



## **Town and Village of Champlain Smart Growth Comprehensive Plan**

### **Task 7b-Interested Party (Stakeholder) Interview Report**

### **September 2024**

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#### **Introduction**

The Town/Village of Champlain Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning process included twelve 1:1 interviews that were conducted between July 15<sup>th</sup> and August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The participants were selected and contacted by Town/Village in consultation with the Town/Village Comprehensive Planning Committee. Interview questions were drafted by Dr. Ruzow Holland and reviewed by the Town/Village Comprehensive Planning Committee. Dr. Ruzow Holland was responsible for conducting the interviews, compiling, and analyzing the results. These materials should be reviewed, presented, and discussed by the Town/Village Comprehensive Planning Committee.

This Report has three major sections. The first section provides interview results in the participant's own words organized by each interview question. Efforts have been made to protect the confidentiality of each interview participant. However, folks "talk" and the transcripts have that informal feel to them. Grammatical errors will appear because commentary is oral and not edited per se or recorded.

The second section of the report presents the SWOT approach with Generative Themes and illustrative quotes that can be used to inform the Comprehensive Plan document as it is developed. Generative themes, including a Vision Statement are based on quotes.

The third section of the report provides a narrative discussion, analysis, and synthesis that discusses the results.

While this report can serve as an “appendix” to the Comprehensive Plan document, excerpts will be used to inform the plan document as it evolves and rolls out. A comparison between the Community Survey, Visioning Engagements, and the Stakeholder Interviews will be one of the next steps to determine the consistency of community input.

### **Stakeholder Interview Participants Summer 2024**

Shannon Thayer, Clinton County Planner, Family in Champlain

Melissa Gooley, Primary Care Manager, Hudson Headwaters Health Network Clinic in Champlain; Resident; Town of Champlain

Lisa Turner, Public Health Programs, Clinton County Health Department; Property Owner; Town of Champlain/Va. Rouses Point

Celine Paquette, Former Legislator, History Center; Resident; Town of Champlain

Nicole Laurin, Executive Director Joint Council for Economic Opportunity, Resident; Town of Champlain

Tim Surpitski, Clinton County Tax Assessor for Champlain; Non-Resident

Ryan Davies, Engineer, Clinton County Department of Health; Jurisdictional Relationship; Non-Resident

Cory Thompson, EMS Services; Resident; Town of Champlain

Matt Boire, President CDC Real Estate; Resident; Town of Champlain/Va. Rouses Point

Melissa McManus, Economic Developer, Property Owner; Town of Champlain/Va. Rouses Point

Molly Ryan, Executive Director Clinton County IDA; Resident; Town of Champlain/Va. Rouses Point

Matt Parrotte, AN Deringer (Business), Resident; Town of Champlain/Va. Rouses Point

## Section 1: Question-by-Question Interview Results

**Please Note: Numbers in Parentheses represents the frequency (Number #-N) of respondents choosing to identify a similar item.**

### **1. What is your connection to Champlain?**

True native—multi-generational-born and raised in Champlain (#3)  
Live in West Chazy  
Went to Northeastern  
Born and grew up in Beekmantown.  
Moved here (#3)

Work here (#2)  
Family here  
Own property in Town and Village of Rouses Point  
Live in Rouses Point (#4)  
Town/Villages are within County Departments/JCEO/Projects' Jurisdiction

### **2. Why did you choose to live here?**

Married a local  
Still in Champlain in husband's house  
Because it's home.  
Love the people who are still around.  
Love this beautiful place, especially this time of year.  
Rather be successful here, than somewhere else, family and friends here.  
Family close by; raised kids, like the community, generally quiet and peaceful.  
Family is all from here, friends and family grew up here, great place to raise kids.

I fit into this town very well, commute to work, safe place to raise children, contribute to the community.  
NECCS is a good school district.  
Safe community: never lock my door, never felt, necessity, like that feeling,  
Like the idea of a small close-knit community where we know everyone, mostly positive, school district is top notch, love the lake, Walkable and bikeable communities, safe was a huge component-safety has changed.  
Live in Beekmantown

### **3. What is your favorite place (street, space, building, etc.) in Champlain?**

### **4. Are there other special places worth highlighting?**

My Lake house  
Museum (#2)  
Stony point  
Breakwater (#2)

Golf course-North Country Golf Club (#3)  
Lake Champlain (#7)  
Chazy River-riverfront, kayak access, marina (#3)  
Ambulance Station

Fire station  
Rec Park in Champlain Village  
Fort Blunder/Montgomery  
Village-Downtown Champlain—Oak Street/River Street-Events-Little  
Pocket Parks, Riverfront (Kayak) access (#2) -Renovated Buildings  
(#2)  
The Canadian Border  
Events at meeting house, kids cooking classes.  
Red canoe store  
Frenchie's Restaurant in RP  
Lakeside coffee  
Perry's Mills-little treasure so off the beaten path; little hamlet

Proximity to Montreal  
Proximity to Vermont  
Rouses Point Waterfront, walkway, pier.  
School NE Clinton (#2)  
Farmland, look of open fields; different than the ADKS; something  
about wide open spaces.  
Northern tier rec trail (#2)  
Frog pond-raise frogs?unappreciated gem.  
St. Mary's Church  
Glenwood Cemetery  
Rouses Point Rec Center  
Point au Fer.

**5. Please imagine for a moment, then share with me what your community could be at its very best.**

*Not the best visionary, love my hometown, ...hard time seeing the Village of Champlain core and main street, older buildings come down, commercial community-would be a bit downtown, small retail and residential buildings, combination of them. Big part, more access to Lake Champlain and better development in the Va. RP to capitalize on that; Route 11 from Town Limit, west of 87 all the way to the lake, better developed; some entrances to housing communities, commercial development, like to see.*

*Access to the river if the tourists or locals would like, than access. Common had boats, heading to RP on their boat from Chazy; kept on the river.*

*It could be a mini lake, George; not that size, have the lake, has the infrastructure to be a smaller version of lake George.*

*I think in working with the towns and village, very interested in being proactive and recruit businesses into the area, actively looking for businesses to come in, room for growth, several levels, add to the community; money, sure that beef up its look, what it offers, come with dollar signs; civic pride in RP and sensed pride in Va Champlain with the leadership.*

*A lot of civic pride, especially in the villages-would like to see that maintained.*

*Working on it, cooperation is phenomenal; a great place to live, school, amenities, raise children, cheaper, repopulating the Va. Champlain; Small Town, safe, open spaces, access to recreation, lake, has it all. Could have it all, for people .raised to this kind of life, bring people home; seasonal residents, remote workers, climate change and uncertainty in the world, residential repopulation, border jobs, remote work; a big hope.*

*Opportunity to reinvigorate entrepreneurship in the community; young people.*

Remember how it was 30 years ago, used to have great number of industrial employers, living, and working in Champlain, nice to see more housing, more shopping, Canadian traffic; installing tesla chargers, capitalize on to wait around for their car, Canadian customers...

