

Town of Parsonsfield Comprehensive Plan 2024 Update



Photo courtesy of Raegan Young

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Introduction & Acknowledgments

The Comprehensive Plan Committee has spent the past two years looking into all the information available to get a better understanding of where Parsonsfield has been and gain a better insight as to where we are heading. Years ago, we had very little intervention from government. Today is quite different. With population increases and the regulations imposed, it becomes more difficult to get citizens involved in these matters. Many aspects of the town government have always been volunteers doing what must be done to keep the community safe and operating with roads, safe building codes, plowing, schools and budget concerns.

With all this in mind, we hope the citizens of our town will look at what we have discovered and proposed. Our vision of the future is to make our community worthy of our pride and admiration.

We would like to thank Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission (SMPDC) and the expertise of Raegan Young, who delicately guided us in the right direction. Thank you also to the whole Parsonsfield Town Staff, who provided us with the necessary data and town information. The Comprehensive Plan Committee members are, in alphabetical order: James Baron, Sabin Beckwith, Aaron Boguen, Dan Flint, Jennifer Lewis, Harvey Macomber, Lynda Sudlow, Lawrence Stevenson, and Thomas Winter.

Part 1: Inventory

Chapter 1: Population & Historic Development

INTRODUCTION

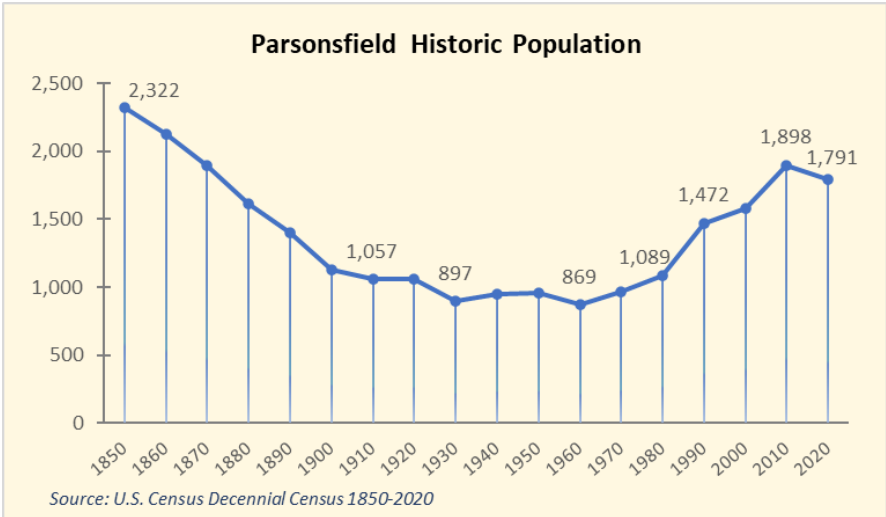
The Town of Parsonsfield was incorporated in 1785 and contains approximately 60 square miles of land. The town is located on the New Hampshire border about 60 miles north of Kittery and 40 miles west of Portland. The names Parsonsfield and Kezar Falls are homages to early settlers, reaching back as far as 1766.

The Town sits in the foothills of the White Mountains of New Hampshire and is peppered with scenic vistas of the Presidential range. The highest summits in Parsonsfield are Ricker’s Mountain, Cedar Mountain and Randall Mountain. The Ossipee River forms the northern border of the town and is fed by the South River in the west. Although largely in Effingham, Province Lake sits on the New Hampshire border with a portion in Parsonsfield. There are several smaller ponds, such as Long Pond and West Pond, which attract both summer residents and recreational tourists.

Parsonsfield was settled in a classically New England village cluster development pattern. That is, a cluster of houses, church and one room school were developed together surrounded by agricultural and forested land. Accompanying the agricultural economic base were mills, ranging from grist to sawmills. These early development patterns still form much of the basis of development in Parsonsfield. Most notably, the neighborhood of Kezar Falls, which stretches into Porter and Hiram, serves as a historic downtown. In addition, much of the existing road network has not changed significantly since the 1800’s. The town has long been protective of its rural character and hesitant of large -scale development.

HISTORIC POPULATION TRENDS

The historic population pattern reflects the development and economic life of Parsonsfield.



Parsonsfield reached its peak population in 1850. Following the increased development, agriculture activities dwindled, and people across New England were moving westward. The town’s population decreased until the 1940’s. In the 40 years between 1980 and 2010, the population almost doubled.

However, during the 2010s the population decreased once again by nearly 6%, and thus Parsonsfield still remains small, under 2,000 residents.

.In general, architectural styles illustrate development over time, and the town character is overall influenced by Colonial and Federal, Greek Revival, Mansard, Queen Anne or Stick style. Each style, including modern manufactured housing, contributes to the character of the community and helps identify the historic development pattern of the different villages.

20 Year Population Trends

The growth rate in Parsonsfield between 1989 and 2010 was slower than that in in most surrounding towns, of which Parsonsfield has the largest land area. However, this period still represents some of the most growth seen in the history of the town. Both York County and the Town of Porter grew at a similar rate during that period. Neighboring towns of Limerick and Newfield saw massive increases, both more than doubling their population.

Year	Population Estimate	Percent Change
1850	2,322	-4.9%
1860	2,125	-8.5%
1870	1,894	-10.9%
1880	1,613	-14.8%
1890	1,398	-13.3%
1900	1,131	-19.1%
1910	1,057	-6.5%
1920	1,062	0.50%
1930	897	-15.5%
1940	946	5.50%
1950	958	1.30%
1960	869	-9.3%
1970	971	11.70%
1980	1,089	12.20%
1990	1,472	35.20%
2000	1,584	7.60%
2010	1,898	19.80%
2020	1,791	-5.64%

Source: Decennial Census

	Total Population			Percent Change		
	1989 Est. (Previous Plan)	2010	2020	1989-2010	2010-2020	1989-2020
Parsonsfield	1,474	1,898	1,791	28.8%	-5.6%	21.5%
Cornish	1,200	1,403	1,508	16.9%	7.5%	25.7%
Effingham	761	1,465	1,691	92.5%	15.4%	122.2%
Hiram	1,067	1,620	1,609	51.8%	-0.7%	50.8%
Limerick	1,356	2,892	3,188	113.3%	10.2%	135.1%
Newfield	644	1,522	1,648	136.3%	8.3%	155.9%
Porter	1,222	1,498	1,600	22.6%	6.8%	30.9%
Wakefield	2,996	5,078	5,201	69.5%	2.4%	73.6%
York County	160,000*	197,131	211,972	23.2%	7.5%	32.5%
Maine	1,228,000*	1,328,361	1,362,359	8.2%	2.6%	10.9%

*Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 2010, 2020; *U.S. Census from Data Commons*

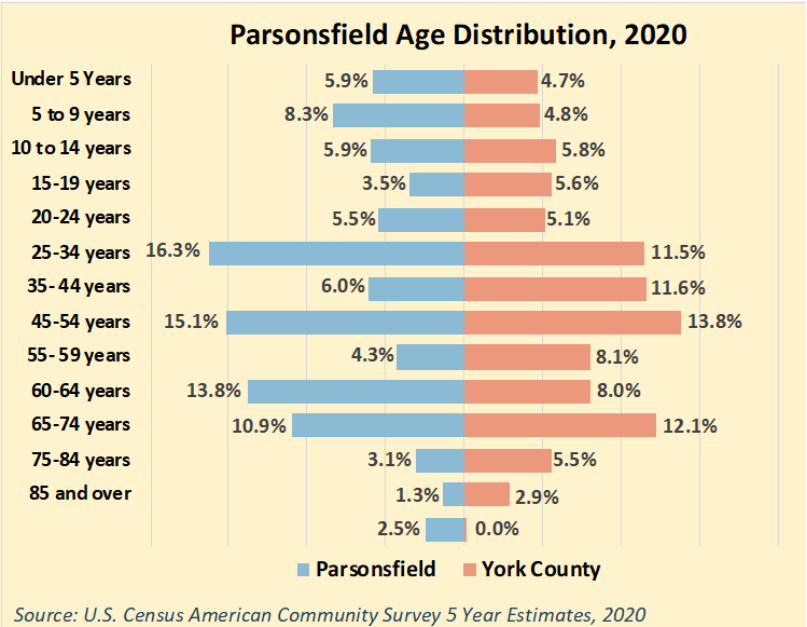
Between 2010 and 2020, growth slowed across the state, with York County dropping to 7.5% growth. This still well out-paced the statewide growth at 2.6%. While almost every surrounding community also saw growth, Parsonsfield’s population decreased by almost 6%. This is the first time the community has seen a population decrease since the period between 1950 and 1960.

Although York County experienced considerable residential development in its coastal communities, these figures show that the rural northwestern part of the county also experienced a considerable amount of development. In recent years, Parsonsfield appears to be an exception. However, this region of the state continues to be impacted by the exodus of people from more expensive urban areas to more affordable rural towns. Through the past year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the popularity of remote work and change in living preferences has caused people to move away from Maine’s coastal communities and into the rural western part of the state. While there is not up-to-date data to perfectly describe this immediate trend, one can see the effects of a shift to more professional/technical style employment impacting this region even before the pandemic.

Natural Increase, 2015-2020		
	Births	Deaths
Total	85	112
2020	12	18
2019	18	14
2018	22	20
2017	12	19
2016	6	20
2015	15	21
Natural Increase	-27	

Source: Town Reports, 2015-2020

In general, age distributions in Parsonsfield and York County are similar, with both the town and county having low populations of people under 25. The large working age population between 25 and 54 years is slightly larger in Parsonsfield. The town also has a larger proportion of residents approaching retirement, between 60 and 64 years.



Population Projections

It is difficult to make population projections for small towns like Parsonsfield. One significant development proposal can skew the results.

Based on the Maine State Economist Projections from 2016, Parsonsfield is expected to grow at a rate similar to York County overall, while many other towns see decreases. Limerick keeps pace with the county as well, while Newfield sees a small increase. According to these estimates, Parsonsfield is anticipated to grow at the highest rate of neighboring towns, by approximately 270 people in the next 15-20 years.

Population Projections, Parsonsfield and Surrounding Towns 2018-2038												
Town	Population observed			Population projected				Percent change from previous period				Total percent change
	2008	2013	2018	2023	2028	2033	2038	2018-2023	2023-2028	2028-2033	2033-2038	2018-2038
Parsonsfield	1,864	1,903	1,958	2,043	2,110	2,162	2,198	4.3%	3.3%	2.5%	1.7%	12.3%
Cornish	1,396	1,417	1,424	1,441	1,445	1,437	1,414	1.2%	0.3%	-0.6%	-1.6%	-0.7%
Hiram	1,610	1,621	1,629	1,627	1,625	1,615	1,597	-0.1%	-0.1%	-0.6%	-1.1%	-2.0%
Limerick	2,809	2,903	2,987	3,104	3,211	3,294	3,352	3.9%	3.4%	2.6%	1.8%	12.2%
Newfield	1,505	1,550	1,578	1,620	1,648	1,662	1,661	2.7%	1.7%	0.8%	-0.1%	5.3%
Porter	1,509	1,491	1,510	1,516	1,521	1,519	1,510	0.4%	0.3%	-0.1%	-0.6%	0.0%
York County			206,290	215,424	223,396	229,809	234,432	4.4%	3.7%	2.9%	2.0%	13.6%
Maine			1,341,160	1,355,924	1,368,838	1,374,023	1,371,608	1.1%	1.0%	0.4%	-0.2%	2.3%

Source: Maine State Economist Demographic Projections, based on 2016 U.S. Census Population Estimates

The rate of growth looks like it varies significantly for Parsonsfield, but that is in part because a small change in total population reflects a large percentage proportionally. Another way to estimate future population growth is to average the rates of change over the past couple of decades. The increase in over 19% from 2000-2010 and a decrease in almost 6% from 2010-2020 averages out to a rate of change of about 7%. If we assumed that Parsonsfield would grow by 7% over the next decade, it would have a total population of 1,918 by 2030. This is a more conservative estimate than the state estimate above but represents an additional 126 residents.

SUMMARY

It was predicted in the last plan that population levels would peak in the year 2000. While growth has been slower than predicted, Parsonsfield was the closest to its peak population at the 2010 census. At the time of this update, current events of the COVID-19 pandemic have and will continue to impact the trends described here.

While the town still has its historic village structures, housing development has spread to most minor collector roads throughout town, changing the overall look of the area. Surrounding towns have seen the same pattern. Parsonsfield's location is not as conducive to development as is the eastern side of York County. However, as areas closer to greater Portland and Biddeford-Saco become more expensive, people are moving farther out on the Route 25 corridor. Development in Parsonsfield is not due to employment or industry opportunities, but lifestyle opportunities, where there is the ability to live rurally, recreate, and find affordable housing.

This comprehensive plan and its resulting goals and policies should consider the historic patterns and the influence of 19th century development and industry on what the town is today, and how that may impact its growth into the future.

Chapter 2: Residential Development

INTRODUCTION

Parsonsfeld historically developed with clusters of villages: Maplewood, West Parsonsfeld, South Parsonsfeld, East Parsonsfeld, Middle Road Village, North Parsonsfeld and Kezar Falls. These villages are spread throughout the town, often resulting in residents going to outside towns for nearby services, such as the post office, grocery, night life, etc.

Maplewood, a small residential development with about 25 houses and an adjacent cemetery, is on the Newfield border. The cluster of residences here are about 2.5 miles from services in West Newfield. West Parsonsfeld or Roberts Corner, a primarily seasonal residential development by Province Lake, is on the Effingham, New Hampshire border. South Parsonsfeld, a residential cluster of about ten houses with a church is located between Maplewood and Middle Road Village. The Village has another cluster of about 15 to 20 houses, a church, the Old Town House, and a historic cemetery. North Parsonsfeld, well known as the home of the Parsonsfeld Seminary, is on Route 160 about four miles south of Porter. It has more than 25 houses and the current municipal building. East Parsonsfeld is on Route 160 near the Cornish and Limerick border, with more than 50 houses. The largest residential area is Kezar Falls on Route 25 which has more than 100 houses, some established commercial development, and the possibility of further commercial development at the former Kezar Falls Mill.

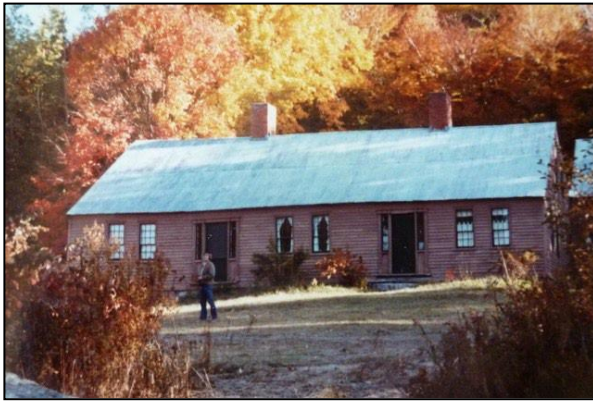
These historic villages tend to resemble a cluster development in design as opposed to a subdivision. The oldest homes are placed close together along main routes, in a traditional New England neighborhood style. In between the villages were farms, which were linked by paths and then roads. About half of the historic development was in the villages with the remainder throughout Parsonsfeld.

In the early 1970s, development started to increase along the rural roads, including seasonal residential development along the ponds and the Ossipee River. Several subdivisions were approved, and mobile homes were added. Older houses have been restored, although many still require work. These changes led to the Town adopting a Land Use and Zoning Ordinance in 1991. Since then, most significant development has taken the form of subdivisions.

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Architectural Styles

The predominately historic housing stock of the town is the Cape or the Colonial style home with a smattering of a variety of other architectural styles, especially in the Kezar Falls area. This architectural heritage is important to the community identity, so cataloging the types of styles currently established could be important for future site design guidelines. According to the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year estimates for 2019, approximately 300 homes, or 20-25% of all housing units were built in 1939 or earlier, making them over 80 years old. The predominate styles include Colonial, Federal, Greek revival, Mansard, and Queen Anne or Victorian.



The photos above are examples of some of the oldest homes in Parsonsfield. New development is rarely in keeping with the old architectural styles.

Other, more common examples of recent housing are similar to these models shown below which are popping up throughout the town.



Housing Development

Over the past several years, the types of housing stock available in Parsonsfield have changed in a few key ways. First, the ASC estimates that the total housing units decreased in the last decade, a trend not seen in other communities. Overall, the proportion of single-family homes has remained consistent. Mobile homes now represent about 7% of the total housing stock, which is slightly less than 2010 and 1980 when mobile homes made up about 10%.

Housing Units by Type, 2010-2020		
	2010	2020
Total Housing Units	1175	1119
Single-Family	81.4%	84.0%
Duplex	1.1%	3.5%
Multi-family	6.7%	5.3%
Mobile Homes	10.7%	7.1%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2010 & 2020

homes, as they represent 8.3 percent of the statewide total housing units.

Housing Tenure, 2010-2020		
	2010	2020
Total Occupied Housing Units	727	710
Owner Occupied	73.5%	83.5%
Renter Occupied	26.5%	16.5%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2010 & 2020

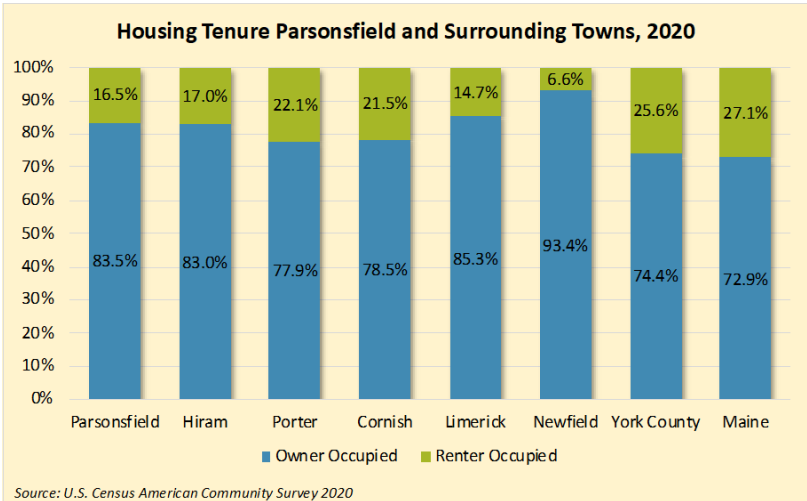
In terms of housing tenure, we saw a trend toward owner-occupied housing, with renters decreasing by 10%. This is contrary to the York County trend, where renter-occupancy increased slightly from 24.8% to 25.6%. Renter occupancy also increased in Cornish, Limerick, and Hiram.

These figures align in relation to the statewide data as well. In 2020, Maine’s overall housing stock was approximately 72.6% single-family homes, 4.9% duplexes, and about 14.2% multi-family structures. In addition, Parsonsfield has a slightly lower proportion of mobile

Occupied Housing Units, 2010 - 2020		
	2010	2020
Total Housing Units	1174	1166
Occupied	65.1%	68.6%
Vacant	34.9%	31.4%

Source: U.S. Census 2010 & 2020

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The average household size has fluctuated over the last two decades. National trends suggest that household size has decreased over time. For Parsonsfield and a few of its neighboring towns, estimates suggest a similar trend between 1989 and 2020.

Average Household Size, 2010 & 2020					
	1989*	2010		2020	
	Overall	Owner	Renter	Owner	Renter
Parsonsfield	2.42	2.64	2.24	2.55	1.93
Cornish	2.56	2.58	2.37	2.33	1.96
Limerick	2.53	2.73	3.7	2.72	2.2
Newfield	2.41	2.43	2.27	2.22	2.17
Hiram	2.62	2.82	3.14	3.1	2.92
Porter	2.5	2.63	2.24	2.55	2.48
York County	-	2.52	2.14	2.45	1.99
Maine	-	2.45	2.04	2.41	1.98

*Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2020; *From previous comprehensive plan*

New Home Starts

In general, Parsonsfield has seen slow residential growth over the past decade, with an uptick in new housing in recent years. There has been one notable residential subdivision of 9 lots, which passed in 2018. The building permit data below shows new housing units, either single family homes or mobile homes, and any multi-family units. Like many towns across the state, Parsonsfield has seen an uptick in development during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This change is not accounted for in the most recent Census and ACS data.

Year	Total Building Permits
2010	2
2015	7
2020	Unknown
2022	11
2023	12

Seasonal Housing

Parsonsfield is one of the few inland York County towns that sees increases in population in the summertime, with seasonal populations similar to Brownfield, Limerick, and Newfield. According to a study performed by SMPDC in 2017 which considered total seasonal units and potential population increases due to accommodations, lodging, or campgrounds, the town’s population could potentially increase by 81% in the summer months.

Excluding coastal communities, this ranks fifth amongst towns in York County by proportional increase in residents. 2010 Census data also suggests that Parsonsfield has a higher proportion of vacant units due to seasonal use than the county overall. Approximately 27% of total units were identified as seasonal, recreation or occasional use in 2010. The total percentage of vacant units, used for recreation or otherwise, has decreased to 31% as of 2020.

Unoccupied Housing Units, 2010				
	York County		Parsonsfield	
	Count	Percent of all Units	Count	Percent of all units
Total Units	105,773	-	1,174	-
Total Vacant Units	24,764	23.4%	410	34.9%
For rent	2,581	2.4%	13	1.1%
Rented, not occupied	137	0.1%	-	0.0%
For sale only	1,296	1.2%	23	2.0%
Sold, not occupied	233	0.2%	10	0.9%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	18,661	17.6%	326	27.8%
For migrant workers	9	0.0%	-	0.0%
Other vacant	1,847	1.7%	38	3.2%

Source: US Decennial Census, 2010, Summary File 1

The 2020 US Decennial Census estimates that out of a total of 1,166 housing units, 366 are vacant.

Housing Affordability

The Maine Housing Authority produces annual data analyzing the affordability of homeownership across the state. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, home prices in York County were rising, and reaching rates unaffordable to the general population. Throughout the past few years, the pandemic has spurred further in-migration to the state, increasing home prices in the populous coastal towns even further.

This has pushed home buyers to look further inland from the Portland and Saco-Biddeford metropolitan areas, increasing demand for homes in rural York and Oxford County. The data below is from 2021.

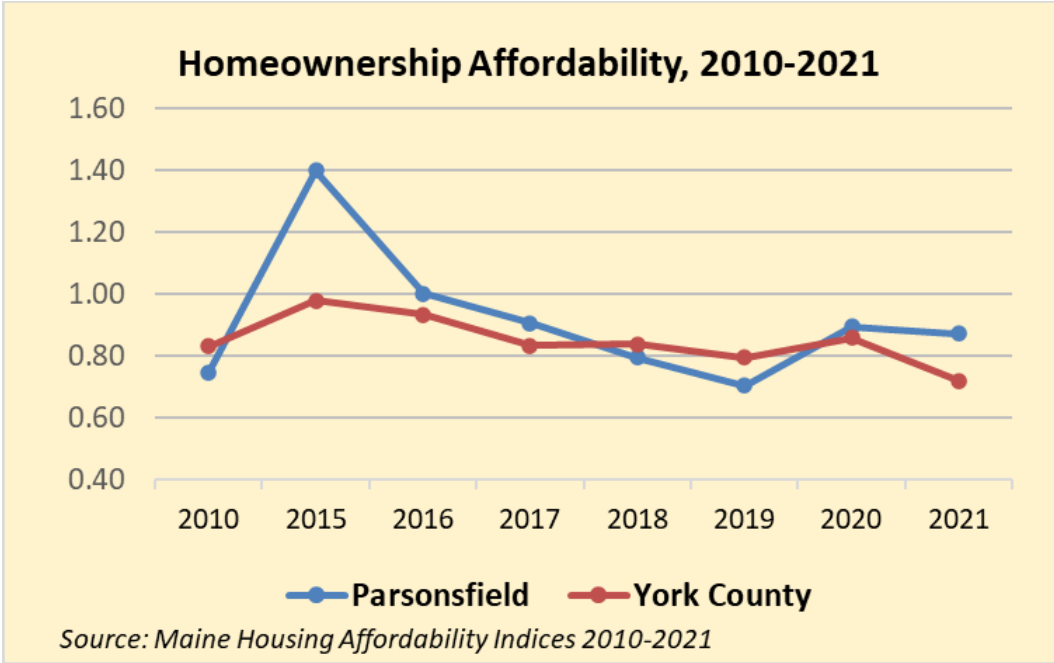
The Affordability Index is the ratio of *Median Home Price* to the *Home Price Affordable to the Median Income*. The affordable home price is one where a household making the median income could cover a 30-year mortgage, taxes, and insurance with no more than 28% of their gross income.

- An index of 1 indicates that the home price is affordable to the median income.
- An index of less than 1 indicates that the home price is generally unaffordable.
- An index of greater than 1 indicates that the home price is generally affordable.

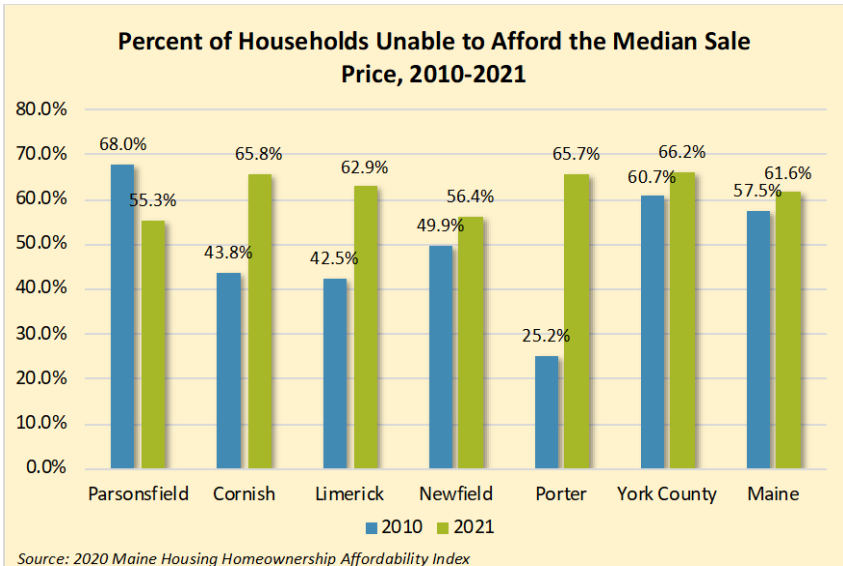
Homeownership Affordability, Parsonsfield and Surrounding Towns, 2021					
Geography	Affordability Index	Median Income	Median Home Price	Home Price Affordable to the Median Income	Percent of Households Unable to Afford Median Sale Price
Parsonsfield	0.87	\$57,049	\$247,750	\$215,816	55.3%
Cornish	0.59	\$48,986	\$317,000	\$187,491	65.8%
Hiram	0.77	\$47,715	\$232,000	\$179,532	61.1%
Limerick	0.75	\$57,360	\$285,000	\$214,589	62.9%
Newfield	0.87	\$57,364	\$263,500	\$228,691	56.4%
Porter	0.69	\$45,745	\$240,000	\$166,503	65.7%
York County	0.72	\$72,883	\$389,900	\$280,921	66.2%
Maine	0.80	\$63,427	\$295,000	\$236,243	61.6%

Source: Maine Housing Homeownership Affordability Index, 2021

Among the surrounding towns, Parsonsfield has the highest affordability index (tied with Newfield). However, with an index below 1, Parsonsfield is classified as unaffordable. In recent years, the index has been on par or higher than the York County index overall. The Maine Housing data also indicates that Parsonsfield may not have seen the same drop in affordability over the last year, experienced by the rest of the county.



Maine Housing reported median sale price is comparable to several surrounding towns, and lower than the state and county. However, median incomes are most like Limerick and Newfield, where median home prices are higher. Approximately 55.3% of the Parsonsfield population could not afford the



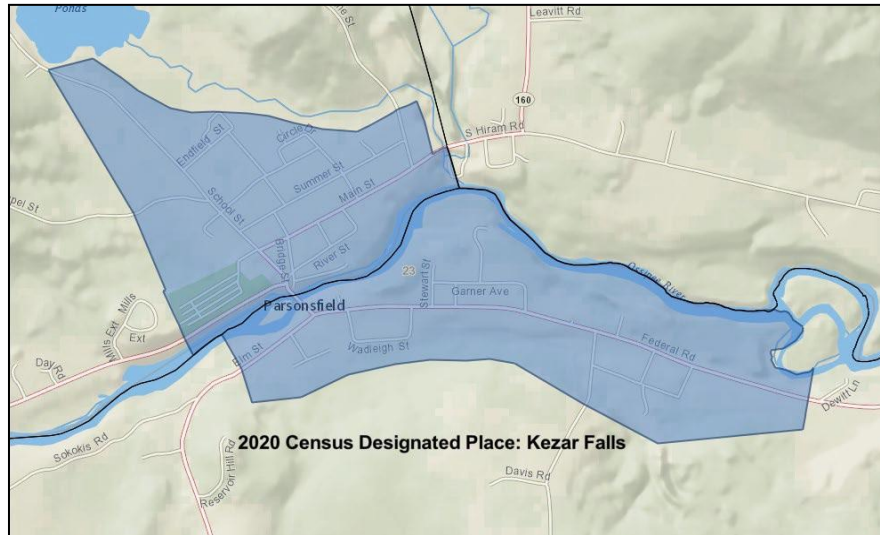
current median sale price. In the chart to the left, we see Parsonsfield is the only community where the percentage of households unable to afford the median sale price has decreased in the last decade. This is due mostly to the estimated median income in Parsonsfield increasing significantly in that period, while home values stayed steadier, compared to other communities.

In the past, Parsonsfield has considered policies that ensured a variety of housing options, as well as the consultation of an affordable housing alternatives corporation. The town should evaluate how these policies and strategies have influenced housing development over the last decade, and whether enough action has been taken.

LAND USE ORDINANCE CONSIDERATIONS

In 2022, the State of Maine legislature passed a key piece of legislation aimed at increasing housing stock in Maine, primarily through zoning regulations. The most significant law *H.P. 1489 - L.D. 2003 "An Act to Increase Housing Affordability through Zoning and Land Use"* enacted a set of zoning requirements that require municipalities to allow higher density housing in various ways throughout the community. Higher density allowances are required in areas that are identified growth areas, are equipped with public sewer or water infrastructure. Both US Census Designated Places and DOT Urban Compact areas are also considered growth areas. There are three major components to the law:

1. Developments in identified growth areas or areas serviced by public water or sewer must be allowed density 2 ½ times the base zone density if most of the housing units meet defined standard affordability requirements for a minimum of 30 years.
2. Anywhere housing is allowed, municipalities must allow at least 2 units per lot on vacant lots. In areas of identified growth areas or areas serviced by public water or sewer, up to 4 units must be allowed on vacant lots. On lots with an existing single-family dwelling, municipalities must allow the addition of up to two units.
3. On any lot with an existing single-family dwelling, municipalities must allow the addition of at least one accessory dwelling unit.



The area of Kezar Falls, including Parsonsfield and Porter, is identified as a census designated place in 2020, meaning it will be treated as a “growth area” by the language of this law. This plan also identifies a growth area which may supersede the census designated place upon adoption. There are a few sites within this Kezar Falls area which may be well suited to redevelopment and added density under these provisions. There is also a portion of this area which is served by public water. These requirements took effect in July 2024 for communities with a town meeting form of government.

Energy Efficiency

Due to the number of homes built before the turn of the century, there is an increased need for energy efficiency. Improved building efficiency has cost and comfort benefits for homeowners, as well as the for the longevity and quality of the housing stock throughout the town. The Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) applies to all towns within the State of Maine. Enforcement of MUBEC is based on population or local action for communities under 4,000, which Parsonsfield could consider.

State Housing Resources

The Maine Housing Authority offers numerous programs aimed at increasing housing options, variety, and affordability. Their programs range from assistance for first-time home buyers, to subsidies for multi-family development. To read more about their services and opportunities, [visit their website](#).

