



enVision Montpelier Public Participation Activities 2007 Report

The enVision Montpelier project has engaged in a wide variety of public participation activities since it started in March of 2007. These activities are designed to reach out to a broad spectrum of the public, rather than being oriented toward people who are always willing to attend municipal meetings.

Early Meetings

The first public meeting we had about the project was April 4, 2007, when the idea was presented to an All Board Meeting up at the Vermont College Campus. Representatives from the City Council, Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, DRB, and DRC were there.

A preliminary group of stakeholders was convened on April 23, 2007 to hear an overview of the program, and to meet two representatives from the Mazer Foundation who came to town to learn more about what the city was planning. This meeting resulted in a successful grant application for \$100,000 to implement the recommendations of the enVision Montpelier project.

The first official stakeholder meeting for the project was June 4, 2007. During this meeting, about 60 interested citizens listened to a presentation about enVision Montpelier, and then broke up into the six working groups – Social Systems, Human Development, Governance, Economics and Livelihoods, Built Environment and Infrastructure, and Natural Environment. The working groups decided to meet over the summer; the regular stakeholder meetings began again in September.

Regular Stakeholder and Committee Meetings

Since September of 2007, the stakeholders have been meeting once a month on alternating Tuesday and Wednesdays, and the committees have been meeting at least once a month. The Economics and Livelihoods committee was so enthusiastic that they decided to meet weekly during the fall, and have taped some educational television shows to reach out to the public.

The Stakeholder meetings have been chaired by alternating chairs of each committee, and each meeting is structured around a topic chosen by the different committees. In September, the meeting was dedicated to the committee meetings after a short overview of the process. The committees used the time to catch up on what had been done over the summer, review their learning objectives, and some of them elected co-chairs.

In October, the Economics and Livelihoods hosted a discussion about economic development, with George Malek as a guest speaker. In November, the Social Systems Committee led a group exercise about the Time Bank project. In December, Michael Hoffmann, a professor at Norwich University, brought 19 of his students to show their plans for Sabin's Pasture development.

In addition to the Stakeholder meetings and the committee meetings, a Steering Committee was established to oversee the public participation process and to make recommendations to the City Council about the Mazer Grants. This committee has been meeting every two months since September.

All in all, the meetings of the enVision Montpelier stakeholders total 48 public meetings, with over 300 people participating. Attendance lists are included with this report.

Public Outreach Efforts

Kickoff Event: In May, the Planning Commission had a kick-off event for enVision Montpelier, setting up two tables at the Montpelier Farmer's Market, talking to people about the project, and getting feedback from the public about what they want for a community vision.



Mayor Mary Hooper, Rep. Warren Kitzmiller at enVision Montpelier kickoff.



Students answer the survey questions.



People use maps to show us what they think is important for the future.



People filling out the survey cards.

Tabling: The VISTA volunteers that were hired for the project have been setting up tables at community events, to get people involved and to ask them to complete the surveys. To date, tables have been set up in the following locations:

Shaw's Market Hunger Mountain Coop Farmer's Market
Student Sustainability Fair Health and Wellness Expo MDCA Annual Meeting

Presentations: The VISTA volunteers and the planning director have also made several presentations to different groups in the community:

Montpelier High School Main Street Middle School MHS Physics Classes

Direct Outreach: The VISTA volunteers have been working directly with a number of individuals and community organizations to recruit stakeholders and solicit community input in the visioning survey:

Kellogg-Hubbard Library The Gary Home
School to Earth Committee MHS Earth Group
MHS staff: Tom Sabo, Myles Chater, Anne Watson, Matt McLane

Faith Community Lunch: On November 7th, the Social Systems Committee hosted a lunch for leaders of the different congregations in the community, which was well attended. This meeting has helped the interdenominational group reconvene their participants after a bit of a hiatus.

Community Service Learning: The Pacem School sponsored a student to come and work with the enVision Montpelier staff on a service learning project that focused on parking. The student will publish the results of their work in the Times Argus through a letter to the editor.

Time Machine: As part of the First Night Celebrations, the staff turned City Hall into a Time Machine to get people thinking about the future. We used it as an opportunity to ask people to complete the surveys, and to draw their visions for the future on the wall of the basement. The memorial room had historical exhibits, and the basement illustrated how planning helps create the future in a city. The exhibit was open from 3-8; a lot of people came through and participated. We also had a nice article about it in the Times Argus.



Lots of people drew pictures of what they wanted for the future.



The entry to the Time Machine. We compared gas and water prices in 1907, 2007, and 2107.