Love to see the “lake community” like a lake placid, Burlington or lake George; sad we don’t have that, RP is at least trying their hardest, nice restaurants, no hotels, air b and b not promoted, wineries are closing, distillery on Oak street; need to promote our lake activities, beaches, campgrounds...

Kings bay, not doing anything. Post covid-worth so much; kings bay campground-investment???

Would have increased supply of housing and industrial capacity...

Workforce housing middle income type, multifamily housing, or sf homes; ton of capacity to have light mfg. and warehousing, has not been able to attract developers at this point.

Love to see more vibrant downtowns with multiple businesses and small-town feel. CCHD are making sure we can connect locations and walkable and bikeable...

Love to see indoor recreational facility-ice rink is indoor, but love to see multi-use, turf for soccer, field games, multi-use sports, walking, school has a pool, remodeling the pool, not been accessible but almost finished, joint use agreements for lap swim; not during school day, security issue, lifeguards and paying.

Still lacking some housing like most communities in the area; small senior living, lower income apartments, more family housing, employees have lived in that area, weren’t able to find housing especially with children. Need.

Luckier than some community’s walkable grocery stores, definitely a plus.

School system? Haven’t been there in a few years, friends and family live in the school district, not as with the times as other districts; personal connection, special needs shortfalls, transported to BOCES; has changed.

Always a matter either maintaining or trying to attain critical mass; losing banks, drug stores, ok if you had a hardware, pharmacy, bank, and grocery store-you were a “place” this still kind of a guiding principle. If you don’t have those things lacking in basics.

Champlain has certainly lost a drug store; Rite Aid closed; buildings waiting to be repurposed; buildings that had a purpose and sitting there empty doesn’t do much good for image as you are driving through.

Estimate of empty buildings of various size and shapes in the Town? Might be 20? Homes as well as businesses -within the two villages and town-65 subpar properties-below average-difficult to sell due to condition. Is this a marketable property? Sometimes they are vacant or

*historical vacancies, building specific purpose and obsolete; no good way to repurpose a building. A lot of time against this; environmental issues in the ground, require clean hole-contamination-is very expensive.*

*Better leadership; haven't had strong leadership; don't people with business minds on either board...*

*Housing would bring in a different group of people, bring in businesses that make people excited about the area.*

**6. If you are traveling (away) and someone asks you about your home Town/Village, what do you say?**

*Small town, rural area, village itself is going through a tough time, beautification programs have been fires and floods, potential in the town, loss of family farms.*

*Tiny little town where Vermont, Canada, and NY meet.*

*I live as far northeast as you can go without hitting Canada or Vermont; 40 minutes south of Montreal. Quiet; quaint; nice place to raise kids.*

*Asia or Europe-New York; south of Montreal*

*NE; by Lake Champlain, Plattsburgh, north of Albany*

*Compare to my hometown, a little town, rural community which I like, living in cities have its benefits, connected get involved volunteer my time, very proud of where I live, still consider myself as an outsider, feel like a fit here, that is a good feeling, this is my home and will be for the rest of my life.*

*South of Montreal; Lake Champlain; BTV not far away; French Canadian Heritage; Quebecers for farming and mills, lot of French names, still how safe it is; compared to other places.*

*Location; northeastern corner, Lake Champlain near the Canadian border; farm fields dominate the landscape; lots of fields with little villages, hamlet, quiet.*

*Be in Montreal in 45 minutes, jobs in Plattsburgh.*

*Great place to have a home base, everything you need is here, housing is affordable.*

*Museums; away; low crime, quiet, rent is reasonable. Home base. Reliable and safe.*

*Recruitment of professionals and retention; providers; trying to sell this community is very hard.*

*Always, say the lake, raising a family in a rural community, quiet and kind, easy to Montreal, NYC, Burlington, high peaks hiking, those type of opportunities. Unless the spouse is super connected, they leave and go back to where they are from, a busier area.*

*A small area that is strategically located, lots of small opportunities, but it is the larger opportunity that is lacking. Infrastructure is a big thing, water, sewer, roads, tax rates, become a place to locate to. Champlain has expanded its water district, working on sewers, but it is necessary to everyday routine, you have to have it. But it must be affordable to all. Cost burden passed on to users and taxpayers.*

*Rural; core group of people very supportive; not all towns have that; great and going for it. Human capital: see things grow and develop opportunities.*

## 7. What do you think are Champlain's strengths?

### A. People

- *Good Leadership is a huge plus.*
- *Culture is great.*
- *Good people willing people, who would love to see the place improve.*
- *Civic pride in place*
- *Human capital*
- *Individual's commitment to see the community grow.*
- *People, very much tight knit community*
- *Large portion of the people who want to work, labor force.*
- *Town perspective*
- *Village of Champlain very good leadership.*
- *All well-meaning, town and village great leadership working together.*
- *Generally speaking, community is welcoming, probably Champlain more than RP*
- *Close knit feel homier community.*

### B. Community Development Existing Services, Facilities, and New Activities

- *Trying to look at segments; added walking trail; phone downtown to connect with spirits; offer things that will be beneficial to seniors; meeting house; summer camp of sorts; all different age groups and needs.*
- *Essential resources-school district, medical center-comprehensive HHHHN, border patrol station at Champlain, border security active, state police barracks located here; just town and village offices, people running the leadership very committed to actively promote our towns and villages and make them better.*
- *Noticeable, keep up the streets, year-round, wintertime, round the clock; sidewalks kept up, village streets, getting to work, school and emergency responses made easier. The Village of Champlain's dedication to keeping the streets clean and safe.*