SUMMARY

Although the state and county have been influenced significantly by the changing economy and housing market over the past few years, data suggests that Parsonsfield may not have been as impacted. ACS & the Census show the total housing units in Parsonsfield has decreased since 2010, however building permits show a slight uptick in new development. Homeownership affordability is an increasing problem regionwide, however Parsonsfield has not seen as dramatic a change as the rest of the county. As populations continue to migrate inland, this may become more of a concern in the future.

Residential Development: Goals, Policies & Strategies

State Goal: To promote and work to ensure choice, economic diversity and affordability in housing for low-income and moderate-income households and use housing policy to help address disparities in access to educational, occupational and other opportunities.

Parsonsfield's Goal: Retain its rural cluster village character providing a variety of housing alternatives and a commitment to open space through planned growth consistent with the historical development and natural resource conditions of the Town.

POLICY ONE: It is the policy of the town to encourage residential development that prioritizes open space preservation in keeping with the natural conditions of the site.

- Require all new multi-unit or subdivision developments in the farm and forest districts to dedicate land for open space.
- Create a cluster residential development ordinance to support a development pattern in keeping with the Town's historic development trends and to conserve open space.
- The Code Enforcement Officer inspect houses in environmentally sensitive areas whenever notified that code violations may exist which negatively impact the environment in these areas.

POLICY TWO: It is the policy of the town to encourage the development of and access to affordable, decent, housing opportunities.

- Periodically provide information at town hall and during selectboard meetings about Maine Housing programs available to support low or moderate income, elderly or other disadvantaged housing in Parsonsfield.
- Partner with existing local and regional non-profits (Avesta Housing, Maine Housing) to develop affordable housing alternatives within the next two to three years, and thereafter reconnect such group at least once a year.
- Review and revise the zoning ordinance to ensure adequate options for housing types are allowed in suitable zoning districts, including senior housing, single and multi-family housing, ADUs, congregate care, and minimum care facilities.
- Advertise, during meetings and in the local paper, at least once yearly on a timely basis, the availability of any property tax relief program or designations.
- Adopt necessary zoning ordinance changes to be in compliance with the state housing law LD2003.
- Work with RPO to assess how LD2003 will impact growth in town, and ways to mitigate negative impacts to infrastructure and essential services.

POLICY THREE. It is the policy of the Town to periodically review residential zoning and code regulations, as well as the staff capacity to enforce both.

- The Planning Board review within one year, and thereafter every two years, the dimensional and density requirements in the Town's Zoning Ordinance and recommend changes in keeping with the Comprehensive Plan.

- Adopt or maintain the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) to ensure up to date energy efficiency standards
- Evaluate the capacity to support a full-time Code Enforcement Officer in order to provide additional time to enforce existing ordinances
- Enforce a code violation fine structure as allowed by state law MRSA 30A 4452
- Adopt an energy efficiency certificate program which creates incentives for new construction which follows certain energy efficiency standards

Chapter 3: Local Economy

INTRODUCTION

Parsonsfield's local economy and businesses are small and primarily agricultural and natural resource based, while many residents work outside of town in other sectors. According to the 1991 Parsonsfield Comprehensive Plan, the town's businesses consisted of contractors, lumber & woodworking, and some retail stores and restaurants, primarily featuring local artisans. Since then, the town has been able to maintain its contractor and industrial-based businesses. Some of the main businesses in town include lumber-based businesses, farms and agricultural facilities, and outdoor recreation focused businesses such as camps and a golf course. These businesses reflect Parsonsfield and its diverse economic history, keeping the town in touch with its agricultural and natural resource-based economy.

Historically, the forestry industry in Parsonsfield has been one of the town's economic drivers. Working in conjunction with the grist mills in town in the 19th and 20th centuries, forest management and its associated water-based manufacturing helped Parsonsfield develop its economy. Today, The Leavitt Plantation makes up a massive portion of the town's land and is primarily used for forestry and recreational purposes. This and other areas bring people to Parsonsfield for hunting, fishing, hiking, mountain biking, and ATVing. The forestry and agriculture industry employs about 11.5% of Parsonsfield's workforce as of 2019, up from 5.3% in 2011. As of 2019, the manufacturing sector employed almost 16% of Parsonsfield's workforce – the second most amongst all sectors.

Employment by Industry, 2019						
	Parsonsfield		York County		Maine	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	68	11.5%	696	0.9%	10,233	2.3%
Construction	50	8.5%	5,806	7.8%	34,151	7.6%
Manufacturing	92	15.6%	11,482	15.4%	50,340	11.2%
Wholesale trade	18	3.1%	1,932	2.6%	11,630	2.6%
Retail trade	91	15.4%	8,533	11.4%	49,826	11.1%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	32	5.4%	3,221	4.3%	20,082	4.5%
Information	10	1.7%	1,464	2.0%	8,386	1.9%
Finance and insurance, real estate and rental leasing	19	3.2%	6,462	8.7%	34,864	7.8%
Professional scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	21	3.6%	6,854	9.2%	42,852	9.6%
Educational services and health care and social assistance	124	21.1%	17,984	24.1%	121,419	27.1%
Arts, entertainment and recreation, and accommodation and food services	12	2.0%	4,017	5.4%	23,008	5.1%
Other services, except public administration	16	2.7%	2,461	3.3%	17,462	3.9%
Public administration	36	6.1%	3,728	5.0%	24,168	5.4%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2019

According to the Maine Department of Labor, in 2021 there were 39 establishments in Parsonsfield which, altogether, employed about 193 people. A large proportion of those employed in Parsonsfield worked in retail trade (21.2%) and transportation/warehousing (15%). The table below displays the

MDOL data on establishments in Parsonsfield. Not all industries are included because the MDOL cannot include data on industries with very few establishments.

Parsonsfield Establishments, 2021				
	Establishments	Average Employment	Total Wages	Average Weekly Wage
Total, All Industries	39	193	\$6,697,694	\$668
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	6	21	\$951,052	\$854
Construction	6	8	\$268,919	\$640
Retail Trade	4	41	\$1,119,089	\$526
Transportation and Warehousing	4	29	\$929,518	\$625

Source: Maine DOL Center for Workplace Research and Information

6 agricultural establishments in town employ on average approximately 21 people, with an average weekly wage of \$854. Other industries that employ folks in town in Retail and Construction have weekly wages of approximately \$526 and \$640, respectively.

Workforce and Commuter Patterns

As the U.S. economy has changed over time, rural areas have seen manufacturing and other producers struggle due to more products being brought in from international markets. The result has been a shift to jobs in the retail, service, and healthcare industries. In southern Maine, these opportunities exist mostly in the greater Portland area. The two top sectors that employ the town’s residents are

Where Parsonsfield Residents Work, 2021		
Employment Location	Count	Share
Cornish	73	10.3%
Portland	57	8.1%
South Portland	50	7.1%
Scarborough	39	5.5%
Porter	30	4.2%
Westbrook	28	4.0%
Parsonsfield	26	3.7%
Sanford	24	3.4%
Gorham	20	2.8%
Limerick	20	2.8%

Source: US Census, LODES 2021

Educational Services & Healthcare and Manufacturing, employing 21.1% and 15.6% of Parsonsfield’s workforce, respectively. Parsonsfield’s contractor-based businesses are evident when looking at the 5th largest employment sector in town – construction, which employs 8.5% of the town’s working residents.

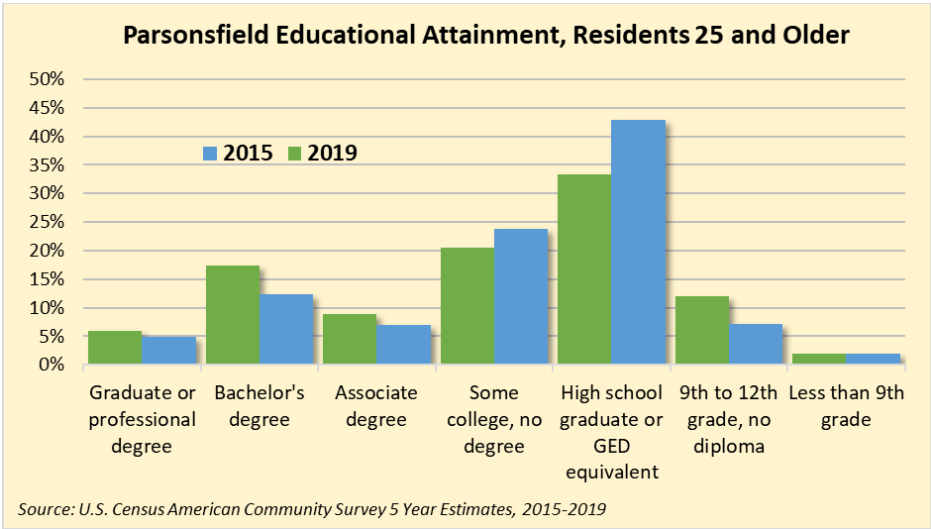
Parsonsfield’s construction and manufacturing base is proportionally larger than that of York County and Maine as a whole. The town’s entertainment and recreation as well as public administration sectors are quite small.

Parsonsfield is one of southern Maine’s “bedroom communities” or one in which residents primarily use the town for their desired rural lifestyle while working in more populated areas. According to the 2021 US Census LEHD Origin Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) data, only about 3.7% of the town’s workforce worked within Parsonsfield.

As illustrated in the table, 10% of Parsonsfield residents work in Portland, with another approximately 15% in the greater Portland areas of Westbrook, South Portland, and Scarborough.

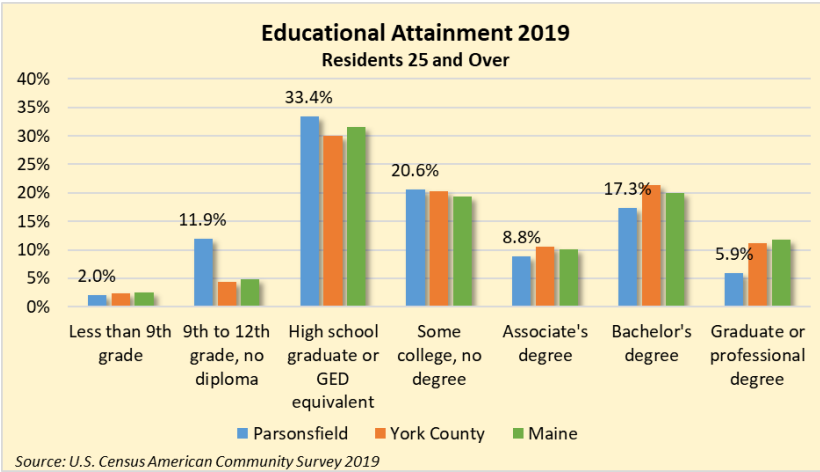
Education

ACS demographic data for Parsonsfield reveals that it has become more educated since 2015. As illustrated in the table below, the town’s residents with an associate degree, bachelor’s degree, and graduate or professional degree all increased. However, the percentage of residents who only graduated high school or received a General Education Diploma (GED) decreased. Many jobs in the manufacturing and healthcare sectors do not require four-year degrees. In many cases, associate degrees or certificates are acceptable. These changes may also reflect Parsonsfield’s growing population of those 25 and older during this time.



Note: This graph uses data only for Parsonsfield’s population 25 years and older. That population increased from 1,282 in 2015 to 1,448 in 2019.

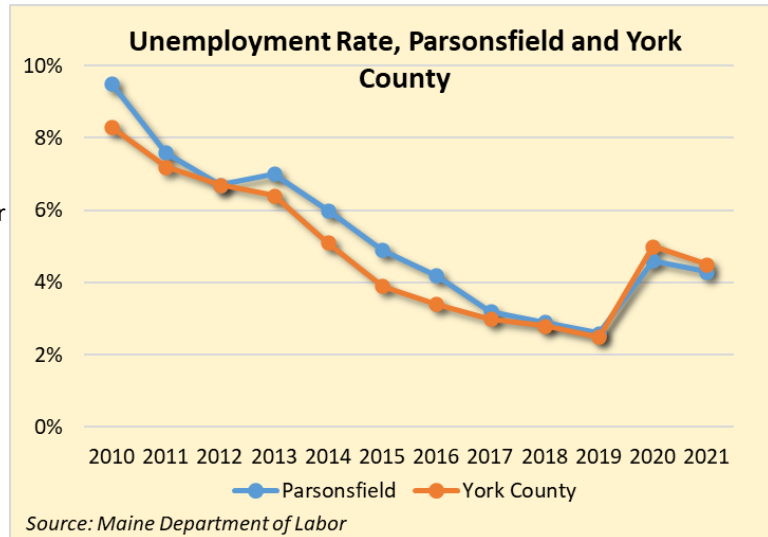
In comparison to the county and the state, Parsonsfield has a lower proportion of individuals who have received bachelor’s (17.3%) and graduate or professional degrees (5.9%). Parsonsfield also has a much higher proportion of residents who have gone through high school and have not received a diploma (11.9%) than both the county and the state.



Employment

Parsonsfeld’s workforce has had employment levels similar to York County in recent years. Through the period between 2013 and 2017, Parsonsfeld had about 1 percent more unemployment than the county as a whole. In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the town’s unemployment rate doubled from 2.6% to nearly 5%. However, this increase was slightly less than the county overall, likely due to the types of employment in Parsonsfeld. The unemployment rate has since started to recover but is still the highest it has been since 2015 at 4.3%.

Note: The unemployment rate is calculated using the number of people actively seeking employment. It does not account for workers who have given up looking for employment opportunities or part time workers (whether retired or school-aged). The rate is the number of those employed divided by the number seeking work.



Income & Earnings

The median household income for Parsonsfeld is approximately 85% of the median income for York County residents as a whole. The most common indicators to measure income for a

community are median household income, average household income, and per capita income (income per person). For each of these indicators, Parsonsfeld falls well below the county. However, this aligns with the rural nature of Parsonsfeld, and its relatively low cost of living in comparison to the rest of York County.

Percent of Households by Income, 2010 versus 2019				
Income	Parsonsfeld		York County	
	2010	2019	2010	2019
<\$10,000	12.0%	6.7%	5.1%	3.4%
\$10,000-\$14,999	2.6%	7.0%	4.7%	3.9%
\$15,000-\$24,999	11.8%	11.3%	10.0%	7.9%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	10.2%	6.2%	9.7%	8.6%
\$35,000-\$49,999	18.0%	14.3%	15.7%	12.4%
\$50,000-\$74,999	25.4%	20.2%	21.8%	19.2%
\$75,000 -\$99,999	8.9%	12.5%	15.1%	14.8%
\$100,000-\$149,999	7.7%	10.9%	12.2%	18.1%
\$150,000-\$199,999	3.3%	7.3%	3.6%	6.0%
\$200,000+	0.0%	3.8%	2.0%	5.6%
Median income (In 2019 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)	\$56,174	\$57,500	\$63,899	\$67,830
Mean income (In 2019 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)	\$61,132	\$69,893	\$76,719	\$85,640
Per Capita Income (In 2019 Inflation Adjusted Dollars)	\$24,243	\$30,402	\$31,523	\$36,093

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 & 2019

The median income increased from \$48,358 in 2010 (\$56,174 in 2019 Inflation Adjusted Dollars) to \$57,500 in 2019. When adjusting for inflation, the Parsonsfield median income only increased by 2.3%, while York County overall increased by 5.7%. The number of residents making over \$100,000 jumped from 11% in 2010 to 22% in 2019. This is likely influenced largely by inflation, which has caused incomes to increase across the board in the last decade.

Parsonsfield’s median income is similar to the state overall (\$57,918).

Families Below Poverty Level, 2010 versus 2019			
	Parsonsfield	York County	Maine
2010	14.4%	5.6%	8.4%
2019	8.2%	4.3%	7.3%
<i>Source: American Community Survey, 2010 & 2019</i>			

The percent of families below the poverty level has decreased significantly in Parsonsfield since 2010, dropping from 14.4% to 8.2% as of 2019.

Poverty levels have dropped statewide as well, but on a smaller scale. Despite this change, the poverty level in Parsonsfield still remains higher than for both the county and the state as a whole.

ECONOMIC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Parsonsfield is one of two communities in York County that has 51% or more of the population earning a low to moderate income, based on the overall median income of the county. This status is recognized by the federal government and means the community may be eligible for specific funding resources. More specifically, the Community Development Block Grant is a low to moderate income specific grant program which funds a wide variety of economic development, housing, infrastructure, and revitalization projects.

Kezar Falls Mill Site

The Kezar Falls Mill building has been vacant since the early 2000’s when operations as a textile mill stopped. In 2015, the town worked with SMPDC to conduct a reuse study which gathered input from town residents and proposed recommendations for future redevelopment of the site. Due to legal challenges, it has taken several years for the property to be purchased from the town. It also has site specific challenges due to the proximity to the river, and past septic/plumbing systems. Very recently, the property has come under new ownership, which may mean redevelopment in the near future.

The 2015 reuse plan recommended mixed-use development at the site, including restaurants, retail, and housing. Given the size and significance of the site to Parsonsfield and the Kezar Falls neighborhood, redevelopment of the mill could be a necessary catalyst for revitalizing the village.

SUMMARY

Although Parsonsfield is not a regional economic center, the community has sustained several businesses throughout the years. The community is one of the lower income towns in one of the wealthier counties in the state, but median incomes are on par with the state overall. Unemployment as historically been slightly higher than the county average, but it had continually improved until the COVID-19 lockdown. Parsonsfield residents have achieved higher levels of education over time, but most of the population has not pursued secondary education. This has implications for the labor force, which may tend toward more “blue collar” workers, who predominantly work in trades that train on the job. While the Maine Department of Labor estimates there are almost 200 jobs in Parsonsfield, many residents commute elsewhere. Parsonsfield may consider ways to support the businesses that are in the community, especially those that are most compatible with the character of the community, such as the forestry and outdoor recreation industries.

Local Economy Goals, Policies & Strategies

State Goal: *Promote an economic climate which increases job opportunities and economic wellbeing.*

Parsonsfield's Goal: *Experience moderate diversified economic development in specific centralized location(s) to serve the needs of the Town's population.*

POLICY ONE. It is the policy of the Town to encourage the forest and agricultural products industries.

- The Planning Board review the Zoning Ordinance and land use regulations to determine what changes should be recommended to reduce barriers to forest and agricultural industries.
- Provide information on the Maine Farmland Trust for business resources.

POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the Town to encourage appropriate diversified commercial development in Kezar Falls and other designated districts.

- Host annual workshop sessions with the Towns of Porter and Hiram, to address regional business needs in the Kezar Falls area.
- Work with the State and regional planning organization to bring new suitable industries to the region and Parsonsfield.
- Review the Town's land use regulations, including commercial use districts and allowed uses, to determine if changes should be made in keeping with this policy, and identify recommended changes.
- Review regulations related to industry and make recommendations for changes, including suitable and appropriate districts for industrial development.
- Review the regulations on home businesses and make recommendations to encourage future home businesses suitable to the community.

POLICY THREE: It is the policy of the Town to thoroughly evaluate the resource and public infrastructure needs of proposed large developments.

- Require impact analysis for proposed large developments including industrial, commercial, and residential developments be submitted by the developer as part of the application process.
- Adopt performance standards for commercial and industrial development which mitigate the impacts to infrastructure and surrounding uses.
- Evaluate and recommend necessary application requirements such as soil surveys, stormwater analysis, etc. for commercial and industrial development for informed decision making on development proposals.
- Require that additional technical assistance to be paid for by the developer when needed.
- Consider the appropriateness of an impact fee ordinance, how it can be used to foster appropriate development and mitigate overburdened infrastructure.

POLICY FOUR: It is the policy of the town to assess infrastructure needs and make improvements which encourage appropriate economic growth.

- Conduct a Downtown Master Plan to make recommendations for aesthetic, infrastructure, and transportation improvements to the Kezar Falls area to promote future economic development.

- Develop a TIF District in the Kezar Falls area for the purpose of generating funds for village improvements.
- Regularly review and apply for potential grant opportunities through state agencies to address local economic needs.
- Review past feasibility studies for a municipal septic system or other sewer solution and make recommendations for expanding this infrastructure in Kezar Falls.

Chapter 4: Transportation

INTRODUCTION

Parsonsfield's transportation network consists mostly of local roads and bridges as well as State Route 160, which is federally classified as a minor collector road (see map 5-1 on next page). Route 160 east, in conjunction with Moulton Hill and Merrill Hill roads, runs from north to south Parsonsfield where West Pond and Long Pond are located, and the northern-central part of town where the Town Office is located. The Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) has public works lots on Route 5 in Cornish, 13 miles east of Parsonsfield and in Porter on South Hiram Road, across the Ossipee River.

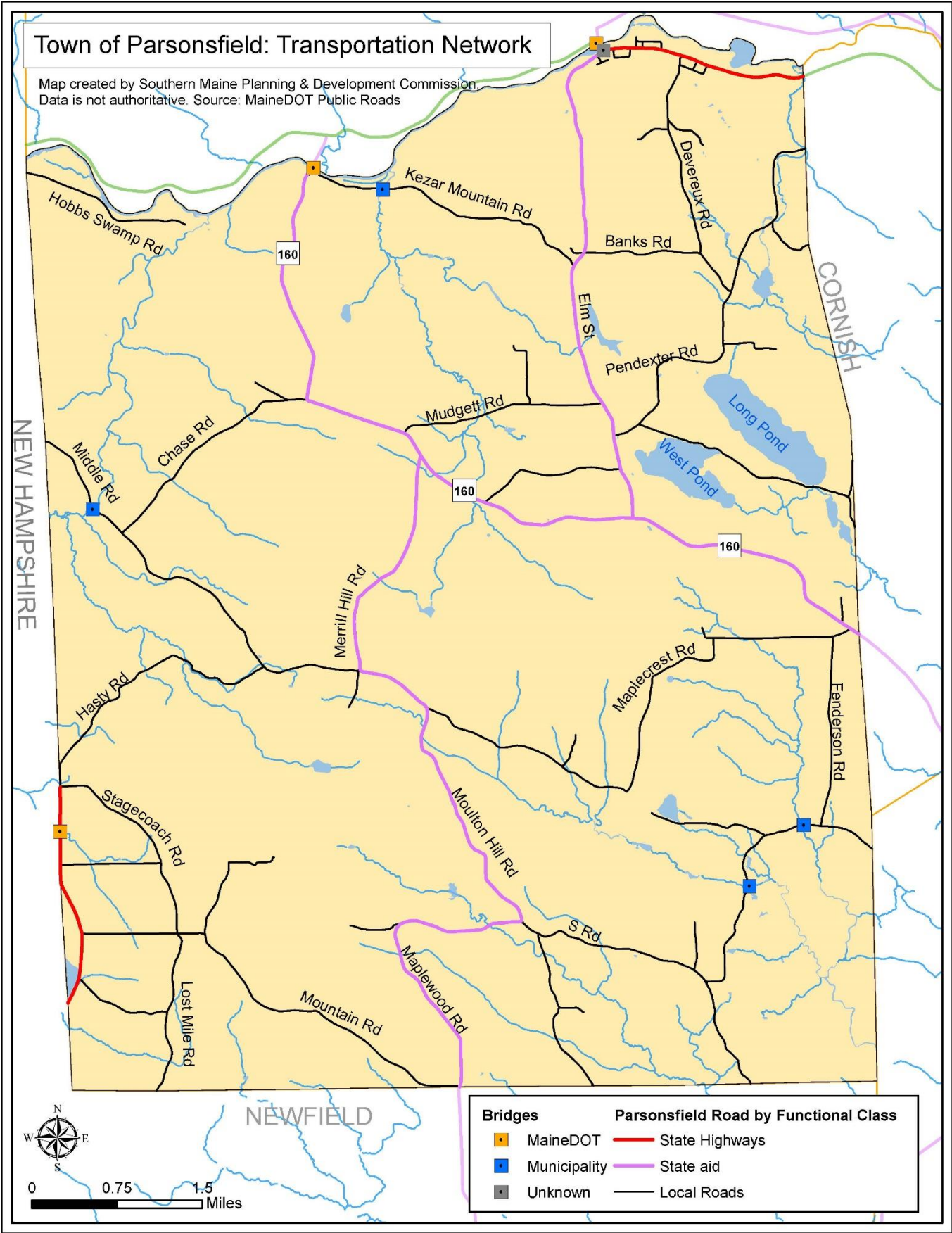
In terms of urban areas, Parsonsfield is located 26 miles north-northwest of Sanford, 36 miles northwest of Biddeford and Saco and 42 miles west of Portland. Bordering Effingham, New Hampshire, the town is also near New Hampshire's Conway (a major ski area and shopping hub, about 33 miles), Rochester (about 39 miles), and Somersworth (about 38 miles). Parsonsfield is also central to two of New England's most frequented water resources: Sebago Lake in Raymond, Maine and Lake Winnepesaukee in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire. Each lake is 30 miles from Parsonsfield – Sebago to the northeast and Winnepesaukee to the southwest.

Roads

Acting as the primary mode of transportation in Parsonsfield, local and regional road networks provide access to basic services and goods for residents and commerce. Roads can be broken down into three categories in the town: State Aid, State Highway and town roads. As illustrated on Map 5-1, the minor collector and State Aid roads are Maplewood Road, Moulton Hill Road, Merrill Hill Road, North Road (Route 160), and Elm Street. These five roads comprise 20 miles (19.8%) of Parsonsfield's 101 miles of roadways. Their state aid status means the town receives maintenance funding from MaineDOT for winter snow removal costs. State Highways distinguished by Map 1 comprise 3.8 miles (3.8%) of Parsonsfield's road network, and local roads make up the remainder of the road network. Town roads comprise 76.2 miles (76.4%) of Parsonsfield's road network. The town also has 19.43 miles of private roads, making up 16.9% of roads. Overall, this means Parsonsfield is responsible or partly responsible for maintaining 80.2% (or 80 miles) of roadways.

While the Maine DOT is responsible for improvements to the State Aid and State Highways, the town has an elected Road Commissioner who is responsible for planning, in conjunction with the Select Board, to maintain and improve local roads.

Map 4.1 Transportation Network



Currently, the town of Parsonsfield manages its roadway capital improvement plan. MaineDOT hosts the [Local Roads Center](#), which is available for technical assistance and guidance for local road maintenance. If the town is interested in improving long term tracking and planning, DOT also offers access to software called the Road Surface Management System (RSMS) which helps to inventory local roads and plan for long term maintenance. The Local Roads Center also offers workshops and resources to improve local expertise about effective local road management.

Between 2016 and 2019, MaineDOT collected traffic counts at 32 locations in Parsonsfield. The highest Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) traffic volumes in town were seen on Route 25. Route 25 east of Elm Street had the highest AADT, measuring in at 5,250 in 2016. The town’s top four counts, which all had an AADT of over 4,500, were all on Route 25. Two locations on Elm Street (one southwest of Route 25, and one just southwest of Fox Ave) had counts of 1,120 and 950, respectively. In West Parsonsfield, Province Lake Road and Lost Mile Road had an AADT of 570 and 200 near the town’s border with New Hampshire. The top 16 counts by AADT conducted by MaineDOT are outlined below:

Annual Average Daily Traffic at Key Intersections		
Location	AADT 2016/2019	AADT 2022
Federal Rd (Route 25) East of Elm St	5,250	6,000
Federal Rd (Route 25) Northwest of Elm St	4,850	
Federal Rd (Route 25) East of Stewart St	4,600	5,440
Federal Rd (Route 25) East of Devereux Rd	4,530	5,090
Elm St Southwest of Federal Rd (Route 25)	1,120	1,330
Elm St Southwest of Fox Ave	950	1,230
Province Lake Rd South of Shore Acres Rd @ NH State Line	760*	
Elm St South of Kezar Mountain Road	730	
Route 160 East of Elm St	660	930
Province Lake Rd South of Stagecoach Rd	570*	
Maplecrest Road West of Route 160	470	510
Elm St North of Route 160	380	500
North Road West of Elm Street	360	550
Pendexter Rd East of Elm Street	260	
Lost Mile Rd South of Shore Acres Rd	200*	
Maplewood Rd North of Mountain Road	180*	
<i>Source: Maine DOT, *Data is from 2019. Note, not all locations are counted every year, so data collection times vary.</i>		

Commuter Data

Parsonsfield’s employment history dates to its 19th century textile mills, logging industry, agricultural and agritourism roots, when it served as a rural employment center up through the 2000’s. Since then, it has been

Means of Transportation to Work	
Drove Alone	73.6%
Carpooled	12.1%
Public Transportation	0.6%
Taxicab, motorcycle, other	0.9%
Worked From Home	12.8%
<i>Source: 2019 American Community Survey</i>	

characterized as a bedroom commuter town for surrounding areas. In 2019, the U.S. Census estimated Parsonsfield to have 999 employed residents over the age of 16. Of these, 10.5% commuted to Portland, 10.5% to Cornish, 6.7% to Hiram, 4.7% to South Portland, 3.8% to Westbrook, and 3.6% to each Porter and Parsonsfield. 3.2% or less of employed residents work in Scarborough, Conway, New Hampshire, or Gorham.

Parsonsfield has a history of lengthy commutes. Data suggests that the number of workers traveling 60 or more minutes has been generally increasing. Starting in 2013, the percentages of workers traveling 60 or more minutes increased from 25.8% to 36.9% in 2019. Even with roughly 12.8% of Parsonsfield's employed residents working from home, average commute times were estimated to be around 43 minutes from 2014 to 2019.

Bridges

Parsonsfield has eight bridges, five are owned and maintained by the municipality, and three are owned by MaineDOT (see map 1, above). MaineDOT inspects all Bridges and Minor Spans on public ways, regardless of ownership, every two years, resulting in a Federal Sufficiency Rating (FSR) for each bridge. These inspections are done in accordance with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and MaineDOT's Bridge Management Coding Guides. This means all bridges in Parsonsfield, owned by MaineDOT and the town are inspected as part of this process. Inspection reports offer more detailed condition information, including maintenance issues, for each bridge. Table 1 describes the FSR scale.

FSR Range	Condition Description	FSR Range	Condition Description
90-100	Excellent	40-49	Poor
80-89	Very Good	30-39	Serious
70-79	Good	20-29	Critical
60-69	Satisfactory	1-19	Imminent Failure
50-59	Fair	0	Failed

Source: Maine DOT

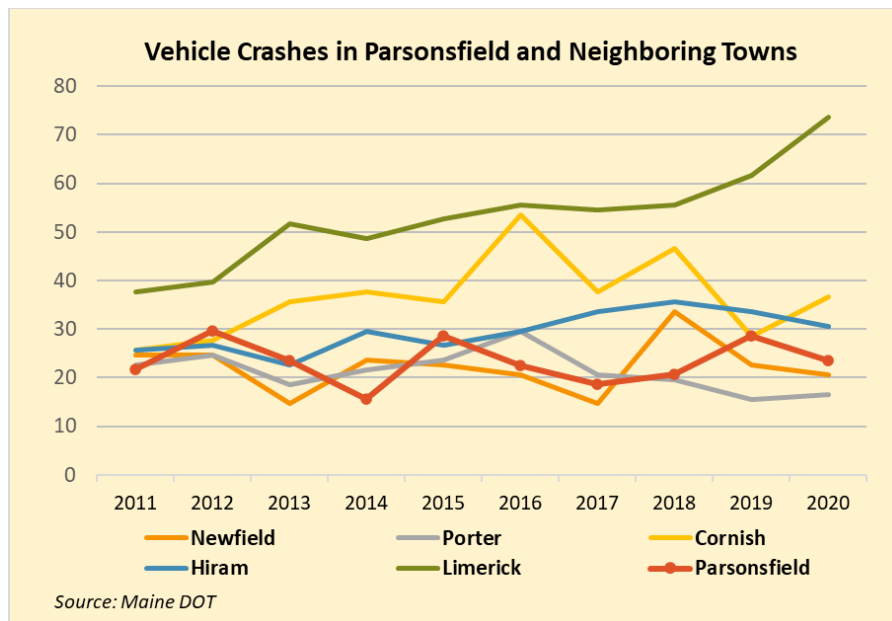
All Parsonsfield's bridges have an FSR of Satisfactory or above. The lowest bridge rating is for Corporal Bridge, rated at a 60, which spans Great Brook. This bridge is owned by the town. Each of the other bridges had ratings between 64 and 86, with two bridges owned by the town having ratings above an 80 (Very Good). A full inventory of Parsonsfield's bridges listing materials, age, inspection dates and other information can be found at www.maine.gov/mdot/bridges/ or in the appendix to this chapter.

