

# Our 4-Town Future Priorities

Determined by Royalton, Sharon, Strafford, and Tunbridge residents at the 4-Town Future Community Meeting, April 25<sup>th</sup> 2019

*Proving that those who live, work and raise their families in a community are best qualified to understand its needs and potential, Royalton, Sharon, Strafford, and Tunbridge community members whittled down a list of 24 issues through discussion, reasoned arguments and thoughtful reflection. In the end, voting with dot stickers, residents chose three action ideas that offer opportunities to enhance existing resources, and to strengthen the town through exciting new ventures. Residents concluded the April 25th meeting by signing up for Task Forces in the selected areas.*

## Residents of the four towns selected three priorities for future action:

### ✓ **Develop Area Housing and Build a Senior Housing Community**

A housing task force can assess current housing needs and explore options to increase new or renovated affordable housing for renters, homeowners, and seniors including co-housing, duplexes and apartments, and other multi-family units for mixed ages and incomes. This task force can also connect buyers and sellers or property owners and renters and offer support and resource connection to area residents looking to purchase, rent, or repair a home. Many expressed interest in capturing private investment and collaborating with regional, state, and federal partners to develop a senior housing development to serve the 4-town region; potentially located in Royalton for its infrastructure and access to services.

### ✓ **Support Economic Development in the Region**

An economic development committee can work to identify economic and business development needs and develop a plan, strategies, and funding opportunities to meet those needs. The group can collaborate with regional, state, and federal partners to attract businesses to the area, develop necessary infrastructure to support business growth, and develop a fund to support local businesses and provide incentives to do business in the region. The group can also help area residents connect to jobs by sharing opportunities and hosting job fairs to connect employers with potential local employees.

### ✓ **Conserve Natural Resources and the Working Landscape and Create a Regional Agricultural Network**

Many residents would like to plan for the future by protecting valuable working lands and natural resources, addressing climate change, and improving resilience through local conservation efforts. A working lands task force can identify priorities for conservation and reforestation, build funding for conservation efforts, and look into opportunities around carbon sequestration markets, land adoption programs, and partnerships with foresters and farmers in the area to protect land while supporting the working landscape. In support of this work, the task force can create a regional network of area farms, connect new farmers to land and other resources, facilitate shared resources and equipment, and support production, storage, processing, marketing and

distribution. The group can also identify and share funding sources and support for farmers transitioning to new products, diversifying their production, or shifting to organic farming practices and organize community work days to support area farms and increase market opportunities such as an annual market and farm celebration at the Tunbridge Fair. Additionally, the group can evaluate a central physical location to serve as a food hub for the region.