

Town of Sullivan, New Hampshire

Master Plan 2015

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Resolution

Be It Resolved That:

The Planning Board of the Town of Sullivan hereby adopts the document entitled:

Sullivan Master Plan 2015

Under the provisions of the State of New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated, Chapters 674:2-4, it is adopted as a guide, or point of departure, for the logical future development of the Town of Sullivan.

Members of the Sullivan Planning Board:

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Adopted, December 3, 2014 by the Sullivan Planning Board

A community questionnaire and a public hearing were conducted for help in preparing this document.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

What is a Master Plan?

According to state law (RSA 674:2) "The purpose of the master plan is to set down as clearly and practically as possible the best and most appropriate future development of the area under the jurisdiction of the planning board, to aid the board in designing ordinances that result in preserving and enhancing the unique quality of life and culture of New Hampshire, and to guide the board in the performance of its other duties in a manner that achieves the principles of smart growth, sound planning, and wise resource protection."

The master plan is, therefore, a framework or guide for the community as a whole to use in shaping its future course. As information changes and as community goals change, the master plan must be updated. The edition of Sullivan's master plan in 2015 is an update of the master plan adopted by the Sullivan Planning Board in 2005. The planning board has been guided by community opinion as expressed in response to a town-wide survey conducted in 2012. The guiding principle is the good of the whole community.

The master plan is advisory in nature, and the carrying out of its recommendations will depend on decisions of the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board and on action of Town Meeting in passing various land use controls, capital improvement appropriations, land acquisition, tax policies, etc. The master plan represents the philosophy of the present residents of Sullivan regarding the future growth and development of the community and should help assure that the residents' priorities for land use and resource preservation are realized.

The Sullivan Planning Board acknowledges with gratitude the thoughtful participation of various community members, especially during its early deliberations, and the helpful advice of the staff of the Southwest Region Planning Commission.

Vision Statement

In every planning survey of the town, the residents of Sullivan have affirmed their commitment to the rural character of this small town of fewer than 700 people. Its scenic roads, its open fields, its pleasant woodlands give the town its rural atmosphere. Over the years since 1993 when the first large tract of land was preserved forever by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, several individual families and another conservation organization have protected large portions of their own lands never to be developed. In an effort to protect backlands from development, the Community Planning Ordinance has required 200 feet of frontage on a class V or better road for a building permit, and the backlands have been largely left to wildlife and to hikers and hunters. The Winch Town Forest and other protected properties offer trails for townspeople to enjoy. The town is mindful of the importance of Sullivan, a hill town, to the water resources of the surrounding area, particularly Keene. And it has begun an effort to conserve energy by upgrading library lighting, installing an energy saving boiler for the highway department, completely insulating the library, and assessing other opportunities for energy conservation. At the same time, the town has supported the library and its opportunities for all to explore books opening the world to readers. Concerned for safety and ease of travel, the town has always supported the careful planning for needed upgrades of the roads and culverts. Community groups and volunteer events, like the annual roadside cleanup, bring neighbors together. The town's commitment to the education of our children was most emphatically demonstrated in the deliberations in 2012 devoted to solving the problem of the closing of the Sullivan School. Small businesses dot the town.

All of these elements reaching back to the past comprise the Town's Vision for the future: a community committed to the peacefulness of undeveloped lands for human enjoyment and wild animal sustenance, the mind-expanding opportunities of schools and libraries, the encouragement of the entrepreneurial spirit, the collaboration among residents for the town good, and participation in the music and arts of the Monadnock Region.

Sullivan Town History

The history of Sullivan mirrors that of most of the other hill towns in the Southwest Region of New Hampshire. It was primarily based on agriculture with some small manufacturing businesses such as tanneries, grist and saw mills as well as lumbering and wood products. In the twentieth century there was a gradual change to a residential community with some small home-based businesses.

Sullivan was formed out of four corners of Keene, Gilsum, Stoddard and Packersfield (later called Nelson). The Gilsum quarter was settled first by two families that arrived around 1770, but settlement did not begin in earnest until about 1780. Concern over the distance to their meeting houses caused 34 families to petition the State of New Hampshire for incorporation, which was granted on 27 September 1787. The founders had originally suggested the name Orange but later agreed to name it after one of New Hampshire's Revolutionary War heroes, Major General John Sullivan. Sullivan was also the president (governor) of New Hampshire at the time.

New settlers began arriving—primarily from central Massachusetts—and the population grew quickly to 220 by 1790, doubling to 488 by 1800 and hit its maximum of 582 in 1820. A town center began to appear in the four corners area (where Gilsum and South Roads intersect with Centre Street). The new town quickly acquired a blacksmith and a few other skilled trades which were located in the center. Merchants were convinced to open a small store as early as 1795. Grist mills began appearing in the early 1790s along the smaller streams in town. A potash cookery, cider mills and even a distillery operated for a time in the area around the center. A meeting house was constructed in 1792, and a settled minister was employed by 1797. Other municipal services, such as a pound and the town burial ground, were created in the center.

While the center contained the small municipal and commercial activity of the new town, the land owners were spread all over the territory. Bolster Pond was settled by 1800 with farms around its entire edge. Nims Hill, Hubbard Hill, Winch Hill, and Boynton Mountain were also settled in this period. The completion of the road to Packersfield (modern day Centre Street) in 1794 connected the farms of Apple Hill to the center. Even the less suitable land such as the swampy Ferry Brook area and the boulder-strewn north central section of town were settled.

The early settlers were engaged in subsistence farming on relatively small plots—50 to 100 acres. However most of the strictly subsistence farms disappeared within a generation or two. Larger farms quickly absorbed their lands and evolved into cash crop production—especially maize, potatoes, hay, and maple sugar. Beef and dairy cattle were also raised, but their products were consumed locally until improvements in transportation allowed for the sale of products elsewhere. Sullivan participated in the "sheep craze"

of the mid-19th century and reported having a little over 3000 sheep in 1848 that produced about 5000 pounds of wool. While that might be impressive it is about average for sheep raising towns. In the same census, Nelson claimed 4300 sheep, Stoddard reported 5175, and Alstead had 6331. Moreover, the same census showed that other crops were important as well. Some 25,000 bushels of potatoes, 1800 tons of hay, and 5300 pounds of maple sugar were produced in the same year. Thus, when the price of wool began to fall dramatically in the 1850s, Sullivan farmers could turn to other crops with a minimum of disruption. Moreover, the relatively small number of sheep may have allowed the "upland pastures" to begin recovering their timber growth sooner than other towns with larger flocks. The return of the forests directly affected the rapid growth of the wood working industry.

Various streams around town could support a water-powered mill for short periods of time during the year. The Ferry Brook area supported two saw mills for much of the 19th century. Jacob Spaulding's mill on Spaulding Brook provided lumber and a grist wheel as well as parts for his brother Dexter's Wheelwright shop. In the north end of town, Luther Hemenway manufactured his patented awl handle for several years. The main source of water power, however, was found in Otter Brook. The Ellis family had built a saw mill on its upper end, but their operation was soon eclipsed by what would become the village of East Sullivan.

In 1797, Nathaniel Mason built a small dam and saw mill next to his homestead on Otter Brook. The saw mill and grist mill operation quickly expanded as abundant water power and direct access to the town's road system improved Mason's business. Soon a village began to grow up around Mason's mill, and what came to be known as East Sullivan started to grow. In 1840, a tannery was established which took advantage of the water and the tannic acid from the abundant hemlock trees in the valley. In 1843, Daniel Goodnow purchased the Mason Mill. He and his son Caleb soon expanded the mill operation into a turning mill and later manufactured tables. The table was patented as the "monitor" and was designed to be folded up for storage. To build the tables, new sheds and buildings were added to the mill complex.

In 1849, Valley Road was laid out along Otter Brook largely to provide better access to the timber land on the east side of town. Another road was planned, but not laid out that followed Otter Brook all the way to the Chandler Meadows region of Stoddard. All of this activity was aimed to bring more wood to East Sullivan to meet the rising demands of the mills. In 1868, a dam was constructed across Otter Brook near the Nelson—Stoddard—Sullivan town line. The dam created a large pond called Ellis Reservoir which was designed to regulate the flow of water to the mills.

Meanwhile, Sullivan Center had developed into a small commercial center. In 1830, a stagecoach route began operating through town. This service delivered mail to our first post office as well as an express service to ship some goods. Wardwell's store was established at this time which provided dry goods and an exchange for the town. Sullivan's company of militia trained next to the armory that was built near the four corners. This

flowering, however, was brief and by 1850 the stagecoach route was gone. By 1860, Wardwell's store was closed. The skilled laborers gradually moved away or relocated to East Sullivan.

After the Civil War, East Sullivan grew rapidly. This growth probably caused a brief rise in population of the town. After declining from 582 in 1820 to 347 in 1870 the population reached 382 in the 1880 census. While Sullivan Center retained the church and the town hall, East Sullivan increased its public services as well. A highway connecting Keene with Hillsborough passed through East Sullivan which allowed the direct transportation of goods to markets. East Sullivan had its own post office after 1850. In 1881, the village inaugurated the first telephone service in town. When Sullivan farmers formed the Honor Bright Grange its hall was located in East Sullivan. A dispute within the Sullivan Church led to the creation of the Union Evangelical Church of East Sullivan in 1875.

Caleb Goodnow retired and his sons sold the mill to Tom Hastings who owned much of the timber land in town and continued to expand his holdings by purchasing many of the marginal farms for their timber lots. He manufactured wooden ware primarily, but later converted to lumber production. The Felt Brothers opened another turning mill on Granite Lake Brook (a tributary of Otter Brook) which manufactured tool handles and a brand of step ladder. In 1889, Leslie Goodnow opened a new turning mill to the south of East Sullivan and began manufacturing chair and crib stock.

By about 1880, East Sullivan had become the de facto center of Sullivan. In spite of frictions with the rest of the town, there was never any serious effort to secede or form itself as an incorporated village. Indeed while the East Sullivan thrived, the rest of town developed into several large farms that, if not prosperous, at least provided a good living for their families. As transportation improved toward the end of the 19th century, many farms began to convert to dairying. Others continued to rely on the standbys of hay, root vegetables, winter squash, maple sugar, and timber.

East Sullivan's golden age began to wane after 1900. The Hastings and Goodnow families' offspring left town to pursue other careers. By 1910, both mills had greatly reduced output or ceased operations all together. Most timber operations used portable steam powered mills and no longer needed the stationary mills. The new technology and better roads enabled lumber to be processed on site and shipped to market.

In 1919 an Indian summer of sorts began when the E. Murdock Company of Winchendon, MA, acquired the holdings of the Hastings family. Murdock manufactured wood products especially tubs, pails, and buckets and were interested in a mill that could saw and plane boards that would be cut into rough shapes and shipped to Winchendon for finishing. Their purchase from the Hastings family included the mill, the timber land, the Ellis Reservoir dam, and the water rights to Otter Brook. By then the mill was worn out and useless so the company built a new water powered mill on Valley Road beside Spaulding Brook. To power the mill an ingenious system was devised to divert water from Otter Brook, through a penstock, and downhill to the

new mill. Once the water was used to power the turbine, it fell into Spaulding Brook which connected to Otter Brook. The mill was called the Norcross Mill after the company's manager Ora Norcross. The mill provided employment for a small number of Sullivan residents and prospered throughout the 1920s. The mill age in Sullivan ended dramatically on 28 December 1931 when the Norcross Mill burned in a huge fire.

Fire also claimed many of the farms in town as well during the early part of the 20th century. The most important fire took place on 10 June 1921 when a massive blaze destroyed every structure but one at the four corners—erasing the last remnants of the town's original center. The farms that remained continued producing goods, but their economics became marginal and were unable to compete effectively with lowland agriculture. Without capital to upgrade equipment or take advantage of new technologies the farms of Sullivan became poorer. The lack of electricity put Sullivan farmers at a particular disadvantage. East Sullivan village had electricity around 1920 largely because it was next to a transmission line that followed Route 9. The rest of the town would have to wait until the Rural Electrification Act of the 1930s and some parts were not wired until 1940 or 1941.

The decline in agricultural or manufacturing opportunities led directly to a population drop as young people moved away. From the high of 382 in 1880, the population dropped to 287 in 1900 and hit its lowest point in 1930 at 192. While the decline was alarming, it failed to show a trend that had begun as early as 1907. More and more people began buying the old, worn out farms and using them strictly as homes. While they might have had a large garden and kept chickens and a milk cow, their primary source of income was earned outside the home. Many of these people worked in logging or as hired men, but as the century progressed the chief source of income was wages earned at a factory or office outside of town—especially in Keene. A few of the old farms were also purchased as summer homes by people outside of town. However, "summer people" never became an important part of the economy probably because Sullivan has no large lake or other attraction. In any event, the new residents of town usually preserved and renovated the old farm houses which probably saved many of them from decay and destruction.

The town grew very slowly through the 1930s and 1940s but began to increase after World War II and continued its rural residential mix. The town made several improvements to the main roads as they were widened and paved and the old iron and wooden bridges were replaced. A volunteer fire company was formed in 1946. The remaining two one-room school houses were consolidated into a new "central" school in 1958. In 1961, the town voted to join the Monadnock Regional School District which gave our junior and senior high school students access to a new secondary school. These changes combined with population pressures from the Keene area contributed to a slow growth in new housing in the 1960s which accelerated in the 1970s and 1980s.

Large land holdings started to be subdivided into smaller lots for the purpose of new housing construction. Many of the remaining large farms were sold to developers for such purposes. Regulation of development remained benign. Sullivan had no land use code regulations and did not even establish a planning board until 1971. The town was very slow to regulate housing. A mobile home ordinance was passed in the 1970s, but no effort was made to regulate regular housing. For the most part development remained relatively small—about 5 to 10 units—and usually stayed on the main roads. The town was successful in challenging developments that would cause new road construction. However, the town was very slow in writing regulations that would govern such issues as frontage, lot width, driveway permits, and minimum size of dwelling units. A comprehensive regulation called the Community Planning Ordinance was finally adopted in 1989.

At the same time, the conservation movement was beginning to stir in town. Landowners had used state current use regulations since the 1960s. These laws allowed large lots of land to pay a minimum tax rate as an incentive to keep the land open. This put an effective end to the breakup of large lots by developers. In the 1990s the use of conservation easements preserved large tracts of back land. Most of this land was originally part of holdings used for timber in the 19th century. Between 1995 and 2005, about 28% of the town's land was placed in some form of conservation easement by local land owners and such organizations as the Nature Conservancy and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. In addition to providing habitat for animals such as bear and moose, the movement has preserved such natural features as Bolster Pond, the large beaver meadow where Ellis Reservoir once stood, and the Otter Brook Falls. These areas are easily accessed from several points and provide some recreational opportunities such as boating, fishing, hunting, hiking and the study of the natural environment.

Commercial activity after World War II remained small and sporadic. Construction companies located at the homes of the owner existed. Such enterprises as taxidermy, pottery, dynamite storage, and knitting supplies operated in town. For about 10 years in the 1980s and 1990s a computer supply company was located in town. One of the more interesting enterprises was the Sullivan Golf Club located on the Gilsum Road. The nine hole course with a club house operated from 1960 to 1975. It later became Ashuelot Ridge which was a popular (some would say notorious) night club that thrived until 1980. However, none of these businesses employed large numbers of people nor did they survive their owner's retirement. Agriculture was also practiced in small portions including sheep, beef cattle, and poultry. However, like their commercial counterparts, agricultural practice was family based and quite small.

Sullivan's population finally stabilized in the 1990s. The numbers went from 376 in 1970, boomed to 585 in 1980 and expanded again to 706 by 1990. The population then slowed to 746 in 2000 and fell to 677 in 2010. While this trend may indicate a shrinking of our town, we still remain a very convenient residential community for Keene with easy access to routes 9 and 10 as well

as a place of great natural beauty. One factor that may reverse this trend is the recent decision to withdraw from the Monadnock Regional School District and send our children to Nelson and Keene. This would provide an incentive to families with children who desire the Keene Schools but who want to live in a rural community.

Sullivan's history is typical of any northern New England hill town. It was quickly settled and its marginal areas quickly abandoned. Enterprising farmers found a good living until they were unable to compete. Small industries took advantage of large tracts of timber to create wood products until they no longer had an economy of scale. While the town faced extinction with the agricultural depression of the 1920s and 1930s, wage earners desiring a rural life soon took the place of the old farms. Since World War II a combination of rural activities, small commercial operations, and residential housing has been the economic story of the town. By the end of the 20th century the town had adopted land use rules, preserved a good portion of the land for forestry and open agricultural space, and taken steps to find better educational opportunities for its children. It remains convenient for more housing development and attractive because of its closeness to Keene. The town is far better equipped to absorb such development than it was in 1970.

