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State of Vermont
Department of Housing and Community Affairs
National Life Building, Drawer 20
Montpelier, VT 05620-0501
www.dhca.state.vt.us

[phone] 802-828-3211
[Department fax] 802-828-2928
[Historic Preservation fax] 802-828-3206

Agency of Commerce & Community Development

October 19, 2009

Gwendolyn Hallsmith, Director
Department of Planning and Community Development
City Hall
39 Main Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

RE: Decision to Approve Growth Center Designation

Dear Gwen,

Congratulations! Enclosed is a signed copy of the Decision to Approve the Montpelier Growth Center application. We recognize and appreciate the hard work you and others put into this application and the years of planning efforts that led up to this point.

I wish you the best for a successful conclusion to the enVision planning process and look forward to following the city's progress in achieving its goals. We hope that Montpelier's update to the downtown board in September each year will offer an occasion to recognize the city's progress as a designated growth center.

If you have any additional recommendations about how we might improve the growth center designation process, please don't hesitate to contact me. I will be happy to meet with you.

Sincerely,

Joss Besse

Joss Besse, Director
Division for Community Planning and Revitalization
Department of Economic, Housing and Community Development

CITY OF MONTPELIER APPLICATION FOR GROWTH CENTER DESIGNATION

Decision to Approve Growth Center Designation

Vermont Expanded Downtown Board

October 28, 2009

Introduction

The Expanded Downtown Board considered the City of Montpelier's application for growth center designation at their September 28, 2009 warned public meeting. The Board voted 7 to 4 to approve Montpelier's application and award growth center designation, based upon review of the application, the Planning Coordination Group's September 9, 2009 recommendations, and the statutory designation criteria (24 V.S.A. §2791). Below is a summary of the Board's findings and conclusions, with attached conditions.

Proposed Growth Center includes or is adjacent to a Designated Downtown, Village Center or New Town Center

Montpelier's Growth Center includes and radiates out from the city's designated downtown. FIGURE 5 IN THE APPLICATION (PAGE 23) SHOWS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DOWNTOWN AND THE GROWTH CENTER.

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1. Rationale for Growth Center

The proposed growth center growth cannot reasonably be achieved within an existing designated downtown, village center, or new town center located within the applicant municipality (24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(G)(ii)).

The primary goal of the city in designating its growth center is to reverse the trend of a decreasing population in the last several decades by fostering new residential development in the growth center that meets the needs of city employees and captures an increasing proportion of the region's anticipated housing needs. APPLICATION PAGE 6.

Regional growth projections developed by the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) in 2003, based on the historic population trends, shows a continuing decrease in the city's population over the next 20 years. Montpelier acknowledges these projections but cites a number of trends and city policies that they believe will reverse this decline and predicting instead that the resident population of Montpelier will grow from 8,543 residents in 2009 to 9,808 residents in 2029.

The increase of 1,265 residents over the next 20 years is optimistic but supported by:

1) the pace of recent housing development (119 new units between 2003-2007);
2) the number of additional units in the permitting "pipeline;"

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2) the number of additional units in the permitting "pipeline;"
3) changes in market preference for urban/village living partly stimulated by increased energy costs and an aging population;
4) results of a linear and geometric regression model showing increases in housing units;
5) available infrastructure capacity; and
6) a regional "fair share" housing target by CVRPC that allocates higher proportion of the region's housing growth to Montpelier. APPLICATION PAGES 7-13

Montpelier's role as a regional job center is expected to diminish slightly over the next 20 years as the proportion of jobs grows in other nearby municipalities. Based on historic trends, the city expects to attract 1,430 net new jobs by 2029, with total employment growth increasing slowly but steadily from 9,968 estimated in 2010 to 11,349 in 2030, mostly in government/office jobs. APPLICATION PAGES 14-16

The application estimates that commercial space in Montpelier's designated downtown is 93% built out and 89% built out in residential units. If 51% of of the city's 20 year employment growth needs for the city were to be accommodated in the growth center, 254,999 s.f. of additional space is estimated to be needed. (The city notes that the estimated space needs for the projected employment growth may be high, not taking into account the trends of people holding multiple jobs and telecommuting from home.) Given the capacity of the downtown, established through the build-out analysis, the city anticipates that an additional 189,426 sq. ft. of commercial space and 335 residential units will need to be located in the growth center, outside of the designated downtown. APPLICATION PAGES 18 – 21. Currently the city provides approximately 12,000 more jobs than residents. 8/20/09 LETTER BY GWENDOLYN HALLSMITH, PAGE 5

The city's build out estimates excluded floodplains, and assumed limited expansion of historic and state-owned buildings. These represent real constraints to redevelopment in the downtown so the build-out analysis adequately demonstrates that 50% of expected retail and office growth can not fit into the designated downtown.

