

2026-2030

A Playbook for Leading Vermont's Innovation Economy: **SOUTH BURLINGTON'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

City of South Burlington



southburlington
VERMONT

SOUTH BURLINGTON—BOLD BY NATURE. POWERED BY INNOVATION.

A landscape for us: creatives, founders, builders, and doers. Where next-generation industries scale, talent thrives, City Center comes to life, and climate and community values lead the way—powering Vermont's next economy.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SOUTH BURLINGTON: BOLD BY NATURE. POWERED BY INNOVATION.

South Burlington is at a moment of decision. The city has grown steadily in recent years—attracting new residents, shaping a vibrant City Center, and investing in infrastructure and sustainability. But these gains come with new challenges: housing costs that threaten to price out the workforce powering the innovation economy, a fragmented support system for the entrepreneurs and small businesses that could anchor City Center, innovation clusters that generate cutting-edge research but lose commercialization value to other regions, and a community that knows its

strengths but hasn't yet translated them into a clear, compelling identity that attracts investment and talent.

In response, the City of South Burlington initiated a strategic planning process to clarify economic direction and strengthen the alignment between community values, growth priorities, and long-term investment. This report reflects that effort: a data-informed, community-shaped strategy grounded in realistic opportunities and developed through a lens of broad legitimacy and implementation readiness.

THE CASE FOR ACTION

Over the past five years, South Burlington has added more than 2,200 residents and 1,500 new jobs—growth rates that far outpace statewide trends. Its population is younger and more diverse than the regional average. More than two-thirds of its adults hold a college degree. And it boasts a unique position as both a regional employment hub and a livable, people-centered community.

South Burlington's economy is shifting from regional services to nationally relevant industries—clean aviation, advanced electronics, life sciences, and specialty manufacturing. GlobalFoundries, BETA Technologies, OnLogic, and a growing ecosystem of suppliers and tech firms are building an innovation economy here in real time. But without a deliberate strategy, the city risks being outpaced by regions with stronger execution capacity—even as the innovation economy flourishes in its backyard. Doing nothing is not a neutral choice. Without action, South Burlington risks losing key employers to better-positioned regions or missing opportunities to shape growth in ways that reflect local values.

This plan is not about change for change's sake. It's about guiding inevitable change in a direction the community supports, and positioning South Burlington not just to keep up with change—but to lead it. Execution will be South Burlington's differentiator—what sets it apart from other cities with good ideas but less follow-through.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

This strategy was built on a foundation of data, lived experience, and civic ambition. The process included:

WHAT WE DID

A review of more than 25 local, regional, and state planning documents, including City Plan 2024 and the city's Climate Action Plan:

A comprehensive benchmarking study comparing South Burlington to 10 peer cities, Chittenden County, the State of Vermont, and the U.S. overall, highlighting where the city leads, lags, and stands out:

A cluster analysis identifying South Burlington's key traded industry strengths—including electric aviation, life sciences, and specialty manufacturing—and their supporting ecosystems, such as talent, infrastructure, and supply chains:

A best-practice scan of economic development organizations in comparable communities across the country, focusing on incentive design, permitting systems, organizational structure, and innovation-focused partnerships:

20 one-on-one interviews with local leaders across business, education, housing, and government:

A series of comprehensive stakeholder roundtables engaging a broad cross-section of the community—including business leaders, entrepreneurs, small business owners, community members, developers, city staff and leadership, Policy Committee members, destination development partners (such as hoteliers and small retailers), and regional collaborators:

WHAT WE DISCOVERED

Revealed strong policy foundations but limited coordination between departments—**highlighting the need for more integrated implementation** to turn ambitious plans into results.

Showed South Burlington **outperforming most peers in growth and talent, but lagging in housing production relative to job creation**—creating unsustainable pressure on affordability and workforce retention.

Uncovered **South Burlington's unusual combination of high-wage, specialized industries with strong local integration**—making it both globally competitive and locally rooted.

Revealed a pattern: **Communities that excel at innovation and growth often have dedicated economic development functions**—not just departments tucked within planning. Without that, cities risk defaulting to land use management instead of leading with economic strategy. **This insight helped shape South Burlington's own blueprint for execution.**

Uncovered frustration with fragmented support systems and unclear pathways for business growth—even among South Burlington's most engaged stakeholders and successful entrepreneurs.

Surfaced concerns that without deliberate action, **South Burlington risks losing its civic character and affordability to growth pressures**—even as residents strongly support economic development aligned with community values.

The result is a plan that blends rigorous analysis with local insight—grounded in South Burlington's identity and built for real-world implementation.

This plan reflects not only data and expertise—it also reflects South Burlington's own investment. Over 100 residents, business owners, and civic leaders gave time, candor, and ideas. That level of participation is rare for a city of this size—and it gives this strategy both legitimacy and momentum.



WHAT WE HEARD

From developers to entrepreneurs, conservationists to small business owners, one message cut through clearly: South Burlington’s opportunity is real—but it must be made actionable. Stakeholders emphasized the urgency of staying ahead of regional competition, the importance of aligning growth with community values, and the need to move from planning to delivery.

The community spoke often of South Burlington’s civic character—a city where people care deeply, participate actively, and prioritize long-term stewardship over short-term gain. One local entrepreneur put it simply: “We don’t want to become Anywhere, USA. We want to become the best version of South Burlington.”

South Burlington’s emerging identity is deeply tied to its setting—a community with strong civic pride, shaped by its natural beauty. From Lake Champlain to a growing network of trails, parks, and conserved lands—with walkable access to the South Burlington Recreation Path and Red Rocks Park—the city is also building momentum around City Center as a new civic and commercial heart. While the city may not yet have a singular identity, it has a clear sense of place—and a growing community of people invested in shaping its future. This strategy helps bring those elements together, using economic development not just to grow jobs, but to define what South Burlington stands for and how it competes. Stakeholders made it clear: South Burlington has pride, purpose, and momentum. But it still lacks a unified story—one that connects values, assets, and economy. This strategy is a step toward claiming that identity with confidence and clarity.

This report is the result of a strategic planning process led by the City of South Burlington, combining data analysis, peer benchmarking, and candid engagement with business, education, civic, and community stakeholders. This process surfaced both optimism and concern—about the pace of change, regional alignment, business climate, affordability, climate action, and shared identity. These conversations, alongside objective analysis, shaped the priorities and strategic framework presented here.



FIVE BOLD GOALS FOR SOUTH BURLINGTON'S FUTURE

1. BOLD INNOVATION THAT POWERS THE FUTURE

Position South Burlington as Vermont's hub for clean, high-value innovation—anchored by advanced electronics, life sciences, and electric aviation. Leverage key employers and institutional partners to grow a globally relevant economy with deep local roots.

2. A PLACE WHERE TALENT BELONGS

Make South Burlington a magnet for the people who will build its future: young professionals, families, entrepreneurs, and creatives. This means addressing the full continuum of talent needs—from housing and childcare to skills development and belonging.

3. A DESTINATION THAT DRAWS YOU IN

Elevate South Burlington's identity as a vibrant destination. Activate City Center, modernize commercial corridors, and expand arts, culture, and recreation in ways that reflect the city's personality and invite participation.

4. READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT

Align development policies, permitting systems, and incentive tools to attract investment that matches South Burlington's climate and equity values. Prepare priority sites that can deliver housing, commercial growth, and community assets.

5. BUILT TO DELIVER

Establish a dedicated economic development function within City Hall to lead implementation. Equip the city with the internal capacity and cross-sector partnerships to execute this plan, measure progress, and adapt over time.

A STRATEGY FOR NOW AND THE FUTURE

This plan balances ambition with pragmatism. Some recommendations—like redeveloping the mall site, building out clean technology supply chains, or creating more diverse housing options—will require sustained coordination over time. But many strategies can begin immediately. Streamlining permitting processes, strengthening support for small businesses, and launching a young professionals network are near-term steps that can build momentum, demonstrate responsiveness, and show the community that the city is ready to act.

WHAT THIS PLAN DELIVERS

This is more than a vision. It is a blueprint for action—designed for execution.

Grounded in both qualitative and quantitative insight, this strategy helps South Burlington move confidently from big ideas to practical implementation. Each goal is paired with clear strategies, implementation guidance, and recommended partnerships. The plan reflects national best practices while remaining deeply rooted in the people, places, and possibilities that make South Burlington unique.

While this plan builds on existing momentum, it also acknowledges that new resources will be needed to deliver on its full promise. Many of the strategies outlined here—especially those tied to innovation, destination development, and workforce

alignment—will require dedicated capacity, expanded partnerships, and modest but targeted investment. This is not a plan that overreaches. It is a plan that matches ambition with realistic resource needs and outlines a pathway to secure them.

Among the most pressing resource needs is capacity. South Burlington has the momentum, the priorities, and the partnerships—but the city currently lacks a dedicated economic development team to deliver on this strategy. Peer cities with similar ambitions have built internal capacity to engage businesses, support small firms, coordinate across departments, and move projects forward. To succeed, South Burlington must match its strategic clarity with the staff and systems to execute.

**SOUTH BURLINGTON IS BOLD BY NATURE.
NOW IT'S BOLD BY STRATEGY—READY
TO LEAD VERMONT'S NEXT ECONOMY BY
PUTTING VISION INTO ACTION.**



02

THE BIG PICTURE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN TO A COMMUNITY —IT SHOULD HAPPEN WITH ONE.

South Burlington stands at the center of Vermont's economic transformation, and the choices it makes today will determine whether it shapes that transformation or simply responds to it. With electric aviation taking flight at BETA Technologies, clean manufacturing scaling across the region, and a new downtown rising from the ground up, the city has momentum that most communities would envy. But momentum alone isn't strategy. The cities that will thrive in the next economy won't be those with the most resources or the best location—they'll be the ones that most clearly understand what kind of future they want and how to shape it.

South Burlington has that clarity. This strategy is built on the recognition that economic development isn't just about landing the next big company or cutting the next ribbon—it's about creating the conditions where innovation, opportunity, and community values reinforce each other. It's about ensuring that when businesses choose South Burlington, they're not just accessing cheap land or tax breaks, but joining a place that reflects their values and connects them to the talent, infrastructure, and quality of life they need to succeed long-term.

