*)

### RESOURCES:

Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans)  
Town of Wilmington Selectboard  
Green Mountain Power Corporation  
Private property owners



#### ACTION STEPS:

- Coordinate sidewalk and lighting initiatives with other recovery projects including Circulation, Riverwalk, Beautification, and Trails
- Identify sources of technical assistance
- Complete a study of the sidewalk and lighting needs and a phasing timetable
- Complete a cost analysis, identify funding sources
- Complete the overall project development plan
- Determine strategy for finding grant matching funds



#### COST ESTIMATES:

**Sidewalks:** Approximately \$500,000. The estimate includes an estimated 200' of newly elevated sidewalk (\$150/ft), 2,800' of new sidewalk (\$100/ft), 3,300' of existing sidewalk slated for repair and replacement (\$2,000), and a pedestrian bridge added to the Route 9 bridge over Beaver Brook, east of downtown.

**Lighting:** Approximately \$328,039. Estimates on proposed fixture upgrades/enhancements are \$276,000 and swapping out the old lights with 100 new lights will cost \$52,000. It is anticipated that the new street lights will consume about 50% less energy than the existing street lights reducing the approximately \$11,000 annual lighting costs paid by the Town of Wilmington.

#### PHASE 1:

#### PHASE 2:

#### PHASE 3:

#### PHASE 4:

#### PHASE 5:

*North side of West Main Street starting with the elevated portion of sidewalk from Erhart property to Wilmington Inn.*

*South side of West Main Street.*

*South Main Street.*

*North Main Street.*

*East Main Street to Shaw's/Our Lady of Fatima.*

## NATURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION



For well over a century, the region of southern Vermont in and around Wilmington has been a tourist destination. The surrounding mountains, waters, and leisurely pace of life offer a respite from the high-energy stresses in some of the country's largest cities along the East Coast. Fresh air, clean water, and a hike through the woods are welcome changes of pace for the many visitors that flock to southern Vermont.

During the recovery planning process, Wilmington residents expressed a full understanding that the same assets that drew them to live in the area can also mean big business. For the past few decades, the economy has been mostly driven by the skiers who come to Mount Snow during the winter. Wilmington residents recognize that a natural way to augment their local economy is to build upon the recreational assets provided by the natural resources in the area. In fact, many residents believe that the very survival of their community rests with their ability to take better advantage of those resources, building upon the fairly recent developments of eco-tourism and “place-based” marketing.

These realizations led to two main projects which arose during the long-term community recovery planning process. The development of the Ridge Trail system was viewed as a ‘low-hanging fruit’ project that could easily and cheaply expand the current recreational trail system that runs through park lands in the area. It would expand the healthy, active lifestyle offerings in the Mount Snow Valley and would be quite attractive to tourists. The second project involves the construction of a much-needed Community Center that would provide a central location for a multitude of civic activities, including a community gathering and activity space, a place for entrepreneurs and artists to put down roots in the community, and a draw for residents and visitors alike.



## NATURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION: Recreational Trail System Improvements

The Ridge Trail, originally constructed in the early 1980s, suffers from a lack of maintenance. The proposed work is to be undertaken on an already existing trail. Work to formalize a trail tread over sensitive areas will minimize intrusion and damage. Two scenic overlook areas have little in the way of clearing requirements, but rather involve the removal of broken and dead trees. No sawing or clearing of live vegetation would be required for any of the Ridge Trail rehabilitation work.

The project could make use of the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC), or other volunteers, to construct a narrow raised turnpike and small overlook clearings under U.S. Forest Service (USFS) supervision. The use of volunteers would minimize the diversion of local resources from other ongoing local projects. Additionally, at either end of the Ridge Trail, there are two ski areas that could be engaged to provide access and resources for the project, perhaps even a volunteer workforce. Restoration of the Ridge Trail will allow a variety of non-motorized trail users year-round access to this compelling natural resource.

In years past, the Ridge Trail played an important role in winter cross-country ski races, and with the possibility of warm weather use as well, the reconstructed trail would open up a number of recreational opportunities. The Ridge Trail connects to another premier hiking opportunity, Haystack Peak, to the south. Beyond the Mount Snow terminus, trails leading down to the Somerset area provide access to significant hiking trails on TransCanada Power land and USFS trails and recreation areas. Additionally, several trails lead up to the Ridge Trail from below, creating a large loop opportunity. Hikers could elect to use lift access at Mount Snow or Haystack ski areas as an "out & back" trail attraction.

