

---

## Chapter 4: LAND USE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

### Introduction

This section of the town plan is designed to guide land use decisions in a manner that balances existing and future uses. Striking a balance means establishing a framework that harmonizes the historic pastoral use of Pomfret lands with uses that will occur in the future such that these uses do not get in the way of or overshadow each other. While guiding and regulating land use decisions are important goals alone, it must not be lost that the overarching point of this effort is to support and enrich the sense of community that already exists in Pomfret.

### The Setting

The town of Pomfret is located in Windsor County, Vermont, situated in East-Central Vermont, part of the southern piedmont, or foothills, of the Green Mountains. Pomfret comprises about 39.4 square miles, bordered by Royalton and Sharon in the north, West Hartford and Quechee in the east, Woodstock and Bridgewater in the south, and Barnard in the west. Pomfret's landscape is characterized by narrow valleys with expanses of open hay fields flanked by occasionally very steep wooded hillsides. The center of Pomfret straddles two watersheds; the north side of Pomfret drains into the White River while the south side empties into the Ottauquechee River. Both the White and Ottauquechee Rivers flow east into the Connecticut River. Pomfret is among the special areas of Vermont that remain unspoiled by high density or large-scale development.

### Elevation & Slopes

The highest points in Pomfret are:

- Seaver Hill on the top of the ridge on the south side of the Appalachian Trail, between Granite Ledge and Pomfret Farms Dr.
- Top of the ridge between Windy Ln. and Hidden Ridge Rd.
- Top of the ridge just south of Webster Hill Rd. and east of Wild Apple Rd.
- Top of ridge between Allen Hill Rd. and Blackmer Rd.
- Top of ridge between Wild Apple Rd. and Bartlett Brook Rd.

About 3,459 acres (or just 14%) of Pomfret's 25,280 acres have slopes of 10% or less. These areas represent the most suitable terrain for development. The vast majority of development has occurred in these areas. Another 3,055 acres of Pomfret's land is situated on slopes of 10-15%. This land is also developable, but only for less intensive uses at a greater cost. Additionally, there are 5,984 acres with slopes of 15-20% and another 12,573 acres with slopes of greater than 20%, neither category offers much opportunity for development, except for the occasional ridgeline project. Combined, these last two categories comprise about 75% of Pomfret's land area.

---

## **Flood Hazards**

Approximately 521 acres of Pomfret are in the floodplain (see flood hazard areas visible on the Future Land Use Map, in Appendix D). Floodplains and Fluvial Erosion Hazard Areas are generally unsuitable for development because of the high potential for loss of life and property, as well as the limited ability of septic systems to perform adequately during periods of high water. (See Chapter 13: Flood Resilience for more information.)

## **Current Land Use**

### *Patterns of Development*

The Pomfret history in Chapter 2 describes the rapid rise in population from the first settlers in the early 1770s. The population peaked at a high of 1,867 in 1830 followed by a dramatic drop to 777 by 1900. By 1950 the population stood at 586. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, farmers moved west to land more suitable for farming than the hills of Vermont. Until the 1950s, the prevailing land uses in Pomfret were agriculture and forestry. Beginning slowly in the 1940s, and then continuing more rapidly into the 60s, 70s, and 80's, Pomfret experienced growth in non-farm residences, both primary and second homes.

According to census figures, the largest jump in housing units occurred between 1970 and 1990 with an increase of 189 units in that 20-year period. Seasonal homes account for 93% of the growth between 1980 and 1990 (80 of 86 units). This growth resulted from the rise of the post-war generation. Increases in wealth, the affordability of automobiles and the construction of the interstate highway system all helped to bring new growth to Vermont, including the newly labeled "Upper Valley." As in most rural Vermont towns, land has been sold for residential development at higher cash value than land kept in farming. Despite the demise of the traditional working dairy farm, recent years have seen a trend of increased agricultural activity, including expanded direct "farm to market" sales to individuals and restaurants, and forest products.

