

TOWN OF NORWICH
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

DRAFT Minutes

September 8th, 2026

Tracy Hall and Zoom

Members present: Jaan Laaspere (Chair), Christian Spalding (Vice-Chair), Mary Gorman, Bob Pape, Vince Crow, Miller Nuttle, Jeff Goodrich

Members absent: None

Staff: Steven True, Director, Planning & Zoning

Minute Taker: Steven True

Others Present: Amy Stringer, Mary Albert, Kevin Gieger

1. **Meeting opened at 6:30 PM**
2. **Approve Agenda:** A **MOTION** to approve the agenda was made by Miller and seconded by Gorman. **MOTION** to approve the agenda as amended carries (7-0).
3. **Public Comment or correspondence for items not on the agenda:** none
4. **Chair's report**
 - a. **Village Master Plan update**

Laaspere noted that Dubois & King was selected as the vendor. Members then discussed the project timeline, and next steps with a tentative kick-off in the third week of September.
 - b. **Bylaws – deferred to a later meeting**
 - c. True notes that the 2027 Municipal Planning Grant has opened, with grant applications due in December.
 - d. Goodrich **MOTIONS**, Nuttle seconds to authorize the Planning Director to pursue a 2027 MP grant to assist in the development of the 2028 Town Plan. **MOTION** carries unanimously.
5. **Writing Town Plans - Best practices presentation by Kevin Gieger, Chief Planner, Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Planning Commission**
 - a. Kevin led a discussion covering topics such understanding the audience, format and length, statutory requirements, the best practices for clearly written objectives, policy, and action statements. Members asked questions about specificity and how to best ensure regulatory weight. Kevin covered specific Plan elements such as Housing, and Utilities and Facilities. The group discussed the outreach and public engagement process.
 - b. Members then reviewed the three model town plans provided in the packet. Spalding ran through a set of pros and cons for each. Members were instructed to review them in more detail as homework over the next month and come to the next meeting prepared to choose the preferred format.

6. Approve minutes from August 11th regular meeting Spading moved, Nuttle seconds to approve the minutes. No discussion. **MOTION** carries (7-0).

7. **Adjourn**

a. **MOTION** is made by Spalding, seconded by Pape to adjourn. No discussion.

MOTION carries (7-0). Meeting adjourned at 8:03 PM.

Next Meeting: October 13th at 6:30 PM

To: Norwich Planning Commission

From: Affordable Housing Subcommittee

Date: September 9, 2026

Re: Missing Middle Housing

We are writing to share the Subcommittee's recommendations for the next Town Plan related to the development in Norwich of "missing middle" housing – a set of traditional housing types that could contribute to a more diverse and affordable housing stock in Norwich. While we know that the Planning Commission is presently focused on the Village Master Plan and that adoption of the next Town Plan is more than a year away, we wanted to share our recommendations now to ensure the Planning Commission was aware of our input and had an opportunity to provide feedback. We expect these recommendations will help to inform both the Housing and Land Use chapters of the Town Plan.

The Subcommittee discussed this memo at the Aug. 17, 2026 Affordable Housing Subcommittee meeting and authorized the Chair, Jeff Lubell, to revise the memo to address the Subcommittee's feedback and then submit it to the Planning Commission. This is the revised submitted version.

What is missing-middle housing and why is it important?

Missing-middle housing is basically everything in between single-family homes and mid-rise multifamily construction. In our context, it includes duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts, townhomes, and other small multifamily structures, such as the potential conversion of office buildings in the village to rental units. The pictures on this page provide nearby examples. They include



Hartford Ave - Hartford



School Street - Randolph



Hartford Ave - Wilder (Hartford)



Norwich Meadows (Norwich)

townhomes in Norwich, a duplex and four-to-six-unit structure in Hartford and a fourplex in Randolph. (See appendix for photo credits.) Additional missing middle housing types are depicted in a graphic from Opticos Design in the appendix.

Historically these diverse housing types were a fairly common feature in the New England landscape. But as zoning rules were created or changed to promote residential neighborhoods that included all or mostly single-family homes, new missing-middle housing has become less common. This is one of many reasons why housing costs have climbed to levels that are unaffordable to many working families.

Missing-middle housing types are often less expensive to construct than single-family homes for several reasons. First, splitting the costs of a single lot among two or more missing-middle units instead of one often reduces per-unit land costs. Second, these homes share walls and often are smaller than newly built single-family homes, reducing the amount of raw material required to build each unit. Third, building multiple rather than single units at a time allows for soft costs (permitting, design, architecture, legal, etc.) to be split among multiple units.

While the price or rent of a home is ultimately a function of the demand for housing relative to supply and not just the costs of producing it, generally newly-built missing-middle homes are sold or rented at a lower price/rent point than newly constructed single-family homes. Again, there are multiple reasons for this, including generally smaller units and a premium that people put on the additional privacy afforded by detached structures.

While there are trade-offs involved in living in a duplex or fourplex relative to a single-family home, we believe that many prospective residents would embrace these and other missing middle housing options in Norwich, choosing smaller attached units in order to achieve a lower rent or home price. A well-functioning housing market should include a diverse range of housing options at different price points. Making it easier to develop missing-middle housing in Norwich would contribute to this desired outcome.

