



REPORT



CEDS Annual Performance Report

2023 Annual Update

September 2022 - September 2023



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Southern Vermont Zone CEDS Partners and Partnership	Page 2
Zone Economics in 2023	Page 3
CEDS Implementation Activities	Page 10
Appendix	Page 14
2022 CEDS Projects	Page 15



Southern Vermont in 2023

Southern Vermont Zone CEDS Partners and Partnership:

The Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation is a private, nonprofit economic development organization that serves as a catalyst for industrial and commercial growth throughout Southeastern Vermont, including Windham County and the towns of Readsboro, Searsburg, and Weston. BDCC serves as the State of Vermont's certified Regional Development Corporation (RDC) for the greater Windham County area. BDCC is one of 12 RDCs throughout Vermont. For more information visit: <https://brattleborodevelopment.com/>

Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) is an affiliate of BDCC that grew from a 2008 grassroots effort, initiated by BDCC, to reverse the economic decline of the Windham Region and plan for the economic impacts from the closure of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. In 2014, after multiple years of regional input, education and data gathering, SeVEDS submitted the Windham Region's federally recognized S.M.A.R.T. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for federal approval. For more information visit: www.seveds.com

The Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) is a political subdivision of the State of Vermont, created by the seventeen towns and villages it serves. It is one of Vermont's eleven regional planning commissions, and since 2016 it has served as one of Vermont's twelve regional development corporations as well. The BCRC works on behalf of its municipalities to build strong, resilient, and sustainable communities; to foster economic prosperity; and to promote a high quality of life for residents of the region. This mission is accomplished through direct planning and community development assistance to town and village governments, through preparation and implementation of regional plans and studies, and through synergistic working relationships with local and regional organizations. For more information visit www.bcrvvt.org.

The Regional Economic Development Working Group (RED Group) is a volunteer body committed to increasing the shared prosperity and quality of life for the seventeen municipalities in southwestern Vermont. The group has a diverse membership that reflects the varied community, business, workforce, and demographic characteristics of the region. The RED Group focuses on the internal and external economic development issues that affect the Bennington County region as a whole; the regional implications of local economic development issues; the process of regional economic development from local, state, and federal perspectives; and options for future initiatives.

The [2019 Southern Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#) was completed by the partners and submitted for final approval in November of 2019 and accepted by the EDA in January of 2020. The 2019 plan is a long term strategy to grow the [Southern Vermont Economy Zone](#) – a region facing significant economic challenges established by the Vermont State Legislature in 2015. The 2019 Zone CEDS is intended to replace the [2014 Windham Region S.M.A.R.T. CEDS](#). The 2018 Southern Vermont Economy Summit at Mount Snow in May served as a kick off for the overall Southern Vermont CEDS [project which was undertaken](#) from November of 2017 through May of 2019 and a draft document was published for 30 day comment on January 7, 2019 after a public presentation in Wilmington, VT. All process and focus group materials related to the 2019 Zone CEDS are hosted digitally at www.SoVermontZone.com

Zone economics in 2023:

We have applied for planning funds from the EDA to conduct the 2024 Southern Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and anticipate having our new CEDS submitted to EDA for consideration in the Spring of 2024. This will be the second CEDS for the SoVermont Zone region and the third for the Windham County Region. While Vermont has regional planning and development entities that coordinate with state activities, the CEDS allows our region to highlight regional strengths and opportunities and bring our communities together to develop long term sustained solutions.

The Southern Vermont Zone partners have also established the Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone as a standalone organization to coordinate resources for the implementation of the CEDS and solicitation of annual project updates. The partners have submitted an application packet for the SoVermont Zone to be recognized by the EDA as an Economic Development District which has demonstrated significant local, regional and state support.

Windham County: 2020 U.S. Census data¹ shows that Windham County's population grew by over 3% since 2010, although that growth is not shared equally among towns. This was the largest population growth percentage of Vermont southern 6 counties. From 2019 to 2021, wages grew by 14% and the number of employers grew by 8%. Nonetheless, southeastern Vermont's labor force keeps shrinking, with fewer young adults and more retirees each year. From 2019 to 2021 the labor force in Windham County dropped by 11%.

Bennington County: According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Bennington County's population remained flat for the second straight decade, and its 2020 population of 37,347 represented an increase of just 222 residents over the previous decade. This relative quiet masks significant migratory trends within the county, however, as the bulk of the population losses were in the southern end of the county, and much of the growth was in the central and northern portions of the county.

The region's workforce has seen significant shifts since the onset of the pandemic, with 27% wage growth and 15% firm growth offsetting a significant 5.5% decline in jobs from 2018 to 2022. The numbers are much healthier when comparing numbers from the first quarter of 2023 to the year before, posting a robust 9 percent increase in establishments, a 2.9% increase in jobs and a 7.2% increase in wages.

Windham Region:

The Windham Region's existing CEDS driven programming continues to mature and evolve and new program development to meet the economic and community development and planning needs of the region is ongoing. The high school career development program, [Pipelines and Pathways \(P3\)](#) is planning it's second Reality Fair². This interactive, hands-on experience covers financial literacy and practical life skills for all Windham County high school students as they begin to take their first steps into the adult world. The Pipelines and Pathways project received

¹ "Vermont Center for Geographic Information." *2020 Census Data* | Vermont Center for Geographic Information, 12 Aug. 2021, <https://vcgi.vermont.gov/data-release/2020-census-data>

² <https://brattleborodevelopment.com/reality-fair-2022/>

significant multi-year private sector commitments in 2023 from three Southern Vermont employers: G.S. Precision, C&S Wholesale Grocery and M&T Bank. The P3 program also hosted its second annual [Fearless Futures Summit](#) which brings together employers and education representatives to highlight career pathways opportunities in Southern Vermont.

