

Objective 1: Increase our Population

Rationale: Attract more people to live in Southern Vermont to participate in the community, the workforce, and support the business and civic environment.

	Strategies	Actions	Priority Level and Timeline	Resource Level	Measures for Progress and Success
1.A	Retain and attract young people (between the ages 24-45)	I) Focus resources and investments on helping existing residents, including students, young adults, and families, stay in the area. Establish creative tax policy to incentivize investment in existing and development of new high-quality housing stock, develop first time homebuyer assistance, create student loan repayment programs, and research other strategies designed to retain population.	High priority and immediate/ongoing	Moderate staff time and high financial cost	Increase in the percentage of the regional population in the 24-45 age group
		II) Create a "welcome wagon" that is geared towards young people to help them connect with their community and find what they need in order to feel comfortable and welcomed.	High priority and immediate	Minimal staff time	Increase in the percentage of the regional population in the 24-45 age group
		III) Identify and support local and regional policies that are attractive to young people and young families including investment in schools, arts and culture, activism and global issue awareness, family friendly workplace policies, and recreation amenities.	Medium priority and ongoing	Minimal staff time	Increase in the percentage of the regional population in the 24-45 age group
		IV) Fund and support the Young Professionals groups' efforts to engage young people and continue to offer high-quality programming. Regularly survey members and non-members on what they would like to see the groups do. Provide support for the YP groups bringing the YP Summit to the region, the development of a scholarship program for training opportunities, and the development of a diverse and active membership. Continue to develop membership benefits.	High priority and ongoing	Moderate staff time and minimal financial cost	Number of members of the Young Professional groups
		V) Following the completion of the workforce needs inventory (Task 4.A.I), pursue initiatives that directly target young professionals that are in demand by local industry. Research how to identify this population and continue to support projects and programs that encourage them to come and stay in the area.	High priority and ongoing	Moderate staff time and moderate financial cost	Increase in the percentage of the regional population in the 24-45 age group
1.B	Retrieve, retain, and attract workforce	I) Create career pathways informational material focused on those who have already been in the workforce and may be looking for new opportunities (both those currently employed and those who have left the workforce but may want to return). Highlight necessary training and where the training is available. Identify and create additional training programs as necessary.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff time and minimal financial cost	Increased number and use of training programs and educational career pathways in the public education system
		II) Following the completion of the workforce needs inventory (Task 2.A.I), pursue initiatives that directly target professionals that are in demand by local industry. Work with local employers to better market to and attract qualified applicants.	High priority and mid-term	Moderate staff time and minimal financial cost	Average number of applicants for key positions
		III) Utilize SoVermont marketing materials to highlight the intersection of quality of life and opportunity to attract qualified talent from outside of the region. Continue to pursue avenues that will bring those who have previously lived in Southern Vermont back to the area.	High priority and ongoing	Moderate staff time and minimal financial cost	Average number of applicants for key positions
		IV) Continue to support and run programs like Dress for Success, interview preparation, resume review, and career fairs.	High priority and ongoing	Moderate staff time and minimal financial cost	Number of program participants
		V) Connect with local Career Centers about how to engage and serve non-typical career center users like New Americans, non-citizens, and accompanying partners who may be looking for work or new opportunities.	Medium priority and mid-term	Minimal staff time and minimal financial cost	Number of people served by the Career Centers per year
1.C	Retain and attract a diverse population	I) Implement a targeted immigration program. Research successful immigration models and best practices (foreign and domestic). Prepare a white paper summarizing the results of the research and recommendations for improvements. Build out the community support for such an approach including public education, cultural competency programming, and community discussions around why it is critically important. Design and execute a targeted immigration recruitment plan.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff time	Implementation of an immigration program
		II) Establish career awareness and exploration programs in K-12 highlighting the accomplishments and successes of people of color. Incorporate presentations, dedicated curriculum, "job shadow", and visual tributes (photos, portraits, etc. on the walls). Incorporate ethnic and social equity training into school curriculum.	High priority, immediate and ongoing	Moderate financial cost and minimal staff time	Number of students going through exploration programming and curriculum
		III) Continue to support and participate in round table discussions on issues impacting people of color in Southern Vermont, including the economic implications of racism, discrimination, and lack of diversity.	High priority, immediate and ongoing	Minimal financial cost and staff time	Number of event participants and actions identified and implemented
		IV) Review marketing and other communication material for opportunities to include other languages, platforms, and methods of communication to be more inclusive and welcoming.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff time and minimal financial cost	Review of materials
		V) Identify support networks available to serve New Americans and non-citizens. Consolidate contact information for organizations, individuals, and entities that will assist in distribution of this information. Ensure linkage to community for new immigrants. Work to ensure material is available in a variety of languages and platforms.	High priority and mid-term	Moderate staff time and minimal financial cost	Inventory of support services
		VI) Encourage the incorporation of accessible and interactive spaces in development projects to create opportunities for diverse interactions and strengthening community social fabric.	Medium priority and mid-term	Minimal staff time and minimal financial cost	Incorporation into site plans