The primary land use is rural residential housing. The 2013 Pomfret Grand List includes 475 residential parcels of which 129 are second homes. However, the true number of residential units is higher because there are several parcels with multiple units, such as hamlet areas throughout the town. Most houses are along and close to either the paved roads or the better class 3 gravel roads which provide access to less steep land. Many of these houses are grouped in neighborhoods including:

- South Pomfret Village Area
- Bartlett Brook Road
- Hewitt Hill Road including a portion of the Pomfret Road east past Howe Hill Road
- North Pomfret including Bunker Hill Road, Caper Street, Starbuck Road and the connecting portions of the Pomfret Road

---

**See Appendix C –Map of Current Settlement Patterns**

Factoring Pomfret's two-acre minimum lot size, there are 12,640 potential residential development sites. However, the true number of easily development sites is much smaller because of the soils and slopes mentioned earlier. Potential development is stymied by topographical and geological conditions, including conservation easements. Deed restrictions and conservations easements keep the number of developable land units limited. Portions of many of the larger residential lots are also used for agricultural activities, including use as pasture land and maple sugaring, as are many of the 104 miscellaneous lots that do not have farm buildings.

**Agriculture and Forestry**

There is very little prime agricultural soil in Pomfret. However, the land in Pomfret used in agriculture is still important not only because of the classification of agricultural value, but also because of the location and current use of the land as hayfields, pasture and the growing of timber for a variety of uses. Open lands lend the town much of its scenic appeal

**See Appendix C – Map of Pomfret Agricultural Soils**

**Natural Resources**

Pomfret's natural and historic resources, rural character, and scenic beauty must be protected and preserved for the health, safety, and enjoyment of current and future generations. Many of these resources are irreplaceable, and if not preserved, will be gone forever. There are many cases in the world where the benefits of natural resources have not been understood until after a resource is gone. Habitat loss and resultant species loss is probably the most vivid example of this trend. This can still be prevented from happening in Pomfret.

**See Appendix C – Map of Pomfret's Natural Resources**

**Wildlife Habitat**

Wildlife habitat protection is critical to the conservation of plants and animals and hence to the general quality of life in Pomfret. "Natural areas" not only encourage and protect species diversity, but they also enhance aesthetic enjoyment, recreation, and education. Wildlife habitat should be given consideration in each decision to build in or change the natural environment.

In addition to deer yards, Pomfret has some unique and fragile habitats, possibly including those of rare and endangered species. Through the years some habitat areas have been placed under permanent protection. Although there has never been a comprehensive town wide study of significant habitats, an inventory limited to the Appalachian Trail Corridor found several wetland areas supporting rare ferns and some vernal pools that may be breeding grounds for rare salamanders. To protect additional habitats it is necessary to continue updating inventories, reviewing development plans that may affect these habitats, and encouraging landowners to

---

arrange for permanent protection of important habitats. The cumulative effect of scattered development on larger contiguous wildlife habitats is important. It is possible to separate deer, bears, and other animals from their wintering areas by scattered development, which, for this reason, should be avoided. The following is a list of the important habitat areas that are protected in Pomfret:

- Sharon-Pomfret Seep (Nature Conservancy)
- Amity Pond (State of Vermont)
- Wetlands on the National Wetlands Inventory (Federal and State)

In addition, there are other conserved lands in town that contain important habitat area, including the Appalachian Trail Corridor and other parcels of land. As of 2016, a total of 5,835 acres of land are conserved of which 1,817 acres are public and 4,018 acres are private land. In total, 24% of Pomfret's land is conserved and this number does not include other privately conserved land through deed restriction. As of the 2016 tax year, there is also 16,913 acres of land enrolled in Vermont's Current Use Program.

## **Wetlands**

The importance of wetlands to the whole ecosystem and to the health, safety, and welfare of the general public, has been recognized in both Federal and Vermont legislation in recent years. The Natural Resources Board estimates that Vermont has already lost more than 35 percent of its original wetlands resources and that the remaining wetlands comprise less than 4 percent of the state's surface area.

In addition to providing important support for fisheries and wildlife habitats, wetlands protect drinking water supplies by filtering out excess toxins and nutrients and by helping to recharge aquifers. Wetlands also play an important role in minimizing flood damage by storing flood waters.

There are 215 acres of wetlands in Pomfret that are on the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) and are protected by the 1990 Vermont Wetlands Rules. The NWI was completed in 1978 but was never field checked. Field observations by the Vermont Wetlands Office staff indicate that this is an underestimation. A more accurate up-to-date inventory would be useful for identifying important wetlands that must be protected in Pomfret. Landowners should be made aware of significant wetlands on their property.

