

# TOWN PLAN



Landgrove, Vermont

# 1 Introduction

## **1.1-Landgrove's History**

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 is still known 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 Landgrove came from Springfield Vermont, and it passed by the Utley's farm in Landgrove. This road was 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 (a portion of which has been discontinued). Later in 1820 a stage road was built between Chester and Peru in the area of what is now Route 11, and that diverted through traffic from the northern to the southern part of Landgrove. This southern section of town is 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 its proximity to the prosperous farms along Utley Brook and the availability of waterpower for mills. A number of houses, shops, a store, and a post office soon were built in Clarksville. As the town grew and developed, schoolhouses, the Meetinghouse (1857) and the Farmers and Mechanics Hall (1874, subsequently used as a schoolhouse until 1966, and now the Town Hall) were built. The architecture and orientation of the buildings in the village continue to reflect the traditional New England village character that is an important part of the town's appeal. The Meetinghouse and the Town Hall (expanded in 2008), located next to each other north of the Village and at the edge of Utley Flats, remain important community assets today.



The prosperity of Landgrove’s farms and mills, together with the town’s population, peaked by the mid-1800s (Figure 1). and the population declined steadily, except for a brief time during a lumbering boom around 1900. The post office and eventually the general store closed. Small time farming was becoming less profitable, the Landgrove school closed, and students started attending school in Londonderry. At the same time the number of second homes was growing. Landgrove was becoming a residential community, containing many attractive new and restored homes that are occupied by both permanent and part-time residents. Still small, the community has grown tight knit, with many events that draw neighbors together, and some of the highest voting turnouts in the state.

Figure-1



THE CHEESE  
THAT CHANGED MANY LIVES



SAMUEL R. OGDEN

The beginnings of Landgrove'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 many of the buildings. This story is recounted in Sam Ogden's memoir *The Cheese That Changed Many Lives*

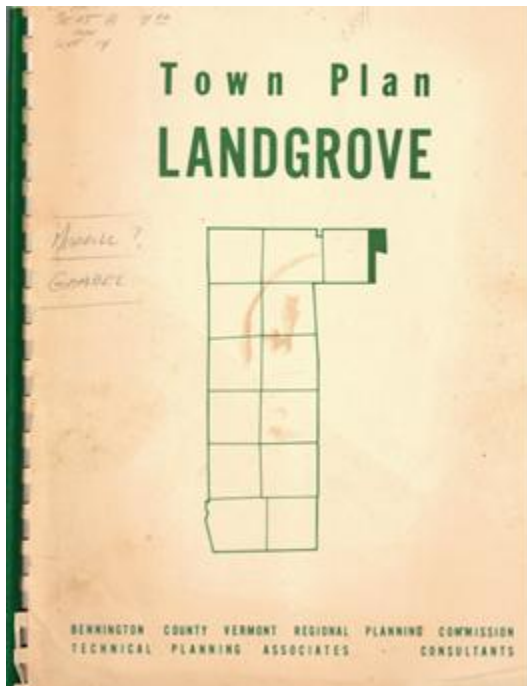
The town's history, together with an unspoiled natural environment of lush meadows, verdant forests, and pristine streams set against the backdrop of the Green Mountains combine to make Landgrove a town of exceptional beauty. Old structures have been restored, new homes have been constructed to reflect the historic character of the town, and public and private lands have been managed to maintain scenic open fields and quality woodlands.

### **1.2-Landgrove's First Town Plan**

The 1967 Vermont Municipal and Regional Planning and Development Act established the framework for municipal and regional planning commissions and outlined their powers and duties. The Act includes a set of common planning goals that towns are encouraged to pursue, these common goals promote cooperation and coordination among the various levels of government. Landgrove has historically supported 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.

Landgrove first adopted a Town Plan that established a set of objectives and a general direction for development in 1970. Since then, townspeople have recognized that an effective planning process is necessary to guide the town's future growth and to ensure that Landgrove remains an outstanding community in which to live. Several updates and revisions to that original plan have been prepared, and the town's zoning bylaws, last updated in 2024, have been used to help implement the land use policies of the plan.



### **1.3-This Town Plan**

This version of the Town 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.

The Planning Commission held public hearings on a draft of this update to the Town Plan in 2025, and then incorporated changes suggested by the public. They then developed a final draft reflecting public comments, which they forwarded to the Select

Board which held further public hearings. After the last changes were warned and discussed, the Select Board approved a Town Plan by majority vote.

This document is designed to serve as a comprehensive, visionary document that guides a town's future development, outlining goals and policies for land use, infrastructure, and community well-being. It will also help the town access state grants and give the town more influence over Act 250 (state land use permit) and Public Utility Commission applications.

## I. Objectives

The objectives listed in this section provide an overall vision for 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 and commissions, attend public meetings and hearings, and otherwise participate in community planning activities. New Select Board members should be encouraged to read this plan as part of their orientation to Select Board work in order to understand the existing strategic direction of the town

Because residents of the town continually interact with other nearby communities, planning for 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 surrounded by a scenic rural landscape and undeveloped forest blocks.
- 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 beauty.
- 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 system.
- Provide for a reasonable level of continued growth in both primary and part-time housing units.

**2.3-Identify and protect the town’s important natural resources, scenic-landscapes, and historic features.**

Significant natural areas, fragile ecological sites, undeveloped forest blocks, open fields, important wildlife habitat and habitat connectors 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. Scenic ridgelines, country roads, vistas, historical, educational, and cultural sites, should be preserved for the enjoyment of current and future residents of the town. Landgrove’s streams, wetlands and ponds provide scenic beauty, and they are also crucial to protecting the clean ground water Landgrove relies upon for domestic water supplies. Air quality is a natural asset of great value to Landgrove. Any activities, whether local or beyond the town’s boundaries, which 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 The Mountain Towns Recreation Board 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 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. The Landgrove Inn, located in a residential district, should be allowed to continue as a grandfathered business. Other new commercial enterprises should be located in the mixed-use zone along Route 11.

Telecommunication infrastructure, including broadband internet access, is vitally important to businesses and residents, but any new communication infrastructure must be consistent with this Town Plan, the zoning bylaws, and should not significantly degrade the town's scenic landscapes and aesthetic values.

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

The town's land use pattern and infrastructure should promote energy efficiency and conservation and be consistent with state and regional energy goals. Support should be given to programs and initiatives that encourage weatherization of existing buildings, energy efficient construction of new buildings, and reduced use of fossil fuels for transportation. Small scale (under 30kw) 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. Emphasis should be placed on maintenance of existing roads and bridges in a manner that ensures that the transportation infrastructure can withstand flooding and other natural hazards. The town should not emphasize widening or straightening roads, which would increase the speed of traffic and make the roads less pedestrian friendly.

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. Some essential facilities and services require intermunicipal or regional planning and cooperation such as schools, childcare, health care services, emergency services, youth sports teams and solid waste disposal. Regional services should be supported so the town receives the best possible services at a reasonable cost.

### **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 at nearby regional schools. The town should ensure that appropriate childcare facilities are maintained in the larger community. Access to adult/continuing education and specialized workforce training opportunities should be available to residents.

### **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.

## II. Economic Development

### **3.1-Economic Activity in Landgrove**

Economic activity in Landgrove is consistent with the town's small size and rural location. According to the Vermont Department of Labor (2024 data), there are 11 business "establishments" in Landgrove, employing a total of 24 people. There are also 34 Landgrove residents in town who work at home. With a total of 124 of Landgrove's residents in the workforce (2020 US Census), it is clear that more than half of the people in Landgrove commute to work in another community. However, mean travel time to work for residents is only about 19 minutes, so most work relatively close to home.

The VT Department of Labor reports that the unemployment rate in Landgrove is 1.6%, lower than the statewide unemployment rate of (2.3%) and that of Bennington County (2.7%) as of 2024. Median household income in Landgrove is estimated to be about \$120,312, suggesting that Landgrove residents are doing relatively well since the statewide median is \$78,024 (2020 Census).

It is important that the town supports business activity and development that is appropriate within the town and the larger community, to ensure that residents have access to good jobs within a reasonable distance. Economic activities that are appropriate within Landgrove include home occupations, natural resource businesses (especially agriculture and forest product based), outdoor recreation, and limited commercial activity (as defined in the zoning bylaws) in the Mixed-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.

Landgrove used to have a number of small inns. Two of these have been closed and demolished in recent memory, and one is now a short-term rental property, leaving just one; the Landgrove Inn. Short term rentals have become more popular than inns, and there is a possibility that absentee ownership of short-term rentals in Landgrove will come to be seen as a good business opportunity. If this happens an ordinance might be needed to control the impact of short-term rentals. Nearby Peru is home to several absentee owned "party houses" which have had negative impacts on the character of the area where they are located.

