

This document represents a compilation of currently identified needs of the Windham Regional Commission (WRC) and the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) and the Southeast Vermont Economic Development Strategy (SeVEDS) as we address the now known closing date of the Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power plant. These organizations are poised to continue working on the closure and cleanup of the site, as well as rebuilding the Windham regional economy in the face of the loss of jobs, payroll and business activity resulting from the closure. These organizations are recognized and supported by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

This is a compilation of *currently identified* needs. It is likely additional needs will emerge as we proceed with our work. We welcome maintaining an open dialogue with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, the Governor's office and the Vermont Legislature as we proceed with this work.

### **Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation and the Southeast Vermont Economic Development Strategy**

BDCC (Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation) is a private, nonprofit economic development organization established in 1954 managing a 2 million dollar annual operating budget. BDCC is fortunate to generate much of its revenue from its real estate holdings. These currently include one single use building in the Exit One Industrial Park, one available lot and land in the Exit One Industrial Park, two redeveloped industrial complexes housing 110 tenants who employ approximately 300. BDCC serves as a catalyst for industrial and commercial growth throughout Southeastern Vermont, including Windham County and the towns of Readsboro, Somerset, Searsburg, and Weston. BDCC's primary objective is to create and retain a flourishing business community in the region it serves that supports vibrant fiscal activity, and improves the quality of life of all its residents. BDCC is affiliated with the State of Vermont as the certified Regional Development Corporation (RDC) serving the greater Windham County area. BDCC is one of 12 RDCs throughout Vermont. BDCC provides staffing and some funding for SeVEDS. SeVEDS (Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies) is an affiliate of BDCC that grew from a 2008 grass roots effort, initiated by BDCC, to reverse the economic decline of the Windham Region. It is guided by a regional board of 18 public and private sector individuals and staffed by BDCC. SeVEDS has solicited and received broad municipal and private sector support within the region.

After decades of little to no economic or population growth, the Windham Region, through SeVEDS, began to undergo a process to assess the current economic and demographic conditions to understand the impacting factors. Subsequently a series of broad strategies were established, including preparing for a Post VY economy (**see SeVEDS Goals, Objectives and Strategies**) and the region began to chart a course towards economic revitalization through refinement and implementation of those strategies, including development of a federally recognized Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). SeVEDS has a number of economic development strategies already outlined with more being finalized along with our CEDS document.

In 2011, the Windham Region was severely impacted by flooding from Tropical Storm Irene. BDCC, the regional development corporation, has been leading a multi-regional effort to assess and recover from the business and economic damage. Leading an effort with the Windham and Bennington County Regional Commissions, BDCC created short and longer term action plans that were funded by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA). These action plans are being implemented including individual business assistance, village and downtown revitalization, identifying long term economic plans that need to be implemented and development of a sustainable regional marketing program to attract employees and tourists to our businesses and employers. BDCC has also taken the lead in partnership with Springfield Regional Development Corporation for CDBG-DR assistance to impacted businesses from Irene.

Because we well understood existing economic challenges in SE Vermont, SeVEDS and BDCC have already added both permanent and temporary staffing capacity to handle the existing challenging economic conditions, have already developed a broad network of regional cooperation, and understand economic revitalization is a marathon and not a sprint. Progress on revitalization plans and actions is underway.

Because we specifically assessed the regional impacts of an eventual VY closure:

1. We estimate that the VY Closure will result in a loss of 6% of the regional economy. A loss of 6% of the Windham region Vermont economy represents \$150 million losses in regional GDP.
2. We know from other nuclear plant closing that at most 50% of employee skills are transferable to existing economy (at significantly reduced wages and standard of living)
3. Employment options to replace 240 SE Vermont residents at average wages of 100K annually are not available in the region or in the foreseeable future based on current conditions

We know that a date certain closure greatly increases our need to be able to act even more quickly and with greater urgency on our existing long term planning and strategy implementation. We have both immediate, short term and longer term needs.

Our immediate needs are for additional capacity to firm up financial needs, to implement projects, and procure grants and other funding and support we will need to implement strategies. We estimate the dollar amount of the immediate capacity need to be \$1,959,000 of which we think we can come up with approximately \$166,000. We are looking for assistance in the remaining amount. **(see budget detail)**

**Immediate needs: Capacity/people**

Organizational alignment and structure consultant  
Funding to assist with a nuclear plant closing conference  
Project manager for Innovation Ecosystem and others  
Redevelopment director  
Marketing coordinator: SVSMP (Windham/Bennington counties), Rte. 30  
Workforce Director  
Expand SBDC position to full time  
Windham Regional Commission needs (see pages 7 & 8)

**Immediate needs: Projects and studies: (See below and attached CEDS project descriptions<sup>ii</sup>)**

Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing: web site and marketing dollars (pages 14 and 49)  
Innovation Ecosystem business planning (page 27)  
Restart a business plan competition  
Redevelopment studies: market assessment, structural assessment, incubator (page 16)  
Business startup funding: potential former VY employees  
Business recruitment marketing  
Cluster analysis (page 52)  
Windham Regional Commission municipal and regional planning for economic development (page 7)  
Workforce training: regional job board, machine apprenticeship, Gov. Career Ready Certificate (pages 37, 41 and 44)

**ONGOING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:** The \*asterisk denotes work that remains to be done, positions that need to be filled and where financial resources are needed.

Below are projects that are currently underway and funded as noted.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS):

1. Funded by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) we are nearing completion of the CEDS for Windham County.
  - a. Original roll out of the CEDS was to be October. It will be delayed up to two months to incorporate the known closing date for VY and the impacts a known closing date represents.
  - b. BDCC is leading this effort with strong participation from Windham Regional Commission and all communities around the region.
  - c. 52 CEDS projects were submitted after a “call for projects” to include in the CEDS. All projects will be included.
    - i. A group of 5 respected, trusted local CEO’s has just completed a prioritization process and selected 12 “vital projects” for advancing the strategies identified in the CEDS. Many of those vital projects are cited below.

Flood recovery:

1. BDCC is administering \$1.5 million dollars of CDBG-DR funds in sub-grant to businesses affected by TS Irene.
  - a. This is a project with BDCC and Springfield Regional Development Corp (SRDC) and covers southern Windsor and all of Windham Counties.
  - b. The first round of grants has gone out to 32 businesses.
  - c. \$500,000 in supplemental funding has been awarded by CDBG-DR. Application workshops and accepting applications will commence in October.
  - d. It is anticipated we will seek an additional \$1million+ in CDBG-DR2 funding.
2. Delivering flood recovery services through a US EDA funded grant to the Windham and Bennington County Regional Commissions (\$475,000) for Bennington and Windham counties for three distinct programs. BDCC, SeVEDS, Windham and Bennington Regional Commissions are all involved:
  - a. Direct resource assistance to businesses affected by TS Irene and other flooding. Through Flood Recovery Officers (FRO’s)
  - b. Direct resource assistance to communities for rebuilding and organizing for recovery. Through FRO’s.
  - c. Development of the Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing Program for the two counties. Components include (**see attached CEDS description**):
    - i. Brand development for the two counties.
    - ii. Targeted marketing and outreach strategies for the two counties to:
      1. Attract tourists to the region
      2. Attract talent to the region
    - iii. \*Development of a “recruitment web site” for the two counties to post job openings, information on relocating to Vermont, and other useful data for those interested in moving here for work.
    - iv. \*Implementation funding.
    - v. \*Coordinator to implement the Sustainable Marketing Strategy and business buy in, annual marketing plans and media buys. This position is expected to becoming self-funding after two years of implementation.

Redevelopment:

BDCC and SeVEDS are undertaking a comprehensive inventory of vacant buildings in Windham County to redevelop as appropriate. This is being done with support from BDCC, Wilmington Community Development

Office, Windham Regional Commission and Bellows Falls Community Development Office and Bellows Falls Area Development Corporation. **See attached CEDS project description<sup>iii</sup>**

1. Have a comprehensive inventory of empty or underutilized buildings including commercial, industrial, hospitality and other real estate.
2. \*Conduct market analysis in the communities where these properties are located. Determine needed businesses and services likely for these buildings.
3. \*Conduct physical assessment, structural analysis, retrofit analysis for specific uses identified as needed in those communities.
4. \*Determine which buildings are suitable for business incubator space and conduct retrofit analysis.
5. \*Prepare marketing materials for each property.
6. \*Target businesses to move to the properties.
7. \* Support legal creation of Wilmington Downtown Commercial Redevelopment Project whose purpose is to purchase 10 vacant buildings in downtown and renovate **See CEDS project description<sup>iv</sup>**
8. \*Support Windham Regional Commission Village Water and Wastewater Need Assessment and Feasibility Plan **See CEDS project description<sup>v</sup>**
9. \*Leverage new broadband infrastructure development **See CEDS project description<sup>vi</sup>**

Innovation Ecosystem: This project is in the planning stages with strong support from throughout the region. This is at the heart of creating new and more entrepreneurial activity in the region. **See attached CEDS project description.<sup>vii</sup>** BDCC is taking the lead on this with help from several local leaders. There is no funding attached to this effort thus far.

1. \*Hire a coordinator for the Innovation Ecosystem.
  - a. Investigate other successful models in rural areas
  - b. Review Maine initiative.
2. \*Planning grant to develop a business plan for the elements of the ecosystem.
3. \*Develop business incubator(s) that target both high tech and legacy sectors.
  - a. Feasibility of which building(s) is part of the redevelopment program.
4. \*Seed capital fund for start-up.
5. Implement a business mentoring program with successful existing entrepreneurs. Look at “Peer to Peer” model.
6. \*Business plan competition re-start:
  - a. Technology
  - b. Traditional
7. Virtual incubator in the region: similar services as above, available around the region
8. Target specific sectors for recruitment and start up.
9. \*Create a high tech co-working space in the region.
10. \*Create a consulting firm with former VY employees to provide services to nuclear and other industries.
11. \*Expand .5 VtSBDC position to 1.0 FTE to support development of startups or expansions.
12. \*University partnerships: These are dollars needed to develop partnerships with UVM and/or other colleges and universities in the region. Strong partnerships with research institutions is critical. Also conducting research on the impacts of these strategies in slowing and reversing economic decline.
  - a. Develop relationships with research labs and university patent libraries to provide new products and solve technical issues with product development.
  - b. Develop and implement the “UVM Windham County Community Development and Applied Economics Program”. This idea is still in the development phase but utilizes this existing program at UVM to be applied in Windham County.
    - i. Student projects to assist with implementation of the innovation ecosystem.

- ii. Student and Faculty research on the impacts to rural community of a nuclear plant closing.
- iii. Longitudinal studies of the outcomes of the innovation ecosystem on the Windham regional economy. Analysis of a number of measures, GDP, real estate values, population changes, wage and income changes, etc.

Workforce projects: BDCC and SeVEDS have hired a full time Director of Workforce Development to undertake the projects listed below. The current workforce director, Pat Moulton Powden, will be assuming the position of Executive Director of BDCC when Jeff Lewis retires at the end of the year. The process to backfill the Director of Workforce Development has begun, earlier than expected so Pat can spear head VY planning and recovery efforts.

These are projects that have begun or are in the planning stages.

1. \*Conduct a survey of VY employees. In conjunction with VDOL and VY.
  - a. Skills, certifications, credentials, degrees and security clearances.
  - b. Determine how many would like to remain in the area.
  - c. Determine how many would like to start their own business.
  - d. Determine if the workforce is an asset we can market to attract businesses and/or clients to business startups.
2. Internship Coordinator for the six Windham County Colleges (**funded by VDOL**)
3. Hiring inventory for the top 50 employers in Windham County. Projected their hiring needs for the next 5 years in terms of numbers and occupations needed. (underway)
  - a. Need intern to assist with the work, compile the results.
  - b. \*Coordinate with area k-12 schools to seek to align curriculum and programs with the occupational needs identified.
    - i. All schools in Windham County.
    - ii. Windham Regional Career Center and River Valley Tech Center
  - c. \*Coordinate with the six colleges to align necessary programs and curriculum. In some cases it will mean new programs in Windham County.
4. \*Undertake the “Scope and Sequence” project submitted to CEDS. **See attached CEDS project description.**<sup>viii</sup>
5. \*Develop a regional job board to list open positions in Windham and Bennington Counties. Link with National Labor Exchange and Vermont Joblink as appropriate. **See attached CEDS project description.**<sup>ix</sup>
6. \*Develop the Southeast Vermont Machine Apprenticeship program. Patterned after the consortium in the Upper Valley, this is a partnership with VTC and employers in Windham County. **See attached CEDS project description.**<sup>x</sup>
7. \*Develop a Southeast Vermont Governors Career Ready program in Windham County. **See attached CEDS project Description.**<sup>xi</sup>
8. \*Expand the Windham Childcare Association. **See attached CEDS description**<sup>xii</sup>.
9. Creation of the “Windham Higher Education Cooperative” has begun. This is all six of the colleges located in Windham County. They are Community College of Vermont, Landmark College, Marlboro College, Vermont Technical College, World Learning/SIT, and Union Institute and University. They have formed and are moving ahead with these projects:
  - a. Hiring an Internship Coordinator to increase internship opportunities for students at the six colleges with area employers. (See #2 above).
  - b. Develop a cooperative agreement to continue to expand joint articulation agreements between the six colleges.
  - c. Other marketing and collaboration as discussed.
10. Continue dialogue with UVM and how they can assist with workforce, innovation and other projects and needs in the region. (ongoing)

**NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:** In this document we are putting forward an initial needs assessment of \$16 million dollars based on existing planning, knowledge and work. We know this list needs to be further refined and grow, and we need to create a financing plan. These projects have been discussed as part of the CEDS process in Windham County. The \*asterisk denotes work that remains to be done, positions that need to be filled and where financial resources are needed.

\*Organizational alignment: The Windham Region CEDS will articulate a need for aligning/organizing governance and resources between existing boards (SeVEDS and BDCC) and how new structures (redevelopment capacity, innovation ecosystem) can be aligned with or added to those existing boards.

\*Nuclear plant closing conference: We are working with the University of Massachusetts to develop a conference to be held in Windham County to focus on announced and planned nuclear plant closings. The focus of the conference is a federal policy to prioritize the closings of the nation's nuclear power plants similar to the base closings policy at the federal level. The conference will engage communities facing a plant closing, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, planners, economic development practitioners, state policy makers, congressional delegations and others to determine if we currently have the best policies in place to assist communities facing nuclear plant closings.

\*Restart the business plan competition: BDCC needs to restart the general business plan competition is held for many years. This competition has resulted in the startup of several new business in the Windham Region. The competition provides cash to winners to get their winning business plan up and running.

\*Co-working space: Funding to develop a co-working space in the Brattleboro area.

\*VY Employee businesses: There has been discussion of the possibility of VY employees that may be able to start a nuclear power consulting business or other businesses that utilize the talents of VY employees. This funding would provide startup capital for such a business. The feasibility needs to be explored. If it is not feasible, this funding can support the business plan competition for VY employees that wish to start a business of any type.