Objective 2: Expand our Business Infrastructure

Rationale: Create an environment that will encourage more jobs and opportunities in Southern Vermont

	Strategies	Actions	Priority Level and Timeline	Resource Level	Measures for Progress and Success
2.A	Establish a collaborative regional system to increase training, education, and readiness of the workforce	I) Conduct ongoing real time demand assessments in order to inform ongoing adaptive development of programs. Combine real time assessments with existing industry surveys to better understand the workforce needs, both current and projected, from the perspectives of employers and workers. Use this information to improve the workforce system, inform curriculum and program development, and to advocate for additional funds needed for training.	High and Immediate	Moderate staff time	Increase in the number and funding of training programs and satisfaction evaluation by program users
		II) Continue to provide regional middle school and high school guidance counselors with written information related to the job opportunities in the area, non-college related pathways, and the latest thinking around the host of avenues available to students after high school. Host career fairs and other events for teenagers related to career opportunities, interview and resume writing skill development, budgeting, available resources, and other life skills to support financial literacy and work readiness.	High priority and ongoing	Moderate staff time and minimal financial cost	Use of information by schools and guidance counselors. Number of events offered and satisfaction evaluation of attendees
		III) Develop a comprehensive workforce system that enhances collaboration between the two counties' workforce networks including expanding existing internship and apprenticeship programs, identification of training opportunities, shared services and resources, and collective marketing and promotion efforts. Ensure regular communication between all partners and ease of understanding by job seekers.	High priority and ongoing	Moderate staff time and minimal financial cost	Number of participants in the programs offered
		IV) Create career awareness and exploration programs for youth and expand work-based learning opportunities and education pathways that interact with, and prepare students for, regional opportunities. Connect students to viable and growing pipelines.	High priority and ongoing	Moderate staff time and moderate financial cost	Number of students using the program
		V) Research what other communities are doing to support those in recovery and what services would help them enter the workforce successfully. Implement programs and policies as appropriate. Approach to include employer encouragement, training, and support at all levels to hire and retain employees in recovery. Address stigma and discrimination with co-workers and look to evidence based approaches.	High priority and ongoing	Moderate staff time and moderate financial cost	Number of businesses considered recovery friendly
		VI) Expand paid internship opportunities for currently enrolled college students and recent graduates in Southern Vermont. Creation and further development of the SoVermont Internship Program in Bennington and Windham County in order to attract and retain young workforce to the region	Medium priority and mid-term	High staff time	Establishment of system; Number of placements
		VII) Pursue funding for occupations with critical supply-gap concerns, including school psychologists, health care professionals, and construction related trades.	Medium priority and mid-term	Minimal staff time	Increase in funding for identified needs
2.B	Strengthen the Southern Vermont entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem	I) Identify sources of funding for early-stage seed money and promote availability to entrepreneurs and small business owners.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff time and moderate financial cost	Reduced failure rate of new businesses; Increase in number of new businesses established each year
		II) Formalize and promote available business acceleration and transition services to potential participants. Expand and adjust services as business community needs change. Increase visibility of the support available, including conducting business visitation meetings at small businesses in all sectors.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff time and moderate financial cost	Reduced failure rate of new businesses; Increase in number of new businesses established each year
		III) Support capacity building for innovation leaders, including programming/training, networking opportunities, business plan competitions, and prizes. Continue to bring in experts on various topics such as digital marketing, customer attraction, human resources, and other programs that will support businesses. Use existing entrepreneurial assets (people) to create mentoring opportunities to support younger entrepreneurs.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff time and moderate financial cost	Reduced failure rate of new businesses; Increase in number of new businesses established each year
		IV) Regularly highlight and promote local entrepreneurs and the work being done through press releases, newsletters, and other outlets to encourage others to consider entrepreneurship.	High priority and short term	Minimal staff time and minimal financial cost	Number of press releases, newsletters or other communications methods per year
		V) Support youth entrepreneurship through school and extracurricular opportunities.	High priority and short term	Minimal staff time and minimal financial cost	Number of events held; Number of young residents establishing businesses in the region
		VI) Research the feasibility of establishing a Center for Rural Entrepreneurship.	Medium priority and mid-term	Moderate staff time and high financial cost	Completion of feasibility analysis and identification of next steps
		VII) Create events that build and cultivate knowledge networks that promote cross-industry engagement and collaboration.	Medium priority and mid-term	Minimal staff time and minimal financial cost	Number of events held each year; Number of business collaborations resulting from those events
		VIII) Facilitate collaboration between partners including health care, universities, and industry to identify unique Southern Vermont knowledge assets that could be leveraged to address major challenges facing Southern Vermont (substance use disorder, water quality, tick borne disease, obesity, different teaching/learning approaches) and pursue a strategy to become the center for research, training, practical experience, and collaboration in that topic.	Medium priority and long-term	Moderate staff time and high financial cost	Number of interested partners