- *School district is great (#3)*
- *Very robust emergency services; 350-1600 call rate-growth and rate of need. Very lucky.*
- *Music in the park; physical, arts, music.*
- *Clean, safe, pleasant environment*
- *Good job in investing and maintaining infrastructure. The village's water system upgraded, comprehensive water treatment plant, and new distribution lines, extended to the border of RP now; gives opportunity for future growth. Public water is essential for growth.*
- *Grocery store, FQHC*

#### C. Strategic Location, Land and Water Resources, Road System, and Availability of Land

- *Proximity of Canadian and Vermont Borders*
- *Montreal, Plattsburgh, and Burlington are close by. Plattsburgh is Montreal's US suburb Easy to live in Champlain and work in the cities.*
- *9/11 happened, come out of the cities/ Covid/ migration-moving to a place- covid was a game changer in the real estate market; why commute and live in the city; you can move to other places-high speed internet you have to have.*
- *Land availability --Industrial Park, very reasonably priced land, and some other real estate. We have buildings that could be repurposed. All our waterfronts, lakes, and rivers. Lake Champlain--Lakefront, land which could be developed.*
- *So many Canadian-based businesses already, it is a calling card when new one's call. US stepping stone; US address, gain more business by US activity. Port of Montreal that come across the border, all over the globe, closest border entry, but not when stuff is coming from China (west coast).*
- *Road network-I87 N/S; Route 11 E/W Vermont to Watertown-trucks on these roads-supportive services for trucks, support that services they are here. Route 11 main thoroughfare Watertown to Vermont-east west (opportunity)??? Municipal water for most of it, a little sewer, those are strengths ease of development. Potential for industrial development; proximity to 87 commuters.*
- *Abundant Ag lands. However, disappearance of small farms, large scale farms consolidation of land in handful of owners-- don't see land on the market –Wineries we have a handful of them.*

## 8. What adjectives would you use to describe Champlain today?

Va Champlain-abandoned

Town-potential

RP: eye appeal Lake Street portion

Small

Great potential

Land for development, commercial and residential development

Internet is important as W/S

Rural

Run down.

Dead

Not attractive

Connection

Village-hopeful but disinvested, particularly the downtown

Pleasant residential streets in Champlain-lovely homes; Oak Street

Town-rural border

Always ambitious wanting development.

Shift to grow your own versus attraction.

Beautiful lake and river

Nature

Hard working

Accessible

Cheap power

Proximity to many things

Partnership working together.

Active

Pride

Friendly

Historic

Founding of the Village of Champlain

Picturesque

Quiet

Accessible

Va Champlain-run down

Champlain Town and RP-underutilized

RP: quaint and pretty

Up and coming.

potential

Rural

Closeknit

Potential

Pieces of set them up for success/gaps to

Struggle with connecting seniors to resources and to each other.

Pockets remote-less accessible to resources

Run Down in Parts-tricky; serve low-income individuals; investments missing

## 9. What do you think are folks' reasons for living in Champlain?

Walkability factor

Access to resources and retail stores nearby

Rural-Natural Beauty

Various employers (Customs-Homeland

Security/Border/Corrections/Teachers/Police/Health Center)

with entry level positions (#3)

Familial history, longstanding multi-generational families (#3)

Good school district (#5)

Cost of Living (rent, electricity, taxes, land, housing) (#6)

Property taxes are lower than in other areas.

Proximity to Canadian Border (#3)

Proximity to Plattsburgh

Access to bigger places with employment

(Montreal/Burlington/Plattsburgh) without living directly in them. (#3)

Love Rouses Point

Civic Pride/Feeling Connected “Homey”

US Citizens, moved to Canada and need office space M-F working remotely from a US location.

Vermonters-proximity and lower costs- Vermont cost of living forces them to live less expensively.

Canadians-historically always here and actively invest in real estate market.

Migration from Downstate and the “other 48”-Pandemic exodus-Covid-shift in ownership/occupancy

Locals: Born and raised here.

**10. If you had to list Champlain’s assets, what resources much be included on your list?**

Natural Resources-rivers, lakes, land, scenery

School District (#4)

Several good employers

Active Farmlands (#2)

Walking trail

EMS

Earl Park-Kayak put in.

Fire

Proximity to Interstate 87

Rec Park in Va. Champlain

Lake Champlain[10 miles of shoreline] Fishing

Retail Base: Shopping Center/Grocery Store/5 gas

Tournaments (#8)

stations/hardware stores (don’t have to go to Plattsburgh) garage/mechanics; having all those resources in your town and don’t have to travel. (#3)

Canadian Border-Border Patrol and Customs (#5)

Great Chazy River (#2)

Vermont (#2)

Available land for economic development (#3)

Montreal

Old Wyeth/Pfizer Property (#2)

Rec Center in RP (#4)

Country Malt -international company employers

Rouses Point

Wineries

Canadian business network

Plenty of functionally obsolete buildings waiting to be torn down with no appeal

Chamber of Commerce

Access to reasonably priced Village RP electricity (#2)

Health Center (#3)