This year, P3 served 640 students from each of the five regional high schools. Many participated in classroom programs where P3's Program Manager works alongside faculty to provide resume intensives and FlexPath classes, like the semester-long "Senior Survival". Students do a range of activities that culminate in mock interviews, and meetings with real professionals from their field of interest.

BDCC's real estate is near capacity. The Cotton Mill and the BDCC's Business Park are home to 84 tenants, are humming with activity and employ over 400 people.



The development and launch of an immigrant, refugee and asylum-seeking resettlement program, the [Southern Vermont Welcoming Communities](#) project in 2021 continues to rapidly take shape across both counties. An associated program, the Welcoming Workplaces training program, has received a gold award from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) in the category of Talent Development and Retention for communities with a population between 25k and 200k people. The project is part of the [Southern Vermont Working Communities Challenge](#), a collaborative, multi-stakeholder project with a goal of attracting 1,000 New Vermonters by 2030. In September of 2021, the Ethiopian Community Development Council hired a Director for its [Multicultural Community Refugee Center](#) in Brattleboro and the Vermont governor announced that Brattleboro would be part of welcoming up to 100 Afghan refugees. Since that time 200 people have resettled locally through ECDC programs in Bennington, Brattleboro and Wilmington. Several refugee households have out-migrated, typically to join family or friends who are established in other states. However a comparable number have in-migrated to Southern Vermont, many to join family and friends and, in some cases, with the promise of an open job offering strong wages. With family reunification over the coming months and years, the refugees settled here hope to expand their own households as well. Many have left spouses, children and parents behind in Afghanistan or refugee camps. Approximately 3/4 of the refugees are Afghan. The next largest group is Eritrean, displaced from Ethiopia. The balance of refugees are from other African countries and from Guatemala.

In conjunction with the Welcoming Communities BDCC's Welcoming Workplaces initiative focuses on building employer best practices in recruiting and retaining BIPOC and foreign-born Vermonters. It is a talent recruitment, attraction, and support program designed to increase the size and quality of our region's dwindling workforce. This year the program was [recognized with a gold prize from the International Economic Development Council](#).

Brattleboro was selected by World Education Services (WES) as one of 16 communities invited to join the fifth cohort of the [Skilled Immigrant Integration Program](#) (SIIP), an initiative that comprises 40 cities, regions, and states in advancing the workforce inclusion of immigrants and refugees who have international education, training, and experience. As an educational partner we've been able to verify educational credentials for some refugees, although this process internationally remains spotty and poses an ongoing barrier to redeploying trained professionals here in the U.S., particularly medical personnel.³

Last year 61 entrepreneurs worked one-on-one with BDCC lending and technical assistance (TA) specialists. 55% were women-owned, 18% BIPOC owned. The business services team is often helping entrepreneurs build financial expertise and systems. Clients are family owned, small operations, often beloved (and delicious) local venues like North River Bakery and Vegan AF. They represent every sector including farms, mail-order, manufacturing, trades, and creatives. This year BDCC formed a new partnership with SCORE NH-VT. Local entrepreneurs can work 1:1 with SCORE volunteers on business fundamentals. This is a great addition to the Vermont TA referral network. In FY'23 we connected 62 businesses to business development programs and providers who provide specialized services. BDCC is also building a comprehensive referral database to better serve the region. BDCC loans can be used for operating funds, equipment, projects, startup or growth. BDCC partnered with the non-profit lender, KIVA, which targets underserved communities.

BDCC Expanded its business support team. For five years, business support and investment was made possible by the [Windham County Economic Development Program](#) funded through the Vermont Yankee closure. WCEDP investment has led to \$51.5 million in impact and 866 jobs created and retained in the Windham Region. Windham's regional businesses require sustained support. BDCC's business services team will provide a suite of technical assistance, trainings, programs, and resources including new lending products geared to businesses at any stage – from startup and growth through reorganization and succession

In 2021, the WCEDP Business Plan Competition was launched. The winner was Vermont Weaving Supplies. Founder Dena Moses is using the grant to launch a subscription-based online member platform that will allow members to access patterns and professionally videographed tutorials. In 2022 the second competition kicked off with four regional pitches and Twenty six entrepreneurs submitted business plans. Dosa Kitchen won the grand prize. In 2023 the 3rd competition resulted in 14 entrants and [Wicked Clean Grooming winning the 20K grand prize](#).

³<https://brattleborodevelopment.com/for-immediate-release-bdcc-refugee-partners-selected-to-join-national-skilled-immigrant-integration-program/>



Jamaica, VT Town Meeting 2023

Investment in regional economic development continues to grow. Each year, voters in the 27 Windham Region towns are asked to invest in SeVEDS. In 2023, funding was approved by voters in Athens, Brattleboro, Brookline, Dover, Dummerston, Guilford, Halifax, Jamaica, Londonderry, Marlboro, Newfane, Putney, Readsboro, Rockingham, Stratton, Townshend, Wardsboro, Weston, Whitingham, Wilmington, and Winhall. These 19 towns represent over 80% of regional residents. Municipal support is matched with philanthropic, private, state, and federal dollars as well as BDCC revenue. Towns will provide \$138,000 to fund FY '23 programs, nearly doubling BDCC's baseline state funding as a regional development corporation. Over the last five years, town funds helped launch BDCC Paid Internships, P3 high school career education, workforce development and attraction, and now Welcoming Communities programs. Town funds match USDA investment to provide programs serving communities directly: the [Southern Vermont Economy Project](#) (SVEP) and [Community Facilities Technical Assistance Program](#) (TAP).

