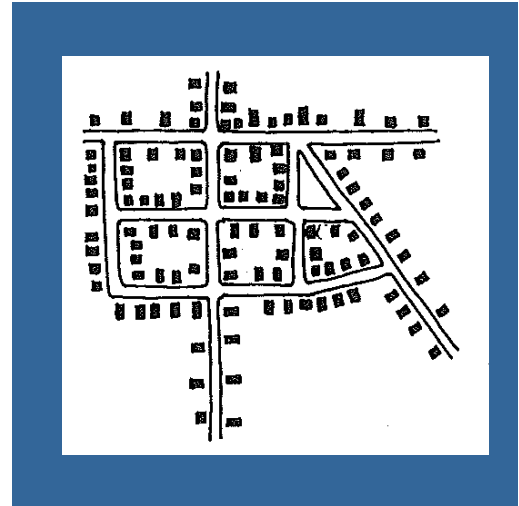


Town of East Montpelier
Village Study Report
July 2011



Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
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Project Overview

In December 2010 the Town of East Montpelier successfully applied for a Municipal Planning Grant from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs “to foster public engagement in planning for future growth and enhancement” within the Town’s East Village. The Town’s Village Committee had been working for many years to enhance and encourage appropriately scaled growth in the village. They had successfully won a Village Designation for the historic core, worked with the Agency of Transportation to provide sidewalks, plantings and other amenities for two roadway improvements in the village, and begun discussions regarding implementing a wastewater study conducted in 2007. The East Montpelier Planning Commission is beginning the process of updating the Town Plan and the Committee felt that a more comprehensive process was needed to determine appropriate directions for growth in the village. The grant enabled the Committee to engage a much broader range of residents, business owners and local officials in discussions of the future of the Town’s principle village. The findings outlined in this report will be incorporated into the broader Town Planning process.

The Town contracted with the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) to assist in the process by:

- Facilitating break out groups at public forums and developing **Goals** based upon public input;
- Compiling and presenting information about traditional **Village Characteristics** to provide context for future development and land use regulations within the Village;
- Utilizing 3-D computer modeling software to illustrate current conditions and illustrate one potential **Future Development Scenario** based upon information from the public participation process;
- Undertaking a survey, or **Sampling** of existing parcels and structures within the Village to determine prevailing dimensional standards and compare them to current regulatory requirements; and by
- Updating the GIS-based **Build Out Analysis**, conducted in 2007, to determine maximum potential growth within the Village based upon current land use regulations.

CVRPC planners worked closely with the members of the Village Committee to prepare information to share at two public forms planned and hosted by the Village Committee. The public forums were designed to engage local citizens in determining the future of the East Village. The study area was identified as the land within a one mile radius of the Route 2 and Route 14 North intersection. See map titled “East Montpelier Village Study Area.”

The information contained within this report includes information CVRPC presented at the public forums, technical data and analysis about future development potential, and a summary of recommendations.

This report is not intended to be an in-depth critique of East Montpelier’s land use regulations or planning policies, nor an endorsement of any particular regulatory strategy, but rather a broad-brush look at current conditions, existing controls, and future planning opportunities.
























East Montpelier Village Study Area—land within 1 mile radius of Route 2 and RT14 North intersection

Public Input, Goals & Timeline

The Village Committee organized and hosted two public forums to solicit community input about the future of the East Village. CVRPC presented information and provided facilitation assistance. The chart below organizes the public input into over-arching goals.