## 11. What changes will really affect the community in the next 15 years?

- *Making strategic moves that well position the community to attract some good development.*
- *Champlain could be a big player in the development of Solar farms and the push to generate clean energy.*
- *Border regulations since Canada changed migrant traffic in those areas, whether next move of federal government, could shift primarily Caucasian population that we have. Potential for increasing diversity and workforce.*
- *Whether or not enough private industry can be located here to attract jobs that are not just government jobs.*
- *The status and outcome of Pfizer (facilities and properties) leaving make it very difficult to move forward.*
- *Champlain border is very important, and those jobs will always be good, broader base of employment.*
- *If we get better jobs, we will need better housing...hard to invest if there is no need.*
- *Cost of living-market driving force, looking for houses, priced out of market; long term, housing market would go back to affordable.*
- *Low-income housing facilities have shut down over the years, a lot of those folks make it up to the Anchorage, drug users, not good people are now crowding those particular areas; drugs, which makes it tough, want to help them, you see that crop up more and more,*
- *We are in need of certain businesses; old burger king, building still stands, 87 interchange, buildings have been sitting vacant, Miramar mall; closed, huge area, building housing.*
- *Border Security we are always concerning ourselves with what happens at the border.*
- *Don't have public transportation, there is a need, no taxi's Ubers, -*
- *Need people to step into the shoes of the current officials; leadership new generation comes to be; like to think younger folks are instilling civic pride; that is an important aspect, that could get lost, that would be very bad, good leaders, in my time; across all levels; they share a common goal, caretaking; number 1 issue to continue to reach those goals.*
- *Overactive drug use is becoming an issue everywhere-see a needle thrown on the ground in a public restroom. That is a concern.*
- *Immigration thing, great deal of immigration—bound to affect our area, H2Visa besides them, these people have entered the US, have to live, and work somewhere, somehow a factor-don't know how.*
- *Climate some new trends water temperatures, warmer periods, could have an effect-lake bass fishing, tourism, farmers, something to watch-*
- *Canadian Exchange rate.*
- *More so than ever hit some companies, don't want to locate in Champlain or stay in Champlain, better access to workers in Plattsburgh, but prefer to be in Plattsburgh, some perception easier access to labor in Plattsburgh.*
- *Employment/working where AI might be a job loss.*
- *Weather the hard times, see climate migrants locate, weathered the closures, what else can go?*
- *Hudson Headwaters anchored the model; health care is a huge risk; close to Plattsburgh, not a huge risk.*
- *Don't see massive outmigration; seems stable.*
- *Loss of generation that is running most of the community organizations, civic society age out, demographic change.*
- *How RP and Champlain address zoning/land use particularly along the lake front-*
- *Chazy FEMA flood plains updated in December, now a significant part of village now in flood plain and while we might not see them flood, development/investment, it will impact the resiliency; large sections of Route 11 grew tremendously.*

- Really be proactive; CRS-FEMA-become Community Rating System; opt into doing some extra things on top of regular flood plain management, reductions on their flood insurance, structural/nonstructural options you can do.
- Hope it sees more industry.
- The Chamber has tried to promote the adk coast and the lake.
- Work opportunities are continuing to grow.
- Better school districts
- Places to stay, various Tourism attractions (fishing, golf, bicycling) Hope they can be grown and build those.
- Affordable housing and shift in housing prices
- Job opportunities/economic development, travel to Plattsburgh to work; employment in home times.
- Revitalization of downtowns is huge.
- Increasing access to water, not a lot of access points.
- Border changes drastically affecting the community.
- Agriculture shift, tons of farmland, not a ton of farmers, Giroux cornfields, not produce, not dairy-that is a bad thing-hard business to be in.
- Don't want to lose the greenspace.
- Villages dissolve and consolidate.
- Industrial Park seems to be vacant; really don't see changes,
- Main street improvements are not really going to happen.
- No change is change.
- Current state of the economy-difficult for people to make investments; deters with housing/economic.
- Domino effect--Financial piece affecting families in the community-support local businesses is challenging.
- The senior population is growing rapidly-very large number, insufficient services to support that population.
- Last couple of years, drastic, social/emotions behavioral issues, (COVID) need to service that are not available, long waiting lists, mental health pt ot-growing from the younger group-classrooms and centers-harder to serve the same number of people-trend seeing this now. Struggling not to fill classroom in terms of kids and staff.
- Child care issue-severe lack of child care-almost no providers especially after school care-bigger burden for families that work; making it hard to parent and work.
- Champlain is unique is level of support from local government-people in elected position seem to truly care about the community-well connected to residents and know programs and services to connect and match up-isolated -able to help us get that information. Liaison to support case management and get resources to help bridge those relationships and refer people.
- Leadership-in-training-bring along next generations-compassion, capacity, huge part of it-stretched so thin-volunteer numbers are down, COVID somewhat attributed. People don't volunteer and don't offer up-more communities could find a way-buckets-find interests/match up interests.
- Can we figure out 10 areas of interest, passionate.
- Change in value in RE Market-gone up in residential.
- The warehouse vacancy is greater than it's ever been, inventory is not being unloaded here and distributed here.

- *Retail so much is to the internet, amazon. Hard to run a brick-and-mortar business with overhead.*
- *Some people aren't having kids, school districts are less important moving forward.*
- *Baby boomers- access to medical-Champlain HHHN building is a good thing.*
- *Senior Housing is a good investment-tsunami-needing assisted and smaller apartments, so behind on, if we started building today.*
- *Miromar but a viable option there.*
- *Sno-bird housing-?? Not as much because of the opportunity in FLA or south.*

**12. What type of uses and future development would you like to see in the Town/Village?**

**13. What opportunities should the Town/Village consider for new growth and development?**

<u>Housing Choices</u>	<u>Reuse/Repurpose Existing Properties</u>	<u>New Economic Opportunities</u>	<u>Service/Recreational/Tourism Opportunities</u>
Nice housing	Pfizer Reuse Brownfield Management (#9)	More entrepreneurial neighborhood-based activity.	We need lodging, don't have motels/hotels, just B&B's. Need more lodging especially in RP
Every demographic-single individual, studio units available. (#7)	Champlain, Industrial Park, lot of capability to increase business and housing opportunities. (#2)	Trucking business is major sector	Beach, Lake Access, Kayak put in's River and Lake (#3) also south of RP in Town
Intergenerational housing-on-site child-care center-shared space	Miromar reuse (#9)	Hub development-Like Plattsburgh /RP has cheap electric	Recreation-Indoor and outdoor (#2)
Senior Housing, Assisted Living	Fort Mongomery (#3)	Small Incubator 10K square feet start	Chazy River -making navigable again-Yacht Club
More starter homes and middle-income homes; growing trend of Vermonters purchasing homes on our side of the lake	Brownfield inventory-in the future, locate parcels, suitable for x Y z;	Green energy possibilities, in the appropriate locations, solar/wind	Places to go out and have dinner. (#3)
Not a proponent of subsidized lower income housing in our region-yes some, overabundance of that development because transportation system is not accommodating,	Northway interchange-business opportunities-old buildings	Data center-VRP capacity, servers for AI (#2) AI will be critical to any industry, esp. in Health Care, RP has	Physical fitness gym type of place.

