

Greater Greensboro Community Visit

Report and Action Plan ~ November 2019



Produced by the Vermont Council on Rural Development
in partnership with the Vermont Community Foundation

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I. Introduction

There is no community in the world like Greensboro. Greensboro is a place that captures people’s hearts – where families have settled for generations and where visitors fall in love with the town and return year after year. Greensboro is a quiet rural community with a long tradition of local gatherings and celebrations and a remarkable economic base of businesses that are well-known and celebrated locally, across the State, and even globally. From the historic buildings and general stores that characterize the Village and the Bend, to the lakes, the forested landscape, the rolling back roads, and recreation trails, Greensboro is a place of beauty, tranquility, tenacity, and community connection and pride.

Greensboro leadership and residents invited a Community Visit process to build on the special qualities that exist in Greensboro to attract new residents and families, ensure residents today from *all* parts of the community and of *all* ages have what they need to thrive, and to determine and advance a strong economic future for the Town. The community named this process “Greater Greensboro” to reflect that desire to build closer connection, bring in residents from all walks of life, and recognize the community strength already in place today as they set their path towards the future.

It is not easy to choose priorities, and there are many good ideas for action listed in the ‘opportunities’ section of this report that can inform the ongoing work of the Task Forces, but in the end, Greensboro selected four priorities for action that will protect critical assets and help to build the future vitality of the community and the economy. These initiatives lay out a challenging body of work for the year(s) ahead, but Greensboro is a town with strong human capacity and a tradition and culture of volunteerism and optimism. With over 175 local people from all parts of the community participating in the process and 60 volunteers now engaged in active Task Forces to advance priorities, it is clear that there is great energy in Greensboro for forward momentum and progress.

We look forward to working with the Greater Greensboro Task Forces as they get to work on the priority projects identified in the process:

- **Build Community Wastewater Infrastructure**
- **Improve Community Walkability and Bike-ability**
- **Address Water Quality and Lake Protection**
- **Improve Broadband and Cell Service**

The Task Forces advancing these issues are already hard at work—please support their efforts, or join them by reaching out to their chairs (listed in the work plan section of this report).

The Vermont Council on Rural Development helps Vermont citizens build prosperous and resilient communities through democratic engagement, marshalling resources, and collective action. VCRD is prepared to support the efforts of Greensboro as it moves forward and to provide follow up help to the Greensboro Task Forces as called upon. VCRD will also serve as an advocate for Greensboro projects with appropriate agencies and organizations in Vermont. Call on us, and on Visiting Team members, when we can be of help. VCRD provides leadership to facilitate the Community Visit process in partnership with the **Vermont Community Foundation** which is devoted to the progress of Vermont communities; VCF supports and helps guide visits, and provides significant resources to community projects throughout Vermont.

IV. Greater Greensboro Priorities

Determined by Greensboro residents at the Greater Greensboro Community Meeting, August 22, 2019

Proving that those who live, work and raise their families in a community are best qualified to understand its needs and potential, Greensboro community members whittled down a list of 20 issues through discussion, reasoned arguments and thoughtful reflection. In the end, voting with red and blue stickers, over 75 participants chose four action ideas that offer opportunities to enhance existing resources, and to strengthen the town through exciting new ventures. Residents concluded the August 22nd meeting by signing up for Task Forces in the selected areas.

Greensboro residents selected four priorities for future action:

✓ **Build Community Wastewater Infrastructure**

Greensboro lacks the wastewater infrastructure needed for new businesses and homes in the village centers, and many residents believe that developing this infrastructure will be essential to a sustainable economic future. A group could come together to develop a plan for a new wastewater treatment system for the villages of Greensboro, potentially including at least part of the lake. The task force could work with regional, state, and federal partners to survey current needs, evaluate what is needed water quality for desired growth in village centers, identify funding sources, and work with the Selectboard to design and implement Greensboro wastewater solutions.

✓ **Improve Community Walkability and Bike-ability**

A task force could form to develop community paths and walkways in Greensboro. The group could identify, plan, and build a network of walking and biking paths throughout the community and build a connecting trail between the Bend and the Village as well as around the Lake and along rivers and brooks in town. The group could also work with the Town to build and improve sidewalks, install bike lanes on key roads, and improve traffic flow and safety to make the Village and Bend more walkable, safe, and inviting for residents and visitors. The task force could also work with regional and state organizations to complete the section of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail that could bring visitors to the Bend and provide recreation opportunities for local residents.

✓ **Address Water Quality and Lake Protection**

Many residents believe that Greensboro could become a model community for water and lake quality. To do this, Greensboro residents could form a committee that would focus on education, monitoring, enforcement, and innovation to encourage best practices by property owners and ensure the current and future water quality in Caspian Lake and other bodies of water in town.

✓ **Improve Broadband and Cell Service**

A task force could form to improve cell and broadband service in Greensboro by collecting data on existing coverage, connecting with resources and providers to explore possibilities, and accessing funding and support to improve connection. The group could connect with and learn from other communities that have improved services such as Craftsbury and avail state and federal services and supports to expand coverage for the community.

✓ Improve Community Walkability and Bike-ability

Community Chair: **Naomi Ranz-Schleifer**

Facilitator: **Richard Amore**, *Planning and Project Manager*, VT Department of Housing and Community Development

Resource Team Members: **Ollie Burruss**, *Mountain Bike Program and Nordic Race Director*, Craftsbury Outdoor Center

Jon Kaplan, *Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager*, VT Agency of Transportation

Doug Morton, *Senior Transportation Planner*, NVDA

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Action Steps

1. Develop a bicycle and pedestrian master plan to identify existing infrastructure, gaps, destinations, and priorities. This planning should be townwide.
2. Develop a parking plan for the Village and the Bend.
3. Strategize for town meeting day to seek funding from the Selectboard to focus on improving walkability and bike-ability. Identify outside grant funding as well to support the work and leverage outside investment.
4. Reapply for the Better Connections Grant Program. A proposal in collaboration with East Hardwick failed, but was at the top of the list.
5. Build out and explore new opportunities for off-road non-motorized recreation. Explore class 4 roads for 4-season trails.
6. Review the Local Motion plan and determine areas for implementation. Build a plan to pilot and test ideas through demonstration and popup projects that could calm traffic and improve safety. Work with Local Motion to partner or solicit guidance.
7. Coordinate transportation investments and planning with wastewater and road pavement schedule. Ensure this is considered when developing the bicycle and pedestrian master plan.

Other Potential Action Steps:

- Map a path around the Lake
- Improve wayfinding with signs and maps
- Evaluate parking lot and crosswalk at Willey's and a handicap parking spot
- Identify private landowners to expand and connect the trail network
- Explore other routes from Willey's to the Lake
- Explore parallel parking on Beach Road
- Explore the "old road" behind Willey's stores
- Develop bike lanes on roads
- Investigate improvements to the 4-way intersection by the ball field
- Improve winter maintenance to improve walking in the Villages year-round