The strategy that follows reflects that understanding. It's designed not just to grow South Burlington's economy, but to grow it in a way that strengthens what residents value most: civic engagement, environmental leadership, and genuine community connection. When done right, economic development becomes a tool for expressing a city's identity—not erasing it.

This approach isn't theoretical. It emerges from six months of intensive engagement with the people who know South Burlington best: business owners who've built companies here, residents who've chosen to raise families here, and civic leaders who've invested decades in shaping the city's future. Through benchmarking studies, stakeholder roundtables, cluster analysis, and dozens of one-on-one conversations, we've built a strategy that reflects both South Burlington's competitive realities and its deepest aspirations. The result is a plan that's as grounded in data as it is in the voices of the community it serves.

South Burlington's approach to economic development reflects a fundamental shift in how communities compete and grow. Rather than chasing any company willing to locate here, the city is positioning itself as a destination for businesses that align with its values and strengths. This means focusing on industries that can thrive in South Burlington's unique context—companies that value climate leadership, seek access to highly educated talent, and want to be part of a community that's actively shaping Vermont's innovation economy.





This strategy is built around five interconnected priorities that define what successful economic development looks like in South Burlington:



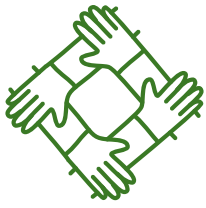
FOCUSED ATTRACTION EFFORTS

South Burlington will compete for the right companies, not just any companies. The city's recruitment efforts will target businesses in electric aviation, life sciences, and advanced electronics—sectors where South Burlington already has competitive advantages and momentum. This means being selective about which opportunities to pursue, building relationships with companies that share the city's climate values, and positioning South Burlington not as a low-cost alternative, but as a high-value destination for innovation-driven firms.



BUILDING A VIBRANT WORKFORCE

The city's greatest competitive asset is its people—both the talent that's already here and the pipeline that's coming. South Burlington will invest in workforce development that connects residents to the jobs being created locally, from entry-level positions to advanced technical roles. This includes working with regional education partners to align training programs with industry needs, supporting career pathway development, and addressing barriers like housing and childcare that prevent people from fully participating in the economy.



CATALYZING INNOVATION

Small businesses and startups are where South Burlington's entrepreneurial energy comes to life. The city will actively support the growth of locally owned businesses, from the restaurants and retailers that give City Center its character to the tech startups that could become tomorrow's anchor employers. This means streamlining permitting for small businesses, creating spaces where entrepreneurs can launch and thrive, and building an ecosystem that helps innovative ideas move from concept to commercial success.



DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Places matter more than ever in attracting and retaining talent. South Burlington's investment in City Center, its trail networks, and its public spaces isn't just about quality of life—it's economic infrastructure. The city will continue building the kind of places where people want to live, work, and spend time, recognizing that vibrant public spaces, walkable neighborhoods, and cultural amenities are now essential tools for economic competitiveness.



HOUSING

Without housing that works for different income levels and life stages, South Burlington's economic growth will be constrained by its own success. The city will support the development of housing options that serve everyone from recent college graduates to senior executives, ensuring that the people who power South Burlington's economy can also afford to live here. This includes workforce housing, family-centered options, and choices that allow residents to age in place.

These priorities work together to create something larger than the sum of their parts: an economic development approach that grows South Burlington's prosperity while strengthening its identity and values.





STARTING FROM A PLACE OF STRENGTH

South Burlington doesn't need to reinvent itself to compete—it needs to build strategically on what's already working. The city enters this next phase with significant assets that position it to lead Vermont's economic future.

A COMMUNITY ON THE RISE

While much of rural America struggles with population decline, South Burlington is growing at twice the rate of Vermont and the nation. Over the last five years, the city added more than 2,200 residents, driven by young families and professionals who are attracted to its combination of opportunity, schools, and quality of life. This growth isn't accidental—it reflects South Burlington's success in creating the conditions that talent seeks.

TALENT THAT DRIVES THE FUTURE

South Burlington's workforce is among the most educated in Vermont, with 70% of adults holding bachelor's degrees or higher. More importantly, the city has a younger demographic profile than most of the state, with 28% of residents in the prime talent years of 25 to 44. This isn't just about credentials—it's about having the human capital that drives innovation economies and attracts forward-thinking companies.

A REGIONAL ENGINE FOR THE INNOVATION ECONOMY

South Burlington already hosts some of Vermont's most dynamic companies and fastest-growing industries. BETA Technologies has put the city on the map for electric aviation, while firms like OnLogic are scaling in advanced electronics. The University of Vermont (UVM) provides research partnerships and talent development, while the proximity to GlobalFoundries positions the region as a player in the national semiconductor ecosystem. These aren't future possibilities—they're current realities that provide a foundation for sustained growth.



CITY CENTER AS CIVIC CATALYST

The development of City Center represents more than new buildings—it's South Burlington's first downtown, designed from the ground up to reflect the city's values and aspirations. With public spaces that bring people together, mixed-income housing that serves different life stages, and ground-floor commercial space designed for local businesses, City Center is both a civic achievement and an economic development tool that will attract talent and investment for decades to come.

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP AS STRATEGY

In an economy where environmental values increasingly drive location decisions, South Burlington's climate leadership positions it ahead of most competitors. The city's commitment to sustainable development, clean transportation, and environmental stewardship isn't just good policy—it's a talent magnet and business attraction tool that sets South Burlington apart in regional and national markets.

A LIFESTYLE THAT KEEPS PEOPLE HERE

South Burlington offers the combination of natural beauty, cultural amenities, and community connection that increasingly drives talent retention. From Red Rocks Park and Lake Champlain to excellent schools and civic engagement opportunities, the city provides the quality of life that helps companies recruit and retain the people they need to succeed.

South Burlington has built these strengths through decades of thoughtful planning, civic investment, and community engagement. Now the opportunity is to leverage them strategically—using economic development not just to grow, but to grow in ways that reinforce what makes South Burlington distinctive and competitive in Vermont's evolving economy.

03

OUR ENGAGEMENT: HOW WE BUILT THIS PLAN

Economic development strategy only works when it reflects the voices and priorities of the people it serves. Over six months, we conducted a comprehensive analysis that combined rigorous data with deep community engagement—from benchmarking South Burlington against peer cities to hosting roundtables with over 100 stakeholders. This process revealed both the city's competitive advantages and the gaps that must be addressed to realize its potential. The result is a strategy grounded in evidence, shaped by community input, and designed for real-world implementation.

Our approach combined rigorous quantitative research with qualitative insights gathered from across the city. From the outset, this was designed to be more than a visioning exercise—it was a strategy development effort that would position South Burlington for sustained competitive advantage.

To understand where South Burlington stands today—and where it has the potential to lead—we conducted a comprehensive assessment of the city's assets, challenges, and economic context in relation to its peers, the region, and national trends.

THAT INCLUDED:

- **A comprehensive benchmarking analysis** comparing South Burlington to 10 peer communities across the U.S.—including cities like Andover, Massachusetts; Bend, Oregon; Castle Rock, Colorado; Portsmouth, New Hampshire; and South Portland, Maine. These communities were selected for their similarities in size, demographic profile, proximity to metropolitan regions, and economic development challenges. The analysis used more than 50 indicators across Livability, Talent, and Prosperity—including metrics such as labor force participation, educational attainment, job growth, income levels, housing cost burden, and growth in creative industries—to understand where South Burlington leads, where it's keeping pace, and where strategic investment is needed to maintain competitiveness.
- **A target cluster and industry analysis** to identify the sectors where South Burlington can compete and grow over the next decade. This analysis examined local employment specialization, wage trends, and job growth across key industries, while also evaluating the city's alignment with regional and state-level economic priorities. It helped pinpoint areas where South Burlington has both current competitive advantage—such as electric aviation, life sciences, and advanced electronics—and future opportunities to lead in emerging fields like clean manufacturing, biotechnology, and aerospace innovation. The occupational data also informed workforce strategies, highlighting high-demand roles, skills gaps, and pathways for connecting residents to growing career opportunities.



- **A best-practice scan of economic development organizations** in comparable communities across the country, focusing on organizational structure, program design, incentive frameworks, and innovation partnerships. This review examined how peer cities structure their economic development functions, coordinate across departments, and balance business attraction with small business support and workforce development. The analysis identified models that could be adapted to South Burlington's context and highlighted tools and approaches that align with the city's climate and community values.
- **A comprehensive stakeholder engagement process** that included more than 20 one-on-one interviews with local business owners, educators, developers, nonprofit leaders, and civic officials to gather deeper qualitative insights on workforce needs, permitting processes, infrastructure priorities, and business climate. These conversations provided the ground-truth context that data alone cannot capture, revealing both the opportunities and frustrations that shape daily economic life in South Burlington.
- **A series of focused stakeholder roundtables** organized around key themes and community priorities—including innovation and entrepreneurship, workforce and talent development, housing and livability, destination development, and regional coordination. These sessions brought together business leaders, employers, educators, entrepreneurs, and community advocates to pressure-test early findings, explore real-time challenges, and co-develop strategic ideas. The roundtables not only helped shape the content of this strategy but also built early alignment among the very stakeholders who will be essential to its success. They served as a forum for surfacing nuanced perspectives, elevating on-the-ground experience and ensuring that the strategy reflects both local ambition and operational reality.

In parallel, we worked closely with South Burlington's city leadership, Economic Development Committee, and department heads to align this strategy with local capacity, policy goals, and ongoing initiatives. Strategy concepts were tested in real time with those who understand the city's internal operations, ensuring this plan was not only data-informed and community-driven but also grounded in municipal realities and aligned with the leadership that will carry it forward.

Every goal and strategy in this plan is connected to what we heard, what we measured, and what we learned throughout this process. It reflects a diverse set of perspectives united by a consistent theme: that South Burlington has remarkable assets and clear momentum, but must act strategically and with coordination to fully capture its potential in Vermont's evolving economy.

04

DISCOVERY INSIGHTS

OUR OPPORTUNITY: SOUTH BURLINGTON: A MORE INNOVATIVE FUTURE—WITH YOU AT THE CENTER.

South Burlington stands at a defining moment. Already the economic heart of Chittenden County—with nearly 20% of the region's jobs—it is emerging as a hub for life sciences, clean manufacturing, and electric aviation. Global firms are investing, homegrown innovators are scaling, and a highly educated, civically engaged population is ready to lead what's next. Younger and faster-growing than Vermont as a whole, South Burlington offers a glimpse of what's possible for the state's economic future. And it's placing climate action at the center of that future—treating sustainability not as a constraint, but as a catalyst.