The annual Southern Vermont Economy Summit is the largest SVEP event. This year 286 attendees from 53 towns gathered in May at the Hermitage for the 2023 Summit, themed "Forging our Future". Workshops included a marketing intensive for small businesses, a deep dive on refugee welcome efforts, and a legislator's FAQ panel on what the state's new housing bill means for communities. Check out the complete program, with presentations and photos at [SoVermontZone.com](#). The runaway Summit hits in 2023 were a workshop on increasing civic engagement with Vermont League of Cities and Towns and Vermont Council on Rural Development, and a student panel put on by BDCC's High School program with Leland and Gray faculty. That audience was riveted as six young people about to graduate high school described candidly how they think about the future, and how Vermont factors into that.

Housing has emerged as a major barrier to addressing the labor shortages throughout Vermont. In the Windham Region, the Town of Brattleboro released a [Housing Needs Assessment and Action Plan](#) that calls for the creation of 500 Housing Units. In 2022 The Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP) offered grants up to \$50,000 per unit for repairs needed to bring vacant rental units up to Vermont Rental Housing Health Code guidelines, add new units to an existing building, or create an accessory dwelling unit on an owner-occupied property. 31 units have been

brought online in Southern Vermont through the VHIP program since 2022. A Southern Vermont Housing Coalition Coalition has a housing project envisioned for the 177 acres former Austine School.⁴

The State of Vermont experienced major flooding and Southern Vermont was not spared. The most extreme damage occurred in Weston and Londonderry, where both towns' village centers were under water. BDCC rapidly stood up support services for impacted businesses, building off of the work and programs that the U.S. Economic Development Administration funded in Southern Vermont after the 2011 flooding from T.S. Irene. This work and assistance chronicling [helped direct on the ground foundation support](#) from both the Vermont Community Foundation and the Stratton Foundation. Climate Change and community mitigation are areas of intense focus for our region's learning.

Bennington County:

Cooperative and creative engagement with the region's municipalities, community organizations, and business sectors, as well as close working relationships with relevant state and federal agencies, is at the heart of BCRC's activities and professional expertise in community and economic development. BCRC has maintained a community development program since 2012 and expanded it to include economic development in 2016. Since then, BCRC has served as both the RPC and RDC for southwestern Vermont, and approximately three staff members work in this program full or part-time.

Strong relationships within Bennington County and across Southern Vermont, as well as an intentional pivot to project-based work to complement traditional grant-funded opportunities, has helped BCRC to expand its engagements. The following are highlights for FY23 work, which reflect the variety of services provided:

- [Bennington Armory Reuse Study](#): In January of 2023 BCRC completed a report for the Town of Bennington that outlined opportunities for reuse of the Bennington Armory, an 8,220 sq. ft building on a 0.5-acre downtown parcel slated for transfer from the Army National Guard to the Town of Bennington. This Municipal Planning Grant-funded work included convening a steering committee, creating a site inventory, organizing tours, compiling a history of the facility, performing an energy audit, exploring other Armory redevelopment projects in comparable communities, and engaging with local press regarding public interest in the proposed land swap between the Town and the National Guard.
- [Walloomsac Inn Redevelopment Notice](#): In the Spring of 2023 BCRC staff received an inquiry from the Preservation Trust of Vermont about the potential for creating a document that could generate interest in the former Walloomsac Inn, now an unused residence in a prominent location of Old Bennington. BCRC staff worked with several stakeholders, including the site's owners, to create and selectively distribute an engaging and descriptive document that features the Inn, its surroundings, and its economic context.
- [Dorset Housing Study](#): The BCRC performed a study of housing trends and affordability for the Town of Dorset. The study included identifying trends in Dorset's housing stock, development patterns, affordability and how the current housing paradigm has impacted the Town economy. Interviews with local employers – including manufacturing, education, and retail – provided a series of qualitative assessments highlighting the impacts of the housing stock on the local economy. It also included a summary of municipal tools and

4

<https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/raising-homes-it-takes-a-village-to-grow-housing-how-vermont-towns-are-trying-to-make-it-happen/Content?oid=35803019>

best practices related to the development of affordable housing and made recommendations for how housing should be considered as part of the redevelopment plan of a 307-acre parcel recently acquired by the Town. Results were presented to the Dorset Selectboard.