2. Size and Configuration of Growth Center

*The proposed growth center is of an appropriate size sufficient to accommodate a majority of the projected population and development over a 20-year planning period. The proposed growth center does not encompass an excessive area of land that would involve the unnecessary extension of infrastructure to service low-density development or result in a scattered or low-density pattern of development at the conclusion of the 20-year period (*24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(F)).

*The proposed growth center will result in a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not characterized by development that is not serviced by municipal infrastructure or that requires the extension of municipal infrastructure across undeveloped lands in a manner that would extend service to lands located outside compact village and urban centers (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(I)(iv)).

*The proposed growth center will result in a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not characterized by linear development along well-traveled roads and highways that lacks depth, as measured from the highway (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(I)(v)).

The proposed growth center encompasses 38% of the city's total 6,041 acres. Sewer and water service areas covers essentially all of the growth center, and much of the remainder of the city. WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AREA MAP AND APPLICATION PAGE 24.

The total size of the proposed growth center is 2,323 acres with a 123 acre designated downtown. APPLICATION PAGES 6 and 24. The developable area in the growth center is estimated to be less than 482 acres. 8/20/09 LETTER BY GWEN HALLSMITH, PAGE 4.

The existing and projected growth in the downtown compared to the projected demand for growth in the Growth Center is presented on page 21 of the application. The unmet need for development beyond what can be accommodated in the downtown is estimated to be 189,426 commercial s.f. and 335 residential units. APPLICATION PAGE 21.

Well over a majority of the city's growth over the next 20 years is projected to occur within the growth center -- 73% of commercial and 104 % of residential. APPLICATION PAGES 25-26.

Growth center boundaries include all of the downtown commercial and business zoning districts and the high and medium density residential districts. The majority of land in the Growth Center is zoned Medium Density Residential (MDR) that is zoned for .23 acres/unit (slightly less than ¼ acre lots), provided there is sewer and water service. MONTPELIER ZONING AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS, APPENDIX 14.

General Business (GB) and Industrial (IND) districts along Route 2 on the west (Toy Town) and east (River Road) ends of the city are also included in the proposed growth center. Development in these areas includes low density, auto-oriented commercial development from past decades, oriented along the highways.

The build out analysis assumes that significant amounts of land in these districts are undevelopable APPLICATION PAGE 44-46 AND GROWTH CENTER BUILD-OUT MAP. According to comments by the Planning Director, there is little danger of substantial new retail and office facilities locating in the GB and IND districts due to development constraints. She stressed that the city hopes to see redevelopment of the low-density, auto-oriented development in a smart growth manner, and that work will begin to revise the bylaws to enable this after the new municipal plan is adopted in 2010.

The existing Master Plan, readopted in 2006, recognizes the need to improve the gateway experience of entering the city but does not describe a smart growth vision for redeveloping the Rt. 2/302 intersection, and the River Road corridor. 2000 MASTER PLAN, PAGE 65, APPENDIX 21.

The purpose statement for the GB district in the Zoning Regulations states that these areas "are designed for accommodating automotive activities, overnight accommodations and uses generally associated with the traveling public." ZONING, PAGE 6-3

A wide range of business, retail, institutional, lodging, as well as some residential, industrial and institutional uses are permitted in the district. A broader set of uses are either permitted or conditional within the IND district. ZONING, PAGES 6-13 TO 6-16.

Minimum lots size in the GB district is 15,000 s.f. (10,000 s.f. for residential with maximum density of 3,000 s.f. per family – or approximately 14 units/acre) and 1 acre for IND, with sewer/water. The maximum building coverages in both the GB and Industrial Districts are 33.3% and maximum building height in both districts is three stories. ZONING, PAGES 6-18 TO 6-19.

