

# TOWN PLAN



Landgrove, Vermont

June 14, 2001

Re-Adopted  
August 9, 2007

# Landgrove Town Plan

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## 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 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 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 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. This early 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 the Flats. This area was well-suited for development because of its proximity to the prosperous farms along Utley Brook, as well as 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 remain important community assets today.

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. 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 actually 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 the buildings in that area.

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 unsurpassing 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. This growth trend is expected to continue.

Townpeople have recognized that an effective planning process is necessary to guide this future growth and ensure that Landgrove remains 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 bylaw has 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 should strive to achieve, and also encourages 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 mak-

ing 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

This section consists of a statement of objectives for the Town of Landgrove. Some of the objectives may be realized by continuing to pursue current policies and directions; others may only be attained with new policies, regulations, investments, or other strategies. Subsequent sections will detail specific policies and actions which will facilitate attainment of the objectives.

### **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 actively participate in the local planning process.

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 effectively addressed.

## **2.2 Effectively manage future growth and development.**

The town directs new development to achieve the following objectives:

- \* preserve the town's unique character -- a small historic village and a scenic rural landscape;
- \* avoid soil erosion, ground water contamination, and damage to other important natural resources;
- \* require that future development bear its fair share of municipal capital and maintenance costs;
- \* prevent incompatible and uncoordinated development that would adversely affect the character of the community and existing property values;
- \* maintain a population and housing density low enough to ensure the continued feasibility of private on-site water supply and sewage disposal systems;
- \* provide for a reasonable level of continued growth in both primary and part-time housing units.

## **2.3 Identify and protect important natural resources and historic features.**

Special areas, including significant natural and fragile ecological areas, ridges and other important features of the landscape, scenic roads, waterways, views, and historical, educational, cultural, and scientific sites are being identified and measures taken to preserve them for the enjoyment of current and future residents of the town.

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

Landgrove relies on clean ground water for much of its domestic water supply. Ground water recharge areas must, therefore, 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.**

Many outdoor, natural resource based recreational activities are available in Landgrove. Methods should be found to maintain or provide public access to these streams, trails and forests. Cooperation with other communities may help to 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 that is appropriate in Landgrove is quite limited. Forestry, agriculture, and outdoor recreation are important in Landgrove and should be encouraged in the future. Small home-based businesses are permitted pursuant to the provisions of the municipal zoning bylaw. Other commercial enterprises should be located in the commercially zoned area along Route 11.

**2.6 Encourage efficient energy use.**

The town's land use pattern, individual developments, and infrastructure should promote energy efficiency and conservation. In addition, sound proposals to develop renewable energy resources should be pursued.

**2.7 Plan for, finance, and provide an efficient system of public facilities and services.**

Appropriate 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 the maintenance of existing roads. Other essential facilities and services require inter-municipal or regional planning and cooperation: schools, communications systems, health care services, fire and police protection, 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.

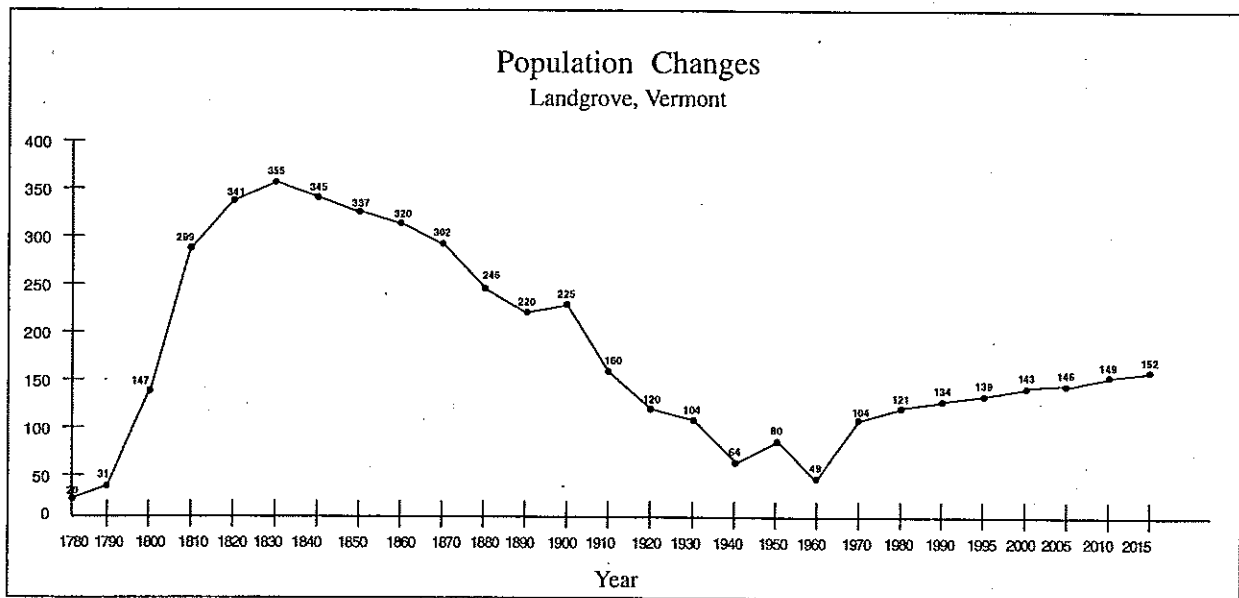
**2.9 Actively encourage a high quality of life for residents of the town.**

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 the preservation of a community that is efficient and economical to operate.

### III. Population, Housing, and Economic Characteristics

#### 3.1 Population

Landgrove's population grew rapidly shortly after the town's founding in 1780. The population peaked at 355 in 1830, and declined slowly but steadily until a low of 49 was reached in 1960. The population more than doubled during the 1960s, and has continued to increase, but at a slower rate, since 1970 (see graph below, data from U.S. Census. According to Vermont Department of Health, Landgrove's population was 142 as of 1998. Most of Landgrove's recent population growth is due to in-migration; in fact, as of 1990, only 26% of the town's residents were born in Vermont. Projections indicate the town will add ten to twenty residents over the next decade.



The median age of Landgrove residents increased from 34.8 years to 42.3 years between 1980 and 1990. A profile of the town's population age structure reveals a relatively high proportion of people in older age categories when compared to Bennington County or the State of Vermont (Table 3.1). Landgrove's population is also very well educated relative to the rest of the state, with over 95% of residents aged 25 and older having a high school education (County - 78%, Vermont - 81%) and 66% holding a bachelor's degree or higher (County and State - 24%).

**Table 3.1 Population Age Structure, 1990**

	Percent of Population in Age Class				
	0-17	18-44	45-64	65+	Median Age
Landgrove	21.6	32.8	26.1	19.4	42.3
Bennington County	25.1	40.2	19.8	14.9	34.9
Vermont	25.4	44.6	18.2	11.8	33.0

Source: US Census 1990

### 3.2 Housing

The number of housing units in Landgrove has grown steadily over the past several decades. There were a total of 87 housing units in the town in 1970. That number increased to 126 in 1980 and to 143 in 1990. Since 1980 the number of housing units maintained as part-time residences has remained at approximately 55 percent of the total. The Vermont Department of Health statistics indicate that as of 1991 there were 147 housing units in Landgrove – 67 year-round residences and 80 part-time units. Clearly then, planning in Landgrove must give due consideration to the interests of both year-round and part-time residents of the town.

Nearly half of the houses in town were built prior to 1939, and most of the rest have been built since 1960. U.S.Census data show that 20 or more housing units have been built in each decade since 1960, whereas only two new houses were built in Landgrove between 1940 and 1959. In fact, very little new home construction occurred from the mid-1800s through 1960 as the population of the town continued its steady decline.

As measured by the number of rooms, houses are, on average, larger in Landgrove (6.5 rooms per unit) than in Bennington County (5.7 rooms) or Vermont (5.6 rooms). There is an average of 2.31 persons per household, and only one housing unit with more than 1.01 persons per room ( a standard of measuring crowding). These relatively large uncrowded houses are also relatively expensive. The median value of a house in Landgrove (\$187,500) is the highest of any town in the Bennington Region and is nearly twice as high as the county (\$97,100) or state (\$95,000) medians.

It is likely that several new homes will be built in Landgrove in the next decade. 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 this time.

### 3.3 Economic Characteristics

Economic activities in Landgrove are consistent with the town's small size and remote location. Other than a limited amount of commercial forestry and farming, current economic enterprises in Landgrove include several home-based businesses and four inns.

The town's total work force (1990 U.S. Census data) consisted of 90 persons. The unemployment rate in 1990 was 4.4%, significantly lower than the county or state rates. Most Landgrove residents who are in the labor force travel to work in another town. Of the 86 individuals who are employed, all but 13 reported that they worked outside their homes, yet only 18 people reported a travel time in excess of 30 minutes.

Over 40 of the town's residents work in professional executive and managerial positions. A relatively large percentage of the remaining work force are employed in technical, sales, and administrative support positions. These occupations offer very good wages, as evidenced by the per capita and median income levels for Landgrove (Table 3.2). Employment is spread across a wide range of industries, with several people working in each of the following businesses: finance, insurance, real estate, business and personal services, health services, education, retail trade, construction, and various other professional services.