Southern Vermont CUD Ribbon-Cutting at Bromley Mountain with US Senator Peter Welch. Peru VT, August 2023

- [Southern Vermont Communications Union District](#): The BCRC has supported the formation and work of the Southern Vermont Communication Union District, providing fiscal management and staff support for efforts to expand access to broadband in rural areas throughout the region. In September 2022 the Vermont Community Broadband Board approved the CUD's \$9.01 million application under Act 71 to fund a two-year buildout of a fiber optic network to unserved and underserved premises throughout Bennington County. This funding will support a public-private partnership between the SoVT CUD and Consolidated Communications that will leverage another \$14.1 million in fiber optic network construction guaranteed by Consolidated to occur in FY23 and FY24. By the end of 2023, 99.3 percent of currently unserved passings within the district will be connected to fiber optic broadband through this partnership. A late summer ribbon-cutting with Senator Peter Welch was the highlight of this essential work.
- **Equity and Public Health Planning and Implementation**: The BCRC managed two studies related to the local unhoused population for the Bennington County Continuum of Care (CoC), a coalition of not-for-profit service providers. The first study looked at the prevalence of Unaccompanied Youth in the southern part of Bennington County, and collected data from surveys and interviews with officials, service agencies, and unhoused youth related to the needs of the population and their ability to access care. BCRC managed an RFP and hired Proscenium Data Solutions to assist with data collection and analysis. BCRC gathered key stakeholders and provided local support towards the effort. BCRC continues to serve on a committee working to implement solutions related to the outcomes of the Unaccompanied Youth report. The COC

Adam Grinold, Executive Director **Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation**
76 Cotton Mill Hill • Brattleboro, VT • 05301 • 802 257-7731 ext 224
agrinold@brattleborodevelopment.com

also engaged BCRC to develop a plan for a Public Sanitation Facility in Downtown Bennington that would act as both a public restroom and a place where the local unhoused population could access services including laundry, showers, phone services, warming/cooling services and information about how to access care. BCRC managed an RFP and hired Placework Studio to assist with developing an architectural vision for the facility and to help estimate the potential costs of site development. BCRC again gathered key stakeholders and has provided local support towards the effort. BCRC is developing a final project report with expected completion in September of 2023.

- The 6th annual Southern Vermont Economy Summit took place in Wilmington on May 23, 2023. The theme of the 2023 Southern Vermont Economy Summit was “Forging our Future” and it was a major success bringing together just under 300 people dedicated to improving the economic conditions and lives of those living in Southern Vermont. At the Summit, BCRC’s Callie Fishburn was named one of eighteen Southern Vermont Emerging Leaders. The Southern Vermont Economy Summit is co-produced by BCRC and the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation.
- BCRC remains an active member of the Vermont Creative Network’s Southern Vermont Zone. The Zone, one of five in the network, covers Bennington and Windham counties. Staff are focused on bringing economic development perspectives to the team’s activities, and facilitating data-informed conversations within the creative community and the broader business community it operates in. The November BCRC Commissioners Meeting featured presentations by Vermont Creative Network’s Johanna de Graffenreid and representatives of the Southern Vermont Creative Network.
- Business Visitations and Support: BCRC staff conducted 82 business visits in FY23. Businesses included large manufacturers and healthcare providers, nonprofit museums and land trusts, art galleries, value-added agricultural producers, downtown retail, food service, real estate offices, and new business startups. Topics included workforce challenges, Vermont Capital Investment Grants, Building Communities Grants, Community Recovery & Revitalization Program (CRRP), real estate development and rehabilitation, community support, housing challenges, land management network building, business acquisitions, and business relocation incentives.
- Community Recovery & Revitalization Program: CRRP grants are available to for-profit, nonprofit, and municipal applicants. The funding is intended for projects making capital improvements or capital expansions that spur economic recovery and revitalization in communities across the state. Eligible projects may include those that assist industries most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic such as arts and entertainment, hospitality, agriculture, and educational services. The funding is also available for capital expenditures that support childcare and affordable housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income households, and to establish or improve municipal water and wastewater systems to build housing or create jobs through business creation and expansion. Projects must show a COVID impact. BCRC worked with sixteen (16) applicants to provide guidance on the applications, information on prevailing wages in the region and writing letters of support prior to the December 29th timeline during which the program provided preference to rural applicants. During the first announced round of awards the Town of Manchester received \$603,776 for a sewer line extension, Hale Resources received \$500,000 to support the development of housing at the former Bennington High School building on Main Street and Bennington Museum received \$36,944 for facilities upgrades. In the second round of awards, the Dorset Water District was awarded \$1,000,000 for upgrades to the town’s water system.
- [Capital for a Day/ARPA Funding Session](#): BCRC assisted the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the Governor’s office in arranging a meeting of all State agencies with ARPA and other sources of funding for municipal, organizational, and business leaders in the region. The event, held at the Manchester Community Library on December 5th, drew about sixty community

members who had the chance to hear about funding resources and ask questions about their existing or potential projects.

