



An Eroding Base Threatens Economic Sustainability

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"The Triangle" featured in the Futures Project Vision Report illustrates the three sets of values we must balance to create good policy: (1) how we care for one another - equity and fairness; (2) how we care for the land we inherit - environmental stewardship; and (3) how to provide conditions where people prosper - economic opportunity. In Vermont conversations about this balance, or sustainability, have been weak on the economic side.

by Jennifer Stromsten

When we talk with communities, organizations and individuals about the Vermont Futures Project, we bring out "The Triangle" featured in the Vision Report. Many people find this image helpful to explain how three basic sets of values must be balanced to create good policy: (1) how we care for one another - equity and fairness; (2) how we care for the land we inherit - environmental stewardship; and (3) how to provide conditions where people prosper - economic opportunity. The triangle illustrates sustainability, asking us to consider whether current practices can be maintained long-term.

Key indicators show that our economic sources need replenishing. Revenue downgrades and budget tightening are output, i.e. revenue problems. Weak growth in the number of employers and a shrinking labor force points to underlying problems with inputs that need serious attention. The extraction mechanisms, i.e. tax policy and funding formulas, may provide an short-term fix. However, only long-term stewardship of our economic base can sustain Vermont.

To learn how you can get involved, please visit <https://vtfuturesproject.org/> or email futures@vtfuturesproject.org