



## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance is a not-for-profit, local development corporation whose mission is to help restore economic prosperity in the Ticonderoga region by serving as a catalyst for innovative ideas and resources, and for public-private partnerships and investment opportunities.

Ti-Alliance works within the Ticonderoga area, which includes the communities of Crown Point, Hague, Moriah, Putnam, and Ticonderoga. The Alliance has been working to develop game-changing projects in the Ticonderoga Area that can kick-start significant economic development.

### OUR STRATEGY

- Expand post-secondary educational opportunities to drive and retain a younger population and skilled workforce;
- Encourage downtown businesses driven by motivated owners that support community needs and attract foot traffic;
- Develop downtown “anchor” buildings to host larger businesses and cultural attractions;
- Expand tourism access to bring year-round tourist dollars into our economy from outside the region;
- Attract non-retail and non-tourism employers to Ticonderoga area;
- Help prevent and remediate vacant and abandoned properties;
- Develop housing to accommodate new and working residents as needed; and
- Build public and private investment resources.

### Accomplishments in 2020:

- (1) **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:** Continued to expand the comprehensive Trade Education Access Program to connect Ticonderoga students with careers and education in the trades.
  - (a) Applied for and received a second round of federal Department of Agriculture Rural Business Development Grant for Ti-High student BOCES tuition to CV-TEC vocational training. This additional \$95,000 brings the two-year total to \$190,000 secured to support tuition of 16 students to CV-TEC vocational training.
  - (b) Awarded the first Ti-Alliance Skilled Career Scholarships in the amount of \$25,000 to three Ti High graduates and established a renewable funding resource for the program. The goal is to award at least three 2-year scholarships for each graduating class.
  - (c) Updated and reprinted the Skilled Careers Education Quick Reference Guide brochure which is actively used in Ticonderoga High School to provide quick information to school counselors and detailed information for students and their families about the trade education and career opportunities available to them.
  - (d) The COVID pandemic abbreviated our “Contractors in the Classroom” that was off to a good start in 2020. But this gave us an opportunity to retool the program to be able to expand the program with student site visits and video visits for the spring of 2021 & a robust internship program.

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- (2) MUNICIPAL SUPPORT: Continued the Zombie and Abandoned Properties Project for a third year: This program supports the Code Enforcement Office (CEO) of the Town of Ticonderoga in identifying, categorizing, and remediating vacant and abandoned buildings in Ticonderoga. The office was able to expand their identification and actionable remediation programs in 2020 with our help. While COVID created significant barriers in implementing remediation, the system allowed additional notification, enforcement, and tracking of owner remediations. Secured Phase 2 funding for 2021.
- (3) DOWNTOWN AND BUSINESS PROGRAMS:
- (a) Wrote and received New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) grant for a Feasibility Study on 3 vacant downtown buildings. The study provided a comprehensive market study of our town and region, identified viable businesses for Ticonderoga's downtown area, recommended new uses for 3 vacant downtown Ti commercial properties, and provided design and budgetary documentation for the three buildings. This was our first substantial state grant.
  - (b) Entered into an agreement with Essex County to purchase the Hacker Building (largest vacant building in Downtown Ticonderoga). The building is in foreclosure with the current owner and will be finalized in early 2021 (delayed by COVID foreclosure restrictions), at which time the building will be sold to Trek Tours LLC for an expansion of their current Star Trek Tours franchise.
  - (c) Wrote a grant to NY Main Street for approximately \$400,000 of funding to support a \$750,000 renovation of the Hacker Building for use by Trek Tours.
  - (d) Utilized our resources as an LDC to raise \$2 million for the rebuilding of the Ticonderoga Golf Club Clubhouse, enable donors to the Ti Golf Club rebuilding project to realize tax benefits from their donations, provide a customized loan instrument that will enable TGC to manage repayment, and provide a vehicle to keep those donations working in our community over the long term.
  - (e) Created and opened Ti-Works, the area's first co-working facility, in partnership with a local building owner. Developed a regular clientele of remote workers seeking professional work environment with reliable broadband and cell signals in downtown Ticonderoga.
  - (f) Created extensive content for the Ticonderoga Area Chamber of Commerce to use for a new tourism website.
  - (g) Convened the first Housing and Lodging Roundtable with 28 attendees to discuss housing and lodging needs in our area. The summit spurred several local investors to renovate depressed houses and rental units and return them to the middle income housing market.
  - (h) Created the new Opportunity Page program to premier in January 2021 aggregating information about opportunities available in the Ticonderoga area. The program will be co-marketed by the Ticonderoga Alumni Association and expanded to include outbound marketing via social media to the NY and Boston metro areas and throughout the North Country Region. There are 4 parts to the Opportunity Page:
    - (i) Businesses for Sale – promoted in conjunction with the resources available at ANCA's Center for Businesses in Transition, designed to provide support for businesses preparing for succession, and people interested in purchasing established businesses.
    - (ii) Businesses to Start – promotes game-changing businesses identified in our feasibility study and Ti-Alliance Tourism study as businesses that could be successful in our market.

- (iii) Affordable Housing – partners with local real estate agents and property owners to identify middle income housing in our area that would be appropriate for working individuals and families relocating to our area. It includes both good rental apartments and houses, as well as houses for sale and move-in ready in the \$130,000-\$300,000 range.
    - (iv) Professional Jobs and Remote Working – partners with regional employers to list professional-level jobs available in our area, and promotes the Ticonderoga Area as a great place to live and remote work.
  - (i) Created the documentation for our Entrepreneurs Fund and are ready to lend when the fund principal reaches a fundable level in preparation for positive results of the Opportunity Page Program.
- (4) ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: Increased the capacity of Ti-Alliance through fundraising and program activity including:
- (a) Raised the funding and increased operating budget for 2021 by 280% over 2020.
  - (b) Increased grant-writing capacity to include grant submissions at the federal, state, and regional levels to support a variety of programming and clients.
  - (c) Hired a full time Communications and Programs Associate. Two people have held the position (first one as a short-term intern, second as permanent employee) and have increased our communications reach through newsletters, press announcements, email and social media. Followers and readers of our email and social media is up over 100% between June 2020 and December 2020. Engagement (click throughs and actions taken) is up by more than 300% in 2020 across our email, Facebook, and Instagram readers. Our communications continue to become more compelling every week both in content and delivery creativity.
  - (d) Hired two key volunteers that will make an impact in 2020. One will manage our Trade Education Access Program which is greatly expanding with the creation of a job site visitation program and video library. The other is a finance person who will dedicate time to supporting some of our clients with financial and business planning service that will help us move projects along.
- (5) RAISING REGIONAL AWARENESS OF ORGANIZATION: Raised the awareness of Ticonderoga with federal, regional, and state economic development funders as a community aggressively and creatively addressing systemic economic development in our area.
- (a) Participated in many regional and state meetings and seminars on rural economic development including being a regular contributor to North Country Chamber of Commerce meetings, the Common Ground regional economic priority conference, quarterly strategy meetings of the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism, and regional meetings on Diversity organized by ANCA.
  - (b) Delivered a presentation to 35 economic development professionals coordinated by The Brattleboro Development Council and Camoin310 Associates on how we designed and utilized the data from our Feasibility Study to drive an actionable downtown development strategy.
  - (c) Established and maintained regular personal contact with key players in federal, regional, and state economic development entities, keeping them always up to date on developments in Ticonderoga.
- (6) COMPLIANCE: Continue to keep Ti-Alliance in good standing with all compliance requirements for LDC, PARIS, NY State Grants Gateway, federal SAM, and Financial Audits