

CHAPTER V COMMUNITY FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

Historically, rural communities in New Hampshire have very few community services. In many cases, these services were limited to only a Town Hall and public school. However, as the population of New Hampshire increased, more services were added to meet the needs of the citizenry. Today, communities are expected to and in some instances are legally required to provide police and fire protection, as well as highway crews, waste disposal, recreational facilities, and professional staff to manage the daily operations of Town government.

Like other rural communities, the Town of Sutton provides vital services to the citizenry. Fire and police protection ensure the safety of all residents. The school system provides the children of Sutton with an adequate public education. The Highway Department maintains roads year-round, including snow removal during the winter months.

The purpose of this Chapter is to inventory and assess current town facilities and programs, identify and assess the adequacy of existing equipment and future equipment needs, identify current and long-term staffing needs, and identify long-term facility and service needs. In order to provide community services in an efficient and effective manner, the Town must assess its current and future needs in order to anticipate future demands and services for the various Departments. Sutton must also develop a mechanism to ensure coherence and consistency among all town and school district agencies. This mechanism can increase opportunities to plan efficient, attractive and long-lasting facilities. By having community facilities that are up-to-date, responsive to residents needs, and operating in the most effective and efficient manner, Sutton will be able to retain its small-town essence while providing high-quality amenities to its residents and businesses.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Predicting future population growth is crucial for planning the expansion of community services and facilities. Prediction of future population changes can only serve as an estimate of what may happen in the future. As noted previously, population trends are affected by numerous variables, including economic shifts and other similar events. The local population projections are based on a community's historical share of its' county's growth. These numbers can only serve as an estimate of what may occur over the next twenty years, with regards to population changes.

Sutton Population Estimates & Projections, 2000-2025

2000 Actual	2001 Estimate	2002 Estimate	2003 Estimate
1,544	1,600	1,629	1,686

2005 Projected	2010 Projected	2015 Projected	2020 Projected	2025 Projected	2000-2025 % Increase
1,680	1,810	1,940	2,070	2,200	31.0

Source: March 2003 Population Projections, NH Office of Energy and Planning; 2000 Census

As can be seen above, Sutton’s population is projected to increase 31% from 2005 - 2025. This corresponds to a 1.5% annual population increase and a 15% per decade population increase. However, it should also be noted that the 2005 population projections are lower than the 2003 population estimate. Therefore, these population projections should be looked at as a low estimate of future population growth and the Town should plan accordingly with regard to community facility expansion.

TOWN OFFICES

The Town Offices are located in the Pillsbury Memorial Hall in Sutton Mills, which was built in 1891. The Town Hall houses the Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Assessing, Administrative Offices for the Board of Selectmen, Police Department, and the files for the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and Conservation Commission.

Over the years, the current Town Hall has been able to meet the needs of the town staff, boards and committees, and the general community. However, as the Town continues to grow, there may be a need to relocate departments, services, or Commissions/Board to other areas within Town to better utilize the existing space at the Town Hall. This will likely require new facilities to be built somewhere else in Town. The 2004 Community Survey responses support this concern with 23 responses indicating that the Town Hall should be expanded/replaced in the next 5-10 years.

Goal

To meet the needs of town residents in an efficient and effective manner.

Recommendations

- Research the need and cost for a Planning and Zoning Administrator and an additional clerk within the next 5 years.
- Create an archival system and storage location for Town documents that is easily accessible and secure.
- Investigate the desirability and cost of using the Internet to provide services and information from the various Town Departments and Committees.

Goal

To ensure that Town staff and users of the Town offices are conducting business in a safe, secure, and efficient building that meets their needs.

Recommendations

- Address the ADA accessibility issues in and around the Town Hall to ensure that the Town is serving all residents.
- Establish a capital reserve fund for the expansion of town offices within the existing structure or the relocation of offices to another facility.
- Undertake a space-needs study in 2005 to address the space needs of all Town Departments and Boards for the next 20-25 years.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Sutton Fire Department was organized in 1941 and is an all volunteer Department. This Department provides fire prevention services to all residents and businesses in Sutton. The Department also educates the public on fire prevention, smoke detector checks, and does life safety inspections for properties within Town.

