

Mad River Valley Economic Summit - 6/4/14

Participant Votes & Commentary

Summary of Results

Public input from attendees of the June 4th MRV Economic Summit & Community Picnic and online survey respondents offers valuable insight into community priorities and goals for economic vitality in our region. The “dot exercise” undertaken at the Summit demonstrated the range of opinions on a variety of economic topics, divided into four sectors (Tourism/Recreation, Agriculture/Food System, Professional Services, and Manufacturing/Incubation). With assistance from Warren consultant Patricia Floyd, Mad River Valley Planning District (MRVPD) staff has tabulated this input, as well as responses from an online survey that closed August 1st.

The community input largely supports MRV Economic Study findings presented at the Summit, highlighting the importance of “quality of life” in attracting and retaining residents and businesses to the MRV. 84% of respondents strongly agreed that “quality of life” in the MRV accounts for their choice to live here, with 60% identifying the MRV as a great place to work and the same percentage stating that MRV schools support their decision to live here. Respondents suggested a desire for the following types of businesses to open in the MRV: more year-round employers, an affordable café, discount recreational clothing, a gym, and a co-working hub.

Attendees at the Summit learned that income from self-employment constitutes 13% of the MRV’s total household income; double the state average. This was reflected in the 90% of respondents who indicated they or someone they know works from home. The seasonality of the local economy was also analyzed by the consultants, and was found to have higher spikes and dips than the state and county, but also less volatile when compared to a sample of other Vermont resort communities. This aligns with the consultant statement that 51 cents of every dollar spent in the MRV comes from outside of the MRV. When asked about economic growth potential, 98% of respondents strongly agreed that the non-winter Tourism/Recreation sector of the economy could be grown. This sector generated the most write-in comments as well, with calls for more biking trails/paths, camping, indoor recreation and nightlife options.

The Agriculture/Food System sector received the second highest positive response, with 94% of respondents agreeing that growth potential exists for this sector, and 65% identifying the Valley as well positioned for the future in this regard. Write-in comments called for a focus on funding for start-ups, production, and collaboration between agriculture and tourism.

Consultant Juli Beth Hinds presented an historical review of MRV businesses at the summit, which demonstrated the MRV’s strong history of business incubation. Within the Manufacturing/Incubation sector, 94% of respondents identified food/agricultural products as the most aligned with the MRV, followed by recreational products at 87%, software/web design at 73% and industrial products at 17%. Beer and wine production, energy efficiency technology, training programs, and a municipal wastewater system were some of the popular write-in responses to the question *What other types of manufacturing would you like to see in MRV?*

“General Comments” provided a wide range of suggestions, from adding the Arts/Creative Economy as its own economic sector to expanding housing resources for aging adults. Comments have been listed by sector and arranged by topic area on the following pages.

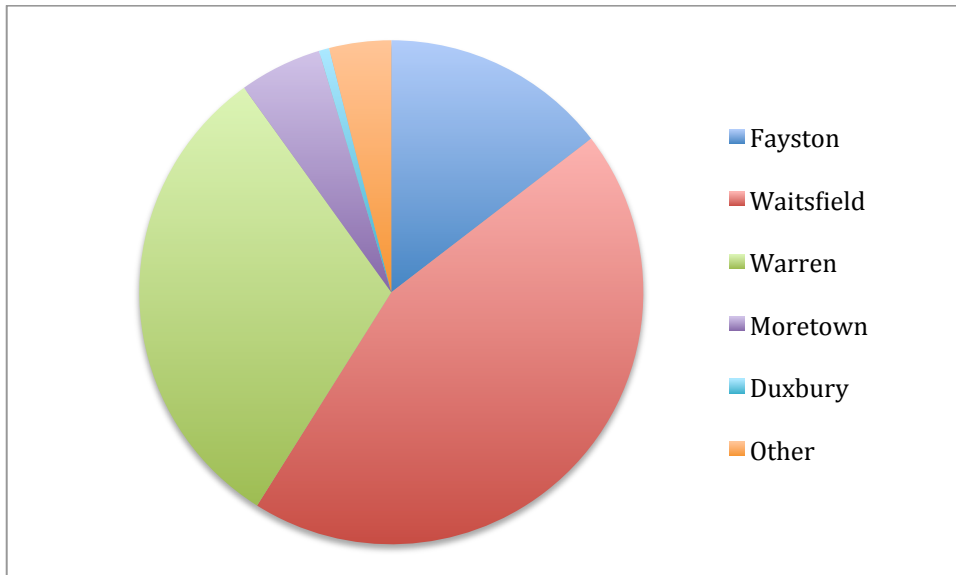
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MRV Economic Summit & Community Picnic/Online Survey Respondents By Town

Estimated Attendance: 250 Event Attendee Sign-Ins: 134 Online Survey Respondents: 19

Fayston	22	14.57%
Waitsfield	67	44.37%
Warren	47	31.13%
Moretown	8	5.30%
Duxbury	1	0.66%
Other	6	3.97%

151 100.00%



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TOPIC: Manufacturing / Incubation

Exploring: "What types of manufacturing businesses are best aligned with MRV?"

