

Economic Development

The Addison County Regional Planning Commission created the Economic Development Chapter jointly with its partner agency, Addison County Economic Development (ACEDC) to coordinate our planning and economic development goals. This economic development Appendix captures a lot of that work and highlights the activities ACEDC will lead to implement economic development within the Region. It also incorporates and compares statistics to performance matrixes taken from the Addison portion of the West Central Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

VISION STATEMENT

Addison County is regionally and nationally renowned as a model for a dynamic and diversified rural economy where local entrepreneurs leverage the area's unique access to natural resources to launch and grow small businesses that contribute to an unmatched quality of life for residents and an unforgettable experience for visitors.

PILLARS OF THE VISION

1. Dynamic and diversified: Addison County's economy boasts over 700 farms, more than 150 retail businesses, nearly 1,400 service-based businesses, approximately 70 manufacturers, a prestigious university, a thriving hospital, and a state-of-the-art production facility for a global aerospace company.

This level of diversification ensures economic resiliency while providing employment opportunities for a varied labor force. The goals and objectives of this plan should promote further economic diversification to maximize resiliency and expand opportunity in Addison County.

2. Unique access to natural resources: There are 255,578 acres of natural forest in Addison County (52% of the County's total land area) and 177,719 acres of active farmland (34 % of the County's total land area). In addition to 56 miles of shoreline on Lake Champlain, Addison County also hosts several rivers and creeks including Otter Creek, Lewis Creek, the New Haven River, and the Middlebury River.

Addison County's waterways, forests, and farmland fuel the local economy by supplying raw materials to value-add manufacturers, artisans, and craftspeople while simultaneously enhancing quality of life by providing residents with access to fresh healthy food and outdoor recreation. The goals and objectives of this Plan promote the responsible stewardship of these resources to ensure they can continue to fuel the economy and enhance quality of life for generations to come.

3. Local entrepreneurs launch and grow small businesses: 99% of Vermont businesses meet the Small Business Administration's industry-specific criteria for small business classification. In Addison County, 82% of businesses qualify as micro-businesses, defined as 10 employees or less.

Addison County is home to brilliant, enterprising people who have launched and grown a multitude of businesses. Over 40% of Addison County residents have a bachelor's degree or higher. Empowering even more community members with tools to channel their creativity into profitable enterprises will power sustainable economic growth, expand opportunity, and improve quality of life in Addison County. The goals and objectives of this plan should promote strategies that seek economic growth through small local enterprise.

4. Unmatched quality of life: Addison County ranks in the top three among Vermont counties in both health outcomes and health factors, has the lowest rate of poverty in the state, and ranks in the 90th percentile of all U.S. counties for safety based on a crime rate of 17.82 per 1,000 residents.

Beyond the data, the anecdotal indicators for quality of life in Addison County are hard to miss: easy access to outdoor recreation, quality schools, and tight-knit communities with bustling Main Streets. The goals and objectives of this Plan acknowledge the vital role quality of life factors play in attracting talent and driving economic growth and strive to preserve the unique factors that distinguish quality of life in Addison County.

5. Unforgettable visitor experience: The annual economic impact of tourism in Vermont recently reached \$4 billion. From downhill thrills at the Middlebury Snow Bowl, in Hancock, VT, to aquatic adventures on Lake Champlain, Addison County offers ample amenities for an unforgettable visitor experience.

With a population of just 37,495, one of the biggest challenges to economic growth in Addison County is its limited consumer base. The simple reality is that for most small businesses in Addison County to survive and grow, they need to sell their goods and services to visitors and consumers outside the county. The goals and objectives of this Plan harness the positive economic impacts of tourism while prioritizing local needs and consumer preferences.

IMPLEMENTATION AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Goals & Objectives Overview

The following goals and objectives are organized according to four strategic focus areas: workforce development, business development and entrepreneurship, operational infrastructure, and quality of life. These focus areas reflect the goals and objectives set forth in Chapter 6 of the Addison County Regional Plan, the West Central Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and the Addison County Economic Development Corporation’s Strategic Plan.

Each focus area is defined by a broad, aspirational goal statement that reflects measurable outcomes to be achieved through a series of objectives and corresponding actions.

The objectives proposed under each focus area represent specific incremental outcomes that contribute to progress toward achieving the ultimate outcomes set forth in the goal statements of each focus area. These goals and objectives will be executed using actions recommended in the Implementation & Performance Measures section.