### **3.2-Economic Policy Implementation**

The town should:

1. maintain and enhance the infrastructure needed to support economic development activities in Landgrove. In addition to public roads and electricity, the town should work with the Communications Union District to ensure that there is high quality broadband and telecommunication infrastructure available;
2. protect the natural, historic, cultural, and recreational resources that provide an outstanding quality of life for residents, and which attract new residents and businesses 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 wood for heating homes and businesses, solar energy for generating electricity.
5. Monitor the impact of short-term rentals on residential areas.

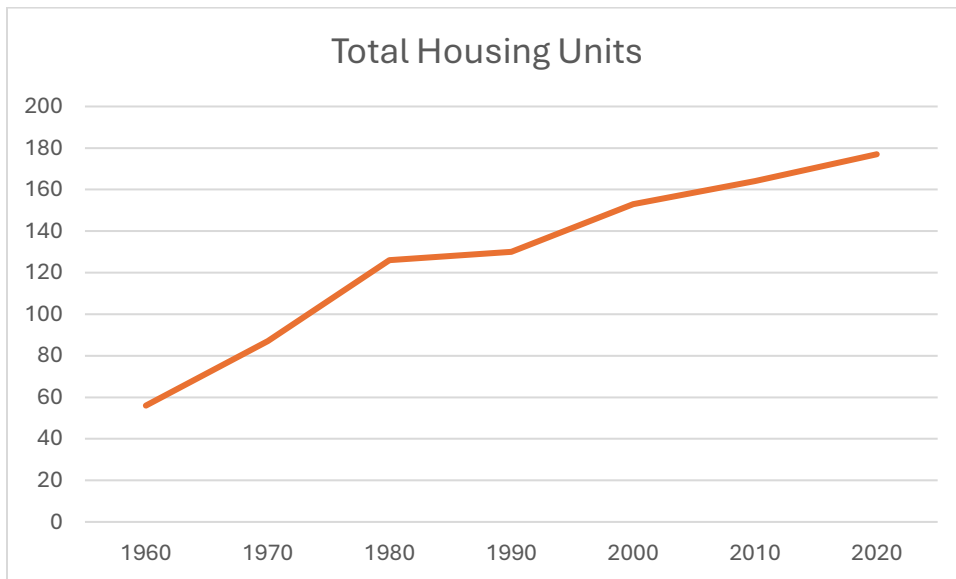


### III. Housing

#### **3.1-Housing In Landgrove**

Of the 208 property parcels in the town of Landgrove, 166 have built structures on them, the rest are undeveloped. 40% are primary homes and 60% are part time homes. All but two of the housing units in Landgrove are single family structures. 20% of all property parcels in town are large tracts enrolled in the state Use Value Appraisal Program (aka current use) which allows landowners of large properties to pay property taxes based on the land's value for farming or forestry, rather than its potential market value for development. The total number of houses in Landgrove has grown steadily since 1960 (Figure 2). Since 2017, there have been five new single-family homes built in town, two demolitions, and two accessory dwelling units added.

For the five-year period from 2019-2023, the average sale price of a house sold in Landgrove was \$584,000. 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's homes and property are, on average, well in excess of county average of \$381,482, and the statewide average of \$412,400. Landgrove's special qualities as a well-preserved rural and scenic town obviously contribute to those values-



The Zoning Bylaws have several provisions designed to promote the construction of housing that is more affordable in Landgrove. These include allowing accessory dwelling units (also known as ADUs) which are small apartments or cottages on the same property as a single-family home. The town also allows multifamily homes (3 or more housing units in the same building) in the mixed-use district. In addition, new subdivisions can be developed as “planned unit developments (PUDs),” which can limit construction costs. The town should also work on

providing affordable housing with regional housing agencies such as Cornerstone Housing to create new affordable housing.

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. Adequate insulation and weatherization, efficient space and water heating, efficient domestic appliances, and other energy saving features should be incorporated in new construction and substantial renovations to existing homes. The town should help publicize state and federal programs that provide incentives for the weatherization of homes and purchase and installation of various renewable energy systems.

### **Housing Policy Implementation**

The town should:

1. recognize and address the need for affordable housing by working with regional and state housing agencies and private developers;
2. design its zoning to help people to buy (or rent) a dwelling in one, two, or three-family buildings in appropriate locations, as defined in the zoning regulations;
3. ensure that all development is designed to be compatible with the character of the town and provide safe, comfortable, and attractive neighborhoods for residents;
4. make sure energy conservation and efficiency are an important consideration in new and renovated housing. Incentives for investment in conservation and renewable energy systems should be supported.

## IV. 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 1,700 feet south of Rt 11, to 1,400 feet in Utley Flats, to over 2,000 feet along the town's northern border.

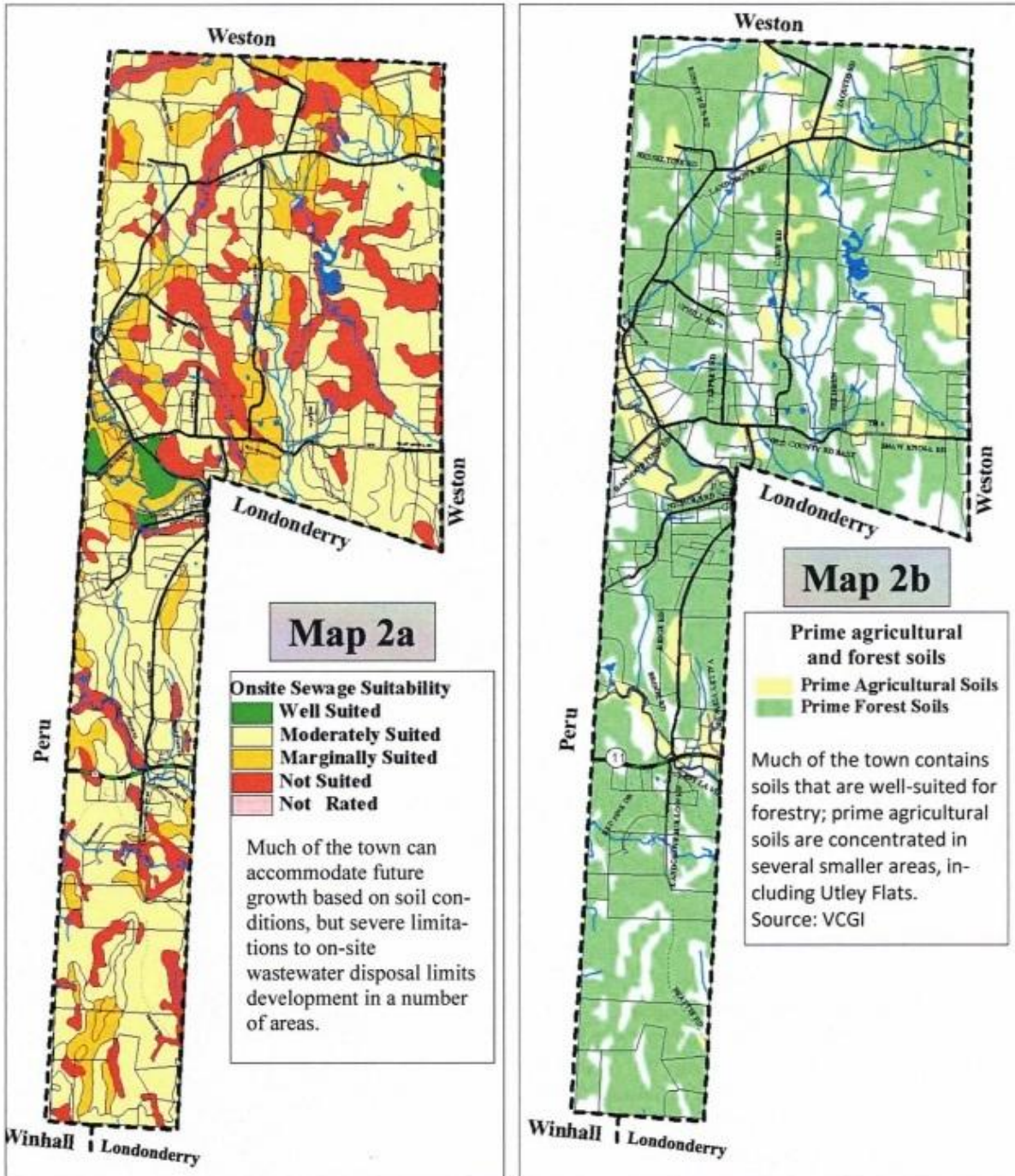
Map 1 Landgrove's Topography



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. The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service has completed a comprehensive soil survey that provides information on the suitability of soils for residential development, agriculture, forestry, and other activities (Maps 2a and 2b). This information should be considered when considering changes to the town's land use plan.

Sand and gravel deposits in Landgrove can be 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.

## Maps 2a and 2b Landgrove's Soils



## **5.2-Agricultural and Forest Lands**

Landgrove was once home to prosperous farms and much of the landscape was once 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 (VLT) has already 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 Program (aka current use), which provides property tax relief for large properties (over 25 acres) that are managed for agriculture or forestry. The town's zoning bylaws also help provide protection of agricultural land by limiting the types and densities of development allowed, and also by allowing planned unit developments that provide flexibility in subdivision design to facilitate preservation of undeveloped open lands.

