



# Strengthening Vermont Downtowns



# 24 Designated Downtown

S		
Barre	Middlebury	St Johnsbury
Bellows Falls	Montpelier	Stowe
Bennington	Newport	Vergennes
Brandon	Poultney	Waterbury
Brattleboro	Randolph	White River Jun.
Bristol	Rutland	Wilmington
Burlington	Springfield	Windsor
Hardwick	St Albans	Winooski



# Downtown Program

- Created 25 years ago in State statute to focus on comprehensive long-term preservation and revitalization of downtowns
- Downtown Designation is with the municipality and requires a downtown organization to help fulfill the community reinvestment agreement
- Benefits support the municipality and property owners including Downtown Transportation Fund, Historic State Tax Credits and Act 250 Relief

# Downtown Program Requirements



- Downtown Renewal Every 8 Years
- 4 Year Review
- Annual Downtown Reinvestment Statistics
- Annual budget and work plans
- Attendance at trainings and workshops
- Compliance with general criteria for downtown program

# How are Downtown Organizations Funded?



Downtown Organizations are non-profits with limited budgets and small staff (a median annual budget of \$110,000). The State provides no funding.

## **Funding Sources:**

- Municipality
- Sponsorships
- Event Revenue
- Business Support
- Annual Appeal and Donations
- Grants

What do  
Downtown  
Organizations do?





## Business Support + Advocacy

## Downtown program staff:

- Run local currency programs to keep spending local
- Promote their businesses locally, regionally and beyond
- Advertise their communities to potential tourists and visitors
- Connect businesses with available resources
- Serve as a unified voice of businesses







# Economic + Community Development



## Downtown program staff:

- Recruit new businesses
- Create connections between businesses, community members, organizations and visitors
- Provide opportunities for volunteerism and engagement
- Promote some of the state's most valuable assets: outdoor recreation, arts and culture, craft beverage, local food
- Create and execute programs related to state grants, for example regional marketing and Better Places

# Newport: Downtown Innovation Gatherings



In February, Newport residents, stakeholders and potential investors came together to share ideas to generate economic development. The group of approximately 40 met in small groups to explore collaboration and brainstorm new ideas.



## Events + Promotions



Middlebury Block Party



Rutland Friday Night

Live MUSIC  
TOBACCO SHOP  
FRANK IAC  
SOFT SERVE ICE CREAM



Barre Heritage Festival



Burlington Red Trouser Show

# Newport: Winter Saturdays



A three month long series that averaged 80 to 100 people a week for live bands, local food and a cash bar, planned and implemented by a group of ten young adults in their 20's and 30's who volunteer with Newport's Downtown organization.



## Downtown program staff:

- Host hundreds of events across the state, drawing thousands of visitors into their downtowns annually
- Create programs and promotions to encourage local spending
- Spend dollars locally through food and beverage, advertising, hiring performers and creating opportunities to support local businesses and entrepreneurs





# Local Leadership + Design



## Downtown program staff:

- Are involved in signage, plants/flowers, walkability, streetscape projects, wayfinding, downtown planning, etc.
- Serve in local leadership roles on nonprofit and regional organization boards and municipal committees
- Support the municipality by maintaining the state's designation in order to ensure that the municipality is eligible for grants
- Work closely with regional, state, federal entities to ensure implement programs on a local level





# 2022 Reinvestment Statistics

## In 2022 in Designated Downtowns:

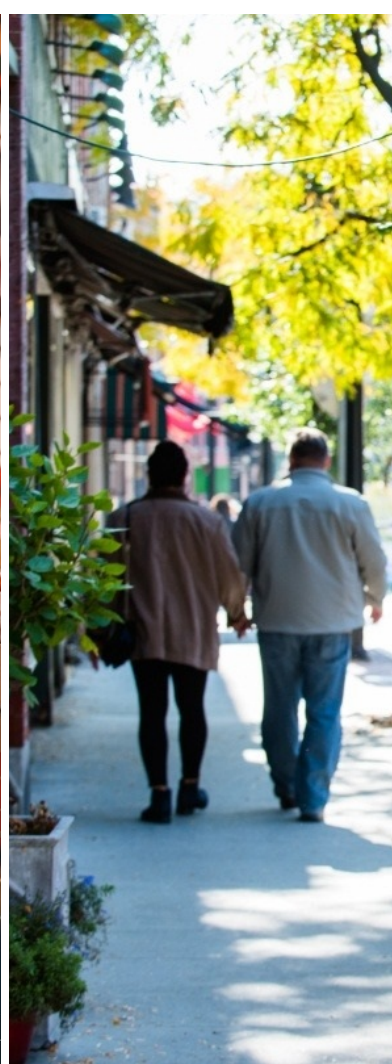
- There was **\$27,544,147** in public investment and **\$101,155,452** of private investment
- There were **149** new or expanded businesses and **305** net new full time jobs and **160** net new part time jobs
- There have been **352** rehab projects, **15** new construction projects and **65** public improvement projects
- There were **2,289** volunteers investing **30,166** hours of time to help better their communities

Vermont's downtowns are **community hubs, economic drivers** and **gathering places**. They are centers of **recreation, dining, shopping, the arts** and **education**. They are home to many of Vermont's **small businesses**. They connect our most rural communities as well as our most populated.

Downtowns are one of our state's greatest assets, rich in history and in possibility. They are the foundation of Vermont communities. **And they are powered by downtown organizations.**

**Your support demonstrates Vermont's commitment to our communities' economic health and vitality.**





**VERMONT  
DOWNTOWN  
COALITION**