



The Derry Resilience Project

A Long-Term Recovery Plan for Londonderry, Vermont, 2025

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Letter of Support from Selectboard

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October 21, 2024

Jordan Gamez, CEM
Community Assistance Group Supervisor
Interagency Recovery Coordination Cadre
Federal Emergency Management Agency

RE: Long-term Recovery Plan – Town of Londonderry, VT

Dear Ms. Gamez,


The Town of Londonderry Selectboard wishes to express its thanks to FEMA staff for reaching out to assist the Town to consider ways to best address emergency situations in the community, particularly the periodic flooding that has had a devastating effect on the Town government, local business and residents alike over the years.

Given your agency's generous offer to work with the Town, we hereby request the assistance of FEMA Interagency Recovery Coordination Cadre with developing a Long-Term Community Recovery Plan for Londonderry.

Selectboard of the Town of Londonderry



Thomas Cavanagh, Chair



Taylor Prouty

James Fleming

Martha Dale, Vice Chair



James Ameden, Jr.

Cc: Kelly Pajala, FEMA
Shane O'Keefe, Town Administrator
Richard Phelan, Emergency Management Director

1 Executive Summary

The Derry Resilience Project includes projects and strategies for:

Flood recovery, to strengthen or replace key infrastructure components such as the south village fire station,

Disaster resilience, to improve emergency preparedness and communications, to conduct a regional watershed study and a regional watershed management task force, and

Community development, to plan for the long-term redevelopment of the villages, to support the north and south villages' long-term sustainability.

The committee crafted this vision statement for the Derry Resilience Project:

“A Londonderry that is vibrant, affordable, and resilient; a place where residents of all ages can thrive in comfort, safety, and community.”

The committee also crafted a mission statement that reads:

“To work toward community recovery and restoration, with development that is thoughtful, equitable, protected from future disasters, and focused on building a strong sense of community.”

The goals of the Derry Resilience Project are:

- Improve the community's ability to respond to emergencies.
- Prepare for future disasters through emergency preparedness, resilience, and hazard mitigation.
- Build a stronger sense of community and foster volunteerism through community-wide communications and activities.
- Plan for development that creates a vibrant, affordable, and thriving community over the long term.
- Take a leadership role in regional cooperation.

The Derry Resilience Project outlines priorities and needs that will guide the planning, program development, and funding for Londonderry's recovery. These identified priorities and needs have been coalesced into projects that support recovery, build resilience, and guide community development.

The projects described in this document include:

Fire Department Strategic Planning

- Relocate the South Derry Fire Station
- Develop a Water Supply Plan

Emergency Preparedness and Response

- Amend the Community Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Develop a website for emergency communications
- Revive the Londonderry Newsletter
- Create a Community Organization Active in Disaster (COAD)

Hazard Mitigation

- Conduct a scoping study of the North Village, looking at the confluence of Utley Brook and the West River – including investigation of flooding impacts at the Plaza

Community Development

- Create long-term development concepts (focused on commercial and housing development)

Regional Cooperation

- Create a Regional Watershed Study
- Create a Regional Watershed Management Task Force

These projects, when taken together, have the potential to transform Londonderry's ability to withstand future disasters and vastly improve its sustainability and resiliency. This transformation does not occur quickly. Success is attained only when the plan enjoys widespread support.

The Derry Resilience Committee will need to remain resolute over the long haul in its commitment to resilient community development. The Town of Londonderry, the Windham Regional Commission, the State of Vermont, and federal agencies, as well as other organizations must be engaged to provide support.



Above: Aerial view of North Main Street and VT 100 on July 10, 2023; Source: Bennington Banner.

2 Prologue

On Monday, July 10, 2023, the Brattleboro Reformer reported heavy rains causing flooding in areas in Windham County: The rainstorm that walloped the region with soaking rain on Sunday sent the West River spilling over its banks and onto streets, and into businesses and homes. Roads were washed out and homes and businesses evacuated due to flooding. Dramatic photos show portions of the mountain town of Londonderry along the West River under water, with more rain expected throughout the day. North Main Street (Route 11) through North Londonderry was inundated by water. North Main Street was fully inundated by water – up to the roof of a car along the state



Above: Aerial View of North Main Street, July 10, 2023; Source: Manchester Journal.

highway.

Londonderry and nearby Weston were the epicenter for flooding, along with Ludlow, 15 miles to the north. Route 11 was closed, as were sections of Route 100, as the floodwaters turned parts of Londonderry and Weston into virtual islands. Homes were evacuated, stranded motorists were rescued by rescue crews. The First Baptist Church in South Londonderry and Flood Brook School were opened as emergency shelters.

Most people here feel that the response and aftermath from organizations like FEMA and the State of Vermont's response was severely lacking. Most also told the Journal that had it not been for this tight-knit community's response with food, fresh water, and volunteering, they wouldn't have made it back.

Mike and Tammy's, a market and diner in business for over 17 years, didn't reopen for nearly three and a half months after the storm, thanks in large part to what Tammy says was much lip service from officials but nothing at all in the bank to help.

“We were told we just didn’t qualify”, she said. “They told us we needed to have all my receipts to prove what I had before they would help. I lost everything. We had a catastrophic flood. Where do they think all these receipts went? When you’re cleaning up from a flood, you don’t have time for all of that mumbo jumbo. We were told by FEMA we could take out a loan, but how do you take out a loan if you don’t know if you’re going to be in business? FEMA was no help.”

Did you have flood insurance?

“We didn’t. Flood insurance is non-existent when you can’t afford it.”

What happens, then, with the next flood?

“I don’t know,” she says. “Yes, this is going to happen again, but what else can you do to prepare when water is halfway up the ceiling, anyway? How do you ever prepare for that? It can happen in an instant.”

A few of the businesses are now gone. There was a woodstove supplier and an auto parts store next door, both desperately trying to save their inventory while the floodwaters circled the floor. A paper sign now hangs inside the window of the empty building. It reads, “Store closing September 1st, 2023.” Below, a small rental sign gathers dust. Many residences along the river and between open stores are either vacant or have ‘for sale’ signs on the lawn. Others seem to be thriving — a butcher shop, Mike and Tammy’s, a diner, a specialty food store, Jelley’s Deli; they all chose to stay on another day in this resilient, small town with its strong community of people that live here.



Above: Jelley’s Deli on July 10, 2024; Source: Town of Londonderry.

