

## CH 10: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Economic Development Goals

*The Region's comparative advantage is in its quality of life, excellent work force and entrepreneurial spirit. Economic development activities need to strengthen and enhance these regional characteristics through:*

1. Maintaining and enhancing the "quality of life" enjoyed by residents of the Region in order to retain current and attract new businesses and workers.
2. Diversifying the Region's economy and increase economic resiliency.
3. Prioritizing economic growth that revitalizes Regional and Town Centers, Village Centers and Hamlets.
4. Supporting economic development within designated growth centers and industrial parks.
5. Prioritizing investments in public services and facilities that further these economic development goals, including expanding and improving infrastructure such as broadband, wireless telecommunication, transportation, energy, sewer and water systems, energy efficiency and clean energy.
6. Supporting public health, and housing policies and programs that allow for residents in the Region to participate in the workforce and contribute to the local economy.
7. Using land use practices and regulations that foster economic development and growth.
8. Having a skilled and educated workforce.
9. Using collaborative efforts with local and state partners to implement coordinated economic development activities.

### Introduction

Sustainable economic development is vital to the prosperity of a Region. The survival of a healthy economy depends, not just on economic growth, but how wealth is distributed within the region. The purpose of this chapter is to define goals and recommendations based on information, data, and analyses of the Region that will improve the economy and, therefore, the quality of life for its residents.

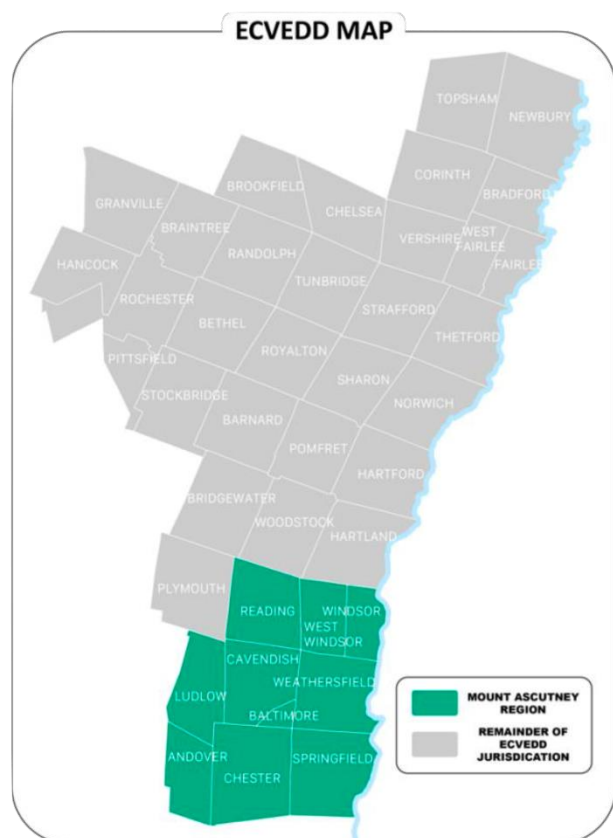
This chapter is intended to work in conjunction with the goals of the East Central Vermont Economic Development District (ECVEDD) and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). An Economic Development District is a federally designated organization charged with the development, maintenance, and implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Although the ECVEDD and the CEDS guide the greater central Vermont area, our Region has specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) that make it unique.

When evaluating the Region’s economy, it is important to recognize that economic development is more than creating new jobs, building new roads, attracting new businesses, constructing new housing, and increasing the taxable grand list. Economic development also includes considerations of the quality of jobs and the sustainability of a high quality of life for all residents within the Region.

**With the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic landscape of the Region has shifted. A lot of statistics in this chapter may not reflect this shift. The permanent economic implications of COVID-19 will not be felt for some time.**

## ECVEDD/CEDS

The federally designated East Central Vermont Economic Development District (ECVEDD) consists of 40 towns within parts of Addison, Orange, Rutland, and Windsor Counties. ECVEDD’s mission is to access and provide resources and to facilitate and support quality decision making for the benefit of entrepreneurs, businesses, and communities in East Central Vermont. This designation allows the region to gain access to Economic Development Administration (EDA) Investment Assistance through a variety of grant opportunities. Any requests for EDA funding must align with the CEDS. The East Central Vermont EDD (ECVEDD) uses grants to retain the organization and implement the strategies and goals outlined in the [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#) (CEDS) plan. A CEDS ambition is to create a strong and resilient economy, while providing a framework for local and regional collaboration. An approved CEDS is required to access EDA funding.

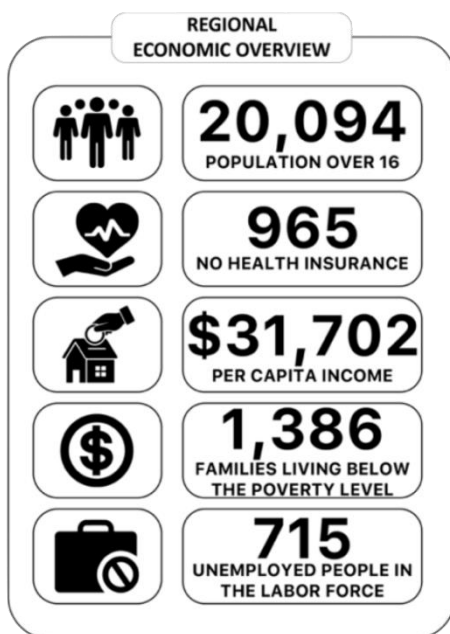


As of 2020, the goals of the CEDS are for a

1. Resilient region;
2. Innovative business environment;
3. Robust and ready workforce;
4. Infrastructure and homes for growth;
5. Quality life and place; and
6. Healthy community.