\*Business recruitment marketing: Part of marketing must include dollars targeted at attracting entrepreneurs and other businesses to the Windham region. This funding could be coupled with the Southern Vt. Sustainable Marketing Program or as a separate campaign utilizing the branding and work of the SVSMP.

\*Short term mitigation planning and financing consultant: BDCC and/or SeVEDS sees the need at some point soon to engage with a consultant with experience in nuclear plant closings and/or base closing with the special needs and challenges that represents, particularly to a rural community. The need is similar to the need the State of Vermont saw post TS Irene when they engaged Whitt Associates. The state specifically identified someone with FEMA experience as a need for the State which is why they engaged Whitt Associate. We see a similar need for us not too far from now. At this time it is difficult to identify exactly what expertise will be needed, but we expect we will need that resources. Whether it is seeking federal grant funding, working with the NRC, expertise developing an innovation ecosystem, or any of the other CEDS projects we have included. We are likely to need that expertise and need the resources to procure it. This is a place card holder for that work.

Special economic development zones in the region: This seeks to target resources to areas in the county with substandard performance now or anticipated.

1. Develop a “Route 30” collaborative of businesses and town management to better market and promote that corridor. Planning has begun on this. **See CEDS project description<sup>xiii</sup>**
  - a. \*Hire staff to organize and promote the region or someone at a willing Chamber of commerce.
  - b. Form a “chamber of commerce” or like entity to support the business along that corridor.
  - c. \*Market empty properties (see redevelopment above).
  - d. \*Market the corridor for visitors.
2. Enhance existing programs for growing businesses in identified “zones”.
  - a. Identify the zones: Route 30, Wilmington/Dover, Vernon/Brattleboro, Bellows Falls.
  - b. Enhance VEDA, VEGI, CDBG, and other programs for projects in this region. I.e. higher investments than normal, higher risk, more funding, higher VEGI incentives.
  - c. Greater investments in tourism and economic development marketing dollars in these zones.

Industrial sites inventory and development: This is work that is just starting. We have limited industrial sites or parks in the county. We need these sites ready for potential new businesses and for locations for expanding existing businesses. We know of at least two existing businesses that will need new buildings to accommodate known growth and we lack shovel ready sites.

1. Conduct an inventory of industrial zoned land throughout the county.
  - a. Identify barriers to development.
    - i. Work to eliminate those barriers. i.e. rezone, remediate brownfields, etc.
  - b. \*Estimate costs to develop.
2. \*Build road, water and sewer up to BDCC’s acreage in the Exit One industrial park.
3. \*Prepare new industrial sites/parks in Bellows Falls, Brattleboro and Wilmington areas.

Develop a “green” high performance building cluster in Windham County: This project planning has begun with a group of very interested people. A business plan needs to be developed to intimate and support this cluster.

1. \*Develop a business plan for this cluster. **See attached CEDS project description<sup>xiv</sup>**
2. \* Support the building a rapid prototyping facility at existing shop for prefab high performance building envelopes and resilient mechanical systems. **See attached CEDS project description<sup>xv</sup>**

## **Windham Regional Commission Vermont Yankee Closure and Decommissioning Resource Needs**

Two essential components of resiliency planning and development going forward will be 1) regional advocacy in the closure and decommissioning process, and 2) land use and redevelopment planning at the regional, interstate and municipal levels to ensure that town and regional plans and economic development plans are in alignment with one another. The Windham Regional Commission would lead these efforts. The WRC has been engaged in Vermont Yankee decommissioning planning since 2007 through our engagement in multiple Public Service Board dockets related to Vermont Yankee. The WRC has remained purposefully neutral as to whether or not the plant should continue operations, but we have focused on what is in the region’s best interest when the plant does eventually close for whatever reason. We have unique knowledge about what the plant operators say they intend to do when they close the plant, and what that means for the orderly development of the region.

We are requesting additional resources to support our responsibilities that are unique to the Entergy Nuclear Vermont Yankee power station closure. We have spent literally thousands of staff and volunteer hours on work related to Vermont Yankee, and that time and effort is of great benefit to our towns, the region as a whole, and the state. Now that plant closure is imminent, we need the resources to represent the region's interests and effectively participate in the land use and redevelopment planning that is essential to recovery, and greater economic resiliency going forward.

- **Continued participation in VT Public Service Board processes: \$60,000 / year until the process concludes.** At this point it is anyone's guess as to how Docket 7862 will proceed. Furthermore, Docket 7600, which relates to the leaking pipes underground, remains open. The WRC has participated in the dockets pro se and this has consumed considerable resources. The Vermont Energy Generation Siting Policy Commission has recognized that Regional Planning Commissions should have bill back authority in order to effectively represent the Regional Plan in major Section 248 processes. We do not have time to wait for a statutory change, and the PSB has denied our requests for reimbursement. We need additional assistance from the state to support our work in the dockets related to VY as long as they move forward. Please note that we are not requesting reimbursement for past participation.
- **Tri-state Regional Commission Collaboration on Regulatory Response and Resiliency Planning: \$45,000 / year.** We have reached out to our regional planning counterparts in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The closure of Vermont Yankee will have impacts throughout the tri-state region and will require a tri-state regional response. The WRC has already assumed a leadership role in this effort, and that role will continue as we work together to develop and pursue initiatives. This will consume resources in addition to our own intraregional and state efforts, and will likely require our engagement in a tri-state U.S. EDA initiative that is already being discussed. We will need funding for our part of the match should that materialize.
- **Local/regional government representation and advocacy in national and federal decommissioning deliberations (Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Federal Legislation, Federal Rulemaking, NGOs (Natl. Association of Development Organizations; National Association of Counties): \$75,000 / year.** Vermont Yankee will have two years after it announces its closure to develop the Post-Shutdown Decommissioning Activities Report required by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that lays out how the plant will decommission. We will need to engage in this process in both Vermont and beyond. As multiple reactors close or announce their closure (3 have closed this year; two have announced closures; more are expected), we will need to engage in national policy discussions about the extraordinary deference the NRC regulations gives to the plant operators without any regard to the orderly redevelopment within the host communities and states. We will need to be part of this conversation to represent our own interests, and we believe our Congressional delegation will be looking to us for guidance due to the level of our engagement and knowledge about the issues. We will also need to engage national organizations such as NADO and the National Association of Counties to research the issues associated with plant closures, orderly redevelopment, and the potential for prime industrial sites throughout the nation to remain idle for decades.
- **Regional Decommissioning Information Center (online): \$10,000 first year/\$5,000 maintenance per year thereafter.** The need for an online public resource center about the closure and decommissioning process has already arisen. We have created a page on our website, but feel a stand-alone online resource center is needed. Our current website is staff created and maintained. We need additional resources to create this new online resource and maintain it throughout the decommissioning process.
- **Closure and Decommissioning Research and Issue Tracking (probably use UVM or VT Law School): \$50,000 / year.** We have relied heavily upon WRC Commissioners to supplement staff to track and

research issues related to the eventual closure and decommissioning of Vermont Yankee, and legal, regulatory and policy issues related to the same. This need will continue, and should be properly resourced in the interest of the region and the state.

- **Regional and Municipal Planning for Economic Development and Resiliency: \$70,000/year for 3 years.** The regional economic development strategies being developed by the SeVEDS partnership and regional and municipal plans will need to be brought into alignment with one another. This includes broad policy positions as well as detailed site identification and planning; GIS analyses and mapping; basic training and awareness for towns about how their plans and policies can contribute to economic development, business retention and growth; and the links between economic development and overall town well being. In our experience the connections between town policy, economic development, and what economic development means for the overall fiscal and socioeconomic sustainability of the town are not well understood. As such, economic development planning is seldom a priority for most selectboards and planning commissions. We need additional resources to support this work above and beyond the municipal planning support capacity and activities we already provide.

## APPENDICES:

*Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategy Group  
Goals, Objectives and Strategies Outline  
(updated July 23, 2013)*

### Goals:

1. Create Operational and Fiscal Sustainability Plan for SeVEDS by December 2011
2. Improve Wage Parity with Surrounding Labor-shed
3. Increase the Size and Quality of the Workforce
4. Increase population proportion of 25-44 year olds from 23% to 28% of total population by 2017
5. Create an Entrepreneurial Environment

### Metrics:

<i>Base SeVEDS Region Metrics</i>	<i>Baseline*</i>	<i>2017 Goal</i>	<i>%Change</i>	<i>Total Change</i>
Population	42,605	44,605	4%	+2000
Employable Population (16 and older)	35,520*	36,171	+1.8%	+651
Labor Participation Rate	65%*	68.8%	+5.8%	-
Total Employed	23,089*	24,894	+7.8%	+1,805
Average Wage	\$38,820	\$39,848	+2.6%	+\$1,028/yr
Total Region Wages	\$896M	\$992M	+10.7%	\$96M
Regional GDP	\$2.37B	\$2.8B	+18.1%	\$430M
<i>Regional Strategic Metrics</i>	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>2017 Goal</i>	<i>Change</i>	
Ratio Net Earned Income/Total Income	.566	.650	+14.1%	-
Increase Median Annual Income for Associates/Some College workforce	\$26,855	\$32,000	+19.1%	+\$5.145/yr (\$2.47/hr)
Increase Median Annual Income for Bachelors Degree workforce	\$32,518	\$39,000	+19.9%	+\$6,482/yr (\$3.12/hr)
Increase 20-44 employment by 20% in five years (2009 data)	10,691	12,829	20%	+2,138
Increase Associates Degrees/Some College and Technical Certificates among 18-44 age bracket	38% (1,495)	47% (1,884)	+23.6%	+389
Increase the 25-44 age population by 20% in five years	9,533	11,439	20%	+1,906

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## Objective 1. Create Operational and Fiscal Sustainability Plan for SeVEDS by December 2011

1. Create Legal SeVEDS Entity
  - a. Create Board of Directors – *A board of directors was named at the September 22, 2011 current board members can be found on the [www.seveds.com](http://www.seveds.com) website*
  - b. Incorporate SeVEDS as a Non-Profit - *Incorporated as a 501 c(6) September 2011*
  - c. Affiliation Agreement with BDCC – *approved and signed December 1, 2011*
2. Outline multiyear budget and fundraising needs
  - a. Hire SeVEDS staff person to provide organizational and funder planning support. – *BDCC provides staffing*
  - b. Prepare 3-year budget – *FY 2012 budget approved on November 17<sup>th</sup> 2011, FY 2013 budget approved July 2012*
  - c. Develop and implement private fundraising campaign
  - d. Develop and implement public fundraising campaign – *FY 2013 - 14 towns were presented with funding request; 7 approved for total of 106,826 in FY 14 funding*
3. Develop Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for submission to EDA
  - a. Complete EDA Technical Assistance Grant – *completed*
  - b. Create Action teams to identify and support implementation of priorities and projects including VY closure, work force, redevelopment, and flood – *workforce, redevelopment and flood action teams created*
  - c. Create CEDS plan – *funding to create CEDS document received in November 2012 – CEDS document to be completed October 2013*

## Objective 2: Increase the Size and Quality of the Workforce (1-8)

4. Develop a Workforce Center of Excellence Collaborative between providers and users of workforce development services that identifies and connects existing workforce development assets, defines future workforce requirements and gaps by September 2012 – *hired Director of Workforce in February 2013, plan and action items below to be worked on with workforce employer group Spring Summer 2013*

**Key Metric:** Recommend Preferred Workforce Development Collaborative Plan by December 2012

- a. Map workforce development assets and define gaps to be filled
  - b. Build strategic relationships between assets
  - c. Define 3 to 5 Career Pathways that will meet the needs of the priority industries
  - d. Identify workforce development Best Practices appropriate to the region
  - e. Recommend Preferred Workforce Development Collaborative Plan by December 2012
5. Increase 20-44 age group employment by 20% in five years

**Key Metric:** By January 2012 Define Top 3 – 5 Industry Clusters with the potential for increasing high-value jobs within the next five years *being developed as part of Windham Region CEDS to be completed in October 2013*

- a. By January 2012 Define Top 3 – 5 Industry Clusters with the potential for increasing high-value jobs within the next five years
- b. Create Action Teams in Q1-2012 around Clusters to identify Strengths (Assets), Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats and value chain gaps

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- c. Prioritize at least 2 Clusters for Opportunity Analysis Research that will Action 3.2.D – define at least 2 Niche Markets per Cluster for implementation by October 2012
  - d. Develop Immigration Attraction Strategy by April 2012 focused on doubling the percentage of foreign born population in the region from 3.5% to 7% by 2016
  - e. Develop a Highly Skilled Professionals recruitment and retention strategy – *acquired SoVermont.com, SVSMP work with Bennington County through EDA Flood Grant*
6. Increase Associate Degrees/Some College and Technical Certificates
- Key Metric:** 18-24 year old age bracket from 38% (1495 persons) to 47% (1884 persons) for net increase of 389 persons by 2017
- a. 18-24 year old age bracket from 38% (1495 persons) to 47% (1884 persons) for net increase of 389 persons by 2016
  - b. Identify Industry Sectors with critical skill needs – *employer hiring projections collection in process May 2013*
  - c. Work with Secondary, Post-Secondary and Vermont State College System and the broader region to develop education programs to meet industry needs – *working with 6 colleges on greater collaboration – worked with CCV and VTC on employer workforce series Fall 2012s*
  - d. Partner with UMass
7. Identify public and private resources to support a sustainable implementation of workforce development plan – *successful municipal fundraising in FY 13 to support wf position hire*

**Objective 3: Increase population proportion of 24-44 year-olds from 23% to 28% of total population by 2017 (1)**

- 8. KBE Strategy connecting the SeVEDS region to the NE Next Generation Knowledge Corridor –*communication with Pioneer Valley Planning CEDS creators/ and John Mullin in 2012*
- 9. Develop a Livable Communities Strategy by 2014
- 10. Leverage Tourism and Second Homeowner Assets to attract 1,000 young families – *tied to SVSMP with Benn Co*
- 11. Develop a coordinated regional marketing plan to promote SE Vermont as the best place to live, place, and work. – *tied to SVSMP w Benn Co*

Action Plans for Objective 4 Strategies will be developed during Phase II

**Objective 4: Create an Entrepreneurial Environment (1-8)**

- 12. Define and implement an Innovation Ecosystem within 3 years
  - a. In 2013, assess regional innovation and entrepreneurial climate based upon best practice criteria (Innovation Index): facilities, governance, business services, access to capital, business networks, culture, R&D capacities, etc. – *done preliminary to be completed as part of CEDS by Oct 2013*
  - b. Convene an Action Team to use the Innovation Index for SeVEDS developed in 12.a to address complex regulatory and other concerns with State and Local jurisdictions.
  - c. Assess business needs and set a goal to assist existing businesses and new or potential businesses each year.
- 13. Create a Young Professionals Group (YPG) to support and attract 20-44 year old professionals and workers *started in Spring 2012*
  - a. By Q4-2011 identify and evaluate strengths and weaknesses of existing young professional networks and social organizations – *surveying completed in June 2013*

