Town of Litchfield

2013 Comprehensive Plan Update

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Draft for Public Review

Town of Litchfield
2013 Comprehensive Plan Update

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1. Introduction: Development of the Comprehensive Plan

The Litchfield Comprehensive Plan is a guide for managing change within the community for the next ten to twenty years. The Plan is an expression of Litchfield's vision for its future and provides a framework for future policy decisions. It also contains a great deal of information about the town and lays out the legal foundation for the town's ordinances.

The goal of the plan is not to predict the future. The planning process is designed to anticipate and prepare for it. We do this by looking at the present conditions within the community. The present conditions indicate future trends. While many of these trends will be in the positive direction for the community, some also will not. Trends are examined in the context of state and federal mandates and policies and regional influences, resulting in a set of recommended policies and implementation strategies. The strategies are all meant to perpetuate the positive trends or address the negative ones.

It is important to note that the Plan is not an ordinance, nor a law of any kind. It is an advisory document that should guide selectmen's decisions, jump start local activities, and form the basis for the town's land use laws. Specific changes to land use ordinances or requests for funding for programs or facilities will, as always, be placed on a Town Meeting Warrant for the voters' consideration.

Evolution of the Comprehensive Plan:

Litchfield's first "comprehensive" plan was adopted in 1991. The plan was inspired by the Maine State Legislature's enactment of the Growth Management Act in 1988 (however, it was never deemed to be consistent with the law). Notable achievements of the 1991 plan included closing of the Town's landfill, creation of a recycling program, creation of Whippoorwill Municipal Park, improvements in road system maintenance through a dedicated investment in road improvements, major improvements to the Town Office, and selection of a site for a new fire station.

Comprehensive plans are generally considered to have a lifespan of 10-12 years. A shorter interval is expected if local circumstances change, or if the plan has been completely implemented. In 1997, the selectmen determined that it was time to revise the 1991 plan. Over the ensuing three years, a local committee, assisted by a consultant, overhauled the plan, resulting in a new plan adopted in 2000. This plan was also deemed by the State to be consistent with the Growth Management Law. The plan was revisited in 2007, with some minor revisions added.

The major achievement of the 2000 plan was the implementation of a land use plan. This resulted in the town's current land use ordinance, along with changes to the subdivision ordinance and road ordinance. The 2000 plan had a number of other strategies that have been implemented in the interval. Chapters 2 through 12 of this edition of the plan contain a section listing notable achievements in each area addressed.

Preparation of the current edition of the plan began in 2011. This is a complete rewriting of the 2000 plan. A lot of information has changed since then: the 2010 census has been completed, we have a track record of the effectiveness of our land use ordinances, new data is available for mapping and resource evaluation, and public service and fiscal information is current. Most of the strategies from the 2000 plan have either been implemented or are no longer effective. It is time for a new set of strategies.

Development of the Current Plan:

It has been the intent of the selectmen in creating this plan that the process reflect the ideas of a cross-section of the community and be open to all. A steering committee was formed and a consultant (Kennebec Valley Council of Governments) hired to assist in assembling the plan.

The steering committee provided a conduit for participation and input from several town groups, including the town office, planning board, conservation commission, recreation committee, and historical society. Each of these was invited to submit ideas for the plan, and where they did so, the ideas are incorporated.

The committee also sought participation from the public at large. Early in 2012, the committee distributed a public opinion survey via the *Sodalite*. (The *Sodalite* has also been used regularly to update citizens on progress of the plan and invite further participation.) The survey returned 171 responses, and the attitudes reflected in those responses have been used to help shape the plan. In February of 2013, the committee sponsored a public input session. More ideas were generated by this open discussion, and have been incorporated into the plan.

This plan is called a "comprehensive plan" because it addresses all of the functions and issues being dealt with by our local government. With such a broad-ranging scope, it is important to have an overall Vision – an image of how this community views itself, and how it anticipates change over the time period of the plan. A Vision provides the "ideal" against which we view our recommendations to see if they move us in that direction. The vision expressed here is drawn from public comment and suggestions, as well as a year of committee deliberations.

IN 2030,

LITCHFIELD HAS RETAINED ITS RURAL CHARACTER. NEW HOMES BUILT OVER THE PAST 18 YEARS HAVE EITHER BEEN GROUPED IN PLEASANT, WELL-TENDED CLUSTERS OR OTHERWISE LOCATED SUCH THAT THERE IS STILL PLENTY OF FARMLAND, FORESTS AND OPEN SPACE ACROSS THE LANDSCAPE.

THE TOWN'S TRADITIONAL SMALL BUSINESSES AND FARMS ARE THRIVING AND THERE ARE MORE OF THEM – SOME OF WHICH OFFER RESIDENTS A CHANCE TO LOCALLY OBTAIN GOODS AND SERVICES THAT REQUIRED DRIVING TO LARGER TOWNS AND CITIES IN THE PAST. THESE BUSINESSES OFFER SOME NEW JOBS IN TOWN, BUT MOST RESIDENTS STILL COMMUTE TO AUGUSTA, LEWISTON/AUBURN AND BRUNSWICK WHERE THERE ARE PLENTY OF GOOD JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

COMMUTING AND TRAVELING AROUND TOWN IS ENJOYABLE BECAUSE OF ITS SCENIC NATURE AND WELL-MAINTAINED ROADS. TOWN FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES HAVE BEEN ADEQUATELY FUNDED, WELL-MAINTAINED AND ENHANCED WHERE NECESSARY TO MEET EMERGING NEEDS AND DEMANDS OF RESIDENTS.

THE COMMUNITY IS VIBRANT WITH A HEALTHY MIX OF YOUNGER, MIDDLE AND OLDER GENERATIONS -- A GOOD PORTION OF WHO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND/OR TOWN GOVERNMENT.

THE TOWN'S NATURAL AND WATER RESOURCES AND ASSETS ARE HEALTHY AND PRISTINE AND PROVIDE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS. THESE RESOURCES, AS WELL AS THE TOWN'S HISTORIC AND CULTURAL ASSETS, HAVE BEEN WELL APPRECIATED, PRESERVED, CONSERVED AND PROTECTED FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE LITCHFIELDERS.

The Plan and its Implementation:

The comprehensive plan report contains several features:

- Inventory and analysis of the many facets of the community. This mainly consists of background data on a variety of subjects. Some of this data is best expressed in tables and charts, some on maps (appendix), but most is in the form of a narrative description. The "analysis" part of it describes some of the trends evident from the data, ranging from population growth, to housing prices, to lake water quality, to the future of farming.

- A discussion of some of the issues relating to these areas. These are the areas of concern that we should be addressing through our recommendations.

- Achievements, or what we've done to date. This is a brief discussion of the major recommendations of past planning efforts and how they have been addressed. This helps put into perspective the efforts of the town that set us on our current path.

- Policies and Strategies. "Policies" are general statements of direction, "strategies" are the recommended action steps. Each recommendation contains some essential elements – a sense of who is responsible for taking action, and a timetable for action. Because the plan as a whole contains several dozen recommendations, the plan highlights one or two of the most urgent "top recommendations" inside each chapter.

The Comprehensive Plan is not the end of the community process but just the beginning. Town staff and committees assigned to carry out the Plan should take the policies and further refine them to make them responsive to the ever changing needs of the community. Among the recommendations of the plan are several *evaluation measures*, which are ways of monitoring our progress towards our goals. Continuing evaluation allows us to judge whether we are making progress or whether we are even on the right track.

The strategies contained in the Plan are consolidated into an Implementation/Action Plan in Chapter 16, with responsibilities and timeframes specified as appropriate. The Comprehensive Plan will be posted on the Town website with the Action Plan also posted separately. The Town Manager and Selectmen are tasked with monitoring the progress on specific action steps. The Town Manager and Selectmen will collaborate and report to the Town annually on the status of each action item in a written form to be posted on the Town website. A summary of the status of the action plan with highlights on key actions completed in the past year should also be included in the Town's Annual Report and a *Sodalite* article each year.

2. Local History

The 39½ square miles of present-day Litchfield originated as part of an enormous land grant by the King of England to the Plymouth Company. In the year 1629, the land was part of 1.5 million acres conveyed by the Plymouth Company to the Pilgrims in the new world. The parcel consisted of a 30-mile-wide corridor along the Kennebec River from Woolwich to Cornville. The land was sold in 1661 for 400 English Pounds. In 1753, a group known subsequently as the Great Proprietors acquired control of the land. The end of the Indian Wars in 1763 saw a surge in settlement within the Kennebec valley. It was not, however, until after the Revolutionary War that large numbers of settlers moved into the area which became Litchfield.

An area encompassing Litchfield was formally incorporated as Smithfield in 1793 and as Litchfield in 1795. In the early 1800's, parts of Litchfield broke off and are now part of Wales, Richmond or West Gardiner.

In 1800, a professor from Yale University visited Litchfield and in his journal noted that the population was about 1,000 and that Litchfield was the only town that he had visited where the entire population was squatters. Like most of the settlers along the Kennebec, the early settlers of Litchfield had not bothered to purchase their tracts from the Great Proprietors. When the Proprietors began to enforce their claim, violence broke out. In the end, the Proprietors won and the settlers either bought their land or moved on.

At the first formal census, in 1840, the town had a population of 2,293. This was also the high-water mark for population prior to the 1980's (*see* Figure 1, Chapter 3.)

The early economy of Litchfield was almost wholly agricultural. Small farms were cut out of the wilderness and water-powered saw and grist mills were built. An examination of early records shows that building roads, supporting schools, and caring for the poor were the major uses of tax money. The town historically contained four village clusters: The Corner, The Plains, Bachelder's Corner, and Purgatory.

Litchfield Corner, once the most active commercial center in Litchfield, refers to the intersection of Rt. 197 and the Hallowell Road. In the 1850's, the Corner boasted two college preparatory boarding schools (Litchfield Academy and the Liberal Institute), an elementary school, a church, a post office, a store, a doctor's office, a pharmacy, a public house, a hotel, a blacksmith shop, a shoemaker, the Fire Insurance Company and a coffin maker. Today, only Litchfield Academy and the church survive, and neither functions in its original capacity. The Academy is a Senior Center, and the church a recreation building. Gowell's store has become the center of local commercial activity, providing groceries, fuel, and hardware.

The Plains is the town's most centrally located village area, situated near some of the early water-powered mills which derived their power from Potter, Ashford, and Spring Brooks. Today, the town office, a church, the public works garage, the Fairgrounds, and the Litchfield Plains Cemetery are features of this neighborhood.

Originally called South Litchfield, and then the North, Bachelder's Corner was a stopping point for the Portland-to-Augusta stage coach and later for the Androscoggin and Kennebec Electric Railway. The crossroads provided taverns, a way station, a school, a store, a church, and a post office. Today, the school is gone, but the church and post office, as well as a small, family restaurant and a convenience store, survive.

The northernmost village in Litchfield is called Purgatory. Legend has it that the name derived from its tormenting mosquitoes. Purgatory Mills, as it was called, contained Litchfield's largest and most profitable mills. The Plimpton Company stood out as a manufacturer of farm implements such as hoes. The mills were driven by the outlet stream from Woodbury Pond. The Purgatory sawmill reportedly milled 100,000 board feet a year in the middle 1800's.

Litchfield's population began to decline about the time of the Civil War. Hardrock farms couldn't compete with the deep soil of the Midwest, and the small, stream-powered mills were no match for mills in Lewiston, Saco and Biddeford. The timberlands had been cut off and would take decades to re-grow. As late as 1925 there were 222 working farms in Litchfield operating over 200,000 acres. The census count of 1940 showed only 722 residents, less than one-third of the town's high-water mark a century before.

By the 1970's, Litchfield's farms worked only 2,000 acres, about 10 percent of the acreage worked at the beginning of the century. Today, Litchfield's working farms can be counted on your fingers. On the other hand, the emergence of the automobile and cheap gasoline, plus a new appreciation of rural lifestyle's by an affluent baby boom generation, combined to send Litchfield's population on a step growth curve for the past forty years – as it has for every town in this region.

Litchfield's population in 1970 had built to 1,220. Since then, we have added an average of sixty residents every year, and in 2010 the population stood at 3,624. The town's commercial base, however, has not kept pace, as the advantages of an urban area for commerce continue to outweigh the shift in population. As a result, Litchfield has become a bedroom community where the majority of breadwinning and commerce occurs outside of the town.

The more than 150 year history of Litchfield's Agricultural Fair, attended annually by thousands of people, attests to the town's abiding interest in and respect for the rural way of life. Townspeople continue to identify with Litchfield's rural character.

3. The People of Litchfield

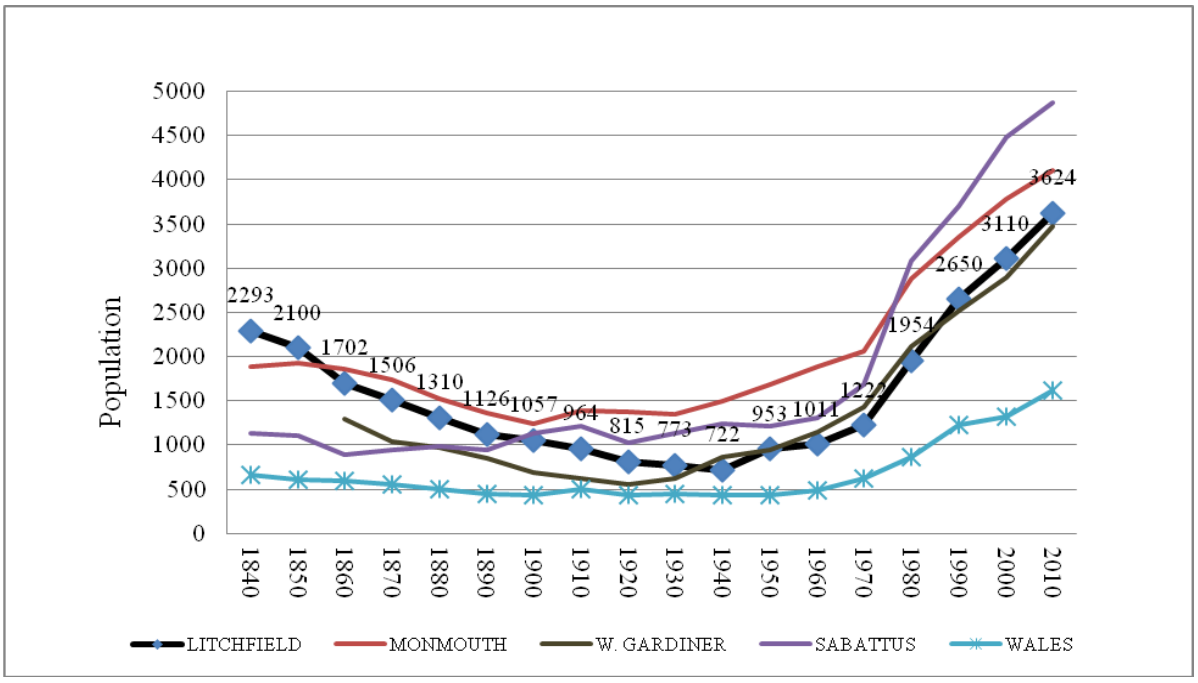
The first measure of a community is its people, and people come in all shapes and sizes. Litchfield's community is changing – not just increasing in numbers, but changing in age, family size, and other characteristics. This information is significant because the type of services demanded of local government depends in part on the population demanding them.

This chapter uses information from the US Census Bureau, Maine Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services, Kennebec Valley Council of Governments, and Litchfield's 2000 Comprehensive Plan. It contains information about our community as it is now and how it is likely to grow into the future.

Population Characteristics:

In most peoples' eyes, population size is the first measure of a town. Litchfield is no exception. Our historical population trends, shown on Figure 1, below, illustrate the factors that have influenced Litchfield over the past 200 years. The trend lines for neighboring towns are included to demonstrate the similarity of trends throughout the region.

Figure 1: Historic Population Trends



Like many rural towns in Maine, Litchfield enjoyed a vigorous period in the early 1800's. The population in 1840 was not much different than that of 1990. Then followed a period of decline coinciding with westward expansion and industrialization. Litchfield's population continued to contract until around 1940. Growth accelerated substantially in the current era of automobile-induced sprawl (since 1970).

The Census tallies a population of 3,624 in 2010. Kennebec Valley Council of Governments uses up-to-date reports of new housing and assumes a constant vacancy rate and diminishing household size (see below) to estimate Litchfield's 2012 population at 3,666 – the 2010 population plus 24 new homes.

Litchfield can attribute much of its current growth to its proximity to job centers and supply of buildable land. The regional comparison at right shows how Litchfield's growth stacks up against its neighbors'. Litchfield is just behind West Gardiner in terms of numerical and percentage growth, though still larger in total population. Wales has shown the highest percentage growth, but is a much smaller town to start. Still, Litchfield in the 2000's grew at four times the rate of Kennebec County (4.3 percent); Maine as a whole grew about 4.2 percent.

Regional Perspective: Population

Town	2000 Population	2010 Population	Change
Litchfield	**3,110**	**3,624**	**514 (16.5 %)**
Sabattus	4,486	4,876	390 (8.7 %)
Richmond	3,298	3,411	113 (3.4 %)
Monmouth	3,785	4,104	319 (8.4 %)
Wales	1,322	1,616	294 (22.2 %)
West Gardiner	2,902	3,474	572 (19.7%)

Community Changes: Migration, Births, and Deaths:

Population change in a community consists of two elements: "Natural Change," which is the difference between births and deaths, and "Migration," which is the difference between those moving into town and those moving out.

Natural change tends not to fluctuate wildly, being based on trends in life expectancy and child-bearing. A positive number indicates a younger population; a negative number indicates an older one. Between 1991 and 2000, Litchfield had 169 more births than deaths. Between 2001 and 2010, Litchfield had 145 more births than deaths. The gradual decline in natural change is consistent with a slowly aging population, but it remains very strongly positive, meaning that the town has plenty of households of child-bearing age.

Whereas natural change is a measure of the internal dynamics of a community, *migration* is more a measure of its economic health. People will choose to move from place to place based on factors such as availability of employment, cost of housing, and perceptions of "quality of life". Migration is calculated as the difference between overall population change and natural change. Therefore, in the 1990's, Litchfield experienced a net migration gain (*in-migration*) of 291 persons, while in the 2000's, it had a gain of 368. These are substantially positive numbers, indicating that Litchfield has been an attractive destination despite uneven economic times statewide.

Seasonal Population:

All population figures cited above refer to year-round population, or, more accurately, population as counted by the Census on April 1. In Litchfield, there is significant population fluctuation with the seasons. Seasonal population consists of two elements: seasonal residents -- such as camp owners/renters -- and visitors, which may include anyone from summer camp enrollees to day-trippers.

There is no census of seasonal population. The Census only reports seasonal housing units, and reported 344 of them in 2010. If we take the 344 seasonal units and assume an average household size of 2.38 (the average for Kennebec County), we come up with 818 seasonal occupants. This assumes that none of the camps are owned by Litchfield permanent residents, which is clearly not the case.

Litchfield has one significant source of overnight accommodations – the Birches Campground. This campground has approximately 115 sites and cottages, and at capacity could contain up to 250 residents. The town has no summer youth camps or retreat centers that would draw other overnight visitors. The maximum seasonal fluctuation, therefore, assuming full occupancy, is no more than about 1,100 residents, less than one-third the year-round residents.

While this number of seasonal residents gives a small bump to the local economy and traffic volumes, it does not have a significant effect on public services.

Families and Households:

Households are a critical demographic indicator because many trends, such as demand for housing and public services, traffic growth, etc., are more closely correlated to households than individuals. "Households" consist of everyone living in a housing unit, including families and unrelated individuals. There are occasionally persons who do not live in a household, (for example, group homes) of which there are 15 in Litchfield.

Table 1, below, illustrates the household profile and changes in Litchfield over time. The overall number of households in town has increased by 21 percent in ten years. Household types that increased by more than 21 percent indicates growth relative to the whole.

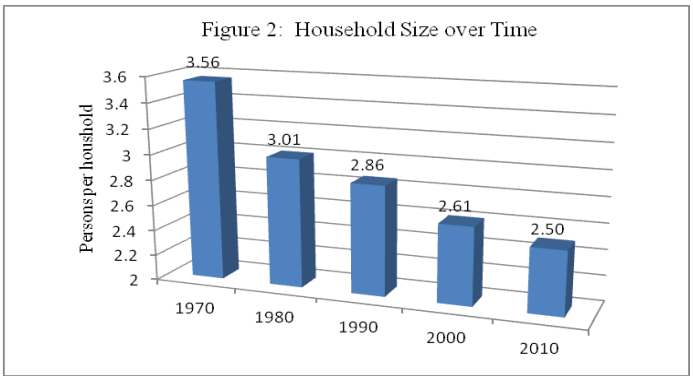
Table 1: Household Characteristics, 2000 and 2010

Household Type:	2000	2010	% increase
All Households	1,190	1,441	21 %
Single-person Households	215	292	36
Single-person "over 65"	67	92	37
Married-couple families	720	820	14
Male-headed families (no spouse)	77	82	6
Female-headed families (no spouse)	100	134	34

Source: US Census

The table demonstrates conventional wisdom – that traditional married-couple families are becoming less dominant. Even though they still make up over half of all households, other categories of household are growing faster. These other categories could be a consideration for future planning. Single-person households tend to seek out smaller housing units, in particular rentals; single-mother households have a much higher poverty rate than conventional households; the number of seniors living alone, while still relatively low, is the fastest-growing demographic among households.

For the purpose of community planning, "Households" is actually a better measure than "population." Households occupy housing units, generate a predictable number of workers and school children, and so on. Figure 2 shows another attribute of households. Their size has been shrinking.



It's a fact of modern society that the average number of persons per household has been in decline. In the 70's and 80's, couples were having fewer children. But as Table 1, above, showed, current trends include single-mother families, more independent living among the elderly, and single-person households (primarily young people). Clearly, those trends are significant in Litchfield. The average number of persons per household in 2010 is 30 percent smaller than what it was forty years ago.

The shrinkage of household size drives demand for housing numbers and styles as much as the influx of new residents. Consider that in the 1990's, only 291 people moved into town (net migration), yet we built 267 housing units. In the 2000's, we had 368 migrants, and built another 266 homes. Mathematically, it works out as follows: in 1970, for every 1,000 residents, we needed only 280 housing units. In 2010, we need 400 units for every 1,000 people. *We needed to build 120 new homes in forty years just to compensate for shrinking households.*

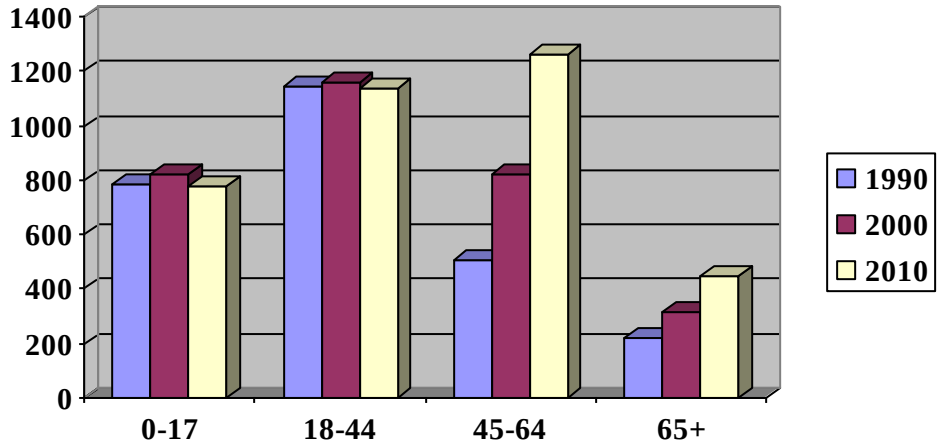
On the ground, it works this way: smaller families and, especially, single-person households drive the demand for more and different housing. The type of homes appropriate for the population is changing as well. There is a growing demand for smaller housing units, especially those designed for young people or the elderly. There is a real possibility that large, suburban homes typical of construction over the past decades will soon be white elephants.

Population Features:

Other physical features of the population are highlighted in the census. As we think about the future of the community, the most important of these is "age." The age profile of a town can tell us whether we need to start planning for new schools -- or new senior citizen centers. The significant feature of the age issue is the Baby Boom. This is the generation of persons born between 1945 and 1965. There were a lot of them; so many that the impact was felt first in schools, then, in starter homes, now in premium and vacation homes, and soon in retirement centers.

Figure 3 shows the impact of aging trends on the town. In 1990, the Baby Boomers were mostly in the 18-44 age group. As time passes, the Boomer numbers move into upper age groups. In 2010, the boom is well into the 45-64 age group. In 2020, it will be well into the 65+ segment. The town is already seeing a steady climb in that group; that will be amplified by the baby boom by the time of the next census.

Figure 3: Litchfield Population Aging, 1990-2010



It appears as if all of the population growth in the town over twenty years has been people over age 45. However, that is not actually the case. If there really were no growth, we would be seeing the 18-44 group sliding downward, and the 0-18 group dropping substantially. This is the case in most of Maine. Litchfield's population still has some young people coming in to supplant those growing older.

A more general measure of an aging community is its "Median Age." A median is a point at which exactly half the population is above and half below, and is not the same as "average." Litchfield's median age in 2010 was 43. In 2000, it was 38.5. Now, while most of us, as individuals, age ten years in a decade, it is not the same with a population. If the median age of a population rises, it means that more people are being added to the "old" side of the equation than the "young" side.

The 4.5 year advance in Litchfield's median age is just about typical in the area. Litchfield is the oldest among neighboring towns (inset) in 2000, and again in 2010. Sabattus and Richmond are aging slightly faster. Kennebec County aged by only 4.1 years in the 2000's, and its median age is 42.8, just about even with Litchfield. Maine's median age in 2010 was 42.7.

Regional Perspective: Median Age

Town	2000 age	2010 age
Litchfield	**38.5**	**43.0**
Sabattus	36.2	42.0
Richmond	37.2	42.1
Monmouth	37.5	42.0
Wales	34.9	38.7
West Gardiner	37.0	42.1

Because it is an issue in many parts of the country, the census also tallies race and national origin. This is not a big issue in Litchfield. Like most of Maine, Litchfield has a

Caucasian percentage of 97 percent. This is a drop, however, from 2000, when 99 percent were Caucasian. In raw numbers, the non-white population went from 32 in 2000 to 107 in 2010 (most of which were Asian). In Kennebec County, a slightly larger 3.8 percent are classified "non-white."

The ancestry of our community may be of some interest, though not necessarily from a planning standpoint. In Litchfield, English and French ancestry dominates, with over 50 percent of the population claiming one or the other. Twenty one percent of the population also comes from Ireland. Other groups with significant numbers are French-Canadian, Scottish, and German.

Community Futures:

A lot of the data in this chapter is interesting because it shows us how the town has changed over the years. But it only becomes valuable when we use it to plan for the future. With a good idea of how Litchfield is changing, we can anticipate future changes in community characteristics and service demands, and make informed planning choices.

The conventional mechanism of forecasting is to project from past trends, using population as the measure. A typical forecast would draw on the growth rate from the past decade, and assumes that it will continue into the next. Kennebec Valley Council of Government's growth forecast is based on such a formula. KVCOG's mathematical forecast range puts Litchfield's population for the year 2030 at between 4,600 and 4,960. Since the town gained about 1,000 residents in the past 20 years, it makes sense that it should gain about the same amount between 2010 and 2030.

The (former) State Planning Office used a more sophisticated formula that takes into account the survival rate of different age groups in town, migration rates, and other factors. SPO's forecast for Litchfield in 2030 is 4,229. That means a shade over 600 people added over 20 years, making the forecast quite a bit less than KVCOG's.

SPO forecasted Litchfield's growth rate to be about on a par with Sabattus. Richmond and Monmouth are projected to grow hardly at all (which does not correspond with their past history). Wales is projected to be the fastest-growing town in the vicinity. (It also has the youngest median age, so future "natural" growth is more likely.)

Regional Perspective: The Future

Town	2030 Pop. Forecasts from SPO
Litchfield	**4,229 (17 %)**
Sabattus	5,701 (17 %)
Richmond	3,485 (2 %)
Monmouth	4,239 (3 %)
Wales	2,103 (30 %)
West Gardiner	4,119 (19 %)

The remainder of this section takes forecasting one step further by establishing a set of "what if" scenarios. These scenarios estimate the impact on the town in three critical areas: population, housing, and employment (Housing and employment impacts will be looked at in more detail in later sections of this Plan). By looking at the physical impact of multiple scenarios, the town can make critical choices about its preferred path to the future.

Scenario 1: "what if" … we keep building houses at the same rate?

Litchfield has been adding new homes at a fairly constant pace over the past two decades. The town added 264 homes in the 1990's, 251 in the 2000's. If we assume similar economic conditions and a continued decline in household size, we can conclude that about 25-26 new homes per year is the "status quo."

What kind of impact would this housing growth have on the community? In order to understand, we first should convert it into population, and here we have to make an assumption about household sizes in the future. Though households are still shrinking, there are indications that the shrinkage is slowing. This may be in part due to economic conditions, but also that the trend of smaller families has now been well-established. We are going to assume that the average number of persons in a household in 2020 will be 2.4, and in 2030, 2.35.

Using these figures, 255 new households in 2020 will result in a population of 4,070. Five hundred ten new households by 2030 will result in a population of 4,585. A population of 4,585 is a growth rate of 12.5 percent per decade, a bit slower than our current rate but still faster than the SPO projection.

2030 Scenario 1:	
Population:	**4,585**
New Residents:	961
New Housing:	510
New Jobs:	600

New households will consume land. Under Litchfield's Land Use Ordinance, a new house lot must be at least one acre in the village and planned development districts, where growth is preferred, and 2 acres in the rural district. If all of the new development took place in the rural district, 510 new homes would consume at least 1,020 acres. To put that in context, Litchfield's total land area is 24,000 acres, so the land that would be consumed in 20 years is 4 percent of the town. If all new housing units were created at the highest density allowed in town, it would consume 510 acres.

The amount of road frontage consumed may be calculated as well. Using 200 feet as the minimum frontage per lot, 510 homes would require 102,000 feet of frontage, equivalent to a new road 9.7 miles long. Hypothetically, if all new homes were on one dead-end road, traffic from the new development at the entrance to the road would be more than double the busiest street in Litchfield today.

We can also estimate the number of new jobs that will come with these households. The ratio of workers to households in Kennebec County has stayed fairly steady for the past 20 years, at about 1.26 workers per household. This is lower than Litchfield's figure, but we have to presume that new households will come from outside the community. Two hundred fifty five new households will bring 321 new workers; 510 new households will bring 642. If the unemployment rate averages around six percent, the demand for jobs will be about 600.

Litchfield need not expect to create all of these jobs within its borders. Most of our current labor force does not work in town. In 2000, Litchfield workers held 1,432 jobs, but only 78 of them in town. Therefore, as long as the regional economy remains roughly the same, we can estimate that only five percent of new jobs will be located in Litchfield – thirty new local jobs over 20 years.

The need for public services based on growth is not as easy a mathematical exercise. For some services, a 20 percent growth rate just means a 20 percent increase in public service costs. That might work for recreation, general office, and solid waste. But for others, the shifting demographic may be more important than population change. Enrollment in schools has been declining in Litchfield since 2000, despite population growth. The town may find itself needing less investment for the school system, more for senior services.

Scenario 2: "What if" . . . we grew more like what it was in the 80's and 90's?

This scenario illustrates a higher growth rate. To do this, and still make it realistic, we will use an actual growth rate from Litchfield's recent past. Between 1980 and 2000, Litchfield gained 1,156 residents, a 20-year growth rate of 59 percent, or annual rate of 2.35 percent. The 80's and 90's were a time of healthy growth in rural towns. Additional development pressure as a result of the Sabattus Turnpike Interchange, from a new economic growth spurt, or just from gradual expansion of urban centers, could easily kick start an new round of high growth in Litchfield.

