

## Query Regarding Interest in Scoping Study for Pedestrian/Bicycle Connection between Lower Village and Upper Village

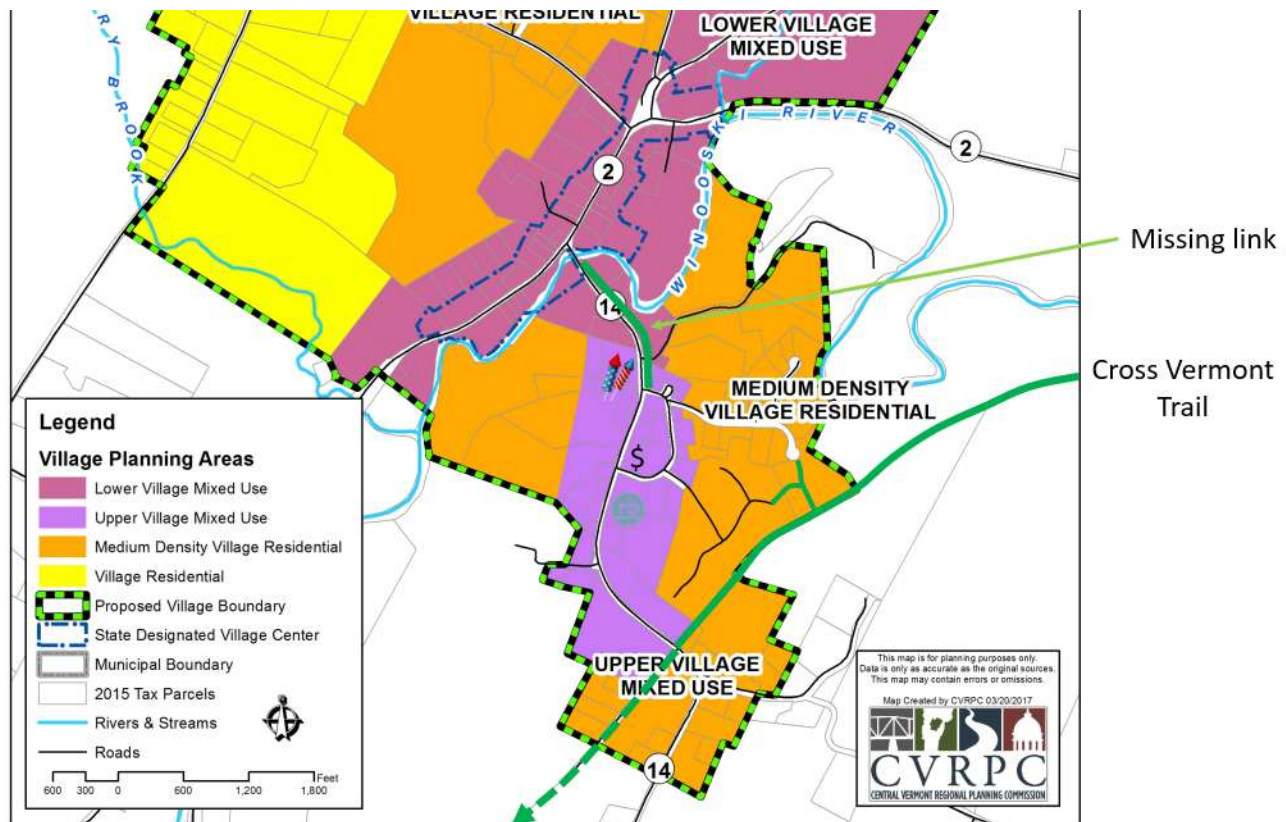
**Problem statement:** The designated village center of East Montpelier lacks a non-motorized link to the Upper Village area just south on VT-14, which lies on higher ground and is expected to be a flood resilient growth area. While a robust sidewalk network within the Lower Village was established in 2020 (with the support of an AoT Bicycle & Pedestrian Grant), VT-14S is steep, winding, and narrow as it heads up the hill to the Upper Village, making it essentially impossible for pedestrian traffic and dangerous for bicycle traffic.

**Potential response:** If we could extend the sidewalk that currently terminates at the south end of the bridge over the Winooski up the hill to Paul's Square, it would really open up possibilities for non-motorized transportation. There would also be incredible synergy with the Cross Vermont Trail, which is planning to connect the upper village to Montpelier along the old railbed. A sidewalk along VT-14S would ultimately allow East Montpelier village residents to commute all the way into Montpelier by bicycle. A non-motorized connection between the Lower Village and Upper Village was identified as a High Priority action item (6.2.2) in the 2018 Town Plan.

**Opportunity:** Vermont's [Transportation Alternatives Program](#) (TAP) accepts proposals for scoping studies like these. Ben McCall has contacted the program manager, who said that this would be an appropriate project for TAP. He emphasized that "a scoping study would provide a realistic cost estimate as well as potential phasing for a lengthy sidewalk such as this one." He estimated the cost of such a study could be between \$40,000 and \$60,000. [The TAP also accepts proposals for construction projects.]

**The Catch:** The program requires a 20% local match, which would amount to \$12,000 for a \$60,000 study. However, it may be possible to include in-kind contributions (e.g., municipal staff time) as part of the match. The deadline for applications is December 31.

**The Question:** Would the Selectboard be interested in having the Energy Committee prepare an application?



Future Trail to Montpelier

[Adapted from 2017 Village Master Plan]