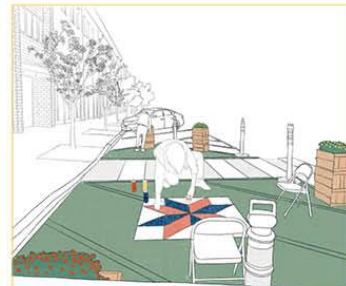
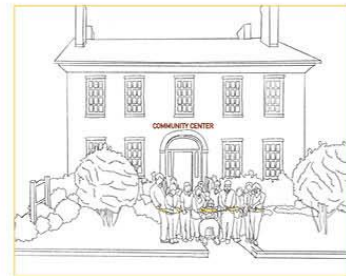
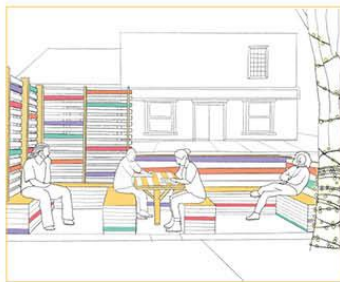


Better Places Application

December 2020



Applications due January 22, 2021

Vermont Community Foundation | Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development
Vermont Arts Council | Preservation Trust of Vermont | National Life Group Foundation

Program Overview

The Better Places program provides “placemaking” grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 that improve the vitality of [state designated downtowns, village centers, new town centers, or neighborhood development areas](#). The Vermont Community Foundation, Department of Housing and Community Development, Vermont Arts Council, National Life Group Foundation, Preservation Trust of Vermont, and the Better Place Partners are collaborating to launch the Better Places pilot grant program.

Program Timeline

- Notice of funds – December 9, 2020
- **Grants Due – on January 22, 2021 at 4pm**
- Application review period – until February 12, 2021
- Grant Awards announcement – week of February 15, 2021
- Project completed – August 31, 2021

Instructions

Read the [Better Places Program Guidelines](#) to ensure the project is eligible for grant funding and for additional information about program requirements. All applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Richard Amore (Richard.Amore@vermont.gov) to discuss project ideas before starting an application.

Grant Application Package

A complete grant application package shall include the following documents:

- 1.) **Grant Application Form** (12-page limit) – Complete application form below
- 2.) **Site Control documentation** (1 page) – Resolution or a signed legally binding agreement authorizing grant use from the owner of the project location (i.e., one of the following - municipal owned property with selectboard or city council approval, private lease or ownership of the property or building, or MOU granting permission from the property owner, etc.).
- 3.) **Fiscal sponsorship agreement** (1 page) – If applicable, for community groups who are using a fiscal sponsor
- 4.) **Project Area Map** (1 map) – Include a clearly annotated map that delineates the project area
- 5.) **Photographs** (1-3 pages) – Include photographs of the project area showing key features and conditions
- 6.) **Appendices** (8-page limit) – To include additional supporting documents: letters of support; relevant previous planning studies and/or projects, project site plans or illustrations, local volunteer or community initiatives, capital projects, implementation and revitalization efforts that have occurred or are planned in the future in relation to this project

2021 Grant Application Form

Project Overview

Municipality or Nonprofit Organization Name
Town of Northfield
Project Name
The “Common” Denominator: Revitalizing Northfield’s Public Green
Amount of Grant Funds Requested
\$20,000
Total Project Cost
\$20,000
Project Site Ownership – please check the appropriate box below. Municipal Owned <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit owned <input type="checkbox"/> or Privately Owned <input type="checkbox"/>

Primary Contact

Local project manager (name and title)	
Jon Ignatowski – Economic Development Director	
Mailing address	
51 South Main Street, Northfield, VT 05663	
Phone	Email address
802-485-9835	jignatowski@northfield.vt.us

Fiscal Information

Accounting System (CHECK ONE)
AUTOMATED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MANUAL <input type="checkbox"/> COMBINATION <input type="checkbox"/>
EIN/TAX ID number
03-6000607

Local or State Permits

Most projects require some type of local or state approval or permit. For projects proposed in the State (VTrans) ROW, applicants must provide a letter of support or similar communication from their applicable [VTrans District Office](#) demonstrating that the district is aware of and in support of the proposed project, as well as communication from the [VTrans Permitting Services](#) unit demonstrating where the applicant stands in the highway access permit, also called a Section 1111 permit, which is required by State Statute for all work within the State Highway Right-of-Way. In addition, the project will need to be in compliance with [VTrans demonstration projects guidance document](#), application, and permitting process.

Please list any permits and/or approvals required for your project, their status, and when they will be approved. [150-word max]

The Town Manager of Northfield, Jeff Schulz, has provided a letter approving the use of the Common and nearby lamp poles for placemaking project elements detailed in this application.

Project Description

Concisely describe the project and explain the project's expected outcomes. [100-word max]

This project will revitalize Northfield's Common, its signature public space, through the provision of attractive lighting, moveable furniture, street banners, public art, and Covid-safety mechanisms. These projects will increase outdoor dining spaces, extend the hours of the Farmers Market, provide Covid-safe gathering areas, install ADA friendly furniture, and significantly increase the attractiveness and beauty of the Common. Public art will engage the community in beautifying common spaces, instilling a sense of unity and civic pride. Ultimately, these projects will turn an under-utilized public space into a destination, a benefit to both the Town and visitors.

Project Location

Describe the project's location, ownership and site control, site conditions, and why this location was selected. Please include site maps or site plans, illustrations, and images to illustrate the project's location in the appendices to the application. [300-word max]

The Common is located in the commercial heart of Northfield, bordered by Wall St. and Depot Square. The Common has been a fixture of Northfield since its earliest years, featuring a historic fountain, a monument, and shade trees. The Town of Northfield owns and maintains the Common, and has approved the use of the space for the projects detailed in this application. This location was selected due its historic and current value as a civic space. The Common is currently home to the weekly Northfield Farmers Market and the annual Labor Day festival. Additionally, given the Common's proximity to local businesses, including a handful of eateries, this public space is integral to the success and growth of the local economy. While the Common and its immediate environment serve an essential public purpose, it is underutilized considering its potential. Seating is sparse, lighting is inadequate, and the existing furniture is not friendly to those with disabilities. As a locus of the community, it falls short of commanding a presence, of exuding the spirit that knits Northfield together. Additionally, the Covid-19 pandemic has increased demand for outdoor, public areas, and the Common is poorly equipped to handle this increased use. Thus, the Common was the obvious candidate for this grant since investments to this space will benefit citizens of all ages and abilities, will further the mission of the Farmers Market, will support local businesses, and enhance community engagement and identity. As we emerge from the dark days of Covid-19, the Common will be a beacon, inviting the public back into their cherished spaces, back into their beloved community.

