

Happy New Year and welcome to Smart Growth Vermont's January E-newsletter! This month, we're kicking off a series we've dubbed "Smart Growth: Fundamental Principles," aimed at increasing understanding of the principles behind our work. We're also highlighting Bristol, giving updates on our community work, recognizing our volunteers and members, and giving you the latest local and national news.

Like what you read in our e-newsletter? [Let us know](#). Better yet, support this publication and our work in Vermont communities by becoming a sustaining member. **Find out more.**

QUICK LINKS

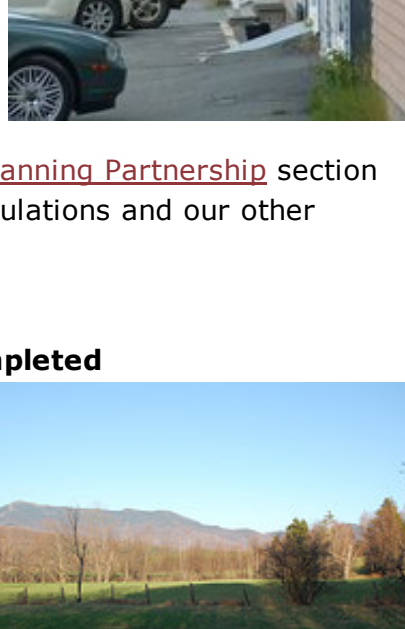
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Community Planning Partnership Update

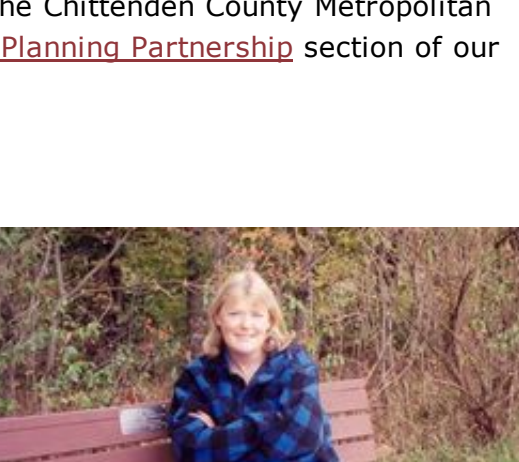
Danville Passes New Village Zoning

On December 3rd the Danville Select Board passed updated zoning regulations for Danville Village and the surrounding area. Smart Growth Vermont has worked with the Planning Commission since early 2008, developing four new zoning districts around the Village that contain standards that encourage infill and development but ensure that new projects fit the historic character of the Village. Through surveys, focus groups and public meetings, residents of Danville shared their thoughts on various drafts and the final standards reflect the community's values and Town Plan goals. Visit the [Community Planning Partnership](#) section of our website for more information on the new regulations and our other project with [Danville](#).



Essex and Jericho Scenic View Assessment Completed

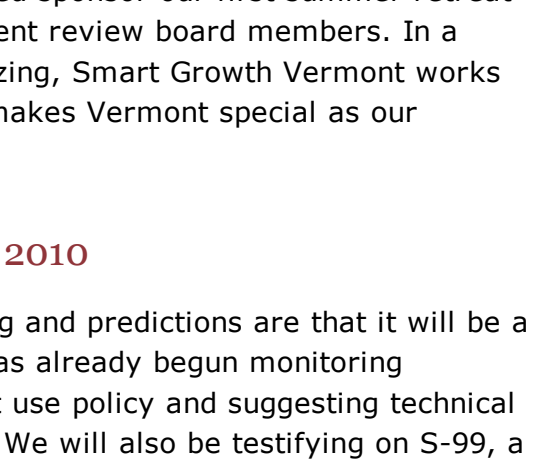
This summer and fall, almost two dozen volunteers were on the roads of Essex and Jericho, taking photos and assessing their scenic views. We presented the results of their hard work to the Essex and Jericho Planning Commissions in mid-December along with a range of regulatory, non-regulatory and conservation options to protect scenic views from further degradation. Now that the assessments are complete, we will work with the towns to develop a Scenic Resource Conservation Plan and draft language to implement it. To learn more about the project and our partners - the Towns of Essex and Jericho, the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and the Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization, visit the [Community Planning Partnership](#) section of our website.