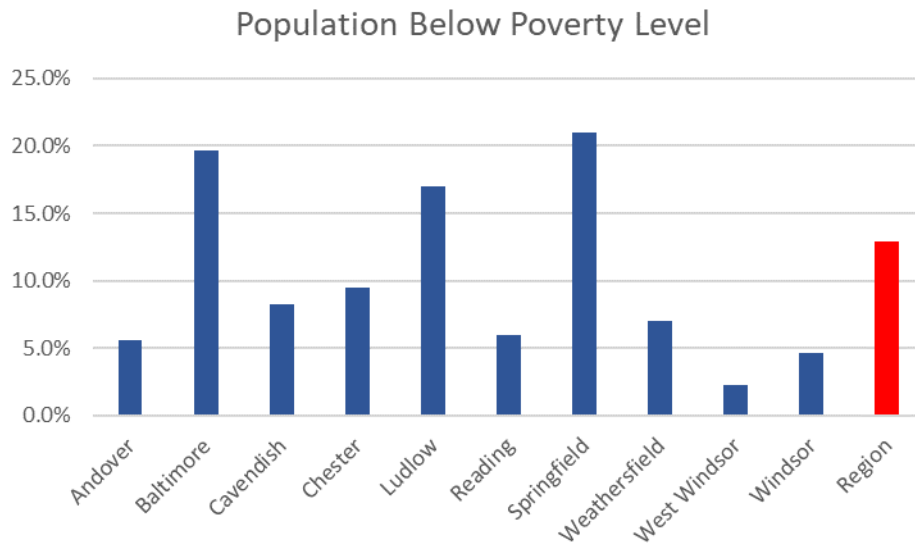
The 2020-2025 CEDS plan characterizes central Vermont's economy as overall slow growing, with a heavy reliance on tourism. The plan outlines economic hurdles being post-industrial brownfields, high property taxes, aging infrastructure, aging population, population loss, and a lack of access to services like public transit and job training. Although central Vermont's overall job growth from 2010 to 2018 was only 2%, creative sector employment grew by 14% over the same time. The CEDS highlights issues with housing affordability both in rental and ownership, as well as elevated high school drop-out rates in our Region compared with northern towns within the ECVEDD.

## Regional Overview



Historically, the Region is known for machine-tool manufacturing. Although some remnants of machine-tool industry remain, the Region has shifted towards a more diversified economy. The Region is characterized as mostly rural, with the downtown areas retaining commercial centers, and agriculture and forested land making up the remainder of the Region. Like other small towns in Vermont, the Region is dealing with population loss and stagnation. The population continues to age, and the Region struggles to attract and retain young professionals and families. The Region continues work towards more affordable housing, adequate work options, childcare, and other factors that draw people to live in the Region. Unlike some of the towns in the northern part of the ECVEDD, our Region tends to have a higher level of poverty, with close to 13% of the population in the Region living below the

poverty level.



Source: 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates

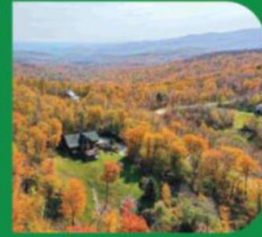
For more information about the Region, see Chapter 2: Regional Profile.

## Town Overview

Each town in the Region contributes differently to the local economy. While larger towns like Windsor, Springfield, and Ludlow attract larger business activity, smaller towns may have working landscapes, home-based businesses, or workers that may telecommute to their jobs in larger towns. Below you will find an economic profile for each town based on their most recent town plan updates.

### ANDOVER

According to Andover's 2018 Town Plan, the town is nestled in the eastern slopes of the Green Mountains and maintains an entirely rural atmosphere. Because of the rural nature, most of the residents find work outside of the town. Historically, Andover residents engage in farming or forest-related work. Although the relevance of this work has shifted over the years, some residents still find employment or hobby in sugaring, farming, or forestry. Due to its geographic location, the town also has many seasonal homes.



### BALTIMORE

According to the 2016 Baltimore Town Plan, Baltimore is the smallest of the nine towns, with a population of a little over 200 people. As a mostly residential community, residents in Baltimore rely heavily on outside employment to sustain their way of life. Because of infrastructural limitations, the town will likely be unable to attract new business. The town plan points to a need to encourage home-based businesses.



### CAVENDISH

According to the 2020 Town Plan for Cavendish, important economic sectors in the town are, "manufacturing, health care, lodging, food services, education, and retail trade." In addition to a more formal employment sector, there are some more underreported home and self-employment-based occupations like artists, musicians, and building tradespeople. Even so, more than 90% of people commute to work in neighboring towns.



