

# TOWN PLAN



## Landgrove, Vermont

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_ 2017



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All other photos were provided by the Bennington County Regional Commission.

## I. Introduction

Landgrove is a small rural town located on the eastern slope of the Green Mountains in southern Vermont. The area was first settled by William Utley in 1769; he established a farm in the fertile valley that still is know as “Utley Flats.” The town was legally chartered in 1780, its municipal limits being determined largely by the boundaries of adjacent towns. Landgrove originally covered 7,040 acres, but the resolution of a boundary dispute with Peru (originally known as Bromley) in 1835 reduced the town’s size to the 5,696 acres that it currently occupies.

The first road into the area from the Connecticut River and Springfield passed by the Utley’s farm in Landgrove. This road was followed, and extended to Manchester, by General Stark’s troops as they traveled to the Battle of Bennington during the Revolutionary War. The road crossed the town from Weston to Peru along what is known today as Old County Road (although a portion of the road has been discontinued). A stage road was built between Chester and Peru in 1820 (now Route 11) that diverted through traffic from the northern to the southern part of Landgrove. This southern section of town was referred to as Landgrove Hollow, and the first store in the town was built there in 1820.

Before long the focus of the community shifted back to the north as the village of Clarksville (most often referred to as “the Village” today) began to develop along Utley Brook at the lower end of Utley Flats. This area was well-suited for development because of both its proximity to the prosperous farms along Utley Brook and the availability of water power for saw and grist mills. A number of houses, shops, a store, and a post office soon were built in Clarksville. The architecture and orientation of these buildings continues to reflect the traditional New England village character that is an important part of the town’s appeal. As the town grew and developed, schoolhouses, the Meetinghouse (1857) and the Farmers and Mechanics Hall (1874, subsequently used as a schoolhouse and then the Town Hall) were built. The Meetinghouse and Town Hall (recently expanded), located next to each other north of the Village and at the edge of Utley Flats, remain important community assets today.



Styles Peak as seen from Utley Flats

Early residents of Landgrove worked the land and operated mills. Farmers raised a variety of crops and livestock and mills were built at several locations around town. The prosperity of the farms and mills, together with the town's population, peaked by the mid-1800s (Figure 1). Dairy farming became the principal economic activity in town and the population declined steadily (except for a brief time during a lumbering boom around 1900) until the mid-1900s. Landgrove has become in recent years a growing residential community containing many attractive new and restored homes that are occupied by both permanent and part-time residents. The beginnings of the town's resurgence can be traced to 1929 when Sam and Mamie Ogden bought most of the properties in the almost deserted village of Clarksville, settled there, and restored and sold many of the buildings.

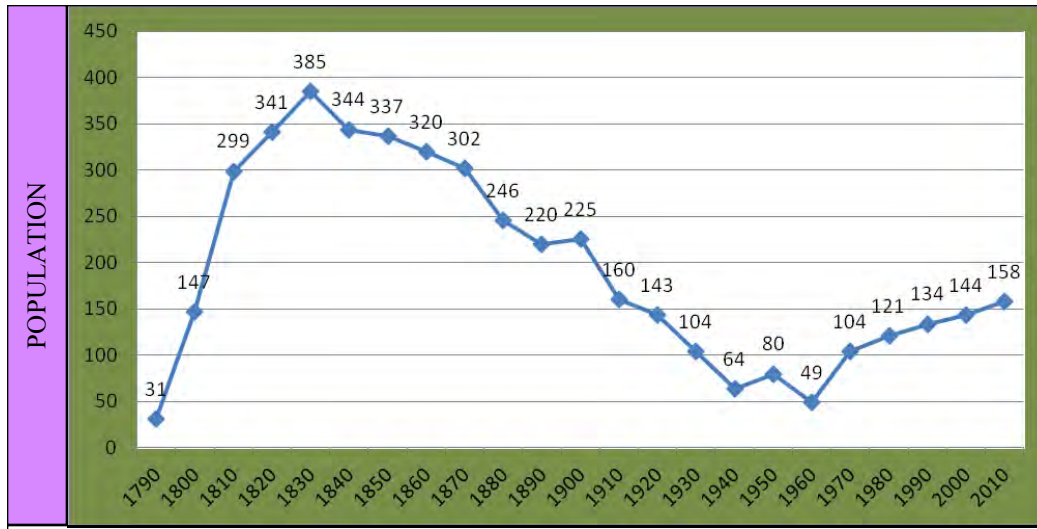


Figure 1. Landgrove's population increased rapidly from its founding through 1830. Following a long period of decline, the population began a slow but steady increase that has continued through 2010; the current population is 158 (US Census).

The town's history, together with an unspoiled natural environment of lush meadows, verdant forests, and pristine streams set against the backdrop of the Green Mountains combine to make Landgrove a town of exceptional beauty. Old structures have been restored, new homes have been constructed to reflect the historic character of the town, and public and private lands have been managed to maintain scenic open fields and quality woodlands. It is this aesthetic appeal and desirable community character that have promoted an increase in population and home construction in Landgrove during the past few decades.

Townpeople have recognized that an effective planning process is necessary to guide future growth and to ensure that Landgrove remain an outstanding community in which to live. A Town Plan was adopted in 1972 that established a set of objectives and a general direction for development. Several updates and revisions to that original plan have been prepared. The town's zoning bylaws have been used to help implement the land use policies of the plan. The Vermont Planning and Development Act includes a set of common planning goals that municipalities, regions, and state agencies are encouraged to pursue, and also promotes cooperation and coordination among the various levels of government. Fortunately, Landgrove has historically espoused many of the same goals as those contained in the state planning law, and has for many years participated in regional planning through the Bennington County Regional Commission.

This Town Plan is the most recent manifestation of Landgrove's ongoing planning process. The

Plan has been updated to reflect current conditions, issues, and objectives, and should be consulted by local officials when making public policy decisions, evaluating public investments, reviewing development proposals, and when considering new or amended bylaws and ordinances. The Plan also provides clear guidelines to private developers and to state agencies and environmental review boards.



## II. Objectives

The objectives listed in this section provide an overall vision for Landgrove’s future and may be realized by pursuing the policies and recommendations contained in the Town Plan.

### 2.1 Maintain an effective planning process.

Effective and responsible decision-making should be promoted through a coordinated, comprehensive planning process and policy framework. The planning process should be premised on the notion that residents of Landgrove should have the primary responsibility for shaping the town’s future direction. Citizens should be encouraged to serve on town boards or commissions, attend public meetings and hearings, and otherwise participate in community planning activities.

Although Landgrove is a small and very rural town, activities and developments in nearby areas can affect the town, and because few products or services are available locally, residents of the town continually interact with other nearby communities. Cooperation with neighboring towns is important to ensure that any intermunicipal and regional issues are addressed effectively.

### 2.2 Carefully manage future growth and development.

Town policies, regulations, and investments should direct new development in ways that will:

- Preserve the town’s unique character—a small historic village within a scenic rural landscape;
- Promote a sustainable community that remains resilient to future social or economic changes;
- Ensure that new development is carefully integrated with the natural landscape to

- preserve environmental quality and scenic values;
- Prevent incompatible and uncoordinated development that would adversely affect the character of the community and existing property values;
- Avoid soil erosion, surface or ground water contamination, and damage to other important natural resources;
- Maintain population and housing densities at levels to ensure the continued feasibility of private on-site water supply and sewage disposal systems; and
- Provide for a reasonable level of continued growth in both primary and part-time housing units.

### 2.3 Identify and protect important natural resources, scenic values, and historic features.

Significant natural areas, fragile ecological sites, scenic ridges, vistas, and other important landscape features, public roadways, waterways, and historical, educational, and cultural sites should be preserved for the enjoyment of current and future residents of the town.

The streams, wetlands, ponds, forests, agricultural soils, and important wildlife habitats present in Landgrove should be protected from incompatible development or use because they provide valuable recreational and economic opportunities, and maintain the quality of the environment.

Landgrove relies on clean ground water for domestic water supplies; therefore, ground water recharge areas must be protected from incompatible development and contamination.

Air quality is a natural asset of great value to Landgrove. Facilities or activities, whether local or beyond the town's boundaries, that would degrade air quality should be discouraged.

### 2.4 Maintain and enhance recreational opportunities.

Public access to streams, forests, trails, and the natural resource based recreational opportunities they afford, should be maintained. The town should cooperate with other communities to help provide access to organized recreational facilities and activities that are not available in Landgrove.

### 2.5 Support appropriate economic activities.

Because of its remote location and environmental constraints, the type of economic development appropriate in Landgrove is quite limited. Small home-based businesses will play an important role in the local economy and should continue to be permitted pursuant to provisions of the municipal zoning bylaw. Economic activities that utilize local assets such as forest resources, agricultural land, and outdoor recreation also should be encouraged. Other commercial enterprises should be located in the commercially zoned area along Route 11. Expansion of telecommunication infrastructure, including broadband internet access throughout the town, is vitally important to businesses, residents, and the town.

### 2.6 Encourage energy conservation and appropriate development of renewable energy resources.

The town's land use pattern, individual developments, and infrastructure should promote energy efficiency and conservation and, when possible, be consistent with state and regional energy goals. Support should be given to programs and initiatives that encourage weatherization of existing buildings, proper construction of new buildings, and reduced use of transportation fuels. Small scale renewable energy use by homeowners and businesses should be supported.

### 2.7 Plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of community facilities and services.

Adequate public facilities and services must be available for the residents of Landgrove. The



local system of gravel roads is of particular importance to the town; emphasis should be placed on maintenance of existing roads and bridges. Maintenance and reconstruction should be carried out in a manner that ensures that the transportation infrastructure can withstand flooding and other natural hazards.

The Town Hall and Meetinghouse should be maintained in good condition to ensure that these important assets remain available to residents and to minimize future repair costs.

Other essential facilities and services require intermunicipal or regional planning and cooperation include: schools, communication systems, health care services, emergency services, and solid waste disposal.

Public capital investments should be planned to meet significant needs and coordinated so that excessive tax burdens are avoided.

## 2.8 Ensure access to good educational opportunities for all residents.

Although Landgrove has not operated a local school in many years, children have been able to receive a good education by attending schools in nearby towns. A quality education should continue to be available to residents at costs not excessive to the town's taxpayers.

Access to adult/continuing education and specialized workforce training opportunities should be available to residents. Improved telecommunication infrastructure would enable greater access to online learning and should be pursued.

The town should ensure that appropriate child care facilities can be developed in the community and that information about child care is available to residents and businesses.

## 2.9 Actively encourage a high quality of life for residents of the town.

The underlying goal of Landgrove's planning effort is to ensure a high quality of life for all residents through economic, environmental, and community planning. Particular emphasis should be placed on the maintenance of a clean, healthy, and aesthetically pleasing environment, the provision of necessary services, and continuing development of a community that is socially and economically sustainable and resilient.



### III. Economic Development

#### 3.1 Overview

Economic activities in Landgrove are consistent with the town’s small size and rural location. According to the Vermont Department of Labor (2016 data), there are eight business “establishments” in Landgrove, employing a total of 32 people. Two of those businesses are associated with some type of construction activity, one is classified as retail, two professional service, one hospitality related, one finance or insurance services, and one household service (households that employ service workers). With a total of 119 of Landgrove’s residents in the workforce (2010 US Census), it is clear that most people commute to work in another community. However, mean travel time to work for residents is only about 15 minutes, so most work relatively close to home. In fact, 34 Landgrove residents identify their home as their place of work.

Consistent with regional and state trends, education and health care businesses are principal employers of Landgrove residents (Table 1), with construction, wholesale and retail trade, and various professional/service industries also providing significant employment.

Industry	Employed Residents
Education and Health Care	20
Wholesale and Retail Trade	16
Accommodation/Food Service/Recreation/ Arts	13
Management/Science/Administration	13
Construction	13
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	7
Information	6
Manufacturing	6
Agriculture and Forestry	5
Other Services	20

Since the labor force in Landgrove is less than 100, the VT Department of Labor does not publish unemployment statistics for the town, though the DOL does report the statewide unemployment rate (2.9%) and that of Bennington County (3.4%). Despite elevated regional unemployment, Landgrove’s unemployment levels has been significantly lower than both state and regional statistics in the past and there is no reason to believe this trend has changed in recent years. Median household income in Landgrove is estimated to be about \$78,125, suggesting that Landgrove residents are doing relatively well since this value is over \$22,000 greater than the statewide median and over \$28,000 above the county median (ACS 2015 5-Year Estimates).

Given these statistics and the town’s location, rural character, and small population it is clear that the town will never be a major employment center. It is important that the town support business activity and development that is appropriate within the community, while also cooperating to ensure that residents have access to good jobs in nearby towns. Economic activities that are appropriate with in Landgrove include home occupations, natural resource (especially agriculture and forest product

based) businesses, outdoor recreation, small-scale hospitality businesses, and limited commercial activity (as defined in the zoning bylaws) in the Commercial land use district that lies along VT Route 11. The presence of the Green Mountain National Forest and the recreational opportunities it affords, as well as Landgrove's proximity to alpine and Nordic ski centers are significant considerations for economic development in the area and for local residents.

The rapid development of telecommunication technologies means that most businesses must have access to high speed (broadband) internet to be successful. It also means that many people can work productively from home offices. Unfortunately, access to high quality broadband services is limited in most of Landgrove. The town should aggressively pursue improved access (fiber optic, cable, or other broadband services) throughout the community.



Many homes and businesses in Landgrove currently rely on satellite or dial-up internet connections because broadband access is limited.