Calls for Service

Calls for service include medical calls, motor vehicle accidents, fires, false alarms, and other service calls. Since 1994, the number of calls for service the Fire Department has responded to has remained fairly constant with a jump in 2003, which can be seen in the tables below.

Calls for Service 1994 - 2003

Year	Total Calls for Service¹
1994	61
1995	75
1996	64
1997	66
1998	57
1999	67
2000	83
2001	77
2002	88
2003	102
Total	740

Source: Town Reports

¹ Majority of calls are for motor vehicle accidents on I-89.

1994-2003 Calls per Capita

Year	Total Calls for Service	Population Estimates	Calls per Person
1994	61	1,472	24.1
1995	75	1,478	19.7
1996	64	1,472	23.0
1997	66	1,489	22.6
1998	57	1,479	25.9
1999	67	1,500	22.4
2000	83	1,544	18.6
2001	77	1,600	20.8
2002	88	1,629	18.5
2003	102	1,686	16.5

Source: Town Reports and OEP Population Estimates

1994-2003 Calls per Fire Fighter Volunteers

Year	Total Number of Calls for Service	Number of Volunteers	Calls per Staff/Volunteers/On-call Personnel
1994	61	NA	NA
1995	75	21	3.6
1996	64	21	3.0
1997	66	22	3.0
1998	57	22	2.6
1999	67	23	2.9
2000	83	23	3.6
2001	77	23	3.3
2002	88	26	3.4
2003	102	31	3.3

Source: Town Reports; Fire Department Volunteers

Review of Equipment Needs

The Fire Department received two grants in 2003 for the purchase of a Cascade System for filling air bottles and the other was for a forest fire pump.

Review of Fire Department Staffing Needs

The Town of Sutton participates with 13 other area towns in the Kearsarge Mutual Aid Organization to provide mutual aid coverage, which is an agreement between area fire departments that allows for additional assistance to be sent when needed. The thirteen towns include Henniker, Hopkinton, Webster, Salisbury, Weare, New Boston, Warner, Bradford, Andover, Newbury, Springfield, Wilmot, and New London.

Goal

To ensure that the Fire Department facility and equipment can meet the needs of the Department and community through long-range budgeting and planning.

Recommendations

- Establish an expendable capital reserve fund for building maintenance that can annually be added to by Town Meeting.
- Establish a capital reserve fund for equipment purchases that can annually be added to by Town Meeting.

Goal

To ensure that development proposals address fire safety issues.

Recommendation

- Investigate the impacts that proposed large-scale developments may have on fire protection services by having the Fire Department review all Major Subdivision applications and Site Plans.

RESCUE SQUAD

The Sutton Rescue Squad is an all volunteer Department that provides emergency services to Sutton and the 13 communities that are part of the Kearsarge Mutual Aid organization.

Calls for Service

Calls for service include medical calls, motor vehicle accidents, fires, false alarms, and other service calls. Since 1994, the number of calls for service the Rescue Squad has responded to has remained fairly constant, which can be seen in the tables below.

Calls for Service² 1994 - 2003

Year	Total Calls for Service
1994	78
1995	103
1996	93
1997	92
1998	100
1999	97
2000	98
2001	95
2002	100
2003	154
Total	1,010

Source: Town Reports

² Most calls for service are for motor vehicle accidents on I-89.

1994-2003 Calls per Capita

Year	Total Calls for Service	Population Estimates	Calls per Person
1994	78	1,472	18.9
1995	103	1,478	14.3
1996	93	1,472	15.8
1997	92	1,489	16.2
1998	100	1,479	14.8
1999	97	1,500	15.5
2000	98	1,544	15.8
2001	95	1,600	16.8
2002	100	1,629	16.3
2003	154	1,686	10.9

Source: Town Reports and OEP Population estimates

1994-2003 Calls per Rescue Squad Volunteers

Year	Total Number of Calls for Service	Number of Volunteers	Calls per Volunteers Personnel
1994	78	13	6.0
1995	103	11	9.4
1996	93	12	7.8
1997	92	11	8.4
1998	100	NA	NA
1999	97	12	8.1
2000	98	10	9.8
2001	95	13	7.3
2002	100	15	6.7
2003	154	15	10.3

Source: Town Reports

Review of Equipment Needs

There is an agreement between the Sutton Rescue Squad, Bradford Ambulance, and the New London Hospital Ambulance to provide transport of people to area hospitals if needed, thus allowing Sutton not to have to solely provide this service.

