

# Chapter 6

## Community Facilities & Services



*Goodwin Library*



# Chapter 6

## Community Facilities & Services

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Master Plan sets forth observations regarding Community Facilities in Farmington.

### 2.0 SCHOOLS

Schools are of critical importance to the town of Farmington. A high quality educational system is essential to adequately prepare Farmington's children to be successful in an increasingly complex world. Farmington offers educational services for students from pre-kindergarten through high school at its three school facilities. Additionally, through a partnership with the Explore Collaborative, basic adult education and enrichment classes were offered to residents in 2004-2005 using classroom space provided by the district. Schools are also fundamentally linked to the economic health of the community.

There is strong linkage between successful schools and successful economic development. Successful schools provide improved employment skills to the community's children and help attract new business activity, raising income levels. This is especially true in the current economic environment—studies have shown a high correlation between educational quality and successful economic development. Management is attracted to communities with good schools,



*Farmington High School*

both as a source of workers and as the type of community management prefers to live in. Today's economy rewards skilled labor, while unskilled workers struggle to attain a reasonable income. Upper income residents, who can afford to pay higher property taxes, are attracted to communities with good schools and frequently avoid communities with perceived poor quality schools.

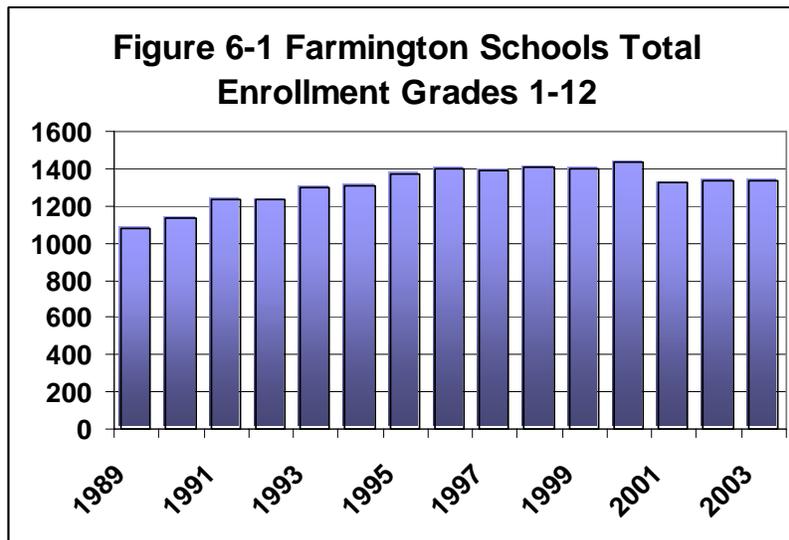
It will be difficult to attract housing that "pays its own way" without the perception in the market that Farmington offers its residents an education that is

competitive with that of surrounding communities. As in most New Hampshire towns, schools represent the largest and most important local expenditure. In 2003 Farmington's school funding totaled approximately \$11.8 million, which represents 70% of the town's total expenditures (municipal and school).

## 2.1 Enrollment Trends

In addition to Farmington students, Middleton also sends students into the Farmington district in all grade levels, under a contract that is scheduled to expire later in this decade. As of this writing, Middleton is considering alternatives to sending students to Farmington schools, including the possible construction of an elementary school.

Long-term trends in total enrollment for grades 1-12 are charted in figure 6-1.<sup>1</sup> Total enrollment grew during the 1990s as the baby boom echo (the children of baby boomers) entered school enrollment age categories. In 1997 total enrollment in grades 1-12 flattened out and has been essentially stable since then, falling modestly in the early years of the current decade. This is significant, in that the pace of new housing construction increased between 1997 and 2003. This higher level of building activity, which brought new students into the system, was offset by the gradual passage of the baby boom echo children through the system.



This fading baby boom echo can be seen to affect these numbers when examining first grade entering class sizes. Because students tend to remain in the district, smaller entering classes would normally predict declining total enrollment over time, other things being equal – although they rarely are, as we shall see. In Farmington, entering class size declined from a peak of 126 in

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of comparing apples and apples over the long term, Figure 6-1 does not include pre-kindergarten and kindergarten enrollment. Farmington began offering Kindergarten in the 1998-99 school year.

1980 to a low of 106 in 2001 (Figure 6-2). This pattern of national demographics has therefore offset the increase of new students entering the system to keep total enrollment stable. Once the baby boom echo fades away once and for all in the later part of the current decade, total enrollment can be expected to more closely match the rate of increase of new residential construction.