These standards allow a mix of permitted uses, and any land consumptive dimensional requirements may be modified through the Planned Development provisions that allow for more densely developed compact development (ZONING, SECTION 713). These provisions are permissive, not mandatory for development in those districts and unlikely to apply to any small scale incremental development projects. No innovative, smart growth development or redevelopment has been proposed to date.

According to the Planning Director, no plan for redevelopment of the auto-oriented development in the GB district has yet been undertaken but the city hopes to use benefits from growth center designation to fund redevelopment in the future. Sewer/water improvements and plans for sidewalks and bike paths are currently underway in the River Street area.

For further discussion on these issues, see Development Pattern discussion below.

3. Appropriateness of Growth Center

*The proposed growth center will support and reinforce any existing designated downtown, village center, or new town center located in the municipality or adjacent municipality by accommodating concentrated residential neighborhoods and a mix and scale of commercial, civic, and industrial uses consistent with the anticipated demand for those uses within the municipality and region (*24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(G)(i)).

*The proposed growth center is planned to develop compact mixed-use centers at a scale appropriate for the community and the region (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(B)).

Montpelier's designated downtown is located at the intersection of several major highways and is at the physical and economic center of the Central Vermont region. The nearest designated downtowns are in Barre City and Waterbury. Plainfield has the closest designated village center approximately 10 miles away. MAP OF DESIGNATED DOWNTOWNS AND VILLAGE CENTERS, APPENDIX 9 .

Montpelier's Designated Downtown is the region's primary employment center, and competes with nearby Barre City and Berlin for retail and other business activity that serves all the region's municipalities. A marketing study conducted for Barre City in 2004, indicates that Montpelier's downtown, while not dominant in any business categories, competes with Barre's downtown for dining, books and music dollars. Berlin's retail development and medical center leads both downtowns in grocery and clothing sales. Montpelier's downtown benefits from the city's role as a government center and the daily influx of approximately 10,000 workers and visitors into the city. APPLICATION PAGES 33-35.

Retail activity in Montpelier is mainly concentrated in and around the designated downtown. The GB and IND districts along the Route 2/302 corridors (River Street and Toy Town to a lesser extent) offers convenience retail and specialized services, many of which are auto-oriented. The city claims that the uses currently existing in those locations would not compete with the downtowns. APPLICATION PAGES 30-31.

The build-out analysis shows very few parcels of land along River Road and Toy Town to be developable, due to physical constraints such as steep slopes, and other parcels have been excluded from having development potential due to conservation easements or institutional uses that were assumed to preclude redevelopment. The parcels with existing auto-oriented commercial development are generally shown as not developable. APPLICATION PAGE 45 AND GROWTH CENTER BUILD OUT MAP.

As discussed above, current zoning permits a very wide range of retail and business uses and activities in the GB and IND districts that, if developed in those locations, have the potential to draw business away from the downtown, especially in the retail and office sectors.

Due to the lack of significant amounts of developable land and the types of uses present in the GB and IND districts, serious competition with the downtown is highly unlikely. Furthermore the city has a proven commitment to maintaining the business vitality of the downtown.

4. Development Pattern

*The proposed growth center promotes densities of land development that are significantly greater than existing and allowable densities in parts of the municipality that are outside a designated downtown, village center, growth center, or new town center, or, in the case of municipalities characterized predominately by areas of existing dense urban settlement, it encourages infill development and redevelopment of historically developed land (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(12)(B)(iv)).

*The proposed growth center results in compact concentrated areas of land development that are served by existing or planned infrastructure and are separated by rural countryside or working landscape (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(12)(B)(vi)).

*The proposed growth center is planned to maintain the historic development pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(A)).

*The proposed growth center will result in a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not characterized by scattered development located outside of compact urban and village centers that is excessively land consumptive (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(I)(i)).

*The approved plan and the implementing bylaws further the goal of retaining a more rural character in the areas surrounding the growth center, to the extent that a more rural character exists (*24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(D)(iv)).

Montpelier's downtown is a dense, mixed-use center that is connected to existing, compact historic residential neighborhoods. The city is applying a wide range of strategies to encourage infill, adaptive reuse/redevelopment of vacant or underutilized land and buildings. APPLICATION PAGE 40.

The Growth Center also includes the Medium Density Residential (MDR) district that makes up the majority of land in the growth center. These neighborhoods are concentrated on the hills north and south of the downtown with development that, partially due to the steep slopes, is developed at a lower density than the older neighborhoods closer to the downtown. The MDR is served by both sewer and water facilities and any development with access to both, may be developed at approximately 4 residential units/acre. ZONING, PAGE 6-19.