What are the barriers to the development of missing-middle homes in Norwich?

Since the state of Vermont recognized the right of homeowners to build a duplex on any lot where single-family housing is allowed, duplexes have become much easier to construct. Structures with three or more housing units, however, remain difficult. The main barriers are in Norwich's zoning rules, which (1) require structures with more than two units to go through the complicated planned unit development (PUD) process, and (2) include density limits that require missing-middle and other multifamily structures to be built on parcels that are far larger than needed to accommodate them, driving up land costs and sharply limiting the universe of parcels in the town that can accommodate missing-middle homes.

The 2020 town plan states that it is the town's goal to "facilitate the creation of duplexes, triplexes and other 'missing middle housing.'" However, apart from changes in the recent zoning package to conform to state law by allowing duplexes and to increase the density bonus for PUDs that include affordable housing, Norwich has not taken significant steps to facilitate the development of missing-middle housing.

Rather than simply repeat this goal in the next town plan, we recommend that the town identify the full range of zoning and other land use changes needed to make missing-middle housing more feasible, specify them as planned changes in the next town plan, and then speedily adopt them shortly thereafter. This memo outlines the changes we recommend be considered.

What changes would be needed to facilitate the development of Missing-Middle Housing?

A. Adjust Norwich's zoning districts to better correspond to expected future land use and identify appropriate zones for missing-middle housing.

One initial question is *where* missing-middle housing types should be encouraged. A review of Norwich's zoning district map, however, indicates that it is not well suited to informing this decision. In the current zoning map, nearly all of Norwich is classified as rural residential, with only very small areas zoned for village residential, business, or commercial/industrial. The rural residential district is very diverse and includes areas like deep forest blocks where we don't want to encourage development and areas closer to the center of town that could be a good source of new homes. The zoning code relies on a complicated calculation for maximum density to regulate land use in the rural residential district that is opaque and can be difficult to implement.

Adopting new zoning districts that look more like the future land use maps in the new regional TRORC plan would be a good step in the direction of defining more functional zoning districts that can be mapped to desired uses and form the basis for regulation of missing-middle and other development types. The draft TRORC 2026 future land use map (reproduced below) includes these categories:

1. **Downtown/Village Center** (purple) – Dense centers with a mix of residential, business, and civic uses. (These will be termed Centers under the [State Designation](#) program.)
2. **Village Area** (pink)– Existing neighborhoods adjacent to Centers with planning and zoning that support residential and mixed-use.
3. **Planned Growth Area** (orchid) – Existing mixed-use neighborhoods and undeveloped lands near Centers that have planning, zoning, subdivision bylaws and infrastructure to support substantial growth.

4. **Transition Area** (orange) – Areas that are planned for growth but don't qualify for other Future Land Use areas due to lack of infrastructure and/or local planning
5. **Rural General Area** (beige) – Low-density rural residential and commercial (not retail) areas
6. **Rural Agriculture & Forestry Area** (teal) – Predominantly working forests & farmland, along with scattered residential and commercial (not retail) development