Safety

As a rural community with low traffic volumes, Parsonsfield's road network is relatively safe. MaineDOT collects crash data across the state, compiling it into their online database. It includes what MaineDOT classifies as "High Crash Locations" or HCLs. To qualify as an HCL, an intersection or stretch of road must exceed eight or more traffic crashes and a Critical Rate Factor (CRF) greater than 1.0 in a three-year period. A CRF is a statistic measure to determine the expected crash rate as compared to similar intersections in Maine. Since 2010, Parsonsfield has had only one HCL in its road network – the 2.2 mile segment of road along North Road (Route 160) that goes from its intersection with Weeks Road to the intersection with Elm Street. These segments of roadway were only HCL's in 2013 and 2014. In 2013, it had 9 crashes with a 44% injury rate, and in 2014 it had 12 crashes with a 33% injury rate. The total

number of vehicle crashes in Parsonsfield is also low. In the last ten years, the town saw a peak of 30 crashes in 2012, and a low of 16 crashes in 2014. Comparatively, other towns such as Cornish and Limerick have seen rises in crashes in the last several years. MaineDOT classifies passenger injury into five categories: no injury, possible injury, non-incapacitating injury, incapacitating injury and fatality.

Since many crashes will involve more than 1 driver and passenger(s), the number of injury reports is always higher than the number of crashes. Since 2010, Parsonsfield’s 398 injury reports yielded 7 fatalities (1.8%), with 7 (1.8%) incapacitating injuries, 44 (11.1%) non-incapacitating, 58 (14.6%) possible injuries and 282 (71%) reporting no injury.



**Note: Waterboro has vehicle crashes in the hundreds and was left out of this graph for sizing and clarity purposes.*

Although the data indicates that safety is not a serious concern for the town, there is anecdotal evidence that traffic volumes and speeds have increased in recent years on minor collectors such as Elm St. This change is especially noticeable in the summer months, potentially due to an increase in seasonal populations during and after the pandemic.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

Pedestrian facilities, such as paved sidewalks and gravel walking paths are valuable features for roadways with high volumes of traffic or high speeds. The primary purpose of sidewalks is to improve safety for pedestrians by separating them from travel lanes of roadways. In addition to this, sidewalks can also serve as a source of recreation for residents, a non-motorized mode of travel, serve to beautify an area, or stimulate economic activity in rural and village settings. The only sidewalks in Parsonsfield are located in the vicinity of Kezar Falls Village and connect residents to businesses and civic facilities. Two crosswalks are also marked on Route 25. Sidewalk conditions vary and existing sidewalk gaps, as well as crosswalk site distances have caused concerns with users. MaineDOT offers assistance through their Village Partnership Initiative program that can help fund improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

Similar to the establishment of pedestrian infrastructure, planning for a bicycle network requires a different approach from that of motorized transportation planning. Bicyclists have different needs from those of motorists, including wider shoulders, better traffic control at intersections, and stricter access management. Parsonsfield does not currently have any bicycle focused infrastructure.

Parking

In the Kezar Falls area of town, municipal parking is important for village activity. There is one public lot along Route 25 in Kezar Falls that is used for the post office and surrounding businesses. The exact number of spots is not known, as it needs restriping, however it is estimated to be around 20, with room to add more. The lot does not have any regular maintenance schedule. If current development plans are successful, and future growth occurs in the area, careful consideration of parking availability may be in order. If the town undertakes any downtown specific planning, future parking capacity should be included.

Electric Vehicles

In recent years, the popularity of electric vehicles has increased as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and climate impacts. Electric charging stations may become a necessity in the coming years, which the town could consider including in public parking lots. The town may also consider including a provision in the zoning ordinance which requires developments of a certain size to include an electric charging station, or the electric infrastructure to install one in the future, as part of the development plan.

Public Transportation

Parsonsfield has very limited public transportation opportunities. York County Community Action Corporation (YCCAC) operates a demand-response transportation service between Waterboro and Alfred that could be available to individuals calling ahead in Parsonsfield. There are some local volunteer groups, namely The Grateful Undead, who also organize rides for older adults or others who need assistance with transportation. The Sacopee Valley Health Center in Porter also offers a shuttle service for appointments at their facility. Regionally, there are Concord Coach bus services available at the Portland and Saco Transportation Centers, as well as the Amtrack Downeaster train which runs from Brunswick to Boston and nearby stops include Portland, Saco, and Wells.

Airports

There are a few small airports in the area which primarily serve private flights or freight transportation. The Portland International Jetport (PWM) is the closest airport which services long distance commercial passenger flights. PWM is about 40 miles, or a 1-hour drive, from Parsonsfield.

SUMMARY

The Parsonsfield road network is the community's main transportation concern. Given the town's large size, the miles of road to be maintained is high for a community with a small population and capacity. Data suggests that not much has changed in the past decade in terms of commuting and general traffic safety, however local attitudes suggest that traffic volumes and speeds may have increased over time in some areas. The area of Kezar Falls is best suited for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and the community may consider improving walkability in that neighborhood.

Transportation Goals, Policies & Strategies

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

Parsonsfield's Goal: Have a well maintained and safe transportation system which meets the functional and aesthetic needs of the community in a cost-efficient manner.

POLICY ONE. It is the policy of the Town to maximize the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network, and work with the Maine Department of Transportation to address safety, maintenance, and development concerns in Parsonsfield.

- Annually provide the Selectboard with the Maine DOT accident data for Parsonsfield, provided online.
- Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts led by Maine DOT or the RPO.
- Continue efforts to create sidewalks and crosswalks along Route 25 in Kezar Falls, including proper lighting, signage and signals.
- Review Annual Bridge Inspection Reports provided by MaineDOT available online, to inform future local bridge repairs & replacement.
- Monitor Average Annual Daily Traffic data for Parsonsfield, available from Maine DOT online, to understand increases in traffic on town roads.
- Engage with the Maine DOT Local Roads Center to stay updated on workshops, new legislation, and technical assistance available for municipality managed roads and bridges.

POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the Town to address the safety, maintenance, and development concerns related to the Town maintained roads in Parsonsfield on a priority basis.

- Consider options for increasing capacity of Road Commissioner through compensation, or creating a hired position.
- Develop or continue to update a prioritized ten-year improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community's transportation network.
- Make recommendations to the Selectboard for posted weight limits or restrictions of heavy vehicles on town ways showing disproportional wear from commercial traffic.
- Seek funding from the DOT's Local Bridge Program to finance bridge improvements.

POLICY THREE. It is the policy of the town to manage land use in a way that maximizes the efficiency of the transportation system, for the benefit and protection of natural resources and existing infrastructure.

- Maintain, enact, or amend ordinance standards for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to encourage transportation-efficient growth patterns (discouraging dead-ends and cul-de-sacs) and provide sidewalks in village areas.
- Establish a checklist for conditional use and subdivision planning board review to determine if additional transportation impact analysis is needed for project approval.
- Evaluate parking requirements for residential and commercial developments, amending where

excessive parking requirements may discourage growth and development in village areas.

- Create a plan to improve current municipal parking lots, including better traffic flow, paint striping, and efficient use of space. Establish a periodic maintenance plan for the upkeep of lots.

POLICY FOUR. It is the policy of the town to meet the diverse transportation needs of the community by promoting safe options for all users and modes (bicyclists, pedestrians, motor vehicles)

- Continue to contribute annually to the social service agencies which provide transportation to low income and health eligible residents.
- Seek public and private partners that may develop a commuter bus or periodic shuttle service along Route 25 to Portland.
- Increase “share the road” signage along high traffic corridors to increase awareness and driver preparedness for bicyclists.

Chapter 5: Natural Resources

INTRODUCTION

The natural resources of Parsonsfield provide important environmental and social value. Wildlife and fisheries habitat, clean drinking water, and recreational opportunities are just some of the many benefits. Most importantly, the vast open space and wild areas of Parsonsfield are key to the rural character of the community. Proper land management and development regulations can mitigate the impacts of development on sensitive areas, and ensure that these resources are protected into the future.

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection runs the *Beginning with Habitat* program, which inventories several key natural resource indicators in publicly available data and maps. This program is the main source of natural resource information for most communities in the state, and this chapter features their data and resources prominently. The chapter is organized into three parts 1) Water Resources 2) Natural Resources 3) Agriculture & Forestry Resources.

The primary natural asset of the community is the Leavitt Plantation property. At approximately 8,600 acres, it is one of the largest contiguous blocks of sustainably managed forest in single ownership in southern Maine. This area overlaps with the Center Lovell Focus Area, an area of almost 10,000 acres identified by *Beginning with Habitat* as a priority natural area for conservation and protection, due to its concentration of rare and exemplary natural communities.

WATER RESOURCES

The various surface water features throughout town are important for providing necessary fish and wildlife habitat, as well as recreational assets, potential water supplies and natural beauty. Parsonsfield relies primarily on private wells for drinking water, so the continued management and protection of water supplies is essential for maintaining the resource.

Surface Water

Parsonsfield lies within two watersheds, the Ossipee River watershed, and the Little Ossipee River watershed. Both watersheds are sub-watersheds of the larger Saco River Watershed. Watershed boundaries approximate how precipitation runs into surface waters based on the topography of the area. Watershed boundaries can be helpful for understanding pollution and contamination of surface and ground water. Parsonsfield's watershed boundaries can be seen in **Map 5.1 Watersheds**.

Rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds are not bound by town boundaries. Land use planning along rivers and streams can affect downstream communities. In the case of Parsonsfield, the primary river, the Ossipee River, forms the northern town boundary with Hiram and Porter, as well as the border between Oxford and York counties.

The Maine Department of Environmental Protection classifies water quality of rivers and streamson a scale of AA-C. In 1990, the eastern section of the Ossipee River was classified as C. in 2021, the entire stretch along the Parsonsfield border is Class B.

Maine DEP Surface Water Classification

Class A: Water at the highest quality potentially acceptable for water supply after filtration.

Class B: Water of the second highest quality acceptable for swimming and other recreational uses and is potentially a water supply after treatment.

Class C: Water of the third highest quality potentially acceptable for boating or industrial water supply following treatment.

Rivers and Streams in Parsonsfield			
Name	Access	Approx. Length in Town (Miles)	Classification
Ossipee River	Porter Powerhouse	8.5	B
South River	Huntress Bridge Road, NH	1.9	A
Benson Brook	Benson Road	3.1	B
Chellis Brook	South Road	5.0	B
Emerson Brook	Champion Pond	4.2	A
Fenderson Brook	Cram Road	3.9	B
Great Brook	Mudgett Road	5.3	B
Wedgewood Brook	Spruce Pond	2.5	B
Pendexter Brook	Cram Road	4.2	B

A great pond is considered any inland waterbody greater than 10 acres. These waterbodies have stricter protections in terms of development regulation, under the Natural Resources Protection Act. These regulations seek to minimize the activities which pose a risk to the overall health of the waterbody, including runoff, pollution, etc. Towns can consider enacting proper control around waterbodies of significance, such as lot size, shoreland setbacks, buffers, water access, and road maintenance.

Lakes and Ponds in Parsonsfield						
Name	Area (acres)	Perimeter (miles)	Mean/Max Depth	Fishery Type	Water Quality Category	Phosphorus Allocation (lb/acre/yr)
Allen Pond	7	.5		N/A	Mod-sensitive	.046
Champion Pond	9	.5	17/31	Warmwater	Mod-sensitive	.050
Long Pond	263	3.2	18/33	Coldwater + Warmwater	Poor restorable	.045
Noah's Pond	23	1.3		N/A	Mod-sensitive	.062
Province Lake	1008	5.2	9/17	Warmwater	N/A*	*
Randall Pond	18	.7		N/A	Mod-sensitive	.060
Spruce Pond	21	.9		No Fishery	Mod-sensitive	.046
West Pond	167	3	10/28	Warmwater	Mod-sensitive	.067

Source: *Lakes of Maine, Lake Stewards of Maine*
 *Maine data not calculated for a primarily NH lake. More info on Province Lake water quality below.

The major threat to water quality for most lakes and ponds are increased nutrient levels, namely phosphorus. The per acre phosphorus allocation defines how much phosphorus each acre of land in a

lake's watershed is allowed to discharge in stormwater runoff when developed. Phosphorus allocations range from about 0.02 lb/acre/year for very sensitive lakes in high growth areas to 0.15 lb/acre/year for less sensitive lakes in very low growth areas. The total phosphorus exported by a development can be limited by limiting impervious surfaces in areas near lakes and ponds, and implementing Low Impact Development (LID) Practices.

According to the Department of Environmental Protection, Long Pond is the most at risk in terms of water quality. It has the lowest per acre phosphorus allocation, and is also the largest lake in the community, so it is likely sought after for development. In the DEP 2020 report on non-point source pollution priority watershed, the Long Pond watershed is listed as sensitive due to a negative trend in water clarity in the past decade. The Long Pond Association has been actively working to combat the water quality issues, including an alum treatment done in summer 2022. Alum treatments are a process of adding aluminum sulfate to the water in large quantities to reduce the amount of phosphorus. Testing shows the treatment has had a positive impact on overall water clarity and quality, reducing algae blooms.

Province Lake, primarily located in NH and managed by NH agencies, also faces problems associated with high phosphorus. The lake has been listed on the NH Department of Environmental Services 303(d) list for impaired waterbodies since 2010. The Province Lake Association developed a Watershed Management Plan in 2014 to respond to the problems, and some recommendations have been implemented in recent years. However, the lake still suffers from frequent algae blooms.

Another common threat posed to waterbody health is the spread of invasive species. The Maine DEP Invasive Aquatic Plant Map reports known findings of variable milfoil in the Ossipee River, near the Route 25 Bridge into Porter. In 2016, Porter and Parsonsfield partnered to pay for clean-up of the milfoil in the Ossipee River. In addition, West Pond is known to have a low density of curly-leaf pondweed, as of 2003. Removal in West Pond is currently being conducted by the lake association. This is a concern that can be monitored in the future to assess whether the town feels the need to take further action to reduce the spread.

Wetlands

Wetlands are an important natural resource, often identified by non-permeable soils, water table at or near the surface, and the presence of certain vegetation. Wetlands are very difficult areas to develop, given the need for expensive infill and engineering. At the same time, it is important to keep these areas undisturbed due to their many important environmental functions.

Key Environmental Functions of Wetlands:

- 1) Act as groundwater recharge and cleansing areas
- 2) Provide habitats for rare and endangered plants and animals
- 3) Maintain lake and river quality by controlling runoff of nutrients
- 4) Store and slowly discharge high water, thus reducing the potential for floods
- 5) Sediment retention areas controlling agricultural runoff
- 6) Provide visual and open-space value

Several laws regulate the activities that take place in or around wetlands. On the national level, the Clean Water Act gives authority to the Army Corps of Engineers to regulate the dredging and filling of wetlands. Maine has two laws that provide protection for wetlands. The first is regulated by The Maine

Department of Environmental Protection, and monitors the dredging, filling, draining, and construction in or over, or within 100 feet of any wetland. There is also a requirement under the Maine State Subdivision Law that states that all wetlands are to be shown on subdivision plans. The location of wetlands is important to keep in mind when the town considers growth and future development. Zoning and appropriate uses should be considered in areas of high wetland density, or wetlands noted for significant importance. The wetlands located within town can be seen on **Map 5.2 Wetlands and Waterbodies**.

Floodplains

Floodplains are areas where waterbodies and wetlands naturally flood during heavy precipitation or spring melting. Floodplains are generally protected from development, both for the benefit of the nearby waterbodies, as well as the threat to property with reoccurring floods. There are some limited flood zone areas along the Ossipee River and its tributaries which see recurring flooding based on the 100-year storm event. Parsonsfield does participate in the National Flood Insurance Program, and the ordinance is set to be updated in 2024 to reflect the new Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps. The Floodplains are depicted in the **Map 5.2 Wetlands and Waterbodies** below.

Aquifers

Aquifers are underground geologic formations which contain usable amounts of water. Typically, aquifers are located in areas of saturated sand and gravel, or cracks in bed rock. Groundwater aquifers are generally the source of potable drinking water for individual private wells, which are the primary water supply type in Parsonsfield.

Parsonsfield has several aquifers which primarily follow the Ossipee River and Emerson Brook. All aquifers maintain a 10-50 gallons per minute rate, which is typical statewide. The aquifers located in town are displayed in **Map 5.3 Aquifers**.

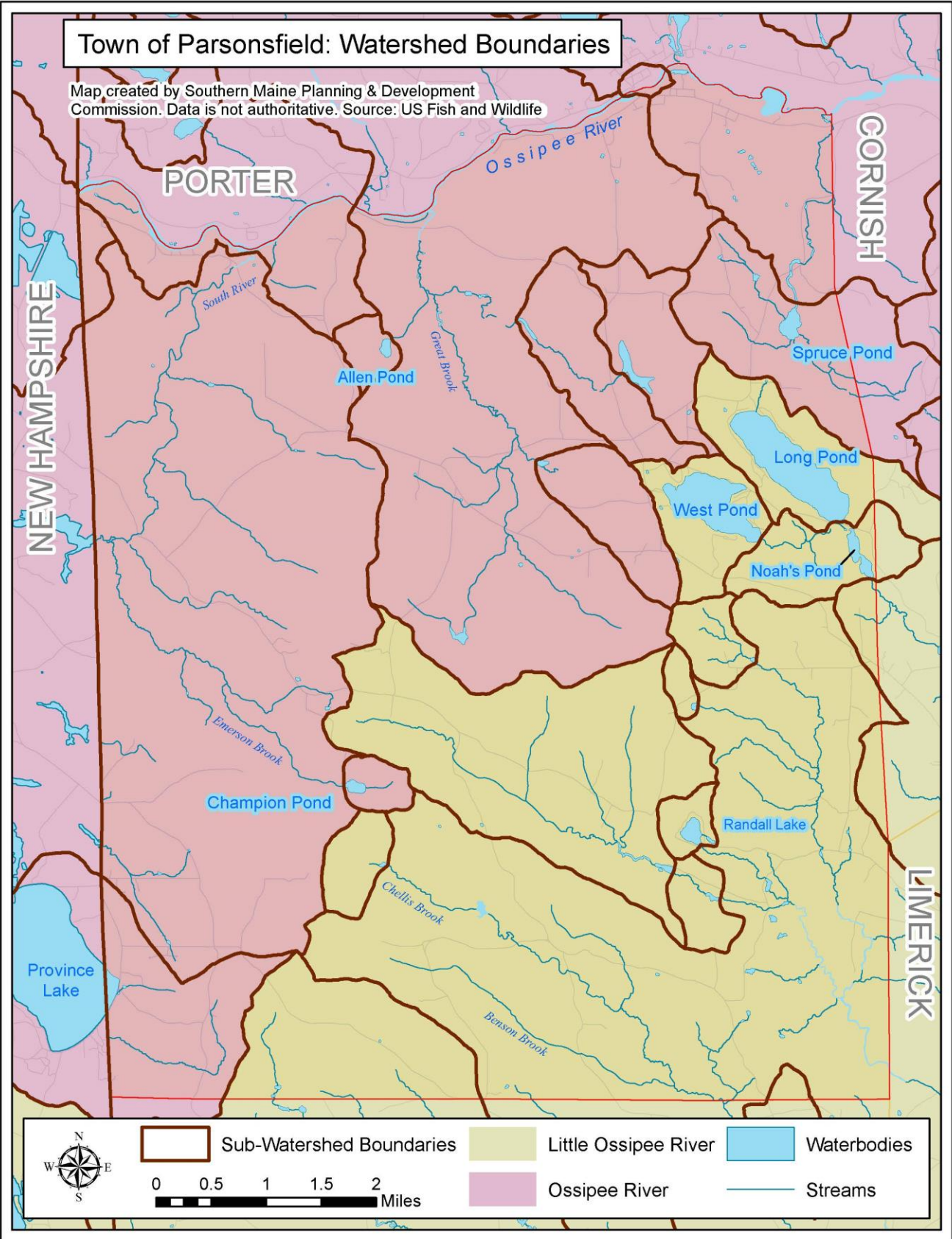
Current Parsonsfield Protections for Water Resources

There are several river and lake associations active in the area. Locally, the Long Pond, Province Lake and West Pond Lake Associations are groups most often formed by volunteer lake property owners for education and awareness of lake protections, water quality conditions, and other relevant news. They may also take an active role in invasive species removal or water quality treatments when necessary.

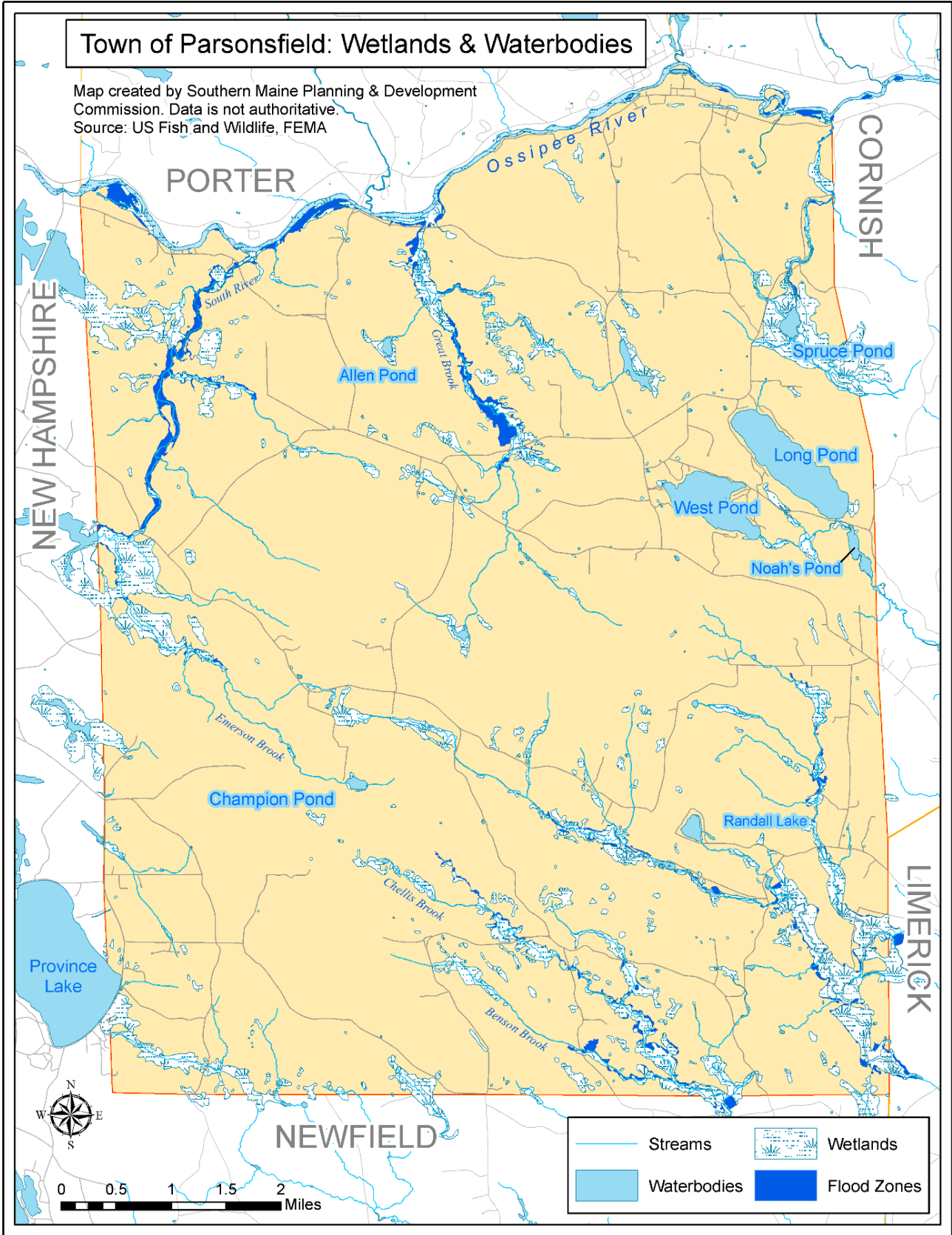
Local Organizations involved with Waterbody Protections & Stewardship		
Organization	Waterbodies	Link
Long Pond Association	Long Pond	longpondassociation.info
Province Lake Association	Province Lake	provincelake.org
West Pond Association	West Pond	Westpond.org
Acton Wakefield Watersheds Alliance	Province Lake & more in NH	awwatersheds.org
Saco River Corridor Commission	Saco River	src-maine.org
Saco Watershed Collaborative	All	sustainthesaco.org

The town’s ordinance includes a shoreland district that reflects the state shoreland zoning requirements. Shoreland District creates protections for waterbodies and wetlands of a certain size and significance. Protections include setbacks, buffers, and limited land uses.

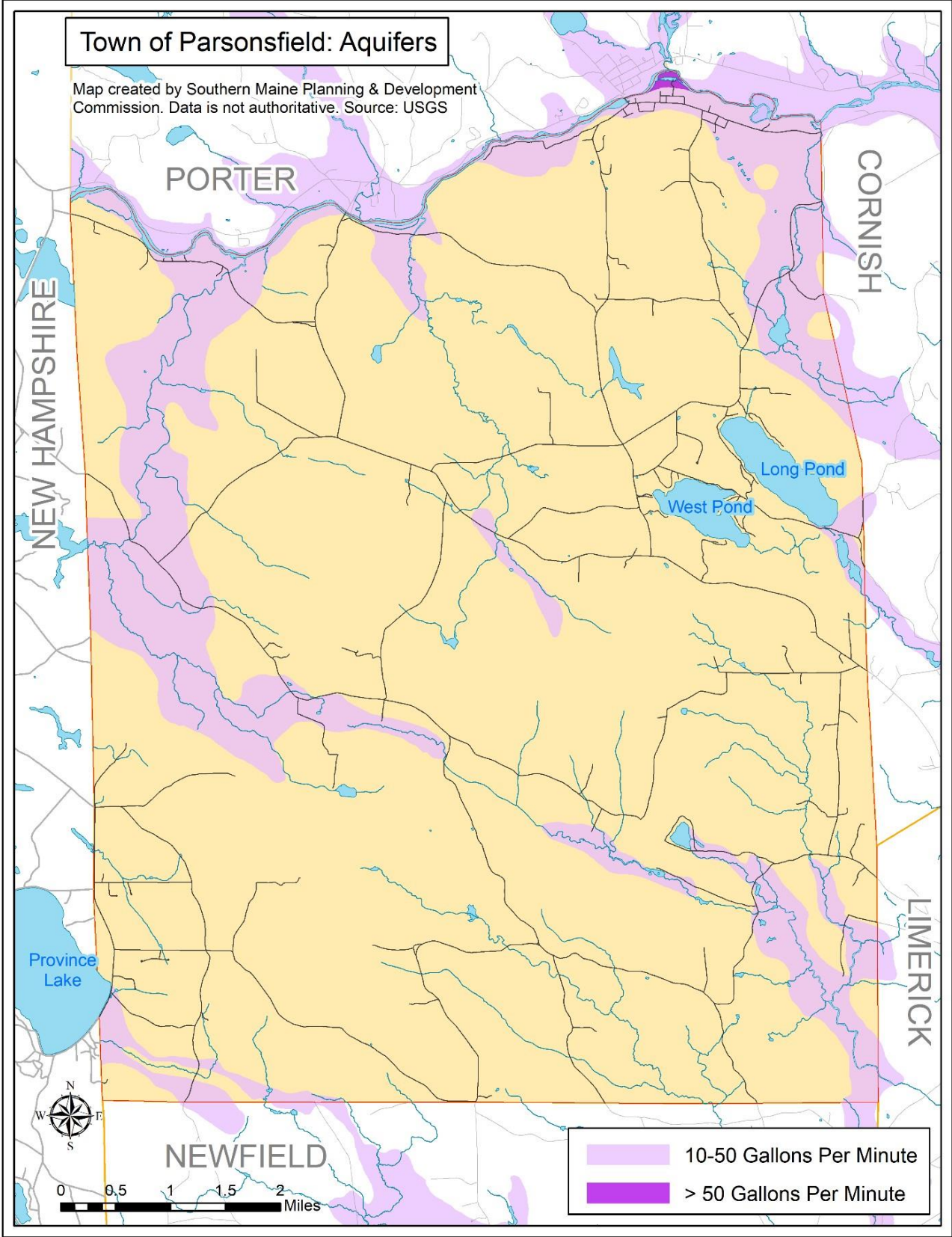
Map 5.1 Watershed Boundaries



Map 5.2 Wetlands and Waterbodies



Map 5.3 Aquifers



NATURAL RESOURCES

Topography

Topographical features have a strong influence on the way a town develops. Steep slopes affect the feasibility of development, water drainage, and scenic views. Parsonsfield has two predominate topographic patterns. The northern section of town features rolling hills and relatively flat land, all of which drains toward the Ossipee River along the northern border of town. These topology patterns can be seen in **Map 5.4 Topography**. The southern portion of the community features steeper hills and mountains, a number of which are over 1000' in elevation. Several taller mountains, such as Dearborn Mountain (1100'), Cedar Mountain (1200') Randall Mountain (1100'), and Wiggin Mountain (1280'). These taller features stand out in the landscape and create several scenic views. The resource protection district includes protections for areas of contiguously steep slopes, which are often poorly suited for development.

Soils

Proper management of growth and development should take into consideration the suitability of soils present throughout the town. Construction of homes, septic systems and roads on unsuitable soils can create defective structures, increased construction and maintenance costs, public health and safety problems, and environmental disturbances.

Each soil type has different characteristics that make it suitable for development. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection and York County Soil and Water Conservation District produce a soil survey which rates soil type based on the suitability for "low-density development", such as single-family residences with basements and septic. The survey primarily considers the water content and drainage ability of each soil type. Poorly drained soils are prone to settling, causing structural problems in buildings over time. A summary of surveyed soils for Parsonsfield can be seen in **Map 5.5 Soil Suitability for Low Density Development**.

Land Cover

According to Beginning with Habitat, approximately 80% of Parsonsfield is undeveloped, with 20% developed. Most development is clustered around roads and in the several small village clusters around town, with the most development in the Kezar Falls stretch of Route 25. The **Beginning with Habitat Undeveloped Habitat Blocks & Connectors Map** shows what contiguous areas of town are undeveloped, included in the appendix.

Wildlife Habitat

There are several state listed plant and animal species with known habitats throughout Parsonsfield. **Map 5.7 Wildlife Habitat** below maps the several types of known habitats of rare, endangered, or threatened species, according to Beginning with Habitat data.

Beginning with Habitat also designates conservation Focus Areas, which are determined by overlapping critical habitat, rare plants and species, and land cover that should be considered a top priority for conservation. The Central Parsonsfield Focus Area, shown in **Map 5.7 Wildlife Habitat**, covers a large swath of land across the middle of town. The designated areas covers approximately

10,000 acres of low mountains, rolling hills, and unique geology. These landforms create conditions that support rare and exemplary natural communities, including rare plant and animal species. Exemplary habitats include ironwood-oak-ash woodlands, hemlock-hardwood pocket swamps, enriched northern hardwood forest, and tall sedge fens. There are several rare species present in the area, but two are particularly of note. The juniper hairstreak butterfly is a state endangered species which uses red cedar as its host. They are known to exist in 2 to 3 places in Maine. The second is the small whorled pogonia, a federally endangered species that is one of the rarest orchids in the eastern US. It can be found in several places in the focus area.

A large portion of this area is already conserved as part of the Leavitt Plantation Forest. However, this focus area designation can be used to prioritize future conservation. The town may also consider other programs and efforts which can help protect the region without formal preservation.

To learn more about the specific species and attributes that make this area significant, visit www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/focusarea/factsheets.htm or the appendix of this chapter.