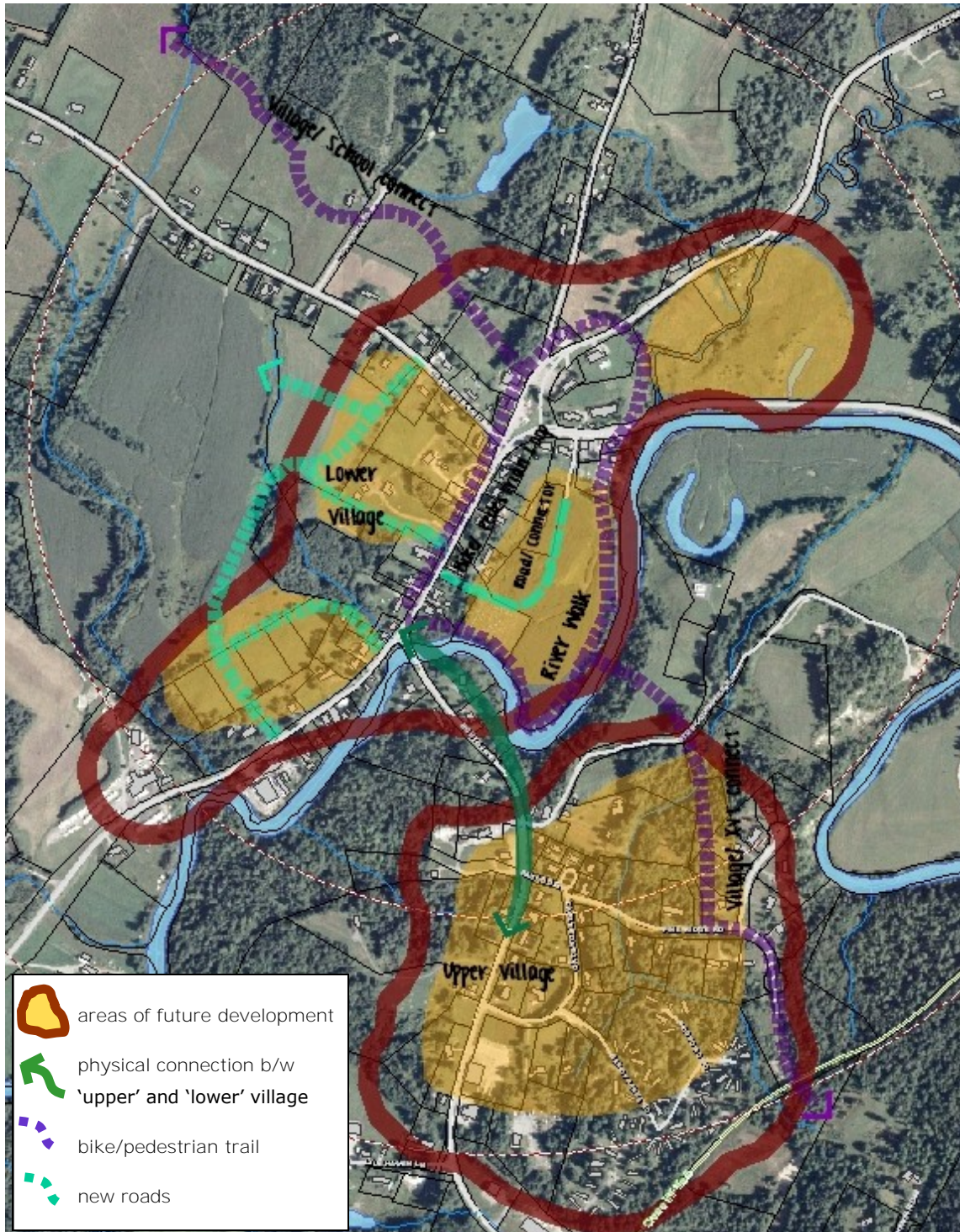
GOALS :		Creating Safe Streets	Developing a Sense of Place	Cultivating a Vibrant Local Economy	Fostering a Healthy Community
Current Conditions	Likes +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible to Montpelier and Barre • Public Transit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History/historic buildings (Capitol Grounds, Brick Church) • Compact Village • At crossroads (RT2 & RT14) • Rural/access to nature • EM Trails • Winooski River • Buildings are not too tall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store and services (store, PO, fire station, Town Offices, bank) • Mix of houses and commercial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trails (EM Trails, Cross VT, VAST) • Bus service • Potential for Senior Housing
	Dislikes -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dangerous to walk • Traffic too fast and heavy • No bike lanes • Poor access / difficult to turn in and out of store, PO and Quaker Hill • Lack of public parking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inaccessible river • Sprawl at end of Village • Lack of Identity • Unattractive entrance to store, PO • Linear village/no depth • No village core • No character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No other stores • Taxes • No wastewater • Services are scattered • No fire hydrants • Poor soils for on site septic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No street trees • Services are scattered • No place to meet friends/ social gathering place • Inaccessible river
Opportunities	Built Environment / Infrastructure Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bike lanes • Sidewalks • Park & Ride • Crosswalks • Multimodal transport (bike, park, ride) • Speed bumps • RT 14 Bridge replacement • Benches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River walk & river access • Attractive streetscape (trees, lighting) • Compact village scale new development • Underground facilities • Connect Upper and Lower Village • Add another bridge to connect Upper and Lower Village • New town hall/offices • Gateway signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compact, village-scale, new development • Community meeting place and green space (town green) • Mixed use (live/work) • Plan trail access and parking within the Village • Ensure adequate potable water • Future fire hydrants and water connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community green space (town green) • Mixed uses (live/work) • River walk & river access • Renewable energy • Connect EM Trails with Cross VT Trail in the Village • Multi modal trail behind Store • Multi family and elderly housing
	Programming/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease speed limit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop history walk/ historic markers • Plan parade / Rally Day in the Village • Co-locate historical society with Town Offices • Host concerts & picnics • Create Village specific Zoning Regulations • Research developable land (where and intensity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bakery, Pizza, Tapas, Ice Cream, Restaurant, Garage/car repair • Farmers Market • Partnerships with Colleges (NECI, VCFA, Goddard) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships with Colleges (NECI, VCFA, Goddard) • Kids playground • Farmers Market • Dances
June 2011		East Montpelier Village Study			CVRPC

