**Zone CEDS Public Input Sessions**

**Round 1- Brattleboro, June 19th**

(JS Notes)

Mike Kim comes in and lays it down on internet / cell / broadband

State is giving out grants to companies that are not delivering internet of value

If SoVermont does not have an initiative to solve for people and biz will go to where there is

better internet

50 mb internet as fast as you can get, 2X what I paid in LA

We need to have some plan in place.

(We will need to admit that the state is NOT going to come up with a strategy)

Emily – Healthcare costs

Traditional values mean that we refuse to see those things as a public good. There is no

statewide internet or healthcare so “the capitalists don’t come in”

David R – finding a workforce at all levels, that is educated and skilled…tradespeople almost

impossible. Need for training and expanded workforce.

Becca – excellent job graduating students, not high rate of ppl going on to any training

Alex – on Sophomore Summit irony is we had employers showing up but teachers not sending

their students, so there’s a problem of buy-in

David – nothing has enough robustness or vitality. Resources are small, unfocused resources

are easily dissipated.

Jim V – lots of career training focuses on young people and it’s expensive to get adult training

? –People not working for lack of childcare.

(Wayne adds more –haven’t found a single opportunity of grants or loans for a childcare

business to locate…OMG shamelessly plugging for the business he wants to start)

Mom of BUHS STEM student who attended Sophomore Summit and “found it very beneficial”

Also, high school starting a new LNA program

Emily – we have a ‘robust system of funding for new centers and tracking people in, the

challenge is that the wages are incredibly low’ also don’t just focus on birth-5 but also needs of

2 working parent families and need for family friendly work places.

Cooper – Scale. Lots of trainings we run are really good but hard to get 8-10 ppl minimum

threshold that makes it worth running. Many training programs are designed to kick in with a

larger cohort than we can assemble.

Main St Entrepreneurship sector is strong – scale challenges there with businesses downtown

hampered by the old buildings they are in, succession planning issues.

Adam – recaps Atlas consulting experience and basic conclusion “we need more people”. “We

are still operating an economy that was built 25 – 30 years ago”. We need to readjust, be aware

of mindset that formed against growth when it was happening so fast, and growth is not a dirty

word…we have to grow our way out. Pro growth – challenge to embrace that.

Wayne – state has concentrated their resources and attention in Burlington &amp; Montpelier

Alex – a lot of our WF systems were built for a different time with high unemployment. We

need to look at “transitions”

What would a modern wf development system look like?

Emily – trust, accountability, relationship based, move out of classroom, take into account that

small businesses operate differently from large businesses

Jen – it would be driven by local demand &amp; opportunity, and local

Spoon – pondering growth. Economy in Vermont should be developed around natural

resources we have and exploiting those resources. Internet and bringing people in…it’s not a

population problem it’s an aging population. We just have too many people in the wrong

categories, the state can’t support more people without stressing natural resources we have.

Stein (Landmark) – we have a housing shortage so there’s not a lot of spaces for people to

come into, what exactly is a skilled workforce?

BUHS mom – is it twofold? If you need a certain skill set and you don’t have the people, or if

you need to have more jobs that employ certain people how do we get more jobs?

If we had our own “silicone valley” with trains and internet and clean energy installers….we

would flourish.

“We need a skills bank and a jobs bank”

Kim – I’m struggling to reconcile the things I’m hearing…how can we have a declining

population how can we have a housing shortage? If I were in my 20s VT might not be the place

for me…now we have a kid to raise. “It’s not until you get to that point that VT seems really

attractive”…people are not looking for a smaller version of LA or NY. We wanted Putney

because it was so different.

Adam – gap between cost to construct a facility and appraised value the day it is done…makes

it very hard to start a new initiative. You want a solar panel factory? Day 1 it’s worth 50% less

than it cost.

School consolidation as population declines….equals cutting services and dealing with a dated

budgeting system to the reality of shrinking resoruces.

We need to have enough resources.

Guy who works w juniors and seniors in h.s. – Bennington is not part of our economic region.

Our region is CT River valley – I place kids in internships, good jobs are in New Hampshire.

