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— 2013 —

ecos

Annual Report - Summary
The State of Chittenden County

— First Edition —



A NOTE FROM THE ECOS PARTNERSHIP

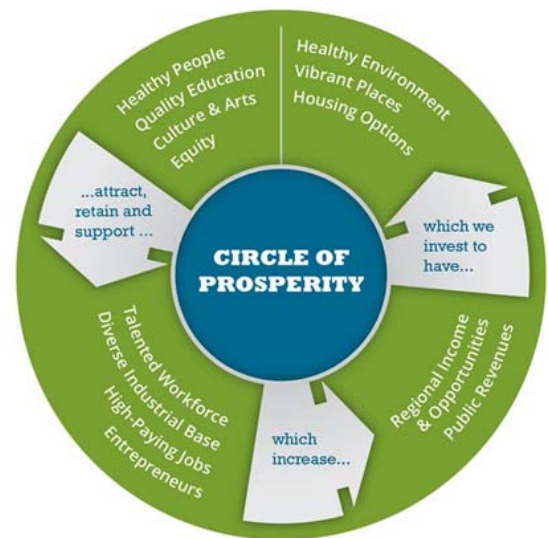
The ECOS Plan adoption in June, 2013 culminated efforts of over 60 organizations in Chittenden County, including all of the municipalities, working together. The ECOS Plan addresses the challenges facing the County and includes strategies to improve our community and achieve our shared vision for a healthy, inclusive and prosperous Chittenden County.

The ECOS Partnership formed to keep the focus on implementing the plan. The Partnership includes the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC), the City of Burlington, Fletcher Allen Health Care, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, United Way of Chittenden County, University of Vermont, and the Vermont Department of Health. The Partners remain committed to working together to build upon our collaborative successes and address areas of concern, using principles known as **collective impact**, to meet ECOS' goals.

Collective impact results from the commitment of a group of people representing different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific problem. This approach is collective, as diverse partners participate, having recognized that no one piece will bring success without the others. For example, we cannot achieve greater mobility, accessibility, affordability and health without concentrating development in planned growth areas. Further, we cannot concentrate growth without providing adequate infrastructure. Visually, these collective interrelationships are described in the Circle of Prosperity. Only by effective collaboration can we achieve improved outcomes without additional public expenditures. The ECOS Project will meet its goals through collective impact.

The [full 2013 ECOS Annual Report](#) compiles accomplishments and indicators depicting progress toward our goals. The Report indicators are drawn from the most reliable statistics, objectively based on substantial research, and intended to be understood by broad audiences.

The summary that follows represents some of the most interesting trends, accomplishments, and actions needed to address the most pressing issues in our community. As we work collectively toward achieving our goals for a healthy, inclusive and prosperous Chittenden County, this Annual Report will serve as a tool to help track our progress and guide our actions. This work would not be possible without the help of our partners: the public and public representatives (federal, state, municipal and regional), and the business and non-profit sectors. We thank everyone who contributed to the first edition of this Report, which we hope will be a valuable tool.



The Circle of Prosperity reflects the interdependence of our efforts and results.

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DEMOGRAPHICS

- From 2010 to 2012, Chittenden County's population increased by 1.3%, or about 2,000 people. For comparison, the population of the state of Vermont has remained relatively unchanged.
- The percent of our population over the age of 65 increased by 2%, and those under age 18 decreased by 2%. For comparison, 12.1% of Chittenden County's population is 65 and over, compared to 15.7% for Vermont and 13.7% for the US.
- Chittenden County is more diverse when compared to the state of Vermont as a whole. From 2007 to 2012, the non-White or Hispanic population grew from 11,362 to 14,877 people, or from 7.4% to 9.4% of the total population. In comparison, Vermont's non-White or Hispanic population grew from 4.8% to 6%. This is an increase of 25+% for both the State and County.
- Refugee resettlement is contributing to population increases, with over 50 languages spoken.
- The number of Black or African Americans in Chittenden County has increased by 60% since 2007. In 2007, the Black or African American population was 2,409 and grew to 3,806 in 2012.

ECONOMY

Trends & Issues

- The number of businesses in Chittenden County is increasing and has surpassed 2008 levels, which indicates recovery from the economic downturn. Chittenden County saw a decrease of 1.5% (87 businesses) in the number of registered businesses between 2008 and 2010. 2012 was the first year since 2008 where the number of registered businesses exceeded the 2008 number. Chittenden County gained 130 new businesses in 2012.
- Since 2009, Chittenden County and Vermont's unemployment rates have decreased. In 2012, Chittenden County's average unemployment rate was 4%; statewide it was 5% and nationally it was 8%.
- We continue to experience tight labor supply in the following sectors: professional/technical, production/technical, and computer and mathematical.
- After a 2-year decline from 2008-2010, median household income has risen the past two years to \$64,000 and has now exceeded the 2008 peak. US median income was \$53,046. Vermont median household income was \$54,168.
- Household incomes for Black/African American and Asians are about 1/3 lower than for Whites.