At the second forum the Village Committee asked participants to prioritize projects and identify timeframes for implementation. CVRPC reviewed the feedback and organized the timeline.

	1 year	5 Years	20 years (Long Term)
Farmers Market			
Gateways Signs			
Lower Speed Limits			
Park & Ride			
Village Rally Day			
River walk			
Village District Zoning			
Village to School Trail			
Businesses located in Village			
Housing for Seniors			
New streets & compact development			
Streetscape Improvements (e.g. sidewalks, bike accommodations, connections between upper and lower village)			
Waste Water Planning & Implementation			

Concept Map

Working with the Village Committee CVRPC developed a concept map of the Village area to illustrate feedback from the first forum and to communicate the relationship of areas of interest.

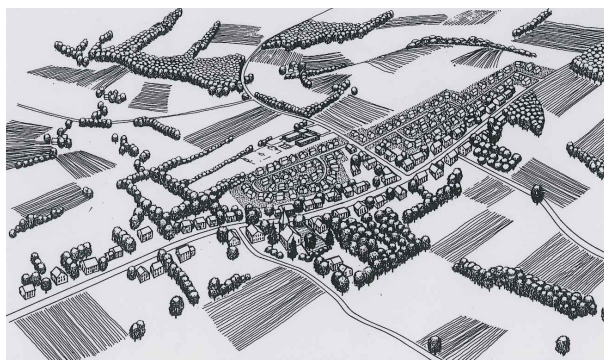


Village Concept Map

Village Characteristics

To assist in the public process, CVRPC presented information about traditional village characteristics to provide context for a discussion about future development and land use regulations. A copy of the presentation is attached.

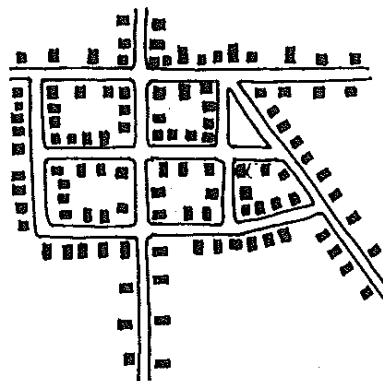
Traditional Village Characteristics



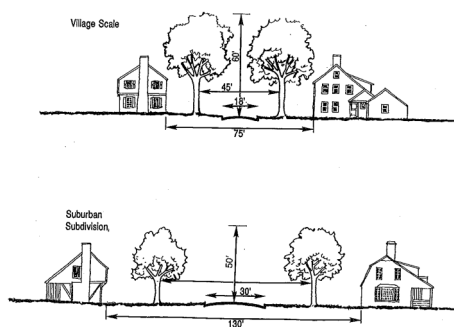
Defined village edges ‡



Mixed uses (residential, commercial, services, institutional)



Interconnected road network (thoroughfare, connecting streets, narrow lanes, foot paths) ‡



Pedestrian scale ‡



Parallel or perpendicular orientation of facades with varied setbacks close to the street.

‡ Illustrations from *Rural by Design*, Randall Arendt, 1994

Future Development Scenario

Incorporating input from the first forum, input from the Village Committee, and elements of traditional village characteristics, CVRPC created a future development scenario for the property currently owned by Mr. Hull to illustrate an example of potential new development in the East Village. The 3-D computer-generated model was presented at the second forum. (Note: The model does not conform to existing land use regulations.)



Before



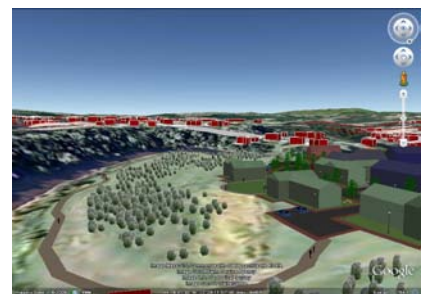
Pedestrian amenities



After



Village-scale development



River walk



Town Green

Village Sampling Inventory

The East Montpelier Village Sampling Inventory compares existing settlement patterns to East Montpelier's current zoning regulations.