Award Criteria

Applications may receive a total of 100 points based on an applicant's responses to five (1-5) required criteria.

1. Project Purpose, Need, and Impact (25 points)

a. Project Purpose and Community Need (10 points)

Explain the project's purpose, relationship to COVID recovery efforts, and the community need that the project will address. [300-word max]

The purpose of this project is to make targeted investments that will increase the usefulness and meaning of the Common to all community members, organizations, and nearby businesses. The elements of this project were specifically selected to instill a sense of community inclusivity and engagement, to evidence the spirit that defines Northfield, to increase access to local foods, to promote multigenerational and accessible use of the Common, to provide a space where people can reconnect during and after the pandemic, and to support local businesses near the Common.

This project has strong a relationship to COVID Recovery Efforts. There are five eateries near the Common, none of which have outdoor seating. Increasing Covid-safe outdoor seating on the Common will assist businesses as they attempt to recover. Additionally, this project includes provisions for the Farmers Market to assist them in their effort to improve customer safety. Lastly, the revitalization of the Common will assist Northfield in its effort to promote itself to visitors, a long identified economic goal that has become even more salient as the community emerges from the hardships of the pandemic.

This project will address Northfield's need for safe, functional, and engaging public spaces. The Common is the only public space in the Northfield Village area that offers a place for public gathering and community building. Public spaces, such as the Common, are integral to the health and vibrancy of local democracies. Additionally, Northfield has been experiencing a protracted period of economic decline, and revitalized spaces will help encourage new development. After years of hardship stemming from Hurricane Irene, the loss of local businesses and high quality jobs, and now, the pandemic, Northfield needs a project that reflects its enduring spirit, needs a high-visibility investment that becomes a catalyst for future growth.

b. Community Impact (10 points)

Describe the intended economic, social, and community impact of the proposed project. Explain the overall impact of the project on local community revitalization and community development efforts.

[300-word max]

A revitalization of Northfield's Common will have manifold economic impacts. At a micro level, enhanced seating on the Common will provide immediate assistance to local eateries that lack outdoor capacity. Visible and numerous outdoor seating options will encourage patrons to return to local eateries and feel safe doing so. At a macro level, a revitalization of the Common will encourage people to visit and shop in Northfield. With increased activity, lighting, banners, and public art, visitors will see that Northfield cares about its public spaces, that Northfield exudes vitality. Northfield is interested in attracting new residents, and a beautiful, inviting, and well-used Common will be a highly visible testament of Northfield's character. Lastly, Northfield is currently expanding its efforts to promote itself and its resources to other communities inside and outside of Vermont. An active and appealing Common will be an anchor to these efforts.

Revitalizing the Common will promote social interaction and engagement, both directly and indirectly. Providing moveable furniture that caters to all ages and abilities will facilitate direct community interaction, thus promoting a healthier, more cohesive community. Given the divisiveness of recent political discourse, an inviting, comfortable public space that caters to everyone is just one way we can begin to heal these wounds, to encourage interactions that allow us to recognize each other's inherent worth. It is easy to forget individual humanity when we cannot see the other – this project will be a strong step in encouraging a rehumanization within our community. Public art, specifically banners designed by local

residents, will provide direct and indirect community engagement. These banners will evoke appreciation for Northfield, exuding values understood by all, instilling a collective belonging and togetherness that may have eroded over the past year.

c. Building off Past Efforts and Partnerships (5 points)

Explain past activities at this location, and how the project implements the ideas and actions identified in prior community efforts, planning initiatives, or other community-driven activities (such as Vermont Council of Rural Development community visit, the town plan, parks and recreation plan, bicycle and pedestrian study, capital plan, or other planning or community engagement process). [300-word max]

Northfield's Common is the epicenter of many community efforts and plans. The Vermont Downtown Action Team (V-DAT) Report for Northfield, published in 2014, details the need for enhancements to the Common (including outdoor seating), and why these enhancements are fundamental to Northfield's development (p. 26). The 2016 Northfield Area Wide Plan also identifies improvements to the Common as integral to Northfield's growth. The plan explicitly states that "refinements to the Northfield Common that improve the pedestrian environment at the west end of the common as well as landscape enhancements, as discussed in the V-DAT report to open the space by removing shrubs and limbing up trees, as well as adding moveable seating, would polish up an enormous community asset" (p. 73). It is important to note that both the V-DAT and the Area Wide Plan involved significant amounts of community outreach and participation to determine the outcomes of the reports. The 2020 Northfield Town Plan has directly incorporated the V-DAT's recommendations for the downtown core (p. 12), endorsing improvements to the Common. The Better Connections Northfield Ridge and River Routes (NRRR) Master Plan states that "The Northfield Common is at the heart of our community and our multimodal transportation web. From here the community plans to make connections that will improve the safety of pedestrians traveling to dinner, shopping, work, and school" (NRRR Website).

Community groups have also implemented projects that have focused on the Common. In 2019, Northfield Common Connections, with funding from the AARP, conducted a walk audit survey and a demonstration project to further the development of pedestrian connections between the Common and Dog River Park. Lastly, in 2019, the NRRR received a quick build grant from the Vermont Department of Health to install new benches near the Common.

2. Alignment with Program Priorities (25 points)

The project and application must support the goals of the Better Places partners (as described on pages 3 and 4 of the [program guidelines](#)). Please check one or more of the boxes below on what the project will address.

