

Southern Vermont Economy Project

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT AND PROJECT PRIORITIZATION REPORT: VILLAGE CENTER PROJECTS

PREPARED FOR THE TOWN OF WARDSBORO

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Introduction to the Southern VT Economy Project & the Community Assessment and Priority Project (CAPP) Process

The Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation's Southern Vermont Economy Project (SVEP) is a program that provides training and technical assistance to increase local capacity, skills, and resources in order to advance local projects in Southern Vermont. The program recognizes that local projects are critical to the ability of Southern Vermont to achieve its community, economic, and workforce development goals. SVEP is funded in part through the USDA Rural Community Development Initiative.

As part of SVEP, the CAPP process is designed to help communities define goals and projects that they would like to move forward, and to give them resources and tools that will help them advance those projects.

The goal of the program is also:

- To help identify shared priorities and potential areas for community/regional collaboration across Southern Vermont.
- Facilitate connections to funders, cultivate community-funder relationships, and match projects with regional, state, and/or federal funding sources.
- Create situational awareness among funders and planning partners in our region of each community's priorities and future plans.
- Develop alignment and linkage between community plans and priorities and the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).
- Introduce BDCC as a resource to help advance community and regional projects.
- And, most importantly, support and accelerate the implementation of community projects that benefit the local economy and the southern Vermont economy.

The Wardsboro CAPP Process

The Town of Wardsboro received Village Center designation for its historic village center in April 2022 through the VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development (Department of Housing and Community Development). As noted in the Wardsboro Town Plan (Adopted 07/09/2019 and Amendments Adopted 12/07/2021):

Achieving Village Center Designation for the villages of Wardsboro, also known as North Wardsboro, and West Wardsboro will help provide state tax credits and access to certain grants to help preserve historic sites and properties. It will further the following statewide goal in Title 24 §4302: (1) To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside (B) Economic growth should be encouraged in locally designated growth Areas employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or both, and should be encouraged in growth centers designated under chapter 76A of this title.

More locally specific reasoning behind the designation were described in the cover letter accompanying the Town's application (March 2022):

The town has seen revitalization in Wardsboro village as a result of the Friends of the Wardsboro Library's work to acquire the Gloria Danforth building, transforming it into the current awesome home of Wardsboro's public library. The Town has modified the space adjoining the library to become McMichael Park, housing a playground, skatepark, and ball field. Wardsboro's Town Hall has seen recent upgrades including floor refinishing, new carpeting, new auditorium chairs, stage upgrades of new front drapery, new lighting and the addition of a set of historic painted backdrop scenic curtains. These enhancements have been catalysts for the annual Gilfeather Turnip Festival, Wardsboro Curtain Call's concerts and plays, and other community festivities. There remain many further development and revitalization opportunities in the village.

With the Village Center designation in place, and building from the success of these earlier initiatives, Wardsboro is now looking forward to completing projects that will continue to support and maintain a vital village center that meets the needs of current and future residents.

As part of that effort, Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation's Southern Vermont Economy Project facilitated a meeting of community stakeholders on 1/10/2022. The purpose of that meeting was to define some long term goals for the Village Center and determine a set priority projects that will help achieve those goals.

The group used a list of ideas collected at a 9/20/2022 Village Center brainstorming meeting with DHCD as a starting point for the conversation on Community Goals. Based on the defined goals, and working from the idea list, the group then came up with a short list of priority projects for the Town along with several community groups.

The following report details those community goals. It also contains the 9/20 brainstorming list mapped onto the community goals, and Project Overview Worksheets for the 4 projects chosen as priority projects.

Finally, the report contains some early-stage Action Step Matrices for the priority projects. These can serve as a guide for the local project leaders as they take the first steps towards implementation of the priority projects.

The Action Steps included in this report are intended merely as a starting point, with the understanding that these are living documents. Project leaders should continue to add elements and refine their action steps as they progress.

Where projects are for the planning phase of a project, it is also anticipated that groups will derive a series of standalone implementation projects once the planning phase is complete. For example, the Park Master Plan may result in one group spinning off to plan, fund and construct a pavilion and another to make a plan to construct and maintain a basketball or pickleball court, and so on.

