STRATEGIC COMPASS
2023-2026
Context

In 2022, Vital Communities embarked on a strategic planning process that featured in-depth engagement from both the Board and staff. It also included input from external stakeholders, gathered through a public survey, community outreach, and focused interviews. Working with a team that included two BIPOC consultants, we made an intentional effort to integrate our commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) as we articulated our vision for both our internal and external work going forward.

Recognizing the ways in which our world has changed since our last Strategic Plan in 2018, the inherent uncertainty of the years ahead, and the need to be agile in response to future priorities identified by Upper Valley communities, we emphasized the development of “JEDI Principles” and “Statements of Intent” that collectively form what we refer to as our “Strategic Compass.” This Compass outlines the approach and values that will guide our actions and decision-making through 2026. It focuses on defining how we intend to work, rather than presenting rigid, fixed plans for the coming years. The Strategic Compass will serve as the foundation for setting annual goals, making decisions, and shaping our plans, ensuring that our actions align with our vision and commitment. The specific components of the Compass are detailed below.

Mission Statement

Vital Communities engages Upper Valley people, organizations, and communities to create equitable solutions to our region’s challenges.
JEDI Principles
Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Hold ourselves accountable for our impact as we establish, strengthen, and heal community relationships.

Advance systems, practices, and policies that are just, both internally and externally.

Practice continual growth by slowing down, showing up with integrity, testing alternatives to the status quo, and listening to and trusting perspectives that challenge our own.

Work collaboratively to foster inclusive and welcoming communities where all individuals have access to the resources and community support they need to live and thrive.

Strive to act in close reciprocity with and respect for the land, climate, and natural ecosystems.
Statements of Intent

Organizational Health
Strengthen internal systems to foster accountability, efficiency, transparency, equity, and trust.

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
Clearly articulate, measure, and be accountable to JEDI principles in all of our internal and external work.

Trust and Relationships
Show up with integrity, slow down, listen to and trust perspectives that challenge our own, and hold ourselves accountable for our impact as we establish and strengthen relationships.

Practice Growth
Practice being courageous by centering community and autonomy, advancing systems that are just, and identifying and testing creative alternatives to the status quo.

Intentional Portfolio Choices
Create and implement a project portfolio that responds to expressed community need; reflects our mission, values and capacity; advances JEDI; and generates positive, measurable impact, and individual passion.

Systems Change
Practice collaborative and cross-sector project work that targets specific levers to generate positive, measurable impact in service of larger systems change.
Ability to Live and Thrive
Design and implement projects that contribute to community resilience and where all individuals have access to the resources and community they need to live and thrive.

Respect and Reciprocity for the Earth
Strive to act in close reciprocity with and respect for the land, climate, and natural ecosystems.

Connectedness
Foster inclusive, cooperative, and welcoming communities where all people see themselves represented; encourage collaboration among the communities and organizations of the Upper Valley.

Getting the organization operating smoothly to support the work
Our vision of the community we are working toward
How we show up in our work