

2013 TOWN PLAN GOALS & ACTIONS

EAST MONTPELIER and the REGION

GOALS

- Promote the continued compatibility of East Montpelier's Town Plan with the plans of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and adjacent municipalities.
- Cooperate with neighboring communities to address compatibility issues as well as mutual opportunities and challenges.

ACTIONS

- The Planning Commission should review the potential conflict areas identified above and make recommendations for appropriate changes in consultation with officials in adjacent towns or cities.
- The Planning Commission should consult with planning officials of towns adjacent to the growth centers proposed in this plan to identify and resolve potential conflicts and to address opportunities for cooperation.
- The Town of East Montpelier should maintain active participation and representation on boards and commissions of regional government organizations.
- **The Selectboard should continue to appoint a representative to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission - either an active member of the Planning Commission or one who periodically reports to the Planning Commission on regional issues.**

TOWN GOVERNMENT

GOALS

- Maintain a system of government that maximizes volunteer efforts by residents.
- Encourage participation in town government and activities by residents.
- Ensure that local government responds to population growth and the increased complexity of the issues it faces.
- Ensure that the management of the town effectively represents the interests of the townspeople.
- Maintain regular communication among town officials, committees, and the public.

ACTIONS

- The Town Clerk should provide notice in the East Montpelier Signpost and on Front Porch Forum in early January of elective offices to be filled at the next Town Meeting and the procedure for filing for the offices.
- The Town Administrator should provide notice on Front Porch Forum in early March of vacancies for town-appointed positions.
- **The Selectboard, through the Town Administrator, should create and maintain a town web site for posting schedules and minutes of town commissions and committees, copies of town bylaws and zoning regulations, the Town Plan, and other public matters.**

- Every town committee should hold a public forum at least once per year to discuss its activities and to invite public input.
- The Planning Commission should host an annual meeting of representatives from every town committee to share ideas and help coordinate activities, especially as they relate to planning within the town.
- Town officials should ensure that town-sponsored programs and activities are offered in accessible sites, and that other reasonable modifications in policies and practices are made if requested to accommodate people with disabilities.
- **The Selectboard should review the maintenance, use and space needs of the Town Office building.**
- **The Planning Commission, in conjunction with the Selectboard, should review capital planning and budgeting to coordinate all town building needs.**
- All local Boards and Commissions should describe their duties and activities in the annual Town Report and at Town Meeting.

FINANCE

GOALS

- Integrate the planning and funding of the town's capital projects throughout the Town into the town Plan and with the annual budgeting process.
- Increase residents' awareness of the cost of town services and of the town's budgeting process.
- Provide opportunities for townspeople to attend budget-building meetings.
- The Selectboard and School Boards present budgets that provide efficient and effective service delivery; adequately address the municipality's and schools' capital needs; and maintain a relatively stable tax rate.
- Seek alternative sources of funds prior to the expenditure of town funds.

ACTIONS

- The Auditors should continue to make financial information in the Town Report as complete and accessible as possible.
- All town committees should continue to report their activities and finances in the Town Report.
- **The Selectboard and the School Boards should continue to inform townspeople of scheduled budget-building meetings by posting notices and publishing announcements in local newspapers and newsletters (Signpost and Elementary School newsletter and Front Porch Forum).**
- **The Selectboard, School Boards, Town Auditors, and representatives of any committees seeking funding from taxpayers should attend the Pre-Town Meeting Forum to present information about warned items and answer questions from townspeople in attendance.**
- **The Selectboard and School Boards should investigate means for achieving the most efficient use of tax dollars, including joining with each other and other towns to purchase goods and services.**

- **The Planning Commission, Selectboard, and Town Treasurer should further explore or implement capital planning and budgeting.**
- **The Planning Commission and the Selectboard should seek state planning grant funding.**
- **The Selectboard should implement the voter-supported recommendations of the Farm Contract Study Committee.**
- **The Selectboard and School Boards should maintain five-year Capital Plans with funding limits as a ratio between debt and capital appropriations.**
- **The Selectboard should continue to establish separate inventory, status, and capital reserve funds for equipment, roads, bridges and culverts; and the Capital Program continue to appear in the annual Town Report with five-year projections.**
- The annual Town Report should reflect total town revenue and expenditures for three consecutive years.

TOWNSPEOPLE

GOALS

- Provide gathering places and educational and social opportunities for residents to get to know one another in small neighborhoods, as well as in town-wide settings, and to build a sense of community.
- Involve residents in learning about and participating in town government and in town affairs.
- Make the most of the resources of our citizens for the betterment of our town government and of our social and business lives in East Montpelier.
- Improve town-wide communication and information opportunities.

ACTIONS

- The Rally Day Committee should continue to organize an annual event for residents to learn more about their town and to enjoy working and playing together.
- The Town Clerk should continue to make available basic educational materials on town activities and how residents can participate in town business.
- Town officials should update and provide written policies to encourage appropriate availability and accessibility to all town buildings for public use; and School Boards should continue to provide school facilities for adult education, as well as after school family activities.
- The Four Corners Schoolhouse Association should continue to offer this meeting place for planned programs of community activities designed to serve all townspeople.
- The East Montpelier Signpost should continue to inform residents of town, school, church, and community happenings on a regular basis through its printed and on-line newspapers.
- **The Selectboard should establish and maintain a town web site, along with information about the Town including current documents, a calendar of current events and meeting agendas.**

- **The Selectboard should appoint a Welcome Coordinator to identify newcomers to town, distribute informational material, and extend an invitation to participate in town activities.**

RECREATION

GOALS

- Develop a year-round program of various recreational activities to meet the interests and needs of residents of all ages and skills.
- Protect public recreational space and develop new recreational areas in various parts of town.
- Make better use of recreational land and facilities now owned by the town.
- Expand sporting field space.