With a 2.35 percent per year growth rate, the population of Litchfield in 2020 would reach 4,572; the population in 2030 would be 5,760. That is an increase of 2,136, more than twice the projection made by KVCOG.

Using the assumed household size in 2020, a population of 4572 would require 464 additional units; the 2030 population of 5,760 would require 1,010 units over 20 years. Fifty homes per year is about what the town was experiencing during the 70's, but also about the peak of new construction just before the 2008 recession.

2030 Scenario 2:	
Total Population:	**5,760**
New Residents:	2,136
New Housing:	1,010
New Jobs:	1,273

If all of the new homes under this scenario were built at the 2-acre minimum lot size in the rural district, development would consume at least 2,020 acres – about 10 percent of Litchfield's total land area – and 38 miles of road frontage. At the smaller lots permitted in growth districts, the new housing would occupy only 1,010 acres.

A thousand new households would probably increase the workforce by about 1,270. To maintain the ratio of five percent of the Litchfield workforce working in town, 64 new jobs would need to be generated locally. It would also increase commuter traffic in and out of town by about 1,200 vehicles per day.

A thousand new homes could also impact the school system. Even though enrollments in Litchfield have been declining despite population growth, there is still an average of 0.47 school-aged children per household. A thousand "typical" households could almost double Litchfield's enrollment. In this respect, the *type* of homes built could have a significant impact. Homes designed for senior citizens, or small apartments, could meet the demand but be less likely to attract families with children than suburban-style single-family houses.

In addition to outside influences, several local events could increase the rate of housing development in Litchfield to fifty units or more per year. New land might become available from the sale of a farm, or a major employer could locate in Gardiner or even Litchfield. An increase in business growth in Lewiston-Auburn or Augusta could easily create enough regional demand to increase development pressures in Litchfield.

Scenario 3: "What if" . . . we were to slow the rate of growth?

The two prior scenarios presented a steady growth rate and an accelerated one. The last scenario asks the question, what about slower growth? First of all, what kind of a scenario would result in slower growth? It could be the result of economic conditions. After the recession hit in 2008, Litchfield went from averaging 40 new homes a year (2005-2008) to about 18 (2009-2011). Continued economic uncertainty or a new spike in energy prices could prolong that trend. Several years back, Litchfield was considering an ordinance to limit the number of housing units constructed each year, which would have had a similar effect.

In this scenario, we will postulate only 20 new homes per year, equating to 400 over 20 years – about 80 percent of our "status quo" scenario (#1). The total number of occupied homes would rise to 1,841, an increase of 28 percent over current housing stock. With an average household size of 2.40, the 2020 population would reach 3,940; at 2.35 persons per household, the 2030 population would be 4,326. Even this projection, though, is higher than that of SPO.

Four hundred new homes in the rural area would require at least 800 acres. While considerably less than the 2,000 acres projected in the Scenario #2, it is still over one square mile of consumption. At the highest density allowable, 400 new homes would consume 400 acres.

2030 Scenario 3:	
Total Population:	**4,326**
New Residents:	702
New Housing:	400
New Jobs:	504

Four hundred new households will add about 500 new members to the workforce. Maintaining a steady ratio of five percent, Litchfield would need to see 25 new jobs locally.

The scenario of slow growth may also raise the question, how do we stop growing? As long as the average numbers of people in a household continues to decline, even a "no growth" scenario requires new construction. Litchfield had 3,624 residents in 2010; if the population stayed constant through 2030, we would still need an average of five new homes each year to accommodate shrinking households.

Another consideration: as the population ages, its taste in housing changes. If the town does not provide for housing and accommodation for seniors, that segment of the population may move elsewhere. Similarly, as Litchfield families produce young adults, they are likely to look for housing suitable and affordable for them. If they can't find it in Litchfield, they will look elsewhere and we will lose the next generation.

In summary, these three "what if" scenarios offer not just numerical estimates, but also a perspective on how growth responds to social and economic environments. Litchfield could grow by as few as 700 new residents in 20 years, or as many as 2,100. The community can

choose to respond to growth as it happens (which could be any of the three scenarios) or plan for the growth rate it feels comfortable with, and take the appropriate action to make it happen.

Issues for the Community and its Future:

Litchfield appears to be in a well-established growth pattern. Litchfield has many assets that will attract new residents: relatively low land and housing prices, a small, rural community with good schools, and easy access to job centers. It would be hard to imagine the town not continuing to grow.

Like many of its neighbors, Litchfield is the object of demographic facts of life. Households are growing smaller, driving the need for more and different housing. The population is also getting older. This may result in a decrease in school populations, but may also generate demand in the future for more senior services, such as recreation and transportation programs.

Litchfield's likely growth will result in or drive demand for more housing and jobs, as well as more and different town services. How much growth does the town want? And, how will it affect demand for town services? The extent to which we choose to manage our growth will have a significant impact on the future character of the community.

4. Housing in Litchfield

State Goal: Encourage and promote affordable and decent housing opportunities for all citizens.

Our Top Recommendations:

A. Re-form the Senior Housing Committee with a mission to provide senior citizens the opportunity to remain in town, including the possibility of developing a senior citizen housing project.

B. The Town Manager and Selectmen should explore grant and loan programs to improve the quality and energy efficiency of existing housing.

Homes are part of the landscape and the community. While people come and go, the houses stay. Without them, there is no population. In fact, population estimates are quite often based on housing counts, because the rate of home-building drives population growth or decline. At the same time, the quality and cost of housing helps to determine the character of the community – people are mobile, and can change houses as they age, or as their economic circumstances change. A community can affect change within itself (or prepare for the changing tastes of its residents) by encouraging or discouraging a variety of housing options.

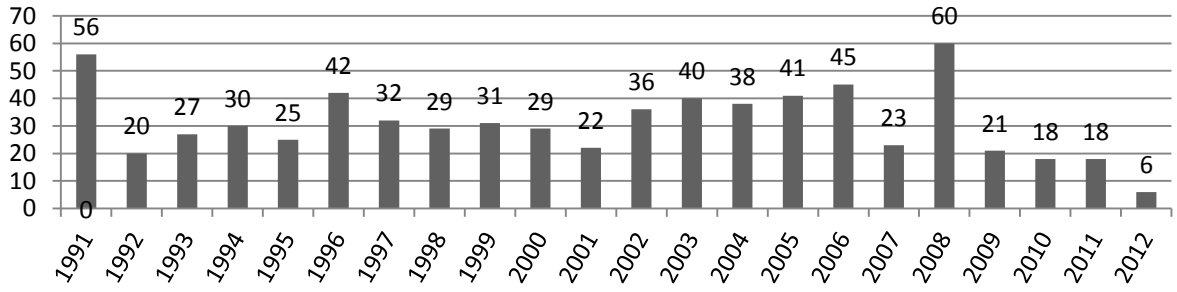
This chapter addresses the number, quality, and cost of housing in Litchfield. Discussion of the location of that housing is reserved for Chapter 13, growth and development (land use).

Housing Numbers and Variety:

Housing growth is necessary to support population growth – and in some cases may outpace population growth, leading to higher vacancy rates. In 1970, the census recorded 726 housing units in Litchfield. In 2000, the count had risen to 1,595, more than doubling. In 2010, the census counted 1,861, another 17 percent increase. Figure 4 below gives us a year-by-year perspective on housing growth in Litchfield over twenty years.

The numbers in Figure 4 are taken from annual Municipal Valuation Reports sent to the State by the Town Assessor, and indicate the number of year-round homes added to the tax rolls. These numbers will not match up exactly with building permits or census counts. Assessors report for the "year as of" April 1, so new homes reported for that year were probably built the year prior. "Net" increase deducts homes that were destroyed or moved from town during the year.

Figure 4: "Net" New Housing Units per Year, 1991-2012



As Figure 4 illustrates, new construction is usually sensitive to economic conditions, with a little lag time. There was a recession in 1989, but it didn't show up in the housing market until after 1991. Housing growth fluctuated for a decade, and then gradually accelerated from 2001. 2007 was a foreshadowing, but the current recession really bit into housing growth in 2009.

Housing by Type:

Table 2, below, indicates the type of housing stock available in Litchfield. Clearly, the overwhelming majority of housing (78 percent) is of the traditional single-family, site-built type. In many towns, traditional housing is gradually losing "market share" to mobile homes, but in Litchfield the number of mobile homes declined during the 1990's. Multi-family homes (primarily apartments) historically have not been much of a factor in rural towns, though Litchfield may see heightened interest in them based on predictions for an aging population and smaller household sizes.

Table 2: Housing by Structural Type, 1990-2010

Housing Type	1990	2000	2010
Site-built single-family (stick-built)	788	1,226	1,376
Multi-Family	25	30	35
Mobile Home	508	313	339

Source: American Community Survey (estimates from sampling)

Litchfield's largest growth is in traditional single family homes. The number of single family homes has almost doubled in twenty years. During the same time, the number of multi-family units has grown slightly and the number of mobile homes has dropped off. In 2010, mobile homes made up only 18 percent of total housing stock.

The popularity and numbers of mobile homes seems to have dropped as the economy strengthened in the 1990's and 2000's. In Litchfield, the percentage went from 38 percent to 18 percent in twenty years. In Kennebec County, it went from 13 percent to 9.7 percent. Some towns, such as Wales (20 percent) and Sabattus (32 percent) still have high percentages of

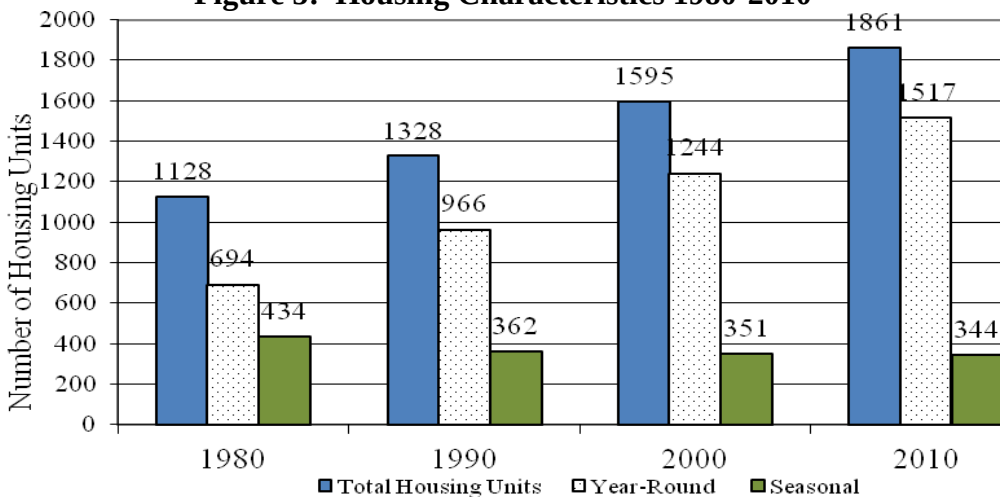
mobile homes. There is a rough correlation between towns with higher median income levels and lower mobile home rates. There are no large mobile home parks in Litchfield.

Multi-family buildings are not a large part of Litchfield's housing stock, as they are in more urbanized towns. A multi-family accommodation, whether an apartment, duplex, or rooming house, tends to be smaller in size and more appropriate for smaller households. In Litchfield, even the multi-family units have only two or three units per building. Accessory apartments (including garage apartments and "granny flats") are not common in Litchfield.

As Litchfield's population profile changes, we are likely to see more potential demand for multi-family units. They serve two purposes: they accommodate young people just starting out – Litchfield's future community. They also serve seniors who are looking for economical, low-maintenance housing (perhaps so their children can move in to the family home.) If these populations are not served, they will go elsewhere, and Litchfield will lose its diversity.

Seasonal homes have long been part of the housing stock in Litchfield. As shown on Figure 5, below, the number of camps in Litchfield has been stable over the past thirty years. Municipal valuation records indicate that 15 new camps have been built since 2000. Conversions to year-round housing may account for the slight decline in the census count. Camp conversions, besides having environmental impact, can create increased population and a new pattern of service demands without the new tax base to support it. There is at least moderate camp development on nearly all Litchfield's lakes, as well as Cobbossee Stream.

Figure 5: Housing Characteristics 1980-2010



Housing Occupancy and Vacancy:

In 2010, over 85 percent of occupied housing units were owner-occupied. This percentage is typical of suburban towns and has not changed much in Litchfield for at least twenty years. Along with the presence of multi-family buildings, rental occupancy tends to rise with proximity to urban areas. As the inset on the following page shows, Gardiner has less than 65 percent owner-occupied units. Kennebec County averages 73 percent owner occupancy.

Litchfield has traditionally had very low vacancy rates. Low rates are typical in a rural town with relatively high incomes and few rental properties. In 2010, only four percent of the year-round housing was vacant. With several years of news about the poor economy, housing crisis and foreclosures, one would infer that vacancy rates would be higher than average. It is apparent that some households that would otherwise be "between homes" are hunkering down until the economy gets better. County-wide, rental vacancy rates are declining. This is an indicator that development of new rental housing is not keeping up with demand.

Regional Perspective: Occupancy

Town	2010 Owner-occupied Percentage
Litchfield	**85.4 %**
Sabattus	81.8 %
Richmond	74.5 %
Monmouth	85.4 %
Wales	86.7 %
Gardiner	63.6%
West Gardiner	85.3 %

Housing Age and Condition:

The American Community Survey (ACS) contains information on the age and condition of housing in Litchfield. As may be deduced from the town's dramatic growth rate, nearly half the houses (46 percent) have been built since 1980.

Older houses are dated through their owners' estimates. Older homes make up a generous proportion of Litchfield's housing stock: 259 homes were built before the Second World War – about one out of every seven homes in town. This makes them potentially historic structures, on the one hand, and potential maintenance problems on the other.

The ACS reports on criteria that it defines as indicators of the quality or livability of the housing stock. One of these is the size of the housing unit and number of occupants. In Litchfield, 113 units (6.5 percent) have only one or two rooms. Thirty eight units (3 percent) have more occupants than they have rooms – though these may not be the units with only one or two rooms.

Sixteen percent of homes (214) report wood as their main source of heat. Again, this used to be an indicator of deficient housing (without central heating), but has become more a matter of choice. By far the largest number of homes (76 percent – 1,021) rely on fuel oil. Homes using fuel oil are subject to oil price spikes. The Town has made efforts to improve energy efficiency for homeowners, including passage of a local PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) Ordinance.

Despite census measures, anecdotal evidence in Litchfield suggests that there are many houses in rural areas that are deteriorated – older mobile homes or poorly-maintained homes and camps. A Housing Rehabilitation Planning Committee was formed in 2007 to address this perceived need, but has been in a holding pattern. These homes may have dramatic needs, such as functional plumbing, adequate electric wiring, and suitable heat and insulation.

New construction is now controlled by the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code. With a population under 4,000, Litchfield is not currently required to enforce the Code, although at the town's current rate of growth or with changes to the law, that requirement could kick in.

Property Values and Affordability

Litchfield homeowners, like many in Maine, have seen erratic increases in property values over the past twenty years. Between 1980 and 1990, the median value of a "specified" (stick-built, on less than ten acres) owner-occupied home rose from $37,800 to $84,500, more than double. Between 1990 and 2000, however, home values rose only 15 percent, to $97,000. Inflation over that period was 32 percent, so homeowners actually lost ground. In 2010, after a brutal couple of years for prices, the median home value in Litchfield was $177,900. This shows how dramatically home values rose in the early 2000's. An 83 percent rise in average values dwarfs the 28 percent inflation rate during the 2000's.

The values reported in the American Community Survey (ACS) are a statistical sampling of homeowner's estimates of value, but tend to be fairly accurate. The problem is that the ACS is a combination of surveys conducted over five years (2007-11), in this case a period of highly fluctuating prices. The Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) tracks actual home sale prices. In 2008, it reported the median sale price of a house in Litchfield was $152,500. In 2009, the median sale price was $130,000. MHSA hasn't assimilated sales data since 2009, but a spot check of real estate listings in fall of 2011 found 44 properties for sale, with an average asking price of $215,500. This included four condos and seven mobile homes.

Regional Perspective: Home Values

Town	2009 Median Home Value
Litchfield	**$179,400**
Sabattus	$125,100
Richmond	$173,800
Monmouth	$148,400
Wales	$160,300
Gardiner	$140,400
West Gardiner	$152,800

Using ACS figures from 2009, housing values in Litchfield have been comfortably higher than elsewhere in the region. As the box on the left shows, Richmond had the next highest median home values, at $173,800. Median values in Sabattus were only $125,100. The median home value for Kennebec County was $142,200, for Maine, $172,100. Sabattus notwithstanding, home values in Maine tend to increase from the coast inland.

Affordability – the relationship between housing cost and income – is a major issue in many areas, and required to be addressed by local comprehensive plans in Maine. The law requires that each town set a goal for at least ten percent of new housing to be affordable to households making less than 80 percent of the town's median household income.

For example, an affordable home for the median income household in Litchfield ($61,048) would be approximately $179,000, as calculated by MSHA. Since the median home value in 2010 was $177,900, this would seem to indicate a pretty good match between incomes and prices. If prices are closer to $215,000, it's not so good.

MSHA has developed what it calls an "affordability index," the ratio between what a median income household can afford and what the median home price is. Anything over "1" indicates an affordable community. In Litchfield, the affordability index calculated in 2009 was 1.22 (can afford $158,000, but homes sell for only $130,000.) The average for the State of Maine is 0.88 – an affordability problem that prompted the concern in the first place. But closer to home, it is less of a problem. The index for Kennebec County is 1.04, and for the Augusta Housing Market is 1.09.

Primarily due to the recent pause in home values, statistically affordability is not a major issue at this time. But this conclusion overlooks two questions: 1) is there any housing available for low and very-low income groups? And, 2) will the new housing being built continue to be affordable? With regard to the second question, we need only look at the asking prices of some of the new homes in town to see that this is not the case.

The census provides information on housing costs as a percentage of incomes as well. This allows us to link actual incomes with monthly housing costs. Table 3, below, shows those figures for 2000 and 2010. The accepted "threshold" for affordability is that no more than 30 percent of income should go towards housing costs. The table shows that even though three-quarters of all homeowners fall within the acceptable threshold, we are falling backwards. Fewer homeowners are paying less than 20 percent and more are paying over 30 percent in 2010 than in 2000. The trend is much more dramatic among renters; more than twice as many renters are paying too much in housing costs, and just half as many are paying less than 20 percent.

Table 3: Housing Costs as a Percentage of Income

Percentage of Monthly Income	2000 #	2000 %	2010 #	2010 %
Owners paying a percentage of monthly income . . .				
Less than 20 percent	304	57 %	280	36 %
20 to 30 percent	123	23 %	235	30 %
More than 30 percent	109	20 %	269	34 %
Renters paying a percentage of monthly income . . .				
Less than 20 percent	47	36 %	25	21 %
20 to 30 percent	41	31 %	20	17 %
More than 30 percent	30	23 %	76	63 %

Source: U.S. Census

The bottom line from these numbers is that in Litchfield, a relatively affluent community, 269 homeowners and 76 renters struggle to afford their current homes, regardless of price.

Renters traditionally have more trouble with housing costs than owners, reflected in the table by the higher percentage paying more than 30 percent. Incomes of renters are generally lower. The census does not distinguish the median income of renters, but according to MSHA statistics, it is $28,000 in the Augusta area. An affordable rental at this income would be approximately $700/month. According to the census, the median rent paid in 2009 was $765. This would require a threshold income of $30,600 in order to be an affordable rent.

Litchfield is part of a regional housing market, and that matters because people who can't afford their homes tend to migrate to more affordable communities. The box at right indicates that Litchfield is slightly less affordable

Regional Perspective: Affordability

Town	2010: Paying more than 30% Of Income on Housing
Litchfield	**29.4%**
Sabattus	24.4 %
Richmond	20.8 %
Monmouth	36.5 %
Wales	28.8 %
Gardiner	27.3 %
West Gardiner	22.6 %

than our immediate neighbors and about average within the larger region. In Kennebec County, 29 percent of homeowners and 48 percent of all renters pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing costs.

Certain segments of our population, particularly the elderly and young, will continue to have problems finding a place to live in Litchfield. These groups typically have lower incomes, and there are relatively few rental units and mobile homes.

MSHA has developed several programs at the state level to address specific needs. The most well-known is the first-time homebuyer program. There is also a program to provide low interest mortgages to veterans or active duty military. MSHA also runs or coordinates several rental assistance programs, including subsidized housing developments and rental vouchers.

Housing Growth Projections:

Chapter 3 outlined three scenarios for future growth in Litchfield. These included estimates of the rate of housing development. The slowest growth scenario projected 400 new housing units over twenty years; the middle growth scenario projected 510; the fast growth scenario projected 1,010.

The growth projections did not address the style of housing likely to be built, but it is not hard to deduce based on current trends. As the population ages, we get more senior citizens and "empty nesters". This type of household is looking for different style housing than we have seen built in the past few decades. With demand dropping for suburban-style, 2,000+ square-foot homes, prices may also drop, causing them to be less attractive to builders as well as buyers.

Although the census does not break down households by number of occupants, it does report on the number of single-person households. In 2010, Litchfield had 292 single-person households; twenty years ago, the figure was only 139. They account for one of every five households in town. If we do not account for the growth curve and just carry that percentage into our housing projections, we can estimate a demand for between 80 and 200 housing units suitable for single-person occupancy over the next twenty years.

It is true that single persons can inhabit any size of home, and from a social perspective it may even be desirable that aging members of the community are able to "age-in-place." But the economic and public service impacts must be planned for. Single persons on average have lower incomes than families, meaning that they will be less able to afford payments and upkeep of a large home. Single persons or even couples inhabiting larger homes reduce the supply of those homes for new, young families, inhibiting the turnover essential to healthy communities, and elevating prices. Elderly homeowners may have higher demands for social services, public transportation, and emergency services. These demands will happen with an aging community regardless of house size, but if smaller housing units are grouped in planned communities or single buildings, it would affect the cost of providing these services.

The town also needs to plan for more affordable housing. The State's yardstick is that ten percent of new housing be affordable to households making 80 percent of median income.

Eighty percent of Litchfield's median income in 2010 is roughly $48,000, and according to MSHA, 404 households in Litchfield earn less than that. A $48,000 income can afford a $145,000 home purchase or $1,200/month in rent. Over the next twenty years, the town's goal would have to be between 40 (slowest growth scenario) and 100 (fastest) new housing units in that price range. At today's prices, it is hard to believe that a new, single-family home could be built for under $145,000, much less two or more per year. However, if the units are smaller, such as duplexes or condos, that might be possible. It is a lot easier to visualize a new set of apartments renting for under $1,200 per month.

Issues in Housing:

Housing growth in Litchfield has been substantial. Recording about 25 new homes per year, Litchfield is likely to continue its rapid growth. Factors that could slow growth include high home prices, high gasoline prices, and poor economic conditions. Factors that could speed growth include proximity to the Sabattus interchange, land availability and a reviving economy.

There is a substantial potential demand for a variety of multi-family housing. At current ratios, five out of every 25 new homes could be single-person-sized. We have very few places for young people to live, and senior-friendly housing will soon be a booming market. Multi-family housing could range from apartments and condos to accessory apartments in existing large homes.

While an affordability problem is not apparent in Litchfield for the average household, our concern should be for lower income groups, such as young, single people and older people who need to down-size. If we do not do something to encourage more affordable housing, we will either lose this part of our community altogether, or they will turn to older mobile homes and other, more problematic housing choices. At current income levels, approximately 2-3 housing units per year should be at the "affordable" price of $145,000 (or $1,200 per month), with a portion of that priced even lower for lower incomes.

Planners should visualize some of the housing choices that individuals have to make based on working wages. This approach is called "workforce housing," because it is focused squarely on the housing needs of wage earners. For instance, a "living" wage in Maine is generally cited as $12 an hour. A rental affordable at that salary would be $575/month, and a home about $75,000. Another example: the average teacher in RSU#4 earns $49,000 a year (2011). That is almost right at 80 percent of the median household income. If Litchfield's teachers are going to be a part of the community – as well as policemen, small business owners, and factory workers – the community needs to work to see that there is the kind of housing they can afford.

Achievements:

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan tied housing to land use in several ways. The Land Use Ordinance that was subsequently enacted encouraged development in village and planned

development districts through differential dimensional requirements. It also excluded mobile home parks from the rural district. The subdivision ordinance requires clustered housing design.

The plan also recommended pursuit of a senior citizen development in Litchfield. A senior housing committee was created and still exists but is inactive. The Town also formed a Housing Rehabilitation Planning Committee in 2007.

Policies and Strategies for Housing:

Policies:

1. Encourage and promote adequate workforce housing to support the continued role of the town in regional development.

2. Ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality affordable housing including rental housing.

3. Kick start a local affordable housing initiative.

Recommended Actions:

A. Re-form the Senior Housing Committee with a mission to provide senior citizens the opportunity to remain in town, including the possibility of developing a senior citizen housing project.

B. The Town Manager and Selectmen should explore grant and loan programs to improve the quality and energy efficiency of existing housing.

C. Town government should continue cooperation with KVCAP, Community Concepts, and Habitat for Humanity in order to offer housing opportunities for residents.

D. The Town (planning board) should continue to direct new mobile home parks into the planned development district. Existing mobile home parks may expand.

E. The Town (planning board) should continue to permit accessory housing units of less than 600 square feet to locate in any owner-occupied home in town.

F. The Code Enforcement Officer should track and provide data on housing costs in his development tracking system (*see* Land Use Plan).

5. Historic and Archaeological Assets

State Goal: Preserve the state's historic and archeological resources.

Our Top Recommendation:

A. The Town Meeting should provide adequate funding for preservation of Litchfield Academy, the Old Town House, and other historic assets, and assist efforts of the Historical Society of Litchfield.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and promote the distinctive archaeological and historic characteristics of the Town of Litchfield. The task of preserving the places, buildings, and memories of the past is important to present and future inhabitants of the town. The remaining evidence of our ancestors whether it consists of cemeteries, old homes, or prehistoric sites, all contribute to the individuality and identity of the community.

Although Litchfield has a long history of settlement, and has many fine examples of architecture from the late 1700's on, no buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places. The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) is the state repository for all historic and archaeological information. MHPC has identified two private homes as possibly being "eligible" for inclusion:

- The home at 2071 Hallowell Road;
- The farmstead at 419 Stevenstown Road.

The town has two locally-significant historic structures, the Litchfield Academy (1852) at Litchfield Corner and the Old Town House (c.1845) on the Hallowell Road about one-half mile north of the existing town office. The Litchfield Academy is now actively used as a senior center and the Old Town House as the historic museum. Both Litchfield Academy and the Old Town House are currently in need of investment for preservation.

Litchfield has six historical archaeological sites as determined by MHPC. Locations for these sites are shown on the *Historic and Recreational Assets Map*.

- "yale" (no other information available),
- Ervin Cram Blacksmith Shop (1870's),
- William Goodwin Farmstead (1830's),
- John Bolden Farmstead (ca. 1800),
- A. Purrington Homestead, and
- Beaver Drive Farmstead (late 18th Century).

Water-powered mills played a major role in Litchfield's early economy. In the late 1800's, Frank Wyman built a steam powered cider mill reputed to be the biggest in Maine. He pressed 10,000 barrels of cider a year. The concrete footings of the mill can still be found on the Upper Pond Road. The last of the mills burned in 1951 and none of the old mill buildings have survived. The remains of stone dams along several brooks are all that remain.

The MHPC has identified three prehistoric campsites, located on the shores of Sand, Woodbury and Cobbosseecontee Stream/Pleasant Pond. Precise locations are suppressed by MHPC to discourage treasure hunters.

The three pre-historic sites identified by the MHPC are all located adjacent to waterways. Rivers and streams provided the only reasonable avenue of transport for early Native Americans. The shoreland zoning ordinance prohibits new development in areas with potential archeological significance. This provides some protection for these sites. Also Litchfield's ordinances provide that subdivisions and commercial projects requiring site review must be cleared by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

Historic Preservation Activities

Litchfield is fortunate to have the Hiram Shorey Family History Center located in the lower level of the town office building. Sponsored by the Rotary Clubs of Maine, the center honors Hiram Shorey, one of the founders of Rotary International and a Litchfield native. HVAC-equipped, the Center has a microfilm reader and a computer as well as shelf space for historical artifacts, books and records.

Archival storage for Litchfield's exceptional collection of early town and vital records is provided in a fireproof vault.

The Town passed a Historic Preservation Ordinance in 2006, as recommended by the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. The ordinance created the Litchfield Historic Preservation Commission and provides a mechanism to designate specific structures and sites for protection. To date, two structures – the Litchfield Academy and the Old Town House – have come under the protection of the Ordinance. The Academy functions as a Senior Center and has an elected board of Trustees. The Old Town House museum houses artifacts belonging to the Historical Society of Litchfield. The Historical Society of Litchfield has obtained grants to supplement town funds and volunteer labor to help maintain it.

Development ordinances in Litchfield have provisions protecting historic and archeological resources. The Shoreland Zoning Ordinance, Land Use Ordinance, and Subdivision Ordinance all have standards requiring identification and protection of historic and archeological assets within identified target areas.

The Historical Society of Litchfield (HSOL) has been active since 1973, primarily in preservation of historic artifacts and the Old Town House Museum. HSOL established and maintains a website that has greatly enhanced public access to Litchfield's past:

www.historicalsocietyoflitchfieldmaine.org. HSOL obtained a grant to have the Town's early records microfilmed and put into digital format. These records are now available on the HSOL Website. The site also contains early maps, pictures of old houses, cemetery information, and biographical sketches of early settlers. The website also gives access to Litchfield's Town Reports through a link to the University of Maine at Orono's Folger Library. HSOL provides free historical and genealogical assistance through the website.

Issues in Preserving Historic Resources:

The Town of Litchfield has a large number of connections to its heritage. Some have been identified and cataloged; many have not. The town has several organizations dedicated to preserving historical assets. Since much of Litchfield's heritage is agricultural, a focus should be on identifying and preserving links to the farming heritage, including rural landscapes.

Issues identified by the HSOL:

1. A Comprehensive archeological survey needs to be done by professionals.
2. The Old Town House needs a new roof. Town funding is necessary.
3. The HVAC system installed for the Shorey Center is not working right and has been shut down; a dehumidifier is currently in place as a temporary solution.
4. The Old Town House Museum's Collection Catalogue must be updated.
5. More data needs to be gathered for the house records in the Survey of Historic Houses. (Houses over fifty years old.)

Achievements:

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan recommended the formation of a Historic Preservation Commission and enactment of a historic preservation ordinance. These have both been accomplished. Language has also been added to the land use ordinances requiring exploration and preservation of historical and archeological assets prior to development.

Policies and Strategies for Historic Preservation:

Policy:

1. Identify and protect the significant historic and archaeological resources in Litchfield.

Recommended Actions:

A. The planning board and historic preservation commission should continue ordinance provisions that require developers to identify and protect significant historic and archeological resources prior to development activities.

B. The historic preservation commission should continue to work with Historic Society of Litchfield and the Kennebec Historical Society on collection and preservation of historic documents and artifacts

C. The Town Meeting should provide adequate funding for preservation of Litchfield Academy, the Old Town House, and other historic assets, and assist efforts of the Historical Society of Litchfield.

6. Community Recreation

State Goal: Promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for Litchfield citizens, including access to surface waters.

Our Top Recommendations:

A. The Selectmen should expand the role and responsibilities of the Town's Recreation Committee and Recreation Department (Director) to encompass all recreational facilities and activities in town for all ages.

B. The Town should work with existing local land trusts or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.

C. The Town should participate in educating landowners about the benefits and protections for allowing public recreational access on their property, and recreational users about the importance of showing respect and appreciation for landowners.