**Table 3.2 Per Capita and Median Income (1989)**

	<b>Per capita</b>	<b>Median Household</b>	<b>Median Family</b>
<b>Landgrove</b>	\$21,455	\$30,000	\$55,000
<b>Bennington County</b>	13,455	28,485	33,513
<b>Vermont</b>	13,529	29,792	34,780

These economic and demographic statistics suggest that Landgrove is and will remain a very rural community with only limited economic activity within its borders. The town should support those industries that are most appropriate in this setting: natural resource and outdoor recreation based businesses, home occupations, and appropriate commercial activities sited in the Residential and Commercial District along Route 11. Activities that would degrade the quality of the natural environment and adversely affect the local economy should not be permitted. Improvements and technical advances in telecommunications can be beneficial to Landgrove residents enabling them to work out of their homes while exchanging information with offices or business clients in distant locations. because many residents work in other towns in the area, local officials should remain aware of important regional economic development issues.

## IV. Natural Resources

### 4.1 Physiography

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 (Figure 4-1). Elevations range from 1,300 feet above sea level along Flood Brook in Landgrove Hollow and 1,400 feet on the broad "Flats" adjacent to Utley Brook to over 2,000 feet along the town's northern border.

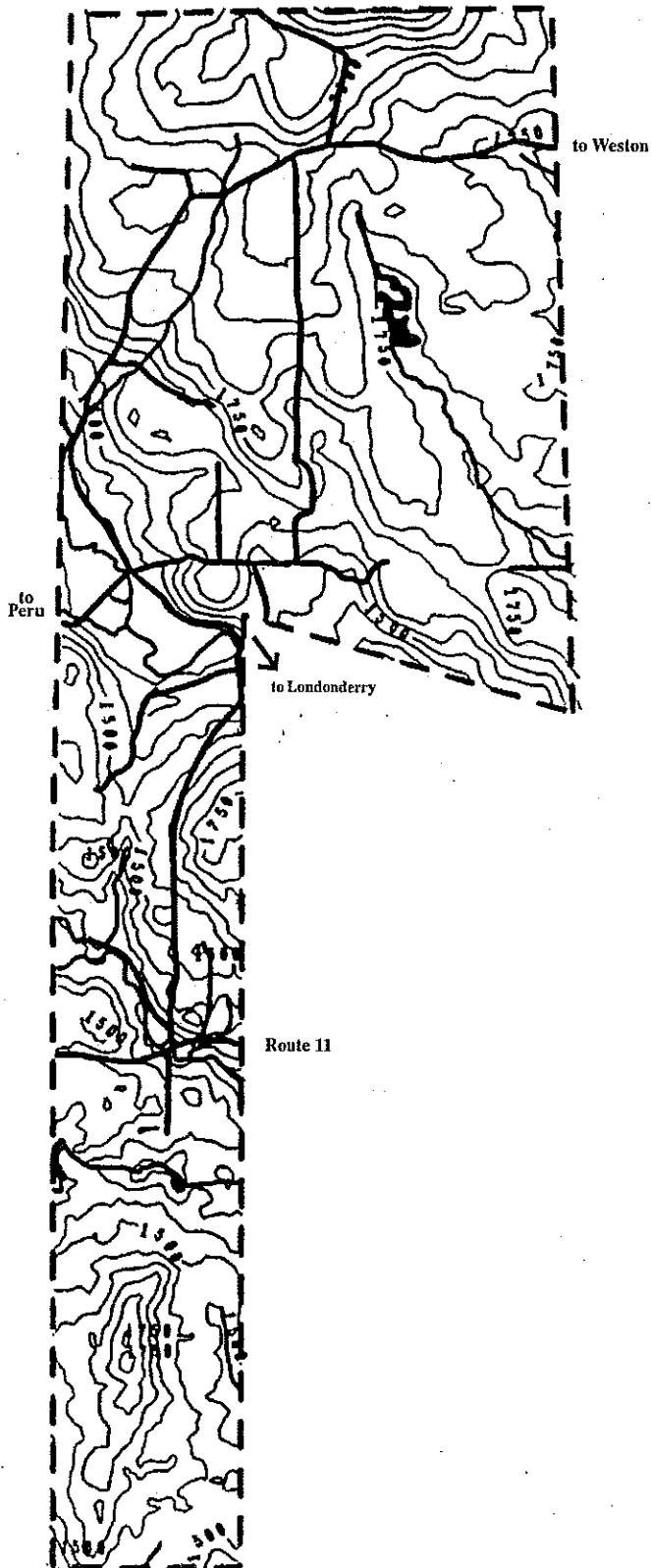
Physical characteristics of the land are important in determining locations that are best suited for development. Siting development on steep slopes or on soils that are too shallow, wet, or unstable can cause severe problems: roads will be difficult and costly to maintain, septic systems may be impossible to install or can fail and contaminate water supplies, and erosion will result in soil loss and degradation of aquatic environments. Areas of steep slopes exist primarily in the extreme northern and southern parts of the town; land slopes in excess of 20 percent occupy less than 350 acres of land in Landgrove (Figure 4-2). Special care should be taken when steep slopes are encountered on a building site, and no development should occur where natural slopes exceed 25 percent.







Soil conditions are more of a limiting factor for development in Landgrove. 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. (Figure 4-3). The U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service has completed a comprehensive soil survey that allows planners and landowners to determine whether soils in a particular area are best suited for residential development, agriculture, forestry, some other activity, or whether the land should not be disturbed. This information should be an important element in future land use planning in Landgrove.

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

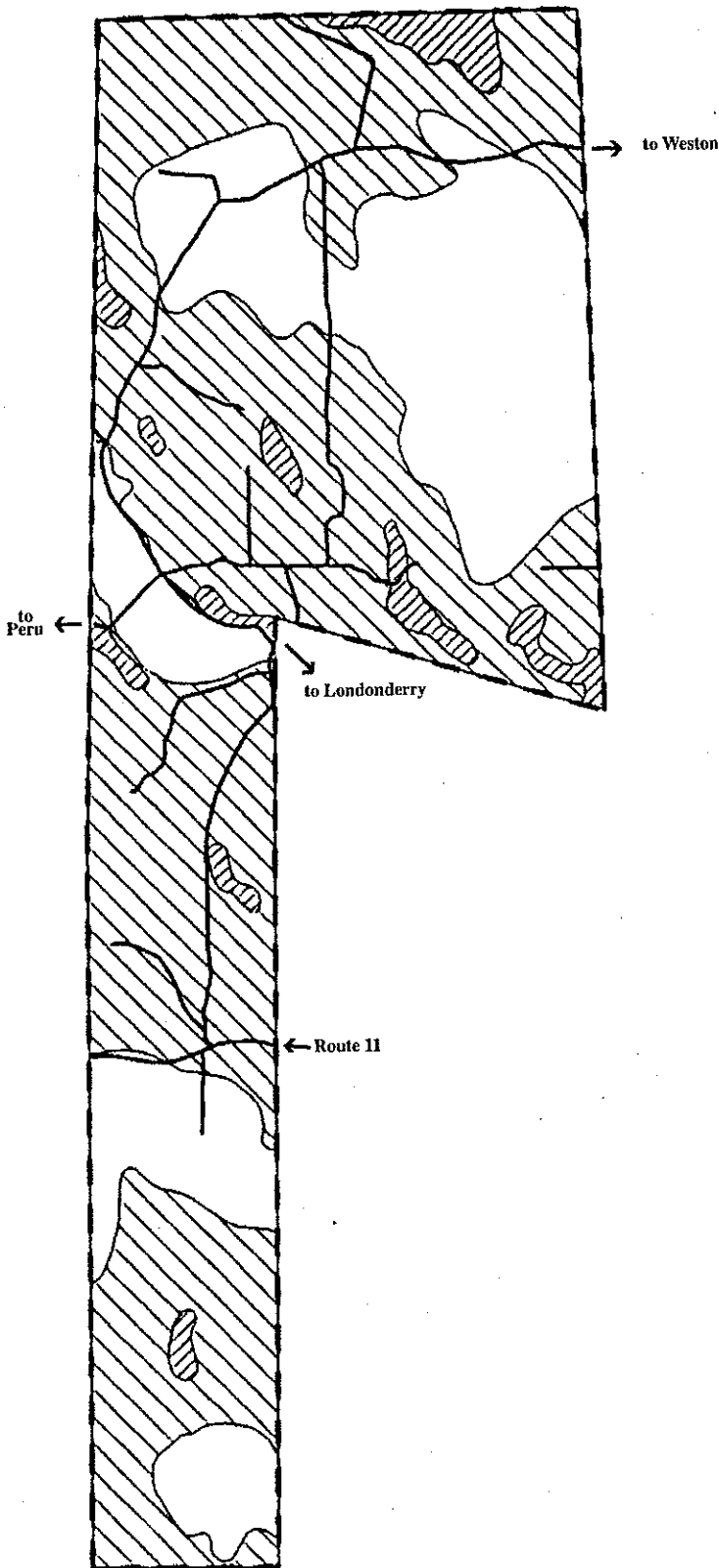
### 4.2 Water Resources

Landgrove contains a rich variety of water resources (Figure 4-4). The most visible of these are Utley Brook, Flood Brook, Carpenter Brook, Burnt Meadow Brook, Jones Brook, and several smaller streams. These streams serve a number of important functions. In addition to supplying clean water to larger waterways (the streams are tributaries of the West River), they are important fisheries, provide a critical habitat component for many wildlife species, offer opportunities for swimming and other recreational activities, and are critical to the area's aesthetic appeal. These functions will be preserved 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 in appropriate locations.



