

1996



Town of Unity
MASTER PLAN

UNITY MASTER PLAN
UNITY, NEW HAMPSHIRE
1996

Prepared by the Unity Planning Board
with the assistance of the
Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission

UNITY PLANNING BOARD

1996

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ADOPTION OF MASTER PLAN

UNITY, NEW HAMPSHIRE


The Planning Board of the Town of Unity, New Hampshire, in accordance with the provisions and procedures of RSA Chapter 675:6, including conducting a public hearing on November 14, 1996, does hereby adopt the Town of Unity Master Plan of 1996. This 1996 Town of Unity Master Plan is an update of the 1986 Town of Unity Master Plan, which is adopted by reference. The goals and recommendations contained in this Plan are designed to aid the Planning Board and other Town boards in the performance of their respective duties for the purpose of guiding and accomplishing the coordinated and harmonious development of the Town of Unity, New Hampshire.

Date Adopted: November 14, 1996

Unity Planning Board:


Fred Hall, Chair




, Vice Chair








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I.

POPULATION

I. POPULATION

INTRODUCTION

An analysis of changing trends in the Town's population is one of the most fundamental aspects of a master planning effort. Any significant changes in Unity's population will consequently affect land use patterns, the Town's economic base, and local demand for housing, transportation, human services and community facilities. Shifts in the composition of the population are important, since knowledge of changes in the school age, senior and seasonal population is a prerequisite to providing for proper education, senior housing, and the timing and tailoring of services in the future.

This chapter examines four facets of population change in Unity. First, historical population trends in Unity are summarized and compared to those of Sullivan County, the Region and the State. Next, migration patterns affecting Unity's population growth are analyzed. Third, selected characteristics of the Unity population are examined, such as age distribution. Fourth, the Town's year-round and seasonal population is projected through the year 2015. These projections indicate the degree of change to expect for the 25-year span between 1990-2015.

Information used in this chapter was derived from a variety of sources: the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, the Office of State Planning, the N.H. Bureau of Vital Statistics and the Unity Community Survey.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The Unity Planning Board conducted a survey of the Town's residents in 1992 to help determine the Town's needs and preferences with respect to future planning activities. The following feedback was received on population growth in Unity:

- Between 1980 and 1990, Unity experienced an average annual population growth rate of 2.1%. Over the next ten years, fifty-nine percent of the property owners preferred to maintain this population growth rate, while twenty-eight percent preferred the growth rate be slower, and thirteen percent preferred a faster growth rate.

POPULATION GOALS

On the basis of the survey results and their knowledge of the community, the Planning Board has adopted the following population goals:

1. Provide for a moderate rate of growth, in keeping with the Town's capacity to provide community services.
2. Accommodate a reasonable share of the Region's population growth.

HISTORIC TRENDS

In 1753, the area which is today Unity received its charter as "Buckingham" from King George, II of England. Grants were made to sixty-nine (69) proprietors for a six mile square tract containing 23,040 acres of land. It is not known if any of these original grantees ever settled the area and, apparently, they did not fulfill the conditions of the charter. Benning Wentworth, Governor of New Hampshire, subsequently granted the land to a new group of thirty-nine (39) families from Kingston, Hampstead and Amesbury in 1764 who had petitioned the crown after losing their lands to ancient land grants. The Town was incorporated under the name of Unity in commemoration of its role unifying these people who had no land of their own elsewhere. As was typical at the time, the conditions of the charter required that every grantee was to plant and cultivate five acres of land within five years for every fifty acres owned. In addition, all pine trees were to be set aside for masting the Royal Navy. Part of Unity was annexed to form Goshen in 1791. Other sections of Town were added to Charlestown in 1810; to Claremont in 1828 and to Goshen in 1837.

The population of Unity showed steady growth, from a base of 106 persons in 1773 to a high point of 1,277 in the year 1820. The arrival of the Quakers in the 1820's was to have a large influence in West Unity, also known as "Quaker City". The Quaker Meeting House survives today. Early businesses operating in Unity in the late 1700's and early 1800's included various saw and grist mills. Harvey Huntoon's Brick Yard in East Unity took on regional significance and supplied the brick for many buildings in Newport and surrounding towns. In 1836, the Unity Scientific and Military Academy was established by an act of the N.H. Legislature. Today, several buildings in Unity Center are said to incorporate parts of the old Academy. Soapstone conduits also survive in Unity Center, documenting one of the first examples of town water, which linked pump log pipes to the house.

Beginning in 1820, the number of Unity inhabitants is marked by a steady decline, reaching a low point of 501 persons in 1930. Here and throughout the state, population decline in the late 19th century was largely due to the inability of New Hampshire farms to compete against Midwest farms, leaving New Hampshire hillsides a maze of stone walls, cellar holes and new forests. During the mid-19th century, the existence of ten mineral springs in Unity brought hordes of

health seekers to Town, who sought the benefits of drinking and bathing in the crystal clear waters. The medicinal properties of the mineral waters were first discovered by white men in 1789. Development of the summer resort area at Lake Sunapee contributed to the springs' loss of popularity. The burning of the Unitoga Springs House, a summer hotel, brought the era to a final close in 1892, though three springs, the foundation of the hotel, and the ruins of a springhouse survive today.

During the Depression, a CCC Camp was established in Town and is now the Moose Ground. During World War II, the Mica Mines in the North Neighborhood served as a valuable source of material for the airplane industries. Deposits of sugar quartz and copper have also been extracted from Unity over the years.

The Sullivan County Home has played an important role in the development of the Town since 1866, when the County purchased 395 acres and numerous buildings from Lyman Rounsevel for \$6,500. The building that previously housed the Baptist congregation was turned over to the Town in 1877 to be used as a Town Hall, a purpose which it continues to serve, though new town offices were constructed in 1981. A fire department was established in Town in 1947.

From the peak population of 1,277 in 1820, Unity's population steadily declined over the next 100 years, to a low of 501 persons in 1930. Between 1930 and 1970, the population grew somewhat erratically to 709 persons. Since 1970, Unity's population has almost doubled, to 1,341 in 1990. Over this twenty year period, Unity's population increased by 632 persons, which represented an annual growth rate of 3.2 percent.

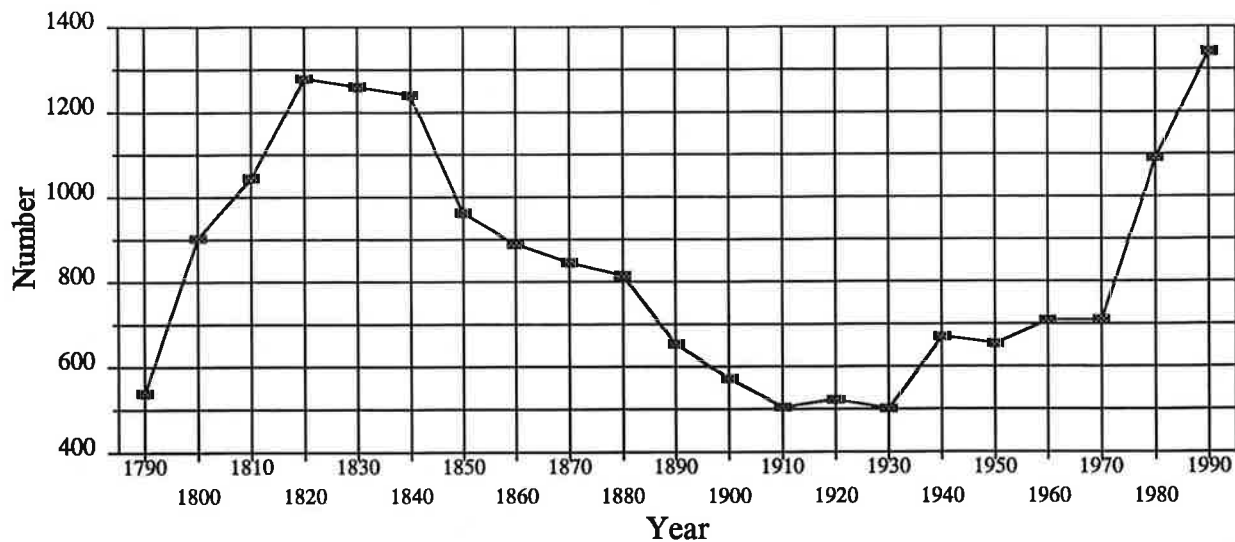
Table I-1 compares the historical population change in Unity with Sullivan County and the State of New Hampshire. In terms of percent change in population, Unity has experienced greater population growth in the last twenty years than the County or the State. Figure I-1 depicts the fluctuations in Unity's population since 1790.

TABLE I-1
HISTORICAL POPULATION TRENDS
UNITY, SULLIVAN COUNTY, NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1767-1990

Year	Unity	Percent Change	Sullivan County	Percent Change	State of N.H.	Percent Change
1767	NA	NA	8,16	NA	NA	NA
1773	106	NA	2,184	176.6%	NA	NA
1775	146	37.7%	2,610	19.5%	NA	NA
1783	NA	NA	2,595	-0.6%	NA	NA
1786	404	NA	6,259	141.2%	NA	NA
1790	538	33.2%	9,107	45.5%	141,885	NA
1800	902	67.7%	14,537	59.6%	183,858	29.6%
1810	1,044	15.7%	16,514	13.6%	214,460	16.6%
1820	1,277	22.3%	18,533	12.2%	244,161	13.8%
1830	1,258	-1.5%	19,669	6.1%	269,328	10.3%
1840	1,238	-1.6%	20,340	3.4%	284,574	5.7%
1850	961	-22.4%	19,375	-4.7%	317,976	11.7%
1860	887	-7.7%	19,041	-1.7%	326,073	2.5%
1870	844	-4.8%	18,058	-5.2%	318,300	-2.4%
1880	814	-3.6%	18,161	0.6%	346,991	9.0%
1890	653	-19.8%	17,304	-4.7%	376,530	8.5%
1900	572	-12.4%	18,009	4.1%	411,588	9.3%
1910	504	-11.9%	19,337	7.4%	430,572	4.6%
1920	522	3.6%	20,922	8.2%	443,083	2.9%
1930	501	-4.0%	24,286	16.1%	465,293	5.0%
1940	669	33.5%	25,442	4.8%	491,524	5.6%
1950	653	-2.4%	26,441	3.9%	533,242	8.5%
1960	708	8.4%	28,067	6.1%	606,921	13.8%
1970	709	0.1%	30,949	10.3%	737,578	21.5%
1980	1,092	54.0%	36,063	16.5%	920,475	24.8%
1990	1,341	22.8%	38,592	7.0%	1,085,000	17.9%

Source: U.S. Census

FIGURE I-1
UNITY'S POPULATION, 1790 - 1990



POPULATION DENSITY

The rapid population growth experienced in Unity and the Region recently, has resulted in a change in the appearance of the landscape as the Town's land was developed. Table I-2 shows that the average population density in the Region in 1980 was 68.7 persons per square mile; by 1990 this density had increased to 75.9 persons per square mile. Meanwhile, Unity's density rose from 30.3 persons per square mile in 1980, to 35.2 persons per square mile in 1990, an increase of 16.3 percent. Since 1970, the change in Unity's population density has been even more dramatic. In 1970, Unity's population density was 19.6 persons per square mile. It increased eighty percent over the next twenty years, to the 1990 figure of 35.2 persons per square mile.

It is important to note that, despite the fact that the Town has a small population, Unity's population density is rising at a rapid rate. This point is important because increased density decreases the amount of open space, places greater demand on local resources, and increases the possibility of conflicting land uses. Thus, despite the Town's small population, there is a strong need for Unity to plan wisely for the future to assure that the Town will grow in a desirable manner.

TABLE I-2
POPULATION DENSITY IN SELECTED
UPPER VALLEY LAKE SUNAPEE REGION COMMUNITIES
1980 - 1990

Town	Land Area Square Miles	Population Density		% Change 1980-90
		1980	1990	
Unity	36.1	30.3	35.2	16.3
Lempster	32.7	19.5	30.1	54.9
Langdon	16.3	26.8	35.5	32.7
Acworth	39.1	15.1	19.9	31.5
Charlestown	38.0	116.1	121.7	4.8
Claremont	44.1	330.5	315.6	-4.5
Newport	42.6	142.7	147.6	3.4
Goshen	22.5	24.3	32.9	35.6
Sunapee	25.2	91.9	110.6	20.3
Croydon	37.5	12.2	16.7	37.2
Cornish	42.6	32.6	38.9	19.4
Region	1233.4	68.7	75.9	10.5

Source: UVLSRPC

NATURAL INCREASE AND MIGRATION

The two major determinants of population change are natural increase and migration. The excess of births over the number of deaths, in any one period, is called natural increase. Conversely, excess deaths over births is natural decrease. Migration refers to the number of people who have moved into and out of the town. If a community has little in and out-migration, almost all changes in population are attributable to natural factors alone. Or if a community has little or no natural increase in population, then the change in population is attributable to in-migration. The total amount of natural increase and migration in Unity is based on the following formula: "The population of Unity at the close of a period is equal to its population at the start of the period, plus

natural increase (the excess of births over deaths) during the period, plus the net migration during the period."

As reflected in Table I-3, below, in the period from 1980 through 1989, in Unity there was a natural decrease of 53 persons. Since Unity's population increased by 249 persons over that span, there was a net in-migration of 302 persons. Thus, all of Unity's net population growth in the 1980's can be attributed to outsiders who have moved into the Town.

TABLE I-3
POPULATION GROWTH: NATURAL INCREASE AND MIGRATION
UNITY, 1980 - 1990

Year	Births	Deaths	Natural Increase/Decrease	Total Population
1980	21	8	13	1,092
1981	9	13	-4	
1982	12	14	-2	
1983	8	26	-18	
1984	6	22	-16	
1985	9	19	-10	
1986	7	18	-11	
1987	8	14	-6	
1988	7	9	-2	
1989	13	10	3	
1990				1,341

1980-89 Net Natural Decrease = 53

1980-89 Net Migration = 302

Sources: Birth & Death Counts: N.H. Dept. of Health & Welfare, Bureau of
Vital Statistics
Population: U.S. Census

AGE DISTRIBUTION

The age composition of a community has great importance in planning for future needs. An increase in the school-age population, for example, indicates the need for greater investment in educational facilities. Likewise, growth in the elderly population requires a different range of services and facilities.

In comparison to other New Hampshire communities, Unity could be characterized as a town with a fairly old population. The table below shows that the median age of Unity's population is significantly higher than both the County and State average.

**TABLE I-4
MEDIAN AGES
UNITY, SULLIVAN COUNTY AND NEW HAMPSHIRE
1980 & 1990**

	1980	1990
Unity	33.5	37.3
Sullivan County	31.6	35.3
New Hampshire	30.1	32.8

Source: U.S. Census

School-age Population

The school-age population (0-24) in Unity has increased in actual numbers, but declined as a percentage of total population over the past decade. In 1980, there were 374 children/young adults in this age group, and in 1990 there were 412, an increase of 38 persons. As a percentage of Unity's population, the school-age bracket declined from 34.3 percent in 1980, to 30.7 percent in 1990.

The increase in the school-age population was a result of a rise in both the pre-school (0-4) age group and the student (5-19) age group. The pre-school age group rose from 65 children in 1980, to 73 children in 1990. Similarly, the student age group increased from 309 students in 1980, to 339 students in 1990.

Working-age Group

The working age group (25-64) is often referred to as the labor force, although not all persons in this group are actually in the labor force; i.e., employed or looking for work. From 1980 to 1990, this age group increased from 471 to 668 persons, an increase of 197 people, or 41.8 percent. This age group also increased as a percent of the total population, from 43.1 percent to 49.8 percent.

Senior Population

The senior population is comprised of persons sixty-five years of age or over. Although most of the persons in this age group are retired, some are employed full or part-time. There are almost always more women than men in this age group. Between 1980 and 1990, the senior population rose from 247 to 261, a 5.6 percent increase. As a percent of the Town's population, this age group decreased from 22.6 percent in 1980, to 19.4 percent in 1990. The following table compares Unity's elderly age group as a percentage of the overall population to the percentages in the Region and the State as a whole. Note that even though the percentage of elderly persons in Unity decreased slightly between 1980 and 1990, it is still far above the Region and State percentages.

**TABLE I-5
SENIOR POPULATION AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION
UNITY, REGION AND NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1980 & 1990**

	1980	1990
Unity	22.6	19.4
Region	12.4	13.3
New Hampshire	11.2	11.3

Source: U.S. Census

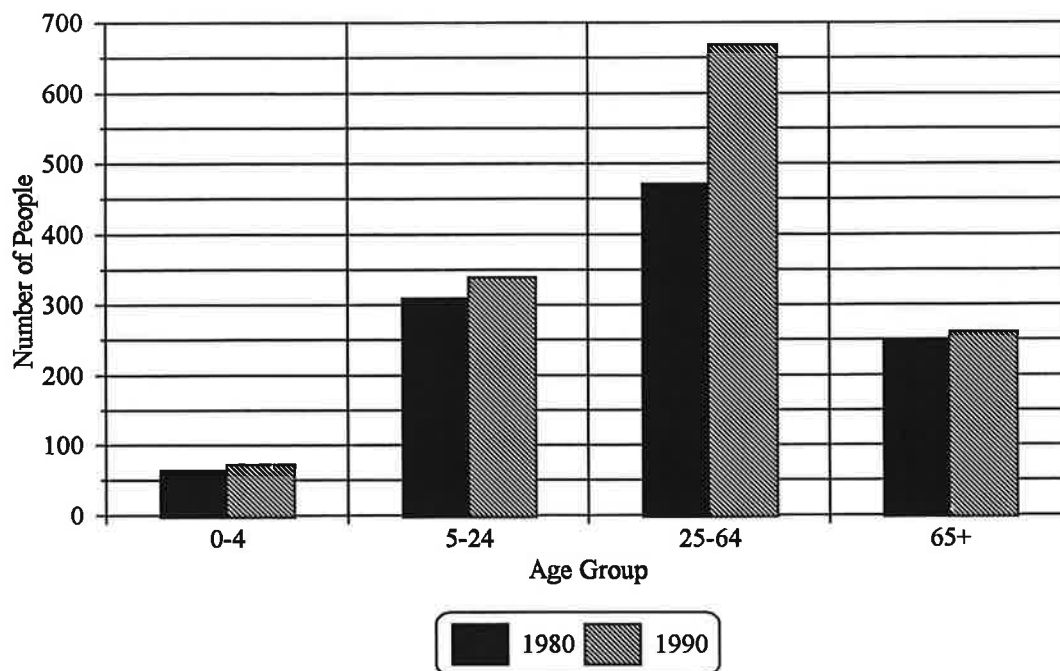
The population of the United States will show a relative increase in the 65-plus age group over the end of this century. Unity, the Region and New Hampshire will probably feel the effects of this population shift. Coupled with the in-migration of retirees, it is expected that the elderly age group will increase dramatically as a percentage of the total population.

TABLE I-6
AGE DISTRIBUTION BY GROUP
UNITY, 1980 & 1990

Age Group	1980 #	1980 %	1990 #	1990 %	No. Change	% Change
Pre-school (0-4)	65	6.0%	73	5.4%	8	12.3%
Student (5-24)	309	28.3%	339	25.3%	30	9.7%
Working-age (25-64)	471	43.1%	668	49.8%	197	41.8%
Seniors (65+)	247	22.6%	261	19.4%	14	5.6%

Source: U.S. Census

FIGURE I-2
AGE DISTRIBUTION
UNITY - 1980 and 1990



How does Unity's age group distribution compare to the Region and State?

The following table shows that Unity's pre-school, student and working-age populations are comparatively low, while the senior population is comparatively very high. The large senior population in Unity is, in part, a result of the Sullivan County Home being located in the Town.

TABLE I-7
COMPARATIVE AGE DISTRIBUTIONS BY GROUP
UNITY, REGION AND NEW HAMPSHIRE: 1980 & 1990

Age Group	Unity		Region		New Hampshire	
	1980	1990	1980	1990	1980	1990
Pre-school (0-4)	6.0%	5.4%	6.3%	7.0%	6.8%	7.6%
Student (5-24)	28.3%	25.3%	34.8%	28.6%	34.3%	28.1%
Working-age (25-64)	43.1%	49.8%	46.3%	51.1%	47.7%	53.0%
Seniors (65+)	22.6%	19.4%	12.4%	13.3%	11.2%	11.3%

Source: U.S. Census

INSTITUTIONAL POPULATION

The Town of Unity also has a fairly sizeable institutional population at the Sullivan County Home and House of Corrections. The 1990 Census counted an institutional population of 236 persons at the County Home complex. The Sullivan County Home currently has a total of 203 beds available for elderly residents. The County Home had beds available for 89 residents until 1970, when the Stearns Building was added and the bed count grew to 152. Another story was added in 1973 and the number of available beds increased to 203. The House of Corrections has a total of 52 beds, but the average number of inmates is 30. It should also be noted that several employees and their families live on the premises, adding another 15-20 people. Thus, the full capacity population at the County facility is 248-253 persons. Therefore, Unity has a substantial number of low and moderate income persons living in the Town, occasionally demanding Town services, but not paying taxes.

SEASONAL POPULATION

The seasonal population is not a major factor in Unity, but should be considered to provide a total picture of the Town's population. The only local concentration of seasonal homes is on Crescent Lake. There are many others scattered throughout the Town's rural setting.

The size of Unity's seasonal population is largely determined by the number of seasonal homes in the community. It should also be noted that those staying in, or traveling to, neighboring communities also have an effect on Unity by increasing traffic, buying goods and services, and using Town facilities.

The precise number of seasonal homes in Unity is difficult to determine. The biggest problem is that many seasonal homes are used for different periods of time. With the winterization of seasonal homes, many are now used throughout the year, but by non-residents. In contrast, many "regular" residents (legally registered voters) are away much of the year - usually during the winter months. A further complication is that a "summer" resident may rent his house to a "year-round" resident during the period that he is away.

According to the U.S. Census, there were 138 seasonal housing units in Unity in 1990. As a percent of total units (558), seasonal housing represents 24.7% of the Town's housing stock.

The number of seasonal residents obviously varies according to the month and day. According to a 1984 survey of seasonal homes around Lake Sunapee, the average seasonal household size was 4.2. Multiplying the number of seasonal homes in 1990 (138) by this rate, gives a 1990 seasonal population estimate of 580.

In projecting the future seasonal population, two assumptions have been made. First, the number of seasonal homes will continue to decline at the same rate experienced between 1980 and 1990, when there was a 16% decrease in the number of seasonal homes from 164 to 138. Secondly, the average size of families occupying seasonal homes will decrease as a reflection of national trends toward smaller family size. Carrying these assumptions through, the following table indicates that Unity's seasonal population is projected to decrease by 224 persons between 1990 and 2015.

TABLE I-8
SEASONAL POPULATION PROJECTIONS
UNITY: 1990-2010

Year	Projected Number of Seasonal Housing Units	Projected Average Household Size	Projected Seasonal Population
1990	138	4.2	580
1995	127	4.2	533
2000	116	4.1	476
2005	106	4.1	435
2010	97	4.0	388
2015	89	4.0	356

Source: UVLSRPC

It is expected that many of Unity's seasonal homes will be converted to year-round use. The conversion issue is important because: 1) the Town has no control over conversions; 2) since there are 138 seasonal homes, the Town's year-round population could increase by 442 (33 percent) without the construction of a single new home; 3) many seasonal homes often have poor road access (especially for fire-fighting equipment), and septic systems which are close to the lake and inadequate for year-round use; and 4) the Town's tax base would be changed, since homes which once demanded services for only a portion of the year would demand Town services (possibly including education) throughout the year.

YEAR-ROUND POPULATION PROJECTIONS

After analyzing past trends, two methods were used to develop three alternative population projections. The first projection is based on a computer model developed for the State Planning Office. A detailed description of the projection methodology is available at the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission.

In the second method, a linear projection of population was made based on two trends: 1) the 1980-90 change in Unity's population which equated to an annual growth rate of 2.1%; and 2) the 1980-90 change in the Regional population which equated to an annual growth rate of 1.1%.

This method is, of course, based on the assumption that economic, social, institutional, cultural and natural conditions will generally remain constant (linear) until the year 2015. These alternative population projections are outlined in Table I-9 and shown graphically in Figure I-3.

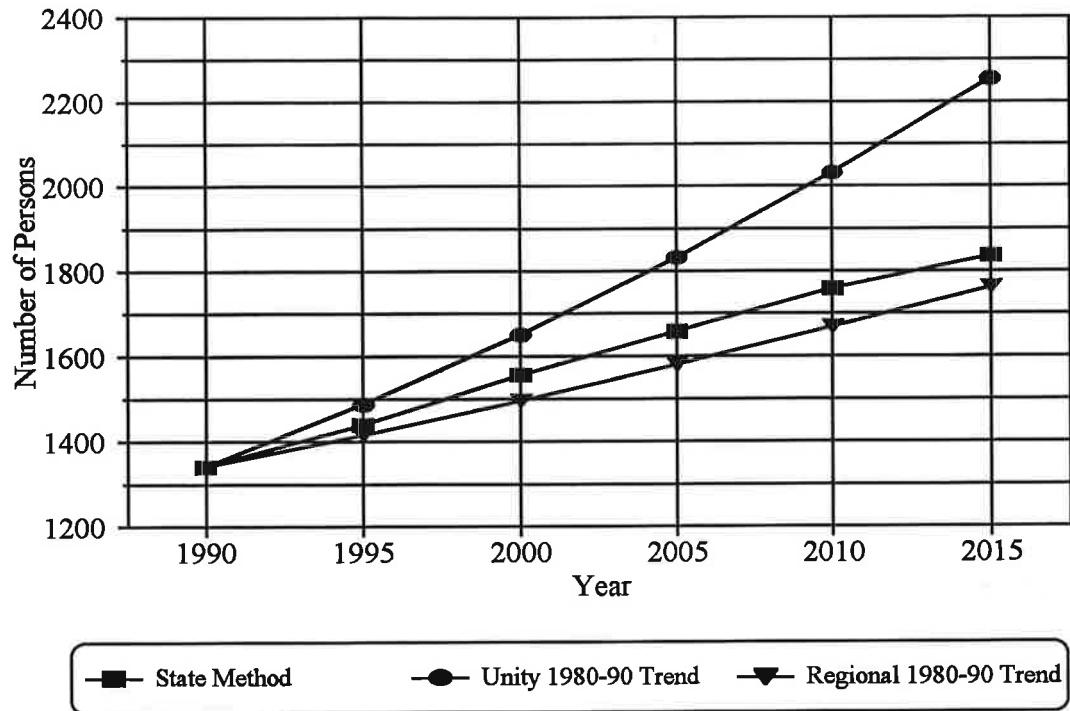
Unfortunately, a totally accurate method for predicting the future population of small areas has not been devised; hence, the alternative projections. Any unexpected change, such as the addition of a large industry, institution or housing development, can alter the projections drastically. One should, therefore, view these projections as a general guide which should be updated periodically as conditions change or new information is available.

TABLE I-9
ALTERNATIVE POPULATION PROJECTIONS
UNITY: 1990-2015

Year	State Computer Method	Unity 1980-90 Trend	Regional 1980-90 Trend
1990	1,341	1,341	1,341
1995	1,439	1,488	1,416
2000	1,556	1,651	1,496
2005	1,658	1,832	1,580
2010	1,759	2,032	1,669
2015	1,836	2,255	1,763

Source: NH Office of State Planning and UVLSRPC

FIGURE I-3
POPULATION PROJECTIONS
UNITY: 1990-2015



Source: NH Office of State Planning & UVLSRPC

II.

HOUSING

II. HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

Housing fulfills more than the basic need for shelter; housing, and the neighborhood environment in which it is located, has a significant influence on the quality of human life. Good housing and good residential neighborhoods are necessary for the mental health, as well as the physical well-being, of our citizens.

Housing is a unique commodity in the market place. Its production, or lack of it, has repercussions throughout the local, regional and national economy. About one-fourth of our national wealth is in the form of housing, and this percentage is probably higher in Unity. Similarly, 25-30 percent of our incomes are used for housing, and housing is often the single-largest financial commitment that we make during our lifetime.

The fact that housing provides shelter for our basic social unit - the family - and because it has such far-reaching implications for the quality of human life and the character of a community, housing, and the environment in which it is located, is of primary importance for local decision-making. A large portion of our local regulations and ordinances are designed to protect and enhance the residential environment.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The Unity Planning Board conducted a survey of the Town's landowners in 1992 to help determine the Town's needs and preferences with respect to future planning activities. The following is a brief summary of the survey results relating to housing:

1. A very strong majority of the survey respondents (77%) felt Unity is a good place to live because it is private, quiet and rural.
2. About nine out of ten respondents preferred the same or slower growth rate in the next ten years as that experienced between 1980 and 1990 (2.1% annual growth rate).
3. Virtually all of the respondents (97%) prefer single-family homes over other types of housing development in the future.
4. None of the other types of housing were supported by a majority of the respondents:

- A. Manufactured homes on individual lots were supported by less than half (48%) of the respondents.
- B. Two-family dwellings were supported by just 39% of the respondents.
- C. Manufactured homes in parks were supported by only 15% of the respondents.
- D. Multi-family dwellings were supported by only 11% of the respondents.

HOUSING GOALS

On the basis of the survey results and their knowledge of the community, the Planning Board has adopted the following housing goals:

1. Encourage high quality residential developments which maintain and enhance the natural character of the land, promoting the enjoyment and safety of their residents.
2. Maintain Unity as a Town of predominantly single-family houses, while accommodating a fair share of the Region's need for housing the elderly, low income and disadvantaged people.
3. Encourage the location of manufactured housing on individual lots in pleasing environments, augmenting both the aesthetic quality and the level of housing opportunity in Unity.
4. Promote an awareness of energy conservation and alternative energy sources in building design and construction.