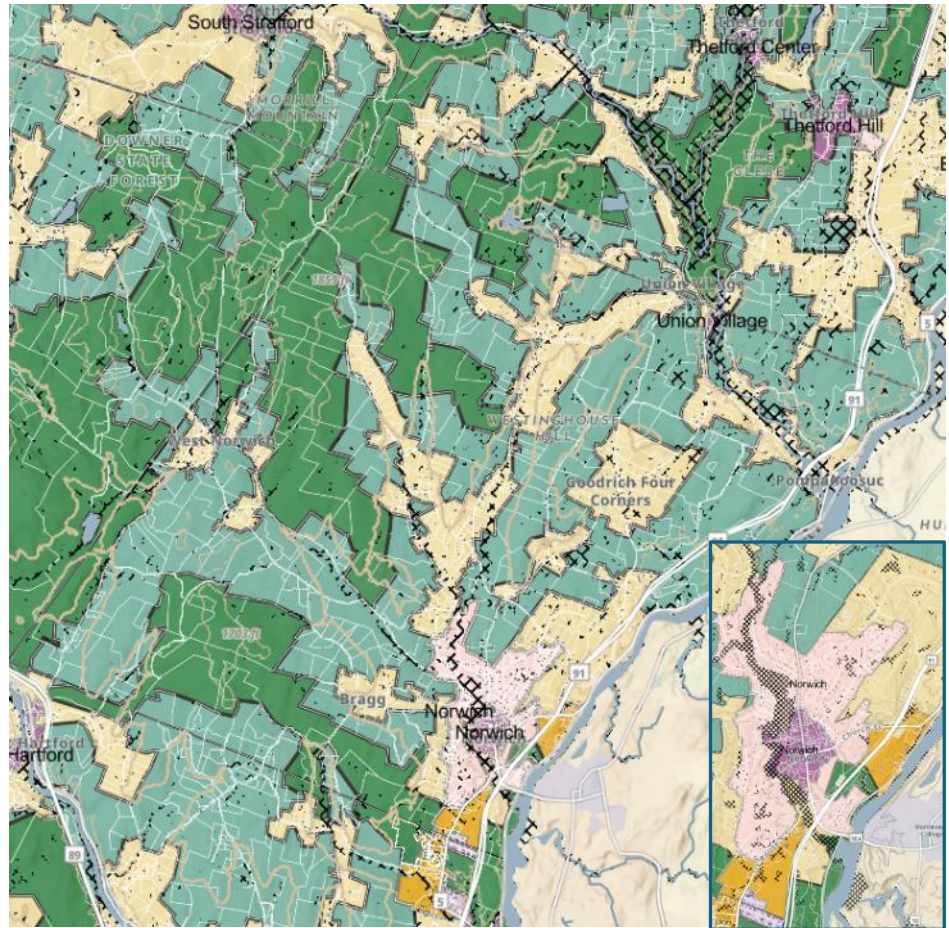


Figure 1 -- Draft 2026 TRORC Future Land Use Map (with inset of center of town)

7. **Rural Conservation Area** (dark green)– Areas of significant natural resources including connectivity/interior forest habitat blocks and wetlands. May include existing small residential, recreation, farming or working forest areas
8. **Enterprise Area** (fuchsia) – Industrial areas/mixed commercial development
9. **Resource-Based Recreation Area** (light green)– Major recreational areas
10. **Hamlets** (brown) – Historic settlement nodes that are mostly residential and not planned for future growth

We assume that Norwich would want to focus mainly on promoting missing-middle housing in the first four land use categories (Village Center (purple), Village Area (pink), Planned Growth (orchid) Area, and Transition Area (orange)).¹ We likely would also want to authorize the development of missing-middle housing in the Rural General (beige) area, the rural category most suited to residential development, though perhaps at a lower density. Missing-Middle Housing would also be appropriate in any mixed-use areas, so depending

¹ It does not appear that TRORC has designated any parts of Norwich as Planned Growth Areas. Given this, Norwich may want to consolidate the Planned Growth and Transition Areas into a single category for purposes of zoning districts.

on the land uses included in areas designated as Enterprise areas (fuchsia, category 8), that would also be a place to facilitate missing-middle housing. Depending on how the Town wants to treat hamlets (light brown, category 10), that might be another place to consider promoting this housing type; the draft TRORC map does not identify any hamlets in Norwich though there are a few areas in which the town may wish to use this designation.

By contrast, the town likely does not want to take steps to facilitate the development of missing middle housing in land use categories 6 (teal, Rural Agriculture & Forestry Area), 7 (dark green, Rural Conservation Area) and 9 (light green, Resource-Based Recreation Area) beyond the statutorily required duplexes and accessory dwelling units. While these areas comprise the majority of the land area of Norwich, they are not well suited for intensive development.

B. Authorize missing-middle housing types in appropriate zones

Once Norwich decides where to facilitate the development of missing-middle housing, the next step would be to authorize appropriate building typologies within those zones. Duplexes are already authorized in all zones, as required by state law. Within the zones deemed appropriate for missing-middle housing, one option would be to make triplexes and fourplexes a permitted use, but with the requirement that they go through site plan review under Section 5.03.

It would also be useful to allow small multifamily or cottage court clusters up to a certain size, such as 6 or 8 units, as a conditional use. Such developments must currently go through the PUD process. Allowing them to be developed as a conditional use without site plan review could make them simpler to develop. The inset picture illustrates a



Figure 2 -- Example of a cottage court

cottage court;² a number of towns have found it helpful to use a zoning overlay to authorize cottage courts.

These developments would also need to comply with minimum lot size and density requirements as discussed below. Multifamily buildings with more than the 6 or 8 units allowed as a conditional use would need to go through the PUD Process.

² This example comes from: <https://davidrobinsonblog.com/2019/04/cottage-courts-affordable-compatible-gentle-density-housing-in-worthington/>

C. Allow sufficient density to support missing-middle housing

To produce missing-middle housing, it is not enough just to authorize it. Additional steps are needed to make it economically feasible. Requiring eight acres to put in a single fourplex because the town requires two acres per unit is the kind of policy that makes development infeasible and promotes sprawl. We need a better approach.

Given the severe limitations that septic capacity puts on development, a case can be made for eliminating formal density limits and simply regulating height, setbacks, lot coverage etc., and letting people build to the extent that septic capacity exists. However, some residents may feel that this provides insufficient protection against large-scale development. An alternative is to provide caps on density that are less restrictive than current rules, even if many developments will not be able to build up to these limits due to limited septic capacity.

We present both alternatives here.

Alternative A: Remove minimum lot sizes and let the septic capacity determine how many units can be built on a parcel. Since Norwich does not have a public wastewater system, development on most parcels is constrained in any event by the site's wastewater capacity. Since septic capacity is already a very strong limitation on new development, under this approach, the town would not further regulate density.

Alternative B: Under this approach, the town would place limits on density, but those limits would be less restrictive than current density limits. In practice, developers would still be limited by what the septic capacity of a site allows, but the density limits would provide additional reassurance that development would not occur at a scale with which the town would be uncomfortable. For example, the following is an illustration of new rules that could promote missing middle housing. Please consider this a starting place for discussion, and not a final proposal.

