

## Vital Communities

Corporate Council – Recapping first four years of council activities  
May 2011

**GETTING STARTED:** In January 2008, Len prepared the following recap of first year of the council (2007):

We wanted to bring together people with the acumen to advance multiple issues simultaneously. People who are used to working on the co-production of solutions.

- Defined a mission statement of analysis and action.
- Early on identified three overarching (and massive) issues (3 E's)—education, employment, energy.
- On employment, clarified there is a well-functioning system for trailing spouses and “the ones not hired” to get networked among regional HR departments.
- Held two meetings with Micropolitan Managers. Heard about frustrations with regional planning structure, which provide consultant planning for individual towns, but create silo mentality between towns.
- Heard from New Hampshire municipal managers about their plan to develop a regional fiber backbone.
- Heard from Stan Williams of ValleyNet about its ECFiber plans to bring very high speed fiber to every town on Vermont side of this region.
- Also heard about these topics that resonated with the council:
  - changing demographics and aging population,
  - turnover on citizen boards,
  - the Route 120 study,
  - the significance of the 2-state character of our region,
  - transit-related problems of the airport and getting people to/from work.

**GROWING:** There was some regrouping of the council in early 2008, including:

- Strong interest in showing a record of measurable achievement by the council.
- Membership dues restructured to allow broader cross-section of participation.
- Interest in growing the council and aiming for 60% participation.

**AREAS OF FOCUS:** In the subsequent three years, 2008-10, the council focused mainly on universal connectivity, then energy, and most recently in 2011 on workplace health care delivery.

- Connectivity Ad Hoc Committee was formed of IT staff from council members and chaired by Don Derrick of ValleyNet. They presented recommendations to the council in March 09 regarding strategies for universal connectivity in VT and NH that the group should support. The council has received numerous updates on regional universal fiber efforts (ECFiber and WCNH).
- Energy Committee was formed of council members. Related presentations have included Clif Below of NH PUC, Kathy Lambert of Dartmouth, John Leigh of DHMC, Dori Wolfe of groSolar. Committee promoted council-wide participation in

Smart Commute survey and six members are participating in the 2011 survey. Second broad task remains promote multi-year collaboration with Tuck. Sequence of steps to date: 1) Prof. Anant Sundaram compiled member baseline data on aggregate energy use; 2) Tuck School Consulting Services researched relevant case studies on regional energy plans most relevant to Upper Valley; 3) Prof. John Vogel's Social Entrepreneurship class conducted interviews for case studies above and outlined an approach to developing a regional energy plan.

- Workplace Health Care Delivery Committee in process of formation as of May 2011. Related presentations have included Dr. Bob McLellan of DHMC, Dr. Al Mulley of The Dartmouth Initiative.
- Several members met with new Valley News editor Mark Travis in May 2009 on ideas for positive local economy stories.
- Other updates and presentations have included:
  - Chambers of Commerce merger discussions (Jul 08)
  - Multi-modal transportation facility (Sept 08)
  - Economic situation in Upper Valley (Jan 09)
  - Cape Air and Dartmouth Coach services (Mar 09)
  - Lebanon Airport as a regional resource (Sept 10)
  - Obstacles facing UV developers, need for a UV land use vision (Nov 10)
  - Dartmouth Entrepreneurial Network (Nov 10)

**MEMBERSHIP:** Council membership has grown from the eight founders in 2007 to twenty one members in 2011. Members have expanded from representatives of the region's largest employers to include regional thinkers at smaller firms. Almost all members have maintained their membership once they join. Average attendance in 2010 was 65%.