It is our hope that having engaged in this multi-step community project planning process, project leaders for these 'sub-projects' will continue to use the worksheet and action plan template as a model to follow as they move from the planning to the implementation stage of projects.

In addition, this priority project list does not preclude other local groups from continuing to carry out their impactful work on existing projects! All projects contribute to the vitality of this already vital community, and all project leads are encouraged to use the Project Overview worksheets and Action Matrix as a planning template for their projects. Blank copies are included at the end of the report for community use.

Top 5 Community Goals for Wardsboro Village Center

1. Promote Parks and Recreational Opportunities in Wardsboro
2. Develop and Enable Sense of Community Through Better Use of Gathering Spaces
3. Preserve and Celebrate Wardsboro's History
4. Develop Sense of Place through Beautification and Streetscape Improvements
5. Improve Community Emergency Resources

Brainstorming list from 9/20/2022 mapped onto 1/10/2023 meeting goals

POTENTIAL PROJECT	DETAIL	CORRESPONDING GOAL
Add deck to back of library	for leisure, classes, programs; design & seed money already	2. Enable Sense of Community
Strong sense of community - Library/FOWL brought community together		2. Enable Sense of Community
Photo group presentations, storytelling	appreciate Wardsboro's history (History group)	3. History
A "Friends of the History House" could help there	as Friends of the Library made library good over 20 years -	3. History
Rich history, enhance history group & history house, guided walks to sites		3. History
Carriage lights in front of each house	solar?	4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Green barn: use for something like the artist co-op done a while ago		2. Enable Sense of Community
Spruce up post office		4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Enhance town common		4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Large evergreen on town common	add lights in winter	4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Veteran flagpole		4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Banners	for graduating seniors, history, fun facts about town	4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Christmas tree(s) on other town lawns		4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Shade trees in MacMichael Park	between ball field & skatepark	1. Promote Parks/recreation resources
Shade trees for playground		1. Promote Parks/recreation resources
Arborvitae on town green in front of fence		4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Put town fence in front of Rafael fence		4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Plant native trees	(remedy invasives?)	4. Sense of Place/Streetscape

POTENTIAL PROJECT	DETAIL	CORRESPONDING GOAL
Diversity of trees		4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
New tree, bushes, perennials where ash tree was	between town hall & Fitzpatrick's	4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
"Victorian" style light poles		4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Make town common a Memorial Park	Move memorial from town hall to there	4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Village plan: orderly trees, lights, walls, benches		4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
lights, benches		4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Lighting can be a nuisance for homeowners		4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Gentle lights - not commercial		4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Lights should not be invasive to night sky		4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Move monument & make something of the green space (new or 2nd common?)	Center of the village is between Town Hall & Town Office.	4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Need to keep clean - 101		4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Pickleball court		1. Promote Parks/recreation Resources
Pickleball, basketball shared space	store equipment at library	1. Promote Parks/recreation Resources
Re-evaluate ball park for young girls only	can other use it for ball, or repurpose the space	1. Promote Parks/recreation Resources
Ice skating rink		1. Promote Parks/recreation Resources
Bathrooms, trash cans	care about area	1. Promote Parks/recreation Resources
Change orientation of ball field so others can use		1. Promote Parks/recreation Resources
Pavilion		2. Enable Sense of Community
Pavilion, storage, restrooms	where town garage is (near library)	2. Enable Sense of Community
Pavilion with cement floor, lights		2. Enable Sense of Community
EV charging stations		Economic Activity

POTENTIAL PROJECT	DETAIL	CORRESPONDING GOAL
Updates to town office	storage, open space, meeting rooms, septic	TOWN
Update town hall kitchen		2. Enable Sense of Community
MacMichael Park - a diamond in the rough		1. Promote Parks/recreation Resources
Solar field on town land	within village center?	Energy/Climate Resilience
Community garden?	within village center?	Energy/Climate Resilience; 2. Enable Sense of Community
Take advantage of antique vehicles, 2 hearses & 2 road equipment	How to make them visible, appreciated. Need to be restored?	4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
Stone walls, trees, get rid of junk cars, fields	appreciate what is great about Wardsboro	4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
400 acre piece of land for sale abutting village center		1. Promote recreation resource
If land is for sale in town, buy to preserve open spaces		1. Promote recreation resource
Cellar holes, trails, historic sites that can be discovered		1. Promote recreation resource
Bull Monument: like the quietness there, do we want it "discovered?"		1. Promote recreation resource
Stock the brook		1. Promote recreation resource
Swimming hole - access		1. Promote recreation resource
Make Wardsboro attractive to students - jobs, maybe an entrepreneur		
Address zoning violations within village	ex: 2 car garage, used as business, get rid of selvage yard	4. Sense of Place/Streetscape
No commercial infrastructure, nor 'draws' for benches, lights		2. Enable Sense of Community
Co-op (in green barn), history center & café	possible focal area	2. Enable Sense of Community
Need anchor, focal point - Gilfeather Turnip		2. Enable Sense of Community