Objective 2: Expand our Business Infrastructure

Rationale: Create an environment that will encourage more jobs and opportunities in Southern Vermont

	Strategies	Actions	Priority Level and Timeline	Resource Level	Measures for Progress and Success
2.C	Increase support services and resources for all businesses and sectors	I) Build financial capacity to promote and provide small business development services through regional development corporations. Research the feasibility of creating a regional redevelopment authority to provide guidance to businesses or developers around project permitting requirements. Establish "So you want to open a business" informational material as well as a quick guidance document related to permitting requirements, realistic expectations, contact information for experts, and basic assistance navigating the process.	High priority and short-term/ongoing	Moderate staff time and financial investment	Use of the websites, number of women and minority owned businesses, successful succession matches
		II) Create a Succession Planning Symposium or set of classes to help retiring business owners sell their businesses and keep them operating in the region. Invite potential second-generation owners to participate and learn useful business practices. Maintain a list of both business owners looking to sell and potential buyers who participate in the program to create matches for business mentoring and/or business sale.	High priority and short-term/ongoing	Moderate staff time and minimal financial cost	Number and amount of funding sources; Number of applicants assisted
		III) Establish funding streams targeted for women, veteran, handicapped, and minority owned businesses locating establishments in downtowns, village centers, and commercial corridors. Establish guidelines for the funds that meet the goals of increasing diversity, supporting small businesses, and helping expand the business offerings.	Medium priority, Mid-term	Moderate staff time and moderate financial cost	Establishment of Available Jobs Now listing and number of people finding jobs through the listing
		IV) Conduct an audit of current processes and initiate training related to diversity and inclusion in all aspects of economic development in the area including programming, materials, and communications.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff time and minimal financial cost	Number of documents reviewed and adjusted
		V) Create and operate a more robust "Available Jobs Now" listing program that is hosted on a single regional website. Use this single point to also highlight assets of the region, provide guidance related to relocation, and other supportive information.	Medium priority and mid-term	Moderate staff time and one time/ongoing financial cost	Average number of jobs listed on website and average number of days jobs are open
		VI) Create, maintain, and operate a centralized Business Assistance Center providing information on all assistance programs including available lenders, grant programs, basic business training opportunities, becoming a certified B-corp, workforce training opportunities, business resiliency, and individuals to contact for more detail. Expand business assistance as needs change.	Medium priority and mid-term	Moderate staff time and moderate financial cost	Number of Business Assistance Center contacts; Client satisfaction ratings
2.D	Enhance business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts	I) Formalize a regional business retention and expansion program and business visitation program. Set expectations on the number of businesses to visit each year, ranging from small to large to ensure regular communication with all critical sectors of the economy.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff time and moderate financial cost	Establishment of a regional business retention and expansion program
		II) Engage with large employers to address areas of opportunity, supply chain possibilities, and shared topics of concern (for example, industry leaders in healthcare and higher education).	High priority and ongoing	Moderate staff time	Number of challenges and opportunities identified and effectively responded to
		III) Convene a task force to discuss the challenges related to small businesses in Southern Vermont, including all sectors such as retailers, trades and construction, professional and technical, hospitality and services, and others.	High priority and immediate	Moderate staff time	Establishment of the Task Force; Issuance of initial and follow-up reports
		IV) Continue to develop and maintain quality development and financing services for business attraction, expansion and business retention efforts. Continue to work regionally to maintain an inventory of available space for new or expanding businesses. Incorporate key information about available properties, site infrastructure, assets, and other critical data into online/searchable database.	High priority and ongoing	Moderate staff time	Number of development projects assisted
		V) Build out the Community Development Financing Institution at BDCC and use it to fund critical projects.	High priority and short term	Minimal staff time	Amount of investment attracted
		VI) Continue to monitor the Opportunity Zone tax policy program and identify ways to leverage the program. Create informational material for potential investors and train staff on the topic.	High priority and short term	Minimal staff time	Amount of investment attracted
2.E	Define emerging clusters in high wage, high growth job sectors	I) Conduct a targeted industry analysis for Southern Vermont to identify emerging opportunities. Consider factors such as higher than average wage, projected job growth, and unique assets in Southern Vermont to guide selection of targets.	Medium priority and mid-term	Moderate staff time and moderate financial cost	Completion of industry analysis
		II) Review and report average wage data in Southern Vermont and the state, as well as neighboring counties on an annual basis to refine targets and track progress.	Medium priority and mid-term	Minimal staff time	Annual reporting on data points
		III) Inventory business assets in all clusters including supply chain business, facilities, funding resources, and physical facilities. Create a detailed network map to show the regional strengths of Southern Vermont and work to identify emerging clusters and opportunities.	Medium priority and mid-term	Moderate staff time and minimal financial cost	Number of assets listed on inventory
		IV) Balance a targeted approach with maintaining a nimble workforce system that has the ability to respond to new opportunities as they arise.	Medium priority and ongoing	Minimal staff time	NA

