

Summary and Narrative

SECTION 1: APPLICATION SUMMARY

APPLICANT:

Applicant Municipality (or lead applicant if applying as a consortium):

Town of East Montpelier

What is your most recent town plan adoption date?

6/3/2013 (mm/dd/yyyy) N/A

Please select all state designations which the municipality currently possesses:

Village Center

Downtown

Neighborhood Development Area

Growth Center

New Town Center

CONFIRMATION:

Has your municipality been confirmed by your regional planning commission?*

Yes

No

If not, is your municipality in the process of being confirmed on or before the application deadline?

Yes

No

If not, is this application for a plan that will be submitted to the regional planning commission for approval?

Yes

No

Has your municipality voted at an annual or special meeting to provide local funds for municipal and regional planning purposes?

Yes

No

CONSORTIUM:

Is this a consortium project?*

Yes

No

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If yes, please select the participating municipalities. *

(All participating municipalities must be confirmed by application due date and must submit a Resolution signed by their legislative body).

Participating Municipalities: (listed alphabetically by town, city, village)

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SECTION 2: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Type:

Planning for Designated Area

If other, specify:

Project Title: (Examples: Zoning Bylaw Update, Village Master Plan, Sewer Line Mapping)

East Montpelier Village Master Plan

1. What does the project accomplish?

Provide a very brief summary of what the project will accomplish and produce. See examples in Show Help section in the upper right corner of the page.

We will develop a Master Plan for East Montpelier Village. The plan will: allow us to develop village zoning for the Designated Village Center and surrounding neighborhoods; and, guide us in making capital investments in the village zoning district.

2. Why is the project important?

Describe the context, purpose, and timeliness of the project, providing any relevant background information such as past or present planning activities, current issues within the community and the status of your municipal plan and bylaws. If you received an MPG last year, discuss any relationship to this application and your capacity to simultaneously complete both grant projects.

This project is important to East Montpelier because the village is the business center and community focal point in town. The village is located at the junction of US Rte. 2 and VT Rte.14, straddling the Winooski River. Several key public facilities are located in the village: Town Offices, Emergency Services Facility, Post Office, and the Old Brick Church (home to our food shelf). Numerous businesses are also located in the village, including Dudley's Store, a focus of village activity. Near the designated village center, off of VT Rte. 14 S, is the 56-unit Sandy Pines Mobile Home Park. The East Montpelier Elementary School is also located nearby. There is an ongoing effort to establish senior housing in the village. These facilities and community resources are vital to the town and spur East Montpelier's need to plan for the future of our village. Several undeveloped parcels lie within or immediately adjacent to the existing village, including a 48-acre parcel recently acquired by the town. Given these pressures and opportunities, it is important to establish a plan for its future.

East Montpelier Village has been a consistent planning priority over the past decade, through committee work, planning studies and in the Town Plan. The Selectboard commissioned engineering studies in 2007 and 2008 to identify feasible options for village wastewater and is currently revisiting these options. The East Montpelier Fire District #1, formed in 2010, is negotiating to acquire the privately owned Crystal Springs Water Company, which serves most of the village.

Funded by a 2014 MPG, the Planning Commission has completed draft bylaw amendments that update the flood hazard regulations and implement river corridor protection, with special consideration given to the Designated Village Center. These draft amendments are currently being considered by the Selectboard. The Village Committee, created in 2004 to focus the town's efforts to revitalize the village area, has: worked with VTrans to ensure the reconstruction of the US 2/VT 14 intersections included sidewalks, crosswalks, greenspace and plantings; successfully applied for Village Center Designation in 2008, which was renewed in

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2013; and, used a 2011 MPG to conduct a village visioning study that engaged village residents and business owners in a discussion of the future development and enhancement of the village. Some of the priorities identified in the resultant Village Study Report have been accomplished or are underway: sidewalks and crosswalks to improve safety; landscaped village green space; construction of a park 'n ride/bus stop facility; and, installation of four gateway signs to the village. The report also documents strong public interest in: creating small secondary streets with compact development reflecting historic patterns; providing greater connections between the east and west sides of the village; and, defining the village as a distinct entity with zoning that would encourage a denser development pattern more typical of the historic core of the existing village.

Based on the village visioning study, the 2013 Town Plan identifies creating a village zoning district as a priority project. The Village Study Report included a concept map of the village area, encompassing the designated village center and surrounding neighborhood areas on both sides of the river. Further definition of the desired village boundaries is necessary for delineating a village zone.