“There’s no other community like this one,” Tammy said before returning to work. “Everyone stepped up with whatever we needed, from a sandwich to a shelf. There were people that stayed straight through everything. We are very grateful for that.”

Echoing that sentiment, Bev Jelley thanked the community for reopening her store. “Even before the light came in the morning, there were people here to help,” Bev said. “My electrician showed up without being called to make everything safe, and another individual showed up without reaching out to drop off several dumpsters, all before the sun came up. There were people here I didn’t even know, customers, strangers, asking, ‘What can I do to help?’ We absolutely would not have made it without that help.”

“I was approached by a town official yesterday about this storm approaching this weekend,” Bev said. “I immediately started thinking about how do we prepare this time? Is this time going to be the last time? I know they are doing studies on how they might control the flooding, runoff dams, and other ideas, but it’ll probably be years before, if ever, that ever becomes a reality.”

“I’m always anxious when it rains hard, now,” she says. “I don’t sleep. I sometimes come up here in the middle of the night and stare down at the river. It doesn’t seem to end anymore, but I still believe and pray, work hard, and know that this will remain open until I can’t do it anymore. I love this community. It is a part of me. I know they feel the same.”

Excerpted from: Albans, Michael, “Londonderry, one year after a devastating flood, looks back with community pride — and ahead with a wary eye”, Manchester Journal, July 9, 2024, Updated Aug 12, 2024.

3 Impact of the Floods on Londonderry

The July 2023 flood event in Vermont caused significant damage in Londonderry, particularly in the southern part of town and along Route 11. Businesses, including a diner and several stores, were heavily affected, with damage totaling over \$104,000. At least thirty homes were inundated, and numerous roads, including parts of Routes 11 and 100, were closed. The West River overflowed its banks, and several evacuations were necessary. Specific Impacts in Londonderry included:

- **Business Closures:** Many businesses on Route 11, including Jelley's Deli, the Vermont Butcher Shop, and others, were closed for months due to flooding, according to Bennington Banner.
- **Road Closures:** Nearly every road in town was shut down, and parts of Routes 11 and 100 were impassable.
- **Evacuations:** Residents were forced to evacuate their homes due to rising floodwaters, according to Manchester Journal.
- **Public Safety Rescues:** Public safety crews performed numerous rescues within town limits.
- **Infrastructure Damage:** The West River backwatered in the north village, causing erosion and damage to the Williams Dam. The Army Corps of Engineers campground behind Ball Mountain Dam was severely damaged.
- **Power Outages:** Some residents experienced power outages as a result of the flooding.
- **Mudslides:** Heavy rainfall caused mudslides, including at Jamaica State Park.



Above: North Main Street, July 11, 2024; Source: Town of Londonderry.

4 Londonderry Community Overview

Land Use and Geography

Windham County is a hilly upland with elevations generally rising to the west. The county is primarily comprised of coniferous forest: mostly spruce, fir, and white pine. Parklands include Townshend, Jamaica, Fort Dummer, Molly Stark, and Dutton Pines state parks. Other recreational areas are Green Mountain National Forest and the Stratton Mountain, Mount Snow, and Haystack



Above: Forbes Construction building on July 10, 2023; Source: Town of Londonderry.

Mountain ski resorts. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail passes through the western corner of the county. There are also municipal recreation areas throughout the county.

The confluence of the West River, VT RTE 11 (running east-west), and VT RTE 100 (running north-south) resulted in the development of the north village. The demise of rail transportation, the emergence of tourism, the ski industry, and second home ownership have resulted in the north village becoming the predominant commercial area.

The commercial area of North Londonderry extends from 800 feet south of the west intersection of VT RTE 100 and VT RTE 11 (The Plaza), and then east, to the intersection of VT RTE 11 and VT RT 100 at Williams Park. That segment is North Londonderry's Main Street. Utleby Brook flows into the West River between the Plaza commercial development and the commercial uses to the east on North Main Street. Both the Plaza and the North Main Street commercial properties back up to the West River and are vulnerable to flooding.

The confluence of Utley Brook and West River is the subject of the North Village Scoping Study. The outcome of that scoping study will help property owners along North Main Street understand the long-term flood risk to their properties and whether or not base flood elevations can be dropped through engineered mitigation projects.

The south village is located approximately 2.7 miles south of The Plaza, along VT RTE 100 where it intersects with Middletown Road and heads west across the river, before it turns south. At the bridge, where VT RTE 100 turns west, Main Street (aka Thompsonburg Road) begins and extends about 900 feet to Old School Street. The downtown consists of The Corner Market, the Champion Fire Company (the South Londonderry fire station), the US Post Office, and several residences. The Post Office building, the Champion Fire Company Station, and several residential buildings are vulnerable to flooding. As of this writing, there is 1 buyout application along Main Street in the South Village on the West River's edge.

Both villages have residential development interspersed among the commercial properties. Outside of the villages there is extensive farmland, forests, and open space. Approximately 80% of the town's land is forested or being used for agricultural purposes. Most of the large tracts of undeveloped land are included in one of several land conservation programs.

Housing

According to the April 2023 Town of Londonderry Housing Needs Assessment & Strategy, "The Town of Londonderry is facing a significant housing challenge today and into the future. Both long-term trends and more recent demographic and economic shifts have placed the community on a trajectory in which local households and workers will have an increasing difficulty in finding quality housing at attainable price points. The balance between year-round housing and seasonal homebuyers and short-term rental operators may threaten the viability and sustainability of Londonderry as a vibrant year-round community unless strategic interventions are made."

"Today, Londonderry faces an immediate need of approximately 299 to 315 households that need new, improved, and/or alternative living arrangements within the town. This includes nearly 190 households that are struggling with housing expenses as well as nearly 50 workforce households that are absent from the town because of the lack of attainable housing. The results also indicate a need for housing interventions across the income spectrum and for a variety of housing types, including owner-occupied and rental housing options. While the problem is complex and inseparable from other issues such, (sic) the results indicate that, without action, it is likely that the housing need in Londonderry will continue to grow into the future."

Government Services

Town of Londonderry

Vermont is divided into areas known as towns, the most basic form of local government. Counties exist in Vermont, but they have few powers and responsibilities.