But this transformation isn't just about industry—it's about people, place, and the small businesses that

power local life. The city's adopted City Plan 2024 Principles show South Burlington's clear, defined vision for itself: Climate-Resilient; Inclusive, Fair, and Just; Collaborative and Engaged; with a People-Oriented, Thoughtful, and Sustainable Built Environment.

City Center has the opportunity to become Vermont's next entrepreneurial and civic hub—a vibrant district for startups, culture, and community connection. Downtown energy, local ownership, and placemaking are emerging as essential strategies to help talent and businesses not just come, but stay.

This strategy builds on that momentum. It connects South Burlington's strengths—its talent, industries, values, and civic energy—into a focused playbook for innovation, inclusion, and climate-smart growth.

SOUTH BURLINGTON HAS EVERYTHING IT NEEDS TO LEAD VERMONT'S FUTURE. THIS IS HOW IT TURNS POTENTIAL INTO PROGRESS—WITH YOU.



*“This is a city
full of people
who want to be
involved. The
question is:
Are we asking
them to?”*



1. SOUTH BURLINGTON TODAY—GROWING, BUT WHAT'S NEXT?

South Burlington is ready for what's next, and residents are ready to be engaged.

South Burlington isn't just growing. It's helping redefine what growth looks like in Vermont. Between 2018 and 2023, the city's population grew by 8%, more than double the rate of the state and county. Nearly 28% of residents are ages 25 to 44, giving South Burlington a younger and more dynamic demographic profile than most of its peers. And this isn't a passive population; it's one that's showing up.

Civic participation has a long tradition here. Residents serve on more than a dozen city boards and commissions, volunteer with neighborhood

groups, and participate in public planning on issues ranging from zoning reform to climate strategy. Many have professional expertise to offer, and most share a common desire: to be invited into decisions early, before plans are finalized.

South Burlington doesn't need to manufacture civic engagement—it already exists. The opportunity now is to build the systems, platforms, and culture that make that engagement visible, effective, and central to the city's future.

“If we want to attract and retain talent, we need more housing options—especially for the people who make this city work.”



2. HOUSING WE NEED.

Housing is being built, but affordability and choice are falling short.

Over the past decade, South Burlington has permitted nearly 2,000 new housing units, the most of any city in the region. Much of that growth has been concentrated in and around City Center, where mixed-use development and compact design have added density and walkability. But despite this activity, housing remains the top concern for both residents and employers.

The core issue isn't quantity; it's access. South Burlington's median home value is \$388,800—that's four times the city's median household income of \$97,229. Renters aren't faring much better: 47% of renter households are cost-burdened, paying more than 30% of their income on housing.

Rising land and construction costs have pushed builders toward high-end products, leaving a gap in middle-income and workforce housing.

There's also a growing mismatch between the types of units being built and the needs of the local population. Stakeholders pointed to limited options for early-career professionals, families with children, and older residents looking to downsize without leaving the community.

Without a broader mix of housing types and price points, the risk is clear: the people powering South Burlington's economy—teachers, nurses, technicians, and entrepreneurs—may be priced out of the city's future.

“There's no shortage of ambition. The question is whether we've built the ladders.”



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3. TALENT IS HERE. OPPORTUNITY MUST FOLLOW.

South Burlington has a deep talent pool, but access and advancement remain uneven.

South Burlington's workforce is among the most educated in Vermont. Nearly 70% of residents over the age of 25 hold a bachelor's degree or higher, and 28% of residents are ages 25 to 44—a higher share than the state and national averages. Labor force participation is also climbing, making South Burlington one of the most talent-rich communities in the region.

But access to opportunity doesn't always follow. Employers in key sectors—including health care, hospitality, and the trades—struggle to fill roles, particularly at the entry and mid-skill levels. In South Burlington's most advanced clusters—like life sciences, aerospace, and chips and electrical manufacturing—pathways to

employment often require specialized degrees or industry credentials, which can be a barrier for many residents.

There are also measurable disparities. Men in South Burlington earn nearly \$20,000 more per year than women, and Black residents experience poverty at rates more than three times the county average. These gaps point to the need for more inclusive systems, not just more jobs.

There is a need for clear pathways and a unified workforce ecosystem that supports all kinds of talent. Without those systems in place, too many residents are left navigating the future economy on their own.

*“Climate
resilience
isn't just
part of our
strategy—
it is the
strategy.”*



4. CLIMATE IS THE ECONOMY.

Climate change is not a side issue; it's central to South Burlington's economic future.

In South Burlington, we don't see climate action as a constraint—it's a catalyst. The city's commitment to sustainability shows up in how it builds, where it invests, and what it prioritizes. From early adoption of form-based code to the mixed-use vision behind City Center, South Burlington has embedded climate values into its land use decisions. These choices have created a more compact, walkable, and lower-emissions city—qualities that are increasingly important to the next generation of workers.

And the demographic shift is already underway. While much of the U.S. is aging, South

Burlington's population is getting younger—a signal that the city's livability and environmental values are resonating with new residents and future talent.

That same ethos is shaping South Burlington's innovation economy. Climate-forward sectors like electric aviation, clean semiconductor manufacturing, life sciences, and environmental consulting are growing here—not in spite of the city's values, but because of them. These industries reflect South Burlington's ability to align economic development with environmental responsibility and quality of place.

“There's a huge opportunity to scale what's already working," one cluster expert said. "But we need space, capital, and the infrastructure to take that next step.”



5. FROM RESEARCH TO SCALE.

Life sciences are accelerating, offering a chance to lead in innovation and commercialization.

South Burlington and the region's life sciences cluster is small but surging. Since 2014, the cluster has added 287 jobs and increased its gross regional product by more than 200%. With 598 jobs today and another 119 expected by 2029, it's becoming one of the region's most dynamic traded sectors. Wages are strong—averaging more than \$150,000—and job growth is concentrated in research and testing services that support pharmaceuticals, analytics, and biotech R&D.

But the downstream value chain is still happening elsewhere. Local firms import

nearly \$70 million annually in key inputs like lab equipment, compounds, and packaging. South Burlington and the region lead in discovery but lose much of the value when it comes to development, production, and commercialization. That gap presents a clear opportunity: build the infrastructure, workforce, and space to support more local scale-up activity.

If South Burlington can move from research to scale, it can capture more of the economic return, while expanding access to high-wage, innovation-driven jobs.

*“BETA put us
on the map,
and this is
our chance to
lead a whole
new kind of
industry.”*



6.A FUTURE BUILT TO FLY.

Aerospace is taking off, anchored by global firms and a next-generation aviation ecosystem.

South Burlington and the region's aerospace cluster is gaining altitude. Over the past decade, the sector has added 318 jobs, with another 91 expected by 2029. BETA Technologies is leading the charge in electric aviation, backed by a growing clean-tech supply chain and national recognition. At the same time, the 158th Fighter Wing of the Vermont Air National Guard, based at Burlington International Airport, brings additional infrastructure, talent, and economic impact to the region.

The sector is high-wage—averaging \$92,342

annually—and well-integrated, with 60% of inputs sourced locally. But it's also concentrated: three employers account for 95% of jobs, and nearly one-third of the workforce is over 55. Career pathways into the industry remain fragmented, particularly for residents without four-year degrees.

With intentional investment in workforce pipelines, site readiness, and climate-smart infrastructure, South Burlington can position the airport district as a national model for sustainable aerospace.

*“It's a core strength—
but one we
haven't fully
positioned.”*



7. NEXT-GEN CHIPS, BUILT HERE.

Chips give South Burlington a tech edge, and a platform to lead in clean manufacturing.

South Burlington and the region have long been a quiet powerhouse in Vermont's electronics sector. With a growing company like OnLogic and a skilled manufacturing workforce, the region is shifting from legacy electronics to next-generation, clean applications—including smart energy systems and advanced industrial tools. Just across the border in Essex Junction, GlobalFoundries—one of the largest semiconductor manufacturers in the U.S.—further anchors the region in the national chips ecosystem.

Within the region, electronics manufacturing supports 3,394 jobs, generates more than \$90

million in GRP, and offers average wages above \$97,000 per year. While job numbers have held steady, employers report rising demand for precision electronics and industrial computing, especially in climate-aligned sectors like aviation, clean energy, and automation.

South Burlington and the region's electronics sector is established—but not yet fully visible as part of the area's innovation story. For a cluster offering high wages and career pathways that don't always require a four-year degree, it's a strategic opportunity hiding in plain sight.

*“We have
people coming
here already.
What we need
now is an
experience,
something that
feels like South
Burlington.”*



8. STAY, GATHER, BELONG.

South Burlington welcomes the region, but the experience is still taking shape.

South Burlington plays an outsized role in Vermont's visitor economy. Home to Burlington International Airport, the region's largest concentration of hotels, and key corridors like Williston Road, it's often the first stop for travelers. The city anchors business travel, conferences, weddings, and academic visits, but it hasn't yet fully defined what visitors experience once they arrive.

That's the next opportunity. City Center is emerging as a place where South Burlington can express its identity—through civic spaces, local businesses, and everyday connections. But across the city, placemaking and activation

remain underutilized. Stakeholders point to a lack of gathering spaces, destination retail, live entertainment, and visible community life that encourages people to stay, not just sleep.

By investing in public space, cultural programming, and partnerships between the hospitality sector and creative economy, South Burlington can transform its visitor infrastructure into a destination identity—one that welcomes outsiders and brings residents together. A more vibrant, connected city isn't just appealing to travelers—it's the kind of place residents want to live, gather, and stay.

“There's momentum here,” one resident said. “But we can't stop at the concrete. We have to fill it with life.”



9. CENTER OF WHAT'S NEXT.

City Center is emerging as a hub, but success hinges on activation, entrepreneurship, and connection.

South Burlington is building its first-ever downtown from the ground up. City Center now anchors the new Library, City Hall, and Senior Center—a major civic investment designed to serve residents of all ages. The complex includes spaces for reading, learning, gathering, and celebrating—from teen lounges and digital labs to a catering kitchen and community auditorium.

