

**TOWN OF EAST MONTPELIER PLANNING COMMISSION
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

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1. Based on your knowledge of East Montpelier Village, what economic development opportunities do you see for the Lower Village (along US2)? Upper Village (along VT14S)? How might we pursue these opportunities?

Dudley's store is an anchor in the Lower Village, but otherwise there is a void of economic activity in the Lower Village. Get owners on board.

Look at vacant/derelict buildings in the village; they send a negative message about the village. Consider a combination of carrots (incentives) and sticks (regulations) to accomplish economic goals. Goal: return vacant properties to active use. Carrot: publicize availability of historic preservation renovation funds in village centers. Stick: Include requirements in zoning: ZA and FD inspect derelict buildings for safety and security at owner's cost.

A café like Red Hen in Middlesex would be a plus. Remember that cafés need high speed WiFi. CVEDC worked with Cloud Alliance to improve WISP infrastructure in this area. There is a revolving loan fund to help provide competition to major internet providers.

Concentrate in village center, where state incentives are available to help implement. Residential, commercial and light business (light manufacturing). Consider ways to make village attractive to "makers." Village is probably too small for a co-working hub.

2. What are the key economic development messages that you think our village business survey identifies?

Respondents to business survey are not particularly interested in sidewalks. Sidewalks may be more important for residents than businesses. Sidewalks become more important with more traffic and higher speeds.

Get back in touch with respondents. Acknowledge responses and follow up.

3. How important is it to create a sense of connection (or physical connection) between the Upper Village and Lower Village?

Not addressed.

4. The 2011 Village Study identified water supply as an "opportunity" for cultivating a vibrant local economy. The DEC currently has a moratorium on new connections to the Crystal Springs water system because of capacity issues. Based on your experience, how important is a public water supply to economic development? Do you have any suggestions on how to deal with this issue?

Infrastructure is important to economic development. Water and wastewater are huge issues. CVEDC can help identify funding sources to finance water/wastewater infrastructure. State Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) has leeway to help fund money for infrastructure.

Breweries, distilleries and wineries are a fast growing sector in Vermont. But all need wastewater infrastructure.

5. The 2011 Village Study identified poor soils for onsite septic and lack of public wastewater as “dislikes.” Based on your experience, how important is public wastewater to economic development? Do you have any suggestions on how to deal with this issue?

See comments for #4.

6. Are there any examples that you are aware of where a similar community facing similar constraints was able to attract businesses into the community?

Waitsfield struggles with water and wastewater issues and has been creative in dealing with them.

7. What would be a realistic economic development “success” for East Montpelier Village?

See comments for #1.

Stay focused. What the community wants is what matters.

CVEDC priorities for economic development: 1. Retain businesses. 2. Expand existing businesses. 3. Recruit new businesses.

Think about funding to help encourage new small business. VSECU funding. Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund flex capital fund. Fresh Tracks Capital.

8. Could any of the identified constraints for East Montpelier be considered an asset?

Not addressed.

9. How important is more housing to economic development for a village like East Montpelier?

Think about East Montpelier as a community that entrepreneurs want to live in. Desirability can help recruit new businesses.

10. VTrans will be constructing a new park and ride facility at the corner of US2 and VT14N. Does a low-use park and ride provide any economic development opportunities that we should consider?

Park and ride may not stay low use. Opportunities to have commuters shop/eat before leaving.

11. Most of East Montpelier Village is in the Residential and Commercial District. Portions of the Lower Village are in the Agricultural and Forest Conservation District, Rural Residential

and Agricultural District, and the Commercial District. Portions of the Upper Village are in the Rural Residential and Agricultural District and the Industrial District. As we think about developing a village-specific zoning district(s), what should we be considering from an economic development perspective?

See comments for #1.

12. What would be the most important investment the Town could make to attract and support businesses in our village?

Not specifically addressed, but see comments for #1 and #4.