POTENTIAL PROJECT	DETAIL	CORRESPONDING GOAL
Sheep in solar field, sell lamb chops		
Birding - find new bird		
2 big draws: 7/4 & Gilfeather - keep them going		2. Enable Sense of Community

Priority Projects for Wardsboro Village Center

The following list of priority projects is based on the above brainstorming list in conjunction with the Top 5 Community Goals for the Village Center.

<p>1. Wardsboro History House: <i>Restore physical building (History House) which is a focal point building at the end of Wardsboro's Main Street.</i></p>
<p>2. Wardsboro Main Street Plantings and Streetscape improvements: <i>Make a plan for tree planting and physical streetscape improvements on Wardsboro's Main Street.</i></p>
<p>3. Wardsboro Park Master Plan: <i>Undertake a planning process to determine best/better uses of 2.3 acre park in Wardsboro Village. Potential to include tree planting/landscaping needs for connected Town Center/Main Street area (See project: Wardsboro Main Street Plantings and Streetscape Improvements).</i></p>
<p>4. Wardsboro Town Hall Improvements: <i>Make improvements to Wardsboro Town Hall to include a generator so Hall can be used as a warming center/restroom/cooking facilities during power outages. In addition, pinpoint other improvements that can be made to the building to increase energy efficiency as well as making it more usable for community events (kitchen area, elevator upgrades).</i></p>
<p>5. Improvements to Municipal Communication/Coordination of Communications: <i>Steps to improve overall communication as well as plan coordination with other town groups (including select board).</i></p>

On the following pages, you will find more information and detail about the proposed projects, including project leads where they are known, resources and potential barriers, as well as an action matrix with first steps and additional information.

As previously mentioned, these documents are intended to serve as a starting point for the project leads. As the projects continue, it is anticipated that additional steps and information will be added. Please treat these as living documents!

Linking Priority Projects to the Wardsboro Town Plan

The stated projects are consistent with the following goals and policies as outlined in the Wardsboro Town Plan (adopted by the Wardsboro Selectboard on July 9 2019, with amendments adopted December 7, 2021);

Land Use Policies:

1. Concentrate future commercial development in or near Wardsboro and West Wardsboro Villages.
4. Create a walkable community by working toward safe and convenient pedestrian access to all portions of the Villages.
7. Facilitate landowner access and understanding of State, Federal, and nongovernmental incentive programs for structure rehabilitation and historic preservation

Community Services and Facilities Goals:

1. Provide public facilities and services to ensure the public's health and safety and to improve the quality of life in the community.
2. Make new investments in schools, libraries, recreational, and cultural facilities in a manner that will serve community needs.

Economic Development Policies

1. Support economic development that meets the social and economic needs of its residents while preserving the environment's ability to support it.
2. Achieve Village Center Designation to advance historic preservation and economic development objectives as noted in the Historic Resources and Economic Development sections of this plan.
3. Use the capital planning process to identify and prioritize investments in facilities and infrastructure.
5. Provide a variety of cultural and recreational opportunities for all Wardsboro residents.
16. Protect, maintain and encourage the use of Wardsboro's historic structures, including cemeteries, stone walls, and cellar holes.