Litchfield's lakes, streams, woods and open spaces provide a wide variety of year-round outdoor recreational opportunities including hunting, fishing, boating, swimming, hiking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing. Other recreational opportunities are available through public and private recreational facilities, programs and activities.

The type and availability of the community's recreational facilities strongly reflect the town's rural nature. The town also offers a number of recreational opportunities that are significantly greater than communities of similar size and character. Many of these have been identified on the *Historic and Recreation Assets Map* at the end of this report.

Recreational Facilities

Water Access

Woodbury Pond Park on the Whipporwill Road offers public access for swimming on Woodbury Pond. The 16.8 acre park was owned by the State and turned over to the Town. It has a small beach with roped off swimming area, bath houses, portable toilets, a picnic area, fire pits, playground area with swings, and a soccer-volleyball area. It is open in the summer from 9 AM

to dusk with staff provided. A small user fee is charged and the park is basically self-supporting. There is parking on site with 75 parking spaces.

Woodbury Pond also has a boat launch ramp (paved) on the Whipporwill Road. This boat launch gives access to Woodbury, Sand, Buker and Jimmy Ponds in the Tacoma Lakes chain. There are about 25 parking spaces but the lot gets quite cramped on a busy weekend. A boat launch ramp facility on the Thorofare Road provides access to Pleasant Pond. That facility has very limited parking.

Passive Recreation:

The Litchfield Conservation Commission maintains a number of trails for four-season use. Vehicles, bikes, snowmobiles, camping and fires are prohibited on these trails, some of which are on Town-owned properties. An example is Smithfield Plantation, a 103-acre, Town-owned parcel administered under a board of (five) trustees. This natural area has trails and also provides school children with an opportunity for hands-on application of science and biology subjects through study of the natural environment. Schools are encouraged to supplement classroom instruction with visits to this area. There is a parking area on Libby Road. There is an amphitheatre on the site and handicap access to the amphitheatre.

The Smithfield Plantation trail and others maintained by the conservation commission are listed on the Town's website and most of the trails listed on the website include a link to aerial maps of the trails. Other Town trails maintained by the commission are:

- MacInnes Trail - accessed from the Pine Tree Road, about half a mile from the junction of the Dennis Hill Road. This trail includes both private and Town land.
- Turkey Trail - accessed between the Plains Cemetery and the Town Office. This trail includes both private and Town land.

Other privately controlled and maintained trails include:

- Woodbury Nature Sanctuary (Stanton Bird Club) - the trail, known as the Yellow Trail, is accessed from the Pease Hill Road near the junction of the Whippoorwill Road
- Webber-Rogers Farmstead Conservation Area (Kennebec Land Trust) -the trail is accessed from the Plains Road near the junction of the Thorofare Road
- Small-Burnham Conservation Area (Kennebec Land Trust) - the trail is accessed from the Pine Tree Road, about a half a mile from the junction of the Plains Road
- Holman Conservation Area (Kennebec Land Trust) - the trail is accessed from the Upper Pond Road.

The commission has an on-going effort to develop new trails and to develop a master trail plan which would show the entire public and private interconnected trail system for the Town.

A system of 63 miles of snowmobile trails also exists throughout Litchfield across private properties with landowners' permission. Litchfield’s snowmobile trails connect to trails in Sabattus, Bowdoin, Bowdoinham, Gardiner and Lewiston and provide snowmobilers access to the town’s stores with gas (Litchfield Country Store and Gowell’s) and diners (Rt. 197 Diner and the Country Café). The nearest ITS trail is in Monmouth.

Litchfield's trails are developed and maintained by members of the Litchfield Snowmobile Club (LSC). Club members handle relations with the private landowners and address landowners' concerns with use on the trails. The club hosts an annual landowner appreciation dinner. Club funding comes from grants, membership dues, the excise tax from local snowmobile registrations and fundraising activities. In addition to adequate funding, the Club's ability to keep the trails well-maintained is highly dependent on the number of members and volunteers that are willing to put in time from late August through April to maintain trails.

Club membership and active participation has been in decline for a number of years. As of 2013, despite recruitment efforts the club has only about six active members and has not been able to keep all trails well maintained or even broken in after snowstorms. There are a number of potential reasons for the decline, including inconsistent snow conditions from year to year, the tough economy and perhaps a waning interest in snowmobiling in the community in general as our population ages. The decline in membership and a decrease in snowmobile registrations has contributed to a decrease in club revenues.

It is difficult to predict whether the LSC will continue to be viable. The Town should consider whether it wants to take action to make sure that trails remain available, particularly since snowmobiling activity supports local businesses. The Town could also consider whether there should be efforts to work with landowners to convert or expand some snowmobile trails to other uses like Horseback riding, jogging, biking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.

Sports Fields and Playgrounds

The Town owns and maintains a complex of sports fields known as Veteran's Memorial Fields located on the Hallowell Road behind the Old Town House. This complex has been enlarged and improved over the years. It supports the Town's organized sports programs and is also available for residents' use. There are three baseball fields, two T-ball fields, a basketball court and a tennis court at this site. An ice skating area is established annually for families to enjoy in the winter. Vehicle access is gated off when scheduled sports are not in progress to discourage vandalism. However, there is parking outside the gate and pedestrian access. Residents that want to use the fields and bring vehicles in can contact the Recreation Director in advance to get access.

Litchfield also has access to sports facilities at local schools that are now owned and maintained by Regional School Unit #4 consisting of the towns of Litchfield, Sabattus and Wales. Carrie Ricker Middle School on Rt. 197 in Litchfield has a multi-function field (soccer/football), and a baseball field. The Libby-Tozier School, also on Rt. 197 in Litchfield, has a multi-function field, usually used for soccer, and a softball field. Litchfield residents also have access to four tennis courts at RSU 4's Oak Hill High School in Wales.

All school facilities are available upon request through the school as long as school activities receive priority. Townspeople regularly use the softball field at Libby-Tozier, and occasionally the fields at Carrie Ricker, for youth sports programs. Programs from other towns

in the RSU and the Oak Hill High School teams also occasionally use the sports fields at the two schools in Litchfield.

Both the Carrie Ricker Middle School and Libby-Tozier School also have playgrounds that local residents can use. The playground at the Libby-Tozier School was specifically intended to be a public playground and was built through the efforts of a local group of parents and volunteers. There are issues surrounding the respective rights and responsibilities of the Town and school district, but the selectmen are working towards a solution.

Other Facilities

The Litchfield Farmers Club sponsors the annual three day Litchfield Fair at the Fairgrounds on the Plains Road. The Fairgrounds is also made available for local organizations including 4-H Horse Clubs, Litchfield Volunteer Fire Association for Baked Bean Hole Suppers, Car Shows, Boy Scouts, Church Groups and others. In recent years, the Fairgrounds has also been the venue for several multi-day regional festivals that draw national and local performers and visitors from across New England. The annual fair and some of the festivals offer attendees opportunities to camp out at the Fairgrounds in tents, trailers and RV's as the Fairgrounds has sites equipped with electricity and water hook-ups.

Litchfield residents also have access to local golf facilities. The Meadows Golf Course is an 18-hole private club, open to the public, and located on the Huntington Hill Road. Cobbossee Colony Golf Course, a 9-hole facility, is located just outside of town on the Cobbossee Road in Monmouth.

Recreation Programs and Organized Activities

The Litchfield Recreation Committee oversees a part-time Recreation Director. The Recreation Director organizes all the youth and adult sports programs in town and is responsible for managing Woodbury Pond Park. The Town's Conservation Commission is active in establishing, maintaining, and promoting residents' use of outdoor walking trails and Smithfield Plantation. The Senior Advisory Committee organizes senior recreational activities.

There are a variety of programs and organized activities in town that provide residents the chance to recreate and socialize. Opportunities for residents to participate in these programs and activities are regularly advertised in the Town's monthly newsletter, the *Sodalite*.

The Litchfield Recreation Committee and Department organizes several recreational sports teams for school-age children. These include: soccer, basketball, T-ball, baseball, and ASA softball. The Department also offers an adult volleyball program on Sunday evenings at Carrie Ricker Middle School.

The conservation commission organizes regular walks and hikes on trails maintained by the commission, as well as other outdoor activities at Smithfield Plantation. The commission is always seeking to expand the organized activities it can offer to townsfolk.

The Litchfield Senior Center, run by the Senior Advisory Committee, holds its functions at the old Litchfield Academy building. Monthly activities are planned for seniors to socialize and exercise through activities held at the Center or trips to other locations. Some regular activities include: aerobics, line dancing, bowling, music, book club, birthday celebrations, movies, crafts, and games.

Many clubs in town give both youth and adults a chance to be active in their community. These clubs offer their members recreational and social opportunities and occasionally host activities that are open to the general public. The club with the most publicly-available activities on a regular basis is the Sportsman's Club on the Hallowell Road. The Sportsman's Club holds Bingo every Wednesday night and country music events at the clubhouse on Sunday nights. The club also puts on events throughout the year, including a children's fishing derby each May in the club's trout-stocked pond.

Issues for Recreation:

The gradual aging of our population makes it important to focus on local recreational and social activities for our senior citizens, particularly activities suited for our long winters. The Senior Center is currently an excellent resource/service for seniors and the Town should explore ways to support and expand activities as needed as well as support means for seniors who may not have transportation to access the Center.

Opportunities for traditional forms of outdoor recreation are made possible through informal cooperation between the public and many private landowners. These activities are dependent upon the willingness of private landowners to allow people to use their land for responsible recreational pursuits. Development can have an adverse impact upon the availability of recreational activities. For example, a local walking trail has recently been impacted by the expansion of the power line corridor and landowner restrictions on dogs on the trail. Development will gradually reduce private land available for walking, skiing, horseback riding, snowmobiling, and hunting. It is in the Town's interest to find ways to keep private lands available for public use whenever possible in cooperation with all applicable landowners. Fortunately, the Kennebec Land Trust is active in Litchfield, and their acquisitions will remain accessible for many of these activities.

An important task for the Town is to develop a master trail plan, which would show a public and private interconnected trail system. The plan could be used to direct future public investments in the development of the trail system. A trail plan for the community would be the first step in preserving some land for future recreation.

An increasing number of residents desire a safe place to jog, bike and walk along the roads. The existing rural road system is not suited for pedestrian or bicycle traffic, making it very difficult for people to recreate along the roadway without having to dodge traffic. While it would be extremely expensive to widen our roads, and major local roads are actually State roads, the Town should try to accommodate walkers and bikers when upgrading our road system.

Woodbury Pond Park is the only public swimming facility among Litchfield's many lakes, and resources are required to maintain usable, clean facilities. Currently, fire pits are in need of repair, but there are no funds budgeted. Many structures are in need of painting and basic maintenance. Geese continue to create unpleasant, unsanitary conditions despite working with State IF&W over several years and trying many methods of discouraging geese from gathering there. The Town needs to consider how best to maintain cleanliness on on-going basis if efforts to keep the geese off the property fail.

Achievements:

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan recommended the Recreation Committee take on additional roles and responsibilities. The plan also recommended that the Recreation Committee be given the resources necessary. It appears that these recommendations have only been partially implemented as the Town still has a fragmented, rather than a comprehensive and coordinated, approach to planning and providing for current and future recreational needs. The Recreation Committee and Recreation Director are primarily focused the management of Woodbury Pond Park, youth/adult sports programs and the Veterans Park Fields complex. Planning and management of other significant Town-supported recreation facilities and activities are split among the senior center and the conservation commission.

The plan also recommended that existing recreational activities, including both local and regional programs, should be widely advertised through newspaper, internet and Town Office Bulletin Board. This has been mostly accomplished. Local activities and programs are consistently well advertised in the *Sodalite*. Timely information about both youth and adult sports programs is on the recreation department's section of the Town website, some information about walking trails is on the conservation commission's section of the website, and information about other local and regional recreation and entertainment opportunities under the Community section of the website.

The 2000 plan also recommended expansion of local and regional programs for senior citizens and development of a plan to construct tennis courts and basketball courts within the community. As previously mentioned, the Town now has a very active senior center; tennis and basketball courts were constructed at the Veteran's Park Fields.

Lastly, the plan recommended requiring that all subdivisions proposed with greater than 4 lots would provide for the recreational needs of its residents with a flexible list of options to meet this requirement based upon the character and size of the proposed subdivision. New subdivisions would also be required whenever feasible to preserve existing trails and other recreational sites within their proposed subdivisions. An exemplary set of recreational access standards is now part of the subdivision ordinance.

Policies and Strategies for Recreation:

Policies:

1. Maintain/upgrade existing recreational facilities, and expand recreational opportunities, as necessary to meet current and future needs.

2. Preserve open space for recreational uses as appropriate.

3. Maintain at least one major point of public access to major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.

4. Facilitate good relations between landowners and recreational users of private property.

Recommended Actions:

A. The Selectmen should expand the role and responsibilities of the Town's Recreation Committee and Recreation Department (Director) to encompass all recreational facilities and activities in town for all ages. Selectmen should also provide the resources needed to carry out the new roles and responsibilities. Assigned responsibilities should include:
   - assessing current and future recreation needs;
   - developing a comprehensive recreation plan for the community;
   - coordinating the development and administration of existing and new recreation opportunities;
   - preparing, proposing and managing a comprehensive recreation budget;
   - coordinating outreach and communication efforts;
   - cooperating with private recreation groups to find ways to enhance their activities and/or arrange for them to hold recreational activities that are open to the public;
   - assessing and reporting annually to the Selectmen on status of recreation programs and facilities as well as plans for their continued operation and improvement; and
   - implementing the recreation policies and strategies outlined in this plan.

B. The Town should work with existing local land trusts or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.

C. Town officials should participate in educating landowners about the benefits and protections for allowing public recreational access on their property including, at a minimum, information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, §159-A. Efforts should also involve educating recreational users about the importance of showing respect and appreciation for private landowners through being responsible users their land.

D. The conservation commission should work with public and private partners to expand and maintain the trail network for motorized and non-motorized uses, connecting with regional trail systems where possible. As part of this effort, the Town should explore the

feasibility of developing canoe trails and seek to make as many trails multi-use as possible, including the snowmobile trails.

E. The recreation committee should continue to advertise recreational activities in the *Sodalite* and through the Town website. The Recreation Director should ensure all recreation-related information on the website is kept up to date. The Town Manager should explore restructuring the website to allow residents to easily locate information about all recreational facilities and opportunities in one place.

F. The Town Manager and the recreation committee should seek state, federal and private grants to fund both existing and new recreation programs. Additional efforts to identify regional recreational programs with surrounding communities should be pursued whenever feasible.

G. The Town should explore ways to provide runners, cyclists, and horseback riders safer places to travel.

H. The recreation committee should work with the conservation commission and other interested groups to develop a master trail plan identifying public and private trails. The plan should be used to direct future public investments in the development of the trail system and identify priorities for preserving land for future recreation.

I. The Selectmen and Town Manager should pursue a legal arrangement with RSU #4 for continued maintenance and public access to sports fields, playgrounds and parking at Libby-Tozier and Carrie Ricker schools.

J. The recreation committee and Recreation Director should develop a maintenance and improvement plan, with associated costs, for ensuring regular, adequate upkeep of all facilities at Woodbury Pond Park. This should include a plan to maintain cleanliness on a daily basis if the geese situation does not improve. The plan should compare anticipated costs and revenues and either adjust entrance fees or find additional resources, to sufficiently cover expenses.

K. The recreation committee should actively pursue getting volunteer resources to assist with maintenance and upkeep of recreational facilities in the town. This effort should include, at a minimum, coordinating with Oak Hill High School, and outreach to students there, to offer opportunities for students to earn their community service hours by working on particular projects in Litchfield.

7. Critical Natural Resources

State Goal: Protect the State's critical natural resources, including wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.

Our Top Recommendations:

A. The Code Enforcement Officer should be trained on new techniques and engineering practices that will better protect natural resources, and will advise the Planning Board on their suitability for incorporation in land use regulations.

B. The Selectmen should dedicate the resources necessary to continue restoration of the former town gravel pit according to the 2010 reclamation plan.

This chapter examines the significant natural resources of the Town and identifies measures to protect these resources for both present and future generations. Litchfield owes a great deal of its rural character to its natural assets. It is bordered by water to the east and north along Pleasant Pond and the Cobbosseecontee Stream. To the west, Woodbury Hill and Oak Hill form a chain of hills shared by Litchfield, Wales and Monmouth. Another series of small hills run through the central and western part of town, ranging from a height of a few hundred feet up to the high point, Danforth Hill, at an elevation of 680 feet above mean sea level. The low point is along the shores of Pleasant Pond at 136 feet.

Soils and Topography:

Soil is the critical building block to support housing, commercial farming, gardening, woodlot management, recreation, wildlife habitats, gravel and sand mining and waste disposal. Careless activities, such as poor land management, waste disposal, or development practices, can trigger erosion, sedimentation and pollution; these in turn, can result in the loss of valuable farmland, polluted streams and ponds, and lost property values.

Soils in Litchfield display a broad range of characteristics. Topography's effect on soils results in shallow depth to bedrock occurring at higher elevations, while soils more susceptible to a high water table occur at lower elevations.

Generally, firm basal tills cover much of the town along the top and sides of ridges. Scattered throughout this till are soils with bedrock within 20 inches of the surface and bedrock outcroppings. Sands and gravels dominate the area around the Sportsman's Club through Potter

Town. Fine sands, silts and clays dominate the landscape along Pleasant Pond and Cobbosseecontee Stream. Historically, the best soils in town have been used for agriculture; however, these are also the best soils for sewage disposal. The distribution of soils specifically suited for farming is depicted on the *Farm and Forest Resource Map* at the end of this report.

Soils are typed and mapped by the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service. The NRCS also publishes ratings of soil suitability for various purposes, including agriculture and development. The Maine State Plumbing Code subsequently adapts these ratings to determine which soil types might not be suitable for subsurface wastewater disposal (septic systems).

Areas classified as having extremely low potential for development (new septic systems not permitted) comprise approximately 3% of the Town and are concentrated in three areas: Jimmy Pond, Ashford Brook, and Potters Brook. The balance of the community is equally weighted between soils classified with low potential for septic suitability (engineered systems permitted) and those where soils are suitable for septic systems.

The low potential soils can generally be found in the southern third of town, Purgatory and the area lying west of Stevenstown Road. Suitable soils are most predominant in an east-west band between Purgatory and Litchfield Plains.

In Litchfield Corner, the village is almost entirely surrounded by unsuitable soils, with small pockets of suitable soils. Therefore, expansion of development here should be closely monitored (despite it being the location of the two schools). Near Litchfield Plains, to the north lie suitable soils for septic systems. To the south lies the largest single area within the town considered to have extremely poor soils. At Batchelders Crossing, the village lies mostly on soils suitable for septic systems, with a band of very limited soils to the south. In Purgatory, the developed areas are almost entirely built on good soils, contrasting sharply with the surrounding soils, most of which have extremely low potential.

Most of the western shore of Pleasant Pond is on soils suitable for septic systems. Some pockets of low and extremely low potential exist; these are associated with the stream corridors of Potters and Magotty Meadow Brooks.

Where there are large areas with steep slopes (greater than 20 percent), development density should be low to accommodate increased erosion potential and reduced likelihood of finding suitable septic system sites. These areas are principally along the sides of Oak Hill, on the east and west sides of Springer Hill, along Potters and Dennis Brooks, and along the southeast shore of Woodbury Pond.

Wildlife Resources

Litchfield's fields, forest, streams and wetlands provide ideal habitat for big game, furbearers, waterfowl, and numerous "non-game" species. The State of Maine *Beginning with Habitat* program provides useful mapped and supporting information tying habitat quality to frequency of species.

There is a known correlation between the diversity of animal species and the size of the habitat necessary to support them. The *Critical Natural Resources Map* depicts several areas in town with extensive unbroken forest blocks suitable for large (or reclusive) species habitat.

The only rare animal species known to occur in Litchfield is the Bald Eagle. There are at least three bald eagle nests that have been observed in Litchfield – two on Pleasant Pond, one on Cobbossee Stream. Regulations call for a half-mile development buffer surrounding an active bald eagle nest.

Because Litchfield sits on the boundary of two distinct biological regions (boreal or Canadian zone to the north and northern temperate zone to the south), and has many lakes and ponds, it supports an abundance of waterfowl. Common inhabitants or migrating species include: black duck, mallard, wood duck, green and blue wing teal, ring-necked duck, and hooded merganser. Loons, a protected species, are less common, but are found on some town ponds and lakes.

Wetlands and Vernal Pools

An important habitat for waterfowl are the Town's wetlands. Each wetland type consists of plant, fish and wildlife associations specific to it.

Litchfield's lakes, ponds and wetlands that have value for waterfowl as nesting, migratory stopovers and for feeding have been mapped and recorded by the *Beginning with Habitat* program. These are depicted on the *Critical Natural Resources Map.* Table 4 below lists wetlands rated as "moderate" or "high" for the purpose of protection under Maine's Shoreland Zoning Law.

Table 4: Wetland Type and Rating for Waterfowl

NO.	Wetland Name	Wetland Type*	Use	Rating
7	Horseshoe Pond	Open Fresh Water	N,M	Moderate
9	Big Meadow	Shrub Swamp	N,M	Moderate
9a	Cobbosseecontee Stream	Deep Fresh Marsh	N.M	Moderate
10	Pt of Cobbossee St.	Deep Fresh Marsh	N.M.	Moderate
96	On Tacoma Lake	Deep Fresh Marsh	N,M	Moderate
98	Jimmie Pond & Area	Deep Fresh Marsh	N,F,M	Moderate
104a	Unnamed Wetland	Deep Fresh Marsh	N	Moderate
104	Adj. To Sand Pt.	Deep Fresh Marsh	N	Moderate
120	Inlet to Loon Pond	Deep Fresh Marsh	N	High
122P	Unnamed Wetland	Fresh Meadow	N	Moderate
126	Inlet to Pleasant Pond	Deep Fresh Marsh	N,M	Moderate

*Type: N-- Nesting M—Migration F—Feeding

Source: Maine Natural Areas Program

A more recent addition to the list of critical habitat areas is vernal pools. These are areas with only seasonal water, nonetheless critical in the life cycle of certain animal species. State law provides protection for "significant" vernal pools, but since these can only be identified for a short period in the spring, to date they have been identified only on a case to case basis.

One significant vernal pool has been identified in Litchfield, near the northern tip of Little Purgatory Pond. This is depicted on the *Critical Natural Resources Map.* Additional significant vernal pools may exist, and our local ordinance should require that identification of vernal pools be part of the development review process.

Rare and Exemplary Natural Features

The *Beginning with Habitat* Program identifies rare or endangered plant and animal species throughout the State. Species that are considered rare, not common in our region, endangered, threatened, or of Statewide importance are mapped. It is up to each town to take the appropriate steps to protect these resources from any negative impacts from development.

Rare plant species have been identified in Litchfield as follows:

1. Large White Trillium located in rich wood thickets and listed as critically imperiled in Maine because of extreme rarity have been located near Cobbossee Stream at the border with West Gardiner in the Purgatory Village Area.

2. Columbia Watermeal, a minute floating aquatic perennial, is among the world's smallest flowering plants. It is considered rare in Maine, but has been located in two areas of Cobbossee Stream along the border with West Gardiner.

3. Small Purple Bladderwort grows along ponds and river shores and is listed as critically imperiled because of rarity. It has been historically found in the town, however recent field observations have not located this species.

From time to time, the State identifies habitat areas described as "focus areas" or "critical natural communities." These may not contain any single rare or endangered species, but represent a rare combination of hydrology, topography and vegetation. According to the *Beginning with Habitat* Program, none of these areas have been identified in Litchfield.

Scenic Resources

From a planning perspective, scenic vistas are those that can be readily seen by the public usually from a public road or other public property. Most of the roadways in Town have ample scenic areas of both forest and open fields. Many of these views are provided courtesy of existing farm fields. Other scenic areas can be viewed from one of the many ponds or other waterways in Town. Due to the relatively low density of existing development, no scenic resources are in danger of degradation.

The Town's rural heritage has provided many scenic vistas throughout the community. For this reason, the Historical Society of Litchfield began conducting a scenic resource survey of the town. The society has since handed off the project to the conservation commission. Once completed, the survey should provide a resource for additional planning and action steps.

Resource Extraction

The town has a number of gravel pit operations which are busily meeting development demands for the surrounding region. Currently the Town regulates gravel pits and the State regulates some operations if they are a certain size. Some of the standards employed for gravel operations include requirements for operational impacts from as noise, traffic, and dust, and a plan for closure and reclamation. The standards are part of the Land Use Ordinance, and apply not only to new operations but to ones already in operation.

The Town of Litchfield also owns a 58-acre pit which has ceased operations. The conservation commission has developed a plan for reclamation and has begun cleanup efforts but lacks funding for a comprehensive reclamation.

Community Protections for Natural Resources

The town has maintained its popularity over the past years. New housing has been built throughout town, and up-development or seasonal conversions have been popular along lakes. All types of development have an impact upon natural resources and Litchfield is no exception. What type of impact is of course the critical question and it is one that the Town can influence in a positive manner. The Town has engaged several tools for the purpose of protecting its natural resource base.

Conservation Organizations:

The Litchfield Conservation Commission is charged with promoting the sustainable use of our natural resources through sound principles, so that future generations may enjoy the benefits of our wildlife, water and the land conservation. The commission was formed in April 2001, based in part on a recommendation of the 2000 Comprehensive Plan. The commission's current activities include walking trail maintenance, forestry projects, milfoil training and education, the loon committee and roadside cleanup. The commission has begun work on a town-wide conservation plan. It has joined the Maine Association of Conservation Commissions, a state-wide, non-profit organization of more than 40 town conservation commissions.

The Cobbossee Watershed District is centered in Winthrop but provides services throughout the region, including Litchfield. It is described more thoroughly in the Water Resources Chapter. The Kennebec Land Trust is active in southern Kennebec County. There are three conservation easements in Litchfield.

The Kennebec Land Trust operates regionally and has a presence in Litchfield. Three large parcels have been acquired by the land trust, and have public access rights.

Land Use Regulation

Litchfield has developed a number of ordinances designed to limit the impacts of development on natural resources. These ordinances are described more fully in Chapter 13 (Land Use). They are:

- Land Use Ordinance: This ordinance regulates development generally. The ordinance contains provisions protecting lake water and groundwater, limiting impacts on critical natural areas, wetlands, and deer wintering areas, and managing stormwater and erosion impacts. The ordinance also contains specific regulations for cell towers, junkyards, and gravel pits (among others.)
- Subdivision Ordinance: This ordinance regulates the division of land and improvements made to support the divisions. It regulates impacts (primarily from road-building) related to erosion control, stormwater management, groundwater protection, and wildlife habitat.
- Shoreland Zoning Ordinance: This ordinance follows with State requirements in regulating land use within districts established along water bodies within the town. Since Litchfield has a large number of waterbodies and very active development along them, this ordinance accounts for a lot of the permitting activity in town.
- Floodplain Management Ordinance: Litchfield has adopted the current version of the federally-mandated floodplain management ordinance, which regulates development within identified floodplains. Litchfield's broader flood zones tend to be in undeveloped parts of the town, and there have been few flood zone issues.

Issues for Natural Resources:

Although critical natural resources within Litchfield are fairly rare, the overall natural resource base is strong and healthy. Regulatory protections are in place for a range of resource assets, including specifically critical natural areas and habitat for threatened or endangered species. It may be possible that establishing a "critical rural area(s)" within the context of the land use ordinance may help to focus protections.

Over the next decade, the greatest impact on the resource base will come with the growth associated with housing construction. Construction will continue to eat away at green space, although it is somewhat more likely to be sited on old farm fields and pasture land. Although regulations are in place, continued vigilance by the Code Enforcement Officer will be necessary to maintain our high standards.

Achievements:

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan recommended a general strengthening of protections for critical natural resources in Litchfield. The enactment of the Land Use Ordinance in 2004 extended performance standards to all development that had previously only been in place for subdivisions or in shoreland zones. At the specific injunction of the plan, the ordinance also

incorporated aquifer protection, phosphorous management, scenic areas, and gravel pits. Along with these regulatory improvements, the Town has increased Code Enforcement training.

The plan stimulated creation of the Litchfield Conservation Commission. The plan also recommended continued cooperation with Cobbossee Watershed District, which has been institutionalized. The plan recommended pursuit of grants for local resource identification and protection. These grants are rare; the Town has not made efforts to apply for them but remains open to the possibility.

Policies and Strategies for Natural Resources:

Policies:

1. Continue to protect the natural resource assets of the community through both regulatory and educational mechanisms.

2. Continue to work with state and regional groups and neighboring communities to extend protection of important natural resources beyond the boundaries of Litchfield.

Recommended Actions:

A. The Planning Board should continue to monitor state and federal requirements for floodplain management, shoreland zoning, and protection of critical natural resources and to incorporate these requirements into land use regulation as necessary.

B. The Code Enforcement Officer should be trained on new techniques and engineering practices that will better protect natural resources, and will advise the Planning Board on their suitability for incorporation in land use regulations.

C. The Planning Board should utilize *Beginning with Habitat* maps and materials and local information to create and define the boundaries of a Critical Rural Area. The board should consider whether this designation should warrant a further restriction of uses and standards than what is currently permitted in the rural area.

D. All town boards should continue to cooperate with regional entities such as Cobbossee Watershed District and Kennebec Land Trust to promote conservation practices, encourage conservation easements and other protection mechanisms, and improve educational outreach.

E. The Town Office should include information on resource protection and water quality awareness with its welcome packets for new residents and run periodic articles in the *Sodalite* on conservation and resource protection issues.

F. The Conservation Commission should seek outside funding to expand its activities.

G. The Selectmen should dedicate the resources necessary to continue restoration of the former town gravel pit according to the 2010 reclamation plan.

8. Water Resources

State Goal: *To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas.*

Our Top Recommendations:

A. The Town should continue to participate as an active member of the Cobbossee Watershed District and the Four Towns Watershed Association, and support Friends of Cobbossee Watershed.