HOUSING PATTERNS

Most of the residential development in Unity is scattered throughout the Town along the road system. There are no major concentrations of housing, although there are groupings of homes in East Unity, Unity and the area near the Sullivan County Farm. There are many seasonal homes clustered around Crescent Lake.

TRENDS IN THE HOUSING SUPPLY

After several decades of slow growth, Unity experienced a 43.7 percent growth in year-round housing units between 1970 and 1980. Again, during the 1980's, the supply of year-round housing units grew 41.9 percent. While there was a significant growth in year-round housing

during the 1980's, there was a decline in the number of seasonal homes, as reflected in Table II-1, to follow. This decline in seasonal homes was presumably due to conversion of seasonal homes for year-round use. Overall, the total housing unit count showed an increase of 21.3 percent between 1980 and 1990.

**TABLE II-1
NUMBER AND TYPE OF HOUSING UNITS
UNITY: 1980-90**

Year	No. of Year-Round Units	Percent Change	No. of Seasonal Homes	Percent Change	Total Units	Percent Change
1980	296	-	164	-	460	-
1990	420	41.9%	138	-15.9%	558	21.3%

COMPOSITION OF THE HOUSING STOCK

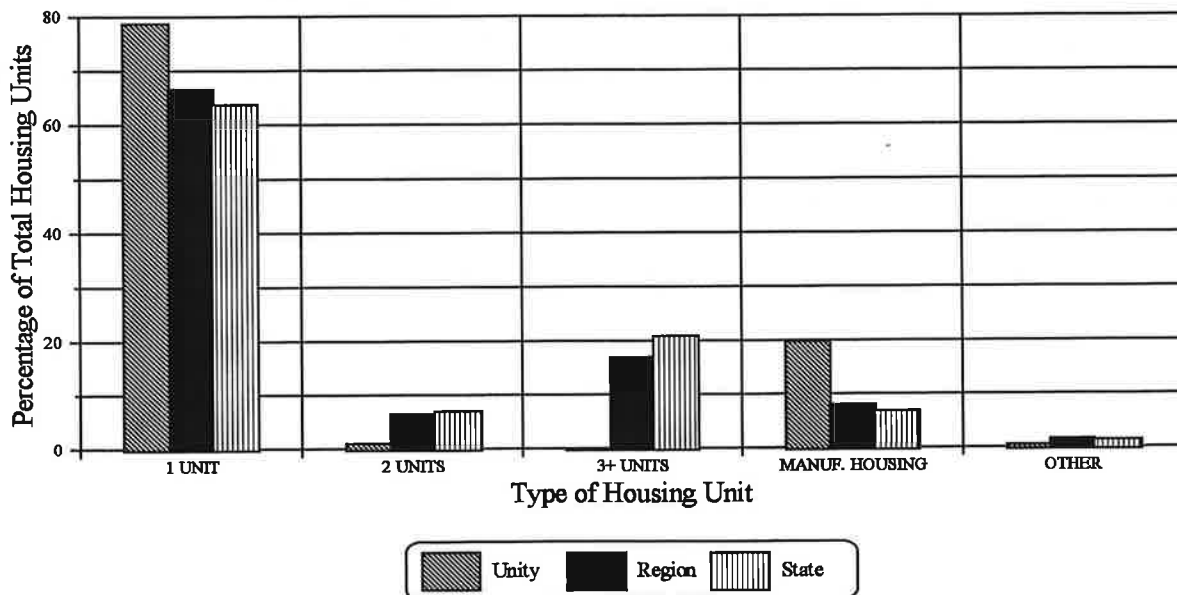
The Town of Unity is a rural residential community with a high proportion of single-family detached homes. Table II-2 shows that in 1990 about 79 percent of the dwelling units in Town were conventional single-family detached homes, and if mobile homes are included, about 98.4 percent of the Town's housing stock can be considered single-family. Two-family housing accounted for 1.1 percent of the housing stock in 1990. There were no multi-family residences (three or more dwellings per unit) in Unity in 1990. As shown in Table II-2, to follow, Unity's housing stock had a much higher percentage of single family units and manufactured housing compared with the Region and the State of New Hampshire in 1990, and a significantly lower percentage of two-family and multi-family residential units compared with the Region and the State of New Hampshire. Figure II-1 graphically illustrates these differences.

TABLE II-2
NUMBER AND PERCENT OF TOTAL HOUSING UNITS
BY NUMBER OF UNITS AT ADDRESS
UNITY, REGION & N.H.: 1990

	Unity		Region		New Hampshire	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Housing Units	558	100.0%	45,835	100.0%	503,904	100.0%
1 Unit	439	78.7%	30,518	66.6%	320,849	63.7%
2 Units	6	1.1%	3,008	6.6%	35,672	7.1%
3 or More Units	0	0.0%	7,803	17.0%	105,440	20.9%
Manufactured Housing	110	19.7%	3,775	8.2%	35,334	7.0%
Other	3	0.5%	731	1.6%	6,609	1.3%

Source: U.S. Census

FIGURE II-1
TYPE OF HOUSING UNITS BY PERCENTAGE
UNITY, REGION & N.H.: 1990



OCCUPANCY

As one would expect, most of Unity's residents own the dwelling in which they live. In 1990, nine out of ten residents owned their own dwelling unit in Unity. Table II-3 shows that only 9.7 percent of Unity's residents rent their dwelling units, compared to 31.3 percent in the Region and 31.8 percent in the State as a whole.

**TABLE II-3
OWNER AND RENTER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS
UNITY, REGION & STATE: 1990**

	Unity		Region		New Hampshire	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total Occupied Units	393	100.0%	35,694	100.0%	411,186	100.0%
Owner-occupied	355	90.3%	24,535	68.7%	280,372	68.2%
Renter-occupied	38	9.7%	11,159	31.3%	130,814	31.8%

Source: U.S. Census

VACANCY

There are very few vacant housing units in Unity. According to the U.S. Census, there were only eleven vacant units in the Town in 1990, which yields a vacancy rate of only 2.7 percent. This vacancy rate of 2.7 percent was about one-half the vacancy rate experienced by the Region (5.3%) and the State of New Hampshire (5.7%) at the same time.

HOUSING VALUES

Town information on assessed valuations is not available yet.

RENTAL COSTS

Rental costs in Unity are lower than the Regional and State averages. In 1990, the median rental cost in Unity was \$363, compared with a median rental cost in the Region of \$436 and a median rental cost in the State of New Hampshire of \$479.

SUBSTANDARD CONDITIONS

Two indicators of substandard housing conditions are the number of dwelling units with more than one person per room (overcrowding) and the number of dwelling units lacking complete plumbing facilities. In 1990, 4.1 percent of the occupied housing units in Unity had more than one person per room. This was about twice the rate experienced by Sullivan County (2.0%) and the State of New Hampshire (1.6%).

Similar results were found in comparing the percentage of housing units lacking complete plumbing in Unity with the County and State. Thirty-two, or 5.7 percent, of the total housing units in Unity in 1990 lacked complete plumbing facilities. This was more than twice the rate experienced in Sullivan County in 1990 (2.5%) and almost five times the rate experienced Statewide in 1990 (1.2%).

AGE OF HOUSING STOCK

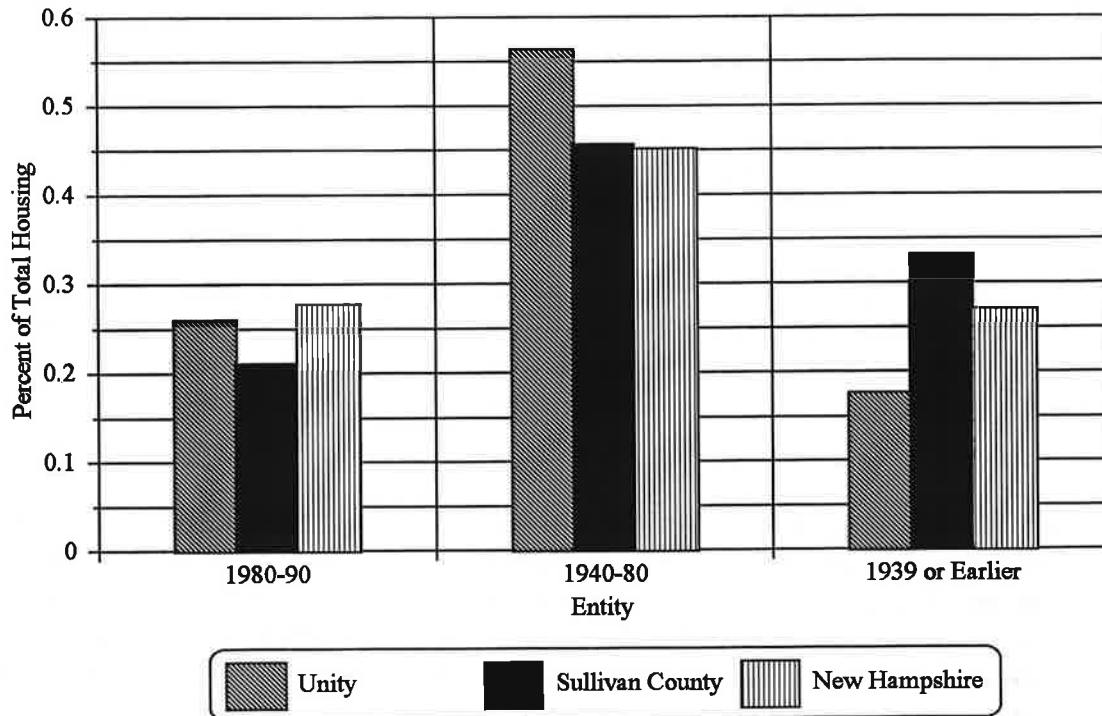
As reflected in Table II-4 and Figure II-2, about one-fourth (26%) of the housing stock in Unity has been constructed since 1980. This is comparable to the percentage of units built in Sullivan County since 1980 (21.1%) and the percentage built in the State since 1980 (27.7%). Unity had a higher percentage of units built between 1940 and 1980 (56.4%) than either Sullivan County (45.7%) or the State of New Hampshire (45.2%). Conversely, Unity had a lower percentage of housing units constructed prior to 1940 (17.6%) than either Sullivan County (33.2%) or the State of New Hampshire (27.1%). Homes constructed prior to 1940 may be indicative of structures which may need renovation and may be reflective of buildings with possible historical value.

TABLE II-4
YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT
UNITY, SULLIVAN COUNTY & N.H.: 1990

	Unity		Sullivan County		New Hampshire	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
All Housing Units	558	100.0%	19,532	100.0%	503,904	100.0%
1980-1990	145	26.0%	4,121	21.1%	139,581	27.7%
1940-1980	98	17.6%	6,485	33.2%	136,558	27.1%

Source: U.S. Census

**FIGURE II-2
YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT
UNITY, SULLIVAN COUNTY & N.H.: 1990**



MANUFACTURED HOUSING

Manufactured housing represents a high percentage (19.7%) of the total year-round housing supply in Unity. Unity's concentration of manufactured homes is substantially higher than the Region and State percentages, which are 8.2% and 7.0%, respectively, according to the 1990 Census.

The Town of Unity allows manufactured homes on individual lots anywhere in Town and manufactured home parks within a one mile radius of the Town Hall. The Town has a specific ordinance for mobile home parks, mobile homes, trailers and camping areas. Obviously, this ordinance and the Town subdivision regulations, which require a three-acre minimum lot size, have not severely restricted mobile homes, since 19.7% of the year-round housing units in Unity are manufactured homes, almost triple the State percentage.

The Town can control the design of mobile home parks and can require that adequate landscaping and buffers be provided, thus, protecting the visual qualities and property values of buildings and

land in Unity Center. Also, by keeping larger concentrations of mobile homes in well-designed parks near the Town center, municipal costs will be minimized and the residents of the mobile home parks will enjoy the benefits of being close to Town facilities and services (library, Town Office, police and fire, recreation, etc.).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Encourage a residential land use pattern which has the medium-density housing in close proximity to the school and village centers, and the lower density housing in the out-lying areas of Town.

By allowing medium density (1 unit/acre) new housing in these areas, the Town can offer a housing alternative to meet the future needs of its residents and help reduce the pressure to convert the rural landscape along the roads in Unity. New housing in these areas can also help local commercial activity, minimize costs for municipal services and conserve energy.

However, since the Town does not have a public water or sewer system, it is crucial that any land being developed should be capable of supporting the water and sewer needs of the use being proposed. The historic character of these areas is another important consideration. However, if good location and design principles are followed, and the Town has adequate regulations to ensure that they will be followed, the new developments can be harmonious with the traditional small-town qualities of Unity.

Housing development in remote areas results in higher municipal service costs, longer response times for emergency services and higher transportation costs. Large lot sizes should be required to ensure lower densities in out-lying areas.

2. Discourage commercial and industrial intrusion into residential neighborhoods.

These uses can lead to safety and health problems, as well as noise and visual pollution, thereby decreasing the quality of residential life and reducing property values.

3. Restrict residential development from critical resource areas such as wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains and agricultural land.

Housing is not a wise or appropriate use in these areas; the Town has plenty of suitable land for future residential development.

4. Allow manufactured homes in certain appropriate areas of Town.

Manufactured homes should be allowed on individual lots anywhere in Town, with manufactured home parks permitted anywhere within a one mile radius of the Town Hall, thus, reducing potential for adverse visual, historic and property value impact, while minimizing municipal costs associated with mobile home parks. Only encourage manufactured housing that meets or exceeds the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards for the construction of a manufactured home, and which is placed on a permanent foundation.

5. Discourage two-family and multi-family residences

Unity has been, and prefers to remain, a rural community for single family residential use, whether it be on-site stick built housing or manufactured housing. The Town discourages two-family residences and multi-family residences from locating in Town, since they conflict with the rural residential image the Town prefers to maintain.

6. Carefully control the conversion of large older homes into apartments or condominiums. While, in many cases, it is both practical and desirable to convert these homes into multi-family dwellings, the issues of parking, sewage disposal, structural and landscaping alterations, density and compatibility with adjacent land uses should be reviewed by the Board.
7. Adopt building codes to ensure the safety and quality of new and existing buildings.
8. Encourage energy-efficient subdivision and site plan design. East/west streets and south-oriented lots should be encouraged to promote energy alternatives.
9. Continue to provide housing and other services for elderly persons at the County Home. With the County facility in Unity, the Town has more than its "fair share" of regional elderly and low/moderate income housing, and Unity's "share" will increase as the facility grows.

III.

CURRENT LAND USE

III. CURRENT LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

The pattern of land use in a community is continually influenced by many factors. Today's settlement patterns reflect the historic evolution of the town; the range of local architecture expresses the tastes and whims of preceding generations. Land use is influenced by local and regional economic conditions which stimulate or suppress the demand for new housing, public services, businesses and industries. Proximity to major transportation facilities (i.e. an interstate highway, airport, rail terminal, etc.) will also influence the nature and rate of land use change. Land use is also impacted by the natural characteristics, such as topography, location of lakes and geology, and how man has made use of these. Indeed, all of the chapters included in this plan in some way relate to land use in Unity; population, housing, economic base, community facilities, transportation, open space and recreation, and local historical resources are all factors which influence (and are influenced by) the ways in which land is allocated.

There are four basic steps which have been followed in the development of this land use plan. They are:

1. community survey results and establishment of goals;
2. inventory of existing land use;
3. description and analysis of natural resources; and
4. recommendations.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

The Unity Planning Board conducted a survey of the Town's residents in 1992 to help determine the Town's needs and preferences with respect to future planning activities. The following is a summary of the survey results relating to land use in Unity:

1. Three out of four property owners in Unity indicated that Unity is a good place to live because it is private, quiet and rural.

2. Between 1980 and 1990, Unity experienced an average annual population growth rate of 2.1%. Over the next ten years, almost sixty percent of the property owners preferred to maintain this population growth rate.
3. In terms of future residential development, 97% of the property owners supported single family residential development. None of the other types of residential uses were supported by a majority of the property owners.
4. Only four out of ten property owners supported the idea of establishing an industrial park, even with the Town not providing any amenities.
5. In terms of future non-residential development, the following list identifies those non-residential uses supported by a majority of the property owners surveyed:

- 88% Home business/occupation
- 86% Agriculture/produce
- 85% Horse operations
- 83% Veterinarian
- 79% Day care center
- 72% Forestry
- 70% Restaurant
- 65% Motel/inn/bed & breakfast
- 64% Professional office
- 64% Light industry
- 63% Auto service and repair
- 62% Retail shops/service
- 60% Dog kennel
- 57% Bank
- 56% High tech industry
- 56% Private school
- 54% Private recreational facility

6. A majority of Unity's property owners supported protection or preservation of the following resources/assets:
 - 90% Wildlife habitat
 - 79% Shorelines of lakes & ponds
 - 78% Prime agricultural land
 - 74% Shorelines of rivers & streams
 - 69% Wetlands
 - 60% Scenic views
 - 54% Floodplains

54% Historic buildings & landmarks

51% Steep slopes

7. Sixty percent of the property owners surveyed supported the idea of the Town taking steps to enhance the village center as the focal point of the community, building upon the core of public facilities already established.
8. Sixty-five percent of those surveyed indicated they would support a simple Zoning Ordinance for the orderly growth of the Town.

LAND USE GOALS

On the basis of the survey results and their knowledge of the community, the Planning Board has adopted the following general land use goals:

1. Maintain the Town's rural and village character and scenic beauty.
2. Encourage continued use of the Town's best farmlands.
3. Recognize the developmental limits on wetlands, steep slopes and floodplains.
4. Protect the quantity and quality of the Town's water resources.
5. Protect historic sites, buildings and settings.

Since virtually all aspects of the community affect land and water use, it is important to keep in mind the other goals which have been adopted as part of this plan.

Population Goals

1. Provide for a slight rate of growth, in keeping with the Town's capacity to provide for community services.
2. Accommodate a reasonable share of the Region's population growth.

Community Facilities Goals

1. Expand the Town's parks and recreational facilities.

2. Provide community services (e.g., schools, library, public safety and utilities) at a level equal to or better than currently provided.
3. Provide for a moderate rate of growth, in keeping with the Town's capacity to provide for community services.
4. Improve existing roads and promote the high quality of new roads.

Transportation Goals

1. Work with the State to maintain and improve the State highway network as it affects Unity.
2. Encourage development that promotes both safety and the effective flow of traffic.
3. Improve existing Town roads.
4. Promote the high quality of new roads.

Economic Development Goals

1. Encourage small, non-polluting (light) industries and commercial establishments to locate on well-planned sites where they will not create a potential for land use or traffic conflicts.
2. Encourage small, home-based businesses which remain subordinate to the primary residential uses and which create minimal impacts on the neighborhood.
3. Maintain the Town's rural and village character and scenic beauty.
4. Protect historic sites, buildings and settings.
5. Provide for a slight rate of growth, in keeping with the Town's capacity to provide for community services and facilities.

Housing Goals

1. Encourage high quality residential developments which maintain and enhance the natural character of the land, promoting the enjoyment and safety of their residents.
2. Maintain Unity as a town of predominantly single-family houses, while accommodating a fair share of the Region's need for housing the elderly, low income and disadvantaged people.
3. Encourage the location of manufactured housing on individual lots in pleasing environments, augmenting both the aesthetic quality and the level of housing opportunity in Unity.
4. Promote an awareness of energy conservation and alternative energy sources in building design and construction.

Open Space and Recreation Goals

1. Maintain the Town's rural and village character and scenic beauty.
2. Encourage continued use of the Town's best farmlands.
3. Recognize the development limits on wetlands, steep slopes and floodplains.
4. Protect the quantity and quality of the Town's water resources.
5. Expand the Town's park and recreational facilities.

Historic Goals

1. To identify and preserve Unity's historic sites, structures, documents and artifacts.
2. To promote an appreciation for, and understanding of, Unity's historic resources.

LAND USE TRENDS

The historic land use trends in Unity are presented after the introduction in the Population Chapter. Based on information compiled by researchers at the University of New Hampshire, between 1953 and 1975, there was a 430 percent increase in developed land in Unity. The bulk of this development appears to have occurred on agricultural land, since over the same time period the percentage of forested land remained relatively constant, while active agricultural acreage declined by 26 percent and idle agricultural land decreased by 57 percent. The trend of converting agricultural land to developed land in Unity mirrored the trend occurring throughout Sullivan County over the same time period.

EXISTING LAND USE

An analysis of existing land use is one of the most important considerations in formulating a future land use plan. The 1985 inventory of existing land use was compiled using field surveys, Town data, U.S. Census data, aerial photographs and a 1977 statewide land use study. Land use acreages were updated from the 1986 Master Plan using building permit data and assuming one-half acre of disturbed area per residential unit or lot, which is consistent with the assumptions made in the Summary of Existing Land Use in the 1985 Master Plan. A summary of existing land use through 1995 is presented in Table III-1. It should be noted that the acreage figures in Table III-1 are intended as rough estimates of the acreage devoted to each category of land use in Unity; they, nonetheless, provide a good picture of the relative land and water areas devoted to different uses in the Town.

Below is a brief description of land use in Unity.

1. Residential

Residential development accounts for approximately 373 acres, or about 1.6 percent of Unity's total land area. As such, it is the most significant use of developed land in the Town. Out of the total 373 acres devoted to residential use, 64 percent is developed for year-round single-family residential use, 18.5 percent is developed for manufactured housing, 17 percent is developed for seasonal housing and less than 1 percent is developed for multi-family residential use.

Most of the residential development in Unity is scattered around the Town. There are no major concentrations of housing, although there are groupings of homes in East Unity, Unity and the area near the Sullivan County Farm. There are many seasonal homes clustered along Crescent Lake.

2. Commercial/Industrial

Many of the commercial activities in Unity are home businesses and, as such, are included in the residential acreages described above. The Sullivan County Complex is the only major employer in Unity. Only about 13 acres, or less than 1 percent of the total land area, is used currently for commercial/industrial uses.

3. Transportation

Unity's road system totals 65.10 miles. These roads and their associated rights-of-way comprise approximately 380 acres, or about 1.7 percent of the total land area.

4. Community Facilities

Unity's community facilities include the Town Hall, Elementary School, Fire Station, Town Garage and Town Landfill. Unity also has three active, and two inactive, cemeteries which are maintained by the Town. The Sullivan County Complex is a major public facility, consisting of the Sullivan County Home and the House of Correction.

The total acreage of the County Complex is 1,556 acres. About 30 acres is developed with buildings, parking areas, etc. The remaining 1,526 acres is agricultural and forest land, and the reservoir.

5. Undeveloped Resources

About 96.4 percent of Unity's land area is undeveloped. The Town also has approximately 140 acres of surface water (lakes and ponds), which represents 0.6 percent of Unity's total area. The large amount of undeveloped land in Unity is a reflection of the limited demand for development, large land-holdings in single ownership, limited road access, and the natural characteristics of the land - varying soils and slopes, wetlands, ledge, etc. - which make development difficult and expensive. Proper use of these undeveloped resources is a major objective in this plan.

**TABLE III-1
SUMMARY OF EXISTING LAND USE
UNITY, 1994**

Land Use Category	No. of Acres	% of Land Area
A. Residential		
1. Conventional Single-Family	237	1.00
2. Multi-family	3	0.01
3. Manufactured Housing	69	0.30
4. Seasonal Homes	64	0.30
Subtotal Residential	373	1.61
B. Commercial/Industrial	13	0.05
C. Community Facilities	25	0.10
D. Sullivan County Complex	30	0.10
E. Cemeteries	4	0.01
F. Roads	380	1.70
Total Developed Land	825	3.62
<u>Undeveloped Land</u>		
A. Agricultural land	1986	8.70
B. Idle Land	400	1.80
C. Forested Land	19529	85.60
D. Wetlands	60	0.30
Total Undeveloped Lands	21975	96.38
Total Land Area	22800	100.00
Lakes and Ponds	140	
Total Area	22940	

LAND CAPABILITY

The fundamental premise of the land capability concept is that the natural features of the environment vary in their ability to support development. Steep slopes, flood-prone areas, wetland soils and the presence of bedrock at or near the surface can serve as major constraints to development. While it is, at times, possible to overcome such natural constraints through intensive engineering, this is often a costly and elaborate process; efficient and environmentally sound planning seeks to guide growth into areas with adequate natural capacity to support development.

The three major natural conditions affecting the land development capability are soils, slopes and surface drainage. Please refer to the Land Use Chapter of the 1986 Master Plan for a full discussion of these natural factors which, in combination, determine the capability of the land to accommodate development.

CRITICAL RESOURCES

Like other communities, Unity has certain natural resources which warrant careful treatment and/or protection. These critical resources include wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, prime agricultural soils and undeveloped aquifer areas. A full discussion of these “critical resources” can be found in the Land Use Chapter of the 1986 Master Plan.

It's important to note that knowledge of land development capability factors and constraints is not, in itself, sufficiently comprehensive in scope to serve as the sole criterion for development decisions. The timing, location, amount and type of growth must also depend upon community goals, proximity to town services, transportation access and maintenance of open space for aesthetic, conservation and recreation purpose. Land capability analysis constitutes one element in the spectrum of factors which condition the town planning process.

PROJECTED FUTURE LAND USE

As reflected in the Population Chapter, Unity's year-round population is projected to increase to 1,836 by the year 2015, according to the New Hampshire Office of State Planning. This would result in a year-round population increase of 397 above OSP's 1995 population estimate of 1,439. Assuming continuation of the 1990 figure of 3.2 persons per household, an additional 124 year-round dwelling units will be needed by 2015 to accommodate the projected growth in population. Assuming continuation of the one-half acre of disturbed or developed area for each residential unit, as reflected in the table summarizing existing land use, an additional 62 acres will be converted to residential use by the year 2015.

Unity's increase in commercial or industrial acreage is likely to be due to growth in home businesses and natural resource related enterprises.

Factors such as a rural and scattered population, lack of water and sewer services, and relatively poor highway access, in combination, suggest that Unity will continue to experience seeing little growth in commercial and industrial land uses.

IV.

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

IV. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

INTRODUCTION

Unity's open space and the recreational opportunities made possible by open space constitute some of the Town's greatest potential, though currently undeveloped, assets. Both open space and recreation serve to create an identity for the Town and provide for the physical and cultural needs of the populace. All too often, open space and recreational resources are given secondary status in land use planning. The affects of neglecting these important community elements never appear instantly, but, rather, accumulate slowly, usually after these resources are irretrievably lost.

The people of Unity must understand the value and benefits of protecting open space for a variety of purposes, and they must understand the relationship between (and the effect of) open space and recreation and housing, education, property values, economic development (including tourism), and mental and physical health. The Town should be aware of and plan for both the long-term and short-term effects of growth, and must actively guide this growth in the direction that meets the Town's economic and social needs without having a negative effect on its environment and the quality of life of its citizens.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The Community Attitude Survey, conducted in Unity in 1992, to poll residents' needs and preferences regarding future planning activities, includes several questions relating to open space and recreation. Based on the survey, open space and recreation emerge as important priorities to Unity residents. The following is a summary of the applicable survey results:

1. An overwhelming majority of survey respondents (77%) like Unity as a good place to live because it is private, quiet and rural.
2. Preservation or protection of natural resources/assets was supported by the survey respondents as follows:
 - A. 90% supported protection of wildlife habitat;
 - B. 79% backed preservation of the shorelines of lakes and ponds;
 - C. 78% supported preservation of prime agricultural land;

- D. 74% favored preservation of the shorelines of rivers and streams;
 - E. 69% backed protection of wetlands;
 - F. 60% supported protection of scenic views;
 - G. 54% favored preservation of historic buildings and landmarks;
 - H. 54% supported protection of floodplains; and
 - I. 51% supported protection of steep slopes
3. Suggested locations to be conserved or protected included Slacks Falls, Perry Mountain, Crescent Lake, Marshall Pond, Gilman Pond, Center of Town and Potato Hill.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOALS

Based on the results of the community attitude survey and their knowledge of the community, the Planning Board has adopted the following open space and recreation goals:

- 1. maintain the Town's rural and village character and scenic beauty;
- 2. encourage continued use of the Town's best farmlands;
- 3. recognize the development limits on wetlands, steep slopes and floodplains;
- 4. protect the quantity and quality of the Town's water resources; and
- 5. expand the Town's park and recreational facilities.

OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL AREAS

Unity's open spaces include: forest land; open land, such as cultivated land, pastures, meadows and open fields; flood plains; water bodies; wetlands; and recreational land. The pattern of open spaces between structures and villages is a key element in defining the character of a town. Forest is by far the most prevalent type of open space. The benefits of open space include the following:

- 1. expanses of unbroken open space embody the rural atmosphere of Unity and mirror the archetype of traditional New Hampshire landscape;

2. provides scenic views that contribute to the quality of life in Town and the promotion of tourism;
3. helps to support wildlife;
4. protects potential water supplies, existing aquifers and groundwater recharge areas;
5. provides flood protection;
6. protects unique natural areas;
7. contributes to the purification of local air supplies;
8. provides buffers from negative sights and sounds;
9. is consistent with the preservation of agriculture and forestry; and
10. ensures minimal fiscal impact upon the Town government, whereas development can have either a positive or a negative fiscal impact.

Some of Unity's undeveloped land is in current use, which is a reduced assessment designed to tax land at its "current use" value rather than its "highest and best use" value, which is often development. Authorized by RSA 79A, current use assessment provides for reduced assessments on parcels of field, farm, forest and wetland of 10 acres or more, natural preserves or recreation land of any size, or farmland of any size generating annual revenues greater than \$2,500. Once in the program, the land cannot be developed without a penalty imposed upon the current owner.