### 3.2 Sustainable Local Economy

Agricultural and forest lands once formed the basis for the town's economic prosperity, and it is possible that those resources, together with locally available renewable energy resources, will become critical economic assets once again. As pointed out in the section of this plan dealing specifically with energy, the long-term cost and availability of energy is a serious issue that needs to be confronted when planning for the local economy. As abundant and relatively inexpensive nonrenewable energy sources are depleted, local, regional, and national economies will have to adjust to new models that do not rely on continued broad-based growth requiring expanded energy inputs. This realization has led to a focus on "sustainable local economies," centering on the idea that economic systems must be developed that can function with less total energy. Such systems orient toward local production and markets, fueled by locally produced energy, and served by transportation modes that do not rely on gas and diesel fueled cars and trucks.

Existing local and regional businesses will remain important to residents of Landgrove in years to come, but will need to adapt to take advantage of opportunities offered by things such as local renewable energy resources, production and distribution of local foods, manufacturing of goods using locally available resources, and industries that support economic sectors that function with lower energy requirements. Key points in the development of a sustainable local economy include:

- ◆ Conserving agricultural and forest land and supporting farm and forest product businesses. An emphasis on production of food for local markets significantly reduces energy use and keeps local money from being exported.
- ◆ When the community is faced with a particular need, the first methods considered for meeting that need should be those involving use of local resources.
- ◆ Produce as much of the community's energy demand as possible using local resources (while working to significantly reduce total energy use through conservation measures).
- ◆ Ensure there are opportunities and incentives for money paid into the economy of the local area to circulate within the community.
- ◆ Develop markets for local goods and manufactured products in nearby communities.
- ◆ Support alternative transportation modes and public transportation options.
- ◆ Retain and develop local human resources.

### 3.3 Policies and Recommendations

1. Maintain and enhance the infrastructure needed to support economic development activities in Landgrove. In addition to public roads and electricity, the town should support the expansion of broadband telecommunication infrastructure systems.
2. Protect the natural, historic, cultural, and recreational resources that provide an outstanding quality of life for residents, and which attract new residents and business to the area.
3. Preserve the most productive agricultural and forest soils to support future growth in these economic sectors and support programs that benefit the working landscape.
4. Encourage residents to make use of renewable energy resources, including use of biomass (wood) for heating homes and businesses, solar energy for heating water and generating electricity, small-scale hydroelectric generation, and properly sited wind turbines.
5. Participate in efforts to develop a sustainable local economy.



Landgrove is a small rural community and economic activities are consistent with that reality. Businesses including home occupations and small commercial uses such as inns, as well as those that make use of local natural resources including agriculture, forest products, and outdoor recreation can be accommodated in appropriate locations.



## IV. Housing

### 4.1 Overview

The number of houses in Landgrove has grown steadily since 1960 (Figure 2). Of the 164 housing units present in town, 74 are occupied by full-time residents and 83 are non-resident homes (seven units are currently classified as “vacant”). Ninety-five percent of the housing units are single family homes—several of the rentals are located in two or three family homes (U.S. Census). Since 2012, there have been three new single family homes built in town, one demolition and rebuilding of a single

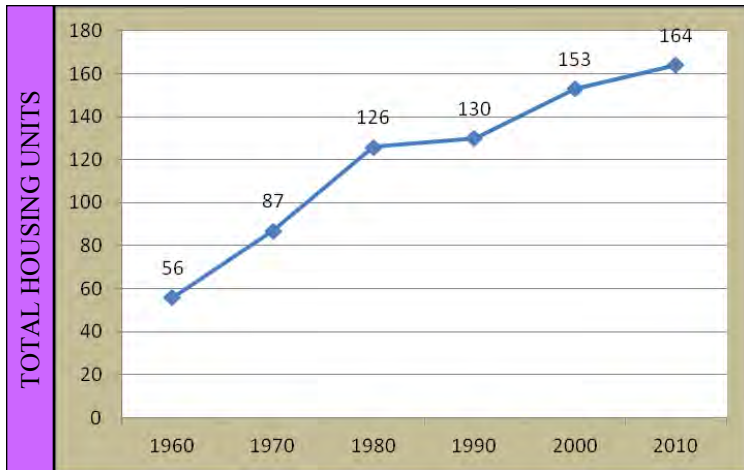


Figure 2. The total number of housing units in Landgrove has nearly tripled since 1960, with over half (83) being owned by non-residents. Interestingly, there now are more housing units than full-time residents in the town (Vermont Center for Rural Studies, University of Vermont, 2012).

family home, and numerous expansions and accessory unit developments.

By most any measure, Landgrove is an expensive place to buy and own a home or land. For the five-year period from 2012 to 2016, the average sale price of a house purchased for year round residency was \$798,000, and the average sale price for a house purchased by a non-resident was \$745,000. It should be noted that there are relatively low numbers of home sales each year and there is a wide range of sale prices, yet it is clear that the value of Landgrove homes and property is, on average, well in excess of county and statewide levels. Landgrove’s special qualities as a well-preserved rural and scenic town obviously contribute to those values, as do

individual properties for their unique features and histories.

The grand list for the town totals over \$126,000,000. Approximately 27% of the grand list sum is attributed to residents’ properties while 73% is attributed to the properties of non-residents. Of the 204 property parcels in town, 160 of which have built structures, 35% are owned by residents and 65% are owned by non-residents. It also bears noting that 19% of all property parcels are enrolled in the state current use program.

High property values limit prospects for development of new affordable housing within Landgrove. The town’s land use regulations do permit multifamily dwellings in the Commercial district and accessory dwelling units are permitted as part of any single family use of property in town. Both of these options can provide opportunities for lower cost housing, and new subdivisions can be developed as “planned unit developments,” consistent with zoning requirements, in a manner that limits infrastructure costs and increases allowable density to lower overall housing costs. The town also can work with regional housing organizations in Bennington, Windsor, and Windham Counties to explore options for a properly sited small-scale housing development that addresses demonstrated local needs.

It is possible that new homes will be constructed in Landgrove in coming years. There is an adequate amount of land zoned for residential use that is physically capable of sustaining the number of new houses that are expected to be built during that time. It is important that any new home construction be done in a manner that conforms to as many of the following “smart growth” principles as possible:

- Locating buildings to minimize impacts on important natural resources and open spaces.

- Relatively narrow roads that discourage high vehicle speeds and which form good connections to the existing road network.
- Carefully planned landscaping along streets and in any community open space areas.

The town also should encourage any new or rehabilitated housing to be made as energy efficient as possible. Adequate insulation, minimizing air infiltration, proper ventilation, efficient furnaces and appliances, and other structural features should be incorporated in new construction and substantial renovations to existing homes. All homeowners and builders should be made aware of the state Residential Building Energy Standards—mandatory for all new home construction and additions in excess of 500 square feet. The town should help publicize state and federal programs that provide incentives for weatherization of homes and purchase and installation of various renewable energy systems.



Residential properties in Landgrove include historic homes and attractive newer construction situated in a beautiful natural setting.

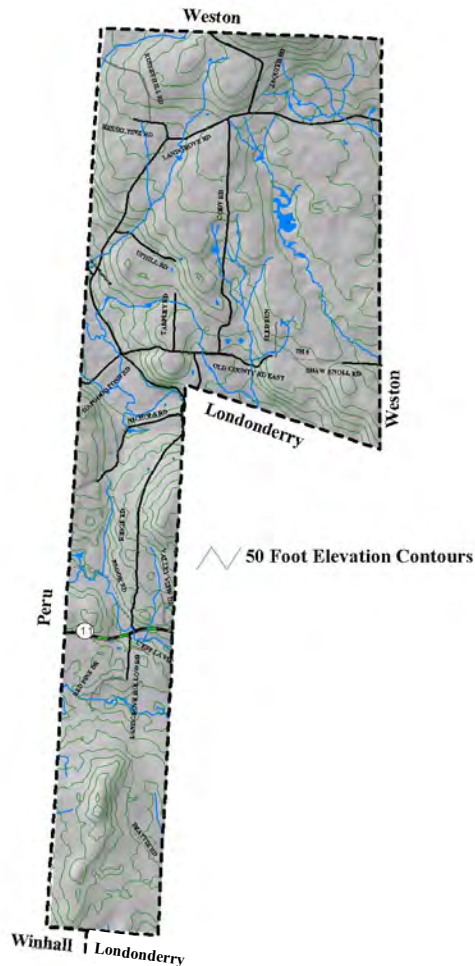
#### 4.2 Housing Policies and Recommendations

1. Opportunities should exist for people to buy (or rent) a dwelling in one, two, or three-family buildings in appropriate locations, as defined in the zoning regulations. Recognize and address the need for affordable housing by working with regional and state housing agencies and private developers.
2. Residential developments should be designed to be compatible with the character of the town and provide safe, comfortable, and attractive neighborhoods for residents.
3. Energy conservation and efficiency should be an important consideration in new and renovated housing. Incentives for investment in conservation and renewable energy systems should be supported.

## V. Natural, Scenic, and Historic Resources

### 5.1 Physical Geography

Landgrove is located entirely within the Green Mountain physiographic province and the watershed of the Connecticut River. The town's topography is characterized by a number of ridges and plateaus bisected by several streams and stream valleys (Map 1). Elevations range from 1,300 feet above sea level along Flood Brook in Landgrove Hollow and 1,400 feet on Utley Flats to over 2,000 feet along the town's northern border.



**Map 1**

#### **Topographic Map of Landgrove**

The town's topography is defined by the level land in the Utley Flats area, a significant rise in elevation in the northeastern part of town, a prominent hill south of Route 11, and several stream valleys.

Source: VCGI

Soils in the town are formed in glacial till and tend to be shallow and/or wet, thereby limiting the potential for on-site wastewater disposal systems (Map 2a). The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service has completed a comprehensive soil survey that provides information on the suitability of soils in a particular area for residential development, agriculture, forestry, and other activities, or whether the land should not be disturbed. This information should be considered when considering changes to the town's land use plan.

Sand and gravel deposits in Landgrove are important economic resources and can be used to help maintain the town's road network, but their extraction should be regulated as a conditional use so that sites can be reclaimed and the quality of the environment protected.

## 5.2 Agricultural and Forest Lands

Landgrove was once home to several prosperous farms and much of the landscape was cleared for pasture and cropland. Agricultural activity declined steadily from the mid-1800s and forest reclaimed much of the land. However, some of the best agricultural soils in town remain undeveloped and are maintained as open fields (Map 2b). Keeping these lands open contributes to the scenic quality of the landscape, preserves the town's rural heritage, and ensures that these areas remain available for more intensive agricultural use in the future.

A number of techniques are available to help preserve important agricultural land. The Vermont Land Trust already has acquired development rights to some open land on Utley Flats, and additional acquisitions of land in that area by the VLT or another qualified conservation organization should be supported. Property owners should be encouraged to make use of the state's use value appraisal (UVA) program, which provides property tax relief for enrolled agricultural or forest lands that are managed for agriculture or forestry. The town's zoning bylaws provide regulatory protection by limiting the types and densities of development, and also allow for planned unit developments that provide flexibility in subdivision design to facilitate preservation of undeveloped open lands.



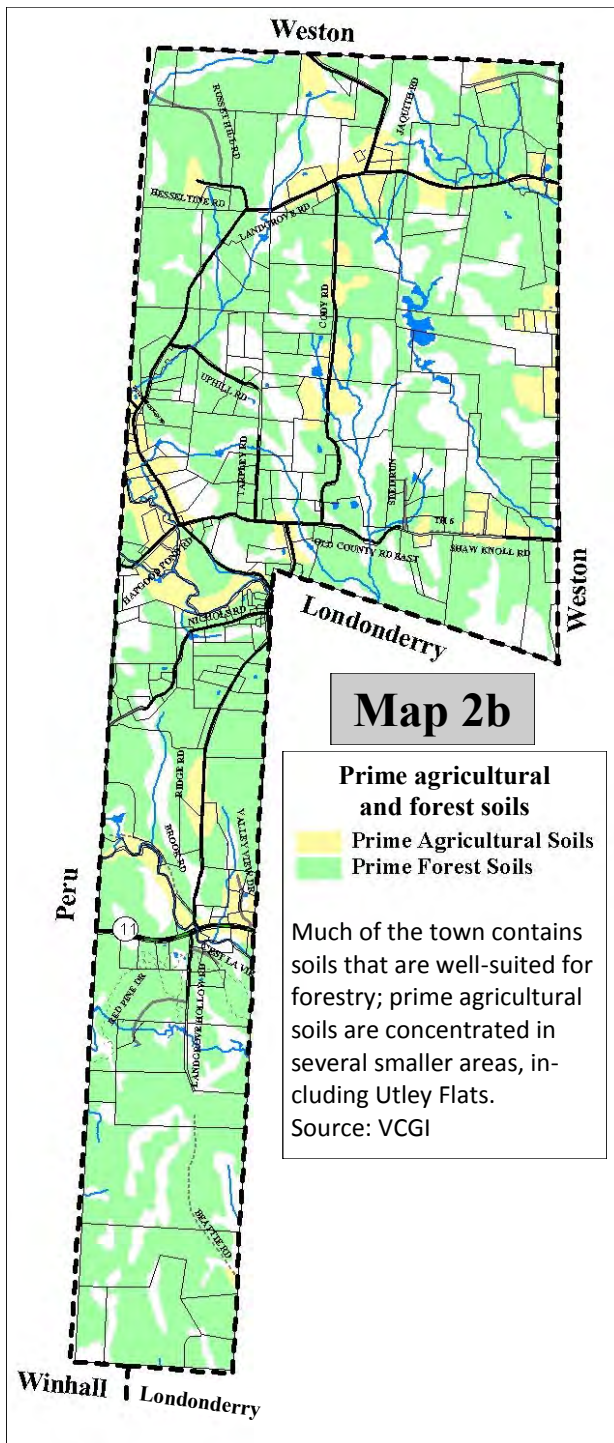
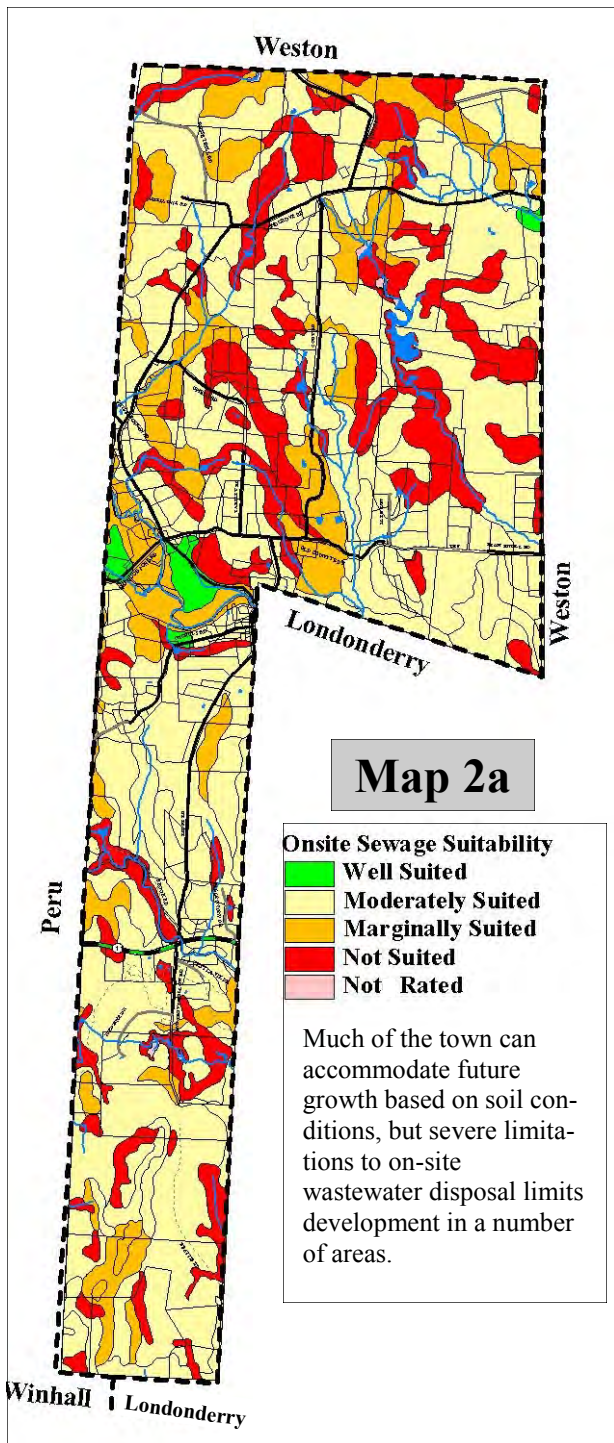
The prime agricultural land on Utley Flats is a valuable natural and scenic resource for the town; much of this land is protected from development. Mixed woodlands in the town's valleys and forested mountainsides contribute additional benefits to the town.