	Minimum Lot Size (Maximum units per acre)			
	SF or duplex	Triplexes	Fourplexes	5+ Units
Village Center, Village Area, Planned Growth / Transition	20,000 SF (4 units/ac)	1 Acre (6 units/ac)	1.5 Acre (8 units/ac)	1.5 Acre (8 units/ac)
Enterprise	1 Acre (4 units/ac)	1 Acre (6 units/ac)	1.5 Acre (8 units/ac)	1.5 Acre (8 units/ac)
Rural General and Hamlet	1 Acre (2 units/ac)	2 Acre (3 units/ac)	2 Acre (4 units/ac)	3 Acre (4 units/ac)

20,000 Square feet is the minimum lot size under current zoning rules for Village Residential I and Village Business, so this illustration sticks with this policy in the village center and the adjoining village area and planned growth/transition areas for the currently authorized single-family and duplex homes. For buildings with three or more units, however, the illustrative policy increases the minimum lot size in recognition of the fact that sufficient land is needed for septic systems and to have a prospect for replacing a septic system when it reaches the end of its useful life.

While the proposed minimum lot size increases for structures with more units, the proposed maximum density also increases. The combination of the two policies would allow two structures of two to four units each – i.e., a duplex, triplex or fourplex – per acre. Larger structures would be authorized at eight units per acre.

Please remember that these are just the zoning limits. In reality, available septic capacity will limit density in most locations to a level below these maximums.

In this illustrative policy, the maximum density for rural general and hamlets is half that of the village center / areas and the minimum lot sizes are larger. This recognizes that development in these areas should be less intensive and more spaced out, while still allowing the use of missing-middle building typologies.

D. Review and adjust other regulations to ensure missing-middle housing is feasible and appropriate

Many other regulations affect the feasibility of development, including height, setback and off-street parking requirements. We haven't reviewed those in detail at this point, but wanted to flag that it would be useful to review these policies carefully as we are developing a new missing middle policy to ensure they do not inadvertently make development more difficult than it needs to be.

There may also be new policies we want to consider to regulate the form and feel of new development in ways that ensure it is appropriate for the location while preserving flexibility for new development. These include regulating the maximum footprint or lot coverage of a development or minimum amounts of open space.

E. Allow conversion of existing buildings to residential use

In addition to changing the maximum density rules, it would be useful in the Village Center, Village Area, and Planned Growth / Transition areas to permit the conversion of existing commercial and mixed-use buildings to residential use as a conditional use, irrespective of the minimum lot or density requirements applicable to new development. This would allow, for example, for upper-story housing in mixed residential/commercial buildings, or

full office-to-residential conversions. Of course, this would be subject to site-plan considerations including parking and building and fire code issues to ensure the development is safe as well as adequate water/wastewater capacity.

Since these conversions do not, in and of themselves, change the footprint of the building, we wouldn't want to necessarily limit the repurposing of the structures for housing. We may, however, want to limit major exterior expansion.

Next Steps

Discussion. The Affordable Housing Subcommittee would welcome an opportunity to discuss the policies proposed in this memo with the Planning Commission. This would provide an opportunity to ask questions and ensure the two bodies are on the same page heading into the town plan update process.

Timing. A key early decision relates to the timing of the zoning changes needed to implement these proposed policies. One option would be to move forward based on the language in the current town plan outlining the town's intent to expand the availability of missing-middle housing. A second option would be to socialize these proposed changes during the preparation of the new town plan and wait until the new town plan is in place to move forward. We assume the Planning Commission would prefer the latter approach, but please let us know if you would prefer to act sooner.

Drafting of Town Plan. If the Planning Commission accepts our recommendations to change the town's zoning to facilitate the development of missing middle housing, the policies proposed in this memo should inform both the Housing and Land Use Chapters of the Town Plan. This process will provide an opportunity to get public input on these proposed changes.

Revisions to Land Use Policies. Eventually the town's land use policies will need to be changed to implement the proposed changes and facilitate the development of missing middle housing. There will be additional opportunities for public input during this process.

Appendix – Missing Middle Housing Types

Stylized Graphic of missing middle housing types

This graphic, produced by the planning firm Opticos Design, is designed to illustrate the many different types of “missing middle” housing types that fall in between single-family and mid-rise multifamily housing. The style of the graphic is to depict one housing type next to the other to squeeze as many housing types as possible into a single illustration. The graphic is not meant to suggest that missing-middle housing needs to be placed this close together.

The Town will retain full control of the density at which missing middle housing is built in Norwich.



Figure 4 – Missing Middle Housing Illustration by Opticos Design

Photo Credits for Page 1 Photos

All but one of the page 1 photos come from a publicly-available presentation prepared by Utile for the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development in connection with the 802 Homes program.

https://outside.vermont.gov/agency/ACCD/ACCD_Web_Docs/CD/CPR/Planning-Your-Towns-Future/CPR-H4A-802-Homes-Feb-Workshop-Intro-Presentation.pdf

The Norwich Meadows photo comes from this website:

<https://norwichmeadowsvt.wordpress.com/galleries/> .