But City Center is more than a collection of buildings. It's a long-awaited opportunity to express South Burlington's identity through civic life, entrepreneurship, and creative energy. With more than 500 new homes under construction

and ground-floor commercial spaces designed for local businesses, the area is poised to become a vibrant, walkable downtown.

Stakeholders envision City Center as a platform for local entrepreneurship and the creative economy. The presence of businesses like Bliss Bee, Folino's Pizza, and Scale reflects a growing interest in local, Vermont-owned enterprises. However, the district's long-term success will depend on what happens beyond the buildings. Programming, activation, and a deliberate focus on everyday connection will determine whether the space feels lived-in or simply built.

“We know what we are,” one stakeholder said. “We just haven’t figured out how to say it.”



10. PRIDE IS HERE. IDENTITY IS CATCHING UP.

South Burlington has substance—now it needs a voice.

South Burlington has a strong sense of local pride. Residents are engaged, businesses are growing, and the city is making bold moves in climate, innovation, and downtown development. But despite this momentum, the city's external identity—how it's seen, understood, and positioned—still lags behind the reality on the ground.

Stakeholders noted that South Burlington is often described by what it's not: not Burlington, not rural, not just a suburb. But contrast alone doesn't make a narrative. What's missing is a unified story that connects the city's economy,

spaces, and values into something that feels tangible, visible, and ownable.

City Center offers a physical anchor for that identity. But identity also comes from placemaking, programming, and a clear understanding of what drives the local economy. When a city knows what it stands for—and builds experiences around that—it becomes easier to communicate, easier to market, and easier to belong to.

A stronger identity won't just clarify perception. It will shape investment, connection, and the kind of future South Burlington builds for itself.

*“We've got
the right
priorities—
now we need
the capacity to
match them.”*



11. BUILDING CAPACITY.

South Burlington has big ambitions, but needs the economic development capacity to deliver on them.

South Burlington is not short on ideas—or momentum. From City Center to clean-tech clusters, from climate leadership to civic engagement, the city is positioned to lead in Vermont's next economy. But stakeholders consistently flagged a core challenge: the current staffing, systems, and organizational capacity don't yet match the scale of the opportunity.

The city has no dedicated economic development office and limited internal coordination across departments that touch workforce, permitting, land use, and business support. As South Burlington expands its reach in innovation sectors, destination development, and inclusive

growth, the need for dedicated leadership and full-time capacity is becoming urgent.

Other peer cities—places with similar population size or industry potential—have built out teams that focus on business retention, workforce partnerships, small business support, data analysis, and development readiness. South Burlington has much of the raw talent and policy commitment in place. But it lacks a clear home for economic strategy inside City Hall.

Investing in internal capacity—through stronger coordination, staffing, and systems—will be critical to translating South Burlington's strategy into results.

05

STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN TO A COMMUNITY —IT SHOULD HAPPEN WITH ONE.


South Burlington is a city with significant assets. Home to breakthrough companies like BETA Technologies and OnLogic, anchor institutions like UVM, and a population that's both highly educated and deeply engaged, the city has assembled the building blocks for sustained innovation leadership. From electric aviation and advanced semiconductors to environmental consulting and life sciences, South Burlington's emerging clusters reflect a new model—one where economic growth and climate action aren't competing priorities, but complementary strategies. This convergence of talent, technology, and values creates an unprecedented opportunity—but only if we act strategically. Economic development that happens by accident rarely produces the outcomes communities want.

This framework represents the next chapter in South Burlington's economic story—a focused and data-informed plan to turn community priorities into measurable outcomes. Built from months of engagement, research, and collaborative design, the strategy reflects what we heard, what we measured, and what we envisioned together. It takes the insights gathered from residents, business leaders, educators, and civic stakeholders and translates them into a practical roadmap for Vermont's innovation economy.

The strategy is grounded in the belief that economic development should do more than create jobs—it should create lasting value aligned with community identity. That means preparing people for careers in growing industries, attracting businesses that share South Burlington's climate values, supporting local entrepreneurship, and investing in the places that make South Burlington vibrant, livable, and competitive. It also means building the internal capacity to execute on ambitious goals and telling a clearer story about what makes South Burlington distinctive in Vermont and beyond.

What follows is not a collection of disconnected initiatives. It is an integrated framework—a shared vision, five clear goals, and a set of strategies designed to deliver results. Every component, every program, project, and partnership, is connected by a larger ambition: to build a stronger, more innovative, and more climate-resilient South Burlington that leads Vermont's economic transformation.

At the heart of the strategy is a vision statement that reflects where South Burlington is going, what kind of economy it wants to build, and the kind of place it aspires to become.





FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION

South Burlington's strategy is grounded in what we heard, what we measured, and what we imagined—together.

The insights are clear: the city is growing, and its economy is evolving. But turning momentum into meaningful progress will take more than energy alone; it will take clarity, commitment, and action.

The vision statement and five goals that follow mark South Burlington's next chapter. Each one is rooted in community priorities, shaped by data, and built to reflect the city's values. Together, they offer a focused, forward-looking framework for a more innovative, inclusive, and climate-ready future.

The five core goals supporting that vision each focus on a different dimension of economic competitiveness: innovation, talent, place, readiness, and capacity. These goals are not generic. They are rooted in South Burlington's context, informed by community input, and designed to create sustained competitive

advantage in Vermont's evolving economy.

Each goal includes a set of targeted strategies—focused areas of work that outline how South Burlington will activate this plan. These strategies are where ambition meets execution. And beneath each strategy are specific actions with clear steps that identify who is responsible, what resources are needed, and how progress will be measured.

This structure ensures the plan is not only visionary but also operational. It can guide annual work plans, shape partnerships, prioritize investments, and measure success over time. It is flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions, but focused enough to direct action and resources toward the highest-impact opportunities.

Together, these elements form South Burlington's economic blueprint—rooted in local values, built on real strengths, and designed to deliver results that strengthen both prosperity and community identity.



VISION STATEMENT

SOUTH BURLINGTON—BOLD BY NATURE. POWERED BY INNOVATION.

A landscape for us: creatives, founders, builders, and doers. Where next-generation industries scale, talent thrives, City Center comes to life, and climate and community values lead the way—powering Vermont's next economy.

GOALS

These five goals define the direction of South Burlington's economic strategy. Each addresses a critical area of opportunity: fostering innovation in target sectors, retaining and attracting talent, creating vibrant places, preparing for strategic growth, and building execution capacity. They are designed to work together, guiding coordinated action across departments and organizations while setting the foundation for long-term economic success that reflects South Burlington's distinctive character and values.



GOAL 1: **Bold Innovation That Powers the Future.**

We will grow South Burlington into a hub for leading-edge, clean, and high-value innovation.



GOAL 2: **A Place Where Talent Belongs.**

We will make South Burlington the place where diverse talent and entrepreneurs stay and succeed.



GOAL 3: **A Destination That Draws You In.**

We will transform South Burlington into a vibrant destination that appeals to residents and visitors alike.



GOAL 4: **Ready for What's Next.**

We will prepare South Burlington to welcome quality growth and investment—with aligned processes, ready sites, and the tools to support them.



GOAL 5: **Built to Deliver.**

We will build an economic development team to deliver on South Burlington's potential.



HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE'RE SUCCEEDING?

Success in economic development isn't just about launching programs or announcing projects. It's about delivering visible, lasting change that improves people's lives and strengthens the community's future. This strategy is built to show results, not just activity. To that end, we've identified a clear set of outcomes that will help South Burlington measure what matters most: Are residents finding quality career pathways and choosing to stay? Are businesses expanding and investing in the community? Is the city's identity gaining recognition, and do residents feel proud of what's being built?

These indicators are designed to track real progress over time and demonstrate that the strategy is working—not just in plans and meetings, but in people's daily experiences and in the city's growing economic strength. If we're executing this strategy successfully, we'll see it in a more dynamic workforce, a diverse and growing business community, stronger civic identity and regional leadership, and a tax base that gives the city enhanced capacity to invest in its future.

TALENT STAYS AND GROWS HERE

More South Burlington residents—especially young professionals and working families—are staying, thriving, and finding career pathways in the city's evolving economy.

BUSINESSES ARE SCALING IN SOUTH BURLINGTON

Expansions, relocations, and new ventures are growing in target sectors and choosing South Burlington as a place to build long-term.

RESIDENTS FEEL CONNECTED TO PLACE

Residents see South Burlington as a community where quality of life, civic life, and identity are aligned—backed by vibrant public spaces, local businesses, and inclusive opportunities to participate.

INVESTMENT REFLECTS OUR VALUES

Development is high-quality, climate-aligned, and fiscally balanced—with a strong mix of commercial, residential, and clean industry investment strengthening South Burlington's future.

GOAL 1

Bold Innovation That Powers the Future.
We will grow South Burlington into a hub for leading-edge, clean, high-value innovation.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington is home to some of Vermont's most promising innovation assets—from electric aviation to next-generation chips. The city sits at the center of a clean, climate-aligned economy, anchored by companies like BETA Technologies and OnLogic, and supported by institutional partners like the University of Vermont. With the Tech Hub, South Burlington has the opportunity to lead in innovation that drives both economic competitiveness and climate progress—but doing so will require coordination, investment, and a strategy for scale and commercialization.





STRATEGIES

- 1.1** Launch sector partnerships in aviation, life sciences, and chip manufacturing to drive workforce development and supply chain growth.
- 1.2** Anchor Vermont's Tech Hub by collaborating with the University of Vermont and GlobalFoundries to elevate South Burlington's leadership in federal innovation efforts.
- 1.3** Create an Innovation District near the airport to support electric aviation, clean-tech manufacturing, and applied R&D.
- 1.4** Support early-stage companies through a City Center innovation hub by launching or partnering on a public-private accelerator or incubator.
- 1.5** Tell South Burlington's innovation story to promote it as a leading-edge hub for R&D and commercialization.