*Above- Small-whorled pogonia, Maine Natural Areas Program
Below- Juniper hairstreak, Jonathan Mays*

Conserved Lands

Conservation land is the primary protection strategy for important natural resources and directing development away from these areas. Parsonsfield has a significant portion of the town area in conservation. The Francis Small Heritage Trust is the local land trust which holds land in Parsonsfield's neighboring communities. The Trust owns 1,472 acres and holds easements on an additional 308 acres.

The Leavitt Plantation Forest is a 8,600-acre forest conserved in 2003, through the collaborated effort of local residents, local timber management companies, Land for Maine's Future, and the Nature Conservancy. The land has primarily been managed for forest products for decades, but as the vast number of rare plant and animal species became known, there was more incentive to conserve the property, and manage the timber harvesting sustainably. The land is also popular among hunters, snowmobilers, hikers, cross-country skiers, and mountain bikers. Several streams serve as prime brook trout habitat and fishing.

Most recently, 533 acres of old growth undisturbed forest known as the Great Oaks Sanctuary, abutting both West Pond and the existing Leavitt Plantation, was conserved through the Northeast Conservation Trust. The organization owns many dispersed properties throughout Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York and beyond which focus on preserving lands as "forever wild", with no intention of motorized or trail access, and little to no wood harvest. The property was originally owned by one of the original founding families of Parsonsfield, was stewarded by many generations of that family until it was purchased by its current owners who intended to eventually preserve the property. The Francis Small Heritage Trust holds an easement on the property, and will be the lead stewardship organization.

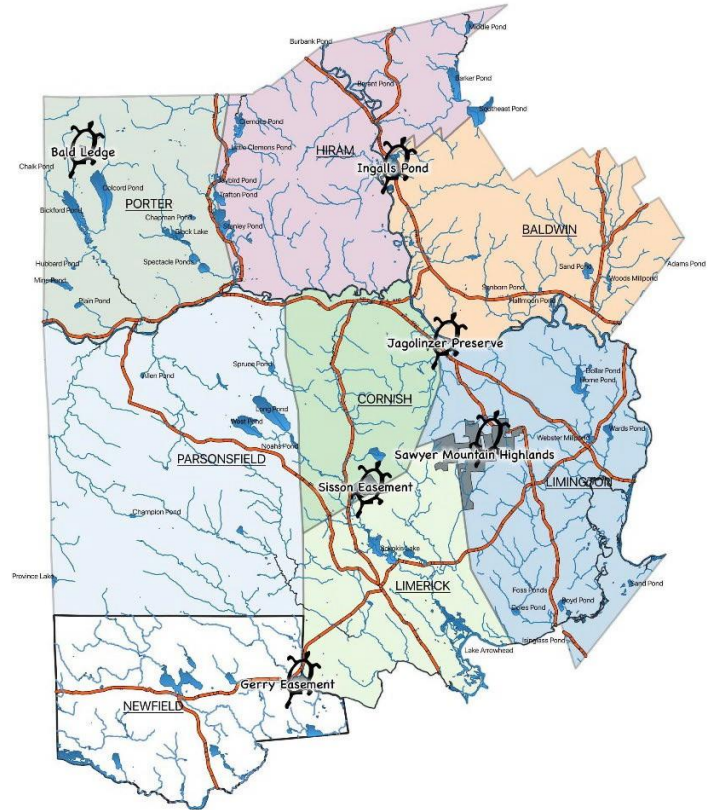
Map sourced from the Francis Small Heritage Trust; the turtle logo shows the location of lands held by the trust.

Conserved lands as of January 2023 are shown in the map below, **Map 5.8 Conserved Lands.**

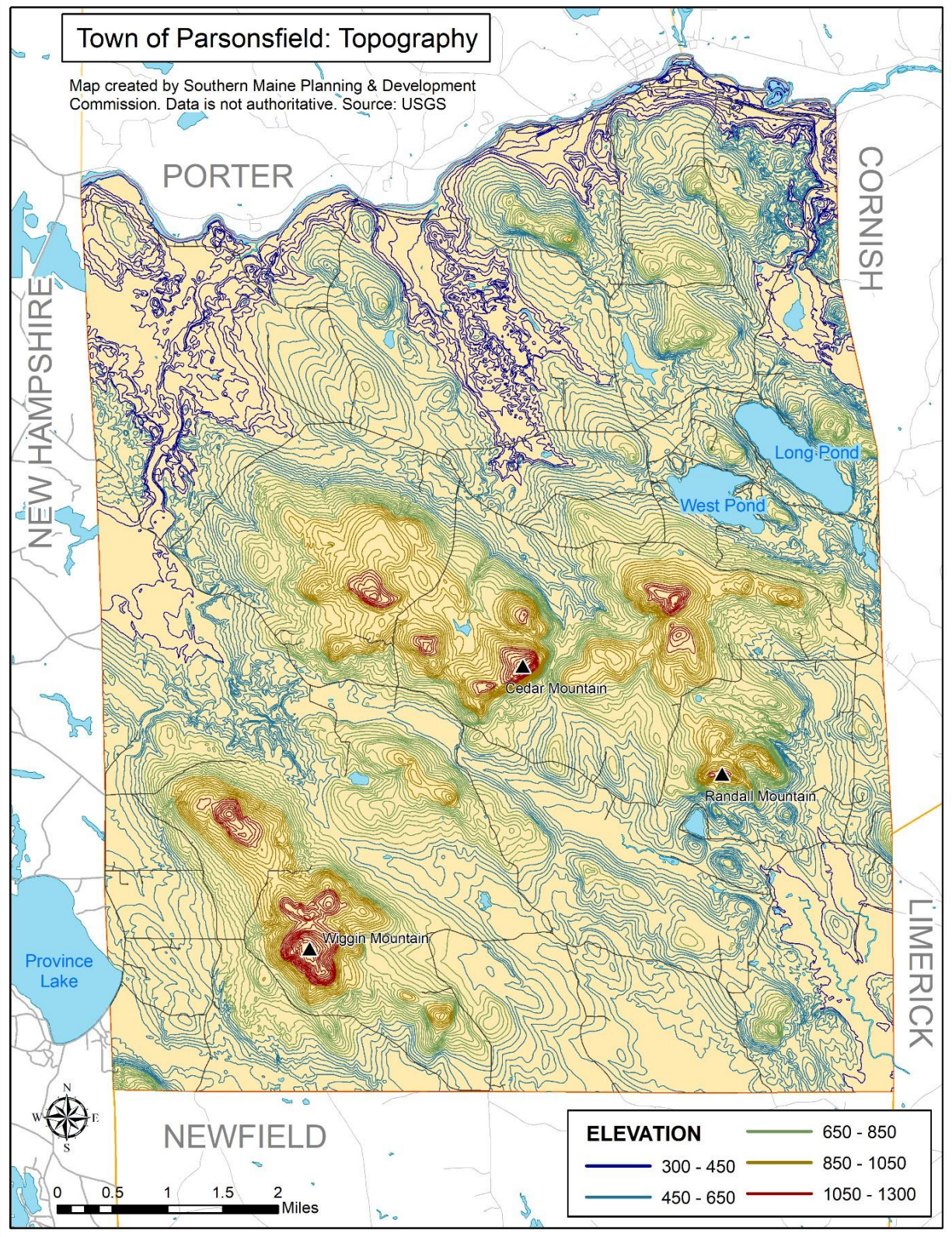
Stream Crossings

Given the extensive stream and river network throughout Parsonsfield, another area of species conservation to consider are fish crossings. The Gulf of Maine Coastal Program inventories fish crossings throughout the state, namely in instances where a road crosses a stream or river.

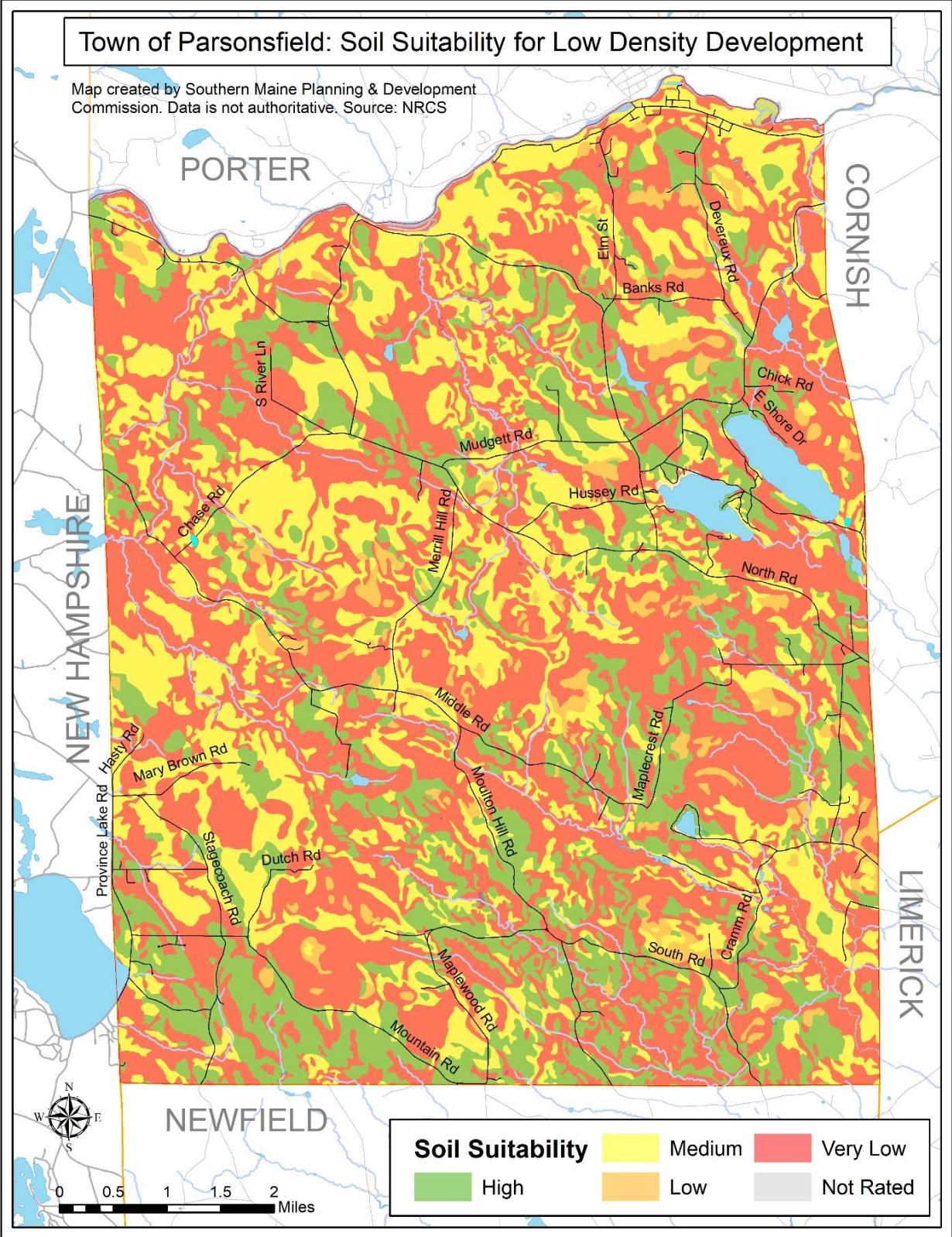
Traditional culvert construction can inhibit the travel of some fish species. In recent years, state agencies have released helpful guidance on how to build future crossings, or upgrade those in need of repair. If the town considers the health and wellbeing of the fish populations a priority, reviewing the condition and construction of these crossings is important. The Gulf of Maine Coastal Program map of crossings is included in the appendix.



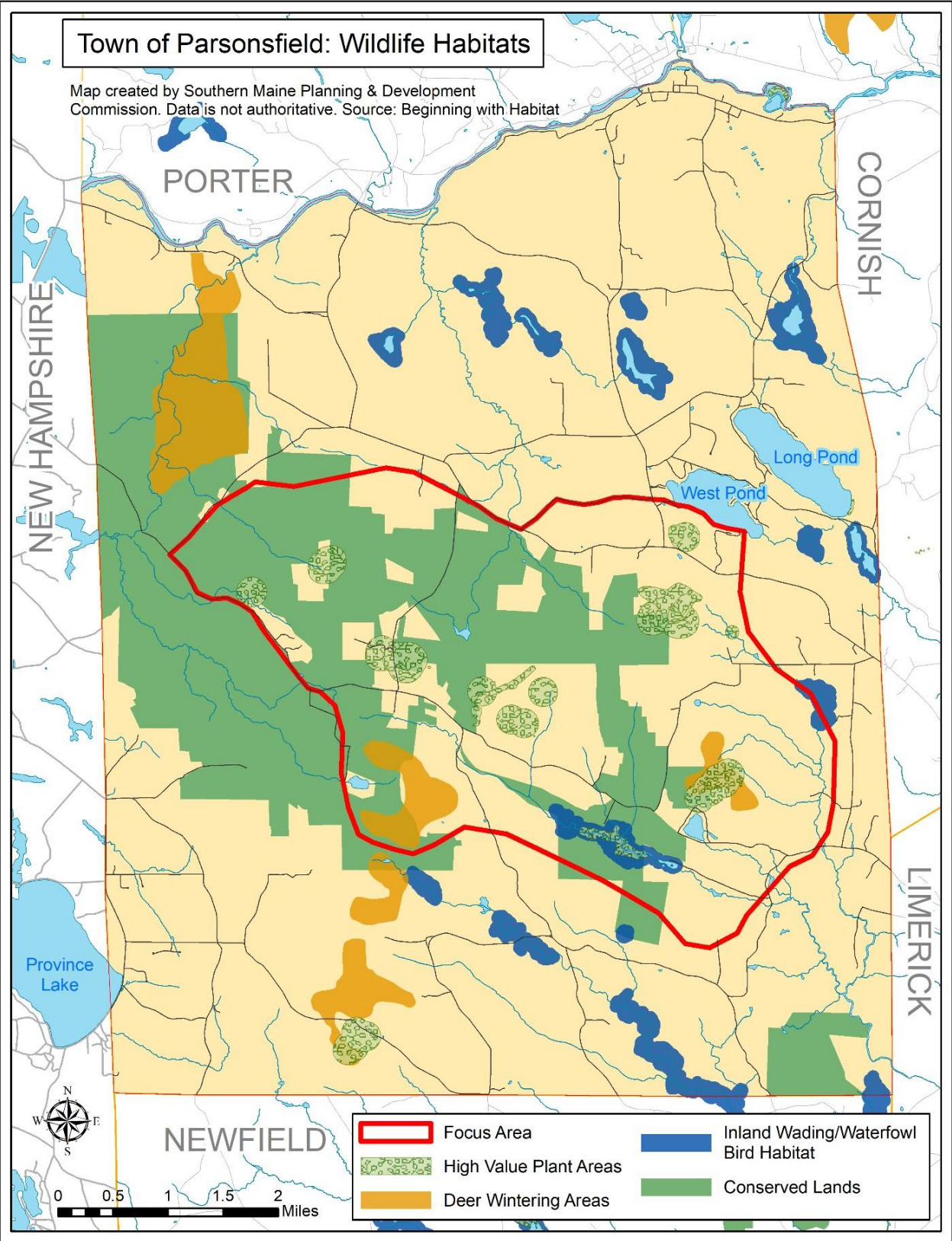
Map 5.4 Topography



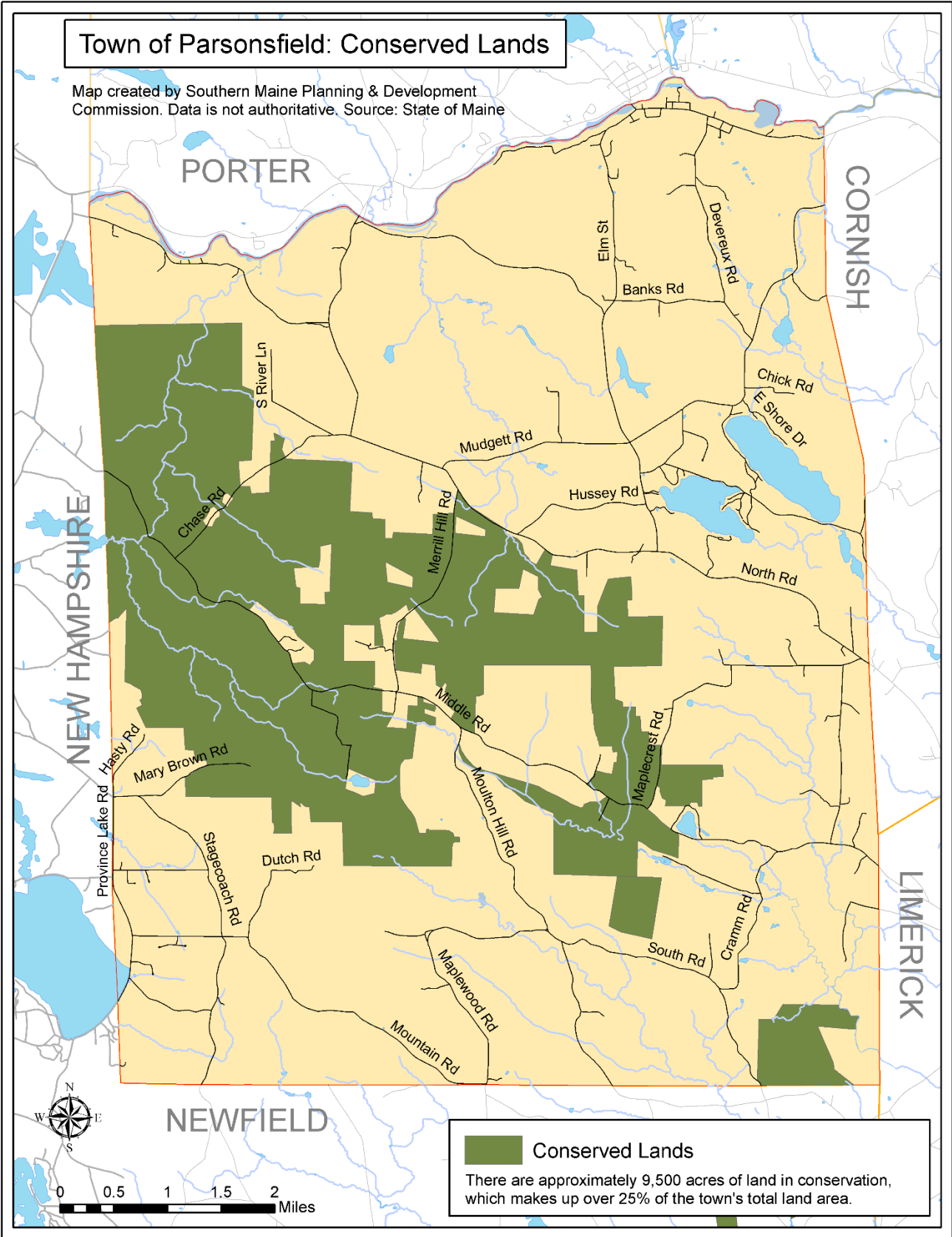
Map 5.5 Soil Suitability for Low Density Development



Map 5.7 Wildlife Habitats



Map 5.9 Conserved Lands



AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY RESOURCES

Prime Farmland

Farming activities can occur on many different types of soils, but some soils have attributes making them most ideal for growing crops. However, the composition of these soils often also makes them well suited to development. Therefore, increasing development poses a threat to areas of potentially productive farmland. In addition, farming in areas where the soil is well suited for growing crops also means it requires less energy and economic resources, including fertilizer and other treatments which can be detrimental to the surrounding environment. The state identifies soil types which are considered Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance.

Understanding the location and extent of Prime Farmland soils in the community is necessary if the community considers regulations or ordinances that create protections for these resources.

Current Use Taxation, Farmland	
Parcels	16
Farmland Acres	211
Woodland Acres	1,335
Farmland Valuation	\$69,263
Woodland Valuation	\$581,218
<i>Source: Maine Revenue Service, 2020</i>	

Parsonsfield Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance are mapped below, in **Map 5.8 Farmland Soils**. Approximately 5,300 acres, or 14% of the town area is considered prime farmland soils.

In 2020, Parsonsfield had 16 parcels totaling 211 acres of farmland registered as current use under the Farmland and Tree Growth Tax program law. This is higher than most neighboring communities, except Hiram which had 371 acres.

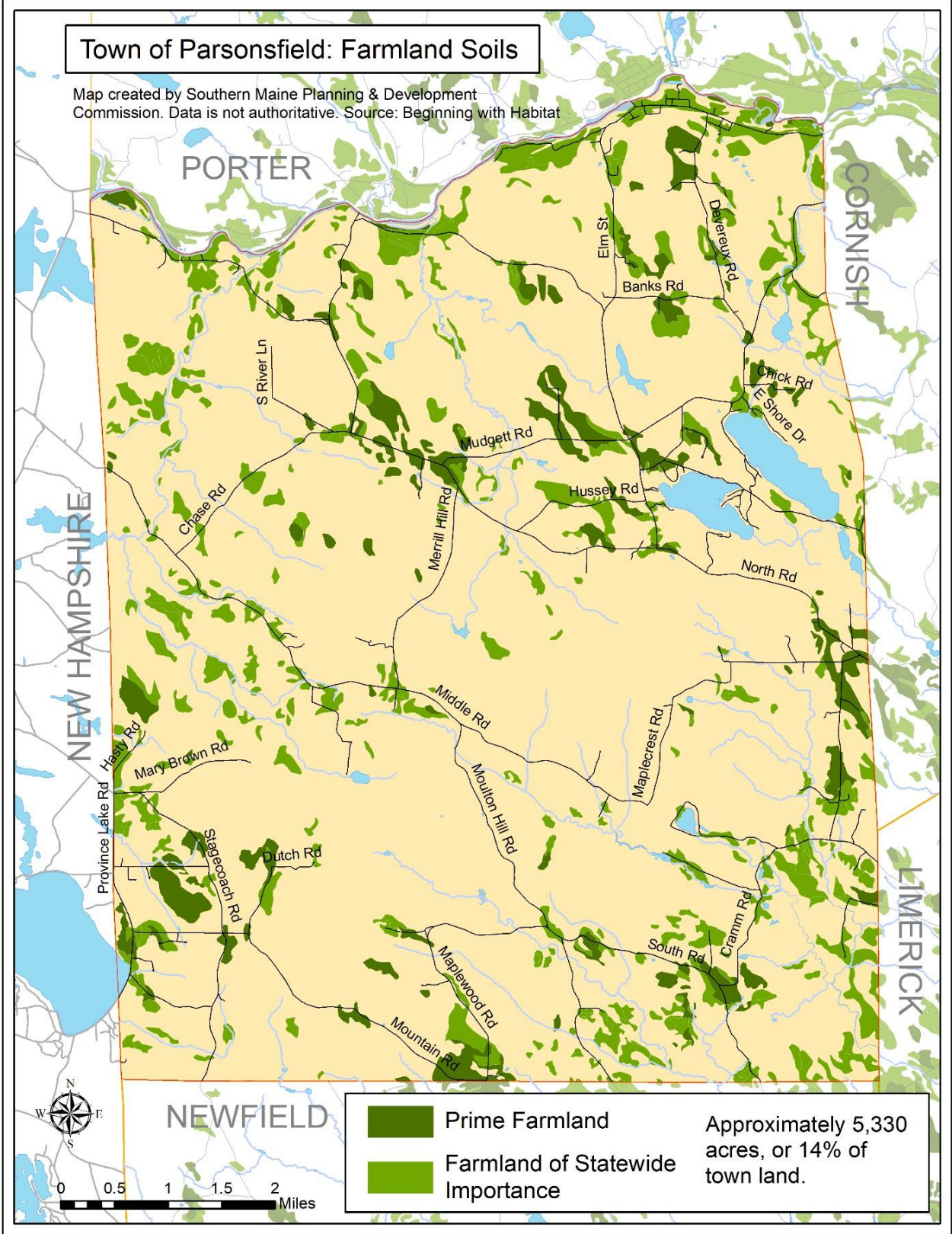
Prime Forest Soils

Forests serve several productive purposes such as protecting water supplies and watersheds, serving as a renewable energy resource, providing lumber and some agricultural goods, providing wildlife habitat, and carbon sequestration. Forested land is the primary land cover and a major economic driver in Parsonsfield, making it an important piece of the community identity. The community has a long history of timber production, dating back to the 1700's, that is still present today. At one time, the S.D. Warren Company owned and managed a large portion of the woodlands to supply the paper mill in Westbrook. Today, the largest forestry operation is the sustainably managed Leavitt Planation. Some residents are independent loggers, and there are several certified tree farms scattered throughout the community.

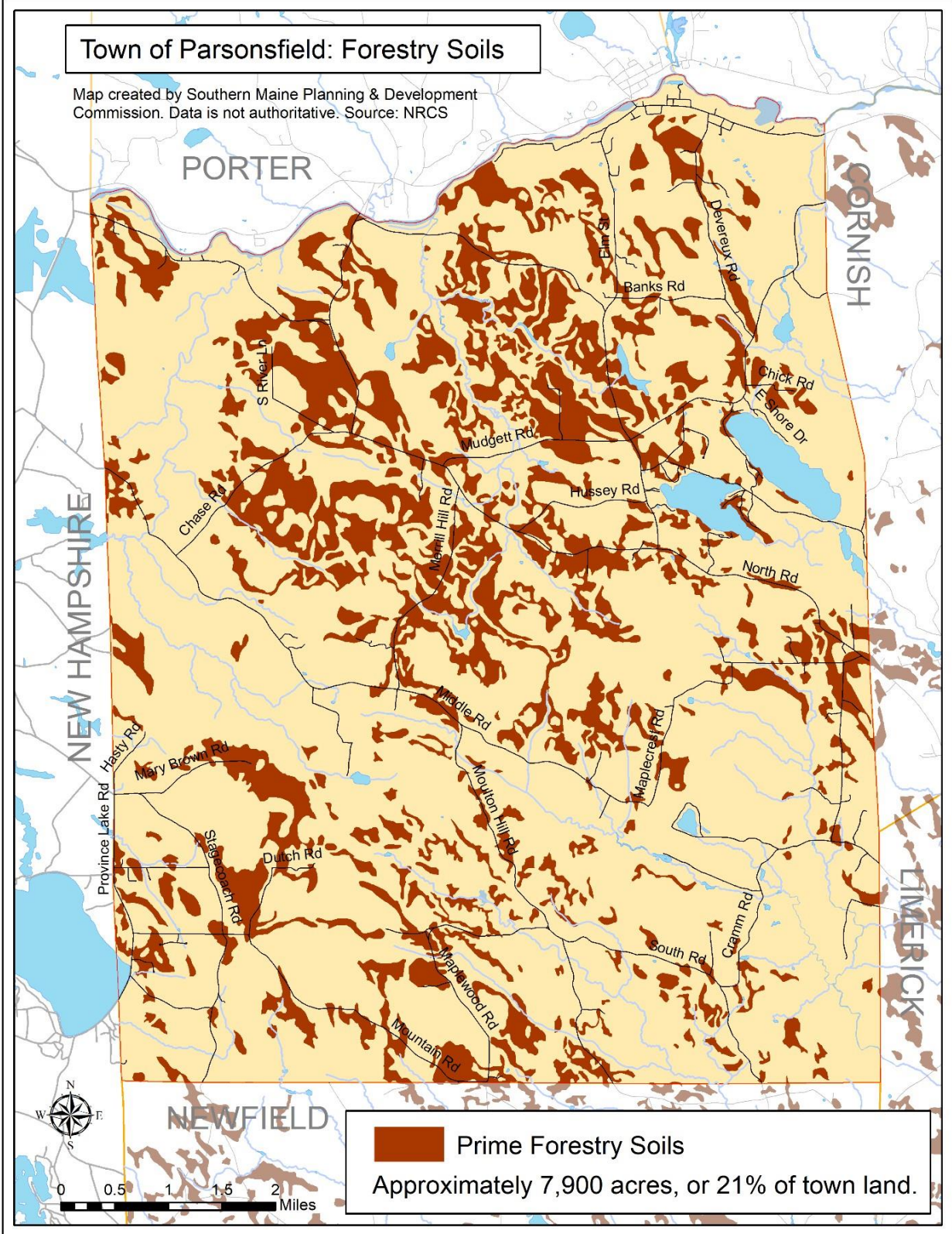
Current Use Taxation, Forests	
Parcels	108
Softwood Acres	3,783
Mixed wood Acres	8,849
Hardwood Acres	2,041
Total Acres	14,674
Total Value	\$6,435,364
<i>Source: Maine Revenue Service, 2020</i>	

In 2020, Parsonsfield had 108 parcels totaling 14,674 acres registered as current use in the Tree Growth Taxation program. The town ranks highest for total acres and total tree growth valuation in all of York County. The total tree growth valuation represents approximately 16% of the total valuation for York County. Particular soils are identified as being ideal for woodland and forestry purposes. When compared to the farmland soils map, it becomes clear that Parsonsfield overall is better suited to forestry and forested lands than traditional agricultural production. Approximately 21% of the total town area is prime forestry soil. The prime forestry soils are mapped below, in **Map 5.9 Forestry Soils**.

Map 5.8 Farmland Soils



Map 5.9 Forestry Soils



Current Protections for Natural, Farm and Forestry Resources

Land conservation is the key tool for preserving open space, wildlife, and natural land cover. Approximately 9000 acres, about 25% of the town's land area is in conservation. In addition to the 8000+ acres conserved in the Leavitt Plantation, approximately 140 acres are held in easement at the Piper-Pomeroy Farm Easement, owned by the Francis Small Heritage Trust.

Limiting allowed land uses in rural areas can also help ensure that new development is well suited to the area and protects important resources. The Parsonsfield zoning ordinance has a Farm and Forestry zone which allows for these uses which are suited to the area, and limits more intense residential or commercial development.

CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS

Given the cultural and natural importance of Parsonsfield's natural resources, and the community's overall value of these resources, it is important to consider future threats of climate change. Currently, the areas of the state that are most impacted by climate change are coastal communities, who have begun to see the impacts of sea level rise. However, there are still various impacts to inland communities that have more recently been observed throughout the state. The Maine Won't Wait climate action plan was published in 2021, and includes the most up to date scientific data about climate change impacts on our state. Some of the key factors to consider include 1) increasing temperatures 2) changing precipitation and 3) changing ecosystems. More details about these impacts and the science behind them can be found in the Maine Climate Council's [*Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and its Effects in Maine.*](#)

Maine's statewide temperature has increased by 3.2 °F since 1895, and is projected to warm by an additional 2 to 4 °F by 2050. Increased temperatures mean an increased frequency of extreme temperature days, which has impacts on human health, especially for children and older adults. Towns may consider whether their residents are well equipped to withstand high heat, and evaluate what services the community provides for heat shelter, shade, and water access. Towns may also consider evaluating emergency planning for times when public and private wells suffer from a lack of recharge, and regularly evaluating well conditions throughout the summer months.

Statewide, total annual precipitation (rainfall and snowfall) has increased by about 6.1 inches (155 mm), with more rain and less snow falling since 1895. Overall, precipitation events are more likely to be heavy, more infrequent in summer months, and more likely rain in winter months. There is also an increased likelihood of extreme weather and storms such as nor'easters, and hurricanes which may cause flooding. The town may consider taking precautions for extreme weather by having updated emergency management plans in the case of flooding or road closures. Changing winter weather may have implications for managing road conditions, and what methods of plowing and salting are most effective. The town may also evaluate what services and facilities are available to residents in the case of power outages, or extreme winter weather.

Lastly, the only way to reduce the intensity of these changes is to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. Municipalities can do their part by evaluating how they are contributing to emissions through facilities operations and the provision of services. Parsonsfield has begun the process of enrolling in the state's Community Resilience Partnership, which will facilitate the town to evaluate any current efforts to plan for climate change, and allow access to grant funds for implementing new resilience measures.