In Londonderry, the Selectboard serves as the town's elected legislative body and the town administrator performs administrative duties at the Selectboard's direction, implementing policy and overseeing the day-to-day operations of town government. Legislative and budgetary decisions are made by the Selectboard. Town budgets are approved by local registered voters at an Annual Town Meeting. Ballot measures are also put before registered voters at the annual Town Meeting. Londonderry's Annual Meeting is a "floor vote" meeting, meaning elections of officers, ballot questions, and budget votes are held from the floor via voice vote, division of the House, or paper ballot in certain instances.

The town does not provide water, wastewater, electric, or telecommunications utilities and services. There is an ongoing effort to build community wastewater systems for the north and south villages, which will be operated and maintained by the town when the systems become operational.

The town does provide a transfer station for trash, recycling, and compost disposal on a regional basis with the towns of Weston, Landgrove, Peru and Windham. The town also provides administrative support for recreational activities on a regional basis with the towns of Weston, Landgrove, Peru, and Winhall. The town maintains 30 miles of dirt and 23 miles of paved town roads. There are also 15 miles of State Highway and numerous privately maintained roads in Londonderry which are not the responsibility of the municipality. Londonderry does have a local zoning by-law which includes flood plain regulations.

South Londonderry Fire Department

The South Londonderry Fire Department is a privately owned, non-profit, volunteer-based fire department, whose station is located at 60 Main Street, in South Londonderry. It serves Londonderry's south village and surrounding communities through mutual aid agreements.

North Londonderry Fire Department

The North Londonderry Fire Department is a privately owned, non-profit, volunteer-based fire department, whose station is located at 5862 VT Route 100 in North Londonderry. It serves Londonderry's north village and surrounding communities through mutual aid agreements.

Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad

The Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad is a private, non-profit, volunteer-based ambulance service. The squad building is located at 6068 VT Route 100 in Londonderry. It serves the towns of Londonderry, Weston, Landgrove and Peru.

Windham Regional Commission

In the absence of county government, the Windham Regional Commission (WRC) provides the essential link between local, state, and federal government. It is an important resource to the 27 towns it serves including communities in Windham, Windsor, and Bennington counties. It is a public entity, constituted by law and required to meet statutory obligations. Its mission is to assist towns in Southeastern Vermont to provide effective local planning efforts and work collaboratively with them to address regional issues.

The WRC's work focuses on assistance to towns on planning and zoning; regional plans; transportation, including bike, pedestrian, transit, and rail; community development, including brownfield redevelopment and community development block grant support; energy; project review; natural resources; GIS mapping support for towns; and all-hazards emergency planning.

Capacity and the Importance of Volunteers

Vermont consists of many very small towns and villages with only a few paid and/or part-time staff, limiting capacity to manage local recovery and access available resources. This describes Londonderry's situation as well. Recovery requires sufficient staffing to design, manage, implement, and monitor the recovery projects and programs. Londonderry's staff must continue all their routine local government functions, while also managing an increased workload. These additional demands include processing more permits for housing and business repairs, designing and implementing public facilities and infrastructure repairs, completing all the necessary paperwork required for state and federal assistance, conducting all the necessary inspections of projects, and continuing to do public engagement along the way.

Many town staff were personally impacted by the disasters and have been balancing work demands along with their own personal and family recovery. Adding staff also adds costs, however, and finding funds for these new positions is a challenge, particularly in small communities with a limited

tax base and other financial constraints. Managing multiple disasters creates additional complexity and stress. This is all to say that volunteers are very important to Londonderry's recovery and sustainability.

Persistent Environmental Vulnerabilities

Flooding

Londonderry is typical of the many small communities in Vermont that were established at locations where they are at risk of flooding due simply to having been established next to a river. Both the north and south villages are located where saw and grist mills used water wheels at first, then later penstock-fed turbines, to generate mechanical power conducted by belts and pulleys. Decades later, the mills were used to generate electricity due to the "head" provided by the elevation change to power a generator located next to the West River. In Londonderry there are 147 structures located within the river corridor and special hazard flood area, and therefore vulnerable to flood damage.

Landslides

Due to repetitive flooding events, soils become fully saturated. This increases slope instability and soil movement and increases the risk of landslides and mudslides. Windham County is the second most susceptible county in Vermont, with 86.6% of its area being susceptible and a total susceptible area of 686 square miles. The risk for landslides increases with flooding and erosion, and areas located in ravines with steep slopes are particularly at risk of landslides. The Londonderry Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2022 describes areas that are at risk of landslides and lists Geological Hazard Mitigation Implementation Options.

Wildfires

Wildfire is a growing issue in Vermont due to high winds, minimal rainfall, lack of water, and highly combustible grasses. In 2024, 82 wildfires – all human-caused – burned 159 acres in the state. It's the most fire damage since 2016, and more than half of the fires happened in October and November. The combination of little rain, dry foliage, and wind is a recipe for disaster. Buildings and structures located in areas where development meets vegetated wildfire-prone undeveloped lands are most at risk. The Londonderry Local Hazard Mitigation Plan 2022 contains a list of Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Implementation Options.

Previous Plans

The Londonderry Long-Term Recovery Plan complements existing plans already adopted by the Town of Londonderry. It is hoped that the town will adopt the Londonderry Long-Term Recovery Plan as an amendment to the Londonderry Town Plan and that it will serve to guide decisions and policies of the town in the years to come.

Relevant Plan Documents

The relevant plan documents currently adopted by the town include:

Londonderry Town Plan, October 2017

Londonderry Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, May 23, 2022

After the Flood Report, 2013

Londonderry Housing Needs Assessment and Strategy, April 2023

Londonderry Main Street (North) Master Plan, June 22, 2022

Londonderry South Village Master Plan DRAFT, October 18, 2024 (not Selectboard approved)

Williams Dam Flood Analysis, July 3, 2024

Williams Dam Assessment Memo, August 13, 2023

Preliminary Investigation and Feasibility Report for Williams Dam, December 16, 2022

Town of Londonderry Williams Dam Study, March 24, 2022

Community Wastewater Feasibility Study, Londonderry, Vermont, December 17, 2021

NEMRC Organizational Study, November 16, 2023

Londonderry Town Plan October 2017 Actions

Projects described in this long-term recovery plan support many of the implementation strategies listed in the Londonderry Town Plan October 2017 and the Londonderry Local Hazard Mitigation Plan 2022 and are noted in the project descriptions. Implementation strategies listed in the Town Plan that are supported by the projects included in this plan include:

Land Use Plan

1.1 Study local geographic and demographic characteristics and match these characteristics with the most compatible land uses.