<b>LANDGROVE, VT.</b>	
Figure 4-1	
<p>  50 Foot Contours   Roads   Streams         </p>	
 <small>VERMONT GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM          DIGITAL TERRAIN DATA - TERRAIN ANALYSIS</small>	 

MAP PRODUCED 2/3/94 BY DCRC



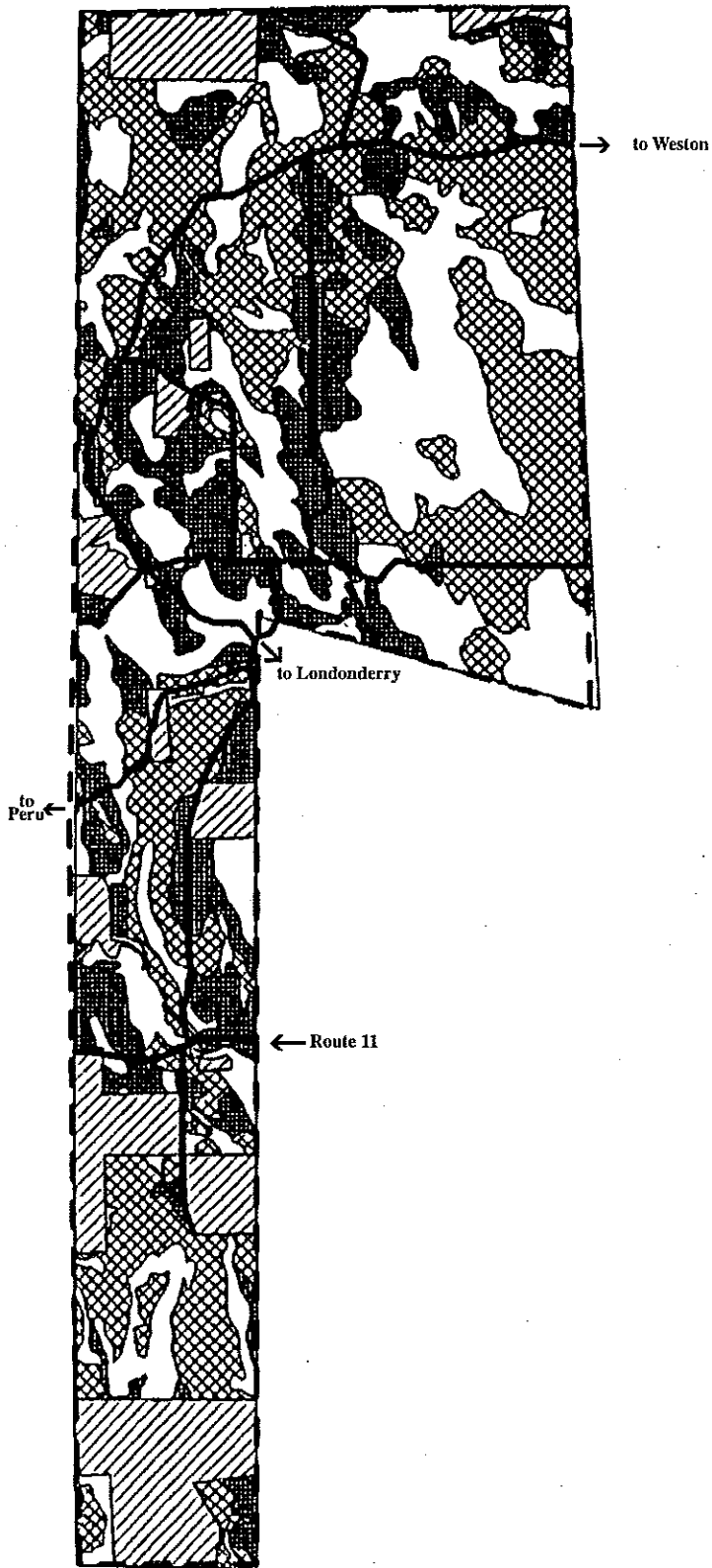
LANDGROVE, VT.

Figure 4-2

- 0 - 5% Slopes
- ▣ 5 - 20% Slopes
- ▤ + 20% Slopes
- N Roads

**GTS**  
GROUNDWATER INFORMATION SYSTEM  
 BOSTON UNIVERSITY - THE U.S. ARMY

**BCRC**  
BOSTON CENTER FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION



**LANDGROVE, VT.**

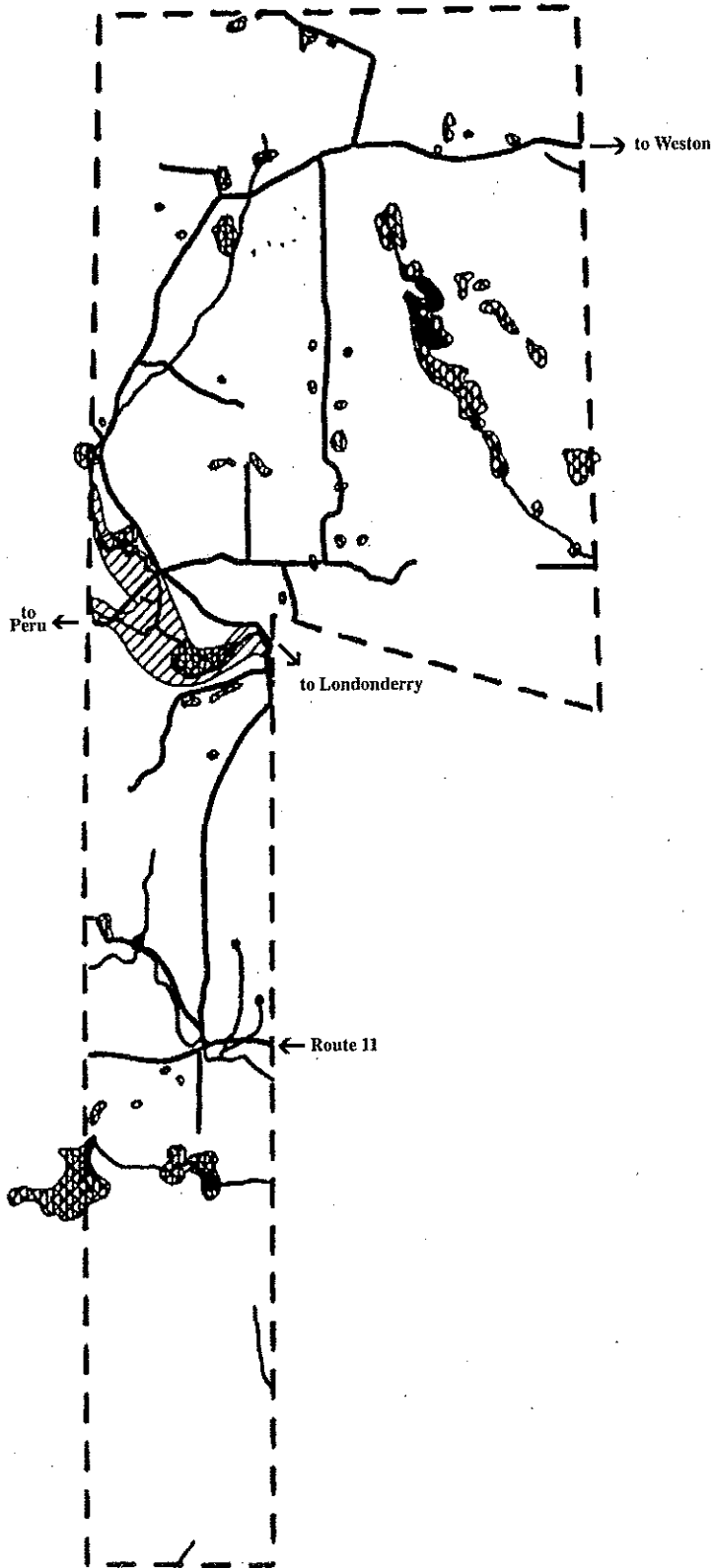
**Figure 4-3**  
 Suitability of Soils  
 for Wastewater Disposal Systems

- Good
- ⊠ Moderate
- Poor
- ▨ GMNF/Town/VLT

**GTS**  
 VERMONT GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM  
 HELPING VERMONTERS TAKE BETTER CARE

VT  
 N

MAP PRODUCED 2/16/94 BY BCRC



LANDGROVE, VT.

Figure 4-4

- Ponds
- ▨ Wetlands
- ▧ Floodplains
- ~ Streams
- Roads



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, open space and aesthetic appreciation, fish and wildlife habitat, and sources of nutrients for fresh water food chains. The large wetland complex at the headwaters of Carpenter Brook is of particular value to the town. A number of beaver dams have created ponds that are surrounded by meadows and second growth forest. Abandoned roads provide access to the area for hiking, cross-country skiing and nature study at all times of the year. The Vermont Wetlands Rules and certain federal regulatory programs afford a level of protection to wetlands; it is possible to petition the Water Resources Board to reclassify very important wetlands to a more secure "Class I" designation.