1. Software / Web Design

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	0	4	21	40	29
%	0%	4.3%	22.3%	42.6%	30.9%
%	4.3% Do not agree		22.3%	73.4% Agree	
Total Votes	94				

2. Food / Agricultural Products

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	0	1	5	38	59
%	0%	1.0%	4.9%	36.9%	57.3%
%	1.0% Do not agree		4.9%	94.2% Agree	
Total Votes	103				

3. Recreational Products

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	0	2	10	46	32
%	0%	2.2%	11.1%	51.1%	35.6%
%	2.2% Do not agree		11.1%	86.7% Agree	
Total Votes	90				

4. Technology Products

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	1	6	28	39	20
%	1.1%	6.4%	29.8%	41.5%	21.3%
%	7.5% Do not agree		29.8%	62.8% Agree	
Total Votes	94				

5. Industrial Products

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	19	32	27	8	8
%	20.2%	34.0%	28.7%	8.5%	8.5%
%	54.2% Do not agree		28.7%	17.0% Agree	
Total Votes	94				

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Written Comments: *Manufacturing / Incubation Ideas? What other types of manufacturing would you like to see in MRV?*

- Provide **Industrial Land Trusts** that keep appropriate sites available in perpetuity for industry the way Agricultural Land Trusts work
- **Wine Production** like **beer**, is a perfect product for this valley and supports both agriculture and tourism
- What about production of **arts and crafts** products?
- Manufacturing for local consumption [editorial note: like localvore, I'm guessing]
- Incorporate **Employee Stock Ownership** concepts to retain businesses in the area whose employees don't want to move it away somewhere
- More support for **agricultural product conversion** – fiber into crafts, for example
- **Remove obstacles** for industrial development in areas that are suitable for their location
- **Forest products**
- **Municipal Wastewater [ed: treatment]** is a key ingredient missing for manufacturing and processing small-scale industrial type businesses
- Very light manufacturing with **goods easy to transport**. It's the heavy manufacturers that have left to be closer to transportation
- Energy efficiency manufacturing...reduce our **carbon footprint**
- YES!
- I think people are interpreting "Industrial" as "machinery", steel mills, possible with "waste products" associated with it. Maybe some examples of "Industrial" to keep people from misinterpreting it [editorial note: is referencing question 5]

Online Survey Responses:

- Clean and quiet! A call center would be good. We need jobs that would have their own training programs for unskilled folks too.
- creative renewable energy equipment, recreation equipment, niche markets of household goods
- Maybe start by looking at why all the business that started here have moved or been purchase and moved out of the state. 15 years ago there were plenty of long term YEAR AROUND middle to large companies here in the valley. The majority of them had either been bought and moved out of state or the company moved to a more friendly business environment. If you don't know how to stop the business from leaving what good does it do to create a business that will leave. I have worked for 3 5x5x5 companies all have either moved out of state or been purchased and are in the process of moving out of Vermont. As far as options if the business climate was friendly the options are endless.
- A water plant.... Canoe manufacturer..... Wind energy..... Wholesale food Lost them all!
- It would be nice to draw a large, clean industry to the valley to bring more families and bolster our school enrollments and local business success.
- how about a world class art academy - painting, ceramics, pottery, fabric art etc.

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TOPIC: Agriculture / Food System

Exploring: "The Valley is a leader in Agriculture / Food System"

1. MRV's Ag / Food System is well positioned for the future

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	1	4	25	46	10
%	1.2%	4.7%	29.1%	53.5%	11.6%
%	5.8% Do not agree		29.1%	65.1% Agree	
Total Votes	86				

2. There is enough Ag / Food System diversity in MRV

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	8	28	57	15	3
%	7.2%	25.2%	51.4%	13.5%	2.7%
%	32.4% Do not agree		51.4%	16.2% Agree	
Total Votes	111				

3. MRV's Ag / Food System has growth potential

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	1	0	4	46	37
%	1.1%	0%	4.6%	52.3%	42.0%
%	1.1% Do not agree		4.6%	94.3% Agree	
Total Votes	88				

4. Ag / Food System is our future

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	1	11	40	21	11
%	1.2%	13.1%	47.6%	25.0%	13.1%
%	14.3% Do not agree		47.6%	38.1% Agree	
Total Votes	84				

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Written Comments: *How can the Valley continue to be a leader in Agriculture / Food Systems?*

- MRV needs to follow **Hardwick's plan** – a “Foodie” area – support our farmers
- Retain **Ag Land Trust** activities
- Retain **Current Use taxation**
- Retain **Warren meadowland overlay** zoning
- We can poise ourselves as a **farm-to-table destination**
- Resist USDA school food regs that teach kids what to throw away as opposed to making healthy food choices about what to eat in the presence of their peers as preparation for making beneficial and sensible choices for the rest of their lives
- My dad always said, “Money spent on good food is not wasted.” But **buying locally** comes at a very steep price.
- Overlap between **Agriculture and Tourism**
- **Fiber** is a neglected agri-area – both production and processing
- Wine grape and **wine production** is perfect for MRV. This commodity supports **Ag and Tourism**; convert from hay
- More **loans / start up support** for Ag and value added
- More vegan options
- Expand interest and availability of non-professional Ag pursuits such as community gardens and backyard agriculture
- Promote use of horse-mowed and fertilized lawns for grazing and other space-consuming Ag projects

Online Survey Responses:

- Provide better funding sources for farmers, producers, distributors.
- Public support through purchasing, investment and planning/zoning. Realizing that growing food can be smelly, dirty and noisy and you might have to live near all that.....
- Organic, respectful of nature's balance.
- continue to support high value food products and support place where this can occur - commercial kitchen, local distribution, etc.
- keep preserving farms and controlling residential development.
- If the valley really wants to be a lead it needs to be proactive with the FDA and federal and state mandates on food. Too many communities are reactive to the changes instead of stopping or addressing them in advance. Look at the FDA ruling and artisan cheeses its on the books for a couple years and now its an issue. To be a leader you need to be in front of things not playing catch up to established and upcoming rules.
- Sandwich boards
- Make it easy for people to buy the products. I still tend to get things at Shaw's, because it's easier and less time consuming. Maybe disseminate more information about how to purchase local products.
- make items more affordable. Locals cannot afford a \$4 tomato.