B. The Town Office should procure and provide educational materials on water quality and lake protection and distribute them through the Code Enforcement Officer and town welcome packets and through periodic articles in the *Sodalite.*

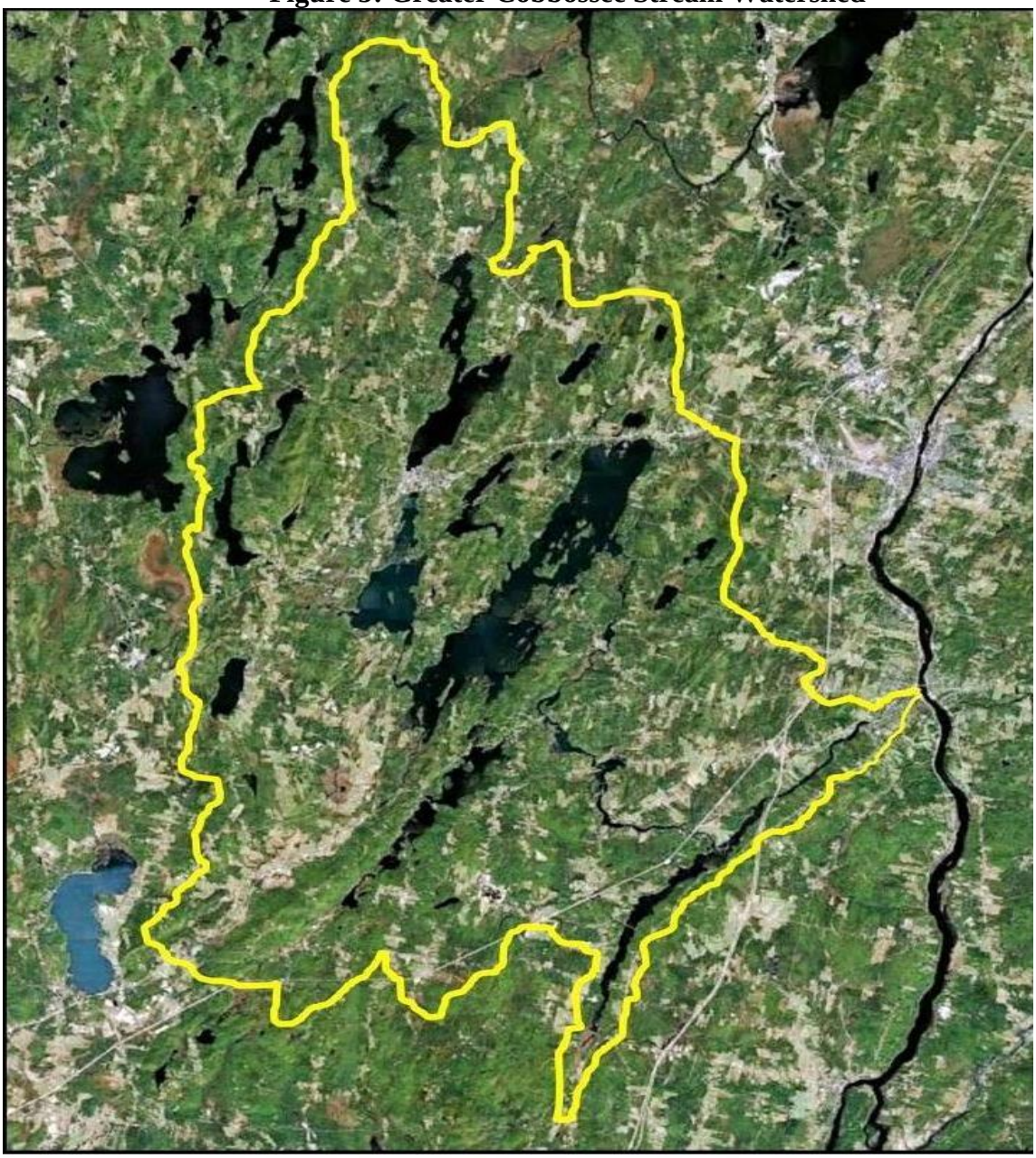
C. The Town Office should procure and distribute educational materials concerning the high risk of contaminants, especially arsenic, in well water and encourage the regular testing of water for arsenic, radon, and phosphorous.

Surface Water

Lakes and streams are an essential part of Litchfield's landscape and economy. These surface water resources contribute to the town's rural character by their natural beauty and open space. As public waters, they provide recreational opportunities for all of Litchfield's residents. They yield a positive economic influence directly through tax revenues from shorefront properties, as well as generally attracting people to Litchfield as a place to live or visit. The surface waters are home to many species of fish and other aquatic animals and plants.

The majority of the surface water in Litchfield is part of the Cobbosseecontee Stream watershed, a 217 square mile area stretching from Mount Vernon in the north to Bowdoinham in the south. Water from upstream lakes flows into Cobbossee Lake and then into Cobbossee Stream. The stream runs through Litchfield for about seven miles and then continues on to the Kennebec River in Gardiner. The map below shows the outline of the entire Cobbossee Stream watershed, with Litchfield located in the southern portion of the watershed.

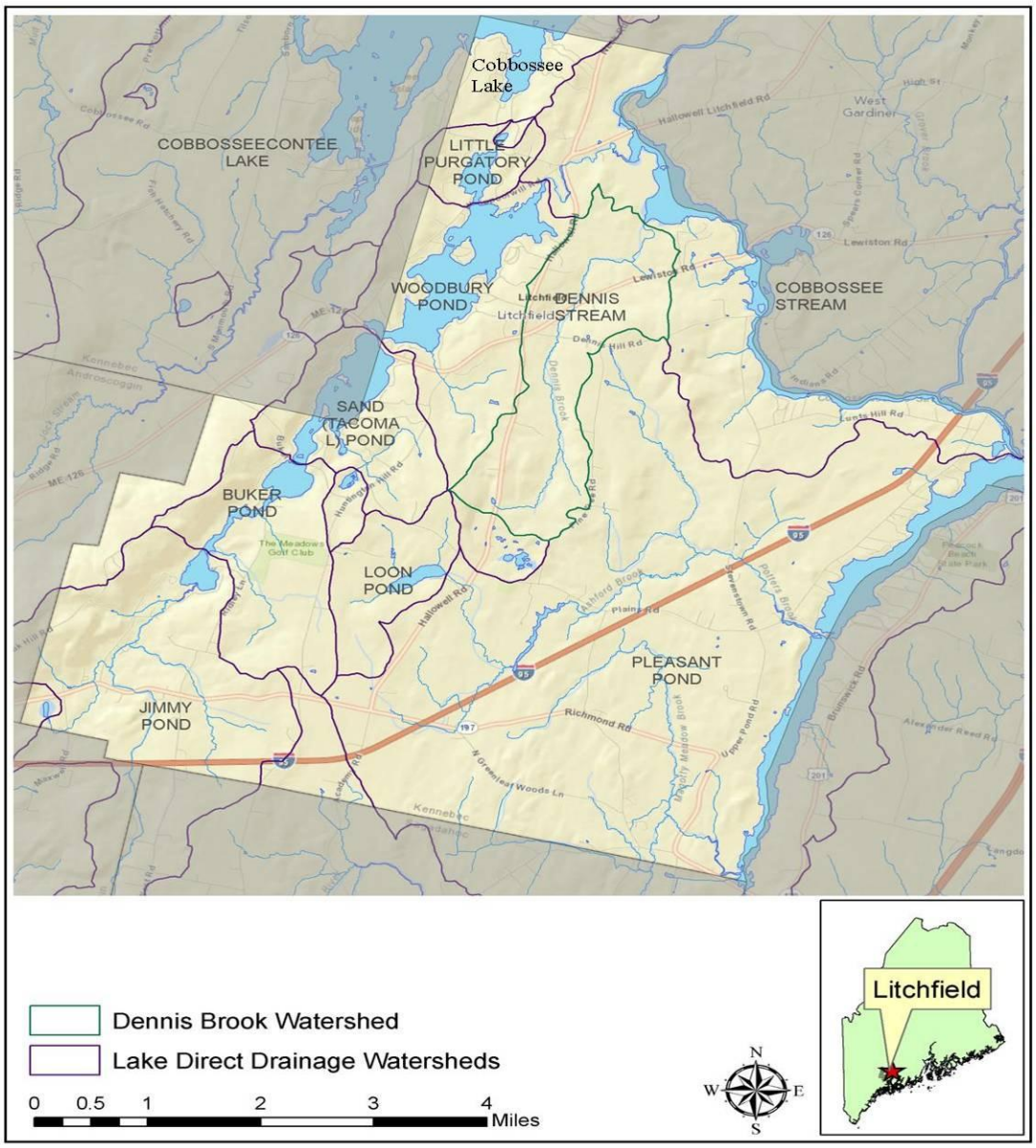
Figure 5: Greater Cobbossee Stream Watershed



Cobbosseecontee (Cobbossee) Stream Watershed
Boundary by Cobbossee Watershed District

Although the surface waters of Litchfield are part of the larger watershed, each water body has its own area of land that drains directly into it, known as its direct watershed. The next map focuses on the town of Litchfield, shown in light yellow, and outlines the direct watersheds of each lake or pond in Litchfield, and the direct watershed of Dennis Brook, which does not drain into a lake or pond. Each of the water bodies is described in the following paragraphs.

Figure 6: Drainages in Litchfield



Watershed Boundaries for Surface Waters in Litchfield, Maine
map provided by Maine Department of Environmental Protection

Cobbossee Lake

Cobbossee Lake, with a surface area greater than 5,000 acres, is the largest lake in the Cobbossee Watershed, although only a little over 100 acres of lake surface lies in Litchfield. The Cobbossee Lake shoreline in Litchfield is developed with seasonal and year round homes, with a fairly high density. Cobbossee Lake is a highly scenic lake used for recreation, especially boating and fishing, and is a nationally known bass fishing lake.

Cobbossee Lake is a great example of the importance of strategic planning and comprehensive strategies to protect water quality. Cobbossee Lake was once a clear lake with a cold water fishery, but by the late 1960's, algae blooms appeared, the lake became depleted of oxygen in the deeper waters, and salmon and other cold water fish had disappeared.

The polluted state of the lake was a major impetus for forming the Cobbossee Watershed District (CWD) in the 70's. CWD would use a comprehensive watershed approach to the water quality problems. It took years of work by the Maine DEP and the CWD to reduce phosphorus runoff into Cobbossee Lake. Phosphorous comes from agricultural practices, from sewage discharged further upstream, and from roads and development in the watershed. New development in the watershed was either required or encouraged to incorporate phosphorus runoff design to limit water quality degradation. CWD worked with local officials, including the Town of Litchfield, to recognize the benefit water quality.

In 2006, Cobbossee Lake was removed from the State's list of impaired waterbodies due to its improved water quality. However, the lake is not yet fully restored, and could decline again in the absence of continued protection efforts. In much of the 1970s, 1980's, and early 1990's, water clarity was only fair, with severe late summer algae blooms. Water clarity has now improved to what CWD rates moderately good, and has remained stable. Moderate algae blooms usually occur around the end of summer, which means the lake usually does not meet CWD water quality goals, despite its turnaround. However, in 2012, the average water clarity for the open water season was 5.2 meters (17 ft) – the best recorded for Cobbossee Lake. Phosphorus concentrations have declined from those measured twenty and thirty years ago.

Cobbossee Lake may be on the edge of continued improvement, yet at the same time, it wouldn't take much to cause a decline. The lake definitely remains a high priority for protection.

Cobbossee Lake provides a fishery for both coldwater and warm-water species but is primarily known for its outstanding smallmouth and largemouth bass. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) routinely stocks Cobbossee Lake with brown and brook trout. Illegally introduced northern pike and black crappie are also present, as they are in many of the local lakes. The loon population is substantial on Cobbossee Lake.

Invasive aquatic plant prevention efforts focus on courtesy boat inspections at the Cobbossee Lake boat launch in Monmouth, organized by the Friends of Cobbossee Watershed (FOCW). Cobbossee Lake is not on the DEP list of infested waterbodies.

<u>The "Tacoma Lakes"</u>:

The Tacoma Lakes are a series of interconnected ponds, each with unique water quality and watershed characteristics, but which together comprise a substantial section of town that offers scenic beauty, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat. Steep slopes throughout the Tacoma Lakes chain contribute to the scenic beauty but also present challenges to environmentally sound development.

Jimmy Pond

Jimmy Pond is the upper end of the chain. It is a small pond, slightly less than 50 acres in surface area, with an outlet stream that flows through an extensive wetland until it reaches Buker Pond. Slightly less than half of the shoreline of Jimmy Pond is developed. Homes are clustered along the eastern and southeastern shore. The remaining shoreline is wooded. The pond is used for recreation, including fishing and waterfowl hunting, on a somewhat limited basis due to public boat launch access only available on lakes further downstream.

The water quality of Jimmy Pond has been regularly monitored since 1993, with limited data available as far back as 1976. Water clarity is moderately good: for the twenty-year period 1993 through 2012, it averaged 4.6 meters (15 ft). The average water clarity for the first decade is higher than more recent one; overall there has been a slight decline. Moderately high concentrations of algae are found in upper waters from time to time. Total phosphorus levels are usually below the concentrations needed for algae to reach bloom conditions, although an occasional high value has been measured.

Monitoring for invasive aquatic plants, such as non-native milfoil, has been conducted by citizen volunteers trained by the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program. No invasive plants have been identified to date. Prevention efforts focus on courtesy boat inspections at the Woodbury Pond boat launch, organized by Friends of Cobbossee Watershed (FOCW) and Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society (TLIS).

Past efforts to protect Jimmy Pond's water quality include a major camp road improvement project conducted by CWD and property owners to reduce erosion and sedimentation. Ongoing efforts include Litchfield's ordinance provisions requiring that phosphorus controls be included in certain types of land development. Given the observed sediment loading to the pond after large rainstorms, additional soil conservation and runoff control in the Jimmy Pond watershed would be advisable.

The large stretch of undeveloped shoreline and the amount of undeveloped area in the Jimmy Pond watershed provide opportunities to protect Jimmy Pond water quality through future development management, as well as conservation actions. Figure 6 showed that Jimmy Pond has a very large watershed in some of Litchfield's prime development areas, with the potential for overwhelming the ability of the pond to assimilate pollutants. Protecting Jimmy Pond from degradation is an important step to protecting Buker, Sand, and Woodbury Ponds.

Buker Pond

Buker Pond is the second in the Tacoma Lakes series. It is a small pond, at 77 acres. It receives inflow from Jimmy Pond and the intervening wetland. Much of the shoreline is developed, although the eastern shore is heavily forested. The pond gets moderate recreational use. Public boat access is from the launch at the north end of Woodbury Pond.

The water quality of Buker Pond has been regularly monitored since 1987, with limited monitoring data available for prior years. Average water clarity in Buker Pond is good – 5.0

meters (16 ft) over the past 26 years, and it has remained rather stable. Total phosphorus levels are usually 12 ppb or less, below the concentrations needed for algae to reach bloom conditions.

Buker Pond provides a suitable habitat for warm-water fish species (primarily smallmouth and largemouth bass, white perch, and chain pickerel). Though not stocked directly, brown and brook trout are occasionally caught.

Examples of past efforts to protect Buker Pond's water quality include CWD's extensive review and recommendations, on behalf of the Town, regarding plans for two large developments - a golf course and a natural gas pipeline - that could have had a detrimental impact on the water quality of Buker Pond, and in the case of the pipeline, of Jimmy Pond. No invasive aquatic plants have been identified to date.

Sand Pond

Sand Pond is third from the top in the Tacoma Lakes chain, separated from Buker Pond by a narrow isthmus. The pond is 262 acres in area and is the deepest of the Tacoma Lakes at 87 feet. Most of the shoreline is developed. The public boat launch on neighboring Woodbury Pond provides boaters access to Sand Pond.

The CWD began regular water quality monitoring on Sand Pond in 1988. Water quality is very good, based on low concentrations of chlorophyll-a, moderate concentrations of phosphorus, and very good water clarity -- the three main parameters used to measure a lake's status. The average phosphorus concentration in Sand Pond since 1988 is 7 parts per billion (ppb). Water clarity has averaged 6.8 meters (22 ft) Secchi disk transparency for the past 25 years. Sand Pond often ranks as one of the clearest lakes in the Cobbossee Watershed.

However, Sand Pond is not immune to water quality degradation. Monitoring in June 1998, after 8+ inches of rain, showed a temporary but noticeable impact to water quality. CWD surveyed camp roads and found eroding sites that could lead to sedimentation throughout the watersheds of all of the Tacoma Lakes. Subsequent projects repaired or improved conditions on several, but not all, roads. Careful planning and practices are necessary to preserve the overall good quality of Sand Pond.

Sand Pond provides a fishery for both coldwater and warm-water species (primarily largemouth and smallmouth bass, brown and brook trout, and white perch). The trout population in Sand Pond is maintained through the Maine IFW's stocking program. No invasive aquatic plants have been identified in Sand Pond.

Little Purgatory Pond

Little Purgatory Pond is a small and shallow pond – 45 acres of surface area and 19 feet deep – that flows directly into Woodbury Pond. The shoreline is partially developed. Recreational use is mostly by pond residents, as there is no developed boat access site, although small boats are sometimes put in from the roadside.

CWD began monitoring Little Purgatory Pond in 2000, although some prior monitoring was conducted, and 15 years of data are available. Average May-September water clarity is moderately good, at 4.7 meters (15 feet). Algae blooms have not been recorded. Total phosphorus data is somewhat limited, but ranges from 10 to 15 ppb on average. More attention is warranted for protection efforts for Little Purgatory Pond. A limited survey for erosion problems has been conducted but could be updated.

Little Purgatory Pond provides a suitable habitat for warm-water fish species (primarily smallmouth and largemouth bass, perch, and chain pickerel). Brown trout and brook trout are sometimes caught. No invasive aquatic plants have been identified in Little Purgatory Pond.

Woodbury Pond

Woodbury Pond is the lowest and largest of the Tacoma Lakes, with an area of 435 acres. It is the second deepest in the chain, about 62 feet. The Tacoma Lakes Dam is located at the northeast end of Woodbury Pond, and from there water flows into a stream that discharges to Cobbossee Stream. A well-maintained public boat launch is located on Woodbury Pond a short distance from the dam, and this access allows for considerable public recreation on Woodbury other lakes in the chain. The shoreline is substantially developed.

Water clarity in Woodbury Pond is very good, with a 25-year average Secchi disk transparency of 6.4 meters (21 feet). CWD began monitoring Woodbury Pond regularly in 1988. Since then, average yearly water clarity has remained stable except for lower measurements in 1989. In some years, as much as 8 meters of transparency has been measured. Algae blooms have not been a problem in Woodbury Pond. A non-blooming type of algae known as metaphyton was observed in many lakes in 2012, including Woodbury Pond. Phosphorus concentrations average 8 ppb, which is below that needed to support algae blooms.

Woodbury Pond provides a fishery for both coldwater and warm-water species (primarily largemouth and smallmouth bass, brown and brook trout, and white perch). The trout population in Woodbury Pond is maintained through the Maine Dept. IFW's stocking program.

Several Litchfield citizens actively participate in plant surveys of the pond. No invasive plants have been identified; however in 2010 CWD discovered invasive variable leaf milfoil in the stream below the dam. In response, FOCW organized citizen volunteers to remove plants by hand and place mats on the stream bottom to limit plant growth. Courtesy boat inspections are conducted at the Woodbury Pond boat launch, organized by FOCW and TLIS, with financial support from the Town.

In 1998, the CWD conducted a road survey for the Tacoma Lakes chain. CWD staff surveyed for erosion and runoff problems that could be impacting water quality and developed general recommendations on how to mitigate the problem sites. Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservation District obtained a grant to fix some of these problems. Other projects to protect Woodbury Pond include CWD review of a large subdivision in the western part of the watershed, and technical assistance with a multi-agency project that included the Maine DOT to

implement best management practices to control runoff from a section of the Hallowell Neck Road. FOCW has installed some erosion control projects at individual properties on the pond.

Loon Pond

Loon Pond is a small and shallow pond, mostly undeveloped and wooded, or wetland, with development limited to only a couple of seasonal homes and some farmland at the north end. Recreational use is low. The pond is part of the greater watershed of Pleasant Pond, draining into Ashford Brook, a tributary to Potters Brook.

CWD has monitored the pond once each summer in eight of the last fifteen years. Water clarity has been moderately good, except in 2009 when it was rated as fair. Average transparency is 4.4 meters (14 ft). It is possible that Loon Pond will experience algae blooms, based on phosphorus concentrations and oxygen depletion. Phosphorus samples collected in seven of the years from 1998 to 2012 averaged 13 parts per billion, with levels measuring 18 and 19 ppb in two of the years (the goal is less than 15 ppb). There is very little development in the watershed of Loon Pond so the future of Loon Pond water quality is highly dependent on good agricultural practices. An opportunity exists to plan for the protection of Loon Pond.

Typically there is no oxygen in Loon Pond waters at depths of 10 feet or greater in August. Loon Pond provides a suitable habitat for warm-water fish with the principal species being largemouth bass and chain pickerel.

Pleasant Pond

Pleasant Pond is a long, narrow waterbody formed by the damming of Cobbossee Stream in Gardiner in the late 1800's. The pond has two distinct sections, a smaller shallow basin (Upper Pleasant) that runs from the mouth of Magotty Meadow Stream to the mouth of Potters Brook, and a deeper main basin that stretches from the Thorofare Bridge to Cobbossee Stream. The combined area is 1,055 acres, with the main basin being 759 acres. The pond is shallow, with the main basin at 30 feet and the upper basin only 12 feet. The watershed to the east side of the pond is steep. The direct watershed of Pleasant Pond is very large, covering almost half of Litchfield. The shoreline is extensively developed along the main basin. The shoreline of the upper basin is much less developed, and is partially protected by a conservation easement and Resource Protection zoning. The pond is popular for recreation, especially boating and fishing. A public boat launch at the Thorofare Road provides boat access.

The water quality of Pleasant Pond is below that of other Litchfield lakes and below average for the lakes of Maine. The pond is eutrophic, meaning overly enriched with nutrients, resulting in excessive algae growth and oxygen depletion. Average water clarity measured in the main basin fluctuates between fair and poor, with the recent 10-year average transparency at 2.8 meters (9 feet). Water clarity is sometimes moderately good in spring and early summer, but usually results in algae blooms by July or August, and often is reduced to less than 2 meters, a level considered severe by DEP. Total phosphorus concentrations average more than 20 parts per billion, more than enough to support abundant algae growth. CWD and KSWCD prepared a Watershed Plan for Pleasant Pond that sets an interim goal of 18 ppb to be reached by 2018.

Monitoring of the upper basin is much more recent, and indicates that it also has elevated phosphorus levels, though not to the same degree as the main basin. Algae blooms do not occur every year, and when they do, the blooms are often of shorter duration. Water clarity is often measured to the bottom of the shallow upper basin, and at those times the pond appears very clear. Reduction in clarity is also observed after heavy rains.

There are several factors that influence the water quality of Pleasant Pond. The large size of its direct watershed means that there is substantial land area generating non-point source pollutants to the pond. Agriculture in the watershed, especially historically, has yielded significant phosphorus loading to the pond. Many areas of the watershed have soils with poor infiltration and more silt and clay than in the other lake watersheds, and sediments covering the bottom of the pond are phosphorus-rich. Best management practices have reduced this load.

In addition to its large direct watershed, Pleasant Pond receives inflow from Cobbossee Stream. Fortunately, water quality has improved in some upstream lakes and cleaner water is flowing into Cobbossee Stream.

Efforts to improve Pleasant Pond water quality have been ongoing since the 1970's. Many grants have been obtained and many agencies have worked with the farmers, who have also invested labor and money in agricultural non-point source control.

Erosion and sedimentation from roads has also been a focus. Camp and public roads have been improved to reduce washouts or increase retention. Areas deserving of improvement have exceeded funds. Projects to stabilize the shoreline with stone and vegetation have been completed at several properties in the last decade. Although the overall phosphorus input from non-point sources has been reduced, phosphorus levels are still too high. Education, planning, and local and state requirements that result in environmentally sound development will help protect any gains made in eliminating non-point source pollution from existing land uses.

Variable leaf water milfoil, an invasive aquatic plant, populates both basins of Pleasant Pond. It is widespread in the upper basin, including near the public boat ramp. Inspectors hired by the FOCW inspect boats leaving the Pleasant Pond boat launches in an effort to prevent these plants from spreading to other lakes. FOCW conducts two major projects to reduce invasive plant growth: volunteers place mats on the pond bottom in some infested areas to curtail plant growth, and plants are removed from the pond by means of a diver assisted suction harvester. DEP, FOCW, and Four Towns Watershed have all been financially involved in the aquatic plant management plan for Pleasant Pond, and the Town of Litchfield has provided financial support.

The preceding analysis clearly indicates that an ongoing commitment to education, water quality monitoring, land use planning, best management practices to control erosion and phosphorus runoff from land use activities, regulation of new development, and permanent land protection are important tools to prevent water quality deterioration in Litchfield's lakes.

Cobbossee Stream

Cobbossee Stream begins at the Cobbossee Lake Dam in Manchester and discharges into the Kennebec River in Gardiner. Litchfield borders the stream for about seven miles. The stream segment in Litchfield has areas of wetland that provide good habitat for birds and aquatic species, and development along the shoreline is light. The Litchfield section of stream is navigable, and recreational uses include waterfowl hunting, fishing, and motorized and non-motorized boating. Scenic beauty abounds while traversing the water.

Cobbossee Stream is designated Class B by DEP, one of four classes for Maine rivers and streams, relating to dissolved oxygen, bacteria, habitat, and aquatic life. Most of DEP's monitoring of Cobbossee Stream has been conducted at the lower section in Gardiner. DEP has placed Cobbossee Stream in a category 2, which means it attains some of its designated uses.

Some water quality concerns for Cobbossee Stream are similar to lakes. Erosion, sediment, and phosphorus runoff are issues, although to a somewhat lesser extent. During summer low flows, algae blooms can develop. Sediment from erosion can get deposited in areas of the stream that are important habitat for fish and other aquatic life. Also, Cobbossee Stream influences the water quality of Pleasant Pond at certain times, so maintaining good water quality in the stream will be beneficial to Pleasant Pond.

Actions to protect Cobbossee Stream consist of four decades of non-point source work and treatments to upstream lakes by CWD. These have resulted in higher quality water flows from Cobbossee Lake into Cobbossee Stream. Grant projects by CWD and KCSWCD in the Tacoma Lakes watershed also benefit Cobbossee Stream. Future work to protect Cobbossee Stream should include the continuation of work within lake watersheds, as well as erosion and sediment control efforts in the Dennis Stream watershed and in the direct watershed.

Invasive variable leaf water milfoil has been identified in several locations along the stream. FOCW has begun control operations. According to DEP, these efforts should reduce the spread of milfoil to other areas of the stream, but will not eradicate it. There are opportunities to do more to control the problem, if funding could be increased.

Water Resource Organizations

Several local and regional organizations focus their efforts on the well-being of Litchfield's lakes, ponds, and streams.

Cobbossee Watershed District

The Cobbossee Watershed District (CWD) was authorized by the Maine Legislature in 1971 as Maine's first regional lake management district. The Town of Litchfield voted to join the District in 1972. In 1988, the Tacoma Lakes were included in CWD's charter. Since then CWD has been very active monitoring water quality and conducting lake protection projects for the Tacoma Lakes as well as Cobbossee Lake and Pleasant Pond. Litchfield pays an annual membership assessment.

The District's mission is to protect, improve, conserve and manage the 28 lakes, ponds and streams of the Cobbossee watershed. CWD carries out this responsibility by monitoring water quality regularly on more than twenty lakes in the watershed and working with public and private landowners to voluntarily implement pollution reduction on roads, shorefront properties, farms, and other lands in the watershed. CWD provides technical assistance to local planning boards, code enforcement officers, and developers. CWD also procures grant funding to assist municipalities and property owners with lake protection and restoration projects, including in-lake treatments, and coordinates water level management throughout the watershed to minimize flooding, provide recreational water levels, and protect aquatic life.

Friends of Cobbossee Watershed

The Friends of Cobbossee Watershed (FOCW) was formed in 2001 as a non-profit, citizen-based effort to complement the Cobbossee Watershed District's mission. A strong focus on education includes the watershed science program that features classroom and field based lessons for students in grades preK-12. A summer Youth Conservation Corps program provides education, technical assistance and labor for landowners' erosion and pollution control projects. A major program to keep infestations of invasive aquatic plants from entering non-infested waters is the Courtesy Boat Inspector program at boat launches, and, recently an invasive plant removal program has been implemented on Pleasant Pond and Cobbossee Stream.

Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society

The Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society (TLIS) helps raise funds for inspection of boats and ponds as well as education and environmental protection. Particularly important is protection from invasive plants, exotic fish, and nutrient loading. The Society also assists the Tacoma Lakes damkeeper, who maintains the water levels in the Tacoma Lakes. The Society is a not for profit lake association, depending upon volunteers for all their activities.

Four Towns Watershed Association

The Four Towns Watershed Association (FTWA) was founded in 1997 in an effort to build a coalition to save the New Mills Dam, the impoundment which helps maintain water levels for Pleasant Pond and Horseshoe Pond in West Gardiner. The four town coalition is comprised of Litchfield, Richmond, Gardiner and West Gardiner. Beyond the successful work in saving and maintaining New Mills Dam, the effort grew into an active association that has completed several water quality and invasive prevention and mitigations initiatives over the past fifteen years.

Kennebec County Soil & Water Conservation District

KCSWCD is one of sixteen soil and water conservation districts in Maine working on local natural resource problems. Districts provide training, technical assistance, and education in natural resource management. KCSWCD offers technical assistance for a fee to landowners, road associations, lake associations, and municipalities. KCSWCD has worked in partnership

with CWD, TLIS, and FTWA, and has conducted non-point source pollution projects in Cobbossee Lake, the Tacoma Lakes, and Pleasant Pond watersheds.

Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program

The Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (MVLMP, or VLMP) oversees a statewide network of citizen volunteer monitors. Maine VLMP trains, certifies, and provides technical support to volunteers who monitor water quality and screen lakes for invasive aquatic plants and animals. Formed in 1971, Maine's VLMP is the longest standing citizen lake monitoring program in the country. While volunteer monitors provide the only data for some lakes in Maine, CWD provides most of the data for the lakes in Litchfield and the rest of the Cobbossee watershed. VLMP monitors collect water clarity data on several of Litchfield's lakes: Cobbossee, Woodbury, Sand, Buker, and Jimmy; CWD collects data for other indicators besides water clarity, and compiles all the data collected to evaluate the condition of Litchfield's lakes. CWD submits water quality data to the Maine VLMP and Maine DEP for inclusion in the statewide database.

VLMP conducts training and coordinates data collection regarding invasive plants, and in Litchfield, citizen volunteers have patrolled the lake waters as well as Cobbossee Stream, identifying native plants and looking for invasive species.

Threats to Surface Water Quality:

There is a wide range of water quality among Litchfield's lakes and ponds. Some of the variation is due to physical factors such as lake size and depth, the flushing rate, and the watershed size and soil type. However, watershed land uses also strongly influence water quality. Planning for new development, agriculture, forestry, and other watershed activities, must include water pollution prevention strategies. Existing land uses can also be evaluated for ways to implement practices to reduce pollution.

Phosphorus is the pollutant that has caused the most degradation of Litchfield's lakes and streams and it remains the primary threat to Litchfield's surface waters. Excessive phosphorus causes blooms of microscopic algae, called phytoplankton. Both Pleasant Pond and Cobbossee Lake in Litchfield have experienced degraded water quality from phosphorus. Excessive phosphorus in streams causes growth of different types of algae which have similar effects.

Phosphorus is found in fertilizer, animal and human waste, soil, and pesticides and herbicides from farming, forestry, and lawn care products. Protection of water quality involves minimizing usage of products containing the pollutant as well as installing measures to prevent the pollutant from entering waterbodies. Another major focus is infiltrating or treating runoff from land use activities to remove phosphorous before it can reach water. Vegetative buffers are among the most effective practices to reduce pollution.

Agriculture is part of Litchfield's history and character; therefore, much work has been done to balance agriculture with water quality protection to the benefit of both. The Town and

regional and local groups have worked to prevent and reduce phosphorus runoff to Litchfield's lakes and streams.

All of the lake watersheds in Litchfield are on the DEP's list "Direct Watersheds of Lakes Most at Risk from New Development", either because the lake is in violation of its class GPA water quality standards, such as Pleasant Pond, or, because the lake is sensitive to degradation. Litchfield's Land Use Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance include standards for erosion and stormwater control and phosphorus management. Consideration could be given to the idea of including some BMPs as part of building permit requirements, or of requiring Planning Board approval of single family dwellings in specified critical areas. Shoreland zoning requirements help balance shoreline development and water quality.

In the last decade, invasive aquatic plants became a new threat to surface waters. Unlike native aquatic plants, these plants spread rapidly and replace native plant populations. Pleasant Pond is one of the few ponds in Maine infested with variable leaf water milfoil, and Cobbossee Stream is infested as well. There is a serious concern about invasive plants being transported from Pleasant Pond or Cobbossee Stream to other waterbodies by plant pieces carried on boat motors or trailers. Multiple organizations have cooperated and coordinated to inspect watercraft moving onto and off of lakes, but the challenge is to provide enough hours, as it has not been possible to have inspectors on duty at all hours of the boating season. The Town of Litchfield and the lake associations help financially support FOCW's boat inspection program.