Matrix Overview

The following Implementation & Performance Measures Matrix contains 61 actions each corresponding to one of the 15 objectives and 4 goals respectively.

The Matrix is structured as follows:

Action: A brief narrative detailing the specific action.

Partners: Indicates either ACRPC or ACEDC as the lead partner followed by a series of supporting partners who will be instrumental in achieving the specific action.

Status: Indicates how advanced the specific action is at present.

- ✦ Actions with “Conceptual” status are simply ideas that have never been implemented or pursued through formal planning by either ACEDC or ACRPC.
- ✦ Actions with “Planning” status are actions that are already in process but require some additional work by ACEDC, ACRPC and supporting partners in order to be fully implemented.
- ✦ Actions with “Implementation” status are actions that are being actively implemented on an ongoing basis and, in most cases, represent existing ACEDC or ACRPC projects, programs, and services that support the goals and objectives of the REDS.

Completion: Indicates the time required to complete the specific action. The three timeframes for completion are:

- ✦ 0-2 years: Actions that can reasonably be achieved in the near-term.
- ✦ 3-5 years: Actions that require more intensive work but can reasonably be achieved within five years.
- ✦ 5+ years: In most cases, these actions have no clear endpoint but rather will be performed on an ongoing basis in perpetuity.

Performance Measures: A brief description of qualitative and quantitative measures that can be used to determine progress toward achieving each specific goal.

Evaluation of progress toward achieving the stated goals and objectives and updates on specific actions will be compiled on ongoing basis by ACEDC and ACRPC and presented annually to each organization’s respective boards of directors. Supporting partners are also welcome to request annual presentations on plan progress.

Goal Area: Workforce development

GOAL STATEMENT: Addison County has a robust and expanding labor force that allows employers in all sectors to hire

Objective:

Addison County’s housing stock offers sufficient supply to meet the needs of workers at every income level.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Ensure Act 181 future land use mapping maximizes opportunities for developing housing, particularly dense, mixed-income housing in close proximity to jobs and established commercial centers.	Lead: ACRPC Support: ACEDC, Municipalities	Implementation	0-2 years	Qualitative: Confirm approval of future land use maps by State Land Use Review Board. Quantitative: Report on the number of areas in the County approved for Tier 1A/1B status.
2. Coordinate with Addison County municipalities to identify appropriate, shovel-ready development sites that can be actively marketed to housing developers.	Lead: ACEDC, ACRPC Support: Municipalities, Private Property Owners	Planning	0-2 years	Qualitative: Confirm the launch of a public database of shovel-ready development sites. Quantitative: Track the number of development sites included in the database on an ongoing basis.
3. Launch a project-based tax-increment financing (TIF) program that provides critical financing for infrastructure that supports new housing development.	Lead: ACEDC Support: Municipalities, Private Property Owners	Planning	0-2 years	Qualitative: Confirm the launch of a Project-based TIF program by ACEDC in 2026. Quantitative: Track the number of Project-based TIF applications supported by ACEDC each year.
4. Support Addison County municipalities in drafting applications for municipal planning grants to support updates to land use plans and zoning codes that support increased housing development.	Lead: ACRPC Support: Municipalities, ACEDC	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Confirm which municipalities in Addison County require updates to land use plans and zoning code in the next 5-8 years. Quantitative: Track the number of planning grant applications submitted each year and the number of plan and code updates completed as a result.
5. Assist property owners in securing State Downtown and Village Center tax credits and grants to support small-scale, adaptive reuse infill housing development.	Lead: ACEDC, ACRPC Support: Private Property Owners, Downtown Orgs, Municipalities	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Report on efforts to share info on tax credits with eligible property owners on an annual basis. Quantitative: Track the number of tax credit applications supported by ACEDC each year.