SUMMARY

Parsonsfield has a wide breadth of vibrant natural resources still intact, and many of which are protected from future development. The lakes and streams, open space, and forests all have immeasurable benefit to the community, including but not limited to drinking water, wildlife habitats, economic production, and a sense of identity for residents. The current zoning ordinance includes some protections for natural resources, including shoreland zoning and zones which limit intense land uses in rural areas. Leavitt Plantation is a unique asset which protects an immense portion of town through conserved and sustainable forest management.

Given Parsonsfield's small population and distance from the closest service centers, the community has not seen very significant development pressure in the last decade. However, the Maine population continues to grow, and we have started to see a trend of populations moving further inland due to social and economic changes created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The town may consider how these changes will affect population growth in the future, and how increased population and development can be balanced with conservation of natural resources.

Natural Resources Goals, Policies & Strategies

State Goals:

Protect the quality and manage the quantity of the state's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal waters.

Protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.

Safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development.

Parsonsfield's Goal:

Conserve, protect and/or preserve the natural resources including forest and agricultural land, ground and surface waters, wildlife habitat, scenic views, and the historic resources including buildings, cemeteries, stone walls and foundations and sites in order to preserve the character of the Town of Parsonsfield.

POLICY ONE: It is the policy of the Town through its regulatory powers to limit and/or control development in environmentally sensitive areas including but not limited to: wetlands, floodplains, aquifers, potential public water supplies, excessively steep slopes, other areas with poor soils and/or inadequate drainage, and critical wildlife habitat.

- Review zoning ordinance to ensure compliance with the current state Shoreland Zoning requirement, and periodically review for consistency. Consider expanding protections beyond state requirements in suitable rural zones.
- Establish a Conservation Commission and define its responsibilities.
- Make available all natural resources maps from this Comprehensive Plan at the municipal office.
- Require as part of development review the Planning Board reference maps on low density development potential, slope, hydric soils, floodplains, woodland productivity, prime farmland, and potential sand and gravel aquifer and other relevant maps and information.
- Consider amending the zoning ordinance to include dark skies lighting requirements that incorporate light shielding, max lumens, and lighting curfews to reduce obtrusive lighting and light pollution that affects wildlife.
- Consider amending local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate low impact development (LID) standards that address issues of impervious surfaces and limited stormwater runoff from new developments and roads.
- Review and recommend changes in the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations and Site Plan Review Regulations to be consistent with Policy One.
- Incorporate wildlife conscious design in updates to all stream crossings (culverts) identified as inadequate by the US Fish and Wildlife Service for better stream continuity and future increased flows.

POLICY TWO: It is the policy of the town to engage in and support the conservation of land for the protection of open space, water resources, critical wildlife habitat, and other important natural resources.

- Inventory all town-owned lands and develop a management plan for the stewardship of open space, and/or the creation of easements, recreation opportunities, etc.

- Share information for landowners on the benefits and use of special taxation categories (tree growth, open space, farmland) and the benefits of conservation easements and development rights. Share information through workshops, flyers, pamphlets, and the town website.
- Create a fund, either through annual appropriations, penalty fees, or impact fees, for the purchase of conservation land. Fund could be used to purchase town land or support private/non-profit efforts for conservation.
- Seek the donation or acquisition of conservations easements on key parcels of land, especially those abutting public water bodies, to formalize public access to those areas, and ensure access for future generations.
- Maintain a relationship with the Francis Small Heritage Trust and explore ways to better support the organization.
- Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species, and explore ways to support local lake associations in invasive clean up activities.

POLICY THREE: It is the policy of the Town to encourage, through regulatory powers and incentives, the preservation of existing and potentially productive forest and agricultural land.

- Review the Zoning Ordinance and recommend measures such as increased minimum lot size and/or conservation subdivision requirements in forest and farm and natural resource conservancy areas to preserve such land.
- Identify areas of potential or active forest and agricultural lands for conservation, and work with landowners to create conservation easements or put property in special taxation.
- Recognize the importance of the Leavitt Plantation lands and prioritize conservation of lands contiguous to the already protected blocks, and within the state Beginning with Habitat identified Leavitt Plantation Focus Area.
- Limit non-residential development in the most rural zones to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.

Chapter 6: Arts and Recreation

Historically, in rural communities, there is little provision of public recreation except that offered by the public schools. However, arts and recreation are still highly valued statewide. In Parsonsfield, vast open space and access to various lakes and ponds allow for walking, hiking, fishing, horseback riding, skiing, snowmobiling, and swimming on a widespread basis. However, because they are largely private, individual activities, it is difficult to document them for planning purposes.

In general, planning for the provision of recreation and arts & cultural opportunities is based on the population, and therefore the demand for those facilities. Parsonsfield has seen an approximately 30% increase in population since the 1989 plan, indicating the need for continued and expanded recreation facilities. In the same period, the opportunities available to residents have remained largely the same.

KEY ORGANIZATIONS & FACILITIES

Sacopee Valley Recreation Council

The town belongs to the five town Sacopee Valley Recreation Council (SVRC), a 501(c)3 non-profit which provides a wide array of recreation programming options year-round to residents in the MSAD #55 school district: Parsonsfield, Baldwin, Cornish, Hiram and Porter. The SVRC offerings range in topic from sports, science, reading, and community events. Each is open to specific ages, ranging from pre-school to adults. Programs range from year to year, but past programs are listed in detail below. In 2020, the town allocated \$4,000 to the SVRC.

Sacopee Valley Recreation Council Programs by Season			
Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Softball • Baseball • Tee Ball • Karate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boys Basketball • Girls Basketball • Field Hockey Camp • Karate • Mountain Biking Club • Pickleball Club • Science Club • Soccer Camp • Summer Reading Camp • Tinkering Camp • Track Camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Hockey • Karate • Soccer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basketball • Competition Cheering • Ice Skating • Karate • Open Gym • Women's Volleyball • Cross-Country Skiing
<p><i>Source: Sacopee Valley Recreation Council, sacopeerec.org</i></p>			

Parsonsfield Seminary

The Friends of Par Sem is a non-profit and volunteer organization which hosts community events for the general public. Their annual events include car shows, haunted houses, ice cream and tea socials, and similar celebrations. The Parsonsfield Seminary property and grounds are also available for use as a venue and event space. Formerly, the Seminary had a playground and recreation fields open for public

use, but those are no longer there.

Public Library

Parsonsfield has one public library, the Kezar Falls Circulating Library which is shared with Porter. The library, located on Route 25 in Kezar Falls, is very active with various programs for children and adults. See Public Facilities section for more information.

Sacopee Valley Adult Community Education

The Sacopee Valley Adult & Community Education (better known as: Sacopee Valley Adult Ed) offers a seasonally rotating list of classes, workshops, activities, and events for people of all ages and interests in the Sacopee Valley region. Workshops and classes include arts and crafts, health and fitness, gardening, cooking, historic house tours, , family activities, senior activities, and general educational enrichment. In addition to job training and lifelong learning opportunities, SVACE offers many hobby and exercise classes for recreation and leisure. Many offerings are free or have a small fee. More information can be found at www.sacopee.maineadulted.org.

The Grateful Undead

The Grateful Undead: Aging Well in Sacopee Valley is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization whose mission is to promote knowledge and organize services and activities that enable residents of the Sacopee Valley and surrounding towns in southwestern Maine to continue to live in their own homes and community safely, independently, and comfortably as they age. Senior Central is a sub-group of the Grateful Undead whose activities are focused on Parsonsfield. See more information at GratefulUndead.org.

Friends of Par Sem

The Friends of Par Sem is a volunteer group that maintains the historic Parsonsfield Seminary and manages community events and activities on the property. Year-round events open to the public are a great opportunity to meet locals and often learn about the history of the town.

Smooth Feather Youth

Smooth Feather Youth is a non-profit group that empowers youth through filmmaking. Directed towards high school students, the local theatre in Porter is supported by area towns and memberships. Learn more at smoothfeather.com.

The Parsonsfield- Porter Historic Society

The Parsonsfield-Porter Historic Society was established in 1953 and is housed in the “History House” on Main Street in Porter. The Society has renovated this historic building to house their collection of historic artifacts and records. They offer a research room, open regularly for individuals to peruse the collection for family history or genealogy and for tours of the house. Each summer, there is a new exhibit focusing on some aspect of local history and the History House is open regularly during the summer. Learn more at www.parsonsfeldporterhistorical.org.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Typical outdoor activities such as walking, biking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, and snowmobiling/ATVing occur throughout the town on abandoned and privately owned roads. However, ownership of these lands can be unknown. The town lacks organized opportunities for these activities.

Lakes & Ponds

There is one public boat launch in Parsonsfield, located on Long Pond. The boat launch supports carry-in and trailered boats with limited parking. The West End House Camp owns a swimming beach on Long

Pond that is also open to the public.

The town owns property on the Ossipee River that could someday be an opportunity for a boat launch, but it has not been explored at this time.

Public Lands

The Leavitt Plantation Forest is popular among hunters, snowmobilers, hikers, cross-country skiers, and mountain bikers. Several streams serve as prime brook trout habitat and fishing. The Francis Small Heritage lands in surrounding towns are generally open to the public for traditional uses such as hiking, hunting, fishing, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiles on existing trails.

Walking & Hiking Trails

The existing trail systems in Parsonsfield are mostly within the Leavitt Plantation. According to the Natural Resources Council of Maine, the Leavitt Plantation has approximately 80 miles of trails. Approximately 50 miles of trail are managed for ATV and snowmobile use, while the remaining 30 are primarily maintained for walking and biking.

There are several small elevations in Parsonsfield with trails of varying use and maintenance. Cedar Mountain is an approximately 1,240ft elevation. A trailhead can be found on Merrill Hill Rd. Randall Mountain is 1,400ft, with a trailhead on Maplecrest Rd. Lastly, Wiggin Mountain is a 1,600ft elevation with a trailhead off of Stonewood Rd.

Neighboring Newfield also offers activities in the Vernon S. Walker Wildlife Management Area (VWWMA), located in southeastern Newfield, approximately a 20-minute drive from Parsonsfield. It offers amenities such as hiking, fishing, kayaking, hunting, bird watching, horseback riding, skiing, and snowmobiling. The most prominent trail is the 2.1-mile Knox Mountain trail which begins across Route 11 from Hicks Road's westernmost entry.

PUBLIC RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE & OPPORTUNITIES

Currently, the town has limited offerings for public recreation infrastructure. The public schools, located in Hiram but close to Kezar Falls, offer an ice-skating rink, trails, a track, basketball courts and other playing fields open to the public when not in use by students. There is a playground located behind the municipal building.

The municipal building is used primarily for the municipal offices and public meetings of boards and committees. There has been an effort in recent years to create more community programming at the town office, including making the gym a reservable space for clubs or activities. It is used increasingly by Senior Central and other groups as a place for recreation and community gatherings, such as coffees, luncheons, like ping-pong, pickleball, etc. and now offers a community garden (sponsored by the Grateful Undead).

PRIVATE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The Province Lake Golf Course is an 18-hole golf course both open to the public and members, with restaurant and event space. The Windsong Campground offers tent and RV camping nearby Spruce Pond and Long Pond. The Southern Maine Guide Service offers facilities and guides for fishing, hunting, and various other outdoor sports activities.

Back Country Excursions hosts guided mountain bike tours and instruction throughout the many miles of trail on the Leavitt Plantation land.

Archie's Strike and Spare Bowling Alley is located in Kezar Falls and was recently renovated. The candlepin bowling alley is a piece of Parsonsfield's history and offers a family friendly gathering place in addition to live music, trivia, and open mic nights.

REGIONAL ARTS & CULTURAL EVENTS

Saco River Festival Association

The Saco River Festival Association is an organization dedicated to bringing live music events and concerts to southwestern Maine. The Association organizes bandstands and summer concerts in neighboring towns such as Cornish.

Ossipee Valley Fair

The Ossipee Valley Fair is an agricultural fair held annually by the Ossipee Valley Agricultural Society (OVAS) in southern Hiram. Now in its 39th year, the fair is a four-day event with 4-H events, horse and cattle pulling, live music, food, and rides and games.

Ossipee Valley Music Festival

The Ossipee Valley Music Festival is an annual music festival held in Hiram by the North Atlantic Arts Alliance. The festival consists of multi-day live music events, educational opportunities, and other activities.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Parsonsfield may look to the public to gauge interest and demand for more organized outdoor recreation opportunities. While the town has various local and regional opportunities for passive recreation, there are few town provided assets. Since the schools are no longer active, the town has lost various assets, especially locally for young children and families, with the loss of those elementary schools.

Based on the population inventory, Parsonsfield has large populations of working age adults from 25-34 and 45-54 years of age, as well as many older adults 60-75 years of age. It may interest the town in evaluating what facilities and activities are available and of interest to these age groups. Opportunities for older adults and seniors who may be more isolated in a rural community like Parsonsfield are especially important and in demand.

The National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) has produced recreation area and facilities standards in the past. Although they are outdated, the standards are still applicable to small rural communities. As Parsonsfield is likely to surpass 2,000 residents in the coming years, some assets recommended for communities of this size include one basketball court, one picnic shelter, one playground, and one tennis court. Many of these are available through the public school district and facilities at the schools in Hiram. The standards also recommend 1 mile of bike trail, 1 mile of nature trail and 1 mile of jogging trail per 2,000 people, which Parsonsfield is exceeding.

SUMMARY

Although the town provides limited arts and recreation programming or facilities on its own, there are many options for both children and adults covered by regional organizations. The town contributes annually to the Sacopee River Valley Recreation Council, which serves as a regional recreation program for all MSAD#55 schools. Sacopee Valley Adult and Community Education provides a local opportunity for group classes and activities that are both educational and recreational. The town also has various natural resources and conserved lands which provide passive outdoor recreation opportunities for hiking, biking, walking, ATVing, hunting and fishing. The Leavitt Plantation is a hallmark asset in the community, providing vast acres of open space for recreation and passive use. The town may consider a supply and demand analysis or public input on what other recreation opportunities, if any, are missing from the community.

Arts and Recreation Goals, Policies & Strategies

State Goals: Promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine's citizens including access to surface waters.

Parsonsfield's Goal: Accommodate the recreation needs of its residents of all ages.

POLICY ONE. It is the policy of the Town to create systems for more town-owned and maintained recreation programs & facilities.

- Establish a Recreation Committee to manage town-owned recreation facilities, determine what additional facilities or opportunities would be valuable, and make recommendations and reports to the Select Board.
- Maintain an inventory of town-owned facilities or public lands available for use.
- Explore opportunities for creating public access to the Ossipee River in Kezar Falls.
- Establish process for town to retain former publicly-owned roads for recreationally purposes.
- Evaluate the costs and benefits of open space land gifts or purchases and accept or implement those which meet the needs of the Town.
- Prioritize recreation programs and facilities that are geared toward older adults and retired populations.

POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the Town to encourage local organizations, schools and non-profits that also provide recreation opportunities in safe & suitable facilities.

- Collaborate with and participate in the five-town regional Sacopee Valley Recreation Council (SRVC).
- Provide financial support to SVRC and other non-profits organizations as feasible.
- Maintain a partnership with the MSAD 55 district to boost awareness of amenities on school grounds available for public use.

POLICY THREE: It is the policy of the Town protect and promote public access to public lands and waterbodies in the town and region.

- Identify all long-term public rights-of-way to public waterbodies, in keeping with state law.
- Raise awareness of public access to public lands and waters.
- Work to increase public access to public water bodies through the donation or purchase of land, easements or development rights.

Chapter 7: Historic Resources

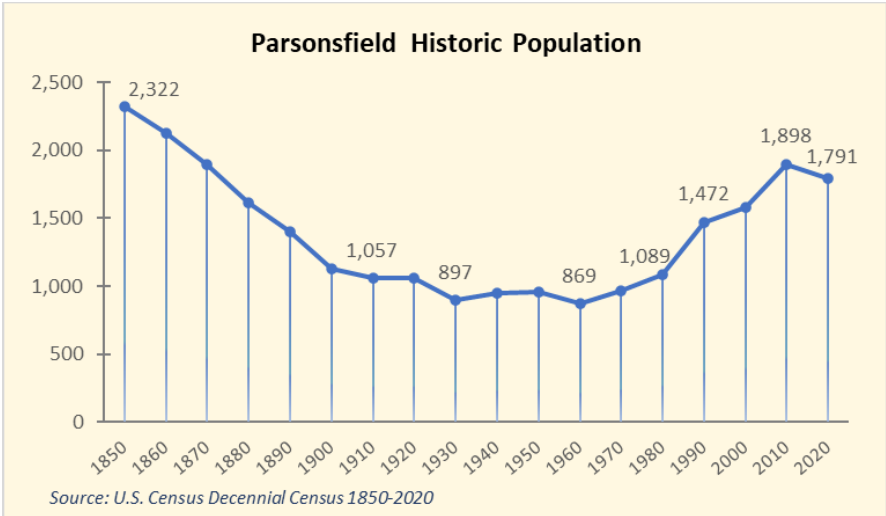
INTRODUCTION

Parsonsfeld has a rich history as an early settlement in rural Maine with several properties on the National Register of Historic Places. There are several different nodes throughout the community where historic villages existed, and many historic homes remain intact.

HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Parsonsfeld was incorporated in 1785, named after Thomas Parsons, who settled conflicting claims on the area of the town and had the area surveyed and divided into ranges and about 200 lots of about 150 acres each. Early settlers were mostly pioneers traveling from the Massachusetts colony, consisting originally of around eleven families. Populations increased to around three hundred after the Revolutionary War. There is no indication of Native American settlements in the community, although the area was very likely used for hunting and gathering for nomadic tribes. Most families maintained a farm, producing enough food for self-sufficiency. Once the sawmills were established, the lumber industry quickly grew and was the major industry in the community through the early 1800's. Forestry remains an identifying feature of the community today.

The early 1800's marked a time of significant growth for the community, and the population peaked in 1850. The town eventually had seven sawmills and seven gristmills. The Parsonsfeld Seminary was established in 1832. The Kezar Falls Woolen Mill was built in 1880, and the large textile mill on the bank of the Ossipee remained in operation into the late 2000's.



Culturally, the community has remained very rural, traditionally agriculture and forestry focused, for many years. With growth having little impact on the overall layout of the community, and minimal expansion of industry or business, the historic structure of the town mostly remains.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

The following properties are on the National Register of Historic Places for their significant architectural qualities, or notable histories. In the early 2010's, the historic society published a 200 page book entitled "Parsonsfeld Maine: A Town of Many Villages" that details many more historic properties in town. Although they are not officially recognized on the register, they are just as valued.

Blazo-Leavitt House, Route 160

Built between 1812 and 1817 by an early settler, Daniel Blazo, the son of a wealthy shipbuilder and merchant Amos Blazo. The house is a Federal style mansion, and was out of the ordinary for its time and region, noted for its fine quality, woodwork, and scale.

Captain James Morrison House, South Road

The late colonial style home was built in the early 1780's, just around the time of the town's incorporation, by a distinguished Revolutionary War captain, James Morison. Morison was recognized for exceptional service and awarded captaincy before he was wounded in 1777. He was one of many war veterans who moved to new townships in Maine after the war.

Parsonsfeld Seminary, Route 160

The Parsonsfeld Seminary was established in 1832 as an educational institution founded by a group of ministers. 150 students attended the first high school session. The high school was eventually closed in 1949, after the Civil War and World War I and II affected student numbers. Beginning in the 1950's, it served as a consolidated elementary school for some time.

A former student, teacher, and principal at Parsonsfeld Seminary, Oren B. Cheney, considered establishing a college at the location, but after 2 consecutive fires, he did not think the Seminary would be rebuilt and he relocated to Lewiston, where he was instrumental in establishing what we now know as Bates College.

The Seminary continued as an educational institution until 1988. It is now owned and cared for by a non-profit group known as The Friends of Par Sem. They hold regular events and do fundraising throughout the year to maintain the buildings and grounds. The site was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.

Porter-Parsonsfeld Bridge, Route 160

The Porter-Parsonsfeld Bridge is one of the few remaining wooden covered bridges in Maine, built in 1859 and spanning 152 feet. The bridge is a "paddleford" construction style that includes attractive laminated wooded arches on the inside. It remained open to traffic until 1960 when another bridge was built upstream.

Andrew Welch Homestead, Middle Road

The Welch Homestead is an example of the classic architecture of the area and town, and before it was a homestead of the wealth Andrew Welch, it was a tavern established by one the of first eleven settlers of the town.

Old Town House, Merrill Hill Road

The Old Town House, located south of one of the oldest cemeteries in town, was constructed in 1832/33 for town meetings and business. An earlier town house was on the west side of Merrill Hill Road and was shared with the Congregational Society until the two uses outgrew the space, and general attitudes shifted to supporting the separation of religious and civic activities. The building has classic Greek revival style details which was common for civic buildings of the era.

Parsons-Piper-Lord-Roy Farm, 309 Cramm Road

Built in 1844, the Greek and gothic revival style house and barns is a shining example of a long-standing agricultural homestead in the community. Several family members from different founding families have occupied the house, which has served as a dairy farm, poultry farm, and more since the 1800's.

The Kezar Falls Library

Recently added to the list, this iconic library in Kezar Falls serves both Porter and Parsonsfield. It was designed by noted architect John Calvin Stevens. It is a Colonial Revival-style design by John Calvin Stevens completed in 1924.

CEMETERIES

Parsonsfield is unique in that it has many cemeteries located throughout the community. The best-known estimate is at least 170. Most of them are small historic family cemeteries which vary in size and are not always maintained due to private ownership and locations. Most cemeteries are no longer active but, like historic buildings, they are an invaluable resource and a reminder of the generations that have passed. The Town maintains 3 larger cemeteries: The North Road Cemetery, the Middle Road Cemetery, and the East Parsonsfield Cemetery. The only currently active cemetery is Maplewood Cemetery.

PROTECTIONS FOR HISTORIC RESOURCES

Although some of the important historic properties are on the National Register, and therefore have certain protections because of that status, there are many more historic homes and villages in Parsonsfield that do not have specific protections. The town may consider the addition of a historic overlay district which could provide some protection for historic properties, such as permitting required for major aesthetic or structural changes to the buildings. This could be especially beneficial in the Kezar Falls area, where maintaining the remaining historic buildings would be important as the corridor develops over time, and to ensure culturally valuable buildings remain.

Historic Resources Goals, Policies & Strategies

State Goals: *Preserve the State's historic and archeological resources.*

Parsonsfield's Goal: *Conserve, protect and/or preserve the natural resources including forest and agricultural land, ground and surface waters, wildlife habitat, scenic views, and the historic resources including buildings, cemeteries, stone walls and foundations and sites in order to preserve the character of the Town of Parsonsfield.*

POLICY ONE. It is the policy of the town to appropriately maintain and manage any town-owned historic properties or buildings.

- Consider including management of town-owned historic properties to the Conservation Commission's duties and responsibilities.
- Evaluate the condition and use of any historic public buildings and develop a management plan for either the preservation of these buildings, or plans to sell them with protective covenants.
- Support private, non-profit groups in Parsonsfield in the maintenance and/or restoration of former publicly operated or owned institutional historic buildings.

POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the Town to protect the community's historic, architectural, and archeological resources through regulatory powers, town funds, and other means.

- Review existing resources and compile a list of historic sites to determine whether there is a village cluster which may be suitable for a local historic district zone which would provide protections for existing buildings and design standards for future development in the zone.
- Work with the Historical Society to identify buildings and sites which have been or might be eligible for placement on the National Register of Historic Places and provide the results to the property owners of identified buildings or sites and the Planning Board.
- Adopt or amend land use ordinances to require the planning board to consider historic significance as part of application review, including consulting the Porter-Parsonsfield Historic Society, when applicable.
- Amend the land use ordinance to require subdivision or non-residential developers to take appropriate measures to protect known historic and prehistoric sites and resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.
- Continue maintenance of cemeteries throughout the town, and consider expanding the list which the town contributes to, or creating a prioritized plan for clean-up of cemeteries in need over the next several years.

POLICY THREE. It is the policy of the town to increase public awareness of Parsonsfield's unique history and celebrate it.

- Support the Historical Society in their ongoing efforts to develop a signage program to provide plaques for display at identified historic sites, buildings, and prehistoric sites.
- Maintain a location for the display of Parsonsfield historic information at a public building or facility.

Chapter 8: Community Facilities and Services

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Parsonsfield has a small municipal government which administers a large land area. In general, residents do not expect many services in such a rural area. For a small town, the sharing of municipal services and facilities is cost effective. It is not expected that a community with a population of only 1500 would provide part-time or full-time employees in every governmental area. The two major governmental expenditures are road maintenance and education. The Town belongs to the five town School Administrative District 55.

Many municipal services are provided on a largely volunteer basis or by and with another governmental unit. For example, the fire department is a joint municipal effort with the Town of Porter and neighboring towns provide mutual aid. Law enforcement does not operate at a municipal level, but the County serves that function in Parsonsfield. For a few years, the town paid for a dedicated deputy, but the agreement has since ended.

There is no public water or sewer system. However, the Maine Water Company operates a private system in Kezar Falls. Many residences rely on well water. There is one public library shared with Porter which operates on a part-time basis with volunteers. The town owns three cemeteries, but approximately 170 are located throughout the community. There is no municipal recreation program or staff.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Staff

The Town of Parsonsfield has a Selectboard and Town Meeting form of government. Three selectboard members (3-year term) are elected to operate the government with one elected annually at Town Meeting. The Road Commissioner and members of the Planning Board, Budget Committee and School Board are also elected. The Town Offices have moved several times over the years. The municipal offices moved to the Lovejoy Building in Kezar Falls in 1982, and then to the former Milliken School in 1987 when it became available for a municipal office building. Today, the offices are in the Fred Morrill Municipal Building, the former Fred Morrill School.

The Town has three full time employees in general government: the Town Clerk/ Treasurer, who serves as the Tax Collector and Registrar of Voters, the Deputy Clerk, and the Selectboard Assistant. There is one part-time administrative assistant who serves the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals. The Code Enforcement Officer is also part time, and is appointed by the Select Board and receives a stipend. A part time Animal Control officer is also paid by stipend.

Facilities

The town has owned several facilities and properties in the past, many of which have been sold or transferred for other uses. Many were formerly town offices or school buildings. Not all properties are actively used and/or accessible to the public. The Old Milliken School, the Lovejoy Building, and the Blazo School are all buildings, which were once town-owned and have been sold to reduce maintenance

and upkeep costs when there was no longer municipal use for them.

Old Town House: Located in Middle Road Village and built in 1833. The building is historically significant and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002. It is used about once a year, primarily for educational events about Parsonsfield’s history. More investigation into the condition of the building is necessary (especially the roof structure and the electrical system), but it is generally in decent condition. As assessment completed in 2002 found issues with the foundation and roof, and some work has been done over the years to abate drainage issues at the site.

Fred Morrill Municipal Building: Located in North Parsonsfield, the former elementary school now houses all town offices. There are recent efforts to make the building more public facing by hosting community activities and allowing space to be used for town events. The town has installed a generator and updates to the kitchen are in the works to better prepare the building to serve as a shelter in emergency situations. Solar panels have been added to the roof to offset energy costs.

SERVICES

Public Safety

The Kezar Falls Fire Department is a volunteer fire department operated by both Parsonsfield and Porter. The firehouse was built in 1989 and is located in the Porter section of Kezar Falls. The building is jointly owned by the two towns and leased to the fire department.

The budget is divided in half by the two towns. In 2021, it was \$104,6500, or \$52,325 for Parsonsfield. This budget does not reflect the cost of purchasing any large equipment. The Town also relies on mutual aid from nearby towns, and appropriates about \$2,000 to Newfield and Effingham, NH and \$1,000 to Limerick for emergency services from their volunteer fire departments in Parsonsfield. As described in other chapters, Parsonsfield has a large land area, and the population is very dispersed across many miles of road. Response times are a concern, especially considering the volunteer nature of the fire departments in the region.

The Town appropriates about \$7,500 annually to the Fire Truck Fund for equipment purchase. The fire equipment currently includes six vehicles, including a utility van, two 1000 gallon pumper trucks, one 2200 gallon tanker, and a 65 foot aerial ladder truck. Generally, one vehicle needs replacement about every five years. Kezar Falls has fire hydrants, but crews rely on lakes, rivers and streams in areas without hydrants. This can pose a problem in the winter if water is not easily accessible or frozen over. Natural waterbodies are used to refill water trucks as well.

2021 Statistics	
Calls	
Parsonsfield	52
Porter	49
Hours	
Firefighter Hours	1026
Training Hours	866
<i>Source: 2022 Parsonsfield Town Report</i>	

The department has 22 volunteer firefighters. In 2021, the fire department had the following calls and volunteers contributed these hours. In 2015, calls and hours were about the same. However, training hours in 2015 totaled to 555 compared to 866 in 2021. This is a normal trend across communities as training requirements have increased over time statewide.

Sacopec Rescue Unit: This four-town rescue unit responds to emergency needs of the residents. It is located in the south Hiram section of Kezar Falls. In 2019, 149 of the 637 calls were in Parsonsfield. The rescue unit budget is about \$437,000 annually which includes town subsidies for the service as well as donations. Parsonsfield contributes about \$37,500 annually. Emergency dispatch is done through the State Police.

Law Enforcement: There is no municipal police department in Parsonsfield. Instead, the Town relies on the York County Sheriff's Department to provide the basic law enforcement provided throughout the county, which is paid for by county taxes. The Maine State Police also patrol Parsonsfield. There is at least one Oxford County Resource Officer placed in the MSAD 55 schools.

Overall, limited resources in public safety and emergency response pose a health risk and property risk for residents, especially those located farthest from services based in Kezar Falls. Assessments of response times have been conducted in recent years and may be improving, but the town should continue to monitor if services are an appropriate level for the community.

Highways

The Town covers 64 square miles and hence there are many roads to maintain. The Town has one elected Road Commissioner who oversees the maintenance and improvement of roads. The Road Commissioner is elected annually at Town Meeting, to a 3-year term. The highway accounts cover snow removal, sanding and salting; highway and bridge repair and cutting brush; paving; sidewalk repair in Kezar Falls; and other highway purposes. Road work is contracted out to private companies with a typical bid process, and the Road Commissioner is responsible for managing contracts.

There are more than 81 miles of road in Parsonsfield with more than 50 miles paved. The overall road maintenance expenditures are subject to individual Town Meeting appropriations. General long-term planning for road work is left up to the Road Commissioner's discretion, with review and approval of the Selectboard. However, as an elected official, they have limited resources and could potentially have a more comprehensive prioritized plan for work over time with more support from the town.

Public Library

There is currently one public library in Parsonsfield, The Kezar Falls Circulating Library. Housed in an historic hip-roofed building constructed in 1925 and designed by architect John Calvin Stevens, the building is on the National Register of Historic Places. There were building renovations in both 1980 and 1981.

It serves both the towns of Parsonsfield and Porter and is managed by a part-time paid librarian who oversees volunteers. It is supported by small stipends from the towns of Parsonsfield and Porter and donations. Parsonsfield and Porter both appropriate about \$5,750 annually to the library. It is a member of the Maine State Library System which provides access to numerous on-line databases such as Ancestry.com. The Library is also a member of the Maine State Library's delivery service which can be utilized to deliver requested books and other items from other libraries to the Kezar Falls Library for the benefit of library users. The Library also provides a free wi-fi connection for those who cannot connect at home and programs of interest to the community.

There are also school libraries located in the Sacopee Valley Elementary, Middle and High Schools, all of which are staffed.

Cemeteries

Three of Parsonsfield's hundreds of cemeteries are owned and maintained by the Town and are open to the public.

East Parsonsfield Cemetery: Located on Weeks Road.

North Parsonsfield Cemetery: Located on Route 160 and Merrill Hill Road

Town House Cemetery: Located on Merrill Hill next to the old Town House.

The Maplewood Cemetery is located on Maplewood Road and although it is not owned by the town, it is one of the largest in Parsonsfield, and still has available plots.

