

CONCEPT PAPER

City of Montpelier: Creating a Sustainable State Capital

May, 2007

Summary

The City of Montpelier has initiated a long-term, visionary planning project called envisionMontpelier, which is designed to lay the groundwork for strategies and activities that will contribute to our progress becoming the country's first sustainable state capital. The project has secured City Council endorsement – they have included it in their goals for 2007-2008, and has recruited a core group of stakeholders from business, government, the schools, non-profit organizations, artists, senior citizens, youth, minority populations, and ordinary citizens to carry out the planning and action project.

We are seeking funds to implement the recommendations that result from the stakeholder group's work in the five key areas of sustainable community development: social well-being, participatory governance, economic security, efficient services and infrastructure, and environmental integrity. Projects will each include consideration of these issues, and priority will be given to proposals that demonstrate strategic leverage toward changing the underlying systems at work in our city to accelerate our progress toward a sustainable future.

Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the implementation grants will be to:

- 1) Demonstrate measurable progress toward the goals that are set for the city, such as reduced carbon emissions, increased renewable energy production, reduced waste streams, increased social equity and participation in governance, poverty eradication, improved eco-efficiency of city services and infrastructure, etc.
 - a. Require each project to submit clear targets and indicators that will be addressed in the key community issue areas.
 - b. Report on the progress of the individual projects and the implementation effort as a whole on an annual basis to stakeholders as a way to maintain engagement.
- 2) Empower the stakeholders to work together toward common ends – encouraging cooperation among diverse groups and enabling principled and coherent decision-making about projects in the city.
 - a. Develop a decision-making process and grant delivery system that engages the stakeholder group in deciding on the grant awards, working with the recipients to implement the projects, and reporting on the progress made.
 - b. Fund projects that address issues in all five of the community sustainability areas.
- 3) Provide a mechanism to solicit matching funds from the city and other stakeholder groups who would be responsible for implementation of the plan.
 - a. Secure a local match for each project proposed that represents at least 30% of the value of the project, including both cash and in-kind contributions.
 - b. Engage the major stakeholders in the community in the financing and implementation of the project action plan.
- 4) Target projects that involve the youth in the community in the design and decision-making, to help young people here feel ownership of the city's future.

- a. Each project will have at least one youth representative from the community who is part of the decision-making and implementation process.
- b. Projects initiated by young people in the community will have priority in the criteria the Stakeholder Group uses to determine funding levels.

Activities

To support the decision-making and implementation of grant activities, the Stakeholder Group will establish clear guidelines and criteria for selecting projects. They will appoint a subcommittee that includes representatives of organizations in the community that are in a good position to evaluate the viability and effectiveness of the proposals such as the New England Grassroots Fund and others, to solicit and review the project proposals, and will establish benchmarks for progress.

To support collaboration among the diverse individuals and organizations involved in the envisionMontpelier project, the city will provide training in conflict management, group process skills, systems analysis, and innovation. This will be an in-kind contribution to the grant activities; funding is not needed for this.

To support the contribution of matching funds for the initiative, the Stakeholder Group will be asked at the outset to make a commitment to the implementation of the plan that is developed by the group as a whole, in the area of the action plan that applies to their organization. When projects are identified, the group will work with the applicable stakeholders to secure an appropriate match.

To support youth engagement in the project, the city has applied for VISTA volunteers through the Youth Services Center; their primary goal will be to engage young people in the planning and project implementation.

Timeline

The timeline for the envisionMontpelier planning process is 18 months to two years from April of 2007. The project implementation grants made under this program will begin in the fall of 2007 and will continue for two to three years to provide incentives and concrete steps toward the realization of the community's goals,

Budget

We are requesting \$100,000 as a two year grant for the implementation activities under the project. We anticipate that the projects that are awarded grant funds will range from \$2,000 - \$25,000 on average, which will allow for 10 – 15 projects. Since the city is administering the grant, it is possible for us to dedicate 100% of the project funds to the implementation projects chosen by the Stakeholder Group.