STRATEGY DETAILS



STRATEGY 1.1

Launch sector partnerships in aviation, life sciences, and chip manufacturing to drive workforce development and supply chain growth.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington already has momentum in key innovation sectors—electric aviation, life sciences, and chip manufacturing—with major employers, university partners, and global relevance. The groundwork is there: detailed cluster analysis has highlighted the city's potential to lead in these industries. But capturing that opportunity requires structure. Sector partnerships can move the ecosystem from informal alignment to focused collaboration—defining shared needs, building talent pipelines, and attracting new suppliers. When done right, these partnerships become the scaffolding for a more competitive, coordinated, and future-ready economy—one rooted in South Burlington's values and strengths.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Map stakeholders across all three sectors—including employers, education and training partners, suppliers, and support organizations—to ensure early inclusion and clarity.
 - Establishes the foundation for durable, cross-sector collaboration
- Establish standing sector groups for aviation, life sciences, and chips, with clear convener roles and shared leadership.
 - Provides structure, ownership, and a consistent forum for progress
- Conduct a SWOT and ecosystem scan for each sector to identify talent needs, supplier gaps, and infrastructure priorities.
 - Builds on existing cluster analysis to ground the work in real opportunities and constraints
- Develop an action agenda for each group focused on two to three initiatives like supplier outreach, joint training, or curriculum alignment.
 - Turns shared priorities into clear, measurable next steps

STRATEGY 1.2

Anchor Vermont's Tech Hub by collaborating with the University of Vermont and GlobalFoundries to elevate South Burlington's leadership in federal innovation efforts.

WHY IT MATTERS

The Vermont Tech Hub represents one of the state's most significant federal innovation investments, and South Burlington is at the geographic and economic heart of it. With UVM and GlobalFoundries anchoring the application, and a growing ecosystem of clean tech and semiconductor firms nearby, South Burlington is uniquely positioned to lead. But visibility alone isn't enough. By stepping up as a civic partner, the city can help shape how this initiative takes root—securing its place as the Tech Hub's home base and ensuring the benefits of federal investment flow through its economy, workforce, and built environment.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Support the Tech Hub resubmission by providing letters of support, convening partners, and reinforcing South Burlington's civic and geographic leadership role.
 - Strengthens the application and ensures South Burlington is visibly at the table
- Help identify potential sites in South Burlington for a Tech Hub headquarters or shared innovation space.
 - Positions the city to host core functions of the initiative and capture long-term value
- Serve as an active civic partner by designating a liaison, attending core convenings, and aligning city messaging with Tech Hub goals.
 - Builds credibility, streamlines communication, and deepens South Burlington's leadership in Vermont's innovation ecosystem



STRATEGY 1.3

Create an Innovation District near the airport to support electric aviation, clean-tech manufacturing, and applied R&D.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington has a rare opportunity to shape a district where climate-aligned industries, advanced manufacturing, and research come together, and electric aviation is leading the charge. With BETA Technologies anchoring this momentum and Burlington International Airport as a unique asset, the city can create an Innovation District that draws in suppliers, startups, and R&D partners. But this isn't just about one company. It's about using that momentum to build the physical, economic, and collaborative infrastructure that supports a broader clean-tech ecosystem—one that keeps South Burlington at the forefront of Vermont's innovation economy.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Review best practices from innovation districts in comparable cities—especially those focused on clean-tech, aviation, or applied R&D.
 - Provides tested models for combining land use, workforce, and business development strategies
- Visit peer districts to explore how other cities have structured successful innovation ecosystems around anchor firms and regional assets.
 - Generates actionable insights to shape South Burlington's approach
- Engage sector partners like BETA, UVM, and local suppliers to understand space, infrastructure, and collaboration needs.
 - Grounds the vision in real demand and positions South Burlington as a responsive civic partner
- In partnership with regional stakeholders, consider hiring a consultant to develop an innovation district strategy that includes land use, infrastructure, programming, and economic development tools.
 - Ensures the district isn't just a physical zone—but a platform for industry growth, workforce development, and collaboration



STRATEGY 1.4

Support early-stage companies through a City Center innovation hub by launching or partnering on a public-private accelerator or incubator.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington is building Vermont's newest downtown, and it has the chance to anchor it in innovation. With UVM looking to expand its role in regional commercialization, City Center could become a natural landing pad for early-stage companies, university spinouts, and climate-aligned startups. Creating an innovation hub here wouldn't just provide space; it would signal that South Burlington is a civic laboratory, a place where next-generation ventures can launch, grow, and stay. By leveraging public-private models and aligning with UVM's goals, the city can transform City Center into a visible platform for experimentation, entrepreneurship, and inclusive economic growth.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Convene UVM, city leadership, and key innovation partners to discuss shared goals for entrepreneurship and off-campus commercialization.
 - Builds alignment around a joint vision and defines roles early
- Review public-private innovation hub models in peer cities—including university-led accelerators and civic-university partnerships.
 - Surfaces practical approaches for governance, programming, and funding
- Mobilize space opportunities in City Center that could host a flexible innovation hub, with coworking, incubation, or prototyping space.
 - Grounds the vision in a real, accessible location for early activation
- Reach a preliminary agreement or MOU with lead partners to explore and advance the concept.
 - Moves from concept to planning, setting up the partnership for action



STRATEGY 1.5

Tell South Burlington's innovation story to promote it as a leading-edge hub for R&D and commercialization.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington is already home to cutting-edge companies, advanced research, and a values-driven innovation economy. But those strengths are still too quiet. To compete for talent, investment, and recognition, the city needs to own—and share—its story. A dedicated innovation brand, paired with clear messaging and professional materials, can help South Burlington stand out in Vermont and beyond. Whether it's a site selector pitch, a Tech Hub meeting, or a national conference, South Burlington should show up with a clear voice, a unified platform, and a compelling reason to invest.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Collaborate with city communications staff to develop a unified innovation identity—such as InnovateSB or Invest South Burlington.
 - Creates a recognizable, city-aligned platform for all economic storytelling
- Define the city's innovation value proposition through messaging that reflects its climate leadership, advanced industries, and civic energy.
 - Clarifies what sets South Burlington apart for companies, partners, and investors
- Use the platform to highlight local success stories—from BETA and OnLogic to student researchers and early-stage startups.
 - Puts a human face on innovation and builds community pride
- Develop a flexible toolkit with visuals, data, and sector-specific materials for use in site selection outreach, grant applications, and conferences.
 - Equips city staff and partners with reusable, professional assets





MEASURING IMPACT AND SUCCESS

ESTABLISHED SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Track the activity of sector partnerships, including meeting frequency, participant representation, and the number of initiatives advanced.

NEW FIRMS AND JOBS IN TARGET SECTORS

Measure growth in company count, employment, and average wages across aerospace, life sciences, and chip manufacturing.

INNOVATION VISIBILITY

Monitor visibility of South Burlington's innovation brand through media coverage, strategic partnerships, and online presence.

This innovation-focused work will create high-value jobs that give talented professionals compelling reasons to stay and build careers here, while generating the economic activity needed to bring energy and vitality to City Center and other key destinations. As these target sectors grow and attract investment, they will drive demand for streamlined development processes and ready sites—all requiring dedicated capacity to coordinate and deliver.

GOAL 2

A Place Where Talent Belongs. We will make South Burlington the place where diverse talent and entrepreneurs stay and succeed.

WHY IT MATTERS

While Vermont's population ages, ours is getting younger. While other cities struggle with brain drain, we're attracting the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs. While communities across New England debate climate action, we've made it central to our economic identity. This convergence of demographic momentum, innovation assets, and climate leadership creates an unprecedented opportunity—but only if we act decisively. Standing still in a rapidly evolving economy isn't neutral; it's a choice to let others define our future.

South Burlington is one of Vermont's youngest and most educated cities, but retaining talent requires more than a strong resume pipeline. Employers still struggle to hire locally, and young professionals face barriers to staying—from housing costs and childcare shortages to limited opportunities for connection. At the same time, climate-conscious workers and entrepreneurs seek communities that reflect their values. Making South Burlington a place where diverse talent and small businesses can stay, grow, and thrive means investing in affordability, access, and a deeper sense of belonging.





STRATEGIES

- 2.1** Align workforce and economic development efforts to ensure local training, education, and reskilling pathways reflect the city's evolving industry base.
- 2.2** Expand housing and childcare access to make South Burlington a viable place to live and work for families and early-career professionals.
- 2.3** Launch a young professionals initiative to connect emerging leaders through networking, service, and career-building opportunities rooted in place.
- 2.4** Support the small business and entrepreneurial ecosystem by mapping resources, closing gaps, and creating a unified platform that supports founders at every stage.



STRATEGY DETAILS

STRATEGY 2.1

Align workforce and economic development efforts to ensure local training, education, and reskilling pathways reflect the city's evolving industry base.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington's economy is changing fast, with new opportunities in electric aviation, biotech, clean tech, and chip manufacturing. But access to those jobs isn't guaranteed, especially for residents without four-year degrees. Employers in skilled trades, health care, and hospitality are also struggling to find and retain workers. Right now, education, workforce, and business leaders all want to work together, but they need a shared framework. Aligning these efforts will help residents move into high-demand roles, close equity gaps, and ensure that South Burlington's economic growth is matched by meaningful opportunity for those who live and work here.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Convene a South Burlington Talent Alignment Roundtable that meets quarterly and includes education, workforce, and employer partners.
 - Creates a consistent, sustained forum to coordinate priorities and track progress
- Map current training programs and credentials against South Burlington's growth sectors to identify alignment gaps and high-impact additions.
 - Provides a baseline for targeted updates and new program development
- Collaborate with regional sector partnerships in health care, skilled trades, and tech to scale pathways and share best practices.
 - Taps into existing infrastructure while tailoring efforts to South Burlington's needs





STRATEGY 2.2

Expand housing and childcare access to make South Burlington a viable place to live and work for families and early-career professionals.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington is building more housing than any city in the region, but cost and choice remain major barriers. Young professionals, families with kids, and even local teachers and nurses are struggling to find homes they can afford. At the same time, the lack of affordable, quality childcare is holding back workers—especially women—from fully participating in the economy. These are not just social issues; they are economic infrastructure challenges. Solving them is essential to retaining talent, attracting employers, and ensuring South Burlington remains a place where working households can put down roots and thrive.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Develop a South Burlington housing action plan that aligns with economic development needs to achieve adopted housing production targets.
 - Reinforces the city's commitment to housing as workforce infrastructure
- Support regional partners in increasing the supply of childcare to meet South Burlington's availability, affordability, and workforce needs.
 - Grounds policy and funding strategies in data, demand, and collaboration

STRATEGY 2.3

Launch a young professionals initiative to connect emerging leaders through networking, service, and career-building opportunities rooted in place.