- Putnam Block Redevelopment: The completed Phase 1 of the Putnam Block Redevelopment continues to fill with tenants. All thirty-one residential units were committed as of the day the project construction was completed. Commercial tenants including the Bennington College Development Office, VNA-Hospice of the Southwest Region, Southwestern Vermont Health Care, Bespoke Salon, Bennington Bookshop, The Coffee Bar and Global Z International are now occupying the buildings. A new 120-seat restaurant, Union South, opened in mid-September 2023.
- [Bennington High School \(Benn Hi\) Redevelopment Project](#): BCRC staff met with representatives of the Town of Bennington and Hale Resources to provide support and guidance for a potential redevelopment project at the former Bennington High School (Benn Hi) building on Main Street in Bennington. It is a complex project that, if successful, would lead to the relocation and expansion of the Bennington Senior Center and Meals on Wheels program, new and improved gymnasium, and other recreational space for the Bennington Branch of the Northern Berkshire YMCA and thirty-seven (37) new affordable and market rate housing units in the historic structure. The BCRC Executive Director has been meeting regularly with Hale Resources to discuss funding opportunities and structure calling upon the success of the Putnam Block Redevelopment project as a model and spoke at a March Bennington Select Board meeting in support of a VCDP grant application to further the project which was ultimately awarded.
- Workforce Development: The BCRC Workforce and Education Committee continued its monthly meetings in a virtual format to begin the fiscal year. Areas of discussion included shoring up childcare in the region, planning and support in conjunction with regional partners for a September career fairs in Bennington and initial planning to relaunch in person April Career month activities in 2023. BCRC worked on planning for a Bennington Career Expo in conjunction with the Vermont Department of Labor, Creative Workforce Solutions and the Southwestern Vermont Chamber of Commerce and the event was a big success in September with over 100 job seekers and 44 employers. Much planning went into the return of in person events for Bennington County Career Month in April following a pause and move to virtual events during the pandemic. Over twenty events took place throughout the county in April and into early May. The Town of Bennington Select Board officially recognized Career Month with an official proclamation at its March 27th meeting.

CEDS Implementation Activities

The topline goals of the Southern Vermont CEDS are to strengthen business and support people. Five objectives were identified to meet those goals: increase our population, improve our physical infrastructure, enhance our social infrastructure, expand our business infrastructure, and develop our economic development infrastructure. Annually projects are submitted to help achieve this goal and they may be found in this report's appendix. Highlights from regional implementation activity from September 2022 - September 2023 are summarized below by objective

A full list of 2022 projects ranked by the CEDS Project Ranking Committee appears in the Appendix.

Funded CEDS Activities in 2023 Windham, Bennington, Zone-wide

Increase our Population:

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

Scope: Zone wide Southern Vermont's **population grew to 83,252** according to the 2020 Census, approximately 2 percent greater than 2010. Federal estimates through 2019 forecast a decline of more than 4 percent, highlighting the importance of the slight gains made. **Key 2023 stats:** 200 New Vermonters, from Afghanistan and Guatemala have relocated in Southern Vermont

Scope: Windham County: 19% increase in the number of Windham County births from 2020 to 2021.

Improve our Physical Infrastructure:

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


SCOPE: County Specific

The CEDS highlighted the need for investment in broadband infrastructure. Southern Vermont has capitalized on major legislation Vermont Legislature passed in May 2019 supporting the development of community fiber projects. As a result, these two CUDS are engaged in the build out of the largest public works project in Southern Vermont. **DVFiber**, a community fiber to the premises project in **24 member towns**⁵ has made major progress in 2023 turning its first customers on. Similarly in Bennington County, the **Southern Vermont Communications Union District** represents the interests of 14 towns and has procured a public-private partnership with an incumbent ISP.

- WRC Windham County DVFiber
 - \$21.9MM grant award
 - Expanded partnership with GWI
 - High level design completed
 - 300 miles of fiber purchased
 - First construction in district 2022-2023
Readsboro and Stamford



⁵ "Member Towns." *DVFiber*, 11 Sept. 2021, <https://dvfiber.net/member-towns/>.

- Hired first Executive Director Gabrielle Cuffrieda
- Whitingham Wastewater Treatment Plants
 - Voters approved 3.9MM bond
 - Congressionally Directed Spending Allocation of 1 Million
- Wilmington Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Extension
 - Extends existing line out along Route 9 and Route 100
 - Expected Cost 3.76 million
 - Northern Borders Regional Commission 1 million dollar grant.
- BCRC Bennington County Southern Vermont Communications Union District/Catamount Fiber⁶
 - \$9MM grant award
 - Public-private partnership with  Southern Vermont Communications Union District
 - First previously-unserved customers connected to fiber optic broadband in summer 2022.
 - More than 99 percent of unserved and underserved connected to fiber within 18 months.
 - Formal partnership with Bennington County Regional Commission to provide administrative and operational services.

Enhance our Social Infrastructure:

Improve quality of life and stability for residents.

- Grace Cottage Emergency Room Expansion
 - USDA Technical Assistance Grant by BDCC provided design
 - Community funded
- P3 Pipelines and Pathways
 - 600 students reached
 - 100 employers engaged

Expand our Business Infrastructure:

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

- Windham County: In FY '23 BDCC Small Business Services helped 120 Entrepreneurs stay, start and grow. \$3.1 Million in BDCC lending was invested in 39 companies that employ 192 people. BDCC Helped 439 Businesses & Non-Profits access Restart Vermont Relief, and helped 132 small businesses access CDBG-CV Pandemic Relief

⁶ <https://sovtcud.net/>

- Bennington Community Market
 - Secured over \$2.5MM in federal and philanthropic grants to create a community-supported grocery store that supports local farmers and makes healthy food accessible in a downtown food desert.
 - Outgrowth of a \$1,000,000 [three-year grant](#) from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to Bennington College to address food insecurity in Bennington County.

Develop our Economic Development Capacity: Enhance the ability for economic development professionals and partners to play a role in implementation.

Scope: Windham County

- Town funding for SeVEDS has enabled the launch of such programs as BDCC Paid Internships, P3 high school career education, newcomer and talent attraction initiatives, and workforce training. Town funds matched with USDA funding also created programs that serve communities directly – the Southern Vermont Economy Project (SVEP) and Community Facilities Technical Assistance Program (TAP). **SCOPE:** Windham In FY22 towns contributed 138,000 which helped BDCC secure **KEY Metric** \$8.9million for other organizations – nonprofits and businesses doing critical projects that contribute to the region’s economic vitality. This includes grants from the Northern Borders Regional Commission, USDA, EDA, CARES Act, CDBG, and multiple state programs.