The proposed Master Plan will build on the village visioning study, using a public engagement process to delineate the boundaries and identify appropriate uses and dimensional standards for a village zone encompassing the Designated Village Center and surrounding village neighborhoods as well as identify preferred locations for future investments in the village zone, such as the side streets, trails and municipal facilities described in the conceptual development scenario in the Village Study Report.

3. How does the project meet the competitive criteria?

a. Explain how the project implements ideas and actions set forth within the municipal plan. Insert municipal plan excerpts that demonstrate the linkage between the project and the plan. (For consortium projects provide municipal plan linkage information, including excerpts, for all member towns. If extra space is needed, please upload your response to this question as an attachment, but do not attach the municipal plan itself.)

For a municipal plan or update project, describe any pressing community planning concerns that the proposed plan or update will address. Cite specific policies in the current plan that are no longer applicable and explain why a plan update is more important than pursuing implementation of the previously adopted plan. If the town plan is set to expire within the next two years, explain why a minor update or re-adoption of the town plan is not adequate.

The 2013 Town Plan identifies East Montpelier Village as a growth area. The plan's goals for East Montpelier Village include:

"Foster a vibrant and attractive town center that is a desirable place to live, work and do business."

"Encourage commercial growth within East Montpelier Village."

"Provide housing and amenities that encourage people of all ages to live in East Montpelier Village."

"Direct growth in a manner that is compact, efficient and reflects the historic settlement patterns of the village core."

"Ensure adequate water supply for the future growth."

"Ensure that the Post Office, town offices, and general store remain in the village as critical community services. Encouraging similar services within the village such as banks, care repair services, restaurants, hardware stores, and drug stores (some of these already exist)."

Relevant actions in the Town Plan for East Montpelier Village include:

"Create a village zone for East Montpelier Village. Zoning changes will require working with the property owners of East Montpelier Village, the Selectboard and the Village Committee."

"The Planning Commission, Village Committee and Selectboard should provide for the participation of local citizens and business owners in discussion of the future of the East Montpelier Village."

"The Selectboard should appoint an ad hoc committee, including members of the Planning Commission and

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Village Committee, to develop solutions to wastewater disposal either through a larger village-wide system or a series of smaller possibly private systems.”

“The Planning Commission should review and revise, as necessary, the zoning regulations to encourage compact settlement and efficient and historic settlement patterns. Consider allowing higher densities.”

“The Planning Commission, with assistance from the Village Committee, should work with landowners, especially larger landowners, to provide assistance in planning for future development.”

“The Village Committee should work in conjunction with the Selectboard to provide amenities to make the village attractive such as a river walk, trail connections to East Montpelier’s larger trail system, safe bicycle routes and facilities for children, such as playgrounds.”

“The Village Committee and Selectboard should provide facilities for the elderly including housing, a senior center, safe pedestrian connections to stores, the Post Office and town offices.”

Development of a Master Plan for East Montpelier Village will advance the Town Plan’s goals for the village as well as directly support the development of a village zone, encourage and focus public participation in discussions of the village’s future, and identify the most appropriate locations in the village for future town facilities and infrastructure.

b. Describe what kind of citizen participation activities and outreach, intended to educate and involve the public in planning, will be conducted as part of this project as well as any coordination and cooperation with relevant local and/or regional organizations.

The process for developing the East Montpelier Village Master Plan will include education and outreach activities, as well as opportunities for citizen participation. The entire process will be documented on the town website: eastmontpelier.vt.org

Education and outreach activities will seek to let town residents know about the Master Plan process and create community interest in the village. Planned education and outreach activities include:

- Articles in the East Montpelier Signpost newsletter;
- Postings on Front Porch Forum;
- Direct mailing to residents within 1 mile of the village, informing them of our work;
- Proposed activity with East Montpelier Elementary School to have students identify, through creative art and writing projects, what they like about East Montpelier Village and their vision for the village;
- Village Events, through partnering with local organizations, to educate town residents and create interest in the village. Proposed events include: an illustrated talk on village history and architecture (with East Montpelier Historical Society); a nature walk along the proposed Riverwalk (with East Montpelier Trails); possible concert on the green (with Old Brick Church); possible Farmer’s Market on the green (with local farmers).