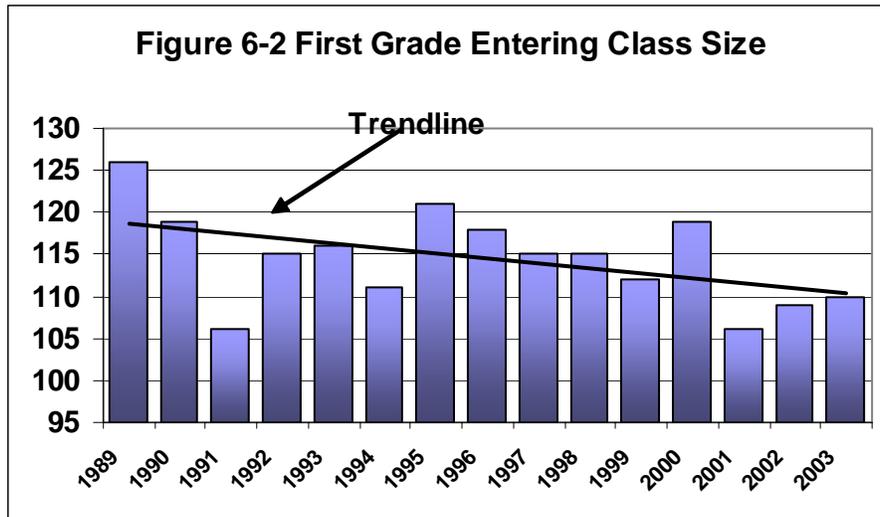
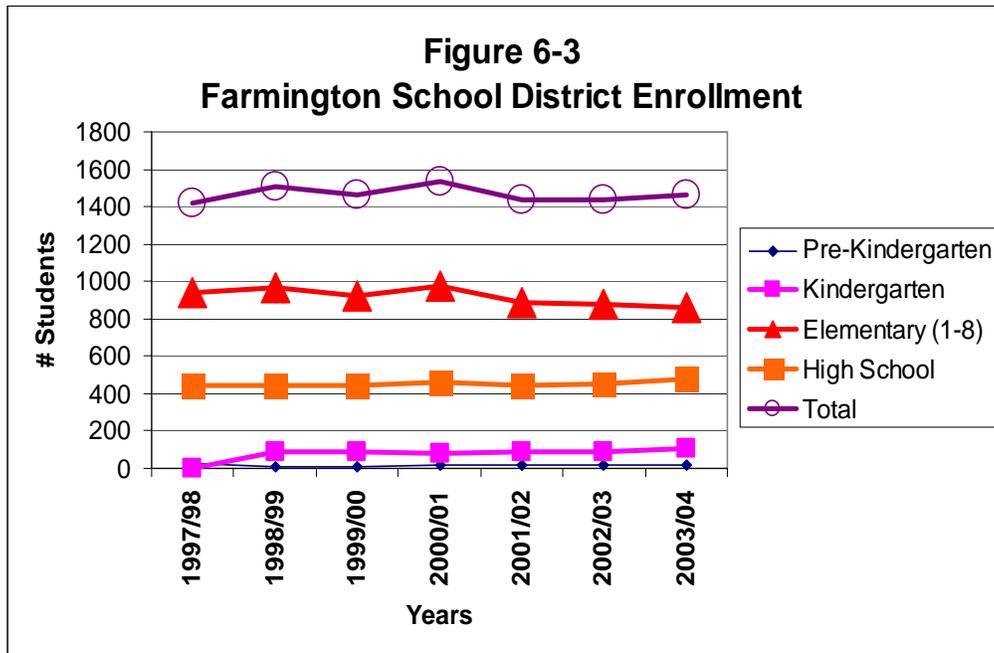


Figure 6-3 reveals that enrollment has not been growing at any of the grade levels in recent years in Farmington. In fact, because of the trends discussed above, enrollment at the elementary level has been declining.



*Farmington Children*



**Table 6-3 Farmington School District Enrollment**

Year	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Elementary (1-8)	High School	Total
1997/98	30	0	944	445	1419
1998/99	12	87	968	440	1507
1999/00	11	88	923	441	1463
2000/01	15	84	972	459	1530
2001/02	19	91	883	445	1438
2002/03	16	91	882	451	1440
2003/04	18	110	857	478	1463

Note that since 1998, when Kindergarten began to be offered, total enrollment has dropped by about 50 students even though this was a period of increased housing construction in Farmington. This seeming incongruity is explained by demographic forces that result in fewer students per household. This trend appears in most New Hampshire school districts.

Looking more specifically at enrollment trends, it is possible to compute the net migration of students into and out of the elementary school grades in Farmington.<sup>2</sup> The trend is somewhat erratic with a significant net in-migration of 33 students between 1999 and 2000; and a significant out-migration of 56 students the following year. This out migration may be attributable to concerns about air quality in the 2001-2002 school year. Other years since 2002 show no meaningful in or out migration of students.