- Supports and furthers place-based, resident-led, economic and community development efforts
- Spurs entrepreneurship, business development, and job growth
- Improves public health, reduces social isolation, and builds social capital
- Stimulates the creative economy and/or supports public art that integrates artists and designers in the creation and development of local projects
- Improves safe and efficient multimodal (bicycle/pedestrian/transit) connectivity for all users

- ☒ Creates opportunities for intergenerational activities and supports age-friendly community-based projects
- ☒ Increases access to healthy food and/or community-driven local food markets in partnership with local producers

a. Alignment with Better Places program priorities (10 points)

Describe how the project will advance one or more of the priorities of the Better Places program as checked above. [300-word max]

This project strongly supports and furthers resident-led development efforts. Public engagement and support were integral to the recommendations of the V-DAT, Area Wide Plan, and Town Plan, all of which documented the need for improvements (streetscaping, seating, etc.) to the Common. This project also complements and supports recent efforts of the NRRR and Northfield Common Connections.

This project improves public health, reduces social isolation, and builds social capital by providing an interactive green space that will encourage citizens to spend time outdoors and, by virtue of its location, promote social interaction. Street banners featuring the artwork of local residents will increase social capital by showcasing the love residents possess for Northfield, thus evoking the strong sense of community that defines Northfield. New outdoor furniture will promote COVID-safe social interaction for people of all ages and abilities.

This project will stimulate the creative economy by commissioning local artists to build a sculpture and to assist with street banner design. The street banners will support and promote public art primarily by pairing local art organizations with the public in the creation of the banners.

This project will create opportunities for intergenerational activities by providing moveable outdoor furniture that is designed to be used by those of different ages and abilities. For instance, a bench with varying seat heights can serve children, adults, and those using wheelchairs. This project will also include Covid-safe play elements that encourage intergenerational interactions.

This project will increase access to healthy food by increasing the capacity of the Northfield Farmers market to operate safely this upcoming growing season, while the proposed lighting elements of this project will allow the market to stay open longer in the evening.

b. Community Capacity and Readiness to Implement (10 points)

Describe the organization and community's capacity, support, and readiness to manage and implement a community-driven placemaking project within six months. This must include a description of the organization and project manager's experience rapidly implementing community-driven projects. [300-word max]

This project has the full support of the Northfield Community Development Network (NCDN), NRRR, Farmers Market, and Northfield Common Connections, all of which are committed to assisting with the implementation of this grant and have robust experience with completing projects of this scale.

The NCDN has hosted two "Nights on the Common" and one "Night on the Crescent" events that attracted hundreds of citizens to these public spaces to enjoy an evening of activities and interaction with local volunteer groups.

The Farmers Market co-hosted the “Night on the Common,” and has exhibited tremendous capacity in hosting a weekly farmers market while adapting to Covid protocols.

The NRRR has demonstrated capacity and readiness through the recent completion of a “quick build” grant that placed benches and bike racks around Northfield, and their current work on a Better Connections grant funded NRRR master plan.

Northfield Common Connections has displayed excellent project management and creativity through the completion of a 2019 AARP Placemaking Demonstration Grant, which funded a walk audit and walkability placemaking project between the Common and Dog River Park.

In addition to the work of these organizations, community volunteers developed, coordinated, designed and constructed the Promise Community Playground in 2018, funded by a state Promise Community Grant.

Lastly, the project manager was formerly the chairman of a complete streets committee in Canton, NY that engaged the public with pedestrian improvements. The project manager also completed an Eagle Scout project that involved the coordination of over fifteen volunteers and hundreds of hours of service. The project manager is the Economic Development Director, who spends his working hours coordinating community-driven efforts.

c. Site Maintenance and Management (5 points)

If applicable, identify the responsible party for the project’s ongoing maintenance, management of the public space or activities, and how it will be maintained and managed in the short and long-term. [300-word max]

The Project Manager, the Economic Development Director, will be responsible for the project’s ongoing planning and coordination needs, while the Town of Northfield will be responsible for ongoing physical maintenance of project elements. The Town of Northfield will also be responsible for the maintenance of the Common and the light poles. The Project Manager will coordinate when lighting and furniture will be placed on the Common, and when certain features need to be removed for the season. It is anticipated that outdoor furniture will likely need to be removed for the winter, while lighting will be installed for all year use, increasing the vibrancy of the Common in the winter. The Town of Northfield will assist with the removal and storage of Common infrastructure in the colder months. The Project Manager will also coordinate all repairs as needed.

3. Project Scope, Schedule, and Budget (25 points)

a. Project Scope (15 points)

Please briefly describe the scope of your project. What changes or improvements will be made to accommodate the new/expanded/improved public space uses or programming? [300-word max]

The proposed project will feature several semi-permanent to permanent installations on Northfield’s Common and lamp poles near the Common. This project includes the following: public art and streetscape improvements in the form of resident-designed light pole banners; publicly-guided, commissioned art in the form of a sculpture; farmers market enhancements in the form of fencing and signage to improve Covid safety; and public space activation through the provision of outdoor furniture and lighting. Light pole banners (to be installed by Town employees on light poles surrounding and near the Common) will be largely designed by local residents, an opportunity extended to everyone in Northfield no matter age or ability. Given the wide array of available materials, it has yet to be decided if these banners will be installed permanently or seasonally. The commissioned sculpture will permanently

symbolize Northfield's resilience, and will involve community input to shape the final design. The temporary fencing and signage for the Farmers Market will increase public safety and Covid resiliency of the Farmers market, primarily by directing pedestrian traffic and disseminating information more efficiently. Outdoor furniture will include pieces that are accessible to all ages and physical abilities, in addition to promoting intergenerational play. Outdoor lighting will be strung between existing trees and/or additional support devices. Outdoor lighting will be fashioned to improve lighting for evening activities on the Common, including outdoor dining and the weekly farmers market. No additional changes to the Common are needed to accommodate the improvements detailed above.