## **Surface Waters**

Pomfret's brooks, streams, and fisheries contribute to wetlands and recharge ground water supply. Undisturbed natural vegetation on and along the banks of streams, called a riparian buffer, provides erosion control and protection from the sun which enhances habitat value and

---

water quality. Maintenance of a riparian buffer by private landowners is essential to minimizing flash flood damage on their property and land further downstream.

Two of the more common local sources of stream pollution and siltation are farming and highway drainage maintenance. While farming is not as significant of a contributor to this problem as it is in other towns, awareness is none the less important to stream protection. Both of these activities are vital to the Town but could be managed in such a way as to have little or no negative effect on streams. Local farming activities and highway maintenance should be reviewed to determine if there is unnecessary stream damage from chemicals, road salt, and drainage ditches.

New private ponds are created every year in Pomfret. Many ponds originally used for farming are now used for recreation and aesthetic purposes. The Town Zoning Ordinance requires a permit issued by the Zoning Board of Adjustment before a pond can be constructed. Currently pond construction plans are reviewed to ensure the safety of downstream roads or property. Pond construction also needs to be reviewed for any adverse effects on streams, wildlife habitat, or wetlands. Ponds are a major source of water for fighting fires. Inventories of ponds and regulation of pond construction should take fire protection into consideration. Additionally, no development other than agriculture and forestry should be allowed in flood plain areas without appropriate municipal review showing that specific engineering and construction standards have been satisfied.

### **Water Supply**

All Pomfret households depend on ground water for domestic use. This water flows in underground streams on uncharted pathways. It is tapped from underground storage areas called aquifers or from underground streams and springs. Ground water is the least understood of all natural resources, yet it is essential to the preservation and quality of life and to economic stability. As a result, the protection of ground water quality and quantity deserves the highest priority when formulating plans for the future of Pomfret.

There appears to be no immediate threat to Pomfret's water supply. A local well driller reports that Pomfret has plentiful water supplies and that existing wells very seldom need to be drilled deeper. Pomfret is not as subject to major hazardous material spills as many other communities due to its distance from major highways, railroads, and waste sites. Still, a safe water supply was a top priority of respondents to the Conservation Commission survey in 1990, and water quality should be monitored. The long term effect of any form of development on the quality of the water supply is a major factor in the review of development plans.

### **Air Quality**

Air quality problems in Vermont are mostly created elsewhere and must be solved at a state, national, or international level. Local wood stoves, backyard burning of trash and excessive brush burning contribute to air pollution. Clean air is a natural resource that cannot be taken for granted, even in rural states like Vermont. Enforcement of existing State and Federal air pollution regulations is important. However, we are all responsible for maintaining a healthy

---

living environment and for being kind to our neighbors. Pomfret residents are generally conscientious people and the Town should continue to encourage responsible behavior through its zoning laws.

### **Gravel and Other Mineral Extraction**

The use of local sand and gravel significantly reduces the cost of road maintenance within the Town and helps to support the local economy. When proper erosion control and reclamation techniques are used, extraction of gravel and other minerals can have minimal impact on the environment. The land can later be returned to other productive uses. Currently there are no operating gravel pits in Pomfret. Potential gravel reserves should be identified and set aside for future use. The extraction of minerals is to be limited to operations that do not conflict with the other goals, policies, or objectives of this plan.

### **Agricultural and Forest Lands**

Agricultural and forest lands are critical natural resources to Pomfret. Agriculture and forest management activities form the anchor of all other activities in Pomfret and the Town should strive to preserve the resources that underpin these activities.

### **Rural Character and Scenic Beauty**

The visual elements of rural character in Pomfret are the traditional working landscape and land use patterns relating to Pomfret's agricultural and forestry heritage, the undeveloped ridgelines and hillsides, and the scenic roads lined with mature trees and old stone walls. Historic resources related to the Town's agricultural and forestry heritage, such as old barns and farmhouses, are other elements of rural character that need to be preserved. Additional elements of rural character may be the people and their institutions: local government mostly made up of volunteers, volunteer fire departments and Fast Squad, and citizens concerned about and caring for their neighbors.

