

**TOWN OF EAST MONTPELIER PLANNING COMMISSION  
TRAILS AND RECREATION QUESTIONS & ANSWERS  
Discussion with EM Trails, Cross Vermont Trail and EM Recreation Board  
November 3, 2016**

**Trails**

1. Briefly describe your organization and its mission. (East Montpelier Trails, Cross Vermont Trails)

*East Montpelier Trails, Inc. is a non-profit volunteer organization working to responsibly build and maintain a local network of trails in East Montpelier. EM Trails has a long-term plan for a loop trail through town. About 12 miles of trails currently exist, with about 8 miles of trails planned.*

*EM Trails partners with other organizations. Working with Cross Vermont Trail has been especially important for construction work. Other partners have included The Gully Jumpers, Montpelier Area Mountain Bike Association and U32 Bicycles.*

*Cross Vermont Trail Association is a non-profit member-based, volunteer-driven organization with two part-time staff. Cross Vermont Trail Association's mission is to assist municipalities, recreation groups and land owners in the creation and management of a four-season, multi-use trail across the state of Vermont for public recreation, alternative transportation, and awareness of our natural and cultural heritage. The Cross Vermont Trail is the organization's signature project. However, the organization also works to create community paths (not wilderness paths) that connect villages and schools with other paths.*

*CVTA is currently raising funds for a bridge across the Winooski River on the old railroad bridge abutments in East Montpelier. This bridge would move the trail off of the VT 2 shoulder onto a new, off-road trail on conserved land in the woods. The bridge would help Cross Vermont Trail accomplish a complete, off-road route from Montpelier to Groton. CVTA has raised \$1.3 million in federal grant funds, and another \$100,000 in local money. CVTA needs to raise another \$99,000 for the bridge project.*

2. Do you own the trails, or do you have an easement? Are easements permanent or for a term period?

*EM Trails co-holds permanent easements for the trails with Vermont Land Trust and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. A few properties have been purchased for trail access.*

*Cross Vermont Trails also uses trail easements.*

3. Briefly describe existing trails in or near East Montpelier Village.

*EM Trails does not currently have any trails that connect into the village, although the Mallory Brook Trail crosses the proposed village boundary between Johnson Road and Cherry Tree Hill Road.*

*The Cross Vermont Trail, running along the old Montpelier to Wells River rail line, crosses VT14 in the upper village.*

4. Do you have plans for trails in or near East Montpelier Village?

*EM Trails is focusing its efforts on completing the trail loop through town and is not currently planning new trails in or near the village, although it supports having such trails.*

*CVTA continues to work with landowners to obtain easements to complete the Cross Vermont Trail corridor, including in East Montpelier.*

5. What needs/opportunities do you see for trails in East Montpelier Village?

*There is considerable potential for a nice trail through the Old LaPerle Farm property purchased by the town. There is potential for a spur trail from the Cross Vermont Trail in the Sandy Pines area to the Winooski River (the “old East Montpelier swimming hole”).*

*A trail between the village, near Dudley’s Store, up to the East Montpelier Elementary School would be nice. There used to be a snowmobile trail between the store and Cherry Tree Hill Road, which might be a possible trail route. Contacting the snowmobile clubs would be appropriate.*

*In conducting trail inventories, CVTA has noticed informal connector trails. If people are already using these trails, then these are good candidates for new, more formal trails.*

*It is important to have village residents engaged in creating new trails in/near the village. Local residents know the informal trails and connections and can help advocate for creating a more formal trail.*

6. Is a trail bridge connecting the Upper Village (near Sandy Pines) to the Lower Village (near the Emergency Services Facility) realistic? Why or why not? Is there a more appropriate or realistic location for a connection between the Upper and Lower Villages that you would recommend?

*There are high costs to design, permit and engineer bridges across the river. See costs for the Cross Vermont bridge project.*

*In CVTA’s experience, it would make more sense to try to accomplish continuous sidewalks in the upper village that connect to the VT 14 bridge into the lower village.*

7. How could trails in the village connect to your existing or planned trails?

*See discussion above.*

## **Recreation**

8. Briefly describe your organization and its mission. (East Montpelier Recreation Board)

*The Recreation Board organizes children’s sports programs, sponsors activities to town residents and maintains the recreation field on Vincent Flats Road, next to the Elementary School. The Recreation Board is currently a town committee, appointed by the Selectboard. The Recreation Board is currently in the process of becoming a non-profit organization that receives town funding. The Recreation Board’s mission will not change much, although the Recreation Board is considering adding adult recreation programs.*

9. What is the status of your proposal to convert to a non-profit organization?

*The paperwork has been signed. Obtaining non-profit status is a slow process.*

10. What facilities does the Rec Board use? Are they owned by the Rec Board or the Town? Would ownership change if the Rec Board becomes a non-profit?

*The Recreation Board uses and maintains the town-owned recreation field property. The 12-acre property has about two acres of open land used for two baseball fields and two soccer fields. Much of the rest of the property has a Class 2 wetland with two streams running through it. Once the Recreation Board obtains non-profit status, the Recreation Board will enter into a land use management plan with the town for continued use of the property.*

*The Recreation Board also uses the elementary school gym.*

11. Does the Rec Board need additional recreational facilities? Why? What type? Where?

*Recently, the Recreation Board has been working on thinning and cleaning up the hedgerow between the recreation field and the school.*

*The Recreation Board has been looking to additional ways to use the recreation fields. A groomed cross-country ski loop was set up last winter, but there wasn't enough snow to use it.*

*Lighting on the soccer field would extend the field's usefulness.*

*Future plans include construction of an amphitheater/stage, observation space next to the wetlands, and a trail connection to the Mallory Brook Trail.*

*Another idea is to have a history walk between the school and the recreation field. The history walk would have markers on the trees, showing the age of the tree and with historical facts for that date.*

*The school gym is booked a lot, especially in winter. The Recreation Board would like to have indoor space, near the fields or in the village, for basketball and volley ball courts.*

12. Do you see a need for new recreational facilities (other than ball fields) in East Montpelier Village?

*See #11.*

**Other discussion points:**

*Cars speeding on Vincent Flats Road next to the recreation field are a problem. A speed hump or something that slows cars would make access and use of the fields safer.*

*It is helpful for trail developers to have potential trails included in the Town Plan. This gives the trail developers more points, and hence more competitive, when applying to grant funding. Mapping proposed trails in the Town Plan can be controversial, for perceived taking reasons. EM Trails has been successful in identifying future trails with dotted lines ("proposed trail, route unknown.") Alternatively, a plan can identify key points to be connected, without identifying the actual route..*

*CVTA has found that landowners are sometimes concerned that agreeing to a trail easement, or a subdivision for a trail corridor, would create a non-conforming lot. This is a potential hurdle to trail creation. Some kind of zoning language that encourages trail development would be helpful.*

*It would be helpful to have a town survey that asked about opinions on housing, conservation trails and recreation.*