### CHESTER

According to the 2020 Chester Town Plan, Chester is an attractive place to work and live given its small size. Chester also has a Village Center Designation which allows for its eligibility for a variety of tax credits and grants. In terms of economic development, Chester wishes to build upon its existing strengths to welcome new businesses and improve the quality of life for all beings, while maintaining the charm and history of the town.



**LUDLOW**

According to the 2019 Ludlow Municipal Plan, Ludlow started initially as an agricultural community and then transitioned into a manufacturing community in the late 1800s. The community has steered away from that over the years but has become a tourist destination for outdoor recreation. Because of this, the economic sectors in Ludlow are heavily dependent on lodging and food service, and there is a substantial reliance on seasonal employment and short-term housing.



**READING**

According to the 2020 Reading Town Plan, like many other towns in the Region, Reading's local economy historically relied on agriculture and milling. More recently, most households commute to other towns for work. The Town hopes to encourage and support local business through investment in local infrastructure, building on the core downtown, and ensuring safe multi-modal transportation through streetscape improvements.



**SPRINGFIELD**

Springfield is the most populous town in the region, and many people from other towns within the region travel to Springfield for employment. According to the 2019 Springfield Town Plan, the town's roots are in machine tool manufacturing. Over the years, with the demise of the machine tool industry, the town struggles to maintain high-quality, high-paying jobs. This struggle has led to issues with population retention. Springfield hopes to build on the town's strengths to encourage new, high-quality jobs to retain and expand on the population.



**WEATHERSFIELD**

According to the 2017 Weathersfield Town Plan, the rural town character and agricultural setting is the greatest asset to the community. Most working people in the town travel outside of Weathersfield for employment. Given this priority, most businesses in the town are small or home-based, to not interfere with the aesthetic character of the place. The town's goals are to maintain the rural character by encouraging small home-based businesses that are appropriate wherever residential development is allowed.



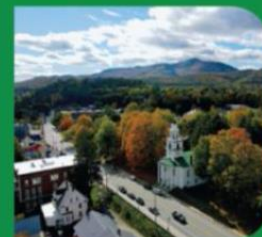
**WEST WINDSOR**

According to the 2020 West Windsor Town Plan, the town was historically agriculture-based. Agriculture remains relevant to the economy to this day. Since then, the town has relied for decades on the business of a commercial ski resort in town. Since then, a small non-profit has taken over and provides recreational opportunities for the community, there have been infrastructure expansions, and some small businesses have opened. West Windsor wishes to continue to support local businesses and agriculture while providing high-quality jobs and prioritize sustainable development that balances out vacation homes and tourism with preserving the natural landscape.



**WINDSOR**

According to the 2019 Windsor Municipal plan, the town has a history of being an industrial and manufacturing center, and though the prevalence of these industries remains, other sectors in the area have grown, like education, health care, leisure and hospitality, and more. The town wishes to build on its existing assets to build a prosperous downtown, encourage start-ups, cultural tourism, business around wood products, and feed the creative economy.



## Employment Data and Characteristics

Employment data is important for the Region because it outlines regional business activity and shifts in economic trends, while also highlighting areas of economic strength, and areas of economic weaknesses. For this section, we use the number of businesses that have registered a trademark name in the Region, a summary chart of all the major employers in the Region, and the number of people who need public assistance. Together, these pieces show a snapshot of the economic condition in the Region.

### Employment Development Department Trade Names

Trade names statistics reflect the number of business name registrations. Trade names take a snapshot of new business activity in a town. When the economic atmosphere of a town allows for it, more people are willing to register and start new businesses. The atmosphere may change based on economic opportunities through local, state, or federal grant opportunities, interest rates on new business lending, or growth in one economic realm that allows for growth in another economic realm. For example, a growth in the housing market may lead to growth in the construction market.

**TABLE 10.1 EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TRADE NAMES**

TOWN	2005	2006	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOT
ANDOVER	0	0	7	1	6	0	0	1	3	2	4	7	4	35
BALTIMORE	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	2	1	13
CAVENDISH	6	16	11	10	9	11	15	5	3	7	6	8	4	111
CHESTER	32	28	20	25	19	17	21	23	15	17	20	18	16	271
LUDLOW	27	33	25	20	23	20	24	27	13	12	11	21	13	261
READING	6	3	5	2	6	6	4	4	4	9	5	6	0	61
SPRINGFIELD	46	25	37	42	27	27	41	39	26	27	32	39	32	441
WEATHERSFIELD	19	16	18	28	28	20	16	16	7	13	7	7	2	191
WEST WINDSOR	0	0	2	0	2	0	4	3	4	9	3	1	4	31
WINDSOR	28	24	32	16	22	31	40	23	13	20	15	23	2	281
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>1711</b>

Table 10.1

### Largest Employers

In addition to the largest employers highlighted in **Table 10.2** it is also important to consider that businesses that employ five or fewer individuals account for a large percentage of employment in the Region. The smaller, more diverse nature of these businesses allows for increased flexibility and adaptability for them to respond to changing global and local demand. While the largest employers, healthcare facilities (Mount Ascutney Hospital and Springfield Hospital), may struggle to respond to change.

