

EAST MONTPELIER PLANNING COMMISSION

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT AREAS DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

April 21, 2016

1. What is the purpose of the Neighborhood Development Area program?

The state has 5 designation programs: the 3 core designation programs (Downtowns, Village Centers and New Town Centers) and 2 add-on programs (Growth Centers and Neighborhood Development Areas). The Neighborhood Development Area program is intended to incentivize housing development close to designated Downtowns or Village Centers

2. What areas are eligible for this program?

Areas applying for the Neighborhood Development Area program must be adjacent or within ¼ mile of a designated Village Center; the distance is larger for a designated Downtown.

3. What are the benefits of the program?

Under the Neighborhood Development program, a developer can increase the number of units built without being subject to Act 250. If Act 250 applies anyway, there are fee reductions, ANR water and wastewater fees are capped, land gains tax is avoided, as is the 5 mile/5 units rule, and prime agricultural soils do not need to be mitigated. These benefits can save time and money for developers.

4. What are the requirements of the program?

Either a municipality or a developer can apply. The area needs to be adjacent or within ¼ mile of the Village Center. The area must be zoned to allow at least 4 dwelling units/acre. For all practical purposes, this means that the area must have a community wastewater system. The area must meet a number of pedestrian-oriented design standards, such as small lots, small setbacks and frontages, front entrances facing the street, minimized garages (not the dominant feature facing the street), and minimized parking requirements. The area also needs to have complete streets,

5. East Montpelier is looking to grow our village. How could this program help us accomplish this goal?

If the density requirements could be met, the incentives might encourage a developer to build mixed-income housing in the designated area.

6. How can we use the design guidelines for the Neighborhood Development Area Program, even if we are not eligible for the program (yet)?

7. What Neighborhood Development Areas have been approved by the Downtown Development Board?

Since the program was established in 2003, 6 Neighborhood Development Areas have been designated: Burlington, Essex Junction, Hinesburg, Shelburne, South Burlington and Winooski.

8. How successful have the Neighborhood Development Areas been in accomplishing the town's objectives?

Not addressed.

9. Can the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile boundary around a Designated Village Center be extended or modified if parts of the village are in a flood hazard area or have steep slopes?

If there are natural features limiting growth, the applicant can apply for a greater distance, however, a supermajority of the Downtown Board must approve. Burlington was approved for a greater distance from their Downtown because of Lake Champlain.

10. Have Neighborhood Development Areas been approved in villages without existing infrastructure such as public water or wastewater?

Not yet.