



White Architecture Festival 2015

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### IN THE LOOP

*A truly sustainable future stretches beyond energy efficiency and renewal. Primarily, it has to do with human well-being. With each project we continue to gain new knowledge, essential for creating desirable places that empower people of all ages. With the goal of achieving a Net Zero Montpelier in 2030, our proposal particularly embraces those who hold the future - the children of today are the future of tomorrow.*

Our vision for Montpelier is to create a model which rises beyond Net Zero, towards a level we call Net Zero+. A Net Zero+ downtown Montpelier 2030 can not be constructed without community engagement and a long-term plan in place. It will require commitment, innovation, and most of all, collaboration. The proposal places the community of Montpelier, and especially the youngest generations, at the center of the design ensuring a bright sustainable future for Montpelier and inspiring cities across the U.S. and worldwide.

The focus of the proposal is the **collaborative design process**. It aims to create an integrated vision and solution where the community of Montpelier is invited to collaborate throughout the project's development. The proposal provides economic, social and creative opportunities for all members of the community making Montpelier the vibrant, authentic, livable and sustainable city it has the potential to become.

We feel that our interdisciplinary and Scandinavian approach will result in a design that is a fully integrated strategy by incorporating tools which empower people - a series of **small scale, do-able, innovative solutions that are adaptable to future changes**. As urban environments and economic markets are becoming increasingly dependent on each other, new demands are being placed on existing infrastructures and new architecture alike. Now it is time for cities to revise codes and zoning to accommodate long term change. Simultaneously, small “do-able” solutions not requiring permits, can be tested and implemented. Places and buildings which are designed with quality materials and have mixed-use functionality can accommodate alteration in program or even repurpose. Beloved buildings and places survive in the long term which make them intrinsically sustainable.

The true goal of our efforts in sustainability is to ensure prosperity, the well-being of people. Environmental sustainability is the means by which we can safeguard the function and balance of our natural systems for our own future existence. But, we believe that environmental sustainability is just the starting point, the prerequisite to achieve a society where all have good living conditions. That’s why our approach towards a sustainable Montpelier also includes the tools for reaching social and economic sustainability to ensure an inclusive and equitable urban design.

The strategy we adopt to ensure a durable sustainability is to increase the adaptive capacity of Montpelier to meet and allow for future change and challenges. The strategy consists of four steps: 1. Acknowledge future change, 2. Provide for a robust urban design and community; 3. Include small scale solutions that can be changed rapidly and cost-effectively; and 4. Place the community at the center of the process towards a Net Zero+ downtown Montpelier.

Not the design, but the process towards a Net Zero+ Montpelier is the key to success. The process and mutual respect and understanding for the overall vision between stakeholders is of key importance. The inclusion of the community of Montpelier is essential. Based on a Scandinavian model, In The Loop will include an extensive range of tools to set a common goal and to drive the process forward. The first structure proposed is the Net Zero+ Center to function as a place of meeting, education and collaboration for the process towards a Net Zero+ Montpelier.

Improved building design and operations, the provision of affordable, accessible and renewable energy are hallmarks of the proposal, but a Net Zero+ Montpelier is more than the reduction of energy usage. It provides identity, diversity and opportunity, it enables social interaction in a safe environment, and it integrates nature into everyday life. In The Loop celebrates Montpelier, engages in urban life, embraces nature and it ensures energy.

**It loops in the people that make up a great city!**