Member Spotlight

Peg Elmer, Associate Director, Land Use Institute, Vermont Law School

Smart Growth Vermont has been outstanding at drawing all sides of a community together - whether that community is the whole state or at the municipal level - to build consensus on difficult land use issues. Illustrating its effectiveness as a team player in a small state with limited resources, Smart Growth Vermont partnered with the Vermont Law School's Land Use Institute and asked professors and students to help develop content on land use law for Smart Growth's [Community Planning Toolbox](#). Smart Growth Vermont also helped sponsor our first summer retreat for local volunteer planning and development review board members. In a complex topic area that is too often polarizing, Smart Growth Vermont works overtime to unite us in maintaining what makes Vermont special as our communities grow and change.



Legislative Session in Full Swing for 2010

The [2010 Legislative session](#) is in full swing and predictions are that it will be a challenging one. Smart Growth Vermont has already begun monitoring discussions on modifications to the current use policy and suggesting technical corrections to the growth center program. We will also be testifying on S-99, a bill designed to provide clarity to Act 250 criteria dealing with strip development and ensuring transportation options are included in major development projects. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and watch for our Legislative Alerts to stay abreast of the issue.

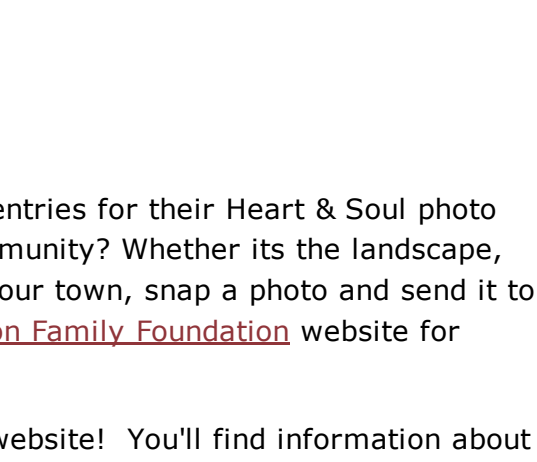
Volunteer Spotlight: Samantha Lederfine Paskal

Sam began volunteering for Smart Growth Vermont in September 2009, entering data for our Indicators of Downtown Health program, helping around the office and contributing to the monthly e-newsletter.

Sam volunteers for Smart Growth Vermont because she has witnessed the power of small communities, both in Vermont and abroad, to work together to affect change. Sam believes that sprawl and communities that are dependent on cars have a negative influence on social capital.

A recent graduate of the University of Vermont's Community Development and Applied Economics (CDAE) department, Sam also volunteers for the Burlington Food Council and is a strong supporter of the local food movement. In her future professional endeavors, she wants to be able to help others to succeed with their own social enterprise ventures.

We are grateful to have a group of dedicated and talented volunteers, including our Board members. Thanks to everyone who contributes to Smart Growth Vermont's mission!



UPCOMING EVENTS

The Orton Family Foundation is accepting entries for their Heart & Soul photo contest. What do you love about your community? Whether its the landscape, an annual event, or a gathering space in your town, snap a photo and send it to the Orton Family Foundation. Visit the [Orton Family Foundation](#) website for more information.

Also, check out [Upcoming Events](#) on our website! You'll find information about conferences, lectures and presentations on a wide variety of topics.

Smart Growth in Action: Fundamental Principles

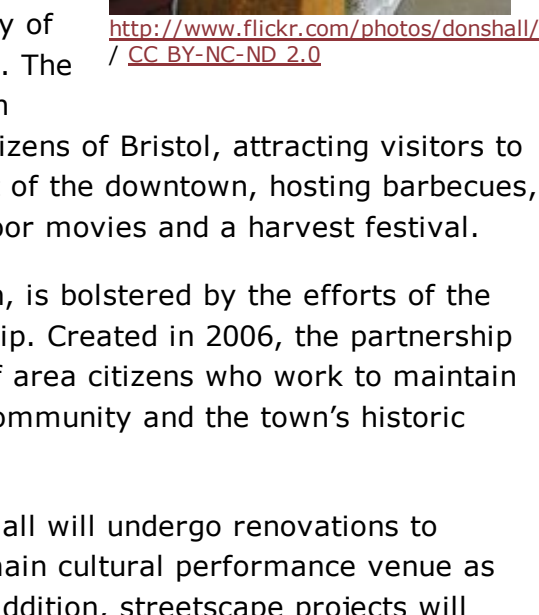
Smart Growth Vermont is kicking off the New Year with a series on the principles of smart growth, and we're starting with: Plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.

Our ancestors had it right. Vermont's traditional settlement pattern of clustering homes and services close together is sustainable and practical, allows for greater mobility options and nurtures a sense of community. The key to incorporating this principle is how we use our land.