In 1993, approximately 64% of the total land area in Unity was listed under current use. The following table provides a summary of current use by category.

TABLE IV-1
INVENTORY OF CURRENT USE
UNITY, 1993
 (As of December, 1993)

Category	# of Acres
Farm	804.64
Forest	10,785.77
Unproductive	2,548.63
Total Lot	590.30
Total	14,829.34

Source: Tax Book, Unity Town Office

A Conservation Commission was formed for Unity in March 1987. This group has been active in understanding, inventorying and protecting Unity's open space and natural resources.

Agriculture

Agriculture has been one of the most important forms of open space in a community. In addition to the production of crops and livestock, farms provide scenic vistas and help create rural character.

Farming was a major form of economic activity in Unity during the 1800's. However, as the population migrated to the cities and more fertile lands in the Midwest, many farms have been abandoned, with fields and pastures growing up to bushes, saplings and, finally, renewed forests. Today, there are very few farms left in Unity and many fields sit idle. The significance of farming should not be underestimated, however.

Full-time farming which provides the only source of family income is on its last legs in Unity. A number of factors have contributed to this situation, with the property tax based education system playing no small part. The future for farming in Unity, as it is with many of the communities in this Region, is with the smaller sized, part-time farm operations. These small farmettes or ranchettes, ranging in size from 5 to 40 acres, sometimes provide a secondary income or, often more importantly, provide an opportunity for an active, rural lifestyle. Individually,

they may not account for much, but cumulatively they can be a significant factor in adding to the rural character of the community.

Benefits of Farmland

The preservation of existing and potential farmland has several important benefits to the Town. Farmland preservation:

1. helps maintain the Town's rural character, which residents identified as the most desirable aspect of Unity;
2. provides open space and scenic views, while making productive use of the land; and
3. provides an important habitat for wildlife - encouraging farmland is one of the best ways to encourage wildlife, especially deer, turkeys, bluebirds, sparrow hawks and woodcocks.

Forests

As discussed earlier, most of Unity's open space and, indeed, land area lies under forest cover. Like many towns in Sullivan County and Northern New Hampshire, Unity's forests represent a major asset to the Town, as well as serving as the Town's dominant land use pattern.

Unity's extensive forests have several functions and benefits. These include:

1. to provide a permanent supply of fuel wood, lumber and other wood products;
2. to hold soil in place, especially on hillsides, where deforestation diminishes the soil's ability to absorb and hold water, and results in the erosion of slopes, sedimentation in streams and lakes, and more frequent and severe flooding;
3. to provide natural wildlife habitats;
4. to offer areas for outdoor recreational opportunities such as hiking, skiing, hunting and camping;
5. to act as a screen or buffer of sights, sounds and the wind; and
6. to provide natural beauty and scenic views for both residents and tourists, especially in the fall.

A number of factors suggest that there is an increased need to develop policies which specifically address land use issues relating to Unity's forests, including:

1. the Region's rapid growth is placing new pressures on forest land for conversion to more intensive uses;
2. housing development on the fringes of large tracts of forested land increases the dangers of forest fires and also increases the threat to life and property should a fire occur;
3. national demand for lumber and finished wood products has driven up the price of lumber over the past decade, making timber harvesting increasingly attractive to woodlot owners;
4. high energy costs and the uncertainty of energy supplies have spurred a rapidly expanding fuel wood market, placing additional pressures on our forests as an energy resource; and
5. ownership of forest land is increasingly fragmented, complicating educational efforts directed toward forest management. Land areas with steep slopes are especially sensitive to forest cutting, due to the potential for erosion and surface water runoff. Much of the commercially marketable forest land in Unity is located on steep slopes. All tree-cutting operations on steep slopes should be closely monitored, especially areas containing potential firewood stands, which are susceptible to improper cutting practices by "non-professionals". Surface drainage patterns and surface waters can also be affected by logging operations, in that the removal of vegetative cover increases the velocity of stormwater runoff and sedimentation. Almost every stream, brook, pond and lake in Unity could be damaged in this manner.

Tree Farms

According to the County Extension Forester, in 1994 there were four certified tree farms in Unity, covering an estimated total of 1,304 acres, which is just under 6% of the total land area in Town. These forest lands must be managed in a manner which will assure continuous production of commercial forest crops in accordance with forestry practices approved by the American Forest Institute.

**TABLE IV-2
CERTIFIED TREE FARMERS
UNITY, 1994**

Owner	Acreage
Sulo Kanto	32
Donald Wright	45
Austin Strout	27
Sullivan County Home	1,200

Source: Steve Wood, Sullivan County Extension Forester

WATER RESOURCES

Water bodies cover 0.5%, or 128 acres, of the Town of Unity. Unity's major water bodies include Gilman Pond and Marshall Pond, while it shares Crescent Lake with the Town of Acworth. In 1992, the County of Sullivan granted the Town of Unity a Conservation Easement on 230 acres encompassing Marshall Pond. The purpose of the easement is to preserve the land and to protect Marshall Pond. Gilman Pond is currently one source for the community water system in Newport. Along with streams and brooks, such surface water is important for its recreational, scenic, firefighting and wildlife potential. There are not currently any public access points to the ponds and lakes in Unity.

**TABLE IV-3
INVENTORY OF LAKES IN UNITY**

Gilman Pond

Size

Area: 67 acres
Length: 1.5 miles
Elevation: 1,267 ft.
Average Depth: 30 ft.
Maximum Depth Sounded: 56 ft.

Description

Color: colorless
Bottom: 20% gravel, 60% muck,
25% sand, 5% rock
Emergent Veg.: scant
Submerged Veg.: scant
Shore: 100% meadow

Marshall Pond

Size

Area: 14 acres
Length: 0.9 miles
Elevation: 1,630 ft.
Average Depth: 10 ft.
Maximum Depth Sounded: 14 ft.

Description

Color: colorless
Bottom: 100% muck
Emergent Veg.: common
Submerged Veg.: common
Shore: 90% wooded, 10% bog

Crescent Lake

Size

Area: 116 acres
Length: 3.2 miles
Elevation: 1,215 ft.
Average Depth: 12 ft.
Maximum Depth Sounded: 21 ft.

Description

Color: colorless
Bottom: 80% muck, 10% gravel,
10% rock
Emergent Veg.: common
Submerged Veg.: abundant
Shore: 100% wooded

Source: County Conservation District, "Inventory of Lakes, Ponds
and Reservoirs in Sullivan County"

Unity waterways include Quabbinnight, Meadow, Spring, Sleeper, Copeland, Sawyer and Chase Brooks, and the Little Sugar River. These waterways provide storm drainage, wildlife habitat, and both active and passive recreational opportunities. As protection against pollution and sedimentation, land within 75 feet of these streams should not be developed.

For a long time wetlands were considered useless, but are now increasingly appreciated for the benefits associated with flood control, wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge and recreation. Wetlands include high water table soils, marshes, bogs and floodplains. The Town should work to inventory and then protect its wetlands through a comprehensive wetlands ordinance.

SCENIC VIEWS

The varying topography of Unity affords Town residents and visitors numerous scenic views which contribute to the Town's unique character. The following list identifies places in the community where significant views are visible from the roadside. Some of these should be considered for "pull-off" and/or picnic areas, while some may warrant the negotiation of scenic easements, development rights or outright purchase. In addition, tree-cutting practices and sign ordinances should be established which will ensure that Unity's residents and visitors will be able to enjoy these beautiful views in the years ahead.

The visual quality of the subjects of these views should also be protected. Development on the Town's hilltops would significantly alter the Town's rural character, and clear-cut logging operations on hillsides can turn beautiful scenes into marred landscapes overnight.

**TABLE IV-4
SCENIC VISTAS IN UNITY**

<u>Location</u>
Mica Mines
"The Knob", West Unity
Gooseneck Hill
Straw Hill
Perry Mountain
Glidden Hill
Potato Hill
Gilman Pond
Marshall Pond

SCENIC SITES

Related to scenic views, there are numerous unique and scenic areas in Unity which merit special consideration and protection. The following table constitutes a partial inventory of these scenic sites. Emphasis should be given to preserving and enhancing both the visual quality and public access to these areas.

**TABLE IV -5
UNIQUE AND SCENIC AREAS IN UNITY**

Location	Description
Mica Mine	Minerals, views
Slacks Waterfalls	Granite gorge, wooded
Old Stone Dam	Fieldstone Dam
Mineral Springs	Remains of bath & spa site
Quartz Deposits	First Chlorophyllite found in Geodetic Survey
Drinking water springs	
Soldier's Grave	
Rock on Butcher Knife Turn	

Note: See also sites and structures in Historic Resources Chapter

SCENIC ROADS

An important piece of state legislation with respect to scenic views along town roads, is Scenic Roads (RSA 253: Sections 17 and 18). This law allows towns to designate, by town meeting vote, any road (other than Class I or Class II state highways) as a Scenic Road. For a more thorough discussion of Scenic Roads, please refer to this same section of the 1986 Master Plan. Unity, to date, has no roads designated as Scenic Roads, but there are numerous roads which could be so designated.

WILDLIFE

Unity has numerous fields, forests, wetlands and water bodies which serve as important wildlife habitats for the Town. For a thorough description of these wildlife resources and areas in Unity, please refer to this section of the 1986 Master Plan.

Benefits of Wildlife

The conservation and encouragement of wildlife has several important benefits to the Town. Conserving and encouraging wildlife and wildlife habitat:

1. helps maintain the Town's rural character, which year-round residents and seasonal residents identified as the most desirable aspect of Unity;
2. provides open space and scenic views;
3. provides areas for educational and recreational activities;
4. helps maintain the balance of nature, which sooner or later has an effect on the human population;
5. provides areas for hunting, trapping and fishing, all of which have positive economic and recreational benefits to the Town;
6. is consistent with the preservation and encouragement of agriculture and forestry;
7. protects potential water supplies and existing aquifers and groundwater recharge areas;
8. provides flood protection;
9. protects unique and unusual natural areas, in some cases;
10. ensures a minimal fiscal impact on the Town, while development may have either a large positive or negative fiscal impact; and
11. provides natural buffers from sights, sounds and the wind.

RECREATION

Unity presently has extremely limited recreation facilities. The Town maintains a playground at the Unity School and also owns a variety of parcels scattered around Town which may have recreation potential. Due to the small number of residents, dispersed settlement and large amounts of open space, Unity does not have to offer the number of man-made facilities which would be necessary in concentrated urban areas. However, recreational facilities remain an essential element of the services provided by any responsive New Hampshire community for its citizens. For Unity, improved recreational opportunities should be a high priority.

Recreational opportunities are both passive and active, and are offered publicly and commercially. The following section describes Unity's, and the Region's, outdoor, indoor and commercial recreational facilities and programs, and recommends improvements in an effort to meet the needs of residents and visitors, and to attain the Town's potential.

The only existing recreation facility is the School yard, where the asphalt parking lot doubles as a playground with a basketball hoop.

RECREATION FACILITY ASSESSMENT, UNITY, 1994

Recreation standards have been developed by the Regional Planning Commission in order to assess the adequacy of local recreational facilities to meet population demands. These standards should be applied with caution, since they represent, at best, flexible, general guidelines; they may be modified to reflect Unity's local conditions in order to provide an accurate evaluation of the Town's actual recreation demands.

Recreation Facility

Ballfields

Suggested Standard: 1 per 1,000 population

Present Facilities: None

Adequacy: Inadequate

Playgrounds

Suggested Standard: 1 per school

1 per 750 population

Present Facilities: 1 at Unity School

Adequacy: Inadequate

Beaches (public)

Suggested Standard: 1 per water body

300' frontage per 1,000 population

2 acres per 1,000 population

Present Facilities: No public beaches; only private beaches

Adequacy: Inadequate

PUBLIC RECREATION FACILITIES WITHIN 25 MILES OF UNITY

Owing to the lack of Town owned recreational facilities, state and federal recreational opportunities take on added significance. There are an abundance of state and federal recreation facilities, offering a variety of alternative recreational opportunities, within a one-half hour drive

of Unity. For a complete listing of those recreation opportunities, including access points to public water, river classification and bikeways, please refer to the Open Space and Recreation Chapter of the 1986 Unity Master Plan. Additionally, the same chapter of the 1986 Master Plan includes a comprehensive listing of commercial recreation opportunities located within a twenty-five mile radius of Unity.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Discourage development in outer lying areas of Unity. These undeveloped outer lying areas of Unity are typically forested areas with rugged terrain that offer natural scenic beauty. These areas often are characterized by large tracts in single ownership served by narrow, gravel roads in poor shape. The provision of Town services is both difficult and expensive because these outlying areas are farthest from the centrally located Town facilities and services.

Forestry, agriculture and low-density housing are appropriate uses for these outlying areas. By encouraging these uses, and discouraging more intensive development, the Town will:

- A. help keep property taxes low;
 - B. encourage residents to live in areas where emergency services can be provided quickly and economically;
 - C. preserve areas for commercial forestry and agriculture;
 - D. provide areas for outdoor recreation;
 - E. encourage wildlife, especially those species which need to roam over large areas; and
 - F. conserve energy.
2. Add to the conservation-recreation fund to buy land, or the development rights to land, for open space, agricultural, forestry, wildlife conservation and recreational purposes. It is recommended that Unity appropriate, each year, an amount equal to one percent of the Town's annual net appropriations. As landowners show an interest in conserving land, or as appropriate parcels become available at a low price, the Town can purchase the development rights for these parcels (or purchase outright), to permanently protect open space for the enjoyment of all residents in the future. If there are no suitable agreements, not enough money for a certain parcel, or no available parcels in any given year, the funds appropriated during the year should be carried over and added to the funds generated in

the following year. The fund could also be used as a method for accepting private donations.

3. Require developers to reserve common areas of open space for recreational purposes in all major proposed residential developments. The land set aside for parks and playgrounds should be reserved for the common use of all property owners in the subdivision by covenant in the deed and should be of reasonable size, character and location for neighborhood playgrounds or other recreational uses.
4. Protect and enhance some of Unity's scenic views. The Town is blessed with several spectacular views which contribute to the quality of life of year-round residents, and are an economic advantage, in that they make Unity attractive for tourists and seasonal residents. Some of the views identified in this chapter can be protected by negotiating deed restrictions with property owners to keep the views free from obstructions, or through hilltop development. Scenic roads and improved public access for scenic sites and areas should also be considered, as well as cleaning up some of Unity's unique scenic areas.
5. Preserve and encourage agriculture, forestry and wildlife in Unity.
6. Provide additional public open space along the shoreline of ponds and rivers in the Town. The relatively recent acquisition of a conservation easement around Marshall Pond is an excellent step in implementing this recommendation.
7. Encourage deed restrictions and conservation agreements to protect agricultural land (RSA:477:45).
8. Encourage future residential, commercial and industrial growth into locations which are on non-agricultural soils. There is ample non-agricultural land for future development.
9. Keep an accurate up-to-date list of existing agricultural operations, including acreages, levels of products being produced and methods of marketing.
10. Encourage local stores and institutions to purchase local agricultural products and to make it known that they are serving or selling local products.
11. Support current use land programs.
12. Ensure that any future land use regulation specifies that existing and future farms in rural areas will not be unduly restricted with respect to odor, light and noise.
13. Encourage efforts aimed at educating the public about agricultural techniques, food storage and processing, marketing and nutrition.

14. Encourage landowners to seek technical forestry expertise to develop a forest management plan for any area which will be logged. The professional forester can help the landowner develop a plan which will avoid environmental problems and ensure a long-term sustained yield. He can also inform the landowner about the quantity and market value of his forest, and, in some cases, prevent loggers from taking advantage of uninformed landowners.
15. Utilize the Regional Forester to advise landowners, develop and enforce management plans, avoid potential environmental problems, and enforce the yield tax. The Town of Unity currently receives 10% of the stumpage value as a yield tax, representing a value of about \$10,000 in 1984. Since there is a potential for some of the yield to go unreported, enforcement of the yield tax would likely cover the cost of the Town's share of a Regional Forester, thereby providing a free service to landowners and the Town as a whole. Another alternative is to charge the Police Department with the responsibility of enforcement. The Town could require that they stop at logging sites as they patrol the Town to ensure that loggers have filed an accurate permit with the Town. Some towns have used this approach successfully.
16. Support enforcement of the state's timber harvesting laws, particularly on sites with steep slopes, where erosion and sedimentation can cause significant environmental impact.
17. Unity should adopt a Wetlands Conservation Ordinance. Wetlands are essential habitats for many species of wildlife.
18. Encourage "soft edges", which are transitional areas between woodlands and open fields. Many species rely upon this type of habitat.
19. Minimum lot sizes should be fairly large in the outlying areas. Many wildlife species need large, undisturbed natural areas.
20. Enforce regulations which are designed to protect water quality.
21. The decline of the fish population in our lakes, ponds and streams must be stopped. The Town should:
 - A. prevent the diversion and pollution of small and large tributaries which result from development on the lakeshore and adjacent areas;
 - B. whenever possible, the Town should encourage landowners to leave their shorefronts in a natural state. Rocky shorelines provide an important wildlife habitat. Changing a rocky shore to a sandy beach creates a "biological desert" which destroys the food base for both fish and small mammals such as mink and otter. In addition, grass lawns planted along the shoreline are usually fertilized, contributing to the nutrient levels in the lake and the growth of algae.

22. The Town should actively pressure state and U.S. Senators and Representatives to support measures which will alleviate the acid rain problem. Acid rain (and snow) changes the chemistry of lakes so they are unable to support fish life, which will seriously upset the balance of nature.
23. Support the Conservation Commission to be responsible, in part, for preserving and encouraging agriculture in the Town. The Conservation Commission should work with the other Town boards and officials, local farmers, residents, businesses and relevant agencies to achieve this goal.
24. Adopt a Steep Slopes and Erosion and Sedimentation Ordinance.
25. Require adequate setbacks and other regulations to protect the Town's water resources from pollution or sedimentation.
26. Designate certain roads (or all roads) in Unity as scenic roads, to help preserve their scenic qualities and ensure public input prior to removal of stone walls and medium and large-sized trees.
27. Future needs of the Town of Unity for outdoor recreation facilities include: at least one all-purpose ballfield, additional playgrounds, parks and picnic areas, and public beaches. A plan should be prepared to develop these facilities gradually over the next ten years.
28. Establish a capital improvements program to implement recommendations in this chapter which require large Town appropriations. These projects should be ranked by priority and phased over several years.
29. Encourage organizations in Unity to help with park improvement projects and to help organize and sponsor special events. Some organizations and individuals have already helped the Town with many projects. This "self help" approach should be continued in the future to assist in implementing many of the recommendations in this chapter.
30. Improve park land, open space and public access along all water bodies in Unity.
31. Establish a Recreation Commission to oversee creation of recreational programs and areas.
32. The Town should consider applying for a Land & Water Conservation Fund grant to help establish park or recreational facilities.
33. Conveniently locate all recreation and park facilities, and provide adequate access and parking.

34. Provide a neighborhood park/playground in every residential neighborhood to serve the residents of that neighborhood.
35. Continue to maintain and develop cooperative agreements between the Town and the School District for recreational facilities to maximize public use and benefit, and to minimize costs.
36. Keep all recreational facilities well maintained and attractive.
37. Set aside certain park and conservation areas to preserve wildlife habitats and natural areas in general, while providing a necessary escape from noise, congestion and the built environment.
38. Ensure that the recreation needs of all segments of the population, including the poor, the handicapped and the elderly, will be addressed by the local recreation program.

V.

**COMMUNITY FACILITIES
& SERVICES**

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

The provision of public services is an important element in protecting the health, safety and general welfare of the community. Unity's community facilities are physical manifestations of services which provide local residents with police and fire protection, access to reading materials, road maintenance, education, waste disposal and meeting rooms.

The need for additional public services and facilities increases as the population grows, residential areas expand, old facilities become outmoded, and as living standards and public expectations rise. Most of these facilities and services are funded through local property taxes.

The following chapter is divided into sections, each addressing a specific community facility or service. They are the Town Office, Town Hall, Police Protection, Fire Protection, Highway Department, Library, Solid Waste and Education.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The Unity Planning Board conducted a survey of the Town's residents in 1992 to help determine the Town's needs and preferences with respect to future planning activities. The following is a brief summary of the survey results relating to community facilities and services.

1. The Town Hall is considered to be one of the most significant historic buildings in Town.
2. The survey respondents rated Unity's services as shown in the following table:

Service	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
Snow Plowing	55%	19%	7%	19%
Fire Protection	42%	17%	3%	37%
Solid Waste/Recycling	34%	24%	10%	33%
Ambulance/Fast Squad	32%	13%	2%	53%
Road Repairs	27%	35%	25%	14%
Police Protection	21%	27%	21%	31%
Library Service	19%	17%	7%	56%
Educational System	15%	24%	11%	50%

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOALS

On the basis of the survey results and their knowledge of the community, the Planning Board has adopted the following goals:

1. provide community services (e.g., schools, library, public safety and utilities) at a level equal to or better than currently provided;
2. expand the Town's park and recreational facilities;
3. provide for a moderate rate of growth in keeping with the Town's capacity to provide for community services; and
4. improve existing roads and promote the high quality of new roads.

TOWN OFFICE

The Unity Town Office is located in the Elementary School on the Second N.H. Turnpike in Unity Center. The Town Office was built as an addition to the school in 1981 and has been used since 1982. The 20' x 16' room houses the Secretary to the Selectmen, Town Clerk and Tax Collector. It is also used for meetings of the Selectmen and Planning Board. Meetings with a large turnout are moved to the Town Hall.

The Town Office is obviously too small; more space is clearly needed to meet current and future needs. The new space should allow the Town Office to be divided by functions: Selectmen and Selectmen's Secretary; Town Clerk and Tax Collector; and Planning Board. The current office space generates too much confusion, with one or more staff members dealing with the public while others are trying to concentrate and complete their work.

Unity should seriously consider relocating the Town Office for two reasons. First, a new location will provide a suitable working environment, hopefully, with the capacity for future expansion. Secondly, the school may have to expand in the future and may need the room for a new classroom or other space.

TOWN HALL

The Unity Town Hall is considered by local residents as the most significant historic building in the Town and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Federal style structure, built in 1831 as a Baptist Church, was sold to the Town in 1877 for use as the Town Hall. The

sale (at auction for \$25) included the condition that any religious group which wanted to use the meeting room would be accommodated.

The Town Hall is in good condition. The Town of Unity, with the assistance of Community Development Block Grant funds, rehabilitated the Town Hall for use as a community senior center, a health care center and a day care center. The rehabilitation funds were not sufficient to refurbish and reattach the old bell tower on the Town Hall, which should be done when funds become available to complete the rehabilitation project.

LIBRARY

The Unity Free Library is located in the front of the Elementary School in Unity Center. The Library used to be located in the Town Hall, but was moved to the School in 1982 after an addition to the School was completed. The Library serves as both the Town and the School Library, and is used for other Town and School activities. The Library currently has 458 linear feet of shelf space and 2,658 accessioned volumes in its collection. Several hundred additional volumes are waiting to be accessioned. The American Library Association recommends a ratio of three to five volumes per capita as a standard for population size. This would indicate that Unity's current collection size falls short of this suggested standard and has not kept pace with the community's recent population growth.

In addition to the book collection, the library maintains small collections of records, videos, video cassettes and periodicals. Additionally, the library offers a free interlibrary loan program tied into other area libraries and the State Library.

There is currently some concern on the part of Library staff that the location of the Town Library within the School results in somewhat of an identity problem on the part of citizens who assume it to be only a School Library. Greater publicity could mitigate this perceived problem.

FIRE PROTECTION

The Unity Volunteer Fire Department Station is located in Unity Center. The Fire Station is adjacent to the Town common and is about 200 yards from the Town Hall and 400 yards from the Elementary School.

The two-story, wood structure originally was built as a schoolhouse and became the Fire Station in 1963. An addition was constructed in 1974. It has two bays which are 80 feet deep and can house up to six (6) trucks. The first floor also contains two furnace rooms, a kitchen and two bathrooms. The second floor has a kitchen, two bathrooms and a meeting room.

The Volunteer Fire Department is a non-profit organization. The Department is supported by Town appropriations and private donations. The list of Fire Department vehicles is outlined below.

**TABLE V-1
INVENTORY OF FIRE TRUCKS
UNITY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT, 1994**

Year	Make/Model	Cost New	Replacement Cost
1959	Mack	\$20,000	
1961	FWD F4-1029 Truck	\$80,000	
1975	Chevrolet C60 Truck	\$15,000	
1984	Chevrolet C70 Truck	\$120,000	
1985	Chevrolet C30 Van	\$15,500	
1988	Chevrolet Cab & Chasis	\$42,000	
1982	Ford Lexington		

SOURCE: Unity Volunteer Fire Department

The Department also has six portable radios, pagers and miscellaneous tools and equipment.

The Town has started a dry hydrant program which should be continued to provide better fire protection. The Department does maintain a small fire pond near the Station, and there is a hydrant at the County Home, but more sources throughout the Town are needed.

The Volunteer Fire Department is a member of the Southwestern Mutual Aid and dispatch services are provided by the Keene Fire Department. The Department has developed an outstanding grid map system, dividing the Town into quarter-mile squares and assigning coded numbers to each structure. This system greatly increases the Department's ability to respond to fires quickly, reducing the amount of property damage and enhancing public safety. Additionally, a house numbering system is being developed as part of the E911 service. Once developed, the Fire Department intends to overlap this house numbering system with the grid system they have developed and use both systems in concert.

POLICE PROTECTION

Unity has two part-time police officers, with at least one person on-call 24 hours per day. The State Police (Troop C in Keene) and County Sheriff also provide police protection. In 1986, the police moved from the Town Hall to the Fire Station, greatly improving Unity's police facilities. The \$2,500 addition on the side of the Fire Station provides a 13' x 42' heated area for administration, storage and vehicular space. The Town does not have a cell lock-up, so prisoners are transported to either Newport or Claremont. Police dispatch is handled by Valley Dispatch in Claremont.

SOLID WASTE

The Town landfill is located on North End Road on a 15.2 acre site which has fairly good soil conditions. It is estimated that Unity generated about 857 tons of refuse each year as of 1990. This figure will, obviously, increase as the Town's population increases in the future. Located at the landfill are a compactor and recycling facilities. Items which are recycled include glass, aluminum cans, newspaper, corrugated cardboard, metals, PET plastics and waste oil.

The Town's future plans regarding solid waste disposal are uncertain at this time. The Town has funded a study to examine landfill closure plans to meet state and federal guidelines, and to evaluate and determine the best alternative solid waste disposal option for Unity. Additionally, the Town is reviewing the options for recycling.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

The Town Garage is located in Unity Center, next to the Fire Station. Built in the early 1970's, the one-story concrete block structure has two bays and a small storage area. The building is insulated and heated.

The Town Garage is located adjacent to the Fire Station, although the two areas are well separated. Currently, sand is piled outside. Additional sheltered storage for other equipment and materials is available.

The Highway Department has three full-time employees. The following table provides a list of Highway Department equipment and their associated values.

TABLE V-2
INVENTORY OF HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT EQUIPMENT, 1984

Year	Make/Model	Cost New	Replacement Cost
1958	Austin Grader	\$15,000	\$125,000
1970	International C-100 Backhoe	\$10,000	\$ 50,000
1975	Huber Grader	\$32,000	\$125,000
1978	Ford Dump Truck	\$ 7,500	\$ 22,500
1983	International Truck	\$13,025	\$ 35,000
1984	Ford Dump Truck	\$ 5,000	\$ 22,500
1987	Ford 6 WH Dump Truck	\$25,000	\$ 50,000
1990	John Deere 544C Bucket Loader	\$50,000	\$ 85,000
1991	Ford Backhoe	\$42,000	\$ 65,000
1993	Ford F350 Truck	\$23,575	\$ 28,000

SOURCE: Unity Town Office

HEALTH SERVICES

The Newport Area Home Health Agency provides visiting nurses and other health-related services to the Town of Unity. With the completion of the Town Hall renovation, the visiting nurses will now have a location in Unity to provide those services. The Town appropriates money each year to support those services.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

Unity's ambulance service is currently provided by Golden Cross in Claremont. The Town annually supports the ambulance service through a Town appropriation. Unity is currently investigating ways of providing more effective ambulance service throughout Town.

CEMETERIES

Unity has three active and two inactive cemeteries which are maintained by the Town. The cost for cemetery maintenance is appropriated annually. With these existing cemeteries nearing capacity, additional cemetery space will be needed in the future.

EDUCATION

The Unity Elementary School is located in Unity Center. Built in 1955, the school originally consisted of four classrooms and a cafeteria on a 7.2 acre site. A new addition was constructed in 1981, adding three new classrooms, a joint school/town library and the Town Office. At the same time, the school's septic system was replaced with a new system and energy conservation improvements were made.

Students attend school in Unity until they reach the ninth grade, when they have their choice of attending a neighboring high school. The Town has a formal agreement with Claremont, ensuring that Unity students will be able to attend their high school. East Unity students are required to go to Newport High School unless their parents make other arrangements; the district boundary being in the center of Town. Other schools, such as Newport and Sunapee, can decide not to accept Unity's tuition students if they so desire. The Town pays all of the tuition for students who attend high school in Claremont and Newport, and part of the tuition at Sunapee High School, with the parents paying the balance. Transportation of high school students is the responsibility of parents (no bus).

The school does not have a gymnasium or outdoor recreation facilities, other than a small playground and two soccer nets in the school yard, a basketball net in the parking lot and two volleyball courts. Parking appears to be inadequate, especially during the winter months. The combined parking lot/playground area is certainly not desirable.

