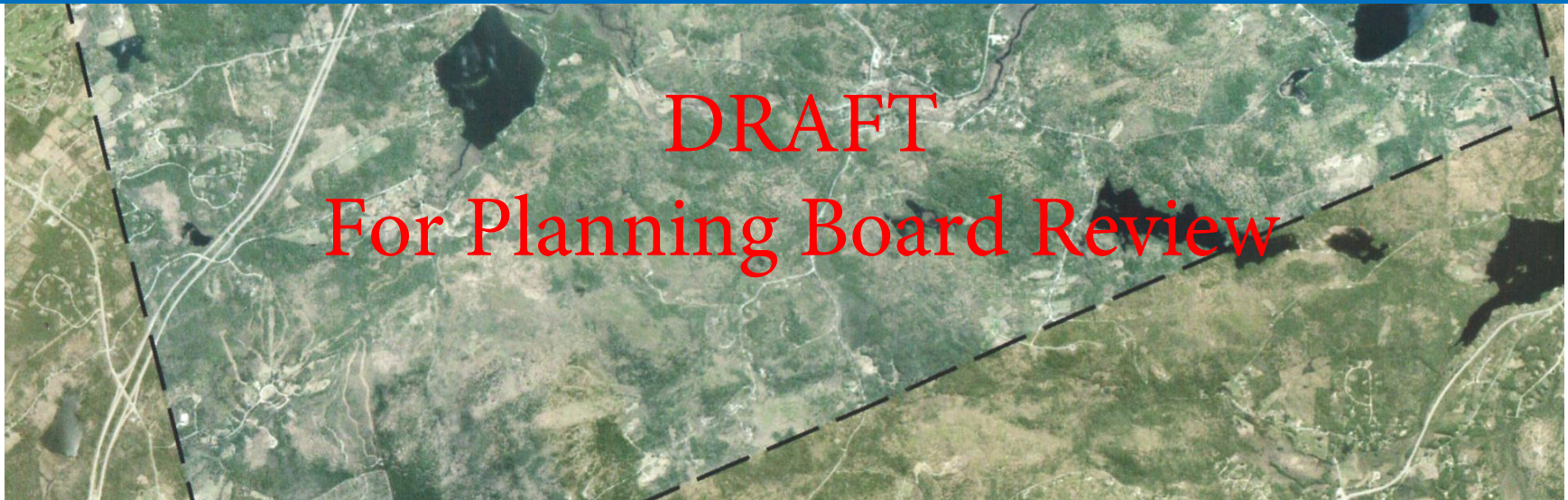




SUTTON MASTER PLAN

Town of Sutton, New Hampshire



DRAFT
For Planning Board Review

2021 Select Board

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2021 Planning Board

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Consultant:

Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission

Michael Tardiff, Executive Director

Katie Nelson, Principal Planner

Craig Tufts, Principal GIS/Transportation Planner

Public Hearing: Date

Adopted: Date



Introduction

This **Master Plan Update** is organized into five chapters plus a set of detailed appendices.

Chapter 1: A Quick Summary is a brief overview of the goals and most important recommendations.

Chapter 2: Sutton Tomorrow – Our Goals in a Nutshell sets out the Town’s goals for the next 5-10 years based on meetings with 10 town departments, committees, boards and community groups as well as an online survey.

Chapter 3: Sutton Today – Our People, Housing & Economy presents current data on the people of the Town and how these statistics have changed since the last Master Plan in 2005. This includes shifts in both the adult and the school aged children of the Town. A summary of the housing stock in the Town and a comparison to adjoining Towns, as well as a review and comparison of tax and median household incomes. And finally a review of what is critical to maintaining a small town way of life.

Chapter 4: Our Services & Resources focuses on the services provided by the Town, the environmental resources that exist and the cultural and historic components of the Town that are so important to the rural feel. Included at the end of this chapter are a series of specific recommendations concerning Service Resources, Environmental Resources and Cultural & Historic Resources.

Chapter 5 Existing & Future Land Uses includes an analysis of current land uses and trends; a review of existing ordinances and other land use regulations, and what are the most important changes to these regulations that are needed to support and sustain the rural community we love.

INTRODUCTION

There are four Appendices included in the **Master Plan Update**:

- Appendix A: Community Input
- Appendix B: Natural Resources & Features
- Appendix C: Transportation Infrastructure & Resources
- Appendix D: Community Facilities & Resources

These include more detailed information about the subject matter in the **Master Plan Update**. These details are provided for those interested in a greater understanding of the facts collected and the sources of the information used.



A QUICK SUMMARY

A QUICK SUMMARY

This **Master Plan Update** summarizes the shared vision of what we, as citizens of Sutton, want our town to be and to provide prioritized recommendations to help achieve that vision.

To begin this process, the Planning Board reached out to local groups for their input and issued an online survey or all town residents (approximately 250 combined responses).

As a result, it is clear to the Planning Board that there is a needed balance between those things we love and want to maintain and those things that need to change to address the challenges Sutton faces.

Three key themes have emerged as the essential issues that need to be addressed:

- Maintain the truly **RURAL ATMOSPHERE** of the town;
- Nurture the inherent **SENSE OF COMMUNITY** and the friendliness of our townspeople; and
- Protect, support and promote our **HISTORIC VILLAGES**.

The two of the greatest challenges that we face are:

- **ENABLING VARIED HOUSING OPTIONS** and
- **IMPROVING THE TOWN'S TAX BASE**.

These are essential so that Sutton remains a place that is an affordable and desirable place to live.

A QUICK SUMMARY

The following proposed KEY ACTIONS in this Plan are designed to help achieve these goals over time.

RURAL ATMOSPHERE

Sutton's rural atmosphere can be protected through some modifications to the Zoning Ordinance that can further protect environmentally sensitive areas and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities. The Planning Board should:

- Develop a **TABLE OF USES** in the Zoning Ordinance that specifies both the type and level of commercial uses permitted by right or special exception within the Rural/Agricultural District. This would improve the current situation where a wide variety of non-residential uses can, through the Special Exception process, can be approved by the Zoning Board.
- Revise the Zoning Ordinance to address the location and intensity of limited commercial uses. These modifications would protect rural areas from impactful uses by focusing those uses in the most suitable areas. For instance, in the in the villages, and for any larger projects, in the vicinity of Exit 10 along Shaker Street and North Road.
- Review the Zoning Ordinance for Cluster Development to ensure that it meets the open space objectives of the Sutton Strategic Conservation Plan and does not become a vehicle to skirt Sutton's subdivision regulations.

There are also opportunities for town boards, committees, and groups to further protect the town's environmentally sensitive areas and enhance recreational options throughout Sutton. The Conservation Commission should:

Implement key strategies of the recently updated Sutton Strategic Conservation Plan. Some of these strategies are:

- Pursue partnerships with regional land trusts to help leverage significant conservation projects in Sutton;
 - Coordinate the findings of the Strategic Conservation Plan with the development of a town-wide trail system that links conservation lands throughout Sutton; and
 - Develop partnerships with neighboring towns aimed at conserving land in border areas of Sutton.
- Form and lead an assessment group to determine if additional town roads and adjoining setbacks need special visual protection. In addition, mountain crests and very steep-sloped areas should be considered for additional protection via visual controls and/or greater land use density restrictions.
- Continue to actively support deed restrictions and the acquisition of critical sites.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Sutton's sense of community can be strengthened with a wider range of housing choices; improved community facilities that include varied choices for outdoor recreation, reasonable tax rates, and options for employment closer to home. The town can do the following to help achieve these goals:

- Recognize that housing for young families and old timers who have lived in Sutton for years needs to be available. Workforce housing needs to be provided for in the zoning regulations. Incentives that encourage this type of construction could be used.
- Permit, and encourage deed restrictions for senior citizen housing, and group living accommodations in appropriate areas.
- Make Town Facilities more available for community use and give assistance to local organizations in support of the “Friendly Community” concept.
- Form a leadership council to work on ideas for improving outdoor recreation. This could include better parking areas for walking trails, and deed-restricted trails for cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.
- Support the objective of a local diverse employment base:
 - Form an Economic Development Committee to help bring appropriate types of uses to town to improve the tax base.
 - Create a new zoning district along Shaker Street/North Road near Exit 10 to provide for limited, light industrial, research and development and hospitality uses.
 - Consider the land abutting the Country Club of New Hampshire golf course for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) zone so that a new village could potentially be established.
 - Utilize available tax incentives, when and where appropriate, to encourage businesses and housing to locate in Sutton and thereby improve our tax base over the long term.
 - Consider using the Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) program, which allows municipalities to establish certain zones in a community where a business can then seek a credit on its New Hampshire Business Profits Tax.
 - Consider adopting The NH Commercial and Industrial Construction Exemption, which permits the Town to implement short-term incentives to encourage the construction of new structures or additions, renovations, or improvements to existing structures. This requires approval at Town Meeting.

HISTORIC VILLAGES

The Villages of Sutton Mills, North Sutton, South Sutton and Blaisdell Lake are the core of Sutton’s small-town atmosphere. Current Zoning regulations do not adequately address the development patterns and potential uses that can restore the vitality of these historic villages without harming the small-town atmosphere. The following can be done:

- Designate specific village zoning districts that address requirements such as lot size, setbacks, and minimum lot width to allow for appropriately scaled renovation and construction.
- Protect the historic nature of the villages through improved land use controls and historically based economic incentives. This should include incentives for the sensitive reuse of existing low functioning buildings such as barns and out buildings.
- Adopt the use of the NH tax relief incentives for property owners who replace or substantially rehabilitate their structures in the villages to encourage the rehabilitation and active reuse of under-utilized buildings and expand the tax base over the long term.
- Permit limited mixed uses in the villages with Planning Board oversight via Conditional Use applications. These mixed uses could include specified types of small commercial activity and limited multiple dwelling uses.

These key action items DO NOT include all of the topics or recommendations in this Master Plan. They are a summary of how we can address the most important issues we face. These efforts can protect Sutton’s many assets and help plan for the future. For more details please read the entire Plan.



Sutton Tomorrow – Our GOALS in a NUTSHELL

Our last Master Plan was completed in 2005; it was extensive and thorough and many of the recommendations in that plan have been achieved. However, a number still remain to be done, and our town has experienced some changes in the last 15 years that need to be addressed.

This **Master Plan Update** summarizes the shared vision of what we, as citizens of Sutton, want our town to be and to provide prioritized recommendations to help achieve this vision.

To begin this process the Planning Board reached out to local groups for their input & issued an online survey for input from all town residents (Approximately 250 combined responses).

As a result, it is clear to the Planning Board that there is a needed balance between those things we love and want to maintain and those things that need to change to address the challenges Sutton faces.

Three key themes have emerged as the essential issues that need to be addressed:

1. Maintaining the truly **RURAL ATMOSPHERE** of the town;
2. Nurturing the inherent **SENSE OF COMMUNITY** and the friendliness of our townspeople; and
3. Protecting, supporting and promoting our **HISTORIC VILLAGES**.

Two of the greatest challenges that we face are **ENABLING VARIED HOUSING OPTIONS** and **IMPROVING THE TOWN'S TAX BASE** so that Sutton remains a place that is an affordable and desirable place to live.

The proposed recommendations in this Plan are designed to achieve these goals over time.

How Have We Changed Since 2005?

Our population has grown from 1,769 in 2005 to approximately 1,978 in 2020. Sutton remains a rural community with distinct villages, scattered houses along existing roads and acres of woodlands and open space.

Sutton has an aging population and slow overall growth. This trend is expected to continue. However, there are current and future needs in housing, transportation, and accessibility that come with accommodating and serving an older community.

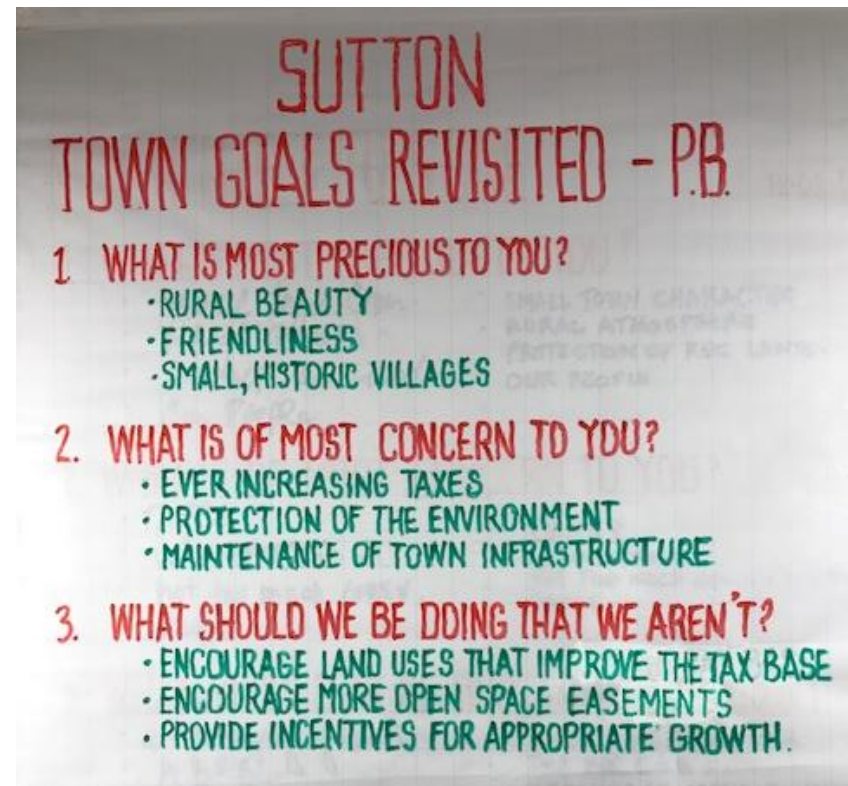
Our average household size continues to decrease, but construction of larger homes continues as the dominant building trend. As a result, there is a lack of adequate housing options for several segments of Sutton’s existing and aspirational population. Choice and affordability for those on modest or fixed incomes and for seniors looking to “downsize” have become key issues.

Sutton’s tax rates have continued to increase based primarily to school costs. This is a significant direct impact on housing affordability because most towns rely primarily on property taxes for almost all of their revenue. These increases are significant to seniors who want to remain here but are often on fixed or limited incomes. Young homeowners who work in the area are also affected if they can’t afford high taxes or expensive housing.

The COVID pandemic has affected everyone. City dwellers are moving to the suburbs and rural communities with many now working remotely from their homes. These changes can also have an impact on our community.

Our Goals & Priorities

In preparation of this Master Plan Update, the Planning Board set out to gather meaningful input from the citizens of Sutton as to their most important goals and priorities. This process included several outreach events held in late 2019 and an online Community Survey that was available in early-to-mid 2020. In total, members of the Planning Board attended meetings with ten separate town departments, committees, boards, and community groups and 180 responses were gathered through the online survey. Utilizing all the input gathered, the Planning Board was able to establish the Plan’s themes (see below).



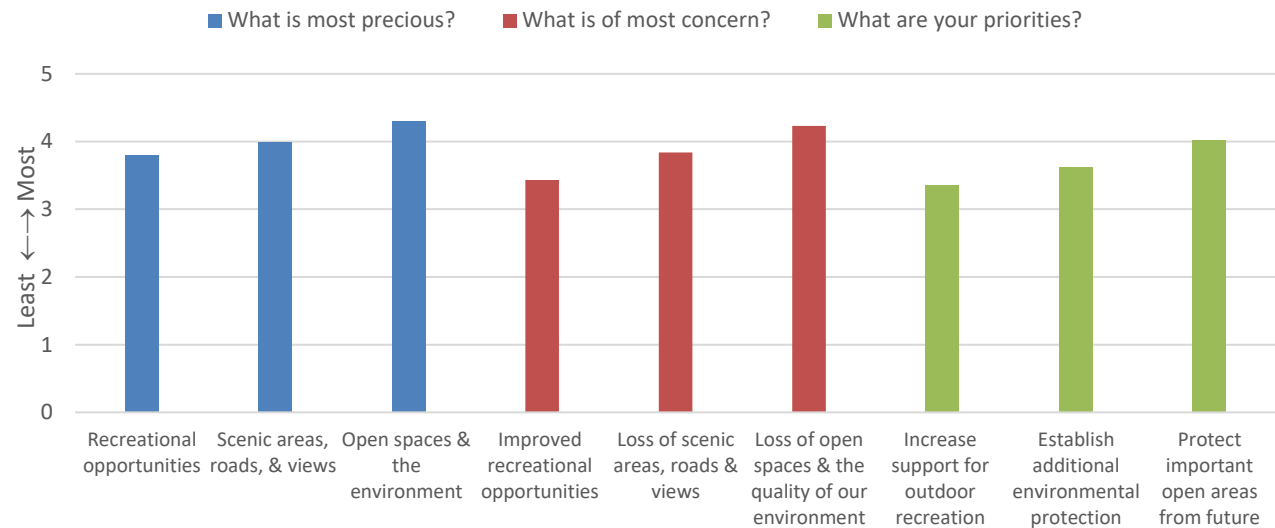
OUR RURAL ATMOSPHERE is our open space, protected water bodies and the town’s overall environmental health. Preservation of our rural beauty requires effective stewardship of these natural resources.

Population trends will affect the need for a variety of recreation options and access to recreation areas and trails. Recreation opportunities accessible for all ages will continue to be important reasons for people to move and remain in Sutton.

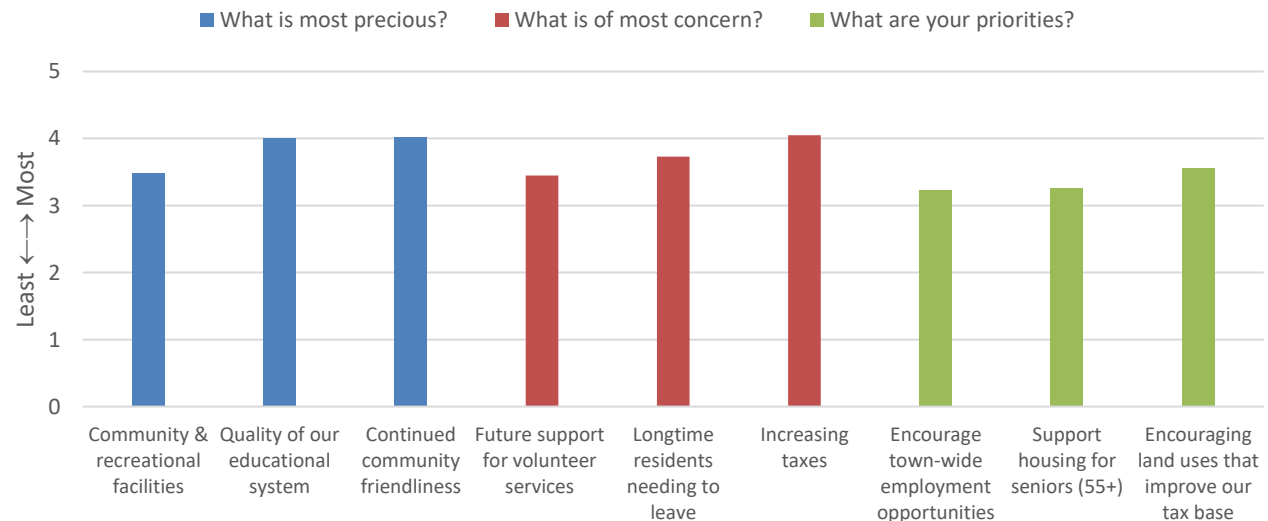
A SENSE OF COMMUNITY is critical to the welcoming atmosphere our town has historically valued. We all want a sense of peace, safety and belonging. Our cultural and civic organizations, community activities, events and volunteerism **ARE SUTTON**. As we try to attract new residents and a stronger employment base this value must be nurtured.

All residents are important parts of our community, from young children to aging seniors. We must maintain and provide a quality education system, affordable housing, and available town services to ensure that all can move to and remain in Sutton.

When thinking of rural character:



When thinking of sense of community:



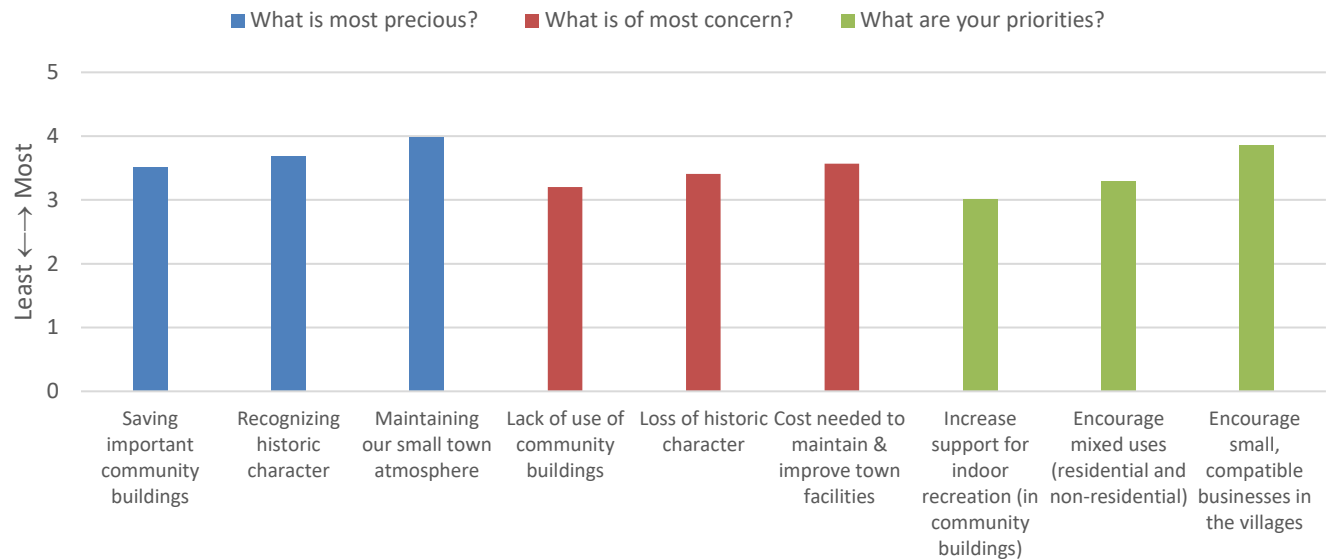
SUTTON TOMORROW – OUR GOALS

OUR HISTORIC VILLAGES

distinguish Sutton from its larger and more “commercialized” neighbors. To preserve that small-town atmosphere any efforts at development should be sensitive to and aim towards preservation of our historic villages, beautiful travel ways and historic sites.

Encouraging appropriate mixed used and commercial development in the village areas will promote the future sustainability of the villages.

When thinking of existing villages:



Key Action Items

The following are the Planning Board’s key action items to address the town’s high priority issues over the next five to ten years.

RURAL ATMOSPHERE

Sutton’s rural atmosphere can be protected through some modifications to the Zoning Ordinance that can further protect environmentally sensitive areas and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.

- a. Develop a **TABLE OF USES** in the Zoning Ordinance that specifies both the type and level of commercial uses permitted by right or special exception within the

Rural/Agricultural District. This would improve the current situation where a wide variety of non-residential uses can, through the Special Exception process, can be approved by the Zoning Board.

- b. Revise the Zoning Ordinance to address the location and intensity of limited commercial uses. These modifications would protect rural areas from impactful uses by focusing those uses in the most suitable areas. For instance, in the in the villages, and for any larger projects, in the vicinity of Exit 10 along Shaker Street and North Road.

There are also opportunities for town boards, committees, and groups to further protect the town’s environmentally sensitive areas and enhance recreational options throughout Sutton.

- a. The Conservation Commission should to work with the Planning Board on recommended land use controls that fairly and equitably direct development.
- b. The Conservation Commission should continue to support deed restrictions & the acquisition of critical sites.
- c. The Conservation Commission should implement key strategies of the recently updated Sutton Strategic Conservation Plan. Some of these strategies are:
 - i. to pursue partnerships with regional land trusts to help leverage significant conservation projects in Sutton;
 - ii. to coordinate the findings of the Strategic Conservation Plan with the development of a town-wide trail system that links conservation lands throughout Sutton; and
 - iii. to develop partnerships with neighboring towns aimed at conserving land in border areas of Sutton.
- b. The Conservation Commission should form and lead an assessment group to determine if additional town roads and adjoining setbacks need special visual protection. In addition, mountain crests and very steep-sloped areas should be considered for additional protection via visual controls and/or greater land use density restrictions.

- c. The Zoning Ordinance for Cluster Development should be reviewed to ensure that it meets the open space objectives of the Sutton Strategic Conservation Plan and is not a potential vehicle to skirt Sutton’s subdivision regulations.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Sutton’s sense of community can be strengthened with a wider range of housing choices; improved community facilities that include varied choices for outdoor recreation, reasonable tax rates, and options for employment closer to home.

- a. The town needs to actively recognize that housing for young families as well as old timers who have lived in Sutton for years needs to be available and protected. Workforce housing needs to be specifically provided for in the zoning regulations. Incentives that encourage this type of construction could also be used.
- b. Deed restrictions for senior citizen housing, as well as group living accommodations need to be permitted in appropriate areas, encouraged and implemented.
- c. Town facilities need to be made available for community use and organizations need to be given assistance to support the “Friendly Community” concept.
- d. Local recreation groups should form a leadership council to work on ideas for improving outdoor recreation. This could include better parking areas for walking trails, and deed-restricted trails for cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

SUTTON TOMORROW – OUR GOALS

- e. The objective of a diverse employment base should be supported through a variety of actions:
 - i. Form an Economic Development Committee to help bring the appropriate types of uses to town that will improve the tax base.
 - ii. Create a new zoning district along Shaker Street/North Road near Exit 10 to provide for limited, light industrial, research and development and hospitality uses.
 - iii. Land abutting the Country Club of New Hampshire golf course should be considered for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) zone so that a new village could potentially be established.
 - iv. Utilize available tax incentives, when and where appropriate, to encourage businesses and housing to locate in Sutton and thereby improve our tax base over the long term.
- f. The Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) program allows municipalities to establish certain zones in a community where a business can then seek a credit on its New Hampshire Business Profits Tax.
- g. The NH Commercial and Industrial Construction Exemption, which can be adopted at Town Meeting permits the Town to implement short-term incentives to encourage the construction of new structures or additions, renovations, or improvements to existing structures.

HISTORIC VILLAGES

The Villages of Sutton Mills, North Sutton, South Sutton and Blaisdell Lake are the core of Sutton’s small-town atmosphere. Current Zoning regulations do not adequately address the development patterns and potential uses that can restore the vitality of these historic villages without harming the small-town atmosphere.

- a. Sutton should designate specific village zoning districts and address requirements such as lot size, setbacks, and minimum lot width to allow for appropriately scaled renovation and construction in Sutton’s villages. The historic nature of the villages needs to be protected through improved land use controls and historically based economic incentives. This should include incentives for the sensitive reuse of existing low functioning buildings such as barns and out buildings.
- b. The Town can adopt the use of the NH tax relief incentives for property owners who replace or substantially rehabilitate their structures in the villages to encourage the rehabilitation and active reuse of under-utilized buildings and expand the tax base over the long term.
- c. Sutton should permit limited mixed uses in the villages with Planning Board oversight via Conditional Use applications. These mixed uses could include specified types of small commercial activity and limited multiple dwelling uses.

These key action items do not include all of the topics or recommendations in this Master Plan. They are a summary of how we can address the most important issues we face. These efforts can protect Sutton’s many assets and help plan for the future.



Sutton Today – Our People, Our Housing & Our Economy

To better understand our community, we must review demographic trends, and patterns of change and then identify positive influences and challenges. By combining the demographic data with the Planning Board’s public outreach responses, we can define how Sutton looks today and clearly identify what needs to be addressed to accomplish our vision over the next 5-10 years.

Without a doubt, our rural “small town” feel is one of Sutton’s greatest strengths and is highly valued and treasured by residents. Sutton’s rural character can be defined in many different ways, including by its historic homes and buildings, open space, agricultural fields, stone walls, and low-density residential uses. Extensive forested lands and water resources support wildlife habitats and recreational opportunities. These factors provide a high quality of life and are a driving force that helps keep both long- and short-term residents in town.

The public input we gathered confirms that residents support preserving Sutton’s strengths while providing the opportunity to draw new residents to the community. Although Sutton’s historic small village centers previously included local businesses and services, those have disappeared, leaving not only an absence of private services that could attract new residents, but also the lack of any commercial taxpayers. Lowering the tax rate, establishing local opportunities for employment, creating affordable and senior housing, and encouraging appropriate uses that fit with Sutton’s rural and small-town feel were most commonly voiced in our outreach.

While we must continue to protect and preserve Sutton’s natural, historical, and cultural resources, we must consider some additional actions to ensure that residents of all ages and income can call Sutton home.

How “Old” is Sutton?

From the 1960s through the 1980s, Sutton experienced substantial growth, nearly tripling the Town’s population. This trend slowed in the 1990s as it did statewide, due mainly to lower migration gains¹. Recently, population growth has started to increase but only slightly. Of the 1,054 residential properties, 780 have a local address with 274 with a non-local, or about 25% of our population is seasonal.

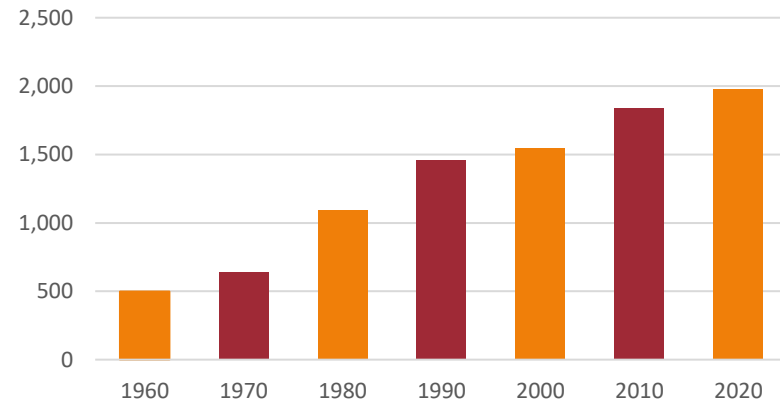
Also, the number of residents 45 and over has increased significantly compared to the modest changes in the younger population. This “Baby Boomer” population will increase the over 65 population in the next two decades¹.

The current median age of Sutton residents is in the mid-40s, meaning that a large portion of our population is working age. In the next ten years, this group will be in their 50s and 60s. Without younger families, the number of school-aged children will decrease.

Meeting the needs of day-to-day living is more of an issue for an aging population. Many retirees remain in rural areas to be close to family or to enjoy the scenic and recreational amenities available. Therefore, providing accessible, year-round outdoor and indoor recreation opportunities to older residents is increasing important. The demand for smaller houses for downsizing families will continue as the average household size decreases

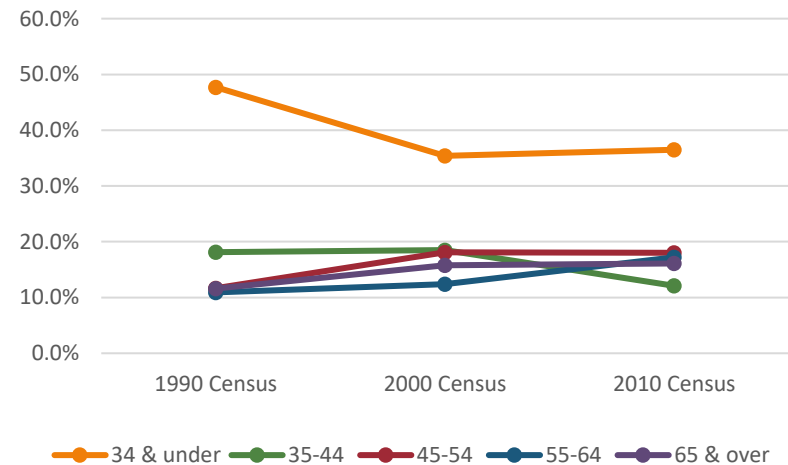
Sutton's Population

Decennial Census Records



Sutton's Historic Population by Age Group

Decennial Census Records



¹ Kenneth Johnson, New Hampshire Demographic Trends in an Era of Economic Turbulence, <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/nh-demographic-trends>.

In addition to the needs of our seniors, there are several ways we can enable new workforce and affordable housing to attract younger households to the community while also supporting households on fixed incomes.

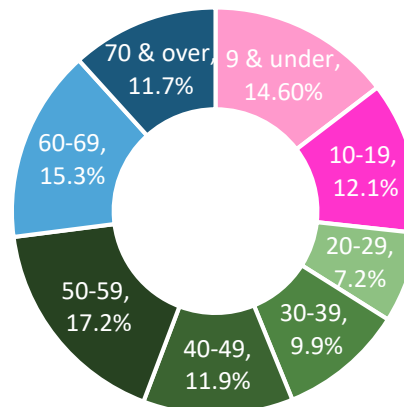
Where are the School-Aged Children?

The number of children enrolled in our public school system is decreasing, as it is across the state. Many rural, regional school districts are facing challenges with maintaining enrollment.

Sutton’s student population has varied over the past five years, the lowest being in 2019 with a total of 263 K-12 students.

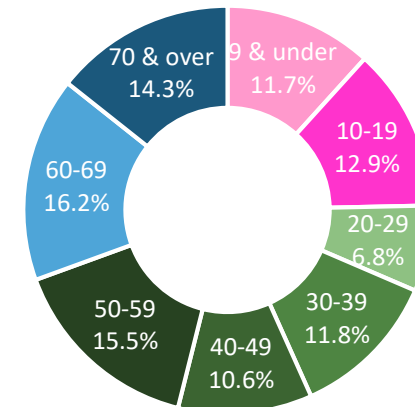
Since so much capital has already been invested in the school system, attracting younger families to the community will be increasingly important. Trends indicate that young people in their 20s and 30s have begun to look for options away from city living. A town that is welcoming to all age groups will become more and more important. Drawing younger families to Sutton will require an inventory of smaller and affordable housing, as well as entry- and mid-level employment positions in the surrounding region.

Population By Age of Sutton
American Community Survey 2006-2010



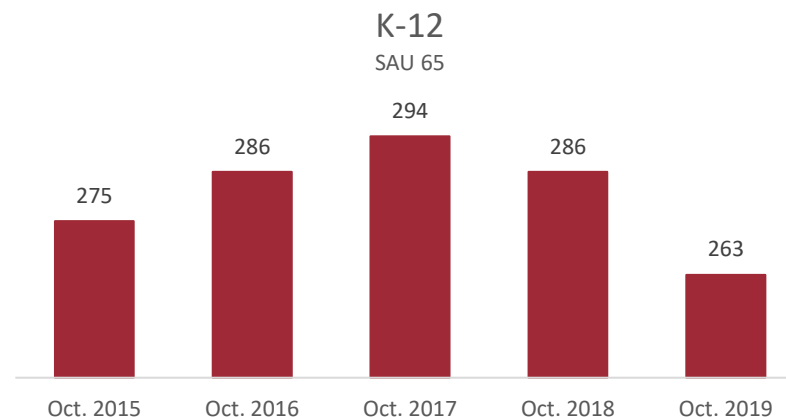
Median Age 45.2 years

Population by Age of Sutton
American Community Survey 2015-2019



Median Age 45.9 years

Total Enrollment of Sutton Children, Grades



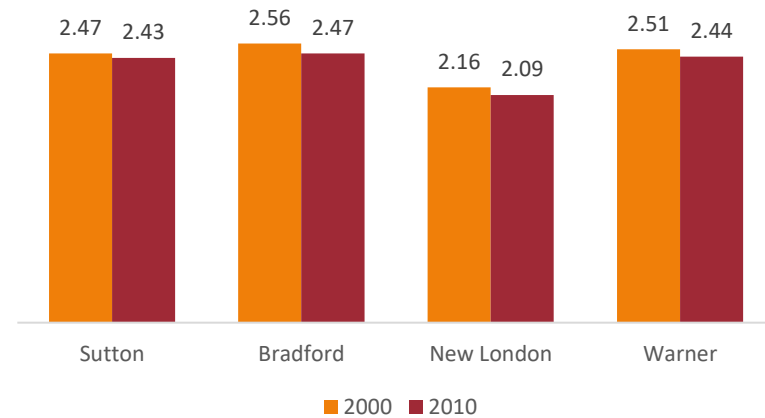
Housing for All

Like many communities in New Hampshire, there are demographic indicators in Sutton that can drive the housing need. One is the age of the population, which suggests a need for housing that is better suited to senior citizens, including single floor living, smaller living space, and lower costs. Older residents are likely to seek to “down-size” to smaller living arrangements, yet in both Sutton and statewide, housing units of 3, 4, or more bedrooms far outnumber one- and two-bedroom units. The group most likely to purchase larger homes, those aged 35-54, is expected to decline statewide, and it is unclear whether the larger units built for Boomers during their child-rearing years will draw sufficient interest from buyers in future years.