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TOPIC – Professional Services

Exploring: “MRV’s Quality of Life attracts people”

1. I live in MRV for the Quality of Life

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	0	1	12	18	53
%	0%	1.2%	14.3%	21.4%	63.1%
%	1.2% Do not agree		14.3%	84.5% Agree	
Total Votes	84				

2. The Valley is a great place to work

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	1	5	27	28	20
%	1.2%	6.2%	33.3%	34.6%	24.7%
%	7.4% Do not agree		33.3%	59.3% Agree	
Total Votes	81				

3. The schools support decisions to live in the Valley

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	4	8	18	20	25
%	5.3%	10.7%	24.0%	26.7%	33.3%
%	16.0% Do not agree		24.0%	60.0% Agree	
Total Votes	75				

4. I work from home / I know someone who works from home

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	0	1	7	13	56
%	0%	1.3%	9.1%	16.9%	72.7%
%	1.3% Do not agree		9.1%	89.6% Agree	
Total Votes	77				

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Written Comments: *I wish we had _____ business in MRV*

- Promote **ESOPs** (Employee Stock Ownership Plans) for MRV businesses as a way of retaining the business here due to reluctance of employees to sell out to someone who would move it away somewhere
- **Innovation** / Innovation / Innovation
- **Climbing gym**
- **Multi-purpose gym** with lots of exercise classes
- Promote Rochester to Waterbury as Vermont's **innovation** corridor, like Silicon Valley or Rt. 128 around Boston. We have some history to base it upon
- Walkability in the Irasville zone
- Good **breakfast place!** (hangout spot)
- **Co-working hub** – more opportunity for those that work remotely to congregate
- Another vote for **co-working hub** – an incubator for tech & professional services
- **Wine** from MRV grown grapes creates a great opportunity for local business and adds to tourism. We don't need more empty meadows.
- Great **coffee / bakery spot** with high quality baked goods open Monday – Friday from 7am!
- Time once again for **Waitsfield Telecom upgrade – DSL's** knees are starting to sag
- **Bowling Alley** or ___ Pin alley to bring people into Valley from surrounding towns
- I do web development. I've lived in MRV for 13.5 years. In all this time, I have commuted to work in So Burlington, Montpelier and Northfield. Would be nice if the **web industry in MRV** was hiring.
- More quality, **mid-range restaurants**
- **Art** / ceramics classes / open studios
- A **discount card for locals** to use at local businesses
- Statewide testimonial to **promote folks who work at home** and Vermont lifestyle
- **Informal café** open in the evening
- YES!
- An indoor rec **center** for kids / tweens to hang out at
- More **cafes** where one could buy simple food, not just sweets, coffee and stay for a long time to work on a computer (I'm self employed)
- Discount outdoor recreation / **clothing store**

Online Survey Respondents:

- More/better restaurants - especially need a café on bridge street.
- Casual clothing
- More jobs of any kind. I was shocked at how few folks live and work here. . I don't think GMVS gets enough credit as a draw to the MRV.
- More affordable (yet healthy) restaurant options for locals. It would also be nice to have some restaurants that offer traditional and/or ethnic menus. Sometimes it's nice to have plain old comfort foods without adding something fancy.
- I think we're pretty well covered
- pizza delivery to Fayston! As mentioned before- a gym, yoga studio and more recreational events.
- Anything for working people who do not have a lot of money. More recreation, arts, shops, restaurants and take out that don't cost a fortune.
- Any thing that is year round, pays a real wage and doesn't move out when successful.
- Brew pub
- More business would be great. I'm self-employed; I get the feeling that local wages are low. I think it would be difficult to find a professional position in the valley, because there simply aren't enough.
- more - with higher paying - less service orientated jobs

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TOPIC – Recreation / Tourism

Exploring: “Tourism / Recreation take many forms”

1. Tourism / Recreation defines the Valley

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	0	5	38	39	15
%	0%	5.2%	39.2%	40.2%	15.5%
%	5.2% Do not agree		39.2%	55.7% Agree	
Total Votes	97				

2. Tourism / Recreation is mostly related to winter

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	17	37	31	10	2
%	17.5%	38.1%	32.0%	10.3%	2.1%
%	55.7% Do not agree		32.0%	12.4% Agree	
Total Votes	97				

3. There is Tourism / Recreation growth potential during the non-winter months

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	0	0	2	39	59
%	0%	0%	2.0%	39.0%	59.0%
%	0% Do not agree		2.0%	98.0% Agree	
Total Votes	100				

