

FAQs

1) Can residents access the property now?

Yes, residents and non-residents can access the property on Country Club Road from the parking lot and walk along the former golf cart paths throughout the former golf course. You can also explore the forested parts of the property, although there are no trails and everyone must be mindful of posted property of abutting land owners.

2) I've heard Council has allowed hunting to continue on the property. Is it safe to walk on the property?

Yes, City Council voted to allow the continuation of hunting on the property for the 2022 hunting season. Deer hunting with archery or shotgun is the only permissible modes of hunting. Just like where many State-owned property is accessible to both hunters and non-hunters for recreational opportunities, individuals are encouraged to wear one or more piece of bright colored clothing so all eyes, both human and animals, can easily spot you from afar.

3) Who has the City hired to facilitate the master planning of the property?

After a Request for Proposal (RFP) process, the City selected the proposal submitted by White + Burke Real Estate Advisors, VHB and Black River Design. White + Burke is the Project Manager and development coordinator while VHB will support the process through site analysis/assessment and creation of conceptual master plan options and Black River Design will conduct a feasibility study of the existing club house.

4) How is the City engaging residents and ensuring far-reaching input at this stage and over the coming months?

Picking up from where community engagement started in March of 2022, the project team has held three separate community engagement sessions in October 2022 to describe the process and listen to residents' concerns and suggestions. Concurrently, the project team is engaging small stakeholder groups including abutters, City committees & departments, and existing tenants in the former club house. The City is committed to engaging with community members from every walk of life, especially those with historically marginalized voices. The project team and the City welcome anyone to share their thoughts and engage with this project. Additional public engagement sessions are planned for January and Spring of 2023 once the constraints and opportunities are identified. Residents can reach out to Josh Jerome, Community and Economic Development Specialist for the City of Montpelier at jjerome@montpelier-vt.org, with any questions or comments.

5) Is this site being looked at like a satellite to the downtown?

No, the Country Club Road property is being envisioned in a holistic way as it connects with the rest of the community. The team will be taking into consideration topographical restrictions, transportation, wildlife corridors, how abutting property may be developed in the future, and regional context.

6) With the known housing crisis, how can we ensure that this site will provide the right product for our community?

As with many communities throughout Vermont and the country, there is insufficient inventory of single-family, duplexes and multi-family properties in Montpelier. As the opportunities and constraints of the site become known and Montpelier's Housing Committee weighs in, the team will be making recommendations on various types of housing and density for the community to consider.

7) How can this site model best practices and be developed with energy efficiency at the forefront?

The site has south-by-southwestern facing slopes making it an ideal location for solar energy production. Ideas being considered include panels on any public or residential structures, as well as arrays that may generate additional energy for the site and beyond.

8) What has the public said are the major concerns to consider?

So far, the community has indicated great support for the opportunities the former golf course presents. Concerns have typically fallen in juxtaposition to uses i.e. those who favor conservation do not believe any development should happen and those who favor housing as a use believe the site should maximize housing development. Transportation has been identified as a concern because of a lack of public transportation and distance from the downtown (~1.79 miles from the site to City Hall). Other concerns voiced have been around how the site will preserve wetlands and wildlife corridors to how much will the City make and how long it will take for the City to realize a return on the \$3 million investment.

9) What has the public said are the most desired use ideas to-date?

There has been a lot of feedback given by the community as to what should happen to the property from recreation, housing, conservation and agriculture. The two prominent uses identified thus far have been housing and recreation.

10) Will the City build a new recreation center on the newly acquired property?

The existing community recreation center located on Barre Street is not adequate for the type of services the community has said they want to have nor is the building fully accessible. Cost estimates to address all of the old buildings deferred maintenance and to comply with ADA accessibility requirements would cost upward of \$7 million. Other locations in the downtown were looked at as possible sites for a new recreation center, but limiting factors included lot size and flood plain. The City used \$1 million from the recreation reserve fund and bonded \$2 million to purchase the former golf course with the intention of siting a new community recreation center on the property.