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- b. Engage a representative group of existing younger individuals (especially 18-35 yrs. old) in the community to assess interests and the role of young professions in the region's economic future – ***started 2013***
  - c. As a result of Action 13b recommend a set of activities and actions to be adopted supporting both the YPG and entrepreneurial climate of the regions, such as: business seminars, speakers, business plan competitions, investment forums, social events, etc. – ***part of FY 14 plan***
14. Create a sustainable start – up funding program by March 2013 – ***included in FY 14 workplan – accelerator/finance***
- a. Define and implement a plan to benchmark and track new businesses looking for funding by December 2012
  - b. Define and implement a plan to benchmark and track new jobs created by December 2012
  - c. Create a mentor/investor network plan utilizing especially the services and assets of 44-75 year olds by December 2012
  - d. Take advantage of opportunities under the federal crowdfunding bill (if passed)
  - e. Create marketing plan including social media to package and publicize local funding sources, mentor networks, incubator spaces, etc. Reach out to UMass/Amherst area via recruitment events, advertising, etc.
  - f. Identify Incubator Space
15. Recognize and blend Quality of Place characteristics and concepts into the SEVEDS strategies
- a. Establish a group of relevant regional stakeholders to review Quality of Place concepts and index methodologies to craft a set of appropriate regional metrics – ***CEDS focus groups June 2013***
  - b. Develop and conduct several community presentations describing the role and critical components of Quality of Place within the SeVEDS strategy – ***CEDS focus groups June 2013***
  - c. Develop internal (within Windham Region) and external (out of Windham Region) marketing plan – ***external SVSMP to be completed Spring 2013***
16. Facilitate bringing challenged properties in the Windham Region back into purposeful use – ***redevelopment group soliciting for regional redevelopment and industrial sites inventory May 2013***
- a. Build structure for redevelopment capacity by 2019
  - b. Aggregate relevant environmental, financial and land record information for qualified interest groups.
  - c. Aiding qualified individuals and/or groups in purchase and rehab planning consistent with regional, economic, environmental and town planning.
  - d. Create a mechanism to facilitate intermediary ownership if there are no other alternatives
  - e. Identify and work with redevelopment efforts underway
17. Expand Percentage of the Regional Economy coming from the Global Economy by leveraging businesses w/global connections seeking higher skilled workers in high wage jobs.
- a. Create a database of businesses with international relationships
  - b. Map international, linguistic, cultural, and technical knowledge assets
  - c. Create a Global Marketing plan that links with International trade marketing tools and programs to expand markets and attract new business to leverage regional assets
  - d. Define three (3) Global Niche Markets having value chain gaps that can be filled by regional assets
  - e. Identify workforce skill gaps that might be filled by international workers coming to the region and create an worker recruitment plan
  - f. Identify potential needs of international workers and develop a plan to meet those needs

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**Objective 5: Plan for a Post VY Economy (I-5)**

18. Establish a sustained effort to cope with and recover from the closure of Vermont Yankee
  - a. Build a broad based steering committee to guide planning and action on economic and social impacts. *Created Daniel Yates (Brattleboro Savings & Loan), Martin Langeveld (Strolling of the Heifers), Andrea Livermore (Building a Better Brattleboro), Art Greenbaum, Barbara Sondag (Town of Brattleboro), Connie Snow (Windham Housing Trust), Ellen McCulloch-Lovell (Marlboro College), Jeff Lewis (Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation), Jesse Corum IV (Attorney) Lawrence Campany (Windham Regional Planning Commission), Mark Richards (Richards Group), Robert Stevens (Stevens and Associates), Robert Woodworth, Chad Simmons, Robert Oeser, Stephan Morse (retired)*
  - b. Conduct Substantial study of other nuclear plant closings and other plan shutdowns and find major learning's - *WRPC*
  - c. Establish Site decommissioning, deconstruction, clean up, restoration and reuse planning group:
  - d. Identify potential impacts from VY closure – *completed November 2011. Major categories include Jobs, GDP declines, Real Estate prices decline, Human Capital, Taxes*
  - e. Identify possible mitigation, barriers and means of overcoming barriers – *Completed February 2012*

**Objective 6: Plan, Track and Participate (I-8)**

19. Maintain list of issues and sectors for development of additional objectives and strategies
  - a. Energy Prices, Broadband and Cell expansion, Disaster preparedness, Transportation Infrastructure, Railroads, Regional Plan

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**Project Description: Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing Program for Recruitment of Employees and Tourists Submitted by Laura Sibilia, Director of Economic Development at BDCC**  
[lsibilia@brattleborodevelopment.com](mailto:lsibilia@brattleborodevelopment.com)

### **1. Organizational Overview:**

BDCC 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.

The primary objective of the BDCC is to create and retain a flourishing business community in the Windham Region that supports vibrant fiscal activity, and improves the quality of life of all its residents. BDCC is affiliated with the State of Vermont as the certified Regional Development Corporation (RDC) serving the greater Windham County area. BDCC is one of 12 RDCs throughout Vermont.

BDCC is the primary regional organization helping businesses recover from physical and economic injury caused by TS Irene in August 2011.

### **2. Project Description: Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing Program for Recruitment of Employees and Tourists**

As part of the FEMA ESF 14 long term community planning recovery process in the towns of Wilmington and Dover, it was identified that there is not a consistent Southern Vermont brand to market the area for tourism and business/employee recruitment.

The *Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing Program* is a part of the Windham and Bennington Region Commission Southern Vermont flood recovery project that was funded by the US Department of Commerce in December of 2012.

- **Phase 1:** (in process) Atlas Advertising has been contracted to begin development of the Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing program, a project envisioned by BDCC. This is a regionally initiated research, analysis and program development process designed to provide a mechanism for the Windham and Bennington Region employers and tourism dependent businesses to create collaborative long-term marketing strategies.

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Those strategies will be targeted to grow the economy by adding new employees to Southern Vermont and attracting visitors, both of which will be supported in the long-term through regional economic development efforts. The scope of work includes evaluating existing employer and tourism recruitment and marketing efforts, current targeted markets, and employer and tourism brands to create a large marketing umbrella brand for Southern Vermont that can be used by all of those entities, and to create annual cooperative marketing plans with a cooperative sustainable funding mechanism.

- **Phase 2:** Create a website for SoVermont that displays career, economic and visitor opportunity including a “job board”.

Coordinate stakeholder buy in by top 75 employers in southern Vermont at 5K annually.

Coordinate stakeholder buy in by the 40 largest Southern Vermont tourism businesses and events at \$2.5K annually to fund an annual Tourism Marketing Campaign.

### **3. Authority:**

BDCC has been contracted by the two regional commissions to manage the project and the current consultant agency, Atlas Advertising. BDCC maintains excellent working relationships with other So Vermont business, planning, municipal and development organizations and has experience working with the State of Vermont on collaborative regional marketing projects. The *Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing Program* also directly relates to a strategy tied to Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS). BDCC is contracted by SeVEDS to provide all of it’s staffing.

### **4. Project Capacity:**

**BDCC has added both a Director of Economic Development and a Director of Workforce Development position in the last two years. These two positions will work closely on further development and implementation of this project.**

### **5. Do you have the wherewithal to implement the project?**

This project is intended to provide efficiency and yield better results for businesses recruiting talent and visitors in Southern Vermont. .It’s success is dependent upon buy in from the employers and tourism entities in SoVermont.

### **6. What is the likely outcome of this project?**

Buy in by the top 75 employers in southern Vermont at 5K annually. Goal annual budget: \$375,000 (75 employers \* 500K annual op budget \*1% contribution) Estimated 5% ROI in payroll and sales on \$375,000 annual for 5 years is \$9.3 million.

Buy in by the 40 largest Southern Vermont tourism businesses and events at \$2.5K annually to fund an annual Tourism Marketing Campaign. Goal annual budget: \$100,000 (40 employers \* 250K avg annual op budget \* 1% contribution) Estimated 5% ROI on 100K annual for 5 years is 2.5 million. There is a possibility of state match for this program.

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**7. Is the proposal consistent with SeVEDS established strategies? Does it satisfy an objective? How will this project help the Windham Region to meet its economic development goals?**

This project is consistent with SeVEDS established strategies to increase the size of the work force and to increase the population of 22-44 year olds.

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**WINDHAM COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT GROUP CEDS PROJECT PROPOSAL**

August 9, 2013

Project Title: Redevelopment Organization for Windham County

Submitted By: Windham County Redevelopment Group

**Organization Overview:**

The Windham County Redevelopment Group is composed of representatives from the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, the Town of Rockingham Development Office and the Town of Wilmington. We are looking to create a redevelopment organization to help revitalize the neglected, blighted buildings that are scattered throughout our towns and are inhibiting our economic growth. In order to provide space for our businesses to grow and for new entrepreneurs to locate to our region, we are looking to ensure that Windham County has a significant supply of buildings that meet standards set by the International Building Code, the current Fire Code (NFPA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and local zoning ordinances.

Our organization's goal is to provide an integral link to the multifaceted approach to grow Windham County's economy represented by this CEDS project and to expand the welfare of our community.

**Project Description:**

We have identified three major planning projects that will allow us to develop an organization that will best serve our community.

*Define the Organization on a Regional Level*

The majority of redevelopment authorities exist to serve a single municipal area. Our goal for the Redevelopment Organization for Windham County is to create a body that can serve the needs of 27 diverse towns with disparate needs. This will require a higher level of coordination, foresight, and, because we will not have an individual town to fund projects, it will require capital. Because the need to redevelop neglected properties is common throughout our region and because this necessary economic tool carries inherent risks that can be mitigated by collaboration, successfully articulating the project on a regional level best serves the interests of our economy. Conveying our goal on a regional level will be challenging and will require significant collaboration with leaders across the region.

*Market Study*

When we begin to evaluate and rehabilitate buildings throughout our region it will be necessary to know what the demand for space is and will be in the future. This will help us determine the type of building most

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needed in the various markets across the region and will help us make the best use of each space. Additionally, a strong understanding of the market will allow us to better attract businesses to the newly renovated spaces, maximizing our impact on the local economy. We plan to apply for a RBEG grant for additional assistance in funding the market study.

### *Building Inventory*

Finally, we have been working on a Building Inventory of abandoned and mostly abandoned commercial and industrial properties in the Windham region. We have attached the preliminary inventory with findings from Brattleboro and Wilmington and we are working on the Town of Rockingham. This information provides a crucial first step in identifying the barriers to redevelop the properties, but more work is necessary before we can make informed planning decisions. In addition to completing the inventory, we will need to preform assessments of the buildings to identify their structural integrity, the availability of electrical and broadband service, whether Brownfields or other environment hazards are present, and assess the building's overall condition. This will help determine ready candidates for potential businesses and property owners. We have assessed a few buildings in the towns of Wilmington, Rockingham, Brattleboro, and Putney, which have been included in the attached report, but it will be necessary to expand this list before we can make informed, regional decisions.

### **Authority to Implement Project:**

The Windham County Redevelopment Group is composed of representatives from the major economic development agencies in Windham County with experience successfully managing properties. We are well connected to the business community and our initiatives have been met with support from business leaders across the region. Our team is experienced in economic development, building management, architectural and structural design and construction. This will enable us to found a successful organization.

### **Regional Economic Impact:**

This redevelopment project addresses a number of the goals identified by SeVEDS: acting regionally, developing our capacity, developing the quality of place, and assisting the manufacturing supply chain. This project will be implemented on a regional level. We are identifying properties in all 27 towns in Windham County and will be developing properties across the region. This will increase the Towns' Grand Lists, provide existing and new businesses with safe and appropriate spaces for work, as well as allow for a more evenly distributed tax burden.

Our physical capacity is a pressing problem for Southern Vermont businesses. It can be difficult to identify space that can be easily, and with minimal investment, transformed into the workspace needed by a growing company. We look to help alleviate this supply problem by redeveloping properties in accordance with the needs of the community.

We all love Southern Vermont for its rural beauty, but this aesthetic charm becomes marred by the presence of blighted or neglected properties in our downtowns, our villages, and our countryside. In addition to accelerating our local economy, this project would give life to the vacant buildings and lend vibrancy to areas that have stagnated.

This project would also help develop the manufacturing supply chain by allowing new business to locate here and our existing employers to grow. Identifying the needs of the manufacturing community and helping develop isolated cluster industries will be difficult without the ability to house these businesses or to meet the space requirements of a growing company. This redevelopment project would help both the

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large employers who are looking for space to expand and the small entrepreneurs who are looking for a space to start a business but do not have the capital required to renovate a property.

Thank you,

Francis Walsh Gretchen  
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### **WILMINGTON DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL PROPERTY REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

The urgency of now demands a collaborative approach to redevelopment, moving away from a one building at a time approach to a more planned and macro program, leveraging public and private efforts.

Organization: Wilmington Works

Contact: Adam Grinold, Promotions Committee Chair

802 464 8092

[adam@visitvermont.com](mailto:adam@visitvermont.com)

Wilmington Downtown Commercial Property Redevelopment Project

Wilmington was severely damaged due to Tropical Storm Irene in August of 2012. The downtown village was completely flooded leaving many business and property owners paralyzed. Many business owners have reopened their store fronts; however many buildings in Wilmington have stayed vacant. Retail stores, restaurants, office buildings, etc. remain closed. Currently there are sixteen vacant buildings in downtown Wilmington; two of them are being developed, one as a diner and the other a restaurant. Ten other vacant buildings outside of the downtown are waiting for a revitalization plan. When potential buyers of properties or interested tenants see the buildings beside them vacant as well, they are more reluctant to make the investment as it seems risky. Local banks are also a bit reluctant to make loans again as a very high risk.

#### Organizational Overview

Wilmington Works, the official downtown organization for the town of Wilmington, working with the Vermont Downtown Program. Wilmington Works is focused on the following mission: "To build, improve and support a vital downtown that benefits the entire Wilmington community." Wilmington Works functions as a subcommittee of Wilmington Fund, VT. The Wilmington Fund VT is a nonprofit organization formed to help rebuild and grow the village of Wilmington, VT, which was badly damaged by Tropical storm Irene in August 2011. The fund recognizes the importance of economic development in the redevelopment of Wilmington and has committed itself and its resources to investing in the downtown.

The Village of Wilmington, Vermont, has been on the National Registry of Historic Places since 1980. Its businesses were badly damaged by Tropical storm Irene on August 28, 2011 with the loss of 40 businesses with 120 employees, 20 apartments, and all Municipal services. All buildings sustained some damage, from flooded basements to total loss.

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Recognizing the importance of the downtown to the economy of the area, it is the purpose of the Wilmington Fund, VT to support Wilmington's recovery by raising funds to help repair damaged buildings and to promote commerce and business activity through use of grants, low interest loans, real estate ownership, other investment opportunities and partnerships with like-minded entities designed to promote job growth and economic opportunity for area residents.