62% of the city is located outside the Growth Center and is comprised mainly of residences on large lots, recreational areas, agricultural fields and forest land. Much of this area is zoned Low Density Residential (LDR) with a minimum zoning density of 1 acre/unit when connected to water and/or sewer facilities, and 2 acres/unit without. Sewer and water service is available in about half of the LDR. WATER AND SEWER SERVICE AREA MAP, APPENDIX 8.

The city lacks a sewer service policy, that would restrict access to sewer service outside the growth center and in rural parts of adjoining municipalities. Restrictions on sewer service have proved to be a critical tool for preventing sprawl on rural land adjoining growth centers in other municipalities.

The growth center boundary to some extent is defined by a "green zone" of protected recreation, conservation, park and farm land located just outside the boundary. "GREEN ZONE" PROTECTED LAND MAP – SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL. The city has taken steps to preserve the rural character outside the Growth Center by providing incentives for cluster development and efforts to identify and protect key open space areas. APPLICATION PAGE 46. A $40,000 Conservation Fund has been established for use in preserving some of these lands, and the city has participated with other entities in helping to conserve priority parcels in the Berlin Pond watershed (Montpelier's water supply) including parcels outside the city boundaries. 8/20/09 LETTER BY GWEN HALLSMITH.

The city has stated its goal to support redevelopment in a smart growth pattern and would hope to use the benefits of growth center designation to help them do so. But revisions to the municipal plan, bylaws and other necessary actions have not yet taken place. The city is in the midst of rewriting its municipal plan and expects that this new plan will guide zoning changes in the future.

The tools and benefits available through designation are expected to help the city secure the resources to plan for redevelopment of the GB and IND districts.

5. Diversity of Development

The proposed growth center incorporates a mix of uses that typically include or have the potential to include the following: retail, office, services, and other commercial, civic, recreational, industrial, and

residential uses, including affordable housing and new residential neighborhoods, within a densely developed, compact area (24 V.S.A. § 2791(12)(B)(i)).

The proposed growth center is planned to support a diversity of viable businesses in downtowns and villages (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(G)).

The proposed growth center is planned to provide for housing that meets the needs of a diversity of social and income groups in each community (24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(H)).

The application demonstrates that there is and will continue to be a wide variety of uses located within the growth center, including residential, retail, office, civic, and parks.

It was noted that the city's PUD regulations offer up to a 25% density bonus for affordable housing projects, and mixed use developments are encouraged (ZONING SECTION 713). It was also noted that the City has a strong history of supporting affordable housing projects.

6. Capital Budget and Program

*The applicant has adopted a capital budget and program in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 4426 and the existing and planned infrastructure is adequate to implement the growth center (*24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(E)).

*The proposed growth center is planned to balance growth with the availability of economic and efficient public utilities and services (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(F)).

A Capital Improvement Program for 2008 – 2014 is provided in Appendix 25. A color-coded version showing the projected capital expenditures within or supporting the growth center were provided in the 8/20/09 supplemental materials.

In general Montpelier's existing infrastructure appears to be sufficient to support projected growth. Sewer and Water facilities, in particular, have the capacity to double the amount of use. APPLICATION PAGE 55. No sewer and water service area has been defined by the city and no related policies regarding sewer line extensions were provided, however, statute does not require that such policies be adopted for designation.

Adequacy of the transportation network is more difficult to gauge using these tools. (See transportation discussion below.)

A Fiscal Impact Model, created in 2005, indicates that growth will benefit the city because of the excess capacity available, and the compact geographic area that prevents services from being spread too wide. APPLICATION PAGE 58.

7. Public Spaces

*The proposed growth center incorporates existing or planned public spaces that promote social interaction, such as public parks, civic buildings (e.g., post office, municipal offices), community gardens, and other formal and informal places to gather (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(12)(B)(ii)).

City Hall, the police station, library and post office are all located in the designated downtown. The city's downtown streetscape itself is an important public space and is linked to a number of public parks and spaces. Beyond these existing features, the city is working on plans to preserve and improve important views and parcels of land within the growth center, especially to improve access and views to the rivers. APPLICATION PAGES 59-63.