Scope: Bennington County

- BCRC allocated professional development budget to enable staff to secure IEDC Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) certification. **KEY Metric** Only one other professional in Vermont possesses this designation.

Scope: Zonewide

- Southern Vermont Economy Project
 - Facilitated solicitation, ranking projects submitted to be included in the five-year plan for growing the southern Vermont economy (see appendix)
 - Southern Vermont Summit
 - SoVermont Get on Board Project
 - 22 Regional Town Meeting Updates
 - [18 Emerging Leaders Recognized](#)
- Economic Development District proposal submitted to the U.S. Economic Development Administration for Consideration.
 - Website for the District: <https://www.sovermontzone.com/general-4>
 - Legal Entity formed and registered with Vermont Secretary of State and U.S. Internal Revenue Service to receive EDD Designation: Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone, Inc.

Appendix

LINK to EDD Designation Packet

https://www.vermontzone.com/_files/ugd/1de45c_2cf25177ed6b41389eb0a5dfc7b98b83.pdf

Link to FY'23 BDCC & SeVEDS ANNUAL REPORT

<https://brattleborodevelopment.com/bdcc-seveds-annual-reports/>

Link to 2021 Brattleboro Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy:

https://www.brattleboro.org/vertical/Sites/%7BFABA8FB3-EBD9-4E2C-91F9-C74DE6CECFD%7D/uploads/Final_Full_Report_-_Housing_Needs_Assessment_and_Strategy_-_Town_of_Brattleboro_VT.pdf

Link to Bennington County 2021 Regional Perspective

<https://vermontbiz.com/news/2021/october/17/bennington-county-pandemic-uncertainty-lingers-workforce-housing-shortages>

Link to Windham County 2022 Regional Perspective:

<https://vermontbiz.com/news/2022/may/21/windham-county-economic-report-you-need-housing-and-housing-needs-infrastructure>

CEDS Projects Rankings:

Adam Grinold, Executive Director **Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation**
76 Cotton Mill Hill • Brattleboro, VT • 05301 • 802 257-7731 ext 224
agrinold@brattleborodevelopment.com

2023 CEDS Projects will be determined by December 1st 2023 and posted to <https://www.vermontzone.com/ceds>

2022 CEDS Projects Submissions:

BDCC and BCRC staff brought together ten individuals representing the region, and who are firmly established in their field of expertise, to review, rank, and discuss the 78 project submissions. This year's committee: Andrea Bacchi, Think Dynamic Digital; Gordon Black, Town of Manchester; Linda Bow, Heritage Financial Credit Union; Michael Corey, Bennington College; Bob Donald, Windham Foundation; Mark Halversen, US Department of Energy (retired); Patrick McAllister, Town of Halifax; James Salerno, Hale Mountain Research; Kate Trzaskos, Downtown Brattleboro Alliance; Betsy Thurston, Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance.

2022 Southern Vermont CEDS Vital Projects (alphabetical by project name)

Project: Area-Wide Plan

- Impact Region: A single town in Windham County
- Submitting Organization: Town of Rockingham

Description: The potential for continued reinvestment and redevelopment of Bellows Falls Island and the Under the Hill area presents a unique opportunity for the Village of Bellows Falls, the Town of Rockingham, and the entire southeast region of Vermont. The Area-Wide Plan has provided a thoughtful and feasible plan for the future of the Island and Under the Hill that addresses a wide range of community needs including housing, job creation, increased tax base, recreational opportunities, and celebrating the history and culture of the area. This work helped align local organizations and groups, stakeholders of property and business owners of the target area, the Railroad, State and Hydro companies in the target area, and community members and downtown merchants to create a fluid document with the vision of the Island District as a Transit Oriented Development centering on remediated brownfield properties with mixed-use facilities and the Under the Hill District a combination of Destination Tourism Cultural Heritage Center Historic Riverfront Park, and Renewable Energy storage and use activities.

Project: BDCC Business Park Expansion

- Impact Region: A single town in Windham County
- Submitting Organization: Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation

Description: The BDCC Business Park Expansion would entail a complete final buildout of the BDCC's 300,000sf business park property using a 4 acre parcel adjacent to the existing building. This project has the advantage of intensifying use on a property that has all of the necessary conditions for industrial businesses including adjacency to road, rail and public transit. As the home of two of Vermont's fastest growing manufacturers and more than 225 employees coming to work every day, demand which cannot be met within the existing Business Park. Nor can these needs be met elsewhere in the region, as there is a shortage of available, suitable real estate for light industrial and industrial uses. Given the tight commercial real estate market and the high costs to build, maximizing use of properties we own is an efficient way to address pent up demand.

Project: Bennington Community Market

- Impact Region: Multiple Towns in Bennington County
- Submitting Organization: Bennington Community Market

Description: Bennington Community Market is a community-supported grocery store that supports local farmers and makes healthy food accessible to everyone in our community, and aims to open its doors in Fall 2022. Our mission is to support local farmers, increase access to healthy food for all members of our community, and contribute to the revitalization of downtown Bennington. The market will be a year-round hub to enjoy seasonal cooking and eating, as well as to provide grocery staples and take-home meal options from our kitchen. In partnership with area organizations that work with food-insecure populations, our Healthy Food Access Fund will provide discounts to our neighbors in need. We will also accept SNAP benefits and participate in the WIC program. We are thrilled to share that the Market, along with other partners in the Bennington Fair Food Initiative, was recently nominated for a federal earmark by Representative Peter Welch to support our regional food system efforts.