4. Tourism / Recreation needs to be more weather “neutral”

	Do Not Agree				Agree
# of votes	3	0	18	39	36
%	3.1%	0%	18.8%	40.6%	37.5%
%	3.1% Do not agree		18.8%	78.1% Agree	
Total Votes	96				

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Written Comments: *What additional Recreation business / offerings and Tourism opportunities would create an advantage for the MRV?*

- Need more indoor recreation - **Enclose Skatiium**
- Roof the **Skatiium**
- Need more indoor recreation - **Climbing walls**
- Need more indoor recreation - **Bowling Alley**
- We definitely need to expand and link the **path network**
- Integrated **hiking / biking trails**, á la VAST trails
- **Walking trail loops** by existing trails
- Better **marketing** – give people specific reasons for coming here
- We leave the Valley when visitors come with young kids. We go to Stowe **bike path**, Stowe watering hole.
- Haven't been yet but plan to go to **indoor kid play space** in Berlin – something where kids can play inside. We do take them on hikes here, without ledges, Blueberry Lake.
- Something else, more **diversity**.
- Integration of public, semi-public and private **trail system** for year-round recreational and transportation use. Provide privacy and release of liability assurance to land owners. Designate non-motorized mountain bikes, horses, dogs, were appropriate
- A large, **multi-functional indoor and outdoor facility** off the mountain
- We need more **events** to be planned and organized both peak and off season
- **Law enforcement helping** rather than harassing
- Support local **music**
- **Music** events
- **Craft [ed: art]** opportunities – we're offering "maker" activities at the library and they are a hit. Do, not just buy.
- **Bikes** allowed on AmTrak – multi-modal recreation & transportation
- More **camping**
- Easy **bike trails**
- Don't forget to support the **arts** as part of the tourist economy
- **Wine** production lends itself to both Ag and Tourism – convert from hay
- Sugarbush or MRV **high ropes course**
- Host a **soccer tournament** in the MRV (MRVSA / Chamber collaboration)
- **Major zip line** at Sugarbush
- Sugarbush **downhill mountain biking** needs to be competitive with upcoming Stowe trails!
- Winter **X-country ski trails** on Valley floor with night lights
- Better **ice skating rink** – it needs a roof. Would be a great other winter asset
- Need indoor venues – **ice skating**
- Need indoor venues – large **concerts**
- Need indoor venues – **swimming** (less expensive than Bridges and Sugarbush)
- I think organized **walking tours and stays at inns**, like they do in Europe, is a good draw
- Disappointed [that] **arts, opera, culture year round**, summer festival [was] ignored [in the presentations]
- Something I can't read: _____ is a major \$\$ maker
- More **camping** opportunities – unsupported, wild is fine
- **Play boating** features on the Mad River – imagine the business it could bring to Bridge Street
- True **bike lanes** parallel to Rt. 100 – make it a real road cyclist mecca!
- Indoor rec a la Jay Peak **water park**

Online Survey Respondents:

- More resources for kids - recreation room, basketball courts, skatepark, bike trails, etc.
- MORE "built and legal" mountain bike trails. Get the Waitsfield conservation commission on board! Revive the Warren Airport culture. Bring a meaningful festival to the Valley. Or pump up the Arts Fest etc. Build on the foliage success. Fourth of July events?

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- I think we're doing just fine
- I recently moved here for the recreational opportunities. I am surprised to see that there is not a gym in downtown Waitsfield. I was also surprised by the lack of yoga studios. Perhaps there is potential for growth with these types of businesses? Or I just haven't found these things yet- or everyone is super disciplined and they wake up at 5:30 to yoga and gym themselves...Obstacle courses and sprints are always great to bring extra income into an area, I would like to see more of those.
- Keep expanding the Mt. bike network and access to trails on public and private lands. This is crucial to making a "destination" for bikers and summer tourists. After driving from Vt to Maine this weekend. I was shocked at the tourism going on in Gorham NH for off road MOTORIZED vehicles. ALL the hotels and campgrounds were packed with people. All the stores had people in them spending money and buying food at restaurants. I don't understand why the Valley doesn't embrace camping and other outdoor activities other than mountain biking and hiking in the summer. We are surrounded by great land with lots of opportunity but we do the same thing over and over. And in the winter most of my skiing friends will say the Valley is great for skiing but get out of there by 4:30pm and head to place that has some nightlife unless you are old and want to be a sleep by 9 pm on a weekend. Try allowing for nightlife in this valley.
- Not more of the same. Lets offer something we don't have
- More things to do when the snow isn't great?

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General Comments:

- I commute out of Waitsfield to my professional job. I see a lot of lower-wage workers commuting into MRV. They **can't afford to live** here.
- Read my lips – **affordable housing!**
- **Indoor recreation** year round
- Like 2/3 of the residents in the Valley, I don't live here full time. I'd like to be actively involved. I drove 3 hours to be here tonight from Boston. The Valley needs to include and engage us part-timers. I **volunteer** to participate – Jack Sharry – jacksharry52@gmail.com
- **Next steps** – have a night focused on each of the four areas to develop an action plan
- Restaurants?
- **Aging condo stock** – retrofit for elderly community
- More **affordable events** for locals
- Where do the **arts** factor in – what segment? Recreation? Retail? Why not separated out? Music? Performance? Not just visual [arts]
- The same folks snap up all the tickets for **events (concerts, etc.)** and, people visiting the area never have a chance to go spur-of-the-moment
- **Art** includes music, performance, theatre, crafts...
- Valley people do not really support local businesses, they want to believe they do but easy to be on **line and maybe save a buck**. Lots of hypocrisy.
- Much of my concern is beyond the control of the community; taxes, roads, closed businesses. However
- Is the current **zoning** still limiting growth?
- Are there **incentives** for a new business to start up here? New businesses that may want to start here need help
- What about **evening entertainment**?
- When you look every day at the same vista, you miss the **deterioration** going on about you. This place looks depressed.
- (Blue = added after the meeting 6/4/14) I am very glad I made the trip. Kudos to you and the other organizers for putting together a very impressive presentation and wonderful community picnic. If that event is any indication of what is possible, the MRV will be a runaway success.
- There appears to me to be a significant opportunity to tap into and leverage the people who call the MRV their home away from home (second homeowners). A prime example of what I mean is Chris Kirchen. He has had great success in venture capital. He knows how to start and run a business. There are many others who are MRV part timers who bring different skills and abilities and want to see the MRV thrive. In fact, I believe many of them belong to the Rotary Club. Another name that comes to mind is Joel Alvord, who was CEO of one of the big Boston banks. It strikes me that if these talented (mostly) **retirees** were invited to **lend their skills and experience to entrepreneurs and business people** in the Valley that it would be a win-win.
- A great deal was made of tele-commuters and professionals who work **out of their homes** in the Valley as a lifestyle choice. I've read articles about other resort communities such as Vail, Aspen, Steamboat Springs and others that have a flourishing tele-commuter community. **What can the MRV learn from these other communities** in terms of their challenges and successes in expanding and taking advantage of this phenomenon?
- It was a great event...very well organized and run.
- The Valley's main appeal is that it is a great place to raise a family because it is beautiful, has good schools, has great recreation alternatives, and contains very friendly people. The families that these attributes would appeal to the most are those who can **work from home** or telecommute on a daily basis, but need some proximity to an airport for occasional travel. It is important to make this "well kept secret" better known. These kinds of families bring income to the Valley and help to support the local businesses. Maybe a **PR campaign** sharing this secret would be beneficial.
- As far as businesses, "**cottage businesses**" like Lawson's beer, Mad River Distillers, and Liz Lovely cookies are perfect. The food hub facility in Waitsfield should be a great place for entrepreneurs to get started.

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- Having a **touring map** (like those in the Napa Valley, CA, for winery tours) might be a great way to draw tourists and increase the awareness and sales for these businesses. This would be like the tour of artists' studios during the Festival of the Arts.
- If businesses grow too big, they are likely to leave the Valley because (1) the towns are too far away from I-89, (2) the labor pool is not large enough and commuting to the Valley is difficult, and (3) a larger manufacturing and distribution footprint would not be in keeping with the vibe of the Valley. We should accept that this as being natural. If some businesses become too successful, they will leave (like Vermont Castings, Northern Power, Mad River Canoe, and Green Mountain Coffee). So trying to attract **larger businesses** to the Valley would probably be a wasted effort.

Online Survey Respondents:

- We should continue to make infrastructure investments in the Valley that will make it attractive for families and businesses to want to relocate here - water, septic, sidewalks, Town Hall, community center, parks, soccer fields, etc. The rising tide will create a stronger tax base. Retain our very special character while controlling and concentrating growth in the town center.
- Encourage and support business diversity. Make it easier to start and grow and business.
- I answered the questions above at the Summit. However, I had an additional comment that could not be addressed by the posters. I believe we need to be encouraging the development of nice, smaller scale housing for the 50+ crowd who came to (or returned to) the Valley for the quality of life but whose children have graduated from high school. Many of us in this demographic still want to live and work in the Valley. However, we also want to unload the financial burden and maintenance responsibilities associated with owning a typical "family house." We want a "real" dwelling, not a seasonal-type condo on the mountain. Renovating the older homes in the village centers and converting them into condos or apartments which are attractive, historic, and walkable would be a real asset. My mother who is 75 seconds this idea as an older Valley resident who can no longer handle the upkeep on her property financially or physically but does not want to leave the Valley or live in "senior housing."
- The presentation gave me some hope. I worry that we are becoming a retirement and bedroom community. Diversification has always been good for the Valley. The intellectual/creative economy is the key to the MRV success. You need a cool place to live for those types of entrepreneurs to want to live here.
- I think the arts community was overlooked as one of the great Valley assets. The Vermont Arts Festival, for example, is bigger and better every year. I know people who plan visits to the Valley just for that month-long event.
- I don't support reckless growth. We should be thinking more about conservation As pointed out by one of the presenters, we have numerous businesses that have prospered numerous years-
- The people who brought us this decline are not the ones to lead us out.
- I love living here. It does seem like we need to have another major employer in the valley to draw more residents and fewer second home owners. The second homeowners are absorbing the housing in the area and making it difficult for those who want to settle here to do so affordably. We need less tourism-related income and more long-term, independent income.
- we need something that will bring in higher paying jobs without creating an environmental mess. And companies that use local labor first. The large companies we have now tend to hire out of town people. ie: the telephone co.

