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Grant Basics Series
Before the Grant

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Vermont League of Cities and Towns

VLCT's Municipal Operations Support Team

Running a Vermont Municipality is Complicated. We Can Help You Uncomplicate It.

Find us: https://www.vlct.org/municipal-operations-support

Contact us: info@vlct.org or Ask A Question*

Today's Topics

- Picking the "Right" Project

- Understanding Roles

- Working as a Team

- Assessing Capacity

- Understanding Grant Readiness

The recorded training will be posted in the VLCT Resource Library at https://www.vlct.org/resource-library

Picking the "Right" Project
What Funders Want

Funders want to know:

- How has the community identified its needs?

- How were priorities set?
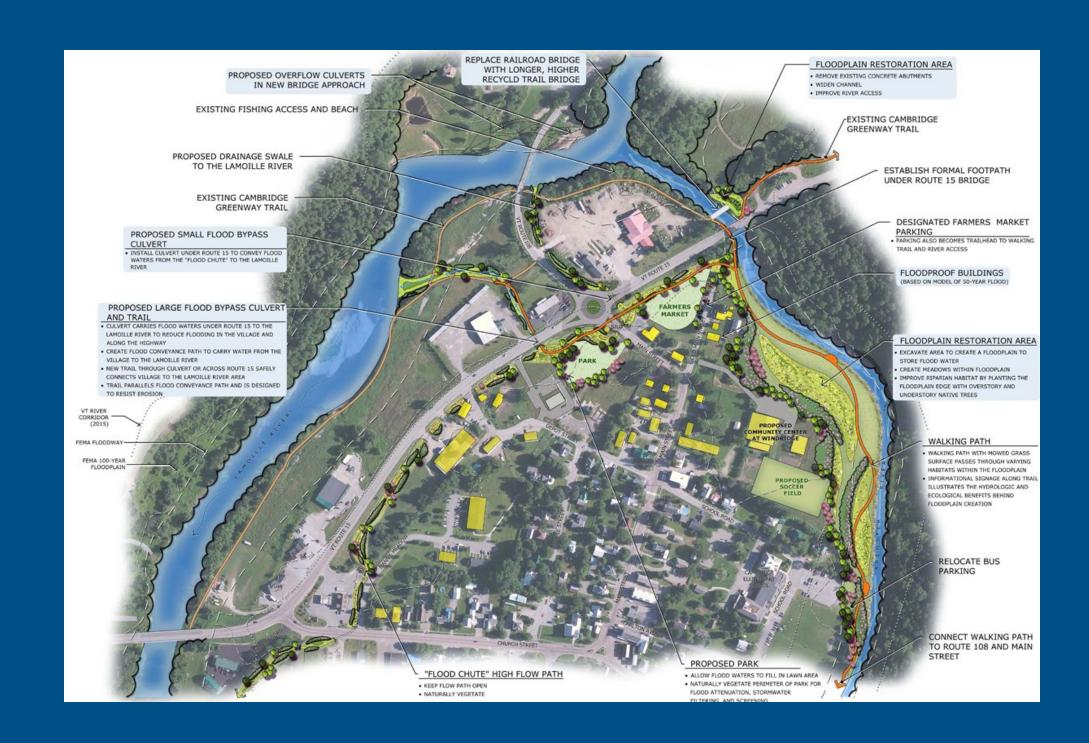
- Who was (and wasn't) engaged, and how?

Funders look for more than a good idea.

