



Vision for Montpelier

Approved by Montpelier City Council
August 20, 2008

Montpelier is a small and vibrant community nestled in the mountains of central Vermont. With foresight and determination, we are poised to do great things in the decades to come.

Our vision is to excel as a creative and sustainable community. More specifically, we seek to safeguard the natural environment and enhance our small-town setting. We aspire to strengthen community and regional ties and expand civic participation. We aim to encourage learning and cultivate good jobs.

Together, we will strive to meet present needs and leave a worthy legacy to future generations. We hope that other communities might take inspiration from our vision and values — and the ways we put them into action.

Who We Are

Montpelier's people are drawn together by a shared sense of purpose and place. Along the banks of the Winooski and in the green hills that rise above it, the changing seasons and the landscape allow us to hike, fish, bike, and ski within the city limits. Our historic downtown is where we shop for local goods, eat healthy food from nearby farms, and chat with old friends and new acquaintances on sidewalks and street corners.

Our creative spirit is inspired by the many writers, artists, dancers, actors, musicians, and chefs in our midst. Our farmers and architects are lighting the way to healthier, more sustainable lifestyles. Our educators kindle our curiosity, add to our knowledge, and bring national recognition to our schools and colleges. We honor those who have long shaped our community, and welcome newcomers into our circle. Our children grow and thrive in a safe and friendly environment.

Our sense of what's possible spurs us to reach out to the world beyond our borders. As the state capital, we are home to government institutions, nonprofit groups, and businesses that work to strengthen communities near and far.

We are increasingly aware of our relationship with the earth, and of the urgent need to preserve its beauty and vitality. We are determined to fight prejudice and exclusion and to embrace those among us who are hungry, ailing, lonely, or different. We are intent on securing avenues for everyone—young and old, rich and poor—to have a voice in setting priorities, resolving conflicts, and shaping decisions in the years ahead.

Goals for Montpelier

Economics and Livelihoods

- ☞ **Economic Well-Being:** Montpelier, Barre, and other adjacent communities cooperate as an economic, social, and cultural center of the Central Vermont region and provide jobs, income, housing, cultural activities, recreation, health care, goods, and services to area residents.
- ☞ **Vibrant Downtowns:** The Montpelier, Barre, and Berlin area has vibrant downtowns with many locally-owned stores that sell a wide variety of affordable goods within an accessible distance to meet resident's needs.
- ☞ **Entrepreneurial Opportunities:** The city of Montpelier is a healthy environment for new ventures; businesses, schools, and other organizations find the support they need to initiate entrepreneurial ideas that create meaningful, creative, and livable wage jobs.
- ☞ **Human Needs:** There are adequate income and human and social services in place so that over their lifespan, residents are able to meet their needs within the community regardless of age, abilities, employment, income level, and health, and involuntary poverty is a thing of the past.
- ☞ **Meaningful Work:** Work in the community is life-enhancing, meaningful, and satisfying, and residents have opportunities throughout their lifetimes to improve their skills and advance to new challenges.
- ☞ **Sustainability:** All economic activities in the city enhance the natural environment, celebrate the rivers and watersheds, and build the natural, social, cultural, human, financial, and institutional capital base for future generations.
- ☞ **Employment Opportunities:** The employment available in the region represents a ladder of opportunities from entry level to highly skilled, and offers creative, recreational, and cultural jobs in addition to those in the traditional employment sectors of government, financial services, public and private education, non-profit, professional services, social support, manufacturing, food business, and retail.

Social and Human Development

- ☞ **Sense of Community:** We have a strong sense of pride in and connection to our community and within each of our diverse neighborhoods, varied interest groups, and community affiliations. We value and encourage inclusive participation in community activities. We honor and observe our role as stewards of our richly diverse social, cultural, and natural resources. We are proud that our city is the seat of Vermont government and we welcome visitors, employees, and enterprises attracted to Montpelier as the State capital.
- ☞ **Safe Neighborhoods:** People take an active role in planning, maintaining, and guarding safe neighborhoods. Residents, young and old, feel safe in their homes and on city streets at all times of the day or night.

- ☞ **Education:** Montpelier is a learning community where people share questions and experiment with ideas. Accessible learning opportunities support a life-long process that fosters personal success and contribution as members of the local, national, and global community.
- ☞ **Resilience:** When difficult times occur, Montpelier's strong community shines. Networks of support respond to those in need in a cohesive and timely way.
- ☞ **Health and Wellness:** People in Montpelier lead lifestyles that promote the health of the whole person across the lifespan. The city environment provides healthy sustenance and community support. When any of us is in need, friends, family, community members, and professionals provide compassionate, high quality, and affordable care.
- ☞ **Faith, Wisdom, and Spirituality:** Montpelier is a place where a wide variety of traditions, values, and spiritual practices are honored. Each of us is able to seek inner peace, meaning, wisdom, and guidance for right action in our own ways. Faith- and values-based communities actively seek to understand and support one another.
- ☞ **Aesthetic Enjoyment and Creative Self-Expression:** The natural beauty, art, and eccentric talent in Montpelier delight and inspire us. The beauty and talent in Montpelier provides a vibrant and diverse source of inspiration for all our senses. Everyone has the opportunity to participate in creative endeavors—the most important prerequisite is our enthusiasm.
- ☞ **Families and Relationships:** Montpelier is a friendly and welcoming place where people greet newcomers openly and warmly. We have a culture of neighbors reaching out to neighbors. Everyone who is able is a mentor to another. Interactions are based on mutual respect; young and old interact on a regular basis for pleasure, work, and shared wisdom. Conflicts are resolved through participatory community processes and seen as opportunities for connection and understanding. These healthy relationships help people feel a sense of belonging, interdependence, mastery of the skills and strengths they share, and generosity to their family, neighborhood, city, and global communities.

