Ingredients for Downtown & Village Revitalization

Gary Holloway
VT Department of Housing and Community Development

Town Officers Education Conference
April 4th & 11th, 2017
Community Planning and Revitalization

Programs

- Downtowns
- Village Centers
- New Town Centers
- Growth Centers
- Neighborhood Development Areas
Vermont Planning Atlas

Website:
Create the Vision and Implement the Plan

Step 1: Community Assessment

Step 2: Develop a Shared Community Vision

Step 3: Identify Community Goals and Objectives

Step 4: Map Out the Future

Step 5: Identify Priority Action Items

Implementation

Review
Strong Collaboration Leads to Success

- **Local Partners** – Municipality, Downtown Organizations, Chamber, Elected Leaders, Business/Property Owners, Schools, Ski Resorts, Non-Profits, Engaged Residents and others

- **Regional Partners** – Regional Planning Commission, Economic Development Corps., Chambers of Commerce, others

- **State/Federal Partners** – ACCD, Vtrans, ANR, USDA and others

- **Non Profits** - Preservation Trust of Vermont, Efficiency Vermont, Vermont Council on Rural Development, VLCT, Vermont Natural Resource Council, AARP, Local Motion and many others.
Municipal Planning Grants

Municipal Planning Grant Basics

- Grants range from $2500 - $20,000
- Annually grant approximately $460,000
- Competitive within region
- 33% match of amount over $8000
- Projects may include:
  - municipal land use plans, zoning bylaws, downtown master plan, conceptual development plan, flood resiliency planning, capital improvement plan, etc.
Village Center Designation Program

124 designated village centers

- For small historic centers with existing civic and commercial buildings
- Targets training and financial incentives to bring additional public and private investment to spark village revitalization.
Designation

Benefits

▪ Technical Assistance
▪ State Grants Priority
▪ State Buildings Priority
▪ Downtown and Village Center Tax Credits
▪ Eligible for Neighborhood Development Area Designation
Village Center Designated Boundary Map
Downtown & Village Center Tax Credits

Overview

- Goal to stimulate investment in commercial centers
- Competitively award $2.2 Million in credits each year
- Applications are due annually on July 1st

Project Types:

- Historic Rehabilitation – 10% credit (unlimited)
- Façade Repairs – 25% credit up to $25k
- Technology Improvements – 50% credit up to $30k
- Code Improvements – 50% credit up to $50k
Hancock General Store, Hancock
Total Project Cost: $145,000; Tax Credits Awarded: $19,850

Hancock’s General Store operated for over 100 years before closing in 2013. A major community hub in this small village, the loss of this business was devastating to residents. That’s when new owners, locals from Hancock, stepped in to buy the building and revive this important community resource. The project required major investments to upgrade the building to meet code requirements and also included façade improvements. The store re-opened in 2016.
Several years ago Hardwick’s Main Street was in a state of decline like many communities throughout Vermont. Buildings were run down, underused or even condemned. In 2006, a tragic fire gutted the Bemis Block, a prominent building in the heart of downtown. Rather than tear it down to create a parking lot, the community chose restoration and created new businesses and housing within the historic building. This key decision not only sparked a new direction for Hardwick, it also showed other small towns how saving one historic building can spur redevelopment of an entire community. Village center designation provided tax credits to help close this financial gap, make projects economically viable, spark community revitalization, and bring buildings back onto the tax rolls.
Priority Consideration for State Grants

- VTrans Bike/Ped Grants
- VTrans Transportation Alternative Grants
- Vermont Community Development Program (CDBG)
- Historic Preservation Grants
- Municipal Planning Grants
- Brownfield Clean-up Grants
- And many others!
Neighborhood Development Areas

Neighborhood Planning Area

Downtowns - 1/2 mile
15 min walk

Village Center/New Town Center - 1/4 mile
5-10 min walk
# Neighborhood Development Areas

## Neighborhood Development Areas (NDA) Designations

Burlington, Essex Junction, Shelburne, South Burlington and Winooski.

## By the Numbers [2011 - 2016]

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<th>6</th>
<th>$33,000</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>designated NDAs</td>
<td>housing units qualified for NDA benefits</td>
<td>months average time saved in state permitting</td>
<td>average saved in state permit fees</td>
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## Designation Benefits

Qualified housing projects within these designated areas receive a variety of benefits that reduce the cost of development such as exemption from Act 250 review, exemption from the land gains tax, and a state wastewater permit fee capped at $50.

## Burlington - Designation Lowers Housing Costs

Bright Street Co-op (proposed)  
Bright Street Co-op (under construction)
23 designated downtowns

- For larger historic centers with the community capacity to support a non-profit organization focused on improving the downtown.