1.2 Review and revise minimum lot sizes and building coverage in villages to concentrate development where environmentally feasible. Identify the potential impact of approved septic alternatives on building/population density.

1.3 Conduct a study using current land use practices to determine whether existing standards will achieve desired future settlement patterns and review current land use designations based upon the results of that study.

Community Resources

4.2 Work with state and local emergency preparedness organizations.

4.3 Plan for protection of the town's historic assets from disasters.

4.4 Evaluate flood hazard areas at least every two years.

4.5 Maintain Local Emergency Operations Plans (LEOP) and Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMP).

Flood Resilience

2.4 The town will be familiar with Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) that delineate areas that could be inundated by water during flooding. (Select Board, Development Review Board, Zoning Administrator)

2.5 The town will be familiar with ANR River Corridor maps that delineate the land area adjacent to streams and rivers that are required to accommodate a stable channel. (Select Board, Development Review Board, Zoning Administrator)

2.6 The town will pursue a flood resilience management approach whose essential components are to identify and map flood and fluvial erosion hazard areas based on studies and maps provided by the Vermont ANR Rivers Program and designate those areas for protection to reduce the risk of flood damage to infrastructure and private property.

2.7 The town will update the Flood Hazard Areas Regulations to include regulation of river corridors and include provisions for advance notification of and specific limits on new development activities in identified flood hazard areas, fluvial erosion areas, and/or River Corridors, based on regulatory templates developed by the ANR DEC Rivers Program.

Transportation

1.1 Reduce speed and truck traffic in village centers through the support of corridor studies and implementation of traffic calming solutions, where appropriate.

Housing

- 1.1 Procure a professional report to identify areas where residential growth is appropriate.
- 1.2 Explore feasibility of development densities that are compatible with affordable housing and with traditional village development, specifically including increased housing unit densities and mixed residential and commercial uses.
- 1.3 Consider a practice to identify and require replacement of lost affordable housing units.
- 1.4 Advocate for state and federal programs and incentives to promote the creation of affordable housing development compatible with the Town, including a program of housing for elderly or other special populations.

5 Long-Term Recovery Planning

While devastated communities understandably tend to focus on short-term, response-level issues such as housing displaced survivors, it is advantageous to adopt a longer-term view as soon as the community can turn its attention to the long-term future. Affected communities generally recover more completely if they begin taking a long-term view soon after a disaster, when there is still considerable attention directed their way. To its credit, the Town of Londonderry determined that it would benefit from a formal long-term recovery plan.

The purpose of the Long-term Recovery Plan (LTRP) is to help Londonderry focus and prioritize projects to ensure a coordinated, holistic, and community-informed approach to embodying its recovery principles. The LTRP will serve as a guide for the community, a living document that will evolve as the recovery of Londonderry progresses.

What is Recovery? Resilience?

Recovery is an active and continuous process that allows cities and stakeholders to assess damages, plan for goals, and put in place strategies that support the ability to absorb the impacts of future disasters with less loss while also strengthening and enhancing the wholistic elements of communities. This proactive approach strengthens communication, encourages measuring progress, and fosters resilience. The best recovery process includes the whole community.

The ability to recover from a disaster begins prior to a disaster with the development of redundant and flexible structures, the ability to think and act adaptively, and pre-disaster planning that identifies needs, addresses gaps, and establishes priorities. After a disaster, as the disaster is stabilized in the response phase, emergency managers and community leaders are collecting data, assessing the situation, and stabilizing lifelines. These efforts contribute to recovery planning and projects by collecting information that will be vital to understanding what needs to be prioritized and what projects to develop well into the future.

The Recovery Continuum diagram below depicts how recovery efforts begin alongside response activities, and gradually scale up during response operations, highlighting the relationship across these phases. Enhancing resilience through mitigation and other risk management strategies spans the entire spectrum, guiding the recovery and rebuilding process. Investments in mitigation and resilience enable the community’s ability to prepare for threats and hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from adverse conditions and disruptions.



Recently Completed and Ongoing Recovery Work

Ongoing recovery efforts are being led by active leadership within the Town of Londonderry, Windham Regional Commission, State and federal partners, and community stakeholders. The result is a focused recovery that is responsive to the community's needs and objectives.

Community Engagement

A central part of the long-term community recovery planning process is an inclusive public involvement program that ensures that the recovery plan incorporates and fully reflects the desires of the entire community. A successful recovery plan will require widespread public support for the various initiatives over a long period of time.

Committee biweekly meetings, beginning on December 19, 2024, and continuing through May 2025.

Community meeting #1 on January 25, 2025.

This meeting was attended by 37 participants and committee members.

Community meeting #2 on May 3, 2025.

This meeting was attended by approximately 22 members of the community.

Community meeting #3 on May 31, 2025.

This meeting consisted of a presentation by the committee to the Selectboard.



Community meeting #1 on January 25, 2025.

6 Vision and Goals for Londonderry

Vision Statement

The overall recovery planning process began by finding consensus on a recovery vision that encapsulated what the community hoped to be when it had fully recovered. With input from all parts of the community, the Londonderry Recovery Committee agreed upon this statement as their recovery vision:

A Londonderry that is vibrant, affordable, and resilient; a place where residents of all ages can thrive in comfort, safety, and community.

This Vision Statement became the yardstick to gauge everything else during the recovery process over the next ten to twenty years.

In addition, the committee formulated a mission statement to describe how it was going to work toward its vision.

The Mission Statement reads:

To work toward community recovery and restoration, with development that is thoughtful, equitable, protected from future disasters, and focused on building a strong sense of community.

Goals

- *Improve the community's ability to respond to emergencies.*
- *Prepare for future disasters through emergency preparedness, resilience, and hazard mitigation.*
- *Build a stronger sense of community and foster volunteerism through community-wide communications and activities.*
- *Plan for development that creates a vibrant, affordable, and thriving community over the long term.*
- *Take a leadership role in regional cooperation.*

7 Ongoing Commitment

The Derry Resilience Project is an organizational structure created for flood recovery purposes. This organization will need to remain resolute over the long haul in its commitment to community development and hazard mitigation. State and federal agencies as well as other organizations must be engaged and continue to provide support. The town and its volunteer base may need to make strategic investments.



Above: Open House held on May 3, 2025.