Energy Policies

1. Maintain and improve as needed the energy efficiency of municipal buildings.

Project Sheet: Wardsboro History House

Community Goal it helps to accomplish:

Preserve and Celebrate Wardsboro's History

Local Project Lead:

History House Nonprofit Group

Description of project:

Restore the physical building (History House) which is a focal point at the end of Wardsboro's Main Street. Work will include the following steps:

- *Find prior assessment of building and have new estimates done on scope of work*
- *Make repairs to the building to return basic functionality*
- *Use History House as a community center/gathering point, both via ongoing fundraising efforts (artisan popup shop during warmer months? Other events in Town Hall space as fundraisers?) and as a community gathering space in its own right via storytelling events and tours once the building is in use.*

Local Project Partners: *TBD: are there other community groups (including the school?) who might be interested in helping with fundraising efforts?*

Timeline:

Spring of 2023; group will re-visit past work, then reach out to PTV for evaluation and research funds available

Possibly apply to Historic Preservation Grant Program (due Oct 2023) for initial structural repairs.

Other improvements: ongoing

Barriers:

Capacity and energy of group to take on fundraising efforts

Difficulty in finding workers to complete repairs

FUNDING – building needs a lot of work

Additional Resources:

Preservation Trust of VT is a terrific resource for information, training, and grants for preserving buildings in Vermont. <https://ptvermont.org/>

ACCD/Historic preservation: <https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation>

Starting Action Step Matrix: *Wardsboro History House*

Action step	Funding needed?	Resources/Partners + Details	Timeline
Review prior work/evaluations that were done and make a plan to update those if needed	no	Committee	Spring 2023
Contact Historic Preservation/PTV about getting updated evaluation if required	\$500 grants; will require match	Sincerbeaux Grant program https://ptvermont.org/our-work/rsf/	Spring/Summer 2023
Plan Fundraiser to raise additional matching funds needed	No	Work with the 4th of July Committee, or brainstorm an ongoing popup for Summer	TBD: Summer, ongoing yearly?
Field Visit from PTV/Historic Preservation: get help in determining appropriate funding matches to complete a plan	No	https://ptvermont.org/our-work/field-service/ https://accd.vermont.gov/historic-preservation/funding	2023 TBD (but do this soon!)
Create some materials/information on the project to share with the community to build awareness about the project (these will also help with writing grant narratives).	Minimal	Committee, town website tbd, Bucketville news What is the benefit that this project will bring to Wardsboro? What is the outstanding need?	Summer 2023
Develop spreadsheet of available grant funding and deadlines	No	Committee Funding Directory from ACCD: https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/HP/HP-Grants/HP-Funding_Directory_2021.pdf	Summer/Fall 2023
Develop plan and budget for most urgent repairs	no	Committee based on work w/PTV/HP	Summer/Fall 2023

Contact REDI about help with preparing for application for determined sources	No	REDI program: https://vhcb.org/redi	TBD once there is a defined project and funding source
Historic Preservation Grant Application or other grant	No	Committee, working with REDI?	Yearly deadlines August announcement for Historic Preservation grants
Commence Critical Building repairs	YES Grant funding with non-profit match tbd		2025-2026?
Ongoing steps: insert below once determined		<i>Examples: create display of historical photos; schedule regular storytelling sessions; Historic Walking Tour at Town Events or standalone</i>	
Other resources		https://ptvermont.org/help/	
<i>Add steps to the list as the project takes shape</i>			

Project Sheet: Wardsboro Main Street Plantings and Streetscape improvements

Community Goal it helps to accomplish:

Develop sense of Place through Beautification and Streetscape improvements

Local Project Lead:

TBD needs a lead to be identified – form a beautification committee?

Description of project:

Make a plan for tree planting and physical streetscape improvements on Wardsboro's main Street. Ideas and elements to include

- *Town Common: memorial and tree (accent and/or seasonal lighting)*
- *Main Street: trees and potentially other plantings*
- *Main Street: Banners on poles*

Project Partners: *Town of Wardsboro (landowner); local landscape architects and nurseries, planning guides and resources from ACCD*

Timeline:

TBD. There is potential to combine some streetscape programs with plans for the park, especially around a tree planting plan.

Barriers:

Rights of way/private property concerns along Main Street portion; questions around need for lighting or not

Resources:

See if this could be incorporated into the Parks plan for some aspects of planning phase

Local landscape architects and nurseries

Vermont Urban and Community Forestry grants (due December yearly) for trees

<https://vtcommunityforestry.org/>

Connect with Windham Regional Commission <http://www.windhamregional.org/> about the above grants, and other possible funding for tree planting

Connect with downtown org in Brattleboro and Wilmington Beautification Committee about their flower barrel programs to determine scope, watering needs/schedule and cost.