Public Utilities

A small water service in Kezar Falls is operated by a private company, the Maine Water Company. Its customers in this area are in the greater Kezar Falls village. A well in a sand and gravel aquifer in Parsonsfield serves as the primary water supply for Kezar Falls customers. It does not provide water outside of Kezar Falls Village in Parsonsfield. The remainder of residents rely on private wells. Maine Water is in the process of a major upgrade in facilities for the Kezar Falls System. The upgrade will be a full renovation of the facility, and some line improvements, but the service area will remain the same.

There is no public sewage or sludge disposal site in Parsonsfield currently, so most structures utilize a septic tank system. It has been noted in previous plans that the town should consider a treatment plant of some kind to serve the Kezar Falls Village area before any concentrated or substantial development occurs.

Central Maine Power serves all residents. There is one small privately owned hydroelectric dam locally which provides power to CMP.

Spectrum provides telephone, cable, and internet services to the Kezar Falls area of town. Consolidated Communications offers phone and internet to the majority of town. Outside of that area, residents either have independent options such as satellite or Starlink, or no service. Cell phone service throughout town is sparse. The town has considered contracting with Spectrum to expand its service, but the costs are not feasible at this time.

Waste Disposal

The town currently contracts with EcoMaine for solid waste disposal. Curbside recycling and trash pickup is provided to all residents and contracted out to a private company. The Tri-Town Transfer Station located in South Hiram is available for large disposal with a fee. The town has had conversations about a transfer station in the past.

Recycling in Parsonsfield was pioneered by the Recycling Committee. The committee remains active, and provides educational information to residents about the progress of the recycling initiative. According to their annual report to the town in 2022, recycling saves taxpayers approximately \$98.89

per ton in tipping fees. Since 2019, the percent of total tons of waste that is recycled has improved from 9% to 10.6% in 2022.

Recreation

As discussed in the Recreation chapter, the Town has no recreation department or park. Passive outdoor recreation occurs throughout the year with activities like hiking, hunting, fishing, cross country skiing, snowmobiling, and swimming. The school district provides various recreation facilities, fields, track, ice skating rink, etc. which are open to the public. The town also allocates funding to the Sacopee Valley Recreation Council which programs various recreation activities for a wide range of age groups.

Health and Welfare

The Town supports various regional health agencies which provide health services to residents, especially those who have low incomes, elderly, or special needs. In 2020, the Town Meeting generally supported town budget allocations to the following agencies:

- York County Community Action Program
- American Red Cross
- Maine Health Care at Home: Compassionate Care Program
- Southern Maine Agency on Aging
- The Life Flight Foundation
- St. Mathew's Food Pantry
- Caring Unlimited

Sacopee Valley Health Center (SVHC) is a private, non-profit organization designated as a Federally Qualified Health Center with a local board of directors. It is the primary physical care facility in the region and serves as the main provider for most medical and behavioral needs. They have been open since the late 70's, and have continued to expand their services with the population's needs over time.

The town's designated emergency evacuation center is Bonny Eagle High School, which is in Standish, ME. The school is approximately 30-40 minutes from Parsonsfield. The distance may be a barrier to safe evacuation. The town is working to prepare the Fred Morrill Municipal Building as an emergency shelter as well, with the addition of a generator and updates to the kitchen facilities.

The town also appropriates funds to the local VFW post and the American Legion Post 123 which provide services to veterans in the area, some of which improve the health and welfare of those individuals.

EDUCATION

Parsonsfield has a strong history of supporting education dating back to its early settlement. Parsonsfield has been home to many schools over the centuries, including the Parsonsfield Free High School, which opened in 1881.

Today Parsonsfield is a part of the Maine School Administration District 55 (MSAD 55), which also includes Baldwin, Cornish, Hiram, and Porter. The district consists of three schools, Sacopee Valley Elementary School, Sacopee Valley Middle School, and Sacopee Valley High School, which are all located at the same campus in Hiram.

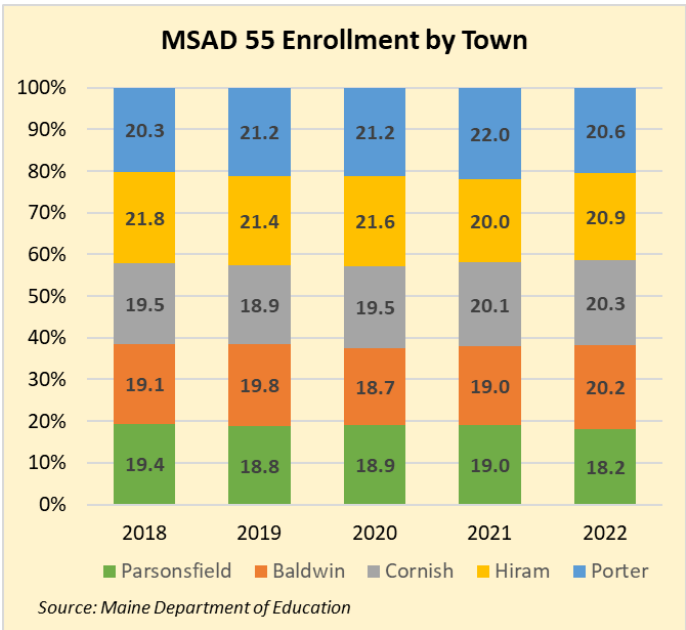
Enrollment

MSAD 55 enrollment has been steady over the last several years, and enrollment make up by town has been very equally balanced over time. As of the 2022-2023 school year, Parsonsfield makes up the smallest proportion of students enrolled, however it is only by about 2%. When looking at the 10-year average enrollment however, Parsonsfield is the second highest, after Hiram.

MSAD #55 School Enrollment, 2015-2022									
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	10-year Average
Parsonsfield	226	208	205	197	187	191	183	183	207.7
Baldwin	217	189	187	194	197	188	183	203	201.5
Cornish	190	188	188	198	188	197	194	204	193.2
Hiram	236	245	243	222	213	218	193	210	223.9
Porter	197	195	197	206	211	214	212	207	203.3
Total	1066	1025	1020	1017	996	1008	965	1007	1029.6

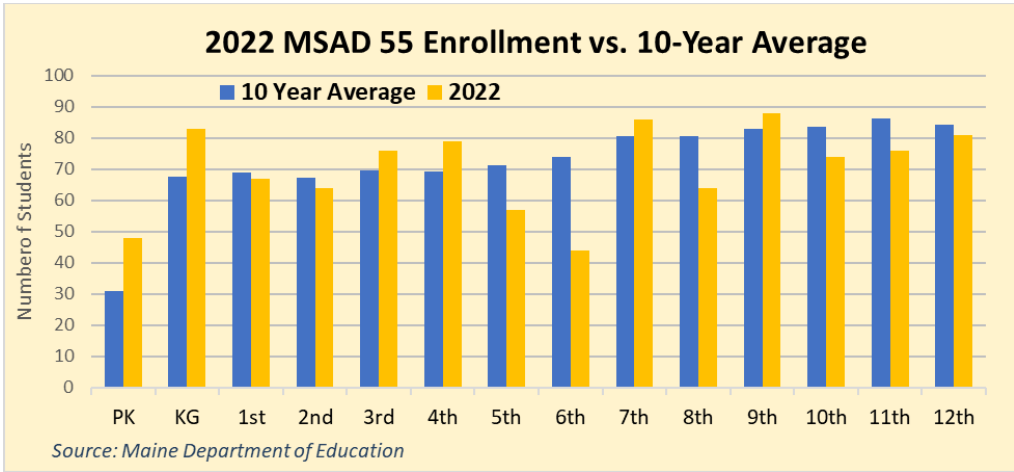
Source: Maine Department of Education, 2022

Enrollment figures by grade can help illustrate how the capacity at each school may change in the coming years. As of 2022, most high school and middle school grade enrollments are lower than the 10- year average. However, both pre-k, kindergarten, third and fourth grades are all higher than the 10-year average enrollment and up from previous years. Depending on how population changes in the coming years, this could indicate a larger cohort moving up through the grades over the next 10 years.



MSAD 55 Total Enrollment by School and Grade								
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	10 Year Average
Sacoee Valley Elementary School	284	282	295	295	321	313	338	304
PK	16	26	32	32	31	31	48	30.9
KG	51	60	70	73	71	65	83	67.6
1st	83	50	58	80	80	63	67	68.7
2nd	59	85	51	58	80	74	64	67.3
3rd	75	61	84	52	59	80	76	69.6
Sacoee Valley Middle School	391	391	388	377	364	338	330	361.3
4th	80	77	66	87	55	51	79	69.1
5th	76	77	79	58	81	52	57	71.2
6th	86	77	75	80	62	84	44	73.8
7th	67	91	80	77	87	62	86	80.4
8th	82	69	88	75	79	89	64	80.6
Sacoee Valley High School	345	338	321	308	296	291	319	337
9th	84	82	67	82	67	74	88	83
10th	85	83	85	72	88	70	74	83.6
11th	91	84	84	78	64	86	76	86.3
12th	85	89	85	76	77	61	81	84.1
MSAD 55	1020	1011	1004	980	981	942	987	1017.9

Source: Maine Department of Education



Data on the total number of homeschooled students district wide indicates an uptick through 2021, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Numbers rebounded to more typical numbers in 2022, however more enrolled again in 2023.

Home Instruction Students by Year				
	2020	2021	2022	2023
RSU 55/MSAD 55	59	131	71	124
<i>Source: Maine Department of Education</i>				

Budget

The total district spending for MSAD 55 for the 2020-2021 school year was \$16,842,113. Approximately 78.6% of which came from state and local allocations, 21% from Federal Grants, and 0.2% from state and local grants. Per pupil spending in MSAD 55 for 2020-2021 school year was \$17, 879, compared to the state average of \$18,020.

Historically, the Parsonsfield allocation to MSAD 55 is the largest portion of the town budget. Over the last 5 years, this appropriation has only increased by about 3.6%, while the town budget has increased by about 10%. As of the 2021-2022 school year, the MSAD 55 allocation made up slightly less than 50% of the total town budget.

MSAD 55 Spending		
	Total District Spending	Per Pupil Spending
2017-2018	\$13,964,937	\$13,909
2018-2019	\$14,231,048	\$14,521
2019-2020	\$14,537,216	\$14,819
2020-2021	\$16,842,113	\$17, 879
<i>Source: Maine Department of Labor</i>		

Education Allocation in Parsonsfield Town Budget			
	MSAD 55 Appropriation	Total Town Budget	Percent of Total Budget
2017-2018	\$1,965,729	\$3,750,262	52.42%
2018-2019	\$1,965,348	\$3,748,643	52.43%
2019-2020	\$1,989,977	\$3,901,522	51.01%
2020-2021	\$1,985,426	\$4,075,555	48.72%
2021-2022	\$2,039,586	\$4,199,525	48.57%
<i>Source: Parsonsfield Town Reports</i>			

Adult Education

Sacopee Valley Adult and Community Education provides several educational courses which focus on career readiness, certifications, and high school/GED equivalency. These opportunities provide adults in Parsonsfield access to lifelong learning and professional development which may be able to enhance career prospects or job opportunities.

SUMMARY

The town of Parsonsfield provides limited local governmental services. Municipal staff is a mix of full and part time, which is typical for small communities. The former Fred Morrill School in North Parsonsfield serves as the primary office, meeting, and community space. Fire, police, and rescue protection are all provided through joint services or other governmental jurisdictions. Due to the town’s large land area and significant road milage, road maintenance is a large cost and task. Some state routes are maintained by the state. The town does have curbside waste and recycling service, which is unique for a small town. Many health and welfare services are addressed in a regional manner through various non-profit organizations.

Community Facilities and Services Goals, Policies & Strategies

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

Parsonsfield's Goal: Provide community facilities and services which meet the needs of its residents and businesses in a planned, cost-conscious manner.

Encourage public services and utilities in a way that is consistent with the conservation of natural resources and historic development patterns.

POLICY ONE. It is the policy of the Town to provide affordable municipal facilities which are conveniently located to the public, are well maintained, and have a suitable working environment for the residents, boards, committees, and municipal employees.

- Survey the employees, boards and committees which use the municipal office building to determine what improvements are needed, if any, and determine next steps.
- Ensure the Capital Improvements Plan includes facility maintenance and improvements.
- Create a municipal buildings report which inventories all the current town owned properties, buildings and facilities, the parties responsible for their maintenance, the funds available for that maintenance, and any needs for the next five years.
- Consider potential upgrades or improvements to the current town offices or other buildings for their use as a small-scale emergency shelter from extreme weather, extreme cold, extreme heat, or power outages.

POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the Town to provide in an efficient manner municipal services which reflect the needs and desires of the community and support the provision of regional services which are not effective to provide at a town level.

- Host an annual meeting of the five-town district including elected officials, committees and key town staff to discuss current issues and challenges, share resources or updates, identify collaboration opportunities, and foster a better understanding of local needs.
- Establish a periodic meeting of border town Selectboards to discuss the joint provision of services and alternatives available to the Town and region to improve services ahead of Town Meeting.
- Evaluate the current level of service of emergency services and monitor the extent to which the town's needs are met relative to national and state service standards.
- With Porter, conduct an assessment to better understand capacity and facility needs of the volunteer fire department, including the possibility of creating some full-time positions.
- Continue to annually engage with School Board officials to discuss facility needs, the impact of school assessments on the tax rate, and maximize the public use of school facilities.
- Survey current municipal employees, namely Code Enforcement and administration, to ensure

that staffing capacity is meeting the needs of the community, and make recommendations for increased staff if necessary.

POLICY THREE. It is the policy of the town to consider the provision of water and sewer utilities in keeping with the needs of the community, either through quasi-public or private operators or town-owned systems.

- Identify future water sources and prioritize areas for conservation or other protections.
- Make recommendations to quasi-public water system operators in Kezar Falls for expansion to growth areas consistent with the comprehensive plan recommendations.
- Seek the regional planning commission to provide seminars or technical assistance on water system and wastewater treatment system improvements.
- Review past feasibility studies for a municipal septic system or other sewer solutions and make recommendations for expanding this infrastructure in Kezar Falls.
- Seek state assistance with evaluating the town's water supply sources and aquifers for PFAS contamination. If present, investigate to understand sources of contamination and seek guidance and funding from the State for remediation.

POLICY FOUR. It is the policy of the town to assist in the provision of solid waste management programs.

- Continue the Recycling Committee to keep the Town abreast of the changes in state law, regional activities, and Parsonsfield's need and progress.
- The Recycling Committee make recommendations to the Selectboard for upgrades, changes, or improvements to recycling and solid waste management based on the needs of the community.
- Continue current partnership with the tri-town transfer station.
- Investigate options for disposal of residential hazardous waste and electronics make information available to the community.

Chapter 9: Fiscal Analysis

INTRODUCTION

When planning for the long-term future of the community, it is important to consider fiscal health. Local governments have a relatively high reliance on the property tax to fund local government and the annual Town Meeting provides the ultimate measure of local control. This democratic form of government depends on the participation of the registered voters to determine the future course of the town.

Towns have various revenue sources upon which they draw to run the local government. Some of these sources the Town cannot control, such as federal and state assistance. The town can apply for grants, but the availability of funding and competitiveness of applications are varying and hard to predict. The town receives some income from its investments, including various special designated funds in town. The property tax is assessed to make up the balance between the revenue which the town is projected to receive and the budget as approved at town meeting.

Valuation and the Tax Rate

Property taxes are based on the valuation of property. In general, developed property generates more property tax revenue than undeveloped property. It has been several years since the last assessment, but the town has been budgeting for a reassessment in the near future.

Compared to neighboring communities, Parsonsfield's valuation is higher than Cornish, Hiram, and Porter, but lower than Limerick. It is the only community in the immediate region with a total land valuation that is higher than total building valuation.

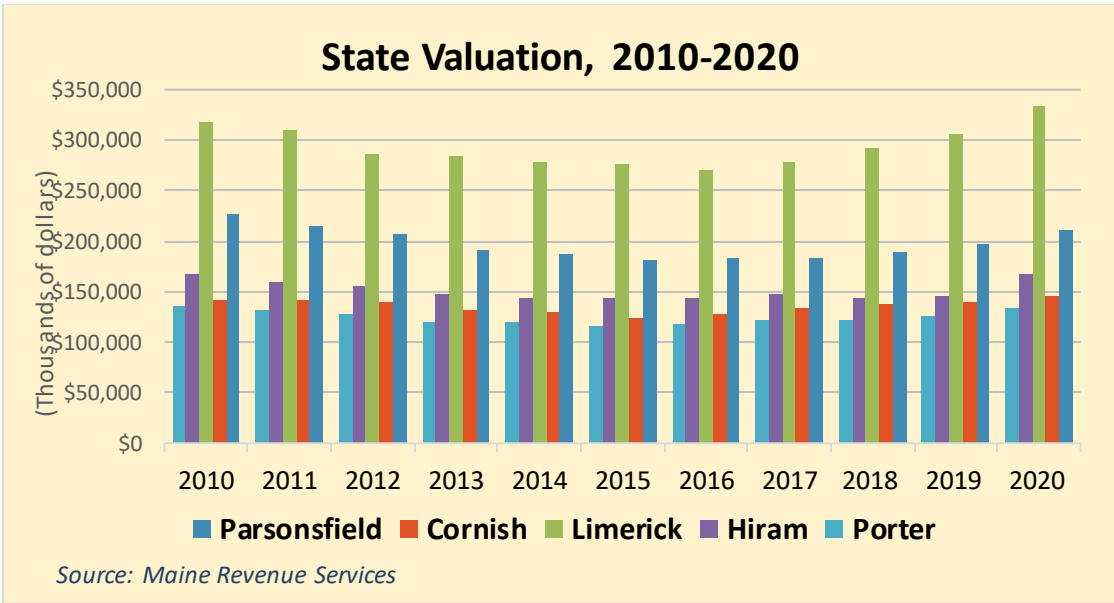
2020 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary					
	Parsonsfield	Limerick	Cornish	Hiram	Porter
Certified Ratio	100%	92%	100%	100%	97%
Commitment	\$3,046,418	\$4,758,966	\$2,001,368	\$2,269,316	\$1,846,750
Tax Rate	0.01515	0.0164	0.0134	0.01454	0.01628
Total Taxable Municipal Valuation	\$201,083,672	\$290,180,868	\$149,355,820	\$156,074,010	\$113,436,749
Total Land Valuation	\$105,140,936	\$114,851,385	\$52,222,400	\$52,197,870	\$49,813,529
Taxable Buildings Valuation	\$94,287,980	\$171,413,411	\$94,772,400	\$102,962,230	\$61,993,811
Total Taxable Land & Building Valuation	\$199,428,916	\$286,264,796	\$146,994,800	\$155,160,100	\$111,807,340
<i>Source: Maine Revenue Services</i>					

As for state valuation history, all communities in this region experienced a dip in valuation from 2010-2015, followed by a recovery between 2015 and 2020. Parsonsfield's valuation decreased by 20% between 2010 and 2015, while neighboring communities experienced decreases of less than 15%.

Parsonsfield’s increase between 2015 and 2020 was like other communities, however other communities rebounded beyond 2010 valuation levels, while Parsonsfield is still yet to reach that point. Valuation changes since 2020 are not captured in the data. However, the real estate market since 2020 has gone through dramatic disruptions due to the pandemic and general economic changes. It is yet to be documented how much rural York and Oxford counties will be impacted by these changes.

Maine State Valuation History, 2010-2020 (Thousands of Dollars)					
	Parsonsfield	Cornish	Limerick	Hiram	Porter
2020	\$210,350	\$146,700	\$334,150	\$167,000	\$133,200
2019	\$198,100	\$138,850	\$305,350	\$146,100	\$125,300
2018	\$189,350	\$137,950	\$292,000	\$144,500	\$121,900
2017	\$183,400	\$133,650	\$277,500	\$146,850	\$121,650
2016	\$183,250	\$128,000	\$270,000	\$144,750	\$117,650
2015	\$181,400	\$124,600	\$276,100	\$144,300	\$116,100
2014	\$187,150	\$129,150	\$277,600	\$144,650	\$120,050
2013	\$192,000	\$132,700	\$284,150	\$147,200	\$120,550
2012	\$207,950	\$139,150	\$285,850	\$155,900	\$128,450
2011	\$214,600	\$141,700	\$309,200	\$160,600	\$132,650
2010	\$227,250	\$142,350	\$318,350	\$167,150	\$135,350
2015-2020 % Change	16%	18%	21%	16%	15%
2010-2015 % Change	-20.18%	-12.47%	-13.27%	-13.67%	-14.22%

Source: Maine Revenue Services



It is a common experience throughout Maine communities for residents with valuable land holdings to be “property rich, but cash poor”. This means that they may have a relatively low income, but have to pay relatively high property taxes. There are several forms of property tax relief, including current use taxation and conservation easements.

Municipal Revenues

The town receives revenue from property taxation as well as other taxes, fees, grants, investments, and revenue sharing from the State and/or federal government.

Town revenues have steadily increased over time, in generally keeping pace with inflation. Property taxes have the smallest increase over all other types of revenue, only increasing by 3% over the last decade, when adjusting for inflation. The change in local endowments & reserve funds is due to a few unusual line items in 2010, including over \$100,000 from the Revaluation/Tax Assessment Reserve. The town has also seen increased state funding over this period, around 9% when adjusting for inflation.

Town Revenues Percent Change, 2010-2020				
	2010-2015 Change	2015-2020 Change	2010-2020 Change	2010-2020 Change Inflation Adjusted
Property Taxes	17%	4%	22%	3%
Excise Taxes & Fees	8%	16%	26%	6%
State Funding	9%	19%	29%	9%
Local Endowments & Reserve Funds	-76%	-33%	-84%	-87%
Collections on behalf of Other Entities	-3%	12%	8%	-9%
Other	-33%	-42%	-61%	-68%
Income Total	9%	5%	14%	7%

Source: Parsonsfield Fiscal Reports

Town Revenues Comparison, 2010-2020			
	2010 Revenues	2015 Revenues	2020 Revenues
Property Taxes	\$2,491,766.38	\$2,921,183.58	\$3,050,970.80
Excise Taxes & Fees	\$271,180.28	\$293,523.97	\$340,776.39
State & Federal Funding	\$258,511.53	\$281,592.40	\$333,868.42
Local Endowments & Reserve Funds	\$125,514.39	\$30,000.00	\$20,000.00
Collections on behalf of Other Entities	\$204,773.13	\$197,623.81	\$221,070.19
Other	\$202,448.39	\$134,751.17	\$78,015.67
Income Total	\$3,554,194.10	\$3,858,674.93	\$4,044,701.47

Source: Parsonsfield Fiscal Reports

Municipal Expenditures

The following table is an overview of changes to municipal expenditures over the past decade. Education remains the largest expense for the community, like most Maine towns and cities. However, state allocations for education have increased in recent years. Several cost categories have increased nominally, although some still have not kept pace with inflation. Roads, which increased 3% nominally in the last decade, decreased in value by 13% after adjusting for inflation. There is a similar trend with public assistance and memberships.

Costs which have decreased nominally over time, have decreased much more significantly when adjusting for inflation. Administration costs have decreased by 14% nominally over the last decade, however when accounting for inflation, this represents a 27% decrease in overall value. Some costs have increased due to the addition of staff and services that the town has chosen to provide. These include the addition of a deputy officer in public safety (no longer in the current budget), waste disposal, and recreation costs. Building and grounds costs increased the most over the 10 year period, increasing by about \$70,000, or over 260% after adjusting for inflation. The bulk of this increase is for contributions to the municipal property capital repair fund and also municipal property capital repairs themselves.

Town Expenditures Comparison, 2010-2020				
	2010-2015 Change	2015-2020 Change	2010-2020 Change	2010-2020 Change Inflation Adjusted
School Assessment	9%	5%	14%	-4%
Roads	-11%	16%	3%	-13%
Waste Disposal	-12%	51%	33%	12%
Bldgs & Grounds	73%	152%	336%	267%
Administration	-30%	15%	-20%	-32%
Public Safety	93%	17%	126%	91%
Arts & Recreation	4%	35%	40%	18%
Public Assistance	10%	4%	15%	-3%
Memberships	-11%	15%	3%	-13%
County Assessment	0%	-1%	-1%	-16%
State Reports	22%	12%	37%	15%
Other	-32%	-88%	-92%	-93%
Expenses Total	3%	11%	13%	-5%

Source: Parsonsfield Town Reports

Town Expenditures Comparison, 2010-2020			
	2010 Expenses	2015 Expenses	2020 Expenses
School Assessment	\$1,741,568.65	\$1,901,273.13	\$1,989,977.34
Roads	\$772,083.99	\$688,557.84	\$796,286.15
Waste Disposal	\$161,840.92	\$142,525.16	\$215,805.45
Buildings & Grounds	\$21,375.03	\$36,955.19	\$93,152.74
Administration	\$346,692.75	\$242,297.11	\$277,989.07
Public Safety	\$118,984.38	\$230,179.72	\$269,052.49
Arts & Recreation	\$12,400.68	\$12,850.14	\$17,371.14
Public Assistance	\$9,843.53	\$10,838.61	\$11,303.08
Memberships	\$1,293.00	\$1,155.00	\$1,334.00
County Assessment	\$103,772.48	\$103,920.96	\$103,062.03
State Reports	\$149,668.13	\$182,717.93	\$204,810.47
Other	\$79,764.52	\$54,105.99	\$6,247.95
Expenses Total	\$3,519,288.06	\$3,607,376.78	\$3,986,391.91
<i>Source: Parsonsfield Town Reports</i>			

Capital Improvement

Parsonsfield contributes to several reserve accounts to budget for future capital expenses. Having public services shared across multiple towns, such as the library and fire department, can make planning for future capital expenditures difficult.

Examples of existing reserve accounts include municipal buildings repair, revaluation/tax assessment, Sacopee Rescue capital needs, Kezar Falls fire department capital needs, salt shed, road repair, and sidewalks.

The town may consider formalizing a 5 to 10 year capital improvements plan which identifies known capital needs, and the intent of how to fund those needs. Coordination with neighboring towns would likely be necessary to have consistent budgeting for shared resources.

SUMMARY

Property valuation in southern Maine has fluctuated significantly in the last decade. Parsonsfield and its neighboring communities have experienced changes, but to less of an extreme than the rest of York County. Property values in Parsonsfield as of 2020 were less than that in 2010, however changes to the market since then are not yet reflected by the valuation. The town is contributing to a reserve account for an eventual reassessment, which has the potential to change the valuation significantly.

Fluctuations in town revenues and expenditures are made more complicated by the extreme rates of inflation in the economy following the COVID-19 pandemic. Increases in town revenues are mostly due to inflation, and property tax revenues have increased the least out of all revenue streams. Some expenditures increased far more than inflation, usually due to year-specific projects and expenses or increases are tied to specific services which the town now provides that it did not in 2010. Some expenses, such as roads and administration did not keep pace with inflation. These line items may require further consideration in future years.

Fiscal Capacity Goals, Policies & Strategies

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

Parsonsfield's Goal: Address the needs of the community in a fiscally sound and responsive manner.

POLICY ONE. IT IS THE POLICY OF THE TOWN TO SEEK ALTERNATIVE INCOME SOURCES TO OFFSET THE RELIANCE ON PROPERTY TAX REVENUE.

- Explore the feasibility of a development impact fee which requires developers to contribute funds proportional to the increased demand for services resulting from new development.
- Evaluate the town fees for permits, licenses, applications, and code violations to ensure they are comparable to surrounding communities and consistent with the cost of providing services, and update if necessary.
- Investigate collaborative purchase of materials and equipment with adjoining towns and through SMPDC's collaborative purchase program.
- Consider funding long term capital expenditures through bonding.

POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the town to maintain a reasonable tax rate which is consistent with maintaining services and is responsive to increased needs.

- Develop a 10-year Capital Improvements Plan which outlines year-to-year allocations for savings and reserve accounts for specific purposes. Document reserve accounts which are already active. Use the CIP to develop an annual capital budget to be voted on annually at Town Meeting.
- Set general budget guidelines annually for departments in keeping with the fiscal indicators like the cost of living, comparable pay for the region, and unusual cost increases or decreases such as fuel.
- Conduct an updated town-wide assessment to ensure valuations reflect current property values. Once updated, establish a revolving evaluation schedule to begin 2-3 years after update to avoid the large cost and burden of a 10-year full town update.

POLICY THREE. It is the policy of the town to practice transparency and productive collaboration in the annual budget process.

- Plan to engage the Budget Committee earlier and more frequently in the process, to ensure adequate time for discussion and revisions.
- Provide as much information as possible in Selectboard budget documents which are provided to the Budget Committee and made available to the public, including brief justifications for changes in budget lines year to year, and a 5-year historic comparison.
- Task the Budget Committee with soliciting budgets and budget justifications from boards and committees to aid in the budget process.

Chapter 10: Existing Land Use

INTRODUCTION

Communities use land use regulations to balance the costs and benefits of development and shape the future growth of a community. Every chapter of the comprehensive plan inventory culminates in the Land Use chapter. The inventories of natural resources, housing, economic development, and public facilities all inform the future growth, development, and land use.

Parsonsfield adopted a zoning ordinance in 1991, after the first Comprehensive Planning effort. Before then, development, although limited, happened organically, following historic patterns. When the zoning ordinance was created, village zones were also based on the historic pattern and existing development. As Parsonsfield plans for the future, the town should consider how the existing zoning ordinance has impacted development, and how it should evolve over the next 10-15 years.

GENERAL LAND USE

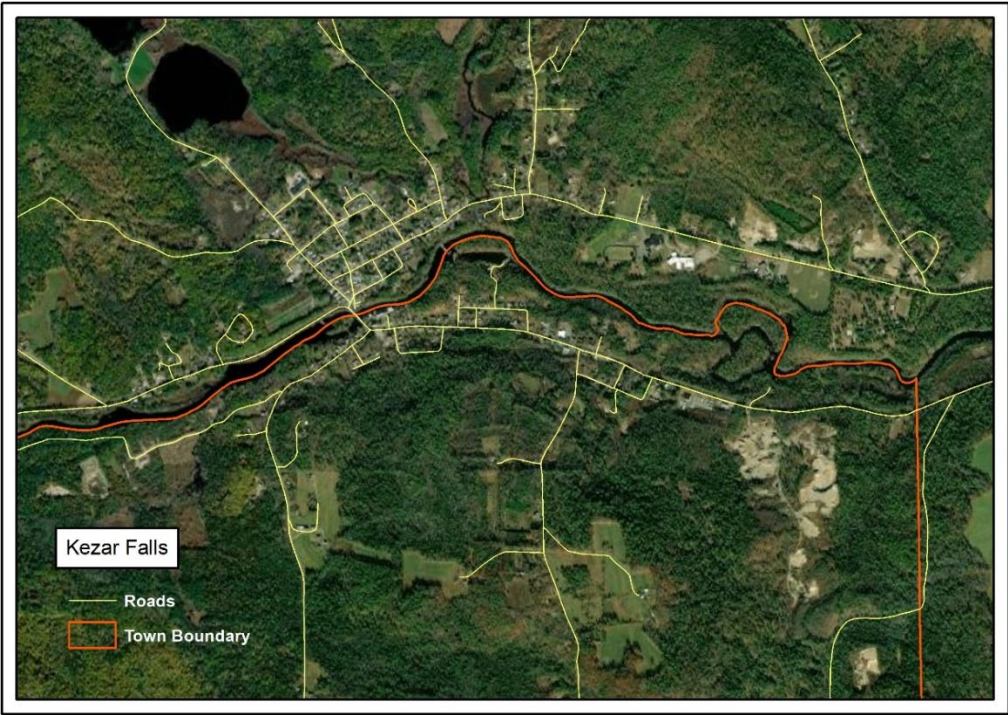
Parsonsfield has remained a largely rural community. Development is dominated by residential and seasonal housing, with limited commercial and industrial uses throughout the community. Development is concentrated in the Kezar Falls village, where the most commercial uses are found. East Parsonsfield village also has some commercial uses. Several small neighborhoods are scattered throughout town at major intersections. Other residential development organically follows the road network, with seasonal housing focused on the shores of West Pond, Long Pond, and Randall Pond. There have been very limited industrial uses in the town's history, including wood processing and the textile mill.