Floodplains in Landgrove are located in low-lying areas along Utley and Jones Brooks. Development in floodplain area is inherently dangerous due to the immediate hazards associated with flood water inundation and to the increased flooding that may occur downstream when developed floodplains are no longer capable of retaining flood waters. Such development can also interfere with the function and quality of floodplain wetlands. The town, therefore, has enacted flood hazard area zoning regulations to control development in these areas.

Most existing residences, as well as future development, depend on an adequate supply of ground water. This water is obtained principally from individual on-site wells. Historically, the low density of development in Landgrove has limited the potential for contamination of these wells. Future protection of these water supplies will depend upon strict adherence to local and state health regulations. Special consideration should be given to areas like Utley Flats that are underlain by a significant gravel aquifer.

### **4.3 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. Keeping these lands open provides valuable wildlife habitat and scenic vistas today, and preserves the potential for future agricultural use of these productive soils if local farming becomes economically important or necessary at some future time.

A number of techniques are available to help preserve important agricultural or open lands.<sup>1</sup> The Vermont Land Trust already has acquired development rights to some open land on Utley Flats; additional acquisitions should be supported. Vermont's current use program provides property tax relief to landowners who keep their agricultural or forest lands undeveloped and well managed (funding for this program has been reduced in recent years, however). The town's zoning regulations permit only compatible types and densities of development, and include a "planned residential development" provision that allows flexibility in lot layout that can be employed to leave important open lands intact.

Much of Landgrove is covered by a forest of mixed hardwood and softwood trees. These forests help prevent soil erosion and flooding, contribute to air and water quality, and provide valuable timber, wildlife, recreational, and aesthetic resources. Over 700 acres of this forest land is owned and managed by the Green Mountain National Forest. Proper management of privately owned forest land also should be encouraged. As with agricultural lands, use value taxation, acquisition of land or development rights, and creative development techniques can be used to protect important forest land resources.

<sup>1</sup> A Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) is a good way to inventory important agricultural land. This process measures the agricultural potential of a parcel of land based on its constituent soil types and characteristics such as location, size accessibility, current land use, and other factors important to the community.

#### **4.4 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. Mention has been made of the streams and wetlands in the town and their importance to fish and wildlife. The mix of land cover types -- open field, hardwood forest, softwood forest, etc. -- characteristic of upland areas in Landgrove is also crucial to the maintenance of a diverse wildlife population. In addition, the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has identified important black bear habitat areas and winter deer yards in Landgrove (Figure 4-5). Development and logging activities should be planned so as to avoid damage to critical habitat areas. Specific measures that can be taken to minimize adverse impacts on wildlife include: maintenance or provision 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 minimize environmental disturbances.

#### **4.5 Scenic Resources**

Landgrove's uniquely beautiful rural character results from an exceptionally scenic natural environment combined with traditional New England architecture and settlement patterns. Vistas up and down the Flats, distant views across highland meadows, the comfortable clustering of homes in the Village, snowy tracteries of tree limbs over a county road on a winter morning, and countless other bucolic scenes are treasured by the residents of Landgrove. These aesthetic qualities also foster a sense of community as townspeople strive together to protect the character of 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 a valued view shed can inalterably degrade scenic resources for the entire town. Similarly, new structures should be designed in a manner that is harmonious with surrounding historic buildings. Landowners are encouraged to consider the town's heritage and natural beauty when developing their properties. Land use regulations, including scenic ridge and historic districts, should be considered to increase protection of particularly critical areas. The town should also ensure that road maintenance activities give due consideration to preservation of the scenic qualities of the town's byways. Utility Infrastructure should be coordinated with Selectboard, Zoning Board, and Road Commissioner prior to any installations.

## **4.6 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 wood stoves and furnaces should consider replacing them with more efficient models to limit discharges of particulate pollution. Pollution from distant industrial facilities can affect air quality in Landgrove; the town should support regional and state efforts to prevent environmental damage from industrial sources.

## **4.7 Planning for Resource Protection**

Protection of the resources discussed in this section will require an ongoing planning process. The planning commission should continue to identify important natural resources, draft regulations for consideration by the town, and work with anyone proposing new developments that might affect these resources. Furthermore, the planning commission should make an effort to involve the owners of these lands and resources in the planning process. In this way, individuals owning important natural resources will be aware of the town's concerns, and the interests of the landowners will be reflected in any preservation strategy that is pursued. Such communication will improve the planning effort and increase the likelihood of success.

## **4.8 Policies and Recommendations**

1. New growth should be encouraged in areas where physical conditions are most capable of supporting such development, and discouraged in areas of steep slopes or poor soils where environmental damage is likely to occur as a result of development. Special attention must be given to the need to prevent soil erosion, contamination of surface and ground water, and damage to natural ecological communities.
2. The natural characteristics and values of Landgrove's streams 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.
3. Development in floodplains must be carefully controlled in accordance with flood hazard area regulations.
4. The productive potential and scenic value of important open and agricultural lands should be protected. Appropriate preservation techniques include: acquisition of land, easements, or development rights by a land trust or other conservation organization, participation in the state's "current use" program, and careful design and siting of new residential development. Similar considerations should be given to important forest lands – acquisition of certain parcels for inclusion in the Green Mountain National Forest is another preservation option available for forest lands.

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. New development should be harmonious with the town's scenic natural landscape and historic architecture. The town has enacted ridge and scenic vista regulations to protect important aesthetic values. (see section VI, Land Use). The town should also consider historic district regulations.
7. 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.
8. Important sand and gravel resources should remain available for economic extraction and use; regulations should ensure that extraction sites are properly developed and restored.

## V. Recreation

### 5.1 Recreational Resources

The recreational needs of Landgrove are not so much for added facilities as for planned preservation of the town's natural attributes. Blessed with an environment so well suited to a wide variety of outdoor activities – hiking, cross-country skiing, bicycling, and fishing, to name just a few – it is good sense that our recreation takes maximum advantage of our location. Recreational facilities should be informal rather than highly developed, and recreational activities should not contribute in any way to the deterioration of our natural environment.

Most destructive of the pleasantness of village life in Vermont has been the conversion of main streets to conduits for through traffic. As roads are "improved" through widening and paving, traffic speeds increase and the usefulness and safety of the roads for children, walkers, runners, bicyclists, and horseback riders decrease. Fortunately, the people of Landgrove have consistently supported retention of our existing system of gravel roads.

The following recreational facilities are available to residents of Landgrove:

- \* The "schoolhouse" building now used as the Town Hall and for social activities. The building also houses a small lending library and is located next to a modest playground.
- \* The Luerich Memorial Field, a five acre tract 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 the trails in Landgrove.
- \* Horses and riding instruction are available in nearby towns.

Much of the land in the Green Mountain National Forest is actively managed for recreational use, and all of this forest 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 lands is therefore most welcome, and should be encouraged lest a rash of "No Trespassing" signs spring up along the town's roads.

## **5.2 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 concern from a recreational standpoint are wildlife habitats, streams, the unpaved rural road system, and the expanses of undeveloped land.
2. The town's population density should not exceed a level commensurate with ample and usable open areas.
3. Any development of recreational facilities should be as informal and economical as possible. Underdevelopment of recreational attributes is preferable to overdevelopment.
4. Developments and 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.

## **VI. Land Use**

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 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 is currently divided into four separate land use, or zoning districts, plus a scenic overlay district, and a regulatory flood hazard area (Figure 6-1 and Figure 6-2). A description of each district is included in this section, together with policies and recommendations that will ensure that future growth is both economically efficient and environmentally sound.

### **6.1 Rural Residential District**

The Rural Residential District includes land within 1,500 feet of roadways that is not within the Commercial or Village Districts. Over 70 percent (4,029 acres) of the land in the town lies in this district. According to the Zoning Bylaw, the Rural Residential District is intended to accommodate most of the town's future growth. Permitted uses 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 industries and offices, tourist homes, nurseries, greenhouses, and agricultural stands, public utilities, cemeteries, and planned residential developments (PRD). 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 PRD when an alternative development pattern would be in harmony with the objectives of the Town Plan.

Based on past trends, it appears likely that nearly all future development in the Rural Residential District will consist of residential homes. Existing zoning regulations would permit a maximum of 1,007 dwelling units or other uses in this district. However, a build-out model developed in conjunction with this plan

suggests that, when physical factors such as soil conditions, slope, and wetlands are considered, the actual maximum number of lots or units is closer to 456. That same model predicts that the total number of lots or units in Landgrove, when the town is fully "built-out" will be approximately 526. The presumption that most future development will occur in this district seems realistic, therefore, as 87 percent of projected future development occurs here.

Because these lands are located 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.

The incremental development that is expected to continue in the Rural Residential 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, a provision for allowing the planning commission to mandate planned residential development, and a scenic vista protection bylaw are all options that the town might consider to ensure that future development conforms to the objectives of the town plan.

