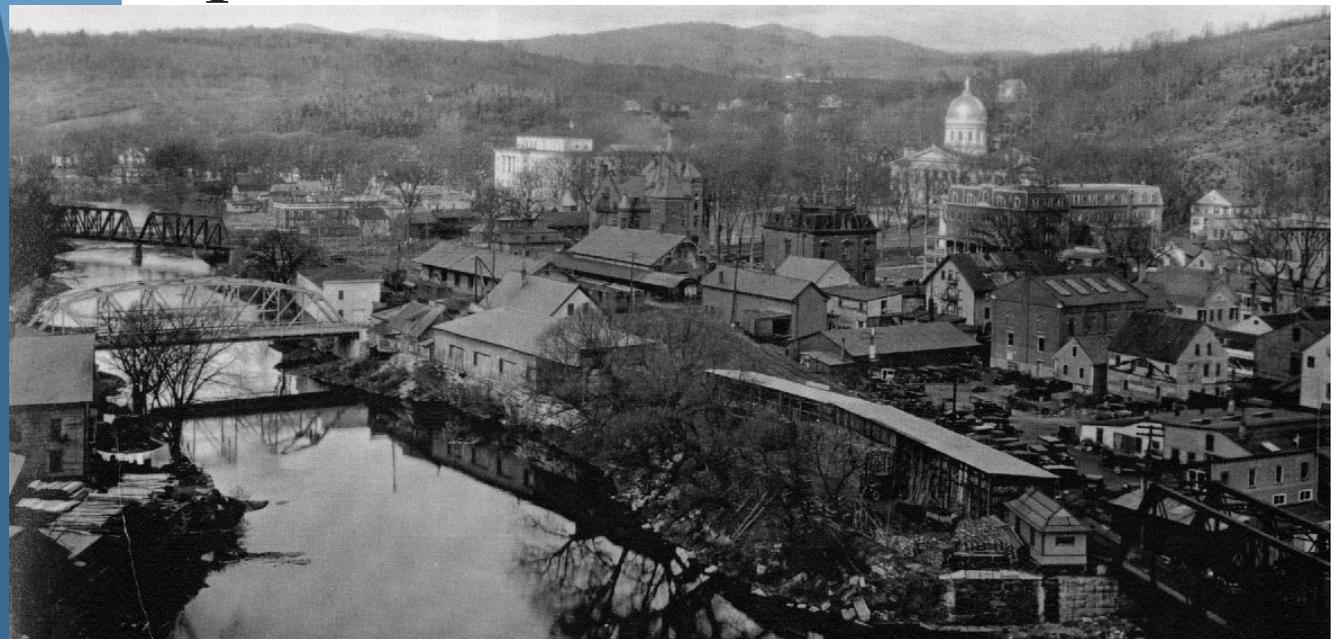


Capital District Master Plan

Montpelier, Vermont 2000



For

The City/State Commission

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Capital District Master Plan

The State of Vermont and the City of Montpelier, acting through the City/State Commission, are developing a Capital District Master Plan. The project was officially initiated by a March 17, 1997 RFP, drafted by James Richardson, Director of Facilities of the Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services. The report has been funded by the City of Montpelier, the State of Vermont, and the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission.

The purpose of this study is to identify, encourage and coordinate mutually beneficial future development plans for the Capitol Complex, City of Montpelier and the Winooski River Corridor. This report shall primarily address the projected space needs for the Vermont state offices and determine appropriate new state office locations; create a greenway plan for the Winooski Riverfront Corridor; determine the feasibility of a multi-modal transportation center, and the possibility of a Montpelier Visitor Center.

The study area is bounded by Main Street to the east, Memorial Drive to the south, Bailey Avenue to the west, and Court Street/Baldwin Street to the north.

Commission Members

Senator Vincent Illuzzi, Chair
Representative Karen Lafayette
Thomas Torti, Commissioner, Department of Buildings and General Services
Candance Moot
Senator William Doyle
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Tim Maker generously contributed the District Energy portion of this report.

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I. Introduction

Acknowledgment

In 1995, a joint committee between the State of Vermont and the Capital City of Montpelier was formed to study issues and make recommendations relating to the harmonious co-existence of State and City. The City-State Commission was the result of many people's efforts and recognition that the two entities must jointly work together planning growth, development and conservation. In large part, this Commission was made possible by the efforts of the late Thomas E. Carey, Montpelier City Councilor. Montpelier residents and state government, through the work of this Commission, will reap the benefit of Tom's vision for our city for generations to come. This Capital District Master Plan is dedicated in his memory.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Master plans are among the oldest and most useful urban design tools. Master plans have been recorded everywhere in the world as a method of balancing the effects of a concentrated population of citizens with the physical environment. The primary goals and motivations of a comprehensive master plan can stem from civic ideals, economics, and cultural/religious visions. In any case, a city's desired physical form is in some part an expression of how that city perceives itself and wants to be perceived by the outside world.

The City of Montpelier and the State Capitol Complex are part of this building tradition. Embraced by a natural bowl of tree covered ridges, the city has a clear organization of development that is a counterpoint to the dynamic natural setting. At the middle scale, the Winooski and North Branch Rivers create axes which crisscross the city, distinguishing various city districts from one another. Finally, there is the built form of the city, a densely grained urban cluster of buildings that is in sharp contrast to the open countryside beyond. Over time, social and activity patterns have pushed and pulled at this structure, but the physical geography and building patterns have proven both stable and adaptable for 150 years.

Recognizing the strength of these existing patterns, the Capital District Master Plan (CDMP) seeks to employ new layers of infrastructure, physical connections, and public spaces within this landscape. The CDMP seeks to preserve the best of Montpelier's historic character while enhancing areas in need of improvement. A primary example of this notion is a public greenway in the Winooski River Corridor. Once a vital area of commerce, the riverfront is currently under utilized. A bikepath, park areas and linkages to the surrounding city are now proposed. Within the greenway is the proposed site for a Capital City Visitor Center and a Multi-modal Transit Center. This complex is centrally located to the Capitol, state offices and the downtown. New pedestrian and vehicular links will lead from the greenway to the State House Green, State Street, and new multiuse parking garages on either Court Street or behind Main Street. Inserted within this new framework are additional state offices and commercial buildings. The existing Capital District Heating Plant, or possibly a new off-site plant, may serve the community with a district energy system. The Capital District Master Plan addresses economic growth, development pressures, transportation, the natural environment, and the dynamics of a Capital City.

Central to this vision is the desire to serve multiple interests. The CDMP is a physical manifestation of the collaborative efforts of the State of Vermont and public/private interests within the City of Montpelier. The CDMP coordinates not only plans for the Capitol Complex, but also the City of Montpelier Master Plan, a development plan sponsored by Montpelier Downtown Community Association and public interests encountered throughout the design process. The intent of this cooperative effort is to maximize the benefits of future development for multiple scales of government as well as the local residents.