**CCA Economic Development Work Group History**

The CCA is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that works with community members and other organizations to enhance the quality of community life for those residing, visiting or doing business in Cabot. Community economic development is an obvious strategy to implement the CCA mission and here is a timeline of how CCA participation in and leadership of these efforts has evolved.

In June of 2010, economic development was on the minds of community leaders when a **community-wide survey,** conducted by the Cabot Planning Commission, revealed that residents identified “a healthy economy” as the number one factor in maintaining a high quality of life in Cabot.

In early 2011, the Cabot Coalition facilitated meetings of community organizations to explore ways to collaborate and share information. These meetings generated interest in creating a community and economic development plan and a committee to implement initiatives to create a more vibrant, healthy and sustainable community and local economy. Projects completed by this group, called Cabot Worx, included a business locator map for tourists visiting the Creamery visitor center and submitting grant applications for community development projects.

Economic Development is included in multiple goals of a comprehensive update of the Cabot Town Plan adopted in June 2012.

In September of 2012, the CCA facilitated the Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) **Community Visit** in Cabot. Many priorities were identified, but the top three were to:

· Develop a Cabot Agricultural Network

· Develop a Community Arts Center

· Improve Community Communications

An additional priority that received attention was economic growth within the community. Economic development was not listed as a priority in the Community Visit Report and Action Plan because it was already included in the 2012 Cabot Town Plan, adopted just a few months before the Community Visit.

The three priorities in the VCRD report are essential economic development tools and continue to be actively addressed through programs of the CCA - the Greater Cabot Working Landscape Network, Cabot Arts, and *The Cabot Chronicle*.

In 2014, the Town of Cabot applied for and received **Village center designation,** which supports the revitalization efforts of small and medium-sized historic centers. This designation makes it possible for smaller communities to access [financial incentives, training and technical assistance](https://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/CD/CPR/CPR-VC-Designation-Benefits.pdf) needed to attract new business and enhance village vitality.

In 2016, after months of work and countless public discussions, a comprehensive update to the 1997 zoning bylaws was put before the citizens for consideration and was subsequently rejected by voters. The zoning update contained specific provisions that were intended to help address economic development and provide a mechanism for revitalization in the designated village center.

Additionally in 2016, a partnership between the CCA and Town of Cabot began in 2016 with the submission of an application to the VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development for a Municipal Planning Grant. Cabot was awarded the grant and work began in 2017 to evaluate the constraints and opportunities for Cabot’s Designated Village Center, to create a plan to revitalize the village and solidify its place as the economic and civic hub of the community. The Cabot Village Revitalization Plan was completed in May 2018.

The CCA created the **Economic Development Work Group** (EDWG) in 2016 to prepare the grant application and facilitate the work funded by the grant. The EDWG included representatives from Town government including the Select Board, Conservation Commission, Planning Commission as well as village business owners and Cabot residents with a desire to support a new economy in Cabot that can compete with the pressures from online and box store retailers.

The EDWG is guided by the Tasks for Strategic Success outlined in the Cabot Village Revitalization Plan released in 2018. The EDWG was also tasked with developing a plan for the brown building at 3065 Main Street, which the CCA purchased in 2018 as this site is a contributing structure to future economic development in the village. In 2019, the EDWG commissioned an historical architectural review of the property to survey its existing conditions, history and possible improvements and use for the future. The EDWG also secured a grant to hire a consultant to assist the group with studying viable options for the site, the costs involved and identifying funding to assist with the selected project/s. The CCA sold the building in 2021 to a private investor interested in Cabot’s village revitalization.

The EDWG continues to implement some of the strategies identified in the Village Revitalization Plan (local Broadband connections and internet accessibility, recreational trails, and consolidation and/or strengthening festivals and arts events) and in 2022 is focused on workforce housing and childcare.

In 2019, the CCA further invested time and resources in initiating a new Municipal Planning Grant application that identified trails as a new and successful economic development tool to promote local recreation and connect the village with assets the State of VT is investing in – Molly’s Falls Pond State Park on Route 2 and the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail.

The CCA believes that as a community we need to establish a holistic approach to economic development (not just focused on tourism) that involves all key partners to identify strategies that will serve residents and visitors alike. If you are interested in learning more or getting involved with the CC or the Economic Development Work Group please email info@cabotvermont.org or call 802-279-4309.

**A History of Cabot’s Economic Development Strategies since 2010**

**2019** Building Assessment of 3065 Main Street by Vermont Integrated Architecture with support from the Preservation Trust of Vermont recommending demo and replacement of the structure

 Zoning Improvements to Village District approved

 Municipal Planning Grant for Recreation Trails awarded to map and expand recreational trails

**2018** Village Revitalization Plan complete, priorities include

· Support the community work to improve opportunities for trails-based recreation

· Improve coordination of arts programs/community events

· Address key buildings in village center

**2016** Municipal Planning Grant for Village Revitalization Plan awarded and CCA establishes its Economic Development Work Group

**2014** Cabot received Village center designation

**2012** Vermont Council on Rural Development Community Visit & Report, led by the CCA in partnership with the Town of Cabot. Priorities identified include:

· Develop a Cabot agricultural network

· Develop a community arts center

· Improve community communications

**2011** Cabot Worx—convened as part of the now defunct Cabot Coalition- to address the concerns of local business owners and the local economy. Cabot Worx disbanded in early 2012 and the CCA emerged as a community development organization.

**2010** Cabot Community Planning Survey conducted by the Cabot Planning Commission