## **6.2 Conservation/Agriculture/Resource (CARE) Districts**

The town established the CARE Districts in 1990 through an amendment to the Zoning Bylaw. This district consists of all land more than 1,500 feet distant from roadways that are shown on the 1985 V.A.O.T. General Highway Map (on file in the Landgrove Town Office). There are several separate areas that are now in this zoning district, the largest being in the northeast and southern sections of the town (Figure 6-1). A total of 1,507 acres of land lie in CARE districts. Lands within this zoning district have poor access to public roads, have serious physical limitations for development, and contain important natural resources. Permitted uses include one and two family dwellings and certain natural resource and recreational activities. Home offices and industries, tourist houses, PRDs, public recreational facilities, and certain commercial agricultural uses are conditionally permitted. The minimum lot area of ten acres is intended to insure that important resources are protected and that these relatively remote areas remain sparsely developed.

An analysis of soil conditions conducted as part of the build-out model revealed that there are, in fact, severe limitations to development over much of the land in the CARE Districts. These poor soils, when considered together with the presence of protected wetlands, public (United States Forest Service) land ownership, and zoning restrictions, suggest that the future development potential of CARE lands is very limited. The build-out analysis projects only 32 units in CARE zones in the future. This land use district, therefore, is reasonable and is likely to result in a development pattern that promotes resource protection while allowing for limited growth.

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 residential developments should be considered as ways to protect areas that are identified as having particularly high resource values.

### **6.3 Village District**

The Village District is located in and around the historic "Clarksville" area. This district contains only 47 acres and is essentially fully developed at this time. One and two family dwellings and agricultural and forest uses are permitted under zoning; professional offices and private recreational facilities are conditionally permitted.

Several existing lots in the Village District are smaller than the two acre minimum standard established in the Zoning Bylaw, and many buildings do not conform to the setback requirements for the district. The dimensional requirements for this district should be reevaluated to determine if changes can be made that will reduce the number of noncomplying buildings and lots without opening the door to new development that would adversely affect public health or the historic integrity of the 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 may want to consider adoption of historic district zoning regulations to protect an area(s) of special significance to the community.

### **6.4 Commercial District**

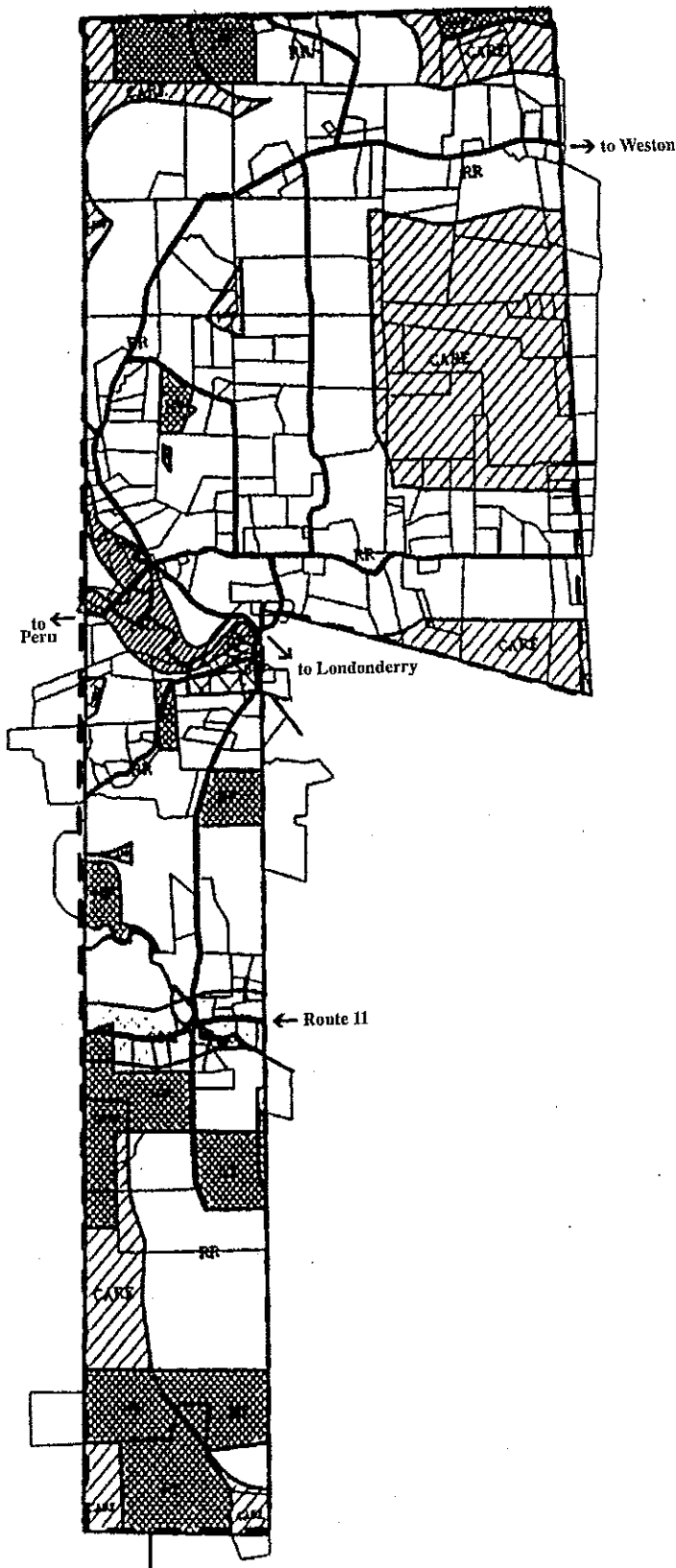
Landgrove's Commercial District includes 129 acres of land lying along both sides of Vermont Route 11. This district is the only area in the town that is intended to accommodate significant commercial development. Retail and professional buildings are permitted along with restaurants, inns, and residential and agricultural/forest uses. Industrial uses are conditionally permitted. The minimum lot area is six acres (with up to two units of use allowed for each six acres), and four acres for residential 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 that is appropriate for substantial commercial or industrial 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 Bylaw must be satisfied.

### **6.5 Utley Flats Scenic Overlay District**

The ridges, hillsides and open agricultural lands in and around the Utley Flats area are one of Landgrove's most cherished scenic resources, contributing significantly to the town's rural and pastoral character. In order to preserve this important natural asset, this area has been designated as the Utley Flats Scenic Overlay District (Figure 6-2).

To assure that any development and use of these areas take place in a manner which will not detract from nor adversely affect its principal scenic qualities, a conditional use permit must be approved by the Zoning Board of Adjustment. This application includes more comprehensive information in addition to that required for Conditional Use Approval, as explained in the Landgrove Zoning Bylaws.



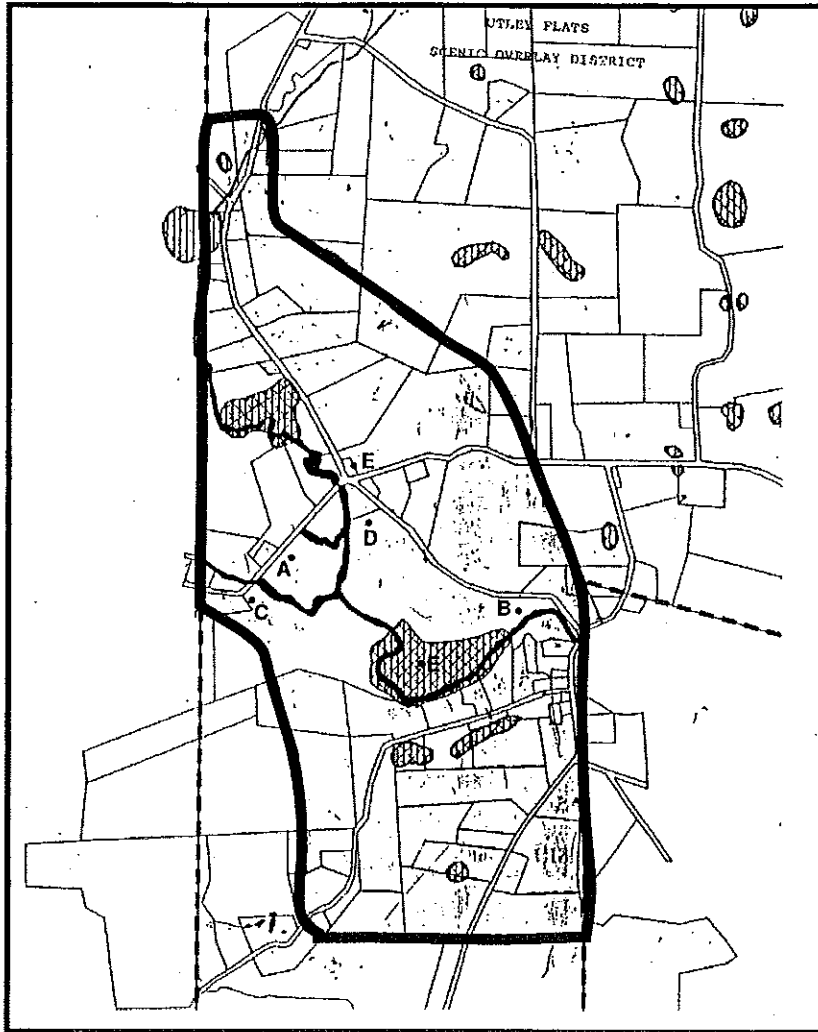
LANDGROVE, VT.