See Action Matrix for more resources

Starting Action Step Matrix: *Wardsboro Main Street Plantings and Streetscape*

Action step	Funding needed	Resources/Partners + Details	Timeline
Determine partners and lead for project, possibly form a sub-committee?	no	Publicize idea at Town Meeting and in local news	2023
Contact other orgs/towns with planting or beautification programs and get their budgets	no	DBA Wilmington Beautification Cttee. Johnson, VT	2023
Research and coordinate with other groups, possibly as part of a Municipal Planning Grant. Possible to include Main Street design as part of a Park Master Plan, or consider expanding the Master Plan to include other recreational areas and also possibly tree planting for Main Street?	YES- will require match from Town (ARPA Funds?)	Windham Regional commission: http://www.windhamregional.org/ Examples of MPG projects funded in 2022: https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/Funding-and-Incentives/Municipal-Planning-Grant/CPR-MPG-Funded-Projects-FY22.pdf	MPG deadline Dec 1 2023 (yearly)
Tree planting resources: can be done independently of a Master Plan as an alternative approach Coordinate tree planting with the Park Master Plan	no	Vermont Urban and Community Forestry grants https://vtcommunityforestry.org/programs/financial-assistance/2023-communities-caring-copy-grants Windham Regional Commission: Margo Ghia/Colin Bratton can help with the above grants	2023

		Local landscape architects/Arborists (From 'down south' in Halifax: Arboreal Habitats); Chris Company at WRC is also a landscape architect and may be able to help with design.	
Ongoing steps dependent on decisions made in planning phase		<i>Examples: fundraise/plan for Main Street flower barrels; determine steps for executing Master Plan elements</i>	2024 onward
Additional general resources for Streetscape Planning and Placemaking		Funding resources for Village Centers: https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/State-Designation-Programs/CPR-Funding-Directory.pdf Placemaking Toolkit (LISC) https://www.lisc.org/our-initiatives/creative-placemaking/main/creative-placemaking-toolkit/ Better Places Toolkit https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/Better-Places/CPR-Better-Places-Toolkit.pdf	

Project Sheet: Wardsboro Park Master Plan

Community Goal it helps to accomplish:

Promote Parks and Recreational Opportunities in Wardsboro

Local Project Lead:

Town & Wardsboro Skatepark Committee; other groups TBD

Description of project:

Undertake a planning process to determine best/better uses of 2.3 acre MacMichael park in Wardsboro Village Center. Potential to include tree planting/landscaping needs for connected Town Center/Main Street area (See project: Wardsboro Main Street Beautification/Streetscape)

- *Improvements needed to existing skatepark*
- *Determine other community uses to make better use of space (ex: ballfield underused, possibility for other groups to use, other uses like pickleball, basketball, etc.)*
- *Tree plantings for shade at playground*
- *Pavillion for community use/community events*
- *Plan for ongoing programming and maintenance of facilities*

Project Partners: *Town of Wardsboro (landowner); other community groups for usage programing as they arise (examples would be: pickleball group; ice skating group for winter)*

Possible partnership with school for use of facilities?

Timeline:

Ideally, begin the planning process ASAP so a plan would be completed by summer 2024 & that work could commence on applying for funding for pieces of the project via available funding programs.

Barriers:

Obtaining consensus from groups with disparate needs

Capacity: Ongoing maintenance of the facility and programs – need to plan with Town for the long term maintenance.

Funding for entire project: may need multiple sources of funding

Resources:

Better Connections or [Municipal Planning Grant](#) (latter would certainly need to include wider look at all of Wardsboro's trails so could move outside Village Center)

[VOREC grant programs](#) for recreational facilities

Implementation:

[Better Places](#) crowd-granting could be a source for the Skatepark improvements OR other facilities within the park (e.g. Pavillion)

State of VT [BGS Recreational Facilities Grant Program](#) (Sept 10th of each year)

AARP Grant programs including [Community Challenge](#) for multi-generational facilities.

Further Notes:

Once the Master Plan is completed, implementation plans will likely result in the creation of several discrete implementation projects that can be managed by interested stakeholders.