Citizen participation activities will seek to inform the public and obtain comments and input on various aspects of the Master Plan. Planned citizen participation activities include:

- Joint working sessions with Village Committee and/or Selectboard, open to the public;
- Ice cream social, inviting residents to view student creative projects, and to review and provide feedback on typical village design characteristics, village boundary scenarios, neighborhood identification, desired facilities and infrastructure, and development concepts from the 2011 Village Study Report (areas of future development, new streets, bicycle and pedestrian trails);
- Public meeting to present and obtain feedback on the draft Master Plan, proposed village zoning amendments, and next steps;
- Public hearing on the final Master Plan and proposed village zoning amendments.

Organizational partnerships will seek to engage local and regional organizations in discussing issues and

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opportunities for East Montpelier Village. The following organizations will be invited to participate in discussions and/or working sessions:

- Village Committee – a key partner throughout the planning process;
- Selectboard – a key partner throughout the planning process, particularly related to transportation infrastructure and future wastewater options;
- East Montpelier Fire District #1 – potable water supply;
- East Montpelier Trails and Cross Vermont Trail – bicycle and pedestrian trails;
- East Montpelier Senior Living Initiative and Downstreet (formerly Central Vermont Community Land Trust) – senior and affordable housing;
- Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation and village businesses – economic development;
- Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (if not selected as the consultant) – village planning.

c. Discuss whether and how your project furthers any of the following statewide priorities:

Municipal Plan updates for the purpose of:

- *Addressing inconsistencies with statewide planning goals or the Regional Plan that were identified by the regional planning commission review of the municipal plan. (Please include a letter in the application from the Regional Planning Commission that summarizes the inconsistencies that need to be addressed.)*

Bylaw updates for the purpose of:

- *Correcting clear conflicts with the Municipal Plan.*
- *Implementing the flood resilience recommendations of the Municipal Plan. The bylaw project may be combined with a flood resilience update to the Municipal Plan to ensure conformance. (See guidance in Attachment #1.)*

Special Projects for Designated Areas - Downtowns, Village Centers, New Town Centers, Neighborhood Development Areas or Growth Centers - including the following:

- *Plans, studies and bylaws to improve the physical and economic environment such as downtown master plans and form based regulations (See guidance Attachment #2.)*
- *Infrastructure studies and capital improvement planning in support of the designated areas (See guidance Attachment #3.)*
- *Applications for a new designated Neighborhood Development Area or Growth Center – please contact DHCD if you are considering an application to obtain one of these designations. The designation process must be initiated before a grant will be issued for this purpose.*

The East Montpelier Village Master Plan is a special project that includes our Designated Village Center and surrounding existing and potential village neighborhoods. The proposed Master Plan will delineate boundaries for village zoning purposes, helping identify the village as a distinct place in the town. The Master Plan will also identify desired uses and densities for village neighborhoods, as well as preferred locations for future public investments.

The Master Plan will build on the village visioning study and 2013 Town Plan, providing the necessary details and action plan that will enable the town to implement the goals, concepts and priorities for the village contained in the previous plans.

d. How does your project relate to any existing state designated Downtown, Village Center, Neighborhood Development Area or Growth Center?

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The East Montpelier Village Master Plan will focus on the Designated Village Center (the historic core of the village) and the surrounding village neighborhoods (including potential new neighborhoods) on both sides of the Winooski River.

Public feedback during the village visioning study and a survey conducted for the 2013 Town Plan consistently identify the desire to make East Montpelier Village a vibrant focal point for residents and businesses. There is limited opportunity for infill development within the Designated Village Center, but substantial opportunity for development adjacent to the Designated Village Center. Planning for village-scale development in the Designated Village Center and the surrounding village neighborhood areas will help provide the critical mass of residents and businesses to make the village more vibrant and help support the businesses and services currently located in the Designated Village Center.

SECTION 3: MUNICIPAL RESOLUTION

Please print and complete the municipal resolution available online. If this is a consortium application, each participating municipality must complete a resolution designating the same Municipal/Authorizing Official and Administrator. See MPG Roles for more information about the responsibilities and permissions of the grant roles.

Municipal/Authorizing Official:

C Bruce Johnson

Title: East Montpelier Town Administrator

Alternate Municipal/Authorizing Official:

Title: East Montpelier Selectboard Chair

Grant Administrator:

C Bruce Johnson

Title: East Montpelier Town Administrator

Upload Completed Municipal Resolution*

https://grants.accd.vermont.gov/_Upload/177932-EM2016MPGResolutionAdopted.pdf

Mailed to DHCD