Much of Landgrove is covered by a forest of mixed hardwood and softwood trees, and highly productive forest soils exist throughout the town (Map 2b). Forests help prevent soil erosion and flooding, contribute to air and water quality, and provide valuable wildlife habitat, 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 lumber, and other beneficial uses.

Forest management is more efficient on larger tracts of land, and forest blocks that are unfragmented by roads, development, or agriculture make better plant and animal habitat, so efforts should be made to limit new development which breaks up large tracts of forested land. Forests can also be impacted by climate change and acid deposition, which affect species composition and overall forest health, and may also promote the spread of invasive insect pests

and plants that have an adverse effect on native plants. Efforts to mitigate such damage and to adapt to inevitable ecological changes should be supported.

As with agricultural lands, the Use Value Appraisal Program (aka current use), 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 such as conservation PUDs can be used to protect important forest blocks. The town should also support appropriate economic activities that encourage the development and maintenance of a “working landscape.”; proper agricultural and forest management techniques that 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), which are a key feature of the town’s scenic character. Landgrove’s streams help provide clean groundwater for wells as well as providing clean water to larger waterways, such as the West River, which flows into the Connecticut River near Brattleboro. They also provide a critical habitat component for many wildlife species as well as offering opportunities for swimming and other recreational activities. Landgrove also has important wetlands, (marshes, swamps, bogs, and fens) which provide flood and storm water control, maintenance of surface and ground water quality, scenic beauty, fish and wild-life habitat, sources of nutrients for freshwater food chains and carbon storage. The large wetland complex at the headwaters of Carpenter Brook is of ecological value to the community (see Map 3). A number of beaver dams in this area have created ponds that are surrounded by meadows and second growth forest.

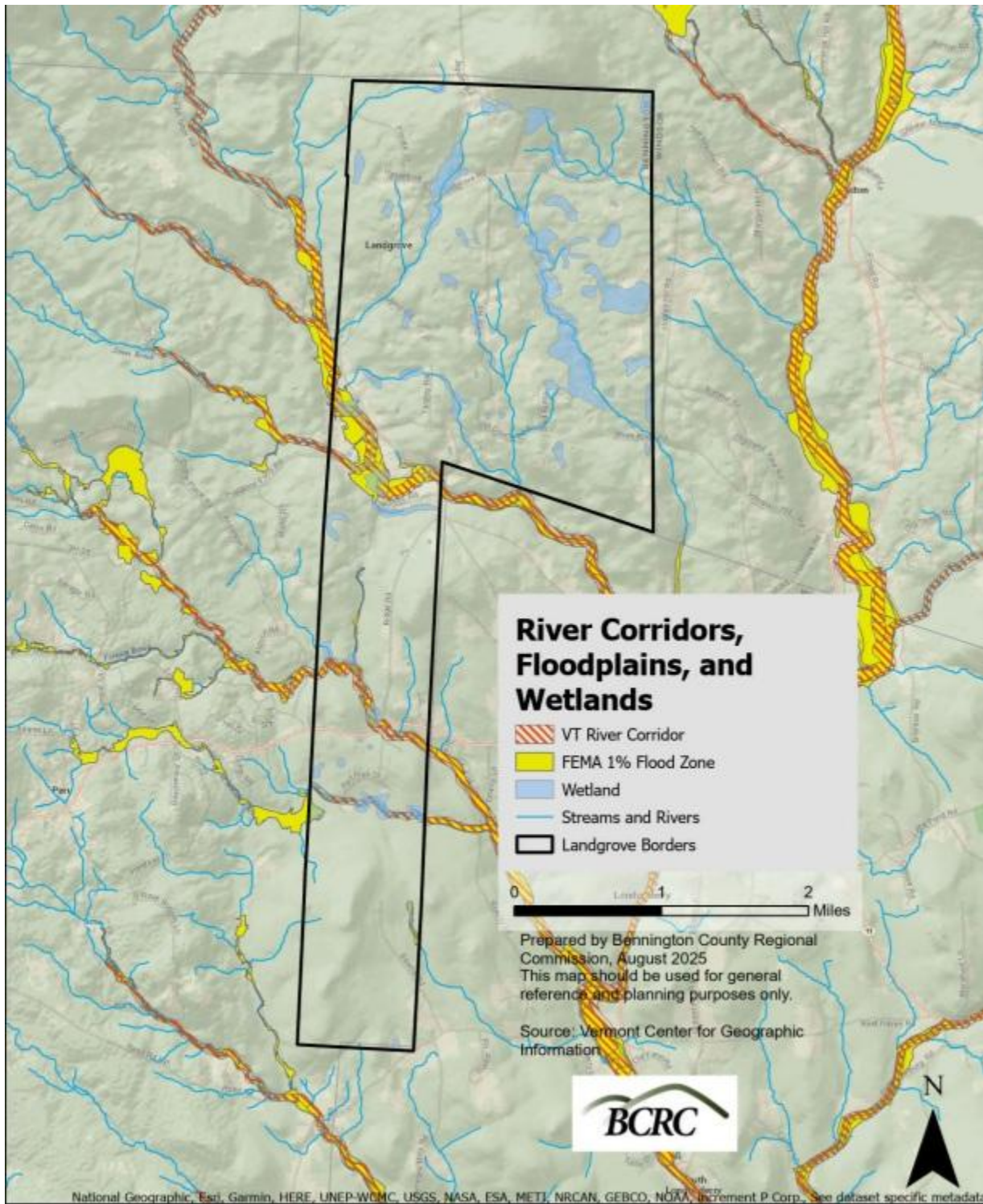
## **5.4-Flood Resilience**

With climate change bringing the possibility of more extreme weather events, flooding is expected to occur with greater frequency. It is imperative that Landgrove properly prepares to minimize future flood damage and to develop the capacity for post-flood resilience. The Landgrove Hazard Mitigation Plan (2024) provides a detailed description of flood hazard areas, the history of flood events and their impacts, and vulnerable road and bridge infrastructure in the town.

To limit the risk from flooding, Landgrove has adopted land use regulations to control development in hazard-prone areas. The town has also added stormwater management regulations to its zoning bylaws, and the town road crew works with the state Municipal Roads Program to control erosion from roads and roadside ditches. These measures can help slow the flow of water during flooding events.

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 that could be in danger as the Utley Brook adjusts its course over time. River corridors are areas where the lateral movement of the river and the associated erosion may be more of a threat than inundation by floodwaters. Elevation or floodproofing alone may not be protective of structures in these areas, as erosion can undermine structures. To help towns deal with these changes, Vermont passed Act No. 121 (S.213) in 2024. This bill is an effort to balance the need for flood-safe development in existing village centers, while promoting the restoration and protection for river corridors outside of village areas. In 2024 Landgrove did one of each of these types of riverside projects; a wetland which had been drained to provide a parking area for town road maintenance equipment was restored, potentially helping to slow down flood waters approaching the village. The other project involved reenforcing the banks of the Utley brook to slow erosion which was threatening the “new cemetery” in Landgrove.