For example, if the community wants to improve the skatepark, build a pavilion, add pickleball facilities, +/- or plan for a winter ice skating rink, each of those projects and their funding could potentially be managed separately by smaller groups (existing or newly formed) who come forward to champion the implementation.

Those groups could then work with the Town to create an ongoing plan for managing use and maintenance (as well as funding for the maintenance) of 'their' facilities.

The goal is to use a combination of Town and private/non-profit sources – both for labor and funding – in a way that is mutually satisfactory for the long term. These groups could either be Town-appointed committees, or separately formed committees or non profits, depending on community interest and the Town's desires around maintaining facilities on its property.

Starting Action Step Matrix: *Wardsboro Park Master Plan*

Action step	Funding needed	Resources/Partners + Details	Timeline
Determine additional community partners and interest groups; get community support	no/minimal supplies	Example: are there groups wanting to support pickleball or other uses in the park? ideas/venues: Bucketville News, Town Meeting, 4th of July @ booth	March-July 2023
Review original park plans and maps, funding, etc.	no	Town has these	By August 2023
Contact WRC about a possible Municipal Planning Grant Application	no	Windham Regional Commission <i>Include group working on Streetscape in these plans to expand scope, or include other recreational opportunities</i>	ASAP
Possible MPG application	Will require approval of match from Town	WRC See examples of 2022 funded projects: https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/Funding-and-Incentives/Municipal-Planning-Grant/CPR-MPG-FundedProjects-FY22.pdf application information: https://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant/application-guidance	December 1, 2023
If not MPG, determine other sources/resources for funding a plan		VOREC grant programs https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/recreation-grants/vorec-community-grant-program	TBD – usually Fall application

Implementation Funding Resources:		<p>AARP Community Challenge https://communitychallenge.aarp.org/2023/organizations/aarp/home</p> <p>Better Places: https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/Better-Places/CPR-Better-Places-Guide-FINAL.pdf</p> <p>BGS Recreational Facilities Grant Program: https://bgs.vermont.gov/sites/bgs/files/2021%20Building%20Communities%20Grants%20Programs%20One%20Pager-FINAL.pdf</p>	
Other resources for Placemaking		<p>Placemaking Toolkit (LISC) https://www.lisc.org/our-initiatives/creative-placemaking/main/creative-placemaking-toolkit/</p> <p>Better Places Toolkit https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/Better-Places/CPR-Better-Places-Toolkit.pdf</p>	
<i>Ongoing project steps can be added below</i>			

Project Sheet: Wardsboro Town Hall Improvements

Community Goal it helps to accomplish:

Develop/Enable Sense of Community through better use of gathering spaces

Improve Community Emergency Resources

Local Project Lead:

TOWN: SB (and Energy Committee)

Description of project:

Make improvements to Wardsboro Town Hall to include a generator so the Hall can be used as a warming center with restroom/cooking facilities during power outages. In addition, pinpoint other improvements that can be made to the building to increase energy efficiency as well as making it more usable for community events (kitchen area, elevator upgrades) as well as emergency usage (a place for a shower?)

Project Partners: *Energy Committee, Windham Regional Commission (Energy upgrades), possibly Community Lunch Coordinator (for kitchen needs), other groups who use the hall for events (Gilfeather Turnip/4th of July, Curtain Call)*

Timeline:

TBD: generator purchase could come first (2023?) other assessments and improvements by 2025/6

Barriers:

Capacity for SB to manage multiple projects – additional project partners?

FUNDING – it's an old building and can use a lot of work

Resources:

[BGS Municipal Energy Efficiency Upgrade](#) program (energy efficiency Upgrades)

[USDA Community Facilities TA program \(via BDCC\)](#): evaluations and design – funding needs to be spent prior to September 2023

[USDA Community Facilities Grant](#) program: Kitchen upgrades – will require town match (can be ARPA funds but must be obligated by December 31, 2024)

[ACCD Historic Preservation](#) (work to building exterior or ADA upgrades – be sure to coordinate w/History House if they are also planning to apply)

ARPA funding (generator)