Location

Sullivan is one of twenty-three communities in Cheshire County, located in southwest New Hampshire. It is bordered by Gilsum on the north and west, by Keene on the south and west, by Roxbury on the south, Nelson on the east and Stoddard on the east and north. Sullivan has a total land area of 12,224 acres, 195 of which are surface water. Sullivan sits on the west side of a ridge which extends northward from Mt. Monadnock to Mt. Sunapee. Its elevations range from 795 feet along Otter Brook to a high point of 1,751 feet above mean sea level at Boynton Mountain. Average temperature is 20.10 in January and 69.00 in July. Average annual precipitation is 37.23 inches.

Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of the Planning Board is to encourage the preservation and improvement of local resources important to a pleasant, attractive, healthy, and convenient environment for residents and neighbors. In furtherance of that goal, the Master Plan shall serve as a guide. The following goals and objectives are derived from residents' responses to the 2012 Sullivan Town Planning Survey.

Housing

General Goals:

1. To encourage housing owners to be sure that all construction meets present health, safety, and energy standards.
2. To encourage the energy efficiency and general maintenance of the Town's housing stock.
3. To encourage a diversity of housing to meet the needs of residents of all age and income levels.

Specific Objectives:

1. Promote needed rehabilitation of the existing housing stock, with an eye to saving energy.
2. Develop awareness of the state-mandated building code (IBC) which will ensure safe and sanitary housing while permitting innovative, cost-effective, and energy-saving building techniques.
3. Ensure that proposed buildings will meet the Town's land use and building codes on inspection after completion.
4. Ensure that residential development is consistent with the nature of the community and addresses present housing needs while preserving the present rural character of the town.

Economic Environment

General Goals:

Recognizing that Sullivan is essentially a bedroom community and that commercial or industrial activities may not bring in enough revenues to offset the individual tax burden, the Town should take appropriate steps to stabilize the tax rate.

Specific Objectives:

1. To enforce non-residential site plan review regulations and establish standards to ensure that non-residential development is consistent with the aesthetic, environmental and safety objectives of the town.
2. To ensure that development is managed so that population growth does not outstrip services.

Land Use and Conservation

General Goals:

1. To maintain the rural atmosphere.
2. To protect and maintain watershed, wetland and surface water areas and maintain the quantity and quality of the town's water bodies.
3. To encourage and promote the upgrade and protection of the town's forest and wildlife resources.
4. To guide growth into areas of town capable of supporting development and to discourage inappropriate development in sensitive areas.
5. To encourage the preservation of Sullivan's historic buildings and mill sites.
6. To protect the Town's good agricultural soils and encourage the use of areas with these soils for agriculture.

Specific Objectives:

1. Through land use regulations, promote development patterns which protect the Town's important natural resources, such as wetlands, ground and surface waters, and unique geologic and vegetative zones and animal habitats.
2. Investigate the feasibility of proposing that Town Meeting regulations and ordinances reduce erosion by regulating development on steeply sloped land.
3. Encourage the concentration of land uses in clusters and limit both "strip development" and irregularly dispersed development patterns.
4. Employ appropriate land use regulations to guide future uses and densities of development.
5. Continually monitor and update the land use regulations to effectively implement the Master Plan and manage anticipated growth.
6. Judge the compatibility of development proposals with existing land uses and with the natural characteristics of the land.
7. Undertake a program through the Conservation Commission and interested individuals to identify for protection significant watershed and undeveloped areas in town.
8. Continue and extend the town's program to improve forestry practices.
9. Continue to set aside money for land conservation, especially to protect the Town's special places.
10. Consider an historic inventory of the Town to identify sites and structures of historic note and make recommendations for National Registry recognition.

Community Facilities

General Goal:

To continue to provide necessary and desirable improvements to Town capital assets to meet current standards for safety and public utility.

Specific Objective:

To encourage energy savings by rehabilitating town buildings through good insulation and more efficient electrical equipment.

Transportation

General Goals:

1. To ensure that projects for increasing the capacity of any existing roads or for creating any new roads will be consistent with the rural character of the Town.
2. To ensure public safety on the roads.
3. To monitor the evolution of a regional transportation plan by working cooperatively with the Southwest Region Planning Commission.

Specific Objectives:

1. To review, on a regular basis, the street design standards in the Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations to ensure that they are always appropriate to the type and level of development in the Town.
2. To continue to maintain Sullivan's road signs and bridges through a regular program of maintenance and improvement to be accomplished at an acceptable budget level.
3. To continue the town's program for the sharing of road equipment, facilities and personnel with other towns where cost savings or improved efficiencies can be realized.

Housing and Population

Housing

What follows is a general overview of housing in Sullivan that may be used as a basis for identifying problems and seeking solutions. It also provides one means for tracking the growth of the town through the past and anticipating future growth. This overview will document the relative age, condition and availability of housing in the Town, comparing Sullivan's housing stock with the housing in Cheshire County as a whole and with nearby towns: Gilsum, Nelson and Stoddard. There is no suggestion intended that any town must match the housing condition, character or adequacy of any other town, but a general comparison can be useful in making judgments about the function of housing within a given community.

**Table 1
Total Housing Comparison (Total Housing Units – 1970 – 2010)**

	Sullivan	Gilsum	Nelson	Stoddard	Cheshire Co.
1970	117	190	151	103	17,241
1980	201	237	171	260	23,274
1990	283	320	379	890	30,350
2000	299	343	400	939	31,876
2010	309	378	460	1,044	34,733
% change 1970 - 2010	164%	99%	205%	914%	101%

Source: Southwest Region Planning Commission

It is important to notice the significance of the gap between the total number of housing units and the number of units occupied year-round in each town. The more seasonal homes there are in a town, the more widely the costs of services, such as schools, road maintenance, fire and police, can be spread. As shown in the chart below, Sullivan's housing stock is made up almost exclusively of year-round homes. Gilsum has relatively few seasonal homes. Stoddard and Nelson, on the other hand, have many seasonal homes unoccupied during the school year. This accounts for a large measure of the substantial difference in tax rates from town to town.

**Table 2
Housing Occupancy Comparison for 2010**

Town	Total Units	Occupied Units	Vacant Housing Units				Vacancy rate	
			Total	Percent			Percent	
				For sale	For rent	Seasonal, recreational.	Homeowner	Rental
Sullivan	309	274	35	5.7	20	45.7	0.8	15.9
Gilsum	378	326	52	13.5	9.6	61.5	2.4	10.6
Nelson	460	303	157	1.3	2.5	91.7	0.9	4.8
Stoddard	1,044	502	542	0.9	0.9	95.4	1.1	7.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010

Comparative tax rates are best understood as a function of three factors that can also be compared from town to town: 1) a town's total budget; 2) the total and median value of a town's homes; 3) the total number of a town's homes, both seasonal and year-round. The lower the value of a town's homes, the higher the tax rate is likely to be. As noted above, the larger the number of seasonal homes compared to the number of homes occupied year-round, the lower the tax rate is likely to be. For example, the town of Stoddard, which has a high proportion of seasonal homes and more than half its land protected from development, has an extremely low tax rate. Sullivan's median home value of \$91,700 in 2000 was relatively low, but its tax rate of \$34.17 in the same year was relatively high.

**Table 3
Comparison of Equalized Tax Rates: 2002-2011**

	Sullivan	Gilsum	Nelson	Stoddard	Regional Average
2002	35.93	32.85	21.28	16.26	28.86
2003	35.77	36.00	20.66	12.44	28.75
2004	20.48	20.14	22.00	12.80	23.09
2005	21.64	20.16	27.80	12.70	20.35
2006	24.76	21.95	13.51	8.85	19.80
2007	21.64	21.79	14.49	8.99	19.71
2008	29.74	26.28	16.23	2.57	20.29
2009	25.08	24.34	16.90	11.04	21.45
2010	25.53	25.95	19.11	12.80	21.16
2011	26.83	25.95	20.55	14.38	21.91

Source: Southwest Region Planning Commission

It should also be noted that the greater the number of homes in a town, keeping in mind the size of the gap between the number of seasonal and year-round homes, the more likely it is that more town services—road maintenance, schools, emergency services and the rest—will be required. And residents of towns with higher median home values often demand more and more expensive town services. In both these cases, total town budgets are likely to be greater, causing the tax rate to increase. However, because of Sullivan's relatively high tax rate, a homeowner in Sullivan will see a higher tax bill each year than will an owner of a home of equal value in a town with a lower tax rate.

As Table 3 shows, Sullivan's highest tax rate was in 2003. A complete revaluation of town properties was finished in 2004. Consequently, the tax

rate dipped considerably for the next 4 years. The Town's budget may be affected by natural disasters (such as the wiping out of several Sullivan roads during the storm of May 2011) or by major changes to Sullivan institutions (such as the closing of the Sullivan School in 2012 and the subsequent need to repay the Monadnock Regional School District for improvements to the school over the years). Of course, increased values of Sullivan properties affect an individual's taxes, too. Table 4 shows the marked escalation in home values throughout the county since 1970, but most of all in Sullivan.

**Table 4
Median Home Value**

	Sullivan	Gilsum	Nelson	Stoddard	Cheshire County
1970	\$4,299	\$9,130	n/a	\$8,214	\$13,142
1980	\$35,000	\$33,000	\$42,700	\$37,100	\$41,000
1990	\$97,900	\$90,600	\$91,700	\$99,700	\$111,000
2000	\$91,700	\$89,100	\$106,000	\$115,900	\$105,300
2010	\$244,700	\$217,800	\$187,800	\$200,400	\$201,800

Source: Southwest Region Planning Commission

Housing Types.

According to the American Community Survey, as of 2011, 89% of the town's housing units are single unit homes, slightly more than 3% are two or more unit buildings, and about 8% are mobile homes.

The median number of rooms in a Sullivan house is 5.6 rooms. Almost 10% have 9 rooms or more, while almost 14% have 4 rooms or fewer. The rest have between 5 and 8 rooms.

All but 3 of the homes have a vehicle. According to our source, the US Census Bureau's American FactFinder, about half the occupied homes use fuel oil or kerosene. Almost as many heat with wood (39%).

Housing Conditions

Inspired by the 1990 US Census showing that 4 Sullivan houses lacked complete plumbing facilities and 2 lacked complete kitchen facilities, the Town applied to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for a Community Development Block Grant to rehabilitate some of Sullivan's housing stock. During 1995, 16 houses were rehabilitated and 3 modular houses were replaced under the HUD contract.

In the American FactFinder estimates, two Sullivan houses currently lack complete plumbing and kitchen facilities. Should the Town wish to undertake such a project in the future, Southwest Region Planning Commission, the agent in 1995, could be approached for help with the planning process.

The Town's most evident need with respect to housing condition of houses in Sullivan is for a way to monitor the safety and stability of existing housing, new construction, renovations and additions. Effective monitoring would require at least a Certificate of Occupancy for all new construction and for some renovations and additions. The March 2014 ballot question asking the voters to approve a new section in the Community Planning Ordinance passed easily. It reads: "Before any newly constructed dwelling or structure intended for human habitation can be occupied or utilized, an occupancy permit shall be approved by the Board of Selectmen or their designee.....Its purpose is to confirm safe and adequate disposal of sewage, well installation, minimum setbacks, driveway and apron installation meet the town's regulation."

The Future of Housing in Sullivan

At present Sullivan continues to be a single rural-residential district under its Community Planning Ordinance, which requires throughout the Town a minimum building lot size of 2 acres with 200 feet of frontage on a Class V or better road.

Questions remain about whether the Town would be best served, in the interest of so-called "smart growth," by revision of the Community Planning Ordinance, designating a number of different zones or districts of varying lot sizes. Questions have also been raised about subdivisions of land that result in long, narrow building lots or other oddly shaped lots. Lots configured in irregular ways use land poorly and tend to obscure property lines. This problem should be addressed, possibly by revision of the Planning Board's subdivision regulations or of the Town's Community Planning Ordinance or both.

The overwhelming result of the Town survey in 2012 was that Sullivan residents want to maintain the Town's rural character. New zoning that would allow smaller lot sizes or encourage housing development in Sullivan's backlands might very well run counter to this goal. Careful attention to maintaining open space and avoiding a steep increase in the Town's tax rate should be at the center of these deliberations.

As noted in the Land Use section of this Master Plan, an informal study of the Town in 2004 found that under Sullivan's present zoning approximately 280 new dwellings could be constructed along presently existing Class V roads. Were construction of that number of houses to occur over time, both the number of housing units in Sullivan and the Town's population would nearly double. Whether this happens will depend, of course, on the willingness of individual owners to subdivide and sell their land.

Although the recession in the past decade has substantially reduced the demand for new housing, the attractive features of the town, including its pleasant vistas, its open spaces, and its proximity to Keene, will draw attention from potential buyers as the economy improves.

Population

In 1820, 582 people were living in Sullivan. This turned out to be the population peak for all of the 19th century. Beginning at about that time, the Town's population, like the populations of many towns in the region, began a steady decline as the result of heavy migration of people to the newly opened agricultural lands of the Midwest and to newly industrializing urban centers. By 1930, Sullivan reached a population low of only 192 people.

Over the next thirty years, U.S. Census figures show that Sullivan's population remained relatively flat, reaching 261 people by 1960. Through the decade of the sixties, the Town's population nearly doubled what it had been in 1930, growing to 376 people in 1970. The following two decades and especially the 1980's were a population boom period. By 1990 Sullivan's population had climbed to 706 people, nearly double what it was in 1970. The U.S. Census of 2000 set the Town's population at 746 people. By the time of the 2010 census, the population had dropped to 677.

Table 1
Sullivan's Population 1820-2010

1820	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
582	192	255	272	261	376	585	706	746	677

U.S. Census figures for 1970 through 2010 show that the rate of population growth in Sullivan and its neighboring towns, as well as in Cheshire County as a whole, have been anything but uniform. Over these forty years, the population of Cheshire County grew by 47%. The rate of growth in Gilsum at 43% was somewhat lower. Stoddard's population exploded at a rate of 509%, almost nine times the rate of growth for the county as a whole.

It is important to note that population figures take account only of year-round residents and do not include seasonal residents. If this were not the case, population totals for Nelson and Stoddard would be much higher than shown in the following tables.

Table 2
Comparative Population Growth 1970-2010

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% of Change 1970-2010
Sullivan	376	585	706	746	677	180%
Gilsum	570	652	745	777	813	143%
Nelson	304	442	535	634	729	240%
Stoddard	242	482	622	928	1,232	509%
Cheshire Co.	52,364	62,116	70,121	73,825	77,117	147%

Source: Southwest Region Planning Commission

Complex relationships among a variety of factors serve to explain these wide differences in the rate of population growth from town to town: 1) the proximity and ease of access to urban centers; 2) topography; 3) the extent to which zoning ordinances and other development regulations limit or encourage growth; 4) the amount of land protected for preservation; 5) the ratio of seasonal to year-round housing in each town; 6) the underlying tax structure of each town.

At the time of Sullivan’s Master Plan in 1995, the Town’s Planning Board projected that Sullivan’s population would grow at an accelerated rate of 3.5% per year reaching a total of just under 1000 people by the year 2000. At the same time, the state of New Hampshire was projecting that the Town would grow by 1% per year reaching a total of just under 800 by the year 2000. Both projections proved to be inaccurate.

At present, the state is projecting that from 2010 to 2020 Sullivan’s population will shrink from 677 people to 582 people, decrease of more than 8.5%. Whether a resurgence of economic growth in the area economy will belie these predictions, time will tell.

As ever, the major factors tending towards growth continue to be Sullivan’s proximity to Keene and other centers of employment, the development close to their capacity of towns to the south of Keene, Sullivan’s rural charm and the attractiveness of small New Hampshire communities to new residents. Factors tending to restrict the growth of Sullivan continue to be the Town’s uniform 2 acre zoning, its relatively high tax rate and, to some extent, its topography and limited road system. How the closing of the Sullivan School and tuitioning. of its students to Nelson and Keene schools will affect population growth is yet to be seen.