Virtually every chapter of this Plan examines a different aspect of rural character. Preserving and encouraging agricultural and forestry activity is a major goal expressed in the Land Use chapter.

The Town Services and Education chapters emphasize the importance of community involvement and volunteer support in governing the Town and in educating Pomfret's children.

In 1989, the Town adopted a Ridgeline and Hillside Conservation Area section to the Zoning Ordinance, reacting to concern that one of Pomfret's most significant scenic resources could be destroyed by insensitive development. The ordinance was updated in 2008. High priority should be given to preventing adverse effects on specific "scenic vistas" or "scenic view sheds" and "scenic roads" including roads and their rights of way that may be bordered by stone walls and maple and other mature trees. These roads need to be protected from efforts to widen and "improve" them to accommodate development. Road maintenance should be limited to the existing roadbed and ditches. Cutting of trees, widening, or any other activity which may change the character of the road should be subject to review by the public.

---

"Scenic vistas" or "view sheds" are areas of scenic beauty as viewed from Town roads that may need special protection from insensitive development, including private or public road construction and utility pole relocation. We all may know scenic beauty when we see it, but the challenge is to adopt a method for protection using both qualitative and quantitative criteria.

## **Special Features**

All of Pomfret is special and there are a number of places and natural features that warrant special mention. Just a few of them are:

- Cloudland Farm, the original center of Pomfret, and the surrounding hillsides
- Galaxy Hill (formerly one of Pomfret's poor farms)
- Sherburne Farm in North Pomfret
- Pomfret's town and family cemeteries
- The views of pasture land and hayfields around Hewittville
- The hillsides and open areas along Blackmer Road
- The Dana-St. John farm and surrounding hillsides
- Thistle Hill Farm in North Pomfret
- Sugarbush Farm in South Pomfret
- Town Hall (formerly the Unitarian Church)
- The Congregational Church in North Pomfret
- The views and hillsides along Wild Apple Road
- The view from Webster Hill Rd. looking south along Pomfret Road
- The view from Allen Hill Rd. near the Leavitt Farm
- Teago General Store in South Pomfret
- The Saskadena Six Ski Area in South Pomfret (Formerly Suicide Six)
- The Appalachian Trail corridor
- Amity Pond Natural Area
- The Abbott Library in South Pomfret

## **Future Land Use**

---

### *Drivers of Future Growth*

There are two predicted key drivers for Pomfret's future land use, both residential and agricultural/forestry. First, a growing "back to the land" movement is expected to bring a steady trickle of demand for housing and land. That movement includes small-scale farming (including the increasing consolidation and commercialization of the maple sugaring industry), an influx of artisans and small-scale farmers and a corresponding growth in services supporting those activities. A second and perhaps more pronounced factor is growth in nearby healthcare employment opportunities, a growing U.S. population, and the attractiveness of Vermont amid a changing climate.

The Town recognizes a growing movement of small-scale farming and supports the continued use of the land for agricultural and forest management activities. The definition of what constitutes farming is undergoing change, but in general Pomfret favors continued productive use of the land.

#### **See Appendix C – Pomfret Future Land Use Map**

Even without these demands for new housing, Pomfret should prepare for the possibility of increased development pressure in the future. Newer technology permits the use of septic systems in areas where they were not feasible in the past. Other factors that could create more future development and demands for housing are listed in the Housing chapter of this plan.

While some of this growth will continue to be for second homes, the expectation is that the bulk of growth will be for housing demands resulting from increased economic opportunities, both job opportunities in nearby cities and towns, as well as increases in local small-scale agricultural and forestry activities. Even by 2030 at the highest estimate, the intensity of development is not expected to be more than 39% of Pomfret's most developable land (up from 31% in 2010). Thus, Pomfret should be able to retain its rural character while making room for new residents, but only if this development is done in a way that adheres to past patterns. Houses on long driveways in the middle of forested tracts have no scenic impact but can ruin habitats. Homes spread across lower fields would impair local scenery and agriculture.

#### **Ridgelines and Hillsides**

Among Pomfret's most valuable resources are the exceptional scenic qualities of many of its ridgelines and hilltops. These physical formations have influenced the location of village settlements and the pattern of agriculture and forestry. The attractiveness of these areas is directly attributable to the variety of elements which make up the land use pattern of the area.