Groundwater Resources:

Aquifers are important because they are the areas where surface water and rain water enter the ground to recharge the ground water system, which in Litchfield is the almost-exclusive source of drinking water. Unfortunately, pollutants such as paint thinners, oils and salts also enter the ground water.

According the Maine Department of Conservation and Maine Geological Survey, Litchfield has two significant aquifers. These are shown on the *Water Resources Map.*

The West Litchfield Aquifer

This aquifer is situated at the foot of Oak Hill at the corner of the Richmond and Wentzell Roads and probably feeds streams which are tributaries of Jimmy Pond and from there supply the Tacoma Lakes system. The size of this aquifer (33 acres) and the fact that it is heavily developed combine to make is the less important of the two.

The Central Litchfield Aquifer

At the foot of Springer Hill and lying east of the Hallowell Road from the Plains Road to the Transfer Station is the Central Litchfield Aquifer which consists of 429 acres of glacial sand and gravel. Water flows eastward, presumably starting with runoff from the east side of Springer Hill, passes through sand and gravel, then appears as streams just west of the Pine Tree Road. At

the center of the aquifer, water surfaces as ponds in the former gravel pits, Mud Pond being the only naturally occurring one. The aquifer may also supply the Mill Pond and Dennis Brook.

In a typical situation the water table is level perched on bedrock. However, in the case of the Central Litchfield Aquifer, the bedrock continues to slope and as the water passes through the gravel it flows downhill. Therefore the water table is sloped except where it rises above the surface of the gravel. The ponds in the former gravel pit area are successively lower west to east.

In 1976 the U.S. Geological Survey drilled a test well at the "uphill" (west) side of the aquifer at the Fairgrounds near the Town Office. Since that time water levels have varied about 11 feet. This range is dependent on precipitation levels, but because of the time required for the water to move through the gravel, there is a delay factor. Highest levels are typically reached in the spring. This causes some of the ponds in the former gravel pit to overflow their banks inundating some otherwise dry areas and causes a moderate increase in the output of the streams which originate at the east edge of the aquifer. The streams flow continually year round, even when the water table is at its lowest.

By good fortune over half of the area of the aquifer is protected in some way or at low risk of damaging development. The following table and figure shows the characteristics of land holdings over the aquifer. Several tax parcels (municipal and conservation) have been subdivided for this analysis because of differing use.

Table 5: Ownership Categories over the Central Litchfield Aquifer

	Number of Parcels	Acreage
Residential	29	168
Commercial	2	5
Organizations	4	87
Municipal	8	99
Conservation	3	70
TOTAL	46	429

Source: Town Office records

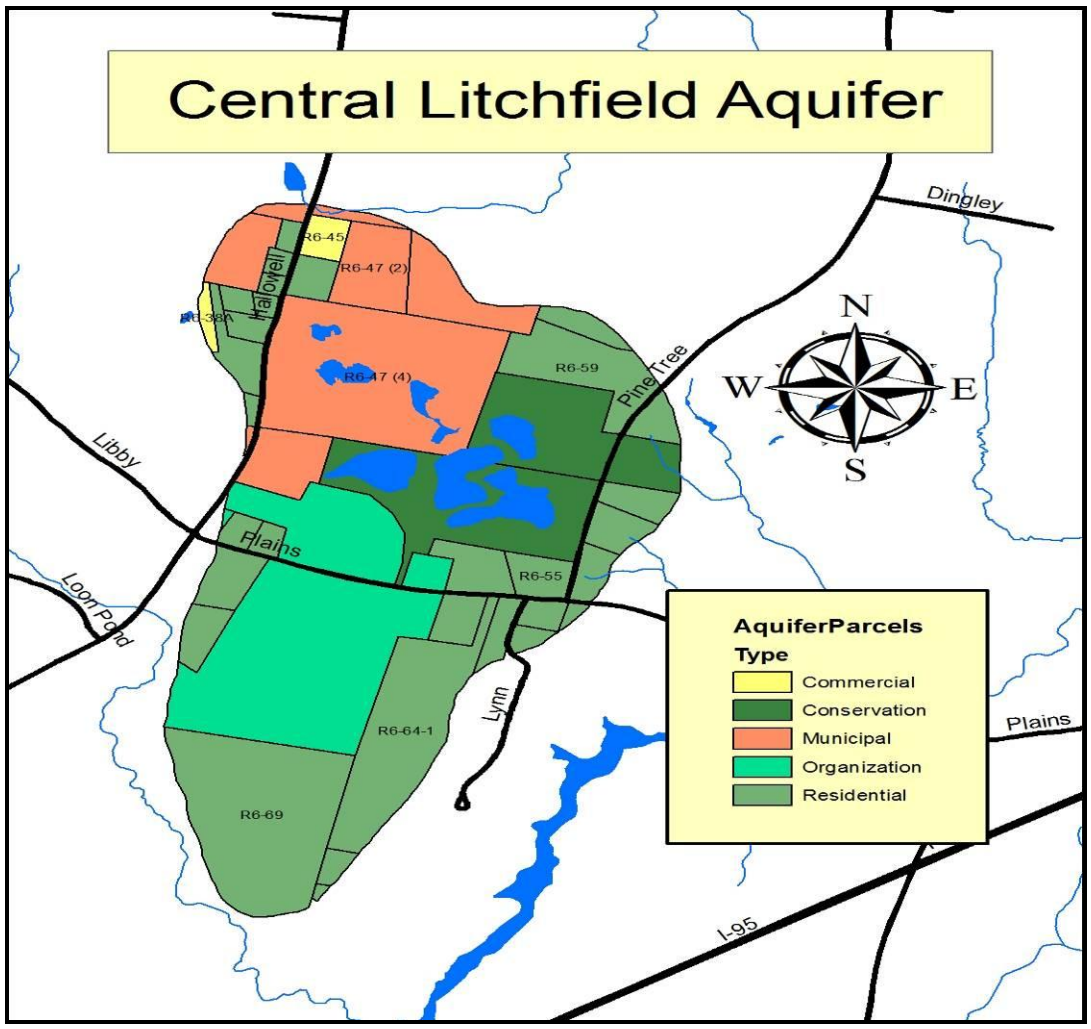
The conserved lands are protected by a permanent conservation/agricultural easement. The municipal parcels are subject to a declaration of trust, which is only revocable by vote at town meeting. The organizations (the Farmers' Club, Cemetery, Plains Church and Masonic Lodge) are eminently stable local institutions, and thus unlikely to change the nature of the use of their parcels in the near future.

The commercial areas have minimal acreage and the remaining parcels are single family residences, with or without significant acreage.

The Town's salt pile is located within the aquifer. When it was uncovered, leaching caused increased salinity in the small pond just west of it. Salinity has not been tested since the salt shed was built. One well drilled at the east side of the aquifer has high salt levels, possibly

from the same source. Another nearby has high arsenic levels, but it is not known if this is naturally occurring, the result of leaching from the cemetery or residue from past agricultural operations. The two residential shallow wells (3 feet deep) on the east side of the aquifer have good water quality.

Figure 7: Land Uses over the Central Litchfield Aquifer



Threats to Groundwater Quality:

Arsenic: The U.S. Geological Survey conducted the largest study of its kind in Maine, from 2005 to 2009, to detect and map the state's high-arsenic wells. The findings were clear: Kennebec County is an arsenic hot spot. Of the top ten Maine municipalities with wells exceeding the federal limit for arsenic, half are in Kennebec County. The problem — naturally occurring from underlying rock — is particularly prevalent in Kennebec County towns including Litchfield. Local hot spots include Readfield, with 49 percent of wells exceeding federal limits; Winthrop, with 46 percent; Monmouth, 45 percent; and Litchfield, 42 percent.

Occurrence of arsenic in Litchfield wells is so widespread and random, no mapping was done. The safe limit for arsenic in drinking water is less than ten parts per billion. Testing well water every few years for arsenic, as well as radon and bacteria is a good practice and should be encouraged by the Town. Water testing can be done at the state lab in Augusta as well as several state certified private labs. Water testing should be sure to specify to test for arsenic. Information on arsenic is available through the Maine Division of Environmental Health.

Contamination of groundwater by surface pollutants is a common threat. The low density of development to date in Litchfield does not lend itself to concentrations of effluent contamination, such as nitrates, at groundwater levels. Litchfield's Land Use Ordinance contains provisions requiring prospective commercial developers to identify any industrial or chemical waste and provide for its safe disposal. The ordinance also specifically requires development over an aquifer to develop a written management plan for any potential contaminants.

Achievements:

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan recommended that the Town enact performance standards for stormwater and erosion control, phosphorous control and aquifer protection. These standards were all included in the Town's Land Use Ordinance and revised Subdivision Ordinance.

The plan also recommended continued membership and cooperation with Cobbossee Watershed District and their activities. The Town continues to coordinate activities with CWD. CWD performs development reviews for the Planning Board for water quality impacts, and works cooperatively to identify and assist the Town with priority issues.

Policies and Strategies for Water Resources:

Policies:

1. Continue strong regional cooperation efforts with water quality organizations and neighboring towns. Improve educational, outreach, and training efforts.

2. Continue regulatory protection for surface and ground water resources through land use ordinances and strict enforcement.

3. Consider mechanisms to address the incremental change in water quality from lot-by-lot development.

Recommended Actions:

A. The Town should continue to maintain and enforce land use ordinance provisions that provide protection consistent with Maine's Shoreland Zoning Law, Stormwater Management Law, Pollution Discharge Elimination System Program, and allowable levels of phosphorous in area lakes.

B. The Town should continue to participate as an active member of the Cobbossee Watershed District and the Four Towns Watershed Association, and support Friends of Cobbossee Watershed.

C. The Town Meeting should continue to fund efforts to eradicate invasive water plants.

D. The Town should continue to promote and support educational efforts to raise awareness in the use of best management practices by homeowners and contractors to protect water quality.

E. The Town Office should procure and provide educational materials on water quality and lake protection and distribute them through the Code Enforcement Officer and town welcome packets and through periodic articles in the *Sodalite*.

F. The Selectmen should continue the inter-local agreement with other municipalities owning the New Mills Dam, to protect shorefront property and fish and wildlife habitat.

G. The Town should consider ways to further encourage farmers to increase their use of vegetative buffers where farmland borders streams or lakes.

H. The Town should continue to encourage permanent protection of high-value lands within lake watersheds as a means of protecting water quality.

I. The Town Office should procure and distribute educational materials concerning the high risk of contaminants, especially arsenic, in well water and encourage the regular testing of water for arsenic, radon, and phosphorous.

J. The Planning Board should maintain the groundwater protection standards in the land use ordinances and evaluate the need for wellhead protection requirements.

K. The Conservation Commission should develop and maintain a list of parcels it deems worthy of conservation for protection of the aquifer.

9. Public Facilities and Fiscal Capacity

State Goal: To plan for, finance and develop public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

Our Top Recommendations:

A. The Selectmen should insure that a rolling 5 year Capital Improvements Plan is prepared and presented to the voters at the annual Town Meeting, starting in fiscal year 2013-14. The plan should include amounts needed for improvements, expansions and replacements of capital assets needed to support public facilities and services.

B. The Selectmen should present an article at the 2014 Town Meeting to authorize and fund the appraisal of land values in town to complement the recent revaluation of buildings and structures.

The purpose of this section is to examine the ability of the Town of Litchfield to support services currently offered by the Town and determine the needs for expanded or new services in the next ten years. Current actions and opportunities for regional cooperation in service delivery are also discussed.

Litchfield is primarily a rural bedroom community with a small town government that provides only essential services such as roads, education, emergency services and administrative services. The town utilizes a variety of publicly owned facilities, contracted services and its ability to raise funds to carry out its mission.

Litchfield has a Town Meeting form of government with three elected Selectmen and a hired Town Manager. Many business functions are overseen by officials appointed by the Selectmen or elected by the Town Meeting. The executive functions are working well, with adequate levels of authority, accountability and transparency. Attendance at Annual and Special Town Meetings and RSU #4 Budget Meetings have greatly diminished over the years. Between 40 and 80 voters attend the annual town meeting, and fewer attend the RSU meeting. Participation in government by its citizens has declined overall, and is a continuing concern.

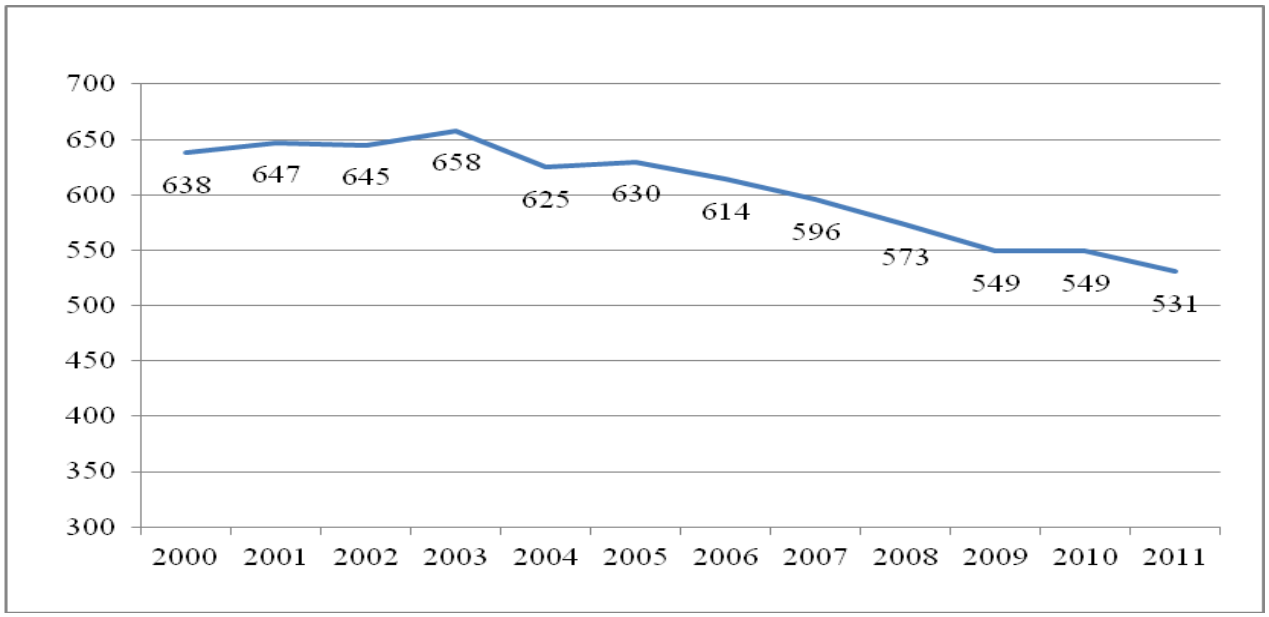
Schools

Litchfield entered into the K-12 Regional School Unit #4 with Wales and Sabattus in 2008. All properties and services are managed by the RSU with representatives from each town

serving on the School Board. Litchfield educational assets and liabilities have been transferred to the RSU. The RSU has sufficient resources and authority to provide educational services for the foreseeable future. Annual budgets passed by the RSU and ratified by town voters become assessments to the Town and are funded primarily by real estate taxes. Although the school consolidation has kept assessments down its first few years, diminished State Aid and a decreasing school population is likely to cause them to increase in the coming decade.

School enrollments have been declining steadily, despite Litchfield's overall population growth. As Figure 8 illustrates, enrollment in public schools has declined by 20 percent in the past decade. This is probably primarily due to an aging population, since similar numbers are reported statewide. A declining student enrollment means increased school costs per student, as the fixed costs become a larger part of the total. It could also have an effect on Litchfield's share of the overall district budget. (Litchfield is a recent entrant into a regional school district, so historical enrollment trends of the RSU are not valid.)

Figure 8: Litchfield Students Enrolled in Public Schools



For the 2011-2012 school year, RSU 4's per pupil operating costs were $9,785 for elementary students, $10,980 for secondary students. The district's per pupil costs are about seven percent higher than the statewide average of $9,120 for elementary, and just a shade below the secondary average of $11,078.

Emergency Services:

The Litchfield First Responder Unit and Fire Department provide the first line of emergency response and are manned by trained volunteers. They provide excellent service but have diminished capability during week days because most of the members work outside of Litchfield. As the Town grows, we may have to consider having a paid staff to provide needed coverage.

The current main fire station garage was constructed with CDBG funding in 2000, but may need to be expanded to accommodate longer trucks. Rolling stock for the fire department has deteriorated, but the Town has a capital improvement fund (bond and reserve) of about $400,000 for replacement of the department's vehicles.

For many years, Litchfield has contracted with the City of Gardiner Emergency Services for ambulance service. This is a truly regional service including more than 6 nearby towns.

Litchfield adopted an Emergency Management Ordinance in 2007 and has appointed am Emergency Preparedness Director to coordinate activities. The Town maintains a central EM radio station and conducts annual training for EM-related personnel.

Public Safety

Litchfield depends upon the Kennebec County Sheriff Department and Maine State Police for intermittent patrolling and emergency services. It is likely that the town will need to upgrade public safety patrolling and institute a local presence in the years ahead, as most towns with similar populations have done.

The town contracts with a local Animal Control Officer who also services surrounding towns.

Cultural

Litchfield has a rich cultural heritage that is being preserved by several volunteer organizations:

- The Shorey Family History Center, operated by The Historical Society of Litchfield, is located in the Town Office building and is a repository for old Town documents. It is in need of improved climate control for historical documents.
- The Litchfield Museum, operated by The Historical Society of Litchfield, is located in former Town Hall and displays artifacts depicting the history and people of Litchfield. It is in need of a new roof.
- Litchfield Academy Community Building, managed by an elected Board of Trustees, serves as a senior and community center. Many recreational and educational activities take place throughout the week days under the supervision of Senior Advisory Committee.
- The Town votes a donation to the Gardiner Public Library which in turn provides residents access to library services.

Utilities:

Land-line telephone and dial-up Internet access is provided by Fairpoint Communications and is available throughout the town. DSL Internet access is provided by Fairpoint Communications and is currently being expanded to cover most of the town. Wireless cellular phone and data services are provided by multiple providers and are generally accessible, particularly along the I95 corridor. Nevertheless, there continue to be dead spots and low data

access speeds within the town. Time Warner Communications provides cable TV and cable internet access through much of the town, but service is not available along less-settled roads.

Litchfield has its own Post Office and zip code: 04350. With the Enhanced 911 implementation in the early 2000's, all local mail routes are now served by the local post office. The Town of Litchfield publishes a monthly newsletter, The *Sodalite*, to all residents and maintains a website for public announcements and reports.

Adequate access and capacity for electrical service exists for residential and small businesses via the recently upgraded CMP S. Monmouth Substation. Three phase power is available on Route 126 from the Monmouth town line to Sand Pond, all of Buker Road, the central part of Oak Hill Road, the southern half of Huntington Hill Road and along Rt 197 from Libby-Tozier School to Ferrin Road. It could easily be extended should the demand ever arise from any of the Town's commercial growth areas.

There is no public water or sewer service available anywhere in Litchfield. The density of development is such that beginning such a service would not be economic, even in the villages. All sewage in town is collected in private septic systems. Local building ordinances govern the permitting of new septic systems. Given the current ability to engineer suitable septic systems, the low permeability of many soils in town is not a significant limitation to further development.

Nearly all drinking water is from private drilled wells or springs. Eight drilled wells in town, serving the schools, local restaurants, Sportsman's Club, golf course and a trailer park, are considered public drinking supplies and are regulated by the State. All are fed by bedrock formations and none have reported surface contamination issues. At present there are no well-head protection plans or standards regulating potential sources of pollution from nearby activities, although there are detailed standards for general groundwater protection in the Land Use Ordinance.

There is concern about the prevalence of naturally occurring arsenic and radon in many drinking water supplies due to their presence in the underlying granite bedrock (discussed in Chapter 8, Water Resources). High levels of phosphorus are also present in many drinking wells. All three pose significant health risks to those drinking the water over long period of time. Because many wells are not tested or treated for the presence of these pollutants, the Town should undertake to educate well owners of the dangers and encourage them to test and remediate the water as needed.

Public Works:

Solid Waste

Litchfield residents and businesses are required to hire local garbage collection for disposal of ordinary trash at MMWAC or Hatch Hill. The town operates a limited transfer station (weekends only) for recyclables, bulky waste and disposal of brush and universal waste materials. Given that the transfer station does not accept construction and demolition debris (it

must be hauled to MMWAC in Auburn and a tipping fee paid), these services should be expanded as soon as is practical. There is also a strong demand for increased availability of recycling facilities, and for access to household hazardous waste disposal.

The Town has a Solid Waste and Recycling Ordinance.

Road Crew:

Litchfield has a full-time crew of four to maintain 32 miles of local roads and 28 miles of State Aid roads. The town currently raises $125,000 per year just for paving. Current policy is to allocate funding for paving every year but pave only every few years and try to contract when prices are low in order to make these dollars go further. The Town tries to repave roads on a 12-year cycle.

The choice of which roads to pave is controversial and lacks clear criteria and long-term plans. The Town Manager is working to establish a Road Surface Management System and a Road Committee to assess the current condition of Town and State-aid roads and recommend future road maintenance actions. (see Chapter 10, Transportation). There is a great need to inventory the current condition of the roads and culverts and plan for their orderly and timely maintenance. Given the recent and likely continuing increases in the cost of paving material, additional sums will need to be allocated to road maintenance.

The Town Garage is adequate, except that at least one bay should be expanded to handle bigger vehicles. The Town has established a plan for replacement of its front line vehicles. The Town Salt Shed was constructed in the early 2000's. The Town is able to mine its own sand for at least the next decade.

Town Office

The current Town Office houses administrative offices, meeting rooms and the Shorey Family History Center. Current hours for public services are Monday 8:30 AM–7:00 PM, Tuesday through Thursday 8:30 AM - 6:00 PM. The building needs a new roof and mold remediation, and could possibly also benefit from an energy audit. As town services have grown over the last decade, we may soon need to evaluate how the space can be better utilized and whether to budget for future expansion.

Regional Services:

Litchfield is primarily a rural bedroom community with most people working in and drawing services from surrounding metropolitan districts of Lewiston, Augusta, Gardiner and Brunswick. Near-term potential for commercial development or local employment is limited. The Town works with surrounding towns to minimize the costs of services such as police, ambulance and libraries.

The fire department has mutual aid agreements with neighboring towns. Ambulance service is provided to a multi-town area out of Gardiner. Litchfield utilizes the county sheriff and state police for law enforcement coverage.

Fiscal Capacity:

A significant function of town government is to provide funding to support the delivery of services and the maintenance of public facilities both for on-going operations and unexpected events. This requires that financial systems and controls be developed and operated to support effective planning, operations and accountability.

The Town of Litchfield has provided a strong financial base for supporting annual and long-term operations. Accounting systems conform to generally accepted practices for municipalities in Maine and are audited on an annual basis. The Selectmen and Town Manager are fully engaged in budgeting, executing and accounting for funds that are raised, expended and held in reserve for future uses.

Given the desire of residents to maintain a rural atmosphere and the lack of pressure for commercial and industrial development, this Comprehensive Plan does not envision the need for significant expansion of municipal services during the next decade. Hence we project only a modest growth in fiscal pressures.

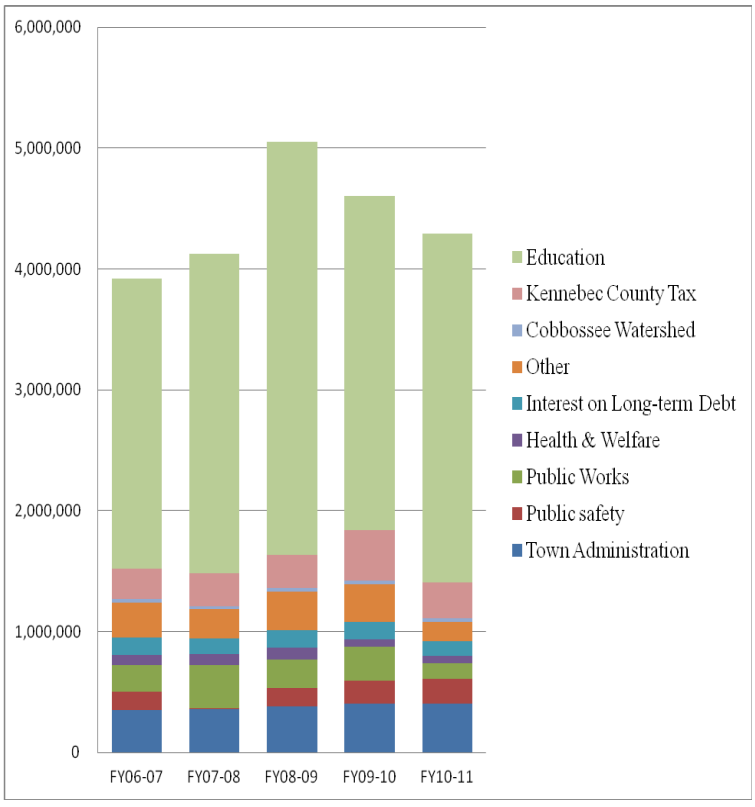
Current Trends and Issues:

General Fund Expenses:

Figure 9 at right shows the composition and growth of town General Fund expenditures for the fiscal years ending 2007 through 2011. The annual town meeting appropriates amounts to be spent during the year to individual fund accounts related to specific purposes. Expenses in individual fund accounts have been grouped into categories aligned with the major services of town government.

Total expenses have grown at a slow rate over the documented period with a net increase of 9.4% and average annual increase of 2.3% over the five year period.

Figure 9: Annual Expenses by Category



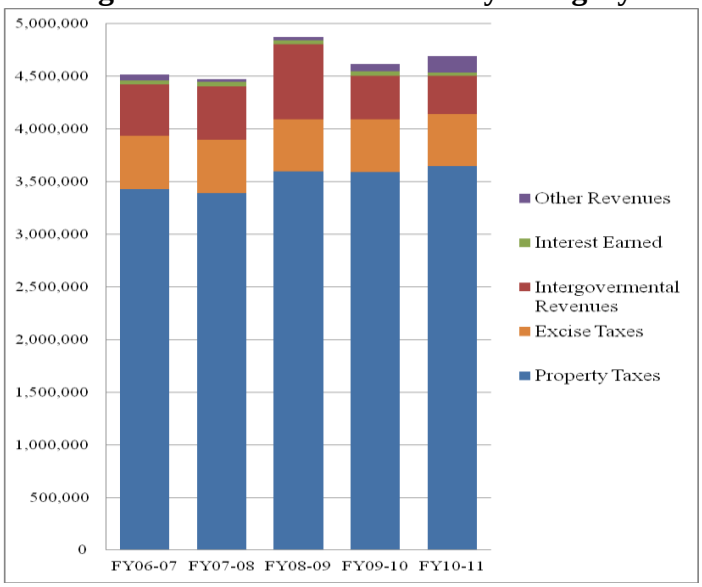
This trend is expected to continue for the next decade as no large increases are anticipated at this time. One possible risk is the price of crude oil which affects the cost of hot top in paving roads. Currently the town appropriates sufficient amounts to repave roads on 10 - 12 year cycle.

Responsibility for local K-12 education passed from the town to RSU #4 in 2009. Litchfield no longer directly controls the budget of the schools and is assessed for its share of the consolidated budget. Citizen participation at annual RSU budget meetings is very low even though education accounts for more than 75% of town expenditures.

General Fund Revenues:

Figure 10 shows the composition and growth of General Fund revenues collected by the town during the same period. Under the fund accounting rules adopted by the town, the expenditures in each category must be funded by raising revenue during the same year, borrowing or transferring money from an existing fund account balance. Revenue numbers are grouped by the source of funds, the largest of which is property tax (see below).

Figure 10: Annual Revenues by Category



Total revenue has grown modestly over the past five years, increasing by a net of 3.8% (annual average increase of 0.9 %). If the expense trends continue as anticipated, we can expect revenue to increase modestly until it achieves a similar rate of growth.

The contributions by revenue sources is likely to change over the next decade due to changes in economic activity (impacting excise taxes) and changes in contributions by the State of Maine, with any differences being made up by cuts in local expenditures or increases in real estate taxes. The current downward trend on contributions by the state is likely to continue putting increased pressure on local resources.

Property Taxes:

Taxes on real and personal property are the principal sources of revenue, accounting for over 75% of the money raised by Litchfield. Once the town meeting has appropriated other revenue and expenses, the remaining amount needed is raised by levying taxes based on the value of property held in Litchfield. This is done by calculating a "mil rate" which is equal to the amount to be raised divided by the total value of taxable property in Litchfield times 1000. Individual tax bills are set by multiplying the value of individual property in thousands by the

mill rate. Table 6 shows the trends in local real and personal property valuations, amounts to be raised (tax commitments) and mil rates.

Table 6: Litchfield Real Estate Taxes

Ending	Tax	Town	Town	Actual	State	Est State
Ending	Commitment	PP Value	RE Value	Mil Rate	RE Value	Mil Rate
2007	3,393,140	2,367,132	146,454,788	22.80	149,936,124	22.28
2008	3,375,843	2,540,461	276,454,788	12.10	153,362,229	21.65
2009	3,574,604	2,415,293	281,283,401	12.60	285,150,003	12.43
2010	3,588,419	2,240,994	300,579,176	11.85	289,160,500	12.31
2011	3,650,083	2,259,970	298,158,394	12.15	307,881,212	11.77
2012	3,548,274	2,282,357	299,952,736	11.95	333,400,000	10.57

Source: Town Records

Because the tax commitment is apportioned according to property value, it is important that values be assessed fairly. Litchfield has not done a comprehensive valuation of property since 1995 and there is compelling evidence that inequities in valuation have developed over the years. In 2008, the Selectmen attempted to adjust for inequities between lakefront and backland properties. This improved the fairness and resulted in an 80 percent increase in overall real estate values. Several articles to fund a complete revaluation have been defeated at Town Meetings.

As an intermediate step to restore fairness, the townspeople voted in 2011 to conduct a "list and measure" survey of all buildings in town. Although the survey did not include a full assessment of the value of land and improvements, it is being used to improve the accuracy of what is being assessed, starting in the tax year 2012-13. We should complete this process by undertaking a full assessment of land values during the next decade.

Many State contributions and reimbursements are based on a State determined "State Valuation" which is set by a check of recent property sales. The ratio between the State and local valuations is a formula that adjusts for variances between prices and their locally assessed values. The variance in the ratio from 100 percent indicates the urgency of local revaluations. Given that waterfront property tends to be the most undervalued and constitutes the bulk of the sales in Litchfield, our State Valuation has grown much faster than the local valuation. This results in the State contributing lesser amounts to Litchfield's revenue than is deserved.

Although there is a significant reduction in taxable valuation due to tree growth and open space exemptions, these are partially reimbursed by the State (in the case of Tree Growth) and are consistent with the voters' support of maintaining a rural atmosphere. Tax exempt properties held by schools, religious groups and governmental use are comparable with those in other towns of Litchfield's size and character.