**TABLE 10.2 LARGEST REGIONAL EMPLOYERS**

EMPLOYER	PRODUCT/ SERVICE	TOWN	2003	2008	2021
			#OF EMPLOYEES	#OF EMPLOYEES	#OF EMPLOYEES
OKEMO MOUNTAIN INC.	SKI RESORT	LUDLOW	1200   WINTER 250   SUMMER	1500   WINTER 300   SUMMER	
LOCAL GOVERNMENT	SCHOOLS / MUNICIPAL	ALL	273	1349	
SPRINGFIELD HOSPITAL	HOSPITAL / MEDICAL	SPRINGFIELD			410
SPRINGFIELD MEDICAL CARE	HOSPITAL / MEDICAL	SPRINGFIELD	480	600	230
MT. ASCUTNEY HOSPITAL	HOSPITAL / MEDICAL	WEATHERSFIELD	320	475	
STATE GOVERNMENT	ALL SERVICES	ALL	224	405	
JELD- WEN	DOOR / WINDOW	LUDLOW   SPRINGFIELD	97	250	250
NEWSBANK, INC.	ELECTRONIC PUB.	CHESTER	260	200	175
BLACK RIVER PRODUCE	WHOLESALE	SPRINGFIELD	130	152	250
MACK MOLDING	MOLDED PLASTIC	CAVENDISH	140	103	80
SHAW'S	SUPERMARKET	SPRINGFIELD   LUDLOW		100	
SIMON PEARCE, US	GLASS /CERAMICS	WINDSOR	97	95	120
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT	ALL SERVICES	ALL		93	
PRECISION VALLEY	UTILITY MAPPING	SPRINGFIELD	56	86	125
GILL ODD FELLOWS HOME	NURSING HOME	LUDLOW	80	80	
LBL FABRICATIONS	FABRICATION	SPRINGFIELD		80	35
VISITING NURSE ALLIANCE	NURSING	LUDLOW   CHESTER   SPRINGFIELD	75	80	
LOVEJOY TOOL COMPANY	MILLING CUTTERS	SPRINGFIELD	76	68	45
V-TEL	TELECOMMUNICATION	SPRINGFIELD	59	65	60
IVEK	DISPENSING	SPRINGFIELD		61	110
SPRINGFIELD PRINTING	PRINTING	SPRINGFIELD		50	45
VERMONT PACKINGHOUSE	FOOD	SPRINGFIELD			75
IMERY'S	MANUFACTURING	LUDLOW			35
IMAGE-TEK	MANUFACTURING	SPRINGFIELD			70
DREW'S ORGANICS	FOOD	CHESTER			85
HARPOON BREWERY	FOOD	WINDSOR			50

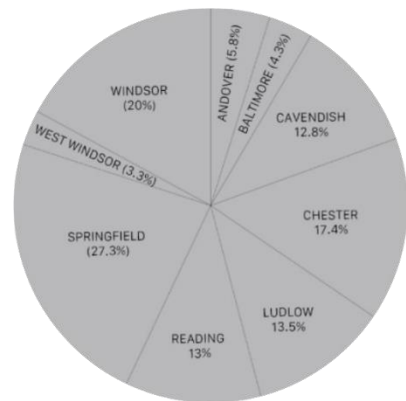
People in Need of Public Assistance

Public assistance helps people in need afford food, Medicare, housing, and other basic human essentials that would otherwise not be afforded by a person or household. Public assistance may refer to either a social welfare and/or social insurance program. An increased reliance on public assistance may happen because of an income gap between the cost of living in the Region and wages, an unforeseen economic downturn, or the closing of a large employer. In the pie chart below, there are many households who need public assistance in Chester (17.4%), Springfield (27.3%), and Windsor (20%). Compared with the rest of the ECVEDD area, our Region has 5.6% more households relying on public assistance than the Northern towns in the ECVEDD area.



**HOUSEHOLDS ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE**

TOWN	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	%
ANDOVER	17	19	15	19	17	11	5.8%
BALTIMORE	7	7	6	10	4	4	4.3%
CAVENDISH	103	107	107	99	103	86	12.8%
CHESTER	289	271	261	259	245	257	17.4%
LUDLOW	139	125	130	136	140	129	13.5%
READING	50	41	39	39	28	32	13%
SPRINGFIELD	1105	1097	1129	1067	1054	1044	27.3%
WEATHERSFIELD	19	0	0	0	0	0	0%
WEST WINDSOR	16	14	13	14	17	16	3.3%
WINDSOR	389	391	361	352	335	292	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,134</b>	<b>2,072</b>	<b>2,061</b>	<b>1,995</b>	<b>1,943</b>	<b>1,871</b>	<b>11.7%</b>
<b>VERMONT</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>41,805</b>	<b>40,321</b>	<b>39,149</b>	<b>15.2%</b>



During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of people in need of public assistance increased, while workforce participation decreased. Hospitality, restaurants, and manufacturing amongst other sectors were impacted by the pandemic, the full impact will not be felt for some time.

**Workforce Data and Characteristics**

Analysis of the [2019 State of Vermont’s Regional Workforce Summit](#) concludes that the biggest obstacle in the workforce is a lack of workers. With an aging population, compounded by socioeconomic conditions like a lack of childcare infrastructure, workforce housing, etc., there is a large percentage of the population that does not participate in the Regional workforce. While larger employers may not struggle as much with this issue, smaller employers see it affecting their bottom line. The solution, however, is routed in long term invested commitment to rebuilding the Region and strengthening both the workforce and all of the factors that draw and keep a sustainable labor force.