Map 3 Landgrove's Surface Waters and Flood Zones



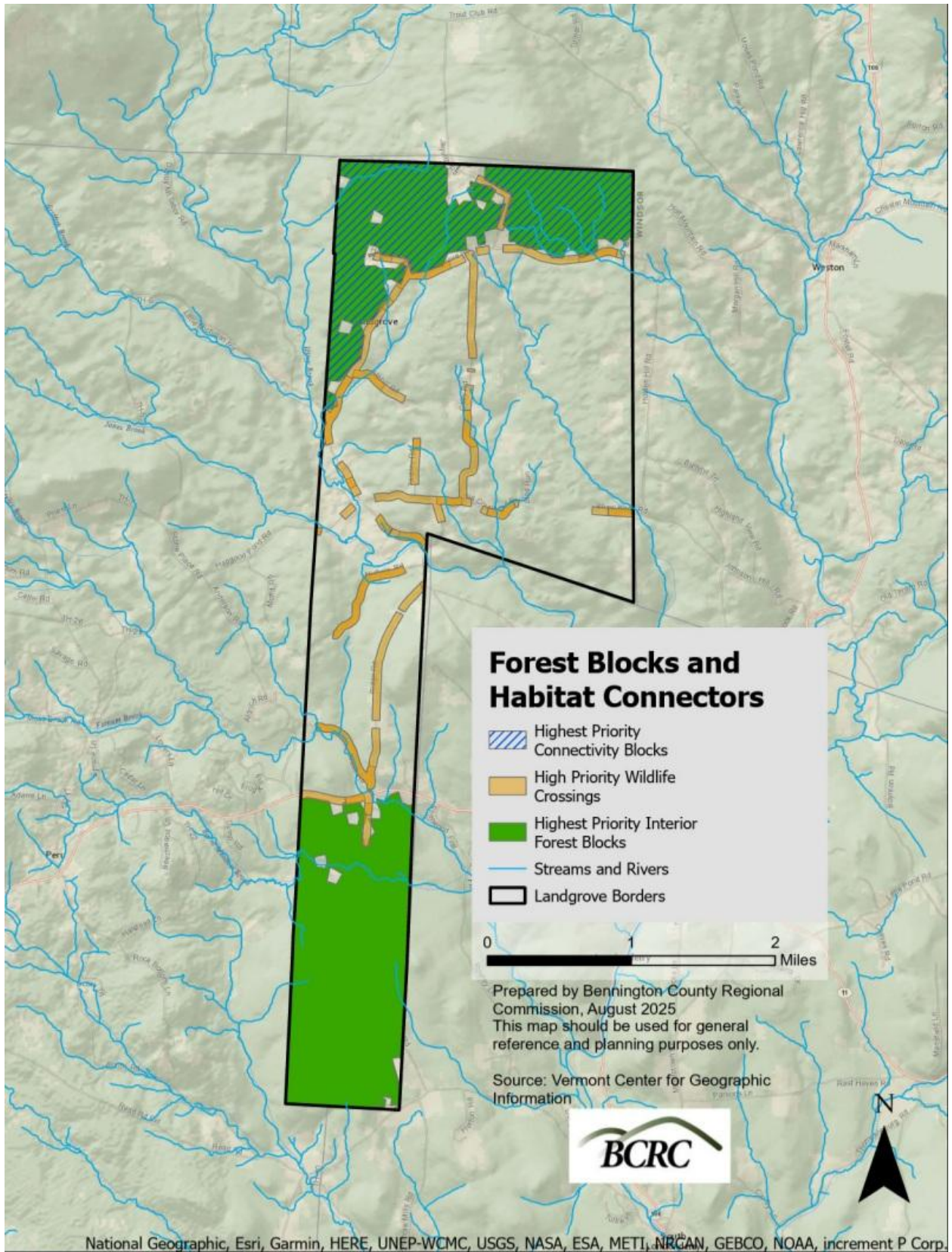
Although there are only a handful of houses in flood zones in Landgrove, there are many roads, culverts and bridges that can be damaged in a heavy rain event. The Hazard Mitigation Plan further reduces risk by prioritizing specific risk mitigation actions for the town, and by expanding access to FEMA risk mitigation funds. Even the most aggressive hazard mitigation strategies cannot eliminate all risk though, so communities must prepare to respond to emergencies and to ensure 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 its residents.

Following a flood event, a municipality can be burdened with significant 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, and has an up-to-date Hazard Mitigation Plan.

### **5.5-Wildlife Habitat**

Many wildlife species, both game and non-game 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, large blocks of hardwood and softwood forest—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 4). Development and logging activities should be planned with natural buffers between developed areas and wildlife habitat, and to retain wooded corridors along streams and between similar but separate habitat areas-





## **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 tracteries 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 and ecological 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 Utley Flats area, and steep slope regulations for the ridgelines around it. Town roads are among the most important public spaces in Landgrove, and they serve as the foreground for the most widely viewed scenic vistas, so road and utility construction and maintenance should be carefully planned and coordinated with the Select Board and Road Commissioner, and any proposal for constructing new long driveways or new private roads which will extend into undeveloped areas should be thoroughly vetted by the Planning Commission.

### **Map 4 Landgrove's Forest Blocks and Habitat Connectors**



## **5.7-Historic Resources**

Landgrove's historic sites and structures are important resources that provide residents with a sense of heritage and a link with the past, promoting a feeling of community identity and pride. 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.



## **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.

## **Natural, Scenic, and Historic Resources Implementation**

The town should:

1. support efforts to conserve agricultural and forest soils and support farming and forestry;
2. preserve Landgrove's streams, ponds, and wetlands. New development should not disturb these resources or associated vegetation. Wherever possible, a natural buffer of at least 50 feet of woody vegetation should be maintained between developed areas and streams or wetlands;
3. control contamination of streams by requiring erosion control measures for new construction and following the Vt. Better Roads Program erosion control protocols;

4. make sure development in floodplains is carefully controlled in accordance with flood hazard area regulations. Do additional studies of potential fluvial erosion hazard areas;
5. continue to fulfill ERAF requirements, including maintaining a Hazard Mitigation Plan, a Local Emergency Operations Plan, participation in the NFIP, and compliance with Town Road and Bridge Standards;
6. make sure the quality and quantity of ground water is protected through strict adherence to state and local environmental and health regulations;
7. make sure development in the vicinity of important natural areas or wildlife habitat areas is carefully planned so that damage to those resources is avoided;
8. be alert to any potential threats to local air quality and support efforts to ensure that Landgrove's air remains clear and clean;
9. make sure new development is in harmony with the town's scenic natural landscape and historic architecture;
10. encourage preservation of historic buildings and structures; adaptive reuse of historic buildings, rather than demolition and replacement, should be pursued whenever practical and appropriate;
11. ensure that renovations of historically important buildings preserve the character of the structures and are sensitive to adjacent historic buildings and sites whenever possible.

## VI. Recreation

### 6.1-Recreational Resources

Landgrove 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, and priority should be placed on maintaining the quality of those experiences. In such an environment, most recreational facilities can be informal rather than highly developed.

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. The town also appreciates the current generous attitudes of many private landowners regarding the use of their land for recreation.

The conversion of local roadways to conduits for high speed through traffic has been destructive to the village life of many Vermont towns, and as traffic speeds have increased, the usefulness and safety of the roads for children, walkers, runners, bicyclists, and horseback riders has decreased. Landgrove has consistently supported the retention of the town's system of narrow unpaved gravel roads.

The following recreational facilities are available to residents:

- The Town Hall has a meeting room that can be used for social activities, and a small outdoor playground.
- The Luerich Memorial Field, a five-acre field with space for parking, field sports, and picnicking.
- A system of trails and Forest Service roads that are used for cross-country skiing, hiking, mountain biking, 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.
- The private Landgrove Tennis Club operates a clay court in the Village, and they host a yearly tennis tournament on Labor Day.
- Landgrove's gravel roads are widely used for walking and bicycling.

Landgrove also supports the Mountain Towns Recreation Board which promotes regional recreational opportunities for children and adults.

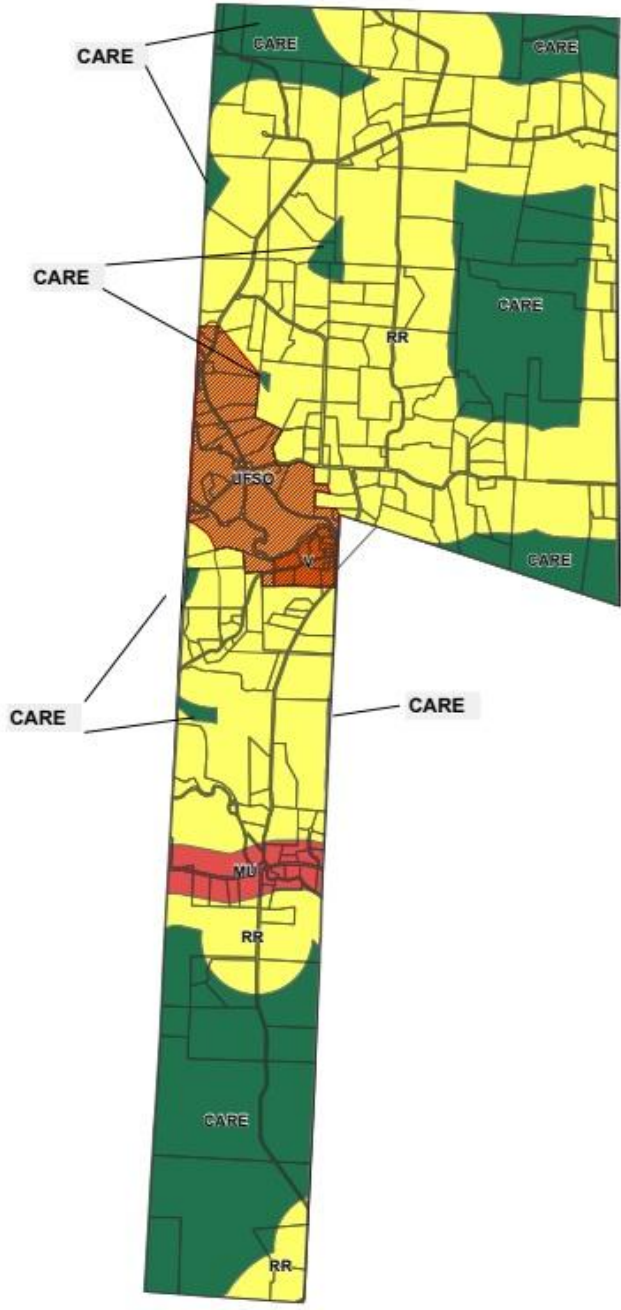


## **6.2-Recreation Policy Implementation**

1. Town policy should be designed to preserve an outstanding natural environment to promote outdoor recreation which is essential to the quality of life for Landgrove residents. Of particular value are wildlife habitats, streams, and the expanses of undeveloped land.
2. Development of recreational facilities should be as informal and economical as possible. The cost of more organized sporting opportunities should be shared with the five towns who are members of the Mountain Towns Recreation Board.
3. Landgrove's scenic country roads should continue to be safe for walkers and bicyclists.
4. 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

### Map 5 Landgrove's Land Use Map



**Zoning Map**  
**Town of Landgrove, Vermont**  
Prepared by Bennington County Regional  
Commission  
March 2024



## **7.1-Landgrove's Land Use**

The town's land use plan, and the zoning regulations that are intended to implement the plan, are intended to have a strong influence on 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 will be reviewed periodically by the Planning Commission to assess whether it is an accurate representation of the community's vision for its future. The current plan divides Landgrove into four separate districts plus a scenic overlay district and regulated flood hazard areas (Map 4). It also includes special rules for development on steep terrain and ridgelines.