ACTIONS

- The Recreation Board, Four Corner Schoolhouse Association, Trails Committee, Friends of Coburn Pond and Rally Day Committee should continue the tradition of working together and involving volunteers in planning and running programs.
- The various recreation groups in town are encouraged to look for ways to broaden the scope of their activities, including encouraging participation by senior citizens and those with disabilities, and possibly coordinating activities with similar groups in surrounding towns.
- The Recreation Board should promote use of the Town Forest and school facilities, in accordance with school policies, by all residents. In addition, it is recommended that they investigate, develop, and encourage more and better use of other town-owned land—including the old town hall site as a possible park in East Montpelier Village.
- The Recreation Board should work with landowners and the Conservation Fund Advisory Committee to explore purchase, easement, gift, or other means of access to potential additional recreation and picnic areas in town.
- The Recreation Board should work with the town representative of the Wrightsville Beach Recreation Area in order to potentially expand recreational facilities and activities there.
- The Recreation Board should work with property owners, the Conservation Fund Advisory Committee, the Vermont River Conservancy and Friends of Coburn Pond to further protect the Coburn Road Pond site for public access over the long term as a naturalizing recreation area.
- In its review of subdivisions and large commercial projects, the Development Review Board should encourage the inclusion of recreational space and the Planning Commission should consider zoning bylaws that permit density bonuses for their inclusion.
- **The Selectboard should explore the feasibility of locating sanitary facilities near more town recreation areas.**

TRAILS

GOALS

- Maintain a proactive and supportive relationship between the town and its trail user groups.
- Keep the trails we have, and expand those sections that public use and sentiment, and landowner willingness, suggest.
- Provide better access and parking for the town's trail resources.

ACTIONS

- **The Selectboard, town highway road crew and trail user groups should work together to provide sufficient, safe parking off the traveled roadway and to educate trail users on safe parking practices. In particular, look for ways to address parking for trail users at the County Road access.**
- Trail user groups in town should maintain close communication with the Selectboard, Planning Commission, and EMTI to be informed about trail needs or opportunities, such as Land Trust actions, housing developments, and Class 4 road discussions.
- Road paving projects undertaken within the town should provide pavement markings or bike lanes for safe sharing of roads by bicycles and automobiles.
- **The Selectboard should notify trail user groups at least 30 days before any major status change of Class 4 roads that would affect future trail access or use.**
- Trail user groups should continue to update trail maps and make them available online and at the Town Office.
- Trail user groups should work with East Montpelier Elementary School on its plans for trails and facilitate linking with the town trail network.
- Town residents, in coordination with one or more of the group(s) noted previously, should continue to volunteer their time and energies when maintaining existing trails or when new trail segments are added to the town's trail system.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOALS

- Concentrate commercial growth within East Montpelier Village, especially business uses that support the community, ensure they are compatible with residential uses, and reinforce the village as the town's social and cultural center.
- Encourage small community-focused commercial enterprises in North Montpelier Village.
- Explore the possibility of developing community drinking water and wastewater systems for the village of North Montpelier.
- Encourage clean and environmentally sound commercial and/or light industrial development within the industrial zone.
- Continue economic planning for new locally owned and operated enterprises and promote businesses which employ a year-round local labor force.
- Support the viability of sustainable agricultural enterprises and promote the development of new businesses that use locally grown agricultural products and organic produce.

- Maintain zoning bylaws that encourage home businesses while still ensuring that rural residential character is preserved
- Discourage strip commercial development outside village areas.

ACTIONS

- **The Selectboard should appoint a Wastewater Committee charged with developing feasible solutions to addressing expanded wastewater disposal opportunities within East Montpelier Village.**
- The Planning Commission should develop zoning bylaws that promote compact, village-scaled commercial uses within East Montpelier Village that are compatible with mixed uses, including residential.
- The Planning Commission should review zoning bylaws to determine if those areas identified as commercial and industrial are appropriate and adequate to meet the town's needs.
- The Planning Commission should develop zoning bylaws that discourage strip development outside of village areas.
- The Planning Commission should ensure that the industrial zone can support clean, non-polluting industries without conflicts with nearby residential uses.
- The Village Committee should continue to pursue projects that enhance the community and make it more attractive and convenient for people who live, work, and do business in the village.
- The Planning Commission in coordination with local agriculture groups should encourage local agricultural enterprises through such measures as hosting farmer's markets or fairs, providing information about local agricultural products, and by ensuring that zoning and other regulations do not unduly interfere with agricultural uses.
- **The Selectboard should appoint a town representative to the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation.**
- **The Selectboard should promote the continued upgrade and expansion of high speed telecommunications throughout the town to support home-based business and overall communications improvement.**

HISTORIC RESOURCES

GOALS

- Build an understanding and appreciation of local heritage as seen in historic structures, surrounding landscapes, and archaeological sites.
- Promote the preservation of East Montpelier's historic properties, without infringing upon the rights of property owners.
- Ensure that development near important historic structures or sites in East Montpelier does not compromise their aesthetic integrity.
- Preserve historic documents and artifacts.
- Preserve and maintain public and private cemeteries as a record of past families living in East Montpelier.

ACTIONS

- The East Montpelier Historical Society, Elementary School, U-32 High School, and other local organizations should encourage interest in local history by providing programs and information about the town's history and historic resources.
- The East Montpelier Historical Society and the Town Clerk should continue to take measures to preserve existing town records and historical collections.
- The East Montpelier Historical Society should work with the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation to correct errors in the inventory of historic sites in North Montpelier.
- The East Montpelier Historical Society should undertake an inventory of historic barns, outbuildings and other agricultural structures in East Montpelier. This document should become part of the official town records and be available to the Development Review Board in its deliberations.
- The East Montpelier Historical Society should publish a record of its activities in the annual Town Report.
- The East Montpelier Historical Society should assist owners of historic buildings who wish to apply for listing on the national or state Register of Historic Places.
- The East Montpelier Historical Society along with the Village Committee should encourage property owners within the Village Designation area to take advantage of tax credits for improvements to historic buildings.
- The Planning Commission should encourage the preservation of historic properties and historic settlement patterns in zoning regulations.
- The Cemetery Commission should continue to keep vegetation from overtaking the old family burial grounds.
- The Cemetery Commission should continue to repair/restore damaged and fallen gravestones, signs, and fences around the Town's cemeteries.