Much of Landgrove is covered by a forest of mixed hardwood and softwood trees. Highly productive forest soils exist throughout the town (Map 2b). These forests help prevent soil erosion and flooding, contribute to air and water quality, and provide valuable wildlife, recreational, and aesthetic resources. The town's sugar maple trees are a valuable resource for syrup producers and logging operations obtain wood that is used for heating (cordwood or woodchips), lumber, and other beneficial uses. Forest management is easier and more efficient on larger tracts of land, so efforts should be made to limit fragmentation of particularly important forest lands.

In addition to development pressures, forested areas of town can be impacted by environmental conditions. Climate change and acid deposition will affect species composition and overall forest health, and may also promote the spread of forest pests and invasive species that have an adverse affect on native plants. Efforts to mitigate such damage and to adapt to inevitable ecological changes should be supported.

As with agricultural lands, use value taxation, acquisition of land or development rights by conservation organizations (including the Green Mountain National Forest, which currently owns over 700 acres of forest land in Landgrove), and creative development techniques can be used to protect important forest areas. The town also should support appropriate economic activities that encourage the development and maintenance of a "working landscape." Proper agricultural and forest management techniques can support food and wood production, as well as a variety of related businesses.





### 5.3 Water Resources

Landgrove contains a rich variety of water resources (Map 3). The most visible of these are Utley Brook, Flood Brook, Carpenter Brook, Burnt Meadow Brook, Jones Brook, and several smaller streams. These streams provide clean water to larger waterways; they are tributaries of the West River which flows into the Connecticut River near Brattleboro. They also are important fisheries (although siltation has degraded fish habitat by covering the gravel substrate), provide a critical habitat component for many wildlife species, offer opportunities for swimming and other recreational activities, and are a key feature of the town's scenic rural character.

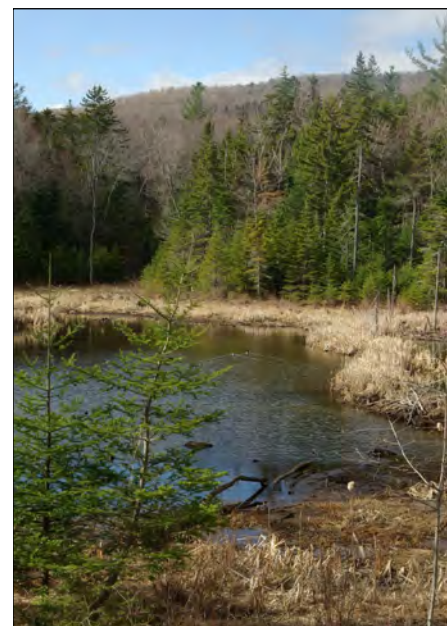


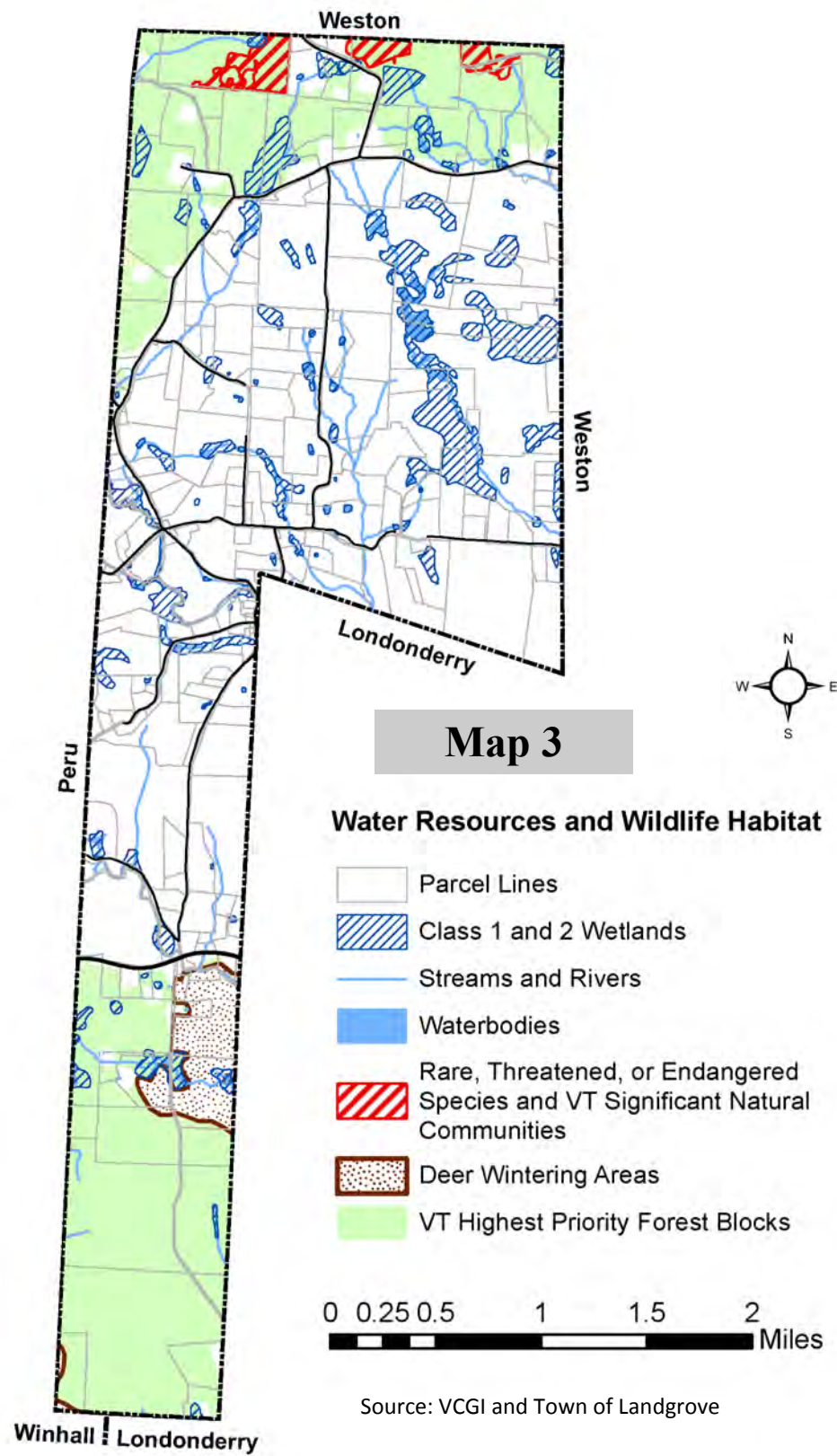
Utley Brook is one of several prominent streams in Landgrove.

These values will be enhanced if the streams remain free of pollution and the streambanks and riparian vegetation are not damaged. Development planning should maintain green space along streams and the town should seek opportunities to ensure public access to the streams in appropriate locations.

Another important surface water feature, found principally—but not exclusively—along stream valleys in Landgrove, are wetlands. These areas are transitional between aquatic and terrestrial systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. Benefits provided by wetlands include: flood and storm water control, maintenance of surface and ground water quality, scenic values, fish and wildlife habitat, and sources of nutrients for freshwater food chains.

The large wetland complex at the headwaters of Carpenter Brook is of ecological value to the community (see image to the right). A number of beaver dams have created ponds that are surrounded by meadows and second growth forest.





## 5.4 Flood Resilience

With changing climate conditions bringing more extreme weather events, flooding is likely to occur with much greater frequency. It is imperative that communities properly prepare to minimize future flood damage and to develop the capacity for post-flood resilience. Effective flood resilience requires several steps, including: assessing hazards, reducing risks, preparing for an emergency, and insuring residual risk.

Landgrove has identified local flood hazard areas by mapping both federally-designated Special Flood Hazard Areas and state-identified River Corridors throughout the community (see Map 4 in Chapter VII). Special Flood Hazard Areas include areas that have been determined to have a one percent or greater chance of inundation from flooding in any given year, and River Corridors are the paths within which rivers are likely to meander over time to find their most stable path while efficiently moving and storing sediment loads. Floodplains in Landgrove are located in the low-lying areas along Utley and Jones Brooks. The Landgrove Hazard Mitigation Plan (2015) provides more detailed descriptions of flood hazard areas, the history of flood events and their impacts, and vulnerable road and bridge infrastructure in the town.

According to GIS analysis, there is currently only 1 structure located in the Special Flood Hazard Area in Landgrove, but there are 7 structures located in the River Corridor (Table 2).

Table 2. Structures in the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) and River Corridor area in Landgrove. Sources: BCRC GIS analyses (using VCGI data layers)		
Type	SFHA	River Corridor
Single family	0	6
Multi-Family Residential	0	0
Other	1	0
Public	0	1
Total	1	7

To limit risk from flooding, Landgrove has adopted land use regulations to control development in hazard-prone areas. The Hazard Mitigation Plan further reduces risk by prioritizing specific risk mitigation actions for the town and by expanding access to FEMA risk mitigation funds. However, even the most aggressive hazard mitigation strategies cannot eliminate all risk, so communities must prepare to respond to emergencies and to insure properties vulnerable to flood damage. The town maintains a Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) to coordinate local response and facilitate contact with other towns and agencies before an emergency occurs. Through participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the town makes federal flood insurance available to all residents.

Following a flood event, a municipality can be burdened with several million dollars in repairs to vital infrastructure. In federally-declared disasters, qualified losses may be reimbursed through the federal public assistance program and the Vermont Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF), whose funding depends on local compliance with a set of requirements. The Town of Landgrove is currently eligible for the largest amount of state (ERAF) funding because it is a member of the NFIP, has adopted the Town Road and Bridge Standards, maintains a current LEOP, has an up-to-date Hazard Mitigation Plan, and has protected river corridors.

## 5.5 Wildlife Habitat

Many wildlife species, both game and nongame animals, thrive in Landgrove and contribute to the rural character and quality of life that residents enjoy. The most important factor in maintaining viable populations of these animals is the protection of their habitats. Streams, wetlands, and the mix of land cover types—open field, hardwood forest, softwood forest—characteristic of upland areas in Landgrove provide the diversity of habitats that support an abundance of wildlife. The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified important forest blocks that serve as habitat and travel corridors to wild species such as deer, bear, and moose (Map 3). Development and logging activities should be planned so as to avoid damage to these critical habitats.



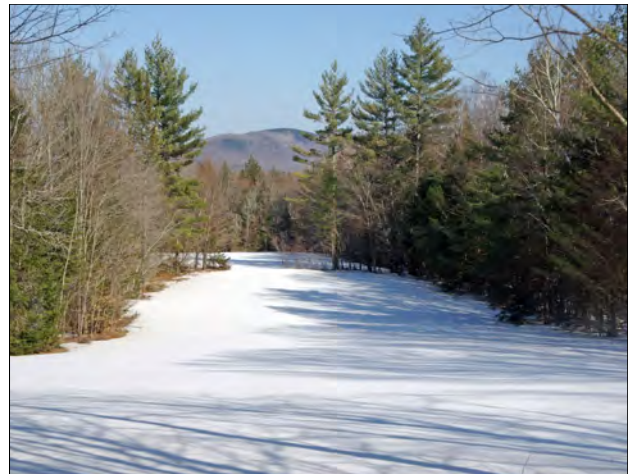
Wildlife are common throughout the town.