Starting Action Step Matrix: *Wardsboro Town Hall Improvement*

Action step	Funding needed	Resources/Partners + Details	Timeline
Gather stakeholders: Wardsboro Curtain Call, Event chairs (4th of July/Gilfeather Turnip fest), Community Lunch group, Energy Committee: determine 'dream big' ideas and needs in addition to energy resources	Can use Act 172 funding as part of this?	https://bgs.vermont.gov/municipal-energy-resilience-program (Windham Regional will be the contact for this program) – mini-grants can be used to explore options and community needs	May/June 2023
Purchase Generator	YES	ARPA Funds? Select Board has estimates	2023
Connect Energy Committee with WRC to coordinate Act 172/Energy Upgrades	no	Margo Ghia at Windham Regional mghia@windhamregional.org	2023
Make a list of desired updates and get current price quotes	no	TBD based on community needs and wants determined in step one	2023/early 2024 so ARPA matching funds can be obligated
If architectural plans or studies are needed use TA programs which can help	May require match	USDA CFTA (must be prior to Sept 2023), or REDI https://vhcb.org/redi	2023/early 2024 so ARPA matching funds can be obligated
Contact USDA Community Facilities Program staff	no	BDCC can help coordinate or reach out directly to VT Program staff https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program/vt#contact	2023/early 2024 so ARPA matching funds can be obligated

Signage for Town Hall to indicate when open for warming/use during power outages	\$200	Easy to purchase if there is not an existing one – a-frame sandwich board with removable letters	When generator is purchased
Include on town website an information section on Town Hall use, for emergency use or community use, and publicize this	no	Bucketville news, community meetings, signage, etc.	TBD when website is up
Develop systems for scheduling use of Hall for community Groups	TBD	Possible calendar plug-in for Town website with system for registering events	When website is up
Additional resources for help with finding and managing Federal Funding		https://www.vlct.org/news/you-asked-vlcts-federal-funding-assistance-program-here-help (VLCT FFA)	
State funding resource guide		Funding resources for Village Centers: https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/State-Designation-Programs/CD-PR-Funding-Directory.pdf	

Project Sheet: Improvements to Municipal Communication/Coordination of Communications

Community Goal it helps to accomplish:

Develop/Enable Sense of Community through better use of gathering spaces

Improve Community Emergency Resources

Local Project Lead:

Town (Select Board & Town Clerk)

Description of project:

Develop a Town Website as a way to share information in a centralized location for all residents and provide information coordination for groups working on different (but possibly overlapping) projects. Determine other ways to communicate in emergency situations.

Project Partners:

Select Board and Committee Chairs, Library, Other Community Groups (History House and Skatepark Committee; VLCT)

Timeline:

ASAP – by the end of 2023

Barriers:

Coordinating a large number of different groups for training and updates; making sure it is up to date.

Resources:

VLCT; other towns (communicate with Town Clerks to see what has worked for them)

Examples of companies used by regional small towns (Readsboro uses Towncloud <https://towncloud.com/>; Halifax and Rupert use <https://collaboration133.com/>)

Starting Action Step Matrix: *Improvements to Municipal Communication/Coordination of Communications*

Action step	Funding needed	Resources/Partners + Details	Timeline
Identify a provider for website construction	no	If needed, consult other smaller towns in Southern Vermont for ideas (Readsboro uses Towncloud https://towncloud.com/ ; Halifax and Rupert use https://collaboration133.com/) VLCT can also potentially help with this	ASAP
Hire firm for website construction and training	YES	ARPA Funding, then budget for ongoing support in Town Budget	2023
Engage other community stakeholders to suggestions for needed content and to provide content (“About,” etc.) for all community projects	no	Library, community events, town boards, skatepark committee, road crew, energy committee, etc.	2023
Provide training for staff and key board members so they can update site (be sure to build in redundancy and retain manuals)	no	Website construction provider can provide this	
Identify other communication needs and resources	TBD	Signage for TH when open or used as warming shelter? Posting on FPF and encouraging residents to sign up Coordinate town email blast list w/Bucketville News?	

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For any questions, or for more information, contact:

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About the Southern Vermont Economy Project: *The Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation's Southern Vermont Economy Project (SVEP) is a program that provides training and technical assistance to increase local capacity, skills, and resources in order to advance local projects in Southern Vermont. The program recognizes that local projects are critical to the ability of Southern Vermont to achieve its community, economic, and workforce development goals. SVEP is funded in part through the USDA Rural Community Development Initiative.*