**Table 3
Population Projections (2010 – 2040)**

Town	2010*	2015**	2020**	2025**	2030**	2035**	2040**	Change 2010-2040
Sullivan	677	626	582	589	595	599	600	-11%
Nelson	729	762	805	816	824	829	830	14%
Gilsum	813	814	824	835	843	849	850	5%
Stoddard	1,232	1,364	1,1513	1,533	1,548	1,558	1,560	27%
Cheshire Co.	77,117	77,128	78,052	79,085	79,861	80,381	80,471	4%

* U.S. Census 2010

** NHOEP Projection Figures - Fall 2013

Age Distribution

It is also interesting to consider the age distribution of our population as Sullivan has grown from 1970 to the present. In Cheshire County as a whole, while the population has grown by 47%, the number of children 0-17 years

old has decreased 13% from what it was in 1970, probably reflecting the tendency over the past thirty years or more of families to be smaller than formerly . The number of children 0-17 years old in Sullivan increased dramatically from 1970 to 1980. But from then until 2000, this segment of the Town’s population had been remarkably consistent in size but since 2000 has dropped dramatically. Since this age group includes almost all school age children, it is also the group that accounts for the largest fraction in the Town’s tax rate—the cost of their schooling. Had Sullivan’s population in this age group increased at a rate more like what we see in Nelson or Stoddard, the Town’s relatively high tax rate would most likely have been even higher than it is today. The drop in school-age population in Sullivan and Gilsum had been of concern to the Monadnock Region School District. There was talk of closing the “Northern Schools” to save money. In 2012, the Sullivan School was closed and the children transported to Gilsum. That same year, Sullivan voted to withdraw from the MRSD. Both Harrisville and Nelson, with declining school populations of their own, competed for the Sullivan school children. Nelson was chosen, and Sullivan elementary school children started school in Nelson in September of 2013.

Table 4
Comparative Age Distribution 1970 – 2010
Children 0-17 Years Old

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% of Change 1970-2010
Sullivan	136	195	203	189	126	-7%
Gilsum	215	195	191	173	156	-27%
Nelson	101	128	151	172	139	38%
Stoddard	66	100	141	187	263	298%
Cheshire Co.	17,464	16,727	17,066	17,197	15,112	-13%

Although the school-age population has declined markedly, the number of people over the age of 65 in Sullivan, as well as in our three neighbor towns and Cheshire County as a whole, has increased markedly. Population growth may be one factor, the other obvious factor is the tendency of people to live longer than they did in earlier decades. The growth in this segment of the population—perhaps especially as we see it most dramatically in Stoddard, where there are many smaller homes suitable for retirees—is a reminder that not all new housing development need be or should be housing for younger families. While this group’s need for housing—most particularly for affordable housing—is great, there is also significant need for housing suitable for other segments of the population, including single adults, couples whose children have left home, people approaching or entering retirement and the elderly. A community that mixes and balances these groups well will very likely be stronger and a more interesting place to live, work and grow up in than is a community excessively weighted only toward families with children of school age.

Table 5
Comparative Age Distribution 1970-2010
Adults 65 Years or Older

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% of change 1970-2010
Sullivan	46	48	69	70	83	80%
Gilsum	62	65	80	84	106	71%
Nelson	40	51	51	68	119	198%
Stoddard	28	86	70	140	243	768%
Cheshire Co.	5,485	7,664	9,188	10,086	11,342	107%

Source: Southwest Region Planning Commission

Conclusion

In recent years it has become a cliché among people who think about planning that growth is inevitable and that in the face of this inevitability development should be guided by sound principles so that growth will be “smart” and not haphazard. At this level of generality, both things are certainly true. But it is also a fact that through the 1990’s Sullivan grew far more slowly with respect to new housing and population than in the previous two decades. At the time of this writing, the Town’s growth has slowed even more despite unusually low interest rates over the past several years. Nonetheless, it is important to ask what principles should guide development in Sullivan to ensure smart growth and what changes in the Town’s Community Planning Ordinance should be made to achieve that end. The surest guide here is the 2012 Town Survey. As in all previous surveys, Sullivan residents have expressed a strong desire to maintain the Town’s rural character, to encourage agriculture and to protect special places and environmental assets such as vistas, wetlands and forests. At the same time, many Sullivan residents worry whether the Town will be able to accommodate children and grandchildren who choose to continue living here in the future. If and when these goals conflict, balances will need to be struck, and new regulations will have to allow for the possibility of such balances.

Population growth, especially growth in the number of school age children, tends to increase taxes. But new development does not necessarily have to be restricted to the development of new housing, and new housing does not have to be only new family housing. The 2012 Town Survey shows that most Sullivan residents do not favor commercial or industrial development. Nonetheless, it might be worthwhile to consider the possibility of development for low impact commercial use and for certain light industrial uses that could be beneficial to the town in some locations. No one will deny the need for family housing or its value, but there are also needs for and values to be found in other types of housing: retirement housing, elder housing, housing for single adults and even some kinds of institutional

housing. Since 1998, the Town has had a cluster housing ordinance that has not yet been used but might serve these alternatives well as Sullivan meets both the need for new housing and the goals of preserving the Town's open space and its rural character.

Finally, as a matter of basic civic responsibility, it will be imperative to focus a sharp eye on the consequences for the Town's tax rate as we contemplate any changes to our present development regulations. It would be both tragic and wrong to allow drastic increases in town taxes that would threaten the ability of any of our neighbors—especially families and elders—to continue living in Sullivan.

Recommendations

1. Having voted at the March 2014 election to revise the Community Planning Ordinance to require a Certificate of Occupancy for newly constructed dwellings or structures intended for human habitation, attention should now be made for requiring a permit for all construction.
2. The Planning Board should carefully and thoroughly undertake consideration of the possibility of designating a number of different zones or districts of varying lot sizes.
3. As a matter of ensuring good planning and design, the Planning Board should develop a means, by revision of our subdivision regulations or our Community Planning Ordinance, of requiring that all new subdivisions of land should result in building lots of regular shape and configuration.
4. Whenever suitable and possible, the Town and especially the Planning Board should urge developers seeking to build in Sullivan to consider the full range of reasonable options open to them: retirement housing, elder housing, housing for single adults and for couples whose children have left home and even some kinds of institutional housing, as well as low impact commercial and light industrial uses. When compatible with a particular site, developers should also be urged to build according to the Town's cluster housing ordinance in order to maximize the preservation of open space.

Economic Analysis

The early economy of the town of Sullivan, like that of the entire southwest region of New Hampshire, was based primarily on agriculture, specifically the small, owner-operated "New England Farm." Many of these farms provided their owners with a hard but largely self-sufficient life. Their main connection to a wider economy was at market in the larger towns where excess produce could be sold and goods and services not available in Sullivan could be purchased.

During the late 18th century, small manufacturing businesses, such as grist mills, saw mills, textile mills and woodworking shops came to be established throughout the region. Sullivan's first mills were built along Otter Brook in 1772, fifteen years before the incorporation of the Town. Because Otter Brook is relatively small, Sullivan's mills were also small when compared to those operating in other nearby towns with access to larger waterways such as the Ashuelot River. Throughout its early history, most people who lived in Sullivan worked in town as well. This basic pattern persisted through a long, hundred-year period of declining population, stretching into the 1930's.

Today there are no longer any mills in Sullivan, and the very few farms that continue in the Town, far from being self-sufficient, are part-time or specialty operations, supplementing their owners' other income. For a very long time now, most of Sullivan's population has worked outside of town in Keene or elsewhere in centers even farther away. There are some local businesses, but for the most part Sullivan has become a bedroom community whose residents have expressed, again and again, their desire to continue to live surrounded by the fields and forests that have survived the earlier rural economy and the various pressures of modern industrial and commercial growth. The people of Sullivan have even affirmed their willingness to be taxed to set aside money to protect land from haphazard or poorly conceived development that would threaten to upset the evolving balance of the Town's forests and fields or undermine its rural character. Several individuals and two conservation organizations, The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and The Nature Conservancy, have preserved in perpetuity over 3,000 acres of land in Sullivan, most of it forest, creating a strong foundation for this goal.

The economic health of Sullivan, of its households and of the Town as a whole, depends chiefly on the employment outside of town of its residents.

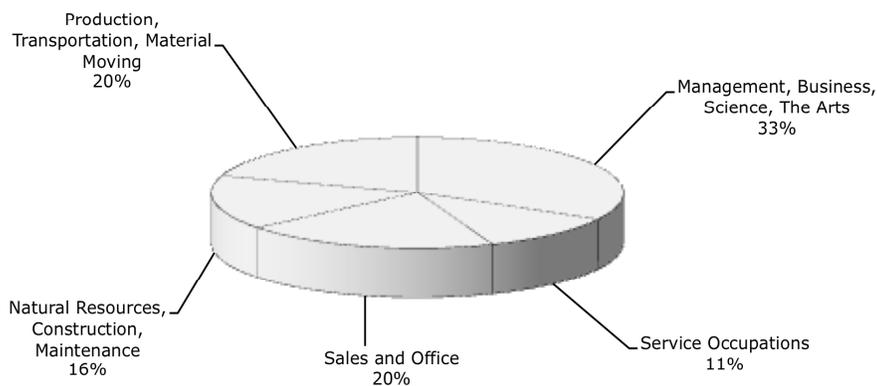
Labor Force, Employment and Income

According to the 2010 Census, 33.3% of Sullivan's labor force is now in managerial, business, science or the arts occupations. Another 20% is employed in production and transportation or as sales or office workers. Categories of employment and the occupations included in these categories change from census to census, so it is not possible in many instances to make direct comparisons from decade to decade, tracking changes in types

of employment. For example, today the category of natural resources, construction, and maintenance is slightly different from the category in the 2000 census, today at 15.6% whereas in 2000 the category had extraction instead of natural resources. Most significantly, in 1990, 17.9% of Sullivan's labor force worked in professional or managerial occupations, far fewer than the 33% who work in these occupations today. This change probably accounts for much of the significant increase in the annual incomes of Sullivan's population shown in Table 2 below.

Chart 1 shows the distribution of Sullivan's working population (numbering 454) by type of employment. The U.S. Census Bureau defines "labor force" as all persons classified in the civilian labor force plus members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

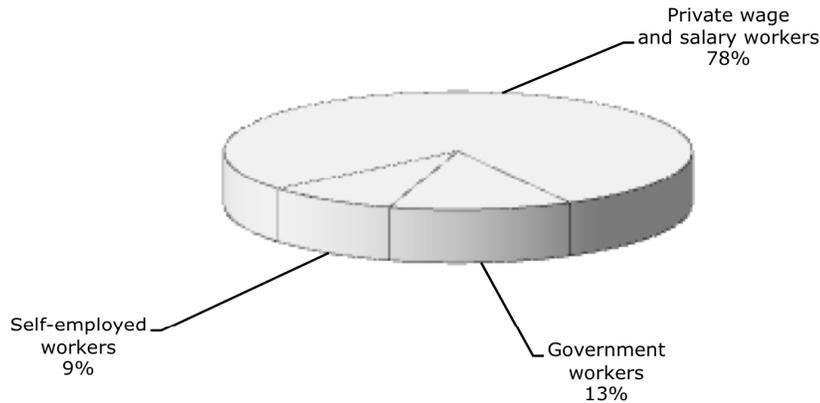
**Chart 1
Employment by Occupation in 2010**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010

According to the Southwest Regional Planning Commission the unemployment rate in Sullivan in 2011 was 4.1%, up significantly from 2.4% in 1999 but lower than that in Gilsum (5.1%), Nelson (4.7%) and Stoddard (4.3%)

**Chart II
Employment by Class**



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

Today 10.8% of Sullivan’s labor force is self-employed, and there continue to be in-town businesses where residents work.

**Table 1
Sullivan’s In-town Employment**

Antique Shop	Farming
Auto Repair	Gun Shop
Auto Salvage	Meat Production and Sales
Auto Transmission Repair	Tattoo Parlor
Contracting and Construction	Trucking
Farm Stand	Village Store

From 1980 to 1990, Sullivan’s median household income nearly doubled from \$16,118 to \$31,083. Over the decade of the 1990’s, the Town’s median household income continued to rise, somewhat more slowly but still dramatically, to \$51,058 in 2000. By 2010, it had reached \$71,667. As seen in Table 2, this increase in median household income has been accompanied by a great shift of Sullivan’s population out of the lowest three income categories up to \$35,000 per year—and into the next four categories—from \$35,000 to \$150,000 per year. In 1980 all but 3% of the Town’s households were in the below \$50,000 per year category. By 2010 this group had

dropped to 36.2%. Today only 17.4% of Sullivan’s households earn less than \$35,000 per year.

While in many respects this is a great change for the better, it is important to bear in mind that these figures are not adjusted for inflation. An income of \$35,000 per year has less purchasing power today than it did in 1980, and from an economic standpoint a household living at or below that income level today will very likely have a harder life than twenty-five years ago. For example, as mentioned in the Housing and Population chapter of this Master Plan, in 1995, Sullivan was eligible for a Community Redevelopment Block Grant through the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development to repair or replace 19 homes in town. This program is no longer available to towns, but individuals can still apply.

Southwest Region Planning Commission

**Table 2
Sullivan Household Incomes 1980 to 2010**

	1980		1990		2000		2010	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Less than \$15K	89	45.6	39	15.3	21	7.5	6	2.0
\$15K to \$25K	58	29.7	52	20.4	29	10.4	18	6.4
\$25K to \$35K	32	16.4	49	19.2	42	15.1	26	9.0
\$35K to \$50K	10	5.1	66	25.9	41	14.8	53	18.8
\$50K to \$75K	4	2.0	38	14.9	91	32.8	64	22.7
\$75K to \$100K	0	0	5	1.9	30	10.8	52	18.4
\$100K to \$150K	2	1.0	6	2.3	14	5.0	63	22.3
\$150K to \$200K	0	0	0	0	2	0.7	8	2.8
Over \$200K	0	0	0	0	7	2.5	17	6.0
	1980		1990		2000		2010	
Total Hseholds	195		254		277		309	
Median Hsehold Income	\$16,118		\$31,083		\$51,058		\$71,667	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980-2010

It is interesting and worthwhile to compare income in Sullivan with income figures for neighboring towns, all of Cheshire County, the state as a whole and the entire country. According to the 2010 Census, Sullivan incomes compare quite favorably.

**Table 3
Comparison of Household Incomes 2010**

	Tot. Hseholds	(\$0-15K)		(\$15-25K)		(\$25-35K)	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Sullivan	277	21	7.6%	29	10.5%	42	15.2%
Gilsum	303	42	13.9%	28	9.2%	33	10.9%
Nelson	260	37	14.2%	41	15.8%	37	14.2%
Stoddard	399	49	12.3%	66	16.5%	62	15.5%
Cheshire Co.	28,321	3,553	12.5%	3,637	12.8%	4,175	14.7%
New Hampshire	474,750	51,443	10.8%	51,226	10.8%	55,301	11.6%
United States	105,539,122	16,724,255	15.8%	13,536,965	12.8%	13,519,242	12.8%
	Tot. Hseholds	(\$35-50K)		(\$50-75K)		(\$75-100K)	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Sullivan	277	41	14.8%	91	32.9%	30	10.8%
Gilsum	303	80	26.4%	73	24.1%	23	7.6%
Nelson	260	31	11.9%	39	15.0%	34	13.1%
Stoddard	399	68	17.0%	91	22.8%	36	9.0%
Cheshire Co.	28,321	5,133	18.1%	6,581	23.2%	2,804	9.9%
New Hampshire	474,750	81,875	17.2%	109,447	23.1%	60,009	12.6%
United States	105,539,122	17,446,272	16.5%	20,540,604	19.5%	10,799,245	10.2%
	Tot. Hseholds	(\$100-150K)		(\$150-200K)		(\$200K+)	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Sullivan	277	14	5.1%	2	0.7%	7	2.5%
Gilsum	303	13	4.3%	2	0.7%	9	3.0%
Nelson	260	21	8.1%	7	2.7%	13	5.0%
Stoddard	399	22	5.5%	5	1.3%	0	0.0%
Cheshire Co.	28,321	1,579	5.6%	446	1.6%	413	1.5%
New Hampshire	474,750	43,093	9.1%	12,118	2.6%	10,238	2.2%
United States	105,539,122	8,147,826	7.7%	2,322,038	2.2%	2,502,675	2.4%

Comparison of Median Incomes in 2010

	Median Income	Per Capita Income*	Pop. 2010
Sullivan	\$78,611	\$31,628	677
Gilsum	51,447	30,203	813
Nelson	63,558	25,031	729
Stoddard	70,208	35,732	1,232
Cheshire County	55,241	27,045	77,117
New Hampshire	64,664	31,422	1,316,469
United States	51,144	39,791	308,747,716

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Summary Files; *ACS 2006-2010 Estimates

These income figures only record the incomes of year-round residents. In Sullivan that includes nearly all households. But 32% of homes in Nelson and 54% of homes in Stoddard are occupied by seasonal residents whose incomes are not included in the table above. It seems reasonable to assume that people who can afford to own and occupy seasonal, second homes are more likely than not to be at the higher end of the income scale. Therefore, it is likely that there is an even greater concentration of incomes at the higher end of the scale in Nelson and Stoddard than is apparent in Table 3.