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Participant Comments Arranged by Ideas

Ag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRV needs to follow Hardwick's plan – a “Foodie” area – support our farmers • My dad always said, “Money spent on good food is not wasted.” But buying locally comes at a very steep price. • Expand interest and availability of non-professional Ag pursuits such as community gardens and backyard agriculture • Promote use of horse-mowed and fertilized lawns for grazing and other space-consuming Ag projects • Make items more affordable. Locals cannot afford a \$4 tomato. •
Ag value-add	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More support for agricultural product conversion – fiber into crafts, for example • We can poise ourselves as a farm-to-table destination • Overlap between Agriculture and Tourism • Fiber is a neglected agri-area – both production and processing • More vegan options • As far as businesses, “cottage businesses” like Lawson’s beer, Mad River Distillers, and LizLovely cookies are perfect. The food hub facility in Waitsfield should be a great place for entrepreneurs to get started. • Continue to support high value food products and support place where this can occur - commercial kitchen, local distribution, etc. • Public support through purchasing, investment and planning/zoning. Realizing that growing food can be smelly, dirty and noisy and you might have to live near all that..... •
Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disappointed [that] arts, opera, culture year round, summer festival [were] ignored [in the presentations] • What about production of arts and crafts products? • Art / ceramics classes / open studios • Craft [ed: art] opportunities – we’re offering “maker” activities at the library and they are a hit. Do, not just buy. • Don't forget to support the arts as part of the tourist economy • Art includes music, performance, theatre, crafts... • I think the arts community was overlooked as one of the great Valley assets. The Vermont Arts Festival, for example, is bigger and better every year. I know people who plan visits to the Valley just for that month-long event. • How about a world class art academy - painting, ceramics, pottery, fabric art etc. •
Business Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe start by looking at why all the business that started here have moved or been purchase and moved out of the state. 15 years ago there were plenty of long term YEAR AROUND middle to large companies here in the valley. The majority of them had either been bought and moved out of state or the company moved to a more friendly business environment. If you don't know how to stop the business from leaving what good does it do to create a business that will leave. I have worked for 3 5x5x5 companies all have either moved out of state or been purchased and are in the process of moving out of Vermont. As far as options if the business climate was friendly the options are endless. • Encourage and support business diversity. Make it easier to start and grow and business.
Employment/ Business Opps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More jobs of any kind. I was shocked at how few folks live and work here. . I don't think GMVS gets enough credit as a draw to the MRV. • Any thing that is year round, pays a real wage and doesn't move out when successful.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More business would be great. I'm self-employed; I get the feeling that local wages are low. I think it would be difficult to find a professional position in the valley, because there simply aren't enough. • More - with higher paying - less service orientated jobs • I love living here. It does seem like we need to have another major employer in the valley to draw more residents and fewer second home owners. The second homeowners are absorbing the housing in the area and making it difficult for those who want to settle here to do so affordably. We need less tourism-related income and more long-term, independent income. • We need something that will bring in higher paying jobs without creating an environmental mess. And companies that use local labor first. The large companies we have now tend to hire out of town people. ie: the telephone co. • It would be nice to draw a large, clean industry to the valley to bring more families and bolster our school enrollments and local business success. • I think we're pretty well-covered (re: types of business) • Clean and quiet! A call center would be good. We need jobs that would have their own training programs for unskilled folks too. • A water plant.... Canoe manufacturer..... Wind energy..... Wholesale food Lost them all!
Energy/Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy efficiency manufacturing...reduce our carbon footprint • YES! • Creative renewable energy equipment
ESOP (comments from same person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate Employee Stock Ownership concepts to retain businesses in the area whose employees don't want to move it away somewhere • Promote ESOPs (Employee Stock Ownership Plans) for MRV businesses as a way of retaining the business here due to reluctance of employees to sell out to someone who would move it away somewhere
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need more events to be planned and organized both peak and off season • Support local music • Music events • More affordable events for locals • The same folks snap up all the tickets for events (concerts, etc.) and, people visiting the area never have a chance to go spur-of-the-moment • Revive the Warren Airport culture. Bring a meaningful festival to the Valley. Or pump up the Arts Fest etc. Build on the foliage success. Fourth of July events?
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More loans / start up support for Ag and value added • Are there incentives for a new business to start up here? New businesses that may want to start here need help • Provide better funding sources for farmers, producers, distributors
Forest Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest products
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I commute out of Waitsfield to my professional job. I see a lot of lower-wage workers commuting into MRV. They can't afford to live here. • Read my lips – affordable housing! • Aging condo stock – retrofit for elderly community • I answered the questions above at the Summit. However, I had an additional comment that could not be addressed by the posters. I believe we need to be encouraging the development of nice, smaller scale housing for the 50+ crowd who came to (or