Figure 6-1  
Land Use Districts

- ▨ CARE
- Rural Res.
- ▧ Village
- Commercial
- ▩ Flood Zone
- ▣ USFS Lands
- ≡ Roads
- ~ Streams



MAP PRODUCED 2/3/84 BY BCRC



**Figure 6-2**  
**Utley Flats Scenic Overlay District**  
**(with Key Public Vantage Points)**

## **6.6 Flood Hazard Area**

The Town has adopted flood hazard area regulations to control development in the floodplain along Utley Flats (Figure 6-1). These regulations are intended to reduce the risk that construction in floodplain areas will result in damage to property or the environment, personal injury, or unnecessarily costs to the public.

## **6.7 Planning for Affordable Housing**

Although the town's land use policies do not discourage the development of affordable housing, high real estate prices have limited the potential for moderate-cost housing opportunities in Landgrove. There is little that a small rural town like Landgrove can do to offset these market forces. A recent amendment to the Vermont Planning and Development Act allows people to maintain a separate "in-law" apartment as part of a permitted residential use. The planning commission should review the affordable housing guidelines published by the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs to see if other methods of encouraging affordable housing are available. It is likely, however, that Landgrove can best participate in planning for affordable housing by working cooperatively with neighboring towns and the Regional Affordable Housing Corporation to find regional solutions to this problem.

## **6.8 Policies and Recommendations**

1. Landgrove's unique character – a small historic village and a scenic rural landscape – should be maintained.
2. All existing land use/zoning districts should be periodically reviewed to address changing needs of the town and reflect the consensus of its residents. They 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. Acquisition of land, development rights, or conservation easements by public or nonprofit organization, and participation by landowners in Vermont's "Current Use" program are appropriate preservation strategies. The town may wish to 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 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, is inappropriate and should not be permitted.
  - \* Commercial and industrial uses should be limited to those that are identified in the Zoning Bylaw, and should be of a scale and design consistent with the town's rural character.

## VII. Transportation

### 7.1 Town Roads and Related Issues

As a small rural town, Landgrove's transportation infrastructure is somewhat limited. One state highway, Route 11, crosses the "panhandle" of the town about a mile and a half south of the Village. In addition, there are over 15 miles of town highways within the municipal limits (Table 7-1).

**Table 7.1: Landgrove, VT Roadway Mileage**

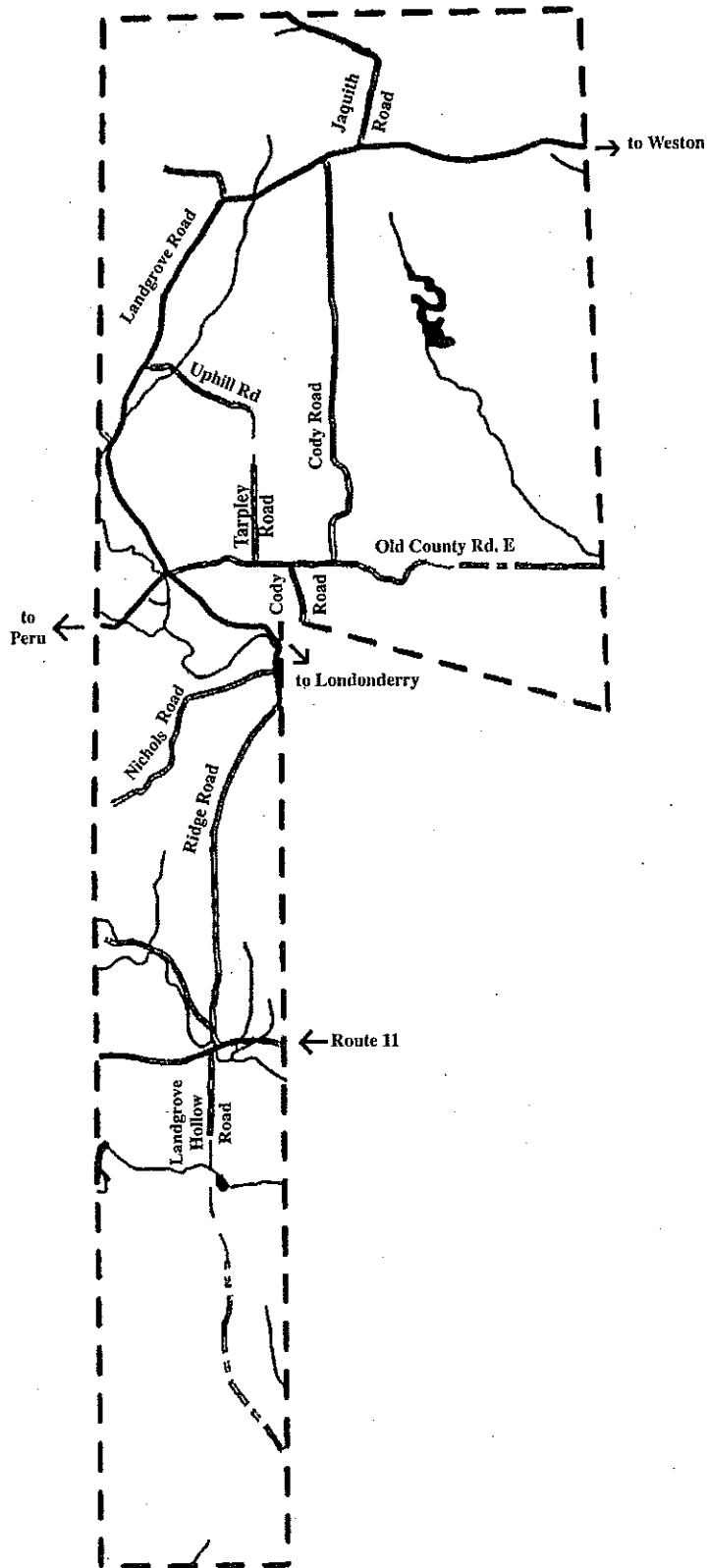
Class 1 Town Highways	-	0.00 miles
Class 2 Town Highways	-	4.82 miles
Class 3 Town Highways	-	9.55 miles
State Highways	-	0.82 miles
Total Travel Highways	-	15.19 miles



Town highways serving as principal travel routes include Cody Road; Old County Road; TH #1, running from the Village along and then across Utley Flats toward Peru; and TH #2, beginning at TH #1 near the Town Hall and continuing through the northern part of town toward Weston (Figure 7-1). Secondary town roads provide access to individual properties throughout the community. Taken together, these roads should be adequate to serve the transportation needs of the community for the foreseeable future.

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. It should be noted, however, that travel on roads in the area can be difficult or hazardous during "mud season" and periods of severe weather.

The relatively low volume of traffic on Landgrove's roads helps to minimize the need for costly improvements and maintenance. The low level of development in the town is one important factor in keeping traffic volumes down. The land use plan (Section VI) and Zoning Bylaw should help limit the overall amount of development and prevent demands for new public roads in remote sections of the town. If a substantial 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 is paved also limits traffic volume. 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 actually reduce traffic safety by encouraging higher speeds and volumes on unsafe roads.



<b>LANDGROVE, VT.</b>	
<b>Figure 7-1</b>	
<b>N</b>	Class 2 Town Road
<b>W</b>	Class 3 Town Road
<b>A</b>	Class 4 Town Road
<b>N</b>	State Highway
<b>/</b>	Discontinued Road
<b>N</b>	Streams
<b>■</b>	Ponds
<b>GTS</b>	
<small>VERMONT GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM SOUTH VERMONT TOWNSHIP COMMISSION</small>	

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

The town maintains an inventory of highway equipment that must be repaired or replaced periodically. Adequate funds must be set aside in the municipal equipment fund to cover these costs when they occur. One pressing need is a building to house the town's highway equipment. A suitable site should be identified and acquired in the near future, and monies budgeted for construction of the structure.

## **7.2 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 volumes or speed.
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 roads, (b) not paying for the cost of improving a Class 4 road to Class 3 standards to serve new development, and (c) only accepting new Class 3 roads that meet the specification 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. Consider posting speed limits to encourage driving at speeds appropriate to road surfaces and conditions.
6. Develop a long-term plan for roadway improvements; consider creation of a capital budget and program as a way to plan for these improvements.

# **VIII. Public Facilities and Services**

## **8.1 Educational Facilities**

Because of Landgrove's small population it is impractical to operate a school locally. Landgrove belongs to the Windsor Southwest Supervisory Union District, where it has one vote. A town school board presents an annual budget and handles disbursements and questions dealing with high school students.

The town, along with Londonderry, Peru and Weston, belongs to Union District #20 which operates Flood Brook School, serving grades K-8. The town has one representative on this Board. Landgrove is assessed its share of operating costs, based on the number of students. This has averaged between 5-6 percent in the years 1995 - 2000, with the number of Landgrove students ranging from 17 - 20. Although the school received an addition and renovations in 1993, space considerations may pose a problem in meeting the needs of students in the near future. High school students are tuitioned to area schools, the amount being approved annually at town meeting. Landgrove has traditionally supported school choice, paying tuition and transportation to either Green Mountain Union in Chester or Burr and Burton Academy in Manchester. For any other approved independent high school, the town will pay a portion of the tuition as approved by voters at

the annual meeting. In recent years, this amount has equaled the Burr and Burton tuition. During the 1999-2000 school year, 18 students attended Flood Brook, 6 were enrolled at Burr and Burton, and 2 at Long Trail School in Dorset.