<u>Housing Choices</u>	<u>Reuse/Repurpose Existing Properties</u>	<u>New Economic Opportunities</u>	<u>Service/Recreational/Tourism Opportunities</u>
		the capacity to do that with their electrical capacity.	
Ranch housing that are about 950-1200 sq feet; new homeowners; other end are baby boomers, moved out to suburbs; one story house-both young and old going after the same thing-building one story, small economic and efficient housing; two parts of the market-baby boomers-30 years in the market; starter housing; condominiums and lake country; HOA; one story; aging in place-no stairs; Market: 100 one-story units; clear in 3 months in Plattsburgh; in Champlain maybe 50 units pulled from Mooers and Chazy; Move surrounding communities to go to PC and HHHN; that much closer to move there. Land rich/cash poor-perfectly good sites; local developers; capacity to develop.	Former slaughterhouse property-near the border. Idle properties.	Climate Migration- People will relocate here	Another child care center, learning center
	Vandalized properties, buy something and fix it up.	Zoning laws need to be more flexible to accommodate growth.	Lodging at the golf course; cabins constantly full. How to get lodging there and serve the lake.
			The school has undertaken leap-state of the art facilities, accessed by the community- Soccer field at school. Softball , track, great thing.
			Campsites on Lakeshore
			Transportation across region

**14. What should the future of each of Champlain's neighborhoods be like?**

**Coopersville:** *connection to the lake is lost, boat launch-might help hamlet, more connected.*

**Perry's Mills:** *industrial history to be interpreted. more happening in Perry's Mills*

**Champlain Village:**

- *historic community*
- *greatest asset down by the river to utilize it more; history museum there; couple of shops there, not much there.*
- *challenging-concerned about flooding; continue on what Janet is doing, more community events, small retail, concerts, something building, see that continue. Help for that.*
- *Still be something.*
- *flood zone increases impacting property investment.*
- *The village is so sad can't tear down some of these buildings, the owners are doing nothing, hazard.*
- *Zombies????*
- *Price chopper and strip mall; mostly full; builds on itself, more traffic in RP will by osmosis it will impact Champlain.*
- *Fixed the flooding in the actual village, bridge was too low; major project; 2009 raised the bridge,*

**Route 87 Interchange:**

- *Should be some focus reaching out to owners around interchange 87 and 11; successful outreach to them; properties around the interchange that have not readapted-welcome and gateway.*
- *Route 11 is growing over time, few access points for housing.*
- *Village of RP-more retail; combination of different things-ownership. Laker friendly.*
- *Miromar, trying to develop that; nice homes there.*

**15. What threatens the future you see for Champlain?**

- *Weakness-village of Champlain tough times, not very prosperous.*
- *Shift from once was, that are or could be.*
- *Small town-hiccup*
- *THREAT-no one comes to stay here, HHHN recruitment, won't live here, but will work here.*
- *The cost of living is on the rise, real estate prices are unaffordable to buy or maintain their homes.*
- *Lack of higher paying employment*

- *Influx of migrants*
- *Never encountered a migrant that was violent.*
- *People feel unsafe; Law enforcement is minimal, but great, waiting 40 minutes for state police. (#2)*
- *A lack of a future workforce-unable, unwilling.*
- *Substance abuse issues locally are a problem (#5) Drug use-certain hubs and places where drugs are prevalent, proximity to the border enhanced concern.*
- *Trend-nowhere for people to stay if they do visit.*
- *Relying on our own local people, not much tourism.*
- *Boats that are dry docked can't because they are too big to get to the lake; 90% of big sailboats can't get out to the lake.*
- *RP/ERS debacle -Pfizer issues*
- *Miromar-lack of interest by property owners.*
- *Illegal immigration; Border Security; live on the second busiest crossing in the US; a lot of traffic, migrants last month 3300 illegal in the month of June; came across; Border uncertainty-rockson road and individuals accesses on foot- confusion and uncertainty; sometimes that could be a concern looking to live or move there- lack of understanding about what is going on. (#4)*
- *Lake Champlain water quality deteriorates.*
- *Inability for municipalities to work together.*
- *Lack of diversity can be problematic and can foster development.*
- *Traditional mindset of not in my backyard to here*
- *Not able or wanting to change.*
- *Weak Canadian dollar-is not great for tourism, still robust.*
- *RP-way too much housing, should be more retail, on the lake, prime real estate.*
- *Flooding*
- *Major changes in cross-border dynamics; limited number crossing the border-exchange is important for through traffic. (#2)*
- *Pandemic challenges.*
- *Leadership-sparkplugs, well intended; Capacity in human capital-leaders unable to give and do what they do, it would be difficult.—succession planning for leadership. (#2)*
- *Lack of housing*
- *Lack of child care*
- *Lack of transportation.*

16. Are there specific barriers to achieving what you would like to see?

17. What other barriers does the Champlain face for future development?

Finances	Intermunicipal Relationships & Strategy	Land Use	Economics
If there isn't support at the state and federal level and without this support, finding those partnerships are key to accomplishing projects.	VRP-quite a wall. Challenge; maintain cooperation, between Village/towns both have a point of view. RP has always looked at itself as an independent place, probably connected by accident; RP has not perceived that it has a lot to gain from cooperation. (#2)	Zoning is an issue, RP several recommendations made for Pfizer zoning for pharmaceutical zoning needs to change.	Probably lack of jobs, more people, strong residential base. Workforce --lack of (#2)
Finances always a big thing- Financial -everything costs money	Marketing PR image-gearred towards low income, right messaging and NIMBY's get the whole community on board. Those in need-were not in need-won't embrace.	Townwide look at zoning in terms of development and industry.	Taxes in NYS are high, getting better for MFG.
	Gary Douglas could be a big help if he wanted to. Attend more chamber functions.	Former Anchorage Hotel	Developers/investment No-investment potential here, somebody finding a way to build it they will come. (#2)
	Lack of control immigration policy	Real estate prices, lack of affordable housing	Absentee Owners
	Lack of control over NYS Police Resources	Aging population in our town, additional senior housing options, snow bird option; move from single family to sell out and be part time residents.	
	Need a Roadmap-strategy to guide them	Turn key housing.	
	Bandwidth and capacity		