Objective 3: Improve our Physical Infrastructure

Rationale: Make the critical infrastructure improvements so that Southern Vermont is resident and business ready.

	Strategies	Actions	Priority Level and Timeline	Resource Level	Measures for Progress and Success
3.A	Expand broadband and cell infrastructure	I) Undertake research to develop initiatives a clear description of the broadband and cell access problem(s), extent of the problem by location, and other variables necessary to understand the problem and develop cost-effective responses.	High priority and immediate	Moderate staff and high financial cost	Number of properties connected
		II) For each area with insufficient broadband or cellular service, collaborate with carriers to develop a solution. Focus initially on high density commerce areas and major roadways.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff and high financial cost	Number of properties connected
3.B	Support vital downtown and village centers	I) Conduct an analysis of livability by municipality to identify strengths as well as areas for improvement within the region. Start by establishing a list of characteristics for communities where people are moving in and then do a regional assessment of municipalities to provide productive feedback on infrastructure, cultural, and civic improvements/changes.	High priority and short term	Minimal staff time	Creation of livability index
		II) Fund grants to neighborhood associations or committees to be used for community building events, street clean up, community watch programs, and other tools to build great neighborhoods. Convene leaders of the neighborhood groups once a year as part of the Southern Vermont Economic Summit to receive feedback, share successes, and engage them in the conversation about creating great places.	High Priority and short term	Moderate staff time and minimal financial cost	Establishment and use of micro grant program; Topic included on economic summit agenda
		III) Continue to bring small and large events into the towns and village centers and do joint advertising and promotion. Create and widely disseminate a region-wide calendar of events that is up to date and helps avoid double scheduling.	High priority and ongoing	Minimal staff time	Creation of event calendar; Increase in number of events and estimated attendance
		IV) Identify catalyst properties/parcels in the downtowns and village centers that are challenging and engage partners to find market and financially feasible redevelopment options.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff time	Development of catalyst properties
		V) Create up-to-date information sheets related to financing available for redevelopment. Establish a consortium of banks and other funding sources to respond to unmet funding needs. Work with banks to focus annual Community Reinvestment Act commitments on priority projects.	Medium priority and short term	Minimal staff time	Number of tools available for redevelopment
		VI) Research the feasibility of incentive programs for building or renovating residential units within ½ miles of downtown/village center to encourage integrated and vibrant communities.	Medium priority and mid-term	Minimal staff time	Development of residential units near downtown districts
		VII) Use different economic development funding tools to implement projects, including Tax Increment Financing, Payment In Lieu of Taxes, Property Tax Abatement, and others to make projects financially feasible.	Medium priority and ongoing	Minimal staff time	Use of economic development tool
3.C	Increase number and variety of accessible housing options for all incomes and ages	I) Conduct a region wide housing needs and opportunities assessment, including utilizing existing work that has been done. Use this to establish a comprehensive understanding of the gaps in housing supply for current and future population. Establish an inventory of available funding and financial assistance programs for housing related work. Identify funding gaps and mechanisms for filling those gaps. Identify zoning or other regulations that hinder effective residential development needed to respond to current market needs.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff time and moderate financial cost	Completion of housing needs and opportunities assessment and funding program inventory
