

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 What is the Montpelier Master Plan

The Montpelier Master Plan is a comprehensive long-range guide to growth and change in the Capital City of Vermont. This update of the 1990 document, which was readopted in June, 1995, is intended to carry Montpelier into the new century with a framework for accomplishing community aspirations and intentions for its physical development. It describes present conditions and states goals, objectives, and recommended courses of action for future use of land, public facilities and services, housing, patterns of circulation, and environmental protection. Taken in its entirety, the Master Plan synthesizes a vision for what the community can and should be in the future and charts a course to achieve that vision. Consequently, citizen input and guidance have been critical in the preparation of the original Plan and this update.

## 1.2 Master Plan Process

The Montpelier Master Plan, like its 1990 predecessor, was produced through the Act 200 planning process, building upon the substantial public involvement which was conducted for the previous plan. This document, however, also represents major reconsideration of the policies of the 1990 Master Plan with the information available from the 1990 census and the City's Geographic Information System. All of the basic information was reviewed and, where appropriate, updated to reflect current conditions.

The Montpelier Master Plan Task Force was renewed from the previous planning effort by the Montpelier City Council to prepare the updated Plan. The following individuals were active Task Force members and interested citizens who spent a significant amount of time on the development of this plan:

Bradley Aldrich	Charles Ballantyne	Margot George	Patricia Blouin
Alan Lendway	Tony Redington	Michael Hoffman	William Kahn
Stephen Sease	Jay White	Barbara White	Thomas McLeod
Barney Bloom	Donna Bate	Nick Marro	Steve Everett
Thomas Commito	George Malek	Lowell Smith	Alan Goldman
Nancy Boone	David Tucker	Chuck Karparis	Nicole Dewing
Thomas Carey	Marjorie Power	Jeff Francis	Stephen Walke, Jr.
Tim Tomasi	Robert McCullough	Sandra Vitzthum	Tom Kingston
Jon Anderson	Les Blomberg	Paul Guare	Peter Hart
Brenda Hausauer	Steven Gorelick	JoAnn Troiano	John Taylor
Stephen Syz	Paul Markowitz	William Patno	Janet Ressler
Hans Estrin	Kim Bent	Kathleen Keenan	Doug Zorzi

The Task Force met frequently from July 1995 to August 1996 to discuss both individual elements and the document as a whole. The Task Force invited key participants in each of the elements of the Plan, including representatives from arts organizations, the Conservation Commission, students studying Montpelier from the architecture curriculum at Norwich University, representatives of the business community, the Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce, and other groups concerned about the Plan. Each meeting was publicly announced and many were shown on cable TV, an effort to further inform and involve the public. Comments received on earlier versions of the Plan were addressed in a revised document which was presented to the Planning Commission for review and hearings. Many publicly announced workshops were held to discuss the latest updates of data and information necessary to carry Montpelier into the twenty-first century. The 1999 draft was distributed to all boards and committees to

solicit review and comments which were incorporated into the now 2000 draft Montpelier Master Plan. The final stage of the planning process is review, revisions where appropriate, and approval of the Plan by the Planning Commission and the City Council.

Major accomplishments and events since the 1990/1995 Master Plan include:

- expansion of Hubbard Park in 1991
- the creation of the Conservation Commission in April 1992
- the devastating flood of March 11, 1992
- the creation of the Tree Board in August, 1993
- the creation of the North Branch River Park
- construction of section 1 of the Winooski West Bike Path in 1999
- construction of Stone Cutters Way, including section 1 of the Winooski East Bike Path, 1997-1999
- reconstruction and expansion of the Montpelier Fire Station;
- formation of a downtown revitalization steering committee in 1998, which evolved into the Montpelier Downtown Community Association in June, 1999;
- construction of a new Police Station behind City Hall in 1999.

### 1.3 Consistency with Act 200

The Montpelier Master Plan has been prepared with close attention to the requirements of Title 24 VSA Subchapter 5. That subchapter outlines the content and process for approving a master plan. Specific requirements are outlined for a plan to be consistent with the Act. Briefly, those requirements include:

- A statement of objectives, policies and programs:* See Section 2.4 and the goals and policies of individual elements.
- 2. *A land use plan:* See Chapter 11.
- A transportation plan:* See Chapter 5.
- 4. *A utility and facility plan:* See Chapter 7.
- 5. *A statement on preservation of rare and irreplaceable natural areas, scenic and historic resources:* See Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.
- 6. *An educational facilities plan:* See Chapter 7.
- 7. *A program for implementation:* See Chapter 12.
- 8. *A statement indicating how the plan relates to development trends and plans for adjacent municipalities and the region:* See Section 2.2.
- 9. *An energy plan:* See Chapter 7.
- 10. *A housing element:* See Chapter 6.