### Project Overview

#### Wilmington Downtown Commercial Property Redevelopment Project (WDCPRP)

Wilmington Works wishes to establish an entity that will purchase empty buildings with the intent to renovate and rent these buildings. Wilmington Works believes the number one obstacle to recovery in the downtown is that the quantity of vacant buildings continues to discourage individual investment. Once established, the economic model for this organization will be to acquire multiple properties through Purchase and sale agreements, Slums/Blight federal and state process, as well as partnerships with current mortgage holders.

Private investors will be partnered with local funds available through Wilmington Fund, VT, local monies raised through the VT state 1% tax option, state tax credits, and other federal and state programs. It will be the intent to pursue the remaining funding through CDBG disaster recovery funds. It will be the goal of WDCPRP to be economically attractive to investors in order to raise at least 25% of the funds through local sources. Wilmington Works believes that there are the state and federal resources available that will allow for the purchase, renovation and operation of these buildings for a 5 to 7 year period at which time the goal will be to sell the buildings and provide the return on investment for the local investors.

It should be clear that the project at this time is NOT the purchase of the properties, their renovation and operation. Rather, the project under consideration for this CEDS submission is the PLANNING PHASE- the legal creation of the organization to be known as Wilmington Downtown Commercial Property Redevelopment Project. This organization will need to be formed to allow for the complex goals and partnerships identified, while also ensuring future availability of state, federal and private funding. It is this complex balance that requires legal, financial, state and federal planning expertise to all contribute in order to properly form this organization. Wilmington Works plans to create the partnerships necessary to form the independent WDCPRP that will carry on the goals identified above.

#### **Authority to implement project**

Wilmington Works, the official organization for the Town of Wilmington's Vermont Downtown Designation is duly authorized and empowered to organize efforts aimed at economic recovery of the village of Wilmington. The property owners in the downtown of Wilmington are eager to support this organization and have demonstrated this support with recent participation in organizational and promotional efforts.

Once established, WDCPRP will need to acquire the vacant properties identified in partnership with their current owners. Engineering, design, and permitting will all follow. Wilmington is currently considering a new master plan to mitigate future disasters and this plan, along with the town plan and local ordinances will all be considered during the implementation phase of the project.

#### **Capacity to implement project**

Wilmington Works is a new organization with little history. However, the board of directors and parent organization, Wilmington Fund, VT have significant experience in business, community organization, and project management. Additionally, the town of Wilmington, the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC),

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Windham Regional Commission, SeVEDS, Mount Snow Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the Vermont Downtown Program will all help provide specific technical assistance where appropriate. An example of support available is the BDCC architectural consulting provided by Robin Sweetapple. The BDCC has already invested significant time and resources to identify each vacant building's needs and challenges. This work will be leveraged to allow for rapid execution in the implementation phase.

### **Wherewithal to implement project**

The Wilmington Fund, VT has raised approximately \$750,000 for village projects, clearly demonstrating a commitment and capacity to see this project through. The 11 person Wilmington Works board is composed of members from the public, private and organization sectors, providing much depth and breadth of community representation. The goal of economic recovery within the village is widely accepted as necessary for the entire community and has very strong support by voters and tax payers.

### **Regional Economic impact**

Once formed and implemented, the WDCPRP will have a significant economic impact for the region. Without this project we are likely to see yet more business shuttered in the village. Simply put, we are barely viable as a tourism-dependent village. We must have our vacant buildings occupied in the coming year or we will be discarded by our visitors as a town you pass through on your way to some other place. With at least two million dollars invested in the purchase and renovation of these buildings, Wilmington will send a clear message that it is serious about its economic development. This message will be received wide and far and will help bring new, young entrepreneurs to the forefront of these efforts.

The facts are staggering when you look at the loss of employment from our vacant buildings. A successful implementation phase and operation of currently vacant buildings will return us to 2008 employment figures and better.

### **Successful Implementation Phase would look like**

- 12-15 New businesses in operation within the village alone.
- 30 full time jobs
- 30 part time jobs

As new business, these would be founded and operated with current business models & workforce standards, significantly increasing the size and quality of the workforce. It is our hope that some of these new businesses would expand beyond the tourism-based industry, employing higher earning employees. Perhaps most importantly, this project will empower the entrepreneurial needs of our current and future residents. By making available newly renovated space at market rates, the WDCPRP removes the major barrier preventing growth and fosters an entrepreneurial environment. This project when implemented will provide the stability needed in our local economy to allow for year round employment options for our young workforce. This is supported by previous employment figures when compared to current employment in Wilmington.

*This project is ground zero for Wilmington, without the rapid and successful redevelopment of these vacant buildings, Wilmington's economy and tax base will continue to suffer. There is no greater priority for Wilmington than a successful commercial property redevelopment.*

Wilmington Population		
2000	2225	
2012	1876	a 16% decrease

### Unemployment Rates – The Impact of Irene<sup>iv</sup>

	September 2008	September 2011	September 2012
Wilmington	5.6%	12.9%	7.1%

The average annual wage in Wilmington is \$28,779 and the median wage for Southern Vermont is \$33,680 which is a considerable difference.

### Rooms and Meals Stats<sup>iv</sup>

2002	Meals	Rooms	Alcohol	Total	Adjusted for Inflation (2010 Dollars)
Wilmington	4,944,316	2,384,713	1,268,295	8,597,324	\$10,293,937

2010	Meals	Rooms	Alcohol	Total
Wilmington	4,651,615	1,447,770	1,006,565	7,108,950

2012	Meals	Rooms	Alcohol	Total
Wilmington	3,589,720	1,428,373	851,442	5,869,535

### Sales Tax<sup>iv</sup>

2007 \$24,045,137

2012 \$20,030,801

### Sewer Flow<sup>iv</sup>

**2000-2005 0.0938**  
**2005-2010 0.0861**  
**2010-2012 0.0772**

	2011	2012	2013
January	0.0619	0.0768	0.0683
February	0.0661	0.0661	0.0708
March	0.1351	0.0732	.0740
April	0.0988	0.0587	
May	0.0809	0.0798	
June	0.0808	0.0674	
July	0.0663	0.0597	
August	0.0930	0.0625	
September	0.1075	0.0579	
October	0.0846	0.0779	
November	0.0700	0.0618	
December	0.0860	0.0728	
Avg.	0.0859	0.0679	

Note that we are seeing decreasing flow rates in 2012 and 2013. One would have anticipated these to increase following the immediate flood recovery.

It could be assumed that these trends are regional and not exclusive to Wilmington. However the data suggests that in fact, Wilmington in particular is suffering more than its Windham County neighbors.

**Tax Receipts 2013<sup>iv</sup>**

2013 YTD% Increase	Meals	Rooms	Alcohol	
<b>Wilmington</b>	4.9%	10.5%	1.8%	

2013 YTD% Increase	Meals	Rooms	Alcohol	
Dover	11.8%	14.2%	13.8%	

<sup>v</sup> Project Proposal for Inclusion in CEDS

## Windham Region Village Water and Wastewater Need Assessment and Feasibility Plan

Organization: Windham Regional Commission

Contact: Chris Campany, AICP

Executive Director

139 Main Street, Suite 505

Brattleboro, VT 05301

(802) 257-4547 x106

ccampany@windhamregional.org

www.windhamregional.org

### Organizational Overview

The mission of the Windham Regional Commission (WRC) is to assist towns in Southeastern Vermont to provide effective local government and work cooperatively with them to address regional issues. The Windham Region is comprised of the 23 towns of Windham County, the towns of Readsboro, Searsburg and Winhall in Bennington County, and Weston in Windsor County, and has a land area of more than 900 square miles. The Commission is composed of town selectboard-appointed Commissioners (up to two per town), and ten Citizen Interest Commissioners representing specific regional interests such as business and industry, natural resources, energy, and housing. The WRC is organized to perform those functions authorized by 24 V.S.A. 4345 and 4345a; the preparation, maintenance and implementation of a Regional plan as provided by 24 V.S.A. 4348a; advise and assist member towns in their preparation, adoption and implementation of municipal plans pursuant to 24 V.S.A. 4381-4426; and coordinate and assist in efforts to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of the Windham Region through development and planning activities affecting human resources and natural resources. In all efforts the Commission fosters the wise expenditure of public funds and resources necessary for the efficient delivery of governmental and community services. We currently have 10 professional staff, an operating budget of approximately \$1.3 million, and a well-established record of managing large federal and state grants and infrastructure implementation projects.

### Project Overview

#### *Project Need*

The principal planning goal for the state, region, and towns is planning of development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village centers separated by rural countryside. Achieving this goal is

impossible when village centers do not have public water and/or sewer. The full scope of the problem is unknown – a fundamental reason why this project is needed – but anecdotal evidence indicates that when the realities of existing village properties (lot size and aging individual well and septic systems) meet the realities of water and wastewater regulations necessary to protect human health, it’s not just new development that is challenging if not impossible. Retaining *existing* businesses, and in some cases homes, is at risk. As properties come up for sale, as aging systems need to be repaired, or as residences or businesses seek to expand, the costs associated with private wastewater regulatory compliance can be prohibitive. This is a crisis that must be addressed.

As is noted in the current Windham Regional Plan: 2

“Many of the region's villages have limited infrastructure to support future growth and available, buildable land is in small units. Septic disposal has proven to be the primary limiting factor for growth and development in unsewered villages. Failed septic systems can also affect the quality of life, threaten public health and environmental quality. Many village buildings are underutilized and business and community expansion is strictly limited by existing septic capacity. Septic system failures often are not easily remedied due to the close proximity of existing on-site septic and water systems. In addition, inadequate space and poor soils contribute to siting problems (Section 3.2 Existing Land Use Issues and Opportunities, p. 22).”

Businesses and residences in villages without public water and/or sewer are ostensibly frozen in time with the amendment of Vermont’s wastewater and potable water rules in 2007. The costs or physical ability for village properties to comply (i.e., not enough land, septic or well on adjoining property, etc.) are simply prohibitive. This undermines business and job retention, the availability and viability of our existing housing stock, and the ability of the region and state to create new businesses, jobs and housing. As such, this is not just about individual business or homeowner capacity to comply with the rules. It’s a question of overall public good, the economic viability of our villages, and the future of our communities. The answer may necessitate a public investment solution.

When the costs of compliance with private wastewater system standards contribute to the closure of inns, stores, restaurants and other businesses, we’re putting the sustainability of our villages at risk. The other side of the same coin is the risk failed private systems pose to human health. Our villages are our economic, civic, social and cultural centers, and as they wither, so will the culture and economy of our region and the state as a whole. Some may fear the costs of public systems, but those costs need to be weighed against the costs incurred by property owners when the inevitable repairs to every private system come due. We also need to confront the costs of losing the businesses and homes that are the anchors of village and town life. We’re losing the very things that make the Windham Region and Vermont the special places that they are.

Villages and other areas of the Windham Region presently served by community wastewater/sewer systems are:	Town	Notes
<b>Village name</b>		
Algiers	Guilford	part of Brattleboro system
Brattleboro	Brattleboro	
Putney	Putney	relatively new
Bellows Falls	Rockingham	
Kissell Hill area	Westminster	part of Bellows Falls system
North Westminster	Westminster	part of Bellows Falls system
Wilmington	Wilmington	
Readsboro	Readsboro	

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Haystack area	Wilmington	fire district
West Dover/Mt. Snow	Dover	fire district
Stratton Mountain	Stratton/Winhall	fire district
Jacksonville	Whitingham	
Whitingham	Whitingham	
Saxtons River	Rockingham	

<sup>vi</sup> **Leveraging Broadband**

**A CEDS Project Proposal**

Organization: BDCC

Contact: Jeffrey Lewis, Executive Director; Laura Sibilis, Economic Development Director

**The Opportunity**

Vermont has seen substantial investment, fueled by Federal ARRA funds, in expansion of broadband availability. One very large project, executed by Sovernet, has been the creation of a ‘middle mile’ infrastructure to build out high capacity fiber to nearly all the towns in our region. (The project addresses other areas as well but we are focused on Windham County.) However, the project was designed to connect the high capacity pipe to a limited number of key community institutions in a town; not to connect all possible users. Completion of the connection project requires a ‘last mile’ connector to arise that motivates people and businesses to want service, then to invest in the final leg of connectivity.

We believe that effective, creative use of the now available broadband capacity in the region by both individuals and business is an opportunity waiting for focus and leadership.

BDCC is the Regional Development Corporation for the Windham Region, and, with its affiliate, SeVEDS, have the mission of economic development. They are well positioned by role and capability to undertake a project of this nature. They have undertaken other regional strategy and planning project in pursuit of their shared mission; notably Post-flood recovery work with Windham and Bennington Regional Commissions, regional strategy and CEDS, and post-flood business recovery CDBG grants.

SeVEDS has established goals for entrepreneurial environment and increased population/workforce in age range 20-44. Improved use of Internet/broadband fits both of these goals well.

**Expected Outcome**

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There are three expected outcomes:

1. Increase the utilization of broadband tools particularly for business with a goal of helping businesses gain broader, deeper access to customers and markets as well as improving the ability to communicate with other members of its supply chain.
2. Market the high capacity, broadly available service to individuals and companies that might like to migrate to Vermont. Make this feature a known advantage to being in Vermont
3. Identify sufficient demand that last mile providers arise to build out the final connectivity needed to make the promise of high capacity broadband a reality at all interested addresses.

### **The Project**

Working from the installation maps from Sovernet (fiber middle mile) and VTel (wireless broadband) plus the established carriers (Comcast and Fairpoint) to identify more recent capacity expansions where there may be lower levels of knowledge and expectation about service and opportunity.

Develop maps for use in marketing programs to show the locations of high capacity lines and connections.

Identify existing businesses with limited use of broadband business tools. Work with those businesses to find networks of suppliers of customers they could benefit from. Introduce them to web based business management tools by bringing in trainers and consultants, including Google, to demonstrate how to use the technology to advantage. That training/education program can be a distinctive advantage in itself.

Work with local colleges, including Marlboro Graduate Center, to develop workshops and targeted training aimed at taking advantage of the vast capacity available. Again, this become part of the competitive distinction of the region—both the training, and the accumulation of trained people available as consultants or employees.

Develop a marketing program to attach to the Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing Program as an element of our attraction strategy based on broadband capacity and availability and the availability of human resources to take advantage of the resource. An element of the program would be examples of business projects undertaken in the region.

### **Regional Economic Impact**

Southeastern Vermont has well documented economic and demographic challenges. We need to create all the differentiation we can. Creating a strong program to take advantage of our broadband capacity could be a useful way of creating an identity for the region by raising the visibility of our readiness for Internet based activity. Among other things this will help to put us on the map with exactly the demographic we need to attract—20 to 44 year olds. This will also add to our entrepreneurial tool box as we work to build an eco-system that supports business innovation, creation and expansion.