EDUCATION

GOALS

- Provide for supportive and stimulating schools that promote learning for the students, staff, and community.
- Encourage all parents to become actively involved in their children's education at home and at school.
- Value the unique qualities of each student and motivate each to enjoy learning and experience success, both academically and socially, while instilling respect for the rights of others.
- Keep informed about student population changes and communicate information about the academic and economic effects of those changes on the school.
- Promote interaction among community members, including those without children, to encourage more community participation in the schools.
- Promote use of school facilities for adult education.

ACTIONS

- The school staff should continue to design a curriculum that will advance the goals adopted by the school boards.
- The School Boards should continue to solicit participation by the public at large in budget discussions prior to their annual meetings.
- As part of long-range planning, the School Boards should address potential growth or decline in enrollment by conferring with the Planning Commission about anticipated changes resulting from planned development.
- Both schools should continue to seek methods to promote greater involvement of the general community in school programs.
- Both schools should retain the open-door policy of permitting residents access to the schools, and provide school space for adult education.
- The Auditors should publish the outcome of voting on all U-32 High School and East Montpelier Elementary School warned articles in the subsequent year's Town Report.

ENERGY and ENERGY CONSERVATION

GOALS

- Transportation:
 - Reduce the use of fossil fuels for transportation by increasing the use of car pools, using school buses by residents, creating more carpooling parking areas, increasing the use of bicycles and expanding bus routes.
- Energy Efficiency of Existing and New Buildings:
 - Establish incentives for residents to install energy efficient devices and follow energy efficiency procedures (tax incentives, building codes, PACE, etc.)
- Local Food Production:
 - Increase the production and consumption of local foods by educating residents on the nutritional and economic value of locally grown foods. Encouraging the localvore movement in addition to the use of root cellars and other types of food preservation will reduce the need of fuel for transportation and reduce the town's carbon footprint. Promoting these opportunities for residents (farmers markets, local food processing facility, etc.) can lead to accomplishing many of the energy goals laid out.
- Building a More Sustainable Community:
 - Increase the number of activities which establish and encouraged the building of a cooperative community among its residents (sharing implements, creating bike routes, "barn raisings", carpooling, etc.)
- Appropriate Siting of Energy and Transmission Facilities:
 - New energy facilities including renewable energy projects as well as transmission and distribution lines should be sited and designed to respect the character of the surrounding area and neighborhood views.

ACTIONS

- The Planning Commission should develop building codes and incentives to encourage residents to install energy efficiency devices (solar hot water, solar photovoltaic, increased insulation, etc.)

- The Food Producers Network should encourage more residents to consume locally produced foods through education on the nutritional and economic value of local foods.
- The East Montpelier Forest Committee should investigate the possibility of using the Town forest to produce a sustainable source of biofuels.
- The East Montpelier Energy Committee should:
 - Encourage the reduction of fossil fuel use for transportation (through the use of the Front Porch Forum, the Signpost and other means) by creating more car pools, increasing the number of bike paths and bus routes (commercial and school).
 - Work with the Selectboard to implement and encourage the use of PACE.
 - Provide information and encouragement to residents on how they can reduce their use of all kinds of energy, especially fossil fuels.
 - Assist neighborhood groups to increase the number of events that create community.
 - Work with East Montpelier Elementary School and U-32 personnel to insure all students are exposed to concepts of sustainable energy use and production.
 - Work with the East Montpelier Village Committee to insure all reasonable efforts are made to include energy saving concepts in their designs.
 - Work with the Selectboard and the Fire Department to investigate the feasibility of converting Town and Fire Department vehicles to biodiesel.
- The Planning Commission should provide guidelines for the siting and design of new energy projects including renewable energy projects; and should prepare guidelines for facilities associated with energy transmission including transmission lines, collector lines, and substations.
- **The Planning Commission and Selectboard should ensure that energy and transmission facilities meet the best interests of the town by reviewing and being involved in applications for a Certificate of Public Good before the Public Service Board.**

TRANSPORTATION

GOALS

- Maintain and plan for a network of roads that will provide safe and adequate transportation for all road users balanced with the desire to retain the scenic beauty and natural areas of town.
- Maximize safety for through-travel on collector roads while allowing reasonable access for landowners, pedestrians, bicyclists, and other local, non-motorized travel.
- Coordinate land-use and transportation planning. Foster pedestrian-friendly, traffic calming design in village centers.
- Enhance opportunities for public transportation.
- Encourage public participation in transportation planning, including involvement from neighboring towns when appropriate.
- Promote and educate the public about cost-effective energy efficiency in transportation planning and the benefits of alternative means of transportation.

ACTIONS

- **The Selectboard should develop policies for the construction and cost efficient long-term maintenance of roads that focuses on safety, adequacy, and access, and complements the other goals of this plan.**
- **The Selectboard and Road Foreman should ensure that the rural character of roads is maintained in maintenance and improvement projects. If changes are proposed notify the public and consider public comment prior to significantly changing the character of any road through widening, cutting of live trees within the public right-of-way, or paving.**
- **The Planning Commission should work with the Selectboard to establish clear design and safety standards for new roads and private driveways in the zoning regulations and subdivision bylaws, and to coordinate review procedures for approval of subdivision roads. Regulations should ensure that development plans minimize the construction of new roads and driveways and reduce roadway width requirements to the minimum possible.**
- **The Selectboard should work with the Agency of Transportation to ensure that all transportation projects meet the goals of this plan including providing multiple use accommodations especially for pedestrian and bicycle use, and protecting the character of the roadside.**
- **The Planning Commission should meet periodically with the town representative to the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee and invite the public to participate.**
- **The Selectboard should work with neighboring towns on transportation projects of mutual interest, and coordinate purchases of material, goods, and services when possible.**
- **The Road Foreman should continue to coordinate efforts with the Tree Warden and Town Forest Committee to beautify the town's right-of-way at the edges of roads in a manner that balances the need for safety and access with scenic beauty.**
- **The Selectboard should review the town's speed limits and consider reducing traffic speeds within the town's villages, posting more gravel roads, maintaining or reducing speed limits on collector roads, and stricter enforcement on collector roads.**

SOCIAL SERVICES

GOALS

- Facilitate access to services for those in need.
- Promote and support person-to-person informal helping networks.

