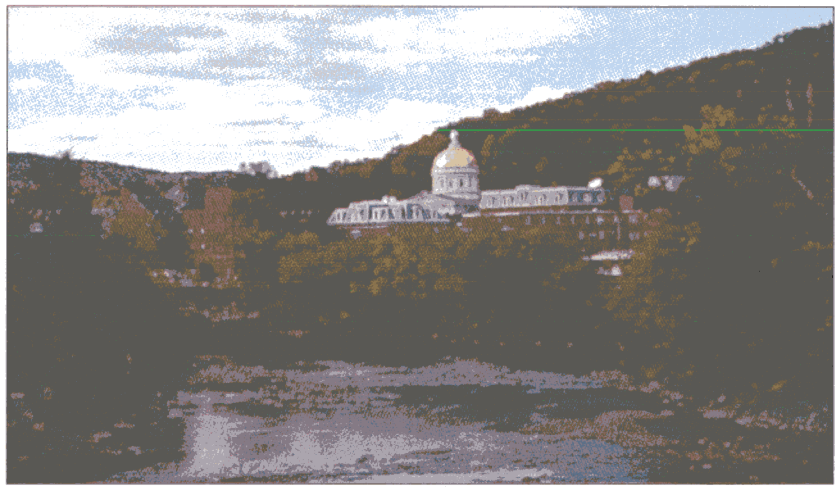
MONTPELIER OPEN SPACE PLAN
VIEWS AND VISTAS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
DRAFT August 2002



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the Report

Montpelier is likely to be a focus of much of the region's future growth. Accommodating this growth in ways that retain the important scenic elements of the City requires a systematic approach to identifying the landscape elements which are most valuable. This study combines established techniques for evaluating scenic quality along with public a survey to determine priorities for the protection of scenic resources. The specific methodologies used are described in detail in the report. The concentration of this study is the visual contribution of existing open spaces rather than the built environment, though in many ways the two are inextricable. The study looks at both dramatic views, and the critical elements in those views. Following is a brief summary of the various sections of the report.

Scenic Resources Inventory

General overview

The sense that the heart of the city is nestled in the valley surrounded by wooded hillsides is critical to Montpelier's sense of place. Also contributing to Montpelier's distinctiveness are a few key visual focal points. These include the Winooski River and North Branch, the clearly defined downtown, and the Statehouse. The rivers have defined the shape of the city and its major roadways. The intensity of downtown Montpelier and its spires, turrets, and domes expresses clarity of purpose. The Statehouse with its gold dome and crowning goddess, seen against a backdrop of green hillsides is one of the most unique and dramatic settings for any public building. College Hall at the top of State Street is a visual counterpoint to the Statehouse dome in many Montpelier scenes.

Important Views

Five Montpelier views ranked highest in the Views and Vistas survey. They are discussed in detail in the full report.

- River Views
- Hubbard Park Tower
- Sabin's Pasture
- North Street
- Berlin Street heading West

Eyesores
Industrial buildings, parking areas, the back facades of some buildings on State Street, eroding river banks, and general visual clutter were noted in the public survey as significant eyesores. Strip development along Berlin Street (east of Main Street to the hill) was also noted as detracting from the otherwise dramatic views looking north to the downtown across the river.

Scenically valuable open space
Four types of open space are identified as visually important components of the urban landscape.

- River Corridors
- Uplands: Ridges and Backdrops
- Open Meadows
- Parks, Plazas, and Greens

Recommendations

Note: Protection should not preclude development of these properties (see full report for appropriate development techniques).

High Priorities for Protection

- Sabin's Pasture (Zorzi)
- Nuissl Meadow
- Goldman Hillside/Pembroke Farm Meadow
- Carr Lot/Confluence Park
- Riverbank Access and Management
- Vermont College Green
- National Life meadow and interstate boundaries
- Backdrop to Statehouse (Gilbertson, Heney)

Moderate Priorities for Protection

- England Farm
- Pearl Street Motors Farm/Vermont Tree Service (Gove and Emmons)
- James Johnson Meadow (Town Hill Road)
- Elks Club
- 112 Northfield Street
- Breezy Acres (Slinkman/Hooper)
- Ridgeline Protection
- Architectural Prominence of Spires, Domes, and Turrets

Scenic Enhancement Opportunities
Ensuring that critical scenic resources receive adequate protection must be the first priority. It is also important to make certain that these resources, once protected, are maintained and enhanced for public use and enjoyment. The report contains a number of suggested enhancement projects.