In 1998 a statewide property tax was enacted under the Education Reform Act (Act 60). Because of the small student count relative to its high property values, the town sends roughly two-thirds of its education taxes to the State Education Fund to be shared with other Vermont towns. Education tax rates have more than doubled in the period 1997-2000, even though student population has decreased and the grand list has increased. The Landgrove Educational Foundation, set up in 1998, works to raise private donations from property owners to keep the town out of an additional sharing pool which would further increase the tax rate. Revisions to Act 60 may be legislated within the next few years.

The town should remain actively involved in the school districts that serve the area. Coordination between town and school expenditure budgets is particularly important since, with the advent of statewide property tax, over 80% of the total local budget has been dedicated to school costs.

## **8.2 Public Buildings and Land**

A variety of public buildings and lands are found in Landgrove (figure 8-1). The Town Hall and the Meetinghouse are the only public buildings in the town, but the town owns three parcels of land, and several hundred acres are owned by the United States Forest Service. Public buildings play an important role in the life of the community and should be maintained in good condition. Town and federal-ly owned lands are intended to be used for open space conservation, recreation, and other natural resource based activities. As noted in Section VII, the town does need to acquire additional land for the construction of a garage to house highway equipment.

## **8.3 Emergency Services and Law Enforcement**

Fire and emergency rescue services available to Landgrove residents are located in neighboring towns and can be accessed by dialing 911. The town should continue to support both of these crucial services through annual appropriations. Law enforcement is provided by a locally elected constable who serves when called upon. State Police serve this area from the Rockingham Barracks.

Health care is available at the Mountain Valley Medical Clinic which is located on Route 11 near the Landgrove/Londonderry town line. Other health services offering services to area residents include the Visiting Nurse Alliance of Vt. and N.H., 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.

## **8.4 Electricity and Telecommunications**

Satisfactory electric and telephone service is available throughout Landgrove. The town should support efforts to upgrade telecommunications systems in the area so that residents can take advantage of the extensive information and services that are rapidly becoming available. However, any installations should not violate the intent of this plan and the zoning bylaws to maintain scenic landscapes and aesthetic values of the town.

## **8.5 Cemeteries**

There are at least five cemeteries in Landgrove (Figure 8-1). An elected board oversees the two main cemeteries in town. The town decided, in 1993, to appropriate funds for cemetery maintenance to augment revenues raised from plot sales. Receipts from plot sales can now be added to the cemetery fund; interest derived from this fund will, over time, reduce the need for a municipal appropriation.

## **8.6 Community Organizations**

**Library:** A small library is located in the Town Hall, accessible during hours the town office is open. Most of the books are donated. The nearest regional libraries in the area are located in Weston and South Londonderry.

**Church:** The Landgrove Community Church, adjacent to the Town Hall, 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 Board of Trustees.

**Community Club:** All permanent and seasonal residents of Landgrove are part of the Landgrove Community Club which organizes several events during the year, including a small Halloween party for the town children and a parade and picnic celebrating the Fourth of July. In the past, the Community Club has also sponsored square dances, children's summer art classes at the town hall during the summer, and has been used as a vehicle to aid those community members in financial need.

**Historical Society:** The Landgrove Historical Society, while not yet incorporated, has formed a steering committee to begin establishing its goals and objectives, which may include researching town history, preserving appropriate historical materials and developing programs of interest to both children and adults. Its mission will be to seek an appreciation and understanding of the Landgrove community and its past.

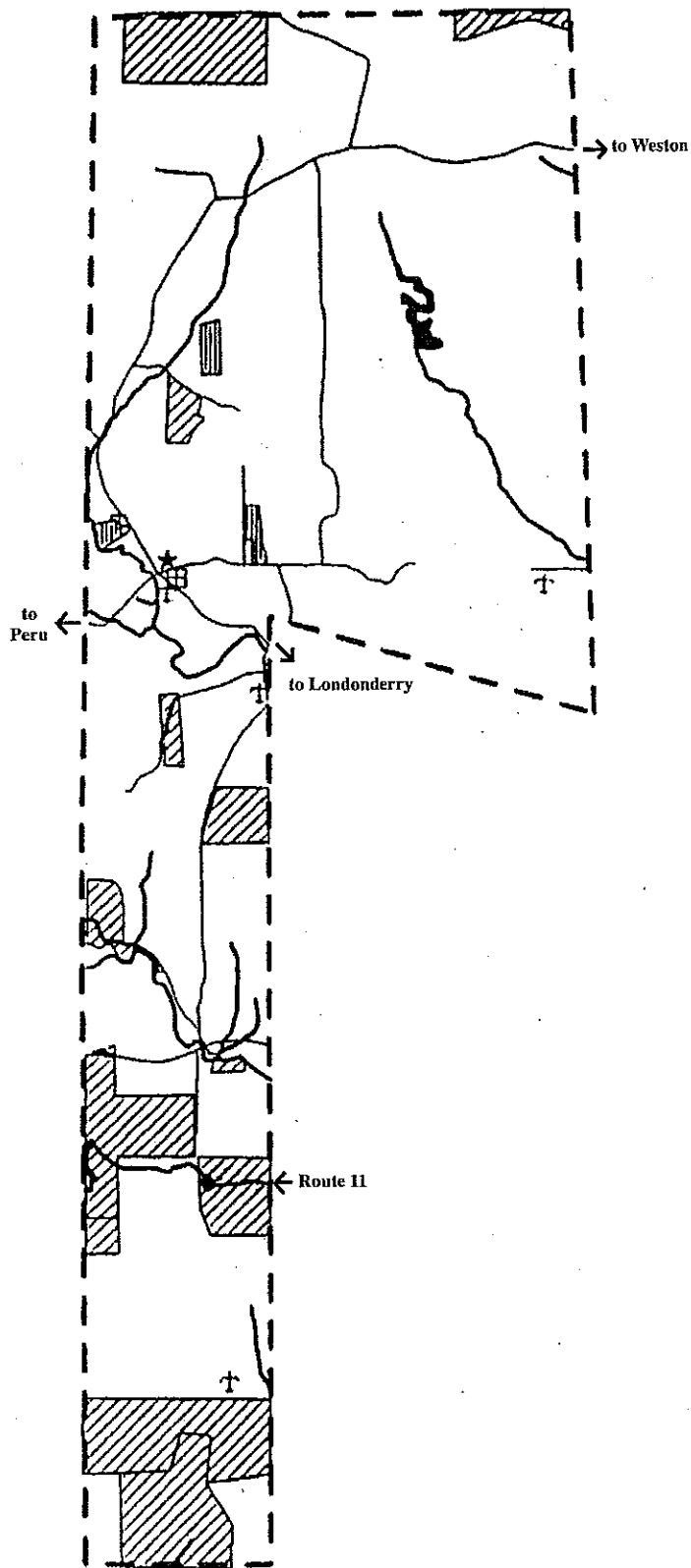
**Educational Foundation:** see Section 8.1.

## **8.7 Solid Waste**

Landgrove is one of five towns utilizing the Londonderry transfer station for solid waste disposal. Recycling is available at that site. A local ad hoc committee determined that it is not feasible for Landgrove to manage solid waste disposal and recycling on its own. The town should continue to participate in the most efficient regional solid waste management program available to it.

## **8.8 Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal**

The Town of Landgrove does not have a town 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 bylaw are intended to ensure that water quality and public health are protected through continued reliance on individual on-site water supply and wastewater disposal systems.



LANDGROVE, VT.

- Figure 8-1  
 Public Buildings & Lands  
 ★ Town Office  
 ⊞ Meeting House  
 † Cemetery  
 ▩ Town Lands  
 ▨ USFS Lands  
 ■ Ponds  
 ~ Streams



## **8.9 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 construction of a building for storage of town highway equipment.
5. Strictly enforce zoning regulations, especially those that pertain to wastewater disposal, to ensure that water quality and public health are protected.
6. Enforce state regulations on dumping rubbish and junk in unauthorized places using the police powers given municipalities under Vermont Statutes Annotated, Title 24, Chapter 61, Subchapter 8.

# **IX. Energy**

## **9.1 Issues**

Energy is a scarce resource that should be considered in any comprehensive land use planning process. Homes and businesses use a variety of energy sources for heating – fuel oil, gas, wood, electricity, and coal. With a heating season that generally lasts seven months, it is evident that home and business energy consumption is a significant issue for everyone in the area. Substantial economic savings can be realized through energy conservation. Every dollar not spent on energy is available for local investment and to meet other basic needs of residents. Of course, a reduction in energy usage also reduces the production of environmental pollutants. Energy conservation can be facilitated through effective land use planning, building standards and design, and improved transportation efficiency.