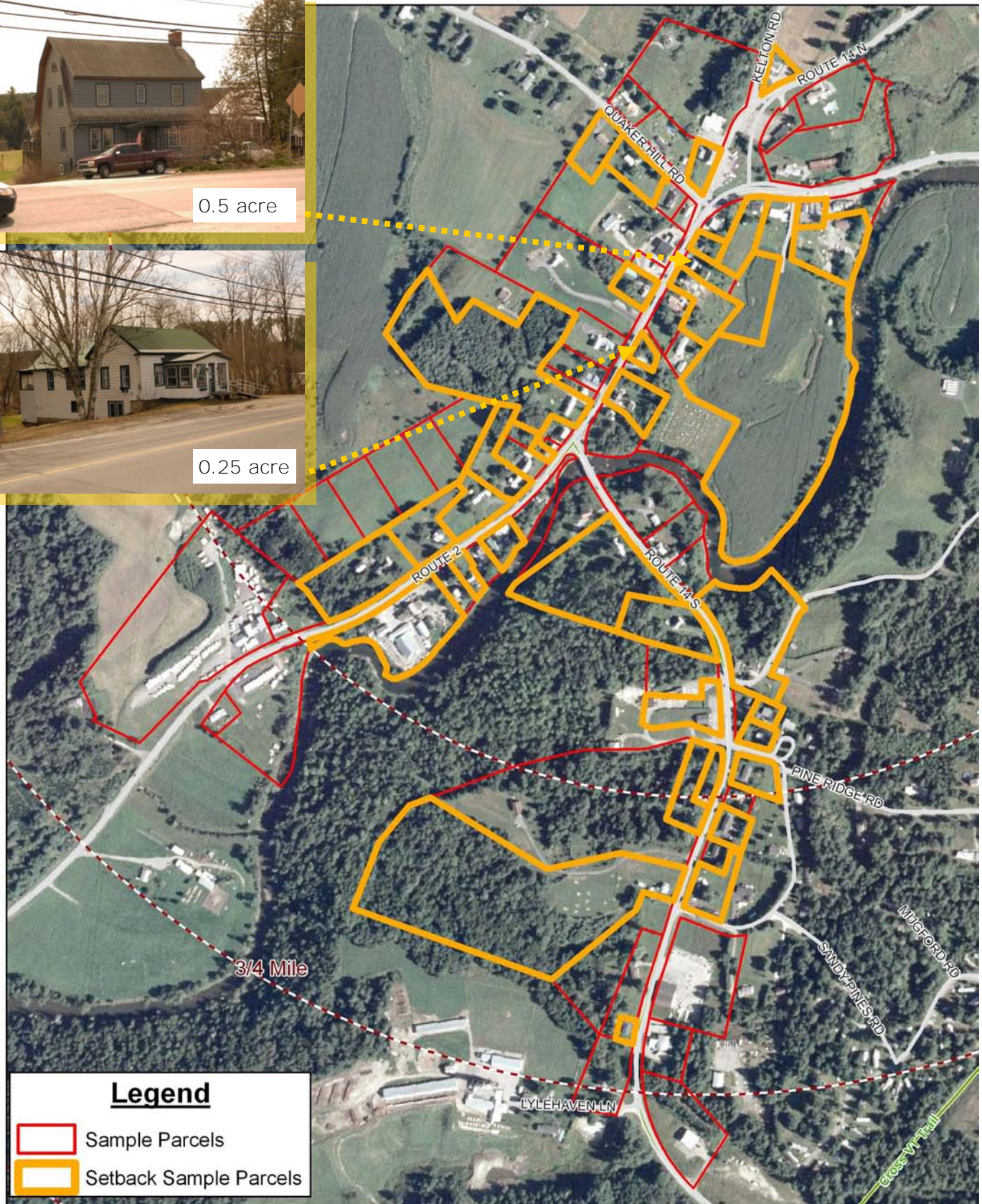
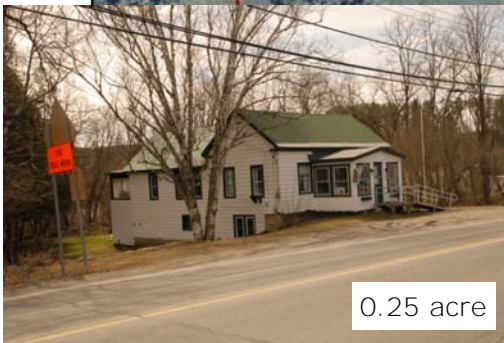
CVRPC undertook a "sampling" of existing conditions within the Village to determine prevailing lot sizes, setbacks and building footprints in order to compare them to current regulatory requirements as established in the Town Zoning Ordinance. CVRPC inventoried these parameters using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer software to conduct the survey (or "sampling") of existing parcels and structures within the Village.