Project: DVFiber

- Impact Region: Windham Region
- Submitting Organization: DVFiber

Description: DVFiber, the trade name for the Deerfield Valley Communications Union District, is on a mission to secure reliable, affordable broadband for all homes and businesses in towns throughout the Windham Region. In the past year the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB) has awarded DVFiber a \$26 million in grant funding to finance buildout of a fiber-optic broadband network. At the same time, DVFiber has

entered into a partnership with GWI as its internet service provider, and hired its first Executive Director.

Project: Grace Cottage Primary Care Clinic Upgrade

- Impact Region: Southern Vermont
- Submitting Organization: Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital

Description: The Grace Cottage Family Health building has been bursting at the seams for decades. A great deal of time and money has been spent on makeshift solutions because this federally-designated Rural Health Clinic is located in two 1840s-era, wood-framed houses connected by a narrow hallway donated to Grace Cottage many years ago. Last fall, generous donors pledged \$5M toward a new clinic building, and Grace Cottage has been working with an architectural firm since January to design a modern, efficient, professional space in which to provide primary care for the coming decades. The plans call for construction of a new, three-story clinic wing with approximately 25,000 square feet on the north end of the current building.

Project: Greater Rockingham Area Services Energy Improvements

- Impact Region: Multiple towns in the Windham Region
- Submitting Organization: Greater Rockingham Area Services

Description: GRAS is working to replace our antiquated inefficient oil burning heating system with an energy efficient wood chip fired steam boiler system. The system will include installation of a biomass boiler, an LP boiler backup and an exterior wood chip silo. The health care and social service providers who lease space in our buildings serve the needs of the community of Bellows Falls and its surrounding communities in Windham County, providing 85 jobs in the region. Due to largely antiquated building infrastructure, we see constantly rising operating costs. This project will provide lasting benefits to our operations and allows us to retain the existing tenants and the jobs and services they provide.

Project: Putnam Community Health (Putnam Block Redevelopment – Phase 2)

- Impact Region: A single town in Bennington County
- Submitting Organization: Putnam Community Health LLC

Description: Putnam Community Health (PCH) is the second phase of the Putnam Block Redevelopment project. The project continues the revitalization of this gateway property. The project plans a single five story, mixed use building. The project expects to draw

Southwestern Vermont Health Care (SVHC) as its anchor tenant with approximately 12,000 SF of medical office space. Retail spaces will line the street on the first floor. High-quality apartments will occupy floors two through four. The fifth floor is slated to be leasehold residential condominiums. There will be approximately sixty (60) residential units. The project will continue the Brownfields remediation begun in Phase I of the project completing the clean up activities on the four-acre site.

Project: Southshire Regenerative Food Center

- Impact Region: Southern Vermont
- Submitting Organization: Southshire Meats

Description: The Southshire Regenerative Food Center (RFC) is a 43,453sf facility that will serve as an aggregation/distribution, meat finishing, and co-packing facility for Southshire Meats. Southshire is moving its headquarters to the facility and is already using a portion of the building for frozen storage and distribution while construction is completed. The RFC will be the aggregation point for a network of small abattoirs located throughout the region. The first of these abattoirs, Higley Hill Processing, is already operational in Wilmington where Southshire and RFN re-opened the mothballed processing facility on Adams Farm. This model of distributed abattoirs allows slaughter to occur closer to the farms where animals are raised, providing greater animal welfare and greater resilience to the foodshed.

Project: Southwestern Vermont Health Care and Castleton University Nursing Partnership

- Impact Region: Bennington County
- Submitting Organization: Southwestern Vermont Health Care

Description: Southwestern Vermont Health Care (SVHC) has partnered with Castleton University to retain qualified professionals, increase equitable access to education, and to address the shortage of registered nurses with a bachelor of science in nursing (BSN) degree. SVHC has committed to offer employment to Castleton students who satisfactorily complete the BSN program, obtain licensure, and meet pre-employment requirements. For students who accept the offer, SVHC will pay back (in full) tuition debt over the course of six years of employment. Encouraging this talented pool of individuals to remain in the community provides a number of economic benefits for the region. Many of the individuals graduating from the program are young professionals, starting new families and establishing personal and professional networks and roots. This six-year program is an incentive to remain in the area, and in turn to purchase or rent local housing, purchase

local goods and services, and more. The absence of education debt for these individuals will encourage investment and spending beyond peers who are burdened with high monthly student loan payments.

Project: Winston Prouty Campus Development Project

- Impact Region: Windham Region
- Submitting Organization: Winston Prouty Center

Description: The Winston Prouty Development Project is one of the most significant housing and development undertakings in New England. The overarching goal of this project is to create an inclusive neighborhood comprising up to 500 units of mixed income housing suited to all people regardless of age, income, ability or disability, gender or gender identity. Furthermore, the project will incorporate additional programmatic assets in arts, recreation, and cultural uses. The housing program intends to respond to the statewide housing deficit, in which Brattleboro is particularly gridlocked in attracting new residents and demographics due to a lack of quality and affordably priced housing.