## 18. What type of housing units should be added to the community and where they should go?

### Type:

- ✓ Refer to any and all housing studies conducted recently and underway check with County Planning Office.
- ✓ Multi-Intergenerational housing (#3)
- ✓ Campus/Village-Style (New Urbanist) Housing- Subdivision with mix of housing types, including services such as child care, gym, etc.
- ✓ Tiny Homes, Studio Apartments,
- ✓ Middle and High Middle Income single family and Townhouse Development housing to attract professionals.
- ✓ Adaptive/Repurpose Historic properties in Va. Champlain into workforce/affordable housing.
- ✓ Assisted Living/Senior Housing (Continuum of care) mix: Independent to Assisted (Always a waiting list-market exists to grow senior housing). Duplexes/Quadruplexes (#8)
- ✓ Short-term housing for cycling in/out employees of Border, Medical, etc.
- ✓ No more Low-Income Housing-We have quite a bit. Low-income housing brings its own problems, transportation, jobs, services, closer to Plattsburgh the better that would be. (#5)
- ✓ Affordable Housing-any type (#4)
- ✓ Upgrading Existing Section 8 Housing-scattered site
- ✓ Starter homes-affordable, modest, various styles
- ✓ Condos—various sizes and shapes- take away the maintenance and landscaping; semidetached middle housing; don't want to own their home; condominium situation, don't want to maintain, lack of that in the county; own or rent, not much in between. (#3)
- ✓ Snow-Bird Housing

### Where?

- ✓ Between the old school and prospect road
- ✓ *Build out south street neighborhood.*
- ✓ *Plenty of land; Always find land somewhere (#4)*
- ✓ *Where you could attract people to in the Champlain area*
- ✓ *Miromar (#2)*
- ✓ *Few decent sized existing properties.*
- ✓ *Off of Prospect Street, there is a very expensive road that is perfect for residential development; cornfields now can*

*eventually cave to community -Prospect Street might be a good place; water, sewer, pavement, should be a priority.*

- ✓ *Anywhere near the golf course,*
- ✓ *Ingress/egress off of 11*
- ✓ *Route 9 and four corners.*
- ✓ *Heading south on 9 a lot of land down there.*
- ✓ *Land near HHHN-on the other side of the road.*
- ✓ *Somewhere accessible to the resources, grocery store and medical providers, not on Route 9 or 11 but close.*

19. What types of recreational facilities or services should be added to the community and where should they go?

- ✓ Gym/fitness center (#2)
- ✓ Public access, including beachfront, fishing access etc. to Lake Champlain (#3)
- ✓ More access to the Chazy River for paddling (#2)
- ✓ More walkable/bikeable trail systems, especially along the river and lake. (#3)
- ✓ Pickleball/Racquetball Courts (#3)
- ✓ Indoor multi-use recreational facility(ies) catering to four-season uses and activities. (Basketball, indoor soccer, gym) (#3)
- ✓ Walkable sidewalks and crosswalks throughout the community. SIDEWALKs-pedestrian access. 87 bisects the town-pedestrian corridor; route 11 is not pedestrian access friendly. (#2)
- ✓ Indoor water park catering to tourists and residents.
- ✓ Hotel
- ✓ Improvements at Golf Course that expand recreational activities (skiing, walking, etc.)
- ✓ More town parks
- ✓ More Lake charter services
- ✓ Better use of stone jetty
- ✓ Indoor or outdoor pool
- ✓ Campgrounds

20. What types of businesses might be supported by the community and where should they go?

- ✓ Green energy has a place in our future. Green Energy hub, *including solar panels*,
- ✓ *Anything that supports what people want-Restaurants (#4), more unique retail to our community (Villages) that draws people in (#3)*
- ✓ *Tesla Chargers strategically located where you want people to walk around for an hour or more.*
- ✓ *Interchange by the highway/border-some large unique chain, Bass Pro Shops near Lake Champlain and close to the border. Huge draw because of Canada; home run.*
- ✓ *Claim fame-what is ours ???*
- ✓ *Hotel-Indoor water park, something unique-make us a destination, particularly on the lake a huge asset. (#3)*
- ✓ *Another affordable grocery option*
- ✓ *Passionate experience that people will drive to.*
- ✓ *Pfizer facility*
- ✓ *Miromar*
- ✓ *Child Care*
- ✓ *Foreign trade zone-underutilized in Plattsburgh, could expand the one from Pburgh to Champlain, multinational company, ship goods to US and Canada.*
- ✓ *Vineyard would be a good fit, leverage Fort Montgomery*
- ✓ *Beach public*
- ✓ *Combination of outdoor activities would bring people in.*
- ✓ *Warehousing, AI/servers, MFG,*
- ✓ *Industries, Paquette park-bring back.*

21. Should the Town/Village consider expanding drinking water or wastewater systems to accommodate growth and, if so, where should expansion occur?

- *Cost/benefit of sewer expansion is risky.*
- *EDU's wastewater/water is cost prohibited with financing structures.*
- *So much ag land doesn't really need public water and sewer.*
- *Already have water and sewer for housing/industrial development. A strong asset; Good system in the Village. Metered on water system Va. Champlain.*
- *Do they have the resources to keep up with the town and village infrastructure? Village of Champlain struggles with Water infrastructure-needs some help. Not sure of town.*
- *Depends on development type and water usage. New border patrol place going in. reason to expand, already expanded quite a bit.*
- *Sewer plant might be expanded, ...*
- *Don't know how tapped out we are? What percent of growth do we need to expand? Are we at capacity? A good problem to have, but not sure where we are.*
- *WE have done a fair amount; love to see it expand, but that is not realistic, pretty good, think water and sewer to the Golf Course? Probably water, maybe not the sewer. Close for the areas targeted to potential residential.*
- *Seems adequate.*
- *More improvement on the lake?*
- *Very upset of the cost in the Village EDU*
- *Water quality is a problem; reverse osmosis because tests are not good.*

22. In the time remaining, please identify the issues that did not get covered that are important to the Town/Village's future.

- ❖ *Repurpose/Reuse of vacant structures (Rite Aid, Burger King, Miromar, Pfizer, etc. Vacant buildings should be occupied or torn down-we lose potential by dragging the past with us. Town/County should provide incentives to get these places up and running. (#2)*
- ❖ *Places like Champlain have lost a lot. We should pause and consider whether a migrant settlement, particularly of French speaking migrants would be good for the Town. This is happening elsewhere (Utica, Tupper Lake, etc.) Very hardworking folks.*
- ❖ *Proximity to Montreal and the Lake and Lake Placid should provide a real kind of economic opportunity. How can we appeal to people to come "back" to the comfort of Champlain and bring their jobs with them.*