Town Expenditures and Revenues

Every year, town department heads submit budget requests to the Town Selectmen who prepare a budget, projecting town expenses for the coming year. This budget is then reviewed by the Budget Committee. After a hearing in February for citizen comment, the budget finally is voted on by the Town during the annual Town Meeting in March.

As can be seen in Table 4 of Selected Town Expenditures below, expenses increased greatly through the 1980's and 1990's, a period of population expansion, and have tended to level off considerably since then. But sometimes specific needs in one category or another will cause expenses to climb in a particular year and then fall off again. The category of Highways in the table below illustrates this.

Table 4
Selected Town Expenditures 1980-2010 (Total and Per Capita)

Category	1980		1990		2000		2010	
	585 pop.		706 pop.		746 pop.		677 pop.	
	Expend.	Per Cap.						
Police	2,067	3.53	1,780	2.52	4,202	5.63	34,975	46.88
Fire	7,155	12.23	4,039	5.72	11,344	15.21	44,900	60.19
Highway	46,372	79.27	122,579	173.62	58,187	78.00	295,647	396.31
Culture and Recreation	3,519	6.02	7,317	10.36	929	1.25	1,000	1.34
Welfare Assistance	2,363	4.04	5,117	7.25	4,389	5.88		
Health (incl. ambulance)	1,842	3.12	6,782	9.61	7,248	9.72	4,488	6.02
Schools	190,323	325.34	442,720	627.08	370,403	496.52	673,565	902.90

Source: Sullivan Town Reports

State revenues are gained from taxes on rooms and meals, motor fuels, earned interest and dividends, business profits, tobacco and gaming as well as from the sale of liquor and lottery tickets, various license and registration fees and grants. Since only limited amounts of these funds return directly to

cities and towns, communities, and especially small communities like Sullivan, must rely heavily on property taxes for revenue to cover the cost of local services. For example, in 2010, Sullivan received \$92,672 from the state. This covered only 5.5% of the Town's total expenditures for that year. The sources of Sullivan's revenues from 1980 to 2010 are illustrated in Table 5 below.

**Table 5
Sullivan's Income Sources 1980-2012**

Source	1980		1990		2000		2012	
		%		%		%		%
Federal	15,000	4.5	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
State*	45,349	13.6	53,820	6.4	62,112	7.9	92,672	6.0
Licenses, Fees and Permits	12,874	3.9	55,339	6.7	106,118	13.4	95,252	6.5
Timber Yield and Excavation	8,555	2.6	16,844	2.0	12,167	1.5	8,903	0.6
Local property tax	252,275	75.6	702,585	84.8	609,894	77.2	1,281,282	87.0
Total income	\$334,063	100.0	\$828,588	100.0	\$790,291	100.0	\$1,473,112	100.0

Source: Sullivan Town Reports

* includes Federal money funneled through the State

Each year, revenues and expenditures are used to calculate the Town's tax rate, taking into consideration certain debits and credits, and then dividing the Town's net property valuation by the sum of the projected expenditures plus county and school assessments. The resulting tax rate multiplied by the value per each \$1,000 of individual properties equals the gross amount of revenue to be collected by the property tax. The expansion by new development of the Town's net valuation, its tax base, can reduce the tax burden of individual property owners. But development does not necessarily lead to lower taxes. On the contrary, haphazard or poorly planned new development will exert undue demands on services, especially schools and roads, and this will increase the tax burden on property owners.

One indication of the relative wealth of a community is its per capita valuation. A low per capita valuation may be the result of many factors present in a community, such as a high proportion of tax-exempt government property or a significant amount of acreage in current use. A high per capita valuation may indicate intense industrial development, the location of a unique facility within the town or a high proportion of seasonal property owned by non-residents whose demand for services, especially schools, is slight. Sullivan's per capita valuation is based almost entirely on year-round residential property.

Table 6
Net Local Assessed Valuation, Per Capita Value and Tax Rate

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Net Valuation	\$6,123,182	\$13,233,096	\$23,048,694	\$55,220,587
Per capita	\$10,467	\$22,621	\$30,896	\$81,566
Tax Rate	\$28.40	\$25.22	\$31.17	\$25.53

Source: Sullivan Town Reports

In general, for any given total of budgeted expenditure, the lower the net valuation is, the higher the tax rate will be. Table 7 and Chart 3 present the assessed valuation figures for property located within Sullivan. Clearly, buildings account for the largest percentage of all categories of property being taxed. Part of the reason for this is the very high proportion of land—about 83% in 2012—that is assessed at a lower value under the Current Use category.

Table 7
Inventory of Assessed Valuation

Description	1980	1990	2000	2010
Land under Current Use	\$282,971	\$233,181	\$759,905	\$956,987
Land not under Current Use	2,258,794	3,656,070	6,312,589	17,019,500
Buildings	3,436,317	9,112,689	16,066,200	36,567,200
Public Utilities	185,100	231,156	431,229	1,386,900
Total Valuations	6,163,182	13,233,096	23,569,923	55,930,587
Total Exemptions	40,000	50,000	90,000	710,000
Net Valuations	-	13,183,096	23,479,923	\$55,220,587

Source: Sullivan Town Reports

During the spring and summer of 2004, Sullivan did a comprehensive revaluation of all the Town's property. From that time, valuation of properties has been done on a rolling basis: 20% of the total number of properties each year. On the assumption that budgets will continue to be relatively stable, the actual taxes paid by most individual property owners will not change by very much.

New, higher property valuations, reflected a real estate market where prices had been increasing steadily. This does not necessarily mean that demand for land and houses in our region has been increasing. In fact, all through the 1990's and early 2000's, the pace of development and population growth in Sullivan and the region as a whole has slowed in comparison to the preceding two decades. The same is true even of the past few years when mortgage rates have been extremely low.

If the region should experience a period of great economic growth, bringing new workers into the area and increasing the demand for housing in Sullivan, this will also increase demands on town services, again especially schools

and roads, causing annual budgets to rise. Past a certain point this would begin to exert a disproportionate tax burden on the Town's lower income citizens. After all, while the property tax rate is uniform relative to its base, the assessed value of property, it is disproportionate relative to any household's ability to pay the tax, namely, its income. It's in this way that the property tax is regressive. And while incomes in Sullivan have risen steeply for many residents over the past thirty-five years, property values have increased even more sharply for everyone. These facts must be kept clearly in mind as Sullivan considers both plans for new development and revision of the Town's Community Planning Ordinance.

Finally, if demand for new housing does increase while real estate prices continue to be high, new workers with higher incomes will have a decided competitive advantage over lower income workers. To meet the demand for housing by lower income workers, it is quite possible that some developers will seek the opportunity of acquiring larger tracts of Sullivan's back lands for subdivision in order to build dense, moderately priced housing developments. This would require the building of roads which eventually would have to be maintained by the Town, increasing the tax burden still further. But development of this kind would also result in the fragmentation of Sullivan's backlands. This would be extremely poor habitat and wildlife management and planning. It would also run counter to the Town's goal of preserving Sullivan's forests and fields. These considerations must also weigh heavily as Sullivan considers its planning options and specific proposals for new development in the future.

Land Use in Sullivan

The pattern of land use in any community reflects the efforts of private life, commercial enterprise and public responsibility as they combine to create a pattern of living that meets the economic, social and natural resource requirements of a community within the limitations of its physical character. The Sullivan of today is a direct result of the economic and social patterns of the past as well as the character of the land available. But it is also the result of the more recent guidelines for development set out in the Community Planning Ordinance of 1989, amended in 2014 , an outgrowth of the Sullivan Master Plan going back to 1980.

Considering Sullivan's growth in comparison to neighboring communities, we can see how the physical character of its land has influenced the Town's development. For example, comparing population changes in Gilsum and Sullivan illustrates the effects of economic activity based on the physical characters of the two towns. In 1800, Gilsum and Sullivan were close in population size: 488 and 484 people, respectively. By 1860, Gilsum's population had grown to 676 people, while Sullivan's had declined to 376. The population of the entire southwest region of New Hampshire experienced only slight population growth during this period. Gilsum's growth in the first half of the 19th century undoubtedly was tied to the water power available from the Ashuelot River. As a result, Gilsum could support relatively large industries such as the woolen mill, its economic mainstay for many years. In the same period, Sullivan depended on Otter Brook and its significantly smaller watershed, capable of supporting only smaller industries.

The construction of a dam in 1868 created Ellis Reservoir. This provided a more stable water supply to the mills along Otter Brook and helped to stabilize Sullivan's population for two or three decades before it began to decline again, dropping to a low point of 192 people in 1930. After 1900, like many of the region's towns, Sullivan began to change from an agricultural and small mill town to a bedroom community serving people working in the region's employment centers, chiefly in Keene. Sullivan's population almost tripled from 272 people in 1950 to 746 in 2000. From then, the population has declined to 677 in the 2010 census with State projections (as shown in the Housing and Population chapter) for a decline by 2040 to the population of 1820, which was 582.

Another physical factor which frequently affects land use and tax base is the availability of scenic and recreational resources, such as large lakes and ponds and mountain areas. These resources are lacking in Sullivan. As a result, neighboring towns such as Stoddard and Nelson, which include an abundance of these resources, have considerably larger seasonal populations. This allows tax assessments to be easier on the year-round populations of those towns. Sullivan has very few summer-only residents.

Concerned about preserving and maintaining its attractive vistas, open fields and forested areas, the Town wrote its first Master Plan in 1980 and adopted its first Community Planning Ordinance in 1989. The Town’s rural character and protection of its natural resources, particularly water resources, have rated high in every town survey from 1979 to 2012. The Community Planning Ordinance of 1989 embodied the opinion of the majority of townspeople that a two-acre building lot limitation, combined with a required 200 feet of frontage on a Class V Road, throughout Sullivan could preserve the town’s rural character and natural resources.

Present land use in Sullivan reflects physical conditions, customary practices and the requirements of the Community Planning Ordinance, which allows certain commercial, industrial and institutional uses by special exception. The table below shows how much land is presently devoted to various uses.

Table I
Land Use in Sullivan
The total area of Sullivan is 11,980 acres or 18.7 square miles.

Land Use	Acres	Percent of total acres
Residential	570	4.8
Commercial	99.5	0.8
Government and Institutional	148	1.2
Recreational	100	0.8
Agricultural	294.4	2.5
Conservation Land	3,313	27.6
Road Network	123	1
Undeveloped Land	5734	48
Wetlands and Hydric Soils	1,437.6	12
Open Water	116.9	1

Source: Town Reports, Master Plans, Town Records, and American Community Survey

Residential use is estimated by counting the number of residences listed in the 2010 census and estimating two acres, the minimum required for a unit of housing, for each housing unit. There are a few grandfathered lots smaller than two acres in size. Between the preparation of the 1980 Master Plan and 2010 residential acreage in Sullivan nearly doubled.

At present commercial activity in Sullivan includes: a full-service auto restoration shop, an auto body shop, an auto transmission repair shop, two contracting and construction operations, two maple sugaring operations, one junk yard, a village store, a tattoo parlor, a gift and antiques shop, and a gun shop. Government property in Sullivan includes the town hall, the library, the town highway garage, the fire station, the Winch Town Forest, and three town cemeteries. The U.S. Postal Service rents a building on Centre Street that serves as the Post Office.

Institutional land in Sullivan includes the Congregational Church property on Centre Street and the Keene Amateur Astronomer’s Observatory.

Recreational acreage includes Jewett Park, the Winch Town Forest (where there is a trail to the monument commemorating the town’s first meeting house) and the 94 acres belonging to Cheshire County Fish and Game, as well as Bolster Pond and Chapman Pond. Some privately owned conservation land offers hiking and skimobiling trails open to the public. A trails map can be found at the end of the chapter on Conservation and Preservation. Written permission is required for vehicular use on private lands.

Agricultural land includes fields used for hay cropping and animal grazing. In 2012, a small organic farming operation was created on Centre Street.

In 1995, Sullivan was home to two small saw mills and two sand and gravel extraction pits. None of these is active any longer. There is a large commercial operation on Centre Street devoted to installing septic systems and constructing home foundations.

In 2012, the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration reported that 9,798 acres—or 83%—of Sullivan’s 11,868 acres of land area were in Current Use. Most of the land in Current Use in Sullivan is forested—much of it is Managed Forest—but there also are fields scattered throughout the Town that provide hay for several cattle and sheep farmers, and for birds dependent on open fields.

Table 2
Land in Current Use in Sullivan and Neighboring Towns in 2012

	Total Acres	Acres in Current Use	% Acres in Current Use	Total C.U. Owners	Total C.U. Parcels
Sullivan	11,868	9,798	83%	138	210
Gilsum	10,668	8,111	76%	132	217
Nelson	14,019	9,968	71%	131	240
Stoddard	32,588	24,673	76%	103	186

Source: New Hampshire DEPARTMENT OF Revenue Administration

Of these 9,798 acres in Current Use, 3,313 acres or 27.6% have been permanently protected from development either by conservation easements granted by private owners or because the land belongs outright to either of three conservation organizations: the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, The Monadnock Conservancy, and The Nature Conservancy. The following table identifies ownership of the protected lands.

**Table 3
Permanently Protected Land in Sullivan**

Conservation Organization Owners	Acres
Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests	952.3
The Nature Conservancy	736.7
Monadnock Conservancy	108.2
Total for conservation organizations	1,797
Privately Owned Land Under Easement	
Hoffman:	620
Stockwell:	325
Sweet:	168
Andorra Forest:	118
Brooks	202
Opaki	48
Cerella	35
Private Owner total	1,516
Total Acres Protected:	3,313

Source: Town of Sullivan

Much of the residential development in Sullivan during the 1970s and 1980s stripped road frontage from large land parcels, locating houses and driveways in closer proximity to one another than formerly. Few people would deny that this weakened the rural character and appearance of the Town. During the spring and early summer of 2003, a subcommittee of the Sullivan Planning Board, working on the 2005 edition of the Master Plan, conducted an informal but careful study to see how many potential building lots fronting on existing Class V or better roads might be developed. By excluding land already occupied by housing and land protected from development as well as land under development constraints such as steep slopes and wetlands, the study found that approximately 280 new dwellings could be constructed along existing Class V or better roads. Should construction of that number of houses occur over time, both the number of housing units in Sullivan and the Town's population would nearly double.

Because of the Community Planning Ordinance requirement that buildings must have at least 200 feet on a Class V road or better, development of back lands would require construction of Class V roads, an expensive proposition. Therefore, no assessment was made of the potential number of houses that could be built on land that does not front on our present Class V roads. However, if Keene continues to expand its commercial and industrial sectors, this might very well attract new employees from outside the region. Such an increased demand for housing could make it more profitable than it is at present for developers to build new Class V roads in order to develop back lands not constrained by wetlands or steep slopes for new housing. In short, Sullivan's proximity to Keene continues to make the Town an attractive location for new housing development. If Keene's commercial and industrial base expands, it is likely that the pressure for new housing development in Sullivan will increase in proportion. However, since the recession beginning

in 2007, there has been little pressure for development, not only in Sullivan, but in the entire Monadnock region. In the years from 2000-2014, the number of new houses constructed in Sullivan has been 29.

One measure of a town's rural character is the density of its population. Compared with Stoddard—where there were 24.2 people per square mile in 2010—and Nelson—where there are 33 people per square mile—Sullivan is slightly more densely populated for a rural community: 36 people per square mile. Gilsum, at 49 people per square mile, is even more densely populated.

Residents of Sullivan remain concerned about the burden of property taxes. Over many years Sullivan's property tax rate has been high, compared to neighboring towns. Sullivan's tax rate was \$35.93 per \$1,000 in 2002. Gilsum's tax rate for the same year was \$32.85 while Nelson's was set at \$21.28, and Stoddard's was at \$16.26. Sullivan's tax rate declined for the next few years. In 2012 it was \$26.75. Gilsum's that year was \$25.94, Nelson's \$19.63, Stoddard's \$14.38. In 2014, the need to borrow money to repay the Monadnock Regional School District for improvements to the now-closed Sullivan School brought Sullivan's rate to \$29.42.