Specific measures that can be taken to minimize adverse impacts on wildlife include: maintenance of natural buffers between developed areas and wildlife habitat, retention of vegetated corridors along streams and between similar but separate habitat areas, and utilization of construction practices that limit environmental disturbances.

## 5.6 Scenic Resources

Landgrove's unique character results from an exceptionally scenic natural environment combined with traditional New England architecture and settlement patterns. Vistas from Utley Flats, distant views across highland meadows, the comfortable clustering of homes in the Village, snowy tracers of tree limbs over a country road on a winter morning, and countless other bucolic scenes are treasured by residents of the town. These aesthetic qualities also foster a sense of community and also appeal to visitors to the area.

Special care must be taken when planning land development in open fields, on ridges, or in other areas of scenic sensitivity. A single poorly planned development located in an important viewshed can inalterably degrade scenic resources for the entire town. New buildings and other structures should be sited and designed in a manner that is harmonious with both the natural environment and with nearby historic buildings. The town has created a special scenic protection zoning district covering the area in and around Utley Flats; consideration should be given to similar protection of other significant areas. Recognizing that town roads are among the most important public spaces in Landgrove, and that they serve as the foreground for the most widely viewed scenic vistas, road and utility construction and maintenance should be carefully planned and coordinated with the Select Board and Road Commissioner.



Vistas across open fields are important elements of the scenic rural landscape in many parts of Landgrove.

## 5.7 Historic Resources

Landgrove's historic sites and structures are important resources that provide residents with a sense of their heritage and a link with the past, promoting a feeling of community identity and pride. The Landgrove Historical Society now operates out of an office in the town hall. Historic buildings are found throughout the town, with a notable concentration in the Clarksville village area. Important public buildings, cemeteries, and stone walls also contribute to the town's historic character. A combination of regulatory controls, public funding for site and building improvements, and incentives for adaptive re-use of historic structures can help a town preserve its most important historic resources. The principal objectives of historic preservation in Landgrove are to:

- Maintain the community's special historic and cultural heritage and preserve a sense of place and pride for the town's residents;
- Maintain those historic and aesthetic qualities that are economic assets to the community and promote the economically viable reuse of historic structures;
- Ensure that renovations of historically important buildings preserve the character of the structures and are sensitive to adjacent historic buildings and sites whenever possible;
- Save historic structures whenever possible.



The Meetinghouse is an important piece of Landgrove's history.

## 5.8 Air Quality

Air is a resource that, although critical to our survival, is generally taken for granted until it becomes polluted. The quality of the air in Landgrove is excellent and efforts should be made to ensure that it remains clear and clean. New structures should be energy efficient to reduce the amount of fuel needed for heating and owners of inefficient woodstoves and furnaces should consider replacing them with newer models that limit discharges of particulate pollution. Consistent with state law, the burning of domestic refuse, a practice which releases dangerous levels of a variety of pollutants, is prohibited. Pollution from distant industrial facilities can affect air quality in Landgrove; the town should support regional and state efforts to prevent environmental damage from such sources.

## 5.9 Policies and Recommendations

1. Support efforts to conserve productive agricultural and forest soils and support diversified farming operations. Land development in rural areas should be designed to preserve as much important farm and forest land as possible.
2. The natural characteristics and values of Landgrove's streams, ponds, and wetlands should be preserved. New development should not disturb these resources or associated vegetation; wherever possible, a natural buffer of at least 50 feet should be maintained between developed areas and streams or wetlands. The Agency of Natural Resources should study the affect of siltation on area streams and recommend remediation measures.
3. Development in floodplains must be carefully controlled in accordance with flood hazard area regulations. Additional study of potential fluvial erosion hazard areas should be conducted. The Town should continue to fulfill ERAF requirements, including maintaining a Hazard Mitigation Plan, a Local Emergency Operations Plan, participation in the NFIP, compliance with Town Road and Bridge Standards, and River Corridor protections.
4. The quality and quantity of ground water should be protected through strict adherence to state and local environmental and health regulations.
5. An activity or development in the vicinity of an important natural area or wildlife habitat must be carefully planned so that damage to those resources is avoided.
6. The town should be alert to any potential threats to local air quality and support efforts to ensure that Landgrove's air remains clear and clean.
7. Important sand and gravel resources should remain available for economic extraction and use; regulations should ensure that extraction sites are properly developed and restored.
8. New development should be harmonious with the town's scenic natural landscape and historic architecture. The town has enacted scenic resource protection regulations and should consider historic district regulations. The town should encourage preservation of historic buildings and structures; adaptive reuse of historic buildings, rather than demolition and replacement, should be pursued whenever practical and appropriate.



## VI. Recreation

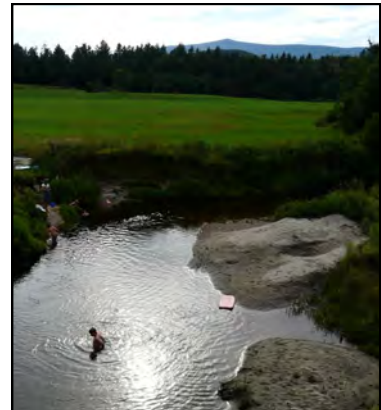
### 6.1 Recreational Resources

The recreational needs of Landgrove are not so much for added facilities as for planned preservation of the town's natural attributes. Because the town is fortunate to have an environment ideally suited to a wide variety of outdoor activities: hiking, cross country skiing, bicycling, horseback riding, and fishing, to name just a few, priority should be placed on maintaining the quality of those experiences. Recreational facilities should be informal rather than highly developed, and recreational activities should not contribute in any way to the deterioration of the natural environment.

The conversion of local roadways to conduits for high speed through traffic has been destructive to the village life of many Vermont towns, and the transformation of those roads has greatly reduced their value as recreational resources. As roads are widened and paved, traffic speeds increase and the usefulness and safety of the roads for children, walkers, runners, bicyclists, and horseback riders decrease. Landgrove has consistently supported retention of the town's system of narrow gravel roads.

The following recreational facilities are available to residents:

- The Town Hall has a meeting room used for social activities and a small outdoor playground.
- The Luerich Memorial Field, a five acre lot with space for parking, field sports, and picnicking.
- Three tennis courts: one on a private membership basis and two under the management of the Landgrove Inn (which also has a swimming pool).
- A system of trails and Forest Service roads that are used for cross country skiing, hiking, and other recreational activities. An extensive network of trails in adjacent towns can be accessed from trails in Landgrove.
- Horses and riding instruction are available in nearby towns.



Much of the Green Mountain National Forest is actively managed for recreational use and all of this land is accessible to the public. Hapgood Pond, a Forest Service campground and day use area that includes a swimming beach, is located just up the road in Peru. Within Landgrove, however, public land ownership is more limited. The current generous attitudes regarding the use of private land is most welcome and should be encouraged as the town would not want to see "No Trespassing" signs curtailing access to open spaces and recreational sites.

### 6.2 Policies and Recommendations

1. Preservation of an outstanding natural environment for outdoor sports is essential to the quality of life for Landgrove residents. Of particular value are wildlife habitats, streams, the unpaved rural road system, and the expanses of undeveloped land.
2. And development of recreational facilities should be as informal and economical as possible.
3. Developments or capital investments that involve, or potentially affect access to, an important recreational resource should include provisions to ensure protection of that resource and continued public access.



## VII. Land Use

### 7.1 Overview


The town's land use plan, and the land use regulations that are intended to implement the plan, will strongly influence the future pattern of development in Landgrove. The overall objective of the land use plan is to maintain the town's rural character and environmental quality while providing opportunities for appropriate growth and economic development. The land use plan should be reviewed periodically to assess whether or not full implementation of the plan is an accurate representation of the community's vision for its future. Landgrove currently is divided into four separate land use, or zoning, districts plus a scenic overlay district and regulated flood hazard areas (Map 4).

### 7.2 Rural Residential District

The Rural Residential District is intended to accommodate residential growth at a moderately low density in a manner that provides for a safe and efficient development pattern while maintaining the rural and scenic character of the landscape. This land use district includes all land within 1,500 feet of roadways that is not within the Commercial or Village Districts (Map 4). Over 70 percent (4,029 acres) of the land in town lies within the Rural Residential District, and most of Landgrove's future growth is expected to occur in these areas (a build-out model showed close to 90 percent of future development taking place in this district). Based on past trends and the municipal land use regulations, nearly all such future development is expected to be single-family residential homes.

Permitted uses in the Rural Residential District include one and two family dwellings, home occupations, municipal and religious uses, and certain natural resource based activities. Uses that are conditionally permitted include home businesses and offices, tourists homes, nurseries, greenhouses, agricultural stands, public utilities, cemeteries, and planned unit developments (PUDs). A minimum lot size of four acres per use or dwelling unit is required. Lot size and other dimensional requirements (but not overall density) may be varied by the planning commission in a PUD when an alternative plan of development would be in harmony with the objectives of the Town Plan.

Because Rural Residential zoned lands are located relatively near existing roads, the objective of encouraging an efficient and economical development pattern is supported. The type and intensity of development that is permitted will promote protection of the environment and the town's rural character.



Low density residential development and natural resource based activities are encouraged in the Rural Residential District.

The incremental development that is expected to continue in this district, however, does threaten to adversely impact some important natural resources. Prime agricultural land, scenic vistas, important wildlife habitat, and other valuable resources are located in this district and can be permanently damaged if not considered in the development planning process. In some cases, acquisition of land or development rights by a conservation organization may provide the best way to preserve these resources. In other instances, regulation may be appropriate. Subdivision regulations, zoning bylaw

provisions allowing the planning commission to mandate planned unit development, and a scenic resource protection bylaw all are options that the town might want to consider to ensure that future development conforms to the objectives of the Town Plan.

### 7.3 Conservation/Agriculture/Resource (CARE) Districts

The town established the CARE Districts in 1990 to protect lands that have a high natural, recreational, scenic, or other special resource value and to limit development in areas that have substantial constraints to development. Land development in the CARE Districts must be at densities low enough to protect their resource value and to perpetuate the traditional settlement pattern of the town. The CARE Districts include all land within Landgrove lying more than 1,500 feet distant from roadways, as shown on the land use plan map (Map 4). There are several separate areas within this district, the largest being in the northeast and southern sections of the town. A total of 1,507 acres of land lie in the CARE Districts.

Permitted uses and densities of development are consistent with the poor access to public roads, physical limitations for development, and presence of important natural resources. Permitted uses include one and two family dwellings and certain natural resource and recreational activities. Home offices and industries, tourist houses, PUDs, public recreational facilities, and certain commercial agricultural uses are conditionally permitted. The minimum lot area is ten acres per use or dwelling unit.

Because of the poor soil conditions common in CARE Districts, the presence of protected wetlands, public (US Forest Service) land ownership, and zoning restrictions, the amount of future growth expected in these areas is extremely limited (build-out analysis projected at no more than 32 units). Such a scenario is consistent with the objectives of this land use plan.

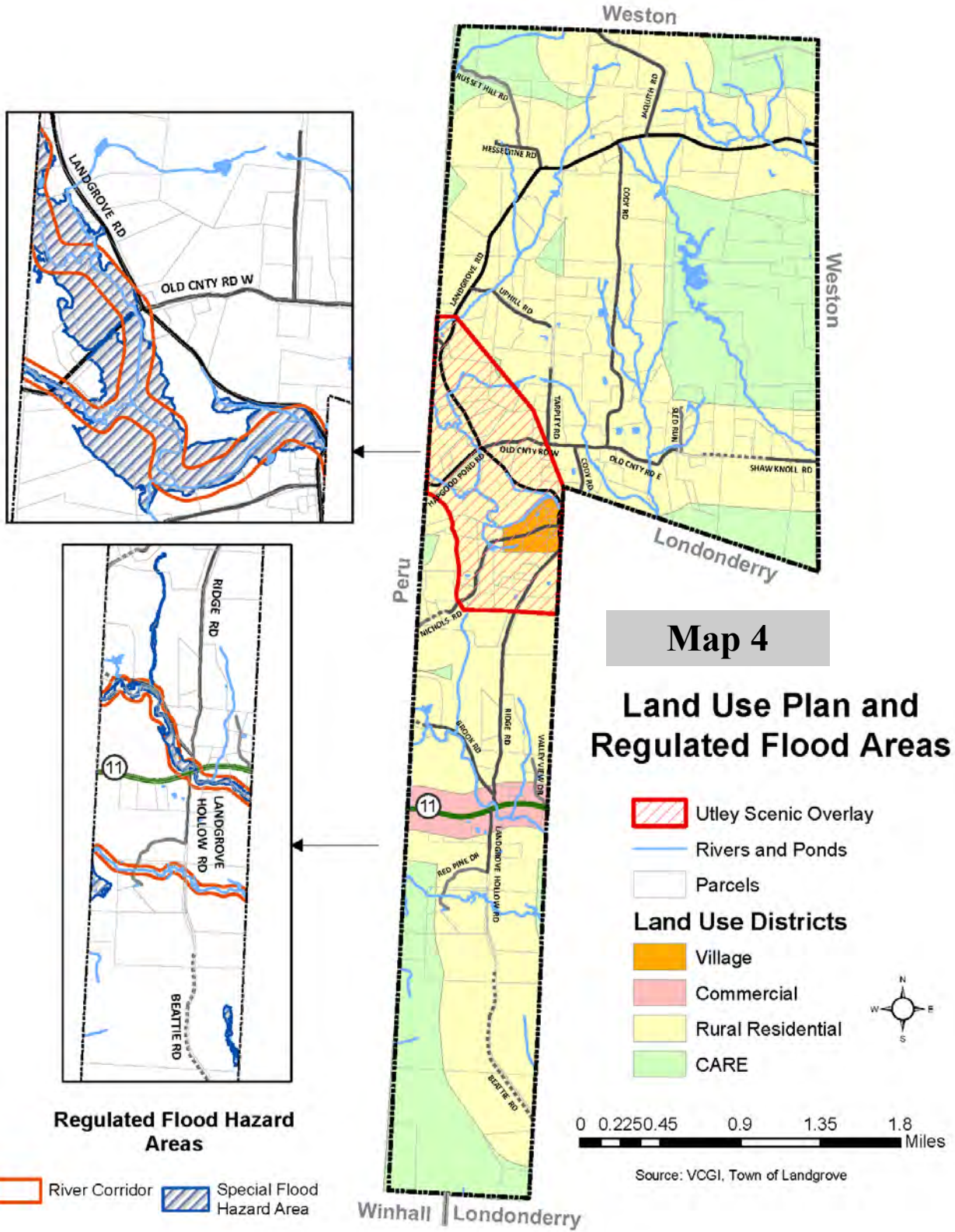
Large lot subdivisions, however, can result in the fragmentation of important resource lands, making management for forest products or recreational use difficult. Acquisition of conservation easements, expanded public land ownership, and planned unit developments should be considered as ways to protect areas that are identified as having particularly high resource values.