ACTIONS

- The Town Clerk and the Elementary School should continue to post up-to-date information for residents to learn about existing social services.
- The Funding Request Study Committee should continue to evaluate requests from Social Service agencies in light of the needs of current residents.
- Individuals in need of services should direct requests or needs to the Town Service Officer when appropriate.
- A town web site should be created consistent with Secretary of State layout and content.

- Neighborhood groups, who are inclined to do so, should contact the Town Service Officer who can maintain a listing of neighborhood groups' points of contact.

FIRE PROTECTION and AMBULANCE COVERAGE

GOAL

- Continue to maintain adequate fire, EMS and emergency response.

ACTIONS

- Town officials should continue to strengthen its relationship with Calais to assure and foster continued partnerships such as joint ownerships, and shared emergency services.
- Town officials should work diligently with EMFD to encourage, support, and promote its mission of providing state of the art emergency services.
- EMFD should continue to work closely with town officials in regards to assuring the delivery of services, the cost of services, and the reliability of services.
- EMFD should continue to provide quarterly meetings for both selectboards that give updates on operations, and finances of EMFD, as specified in the contractual language.
- EMFD and town officials should continue to work together to assure that Emergency Operation Plans, Disaster Mitigation plans and other essential documents remain up to date.
- EMFD should continue to provide fire prevention, community risk, awareness classes throughout community. These efforts if possible should be expanded to parts of community such as; neighborhood groups, landlords, tenants, and other groups of interest.
- EMFD should continue to stay focused on retaining/promoting volunteer services and look at ways of allowing and welcoming assistance from not only those interested and/or able to participate in firefighting operations, but those able to assist with administrative/support operations.
- EMFD should continue to collect data to assure human resources are deployed in such a manner that paid staff supplements its volunteer staff.
- Both EMFD and Town should look to expand its available water supplies. In the future, the Town should assure that infrastructure improvements such as the US Rte. 2/VT Rte. 14 intersection and Village Bridge replacement project incorporate dry hydrant/river access.
- EMFD should continue to work closely and support its membership within the Capital Mutual Aid System; this system is designed for communities to help each other during large emergencies at no cost to each other.

POLICE and DISASTER PLANNING

GOALS

- Ensure that police and disaster services continue to meet the needs of residents
- Develop and maintain a Rapid Response Plan and an Emergency Operations Plan that reflects the needs of our community during emergency situations.

ACTIONS

- **The Selectboard should continue to evaluate the cost and effectiveness of contracting police services to agencies such as the Vermont State Police and Washington County Sheriff's Office.**
- The EMFD should evaluate relationships of local officials (Emergency Management Coordinator, Constables, Road Foreman, Health Officer, EMFD, Selectboard) to better understand compatibility roles and responsibilities.
- Town officials should maintain relationships with Vermont Emergency Management, Vermont State Police, and other State and Federal agencies to assure availability of assistance.
- Town officials should coordinate with EMFD a semi-annual table top/practical drill that introduces officials to the operations and functions of the EOC and Emergency Operations Plan.
- All emergency response plans should be reviewed annually by major stake holders (i.e. town officials and EMFD).
- Town officials should work closely with the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and Vermont Emergency Management while developing, maintaining, and testing emergency response plans.

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

GOALS

- Ensure an environmentally sound and economically responsible plan for the town's solid waste, including access to a solid-waste facility that will meet the needs of the residents of East Montpelier for the foreseeable future.
- Ensure that local zoning regulations reflect the community's concerns about solid waste disposal.
- Through public awareness, encourage citizens to reduce, reuse and recycle under the initiatives developed by the CVSWMD.
- Continue to have the Selectboard appoint a community member to the CVSWMD Board.
- Protect the character of the area surrounding the present solid-waste facility located in East Montpelier.
- In line with the CVSWMD "Zero Waste" initiatives, achieve a 10% reduction of landfill disposal of solid waste generated by town residents, town offices, the two schools and other town government operations.

ACTIONS

- **The Selectboard should encourage citizens to let the town know of any trash trouble spots.**
- **The Selectboard should improve enforcement of illegal dumping and storage.**
- **The Selectboard should continue to participate in Green-Up Day and Adopt-A-Site as part of its educational programs with the CVSWMD. These programs may be funded by grants from the state and solid waste district.**
- **The Selectboard should ensure that special disposal days and sites are posted at the Town Clerk's office, in the East Montpelier Signpost and on Front Porch Forum.**

- **The Selectboard should enforce local ordinances and state statutes regulating burning, dumping, storage, and other disposal of solid waste in order to protect health and safety of the community.**

FOREST RESOURCES

GOALS

- East Montpelier will have abundant and healthy forest, valued by all citizens and managed for long-term sustainability. The multiple benefits of the forests will be acknowledged for their ecological, economic, social, and conservation values. Forest landowners and community leaders will encourage and support the conservation and management of healthy forests that reflect stated multiple uses and values.
- Maintain and enhance forest ecosystem health and productivity, while conserving biological diversity across all landscapes.
- Encourage long-term stewardship of forestland that empowers landowners to achieve sustainable management objectives.
- Continue to assess the forest resources in town and threat to their long-term sustainability.
- Manage public forestland to ensure ecosystem health and as a demonstration of proper forest practices for private landowners.
- Promote the stewardship and replanting of roadside trees.
- Encourage an ethic of respect for the land, sustainable use and exemplary management.
- Conserve large tracts of undeveloped forestland that protect wildlife habitats, improve water quality, and enhance recreational activities.
- Encourage local use and sourcing from town's forests and forest products sector.
- Maintain Town Forest as a source of forest products and revenue as well as a place of public use and enjoyment.