Norwich Village Master Plan – Public Participation Plan

Elevator Pitch/Project Introduction

The Town of Norwich is laying the foundation for future planning and development in the greater Village area through the creation of a cohesive Village Plan that will guide future planning through specific and measurable goals, strategies and actions. This plan will link the physical, natural, and social infrastructure of the Town so that these elements thrive as parts of an integrated system. The project process will include diverse community engagement to develop ideas that are publicly vetted and supported. Priority topic areas include, but are not limited to:

- Housing and Infrastructure
 - Infrastructure supports housing, business, and recreation goals
- Bike, Pedestrian, and Road Safety
 - Walking and biking in the village feels enjoyable and safe and can be an effective means of transportation to Village destinations.
- Community Building and Downtown Vibrancy
 - The historic Village feels like and serves as a vibrant community center.

The Norwich Master Plan Steering Committee engaged consulting firm DuBois & King to assist with this process.

For more information or to join the mailing list to receive regular project updates and invitations, please contact Town Planning Director, Steven True, at strue@norwich.vt.us.

Priority Goals

- Find achievable solutions to problems people care about in the village. Select a few and get them done. Demonstrate successes at solving resident's concerns.
- Create a long term plan, including but not limited to a capital plan, that prioritizes town activity and spending, placing individual projects within a holistic view.
- Develop a process for resident engagement and planning that becomes an ongoing tool, including for the 2028 town plan project.

City of

Montpelier

vermont

City Plan

2025

Energy

Implementation Plan

Strategies

EN.1: Continue the Capital Improvement Program		
The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a tool to forecast and budget for proper spending on maintenance and improvement on buildings and infrastructure. The City reviews its CIP annually to develop annual work plans based on funding and to project future projects. The City should continue to update with energy efficiency projects identified in the 2021 Montpelier Net Zero Energy Action Plan and other larger capital projects that have been identified.		
Priority : High	Implements Goal #1 	Program
Cost : High	Responsible Party : Sustainability & Facilities Coordinator	

EN.2: Continue the Policy of Requiring that Any New Future Municipal Facilities and Vehicles Be Net Zero		
Although no new municipal facilities are being proposed at this time, this plan recognizes that when new facilities are proposed and constructed, they should be Net Zero at the time of operation. This Net Zero policy should also extend to purchases of replacement vehicles identified in the 2021 Net Zero Energy Action Plan as they come up in the equipment plan as well.		
Priority : High	Implements Goal #1 	Policy
Cost : High	Responsible Party : City Council	

EN.4: Continue to Advance the Recreation Center Update		
The Barre Street Recreation Center uses over 5,000 gallons of heating oil annually. Significant weatherization improvements were needed and a Department of Energy grant was secured to cover a significant percentage of the project. This project will remove asbestos, lead, and other problem materials before weatherizing the building and replacing the furnace with an air-to-water heat pump system with a pellet boiler back-up.		
Priority : High	Implements Goals #1, #2  	Project
Cost : High	Responsible Party : Sustainability Coordinator	

EN.5: Initiate a Montpelier High School Wood Chip Boiler Project		
MHS is the single largest municipal user of fossil fuel. The School District should invest in conversion of the heating system at MMS to a non-fossil fuel alternative.		
Priority : High	Implements Goals #2 	Project
Cost : High	Responsible Party : Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools	

EN.6: Initiate a Montpelier Middle School Wood Chip Boiler Project		
MMS is the second largest municipal user of fossil fuel. The School District should invest in conversion of the heating system at MMS to a non-fossil fuel alternative.		
Priority : High	Implements Goal #2 	Project
Cost : High	Responsible Party : Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools	

EN.8: Initiate a Montpelier Water Plant Pellet Boiler Project		
The Water Plant is the third largest municipal user of fossil fuel. The 2021 Energy Action Plan identified that the city should pursue the installation of a pellet boiler for the facility.		
Priority : High	Implements Goal #2 	Project
Cost : High	Responsible Party : Sustainability Coordinator	

Aspiration

Montpelier will be a Net Zero City by 2030 for municipal operations and 2050 community wide.

Goals

- 

Reduce base energy use in schools and municipal buildings through efficiency and weatherization.
- 

Reduce fossil fuel use in schools and municipal facilities through conversion to non-fossil fuels and other measures.
- 

All vehicles used by schools and the municipality will be powered by renewable sources (electric or bio-fuels).
- 

Reduce base energy use in residential and commercial buildings through efficiency and weatherization.
- 

Reduce fossil fuel use in residential and commercial buildings through conversion to non-fossil fuels, increased renewable energy production, and other measures.
- 

All vehicles used on Montpelier will be powered by renewable sources (electric or bio-fuels).

EN.9: Purchase Offsets to Achieve Net Zero

Because the city cannot eliminate the use of all fossil fuels in its operations, the city will need to purchase carbon offsets in 2030 to make up the difference of any remaining fossil fuel use. The 2021 Montpelier Energy Action Plan has a comprehensive discussion of the subject.