		II) Begin the conversation with major employers and stakeholders in the region about creative solutions to housing in the region, including public-private-partnerships, house sharing, and other techniques used successfully in New England and beyond.	High priority and ongoing	Minimal staff time	Increased development by local and regional residential developers
		III) Identify target properties, parcels, areas for housing or mixed-use development. Prepare a financial feasibility analysis on each and create incentives to spur development of a variety of housing solutions in communities that are feeling the greatest pressure.	High priority and mid-term	Moderate staff time and moderate financial cost	Development of target properties
		IV) Identify and communicate with local and regional developers who might undertake new residential development on sites identified in 2.C.II.	High priority and mid-term	Minimal staff time	Increased development by local and regional residential developers
		V) Attend real estate networking events to ensure that real estate brokers are familiar with the many resources and assets of Southern Vermont, and can be informed advocates for the area. Use continuing intelligence from these brokers to monitor changing needs in the residential market.	Medium priority and mid-term	Minimal staff time	Increased interaction between the region's economic development and residential broker communities
		VI) Develop housing rehabilitation program to modernize existing housing stock (energy efficiency, appearance, health and safety).	Medium priority and mid-term	Minimal staff time and moderate financial cost	Increased housing rehabilitation projects

Objective 3: Improve our Physical Infrastructure

Rationale: Make the critical infrastructure improvements to be resident and business ready

	Strategies	Actions	Priority Level and Timeline	Resource Level	Measures for Progress and Success
3.D	Address water and wastewater issues	I) Address Windham Regional Commission's Village Wastewater needs as identified in the Windham County 2014 CEDS.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff time and high financial cost	Number of projects completed
		II) Support towns in applying for available funds, including Municipal Planning Grants for water and wastewater issues.	Medium priority and mid-term	Minimal staff time	Amount of investment made in water and wastewater infrastructure
		III) Work collaboratively to identify ways to address biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and dissolved air flotation (DAF) constraints and test pilot projects.	Medium priority and mid-term	Minimal staff time and moderate financial cost	Amount invested in the research
		IV) Expand knowledge of systems and expertise on water and wastewater issues related to development and redevelopment projects in the region. Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the water and wastewater systems in all the towns and prioritize based on health/safety and community goals.	Medium priority and mid-term	Moderate staff time or cost	Designated personnel
3.E	Enhance transportation infrastructure	I) Prepare a Southern Vermont Regional Transportation Plan identifying priority transportation needs and estimated costs. Conduct inventory of existing multi-modal transportation assets. Create a comprehensive list of locations to pursue charging stations and opportunities to decrease reliance on personal automobiles.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff time and moderate financial cost	Establishment of a Regional Transportation Plan
		II) Encourage walking and cycling and create "safety in numbers" by incorporating the Complete Streets approach and National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Design Standards along logical pedestrian and bicycle routes.	Medium priority and short term	Minimal staff time	Number of projects incorporating design standards
		III) Enhance public transportation awareness and options to connect workforce with regional opportunities in a timely, reliable, and convenient way.	Medium priority and short term	Moderate staff time and high financial cost	Number of public transportation users.