Another possible aspect of the project would be the development of trails in the Haystack Village East property that is owned by the Town of Wilmington. The project would involve volunteers clearing trails and repairing culverts. A necessary step would be the establishment of formal easements and the preparation of parking areas to serve as trail heads.

Once complete, the community will have a premier hiking attraction to offer in addition to many other hiking opportunities that already exist. The project provides a stand-alone attraction that contributes to the recreational nature of life in the valley, without negatively affecting community capacity. The Ridge Trail will be another important resource that the Mount Snow Chamber of Commerce could use in its marketing of the valley's recreational opportunities.

### CHAMPION:

MIKE PURCELL

### RESOURCES:

Town of Wilmington Trails Committee

Town of Dover

Vermont Youth Conservation Committee

Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans)

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

U.S. Federal Highway Administration

**ACTION STEPS:**

- Assess trail conditions to determine required repairs
- Determine scope of work for volunteer crews
- Conduct repair and construction project
- Prepare application for reimbursement grant from VFPR, other partners

**COST ESTIMATES:**

According to the VYCC, crews of 8 to 10 volunteers will cost approximately \$5,500-\$7,000 per week. The productivity of the crews will determine the amount of time required to complete the work.

SUMMER 2012:	FALL 2012:	FEBRUARY 2013:
<i>Trail assessment and inventory.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Conduct repairs</i></li><li>• <i>Develop grant application</i></li></ul>	<i>Grant Application Deadline (Vermont DFPR)</i>

## NATURAL RESOURCES & RECREATION: Wilmington Community Center

A community center has been a long-standing need in the Wilmington/Dover valley community. It was a favorite recovery project for several planning workgroups during the recovery planning process, and a top vote-getter during the public prioritization meeting in February 2012.

A new community center in Wilmington would provide a central location for a number of activities that are not currently available to residents. A community center is a gathering place for locals and visitors of all ages. It could be home to social services, a place to meet others in the community, to play sports, work out, just sit and visit with neighbors.

A community center would enhance residents' daily lives by strengthening families, improving health and wellness, providing safer alternatives for youth recreation, and by improving the local economy. It would promote a new sense of unity and togetherness that is a fundamental part of a healthy civic life. And as a designated emergency shelter, such a facility would also enhance the community's capacity to deal with future disasters.

Potential uses for the new facility include:

- Recreation center (gym, weight room, dance room, pool, etc.)
- Public meeting hall
- Emergency shelter space
- Social Services offices
- Lending Library
- Educational facilities/classroom space
- Dining Hall/food service
- Business Incubator offices

In March 2012, Wilmington and Whitingham voters approved the consolidation of their school districts, which resulted in plans for the Twin Valley High School to vacate its current location. That facility would be quite suitable for a community center, with already existing classrooms, office space, a commercial kitchen, ball fields, and plentiful parking. Neighbors near the current school are already accustomed to traffic related to the high school, and thus likely would be amenable to its use as a community center. In addition, the project could be completed in an extremely short timeframe, and provide sorely needed momentum to local recovery efforts.

The renewed commitment to securing a new community center would demonstrate that Wilmington residents have embraced a new direction. Design and renovations would have to be tailored to special uses, with most of them requiring upgraded broadband services. The Wilmington community has an excellent opportunity to acquire a desired community amenity at a fraction of the cost that a new facility would require.

### CHAMPIONS:

STEVE GOLDFARB, WILMINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

### RESOURCES:

Town of Wilmington

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development Grant Program

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development,  
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program



#### **ACTION STEPS:**

Coordination will be recommended with the following recovery projects:

- Centralize Social Services (Housing, Health, and Human Services)
- Community Volunteer Resource Center (Housing, Health, and Human Services)
- Revitalization through Circulation Plan (Historic Village)
- Business Assistance Program (Economic Development)
- Business Recovery and Resource Center (Economic Development)
- Improve Broadband and Cellular Coverage (Economic Development)

A completed build-out of a community center will be required for any of the above uses. For other use, the community center will contribute to implementation only if it ends up being located in the old high school facility (e.g., improving circulation in the village).



#### **COST ESTIMATES:**

Depending upon the uses for the facility, renovation costs could range from minimal to significant. Operating costs will also vary depending upon uses, though several possible revenue streams could offset them.