Despite an uptick in population in the last decade, Parsonsfield is still mostly undeveloped. Large tracts of conserved land contribute to this pattern, as well as large land holdings. There are some other development constraints, such as elevations, steep slopes, wetlands, and hydric soils that also make a large part of the community best suited to open space.

Neighborhoods

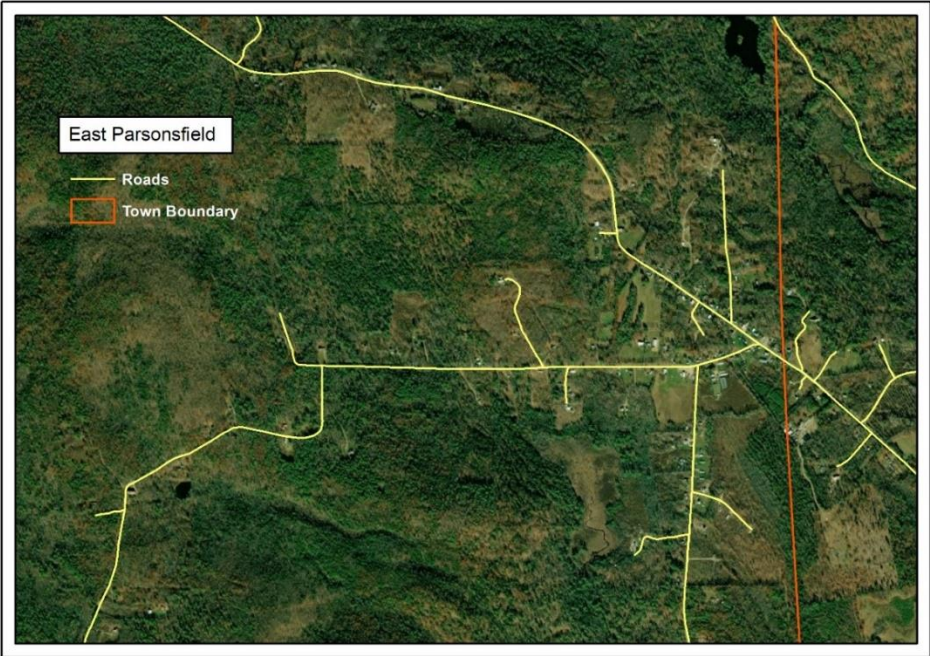
Kezar Falls

Kezar Falls encompasses the intersection of three towns, Parsonsfield, Porter and Hiram. The Parsonsfield side is less densely developed but is the most developed area of town overall. Along the Route 25 "Main Street" corridor, there are shops, auto repair, construction, and limited food & service-related businesses. Some civic uses, such as the post office and library are also present. Development is all close to the main roadway, which is typical of historic neighborhoods. In the previous plan, it was suspected that development would spread south of Route 25, which has been limited in reality.



East Parsonsfield

The East Parsonsfield village consists of development clustered around the intersection of Route 160 with the Parsonsfield town boundary. The majority of development here is residential, with some scattered home occupations and a post office. Like Kezar Falls, the development is close to the road, with a few dead end neighborhood streets.



DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

In 2022, Parsonsfield issued 11 building permits for new build single family dwellings and mobile homes. There is no indication of whether these are intended to be year-round primary dwellings or seasonal homes. Only three of these newly permitted dwellings were located in the greater Kezar Falls area, and most were in Central and East Parsonsfield. Although this is a small sampling, it may be true that development may continue to happen somewhat sporadically throughout the community with current zoning.

Year	Total Building Permits
2010	2
2015	7
2020	Unknown
2022	11
2023	12

Although development is difficult to track, especially in a small community with limited staff capacity, total building permits issued in the last couple of years far exceed the normal rate of growth for Parsonsfield pre-2020. Relative to other communities, 10-12 new homes a year is still slow growth, but since Parsonsfield has operated with such a small population for many years, it will take some adjusting

to ensure the ordinance, municipal services, and facilities are well suited to direct and support the additional development.

CURRENT ZONING DISTRICTS

The current zoning ordinance was most recently revised in 2018, and includes six base zones, as well as a public water protection overlay and shoreland zoning provisions. The current zones are typical of a rural Maine community, and include a balance of allowed residential, commercial, and industrial uses as well as protections for open space and natural resources. The following section highlights the purpose of the district, taken directly from the ordinance, as well as some of the allowable uses and standards. This is meant to be a summary of the existing zones and does not include all details and requirements included in the ordinance itself.

Village

The purpose of this district is to preserve the historic villages in Parsonsfield and to promote the traditional village atmosphere that is common to New England towns. This District allows a mixed use of residential, commercial, and institutional uses.

The village district allows many uses, and requires site plan review for most all of them. The uses that are not allowed are those better suited for large land areas, or would be disruptive in a densely developed area, such as industry, manufacturing, and agriculture. The only residential use not allowed in the village district is mobile home parks, which would be better suited for a larger land area.

Village Residential

The purpose of this District is to provide for residential growth and commercial uses appropriate for a village area. This district is intended to be compatible with the Village District. The District provides for a mixed use of residential, commercial and institutional uses.

The village residential district allows for the growth and expansion of the village areas in keeping with the current village development patterns. It allows the same residential uses as the village district but is

slightly more restrictive on commercial and allows no industrial uses. It does allow a few uses which are more suitable for larger land areas, such as outdoor recreation facilities, agriculture, and cemeteries.

Rural Residential

The purpose of the Rural Residential District is primarily to provide for low-density residential housing in areas of Parsonsfield where a pattern of rural housing exists. The District allows a mixture of residential uses and institutional uses. Limited commercial uses are allowed.

The rural residential district allows for all of the same residential uses as the village and village residential districts, plus mobile home parks with site plan review. Limited commercial uses are allowed, most of which are small scale or suited to home occupations. This district allows more resource based uses, such as agricultural products processing and campgrounds, which are not allowed in the village zones.

Light Industrial/Office

The purpose of the Light Industrial/Office District is to provide locations in Parsonsfield for the development of light manufacturing and professional commercial uses. This District is located near three-phase electrical power, public water, telecommunications services and major roads that are necessary to support more intense commercial development. This District is intended to encourage economic growth and diversity in Parsonsfield that will strengthen the local economy. The allowed uses are primarily industrial and commercial in nature.

Excluding the resource protection zone, the light industrial/office district has the fewest allowed uses. Most residential, educational or civic, and outdoor/resource-based uses are not allowed, likely to direct them to areas better suited and already partially developed. This is the only district that allows heavy manufacturing, with site plan review, in addition to light manufacturing, trucking, and warehousing and storage. The limited commercial uses allowed are the largest or more intense, like wholesale business, retail business more than 4000 sq ft and shopping centers, which all require a special exemption to be sited in the village district.

Forest and Farm

The purpose of the Forest and Farm District is to promote and encourage natural resource based uses like forestry and farming. The District also serves to protect those areas of town characterized by steep slopes and soils not suitable for intense development. The District provides for low-density housing, farming, forestry and related commercial uses as well as outdoor recreational uses.

The Forest and Farm district is most restrictive of commercial, industrial and civic uses, and allows most residential and resource-based uses. A few commercial uses are allowed, but industrial uses are limited to sawmill and related operations, and sludge spreading or waste disposal with a special exception. This zone is especially designed to allow all outdoor and resource-based uses, including agriculture, without the need for a CEO permit, which is not allowed in any other zone.

Resource Conservation

The purpose of the Resource Conservation District is to conserve natural resources for forestry related activities, outdoor recreational uses, wildlife habitat and agriculture. This District includes areas where development rights may have been purchased or restricted. No development is permitted in this District. The Resource Conservation district is the most restrictive of the base zones, with only a few allowed uses related to emergency services, forestry, and agriculture. This district is primarily located around already conserved lands, including the large Leavitt Plantation.

Public Water Protection Overlay

The purpose of the Public Water Protection District is to protect the ground water aquifer and recharge area that is the source of water for the public water system. The Public Water Protection District is shown on the Parsonsfield Land Use District Map as an ellipsoidal area beginning on the shore of the Ossipee River where the public water wells are located and continuing to the peak of Cub Hill. The protection of the public water supply from toxic and hazardous contamination is essential to the health and well-being of the community and its citizens. The public water supply consists of the wells that supply the water, the aquifer that stores the water for the wells and the recharge area that replenishes the aquifer.

The Public Water Protection Overlay restricts the most intense uses, such as industrial and most commercial. Select outdoor and resource-based uses are allowed, but this is the only zone that requires site plan review for forestry.

SHORELAND ZONING

Resource Protection

The Resource Protection District includes areas in which development would adversely affect water quality, productive habitat, biological ecosystems, or scenic and natural values.

The Resource Protection district is mandated by statewide shoreland zoning regulations. It covers several specific areas including 250ft buffers along freshwater wetlands and wetlands associated with great ponds and rivers, flood plains, and areas of contiguous steep slopes. Very limited residential and commercial uses are allowed in the resource protection zone, and they must follow performance standards specific to the shoreland zoning.

NEW OR SPECIAL LAND USES OF CONCERN

One of the many ongoing challenges with zoning ordinances is the unpredicted popularity of specific uses. No zoning ordinance can predict every possible use that may come to the community, so ordinances usually include some clause for defining a use. In Parsonsfield, the ordinance says, *“For any land use not listed on this Table, the Planning Board shall determine which listed land use type is most similar to the non-listed land use and determine the appropriate procedure and the type of permit required.”* This may give the Planning Board flexibility in most cases, but it can also become an issue when a new intense use is not clearly defined anywhere in the ordinance. Therefore, new and special land uses should be considered and added regularly.

Solar

In 2019, the Maine legislature passed several bills to encourage solar development in the state. “LD 1711 An Act To Promote Solar Energy Projects and Distributed Generation Resources in Maine” set up

two net energy billing programs for smaller scale solar farms. “LD 1494 An Act to Reform Maine’s Renewable Portfolio Standard” increased the share of Maine’s electricity that must come from renewable resources, particularly from resources located in Maine. The passage of these and other solar legislation resulted in a huge uptick in solar development throughout the state. They have since enacted laws that have limited the impact of LD 1711, as well as added decommissioning standards for solar farms, but it remains a viable new use that Parsonsfield may encounter in the near future.

Arrays can range in size from smaller arrays around 5 acres to very large arrays of 200 or more acres. Solar companies choose the siting for arrays based on the optimum energy generation, and there have been several proposed in places near Parsonsfield. Communities may consider creating performance standards for solar arrays that consider various factors, including but not limited to:

- Limiting the amount of clear cutting that is permitted for any one array
- Limiting the amount of an array that can be sited on prime farmland or farmland of statewide significance
- Landscaping, planting or maintenance of the grounds around and under the solar panels, such as limiting mowing for pollinator and habitat health

Wind Farms

There are currently no ordinance regulations which address wind farms in Parsonsfield. Although it is unclear whether the town is likely to be well suited for wind energy generation, the state overall is seeing an increase in renewable energy operations. Wind farms should be addressed on the ordinances use table along with other new uses, such as solar.

Animal Husbandry

Despite a history of citizen agriculture, farms and animal husbandry in the community, Parsonsfield does not currently have any provisions for livestock in the zoning ordinance. For the most part, agricultural takes place with residential uses, and where lot sizes are too small to allow for proper spacing of animals, there can be issues of animal care, land degradation, and impacts to neighboring properties. As the popularity of self-subsistence and hobby farming grows in Maine and the region, the town may consider adopting land use provisions that limit the number and types of animals allowed in certain zones, and on minimum lot sizes.

Mining & Extraction

Mining and extraction operations, namely gravel pits, are fairly common in this region of the county, and due to the intensity of the use can pose some issues. The noise caused by operations and heavy equipment, impacts to roadways from large vehicles, and environmental implications are all concerns which could be mitigated with performance standards or ordinance requirements. The town may consider disincentivizing the use in primarily residential areas with weight limitations, or noise ordinances.

Short-term Rentals

With the growing popularity of accommodations services like AirBnB, short term rentals have become common place, and can often operate without any knowledge of the town. The state of Maine requires that short term rental operators pay sales tax to the state, but there are no other requirements at the state level, leaving regulation to towns and cities. Many communities across the state require that short term rental operators register their units with the municipality. In addition, towns may restrict short

term rentals to specific zones, or require that the owner must occupy the residence. If the town finds that an increased popularity of short term rentals becomes an issue for the provision of services or housing availability, it could consider future regulation to monitor or limit them.

Adult-Use and Medical Cannabis

Maine has enacted laws allowing municipalities to opt-in to allow medical cannabis or adult-use recreation cannabis facilities. The allowances and power of the municipality differ slightly for each use, but in general municipalities are given the option to allow testing facilities, manufacturing facilities, cultivation facilities, dispensaries, or retail stores. Many municipalities who do opt in also include special permitting requirements, such as only allowing a specific number of permitted facilities within the community or prohibiting stores from being located nearby schools. The town should consider their options for both programs, and understand the community attitude and desires for these uses to see if they may be well suited.

SUMMARY

Development in Parsonsfield continues to be relatively slow and dispersed. To date, the zoning ordinance has protected the town against unwanted uses and unreasonable development. However, several new use types have become more common since the last major ordinance update which need to be considered. Preemptively including uses that the Planning Board has not yet been faced with will ensure the town has already had important public conversations and is prepared when proposals come. The ordinance overall seems to be effective for directing suitable land uses to the areas most suitable, but as residential development continues or increases with the housing market, changes may be necessary to ensure sprawling development is not encouraged. This is discussed further in the Future Land Use section of this plan.

Article II. Land Use Districts and Uses	
Note 1: Requires the same permits as the primary structure or if the primary structure is a non-conforming use it requires a site plan review permit.	
Key to Table 1:	
Y	Allowed use (no permit required, but the use must comply with all applicable land use standards).
P	Allowed use requires building or use permit from CEO.
R	Use requires site plan review permit from Planning Board following site plan review (may be a minor or major review).
C	Use requires conditional use permit from Planning Board following conditional use review.
S	Use requires special exception permit from Planning Board following site plan review, provided that the applicant shows by substantial evidence:
	a. there is no alternate site which is both suitable to the proposed use and reasonably available to the applicant.
	b. that an environmental neighborhood impact report shows that there will be no adverse impacts on neighboring uses.
N	Prohibited use.

Source: Town of Parsonsfield, Use Table Key, full table below

TABLE 1
Table of Permissible Uses

USE/STRUCTURE	Land Use District						
	V	VR	R	FF	LIO	PW	RC
RESIDENTIAL							
Accessory Structure	P	P	P	P	P	R	N
Group Homes	R	R	R	R	N	R	N
Duplex/Two Family Dwelling	P	P	P	P	N	R	N
Home Occupation	P	P	P	P	P	R	N
Manufactured Housing	P	P	P	P	N	R	N
Mobile Home Park	N	N	R	N	N	N	N
Multi-Family Dwelling	R	R	R	S	N	R	N
Single-family Dwelling	P	P	P	P	N	R	N
Subdivision	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
COMMERCIAL							
Accessory Structure	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Amusement Facilities	R	R	S	N	N	R	N
Auto, Rec. Vehicle, Small Engine Repair Shop	R	R	S	N	N	N	N
Automotive Body Shop	R	N	N	N	N	N	N
Automotive Service Station	R	S	N	N	N	N	N
Automobile, Rec. Vehicle, Small Engine Sales	R	R	N	N	R	N	N
Banks	R	R	N	N	N	R	N
Bed and Breakfast	P	P	P	P	N	R	N
Boarding, Lodging (four or less persons)	P	P	P	P	N	R	N
Car Wash	R	N	N	N	N	N	N
Commercial Communication Tower	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Dry Cleaners; Laundromat	R	S	N	N	N	N	N
Firewood Processing	N	N	R	Y	N	N	R
Funeral Home	R	R	R	N	N	R	N
Hotel/Motel/ Inns	R	R	R	R	R	N	N
Junkyard, Minor	N	N	N	R	S	N	N
Neighborhood Convenience Store	P	P	R	N	N	R	N
General Convenience Store	R	R	N	N	N	N	N
Offices: Business, Professional, Medical, Clinics	R	R	S	N	R	R	N
Printing/Photocopying	R	R	S	N	R	N	N
Recreational/Indoors (bowling,skating,tennis, squash, racquetball,billiards, exercise, etc.)	R	R	S	N	R	R	N
Recreational/Outdoors (golf driving ranges, miniature golf, water slides)	N	R	R	R	N	R	N
Restaurant	R	R	R	S	R	R	N
Retail Fuel Distributor (petroleum products)	R	S	N	N	S	N	N
Retail Business (less than 4000 sq.ft.)	R	R	R	N	N	R	N
Retail Business (more than 4000 sq.ft.)	S	N	N	N	R	N	N
Shopping Center	S	N	N	N	R	N	N
Taverns	R	N	N	N	N	N	N
Transmission Tower	N	N	S	R	N	S	R
Vendor, Mobile or Temporary,3 or more days	P	P	P	N	N	N	N
Veterinary Hospital	R	S	S	R	S	N	N
Wholesale Business	S	N	N	N	R	N	N

Table of Permissible Uses
Land Use District

USE/STRUCTURE	V	VR	R	FF	LIO	PW	RC
INDUSTRIAL							
Manufacturing – Light	R	N	N	N	R	N	N
Manufacturing – Heavy	N	N	N	N	R	N	N
Sawmill and Related Operations	N	N	N	R	S	N	N
Sludge and Ash Spreading/Disposal	N	N	N	S	N	N	N
Trucking, Distribution Terminal	N	N	S	N	R	N	N
Warehousing and Storage	R	N	S	N	R	N	N
Waste Disposal/Landfill	N	N	N	S	N	N	N
EDUCATION, INSTITUTIONAL, PUBLIC							
Accessory Structure	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Church, Synagogue, Parish House	R	R	R	N	N	R	N
Community Centers, Clubs	R	R	S	N	N	R	N
Day Care Facility	R	R	R	R	N	R	N
Essential Services	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Fire, Police Station	R	R	R	R	R	R	N
Government Office	R	R	S	N	N	R	N
Congregate Housing/Nursing Home	R	R	R	N	N	N	N
Museum Library	R	R	S	S	N	R	N
Nursery School	R	R	R	R	N	R	N
Public, Private School	R	R	R	S	N	R	N
Public Utility Facility	R	R	R	S	R	R	N
Transfer Station	N	N	R	R	N	N	N
Residential Treatment Facility	R	R	R	N	N	N	N
OUTDOOR, RESOURCE BASED USES							
Accessory Structure	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Agriculture	N	R	R	Y	N	R	R
Agricultural Packaging and Storage	R	R	R	R	R	S	N
Agricultural Products Processing	R	N	R	R	R	N	N
Animal Breeding/Care and Kennels	N	R	R	R	N	N	N
Campground	N	N	R	R	N	N	N
Cemetery	N	R	R	R	R	R	N
Extractive Industry	N	N	R	R	N	N	R
Large Scale Water Extractions	N	N	C	C	N	N	N
Farm Stands	R	R	R	R	N	R	N
Forestry (meet applicable Requirements)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	R	Y
Golf Course(excluding miniature golf)	N	N	R	R	N	N	N
Mass Gathering (more than 1,000 People for more than 4 consecutive Hours)	R	R	R	R	R	N	R
Parks	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Stables/Barns	R	R	P	P	N	S	N

Legend:

V= Village

R= Rural Residential

LIO=Light Industrial Office District

RC= Resource Conservation

VR= Village Residential

FF= Forest & Farm

PW= Public Water Protection (overlay)

Land Use Goals, Policies & Strategies

State Goals: Encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of the community while making efficient use of public services.

Parsonsfield's Goal: Develop and enforce regulatory measures in keeping with the Maine statutes which protect the natural resources, provide adequate development standards, and guide development in keeping with this Comprehensive Plan.

POLICY ONE. It is the policy of the Town to analyze its municipal needs and development trends on a periodic basis.

- Maintain a database of building permit approvals which tracks new housing units monthly, and report trends annually to the Selectboard and Planning Board.
- Meet with the Code Enforcement officer annually to discuss development trends of the past year, including total new home starts, and any new land uses of concern.
- Review the municipal data in the Comprehensive Plan annually, and update sections as needed every five years.

POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the Town to revise the Zoning Ordinance, as needed, to be consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

- Conduct a robust review of the Land Use and Zoning Ordinance to address issues of inconsistency and clarity and incorporate the recommended ordinance changes described in the strategies of this Comprehensive Plan.
- Conduct a periodic complete review of the Land Use and Zoning Ordinance every 2- 3 years to ensure it is in keeping with this Comprehensive Plan, the town's needs, and current issues, and maintains clarity and accessibility to the public. Require the Planning Board to submit the review to the Selectboard.
- Evaluate the zoning ordinance for emerging uses which are not covered, such as solar farms, short term rentals, wind farms, and adult-use cannabis, or uses which are of a concern to community health and wellbeing, such as mining/extraction and animal husbandry, and make recommendations for ordinance updates which cover best practices for these uses.
- Amend the zoning ordinance to replace the provision that requires the Planning Board to determine for a non-listed use which listed land use type is the most similar with a statement that asserts uses not defined in the use table are not permitted in any zone.

POLICY THREE. It is the policy of the town to adjust regulations as needed to ensure growth is consistent with the town's ability to provide services and infrastructure.

- Require that subdivisions of a certain size be built in phases to ease impacts on municipal services.

POLICY FOUR. It is the policy of the town to direct growth where development and neighborhoods already exist, to avoid sprawling development and its negative impacts on infrastructure and the environment.

- Consider implementing a differential growth cap which would allow more development in

denser neighborhoods and village areas, and less in rural zones.

- Maintain the Farm and Forest district to limit development in the rural areas.

POLICY FIVE. It is the policy of the town to protect natural resources and critical natural areas through buffer zones currently defined in the shoreland zoning ordinances, as well as other zoning tools.

- Develop a unified shoreland zoning ordinance which maintains the current standards but is separate from the rest of the land use ordinance, to minimize confusion and better clarify regulations.
- Consider expanding the resources protected under shoreland zoning to go beyond state requirements, such as including wetlands under 10 acres, or included forested wetlands.
- Consider the feasibility of mandatory open space zoning (also known as conservation subdivisions) for rural area subdivisions, in which any subdivision is
- required to retain a large share of land (often 60% to 80%) as open space outside of the lots that are developed.
- Require that any open space areas designated as part of a subdivision development be contiguous to any adjacent conserved land parcels.

Part 2: Implementation

Implementation Plan

While the Comprehensive Plan Committee has stewarded this plan to completion, it will be the work of all town staff, committees, boards, and commissions to ensure implementation. The committee understands that many factors are at play in the community at any given time. To this end, the goals, policies, and strategies have been written with the intent that the boards and committees who will be involved with each action have some flexibility and decision-making power in how strategies are implemented, based on the current conditions at the time. The major responsible parties will be the Selectboard, the Planning Board, the Budget Committee, the Road Commissioner, and municipal staff including the Code Enforcement Officer. The plan recommends the creation of a Conservation Commission and a Recreation Committee for the creation and management of town-owned facilities and open space. However, coordination between these groups and the existing Sacopee Valley Recreation Council will be important. There are also several places throughout the recommendations which urge the town to consider the need for additional staff, or additional resources for existing staff, to increase their ability to dedicate time to recommended actions as well.

Given the dispersed implementation of the plan through several individuals, boards, committees and organizations, a mechanism to monitor progress on a regular basis over the next 10-15 years is essential. The Comprehensive Plan Committee recommends that the Select Board establish a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to be the central group to monitor progress, provide accountability, and support other responsible parties with interpreting the plan and navigating challenges in implementation. The Implementation Committee should engage the Selectboard annually at the start of the budget process to review the Goals, Policies and Strategies matrix and identify 3-5 strategies which should be prioritized for the following year. Capital needs for identified priority actions should be considered as part of the budget, or planned for future budget cycles. Any strategies which recommend regular reports to the Selectboard about various concerns and trends should also be timed with this annual prioritization. The Implementation Committee, which should be seated with representatives from the decision-making boards and committees, shall compile a report on plan progress to date to be included in the Town Report, to ensure the public has a mechanism for being updated regularly.

Implementation Strategy

- 1) **Establish a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee**
- 2) **Seat the committee with representatives from the Selectboard, Planning Board, Budget Committee, etc. as well as Comprehensive Plan Committee members.**
- 3) **Implementation Committee serves as a central body to monitor plan progress, navigate challenges in implementation, and support accountability.**
- 4) **Selectboard annually identifies 3-5 strategies to focus on each fiscal year, and Implementation Committee supports & monitors progress.**

Regional Coordination

Parsonsfield recognizes the importance of regional cooperation for effective public services, efficiency of resources, and for planning across borders. The town currently has several areas where it collaborates regularly and shares resources with neighboring towns and the region. This includes a two-town shared fire department, mutual aid agreements for fire response with three other towns, EMS responses provided by the Sacopee Rescue Unit which is funded by four towns, recreational opportunities provided by the five-town Sacopee Valley Recreation Council, an agreement to allow residents access to the Tri-Town Transfer Station, and more. Seeking improvements in these arrangements and finding other opportunities for collaboration should continue.

Looking toward the future, this plan recommends several strategies for improving regional coordination and creating more regular engagement with neighboring communities. Regularly engaging with Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission, our regional planning organization, and state agencies will also help the town engage with other communities, and ensure actions are consistent with the region when suitable. Such recommendations include:

- *Host a periodic meeting of the five-town district including elected officials, committees and key town staff to discuss current issues and challenges, share resources or updates, identify collaboration opportunities, and foster a better understanding of local needs.*
- *Annually convene a meeting of neighboring communities Selectboards to discuss the joint provision of services and alternatives available to the Town and region to improve the services ahead of Town Meeting.*
- *With Porter, conduct an assessment to better understand capacity and facility needs of the volunteer fire department, including the possibility of creating some full-time positions.*
- *Host annual workshop sessions with the Towns of Porter and Hiram, to address regional business needs in the Kezar Falls area.*
- *Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts led by Maine DOT or the RPO.*
- *Continue to annually engage with School Board officials to discuss facility needs, the impact of school assessments on the tax rate, and maximize the public use of school facilities.*
- *Work with the State and RPO to bring new suitable industries to the region and Parsonsfield.*
- *Regularly review and apply for potential grant opportunities through state agencies to address local economic needs, and combine applications with neighboring towns where suitable.*
- *Investigate collaborative purchase of materials and equipment with adjoining towns and through SMPDC's collaborative purchase program.*

Future Land Use Plan

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Future Land Use Plan is to identify areas of the community that are most well suited for future development in various forms, including residential, commercial, or natural resource industries, and to tie in strategies that the community could use to ensure growth is concentrated in these areas, and minimized in rural areas. Parsonsfield has seen an increase in residential development in recent years, like much of the state, and in general it is dispersed throughout the large community. There are, however, some concentration in the few historic neighborhoods and villages, as well as around the lakes and ponds.

The committee is aware that although Parsonsfield is a rural community with limited services and commercial offerings, development will continue here in the future. The town, with strategic land use planning, can direct growth to areas where it will be best served by municipal facilities and services, as well as preserve the natural beauty and resources throughout the rest of the community.

GROWTH AREAS

Both the Kezar Falls and East Parsonsfield areas of town currently have small areas zoned “Village”, which is one of the densest zones in town as evidenced by minimum lot size requirements .46 acres and has flexible allowances for uses. These areas have been natural areas of growth due to their historic significance, proximity to major transportation routes, and proximity to municipal facilities. Due to these advantages, these villages plus the surrounding neighborhoods have been identified as areas well suited for future residential and commercial development. Environmental conditions in these areas are also appropriate for housing of various types, low-density commercial activity and home occupations. The Kezar Falls village has the advantage of a public water system, which serves customers in Parsonsfield, Hiram and Porter. This supports increased density; however, the area lacks sewer infrastructure. There has long been the potential for the Robinson Mill to be redeveloped into a mixed use commercial and housing opportunity, however infrastructure concerns make it a challenge. Investing in a municipal sewer solution for the Kezar Falls village could support redevelopment of the mill, along with increased density and redevelopment of other buildings along Federal Rd/Route 25. The East Parsonsfield village area does not have water or sewer infrastructure, but the historic density in this area means future development would fit in with neighborhood character. There are also a few home occupations, a post office, and its location on Route 160 provides quick access to Limerick and other service centers.

RURAL AREAS

The rest of the town, not identified as a growth area, is designated rural. Parsonsfield is by nature a rural community, and therefore most of the community should be designated as such. Portions of these rural areas have seen increased development in recent years, especially seasonal dwellings near the river and ponds, which points to the importance of planning for their future with an increased emphasis on resource and watershed protection measures.

Parsonsfield is unique in that a large portion of the town’s large land area is under conservation, in the Leavitt Plantation conservation area. This is also the area of the highest concentration of natural resources, and it has a challenging topography, making it the least suitable for development. In addition to the strategies listed below, continuing to support the expansion of this vast contiguous conserved area is a reliable and perhaps the strongest long-term strategy for reducing sprawled growth throughout

the community.

STRATEGIES FOR DIRECTING DEVELOPMENT

Various strategies for directing development into growth areas and away from rural areas have been proposed in the Land Use Goals, Policies and Strategies. One such recommendation, a differential growth cap, could be a particularly effective way to ensure that future development is concentrated in identified growth areas. A differential growth cap is one where the maximum number of new builds is different for each zoning district, allowing the town to cap growth in the most rural areas, while still allowing for increased density where it is desirable. Parsonsfield currently has no growth cap, and although development has been naturally paced in the past, housing market conditions have been much more demanding. Several Maine communities have instituted this provision in recent years.

Outside of the “Village” zones, the majority the growth areas are zoned “Village Residential”, which requires slightly larger lot sizes, and is more restrictive about commercial uses. In time, the town could consider expanding the two “Village” zones into areas of the “Village Residential” where suitable. Currently, the minimum lot sizes allowed in the growth areas are reasonable and well suited for the density that is desired. The existence of the Farm and Forest zone ensures that natural resource industries are prioritized in rural areas, and other uses are generally limited. This zone also has the largest lot sizes of 3 acres, which limits growth while still providing flexibility to landowners.

Investment in infrastructure, namely water and sewer, is a primary determinant of development. In order to continue to support growth in the primary growth area of Kezar Falls, future expansion of public infrastructure may be necessary. The same goes for public amenities such as sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, and public parking. The addition of a TIF district in Kezar Falls could create a funding source for such improvements in the village, further incentivizing growth to concentrate in that area. Conducting a Downtown Master Plan that would identify more specific needs of the Kezar Falls Village area, as suggested in the Economic Development chapter, would be necessary to establish a TIF, and it could also support the town in accessing other funding sources, such as the Community Development Block Grant program.

Throughout the proposed strategies, there are various options which prioritize the protection of natural resources and open space within the rural areas. For example, the shoreland zoning ordinance is currently in compliance with state requirements, but the town could consider adding measures above and beyond what is required by the state. This could include protection for forested wetlands, or freshwater wetlands less than 10 acres in size.

TRANSITIONING TO GROWTH AREAS

Within the rural areas, two areas of town have been identified as areas which may be transitioned to growth areas in the future, but investments in municipal infrastructure and services are necessary to make it feasible and safe. The first of these areas is the section of North Rd. surrounding the town offices, and abutting the Parsonsfield Seminary. This area is more central to the community geographically, and has road connections to both north, south, and east Parsonsfield. The town has put an effort in recent years to develop the town offices as a community center, offering more events and services. There are also recommendations in the Goals, Policies, and Strategies to continue this effort, potentially creating some open space or parks on the property. In time, investment in the services here could justify allowing for continued growth in this village node. The area is currently zoned for “Village Residential” on both sides of North Rd. The transitional zone only encompasses areas on the north side of the road, as well as areas along Mudgett Rd., due to the proximity of the Leavitt Plantation on the

south side of this village. There are also properties of significant historic value in this area, namely the Parsonsfield Seminary, so establishing performance standards for development in keeping with the current historic character would be an important consideration.