In 1994, Sullivan residents thought that attracting commercial enterprise to the Town would bring in new revenue, easing the tax burden on homeowners. They were surprised to learn the Town could not tax the profits of business operations but only the assessed value of their buildings. Asked in 2012 where in Sullivan they might like a commercial zone to be located, most respondents to the community planning survey demonstrated extremely little enthusiasm for having such a zone anywhere in town. Overwhelmingly, most respondents to the survey said they want Sullivan to continue to be a rural and residential town into the future.

How, then, if increased revenue from new commercial enterprises is unlikely, can the town keep the tax rate from escalating? One way is to keep the lid on expenditures. Schools once consumed the largest share of revenues raised locally through the property tax. In 2002, the proportion of property taxes earmarked to support our schools was 67%. In 2013, the proportion earmarked for schools was 39% after Sullivan withdrew from the Monadnock Regional School District. It will take some years to see what the fiscal effect of the tuitioning of Sullivan students to Nelson and Keene schools will have on the tax rate.

Most respondents to the community planning survey in 2012 emphatically endorsed a Master Plan goal of assuring that development is managed so that population growth does not outstrip the town's ability to pay for new or expanded services, especially school costs, in a way that would place an onerous burden on taxpayers. Perhaps more of us have become aware since the 1994 survey that new development always causes taxes to rise in order to cover the cost of new or expanded services, while open space costs the Town less and lightens the tax burden. Most residents responding to the survey said they wanted the town to set aside more money for land conservation and to actively encourage agricultural use of land where appropriate. The 2004 Town Meeting voted overwhelmingly to establish a

capital reserve fund to purchase land for preservation. As of the end of 2013, that fund stands at \$8814.90

That land under conservation contributes to lower taxes is clearly illustrated by the example of Stoddard, where 66% of the town's land is protected. Stoddard, at 53.9 square miles, has a larger land area than Sullivan, at 18.7 square miles, and a larger population, 1,232 people in 2010. Having such a large proportion of its land protected from development has contributed to a much lower tax rate for the people of Stoddard -- \$14.38 per \$1,000 in 2012 as against Sullivan's tax rate of \$26.75 for the same year. Of course, having a large number of seasonal residents also increases revenue while decreasing the need for services, most especially schooling. Unlike Stoddard, Sullivan, as noted earlier, has very few seasonal residents. The existence of private roads and the generous proportion of state roads also reduce highway maintenance costs.

Recommendations

1. After careful consideration, and following our survey to determine how many potential building lots fronting on existing Class V or better roads might be developed in the future, this Master Plan has concluded that the Town of Sullivan, unlike many other towns in the region, does not fall readily into distinct and easily recognizable zones. Therefore, this Master Plan recommends that Sullivan should continue to consist of one Rural Residential District in accord with the wishes of the Town. It is further recommended that the two-acre building lot limitation with the required 200 feet of frontage on a Class V Road throughout the Town should remain in force. But we also recommend that the Planning Board, along with any other concerned residents who care to join in the endeavor, should carefully and systematically consider specific alternatives to the Town's present zoning.
2. Following the wishes of the Town, as expressed in the community planning survey of 2012, this Master Plan also recommends that the Town's officials, boards and commissions actively investigate, encourage and support the possibilities for maintaining and expanding the agricultural use of land wherever and whenever appropriate.
3. This Master Plan recognizes our growing awareness that special places in Sullivan should be protected to ensure the preservation of the Town's rural character. The Conservation Commission has developed a list of high priority areas for protection. This list will be found at the end of the Conservation and Preservation section of this Master Plan. Of course, such protection depends very much on the willingness of private landowners to give or sell conservation easements on their property to area land trusts as a number of property owners and residents have already done.

4. Finally, the Master Plan recommends that the following sites in Sullivan should be noted as being of historic importance and should be protected and preserved for that reason:

The Community Hall (old Town Hall, grange, community hall)

The Sullivan United Church and horse sheds

The East Sullivan School

The Center School (next to the parsonage)

The Boulder Road School (preserved by Hoffmans)

The South Road School (at corner of Ferry Brook)

The Library (which was once the Town Hall)

The Parsonage on Centre Street

The Cerella House (only brick house in town)

The Town Pound (on South Rd. near 4 corners)

The Site of first meeting house (on Winch Hill, marked by monument)

The Nims monument

The Patent marker (on Sweet property, marking old Packersfield location)

The Rugg Monument on Kendall Lane

Cellar holes and stone walls (physical reminders of the way life was)

Table Rock (on Brooks land)

The Giant's Cradle in the Olsen land belonging to SPNHF

The Goodnow mill site on Route 9

The Tannery site across from the Sullivan Store

The Hastings mill site at the corner of Valley Road and Centre Street

The Hastings House

The Jewett Homestead (once post office and library)

The Seward Mountain Farm

Conservation and Preservation

As important as all these things are, any town is more than its buildings and roads, its people, their history and their present relationships to one another. At base and in the fullest possible sense, every town is also its land: its topography, soils and waters, and the vegetation, forests, wildlife and even the insects the land supports. In all the most practical ways we can imagine, Sullivan, like any and every town, is the aggregate of how, both historically and today, its people have used—for good or ill, wisely or unwisely—the land that surrounds us and the natural resources it supports and how in turn we who live here today have been shaped by the land and our use of it. Any meaningful plan for or assessment of Sullivan and the people who live here must take into account the care or carelessness with which we live in relationship to the Town's unique 18.7 square miles and our aspirations for its wholeness and health into the future.

Forests, Farms and Open Space

More than 40% of the Town of Sullivan is forested. Farms, bodies of water, roads and areas developed for residential and commercial use make up the bulk of the Town's non-forested land. The reverse was true in the early 1800s, when most of Sullivan was open pasture, but today Sullivan continues to be known for its extensive tracts of timberland. Most of the forest has been cut over at least twice since the earliest European settlement, and throughout recent ups and downs in the timber market there has been a third and fourth major cut on many forested parcels of land in town. Only scattered pockets of older trees remain, and most of these are portions of sugar bush established at the time of settlement.

Because Sullivan is generally high in elevation, has relatively few large streams, lakes or ponds and rests on land much of which is primarily stony and steeply sloped, it was never as heavily farmed or developed as some of the other towns surrounding Keene. Consequently, open space, both timbered and agricultural, has prevailed in Sullivan since its incorporation. In recent times, the Town's rural character and proximity to large tracts of open space to the north has allowed it to support a rich diversity of vegetation and a flourishing and diverse population of wildlife species. Bear, deer, and moose regularly browse and forage in the backlands—and sometimes the back yards—of Sullivan, and otter, coyote, fisher, fox, beaver, snowshoe hare, muskrat, porcupine, turkey, and all the smaller mammals common to our region are permanent residents as well. An abundance of the birds, reptiles and amphibians characteristic of northern New England also make their homes in Sullivan. The wildlife, timber and other resources that thrive on the land in Sullivan have contributed and will continue to contribute inestimable value to the social health and well-being of the Town's human residents.

In the most recent survey of Sullivan residents, conducted in the fall of 2012, townspeople strongly stressed their interest in preserving the rural character

of the Town by conserving the open land that has value both for agriculture and for the aesthetic appeal of its vistas as well as the undeveloped land that has value for forestry and wildlife populations.

The most secure method of preserving land for wildlife and undisturbed beauty and for the overall health and strength of our ecosystems is for it to be owned by an institution devoted to such preservation. For example, in 1994, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests gained ownership of almost 200 acres on the north side of town as the result of a gift by the Piper family. The land is prime deer, moose and bear habitat. It is used by hikers, snowmobilers and hunters. Boynton Mountain, the highest point in Sullivan at 1,757 feet, is within the bounds of this land. There are two cellar holes within this preserve, dating from 19th century farms. From them we can imagine the life of two Sullivan families more than one hundred years ago as described in the Reverend Seward's 1921 History of the Town of Sullivan. Subsequent addition of the Olsen property of over 700 acres adjacent to the Piper preserve offers extensive wildlife habitat and is a favorite place for hunting.

Conservation easements or other recorded conservation restrictions also protect open space while allowing the grantor to continue to own and use the land for forestry and farming. There are now such conservation provisions in place on several hundred acres on the north side of town, maintaining open space and wildlife habitat and creating a corridor across this side of town from Bear Den Ledges to the Andorra Forest. The ultimate goal would be to extend this corridor, bringing it into the closest possible connection with The Harris Center for Conservation Education's "super-sanctuary" to the east and out to Surry Mountain to the west and to the lands along the Ashuelot River marked for preservation in the Goose Pond and Three Mile Swamp area. This vision was partly realized when the Nature Conservancy created Otter Brook Preserve in 1999. At nearly 15,000 acres, the Andorra Forest (in Stoddard)/Otter Brook conservation area (including acreage in Nelson and Stoddard) is one of the largest contiguous forest blocks in Southwestern New Hampshire. It is this type of landscape-scale conservation that will make a significant impact on the preservation of New Hampshire's most special places. It is hoped that landholders around Chapman Pond and along the course of Spaulding Brook will also grant conservation easements in order to preserve these important and beautiful places.

The Town can also protect valuable tracts of land by accepting outright donations of land for conservation purposes and by purchasing land through funds that come to the Conservation Commission through the change of use tax. At present only 50% of the change of use tax is earmarked for use by the Conservation Commission.

As mentioned in the Land Use in Sullivan section of this Master Plan, The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, The Nature Conservancy, and the Monadnock Conservancy own a total of 1,689 acres in Sullivan. Private owners have granted conservation easements on a total of 1,516 acres. In total, 3,313 acres of land in Sullivan are preserved and

protected from development forever. This is almost 28% of Sullivan's total land acreage. A full list of permanently protected land in Sullivan can be found in Table 3 on page 37 of the Land Use in Sullivan section of this Master Plan. A map following page 37 shows protected land in the town.

The State's Current Use Law also helps to preserve open space for wildlife, recreation, agriculture and forestry. Of Sullivan's nearly 12,000 acres, almost 10,000 are presently in Current Use. However, were an economic and building boom in and around Keene to dramatically raise land values, the rewards of converting those acres to development use could prove irresistible to some owners. It is worth stressing here that good agricultural use of open lands is itself a sound conservation practice, adding not only to the rural character of the Town but also to the effort to preserve open space. In fact, the 2012 Planning Survey showed that a strong majority of the respondents support directing the Town's boards and commissions to actively support and encourage agricultural growth in Sullivan.

There are threats to fields and forests: invasive species such as glossy buckthorn, Japanese barberry, burning bush, purple loosestrife, multiflora rose and Japanese knotweed. These invaders may take years to become widespread through bird-planted seeds and roadside mowing, but they will eventually take over large swaths of fields and forests if not eliminated.

Rivers, Ponds and Streams

The Ashuelot River runs through the northwest corner of Sullivan for about 1,500 feet. The steepness of the slope down to the river makes development on the Sullivan bank unlikely, but the Town has expressed its interest in the health of the entire river by membership in the Ashuelot River Local Advisory Committee, formed in 1994 and charged with creating a management plan for the river corridor. The Advisory Committee issued its Management Plan in December of 2001, and Sullivan subscribes to its findings, goals and recommendations. Additionally, the Town supports water quality testing in the river managed by the Ashuelot River Advisory Committee.

Otter Brook is the largest of Sullivan's streams. It flows through large and beautiful Chandler Meadow where it once was dammed to create power for small industries along the banks of the brook. From there it flows through woods, then along Valley Road, and finally along Route 9 into Roxbury, where a huge dam holds its waters back from flooding Keene in time of unusually high water. Otter Brook and the dam support a large recreation area open to the public for swimming, walking and picnicking.

Sullivan's other major streams are Chapman Brook, Spaulding Brook, Meeting House Brook, Great Brook, Hubbard Brook, White Brook, Bolster Brook, Hemenway Brook, and Ferry Brook. All of these streams offer visitors areas of great natural beauty and interest for exploration, quiet repose and conservation education. They also support a variety of wildlife. Most notably they provide habitat for otter, beaver, muskrat and mink. The Sullivan Conservation Commission has recommended that the Town adopt more stringent setback requirements and wider buffers to protect all of Sullivan's major streams.

Sullivan's two ponds are almost entirely free of development. All of Bolster Pond is now protected since acquisition of a portion of the shoreline by The Nature Conservancy, which supplemented a private conservation easement protecting the rest of it. There is in perpetuity only one seasonal cabin on the south shore of Bolster Pond. The shores of Chapman Pond continue to be unprotected from development. An economic boom, particularly in the housing market, could easily threaten the precarious stability of this *status quo*.

Wetlands

"Wetlands" is the term used to designate all varieties of land that serve as transition zones between areas of surface water and upland sites. Wetlands can be bogs and peat lands, fresh marshes, wooded swamps and riparian areas. The New Hampshire Wetlands Board defines "wetland" as ". . . an area that is inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support . . . a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions." Wetlands are valuable for many reasons and purposes. The most important among these reasons are the value of wetlands as a flood control resource, as a source for groundwater and as wildlife habitat, especially vernal pools. Wetlands are also extremely important for nutrient retention, for their educational use, their use for water-based recreation and for their historic value.

Sullivan's wetlands serve specific valuable functions for the Town's residents. For example, the wetlands at Ellis Reservoir and along Valley Road help lessen the effects of flood events along Otter Brook. Sullivan's shrubs and forested wetlands also help control excessive erosion along all of our smaller streams and brooks by slowing the fast-moving water. They restore water quality to all of our water bodies that have been affected by road salt and sediment, logging run-off and septic leachate. When runoff can spread out and flow through the dense vegetation of a wetland, the roots bind the accumulated sediments, leaving higher quality water. Wetlands also cycle nutrients that are important for tree growth in our forests, and they provide valuable habitat for our native wildlife, particularly for amphibians. The stratified drift aquifer that has been identified along Valley Road on the Otter Brook side might be a potential municipal groundwater source.

According to the National Wetlands Inventory, wetlands and hydric soils account for 15% of Sullivan's 11,980 acres. While this may seem like a high proportion of wetlands, compared to other towns in Cheshire County, Sullivan is on the dry end of the spectrum as is neighboring Gilsum, where hydric soils comprise 12% of that town's land. Rindge, by contrast, has over 38% of its soils in the poorly or very poorly drained class. The overall Southwest region average for hydric soils is 18%.

Because of the high value of wetlands both in terms of how they benefit society and how they are regulated by the State and Federal Government, Sullivan has a strong interest in preserving its wetland resource for future generations. To this end, the Planning Board proposed to the Town the creation of a Wetland Conservation District to be added to the District

Designation section of the Community Planning Ordinance. The new Wetland Conservation District was approved and adopted by ballot in March of 2004. The designation includes a clear definition of "wetlands" in accord with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers diagnostic characteristics of wetlands, a complete list of permitted uses of wetlands, special exceptions and a number of special provisions. This addition to the Community Planning Ordinance creates a 50 foot buffer from the edge of all wetlands in Sullivan and requires that no septic tank or leach field be placed less than 100 feet from that buffer.

Soils and Slopes

Sullivan soils are mostly well drained to moderately well drained sandy loams and loams that are of glacial origin. Typically, they have a hardpan layer beneath the surface. Consequently, the most common types are in the Marlow or Peru series. Those deeper soils with no hardpan layer are typically in the Berkshire series, and represent our better agricultural soils. However, Berkshire soils are scarce relative to the shallow-to-bedrock soils, such as the Tunbridge and Lyman series. The latter two types are quite common in the northwest part of town, where hillier terrain and steeper slopes helped form these soil types.

Over half (51%) of the terrain in Sullivan imposes "severe" building limitations because of steep slopes, shallow soils or wetlands. These conditions also create operational restrictions for timbering, farming and recreation in areas where slopes or trails used by skidders, farm equipment or other motorized vehicles may cause soil erosion and loss. Careful design of driveways, logging roads, access trails and bridges continues to be needed to prevent unnecessary loss of topsoil and subsoil.

The Town's Community Planning Ordinance and Driveway Regulations attempt to limit and mitigate negative impacts on our soils caused by less than adequate building practices and the careless use of equipment, but it is the view of the Selectmen, the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission that more can and should be done to safeguard the integrity of our soils by enforcing sound building practices and careful use of machinery on the land.