## APPENDIX

## PROJECT, CHAMPIONS AND SPONSORS

Project Name	Project Champions	Email	Project Sponsor	Cost Estimate
Marketing & Branding Program	Adam Grinold	<a href="mailto:agrinold@gmail.com">agrinold@gmail.com</a>	Mount Snow Valley Chamber of Commerce	\$50,000
Improved Broadband & Cellular Service	Ken Black Meg Streeter	<a href="mailto:dovereds@sover.net">dovereds@sover.net</a> <a href="mailto:megstreeter.realestate@gmail.com">megstreeter.realestate@gmail.com</a>	Town of Dover Town of Wilmington	Cell tower – \$900,000. Broadband connections to un-served areas – \$720,000 Increased broadband connectivity to under served areas – \$350,000 Development of Wireless Zones in downtown areas – \$40,000
Community Recovery Coordinator	Laura Sibilia	<a href="mailto:lsibilia@brattleborodevelopment.com">lsibilia@brattleborodevelopment.com</a>	Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation	Preliminary estimated cost is \$80,000 per year for two years
Business Assistance Program	Adam Grinold	<a href="mailto:agrinold@gmail.com">agrinold@gmail.com</a>	Mount Snow Valley Chamber of Commerce	Part time employment professional at a cost of approximately \$50,000 per year
Business Recovery and Resource Center	Gretchen Havreluk Bruce Mullen	<a href="mailto:ghavreluk@gmail.com">ghavreluk@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:bruce_mullen@earthlink.net">bruce_mullen@earthlink.net</a>	Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation	Incubator startup cost – approximately \$50,000 Incentive program – approximately \$150,000 Fund Management – approximately \$18,000
“Keep it in the Valley” Campaign	Nicki Steel Arlene Palmiter Gretchen Havreluk	<a href="mailto:nickisteel@myfairpoint.net">nickisteel@myfairpoint.net</a> <a href="mailto:ghavreluk@gmail.com">ghavreluk@gmail.com</a>	Mount Snow Valley Chamber of Commerce	Technical assistance (surveys, planning, marketing) — Approximately \$20,000.
Revitalization through Circulation Plan (RCP)	Mary Therese Wright Renee Galle	<a href="mailto:marytheresewright@gmail.com">marytheresewright@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:ggallere@gmail.com">ggallere@gmail.com</a>	Town of Wilmington	\$100,000

Project Name	Project Champions	Email	Project Sponsor	Cost Estimate
Downtown Designation	Tom Consolino	<a href="mailto:tconsolino@myfairpoint.net">tconsolino@myfairpoint.net</a>	Town of Wilmington	Downtown designation is very time consuming and generally involves professional staff. The cost estimate covers \$15,000 of staff time.
Parking and Greenspace	Carolyn Palmer	<a href="mailto:palmer.carolyn@gmail.com">palmer.carolyn@gmail.com</a>	Town of Wilmington	Phase 1: Materials and town road crew labor – \$35,000. Phase 2: Lighting and plantings – \$30,000. Phases 3 and 4: Parking and Trolley system will require further study, estimated cost is \$120,000.
Short Term Enhancements	Alice Greenspan	<a href="mailto:abgreenspan@myfairpoint.net">abgreenspan@myfairpoint.net</a>	Town of Wilmington	It is anticipated that private funding in the form of donations will be used to fund the majority of the project.
Sidewalks & Streetlights	Susan Lawrence Cliff Duncan	<a href="mailto:anchor@sover.net">anchor@sover.net</a> <a href="mailto:DCTV8@sover.net">DCTV8@sover.net</a>	Town of Wilmington	Sidewalks: Approximately \$500,000. Lighting: Approximately \$330,000.
Centralized Social Services	Mary Jane Finnegan Elizabeth McEwen	<a href="mailto:mjgf@myfairpoint.net">mjgf@myfairpoint.net</a> <a href="mailto:ecmcewen@gmail.com">ecmcewen@gmail.com</a>	Social Service Agency TBD	
Deerfield Valley Medical Health Center Expansion	Paul & Mary Tonon W. Scott Ericson Heidi Taylor	<a href="mailto:pt20@columbia.edu">pt20@columbia.edu</a> <a href="mailto:wse1@phin.org">wse1@phin.org</a>	Southwestern Vermont Medical Center	Extended hours of operation at the SVMC-DVC could be self-supporting, if the program generates additional revenue at SVMC by increasing the number of patient referrals/visits and reducing unnecessary emergency room visits.
Standard Operating Guidelines	Jeanette Toro-Linnehahn	<a href="mailto:jeanet2710@aol.com">jeanet2710@aol.com</a>	Town of Wilmington	In-kind costs of volunteer and administrative time.