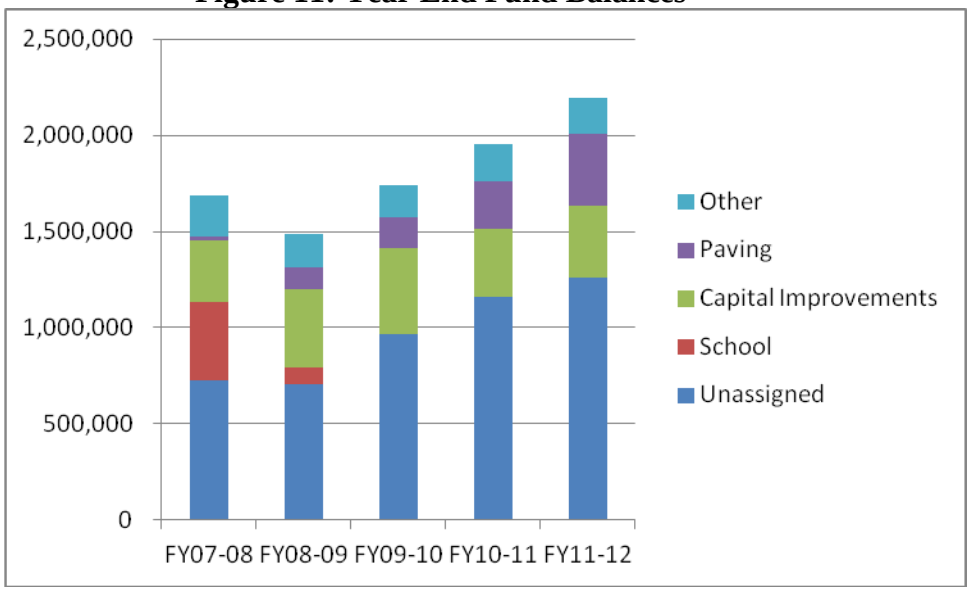
A State law known as LD 1 sets a "property tax levy limit" on the amount that property tax commitments can increase each year. Unless overridden by a vote of the town, increases are limited to the combined rate of growth of local property values and statewide average incomes.

Litchfield has managed its finances to be well below these statutory limits and has not needed to vote to increase them.

Assets:

While expenses and revenues are measures of the flow of funds in and out of Litchfield's governmental accounts, the overall financial health of a town at a given point in time is measured by its assets and liabilities. Assets consist of Capital Assets (buildings, equipment and other tangible goods), Accounts Receivable (loans, payments, taxes owed to Litchfield) and Fund Balances (cash attributed to various fund accounts). Although Litchfield operates on a yearly budget of expenses and revenues, we are able to save up for future expenses by accruing money for specific projects and general contingencies. Figure 11 shows the level of major operating fund balances.

Figure 11: Year End Fund Balances



The Unassigned Fund Balance is used to provide money to carry on operations from the beginning of the fiscal year in July until tax receipts pick up in November. By carrying a starting balance in excess of $900,000, Litchfield has not needed to take out "tax anticipation loans" as some towns do each year. This fund is also used to cover contingencies such as delayed payments by the State and other receivables.

Capital Equipment Reserves are used to accrue funds to purchase new or replacement equipment or buildings for the Fire and Rescue, Public Works and other activities. Funds are appropriated annually to build the reserves and uses are approved in the year they occur. In 2000, consistent with a recommendation in the Comprehensive Plan, the town approved implementing a Capital Improvement Plan process to maintain a 5 year projection of capital needs. After being used for several years, it has dropped by the wayside. At present Capital Equipment Reserves are funded without a documented spending plan. The Town Manager has begun to reinstitute a formal Capital Improvement Plan starting in fiscal year 2013-4.

The Paving Fund maintains balances for money appropriated but not yet spent on paving town roads.

Litchfield's buildings and other capital assets are in reasonable shape at present**,** but must be maintained and may need to be expanded as discussed on page 66.

Litchfield does a good job of keeping receivables current and at a manageable level. Unpaid property taxes are pursued with compassion and fairness and actions taken to foreclose on property only as a last resort.

Liabilities:

Liabilities are obligations that Litchfield owes to other entities including Accounts Payable (bills, short term loans) and Long-term Debt. The town has adequate current resources and reserves to manage its payables in a timely manner. Long-term debt is very modest and is shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Litchfield Debt Status, 2008-2020(estimated)

Year Ending	Beginning Debt	Principal	Interest	Total
2008	3,351,322	429,634	168,967	598,601
2009	2,921,690	332,966	150,458	483,424
2010	2,732,879	339,178	137,791	476,969
2011	2,543,017	359,475	124,657	484,132
2012	2,182,751	360,349	105,723	466,072 Est
2013	1,822,402	361,252	86,654	447,906 Est
2014	1,461,150	362,185	67,527	429,712 Est
2015	1,098,965	363,149	48,299	411,448 Est
2016	735,816	326,645	29,682	356,327 Est
2017-20	409,171	409,171	15,099	424,270 Est

As of June 30, 2011, Litchfield had the following loans outstanding:

Amount Borrowed	Start Date	Amount Remaining	End Date	Purpose
		$150,000	Nov 2015	Equipment general obligation bond
	Nov 1996	$1,772,793	Nov 2016	Carrie Ricker school construction bond
		$259,958	Nov 2019	Paving loan note payable
		$2,182,751		Total

As of 2009, RSU #4 has assumed payments on the Carrie Ricker school construction bond leaving Litchfield with slightly more than $400,000 in long-term debt. This is well within the statutory cap of 7.5% of property valuation which is approximately $22,500,000.

Issues for Public Services:

As a rural community, Litchfield historically has provided a fairly low level of public services. Most of the upgrades to public service over the past few decades have come as a result of state and federal mandates, rather than citizen demand. Population growth has not yet reached a level where demand for local services exceeds capacity.

The most pressing issue for local public services is road maintenance. It is anticipated that the local budget for road repair will increase over the coming decade, as well as the need for replacement of public works equipment. Waste management will also become more of an issue in the next decade, as the issue of appropriate disposal methods for categories of waste become more complex.

Litchfield is on a solid financial base. Local expenditures are well under control to the extent that town management can influence them. There is a need to get a better handle on long-term capital expenditures, but the Town is making strides in that direction.

A growing issue in local government is participation by its citizens. In Litchfield, the annual Town Meeting is generally attended by no more than 40 residents, and other public meetings or hearings are poorly attended. Volunteer committees, from the fire department to the planning board, are having problems recruiting members. While low participation from citizens is taken by political scientists as a sign that things are running well with little controversy, it is tough on a small town with a limited budget, when the volunteers it relies on to carry out the business of government are no longer available. This could in the future lead to increased costs as we need more paid staff or have to make decisions without contributions and suggestions from the public.

Achievements:

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan recommended that the Town develop plans for construction of a new sand and salt shed and fire station. Both of these projects have been completed. The plan also called for improvements to the public works garage. Minor improvements have been made to date.

The plan also called for development of a Town newsletter and website. The website is in place, and the newsletter, the *Sodalite* is a popular venue for communication between the Town and residents.

The comprehensive plan recommended the development of a capital improvements plan. While an initial plan was developed in 2000, it was not kept up, and lapsed until very recently.

The plan focused on school management. In 2000, it could not have envisioned the emphasis on consolidation in recent years. School management is now the responsibility of the regional school unit.

The plan recommended an evaluation of the town's solid waste programs. There is no evidence that this was done. The plan also recommended that the Town Manager explore regional affiliations for provision of services such as fire protection, public works, recreation, and police protection. While the Town has been open to discussions along these lines, the fact of our remoteness from other population centers makes it difficult to provide cost-effective regional services.

Policies and Strategies for Public Facilities and Fiscal Capacity:

Policies:

1. Establish a process to assess and fund the needs for maintaining and expanding facilities and services as the town population grows.

2. Implement the recently adopted Litchfield Emergency Management Ordinance.

3. Establish a process for maintaining the condition of its roads and appropriate sufficient funds to implement it.

4. Improve the participation of its voters in the RSU #4 and Town budget adoption processes.

5. Maintain adequate reserves to cushion shocks from unexpected events such as reduced revenue sharing, reimbursements and funding from the State of Maine.

6. Improve the accuracy of property assessments to ensure fairness in taxation and to maximize its share of State aid and reimbursements.

7. Reinstitute a Capital Improvements Plan covering a rolling 3-5 year projection of capital needs.

8. Continue the judicious use of debt for funding long-term purchases and improvements and smoothing the financial impact over multiple years.

Recommended Actions:

A. The Selectmen should insure that a rolling 5 year Capital Improvements Plan is prepared and presented to the voters at the annual Town Meeting, starting in fiscal year 2013-14. The plan should include amounts needed for improvements, expansions and replacements of capital assets needed to support public facilities and services. The Capital Investment Chapter of this plan (Chapter 15) should be incorporated into the CIP.

B. The Selectmen should present an article at the 2014 Town Meeting to authorize and fund the appraisal of land values in town to complement the recent revaluation of buildings and structures.

C. The Town Manager and Selectmen should conduct bi-annual assessments of the adequacy of service and staffing levels for public services provided by the Town to include fire protection, emergency response, public safety, public works, waste disposal, licensing & permitting, code enforcement and clerical services. Immediately, the Selectmen should expand transfer station services to include weekday hours and explore ways to handle disposal of residential construction and demolition debris.

D. The Selectmen and Town Manager should implement the provisions of the recently passed town Emergency Management Ordinance.

E. The Town Manager and School Board representatives should undertake ways to educate the voters on the significance of RSU budget on local taxes and urge voters to attend the RSU meeting to act on the proposed budget.

F. The Selectmen should explore options for increasing attendance at Town Meetings and participation in town government overall; to include consideration of whether another form of town government would be more desirable for ensuring adequate representation of residents in Town decisions and affairs.

G. The Selectmen should develop annual budgets to include the maintenance of prudent levels of reserves to address future needs and provide a financial cushion for unexpected events.

H. The Selectmen should adopt a policy to guide the town in the appropriate use of long-term debt in funding new or expanded services or assets.

10. The Transportation System

State Goal: Plan for, finance, and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

Our Top Recommendations:

A. The Road Commissioner (Town Manager) and Selectmen should establish a process for maintaining an inventory of the condition of town roads and developing annual paving and infrastructure plans, through the Road Surface Management System (RSMS).

B. The Planning Board should examine the issue of new development along substandard private roads, possibly tying road improvements to building permit requirements.

Residents and businesses in Litchfield are highly dependent on its transportation system. Local businesses need it to move products and draw customers. Residents need a way to get to their jobs out of town, and employers need a way to access workers. Families need transportation to schools, services, shopping, and recreation.

Transportation to this point has grown from farm lanes and wagon trails to the paved roads and highways we use now, without too much planning or thought in between. As the cost of building and maintaining the system grows, though, we suddenly have to begin planning for how to manage "more with less". This chapter explores how we can provide the most cost-effective transportation choices, while promoting land use and economic development choices that make the best use of the system.

System Elements and Issues:

State Highways:

The backbone of Litchfield's transportation system is the state highway system, designed to accommodate motor vehicles. "State highways" also include the category of state aid roads, maintenance of which is only partially borne by the state. In Litchfield, state highways total 11.6 miles, while state aid highways total 16.4 miles.

State Route 9/126: Route 9/126, also known as the Lewiston Road, is a state highway running east-west through northern Litchfield between West Gardiner and Monmouth. The portion in Litchfield is approximately 3.7 miles. Listed as an arterial highway by the state, 9/126 provides direct access to Gardiner and the Interstate system. The road was recently rebuilt, providing good riding conditions. The State considers the route a mobility highway, meaning that it is important for commercial purposes and has a higher standard for permitting success. Traffic averages around 2,500 vehicles per day, with about five percent commercial traffic.

State Route 197: Route 197, known as the Richmond Road, runs for approximately 7.9 miles east-west through the southern portion of town, linking Richmond and Wales. Route 197 provides access to the Lewiston-Auburn area and to the new Turnpike interchange in Sabattus. It is classified as a collector road, with lower design standards (such as only graveled shoulders) and access restrictions. Traffic counts are higher at the western end of the road, increasing dramatically west of Hallowell Road and the schools. The high traffic count is about 2,800 vehicles per day, with about seven percent commercial vehicles. Increasing traffic capacity along this road is a high priority, long-term project in the regional corridor management plan for the Augusta-Southwest corridor.

Hallowell Road: The Hallowell Road runs north-south through the center of Litchfield, linking the two state highways and continuing north through Purgatory. It provides access to the town office and fairgrounds. North of Route 9/126, it is classified as a major collector. The road is a state aid road, meaning that the State is responsible for summer maintenance and improvements and the Town is responsible for plowing. Though having been resurfaced within the past few years, the road remains narrow, rutted, and hilly. Traffic generally averages 1,000 vehicles per day south of 9/126; 1,500 vehicles per day to the north.

Plains Road: The Plains Road originates at the Hallowell Road near the fairgrounds and runs east and north along Pleasant Pond to West Gardiner. Plains Road is also a state aid road, very low on the priority list for improvements. Traffic averages only 500-700 vehicles per day.

Neck Road: Neck Road runs north from Purgatory along the eastern shore of Cobbossee Lake towards Manchester. Neck Road is in fairly good riding condition, recently repaved. It is a state aid road, averaging about 1,000 vehicles per day.

The layout of state-funded roads loosely forms a grid pattern serving all portions of town and allowing access to commercial and employment centers to the west and east. The state-numbered highways are designed for greatest traffic loads.

The state aid roads are quite low on the priority list for funding for improvements. This is becoming a significant issue. Local snow plowing efforts are hampered by rutting and potholes, causing dangerous conditions. Shoulders are narrow and eroding into lake watersheds. A particular concern is the intersection of Steventown, Plains, and Upper Pond Roads. Very recently, the Town raised money for a match to make critical improvements to visibility at the intersection, but the State failed to put forward its share.

The Maine Turnpike (I-95) also runs through Litchfield for a distance of nine miles, but has no interchange, so is a non-factor.

Town Roads:

Litchfield has approximately 31.9 miles of town ways, consisting of at least 27 named roads. Major town roads are Huntington Hill Road (3.78 miles), Stevenstown Road (3.67 miles), Oak Hill Road (3.21 miles) and Pine Tree Road (2.71 miles). Less than four miles of town way are unpaved.

Litchfield is in the process of implementing the Road Surface Management System (RSMS) for town ways, as recommended in the 2000 plan. The Town is attempting to stick to a 12-year paving cycle, although fluctuations in the cost of paving make it difficult. The Town annually allocates about $125,000 for paving, and additional sums for other maintenance activities. Both summer and winter maintenance are performed by the public works crew under the supervision of the town manager as road commissioner. Paving is contracted.

Camp Roads:

Private camps have resulted in a large number of private roads. Litchfield has approximately 16 miles of private road, many of them serving only two or three private homes.

Perennial issues with private roads are maintenance and seasonal conversions. Private roads are the responsibility of the users to maintain, with maintenance often done casually by untrained personnel. Camp roads can easily generate polluting runoff directly into water bodies. Camps are occasionally converted from seasonal to year-round use, and the roads serving them, which were fine in summer, are not designed for winter maintenance or year-round emergency vehicle use.

Pursuant to a recommendation in the 2000 plan, Litchfield upgraded its Road Ordinance. The ordinance now contains construction standards for all roads and common driveways. Any road constructed or improved to serve more than eight dwelling units is required to be paved. All new private roads must implement a Road Maintenance Plan, which requires membership and financing of a road association. A process is in place for town acceptance of a private road, although the Town has not voted to accept any roads since the ordinance was adopted.

The town also participates in efforts to properly maintain existing camp roads. The Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society and Cobbossee Watershed District have active outreach and technical assistance programs for landowners. The town has information at the town office and on the website, linking to other resources such as the *Gravel Road Maintenance Manual*, and a guide to forming road associations.

Support Infrastructure for the Road System:

In order to function efficiently, the highway system needs certain additional elements of infrastructure. These include bridges, traffic controls (signals, directional controls), and parking.

Bridges: Litchfield's road system of necessity includes a number of stream crossings. Many of these are small culverts, which are the responsibility of the town to maintain. Culverts must be cleaned and inspected regularly, and replaced as necessary. Most bridges are the responsibility of the State, depending on the length of their spans. The Maine DOT inventories all bridges on a regular basis. There are 25 bridges in Litchfield (including some over the Maine Turnpike). While most are in good condition, and none are in poor condition, there are a few that have one or more elements requiring attention. These are:

- Wharf Bridge over Cobbossee Stream. This bridge carrying Indiana/Dennis Hill Road is on the State's watch list, meaning it could be posted for weight limits unless repaired. Built in 1936, it is a 100' steel girder bridge. The substructure is in poor condition and the approach is fair, while other elements of the bridge are good.
- Hatch Bridge, carrying Plains Road over Potter's Stream (near the Pleasant Pond boat landing). This had been on the State's watch list, but was recently repaired. The span is 24 feet long, consisting of steel culverts, originally installed in 1940. There is no particular element in poor condition, but the age of the bridge warrants its constant monitoring.
- Burnham Bridge, carrying Plains Road over Cobbossee Stream between Litchfield and West Gardiner. This is a 98', steel girder bridge built in 1936. The bridge is generally in fair condition, but the channel beneath is in poor shape.
- The Old Mill Road Bridge over Purgatory Stream (off of the Hallowell Road). This is the poorest of bridges that are municipal responsibility, although on a low-use dead end road. It is an eighteen foot long, steel girder bridge. The substructure is in poor condition; the superstructure and approaches are fair.

None of the bridges of town responsibility stand out as needing near-term replacement or closure, and none are listed as requiring a weight limit. The location and maintenance responsibility of all bridges (except Maine Turnpike) is shown on the *Transportation Map.*

Traffic Controls: Traffic controls are infrastructure to help manage the flow of traffic. They range from route signs to signals and raised islands.

Despite having two state highways serving the town, the traffic counts in Litchfield do not yet warrant many traffic controls. There are flashing yellow "caution" signals at Hallowell Road and Route 9/126 and Hallowell Road and Route 197, the two highest volume intersections in town. Most intersections are controlled only by "stop" or "yield" signs. These controls appear to be adequate to meet demand.

Parking: Parking in Litchfield is traditionally provided by the entity responsible for generating the demand. Businesses provide their own, on-site parking lots, and there is no concentration sufficient to warrant public parking. Litchfield's Land Use Ordinance contains a comprehensive set of standards for off-street parking for new development.

No public parking is provided other than that associated with public facilities such as the town office, fairgrounds, and schools. No parking issues are evident in town, except that parking

is extremely limited at the boat landings on the causeway over Pleasant Pond, where vehicles with trailers park along the roadside.

Environmental Issues:

The road system has been recognized to have an impact on natural and environmental assets. In Litchfield, perhaps the most sensitive impact is the runoff generated to affect lake water quality. Litchfield's Land Use Ordinance has strong mechanisms to protect waterbodies from road construction activities as well as post-construction runoff (erosion control and stormwater management standards). Litchfield's Road Ordinance requires private roads to have maintenance plans, and the Town cooperates in efforts by private environmental organizations to educate the public in remediation and improvements to camp roads. Town public works personnel are trained in best management practices for road maintenance.

Transportation facilities can also impact wildlife habitat, including travel corridors. This can be particularly through increased mortality evident at stream crossings or near wildlife management areas. There are no recognized locations in Litchfield where existing roads conflict with wildlife movements. However, there are many instances of perched culverts, which inhibit fish passage. This should be rated a deficiency in any culvert inventory.

Noise and light pollution can occur along some roads; however the roads in Litchfield do not carry enough traffic to rise to a nuisance level. Light from development can also spill onto the roadways, creating a safety issue for motorists. Litchfield's Land Use Ordinance contains standards limiting glare from lighting in new development.

Transportation Choices:

Even though in today's society, a huge majority of trips and miles travelled are by trucks and autos, there is still demand for alternatives. Some segments of the population (notably youth and some elderly) cannot use motor vehicles to get around, and the increasing costs and impacts of energy consumption argues for reduced automobile use into the future. While we do not anticipate an enormous shift in demand over the period of this plan, transportation systems take an enormous amount of time and money to put in place, and require planning well in advance.

Common alternatives to the car or truck in densely developed areas are the rail or public transit service; however, Litchfield has nowhere near enough development density to support either. No rail lines exist in Litchfield. The nearest rail freight access is from Auburn and passenger rail is available in Brunswick.

Public transit, either commercial or public bus lines, is not generally available in Litchfield. Concord Coach Lines and Greyhound service are available out of Augusta or Lewiston. For special needs services, Kennebec Valley Transit provides limited on-demand bus service. Volunteer driver services may also be available through KV Transit.

A variation on public transit is the use of carpooling or vanpooling. Many towns are advocating for satellite parking lots, which allow commuters and others to consolidate their

travel by sharing rides. Because Litchfield has neither the housing density nor a strong commuter pattern (being split between Lewiston/Auburn, Bath, and Augusta), a park-and-ride lot has not made economic sense in the past. This has not stopped residents from adopting their own practices, however. Informal arrangements are common and the census reports that roughly one in 14 Litchfield workers carpool to work. Interest in carpooling is expected to rise in proportion to the rise in gasoline prices. A commuter park-and-ride lot is listed as a high priority, mid-term project in the regional corridor management plan for Augusta-Southwest Corridor.

For those with not so far to go, or an inclination for physical activity, the options are bicycling or walking. In Litchfield, sidewalks are non-existent, but this is to be expected with a low density of development. Sidewalks tie together popular destinations and high density residential areas. Unless the development pattern changes dramatically, sidewalks will not become economically feasible over the planning period.

There is a potential for pedestrian trails in such locations as the fairgrounds or Tacoma Lakes. Many towns have developed loop trails for scenic access, exercise or nature walks. These would be more in the category of recreation facilities than transportation, however, and are discussed in Chapter 6, outdoor recreation.

Bicycle travel in Litchfield is limited to on-street routes or cross-country trails. Potential opportunities include not only dedicated bike trails or dedicated lanes on roadways, but facilities for bike storage at strategic locations. The town should identify bicycle-friendly destination points, such as the schools and fairgrounds, and prioritize them for storage facilities.

Bicycle touring is a large and growing component of outdoor recreation and tourism, especially in scenic areas such as Litchfield. However, most of Litchfield's rural roads are narrow and the shoulders are too poor to permit safe biking (or walking). Only Route 9/126 is considered to have shoulders wide enough for safe bicycle travel. Traffic is low enough on many of the rural roads that is should not threaten bicycle touring. If interest exists, the town could designate a series of local roads as a bike tour loop, prioritize those roads for shoulder improvements, and post with signs to encourage awareness by both cyclists and drivers.

There are no public or private airports in Litchfield. Augusta State Airport and Auburn/Lewiston Municipal are the nearest airports.

Traffic and Development:

A transportation system is judged not just by its physical condition, but by its ability to support the demands on the system. Government has historically been responsible for the infrastructure itself, but has not exerted much control over how (and how much) it is used. In urban areas, we are seeing how lack of attention to land use patterns has overburdened highways, leading to increased costs for safety, congestion, and added capacity.

The transportation system, obviously, is used to travel from point to point ("traffic generators"); the volume of traffic depends on where and how strong those traffic generators are, and traffic conflicts ("crashes") are often the unintended consequence of those locations.

Traffic levels have generally been growing over the past few decades as part of a national trend. Freight (truck) traffic is up noticeably, a result of our increased standard of living (more consumer goods and food travelling longer distances) and an increasing reliance on roads by freight carriers.

In terms of road use, however, automobile traffic has the greater impact. Most trips originate in the residence and move to employment centers, schools, or shopping. Litchfield is an example of the "residential" end of traffic generators. Other than the schools, and very rarely the fairgrounds, the town has no large traffic destinations. Even residential traffic is very dispersed, characteristic of the town's pattern of development.

The transportation impact of sprawl is that more rural residents drive longer distances to get to their destinations. Statistically, this would show up as increased use of roads leading into rural areas and stable or declining use of urban roads. This is illustrated in the table, below.

Table 8: Historical Traffic Volumes*

Location	1996	1998	2006	2008
Route 9/126 west of Hallowell Road	2,590	2,430	2,870	2,440
Route 197 @ Wales town line	2,080	1,970		2,420
Route 197 west of Huntington Hill Rd.	2,470			2,800
Hallowell Road north of 9/126	1,590	1,550	1,490	1,550
Hallowell Road south of 9/126	1,090	1,130	1,100	1,050

Source: MDOT Traffic Counts

Traffic volumes are the count of vehicles that pass by a given point on an average day. As can be seen, the only significant traffic increases during the period were on Route 197. This would appear to indicate that there is more growth in the southern half of town than the north, or that the Sabattus Interchange is drawing trips away from other routes of access to the Turnpike.

Figures from the 2000 plan appear to indicate that in 1980 traffic counts were only half of what they were in 1998, although the exact points where the counts were taken is not recorded. That increase is probably the result of the dramatic population and development growth taking place in town in the 80's and 90's.

Traffic volumes are sensitive to economic conditions. Traffic nationwide dropped off dramatically in 2008, when gas prices peaked, followed by the recession. More recent traffic counts are not yet available, but are likely to be pretty flat.

Counts of commercial traffic are infrequent. In Litchfield, only two counts are available. On Route 9/126, trucks accounted for 6.4 percent of all traffic in 1996. On Route 197, trucks accounted for 7.4 percent of traffic in 2006. These are relatively small percentages, indicating that Litchfield is a small generator of commercial traffic.

Traffic follows development, and traffic growth is likely to be tied directly to the location of housing and commercial growth. Litchfield's Land Use Ordinance lays out a pattern of residential development mostly clustered along the two major highways. But it is an open question whether the ordinance would actually affect traffic patterns.

The visible result of traffic conflict is the traffic accident. While traffic accidents can happen anywhere and for any reason, traffic engineers can use a statistical analysis to determine if there are certain crash locations that are particularly prone. Route 9/126 is designated as a "retrograde arterial," for example, because it has statistically more accidents stemming from driveway entrances than the statewide average. The most recent DOT crash data, however, does not point to any particular road segments or intersections with higher-than-expected crash rates. At the previous writing of the comprehensive plan, the intersection of Route 9/126 and the Hallowell Road had the highest rate of crashes, but the flasher was installed in 1999, which seems to have lowered the rate.

Locally, the intersection of Stevenstown, Plains and Upper Pond Roads is recognized as being most critically in need of site distance improvements. Funds were raised for necessary work, but the State failed to come up with its share through the minor collector program.

Issues in Transportation:

Standards in the road and land use ordinances should be reviewed to ensure that they reflect current practices and technology. Since adoption of our ordinances, State Law has expanded to regulate new driveways and entrances onto state highways. The town's ordinance should not duplicate that requirement.

Private roads will continue to be an issue. Existing private roads will be built on, and new ones will be created. It is critical that roads be built and maintained to a standard that, at a minimum, permits the passage of emergency vehicles. When road associations' bills come due for paving or reconstruction, there may be pressure to have the town accept them.

Maintenance of town roads is inadequately funded. The town will have to explore ways to do a better job of prioritizing its investments and making its dollars go farther to cost-effectively assure compliance with our standards. The town may at some point be forced to decide to set a lower standard for maintenance. However, the town may also have to consider investing more in shoulder improvements to support increased interest in walking and biking.

How can the town address the transportation needs of senior citizens and others who are unable to operate their own automobile? This appears to be a significant and growing issue for the town. This and other questions point to the reality of transportation as a regional network with regional solutions being the most effective. Overall, the town needs to expand its range of transportation alternatives.

Achievements:

As of 2000, the Town was deficient in its regulation of road construction and access, particularly for commercial development. The 2000 plan recommended improved standards for access points, access to rear lands, off-street parking, roadside landscaping, and construction of new roads. The Road Ordinance in 2001 and Land Use Ordinance in 2004 addressed these concerns; however, some of these provisions have become dated and should be revisited. The subdivision ordinance was amended to include the recommended provision to restrict access to public roads for subdivisions of more than four lots.

Local maintenance has been a continuing issue. The RSMS assessment program recommended by the 2000 plan is just now being implemented. Recommended improvements to the town garage have been completed, and the public works crews now receive regular training on road maintenance and best management practices for erosion control.

The plan recommended an effort by the Town to persuade Maine DOT to locate a park-and-ride lot somewhere in Litchfield. The Town has made these efforts, but they have not resulted in a lot.

Policies and Strategies for the Transportation System:

Policies:

1. Prioritize local and regional maintenance and improvement needs to promote safe, efficient, and optimal use of the transportation system;

2. Promote public health and safety and enhance liveability through coordination of targeted transportation improvements and planned changes in land use and development patterns.

3. Plan alternative transportation opportunities for all citizens, including children, the elderly, and disabled.

4. Promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state and state aid highway network.

Recommended Actions:

A. The Road Commissioner (Town Manager) and Selectmen should establish a process for maintaining an inventory of the condition of town roads and developing annual paving and infrastructure plans, through the Road Surface Management System (RSMS).

B. The Planning Board should examine the issue of new development along substandard private roads, possibly tying road improvements to building permit requirements.

C. The Board of Selectmen should appoint a Road Advisory Committee. The committee will review the RSMS recommendations, advise on more cost-effective maintenance and

improvement measures, and provide expertise on other transportation issues.

D. The Town should continue to provide training for the public works department on best management practices for erosion control, hazardous materials handling, and other areas of need.

E. The Board of Selectmen and Town Manager should continue to coordinate on regional transportation planning with neighboring communities, regional entities, and MaineDOT.

F. The Town Manager, in cooperation with the Cobbossee Watershed District and Tacoma Lakes Improvement Society, should continue to monitor the condition and use of camp roads along waterbodies, and report on conditions that may affect the provision of emergency services on those roads.

G. The Board of Selectmen should appoint or assign an advisory committee to deal with emerging issues for senior citizens, among them the mobility, affordability, and health impacts of senior transportation, and identify strategies to remedy the problem.

H. The Town should advocate with MaineDOT for the placement of Car Lots/Ride Share Lots within the immediate region. Suggested locations are Richmond at the I-295 junction, Plains Road at Upper Pond and Stevenson, and Route 197 at Farrin Road.

I. The Planning Board should review local ordinances to ensure that they are consistent with regional and state transportation policies and rules, including the Sensible Transportation Policy Act, State access management regulations, and traffic permitting regulations and provide opportunity for alternative transportation modes where applicable.

J. The Town Manager should work with MaineDOT to fund and program improvements to dangerous intersections on state aid roads, specifically the intersection of Stevenstown, Plains and Upper Pond Roads.

K. Together with the inventory of town roads, the Road Commissioner should inventory culvert placements and seek outside funding for replacement if available to assist fish passage.

11. Litchfield's Economic Opportunity

State Goal: Promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.

Our Top Recommendation:

A. The Town Manager and Board of Selectman should research TIF's and develop a TIF policy or alternate economic incentives.

The vitality of a community is often measured by its economic activity. A healthy economy is necessary for a growing population, and triggers demands for housing, recreation, social, and cultural services. But a healthy economy is not the same as a large local employment base. Litchfield is a good example of the need to look at economic development from a regional perspective.

This chapter profiles local and regional economic conditions. It includes a great deal of statistical information garnered from state and federal sources, as well as some observations on Litchfield's economic circumstances.

Statistical Profile:

[NOTE: The census bureau has changed the way it collects and reports economic data. The bureau now does annual surveys instead of the "long form.", so that the data reported in the 2010 category is actually information collected between 2007 and 2011 in the "American Community Survey" (ACS). This means that data sets are not entirely compatible over time.]

Per Capita and Household Incomes:

The most conventional measure of the economic health of a community is the income of its residents. The census reports two basic types of income measures: "Per-Capita Income," (PCI) which is simply the aggregate income of the town divided by its population, and "Household Income," which is the reported income (usually the median) of the households within the town. The latter is more helpful from a planning perspective because it reflects what households actually earn.

Per capita income is particularly useful for comparison among geographies, in our case towns. Litchfield had a 2010 PCI (technically, average income from 2007 to 2011, adjusted to 2010 dollars) of $25,379. That puts the community about average among towns in our region (inset at right). Litchfield's growth rate is fairly healthy, too; among neighboring towns, only Monmouth has a higher growth rate and West Gardiner a significantly higher income. Kennebec County, in 2010, had a PCI of $25,023, and a growth rate of only 35 percent. Maine overall had a PCI of $26,195.

Regional Perspective: Per Capita Income

Town	2000 PCI	2010 PCI	% change
Litchfield	**$ 17,835**	**$25,379**	**42.3 %**
Sabattus	$ 17,451	$21,141	21.1 %
Richmond	$ 17,896	$25,431	42.1 %
Monmouth	$ 17,551	$25,326	44.3 %
Wales	$ 16,963	$23,812	40.4 %
West Gardiner	$ 19,832	$26,652	34.4 %

It should be noted that the overall increase of the cost of living for the 2000's was 28.4 percent. That means that people are not 40 percent richer than they were ten years ago. Litchfield's 2000 per capita income, in 2010 dollars, would have been $22,900, so the income growth "after inflation" was only 10.8 percent.