ACTIONS

- The Town Forest Committee should:
 - Offer town-sponsored workshops on stewardship and management of small woodlots, information on the Vermont Land Trust, and conservation easements.
 - Develop a curriculum program for the elementary and secondary schools to educate the students on the schools' wood heating systems.
 - Work with the Road Foreman to inventory the health and integrity of woody vegetation growing within the road rights-of-way and identify areas in need of improved management.
 - Work with the C and the Planning Commission to assess and spatially document significant forest resources in town for planning and zoning purposes.
 - Work with the Conservation Fund Advisory Committee to continue partnerships with the Vermont Land Trust and other forest land conservation groups.
 - Inventory the Town Forest and assess the need for harvesting activities.
 - Fabricate and install new signage at Haggett Road entrance to Town Forest.
- The Planning Commission should:
 - Encourage forest protection through the town's land use and development regulations, with particular emphasis on maintaining and enhancing riparian forest

buffers, retaining unfragmented forestland, and avoiding the use of invasive species.

- Evaluate zoning regulations to encourage sustainable forestry practices and a strong forest products economy.
- **The Planning Commission and Selectboard should encourage the use of local forest resources in municipal construction and development.**
- **The Selectboard should encourage enrollment in the Current Use Program to help maintain the town's working landscape and significant habitats.**

EARTH RESOURCES

GOALS

- Provide for siting and operation of development so that future extraction of earth resources is not foreclosed.
- Avoid unnecessary land use conflicts and environmental damage in conjunction with earth resource extraction.

ACTIONS

- The Planning Commission should ensure the zoning regulations permit earth resource extraction operations as a Conditional Use in situations where such operations will not adversely affect the character of the neighboring area and traffic on roads in the vicinity, along with requiring a plan for the rehabilitation of the site once operations cease.
- **The Selectboard should request the state to revise the 1960s vintage sand and gravel map which would help better identify site(s) having favorable sand or gravel deposits as part of planning for future needs.**

WETLANDS, WATERWAYS and WILDLIFE

GOALS

- Protect wetlands and waterways in town.
- Avoid, limit, or control land uses or land use activities that degrade surface water quality or create higher flood risks, particularly in riparian and floodplain or flood prone areas.
- Promote appropriate uses of wetlands and waterways through education and improved public access.
- Protect fish and wildlife habitats and other natural resources in a manner that does not conflict with other goals of this plan so that the values of these habitats and areas may be maintained or enhanced and passed on to future generations.
- Coordinate local natural resource protection efforts with similar undertakings of federal and state governments.
- Recognize areas of East Montpelier that are locally important or regionally significant due to their natural features.
- Protect surface water and associated habitats against degradation due to sediment contributions from construction and unpaved road maintenance activities.

ACTIONS

- The Planning Commission and the Selectboard should emphasize the values and functions of riparian corridor management during development of town land use regulations and town operations, respectively.
- **The Selectboard and Conservation Fund Advisory Committee should help to inform landowners of voluntary conservation options, including conservation restrictions, purchase or donation of development rights, or other mechanisms. It is recommended that conservation organizations, such as the Vermont Land Trust, the Trust for Public Land, the Vermont River Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy, be enlisted to explore incentives and funding for landowners who wish to enter into such long-term (often permanent) agreements.**
- **The Selectboard should consider creating an East Montpelier Conservation Commission to broaden and coordinate conservation efforts, including the work of the current Conservation Fund Advisory Committee. Such a commission, if created, could work in a number of regards including but not limited to:**
 - **Inventory important fish and wildlife species,**
 - **Inventory rare, threatened, or endangered species,**
 - **Monitor certain areas for biological diversity or environmental health,**
 - **Assist with the maintenance and/or monitoring of previously conserved lands,**
 - **Work to identify or rank areas in need of protection or preservation,**
 - **Work to raise awareness by private property owners of techniques and organizations for managing or preserving their land,**
 - **Seek privately raised funds for purchase of development rights,**
 - **Organize or coordinate environmental education and clean-up activities,**
 - **Inform residents about surface water resources and the means to protect them, the value and sensitivity of watersheds, the relationship between land use and water quality.**
- **The Selectboard and School Boards should ensure that town maintenance activities involving roadways and other town owned property are done in a manner that minimizes negative impacts on surface and ground water quality.**
- **The Selectboard, or its designees, should take an active role in any discussions to reclassify waterways or wetlands. Public notice of any impending reclassification should be published and posted.**
- The Recreation Committee and the Planning Commission should work with landowners and other interested parties such as the Vermont River Conservancy to provide increased access to, and appropriate use of, wetlands and waterways. Use of the town's conservation funds and other similar public and private funds could be considered for the purchase of important public access to wetlands and waterways.
- In light of recent floods and anticipated effects from climate change, the Planning Commission should explore the capability and opportunities arising from Fluvial Erosion Hazard (FEH) mapping or creating a FEH zoning bylaw provision. Adoption of a FEH bylaw will allow the town to receive higher cost share from the State when repairing damages from future flood events.
- When repairing and installing culverts, the East Montpelier Road Crew should look for opportunities to create more plunge-pool type cooling-off spots, such as the one on

Dodge Road. Any such projects could be done to also allow for fish passage and be sized to accommodate higher or flashier water flows (higher flow rates with more rapid rises and falls) and water volumes arising from anticipated effects due to climate change.

- To help prevent erosion and minimize impacts from stormwater runoff, the Planning Commission should consider use of LID techniques (e.g. minimize creation of impervious surfaces and protecting soils' infiltration ability) within certain provisions of the town's land use and zoning regulations.

SCENIC RESOURCES

GOALS

- Preserve and enhance the aesthetic beauty of the town's landscape through a combination of public and private efforts, while maintaining sensitivity to the concerns and rights of property owners.
- Ensure that East Montpelier's villages remain important focal points through well-planned development and enhancements that ensure the villages are attractive and desirable places to live, work and do business.
- Encourage development which reinforces the traditional settlement patterns of clearly defined villages and rural countryside.