Goal

Provide a high level of service to meet the needs of Sutton residents.

Recommendations

- Continue to be members of the Kearsarge Mutual Aid organization.
- Provide training and educational opportunities for volunteer personnel.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Sutton Police Department was incorporated in 1784 and is located in the bottom floor of the Town Hall. This Department provides DARE education in the Sutton Central School to 5th graders, as well as providing coverage at school dances (KRHS), graduation ceremonies at KRHS, fingerprinting/photo's for child safe program, education on firearm safety/gun safe program, and any other requests that may arise. The Police Department also provides vacant house checks.

Calls for Service

From 1994 to 2003, the Police Department calls for service have fluctuated annually, which can be seen in the tables below.

Calls for Service, 1994-2002

Year	Calls
1994	NA ³
1995	2,495
1996	2,263
1997	2,294
1998	1,755
1999	2,415
2000	1,735
2001	2,804
2002	1,961
2003	2133

Source: Town Reports; Police Department

1994-2003 Calls per Capita

Year	Total Calls for Service	Population Estimates	Calls per Person
1994	NA	1,472	NA
1995	2,495	1,478	1.7
1996	2,263	1,472	1.5
1997	2,294	1,489	1.5
1998	1,755	1,479	1.2
1999	2,415	1,500	1.6
2000	1,735	1,544	1.1
2001	2,804	1,600	1.8
2002	1,961	1,629	1.2
2003	2,133	1,686	1.3

Source: Town Reports and OEP Population Projections

³ 1994 figures are not comparable because of a change in reporting.

1994-2003 Calls per Staff

Year	Total Number of Calls for Service	Number of Staff (Full Time Equivalent)	Calls per Staff/
1994	NA	2	NA
1995	2,495	2	1,247
1996	2,263	2	1,131
1997	2,294	2	1,147
1998	1,755	2	877
1999	2,415	3	805
2000	1,735	3	578
2001	2,804	3	935
2002	1,961	3	654
2003	2,133	3	711

Source: Town Reports and Police Department

Review of Facility Needs

The location and size of the current Police Department is inadequate and poses potential safety issues to the staff and community members. The 2004 Community Survey responses indicate that 12 people also agree that the current facility is need of updating/expansion.

There is currently no handicap access to the Department and there are 13 stairs that need to be passed to reach the Department, which can be very dangerous when wet. As well, the space available to the Police Department does not allow for secure evidence storage, the holding of suspects, or the private questioning of witnesses.

Review of Equipment Needs

The following is a list of equipment needs for the Police Department over the next ten years.

- 1) Update portable radios to digital
- 2) New radar/speed equipment (handheld, vehicle)
- 3) Video/Audio equipment for both cruisers
- 4) Replace cruiser with 4-wheel drive vehicle
- 5) Office equipment to include desks, computers etc. (all laptops, printer, desktops, copy machine)
- 6) Update camera equipment
- 7) Update mobile car radios
- 8) Emergency life systems
- 9) Computer programs
- 10) Add one more car (fleet total of 3)

Review of Police Department Staffing Needs

The Police Department currently has two full-time officers – a chief and a patrolman. It is anticipated that the position of Sargent will be filled by the end of 2004. Currently, there are 3

part-time officers. Anticipated future needs will be for a full-time resource officer for the high school/middle school in Sutton.

Goal

To ensure that the Police Department facility and equipment can meet the needs of the Department and community through long-range budgeting and planning.

Recommendations

- Establish a capital reserve fund for equipment purchases that can annually be added to by Town Meeting.
- Review the various options for relocating the Police Department out of the Town Hall. This review should include land costs, building costs, and equipment costs associated with the relocation and how should relocation should be paid for (bonds, capital reserve funds, selling of town property, etc.).