They want well-developed projects.
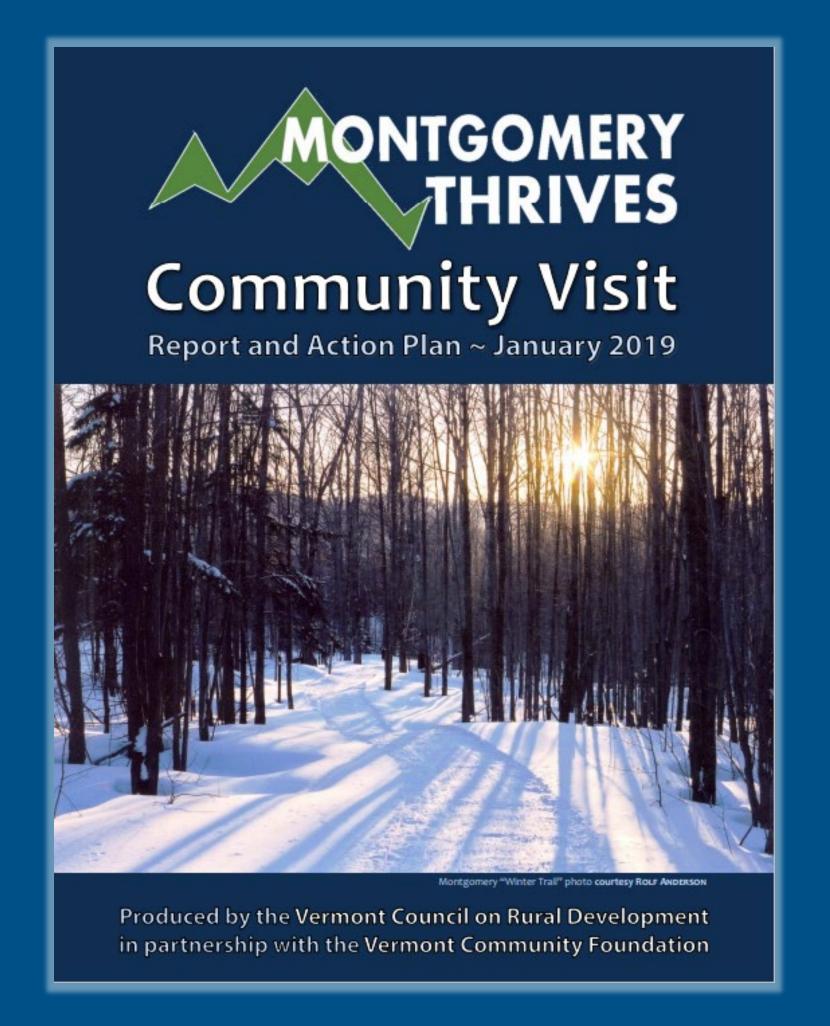
Picking the "Right" Project
Identifying Needs and Setting Priorities

Jeffersonville Visual Master Plan

Picking the "Right" Project
Identifying Needs and Setting Priorities

**Berlin Town Center and
Capital Improvement Plan**

What Success Looks Like

Common threads:

- The community generates ideas
- Someone (small group/outside person) helps focus and frame the ideas
- The community sets priorities
- Someone is assigned to transition the concept into a project

Understanding Roles

Understanding Roles
Accountability vs. Responsibility
(There is a difference)

Responsibility

- Responsible for completing a task in the larger activity
- "The Doer"
- Assigned to do the work
- Entrusted with the task
- Develops task and makes it happen
- Responsible to the person/entity that is accountable
- Facilitates, coordinates, and clarifies

Accountability

- Accountable for ensuring each task in the larger activity is completed to the required standard
- "Where the buck stops"
- Makes the final decision (sign-off) about the work
- Has the power/authority to say "yes" or "no"
- Has ultimate ownership of the activity
- Liable for any faults
- Directs, validates, approves

Understanding Roles
Broader Accountability

Using public money involves accountability to:

- Beneficiaries - your residents and local partners

- Funders - State and federal entities that will award funds

- Taxpayers - Here, there and everywhere – most often grant funds are the public's money

Be a good steward.