Priority : High	Implements Goal #2, #3  	Program
Cost : High	Responsible Party : Sustainability Coordinator	

E.10: Continue the Capital Equipment Program

Similar to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) the Capital Equipment Plan (CEP) is a tool to forecast and budget for proper spending but in this case it targets vehicles and other capital equipment. The City reviews its CEP annually to make purchases based on funding and to project future purchases. The City should continue to use the CEP to purchase the City's fleet of vehicles consistent with the 2021 Energy Action Plan. This will include monitoring for emerging opportunities regarding heavy vehicles (Medium) and electrifying mid-range vehicles (Low priority).

Priority : High	Implements Goal #3 	Program
Cost : High	Responsible Party : Sustainability Coordinator	

EN.11: Expand District Heat System and Grow Customers

The City's District Heat Utility is an excellent means to replace a fossil fuel heating source with a renewable one. The city should continue to identify funding and policies to help new buildings connect to the system. This will help with the City's energy goals, resilience goals and to make the utility sustainable over the long term.

Priority : High	Implements Goal #5 	Program
Cost : High	Responsible Party : Sustainability Coordinator	

EN.12: Continue the Net Zero Revolving Loan Fund for City Improvements

The City established a Net Zero Revolving Loan Fund in 2018 to help fund energy efficiency projects in municipal buildings. This fund has been used to initiate projects such as LED lighting upgrades, window weatherization in City Hall, and sealing of overhead doors. The savings from completed projects are reinvested in the fund to support future projects.

Priority : Medium	Implements Goal #1 	Program
Cost : Low	Responsible Party : Sustainability Coordinator	

EN.13: Install New Electric Vehicle Charging Stations for Fleet Vehicles

It is anticipated that a number of vehicles will be replaced with electric vehicles in order to meet our Net Zero goals. This will affect such items as police cruisers, smaller utility trucks, and other cars. EV charging stations will be needed to charge municipal vehicles at municipal facilities when not in use.

Priority : High	Implements Goal #3 	Program
Cost : Medium	Responsible Party : Sustainability Coordinator	





Strategies

Seek GMPs support to analyze the city's current rate structure, to determine current and future electricity demand and costs at individual facilities where EVs are being considered, identify off-peak charging strategies, and coordinate installation of EV chargers.

EN.15: Develop a Plan for Switching to B20 for Heavy Vehicles

DPW staff should connect with peers who have already transitioned to B20 for their operations to discuss best practices and make recommendation for a transition plan for deployment in Montpelier.

EN.16: Amend and Continue to Administer the Unified Development Regulations (Zoning Bylaws)

The zoning bylaws regulate how land can be used and altered. Broadly, they help communities protect the environment and limit impacts on neighborhoods, public services, and infrastructure. Regarding the energy plan, the zoning bylaws have exemptions for roof solar and other devices to allow them without permits. The city has also voted to exempt installation of EV chargers in private houses, parking lots, and on street in order to facilitate their implementation. Regulations including zoning should continue to be reviewed periodically to ensure it accommodates new technologies.

EN.17: Initiate a DPW Garage Wood Pellet Boiler Project

The DPW garage is a large municipal user of fossil fuel. The 2021 Energy Action Plan identified that the city should pursue the installation of a pellet boiler for the facility.

EN.18: Install Cold Climate Air Source Heat Pumps at the DPW Maintenance Shops

The 2021 Energy Action Plan identified the installation of cold climate air source heat pumps at the DPW shops to displace some of the fossil fuels in those locations.

EN.19: Implement Program for Conversion to B20 for Heavy Vehicles

Once the plans have been developed for conversion to B20 and when the renewable diesel market makes financial sense, the city should begin to roll out the B20 conversion plan through the Capital Equipment Plan.

EN.20: Add Additional EV Chargers in Municipal Lots and On-street Parking Spaces

Montpelier already has a few EV chargers in municipal parking lots but the city will need to continue to add additional Level 2 and Level 3 changers to support tourists, workers and residents.

EN.21: Initiate a Project to Replace Backup Generators with Batteries

A majority of the electricity used by the city facilities is generated by the city's PV arrays and from the grid. A small amount of diesel is burned for emergency power at the police station, city hall, fire station, and water plant. There is now technology available to replace these generators with battery back up systems. This should be explored especially at the end of the useful lives of these systems.

EN.22: Develop a Detailed 2050 Net Zero Plan for Residential and Commercial Buildings and Vehicles

The City's second net zero aspiration is for the rest of Montpelier (not municipal) to become net zero by 2050. This will require a plan and action plan similar to the 2021 plan for municipal operations.

E.23: Initiate a Program for Small Scale Facility Conversions to Heat Pumps for Heat and Hot Water

These lower priority items, identified in the 2021 Energy Action Plan should be pursued after the largest contributors have been addressed.

EN.24: Develop a New Energy Efficiency Outreach Program

While it will be a few years before the city can invest in helping individuals with their homes and businesses, there are many programs by Efficiency Vermont and others that can benefit them. MEAC and the Sustainability Coordinator should work to educate the public about these opportunities.

EN.25: Continue the Home Energy Information Ordinance

The home energy information ordinance was adopted in 2022 to require sellers of properties to provide an energy profile to any prospective purchaser. The expectation is that buyers will have information about the efficiency of the building before purchasing and can compare to other properties they are considering to make an informed decision.