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Objective:

Addison County’s network of vocational training programs and workforce development organizations is nimble and responsive to the ever-changing needs of employers, providing adequate training opportunities that enable local residents to secure and thrive in local jobs.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Deploy a Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) workforce expansion coordinator for two years to build partnerships between workforce service providers and area employers in the manufacturing and human services sectors.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTDOL, Workforce Service Providers, Employers	Implementation	0-2 years	Qualitative: Document efforts of the workforce expansion coordinator. Quantitative: Track the number of employers served through the workforce expansion program.
2. Use the Addison County Workforce Alliance’s (ACWA) bi-monthly meetings to facilitate conversations between Addison County employers and workforce service providers.	Lead: ACEDC Support: Workforce Service Providers, Employers	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Confirm ongoing administration of bi-monthly ACWA meetings. Quantitative: Track the number of employers and workforce service providers participating in bi-monthly ACWA meetings.
3. Assist employers and workforce service providers to secure funding for new training programs.	Lead: ACEDC Support: Workforce Service Providers, Employers	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Document efforts to share info on funding programs with employers and workforce service providers. Quantitative: Track the number of funding applications submitted each year to support workforce training.
4. Support the long-term viability and effectiveness of existing educational facilities, including Career and Technical Education Training for youth and adults.	Lead: ACEDC Support: Workforce Service Providers, Employers	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagements with educational facilities and workforce training providers and engagements with State elected officials and administrators related to career and technical education and workforce training. Quantitative: Track the number of students and adult learners enrolled in local career and technical education classes and workforce training programs.

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Objective:

In Addison County, labor force participation rates among historically marginalized and underemployed populations exceed the state and national averages.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Deploy a VDOL workforce expansion coordinator for two years – housed by ACEDC – to connect residents from three priority populations: youth ages 16-24, adults without a high school diploma, and people with disabilities to jobs in manufacturing and human services. This includes supporting the development of the corresponding action plan to continue efforts after the program ends.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTDOL, Workforce Service Providers, Employers	Implementation	0-2 years	Qualitative: Document efforts of the workforce expansion coordinator. Quantitative: Track the number of employers served through the workforce expansion program.
2. Develop a program that connects New Americans with job opportunities in Addison County.	Lead: ACEDC Support: Workforce Service Providers, Employers	Conceptual	3-5 years	Qualitative: Confirm the launch of a New Americans jobs program within 3-5 years. Quantitative: Track the number of New American workers served through the program.

KEY METRICS:

Labor force participation rate: 2025 Baseline - 64.2% (Vermont Department of Labor)

Unemployment rate: 2025 Baseline - 2.2% (Vermont Department of Labor)

Size of workforce: 2025 Baseline - 20,469 (UVM Office of Engagement, Annual Data Services Report)

Live/Work ratio: 2025 Baseline – 50% (UVM Office of Engagement, Annual Data Services Report)

Prime working age population over 60: 2025 Baseline – 34% (UVM Office of Engagement, Annual Data Services Report)

Goal Area: Business Development and Entrepreneurship

GOAL STATEMENT: Addison County consistently experiences positive annual net growth in the number of small businesses operating in the county and corresponding growth in inflation adjusted gross sales and sales tax receipts.

Objective:

Entrepreneurs experience low barriers to launching a business and receive easy access to technical assistance and financing.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Advocate for streamlined State permitting processes that reduce the time it takes for businesses to launch and expand.	Lead: ACEDC, ACRPC Support: ACRPC, ACCOC, Downtown Orgs, VTAC-CD, VTANR	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Document outreach to State elected officials and administrators related to permitting and approvals for commercial development. Quantitative: Track the number of commercial projects applying for an Act 250 permit each year and the amount of time required for permit approval.
2. Work with municipalities to identify realistic opportunities for easing local permitting and lowering fees that make it cheaper and easier to launch a business in Addison County.	Lead: ACEDC, ACRPC Support: Municipalities, ACCOC, Downtown Orgs, ACRPC, VTSBDC	Conceptual	3-5 years	Qualitative: Document engagement with municipalities related to local permitting and fees for business startup and expansion. Quantitative: Track the number of business expansion projects completed in Addison County on an annual basis.
2. Convene Addison County economic development partners to coordinate the marketing of local business support services and to maximize the reach of coordinated marketing efforts.	Lead: ACEDC Support: ACCOC, Downtown Orgs, VTSBDC	Conceptual	3-5 years	Qualitative: Confirm the launch of a collaborative marketing campaign between Addison County-based economic development organizations. Quantitative: Track the number of referrals between organizations and the total number of businesses served across organizations.
3. Recapitalize the ACEDC's revolving loan funds while seeking new opportunities to provide access to capital for new and expanding business that struggle to access conventional financing.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTAC-CD, USDA-RD	Planning	0-2 years	Qualitative: Confirm that new lending capital has been secured within two years. Quantitative: Track the amount of capital available to be lent out through ACEDC RLFs on an annual basis.
4. Help create and review business plans for entrepreneurs.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTSBDC	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Document efforts to promote business planning services. Quantitative: Track the number of clients receiving business planning consultations through VTSBDC and ACEDC each year.
5. Introduce entrepreneurs to peers, service providers, and associated businesses.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTSBDC, ACCOC, Downtown Orgs, Municipalities, VTACCD	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Document communications between economic development partner organizations. Quantitative: Track the number of referrals between organizations on an annual basis.