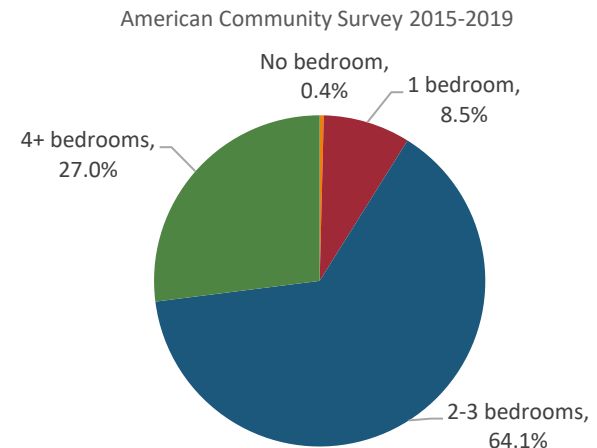
In addition, expanding the housing available to the workforce population can be worthwhile economic development strategy. It requires attracting those who are in the workforce today and in the future. Much of the housing this group requires is similar to that sought by downsizing baby boomers: smaller homes near amenities and places of employment.

The trend for families to have fewer children is another indicator an increasing need for smaller housing units and demonstrates the shifts in supply and demand now occurring in the housing market.

Average Household Size
Decennial Census Records



Occupied Housing Units with Number of Bedrooms
American Community Survey 2015-2019



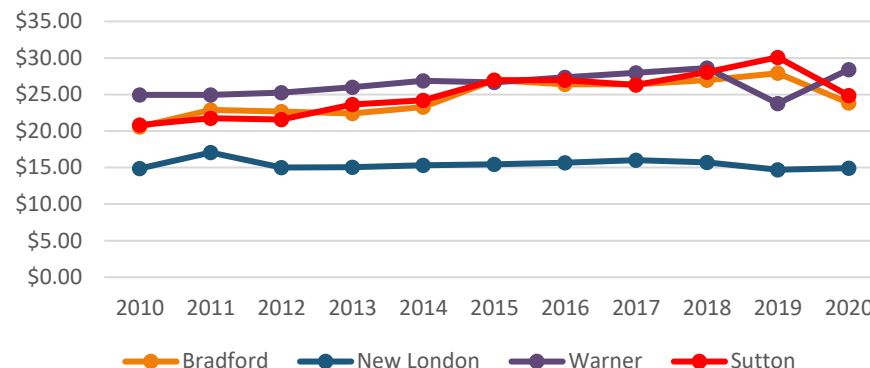
Increasing Tax Rates

Sutton’s tax rate has increased significantly since 2010. The rate in 2020 was \$24.87², approximately four dollars higher than the 2010 rate of \$20.83. As seen below, much of the tax rate can be attributed to the local education and municipal rate, both of which have increased significantly since 2010.

Sutton’s tax rate compared to abutting communities shows a rate of increase most similar to Bradford, which of our neighboring communities has the most similar total population.

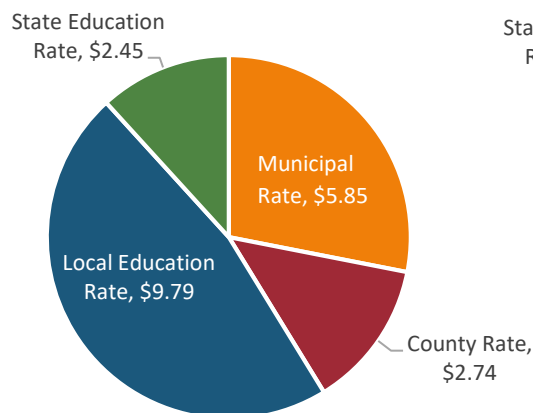
Historic Tax Rate of Sutton & Abutting Communities

NH Department of Revenue Administration



Sutton's 2010 Tax Rate

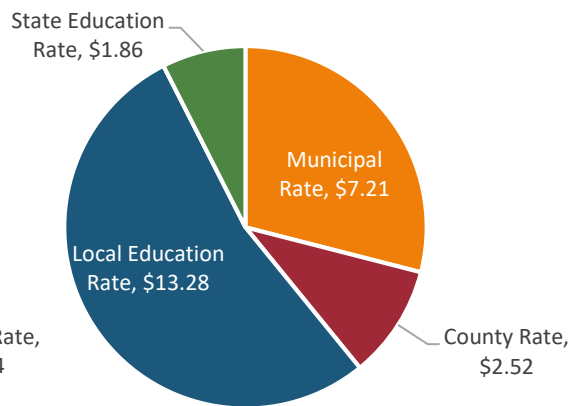
NH Department of Revenue Administration



Total Rate \$20.83

Sutton's 2020 Tax Rate

NH Department of Revenue Administration



Total Rate \$24.87

What did the Community Survey say?

Public input gathered through the Community Survey highlighted residents concern over the rising tax rate. Many cited taxes as a driving force to relocate out of Sutton.

Support was expressed for an improved tax base to help offset the tax rate, but only in a way that fits with Sutton’s rural feel and character. It was also noted that there are no shops in Town. Examples of preferred local businesses include agricultural trades, small retail such as a food market, and a restaurant or coffee shop.

² Sutton completed a town-wide reassessment for 2020. This resulted in a decrease in the tax rates, but that decrease was due entirely to the

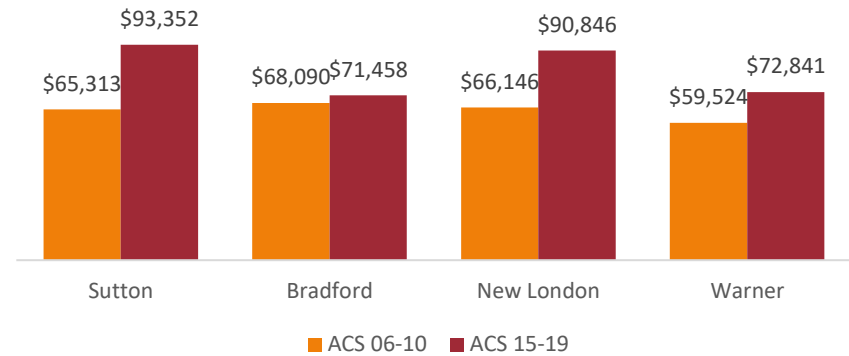
increases in assessed values for Sutton properties not to an increase in costs.

Increasing Median Household Income

New Hampshire generally has a high median household income in comparison with other states, indicating a productive economy with good jobs and competitive salaries. According to ACS data for 2010 and 2019, Sutton’s median household income has increased, especially compared to neighboring communities. This also may indicate that we have a high percentage of residents who are nearing retirement, at the peak of their earning potential, or who are wealthy retirees.

Current & Historic Median Household Income

American Community Survey 2006-2010 & 2015-2019

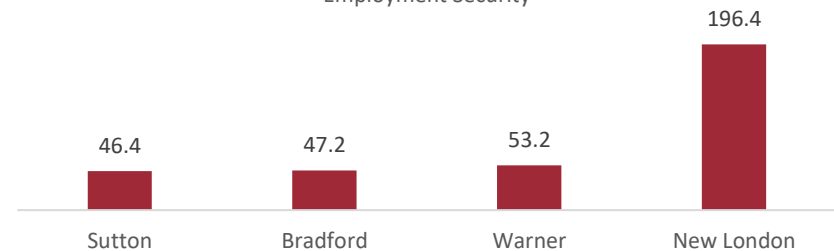


Maintaining A Small Town Way of Life

Low density isn’t the only or perhaps even the best way to maintain a small town way of life. As Suttonians, we recognize the treasure we still have as a rural, friendly town. If we continue to grow in a scattered way along our existing roads, we will over time, become more and more suburban in feel. It is not uncommon to want things to stay as they are – to restrict change- but our villages were once thriving bustling rural centers with homes, farms and businesses. We need to enable the things we want. Change, if properly managed, can help us keep these things. This requires planning, diligence, and patience. We do not need or want rapid growth or excessive commercialization but we do want a diverse population set in a bucolic open environment with a few vibrant villages.

Persons Per Square Mile of Land, 2019

2020 Census, Economic & Labor Market Information Bureau, NH
Employment Security



What’s the difference between the Census and the American Community Survey?

Census data is collected every ten years by the US Census Bureau, gathering official counts of population at a variety of geographic levels. A new data source, American Community Survey (ACS), supplements Census data by asking questions used to measure social and economic characteristics of the population. The ACS is an ongoing survey that gathers trends from a smaller population sample annually, producing estimates on data originally only available in the decennial census. Data is collected in five year samples, with ACS 2015-2019 being the most recent. At the time of this Plan’s development, some of the 2020 Census data has been released and incorporated where appropriate in this Plan. Additional 2020 Census data is expected to be released over the coming year.



Our Services & Resources

Sutton is home to a small community living within a large area with abundant natural resources and forested areas. The Town is situated at a prime location along I-89 at Exit 10. NH 114 is the main north south link to adjoining communities. Villages emerged where residents and services historically clustered, including North Sutton, South Sutton, and Sutton Mills.

Demographics to Support Community Services:

- The Town contains 42.6 square miles of land and 0.8 square miles of water bodies, this is a geographically large community for the region.
- The Town contains 42.6 square miles of land and 0.8 square miles of water bodies, this is a geographically large community for the region.
- Three villages concentrate people and services; North Sutton, Sutton Mills, and South Sutton (i.e. Town Hall, Police and Fire Station, Highway Garage, post offices, schools, and public library.)
- Sutton's population was 1,881 in 2019 as reported by the New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives, or a population density of 44 persons per square mile.
- Sutton's population is growing older, as seniors choose to age in place.
- Sutton's residential property owners generally pay real estate taxes that are relatively higher than real estate taxes paid by residential property owners in nearby communities.

What Did Residents Say?



Retain the small-town, friendly atmosphere.



Maintain current facilities and services at reasonable tax levels.



Increase road maintenance.



Encourage small businesses in the village areas.



Protect natural water resources.



Ensure open space and the environment are protected.



Expand the trail system.

Accomplishments since 2005:

- Establishment additional Capital Reserve Funds Accounts to help in the financing of large purchases.
- Upgraded several Town facilities to address deficiencies, functional needs, and ADA compliance.
- Hired additional administrative support staff was hired for the Land Use Department.
- Made digital tax maps were made available on the Town website.
- Increased broadband availability and speeds with fiber optic and technology improvements.
- Completed the Sutton Strategic Conservation Plan (Natural Resources Inventory) in 2020.
- Protected over 1,500 acres of conservation lands since 2016.
- Added the Old South Sutton School House (District #9) to the State Registry.
- Reorganized the Old Store Museum (Town- owned) for visitors.
- Received a Land and Community Heritage Investment Grant for renovations to the South Sutton Meetinghouse.
- Made improvements to the Zoning Ordinance & Land Use procedures.

Town Services Today & Tomorrow

Meeting the Need: Facilities, Staffing, & Equipment

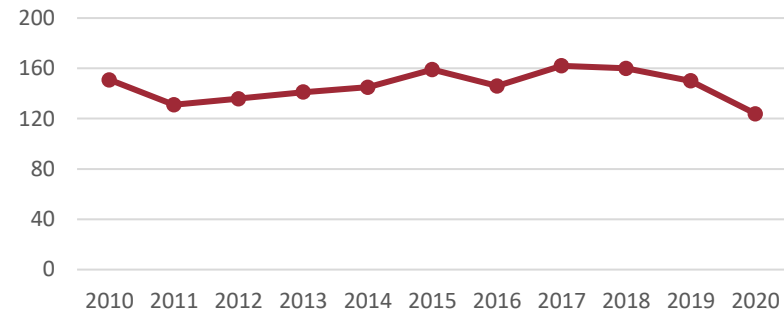
Community service needs are often a challenge for small towns. As a Town’s population continues to grow, the needs will change. Additional staff may be required, as well as additional office, meeting, training, and storage space. Money for regular maintenance, construction of new facilities or additions, or purchasing new or replacement equipment is not always immediately available. Funding can be difficult to secure or may require a bond.

To be prepared for expected and unexpected purchases, the town should continue to build its Capital Reserve Funds with annual deposits voted for at Town Meeting. The Planning Board should participate with Town Departments in an annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP) development process. This is an important community planning and fiscal management tool for financing capital improvements over multiple years. Prioritizing large municipal expenditures using this process can provide stability in the municipal tax rate by planning and budgeting for major expenditures well in advance.

For example, we can help determine public safety needs by reviewing calls for service to the Police and Fire Departments. As shown in the adjoining charts, the number of calls for service decreased in 2020 for both departments. Since this was the year of COVID-19, a review of trends over last decade tells a different story.

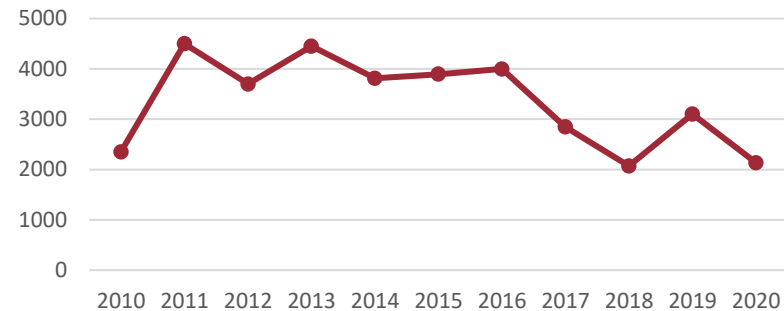
Fire Department Calls for Service

Sutton Annual Reports



Police Department Calls for Service

Sutton Annual Reports



Further analysis of the data may indicate that some specific needs must be considered. For instance, our volunteer fire department can only work if there are enough capable residents who live and work locally. Without such a base the town may be forced to consider a paid rather than volunteer fire department. Regular review of this type of data and recent trends for all of Sutton’s departments can help identify our current and anticipate our future needs.

OUR SERVICES & RESOURCES

Funding for Road Maintenance and Improvements

Throughout the public input process, concern was raised about the level of ongoing maintenance on town roads. Revenue for town roads comes from the State Highway Aid (state gas tax), automobile registration fees, and local property taxes. In New Hampshire, local communities are responsible for the majority of all road miles in the state but are restricted by state statute from specifically taxing for this purpose.

Sutton has worked with the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission to implement a Road Surface Management System (RSMS). This program is designed to help prioritize road improvements and to develop a transparent system for short, medium and long-term improvements made by the Town. Larger projects would be programmed for and eventually funded through the NHDOT 10 Year Plan, which is updated every two years. Due to limitations in such funding, successful projects require building a strong case and continued support over many years.

Broadband Availability

Available and reliable broadband internet is critical to not only sustain a high quality of life for residents, but also to keep Sutton a desirable community within the region. Broadband has become increasingly intertwined with daily life, impacting all ages of the population. With available broadband, small businesses can thrive in rural areas without being tied to urbanized centers. High-capacity, fast internet technology allows students to receive a high level of education, whether in the classroom or from home. Access to online health care has become increasingly common. The internet has become a

critical resource in emergency management operations, as well as other public safety procedures. Sutton has full broadband availability, but as needs and technology changes the Town should seek to improve service and providers as opportunities are presented.

Recreation Considerations

Recreational needs of the older population need to be considered as the population ages. As more residents stay in New Hampshire year round this will become increasingly important. There is also the desire and need to attract younger families and therefore we must plan for their recreational needs as well.

Underutilized or vacant town-owned property can sometimes be used to expand recreational opportunities. As land parcels become available that would be suitable for recreational uses, the town should consider “land-banking” or purchasing these parcels for future use. Additionally, a local community center potentially using existing buildings could be evaluated.

Trails, Walking, & Bicycling

As an important component to a high quality of life, trails provide a much-needed means of stress reduction and physical well-being. Recreation facilities also provide residents with a place to interact and create a sense of community that is beneficial to residents of all ages.

Sutton has many trails in town, and there are opportunities for the creation of both new trails and connections to larger trail networks within the region and surrounding communities. Trails range from short walks, to long distance trails like the Sunapee-Ragged-Kearsarge Greenway that

passes through Sutton. Among the most promising trail areas in Sutton is the King Hill Reservation, which includes portions of the former ski area. This property of more than 400 acres near the New London town line has become popular for hikers, skiers, and other trail users in all four seasons. There is interest in enhancing this trail system by building a new trail within the right of way of I-89. This trail would enable the completion of a loop, and improve access to the Reservation. The trail could be built in the forested area of the right of way and thereby avoid crossing private property.

Towns can create Town-maintained trails on their currently unmaintained Class VI roads. This can be done by designating specific Class VI roads as Class A Trails at Town Meeting. The ideal candidate roads have little development along them, are scenic, have no inherent liability concerns, already allow public access, and also serve to connect large areas of open space, conservation, and/or agricultural lands. By reclassifying certain Class VI roads to Class A Trails, the community could take a step toward expanding a community-wide system of greenway trails. This is something the Conservation Commission and/or a Recreation Committee should pursue.

Sutton's Villages - North Sutton, Sutton Mills, South Sutton and Blasdell Lake - are nodes of activity that are suitable for improvements that support walking and bicycling. Pedestrian and bicycle connections within and between these villages would enhance the experience and improve access for both recreation and transportation. Accommodations such as sidewalks, trails, roadway shoulders, bike lanes, or lane

striping are among a range of treatments that may help enhance non-motorized travel in Sutton.

Environmental Resources Today & Tomorrow

Water Quality & Stormwater Management

Water quality and stormwater management go hand in hand. Nearly everyone has seen the effects of stormwater at one time or another: streets and basements have flooded, erosion threatened properties, and drinking water sources became compromised. However, there are other implications of stormwater that are not so easily seen. For example, without properly maintained stormwater infrastructure, oils and sediments can eventually be deposited into Sutton's surface waters, deteriorating the water quality and in turn impacting plants, wildlife, and the people who enjoy them. Without proper land use planning, the quantity and quality of the primary aquifer in the town can also be threatened.

Educating the community about water quality and stormwater controls should be a priority so that our residents become aware of why they should care about stormwater. Town stormwater management bylaws and regulations, utilizing best management practices, for both commercial and residential development should continue to be adopted and enforced.

Permanent Land Protection

Within Sutton, there are several town and privately owned properties that have conservation easements in place. These sites are permanently protected as conservation land. The list

OUR SERVICES & RESOURCES

of Conservation Lands, located in Appendix B, illustrates the town-owned parcels.

Many other parcels appear to include large areas of open space without any permanent legal protection through conservation easements or deed restrictions to keep those open areas intact. Without permanent protection, those open spaces are susceptible to future development, even though they may have ecological significance or are valued as open spaces.

Flooding & Dams

A classified Significant Hazard dam in Sutton is the Chadwick Meadows Wildlife Refuge Dam along Lyon Brook. There are two Low Hazard dams, Blaisdell Lake Dam along a tributary of the Warner River and the Cascade Brook Dam along Cascade Brook. These areas are unlikely to flood but still have the potential of breach or failure.

Beaver dams carry a high probability of flooding and potential for breakage. Beaver dams are located throughout the Town. One prominent location is the upstream side of Kezar Lake near Penacook Road/Kings Hill Road. This historically been a problem and caused damage to those roads. Another location is Beaver Dam Pond on Beaver Pond Road.

Habitat Loss and Fragmentation

Habitat loss and fragmentation of open space is a challenge that many rural communities face. Ideally, we would like to have a contiguous network of open space for the purposes of wildlife migration and ecological connectivity. Practically, this can't always be the case due to both the manner and the timing that open space parcels are acquired. A cohesive open

space plan and criteria for high value natural resources can help determine which properties to prioritize for this purpose.

This is and should continue to be a high priority concern of the Conservation Commission.

Habitat loss occurs most frequently through scattered and cumulative development patterns that consume the landscape. Since Sutton is home to many wildlife species, it is especially important to preserve their habitats. So it is important to create awareness about the threats to our wildlife and to implement plans for habitat protection.

It is equally important to preserve ecologically fragile and significant habitat, like wetlands and vernal pools, which serve as feeding and breeding areas for many species. Actively maintaining Sutton's natural resources and wildlife will help to maintain Sutton's rural character. Maintaining an accurate list of wetlands that would benefit from restoration efforts or that are particularly vulnerable to habitat loss an important way to assure that these areas are protected.

Future Drinking Water Protection

Sutton contains one aquifer with high potential to yield good water. This aquifer is located in the northeastern portion of town and in therefore, one of the town's significant water resources. While the aquifer is not currently subject to groundwater threats, future development within the aquifer, especially within the aquifer charging area, could potentially impact this resource. Other aquifers with limited potential to yield groundwater are within Sutton, as detailed in Appendix B. Since all of Sutton's drinking water currently comes from

wells, protecting the quality and availability of safe and plentiful drinking water is extremely important.

Cultural & Historic Resources Today & Tomorrow

Stewardship & Volunteerism

Sound and responsible stewardship of our historic and cultural resources is tied to a certain level of responsibility to protect, manage and provide education about these resources.

The challenge is to engage the community at multiple levels, about what they can do with their own property and how they can participate in the protection of the Town's irreplaceable resources.

The historic nature of much that still exists in our villages both public and privately owned, is an extremely important part of what makes Sutton so special. This atmosphere needs to be carefully nurtured and protected while still preserving the rights of individual property ownership. In other communities, Historic Districts have been established to mandate the preservation of historic structures and sites. This does not seem appropriate or necessary in Sutton. There are ways to encourage and support financially the creative use of old buildings and thereby maintain what is so special about our villages while also allowing them to grow and change.

Volunteerism is tied very closely to stewardship of our cultural and natural resources. It plays a large role in the success or failure of many activities. Why an individual decides to volunteer is instrumental in understanding how to approach

recruitment of a broader base of volunteers in our community. Specifically, it is critical that we figure out what will attract younger residents to participate in more of our local and regional boards and committees.

New Hampshire communities like Sutton have a long tradition of reliance on volunteerism to fulfill many local functions. Volunteer efforts to support cultural events such as Old Home Day and other initiatives are often critical to the success of the event. Looking for new and creative partnerships to help with a specific project can be invaluable to getting a project off the ground and engaging new residents in town activities. How Sutton responds to the reality of an aging population, a declining pool of a younger residents ready to take over, and the overall drop in the volunteering rate is going to be critical to maintaining the integrity and sense of community so valued by residents.

With all this being said, it is important to acknowledge all of the residents who have served as volunteers, giving their time and service to our community. It is the ability for all of us to work together that has so greatly contributed to Sutton's high quality of life and sense of community for all.

Recommendations

Service Resources

- a. Initiative a long term improvement plan for town facilities and staffing needs.
- b. Implement a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) so that the Town can afford large municipal expenditures with limited impact to the tax rate.
- c. Use the Town's Road Surface Management System (RSMS) to better prioritize road improvement projects.
- d. Support available transportation resources that serve Sutton's aging population.
- e. Implement full cellular and improved broadband internet coverage of the community, including making such services from multiple providers.
- f. Promote and establish local and regional trails to connect to established regional trail networks.
- g. Develop and improve trailheads with kiosks and adequate area for parking.

Environmental Resources

- a. Conduct outreach education on protecting Sutton's natural resources, such as permanent land protection, invasive species control, and stormwater management.
- b. Actively support the Conservation Commission's implementation of the Strategic Conservation Plan.
- c. Develop stewardship programs for better understanding of

the importance of wildlife habitat protection.

- d. Continue the Land Use Change Tax Conservation Fund for the purchase of appropriate parcels.
- e. Protect potential future drinking water resources, including the high-yielding aquifer in the northeast corner of town.
- f. Monitor the condition of dams, including beaver dams, and budget for needed improvements.

Cultural & Historic Resources

- a. Engage volunteer participation in town projects, local town boards, committees, and commissions.
- b. Improve town and community facilities for community and local organizations use.
- c. Support the creation of a leadership council to work on ideas for improving outdoor recreation within the town.
- d. Develop stewardship concepts that support and encourage historic conservation of our villages, special buildings and sites.
- e. Adopt land use regulations that both protect the historic fabric of our town while protecting individual property rights and the need for the town to appropriately grow and change.



Existing & Future Land Uses

Sutton's land uses range from historic villages to wide swaths of undeveloped forested areas, steep slopes, and sensitive natural resources. The chapter outlines the Planning Board's strategy for protecting Sutton's natural resources while the stage for a future that includes appropriate levels of economic growth.

Important issues to support Sutton's sustainable future:

- Sutton's small-town atmosphere is embodied in the villages of Sutton Mills, North Sutton, South Sutton, and Blaisdell Lake. The protection and enhancement of the villages can be achieved through zoning changes and the use of incentives. Initiatives to enhance and protect the villages should include the appropriate use of a Village based Cluster Development option and provisions allowing limited mixed-use opportunities.
- Sutton needs to strength opportunities for housing for all residents, from young families to those seeking to age in place. A variety of housing choices will help assure Sutton's sustainable future.
- More sensitive land use controls which still allow for appropriate construction in the future areas of the town can at the same time help avoid major visual or environmental impacts in these areas.
- There is potential for limited commercial and light industrial uses in specific areas of the town. This could improve the tax base while also assuring that these uses are situated only where they are best suited.
- The Sutton Strategic Conservation Plan offers a strategy to continue to protect Sutton's natural resources while proactively working to develop the town trail network.

EXISTING & FUTURE LAND USES

Existing Land Uses

The total land area of Sutton is approximately 26,000 acres. The single-family/duplex designation accounted for just under 968 acres. Agricultural lands accounted for almost 570 acres. Outdoor recreation space totals at just over 530 acres, which includes playing fields, trails, and the Country Club of New Hampshire. Commercial retail uses account for less than 7 acres. Commercial mix and other commercial

accounts for much more land at just under 64 acres. Institutional properties such as schools, churches, and governmental utilize about 90 acres. The table shows these active land uses plus those areas that are open space, road pavement surface, and the remaining acres in undeveloped lands. These land uses can be seen on the **Existing Land Use Map** at the end of this Chapter.

Current Land Uses in Sutton

Land Use Map

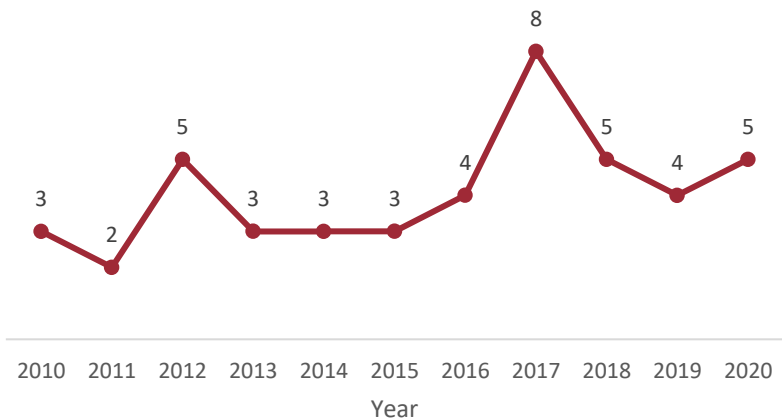
Land Use Category	Acres
Single Family Duplex	967.8
Multi-Family	0.3
Other Residential	10.9
Commercial Retail	6.8
Commercial Mix / Other Commercial	63.9
Agricultural Land	569.6
Developed Agricultural Land	89.8
Outdoor Recreation	530.3
Institutional	89.5
Industrial	18.8
Gravel Pits	15.0
Communication	6.8
Cemeteries	5.0
Road Pavement Surface	237.0
Other Transportation	170.8
Undeveloped Land	23,038.9
TOTAL	26,014.6

Building Trends

Residential building trends indicate an increase in housing units in recent years, reflective of the growing economy since the 2008 recession. As shown in the graphic, a net of five new residential building permits were issued in 2020, following a high of eight permits in 2017. It should also be noted that the number of building permits issued is a net change in dwelling units and includes any demolition permits.

Sutton's Net Change in Housing Units

NH Office of Strategic Initiatives & Town of Sutton



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic on personal incomes, business opportunities and where people may choose to live makes it difficult to predict future trends in terms of residential building permits. Without any changes to our current land use regulations it is not unreasonable to assume Sutton may not have the ability to protect our Town from inappropriate uses.

“Current Use” Trends

Current Use is a property tax incentive to make it easier for landowners to keep their open space undeveloped. Instead of being taxed as its real estate market value, land in “Current Use” is taxed on its income-producing capability, i.e., as a woodlot, or a farm, not as a potential site for houses. Current use keeps property taxes at a lower, more predictable rate.

Lower taxes on land in Current Use may be an incentive to limit development of open land, but the Current Use designation is not permanent. Land in Current Use can be developed. Property owners can remove all or a portion of their land from Current Use at any time and pay a Land Use Change Tax paid to the town. Sutton is fortunate that the Land Use Change Tax collected is used for conservation purposes. Most recently in 2020, \$2,549 was collected in Land Use Change Tax when 14.12 acres were removed.

As of 2020, 69.5% of all land in Sutton has been put in Current Use, preserving the land in its traditional use, much of which as forestland. In 2020 alone, 54.74 acres were added. Comparing 2020 to 2010, the amount of total land in Current Use has increased, as has the number of Current Use parcels.

Current Use Trends – Comparative of 2010 & 2020

NH Department of Revenue Administration and Town of Sutton Annual Report

Year	Total Acres in Current Use	Total Current Use Owners	Total Current Use Parcels
2020	18,944	372	484
2010	17,559	301	428

Sutton’s Zoning and Land Use Regulations

The following is a summary of Sutton’s existing zoning and land use regulations.

Zoning Ordinance

The Town of Sutton is divided into two districts - a Residential District and a Rural-Agricultural District. The locations of these Districts can be seen on the **Future Land Use with Existing Zoning Map** with the areas designated as the Rural Agricultural District being by far the largest.

In critical areas Overlay Districts are superimposed on the two base zoning Districts so that additional regulations can be applied. There are currently 3 overlay districts: Steep Slopes, Wetlands/Shoreland, and Floodplains Land may be used under rules established for each base zone plus any requirements specific to the relevant overlay district.

The Development Constraints Map in Appendix B of this plan shows the location of the wetlands (National Wetlands Inventory), steep slopes (derived from DEM data) and floodplain overlay districts (floodplains from FEMA Flood Insurance Rates Maps), which are mapped using GIS data available from NH GRANIT. A potential Aquifer Protection

EXISTING & FUTURE LAND USES

Summary Sutton’s Current Zoning Ordinance

Residential District

- Permits single-family dwellings & accessory buildings; manufactured homes on single lots; rooming or boarding houses; home occupations; farm stands.
- Additional uses permitted by special exception.

Rural/Agricultural District

- Permits uses outlined in the Residential District as well as forestry and accessory buildings.
- Additional uses permitted by special exception.

Wetlands Overlay District

- Protects the public health, safety and general welfare by controlling and guiding the use of land areas which have been found to be saturated or subjected to high water table for extended periods of time; including established and seasonal wetlands.

Steep Slope Overlay District

- Limits the nature and intensity of development of steep slopes to those uses which can be harmoniously, appropriately, and safely located on steep slopes and thereby serve the additional objectives to prevent soil erosion; protect surface waters from sedimentation, turbidity, runoff of storm water and effluent from sewage disposal systems; preserve tree cover and other vegetative cover; protect wildlife habitat; preserve scenic views; protect natural areas; and maintain ecological balance.

Floodplain Development Ordinance

- Sutton is a participating community in the National Flood Insurance Program and agrees to comply with the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1986 as detailed in the ordinance.

Overlay Zone could be developed in the same manner if the Conservation Commission or the Planning Board recommends that such an additional overlay would be helpful to conservation and land use planning.

Other Zoning Ordinance Provisions

In addition to the Zoning Ordinance, Sutton has other Land Use Regulations that influence and help shape the land use patterns in Town. Some of these regulations are specific to a District, while others can be applied to the entire Town when certain criteria are met.

Special Exceptions

A use which may be approved by the Zoning Board of Adjustment in Districts where the use is specifically authorized by Special Exception when the Zoning Board of Adjustment finds that such use can be developed in accordance with the provisions of Article VI of the Zoning Ordinance. In the two base districts a wide variety of uses are allowed by Special Exception. In particular, *any type of industrial, commercial, or agricultural use* can be allowed by Special Exception in the Rural/Agricultural District.

Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act Provisions

Public water bodies, as defined by the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act. NH RSA 483-B establishes rules for buffers and setbacks required. In Sutton these include Blaisdell Lake, Billings Pond, Kezar Lake, Gile Pond, Loch Lyndon (Newbury) Reservoir, and Russell Pond. Sutton has approved additional buffers under certain conditions.

Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations

The Planning Board’s process and standards for the subdivision of land and the review of commercial and non-single family residential site plans is outlined in the Town’s Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations. Originally enacted in 1970 (subdivision regulations) and 1974 (Site Plan Regulations) and most recently updated in 2018, the regulations lay out the procedure for the Planning Board’s review of applications, the information that must be prepared by applicants, and specific design standards as applicable to a particular application. The Planning Board will, in certain situations, approve waivers to some of these requirements as well as Conditional Use Approval where permitted.

Cluster Development

The purpose of the Cluster Development provision is:

1. to encourage the preservation of open space,
2. to promote more efficient use of land in harmony with its natural features and limitations,
3. to accommodate flexibility and variety in residential development within prescribed limits, and
4. to enhance and protect the health, safety, convenience, and general welfare of the residents of Sutton.

The Cluster Ordinance also sets rules to help assure a level of minimum privacy for residents; safety for children, pedestrians, and bicyclists; and to enhance aesthetic enjoyment through interrelating open spaces. The use of the cluster option can be a key method of promoting sustainable and appropriate housing development in Sutton. Applications for Cluster Developments must also comply with the

Subdivision and Site Plan Regulations. Options for the potential update of the Cluster Development provision are described later in this chapter.

How to Support a Sustainable Community

A sustainable community is one that plans for and implements strategies that protect what is most valued and presently exists while at the same time allows for and manages necessary change to meet changing needs.

Based on input from our fellow citizens, the Planning Board has determined that sustainable development in Sutton has three objectives:

2. nurture the rural atmosphere,
3. reinforce the sense of community, and
4. protect the essence of the historical villages.

There are a number of tools and approaches available to support and promote sustainable residential and commercial development in Sutton. These approaches include modifications to zoning in Sutton’s villages as well as in the area of Exit 10 and the area in the vicinity of the Country Club of New Hampshire.

Economic incentive options include the use of tools such as the Community Revitalization Zone (ERZ) program or the Commercial and Industrial Construction Exemption.

Approaches for securing Sutton’s future are more fully described in the next section.

Future Land Use - Key Action Items

The following are the Planning Board's key Land Use action items for the next 5 to 10 years. These actions items support the Master Plan's three themes: Rural Atmosphere, Sense of Community and Historic Villages.

Rural Atmosphere

The protection of Sutton's rural atmosphere can be achieved through changes to the Zoning Ordinance as well as by the town and local groups and committees. The focus should be directed toward environmentally sensitive areas and outdoor recreation opportunities.

The Planning Board should:

- a. Modify the Sutton Zoning Ordinance to address the location and intensity of appropriate mixed use, light industrial and commercial uses. The modifications would be designed to better protect rural areas from impactful uses while at the same time focusing those uses in areas that is more suitable. Implementation actions are:
 - i. to create a **TABLE OF USES** that specifies the type and level of non-residential uses permitted by right or by Special Exception within the Rural/Agricultural District.
 - ii. to permit low impact light industrial, research and development and hospitality uses along portions of Shaker Street/North Road in the vicinity of Exit 10 (see **Future Land Use Map**).
 - iii. to review and revise the Cluster provision of the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that it meets the objectives of the

Sutton Strategic Conservation Plan.

- iv. to modify the Cluster provisions to allow cluster development as either a Permitted or Condition Use in the Rural/Agricultural District instead of through the current Special Exception Process. Particular emphasis would be placed on the trail development, the protection of wildlife habitats and the improvement of critical components of open space.
- v. to evaluate whether very steep-sloped areas should have additional visual controls and/or greater land use density restrictions through an update of the Steep Slope Overlay District.
- vi. to consider adopting an Aquifer Protection Overlay Zone to protect aquifer in the northeastern portion of town that has a high potential to yield good water.

The Conservation Commission should:

- a. Implement key strategies of the Sutton Strategic Conservation Plan which are:
 - i. to pursue the expansion of a trail system that links conservation lands throughout Sutton.
 - ii. to partner with regional land trusts to help leverage significant conservation projects in Sutton.
 - iii. to work with neighboring towns to conserve land in the border areas of Sutton; and
 - iv. to form and lead an assessment group to determine if more town roads and adjoining setbacks need additional

visual protection.