Objective 4: Enhance our Social Infrastructure

Rationale: Improve quality of life and stability for residents

	Strategies	Actions	Priority Level and Timeline	Resource Level	Measures for Progress and Success
4.A	Expand accessible child, elderly, and other care options	I) Conduct a review of workforce development needs and any related skill gaps for both child care, early childhood education, and elderly care. Work locally to fund programs to fill those gaps.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff and minimal financial cost	Number of businesses responding and action items
		II) Expand available information and training for in-home child care providers to provide guidance on how to meet the state regulations. Establish a contact person and compile informational material for how to open and operate an in-home care provider facility.	High priority and short term	Moderate staff and moderate financial cost if incentives offered	Number of providers in region
		III) Convene a discussion with major employers regarding the potential for a cooperative approach to child care/early childhood education programs and other community-based solutions.	High priority and short-term	Minimal staff	Establishment of a major employer supported cooperative child care program
		IV) Create incentives for people to open child and elderly care programs and pursue required degree programs.	Medium priority and mid-term	Moderate staff and moderate financial cost if incentives offered	Number of providers in region
		V) Increase awareness of programs that are available to people and care-takers in the region. Look for ways to fill in any gaps to ensure a continuum of care options for elderly and disabled in the community.	Medium priority and mid-term	Minimal staff	Number of available programs
4.B	Expand and support recreation and cultural opportunities	I) Continue to use recreation and cultural amenities to market the area for both visitors and new residents. Maintain up-to-date inventories of available resources and assets and encourage collaboration between major tourism drivers and supporting assets. Assure complete and up-to-date information is available on multiple, linked websites.	High priority and ongoing	Minimal staff time and moderate financial cost	Increased number of visitors and new residents
		II) Support the creation of a single regional creative economy advocate/leader and collaborative effort to pursue goals of the creative economy in support of the arts and cultural resources.	Medium priority and mid-term	Volunteer time	Creation of a regional creative advocate with support and satisfaction of arts and cultural organizations and venues
		III) Encourage major tourist destinations to implement a more diversified promotional campaign. Conduct ongoing discussions and training for host community businesses around customer service and how to be welcoming to non-white visitors.	High priority and short term	Minimal financial cost and minimal staff time	Demographics of tourists
		IV) Establish a fully integrated and developed living history presence in SoVermont, including African American history, indigenous peoples, farm tourism opportunities, and interpretive trails.	Medium priority and mid-term	Volunteer time and some financial cost	Establishment and continued evolution of a regional climate change and resiliency plan
		V) Incorporate the implications of climate change on recreational and cultural resources in planning initiatives and identify ways to boost resiliency in existing businesses while working to pursue policies that are attempting to slow the effects.	Medium priority and mid-term	Minimal staff time	Identification and incorporation of policies
		VI) Create an inventory of indoor recreational assets and support the creation of additional spaces through retrofitting existing buildings for recreational uses.	Medium priority and mid-term	Minimal staff time	Number of indoor recreation assets
4.C	Increase civic and community engagement	I) Continue to evolve public engagement with the changes in technology and needs of the participants to ensure a wide range of engagement and involvement for all major projects, elections, community discussions, and promotions. Use a number of platforms, opportunities for engagement, and different techniques to increase inclusion and ensure participation is accessible and enjoyable for all.	Medium priority and short term	Moderate Staff time and minimal financial cost	Number of people attending meetings or responding to requests for input
		II) Engage with local non-profits and municipal boards to identify their needs regarding board members, volunteers, etc. Coordinate an annual event that highlights all the work being performed by local boards and simultaneously connects interested people with organizations looking for board members and volunteers.	Medium priority and mid-term	Minimal staff time and minimal financial cost	Number of boards and people in events
		III) Create training programs and material for new and existing board members to use so they can better understand their role on the board, how to review finances, fundraising approaches, meeting management, and other topics to build capacity.	Medium priority and long term	Minimal staff time and minimal financial cost	Number of people completing the training
		IV) Work with middle schools, high schools, and adult education providers to offer content/curriculum related to having a sense of pride in the region through history, increasing civic engagement, running for office, and help them develop and understanding of why it is important to get involved in the community.	Medium priority and long term	Moderate staff time and minimal financial cost	Number of classes using curriculum

Objective 5: Strengthen our Economic Development Capacity

Rationale: Enhance the ability for economic development professionals and partners to play a role in implementation