Disconnect btwn what employers need and what schools do…School districts are a college

prep program. Kids are told if they are smart, leave and if they are stupid, stay.

The things that 20 year olds do aren’t here…

This plan will be a success if it addresses:

David R – can we make “small” an economic asset? We are actually way behind CA etc in terms

of green policies.

Bethaney? – let’s meet the needs of the people already here…working poor i.e. at 200% of

median income and below.

“Better standard of living for all southern Vermonters” – So we have to think about WHO we

are planning for.

Wayne – “I’m a data guy”. Cost of living ...only data you can get is for Burlington etc.

So the information we need to use has to be indigenous and local data.

Jim V – Double down on what we’re good at. Let’s get rid of 20 year olds.

Adam – We are working to build a system where kids can stay here and succeed, with the jobs

that will enable that

Jen – Who are we planning for? Let’s not just plan for ourselves…those of us who came here to

raise our kids but also consider the people who are already here, who will stay, who have

stayed and succeeded

Spoon – our ed system preps kids for jobs in the metro area, not for a rural state that we

are…”you can’t make money here it’s a hardscrabble state, or you emphasize STEM and send

kinds into metro areas”

Alex – let’s envision a CEDS “for people who want to be here” not in buckets by age or some

other precondition, not by demographics…Who wants to be here not just who we think should

be here or should want to be here

Consultant – Every community thinks it has brain drain. It’s parents and grandparents…

Drew – UVM and state system is not supporting the training needs of industry! They are driven

by full pay out of staters. That training system is not beholden to us. We are on the border of 3

states.

Stein – 3 state message. I was at 5 colleges collaborating but what’s wrong with Vermont?

Vermont would not come to the table. My kids at Landmark College enjoy Keene not Bratt.

Success if…we reduce boundaries and increase collaboration

Emily –historically if we think of previous in migration there were people with low education

level, took low level jobs, and could earn a living at it. That was a very different workforce

training model…I’d like to bring that into the future.

Difficult to progress through a career here – lots of high level and entry level jobs, not enough

mid-level.

Wayne – just recounted the history of boomers.

Sarah – need to be MORE WELCOMING…takes work to tap into that welcome but it needs to be

easier.

Kim – external awareness about what Vermont means to people. Maple syrup it has to be

Vermont. But I had to investigate to learn that VT does not allow billboards! It’s great! Small

town feeling. Stores actually close! Contributes to good living. Market that sort of thing…it’s a

style of life you can get here and not in other places.

Does Southern Vermont need its own brand?

Emily – unbrandable brand of Southern Vermont is authenticity…

David – I identify with Brattleboro, not Rutland, we need to highlight that affinity.

Spoon – the undercurrent through all of this should be increasing an emphasis on creating an

economy in cooperative and worker owned models&gt; They create more jobs at higher wages for

people etc. (“excluding ESOPS”) and creates a tremendous sense of community among workers,

and translates to community and resiliency in the larger sense.

Emily – coops and worker owned helps with legacy planning challenge. VT is a leader in this.

Success if – PRIDE - we can build awareness of our full assets, and the self-esteem among

ourselves that says it’s a great place for people of any age…But pride in what is actually HERE

to get to know one another better.

Success if – we stop making excuses for ourselves…need to have enough childcare, need to

have enough housing, need to have family friendly. The last CEDS needed people to (a) see

there was a problem, and (b) believe something can be done…

IF MONEY IS NOT AN OBJECT

Spoon – begin teaching different economic models in our schools and emphasizing democracy.

Swing pendulum back from STEM to humanities.

Sheila – Faster internet, cable, fiber optics, and cell.

Jen – Putnam Block all phases so we can have a demo project of

Stein – trolley in Brattleboro all up and down town, free, jump off and on. Creates more

corridors, reduces cars. More places for people to be out and together.