Explain how the project will attract people to the project location, what investments, and activities the project will promote to bring people to the site? [300-word max]

All the elements of this proposed project will attract people to the Common and encourage Covid-safe use. As part of the banner design process, a Covid-safe public event will be promoted and hosted on or near the Common to encourage community participation in the design of the banners. The large street banners showcasing local artwork will beckon pedestrians and motorists from a distance. Attractive colors and designs will catch the eye and one's curiosity, thus drawing the public to the Common. Public furniture and lights will invite people to use the space, whether for Covid-appropriate social interaction, for dining, for relaxation, and/or for play. Signage and lighting will enhance the Farmers Market's presence and hours of operation, thus attracting more people to the Common and increasing access to healthy, local foods. Once on the Common, the commissioned sculpture will be noticeable, inviting the public to interact with the piece's message. An event will be planned to unveil and celebrate the investments listed above, likely timed with the first farmers market of the season or another outdoor event on the Common. This event will be promoted through printed and digital information outlets, informing the public of the investments made, thus encouraging their use.

b. Budget (5 points)

Provide a budget narrative below with a detailed budget sheet (see sample budget on page 8) that includes all funding sources for the project and expected expenses and costs including labor, material, contingencies, and other eligible project expenses. [300-word max]

We estimate that our Better Places project will cost \$20,000, which includes a 10% contingency. We have not secured outside sources of funding to assist with project expenses. The budget is broken into (4) categories: Lighting, Site Furniture, Art and Farmers' Market COVID Provisions. Hours of research have gone into the development of a budget for each category, and simplified for the purposes of this application. The majority of the funds will be used toward much needed site furnishings, followed by the Art, Lighting and finally the Farmers' Market. Please see the proposed budget for a more complete description.

Furniture and banners for existing light poles will be installed by the Town of Northfield's highway department employees, a service that will be provided for free. Depending on the final design and products chosen for outdoor lighting, installation will either be performed by the Town of Northfield's highway department or citizen volunteers. The sculptor may have a design fee, and there may be a design fee for the street banners if a professional is required to transpose public art onto the banner. It is estimated that no more than 10% of the total project budget will be allocated for design fees. The remainder of the project budget will be used for capital costs and implementation. All labor for the project provided by the Town of Northfield will be provided without expense to the grant.

c. Schedule (5 points)

Provide a list of tasks with dates for key project activities like public outreach, partner organization activities, permitting, design, construction, programming, and other timeline details. [300-word max]

Late February: Advertise receipt of the grant to the community. Form a steering committee responsible for organizing and directing the use of the grant funds. Develop a plan for community engagement and outreach to collect feedback on the project scope, and the public-defined needs for Common improvements.

Early March: Identify research and data needed for products, design and community outreach. The Steering Committee will each take on roles and responsibilities to complete this research & engagement. Engage with the Town of Northfield to understand maintenance & other concerns. RFP documents for a sculpture or other custom site furniture should be developed for release by late March. Discuss project scope with the Select Board.

Late March: Steering Committee to solicit bids for products identified by the committee in Early March. RFPs should be sent out about any custom pieces.

Early April: Steering Committee to review bids, products and determine which items will be purchased. Work with the Town of Northfield to confirm their acceptance of the plan. Receive and review bids for custom furniture and sculpture.

Late-April: Meet with Select Board for final review (with direction from the Town Manager). Post-approval, award bids and begin contracts for services. Purchase pre-made elements of the project: String lights and attachment systems, outdoor seating, banner hardware, farmers market safety materials. Begin promotional activities for banner artwork, start collecting artwork through Covid-safe public event.

Early May: Provide COVID provisional materials for the Farmers' Market to use for their May 1st market.

Early June: Install banners, site furniture, and lighting on the Common as received.

July-August: Host a Covid-safe public unveiling of the sculpture. Give a tour of all the different project elements and explain their importance to the Common. Invite partnering organizations to discuss their mission and how the Common relates to their work.

4. Project Outreach and Partnerships (20 points)

Placemaking projects are more successful: 1) when there is sustained public outreach and community engagement throughout the project, 2) when they begin with strong community support and leadership, and 3) when they are done in partnership with organizations outside the municipal government.

a. Project Outreach, Inclusion, and Equity (10 points)

Explain how this project engages and serves community members in an equitable and inclusive process connecting with diverse socioeconomic groups, under-served, and under-represented populations in the community. [300-word max]

This project should be seen as a product of nearly a decade's worth of planning and community engagement. Northfield's V-DAT, published in 2014, was developed with extensive community engagement and feedback. As addressed in Section 3.4.2, Common enhancements are seen as fundamental to Northfield's growth. The Northfield Area Wide

Plan, which was published in 2016, was developed with significant community input, and improvements to the Common are identified as priorities to Northfield's development. Furthermore, Northfield's Town Plan, which was updated in 2020, calls for streetscape improvements in the downtown core, specifically referring to V-DAT recommendations. Finally, in the Spring of 2020, Northfield voters overwhelmingly approved the hiring of an Economic Development Director, with a job description that includes the responsibility of undertaking community development projects documented in earlier planning efforts.

All of the efforts detailed above evidence that this proposed project is deeply rooted in prior community outreach, engagement that strived to be equitable and inclusive. This project is bringing the ideas of the community to life, ideas that have been shared by individuals of diverse backgrounds and privileges. Additionally, this project is focusing on one of the most accessible, visible, and widely used public spaces in Northfield. The Common does not benefit one community group more than another – it is equidistant to households of all income levels.

Lastly, the planning efforts of this grant have also been mindful of outreach, inclusion, and equity. A committee comprising several community groups was formed to scope this project, and the individuals on the committee each represent a diverse cross-section of stakeholders from the community.

b. Project Partnerships (10 points)

Describe the project team, the community partnerships, and partnering organizations working together to help advance this project. Please include a list of partnering organizations and their role in the project. Please attach letters of support in the appendices. [300-word max]

The project team currently includes Northfield's Economic Development Director; the Northfield Farmers Market; the NCDN; the NRRR; Northfield Common Connections; and Art, Etc. Representatives from each entity have been involved in scoping individual elements or the entirety of this project. Meetings and communication have been conducted virtually, and all members of the project team have been engaged at least once a week since the release of the grant, with most members engaging three to four times a week.

Jon Ignatowski, Northfield's Economic Development Director, has the responsibility of engaging in community development projects. Jon is the project manager.

The Northfield Farmers Market is committed to supporting local producers while expanding the availability of local, healthy foods. The Farmers Market has been vital in advising the team on how the Common is currently used, and what investments would provide the most community benefit.

The NCDN is a local organization committed to revitalizing Northfield, and has supported the project from its inception, providing feedback and the commitment of volunteers.

The NRRR was formed to expand outdoor recreation and multimodal connectivity in Northfield. Representatives from the NRRR have provided extensive amounts of support in designing the specific elements of this project, in addition to grant preparation assistance.