The service sector is an important part of the local economy. This sector includes such types of employment as health care, education, recreation, and arts and entertainment. Some of the largest service employers in the Region are health care providers, such as Mount Ascutney Hospital and Health Care Center and Springfield Hospital. Some of these service providers are the fastest growing, highest wage-earning sectors of the regional economy.

The need to develop a strategy to meet the demands of the regional economy and create and maintain jobs that mirror economic trends is necessary to preserve quality of life and to create a critical mass of skilled labor. Workforce development opportunities provided by the River Valley Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and the Howard Dean Education Center include a major starting point to achieving this goal. WIB is responsible for coordinating workforce training in the Region, takes input from employers and workers in the Region and partners with area educators and providers to help develop training programs to serve the area’s

economic development needs. In addition, the Springfield area was awarded a [Working Communities Challenge](#) grant to increase workforce participation which includes addressing systematic barriers to workforce participation like childcare, housing, education, transportation, etc.

## Competitive Assessment



### SWOT

The purpose of a SWOT analysis is to gauge the internal and external factors that play into the successes and challenges of a situation. This qualitative SWOT analysis survey was given in Fall of 2021 to regional economic stakeholders, like local business owners, chamber of commerce members, and other economic development stakeholders.

### Weaknesses and Threats

Given the results of the SWOT analysis and the list of priority projects for the region, we can deduce that our Region struggles economically with a high cost of living, lack of housing, lack of a workforce population, that is threatened by the

increasingly aging population of the region, compounded by the increase in the number of people struggling with substance use disorder and low wages. Since these issues are not just economic, but have a social element to them, it is imperative that we use a multi-pronged approach to making sure all people in the Region can afford to not just live in the area, but enjoy local business establishments and support the local economy.

### Strengths and Opportunities

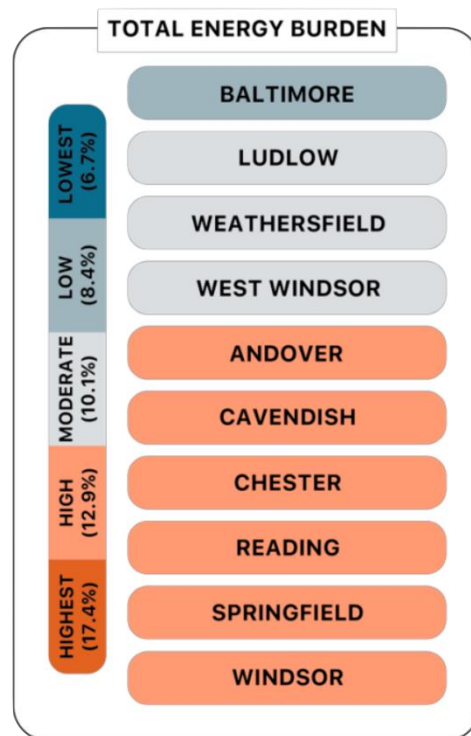
Although there are significant challenges facing the Region, there are also ample strengths and opportunities to build upon and improve existing economic conditions. According to the results of the survey, there are opportunities to invest in a better broadband system for potential remote work, continue to sustain and conserve the natural beauty of the Region, and market the Region for the unique lifestyle it provides the people who choose to live here.

The MARC can support these projects through continuing to engage with economic development stakeholders, as well as approach socioeconomic projects that promote healthy and equitable economic opportunities for all people living in the Region.

When asked about the implications of COVID-19 on the Region's economy, respondents largely agree there are serious negative effects on the labor force, small businesses (especially those that rely on tourism), but also that the pandemic could bring opportunity for more remote work, and telehealth opportunities as well as an increase in a permanent tax base.

### Climate Action and the Economy

Today's world is experiencing an increased awareness of our individual and collective impact of our energy consumption on the environment. According to [Vermont's Climate Action Plan](#), the state of Vermont has spent an estimated 2 billion dollars per year on fossil fuels (gasoline, diesel, fuel oil, propane, and natural gas) over the last ten years. The economic burden of fuel often falls on lower income households, renters, and small businesses who cannot afford to upgrade their energy systems. Andover, Cavendish, Chester, Reading, Springfield, and Windsor all on average carry a high energy burden; Ludlow, Weathersfield, and West Windsor have a moderate energy burden, and only Baltimore has a low energy burden. Although initial costs of shifting to renewable energy can be costly, there are more concerted efforts and funding to help ease the cost and shift households and businesses into a less energy consuming, and overall, more cost-effective energy system.



More information can be found in the Regional Energy Plan.

### Black River Innovation Campus

Black River Innovation Campus (BRIC) in Springfield, VT is a major asset to this Region. BRIC is a nonprofit center that provides a wide range of technological and career services. With a digital live/workspace, entrepreneurship center, and computer science and digital training, the

goal of BRIC is to “eliminate barriers of entry for digital and technology entrepreneurs and web-enabled businesses.” BRIC works in many fields across economic development, education, technology, and outreach and has attracted (according to the 2021 ECVEDD Annual Report) \$2.5 million in investment alone. For more information on BRIC, click [here](#).