8. Spatial Pattern

*The proposed growth center is organized around one or more central places or focal points, such as prominent buildings of civic, cultural, or spiritual significance or a village green, common, or square (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(12)(B)(iii)).

*The proposed growth center will result in a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not characterized by linear development along well-traveled roads and highways that lacks depth, as measured from the highway (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(I)(v)).

The growth center is organized around the downtown business area and the statehouse which are within the designated downtown. Both provide strong focal points. In surrounding neighborhoods, focal points are provided by parks and schools, especially the Vermont College campus.

At this point, the GB and IND districts lack focal points and are oriented in a linear manner along Route 2 and 302. (See see above.)

9. Transportation and Other Infrastructure

*The proposed growth center is supported by existing or planned investments in infrastructure and encompasses a circulation system that is conducive to pedestrian and other non-vehicular traffic and that incorporates, accommodates and supports the use of public transit systems (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(12)(B)(v)).

*The proposed growth center is planned to enable choice in modes of transportation (*24 V.S.A. §

2791(13)(C)).

*The proposed growth center will result in a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not characterized by development that limits transportation options, especially for pedestrians (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(I)(ii)).

Existing pedestrian infrastructure is well-developed in Montpelier and measures to further improve and extend sidewalks, bikepaths and transit facilities are described on pages 65-69 of the application. Approximately $60,000 is allocated in the capital budget to sidewalk reconstruction and resurfacing, mostly in the designated downtown. Improvements proposed to relieve traffic congestion and improve safety of roads are described on subsequent pages.

The size of Montpelier's growth center, especially considering that the distance from Toy Town to the Civic center (several miles) is too large to be easily walk-able from boundary to boundary. Some of the more remote areas, such as Toy Town to the west lack a pedestrian or bicycle path connection to the downtown.

Green Mountain Transit provides regular transit service within Montpelier, serving some of the more remote parts of the growth center on Route 2 going west, Berlin Street going south and east towards Barre city. No bus service is available on roads going north from downtown. GREEN MOUNTAIN TRANSIT WEBSITE.

Concern was expressed that the city's efforts to build sidewalks and bikepaths to outlying areas, such as the current construction of a bike path on Route 302, detracts from its ability to maintain the facilities that already exist. Furthermore, while the city is making an effort to provide pedestrian connections to River Street, it was noted that due to the number of curb cuts and the high traffic levels along at road, an inviting pedestrian environment will not be possible until the area is redeveloped to smart growth standards. As of yet, no plans for the redevelopment of this area have been prepared.

As noted above, the growth center is served by sewer and water infrastructure with capacity to support projected development in the growth center. There are no policies in place regarding priorities for sewer and water line extensions and no designated sewer service areas.

10. Natural and Historic Resources

*The applicant has identified important natural resources and historic resources within the proposed growth center, anticipated impacts on those resources and has proposed mitigation (*24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(B)).

*The approved plan and the implementing bylaws provide reasonable protection for important natural resources and historic resources located outside the proposed growth center (*24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(D)(iv)).

*The proposed growth center is planned to protect the state's important environmental, natural and historic features, including natural areas, water quality, scenic resources, and historic sites and districts (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(D)).

Montpelier's natural resources are described on pages 78-97 of the application along with maps of the major features.

Montpelier has recently undertaken a Natural Communities Inventory that provides detailed information on the plant and animal habit within and without the growth center. While most of the plants listed on the state inventory of rare, threatened and endangered species were not found at the time of the city's inventory, new rare and uncommon plans were found and the state non-game and natural heritage program was notified

A deeryard area on the west side of the growth center was identified by the Fish and Wildlife division as land that potentially should be removed from the Growth Center or if included, mitigation provided outside the growth center. City staff noted that much of the deeryard is on steep slopes, unlikely to be impacted by development and cited provisions in Section 715 of the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations that require site plans "to make appropriate provision" for the protection of wildlife habitat and other natural and cultural resources. These standards apply to all development subject to Site Plan Review (all development except single and two family residences).

Because Montpelier's downtown is located at the confluence of the Winooski and North Branch Rivers, protection of water resources and hazard mitigation are a critical part of any planning for growth. All of the designated downtown is within the floodplain, the city is taking an active role in floodplain regulation. APPLICATION PAGE 92.