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vii CEDS PROPOSAL  
PLANNING GRANT FOR INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

APPLICANT: Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation  
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This project seeks to obtain funding to continue development of an “innovation ecosystem” in Windham County. Funding will continue to build the foundation that will lead to implementation of the key elements needed within an innovation ecosystem. Specifically, funding would assess existing key elements of an innovation ecosystem currently in Windham County or within a reasonable distance, determine missing elements, research models for those missing elements, and develop metrics for evaluating success of the innovation ecosystem. Assessments will include determining the demand for technology innovation in Windham County companies, demand for incubator space in the region and best locations, ability to create regional capital sources such as revolving loan funds and/or seed capital sources and the best structure, the ability to develop regional start up and research capital in the region and appropriate structures, investigate appropriate research institutions including Universities and research laboratories to collaborate with, opportunities for Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grants for area companies and the development of metrics to appropriately measure the elements of an innovation ecosystem.

WHAT IS AN INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM?

An innovation ecosystem is an environment, both virtual and physical, that fosters innovation within existing firms and seeks to enhance the creation of new firms engaged in innovation of products, services and systems. The term “ecosystem” is deliberate and refers to “actors and functions” being present to enhance innovation.

Elements of an innovation ecosystem can include, but is not limited to the following:

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- Innovative firms
  - Innovation Engineering
  - Innovative and creative people
  - Business incubators
  - Shared services
  - Financing including start up and growth capital.
  - Mentoring/training
  - Consulting services
  - Professional services
  - Talent recruitment
  - Research and technical development capacity
  - Innovation clusters

The diagram in appendix A depicts elements of an innovation ecosystem and how they interact.

The creation of such a system in Windham County involves being proactive in developing the right environment for innovation, improving knowledge and understanding about innovation, connecting sectors and communities with skills and access to risk finance and making the region a better place to live and work. We have to assess elements that presently exist within existing firms and other entities, including the appetite for innovation. Create an inventory of missing elements such as risk capital, connections to Universities, and develop relationships with missing elements and/or bring those elements to Windham County. Creating such a system involves developing an innovation strategy. SeVEDS consultants Vital Economy sees five common elements of an innovation strategy:

1. Strategy: Where do we want to go? What are the choices we have? What broad approach will we take? Such a strategy is constantly evolving.
2. Process: A process for generating, selecting, prototyping, funding, implementing and commercialization. In Vermont, the Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center promotes the use of Innovation Engineering as a process.
3. Structure: Having in place laboratories for experimentation. Venture capital that funds innovation projects. A “specialist ladder” for talent to develop and grow.
4. Climate: Innovation grows in spaces that are open and conducive for collaboration. These can be informal or self organizing groups like Special Interest Groups or Quality Circles or other Communities of Interest (COI) to enable innovation. These groups can organize knowledge sharing sessions, competitions and newsletters.
5. Competency: Innovation needs ambidextrous leaders who can focus on efficiency as well as new ideas.

#### BACKGROUND:

Traditional economic development has long focused on the creation of jobs by attracting new firms to a state or region, such a strategy is extremely competitive and difficult for Vermont or Windham County. We compete with states with much larger budgets and incentives that far outpace what we offer here. Vermont, and Windham County have always fared better by encouraging business start ups and expansions of existing businesses, most of which started here. In fact, new research shows that while small businesses create more jobs, the most new job creation is from start ups. That job creation by small businesses has more to do with age of the business than size. Why? Start ups tend to be the innovators. Businesses that start here tend to have a greater loyalty to their “home” town and are not easily lured by the promise of incentives. Vermont has a history of starting and growing nationally recognized names like Ben & Jerry’s, Burton Snowboards, Green Mountain Coffee and King Arthur Flour to name a few. Vermont continues to be a small business state with

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approximately 90% of all establishments employing less than 25 people. Lastly, if a community or region has a good diversity of small, medium and large size firms, there is less susceptibility to the decline of one industry sector or one large business. Ten firms employing 10 people is generally less risky to an economy than one firm employing 100 people.

We believe creating an innovation ecosystem that supports legacy industries and products as well as new innovative businesses and products will create more stable, higher paying jobs and provide greater stability for the regional economy. Further, creating an entrepreneurial environment is Objective 4 of SeVEDS.

While Windham County hosts a few multi-tenant industrial buildings, it lacks a true incubator. We lack the “infrastructure” that will encourage new business start up and enhance the likelihood of success.

#### AUTHORITY AND CAPACITY TO ACCOMPLISH:

Through SeVEDS, a small group has been meeting to discuss a “business accelerator” model for Windham County. Those conversations have progressed to innovation and the innovation ecosystem. The team meeting has been Jeff Lewis and Pat Moulton Powden of BDCC, Martin Langeveld of Strolling of the Heifers and Tristan Toleno, local business person and Vermont Legislator. It is expected most of the work will occur under the auspices of BDCC and SeVEDS. BDCC has a long history of economic development delivery in Windham County. This includes property development and management. BDCC successfully ran a business plan competition for a number of year. Jeff Lewis is retiring at the end of 2013, his successor; Pat Moulton Powden has 32 years of experience in the practice of economic development in Vermont. Having served in various positions statewide, Pat is knowledgeable of the state resources that can be brought to Windham County to help implement. Martin Langeveld has vast experience in media and marketing as well as success organizational skills. Strolling of the Heifers sponsors a “farm to food” business plan competition annually that has now expanded statewide and partnered with VTC. Tristan Toleno has extensive experience in complex systems and is a respected voice in the Vermont Legislature. Jeff Lewis is retiring from BDCC but may remain involved as his time allows. There is additional talent in the region that will be tapped. This includes existing innovators and creative talent in the region that can help design and drive elements of the ecosystem.

BDCC is prepared to apply for and administer a grant for this work. We are prepared to seek out the necessary talent to undertake the assessment and other work. We are well connected regionally and statewide with education and other institutions that will be supporting the various elements of the ecosystem.

BDCC has extensive experience in grant writing and administration. We plan on pursuing grant funds to continue this development work as outlined below. Both Pat Moulton Powden and Laura Sibia have successfully written and administered grants. BDCC as present is administering or co-administering in excess of \$1.6 million dollars in federal grants.

There are existing resources/entities that can provide direct services and/or guide our activities going forward. These include but are not limited to:

- Vermont Manufacturing Extension Service (VMEC) including their Innovation Engineering program.
- Vermont Experiment to Stimulate Competitive Research (VtEPSCOR)
- Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies (VCET)
- Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA)
- Vermont Investors Forum
- North Country Angels
- Fresh Tracks Capital
- Higher Education including UVM, VTC, others
- National Research Laboratories

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#### THE WHEREWITH ALL TO IMPLEMENT:

Developing an innovative ecosystem will involve many players, multiple institutions, time and tenacity. The work will involve developing relationships as well as creating new resources. The BDCC and SeVEDS boards and staff are well networked throughout the state and region to make these critical connections. In some cases, we will need to develop relationships with entities out of state. We will be initiating these conversations in the coming months. We will rely on our excellent relationships with our Congressional delegation to help make connections to federal research laboratories as well as funding sources. We are also connected with regional and national economic development organizations to tap in to “best practices” in regions with well establish ecosystems as well as those in the start up phase.

We are in conversations with the University of Vermont, Vermont Technical College and others to discuss how they could be a part of this system. We have relationships with the Vermont State College system, which includes Community College of Vermont (CCV) and Vermont Technical College (VTC) locally. These resources will be tapped as needed. We are looking to these partnerships to help us develop critical elements of the ecosystem. We know both VTC and CCV are interested in developing additional capacity in Brattleboro with the new campuses in downtown.

We are seeking development funding at this stage. We anticipate needing approximately \$100,000 to conduct the necessary assessments and determine appropriate metrics. We will be applying for grant funding from federal and/or state sources. US Department of Agriculture Rural Development, Community Development Block Grants, US Economic Development Administration, and National Institute of Standards and Technology are all possible sources of grant funds. We will need to obtain matching funds from existing sources such as community development funds around the region, foundations, and other sources with a vested interest in the Windham regional economy. We do not have funding committed at this time but are optimistic we can acquire the necessary resources which could include direct appropriations from the Vermont Legislature.

Grant funding will enable us to hire or contract to have the capacity to undertake the necessary assessments and develop metrics to determine success. We will need to bring in that talent to undertake these assessments in a timely manner.

#### WHAT IS THE LIKELY OUTCOME OF THIS PROJECT?

The development funding will enable us to undertake the assessments and develop an implementation plan for the various elements of an innovation ecosystem. Some elements may require development of physical space, such as business incubators. Others will require developing relationships for product development and or technical solutions, such as with research laboratories. The assessments will enhance continuing discussions with resources and partners as well as initiate conversations with external resources. The development phase is critical to implementation of this strategy. As with any new initiative, you need to have a plan before you begin and this will develop that plan.

The development of an innovation ecosystem will result in the creation of new business, the expansion and stabilization of existing businesses throughout the region. The ecosystem will be region wide, as both virtual and physical infrastructure. We want the jobs created as a result of the ecosystem to be above the northern New England average as they will be research, production, manufacturing, science and higher end service related. This type of employment typically pays higher than average wages. The metrics we develop for the ecosystem will include job creation and wages so this will be measured going forward.

#### CONSISTENCY WITH SeVEDS ESTABLISHED STRATEGIES:

Development of an innovation ecosystem is Goal #5 in the SeVEDS goals, objectives and strategies outline currently articulated by SeVEDS. That goal is to “Create an Entrepreneurial Environment” which through conversations with Vital Economy, the SeVEDS consultant assisting with the CEDS, and internal conversations, we have focused on the “innovation ecosystem” as the term for this work. The characteristics of an entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem are the same with a greater emphasis on innovation in the innovation ecosystem.

### *Innovation Ecosystem Actors & Functions*



## CEDS Project Proposal

**Southern Vermont Scope and Sequence to Success Project**

**Applicant:** Rebecca Balint, SeVEDS Workforce Development Committee  
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Having worked in the field of education for many years, Rebecca Balint has extensive contacts in the public schools throughout the county. Through her work on the SeVEDS Workforce Development Committee, she has gained the necessary knowledge of the economic and employer landscape to undertake this work. She has many years' experience working on curriculum committees for schools and districts within Windham County. She understands the school systems and the enormous pressure on schools due to the constraints and mandates of No Child Left Behind.

**Project Description: Southern Vermont Scope and Sequence to Success Project**

The **Scope and Sequence to Success Project** will assist students and employers by working with Windham Region schools and businesses to clarify "pathways" to jobs that will come available in the great Windham Region in the next five years.

Partnering with middle schools, high schools, the new proposed STEM Academy at BUHS, the regional career centers, and CCV and VTC, we will collaboratively identify a clear set of workshops, classes and courses that will adequately prepare those students who want to work in the Windham Region beyond high school graduation. We will initially focus on pathways for advanced manufacturing and healthcare employment; these are the areas that will see the most immediate and dramatic need for workers.

**Background and Context:**

Students in our region are often not ready to step into jobs available to them upon graduation. We will identify the critical skills and training needed by local employers and develop a clear map that students can follow in order to be employment-ready.

As the research shows, the SeVEDS region has been steadily declining as an employment hub for the past decade. There has been a decline in total number of jobs, as well as the quality of employment and the wages associated with that employment. Windham County wages are substantially below those available in the adjacent counties of New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Although there is a popular perception that workers in Windham County are more highly educated than those in other parts of Vermont or surrounding regions, this is

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not borne out by the data. Our workers are generally under-educated and are not prepared for jobs with high demand skills across many industry sectors.

We have a growing population of residents who qualify for free and reduced lunch; poverty has grown in Windham County in the last decade. There is genuine concern that we will enable a crushing cycle of poverty to continue if we don't actively work to connect local families to real, good-paying jobs in our region.

As well, there is a very real danger that the workforce in the Windham region will not be able to meet the workforce needs of the region's employers. We must focus on increasing educational attainment in this region so that we keep the valuable employers we have and develop our workforce to such an extent that our region will become more attractive to additional employers.

#### **Work already underway:**

The SeVEDS Workforce Committee has begun a critical hiring inventory with the region's top 50 employers. After the initial survey is done with the biggest employers, we will know the approximate aggregate number of jobs that will open up in our region in specific skill areas. We want to insure that our region's students and parents are not only aware of the jobs that local employers will have in the near future, but will also be prepared to step into these jobs.

#### **Project timeline**

- 1. Complete employer hiring inventory:** This work is in progress by SeVEDS Workforce Committee and will be completed by December 2013. Using this data, we will know the types of jobs that area employers anticipate will become available in the next 5 years. This is information that we will share with area schools, the student population, the general public and the regional colleges.
- 2. Work with representatives from area middle schools, high schools, and technical centers to collaboratively develop education and employment "roadmaps" for students in advanced manufacturing and healthcare.** Students, parents and educators need a clear scope and sequence that will guide them through the education and training students need in order to be employment-ready. We will start by working in the Brattleboro area (at BUHS, the Windham Regional Technical Center and the STEM Academy), as that network directly impacts the highest number of students. We will then turn our attention to River Valley Career Center in Springfield and BFHS, and then Twin Valley. Our intent is that this work will be regional in scope and focus. All corners of our region need a clear roadmap of learning for students seeking area employment. Complete working draft of curriculum scope and sequence by June 2015.
- 3. Work closely with CCV and VTC to develop a seamless pathway between high schools' course offerings and college classes so that students will be employment-ready in advanced manufacturing or healthcare upon completion of a particular certificate programs.** Complete working draft of "Higher Ed Connector" by December 2015.

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4. **Identify teachers and administrators who will be “Education to Employment Allies” within their public schools and will educate students and families about genuine employment opportunities in the Windham Region.** There is a narrative in our region that “there are no jobs here.” We must work with educators to dispel this myth. We will utilize varied communication systems: email, Facebook, Twitter to facilitate communication about employment opportunities in real time. Communicate regularly with this “working group” of educators to inform them about job opportunities coming available in the Windham Region.
  
  5. **Identify local employers who will be “Employment Ambassadors” within the region and will educate their communities about the work they do and the employment opportunities available in SeVEDS region.** Link employers and educators through the communication networks developed for the “education/employment allies.”

### **Benefits to the Region**

This project speaks directly to the needs of several critical sectors of our population. Students and their parents benefit because there will be a clear pathway for them to follow to be employment-ready. The economic landscape is improved because the quality of our workforce improves. Current local and regional businesses are more likely to stay in the area because there will be a better prepared workforce, and the program will make our area more attractive to businesses outside our region. By connecting schools to employers, our educational system will be more attractive to those considering relocating to the area.

We have a thriving BUHS Dual Enrollment program that enables high school students to earn college credit; it is important to also develop a robust system to successfully prepare students for area employment. The recent meetings of local businesses with Governor Shumlin and Representative Peter Welch were filled with urgent warnings from local industry that the workforce here is not prepared for the jobs available to them, and this obstacle prevents area businesses from expanding their capacity.

SeVEDs has identified 5 key goals for regional economic development. This proposed project directly relates to two of these goals: Increasing the size and quality of the area workforce and increasing the population proportion of 25-44 year olds in the region.