Enrollment Trends

The following table shows enrollment trends at the Unity Elementary School for the period 1984 to 1993. Over this ten year period, the enrollments ranged from a low of 115 in 1991-92, to a high of 150 in 1984-85. During this period, the average enrollment was 123 students.

**TABLE V-3
ENROLLMENT TRENDS
UNITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1970-1984**

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
1984-85	16	18	15	18	19	11	22	31	150
1985-86	21	10	8	16	17	13	23	14	122
1986-87	19	11	7	19	18	13	23	12	122
1987-88	17	15	14	12	7	19	17	16	117
1988-89	17	13	15	13	7	19	17	18	119
1989-90	24	11	17	16	14	8	19	16	125
1990-91	12	23	11	16	15	15	8	19	119
1991-92	12	13	24	10	15	17	16	8	115
1992-93	19	14	11	17	24	10	12	17	123
1993-94	18	13	14	14	21	10	12	17	119

SOURCE: Supervisory Union #6

Projecting the future enrollment of the Unity Elementary School is virtually impossible, due to the small number of students and the potential impact of development. A single 20-lot subdivision, for example, could add 20-40 students. The Town should carefully monitor its school enrollment levels and consider the impact of development on future school facilities and costs.

The following table shows enrollment trends of Unity high school-age students enrolled at Claremont, Newport, Fall Mountain and Sunapee High Schools. As reflected below, the enrollment of high school tuition students from Unity ranged from a high of 90 in 1985-86, to a low of 58 in 1992-93. Over this period, the average enrollment was 63 students.

**TABLE V-4
ENROLLMENT TRENDS
HIGH SCHOOL TUITION STUDENTS**

Year	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
1984-85	23	21	12	15	71
1985-86	38	23	19	10	90
1986-87	23	23	17	17	80
1987-88	16	17	18	17	68
1988-89	22	14	13	17	66
1989-90	27	13	15	12	67
1990-91	23	15	16	8	62
1991-92	20	17	15	16	68
1992-93	13	15	14	16	58

SOURCE: Unity Town Reports

The information above indicates that the enrollment at the Unity Elementary School and the high school tuition student enrollment both peaked in 1985-86 and have shown a general decline since then. These school enrollments seem to be mirroring the changes in the economy. The elementary school appears to meet present needs, but may need to be expanded in the future if the enrollments increase with an improving economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Prepare and update annually a 10-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to plan major capital expenditures and help spread the costs evenly over time.
2. Ensure that population and business growth will occur at a slow to moderate rate and not out-pace the Town's ability to provide community facilities and services.

3. Consider the impact of specific development proposals on Unity's community facilities and services. This should involve a number of factors, including, but not limited to, fiscal impact, the current and projected capacity of the facilities, location, and relationship to the CIP.
4. Provide handicapped access to all public buildings and facilities in Unity.
5. Emphasize the prevention of fires, accidents, and other health and safety problems.
6. Make access for fire engines and emergency vehicles a major consideration in evaluating the location and design of proposed subdivisions and developments.
7. Avoid long, dead-end streets to provide two potential means of access for fire trucks and other emergency vehicles.
8. Discourage development in outlying areas to minimize municipal service costs, maximize the response time for emergency vehicles, and create a more desirable land use pattern.
9. Limit building heights to ensure that each floor and roof can be reached by the Fire Department.
10. Locate community facilities in central, convenient locations with good access. Facilities for emergency services (police, fire) should be highly visible.
11. Whenever possible, create community facilities which are multipurpose to maximize public use and benefit.
12. All community facility buildings should be energy-efficient and have adequate space and parking.
13. Dispose of all solid waste in an economical, cost-effective and environmentally sound manner.
14. Avoid duplication and overlap of municipal services and responsibilities.
15. Whenever feasible, provide community services on a regional basis to minimize costs and/or ensure a higher level of service.
16. Participate in regional planning efforts, as growth in neighboring communities has a significant impact on Unity's community facilities and services (especially roads, police, schools and solid waste).

17. Specific recommendations for each facility are as follows:

A. Town Office

The Town Office should move out of the Elementary School to a new location offering a suitable working environment and the capacity for future expansion, thus, allowing for the utilization of the space by the school as needed in the future.

B. Town Hall

The Town Hall was recently refurbished for use as a community senior center, a community health care center and a community day care center. The Town should continue to expand the use of this centrally located facility for other groups and organizations. Additionally, as funding permits, the Town should complete the building renovations by repairing and reattaching the tower on the old Town Hall.

C. Library

While space for the library is currently adequate, it is expected that additional space will become necessary in the near future and an appropriate solution should be studied with room for future expansion. In the short run, relocation of the Town Office could create additional space for future library needs.

D. Fire Protection

The Town should continue the dry hydrant program, a valuable method of providing better fire protection in rural areas.

Require and encourage the use of smoke and heat detectors.

Study and consider establishing a Capital Improvements Program to allow the Town to anticipate and plan for the purchase of major expenditures, such as fire equipment, and distribute these costs fairly and evenly over time.

Continued efforts should be made to improve the Fire Department by working with other fire departments in the mutual aid system.

E. Police Protection

The Police Station's current central, visible location at the Fire Station is good. The expense of replacing the Town's police cruiser should be included in the Capital Improvements Program.

F. Solid Waste

The Town should continue to explore environmentally-sound alternatives for solid waste disposal. A regional solution would seem to be the most appropriate and cost-effective solution to the Town's future needs.

G. Highway Department

Require high standards for road construction, which will help keep the Town's costs down.

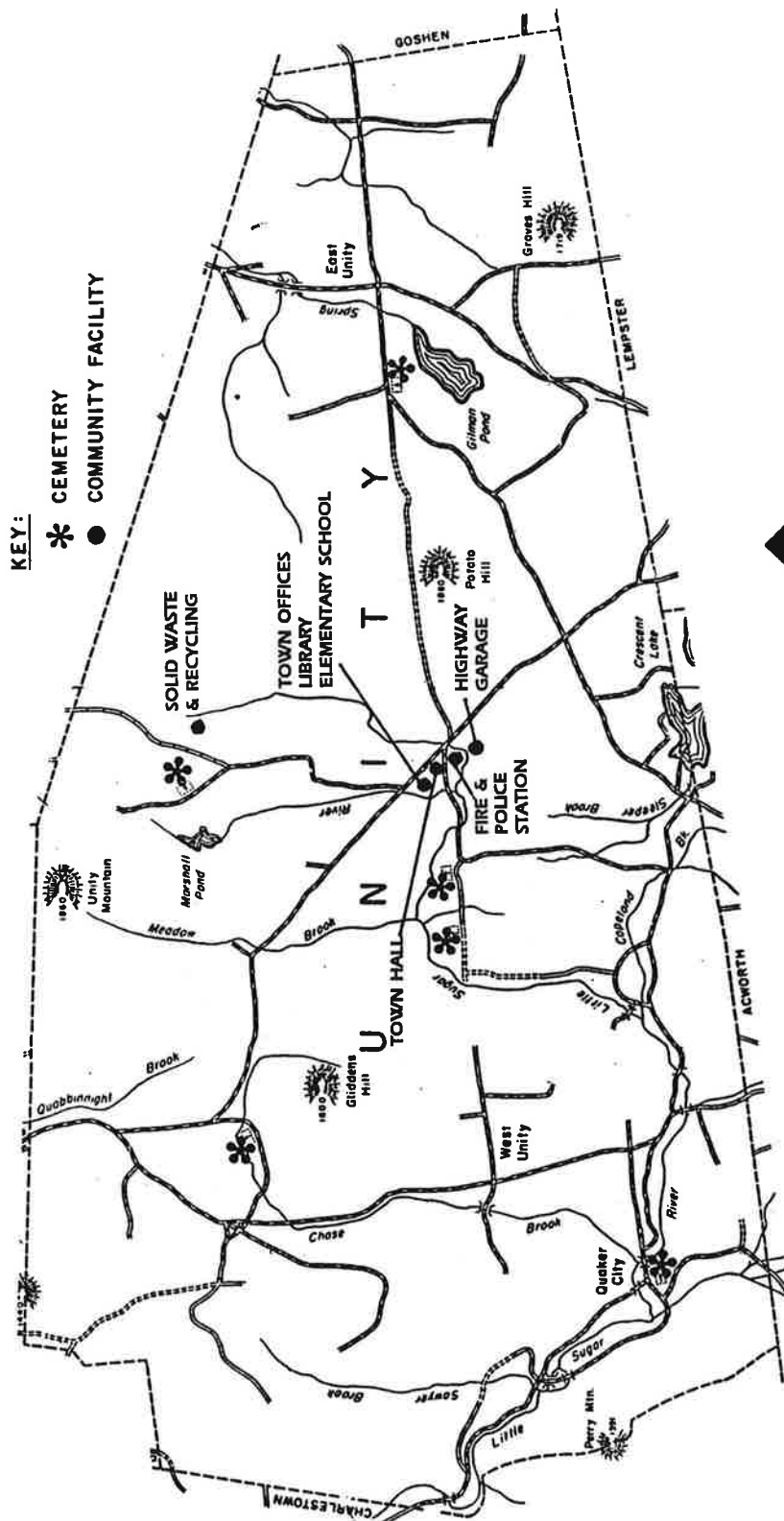
Continue to contribute to a Capital Reserve Fund to plan for the purchase of Highway Department vehicles and equipment.

H. School Building

The Unity Elementary School appears to be adequate for the Town's current needs.

Continue to upgrade the Unity Elementary School to meet future needs.

Relocation of the Town Office would create additional space which could serve future school expansion needs.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

UNITY, NEW HAMPSHIRE

MAP V-1



Upper Valley Lake Sunapee
Regional Planning Commission
199 Heater Road, Suite 1, Lebanon, NH 03766-1451

VI.

**PUBLIC ROADS
AND
TRANSPORTATION**

VI. PUBLIC ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

With population growth in the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region at about 1 percent per year, the need to plan a transportation network that will meet substantially greater and more diverse future needs and demands becomes evident. A strong interrelationship exists between development of the transportation system and economic growth; each will have an influence on directions the other takes. Thus, it is necessary to conduct transportation planning based upon both the economic environment that is projected to occur and that which is desired.

The 1992 Community Attitude Survey asked respondents to rate services in Unity. With respect to road repairs, respondents indicated the following: Good - 27%, Fair - 35%, Poor - 25%, and No Opinion - 14%. With regard to snow plowing service, the respondents had the following response: Good - 55%, Fair - 19%, Poor - 7%, and No Opinion - 19%.

This chapter provides an overview and evaluation of Unity's existing transportation system, a forecast of future changes and needs, and recommendations for improving the present transportation system and meeting these future demands.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The Unity Planning Board conducted a community attitude survey of the Town's property owners to help determine local needs and preferences with respect to future planning activities. The survey results pertaining to public roads and transportation are outlined below:

1. With respect to road maintenance and repairs, the survey respondents provided the following ratings: Good - 27%; Fair - 35%; Poor - 25%; and No Opinion - 14%.
2. With regard to snow plowing service, the surveyed property owners responded with the following ratings: Good - 55%; Fair - 19%; Poor - 7%; and No Opinion - 19%.

TRANSPORTATION GOALS

On the basis of the survey results, and their knowledge of the community, the Planning Board has adopted the following transportation goals:

1. Work with the State to maintain and improve the State highway network as it affects Unity.
2. Encourage development that promotes both safety and the effective flow of traffic.
3. Improve existing Town roads.
4. Promote the high quality of new roads.

PUBLIC ROAD SYSTEM

The public road system in Unity totals 65.10 miles. Table VI-1 presents a breakdown of road mileage by functional classification.

**TABLE VI-1
ROAD MILEAGE BY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION
TOWN OF UNITY**

Class	Description	Miles
II.	Secondary State highway system	12.67
V.	All highways for which a municipality is responsible for maintenance	43.04
VI.	Highways discontinued subject to gates and bars and not maintained by the Town for five successive years	9.39
Total		65.10

Source: Regional Transportation Plan of the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region - August 1992, based on data from the New Hampshire Department of Transportation

CONDITION OF TOWN ROAD SYSTEM

Unity's road system, overall, is in fair to poor condition. Roads particularly in need of improvement are Cross Road and the road to Charlestown.

The Town has recently developed a plan for upgrading the Town's roads. Funding of that road improvement plan begins in 1994.

ACCESS TO ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

An important piece of State Legislation pertinent to roads in Unity is Access to Highways (RSA 249, Section 17). The law states that anyone wishing to construct or substantially alter any driveway, entrance, exit or approach within the right-of-way of any Class I, Class III or the state-maintained portion of a Class II highway must apply for a permit with the N. H. Department of Public Works and Highways. The law outlines the standards for driveway accesses.

The Access to Highways law provides the Unity Planning Board with the power to regulate access to any Town roads. To carry this out, the Unity Planning Board has adopted Driveway Regulations.

OFF-SITE ROADS

Even if the new road in a subdivision meets the Town's specifications, the other roads in the area may not be adequate to handle the increased traffic resulting from the subdivision. In this case, the developer/subdivider should pay his proportion of the cost to upgrade these off-site roads. The extent of these improvements should bear a rational connection to the needs created by and the benefits conferred upon the subdivision. Factors to be used in determining the allocation of costs may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the standard to which the Town presently maintains the roads;
- the frontage of the proposed subdivision;
- the potential traffic increase necessitated by the proposed subdivision;
- the character and potential for development of the neighborhood served by these access roads;
- the number of residences presently fronting on or normally trafficking these roads; and
- compliance with the Town's Master Plan.

SCENIC ROADS

Another important piece of State Legislation with respect to town roads is Scenic Roads (RSA 253, Sections 17 and 18). This law allows towns to designate, by town meeting vote, any road (other than Class I or Class II state highways) as a Scenic Road. Abutting property owners must be notified of the proposed scenic road designation prior to the town meeting.

Once a road has been designated as a Scenic Road, any repair, maintenance, reconstruction or paving work shall not involve or include the cutting or removal of medium and large-sized trees (with a circumference of 15 inches or more at a point four feet from the ground), or the tearing down or destruction of stone walls, except with the prior written consent of the Planning Board or any other official town body designated at the town meeting to implement the law, and after a public hearing has been held.

The Scenic Law is flexible, however, in that it allows the road agent, without consent, to cut trees, shrubs, vegetation and any other natural or man-made obstructions within three feet of the road traveled way. In emergency situations, the highway superintendent may also cut and remove trees with the written consent of the Selectmen and without a public hearing.

Designation of a road as scenic does not affect the eligibility of the Town to receive state construction or reconstruction aid pursuant to the provisions of RSA 241. In addition, a scenic road designation does not affect the rights of any landowner with respect to work on his own property.

The main purpose of a scenic road designation is to help protect the scenic qualities of that road. To a town engineer, road agent or highway department employee, the trees and stone walls along the road may have no meaning; to the property owners who live on or travel along that road daily, the trees and stone walls may have a great deal of meaning in terms of visual quality and the rural character of the area. The designation of a road as scenic is a declaration by the Town that the road has important visual qualities which must be recognized and treated with care.

Trees can still be cut and stone walls can still be removed along scenic roads when there is good reason. Regular, routine maintenance and repairs of the road are not affected by this law. Perhaps most significantly, the designation of a road as scenic establishes a mechanism for public input before the highway department carries out its work. To property owners along the road, this opportunity is much preferred over having to react emotionally while the work is going on or after it has been completed.

CLASS VI ROADS

The Town of Unity has an extensive network of Class VI roads, totaling an estimated 20.5 miles. Under RSA 674:41, the Board of Selectmen has the discretion to authorize the issuance of building permits on Class VI Town roads, after review and comment by the Planning Board.

In studying this issue, the Planning Board has a number of concerns with approving building permits whose only access is provided by a Class VI Town road. These include:

1. concern that development along a Class VI road may lead to the receipt of either a petition to lay out the road as a Class V, Town maintained road or a petitioned warrant article requesting the Town Meeting to reclassify the Class VI road as Class V;
2. concern that development along Class VI roads might tend to drain existing Town services and force increased costs to the Town to provide additional services;
3. concern that any structures built on Class VI Town roads should be reasonably accessible to emergency vehicles twelve months of the year;
4. concern that the safety and property of people occupying or using those structures will not be unreasonably placed at risk; and
5. concern that the safety of emergency response personnel and/or their vehicles or equipment will not be unreasonably endangered.

The Planning Board thinks it is in the best long-term interest of the community not to issue building permits on a Class VI Town road unless the applicant upgrades the Class VI road to the standards specified in the Unity Subdivision Regulations or has provided security for the same.

ACCIDENT GENERATORS

Table VI-2 presents a summary of the number of accidents on roads in Unity for the years 1990 through 1993. The highest accident generator is Gilman Pond Road, with reported accidents totaling seventeen over the four year period. This was closely followed by the Second N.H. Turnpike and Stage Road, both of which totaled sixteen reported accidents over the four year span.

TABLE VI-2
NUMBER OF REPORTED ACCIDENTS IN UNITY
1990-1993

Road Name	1990	1991	1992	1993
Second NH Turnpike	6	2	2	6
Cemetery Road				1
Center Road	1	3		2
Chandlers Mill Road			1	
Cold Pond Road	2	2	1	7
Correytown Road	1			
County Farm Road				6
Crescent Lake Road	1			
East Unity Road	3	1	3	5
Egan Road			1	1
Gilman Pond Road	6	2	2	7
Lear Hill Road		2		
Mica Mine Road	3	1	1	
North Shore Road	1	1	1	
Pinewood Drive		1	1	
Quaker City Road				1
Sparling Hill Road	1		3	1
Stage Road	6	3	3	4
Straw Hill Road			1	1
Strout Road			1	
Unity Road	5	3	1	
West Unity Road	3	3	1	3
Totals	43	28	31	51

Source: Town of Unity Police Department

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue to fund the road improvement plan. The Board of Selectmen have developed a road improvement plan and began funding that plan in 1994. Funding should be continued in subsequent years to implement that plan.
2. Continue to require adequate road standards for new subdivisions. By requiring that a road be constructed properly, the Town can avoid unnecessary expenditures and problems.
3. Consider the effect which proposed subdivisions may have on off-site roads and, in certain cases, require the developer/subdivider to improve off-site roads as a condition for subdivision approval. Even if the new road in a subdivision meets the Town's specifications, the other roads in the area may not be adequate to accommodate the increased traffic resulting from the development. In this case, the developer/subdivider should pay his proportion of the cost to upgrade these off-site roads.
4. Require adequate rights-of-way and setbacks. It is recommended that the Town continue to require a 50 foot right-of-way for all new roads, to allow for road maintenance (plowing, drainage, etc.) and road improvements (widening, straightening curves, improving drainage, etc.). An adequate setback is also needed for buildings, fences, etc., which would obstruct the vision of motorists and bicyclists.
5. Continue to implement driveway regulations. This will ensure curb cuts occur at safe locations with good sight distance, and protect existing Town roads by ensuring adequate provisions for drainage or surface water.
6. Encourage commercial and higher density single-family residential development in and near existing concentrations in the village areas.
7. Discourage strip commercial and multi-family residential development along State and local roads in Unity.
8. Discourage long, dead-end roads and encourage a flow-through road system.
9. Minimize the number of road access points (curb cuts) whenever possible, using shared driveways and interior road networks when appropriate.
10. Locate road access points (driveways, ingress, egress points, etc.) in the safest possible locations, usually by maximizing sight distances.
11. Implement improvements which will improve pedestrian and bicycle travel.

12. Institute the PAVER system for highway pavement maintenance.
13. Participate in regional transportation planning efforts.
14. Do not issue building permits whose only access is provided by a Class VI road, unless either the Class VI road providing access is improved to Town specifications as outlined in the Unity Subdivision Regulations, or security is provided for the same.

VII.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

VII. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Unity's economic base is inseparably linked to the economic prosperity of the Region as a whole. The Town's major employer is the Sullivan County Complex, although most local residents who seek stable year-round employment must commute to neighboring job centers. Claremont and Newport serve as the primary employment centers in the region, although some Unity residents also commute to Charlestown, Windsor County, Vermont and other towns.

This chapter examines a variety of economic indicators which, taken together, provide a good overview of the local economy and its relationship to that of the Region. The analysis and statistics presented here provide a basis for the identification of economic development issues which need to be addressed by the Planning Board in its formulation of future planning policies.

Whenever possible, economic indicators for Unity and/or Sullivan County are compared to state and national trends to provide a context in which to judge the adequacy and vitality of the area's economy.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The Unity Planning Board conducted a survey of the Town's residents in 1992 to help determine local needs and preferences with respect to future planning activities. The following is a brief summary of the survey results relating to economic development.

1. A private, quiet and rural atmosphere is by far the top choice in what makes Unity a good place to live, according to Unity landowners.
2. The most favored non-residential types of development by Unity landowners were as follows:

A.	Home business/occupation	88%
B.	Agriculture/produce	86%
C.	Horse operations	85%
D.	Veterinarian	83%
E.	Day care center	79%
F.	Restaurant	70%

3. Small, home-based businesses continue to be the most desirable type of future economic development in Unity.
4. The residents were also asked whether they would like to see an area of Town reserved for establishment of an industrial park with the Town not providing any amenities. Thirty-nine percent said yes, thirty-five percent said no, and twenty-six percent said do not know/no opinion.

On the basis of the survey results and their knowledge of the community, the Planning Board has adopted the following economic development goals:

1. Encourage small, non-polluting (light) industries and commercial establishments to locate on well-planned sites where they will not create a potential for land use or traffic conflicts.
2. Encourage small home-based businesses which remain subordinate to the primary residential use and which create minimal impacts on the neighborhood.
3. Maintain the Town's rural and village character and scenic beauty.
4. Protect historic sites, buildings and settings.
5. Provide for a moderate rate of growth, in keeping with the Town's capacity to provide for community services and facilities.

INCOME PATTERNS

One way to look directly at the economic environment in which Unity's residents live and work is to examine local income levels.

The following table compares Unity's median family, median household and per capita income levels to those of neighboring communities and the State as a whole. These data show that Unity has a low per capita income figure. Both the median family income and the median household income are below the State level.

Median family income is defined as the median figure of the total monetary income distribution which was received in calendar year 1989 by all family members 15 years of age and older, while median household income is the median figure of the monetary income received in the same year by all household members 15 years and over, whether related to the householder or not. Since many households consist of only one person, average household net income is usually less than median family income. Non-institutional per capita income is the mean income computed for every man, woman and child in a particular geographic area, excluding inmates of a group institution.

TABLE VII-1
COMPARATIVE MEDIAN FAMILY, MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD
AND PER CAPITA INCOME LEVELS, 1989

Entity	Per Capita Income	Median Household Income	Median Family Income
Acworth	\$ 11,761	\$ 33,661	\$ 35,833
Charlestown	14,200	26,400	30,848
Claremont	11,552	25,532	30,060
Cornish	14,351	34,018	35,978
Goshen	12,847	32,813	37,292
Grantham	19,159	42,738	44,934
Langdon	13,040	34,205	36,635
Lempster	11,060	28,750	31,467
Newport	11,590	28,036	32,304
Sunapee	14,589	32,679	35,521
Unity	11,912	31,458	31,875
Washington	12,885	33,333	35,278
New Hampshire	15,959	36,329	41,628

SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census and UVLSRPC

POVERTY LEVEL

The National poverty level is defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and is adjusted annually to allow for changes in the cost of living as reflected in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Unfortunately, local-level data are published only every ten years. The poverty level figures vary according to family size. In 1989, the poverty threshold for a family of four persons was \$12,674. The percentage of persons in Unity below poverty level in 1989 was 7.1 percent, which was below the Sullivan County percentage of 9.8 and above the statewide figure of 6.4 percent. Table VII-2 compares poverty level statistics to those of nearby communities, Sullivan County and the State.

TABLE VII-2
NUMBER AND PERCENT BELOW POVERTY LEVEL
UNITY, AREA COMMUNITIES, SULLIVAN COUNTY AND NEW HAMPSHIRE
1989

Entity	Number	Percent
Acworth	60	7.7
Charlestown	337	7.3
Claremont	1,794	12.9
Cornish	61	3.7
Goshen	49	6.6
Grantham	59	4.7
Langdon	24	4.1
Lempster	109	11.5
Newport	610	10.0
Sunapee	285	11.1
Unity	95	7.1
Washington	45	7.2
Sullivan County	3,715	9.8
New Hampshire	69,104	6.4

Source: 1990 U.S. Census and UVLSRPC

A relatively low percentage of the elderly population in Unity is below the poverty level. The 1990 Census data shows that 6 percent of Unity's elderly population is poor, more than double the County and State averages.

Since it is projected that the elderly population will become a larger and larger percentage of the Town's population in the future, elderly needs will become a major concern of the Town. Issues will include elderly housing, isolation and transportation dependency, proximity to shopping and part-time employment opportunities, health care, and social and recreational services.

COMMUTING PATTERNS

The availability of employment opportunities for Unity's residents within a reasonable commuting distance is another important economic consideration. In addition, commuting patterns into and out of Unity are key factors in local and regional transportation and land use planning.

As shown in the following table, about 77 percent of Unity's residents over the age of 16 who work are employed in either Claremont, Newport or Unity, and 84 percent work in Sullivan County.

**TABLE VII-3
NUMBER AND PERCENT OF WORKERS BY PLACE OF WORK DESTINATIONS
UNITY, 1979**

Total workers 16 years and over living in Unity: 570

Location of Work	Number	Percent
Claremont	192	33.7
Newport	137	24.0
Unity	109	19.1
Charlestown	19	3.3
Lempster	5	0.9
Remainder Sullivan County	18	3.2
Springfield, VT	7	1.2
Remainder Windsor Co., VT	9	1.6
Merrimack County	10	1.8
Walpole	4	0.7
Remainder Cheshire County	13	2.3
Rockingham	7	1.2
Remainder Windham Co., VT	2	0.4
Hillsboro	4	0.7
Worked Elsewhere	34	5.9

SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census and UVLSRPC

Unity's businesses provide employment opportunities for people in Unity and from the surrounding area. Where do these workers come from?

The following figures were gleaned from the place-of-work tables for communities in the area. Unfortunately, this table does not provide a complete, detailed, commuting profile because Unity is sometimes grouped with other Sullivan County communities as an employment destination for some towns. The following table includes towns where Unity was listed as a single employment destination.

**TABLE VII-4
ORIGIN OF WORKERS EMPLOYED IN THE TOWN OF UNITY, 1989**

Origin	Number	Percent of Total
Unity	109	42.9
Claremont	87	34.3
Newport	47	18.5
Charlestown	7	2.8
Lempster	4	1.6
Total	254*	100.0

SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census and UVLSRPC

*Actual total is slightly higher since Unity is sometimes grouped with other Sullivan County towns in Place of Work Tables for other communities.

EMPLOYMENT

A high percentage (33%) of Unity's residents over the age of 16 who work have manufacturing jobs. This is above both the State percentage of 29 and the County percentage of 26.7. In terms of non-manufacturing employment, Unity has a higher percentage of jobs in the construction/agriculture/forestry/fishing/mining sector of the economy, and somewhat lower percentages in all the other sectors compared with the County and the State.

TABLE VII-5
NUMBER AND PERCENT OF EMPLOYMENT BY ECONOMIC SECTOR
UNITY, SULLIVAN COUNTY AND NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1989

Economic Sector	Unity		County		State	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1) Manufacturing	192	33.0	4,947	26.7	129,383	22.5
a) Durable Goods	128	22.0	3,297	17.8	93,825	16.3
b) Non-Durable Goods	64	11.0	1,650	8.9	35,558	6.2
2) Non-Manufacturing	389	67.0	13,608	73.3	444,854	77.5
a) Construction, agri., forestry, fishing, mining	74	12.7	1,763	9.5	49,593	8.6
b) Transp., Communic. & Utilities	21	3.6	915	4.9	33,069	5.8
c) Trade	93	16.0	3,907	21.1	124,525	21.7
d) F.I.R.E.*	15	2.6	944	5.1	38,943	6.8
e) Services	170	29.2	5,553	29.9	177,843	31.0
f) Public Admin.	16	2.8	526	2.8	20,881	3.6
TOTAL	581	100.0	18,555	100.0	574,237	100.0

SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census and UVLSRPC

*F.I.R.E. - Finance, Insurance and Real Estate

While Table VII-5 shows employment according to the types of businesses in which people work, it does not describe the types of jobs within these businesses. Manufacturing jobs, for example, range from the person sweeping the floors to top-level management. The following table provides another view of Unity residents' employment, grouping jobs by occupational categories. Based on these data, it appears that Unity's residents' employment is relatively high in manufacturing and production type jobs and low in management/professional and technical, sales and administrative support.

TABLE VII-6
NUMBER AND PERCENT EMPLOYED BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY
UNITY, SULLIVAN COUNTY AND NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1990

Employed Persons 16 yr. & Over	Unity		Sullivan Co.		State	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Managerial & Prof. Specialty	81	14.0	4,034	21.8	164,361	28.6
Tech., Sales & Admin. Support	143	24.6	5,052	27.2	182,457	31.8
Service	70	12.0	2,342	12.6	69,003	12.0
Farming, Forestry & Fishing	29	5.0	465	2.5	7,847	1.4
Precision Prod., Craft & Repair	123	21.2	2,799	15.1	71,870	12.5
Operators, Fabricators & Laborers	135	23.2	3,863	20.8	78,699	13.7
TOTAL	581	100.0	18,555	100.0	574,237	100.0

SOURCE: 1990 U.S. Census and UVLSRPC

PROPERTY TAX BASE

The Town of Unity has a fairly high local property tax rate in comparison to the other communities in the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region. Only eight communities have a higher tax rate, while twenty-two have a lower rate. Unity's tax rate also is below the State average.