Project Name	Project Champions	Email	Project Sponsor	Cost Estimate
Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)	Jeanette Toro-Linnehahn	<a href="mailto:jeanet2710@aol.com">jeanet2710@aol.com</a>	Town of Wilmington, Deerfield Valley Rescue Service	Initial costs for start-up – minimal.  On-going program maintenance, training – staff time.
Community Volunteer Resource Program	Patti Burke	<a href="mailto:paburke@us.ibm.com">paburke@us.ibm.com</a>	Town of Wilmington	Cost for the volunteer management software depends on whether freeware is chosen or whether a contract with a data management firm or agency is pursued.  Cost for a VRC will be low if facility space is donated.
Diversified Housing Options	Bob Pelosi  Meg Streeter	<a href="mailto:bob@southernvermont.us">bob@southernvermont.us</a> <a href="mailto:megstreeter.realestate@gmail.com">megstreeter.realestate@gmail.com</a>	Town of Wilmington	An initial assessment of local resources can be completed using local capacity. Based on the findings of this initial assessment, detailed project costs can be developed.
Flood Mitigation	Barbara Cole  James Burke	<a href="mailto:vtgatekeeper@gmail.com">vtgatekeeper@gmail.com</a>	Town of Wilmington	The next site visits by the Corps of Engineers and the State ANR will be at no cost to the community. Detailed studies by the Corps of Engineers typically will require a cost share of 35%, though in-kind services from the town might meet these requirements. Some work could be accomplished using town equipment and labor, if appropriate.
Water District and Wastewater Department Merger	John Lazelle	<a href="mailto:johnlazelle@gmail.com">johnlazelle@gmail.com</a>	Town of Wilmington	The only anticipated cost to realize this merger is for legal services, which are estimated to come to less than \$10,000. The Town will then have to incur additional costs to bring the water system into compliance with applicable standards, which could represent more than \$1 million dollars.

Project Name	Project Champions	Email	Project Sponsor	Cost Estimate
Combined Facility for Police, Fire and Town Records	Chief Ken March Chief Joe Szarejko	<a href="mailto:wilmfire@myfairpoint.net">wilmfire@myfairpoint.net</a> <a href="mailto:jszarejko@dps.state.vt.us">jszarejko@dps.state.vt.us</a>	Town of Wilmington	A preliminary cost estimate for the combined facility is \$4,000,000, and is based on the Town of Wilmington's Letter of Intent to the State Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Officer. The architecture firm chosen to carry out the project will estimate the actual cost.
Multi-tiered Emergency Alert System	Chief Ken March Chief Joe Szarejko Avi Azoulay James Bogard	<a href="mailto:wilmfire@myfairpoint.net">wilmfire@myfairpoint.net</a> <a href="mailto:jszarejko@dps.state.vt.us">jszarejko@dps.state.vt.us</a>	Town of Wilmington	Reverse 9-1-1 program – \$3,000 to \$5,000 annually. Acquisition and installation of siren system – \$8,000 to \$12,000. Development and distribution of educational material – \$5,000.
DVTA Transit Facility	Randall Schoonmaker	<a href="mailto:randys@moover.com">randys@moover.com</a>	Deerfield Valley Transit Authority	Project budget estimated at \$ 3.7 million, with some costs already covered by donations and grant funds.
Recreational Trail System Improvement	Mike Purcell	<a href="mailto:buyvt@together.net">buyvt@together.net</a>	Town of Wilmington	According to the VYCC, crews of 8 to 10 volunteers will cost approximately \$5,500-\$7,000 per week. The productivity of the crews will determine the amount of time required to complete the work.
Community Center	Steve Goldfarb	<a href="mailto:goldfarb@sover.net">goldfarb@sover.net</a>	Town of Wilmington Wilmington School District, TBD	Depending upon the uses for the facility, renovation costs could range from minimal to significant. Operating costs will also vary depending upon uses, though several possible revenue streams could offset them.

## **Long-Term Community Recovery Plan**

Our community enjoys a vibrant, growing, year-round, and diversified economy built upon the foundations of limitless opportunity for all ages that also preserves a unique historic, cultural, and recreational heritage.