8 Projects

Based on comments received at the January 25, 2025, Community Meeting, the committee narrowed its focus to 10 projects that fall into the following five categories:

Fire Department Strategic Planning

- Build a New South Derry Fire Station
- Develop a Water Supply Plan for Londonderry

Emergency Preparedness and Response

- Amend the Community Emergency Preparedness Plan
- Develop a website for emergency communications
- Revive the Londonderry Newsletter
- Create a Community Organization Active in Disaster (COAD)

Hazard Mitigation

- Conduct a North Village Scoping Study, looking at the confluence of Utley Brook and the West River

Community Development

- Create Long-term Community Development Plans for the north and south villages (focused on commercial and housing development out of the floodplain)

Regional Cooperation

- Create a Regional Watershed Study
- Create a Regional Watershed Management Task Force

For each project, the committee identified a project champion, project partners, (funding) resources, action steps, cost estimates, and a timeline for implementation, explained below.

Project Champion

Project champions are people or entities that agree to take the leadership role of a project to ensure it moves through the process. These leaders, critical to the success of every recovery strategy, have a passionate interest and the energy needed to keep the momentum going to drive projects through implementation. That passion is focused on their continued advocacy through all phases of the project.

Project Partners

For each project the committee identified likely partners, with whom collaboration and/or resources may be required. These partners include entities like the Windham Regional Commission, Stratton Foundation, Neighborhood Connections, the State of Vermont, FEMA, HUD, USDA, private foundations, and others.

Resources

Each project in this recovery strategy has a list of potential resources that can help bring projects to reality. Many funding agencies and organizations require that applicants complete an inclusive planning process and demonstrate a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach to the identification of problems and solutions for which the funds are being sought. This is one of the reasons the Town of Londonderry chose to prepare this plan. A few resources for which Londonderry is eligible and a good fit are listed for each project described in this document. For a comprehensive list of resources available to municipalities and nonprofits in Vermont, please see the [Vermont Grant Resource Guide 2025](#), available from the Vermont Office of Emergency Management.

Action Steps

Steps to achieve each project have been identified to the best extent possible. These lists of actions are meant to assist the town in beginning each project but will inevitably change as project implementation evolves.

Cost Estimates

Many project costs will not be identified until preliminary studies are completed. Rough estimates of project costs have been provided where possible.

Timeline

In the description of each project there is a timeline to indicate the years or timeframe in which each phase of the project is expected to be completed.

Measuring Progress

Some of the projects identified are long term. They will take shape over many years and even decades. Measuring and communicating success is important for maintaining momentum and keeping with the vision. One of the projects identified by the Recovery Committee is the revival of the Londonderry Newsletter, a monthly newsletter published to keep the community, stakeholders, and partners aware of progress and volunteer opportunities. This newsletter will inform the community about the progress made by the Derry Resilience Project. As of this writing, the first issue of Doings in Derry was published on May 1, 2025, and is available on the town's website.

Designated Recovery Project Coordinator

A Recovery Project Coordinator's primary responsibility is to oversee the implementation of the projects identified in the town's Recovery Plan. This includes coordinating with others to ensure that each project proceeds through resource identification, grant preparation and submittal, implementation, and maintenance of the recovery plan, ensuring the town can quickly recover from disruptions and maintain business continuity. It includes stepping in when needed to resolve issues that may crop up and convening task force meetings as necessary to maintain progress and reporting to the community on progress and obstacles. The coordinator acts as liaison between the town and task forces.

Category: Fire Department Strategic Planning

1. New South Village Fire Station

Description

The existing South Londonderry Fire Station was severely damaged by the flooding in July 2023. The South Londonderry Fire Department needs a new fire station as the building is vulnerable to repeated flooding.

Project Champions: Rich Phelan, Jeff Duda

Project Partners: Selectboard, Champion Fire Department, State of Vermont, FEMA, USDA-RD, sources of private philanthropic funding.

Action Steps:

1. A conversation between the Champion Fire Department and the Selectboard about how to accomplish the project.
2. Identify a location.
3. Seek funding to pay for a preliminary architectural design and cost estimate.
4. Develop preliminary architectural and engineering designs, cost estimate.
5. Seek and obtain funding for the entire project.
6. Develop final construction documents.
7. Write and advertise a Notice for Bids.
8. Negotiate a construction contract with the successful bidder.
9. Manage the construction of the project through to completion.

Cost Estimate: \$5M

Timeline: 5 – 10 years

Resources: USDA Disaster Supplemental, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, SAFER Grant, private philanthropic funding.



Category: Fire Department Strategic Planning

2. Water Supply Plan

Description

There is a need in the Town of Londonderry to add to the number of places where water can be drawn for fire protection. The dry hydrants need to be regularly maintained, and their conditions assessed.

Project Champions: Chad Stoddard, Jeff Duda, James Ameden, Sr., Tom Cavanagh

Project Partners: Troy Dare, project manager for the Vermont Rural Fire Protection Grant Program, State of Vermont, Selectboard, Phoenix Fire Company, Champion Fire Department.

Action Steps

1. Engage with the two fire departments
2. Work with Troy Dare to finalize the project
3. Determine preliminary cost estimate, establish budget
4. Prepare construction documents
5. Write and advertise a Notice for Bids.
6. Negotiate a construction contract with the successful bidder.
7. Manage the construction of the project through to completion.

Cost Estimate: \$0 – \$1000

Timeline: 1 – 3 years

Resources: Vermont Rural Fire Protection Grant Program, State of Vermont, USDA.



Category: Emergency Preparedness and Response

3. Community Emergency Preparedness Plan Amendments

Description

The current Londonderry Emergency Operations Plan was completed in 2024, with an understandable focus on operations. Based on the public engagement meeting held on 1/25/2025, the community now believes that there is a need to amend the plan by adding items that have to do with preparedness. The items that the community wants to add include:

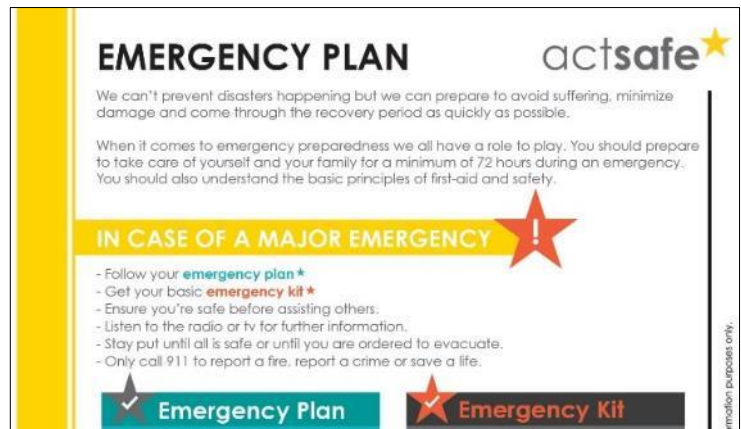
- Create a standing volunteer organization
- Collaborate with Neighborhood Connections (Case Management)
- Collaborate with the Stratton Foundation
- Provide preparedness and response training for volunteers