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Objective:

Businesses that launch in Addison County choose to grow in Addison County and are able to reach maturity without relocating outside of the county.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Work with growing businesses to anticipate and help address their expansion needs including but not limited to: financing and investment, physical expansion or relocation, increased hiring, and access to new markets.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTSBDC, VEDA, VTACCD	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagements with businesses seeking expansion in Addison County. Quantitative: Track the number of businesses that completed physical expansions or executed investments that expanded employment in Addison County on an annual basis.
2. Seek opportunities for connecting local businesses with slow capital that allows for sustained growth without the constraints of burdensome debt service.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTSBDC, VCLF, CCoVT, VCF	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Document business referrals to alternative lenders and investors. Quantitative: Track the number of small business loans with terms greater than 10 years facilitated by ACEDC on an annual basis.

Objective:

Addison County is an attractive destination for relocating entrepreneurs, remote workers, and expanding small businesses regionally and nationally.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Implement “Think Vermont Grants for Relocation Outreach Work” (GROW), which fund efforts to attract and retain new residents to Addison County.	Lead: ACCOC Support: ACEDC, VTACCD	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Continue State-mandated reporting on administration of the GROW grant program. Quantitative: Continue tracking the number of new resident prospects and actual new residents engaged through the program.
2. Work with local and State partners to promote Addison County as a desirable place to live and work.	Lead: ACEDC Support: ACCOC, ACRPC, VTACCD	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Document efforts outside of the GROW grant program to promote Addison County as a desirable place to live and work. Quantitative: Track overall population, labor force, and number of businesses in Addison County on an annual basis.

KEY METRICS:

Number of active businesses: 2025 Baseline - 1,158 (U.S. Census Bureau)

Number of new businesses (annually): No 2025 Baseline

Number of businesses in operation for 5 years or more: No 2025 baseline

Gross sales at Addison County businesses: 2024 Baseline - \$1,038,281,743 (Vermont Department of Taxes)

Annual sales tax receipts: 2024 Baseline - \$227,799,489 (Vermont Department of Taxes)

Goal Area: Operational Infrastructure

GOAL STATEMENT: Businesses in Addison County benefit from robust and resilient conventional infrastructure as well as accessible operational infrastructure.

Objective:

Addison County offers adequate industrial and commercial facilities to support new and expanding businesses.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Develop the Phase II and Phase III areas of the Middlebury Industrial Park, providing much-needed new commercial and industrial space for expanding businesses.	Lead: ACEDC Support: Middlebury College, Town of Middlebury	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Confirm the completion of engineering and permitting for new infrastructure in 2026. Confirm funding has been secured for infrastructure build out in 3-5 years. Quantitative: Track the number of shovel-ready sites on the market at the Industrial Park on an annual basis following construction of new infrastructure.
2. Advance new commercial/industrial development at the Firehouse Industrial Park, Bristol.	Lead: ACEDC Support: Stoney Hill Properties, Town of Bristol	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Confirm that new development is underway at Firehouse Industrial Park in the next 5 years. Quantitative: Track the total square feet of new commercial/industrial space developed at the Firehouse Industrial Park.
3. Plan and facilitate commercial and industrial redevelopment along the Vergennes N. Main Street corridor as envisioned in the Transportation Oriented Development Master Plan.	Lead: ACEDC, ACRPC Support: City of Vergennes, ACRPC, Vergennes Partnership, Private Property Owners	Conceptual	5+ years	Qualitative: Confirm the availability of sites in the N. Main Street corridor for commercial/industrial development or redevelopment in the next 5 years. Quantitative: Track the total square feet of new or improved commercial/industrial space along the N. Main Street corridor on an annual basis.
4. Continue to explore opportunities to plan and develop a business incubator with a special focus on agricultural businesses and value-add manufacturers.	Lead: ACEDC Support: ACORN, VTAFM, VTACCD	Conceptual	5+ years	Qualitative: Confirm that a site has been secured/identified for an agriculture and manufacturing-focused business incubator in the next 5 years. Quantitative: Track the number of businesses served through the incubator on an annual basis.
5. Pursue the recommendations of the Vergennes Planning and Environmental Linkages Study to improve truck traffic and business conditions in downtown Vergennes.	Lead: ACRPC Support: City of Vergennes, Vergennes Partnership, ACEDC, VTDOT	Planning	3-5 years	Qualitative: Confirm the selection of a desired PELS alternative and the commencement of work on the selected alternative in the next 5 years. Quantitative: Track traffic volumes following completion of the selected alternative.