- ❖ *Nice to see the Town showcase the golf course (ownership); 100-year-old trust/members-showcase the lake and course.*
- ❖ *A Townwide business group-anything to create the cohesiveness so that more gets done. The Chamber in Plattsburgh-- like to see more people join and get active, the more we do together as a region, the stronger we are as a region. Chamber-might organize a townwide business roundtable?*
- ❖ *Champlain's public amenities appear random and need better connections; things isolated-having more centralized library, focusing on walkability.*
- ❖ *Safety of Roadway infrastructure-quality of roads (condition, maintenance, etc.) Sidewalks on Route 11-complete street issues Sidewalk/ walkability/access for pedestrians along route 11 corridor; (#2)*
- ❖ *Village of Champlain, playground park, doesn't have much-lacking, RP has a really nice one; in the Village that playground could use an upgrade.*
- ❖ *Vermont is like Austria, North Country like Bulgaria; we are not the sound of music; image is Vermont; tough to be a Budweiser town with champagne tastes-we have don't have highs or lows but muddle along. Potential than crashes*

**23. What are the most important, critical (NOT TO BE LEFT OUT) issues to present to and hear back from the community?**

- *Dredging Project Chazy River Delta*
- *Zoning revaluation-flexible for businesses*
- *Miromar location is developed into housing-leaving it undeveloped is not good for anybody, reuse.*
- *Addressing lack of industry in the industrial park; plenty of land and plenty of businesses looking for land. TDC-*
- *Projects related to Creating Healthy Schools and Communities Program.(CCHD-NYSDOH).*
- *Indoor recreational facilities.*
- *Pfizer reuse*
- *The beach area is a huge deal.*
- *Don't work against each other; work together in towns and villages.*
- *Not a place in RP to dock your boat and sit down and get a sandwich.*
- *Have to hold on to the community a sense of community-heritage, French-Canadian, small-town nature, people know each other, social fabric holding together, as the older generation ages out-passing the baton to? Hopefully, kids in their 20s are pretty cool. School is a huge part of that.*
- *The more the school can open to the community that is a hub better.*
- *Leadership-cultivating the next generation of elected and volunteer human capital so there is the capacity to step in as the future unfolds. We need dedicated people to keep this going!*

- *Process is happening, trying to get ideas and concerns cannot be harmful, can only be helpful.*
- *Love to see more collaboration amongst the two villages and the Town.*
- *Nice riverfront development, village of Champlain—river street in buyout; ugly playground/dress up.*
- *New information and planning around flood resilience and adaptation-how to approach and impact people.*
- *Basic county wide feedback about housing/transportation issues and how to plan better for these items.*
- *Public Transportation routes –where ...are the routes appropriate? Is the timing, right? Going where you need it to go? Pickup locations appropriate for people? (Two-Hudson Headwaters and Price Chopper, Anchorage in and Family Dollars) Out and back; connect people to Plattsburgh, not an east west connector, only a north south.*
- *Housing related needs a focus-things hinge on that...*
- *Succession planning piece for human capital to step in and continue that...*
- *A viable idea, Elm Street, Village of Champlain, Harris Graphics, not in the flood plain--Old high school in town-supposed to be apartments closed community; short term rentals given them a place to live. Twice sold and intention to develop.*
- *Lack of funding and execution.*
- *50-unit one floor modest single-family units we could sell rapidly.*

## Section 2: Generative Themes and illustrative quotes in SWOT Form (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) that can be used to inform the Comprehensive Plan

### Vision For Champlain's Future (A Strawman to Consider) :

We are proud to be a clean, kid-friendly, hospitable, close-knit, affordable, and bustling border community on beautiful Lake Champlain. We like being less than one hour's drive to Burlington, Vermont, Plattsburgh, and Montreal, Canada for work, shopping, and other services. Our abundant and rich farmland gives us plenty of open space that complements our Lake Champlain and Chazy River shorelines. We are well placed with plenty of affordable housing, varied recreational opportunities, services, and businesses giving easy access and convenience to our diverse residents.

**We love our Town and intentionally strive to grow purposefully and carefully.**

<u>Strengths</u>	<u>Opportunities</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lake Champlain, Chazy River, Open Space</li> <li>• Family and kid-friendly, hospitable, close-knit, affordable residential community</li> <li>• Good School System</li> <li>• Public Facilities, Government &amp; Infrastructure-good systems</li> <li>• Health/Medical Facility</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> Busiest Border USA/Canada</li> <li>• Good mix of newcomers and multi-generational residents/businesses</li> <li>• Grocery Store, Gas Stations, Banks, Hardware Store, etc.</li> <li>• Affordable Land and Housing Stock</li> <li>• Pride of Place</li> <li>• Close to Montreal, Burlington &amp; Plattsburgh</li> <li>• Town/Village embraces Grants -strong grant utilization.</li> <li>• Existing businesses and services</li> <li>• Historic and cultural properties-All kinds of “cool” buildings around Town/Village</li> <li>• A long way from “overgrowth”</li> <li>• Good Leadership</li> <li>• Farmland-good soils</li> <li>• Recreational Trail and Park Development</li> <li>• Crossroads of Route 11 (E-W) and Interstate 87 (N-S)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Particular Parcels of Private Land with Water/Sewer</li> <li>• Miromar/Pfizer/Vacant Properties</li> <li>• Market Demand for development for affordable housing</li> <li>• Development/Buildability</li> <li>• Existing properties-adaptive reuse</li> <li>• Route 11 Major Corridor; Interstate 87 Interchange</li> <li>• Embrace appropriate and suitable land use controls.</li> <li>• Communication-Community Engagement-Conversations about what's next.</li> <li>• Law enforcement and crime mitigation</li> <li>• Green Energy</li> <li>• AI-Energy Intense Facilities</li> <li>• Climate Migration Destination</li> <li>• Tourism-based development</li> <li>• Incentivize Development-help with shovel ready-brownfields, ideas, capital, etc.</li> <li>• Continue to improve communication and build relationships between the two villages and the town.</li> <li>• Continue to capitalize on increased involvement with the North Country Chamber of Commerce.</li> </ul>