These characteristics serve to comprise these scenic values in ridgeline and hilltop areas. They include the mixed pattern of open meadowland to wooded areas, the prominence of clear unobstructed panoramic views of distant ridges from other ridges as well as from the valley floor and the non-intensive nature of the use of the land. Other integral elements of these scenic areas

---

are the type of characteristics of roads which lead to and from the areas and the accessibility of the ridgelines' scenic resource to the public.

The scenic value of the hillsides and ridgelines benefit more than just the people of Pomfret. These areas, coupled with the other elements of the pastoral landscape, combine to attract a large tourist population which accounts for a large portion of the area's economy. While its economic value can be considered appreciable, its contribution to the well-being of the area is perhaps more significant.

Historically, the typically rugged character of these areas has limited development opportunities. However, the location of development in future years in Pomfret cannot be assumed to be confined to those areas traditionally considered suitable or desirable for development. With adequate financial resources and quality engineering (incl. innovative technologies for wastewater system design and operation), land, including ridge tops and hilltops, can or will be developed without appropriate zoning regulations.

### **South Pomfret Village Area**

The Pomfret Planning Commission has collected input from members of the community and has used this guidance to create a framework through which the citizens' vision can be implemented. This vision includes changes to land use areas that support the goals of the community while remaining consistent with state law. The **South Pomfret Village Area** will be established to implement this vision.

The South Pomfret Village area is the one area that has developed into a small community center with mixed land uses at higher densities as compared to the more rural areas of Pomfret. South Pomfret has the most densely clustered mixed-use pattern of development in Pomfret and is home to a general store with a Post Office, the Abbott Memorial Library, a fire station, the local grade school, and a new arts center. Adjacent to the South Pomfret Village Area is the Suicide Six ski area, a small historic privately owned ski area. Having this Village Area is consistent with historical settlement patterns, but it also accomplishes a modern goal by reducing the impact of growth on the more rural areas of the town, thereby helping to retain the important rural character of the town.

The South Pomfret Village Area may support housing types at densities that are higher than the surrounding areas. However, because South Pomfret has neither public water nor sewer, all development should be at a density that can be supported by the ability of the soils to support on-site wastewater systems. In the future, community wastewater, water supply, or both could facilitate a more typical village pattern.

Figure 8 - Satellite Image of the Delineated South Pomfret Village Area



---

**Figure 9 - Aerial Image of the South Pomfret Village Area**



**Figure 10 - Aerial Image of the South Pomfret Village Area & Suicide Six**



**Figure 11 - Teago General Store, circa 1970**



In time, the South Pomfret Village Area may be suitable for retail stores and services, tourist businesses, lodging, public facilities and other business enterprises at a small scale with appropriate site plan design characteristics fitting the context of their surroundings. Growth in the South Pomfret Village Area may depend, to some degree, on eventually developing a means to deliver public water and sewer.

### **Rural Areas**

Rural Areas in Pomfret consist primarily of residential, forestry, and agricultural land uses, with some home business, outdoor recreational and natural resource uses. Home businesses are appropriate land uses within Rural Areas and are valuable to both the quality of life and the economic character of the region. Historically some home businesses in Pomfret have extended outside of the residential buildings with product and equipment into accessory structures or in the open. To maintain the character of the area, larger home businesses extending beyond the residential and accessory structures should be subject to site plan review ensuring compatibility with the residential uses.

Non-residential uses including small service businesses, small professional offices and inns may be acceptable land uses for Rural Areas provided that such uses are planned as relatively small in size or scale, do not unduly conflict with existing or planned residential, forestry or agricultural uses, and do not unduly affect rural character. Larger retail establishments serving a regional market are not appropriate for Rural Areas, but appropriately scaled businesses with a secondary retail component may be allowed. In circumstances where land is proposed for residential or

---

non-residential uses, development should be sited to minimize or avoid adverse impacts on agricultural and forest land, wetlands, river/stream corridors, and mapped wildlife habitat blocks and corridors.

The future character of the town will be affected by the location and density of future development of new lots. The number of new houses in a subdivision may not have as much negative impact as where those houses are sited with regard to the working landscape, and scenic and natural resources.

