

Chapter 12 – Economic Development

Goals, Policies, and Recommendations: Economic Development

Goals

1. Economic development, community development, and land use policies and plans ~~are aligned to~~ improve the Region's unique quality of life.
2. Essential elements for attracting new, younger residents are in place, ~~including housing that is affordable, ubiquitous telecommunications, transit, and a mix of desirable employment, recreation, and cultural opportunities.~~

Policies

1. Public and private infrastructure shall be planned and funded to support ~~and sustain a viable our~~ economy and the natural environment ~~while enhancing quality of life goals and shall not detract from existing core areas most appropriate for economic development.~~
2. Regional development activities should 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. ~~The establishment of diversified attractions that expand tourism and recreation opportunities while respecting the Vermont brand is encouraged.~~
3. New workforce housing development is supported in villages and downtowns.
4. ~~High speed Internet, with fiber based systems, is supported throughout the Region.~~
5. ~~Cellular phone networks are supported in all areas of the TRO Region.~~
6. ~~Transit systems should connect all village and town centers and serve major employment centers and businesses.~~
7. ~~Child care facilities in our communities or in employment centers are supported by this Plan.~~
8. ~~4.~~ Economic development strategies between TRORC, ECVEDD, and other regional economic development consortiums should align to support a more diverse and resilient regional economy.
5. Efforts should be made to engage and assist institutions with community dialogue and business continuity planning.

Recommendations

1. TRORC will assist towns with provide grant management, Act 250 support, zoning bylaw revisions, and grant and loan management ~~local regulatory reform assistance~~ to further the development of job growth and workforce housing in areas close to our Region's core economic areas ~~employment and service opportunities.~~
2. TRORC will assist towns in asset management, capital budgeting, and shared services/purchasing to lower costs and stabilize taxes.

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3. TRORC will participate in discussions to improve the regulatory system at the state level and improve permitting coordination between local and state levels of government.
4. ~~TRORC will assist towns with village and downtown designation in order to provide incentives in these areas.~~
5. ~~TRORC will work in concert with towns and development organizations to provide technical support (such as support with permitting, funding, or brownfield assistance) to businesses wishing to stay in or relocate to core areas.~~
- 6.4. TRORC will work with Vermont state agencies, regional and local development groups, trade associations, Chambers of Commerce, planning commissions, and other groups to integrate land use planning with economic planning and development programs based on our Region's assets.
7. ~~TRORC will review and recommend revisions to zoning bylaws and other land use guidelines to ensure they actively support vitality in town centers, including infill, adaptive reuse of structures, increased height limits, and density bonuses.~~
8. ~~TRORC will offer assistance to towns in asset management, capital budgeting, and shared services/purchasing in order to lower costs and stabilize taxes.~~
9. ~~TRORC will assist towns to apply for and manage grants and loans for infrastructure repairs and/or upgrades that bolster the livability of core areas.~~
- 10.5. Public agencies, schools, and private businesses ~~should~~must expand workforce training and education that aligns with the strategic needs of our Region's current and future employers ~~and expand linkages that allow the Region's youth to learn about local career opportunities and gain exposure to the workplace.~~
11. ~~TRORC and child care providers must work with member towns to address identified needs for child care facilities or services, including identifying publicly owned buildings throughout the Region suitable to serve as child care facilities.~~
12. ~~The State should map existing cellular and broadband services in the Region, identify gaps, and work with cellular companies to provide coverage in those gap areas, ensuring that all areas have good service that supports both current and future businesses and residents.~~
13. ~~State, regional, and local economic development agencies should develop stronger financing/funding mechanisms for business expansion and entrepreneurship.~~
- 14.6. TRORC will work with the Vermont Arts Council to support regional and statewide creative zones.
15. ~~The Small Business Development Center, Chambers of Commerce, and development corporations should develop a coordinated network of resources for businesses—including business coaching, financing, permitting assistance, and peer to peer networking—to equip current and would be business owners with the skills needed to brand, promote, and effectively operate businesses.~~
- 16.7. TRORC will work with towns and development organizations in the Region to identify and undertake brownfields assessments to rehabilitate inventory vacant and underutilized sites and buildings most suitable for near-term commercial and residential development in existing downtowns and villages where water, sewer, power, Internet, and roadways have capacity.

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- ~~17.~~ ~~TRORC will support efforts to recognize businesses for excellence in creating better downtowns and villages.~~
- ~~18.~~ ~~TRORC should support and assist efforts that focus on how best to utilize our rivers as economic drivers while improving water quality and protecting the rivers' natural beauty, native animal and plant species, health, and unique character.~~
- ~~19.8.~~ TRORC should work with local producers, development corporations, educational programs, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture and other organizations to identify and create needed processing, storage, and distribution capacity for locally made food and forestry products.
- ~~20.9.~~ TRORC should work with land trusts and local conservation commissions to inventory farm and forest lands to understand where parcels are available that could provide opportunities for new farm and forest businesses and to assist towns in crafting regulations to reduce fragmentation and leave land available for farming, forestry, and other land-based businesses.
10. TRORC strongly supports property tax reform efforts at the local and state levels that would reduce the costs of land ownership for farming and forestry, while protecting against the Current Use Program's use as a low-cost vehicle for speculative holding of property for future development.