The following table also shows the Town's tax base on a per capita basis. This, in effect, is a partial measure of the residents' ability to pay taxes. Only five communities have a lower full value per capita tax base. The average local per capita tax base in New Hampshire is nearly double Unity's tax base.

New local economic development does, of course, contribute to a community's local property tax base. It can, in a few cases, greatly relieve the property tax burden placed on individual homeowners. Newington, New Hampshire is a case in point: the Town has relatively little housing development but includes a base of several large shopping centers, a major power plant and numerous industries. Newington has the lowest tax rate in New Hampshire.

It would be naive, however, to assume that extensive new commercial or industrial development will always reduce the local property tax burden. Many communities in the southern part of the state have learned an expensive lesson in recent years; the influx of new businesses brings

concurrent new residential development, which, in turn, places additional pressure on over-strained community facilities. Schools, police and fire departments, water and sewer systems, and other community facilities must often be expanded to accommodate the new population growth which can accompany economic development. It also can drive up the price of housing, which is counter-productive to the Town's goal of encouraging affordable housing.

It is interesting to note that the communities in the Region with the greatest amount of commercial and industrial development generally have the highest tax rates (Claremont, Newport, Lebanon, etc.), while the towns with the lowest tax rates tend to be small, residential towns. Thus, one must realize that the quality, rather than the quantity, of economic and housing development in Unity is the key issue which determines the net impact on the Town's tax base.

**TABLE VII-7
COMPARATIVE TAX RATES AND PER CAPITA TAX BASE
IN UNITY AND SELECTED COMMUNITIES**

Town	Equalized Assessed Valuation	Full Value Tax Rate	Rank in Region	Estimated Full Val. Per Capita	Rank in Region
Acworth	47,256,732	19.29	19	66,026	14
Charlestown	137,113,321	33.98	1	35,987	27
Claremont	432,567,868	33.49	2	39,763	25
Cornish	73,735,210	22.82	12	53,561	18
Goshen	29,727,676	30.37	4	51,627	20
Grantham	208,005,774	11.40	27	194,174	1
Langdon	27,365,717	25.72	9	53,259	19
Lempster	39,906,651	28.15	5	55,812	17
Newport	212,351,620	30.59	3	42,616	24
Sunapee	391,674,145	13.40	25	180,270	2
Unity	50,352,307	17.98	23	39,015	26
Washington	81,590,422	18.44	22	139,915	5
New Hampshire	60,251,627,673	22.88		66,640	

SOURCE: N.H. Dept. of Revenue Administration and UVLSRPC

It is, therefore, extremely important to critically examine both the costs and benefits of new commercial or industrial development and to project the potential secondary impacts of new development before encouraging indiscriminate business growth in Unity.

The key to a strong municipal tax base in New Hampshire is well planned, balanced and well timed growth. A sound capital budgeting program can also help maintain the fiscal health of a community, since it projects major capital outlays and provides for stable, long-term financing arrangements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The economic climate of Unity is closely tied to regional economic conditions, especially in Claremont and Newport. Only 19 percent of the Town's residents who work are employed in Unity. Eighty-four percent (84%) are employed in Sullivan County. Thus, economic development activities throughout the County have a strong influence on the residents of Unity.

The intent of the following recommendations is to strengthen and improve Unity's economy and employment opportunities for its residents. The Town wishes to accommodate limited light industrial and business uses which will provide good jobs and expand the net tax base.

Unity does not, however, want to become a major commercial or industrial center, and it does not want rapid growth. The Town's rural agricultural character, small-town atmosphere and natural and scenic resources are cherished by all who live, work or vacation here. These desirable features are important assets which must be protected.

The Town of Unity feels that it is possible to allow desirable economic growth in appropriate locations, while, at the same time, protecting and enhancing the Town's assets through sound land use planning, site design, and the adoption of local land use regulations which are designed to protect the public interest. This will allow the Town of Unity to enjoy the benefits of economic growth without destroying the quality of life which we all desire.

1. Prevent strip commercial development in Unity, especially along State roads. State roads are the major transportation corridors in the Town of Unity. They are designed and intended to carry a great deal of truck and auto traffic at rapid speeds. Strip commercial development along these roads will: (1) transform scenic, visually pleasing roads into a long ugly line of commercial establishments, thus, changing the image of the Town and making it less appealing to tourists and visitors; (2) create traffic congestion and safety hazards, making it more difficult, frustrating and dangerous for residents and tourists to move around, and slowing truck traffic which services business in Unity and the Region; and (3) draw activity away from the village areas. While discouraging strip commercial development, the Town should encourage the concentration and expansion of commercial

activity in the villages. A variety of small stores, shops and services within a compact, attractive area is an attraction to shoppers and potential businesses.

2. Encourage home occupations, with proper restrictions. Home businesses are an important part of the local economy and they should be encouraged. The intent of any future zoning regulation would be to allow traditional home businesses in residential areas, provided that the business will be small in size and in the number of employees, that it will have a minimal impact on the residential neighborhood and that the business will be an accessory use of the building, while the residence will be the primary use. Businesses which do not meet this intent should be considered commercial uses; any future zoning ordinance should be written to ensure that this intent will be met.
3. Encourage the conversion of suitable structures to inns and "bed and breakfast" lodging facilities. Inns and "bed and breakfast" facilities should be encouraged to expand the number of available tourist accommodations in the Town. This form of tourism should be encouraged instead of typical motel developments.
4. Encourage agriculture and forestry in the Town of Unity.
5. Encourage the rehabilitation and use of historic structures in the villages.
6. Identify and reserve limited, suitable areas for future industrial and commercial development.
7. Require the local school system to provide adequate opportunities for vocational training.
8. Promote the creation of adult job re-training programs.
9. Require off-street parking regulations for all residential, commercial and industrial uses.

VIII.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

VIII. HISTORIC RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

A plan for the future without a look to the past is incomplete. Historic structures and sites which survive from earlier periods are the visual manifestation of the story of a community's people, places and activity. The preservation of these resources is fundamental to the retention of a sense of place and identity in any given community. An index to the past, surviving fragments of history contribute to the character and individuality of each town, and lend a sense of continuity. Historic structures and sites are but one part of our total environmental resources and, like many others, are nonrenewable.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss significant historic sites and resources in Unity, and to make recommendations for their continued preservation. Existing legislation pertaining to historic preservation and preservation tools for private citizens and at local, state and national levels are included.

This chapter was prepared in recognition of the fact that Unity's historic resources and historic quality play an important role in the overall quality of life in the community. It does not attempt to be a complete and comprehensive inventory of all local resources, but is intended as a departure point for the future. The present state is but a chapter in an ongoing story.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDE SURVEY

In the 1992 Community Attitude Survey, Unity property owners showed positive interest in the preservation of the Town's historic resources. Of the total number of respondents, 54 percent felt that there were buildings and landmarks in Unity which should be preserved for their historic value.

PRESERVATION ACTION TO DATE

Private individuals and groups have taken responsibility for many of the local preservation and historical activities in recent years, including the propagation of valuable information concerning local and area history. Commemorating Unity's bicentennial in 1964, the local historical committee published Highlights in History of Unity, N.H., as well as reproducing copies of the original land grant map and 1860 map of the Town. Among many other projects, the Unity

Council on the Parks, in 1977, focussed their energies on renovation proposals for the Town Hall and Quaker Meeting House. The Unity Historical Society was organized in 1983 and holds monthly meetings. Proposed projects include inventorying the Town's cemeteries and old mill sites. The actions of individuals have insured the protection of local landmarks; examples include John Callum's repairs to the Butcher Knife Hill Signpost and Peg DeLude's stenciling in the Town Hall.

Historically, New Englanders have continuously found new uses for older structures, in contrast to today's disposable societal values. Just as the old Baptist Church was adapted for use as a Town Hall in the 1870's, many of yesterday's schoolhouses today serve as houses, a valuable lesson for the present. One of Unity's old schoolhouses was reportedly moved to Strawberry Banke in Portsmouth some years ago.

The Unity Town Hall is on the National Register. At this time, there are no locally designated scenic roads in Unity.

TOOLS FOR THE PRESERVATION & ENHANCEMENT OF HISTORIC SITES AND AREAS

Within Unity, there are numerous historic structures worthy of preservation, including clusters of structures in Unity Center, East Unity, West Unity and Quaker City. Respect for the Town's historic assets, however, does not at this time appear to be community-wide. Cases of decay, neglect and deferred maintenance are, unfortunately, all too common and pose the most imminent threat to Unity's historic resources. Currently, the Unity Planning Board controls development through subdivision regulations. However, the protection afforded Unity's farms by a uniform three-acre subdivision requirement, otherwise threatened by being carved into smaller parcels of land, may be undermined by ever rising taxes. Zoning regulations, even if adopted, may not be enough to protect Unity's historic resources with the growth projected for Unity over the next fifteen years. It should not be assumed that land use controls and federal incentives alone will be sufficient to preserve Unity's important resources. It is the private sector which provides the fuel and support necessary to ensure that the community's cultural resources remain an integral part of everyday life. It is a partnership between levels of support which must be struck.

In order to ensure that Unity is able to retain these historic assets in the future, the various vehicles for preservation available at the private, local and federal level are discussed below and should be considered.

Private Citizens and Organizations

Much of the responsibility of historic preservation is undertaken by private individuals or groups. Pride in ownership and regular maintenance alone are responsible for remarkable preservation

results. Unfortunately, improvement work undertaken with good intentions can often result in techniques or materials inconsistent or insensitive to an older building. As a result, the integrity of the building is compromised and work done may actually damage the building it was intended to preserve, often proving more expensive than the proper treatment. A wealth of specialized information covering topics sensitive to the needs of older buildings ranging from the pros and cons of vinyl and aluminum siding, stripping paints and window replacement to repointing brick, is available from the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission.

Group organizations, through historical societies and other organizations, can enhance the public's awareness of the importance of preserving a town's historic quality through slide shows, walking tours, pamphlets and publications.

Historic Resources Survey

There are several advantages in undertaking an historic resource survey. In addition to providing a permanent written and photographic record of a town's architecture, a good inventory is the most basic of preservation tools and can be used to establish historic districts or to prepare nominations for listing of historic structures in the National Register of Historic Places. Data gathered in a survey may encourage a greater appreciation of the historic structures and sites by local citizens. Historic resource assessments are also necessary for accomplishing environmental reviews required in projects receiving federal funding. As the beginning of a comprehensive historic preservation strategy, information gathered should act as a firm foundation for future decision making, by identifying buildings suitable for and worthy of rehabilitation.

National Register of Historic Places

As part of a statewide effort to identify and help preserve significant resources, matching grants are available from the New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources for historic resource surveys. The New Hampshire Division is mandated by state and federal law to complete such surveys, documenting resources significant for their historical or architectural character, quality and importance.

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's cultural resources worthy of preservation. Established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and administered by the National Park Service within the Department of the Interior, the Register lists properties of local, state and/or national significance in the areas of American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture. Resources may be nominated individually or in groups, as districts, as a multiple resource area or by category as a thematic group.

In New Hampshire, any individual may prepare a nomination application. National Register forms, maps and photographs are submitted to the N.H. State Historic Preservation Office for review by the State Review Board. Following approval at the State level, it is sent to Washington, D.C. for final review, approval and listing. Assistance in the preparation of any National Register nomination is available from the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission.

The benefits of being included on the National Register Listing are:

1. recognition of local, state or national significance often stimulating appreciation of local resources and encouraging pride in ownership;
2. provides for review and amelioration of effects which any federally funded, licensed or assisted project might have on the property;
3. eligibility for certain federal tax benefits, including the 25 percent investment tax credits for the rehabilitation of income-producing buildings and the charitable deduction for donations of easements; and
4. qualification for federal preservation grants, when funding is available.

Within Unity, the Unity Town Hall has been listed on the National Register. Nearby Register structures include the Courthouse, old Courthouse, District 7 Schoolhouse, Richards Library and the Wrights Bridge in Newport; Acworth Meeting House; and Claremont City Hall in Claremont. Area districts include Monadnock Mills and Claremont Multiple Resource Districts, and the Downtown Newport Historic District. Over 50 individual buildings or structures and 10 districts in the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region are listed in the National Register.

Each individual building within a National Register District may not be an outstanding landmark on its own, but the group of structures taken as a whole must convey a strong sense of history and integrity. To be eligible for listing in the National Register, properties or districts must meet the evaluation criteria in the Federal Regulations summarized below:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association; and

1. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
2. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

3. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Listing in the Register does not interfere with a property owner's right to alter, manage, dispose of or even demolish his property, unless, for some reason, federal funds are involved. Nor does National Register listing require that an owner open his property to the public. Once nominated, a National Register District must have the approval of a majority of property owners, with each owner having a single vote regardless of the number of eligible properties he may own and regardless of whether the property contributes to the District's significance. For a single privately-owned property with one owner, the property will not be listed if the owner objects. National Register listing can be an important tool for identifying and planning the future of significant resources. Listing can act as a catalyst to change public perception and improve an area's image, but cannot, in itself, prevent major detrimental alterations or even demolition. It remains an important psychological first step towards historic awareness, respect and protection.

Local Historic Districts

The term "historic district" can refer either to a locally designated historic district or, as has previously been discussed, to a National Register Historic District. Both are useful preservation tools but differ in the way in which they are established and the protection they afford. An historic area may be both a locally designated historic district and a National Register District. Both Newport and Claremont have created local historic districts.

The concept of historic districts exemplifies the growing recognition that buildings cannot live in a vacuum but protection must be provided to structures as part of the total environment. The purpose of an historic district is to protect and preserve areas of outstanding architectural and historic value from inappropriate alterations and additions which might detract from an otherwise distinctive character. The New Hampshire legislation (RSA 674:45, formerly 31:89) identifies the following purposes of historic districts:

1. preserves an area which reflects cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history;
2. conserving property values;
3. fostering civic beauty, strengthening the local economy; and

4. promoting the use of the district for the education, pleasure and welfare of community citizens.

The most comprehensive preservation tool available to local governments under state law is the creation and administration of a local historic district. As authorized by RSA 674:45, an historic district commission may be designated by local town meeting to prepare a suitable ordinance which establishes a framework for the commission's decisions and administration. The commission may contain 5, 6 or 7 members, each serving three year terms. In order for a town to adopt an historic district ordinance, two public hearings should be held at least 15 days apart. Fourteen days notice must be given, with proper notification in a paper of general circulation and proper posting. After the public hearings, an official ballot must be taken. A majority of the voters must vote for the historic district ordinance before it can go into effect.

An historic district is characterized by a grouping of structures and/or sites which physically and spatially comprise a specific environment. Buildings may represent a cross section of ages and styles but should be unified by past events or by plan or physical development. One of the most difficult aspects of creating an historic district is delineating its boundaries. Sometimes a boundary is as obvious as a major highway, body of water or other physical impediment. But many times a decision has to be made concerning which structures should be included and which should not. Boundaries must not be arbitrary or capricious.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation suggests the following guidelines for delineating the edges of an historic district:

1. Historic Factors
 - A. Boundaries of an original settlement or planned community
 - B. Concentrations of early buildings and sites
2. Visual Factors
 - A. Edges related to changes in the visual character of an-area
 - B. Edges based on topographic considerations
 - C. Edges drawn to include gateways, entrances and vistas to and from a district
3. Physical Factors
 - A. Railroads and highways
 - B. Major open spaces
 - C. Rivers, marshlands and other natural features
 - D. Major changes in land use
 - E. Walls, embankments, fence lines
 - F. Limits of a settled area

4. Surveyed lines and lines of convenience
 - A. Streets and other local rights-of-way
 - B. Property lines
 - C. Uniform setback lines
 - D. Other lines of convenience

After preparing an appropriate ordinance, the commission is given authority to consider the appropriateness of any proposed construction, exterior changes or demolition of any structure within the district. In addition to the buildings, streetscape features above ground, utility structures and signs are often also regulated. Each individual ordinance must outline precisely permitted and prohibited actions and regulated activities. Expectedly, ordinances take on varying degrees of strictness. Activities permitted as of right might include routine maintenance, painting, replacement of exterior features with similar features, rehabilitation and routine landscaping. Prohibited uses might include artificial siding, lighted signs, mercury vapor lighting, etc. An historic district ordinance can specify the use of land, as well as its appearance or aspect, though a town can limit the commission's powers so as not to include land use regulation.

It is important to emphasize that historic district commissions control noncontributing structures, as well as new construction, within a district. Alterations and additions within a district are individually reviewed in respect to their mass, scale and detailing in relation to surrounding structures.

An historic district commission may be abolished upon petition of twenty-five (25) voters, followed by two public hearings and a town meeting, with a 2/3 vote needed to abolish. The success of any local historic district is dependent on a variety of factors, including local support and the ability and commitment of the town to enforce such regulation.

For additional information on local historic districts, contact the N.H. Association of Historic Districts in Exeter or refer to: Historic Districts in New Hampshire: A Handbook for the Establishment and Administration of Historic Districts, and A Guide to Delineating Edges of Historic Districts. These and other pertinent publications are available at the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission office.

Historic Building Rehabilitation Tax Incentives

The Economic Recovery Act of 1981 provides attractive incentives in the form of federal investment tax credits for the substantial rehabilitation of income-producing older buildings. The act was enacted to support preservation by eliminating certain favorable tax incentives, which encouraged the demolition of historic structures. Credits are deducted from taxes owed, not income earned, with depreciation over an 18-year cost recovery period. Currently, the tax incentives take three forms:

<u>ITC</u>	<u>Building Use</u>	<u>Eligible Properties</u>
15%	commercial & industrial	30 - 39 years old
20%	commercial & industrial	40 years or older
25%	commercial, industrial & income residential	certified historic structures 50 years or older which undergo a certified rehabilitation

To be eligible for the 25 percent credit, a building must be a certified historic structure, either listed individually on the National Register or contributing to a Register Historic District or certified Local District. Certified rehabilitation work must adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, a list of ten standards developed to ensure that significant features of a building will not be compromised. Only the 25 percent category carries any guidelines for how work is to be done, but owners of properties within historic districts must use the 25 percent or obtain certification that their structure is not historic to elect the lesser credits. Despite increased paperwork and procedures, those choosing the 25 percent are favored by a larger credit and more advantageous depreciation rules. In order to qualify for any of the tax credits, rehabilitation expenditures over a 24 month period must exceed \$5,000 or the adjusted basis of the property, whichever is greater. Current legislation does not permit local governments to take advantage of these credits for town-owned properties.

For additional information about the National Register or rehabilitation tax credits, contact the New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Office in Concord.

Other Preservation Tools

1. Revolving Funds

Revolving funds are self-replenishing loan pools. The money in the pools is mostly composed of donations and is used to restore buildings. The fund revolves when the restored building is sold. With a revolving fund, a nonprofit organization can either acquire a deteriorating building, restore it and then sell it, or make low interest loans available to those who need to restore their historic buildings.

The first building restored by a revolving fund should be a highly visible one, so that donors can see their money at work. A building should be endangered, well worth saving and have a high resale potential before it should be considered eligible for a revolving fund. Besides donations, an organization administering a revolving fund can solicit sources of revenue from private foundations and government subsidies, such as Community Development Block Grants.

2. Scenic Road Designations

New Hampshire State Law RSA 231:157-158 enables a town to designate any road as scenic unless it is a Class I or II highway. Upon petition of ten persons who either are voters of the town or whose lands abut the proposed designated road, a vote can be held at a town meeting to consider the proposal. A positive vote at the town meeting can designate a scenic road.

A scenic road designation protects trees and stone walls situated on the public right-of-way. After designation of a scenic road "any repair, maintenance, reconstruction or paving work done with respect thereto shall not involve or include the cutting or removal of trees, or the tearing down or destruction of stone walls, or portions thereof, except with the prior written consent of planning board or official municipal body. . ." (RSA 231:158).

Designation of a road as "scenic" will not affect the town's eligibility to receive state aid for road construction, nor will it affect the rights of abutting landowners.

Designation of scenic roads enables a town to preserve the rural environs around its historic structures. A scenic road designation also stimulates pride in, and respect for, the existing landscape. This is an especially important tool for Unity, whose architectural heritage is reflected in the inseparable bond between architecture and landscape.

3. Easements

New Hampshire Law RSA 447:45-47 covers the subject of easements. An easement is a property right that can be bought or sold. It allows a property owner to put limitations on his property when an easement is sold, or for another person to set limitations upon the property owner when an easement is purchased. Easements can be of two types: conservation or preservation.

A preservation easement is an agreement between an historic property owner and a government agency or preservation organization which gives the latter the right to review any proposed changes to the structure. In return for giving an easement, a property owner is eligible under the Tax Treatment and Extension Act of 1980 to make a deduction from his taxes. If the easement is considered a lifetime gift, then the property owner could receive a deduction for up to 50 percent of his adjusted gross income. Costs of such a program may be significantly lower than buying properties outright to protect these valuable resources, particularly when easements can be acquired by donation.

Two major types of preservation easements have been employed in the past. First of all, the property owner could donate an exterior facade easement. This could include air rights, exterior maintenance, alterations, etc. The second type of preservation easement

is for the interior of an historic structure. This type of easement is rarely used, for it is often difficult to enforce and also difficult to acquire. An interior easement can restrict all or part of the interior.

In rural areas, conservation easements can play a vital role in preserving the lands around historic sites. Typically, a conservation easement can be donated to protect open spaces, scenic areas, waterways and wildlife sanctuaries.

The totality of natural and architectural landscape which makes Unity so special calls for a unique solution, involving cooperation between preservation and conservation interests. The architectural and historical value of many of the houses in Unity is equal to the ecological value of the surrounding open space, each considerably diminished without the other. Development of a land trust between both preservation and conservation interests would be a valuable tool to safeguard both natural and architectural features. Harrisville, New Hampshire, is just one rural community which has established a program to protect both settings and buildings.

4. Covenants

A covenant is a contractual agreement where the owner agrees to maintain the historic and architectural character of his home. A covenant can either be in the form of an affirmative provision or a negative provision. An affirmative provision requires the owner of an historic structure to provide for certain upkeep of the exterior appearance of his home. A negative provision, or a restrictive covenant, contracts the owner to abstain from changes to his historic building that would alter its historic or architectural integrity. The right to enforce a covenant is normally granted to a preservation agency. The general difference between easements and covenants is that easements are considered to be an interest in real estate, whereas covenants are only a contractual obligation. Under certain circumstances, however, covenants become binding upon future owners as well, thus, blurring the difference between the two.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. History should be promoted in a variety of ways, including:
 - A. photographs in public buildings;
 - B. markers at key historic structures;
 - C. tours of historic structures and sites; and
 - D. in the school system.

2. A depository and permanent home for materials pertinent to Unity's history is located in the basement of the renovated Town Hall.
3. Rehabilitation of the privately-owned Quaker Meeting House should be emphasized using any and all available resources, including federal funds, rehabilitation tax credits, foundation funding and fund-raising.
4. Designation of scenic roads should be undertaken.
5. Preparation of an historic resources survey for Unity, with information updated periodically to indicate changes to buildings, including remodeling, fire, demolition or changes to surroundings.
6. Publication of a complete history of Unity should be encouraged.
7. The Town should continue to promote the preservation of Town-owned historic properties, including "The Hearse", currently in storage.
8. The Historical Society should be encouraged to undertake cemetery inventories and oral histories to record the memories of residents for future generations.
9. The nomination of the Quaker Meeting House to the National Register of Historic Places is strongly recommended. Various other local structures, including numerous private residences, should also be considered.
10. The establishment of local historic districts in Quaker City, West Unity and East Unity should be explored.
11. Use of easements should be promoted.
12. Preservation of the last fragment of the springhouse at Unitoga Springs should be encouraged before this fragile bit of Unity history is lost forever.

LOCAL HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES

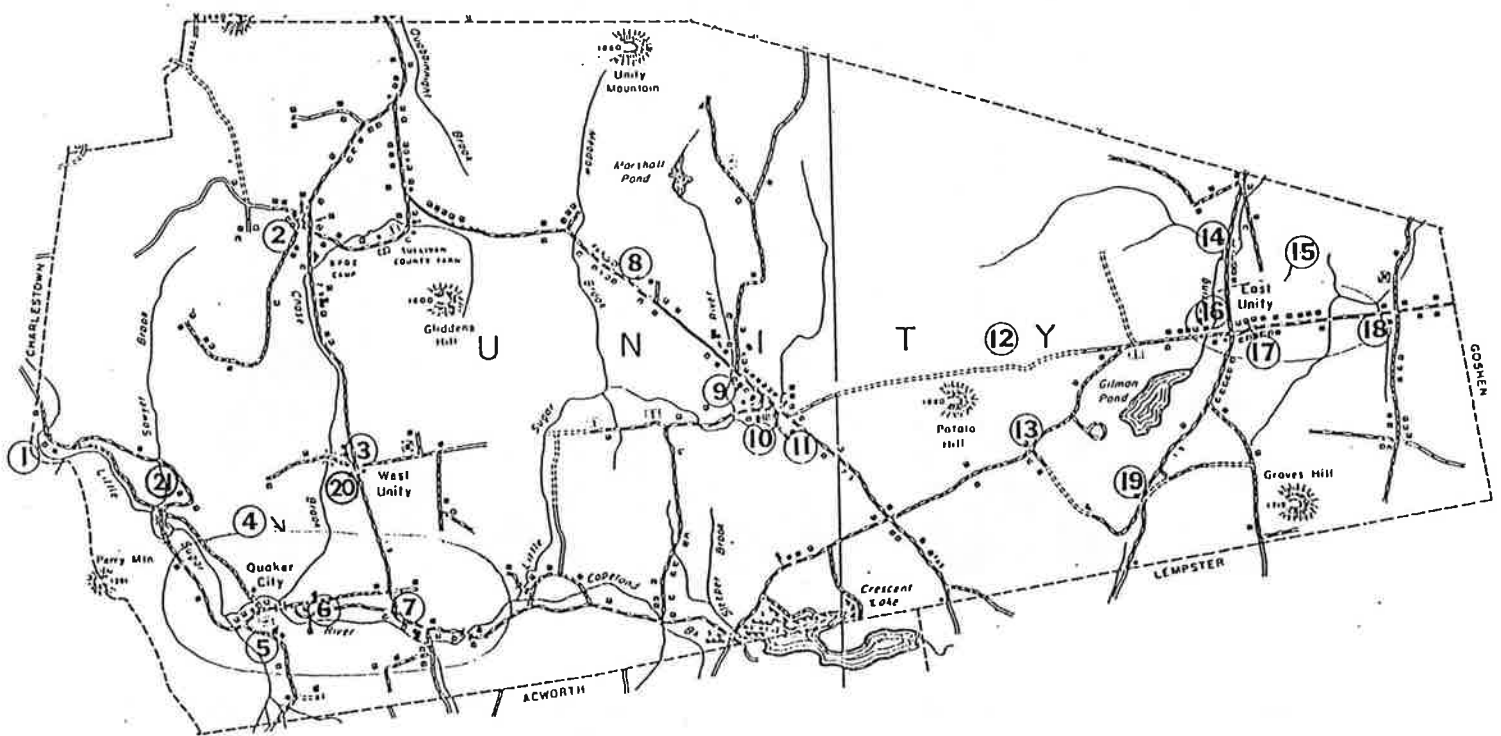
The Unity Planning Board, with the assistance of the Unity Historical Society, has identified a number of important local historic sites and structures worthy of protection efforts. The list below identifies these important local historic sites and structures, and the following map depicts the location of each of these historic sites and structures.

TABLE VIII-1
IMPORTANT LOCAL HISTORIC SITES & STRUCTURES

<u>Location Number</u>	<u>Name</u>
1	Tommy Davis House
2	Old County Schoolhouse #6
3	West Unity Methodist Church
4	Quaker City
5	Quaker City Meetinghouse
6	Quaker City Schoolhouse
7	Butcher Knife Hill Rock
8	Niboli House
9	Unity Town Hall
10	Unity Center Tavern
11	Center Schoolhouse #2
12	Soldiers Grave
13	Wright House
14	Unitoga Springs Springhouse Ruin
15	East Unity
16	Walker House
17	East Unity Schoolhouse #1
18	Brick Houses, Four Corners
19	House, Unity Road
20	School in West Unity
21	Breed Farm

MAP VIII-1

IMPORTANT LOCAL HISTORIC SITES AND STRUCTURES

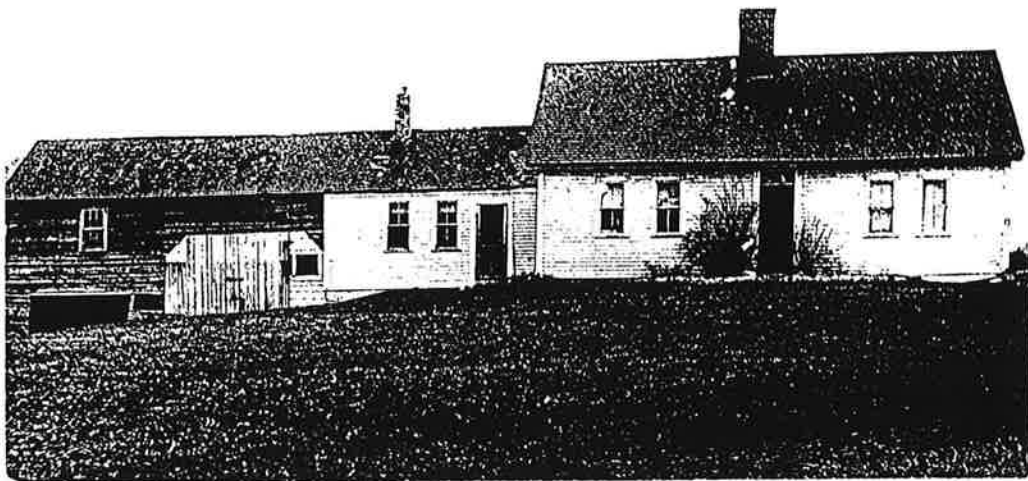


The 1986 Master Plan included a photograph and a brief description of each of the first nineteen important local historical sites and structures identified on the above list. Please refer to the 1986 Master Plan for these photos and descriptions.