EN.26: Initiate a Program to Add Heat Pumps to Certain Facilities and Spaces

Heat pumps are a more efficient way to air condition smaller spaces and heat water for domestic use. The 2021 Energy Action Plan identifies a number of smaller projects to improve efficiency and eliminate use of fossil fuels.

An aerial photograph of a historic town, likely in the Adirondack region. The town is nestled at the base of a large, densely forested hill. In the foreground, a large brick church with a tall, dark steeple stands out. To its right, a large white building with a gabled roof is visible. The town is characterized by a mix of historic architecture, including brick and wooden buildings, and is surrounded by lush green trees. The sky is bright and clear.



City Plan 2025

Housing Implementation Plan

Strategies

HO.1: Continue to Implement the Country Club Road Actionable Plan			
In 2022 the City purchased the 138 acre former Elks Club Golf Course for purposes of promoting housing development and to build a new recreation and community center. The City has developed an actionable plan for the Country Club Road (CCR) property where new housing may be built to meet the high demand that exists today. The entire plan can be downloaded and viewed here: https://www.montpelier-vt.org/1296/Country-Club-Road-Site-Property-Developm This site could accommodate at least 300 units of housing although the exact number will be determined by the development process. For perspective, the city only added 143 housing units in the ten years between the 2010 and 2020 Censuses. This housing will likely be built by for-profit and non-profit entities over the coming years but it will require the city to extend the utilities, such as sewer and water, and to build out the road system.			
Priority : High	Implements Goals #1, #2, #4, #5, #6	☆☆☆☆☆	Project
Cost : High	Responsible Party : Planning Dept.		

HO.2: Amend the Overnight-Overflow Shelter Plan and Program			
For a number of years the City has supported Good Samaritan Haven in its operation of an overflow shelter in Montpelier. Most recently this was housed at the Country Club Road Site as a long-term temporary location. The City would now like to find a more permanent location which meets all health and safety requirements so a planning effort is underway to identify a place to house it. Once found, the city intends to continue to support Good Samaritan's operation of the facility.			
Priority : High	Implements Goal #5, #6	☆☆	Program
Cost : High	Responsible Party : City Manager		

HO.3: Amend and Continue to Administer the Unified Development Regulations (Zoning Bylaws)			
The zoning bylaws regulate how land and buildings can be used and altered. Broadly, they help communities protect the environment and limit impacts on neighborhood, public services, and infrastructure. Zoning regulations can have a profound impact on the ability to develop housing therefore it is critical that the rules are properly balanced to allow new housing while protecting against any negative impacts of that growth. Montpelier's Unified Development Regulations were significantly changed in 2018 and has since had a number of minor amendments to address issues and promote housing. Some of these changes include making housing projects permitted (i.e. administrative rather than needing a hearing) and adjusting dimensional standards so that most buildings, parcels, and uses are now conforming (i.e. the rules match what you see on the ground) which allows projects to be approved more efficiently. Densities have been increased to allow infill including a rule allowing six units on any parcel with access to sewer and water utilities. Parking requirements have been reduced and, in some places, eliminated. Finally, changes were made to treat congregate housing in a similar manner to dwelling units to allow for a broader variety of housing options. Dramatic changes should be made to the zoning to facilitate housing development. Topics for consideration should include shortening the subdivision process, eliminating smaller projects from major site plan, increasing height requirements, removing some application standards, and eliminating the shading requirements among others. The city should continue to monitor the rules to look for barriers to housing. One area where changes are needed is to the subdivision regulations where the city needs clearer rules on when sidewalks are required by the developer on their project as well as whether the developer should be responsible for extending sidewalks to their project, where warranted. The lack of clear rules has prevented more neighborhoods from being added to the growth center and therefore benefit from Act 250 exemptions which the program provides.			
Priority :High	Implements Goals: #1, #2, #3, #5, #6	☆☆☆☆☆	Permit
Cost : Medium	Responsible Party : Planning Dept.		

HO.4: Continue the Montpelier Accessory Dwelling Unit Program (MAD UP)			
A pilot program with VSHA was started in 2019 to provide assistance to property owners to add accessory apartments to single family dwellings. That pilot was very informative and showed a great deal of interest in adding ADUs in Montpelier. When the program ended, the housing committee decided to continue the program working with Downstreet Housing and Community Development using housing trust fund money and the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP).			
Priority : High	Implements Goals #1, #2	☆☆	Program
Cost : Medium	Responsible Party : Planning Dept		

Aspirations

- A) Montpelier will have an adequate supply of safe, resilient, and affordable housing that meets the needs of all current and future residents.**
- B) Montpelier will affirmatively further fair housing in order to protect all people from discrimination, promote economic opportunities, and create a more diverse, inclusive community.**

Goals

- 1 **Increase the number of homes in Montpelier by a minimum of 75 units per year.**
- 2 **Maintain a mix of housing types, sizes, occupancies, and costs.**
- 3 **Improve the safety, health, and climate resiliency of our homes.**
- 4 **Increase the number of homes that are universally accessible on the first floor.**
- 5 **Maintain the city's commitment to affirmatively furthering fair and accessible housing by focusing on the areas where needs are not currently met.**
- 6 **Increase support for homeowners, developers, and non-profit partners in the creation of the housing that would not otherwise be provided by the private market.**

HO.5: Renew Tax Increment Finance Program (TIF)

Tax Increment Finance (TIF) is a program of the state that allows the new tax revenue generated by a project to be used to pay for public improvements that are needed for the project. The City received TIF approval in 2018 to fund housing projects that may need utilities (sewer and water) or new public streets within the TIF District. The City withdrew from the program in 2022 for a number of reasons including the impacts of the Citywide reappraisal. The City should consider reapplying to use the program to support potential housing projects if a new district is appropriate or if the state begins to allow project-based TIFs.