Protection of natural and scenic resources is an important objective of the town's land use plan.


### 7.4 Village District

The Village District is located in and around the historic "Clarksville" area (Map 4), and is intended to preserve the historic residential character of the compact village area while accommodating appropriate uses of existing structures and new residential development at moderate densities. This district contains only 47 acres of land and is essentially fully developed at this time, although new accessory uses/dwelling units may be permitted in accordance with zoning regulations. Existing uses are primarily residential (one and two family dwellings are permitted); conditionally permitted uses include home professional offices and private recreational facilities.



**Map 4**

**Land Use Plan and Regulated Flood Areas**

-  Utley Scenic Overlay
-  Rivers and Ponds
-  Parcels
- Land Use Districts**
-  Village
-  Commercial
-  Rural Residential
-  CARE



0 0.2250.45 0.9 1.35 1.8 Miles

Source: VCGI, Town of Landgrove

**Regulated Flood Hazard Areas**

-  River Corridor
-  Special Flood Hazard Area

The town has an interest in preserving the historic character of areas such as the Village. Historic structures can never be replaced once they are lost. Many historic buildings in Landgrove have been carefully restored and most new structures have been designed to be consistent with the town's architectural heritage. This trend should be encouraged in the future. The town also should consider adoption of historic district zoning regulations for the Village District.



Historic buildings clustered along the roadway create a unique streetscape in the Village District.

#### 7.5 Commercial District

The Commercial District, which extends 625 feet back from either side of Route 11 (Map 4), includes 129 acres and is designed to provide for mixed commercial and residential uses and other compatible development at moderately low densities to conveniently serve the retail, service, business, and residential needs of the community without creating strip development, unsightly clutter, land use conflicts, or other undesirable impacts.

Specific permitted uses include retail and professional buildings, restaurants, inns, and residential and natural resource based uses. Because Route 11 is the only paved road in Landgrove, and because the town wants to retain its quiet rural residential character, this district is the only area in town appropriate for substantial commercial development. A site plan must be approved by the planning commission prior to any commercial development. Standards for traffic safety, parking, landscaping, screening, signs, and other conditions set forth in the zoning bylaws must be satisfied.

#### 7.6 Utley Flats Scenic Overlay District

The ridges, hillsides, and open agricultural lands in and around the Utley Flats area represent some of Landgrove's most important and cherished resources, contributing significantly to the town's rural and pastoral character. Preservation and conservation of these areas is essential to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of Landgrove's current and future residents.

The Utley Flats Scenic Overlay District includes 571 acres (Map 4) and is dominated by Utley Brook which rises in the Green Mountain National Forest and emerges from woodland into agricultural terrain near the Danby Road/Bufham Hill intersection. It consists not only of the fields adjacent to the

brook, but also includes the steep ridges surrounding the valley and the historic Landgrove Village area. An interrupted tree line follows the course of Utley Brook. Development along the roads in and adjacent to the district is a traditional New England rural pattern of houses clustered together in a village and other houses and farms lying close to the roads with extensive open fields surrounding them on both sides of the brook. The back yards of some village homes abut the brook on the west side of the Village and, where the road through the Village crosses the bridge, extensive wetland vegetation provides evidence of the old Harlow Mill Pond to the northwest. Although hillsides and ridgelines around the Utley Flats area were cleared for pasture land in the nineteenth century, today they are once again primarily wooded. Most recent building throughout the district has been accomplished in a manner that preserves these important characteristics of the landscape.

The open fields, hillsides, ridgelines, and historic village which comprise the Utley Flats Scenic Overlay District are highly sensitive to changes in land development patterns. Wooded hillsides are vulnerable to the visual impacts of land development where the tree canopy is substantially altered or removed altogether; this is especially true when new structures are built on steep hillsides which have been cleared of natural vegetation and therefore lack adequate downslope screening. Ridgelines seen against the sky are especially sensitive to land development which interrupts the natural horizon. On the valley floor, subdivision of contiguous farmland into residential parcels can destroy the viability of long-term agricultural use. An additional concern is that construction of new homes and accessory structures, and the installation of driveways and above-ground utility lines in the middle of open fields can significantly degrade the area's scenic quality.

Because of its scenic qualities, importance to the town's unique identity, and its vulnerability to development impacts, a conditional use permit—subject to specific development standards that are included in the zoning bylaws—must be obtained from the Zoning Board of Adjustment prior to most development in the district.



The Utley Flats Scenic Overlay District provides a measure of regulatory review that is intended to preserve the character of this unique part of the community.

## 7.7 Regulated Flood Hazard Areas

The issues associated with development in flood hazard areas were reviewed in Section 5.4. Development in the regulated flood hazard areas (Map 4) is controlled to reduce the risk of damage to property or the environment, personal injury, and unnecessary costs to the public.

## 7.8 Policies and Recommendations

1. Landgrove's unique character with its a small historic village and scenic rural countryside should be maintained.
2. All existing land use/zoning districts should be periodically reviewed to address changing needs of the town and to reflect the consensus of its residents. The districts may be revised or even eliminated, but should maintain the intent of the Town Plan.
3. A special effort should be made to protect important natural, scenic, and historic resources through regulation and/or acquisition of some interest in critical properties. The town may consider adoption of additional regulations - scenic vista, historic district, or subdivision regulations - to ensure protection of valued resources.
4. The following specific policies apply to any new development:
  - Important natural, scenic, and historic resources should be preserved to the maximum extent possible.
  - The density of development must not exceed the amount that the land is physically capable of supporting.
  - During construction, all necessary measures should be taken to minimize soil erosion.
  - Access to important natural or recreational resources should not be obstructed.
  - Proposed development that exceeds the town's planned growth rate, or which causes substantial economic hardship to the town because of the increased demand for facilities and services, should not be permitted.
  - Commercial and industrial uses should be limited to those identified in the zoning bylaws and should be of a scale and design consistent with the town's rural character.



## VIII. Transportation

### 8.1 Town Transportation Infrastructure

As a small rural town, Landgrove’s transportation system is somewhat limited, but still accounts for a significant share of the annual municipal budget. One state highway, Route 11, crosses the “panhandle” of the town about a mile and a half south of the Village. In addition, the town maintains over 15 miles of local roadways (Table 3).

<b>Table 3. Landgrove, Vermont Roadway Mileage by Highway Classification</b>	
Class 1 Town Highways	0.00 miles
Class 2 Town Highways	4.82 miles
Class 3 Town Highways	9.55 miles
Class 4 Town Road (not maintained)	1.50 miles
State Highways	0.82 miles
<b>Total Highway Mileage</b>	<b>15.19 miles (excluding Class 4)</b>



Class 2 town highways serve as principal travel routes within Landgrove and connecting to other towns and/or the state highway system (Map 5). Those roads—Ridge Road, Landgrove Road, and Hapgood Pond Road, provide connections to Peru, Weston, Londonderry, and to Route 11. The secondary, or Class 3, town roads serve primarily to provide direct access to individual properties throughout the community. These roads should be adequate to serve the transportation needs of the community for the foreseeable future. In addition, the four sections of Class 4 town highway, although not maintained for vehicular use, are potentially important public rights-of-way that can be used by hikers, skiers, and horseback riders. The Class 4 segments that continue east from Old County Road and south from Landgrove Hollow Road are particularly important, and those rights-of-way should remain in town ownership.

The maintenance of the network of town roads, bridges, culverts, and drainage systems involves considerable work and expense. Landgrove hires qualified private contractors to operate the town’s road equipment. This arrangement has proven to be cost effective and has kept the road system in good repair. Adequate funds must be set aside in the municipal equipment fund to cover costs associated with the repair and replacement of highway vehicles and equipment. In addition, the town should seek a suitable site for the storage of highway equipment and should investigate whether a new highway garage is needed.

The relatively low volume of traffic on Landgrove’s roads helps to minimize the need for costly improvements and maintenance. The low density of development and the land use pattern established in this Plan should continue to limit the overall amount of development and prevent demands for new public roads in remote sections of the town. If a sizeable new development is proposed, the probable impact on the town’s transportation infrastructure should be determined and the developer should be responsible for the cost of required improvements.

The fact that none of the town’s roads are paved also limits traffic volume and speed. Through traffic is less likely to make use of a gravel road system like the one found in Landgrove. By limiting traffic speeds, these gravel roads also help promote safety. The steep and prolonged grades and sharp

curves common to most of Landgrove’s roads suggest that paving would reduce traffic safety by encouraging higher speeds and volumes on these roads.

The lack of pavement in Landgrove does present some challenges, as well, however, as “mud season” and severe weather events can make travel difficult or hazardous. Heavy rain events, such as the August 2011 tropical storm can inflict heavy damage, washing out culverts and vulnerable sections of roadway. The town should identify areas that have been, or are likely to be, impacted by such events and make sure that culverts and drainage systems are adequately sized and constructed; if they are not, replacements or reconstruction should be included in short and long range improvement plans.

The town’s narrow, winding gravel roads also contribute to the community’s scenic and historic character. Roadway improvements and maintenance activities should, wherever possible, preserve existing road width and alignment, and important features such as roadside trees, stone walls, and other scenic or historic attributes.



The town’s unpaved country roads are scenic and limit traffic problems, but mud season presents some challenges.



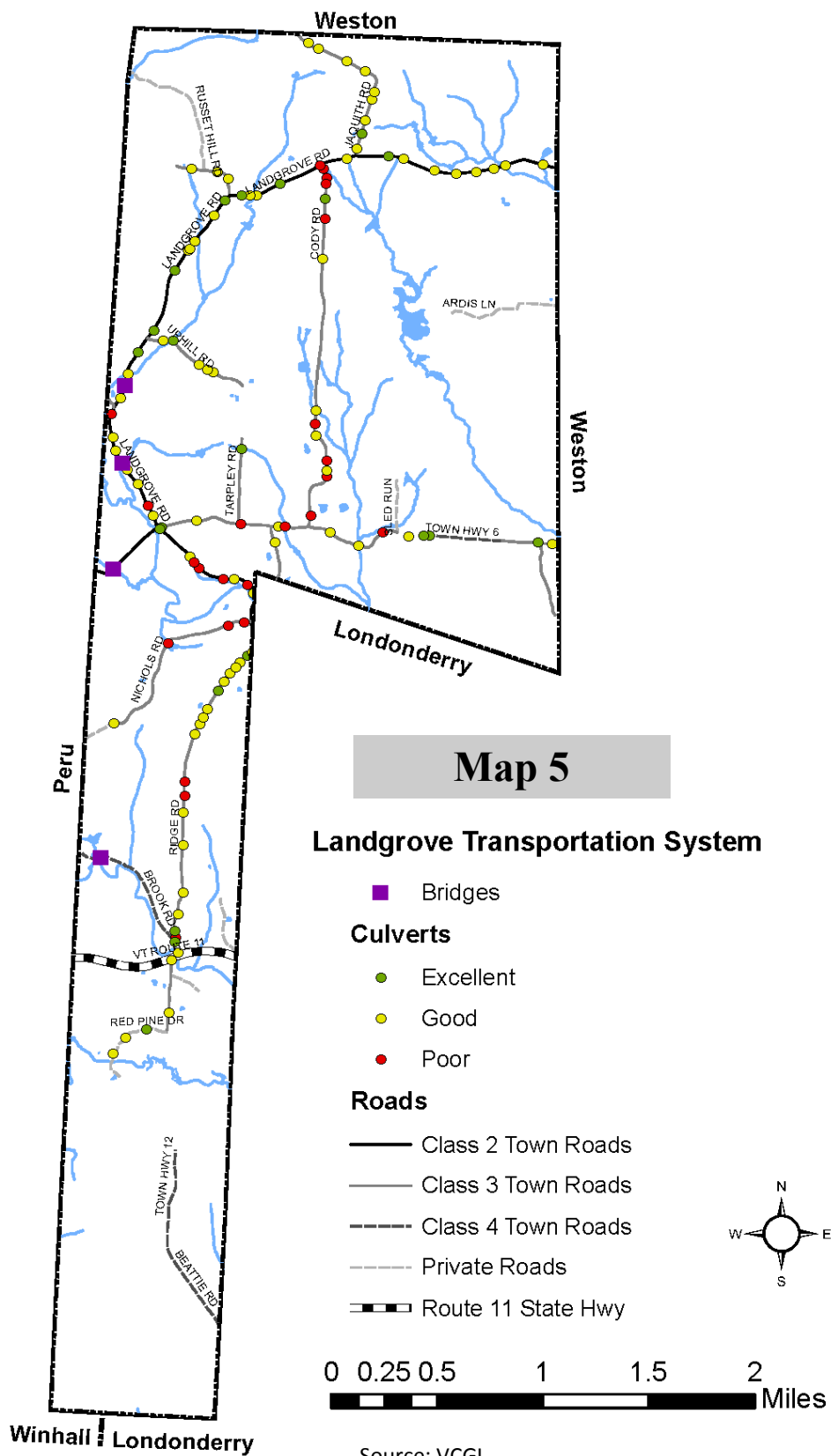
## 8.2 Policies and Recommendations

1. Retain the current system of unpaved town roads. Maintenance activities should focus on efficiency, economy, and prevention of deterioration rather than on facilitation of greater traffic speeds.
2. Road construction activities, public or private, should preserve scenic and historic features of the landscape and should avoid impacts on important natural areas.
3. Continue the existing policy of: (a) not maintaining, plowing, or resurfacing Class 4 town highways, (b) not paying for the cost of improving a Class 4 town highway to Class 3 standards for the purpose of serving new development, and (c) only accepting new public Class 3 roads that meet the specifications of the Town Road Ordinance.
4. Land use regulations should continue to limit overall development density and discourage development in remote areas, thereby minimizing negative impacts on town roads.
5. Continue efforts to encourage driving at speeds appropriate to road surfaces and conditions.



