

PROPOSED TOWN PLAN AMENDMENTS

East Montpelier Planning Commission Hearing
May 5, 2022

Changes Proposed

- New Section in Chapter 6 Guiding Development of Telecommunications Towers
 - Background to guide town actions
 - Criteria for preferred citing
 - Criteria for restricted areas
- Corrections to Scenic Resources Section
- New Goals, Policies, and Actions related to the above changes

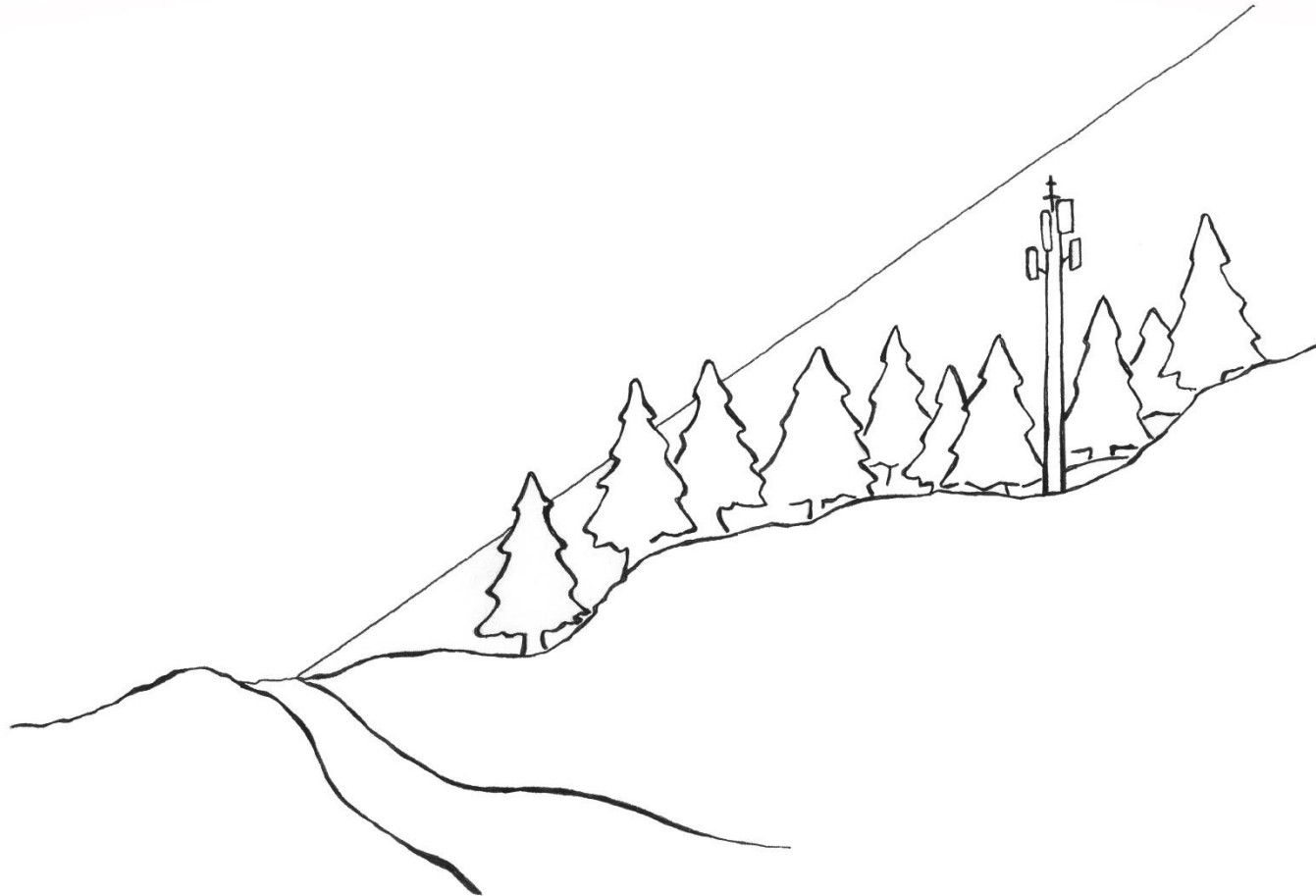
Cell Towers: Background

- No free-standing cell towers as of 2022
- Mixed quality of cell reception in town
- Shifting reliance on cell phones, with significant recent increases in cell phone only households (State-level data)
- Regulatory Process
 - Town Plans receive 'substantial deference'
 - Telecommunications Act of 1996 (federal law) prohibits local regulation based on health impacts

Cell Towers: Preferred Sites

- Co-located with existing towers
- Attached to existing infrastructure
- In areas where topography and tree cover shields views from populated or scenic areas

Cell Towers: Preferred Site Example



Cell Towers: Unsuitable Areas

- Village Areas
- Significant Scenic Public Views
- Ridgelines
- Areas where a tower could damage homes, sensitive natural environments, property of those not hosting the tower.

New Goals, Policies, and Actions

- **Goal 6.18:** Enable all areas of East Montpelier to have adequate cell service coverage to meet the needs of residents, businesses and emergency service providers, while protecting the town's scenic and natural resources.
- **Policy 6.18.1:** *East Montpelier supports cell service infrastructure that enables adequate cell service coverage in all areas of town and that is sited and designed to protect the town's scenic and natural resources.*
- **Action 6.18.1:** File for intervener status and/or submit public comments on Section 248a applications before the Public Utility Commission that do not meet the siting and design criteria described in the *Town Plan* and *Land Use and Development Regulations*.
- **Action 6.18.2:** Consider whether conducting an inventory of suitable cellular facility locations would be beneficial for both the town and cellular carriers and whether grant funding for such a study is available.

Scenic Views Updates

- Corrections to scenic views table and map
 - Two areas intended to be included in original town plan included in one but not the other
- East Montpelier trails as potential scenic areas
- Clarification of reasoning for foreground definition
- Clarifies definition of large solar projects

New Action

- **Action 9.13.3:** Review and identify, as needed, updates to the Significant Scenic Views. In addition, consider views from permanently protected publicly accessible town trails for designation as Significant Scenic Views.