The Village Sampling Inventory focused on the Village of East Montpelier along the US Route 2 and 14 South corridors. Eighty-nine parcels were selected for the purposes of sampling. See map titled "Village Sampling Inventory" on the following page.

All 89 parcels were sampled for lot size, road frontage, and lot coverage characteristics. Because setbacks are not automatically calculated by the GIS program used in this project, CVRPC took a smaller sample and used "hand measurements" to derive setback data. A random sample of 27 parcels were used. These parcels displayed a range of lot sizes similar to the larger core sample and are therefore believed to be fairly "typical" for the Zone.

	Lot Size	Road Frontage	Set Backs			Building Sq Ft
			Front	Side (left/right)	Rear	
Regulations w/in Zone C	1 acres (43,560 sq ft)	150 ft	50 ft	25 ft	25 ft	No Max Coverage
Mean	1.76 acres	200 ft	78 ft	47/79 ft	146 ft	3,142 sq ft
Median	0.95 acres	149 ft	73 ft	38/52 ft	90 ft	2,365 sq ft
Minimum	0.068 acres	0 ft	20 ft	0/6 ft	0	1,078 sq ft
Maximum	14.5 acres	761 ft	160 ft	180/347	854	22,727 sq ft
% Non-Compliant	52%	52%	28%	31/26%	11%	N/A

Lot size examples



Village Sampling Inventory

Build Out Analysis

Purpose The Build Out is intended to provide a general picture of development issues in the area around East Montpelier's East Village in the context of its existing settlement patterns, as well as its potential to accommodate new growth under its current land use policies. CVRPC analyzed these parameters using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer software to conduct the Build Out Analysis.

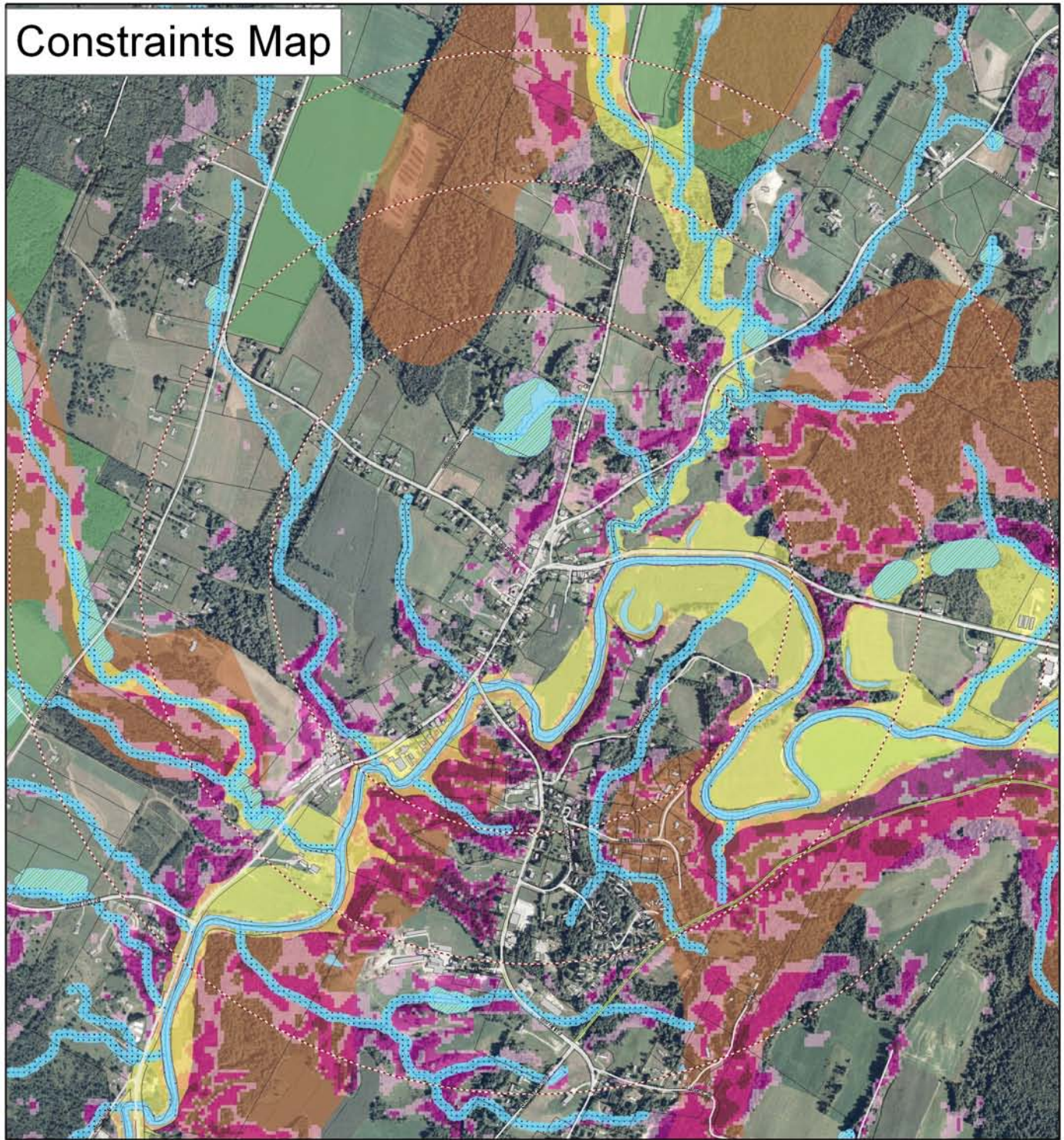
The Build Out Analysis attempts to identify the general location and intensity of future growth based upon physical restrictions, available infrastructure, and allowable zoning density. It is not intended to suggest or predict the exact sites of futures homes or businesses.