### **Authority to Accomplish Proposed Project**

SeVEDS is the premiere organization in the Windham region working to reverse the economic decline of our area. Its Workforce Committee is a duly established committee of SeVEDS with authority to proceed with projects and initiatives. SeVEDS is affiliated with the BDCC, which is an established Regional Development Corporation, 501 C 6, and private, non-profit organization. SeVEDS and/or BDCC will apply for the proper funding to carry out this project. The Scope and Sequence effort is endorsed by the SeVEDS Workforce Committee, and it falls clearly within the responsibilities of that group.

Working closely with Pat Moulton Powden, Workforce Development Director and soon to Executive Director of BDCC, the Workforce Development Committee has already cultivated solid contacts with regional employers and has made positive initial contacts with the educational community. SeVEDS is currently building relationships with the new head of the Windham Regional Center and the principal of BUHS, who is in the midst

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of the initial planning of a STEM Academy at the high school. The WSESU Superintendent, Ron Stahley, has said he would be willing to assist us in bringing more superintendents to the table to discuss ways of supporting this vital work.

As teachers, administrators, support staff and guidance counselors are all swamped with meeting the requirements of No Child Left Behind, AYP (adequate yearly progress), and the new Common Core, it is imperative that we take the lead on this important work and not expect our overtaxed schools to do so alone.

### **Resources to Accomplish this Project**

The Scope and Sequence project is a vital but a new and untested project. We are confident that the BDCC and SeVEDS have the necessary capacity to bring this project to fruition. The SeVEDS Workforce Committee will continue to spearhead this initiative using seed money from SeVEDS and the paid working & volunteer hours performed by members of the group. We also have a summer intern who has helped a great deal in getting this program off the ground. We estimate the ongoing cost of this 2 year project to be in the range of \$200,000. This will cover staff time, curriculum consulting, materials costs, social media development, traveling costs, printing costs, data input, and resources unanticipated at this time.

The SeVEDS Workforce Committee will need to secure grant funding to support this project. Both Pat Moulton Powden, Director of Workforce Development, and Laura Sibilia, SeVEDS Director, have extensive experience writing and administering grants. BDCC is currently administering or co-administering over \$1.6 million dollars in grants.

### **The Critical Need for this Work**

Employers, educators and local families have all voiced concern that, despite our excellent schools and state of the art Windham Regional Tech Center, many students still do not seem adequately prepared for employment in the Windham Region following graduation. We see this as a more of a disconnection of information than a lack of true educational resources. We have talented professionals on both the educational and employment side of this equation. We simply need to do a better job of bridging the communication gap and strive for a deeper and more full understanding of the economic and employment landscape. This project will strengthen and make more relevant the immediate work of schools; it will offer much-needed talented and trained employees to local businesses; and it will offer local families the hope that there will be good-paying jobs available to their children.

### **Likely Outcomes of the Project**

In conjunction with the Southern Vermont Regional Job Board, this project seeks to increase the talent pipeline to regional employers. A clear curriculum Scope and Sequence for students and their families will increase the number of employment-ready high school graduates in our region. It will also increase awareness of local business and visibility of available work. Having clear “pathways” to work, as well as strengthened partnerships with area businesses, will make our educational offerings more attractive to those interested in relocating to Southern Vermont.

It is our hope that this focused, clear attention to employment pathways will also bolster positive feelings about the work climate in Southern Vermont—for businesses and for families. We have heard from some area families and educators that there is such a strong emphasis placed on 4 year college degree attainment, that area

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students who wish to seek gainful area employment feel lost in the shuffle. We want to support all area students in their career aspirations.

### **Consistency with SeVEDS Strategies**

- 1.) Increase the employable population
- 2.) Increase the total employed
- 3.) Increase 20-44 year old employment by 20% in five years
- 4.) Increase 25-44 year old population by 20% in five years.

### **Employment:**

In terms of jobs created, we must take the long view with this project. In order to bring (and to keep) jobs in the Windham Region, we must have a robust well-trained, reliable workforce. We have heard this from employers, large and small, in our region: They are worried that they won't be able to fill jobs in the near future, as they already have jobs they can't fill; the workforce available to them often does not have the necessary skills and training.

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ix **CEDS PROJECT PROPOSAL**  
**SOUTHERN VERMONT REGIONAL JOB BOARD**

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

**The goal of this project is to build a talent pipeline for employers in Southern Vermont.** This project will create a regional job board to list available jobs in Windham and Bennington Counties. It will retrieve resumes from interested applicants as well as those interested in relocating to Vermont. It will further seek to “mine” for folks that express interest in the lifestyle and jobs offered in Southern Vermont. The job board will be available to employers in Windham and Bennington Counties.

The job board will be part of and incorporated in to the “Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing Program” being done by the Windham and Bennington Counties Regional Planning Commissions and the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC). That Program will market the region to attract tourists and talent (funded by US Economic Development Administration flood recovery funds). The program has contracted with Atlas Advertising of Denver to develop a brand for southern Vermont as well as a sustainable marketing program, including collateral and electronic materials, to market the region to potential tourist and talent to fill hard to fill jobs. Atlas is developing the brand, visuals, and collateral. The actual marketing will be funded by area businesses. That effort will develop a web site or web portal to market the region. The job board will be part of that web site or portal.

The job board will enable employers to list their openings and push information out to potential applicants. It will also provide a venue for those interested in relocating to Vermont to post their resumes and push that information out to employers. In addition to the job board, the web site will contain relocation information for those interested in moving to Windham and Bennington Counties.

This job board will be unique in the state by marketing jobs in the two counties. Development of the job board will include the technology needed to link to state and national job boards.

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## BACKGROUND:

SeVEDS has identified the availability of workforce as a major challenge to employers and a limiting factor in the expansion of existing employers and the ability to attract new employers. Companies seeking certain technical or hard to find skills are seriously challenged finding that talent in Windham County. By example, in meetings with Norm Schneeberger of GS Precision, and often quoted by Governor Shumlin, GS Precision maintains they could hire in excess of 40 new employees if they could find the talent with advanced manufacturing skills. We continually hear from employers throughout the county the difficulty finding highly skilled, professional and/or technical workers. These include engineers of almost all types, technicians, professionals at a variety of levels, professors, CFO's and accountants to name a few of the sought after positions. We are aware of employers that have set up satellite operations in other states or countries as a means of attracting the talent they need versus asking those employees to move to southern Vermont.

SeVEDS demographic information indicates we are the oldest county in Vermont and aging the fastest. Further, that we are losing population in the 25-44 year old cohort at an alarming rate. This all leads to a serious concern of our ability to sustain our current employer base and seriously diminishes our ability to attract or grow new businesses in this region.

The SeVEDS Workforce Committee is in the process of doing a "hiring inventory" with Windham County employers. This inventory will provide numbers and types of jobs needed by area employers over the next five years. The inventory will include jobs needed to fill positions vacated by retirement, and regular attrition as well as growth of companies. We expect that inventory will yield a need for hundreds of jobs over the next five years. Finding that talent is a deep concern for area employers. This inventory will provide data needed to populate the talent recruitment web site and job board.

The SeVEDS Workforce Committee is also engaged in a variety of activities working with area schools and higher education to align programs and curriculum with the hiring needs of area employers. These activities will include career exploration, internships and other opportunities to help students understand the career opportunities in Windham County. As well as education and training programs specifically designed to prepare workers for the jobs available in the region.

These activities are proceeding along two tracks:

- 1) Work with schools to fill the talent pipeline locally through better alignment of career exploration, curriculum and training programs.
- 2) Attract talent to the region to fill hard to fill jobs. These efforts will also seek to attract back "ex-patriots" of Windham and Bennington Counties that perhaps grew up here, went to school here, vacationed here and would love to live here if they could find the right job.

## AUTHORITY TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT WE ARE PROPOSING:

The SeVEDS Workforce Committee is a duly established committee of SeVEDS with authority to proceed with projects and initiatives. SeVEDS is affiliated with BDCC which is an established Regional Development Corporation, 501 C 6, and private, non-profit organization. SeVEDS and/or BDCC will apply for funding to carry out this project. This effort is endorsed by the SeVEDS workforce committee. This effort legitimately falls within the responsibilities of the SeVEDS Director of Workforce Development and SeVEDS Workforce Development Committee.

## CAPACITY AND WHEREWHITAL TO IMPLEMENT:

While this is a new project to this region and these organizations, BDCC and SeVEDS have the capacity to carry out such a project. We will need to attract grant funding to build the job board. We

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have extensive experience with grant writing and administration between the Director of Workforce Development, Pat Moulton Powden and SeVEDS Director Laura Sibilica. We will need to identify and attract matching funds for this project which we expect will come from area employers. We do not have commitment of funding at this time but will be pursuing soon.

Pat has previously served as Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Labor which operates Vermont Job Link, a statewide job board. In addition, Pat served on a committee of the National Association of State Workforce Agencies to select the successor to “America’s Job Bank” when the US Dept. of Labor chose to discontinue that nationwide job board. Pat was part of the team that selected a vendor to create a new national job board.

BDCC has extensive experience attracting and administering federal grants. We are currently administering or co-administering in excess of \$1.6 million dollars in grants.

We will have to contract with a consultant or firm to build the job board infrastructure. There are multiple companies that provide that service to states and regions. There is no doubt the technology exists. It will need to be customized to Southern Vermont and adapted to fit the marketing strategy of the Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing Program.

#### LIKELY OUTCOME OF THE PROJECT:

The outcome will be a greater talent pipeline to regional employers. A job board targeted to Southern Vermont job openings and those interested in relocating to Vermont will increase the number of resumes and interested talent. It will substantially augment the talent recruitment efforts currently being done by employers on their own, by themselves. This will increase the visibility of job openings because the job board is coupled with marketing strategies also being funded by employers. It will provide a “spotlight” on jobs in this region.

We are aware of no such effort underway elsewhere in Vermont at the present time. By highlighting jobs in Southern Vermont, we will increase the talent pipeline available to employers.

This will result in more in-migration of talent to the region. This will grow the 25-44 year old demographic and result in measurable population increase of that age cohort.

#### CONSISTENCY WITH SeVEDS STRATEGIES:

This proposal hits several important strategies of SeVEDS:

- 1) Increase the employable population (16 and older)
- 2) Increase the total employed
- 3) Increase regional GDP
- 4) Increase 20-44 year old employment by 20% in five years.
- 5) Increase the 25-44 age population by 20% in five years.

The Sustainable Marketing Program and job board will attract more workers to the region. The marketing efforts will target the 20-44 year old age cohort and result in increasing that age population and increase the number of folks in that age demographic who will be working in the region. It will increase GDP by helping to fill the talent pipeline needed by area employers. Those employers will be able to fill needed jobs and thereby increase their productivity and production resulting in an increase in regional GDP.

**Regionality:** This is a regional project that targets both Windham and Bennington Counties. While SeVEDS is Windham County, the Sustainable Marketing Program is both counties. Due to SeVEDS and

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the work of the SeVEDS Workforce Committee, Windham County is a few steps ahead of Bennington County. By having both counties involved, the job board will have a critical mass of jobs.

**Developing capacity:** This project will further develop capacity for the region to sustain talent recruitment activities by developing the job board in conjunction with the Sustainable Marketing Program. The marketing will be funded by employers. The job board can be funded by grant funds but must be maintained in the same way the marketing efforts will be maintained, by the users which are employers. We expect maintenance costs will be minimal.

**Employment:** While this project only creates jobs for the consultant building the board, the job board itself will help fill literally hundreds of jobs provided by employers throughout the region.

**Wages:** The wages of these jobs will range from entry to professional, CEO level jobs.

**Leveraging external assets:** This project leverages the assets of the Sustainable Marketing Program. It also leverages and enhances the assets of employers currently marketing to attract talent from out of the area. It is impossible to estimate the dollars spent by employers own talent recruitment efforts but it is likely in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. The job board provides another venue at low cost to these employers.

**Quality of place:** The web site or portal being developed by Atlas, as well as the brand, is very likely to highlight our region's quality of place as an attraction, in addition to the job, for those coming to Vermont. This project builds on that quality of place by bringing folks to Southern Vermont who love Vermont and want to be part of all it offers. Further, it will bring professional talent and young professionals to the region who will engage with their communities to protect and enhance the quality of place.

**Supply chain:** This directly speaks to the talent supply chain. The goal is to enhance the talent pipeline.

**Readiness to begin:** The project is underway with the work Atlas Advertising is doing in the Southern Vermont Sustainable Marketing Program. Atlas is scheduled to wrap up their work in 2013. This project will launch soon starting with the identification of funding sources and application.

**Consistency with SeVEDS:** This project hits several of the SeVEDS goals. It is supported by the SeVEDS Workforce Committee. It is supported by SeVEDS and BDCC staff.

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**CEDS PROJECT PROPOSAL**  
**SOUTHEAST VERMONT MACHINIST APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM**

APPLICANT: Patricia Moulton Powden, BDCC and SeVEDS Workforce Committee  
Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation  
76 Cotton Mill Hill  
Brattleboro, VT 05301  
(802) 257-7731 ext. 224  
[pmpowden@brattleborodevelopment.com](mailto:pmpowden@brattleborodevelopment.com)

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

We propose to create the Southeast Vermont Machinist Apprenticeship Program in Windham County. Patterned after the same program in the Upper Valley of Vermont, this will provide precision machining and manufacturing training for regional employers. The program is conducted by Vermont Technical College (VTC) and involves a collaboration of regional machine technology employers. Appendix A has a description of the existing program in the Upper Valley. This could be modified to meet the specific needs of Windham regional employers. The program would be offered to incumbent workers, new hires and those seeking a career in precision machining. The existing program provides academic credit to those successfully completing the program. The credits are only a few shy of an Associate's Degree from VTC. Successful completers may choose to proceed to obtain their Associates on their own.

BDCC will survey area machine technology employers to determine their interest in participation. We will determine how many incumbent workers and new hires from each company. GS Precision has embarked on a similar program for their hiring needs. Most other employers are too small to cover the costs of such a program so a collaboration is needed.

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We will work with the Windham Regional Career Center as a program delivery site. We also want to collaborate with the Center to see what elements can be offered in their adult program and as well as the program offered to high school students.

**AUTHORITY TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT WE ARE PROPOSING:**

Pat Moulton Powden, as SeVEDS Director of Workforce Development will assess employer interest and work with VTC and area employers to design the program specific to the needs of regional employers.

Development of employer specific training is well within the goal of SeVEDS Workforce program.

We need this type of training to support the precision machining businesses in this region.

**CAPACITY AND WHEREWHITAL TO IMPLEMENT:**

While this is a “new” to this region, BDCC and SeVEDS have the capacity to deliver the assessment of employer interest, convene necessary parties to make this program happen in Windham County. We will seek federal and state grant funds to offer the program, as well as participation by area employers. We will seek as needed, US Dept. of Labor funds, funding from the Vermont Department of Labor’s Workforce Education and Training Fund (WETF) and the Vermont Training Program (VTP) at the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. Funding from WETF and VTP has been utilized to offer this program in the past so likelihood of success is significant. A detailed budget will be prepared once a final design is established. We will work with the existing program design and modify as needed.