	Strategies	Actions	Priority Level and Timeline	Resource Level	Measures for Progress and Success
5.A	Enhance CEDS implementation ability	I) Apply to the U.S. Economic Development Administration for SoVermont Economic Development District designation and funding and identify other funding sources for available implementation.	High priority and immediate	Minimal staff time	Achieve designation
		II) Define resources needed to adequately implement the CEDS. Consider resources for and from both Windham and Bennington County.	High priority, and short term/ongoing	Additional staff time and financial resources	Resources committed per year
		III) Communicate a concise written summary of the CEDS to each town board. Focus presentation on why this is urgent, the intended outcomes, and the local engagement required for success.	Medium priority and mid-term/ongoing	Minimal staff time	Completed presentations and amount of financial commitments
		IV) Create a master list for necessary or desirable staff professional development training and incorporate into organizational budgets and work timelines. Look into trainings that support the goals of the CEDS including diversity, small business support, and collaboration/project management.	Medium priority and mid-term/ongoing	Minimal staff time to identify, moderate time and financial resources per year	Completion of trainings
		V) Establish a regular review and discussion with the State regarding priorities of the CEDS, coordination with regional and statewide initiatives, and opportunities for funding and/or assistance.	Medium priority and ongoing	Minimal staff time	Resources committed per year
5.B	Develop a communications plan to increase awareness and support of economic development initiatives	I) Create an elevator pitch for all economic development leaders to explain to residents, peers, employers, and decision makers outlining why economic development is important to Southern Vermont, get everyone on the same page, and encourage their participation in improving the region's economy.	High priority and immediate	Minimal staff time	Completed pitch
		II) Continue to prepare annual reports that outline the impact of the various economic development initiatives, including a dashboard that provides updates on the implementation of the various CEDS strategies and actions. Distribute this work widely and make it easily accessible on organization websites. Work to increase awareness and understanding of the various organizations, role in economic development, process for awarding funds, and impact of the work being done.	Medium priority and short term/ongoing	Minimal staff time	Annual reporting on data points
		III) Create a "train the trainer" course which can be given to non-profit boards, select boards, etc. laying out a foundational understanding of our regional economy and our CEDS plan. Help boards implement this training course for their residents.	Medium priority and short term/ongoing	Minimal staff time	Number of trainings completed
		IV) Develop an internal and external strategy to spread awareness to existing and prospective residents and businesses	Medium priority and short term/ongoing	Moderate staff time and high financial investment	Completed strategy and implementation
		V) Work to further engage the local and state media related to economic development initiatives in Southern Vermont. Make sure the Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone is listed as a partner in major initiatives and successes as the CEDS is implemented. Issue regular and relevant press releases.	Medium priority and mid-term/ongoing	Minimal staff time	Number of press releases per year
5.C	Continue to act regionally	I) Continue to have regular meetings with municipalities to outline the objectives of the CEDS, identify ways that they can participate, and offer training and guidance on critical economic development related issues. Look for solutions that do not put additional strain on existing staff like pre-prepared webinar or other materials.	High priority, and short term/ongoing	Moderate staff time	Number of meetings hosted.
		II) Define the role of the CEDS committee and any potential task forces related to advocacy/legislative issues or other specific topics. Establish quarterly meetings of the CEDS Committee to review progress, make refinements to the strategy, and pursue new initiatives.	High priority, and short term/ongoing	Minimal staff time	Number of CEDS meeting attendees, Number of implemented actions of the CEDS
		III) Continue to host and grow the SoVermont Economic Development Summit to share information, increase collaboration, and identify new opportunities. Focus on being a facilitator of collaboration between organizations to leverage resources of the small communities.	High priority, and short term/ongoing	Moderate staff time	Number of summit participants
		IV) Develop a new process to identify priority projects across the region for incorporation into the CEDS.	High priority and immediate	Moderate staff time	Number of eligible projects submitted
		V) Continue building on the Southern Vermont Economy Project Network and connections through enhanced communication of work being done, regular meetings, and increase cooperation around data collection and analysis.	High priority, and short term/ongoing	Moderate staff time	Number of collaborative events and meetings
		VI) Continue to establish relationships and partnerships with neighboring counties that are outside of Vermont to leverage the opportunities, assets, and workforce that exist.	High priority, and short term/ongoing	Moderate staff time	Number of collaborative events and meetings