<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer Volunteers and people interested in developing leadership capacity.</li> <li>• Recruitment of mix of residents to get involved.</li> <li>• Hod-podge/Worn Out in Places-deferred maintenance-clean up.</li> <li>• Lack of walkable Route 11-Sidewalks and Safety</li> <li>• Need for a "Main Street" Hamlet Revitalization Strategy</li> <li>• Lack of Affordable Housing</li> <li>• Not always competitive when applying for grants -grant amounts are never enough.</li> <li>• Lack of compassion by property owners of derelict buildings about neighborhood impacts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drugs and illicit activities/Crime</li> <li>• Flooding</li> <li>• Derelict Properties</li> <li>• Missing opportunities to develop/invest/get properties shovel ready.</li> <li>• Influx of people without financial assets</li> <li>• Illegal immigration</li> <li>• Climate Change-less snow, more storms, etc.</li> <li>• Declining property conditions-not everywhere, but in a few places</li> <li>• Demographic changes in the US and locally-less children, more aging in place.</li> <li>• Lack of "Third Place"<sup>1</sup> retail establishments</li> <li>• Adopting a Comp Plan and not implementing it and periodically reviewing it.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> One's "first place" the home and the people the person lives with. The "second place" is the workplace—where people may actually spend most of their time. Third places, then, are "anchors" of community life and facilitate and foster broader, more creative interaction. In other words, "your third place is where you relax in public, where you encounter familiar faces and make new acquaintances." From: The Great Good Place by Ray Oldenburg (1989).

## Section 3: Analysis and Discussion

Representatives of the Town engaged with a representative sample of key informants, including citizens, business owners, residents, social/human/economic services proxies all of whom have a personal stake in the success or outcomes from Champlain's planning efforts. They were chosen by the Town and Village leadership with input from the Comprehensive Plan committee members. In addition, several key informants were suggested by the interviewees and added to the interview roster. Many insights, suggestions, and feedback from key informants identified needs, expectations, concerns, and pain points about living and working in Champlain.

### Common/Popular Commentary from Key Informants

#### Fixed Assets

From an historical and contemporary perspective, the international border with Canada, the proximity of the City of Montreal, the cross-border economics, as well as the cultural and the familial French-Canadian constitution of the Town and Village define Champlain and are its strongest assets. Fluctuations in monetary exchange rates, Federal (USA and Canada) immigration policies, the COVID Pandemic, and boating access to Lake Champlain also drive cross-border traffic and economics. The Town and Village have limited impact on existential policies of both Federal Governments, but the assets of having an international border and urban proximity retain their lasting value.

More recently, the state border with Vermont, easy access via Rouses Point Bridge and Cumberland Head Ferry, and the high cost of living in northwestern Vermont (Burlington Metro Area) have created housing demand in Champlain. These influence most aspects of the Champlain economy, transportation, housing, and related services by changing the dynamics, increasing demand, and changing the demographics of the population.

A well-developed transportation system that includes north-south interstate system connecting NYC and Montreal (I87) and an east-west major State Route (11) linking Watertown and Vermont are supporting assets that promote accessibility to and from the Town.

Plentiful private land resources also exist in the Town and Village. Arable, flat, developable lands with associated transportation, water/sewer infrastructure, internet and cell service round out Champlain's fixed assets that continue to provide lasting value to the community. Furthermore, the proximity of Lake Champlain, the Great Chazy River, and the Adirondacks represent important fixed assets to the community.

#### Tangible Assets

A diverse retail and service base continues to change (and grow) in the Town and Village responding to demographic changes from the influx of Canadians and Vermonter as well as the changes associated with remote work, continued urban out-migration from the

COVID Pandemic and the availability of land, homes, and business locations. For example, key informants note increased trucking-related enterprises and services, more gas stations, and convenience stores, and the very new primary health center. Excellent public services, including a good school system were also noted.

Recreational assets such as the Golf Course, Lake Champlain/Chazy Marinas, Recreational Center(s), trail systems and parks, while located on fixed assets, could also change use over time (hence their tangible nature). These basic assets are important to the key informants, but there are concerns that their maintenance, opportunities for expanded use, and accessibility constrain their value.

Lastly, derelict buildings, such as Miromar, Pfizer, Burger King, Drug Store, etc., while considered tangible assets that could add value to the community, remain vacant and continue to deteriorate to the disadvantage of the community. Key informants want to see actions taken to recycle and reuse properties in order to create new economic opportunities.

### **Intangible Assets**

Leadership in the community was noted by interviewees as exemplary and concern was raised that succession planning for community leadership is an important component of planning going forward.

Pride in the community is a very important intangible asset. Champlain is proud to be a clean, kid-friendly, hospitable, close-knit, affordable, and bustling border community.

### **Worries and Liabilities**

Existential concerns about US/Canadian trade policies, immigration, and monetary exchange rates are strong influencers on the community and there is very limited control on the outcomes of international matters. However, the Town and Village must respond to these concerns in real time and find it challenging to predict the future.

Lake and river flooding as a result of the climate crisis require adaptation and resilience planning that continues to accelerate in pace and scope. Key informants are concerned that the cost associated with mitigation and adaptation requires a stronger investment from outside the community.

Housing affordability, availability, and responsiveness to market demand are not keeping up with the times. Lack of developers and investors to build affordable and diverse housing types is keeping people from moving in or staying in the community.

Vacant buildings are both an asset and a liability. They are a visual, economic, and tax burden. Again, lack of developers and investors to acquire and repurpose the dozen or so buildings in the community is a concern. Furthermore, absentee ownership and lack of owners' interest in selling properties is a disadvantage and a strong pain point to informants.

The unproductive relationship between the Village of Rouses Point and the Town and Village of Champlain continues to be a problematic legacy. Informants would like to see Rouses Point join with the Town and Village of Champlain and not stand outside a collaborative relationship. There are too many overlapping issues and concerns that might benefit from a cooperative inter-municipal relationship.

### **Areas that Need More Exploration**

An overarching effort to understand opportunities for interactive housing, economic/services, and recreational land development targeted at retaining and expanding middle income/professional/family/elderly households' ability to live in Champlain would be useful.

- ✓ Repurposing of existing derelict properties requires further consideration and understanding of the tax implications, the role of Clinton County taxation, investment climate, ownership patterns, brownfield and zoning issues, etc. going forward.
- ✓ A reconnaissance analysis of land availability and development opportunities for mixed use, age, and unit-diverse affordable housing in order to prospect for investors and developers needs further consideration.
- ✓ Development of a recreational master plan for the community that links existing and proposes new 4-season recreational opportunities would be helpful to ascertain gaps in access, use, and availability.

A comparison between the Community Survey, Visioning Engagements, Stakeholder Interviews, and engagement workshops will be necessary to determine the consistency of community input (or identify other issues/concerns/pain point) noted in this report.