Effective land use planning can promote energy conservation. Development densities should be highest in and near growth centers, with lower densities in outlying areas. As a rural community remote from growth centers, development densities in Landgrove should be relatively low. The land use plan reflects this policy, and also directs new development to areas along existing roads, thus limiting the potential for costly and energy inefficient scattered development. The sections of the municipal zoning bylaw that provide for home occupations also support the objective of energy conservation by reducing the need for some residents to commute to work. Decisions concerning public capital expenditures on roads and other infrastructure should be mindful of energy conservation.

The siting, design, and construction of buildings strongly influences the amount of energy required for heating and cooling, as well as the amount of electricity needed for lighting. Proper subdivision design, building orientation, construction, and landscaping provide opportunities for passive solar space and domestic hot water heating, natural lighting, and photovoltaic electricity production. Additional energy savings can be realized by retrofitting existing buildings with insulation, weatherstripping, compact fluorescent lights, and efficient appliances.

Renewable energy resources offer long-term advantages over non-renewable resources. Solar, wind, hydro, and wood or wood/gas resources are all potential energy sources in this area. The town should support efforts to research and develop these and other alternative energy resources.

## 9.2 Policies and Recommendations

1. The town should make an effort to minimize its own energy consumption by using appropriate energy conservation and efficiency practices, and should support programs that are designed to increase public awareness of energy issues and to encourage homeowners to conserve energy.
2. Major development proposals should fully and effectively address energy conservation and efficiency concerns.
3. Land use planning should be consistent with the objective of encouraging energy efficiency.
4. Renewable energy resources should be protected.

# X. Municipal Finance

## 10.1 Budget and Tax Issues

Landgrove's town budget had a slow, steady growth from 1983-1997, with a substantial increase in 1998-2000 due to Act 60's legislation of a statewide property tax (see sect. 8.1). The share of local school costs varied from 39% in 1990 to 77% in 1998. These costs vary year to year because of changes in tuitions, assessments, and student enrollment numbers. In the years before 1997, the town was often able to defer general fund and road expenditures in years when school costs were high. In 2000, the first year of Act 60 full implementation the town had to raise almost 3 times the approved budget amount for the statewide property tax, 2/3rds of which was shared among other towns (Figure 10-1).

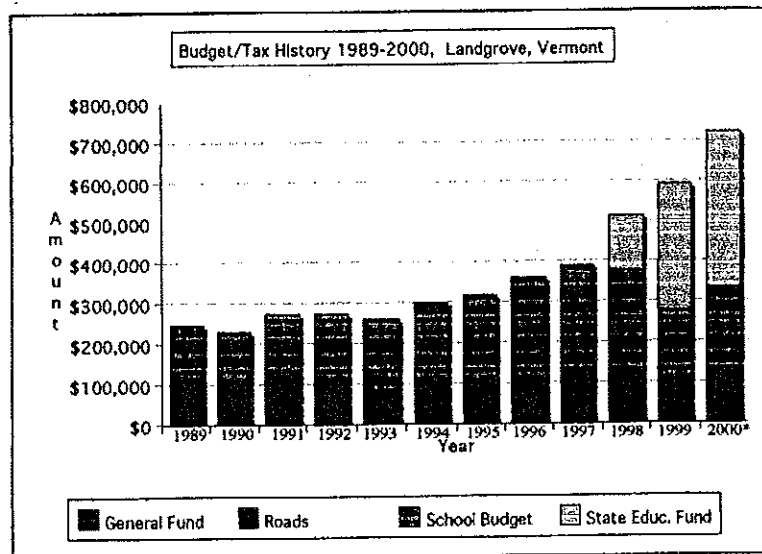


Figure 10-1. General Fund, road, and school budgets (local budget expenses and statewide tax) since 1989. \*2000 data represent budgeted amounts. 1991 General Fund increase was due largely to a \$13,500 appropriation for the Londonderry Fire Department. Variability in the local school budget results from changes in the number of students and varying tuition/assessment amounts.

Property tax payments have increased in proportion with the total budget (figure 10-2). The steady increase was not excessive until the property tax reform of 1998. Legislative proposal for future changes should be closely monitored, as new funding schemes should not result in additional significant tax increases for Landgrove. The town must carefully consider future growth projections and capital needs to ensure that local taxes do not become a serious hardship for full and part-time residents.

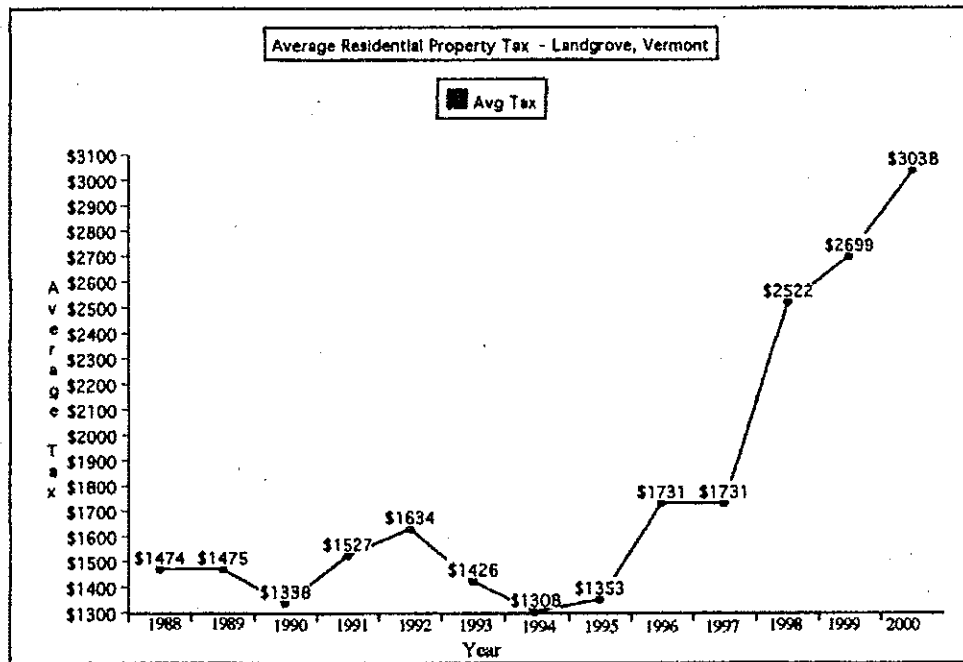
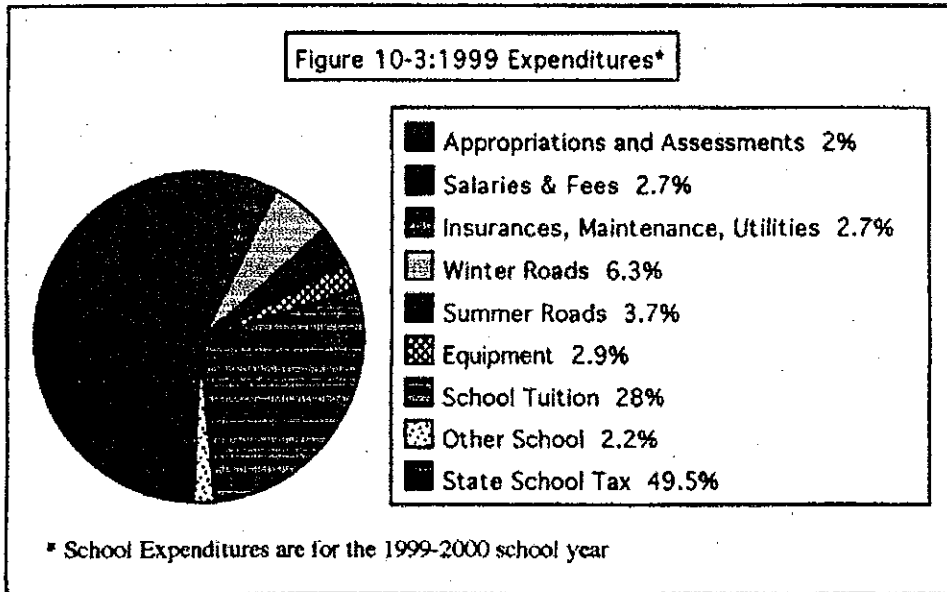


Figure 10-2. Average residential property tax payments 1983-1993. Averages were obtained by dividing the listed value of all full-time and part-time residential properties by the total number of those properties and multiplying by the tax rate for each year.

A review of the town's expenditures for 1999 (Figure 10-3) clearly illustrates the impact of school tuition and payments to the State Education Fund on the total budget. The budget may be further impacted by periodic large expenditures (school addition, new town building, road maintenance, equipment purchases). Coordinated planning among all areas 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) provide one way to coordinate planning by requiring that all town departments, service providers, and schools identify projected capital needs, now and in the future. 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 town taxpayers. Such information will prove extremely valuable to the Board of Selectmen as they develop annual budgets and plan for future improvements.

**10.2 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.

## **XI. Relationship to Adjacent Towns and the Region**

Most of the town of Landgrove 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 in *Upland Forest* areas, and acknowledges the presence of one rural *Hamlet* (Landgrove Village). 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 historical 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 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 – schools, emergency services, solid waste, etc. – 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.

## **XII. 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 Board of Selectmen also should appear at any Act 250 hearings in Landgrove and offer testimony on a proposed development's conformance with the Plan.
- \* The town's implementing bylaws, particularly the zoning bylaw, should be reviewed in light of the information and policies contained in the 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.