

III. Design Process

A. Public Involvement

The Capital District Master Plan was developed with the active involvement of many parties. These include representatives from the State of Vermont, the City of Montpelier, and many other public and private organizations.

Whereas previous master plans for the Capital District laid out visions of a large self-contained “modern” state complex, the current iteration of the plan calls for a smaller scale, more integrated approach. The State does not envision having the financial resources, nor the desire, to create a massive state complex. Rather, there is a clearer sense that a moderately scaled Capitol Complex can integrate better with downtown Montpelier, and that mutually beneficial designs for the river corridor, parking access, and public transportation can make for a more attractive, efficient city.

Public involvement has been significant throughout the planning process. Initial meetings focused upon both general and specific concerns, and tried to evaluate the existing public policies for the downtown and the Capital District. Later, presentations were held to review the gathered information. During these events, a great deal of time was spent with each and every public/private body that might be directly affected by the new master plan. Each step of the design process was accompanied by coordination and review meetings with the City/State Commission. Invested parties include, but are not limited to, the following:

Parties Involved in the Capital District Master Plan:

- VT Department of Buildings and General Services
- City/State Commission
- City/State Steering Committee subcommittee
- VT Agency of Transportation
- Central VT Regional Planning Commission: Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Montpelier City Council
- Montpelier Planning Commission and Planning Department Staff
- Montpelier Conservation Commission
- Montpelier Tourism Council
- Montpelier Economic Development Committee
- Montpelier Chamber of Commerce
- VT Historical Society
- Private landowners
- Developers
- US Government
- Washington County Supreme Court

Private land and business owners were consulted throughout the entire process. Many areas of the proposed plan involve private land holdings either through the potential need for their land or via substantial impacts on their current uses. In all cases, the private landowners were active participants in the design process, and enthusiastic about the potential opportunities for their businesses or holdings.

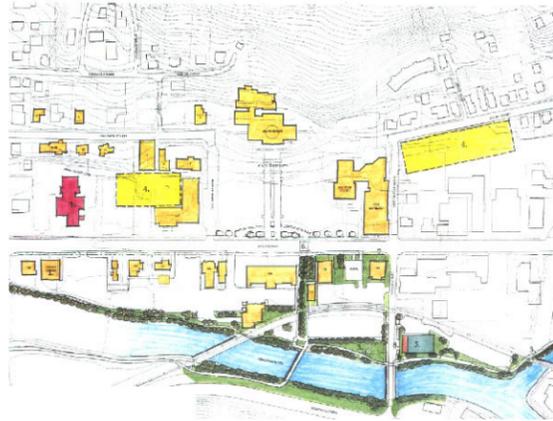
B. The Planning Process

The planning process began by interviewing members of the Vermont Department of Buildings and General Services and the City of Montpelier. These sessions reviewed all past planning work for both the Capitol Complex and City of Montpelier. These meetings and plan reviews helped determination significant issues, opportunities and goals for the planning process. A public workshop was then held to add and refine these concerns. During the entire public input process the planning team completed detailed assessments of state office needs, transportation needs, environmental issues along the Winooski Riverfront, and a general infrastructure review of the planning area.

C. Five Master Plan Options leading to a Final Plan

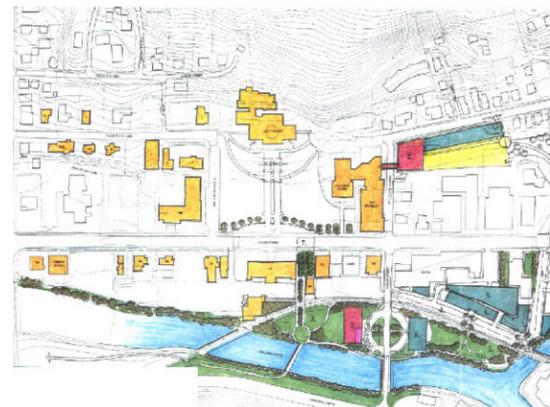
From the information assessment and public input phase, the planning team generated five alternative Master Plan schemes. These schemes, shown on the following page, were presented to the City/State Commission, general public, city and state administrations, city and state review bodies, civic groups, clubs and individual private land owners. The review of the five schemes took place over a six-month time period to allow for maximum analysis and feedback from all interested parties. The planning team compiled and responded to all comments to generate a single master plan. This plan then went through the same process as described above. The final plan underwent a second review period of four-months to finally take the form presented in this document.