After consulting with the Unity Historical Society during this Master Plan Update process, the Planning Board decided to add two more important local historical structures to the list. These are identified as numbers 20 and 21 on the list. The photos and brief descriptions of these two additional historic structures are presented below.



20. School in West Unity (on right side of photo), built in 1862 on land of Harvey Sanborn and sold to Town for \$1.00. West Unity Methodist Church (on left side of photo), built in 1846.



21. Enoch Perley Breed and Della (Walker) Breed Farm, now owned by Robert & Margaret Day.

IX.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

IX. CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

INTRODUCTION

The New Hampshire Legislature, in 1989, amended the enabling statute which addresses the purpose and description of a Master Plan to incorporate a Construction Materials section. RSA 644:2, VIII-a calls for a "construction materials section which summarizes known sources of construction materials which are available for future construction material needs, including, at a minimum, the location of and estimated extent of excavations which have been granted permits under RSA 155-E, as well as reports filed pursuant to RSA 155-E:2, I(d) with respect to non-permitted excavations."

Sand and gravel operations occupy a prominent place in our economy. These earth resources provide construction aggregate for roads and other development activities and, thus, it is important that known deposits of these resources be identified and wisely used.

At the same time, earth excavations can be a disruptive land use, creating dust, noise, fumes and heavy truck traffic, and leaving a damaged landscape. Excavation activities may cause erosion and sedimentation, fuel spills and exposure of the water table which may, in turn, contaminate the groundwater. Excavation too close to the water table may result in local flooding in wet years when the water table is unusually high. Thus, it is important that excavation operations be performed with care. Plans for excavations should consider impacts on aesthetics, wildlife, ground and surface waters, air quality, roads, adjacent land uses and the character of the surrounding area. Restoration plans and security to ensure implementation of those plans are needed for every excavation.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The Unity Planning Board conducted a community survey of the Town's property owners in 1992 to help determine local preferences with respect to future planning activities. The survey results pertaining to earth excavations are as follows:

1. Three out of four property owners (76%) responding to the survey indicated they would prefer not to have earth excavations develop in Unity in the future.
2. Virtually the same response was received from property owners when asked if they would like to see earth excavations permitted to develop in an industrial park if one was

developed in Town; 78% of the property owners responding indicated they would not want to have earth excavations permitted in an industrial park.

EARTH EXCAVATION GOALS

On the basis of the survey results and their knowledge of the community, the Planning Board has adopted the following goals for earth excavations:

1. Provide reasonable opportunities in Unity to extract earth resources while ensuring protection from air pollution, erosion and sedimentation, surface and groundwater pollution, flooding, degradation of the landscape, adverse traffic impacts and adverse impacts on the neighboring land uses.
2. Ensure reclamation of permitted earth excavations by requiring reclamation plans and security to implement those plans, if needed.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

This section of the Unity Master Plan identifies such construction materials located in the Town of Unity. The text and maps are based on three sources of information:

1. A listing and map of existing and former sites of sand and gravel excavations provided by the Unity Town Office.
2. Maps prepared by the N.H. Department of Environmental Services, Water Resource Division, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Interior, Geological Survey for the Town of Unity dated July, 1992 entitled:
 - A. Altitude of Water Table, Data Collection and Surficial Geology for Stratified-Drift Aquifers in the Lower Connecticut River Basin, Southwestern N.H.; and
 - B. Saturated Thickness and Transmissivity of Stratified-Drift Aquifers in the Lower Connecticut River Basin, Southwestern N.H.

These maps identify the location of stratified-drift aquifers, which also happen to be prime gravel deposits. Copies of these maps can be found in the Unity Town Offices, as well as the Water Resources Division of the N.H. Department of Environmental Services.

3. The 1980 Soil Survey of Sullivan County completed by the Sullivan County Soil Conservation Service (SCS).

The soil maps identify deposits of sand, gravel, roadfill and topsoil, all of which are designated in the soils survey as construction materials. The soil categories are depicted

by a number followed by a letter from A to E; the number represents the composition of the soil and the letter refers to the slope - A being the flattest and E the steepest.

The ratings are based on observed performance of the soils and on estimated data and test data conducted as part of the SCS survey. This information is intended for town-wide land use planning purposes and not site specific planning because it does have limitations. Due to map scales and associated margins of error, there may be small areas of different soil types included within the mapped area of another soil type.

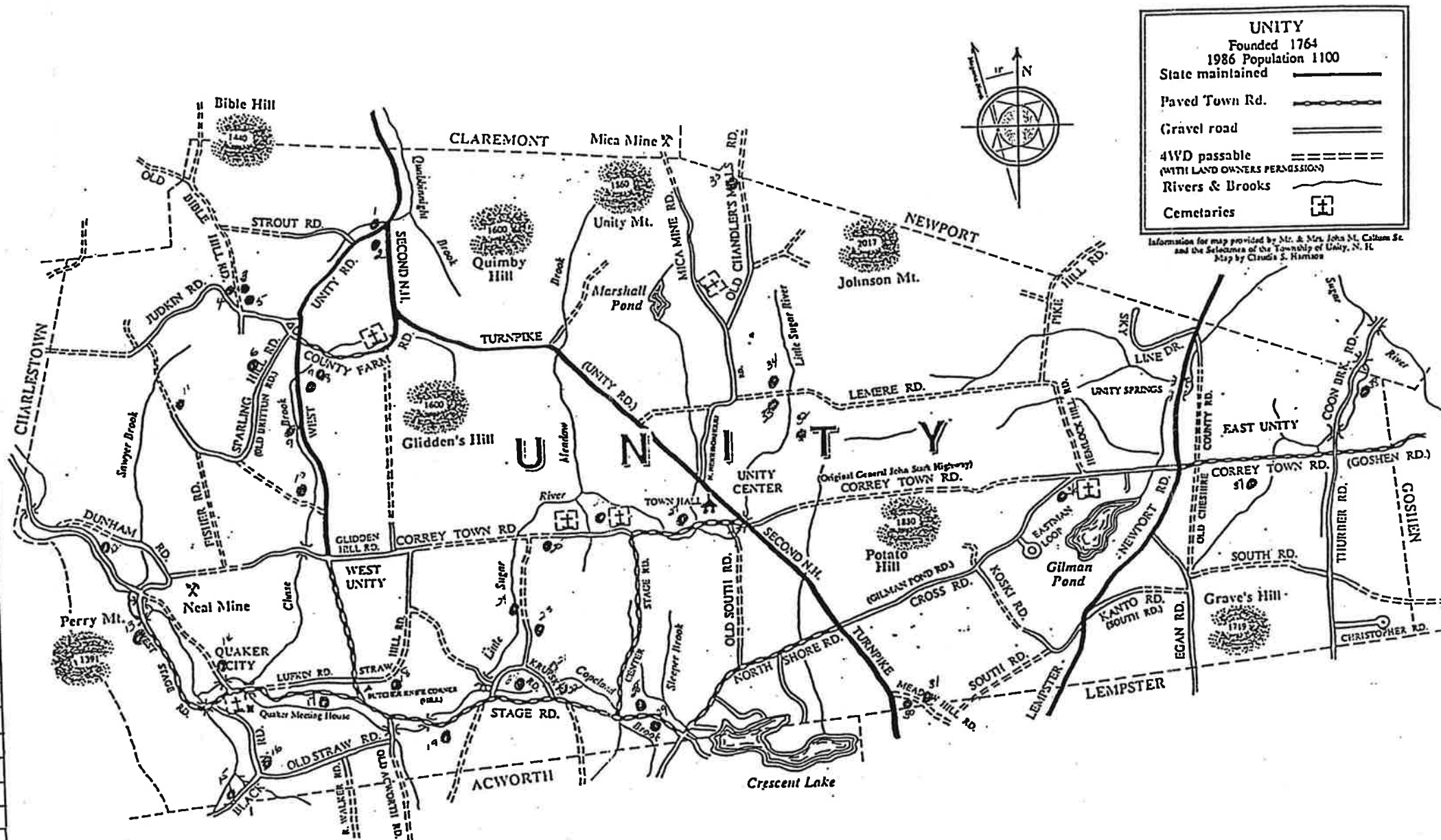
The following maps presented in this Master Plan are based on these SCS soils maps. For a clearer identification of the soil types, please refer to the 1980 Sullivan County Soils Survey publication available at the Soil Conservation Service office in Claremont or at the Unity Town Offices.

EXISTING EARTH EXCAVATIONS

Since RSA 155-E was initially adopted in 1979, no landowner in Unity has obtained an earth excavation permit. Additionally, no landowner has filed a report with the regulator pursuant to RSA 155-E:2,I(d) since the 1989 amendments to RSA 155-E. Map IX-1, to follow, identifies the location of all known earth excavations in Unity based on information from the Town Offices. All of these excavations are now considered abandoned by the Planning Board. Anyone wanting to apply to open a new or abandoned earth excavation, should contact the Planning Board for a permit application.

1. Fletcher Steve
2. Kangas, Craig Susan
3. Augustinowicz, Ted
4. Gesner
5. Bastian, Russell
6. Woodhams Robert & Sheila
7. Gibson, Hazel
8. Sullivan County Farm
9. Gibson, Hazel
10. Sullivan County Farm
11. Sylvia Joyce
12. Grant Rodney Linda
13. Light, Lorraine
14. Horse, Malcolm
15. Page, Lawrence Evelyn
16. Welch Robert
17. Tancredi, Leo
18. Hall, Fred & Harriet
19. Palmer, Richard
20. Krupsky, Adam & Hazel
21. Ferauson, Ronald
22. Labossiere, David Eugene
23. Sato, John & Sarant, Law.
24. Sato, John & Sarant, Law.
25. Trovato, Anthony
26. Sullivan County Farm
27. Christensen, Noble Mrs
28. Guise
29. Stone, Cliff
30. Callum, Terry ?
31. Johnson, Brian ?
32. Cox, Wilbur Jr
33. Cox, Wilbur Jr.
34. Cox, Wilbur Jr.
35. Baker, James
36. Town of Newport
37. Riets, Ernest
38. Santi, Joan ?

MAP IX-1: ABANDONED EARTH EXCAVATIONS



SOURCE: UNITY TOWN OFFICES

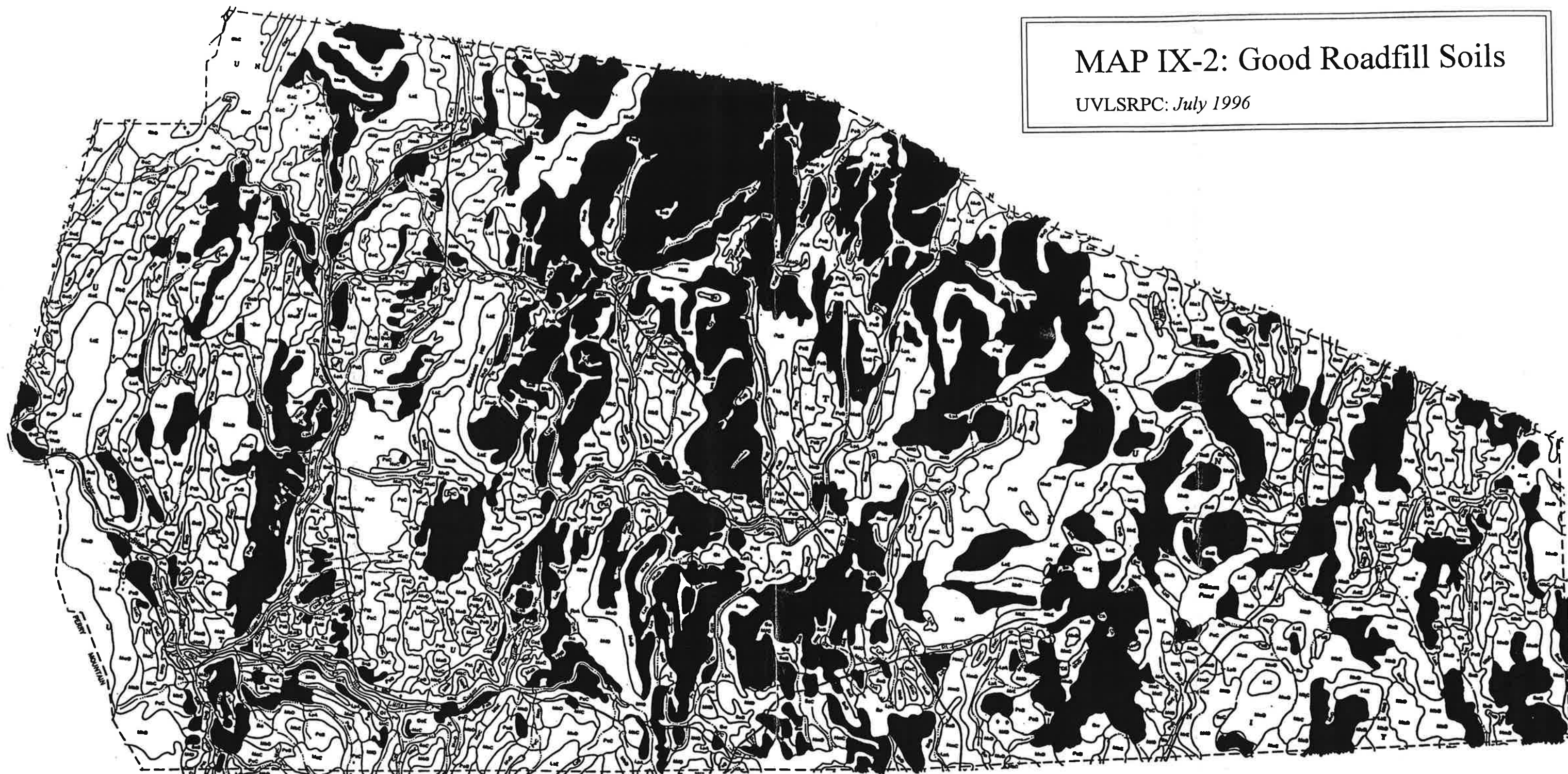
ROADFILL

The SCS soil survey defines soils as being either good, fair or poor for roadfill purposes. The soil types in Unity which comprise good or fair roadfill are listed in Table IX-1 and illustrated on Map IX-2 and Map IX-3. All the remaining soils are poor for roadfill purposes. As reflected on Map IX-2, there are large areas which have good soil ratings for roadfill purposes, particularly in the central part of Town. The majority of the remaining soils in Town qualify as fair for roadfill purposes, as shown on Map IX-3.

TABLE IX-1
ROADFILL SOILS

Good Rating	Fair Rating
AdA,AdB,AdC	Bdb,Bdc,BdD
Aga,AgB,	BeB,BeC,Bed
CoA,CoB,CoC	CyA
DtB,DtC	DtD
HcA,HcB,HcC	DuC,DuD
McB,McC	Ha,Hb
MfB,MfC	HeB,HeC,HeD
MrC	HmB,HmC,HmD
MvB,MvC	MaB,MaC,MaD
MwB,MwC	McB,McC,McD
Of	McD
QsC	MfD
Warwick	Hermon
Su	MrD
WaB	MvD
Quonset	MwD


Good Rating	Fair Rating
WdA, WdB, WdC	NN\nA
	PcA, PcB, PcD
	PtA, PtB, PtC,
	PvB, PvC
	Pw
	Sda, SdB
	SnA, SnB
	SaB, Sac
	UnB, UnC
	Wn

UVLSRPC: *July 1996*

SOILS MAP

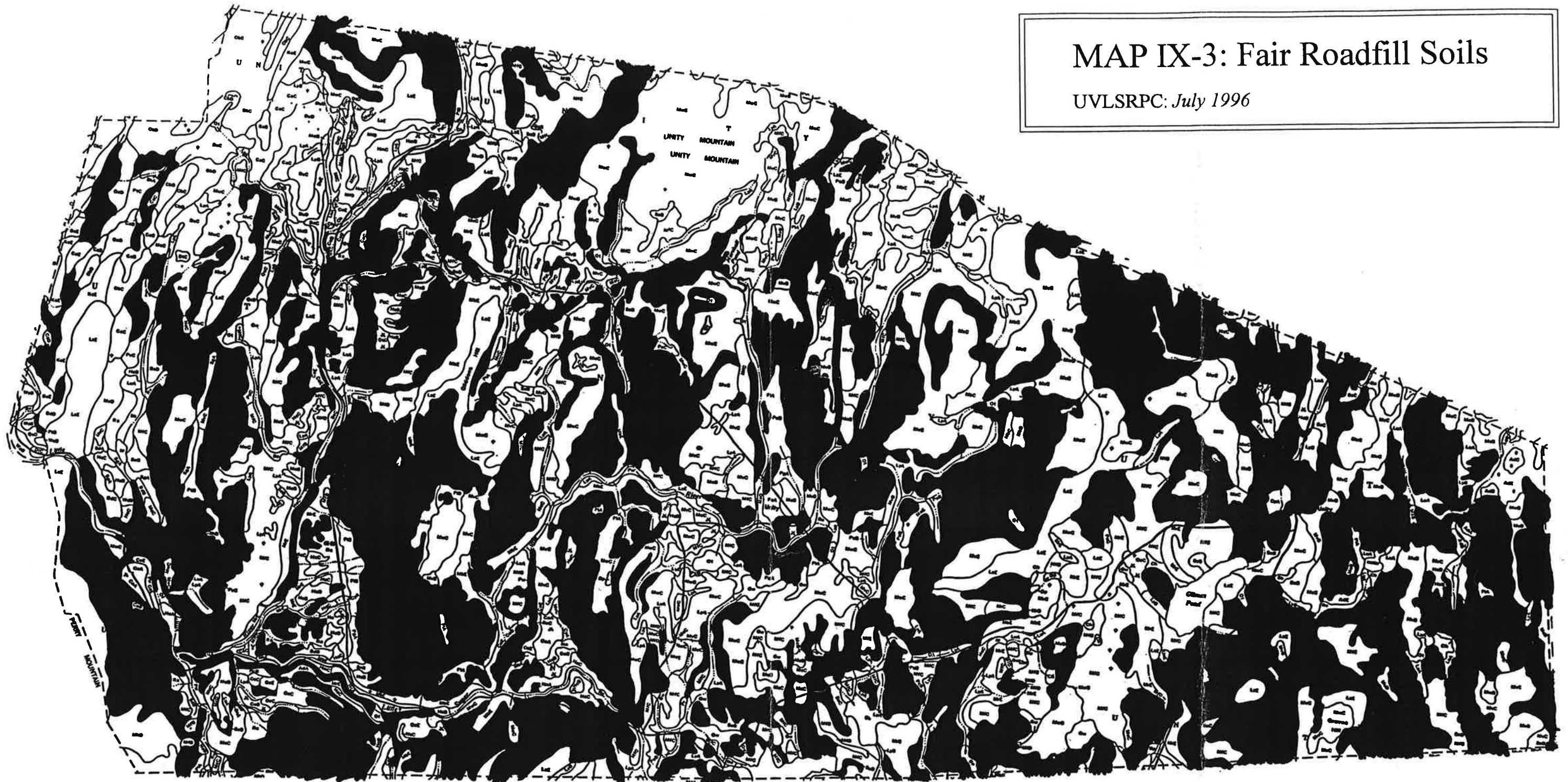
UNITY, NEW HAMPSHIRE.



 **Upper Valley Lake Sunapee
Regional Planning Commission**
77 Bank Street, Lebanon, New Hampshire 03766-1704

MAP IX-3: Fair Roadfill Soils

UVLSRPC: July 1996



Soil Survey of Sullivan County, New Hampshire by the Soil Conservation Service in 1945. This information should show approximate location of soils, it does not show the exact areas of existing soils that could have been shown on a large scale.

SOILS MAP



UNITY, NEW HAMPSHIRE



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TOPSOIL

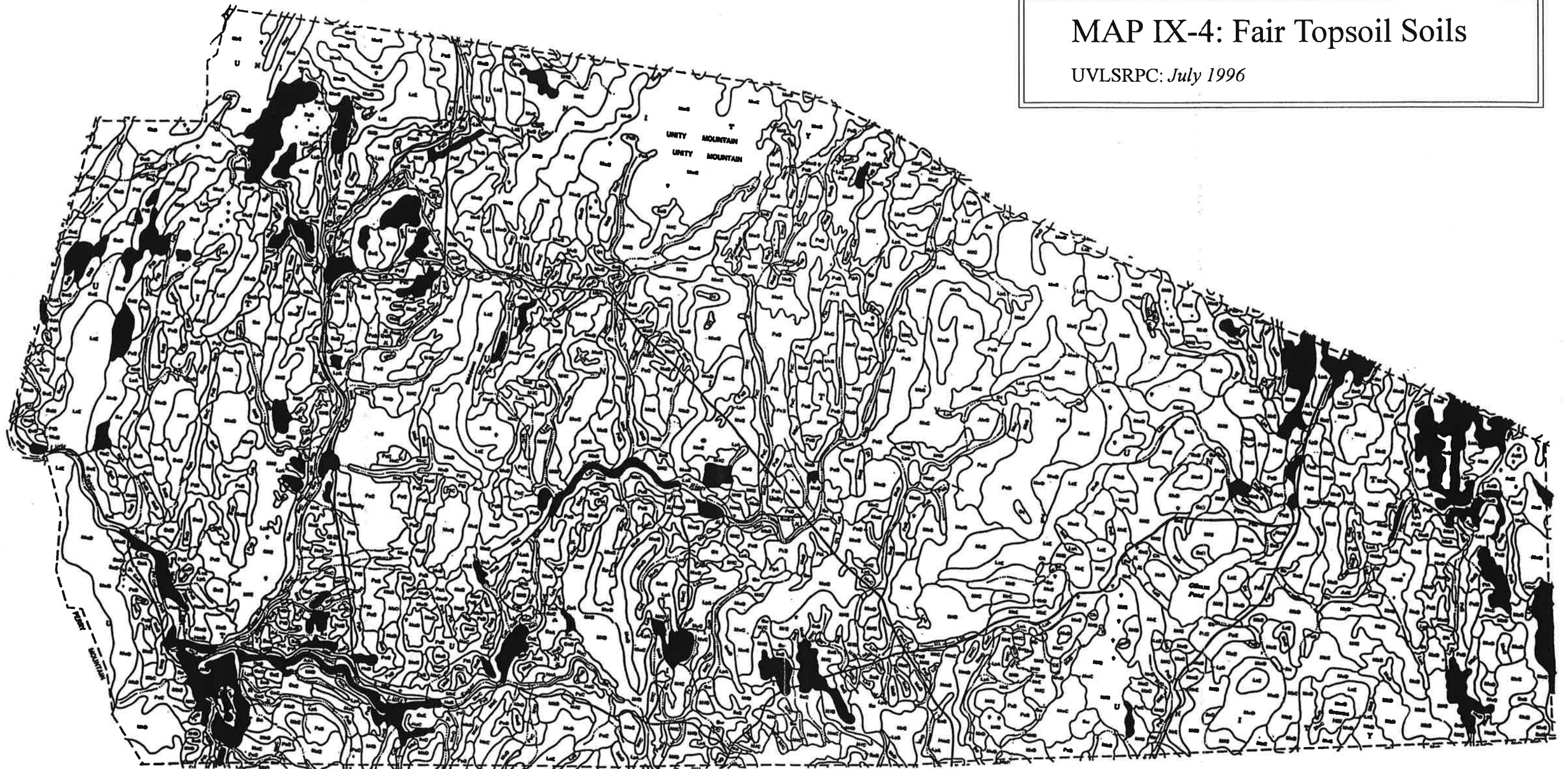
The SCS soil survey defines soils as being either good, fair or poor for topsoil. There are no soils in Unity rated as good for topsoil. The soil types in Unity which comprise fair topsoil are listed in Table IX-2 and illustrated on Map IX-4. As reflected on Map IX-4, there are only a few small areas which have a fair soil rating for topsoil in Unity, located primarily on the east and west sides of Town.

TABLE IX-2
TOPSOIL SOILS

Good Rating	Fair Rating
Ha,Hb	CoB,CoC
Wn	CyA
	DtB,DtC
	McB,McC
	Of
	Pw
	SdA,SdB
	SnA,SnB
	Su
	UnB,UnC

MAP IX-4: Fair Topsoil Soils

UVLSRPC: July 1996



Soil Survey of Southern County, New Hampshire by the Soil Conservation Service, 1960. This map was prepared by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, 77 Bank Street, Lebanon, New Hampshire 03766-1704. It is based on the Soil Survey of Southern County, New Hampshire, 1960, and is a derivative work. It is not a substitute for the original survey.

SOILS MAP



UNITY, NEW HAMPSHIRE



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SANDY SOILS

The SCS soil survey defines soils as being either probable or improbable rating for the presence of sand in that location. The soil types in Unity which comprise a probable rating for sand are listed in Table IX-3 and shown on Map IX-5. As reflected on Map IX-5, there are large areas of Unity which have a probable rating for sandy soils, located primarily in the central part of Town.

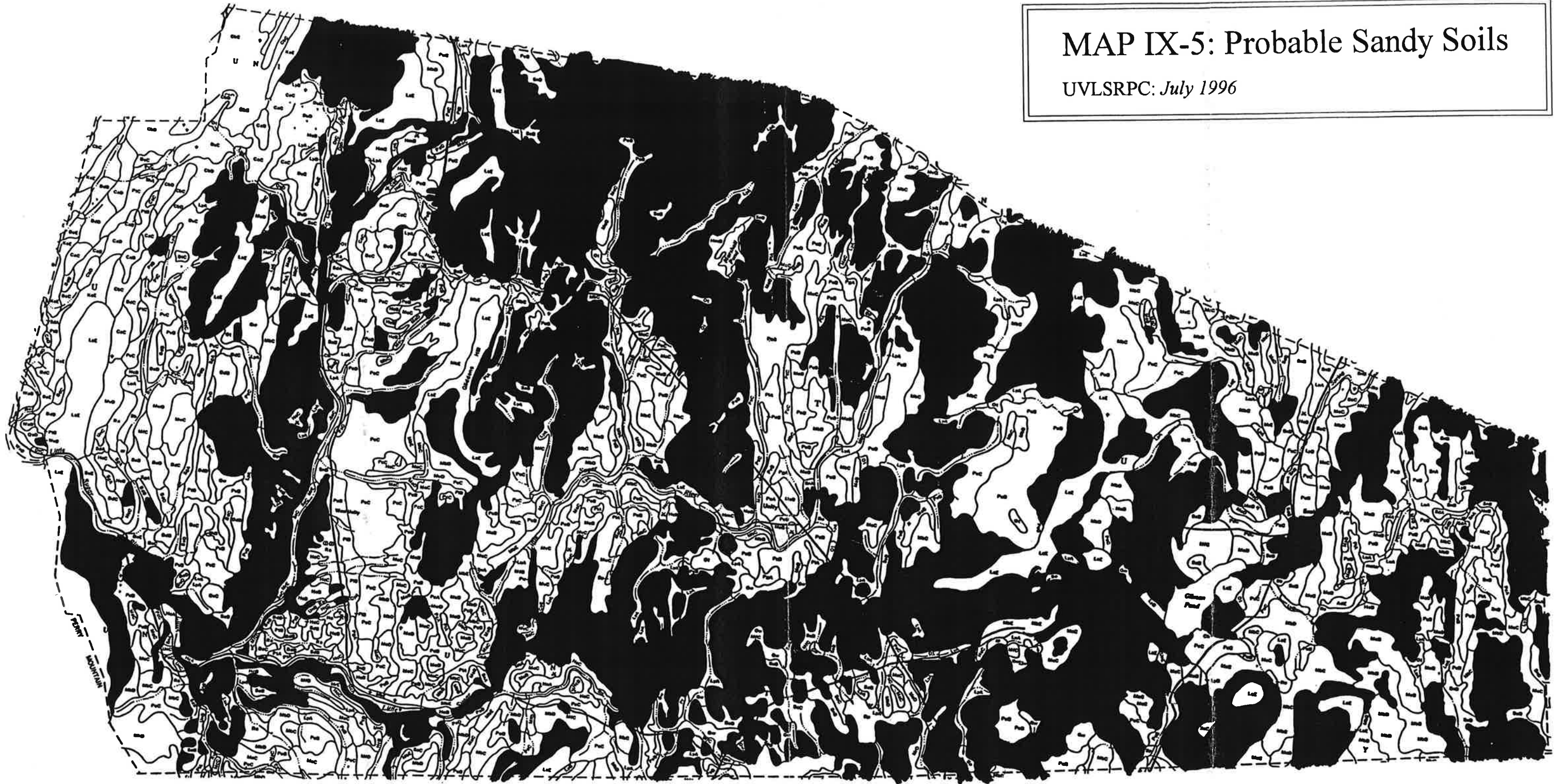
TABLE IX-3
PROBABLE SANDY SOILS

Probable Sandy Soils
Ada,AdB,AdC,AdE
AgA,AgB
Ch
CoA,CoB,CoC,CoE
CyA
HeB,HeC,HeD
HmB,HmC,HmD
Monadnock
Moosilauke
McB,McC,McD
MfB,MfC,MfD
MrC,MrD,MrE
Hermon
MuD
MvB,MvC,MvD
MwB,MwC,MwD
Na
NnA

Probable Sandy Soils
Of
Pw
QsC, QsD
Warwick
Rv
Sa, Sb
Su
WaB
Quonset
WdA, WdB, WdC, WdE

MAP IX-5: Probable Sandy Soils

UVLSRPC: July 1996



Soil Survey of Sullivan County, New Hampshire by the Soil Conservation Service in 1950. This survey was made under the supervision of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It does not show the most recent of information which has been made known to a large scale.