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	<p>returned to) the Valley for the quality of life but whose children have graduated from high school. Many of us in this demographic still want to live and work in the Valley. However, we also want to unload the financial burden and maintenance responsibilities associated with owning a typical "family house." We want a "real" dwelling, not a seasonal-type condo on the mountain. Renovating the older homes in the village centers and converting them into condos or apartments which are attractive, historic, and walkable would be a real asset. My mother who is 75 seconds this idea as an older Valley resident who can no longer handle the upkeep on her property financially or physically but does not want to leave the Valley or live in "senior housing."</p>
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Indoor Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climbing gym • Need more indoor recreation - Climbing walls • Multi-purpose gym with lots of exercise classes • Bowling Alley or ___ Pin alley to bring people into Valley from surrounding towns • Need more indoor recreation - Bowling Alley • An indoor rec center for kids / tweens to hang out at • Haven't been yet but plan to go to indoor kid play space in Berlin – something where kids can play inside. We do take them on hikes here, without ledges, Blueberry Lake. • Something else, more diversity. • A large, multi-functional indoor and outdoor facility off the mountain • Need indoor venues – ice skating • Need indoor venues – large concerts • Need indoor venues – swimming (less expensive than Bridges and Sugarbush) • Need more indoor recreation - Enclose Skatiium • Roof the Skatiium • Indoor rec á la Jay Peak water park • Indoor recreation year round • Recreation room for kids • I recently moved here for the recreational opportunities. I am surprised to see that there is not a gym in downtown Waitsfield. I was also surprised by the lack of yoga studios. Perhaps there is potential for growth with these types of businesses? Or I just haven't found these things yet- or everyone is super disciplined and they wake up at 5:30 to yoga and gym themselves... • More things to do when the snow isn't great
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Wastewater [ed: treatment] is a key ingredient missing for manufacturing and processing small-scale industrial type businesses • Law enforcement helping rather than harassing • We should continue to make infrastructure investments in the Valley that will make it attractive for families and businesses to want to relocate here - water, septic, sidewalks, Town Hall, community center, parks, soccer fields, etc. The rising tide will create a stronger tax base. Retain our very special character while controlling and concentrating growth in the town center. •
Innovation Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation / Innovation / Innovation • Promote Rochester to Waterbury as Vermont's innovation corridor, like Silicon Valley or Rt. 128 around Boston. We have some history to base it upon • Time once again for Waitsfield Telecom upgrade – DSL's knees are starting to sag • I do web development. I've lived in MRV for 13.5 years. In all this time, I have commuted to work in So Burlington, Montpelier and Northfield. Would be nice if the web industry in MRV was hiring. • There appears to me to be a significant opportunity to tap into and leverage the people who

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	<p>call the MRV their home away from home (second homeowners). A prime example of what I mean is Chris Kirchen. He has had great success in venture capital. He knows how to start and run a business. There are many others who are MRV part timers who bring different skills and abilities and want to see the MRV thrive. In fact, I believe many of them belong to the Rotary Club. Another name that comes to mind is Joel Alvord, who was CEO of one of the big Boston banks. It strikes me that if these talented (mostly) retirees were invited to lend their skills and experience to entrepreneurs and business people in the Valley that it would be a win-win.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As far as businesses, "cottage businesses" like Lawson's beer, Mad River Distillers, and Liz Lovely cookies are perfect. The food hub facility in Waitsfield should be a great place for entrepreneurs to get started. •
Land Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Industrial Land Trusts that keep appropriate sites available in perpetuity for industry the way Agricultural Land Trusts work • Retain Ag Land Trust activities • Keep preserving farms and controlling residential development. • I don't support reckless growth. We should be thinking more about conservation. As pointed out by one of the presenters, we have numerous businesses that have prospered numerous years-

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<p>Marketing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statewide testimonial to promote folks who work at home and Vermont lifestyle • A discount card for locals to use at local businesses • Better marketing – give people specific reasons for coming here • The Valley's main appeal is that it is a great place to raise a family because it is beautiful, has good schools, has great recreation alternatives, and contains very friendly people. The families that these attributes would appeal to the most are those who can work from home or telecommute on a daily basis, but need some proximity to an airport for occasional travel. It is important to make this "well kept secret" better known. These kinds of families bring income to the Valley and help to support the local businesses. Maybe a PR campaign sharing this secret would be beneficial. • I don't think GMVS gets enough credit as a draw to the MRV. • Sandwich boards (permit usage of) • Make it easy for people to buy the products. I still tend to get things at Shaw's, because it's easier and less time consuming. Maybe disseminate more information about how to purchase local products.
<p>Outdoor Sports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We definitely need to expand and link the path network • Integrated hiking / biking trails, à la VAST trails • Walking trail loops by existing trails • We leave the Valley when visitors come with young kids. We go to Stowe bike path, Stowe watering hole. • Integration of public, semi-public and private trail system for year-round recreational and transportation use. Provide privacy and release of liability assurance to land owners. Designate non-motorized mountain bikes, horses, dogs, were appropriate • A large, multi-functional indoor and outdoor facility off the mountain • Bikes allowed on AmTrak – multi-modal recreation & transportation • More camping • Easy bike trails • Sugarbush or MRV high ropes course • Host a soccer tournament in the MRV (MRVSA / Chamber collaboration) • Major zip line at Sugarbush • Sugarbush downhill mountain biking needs to be competitive with upcoming Stowe trails! • Winter X-country ski trails on Valley floor with night lights • Better ice skating rink – it needs a roof. Would be a great other winter asset • I think organized walking tours and stays at inns, like they do in Europe, is a good draw • More camping opportunities – unsupported, wild is fine • Play boating features on the Mad River – imagine the business it could bring to Bridge Street • True bike lanes parallel to Rt. 100 – make it a real road cyclist Mecca! • Obstacle courses and sprints are always great to bring extra income into an area, I would like to see more of those. • More resources for kids - basketball courts, skatepark, bike trails, etc. • More "built and legal" mountain bike trails • Keep expanding the Mt. bike network and access to trails on public and private lands. This is crucial to making a "destination" for bikers and summer tourists. After driving from Vt to Maine this weekend. I was shocked at the tourism going on in Gorham NH for off road MOTORIZED vehicles. ALL the hotels and campgrounds were packed with people. All the stores had people in them spending money and buying food at restaurants. I don't understand why the Valley doesn't embrace camping and other outdoor activities other than mountain biking and hiking in the summer. We are surrounded by great land with lots of opportunity but we do the same thing over and over. Not more of the same. Lets offer something we don't have