Five Master Plan Options



1. Status Quo - Minimal new building:

New State Offices are accomplished primarily through the acquisition of buildings in or near the current Capital District. The State will buy currently leased space in National Life, the Union Mutual and other buildings, lands adjacent to the Capital District, and renovates them to suit state offices. Existing Capital District lands are land banked, while parking and the river frontage are aesthetically improved for the greenway. Many, but not all, of the existing surface parking spaces are retained or reorganized. Parking displaced by the greenway will be located in structures on Court Street or behind 133 State Street.



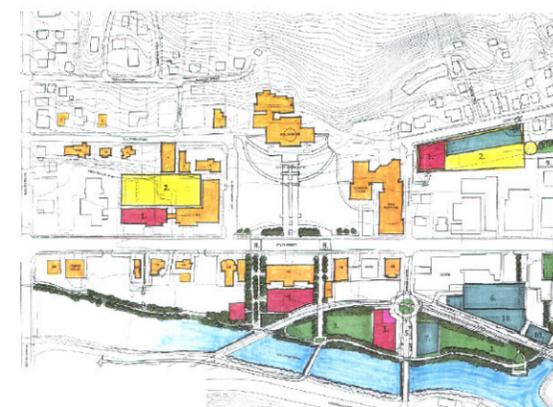
2. Downtown Linkages :

Existing downtown buildings are used to partially serve the state building space needs, requiring less space to be built in the Capital District. Greenspace is maximized with less building coverage, and parking for both the downtown and the Capital District is distributed through a series of shared surface and structured lots. Part of the link includes a new street facing the riverfront with new private development opportunities to benefit the city's economic vitality.



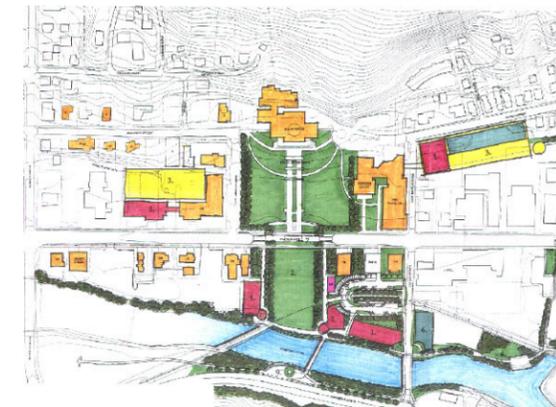
3. River Connections:

New buildings are developed along State Street to fill existing "gaps", preserving the continuity of the historic streetscape. In contrast to the built-up street is a continuous park established along the river which integrates a new Capital District and Downtown Montpelier Transit/Gateway Center.



4. Alternative Street Connection - Riverfront Revitalization:

The Downtown and the Capital District are connected with a new road from Main/Barre Street to Taylor Street paralleling the WCRR line. New private development is located along this street requiring the removal of the former VTLCT building and M&M beverage. New buildings match the scale of Main Street in a series of commercial blocks and storefronts, all facing a large riverfront park. State buildings are accomplished with new construction on Taylor Street and additions to both 120 and 133 State Street. Additional state office space is available on Court Street above the parking structure.



5. Maximize Green Space:

The central feature of this plan is the removal of the 120 State Street building and the extension of the State House Lawn to the river. New buildings frame the green on both sides and additional buildings are added to 133 State Street, next to and across Gov. Davis Blvd from the Pavilion. Displaced parking is located to peripheral lots and structures on the back lots.