Notable Accomplishments

- In terms of business growth, Dealer.com, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, All Earth Renewables, ASIC North, Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, MicroStrain, and Competitive Computing were in the top ten for fastest five-year sales and employment growth. However, this was partially offset by layoffs at IBM.
- The Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, through its Young Professionals Division, hosted the first annual Launch VT Business Pitch Competition.
- The ECOS Plan was adopted by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission as the Regional Plan and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and by the Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The ECOS Plan is the culmination of extensive work from over 60 partners and hundreds of participants. This is the first time each organization's plans have been combined into a single plan.

High Priority Actions

- The Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation (GBIC) is partnering with the Vermont Technology Council to create a Web site portal to match Vermont technology companies with open internships with students in higher education seeking experience in the field.
- GBIC is working with IBM to get additional sites available for manufacturing uses.
- More targeted workforce development is needed to meet the needs of technology and manufacturing employers with a focus on science, technology, engineering, and math to further the growth of our knowledge-based economy. These technical skills are supplemented by the presence of a strong arts and creative community. More work is needed to identify opportunities to provide training to the existing workforce that don't yet have the skills needed for the 21st century workplace.
- Support is needed to improve the effectiveness of workforce development programs and relations between the Workforce Development Council, Agency of Human Services, the Departments of Education, Labor, and Economic Development.
- Retention-based incentives for strategic, high value added employers are needed.

ENVIRONMENT

Trends & Issues

- To address clean water goals, the 2012 draft Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) will require the reduction of 190 tons per year (this means a 36% reduction) of phosphorous flowing into Lake Champlain and its streams and rivers.
- Significant work is needed to reduce energy consumption and fossil fuel usage to achieve the state's goals of 90% renewables by 2050 and a 50% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2028.

Notable Accomplishments

- Progress is being made by Chittenden County's urban municipalities to establish flow restoration plans to improve the water quality of streams impacted by stormwater run-off.
- 575 renewable energy projects have been installed in Chittenden County, generating 97,333kW. Between 2011 and 2013, electricity generated from renewable energy generation sites in Chittenden County increased by 5%. The number of solar photovoltaic sites in Chittenden County increased by 78%.
- Efficiency Vermont's Home Energy Challenge resulted in 178 or .3% of homes weatherized in participating Chittenden County towns.
- Total energy consumption in Chittenden County has been decreasing from a high of 40 trillion BTU in 2003/4 to 37 trillion BTU in 2010, a 7.5% decrease.
- The Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC) and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) completed an electric vehicle (EV) charging station planning analysis to determine the most appropriate locations for future charging facilities in the County.
- Numerous projects increasing transportation options were implemented, including:
 - Commuter transit to Milton and Colchester, operating six times a day;
 - Williston mid-day transit service;
 - Installation of nine transit shelters with solar lighting in Colchester and Williston;
 - New Park & Ride lot established at the Sawmill site in Underhill Flats;
 - The formation of an Employee Transportation Coordinator Network, with 15 local businesses currently enrolled;

- New sidewalks with multiuse paths in Colchester, Essex Junction, Burlington, Milton and implementation of Safe Routes to Schools in Jericho.

High Priority Actions

- Significant efforts will be needed by all parties to meet clean water standards for Lake Champlain. Prioritizing and funding these investments will be a substantial challenge, and an opportunity to improve our community and the health of Lake Champlain.
- More energy conservation and renewable energy investments are needed to help the state reach the goals of reducing energy consumption by weatherizing 25% of its housing stock by 2025 and generating 90% of its total energy from renewable sources.
- Installation of three Level 3 charging stations and EV enhancements for municipal plans and bylaws;
- More investments in efficient transportation projects are needed. Projects for 2014 include:
 - VT15 Footbridge and Browns Trace Multiuse Path, Jericho;
 - Meadow Run to Alliance Church Multiuse Path and So. Brownell Road Sidewalk, Williston;
 - Installation of five transit shelters with solar lighting in Essex and Williston;
 - Richmond Park & Ride completion, including signalization of I-89 southbound off ramp.

QUALITY OF PLACE

Trends & Issues

- 86% or 508 units of new housing development occurred in areas planned for growth by the municipalities, exceeding the goal of 80% for the second year in a row.
- The vacancy rate for rental units in Burlington and Winooski remains at about 1%, which is causing high rents and negatively impacting the overall housing market (a healthy rate is 3-5%). The rate has remained steadily below 2% since 2009 which indicates municipalities may need to increase the emphasis on constructing market rate housing alongside affordable housing initiatives.
- The recent downward trend in vehicle miles of travel seems to have ended. Total vehicle miles traveled per person in 2012 was the highest since 2007 and increased 2% over 2011.
- There are 776 at-risk structures (1.3% of the total) in flood and/or erosion hazard zones. Slightly over half of these structures are single family homes.