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Objective:

Addison County offers adequate industrial and commercial facilities to support new and expanding businesses.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
6. Identify and assess Brownfields sites while pursuing further funding for environmental remediation.	Lead: ACRPC Support: ACEDC, Municipalities, Private Property Owners, VTACCD	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Confirm that a new EPA Brownfields Assessment grant has been secured in the next 5 years. Quantitative: Track the number of brownfield sites assessed annually.
7. Build an affordable and resilient telecommunications network throughout the Region for individuals and businesses.	Lead: ACRPC Support: Telecomm service providers, ACEDC, Municipalities	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Confirm the completion of the Maple Broadband fiber-optic network within 5 years. Quantitative: Track the number of residential and commercial fiber-optic connections annually. Track the rate for fiber-optic service in Addison County annually.



Aqua Vitea tank storage, Middlebury



Aqua Vitea facility, Middlebury

Objective:

Affordable, sustainable energy sources are accessible for all businesses.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Encourage the development of cost-effective, community-scale thermal systems, such as geothermal, Thermal Energy Networks, and waste heat recovery.	Lead: ACRPC Support: VCTN, ACEDC, VGS	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagement with businesses and commercial users interested in geothermal networks. Quantitative: Track the number of thermal energy networks proposed, planned, and developed in Addison County annually.
2. Encourage Green Mountain Power (GMP) to make distribution upgrades to support continued renewable generation.	Lead: ACEDC, ACRPC Support: GMP, ACRPC	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagements with GMP related to upgrades to local distribution system and investments in renewable generation. Quantitative: Track the dollars invested in upgrades to existing distribution system and in new renewable generation.
3. Leverage the municipal and energy infrastructure at the Middlebury Industrial Park to attract new and expanding businesses.	Lead: ACEDC Support: Town of Middlebury, VGS	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Document referrals of new/expanding business prospects to utility providers serving the Industrial Park. Quantitative: Track the number of new users connecting to existing municipal and energy infrastructure in the Industrial Park on an annual basis.
4. Develop farm and municipal digesters that produce clean energy, promote the circular economy, and improve water quality.	Lead: ACEDC, ACRPC Support: Purpose Energy, Municipalities, VGS	Conceptual	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagements with farmers and municipal partners related to developing anaerobic digestors. Quantitative: Track the number of anaerobic digestors developed for energy production in Addison County annually.
5. Leverage energy incentives available from energy efficiency utilities and distribution utilities.	Lead: ACEDC Support: Municipalities, VGS, Efficiency Vermont, GMP	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagements with businesses and commercial energy users related to energy-related incentives. Quantitative: Track the number and value of energy incentives awarded to businesses and commercial users annually.

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Objective:

Addison County manufacturers, artisans, and craftspeople benefit from adequate facilities for harvesting, processing and storing raw materials, work-in-progress goods, and value-added products.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Advocate for responsible timber harvesting and develop strategies for retaining and expanding local lumber mills.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTAFM, Local Mills, Value-add Businesses, VTANR	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagements with State and local partners related to statewide timber harvesting and local timber milling. Quantitative: Track the number of value-add businesses in Addison County sourcing timber from within the state annually. Track the number of active lumber mills operating in Addison County annually.
2. Develop and implement strategies for retaining dairy farms and ensuring adequate access to processing facilities.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTAFM, Local Dairies	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagements with local dairy operations. Quantitative: Track the number of active dairy operations in Addison County annually. Track the output and revenue of active dairy operations in Addison County annually.
3. Work to expand access to warehousing and storage facilities for local producers and manufacturers and explore the feasibility for a shared facility with third-party logistics services.	Lead: ACEDC Support: Local Producers and Manufacturers, Industrial Property Owners	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagements with local producers related to warehousing and storage. Quantitative: Track the total number of warehousing and storage facilities serving producers in Addison County and the total available square footage at warehousing and storage facilities.
4. Develop a shared aging facility for local cheesemakers.	Lead: ACEDC Support: Local Cheesemakers, VTAFM	Conceptual	5+ years	Qualitative: Confirm the need for a shared aging facility within five years. Quantitative: In the near term, track the number of local cheesemakers using aging facilities outside the county annually. Long term, track the number of local cheesemakers using a shared aging facility in the county annually.
5. Support efforts to develop a new grain processing facility in Addison County.	Lead: ACEDC Support: Champlain Valley Grain Center	Planning	3-5 years	Qualitative: Confirm the start of construction on a new grain processing facility in Addison County within five years. Quantitative: Track the volume of grain being processed within Addison County annually.
6. Along with efforts to establish a business incubator, coordinate efforts to establish shared commercial kitchen space in Addison County.	Lead: ACEDC Support: PAHCC, ACORN	Conceptual	3-5 years	Qualitative: Confirm that a shared/community commercial kitchen has been established within 5 years. Quantitative: Confirm the number of businesses utilizing a shared commercial kitchen annually.
7. Support opportunities at the Hannaford Career Center to serve as a hub for entrepreneurship.	Lead: ACEDC Support: PAHCC	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Document referrals of local businesses to the Hannaford Career Center. Quantitative: Track the number of businesses that partner with Hannaford Career Center for training and business development annually.

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Objective:

Addison County businesses have easy access to distribution networks that allow them to affordably and efficiently deliver their products to local, regional, and national markets.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Seek opportunities to expand refrigerated food delivery services in Addison County.	Lead: ACEDC Support: ACORN, VTAFM	Conceptual	3-5 years	Qualitative: Confirm the need for expanded refrigerated food delivery in Addison County. Quantitative: Track the number of local service providers offering refrigerated food delivery in Addison County and the number of local producers served by local refrigerated food
2. Work with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food Markets to seek opportunities for launching and expanding distribution cooperatives among Addison County farm and forest producers and small businesses.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTAFM, ACORN	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagements with State staff and local producers related to shared distribution. Quantitative: Track the number of local producers and small businesses participating in distribution cooperatives annually.

Objective:

Expand critical water and wastewater infrastructure in existing villages to support development. Businesses in the Region play an active role in planning and, when appropriate, financing the expansion.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Engage manufacturers and large industrial and commercial users in discussions on future infrastructure needs.	Lead: ACEDC Support: ACRPC, Local Industrial and Commercial users, State and Local Utility Providers	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagements with large industrial and commercial users related to future infrastructure needs. Quantitative: Track the number and value of investments in infrastructure upgrades in Addison County annually.
2. Advocate for zoning and land use planning that promotes mixed-use development, allowing for commercial and industrial users to absorb the cost for upgraded and expanded infrastructure.	Lead: ACRPC Support: ACEDC, Municipalities	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagements with municipal partners related to zoning updates. Quantitative: Track the number of zoning districts within Addison County that permit mixed-use

KEY METRICS:

Square feet of new commercial/industrial space constructed (annually): 2025 Baseline needed

Dollars invested in water and wastewater infrastructure (annually): 2025 Baseline needed

Dollars invested in road, telecom, and energy infrastructure (annually): 2025 Baseline needed

Office vacancy rate: 2025 Baseline needed

Retail vacancy rate: 2025 Baseline needed

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Goal Area: Quality of Life

GOAL STATEMENT: High quality of life is regularly cited as the number one reason talent and industry choose to locate and remain in Addison County.

Objective:

A commitment to equity among businesses, municipalities, and civic organizations ensures Addison County's high quality of life is enjoyed by all residents.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Refine ACEDC's existing programs to include measurable business startup and entrepreneurial activity among minority populations in Addison County to determine a baseline for monitoring progress in advancing minority and women-owned businesses.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTDC, VCF, VT-POC, VTCWE	Conceptual	5+ years	Qualitative: Document efforts to market ACEDC programs and services to minority populations. Quantitative: Track the number of minority and women-owned businesses served by ACEDC annually.
2. Work with lending partners to determine strategies to help minority and women entrepreneurs access capital.	Lead: ACEDC Support: Commercial Lenders, VEDA, VCLF, CCOVT, VCF	Conceptual	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagements with lending partners related to strategies for minority and women-owned business lending. Quantitative: Track the number and value of loans issued by ACEDC to minority and women-owned businesses annually
3. Establish business training and mentorship programs tailored specifically to marginalized and underrepresented populations.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTDC, VCF, VTPOC, VTCWE	Conceptual	0-2 years	Qualitative: Confirm the launch of new programs specifically tailored to marginalized and underrepresented populations. Quantitative: Track the number of entrepreneurs and business owners from marginalized and underrepresented populations served by ACEDC annually.
4. Refine ACEDC's programs to ensure they assist marginalized and underrepresented populations with market research, product development, packaging design, distribution strategies, marketing and promotion strategies, and facilitate access to retail partnerships.	Lead: ACEDC, Support: VTDC, VTPOC, VTCWE	Conceptual	5+ years	Qualitative: Document efforts to market ACEDC programs and services to marginalized and underrepresented populations. Quantitative: Track the number of entrepreneurs and business owners from marginalized and underrepresented populations served by ACEDC annually.
5. Refine ACEDC's and others' programs to ensure they link marginalized and underrepresented populations with larger contracts and financial opportunities, potentially including business-to-business (B2B) linkage forums for joint ventures and teaming solutions.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTDC, VTPOC, VTCWE, VCF	Conceptual	5+ years	Qualitative: Document efforts to connect entrepreneurs and small business owners from underrepresented and marginalized populations to new business and contracting opportunities. Quantitative: Track the number of entrepreneurs and small business owners from marginalized and underrepresented populations that receive assistance accessing new business and contracting opportunities annually.

Objective:

Addison County's businesses, municipalities, and civic organizations work together to preserve and expand access to recreational and cultural amenities.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Draft a countywide master plan for municipal forests that includes an economic development chapter supporting the Moosalamoo National Recreational Area Master Plan.	Lead: ACRPC Support: ACEDC	Conceptual	3-5 years	Qualitative: Confirm that a countywide master plan for municipal forests/public lands is completed or underway within 5 years. Quantitative: Track the total acres and miles of trails included in master planning.
2. Measure the economic impact of outdoor recreation in Addison County.	Lead: ACEDC, Support: MALT	Conceptual	5+ years	Qualitative: Confirm a strategy has been established within 5 years for measuring the annual economic impact of outdoor recreation in Addison County. Quantitative: Track the amount of consumer spending that can be directly attributed to outdoor recreation in Addison County annually.
3. Identify and pursue funding streams to support arts events, venues, and pop-ups for individual artists and artistic organizations.	Lead: ACEDC, Support: Downtown Orgs	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Document efforts to promote funding opportunities to artists and arts organizations in Addison County. Quantitative: Track the number of funding applications for arts and cultural programming and projects annually and the volume of funding awarded.
4. Investment in trail infrastructure, signage, and maintenance along the TAM to improve accessibility.	Lead: ACRPC Support: MALT, GMC, ACBC, Municipalities, Downtown Orgs, ACEDC	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Document the current need for trail maintenance and improvements along the TAM. Quantitative: Measure volume and value of investments made in improving the TAM annually.
5. Develop a completely interconnected trail network that supports active transportation, recreation, and health while also driving sustainable tourism and business growth.	Lead: ACRPC Support: MALT, GMC, ACBC, Municipalities, Downtown Orgs, ACEDC	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Confirm that a plan or strategy has been developed for building out a regional trail network within 5 years. Quantitative: Track the miles of interconnected trails spanning municipalities within Addison County annually.

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Objective:

A thriving business sector offers residents access to essential goods and services.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Conduct a consumer survey to identify gaps in Addison County’s retail and service sectors.	Lead: ACEDC Support: ACCOC, Downtown Orgs	Conceptual	0-2 years	Qualitative: Confirm that a survey has been completed within 2 years. Quantitative: Track the number of survey respondents and measurable demand for specific retail and services.
2. Use the market data developed in the Transit Oriented Development market study to identify gaps in retail and service sectors.	Lead: ACEDC Support: ACRPC, ACCOC, Downtown Orgs	Implementation	0-2 years	Qualitative: Confirm an analysis has been completed of TOD market study data. Quantitative: Track the number of retail and service gaps in the market annually.
3. Proactively recruit businesses that offer goods and services currently missing in the market.	Lead: ACEDC Support: ACCOC, Downtown Orgs, Municipalities, Commercial Landlords	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Document efforts to recruit business that fill gaps in the market. Quantitative: Track the number of new businesses opening in Addison County annually that provide goods or services that were previously unavailable in the market.
4. Provide coordinated succession planning for existing businesses to ensure businesses providing essential goods and services continue to operate after transitions in ownership.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTSB-DC, ACCOC	Implementation	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagements with owners planning an exit from their businesses. Quantitative: Track the number of businesses that successfully transfer ownership annually.

