



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** East Montpelier Planning Commission

**FROM:** Eric Vorwald, AICP

**DATE:** August 10, 2016

**RE:** **Summary Report on Public Engagement Session #1 – July 21, 2016 - UPDATE**

As per the Agreement of Services between the Town of East Montpelier and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, the following is a summary report of the activities conducted at the first public engagement session to discuss the East Montpelier Village Master Plan.

On July 21, 2016 a public engagement session was held at the East Montpelier Village Municipal Offices. Originally, the public engagement session was scheduled to be held at the East Montpelier Emergency Services Facility, however due to a scheduling conflict it was relocated to the municipal offices. Approximately ten citizens and seven planning commission members attended this session. This was the first public engagement session and will help guide the future direction of the planning process for the East Montpelier Village Master Plan.

The format for the meeting was a true open house whereby the community was encouraged to stop in any time between 6:00pm and 8:00pm to provide their opinions. Six stations were set up with varying topics and participants were asked provide their opinions relative to the information being presented. The six stations included:

1. Preferences on density
2. Preferences on a village boundary
3. Identification of likes and dislikes within the existing village
4. Identification of what uses should be included in a future village
5. Establishing a vision for the village
6. Support for recommendations from the 2011 village study

Initial results from this session indicate that attendees felt density in the village should be between two and seven units per acre depending on the height of the building. They also preferred the village boundary that included the most land area. Some of their likes include the small town atmosphere and the future park & ride facility; while they dislike the traffic on U.S. Route 2, the lack of a geographic center for the community, and the lack of gathering spots. Future uses for the village that were noted include places to gather such as a park, café, or bakery; and they would like a river walk to be developed. In general,

there was support for a vision that includes a compact center with open space, mixed uses, and pedestrian scale amenities. Finally, people typically support the recommendations that were identified in the 2011 village study.

There were several residents who knew they would not be able to attend this session and provided input in advance of the meeting. Based on the attendance at the public open house, it was decided that a web-based version of the information would be made available to allow people that were unable to attend the session an opportunity to provide their opinions. It was requested that on-line responses to the various input categories be provided to the Town by August 9, 2016.

Below is the information that was collected via the public open house and includes responses that were provided in advance of the open house and after the open house. In some instances, multiple people provided the same response. These items are noted with an asterisk. This is most commonly found under the first two sections of the information.

### **Likes**

#### Size

East Montpelier Elementary School and Recreation Department

Future Park & Ride space

Small town atmosphere

Dudley's

Mix of residential, commercial, and public services

Traditional New England architecture

Variety of services (post office, hardware store, church, bank, etc.)\*

Improved Route 2 & 14 intersection

Fairly compact development along Route 2 and parcels are within walking distances

Well maintained properties

### **Dislikes**

No reason to visit East Montpelier Village if you live closer to Montpelier

Traffic on Route 2

No walking opportunities

Traffic is too fast\*

Not enough businesses or housing\*

No sidewalks or crosswalks\*

No gathering spots

No access to river

Improved walking & biking

Proposed nature of the village

Lack of one village center\*

Lack of bicycle/pedestrian paths\*

School is too far from the village

Several rundown or trashy buildings\*  
Unattained potential as a crossroads  
Traffic volumes in town\*

**Wants/Needs**

Café/restaurant/bakery/coffee shop\*  
Cyber lounge/Wi-Fi in town\*  
Brew pub, great playground, recreation for all ages\*  
River walk\*  
Varied housing density, small lots at core, larger lots as you move away from center; any industry that might develop at the edge of the village  
Senior housing; Affordable housing\*  
Community activities and places\*  
Community gathering place or business with space for gathering/bakery\*  
A business route to reduce truck traffic through the village  
Slower traffic and less of it, but more bikes  
Foster the Cross Vermont Trail and the East Montpelier Trails  
Multi-use housing  
Maker space  
Green space/gazebo by the river  
Sidewalks/paths\*  
Higher density in the village center  
Route 14 bridge with sidewalks connected to the credit union  
Water and sewer systems\*  
Access to public transportation  
Mix of residential and businesses  
Center for community events, classes, etc.  
Space for community gardens  
Access to recreational trails

**Vision**

Vision 1 – Compact Village -	11 votes
Vision 2 – Medium Density Village -	5 votes
Vision 3 – Limited Change Village -	2 votes

**Boundary**

- 1. Small Boundary - 3 votes
- 2. Medium Boundary - 3 votes
- 3. Large Boundary - 10 votes

**Density**

- 2 units/acre- 4
- 3 units/acre- 5
- 4-5 units/acre- 2
- 5 units/acre- 1
- 7 units/acre- 3 (one noting okay if this meant taller buildings in a small area)

**2011 Study**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Unsure/Neutral</u>
1. Mixed Use	12	0	2
2. Interconnected Roads	9	1	1
3. Expanded Development	11	0	1
4. Defined Boundary	6	0	6
5. Bike/Ped Connections	9	0	2
6. Reduced Setbacks	12	0	1