## **7.2-Rural Residential District**

Over 66 percent (3,772 acres) of the land in town lies within the Rural Residential District, and most of Landgrove's future growth is expected to occur in this area. This land use district includes all land within 1,500 feet of roadways (excluding private roads), that is not within the Mixed Use or Village Districts (Map 4). This is a district that can 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. Based on past trends and the municipal land use regulations, nearly all such future development is expected to be single-family homes.

Permitted uses in the Rural Residential District include one- and two-family dwellings, accessory dwellings, primitive camps, home occupations, municipal and religious uses, agriculture, forestry and certain natural resource-based activities. Uses that are conditionally permitted include Owner Occupied Boarding Houses, home businesses, cemeteries, and planned unit developments (PUDs), On Farm Businesses, Mobile Home Parks and certain institutional uses permitted by state law. Lot size and other dimensional requirements 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.

There are large tracts of prime agricultural land, important forest blocks, habitat connectors, scenic vistas, and other valuable natural resources located in this district that could be permanently damaged if they are not considered in the development planning process. In some cases development will be limited due to the expense of providing access and utilities to the more remote parts of the district. In other cases development will be limited by the town's poor soil conditions which can make finding locations for septic systems more. Acquisition of land or development rights by a conservation organization can also be used to preserve this district's important natural resources. In other instances, environmental controls in the Zoning Regulations may be appropriate 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 the highest natural, recreational, scenic, or other special resource value, and to limit development in areas that have the highest constraints to development. Land development in the CARE Districts must be at densities low enough to protect their resource value and to fit in with the traditional settlement pattern of the town. The CARE Districts include all land within Landgrove lying more than 1,500 feet distant from roadways (excepting private roads), as shown on the land use plan map (Map 4). A total of 1,776 acres of land lie in the CARE District, mostly in the northeast and the southern sections of the town.

Permitted uses and densities of development align with limited access to public roads, physical limitations for development, and presence of important natural resources. Permitted uses in the Rural Residential District include one- and two-family dwellings, accessory dwellings, primitive camps, home occupations, municipal and religious uses, agriculture, forestry and certain natural resource-based activities. Uses that are conditionally permitted include Owner Occupied Boarding Houses, home businesses cemeteries, and planned unit developments (PUDs), On Farm Businesses, Mobile Home Parks and certain institutional uses required to be permitted by the state.

The amount of future growth expected in the CARE Districts is extremely limited due to the poor soil conditions, the presence of protected wetlands, Forest Service land ownership, and other zoning restrictions, but like the Rural Residential District, there may be landowners who propose new development in this area. The subdivision of large lots in this district could result in the fragmentation of important forest blocks, making forest management, and the preservation of wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities difficult. Acquisition of conservation easements expanded public land ownership, and Conservation PUDs should be considered as ways to protect areas that are identified as having particularly high resource values.

#### **7.4-Village District**

The Village District is located in and around the historic “Clarksville” area (Map 4), and it 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. Many historic buildings in Landgrove have already 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. Historic structures can never be replaced once they are lost.

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 and the normal accessory uses to one and two-family dwellings are permitted); conditionally permitted uses include home professional offices and private recreational facilities. The planning Commission has discussed expanding the Village District so it includes older houses on small lots south of the current village on Ridge Rd, and North on the Landgrove road to the Landgrove Inn.



### **7.5-Mixed Use District**

The Mixed-Use 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 serve the 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 commercial development. Standards for traffic safety, parking, landscaping, screening, signs, and other conditions set forth in the zoning bylaws must be satisfied so a site plan must be approved by the planning commission prior to any commercial development.

### **7.6-Utley Flats Scenic Overlay District**

The 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 well-being of Landgrove's current and future residents.

The Utley Flats Scenic Overlay District includes 382 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 intersection of Danby Road-and Little Michigan Rd. It consists not only of the fields adjacent to the brook but also includes the historic Landgrove Village area. 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. An interrupted tree line follows much of the course of Utley 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.

The open fields and historic village which comprise the Utley Flats District are highly sensitive to changes in land development patterns. 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 would significantly impact the area's rural and historical character. Because of its scenic qualities, importance to the town's unique identity, and its vulnerability to development, a conditional use permit must be obtained from the Zoning Board of Adjustment prior to most development in the district. The permit is subject to specific development standards that are included in the zoning bylaws.



### **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-Ridgelines and Steep Terrain**

Development on steep terrain (over 20% grade) poses many potential challenges for the town. Access for emergency vehicles can be limited, stormwater and erosion control become more difficult, and the clearing of ridgelines for development can spoil the view of many people below, 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 the natural environment. As many large trees as possible should be left standing, exterior lighting should be shielded, building materials should not be highly reflective, or of a color that would stand out unnecessarily.

### **7.9-Land Use Policy Implementation**

1. Landgrove's unique character with its small historic village and scenic rural countryside should be maintained;
2. the existing land use plan and 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; large forest blocks, and wildlife habitat connectors, important natural, scenic, and historic resources should be preserved to the maximum extent possible;
4. the density of development must not exceed the amount that the land is physically capable of supporting;
5. during construction, all necessary measures should be taken to minimize soil erosion;
6. access to important natural or recreational resources should not be obstructed;
7. p[roposed 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 be carefully considered;
8. 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;
9. the town should carefully examine any proposed development involving new private roads or exceptionally steep terrain.

## VIII. Transportation

### **8.1-Town Transportation Infrastructure**

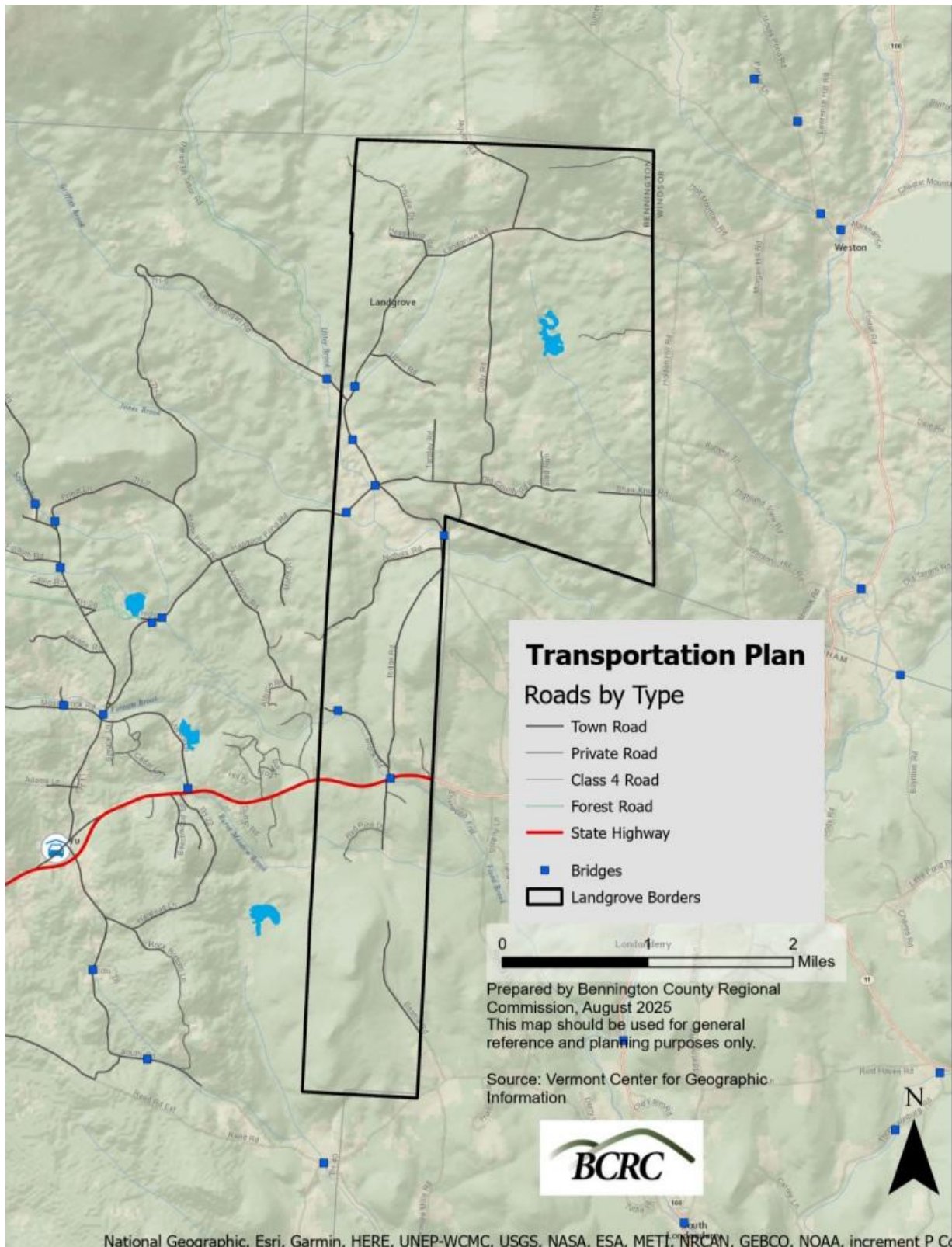
As a small rural town, Landgrove’s transportation system is somewhat limited, but still accounts for a significant share of the annual municipal budget. One state highway, Route 11, crosses the town about a mile and a half south of the Village. In addition, the town maintains just under 15 miles of local roadways (map 6).

