

HOW DO WE USE CIRCULATION?

Becoming aware of circulatory patterns is useful in understanding how the places we live function and how we rely on that functionality. It is helpful to see this circulatory system as a network of veins and arteries as we engage in public discussions about topics such as district heating from a wood-chip plant, solar power on the rooftop of a school, raingardens along neighborhood streets to mitigate stormwater runoff, and roundabouts to smooth out traffic congestion.

RECOMMENDED IDEAS AND PRACTICES

- Implement traffic calming or “slow roads” with interventions, such as a street trees, bike lanes, parking bump-outs, narrower road widths, roundabouts and road-sharing.
- Develop an intermodal transportation system that brings the network of vehicles, trains, light rail, bikes, pedestrians, boats, and airplanes together in coordinated hubs and lines.
- Define critical routes and paths for important community functions and activities—from the daily routes to annual festivities, and from common market places to famous landmarks.
- Define visual corridors (historic, aesthetic) and maintain and protect them to encourage appropriate-scale development and infrastructure.
- Define wildlife corridors (along streams, waterways, ridgelines) and maintain and protect them to encourage the flow of natural systems through the community.
- Provide opportunities for the intersection of natural and human activities so that events, such as the cleaning-up of a shoreline and subsequent building of a riverside picnic shelter and canoe access can occur.



New pedestrian crosswalk at busy intersection, Burlington, VT.

FIVE PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY DESIGN

The Vermont Design Institute has developed Five Principles of Community Design based on spatial forms, patterns, and design concepts observed and used over the course of their work.

PREMISES:

- * Community design is a collaborative planning process with the immediate goal of improving the quality of life for all community members of the ecosystem—from the smallest insects to us humans, and from, the waterways to the skies above.
- * Effective community design creates economic opportunities for local residents at different scales of interest—from global connections to bioregional needs and immediate solutions.
- * Sustainable communities depend on alternative forms of energy and transportation.
- * Sustainable lifestyles include changing our daily patterns, consumption habits, and production technologies to accommodate “closing the loop” and living with a no-waste policy.
- * Sustainable community landscapes allow for protection of open space, regeneration of native vegetation, stormwater mitigation, increased green space, local food production at various scales, and sensitivity to public-private zones.
- * Successful community design increases community knowledge of local history, cultural landscape, and sacred ground.

ASSUMPTIONS:

- * We need to be re-constructing our patterns of habitation, transportation, energy, water, waste, and food systems.
- * We believe individual empowerment and reconnection to place leads to transformation and healing for Earth.
- * People do care and have an amazing strength of vision if given the chance to be heard.