Workforce Development

What We've Discussed:

- Job training for manufacturing
- Internships/experiential learning opportunities
- Need for coordination and buy-in for certificate programs so there is consistency and a clear path for students
- Need for collaboration between tech centers and community colleges
- Job training is for workers of all ages
- Need for better job fairs
- All fields (not just tech) need internship opportunities, such as government, theater, etc.
- Challenges with accessibility of existing programs due to extracurricular activities, available transport, etc.
- Need for improved messaging about the value of alternatives to four-year degrees

What We Know:

- Existing programs include Running Start, Pathways to Success, Shining Success, Dress for Success, WorkReadyNH. What else?
- Whelen Manufacturing already is and is happy to continue brining students in to see if they have an interest in a manufacturing career. It seems that laws restrict students younger than 15 from coming in to learn about careers.

Questions We Have:

- What is the legal process to have an internship with manufacturing companies?

Our Ideas:

- Identify businesses that would be interested in participating in a job training or shadow program
- Organize job shadows between schools and local companies.
- Look at other existing programs and best practices
  - Green Mountain Economic Development has a program that may be similar to what this group wants to pursue.
- Organize a Sullivan County Day for 8th and 9th graders to learn about jobs and get connected to employers for shadowing opportunities.

Regional Identity

What We've Discussed:

- Desire to change state-wide perception about Sullivan County
- Need to learn more about what we have to be proud of here in Sullivan County
- Need for a marketing plan for region
- Town and city centers struggling for vitality
- Too many empty storefronts
- Many residents shop outside the county

Questions We Have:

- How many storefronts are currently empty in Sullivan County's key business districts?
- What programs exist for motivating new businesses to move in?

Our Ideas:

- First step: Identify county assets via a crowdsourced mapping project. Get residents excited about the many strengths and high quality of life in the region.

Economic Infrastructure

What We've Discussed:

- Need for better public transit – Claremont to Lebanon
- Shortage of affordable housing
- Need to find out what the future needs and plans of existing business are

What We Know:

- Key transit stakeholders include Southwest Community Services, Vital Communities, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission; who else?

Questions We Have:

- Is funding for transit available and feasible?
- How can we work on housing?

Our Ideas:

- Survey large companies to get a better idea of their employee transit needs and if they would be willing to pay for transportation for employees
- Gather ridership data
- Identify missing housing stock
- High school renovation projects for housing