Northfield's Common Connections Placemaking Committee has initiated and led placemaking projects in Northfield since 2019. Common Connections aims to support and reveal the deep sense of place and community spirit in Northfield, using art, community engagement and

creativity. Common Connections has successfully completed state and private grants under budget, which has brought both planning and built changes to Northfield.

Art, Etc. is a local business located across the street from the Common. Art, Etc. has assisted with scoping the public art portion of this project, in addition to providing high level feedback to the entire scope.

5. Application Quality (5 points)

The application submission is complete, well-written, clearly identifies the project, and is internally consistent. *No response necessary.*

Certifications

Please check each box indicating that you understand and will comply with the following provisions.

- that all named key project leaders and organizations have agreed to be included in this project
- that documentation of site control is included in the application, including a signed resolution, or signed legally binding agreement from the owner of the project site (municipal resolution, private lease, and/or MOU) is attached to the application
- that the applicant understands that no information contained in this submission shall be deemed confidential and such information may be shared with other governmental entities or Better Places partners
- that the applicant has the permission and hereby grants to the Vermont Community Foundation and the Department of Housing and Community Development an unrestricted license to use and publish your submitted photographs in any and all manners of communications and media.
- that the applicant emailed one (1) required electronic copy of the application to accd.cpr@vermont.gov and it constitutes an official submission of your application. No signature is required.

I, (Jonathan A Ignatowski) certify that the statements in this application are true and the information provided is complete and correct. There have been no misleading statements or omission of any relevant facts.

Appendices - Additional Supporting Documents [8-page limit]

In order to help Vermont Community Foundation, the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), and the Better Places partners understand the status, context and local commitment to the proposed project, the application may provide additional support documents and information:

- 1. Previous local efforts.** Include a list of all prior and current community development efforts, including but not limited to capital improvements, public space programming, events, and activations, placemaking initiatives, and private investment that has occurred in the project site, area, and relates to the project scope. [300-word max]

Common revitalization project 1997

Common Revitalization Project 2010-2014: Replacement of the retaining wall, burying utility lines, streetscape lighting, new sidewalks on the Common, new paving, drainage improvements, pedestrian bump-outs

Northfield Savings Bank improvements 2017: Bank renovation, parking improvements, removal of extra buildings behind Mayo Nursing Home, sidewalk improvement, soil contaminant remediation

Launch of new local businesses: Cornerstone Burger Company, Good Measure Brewing Company, Carrier Coffee Roasters, Art Etc. over the past 5 years

East Street Sidewalk Improvements 2019: Replaced sidewalk, installed new ornate lamp posts

Northfield Common Connections, Walk Audit and Demonstration Project 2019: With an AARP Community Demonstration Project Grant, Northfield Common Connections conducted a walk audit and a demonstration project that called attention to the gaps in infrastructure between the Common and Dog River Park. The demonstration project included a temporary, marked pedestrian path between the Common and Dog River Park.

Better Connections NRRR "Quick Build" Project 2019: The NRRR received funding from Vermont Department of Health to install new benches and bike racks in and around the Common area

Norwich University Architecture Department and Northfield Energy Committee Kiosk 2020: Ground broke for the Community Connections Kiosk in late 2020, and is located across from the Common. The kiosk will provide shelter, seating, and local information for citizens, visitors, and those using Green Mountain Transit.

Night on the Common 2016, 2017: The NCDN and Northfield Farmers market co-hosted an evening event on the Common for family-oriented entertainment and to showcase all of Northfields non-profits

Northfield Farmers Market: A weekly market held on the Common during the growing season that connects local producers with local consumers

Labor Day Celebration: Since 1976, the Town of Northfield has been closing Depot Square (a road contiguous to the Common) to turn the road and the Common into a festival site.

- 2. Letters of Support.** Attach letters of support from local, regional, or state partners to illustrate strong community and partner support for the project.

List attached letters of support

- | |
|---|
| 1. Northfield Common Connections |
| 2. Northfield Ridge and River Routes |
| 3. The Northfield Farmers Market |
| 4. The Northfield Community Development Network |
| 5. Art Etc. |

Application Submission

Application materials MUST be submitted electronically. Electronic applications are **due 4:00PM, January 22, 2021**. Email them to accd.cpr@vermont.gov. If your materials exceed 10MB, please divide them into separate emails. Include the municipality's name and project in the subject line, along with 1 of 2 and 2 of 2.

Better Places Program Contacts

For questions regarding the Better Places Program, contact the Program Managers:

Richard Amore | Planning and Outreach Manager

Department of Housing and Community Development

802.585.0061

richard.amore@vermont.gov

Sarah Waring | Vice President for Grants and Community Investments

Vermont Community Foundation

swaring@vermontcf.org

MUNICIPAL OFFICES



Jeff Schulz, Town Manager
jschulz@northfield.vt.us

Phone 1-802-485-9822

Fax 1-802-485-8426

**51 SOUTH MAIN STREET
NORTHFIELD, VERMONT 05663**

January 19, 2021

Re: Better Places Program – Grant Application

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to express support for Northfield's Better Places Grant Application for the placement of moveable string lights on posts and trees, a sculpture for one of the gardens in the Common, banners on the taller light poles, moveable dining furniture, and multi-generational, multi-ability benches in the Downtown – which is a State Designated Village Center. The Town supports this effort because we see it as a compliment to the Town of Northfield's long-term efforts to revitalize and improve its downtown.

Northfield is fully committed to and is very proud of its downtown and its pedestrian network having completed the following major projects over the past seven years: the replacement/upgrade of all sidewalks within and around Northfield's Downtown Common, the replacement/upgrade of 400 feet of sidewalk along the Mayo Block, Northfield Savings Bank, and the Northfield Municipal Offices, the construction of 1800 feet of new sidewalk along Central Street, and most recently, the replacement/upgrade of sidewalks on East Street and a portion of Main Street. In addition, Northfield has upgraded its street lighting around the Downtown Common with decorative lighting fixtures and the conversion of all of its street lights to LED.