WHY IT MATTERS

Talent retention isn't just about jobs; it's about belonging too. For South Burlington to keep its early-career professionals, it needs to create visible pathways into community life. That means helping young people build social capital, find mentorship, and see themselves reflected in the city's future. Civic connection, community-building, and leadership opportunities are core components of economic development, especially in a place where so many young residents are new to the region. A dedicated young professionals initiative can help root this generation in South Burlington and grow the civic bench that shapes what comes next.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Join forces with the South Burlington Recreation and Parks team to align with existing programs and bring a placemaking lens to talent retention.
 - Leverages current infrastructure and reduces duplication of effort
- Review what's working in regional young professional networks (e.g., Burlington Young Professionals) and identify partnership opportunities.
 - Builds on successful models rather than starting from scratch
- Co-host a launch event or seasonal series in partnership with a regional young professionals group to test engagement and build early momentum.
 - Creates visibility and low-barrier opportunities for connection
- Develop a recruitment strategy for city boards, commissions, and civic service focused on young and emerging leaders.
 - Makes city government more reflective of South Burlington's next generation



STRATEGY 2.4

Support the small business and entrepreneurial ecosystem by mapping resources, closing gaps, and creating a unified platform that supports founders at every stage.

WHY IT MATTERS

Small businesses are the backbone of South Burlington's economy and a powerful source of innovation, inclusion, and community character. But for many aspiring founders, the support landscape is fragmented and hard to navigate. Whether it's permitting, mentorship, capital access, or just knowing where to start, entrepreneurs need a clearer on-ramp. By mapping the ecosystem, closing resource gaps, and creating a unified digital entry point, South Burlington can help more residents launch and grow businesses, especially those historically underrepresented in entrepreneurship. Supporting small businesses is economic development that sticks, because it's built from within.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Map South Burlington's entrepreneurial ecosystem to identify existing resources, gaps, and partners serving local founders.
 - Creates a clear baseline to inform future programming and coordination
- Develop a "How to Start a Business" guide and resource portal housed within the city's innovation brand platform (e.g., InnovateSB).
 - Provides a simple, centralized entry point for entrepreneurs at every stage
- Host workshops and office hours with regional partners like VCET, Vermont SBDC, and CWE to bring direct support into South Burlington.
 - Expands access to technical assistance and builds stronger local relationships
- Promote and celebrate small business stories through city communications and community events.
 - Builds visibility, fosters local pride, and reinforces entrepreneurship as a core part of South Burlington's identity





MEASURING IMPACT AND SUCCESS

GROWTH OF 25 TO 44-YEAR-OLD WORKING-AGE POPULATION

Measure growth in the number and share of residents aged 25 to 44.

SMALL BUSINESS FORMATION

Track small business formation rate over time.

NEW HOUSING UNITS APPROVED OR COMPLETED

Monitor the number and type of new housing units—particularly mixed-income or workforce-oriented—delivered to support population and employment growth.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT RATES

Track educational attainment levels over time.

Becoming a place where diverse talent and entrepreneurs thrive will strengthen the workforce pipeline that powers innovation sector growth, while the young professionals and families who choose to stay will become the customers and community energy that activate destinations across the city. This talent retention work directly informs how we plan for quality growth and shapes the internal coordination needed to deliver on multiple fronts simultaneously.

GOAL 3

A Destination That Draws You In.
We will transform South Burlington into a vibrant destination that appeals to residents and visitors alike.

WHY IT MATTERS

Small businesses are more than storefronts; they're the engines of South Burlington's local economy. They create jobs, serve neighborhoods, build wealth, and shape the character of the community. When small businesses thrive, so do the people behind them: the entrepreneurs, families, and workers who call South Burlington home.

But strong ecosystems don't happen by accident. They require intentional support, from access to capital and space to mentorship and streamlined processes. By investing in entrepreneurship, South Burlington can unlock innovation, strengthen local ownership, and create a more resilient and inclusive economy—one built for the future.

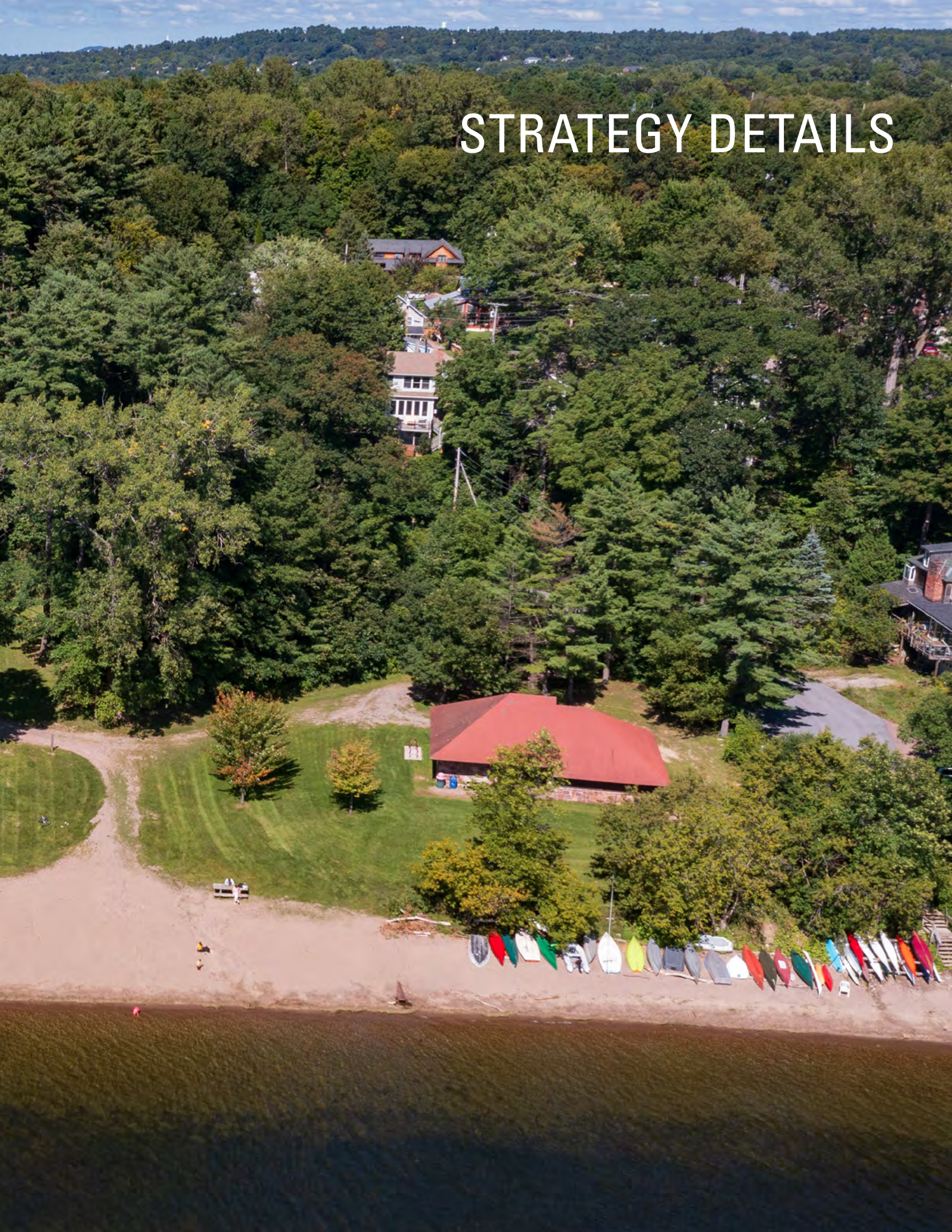




STRATEGIES

- 3.1** Activate City Center as a year-round civic and entrepreneurial hub through partnerships, programming, and business activity that bring the district to life.
- 3.2** Support the transformation of University Mall into a mixed-use district that blends housing, retail, and public space.
- 3.3** Launch a hospitality and placemaking initiative to enhance both the visitor and resident experience.
- 3.4** Strengthen South Burlington's destination appeal by working with regional partners to promote the city as more than a gateway—an experience in its own right.
- 3.5** Invest in active transportation infrastructure to create a destination shaped by both mobility and quality of life.

STRATEGY DETAILS



STRATEGY 3.1

Activate City Center as a year-round civic and entrepreneurial hub through partnerships, programming, and business activity that bring the district to life.

WHY IT MATTERS

City Center is more than a development project; it's the biggest civic investment South Burlington has ever made in itself. The district brings together housing, public space, and anchor institutions like the Library and City Hall to form the city's long-awaited downtown. But infrastructure alone won't create identity. To become a true civic and entrepreneurial hub, City Center must be activated—through regular programming, local business energy, and everyday community connection. With new homes and retail-ready spaces coming online, now is the moment to turn City Center into a lived-in place where South Burlington's values, culture, and future visibly come together.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Develop an annual calendar of events—markets, performances, festivals, and civic gatherings—to activate City Center year-round.
 - Creates reliable foot traffic and establishes the district as South Burlington's community hub
- Intentionally recruit local businesses and entrepreneurs that reflect South Burlington's identity and values—curating a mix of food, retail, and cultural experiences.
 - Brings distinctiveness, character, and energy to the ground floor
- Create a City Center programming partnership with Parks & Rec, the library, schools, and nonprofits to coordinate space use and events.
 - Builds shared ownership and ensures inclusive, ongoing activation
- Use City Center as a civic testbed for public art, placemaking pilots, and creative uses of public space.
 - Reinforces the district as a place for experimentation, expression, and everyday connection



STRATEGY 3.2

Support the transformation of University Mall into a mixed-use district that blends housing, retail, and public space.