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
State Ed Fund	\$ 1,117,084	\$ 1,213,650	\$ 1,158,352	\$ 1,164,532	\$ 1,147,106	\$ 1,110,995	\$ 1,185,905	\$ 1,225,539
Local Ed	\$ 345,529	\$ 321,322	\$ 506,425	\$ 442,327	\$ 474,393	\$ 425,461	\$ 447,496	\$ 373,076
Roads	\$ 241,645	\$ 246,791	\$ 249,218	\$ 222,513	\$ 205,270	\$ 216,002	\$ 305,721	\$ 251,669
General Fund	\$ 146,093	\$ 143,845	\$ 138,920	\$ 159,337	\$ 167,100	\$ 174,574	\$ 194,417	\$ 201,191
Total	\$ 1,852,368	\$ 1,927,626	\$ 2,054,934	\$ 1,990,729	\$ 1,995,890	\$ 1,929,054	\$ 2,135,562	\$ 2,053,499

Class 2 town highways serve as principal travel routes within Landgrove and they also connect to other towns and/or the state highway system (Map 6). 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 highways serve primarily to provide direct access to individual properties throughout the community. In addition, there are four sections of Class 4 town highway in town, which are not maintained for vehicular use, but are potentially important public rights-of-way that can be used by hikers, skiers, and horseback riders. and they should remain in town ownership.

Landgrove currently hires qualified private contractors to operate the town’s road maintenance 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 road maintenance equipment. Landgrove participates in the Vermont Better Roads Program, a state program which provides technical support and grant funding to municipalities and promotes the use of erosion control techniques that save money while protecting and enhancing water quality in Landgrove’s streams.

Map 6



In 2024, the town moved its road maintenance equipment and the town's winter sandpile out of the wetlands near the Utley Brook to a newly acquired parcel of land on the other side of Landgrove Rd. The wetlands where the equipment used to be stored was then restored, in consultation with the Vt. Agency of Natural Resources. In the near future, the town plans to erect a building to cover the sand to keep the sand pile dry, which will reduce the amount of salt spread on the town roads in winter, potentially making mud season less muddy.

Landgrove's existing roads should be adequate to serve the transportation needs of the community for the foreseeable future. The town's narrow, winding gravel roads 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 features. The fact that none of the town's roads are paved also limits traffic volume and speed, promoting safety.

Landgrove's quiet country roads do present some challenges, "mud season" and ice storms can make travel difficult or hazardous, and heavy rain events, which are becoming more frequent, can wash out culverts and vulnerable sections of roadway. The town has identified areas that have been, or are likely to be, impacted by such events and improved culverts and ditching to minimize washouts and erosion.



If new development in a remote section of town is proposed, the probable impact on the town's transportation infrastructure should be determined by the Planning Commission, and the developer should be responsible for the cost of any required improvements. Narrow private roads and even long driveways on steep terrain can be difficult for emergency vehicle access, so the town should be strict in regulating the width and steepness of new driveways and roads, and in some cases, fire ponds should be required on the site of remote developments. Long driveways and private roads should also be regulated the impact of rural sprawl, which can break up important wildlife habitat and forest blocks.

### **8.2-Transportation Policy Implementation**

The town should:

1. retain the current system of unpaved town roads. Maintenance activities should focus on the prevention of washouts and erosion rather than on facilitation of greater traffic speeds;

2. make sure that road construction activities, public or private, have the least possible impact on any important natural areas;
3. require that all roads including private roads are suitable for emergency vehicle access under all conditions, and that all structures in town have access to firefighting water through fire ponds or roads wide enough for the fire department to truck in tankers of water;
4. continue the existing policy of the town not maintaining, plowing, or resurfacing or paying for the cost of improving Class 4 town highways;
5. make sure that land use regulations continue to limit overall development density and discourage development in remote areas, thereby minimizing negative impacts on town roads;

## IX. Community Facilities and Services

### **9.1-Educational Facilities**

Because of Landgrove's small school age population (in 2024 there were only 17 children attending school) it is impractical to operate a school locally. In the early 2010s, the town formed the first Regional Education District (RED) in Vermont with neighboring towns of Weston, Peru, and Londonderry. Local students have continued to attend school from kindergarten through grade eight at Flood Brook School just over the Landgrove line in Londonderry.

In 2017, the RED was expanded to form the Taconic and Green (T&G) School District, incorporating the towns of Manchester, Dorset, Danby, Mount Tabor, and Sunderland. This new district, which is part of the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union, maintains schools for K-8 students, and secondary school education is provided on a voucher payment system that allows students to attend the school of their choice, with the town paying a fixed amount toward tuition that is approved annually. Most students from Landgrove choose to attend Burr and Burton Academy in Manchester, a private school which accepts any student from 13 surrounding towns who want to attend. Until recently Burr and Burton operated a small mountain campus just over the Landgrove line in Peru. That campus closed in 2024, and its future is uncertain. The school district's long-term plans include the construction of a regional middle school (RMS) in Manchester. The new RMS is being designed to provide significant educational benefits for our students, and the concept is generally supported within the district, though there are local concerns about transportation and the impacts on a smaller Flood Brook School elementary-only program."

School spending fluctuates somewhat from year to year as a result of changes in property tax assessments, the number of school-age children in town (an especially important factor in a small town like Landgrove), and the school staff's health care costs. In addition, Vermont's educational funding system causes a portion of Landgrove's education taxes to be sent to the state to be shared with other communities which have lower per capita property tax revenues and more students. As a result, Landgrove's educational expenses are quite high even though Landgrove has relatively low per-student expenses. Some people feel that this property tax burden is too much for some families, so legislative proposals for future changes in the tax system should be closely monitored, and proposals that would reduce the burden on Landgrove's residents and non-resident homeowners should be supported.

### **9.2-Public Buildings**

The Town Hall and the Meetinghouse are currently the only public buildings in Landgrove. Public buildings play an important role in the life of the community and should be maintained in good condition. Town hall has an administrative office space, a kitchen and a large meeting room. The Meeting House is a beautiful historic building which is used only in the warmer months. In 2024 the town purchased equipment for hosting on-line meetings at the town hall,

and the town also purchased land from the Landgrove Inn so it could move its winter sand pile road maintenance equipment out of an environmentally sensitive part of Leurich Field, and eventually be kept under cover when a town garage can be built.



The recently expanded town hall is an important public building.

### **9.3-Cemeteries**

The town owns two cemeteries, and it is looking for land for a third to fill the town's future needs. A four-person commission oversees the two-town cemeteries and helps preserve three other tiny cemeteries in town which are on private land. The cemeteries are maintained with a combination of an annual appropriation from the town, and the money from plot sales. In 2016 the town provided financial support to the Cemetery Commission to construct a beautiful stone wall at the New Cemetery. In 2024 the town worked with the Agency of Natural Resources to add riprap to the banks of the Utlely brook to prevent further erosion of the "New Cemetery".

### **9.4-Town Land**

The town also owns five other parcels of land. Leurich Field is home to Landgrove's annual fourth of July celebration, there are also two small town forests (the Lynn Pitcher Memorial Forest and the Wendy Evarts Memorial Forest) and in the village there is a five acre lot the town owns in a flood zone, and a tiny parcel of land that is home to the town's war memorial, and in addition several hundred acres in Landgrove are owned by the United States Forest Service (Map 7). Town and federally owned lands are intended to be used for open space conservation, recreation, and other natural resource-based activities.

