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February 2021

## Vermont Futures Project: 5 Things to Know

### 1.

#### Is This Our Moment?

As the world came to a standstill in 2020, people everywhere were united in a shared, yet separate, experience. In truth, we have lost a lot. Surely, we will be studying the irreversible effects of the events of this year on our social structure and ways of life for generations to come. Despite the many challenges, there were also things we gained. With lockdowns and restrictions, people were forced to pause, to reflect, and to look inward as they assessed what matters most in their homes, families, communities, and their lives.

It is no mistake that last year also saw [\*rapid movement toward places like Vermont\*](#). With increases in remote work and worker flexibility, urban and suburban dwellers began to make long-dreamed moves to locations where they could feel safe and build the lifestyle of their dreams. Though the data is still unclear, Vermont may be [\*experiencing a positive shift\*](#) in demographics and opportunity. Only time will tell, but this our moment to move boldly forward to a prosperous economic future for all.

### 2.

#### 2020 Year in Review

2020 was also a year of reflection and adaptation for The Vermont Futures Project. We, too, were challenged, focusing on Vermont's economy with great uncertainty. One thing we know is that the COVID-19 pandemic will not last forever. Focusing on our future is more important than ever. Despite the challenge of working remotely, The Vermont Futures Project made great progress with relevant research and data analysis to assess our current economic and racial equity conditions. From our [\*Vermont Taxing Dilemma\*](#) white paper to our [\*Live in Vermont Survey\*](#) and new [\*Racial Data Sets\*](#), we are adapting to help show what's possible for Vermont's economic future. Take a moment to view our [\*2020 Year in Review\*](#).

### 3.

#### Research is at the Heart of Vermont Futures Project

Most will agree that our shared COVID experience in 2020 generated many questions about our community health.

Likewise, it unearthed new questions about Vermont's economy.

In 2020, The Vermont Futures Project had the opportunity to discuss the state's economy with a wide variety of business, nonprofit, community, higher ed, and government leaders across Vermont. We cataloged the input and boiled down questions into a list of the top [Vermont economic research](#) topics that we think warrant further investigation. We submitted several research questions and ideas to [UVM's newly created Office of Engagement](#). We are excited to play a role partnering with UVM and others on an Economic Resilience Assessment Project that will study Vermont's current community economic development condition and eventually provide Vermont stakeholders with actionable data and knowledge. More information will follow in the months ahead.

### 4.

#### Building Knowledge of and Engagement With VT Economy

Our priority in 2021 is to continue advancing research and data relevant to telling the story of this moment in time. We are planning a long-term "Economic Knowledge Campaign" that will engage and inform Vermonters on how Vermont's economy works and how it impacts our daily lives. We also look to acknowledge and celebrate the business ecosystem that helps Vermont thrive. Economic investment affects all Vermonters — our homes, jobs, health, schools, the taxes we pay, the natural environment around us, economic progress in our communities, and opportunities to achieve our dreams. What, where, and how communities build will affect Vermonters' lives for generations to come. Stay tuned for more information on this campaign in the months ahead.

### 5.

#### Honoring Businesses and Our Donor Partners

We would like to take this moment to thank all the Vermont business owners and leaders who continue to rise to the challenges to support their local communities, employees, and customers and clients. There are too many to list, but we will start with recognizing all our [Donor Partners](#) who have generously committed their time and money supporting our work. As The Vermont Futures Project enters our fifth year, we are looking back at our top and long-term donors, who make it possible for us to do what we do. We start with our top donors who have given over 30K over the last four years: [Vermont Chamber of Commerce](#), [UVM Health Network](#), [ReArch](#), [Revision Military](#), [Vermont Mutual Insurance Group](#), [A.N. Deringer](#), [Ski Vermont](#), [Champlain Investment Partners](#), [Casella Waste Management](#), [NFP](#), and [Rutland Regional Medical Center](#). For your support, which encourages long-term economic security in Vermont, we thank you!

Be Safe and Well,



*Lori A. Smith*

Lori A. Smith, Executive Director  
Vermont Futures Project

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The Vermont Futures Project is an independent non-partisan organization with a goal of providing a vision that supports and encourages long-term economic growth for Vermont, providing data and recommendations to achieve this goal. The Vermont Futures Project is an initiative of the Vermont Chamber Foundation.

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