We will begin assessing employer interest in the fall of 2013. The hope is we can offer the program in 2014.

**LIKELY OUTCOME OF THE PROJECT:**

The outcome of the project is better trained and prepared machine technology workers. We hear consistently around the region a lack of workers possessing machine technology skills. In particular we hear a screaming need for math skills in this sector. This program can upgrade the skills of incumbent workers, prepare new hires and provide an opportunity for folks seeking careers in this field.

**CONSISTENCY WITH SeVEDS STRATEGIES:**

This project speaks directly to the SeVEDS goal #3 of “Increase the size and quality of the workforce” by bringing critical machining skills education to the region.

Further, it furthers the objectives of Objective #2 of the SeVEDS goals, objectives and strategies of “building strategic relationships between assets” by utilizing and existing VTC program, partnering with regional employers and service providers. It also brings a best practice from elsewhere in the state to Windham County.

Appendix A:

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## Associate Degree & Apprentices Program

- **General Education (20 credits)**  
English I, Technical Communications, Humanities elective, Social Science elective, Technical Math I, Physics I
- **Foundation Courses (20 credits)**  
Computer Applications, Communications, Technical Mathematics II, Physics II, Technical Elective
- **Emphasis Courses: (20 Credits)**  
Design Communication, Manufacturing Processes, Metrology & Inspection, Computer-Aided Technology, Engineering Project, 8 additional emphasis credits.

Total Credits = 60



### Apprentice Program Courses:

Technical Math I (5 cr.)  
Technical Math II (5 cr.)  
Physics I (4 cr.)  
Design Communications (2 cr.)  
Manufacturing Processes (2 cr.)  
Metrology & Inspection (3 cr.)  
Computer-Aided Technology (2 cr.)  
Engineering Project (3 cr.)

Total Credits = 27

## Advanced Machinist Apprenticeship Course Sequence

### Spring 2013:

MEC1011 Design Communications  
HACTC, MW 4 pm - 6:30 pm

### Fall 2013:

MAT1340 Introduction to  
Technical Math  
VTC, Days/Times TBD

### Spring 2014

MAT1420 Technical Math  
VTC, Days/Times TBD

### Fall 2014:

PHY1041 Physics I  
VTC, Days/Times TBD

### Spring 2015

MEC1020 Manufacturing Processes  
Location/Days/Times TBD

### Fall 2015

MEC1060 Metrology & Inspection  
Location/Days/Times TBD

### Spring 2016

MEC2040 Computer-Aided  
Technology  
Location/Days/Times TBD

### Fall 2016

ELT2730 Engineering Project  
VTC, TBD



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**CEDS PROJECT PROPOSAL**  
**SOUTHEAST VERMONT GOVERNOR'S CAREER READY CERTIFICATE**

APPLICANT: Patricia Moulton Powden, BDCC and SeVEDS Workforce Committee  
Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation  
76 Cotton Mill Hill  
Brattleboro, VT 05301  
(802) 257-7731 ext. 224  
[pmpowden@brattleborodevelopment.com](mailto:pmpowden@brattleborodevelopment.com)

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

We propose to bring the existing Governor's Career Ready Certificate to Windham County. The Career Ready Certificate is a collaboration of the Community College of Vermont (CCV) and the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) to provide critical workplace skills to Vermont's unemployed and underemployed. It also partners with employers to recognize the Certificate as skill mastery in the program areas. The full program has been in existence in Vermont for over three years. We do not believe it has been offered in Windham County before and no Windham County site is on the current schedule of offerings. While it has been offered in Springfield and nearby regions, we want to bring it here. In other parts of the state where the program has been offered, it has been embraced by employers and the workforce.

We will work survey existing employers to determine their interest in the program. And work with CCV to bring the program to Windham County. The program is typically free to participants due to state funding. That funding is shrinking and we may need to seek grants to assure delivery here. We will work with employers to see if certain elements of the program should be emphasized or de-emphasized. For example, we may want to augment the math portion or the "soft skills" portion of the program.

We will target the regions unemployed and underemployed. Working with VDOL locally, Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA), Youth Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, United Way and other service providers, we will spread the word about how this program will benefit them as attendees. We will work with area employers so they can see the value of the certificate to them. If there are two applicants for one job, and one has the Certificate and another does not, the Certificate holder is the best bet as they have mastered the modules of the program.

**Governor's Career Ready Certificate Program Description**

Participants are assessed to determine their individual needs for skill building using American College Testing (ACT) Workkeys. The skill modules listed below may vary in content and sequence according to those individual needs, and describe sample topics only.

Students will learn and practice:

- Module 1- Applied Mathematics: the use of calculators, fractions, decimals, percentages, ratios, proportions, perimeters, surface areas, and more.
- Module 2- Reading for Information: identifying the main ideas, understanding and applying instructions, and comprehending important details.

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- Module 3- Locating Information: reading charts and graphs, identifying trends, interpreting data and drawing conclusions.
  - Module 4- Teamwork & Interpersonal Skills: listening and speaking, debating ideas, working on a team, and dealing with conflict.
  - Module 5- Work Ethic, Learning & Life Skills: time and project management, learning to learn, punctuality and attendance, setting goals and priorities.
  - Module 6- Basic Computer Skills: introduction to computers, simple applications, email basics and the use of the Internet.

### **What's in it for Employers?**

The Governor's Career Ready Certificate can help take the guesswork out of hiring decisions. Using a "Six Point" assessment process we can help identify the strengths and improvement needs of new and potential employees as well as develop a plan for helping employers and their employees reach new levels of workplace readiness.

Job profilers can help pinpoint the most important skills needed for a specific job, based on thousands of national skills standards. By matching skills with an employee, and by raising those skills through individualized targeted training, we'll help you get the right person in the right job with the right skills.

The Governor's Career Ready Certificate utilizes the national WorkKeys assessment system, a tool used in over 40 states to give employers a hiring advantage.

The program can help:

- Match the right person to the right job
- Reduce turnover
- Reduced training costs
- Save time and take the guesswork out of hiring

The Governor's Career Ready Certificate can also help existing employees. By assessing their talents, skills and work suitability, CCV can help raise the skill levels of your existing employees through the same individualized training we provide to new and potential employees.

The Certificate program responds to the concerns heard expressed by employers that applicants lack basic skills and "work ethic." This program seeks to teach those critical skills to the regional unemployed and underemployed.

### **AUTHORITY TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT WE ARE PROPOSING:**

BDCC and SeVEDS will do the work to assess employer interest and work with CCV to assure program delivery. CCV has expressed willingness to bring the program here. We need to develop employer interest. This is a legitimate element of the SeVEDS Workforce Committee work. While we have not had an in-depth conversation about this Certificate, that will be happening soon.

Timetable for implementation is to be assessing interest Fall 2013 for implementation in early 2014.

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This program can be taught at CCV's existing facilities or at any of the educational facilities in the region. The

**CAPACITY AND WHEREWHITAL TO IMPLEMENT:**

While this is a "new" to this region, BDCC and SeVEDS have the capacity to deliver the assessment of employer interest, convene necessary parties to make this program happen in Windham County.

Pat Moulton Powden was part of the development team for the Career Ready Certificate when she was the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and is very familiar with its content and impacts. She has already initiated conversations with the Tiffany Keune at CCV about the possibilities of delivering locally.

It may be that CCV can offer the program without us finding implementation dollars. If not, we will pursue Workforce Education and Training Funds (WETF) from VDOL to implement this program regionally. These grants are targeted at delivering training programs that will result in new hires and job retention. We may also pursue US Dept. of Labor funding to implement if needed.

**LIKELY OUTCOME OF THE PROJECT:**

The outcome of the project is a better prepared workforce. It will provide a competitive edge to those seeking employment. It will help reduce turnover at area employers. It will result in lower unemployment.

When implemented, we will survey attendees to track attendees and how the program impacted them. We will also survey employers and ask them to track turnover rates from successful program graduates. We recognize folks take, stay in or leave jobs for a variety of reasons. But surveying can give us information to help market the program and/or make changes going forward.

**CONSISTENCY WITH SeVEDS STRATEGIES:**

This project speaks directly to the SeVEDS goal #3 of "Increase the size and quality of the workforce" by bringing critical skills education to the region.

Further, it furthers the objectives of Objective #2 of the SeVEDS goals, objectives and strategies of "building strategic relationships between assets" by utilizing and existing CCV program, partnering with regional employers and service providers and tracking the success of the program. It also brings a best practice from elsewhere in the state to Windham County.

Windham Child Care Association  
130 Birge St.  
Brattleboro, VT 05301  
802-254-5332  
www.windhamchildcare.org

Contact: Elizabeth Raposa, Executive Director  
elizabeth@windhamchildcare.org

### Organizational background

Windham Child Care Association envisions a day when the healthy development of all children is a top priority of our communities, our state, and our nation. Families struggle to pay for child care, which can cost more than tuition at a state college. Long-term studies document that \$1 invested in quality early care can save up to \$17 in later costs (e.g., for special education, criminal justice, welfare, social services, etc.) Through our outreach, education, and family support services, we constantly work to our mission to improve the lives of children and families in Windham County.

Founded as Vermont's first child care resource and referral agency in 1981, Windham Child Care Association began as a loose affiliation of child care providers. Since that time, the organization has seen tremendous success in terms of its organizational capacity and community impact. From a one-person office in a converted barn, the staff now includes fourteen trained and capable staff and is overseen by an eight member board of directors. It is an integral part of the community's fabric of human service agencies and the non-profit sector.

As the regional community child care support organization, Windham Child Care Association is the only community organization in Windham County that offers child care referrals, helps families access financial support for child care, and provides comprehensive professional support for early childhood and afterschool educators. In addition to these core services we provide child care for 20 children ages 6 weeks to 8 years in our licensed child care center – Sprouts Early Learning Cooperative – and operate the county's bookmobile program – the Early Learning Express.

### Project Description

A healthy, robust and flexible child care system is vital to any economic development plan. During the fall of 2012 and the spring of 2013 the organization conducted a community needs assessment and will publish a report titled, *The State of Child Care in Windham County*, in the fall of 2013. Information gathered through this process also informed this year's strategic planning process. One theme that emerged through our community conversations and surveys is that Windham Child Care Association plays a key leadership role in building and supporting the development of a robust child care system in our region.

Our project addresses SeVEDS objectives of attracting young workers (ages 24 – 40) to the region, building capacity, quality of space and enhanced business clusters through the following strategies:

1. Build a more sustainable child care system through innovative shared business practices which will increase overall individual and program quality and earnings.

### Shared services

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Rationale: The ability for any program to stay solvent has to do with the level of enrollment in individual programs and those programs ability to collect fees. Our organization is poised to establish a shared services business model that will support, stabilize and enhance the child care programs in our region. We are in the eighth month of a one year pilot focused on establishing this type of business model. Currently we have 12 family child care programs involved and it has been a successful venture. We plan to roll this program out to all interested child care programs including family child care and child care centers. Our model will provide a 'fiscal back office' to provide billing, enrollment and other administrative functions. This model, which is utilized in other economic sectors, decreases the duplication of efforts and allows for a more centralized and streamlined approach to the business-end of child care. This service could include:

- o Shared business administrative costs – centralized billing and accounts receivable, enrollment, commercial insurance;
- o Cost savings on general areas – janitorial, supply and food ordering, etc.;
- o Marketing support;
- o Shared transportation;
- o Shared healthcare consultant.

Goals:

o Increase wages/income within the child care workforce. A recent wage and income survey conducted by us in July 2013 reveals that the majority of child care workers are not earning a livable wage. By shifting administrative functions to a share services model individual programs will see more dollars available to increase wages of their employees or their individual earnings. We anticipated all participating programs to see a 15-24% increase in their net income. So, a family child care provider who is currently earning \$22,000/year could see an increase to \$27,280 allowing more dollars to be spent in local economy thus increasing the overall economic capacity of the region.

o Increase in access to high quality child care programs for families. Research shows that when child care programs are able to focus their resources and energies directly on program development and delivery, overall program quality increases. As programs achieve higher quality ranking within the state quality rating system they are able to receive increased tuition reimbursement for children receiving state tuition assistance. This increased reimbursement is then applied to the child's tuition thus decreasing annual tuition by at least 9%. For a family currently paying \$8,658 annual tuition for one child they could see an annual savings of \$779. This savings helps to stabilize families economically and increases their capacity to spend additional dollars in the local economy.

SeVEDS Objective(s):

Building capacity: To further develop the shared services model the organization will need to re-structure its current fiscal office. We will increase our current part time staff person to fulltime and hire 1 additional fulltime and 1 part time administrative staff. This increase of 2.5 FTEs will move our fiscal office staff from .5 to 2.5 FTEs. Networking through a shared services business model builds the collective capacity of an economic sector.

Enhance/support business clusters: A shared services business model will allow programs within the child care field to reduce costs while increasing quality of programs, thus offering more choices to families seeking high-quality affordable child care.

Enhance quality of space: Increase of dollars to spend in local economy will sustain local businesses and create a more vibrant community. A sustainable and affordable child care system will attract new employers and employees to our region.

## 2. Workforce development for the child care field and other fields of employment

Rationale: A strong economic base which attracts young workers of child-bearing age must be built with a vibrant child care system as one of its legs. Windham Child Care Association works on this strategy in two distinct yet related ways:

Goals:

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o A highly qualified and credentialed workforce provides employees with increased child care choices. Windham Child Care Association works closely within the child care community to support educational and professional growth of its members. Our programming includes the following:

☐ Provide education and training to the child care provider population through our ongoing professional development program;

☐ Partner with CCV and other higher education institutions to provide opportunities for individuals to achieve at least an Associate's degree, preferably a Bachelor's degree, in Early Childhood Education/Development;

☐ Provide career counseling for individuals interested in the field of early childhood;

☐ Provide support to programs to increase their program quality as identified by the state quality rating system;

☐ Provide trained mentors to assist individuals when they enter the field and as they progress in their career.

o Partner with local employers to:

☐ Provide subsidized child care spaces and/or additional child care reimbursement benefits for their employees;

☐ Provide comprehensive child care referrals for families seeking child care;

☐ Provide parenting education and/or support to address work/family issues, child development and other parenting concerns.

SeVEDS Objective(s)

Building Capacity: Windham Child Care Association will add 1 fulltime staff to our current program staff to meet the anticipated need and desire for additional provider training and mentoring. We will add 1 part-time staff to support employers and their employees with child care issues and concerns. This is an increase of 1.5 FTEs.

Building Capacity & Quality of Space: Employer-supported child care is an attractive enticement for young families and individuals of child-bearing age. This strategy can increase and sustain the overall employment of the region enhancing our quality of place.