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Professional Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-working hub – more opportunity for those that work remotely to congregate • Another vote for co-working hub – an incubator for tech & professional services • There appears to me to be a significant opportunity to tap into and leverage the people who call the MRV their home away from home (second homeowners). A prime example of what I mean is Chris Kirchen. He has had great success in venture capital. He knows how to start and run a business. There are many others who are MRV part timers who bring different skills and abilities and want to see the MRV thrive. In fact, I believe many of them belong to the Rotary Club. Another name that comes to mind is Joel Alvord, who was CEO of one of the big Boston banks. It strikes me that if these talented (mostly) retirees were invited to lend their skills and experience to entrepreneurs and business people in the Valley that it would be a win-win. • A great deal was made of tele-commuters and professionals who work out of their homes in the Valley as a lifestyle choice. I've read articles about other resort communities such as Vail, Aspen, Steamboat Springs and others that have a flourishing tele-commuter community. What can the MRV learn from these other communities in terms of their challenges and successes in expanding and taking advantage of this phenomenon? • The presentation gave me some hope. I worry that we are becoming a retirement and bedroom community. Diversification has always been good for the Valley. The intellectual/creative economy is the key to the MRV success. You need a cool place to live for those types of entrepreneurs to want to live here.

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Restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good breakfast place! (hangout spot) • More quality, mid-range restaurants • Great coffee / bakery spot with high quality baked goods open Monday – Friday from 7am! • Informal café open in the evening • YES! • More cafes where one could buy simple food, not just sweets, coffee and stay for a long time to work on a computer (I'm self employed) • Restaurants? • What about evening entertainment? • And in the winter most of my skiing friends will say the Valley is great for skiing but get out of there by 4:30pm and head to place that has some nightlife unless you are old and want to be a sleep by 9 pm on a weekend. Try allowing for nightlife in this valley. • Brew pub • Pizza delivery to Fayston! • More/better restaurants • More affordable (yet healthy) restaurant options for locals. It would also be nice to have some restaurants that offer traditional and/or ethnic menus. Sometimes it's nice to have plain old comfort foods without adding something fancy.
Regulatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the valley really wants to be a lead it needs to be proactive with the FDA and federal and state mandates on food. Too many communities are reactive to the changes instead of stopping or addressing them in advance. Look at the FDA ruling and artisan cheeses its on the books for a couple years and now its an issue. To be a leader you need to be in front of things not playing catch up to established and upcoming rules. • Resist USDA school food regs that teach kids what to throw away as opposed to making healthy food choices about what to eat in the presence of their peers as preparation for making beneficial and sensible choices for the rest of their lives
Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discount outdoor recreation / clothing store • Creative renewable energy equipment, recreation equipment, niche markets of household goods • Casual clothing • Affordability - Anything for working people who do not have a lot of money. More recreation, arts, shops, restaurants and take out that don't cost a fortune.
Transportation re mfg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very light manufacturing with goods easy to transport. It's the heavy manufacturers that have left to be closer to transportation
Wine (comments from one person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wine Production like beer, is a perfect product for this valley and supports both agriculture and tourism • Wine grape and wine production is perfect for MRV. This commodity supports Ag and Tourism; convert from hay • Wine from MRV grown grapes creates a great opportunity for local business and adds to tourism. We don't need more empty meadows. • Wine production lends itself to both Ag and Tourism – convert from hay
Zoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove obstacles for industrial development in areas that are suitable for their location • Retain Current Use taxation • Retain Warren meadowland overlay zoning • Is the current zoning still limiting growth?
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think people are interpreting "Industrial" as "machinery", steel mills, possible with "waste

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Process	<p>products” associated with it. Maybe some examples of “Industrial” to keep people from misinterpreting it [editorial note: is referencing question 5]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like 2/3 of the residents in the Valley, I don’t live here full time. I’d like to be actively involved. I drove 3 hours to be here tonight from Boston. The Valley needs to include and engage us part-timers. I volunteer to participate – Jack Sharry – jacksharry52@gmail.com • Next steps – have a night focused on <u>each</u> of the four areas to develop an action plan • Where do the arts factor in – what segment? Recreation? Retail? Why not separated out? Music? Performance? Not just visual [arts] • (Blue = added after the meeting 6/4/14) I am very glad I made the trip. Kudos to you and the other organizers for putting together a very impressive presentation and wonderful community picnic. If that event is any indication of what is possible, the MRV will be a runaway success. • It was a great event...very well organized and run.
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General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manufacturing for local consumption [editorial note: like Localvore, I’m guessing] • Walkability in the Irasville zone • <i>Illegible:</i> _____ is a major \$\$ maker • Valley people do not really support local businesses, they want to believe they do but easy to be on line and maybe save a buck. Lots of <u>hypocrisy</u>. • When you look every day at the same vista, you miss the deterioration going on about you. This place looks depressed. • Organic, respectful of natures balance. • The people who brought us this decline are not the ones to lead us out.
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