### **General Land Use Goals**

1. Preserve the concentrated land use pattern of South Pomfret Village.
2. Preserve the rural character and natural beauty of Pomfret

### **General Land Use Policies**

1. Pomfret supports land uses that foster preservation of the Town's character. Pomfret is characterized by working rural landscape with pockets of small and concentrated residential settlements. Pomfret generally discourages intensive land uses. One factor in determining intensity is the amount of area a new development project would consume relative to the amount of open space remaining.

Very Low intensity residential, agricultural and forestry projects are generally permissible in the Rural Residential Area. Other low intensity projects may be permitted, depending on the impact the project would have and whether the impacts can be mitigated, e.g., by screening.

Pomfret does not generally have the physical infrastructure to support high intensity land uses (for example, commercial-scale utility projects, large warehouses or primary retail).

2. With the exception of Planned Unit Development (PUD's), the Town will continue with two-acre minimum lot size zoning.
3. Projects that will result in new construction of affordable housing and conversion of existing structures to affordable housing as part of PUD's are encouraged.
4. Above and beyond meeting state-regulations, new development shall:
  - Minimize development of existing farmland or land with a high potential for future agricultural or forestry use;
  - Avoid undue adverse effects on significant natural resources including stream corridors, wetlands, and habitat areas; Discourage the introduction and spread of invasive plant species.
  - Avoid undue adverse visual effects on open meadows and forest lands as viewed from public right-of-ways;
  - Maintain scenic vistas of the working landscape, hillsides and ridgelines.

- 
5. Density of new development will be limited to the physical capacity of the land and without degradation of the environment.
  6. The rate of development shall not exceed the ability of existing and planned town services and facilities to support it.
  7. Promote traditional agricultural and forestry activities and encourage innovative new ones. These agricultural and forestry activities should include the use of tillable land, pastureland, and all kinds of forestland and help provide primary and secondary sources of income that foster local economic opportunities.
  8. Home-based businesses are encouraged in all areas of the Town. To maintain the character of the area, larger home businesses extending beyond the residential and accessory structures should be subject to site plan review ensuring compatibility with the residential uses.
  9. Manage future growth in Pomfret so that economic development does not create distinct commercial and industrial districts.
  10. Placement of telecommunications towers, energy generation facilities, or other infrastructure shall be sited to preserve the scenic beauty of the landscape and do not cause any undue adverse effect. Commercial-scale solar and wind development projects shall be located so they cannot be seen from any public road or trail to minimize visual impacts.
  11. Discourage the spread of invasive plants that change the traditional landscape and compromise wildlife habitats by crowding out native species.

### **General Land Use Recommended Actions**

1. Inventory and recommend measures against invasive plant species on roadsides and stream banks and in forests and fields (Invasive plant committee)
2. The Town should develop a list of scenic vistas that the Town would like to protect through its zoning regulations (Planning Commission).
3. In the future, the Town should consider other methods (e.g., larger minimum lot size or density-based formulas) as the demand for other kinds of zoning arises.
4. In the case of multiple unit projects, e.g., PUD's, buildings shall be clustered. Approval of future subdivision development within PUD's should be reviewed based on a system that permits smaller residential lots and larger open space parcels for agriculture, forestry, while limiting the total number of new lots on a specific parcel. Topography, limited access, scenic and natural resources should be taken into consideration and will be taken into consideration where mandated by statute.
5. To maintain the character of the area, larger home businesses extending beyond the residential and accessory structures should be subject to site plan review ensuring compatibility with the residential uses.

- 
6. Commercial-scale solar and wind development projects shall be screened so they cannot be seen from any public road or trail
  7. Placement of telecommunications towers, energy generation facilities, or other infrastructure shall be sited to preserve the scenic beauty of the landscape and do not cause any undue adverse effect.