Sand and Gravel

Until recently there were two licensed gravel pits in Sullivan, one on Gilsum Road and the other on Valley Road. At present there are none, but there are several road borrow pits and small gravel deposits that could be developed in the future.

Trails in Sullivan

There are four formal hiking trails in Sullivan, all labored over by volunteers, some from the Sullivan Conservation Commission and some associated with the organizations owning the land.

Soon after the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF) took ownership of the Piper Memorial Forest in 1993, volunteer land stewards gathered to make a clear loop trail over Boynton Mountain. The trail passes

Winchester cellar hole at its beginning, climbs to the top of Boynton Mountain, at 1,757 feet, on its south side and returns to the old Chapman Road down the west side of the mountain, where moose browse is evident. Bird song fills the forest through the spring and into the summer.

In Winch Town Forest, an historic road follows the old Stoddard Road to Meeting House Rock. Once, wagons carried worshippers to the first meeting house. Following a logging to harvest super-mature red pine in 2012, the area around the Meeting House Rock has been cleared, revealing Mount Monadnock and the hills in Nelson and Stoddard from the top of the cleared rise of land above the Meeting House Rock.

In 2001, the Conservation Commission sponsored a volunteer effort to build a trail to the Giant's Cradle on the Olsen land and named it in honor of Maurice Sweet, who had drawn a map to find this hidden treasure. It follows the old Cummings Road up hill and down dale to the Giant's Cradle and then out to the old Boynton Mountain Road (part of the snowmobile trail to Gilsum and beyond).

In 2002, The Nature Conservancy called on volunteers, including several Sullivan people, to clear saplings and other impediments to the trail that leads from the Boulder Road parking lot to Bolster Pond, then turns back and crosses Bolster Brook to Kendall Lane, where hikers can turn either north or south. The southerly trail passes several bear trees, re-crosses Bolster Brook to Ellis Reservoir, and ends up on Ellis Road for a walk back to Boulder Road and the parking lot.

The Sullivan Conservation Commission has also sponsored several hikes in the Olsen Forest to the Giant's Cradle along a trail cut by SPNHF volunteers. A logging operation during the winter of 2004 obliterated part of the trail which has been re-blazed. Interesting rock formations and several brook crossings make this trail appealing to people and to a wide variety of animals.

None of the trails described above is open to wheeled vehicles since their use causes erosion.

Parts of Sullivan, including the Piper Memorial Forest, are open to snowmobiles. A map at the end of this chapter shows the trails which connect Sullivan to many other towns.

The Future of Conservation and Preservation

The greatest threats to Sullivan's natural resources continue to be the following:

Loss of open space, vistas of extraordinary aesthetic value, wetlands and unique natural areas and features as a result of excessively dense, crowded and poorly planned and designed housing and other development.

Erosion and loss of wetlands and soils, especially in areas of steep slopes and fragile soils, caused by poor siting of buildings and driveways and poor planning as well as by excessive and carelessly damaging use of machinery.

Damage caused by poor management and inadequate containment of hazardous wastes, road salt, automotive by-products and junkyards.

Encroaching invasive species that threaten to take over fields, parts of forests, and roadsides. Many are planted by landowners unfamiliar with the danger and can be seen (e.g., burning bush) throughout the town.

The Selectmen, the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission continue to investigate methods of managing these problems in order to mitigate them while honoring and respecting the rights of property owners. Education about the value of our natural resources and sound use of them is a major tool towards this goal. More careful regulations may also be necessary.

The Sullivan Conservation Commission has long planned to create an open space plan for the town and has identified the following as areas of prime concern:

- Chapman Pond and its watershed, where Chapman Brook forms Spaulding Brook at the junction of Great Brook.
- The ledges in Sullivan leading up to Bear Den State Park.
- The open fields along South Road with their impressive vistas west out to the Vermont mountains and their value as agricultural land.
- The fields and their vistas along and at the end of Corey Mine Road.
- The nearly 70 acres at the juncture of Church Street and Gilsum Road, which once were a golf course but include much of the Town's prime agricultural land.
- The stratified drift aquifer on the Otter Brook side of Valley Road.
- The wetland that runs from Price road to Ferry Brook Road.
- The wetlands that are part of Hubbard Brook watershed.

Finally, the Sullivan Conservation Commission in 2010 completed a Natural Resources Inventory, which identifies and assesses the natural resources present in the Town and their relationship to the region's habitat and wildlife resources. Special attention is given to rare landscape elements and associated species, minimization of the introduction and spread of invasive species, avoidance of negative impacts on ecological processes and, especially, the retention of large contiguous areas and connected smaller areas that contain critical habitats. This work should provide a helpful basis for the Town as it seeks to make reasonable and wise decisions about land use and development. Copies may be purchased from the Conservation Commission. The Sullivan Library has a copy that may be borrowed. By vote of the Planning Board on December 3, 2014, the Natural Resources Inventory was adopted into the Master Plan by reference.

Recommendations

1. The Town's Boards and Commissions should initiate action to change the Community Planning Ordinance so that it requires more stringent setbacks and wider buffers to protect all of Sullivan's major streams.
2. The Town's Boards and Commissions should do all they can to protect the integrity of our soils by enforcing sound building practices and careful use of machinery on the land to prevent erosion.
3. The Town's Boards and Commissions should also do all they can to limit damage caused by poor management and inadequate containment of hazardous wastes, road salt, automotive by-products and junkyards.
4. Through all appropriate means available, the Town should continue to educate its residents about the sound use of our natural resources.
5. The Town should develop and adopt a comprehensive open space plan with special attention to the areas of prime concern listed above.

Energy

Purpose

In keeping with the Town Meeting vote of March 24, 2007, on Article 27 to “go on record in support of effective actions by the President and Congress to address the issue of climate change” and for citizens “to work for emission reductions,” the Sullivan Selectmen at their meeting of March 30, 2009, approved the formation of an advisory energy committee. After collecting data on energy costs of town buildings, the committee hoped to reduce costs as well as lower greenhouse gas emissions. That committee has made efforts to reduce energy consumption in town departments and to encourage citizens to find ways to reduce their energy usage. The purpose of this chapter of the Sullivan Master Plan is to encourage expansion of those efforts.

Statutes Related to Energy and Planning

RSA 672:1

III. Proper regulations enhance the public health, safety, and general welfare and encourage the appropriate and wise use of land.

III-a. Proper regulations encourage energy efficient patterns of development, the use of solar energy, including adequate access to direct sunlight for solar energy uses, and the use of other renewable forms of energy and energy conservation. Therefore, zoning ordinances should not unreasonably limit installation of solar, wind, or other renewable energy systems or the building of structures that facilitate the collection of renewable energy, except necessary to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

New Hampshire Climate Action Plan

Developed in 2009 by the state-authorized, bi-partisan Climate Change Policy Task Force, the plan concluded that the most significant reductions in both emissions and costs will come from substantially increasing energy efficiency in all sections of the economy, continuing to increase sources of renewable energy and designing our communities to reduce reliance on automobiles for transportation by reaching for the following goals:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from buildings, electric generation, and transportation;

- Protect natural resources to maintain the amount of carbon sequestered;

- Support regional and national initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases;

- Develop an integrated education, outreach and workforce training program; and

- Adapt to existing and potential climate change impacts.

Energy Efficiency and Conservation: What has already been done.

Sullivan began its efforts to encourage energy efficiency and conservation by responding to Cool Monadnock's offers of guidance in assessing municipal energy expenditures and visiting town buildings to decide which should have an energy audit. In 2009, an auditor provided by the NH Municipal Energy Assistance Program reported to the selectmen on the needed retrofitting to make the Sullivan Library more energy-efficient. An audit was also done of the town garage, and application for grant money to help both buildings reduce energy consumption and save money was made to the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program in February of 2010. Only the highway garage application was successful, and a new energy efficient wood boiler was installed outside the garage near the end of 2011. During 2012, PSNH did an evaluation of the need for lighting upgrades in all four town buildings. Funding for upgrades in the library came from the Friends of the Library, which the previous year had also funded installation of storm windows on the main room in the library. In town newsletter articles, the energy Committee has encouraged residents to consider insulating their homes to reduce energy costs. In the spring of 2014, the Friends of the Library and the Library Trustees used funds authorized by the town meetings of 2013 and 2014, plus earnings of the Friends, to increase the insulation in the library in expectation of reducing the demand for propane, an increasingly costly fuel.

Keeping track of energy consumption and its costs in town buildings since 2005 and into the future will help the town determine where additional action to reduce consumption needs to be undertaken.

One of the benefits of land conservation in Sullivan is the maintenance of carbon-sequestering forests, which also help maintain water quality and quantity. Water will be ever more precious in what seems to be a sustained period of drought in many parts of the world.

Renewable Energy

Many homeowners in Sullivan heat at least part of their homes with wood, a renewable resource. At least two homeowners rely on geothermal heating and cooling. One engineer in town is producing a new wind turbine that may prove usable by individual homeowners. Several homeowners heat their water using roof-supported solar collectors. More could be done, especially with solar installations, the costs of which have declined markedly in recent years. But many people would need some help with these significant capital investments. An increasing number of renewable energy incentives have become available from the state and federal government as well as from some utilities. These can greatly reduce the upfront cost for small-scale installations. The Monadnock Energy Resources Initiative is coordinating barn-raiser solar hot water installations and neighbors-helping-neighbors weatherization trainings.

The NH Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is providing municipal grants to support both energy efficiency projects and installations of

renewable energy systems. In 2010, the NH Community Development finance Authority (CDFA) established a revolving loan fund for municipal energy efficiency projects and installations of renewable energy systems. Their loan agreements facilitate a financing process for municipalities which is geared to be readily workable and structured to be "cash neutral," that is, repayable solely through energy savings.

Transportation

Given the small numbers of energy-efficient vehicles, the best way for individuals to reduce vehicular energy use and CO2 emissions is to travel less and to make better use of alternative transportation. Increasingly, high-speed internet service throughout the town makes conducting business from home a more feasible option to commuting by car.

Recommendations

Adopt ordinances that encourage and improve energy efficient development, including green building design and small wind, geothermal and solar energy systems.

Adopt energy conservation and efficiency measures for municipal buildings and operations. This could include creating local energy building requirements that exceed the State Energy Code.

Implement a municipal buying strategy of Energy Star equipment and eco-friendly office products, as costs permit, and implement awareness campaigns to encourage the consumption of such equipment and products within the broader community.

Join with nearby towns to form a single, eco-friendly purchasing contract to provide economy of scale for all.

Implement the dimming and lowering of the arc of night lighting on public buildings where reasonable.

Evaluate ways to reduce fuel usage by the town's vehicle fleet – analyzing routes, usage, and creating a strict anti-idling policy where feasible.

Promote voluntary efforts to weatherize and insulate homes and businesses.

Encourage residents to reduce, reuse, recycle, compost, replace incandescent bulbs with CFLs or LEDs, and use clotheslines and wooden drying racks to reduce the energy usage of clothes dryers.

Community Services and Public Buildings

Community services are provided by a combination of taxpayer-supported governmental functions and private or volunteer organizations. The principal services are town government, supervised by selectmen elected at the annual Town Meeting, Fire and Rescue Department, Emergency Management, Police services, Highway Department, Town Library and Cemeteries, all located in the center of town.

Other service facilities available to town residents, but not maintained by the Town, are the U.S. Post Office, on Centre Street south of Sullivan Center, and the United Congregational Church of Sullivan at the corner of Centre Street and Church Street. The Sullivan Elementary School, once on Centre Street, was closed in 2013. The Sullivan students now attend the Nelson School for elementary years and the Keene Middle and High schools thereafter.

Town Hall

In 1996 the meeting place in East Sullivan, used from the 1960's to the 1990's, was replaced by a new town hall located in Sullivan Center. Its financing was made possible by the sale of land taken for failure to pay taxes and by a generous donation from a Sullivan family. The new building is well lighted, comfortably heated, and handicapped accessible. It offers adequate meeting space for the annual Town Meeting, comfortable offices for the Selectmen, the Administrative Assistant, Town Clerk, Tax Collector, and a place for the regular meetings of the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, and various other government and civic groups. Town records and archives are housed in the basement of the building, which also provides an area for the School Board to conduct its meetings and an area for the Cheshire County Sheriff's Department to conduct Sullivan's police business. Current updates on the town telephone and computer systems are currently being evaluated for implementation. Parking is shared with the church next door, providing more spaces than either building could provide on its own.

Fire Department

Sullivan is served by a volunteer Fire & Rescue Department of 15 men and women, headed by a Chief, Deputy Chief and Captain who are elected by the membership and appointed by the Selectmen. The Fire and Rescue Department operates in accord with State, National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) and Hospital rules and protocols. The department maintains its own operating guidelines for Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and regularly trains its personnel in those procedures and protocols. The department responds to fire and to emergency rescue calls. In addition, the department also responds to emergency medical calls, providing basic and advanced life support. Sullivan contracts through the City of Keene for ambulance service, which is available 24 hours a day. The department members are not paid to respond to emergency calls, but training, equipment and protective clothing are provided at Town expense.

The Fire & Rescue Department is housed in a one-story concrete block building constructed in 1975, with additions added in 1998. It has 5 vehicle bays opening onto Centre Street with 2 side and 1 rear personnel doors. The building is heated by 2 forced-air systems, has running water and 1 rest room, which is not handicapped accessible. Water is from one well and shared with the Library. The septic system, also shared with the Library, was designed and authorized only to be used for normal Fire Station usage. The building has 1 meeting room, 1 office, a small kitchen and 2 maintenance/storage rooms.

Principal equipment housed in the Fire Station includes:

1 pumper (2003)	1 small 4x4 brush truck (2002)
1 tanker (1990)	1 EMS squad (1994)
1 heavy rescue (1983)	1 rescue boat (1999)

Equipment requiring updating to current NFPA standards include protective clothing and SCBA (Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus).

Maintenance of the Department’s apparatus and equipment at proper levels along with continuous training is not only a necessary Town obligation for health and safety reasons but is in the interest of the Town because the Town is exposed to liability if inadequate and unsafe equipment is provided or current training standards are not maintained.

Sullivan Office of Emergency Management

Sullivan has a formal Emergency Management Plan, adopted in April 1994 and developed with the assistance of the New Hampshire Emergency Management Agency, under guidelines provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The Plan can be invoked to deal with natural or man-made disasters and hazards, and it provides detailed operational procedures for specific hazards that may affect the community and present a high potential for property damage or loss of life.

An Emergency Management Director is appointed by the Selectman and coordinates the functions of the various emergency departments, such as Fire, Police, and Highway. Hazard mitigation is also a function of the Office of Emergency Management. To provide effective management of the field forces during a major emergency situation, the key decision makers must exercise control from a single facility within the community, known as the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The Fire Station houses the Town’s EOC. This facility is closed to the public during emergencies. Immediate notification of the general public of an imminent or actual emergency is an essential function of Town government. Public notification will consist of an alert giving information on the situation and instructions on how to protect lives and property. Methods of alerting the public may consist of loudspeaker-equipped vehicles, door-to-door canvassing, Emergency Broadcast System, and word of mouth (friends, relatives, neighbors).

Health Services

Other than the Fire Department's emergency rescue function, supplemented by ambulance service from Keene, the Town provides no health services, and residents rely upon facilities in Keene and elsewhere to provide professional medical care. There are several practicing medical professionals residing in Sullivan, and a good number of citizens have been trained in first aid and CPR, through the Fire Department or the American Red Cross in Keene. There is also a local health officer, who has authority under state law, including the right to inspect septic systems and to assist with environmental issues and foster home inspections. .

Police Department

The town does not currently have an appointed police chief. In September of 2013, Chief Karl Wheeler announced to town officials that he would be resigning from his position as Police Chief. Chief Wheeler provided 40 years of police service to the Town of Sullivan. With no certified police official, the Selectmen entered into a short-term agreement with the Cheshire County Sheriff's Department to provide interim services. During this period of time, the Selectmen had an opportunity to develop a list of options, identify what services the town needs, estimate costs, and take public comment. In December 2013, prior to the expiration of the short-term contract with the Cheshire County Sheriff's Department, the Selectmen reviewed the options and made the decision to sign a one-year contract with the Cheshire County Sheriff's Department. The contract covers a period from January 1, 2014, to December 31, 2014, with an option to renew for future years if desired. The Selectmen will continue to review the services provided by the Cheshire County Sheriff's Department prior to the contract renewal date. The office of the Police Department continues to be located on the ground floor of the Town Hall and is being utilized by the Cheshire County Sheriff's Department. If you have any non-emergency questions, you can contact the Sheriff's Department during their office hours Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 352-4238. For all emergencies please call 355-2000 to reach Cheshire County Dispatch Center or 911, and either the Sheriff's Department or the state Police will be dispatched.