SOILS MAP



UNITY, NEW HAMPSHIRE



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GRAVEL SOILS

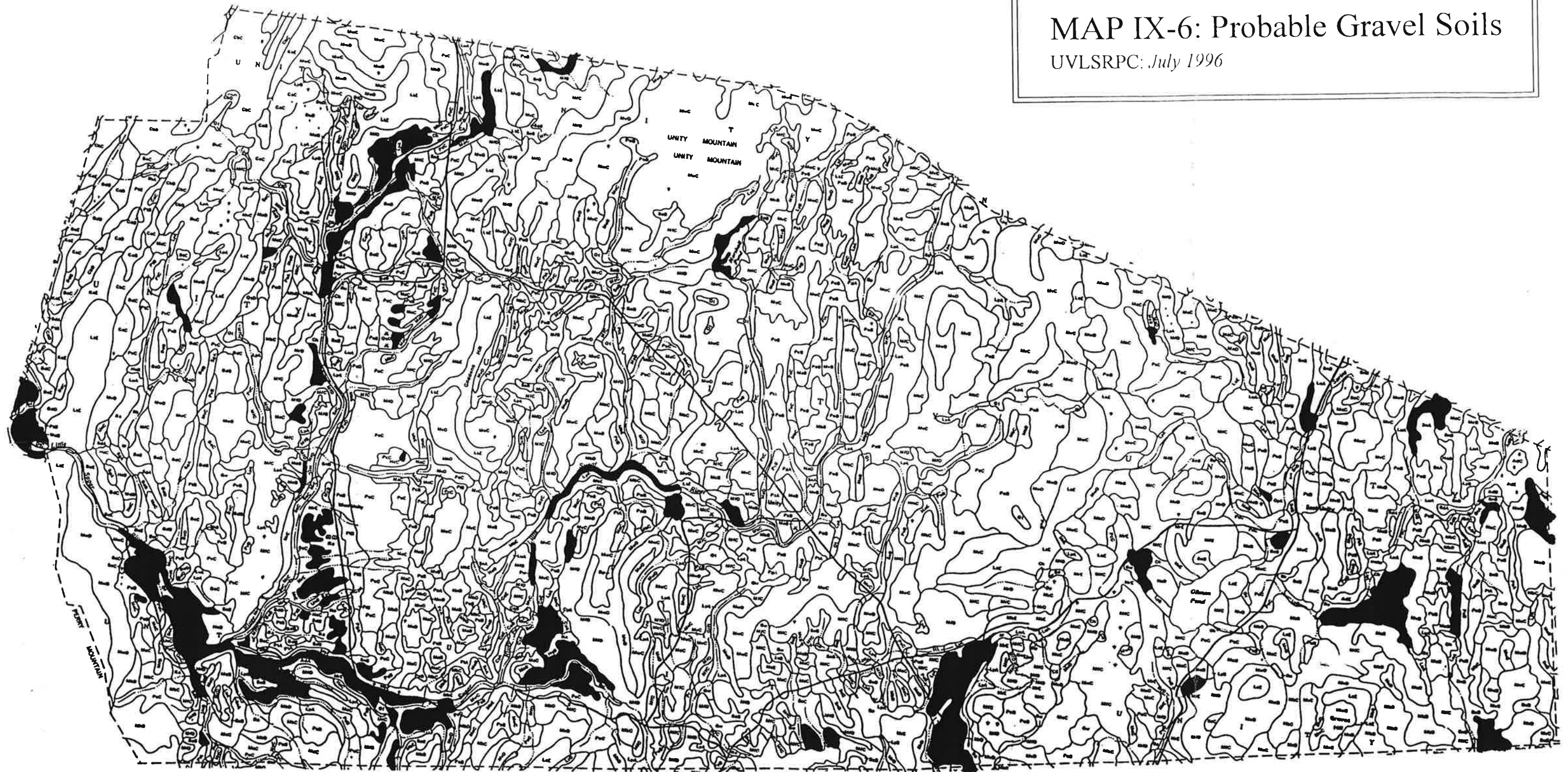
The SCS soil survey defines soils as being either probable or improbable rating for the presence of gravel in that location. The soil types in Unity which comprise a probable rating for gravel are listed in Table IX-4 and shown on Map IX-6. As reflected on Map IX-6, there are relatively small areas of Unity which have a probable rating for gravel, located primarily in the west and east sides of Town.

TABLE IX-4
PROBABLE GRAVEL SOILS

Probable Gravel Soils
AgA,AgB
CoA,CoB,CoC,CoE
HcA,HcB,HcC
HeB,HeC,HeD
HmB,Hmc,Hmd
Moosilauke
Hermon
MuD
NnA
Pw
QsC,QsD
Warwick
WaB
Quonset

MAP IX-6: Probable Gravel Soils

UVLSRPC: July 1996



Soil Survey of Sullivan County, New Hampshire by the Soil Conservation Service as of 1960. This information should not be used for engineering or other purposes. It does not show the exact areas of construction with this could have been made of a large scale.

SOILS MAP



UNITY, NEW HAMPSHIRE



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Regional Planning Commission
77 Bank Street, Lebanon, New Hampshire 03766-1704

GROUNDWATER IDENTIFICATION

To further refine the attempt to locate sand and gravel deposits in Unity, the SCS soil survey data can be compared to the Stratified-Drift Aquifer Maps prepared by the Water Resources Division of the N.H. Department of Environmental Services in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey for the Lower Connecticut River Basin of Southwestern N.H.

These "state-of-the-art" stratified-drift aquifer maps identify the locations of sand and gravel deposits on the valley floors, since where an aquifer exists, so do sand and gravel deposits. However, these groundwater identification maps present only part of the picture with regards to sand and gravel deposits.

In comparing the groundwater availability maps with the SCS soil maps identifying probable locations of sand and gravel deposits, all of the potential groundwater sources coincide with either sand or gravel deposits, but there are a number of sand and gravel deposits that exist outside the areas of groundwater availability. The reason for this is that sand and gravel deposits were created by glaciers and rivers, with deposits occurring on the valley floors (stratified-drift deposits), and on ridges, hillsides and hilltops (esker and moraine deposits). Only the deposits of sand and gravel on the valley floors are depicted on the Stratified-Drift Maps. The other sand and gravel deposits on the ridges, hillsides and hilltops (eskers and moraines) would not show up on a groundwater availability map. While good aquifers are also good sand and gravel deposits, good sand and gravel deposits are not always good groundwater sites.

REGULATIONS AFFECTING EARTH EXCAVATIONS

One of the provisions of the state law governing earth excavations is that a town must allow reasonable opportunities somewhere in town for excavations. Unity currently has no adopted zoning ordinance regulating or restricting earth excavations anywhere in Town. If a zoning ordinance is proposed again in Unity, it needs to address the issue of providing reasonable opportunities for earth excavations to comply with the provisions of RSA 155-E.

To date, the Unity Planning Board has developed and approved an application for earth excavations. At this point, the Planning Board has chosen not to adopt local earth excavation regulations, but rather regulate earth excavations based on the provisions of the state statute.

One of the provisions of the state law allows a town in which aquifers are known to exist, as designated by the U.S. Geological Survey, to protect those groundwater resources by prohibiting any excavation which would substantially damage a known aquifer. The Stratified-Drift Aquifer Maps provide the information to the Planning Board to make this evaluation as part of an application for an earth excavation. The possible damage resulting from an earth excavation located directly over a known aquifer could include adverse affects on the water table from

digging too deep and the danger of pollution from spills of truck oils and other chemicals used on the site which could percolate through the soils into the groundwater.

EARTH EXCAVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Planning Board should carefully review each application for an earth excavation to ensure the operation will comply with the provisions of RSA 155-E, including the Minimum and Express Operational Standards, the Minimum Express Reclamation Standards, Incremental Reclamation and Prohibited Projects.
2. The Planning Board shall require the applicant for an earth excavation to identify the location of the proposed operation relative to the known aquifers based on the referenced "Stratified-Drift Aquifer Maps". If the proposed operation overlays a known aquifer, then the Planning Board shall require the applicant to demonstrate that his earth excavation operation will not substantially damage the known aquifer.
3. In reviewing an earth excavation application, the Planning Board should call upon any outside engineering or environmental consultants, including the Soil Conservation Service, at the applicant's expense, for advice on potential adverse impacts of the proposed operation, recommendations on how to mitigate those impacts, and review of the proposed reclamation plans.

X.

FUTURE LAND USE

X. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Future Land Use Plan is the most important element of the comprehensive planning process. It is a synthesis of all of the Master Plan chapters, which are based on the opinions expressed in the Community Attitude Survey and on an inventory and analysis of trends, existing conditions and future needs with respect to land use, natural resources, population, housing, economic development, transportation, utilities, open space and recreation, community facilities and services, and historic resources.

The Future Land Use Plan is a comprehensive policy statement of desired land use which can be used as a guide for future growth and development of the Town. Future land use decisions and local ordinances, regulations and policies should be generally consistent with the land use plan. To implement this plan, existing ordinances and regulations must be changed and new ones must be created.

POPULATION GROWTH

After three decades of relatively slow growth, Unity's population suddenly exploded during the 1970's, with more than a 50 percent increase in population over a 10 year period. Population growth slowed somewhat in the 1980's, but Unity still experienced a 22% increase in population over this decade. This twenty year period of relatively rapid population growth has caused many local residents to become concerned about the effect of unplanned growth in their community. With the number of deaths exceeding the number of births in Unity, all of the Town's population growth can be attributed to in-migration. During this period of growth, all age groups (preschoolers, students, working age group and senior citizens) have been increasing and placing greater demands on Unity's community facilities and services. It is expected that the elderly age group will increase significantly as a segment of our population over the next two decades, and the special needs of this population must be considered in our current planning activities. The Town's seasonal population, estimated at about 580, is expected to continue to decline, as it did during the 1980's. Population projections done by the N.H. Office of State Planning indicate that Unity's year-round population will rise from about 1,439 in 1995, to about 1,836 persons in the year 2000.

Between 1980 and 1990, Unity experienced an annual average population growth rate of 2.1%. As expressed in the Community Attitude Survey, sixty percent of the surveyed property owners preferred to maintain this population growth rate.

Population Goals

1. Provide for a moderate rate of growth, in keeping with the Town's capacity to provide for community services.
2. Accommodate a reasonable share of the Region's population growth.

Population Policies and Recommendations

1. Unity must consider the cumulative impacts of growth, particularly with respect to the Town's natural resources, community facilities, finances, visual and aesthetic character, and the social implications associated with growth.
2. Most growth should occur in appropriate areas near the villages, while growth should be discouraged in the outer-lying areas of Unity, especially those with poor road access and poor land development capability.
3. Unity should require impact studies of all major or "problem" developments proposed.
4. Developers should be required, as a condition of approval, to pay a reasonable portion of the municipal improvements and costs associated with the proposed development.
5. If Unity's growth rate accelerates beyond the current rapid rate of growth, the Town should seriously consider limiting the number of residential building permits each year (to allow moderate growth and prevent rapid growth), and tie this limitation to a capital improvements program.

HOUSING

Along with growth in population, the amount of housing in Unity has increased significantly, with the addition of about 124 year-round housing units during the 1980's. Almost all of Unity's new housing has been single-family homes in scattered locations throughout the Town. In addition, almost all of Unity's residents own the dwelling in which they live. The vacancy rate in Unity is only 2.7 percent (almost one-half the regional and state averages), indicating a tight housing market. In comparison to the State and Region, housing costs (both owner and rental) are low, indicating that Unity provides a significant amount of affordable housing. In addition, it should

be noted that the Sullivan County Facility, consisting of the Sullivan County Home and House of Corrections, is located in Unity. The County Home has 203 elderly residents, most of whom are low-income persons. The House of Corrections has 52 beds, with an average of 30 inmates. Also, several employees and their families live on the premises, adding another 15 to 20 people, bringing the total population at the County Facility to 248-253 persons.

Unity also has a significant number of residents living in manufactured housing. In 1980, almost twenty percent of Unity's housing units were manufactured homes, compared to 8.2 percent in the County and 7.0 percent in the State as a whole.

According to the Community Survey, virtually every resident of the Town wants Unity to remain as a quiet, rural residential community. An overwhelming majority prefer single-family homes over other types of housing in the future, and very few residents favor multi-family homes. Opinion is divided with respect to the location of mobile homes and mobile home parks in Unity.

Housing Goals

1. Encourage high quality residential developments which maintain and enhance the natural character of the land, promoting the enjoyment and safety of their residents.
2. Maintain Unity as a town of predominantly single-family houses, while accommodating a fair share of the Region's need for housing the elderly, low income and disadvantaged people.
3. Encourage the location of manufactured housing in pleasing environments, augmenting both the aesthetic quality and the level of housing opportunity in Unity.
4. Promote an awareness of energy conservation and alternative energy sources in building design and construction.

Housing Policies and Recommendations

1. Encourage a residential land use pattern which has the medium density housing in close proximity to the school and village centers, and the lower density housing in the outlying areas of Town.

By allowing medium density (1 unit/acre), new housing in these areas, the Town can offer a housing alternative to meet the future needs of its residents and help reduce the pressure to convert the rural landscape along the roads in Unity. New housing in these areas can also help local commercial activity, minimize costs for municipal services and conserve energy.

Since the Town does not have a public water or sewer system, it is crucial that any land being developed should be capable of supporting the water and sewer needs of the use being proposed. The historic character of these areas is another important consideration. However, if good siting and design principles are followed, and the Town has adequate regulations to ensure that they will be followed, the new developments can be harmonious with the traditional small-town qualities of Unity.

Housing development in remote areas results in higher municipal service costs, longer response times for emergency services and higher transportation costs. Large lot sizes should be required to ensure lower densities in outlying areas.

2. Carefully control the conversion of large old houses into apartments or condominiums. While, in many cases, it is both practical and desirable to convert these homes into multi-family dwellings, the issues of parking, sewage disposal, structural and landscaping alterations, density and compatibility with adjacent land uses should be reviewed by the Planning Board.
3. Discourage commercial and industrial intrusion into residential neighborhoods. These uses can lead to safety and health problems, as well as noise and visual pollution, thereby decreasing the quality of residential life and reducing property values.
4. Adopt building codes to ensure the safety and quality of new and existing buildings, and hire a part-time building inspector.

Building codes will protect both public safety and the consumer. Building permit fees, a tiny portion of the total construction cost, will cover a large portion of the part-time inspector's salary. A retired person could be ideal for this job.

5. Encourage energy-efficient subdivision and site plan design. East/west streets and south-oriented lots should be encouraged to promote energy alternatives.
6. Restrict residential development from critical resource areas, such as wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains and prime agricultural land. Housing is not a wise or appropriate use in these areas; the Town has plenty of suitable land for future residential development.
7. Continue to provide housing and other services for elderly persons at the County Home. With the County facility in Unity, the Town has more than its "fair share" of regional elderly and low/moderate income housing, and Unity's "share" may increase if the facility continues to grow.
8. Allow manufactured housing in certain appropriate areas of Town. Manufactured housing should be allowed on individual lots anywhere outside the village center, with mobile home parks permitted anywhere within a one mile radius of the Town Hall, thus, reducing

potential for adverse visual, historic and property value impact, while minimizing municipal costs associated with mobile home parks. Only encourage manufactured housing that meets or exceeds the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards for the construction of a manufactured home, and which is placed on a permanent foundation.

9. Discourage two-family and multi-family residences. Unity has been, and prefers to remain, a rural community for single family residential use, whether it be on-site stick built housing or manufactured housing. The Town discourages two-family and multi-family residences from locating in Town, since they conflict with the rural residential character the Town prefers to maintain.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Unity's open space and recreational opportunities constitute some of the Town's greatest potential assets, though currently undeveloped. All too often, open space and recreational needs and opportunities are forgotten, and the effects of neglecting these important community elements never appear instantly, but, rather, accumulate slowly, usually after these resources are either financially prohibitive or irretrievably lost. The people of Unity must understand the value and benefits of providing for recreation and protecting open space, and we must understand the relationship between recreation and open space, and housing, education, property values, economic development, and mental and physical health.

According to the land use analysis outlined in Table III-1, about 86 percent of Unity's land area is forested, 8.7 percent is agricultural, 1.8 percent is idle land, and about 3.6 percent is developed.

Unity's extensive forest resources have several functions and benefits. These include:

1. to provide a permanent supply of fuel wood, lumber and other wood products;
2. to hold soil in place, especially on hillsides, where deforestation diminishes the soil's ability to absorb and hold water, resulting in the erosion of sloping soils, sedimentation in brooks, streams and lakes, and more frequent and severe flooding;
3. to provide wildlife habitats;
4. to offer areas for outdoor recreation opportunities such as hiking, hunting, camping and cross-country skiing;
5. to act as a screen or buffer of sights, sounds and the wind; and

6. to provide natural beauty and scenic views, and maintain the Town's rural character.

The Town should do as much as possible to ensure that Unity's forest resources are managed properly. Landowners should be encouraged to seek technical forestry expertise to develop a forest management plan which will avoid environmental problems and ensure a long-term sustained yield. Also, the Town should adopt a steep slopes and erosion and sedimentation ordinance to prevent serious environmental (erosion and sedimentation) problems, avoid excessive runoff which could negatively affect someone else's property, and protect the Town's watercourses and water bodies.

Unity's active and idle agricultural land constitutes one of the most important forms of open space in the Town. In addition to the production of crops and livestock, farms and fields provide scenic vistas and help create rural character. Once a major form of economic activity during the 1800's, farming has declined in Unity to a point where, today, there is little farming activity, and many fields either sit idle or have converted into woodlands or development. The loss of our agricultural lands must be halted. Once converted to housing or other development, former farmland will never be reclaimed for farming purposes. Even unmaintained fields which grow up into woodlands may be lost forever, since it is very expensive and difficult to revert woodlands to agricultural land again. The Town must take a number of active steps to preserve and enhance active and idle agricultural lands. They include:

1. guide development into locations which are on nonagricultural soils;
2. encourage deed restrictions, conservation agreements and purchase of development rights;
3. support efforts to increase the penalty for taking agricultural land out of current use;
4. ensure that any local land use regulations do not unduly restrict farming operations; and
5. encourage direct marketing.

Unity's water resources include Gillman Pond, Marshall Pond, Crescent Lake (shared with Acworth), the Little Sugar River, and Quabbinnight, Meadow, Spring, Sleeper, Copeland, Sawyer and Chase Brooks. There also are a number of wetland areas, often directly relating to the water bodies and watercourses listed above. The three water bodies cover approximately 128 acres of Unity's total area. Gillman Pond is currently one source for the community water system in Newport, although it probably will be abandoned soon. Currently, the only public access to a lake or pond in Unity is provided to Marshall Pond. Providing public access should be a top priority, and purchase of Gillman Pond from the Town of Newport should be considered seriously. In addition, Unity's water resources must be protected against pollution and sedimentation, and land within 75 feet of our water should not be developed. Septic systems should be set back a minimum of 125 feet to avoid pollution. Once considered useless, wetlands are now increasingly

appreciated for their functions and benefits associated with flood control, wildlife habitats, groundwater recharge and recreation. A wetlands conservation ordinance should be adopted as soon as possible.

The varying topography of Unity affords Town residents and visitors numerous scenic views, which greatly contribute to the Town's unique character. Some areas should be considered for "pull-off" and/or picnic areas, while some may warrant the negotiation of scenic easements, development rights or outright purchase. Site plan review and sign regulations can also be used to help protect scenic views for the enjoyment of Unity's residents and visitors in the years ahead. As discussed previously, development on the Town's hilltops and hillsides, and clear-cut logging operations, can turn beautiful scenes into marred landscapes overnight.

Unity's scenic areas should also be protected by designating certain roads as scenic roads. The scenic road designation ensures that a public hearing will be held before the Town cuts medium and large-sized trees (circumference of 15 inches or more), or removes stonewalls along its scenic roads. It does not apply to obstructions within three feet of the road traveled way and does not in any way affect the rights of any landowner with respect to work on his own property. Regular, routine maintenance and repairs of the road are not affected by this law. The key point is that designation of a road as scenic establishes a mechanism for public input before the highway department does its work. To property owners along the road (and, presumably, Town officials), this opportunity for public input and information is much preferred over having citizens react emotionally while the work is ongoing or after it has been completed.

The designation of scenic roads can do much to help protect the visual quality and rural character of the Town, and enhance public input and communication in the Town. Although there are no designated scenic roads in Unity currently, there are several roads which should be considered. Some towns, such as Tamworth, have designated all town roads as scenic roads. Is there any reason not to do so in Unity?

Unity presently has extremely limited recreational facilities, which is a glaring deficiency calling for immediate attention as a high priority. The only actual recreational facility in Unity is the playground at the Elementary School, although the Town owns a number of parcels, some of which have some recreational potential. With a lack of facilities, Unity's residents must rely upon neighboring communities, such as Claremont and Newport, the State, with facilities such as Mount Sunapee and Pillsbury State Parks, and commercial recreation businesses which provide opportunities such as golf, skiing, tennis, racquetball, camping, boating, bowling, horseback riding and theatre.

As soon as possible, the Town should prepare a comprehensive recreation plan which can be carried out by the Town and volunteer organizations over the next several years. Public recreational facilities needs include, but are not limited to, an all-purpose ballfield, additional playgrounds, park/picnic areas, a boat launch and beach at each water body, and, eventually, a tennis court. To help keep pace with recreational demands caused by growth, the Town should

require subdividers and developers, as a part of subdivision or site plan review approval, to set aside land which is of adequate size and character to accommodate park and recreation facilities for the residents of the subdivision or development.

As expressed in the Community Survey, almost all of Unity's residents want the Town to remain a quiet, rural residential community. A majority of the landowners surveyed supported preservation or protection of the following natural resources: wildlife habitat, shorelines of lakes and streams, agricultural land, wetlands, scenic views, historic buildings and landmarks, floodplains and steep slopes. Thus, the protection of open space in Unity is clearly a high priority. In terms of recreation, over two-thirds of the respondents feel that certain areas should be set aside for recreational enjoyment. Suggested locations to be protected include Slack Falls, Perry Mountain, Crescent Lake, Marshall Pond, Gillman Pond, Center of Town and Potato Hill.

Open space and Recreation Goals

1. Maintain the Town's rural and village character and scenic beauty.
2. Encourage continued use of the Town's best farmlands.
3. Recognize the development limits on wetlands, steep slopes and floodplains.
4. Protect the quantity and quality of the Town's water resources.
5. Expand the Town's park and recreational facilities.

Open Space and Recreation Policies and Recommendations

1. Conveniently locate all recreation and park facilities, and provide adequate access and parking.
2. Provide a neighborhood park/playground in every residential neighborhood to serve the residents of that neighborhood.
3. Encourage organizations and clubs to help with park and recreational facility improvement projects, and to help the Town organize and sponsor recreation programs and events.
4. Require applicants, as a part of subdivision or site plan review approval, to set aside land which is of adequate size and character to accommodate park and recreational facilities for the residents of the subdivision or development.

5. Continue to maintain and develop cooperation agreements between the Town and the School District to maximize public use and benefit, and minimize costs.
6. Keep all recreational facilities well maintained and attractive.
7. Set aside certain park and conservation areas to preserve wildlife habitats and natural areas in general, while providing a necessary escape from noise, congestion and the built environment.
8. Ensure that the recreation needs of all segments of the population, including the poor, the handicapped and the elderly, will be addressed by the local recreation program.
9. Future needs of the Town of Unity for outdoor recreational facilities include at least one all-purpose ballfield, tennis court, additional playgrounds, park and picnic areas, and public beaches. A plan should be prepared to develop these facilities gradually over the next 10 years.
10. Establish a capital improvements program to implement recommendations in this chapter which require large Town appropriations. These projects should be ranked by priority and phased over several years.
11. Improve park land, open space and public access along all water bodies in Unity.
12. Establish a Recreation Commission to oversee creation of recreational programs and areas.
13. Consider applying for a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant to help establish park or recreational facilities. Maximum federal grant is \$40,000, subject to a 50/50 match in the form of Town funds, revenue sharing, CDBG funds, or in-kind contributions. Unity should seek to obtain these funds each year, before they are cut by the federal government.
14. Support a Conservation Commission to be responsible for preserving and encouraging agriculture in the Town. The Conservation Commission should work with other Town boards and officials, local farmers, residents and businesses, and relevant agencies to achieve this goal.
15. Encourage deed restrictions and conservation agreements to protect agricultural land (RSA 477:45).
16. Guide future residential, commercial and industrial growth into locations which are on nonagricultural soils. There is ample nonagricultural land for future development.
17. Support efforts to increase the penalty for taking land out of current use.

18. Ensure that any future zoning ordinance specifies that existing farms and future farms in rural areas will not be unduly restricted with respect to odor, light and noise.
19. Adopt a Wetlands Conservation District Ordinance.
20. Adopt a Steep Slopes and Erosion and Sedimentation Ordinance.
21. Encourage landowners to seek forestry expertise to develop a management plan for any area which will be logged.
22. Require adequate setbacks and other regulations to protect the Town's water resources from pollution or sedimentation.
23. Protect and preserve Unity's scenic views.
24. Designate certain roads (or all roads) in Unity as scenic roads to help preserve their scenic qualities and ensure public input prior to removal of stonewalls and medium and large-sized trees.
25. Require that minimum lot sizes be fairly large in outer-lying areas.
26. Keep an accurate up-to-date list of existing agricultural operations, including acreages, levels of products being produced, and methods of marketing.
27. Encourage local stores and institutions to purchase local agricultural products and to make it known that they are serving or selling local products.
28. Encourage efforts aimed at educating the public about agricultural techniques, food storage and processing, and marketing and nutrition.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The provision of public services is an important element in protecting the health, safety and general welfare of the community. The need for additional or better public services and facilities increases as the population grows, residential areas expand, old facilities become outmoded, and as living standards and public expectations rise. Most of these facilities and services are funded primarily through local property taxes.

The Unity Town Office is located in a classroom at the Elementary School. This space is, obviously, too small; more space is clearly needed to meet current and future needs. The Town Office should be moved in the near future to provide a suitable working environment with the

capacity for future expansion. In addition, the school may have to expand in the future and may need the room as a new classroom or some other use.

The Unity Town Hall is considered by local residents as the most significant historic building in the Town, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Town Hall is in good condition. The Town of Unity, with the assistance of Community Development Block Grant funds, rehabilitated the Town Hall for use as a community senior center, community health care center and community day care center. The rehabilitation funds were not sufficient to refurbish and reattach the old clock tower on the Town Hall, which should be done when funds become available to complete the rehabilitation project.

The Unity Free Library has been located in the front of the Elementary School since 1982, when an addition to the school was completed and the library was moved there from the Town Hall. The library serves as both the Town and school library, and receives a great deal of use. Based on standards recommended by the American Library Association, Unity is highly deficient in terms of the number of volumes in its collection. The "Friends of the Library" group has been very active, organizing special activities, raising funds and volunteering their time. While space at the library is currently adequate, it is expected that additional space will become necessary in the near future, and an appropriate solution should be studied, including room for future expansion. In the short run, relocation of the Town Office could create additional space for future library needs, unless school enrollments climb.

The Unity Volunteer Fire Department Station is located in Unity Center. The station was converted from a schoolhouse to a fire station in 1963, and an addition was constructed in 1974. It has two bays which are 80 feet deep and can house up to six (6) trucks. The Fire Department currently owns four (4) active trucks, a number of radios, pagers, and miscellaneous tools and equipment. The Volunteer Fire Department is a nonprofit organization with about 16 members. It raises most of its own funds, although the Town does contribute some money for operating expenses each year. The Department is a member of the Southwestern Mutual Aid, and dispatch services are provided by the Keene Fire Department.

The Town has started a dry hydrant program, which should be continued to provide better fire protection. When appropriate, subdividers and developers should be required, as a part of subdivision or site plan review approval, to install hydrants or fire ponds as recommended by the Fire Chief. Access by fire trucks should also be a major consideration while reviewing subdivision and site plan proposals. The Town should also require and encourage the use of smoke and heat detectors, which are relatively inexpensive and easy to install. Finally, the Town should establish a capital reserve fund for replacement of fire equipment, enabling the Town to anticipate and plan for the purchase of fire trucks, and distribute the cost fairly and evenly over a number of years.

Unity has two part-time police officers, with at least one person on call 24 hours per day. The State Police (Troop C in Keene) and County Sheriff also provide police protection. In 1986, the

police moved from the Town Hall to the Fire Station, greatly improving Unity's police facilities. The \$2,500 addition on the side of the Fire Station provides a 13' x 42' heated area for administration, storage and vehicular space. The Town does not have a cell lock-up, so prisoners are transported to either Claremont or Newport. Police dispatch is handled by Valley Dispatch in Claremont.

The Town Landfill is located on North End Road on a 15.2 acre site which has fairly good soil conditions. It is estimated that Unity generated about 857 tons of refuse each year as of 1990. This figure will, obviously, increase as the Town's population increases in the future. Located at the landfill are a compactor and recycling facilities. Items which are recycled include glass, aluminum cans, newspaper, corrugated cardboard, metals, PET plastics and waste oil.

