

**TOWN OF EAST MONTPELIER PLANNING COMMISSION
VILLAGE CENTER DESIGNATION PROGRAM QUESTIONS
Discussion with Richard Amore, VT Dept. Housing and Community Development
January 19, 2017**

1. What is the state definition of a village center?

Vermont law defines a village center as “the core of a traditional settlement, typically comprised of a cohesive mix of residential, civic, religious, commercial, and mixed use buildings, arranged along a main street and intersecting streets that are within walking distance for residents who live within and surrounding the core.” (24 (V.S.A. § 2793a)

2. What is the purpose of the state Village Center Designation program?

Village Center Designation is intended to recognize a community’s historic core and development pattern. Additionally it can be used to support the State’s planning goals related to land use and development patterns.

3. What is the process for village centers to become designated?

The process is generally as follows: meeting with Vermont Department of Housing & Community Development; build local support; begin application process; complete the application checklist; submit the application; application is reviewed by the Department of Housing & Community Development; the application is reviewed by the Downtown Board for possible action and official designation.

4. How often do village center designations need to be renewed?

Renewals are done every five years and a renewal application is required to be reviewed by the Downtown Board for consideration of renewal.

5. How many designated village centers are in Vermont, and what is their typical size?

Currently there are 124 communities with Village Center Designation. These vary in size depending on the community. Some have only a few properties while others have many.

6. How are designated Village Center boundaries determined?

Boundaries are determined by a survey of the properties within an area that may have a historical context in the community or other properties that could contribute to the historic context of a community’s village or core area.

7. What are the benefits of the Village Center Designation program?

Community's with Village Center Designation receive technical assistance from ACHD; priority in state grant funding; priority for locating state buildings; downtown and village tax credits; and neighborhood development area designation.

8. Who is eligible to access the available tax credits for buildings in a designated village center?

Property owners or business owners can apply for tax credits. The applicant for the tax credits is typically the person that will do the improvements which doesn't need to be the property or building owner.

9. Has anyone applied to use the tax credits in East Montpelier Village?

Tax credits have not been applied for however historic preservation grants have been used for the Four Corners School and the Old Meeting House.

10. How might East Montpelier better utilize its village designation to revitalize both the designated village center and the surrounding village?

Properties in the village can take advantage of the tax credits and technical assistance to identify programs for revitalization; Neighborhood Development Area designation can help properties surrounding the Designated Village Center; and federal tax credits can be used in conjunction with state tax credits if applicable.