- b. Pursue the protection of important environmentally sensitive areas with land use controls that fairly and equitably restrict impactful development.
- c. Prioritize obtaining new permanently protected conservation land over the aquifer.

Sense of Community

A sense of community will be strengthened with a range of housing choices in town; ample community facilities including varied outdoor recreation areas; reasonable tax rates; and employment opportunities close to home. The following are action items in support of these goals:

- a. The Town needs to actively recognize that housing for young families as well as old timers who have lived in Sutton for years needs to be both provided and protected.
 - i. Workforce housing needs to be specifically allowed and encouraged through zoning regulations and incentives applicable to appropriate areas.
 - ii. Deed restricted housing should be provided for those 55+ years old,
 - iii. Group living, should be permitted in appropriate areas to provide affordable alternatives for seniors.
- b. The Town should support development of a diverse employment base primarily by allowing limited commercial uses in appropriate areas of Town.
 - i. The town should form an Economic Development

Committee to help bring the appropriate types of uses to town that will improve the tax base.

- c. The Town should delineate and zone for a Hospitality, Research/Development, and Light Industrial District along portions of Shaker Street/North Road in the vicinity of Exit 10.
- d. The Town should consider designating the land abutting the Country Club of New Hampshire golf course as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) that could eventually be the core of a new village.
- e. The Town could utilize available tax incentives, when and where appropriate, to encourage businesses and developers to locate in Sutton and improve our tax base long-term.

The NH Economic Revitalization Zone (ERZ) program allows a business to seek a credit on its NH Business Profits Tax if they are within such a zone.

Commercial and Industrial Construction Exemption (if approved at Town Meeting) could be used to encourage the construction of new commercial structures additions, renovations, or improvements to existing structures.

EXISTING & FUTURE LAND USES

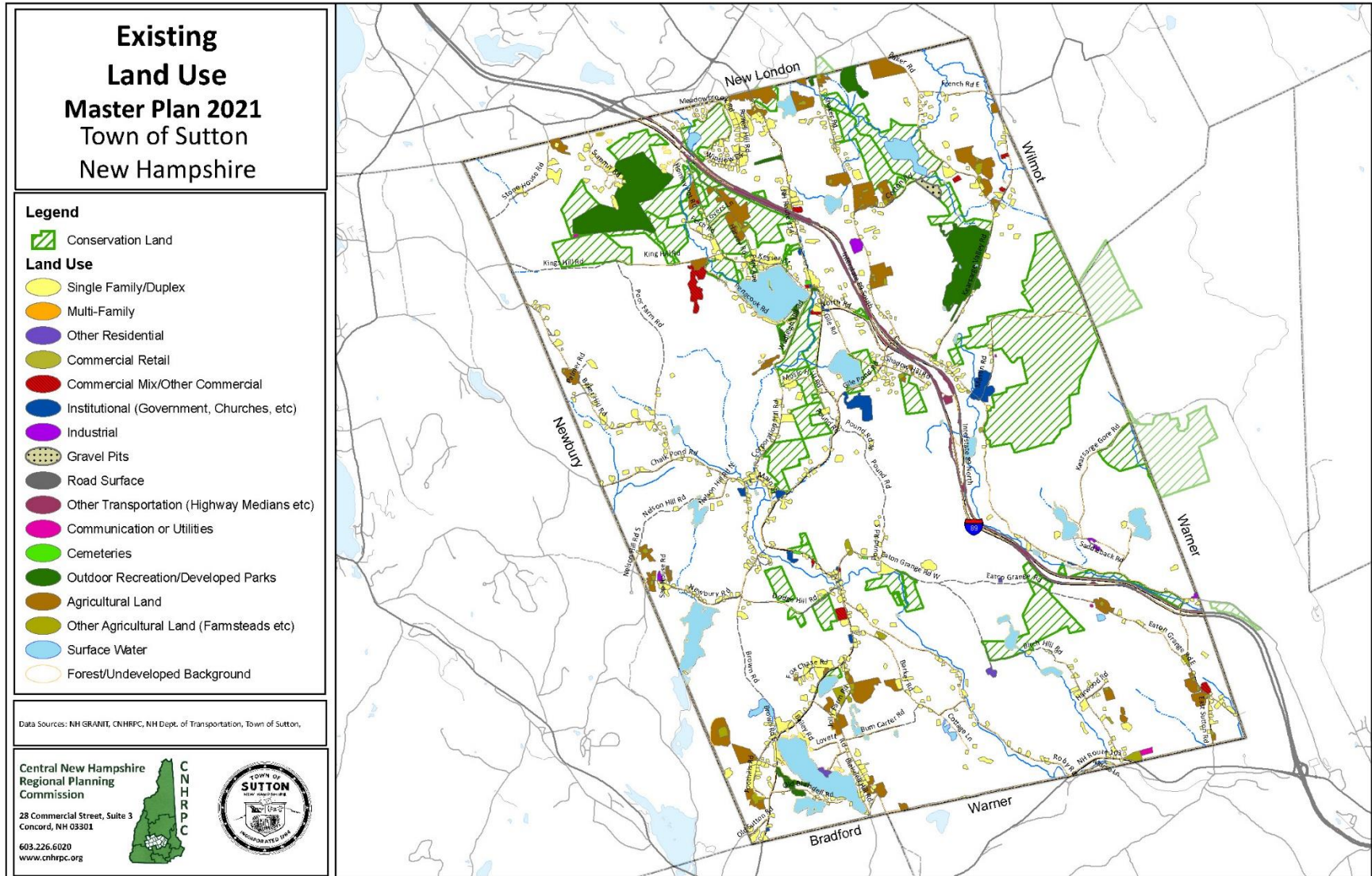
Historic Villages

Current zoning does not allow construction patterns and potential uses that would help restore the vitality of the four historic villages without harming the small-town atmosphere.

Toward that end the following action items are proposed:

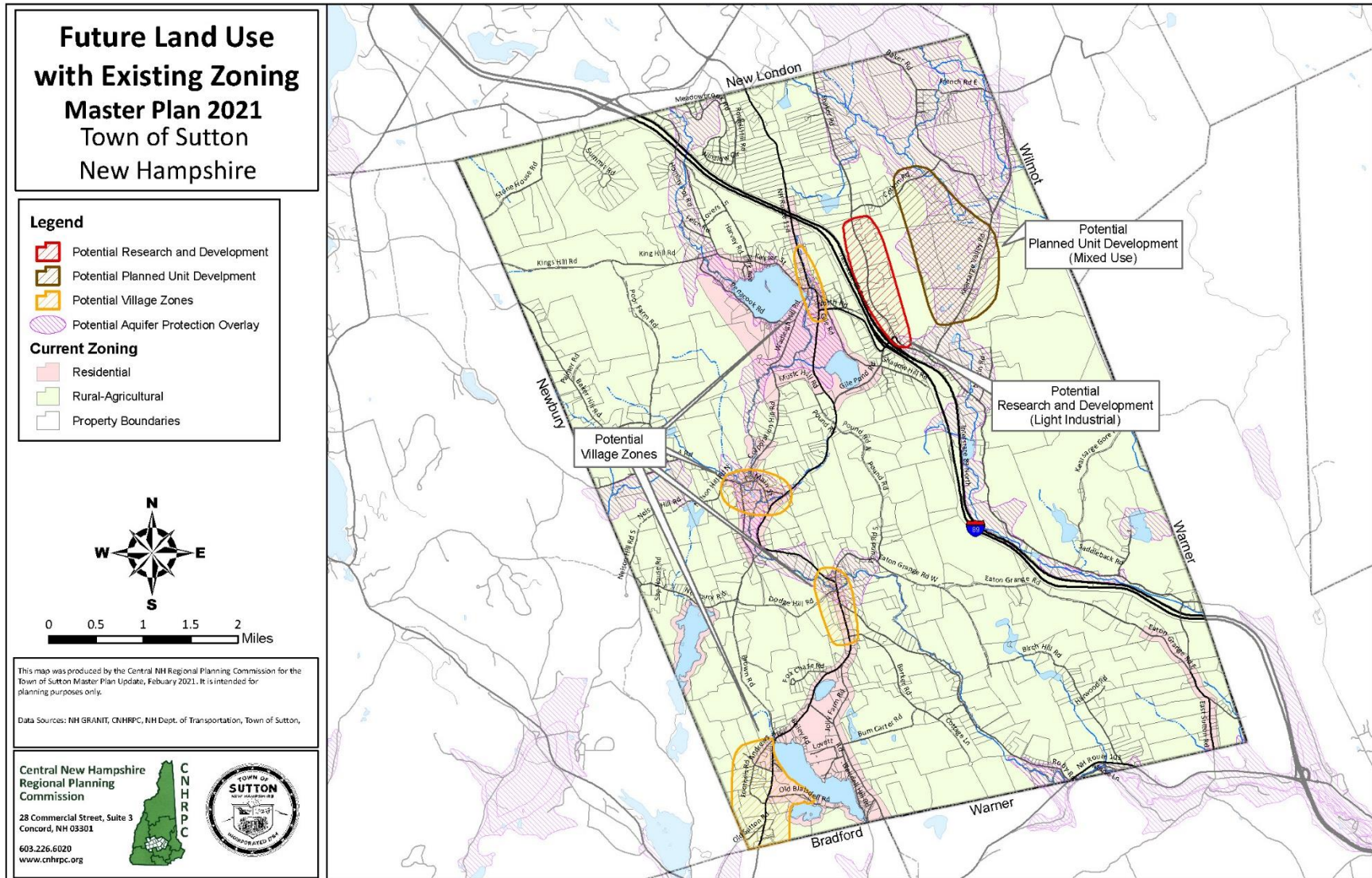
- a. Sutton should designate specific village zoning districts that address lot size, setbacks, minimum lot width, and require appropriately scaled buildings.
- b. The Town should adopt improved land use controls to protect the historic nature of the villages. This should include incentives for the sensitive reuse of existing low functioning buildings such as barns and other y structures.
- c. Sutton should allow specific, limited & small- scale mixed uses in the villages. These mixed uses could include specified types of commercial uses, & modestly sized multiple dwellings Planning Board oversight via conditional use applications could be used to manage these changes so that they are compatible with existing buildings within the villages.
- d. If adopted at Town Meeting, the Board of Selectmen can use the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive (NH RSA 79-E) for structures within the village areas. This allows for the delay of any increase in taxes for property owners in the designated village zone for a period of 1 to 5 years if they replace or substantially improve their property and the work enhances the village area. The goal is to encourage the rehabilitation and active reuse of under-utilized buildings.

Existing Land Use Map



EXISTING & FUTURE LAND USES

Future Land Use with Existing Zoning Map



Appendix A – Community Input

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Community Survey Results 10

APPENDIX A

Citizen Input

The Planning Board gathered citizen input from members of the Town's various boards, committees, and departments. The following is a summary of those outreach events.

Fire & Rescue

What is most precious to you?

- Small town charm
- Rural atmosphere
- Protect recreation lands
- Our people

What is of most concern to you?

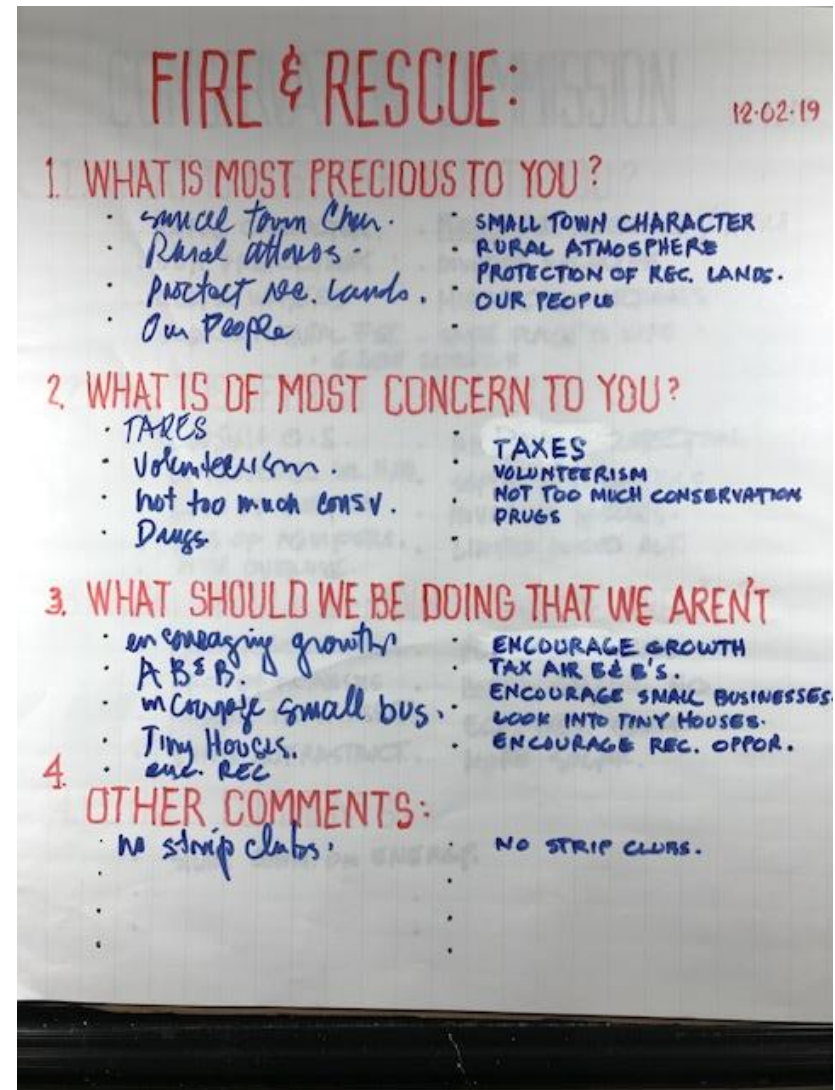
- Taxes
- Volunteerism
- Not too much conservation
- Drugs

What should we be doing that we aren't?

- Encourage growth
- Tax Airbnb's
- Encourage small businesses
- Look into tiny houses
- Encourage recreation opportunities

Other comments:

- No strip clubs



Conservation Commission

What is most precious to you?

- Rural character
- Our friendliness
- Clean waters
- Scenic natural forest
- Public recreational amenities/trails
- Diverse wildlife
- Historic connections
- Safe place to live
- Great schools

What is of most concern to you?

- Loosing open space
- Unprotected wildlife habitat
- Loss of people
- Loss of aquifer
- ATV overuse
- Resource protection
- Septic system controls
- Invasive species
- Limited access AVT

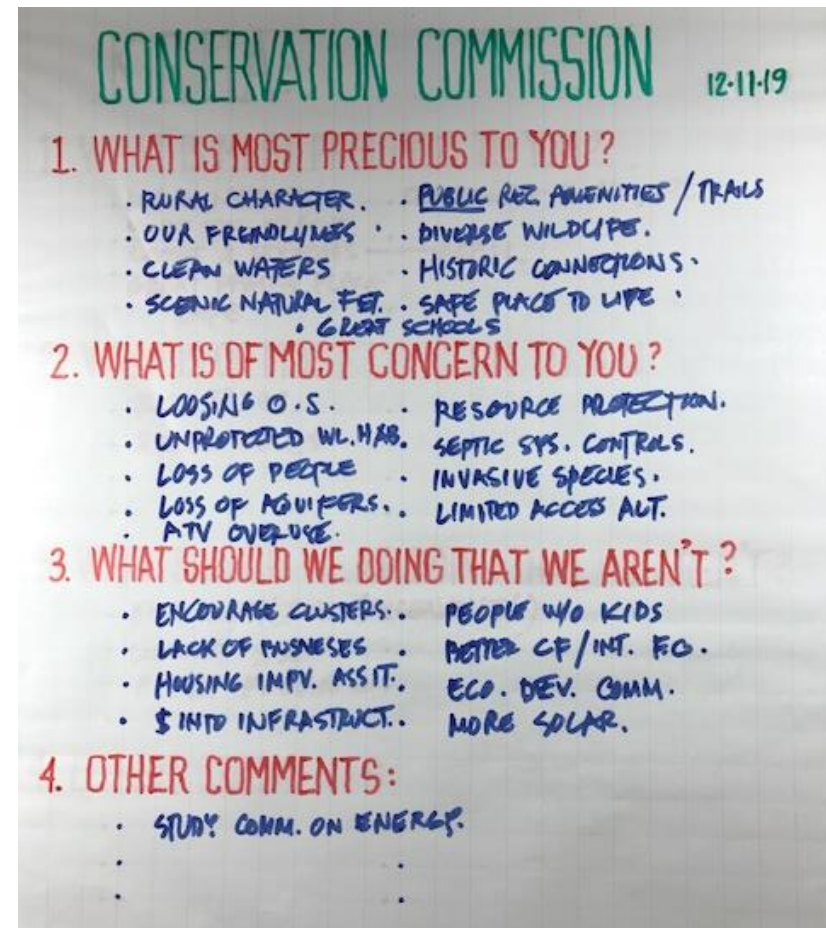
What should we be doing that we aren't?

- Encourage clusters
- Lack of businesses
- Housing Impv. Assistance
- Money into infrastructure
- People without kids

- Better CF/Int. F.O.
- Economic Development Committee
- More solar

Other comments:

- Study Comm. on Energy



APPENDIX A

KRHA

What is most precious to you?

- Rural nature
- Wide open spaces
- Lakes and streams – Kezar
- Great family place
- Safe
- Convenient to N.L., Etc.

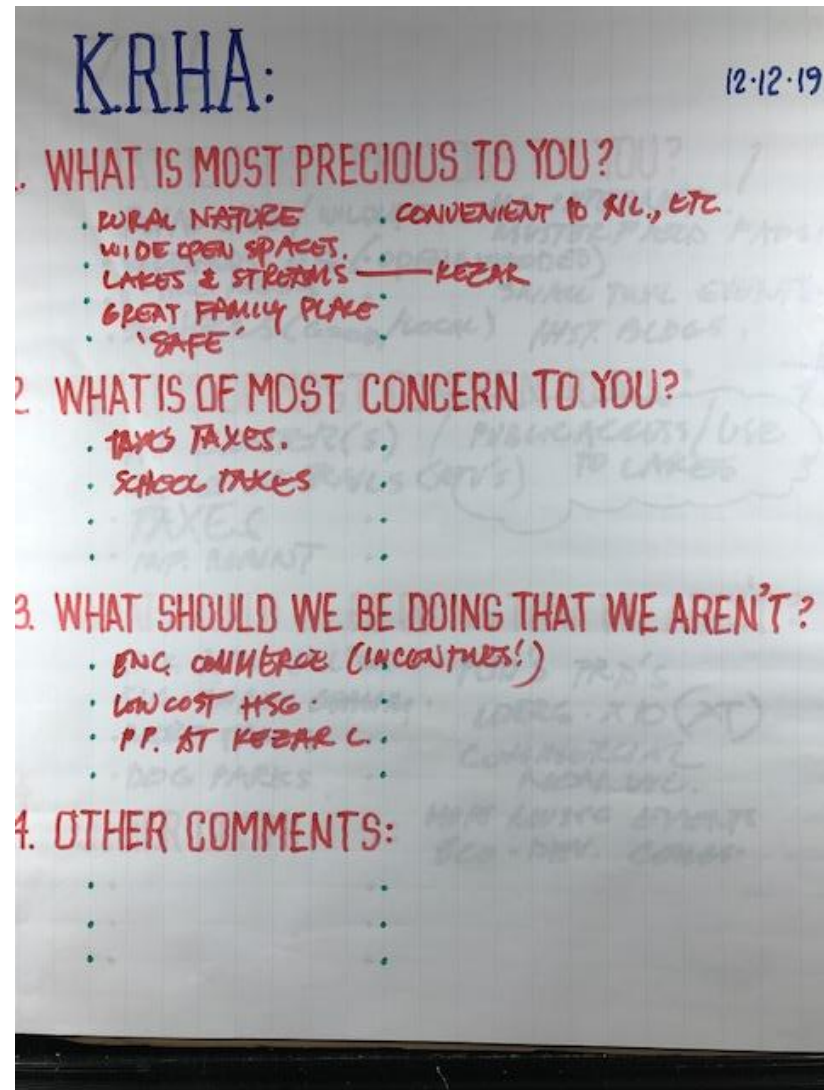
What is of most concern to you?

- Town taxes
- School taxes

What should we be doing that we aren't?

- Encourage commerce
- Low cost housing
- PP. Kezar Lake

Other comments:



Zoning Board of Adjustment

What is most precious to you?

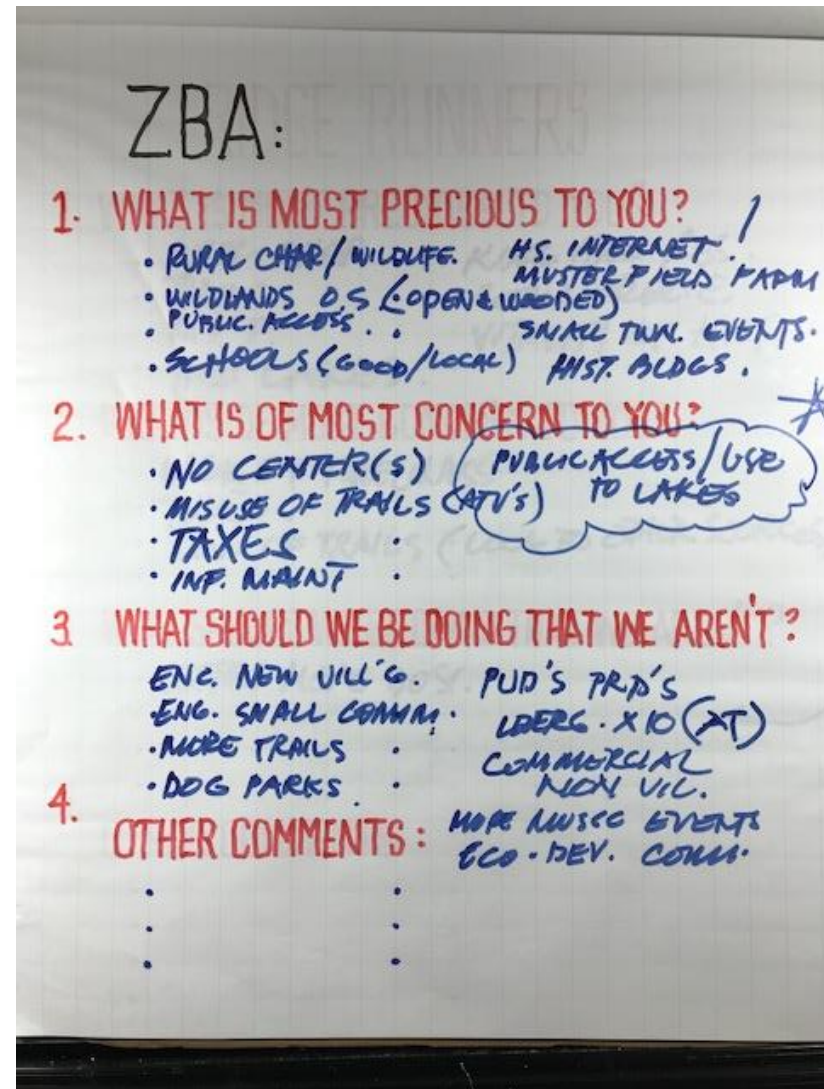
- Rural character/wildlife
- Open space and wooded
- Public access
- Schools (good and local)
- High speed internet
- Musterfield farm
- Small town events
- Historic buildings

What is of most concern to you?

- No center(s)
- Misuse of trails (ATV's)
- Taxes
- Inf. Maintance
- Public access/use of lakes

What should we be doing that we aren't?

- Encourage new village
- Encourage small community
- More trails
- Dog parks
- PUD's PRD's
- Commercial non village
- More music events
- Economic development committee



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Ridge Runners

What is most precious to you?

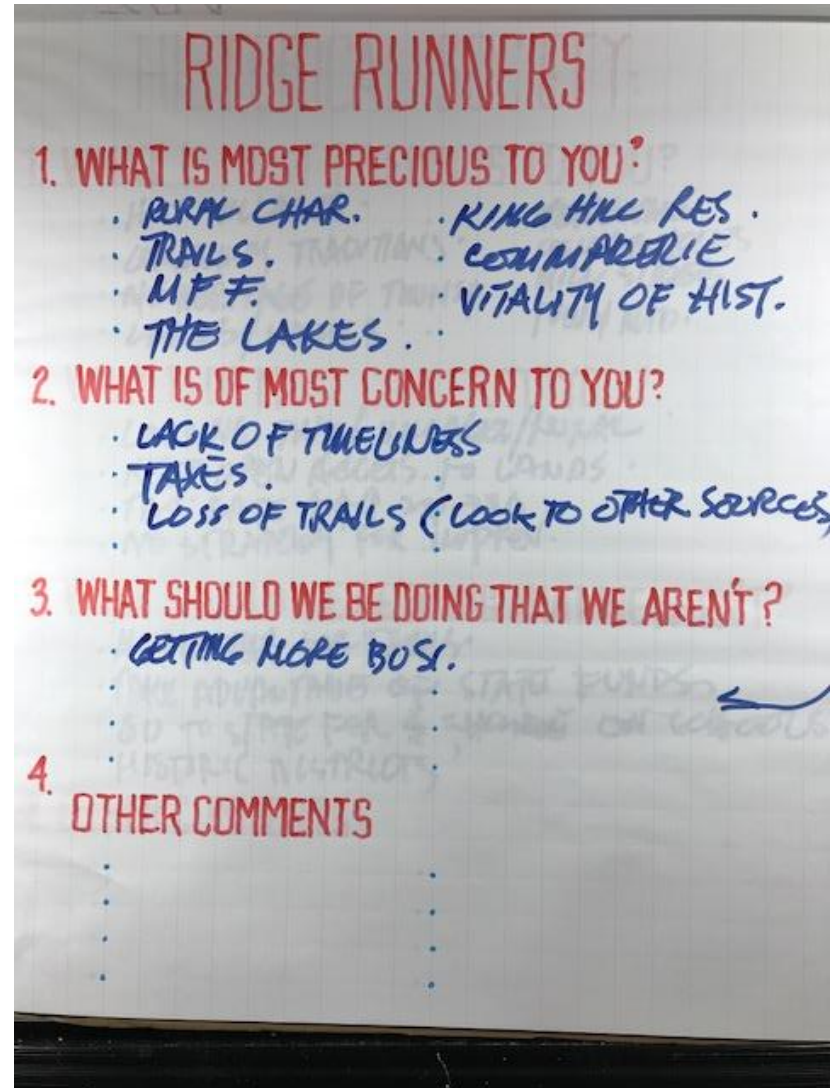
- Rural character
- Trails
- MFF
- The lakes
- King Hill Res
- Camaraderie
- Vitality of history

What is of most concern to you?

- Lack of timeliness
- Taxes
- Loss of trails

What should we be doing that we aren't?

- Getting more business



Historical Society

What is most precious to you?

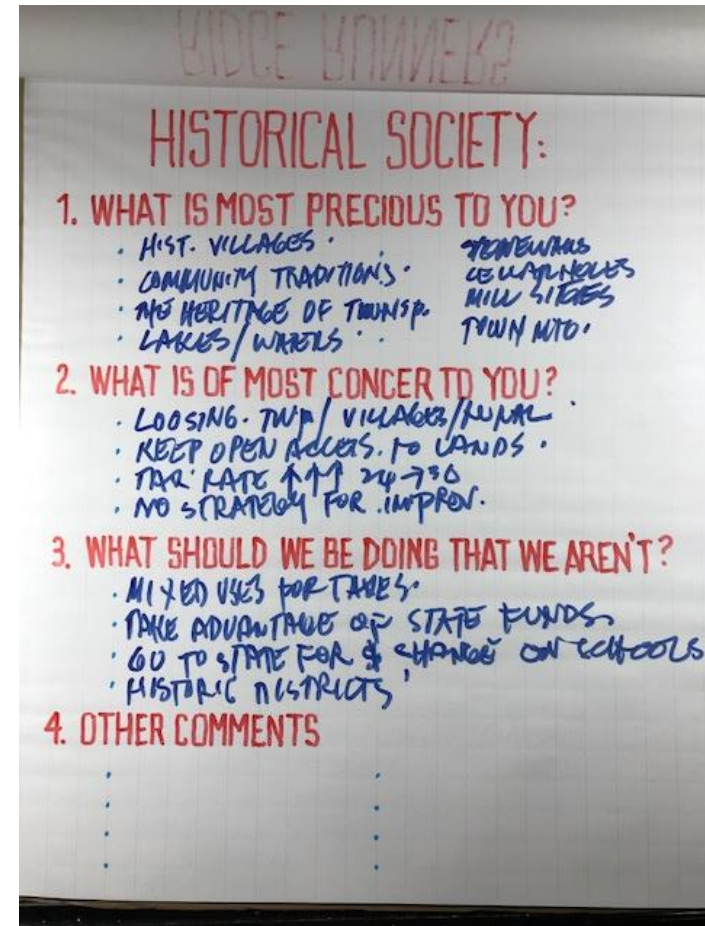
- Historic villages
- Community traditions
- Heritage of town
- Lakes/waters
- Stonewalls
- Cellarholes
- Mill sites
- Town mto.

What is of most concern to you?

- Loosing town/villages/rural
- Keep open access to lands
- Tax rate increasing
- No strategy for improvement

What should we be doing that we aren't?

- Mixed uses for taxes
- Take advantage of state funds
- Go to state for funds, change our schools
- Historic districts



APPENDIX A

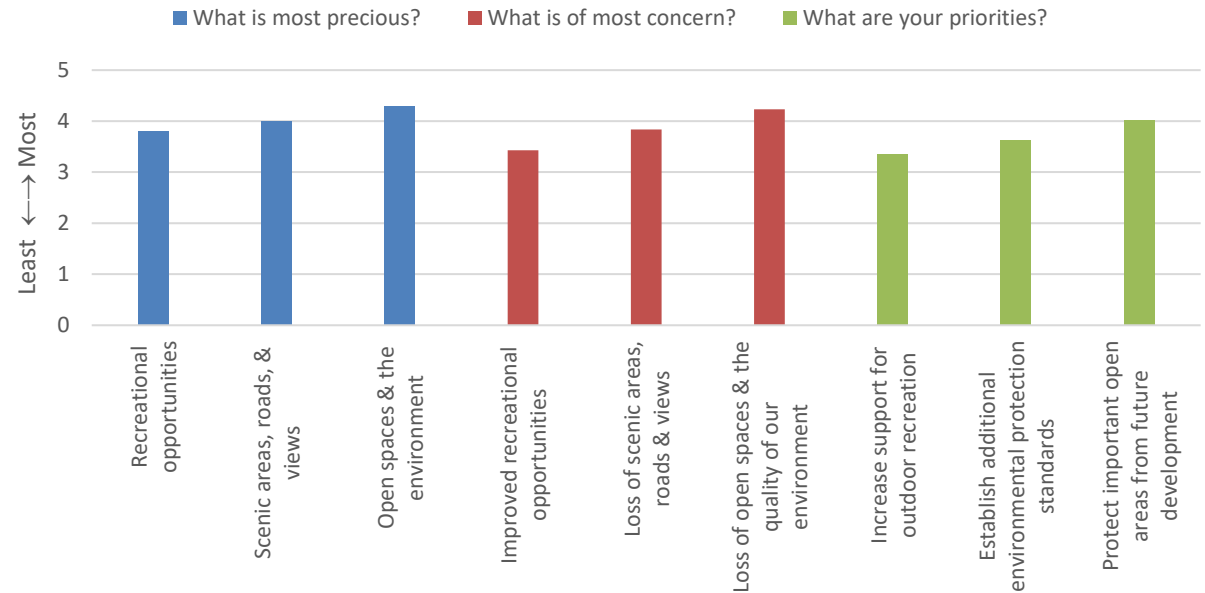
Community Survey Summary

In preparation of this Master Plan Update, the Planning Board prepared a Community Survey to gather input from residents and landowners to understand Sutton’s current needs and desired future. In total, 180 responses were gathered and helped shape the recommendations included in the Master Plan.

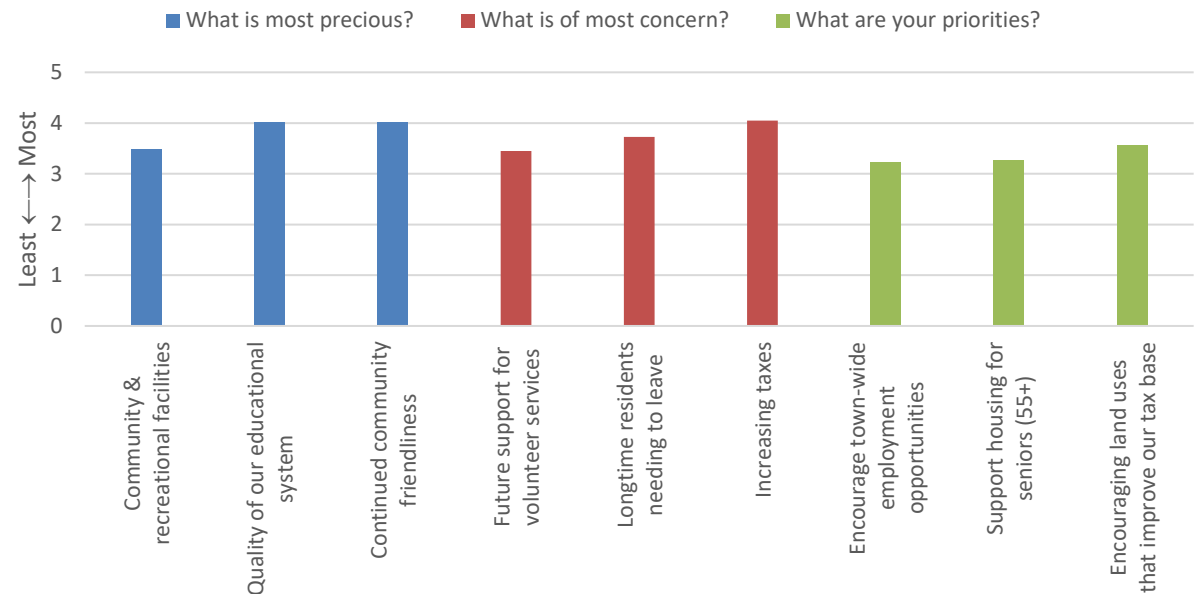
Rural character, one of the Master Plan’s three primary themes, was highlighted in the survey. Open space and the environment was highly valued by residents and land owners, including the preservation of open space and undeveloped land.

The second primary theme of the Master Plan, sense of community, was also highlighted in the survey. Continued community friendliness and quality of the education system was most highly valued. Increasing taxes were of the highest concern, as well as the impact on longtime and senior residents. Encouraging land uses that improve the tax base was the most important priority for the future, reinforcing resident’s desire to balance the tax rate.

