



March 20, 2017

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Vermont Futures Project Vision Report

In early January we published the Vermont Futures Project's 20-year vision [A Vision for Vermont's Economy](#).

In unveiling this report, Bill Shouldice, Chair of the Vermont Futures Project and CEO of Vermont Teddy Bear, introduced the project vision and set the stage for the work ahead to invigorate our economy. Perhaps most important in Bill's talk was the 'why?'-- why the long-term economic vitality of Vermont is critical. Bill spoke with conviction about what a strong Vermont economy means personally for him and his daughter, a college junior who wants to work in Vermont after graduation. Her story underscores the mission of our work-- to make it possible for young people to live and work in Vermont, now and in the future.



Statewide Meetings and Conversations

To further the Vermont Futures Project work, Jeff Lewis and Jennifer Stromsten, our project researchers, are scheduled to speak about the work of the Vermont Futures Project at a number of meetings throughout the state:

- March 20, Riverbend Tech School, Bradford
- March 21, Bennington Regional Economic Development, Manchester
- March 22, [VLCT Local Leadership in Economic Development Workshop](#), Montpelier
- April 4 and 11, Town Officers Education Conference, Lake Morey Resort and Montpelier
- April 27, Bizfit Conference on Women in Business, Rutland
- May 24, Southern Vermont Economic Development Summit, Stratton
- May 25, [Vermont Chamber EXPO](#), Sheraton Burlington

In addition to these public events, we continue to have small and informal meetings with local and regional groups, state policy makers, and opinion leaders to further the conversation on how to achieve economic sustainability in Vermont.

Policy Changes

We have been very pleased to see Vermont Futures Project data and ideas included in key legislative discussions. This includes workforce housing efforts driven by Vermont Futures Project data on the need for housing to support workforce growth. Governor Scott proposed a \$35 million revenue bond for new affordable and workforce housing in collaboration with the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. Additionally, legislators are now widely discussing [workforce issues](#) and pointing to the Vermont Futures Project data, specifically the workforce supply gap of [10,000 new workers](#) as a critical area to focus legislative efforts.



Progress on Targets

Our vision report established a set of targets for each of the six key indicators by which we track our progress in the economy. Since we initially published the data, we've seen evidence of progress:

- A slight uptick in workforce last year, after years of decline;
- Some growth in housing starts; and
- An increase in the grand list.

Unfortunately, other indicators have continued their downward trend. And while the upward movement in workforce is encouraging, we have identified a need for more than [10,000 new workers](#) a year for the next twenty years. We are still far from that number.

Young Professionals Engaged

Among the most encouraging interactions we have had across the state are with the growing number of Young Professional organizations. These groups are active in all regions, and particularly in Rutland, Windham, and Chittenden counties. Young professionals are enthusiastic, talented, and motivated to make Vermont work better. These young Vermonters are offering ideas and energy for creating vibrant communities and thriving businesses.

Regional Action

We are also very encouraged by the activity we see at the regional level in Windham, Rutland, Franklin, Orange counties. The communities are tightly focused on building capacity and a strong supply chain of future workers, from middle school to the workplace. In Rutland County, there is a shared priority on recruitment and a marketing effort to bring new workers to the area. The Rutland Regional Medical Center has revamped its recruiting program to emphasize Rutland's people and community, making it more attractive for young professionals. They have also formed a partnership with the [Rutland Young Professionals](#) organization to welcome potential hires to the community.

Get Involved

Study the Data. Visit the [Economic Dashboard](#) on our website to follow the progress on improving Vermont's economy.

Engage on Social Media. Imagine your #FutureVT and continue the conversation with us on Twitter @VTFutures, or Instagram @VTFuturesProject.

Follow me on
twitter

Donate. Help secure Vermont's economic future with a contribution to support the continued development of data, policy recommendations, and strategies for economic growth.

Donate



Contact Us. Want us to speak at your next event? Have an idea for how to improve Vermont's economic future? Email us at futures@vtfuturesproject.org.

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ABOUT US

The Vermont Futures Project promotes the long-term economic health of Vermont that provides opportunity for Vermonters. Through leadership, research and education, the Vermont Futures Project seeks to inform the conversation about Vermont's economic future and demonstrate how a health economy contributes to Vermont's vibrant communities and unique quality of life.

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