6. Continue implementation of the long-term plan for roadway improvements focusing on roadway segments, culverts, and bridges that may be vulnerable to future severe weather events. Continue the active investigation to acquire a site for vehicle and equipment storage and/or for the stockpiling of sand, gravel, and other materials. Evaluate the costs and benefits of constructing a town garage.





## IX Community Facilities and Services

### 9.1 Educational Facilities

Because of Landgrove’s small population it is impractical to operate a school locally. Since forming the first Regional Education District (RED) in Vermont with neighboring towns of Weston, Peru, and Londonderry, Landgrove has reversed in its local community the statewide trend of shrinking student populations and rising education costs. Local students have continued to attend school from kindergarten through grade eight at Flood Brook. The town traditionally has supported school choice and students attend various high schools in the area, with the town paying a fixed amount toward tuition that is approved annually.

In 2017, the district expanded to form a new RED called the Taconic and Green (T&G) District, incorporating the towns of Manchester, Dorset, Danby, Mount Tabor, and Sunderland. This new district maintains schools for K-8 students, and school choice for 9-12 students. These changes should lead to savings as well as improvements in curriculum development and coordination.

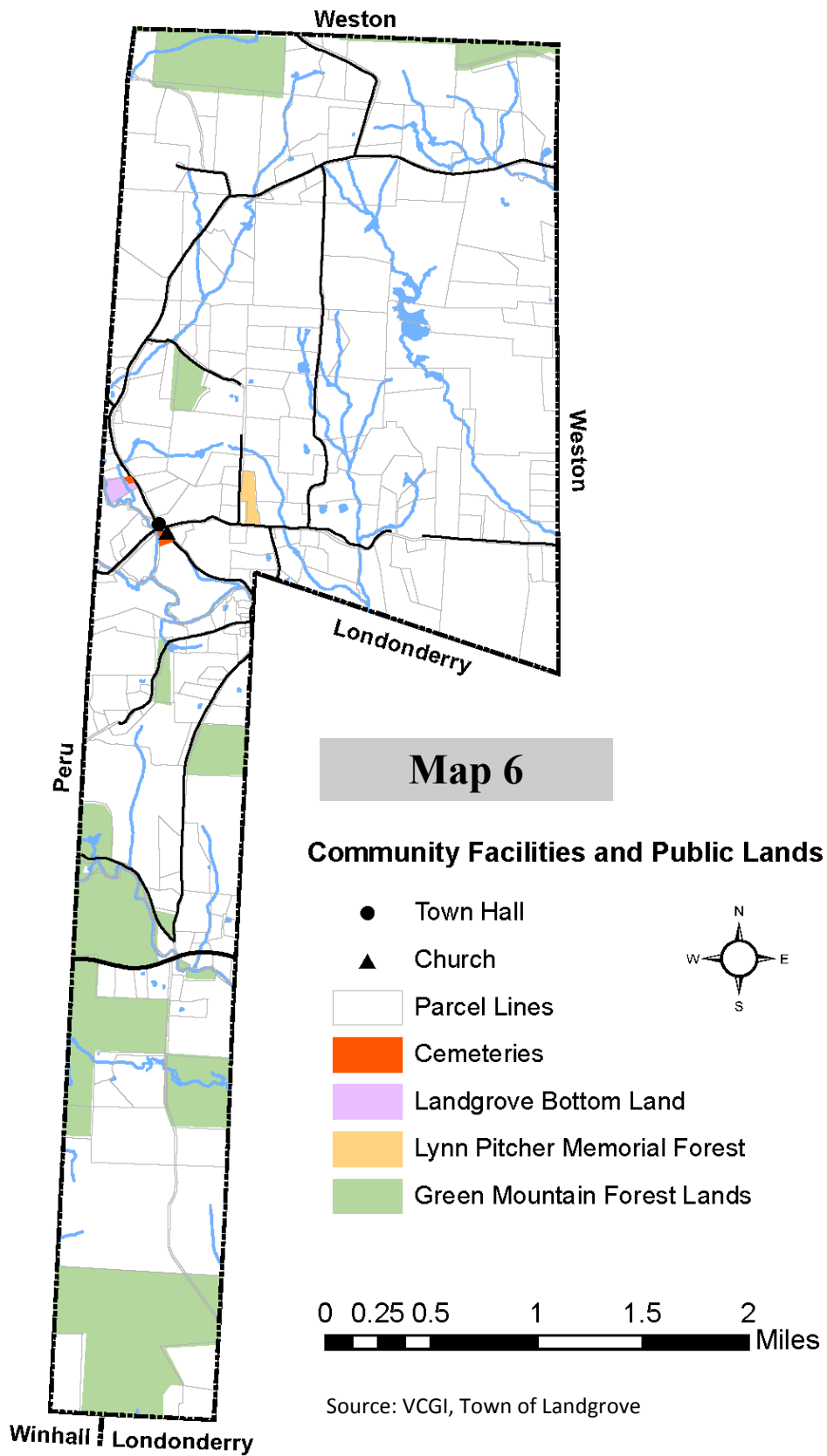
Vermont’s educational funding system causes a large share of Landgrove’s education taxes to be sent to the state to be shared with other communities. As a result, education tax rates have remained high despite low numbers of local students relative to other towns. The town should remain actively involved with the school districts that serve the area. Coordination between town and school expenditure budgets is particularly important because a majority of the total local budget is allocated to educational expenditures.

### 9.2 Public Buildings and Land

The Town Hall and the Meetinghouse are the only public buildings in Landgrove; the town also owns three parcels of land and several hundred acres are owned by the United States Forest Service (Map 6). Public buildings play an important role in the life of the community and should be maintained in good condition. A recent addition to the town hall has provided expanded office space while the meeting room remains an important venue for town boards, commissions, and other public events. Town and federally owned lands are intended to be used for open space conservation, recreation, and



The recently expanded town hall is an important public building.



other natural resource based activities. As noted in the previous section, the town does need to acquire land for storage of highway equipment and materials.

### 9.3 Emergency Services and Law Enforcement

The town is served by the Peru, Weston, and Londonderry fire departments and by the Londonderry Rescue Squad. Residents can access these emergency services by dialing “911.” The town should continue to support these crucial services through annual appropriations. A locally elected constable serves the town when called upon. The Vermont State Police serves the local area from the Westminster barracks.

### 9.4 Health Care

Established over 40 years ago, the Mountain Valley Medical Center (MVMC) is a key resource for primary health care for Landgrove and surrounding towns. Located on Route 11 (Map 6) and originally founded and entirely supported by the mountain towns, the MVMC provides medical assistance to all residents regardless of their ability to pay. Within the last two years, the MVMC has become part of the wider network of the Springfield Medical Care System, allowing access to a significantly expanded range of medical services (though the clinic buildings and facilities remain property of the MVMC). The MVMC is governed by a board that consists of representatives from five mountain towns, including Landgrove. All donations in support of MVMC stay with the clinic and are used only to benefit local communities.

Regional hospitals are located in Bennington, Springfield, Rutland, and Lebanon, New Hampshire. Also providing services to residents of Landgrove are the Visiting Nurse Alliance of Vermont and New Hampshire, the Vermont Center for Independent Living, and the Mental Health Service of Southeast Vermont. Continued support for these existing services should ensure that adequate health care services remain available to the community.

### 9.5 Electricity and Telecommunications

Satisfactory electric and land line telephone service is available throughout Landgrove. The town should aggressively pursue improved access to broadband (fiber optic, cable, or other broadband services) and cellular coverage throughout the community. Information on current broadband coverage and plans for improvement projects can be found at the website, [www.broadbandvt.org](http://www.broadbandvt.org). Any new tower installations, however, must be consistent with this Town Plan, the zoning bylaws, and should not significantly degrade the town’s scenic landscapes and aesthetic values.



Town residents recently provided financial support to build a stone wall at one of the local historic cemeteries.

### 9.6 Cemeteries

There are at least five cemeteries in Landgrove (Map 6). A commission oversees the two main cemeteries in town. Town residents decided in 1993 to appropriate funds for cemetery maintenance to augment revenues raised from plot sales. Receipts from plot sales are now added to the cemetery

fund, with interest used to reduce the amount of the municipal appropriation. The town provided financial support to the Cemetery Commission to construct a beautiful stone wall at the Landgrove Cemetery, completed in 2016.

### 9.7 Community Organizations

- Church: The Landgrove Community Church, adjacent to the Town Hall (Map 6), offers services during the summer months, featuring visiting speakers and ministers of varied religious and secular backgrounds. The building is available for weddings, funerals, and other private services upon request to the organization’s Board of Trustees.
- Community Club: All residents and non-resident property owners in Landgrove are part of the Landgrove Community Club which organizes several events during the year, including a small Halloween party for the town’s children and a parade and picnic celebrating the Fourth of July. In the past, the Community Club also has sponsored square dances, children’s summer art classes at the Town Hall, and has been used as a vehicle to aid those community members in financial need.
- Historical Society: The Landgrove Historical Society (LHS) office is located in the Town Hall. Its members research town history, preserve important historical materials, and develop programs about Landgrove that are of interest to community residents. The LHS office is open by appointment.
- Library: There is no library in the town, but nearby regional libraries are located in Weston and Londonderry. The town should cooperate with those libraries to ensure that their services remain available to local residents.



The Landgrove Community Club organizes festivities for the Fourth of July and some other events.

### 9.8 Solid Waste

Landgrove is one of five towns utilizing the Londonderry transfer station for solid waste disposal. Recycling is available at that site. Because it is not feasible for Landgrove to manage solid waste disposal and waste reduction programs on its own, the town should continue to participate in the most efficient regional solid waste management program available to it.

### 9.9 Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal

While the town does not own a public water supply or sewage disposal system, and none is available anywhere in the community, there is no indication that such systems will be required at any

future time. The land use plan and zoning regulations are intended to ensure that water quality, availability, and public health are protected through continued reliance on individual on-site water supply and wastewater disposal systems. Consequently, strict adherence to all local and state regulations covering the design and construction of such systems is critically important.

#### 9.10 Childcare

Childcare centers and family childcare homes provide care and early education for the town's children and contribute to the local and regional economy by enabling parents to participate in the workforce. The nearest registered or licensed providers are located in Peru, Weston, and Londonderry. The town's land use regulations allow home-based childcare centers in accordance with Vermont state law.

#### 9.11 Governmental Services

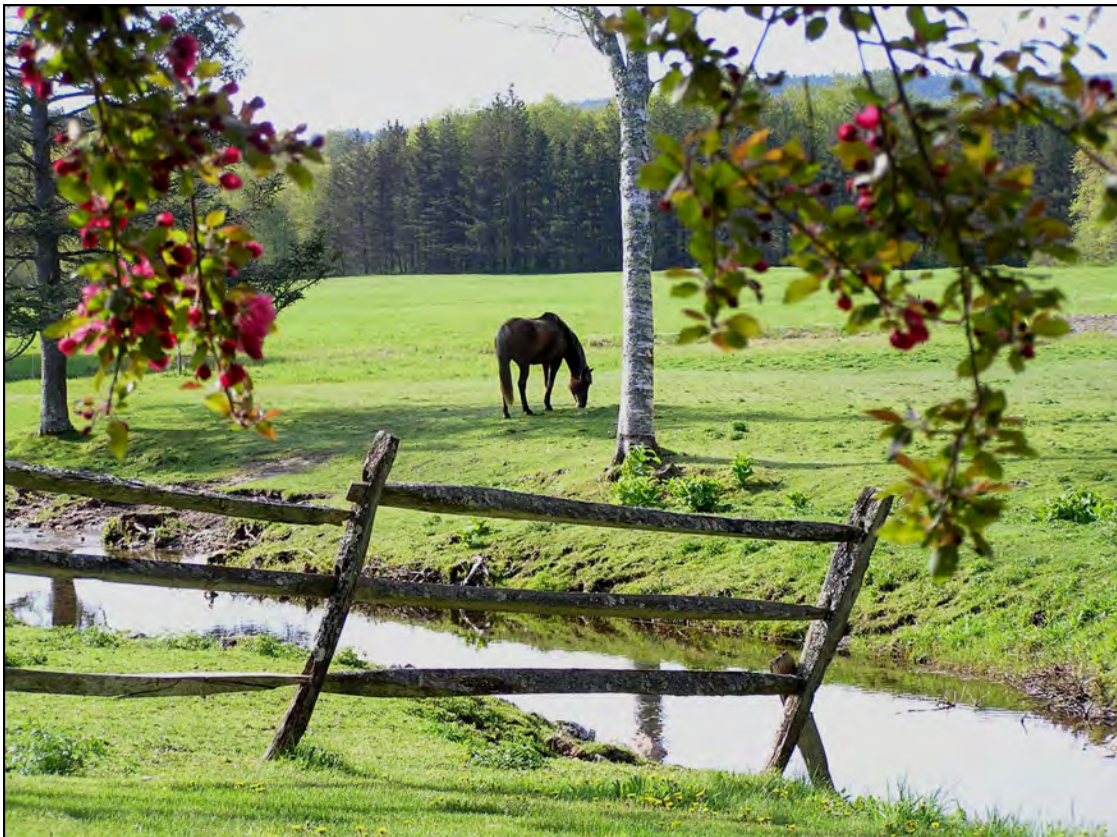
Landgrove has a small municipal government that provides an array of important services to the community. In addition to overseeing the maintenance of the network of local roads and bridges, town officials are responsible for property assessments, managing municipal finances, implementing land use regulations, and the many record-keeping and licensing functions overseen by the town clerk's office. These functions all rely on significant effort by elected and appointed volunteers. Town boards and commissions include:

- Select Board: the town's elected legislative body—develops budgets, hears and responds to citizen concerns, votes to adopt ordinances and bylaws, enters into contracts for services;
- Board of Adjustment: rules on specific types of zoning applications and appeals;
- Planning Commission: prepares the Town Plan, land use regulations, and reviews certain site plans for conformance with regulations;
- Conservation Commission: advances efforts to conserve important land and natural resources;
- Cemetery Board: oversees maintenance of two local cemeteries;
- Justices of the Peace: among other duties, hear appeals of property assessments;
- School Directors: represent the town on the regional educational district board;
- Listers: determine property values for the purpose of local taxation;
- Auditors: review the town's books and accounts;
- Bennington County Regional Commission: Landgrove is entitled to two representatives to this county-wide organization that provides technical planning assistance to towns in a number of areas.