Goal

To ensure that development proposals address safety issues.

Recommendation

- Investigate the impacts that proposed large-scale developments may have on safety services by having the Police Department review all major subdivision applications and Site Plans.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

The role of the Sutton Highway Department is to maintain town roadways and to make improvements that are necessary to provide safe and convenient travel. Maintenance duties of the Department include road grading, paving, snow removal, drainage improvements and other repairs, as they are needed. The Department purchases equipment as approved at Town Meeting and performs most repair and maintenance in-house at the Town garage.

See the Transportation Chapter for more information on the Highway Department.

Facility Needs

The Highway Department facility is located at 13 Village Road in Sutton Mills and has a storage garage of approximately 3,400 sq.ft in size, as well as three sheds and a barn. This facility is inadequate for the current Department operations, because not all of the existing equipment can fit into the storage garage, and should be replaced/expanded.

Equipment and Staffing Needs

At the present time, the Highway Department does not need any additional staff or equipment. However, as the Town continues to expand, it is anticipated that an additional plow truck and full-time staff will be necessary in order to maintain the current level of service.

Goal

To ensure that the Highway Department facility and equipment can meet the needs of the Department and community through long-range budgeting and planning.

Recommendations⁴

- Continue to annually put money into the equipment capital reserve fund at Town Meeting.
- At Town Meeting, annually add money to the established capital reserve fund for the expansion/replacement of the current department facility, including feasibility and architectural studies, land acquisition costs, and the actual building.

SUTTON FREE LIBRARY

The library is located in Sutton Mills, near the Town Hall, in a building originally built in 1910.

The Library provides a children's summer reading program, which is funded by the Library, and an adult springtime reading program, which is funded through the NH Humanities Council. The Library Trustees has also offered periodic craft workshops as a way to raise funds for Library equipment purchases.

Staffing Needs

Currently, the Librarian is the only paid staff person but there are a few residents who volunteer regularly at the Library. There are five Library Trustees who serve 1 to 3-year staggering terms who are also responsible for many of the operations of the Library.

Facility Space and Equipment Needs

The library is crowded and there are few options available to try to alleviate this situation in the current building short of removing portions of the collection. In the 2004 Community Survey, 33 respondents felt that the Library would need to be updated/expanded in the next 5-10 years.

There is limited equipment in the Library but it currently includes two public computers with internet access, a TV, VCR, and photocopier.

Goal

To ensure that the Library building and equipment meets the needs of the community

Recommendation

- Establish an expendable capital reserve fund for building maintenance that can be annually added to by Town Meeting.
- Make sure that the building, equipment, and staff/volunteer adhere to state and federal regulations, such as fire safety, ADA, and library privacy rules and requirements.

⁴ See the Transportation Chapter for more Highway Department recommendations.

Goal

To provide services and resources that residents of Sutton are interested in.

Recommendations

- Conduct a community survey to assess the interest of the community members in various programs, services, books, etc. in order to accurately plan and budget for such things.
- Create a comment/suggestion box to be placed in the Library to solicit on-going feedback from patrons.
- Partner with the schools to avoid duplication of services and resources, as well as increase participation by students in the library.
- Take greater advantage of funding opportunities offered by the state and other non-profit organizations to help expand current program offerings, such as workshops, book signings, reading programs, and music.
- Create an easy to use tracking system for library holdings in order to assess the types of books that are of interest to the patrons. This information can help direct future purchases as well as creating a methodology for removing some items from the collection (i.e. book sale).

SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING FACILITY

Sutton does not offer municipal curb-side trash/recycling pick-up. All residents must bring their waste to the solid waste and recycling facility or hire a private hauler to take the solid waste away. The 2003 figures for material collected at the Transfer Station can be seen below.