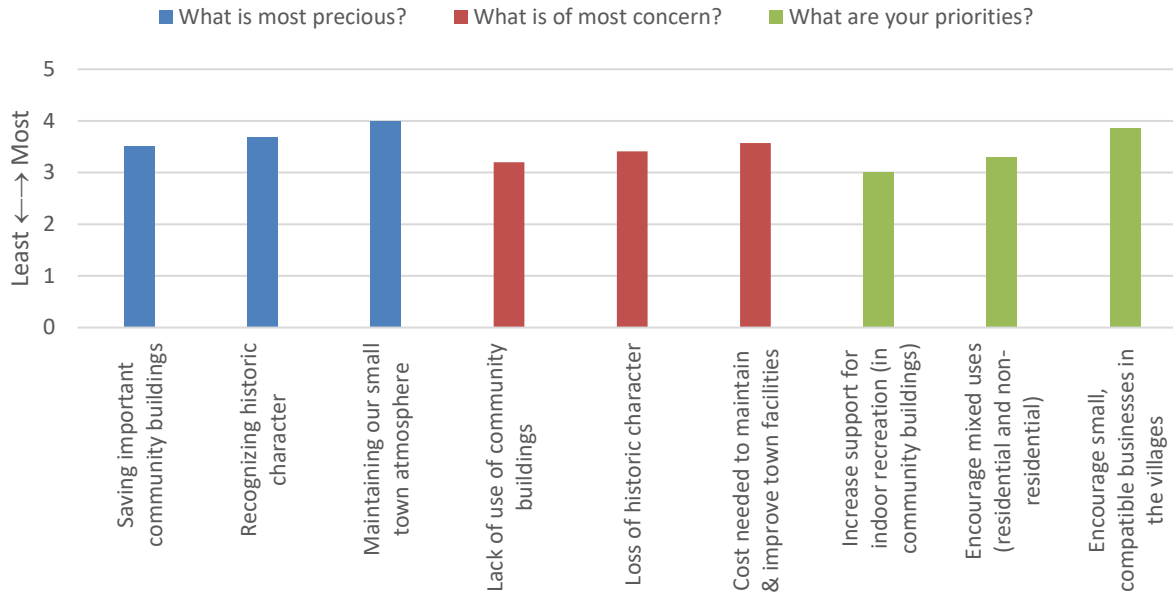
When thinking of rural character:



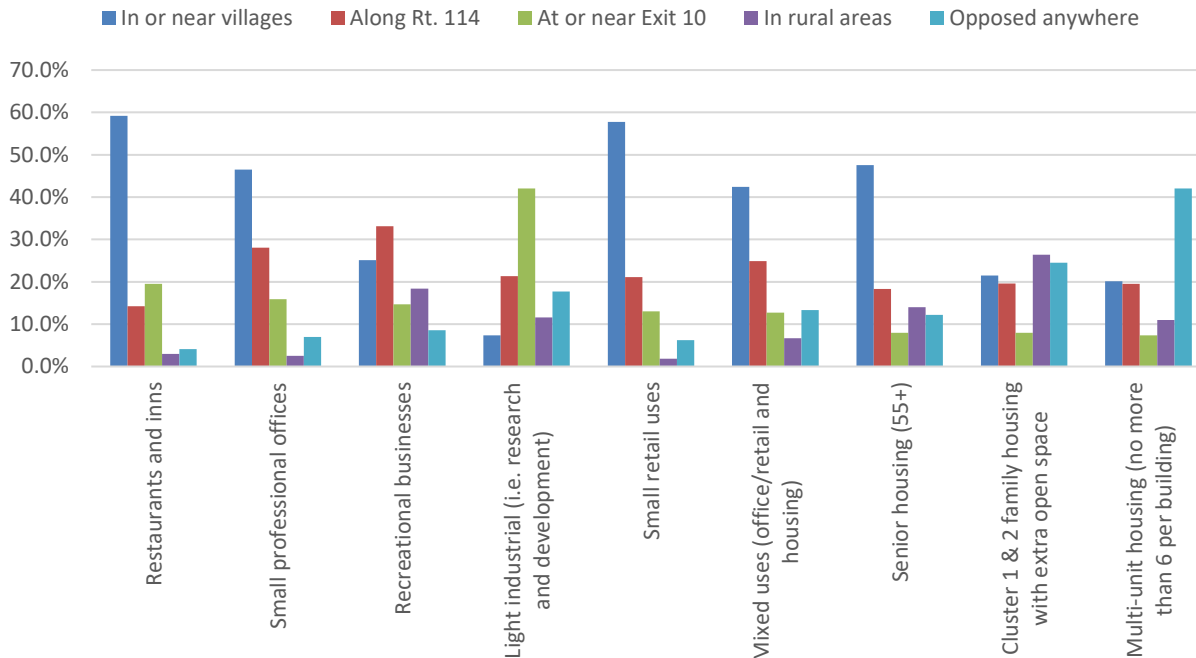
When thinking of sense of community:



When thinking of existing villages:



What types of housing & businesses do you support?



The third and final Master Plan theme is existing villages, and like the previous two, was highlighted in the survey. Maintaining Sutton’s small town atmosphere was the highest priority, while concern was expressed for the cost needed to maintain and improve current town facilities. For the future, greatest support was given for the encouragement of small, compatible businesses in the villages.

As part of the survey, residents and landowners were able to provide input on preferred land uses and housing types. Responses support encourage of development that fits with Sutton’s small town feel and rural character in the village areas, such as restaurants, inns, small retail stores, small professional offices, senior housing and mixed use. Light industrial development was supported at or near Exit 10 and recreational businesses were supported along Route 114. Multi-unit housing was opposed anywhere in Sutton. Additional frequent responses included recreational areas, with specific mentions of trails, playgrounds, fields, parks, and athletic fields.

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In regard to areas that should be protected from future development, frequent responses included area near surface waters. This includes both Kezar and Blaisdell Lake, their watersheds, and all of the wetlands scattered around town.

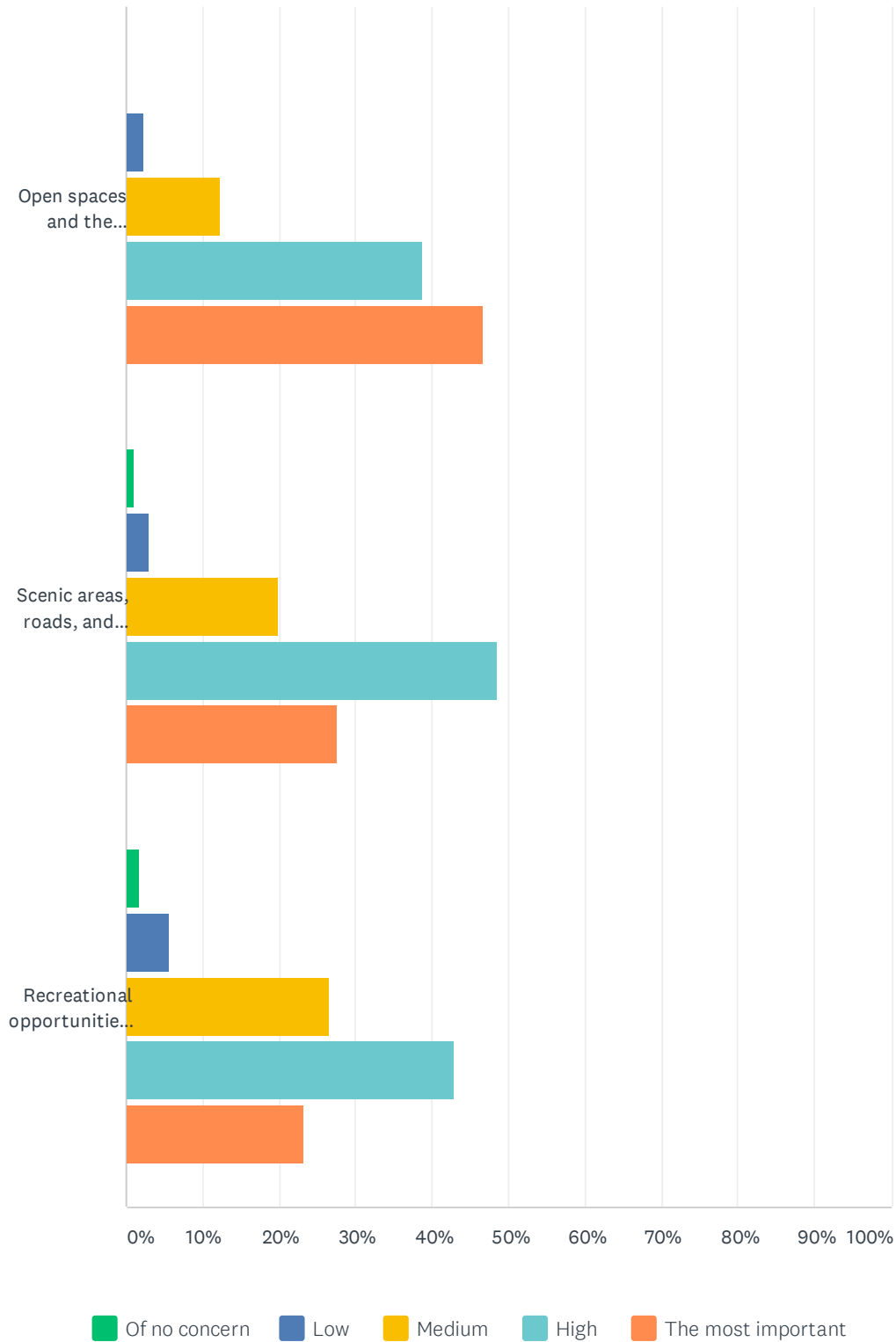
Survey participants were able to provide any road or road segments that require particular attention. Frequent responses included Roby Road, Shaker Street, Blaisdell Hill Road, Baker Road, and Rowell Hill Road. It should be noted that this is not a full list responses. It was also commented that speeding on main roadways, including Rt. 114, was a concern.

Community Survey Results

Available on the following pages.

Q1 What is most precious to you when thinking of rural atmosphere?

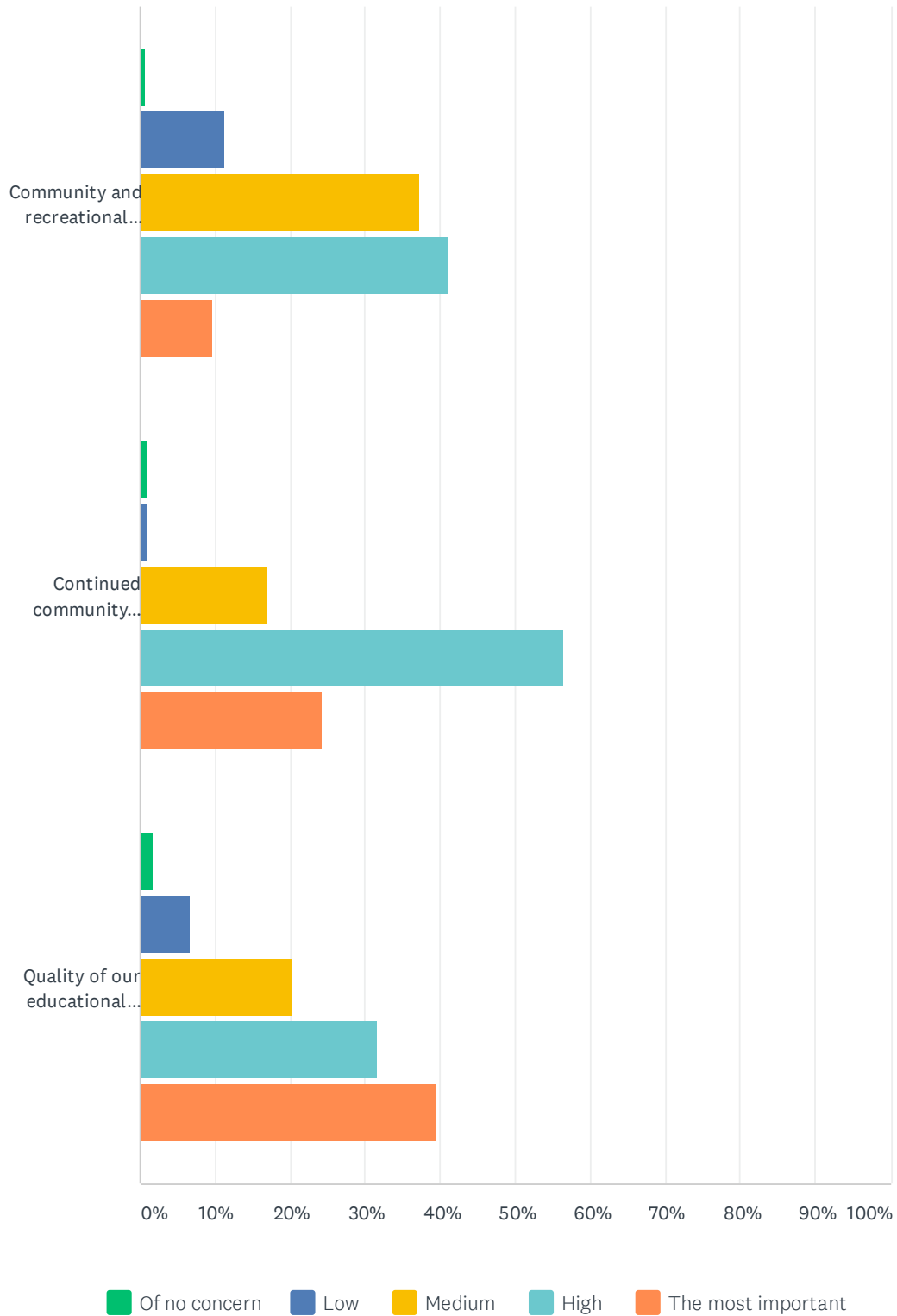
Answered: 179 Skipped: 1



	OF NO CONCERN	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	THE MOST IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Open spaces and the environment	0.00% 0	2.25% 4	12.36% 22	38.76% 69	46.63% 83	178	4.30
Scenic areas, roads, and views	1.13% 2	2.82% 5	19.77% 35	48.59% 86	27.68% 49	177	3.99
Recreational opportunities (i.e. hiking, hunting, lakes, snowmobiling, etc.)	1.69% 3	5.65% 10	26.55% 47	42.94% 76	23.16% 41	177	3.80

Q2 What is most precious to you when thinking of sense of community?

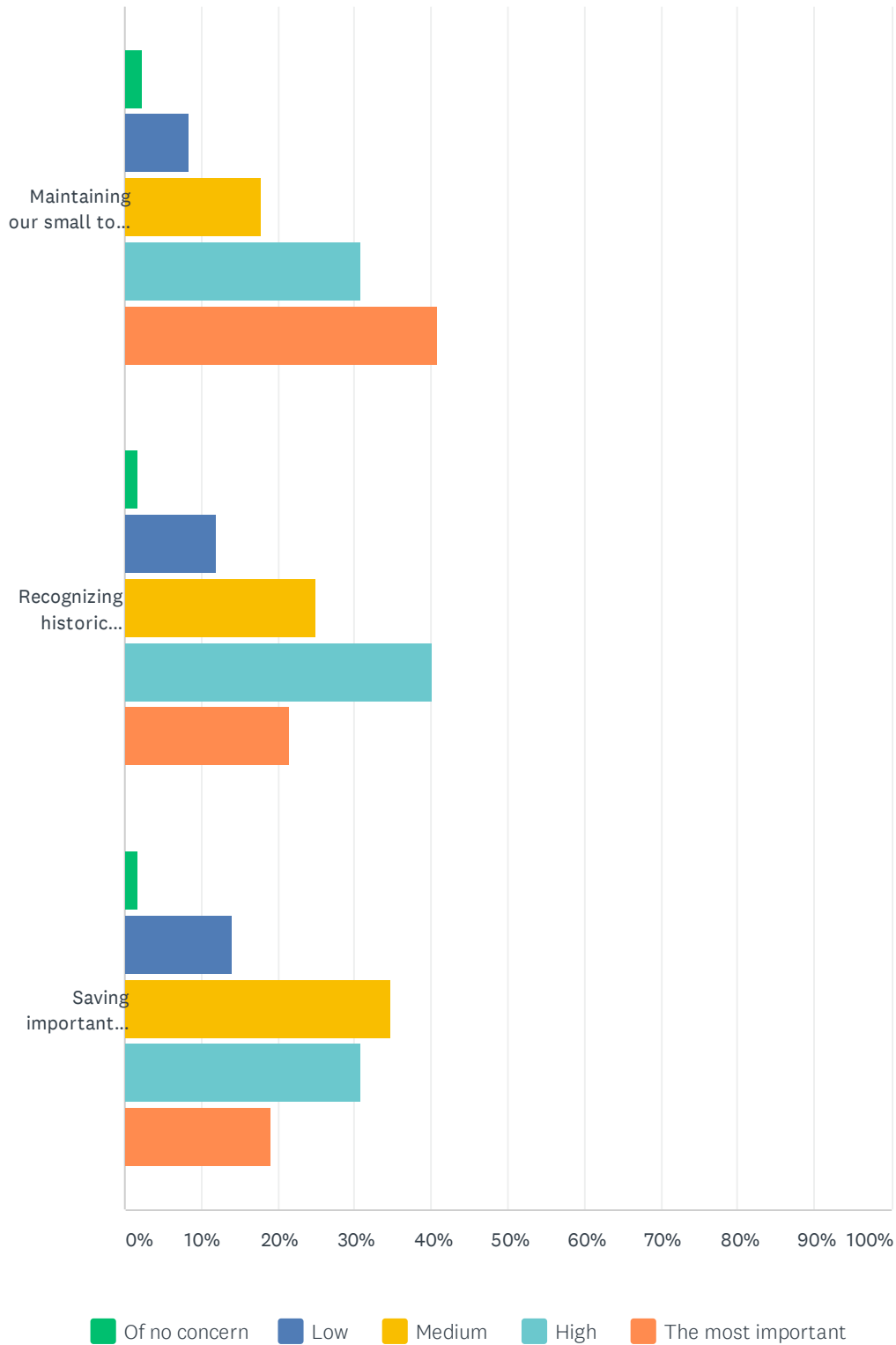
Answered: 179 Skipped: 1



	OF NO CONCERN	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	THE MOST IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Community and recreational facilities	0.56% 1	11.30% 20	37.29% 66	41.24% 73	9.60% 17	177	3.48
Continued community friendliness	1.13% 2	1.13% 2	16.95% 30	56.50% 100	24.29% 43	177	4.02
Quality of our educational system	1.69% 3	6.78% 12	20.34% 36	31.64% 56	39.55% 70	177	4.01

Q3 What is most precious to you when thinking of existing villages?

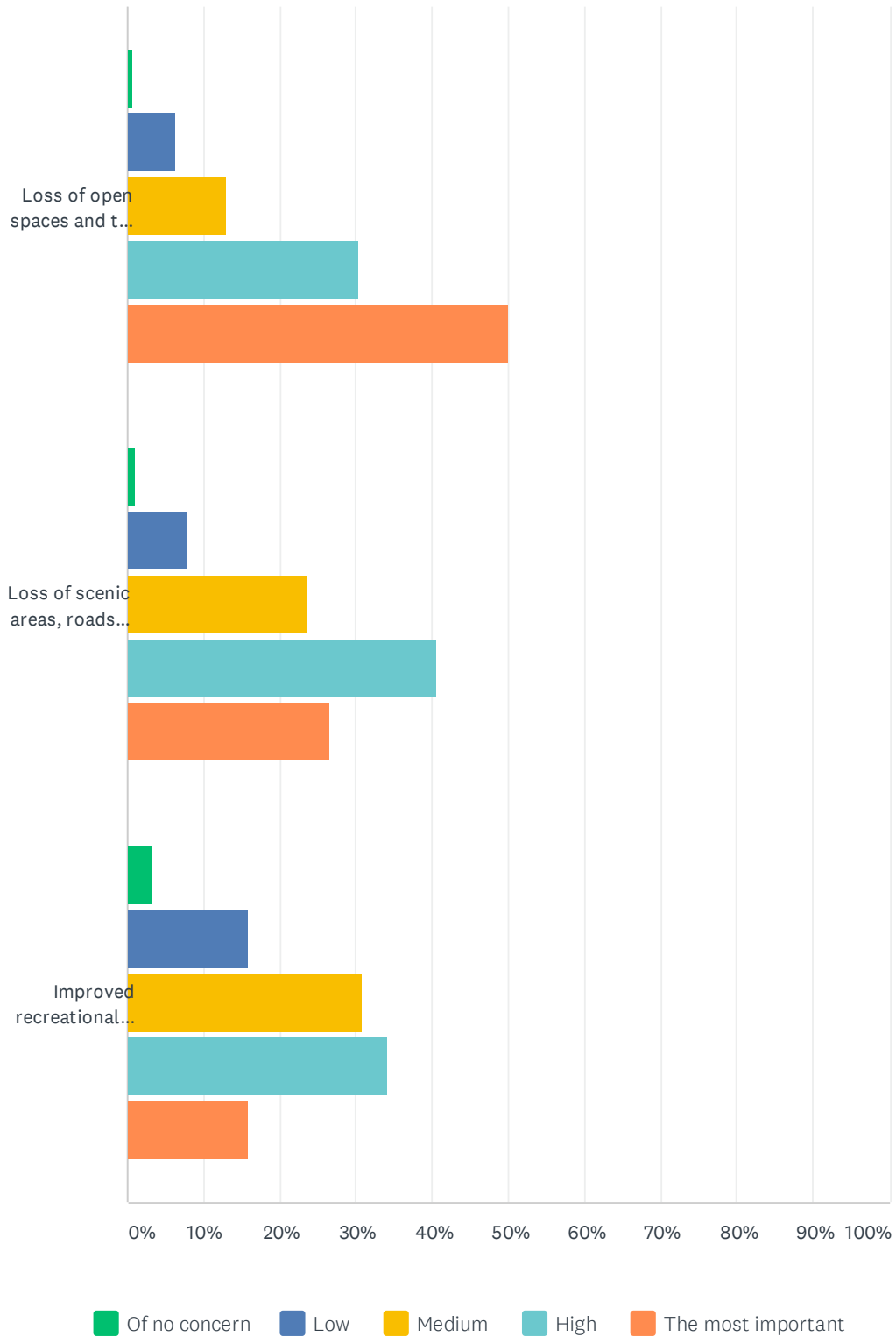
Answered: 180 Skipped: 0



	OF NO CONCERN	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	THE MOST IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Maintaining our small town atmosphere	2.23% 4	8.38% 15	17.88% 32	30.73% 55	40.78% 73	179	3.99
Recognizing historic character	1.69% 3	11.86% 21	24.86% 44	40.11% 71	21.47% 38	177	3.68
Saving important community buildings	1.68% 3	13.97% 25	34.64% 62	30.73% 55	18.99% 34	179	3.51

Q4 What is of most concern to you when thinking of rural atmosphere?

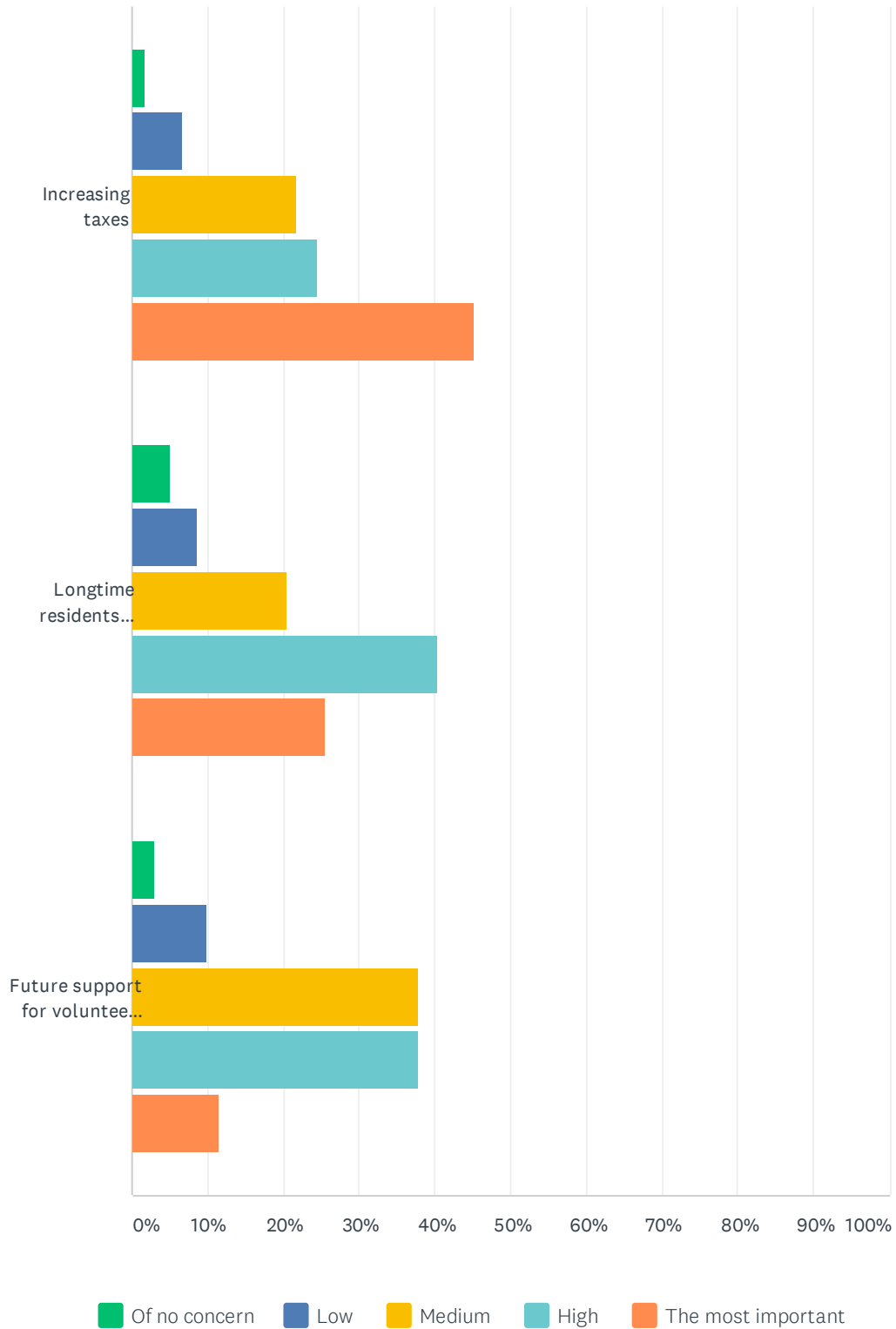
Answered: 179 Skipped: 1



	OF NO CONCERN	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	THE MOST IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Loss of open spaces and the quality of our environment	0.56% 1	6.18% 11	12.92% 23	30.34% 54	50.00% 89	178	4.23
Loss of scenic areas, roads and views	1.13% 2	7.91% 14	23.73% 42	40.68% 72	26.55% 47	177	3.84
Improved recreational opportunities (i.e. hiking, hunting, lakes, snowmobiling, etc.)	3.41% 6	15.91% 28	30.68% 54	34.09% 60	15.91% 28	176	3.43

Q5 What is of most concern to you when thinking of sense of community?

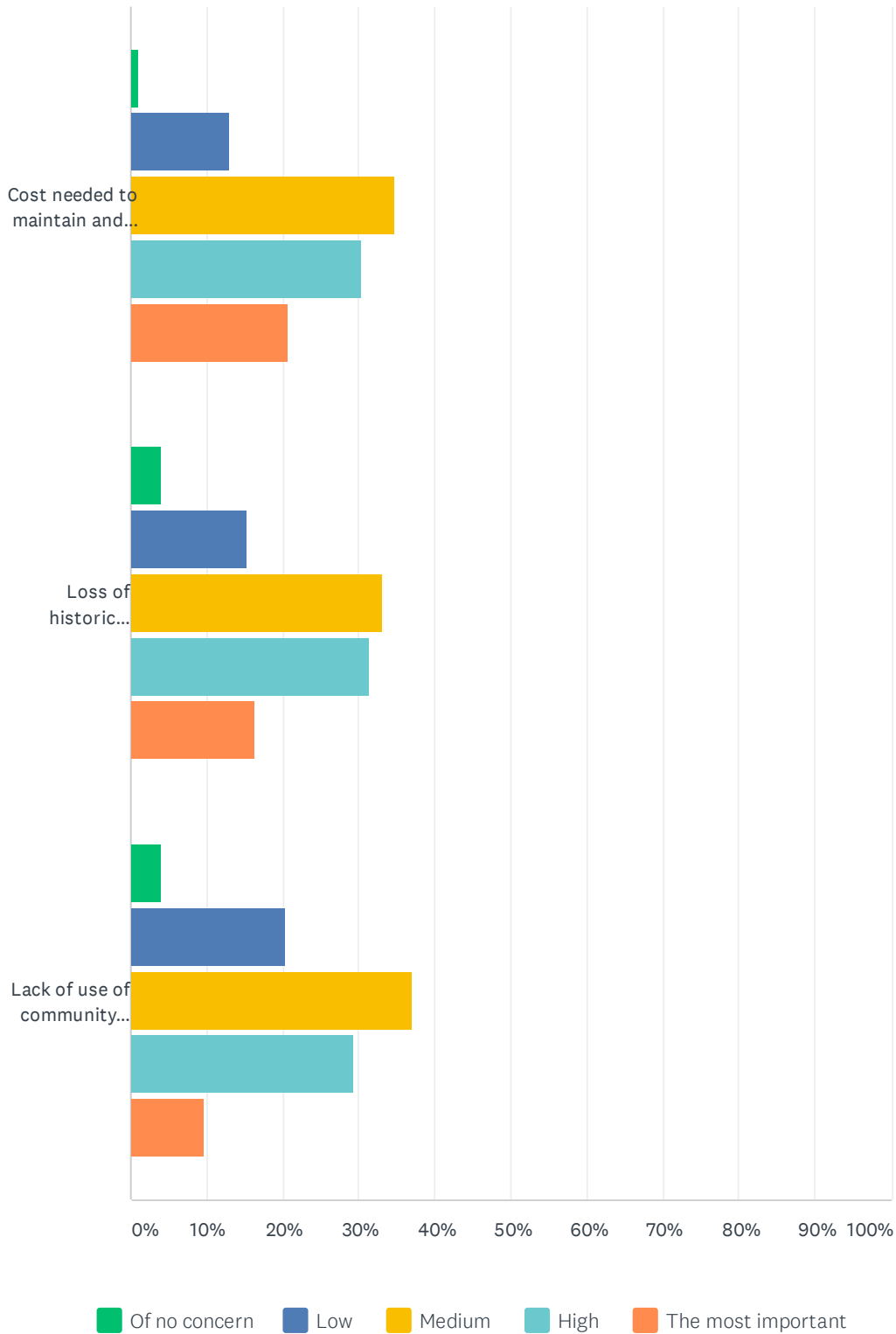
Answered: 179 Skipped: 1



	OF NO CONCERN	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	THE MOST IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Increasing taxes	1.68% 3	6.70% 12	21.79% 39	24.58% 44	45.25% 81	179	4.05
Longtime residents needing to leave	5.11% 9	8.52% 15	20.45% 36	40.34% 71	25.57% 45	176	3.73
Future support for volunteer services	2.87% 5	9.77% 17	37.93% 66	37.93% 66	11.49% 20	174	3.45

Q6 What is of most concern to you when thinking of existing villages?

Answered: 180 Skipped: 0



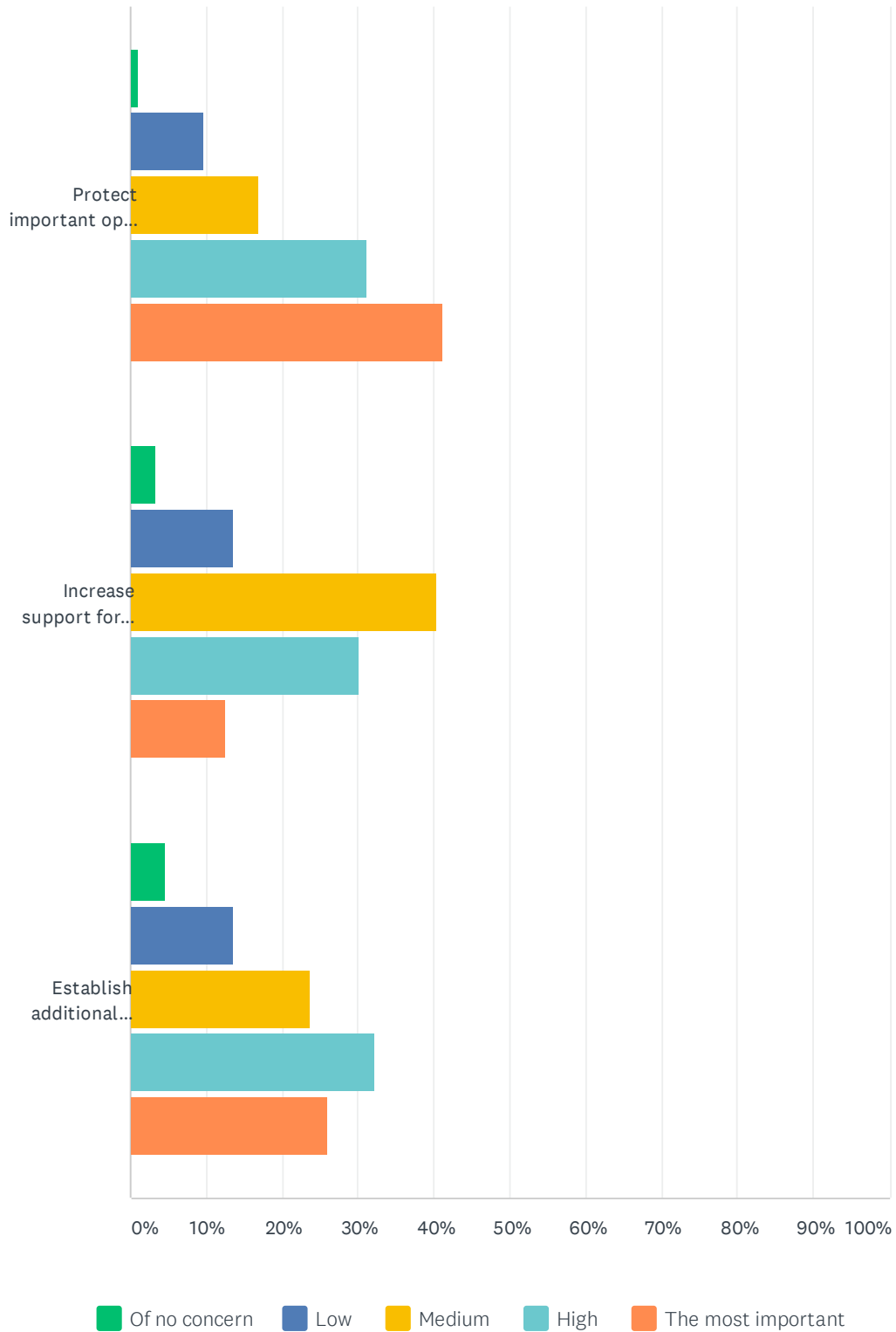
	OF NO CONCERN	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	THE MOST IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Cost needed to maintain and improve town facilities	1.12% 2	12.92% 23	34.83% 62	30.34% 54	20.79% 37	178	3.57
Loss of historic character	3.93% 7	15.17% 27	33.15% 59	31.46% 56	16.29% 29	178	3.41
Lack of use of community buildings	3.93% 7	20.22% 36	37.08% 66	29.21% 52	9.55% 17	178	3.20

Q7 Do you have other significant concerns (rated high or the most important)?

Answered: 97 Skipped: 83

Q8 What are your priorities when thinking of rural atmosphere?

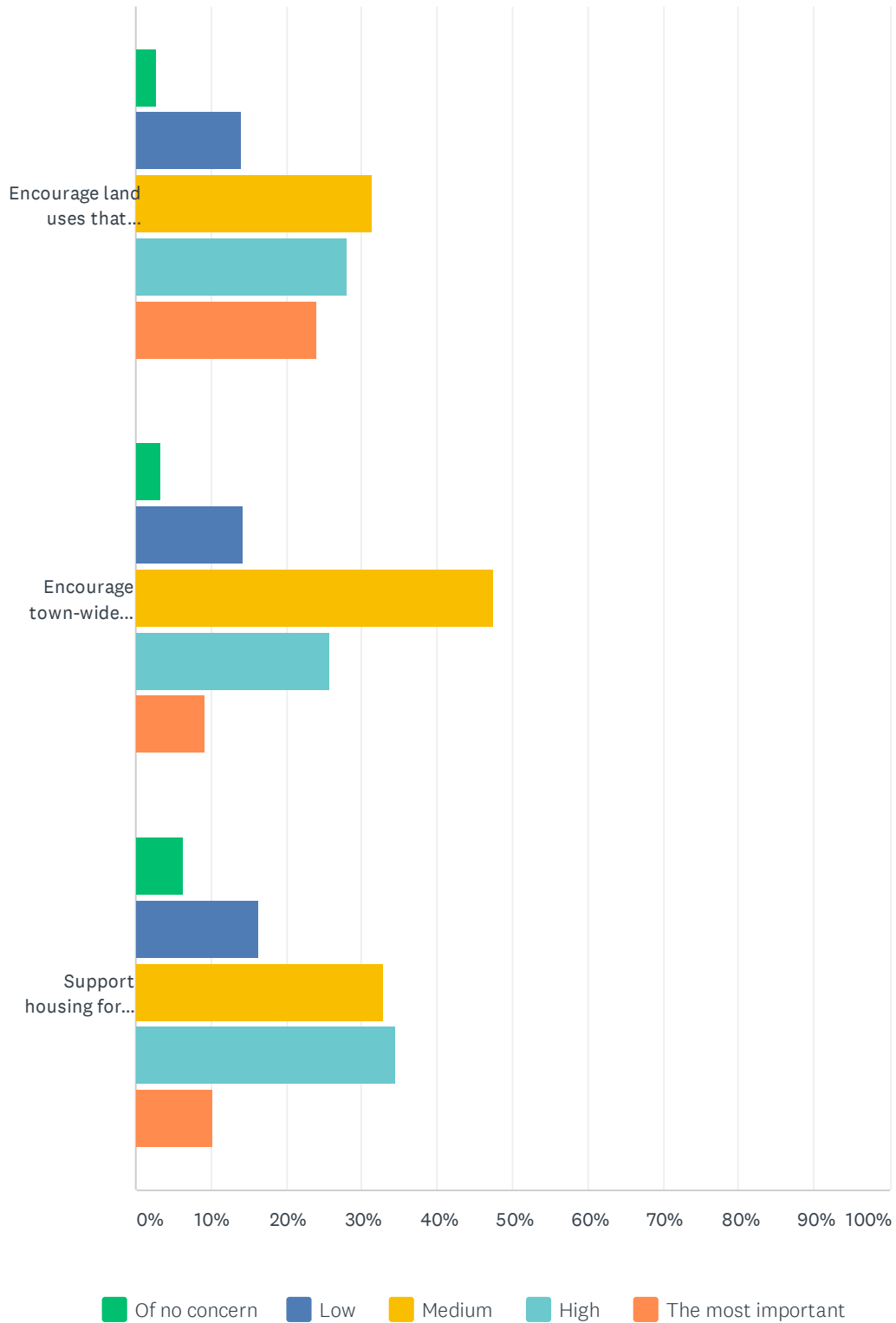
Answered: 179 Skipped: 1



	OF NO CONCERN	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	THE MOST IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Protect important open areas from future development	1.13% 2	9.60% 17	16.95% 30	31.07% 55	41.24% 73	177	4.02
Increase support for outdoor recreation	3.41% 6	13.64% 24	40.34% 71	30.11% 53	12.50% 22	176	3.35
Establish additional environmental protection standards	4.52% 8	13.56% 24	23.73% 42	32.20% 57	25.99% 46	177	3.62

Q9 What are your priorities when thinking of sense of community?

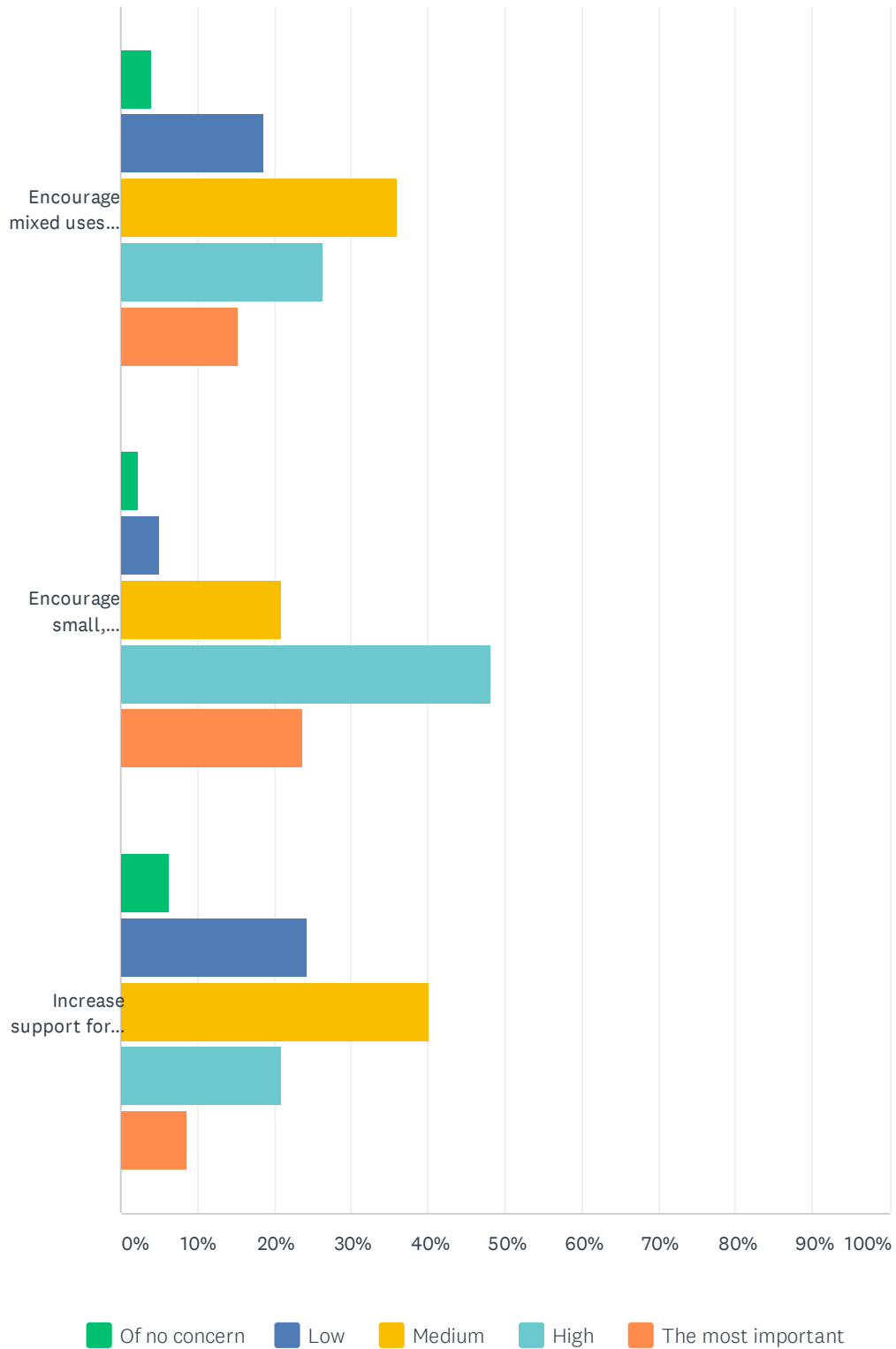
Answered: 179 Skipped: 1



	OF NO CONCERN	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	THE MOST IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Encourage land uses that improve our tax base	2.79% 5	13.97% 25	31.28% 56	27.93% 50	24.02% 43	179	3.56
Encourage town-wide employment opportunities	3.43% 6	14.29% 25	47.43% 83	25.71% 45	9.14% 16	175	3.23
Support housing for seniors (55 and older)	6.21% 11	16.38% 29	32.77% 58	34.46% 61	10.17% 18	177	3.26

Q10 What are your priorities when thinking of existing villages?

Answered: 179 Skipped: 1



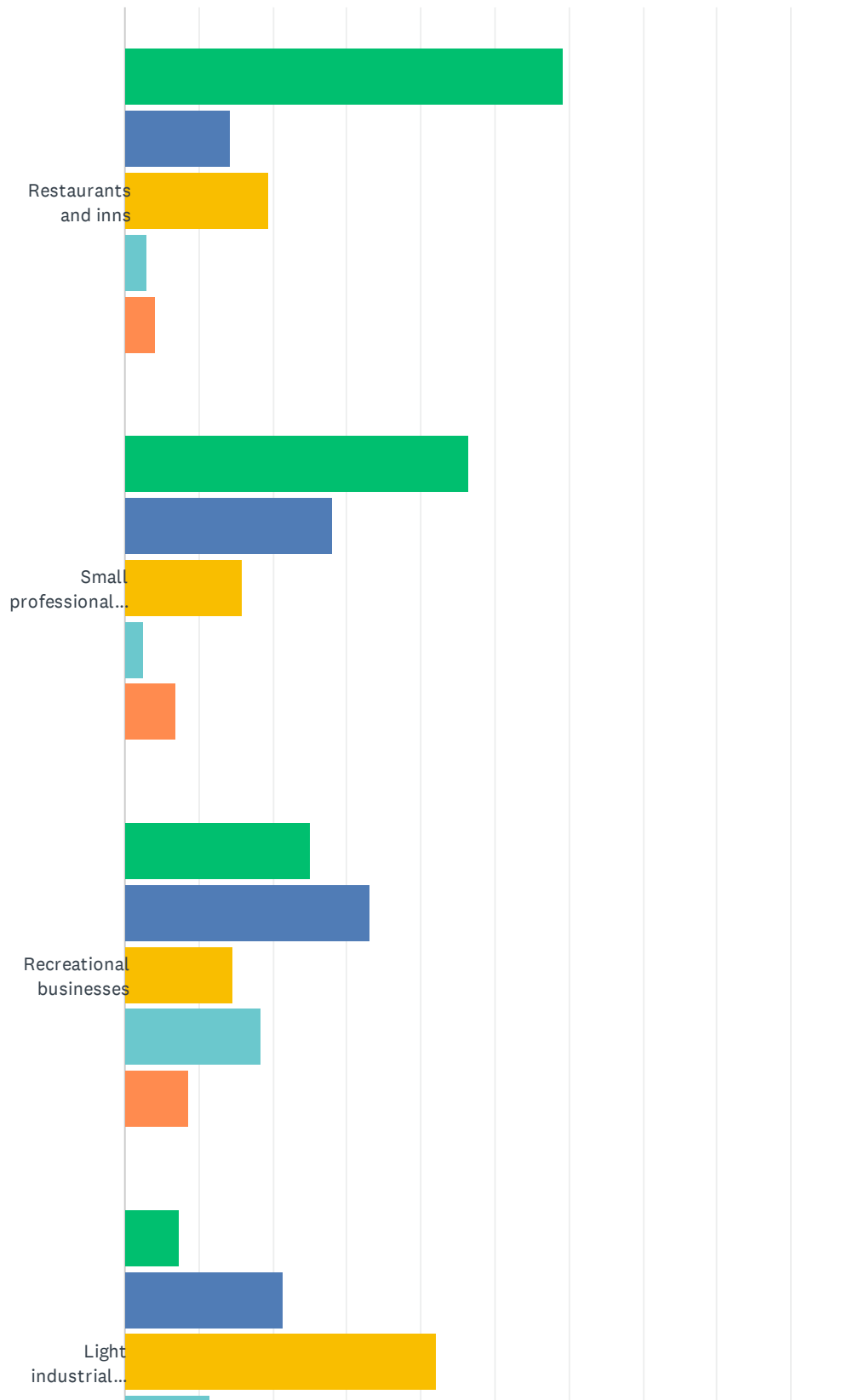
	OF NO CONCERN	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	THE MOST IMPORTANT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Encourage mixed uses (residential and non-residential) in the villages	3.93% 7	18.54% 33	35.96% 64	26.40% 47	15.17% 27	178	3.30
Encourage small, compatible businesses in the villages	2.26% 4	5.08% 9	20.90% 37	48.02% 85	23.73% 42	177	3.86
Increase support for indoor recreation (in community buildings)	6.21% 11	24.29% 43	40.11% 71	20.90% 37	8.47% 15	177	3.01

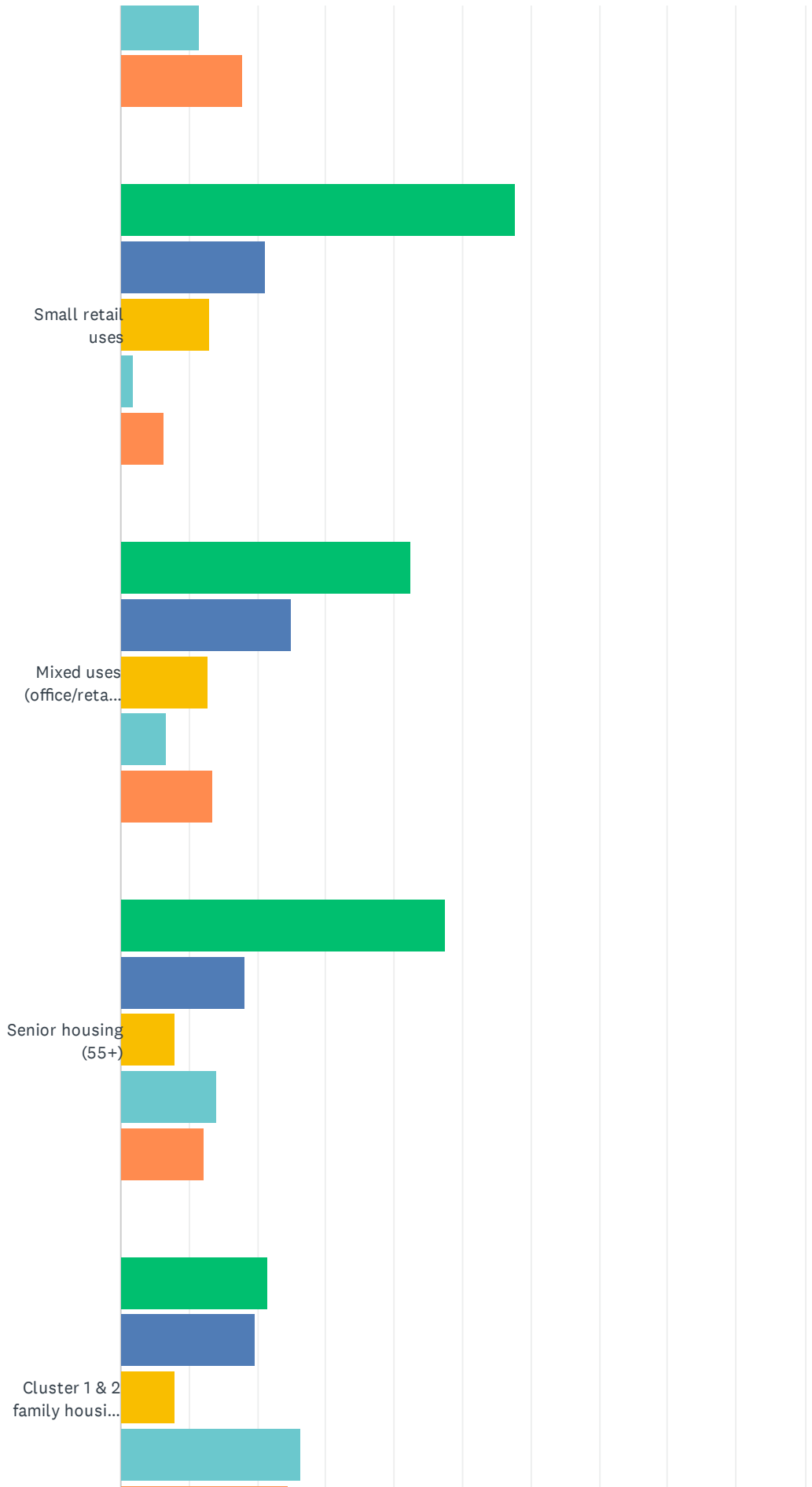
Q11 Do you have other priorities of significant concern to you (rated high or the most important)?

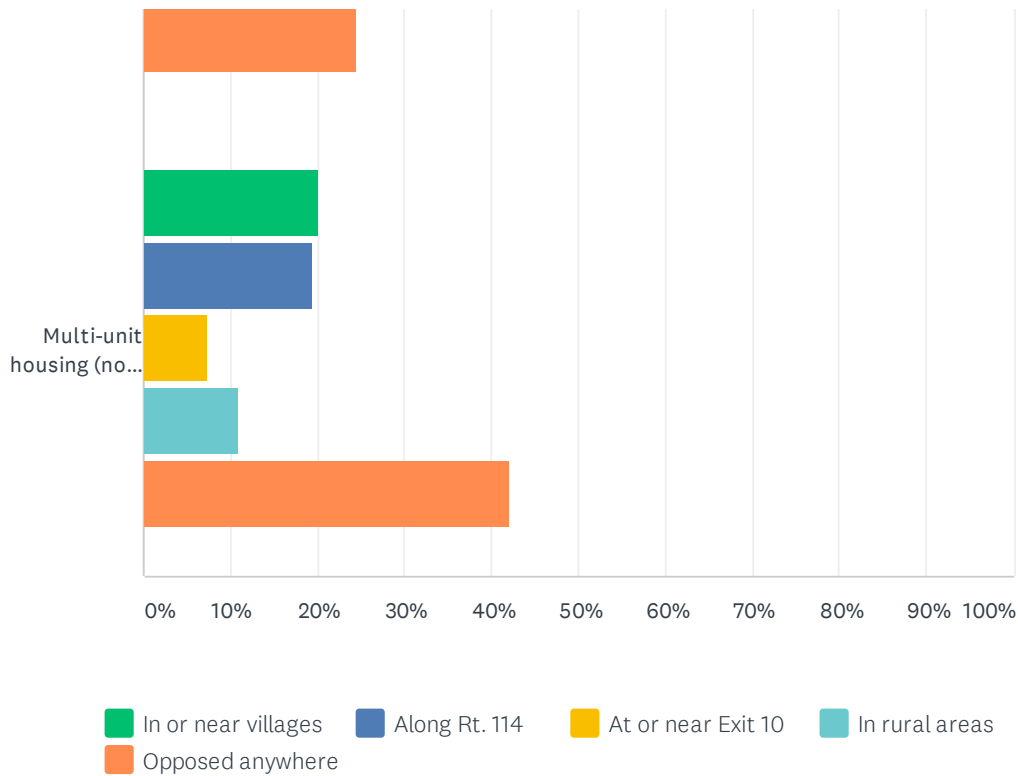
Answered: 70 Skipped: 110

Q12 What types of housing & businesses do you support? (check most appropriate)

Answered: 171 Skipped: 9







	IN OR NEAR VILLAGES	ALONG RT. 114	AT OR NEAR EXIT 10	IN RURAL AREAS	OPPOSED ANYWHERE	TOTAL
Restaurants and inns	59.17% 100	14.20% 24	19.53% 33	2.96% 5	4.14% 7	169
Small professional offices	46.50% 73	28.03% 44	15.92% 25	2.55% 4	7.01% 11	157
Recreational businesses	25.15% 41	33.13% 54	14.72% 24	18.40% 30	8.59% 14	163
Light industrial (i.e. research and development)	7.32% 12	21.34% 35	42.07% 69	11.59% 19	17.68% 29	164
Small retail uses	57.76% 93	21.12% 34	13.04% 21	1.86% 3	6.21% 10	161
Mixed uses (office/retail and housing)	42.42% 70	24.85% 41	12.73% 21	6.67% 11	13.33% 22	165
Senior housing (55+)	47.56% 78	18.29% 30	7.93% 13	14.02% 23	12.20% 20	164
Cluster 1 & 2 family housing with extra open space	21.47% 35	19.63% 32	7.98% 13	26.38% 43	24.54% 40	163
Multi-unit housing (no more than 6 per building)	20.12% 33	19.51% 32	7.32% 12	10.98% 18	42.07% 69	164

Q13 Do you have other land uses you would like to see in town?

Answered: 63 Skipped: 117

Q14 Are there specific areas that you think should be protected from development?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 80

Q15 Are there specific roads that you think require particular attention?

Answered: 93 Skipped: 87

Q16 Are there things that we, as a town, should be doing that we aren't?

Answered: 94 Skipped: 86

Q17 Are there other important issues that we have not addressed?

Answered: 72 Skipped: 108

Appendix B – Natural Resources & Features

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Abbreviations

- LUCT – Land Use Change Tax
- NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service
- NHDES - New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
- SGCN – Species of Greatest Conservation Need
- WAP – Wildlife Action Plan

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Soils

In addition to offering many environmental and agricultural benefits, soils are subject to contamination, erosion, and depletion at an alarming rate. Productive soils for farming and forestry are often prime development sites, that when built upon, become unavailable for those essential uses.

Soil is a collection of organic materials and minerals that reflects a combination of factors that formed it – climate, plant and animal life, parent materials, topography, and time. In New Hampshire, most parent material was deposited by glaciers or are glacial material that have been reworked and deposited as a result of the forces of wind and water.

Among the most restrictive soils, in terms of development potential, are the hydric soils. These soils form where there is water at or near the surface for at least several weeks. This extended period of saturation causes visible changes in the soils. Hydric soils are one of the three indicators used to identify wetlands and may be classified by their drainage class. Most hydric soils are considered poorly drained or very poorly drained. Other hydric soils are the very poorly drained soils, which have at least four inches of organic matter near the surface.

Hydric soils are mapped to an accuracy threshold of about 2 acres by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Determination of hydric soil areas for development purposes using NRCS data is not accurate enough, in most cases, to protect this resource.

Sand and Gravel Deposits

Large deposits of sand and gravel can be a valuable source of construction materials. Because of their permeability (the ability to allow water to flow through), sand and gravel deposits also tend to be good sites for water supply wells. Permeability also makes sand and gravel deposits very vulnerable to contamination; once contaminants are spilled or dumped, they can quickly spread. Therefore, special attention should be given to regulating land uses over these deposits.

The Town of Sutton issues new permits for commercial sand and gravel excavation under New Hampshire State statute (RSA 155-E:4-a) and through the Zoning Board of Adjustment issuing licenses for new excavation operation (Section III B 1-3 of the Zoning Ordinance). The Board of Selectmen annually reviews the excavation sites for tax purposes, as does the NH Department of Revenue Administration.

There are currently two active privately-owned sand and gravel pit operations that will need to be reclaimed once all of the financially viable deposits have been removed, as well as one inactive operation. Reclamation requires restoring of an excavation site to a standard at least equal to that outlined in Town regulations.

Sand & Gravel Pit Operations in Sutton

Town of Sutton

Owner	Pit Size	Location	Excavated	Assessed Value
C. Rowe	1.5 acres	08-270-222	850 cubic yards	\$60,000
M. West	3 acres	09-437-245	4 cubic yards	\$60,000
K. Rowe	2 acres	07-370-517	Inactive	\$15,000

Surface Water

Rivers & Brooks

The Town of Sutton lies within the Merrimack River principal drainage basin and the Contoocook River sub-basin, with the exception of the western face of Kings Hill in the northwest corner of Sutton, which drains into Lake Sunapee and the Connecticut River principal drainage basin. The northeastern 20% of the Town flows into the Blackwater River, while the remainder flows into the Warner River.

Cascade Brook originates in Winslow State Park in Warner. Baker Brook originates in Baker Pond in Sutton and flows into Cascade Brook east of Shaker Road in northeast Sutton. Cascade Brook then flows north to Wilmot Flat, where it empties into the Blackwater River.

The Warner River originates in Bradford and flows in an easterly direction through Warner before entering the Contoocook River in Hopkinton. One meander bend flows into Sutton along the southern boarder. At this bend is the confluence of Lane River. Beginning at Kezar Lake in North Sutton, Lane River flows south through Sutton Mills and South Sutton to the Warner River. Lyon Brook flows south from New London into Kezar Lake, with tributaries draining the eastern side of Kings Hill. Crate Brook and Kings Brook originate at the southern base of Kings Hill and flow into Lane River at Sutton Mills. Thistle Brook flows from just south of Gile Pond, along Route 114, and into Lane River just below Sutton Mills.

Newbury Reservoir and Blaisdell Lake feed small streams, which drain into the Warner River in Bradford. Stevens Brook

begins near the intersection of Kearsarge Valley Road and North Road and flows along northeast side of I-89 into Warner.

Lakes & Ponds

Billings Pond is a natural pond located in the southwest corner of Sutton, adjacent to the southern shore of Blaisdell Lake. Its 0.21 square mile watershed is contained within the watershed of Blaisdell Lake and is part of the Warner River System.

Blaisdell Lake is the second largest lake in Sutton, and is used extensively for recreation activities in the summer. Many summer residences front its shores. Blaisdell Lake is a natural lake, which has been raised by damming, and drains a land area of 0.67 miles. It does not have free public access.

Gile Pond is located south of North Sutton Village. This natural pond is bounded in part by Shadow Hill State Forest. It is also part of the Warner River system.

Kezar Lake is a 181.45 acre lake in North Sutton. Eighty-eight percent of the water in Kezar Lake comes from Lyon Brook, which itself is composed of Lyon Brook, Clark Brook and King Hill Brook. Kezar Lake is a significant public waterbody for the western section of the state, supplying a moderately sized state park managed by the Department of Resources and Economic Development, many seasonal and year round homes, and a public access to the lake. This public access is also a public swimming beach, Horse Beach.

In 1931, a sewage treatment facility in New London, three miles from Kezar Lake, began to discharge treated effluent into Lyon Brook. In 1963 the first documented algae bloom

APPENDIX B

occurred. "In 1968, the State Tax Commission ordered a 30 percent across the board reduction in appraised evaluations (Town Report of Sutton, New Hampshire, 1968)." In 1982, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department purchased Chadwick Meadows, and altered the outlet structure to create a year-round wetland. The dam is managed for the benefit of Kezar Lake.

In 1990, as a result of lengthy litigation between the Town of New London and members of the Kezar Lake Protective Association, the Town of New London was ordered to pay \$220,000 to the Association. In addition, a consent decree was entered into by both towns. The Town of New London was ordered to pay for up to two more treatments of the lake when certain water quality standards were not met. The court ordered that weekly sampling of the lake and its watershed be conducted jointly by the Town of New London and the Kezar Lake Protective Association, and that the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) take additional samples monthly. In 1995, at the recommendation of DES, the Kezar Lake Watershed Committee was formed. Representatives of Sutton, New London, and NHDES meet periodically to monitor the entire watershed.

The NHDES began to clean up Kezar Lake in 1979. A large EPA grant was given to the state to study and remediate the lake. Eventually, aluminum salts were applied to the lake. They bound with the phosphates, which were causing the algae blooms. The phosphates sank to the bottom, where they remain to this day.

Kezar Lake is not like any other lake. It is the most studied lake in the United States. It has known phosphate deposits at its bottom, bound up with the aluminum salts. Additional phosphates could, at any point, result in the release of the existing phosphates. An algae bloom could then reoccur. The algae bloom from the past has been described as pea soup. The history of Kezar Lake, and its fragile condition, must be remembered when any land use activities in its watershed are considered.

The Newbury Reservoir, also known as the Loch Lyndon Reservoir, this artificial pond straddles the Newbury Town Line. Of the 127 total acres of this Reservoir, 90 acres are contained within Sutton.

Russel Pond is a natural pond is located ½ mile upstream from Blaisdell Lake. It is used in all seasons for various recreational activities. The Town recently purchased a 9 acre parcel of land with approximately 2,000 feet of frontage on the Pond.

Groundwater

Groundwater is an important limited resource. Without adequate amounts of high quality groundwater, development will be restricted. Groundwater is the subsurface water, which saturates the soil and fills the cracks within the underlying bedrock. The top surface of this saturated zone is called the water table. In some locations, such as kettle hole ponds, the visible surface of the water may reflect the level of the groundwater of the adjacent land.

The groundwater is replenished largely by rainwater and snowmelt, which percolates downward through the soil. Other sources of replenishment, or recharge, may come from streams, lakes and ponds. Some groundwater flows to streams, ponds, and lakes and then becomes part of the surface water runoff. Although rainfall will percolate into all soil and weathered rock surfaces to some extent, areas of more porous sand and gravel will allow a greater amount of infiltration, and are specifically noted as "recharge zones" to signify their importance in recharging groundwater reservoirs. Therefore, it is important to identify and protect these areas from land uses that may be a significant threat of subsurface contamination.

If there is enough groundwater to provide an adequate water supply, that area of groundwater is called an aquifer. Most of the highly productive aquifers in New Hampshire consist of unconsolidated deposits of gravel and sand, floodplains, abandoned riverbeds and alluvial valleys.

In addition, if recharge areas are covered by development and impervious material, then the recharge of the underlying aquifers is reduced. The surface of the soil would be physically sealed by various materials such as asphalt or cement, which would not allow any water to penetrate the surface. This means that, not only would the recharge of the aquifer be impaired, but also there would likely be an increase in surface runoff and, therefore, an increase in the occurrence of floods.

Sutton contains one aquifer with high potential to yield groundwater. This aquifer is located near North Sutton

Village. The largest stratified drift aquifer in Sutton is located in the eastern half of Town in an elongated strip from Cascade Marsh to Steven Brook. This aquifer has medium potential to yield groundwater but due to its shape and location, it is probably not a good candidate for a public water supply. Another aquifer with medium potential to yield groundwater lies on the west side of Route 114 from South Sutton to Sutton Mills. Water quality here may have been affected by the original landfill site, a septage disposal site, the burial of ashes from the solid waste incinerator, and nearby road salting.

Wetlands

Wetlands are identified based on three indicators: the presence of water at or near the surface during part of the growing season, the presence of hydric soils, and the prevalence of vegetation adapted to grown in wet areas. Wetlands include, but are not limited to swamps, bogs, marshes, vernal pools, and similar areas.

Many wetlands have water present because the soils are poorly drained or the water table is very close to the surface. Sutton has a significant number of wetlands. The primary impacts facing wetland resources in Sutton today are the effects of development in their buffers or in the wetlands.

Wetlands have been viewed in the past as areas with little economic value and have been subjected to filling, draining, and dumping with little regard for the consequences. In recent times, however, it has been shown that wetlands provide benefits to the community. Wetlands provide numerous functions and values, some of which are listed below.

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- Flood Control – Some wetlands act as a giant sponge during periods of high run-off or flooding and then release this stored water slowly during drier periods.
- Water Storage and Groundwater Recharge - The water in the wetlands can move up by means of evaporation, laterally by flowing in streams, and downwards, thus recharging groundwater.
- Erosion and Sediment Control - Because wetlands vegetation absorbs or retains and slows down the rate of runoff, the water's erosive powers are decreased, and the sediment settles out of the water.
- Pollution Filtration - Wetlands vegetation and microorganisms reduce the harmful potential of pollutants such as organic material, bacteria, nitrates, and phosphates found in water.
- Wildlife - Wetlands vegetation and water provides food, habitats, and breeding grounds for a wide variety of wildlife.
- Education and Recreation - Wetlands provide natural areas of study for all ages. Wetlands serve as excellent sites for photography, canoeing, snowshoeing, hiking, fishing, and hunting.
- Environmental Health and Diversity - Generally, only wetland plants can tolerate wet soils and only certain types of animals and wildlife can tolerate such an environment.

Floodplains

Floodplains are areas of land bordering a river or stream that flood periodically. Floodplains are important for at two major reasons: 1) they carry floodwaters, and 2) they provide valuable wildlife habitat. By trapping sediments and reducing erosion, undeveloped floodplains play an important role in preventing pollution of rivers and streams.

As development occurs in an upstream watershed the runoff volume and rate of flow increase due to the larger areas of paved and other impervious surfaces (e.g. roofs, roads and driveways). Flooding can consequently become more frequent and floodwaters more damaging since they are moving faster. Preserving floodplains becomes increasingly important as uplands are developed, as does attention in local Ordinances to minimizing the amount of impervious surfaces in these floodplains.

Retaining a floodplain in its natural state, is the most cost-effective way to reduce flood damages, and has been found to be far less expensive than dams, channelization, and other structural methods. Undeveloped floodplains also trap sediments and pollutants and reduce erosion. Since protecting a floodplain helps to reduce water pollution, development within the floodplain leads to more rapid movement of pollutants into the stream channel, which degrades the quality of the water.

Sources of Pollution

Point Source Pollution

Contaminants from various land uses, or activities business (e.g. fuel or oil spills), industry (e.g. improper use and disposal of hazardous materials/waste) and households (e.g. improper use and disposal of herbicides) also present threats to groundwater and to current and/or potential water supplies. Point source pollution, which is defined as any single identifiable source of pollution, such as a pipe or ditch, is a concern to local residents and business owners as it may have many different routes of entry. Leaking above and below-ground storage tanks, floor drains that directly release into the ground or water body, dry wells, burying waste, and inadequate septic systems are all examples of contamination entry methods. Larger point sources include industrial factories, sewage treatment plants, oil refineries, food processing, and pulp and paper mills.

According to the NHDES, potential sources of contamination exist in Sutton. These include underground storage tanks, aboveground storage tanks, hazardous waste generators, and a solid waste facility.

Non Point Source Pollution

Unlike point source pollution, non-point source pollution cannot be traced back to any specific source. It is water pollution that is caused by widely dispersed sources of pollutants that are carried by runoff from rain and snow melt. Much of the non-point source pollution occurring in Sutton is impacting surface water bodies – lakes, rivers, and ponds.

There are various sources that can contribute to this type of pollution, including septic systems, pet and domestic animal waste, lawn and garden care, impervious surface runoff, and land disturbance during land development activities.

Scenic Viewpoints

In 2001, the Sutton Master Plan Committee selected 22 key viewpoints from around town. The viewpoints were chosen based on a consensus of the committee members after identification of important views and features in the Town and should not be considered an exhaustive list. This analysis sought to identify and include views from places where people live, gather, and move through the Town. Thus, emphasis was placed on views from commonly traveled roadways, villages, and important open areas of the Town, such as lakes, farm fields, and wetlands.

- 1) Route 114 at Little Britton Road
- 2) Kearsarge Valley Road at the Town Line
- 3) Kearsarge Valley Road at the Country Club of NH
- 4) Exit 10 at North Road and I-89
- 5) Muster Field Farm/Matthew Harvey Homestead on Harvey Road
- 6) Horse Beach on Kezar Lake
- 7) Intersection of Corporation Hill Road and Main Street in Sutton Mills
- 8) Old Newbury Road at the Newbury Reservoir
- 9) Route 114 in South Sutton at Roby Road
- 10) I-89 northbound 1¼ miles north of the Warner Town line
- 11) Route 114 at Russell Pond

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- 12) Route 114 at Blaisdell Lake
- 13) Eaton Grange Road at Sutton Lane
- 14) Baker Hill Road ¼ mile south of the Town Line
- 15) Poor Farm Road ¼ mile south of King Hill Road
- 16) Wadleigh Hill Road at Pressey Bridge
- 17) Gile Pond Road at Gile Pond
- 18) Rest stop on I-89
- 19) Meetinghouse Hill Road ¾ mile north of the Village of South Sutton
- 20) Birch Hill Road ¾ mile east of Roby Road
- 21) Route 103 ½ mile east of Roby Road
- 22) Blaisdell Hill Road ½ mile north of Town Line

Wildlife

The challenge of conserving enough habitats to support healthy native wildlife populations is complicated by the varying habitat requirements of the number of diverse species located in Sutton. Some species require less than an acre of undisturbed forest, while others need territories covering a hundred acres. In addition, many species require several different habitat types through the course of the year. The more habitat diversity within the region, the more likely it will support a diverse and abundant wildlife population.

A major threat to wildlife diversity is sprawling development patterns that cover the rural landscape, which cause habitat fragmentation through residential lawns and roads. Wildlife that are sensitive to human encroachment are restricted to these islands of undisturbed land and they may move or die out if an area becomes too small. The fragmentation of

wildlife habitat may also result in a loss of native plants, a reduced breeding gene pool, a loss of natural predators, and an increase in animals' susceptibility to disease.

For optimum wildlife habitat, blocks of unfragmented land should be void of significant human activity or development. Unfragmented lands often encompass many habitat types and can also provide safe travel corridors and migratory pathways. Reducing the size of forest tracts affects many species, even if all other habitat features remain the same. Fragmentation of undisturbed habitats with roads represents a source of mortality and creates barriers to wildlife movement.

Corridors and greenways are typically used not only by people for recreation and transportation, but also by wildlife to travel from one habitat to another. Maintaining viable and undeveloped corridors ultimately measures the biological success of the animals, particularly larger mammals within an area. The more biodiversity found within an area, the more valuable and self-sustaining the community becomes from both ecological and economic perspectives.

The size of a species population is usually dependent on the amount and location of suitable habitat. Animal populations can often be manipulated by varying the amount of available habitat. However, unless a species is rare and endangered, one species should not be favored over another. Providing a variety of habitats and protecting them from development and negative environmental impacts will increase wildlife diversity in Sutton.

New Hampshire Fish and Game released the NH Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) in 2015, with the goal of serving as a blueprint for conserving Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) and their habitats in New Hampshire. As part of this Plan, maps were released for each of New Hampshire's communities showing wildlife habitat land cover and highest ranked wildlife habitat. Additionally, a document was released for each community noting the SGCN. While some of this data is shown on the included maps, specific information can be seen on the [WAP website](#).

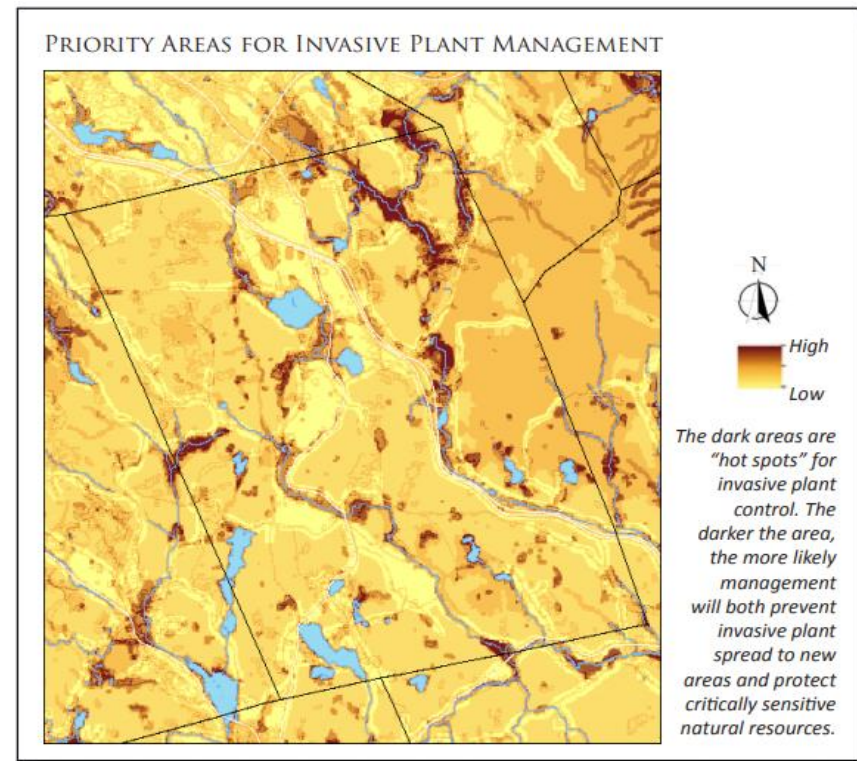
Invasive Species

Invasive plants can cause significant ecological and economic harm and are changing the face of America. They may impact wildlife by choking out natural habitats such as freshwater wetlands, causing loss of available food, or by altering habitat structure or function.

The importance of minimizing the spread of invasive plants across the landscape means they are a common focus of restoration projects. However, invasive plants know no boundaries and can easily reestablish from surrounding areas unless a landscape-scale strategic approach is taken to prioritizing management projects.

Picking Our Battles is a collaboration of New Hampshire Fish and Game, the New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau, and the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve who teamed up with representatives from over 120 communities, natural resource managers, and academics to develop a statewide strategic prioritization plan for the control of upland, wetland, and intertidal invasive plant species.

This statewide project has been used to develop a customized invasive plant control strategy for each New Hampshire municipality, including a map showing priority areas where invasive plant removal will have the most immediate impact and most effectively protect our native natural resources in the long-term. They also show a customized "early detection" list of plant species just coming into each community and are most easily manageable before becoming fully established in the community. Invasive plants can cause significant ecological and economic harm and can impact wildlife or alter habitat



["Picking Our Battles": An Invasive Plant Control Strategy for Sutton, NH.](#)

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structure or function. The top three invasive species noted for Sutton include the Black Swallow-Wort, Garlic Mustard, and Norway Maple.

Location of invasive species in Sutton and priority areas for management can be seen on the [“Picking Our Battles”: An Invasive Plan Control Strategy for Sutton, NH.](#)

Species of Special Concern

The Natural Heritage Bureau, in the NH Division of Resources and Economic Development’s Division of Forest and Lands, maintains a database of known rare plant populations, rare wildlife populations, and exemplary natural community occurrences. Exemplary natural communities are distinctive communities of forests, wetlands, grasslands, etc., that are found in few other places in New Hampshire, or are communities that are in good condition.

The Natural Heritage data (which is updated periodically) represent the current documented information for the location and status of species of concern and natural communities in New Hampshire, but all significant plant and animal species have not yet been documented since a comprehensive natural resources inventory of the Town has not been done.

Rare Plants, Animals, and Exemplary Natural Communities in Sutton

New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau, July 2020,
<https://www.nh.gov/nhdf/documents/town-lists.pdf>

Species	Flag*	Listed	Reports in Sutton over past 20 years
Natural Communities- Palustrine			
Inland Atlantic white cedar swamp	Historic record	--	Historical
Vertebrates - Birds			
Common Loon	Very high importance	Threatened	2
Least Bittern	Historic record	Special concern	Historical
Marsh Wren	Very high importance	--	1
Northern Harrier	Historic record	Endangered	Historical
Pied-billed Grebe	High importance	Threatened	1
Vertebrates - Reptiles			
Blanding’s Turtle	Historic record	Endangered	Historical
Wood Turtle	Extremely high importance	Special concern	5

**Flags are based upon a combination of (1) how rare the species or community is and (2) how large or healthy its examples are in that town.*

Forest

Sutton is a predominantly forested community. Forests serve a number of functions in both the community and the region, including protecting public water supplies and watersheds, serving as a source of renewable energy, providing lumber and other forest products, wildlife habitat, providing outdoor recreational opportunities, and contributing to the rural character of the community.

While a small percentage of Sutton's forestland is state and town owned, the majority is owned by private individuals and woodland investors. The Sutton Town Forest system contains 1 lot that totals approximately 74 acres of forest and wetland and is located in North Sutton. This town forest is managed for wildlife, recreation, and aesthetics.

A Tree Farm is a privately owned forest managed to produce timber with added benefits of improved wildlife habitat, water quality, recreation, and scenic values. To qualify as a tree farm, a landowner must dedicate at least 10 acres to growing and harvesting forest products, have a written plan for the future management of their forest, follow management recommendations, and demonstrate a commitment to stewardship of their forest for multiple values. Of all of the woodlots in Sutton, 13 are certified New Hampshire Tree Farms that include 3,393-acres (from New Hampshire Tree Farm data, June 2021) and can be identified through the green and white diamond-shaped signs on each property. This voluntary certification recognizes landowners who are good stewards of their property and who meet the standards of

both the National Tree Farm certification as well as the state standards.

Forest management is also found on non-Tree Farm properties in Sutton and there are also instances of rampant logging. While the heavily logged areas may appear to be the norm as they have the largest visual impact, they may actually be the exception to the normal practice in Sutton.

Forest management includes timber production but also wildlife habitat management, water quality control and recreational opportunities. The town can encourage sound forest management on public properties through the development of written forest management plans with well-defined prescriptions all geared toward complete forest management. The plans should be put into action with stand treatments being done according to Best Management Practices for Timber Harvesting. Private landowners, too, can be encouraged to implement forest management on their own properties through landowner education, by hosting woodlot tours on publicly managed lands, and through the posting of workshops and woodlot tours offered to the public. The State of New Hampshire already encourages forest management on private lands through Current Use Assessment with the tax incentive category of Forestland With Documented Stewardship.

New Hampshire has a real estate tax and timber is considered to be real estate. Timber is taxed only at the time it is cut and at a rate that encourages the growing of timber. Timber on all land is taxable at 10% of the assessed stumpage value (standing timber value) at the time of cutting. Yearly timber

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tax totals have fluctuated over time, as can be seen in the table below. The tax collected goes into Sutton’s general fund, according to RSA 79.

Timber Tax Collected
Town of Sutton

Year	Timber Tax Collected
2020	\$23,557.73
2019	\$6,223.72
2018	\$4,976.54
2017	\$4,896.00
2016	\$8,340.69

Protected Open Space and Conservation Lands

In its simplest definition, open space is land that has not been developed or converted to other uses. They include forests, fields, river corridors, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and greenway corridors, as well as agricultural lands and town parks.

Open land can be used for commercial, recreational, and relaxation activities. It provides aesthetic and scenic values, wildlife habitat, and helps to minimize urban sprawl. Recreational opportunities on open land include walking, hunting, fishing, biking, wildlife viewing, and photography, just to name a few.

The Town owns a number of parcels of land, many of which are managed by the Conservation Commission as open space. The State of New Hampshire, as well as many other non-profit conservation organizations, also own land or hold conservation easements on land within Sutton.

Protected Land in Sutton as on the Conservation Lands Map

Property Name	Estimated Acreage	Protection Type	Location on Map	Property Name	Estimated Acreage	Protection Type	Location on Map
Aquavilla Wetland	30.3	FO	1	Loon Island	1.1	FO	27
Ash Dump	5.4	FO	2	Mahoney	26.2	CE	28
Ash Dump	11.8	FO	3	Mahoney	3.3	CE	29
Billings Pond Island	0.3	FO	4	Mildred Lefferts Natural Area	6.3	FO	30
Black Mountain Forest	10.3	FO	5	Putnam Easement	34.1	CE	31
Black Mountain Forest	1283.8	FO	6	Putnam Easement	11.5	CE	32
Bristol	15.3	CE	7	Seymour Natural Area	4.0	FO	33
Bristol	52.6	CE	8	Shadow Hill State Forest	36.9	FO	34
Bristol	125.6	CE	9	Shadow Hill Woodlot	42.6	CE	35
Bristol	4.0	CE	10	Shingle Mill Corner Lot	0.9	FO	36
Bristol	66.8	CE	11	Sprout Lot	3.8	FO	37
Cascade Marsh CE	123.0	CE	12	Sundell Natural Area	4.0	FO	38
Cascade Marsh WMA	331.0	FO	13	Sutton Pines	3.7	FO	39
Cloves/Stevens Brook Natural Area	19.8	FO	14	Sutton Town Forest + Wetland	82.8	FO	40
Currier Easement	15.0	CE	15	Town of Sutton #2 - Russell Pond	9.7	CE	41
Emerson	32.7	CE	16	Wadleigh State Park	43.7	FO	42
Enroth	40.0	CE	17	Warner Town Forest	23.1	FO	43
Enroth Gift	4.4	FO	18	Warner Town Forest	3.9	FO	44
Forte Tract	100.0	FO	19	Webb/Crowell Forest	43.6	FO	45
Johnson Trusts	88.1	CE	20	Webb/Crowell Forest	31.8	FO	46
Kearsarge Gore Farm	428.0	CE	21	Wells Family Trust	10.9	CE	47
Keith #1	54.0	CE	22	Wells Family Trust	37.5	CE	48
Keith #2	58.7	CE	23	Wells Family Trust	42.8	CE	49
Keith #3	1.8	CE	24	William Bean Quarry	136.0	FO	50
Kezar Conservation Group LLC	68.7	FO	25	Woodlot & Grange LLC	192.8	CE	51
King Hill Reservation	449.3	FO	26	Woodlot & Grange LLC	22.2	CE	52

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Current Use

Current Use is a property tax incentive to encourage landowners to keep open space undeveloped. Land that is participating in the Current Use Program is taxed on its potential to generate income in its existing, or current use. The alternative taxing strategy would be to tax the land on its income producing potential at the most highly developed use that could take place on it, such as a housing development or commercial business venture.

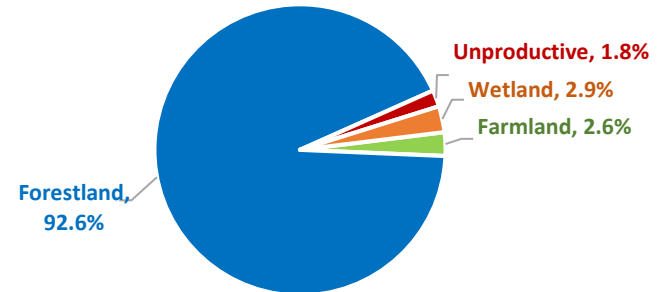
Landowners who have qualifying land must apply to the Town to participate in the Program. Lands which typically qualify for the Current Use Program include farm land, forest land, tree farms, certain wetlands, and other undeveloped areas over 10 acres in size, as well as qualifying farmland and discretionary easements. An additional tax benefit can be added to Current Use land if recreational uses are allowed. Landowners can post all or part of their Current Use land for no trespassing, as well as post against certain types of uses (ATVs, hunting, snowmobiling, etc.) (RSA 79-A).

Over the last ten years, the Current Use program has been embraced by the residents of Sutton. As of 2020, over 69% of the total land area in Town has been enrolled in the Current Use program, up nearly 5% since 2010.

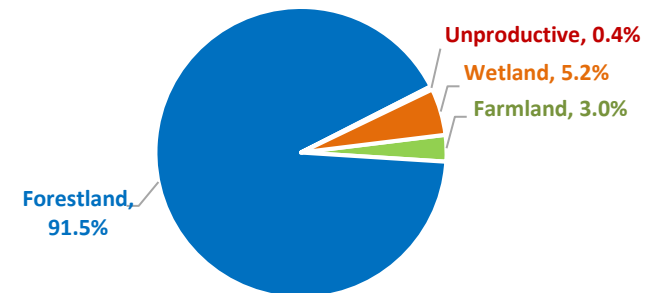
When land that has been participating in this program is developed and/or no longer meets acreage requirements, a Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) is charged. The Land Use Change Tax is set at 10% of the assessed market value of the land at

the time the change occurs. In Sutton, the LUCT collected is used for conservation purposes.

Sutton's 2010 Current Use Percentages
17,559 Total Acres in Current Use
LUCT Collected: \$3,000



Sutton's 2020 Current Use Percentages
18,944 Total Acres in Current Use
LUCT Collected: \$30,927



Data from the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration

Recreation

Trails

Trails create opportunities to access open land in the community and allow residents to get outdoors to access natural, scenic, and recreational areas. Trail-users include pedestrians, hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers, snowmobilers, and ATV riders, just to name a few. A multi-use trail is defined as any trail that is used by more than one user group or for more than one trail activity. Many trails allow for multiple uses but may be posted for no trespassing during certain seasons or for specific types of trail uses.

Trails can be classified as official or unofficial, permanent or temporary, seasonal, and single-use or multi-use. Examples of official trails are those owned and/or maintained by the federal, state, or town government and examples of unofficial trails are Class VI roads. An example of a permanent trail includes those located on the Muster Field Farm property while temporary trails include x-country ski trails. Seasonal trails are those trails that are maintained, used, or exist in a specific season, such as snowmobile trails in winter. Single-use trails are those that are created and maintained for a specific user group, such as equestrians, while multi-use trails can accommodate more than one user at a time.

Snowmobiling

Sutton has a local non-profit snowmobile club, the Sutton Ridgerunners. The Ridgerunners maintains and grooms approximately 30 miles of trails in the Sutton area for snowmobile use. All of the snowmobiling trails within Town

are for winter snowmobiling use only, except where posted by private property owners. These trails are developed through agreements with local landowners and are maintained by Sutton Ridgerunner volunteers.

Class A Trails

A Class VI road is one type of rights-of-way to consider for an officially designated recreational trail system because the pathway has been established and public access is allowed. Typically, Class VI Roads are public rights-of-way that are used for recreational purposes, for through travel, for driveway access, and for other uses, such as agricultural and forestry uses. The owners of the properties abutting the Class VI road are not liable for damages or injuries sustained to users of the road, although they may choose to maintain the road for access to their property.

In 1993, the State enacted RSA 231-A, which allows municipalities to designate Class V and VI roadways as “Class A” trailways. With such a designation, the roadways are established as municipal trails. This designation will create ownership and responsibility for the trail by the Town. Class A Trails allow abutting landowners continued use of the right-of-way for vehicular use to existing structures, timber, or agricultural operations, but any new building or development is prohibited. The abutting landowners may be eligible for damages as per RSA 231-A:2(II).

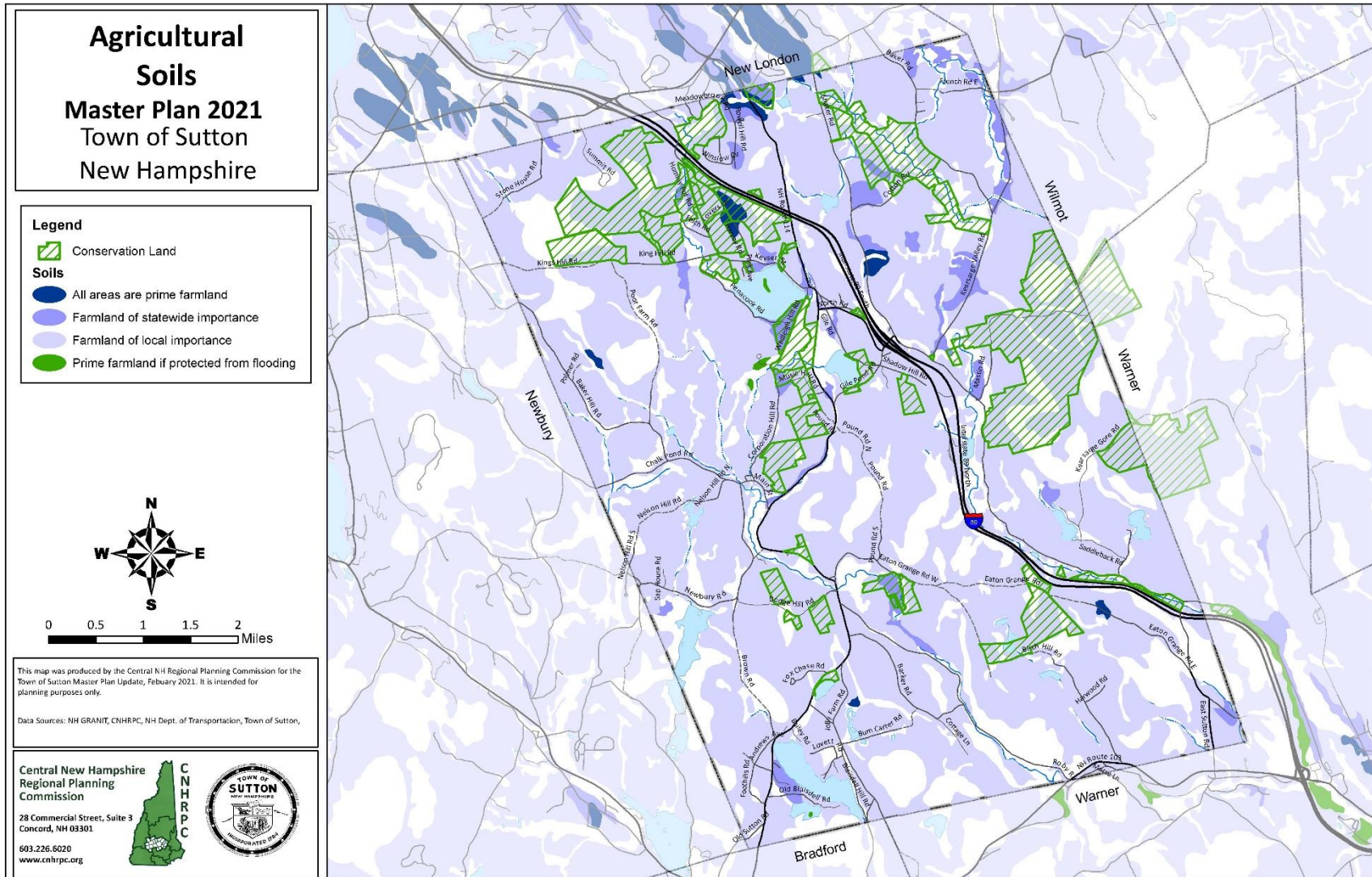
Class A trails can be established at the annual Town Meeting by including a warrant article on the specific proposal and needs a simple majority in order to pass. In addition, Class A status can be rescinded through a vote at the Town Meeting.

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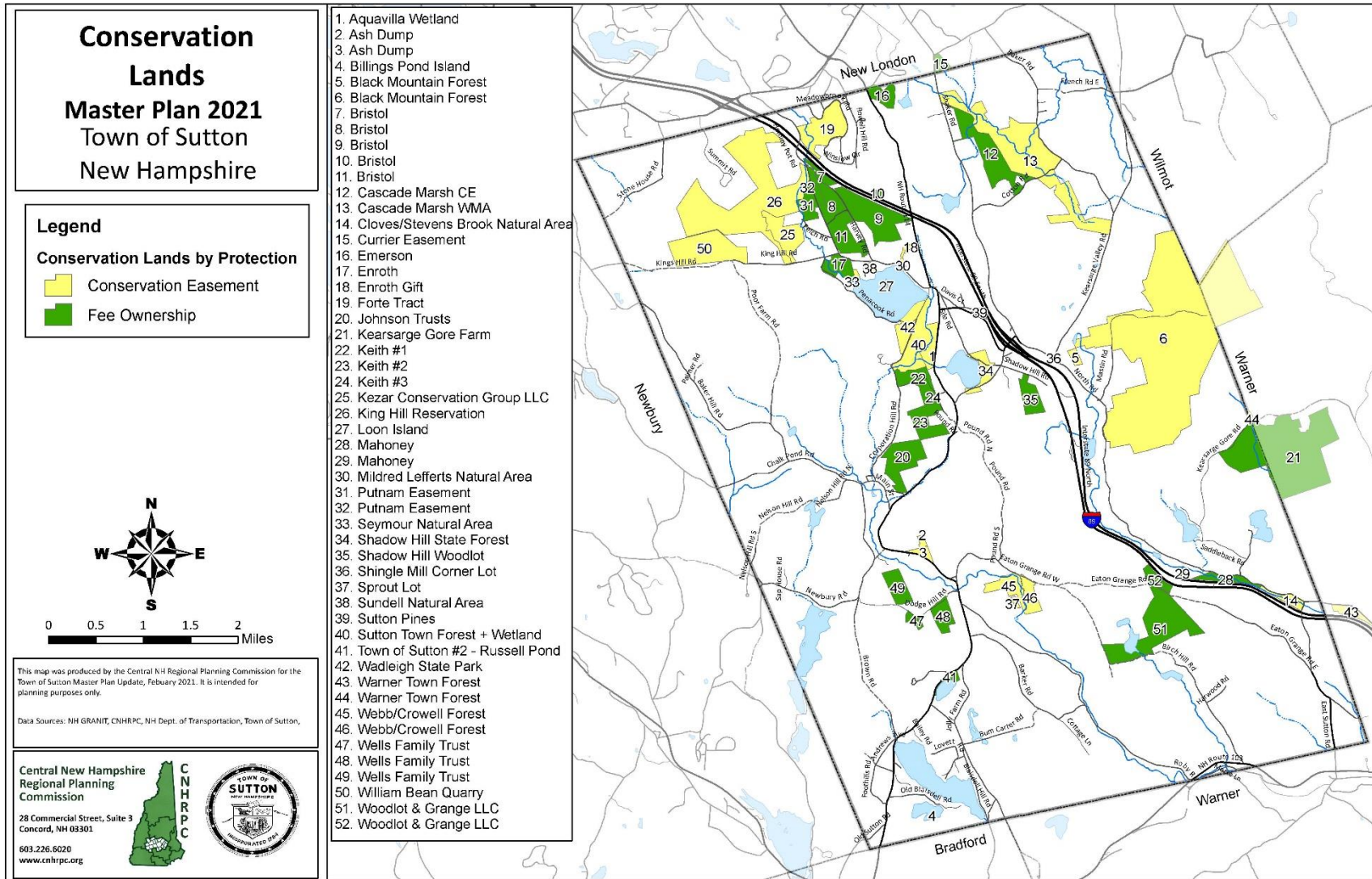
Water Access

Sutton has numerous lakes, rivers, and ponds. These provide opportunities for swimming, boating, fishing, and wildlife viewing. It is desirable for the people of Sutton to have access to these resources. Some access to Kezar Lake is available through Wadleigh State Park and “Horse Beach.” There is no free public access to Blaisdell Lake.

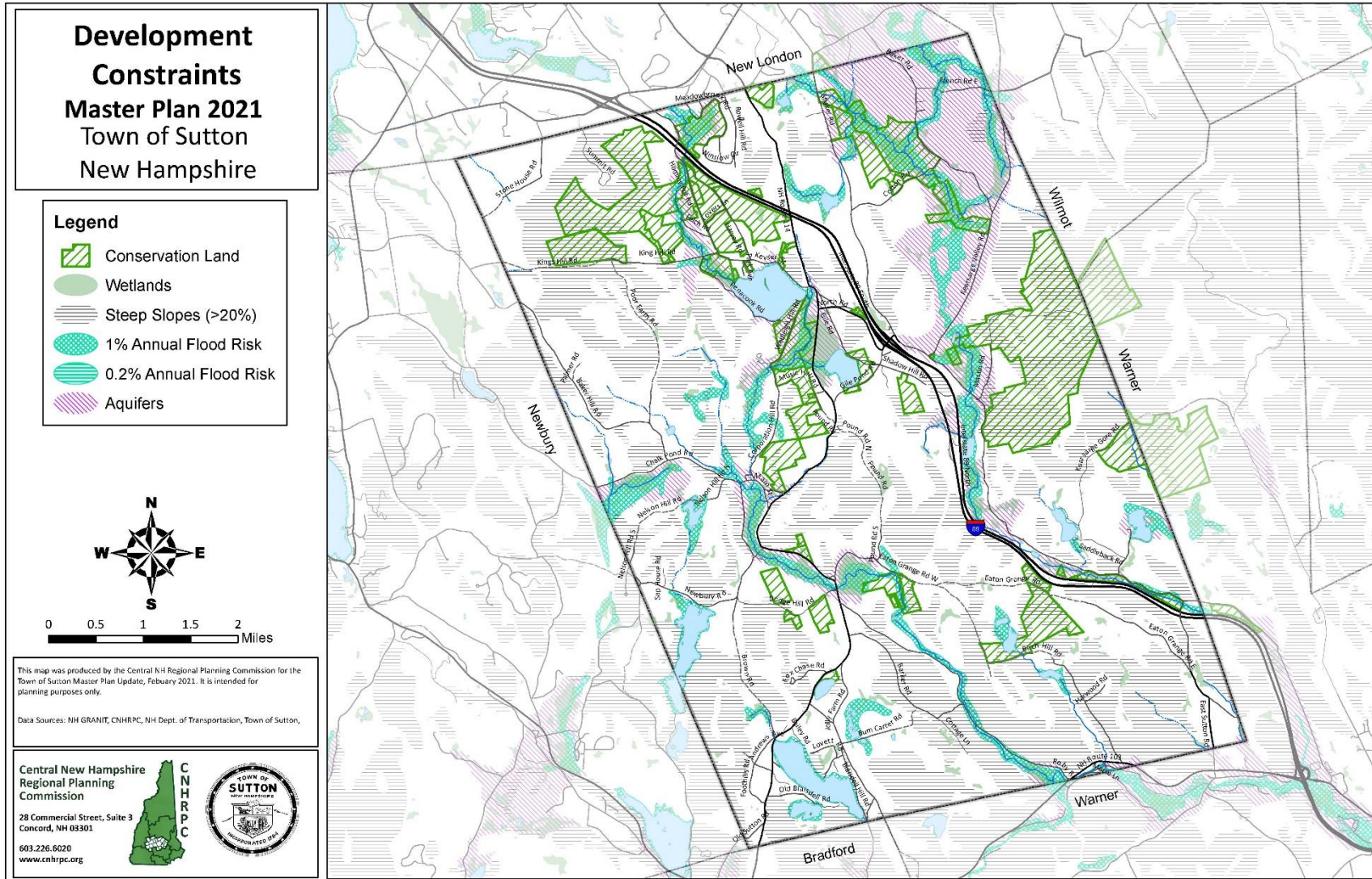
Agricultural Soils Map



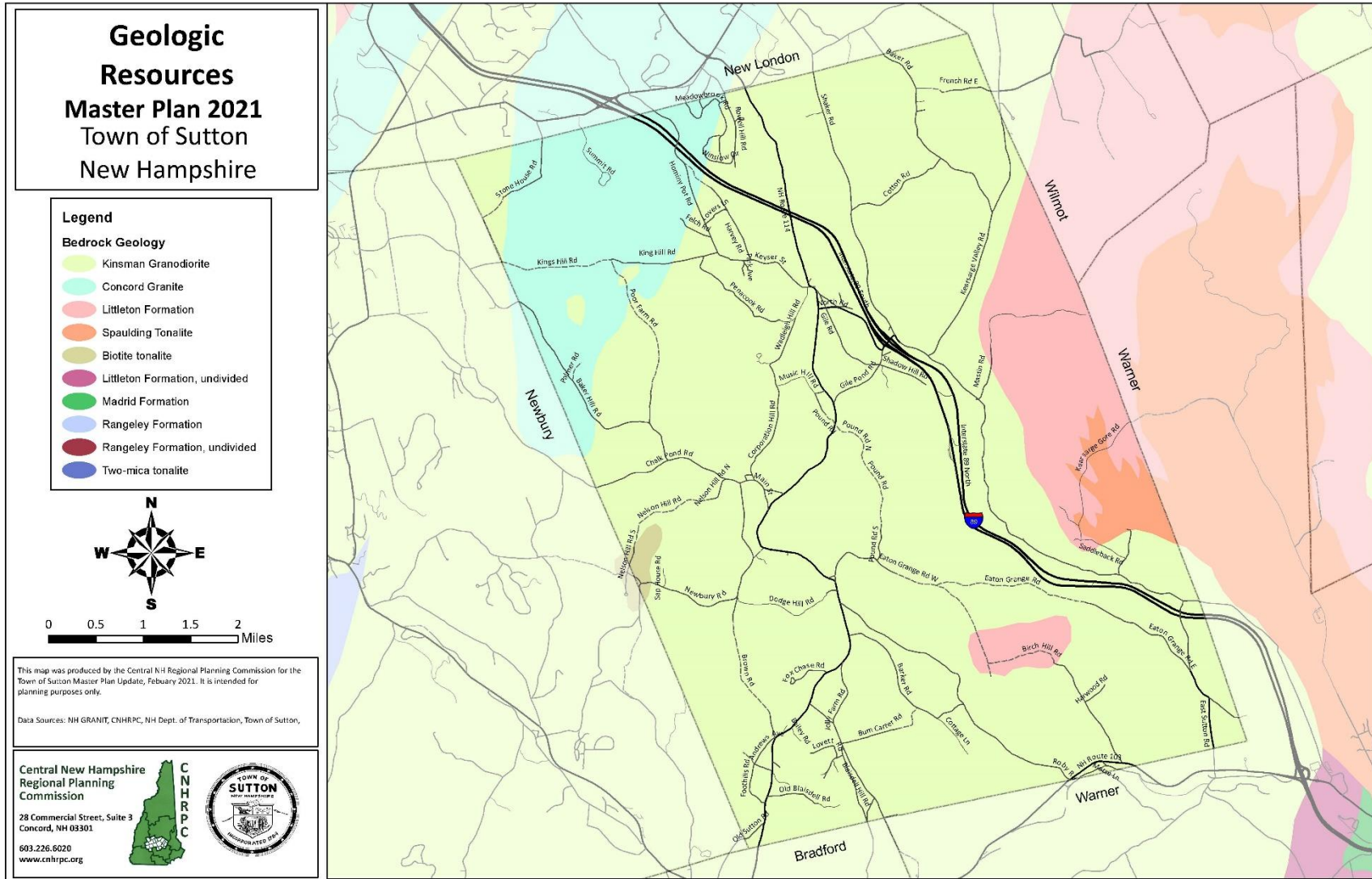
Conservation Lands Map



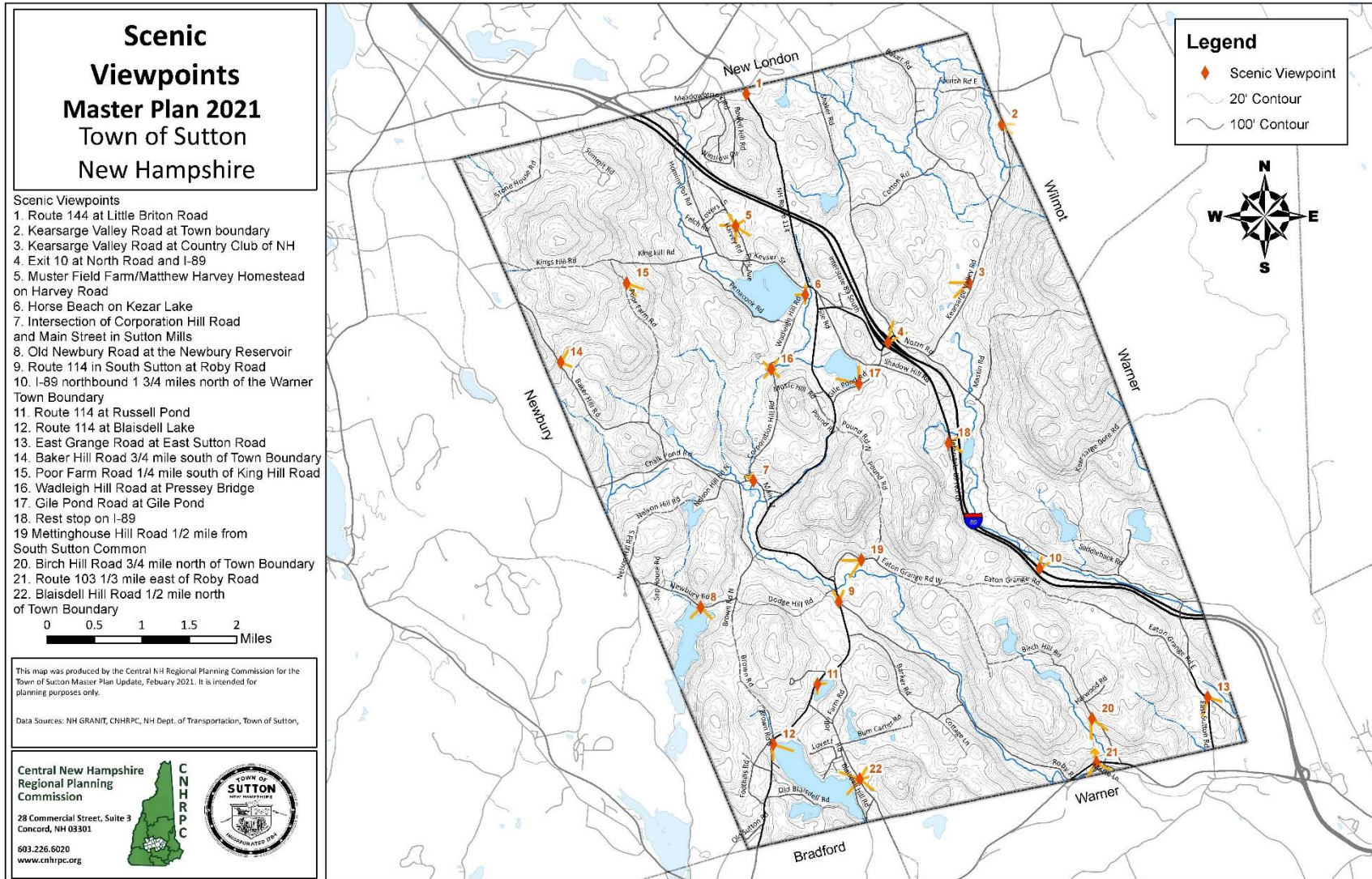
Development Constraints Map



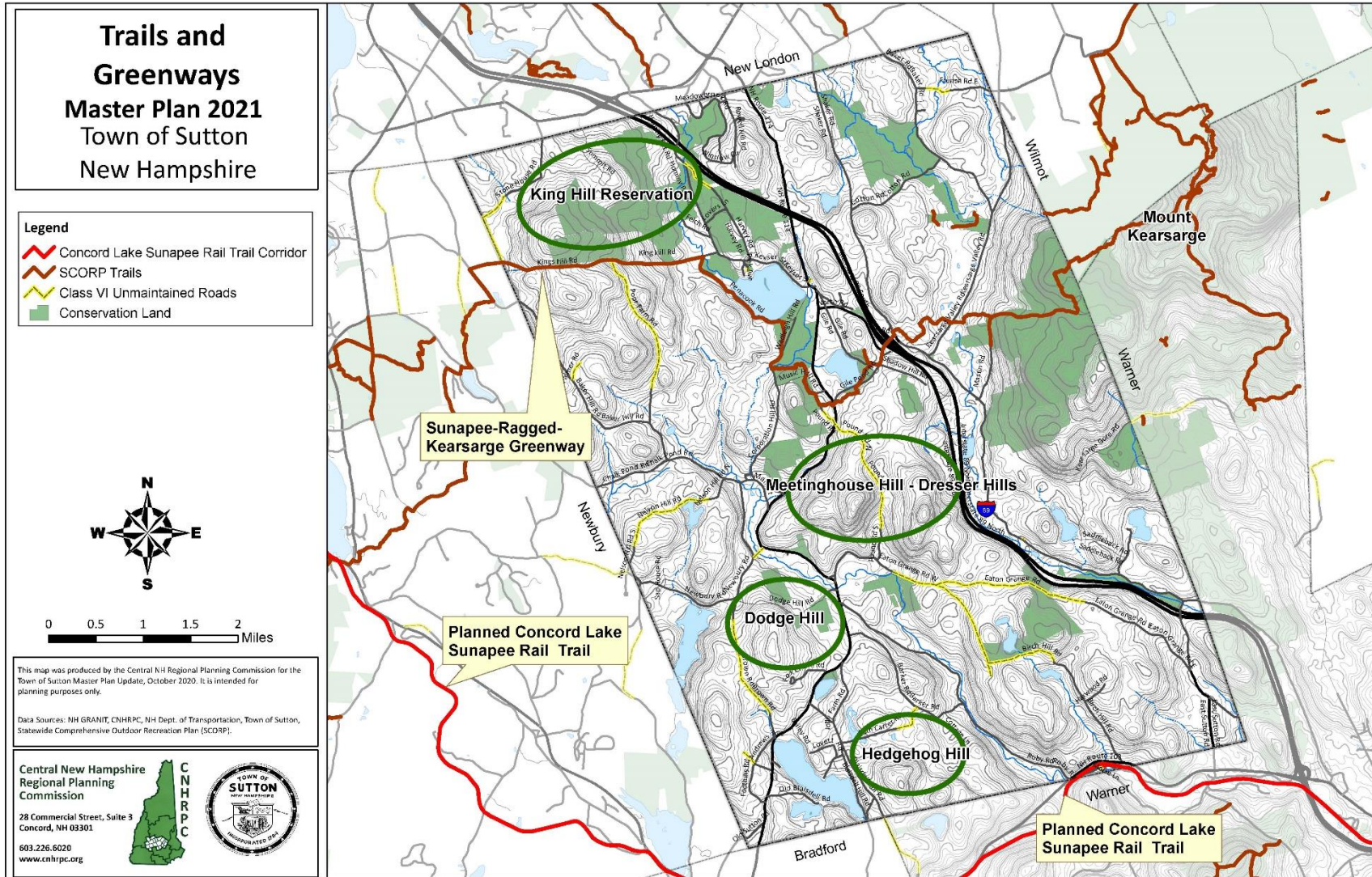
Geologic Resources Map



Scenic Viewpoints Map

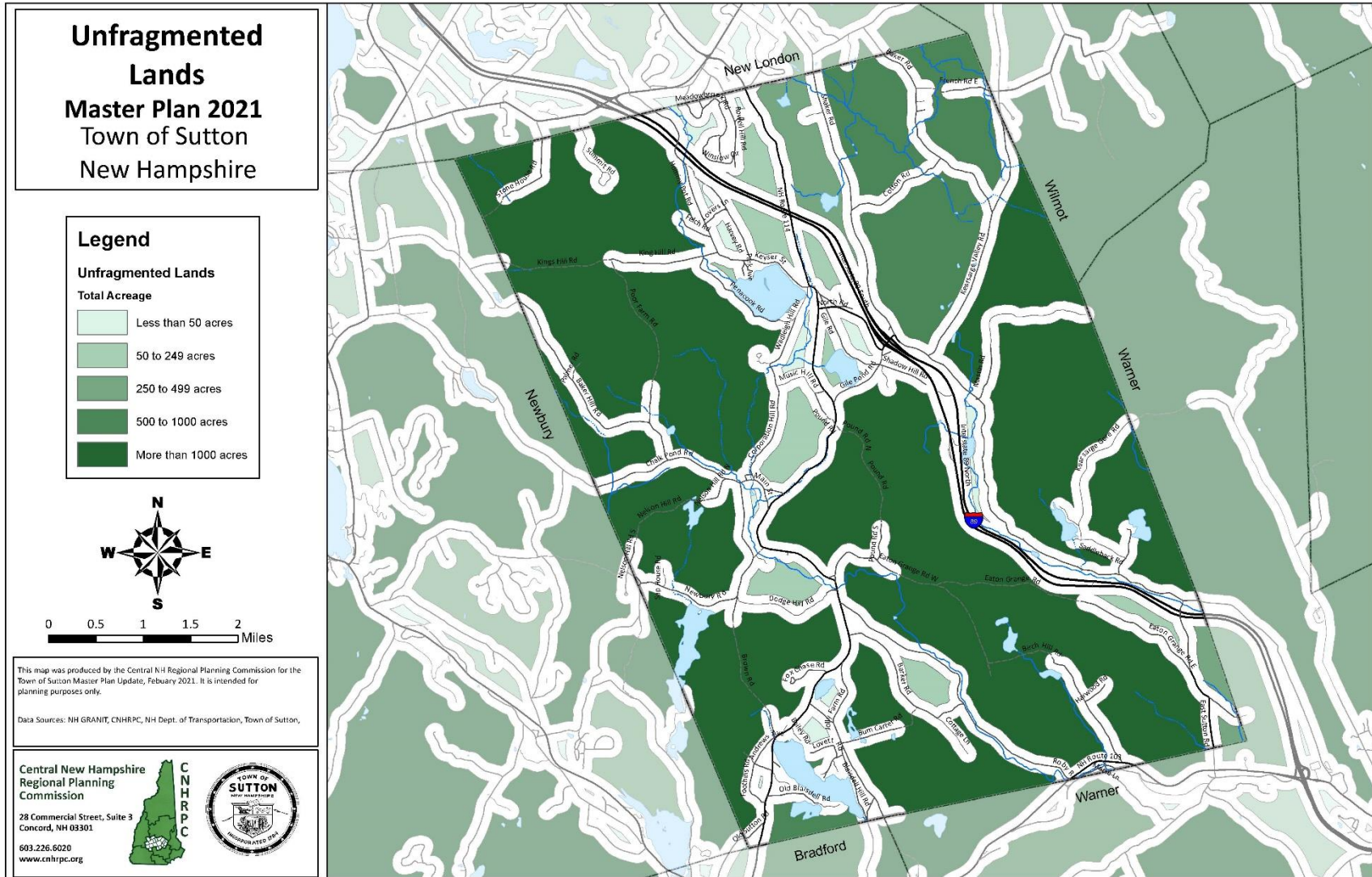


Trails and Greenways Map



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Unfragmented Lands Map

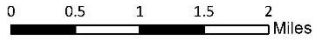


Walks and Trails Map

Walks and Trails Master Plan 2021 Town of Sutton New Hampshire

Legend

- Points of Interests
- Walks and Trails
- Conservation Land



This map was produced by the Central NH Regional Planning Commission for the Town of Sutton Master Plan Update, February 2021. It is intended for planning purposes only.

Data Sources: NH GRANIT, CNHRPC, NH Dept. of Transportation, Town of Sutton.

Central New Hampshire
Regional Planning
Commission
28 Commercial Street, Suite 3
Concord, NH 03301
603.226.6020
www.cnhrpc.org

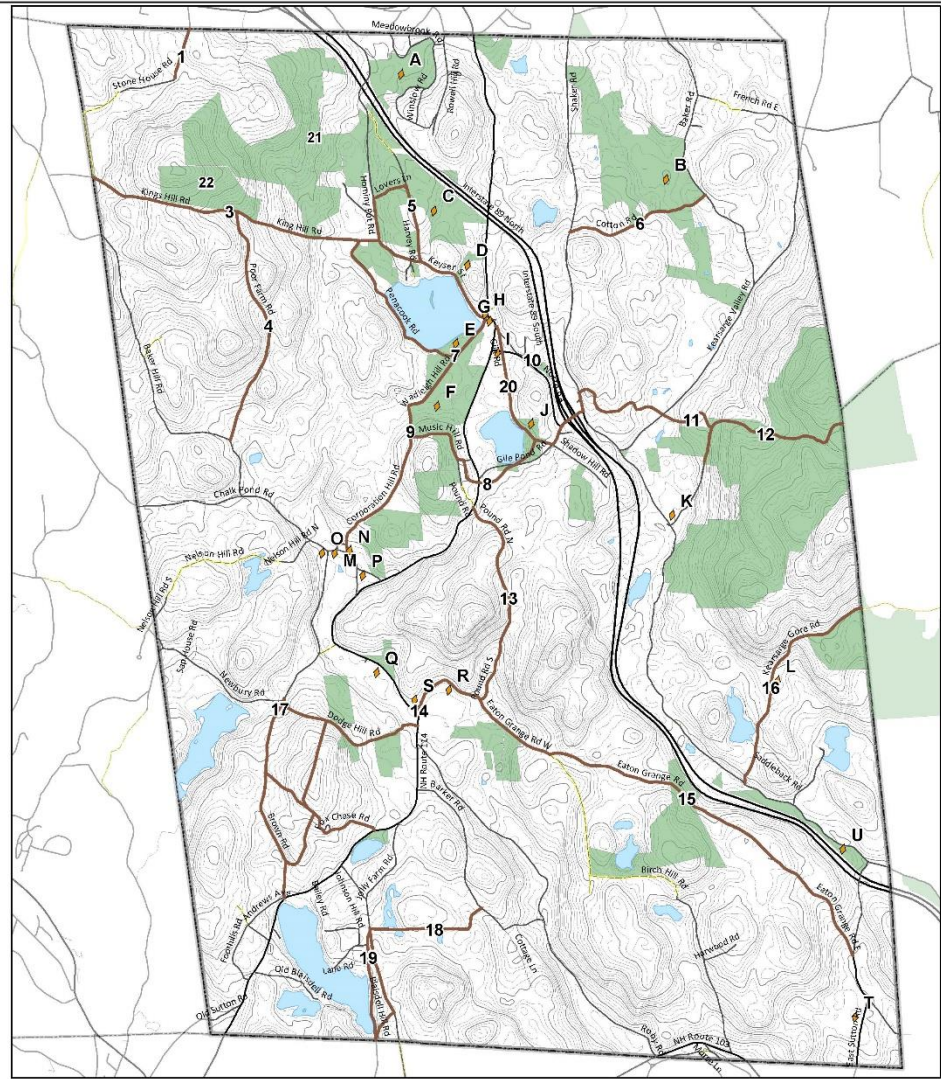


Walks and Trails

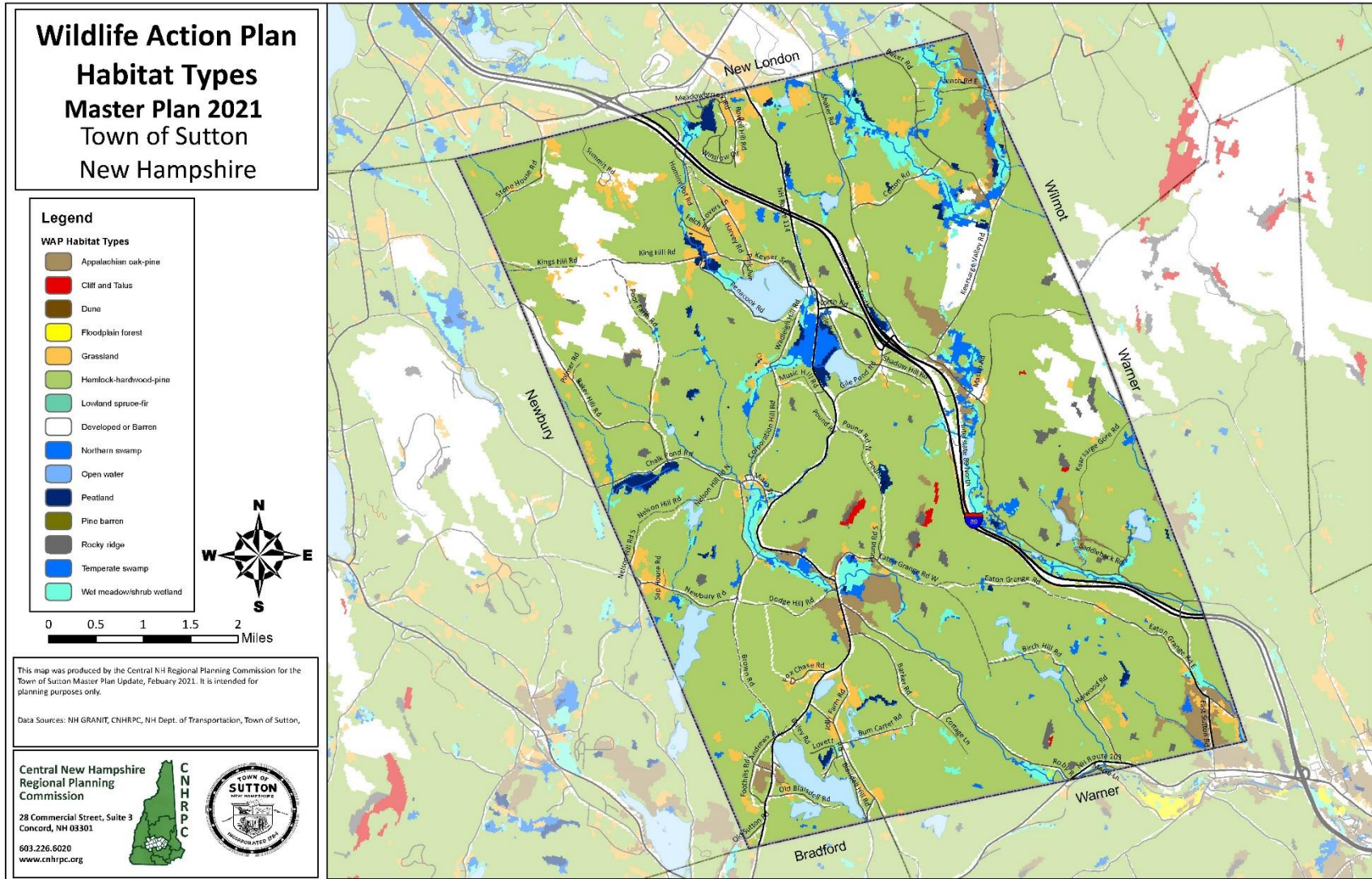
1. Quarry Walk(Trail)
2. Stone House Rd
3. King Hill Rd
4. Poor Farm Rd
5. Muster Field Walk
6. Cotton Rd
7. Kezar Lake Walk
8. Kearsarge Valley Trail (SRK)
9. Wadleigh Hill Rd/Corporation Hill Rd
10. Primeval Pines Walk
11. Link Trail (SRK)
12. Lincoln Trail (SRK)
13. Pound Rd
14. Meeting House Hill Rd
15. Eaton Grange Rd
16. Kearsarge Gore Rd
17. Dodge Hill
18. Bum Carter Rd
19. Blaisdell Hill Walk
20. Gile Rd
21. King Hill Reservation
22. Bean Quarry

Points of Interests

- A. Chadwick Meadows - NH Fish and Game wildlife management area.
- B. Cascade Marsh- NH Fish and Game wildlife management area.
- C. Muster Field Farm Museum and Harvey Homestead - working farm museum.
- D. Lefferts Town Natural Area - Sutton Conservation Commission
- E. Wadleigh State Park - swimming, picnicking, fishing, boating and playfield.
- F. Town Forest and Wetlands - Sutton Conservation Commission.
- G. Smiley Grove - park and playground, North Sutton Improvement Society.
- H. North Sutton Cemetery
- I. Sutton Volunteer Fire Department
- J. Shadow Hill State Forest
- K. Kearsarge Regional High School
- L. Gore - Palmertown Cemetery
- M. Pillsbury Memorial Hall - Sutton Town Hall
- N. Sutton Free Library
- O. Sutton Central School
- P. Sutton Mills Cemetery
- Q. Millwoods Cemetery
- R. Old South Centery
- S. So. Sutton Common - Sutton Historical Society - The Old Store Museum
- T. East Sutton Cemetery
- U. Stevens Brook - Cloues Natural Area and Reddington Dam Site - Sutton Conservation Commission

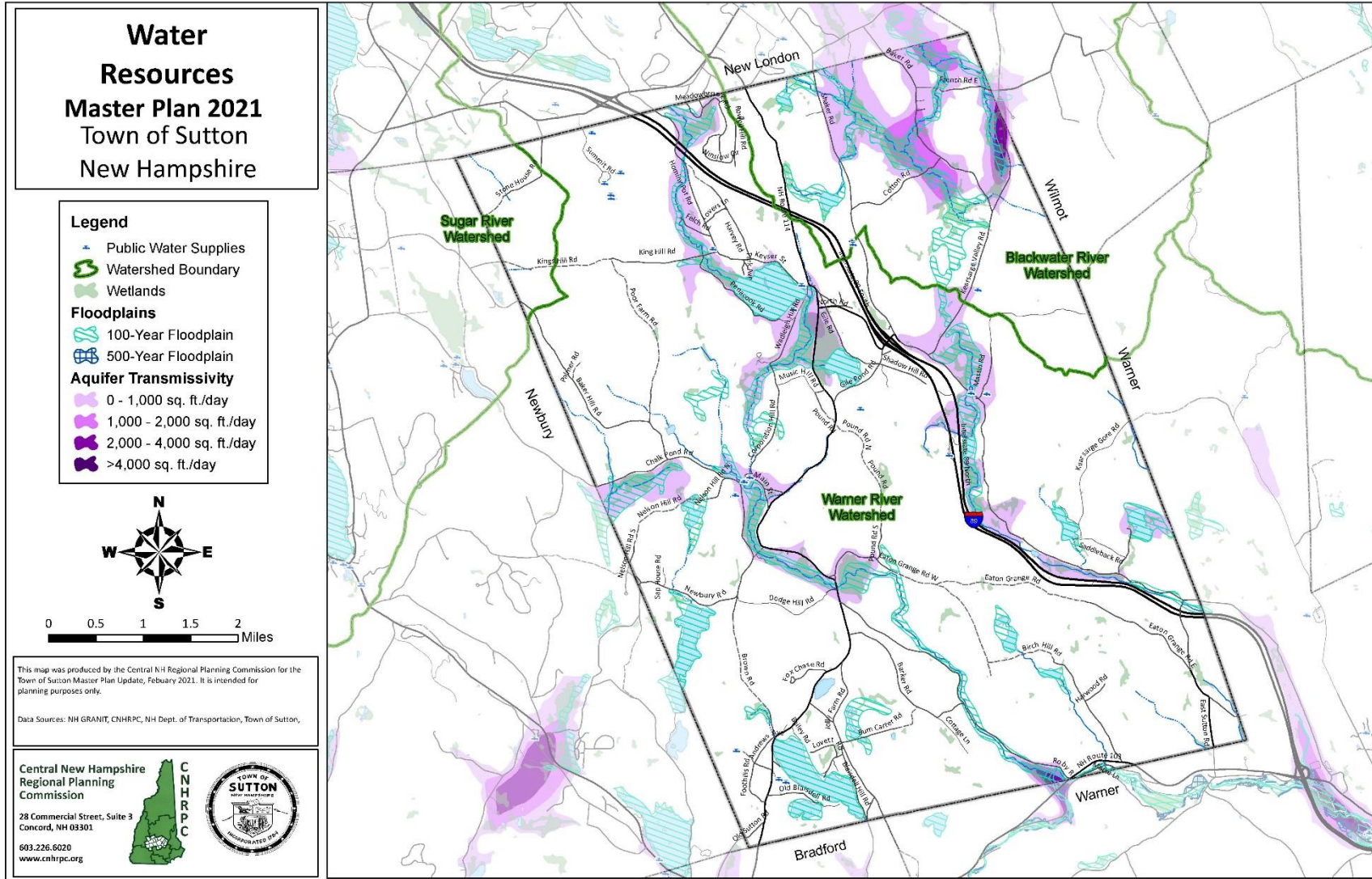


Wildlife Action Plan Habitat Types Map



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Water Resources Map



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Abbreviations

- AADT - Average Annual Daily Traffic
- CNRHPC - Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission
- CAP - Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties
- HBGA - Highway Block Grant Aid
- HPMS - Highway Performance Monitoring System
- IRI - International Roughness Index
- NBIS - National Bridge Inspection Standards
- NHDOT - New Hampshire Department of Transportation
- RCC - Regional Coordinating Council
- RPC - Regional Planning Commission
- RSMS - Road Surface Management System
- T² - Technology Transfer Center
- TYP – Ten Year Plan
- UNH -University of New Hampshire
- VDP - Volunteer Driver Program

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State Highway Classification & Funding

The State Aid classification system, which is identified by NH RSA 229:5 and 229:231, establishes responsibility for construction, reconstruction, and maintenance as well as eligibility for use of State Aid funds. This classification system also provides a basic hierarchy of roadways.

Of the seven possible state classifications, Sutton’s roads fall into six of these: Class I, Class II, Class III, Class V, Class VI and private roads. The most mileage is accounted for by Class V roads.

State Legislative Classification
New Hampshire Department of Transportation

Class	Mileage	Percent of total
Class I: State Aid Highways	19.96	17%
Class II: State Aid Highways	11.58	10.0%
Class III: Recreational Highways	0.60	1%
Class V: Rural Highways	59.70	52%
Class VI: Unmaintained Highways	13.20	11%
Private Roads	10.31	9%

Class I Trunk Lane Highways

- Consists of all existing or proposed highways on the primary state highway system, except portions of the highways within the compact sections of cities and towns.

- NHDOT assumes full control and pays costs of construction, reconstruction and maintenance of its sections with the assistance of federal aid.
- I-89 is a Class I highway.

Class II State Aid Highways

- Include all highways on the secondary state highway system, except portions of the highways within the compact sections of cities and towns, which are classified as Class IV highways.
- All sections improved to the state standards are maintained and reconstructed by NHDOT. All other sections must be maintained by the city or town in which they are located until brought up to state standards. The same applies to bridges on Class II highways.
- NH Route 114 is a Class II highway.

Class III Recreational Roads

- All roads leading to, and within, state reservations designated by the Legislature.
- NHDOT assumes full control of reconstruction and maintenance.
- Wadleigh Hill Road is a Class III Road.

Class V Rural Highways and Block Grant Aid

- Consists of all traveled highways that the town has the duty to maintain regularly.

NHDOT provides funding to towns for road maintenance on Class IV and V roads in the form of Highway Block Grant Aid. These funds are distributed annually with partial disbursements made four times a year. The funds come from a portion of the total road toll (gas tax) and motor vehicle registration fees. The funds can only be used to fund or match funding for constructing, reconstructing or maintaining Class IV and V (town maintained) highways as well as equipment for maintaining local roads.

Highway Block Grant Aid funds are allocated from an annual apportionment (State Fiscal Year) of not less than twelve percent (12%) of the total highway revenues collected from the preceding year. Half of this total apportionment is distributed based on population and the other half is distributed based on Class V road mileage. Distribution formulas do not take into consideration the condition of roads or the traffic on municipal roads.

Senate Bill (SB) 367, signed into law in 2014, raised revenue dedicated to increased highway block grant funding to municipalities, increased municipal bridge aid, resurfacing and reconstruction of secondary roads, and completion of the I-93 expansion. Additional funding due to SB 367 is shown in the table below.

Highway Block Grant Aid Payments for Sutton

New Hampshire Department of Transportation

Year	HBGA	SB 367
SFY 2016	\$93,531.96	\$12,702.66
SFY 2017	\$96,527.21	\$13,229.89
SFY 2018	\$99,309.59	\$13,332.20
SFY 2019	\$100,694.07	\$13,478.28
SFY 2020	\$102,289.37	\$13,642.39
SFY 2021	\$97,221.18	\$12,549.40

Class VI Unmaintained Highways

- Class VI roads are roads that are not maintained by the town, may be subject to gates and bars, and normally consist of a gravel or dirt surface.
- A Class V road can become a Class VI road if the town has not maintained it for five years or more.

Under RSA 674:41, I(c), for any lot whose street access (frontage) is on a Class VI road, the issue of whether any building can be erected on that lot is left up to the Town Selectmen who may, after review and comment by the Planning Board and after a public hearing, vote to authorize building along that Class VI road, or portion thereof. Any work done to Class VI highways shall be approved in advance by the Board of Selectmen, after conferring with the Road Agent. This process is outlined in Sutton’s Class VI Road Policy. Even if the Board of Selectmen does vote to authorize building, the law states that the municipality does not become responsible for road maintenance or for any damages resulting from the

APPENDIX C

road's use. The purpose of RSA 674:41, I(c) is to prevent scattered and premature development.

Federal Functional Classification System

The functional classification system identifies roads by the type of service provided and by the role of each highway within the state system based on standards developed by the US Department of Transportation. While the state aid classification system outlined above is the primary basis for determining jurisdiction, the following system determines eligibility for federal funds.

Interstate

- The highest classification and designed and constructed for mobility and long-distance travel.
- Divided highways that provide limited access, offering high levels of mobility while linking the major urban areas.

Major Collectors

- These roadways differ from arterials (interstate) roadways due to size and general service area.
- Serve traffic in a specific area, whereas arterials generally serve traffic moving through an area.
- Eligible for federal aid funding and distribute traffic on local roads to arterials.
- NH Route 103 is a Major Collector.

Minor Collectors

- Not eligible for federal aid funding and typically provide access to smaller communities within a geographic area or economic region.
- May link locally important trip generators, such as shopping centers, to surrounding rural areas. They also serve as links between two or more major collectors.
- NH Route 114 is a Minor Collector.

Local Roads

- Roads and streets that are used to provide access to adjacent properties.
- This includes the majority of roads in Sutton.

Federal Functional Classification

New Hampshire Department of Transportation

Federal Functional Classification	Mileage	Percent of total
Interstate	18.9	16.4%
Major Collectors	0.8	0.7%
Minor Collectors	13.7	11.9%
Local Roads	58.2	50.6%
Class VI or Private Roads	23.5	20.4%

Bridge Network

Bridges are the most expensive part of the surface transportation network. NHDOT inspects all of the state's municipal and state owned bridges. Inspections typically occur biannually with some bridges known to have deficiencies being inspected more frequently. NHDOT shares inspection reports with towns after they occur in addition to maintaining their own database where bridges are scored based on National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS).

NHDOT manages three bridge aid programs including: State Aid Bridge (state funded), SB 367 (state funded), and the Municipal Off-System Bridge Rehabilitation and Replacement (federally funded). Municipalities may submit an application for a preliminary estimate or hire an approved consultant to do the estimate. NHDOT determines a potential program and year of funds for construction. This process can take several months.

Bridges in Sutton, and their condition, are shown on Table C.4 and on the **Bridge Condition Map**. Structurally Deficient does not mean that the bridge is necessarily unsafe for use rather refers to a bridge with one or more deteriorated components whose condition is critical enough to reduce the safe load carrying capacity of the bridge. Culverts, bridges 10 years or newer, and bridges 20 feet or less in length do not typically receive deficiency ratings and therefore are defined in the table below as "Not Applicable". NBIS ratings for the major

structural elements of the bridge are further simplified into four color coded categories:

- Red – Bridges that have one or more major structural elements with an NBIS condition rating of 4 = Poor or less. These bridges comprise the state/municipal Red Lists.
- Yellow – Bridges that have their lowest rated major structural element with an NBIS condition rating of 5 = Fair or 6 = Satisfactory.
- Green – Bridges that have all major structural elements with an NBIS rating equal to or greater than 7 = Good.
- Closed or N/A – Bridges that have been closed due to one or more major structural elements with an NBIS rating equal to or less than "1 = Closed

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Bridges in Sutton

New Hampshire Department of Transportation 2019 Bridge Summary

Location	FSR	Structural Deficiency	Owner	AADT	Inspection Date	Year Built/Rebuilt
King Hill Rd over Brook	99.0	Not Deficient	Municipality	92	Sep 2018	1996
I-89 SB over North Hominy Pot Rd	92.4	Not Deficient	NHDOT	9278 / 240	Apr 2017	1967, 1988
King Hill Rd over Brook	100.0	Not Deficient	Municipality	92	Sep 2018	1996
I-89 NB over North Hominy Pot Rd	92.4	Not Deficient	NHDOT	9385 / 240	Apr 2017	1967, 1988
Felch Rd over Brook	80.4	Not Deficient	Municipality	1157	Sep 2018	2010
Hominy Pot Rd over Lion Brook	96	Not Deficient	Municipality	249	Sep 2018	2017
Penacook Rd over Brook	100	Not Deficient	Municipality	92	Sep 2018	2000
Penacook Rd over Lion Brook	100	Not Deficient	Municipality	92	Sep 2018	2000
Main St over Kings Brook	86.9	Not Deficient	Municipality	723	Sep 2018	2007
Main St over Lane River	86.9	Not Deficient	Municipality	723	Sep 2018	1935, 1990
Pedestrian path over Lane River	-2	Not Applicable	Municipality	0	Sep 2016	1930, 2000
Wadleigh Hill Road over Lane River	50.2	Not Deficient	Municipality	92	Sep 2018	1985
I-89 SB over NH Route 114	80.7	Not Deficient	NHDOT	9278	Apr 2017	1967, 1987
I-89 NB over NH Route 114	77.4	Not Deficient	NHDOT	9385	Apr 2017	1967, 1987
Wadleigh Hill Road over Kezar Lake Outlet	64.4	Not Deficient	NHDOT	286	Apr 2017	1940
NH Route 114 over Lane River	88.1	Not Deficient	NHDOT	1688	Apr 2017	1932, 1981
I-89 SB over Gile Pond Rd	96	Not Deficient	NHDOT	9621 / 1300	Apr 2017	1967
I-89 NB over Gile Pond Rd	95.3	Not Deficient	NHDOT	9676 / 1300	Apr 2017	1967
Cotton Rd over Baker Brook	51.3	Not Deficient	Municipality	92	Sep 2018	1945
Roby Rd over Lane River	85.9	Not Deficient	Municipality	354	Sep 2018	2002
North Rd over Stevens Brook	96.3	Not Deficient	Municipality	1536	Sep 2018	1950
Morse Loop over Brook	-2	Structurally Deficient	Municipality	50	Sep 2018	1988
I-89 NB over Stevens Brook Rd	93.2	Not Deficient	NHDOT	9676 / 40	Apr 2017	1967
I-89 SB over Stevens Brook Rd	93.3	Not Deficient	NHDOT	9621 / 40	Apr 2017	1967

AADT= Average Annual Daily Traffic,

Traffic Count History

CNHRPC maintains a traffic count program for the region. Each year, CNHRPC will collect traffic data at up to 10 locations for each member municipality. Traffic count data is also collected for NHDOT in accordance with federal guidelines under the Federal HPMS.

The **Average Annual Daily Traffic Map** displays the AADT volumes for 2013-2019, which can also be viewed on the NHDOT Transportation Data Management System interactive map at www.nh.gov/dot/org/operations/traffic/documents.htm. AADT is a basic measure of traffic demand for a roadway and represents the volume of traffic travelling in both directions. CNHRPC provides traffic count data to the NHDOT, who then calculates the AADT by applying correction factors to raw data to account for weekday and seasonal variations in traffic volumes. The data collected by CNHRPC is available online at <http://cnhrpc.org/gis-data/traffic-count-data/>.

Roadway Conditions

Pavement condition data from 2019 was obtained from the NHDOT's Pavement Management Section for state-maintained (Class I and II) roads and is displayed on the **Pavement Condition Map**. The pavement condition is rated based on the International Roughness Index (IRI), which is calculated directly from the average pavement roughness measured in the left and right wheel paths of roadways. The data indicates that the majority of Class I and II roads are in

good and Fair condition. Due to the age of the data, some roads may have since been repaired while some roads may have fallen into worse disrepair.

In 2015, Sutton worked with CNHRPC to implement a Road Surface Management System (RSMS) to help prioritize road improvements and develop a transparent system for short, medium and long term improvements. RSMS is a methodology intended to provide an overview and estimate of a road system's condition and the approximate costs for future improvements. The process involved a windshield survey of all the local road surfaces where numerous distresses were observed and objectively recorded. Drainage was also reviewed as part of this program and is a key component in the life and quality of road surfaces. The data was entered into RSMS 11, a software developed by Maine Department of Transportation. The program uses algorithms factoring in various distresses, traffic levels and the importance of each roadway to determine whether the road falls into one of five maintenance categories. This data is also displayed on the **Pavement Condition Map**. The program assists towns in prioritizing road maintenance and resurfacing with a focus on preservation and "keeping the good roads good."

In 2016, a new RSMS system was initiated under NHDOT's Statewide Asset Data Exchange System (SADES). This new version included many changes to improve the quality, consistency, and efficiency of data collection and the overall value of the product to better guide municipalities with road maintenance. Although this program is currently only for

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paved roads and the vast majority of roads in Sutton are unpaved or gravel, Sutton may want to consider updating to this program in the future.

Motor Vehicle Crashes

Motor vehicle crash data from 2015 - 2019 was obtained from NHDOT, who receives the data from the Department of Safety for crashes with over \$1,000 in damage. Roughly 20% of crashes are not locatable based on the information contained in the crash reports. Of the 387 crashes reported over the 5 year period, over 60% were located on Interstate 89. The second highest number of crashes occurred along NH Route 114. It is reasonable to assume that a number of smaller crashes may also have occurred during this time period which were not reported. All crashes in Sutton are a cause for concern and should be monitored to determine locations where infrastructure improvements may mitigate issues that lead to crashes or reduce the severity of crashes.

Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)

The purpose of NHDOT's Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) program is to achieve a significant reduction in fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads through the implementation of highway safety improvement projects.

The process for which a project receives funding from HSIP for a roadway segment or intersection is highly dependent on data. If data (history of crashes resulting in injuries or fatalities) warrants further examination a Road Safety Audit

(RSA) is typically the next step. The RSA is a collaborative approach to review safety issues and make recommendations for improvements. CNHRPC assists towns in applying for HSIP funds and in completing small scale RSAs that can offer a variety of actions to improve safety.

Scenic Roads

Scenic Roads help to retain a sense of history and rural quality that Sutton's residents have indicated a strong desire to maintain. RSA 231:157 allows towns by a vote at town meeting to designate any road other than a Class I or II highway as a Scenic Road. A municipality may rescind its designation of a scenic road using the same procedure.

The effect of designation as a scenic road is that, except in emergency situations, there shall be no cutting of trees with a circumference of 15 inches at 4 feet from the ground or alteration of stone walls by the town or a public utility within the right-of-way without a hearing, review, and the written approval of the Planning Board. This law does not affect the rights of individual property owners; nor does it affect land uses as permitted by local zoning.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Infrastructure

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities, such as paved sidewalks, roadway shoulders, trails, and gravel walking paths improve safety for pedestrians or bicycles by separating them from travel lanes of roadways. Sidewalks and paths can also serve

as a source of recreation for residents, a non-motorized mode of travel, serve to beautify an area, or stimulate economic activity in rural and village settings.

In the summer months, pedestrian and bicycle activity increases specifically near Wadleigh State Park and North Sutton. Enhancing walking routes between the State Park and the village may create economic development opportunities, and enhance the village experience for both visitors and residences. Sutton Mills is also a node of activity with multiple civic and institutional destinations that may be accessible by walking or bicycling.

There are a range of treatments that could help improve these connections. Sidewalks and crosswalks are options in the villages, which the town would need to maintain. Trails may make desirable connections in some parts of town. Along NH 114 and elsewhere in town, lane striping or bike lanes could enhance and designate space for bicycles. There are also a range of traffic calming techniques that can be used to slow traffic speeds and enhance safety and comfort of people traveling by foot or bicycle.

Sidewalk construction, particularly if they are along a portion of Route 114, may be candidates for the highly competitive Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding, which has competitive grant rounds approximately every two years. Medium to small sidewalk projects may be more efficiently constructed with town or private funds. Projects involving trail connections may be suitable for the Recreational Trail

Program (RTP), described in the trails discussion of this Appendix. Bicycle and Transportation elements can also often be tied into traditional roadway projects like paving, reconstruction, or intersection reconfigurations.

Public Transportation

Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc. (CAP) who operates Concord Area Transit, also provides a Rural Transportation Service that serves the Town of Sutton. This service, run out of Mountain view Senior Center in Bradford, is available on demand for seniors aged 60 years and over and persons with disabilities.

The Mid-State Regional Coordinating Council (RCC) works with CAP and other transportation providers in the region to coordinate and operate services like the Volunteer Driver Program (VDP), run by CAP. The VDP is also available to residents in Sutton over 60 or with disabilities. The primary purpose of these trips are for essential social services and medical appointments (including long distance medical). Currently Mid State RCC's volunteer drive program does not charge for rides although donations are accepted.

Additionally, nearby is the New London Park and Ride which is served by Dartmouth Coach. There is also a Park and Ride in Warner without bus service.

Class VI Roads & Trails

Class VI roads are an important component of a town's transportation infrastructure due to their rural character, history, and potential recreational opportunities. Across the State, many communities look at Class VI roads as candidates for designation as Class A Trails. These roads have little or no development associated with them, are scenic, have no inherent liability concerns, public access is already allowed, and also serve to connect large areas of open space, conservation, and/or agricultural lands. Unlike Class VI roads that the town does not maintain, towns, at their option, may conduct maintenance on Class A Trails.

Reclassification of Class VI roads to Class A Trails will not inhibit the access rights of landowners along the roadways. In the case of a Class A trail, landowners can continue to use the trail for vehicular access for forestry, agriculture, and access to existing buildings. However, under such classification, new building development as well as expansion, enlargement, or increased intensity of the use of any existing building or structure is prohibited by New Hampshire Statute. The town and owners of properties abutting Class VI roads are not liable for damages or injuries sustained to the users of the road or trail.

Grant funds are available on a competitive basis for medium sized efforts. The recreational Trails Program, or RTP, is a popular source of funding for motorized, non-motorized, and mixed trails. This program, administered by the Department

of Natural and Cultural Resources, has grant rounds nearly every year. Grant amounts change on occasion, but are currently between \$8,000 and \$80,000, with a required 20% local match. The program has proved popular for trail building and amenities for many years in New Hampshire. Class VI roads are an important component of a town's transportation infrastructure due to their rural character and potential recreational opportunities.