- Targets training and financial incentives to bring additional public and private investment to spark downtown revitalization.
Designation Benefits

- Downtown Transportation Fund
- Special Assessment Districts
- Act 250 Exemptions
- Traffic Calming Signage Options
- Technical Assistance
- State Grants Priority
- State Buildings Priority
- Downtown and Village Center Tax Credits
- Eligible for Neighborhood Development Area Designation and Growth Center Designation
Downtown Organization
Downtown Program Trainings

▪ Downtown and Historic Preservation Conference
  June 8th in White River Junction

▪ Downtown Retreat at the Grand Isle Lake House

▪ Downtown Network Meetings

▪ Board, Volunteer & Staff Training

▪ Technical assistance as needed
Advocating for Vermont Downtowns
Small businesses make up 97% of our employers and are truly the backbone of our state’s economy.
Promoting Your Downtown

Waterbury Arts Fest

The Not Quite 4th of July Parade
Volunteers Making Things Happen

In 2015 volunteers contributed 32,670 hours to the 24 downtown organizations valued at $715,800
Sales Tax Reallocation

Hampton Inn
St Albans -
Opening Spring 2017

$103,492 awarded in tax credits

$11,000,000 private investment
Downtown Transportation Fund

Bristol - Building a Walkable and Vibrant Downtown

VTrans funds the Downtown Transportation Fund (DTF) program that supports revitalization efforts in designated downtowns by making these areas more pedestrian, bike, and transit friendly. Since 1999, the fund has invested $9.7 million to support 109 projects leveraging over $47 million for transportation improvements in designated downtowns. The Town of Bristol recently used a DTF grant to enhance the village green by adding lighting, benches, and bike racks to strengthen the connection to downtown and the VTrans Improved Main Street intersection. The Prince Lane reconstruction project, also funded by a DTF grant, added sidewalks, lighting, and landscaping to improve access to local businesses and bring vitality to the downtown.
Downtown Transportation Fund

Transforming St. Albans
Public Improvements Leverage Private Investment
Downtown Transportation Fund

By the Numbers [2011 - 2016]

- 33 downtown transportation grants awarded
- 17 communities served
- $1.9 M in downtown transportation grants awarded
- $10.9 M leveraged with downtown transportation funds

Vergennes - Transportation Improvements Spark Revitalization Efforts

Before

After
Return on Investment

By the Numbers [2015]

- 24 designated downtowns
- $25.4 M in public investment
- $32.6 M in private investment
- 65 net increase/expansion in businesses
- 101 number of new housing units
- $1.4 M awarded in tax credits
- $28.1 M in private funds leveraged with tax credits
- 296 net new jobs created
- 32,670 volunteer hours valued at $715,800

Railroad Row, White River Junction
Funding Directory

Designated Downtown and Village Centers

Funding Directory

Title: Designated Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit
- Description: Provides tax credits for eligible downtown and village center projects, including construction, rehabilitation, and renovation.
- Eligibility: For properties located within designated downtown and village centers.
- Website: [Designated Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit](#)

Title: Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit
- Description: Provides tax credits for rehabilitation of historic buildings.
- Eligibility: Historic buildings located within downtown or village centers.
- Website: [Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit](#)

Title: Sales Tax Reimbursement Program
- Description: Provides sales tax reimbursement for eligible downtown and village center projects.
- Eligibility: Eligible for projects located within designated downtown and village centers.
- Website: [Sales Tax Reimbursement Program](#)

Title: Vermont Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)
- Description: Provides funding for community development projects.
- Eligibility: For projects located within designated downtown and village centers.
- Website: [Vermont Community Development Block Grant Program](#)

Title: Downtown Transportation Fund
- Description: Provides funding for transportation projects.
- Eligibility: For projects located within designated downtown and village centers.
- Website: [Downtown Transportation Fund](#)

Designated Downtown and Village Centers

Funding Directory

Title: Municipal Planning Grant Program
- Description: Provides grants for municipal planning projects, including economic development, zoning, and transportation planning.
- Eligibility: For projects located within designated downtown and village centers.
- Website: [Municipal Planning Grant Program](#)

Title: Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
- Description: Provides grants for hazard mitigation projects, including anti-terror planning.
- Eligibility: For projects located within designated downtown and village centers.
- Website: [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program](#)

Title: State Historic Preservation Grant
- Description: Provides grants for historic preservation projects.
- Eligibility: For projects located within designated downtown and village centers.
- Website: [State Historic Preservation Grant](#)

Title: Local Government Program
- Description: Provides funding for local government projects, including economic development and public infrastructure.
- Eligibility: For projects located within designated downtown and village centers.
- Website: [Local Government Program](#)

Title: Brownfield Revitalization Fund
- Description: Provides funding for brownfield revitalization projects.
- Eligibility: For projects located within designated downtown and village centers.
- Website: [Brownfield Revitalization Fund](#)

Title: Cultural Resources Grant Program
- Description: Provides funding for cultural resources projects.
- Eligibility: For projects located within designated downtown and village centers.
- Website: [Cultural Resources Grant Program](#)
Downtown and Village Center Tax Credit Awards Announced

With St. Albans’ new five-story, 84-room Hampton Inn as the backdrop, Governor Shumlin announced the winners of $2.25 million in state tax incentives. This year, 21 downtown and village projects, valued at over $47 million, received support. Projects include the Trout River Brewing Co. in Springfield, renovation of a blighted block in downtown Newport, rehabilitation and code upgrades of a community arts center in Waterbury Center, expansion of the South Royalton Memorial library to make the building accessible, and housing projects in Brattleboro, St. Albans, White River Junction and Winooski. Two municipalities were awarded sales tax reallocation dollars. In Winooski, the award will be used in conjunction with a new mixed use development and function venue and in St. Albans, reallocated taxes will support public infrastructure improvements associated with the new hotel. For a complete list of projects, visit our website.
Thank You.

Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development