Household income is a much less theoretical figure. It represents the actual budget that most families have to draw from. Two factors make it perform differently from per capita income: 1) decreasing household size over time, and 2) changes in the number of members of the household receiving income. The shift in income levels over time is illustrated in Table 9. Some of this can be anticipated as inflation builds incomes, but in just ten years, the town seems to have more than tripled the number of households earning over $100,000.

Table 9: Household Income by Category: 2000 compared to 2010

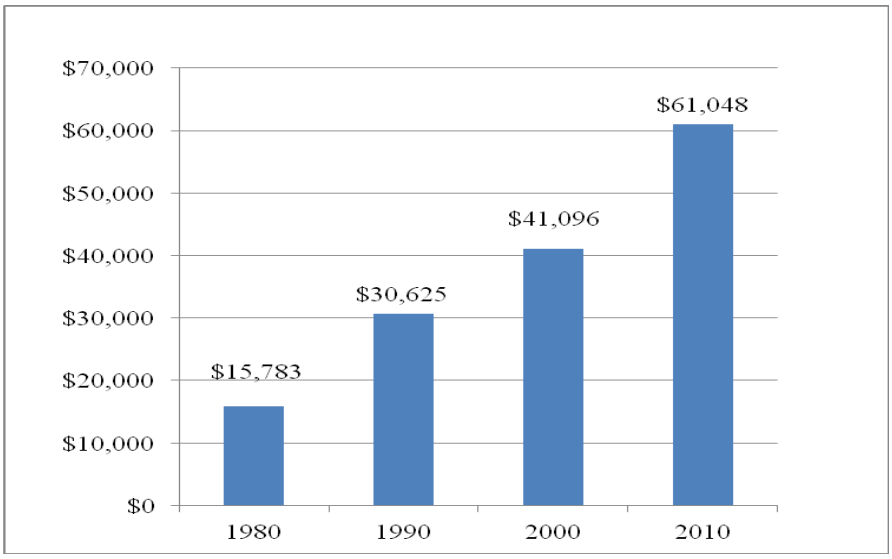
Range	2000	Percent	2010	Percent
Less than $10,000	86	8.0	45	3.4
$10 – 25,000	91	8.4	162	12.1
$25 – 50,000	413	38.4	330	24.7
$50 – 100,000	426	39.5	577	43.0
$100,000 and over	61	5.7	226	16.9

Source: US Census

Median household income measures the midway point of incomes in the community – half of household incomes are over the point and half are under. In 2010, Litchfield's was $61,048, a substantial (48.5 percent) jump from 2000 (Figure 12, following page). Much of the gain is eaten up by inflation; the rate of inflation for the 1990's was 32 percent, for the 2000's 28.4 percent.

Median household income does not equate to "average salary." In fact, not all household income is from wages. Only 14 of every 15 households in Litchfield have income from earnings. Almost 30 percent receive social security income – a total of 394 households (up from 268 in 2000.) Over 100 Litchfield households receive either SSI or cash public assistance; 148 receive food stamps.

Figure 12: Growth in Median Household Income, 1980-2010



Associated with household income levels is the number of households living in poverty. There may still be wage-earners in these households, but for whatever reason, they fall below the poverty line. "Poverty line" is not a pre-determined number; it varies from place to place in the US, and according to the number of people in the household. The census does not report what the actual poverty line is, but reports on the number of individuals and households below that line in each community.

In Litchfield, 11 percent of all residents are below poverty level. While this seems a high number, it is less than the figure for Kennebec County, which is 12.9 percent. The links between poverty and family situation are pretty clear. Only 7.7 percent of the elderly are below poverty level, but 16 percent of children are. Only 2.2 percent of married couple families are below the poverty level, but 45 percent of single-mother families are.

Litchfield's Workforce:

Economic health depends almost entirely on the workforce – its availability and skills. The labor force, as the census bureau interprets it, is a subset of the working-age population – everyone over age 16, including those already retired.

In Litchfield, the labor force in 2009 consisted of 2,014 individuals, 72 percent of all persons of working age. That is actually a slight decline from the 2000 labor force of 2,042 people (the number of elderly has grown by 12 percent in the interval). The gender breakdown is 1,013 women and 1,001 men.

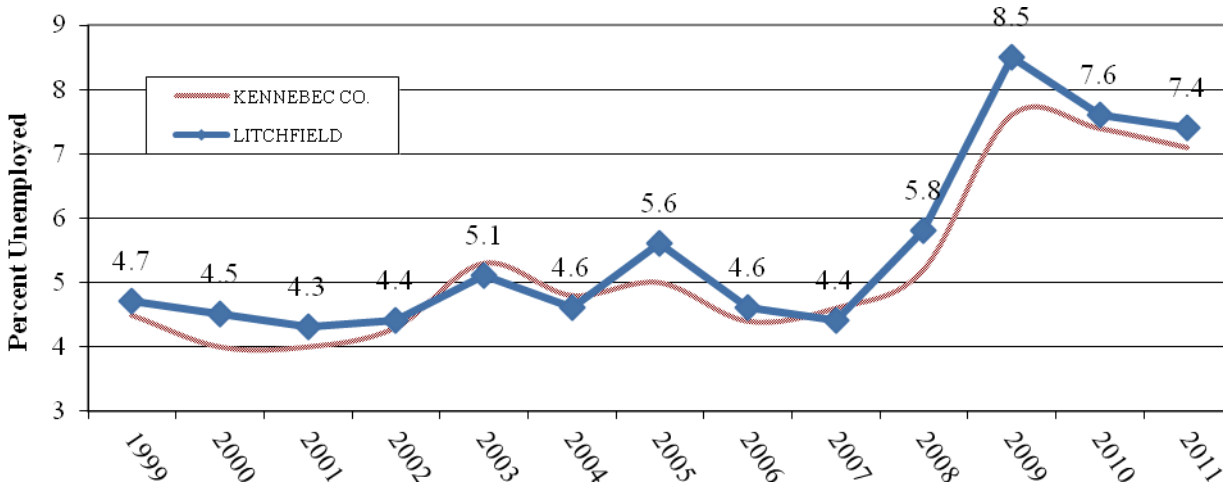
There are 1,340 households in Litchfield, so that means an average of 1.5 workers per household. This is a substantially higher ratio than in Kennebec County, which averages only 1.26 workers per household. This may partly explain Litchfield's higher income levels.

Although the classical concept is that the male is the bread winner in the household, that presumption does not hold water in Litchfield. 76.3 percent of working-age males are employed, but 67.9 percent of women are as well, and there are more women than men in total. In families with school-aged children, 82 percent of them have both parents in the workforce.

The unemployment rate tells us what percentage of the workforce does not have jobs. Media and planners monitor the unemployment rate as a measure of the health of the economy. Annual figures are reported by the Maine Department of Labor (DOL), based on monthly surveys. The trend in unemployment is displayed in Figure 13 below.

The DOL estimate of unemployment for Litchfield in 2011 was 7.4 percent. Although this is much higher than our historical average, it is considerably below the national average of about 9 percent throughout 2011. Maine's average was a little above Litchfield's, at 7.9 percent, and Kennebec County's was a little below, at 7.1 percent. Litchfield has a history of just slightly higher unemployment than Kennebec County. We are currently on a positive trend. Litchfield's unemployment rate in the recent recession peaked in 2009, though the town still has a long way to go to regain the employment levels of the early 2000's.

Figure 13: Litchfield Unemployment History, 1999-2011



Litchfield is a relatively small player in a regional economy and that must be considered in any economic planning. The Maine DOL places Litchfield as part of the Augusta Labor Market Area. The Augusta LMA has a labor force (in 2010) of 43,140; Litchfield's piece is only 4.8 percent of that.

Litchfield contributes workers to the regional economy, as do all small towns in this area. In 2010, nearly 1,400 workers left Litchfield to work in other towns, while only 165 came to work in Litchfield from elsewhere and only 78 residents actually work in town. Litchfield workers can easily commute to many destinations. Even though Litchfield is in the Augusta LMA by virtue of being in Kennebec County, the largest fraction of workers goes into Lewiston or Auburn, with another good chunk going to Bath or Brunswick. The new Turnpike interchange in Sabattus has also opened up the Portland job market. Table 10, on the following page, describes the major destinations of workers, as well as where the people who work in Litchfield come from.

Though Litchfield appears to be convenient to several job centers, residents seem to travel further afield for work every year. In 2010, the average travel time for a commuter from

Litchfield was 32 minutes. The average commuting time in 2000 was 28 minutes, which was up from 24 minutes in 1990.

Table 10: Commuting Patterns in Litchfield, 2010

Litchfield Residents working in:		Litchfield Workers Coming From:	
Auburn	91	Gardiner	30
Lewiston	280	Litchfield	175
Brunswick	57	West Gardiner	32
Portland	52		
Augusta	231		
Litchfield	78		
Bath	85		

Source: American Community Survey

Worker Profiles:

Table 11 profiles the occupations of Litchfield workers in 2000 and 2010. These are general categories and even their definitions change over time. As our economy changes, so do job descriptions, and many occupations today did not even exist a decade ago.

Table 11: Occupational Profile of Litchfield Workers: 2000, 2010

Occupation	2000	Percent of total	2010	Percent of Total
Professional and Managerial	508	32.1	460	25.1
Sales and Office	435	27.5	490	26.1
Service	178	11.2	448	23.8
Farm and Forestry	15	0.9	21	1.1
Construction, Maintenance	172	10.9	292	15.0
Production, Transportation	276	17.4	193	10.3

Source: American Community Survey

The big change, according to the numbers, is the shift into service occupations from production and management. Although service jobs in general would pay less than management or production, it is probable that the growth here comes from health-related services. Because of the increase in the labor force over ten years, even though sales/office occupations gained in numbers, their percentage of the labor force declined.

The census also classifies workers by the industry of employment. This is not as good as describing a person's actual job, because a manufacturing industry, for instance, may have secretaries, managers, sales staff and skilled machinists all together. But this measure does gauge which sectors of the economy are doing well for Litchfield residents.

Table 12 identifies the significant industrial categories. The table illustrates what we may already know empirically – manufacturing is shrinking as we shift to a service economy. The

town gained 125 jobs in health and educational services alone, another 91 in other services. The town lost percentage in manufacturing and public administration.

Table 12: Industrial Classification of Litchfield Workers: 2000 and 2010

Industry of Employment	2000	Percent of total	2010	Percent of total
Construction	87	5.5	172	9.1
Manufacturing	263	16.6	250	13.3
Wholesale and Retail	274	17.3	335	17.8
Services, exc. Health and education	327	20.6	413	21.9
Health and education services	353	22.3	478	25.4
Agriculture and Forestry	22	1.4	39	2.1
Public Administration	153	9.7	153	8.1

Source: American Community Survey

Self-employed workers, just 108 in number, accounted for 5.7 percent of the workforce. Private wage workers comprise 72 percent of the workforce, with public sector employees accounting for the balance.

These figures must be considered when it comes to planning to develop or support local or regional economic growth. Manufacturing, for example, makes the big splash when a mill cuts back or shuts down. Yet, it is clear from the figures that manufacturing supports only 13 percent of the community's economy. The workforce has shifted to a service-based economy; job growth in that sector is what we should be focusing on. Table 12 also showed a jump in construction employment. Construction is usually tied to overall economic growth, and fluctuates with the regional and national economy.

Workforce Education and Training:

Adapting to new economic opportunities also requires that our workforce be educated differently. A transition to service-based occupations and away from traditional blue collar jobs should be reflected in an educational level – years of schooling – on the rise. Jobs that require mastery of math, science and technical skill are more likely to flow to areas with higher educational levels. College is a basic requirement for many professional, health-related, and educational professions. There is also a direct correlation between education and income levels.

Litchfield is indeed increasing its educational levels. In 1990, only 79 percent of the adult population had a high school education, and 14 percent had a college education. In 2000, the high school graduation rate rose to 86 percent, and college graduation rate to 21 percent. In 2010, high school attainment rose to 94 percent, and college to 24 percent. Over 540 residents now have college degrees, some 200 have advanced degrees.

These numbers put Litchfield well up among other towns in the region (inset on following page). Our high school and college graduation rates are both the highest in the region. The town is above high school attainment levels for Kennebec County (90.6 percent) and Maine (90.3 percent), but below college attainment rates of 25 percent for Kennebec County and 26.8

percent for Maine. This means that this community is relatively well-positioned to take advantage of new economic opportunity.

Regional Perspective:
Educational Attainment -- 2010

Town	High School	College
Litchfield	**94.0**	**24.0**
Sabattus	78.7	11.1
Richmond	87.3	18.8
Monmouth	89.6	18.6
Wales	87.0	14.3
West Gardiner	92.6	19.2

Despite the improvement in educational levels, a rapid shift in job opportunities has the potential to leave some people behind. The progress in educational attainment does not address those individuals that have been around for years and now need more education to change with the times. To do this, we need to ensure access to educational and training opportunities in the region, ranging from community and technical colleges to adult education programs through the school district. As a rural town, Litchfield does not have the same convenience of access to these services.

Local and Regional Perspective

Litchfield has a very small economic footprint. As indicated earlier in this chapter, only 78 Litchfield residents work in the same town where they live. Another 165 out-of-town residents commute into Litchfield for work while nine times as many go the other direction.

Litchfield's business community consists of a large number of very small businesses. The schools are clearly the largest single employer. The towns business registry lists 184 businesses, but the vast majority are single-person or even part-time enterprises. Many are in the construction (44 businesses) or landscaping (18) trades, operating out of their home or a small shop. There are 27 businesses associated with agriculture or forestry. There are 12 auto repair businesses and two computer businesses. There are only three retail stores, three restaurants, and four overnight accommodations.

The town has no economic development infrastructure. There is no business association or economic development committee. The Town has not adopted a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, and when asked recently to do so, declined. (Tax Increment Financing is a state-authorized means of reducing a commercial property's tax impact without losing the valuation.) Litchfield does have some economic assets that could be leveraged into a certain kind of economic opportunity – primarily natural resources such as farmland, forests, and lakes.

Litchfield's Land Use Ordinance regulates the location of commercial development and sets development standards. The Village District accommodates several existing businesses, and the Planned Development District is designed for new development. The PD District takes advantage of the town's principal economic development asset, the state highways. The Rural District restricts businesses to those that are agriculture-related or cottage industry. Development standards in all districts ensure that new development will not impact neighboring landowners or environmental resources. Since the adoption of the ordinance, nearly all new commercial development has been in the Planned Development District, the sole exception being a greenhouse in the Rural District.

The strength of the economy regionally has a significant impact upon growth locally. Though Litchfield is part of the Augusta Labor Market Area, the Lewiston/Auburn Metropolitan Area is a larger draw, with more Litchfield residents working in Lewiston alone than Augusta. The Lewiston/Auburn area has a different market profile. While Augusta is dominated by state government, Lewiston/Auburn has a more traditional service-and-manufacturing economy. With the presence of the Sabattus Interchange, the vigorous and complex Portland labor market becomes more accessible as well.

A regional perspective is most valuable when it comes to economic development efforts. Marketing and business solicitation on a regional level is far more cost-effective than when done by individual towns, and the impacts of economic development seldom are confined inside a town's boundary. Litchfield, itself, has little infrastructure for major employment opportunities. The town has no traditional business district, nor business development zones, nor public water and sewer availability.

There are a few regional economic development groups available, but Litchfield is in a bit of a black hole. Kennebec County developers seldom think as far south as Litchfield – even Western Kennebec Economic Development Association, centered in Winthrop. No Litchfield businesses are even members of the Kennebec Valley Chamber of Commerce. Androscoggin development associations do not venture into Kennebec County.

Issues for the Local Economy:

Litchfield's local economy is closely tied to the regional economy, as 95 percent of Litchfield workers leave town to find work. Even so, Litchfield is isolated from major service centers and does not actively participate in regional development initiatives.

Incomes and educational levels in Litchfield are generally higher than those in Kennebec County, even though the unemployment rate is slightly higher as well. More than half the workforce is engaged in the service sector. This suggests a shift in jobs from lower-paying sectors to higher-paying ones, and a labor force generally able to take advantage of opportunities.

Litchfield has never had an industrial infrastructure or geographic focal point for commercial development. This limits the town's opportunities for economic growth without major investment. The town does have a large number of small businesses, mostly providing services to local residents. The town has potential for development of recreation or resource-based opportunities. Any improvement of the local economic situation would have to be based on a reasoned analysis of our strengths and weaknesses as a community. In other words, what do we have to offer potential employers?

Despite rapid growth in population, local economic opportunity lags behind. Most residents must commute to employment centers not only for jobs but for shopping, services, and entertainment as well.

Achievements:

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan recognized the lack of economic development infrastructure, and recommended that the Town appoint its own economic development committee and work closely with regional economic development groups. The Town did make an attempt at forming a committee, but there was insufficient interest. The Town monitors regional economic development activity, but does not actively participate.

The Land Use Ordinance restricts the diversity of business opportunities in the Rural District, but acknowledges the realities of a rural economy by generally permitting farm- and forest-based enterprises and cottage industry, as recommended by the 2000 plan.

Policies and Strategies for Economic Opportunities:

Policies:

1. Support the ability of Litchfield residents to find jobs through regional economic development, continuing education opportunities, and an adequate transportation system.

2. Support the expansion of the local business community.

3. Identify opportunities for enhancement of local economic sectors: agriculture, forestry, recreation.

4. Continue to regulate and manage local business development to appropriate areas of the community.

Recommended Actions:

A. The Town Manager and Board of Selectmen should seek out opportunities to work with regional economic development organizations to improve the economy.

B. The Town Manager should assign responsibility for developing an economic development strategy for the community. The strategy should explore specific ways to take advantage of Litchfield's natural assets (farming, forestry, recreation).

C. The Town should continue to support expansion of communications infrastructure throughout the community. The Town should work with local cable and internet service providers to seek expansion of access.

D. The Planning Board should continue to maintain and refine commercial development standards in the Land Use Ordinance. The ordinance should refine standards for cottage industry to promote "working from home" while preserving the residential character of rural neighborhoods. The standards should distinguish between low impact and high impact types of cottage industry.

E. The Town Manager and Board of Selectman should research TIF's and develop a TIF policy or alternate economic incentives.

F. The Town should work with RSU 4 administration to develop adult/continuing education offerings at schools within the community.

12. Farming and Forestry

State Goal: To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development that threatens those resources.

Our Top Recommendation:

A. The Planning Board should not restrict the viability of resource-based activities within land use ordinances, including permitting of greenhouses, farm stands, sawmills and pick-your-own. The Planning Board should adjust provisions as necessary to support new opportunities in rural economic growth.

Litchfield's traditional community image draws heavily on its agricultural heritage. Although we are past the era when most of the population owned a farm or worked in the woods, rural and suburbanizing towns like Litchfield still value the traditional land uses that keep the community healthy and productive. In the public opinion survey conducted in 2012, "supporting local agriculture" ranked as the clear #1 most important issue among townspeople. "Supporting local forestry" ranked #5 (of 14). Farm and forest landscapes were the two most important considerations to residents' perception of Litchfield's rural character.

There is another reason for maintaining farm, forest, and other open space land – they are good for the tax rate. Some towns, particularly fast-developing ones, conclude that, in order to get on top of rising taxes and service demands, they have to add more development to their tax base. But the opposite is true; open land pays very little in taxes, but demands even less in services, effectively subsidizing developed uses. The same cannot be said of commercial, residential, or any other type of development.

To illustrate, an acre of farm or forest land valued at $1,000 in Litchfield would pay $11.95 in taxes at last year's 11.95 mill rate. The farmland may require police and fire protection and road access, but would not require education, recreation, library, cemetery, a transfer station or any of several other local functions that together make up more than two-thirds of the town's annual expenditures. The same thousand dollars of "developed" valuation requires three times the expenditures. These figures show why, throughout Kennebec County, Maine, and the US, taxes in rural areas are lower than in suburbs and cities.

Farming in Litchfield:

Farming is a vital and continuing part of Litchfield's tradition and economy. Agriculture formed the backbone of our economy until very recently. A combination of changes in the agriculture industry, competition, demand for suburban land, improvements to transportation and other factors have contributed to a significant drop-off in traditional agriculture.

There are, however, signs of a transition in farming. It is a parallel to a small retail store learning to compete with the "big boxes." It's been demonstrated that large, commodity-based farms such as dairy and apple struggle in Maine to compete with other parts of the world. The emerging success story among Maine farmers is the small, labor-intensive farm that can market unique or superior crops locally. This approach requires a whole different set of skills among farmers, and a different support structure from the community.

This trend can best be demonstrated by numbers from the USDA *Census of Agriculture*. This data is only available at the county level, but it shows the trends. In 1997, there were 494 farms in Kennebec County (up from a low point of 455 in 1992), and 248 full-time farmers. The average farm size was 194 acres. In 2007, Kennebec County could boast 649 farms, with 308 farmers. That is an increase of 31 percent in the number of farms in what many people thought was a dying industry. At the same time, the average farm size shrunk to 127 acres and the total acreage in farms declined by about 12 percent. The value of products sold held about steady. The agricultural industry, like other successful ones, is learning how to do more with less.

Many dairy and other commodity-based farms in Central Maine have been lost due to changes in the market, land development demands; high operating costs, and an aging farming population. While the food on our tables may come from anywhere in the world, it is still important for the health of the local economy to support locally grown food products. Agricultural land not only provides local incomes but preserves some of the most attractive land within the community. This is one of the reasons why Litchfield seeks to promote and preserve its existing agricultural resources.

Litchfield has a mix of operating farms as of 2012. The diversity of farm types and locations highlights the health of the farm economy and the difficulty in trying to "fix farming." The list does not include the many hobby and subsistence farms/gardens throughout town, which also contribute to rural values and preserve open space.

- 3 Vegetable/Fruit farms (Hallowell Rd, Huntington Hill Rd, Plains Rd)
- 1 Christmas Tree farm (Pine Tree Rd)
- 2 Retail Horticulture (Maxwell Rd, Rt. 197)
- 2 Dairy Farms (Stevenstown Rd, Plains Rd)
- 2 Equine Stables/Hay farms (Hallowell Rd, Upper Pond/Stevenstown Rd)
- 9 Cattle/Hay farms (one on Academy Rd, one on Plains Rd, four on Hallowell Rd, two on Rt. 197, one on Small Rd.)

Despite the motivation to promote agriculture it must be recognized that municipal resources are limited in their utility, particularly since farming is so diverse. One of the few tools

a town can use to affect farming is through land use controls. Land use regulation need not be an impediment to agricultural operations – nor can it make a significant difference unless other tools are used at state and federal government levels.

While protecting farmland from encroaching development, regulations can make it easier to establish the kinds of "value-added" operations that many farms rely on to supplement their income. Since local sales and marketing is one of the keys to the new farm economy, towns also have an opportunity to work with local farmers to increase visibility, access, and market opportunities. The Litchfield Fair is a prime example of the power of the community to promote local farming. Litchfield's business registry lists at least eight rural operations dealing in farm produce or value-added production.

One of the most problematic changes that can occur in a rural area with an agricultural base is the pressures associated with housing development. The demands of new homeowners for a pristine residential environment do not leave room for the sights, sounds and smells usually associated with a farm. Conflicts arise from placing new housing too close to traditional farms, and it results in the eventual demise of the farm in favor of the home. Another issue is that over time the support system necessary for local agriculture erodes, making it difficult for remaining operations to obtain equipment, feed, and supplies needed to carry out their operations.

While it is important for the Town to identify what it can do locally to promote farming it is even more critical that state and federal officials employ strategies at those levels of government that will also aid agriculture. Items of particular interest include: taxation issues (especially current use valuation for farms), mitigating market pressures from development, providing for the retirement and health care needs of farmers, and allowing younger people to enter the occupation at an affordable level.

The shift in paradigm for farming is already reflected to some extent in Maine's policies and programs. The Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry has developed a vigorous local marketing and promotion program (*Get Real, Get Maine).* DACF has also subsidized and promoted an explosion in local farmers markets, including markets in Lewiston, Winthrop, Bowdoinham and Gardiner. DACF also created such promotions as Maine Maple Sunday and Open Farm Day.

Also, the definition of "farmland" for the purpose of farmland tax assessments has been amended to encompass much smaller farms (as small as 5 acres). Litchfield has 40 parcels enrolled as "farm and open space," totaling 942 acres (2010 valuation figures).

Maine Farmland Trust, a non-governmental, non-profit organization promotes farming by working with farmers to preserve their land and transfer it while maintaining it in farming upon retirement. Other land trusts, including Kennebec Land Trust, have the capacity to accept agricultural and conservation easements, which are appropriate in some circumstances to preserve land while reducing its tax exposure. KLT has three easements in Litchfield, though they are forested land.

Important Agricultural Soils

Farmland soils are an important element in a farm economy, though of slightly lesser importance as farms become smaller and more diverse. State law requires towns to recognize prime farmland soils and incorporate them into planning and subdivision review. Litchfield has been pro-active in this regard, requiring the identification and protection of farmland soils in its land use and subdivision review long before being required to by the State.

Prime soils have been identified for Litchfield by the planning board in consultation with local farmers. These may not necessarily be the soils that the State has identified as "Prime" but are best for the type of farming typical of Litchfield. The Town has two categories:

- Prime Agricultural Soils: Deerfield (DeB), Paxton (PbB, PbC, PdB), Windsor (WmB), and Woodbridge (WrB).
- Agricultural Soils of Local Importance: Hartland (HfC), Hinckley (HkB), Lyman (LyB), Scio (SkB), and Woodbridge (WrC).

The *Farm and Forest Resources Map* shows the mapped location of these soils in town. They are found mainly along the hill tops and ridges of town (thus along the north-south roads). The most valuable of these soils is on Huntington Hill, Springer Hill, the Hallowell Road (north and south of Route 126), Dennis Hill and Pine Tree Road, central Stevenstown Road and the lower Pond Road.

Forestry:

Forested land accounts for 44 percent of the land area (approximately 11,000 acres) of Litchfield. While the vast majority of this land is in woodlots or unmanaged holdings, there is a considerable amount of forest activity going on. There are nine certified tree farms in Litchfield, totaling 771 acres. There are no acreage holdings by major industrial forest land owners.

The Town itself owns approximately 550 acres of forested land, some of which is the Smithfield Plantation forest. Most of it is under forest management plans, though the quality of the woodland is variable and any parcel could be sold with permission of the Town Meeting.

Maine's Tree Growth tax program allows land owners a lower valuation (in the neighborhood of $300 per acre) if they have a forest management plan in place for their holdings. A penalty is imposed if land is subsequently taken out of the program and developed. This program has helped to preserve or maintain land in active forest production. The Town is reimbursed by the State for a portion of the lost tax valuation it incurs. The amount of funds returned to towns from the State does not fully recover the lost taxes, so the Town in small measure subsidizes enrolled forest land.

A total of 3,668 acres of forest land is enrolled in the state's Tree Growth program as of 2010, broken down as follows: 342 acres softwood; 1,925 acres mixed; 1,400 acres hardwood. Litchfield ranks #8 in the county (among 29 towns) in acreage classified as tree growth, although the 3,668 acres represents a fairly steep decline from the 4,531 acres classified in 1998.

Active forest management is a normal land use activity for a rural community. Unlike farming which tends to upset residential neighbors, forests tend to be a better neighbor to residential uses – at least until the year that harvesting activities take place. Forestry operations sometimes generate complaints from nearby homes as forested views enjoyed for years disappear or from the noise of saws and tractors. Some of these issues arise as more new housing locates in rural portions of the community once mostly occupied by farms, forest and open space.

Forestry operations and continued participation in the tree growth program should be encouraged by the Town. Likewise, property owners and woods workers need to follow State laws and regulations regarding forest practices especially those that apply to clearcutting, shoreland areas, and other locations susceptible to erosion. These issues are important considering the town's many water resources. The Town through its Code Enforcement Officer can refer any problems to the State for enforcement whenever necessary to ensure that State Laws are being followed.

Issues in Farming and Forestry:

Farming and forest management, together with other resource management activities, is typical within rural communities, but often comes into disfavor as farm towns transition into suburbs. Commercial activities can often interfere with the quiet enjoyment of a homeowner. On the other hand, pets, ATV's and other recreational pursuits may also interfere with farms and forests. It is essential to build and maintain awareness of the rights of other people in the neighborhood.

Natural resource management benefits the community by providing open space, preserving clean water and resource values, and keeping taxes low. The demand on public services is negligible. However, farmers in particular have to make a living. They should be given the opportunity to do so, even if it includes activities that are not directly tied to growing food. We also need to work at supporting them, through local marketing and promotion of farms and farm produce.

Achievements:

The 2000 Comprehensive Plan recommended that the Town be sensitive to the needs of farm operations particularly in developing regulations. The Subdivision Ordinance implemented this recommendation by mandating open space housing subdivisions and requiring that developers show areas of prime farmland – before this became a state requirement. The Land Use Ordinance permits a large variety of resource-related commercial activities in the Rural District. An additional set of performance standards requires developers to be aware of active farm operations and design accordingly.

Policies and Strategies for Agriculture and Forestry:

Policies:

1. Continue to protect land areas identified as prime/active farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.

2. Support farming and forestry as active economic enterprises and incorporate into local economic development planning and promotion.

Recommended Actions:

A. The Planning Board should not restrict the viability of resource-based activities within land use ordinances, including permitting of greenhouses, farm stands, sawmills and pick-your-own. The Planning Board should adjust provisions as necessary to support new opportunities in rural economic growth.

B. The Planning Board should obtain good neighbor standards for new development located adjacent to an existing agricultural or forest operation, designed to make homeowners aware of some of the common rural land use activities and to protect agricultural sites from negative impacts from development. These good neighbor standards should be in the form of a handout to be distributed to new residents in a welcome packet.

C. The Town Assessor should continue to encourage property owners through an outreach program to take advantage of the State Tree Growth, Open Space, and Farmland Tax Programs.

D. The Planning Board should consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester and with Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservation District staff when evaluating new land use regulations pertaining to farm or forest land management practices.

E. The Town Office should promote local farms and farm products by highlighting their availability on town office bulletin boards, distribution tables, and the *Sodalite.*

F. The Planning Board should consider incorporating areas of prime farmland soils with farming operations into areas designated as critical rural areas.

13. Land Use and Development

State Goal: Encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of the community, while protecting the state's rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.

Historical Pattern of Development:

Litchfield's history is that of a farming community. The area around Litchfield began to be settled prior to the Revolutionary War. Though the first settlers were probably trappers, farming quickly became the dominant land use of the town. The topography and soils offered a good basis for this form of development. Since farms were mostly subsistence operations, farm homesteads were widely distributed on small parcels throughout the town.

On the other hand, the area offered fewer opportunities for either trade or power by means of water resources. Although four villages emerged – Litchfield Corner, Batchelder's Corner, the Plains, and Purgatory – these were crossroads or small mill sites, and none ever gained critical mass to become a true commercial village. Manufacturing was entirely tied to Litchfield's farming and forest products, and when the farm economy went into a tailspin and population declined in the post-civil war period, industry dried up as well.

Litchfield was "rediscovered" in the 1960's and 1970's – not so much for agriculture but for a rural way of life close enough to Augusta and Lewiston to commute by car. Litchfield's population has quintupled since 1940, while neither farming nor commerce has gained appreciably. Individual house lots are widely distributed on small parcels throughout the town.

Some of the rediscovery of Litchfield came in the form of cottages and camps clustered around several local lakes. Roughly one-fifth of the local housing stock is in the form of seasonal residences, either lakefront or nearby.