Approach The Build Out Analysis utilized the current parcel configuration, zoning requirements, and existing development to identify the general location and intensity of future growth for the Village area. Areas with physical and/or regulatory constraints were identified and the GIS software removed potential development from slopes greater than 30%, National Flood Insurance Program 100-year flood zone, wetlands (including 50 ft. buffer), and conserved lands (State, Municipal, and Vermont Land Trust Land). Additionally the software reduced potential development through efficiency factors for stream, rivers, lakes, ponds with 50 ft. buffers, prime agricultural soils, deer yards and the East Montpelier Conservation Overlay Zoning District. The Build Out analysis does not factor in the physical capacity for on-site wastewater treatment or potable water.

The constraints utilized in the Build Out are the same constraints identified within a previous Build Out undertaken by CVRPC for the *Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study for Wastewater Treatment for the Villages* by Forcier, Aldrich & Associates, May 2007.

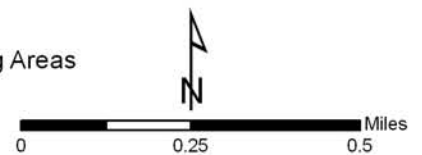
Spatial Results The Build Out contains "Spatial" results which convert the numeric building counts into points or polygons representing individual structures. It then refines the numeric building counts by taking into account the actual geometry (i.e. setbacks) of land-use areas and buildings. The "Spatial" Build Out therefore provides a more accurate indication of potential buildings based upon the current Zoning Ordinance.

Constraints Map



Legend

	Parcels 2010		Rivers, Lakes, and Ponds		Deer Wintering Areas
	Building Footprints		Streams		Slope 15-19%
	Roads		100 Year Flood Plain		Slope 20-29%
	Cross Vermont Trail		Stream 50ft buffer		Slope > 30%
	Conserved Lands		Wetlands 50ft Buffer		



M:\Towns\Emontplr\Village Growth Center Study
2011\Build_Out_Projects_Data\Constraints_Map.mxd

East Montpelier's Density Rules for Future Development Density rules are applied to calculate the amount of potential future development. The number of potential residential units are calculated based upon East Montpelier's minimum lot size and are referred to as dwelling units. CVRPC converted East Montpelier's commercial development regulations into a floor area ratio (FAR) which is used to calculate the amount of potential commercial square footage (necessary conversion for software compatibility purposes.)

Allowances for roads, driveways, and natural constraints are incorporated and reduced the overall density on a parcel. The remaining developable land is referred to as the area's "efficiency factor." For example, in the A- Commercial District, development potential was reduced due to stream, rivers, lakes, ponds with 50 ft. buffers, prime agricultural soils, deer yards and the East Montpelier Conservation Overlay District, leaving a 51% "efficiency factor" for future development.

The table below outlines the density rules used in the build out.