### **Specific Land Use Policies: South Pomfret Village Area**

1. The South Pomfret Village Area is designed for mixed uses (within the same structures or adjacent structures). The Town will generally direct medium intensity non-residential uses into the South Pomfret Village Area where the proximity of land uses is closer together and the need for open space is lower. The South Pomfret Village Area still reflects Pomfret's rural character and any new development must be consistent with the existing character of that Area (for example, a recent project that converted a barn into a community arts center).
2. Light commercial and industrial activities, and primary retail establishments, shall be located within or adjacent to the Village Area. All activities in the village area will be reviewed to ensure that the scale is commensurate with the Town's ability to support those activities.
3. Shops and services, tourist businesses, lodging and public facilities, at a scale and design appropriate to the existing characteristics, are encouraged.
4. Development in the South Pomfret Village Area shall reflect existing settlement patterns, land capacity, and the availability of utilities and infrastructure for expansion.
5. Conversion of structures and older buildings of historic merit is encouraged to increase longevity and enable new, more economical, and energy efficient uses of property and to avoid obsolescence.
6. Where new development is planned, efforts must be made to ensure that it is complementary and compatible with the architecture and configuration of existing buildings and streetscape, and respects the traditional size and scale, proportions, and shape of the neighborhood.
7. Single, two, and multiple family housing at medium to high densities is encouraged in the village area.
8. New businesses shall be limited to uses that do not adversely affect the quality of life, the unique character and historic atmosphere of the village, or the rural residential nature of the Town.

### **Specific Land Use Recommended Actions: *South Pomfret Village Area***

1. The town shall consider which future uses of Saskadena Six ski area will be consistent with the town's long term vision. (Selectboard)

- 
2. The town shall continue to encourage housing and commercial development in South Pomfret Village consistent with the local character and density. (Selectboard)
  3. The Town should explore funding opportunities to determine the feasibility and cost to establish a municipal water and/or sewer system for the South Pomfret Village Area. Funding may be available through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) or municipal planning grants made available by the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development. (Selectboard)

**Specific Land Use Policies:** *Historic Districts and Buildings*

1. Protect and preserve Pomfret's natural and historic resources, rural character, and scenic beauty for the health, safety, and enjoyment of current and future generations.

**Specific Land Use Recommended Actions:** *Historic Districts and Buildings*

1. The Town should inventory sites and structures of historic significance and establish criteria for the degree of protection and maintenance needed (Planning Commission).
2. The Town should assemble an informational guideline for buildings and areas on the State of Vermont Division of Historic Preservation Historic Sites & Structures Survey, which will be advisory only, and will provide information to protect and enhance the historic character and resources of these buildings and areas (Planning Commission).

**Specific Land Use Goals:** *Rural Areas*

1. The town's rural living environment is maintained.

**Specific Land Use Policies:** *Rural Areas*

1. Residential, agricultural, and forestry uses are to be the primary and dominant land uses in the Rural Residential Area. Except for new home-based businesses, secondary retail, or existing commercial or industrial activities, new commercial or light industrial activities not associated with home-based businesses shall not be located in rural areas. Primary retail activities shall not be located in rural areas.
2. Residents are permitted to conduct home-based businesses, provided that the nature of the occupation is customary or appropriate in rural residential areas, that it does not detract from the rural character of the area, and that it does not cause an undue burden on the ability of the town to provide services such as highways and fire protection.
3. New land development shall be planned and sited to promote its continued use for agriculture and forestry. This can be accomplished by siting residential and other non-agricultural uses on the least productive soils or at the edges of woodlands and fields, relatively close to roads. In addition, the layout of building lots shall be designed to preserve crop and pastureland and managed woodlands.

- 
4. Where possible, conversion of farm buildings into new residential structures is encouraged.
  5. Continue the Town's subdivision policies and regulations that discourage rapid development of land in a way that outpaces the current Town's ability to provide for infrastructure.

**Specific Land Use Recommendations:** *Ridgeline Areas*

1. The Town shall protect the ridgelines through continued application of the Ridgeline Overlay and enforcement of Ridgeline zoning.

**Specific Land Use Policies:** *Flood Hazard Areas*

1. The Town shall protect the flood hazard areas through continued application of the Flood Overlay and enforcement of Flood zoning.
2. The Town will strive to avoid and minimize the loss of life and property, the disruption of commerce, and the extraordinary public expenditures and demands on public services that result from flooding related inundation and erosion.
3. The Town shall ensure that the selection, design, creation, and use of development in hazard areas is safe and accomplished in a manner that is consistent with public well-being, does not impair stream equilibrium, flood plain services, or the stream corridor.
4. The Town shall manage all flood hazard areas designated pursuant to 10 V.S.A. Chapter 32 § 753, the municipal hazard mitigation plan; and make the Town of Pomfret, its citizens, and businesses eligible for federal flood insurance, federal disaster recovery funds, and hazard mitigation funds as may be available.
5. The Town will endeavor to protect the environmental and recreational value of Pomfret's rivers and streams.