Emily – one Southern Vermont project = consistent cell service Bennington to Brattleboro…

Jen

Alex – Ed infrastructure - CTE’s, and road from schools to careers (literally and figuratively)

Drew – right now kids coming to CTEs takes $ out of their home school. We don’t have a

pipeline of talent. Our workforce needs are the ball and chain on everything

Grafton guy – need more flexibility to be proactively reactive to workforce needs. Have AOE

decisions driven by DOL data. …

Wayne – move state employees to Southern Vermont

Adam – design and implement a modern WF development system that recognizes wf does not

see those borders…state boundaries don’t recognize this multi state region

Kim – instead of relying on the state to roll out fiber internet, as an entire group let’s start a

communications union district, the first step in creating a state recognized organization that

can roll out internet revenue funded. Just takes a vote at town meeting to get towns together

to form CUD. Would put us on the path to rolling out fiber internet.

Alex – build on Southern Vermont Economy Project and look at capacity. Every project that’s a

good and important idea should have the capacity to execute / implement (project

management, technical, legal, planning, HR Capacity)

Gal in front of me – look at capacity for resilience i.e. adverse childhood experience and its

impact on health outcomes and individuals.

Kim’s partner – We had looked into moving to England. One criteria was $, and you had to hire

at least 2 locals.

Grafton – Our 0% unemployment today is radically different from 6 years ago. What will be

radically different in another 6-10 years?

WHAT ABOUT SMALL PROJECTS?

(Whiteboard notes)

What do you love about SoVermont?

 Citizens speak their mind, but are friendly/civil  discourse

 Access to decision markers

 Beautiful and rough topography  humble people, hard workers

 Rural character bus access to great services, arts, metropolitan area  quiet, privacy, nature,

not the city

 Class divide can be overcome due to scale

 Local identify with farms (district places)

 Flexible public-school system

 Long standing traditions – town meeting day, sugar on stout

 Citizen legislature

 Collaboration with organizations is easy  working with you neighbors  common good

 Positive support from citizens

 Children feel ownership to town

 Community accountability

 Hidden economy and social safety net

 Cannot presume who you might meet

 Promise for YP success, career

 Bountiful waterways  drink, swim

 Infrastructure care  public services

Greatest Challenges

 Business

o Our labor shed

o Education/skilled workforce

o Mid aged workforce training – not just young poops

o Training threshold #

o Older structure in downtown

o Sucession planning

o Opperating a 25 year old  also workforce systems

o Economy  not enough people to fill this economy

o Gap of cost to build and value at finish

 Residents

o Opportunities to attract people back

o Job bank

o Skills bank

o Develop economy around NR sustainable

 Both

o Housing

o Internet

o Childcare

o Publsans

o Scale

o Relationship based workforce system to take in account of current assets

Key Issues

 Growth  compatible with what people are looking for

 Market VT compatible --? Small scale = success/asset

 Meet needs of people who are already here while also attracting new people (Standard of lviign)

 Data collection  scale

 Double down on what ewe are good at: food, family oriented, remote working

 Antiquated workforce system

 Education preps kids for jobs/careers that are not actually here

 Higher education not supporting training system for sectors needed (Education is 3 rd largest

sector in VT)

 Tri state: positive and negative  how do we capitalize on this  sharing resources, sharing

workforce

 Lack of mid-level jobs for career advancement

 Attracting 15 to 35 year olds  this is the demographic we want

 External awareness of what VT is/means to outsiders  no billboards, small town feeling 

market this

 Unbrandable brand  authenticity

 Brand for ourselves instead of being forced into a stereotype

 Co-op/worker owned models then translates to community  helps with legacy planning

 Teach economics in schools/humanities

 A CEDS for people who want to be here

Projects BIG idea

 Putnam phase 1,2, and 3

 Trolley from Brattleboro to Putney Road

 Education centers and infrastructure  roads

 Workforce needs  change model, flexibility

 Move state offices to SoVermont

 Modern workforce and economic development system for all SoVermont but doesn’t stop at

those state borders

Projects Quick

 Fiber and cell

 Consistent radio and cell coverage

 Liaison between DOL. AEC, ACE

 More local data (granular)  learn more about ourselves

 Communications Union District (CUD) eg. EcFiber

 Capacity Building to execute projects – zoning, project management, HR

 ACE impacts on younger population (better understand)

Projects under both categories

 Business incentive for new businesses (hire 1-2 local people)

 Recognizing the flux of unemployment (past, future)