Notable Accomplishments

- Chittenden County municipalities are succeeding in encouraging redevelopment and development in areas planned for growth. Some specific highlights include:
 - Hinesburg Cheese Plant redevelopment;
 - Colchester's adoption of form-based code zoning for the Severance Corners Growth Center. Form-based code is a tool used to regulate new development in a fashion that fosters predictable built results (by using illustrations more easily understood by developers and the public) and a high-quality physical form appropriate for Vermont's landscape.
 - Burlington's adoption of PlanBTV, a land use and development plan for Burlington's Downtown and Waterfront.

- With support from the Department of Housing and Community Development, the 2013 Vermont Legislature amended the Neighborhood Development designation process to encourage development around designated villages and downtowns.
- In Spring 2013, United Way of Chittenden County launched Neighbor Rides, a strategic initiative that brings together transportation and service providers to advance the health and well-being of seniors and persons with disabilities by expanding limited transportation dollars more efficiently through the use of volunteer drivers.
- Transportation System Improvements included:
 - VT117/Sand Hill Road intersection in Essex Junction;
 - VT2A/VT289 Intersection Adaptive Signal Control in Essex;
 - Checkered House Bridge in Richmond;
 - Quinlan Covered Bridge in Charlotte;
 - Paving of US2 (Colchester and Bolton), VT128 (Essex to Westford), US7 (Charlotte to South Burlington), VT116 (Hinesburg).
- Vermont enacted flood resiliency legislative changes in May, 2013. Act 16 addresses municipal and regional planning and flood resilience and creates planning goals to reduce future flood damage.

High Priority Actions

- Form-based code efforts initiated in Burlington, South Burlington, Shelburne, Westford, Jericho, and Winowski.
- Improvements to Vermont's growth center designation process by the Legislature and ACCD.
- Progress on transportation projects, including:
 - Construction of US2/Exit 14 improvements—Staples Lane;
 - Commencement of 3-year I-89 bridge replacement over Lamoille River, Milton;
 - Paving of US2 (South Burlington to Williston) and VT2A (Williston).
- Seek hazard mitigation funding from FEMA for property owners with structures in hazard zones.

COMMUNITY

Trends & Issues

- Based on the Opportunity Index, which looks at pre-school enrollment, high school graduation, post-secondary education, access to healthy foods, access to healthcare, and engagement in civic life, Vermont ranks first among the states, with Chittenden County ranking first among Vermont counties for having the highest opportunity index score.
- In the 2012/2013 school year, only 51% of 11th grade students in Chittenden County were proficient in math and only 44% were proficient in science. These percentages are significantly worse for English language learners and low income students.
- On average, low income and Non-White residents in Chittenden County have significantly worse outcomes related to health and education. For example, residents with incomes below 250% of the federal poverty level are three times more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and asthma, and are twice as likely to be diagnosed with depression.
- Substance abuse remains an issue in Chittenden County and has many negative consequences. While alcohol consumption is the most prevalent form of substance abuse in Chittenden County, there is also an increasing concern about opiate abuse. Abuse of alcohol and illicit drugs strains families, communities, medical and social service systems, and public safety.

Notable Accomplishments

- The Flexible Pathways bill was passed in 2013, which increases learning opportunities for Vermont students. Included in the legislation is the expansion of the statewide Dual Enrollment Program, Early College Programs, work-based learning, the use of Personalized Learning Plans and virtual/blended learning.
- The Partnership for Change was initiated in Burlington and Winooski school districts to engage students, teachers, parents and community members in remodeling the public high school system to align with what all young people need to thrive in a complex global society.
- UVM has initiated a Sustainable Entrepreneurship MBA program.
- The Howard Center opened a regional opioid treatment center in South Burlington to expand access to therapy for those with opioid dependence.
- In 2013, a new law made Vermont the first state in the nation to provide school meals — breakfast and lunch — at no charge for all students qualifying for the federal reduced-price meals program.
- The City of Burlington sponsored the “We All Belong” program, and the Chittenden County RPC sponsored “People of Color Leadership Development” training to create more inclusive work places and support leadership development in our diversifying community.

High Priority Actions

- Decrease health disparities by addressing the recommendations in the Health Disparities of Vermonters Report by the Vermont Department of Health, found at: <http://healthvermont.gov/pubs/healthdisparities/recommendations.pdf>
- Take additional actions to meet the increasing opiate crisis including actions for prevention, treatment and recovery.
- Support public schools and higher education efforts to increase the quality and quantity of STEM graduates to make sure that graduates have the skills and competencies they need for the 21st century workplace.
- Strengthen career development and experiential programs at institutions of higher education to prepare graduates for jobs in the County.
- Explore the development of efforts to advance equity in our organizations and the region.