The Town's future plans regarding solid waste disposal are uncertain at this time. The Town has funded a study to examine landfill closure plans to meet state and federal guidelines, and to evaluate and determine the best alternative solid waste disposal option for Unity. Additionally, the Town is reviewing options for recycling as well.

The Town Garage is located in Unity Center next to the Fire Station. Built in the early 1970's, the one-story, concrete block structure has two bays and a small storage area. The building is insulated and heated. Although it is located adjacent to the Fire Station, the two areas are well separated. Currently, sand is piled outside. Additional sheltered storage for other equipment and materials is available.

The Newport Area Home Health Agency provides visiting nurses and other health-related services to the Town of Unity. Ambulance service is provided by Golden Cross in Claremont.

Unity has three active and two inactive cemeteries which are maintained by the Town.

The Unity Elementary School is located in Unity Center. Built in 1955, the school originally consisted of four classrooms and a cafeteria on a 7.2-acre site. A new addition was constructed in 1981, adding three new classrooms, a joint school/town library and the Town Office.

Students attend school in Unity until they reach the ninth grade, when they have their choice of which neighboring high school to attend. The Town has a formal agreement with Claremont, ensuring that Unity students will be able to attend their high school. East Unity students are required to go to Newport High School, unless their parents make other arrangements, the district boundary being in the center of Town. Other schools, such as Newport and Sunapee, can decide not to accept Unity's tuition students if they so desire. The Town pays all of the tuition for students who attend high school in Claremont and Newport, and part of the tuition at Sunapee High School, with the parents paying the balance. Transportation of high school students is the responsibility of parents (no bus).

The school does not have a gymnasium or outdoor recreational facilities, other than a small playground and two soccer nets in the schoolyard, a basketball net in the parking lot, and two volleyball courts. Parking appears to be inadequate, especially during the winter months. A combined parking lot/playground area is certainly not desirable.

Unity provides art and gym for its elementary students.

Between 1984 and 1993, the enrollments at the Unity Elementary School ranged from a low of 115 in 1991-92, to a high of 150 in 1984-85. During this period, the average enrollment was 123 students.

The information above indicates that the enrollment at the Unity Elementary School and the high school enrollment peaked in 1985-86, and have shown a general decline since then. These school enrollments seem to be mirroring the changes in the economy. The elementary school appears to meet current needs, but may need to be expanded in the future if the enrollments increase with an improving economy.

Projecting future enrollment of the Unity Elementary School is virtually impossible, due to the small number of students and the potential impact of development. A single 20-lot subdivision, for example, could add 20 to 40 students in a short period of time. The Town should closely monitor its school enrollment levels and consider the impact of development on future school facilities and costs.

Community Facilities and Services Goals

1. Provide community services (e.g., schools, library, public safety, etc.) at a level equal to or better than currently provided.
2. Provide for a moderate rate of growth, in keeping with the Town's capacity to provide for community services.
3. Expand the Town's park and recreational facilities.
4. Improve existing roads and promote the high quality of new roads.

Community Facilities Policies and Recommendations

1. Prepare and update annually a 10-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to plan major capital expenditures and help spread the costs evenly over time.

2. Ensure that population and business growth will occur at a slow to moderate rate and not out-pace the Town's ability to provide community facilities and services.
3. Consider the impact of specific development proposals on Unity's community facilities and services. This should involve a number of factors, including, but not limited to, fiscal impact, the current and projected capacity of the facilities, location, and relationship to the CIP.
4. Provide handicapped access to all public buildings and facilities in Unity.
5. Emphasize the prevention of fires, accidents, and other health and safety problems.
6. Make access for fire engines and emergency vehicles a major consideration in evaluating the location and design of proposed subdivisions and developments.
7. Avoid long, dead-end streets to provide two potential means of access for fire trucks and other emergency vehicles.
8. Discourage development in outlying areas to minimize municipal service costs, maximize the response time for emergency vehicles, and create a more desirable land use pattern.
9. Limit building heights to ensure that each floor and roof can be reached by the Fire Department.
10. Locate community facilities in central, convenient locations with good access. Facilities for emergency services (police and fire) should be highly visible.
11. Whenever possible, create community facilities which are multipurpose to maximize public use and benefit.
12. All community facility buildings should be energy-efficient and have adequate space and parking.
13. Dispose of all solid waste in an economical, cost-effective and environmentally sound manner.
14. Avoid duplication and overlap of municipal services and responsibilities.
15. Whenever feasible, provide community services on a regional basis to minimize costs and/or ensure a higher level of service.

16. Participate in regional planning efforts, as growth in neighboring communities has a significant impact on Unity's community facilities and services (especially roads, police, schools and solid waste).

17. Specific recommendations for each facility are as follows:

A. Town Office

Move the Town Office out of the Elementary School to a new location offering a suitable working environment and the capacity for future expansion, and, thus, allowing for the utilization of the space by the school as needed in the future.

B. Town Hall

The Town Hall was recently refurbished for use as a community senior center, community health care center and community day care center. The Town should continue to expand the use of this centrally located facility for other groups and organizations. Additionally, as funding permits, the Town should complete the building renovations by repairing and reattaching the tower on the Town Hall.

C. Library

While space for the library is currently adequate, it is expected that additional space will become necessary in the near future, and an appropriate solution should be studied with room for future expansion. In the short run, relocation of the Town Office could create additional space for future library needs.

D. Fire Protection

The Town should continue the dry hydrant program, which is a valuable method of providing better fire protection in rural areas.

Require and encourage the use of smoke and heat detectors.

Study and consider establishing a Capital Improvements Program to allow the Town to anticipate and plan for the purchase of major expenditures, such as fire equipment, and distribute these costs fairly and evenly over time.

Continued efforts should be made to improve the Fire Department by working with other fire departments in the mutual aid system.

E. Police Protection

The Police Station's current central, visible location at the Fire Station is good. The expense of replacing the Town's police cruiser should be included in the Town's Capital Improvement Program.

F. Solid Waste

The Town should continue to explore environmentally sound alternatives for solid waste disposal. A regional solution would seem to be the most appropriate and cost-effective solution to the Town's future needs.

G. Highway Department

Require high standards for road construction which will keep the Town's costs down.

Continue to contribute to a Capital Reserve Fund to plan for the purchase of highway department vehicles and equipment.

H. School Building

The Unity Elementary School appears to be adequate for the Town's current needs.

Continue to upgrade Unity Elementary School to meet future needs.

Relocation of the Town Office would create additional space which could serve future school expansion needs.

PUBLIC ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

The public road system in Unity totals over 65 miles, of which about 13 miles are maintained by the State, 43 miles are maintained by the Town, and 10 miles are discontinued subject to gates and bars and were not maintained by the Town for five successive years. A large percentage of the Town's budget is devoted to road maintenance and improvements. According to the Community Survey, Unity residents showed a real concern with the condition and maintenance of roads in Town.

As the Town of Unity grows, the demand for better road maintenance and more improvements will increase. Accident data from 1990 through 1993 indicates that the roads generating the most accidents are Gillman Pond Road, the Second New Hampshire Turnpike and Stage Road. In addition to requiring that new roads meet the Town's specifications, the Town should require

subdividers and developers to pay their proportion of the cost to upgrade off-site roads leading to the new road or subdivision when the existing off-site roads are inadequate to handle the increased traffic resulting from the new subdivision or development. As discussed under open space and recreation, Unity has a number of rural roads which could be designated as scenic roads to preserve their scenic qualities and rural character, and ensure public input prior to removal of stonewalls and medium and large-sized trees along the roads.

Transportation Goals

1. Work with the State to maintain and improve the State highway network as it affects Unity.
2. Encourage development that promotes both safety and the effective flow of traffic.
3. Improve existing Town roads.
4. Promote the high quality of new roads.

Transportation Policies and Recommendations

1. Encourage commercial and higher density single family residential development in and near existing concentrations in the village areas.
2. Discourage strip commercial and multi-family residential development along State and local roads in Unity.
3. Require adequate road standards for new subdivisions and developments.
4. Consider the effect which proposed subdivisions or developments may have on off-site roads and, in appropriate cases, require the developer/subdivider to improve off-site roads as a condition for subdivision or site plan approval. Even if the new road in a subdivision meets the Town's specifications, the other roads in the area providing access to the new subdivision may not be adequate to accommodate the increased traffic resulting from the development. In this case, the developer/sub-divider should pay his/her proportion of the cost to upgrade these off-site roads.
5. Require adequate setbacks between roads and buildings, structures, parking lots, fences, etc., to allow for road maintenance and improvements, and prevent obstruction of vision by motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians.
6. Discourage long, dead-end roads and encourage a flow-through road system.

7. Minimize the number of road access points (curb cuts) whenever possible, using shared driveways and interior road networks when appropriate.
8. Locate road access points (driveways, ingress, egress points, etc.) in the safest possible locations, usually by maximizing sight distances.
9. Continue to implement local driveway regulations.
10. Implement improvements which will improve pedestrian and bicycle travel.
11. Institute the PAVER system for highway pavement maintenance.
12. Continue to fund the road improvement plan. The Board of Selectmen have developed a road improvement plan and began funding the plan in 1994. Funding should be continued in subsequent years to implement that plan. This road improvement plan should be incorporated into a Capital Improvements Program when one is developed.
13. Participate in regional transportation planning efforts.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Unity's economic base is inseparably linked to the economic prosperity of the Region as a whole. The Town's only major industry is the Sullivan County Complex, and most of Unity's residents commute to neighboring job centers, such as Newport and Claremont, for employment. As indicated in the Community Survey, most residents want the Town to remain a quiet, rural residential community with the County Complex and home businesses as the predominant form of business activity in the Town. Clearly, most prefer to see Unity remain a "bedroom town" with limited commercial and industrial development. In comparison to neighboring communities, Sullivan County, and the State as a whole, Unity can be described as a community with moderate income levels and a moderate percentage of persons living below poverty level.

As discussed previously, most of Unity's workers travel to other communities for employment. The major employment centers are Claremont and Newport, where 34 percent and 24 percent, respectively, of Unity's workers travel for employment. Nineteen percent (19%) work in Unity, most often at home businesses or the County Complex. Of those who work at businesses in Unity, 43 percent come from Unity, 34 percent are from Claremont, and 19 percent come from Newport to Unity for employment.

A high percentage (33%) of Unity's residents who work have manufacturing jobs. This is above the State average of 23 percent, and above the County average of 27 percent.

In comparison to the State as a whole, economic growth in the Claremont area has been very slow. Manufacturing employment has been relatively stagnant over the past decade, while the service and trade sectors of the economy have been increasing the fastest. The service and trade sectors are also the fastest growing sectors of the State economy. Unemployment rates in the area were generally below the State unemployment rates during the 1970's, but higher than the State during the early 1980's. Wage rates in the Claremont area are about 12 percent below the State average.

Compared with other communities in the Region, the Town of Unity's full value tax rate is one of the lowest in the Region, with Unity's rate ranked 23rd out of 27 communities in the Region. However, the Town also has one of the lowest per capita tax bases in the Region. Unity's estimated full value per capita was ranked 26th out of 27 communities. The average local per capita tax base in New Hampshire is nearly double Unity's tax base. This is a key point, since the per capita tax base is a partial measure of our residents' ability to pay taxes. If the Town wishes to improve its tax base and tax rate, we must realize that the quality, rather than the quantity, of economic and housing development will determine the net impact of development on our local tax structure. The Town must also realize that good recreation and community facilities are necessary to attract quality development.

Economic Development Goals

1. Encourage small, non-polluting (light) industries and commercial establishments to locate on well planned sites where they will not create a potential for land use or traffic conflicts.
2. Maintain the Town's rural and village character and scenic beauty.
3. Protect historic sites, buildings and settings.
4. Provide for a slight rate of growth, in keeping with the Town's capacity to provide community services and facilities.
5. Encourage small home-based businesses which remain subordinate to the primary residential use and which create minimal impacts on the neighborhood.

Economic Development Policies and Recommendations

1. Identify and reserve limited, suitable areas for future industrial and commercial development.
2. Prevent strip commercial development, especially along State roads.

3. Encourage home occupations, with proper restrictions.
4. Encourage the conversion of suitable structures to inns and “bed and breakfast” lodging facilities.
5. Encourage agriculture and forestry in Unity.
6. Require the local school system to provide adequate opportunities for vocational training.
7. Promote the creation of adult job re-training programs.
8. Require off-street parking regulations for all residential, commercial and industrial uses.
9. Encourage the rehabilitation and use of historic structures in the villages to accommodate future commercial growth.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Unity’s historic resources and historic quality play an important, yet often underestimated, role in the overall quality of life in the community. It is clear from the Community Survey that Unity’s residents appreciate their historic resources, as 54 percent felt that there are buildings which should be preserved for their historic and scenic value. The Town Hall and Quaker Meeting House were mentioned most frequently. Fortunately, groups and a number of private individuals have taken responsibility for many of the local preservation and historical activities in recent years. Examples include:

- publication of the booklet, Highlights in the History of Unity, NH;
- repairs to the Butcher Knife Hill signpost by John Callum, Sr.;
- stenciling in the interior of the Town Hall by Peg Delude;
- current projects of the Unity Historical Society, established in 1983; and
- nomination of the Town Hall to the National Register of Historic Places.

A majority of Unity residents favor the preservation of some historic buildings in Town. There is a general consensus that Unity’s historic buildings contribute to the Town’s unique character. The Town should consider preparing a survey of historic resources. Some areas may warrant investigation of National Register designation or local historic districts. Site plan review, sign

regulations, easements and scenic road designations can also be used to help protect historic areas and views for Unity's future residents.

Historic Resources Goals

1. Identify and preserve Unity's historic sites, structures, documents and artifacts.
2. Promote an appreciation for and understanding of Unity's historic resources.

Historic Resources Policies and Recommendations

1. Unity should consider the impact of new development and new construction on its historic resources, encouraging compatible new design and rehabilitation, rather than new construction, where feasible. Similarly, signage should be simple, so as not to diminish or detract from buildings of historic or architectural significance.
2. The Town should continue protection of the newly renovated Town Hall.
3. The Historical Society should prepare an historic resources survey for Unity, with information updated periodically to indicate changes to buildings, including remodeling, fire, demolition, or changes to surroundings.
4. Eligible historic structures and areas should be considered for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
5. Open space should be preserved to complement the architecture which is so inseparably linked with the landscape. The Town should encourage the donation of or purchase of conservation and agricultural easements to preserve the community's agricultural heritage.
6. Copies of literature from the State Historic Preservation Office and the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission regarding appropriate rehabilitation techniques should be placed on file with the Town to encourage the sensitive renovation of older homes and buildings.

LAND USE

Virtually every goal and recommendation contained in this Master Plan relates in some way to local land use planning. As such, our decisions about future land use will, in many ways, have a profound effect on the quality of life for future generations.

The relatively rapid population growth experienced in Unity has resulted in significant land use changes over a short period of time. Between 1953 and 1975, the amount of developed land increased by 430 percent, while active agricultural land declined by 26 percent and idle agricultural acreage dropped 57 percent. The amount of forested land remained fairly constant, with the acreage lost to development matched by the conversion of fields and pastures into woodlands.

Only four percent (4%) of Unity's land area is developed. Most of the developed land is occupied by either residential uses or roads leading to them. The remaining developed land consists of industrial/commercial, community facilities, cemeteries and the Sullivan County Complex.

About ninety-six percent (96%) of Unity's land area is undeveloped. Most of the undeveloped land is forested. About 10 percent of the Town's land is either active or inactive agricultural land, and the amount has been declining rapidly. The large amount of undeveloped land in Unity is a reflection of the limited demand for development, large land holdings in single ownership, limited road access, and the natural constraints of the land (varying soils and slopes, wetlands, ledge, etc.) which make development difficult and expensive. Proper use/conservation of these undeveloped resources is a major objective in this plan.

The Town's regulations and ordinances should seek to guide growth into areas with adequate natural capability to support development. One of the chief factors to consider in assessing land capability is the capacity of the site to treat sewage effluent properly. Inadequate soil capability to absorb and treat septic effluent causes nutrient enrichment of surface water (Crescent Lake, Gilman Pond, Marshall Pond, etc.); poor site planning can also cause the contamination of private well waters by failed septic systems.

The provision of sewer lines can overcome a number of the limitations which natural conditions impose upon development. However, even with sewer lines, natural factors remain an important consideration relative to such things as road construction, foundation stability, erosion and sedimentation hazards. Further, slope, soil type and depth to bedrock affect the cost of constructing and maintaining sewer lines.

Certain of Unity's natural resources have been designated as "critical resources." They include:

1. Wetlands - In their natural condition, wetlands perform a number of valuable functions for man. Among them are: storage of floodwaters during peak overflow periods; storage and retention of nutrients, thus, preventing addition of nutrients to downstream lakes; discharge of water to streams during periods of low flow; provision of prime water to streams during periods of low flow; and provision of prime habitat for many types of wildlife. They are unsuitable for development purposes because of their year-round high water table.

The Town of Unity should adopt a Wetlands Conservation Overlay District to protect this important resource.

2. Floodplains - Floodplains are the periodically inundated flatlands adjacent to rivers and streams. Floodplains serve as storage areas for water during times of flooding and provide travel corridors for wildlife. Due to their important ecological characteristics, development in floodplains presents some special problems, including: 1) a high probability of property damage during flooding; 2) the restrictions of periodic storage resulting in potentially greater flooding; and 3) the increased likelihood of erosion and sedimentation. The latter factor can cause increased turbidity of the water in rivers and streams.

Land delineated as Flood Hazard Areas within the 100-year floodplain is designated as a critical resource. Areas between the 100-year and 500-year floodplain, while not falling within the critical resource category, should still be subject to some development restrictions; hazardous waste storage sites and landfills, because of their long-term potential for water contamination in the event of severe flooding, are examples of inappropriate uses in this zone.

3. Steep Slopes - Much of the land in Unity is very steep. Land capability analysis designates slopes having a grade of over 25 percent as a critical resource. The problems encountered by development on steep slopes entail erosion and sedimentation associated with construction, malfunctioning septic systems, difficult road construction and aesthetic disruption.

Land areas with steep slopes are subject to a higher volume and velocity of surface water runoff, increasing the likelihood of erosion problems. When development on steep slopes disturbs trees and/or necessitates the removal of topsoil and vegetative cover, runoff leads to siltation of streams, rivers and lakes. Sedimentation can affect the navigability of water bodies, destroy fish spawning grounds, choke off plant life, and have an overall deleterious effect on water quality.

Construction of roads in steep areas can be costly due to increased cut and fill requirements. Maintenance of roadways in steep areas, particularly during the winter months, is an additional constraining factor.

Another important consideration in steep slope areas relates to on-site sewage disposal. Septic systems are more difficult to design and are more likely to malfunction in steep terrain. Often, the soil is shallow on steep slopes, causing leachate breakthrough and resulting in health hazards. A municipality may be forced to incur substantial expense in order to provide sewer service to an area where surface breakthrough of leachate has occurred.

Finally, much of Unity's natural beauty derives from the Town's hilly terrain. Poorly designed development on highly visible steep slope areas may adversely affect a scenic vista and detract from the surrounding beauty.

A Steep Slopes Conservation District, and provisions to prevent erosion and sedimentation, should be adopted by the Town as soon as possible.

4. Prime Agricultural Land - Prime agricultural soils are an important natural resource which is both highly productive and limited in quantity. Prime farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage and fiber, and is also available for these uses. This land could be cropland, pasture land, forest land or other land, but not urban built-up land or water.

The encroachment of development on prime agricultural soils is an important planning concern as it relates to the long-term needs of the community.

Because prime agricultural soils typically have excellent development capability, they are particularly vulnerable to development pressures. Most farmland is characterized by relatively gentle slopes and good drainage; development costs are further minimized by the fact that farmland does not need to be cleared as a part of street and foundation construction.

There is no single solution to the farmland preservation problem. Instead, a number of actions are needed simultaneously to preserve this unique and limited critical resource. Examples include negotiation of conservation agreements and deed restrictions through a land trust; purchase of development rights; and any actions which will encourage, rather than hamper, the ability of farmers to operate their farms and market their products.

5. Undeveloped Aquifer Areas - Aquifers are susceptible to pollution due to the ease and speed with which waterborne pollutants are transmitted through the soil. Septic tank effluent, landfill leachate, or improperly stored hazardous wastes are potential sources of aquifer pollution. In addition, development which involves extensive amounts of impervious material cover (e.g., asphalt or cement) can reduce the productivity of aquifer areas.

Unity's Groundwater Availability Map was prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and delineates aquifer areas according to their potential yield. USGS data indicate that there are only three small potential aquifer areas in Unity, all of which are rated as having medium potential to yield groundwater:

- A. an area along the Little Sugar River just north of Quaker City (349 acres);
- B. an area along Chase Brook (398 acres); and

C. an area just west of Crescent Lake (149 acres).

The estimated total area of these three small aquifers is 896 acres.

Generally, lot sizes in aquifer areas should be large, and densities and lot coverages should be low to prevent nutrient overloading from septic systems and ensure an adequate area for aquifer recharge. In addition, certain uses, such as storage of hazardous waste, salt piles and landfills, should not be permitted in these areas.

Based on the Town's growth projections, it is expected that between 1980 and the year 2000, Unity will need an additional 160 acres for residential development, 11 acres for commercial development, and 10 acres for industrial development, which totals 180 additional acres to be developed by that year.

The projected future land use needs suggest that future growth can be accommodated in an orderly, incremental manner without straining community facilities and services or requiring the stringent timed growth ordinances which some rapidly growing communities in the southern part of the State have been forced to adopt in recent years. Furthermore, we have enough suitable land to accommodate this growth. If we allow development in inappropriate areas, Unity's taxpayers will not only be subjected to the hazards to health, safety, and a denigration of the quality of life, but will have to bear the financial burden of correcting the effects of building in inappropriate areas. Controls must be established and enforced that accommodate more intense and efficient development patterns on the limited buildable land resources, while strongly curtailing intense uses of marginal and unsuitable lands. The recommended strategy for implementing such a land use policy is outlined in the following goals and policy statement. It should be noted that most of the following goals and policies were strongly supported in the Unity Community Survey.

Land Use Goals

1. Maintain the Town's rural and village character and scenic beauty.
2. Encourage continued use of the Town's best farmlands and discourage the use of this land for other purposes.
3. Recognize the developmental limits on wetlands, steep slopes and floodplains.
4. Protect the quantity and quality of the Town's water resources.
5. Protect historic sites, buildings and settings.

Land Use Policies and Recommendations

1. Encourage a land use pattern which has the medium density housing and commercial/industrial uses in close proximity to the school and village centers, and the lower density housing in the outer-lying areas of Town.
2. Base future land use decision-making upon the natural capability of the land and other resources to sustain varying types and intensities of development.
3. Take positive steps to identify and protect critical natural resources that contribute to the health, safety and well-being of Unity's residents.
4. Promote, protect and enhance Unity's visual/cultural resources at the community-wide scale, as well as on a site-by-site basis.
5. Promote land use patterns that facilitate a safe, economical and energy-conserving transportation system in Unity.
6. Discourage strip development.
7. Encourage energy-efficient subdivision and site plan design. East/west streets and south-oriented lots should be encouraged to promote energy alternatives.
8. Restrict development from critical resource areas, such as wetlands, steep slopes, floodplains and prime agricultural land. Development is not a wise or appropriate use in these areas; the Town has plenty of suitable land for future residential development.
9. Allow manufactured homes in appropriate areas of Town. Manufactured homes should be allowed on individual lots anywhere outside the village center, with manufactured home parks permitted anywhere within a 3/4 mile radius of the Town Hall, thus, reducing potential for adverse visual, historic and property value impact, while minimizing municipal costs associated with manufactured home parks.
10. Carefully control the conversion of large old houses into apartments or condominiums. While, in many cases, it is both practical and desirable to convert these homes into multi-family dwellings, the issues of parking, sewage disposal, structural and landscaping alterations, density and compatibility with adjacent land uses should be reviewed by the Planning Board.
11. Discourage commercial and industrial intrusion into residential neighborhoods. These uses can lead to safety and health problems, as well as noise and visual pollution, thereby decreasing the quality of residential life and reducing property values.

12. Unity's Subdivision Regulations should include, but not be limited to, the following provisions:
- A. minimum lot size requirements; eventually, minimum lot sizes should be based on soil and slope conditions, using a "sliding scale";
 - B. road and lake frontage requirements;
 - C. a provision whereby the Planning Board may require an impact study (the cost of which is to be paid by the developer) for any major or "problem" subdivision proposal; and that the cost of professional consultants to ascertain compliance with requirements be paid by the developer;
 - D. a statement that premature subdivisions will not be approved by the Planning Board, including a definition of a premature subdivision;
 - E. a statement that developers may be required to pay a reasonable portion of the off-site road improvement costs associated with their developments;
 - F. a 4:1 maximum ratio of lot length to lot width to prevent "toothpick" lots;
 - G. a provision whereby developers of large subdivisions (10 or more lots or units) are required to set aside adequate land area which is suitable for recreation purposes, or contribute equivalency in land or money to the Town for provision of recreational services; and
 - H. provision for compliance hearing on preconditions.
13. Adopt Site Plan Review Regulations. Under the provisions of RSA 674:43, the Town can "empower the Planning Board to review and approve or disapprove site plans for the development of tracts for nonresidential uses, or for multi-family dwelling units other than one and two-family dwellings, whether or not such development includes a subdivision or re-subdivision of the site."

The adoption of site plan review provisions will allow the Planning Board to evaluate proposed projects in greater detail than provided under subdivision regulations (and zoning, if adopted in the future). Regulations should be written which include requirements for site access, drainage, parking, pedestrian circulation, exterior handicapped features, water and sewer systems, and landscaping. The Board may require that a surveyed plot plan, working drawings and impact reports be submitted as part of the owner's application.

The Town should also require a bond for landscaping improvements proposed as a part of site plan review. When a commercial, industrial or multi-unit residential building is constructed, landscape improvements are usually among the last items completed. This results in many cases where planned landscape improvements are never actually carried out, especially if the total project has a cost overrun. The Town should require a bond to ensure that the landscape design, which was an integral part of the proposal, is, in fact, completed as approved.

14. Adopt a simple zoning ordinance. A number of the Master Plan recommendations can only be carried out by adopting a zoning ordinance. This process involves preparatory work, including hearings, by the Planning Board. The Planning Board then presents the proposed ordinance to the voters at Town Meeting. Future amendments must follow the same procedure, with the final decision to be made by Unity's voters.

Unity should adopt a relatively simple zoning ordinance which consists of the following districts:

- A. Rural District (most of the Town);
- B. Village District; and
- C. Environmental Overlay District.

The primary purpose of the Rural District is to provide for low-density housing, home businesses, agriculture, forestry and wildlife. Several other uses can be listed as "special exceptions," which means that certain uses are forbidden, except under special conditions which are set forth in the ordinance itself. If the proposed use is listed as a special exception and meets the conditions of the ordinance, the Zoning Board of Adjustment can grant "special exception." Conditions generally ensure that the particular use will not be detrimental or injurious to the neighborhood. The Planning Board should determine the exact list of permitted uses and special exceptions after further study, and it should define each use.

The Village District should allow medium density and compatible commercial and industrial uses, while protecting the integrity of the existing village settlements. By allowing medium density (1 unit/acre) new housing in these areas, the Town can offer a housing alternative to meet the future needs of its residents and help reduce the pressure to convert the rural landscape along the roads in Unity. New housing in these areas can also help local commercial activity, minimize costs for municipal services and conserve energy.

However, since the Town does not have a public water or sewer system, it is crucial that any land being developed should be capable of supporting the water and sewer needs of the use being proposed. The historic character of these areas is another important consideration. If good siting and design principles are followed, and the Town has

adequate regulations to ensure that they will be followed, the new developments can be harmonious with the traditional small-town qualities of Unity.

The Environmental Overlay District should include the following environmental protection districts:

- A. Wetlands Conservation District - No building development or septic systems should be allowed in the wetland district. Permitted uses should include agriculture, forestry and recreation uses not requiring alteration of the wetland. Septic systems should be set back no less than 100 feet from the edge of the wetland. Water impoundments and driveways should be listed as special exceptions.
- B. Steep Slope District - Development should not be allowed on slopes exceeding 25 percent, while lots with a 15 to 25 percent slope should be at least six acres in size. Ridgelines should also be protected.
- C. Aquifer Protection District - It is important, in the long run, that these groundwater resources be protected from contamination or pollution resulting from uncontrolled development or adverse land use practices. Some of the practices that may adversely affect an aquifer include landfills and dumps, intensive development, and improper storage of hazardous materials or liquids.
- D. Floodplain District - Development occurring in floodplain areas may cause property damage and pose safety risks to residents of housing located within floodplain boundaries. No development should be allowed within the boundaries of the Zone A Flood Hazard Area as delineated on Unity's Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM).

In addition to the creation of these districts, the Zoning Ordinance should include, but not be limited to, the following provisions:

- A. minimum lot size requirements;
- B. setbacks between roads and buildings/structures/parking lots;
- C. road and water frontage requirements;
- D. setbacks between septic systems and water bodies or watercourses (125 feet), and septic systems and wetlands (100 feet);
- E. maximum density requirements;

- F. side and rear setbacks;
 - G. sign regulations;
 - H. a maximum height restriction of 35 feet for all buildings in the Town;
 - I. off-street parking requirements (design and number of spaces);
 - J. lot coverage;
 - K. manufactured home park regulations;
 - L. condominium conversion regulations;
 - M. earth removal regulations; and
 - N. detailed definitions for each use regulated.
15. Prepare a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) which will enable the Town to develop a long-range plan for replacement and improvement of roads and community facilities, and schedule the associated costs evenly over time.