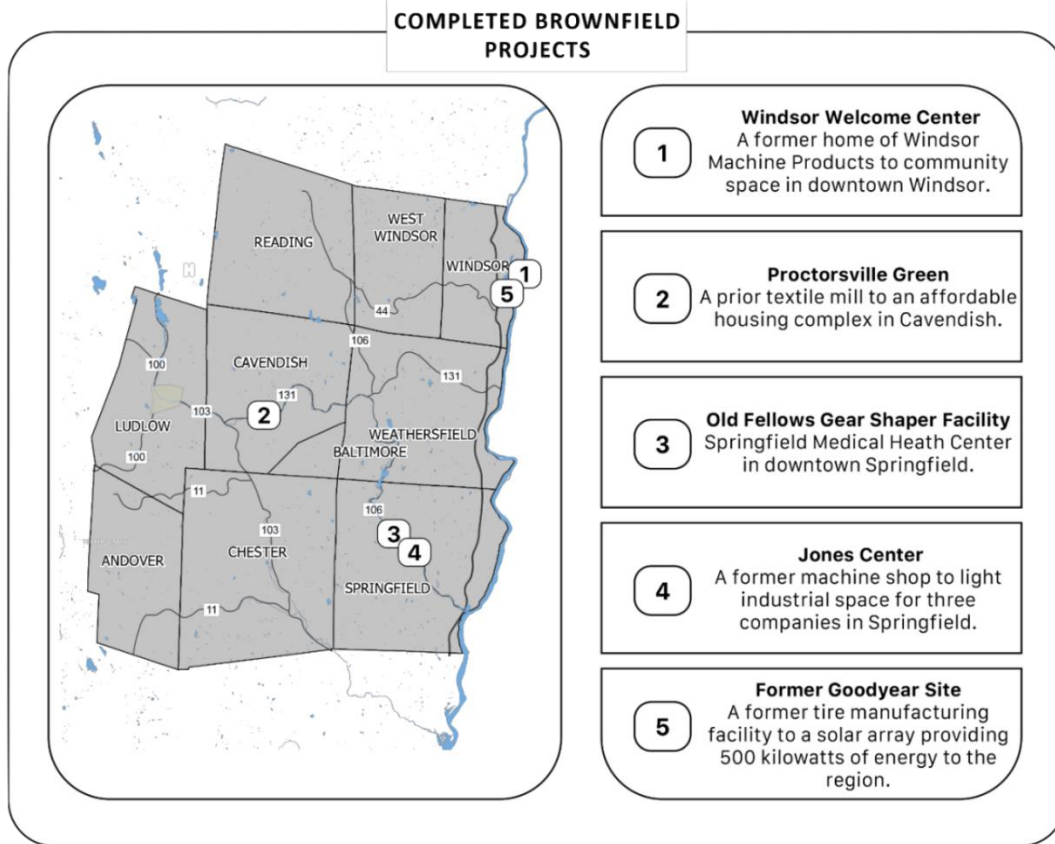
## **Adaptive Re-Use and Brownfields**

Adaptive re-use of the existing infrastructure left behind by the departure of an expansive machine tool industry and other large industrial manufacturing complexes including Goodyear Rubber Co., Fellows-Gear Shaper and Park & Woolson mill complexes, represents a viable economic opportunity. Many of these properties are located within or on the outskirts of historic downtowns. Adaptive reuse of these sites contributes to the revitalization of downtown areas and provides potential space for new commercial businesses, light manufacturing, and affordable housing. The RPC has partnered with many different organizations to help see this to fruition and has been successful in attracting new businesses to Springfield and Windsor.

Since 1999, the Mount Ascutney Regional Commission has been an active participant in the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Brownfields Program, which provides federal funding for environmental assessment and cleaning up of brownfields. The Regional Commission's Brownfields Program has been assisting towns, property owners, and potential developers throughout the region in the revitalization of properties and structures previously used for industrial and commercial purposes with known or suspected pollution including soil contamination due to hazardous waste. These properties, when cleaned up, have the potential to become valuable to the surrounding community. Redeveloped properties can generate tax revenues, jobs, stimulate economic growth, and can transform blighted sites into generators of renewable energy and green space that is productive, environmentally safe, and aesthetically appealing.