Density Rules			
Land-Use Designation	Dwelling Units	Floor Area Ratio	Efficiency Factor (%) Build Out
A – Commercial District		0.73 FAR	51
B – Industrial District		0.74 FAR	61
C – Residential and Commercial District	1 acre min. lot size	0.64 FAR	65
D –Rural Residential and Agricultural District	3 acre min. lot size	0 FAR	63
E – Agricultural and Forest Conservation District	7 acre min. lot size	0 FAR	65

Build Out

The Build Out map represents potential development in East Montpelier Village. The green squares represent the potential residential development and the red squares represent the potential non-residential (commercial, civic, industrial, etc.) development. The squares provide a visual illustration of the concentration of residential and non-residential development based upon current constraints and land use regulations.

Build Out - Potential Residential unit

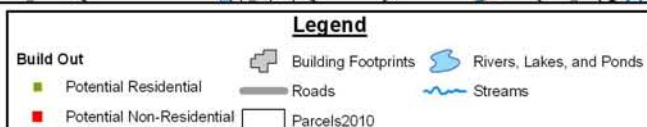
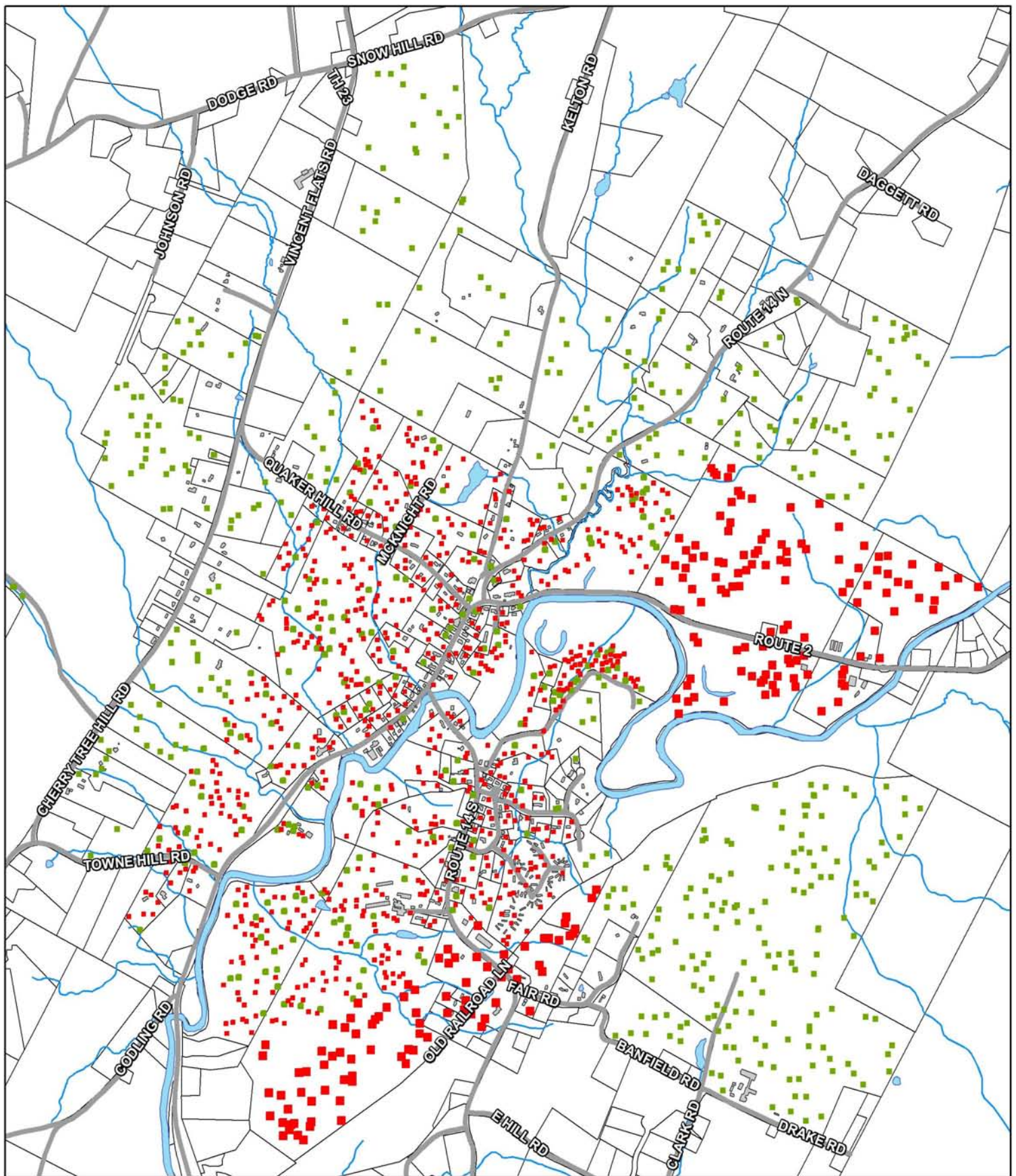
Dwelling Unit Quantities