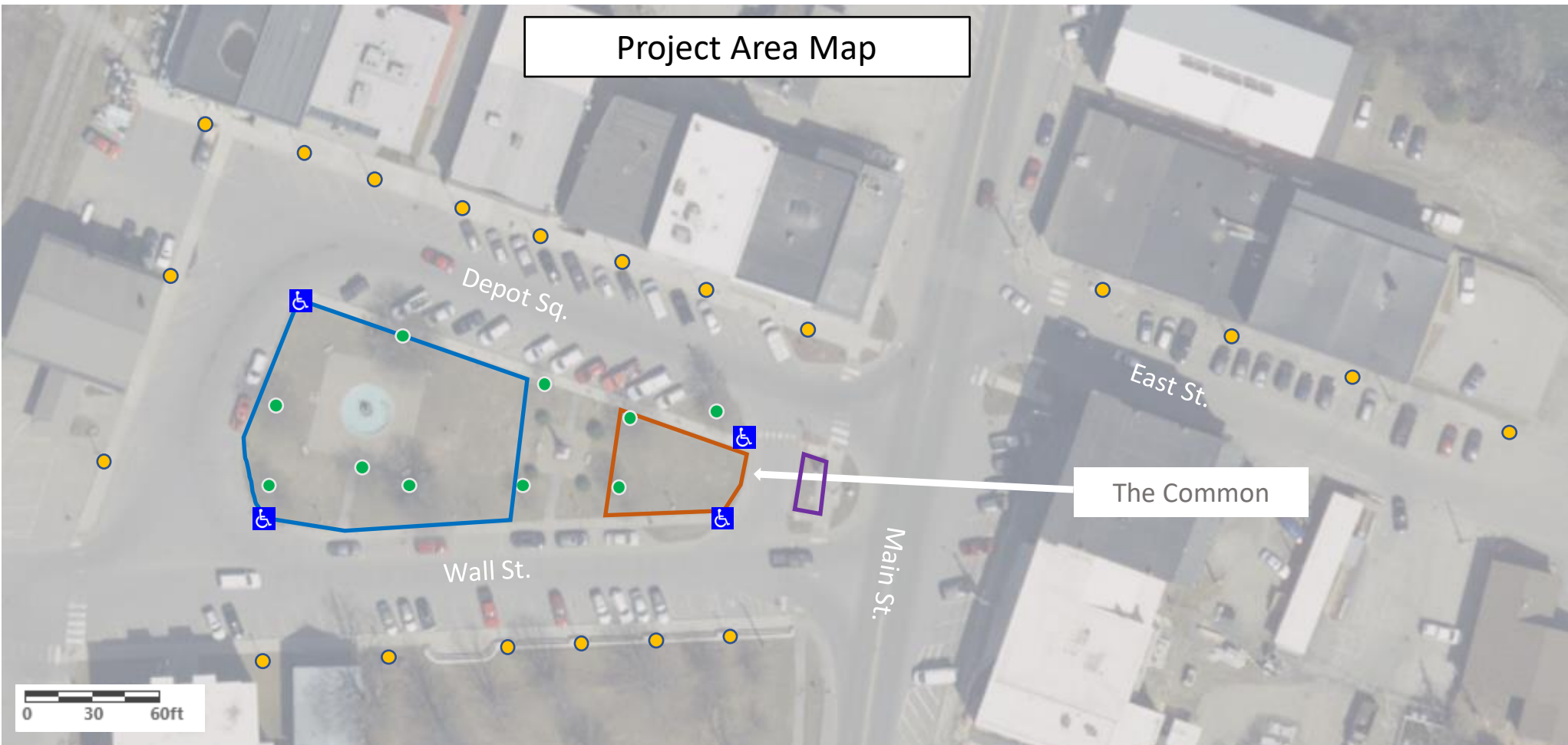
If you have any questions, I can be reached at 485-9822, or jschulz@northfield.vt.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Schulz", is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Jeff Schulz, Northfield Town Manager

Project Area Map



The historic fountain is located in this specific project area and is the site of Northfield's Farmers Market. The Market is arranged around the fountain. This specific project area will include string lighting and moveable furniture.



This specific project area will include moveable furniture



This specific project area will be the likely location of a sculpture



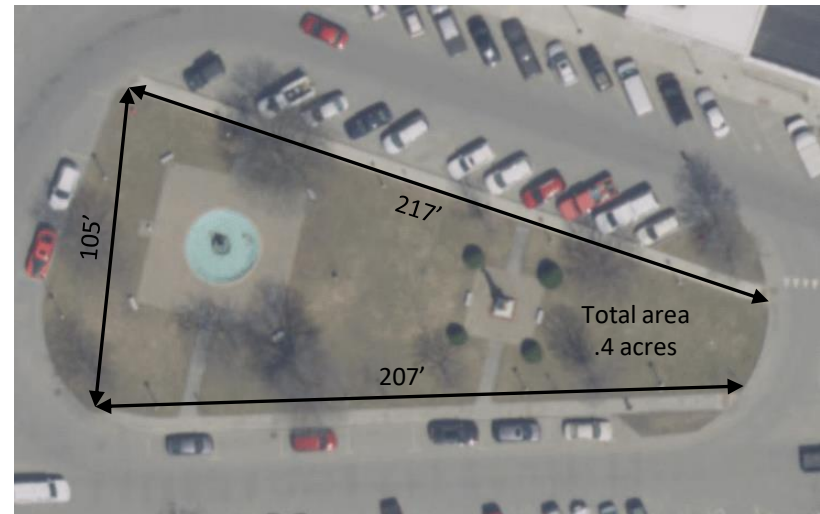
Indicates the location of a light pole where a banner may be installed