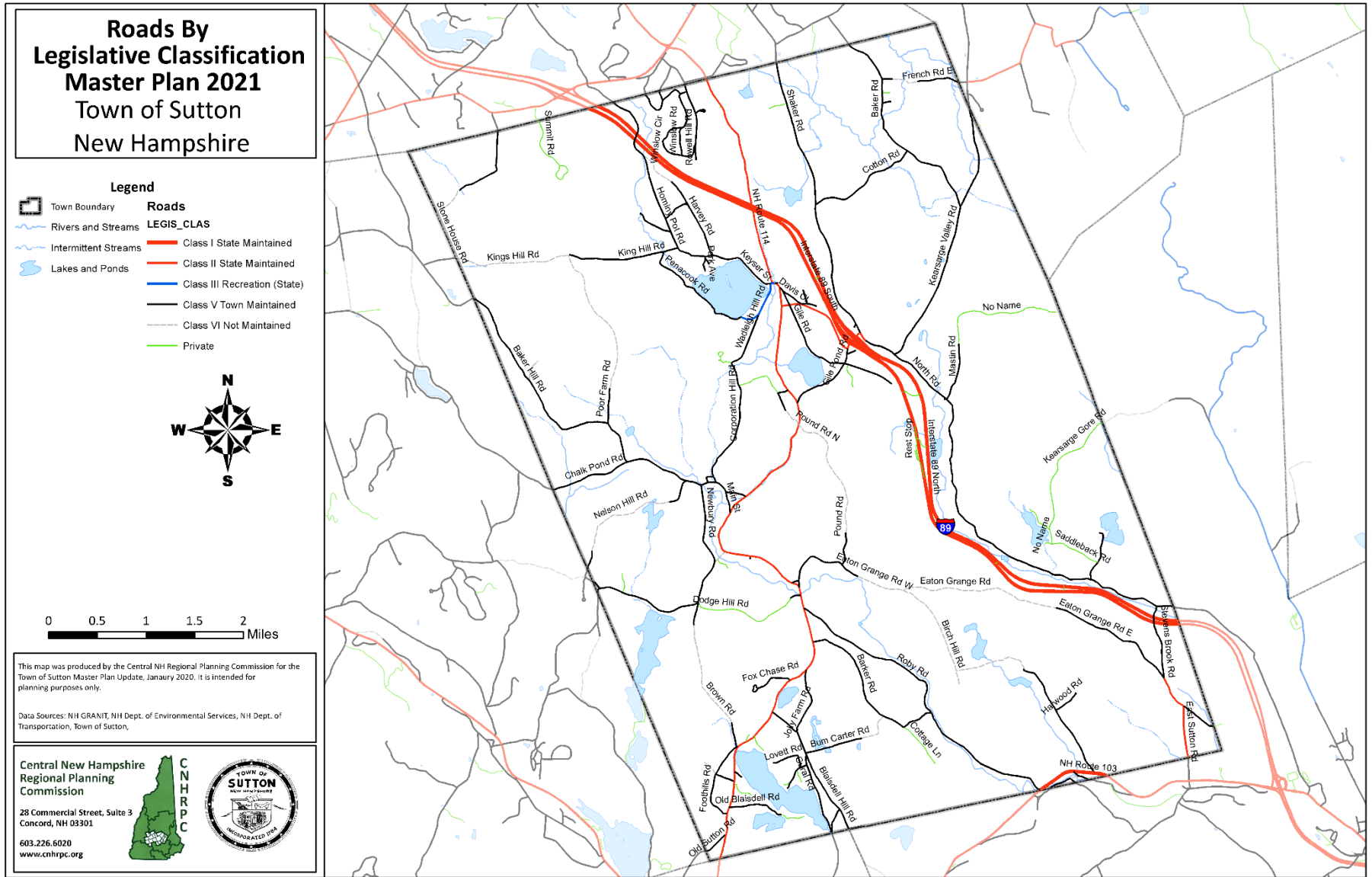
The Transportation Planning Process in New Hampshire

Arguably the most important transportation planning document in NH is the NHDOT Ten Year Transportation Improvement Plan (TYP). The TYP is updated on a two year cycle beginning with RPC's soliciting new Federal Aid Eligible transportation improvement projects and reaffirming local and regional support for projects included in the current TYP. Using the existing TYP as base, NHDOT works with the RPCs to update existing projects and program new regional and statewide priority projects into the Draft TYP to cover the next ten fiscal years. The Draft TYP goes through multiple review processes by the Governor's Advisory Committee on Intermodal Transportation (GACIT), the Governor, and then by the New Hampshire Legislature, undergoing numerous public hearings and other public comment. In Sutton, NH 114 is not a federal aid eligible road and maintenance, and improvements are subject to funding and the NHDOT District's paving program. Bridges in Sutton on the municipal and state

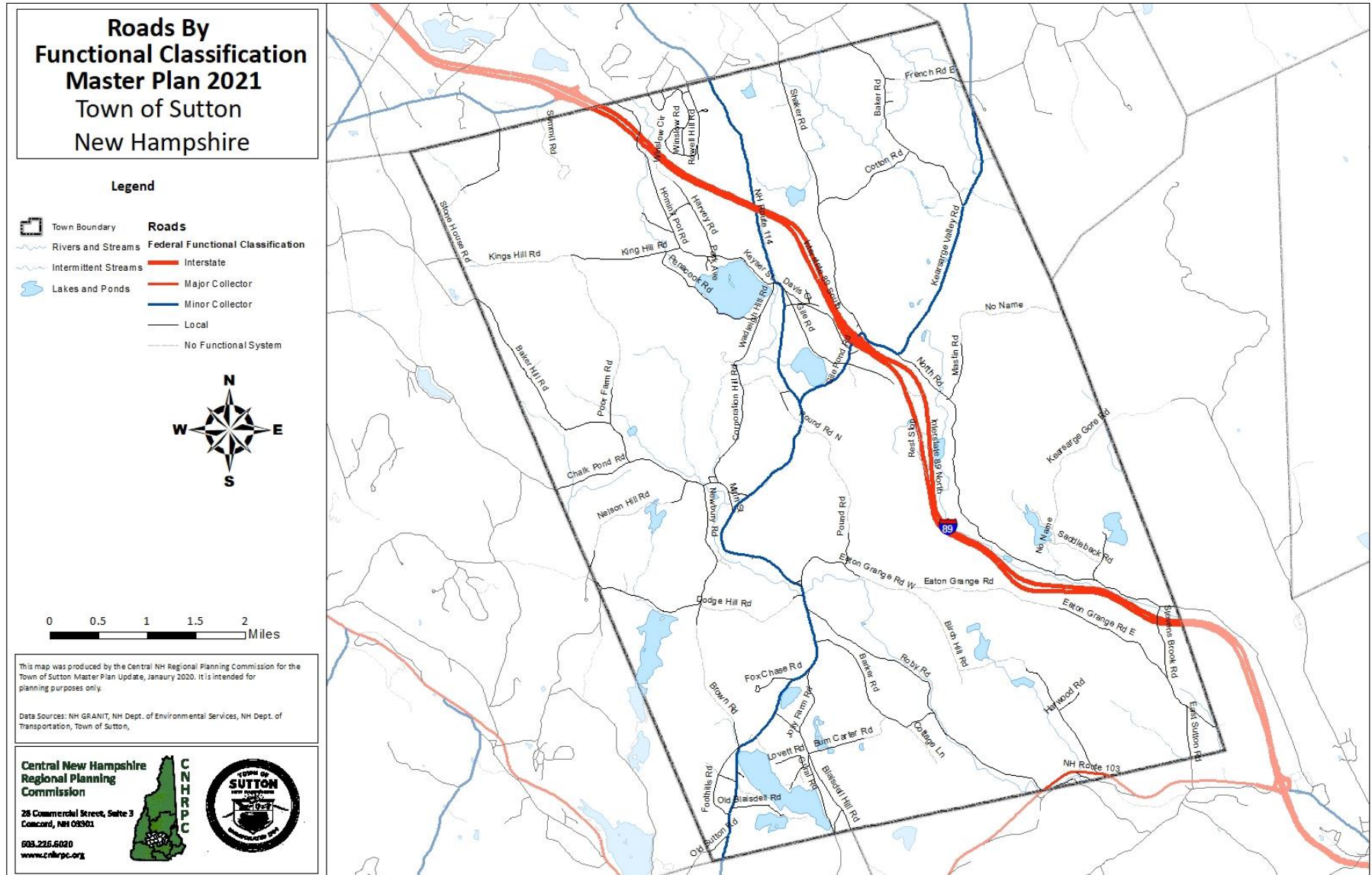
networks are also subject to funding availability and should utilize the appropriate NHDOT bridge aid program for rehabilitation and reconstruction.

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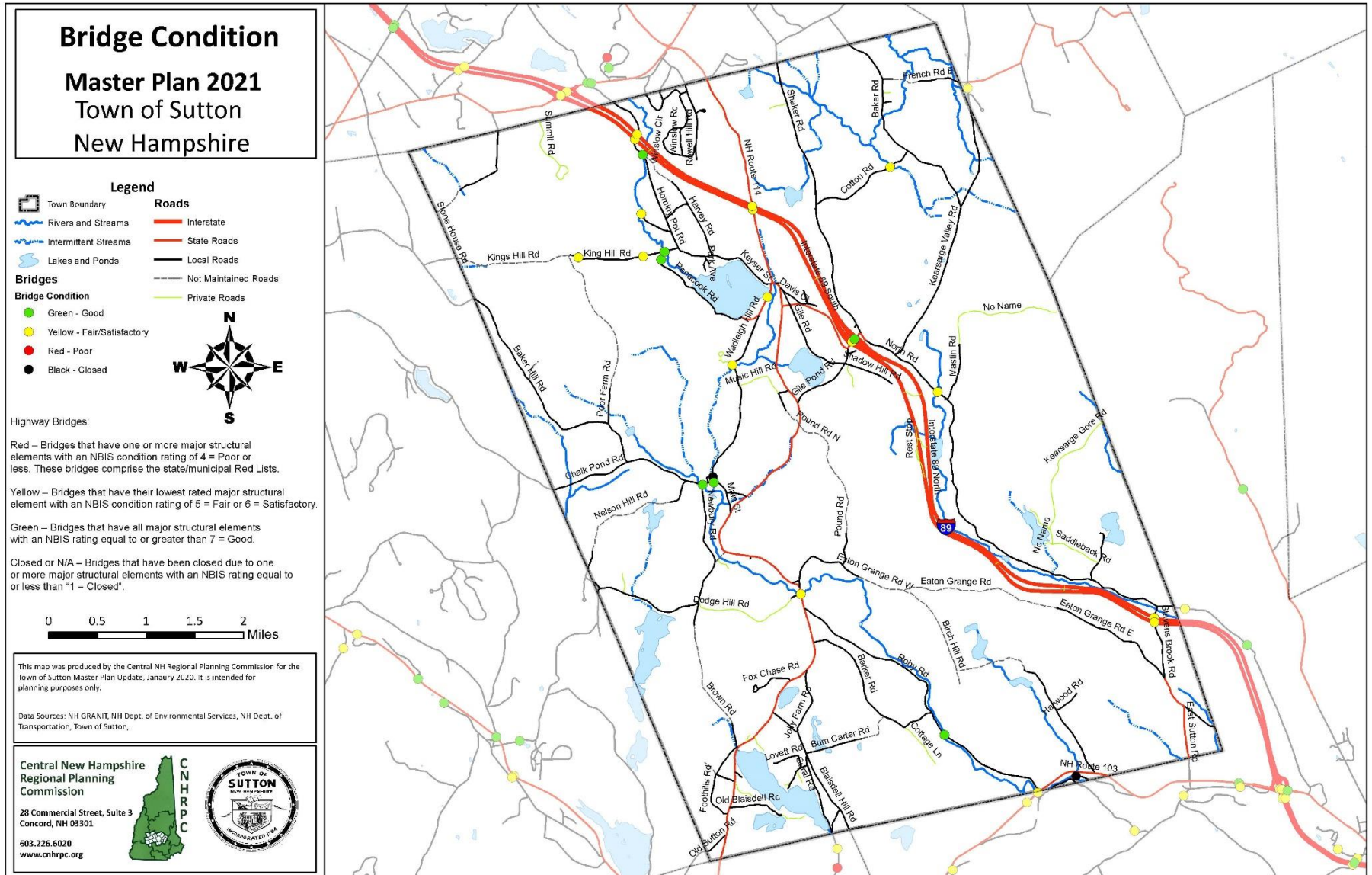
Roads by Legislative Classification Map



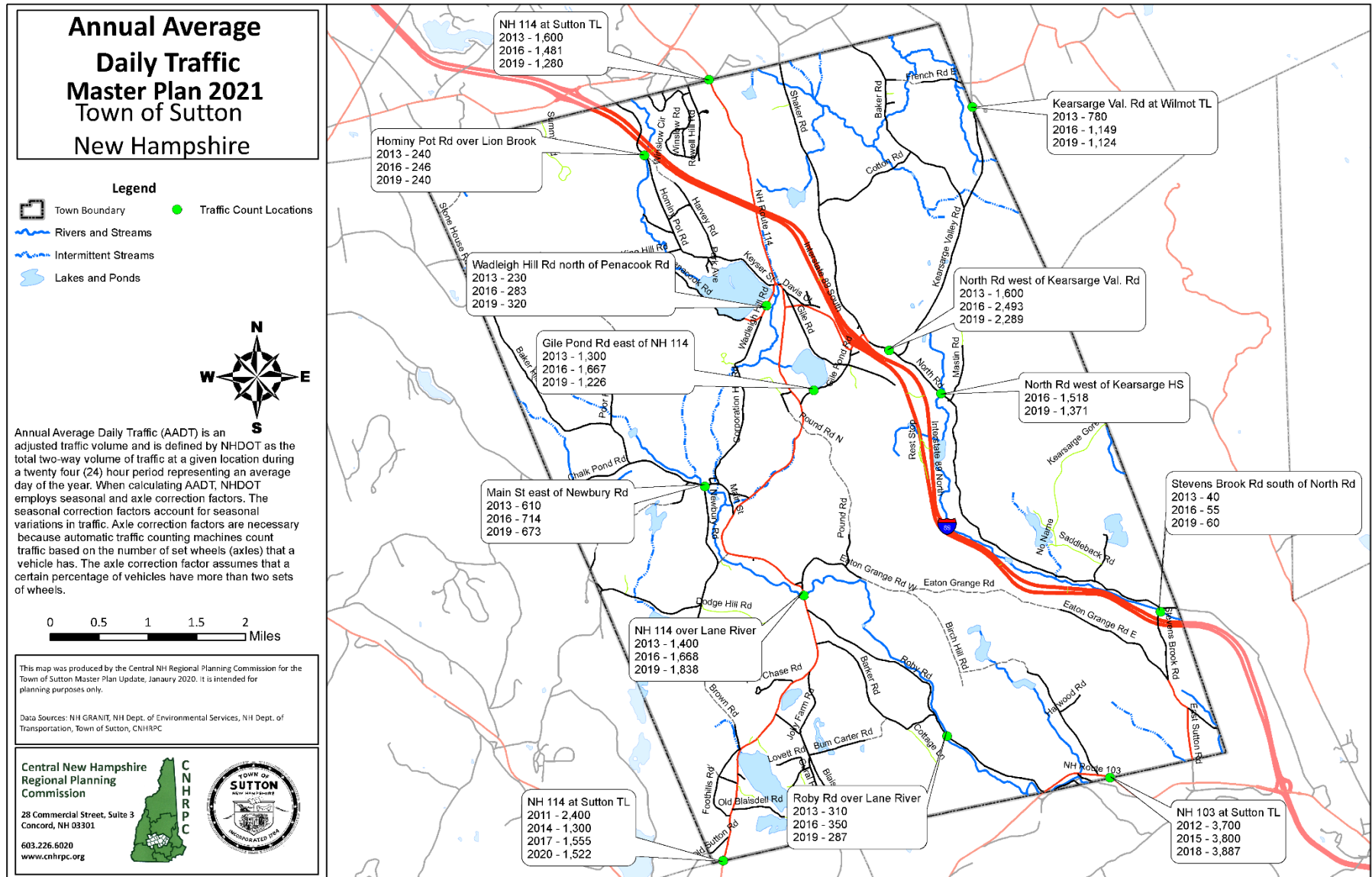
Roads by Federal Functional Classification Map



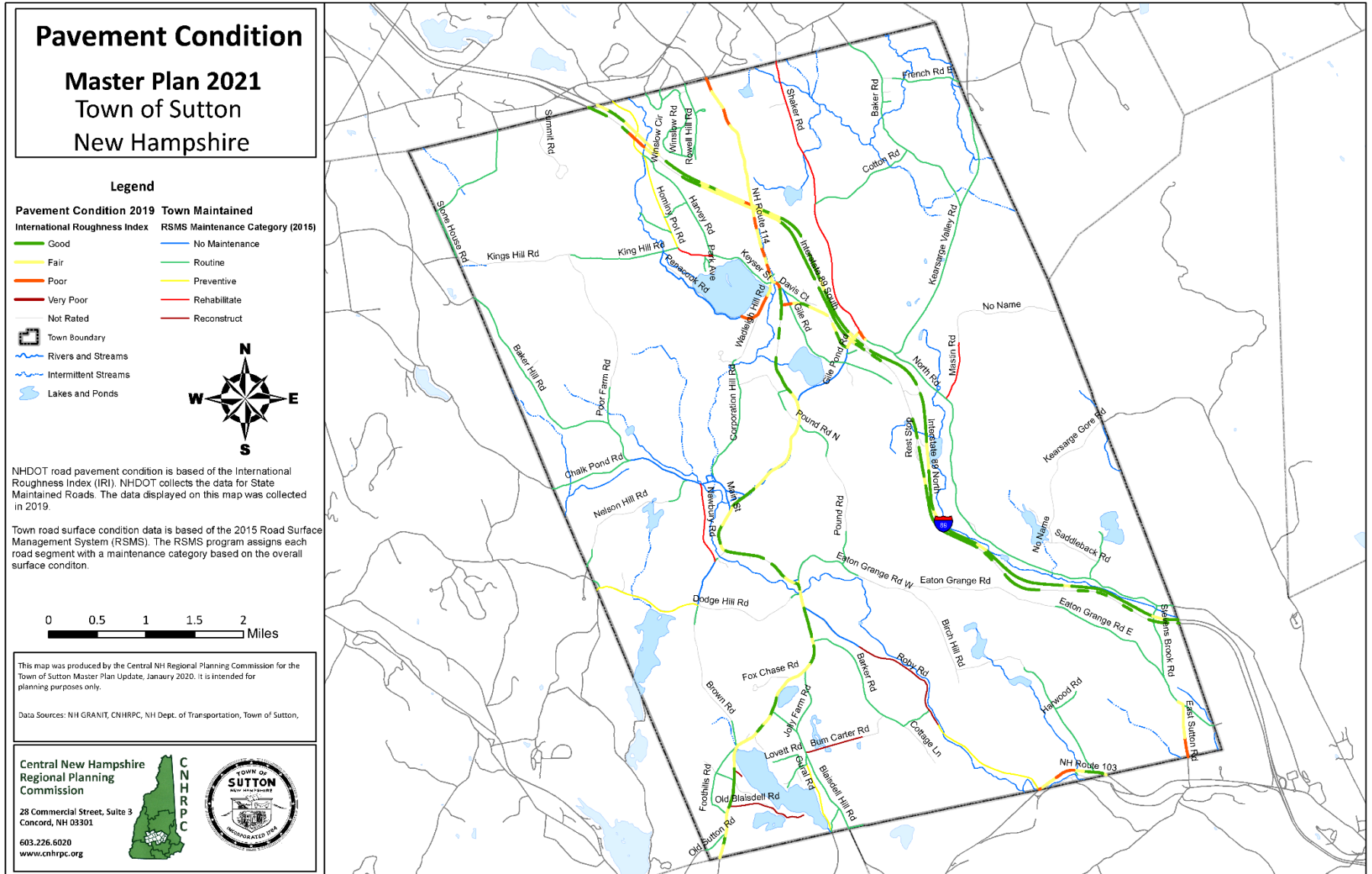
Bridge Condition Map



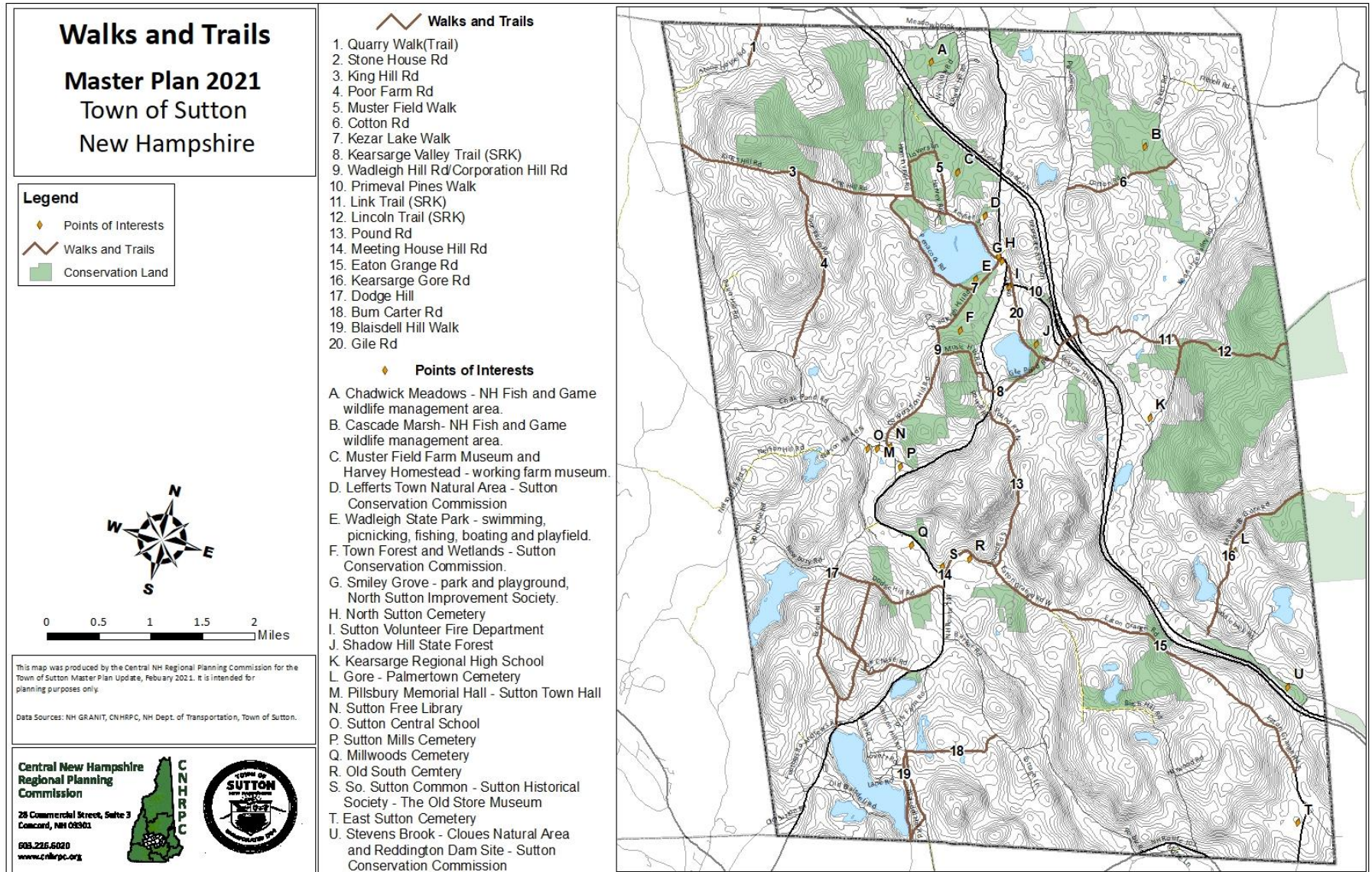
Annual Average Daily Traffic Map



Pavement Condition Map



Walks and Trails Map



Appendix D – Community Facilities & Resources

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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, administrative offices for the Board of Selectmen and Assessing. The Town Hall also houses the files for the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and Conservation Commission.

Over the years, the 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 and Boards 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.

While there is ADA accessibility at the Town Offices, this access could be improved. For example, there is a need for ADA accessible parking. Also, there is a need to create an archival system and storage location for Town documents that can be easily accessed and secured. Lastly, a dedicated Assessing staff member is needed to provide additional administrative assistance

Recently in 2020, adjustments were made to the Town Hall in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the addition of an ultraviolet filtering mechanism to the heating and ventilation system. Also in 2020, voters approved the purchase of a new clerk/motor vehicle software. A Capital

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Reserve Fund is in place for the Town Hall facility where annual deposits are voted upon at Town meeting. An additional capital reserve has been established for computers town-wide.

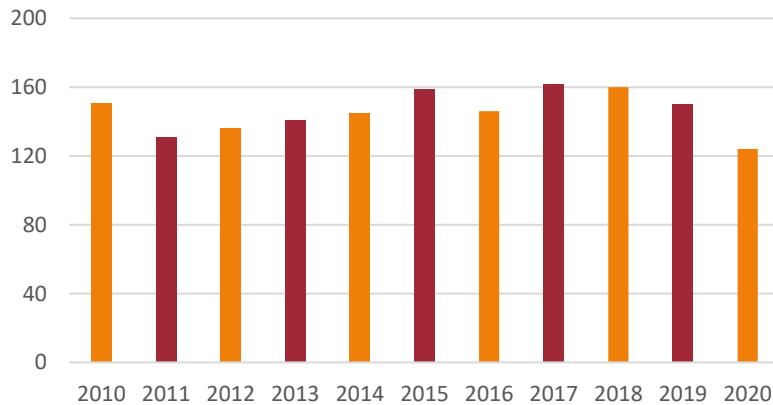
Fire Department and Rescue Squad

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 performs life safety inspections for properties within Town.

Calls for service include medical calls, motor vehicle accidents, fires, medical assists, and other service calls. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of calls for service remained relatively stable. Most recently, there were 124 calls for service in 2020.

Fire Department Calls for Service

Sutton Annual Reports



Department members continue to annually monitor the condition of equipment. Steps are taken in acquiring new equipment when needed, such as the new tanker approved at the 2021 Town meeting. There are also several capital reserve accounts in place related to the Fire Department, with a new Fire Safety Equipment Capital Reserve Fund established in 2020. Allocations are voted upon annually at town meeting.

In 2018, updates were made to the Fire and Rescue Station to improve deficiencies, functional needs and general upgrades. Additional improvements are still needed, with a new Public Safety Facility being discussed as a potential option.

All members of the department are volunteers and continue to give their time to trainings, meetings and incidents that require response. Positions within the department include a fire chief, rescue squad chief, fire fighters, and rescue personnel. As needs of the community continue to grow, paid personnel may be needed in the future.

The 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.

The Sutton Rescue Squad tracks patient contacts versus calls as one call can result in multiple patients requiring assessment and treatment. The majority of calls were for motor vehicle accidents on I-89 and other roadways in Sutton. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of patient contacts has varied, with a decreasing trend in recent years. Most recently in 2020, there were 122 patient contacts.

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 ensuring Sutton is not the sole provider of this service.

Expenditures for the Sutton Rescue Squad are kept to a minimum as the only costs are for training and supplies. There are several capital reserve accounts in place related to the Rescue Squad, including Rescue Vehicle and CR Rescue Equipment. Allocations are typically approved annually at town meeting.

Police Department

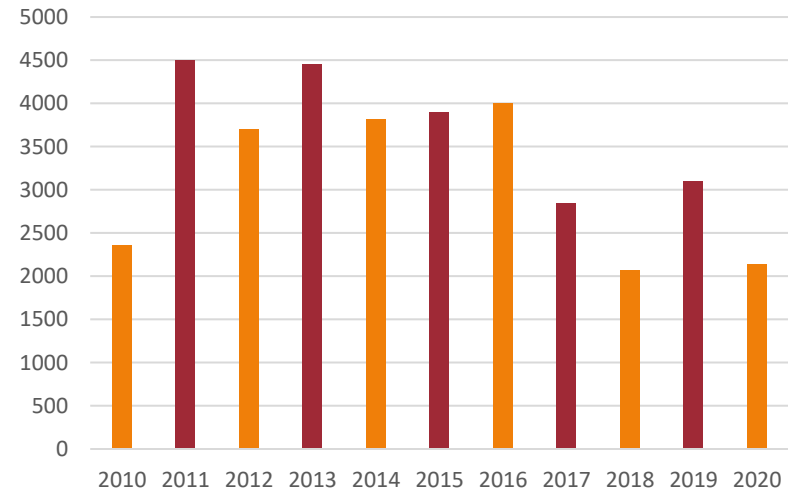
The Sutton Police Department was incorporated in 1784. The Department provides DARE education in the Sutton Central School to 5th graders, as well as providing coverage at school dances (KRHS), graduation ceremonies at KRHS, fingerprinting/photo's for child safe program, education on firearm safety/gun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

Calls for service include alarms, police assist, ambulance assist, road hazard/obstruction, vacant property checks, directed patrol, and other service calls. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of calls for service varied. Most recently, there were 2,140 calls for service in 2020.

The Police Department facility was built in 2006 but has space constraints. Building a new Public Safety Facility is currently

Police Department Calls for Service

Sutton Annual Reports



being considered as an option by town officials, and would house the Police Department, Fire Department, and Rescue Squad.

The Department continues to annually monitor the condition of their equipment. Steps are taken in acquiring new equipment when needed. There are also several capital reserve accounts in place related to the Police Department for use in future purchases. Allocations are voted upon annually at town meeting.

The Police Department currently consists of one full time corporal, one full time sergeant, one full time chief and an administrative assistant. All officers are graduates of the State of NH Police Academy and undergo continuing education,

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training and active duty. Currently, the Department is understaffed by three part-time officers and a full-time School Resource Officer (SRO). The Department has been unsuccessful in finding qualified candidates to fill these positions since 2016.

Emergency Management

The Office of Emergency Management for the Town of Sutton works to keep the Emergency Operations Plan current. Recently in 2020, several town departments and volunteers worked to update the town's Emergency Operations Plan, which identifies potential hazards and give guidelines and resources to deal with such hazards should they arise. This plan is updated every five years.

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 themselves at the Town garage.

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 a salt shed. This facility was built in 2010 and a new salt shed was built in 2016.

At the present time, the Highway Department does anticipate future replacement or purchase of equipment over the timeframe of this Master Plan. These items include a sweeper, ten wheel dump truck, tow behind debris blower, mower, roller, and an excavator. Recently in 2020, voters approved the purchase of a fully-equipped F550 Truck.

The Department currently consists of a Road agent and six staff members. However, as the Town continues to expand, it is anticipated that an additional staff member will be necessary in order to maintain the current level of service.

Annually at Town Meeting, allocations to capital reserve funds are voted upon by residents. There are several accounts established related to the highway department to be used for various equipment needs. It is anticipated that a new capital reserve fund will be proposed for acquiring land for the stockpile of materials. Additionally, the Highway Pickup Truck Capital Reserve Fund was discontinued by voters in 2020.

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.

Currently, the Sutton Free Library has a Library Director and Assistant Librarian. Substitute librarians are currently needed.

There are five Library Trustees who are also responsible for many of the operations of the Library.

The library recently underwent an upgrade to bring the bathroom into ADA compliance. There are plans to bring the entryway into ADA compliance with an entrance ramp, though this warrant article was not approved by voters at the 2021 town meeting. Additionally, a new camera security system at the Library was approved for installation during the 2021 town meeting. Additional future needs include an update to the electrical wiring, addition of ADA compliant flooring and shelving, and an outdoor bulletin board. Several technology improvements are also needed, including computers, scanners, printers, laminator, etc. The Library would also benefit from a meeting room, which could also be used for community events and gatherings.

Established capital reserve funds are in use related to the Library, where allocations are voted upon by residents annually at town meeting.

Recently in 2020, the Library undertook an automation project that includes the ability to more easily track library statistics with circulation, use, and an online catalog. This will allow both staff and patrons to easily browse the library’s collection, place items on hold, and request through the interlibrary loan program on any internet connected device.

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 2020 figures for material collected at the Transfer Station can be seen in following table.

Materials Collected at the Solid Waste Transfer Station and Recycling Facility

Town of Sutton Annual Report

Material	2020 Tonnage	Expense	Revenue
Aluminum Cans	6.33		\$3,347.60
Steel Cans	6.88		\$206.53
Plastic	21.48	\$5,843.15	
Paper/Cardboard	65.51		
Glass	50.22	\$1,968.75	
Septage Gallons	163.82	\$2,491.34	\$13,088.00
Tires	1.94		
Municipal Solid Waste	358.65	\$27,974.00	
Demolition Debris	118.25	\$15,266.00	

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.

Recently in 2020, the facility renewed their contract for Septage Lagoons through September of 2029.

Every year the Town participates in a regional household hazardous waste day with the Town of Henniker in which

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residents can safely dispose of hazardous materials, such as paint, motor oil, and batteries.

There are currently two recycling crew and one supervisor that manage the solid waste and recycling facility.

The town has an existing capital reserve fund account for the Solid Waste Facility with allocations voted on annually at town meeting. In the future, Sutton should consider establishing a capital reserve fund for special studies that may be required for environmental permitting processes.

Town-Owned Cemeteries

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

A listing of the Town-owned cemeteries located in Sutton can be seen below.

- Old Cemetery in South Sutton
- Millwood Cemetery
- East Sutton Cemetery
- Gore Cemetery
- Sutton Mills Cemetery
- North Sutton Cemetery
- Maston Cemetery

Recently at the 2020 town meeting, voters approved the purchase of land located on the west side of Kearsarge Valley Road at the intersection of Baker Road with the purpose of establishing a cemetery.

The town has an existing capital reserve fund accounts for cemetery improvements and maintenance with allocations voted on annually at town meeting.

Sutton Central School & 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.

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 on Newbury Road and was originally built in 1952 with additions in 1977, 1994, and 2001.

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.

In 2003, the decision was made for the Regional School District to purchase 86 acres in Sutton for a new middle school. This replaced the previous school in New London and has a capacity of 700 students. The new facility also addressed ADA compliance and health and safety issues previously present.

The high school also had capacity issues that were addressed. In 2004, voters of the district passed a bond for the construction of a second floor addition. This increased the capacity by approximately 250 students: seven classrooms, two biology labs, and a computer lab. This addressed concerns of overcrowding at the time.

Finally, the School District has existing expendable trust funds, including for special education and school building

maintenance. Allocations are voted for annually at town meeting.

The School District’s Master Plan should be referred to for current and future needs as it provides much more detail than outlined here.

Sources for Financing Facility Needs and Improvements

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.

User Fees

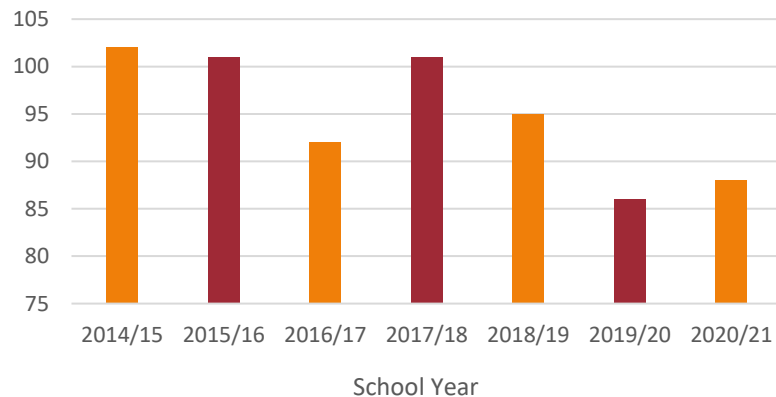
During the 1980s, the concept of user fees for the funding of numerous public facilities and services was widely adopted throughout the nation. Several communities in New Hampshire help finance community facilities and programs through the adoption of user fees. Examples of user fees in New Hampshire include water district charges and transfer station fees.

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 in minimizing the burden on taxpayers for specific programs such as building code enforcement.

Sutton Elementary School Enrollment

New Hampshire Department of Education



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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
- Handicap Education Aid
- Area Vocational School Tuition and Transportation Aid
- Sweepstakes Aid
- Nutrition Grants
- Driver Education

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 facilities.

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 facilities.

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 fund future, unidentified needs.

Growth Management

The purpose of this type of 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. Growth Management Ordinances are useful when growth is occurring as they allow Town Departments to manage growth 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

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.

Town Appropriations

In addition to grants, community groups can also seek appropriations through the annual budget process to pay for the expansion of recreational or community facilities.

Volunteers

Sutton should continue to seek the help of volunteers and publicly recognize their efforts.

Community Facilities Map