ACTIONS

- The Planning Commission should ensure that zoning regulations promote the protection of scenic and open space resources through such techniques as planned unit development, clustering and minimizing roads and drives that divide contiguous open areas.
- **The Selectboard and Development Review Board should consider scenic resources an important element in any plans and decisions regarding the development of public roads, utilities, and public buildings.**
- **The Selectboard should assign existing town committees or create an ad hoc task force to:**
 - **Develop a five-year plan for protecting resources of high scenic value. Protection measures must include working with landowners, and may include options such as easements, purchases, gifts, and other voluntary means.**
 - **Work proactively with larger landowners to encourage future planning from development that retains valuable scenic and open space resources.**
 - **Recommend approaches to planning and design that would enhance East Montpelier's three villages as important town focal points and encourage new efficiently-organized and pedestrian-scaled development providing desirable places to live and work, and with a pace of traffic flow appropriate to areas of commercial and pedestrian use.**
 - **Explore a local scenic roads program to provide roads which are both safe and beautiful. Consider standards and programs that encourage narrow roadway widths, preserve and plant roadside trees, minimize disturbance to roadsides as a result of ongoing road maintenance and repair, and build and maintain power lines that retain the visual quality and important trees**

within public rights-of-way. These efforts need to be balanced with transportation needs for the town in consultation with the Road Foreman.

- The Town Forest Committee should continue to assist landowners in making improvements such as roadside beautification by offering saplings for transplanting.

WATER SUPPLIES and AQUIFERS

GOALS

- Ensure the continued availability of a sufficient and sustainable supply of clean water for residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial use.
- Safeguard the quality and quantity of the town's groundwater, assuring that any withdrawal or use of the town's groundwater does not harm the citizens, existing uses, water systems or ecosystems of East Montpelier.
- Acknowledge groundwater as an important natural resource that supports our rich natural ecology, our community and future generations and as groundwater exists in the state's public trust, the town gives priority to water withdrawals for domestic drinking water, fire emergency, agriculture and permitted commercial uses.
- Protect and improve water supply for persons and businesses being served by Crystal Springs source.
- Protect existing water sources while ensuring reasonable quantity of good quality groundwater for every resident by applying a groundwater withdrawal threshold lower than used by the State of Vermont.

ACTIONS

- Planning Commission and Selectboard should consider where future public water supplies may be possible and appropriate to support any anticipated growth areas.
- Planning Commission and Selectboard should encourage homeowners to test their water supplies annually for quality and safety.
- **Selectboard should appoint a representative (possibly the Health Officer) to meet with the owners of private water systems and with the Water Supply Division of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation to review the status of systems under state jurisdiction and their ability to serve expanded uses, particularly in proposed growth centers.**
- Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District should continue promoting efforts to properly dispose of hazardous household and industrial waste, which has the potential to pollute groundwater and surface water.
- **The Development Review Board, Planning Commission and Selectboard should ensure that local practices provide for adequate isolation distances from wells and springs to certain land use practices (e.g., septic systems, storage of salt and hazardous materials, fertilization, animal pasturing, and waste disposal) that might otherwise contaminate water supplies.**
- All townspeople should pay careful attention to the maintenance and proper operation of on-site wastewater systems (i.e., your own septic system!) to prevent any "gross system failure" (where there is breakout and backup of sewage) as well as the unseen "treatment failure" (where the sewage effluent stays below the ground surface but where treatment is inadequate and ground or surface water may be contaminated).

- **The Planning Commission and Selectboard should encourage the appropriate use of alternative low-use appropriate technologies in new and rehabbed construction, including: low-flow toilets, showerheads, and other water fixtures; composting toilets; and alternative wastewater systems, including gray water recycling and living machines (bio-filtration systems).**
- **The Planning Commission, the Community Groundwater Study Group, and Selectboard should consider amending town regulations in order to establish 35,000 gallons per day as a withdrawal threshold requiring a permit (a lower and more-restrictive threshold than currently specified by the State of Vermont). Such an amendment should exclude uses for agricultural and fire-fighting purposes.**
- **The Selectboard and Planning Commission should evaluate recently completed geologic mapping of town groundwater resources with respect to possible changes to the conservation overlay (an overlay in zoning regulations).**
- **The Selectboard, Planning Commission and other municipal officials should maintain periodic communication and coordination with the Fire District regarding land use and planning matters affecting the East Montpelier Village area.**

LAND USE PATTERNS and ZONING

GOALS

- Ensure that land use patterns retain the values expressed by citizens including rural development patterns, protection of agricultural land, protection of open space, and the enhancement of East Montpelier's villages.
- Protect valuable agricultural land.
- Zoning regulations and other policies and actions of the Town should work toward the protection of rural settlement patterns while ensuring opportunities for new development.
- New development should be focused within East Montpelier's villages and identified growth areas.
- Encourage compact development that reflects historic development patterns and protects open space.
- Provide clearly written zoning regulations that reflect the goals of this plan and serve the needs of the citizens of East Montpelier.
- Prevent strip development along major highways.
- Protect valuable riparian and wetland areas.
- Protect unfragmented forest lands.

ACTIONS

- The Planning Commission should undertake the following tasks:
 - Create a village zone for East Montpelier Village. Zoning changes will require working with the property owners of East Montpelier Village, the Selectboard and the Village Committee.
 - Improve zoning regulations to protect agricultural land from poorly planned development through techniques such as planned unit development, conservation subdivisions and reducing roadway widths.