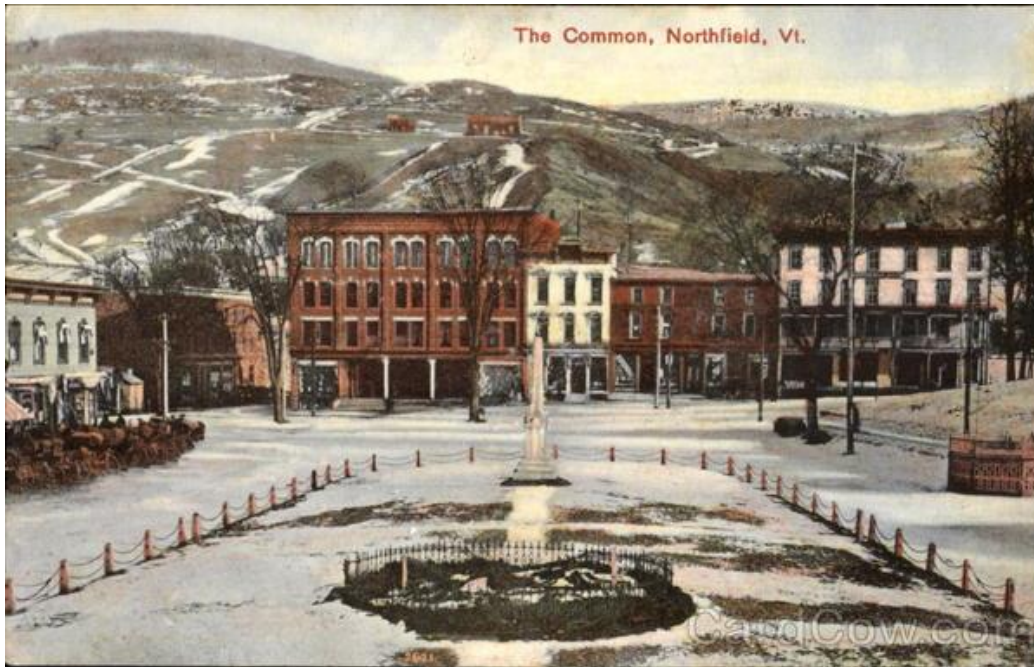


Indicates the location of a tree



Indicates wheelchair access points to the Common





A view of the Common in 1907

Source: <https://www.cardcow.com/129156/northfield-vermont-common/>



Northfield's Annual Mayday Celebration on the Common

Source: <http://eatstayfarm.com/2019/05/spring-fever-2/>



Both images depict the annual Labor Day festivities that are held on the Common. Depot Sq. is closed to vehicular traffic and turned into a pedestrian mall for the event.

Photo on left: <https://www.nsbvt.com/news-events/41st-annual-nsb-footrace>

Photo on right: <https://www.northfieldlaborday.org/index.html>



View of the Common from Main Street, facing West



View of the Common from Wall St., facing North



The Northfield Farmers Market, West end of the Common



This is a view of the West side of the Common, from Depot Square. The historic fountain is a commanding feature in this part of the Common. The Northfield Farmers Market, as shown in earlier photos, occupies the entire West end of the Common and forms a circle around the fountain. String lighting spanning the trees and added poles will help illuminate this part of the Common, thereby enhancing evening dining and evening operations of the Farmers Market. Outdoor furniture will also be placed on the paved surface surrounding the fountain.

Better Places Grant
 Town of Northfield 2021
 Northfield, VT

1/22/21

Category	Project Cost Description	Supplier if Known	Budget Cost	Example Items
Common Lighting				
	<i>To Include: Professional-grade, all-season, low-maintenance string lighting to enhance year-round lighting on Common for Farmers' Market and community events. Attached to existing poles and trees. Includes contingency for installation of additional posts to support lighting.</i>	Site lighting to be bid by national landscape lighting companies with local representation as needed. As many elements as feasible will be purchased within Central Vermont.	\$4,000.00	The primary cost here will be for approximately 500' of string lights (product will vary depending on manufacturer recommendations for the particular site), subcosts will include hardware and concrete-reinforced poles as needed. We will consult a professional lighting company to solidify design.
Site Furniture				
	<i>To Include: Accessible, multigenerational seating, custom multigenerational play elements & moveable tables and chairs</i>	Site furniture and custom elements to be bid by local and national site furnishings companies.	\$9,000.00	(8-10) moveable tables and chairs, (2-3) benches, (1) custom multigenerational play element
Art				
	<i>To Include: Banners for light posts featuring community-led designs, permanent, locally-made art piece or sculpture for Common</i>	Local artist and banners purchased through local graphic design establishments	\$4,500.00	(11-15) banners (\$2,000 approx), (1) custom piece of sculpture (\$2,500 approx)
Farmers Market COVID Provisions				
	<i>To Include: Fencing and signage for weekly summer Farmers' Market on the Common. To encourage wayfinding for customers addressing COVID-19 safety requirements.</i>	Local hardware and copy center and/or sign design establishments	\$500.00	
Contingency (10%)				
	<i>To be used for unforeseen product, installation and construction expenses</i>		\$2,000.00	
TOTAL			Total Request	\$20,000.00

Other Resources / Internal or In-Kind	Description	Time	Value of Donation
	<i>The Town of Northfield has committed to provide labor for the installation of lights, banners, and site furnishings</i>	(2) days, (3) FTE employees + equipment	\$3,000.00

January 18, 2021

Better Places Grant
One National Life Drive
Deane C. Davis Building, 6th Floor
Montpelier, VT 05620-0501

Dear Grant Selection Committee,

Northfield's Common Connections Placemaking Committee formed in 2019 after attending an AARP Placemaking Workshop. The group applied for and received an AARP demonstration placemaking grant to create a temporary pedestrian lane from the Common to help activate the newly completed, Dog River Park. We introduced this temporary lane with a celebration that encouraged the public to walk the route and included art, free ice cream, and live music. Common Connections has continued since the demonstration project to support placemaking activities that enhance walkability and use of Northfield's public spaces.

The Common Connections Placemaking Committee would like to express our support for Northfield's application to receive a Better Places grant in order to improve the ambiance and use of the Northfield Common area for dining, play and shopping. Feedback from past events identified great interest in the community for continued placemaking activities. We discovered that Northfield is thirsty for more placemaking activities that enliven our public spaces and welcome pedestrians and cyclists into the downtown. Covid 19 has made this need even greater as diners and shoppers downtown need more space to spread out, but want to continue to find ways to support businesses and "gather" in a socially distant manner.

The Common Connections team can offer our support and guidance to Northfield in the implementation of this grant. We have experience in placemaking and enthusiasm to help support the efforts to enhance the Common area. This grant application is completely in line with our mission to placemake public spaces to create a more walkable, artful and engaged Northfield. We look forward to continuing to support the ACCD and AARP's placemaking initiatives in Vermont.