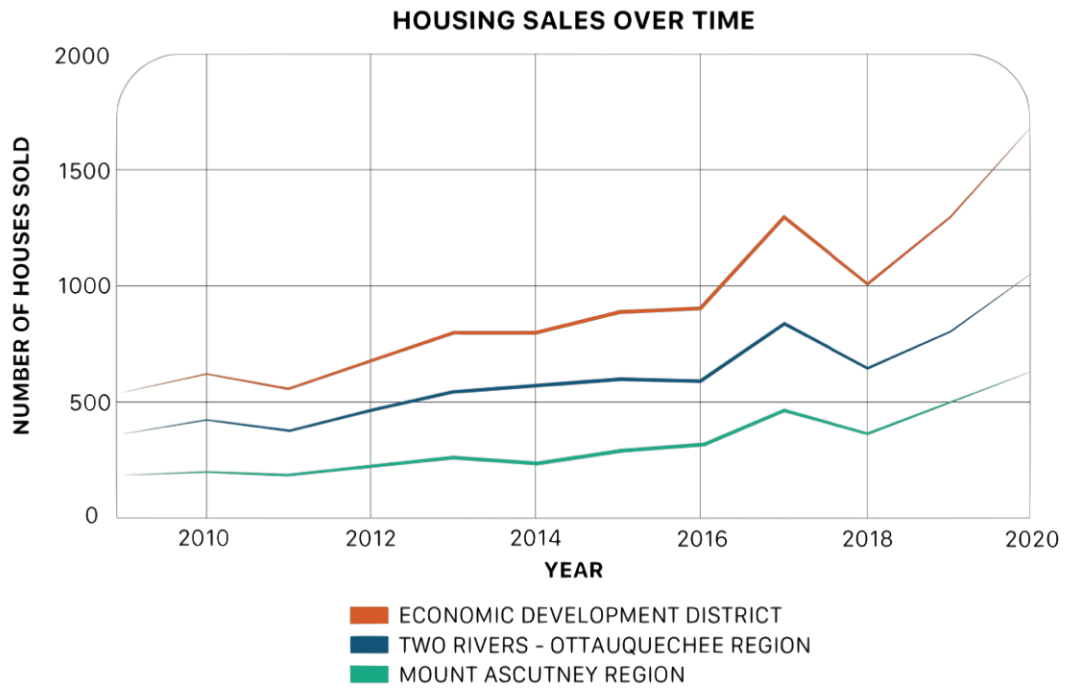
The Program offers technical assistance and funding in the form of low interest loans and subgrants to assist property owners and bona fide prospective purchasers of brownfields properties in all phases of brownfields revitalization from environmental assessments, through corrective action planning and remediation.

The MARC Brownfields Reuse Program has provided funding to facilitate various stages of assessment and cleanup at the following sites:



## Housing

Another challenge to economic growth is to ensure adequate workforce housing for workers in this Region. Like most of the Northeast, this Region suffers from a lack of housing units, both new and old, at a price that is affordable for a significant portion of the workforce. The 2003 Vermont Job Gap Study documents that a significant percentage of full-time workers in Vermont still do not earn enough to pay for all the necessities of living. Focusing on the development of affordable housing in the Region, coupled with attracting new good paying jobs, is paramount to ease this burden.



	# OF SALES	TOTAL VALUE OF SALES	AVERAGE SALES PRICE	% OF CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
2009	184	\$33,449,447	\$181,790	-22.8%
2010	201	\$47,726,554	\$237,446	30.6%
2011	186	\$38,484,105	\$206,904	-12.9%
2012	221	\$45,797,903	\$207,230	0.2%
2013	263	\$59,748,576	\$227,181	9.6%
2014	237		\$235,505	3.7%
2015	290	\$62,553,766	\$215,703	-8.4%
2016	317	\$75,224,840	\$237,302	10.0%
2017	464	\$97,081,064	\$209,022	-11.9%
2018	364	\$84,425,148	\$231,938	11.0%
2019	498	\$143,842,342	\$288,840	25.0%
2020	637	\$210,467,451	\$330,404	14.4%
		<b>10 YEAR CHANGE: 39.1%</b>		

**ASCUTNEY REGION**

	# OF SALES	TOTAL VALUE OF SALES	AVERAGE SALES PRICE	% OF CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
2009	365	\$99,915,823	\$273,742	-18.2%
2010	423	\$110,786,849	\$261,907	-4.3%
2011	376	\$130,188,950	\$346,247	32.2%
2012	467	\$116,755,537	\$250,012	-27.8%
2013	540	\$138,849,589	\$257,129	2.8%
2014	566	\$162,280,161	\$286,714	11.5%
2015	602	\$178,886,877	\$297,154	3.6%
2016	595	\$150,247,281	\$252,516	-15.0%
2017	843	\$243,690,354	\$289,188	14.5%
2018	651	\$212,097,890	\$325,803	12.7%
2019	807	\$241,414,123	\$299,150	-9.0%
2020	1065	\$405,808,315	\$381,041	27.4%
		<b>10 YEAR CHANGE: 45.5%</b>		

**TRORC REGION**

	# OF SALES	TOTAL VALUE OF SALES	AVERAGE SALES PRICE	% OF CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR
2009	549	\$133,365,270	\$242,924	-20.2%
2010	624	\$158,513,403	\$254,028	4.6%
2011	562	\$168,673,055	\$300,130	18.1%
2012	688	\$162,553,440	\$236,270	-21.2%
2013	803	\$198,598,165	\$247,320	4.7%
2014	803	\$162,280,161	\$202,092	9.8%
2015	892	\$241,440,643	\$270,673	-0.3%
2016	912	\$225,472,121	\$247,228	-8.7%
2017	1307	\$340,771,418	\$260,728	5.5%
2018	1015	\$296,523,038	\$292,141	12.0%
2019	1305	\$385,256,465	\$295,216	1.0%
2020	1702	\$616,275,766	\$362,089	22.7%
		<b>10 YEAR CHANGE: 42.5%</b>		

**EDD REGION**

Keys to the Valley

Headed by MARC, TRORC, and UVLSRPC, all regional planning commissions in the Upper Valley, this project aims to tackle the housing crisis, through a collaborative and multi-faceted approach. The main objective of the Keys to the Valley project is to address the housing crisis in the Upper Valley and find state, regional, and local solutions that intersect these issues. More information on Key to the Valley can be found [here](#).