2022 Southern Vermont CEDS Projects (alphabetical by project name)

- 47 Flat Street – M&S Development LLC
- 814 Arts Hub in Southern Vermont
- Area-Wide Plan – Town of Rockingham
- BDCC Business Park Expansion – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- BDCC Business Services – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation/SeVEDS
- Bellows Falls Incremental Neighborhood Housing Development – Town of Rockingham
- Bellows Falls Opera House Lower Theater – Town of Rockingham
- Bellows Falls Vacuum Coating Training Center – Sustainable Valley Group, Inc.
- Bennington Armory Reuse – Town of Bennington
- Bennington Community Market – Bennington Community Market
- BF Historic Trains Station Purchase and Renovation – Town of Rockingham
- Brattleboro Multi-Use Industrial Park – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- Brattleboro Quality Youth Development Project and Youth Council – Building a Positive Community
- Build to Scale – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- CCC New Childcare Center Series – Child Care Counts
- Chroma Slope Stormwater Protection – Chroma Technology Corporation

- Commercial Real Estate Analysis for Windham Region – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- Community Facilities Technical Assistance – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- Cotton Mill Expansion – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- Development Discussions – Bennington County Regional Commission
- DeWitt Housing and Small Business Training Center Redevelopment – M&S Development, LLC
- Dover & Wilmington Bi-Town Strategic Marketing Plan – Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley Chamber of Commerce
- DVFiber – Deerfield Valley Communications Union District
- Economic Dignity and Health Equity Community of Practice – Bennington Office of Local Health, Vermont Department of Health
- Energizer Facility Reuse – Town of Bennington
- Everett Estate Redevelopment – Southwestern Vermont Health Care
- Flood Hazard Mitigation in Jacksonville Village – Town of Whitingham
- Food Connects Capital Expansion Project – Food Connects Inc.
- Food Scrap Composting Facility Expansion – Windham Solid Waste Management District
- Gamer’s Grotto Structural Upgrades – The Gamer’s Grotto
- Governor Hunt House Community Center – Friends of Vernon Center
- Grace Cottage Primary Care Clinic Upgrade – Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital
- Greater Rockingham Area Services Energy Improvements – Greater Rockingham Area Services
- Green Island Project: Great Falls Food Hub – Sustainable Valley Group, Inc.
- HatchSpace – The Hatch, Inc.
- Improving Energy Efficiency and Building Community – WindowDressers of Bennington County
- Intersecting Recreation, Environmental Education and Food Security at Lake Paran – Paran Recreations
- Island St. Revitalization – Bellows Falls Area Development Corporation
- Leveraging Start-Up Success to Expand Engagement and Impact – Flat Iron Cooperative, Inc.
- Library Roof – South Londonderry Free Library Association LLC
- Media Skills Training Program – GNAT-TV/BCTV/CAT-TV
- Museum New Site Expansion – Southern Vermont Natural History Museum
- Old School Community Center – Old School Enrichment Council, Inc.
- Pipelines and Pathways Program (P3) – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- Pownal Center Business Revitalization – C&T Adventures LLC

- Putnam Community Health (Putnam Block Redevelopment Phase 2) – Putnam Community Health LLC
- Refugee Rental Assistance Program – Bennington County Open Arms
- Resourcing Southern Vermont’s Co-operative Economy – Valley Alliance of Worker Co-operatives
- Retreat Farm as a Public Common – Retreat Farm
- Retreat Farm Market and Food Center – Retreat Farm
- Rich Earth Institute’s Urine Nutrient Reclamation Project – Rich Earth Institute
- Robertson Paper Site Redevelopment – Bellows Falls Area Development Corporation
- Rockingham Industrial Expansion Project – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- Rockingham Industrial Park Stormwater Project – BDCC Holdings II
- Route 9 Infrastructure Improvement – Town of Wilmington
- Skillab Tech Enabled Workforce Support – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- Southern Vermont Economy Summit – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- Southshire Regenerative Food Center – Southshire Meats LLC
- Southwestern Vermont Health Care and Castleton University Nursing Partnership – Southwestern Vermont Health Care
- Southwestern Vermont Medical Center Emergency Department Transformation – Southwestern Vermont Health Care
- SoVT CUD Public-Private Partnership – Southern Vermont Communications Union District
- SoVT Zone Wide Water Infrastructure Assessment – Windham Regional Commission
- SVEP 3.0: CAPP – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- The Arlington Common – Arlington Arts Enrichment Program
- The Bike Hub – The Bike Hub, Inc.
- The Commons at High Street & Green – High Street & Green
- Thursday Night Live! – Better Bennington Corporation
- TLR Master Plan BF Greater Island District and FERC – Town of Rockingham
- Trails and Outdoor Recreation – Town of Rockingham
- Tri-Park Master Plan Projects – M&S Development LLC
- Tri-Park Mobile Cooperative Housing Capital Improvements – Tri-Park Cooperative Housing Corporation/M&S Development
- UVM Spatial Analysis Initiative for Bennington County – Bennington County Regional Commission
- Voices of Hope – Voices of Hope
- WheelPad L3C Manufacturing Facility – WheelPad L3C
- Whitingham Sewer Infrastructure – Town of Whitingham
- Winston Prouty Campus Development Project – Winston Prouty Center

- Workforce Center of Excellence – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
- Working Communities – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation