

CHAPTER VII 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 Bow 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.

1988 MASTER PLAN – COMMUNITY FACILITIES RELATED TOPICS

The first Sutton Master Plan was adopted in 1977 and subsequently updated in 1987 and again in 1988. The following goals were highlighted in the 1988 updated Master Plan, along with objectives and recommendations on how to meet the goals

Goal Four: To provide Town services including schools, police, fire protection, governmental administration, and road maintenance in an efficient and economical manner.

Objectives

- 1) To provide Town services in a manner consistent with the needs of a rural residential community.
- 2) To evaluate proposed development to assess the economic impact on the provision of services.

- 3) To design and implement guidelines and regulations to insure fair and balanced distribution of increased cost impact, created by new development, in providing Town services.

Recommendations

- The Town should provide against such scattered or premature subdivision of land as would involve danger or injury to health, safety, or prosperity by reason of the lack of water supply, drainage, transportation, schools, fire protection, or other public services, or necessitate the excessive expenditure of public funds for the supply of such services.
- The Planning Board should continue to require road traffic impact study for all major subdivisions and for minor subdivisions and minor subdivisions, where appropriate.
- The Planning Board should require a drainage study and an economic impact analysis where appropriate.
- The village centers should be protected as valuable historic, social, and aesthetic assets to the Town, Their character should be maintained and preserved.
- Care should be taken that village centers are not developed to the point that municipal water and sewer are required.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

In June 1999, a Master Plan Community Survey was mailed out to approximately 600 property owners. 195 surveys were returned for a 32% response rate. The following 4 survey questions relate to the community facilities in Sutton.

Please tell us why you think Sutton is an attractive place to live.

	# Responses
Safe/low crime	13
Good schools	13
Fair/low taxes	5
Town services	5
Town Government	4

Of all the values you place on living in Sutton, name the single most important to you.

	# Responses
Good schools	4
Fair taxes	1

Please describe how you would like Sutton to be in 20 year.

	# Responses
More services	6
Lower taxes	5

Better library	3
Paid Fire and Rescue Dept.	1
Home mail delivery	1
Better schools	1
More recreation areas for children	1

What problems exist in Town that you fee should be addressed soon.

	# Responses
Taxes	30
Better roads	13
Recycling center hours	6
Police improvement	5
Lack of recreational facilities	4
Library	4
Zoning and enforcement	4
North Sutton Post Office	3
Longer Post Office Hours	2
Better schools	2
Home mail delivery	2
No dog officer	2
No public kindergarten	1
Town Hall parking	1
No annual hazardous waste disposal	1
Better sense of town services	1

TOWN HALL OFFICES

The Town Hall is located at XX and was built in XXX. The Town Hall houses the XXXXXXXX.

It is anticipated that the current facility is large enough in size to serve the needs of the Town for the next 5 years. However, 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.

Staffing/equipment/space needs

Recommendations

- Research the need and cost for a Finance Director, Planning and Zoning Administrator, and an additional clerk within the next 5 years.

- Create an on-site archival system and storage location for Town documents that is easily accessible and secure.
- Address the ADA accessibility issues in and around the Town Hall to ensure that the Town is serving all residents.
- Investigate the desirability and cost of using the Internet to provide services and information from the various departments located within the Municipal Building.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Sutton Fire Department was incorporated in XXX 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 and CPR, 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 XXXXX, which can be seen in the tables below.

Calls for Service* 1994 - 2003

Year	Total Calls for Service
1994	
1995	
1996	
1997	
1998	
1999	
2000	
2001	
2002	
2003	
Total	

Source:

* Calls for service include medical calls, motor vehicle accidents, fires, false alarms, and other service calls

1994-2003 Calls per Capita

Year	Total Calls for Service	Population Estimates	Calls per Person
1994			
1995			
1996			
1997			
1998			

1999			
2000			
2001			
2002			
2003			

Source:

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			
1995			
1996			
1997			
1998			
1999			
2000			
2001			
2002			
2003			

Source:

Review of Facility Needs

Review of Equipment Needs

Review of Fire Department Staffing Needs

Recommendations

- 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 was incorporated in XXX and is an all volunteer Department. This Department provides XXXXX

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 XXXXX, which can be seen in the tables below.

Calls for Service* 1994 - 2003

Year	Total Calls for Service
1994	
1995	
1996	
1997	
1998	
1999	
2000	
2001	
2002	
2003	
Total	

Source:

* Calls for service include medical calls, motor vehicle accidents, fires, false alarms, and other service calls

1994-2003 Calls per Capita

Year	Total Calls for Service	Population Estimates	Calls per Person
1994			
1995			
1996			
1997			
1998			
1999			
2000			
2001			
2002			
2003			

Source:

1994-2003 Calls per Rescue Squad Volunteers

Year	Total Number of Calls for Service	Number of Volunteers	Calls per Volunteers Personnel
1994			
1995			
1996			
1997			

Year	Total Number of Calls for Service	Number of Volunteers	Calls per Volunteers Personnel
1998			
1999			
2000			
2001			
2002			
2003			

Source:

Review of Facility Needs

Review of Equipment Needs

Review of Rescue Squad Staffing Needs

Recommendations

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Sutton Police Department was incorporated in XXX and is located in the basement of the Town Hall. This Department provides XXXXX.

Calls for Service

From 1994 to 2003, the Police had XXX calls for service, which can be seen in the tables below.

Calls for Service, 1994-2002

Year	Calls
1994	
1995	
1996	
1997	
1998	
1999	
2000	
2001	
2002	
2003	

Source:

1994-2003 Calls per Capita

Year	Total Calls for Service	Population Estimates	Calls per Person
1994			
1995			
1996			
1997			
1998			
1999			
2000			
2001			
2002			
2003			

Source:

1994-2003 Calls per Staff

Year	Total Number of Calls for Service	Number of Staff	Calls per Staff/
1994			
1995			
1996			
1997			
1998			
1999			
2000			
2001			
2002			
2003			

Source:

Review of Facility Needs

Review of Equipment Needs

Review of Police Department Staffing Needs

The Sutton Police Department currently has X staff. The current accepted staffing standard advises 1 officer per 1,000 in population, which does not include the staffing of the police Chief or the School Resource Offices (SRO). Using the population estimates for 2015, this would mean an additional X officers would be needed in the next ten years.

Recommendations

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 XXX and is approximately XXXX in size, which includes the office area, garages, and salt storage.

Equipment Needs

Staffing Needs

Recommendations

- Conduct a survey of all town roads to gather accurate information on the right-of-ways (ROW) for each road.
- The Town should annually set aside money for road maintenance, in addition to the funding that is received from the State.

SUTTON FREE LIBRARY

The library is located at XXX

The following table highlights the circulation of library materials by patron type and material type, as tracked by the computer system.

2003 Circulation by Patron Type	
Adult Circulation	
Juvenile Circulation	
Total Circulation	
2003 Circulation by Material Type	
Printed Matter Circulation	
Audio Circulation	
Video Circulation	

Total Circulation	
Total of Registered Card Holder Patrons	

Source: 2004 Sutton Free Library Staff

In recent years, the volume and variety of materials the Library has to offer has increased significantly. The current collection that the Library holds can be seen below.

Summary of Library Collection, 2003

Categories	Number of Items
Books	
Audio Books	
Video Cassettes	
CD's	
Audio Cassettes	
Total	

Source: Sutton Free Library 2004

PROGRAMS OFFERED?

Staffing Needs

Currently, Library staff includes XXXXX

Facility Space and Equipment Needs

Recommendations

- Add a DVD movie selection and more books on CD to the circulation.
- Provide additional adult programs, such as music and art activities, author book signings and reading events, and topic seminars.
- Provide additional children's programs, such as a parent/child book club and more activities for older children.

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

Sutton, like most towns in the central New Hampshire region, disposes of its trash at the Wheelabrator Incinerator in Penacook. In 2003, approximately XXXX tons of household trash went to the incinerator, a comparison to past years figures can be seen below. Based on a population of XXX people, trash per person was XXX pounds in 2003. Businesses located in Sutton XXXX.

1994-2003 Solid Waste Figures

1994	
------	--

1995	
1996	
1997	
1998	
1999	
2000	
2001	
2002	
2003	
2004	

Source:

In 2003, the cost for disposal of trash at the incinerator is based on a rate of \$XX/ton for trash. If Sutton exceeds its Guaranteed Annual Tonnage (GAT), which is XXX tons, the cost increases to \$XXX/ton. The additional cost to dispose of solid wastes when the GAT is exceeded should be a significant incentive to continue recycling efforts.

The table below highlights Sutton’s 2003 recycling results.

2003 Recycling Totals

Month	Paper Tons	Commingled Tons
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		
July		
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		
Total		

Source:

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

Staffing Needs

There is currently X staff person that manages the transfer station.

Equipment Needs

Recommendations

- Provide public education materials about the benefits of recycling, including the environmental, public health, and cost savings to the community.
- Sutton should investigate opportunities for low-cost ongoing paint collection and disposal, electronic equipment collection, and household hazardous waste collection in cooperation with abutting communities and the Department of Environmental Services.

TOWN-OWNED CEMETERIES

There are X cemeteries in Sutton that the Town maintains in some way. The Board of Selectmen play the role of the Cemetery Trustees, making the policies and budgets that govern the Town-Owned Cemeteries. A listing of the cemeteries located in Bow can be seen below.

Town-Owned Cemeteries in Sutton

Cemetery	Location	Size (acres)	# of Plots Remaining

Source:

Recommendations

- The Town-Cemeteries should be mapped to show the locations of all occupied plots, the inscription on the gravestone, a picture of the gravestone, and all purchased but yet unoccupied plots.
- Digital pictures should be taken of all headstones to ensure that the information will be preserved and to create a record for maintenance purposes.

SUTTON CENTRAL SCHOOL

Staffing Levels

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 Capacity and Enrollment Figures, 1999-2003*

School	Capacity	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Sutton Central School						

Source: NH Department of Education 2004

* Figures gathered October 1st of each year

Facility Needs

Recommendations

- If school expansion becomes necessary, investigate the possibility of expanding the existing facilities, using town-owned land, and/or purchasing land for the construction of new school buildings.
- The School Board and Town should work together to proactively plan and pay for additional school facilities in a timely manner.

KEARSARGE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Staffing Levels

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 Capacity and Enrollment Figures, 1999-2003*

School	Capacity	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Kearsarge Regional School - Total						
Kearsarge Regional School – Sutton portion						

Source: NH Department of Education 2004

* Figures gathered October 1st of each year

Facility Needs

Recommendations

- The Regional School Board and Town should work together to proactively plan and pay for additional school facilities in a timely manner.

STRATEGIES TO MEET COMMUNITY FACILITIES NEEDS

The following is an inventory of alternative financing sources and strategies Sutton could employ to help pay for needed staff, equipment, and facilities in various Departments. These suggestions should be reviewed by Department Heads and the Board of Selectmen as ways to meet the goals and recommendations outlined in this Chapter.

Bonds

Bonding is a popular method of raising revenue to construct or purchase town equipment and facilities. Though viable, the Town should avoid encumbering too much debt, as it can limit the ability of the Town to provide for future, unidentified needs.

Capital Reserve Funds

Capital reserve funds are similar to savings accounts, as they allow the Town to contribute money to a specific account for the purpose of purchasing or defraying the cost of significant items such as school additions, highway equipment, fire trucks, and municipal buildings and facilities.

Grants-in-aid

New Hampshire communities are eligible for various grants in aid for financing school construction and improvements. Examples include:

- Foundation Aid to help schools provide minimum education
- Building Aid
- Area Vocational School Tuition and Transportation Aid
- Handicap Education Aid
- Sweepstakes Aid
- Nutrition Grants
- Driver Education

Growth Management

The purpose of this Ordinance is to regulate and control the timing of development in accordance with the objectives of both the Master Plan and the Capital Improvements Program, which are adopted by the Planning Board. By having a Growth Management Ordinance in place, Town Departments are able to anticipate growth to occur in a more orderly and manageable way. This allows future capital needs planning and budgeting to happen in a proactive way, as opposed to reacting to large unanticipated growth in any certain year.

License and Permit Fees

Fees, such as building permits, zoning applications, and planning board subdivision and site plan fees are all examples of permit fees. Such fees are highly equitable and are successful for

minimizing the burden on taxpayers for specific programs, such fees are currently collected by the Planning, Zoning, and Building Department.

Private Foundations / Trusts

For years, communities have been the beneficiaries of trusts and donations created by private citizens and foundations. The Town should actively solicit such resources for assistance regarding the development or expansion of recreational facilities and programs..

Sale of Surplus Town Property and Land

Sale of town owned property is another viable option for raising funds to pay for new community facilities. Parcels that should be liquidated include those that have no significant conservation or cultural value, or limited potential for future community facilities.

User Fees

During the 1980s, the concept of user fees for the funding of numerous public facilities and services were widely adopted throughout the nation. To help finance community facilities and programs, several communities in New Hampshire have adopted user fees.

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.