#### 9.12 Policies and Recommendations

1. Developments that impact public facilities and services should be permitted only if it can be shown that such impacts will not subject taxpayers to economic hardship.
2. The town should continue to support the Londonderry Rescue Squad, the Phoenix Fire Department, and other essential public services.
3. Consider adoption of a capital budget and program to help coordinate the financing of major public expenditures.
4. Pursue acquisition of a suitable parcel of land for storage of town highway equipment and materials.

5. Strictly enforce zoning and health regulations, especially those that pertain to wastewater disposal, to ensure that water quality and public health are protected.
6. Continue efforts to reduce the generation of solid waste through educational programs, initiatives to reduce the use of wasteful packaging, and through recycling programs. Enforce state regulations dealing with the dumping of rubbish and junk in unauthorized places using the police powers given to municipalities under V.S.A. Title 24, Chapter 61, Subchapter 8.
7. The town should work with electricity and telecommunications providers to ensure that the best available services are provided to residents, businesses, and the municipal office building at a reasonable cost. Continuing efforts should be made to establish the best possible infrastructure, including fiber optic and broadband technologies. New facilities, such as telecommunication towers, should be provided as necessary, but must be sited with sensitivity to environmental, scenic, and neighborhood concerns.



## X ENERGY

### 10.1 Overview

Energy is a basic need of our society, but with most of it derived from scarce resources, effective planning for energy use and conservation is extremely important. Our transportation system relies on energy to propel the cars, trucks, buses, airplanes, and trains that transport people and goods to, from, and throughout the community. Homes and businesses require energy to power appliances and machinery and to provide heat in the winter and cooling in the summer. The town and many local residents have taken some steps to promote energy conservation, but much more can be done.

The amount of money spent on energy is considerable, even in a small town like Landgrove. Total residential space heating expenditures in town (using energy consumption data for average homes in Vermont and US Census data for the type of fuel used in Landgrove's 74 year-round homes) amount to approximately \$209,000 per year. Assuming that the town's 90 homes belonging to non-residents spend half as much to heat their homes each year (\$104,500), space heating alone accounts for well over \$300,000 in annual energy costs. Applying a similar analysis for electricity consumption, Landgrove homeowners (residents and non-residents) spend approximately \$115,000 annually. Finally, vehicles used by the town's permanent population can be expected to consume over 78,000 gallons of gasoline each year (US Census, Federal Highway Administration, and US EPA estimates) - at an annual cost of approximately \$275,000. All told then, energy consumption by Landgrove residents and homeowners exceeds \$700,000 per year.

Legislation known as Act 174 was passed in 2016 to help Vermont communities chart paths to reach the statewide energy goal of 90% renewable energy by 2050, and to create a pathway for local land use priorities to receive substantial deference during energy siting proceedings of the Public Service Board. Energy plan elements that meet the standards of Act 174 include detailed energy use and future projections analyses, energy reduction and conversion strategies, and resource mapping exercises. Landgrove may consider the opportunities made available through Act 174.

There are many measures that can be taken to promote energy conservation and efficiency. Topics covered in this chapter will include weatherization of existing buildings, use of renewable energy resources, provision of a transportation system that encourages reduced energy use, support for locally produced goods and services, and utilization of energy efficient building designs, vehicles, and appliances.

### 10.2 Improving Energy Conservation and Efficiency in Landgrove

Careful planning of new developments and individual homes can contribute to energy conservation. Compact planned unit developments, building orientation to take advantage of solar gain for heating and natural lighting, proper use of vegetation, and energy-saving insulation and appliances will enhance conservation efforts. The town should make all applicants for zoning permits aware of the state's energy efficiency standards, which require that new buildings meet Residential Building Energy Standards. To encourage homeowners to invest in energy efficiency improvements, the town could make use of the recently enacted "Clean Energy Assessment District" or other programs that reduce the upfront cost of such improvements.

Owners of existing homes can benefit from an energy audit, where potential weatherization improvements are identified together with the cost and expected energy (and dollar) savings of each. There are a number of businesses in the region that offer energy audit services, and organizations such as the Bennington Rutland Opportunity Council (BROC) provide weatherization services to income eligible homeowners and renters.



New technologies and state and federal financial incentives also provide opportunities for homeowners to add renewable energy systems to their houses. Solar panels, evacuated tubes, and other devices can provide significant hot water and space heating while solar photovoltaics and wind turbines can generate electricity. Small geothermal systems can also be used to increase space heating efficiency in many homes.

Businesses and the town government can take steps to conserve energy as well. Support for employee ride-share, public transportation use, and telecommuting should be considered. Whenever possible, local raw materials should be used and local markets identified for products. Energy audits of buildings identify and help prioritize conservation improvements. Use of energy-saving office equipment, consideration of fuel efficiency when purchasing new vehicles, and carefully planning operations to limit energy use also will contribute to energy and cost savings.

Efficiency Vermont, the State's energy efficiency utility, reduces energy use and costs by offering technical assistance and financial incentives to help Vermont residents and businesses identify and pay for cost-effective approaches to energy-efficient building design, construction, renovation, equipment, lighting and appliances. The town should coordinate with Efficiency Vermont to ensure that their services are utilized to the maximum extent possible.

Landgrove is a bicycle and pedestrian friendly community and safe and well-maintained roads should be maintained for these uses. Gasoline prices will continue to rise over time, and as they do, the attractiveness and energy saving measures provided by various forms of public transportation will become more evident. The town should periodically assess the demand for new public transportation to employment and educational centers.

A tremendous amount of energy is used (and local dollars spent) to produce and transport food to the area. Significant energy savings can be realized through production of local food: in backyard gardens, community supported agriculture (CSA) operations, and at area farms that sell their produce at local stores and farmer's markets.



Landgrove has a wealth of biomass resources that, if carefully managed, could provide local fuel sources for high-efficiency cordwood and wood pellet stoves to meet residents' heating needs.

### 10.3 Local Renewable Energy and Electricity

Generation of energy from renewable energy resources supports conservation of non-renewable energy resources while helping to maintain a clean environment. Potential renewable energy resources in Landgrove include:

- Small scale wind turbines to generate electricity at suitable sites.
- Use of cordwood to heat homes; an adequate supply of this fuel exists locally to meet all of the town's residential space heating needs.
- Solar energy to heat buildings, water, and to power photovoltaic cells.
- Methane-based energy systems using waste from livestock operations.

- Liquid fuels such as vegetable oils and biodiesel from crops such as canola and sunflowers.
- Geothermal energy to supplement space heating systems.

Much of the town’s energy is used in the form of electricity and it is critical to assure an adequate supply from both generating sources and the capacity of transmission and distribution systems. Approximately two-thirds of the state’s electricity is supplied through state contracts with Vermont Yankee Nuclear and Hydro Quebec. It will be important to maintain reliable sources of supply while additional generating capacity is developed. Ultimately, a “smart grid” will be needed to much more efficiently manage the generation, transmission, and use of electricity. It is likely that the smart grid will rely on many distributed small generators located closer to the points where the electricity is used; consequently, the town should support economically and environmentally sound development of local electricity generating capacity, improvements to the “Southern Loop” transmission system, and development of smart grid technology.

#### 10.4 Energy Policies and Recommendations

##### 1. Actively promote the energy-related benefits of town policies that:

- Lead to consideration of energy use, including short and long-term energy costs, in municipal decision-making;
- Require efficient site planning and building;
- Support development of renewable energy resources;
- Ensure that roadway maintenance encourages walking and biking.



Some Landgrove residents already have deployed renewable energy systems such as these solar-tracking photovoltaic panels.

##### 2. Create and support programs and facilities that provide stable, affordable, and clean renewable sources of energy, including wood, wind, hydroelectric, solar, and geothermal consistent with all environmental policies set forth in this plan.

##### 3. The town should make an effort to reduce fossil fuel use in its municipal facilities and operations:

- Consider replacing indoor and outdoor lighting with LED fixtures.
- Fuel efficiency should be an important consideration when the town replaces vehicles and heavy equipment.
- Opportunities for employing renewable energy resources in municipal buildings and equipment should be pursued.

##### 4. The town should consider conducting a comprehensive municipal energy audit.

##### 5. The town should encourage participation in energy conservation incentive and educational programs and consider innovative programs such as the Clean Energy Assessment District to provide incentives and support financing of energy conservation and efficiency improvements.

## XI Municipal Finance

### 11.1 Budget and Tax Issues

Total expenditures in Landgrove have been fairly stable in recent years (Figure 4). The largest portion of public spending in town, as in most towns, is associated with education costs. These costs fluctuate from year to year as a result of changes in tuition costs, assessments, and enrollments (an especially important factor in a small town like Landgrove). The largest education-related expense in Landgrove, and the largest portion of the budget overall, is the payment of tax dollars to support the state education fund. Year-to-year variations in the municipal (non-education) portion of the budget have been less significant, with increases seen to fund the town hall addition and for new equipment for the highway department.

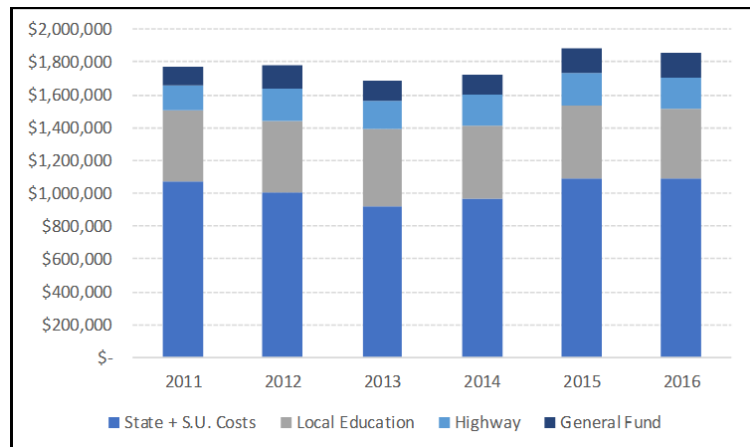


Figure 4. Total town spending, 2011 through 2016.

The average residential property tax in Landgrove is quite high, attributable to the high property values in the town, and the significant portion of tax payments that are paid to the state education fund. Landgrove's residential and non-residential tax rates (in 2016, \$1.81 and \$1.76, respectively) have risen by about 24% since 2012, and, accordingly, property tax payments have increased significantly. Interestingly though, this change has affected the payments of residents more than non-residents. Since 2012, the average resident's home tax payment rose 30% while non-residents' stayed flat (Figure 5). This trend represents a reversal from the period of 2006 to 2011 when the average non-resident paid more than the average resident in property taxes. Clearly, the property tax burden is considerable and poses significant financial challenges for many families. Legislative proposals for future changes in the tax system should be closely monitored, and systems that reduce the burden on Landgrove's residents and non-resident homeowners evaluated.

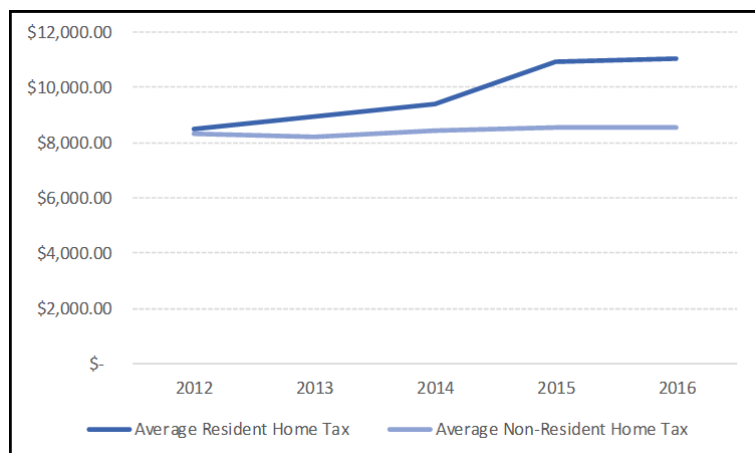


Figure 5. Average property taxes, 2011 through 2016

The distribution of municipal expenditures for 2016 (Figure 6) clearly illustrates the impact of education costs, particularly payments to the State Education Fund, on the total budget. The budget may be impacted from year to year by occasional large expenditures such as emergency road repairs, new equipment purchases, and building additions. Coordinated financial planning among all areas of government is important to ensure that excessive costs are not incurred in any one year.