- Prevent strip Development by specifying Zones A (Commercial) and C (Residential and Commercial) how strip development is to be prevented. Review the land use regulations to prevent strip development in other zoning districts.
- Create a village zone for North Montpelier Village.
- Clarify the Conservation and Aquifer Protection Overlay Zones by defining the resources to be protected and providing clear guidance for resource protection.
- Revise the Aquifer Protection Overlay Zone if needed to reflect current geological and groundwater mapping.
- Review the Industrial Zone to ensure that conflicts with residential uses will not interfere with future commercial and industrial development within the zone.
- Explore the potential for other growth areas such as Gallison Hill. The Planning Commission should initiate a detailed planning process for the growth areas in town to ensure that development is efficiently planned and that each growth center provides a desirable place to live, work and do business. Each growth center should retain a distinct character and function.
- Strongly encourage developers to do Planned Unit Developments that efficiently use the land, reflect historic settlement patterns, and protect open space. Provide encouragement and incentives for this approach.
- Protect riparian areas and encourage the use of Low Impact Development strategies within the zoning regulations
- **The Selectboard should review its policies and actions to be sure it is consistent with the goals and recommendations of this Plan.**
- All Development Review Board members should review the Town Plan to ensure that its decisions are consistent with this document. The DRB should also inform the Planning Commission if inconsistencies are observed between the Zoning Regulations and the Town Plan.
- The Forestry Committee should identify unfragmented forest land and provide recommendations to the Planning Commission as to how these areas should be protected.

VILLAGES and GROWTH AREAS

Goals for East Montpelier Village

- Foster a vibrant and attractive town center that is a desirable place to live, work and do business.
- Encourage commercial growth within East Montpelier Village.
- Provide housing and amenities that encourage people of all ages to live in East Montpelier Village.
- Direct growth in a manner that is compact, efficient and reflects the historic settlement patterns of the village core.
- Ensure adequate water supply for the future growth.
- Ensure that the Post Office, town offices, and general store remain in the village as critical community services. Encouraging similar services within the village such as banks, car repair services, restaurants, hardware stores, and drug stores (some of these already exist).

Actions for East Montpelier Village

- The Planning Commission, Village Committee and Selectboard should provide for the participation of local citizens and business owners in discussions of the future of the East Montpelier Village
- The Village Committee and Selectboard should ensure pedestrian safety through the construction of sidewalks and managing traffic speeds.
- **The Selectboard should appoint an ad hoc committee, including members of the Planning Commission and Village Committee, to develop solutions to wastewater disposal either through a larger village-wide system or a series of smaller possibly private systems.**
- The Planning Commission should review and revise, as necessary, the zoning regulations to encourage compact settlement and efficient and historic settlement patterns. Consider allowing higher densities.
- The Planning Commission, with assistance from the Village Committee, should work with landowners, especially larger landowners to provide assistance in planning for future development.
- **The Village Committee should work in conjunction with the Selectboard to provide amenities to make the village attractive such as a river walk, trail connections to East Montpelier's larger trail system, safe bicycle routes, and facilities for children such as playgrounds.**
- **The Village Committee and Selectboard should provide facilities for the elderly including housing, a senior center, safe pedestrian connections to stores, the Post Office and town offices,**
- **The Selectboard, in coordination with the Village and Energy Committees should work to expand bus service from the village to other destinations.**
- **The Selectboard, in coordination with the Village Committee and Planning Commission should provide a convenient and attractive Park and Ride facility within the village.**
- **The Selectboard, in coordination with the Village and Energy Committees, should encourage owners of historic properties to undertake repairs and energy efficiency improvements while retaining the historic architectural character. Many of these properties are currently eligible for low-interest loans as a result of the Village Designation.**
- The East Montpelier Historical Society in coordination with the Village Committee should highlight the history of East Montpelier Village with historic plaques, a walking tour brochure and on-going walks and talks featuring the history of the village.
- **The Village Committee and Selectboard should develop a river walk to take advantage of the lovely views over the Winooski River and to provide a place for local residents to walk away from the busy roads.**

Goals for North Montpelier Village

- Foster a strong sense of community within the village
- Encourage commercial growth that supports and enhances the local community.
- Explore alternatives to the now closed Riverbend Store and Post Office to provide a community focal point.

- Encourage pedestrian and bicycle transportation within the village.

Actions for North Montpelier

- **The Selectboard should appoint a North Montpelier Village Committee to promote enhancement and economic vitality of the village. This committee should be charged with the following actions:**
 - **Work with owners of the former Riverbend Store to develop a more vibrant community-oriented facility.**
 - **Work to enhance connections to, use of, and views of North Montpelier Pond.**
 - **Coordinate with the Planning Commission and Selectboard to apply for Village Designation as provided for in 24 V.S.A. Chapter 76A which provides tax credits and grants for revitalization efforts.**
 - **Develop entry signs for the village.**
 - **Enhance connections with, use of and views of the Kingsbury Branch and the waterfall,**
 - **Assist building owners in repairing and improving the energy efficiency of historic buildings.**
 - **Improve pedestrian connections throughout the village.**
 - **Engage residents and business owners in planning for the future of North Montpelier.**
 - **Study the feasibility of water and wastewater systems for North Montpelier Village.**

Goals for East Montpelier Center

- Retain the rural residential and agricultural character of East Montpelier Center.

Actions for East Montpelier Center

- The Planning Commission should consider whether any zoning or other land use changes would help to retain or enhance the character of East Montpelier Center.

Goals for the Gallison Hill Growth Area

- Take advantage of a major community and regional focal point by planning for a potential growth area in a manner that is consistent with existing uses and compatible with surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Actions for the Gallison Hill Growth Area

- The Planning Commission should discuss whether or not there is potential for future growth within this part of town.
- If the potential exists for this area to evolve, the Planning Commission should hold public meetings to consider planning options. Planning should be coordinated with U-32 and the City of Montpelier.
- The Planning Commission should consider increasing housing density in the surrounding area.

HOUSING

GOALS

- Develop patterns of housing that maximize open spaces and encourage clustering and greater use of planned residential development provisions.
- Facilitate the development and availability of housing that is affordable to people of various income levels.
- Assist with housing upgrades and maintenance for the elderly and low-income residents.
- Encourage shared dwellings where feasible, with special consideration given to creative types of living arrangements that are designed to enable people who cannot live alone to remain in their homes.
- Support energy-efficient rehabilitation of older houses.
- Pursue multifamily housing developments.
- Support the development of housing for senior citizens.
- Encourage mixed use commercial retail apartment development in East Montpelier and North Montpelier Village centers.