WHY IT MATTERS

The University Mall is one of the largest commercial sites in Vermont and one of South Burlington's biggest redevelopment opportunities. As the city updates its form-based code, this is a critical moment to rethink what's possible on the site: not just a new version of retail, but a vibrant district that integrates housing, public space, and neighborhood-serving businesses. Done right, the transformation of the mall could signal a new era of walkable, mixed-use development in South Burlington. It's also a chance to show what bold reuse looks like—and to invite the community into the future of one of the city's most visible places.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Complete updates to the city's form-based code with specific guidance for large-site redevelopment and urban-scale infill.
 - Creates a policy foundation that enables walkable, mixed-use transformation of the mall site
- Continue building a collaborative relationship with the University Mall owner to explore long-term redevelopment opportunities and align around shared goals.
 - Positions the city as a trusted, forward-looking partner in reimagining the site
- Launch a temporary activation or pop-up project at the Mall to showcase new uses—such as food vendors, outdoor events, or art installations.
 - Demonstrates what's possible and builds public imagination for future redevelopment

STRATEGY 3.3

Launch a hospitality and placemaking initiative to enhance both the visitor and resident experience.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington sits at the crossroads of Vermont's most dynamic region, but first impressions matter in building lasting connections. Whether it's a business visitor exploring partnership opportunities, a family considering relocation, or residents seeking vibrant community spaces, the quality of their experience shapes how they see and engage with the city. Small investments in wayfinding, public art, welcoming spaces, and local storytelling can transform routine interactions into memorable moments that build pride, attract talent, and strengthen South Burlington's reputation as a place that cares about both residents and visitors. Great places aren't accidents—they're created through intentional hospitality that makes everyone feel they belong.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Launch the South Burlington Sprout Fund—a small-grant program to support community-driven placemaking and hospitality projects across the city.
 - Enables creative, visible enhancements that reflect local identity and improve the visitor experience
- Develop clear criteria for funding that prioritize public art, wayfinding, micro-venues, outdoor amenities, and small business-led welcome efforts.
 - Balances support for resident-driven ideas and hospitality improvements
- Use a Sprout Fund to enhance South Burlington's "front doors"—such as hotel corridors, trailheads, and commercial nodes.
 - Improves first impressions and builds pride of place in key visitor and resident touchpoints
- Promote the Sprout Fund as a platform for storytelling and civic creativity—celebrating funded projects and the people behind them.
 - Builds momentum, community pride, and a sense of shared authorship in South Burlington's evolving identity



STRATEGY 3.4

Strengthen South Burlington's destination appeal by working with regional partners to promote the city as more than a gateway—an experience in its own right.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington is home to the region's airport, its largest hotel cluster, and a growing list of reasons to stay. But for too long, it's been seen as a stopover—"not Burlington"—rather than a destination in its own right. That's changing. With City Center taking shape, trail networks expanding, and local businesses anchoring new experiences, South Burlington has the chance to tell a different story—one rooted in quality of life, creativity, and community. Working with regional tourism and marketing partners, the city can step more confidently into the visitor economy—and in doing so, build pride and economic return from the inside out.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Work with regional tourism and marketing partners (e.g., Hello Burlington, state agencies) to align messaging and elevate South Burlington as a stand-alone destination.
 - Leverages existing networks while amplifying the city's unique story
- Curate and promote a "Stay in South Burlington" experience guide featuring trails, events, restaurants, City Center programming, and Sprout Fund projects.
 - Connects emerging local assets into a cohesive, resident- and visitor-friendly narrative
- Integrate the city's voice and values into signage, wayfinding, and digital touchpoints across hotels, commercial areas, and public spaces.
 - Creates a more welcoming, consistent sense of place
- Celebrate South Burlington's local stories—business owners, artists, community leaders—as part of broader destination branding.
 - Reinforces identity and pride while making the city more memorable to visitors



STRATEGY 3.5

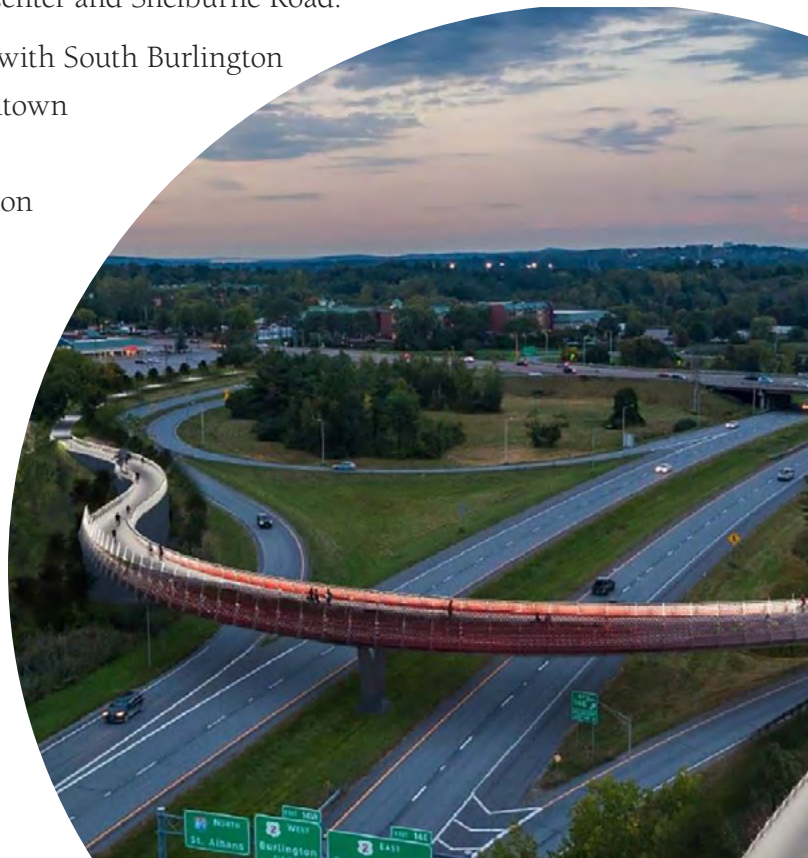
Invest in active transportation infrastructure to create a destination shaped by both mobility and quality of life.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington's trails, paths, and sidewalks aren't just infrastructure; they're part of its identity. With more residents choosing to walk, bike, or roll, and more visitors engaging with the city through its trail network and public spaces, investing in active transportation is a chance to shape how people experience the city. It's also an economic strategy: businesses thrive where people linger, and talent stays where mobility meets livability. By connecting neighborhoods, parks, City Center, and commercial areas through safe, accessible design, South Burlington can create a destination that prioritizes people—and reflects its values.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Advance implementation of South Burlington's Active Transportation Plan, starting with priority connections like the Exit 14 I-89 bike/ped bridge and key trail gaps between population centers, commercial areas, and innovation districts with high concentrations of employees.
 - Delivers on existing plans and visibly improves how people move through the city—on foot, bike, and wheels
- Establish a frequent transit link between City Center and Shelburne Road.
 - Builds access, livability, and community with South Burlington by creating access to the city's new downtown
- Build out transit service to better serve innovation districts and other high concentrations of employment.
 - Expands the pool of available workforce for employers and potential jobs for job seekers





MEASURING IMPACT AND SUCCESS

CITIZEN AND BUSINESS SATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF PLACE

Track responses from surveys measuring how residents and business owners view South Burlington's livability, public amenities, and sense of community.

NEW DESTINATION ASSETS OPENED

Count the number of new restaurants, entertainment venues, or experiential retail spaces launched in South Burlington.

PLACEMAKING EVENTS AND ACTIVATIONS HOSTED

Measure the number of public events, pop-ups, and cultural activations held in the city.

VISITORS IN THE CITY

Count overnight hotel stays in South Burlington.

Creating vibrant, authentic destinations provides the quality-of-place foundation that helps retain talent and attract the workforce needed for next-generation industries. The placemaking and infrastructure investments that make South Burlington a true destination also support the broader economic ecosystem, requiring sophisticated project management and development processes that accommodate both innovation and community-building.

GOAL 4

Ready for What's Next. We will prepare South Burlington to welcome quality growth and investment—with aligned processes, ready sites, and the tools to support them.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington has the opportunity to shape the kind of growth it wants: high-quality, climate-friendly, and consistent with community values. With strong momentum and demand, the city is well-positioned to attract investment. But being ready means more than having land and infrastructure; it means having the tools to market those assets clearly. Aligned processes, development-ready sites, and strong storytelling will help South Burlington welcome investment that reflects its identity, strengthens its economy, and supports a more resilient future.





STRATEGIES

- 4.1** Create and seek out opportunities to partner on redevelopment projects that advance City Center, including the Williston Road corridor as the Gateway to Vermont, creating a welcoming environment.
- 4.2** Ensure permitting processes are clear, efficient, and supportive of business and development.
- 4.3** Maintain a real-time inventory of commercial and industrial space to support business expansion, retention, and site selection.
- 4.4** Equip the city with tools to promote investment that reflect South Burlington's climate-smart and innovation-aligned identity.
- 4.5** Establish a neighborhood center/downtown along the Shelburne Road corridor to complement City Center and create a focus area for the southwestern part of the city.

STRATEGY DETAILS



STRATEGY 4.1

Create and seek out opportunities to partner on redevelopment projects that advance City Center, including the Williston Road corridor as the Gateway to Vermont, creating a welcoming environment.

WHY IT MATTERS

Exit 14 is the front door to South Burlington and one of the busiest, most recognizable intersections in Vermont. But right now, it's defined by congestion, outdated land use, and a lack of clear identity. As development pressures rise and interest in the corridor grows, South Burlington has a timely opportunity to shape what comes next. A clear redevelopment vision can help the city coordinate land use, infrastructure, and business attraction efforts, while reinforcing climate, mobility, and design goals. This is more than a transportation node. It's a chance to make a statement about what South Burlington values and where it's headed.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Unlock continued infill development in the TIF District along San Remo Drive, Dorset Street, and on Hinesburg Road, partnering with outside resources as appropriate to spur private investment.
 - Ensures the continued development of the downtown and the fiscal viability of the TIF District
- Seek opportunities along Williston Road to partner with private sector developers on transportation improvements aligned with the community's redevelopment vision.
 - Restructures the corridor as welcoming all to Vermont while integrating US Route 2 into City Center and South Burlington
- Incorporate key transportation projects—like Exit 14 bike/ped improvements and transit connections—into the redevelopment of City Center.
 - Links land use and infrastructure planning for greater impact and funding leverage



STRATEGY 4.2

Ensure permitting processes are clear, efficient, and supportive of business and development.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington has strong standards, but even the best standards can stall good projects without clear processes behind them. As development interest grows—particularly in innovation sectors and climate-aligned projects—South Burlington has an opportunity to modernize how it supports responsible growth. Clear timelines, transparent guidance, and better communication between departments can help reduce frustration, encourage reinvestment, and show that South Burlington is ready for quality development. Getting this right is about more than efficiency; it's about aligning internal systems with the city's external goals.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Engage a consultant to conduct a permitting and development process audit in collaboration with city staff.
 - Brings objective insight into where the process can be streamlined, clarified, or better aligned with South Burlington's goals
- Develop a "concierge" service for priority economic development projects, providing tailored support and cross-department coordination.
 - Helps high-impact proposals navigate city processes more efficiently and successfully
- Host a developer and sector partner roundtable to gather feedback on permitting timelines, communication, and transparency.
 - Builds trust and surfaces ideas for improvement directly from the field
- Create and publish updated permitting guides and checklists based on the audit findings.
 - Makes the system more user-friendly and reinforces the city's readiness to support quality growth

STRATEGY 4.3

Maintain a real-time inventory of commercial and industrial space to support business expansion, retention, and site selection.