Historic and cultural resource preservation has long been a priority of the city as is evidenced by the establishment of a Historic District on the National Register, a Historic Preservation Commission, Certified Local Government status, and a Design Control District in the zoning regulations. Various potential archeological sites have been identified through studies conducted for federally funded projects. APPLICATION PAGES 97-104

The city has adopted a wide range of regulatory tools intended to protect cultural and environmentally sensitive areas that applied to all parts of the city regardless of whether they occur in the urban or rural parts of the municipality. These include the following provisions in the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations:

- 305. Design Review District (for places with architectural, urban design and cultural significance and includes provisions for removal of historic buildings)
- 713E. Density Bonuses for Cluster Development (provides incentives for residential development that protects sensitive resources)
- 715. Site Protection and Design Standards (applied as part of Site Plan Review with protection specified for a wide range of natural and cultural resources including archeological)

- 715. Flood Plain Development (for all Flood Hazard Areas)
- 723. Storm Drainage (including provisions that encourage natural drainage systems)

11. Agriculture

*The most recently adopted guidelines of the Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets have been used to identify areas proposed for agriculture and the proposed growth center has been designed to avoid the conversion of primary agricultural soils, wherever possible (*24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(C)).

*The proposed growth center serves to strengthen agricultural and forest industries and is planned to minimize conflicts of development with these industries (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(E)).

*The proposed growth center will result in a settlement pattern that, at full build-out, is not characterized by the fragmentation of farm and forest land (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(13)(I)(iii)).

About a third of the city's agricultural soils are located within the growth center boundaries, but most have already been developed. A notable exception is the Two Rivers Center for Sustainability that is located within the proposed growth center, on prime agricultural soils in the Industrial District between Route 2 and the Winooski River. (This land is shown as an excluded area on the Build Out map and although it is shown to be within the growth center, it is the only farm identified on the "Green Zone" map.)

Two other farms are identified on the Appendix 10 map of agricultural soils. One is within an area of prime agricultural soils outside the growth center on Towne Hill Road and the other on the southern city boundary in a location not indicated to include prime agricultural soils. Most of the undeveloped primary agricultural soils are located outside the Growth Center in the Towne Hill Road area.

The regulatory and non-regulatory measures discussed above for protecting significant resources apply to agricultural lands and primary agricultural soils.

12. Planning Process

*The applicant has a regionally confirmed planning process and an approved municipal plan. The approved plan contains provisions that are appropriate to implement the designated growth center proposal. The applicant has adopted bylaws in conformance with the municipal plan that implement the provisions in the plan that pertain to the designated growth center (*24 V.S.A. § 2793c(e)(1)(D)).

*The proposed growth center is planned to reinforce the purposes of 10 V.S.A. Chapter 151. The proposed growth center is planned in accordance with the planning and development goals under 24 V.S.A. § 4302 (*24 V.S.A. § 2791(12)(B)(vii) and (viii)).

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission approved Montpelier's 2006 municipal plan and planning process in April, 2006. The city is in the process of undertaking a major public participation process, enVision Montpelier, that will result in a new municipal plan (referred to by the city as a Master Plan). The city is aiming to adopt the new plan in the summer of 2010. The Zoning and Subdivision Regulations were last amended in May, 2008 – further revisions are anticipated once the new Master Plan has been adopted.

Because of the questions pertaining to including the GB and IND districts in the growth center, the city should be required to report annually on the results that are being achieved through new development and any progress in adopting the anticipated updates of the plan and bylaws.

Expanded Downtown Board Approval

The Board concludes that Montpelier has demonstrated that its growth center meets the statutory criteria for growth center designation as discussed herein. The City has worked to implement the proposed growth center as envisioned in the application and has demonstrated through the plan and implementation tools that compact development will be concentrated within the growth center and guide over 50% of the town's growth into this area over the next 20 years. The tools are in place to protect important resource lands and the city is conducting the kind of planning expected in the growth center statute.

The Board hereby approves Montpelier's application on these findings and conclusions, and on the following condition.

> The city shall report annually to the Board on or before September 30, on the results that are being achieved through new development, especially the percentage of the total and the types of growth in each of these areas: the downtown; growth center, and the remainder of the municipality. The city shall also provide an update on the progress in adopting the new municipal plan and summarize the content of the plan and any changes in the land use regulations, funding priorities or infrastructure projects that are pertinent to the findings of this decision.

Kevin Dorn, Chair
Expanded Downtown Board

10-19-09
Date