**Specific Land Use Policies:** *Agriculture and Forestry*

1. Pomfret supports agriculture and forestry because these activities help to retain the rural character of the town and provide primary and secondary sources of income that foster local economic opportunities.
2. The community understands the importance of agriculture and forestry to the Town and recognizes that agricultural and forestry practices may create conditions, including noise and odors that may create conflicts with residential use. Purchasers of homes should understand that the town cannot retain its rural character without reasonably exposing homeowners to the sights, sounds and smells of a working landscape. Neighbors will try to resolve any problems among themselves; however, it is understood that reasonable agricultural practices, which are defined by State policy, benefit farming operations and contribute to a working landscape, harmony with neighbors and community pride.

- 
3. The Town supports the use of “Required Agricultural and Forest Management Practices” and encourages the use of “Best Agricultural Practices.”
  4. Encourage sound agricultural practices such as crop rotation, organic farming, and sustainable woodlot management practices that do not deplete natural resources.
  5. Where residential subdivisions and PUDs are proposed adjacent to farm operations, reasonable setbacks may be required from the lot lines next to cropland for wells and residences under the subdivision regulations. Reasonable buffers between residences and cropland, including roads and pastureland, may be required. This requirement is designed to minimize conflicts between farm operations and residential uses, however mechanisms other than buffers may be permitted to achieve such goals.
  6. Promoting sustainable, economically viable farming and forestry alternatives is important to the future of farming and forestry in Pomfret. Diverse agricultural enterprises, including dairying, hay production, livestock production, produce stands, and specialty farms such as wildflowers, nurseries, berries, orchards, produce, and value-added products in general will be encouraged. Included here are growing activities related to Vermont’s “farm to plate” movement. Pomfret encourages local production and consumption.
  7. Land in active agricultural or forest use should continue to be taxed at a rate that allows the land to stay in active use. The Town should consider measures of its own in the event state tax incentives are abolished.

**Specific Land Use Policies:** *Natural Resources*

1. Avoid land use decisions that will result in habitat fragmentation.
2. The town encourages and should support landowners becoming more educated on the impacts that development has on habitat, wildlife corridors, and other natural resources.
3. Agricultural practices and Town road maintenance should not degrade the water quality of Pomfret’s streams and brooks. Ensure that the town road maintenance practices minimize the spread of invasive or detrimental plants and encourage landowners to adopt agriculture and land management practices to minimize the spread of invasive and detrimental plants.
4. Any existing Town rights-of-way that can provide access to natural resource, historic and scenic vista sites shall be preserved.
5. The installation or relocation of utility poles, other utility equipment, and towers shall be done in a manner that has little or no impact on scenic roads and vistas.
6. For air quality and safety purposes, excessive brush burning in Pomfret that adversely affects surrounding landowners should be limited.
7. Encourage best practices that reduce the Town’s collective carbon footprint.

**Specific Land Use Recommendation Actions:** *Natural Resources*

---

1. Inventory and recommend protection measures to ensure preservation and protection of Pomfret's natural resources, including:

- Habitats of rare, threatened, or endangered animal and plant species
- Brooks, streams, fisheries, stream banks
- Wetlands, vernal pools
- Wildlife habitats
- Agricultural and forest land
- Mineral resources: gravel, sand, rock

2. Identify the sources of public drinking water (aquifers) in Pomfret and develop and implement a long-range land use plan to protect them.

3. Identify, inventory, and prioritize those elements that significantly contribute to Pomfret's rural character and scenic beauty. These include:

- Hilltops and ridgelines
- Scenic vistas
- Open pastures and meadows
- Scenic roads
- Barns and houses
- Stone walls
- Village settlement patterns
- Town and community buildings

4. Landowners should consider these impacts before starting a development project, including the impacts of constructing new or expanding existing roads.

- 
4. Identify those resources that could be accessible by trails.
  5. Review development projects to limit the impact on:
    - Elements that significantly contribute to the rural character and scenic beauty of Pomfret;
    - Natural resources that need to be preserved and protected