

CONNECT...

Communities, People and the Land

Vermont's economic, social and environmental well-being is grounded in our cultural and economic heritage. This heritage created and maintained the state's historic landscape of compact cities and villages surrounded by working farms and forests. But this landscape is in jeopardy. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Vermont's rural communities are absorbing 40% of the state's population growth, resulting in the loss of valuable farmland, forest and wildlife habitat.

For Vermont to grow and thrive we need to carefully integrate growth, environmental protection and economic opportunities into our local and state planning framework. This will require the participation of citizens, local and state officials, developers, business leaders and non-profit organizations.

Our future depends on careful analysis, dialogue, cooperation and leadership.

Smart Growth Vermont facilitates that analysis, dialogue and public engagement. We do this on-the-ground at the community level, where we provide local leaders with the resources they need to make wise land use decisions, and at the state level, where we help guide the development of sound land-use legislation.

Our goal is to encourage development that revitalizes neighborhoods, strengthens downtowns and village centers, protects farmland and open space, keeps housing affordable, and provides more transportation choices. This is development that is good for the economy, community and the environment.

SMART GROWTH...

- ★ Reduces energy use and harmful greenhouse gas emissions
- ★ Creates a range of housing opportunities and choices
- ★ Enables a mix of land uses
- ★ Preserves open space, farmland, forests and other critical environmental areas
- ★ Provides a variety of transportation choices
- ★ Creates opportunities for walking, bicycling, and other recreation
- ★ Takes advantage of compact building design
- ★ Encourages community and stakeholder collaboration
- ★ Fosters distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- ★ Makes development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective
- ★ Strengthens existing communities



Design: Place Creative Company



SMART GROWTH *in Vermont*



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INVEST...

In Vibrant Downtowns

Our downtowns are our lifeblood. Neglected for many years, there is now a resurgence, thanks to the Downtown Tax Credit program, of redevelopment and renovation of existing downtown space that brings it back to life. Through a partnership of developers, realtors and non-profit housing organizations, Burlington's Banknorth Block has been revitalized and a brownfield site redeveloped. A landmark factory was restored and converted to condos, two historic homes converted to apartments, and new construction adds permanently

affordable apartments as well as market-rate rental units combined with office space. This is all within easy walking distance of bus routes, jobs, shops, schools and Burlington's waterfront.

Barre's granite industry, in decline for years, has left behind several hulking granite sheds. ReSOURCE North's creative reuse of one of these sheds is turning a brownfield into a community resource. Not only will the energy-efficient retrofit provide space for community residents to purchase recycled goods and materials, it also extends their social enterprise by providing space for a training program to help lower-income residents develop skills and become self-sufficient. The

site is easily accessible by foot, bike, car and public transportation.

What happens to a strip mall when retail operations abandon it? In Winooski's case, it is reborn as the O'Brien Community Center. The Center provides space for retail businesses as well as social service organizations, health practitioners and a YMCA. Residents come to the Center for educational and vocational training and to use the commercial kitchen to start up a new business.



Left: ReSOURCE North, Barre



Right: Winooski's O'Brien Community Center

REVITALIZE...

Village Centers

Many small Vermont towns are losing their sense of community as their village stores close and post offices move to the outskirts of town. In Proctorsville's case, this trend was exacerbated by a devastating fire that left a burnt out mill site. This area became the focus of a community strategy to re-energize the village center through mixed-use development which kept a key anchor – the post office – in the village. The project added affordable homes and gave historic buildings new lives as housing and shops, all within a short walk to a grocery store, churches, the school and library, and good jobs within five miles of the village center.

When your village's main economic engine is a world-class ski resort, appearances count. Stowe's Lower Village recognized the importance of maintaining and improving the scenic vistas and adding commercial space and jobs to enhance this gateway to the main village. The South Main Street Business Center project combined new construction, historic renovation, land preservation and the state's first river preservation, resulting in new space for several companies and creation of six jobs.

Proctorsville Green Revitalization



PLAN...

for the Future of Our Communities

Good land use starts with strong plans that build on our special landscape. The Finney Crossing at Tafts Corners plan in Williston has the potential to turn a commercial center into a neighborhood. The proposed development will result in a compact, mixed-use community with single- and multi-family homes integrated with shops and offices. The extensive sidewalk network and multiple public outdoor spaces put people at the center of the design.

One way to ensure working landscapes remain viable is to encourage village-

centered plans. The 2009 Calais Town Plan establishes a framework for their zoning and for citizen participation to protect both their rural district, revitalize the village, encourage food production, protect open space, provide low and moderate income homes, and increase transportation options to reduce the need to travel for work and shopping.

Hartford's White River Junction Revitalization Plan maintains the character and scale that make historic White River Junction unique. Proposed elements include: building in available



Downtown White River Junction

vacant space; sidewalks, street lights, crosswalks, a river walk/bike path and bike racks to reduce the number of cars in the downtown; higher density housing options; and street trees and other green ways to control run-off from pavement and roofs.

CREATE...

Healthy Neighborhoods



Burlington Cohousing Kitchen



Champlain Valley Cohousing



Second Branch Homes East Randolph

Building more homes in a way that respects our state's character and environment will not only ease Vermont's current housing shortage, but provide economic benefits. In today's market, almost half of Vermont's households cannot afford a median priced home or today's Fair Market Rent. Recent developments, such as Second Branch Homes in East Randolph, are working to offset this shortage by providing energy-efficient single family homes designed to be affordable. These

homes are clustered in the village and within easy walking distance of the general store, post office, community hall, fire station, church and a farm equipment and sales service center.

Vermont's growing cohousing movement provides an alternative to traditional homes in rural, village-centered and urban settings. Burlington Cohousing's East Village is a vibrant urban infill neighborhood designed to be multi-cultural and multi-generational. Putney Commons

provides an example of the density called for in the Putney Town Plan, with six condominiums clustered on a brownfield close to the food coop, health practitioners, library, restaurants and various other businesses.

Champlain Valley Cohousing combines attached and single-family homes around a common green with conservation of 118 acres of farmland and forest.