A formal capital budget and program (as provided for in 24 V.S.A. Section 4426) provides one way to coordinate planning by requiring that all town departments, service providers, and schools

identify projected capital needs—both immediate and longer term. Even if the town decides not to develop a formal capital budget, town departments, service providers, and schools should be surveyed each year to determine their capital needs and projected requests for revenues from taxpayers. Such information will prove extremely valuable to the Select board as they develop annual budgets and plan for future improvements.

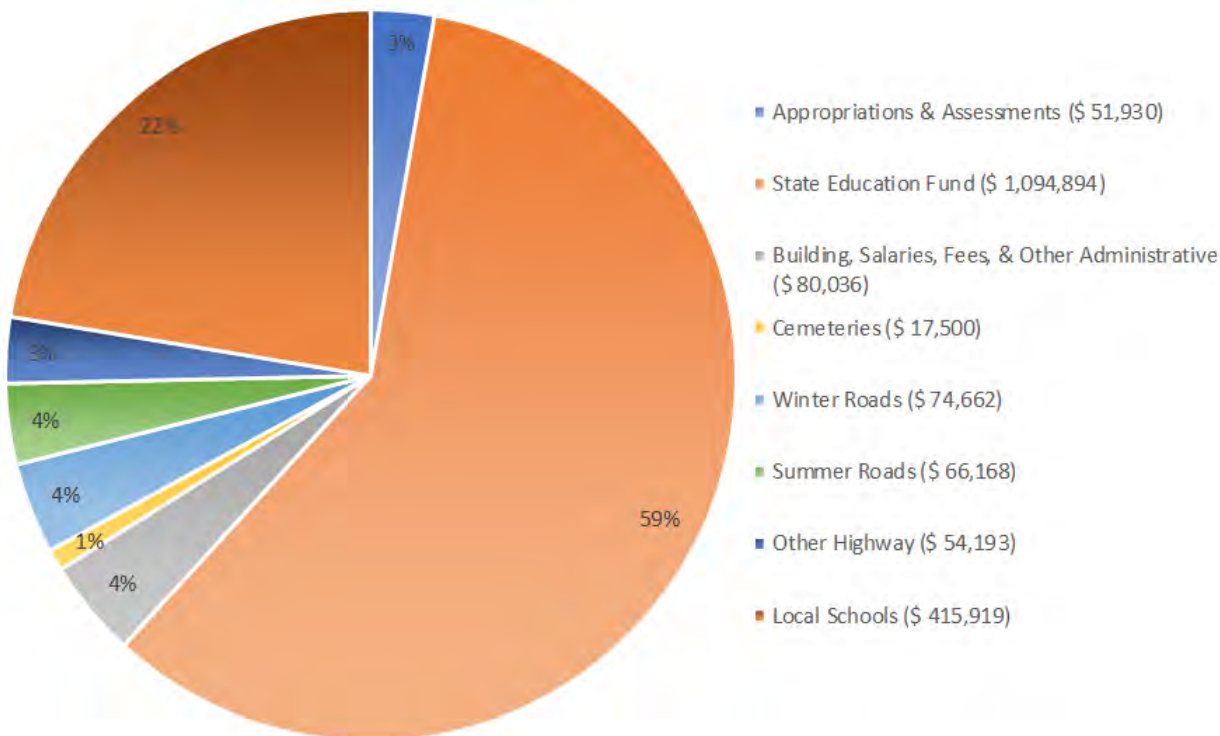
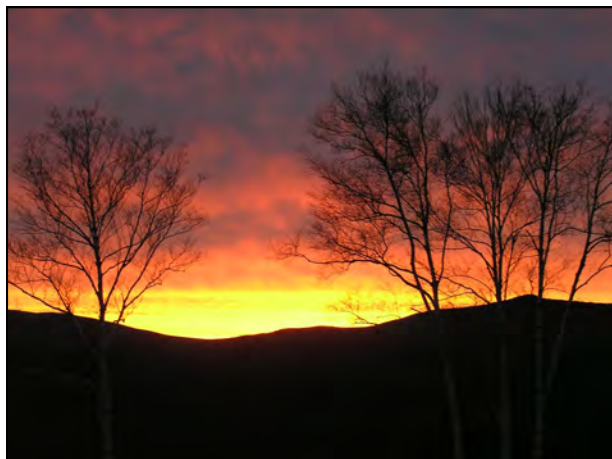


Figure 6. Municipal budget expenditures (2016).

11.2 Policies and Recommendations

1. The town should continue to carefully develop annual budgets in an effort to minimize the burden on local taxpayers.
2. Consideration should be given to development of a capital budget and program, or some other method to plan and budget for major expenses.



## XII Consistency with State Planning Goals

### 12.1 Statutory Requirements

The Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act encourages towns and villages to develop plans that are compatible with the plans of other municipalities in the region and with the regional plan, and which are consistent with the goals that are contained in 24 V.S.A. Section 4302. The following section (12.2) will detail this Plan’s consistency with those goals and Section 12.3 will include a brief discussion of the Town Plan in the context of the Bennington County Region and nearby municipalities.

### 12.2 Consistency with State Goals

- 1. To plan development so as to maintain the historic settlement pattern of village and urban centers separated by rural countryside.**

This goal is effectively addressed by describing Landgrove’s character as a small rural town, with a concentrated village area, but consisting primarily of undeveloped agricultural and forest lands. Land use districts include a higher density village district, a low density rural residential district, and very low density agricultural and conservation districts. Commercial uses are restricted to a small area along Route 11 that crosses a narrow portion of the town between Peru and Landgrove. A special “Utleys Flats Scenic Overlay” district provides for special standards to protect the rural and scenic character of a highly valued open space area in the center of the community.



- 2. To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities and that maintains high environmental standards, and to expand economic opportunities in areas with high unemployment or low per capita incomes.**

The plan includes a chapter on economic development. The plan notes that the town's small size and rural location limit economic activity to agriculture, forestry, home-based businesses, construction work, and small inns. Recognition is given to the importance of economic centers in nearby towns and of the potential for additional local economic activity through improved telecommunication services. Considerable attention also is given to principles of sustainable economic development.

- 3. To broaden access to educational and vocational training opportunities sufficient to ensure the realization of the abilities of all Vermonters.**

The section of the plan dealing with educational facilities discussed the town's participation in the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union, the Flood Brook (elementary) school, located in Londonderry, and options for attending high school. The plan also discussed the challenges of the current educational funding system. The plan also notes the potential for greater access to educational services through improved broadband services.



- 4. To provide for safe, convenient, economic, and energy efficient transportation systems that respect the integrity of the natural environment, including public transit options and paths for pedestrians and bicyclers.**

The town has a very small network of local roads (all unpaved) and bridges. The transportation infrastructure is well-coordinated with the land use plan, as access to remote forest areas is limited and investment focuses on maintaining roads that provide access to established settled areas. Considerable attention is directed at implementation of policies that ensure that the local road system reinforces, rather than detracts, from the town's rural and scenic character. The plan includes recommendations for ensuring that capital and equipment needs are sufficient to provide for the long-term upkeep of the roads. Also discussed is the need to assess roads and bridges for improvements in anticipation of future flood events.

**5. To identify, protect, and preserve important natural and historic features of the Vermont landscape.**

The plan contains a comprehensive description of important resources: water, agricultural and open lands, forest resources (including a discussion of the Green Mountain National Forest and its landholdings in town), wildlife habitat, scenic resources, and air quality. The plan relates resource protection strategies to the land use plan, and also includes specific recommendations for ensuring protection of key resources. Special note of historic resources is made in the land use element, focusing specifically on the “Clarksville” village area and recommending consideration of historic district standards.



**6. To maintain and improve the quality of air, water, wildlife, and land resources.**

As noted above, the plan includes a thorough discussion, policies, and strategies for protecting air, water, and wildlife resources. The plan also identifies important land resources and also discusses the economic importance of some of those resources and how those benefits could be realized through further promotion of a working landscape.

**7. To encourage the efficient use of energy and the development of renewable energy resources.**

The plan includes a detailed chapter focusing on numerous aspects of energy conservation and renewable energy. It discusses both efficiency and conservation, and relates these topics to the town’s land use plan. It provides an information on the importance of proper siting and construction of buildings. And discusses renewable energy resources available in the area (primarily small-scale use at residential buildings). The plan discusses the importance of developing alternative means of space heating, using local resources, and accessing alternative transportation options. An overview of municipal (building and vehicles) energy use and ideas for reducing energy consumption also is included, and it is noted that the town may consider opportunities made available through Act 174.

**8. To maintain and enhance recreational opportunities for Vermont residents and visitors.**

The plan incorporates discussion of recreational opportunities with the description of natural resources, the town’s system of low-speed unpaved roads, and the Green Mountain National Forest – including Forest Service trails and other resources. It emphasizes the need to maintain and enhance public access to streams, trails, and forests.

**9. To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.**

The plan discusses and includes specific policies related to regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to the conservation of agricultural and forest lands. An important link is made

between land protection and the town's land use plan. The plan promotes "good management of agricultural and forest land and also discusses conservation by way of economic activity – through a "working landscape."

**10. To provide for the wise and efficient use of Vermont's natural resources and to facilitate the appropriate extraction of earth resources and the proper restoration and preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the area.**

The plan discusses the economic benefits and importance of access to natural resources; it includes a policy dealing specifically with the importance of maintaining access to sand and gravel resources, and with proper site restoration.



**11. To ensure the availability of safe and affordable housing for all Vermonters.**

The plan includes a comprehensive description of the current housing stock in Landgrove as well as issues inherent with providing affordable housing in a small rural mountain town with high real estate values. It identifies regulatory provisions that enable more flexibility in development of "accessory apartments" and suggests collaboration with neighboring towns and regional affordable housing development organizations.

**12. To plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services to meet future needs.**

The plan contains a complete description of community facilities and services as well as issues that need to be addressed. The importance of maintaining and enforcing the town's land use policies to ensure that excessive demands are not placed on the town's ability to provide services is noted and appropriate policies included.

**13. To ensure the availability of safe and affordable child care and to integrate child care issues into the planning process, including child care financing, infrastructure, business assistance for child care providers, and child care workforce development.**

The plan identifies the location of child care facilities in adjacent towns and describes how and where facilities can be developed in Landgrove.

**14. To encourage flood resilient communities.**

In the chapter on Natural, Scenic, and Historic Resources, a section on flood resilience provides an overview of preventative and recovery measures the town is taking to plan for potential flood events and reduce potential damage. To protect its residents, the town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, adheres to Town Road and Bridge standards, maintains a Local Emergency Operations Plan and a Hazard Mitigation Plan, and regulates development in River Corridors.



### 12.3 Relationship to Regional Plan and Adjacent Towns

Most of the town lies within the Bennington County Regional Plan's *Rural* planning district. The Regional Plan also identifies two small areas characterized by steep slopes and relatively high elevation as being the *Upland Forest* areas, and acknowledges the presence of one rural *Hamlet* in Landgrove. The densities and patterns of development deemed appropriate for these areas by the Regional Plan are entirely consistent with the land use plan contained in this document and the land use regulations that are intended to implement the plan. Both plans recommend that Landgrove retain its rural landscape, with new development planned in a way that will be consistent with the town's historic character while avoiding unnecessary public expense and damage to important natural resources.

Similarly, the plans of adjacent towns (Peru, Winhall, Londonderry, and Weston) do not conflict with Landgrove's Town Plan. The goals and general planning policies in each of those plans are consistent with those contained in this Town Plan. Adjacent planning districts in the surrounding towns emphasize low density residential development and protection of forests and other important natural areas. This Plan also identifies a number of issues, such as schools, emergency services, and solid waste, where intermunicipal cooperation and communication is necessary.

It does not appear that the level of development planned for Landgrove will result in any significant impact in any other town. Moreover, Landgrove has planned for the growth pressures it may face as a result of development in nearby areas. It would be wise, nonetheless, for the town to participate in joint meetings with neighboring towns when issues of common concern arise, and to participate actively in the Bennington County Regional Commission.



### **XIII Implementation Program - Summary**

Most of the chapters in this Town Plan contain specific policies and recommended actions designed to implement the objectives which were presented in Chapter II. A brief synopsis of principal implementing measures is presented here. Refer to the text of the Plan for a more thorough discussion of these items.

- The Town Plan should serve as a guide to local officials. Boards and commissions should refer to the Plan as a regular part of their decision-making process.
- The Town Plan should be consulted when town officials review and comment on the plans of state agencies, the regional planning commission, and neighboring towns. The Planning Commission and Select Board also should appear at any Act 250 or other state regulatory hearing in Landgrove and offer testimony on conformance of a development with the Town Plan.
- The town's implementing bylaws, particularly the zoning bylaw, should be reviewed in light of the information and policies contained in the Town Plan, and amended as appropriate. Enforcement of these regulations is necessary to ensure that the objectives of the Town Plan are realized.
- The town should work with property owners, public and non-profit organizations, and other interested parties when developing strategies for identifying and protecting important resources. Programs that are designed to protect such resources should be supported.
- The town should identify, on an annual basis, future needs of town departments, area schools, and other public service providers. Consideration should be given to development of a capital program or some other mechanism to help plan for such needs.
- Landgrove should participate in multi-town or regional planning initiatives dealing with solid waste, transportation planning, education, public services, and other issues that require cooperation among several towns.