Project Champion: Rich Phelan

Project Partners: Neighborhood Connections, The Stratton Foundation, Londonderry Selectboard, Vermont Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VT VOAD*)

Action Steps:

1. Form a working group to develop the details of the amendments to the plan.
2. Conduct working group sessions to identify and delegate tasks.
3. Develop final ideas for amending the plan.
4. Update the town website.
5. Identify a small group to maintain lists of resources, etc.
6. Identify team leaders who receive training and are ready to lead groups of volunteers in case of an emergency.
7. Connect with Vermont Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) groups and be ready to receive and direct volunteers.



Cost Estimate: \$2k to cover advertising costs.

Timeline: 1 year

Resources: Vermont Emergency Management, Windham Regional Commission, Red Cross, Neighborhood Connections, The Stratton Foundation, Londonderry Selectboard, Vermont Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VT VOAD*)

*The VT VOAD is a network of agencies that serve communities in Vermont impacted by disasters. VT VOAD is a statewide partnership of organizations and entities that have a role in preparedness, resilience, response, and recovery.

Category: Emergency Preparedness and Response

4. Emergency Communications Website

Description

The goal of this project is to have a page on the new website dedicated to emergency preparedness and operations. It will be used to issue alerts, notify residents of the availability of resources, and raise awareness about emergency preparedness and operations. It will be periodically updated and include a mechanism for signing up to receive emergency alerts through VT-Alert that is simple and easy to use. The Town solicited and evaluated bids from several website production companies and has accepted a bid from a company that will begin work on the website in late spring of 2025. In the short term, the town will continue to use the Facebook page.

Project Champion: George Mora

Project Partners: Rich Phelan, Selectboard, Maryann Morris, Tina Labeau

Action Steps:

1. Create content for a section dedicated to emergency communications, to be added to the website.
2. Manage the process of creating the finished website.

Cost Estimate: Will be included in the overall cost of the website.

Timeline: 1 year

Resources: Vermont Emergency Management

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

Response Stage

Preparation "the earlier, the better" | Pre Event 1-8 weeks before event | During Event the week of the event | Post Event 1-3 weeks after event

ID	Business Impact	Description
1	Operatin System Fail	
2	Heating sys Failure in Se Room A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective Target Audience Main message Tactics per channel Timeline Budget
3	Level 2 Employees Defection	
4	Fault in Pipeline	

ID	Business Impact	Risk Level	Status	System	Date	Person
6	Moderate	In Planning	Incentive System	05 Aug 2023	Ant Hawk	
2	Extreme	In Testing	Failover to maintenance team	09 Sep 2023	Dan Jones	

Category: Emergency Preparedness and Response

5. Londonderry Newsletter

Description

The community wishes to revive the Londonderry newsletter that was discontinued in February of 2020. It will include notices about municipal and civic events held in Londonderry and the surrounding area.

Project Champion: Jen Greenfield

Project Partners: Pamela Spaulding

Action Steps:

1. Set up a new template.
2. Assemble new content from several sources.
3. Automate as much of the production as possible.
4. Update content on a regular basis.

Cost Estimate: \$0

Timeline: The first issue has already been delivered!

Resources: Town of Londonderry



Category: Emergency Preparedness and Response

6. Community Organization Active in Disaster (COAD)

Description

Recovery service providers in the area feel that there may be a better way to reliably provide access to information and services to communities in the area. They want to explore alternatives to the current LTRG structure. One alternative would be to create a Community Organization Active in Disaster (COAD) whose service area coincides with the Neighborhood Connections' service area. (Neighborhood Connections serves Andover, Chester, Jamaica, Landgrove, Londonderry, Peru, Stratton, Weston, Windham, and Winhall, the same service area as the Mountain Town LTRG.) While LTRGs serve in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and then is disbanded once all needs are met, the COAD organizational structure remains intact and active before, during, and after a disaster.

Project Champions: Rich Phelan, Thom Simmons

Project Partners: Neighborhood Connections, The Stratton Foundation, other non-profits in the area, Londonderry Selectboard, churches.

Action Steps:

1. Explore the feasibility of creating a COAD.
2. Create a plan for handing off any remaining cases after FEMA departs.
3. Form a COAD if feasible and desirable.
4. Draft regional rules of engagement for its incident command structure.
5. Conduct regional table-top exercises.
6. Receive training, possibly provided by VEM.
7. Coordinate with Londonderry Emergency Preparedness Plan.

Cost Estimate: \$0

Timeline: 1 year

Resources: Neighborhood Connections, The Stratton Foundation, Londonderry Selectboard, faith-based non-profits, other non-profits in the area.



Category: Hazard Mitigation

7. North Village Scoping Study

Description

The intent of this project is to look at the confluence of Utley Brook and the West River to see if it could be altered to lessen the "water dam" effect which contributes to flooding along North Main Street. The study area extends from the Plaza shopping center to the Williams Dam and from the confluence to Pingree Park. It will include an investigation of flooding impacts at the Plaza. It is hoped that the Utley Brook flood plain could be lowered in a few locations, or that benching could be done to create water storage.

This is the only RIVER project application that will be submitted to Vermont Emergency Management (VEM). It is a phased project. Phase 1 will look at the parcels, storage creation, floodplain restoration, vegetation, grading, and the island, which has a septic field in it. A wastewater plan was done in the past, and that will be integrated as needed. Phase 2 consists of implementation.

Project Champion: Paul Hendler

Project Partners: Londonderry Selectboard, Londonderry Planning Commission, Windham Regional Commission, State of Vermont, Conservation Commission

Action Steps:

1. Apply to VT Emergency Management by April 30.
2. Phase 1: Engineering study
3. Phase 2: Implementation

Cost Estimate: TBD

Timeline: Phase 1: 1 – 3 years; Phase 2: 3 – 10 years

Resources: Londonderry Planning Commission, FEMA HMGP Disaster Supplemental Funds, State Flood Resilient Communities Fund, Vermont Emergency Management. Nature Conservancy.