Capacity and resources to implement project

Windham Child Care Association is a fiscally sound organization with strong leadership and an experienced and well-qualified staff. We are continually working to diversify our financial support in order to ensure the organization is not over-reliant on any one source of funding. We have 100% Board participation in our fundraising efforts. Our stability is further affirmed through the support of community members and foundations that share our vision of promoting a good start for all our children. We have well-established collaborative relationships with many organizations. Both our fundraising and our inclusion in local collaborations evidence the support of the community for Windham Child Care Association's work.

Windham Child Care Association has an important voice in the community conversation surrounding the health and well-being of children. We have demonstrated the value of a strong child care infrastructure for businesses, employees, and the community to local individuals and businesses in a variety of venues.

We are currently engaged in the above activities and are prepared to move ahead with fully implementing this project in the coming fiscal year.

## **Route 30/West River Valley Project**

**Submitted by Laura Sibilia, Director of Economic Development at BDCC [lsibilia@brattleborodevelopment.com](mailto:lsibilia@brattleborodevelopment.com)**

### **1. Organizational Overview:**

BDCC 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.

The primary objective of the BDCC is to create and retain a flourishing business community in the Windham Region that supports vibrant fiscal activity, and improves the quality of life of all its residents. BDCC is affiliated with the State of Vermont as the certified Regional Development Corporation (RDC) serving the greater Windham County area. BDCC is one of 12 RDCs throughout Vermont.

BDCC is the primary regional organization helping businesses recover from physical and economic injury caused by TS Irene in August 2011.

**2. Project Description:** Creation of a plan to network businesses and economic interests along Route 30/West River Valley to leverage existing organizational and financial resources

Businesses in Dummerston, Newfane, Townshend, Jamaica, Winhall and Londonderry Businesses along Route 30 and in the West River Valley are more vulnerable and isolated than businesses in other small towns in the region due to a lack of connection to business organizations like a chamber of commerce.

Since TS Irene in 2011, BDCC has been called out numerous times to meet with businesses in this part of the region, particularly post Irene, struggling with low economic activity, marketing challenges, staffing challenges, beautification, and business development. Stratton Mountain ski resort is a main destination for travelers in and through this region and, in the past, has supported the idea of connecting businesses in this region via a byway program which would have allowed increased collaborative marketing.

### **3. Authority:**

BDCC is the regional economic development entity for SE Vermont and has or is establishing relationships with businesses in this region.

### **4. Project Capacity:**

BDCC has added both a Director of Economic Development and also has two Flood Recovery Officers who have been working with businesses in this area.

### **5. Do you have the wherewithal to implement the project?**

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This project is intended to provide efficiency and yield better results for businesses along route 30 / West River Valley. It's success is dependent upon buy in from those businesses.

**6. What is the likely outcome of this project?**

An increase in tourism and event activities, increase in business support, increase in year round population, increased jobs and increased grand lists

**7. Is the proposal consistent with SeVEDS established strategies? Does it satisfy an objective? How will this project help the Windham Region to meet its economic development goals?**

This project is consistent with SeVEDS established strategies to increase the size of the work force and to increase the population of 22-44 year olds as well as to develop the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

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<sup>xiv</sup> **Develop a “green” high performance building cluster in Windham County:**  
**Submitted by Laura Sibilia, Director of Economic Development at BDCC on behalf of Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS) [lsibilia@brattleborodevelopment.com](mailto:lsibilia@brattleborodevelopment.com)**

### **1. Organizational Overview:**

BDCC 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.

The primary objective of the BDCC is to create and retain a flourishing business community in the Windham Region that supports vibrant fiscal activity, and improves the quality of life of all its residents. BDCC is affiliated with the State of Vermont as the certified Regional Development Corporation (RDC) serving the greater Windham County area. BDCC is one of 12 RDCs throughout Vermont.

SeVEDS is affiliated with BDCC and its mission is to develop and implement strategies to reverse the Windham Region’s economic decline..

### **2. Project Description: Explore Viability of a Green Products and Services Industry Cluster in Southeastern Vermont**

Background:

Asset mapping discussions around the SeVEDS region identified a number of unique raw material, products, services, and research and knowledge assets in the green building field.

The next step is to explore the viability for developing an emerging industry cluster that would establish Southeastern Vermont as the center of gravity for growing green building research, product and service businesses with high wage jobs.

### **3. Authority:**

BDCC has contracted with VITAL Economy to create a regional economic development strategy on behalf of its affiliate SeVEDS. . BDCC maintains excellent working relationships with So Vermont business, planning, municipal and development organizations. *Exploring the Viability of a Green Products and Services Industry*

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*Cluster in Southeastern Vermont* directly relates to a strategy tied to Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies (SeVEDS). BDCC is contracted by SeVEDS to provide all of its staffing.

**4. Project Capacity:**

**BDCC has added both a Director of Economic Development and a Director of Workforce Development position in the last two years. These two positions will work closely with regional industry leaders on further development and implementation of this project.**

**5. Do you have the wherewithal to implement the project?**

BDCC, on behalf of SeVEDS, has managed the Windham Regional CEDS plan and will be able to implement development of *a Green Products and Services Industry Cluster in Southeastern Vermont*

**6. What is the likely outcome of this project?**

Based on initial research, Southern Vermont economic development consultants ViTAL Economy believe there may be significant opportunity for the SeVEDS region to connect its unique assets in the Green Building Research, Products and Services arena and develop a Northeastern U.S. regional center of excellence that can create hundreds of new higher wage jobs and numerous green building research, product and service firms over the next ten years.

**7. Is the proposal consistent with SeVEDS established strategies? Does it satisfy an objective? How will this project help the Windham Region to meet its economic development goals?**

This project is consistent with:

- SeVEDS established strategies to increase the size of the work force
- Increase the population of 22-44 year olds.
- Grow the entrepreneurial ecosystem of SE Vermont.
- Improve average wage

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## **Build a rapid prototyping facility at existing shop for prefab high performance building envelopes and resilient mechanical systems**

### **1. Identify the applicant**

Eli Gould

57 Covey Rd., Brattleboro, VT 05301

802.258.0800 [ironwoodbrand@gmail.com](mailto:ironwoodbrand@gmail.com)

I am a Vermont native, resident of West Brattleboro and proprietor of three related companies:

-Ironwood Brand LLC, a vertically integrated timber/mill/design/build firm focusing on the residential construction sector. ([www.ironwoodbrand.com](http://www.ironwoodbrand.com))

-Precraft, LLC, an R&D vehicle to lead the development of new building assemblies and market them on-line (secured the future site of [www.precraft.com](http://www.precraft.com)).

-STIX, L3C (Sustainable Timber Investment Exchange), a means to advance wood science to the point where native lumber can be used for engineered structures as well as a means to carry out the key forestry work which often cannot happen commercially.

Over the course of 19 years Ironwood Brand has been involved in the construction of more than 80 structures, primarily single-family homes. Many of them include lumber harvested and milled locally by us. The design elements in these homes have often been developed or refined through my advanced CAD/CAM capabilities which I first explored during my dual forestry/architecture degree at Yale.

While some Precraft type manufacturing/assembly has already taken place at my shop in West Brattleboro, we have not yet actively launched the Precraft company. Some building component partners have Precraft as their R&D partner for next year based on work we have done for the Alex Wilson house/barn prototype project this year. When we are successful at the next level, a scaled up design/build operation could quickly move into some of Brattleboro's vacant manufacturing space. Even at that point, my shop would continue to provide its best value as a destination to demonstrate, develop, and teach the design/build of prefab building components linked to a local supply chain.

STIX, one of the first Vermont low-profit L3C's, was only a concept and startup until last year when we won a wood science grant through VT Forest, Parks and Recreation, allowing us to build a mobile timber testing device

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that I had been proposing to other funding sources for years. Hurricane Irene accelerated the need for this device and the science behind it. I did recently get called in to explain and plan some possible applications with the VTrans group of engineers.

## **2. Provide a detailed description of the project.**

### Prefab high-performance building envelopes and resilient mechanical systems.

Ironwood Brand, with its sister companies PreCraft and STIX, is seeking matching funding to complete a rapid prototyping facility at our shop. High-performance building envelope sections as well as specialized building mechanical systems will be the products. With this facility we will be able to scale up our industry-leading R&D work in the building trades, link local forestry and wood product manufacturing with more regional construction employment opportunities, and help a whole supply chain achieve the best utilization of my hometown region's timber.

I believe that Windham County's position as the state's top timber county, so well connected by transportation hubs to other states, is a "sleeping giant" of economic impact once we have a design and manufacturing process that truly links native lumber, design/engineering, and prefab construction. Add to that the expanding demand for energy efficiency and resilient design (resilient against climate change impacts) -- a field in which our region is already rich with expertise -- and Windham County can be a real leader for others to emulate and for exporting of our knowledge and experience. My companies can demonstrate that process, provide immediate job creation, and more importantly provide opportunities for other small and large companies to take part in their own growth based on that model.

On the 42'x84' footprint of a falling down barn, purchased in 2004, I have slowly permitted, constructed, and brought into operation a sawmill, design studio, and prefab construction facility. Even as my companies have become recognized around the region, and grown to eight employees and a large indirect sales impact, my property equity has almost slipped "underwater" as comparable properties had their appraisals drop and I have struggled to fund major construction steps out of pocket.

The key infrastructure improvements that we need include provision for sewer and water, a completed and reinforced roof, and a small interior frost free enclosure to house critical building services like backup heat and IT equipment.

## **3. Establish that you have the authority to accomplish what you are proposing.**

The unfinished shop that I own at 628 Abbott Road is 3500 square feet and there is an adjacent sawmill, also on my property. Two years ago an attached 10 x 20 office/engineering space was added. This all sits on an acre of land with an adjoining 2-acre lot also owned by me. This is property 100132-000 on the Brattleboro's Listers' records.

The major remaining needs to complete the mill include:

-Sewer and water. There is no town water and sewer so a well and septic system would need to be permitted and constructed. Since there are 3 acres available it is quite likely that both are feasible. A septic system plan has already been designed.

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-Roof. While a newer roof currently covers a portion of the space, an older, dilapidated roof needs complete replacement.

-Small interior frost free enclosure. I already have a good idea about how this can be constructed to leverage the existing heating system and existing space.

#### **4. Do you have the capacity to implement this project?**

Along with the previously mentioned academic background in forestry/architecture, I already have a lengthy track record in residential construction with a focus on green building and resilient design. I have been building customized homes for 19 years. One Brattleboro house project in 2012 won a state-wide, Efficiency Vermont award in the "passive house" category. On another project, in 2012 and 2013, we have led the major renovation of the farm house and barn of Building Green founders Alex & Jerelyn Wilson. As part of this process they meticulously chose resilient design materials and approaches, usually aided by my research and advice.

My unfinished shop on Abbott Rd. -- even for awhile before it had any kind of roof -- has been put to use on 8-10 projects, as my individualized, customer-driven designs have been assembled in house and then transported to the building sites.

I have also been the recipient of a wood science grant through VT Forest, Parks and Recreation, allowing us to build a mobile timber testing device that I had been proposing to other funding sources for years. I successfully finished that project, complete with an end of grant report.

#### **5. Do you have the wherewithal to implement the project?**

I need \$100,000 to make this facility improvement project happen. I have had conversations with Merchants Bank on a \$40,000 financing package. It is my intention to apply for a Working Lands grant of \$50,000 and I am prepared to put in \$10,000 of my own capital.

Since my company has already exercised most if not all elements of the design/prefab approach to high performance building envelopes and mechanical systems, we clearly have the managerial capacity to make this happen. I have recently subcontracted some project coordination and scheduling work with a person who can scale up her hours as the need arises, and my part-time business manager can ramp up his number of hours. Some members of my crew, while spending much of their time on site carpentry, have also participated directly in the shop prefab work.

#### **6. What is the likely outcome of this project?**

The benefits to my employees will be immediate as they help to create a workplace where we can build homes year round regardless of weather. Also every step that I take towards being ready to build and export helps my hometown partners who supply timber, lumber, and allied services and trades people on all the projects that I lead.

My 6 current full-time skilled carpenters are paid at rates equaling \$37,440 to \$50,440 per year, with 4 of the 6 above \$40,000. Because of the seasonal nature of the bulk of the work Ironwood currently carries out, these employees do not usually work full-time during January through March. If this proposed R&D/prefab assembly facility goes forward, however, year-round work can become much more the norm.

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We design buildings and link them to standing timber, instead of cutting standard inventory or retail. Even two of our underutilized local species, hemlock and poplar, represent millions of board feet in this county alone, or the capability to supply many hundreds of homes. Even just an incremental growth in the number of homes built with our process has an impact because our percentages of local products are higher than a typical home.

This is proven by a quick look at our current local leadership of a small but vertically integrated supply chain. Ironwood's direct services in recent years have averaged close to half a million, but each year the many small or medium residential projects which we manage add up to millions of dollars being spent locally on other trades and local suppliers. My lumberyard accounts, all local, have been in the consistent six figures for four years now, and I have built a broad, reliable network of allied professionals which my jobs provide work to. Timber harvesters, sawmills, site and survey workers, construction trades, building science and design professionals, even local insurance and lending contacts all have been impacted by Ironwood's consistent presence. This network can easily scale up as quickly as or more quickly than my own small businesses can. So, while my standard operations can continue their success, the R&D and assembly aspects can also be a focal point, an idea generator and experience-sharer to jumpstart success for other companies wanting to serve the expanding demand for high performance envelopes and resilient mechanical systems.

Although we have used the residential design market as the most flexible field to develop our skills and capabilities, public buildings and engineered structures represent a slower-to-change supply chain that I am already working to impact. My conviction is that Vermont's new design/build enabling legislation will eventually become best utilized by municipalities. This will call for all the engineering and design capacity that we are building, and for a small and tightly controlled "chain of custody" that can follow a single timber through mapping, harvest, design, milling, testing, fabrication, and assembly.

**7. Is the proposal consistent with SeVEDS established strategies? Does it satisfy an objective? How will this project help the Windham Region to meet its economic development goals?**

This project addresses the SeVEDS goal to Improve Wage Parity with Surrounding Labor-shed. My residential construction work provides above average pay for my full-time skilled carpenters during the construction season but this is not generally true in the winter. This R&D/prefab shop will enable them to work year-round. They are paid at rates equaling \$37,440 to \$50,440 per year, with 4 of the 6 above \$40,000 despite not having college degrees.

This project addresses the SeVEDS goal to Increase Population Proportion of 25-44 Year olds. My current full-time employees all fall within this range. The Building trades are often a younger person's profession because of the physical nature of the work. But as my companies transition into more R&D and testing work, young college grads with CAD/CAM or other technical education will be needed by me or by other companies that enter this expanding field.

My project addresses the SeVEDS goal to Create an Entrepreneurial Environment. My companies want to be a regional leader in the high performance/resilience field, but we also want to see existing or new companies in our area work in this same arena. I have seen the demand grow for this work even as traditional timber framing is declining.

While I believe the SeVEDS plan has not yet finalized the industry clusters that the region should focus on, it is my understanding from a recent visit of the Vital Economy folks that they will recommend Green and High

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Performance Sustainable Building Materials as one of these. The link to my project proposal could not be more direct