Governance

- ☞ **Self-determination:** Montpelier subscribes to the principles of democratic governance and recognizes that it cannot thrive without an informed citizenry. The city therefore promotes civic education and strives to make it as easy as possible for community members to be knowledgeable about issues of the day. Citizens likewise recognize their responsibility to play an active role in civic life.
- ☞ **Access:** Montpelier recognizes that all members of the community have a right to participate in public discourse about the city's present and future and to have a meaningful say in municipal decision-making. The city encourages residents to monitor its operations and responds promptly and candidly to public concerns. Aware that its mechanisms for civic input may not keep pace with changing demographics, it reviews and revises its procedures every few years to ensure broad participation.
- ☞ **Equity:** Montpelier realizes that communities grow stronger when all their members are able to help shape their common future. Our public officials thus work to remove barriers to

participation by reaching out to all members of the community and empowering them to participate in civic dialogues and decision-making processes. Factors such as language, age, race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, time, finances, ability, knowledge, and health prevent no one from taking part.

- ☞ **Conflict Resolution:** Montpelier strives to defuse tensions and resolve disagreements in the early stages. It develops lasting and satisfactory solutions and helps people discover their own power to settle disputes.

Infrastructure and Built Environment

- ☞ **Communications:** The citizens of Montpelier are connected to each other and the rest of the world. Our communication systems are reliable and support the engagement of all people, information dissemination, social relationships, entertainment, and economic activity.
- ☞ **Energy:** Montpelier's energy is generated by renewable resources of local origin. The delivery of energy is structured to encourage efficient use and affordability.
- ☞ **Food:** Food sources derive from local, sustainable practices that provide us with a high quality, healthy, affordable, and secure supply of food.
- ☞ **Goods and Services:** People and businesses in Montpelier buy locally produced goods and services and are leaders in responsible consumption to support employment and wealth creation. We do our best to buy products from local businesses that support employment and wealth creation.
- ☞ **Housing:** Montpelier has a mix of housing that is affordable, safe, healthy, accessible, eco-efficient, in diverse neighborhoods that enhances the experience of people who live here. The housing adapts over time to reflect changes in demographics, climate, and technology while maintaining its historic character.
- ☞ **Buildings:** Montpelier's public and private buildings enhance the historic environment and cultural values which have shaped the city through time, and contribute to comfort, health, peace, and safety of our residents.
- ☞ **Transportation:** Montpelier is built at a human scale with a transportation system that serves the access and mobility needs of all people through a choice of convenient, comfortable, affordable, and efficient transportation modes. The transportation system connects people and goods locally, regionally, and globally. Transportation needs are met safely in a manner supportive of human and ecosystem health.
- ☞ **Waste Management:** The citizens of Montpelier work toward zero waste by using materials responsibly and minimizing consumption. We reuse, recycle, and reduce the materials we consume. Wastes created are safely managed without harm to other species or systems.
- ☞ **Utilities:** Montpelier's water and waste- water, electric, and heating systems support existing and future development and provide residents with safe, high quality, reliable service.

☞ **Recreation, Educational, and Cultural Facilities:** Montpelier provides all age groups with state of the art facilities to achieve their highest human potential, stay healthy, and pursue creative endeavors.

Natural Environment

☞ **Water Resources:** Montpelier residents value water as a precious resource and guarantee equitable access for all living things. We live in harmony with the natural rivers, and have protected and recaptured historic floodplains. We are stewards of water, protecting its quality and quantity by maintaining the integrity of the hydrologic cycle and the integrity of our watersheds, including the waters that flow to Lake Champlain. Our water supply is sufficiently secure, flexible, and adaptable to changing conditions and circumstances.

☞ **Natural Communities and Biodiversity:** Montpelier is rich with intact ecosystems and their diverse natural communities. We protect and restore our natural heritage, rare and endangered species and communities, wildlife corridors, and the overall biodiversity of the city. There are strong links to larger ecosystems surrounding the city, and we are mindful of our regional and global assets and impacts.

☞ **Open Space & Recreation:** Montpelier residents and visitors have opportunities to recreate outdoors and to learn about the natural environment. There are abundant green and open spaces throughout the city for both natural ecosystems and recreation. The city parks are linked to each other, to neighborhoods, and to surrounding open spaces, forming green spaces, pathways, trails, and corridors for the benefit of people and wildlife.

☞ **Energy:** The energy used by Montpelier residents comes from a diverse portfolio of resources, the majority of which are renewable, have a low impact on the environment, and contribute to the positive development of our society. Residents conserve energy and demonstrate the highest level of efficiency in their homes and businesses.

☞ **Waste Management:** Montpelier residents work toward zero waste by using materials responsibly and minimizing consumption. We reuse, recycle and reduce the materials we consume. Wastes created are safely managed without harm to other species or systems.

☞ **Food:** Food sources derive from sustainable practices that provide us with a high quality, healthy, affordable, and secure supply of food. Neighborhood gardens grow local, seasonal, and fresh food for all our residents, and neighborhood food storage facilities ensure local food in all seasons.

☞ **Air & Climate:** Montpelier residents value the quality of clean air, recognizing it as the most basic need for survival. Treasuring clear, bright skies, we steward our air shed and responsibly address climate change. Economic and social activities protect all living things by ensuring healthy air quality indoors and out.

☞ **Land and Soil:** Fertile soil is vital to maintaining life. Montpelier community members are responsible stewards of land, maintaining the life-supporting processes integral to healthy, intact ecosystems. We use and share our land wisely and equitably.