Category: Community Development

8. Long-term Village Center Development Concepts

Description

Focused on retail and in the designated village centers, identify ways to reconfigure development over the very long term to address the threat of future flooding; and to identify new areas of commercial and housing development outside the flood plain.

Project Champion: George Mora, Jen Greenfield, Pamela Spaulding

Project Partners: Londonderry Selectboard, Londonderry Planning Commission, Londonderry Development Review Board, Londonderry Zoning Administrator, property owners, Windham Regional Commission, Londonderry Housing Commission

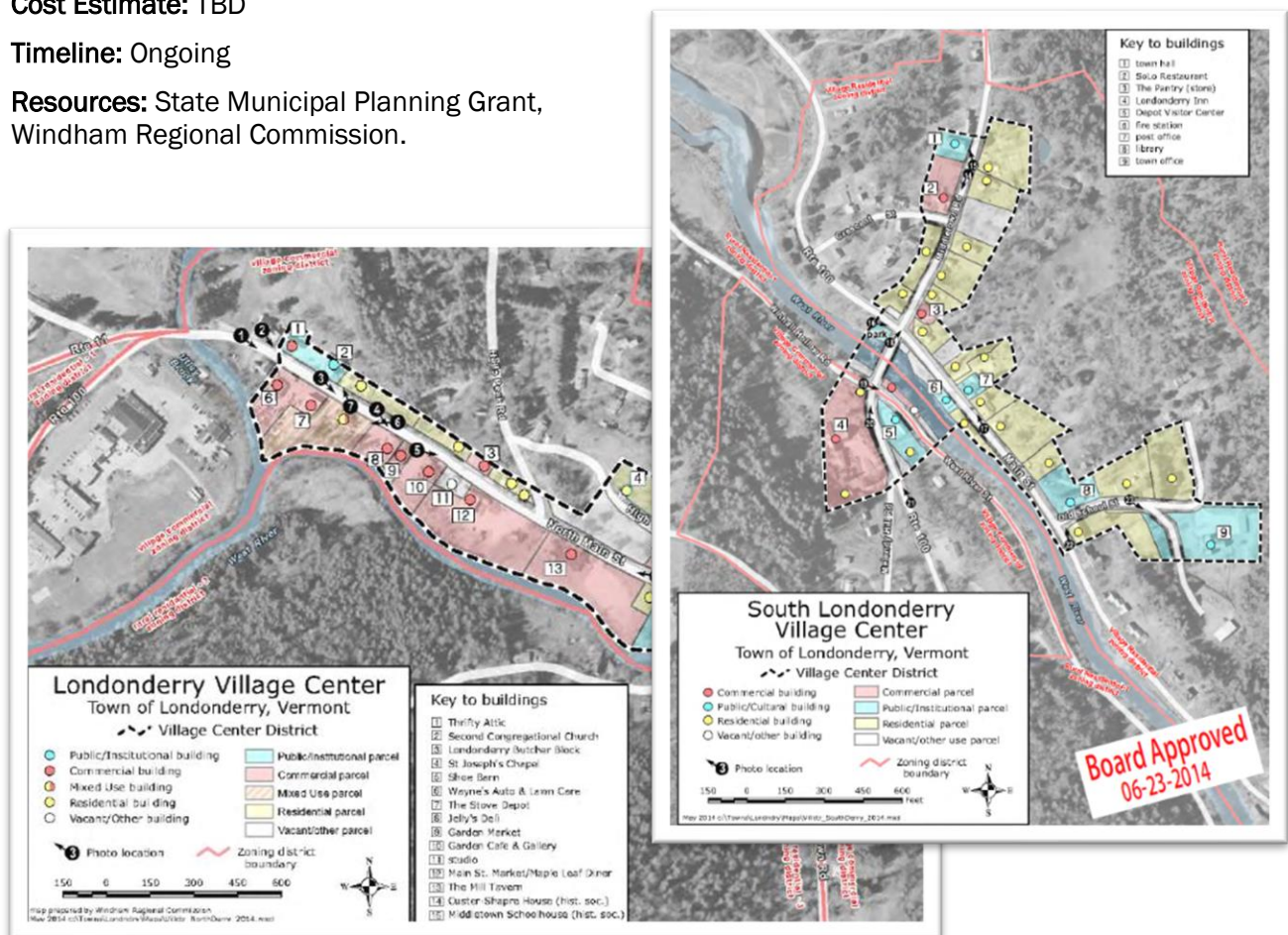
Action Steps:

1. Meet with owners of properties along north and south Main Street.
2. Develop a menu of options for redevelopment, focused on housing and commercial land uses.
3. Develop a conceptual plan and vision for incremental redevelopment over the long term that honors who and what Londonderry is, its history, and vision.
4. Complete the zoning bylaw rewrite.

Cost Estimate: TBD

Timeline: Ongoing

Resources: State Municipal Planning Grant, Windham Regional Commission.



Category: Regional Cooperation

9. Regional Watershed Study

Description

The community expressed a desire for a regional watershed study. A regional watershed study examines the interconnectedness and health of water resources within a specific geographic area, often encompassing multiple smaller watersheds or river basins. It aims to understand the complex interactions of land use, water quality, and environmental factors to inform management and conservation strategies. Key aspects of a regional watershed study:

- **Data Collection and Analysis:** Studies rely on collecting various data, including water quality samples, flow measurements, land use data, and other relevant information, which are then analyzed to identify trends and patterns.
- **Modeling and Simulation:** Computer models are frequently used to simulate watershed processes and predict the potential impacts of different management scenarios.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging with local communities, landowners, and other stakeholders is crucial to ensure the study's relevance and to incorporate their knowledge and concerns.
- **Management Recommendations:** Ultimately, the study aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for improved watershed management, conservation, and protection.

Project Champion: Helen Hamman, Londonderry Conservation Commission

Project Partners: Vermont Nature Conservancy, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Vermont Emergency Management, Londonderry Selectboard, Londonderry Planning Commission, Londonderry Zoning Administrator, Londonderry Development Review Board, Londonderry Conservation Commission, Londonderry Zoning Commission, Windham Regional Commission, Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District, Connecticut River Conservancy, Vermont River Conservancy, Trout Unlimited.