### **9.5-Emergency Services and Law Enforcement**

The town is served by Londonderry's Phoenix fire department and by the Londonderry Rescue Squad. The town should continue to support these crucial services through annual appropriations. The Vermont State Police serves the local area from the Shaftsbury barracks and there is also an elected town constable with certain limited policing authority.

Residents can access these emergency services by dialing "911." The town encourages its residents to display their 911 address numbers where they can be seen by emergency vehicles, and the town clerk can provide residents with a form that automatically notifies the enhanced 911 dispatch system if someone with a disability is located at a residence when an emergency is reported. Some locations in Landgrove can be difficult to access by firetruck and some are great distances from sources of water for firefighting. The town encourages fire tanks or fire ponds at such locations, and the addition of pull-offs on narrow roads and driveways may be necessary for fire trucks to pass each other when bringing water to a fire scene.

### **9.6-Health Care**

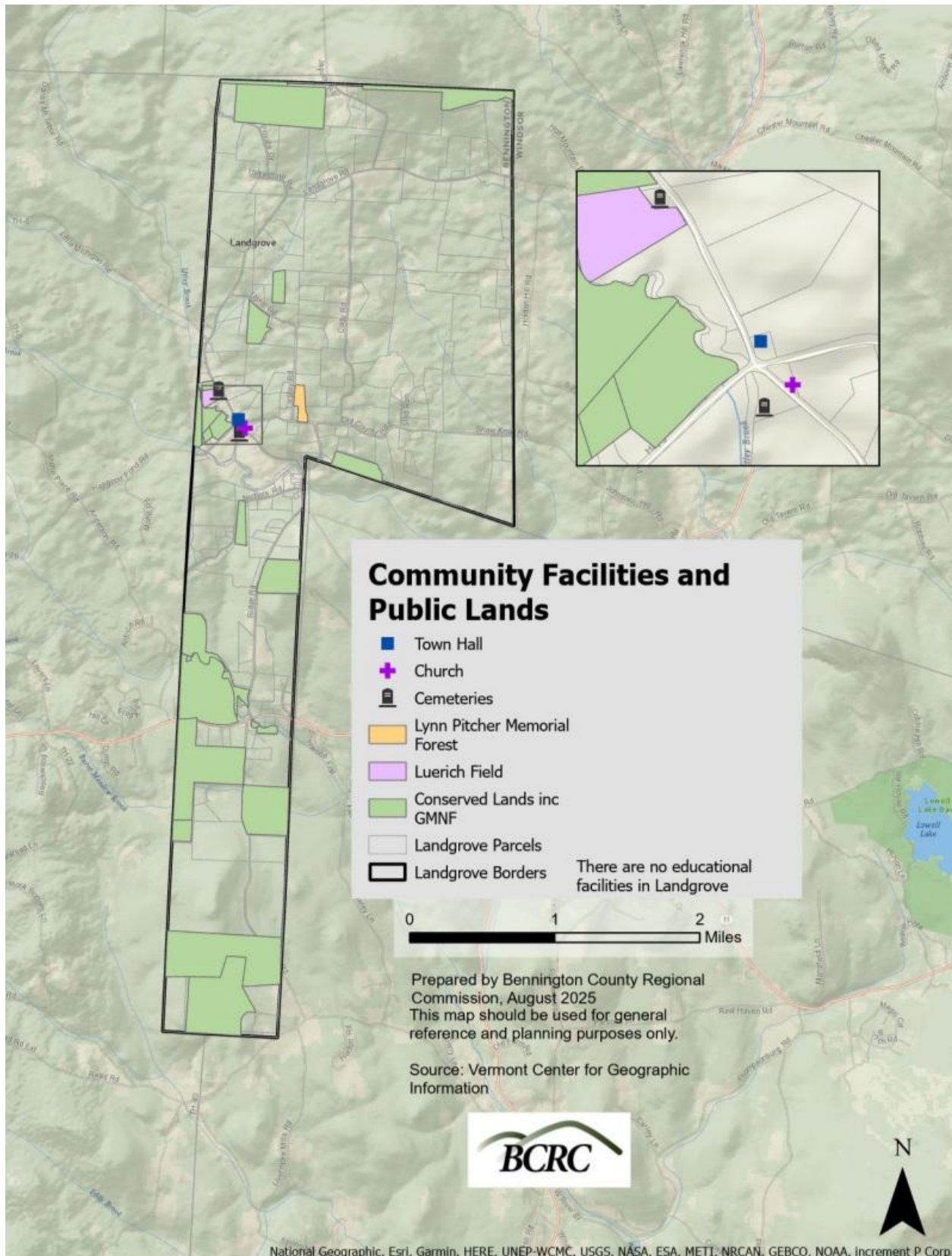
Established over 40 years ago, the Mountain Valley Health Center (MVHC) is a key resource for primary health care for Landgrove and surrounding towns. Located on Route 11 and originally founded and entirely supported by the mountain towns, the MVHC provides medical assistance to all residents regardless of their ability to pay. Within the last two years, the MVHC has become part of the wider network of the Northstar Health System, allowing access to a significantly expanded range of medical services (though the clinic buildings and facilities remain property of the MVHC). The MVHC is governed by a board that consists of representatives from five mountain towns, including Landgrove. All donations in support of MVHC stay with the clinic and are used only to benefit local communities. MVHC is in the planning stages for opening a pharmacy, to replace the Londonderry Pharmacy which closed in 2025.

Regional hospitals are located in Bennington, Springfield, and Rutland in Vermont, in Lebanon, New Hampshire and in Albany, New York. Also providing services to residents of Landgrove are the Visiting Nurse Alliance of Vermont and New Hampshire, and the Mountain Towns Connector which provides rides to medical and other essential appointments. Continued support for these existing services should ensure that adequate health care services remain available to the community.

### **9.7-Electricity and Telecommunications**

Satisfactory electric, phone and broadband service is available throughout Landgrove. If new communication tower installations become necessary, they must be consistent with this Town Plan, the zoning bylaws, and should not significantly degrade the town's scenic landscapes and aesthetic values.

# Map 7 Community Facilities and Public Land



### **9.8-Community Organizations**

The Landgrove Meetinghouse, adjacent to the Town Hall (Map 7), offers concerts, readings and religious services featuring visiting speakers as well as clergy of varied religious backgrounds during the summer months. The building is also available for weddings, funerals, and other private services upon request to the organization's Board of Trustees. The town should look into making the meeting house more accessible to people with mobility impairments.

The 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.



The 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. They also sponsor a popular annual pancake breakfast. The LHS office in the town hall is open by appointment.

Library: There is no library in the town, but nearby regional libraries are located in Weston, Manchester and Londonderry. The town should cooperate with those libraries to ensure that their services remain available to local residents.

### **9.9-Solid Waste**

Landgrove residents started using the Londonderry dump in 1947. Nowadays Landgrove is one of the five towns in the Londonderry Solid Waste Group which utilizes the Londonderry transfer station, which sits on top of the old dump. The transfer station accepts solid waste as well as paper, containers, food scraps for recycling, and hazardous and electronic waste collection

happens twice a year at the Flood Brook School. 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. Landgrove residents also participate in Green Up Day, observed annually on the first Saturday of May, when volunteers pick up any roadside trash that has accumulated since last year.

### **9.10-Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal**

Landgrove does not own a public water supply or sewage disposal system, and there is no indication that such systems will be required at any future time. The land use plan and zoning regulations help ensure that water quality, availability, and public health are protected but most of the responsibility for maintaining the safety of these systems falls upon the State of Vt Agency of Natural Resources who designate isolation zones to prevent cross contamination of wells by septic systems and other sources of pollution. These isolation zones can cross property boundaries, and residents in town are sometimes surprised to receive letters from the state telling them that part of their land is in a neighbor's well isolation zone, which means that they cannot construct a septic system on that portion of their property.

### **9.11-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.

### **9.12-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 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 a small paid staff, and many elected and appointed volunteers. A few important town boards and commissions include:

- The Auditors, who review the town's books and accounts;
- The Cemetery Commission, who oversee the maintenance of local cemeteries;
- The Collector of Delinquent Taxes, who notifies taxpayers when their taxes are overdue, makes arrangements for late payments, and takes formal collection actions, including conducting tax sales;
- The Constable who under state statute can serve legal papers, assist the health officer, destroy unlicensed animals, kill injured deer, and remove disorderly people from town meetings;
- The Grand Juror investigates potential violations of local regulations or laws;

- The Justices of the Peace, who among other duties, hear appeals of property assessments;
- The Listers, and their Assessor who determine property values for the purpose of local taxation;
- The Moderator, who presides over town meetings and ensures their smooth operation;
- The Select Board, the town’s elected legislative body who develop budgets, hear and responds to citizen concerns, vote to adopt ordinances and bylaws, and enter into contracts for services;
- The District School Board Member, who helps set the vision and direction for education within their district;
- The Town Clerk, who maintains public records, oversees elections, and provides various services to the public;
- The Treasurer, who manages the town's finances;
- The Trustees of Public Funds, who manage real and personal property held in trust by the town, including cemetery trust funds and other funds established for specific purposes;
- The Zoning Administrator, who is primarily responsible for administering and enforcing the town's zoning bylaws and land use regulations;
- The Zoning Board of Adjustment/Planning Commission, which rules on specific types of zoning applications and appeals and prepares the Town Plan and land use regulations.