Understanding Roles
Accountability & Responsibility

- Who is responsible for grant identification?
- Who is authorized to apply for grants on the municipality's behalf?
- Who is authorized to commit municipal resources?
- Who holds/keeps the passwords?
- Who signs the grant application?
- Who tracks and ensures compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant (the regulations)?
- Who keeps grant-related records?
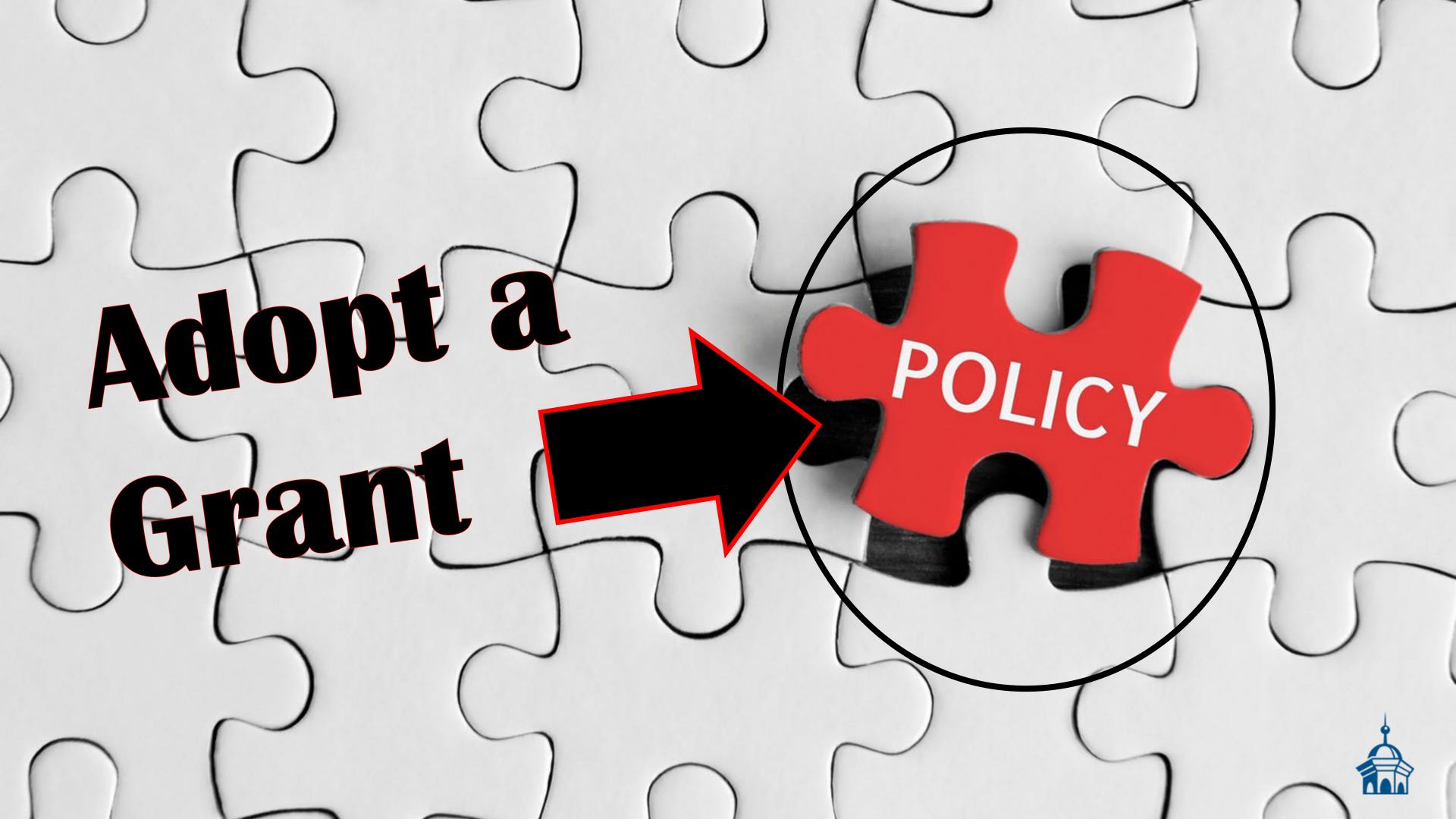- If awarded, who is authorized to enter into a grant agreement?

Understanding Roles
Accountability & Responsibility

Who decides:

- Is the grant strategically aligned with municipal goals and plans?
- Are municipal resources (human and financial) sufficient to support the application?
- Who analyzes grant match, audit costs, and administrative costs?
- What policies and procedures are required for most grants?
- Can the financial management system track and manage the grant funds and match? Who maintains this system?

So many questions!

What's the best way
to get everyone on
the same page?

Adopt a Grant → POLICY

Understanding Roles
Communication is Essential

Talk with local officials early and often:

- Treasurer or finance staff – financial reports
- Clerk – public records management
- Listers – land and property transactions
- Highway or Public Works Supervisor – road closures, resource needs and impacts, etc.
- Zoning Administrator – zoning compliance

Communicate early and often.

Understanding Roles
Communication is Essential

Residents are your biggest stakeholder.

What is your plan for engaging them?

Understanding Roles
Working as a Team

Key grant roles:

- Authorized agent

- Grant writer

- Finance manager

- Grant administrator

- Project implementer

One person might hold multiple roles, or one role might be fulfilled by multiple people.

Assessing Capacity
Do You Have It?

Grants require capacity to:

- Research and identify grant opportunities
- Write applications
- Administer an award
- Manage the grant-funded project
- Maintain constructed facilities and equipment
- Replace facilities and equipment at lifecycle end

Take time out to assess your capacity.

Assessing Capacity
Filling Gaps

Bridge your capacity gap:

- Use volunteers

- Hire or share staff

- Use a service provider

- Hire a consultant

CAPACITY

Be Ready To Go
Understanding Grant Readiness

Prepare before you apply

- Renew <u>Sam.gov</u> registration annually*
- Register in application portals
- Talk to funders (build relationships)
- Learn about grant requirements and how grants work
- Set up systems (financial, policies, tracking)
- Plan for match funds
- Get projects on <u>priority lists</u>

*VLCT Web Resource: <u>Answers to Sam.gov Frequently Asked Questions</u>

Final thoughts

Have questions?

LET US KNOW!

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