Contemporary Pattern of Development:

Litchfield does not have a nucleus on which to focus its growth. The town is crossed by several state highways, but the two most important are on opposite sides of town. Neither is even moderately developed commercially, and the town has no desire to promote a strip development pattern. There is neither public water nor sewer systems available within the town, nor is there adequate density to support their development. As noted above, none of the four villages has ever grown from more than a crossroads. While many of the public buildings are clustered – the town office, fairgrounds, fire station, old Litchfield Academy, public works –

they are strategically located in the geographic center of town. This is historically near Plains village, but contains almost exclusively residential and institutional uses.

Commercial development over the past couple of decades has been very light, consisting primarily of service stations and small shops. Existing businesses are small, tend to go into existing buildings, and are not of the type to generate traffic or become a nucleus for further development.

In contrast to the level of commercial development, growth in housing has been substantial and vigorous. Litchfield expanded by 264 year-round homes between 1990 and 2000, and by 251 between 2000 and 2010. The recession-induced housing slump has slowed development to 18 new homes in tax year 2011 and six in tax year 2012. As noted, the lack of focal points for development, lack of infrastructure, and abundance of developable land has resulted in the dispersed pattern of development within Litchfield today.

Existing Land Use Plan/Regulation:

The existing land use plan dates from the 2000 Comprehensive Plan, with some small changes made in 2007. That plan noted the same difficulties the Town faces today: "Based upon past development trends, it would appear that rural areas and especially roadside lots will continue to be sold and developed by individual landowners. It is further recognized that without municipal sewer and water and a clearly established village center it is difficult to implement many planning strategies designed to promote compact development and reduce sprawl." (*Plan, pp. 69-70).*

The 2000 Plan was the first time the Town had attempted to designate growth areas, and resulted in the establishment of three district designations: Village Districts (encompassing Batchelders Corner, Purgatory and Litchfield Corner), Planned Development Districts adjacent to the villages along portions of Route 9/126 and 197, and the remaining Rural District. A Land Use Ordinance was enacted in 2004 to implement these districts. It replaced a pre-existing Site Review Ordinance and joined existing Shoreland Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances, which were also updated. See the *Existing Land Use Districts Map* (following page). The Land Use Ordinance has been revised in 2007, 2011, and 2012.

Based on recommendations of the plan, performance standards were added or upgraded. The plan had called for an open space design option for new subdivisions over 10 acres; the Subdivision Ordinance now mandates it for all subdivisions.

The Land Use Ordinance does not allow the more common forms of commercial development (including stores, offices, restaurants) in the Rural District, permitting only businesses relating to natural resources, warehouses, and low-impact cottage industries. It does not permit mobile home parks in either Village or Rural Areas. The ordinance also instituted dimensional standards, as shown in the table below.

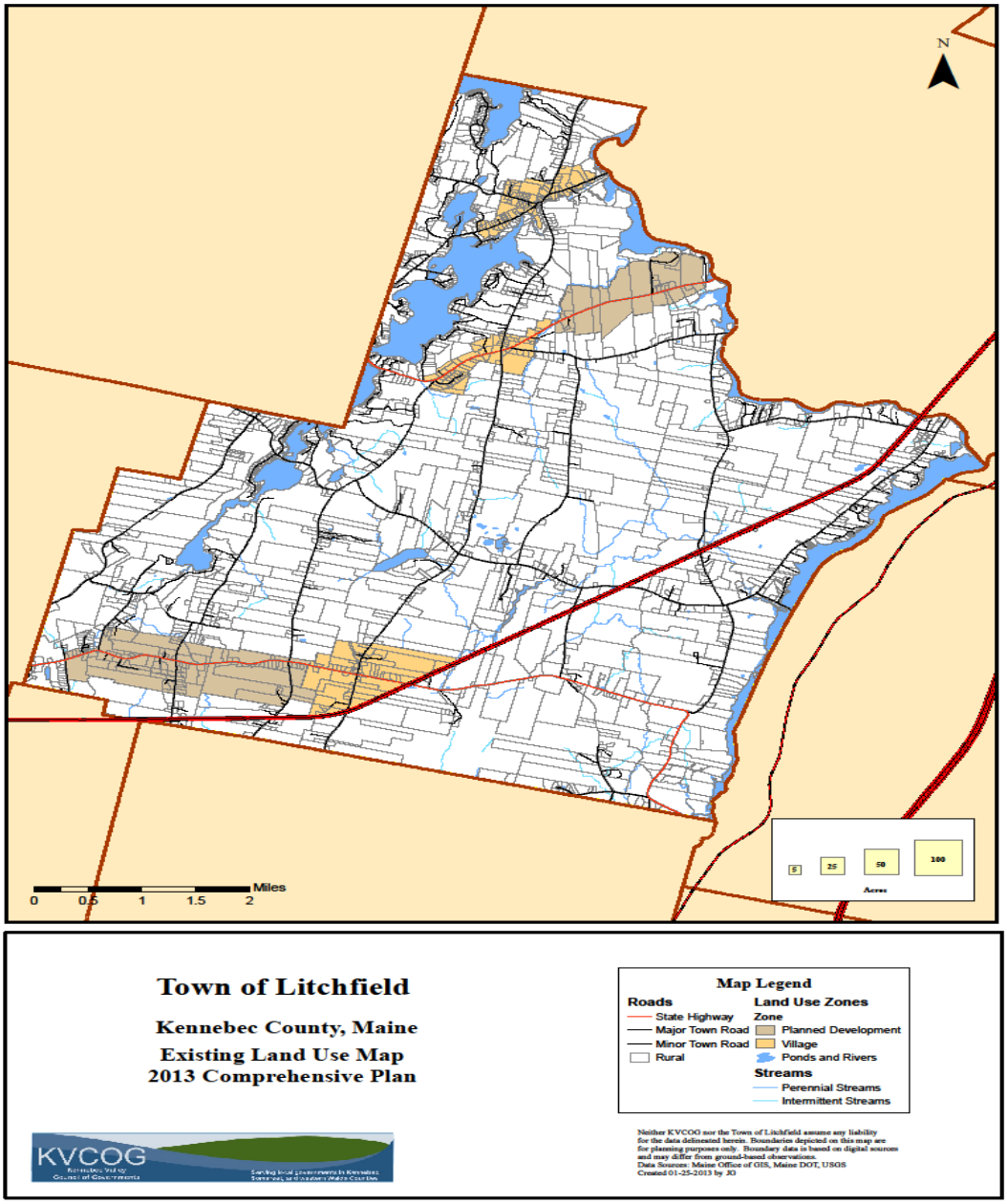


Table 13: Litchfield Land Use Ordinance Dimensional Standards

	Rural	Village	Planned Development
Minimum Lot Size	2 acre	1 acre	1 acre
Road Frontage (public)	200’	100’	200’
“ “ (private)	150’	100’	150’
Front Setback	50’	25’	35’
Side Setback	20’	10’	20’

Source: Litchfield Land Use Ordinance, section 7.H

Due to the accelerated pace of development at the time, efforts were also made to institute more restrictive land use controls, including a growth cap. These efforts were soundly defeated at Town Meeting. In fact, the existing ordinances are also the result of negotiation and compromise in the face of pushback from the townspeople.

As part of implementation of the plan, the Litchfield Code Enforcement Officer began closely tracking new development in 2004. Between 2004 and 2011, the CEO recorded 195 permits for new residential units. Of these, 72 were for mobile homes and one was for an accessory unit. Out of all residential permits, 36 percent have been in the growth area (14 percent in village, 22 percent in planned development). The growth area covers about 11 percent of Litchfield's land area.

There did appear to be a noticeable shift around 2008. While this was concurrent with the national housing slowdown, the pattern of development in Litchfield shifted as well. This may be attributable to land use regulations beginning to take hold. Between 2004 and 2007, 31 percent of new residential growth took place in growth areas; since 2008, 47 percent of new home permits have been in growth areas.

There have been no major subdivisions approved since 2004. There have been a number of minor subdivisions, but most of the housing development has taken place from the existing subdivision lot inventory or individual lot splits.

There were also a total of seven permits for commercial uses. One was issued to property in a village district, five within planned development districts, and one in the Rural District. The one in the Rural District was a greenhouse.

Public Opinion:

In 2012, the Town conducted a public opinion survey of residents' opinions through the *Sodalite*. The survey focused on land use issues.

From a list of 14 local issues, land use issues were two of the top four. "Supporting local agriculture" was #1, and "preserving the town's rural character" #4. Farmland and forest were the principal indicators for people of "rural character."

A majority of residents (about 61 percent) agreed with the statement that the pace and location of development has been acceptable over the past 20 years. In separate questions, 36 percent thought the pace had been too fast; 30 percent thought it had been too slow. Thirty six percent of respondents believed that new development is too visible from the road, but only 30 percent thought that it is overall too spread out.

From a list of suggestions to preserve rural character, the most strongly supported were "encourage new homes and businesses to locate in certain areas of town" and "encourage development setbacks from roads and fields." A suggestion to work with land trusts to purchase conservation easements locally received lukewarm support. The only suggestion that was not at all supported was that we "discourage development in rural areas."

14. Land Use Plan

Land Use Issues:

- Commercial development location is not an issue, based on trends over the past ten years. What little new commercial development there is, is meeting the letter and spirit of the Land Use Ordinance.

- Current ordinances may be having the desired effect; since 2008, a higher percentage of growth has been observed in growth areas. Roughly half of new development is locating on about 11 percent of the town's land area.

- Current growth areas may not accommodate projected growth beyond a ten-year window; however, there is not really any historical, land-capacity-based, or investment-based rationale for expanding them.

- Existing ordinances have strong protections for rural areas. (open space, agriculture/ forest, rural design, limitation on mobile home parks and commercial uses)

- Growth-related capital investments in Litchfield are negligible and limited primarily to road improvements. However, a number of existing public facilities are concentrated in one geographic area of town which is currently designated as a rural area.

Assessment of Growth Areas:

The Town has designated growth areas as a result of its 2000 Comprehensive Plan. These growth areas include two Planned Development Districts and three Village Districts. Litchfield's current growth area encompasses roughly 2,600 acres. Not all of this land is available for new development. Judging from aerial photographs, approximately 50 percent is already developed. Another 10 percent may be unavailable due to resource or ownership constraints, leaving approximately 1,000 acres available for development.

At exactly the minimum lot size, these 1,000 acres could accommodate 1,000 new residential housing units. But we know that land development does not operate this efficiently. Land must be devoted to roads, lots are quite often double or triple the legal minimum, and not all owners of developable land within growth areas are willing to sell. All things considered, the existing growth areas may accommodate 250 new homes.

Demographic growth scenarios for Litchfield to 2030 range from 4,300 to 5,760, reflecting growth rates ranging from 17 percent to 57 percent over twenty years. The current

recession may put us more at the low end of that forecast. That would result in a demand for approximately 400 new housing units. If we estimate that between 50 and 75 percent of projected housing will go into the growth area, that results in 200 to 300 new homes. As noted in the above paragraph, the anticipated capacity of existing growth areas is 250 homes.

Commercial growth must also be taken into account, though abstract projections don't work well for a town as small as Litchfield. Based on our scenarios, the Town can think about planning for enough commercial development for 50-100 new jobs over the next 20 years. Conversion to land area requires assumptions: Light industry creates 7 jobs per developed acre, while retail stores yield 14-22 jobs per acre. Therefore, the demand for commercial development land could be anywhere from three acres to 14 acres, or allowing for market inefficiencies, between 10 and 50 acres. This demand can easily be accommodated in the existing growth areas.

More problematic for the Town is the requirement that "the Future Land Use Plan must designate as ***growth area*** those lands into which the community intends to direct a minimum of 75% of dollars for municipal growth-related capital investments made during the planning period." (*Chapter 208, "Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule"*) Litchfield does not have a clear direction for its investments. The current village areas are built at crossroads with no historical investment in public facilities to speak of.

However, a number of public buildings are located within a confined area near the junction of Hallowell Road and Libby/Plains Road, close to the geographic center of town. The town office, town garage, fire station, Veterans Park Fields, the Sportsman's Club, and Masonic Lodge are located at the crossroads just west of the fairgrounds and the historic location of Plains village. On the assumption that these facilities will continue to be maintained and may be expanded, it makes sense that they be located in a growth area. They are currently in the rural area.

Recommended Actions:

A. Create a new growth area adjacent to the intersection of Hallowell Road and Plains Road, to encompass existing public facilities, private development and a small portion of undeveloped land. The new growth area is shown on the *Proposed Land Use Map* as the Town Center District and is expected to encompass approximately 125 acres.

B. The Town Center District as shown will include land currently devoted to small residential and institutional uses. Many of these lots are below the minimum lot size for the Rural District currently covering the area, making them non-conforming. It is recommended that dimensional standards for the Town Center District be adjusted to resemble those of the existing village districts, so that these lots will become conforming.

C. The proposed district contains only one commercial building. While the district is centrally located within the town, the roads and lots are not adequate to support major commercial development. The Land Use Ordinance should be amended to permit more commercial/institutional uses in the new district, but limit their size and impact.

Land Use Regulation:

Litchfield's 2000 Comprehensive Plan triggered significant changes to land use regulation. There is evidence that the new ordinance may be moderately effective in changing land use patterns and preserving rural areas. However, more stringent regulation has been proposed to town voters and has been repeatedly turned down. This suggests that land use regulation may be at the limits of its effectiveness for the time being.

During this process, the possibility of increasing the contrast in dimensional standards between growth and rural areas was discussed, but small changes have not been demonstrated effective, and there is no political support for a change dramatic enough to make a difference.

There is already an effective prohibition on mobile home parks and most commercial development in rural areas, and performance standards designed to protect open space, farmland, and natural resource assets.

Additional formal protection is needed for the Town's most critical resource areas. There are ordinances and performance standards in place that should provide protection from subdivision and commercial development. The Land Use Ordinance also requires avoidance or a mitigation plan where development could impact a critical natural area, and compliance with erosion control standards strict enough to reduce phosphorous export into the lakes. The Town also has Shoreland Zoning and Floodplain Management ordinances.

Critical resources, however, are not viewed as a whole or noted prominently enough to provide protection in the face of incremental development. The Town should designate Critical Rural Areas to protect the most valuable natural resources. These may include wetland areas of high or moderate value for habitat, critical natural areas identified by the *Beginning with Habitat* maps, habitat for rare or endangered species, previously-identified conservation lands, and other locally-identified areas of importance. These areas should appear on the Land Use Map only after field confirmation. Boundary issues are currently a concern to placing them on a map at this time.

Recommended Actions:

A. Add a Critical Rural Area within the Rural District on the Land Use Map.

B. No changes are recommended to existing growth area boundaries, permitted uses or dimensional standards.

C. Consider requiring phased development plans for subdivisions exceeding ten lots.

D. Consider density bonus for clustered housing within growth areas. Allow smaller lot sizes in exchange for dedicated open space.

E. Continue to enforce regulations already in place to manage development in the Rural District.

Non-Regulatory Strategies to Manage Growth:

There are a range of actions that can be effective in directing growth away from rural areas and into growth areas without the need for regulations. Unfortunately, some of the most effective require financial resources that the Town does not have. Non-regulatory measures that can be implemented include education and persuasion of prospective developers.

Recommended Actions:

A. The CEO should provide an annual update of building activity to the planning board, with special reference to the location of new development in growth or rural areas.

B. The Board of Selectmen should adopt a formal policy (or incorporate into Road Ordinance) that private roads in the Rural District should not be considered for acceptance as town roads.

C. Town committees and boards should encourage the protection of high value rural areas through purchases, donations, conservation easements and other mechanisms, working with Kennebec Land Trust and other public and private conservation entities.

D. The Town should continue to encourage landowner participation in current use tax programs.

E. The planning board should maintain contact with boards in Monmouth, Wales, Bowdoin, Richmond, and Gardiner, for the purpose of having joint meetings periodically or forming joint working groups to address regional development issues.

F. The planning board and CEO should be pro-active in working with landowners and developers to encourage development in growth areas and more sensitive development town-wide.

G. The Town Manager should monitor its capital expenditures to meet the goal of 75 percent of new expenditures occur in growth areas, exclusive of spending on road improvements or passive recreation facilities.

15. Capital Investment Plan

A Capital Investment Plan (CInP) is a required element of local comprehensive plans. The CInP identifies capital equipment or needs that are part of the plan's recommendations and integrates them into the municipal Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). Unlike the CInP, the Capital Improvements Plan is an annual document prepared as part of the municipal budgeting process. It is not a mandate, but is utilized to help prioritize and spread out the cost of new capital purchases.

The Town of Litchfield is in the process of developing a CIP. The CIP will document many of the decisions already made by municipal officers. For example, as indicated in Chapter 9, the Town already maintains at least two separate reserve accounts, for paving and capital improvements. A structured CIP will identify additional sources of funding, such as grants, loans, or contributions for shared equipment. It should also allow decision-makers the opportunity to set priorities and identify major costs well in advance.

Chapter 9 also provided a number of recommendations on the way a CIP should be used in fiscal management. The recommendations include:

1. The Town Manager and Selectmen should conduct bi-annual assessments of the adequacy of service and staffing levels for public services provided by the Town to include fire protection, emergency response, public safety, public works, waste disposal, licensing & permitting, code enforcement and clerical services. Immediately, the Selectmen should expand transfer station services to include weekday hours and explore ways to handle disposal of residential construction and demolition debris.

2. The Selectmen should develop annual budgets to include the maintenance of prudent levels of reserves to address future needs and provide a financial cushion for unexpected events.

3. The Selectmen should adopt a policy to guide the town in the appropriate use of long-term debt in funding new or expanded services or assets.

Table 14, on the following page, lists the capital investments recommended in other sections of this plan. Although the table does not identify dollar amounts, it does suggest sources of funding. The intent is for this table to be integrated into the Town's CIP development.

Table 14: Capital Investment Recommendations

Item	Priority	Funding Sources
Town-wide Appraisal of Land Values	high	appropriations
Road Improvements (RSMS-recommended funding amount)	moderate	reserve
Intersection improvement	moderate	appropriation/DOT
Woodbury Pond Park Improvements	moderate	reserve/grants
Trail Plan/trail network expansion	low	grants
Preservation of Litchfield Academy	moderate	appropriations
New roof for Old Town House	high	appropriations
Open Space acquisition account (unfunded)	moderate	grants/contributions
Roof and Water Damage Repair for Town Office	high	appropriations

16. Implementation Plan

The comprehensive plan is the product of several years of data collection and discussions among town staff, committees, and residents. It is intended to be a working document and guide for Town policies and actions over the next decade and more. This chapter is intended to break down the recommendations to make them easier to understand and implement.

This plan contains more than 80 recommendations. This chapter sorts them according to the entity responsible for seeing them carried out. Each is assigned an entity responsible for seeing to it that it is carried out. Each is also classified in terms of *Timeliness*:

- *Ongoing* means that this strategy is already in place, but that the plan considers it important enough to emphasize that it continue.
- *Short-term* means that the recommended action either has begun or is urgent or timely enough to be started right away and completed within a year to 18 months.
- *Mid-term* means that the action is not as urgent, and can be started and completed in the two-to-five year time period.
- *Long-term* means that the action is one that is either not very urgent or requires a bit more time to come into focus. Long-term actions would not commence for five years or more.

The actions listed here are abbreviated from their original language for clarity. The full recommendations can be found in the appropriate chapter.

The **Town Meeting** is the legislative body of the Town. It is responsible for approving funding for projects and organizations. While it is also responsible for enacting legislation, recommendations for specific ordinances are assigned to a person or committee to be drafted. Town Meeting should:

Ongoing:

- Provide adequate funding for preservation of Litchfield Academy, the Old Town House, and other historic assets, and assist efforts of the Historical Society of Litchfield.

- Continue to fund efforts to eradicate invasive water plants.

Short-term:

- Dedicate the resources necessary to continue restoration of the former town gravel pit according to the 2010 reclamation plan.

The **Board of Selectmen** is the administrative arm of the Town. The Board is responsible for setting policy and giving direction to Town staff and committees. It is also the chief representative of the Town in contact with non-municipal entities. The Board should oversee implementation of the actions in this plan and should act or assign responsibility for:

Ongoing:

- Together with the Town Manager, explore grant and loan programs to improve the quality and energy efficiency of existing housing.

- Continue cooperation with KVCAP, Community Concepts, and Habitat for Humanity in order to offer housing opportunities for residents.

- Work with existing local land trusts or other conservation organizations to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.

- Cooperate with regional entities such as Cobbossee Watershed District and Kennebec Land Trust.

- Participate as an active member of the Cobbossee Watershed District and the Four Towns Watershed Association, and support Friends of Cobbossee Watershed.

- Promote and support educational efforts to raise awareness in the use of best management practices by homeowners and contractors to protect water quality.

- Continue the inter-local agreement with other municipalities owning the New Mills Dam, to protect shorefront property and fish and wildlife habitat.

- Continue to provide training for the public works department on best management practices for erosion control, hazardous materials handling, and other areas of need.

- Continue to support expansion of communications infrastructure throughout the community. The Town should work with local cable and internet service providers to seek expansion of access.

- Continue to encourage landowner participation in current use tax programs.

Short-term:

- Expand the role and responsibilities of the Town's Recreation Committee and Recreation Department (Director) to encompass all recreational facilities and activities in town for all ages and provide the resources needed to carry out the new roles and responsibilities.

- Pursue a legal arrangement with RSU #4 for continued maintenance and public access to sports fields, playgrounds and parking at Libby-Tozier and Carrie Ricker schools.

- Ensure that a rolling 5 year Capital Improvements Plan is prepared and presented to the voters at the annual Town Meeting, starting in fiscal year 2013-14.

- Present an article at the 2014 Town Meeting to authorize and fund the appraisal of land values in town to complement the recent revaluation of buildings and structures.

- Appoint a Road Advisory Committee.

- Adopt a policy to guide the town in the appropriate use of long-term debt in funding new or expanded services or assets.

- Expand transfer station services to include weekday hours and explore ways to handle disposal of residential construction and demolition debris.

Mid-term:

- Re-form the Senior Housing Committee with a mission to provide senior citizens the opportunity to remain in town, including the possibility of developing a senior citizen housing project.

- Together with the Town Manager, research TIF's and develop a TIF policy or alternate economic incentives.

- Adopt a formal policy (or incorporate into Road Ordinance) that private roads in the Rural District should not be considered for acceptance as town roads.

Long-term:

- Explore ways to provide runners, cyclists, and horseback riders safer places to travel.

- Explore options for increasing attendance at Town Meetings and participation in town government overall.

- Appoint a committee to deal with transportation issues for senior citizens, among them the mobility, affordability, and health impacts of senior transportation, and identify strategies to remedy the problem.

- Work with RSU 4 administration to develop adult/continuing education offerings at schools within the community.

The **Town Manager** is the chief executive of the Town. He or she is responsible to see that the day-to-day functions of the Town are carried out. He or she also assigns tasks for staff. The following recommendations are the Town Manager's to either carry out or direct others:

Ongoing:

- Continue to coordinate on regional transportation planning with neighboring communities, regional entities, and MaineDOT.

- Continue to monitor the condition and use of camp roads along waterbodies, and report

on conditions that may affect the provision of emergency services on those roads.

- Develop annual budgets to include the maintenance of prudent levels of reserves to address future needs and provide a financial cushion for unexpected events.

- Seek out opportunities to work with regional economic development organizations to improve the economy.

- Continue to encourage property owners through an outreach program to take advantage of the State Tree Growth, Open Space, and Farmland Tax Programs.

- Monitor the Town's capital expenditures to be able to report that 75 percent of new expenditures are targeted to growth areas, exclusive of spending on road improvements or passive recreation facilities.

Short-term:

- Together with Selectmen, conduct bi-annual assessments of the adequacy of service and staffing levels for public services provided by the Town to include fire protection, emergency response, public safety, public works, waste disposal, licensing & permitting, code enforcement and clerical services.

- Implement the provisions of the recently passed town Emergency Management Ordinance.

- Establish a process for maintaining an inventory of the condition of town roads and developing annual paving and infrastructure plans, through the Road Surface Management System (RSMS).

- Inventory culvert placements and seek outside funding for replacement.

- Work with MaineDOT to fund and program improvements to dangerous intersections on state aid roads, particularly the intersection of Stevenstown, Plains and Upper Pond Roads.

Mid-term:

- Meet with School Board representatives to undertake ways to educate the voters on the significance of RSU budget on local taxes and urge voters to attend the RSU meeting to act on the proposed budget.

Long-term:

- Advocate with MaineDOT for the placement of Car Lots/Ride Share Lots within the immediate region.

- Assign responsibility for developing an economic development strategy for the community. The strategy should explore specific ways to take advantage of Litchfield's natural assets (farming, forestry, recreation).

The **Town Office** refers specifically to functions carried out by the office staff. These functions include communication with residents and the public:

Short-term:

- Procure and provide educational materials on water quality and lake protection and distribute them through the Code Enforcement Officer and town welcome packets and through periodic articles in the *Sodalite.*

- procure and distribute educational materials concerning the high risk of contaminants, especially arsenic, in well water and encourage the regular testing of water for arsenic, radon, and phosphorous.

- Promote local farms and farm products by highlighting their availability on town office bulletin boards, distribution tables, and the *Sodalite.*

The **Code Enforcement Officer** is responsible for enforcing land use and other ordinances in the Town. He or she also keeps records of building permits and other approval activities. The CEO should:

Ongoing:

- Track and provide an annual update of building activity to the planning board, with special reference to the location of new development in growth or rural areas.

- be trained on new techniques and engineering practices that will better protect natural resources, and should advise the Planning Board on their suitability for incorporation in land use regulations.

Short-term:

- Implement a process to track and provide data on housing costs in his development tracking system.

The **Planning Board** administers the provisions of the Subdivision and Land use Ordinances, and recommends amendments to those ordinances. The Planning Board also carries out other functions related to land use planning. The Planning Board should:

Ongoing:

- Within land use ordinances, continue to . . .
    - Direct new mobile home parks into the planned development district. Existing mobile home parks may expand.

    - Permit accessory housing units of less than 600 square feet to locate in any owner-occupied home in town.

- Maintain and enforce provisions that provide protection consistent with Maine's Shoreland Zoning Law, Stormwater Management Law, Pollution Discharge Elimination System Program, and allowable levels of phosphorous in area lakes.

- Maintain groundwater protection and evaluate the need for wellhead protection requirements.

- Maintain and refine commercial development standards in the Land Use Ordinance.

- Not restrict the viability of resource-based activities within land use ordinances, including permitting of greenhouses, farm stands, sawmills and pick-your-own.

- Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester and with Kennebec County Soil and Water Conservation District staff when evaluating new land use regulations pertaining to farm or forest land management practices.

- Together with the historic preservation commission, continue ordinance provisions that require developers to identify and protect significant historic and archeological resources prior to development activities.

- Continue to monitor state and federal requirements for floodplain management, shoreland zoning, and protection of critical natural resources and to incorporate these requirements into land use regulation as necessary.

- Review local ordinances to ensure that they are consistent with regional and state transportation policies and rules.

- Maintain contact with boards in Monmouth, Wales, Bowdoin, Richmond, and Gardiner, for the purpose of having joint meetings periodically or forming joint working groups.

Short-term:

- Work on amendments to the land use ordinances, including . . .
  - Creating a new growth area adjacent to the intersection of Hallowell Road and Plains Road, to encompass existing public facilities, private development and a small portion of undeveloped land.

  - Adding a Critical Rural Area to the Land Use Map.

  - Utilizing *Beginning with Habitat* maps and materials and local information to create and define the boundaries of a Critical Rural Area.

  - Consider incorporating areas of prime farmland soils with farming operations into

areas designated as critical rural areas.

- Become pro-active in working with landowners and developers to encourage development in growth areas and more sensitive development town-wide.

Mid-term:

- Examine the issue of new development along substandard private roads, possibly tying road improvements to building permit requirements.

- Obtain good neighbor standards for new development located adjacent to an existing agricultural or forest operation, and provide to the Town Office for inclusion in a welcome packet. Standards are designed to make homeowners aware of some of the common rural land use activities and to protect agricultural sites from negative impacts from development.

- Consider requiring phased development plans for subdivisions exceeding ten lots.

- Consider density bonus for clustered housing within growth areas. Allow smaller lot sizes in exchange for dedicated open space.

The **Conservation Commission** deals with natural resource initiatives. The commission is also responsible for management of Smithfield Plantation and much of the Town's trail system. The Conservation Commission should:

Ongoing:

- Seek outside funding to expand its activities.

- Continue to encourage permanent protection of high-value lands within lake watersheds as a means of protecting water quality.

- Encourage the protection of high value rural areas through purchases, donations, conservation easements and other mechanisms, working with Kennebec Land Trust and other public and private conservation entities.

Short-term:

- Consider ways to further encourage farmers to increase their use of vegetative buffers where farmland borders streams or lakes.

- Cooperate with the recreation committee on development of a master trail plan for the town.

- Develop and maintain a list of parcels it deems worthy of conservation for protection of the aquifer.

- Participate in educating landowners about the benefits and protections for allowing public recreational access on their property.

The **Recreation Committee** is responsible for directing the Town's recreation programs, and managing the activities of the Recreation Director. The Recreation Committee and Director should:

Ongoing:

- Continue to advertise recreational activities in the *Sodalite* and through the Town website. The Recreation Director should ensure all recreation-related information on the website is kept up to date.

- Together with the Town Manager, seek state, federal and private grants to fund both existing and new recreation programs.

- Actively pursue getting volunteer resources to assist with maintenance and upkeep of recreational facilities in the town.

Short-term:

- Together with the Conservation Commission and other town committees and groups, develop a master trail plan identifying public and private trails. The plan should be used to direct future public investments in the development of the trail system and identify priorities for preserving land for future recreation.

- Identify regional recreational programs with surrounding communities that should be pursued whenever feasible.

- Develop a maintenance and improvement plan, with associated costs, for ensuring regular, adequate upkeep of all facilities at Woodbury Pond Park.

The **Historic Preservation Commission** is responsible for administering the Historic Ordinance. It also represents the Town in the activities of the independent Historic Society of Litchfield. The HPC and Historic Society should:

Ongoing:

- Continue ordinance provisions that require developers to identify and protect significant historic and archeological resources prior to development activities.

- Continue to work with Historic Society of Litchfield and the Kennebec Historical Society on collection and preservation of historic documents and artifacts.

Regional Coordination:

The Town of Litchfield has recognized the value of cooperating with neighboring towns and regional groups. Joining with others, we can get things done that we might not have done otherwise, or provide a better service to our citizens than otherwise possible. We have several recent examples of successful regional cooperation:

- Litchfield helped to form the Four Towns Watershed Association in 1997. The FTWA maintains the New Mills Dam in Gardiner and helps to preserve Pleasant Pond.

- Litchfield joined the Cobbossee Watershed District in 1972. CWD runs many programs aimed at improving and preserving the water quality of lakes in the region.

- In 2009, Litchfield joined with Sabattus and Wales in Regional School Unit #4. Prior to that time, Litchfield had administered its own school system.

- Litchfield is a member of the regional ambulance service centered in Gardiner. The Town's fire department has mutual aid agreements with neighboring communities and we utilize the county sheriff and state police for law enforcement coverage.

While the town benefits from natural resource assets that make it easy to form a regional coalition to protect them, our geographic position tends to work against us with regard to public service functions. Litchfield does not have a logical association with other towns, making it difficult to enter into interlocal agreements or share services or equipment. The Town does utilize Gardiner for some services (ambulance, library), but it is not especially convenient, and not many residents are oriented in that direction.

This plan suggests maintaining the regional connections we already have and seeking out new ones. Among them:

- Identify regional opportunities to expand recreational programs and services.

- Seek out possibilities to share capital equipment used occasionally for the fire department, public works, or transfer station.

- Participate in regional economic development initiatives.