Objective:

Addison County maintains high ratings for health factors and health outcomes.

Action	Partners	Status	Completion	Performance Measures
1. Advocate for the vital role that health factors play in sustaining a vibrant and effective local workforce in planning processes.	Lead: ACEDC, Support: Local Healthcare Providers, ACRPC	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Document engagements with healthcare providers and community partners related to health factors and workforce development. Quantitative: Track health factors in Addison County annually using the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps database.
2. Work with partners in health and health care, through initiatives like Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNA) and Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIP) to assess and design actions that improve economic mobility for our workforce and economic development for our county, while helping control rising healthcare costs.	Lead: ACEDC Support: Local Healthcare Providers	Planning	5+ years	Qualitative: Confirm ACEDC’s participation in the next Addison County Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), planned for 2027. Quantitative: Track the number of CHIP objectives that directly support workforce and economic development.
3. Explore the feasibility of health-based bond programs such as social impact bonds and development impact bonds to drive local investments in health and wellness.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VCF, VCLF, Local Healthcare Providers	Planning	3-5 years	Qualitative: Confirm the feasibility of health-based bond programs in Addison County within 5 years. Quantitative: Track the number of businesses and community partners consulted on topic of health-based bonds.
4. Develop promotional campaigns and marketing initiatives that recognize local employers who invest in the health and wellness of employees.	Lead: ACEDC Support: VTDOL, Local Healthcare Providers	Planning	3-5 years	Qualitative: Confirm the launch of marketing and promotional campaigns that recognize local employers who invest in employee health and wellness. Quantitative: Track the number of employers in Addison County making significant investments in employee health and wellness annually.

KEY METRICS:

Poverty rate: 7.4% (2024 Addison County Community Health Need Assessment)

Uninsured rate: 4.7% (2024 Addison County Community Health Need Assessment)

Cost-burdened renters/homeowners: 47%/24% (2024 Addison County Community Health Need Assessment)

Percentage of adults experiencing food insecurity in prior year: 7% (2024 Addison County Community Health Need Assessment)

Ratio of population to primary care physicians: 890 to 1 (2024 Addison County Community Health Need Assessment)

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Conclusion

This Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) acts as the guiding plan for the Addison County Economic Development Corporation (ACEDC), and extends the West Central Vermont Economic Development Strategy and the Economic Development Chapter of the Addison County Regional Plan.

The ACEDC and ACRPC began this effort in the spring of 2025. The base of the strategy was inspired by the West Central Vermont Economic Development Strategy, the original Economy Chapter of the Addison County Regional Plan and the operating strategy of the ACEDC. This basis was then adjusted by the REDS Steering Committee through several meetings and draft overviews. After a substantial draft was completed, ACRPC and ACEDC, hosted two open houses to provide the community with opportunities for input. Invitations were extended through direct, internal, and public channels to ensure broad community buy-in. Throughout this process, professionals were consulted in their area of expertise and edits were presented to the Committee for review.

The implementation of this plan will be largely performed and measured by the ACEDC. The organization is the lead on most actions, a partner on almost all actions, and will be engaged with the entire plan's implementation and evaluation. This is a living document, intended to be revised as conditions and goals evolve. The Regional Plan requires formal revisiting every eight years, which further enforces the need for constant revision.

The Addison County Economic Development Corporation and the Addison County Regional Planning Commission would like to thank the following groups and organizations for their contributions and support for this process:

REDS STEERING COMMITTEE:

Nicole MacTavish (ACEDC Board), Renny Perry (ACEDC Board), Mark Foster (ACEDC Board), Gioia Kuss (ACRPC Board), Ron Dendas (ACRPC Board), Melanie Sands (ACRPC Board), Jennfier Erwin (ACRPC Board), Phil Pedlikin (ACRPC Board).

COMMUNITY PARTNERS THAT REVIEWED THE PLAN:

Middlebury Area Land Trust, Vermont Gas Systems, Vermont Community Thermal Networks, Patricia A. Hanaford Career Center, Kennedy Brothers, Causton Consulting, and Tri-Valley Transit.