Highway Department

The Highway Department consists of two full-time employees and one part-time employee. The Road Agent position is filled for a two-year term by town election. Services include maintenance of Town Roads (Class V or better) and snow removal from roads and town buildings.

The Highway Department is housed in a 30x50 foot single story wood frame maintenance building built in 1979 on a concrete slab. The building was moved in 1996 to its current location on Church Street from behind the Congregational Church. A floor drain containment system was installed at the time of the move. An office, washroom, septic system and an artesian well were built in 1999-2000 with funds from the sale of the old Town Hall in East Sullivan. The garage and office area are heated primarily by an energy

efficient wood boiler system installed in 2012, using funds awarded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, supplemented by three propane heaters.

Sheds were built in 2001-2003 for sanders, wood, and equipment. A fuel storage building was built in 2005 with spill prevention containment, which serves as a fuel station for Highway, Fire, and Police departments.

A salt storage building was built in 2006 to remove salt from inside a portion of the highway garage building. An additional salt and sand storage building is still needed to prevent salt residues from entering ground water. The winter road sand is mixed with salt to prevent sand from freezing into large chunks. The sand pile is covered with plastic each year, but it is still open to the elements as it is being used. Additionally, the plastic deteriorates during the summer season when it covers the unused portion of winter sand. If Sullivan intends to continue to have a highway department in the long term, this practical and environmental issue should be addressed.

The Highway Department equipment maintained on site currently includes:

Austin Western Grader (1957)	fair condition
Chevy Kodiak dump truck (1989)	fair condition
Ford F550 4x4 dump truck (2000)	good condition
John Deere 4x4 backhoe (2002)	good condition
John Deere grader (1987)	good condition
International 7400 truck (2004)	good condition

Needed capital improvement: a storage building for salt and sand. A schedule for replacing vehicles should also be formalized.

Sullivan School District

In 2011 a study committee was established by the Town of Sullivan to assess available options for educating Sullivan students, after the Keene School District invited the Town of Sullivan to tuition their students to Keene's middle and high schools. Immediately after the residents from Sullivan voted to withdraw from the district in the spring of 2012, Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD) made public the plans to close the Sullivan Central School at the end of that school year. This vote established a committee to look at the feasibility of the Town's withdrawal. Once MRSD's committee finished their report in favor of the withdrawal, a district-wide vote in the fall of 2012 approved Sullivan's withdrawal.

The newly reconstituted Sullivan School District, and School Administration Unit #96, have completed the first year as such and are already into their second year of operating as an independent school district. There presently are multi-year contracts with the Nelson and Keene school districts to educate our students, numbering between 75 and 80, in grades K-12. The contracts will be reviewed annually to continue to ensure proper fit for Sullivan students.

Preschoolers who have an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) attend the preschool that best meets their individualized needs, and therapy services are contracted as recommended in the IEP.

Superintendent and business manager services are contracted by the district, and a five-member school board, elected by town voters, meets once monthly to discuss school district matters. The town budget committee also serves as the district budget committee and the town clerk as the district clerk. The district also has its own treasurer.

The school board believes strongly in the importance of operating in an open and honest manner, and representing the best interest of all residents, including the children. The district shall take action to build a reserve fund to utilize in the event of an unforeseen special education expense. It is hoped that the town's children will be positively impacted for years to come from the current path it has taken by the creation of an independent school district.

The former Sullivan Central School building reverted to the Sullivan School District from MRSD, as required by law, and was sold in the autumn of 2014, as the school district has no need for the building. Due to the size of the building, its condition and the small number of Sullivan students, it is not feasible to utilize the former school building as a school for the students of Sullivan.

The mission of the Sullivan School District is closely aligned with the missions of the Nelson and Keene districts. It has always been our goal to provide a quality education for the students of Sullivan and to create a community that is responsive to the needs of the children of Sullivan.

"The mission of the Nelson School is to instill strength of spirit, and ignite a love of learning. The school prides itself on its small nurturing atmosphere and its close connections to the community. The Nelson School culture creates an environment where students, while developing a strong sense of individuality and respect for others, prepare to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The staff and school board believe that a quality education is a fundamental right of all children and that the education and social development of each and every Nelson student is a shared responsibility among the school, the parents and the community. Nelson School believes in a safe and nurturing school environment where everyone is treated as a worthwhile individual, where intellectual growth in a cooperative setting is encouraged and where independent thinking is fostered. Nelson School places a strong emphasis on the basic skills, creates excitement about learning, sets high and clear expectations of performance, and challenges each student to reach his or her full potential. Nelson School believes in and celebrates the individuality and uniqueness of every child and strives to meet the individual needs of each student within the regular classroom to the greatest extent possible." (Obtained from the Nelson Master Plan.)

"The mission of the Keene School District is to provide students with the tools to become productive and responsible citizens in an ever-changing world." (Obtained from the SAU 29 website).

Further information about the Nelson School, Keene Middle School and Keene High School can be found on the SAU 29 web page. Further information about the Sullivan School Board and current budget information can be found at the Sullivan town web site and on our Facebook page. The district address is Sullivan School District, PO Box 111, Sullivan, NH 03445.

Library

On March 14, 1893, the town meeting formally established the Sullivan Public Library by voting to create a free library in accord with New Hampshire Statutes. This included establishing a three-member board of trustees and appropriating \$15 to cover expenses. However, the library's origins can be traced to the founding of the Sullivan Social Reading Circle on November 23, 1869. This was a group of residents led by Rev. John Murdock Stow who gathered at Asa Wilson's home in East Sullivan to exchange books and to discuss what they had read. The reading circle dissolved as a formal organization the following year, but their library continued first at the Wilson home (now 19 Centre Street), then at the Union (later the Community) Hall and finally at the home of Thomas and Ida Hastings (18 Centre Street). Although the library was located in East Sullivan, its use was opened to all Sullivan residents and it was known as the Sullivan Library.

In 1892, various residents began a movement to establish a publicly funded library, which led to the town meeting vote in 1893. It was decided to have the library located at the home of Mason and Ann Sarah Nims, which stood until 1929 on Centre Street at the top of the hill leading from East Sullivan.

In 1921, it was decided to place part of the collection in Sullivan Center and the rest in East Sullivan after Ann Nims remarried and moved away. The Center collection was kept by Bessie Jewett at the Jewett Homestead (now 443 Centre Street). This place was logical since it also contained the Center Post Office. The East Sullivan collection was kept by Lillian Brown first at 19 Centre Street and then at 394 Valley Road from 1923 until 1955.

In 1957, the library was located in a public building for the first time when the old upstairs dining room at the Community Hall was converted into space to house the complete collection. In 1970, the town meeting moved to the Community Hall and the decision was made to move the town offices there as well. The only suitable space for the town office was the area occupied by the library. So, the decision was made to move the library to its current location in Sullivan Center, which was the old Town Hall.

Constructed in 1852, the "new" library building needed some repairs to make it suitable. The new library opened for business in 1974. However, two years later, the Monadnock Regional School District began looking for a home for the Sullivan School during a renovation project. While the upper grades could go to Gilsum, the decision was made to house the lower grades at the library. In 1976, the building underwent a significant renovation to make it suitable for a classroom. The old floor was removed and replaced with a concrete slab and carpeting, the plaster walls were removed and replaced with sheet rock. Recessed lighting and a suspended ceiling were added. A

small addition was built on the rear of the building containing a bathroom and storage space. This required the addition of a septic system to be shared with the newly constructed Fire Station. All of this was done in time for the 1977-78 school year.

Once the students returned to the Sullivan School, the library reopened. A new circulation desk and bookshelves made from trees harvested from the Winch property were added. The "new" building was formally dedicated on May 29, 1979. It included space for a reference area, a children's reading area, and space for small community and board meetings.

In 1992, the building underwent another renovation to add a handicapped entrance and new wiring. In addition, the floor arrangement was changed. New roofing was added in 1995. However, many problems remained to be solved. The bathroom was not handicapped accessible and the pipes often froze in the winter. The attic storage space, which was used for town archives as well as papers for the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board, was deemed to be a fire hazard. While the handicapped entrance met the spirit of the law, it was not in full compliance and its location at the front door detracted from the building's appearance.

These problems were noted in the 1995 Master Plan and a goal was established to fix them. This resulted in the 1997 renovation project for the library which was part of the larger town center project. An addition was put on the back of the building. The project removed the handicap ramp and restored the front entrance to its original state. The new, fully compliant ramp was constructed to a second entrance. A fully usable, handicapped accessible bathroom with a reliable water supply was built in the addition. The addition also created new shelf space to house the collection for the foreseeable future. This enabled the library to shift parts of the collection to the new area and create more space for events and reading areas. The addition also allowed for the creation of an archives room to house the collection of historical materials that had been improperly stored in the attic as well a new heating plant, and a proper office area for the librarian.

Of course the physical plant does not remain static. While the addition solved the problems of space, the age of the building began to show in two areas. The first is physical. In 2011 the "old" part of the building had its sills replaced as well as clapboards on the east side. The building was also painted. The second problem is energy efficiency. In 2010-2012, the town wide committee studying the efficiency of town buildings found numerous problems in the library building—especially in the original portion. The cost of fixing those problems was deemed too high to tackle at once. So far, storm windows have been installed and energy efficient lighting has replaced older fixtures. To accomplish the goal of greater fuel efficiency, the town began a capital improvement fund for insulating the library in 2013, and added to it in 2014.

Fund raising for the library continues to be conducted by the Friends of the Sullivan Public Library. The library has a long history of volunteer support. Such groups as the Homeland Circle in the 1950's and 1960's and the Lady

Volunteers of Sullivan in the 1970's helped raise funds and provided services. In the late 1970's, the Library Board of Trustees began organizing an annual craft fair to raise funds, but that became a burden for only three people and some volunteers. The friends group finally coalesced as a formal organization in 1987 and took over fund raising from the trustees. Since then, they have organized craft fairs, the annual Santa Day, and a plant and book sale at the end of May. They also have participated in various activities as volunteers. Their efforts have made possible the purchase of new equipment, computers, and materials. They were also major contributors to the fund drives for the new roof and the new addition. Recently, the Friends not only raised the money but also oversaw the work contracted with PSNH to replace old electrical elements. They also paid for the storm windows and the supplement to the Capital Reserve Fund used to pay for the spring 2014 insulation of the library.

The Friends, however, is a small organization and they have had difficulty recruiting new members. As Sullivan's population declines in numbers and ages, such organizations as the Friends will find it increasingly difficult to continue. This could be a major problem for the support of library services in Sullivan in the future.

The Sullivan Public Library meets the New Hampshire State Library Accreditation Standards for an associate library. It is open 15 hours per week. The Sullivan Public Library is a member of the Nubanusit Library Co-op and is linked to the New Hampshire State Library System via the computer network called New Hampshire Automated Information System (NHAIS). Both memberships help our librarian gain new skills, discuss problems with other libraries, and facilitate interlibrary loans. The last area has grown dramatically over the last few years as our holdings have become available to the entire state via NHAIS. In 2012, the library processed 191 requests from other libraries for our materials while obtaining 365 requests from other libraries for members of our community.

The usage of library services continues to be strong in spite of the decline in Sullivan's population and a significant decline in its school-age population. As of December 2012, there were about 500 library cards on file. Circulation remains strong—especially for books and video—and holdings include 6,955 books, 189 audiobooks, and 756 videos as of 2012.

The library continues to respond to the changing methods of service delivery to the patrons. In addition to the public computer, patrons are also free to use the library's Wi-Fi system. A number of databases are available to patrons through the NHAIS system including the popular Ancestry.com. In 2011, the library joined a consortium that provides downloadable eBooks and audio books.

There are several challenges and opportunities for the Sullivan Public Library. The continued maintenance of the physical plant will need close monitoring. The roof on the original building was last replaced in 1995 and will reach the 20 year mark in 2015. The need to continue the plan for energy efficiency

upgrades will be expensive although it will have long term benefits. On the plus side, the addition constructed in 1997 continues to meet our needs.

The recent changes in the schools will require coordination with a new school system in order for the library to continue serving Sullivan students with our summer programs and story times.

The librarian and library trustees will have to become more aware of the changes in the electronic field as new ways to deliver information evolve. The increased availability of individual tablet technology and use of the "cloud" to access and download information will be especially challenging.

While costs of computer hardware have declined, the increasing costs and diversity of software make it difficult to select services that will attract and serve our patrons at a cost that is reasonable. Usage of such past library staples as dictionaries and encyclopedias have declined dramatically (practically to zero), and the costs of high demand databases have increased and will continue to do so.

The constantly decreasing role of the N.H. State Library services will continue to create difficulties in delivering online services to our patrons. The recent dramatic increase in the cost of the eBook service is one of many examples of this trend.

The need for volunteers—especially to organize fund raising and assist the librarian—will increase. Yet, at the same time, the decline and aging of Sullivan's population will make recruitment more difficult.

It is hoped that the same public interest and support that has sustained the Sullivan Public Library over the years will continue. The world of information delivery has changed dramatically and will continue to do so. However, the need for a publicly funded library service is still as great as it was when Rev. Stow organized the first library in Sullivan almost 150 years ago.

Cemeteries

There are three town-owned cemeteries in Sullivan, two of which are located in Sullivan Center: the old Four Corners Cemetery and the Meetinghouse Cemetery. The third cemetery is located in East Sullivan. They are managed by the Cemetery Trustees, who are elected for three-year terms at Town Meeting.

While there is no mortuary or cold storage facility in Sullivan, in emergency situations, the Emergency Management Director can designate the use of the Town Barn as an emergency morgue.

In 2001, the cemetery expanded 100 feet toward the church. The gates were moved and a portion of the land was prepared and seeded. Disease-resistant elm trees, awarded by the New Hampshire the Beautiful Program for several town cleanups led by the Conservation Commission, have been planted along the south line of the expanded cemetery.

United Congregational Church of Sullivan

The Sullivan Congregational Church, organized in 1792 when George Washington was president, now occupies its third meetinghouse, a building originally dedicated in 1848. Horse sheds were also built behind the original facility and remain today. The Sullivan Church was the site of Town Meeting for some 50 years, until the first town hall (now the library) was built in 1848. Since the merger of the Sullivan Church with the Union Church in East Sullivan in 1950, which was then located in what became the Town Hall until 1996, the church has been called the United Congregational Church of Sullivan and is the only church in town. The church sanctuary has wonderful acoustics and Monadnock Music performers give a concert there once during each summer.

In the 1980's a major building program was launched by the church, having as its goal a new facility with large meeting rooms, a kitchen and bathrooms. Beyond its usefulness for church functions, the addition was planned to provide a meeting place for community groups and functions, a fellowship room for receptions and community dinners, a resource facility for temporary community shelter (hence inclusion of a shower), a distribution point for food and clothing programs and a community center. Thus the wing was built with a septic system designed for use by 150 people, far in excess of the regular church attendance.

The meeting hall, finished in 1994, contains a modern, fully equipped kitchen, four bathrooms and two large 1300 square foot meeting rooms. After its dedication in October of that year and for several years after, the upstairs meeting hall was the location of regular Sunday brunches, attended by many in the community beyond the church membership. Today the hall is used for church fellowship get-togethers, Fire Department dinners and training sessions, receptions, a rehearsal hall for a local puppeteer group, craft shows and community programs. It can also be rented for wedding or baby showers, birthday parties and family reunions. The lower hall was used for many years as the location of the Keene Family YMCA after-school program until Sullivan School was closed. Today the lower meeting hall is used for a Monday evening quilting and sewing group. It is also a collection area for items to be sent off to disaster areas in both the US and abroad, items for Kurn Hattin School and Sullivan Church welcome baskets. The church food pantry is also on the lower level. This provides for a monthly distribution of food and household items to needy Sullivan families.

U.S. Post Office

The United States Postal Service leases a 900 square foot, one story building from a private owner. The Post Office serves the Sullivan area (Zip Code 03445) through post office boxes rented at the Post Office and also through local deliveries to residential mail boxes located on town roads. It also serves the town of Nelson, Zip code 03457, since a fire destroyed the post office in that town in 1992.

From the time it was situated in a centrally located private home to the present, the Post Office has served as an informal meeting place to greet friends and neighbors with a bulletin board for posting official and non-official notices. As such, it provides an important and useful function for this widely dispersed community, and maintenance of its location in the town center is highly desirable.

Recreation

Currently, there are no formal recreation programs sponsored by the Town of Sullivan. The Sullivan Library offers special storybook hours for children, as well as its roster of books and videos, including temporary loans from the state library. The Sullivan Conservation Commission periodically offers nature hikes.

Money is regularly appropriated at Town Meeting in March for recreation purposes. Much of this is used for a Christmas Party, organized by volunteers, for town children.

The several properties listed below are available in town for recreational use.

Bolster Pond and Chapman Pond, cover more than 10 acres and so are defined by the state as Great Ponds, guaranteeing public access for fishing and boating. These ponds are off Boulder Road and Boynton Road respectively.

Jewett Park on the corner of Church and Centre Streets once had some picnic tables and some playground equipment, but currently has only the simple shelters built to shade the tables. People have rarely been in the park in recent years. Keeping down the brush is an ongoing challenge, most recently tackled by volunteers in the fall of 2012.

Otter Brook Preserve, accessible from Boulder Road, where there is a sign and parking area, is owned by The Nature Conservancy. Maps in a kiosk near the trailhead show the current trail system, originally carved out by volunteers from Sullivan and other communities. One trail leads to Bolster Pond, now completely protected from new development. Another leads to the remains of Ellis Reservoir. The trails are for walkers only. Organized hikes are occasionally offered by the Harris Center for Conservation Education and The Nature Conservancy.

Allison Nims Piper Memorial Forest and the Olsen Forest, owned by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, offer almost 1,000 acres free from development, home to bear, moose, deer, and many other animals. The parking area for Piper is on Gilsum Road, and the trail within Piper leads to Olsen on the other side of the discontinued portion of Boynton Road. The hiking trail in Piper leads over Boynton Mountain, the highest point in town at 1751 feet.

Winch Town Forest is accessible on a path behind the fire station. An unmarked trail leads to the monument commemorating the site of the first meeting house in Sullivan. The terms of the Winch Trust dictate that any income from the 100 acres be set aside to help the "needy poor." In 2000 a

forest management plan for the next ten years was prepared by Calhoun Forestry. Two recommended forest improvement cuts have since been conducted, the more recent netting over \$25,000 for the town.

Recommendations

1. The Town should continue to ensure that public buildings meet the needs of the community, are in good repair, and work toward greater energy efficiency.
2. The Town should build a salt/sand shed at the highway department to prevent salt residues from entering ground water.
3. The Town should carefully monitor the physical condition of the library regularly and ensure that necessary repairs and renovations be made in a timely fashion.

Traffic and Transportation

Road History

In 2002, the town's historian Chris Pratt completed a history of the roads in Sullivan, showing that many roads have been built and discontinued over the Town's 200+ year history. That history is available in the Town Library.

Road Classifications

Nearly thirty miles of roads wind in and out of Sullivan. Of these, 20.6 miles of paved or gravel roads are maintained by the Town's Road Agent. The State of New Hampshire provides maintenance on 6.45 miles of roadway.

Table 1
Classified Road Mileage

State Maintained		
Class I	Trunk Line	1.777 miles
Class II	Secondary Roads	4.608miles
	Subtotal:	6.45 miles
Town Maintained		
Class V	Town Roads	10.5 paved miles
		10.1 gravel roads
	Subtotal:	20.613 miles
Not Maintained		
Class VI	Unmaintained	1.97 miles
Maintained Summer Only		
Class IIIA (to public waters)	.569 miles	.569 miles
	Total	29.602 miles

Source: NH Department of Transportation

The State-maintained roads in Sullivan include all the miles of Route 9 located in Sullivan, also known as Franklin Pierce Highway, and the two State-maintained secondary system rural roads, which are 4.4 miles of Sullivan Centre Street and 0.159 miles of Valley Road. This section of Valley Road will be widened to support heavy traffic during the reconstruction of the bridge over Otter Brook at Centre Street. Just over half the roads in Sullivan are paved. Gravel roads include Boulder, Boynton, Corey Mine, Cross, Ellis, Ferry Brook, Price Roads and Jenkins and Tyler Lanes plus the last mile of Gilsum Road before it reaches the Gilsum town line. There are also short stubs of roads the Town voted not to discontinue at the 1999 Town Meeting: Holt Road, Martin Court, Old Apple Hill Road.

One of the major concerns is wear and tear on the roads. Heavy trucks are particularly hard on the surfaces. Although the roads are closed to vehicles over 6 tons during the spring thaw and mud seasons, trucking the rest of the year also takes its toll, particularly when there are logging operations bringing in enormous pieces of equipment and taking away heavy loads of logs and chips. Additionally, service trucks (e.g., fuel, parcel, and sanitation) exempt from weight restrictions have become heavier and thus more damaging to roads when they are most vulnerable. Further, substantial thawing in recent years during the winter months while town roads are not posted with weight restrictions compounds the roads' loss of integrity. Residential construction projects can stress one particular road with years' worth of traffic in a few weeks at any season.

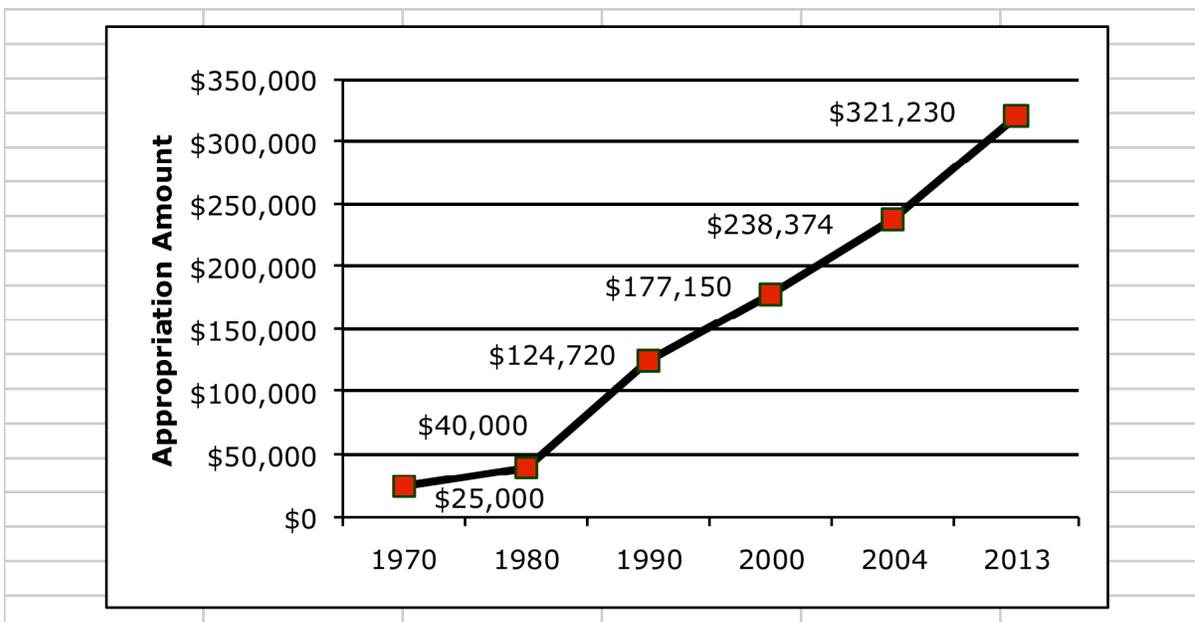
911

The most notable change in Sullivan in the last 20 years was the introduction of the 911 emergency road system in 1999. As a result, every house has a number on a named road, and several road spurs not maintained by the Town were given names to facilitate emergency service.

Road Expenditures

Appropriations for maintaining Class V roads in Sullivan have increased substantially since 1970, as the chart below shows. However, the budget for General Government, the only portion of appropriations over which Town Meeting has direct control, has also increased. Consequently, highway appropriations since 1985 have consistently accounted for about half—ranging from 43% to 56%—the General Government actual expenditures. Capital reserve appropriations for both equipment and resurfacing are made annually and reduce the necessity for a large jump in expenditures for any one year.

**Chart 1
Town Appropriations for Roads 1970 to 2013**



State aid called the Highway Block Grant, mostly a pass-through from the Federal government, has increased from about \$7,000 in 1970 to about \$47,390 in 2013.

Over the years, the Highway Department has tried to balance equipment purchases and tax increases. Purchase of a new one-ton truck in May of 2000 and a new backhoe in 2002 reduced maintenance costs for several years. Now those vehicles are 14 and 12 years old. With the cost of everything increasing so dramatically, Sullivan has struggled to implement a scheduled equipment purchase plan. Major activities, described in considerable detail in the department's annual report, include shimming of roads, replacement of culverts, and reconstruction of a major portion of one town road each year.

The Road Agent and one full-time helper manage the major projects and routine maintenance including snow plowing with occasional seasonal help. Some work, such as paving, trucking and excavation, is contracted out.

Source: Town of Sullivan

Road Usage

Road traffic on selected roads is measured by SWRPC for the State about every third year. The chart below shows traffic changes (vehicles per day) between on Route 9 west of Centre Street. Other measured roads have shown few changes.

**Table 2
NH DOT Traffic Reports**

	1995	1997	2000	2008	2011
Route 9 west of Centre St	5100	6100	6200	7100	7100

Whether projected (for 2017) reconstruction of the Route 9 bridge in East Sullivan and other improvements on the road to the east will affect traffic counts is uncertain.

Bridges

The State bridge on Route 9 west of the store is considered structurally deficient or functionally obsolete. Plans have been in the works for many years to reduce the bridge's vulnerability to 100-year floods. In 2014, specific plans were made by the State, after consultation with the community, to rebuild the bridge to be high enough to withstand an expected surge in water from 100-year floods. The short section of Valley Road will be expanded to carry the traffic while the bridge is under construction.

Bridges owned and maintained by the Town of Sullivan are on Cross Road over Spaulding Brook, on Valley Road over Spaulding Brook, Old Concord Road over Granite Lake outlet, and a second on Old Concord Road over Granite Lake outlet. All of these are counted as in good condition. Like the preceding bridges, the Valley Road bridge over Meeting House Brook is under 10 feet in span. The bridge on Price Road over Ferry Brook was replaced in

2006 after 2005 flooding. Now over 10 feet in span, it must be inspected biennially by DOT. The bridge on Ferry Brook Road over Ferry Brook was replaced in 2013 after the 2012 flooding. It, too, now exceeds 10 feet in span and requires a biennial inspection by the DOT. A \$57,000 appropriation was voted at the 2013 Town Meeting to pay for that bridge replacement. Flood assistance from FEMA for this particular bridge totaled about \$140,000.

Given the increasing severity of storms creating damages from flooding, the Town should consider a capital reserve for major bridge rehabilitation.

Source: Sullivan Road Agent

Accessibility

Route 9 is an important artery for Sullivan residents traveling west to Keene and east to Concord. In 2003, the State made some repairs on the 1.8 miles between Sullivan and Roxbury, primarily to widen road shoulders along Otter Brook. Reconstruction of the bridge on Route 9 west of the store is planned for 2017, as described above.

Route 10 is also an important artery for Sullivan residents traveling south to Keene or north toward Hanover. Little has changed on Route 10 since 1995, but dormant plans of the Thomas family to extract gravel from their significant acreage on the west side of the road, near its intersection with Route 9, may affect traffic in the future. The possibility of future industrial development along Route 10 also exists and may affect traffic.

Special Service Transportation

No public transportation exists for Sullivan residents needing to meet appointments elsewhere. The Southwest Region Planning Commission website (www.swrpc.org) has a chart on a page for Sullivan residents showing special service transportation (e.g., for medical appointments) that may be available to individuals in need. Contact information is given.

Alternative Means of Travel

Keene's Dillant-Hopkins airport no longer offers commercial air flights. Limousine services will take passengers to Boston, Hartford and Manchester Airports.

Through a public/private partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Greyhound Bus Lines provide a new bus route service connecting Brattleboro, VT, to Boston, MA, on Fridays and Sundays. The service includes a stop in Keene at the Transportation Center on Gilbo Avenue.

Amtrak Trains leave Brattleboro, VT, the train station closest to Sullivan, once per day for New York and St. Albans. Although there never was a train track through Sullivan, fifty years ago a rail line took passengers from Keene to Boston.

Taxi service in the Keene area includes Adventure Taxi and Ideal Ride Taxi.

Since Sullivan residents depend so heavily upon their own vehicles for transport to work, shopping and recreation, careful attention to maintaining safety on roads in Town is critical to the well-being of the community.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Having reviewed the current state of Sullivan's community services and public buildings and trends in economics, housing, population, land use and conservation during the ten years since the publication of the Town's last Master Plan in 2005, the Planning Board concludes that Sullivan is still—and is likely to continue to be—a community most of whose residents commute to work outside of town. As expressed by their responses to the 2012 Town Survey, the people of Sullivan wish to preserve the attractive rural residential character of the Town while continuing to improve town services and facilities, assuring the health and well-being of the Town and avoiding increases in the already burdensome property tax rate.

Therefore, the Planning Board makes the following recommendations:

Housing

1. The Town should identify substandard houses whose owners qualify for rehabilitation assistance and encourage them to apply for funding to bring their houses up to safety and habitability standards.
2. The Town should revise the Community Planning Ordinance to require a building permit for all construction.
3. The Town should urge developers to consider the full range of reasonable options open to them in addition to new family housing and should urge developers to build according to the Town's cluster housing ordinance whenever possible to maximize the preservation of open space.

Land Use

1. Sullivan should continue to consist of one Rural Residential District, and the two acre building lot limitation with 200 feet of frontage on a Class V or better road throughout the Town should remain in force, but the Planning Board should carefully and systematically consider specific alternatives to the Town's present zoning.
2. The Town should actively investigate, encourage and support the possibilities for maintaining and expanding the agricultural use of land wherever and whenever appropriate.
3. Special places in Sullivan should be protected to ensure the preservation of the Town's rural character. The Conservation Commission has developed a list of high priority areas for protection. It can be found at the end of the Conservation and Preservation section of this Master Plan.

4. Certain sites of historic importance in Sullivan should be protected and preserved. A list of these sites can be found at the end of the Land Use section of this Master Plan.
5. The Town should consider setting a limit on hillside construction in order to reduce the risk of erosion.

Conservation and Preservation

1. The Town should change the Community Planning Ordinance so that it requires more stringent setbacks and wider buffers to protect all of Sullivan's major streams.
2. The Town should do all it can to protect our soils by enforcing sound building practices and careful use of machinery on the land to prevent erosion.
3. The Town should do all it can to limit damage caused by poor management and inadequate containment of hazardous wastes, road salt, automotive by-products and junkyards.
4. Town should continue to educate its residents about the sound use of our natural resources.
5. The Town should develop and adopt a comprehensive open space plan with special attention to areas of prime concern.
6. The Planning Board should exercise its power of discretion to retain large contiguous or smaller connected areas that contain critical habitats. Parcelization and fragmentation of large habitats and obstruction of connecting corridors should be avoided whenever possible.

Energy

1. Adopt ordinances that encourage and improve energy-efficient development, including green building design and small wind, geothermal and solar energy systems.
2. Adopt energy conservation and efficiency measures for municipal buildings and operations. This could include creating local energy building requirements that exceed the State Energy Code.
3. Implement a municipal buying strategy of Energy Star equipment and eco-friendly office products, as costs permit, and implement awareness campaigns to encourage the consumption of such equipment and products within the broader community.
4. Join with nearby towns to form a single, eco-friendly purchasing contract to provide economy of scale for all.
5. Implement the dimming and lowering of the arc of night lighting on public buildings where reasonable.
6. Evaluate ways to reduce fuel usage by the town's vehicle fleet – analyzing routes, usage, and creating a strict anti-idling policy where feasible.

7. Promote voluntary efforts to weatherize and insulate homes and businesses.
8. Encourage residents to reduce, reuse, recycle, compost, replace incandescent bulbs with CFLs or LEDs, and use clotheslines and wooden drying racks to reduce the energy usage of clothes dryers.

Community Services and Public Buildings

1. The Town should continue to ensure that public buildings meet the needs of the community, are in good repair, and conserve energy.
2. The Town should build an additional salt/sand shed at the highway department to prevent salt residues from entering ground water.
3. The Town should carefully monitor the physical condition of the library regularly and ensure that necessary repairs and renovations be made in a timely fashion.