**9.13-Municipal Finance**

Total expenditures in Landgrove have been fairly stable in recent years (Figure 4). The largest portion of public spending in town, as in most Vermont towns, is associated with education costs. Year-to-year variations in the (non-education) portion of the budget have been less significant, with increases seen to fund the addition to the Town Hall, for the purchase new road maintenance equipment, and in the near future a shed to store winter sand and highway maintenance equipment.

In Vermont there are two real estate tax rates, homestead and non-homestead. A property is considered non-homestead if it is used for commercial purposes, if it is rented, or if the property is used as a second home. Landgrove’s homestead tax rate was \$1.94 in 2024 and the non-homestead rate was \$1.85. These rates have risen by about 16% and 3% respectively since 2017, and, accordingly, property tax payments have increased significantly.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
State Ed Fund	\$ 1,117,084	\$ 1,213,650	\$ 1,158,352	\$ 1,164,532	\$ 1,147,106	\$ 1,110,995	\$ 1,185,905	\$ 1,225,539
Local Ed	\$ 345,529	\$ 321,322	\$ 506,425	\$ 442,327	\$ 474,393	\$ 425,461	\$ 447,496	\$ 373,076
Roads	\$ 241,645	\$ 246,791	\$ 249,218	\$ 222,513	\$ 205,270	\$ 216,002	\$ 305,721	\$ 251,669

General Fund	\$ 146,093	\$ 143,845	\$ 138,920	\$ 159,337	\$ 167,100	\$ 174,574	\$ 194,417	\$ 201,191
Total	\$ 1,852,368	\$ 1,927,626	\$ 2,054,934	\$ 1,990,729	\$ 1,995,890	\$ 1,929,054	\$ 2,135,562	\$ 2,053,499

**9.14-Community Facilities and Services, Policy Implementation**

The town should:

1. support the town’s officers and volunteers;
2. 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. enforce zoning and health regulations, especially those that pertain to wastewater disposal, to ensure that water quality and public health are protected;
5. continue efforts to reduce the generation of solid waste through educational programs, initiatives to reduce the use of wasteful packaging, and through recycling programs;
6. work with electricity and telecommunications providers to ensure that the best available services are provided to residents, and to ensure that new telecommunication towers, be sited with sensitivity to environmental, scenic, and neighborhood concerns;
7. continue to be involved with the district School Board to make sure the town’s children receive an excellent education;
8. maintain town buildings so they are always available to the residents of the town;
9. purchase land for a new cemetery;
10. build a facility for storing winter stand and highway maintenance equipment;
11. make sure that any proposed development that impacts public facilities and services should be permitted only if it can be shown that such impacts will not subject town residents to unreasonable property tax increases.

## X. Energy

### **10.1 Landgrove Energy Use**

Energy is a basic need of our society, from heating homes, to transportation, to powering our computers. 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 67 year-round homes) amount to approximately \$134,000 per year. Assuming that the town's 83 homes belonging to non-residents spend half as much to heat their homes each year (\$83,000), heating alone accounts for well over \$200,000 in annual energy costs. Applying a similar analysis for electricity consumption, Landgrove homeowners (residents and non-residents) spend approximately \$128,500 annually. Finally, vehicles used by the town's permanent population can be expected to consume over 69,000 gallons of gasoline each year (US Census, Federal Highway Administration, and US EPA estimates) - at an annual cost of approximately \$214,000. All told then, energy consumption by Landgrove residents and homeowners exceeds \$899,000 per year.

The town should encourage the conservation of energy wherever possible. In Landgrove, that takes the form of using local wood for heat, using solar panels and batteries to generate and store electricity, and providing access to high-speed internet for everyone to improve opportunities for working and learning from home. The town should continue to encourage energy conservation as new technologies arise. 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.

### **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 for windbreaks, and energy-saving insulation and appliances will enhance conservation efforts. The town should make all applicants for zoning permits aware of the state's building efficiency standards for new buildings and additions over five hundred square feet. To encourage homeowners to invest in energy efficiency improvements, the town could make use of Vt Clean Energy Development Fund Efficiency Vermont, offer 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.

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) and The Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) 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 photovoltaics and wind turbines can generate electricity. Heat pumps and other cutting-edge heating and cooling systems can also be used to increase the efficiency of hot water and space heating as well as cooling 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.

Landgrove is a bicycle and pedestrian friendly community, and safe and well-maintained roads should be maintained for these uses. As concern about the dangers of climate change rise over time, the attractiveness and energy saving measures provided by various forms of public transportation may become more evident. The town should periodically assess the demand for new public transportation to employment.



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.

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. 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.

### **10.3- Energy Policy Implementation**

The town should actively promote policies that:

1. lead to consideration of energy use, including short and long- term energy costs, in municipal decision-making;
2. require energy efficient site planning and building practices;
3. support development of renewable energy resources;
4. ensure that roadway maintenance encourages walking and biking;
5. support programs and facilities that provide stable, affordable, and clean renewable sources of energy, including wood, wind, hydroelectric, solar, and energy savings through weatherization and efficient heating and cooling systems;
6. reduce fossil fuel use in its municipal facilities and operations;
7. consider replacing indoor and outdoor lighting with LED fixtures;
8. consider Fuel efficiency when the town replaces vehicles and heavy equipment;
9. employ renewable energy resources in municipal buildings and equipment;
10. consider conducting a comprehensive municipal energy audit.

## XI Consistency with State Planning Goals

### **11.1-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.

### **11.2-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 plan calls for Landgrove to maintain its character as a small rural town, with a concentrated village area, surrounded by agricultural land and forest blocks. Land use districts include a higher density village district, a low density rural residential district, and very low density agricultural and conservation district. Commercial uses are restricted to a small area along Vermont Route 11. A section of the land use plan on the Utley Flats Scenic Overlay district contains special standards to protect the rural and scenic character of a highly valued open space area in the center of the community. Much of Landgrove consists of steep slopes and the zoning regulations impose strict environmental controls in these areas.

2. To provide a strong and diverse economy that provides satisfying and rewarding job opportunities while maintaining high environmental standards.

The plan's a chapter on economic development. notes that the town's small size and rural location limit the types of economic activity that can be supported to agriculture, forestry, home-based businesses, construction, property maintenance work and a certain amount of commercial activity in the mixed-use district. Inns used to be common in town, but now only one remains. 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.

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 Taconic and Green Regional School District, the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union, the Flood Brook (elementary) school, located in Londonderry, and the options for high school. The plan also discussed town's tax burden from the current educational funding system.

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, skiers and cyclists.

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; the number of roads to remote forest areas is limited, which helps to limit rural sprawl, and the town's investment focuses on maintaining roads that provide access to established settled areas. 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 lands, forests (including a discussion of the Green Mountain National Forest and its landholdings in town), wildlife habitat, beautiful scenery, and good air quality. The plan relates resource protection strategies to the land use plan and also includes specific recommendations for ensuring protection of key resources such as undeveloped forest blocks and wildlife habitat. The potential impact of new development with long and steep driveways and private roads into undeveloped areas damaging the continuity of forest blocks and wildlife habitat is discussed. Special note of historic resources is made in the land use element, focusing specifically on the "Clarksville" village area, the town hall and meeting house.

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 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 information on the importance of proper siting and construction of buildings. And discusses the town's support for small-scale renewable energy projects at residential buildings. The plan discusses the importance of developing efficient means of 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 provided by the town's, the town's system of unpaved roads, natural resources and the Green Mountain National Forest including Forest Service trails, the Catamount Trail. It also emphasizes the need to maintain and enhance public access to streams, trails, and forests, and also mentions the Mountain Town Recreation Board based in Londonderry, which oversees organized recreational opportunities for five towns.

9. To encourage and strengthen agricultural and forest industries.

The plan discusses regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to the conservation of agricultural land and forest blocks. 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 description of the current housing stock in Landgrove as well as issues inherent in providing affordable housing in a small rural mountain town with high real estate values. It identifies regulatory provisions that enable more flexibility in development-such as ADUs, PUDs, and 2-family homes, 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 with town services 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 and state Road and Bridge standards, maintains a Local Emergency Operations Plan and a Hazard Mitigation Plan, and is considering regulating development in River Corridors.



### **11.3-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.