2003 Solid Waste and Recycling Facility Figures

Residential Municipal Solid Waste	200 tons
Construction & Demolition Debris	98 tons
Leaf & Yard Waste/Brush	30 cubic yards
Mixed Paper/Cardboard ⁵	200 tons
Glass	90 tons
Cans	14 tons
Scrap Metal	150 tons
Computers	90/yr
Propane Tanks	75/yr
Fluorescent Tubes	100/yr
Batteries	300/yr

Source: Transfer Station Director, August 2004

⁵ The Town receives \$35/ton for this material.

In 2003, the cost for disposal of trash at the Lebanon landfill, which is where the municipal solid waste is disposed of, is based on a rate of \$57/ton for trash (2001-2011 contract).

Recycling in Sutton is mandatory and revenue is generated by selling recyclable materials collected at the solid waste and recycling facility. The types of materials accepted at the transfer station for recycling include glass, paper and cardboard, cans, scrap metal, batteries, used oil, and tires.

The solid waste and recycling facility also accepts yard waste/brush, construction debris, florescent lights, and other bulky items (refrigerators, washers, dryers, etc.). Residential septage is also accepted.

Every year the Town participates in a regional household hazardous waste day with the Town of Henniker in which residents can safely dispose of hazardous materials, such as paint, motor oil, and batteries.

Staffing and Equipment Needs

There are currently 2 full-time (plus an addition part-time person in the summer) staff people that manage the solid waste and recycling facility.

Goal

To ensure that the Transfer Station facility and equipment meet the needs of the Department and community through long-range budgeting and planning.

Recommendations

- Establish an expendable capital reserve fund for building maintenance that can annually be added to by Town Meeting.
- Establish a capital reserve fund for equipment purchases that can annually be added to by Town Meeting.
- Establish a capital reserve fund for special studies that may be required for environmental permitting processes.

Goal

To increase public awareness of the transfer station operations.

Recommendations

- Provide public education materials about the benefits of recycling, including the environmental, public health, and cost savings to the community.
- Provide information in the Annual Report on the amount of solid waste, recycling, septic sludge, brush, etc. collected, as well as posting monthly totals at the Transfer Station.

TOWN-OWNED CEMETERIES

There are seven cemeteries in Sutton that the Town maintains in some way. There are three elected Cemetery Commissioners, making the policies and budgets that govern the Town-Owned Cemeteries. The Cemetery Commission is responsible for maintaining the cemeteries, except the Maston Cemetery.

A listing of the Town-owned cemeteries located in Sutton can be seen below and the location of these cemeteries can be seen on the Historic Structures, Historic Sites, and Cemetery Location map in the Historic and Cultural Resources Chapter.

- 1) Old Cemetery in South Sutton
- 2) Millwood Cemetery
- 3) East Sutton Cemetery
- 4) Gore Cemetery
- 5) Sutton Mills Cemetery
- 6) North Sutton Cemetery
- 7) Maston Cemetery

Goal

To ensure on-going preservation and up-keep of the Town-owned cemeteries.

Recommendations

- Digital pictures should be taken of all headstones to ensure that the information will be preserved and to create a record for maintenance purposes.
- Establish an expendable capital reserve fund for cemetery maintenance that can be annually added to by Town Meeting.

Goal

To ensure the future burial needs of Sutton residents/families will be met.

Recommendations

- The Town-Cemeteries should be mapped to show the locations of all occupied and unoccupied plots and all purchased but yet unoccupied plots.
- Create a plan, budget, location, and timeline for the establishment of a new cemetery.

SUTTON CENTRAL SCHOOL

The Sutton Central School is an elementary school that houses kindergarten through fifth grade. The school is for Sutton residents and those children from other communities wishing to pay tuition to attend. The school is located at Newbury Road and was originally built in 1952 with additions in 1977, 1994, and 2001.

Enrollment Figures

School Department needs, more than any other community facility, are dictated by the future population trends of a community. As the number of school-aged children rise and fall, staffing, facility, and operating projections need to be made and budgeted for. Because many of these expenses, such as an addition to a building, can take years to plan and finish, enrollment projections are vital to ensuring that adequate budgeting and planning are done.

School Enrollment* Figures, 1994-2004

Year	Enrollment
1994	92
1995	100
1996	95
1997	90
1998	87
1999	90
2000	92
2001	96
2002	97
2003	108
2004	110

Source: KRSD Office of the Superintendent

* Enrollment is determined by a count conducted on 10/1 of each year

Goal

To proactively plan for school facilities in a timely manner.