WHY IT MATTERS

For South Burlington to compete for business growth and investment, it needs to know—and show—what's available. Right now, information about commercial and industrial space is fragmented across brokers, developers, and internal files. A centralized, up-to-date inventory helps city staff respond to inquiries faster, support existing businesses looking to grow, and market the city more effectively to prospective employers and developers. In a high-demand, low-vacancy region like Chittenden County, making it easier to match businesses with available space is both a competitive advantage and a signal that South Burlington is open for business.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Invest in a commercial real estate data platform or mapping tool to maintain a real-time inventory of available sites.
 - Enables faster response to site selection inquiries and supports proactive outreach
- Partner with brokers, property owners, and developers to share listings and regularly verify site status.
 - Builds trust and ensures the inventory stays accurate and representative
- Integrate the inventory into the city's economic development website (e.g., Invest South Burlington) for public visibility.
 - Makes it easy for prospective businesses, site selectors, and partners to explore local opportunities
- Use the inventory as a tool to track trends in demand, pricing, availability, and space needs by sector.
 - Helps inform land use planning, recruitment efforts, and small business support



STRATEGY 4.4

Equip the city with tools to promote investment that reflect South Burlington's climate-smart and innovation-aligned identity.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington isn't just trying to grow—it's trying to grow in a way that reflects its values. From climate leadership to clean manufacturing and advanced mobility, the city is attracting a new wave of investment. But to shape that growth, it needs the right tools: incentives that reward sustainability, marketing that reflects its innovation strengths, and processes that guide developers toward climate-smart outcomes. When cities align their values with how they attract and approve investment, they don't just get more growth—they get the right kind of growth.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Incorporate clear language into RFIs, RFPs, and investment briefs that outlines expectations for energy efficiency, mobility access, and environmental performance.
 - Makes the city's values visible and actionable for prospective partners
- Create a one-pager or investment brief highlighting South Burlington's clean industry strengths, talent assets, and climate-forward identity.
 - Provides a sharp, branded tool for outreach to developers, funders, and site selectors
- Codify climate-aligned criteria in local policies, incentives, and project evaluation processes.
 - Embeds the city's values directly into how investment decisions are made



STRATEGY 4.5

Establish a neighborhood center/downtown along the Shelburne Road corridor to complement City Center and create a focus area for the southwestern part of the city.

WHY IT MATTERS

While City Center anchors the community's downtown vision, the Shelburne Road area could become a complementary hub that brings services, housing, and employment closer to where people already live and work. Creating a neighborhood center here isn't just about development—it's about building complete communities where people can access daily needs without long car trips, supporting both climate goals and quality of life. With the Champlain Parkway and other transportation investments coming online, South Burlington has a window to shape this corridor intentionally, ensuring new growth strengthens community connections rather than just adding more sprawl.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Engage local stakeholders and the State of Vermont to prepare a plan and integrate zoning, mobility, and design guidance through workshops, business outreach, and public design sessions.
 - Creates a climate-aligned plan to expand and spark development capacity and supercharge community and business energy, meeting residential, business, institutional, and property owner needs
- Seek state designation as a Center to leverage state programs along the corridor.
 - Aligns the city with state efforts, enables the city to access outside funding through state programs, and reduces the development costs on housing development
- Incorporate key transportation projects—like Shelburne Road crossings, bicycle and pedestrian connections, and links to the Champlain Parkway—into the plan.
 - Builds on current and future investments for vehicular access and active, climate-friendly transportation
- Plan for future public spaces such as parks, recreation, or other civic facilities.
 - Catalyzes and anchors private sector development while increasing quality of life for new and existing residents and employees in the area



MEASURING IMPACT AND SUCCESS

COMMERCIAL SITE AVAILABILITY

Track the number of development-ready commercial and industrial sites, updated and promoted through a real-time inventory.

PERMITTING AND DEVELOPMENT TIMELINES

Measure the average time to complete key permitting and approval processes for commercial projects.

SITE SELECTOR ENGAGEMENT

Track outreach to and engagement with site selectors, brokers, and prospective investors considering South Burlington.

Preparing for strategic growth with aligned processes and ready sites enables the physical infrastructure needed for innovation districts, mixed-use development, and the housing that supports a thriving workforce. This growth-readiness work accelerates destination-building projects while requiring dedicated staff capacity to coordinate complex, multi-faceted development initiatives.

GOAL 5

Built to Deliver. We will build an economic development team to deliver on South Burlington's potential.

WHY IT MATTERS

A great strategy means little without the capacity to deliver. South Burlington has big ambitions—and the assets to match. But delivering on those ambitions will require internal capacity that's as focused and future-ready as the strategy itself. Today, South Burlington is underbuilt for the work ahead. This goal is about aligning leadership, structure, and systems so that strategy turns into results. The city currently has no dedicated economic development team. Many of its economic activities are diffused across planning, permitting, and community engagement. Peer cities with high-impact outcomes—especially in housing, small business, and innovation—have invested in internal leadership, interdepartmental coordination, and public-private partnerships to get results. Building that capacity—staff, systems, and tools—will ensure South Burlington can lead proactively, respond to opportunity, and deliver on its vision with confidence and credibility.





STRATEGIES

- 5.1** Establish an economic development function by creating dedicated staffing or a coordinated internal team to lead implementation of the strategic plan.
- 5.2** Improve internal coordination with digital tools and cross-training to support timely project delivery.
- 5.3** Strengthen South Burlington's voice in regional and state economic strategy by participating actively in shared initiatives and collective planning efforts.

SOUTH BURLINGTON

PUBLIC LIBRARY & CITY HALL

STRATEGY
DETAILS



STRATEGY 5.1

Establish an economic development function by creating dedicated staffing or a coordinated internal team to lead implementation of the strategic plan.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington has big ambitions and now, a clear plan. But without a dedicated function to lead implementation, those ambitions risk stalling. The city currently lacks full-time economic development staff and formal structures to manage business engagement, recruitment, retention, and strategy execution. Establishing an internal team or designated staff member sends a clear signal: South Burlington is ready to lead growth on its own terms. It also allows the city to respond to opportunities faster, coordinate across departments, and build relationships that turn plans into outcomes. Cities with clear goals need someone clearly responsible for delivering them.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- City Manager's office to partner with a consultant to design the structure, scope, and goals of South Burlington's economic development function.
 - Ensures the model fits city operations and aligns with strategic priorities
- Identify key skill sets and resourcing needs across business engagement, strategy implementation, and internal coordination.
 - Builds a clear foundation for staffing and support systems
- Make an initial strategic hire to pilot the function—focused on business retention, project coordination, or innovation partnerships.
 - Allows the city to build capacity while testing and refining the model



STRATEGY 5.2

Improve internal coordination with digital tools and cross-training to support timely project delivery.

WHY IT MATTERS

Economic development doesn't live in one department—it cuts across planning, permitting, infrastructure, communications, and finance. In a city like South Burlington, where internal resources are lean, improving coordination is critical to getting things done. Simple digital tools, shared project dashboards, and cross-department training can help ensure that staff are aligned, timelines are clear, and opportunities don't get stuck between silos. This is about working smarter—not just faster—and creating a system that matches the city's ambition with execution.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Adopt a shared project tracking tool to coordinate key economic development efforts across departments.
 - Keeps staff aligned and projects moving
- Provide basic cross-training annually for staff involved in permitting, planning, and development-related roles.
 - Builds shared understanding and reduces bottlenecks
- Hold quarterly coordination check-ins between key departments.
 - Strengthens collaboration and problem-solving in real time



STRATEGY 5.3

Strengthen South Burlington's voice in regional and state economic strategy by participating actively in shared initiatives and collective planning efforts.

WHY IT MATTERS

South Burlington is one of Vermont's fastest-growing and most economically vital cities, and it should be at the table when big decisions are made. From Tech Hub planning to workforce strategy and regional housing efforts, South Burlington has both a strong stake and valuable insight to contribute. By engaging consistently and collaboratively with state and regional partners, the city can help shape strategies that reflect local priorities, while also positioning itself as a leader in Vermont's next economy.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

- Host a quarterly regional gathering of economic development and destination partners to share updates, align priorities, and strengthen collaboration.
 - Builds stronger regional alignment and gives South Burlington a consistent leadership role
- Participate actively in regional and state planning efforts related to Tech Hub, workforce, housing, and innovation.
 - Ensures South Burlington's priorities are reflected in broader strategy conversations
- Designate a city point person for external strategy engagement to track opportunities and represent South Burlington in key forums.
 - Increases visibility and streamlines communication with regional and state partners





MEASURING IMPACT AND SUCCESS

PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL AND STATE EFFORTS

Track the number of collaborative economic development or destination initiatives South Burlington actively contributes to each year.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITY

Measure progress toward key action items, including staffing, cross-departmental alignment, and priority project advancement.

Building internal economic development capacity creates the dedicated expertise needed to execute sector partnerships, coordinate workforce initiatives, manage complex placemaking projects, and oversee strategic growth preparation. This foundational work enables everything else—providing the municipal infrastructure to turn integrated strategy into measurable community impact.

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South Burlington Business Association

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Vermont Business Roundtable

Vermont GaN Tech Hub

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This report and strategic planning process was led by Civic Solutions Partnership (CivicSol) on behalf of the City of South Burlington. CivicSol is a national economic development and strategy firm that partners with communities to unlock opportunity, strengthen competitiveness, and deliver results. With deep experience in workforce strategy, business growth, and place-based investment, CivicSol works alongside public and private leaders to turn insight into action, supporting the growth of more than 100 communities across the country. For more information visit www.civicsol.com.