Priority : High	Implements Goals: #1, #6	☆☆	Program
Cost : High	Responsible Party :City Manager's Office		

HO.6: Create a New Affordable Housing Project

For many years the City has worked with its housing partners to develop affordable housing projects including Pioneer Street Apartments, River Station, Frenchs Block, and most recently at the Montpelier Transit Center. Through the Housing Trust Fund, the City sets aside money to support new affordable housing projects. The City should sponsor at least one new housing project during the lifetime of this plan. In particular the City would like to identify a project that would help disadvantaged groups such as refugees, asylum seekers, group homes, Single Room Occupancies (SRO)s, persons reintegrating from incarceration, and the homeless.

Priority : High	Implements Goal: #5, #6	☆☆	Project
Cost : High	Responsible Party : Planning Dept.		

HO.7: Continue to Participate in the Growth Center Program and Expand the District as Appropriate

The Growth Center Program is a program of the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development which provides benefits to the municipality as well as private developers in order to target 50% of all development over a twenty year period within the Growth Center District. Montpelier has participated in this program since 2009 and has adopted a Growth Center District that covers most of the highest density zoning districts in the downtown area. The district will need to be expanded to include the Country Club Road site and remainder of Residential 9000 District.

Priority : High	Implements Goal: #1, #6	☆☆	Program
Cost : Low	Responsible Party : Planning Dept.		

HO.8: Continue to Administer and Enforce Building, Fire, and Other Health and Safety Codes

Montpelier enforces a number of codes to ensure projects are constructed and operated safely. The City has an agreement with the state Division of Fire Safety to enforce the state building code and fire and life safety code on all public buildings and has expanded that permitting program to single family homes as well. The City also enforces the state health code and other smaller ordinances including a public nuisance building.

Priority : High	Implements Goal #3	☆☆	Permit
Cost : Medium	Responsible Party : Building Inspector		

HO.9: Continue Automatic Sprinkler Requirements in Building Codes

The City of Montpelier added a sprinkler requirement to the building codes in 2007 that required automatic sprinklers to most new and substantially improved public buildings in the City. This did not include owner occupied dwellings but did include most other residential housing. This was done to reduce risks to life and property in the event of a fire. The ordinance was revised in 2018 to exempt two family structures as the cost of a sprinkler was identified as a barrier to small infill projects.

Priority :High	Implements Goals #3	☆☆	Permit
Cost : Low	Responsible Party : Building Inspector		

HO.10: Adopt a Fair Housing Policy

The Housing Task Force would like to formally adopt a policy that the City is committed to affirmatively furthering fair housing in the implementation of all its planning, permitting, programs, projects, and policies.

Priority : High	Implements Goals #5	☆☆	Policy
Cost : Low	Responsible Party :Housing Committee		





Strategies

The Designated Downtown Program is a program of the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development which, among other benefits, provides developers with tax credits for certain projects and special considerations in state permitting including less state jurisdiction, reduced fees, and presumed compliance with certain criteria in Act 250.

Priority : High	Implements Goals #1, #6  	Program
Cost : Low	Responsible Party : Montpelier Alive & Planning Dept.	

Priority : Medium	Implements Goal #5	Plan
Cost : Medium	Responsible Party : Housing Committee	

Priority : Medium	Implements Goals #1, #6		Program
Cost : Medium	Responsible Party : Planning Department		

Priority : Medium	Implements Goals #3, #5	Program
Cost : Medium	Responsible Party : Planning Department	

Priority : Low	Implements Goal #3	Program
Cost : High	Responsible Party : City Manager	

Priority : Low	Implements Goal #1	
Cost : Medium	Responsible Party : Planning Dept.	

Priority : Medium	Implements Goals #1, #6	Program
Cost : Medium	Responsible Party : Planning Department	

Priority : High	Implements Goals #6	Program
Cost : Medium	Responsible Party : Planning Department, Housing Committee	

Priority : Medium	Implements Goal #1	
Cost : Low	Responsible Party : Planning Dept.	

Priority : Medium	Implements Goal: #3	
Cost : Low	Responsible Party : Planning Department	

Priority : Low	Implements Goal #4	Program
Cost : Medium	Responsible Party : Planning Department	

Priority : Medium	Implements Goals #3, #5	Plan
Cost : Medium	Responsible Party : Housing Committee	

Priority : Low	Implements Goals #5, #6	Program
Cost : Medium	Responsible Party : Homelessness Task Force	

Priority : Low	Implements Goals #2, #5, #6	Policy
Cost : Low	Responsible Party : Housing Committee	

Priority : High	Implements Goal #1, #6	Program
Cost : Medium	Responsible Party : City Manager	