Recommendation

- Continuously review current and projected enrollment figures in order to plan for staffing, equipment, and space needs.
- If school expansion becomes necessary, investigate the feasibility of expanding the existing facility at its current site or building a new elementary school where the middle school is being built.
- Establish a capital reserve fund, and annually add funds to it, which can be used to help pay for school facility expansion or new construction.

KEARSARGE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Town of Sutton is part of the Kearsarge Regional School District, which was established in 1966 and contains six other towns. The middle school (grades 6-8) built in 1941, is located in New London, and the addition was completed in 1962. The high school (grades 9-12) is located in Sutton, on North Road, and was built in 1970 as America's first "open concept" school. This concept has now been abandoned for a more traditional system following the advice of numerous recent studies.

Enrollment Figures

School Department needs, more than any other community facility, are dictated by the future population trends of a community. Operating projections, staffing, facilities, and budgeting need to be updated as the number of school-aged children rise and fall. Because many of these expenses, such as an addition to a building, can take years to plan and finish, enrollment projections are vital to ensuring that adequate budgeting and planning are done. The Kearsarge School system enlists the help of experts and state population projections to achieve this goal with fairly accurate results.

School Enrollment* Figures, 1994-2003

Year	Kearsarge Regional Middle School	Kearsarge Regional High School
1994	73	53
1995	67	73
1996	69	88
1997	49	98
1998	61	87
1999	70	77
2000	75	85
2001	84	81
2002	84	63
2003	81	91

Source: KRSD, Office of the Superintendent

* Enrollment is determined by a count conducted on 10/1 each year Sutton portion only

Facility Needs

In 2003, the decision was made for the Regional School District to purchase 86 acres in Sutton for a new middle school. This will replace the existing school in New London and have a capacity of 700 students. This new school is necessary because the current middle school has a capacity of 450 students and the enrollment is at 562 (2003 figures). There is also ADA compliance and health and safety issues at the current middle school that would be easier to address by building a new facility, rather than trying to fix the current building.

The high school also has had capacity issues that are being currently being addressed. In March 2004 the voters of the district passed a bond for the construction of a second floor addition. This increases the capacity by approximately 250 students: seven classrooms, two biology labs, and a computer lab. This will partially address some of the overcrowding, but the common areas, such as the cafeteria and the auditorium cannot be altered. Creative scheduling will help relieve this problem.

Goal

To use school facilities in an efficient and effective manner.

Recommendation

- The Regional School Board and Town should work together to proactively plan and pay for additional school facilities in a timely manner.
- The Regional School District is conducting a feasibility study for future uses of the existing middle school building in New London. Sutton should actively participate in this study. One of the most promising possibilities is to use this building as a vocational school with some of the space possibly reserved for the SAU offices, a Pre-School, James House, and community related activities. The State has just offered a \$10,000 grant to study the feasibility of a Public Vocational Charter School for this facility which will include some state funding.

CONCLUSION

The provision of community services and facilities is one of the primary functions of government. As the population and demographics of Sutton grow and change over time, it is important that the community make adjustments in its delivery of services to meet those changes. Trends for the future indicate that certain services will be provided on a regional basis, with multiple towns sharing the costs for equipment and staffing. Other services may in the near future become Internet-based, such as billing and payment of taxes.

The recommendations made in this Chapter address some of the changes that could potentially be made to community facilities to help maintain a high level of service. It is evident that each department in Sutton is in need of additional staff, new or expanded facilities, or equipment upgrades. Although many of these requests have already been planned for, Sutton needs to be proactive in its financing and planning to ensure that community services remain at their current level of quality and that the residents are not burdened with large tax increases to pay for such services all at once.

Efficient community facilities and services that meet the needs of the public are important for maintaining and improving quality of life. Sutton is a desirable community because of its small-town feel and numerous amenities. In the future, community facilities will continue to play a crucial role in Sutton's ability to attract potential newcomers as well as retain current residents.