Instead of building at the edges of our towns or cities on open land, we should first look to existing open or undeveloped parcels within our downtowns and village centers. Abandoned buildings can be given new life with thoughtful renovation. Infill properties can become homes, business and public facilities with the right design. With modifications to zoning regulations, towns can encourage new homes in their centers by decreasing their minimum lot sizes. These are a few of the many ways to utilize the land to maintain traditional settlement patterns.

One key outcome to concentrating our growth and development in our centers is protection of our open and working landscape. Updated town plans and bylaws are key to how we use the land. Careful consideration of where we build must be at the center of our planning decisions. Revised regulations that clearly define where growth should occur are crucial to the planning process. And the key to these revisions is active citizen participation. Ask questions. Attend hearings and meetings. Be a catalyst in your town.

Learn more about this and other smart growth principles on our [website](#).



Pollard Block, Proctorsville Green -- Credit Marie Claire Carroll

Community Spotlight: Bristol

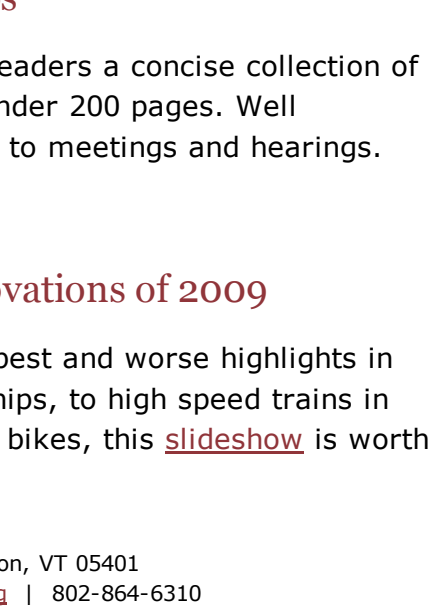
Surrounded by woodlands and located at the base of the Green Mountains, Bristol is home to roughly 3,800 friends and neighbors. Bristol boasts abundant natural beauty with extensive recreational opportunities, not to mention the numerous annual festivals. Originally named Pocock, in honor of a distinguished English admiral, they changed the name in 1789. But the admiral lives on in the annual Pocock Rocks Music Festival and Street Fair.

Downtown Bristol is recognized as a National Historic District and is home to a variety of shops, homes, services and restaurants. The one and a half acre town green plays an integral role in bringing together the citizens of Bristol, attracting visitors to the community, and is an essential part of the downtown, hosting barbecues, band concerts, a farmers market, outdoor movies and a harvest festival.

The heart of Bristol, its lively downtown, is bolstered by the efforts of the Bristol Downtown Community Partnership. Created in 2006, the partnership is a nonprofit organization comprised of area citizens who work to maintain the vitality of the downtown business community and the town's historic character.

This year, Bristol's 125 year old Holly Hall will undergo renovations to continue to serve as the community's main cultural performance venue as well as home to the Town's offices. In addition, streetscape projects will enhance the downtown area known as Prince Street Lane.

The Bristol Planning Commission recently re-wrote their town plan, with help from Smart Growth Vermont, and citizens will vote to pass it during Town Meeting in March. Learn more about the updated Town Plan and current project to re-evaluate the town's zoning and bylaws in the [Community Planning Partnership](#) section of our website.



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VERMONT NEWS

Great Ice Returns to Grand Isle

Mark your calendars for the annual Great Ice in Grand Isle! The first three weekends in February may be cold, but those Islanders know how to celebrate. There will be plenty of fun for all ages, from skating, snowshoeing and nordic skiing, to a bonfire, art exhibits, ice golf and the Frozen Chosen Regatta. And, if that's not enough to get you out, check out the [event schedule](#) for much more! Break out of the winter blues by enjoying what the cold has to offer!



Growing an Employee Owned Company

Vermont-based Gardener's Supply Company recently became wholly employee owned. Since 1987, the founder, Will Raap, has been selling stock to employees through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). An ESOP allows every employee to "have a piece of the pie" by sharing in ownership and company profits. And now that investment will pay off for the business and the community. [Read more.](#)



NATIONAL NEWS

Smart Growth Planning at Your Fingertips

A new book, *The Smart Growth Manual*, offers readers a concise collection of planning, policy and architectural principles in under 200 pages. Well illustrated, this book can easily be carried along to meetings and hearings. [Check it out!](#)

The Best and Worst Transportation Innovations of 2009

Treehugger magazine offers a slideshow of the best and worst highlights in transportation for 2009. From polluting cargo ships, to high speed trains in China, solar paneled boats and electric powered bikes, this [slideshow](#) is worth checking out.