## **Workforce Training and Support**

Workforce training efforts in the Region attempt to connect people with employment resources by addressing systematic barriers a person may have to working or advancing their careers. In the Region, there are various agencies working to address these issues, and MARC can continue to support these projects through partnering and promoting Regional awareness and spearheading planning issues that create hurdles for success.

### Working Communities Challenge

In the Region, a major program that promotes workforce development is the Springfield Area Working Communities Challenge. The program works to address specific issues that residents may have with transportation, childcare, housing, education, and recovery. This program includes our Region and beyond and works with community partners who have varying expertise in all realms of the different subject areas. For more information on the Working Communities Challenge [click here](#).

### Recovery Friendly Communities/ Workforce

Recovery friendly workforce programs specifically acknowledges and works intentionally with individuals in recovery. A recovery friendly workforce creates a safe space for those in recovery, engages employers and employees on substance use disorder and behavioral health education, creates health and safety- based programming, and becomes active partners in prevention and recovery with the Region and local communities. Recovery-friendly communities are a part of the [Working Communities Challenge](#) and [Working Fields Agency](#). More information on the importance of the programs for people in recovery can be found in the Health Chapter.

### Child Care

While Vermont law is very restrictive regarding childcare, the industry is a necessary part of the Vermont economy — pumping money into local communities by supporting working families, creating jobs, and generating taxes through employment and the purchase of goods and services. Money spent on childcare stays in Vermont communities, helping children, families, and local businesses. Statewide, childcare:

- Is a significant force in the state’s economy;
- Enables people to work; and
- Negatively impacts economic growth when supply is insufficient.

In the Region, childcare has become increasingly hard to come by over the years. According to Let’s Grow Kids, 3 out of 5 of Vermont’s youngest children do not have access to childcare, and 21,225 children under the age of 5 need childcare. Middle income families spend on average between 20-40% of their income on childcare, which can affect their ability to become active participants in the local and regional economy. Employers can become active participants in helping to solve the childcare crisis by creating a family- friendly workplace through instituting family-friendly work-policies. In the Region, multiple agencies are



addressing this issue, including the [Working Communities Challenge](#) and Let's Grow Kids. For more information on Let's Grow Kids, [click here](#). Additional information on childcare can be found in the Health Chapter.

## **Policies / Recommendations**

### **Economic Development Policies**

1. Develop and enhance regional development activities that support the diversity of the Region's economic base by encouraging entrepreneurship, supporting the expansion of local businesses and attracting new businesses that are consistent with the Regional Plan and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Town Plans.
2. Support economic development efforts that will promote building sustainable competitiveness in the highest return, value-added sectors of the economy.
3. Plan infrastructure investments to serve town and village center revitalization and industrial parks.

### **Economic Development Recommendations**

- 1) Support regional priority projects like
  - a) Improved access into North Springfield Industrial Park
  - b) Springfield wastewater extension to Hartness Airport
  - c) Evaluate cost effective wastewater solutions for Ascutney, Perkinsville and Felchville
  - d) Bolster outdoor recreation (e.g. develop app of things to do in region, implement Mt Ascutney Outdoor Rec Plan, etc.)
- 2) Assist municipalities in a review of their regulations and administrative procedures to ensure clarity in their permitting process.
- 3) Encourage towns to develop capital improvement programs so that future expansion/maintenance of infrastructure will not place undue hardship on communities.
- 4) Provide education forums and other types of technical assistance to educate municipalities on economic development and infrastructure planning.
- 5) Continue to provide staff assistance to local economic and downtown development groups.
- 6) Coordinate vocational and technical training opportunities to support statewide workforce programs.

## **Local Resources**

### **Vermont Department of Economic Development**

[www.thinkvermont.com](http://www.thinkvermont.com)

### **Vermont Economic Development Authority**

[www.veda.org](http://www.veda.org)

### **Vermont Small Business Development Center**

[www.vtsbdc.org](http://www.vtsbdc.org)

### **USDA Rural Development**

[www.rd.usda.gov/vt](http://www.rd.usda.gov/vt)

### **Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce**

[www.springfieldvt.com](http://www.springfieldvt.com)

### **Okemo Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce**

[www.yourplaceinvermont.com](http://www.yourplaceinvermont.com)

### **Springfield On the Move**

[www.springfieldonthemove.net](http://www.springfieldonthemove.net)

### **East Central Vermont EDD**

<https://www.ecvedd.org>

### **20-25 ECVEDD CEDS**

<https://www.ecvedd.org/ceds/>

### **Vt Dept Labor(regional economy / employers / labor market info / workforce / unemployment / so many stats...etc)**

<https://labor.vermont.gov/>

### **Springfield Regional Development Corp**

<https://www.springfielddevelopment.org/>

### **Black River Innovation Campus**

<https://bricvt.org/>

## **References**

<http://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/2014-Annual-Report.pdf>

<https://publicassets.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/SWVT2020.pdf>