The 1990/1995 Master Plan was approved by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission in 1995. Differences between this document and the 1990/1995 plan include:

- the addition of an **economic development** chapter;
- and expanded **energy** section;
- a revamped **transportation** chapter; and
- a revised implementation matrix.

**TABLE 1-1. MASTER PLAN CONSISTENCY WITH THE  
ACT 200 GOALS IN 24 V.S.A. §4302**

GOAL	MASTER PLAN
(a) General	All
(b) Continuing Planning Process	
(1) To establish a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework to guide decisions by municipalities, regional planning commissions, and state agencies.	All
(2) To encourage citizen participation at all levels of the planning process, and to assure that decisions shall be made at the most local level possible commensurate with their impact.	All
(3) To consider the use of resources and the consequences of growth and development for the region and the state, as well as the community in which it takes place.	All
(4) To encourage and assist municipalities to work creatively together to develop and implement plans.	All
(c) Specific Goals	
(1) To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.	Chapters 4, 5, 6, 11, 12
(A) Intensive residential development should be encouraged primarily in areas related to community centers, and strip development along highways should be discouraged.	Chapters 4, 6, 11, 12
(B) Economic growth should be encouraged in locally designated growth areas, or employed to revitalize existing village and urban centers, or both.	Chapters 9, 11, 12
(C) Public investments, including the construction or expansion of infrastructure, should reinforce the general character and planned growth patterns of the area.	Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12

GOAL	MASTER PLAN
(2) To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards, and to expand economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes.	Chapters 9, 11, 12
(3) To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the full realization of the abilities of all Vermonters.	Chapters 7, 9, 12
(4) To provide for safe, convenient, economic and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclers.	Chapters 3, 5, 11, 12
(A) Highways, air, rail and other means of transportation should be mutually supportive, balanced and integrated.	Chapters 3, 4, 5, 11, 12
(5) To identify, protect and preserve important natural and historic features of the Vermont landscape, including:	Chapters 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12
(A) significant natural and fragile areas;	Chapters 3, 7, 11, 12
(B) outstanding water resources, including lakes, rivers, aquifers, shorelands and wetlands;	Chapters 3, 4, 11, 12
(C) significant scenic roads, waterways and views;	Chapters 3, 4, 5, 11, 12
(D) important historic structures, sites, or districts, archaeological sites and archaeologically sensitive areas.	Chapters 4, 5, 11, 12
(6) To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife and land resources.	Chapters 3, 4, 11, 12

GOAL	MASTER PLAN
(A) Vermont's air, water, wildlife, mineral and land resources should be planned for use and development according to the principles set forth in 10 V.S.A. § 6086(a).	Chapters 3, 4, 6, 11, 12
(7) To encourage the efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy resources.	Chapters 5, 7, 12
(8) To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors.	Chapters 3, 7, 8, 11, 12
(A) Growth should not significantly diminish the value and availability of outdoor recreational activities.	Chapters 3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12
(B) Public access to noncommercial outdoor recreational opportunities, such as lakes and hiking trails, should be identified, provided, and protected wherever appropriate.	Chapters 3, 5, 9, 11, 12
(9) To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.	Chapters 3, 7, 9, 11, 12
(A) Strategies to protect long-term viability of agricultural and forest lands should be encouraged and should include maintaining low overall density.	Chapters 3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12
(B) The manufacture and marketing of value-added agricultural and forest products should be encouraged.	Chapters 7, 9, 11, 12
(C) The use of locally-grown food products should be encouraged.	Chapters 3, 9, 11, 12
(D) Sound forest and agricultural management practices should be encouraged.	Chapters 3, 7, 9, 11, 12
(E) Public investment should be planned so as to minimize development pressure on agricultural and forest land.	Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12
(10) To provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's natural resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.	Chapters 3, 7, 11, 12

(11) To ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Vermonters.	Chapters 4, 6, 11, 12
(A) Housing should be encouraged to meet the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each Vermont community, particularly for those citizens of low and moderate income.	Chapters 4, 6, 11, 12
(B) New and rehabilitated housing should be safe, sanitary, located conveniently to employment and commercial centers, and coordinated with the provision of necessary public facilities and utilities.	Chapters 4, 6, 11, 12
(C) Sites for multi-family and manufactured housing should be readily available in locations similar to those generally used for single-family conventional dwellings.	Chapters 4, 6, 11, 12
(D) Accessory apartments within or attached to single family residences which provide affordable housing in close proximity to cost-effective care and supervision for relatives or disabled or elderly persons should be allowed.	Chapters 4, 6, 11, 12
(12) To plan for, finance and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs.	Chapters 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12
(A) Public facilities and services should include fire and police protection, emergency medical services, schools, water supply and sewage and solid waste disposal.	Chapters 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12
(B) The rate of growth should not exceed the ability of the community and the area to provide facilities and services.	Chapters 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12