ACTIONS

- **The Selectboard should give special support to projects that address the need for housing in our community, including but not limited to:**
 - **Encourage proposals for the development of a multi-unit retirement residence.**
 - **Continue to support efforts to help elders and persons with disabilities to stay in their homes.**
 - **Continue to support programs administered by Community Capital of Vermont and Central Vermont Community Land Trust to address regional housing needs.**
 - **The Selectboard should adopt a special tax on conserved properties to establish a fund to provide tax incentives for the development of clustered affordable housing.**
 - **Provide tax incentives for PRD's**
 - **Provide tax incentives for multi-unit housing projects.**
- The Planning Commission should review zoning regulations related to housing and draft amendments, as needed, in order to encourage the following:
 - Shared and multi-family dwellings, especially in residential zones.
 - Clustered housing and preservation of open spaces.
 - Inclusion of residential units in mixed-use commercial development.
 - Establish special small lot ¼ acre zones in the east, north and center village areas as well as along Gallison Hill Rd. from U-32 to Towne Hill Rd. in areas where water and wastewater infrastructure can or does exist.
- The Planning Commission should communicate with the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to adjust their housing projections to better suit the needs and character of our town.
- The Planning Commission should review capital planning and budgeting to coordinate all town building needs.

- The Conservation Fund Advisory Committee should explore the feasibility of working with the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to integrate affordable housing space as part of proposed conservation projects.
- The Planning Commission should conduct a housing needs assessment for the town using the Vermont Housing Finance Agency needs assessment methodology.

AGRICULTURE

GOALS

- Educate residents concerning the variety and volume of agricultural products produced in our community and agriculture's positive impact on the town and its open space.
- Connect our schools to the farmers in town and the importance of food production and food security to our community.
- Retain a critical mass of farmers and agricultural land to insure agricultural services, viable agricultural community and desire for farmers to stay in town and produce a variety of products.
- Provide for flexibility and creativity in the town's land use regulations so agricultural businesses and homeowners can co-exist.
- Retain a viable agricultural community with productive use of highly-rated LESA land.
- Foster conservation efforts, both voluntary and regulatory, through zoning, to protect prime agricultural land from development and to reduce or avoid problems generated by development and agriculture where they exist side by side or in close proximity.
- Involve residents in an on-going process to ensure planning and protection for the agricultural industry. Such efforts should reflect the needs and desires of the farming community as well as protecting environmental quality and the quality of life in the community at large.

ACTIONS

- The East Montpelier Elementary School, U-32 School and the agricultural community should develop a working relationship to establish a greater appreciation and understanding of this important economic aspect of our community.
- East Montpelier Elementary and U-32 School Boards should work together to source at least 10% of their food purchases throughout the year from local farms.
- East Montpelier Elementary and U-32 Schools should purchase milk from the cooperatives associated with Lylehaven, Butler, McKnight or Fairmont dairy farms found within town.
- The town Energy Committee and the local food producers' network should provide information to residents to promote and showcase agricultural products within our town. Such information could be provided on a continuing basis in the Signpost and Front Porch Forum. Strive for this by having one agriculture related topic in each Signpost issue.
- The Planning Commission should periodically update data on general land use and development patterns, including the Agricultural Lands Inventory.
- The Planning Commission should periodically meet and coordinate with the Conservation Fund Advisory Committee.
- The Conservation Fund Advisory Committee should continue to use the LESA system as one means of evaluating agricultural land in conjunction with land conservation efforts.

- The town Energy Committee and local food producers' network, while continuing to the diversification and promotion of local foods produced in town, should form an East Montpelier Agricultural Cooperative to share resources, trucking skills, etc.
- The town Energy Committee and agricultural interests in town should consider use of the Four Corners School (or some other site) for a mid-week farmers market and community supported agriculture drop off site from June – August.
- **The Selectboard should consider purchasing a parcel of high quality farmland for a young farmer to get started in farming and the farmer would provide a designated amount of food products for every interested family in town.**
- The Conservation Fund Advisory Committee should work with owners of agricultural land in town to seek alternatives to development. This effort might include seeking more diversified agricultural uses of the land, and sale of development rights. Consider the conservation of smaller parcels of land suitable for diversified agricultural operations.
- The Rally Day Committee should continue the farmers market at Rally Day activities in September and in conjunction with town Energy Committee and local food producers network expand the farmers market to other days or seasons if demand warrants.
- **The Selectboard should inform the Planning Commission, Development Review Board and townspeople about scheduled informational hearings associated with Large Farm Operation permits issued by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture.**

WASTEWATER DISPOSAL

GOALS

- Protect and improve quality of ground water and surface water of East Montpelier and protect the health its citizens.
- Develop a wastewater solution for East Montpelier Village and North Montpelier Village.
- Provide for orderly growth throughout town, especially in designated growth areas.

ACTIONS

- **The Selectboard should support adoption of another Wastewater Committee charged with finding cost-effective wastewater treatment systems for the East Montpelier Village and North Montpelier Village. These systems may be public or private, centralized or decentralized.**
- The Sewage Officer in coordination with the State, should encourage all townspeople to pay careful attention to the maintenance and proper operation of their individual on-site wastewater systems.
- The Sewage Officer, in coordination with the State, should promote public health protection, land use planning and water quality protection coordination among the Selectboard, Planning Commission, Health Officer and Development Review Board regarding wastewater treatment capacity and compatibility with soil types.
- **The Selectboard should expand upon information regarding potential sources of funding for individual onsite wastewater treatment system repairs and upgrades.**
- **The Selectboard and Wastewater Committee should consider establishing a wastewater management district(s) or association(s) within the villages as a potential model for implementing a wastewater disposal solution**