Sincerely,

Lydia Petty

Bonnie Donahue



NORTHFIELD RIDGE+RIVER ROUTES

January 15, 2021

Dear Grant Selection Committee,

We enthusiastically support Northfield's application for a placemaking grant for our Village Common. This grant would build on the efforts of the Better Connections grant that enabled placement of benches and bike racks surrounding and on the Common. These site fixtures convey energy, design and a sense of pride. Especially in this time of CoVid, this grant would bring renewal to an area key to economic recovery in our town.

The Northfield Ridge and River Routes grant may be winding down but an implementation team is forming and would provide key support for the common placemaking efforts. With a new economic development director, Jon Ignatowski on board, Northfield has all the elements necessary to continue to build on recent past successes and create a vibrant village center.

Thank you for your consideration.

Deborah Zuaro
Lydia Petty

Co-chairs Northfield Ridge and River Routes Steering Committee



January 19, 2021

Better Places Grant
One National Life Drive
Deane C. Davis Building, 6th Floor
Montpelier, VT 05602-0501

Dear Grant Selection Committee:

The Northfield Farmers Market has provided access to affordable, locally grown and prepared foods for over 10 years on the Town Common. We've grown from an informal group of four local producers to a vibrant, volunteer-run market with an active roster of over 30 vendors generating over \$56,000 in total annual sales in fiscal 2019-20.

The market was on track for further growth in the 2020-21 season until the COVID-19 pandemic struck. In compliance with the governor's executive orders, we launched the summer 2020 market with significant modifications for safe operation in compliance with state requirements, which we anticipate will continue for the upcoming summer season.

We are partnering with the Town of Northfield on this Better Places Grant project for two reasons. First, while we operate as a non-profit organization, we are responsible for the revenues generated by our vendor family. ***Ours is the only affordable retail sales channel available to many of our agricultural vendors, so we are committed to preserving this important revenue stream for them.*** Second, by August 2020, 3SquaresVT/SNAP transactions had doubled from 2019 and we anticipate that will increase due to the economic impact the pandemic has had on local families. ***We are the only accessible farmers market for many of our food-insecure and transportation-challenged neighbors.*** The project elements proposed in this Better Places Grant – such as public safety provisions, outdoor lighting, and moveable seating – will directly assist the Northfield Farmers Market in furthering its mission to enhance the local food economy.

We are committed to working with the Town of Northfield to enhance the Northfield Farmers Market as a vital part of the local food system and agricultural economy by providing easy access to healthy, affordable foods that are locally grown and made. Because of our experience in compliance with complex, ever-changing state requirements for safe operation, we are happy to participate in the design and implementation of this grant as a great way to make the Town Common an even better place.

Sincerely yours,
/s/ Cassie Morse, Market Manager

NCDN
Northfield Community Development Network, Inc.
PO Box 215
Northfield Falls VT 05664
January 21, 2021

To whom it may concern:

The mission that fuels the members of NCDN (Northfield Community Development Network, Inc.) is one of “revitalizing Northfield, Vermont, by rebuilding the greater area community physically, economically, and socially, in coordination with local institutions, with a goal to promote sustainable commerce and increased population.”

With this mission in mind, the members of NCDN strongly support Northfield’s efforts to secure a placemaking grant through Better Places, to enrich Northfield’s downtown area with brighter and safer lighting, expanded seating, improved access to shops, and other similar features and amenities that add value to our community.

Northfield’s historic downtown Common and its neighboring East Street serve as the heart of the Town. While some improvements to the Common and East Street have been made over the last several years thanks to the efforts of a few dedicated community volunteers, there remains much to do in order to make this valued public space safer, more accessible, and more widely utilized by Northfield’s citizens and visitors, its businesses, and its vibrant Farmers Market.

The goals of the grant are fully consistent with the best interests of the Town and of NCDN as a local nonprofit organization committed to community development. As such, NCDN has committed to engage with the Northfield Municipality to help plan and implement the elements of the Better Places grant.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need any additional information as you consider Northfield for this Better Places grant.

Sincerely,



Kaitlyn Keating
NCDN Chair

It is my pleasure to write a letter of support regarding the *Better Places Grant* submitted by Jon Ignatowski, Economic Development Director for the town of Northfield, Vermont.

I have been a resident of Northfield for over 20 years and as of June 2021, the owner of **ART, etc.** on Depot Square for two years. We strive to bring stunning Vermont made artisan crafts into everyone's life, one piece at a time. **ART, etc.** features over 15 artists from Northfield and central Vermont and has two exhibit gallery spaces.

Since 2015, my family and I have seen a positive improvement, development and support of new businesses in our downtown: from restaurants to a brewery; an award-winning coffee shop and a variety of retail outlets. These businesses have helped turn empty, outdated store fronts into vibrant and exciting gathering spots for the community as well as attracting visitors to Vermont and our area. These businesses also boost the emotional and physiological environment for residents: having safe, enjoyable and beautiful places to gather while appreciating locally made beer, coffee, food and art is a positive enhancement for everyone's life.

Science has documented that art, in any form, improves one's life: *art appreciation promotes the quality of life and makes you feel good*¹. Being in the presence of beauty can increase your positive mood, enhance your environment and inspire your senses.

Last fall Northfield Ridge and River Routes installed Vermont-made, colorful benches and bicycle racks with the support of a "Quick Build" grant from the Vermont Department of Health. These are examples of ways Northfield is offering residents and guests to sit, relax and take a moment to enjoy our surroundings.

Northfield has also had natural beauty added to our downtown. Over the past few summers, a group of dedicated and talented gardeners have developed ignored areas and established beautiful floral gardens which bloom from May to October. These colorful spots enhance these once neglected areas of downtown and bring an appreciation of nature, and these gardeners, to all who pass by.

This *Better Places* grant will continue the work that these gardeners and businesses have already begun. Artwork created by Northfield residents of all ages and other Vermonters will add a sense of originality to our downtown and pride in our state. Creations of artwork in the form of light pole banners and garden sculptures will bring additional elements of art, beauty and perhaps a bit of whimsy into public spaces. It is our hope that we can extend these artistic visions to other areas of Northfield in the near future.

I wholeheartedly support the application of this *Better Places* grant for the Town of Northfield, Vermont and look forward to increasing the presence of public art in our community.

Sincerely,
Andrea Melville, owner
ART, etc. LLC
802.279.5048
artetcvt@gmail.com

¹ Professor Semir Zeki, neurobiologist at the University College of London