Land-Use Designation	Existing Dwelling Units	Spatial Build-Out
A – Commercial District	4	0
B – Industrial District	7	0
C – Residential and Commercial District	179	177
D –Rural Residential and Agricultural District	60	137
E – Agricultural and Forest Conservation District	12	23
Total	262	337

Build Out - Potential Commercial floor area (sq ft)

Commercial Floor Space

Land-Use Designation	Existing Floor Area (sq. feet)	Spatial Build-Out Floor Area (sq. feet)
A – Commercial District	59,225	3,459,333
B – Industrial District	43,800	2,623,360
C – Residential and Commercial District	140,740	5,850,297
D –Rural Residential and Agricultural District	0	0
E – Agricultural and Forest Conservation District	0	0
Total	243,765	11,932,990



Build Out Summary

Housing Demand According to population forecasts undertaken by EPR for CVRPC in 2001, **East Montpelier's future housing demand for 2020 is 1,468 units. The 2010 Census** indicates there are currently 1,129 units throughout town. CVRPC identified 262 units located within the Village study area. Under Build Out scenario #2 the East Village has the current capacity to accommodate 100% of town-wide 2020 future housing demand.

Non-residential Buildings Both Build Out scenarios identified ample non-residential development capacity. To put potential square footage into perspective, consider the following averages:

	Average sq ft	Build Out potential sq ft	Number of potential stores
Main Street Retailer	2,000 sq ft	11,932,990	5,966
Chain Drug Store	13,000 sq ft		918
Supermarket	40,000 sq ft		298
Home Depot	125,000 sq ft		95

While the Build Out suggests that there is ample development potential within the Village area, the analysis does not factor in the physical capacity for on-site wastewater treatment; hence the Build Out is a theoretical estimate of development potential in the Village area.

Findings and Considerations

The two forums were well attended with about 30 people at each of the two meetings. Attendees included business owners, residents, local officials and people living near the village and a few from other parts of Town. Participants showed great enthusiasm for future opportunities to make the village a desirable place to live, work and conduct business. Work has already begun on several of the short term **goals identified. This year's Rally Day was held in the village with a River Walk, history tour and farmer's market on the new Green.** Two new committees were formed as a result of the forums: a wastewater committee and a committee to investigate entry signage for the village gateways.

As identified in the public participation process, implementing a municipal or community wastewater system is a priority for the future of the East Village. The current reliance on individual on-site treatment and access to potable water may well inhibit the intensity and diversity of uses for which forum participants expressed the desire (see GOALS chart). Participants responded positively to the Future Development Scenario which illustrated village-scale development as an example. However, the feasibility of this type of development would rely on a municipal or community wastewater treatment system.

The Village Sampling Inventory identified that approximately half of surveyed parcels currently conform to minimum lot size requirements. Yet, one acre lots are considerably larger than those typically found in historic villages. This suggests that the current one-acre zoning may be too restrictive if historic patterns are considered desirable for the future. This issue may need to be explored further through the planning process. The *Vermont Growth Center Planning Manual* indicates historic lot sizes for single-family homes average 4,800 sq ft or 0.11 acres.

The Build Out Analysis theoretically indicates ample development potential within the Village area. Undertaking subsequent Build Out scenarios utilizing alternative development constraints and zoning parameters could help East Montpelier define a Village-specific zoning district. A Village-specific zoning district would help direct infrastructure investments, economic development and new housing to the Village and contribute to *developing a sense of place* as identified at the public forums.

Lastly, recent changes to 24 VSA Chapter 117 now require town plans to contain an economic development element or chapter. While economic development planning has been embedded throughout the enabling statute, separating it out elevates this important facet of planning. The effective date of this new requirement is July 1, 2012. Under the plan for the municipality, Chapter 117 section 4382 now includes:

(11) an economic development element that describes present economic conditions and the location, type, and scale of desired economic development, and identifies policies, projects and programs necessary to foster economic growth.

Public forum participants expressed the need to *cultivate a vibrant local economy* within the East Village. Hence, the timing of this new element may prove beneficial as East Montpelier updates its municipal plan and continues to plan for the future of the East Village.