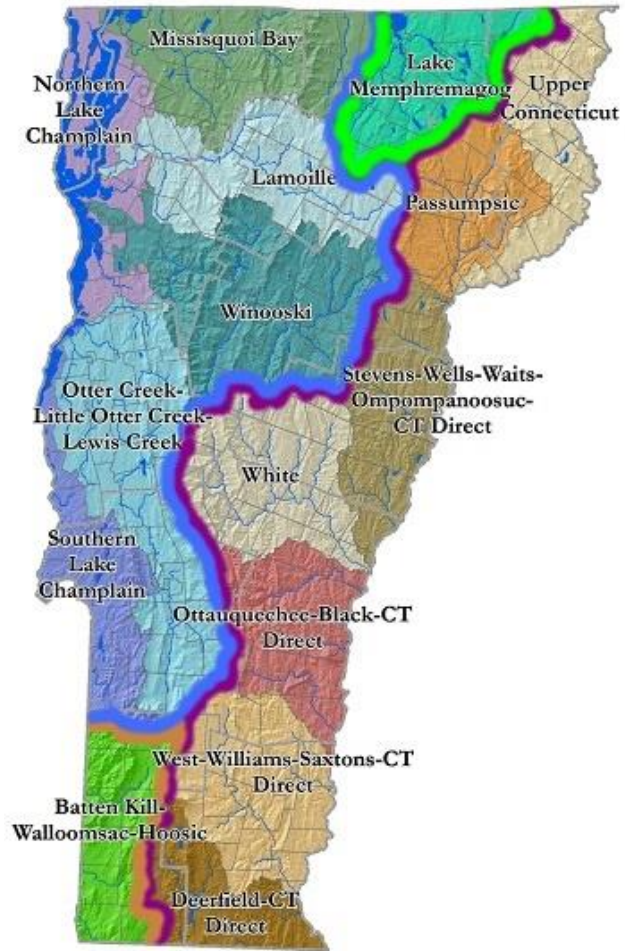
Action Steps:

1. The West River Corridor Plan is set to be finalized in May 2025.
2. Present the plan to the community.
3. Turn it over to the Management Task Force for implementation.

Cost Estimate: \$0

Timeline: 3 – 5 years

Resources: Vermont Emergency Management



Category: Regional Cooperation

10. Regional Watershed Management Task Force

Description

The community desires to create a Regional Watershed Management Task Force, a collaborative group focused on protecting and improving the health of the West River watershed area. This task force will bring together various stakeholders – including government agencies, scientists, community groups, and landowners – to address water quality issues, promote conservation, and manage water resources sustainably.

Project Champion: Helen Hamman, Londonderry Conservation Commission

Project Partners: Vermont Emergency Management, Londonderry Selectboard, Landgrove Selectboard, Londonderry Zoning Administrator, Londonderry Planning Commission, Londonderry Conservation Commission, Weston Selectboard, Windham Regional Commission, Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District, Vermont Nature Conservancy, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Connecticut River Conservancy, Vermont River Conservancy, Trout Unlimited (likely limited as to types of projects they work on).

Action Steps:

1. Approach the towns of Weston and Landgrove to gauge their interest and bandwidth for taking this on.
2. Create a task force made up of representatives from the towns and agencies that have shared interests.
3. Share information, collaborate on projects – such as blue alerts, debris removal, desktop exercises, etc.

Cost Estimate: \$0

Timeline: 1 – 3 years

Resources: Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Windham Regional Commission, Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District, Connecticut River Conservancy, Connecticut Nature Conservancy, Vermont River Conservancy, Trout Unlimited.



9 Implementation Matrix

Goal 1: Fire Department Strategic Planning				
ID	Task	Champion	Partners	Timeframe
1	New South Village Fire Station	Rich Phelan, Jeff Duda	Selectboard, Champion Fire Department, State of Vermont, FEMA, USDA-RD, sources of private philanthropic funding.	5 – 10 years
2	Water Supply Plan	Chad Stoddard, Jeff Duda, James Ameden, Sr., Tom Cavanagh	Troy Dare, project manager for the Vermont Rural Fire Protection Grant Program, State of Vermont, Selectboard, Phoenix Fire Company, Champion Fire Department.	1 – 3 years
Goal 2: Emergency Preparedness and Response				
ID	Task	Champion	Partners	Timeframe
3	Community Emergency Preparedness Plan Amendments	Rich Phelan	Neighborhood Connections, The Stratton Foundation, Londonderry Selectboard, Vermont Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster	1 year
4	Emergency Communications Website	George Mora	Rich Phelan, Selectboard, Maryann Morris, Tina Labeau	1 year
5	Londonderry Newsletter	Jen Greenfield	Pamela Spaulding	1 year
6	Long-term Recovery Group Restart	Rich Phelan, Tom Simmons	Neighborhood Connections, The Stratton Foundation, other non-profits in the area, Londonderry Selectboard, churches.	1 year
Goal 3: Hazard Mitigation				
ID	Task	Champion	Partners	Timeframe
7	North Village Scoping Study	Paul Hendler	Londonderry Selectboard, Londonderry Planning Commission, Windham Regional Commission, State of Vermont, Conservation Commission	4 – 13 years
Goal 4: Community Development				
ID	Task	Champion	Partners	Timeframe
8	Long-term Village Center Development Concepts	George Mora, Jen Greenfield, Pamela Spaulding	Londonderry Selectboard, Londonderry Planning Commission, Londonderry Development Review Board, Londonderry Zoning Administrator, property owners, Windham Regional Commission, Londonderry Housing Commission	On-going
Goal 5: Regional Cooperation				
ID	Task	Champion	Partners	Timeframe
9	Regional Watershed Study	Helen Hamman, Londonderry Conservation Commission	Vermont Nature Conservancy, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Vermont Emergency Management, Londonderry Selectboard, Londonderry Planning Commission, Londonderry Zoning Administrator, Londonderry Development Review Board, Londonderry Conservation Commission, Londonderry Zoning Commission, Windham Regional Commission, Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District, Connecticut River Conservancy, Vermont River Conservancy, Trout Unlimited.	3 – 5 years
10	Regional Watershed Management Task Force	Helen Hamman, Londonderry Conservation Commission	Vermont Emergency Management, Londonderry Selectboard, Landgrove Selectboard, Londonderry Zoning Administrator, Londonderry Planning Commission, Londonderry Conservation Commission, Weston Selectboard, Windham Regional Commission, Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District, Vermont Nature Conservancy, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Connecticut River Conservancy, Vermont River Conservancy, Trout Unlimited.	1 – 3 years