The second area recommended for transitioning to growth is the area adjacent to Province Lake, which features an historic golf course, a popular restaurant, and an inn across the NH border. In addition to some historic properties, there has been a concentration of development surrounding these commercial activities in recent years. Given the proximity to the lake, it is a desirable place to live, and residential development in this area tends to be more upscale. However, the location is also a challenge, as there are no public facilities in this area, and response times for fire and safety have been a problem in the past. The most direct route to this area is Hasty Road, which is a dirt road that winds through the Leavitt Plantation forest with very few connections to other roads and no homes or development. In order for this area to be well suited for continued growth, the community would need to consider the addition of a satellite fire station, or truck & EMA equipment storage, to better serve this area.

OTHER AREAS OF TRANSITION

Throughout the Future Land Use planning discussion, a few areas of the community were highlighted as being historic villages, but are no longer well suited for growth for various reasons. These areas are all zoned as “Village Residential”, which is one of the community’s more flexible zones.

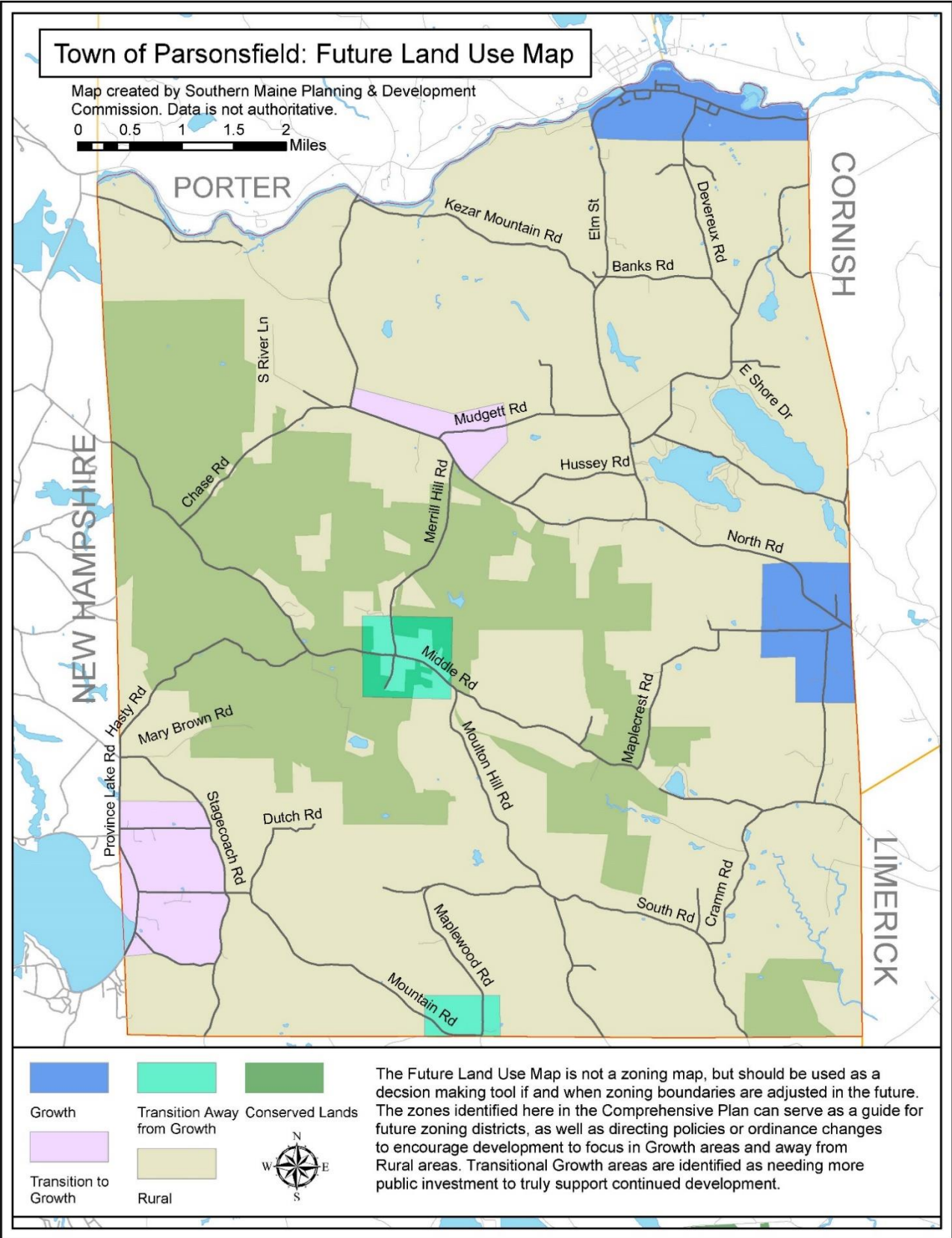
There is a small village area located at the intersection of Middle Rd and Merrill Hill Rd, and is predominantly abutted by the Leavitt Plantation conservation area. Given its proximity to the community’s critical natural resources, the committee recommends discouraging growth in this area. One consideration would be to evaluate the current properties for historic designations, and possibly include this area in a historic overlay district, which is recommended in the Historic Resources Goals, Policies, and Strategies.

The Maplewood village area is located along Maplewood Rd and Mountain Rd at the town border with Newfield. The area is farthest from the town’s amenities but does have some historic development and significance. This area could also be evaluated for historic designations or considered as part of a historic overlay district.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The following map shows visually the areas identified above as growth, rural and transitional areas. This map should be used as a guide when making future zoning and ordinance decisions, and through implementation of the Goals, Policies and Strategies of this plan.

Future Land Use Map



Goals, Policies and Strategies Matrix

Residential Goals, Policies & Strategies		
<p>State Goal: <i>To promote and work to ensure choice, economic diversity, and affordability in housing for low-income and moderate-income households and use housing policy to help address disparities in access to educational, occupational and other opportunities.</i></p> <p>Parsonsfield's Goal: <i>Retain its rural cluster village character providing a variety of housing alternatives and a commitment to open space through planned growth consistent with the historical development and natural resource conditions of the Town.</i></p>		
Policy	Strategies	Responsible Party
<p>POLICY ONE: It is the policy of the Town to encourage residential development that prioritizes open space preservation in keeping with the natural conditions of the site.</p>	Require all new multi-unit or subdivision developments in the farm and forest districts to dedicate land for open space.	Planning Board
	Create a cluster residential development ordinance to support a development pattern in keeping with the Town's historic development trends and to conserve open space.	Planning Board, Selectboard
	The Code Enforcement Officer inspect houses in environmentally sensitive areas whenever notified that code violations may exist which negatively impact the environment in these areas.	CEO
<p>POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the Town to encourage the development of and access to affordable, decent, housing opportunities.</p>	Periodically provide information at town hall and during selectboard meetings about Maine Housing programs available to support low or moderate income, elderly or other disadvantaged housing in Parsonsfield.	Selectboard, Town Staff
	Partner with existing local and regional non-profits (Avesta Housing, Maine Housing) to develop affordable housing alternatives within the next two to three years, and thereafter reconnect such group at least once a year.	Selectboard, Planning Board
	Review and revise the zoning ordinance to ensure adequate options for housing types are allowed in suitable zoning districts, including senior housing, single and multi-family housing, ADUs, congregare care, and minimum care facilities.	Planning Board

	Advertise, during meetings and in the local paper, at least once yearly on a timely basis, the availability of any property tax relief program or designations.	Selectboard, General Assistance Coordinator
	Adopt necessary zoning ordinance changes to be in compliance with the state housing law LD2003	Planning Board
	Work with RPO to assess how LD2003 will impact growth in town, and ways to mitigate negative impacts to infrastructure and essential services	Planning Board
POLICY THREE. It is the policy of the Town to periodically review residential zoning and code regulations, as well as the staff capacity to enforce both.	The Planning Board review within one year, and thereafter every two years, the dimensional and density requirements in the Town's Zoning Ordinance and recommend changes in keeping with the Comprehensive Plan.	Planning Board
	Adopt or Maintain the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) Code to ensure up to date energy efficiency standards	Selectboard
	Evaluate the capacity to support a full-time Code Enforcement Officer in order to provide additional time enforce existing ordinances	Selectboard
	Enforce a code violation fine structure as allowed by state law MRSA 30A 4452	Selectboard, CEO
	Adopt an energy efficiency certificate program which creates incentives for new construction which follows certain energy efficiency standards	Selectboard, CEO

Local Economy Goals, Policies & Strategies

State Goals: Promote an economic climate which increases job opportunities and economic wellbeing.		
Parsonsfield's Goal: Experience moderate diversified economic development in specific centralized location(s) to serve the needs of the Town's population.		
Policy	Strategies	Responsible Party
POLICY ONE. It is the policy of the Town to encourage the forest and agricultural products industries.	The Planning Board review the Zoning Ordinance and land use regulations to determine what changes should be recommended to reduce barriers to forest and agricultural industries.	Planning Board
	Provide information on the Maine Farmland Trust for business resources.	Selectboard, Town Staff

<p>POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the Town to encourage appropriate diversified commercial development in Kezar Falls and other designated districts.</p>	<p>Host annual workshop sessions with the Towns of Porter and Hiram, to address regional business needs in the Kezar Falls area.</p>	<p>Selectboard, RPO</p>
	<p>Work with the State and regional planning organization to bring new suitable industries to the region and Parsonsfield.</p>	<p>Selectboard, RPO</p>
	<p>Review the Town's land use regulations, including commercial use districts and allowed uses, to determine if changes should be made in keeping with this policy, and identify recommended changes.</p>	<p>Planning Board</p>
	<p>Review regulations related to industry and make recommendations for changes, including suitable and appropriate districts for industrial development.</p>	<p>Planning Board</p>
	<p>Review the regulations on home businesses and make recommendations to encourage future home businesses suitable to the community.</p>	<p>Planning Board</p>
<p>POLICY THREE: It is the policy of the Town to thoroughly evaluate the resource and public infrastructure needs of proposed large developments.</p>	<p>Require impact analysis for proposed large developments including industrial, commercial, and residential developments be submitted by the developer as part of the application process.</p>	<p>Planning Board, Selectboard</p>
	<p>Adopt performance standards for commercial and industrial development which mitigate the impacts to infrastructure and surrounding uses.</p>	<p>Planning Board</p>
	<p>Evaluate and recommend necessary application requirements such as soil surveys, stormwater analysis, etc. for commercial and industrial development for informed decision making on development proposals.</p>	<p>Planning Board</p>
	<p>Require that additional technical assistance to be paid for by the developer when needed.</p>	<p>Planning Board, Selectboard</p>
	<p>Consider the appropriateness of an impact fee ordinance, how it can be used to foster appropriate development and mitigate overburdened infrastructure.</p>	<p>Planning Board, Selectboard</p>
<p>POLICY FOUR: It is the policy of the town to assess infrastructure needs and make improvements which encourage appropriate economic growth.</p>	<p>Conduct a Downtown Master Plan to make recommendations for aesthetic, infrastructure, and transportation improvements to the Kezar Falls area to promote future economic development.</p>	<p>Selectboard</p>
	<p>Develop a TIF District in the Kezar Falls area for the purpose of generating funds for village improvements.</p>	<p>Selectboard</p>
	<p>Regularly review and apply for potential grant opportunities through state agencies to address local economic needs, and combine applications with neighboring towns where suitable.</p>	<p>Selectboard, Town Staff, RPO</p>

	Review past feasibility studies for a municipal septic system or other sewer solution and make recommendations for expanding this infrastructure in Kezar Falls.	Selectboard, Town Staff
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Transportation Goals, Policies & Strategies

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

Parsonsfield's Goal: Have a well maintained and safe transportation system which meets the functional and aesthetic needs of the community in a cost-efficient manner.

Policy	Strategies	Responsible Party
POLICY ONE. It is the policy of the Town to maximize the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network, and work with the Maine Department of Transportation to address safety, maintenance, and development concerns in Parsonsfield	Annually provide the Selectboard with the Maine DOT accident data for Parsonsfield, provided online.	Road Commissioner, Selectboard
	Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation efforts led by Maine DOT or the RPO.	Selectboard
	Continue efforts to create sidewalks and crosswalks along Route 25 in Kezar Falls, including proper lighting, signage and signals.	Selectboard
	Review Annual Bridge Inspection Reports provided by MaineDOT available online, to inform future local bridge repairs & replacement.	Road Commissioner, Selectboard
	Monitor Average Annual Daily Traffic data for Parsonsfield, available from Maine DOT online, to understand increases in traffic on town roads.	Road Commissioner
	Engage with the Maine DOT Local Roads Center to stay updated on workshops, new legislation, and technical assistance available for municipality managed roads and bridges.	Road Commissioner, Selectboard
POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the Town to address the	Consider options for increasing capacity of Road Commissioner through compensation, or creating a hired position.	Selectboard, Budget Committee

<p>safety, maintenance, and development concerns related to the Town maintained roads in Parsonsfield on a priority basis.</p>	<p>Develop or continue to update a prioritized ten-year improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for the community’s transportation network.</p>	<p>Road Commissioner</p>
	<p>Make recommendations to the Selectboard for posted weight limits or restrictions of heavy vehicles on town ways showing disproportional wear from commercial traffic.</p>	<p>Road Commissioner</p>
	<p>Seek funding from the DOT's Local Bridge Program to finance bridge improvements.</p>	<p>Budget Committee, Selectboard</p>
<p>POLICY THREE. It is the policy of the town to manage land use in a way that maximizes the efficiency of the transportation system, for the benefit and protection of natural resources and existing infrastructure.</p>	<p>Maintain, enact, or amend ordinance standards for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to encourage transportation-efficient growth patterns (discouraging dead-ends and cul-de-sacs) and provide sidewalks in village areas.</p>	<p>Planning Board</p>
	<p>Establish a checklist for conditional use and subdivision planning board review to determine if additional transportation impact analysis is needed for project approval.</p>	<p>Planning Board</p>
	<p>Evaluate parking requirements for residential and commercial developments, amending where excessive parking requirements may discourage growth and development in village areas.</p>	<p>Planning Board</p>
	<p>Create a plan to improve current municipal parking lots, including better traffic flow, paint striping, and efficient use of space. Establish a periodic maintenance plan for the upkeep of lots.</p>	<p>Selectboard, Road Commissioner</p>
<p>POLICY FOUR. It is the policy of the town to meet the diverse transportation needs of the community by promoting safe options for all users and modes (bicyclists, pedestrians, motor vehicles)</p>	<p>Continue to contribute annually to the social service agencies which provide transportation to low income and health eligible residents.</p>	<p>Select Board, Budget Committee</p>
	<p>Seek public and private partners that may develop a commuter bus or periodic shuttle service along Route 25 to Portland.</p>	<p>Select Board</p>
	<p>Increase “share the road” signage along high traffic corridors to increase awareness and driver preparedness for bicyclists.</p>	<p>Road Commissioner</p>

Historic Resources Goals, Policies & Strategies		
State Goals: Preserve the State's historic and archeological resources.		
Parsonsfield's Goal: Conserve, protect and/or preserve the natural resources including forest and agricultural land, ground and surface waters, wildlife habitat, scenic views, and the historic resources including buildings, cemeteries, stone walls and foundations and sites in order to preserve the character of the Town of Parsonsfield.		
Policy	Strategies	Responsible Party
POLICY ONE. It is the policy of the Town to appropriately maintain and manage any town-owned historic properties or buildings.	Consider including management of town-owned historic properties to the Conservation Commission's duties and responsibilities.	Selectboard
	Evaluate the condition and use of any historic public buildings and develop a management plan for either the preservation of these buildings, or plans to sell them with protective covenants.	Selectboard
	Support private, non-profit groups in Parsonsfield in the maintenance and/or restoration of former publicly operated or owned institutional historic buildings.	Selectboard
POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the Town to protect the community's historic, architectural, and archeological resources through regulatory powers, town funds, and other means.	Review existing resources and compile a list of historic sites to determine whether there is a village cluster which may be suitable for a local historic district zone which would provide protections for existing buildings and design standards for future development in the zone.	PB, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Historic Society
	Work with the Historical Society to identify buildings and sites which have been or might be eligible for placement on the National Register of Historic Places and provide the results to the property owners of identified buildings or sites and the Planning Board.	Selectboard
	Adopt or amend land use ordinances to require the planning board to consider historic significance as part of application review, including consulting the Porter-Parsonsfield Historic Society, when applicable.	Planning Board
	Amend the land use ordinance to require subdivision or non-residential developers to take appropriate measures to protect known historic and prehistoric sites and resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.	Planning Board

	Continue maintenance of cemeteries throughout the town, and consider expanding the list which the town contributes to, or creating a prioritized plan for clean-up of cemeteries in need over the next several years.	Selectboard, Conservation Commission
POLICY THREE. It is the policy of the town to increase public awareness of Parsonsfield's unique history and celebrate it.	Support the Historical Society in their ongoing efforts to develop a signage program to provide plaques for display at identified historic sites, buildings, and prehistoric sites.	Selectboard, Town Staff
	Maintain a location for the display of Parsonsfield historic information at a public building or facility.	Selectboard, Town Staff

Arts and Recreation Goals, Policies & Strategies

State Goals: Promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine's citizens including access to surface waters.

Parsonsfield's Goal: Accommodate the recreation needs of its residents of all ages.

Policy	Strategies	Responsible Party
POLICY ONE. It is the policy of the Town to create systems for more town-owned and maintained recreation programs & facilities.	Establish a Recreation Committee to manage town-owned recreation facilities, determine what additional facilities or opportunities would be valuable, and make recommendations and reports to the Select Board.	Selectboard
	Maintain an inventory of town-owned facilities or public lands available for use.	Town Staff, Recreation Committee
	Explore opportunities for creating public access to the Ossipee River in Kezar Falls.	Selectboard, Recreation Committee
	Establish process for town to retain former publicly-owned roads for recreationally purposes.	Planning Board, Selectboard
	Evaluate the costs and benefits of open space land gifts or purchases and accept or implement those which meet the needs of the Town.	Selectboard
	Prioritize recreation programs and facilities that are geared toward older adults and retired populations.	Recreation Committee, Selectboard

POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the Town to encourage local organizations, schools and non-profits that also provide recreation opportunities in safe & suitable facilities.	Collaborate with and participate in the five-town regional Sacopee Valley Recreation Council (SRVC).	Recreation Committee
	Provide financial support to SVRC and other non-profits organizations as feasible.	Selectboard
	Maintain a partnership with the MSAD 55 district to boost awareness of amenities on school grounds available for public use.	Selectboard, Recreation Committee
POLICY THREE: It is the policy of the Town protect and promote public access to public lands and waterbodies in the town and region.	Identify all long-term public rights-of-way to public waterbodies, in keeping with state law.	Planning Board, Selectboard
	Raise awareness of public access to public lands and waters.	Recreation Committee
	Work to increase public access to public water bodies through the donation or purchase of land, easements or development rights.	Planning Board

Natural Resources Goals, Policies & Strategies

State Goals:

Protect the quality and manage the quantity of the state's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal waters.

Protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.

Safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development.

Parsonsfield's Goal:

Conserve, protect and/or preserve the natural resources including forest and agricultural land, ground and surface waters, wildlife habitat, scenic views, and the historic resources including buildings, cemeteries, stone walls and foundations and sites in order to preserve the character of the Town of Parsonsfield.

Policy	Strategies	Responsible Party
<p>POLICY ONE: It is the policy of the Town through its regulatory powers to limit and/or control development in environmentally sensitive areas including but not limited to: wetlands, floodplains, aquifers, potential public water supplies, excessively steep slopes, other areas with poor soils and/or inadequate drainage, and critical wildlife habitat.</p>	<p>Review zoning ordinance to ensure compliance with the current state Shoreland Zoning requirement, and periodically review for consistency. Consider expanding protections beyond state requirements in suitable rural zones.</p>	<p>Planning Board</p>
	<p>Establish a Conservation Commission and define its responsibilities.</p>	<p>Selectboard</p>
	<p>Make available all natural resources maps from this Comprehensive Plan at the municipal office.</p>	<p>Selectboard, Planning Board, Conservation Commission</p>
	<p>Require as part of development review the Planning Board reference maps on low density development potential, slope, hydric soils, floodplains, woodland productivity, prime farmland, and potential sand and gravel aquifer and other relevant maps and information.</p>	<p>Planning Board</p>

	Consider amending the zoning ordinance to include dark skies lighting requirements that incorporate light shielding, max lumens, and lighting curfews to reduce obtrusive lighting and light pollution that affects wildlife.	Planning Board
	Consider amending local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate low impact development (LID) standards that address issues of impervious surfaces and limited stormwater runoff from new developments and roads.	Planning Board
	Review and recommend changes in the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Regulations and Site Plan Review Regulations to be consistent with Policy One.	Planning Board
	Incorporate wildlife conscious design in updates to all stream crossings (culverts) identified as inadequate by the US Fish and Wildlife Service for better stream continuity and future increased flows.	Selectboard, Road Commissioner
POLICY TWO: It is the policy of the town to engage in and support the conservation of land for the protection of open space, water resources, critical wildlife habitat, and other important natural resources.	Inventory all town-owned lands and develop a management plan for the stewardship of open space, and/or the creation of easements, recreation opportunities, etc.	Selectboard, Conservation Commission
	Share information for landowners on the benefits and use of special taxation categories (tree growth, open space, farmland) and the benefits of conservation easements and development rights. Share information through workshops, flyers, pamphlets, and the town website.	Conservation Commission
	Create a fund, either through annual appropriations, penalty fees, or impact fees, for the purchase of conservation land. Fund could be used to purchase town land or support private/non-profit efforts for conservation.	Selectboard, Conservation Commission
	Seek the donation or acquisition of conservations easements on key parcels of land, especially those abutting public water bodies, to formalize public access to those areas, and ensure access for future generations.	Conservation Commission, Selectboard
	Maintain a relationship with the Francis Small Heritage Trust and explore ways to better support the organization.	Selectboard, Conservation Commission
	Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species, and explore ways to support local lake associations in invasive clean up activities.	Selectboard, Conservation Commission

<p>POLICY THREE: It is the policy of the Town to encourage, through regulatory powers and incentives, the preservation of existing and potentially productive forest and agricultural land.</p>	<p>Review the Zoning Ordinance and recommend measures such as increased minimum lot size and/or conservation subdivision requirements in forest and farm and natural resource conservancy areas to preserve such land.</p>	<p>Planning Board</p>
	<p>Identify areas of potential or active forest and agricultural lands for conservation, and work with landowners to create conservation easements or put property in special taxation.</p>	<p>Conservation Commission</p>
	<p>Recognize the importance of the Leavitt Plantation lands and prioritize conservation of lands contiguous to the already protected blocks, and within the state Beginning with Habitat identified Leavitt Plantation Focus Area.</p>	<p>Conservation Commission, Selectboard</p>
	<p>Limit non-residential development in the most rural zones to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.</p>	<p>Planning Board</p>

Community Facilities and Services Goals, Policies & Strategies

State Goals: *To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.*

Parsonsfield's Goal: *Provide community facilities and services which meet the needs of its residents and businesses in a planned cost-conscious manner.*

Encourage public services and utilities in a way that is consistent with the conservation of natural resources and historic development patterns.

Policy	Strategies	Responsible Party
POLICY ONE. It is the policy of the Town to provide affordable municipal facilities which are conveniently located to the public, are well maintained, and have a suitable working environment for the residents, boards, committees, and municipal employees.	Survey the employees, boards and committees which use the municipal office building to determine what improvements are needed, if any, and determine next steps.	Selectboard
	Ensure the Capital Improvements Plan includes facility maintenance and improvements.	Selectboard, Budget Committee
	Create a municipal buildings report which inventories all the current town owned properties, buildings and facilities, the parties responsible for their maintenance, the funds available for that maintenance, and any needs for the next five years.	Selectboard
	Consider potential upgrades or improvements to the current town offices or other buildings for their use as a small-scale emergency shelter from extreme weather, extreme cold, extreme heat, or power outages.	Selectboard
POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the Town to provide in an efficient manner municipal services which reflect the needs and desires of the community and support the provision of regional services which are not effective to provide at a town level.	Host an annual meeting of the five-town district including elected officials, committees, and key town staff to discuss current issues and challenges, share resources or updates, identify collaboration opportunities, and foster a better understanding of local needs.	Implementation Committee
	Establish a periodic meeting of border town Selectboards to discuss the joint provision of services and alternatives available to the Town and region to improve services ahead of Town Meeting.	Selectboard, Kezar Falls Fire Department, Ambulance, Library
	Evaluate the current level of service of emergency services and monitor the extent to which the town's needs are met relative to national and state service standards.	Selectboard, Kezar Falls Fire

		Department, Ambulance
	With Porter, conduct an assessment to better understand capacity and facility needs of the volunteer fire department, including the possibility of creating some full-time positions.	Selectboard, Kezar Falls Fire Department
	Continue to annually engage with School Board officials to discuss facility needs, the impact of school assessments on the tax rate, and maximize the public use of school facilities.	Selectboard, Conservation Commission
	Survey current municipal employees, namely Code Enforcement and administration, to ensure that staffing capacity is meeting the needs of the community, and make recommendations for increased staff if necessary.	Selectboard
POLICY THREE. It is the policy of the town to consider the provision of water and sewer utilities in keeping with the needs of the community, either through quasi-public or private operators or town-owned systems.	Identify future water sources and prioritize areas for conservation or other protections.	Conservation Commission, Selectboard
	Make recommendations to quasi-public water system operators in Kezar Falls for expansion to growth areas consistent with the comprehensive plan recommendations.	Selectboard
	Seek the regional planning commission to provide seminars or technical assistance on water system and wastewater treatment system improvements.	Selectboard, Planning Board
	Review past feasibility studies for a municipal septic system or other sewer solutions and make recommendations for expanding this infrastructure in Kezar Falls.	Selectboard
	Seek state assistance with evaluating the town’s water supply sources and aquifers for PFAS contamination. If present, investigate to understand sources of contamination and seek guidance and funding from the State for remediation.	Conservation Commission, Selectboard
POLICY FOUR. It is the policy of the town to assist in the provision of solid waste management programs.	Continue the Recycling Committee to keep the Town abreast of the changes in state law, regional activities, and Parsonsfield's need and progress.	Recycling Committee, Selectboard
	The Recycling Committee make recommendations to the Selectboard for upgrades, changes, or improvements to recycling and solid waste management based on the needs of the community.	Recycling Committee
	Continue current partnership with the tri-town transfer station.	Selectboard

	Investigate options for disposal of residential hazardous waste and electronics make information available to the community.	Selectboard, Recycling Committee
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Fiscal Capacity Goals, Policies & Strategies		
<i>State Goals: To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.</i>		
<i>Parsonsfield's Goal: Address the needs of the community in a fiscally sound and responsive manner.</i>		
Policy	Strategies	Responsible Party
POLICY ONE. It is the policy of the town to seek alternative income sources to offset the reliance on property tax revenue.	Explore the feasibility of a development impact fee which requires developers to contribute funds proportional to the increased demand for services resulting from new development.	Selectboard, Planning Board
	Evaluate the town fees for permits, licenses, applications, and code violations to ensure they are comparable to surrounding communities and consistent with the cost of providing services, and update if necessary.	Selectboard, Planning Board, CEO
	Investigate collaborative purchase of materials and equipment with adjoining towns and through SMPDC's collaborative purchase program.	Budget Committee, Selectboard
	Consider funding long term capital expenditures through bonding.	Selectboard, Budget Committee
POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the town to maintain a reasonable tax rate which is consistent with maintaining services and is responsive to increased needs.	Develop a 10-year Capital Improvements Plan which outlines year-to-year allocations for savings and reserve accounts for specific purposes. Document reserve accounts which are already active. Use the CIP to develop an annual capital budget to be voted on annually at Town Meeting.	Budget Committee, Selectboard
	Set general budget guidelines annually for departments in keeping with the fiscal indicators like the cost of living, comparable pay for the region, and unusual cost increases or decreases such as fuel.	Budget Committee, Selectboard

	Conduct an updated town-wide assessment to ensure valuations reflect current property values. Once updated, establish a revolving evaluation schedule to begin 2-3 years after update to avoid the large cost and burden of a 10-year full town update.	Selectboard
POLICY THREE. It is the policy of the town to practice transparency and productive collaboration in the annual budget process.	Plan to engage the Budget Committee earlier and more frequently in the process, to ensure adequate time for discussion and revisions.	Selectboard, Budget Committee
	Provide as much information as possible in Selectboard budget documents which are provided to the Budget Committee and made available to the public, including brief justifications for changes in budget lines year to year, and a 5-year historic comparison.	Selectboard
	Task the Budget Committee with soliciting budgets and budget justifications from boards and committees to aid in the budget process.	Selectboard, Budget Committee

Land Use Goals, Policies & Strategies		
<p>State Goals: <i>Encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of the community while making efficient use of public services.</i></p> <p>Parsonsfield's Goal: <i>Develop and enforce regulatory measures in keeping with the Maine statutes which protect the natural resources, provide adequate development standards, and guide development in keeping with this Comprehensive Plan.</i></p>		
Policy	Strategies	Responsible Party
<p>POLICY ONE. It is the policy of the Town to analyze its municipal needs and development trends on a periodic basis.</p>	Maintain a database of building permit approvals which tracks new housing units monthly, and report trends annually to the Selectboard and Planning Board.	CEO, Town Staff
	Meet with the Code Enforcement officer annually to discuss development trends of the past year, including total new home starts, and any new land uses of concern.	Planning Board
	Review the municipal data in the Comprehensive Plan annually, and update sections as needed every five years.	Planning Board
<p>POLICY TWO. It is the policy of the Town to revise the Zoning Ordinance, as needed, to be consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan.</p>	Conduct a robust review of the Land Use and Zoning Ordinance to address issues of inconsistency and clarity and incorporate the recommended ordinance changes described in the strategies of this Comprehensive Plan.	Planning Board
	Conduct a periodic complete review of the Land Use and Zoning Ordinance every 2- 3 years to ensure it is in keeping with this Comprehensive Plan, the town's needs, and current issues, and maintains clarity and accessibility to the public. Require the Planning Board to submit the review to the Selectboard.	Planning Board, Selectboard
	Evaluate the zoning ordinance for emerging uses which are not covered, such as solar farms, short term rentals, wind farms, and adult-use cannabis, or uses which are of a concern to community health and wellbeing, such as mining/extraction and animal husbandry, and make recommendations for ordinance updates which cover best practices for these uses.	Planning Board

	Amend the zoning ordinance to replace the provision that requires the Planning Board to determine for a non-listed use which listed land use type is the most similar with a statement that asserts uses not defined in the use table are not permitted in any zone.	Planning Board
POLICY THREE. It is the policy of the town to adjust regulations as needed to ensure growth is consistent with the town's ability to provide services and infrastructure.	Require that subdivisions of a certain size be built in phases to ease impacts on municipal services.	Planning Board
POLICY FOUR. It is the policy of the town to direct growth where development and neighborhoods already exist, to avoid sprawling development and its negative impacts on infrastructure and the environment.	Consider implementing a differential growth cap which would allow more development in denser neighborhoods and village areas, and less in rural zones.	Planning Board, Selectboard
	Maintain the Farm and Forest district to limit development in the rural areas.	Planning Board
POLICY FIVE. It is the policy of the town to protect natural resources and critical natural areas through buffer zones currently defined in the shoreland zoning ordinances, as well as other zoning tools.	Develop a unified shoreland zoning ordinance which maintains the current standards but is separate from the rest of the land use ordinance, to minimize confusion and better clarify regulations.	Planning Board
	Consider expanding the resources protected under shoreland zoning to go beyond state requirements, such as including wetlands under 10 acres, or included forested wetlands.	Planning Board, Conservation Commission
	Consider the feasibility of mandatory open space zoning (also known as conservation subdivisions) for rural area subdivisions, in which any subdivision is required to retain a large share of land (often 60% to 80%) as open space outside of the lots that are developed.	Planning Board
	Require that any open space areas designated as part of a subdivision development be contiguous to any adjacent conserved land parcels.	Planning Board