

SWOT Analysis				
Theme	STRENGTH S	WEAKNESS W	OPPORTUNITY O	THREAT T
Land Use and Natural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working landscape and rural entrepreneurial spirit • Natural beauty • Heritage-based tourism • Rural character • Four season resorts • Forest products economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived and real conflicts between regulatory hurdles and development demand • Expense, time and regulatory constraints, around permit approval, combine to limit development • Lack of pre-permitted buildings and land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage-based tourism • Growth in value-added agriculture • Expand year-round recreation opportunities • Strengthen outdoor recreation economy • Eco-tourism • State Designated Downtown Program • Hemp business • Expansion of modern wood heating market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggling “conventional” agriculture • Fragmentation threatens ecological systems and the forest products industry • Climate change impacts on seasonal tourism businesses
Public Health/ Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to federal qualified health centers • Access to quality food and fresh produce • Diversified farmers markets • Farm to table initiatives • Dartmouth Hitchcock Health and Mount Ascutney hospitals • Recent Community Health Needs Assessment completed for MAHHC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substance misuse • Attracting and retaining professionals • Challenging payer mix due to socioeconomic conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partnerships • Collaboration between healthcare and community improvement groups • Improve health outcomes through connections to local food options and recreational opportunities • “Age in Place” community nursing model • Lifestyle medicine • Community nurses • Regional health advisory network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Springfield hospital and SMCS bankruptcy • Lack of maternity services • Public policies supporting cannabis use • Large share of region’s population depends on social services • Aging population will increase demand for support services • Workforce shortages and difficulty retaining qualified workers • Tick-borne diseases

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Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to numerous metro centers • Proximity to two interstate highways • Served by three freight rail lines • Amtrak Vermonter passenger service • Proximity to bus services • Growing pockets of high-speed internet and Fiber • Water and wastewater capacity • Hartness Airport • State Designated Growth Center and TIF District in Hartford • Opportunity Zones in Randolph, Royalton, and Springfield • Hospitals and rural health center systems • Comprehensive upgrade and maintenance schedules for highway and bridge infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging infrastructure and lack of funding for maintenance • Truck access to industrial parks through downtowns creates potential conflicts • Limited rural public transit • Limited rural broadband services • Insufficient cellular infrastructure • Very limited presence of rideshare services (Uber, Lyft, etc) • Unmet school infrastructure needs and lack of state funding support • Declining student enrollment = higher cost per pupil • Elderly & Disabled transportation needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing broadband coverage • Availability of grants and loans for broadband and fiber optic Internet expansion • Green Mountain Railway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance to ports and international airports • Uncertainty about future energy costs and dependency on non-local energy sources • Climate change impacts can affect a range of transportation-related decisions

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Support for Economic Development and Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships between RPCs and RDCs ED support system interfaces well with businesses Professional training resources available via collaborations between elected officials and development groups Cross pollination among businesses and entrepreneurs Ease of access to business owners and politicians The “Vermont Brand” as advertising tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General lack of investment capital Difficulty retaining successful local ownership Small businesses lack capacity and resources to perform vital professional functions (technological, marketing, human resources, etc.) to meet long-term growth needs Perception of poor business climate Disengaged citizens, town official’s volunteerism, and lack of participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State incentive programs available Availability of commercial and industrial space for lease and/or purchase Multiple Opportunity Zones Commercial hemp and cannabis market Collaboration between schools, communities, and businesses to identify and address skill shortages among the workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of state-level political consensus Changing tax structure in NH and NY Competition from NH, which has no sales or income tax

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Education & Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong relationships between housing organizations, towns, RDCs and RPCs • Proximity of Dartmouth College and Dartmouth Regional Technology Center • Strong relationship between RDCs, regional technical centers, high schools, and workforce investment boards • Strong volunteer base centered around schools • Good schools throughout a majority of the region • 4 Career and Technical Education Centers and VT Technical College • Low crime rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for more education and job training programming for all ages • Slow wage growth compared to other regions in VT and adjoining regions of NH • Lack of human capital, particularly for middle and upper-level positions • Dependency on NH side of UV for jobs • Lack of a statewide workforce development strategy • Weak links between economic development, human services, and education initiatives • Difficulty informing businesses of resources • Fragmentation and dilution of advertising due to proliferation of platforms • Lack of quality adult day care • Disproportionate share of subsidized housing in towns with sewer and water • Inadequate supply of all housing types • Substandard and aging housing stock • High cost of living • VT tax policy with respect to remote workers • Lack of reliable transportation • Fragmented relocation resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively low cost of middle income/workforce housing in the southern half of the District • Potential to expand transit industry • Ongoing transition to advanced manufacturing • Recovery-friendly workplaces, housing, and policies • Pop-up trainings and education events • Expanding creative economy • Tourism as potential workforce recruitment tool • Regional co-working spaces provide workspace for distributed and remote workers • Technical training at both high-school and post-high school levels • Full development of career pathways • VTC major in Renewable Energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce shortages • Aging population resulting in higher healthcare costs and a declining workforce • Lack, and high cost of, qualified childcare • Stigma associated with “affordable” housing • Social Isolation • High employee turnover