<sup>2</sup> This is computed by observing the progression rate of students from one year to another. If, for example there were 100 first grade students in a given year, and 105 second grade students the following year, the data would show a net in migration of 5 students. It is not possible to compute migration for the high school because of the enrollment of Middleton students.

	<b>1999-2000</b>	<b>2000-2001</b>	<b>2001-2002</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>
Grade 2	-4	-19	-9	-13
Grade 3	11	-6	3	-7
Grade 4	6	-13	-9	4
Grade 5	8	-7	12	8
Grade 6	7	-4	-2	-1
Grade 7	0	-6	8	-1
Grade 8	5	-1	-2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>-56</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>-8</b>

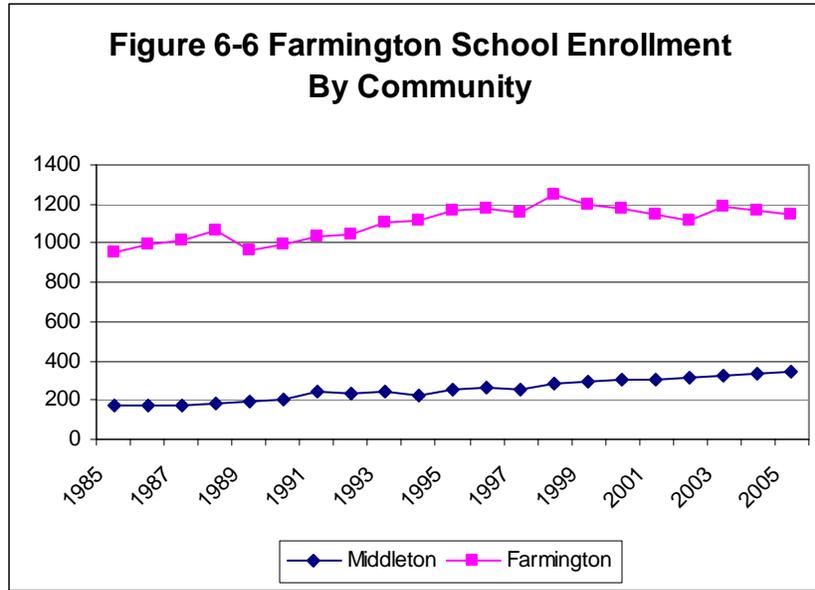
School generation town-wide based on students residing in Farmington and the town's occupied housing units averages about one student for every two housing units

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Farmington Resident Students	996	1180
Occupied Units	2,032	2343
Enrollment per Unit	0.4902	0.5036
Note: year 2000 is the Revised Census figure		

## **2.2 Projected Enrollment**

SAU 61, which oversees Farmington's schools has projected future enrollment. Those projections call for overall enrollment to continue the recent trend of modest declines with enrollment dropping by about 15-20 students per year. Enrollment is projected to decline at the elementary, middle and high school grade levels. These projected enrollment declines occur because the baby boomer's children will be graduating from Farmington's schools over the next 5+ years. This projection is not "set in stone"--if Farmington's rate of population growth rises above recent levels, enrollment could increase.

Though the vast majority of students in the Farmington schools are Farmington residents, enrollment from Middleton has been increasing, in contrast to recent declines in enrollment from Farmington.



Currently Middleton sends just over 300 students to the Farmington schools, representing about 25% of total Farmington school enrollment. Should Middleton elect to either build schools or send their students to another district, Farmington would achieve significant capacity in its school system, but at a loss of significant tuition revenues, which could increase the education costs to Farmington residents.

### 2.3 School Facilities

The K-3 and High School facilities are of recent vintage. The middle school was recently renovated as well. The Farmington schools, on average, are among the newest for any community in the state.

	Year Built/ Renovated	Grades	Capacity +/-	2003 Enrollment
Valley View	2002	K-3	500-525	445
Henry Wilson	2002	4-8	600 +/-	559
Farmington High School	1996	12-Sep	500+/-	479

The school system as a whole has adequate capacity to accommodate SAU enrollment predictions through for the next several years, although the high school is already functioning at its capacity. The SAU has developed plans to add four additional classrooms to the high school to address space utilization issues. Voters were willing to support overlapping bond issues to build the high school and the Valley View K-3 resulting in large investments in a relatively short period of time. The newness of these buildings is a testimony to the community's commitment

to education. With the exception of space issues at the high school, which are in process of being addressed, the buildings are in good condition and have adequate capacity.

## 2.4 Planning Factors in School Performance

Farmington’s students perform poorly on standardized tests administered under the New Hampshire Department of Education. In mathematics, Farmington’s third grade students ranked 101<sup>st</sup> out of 153 districts tested. By the tenth grade, Farmington’s students ranked last among the states 76 districts tested. Similarly, in reading, Farmington’s third grade students ranked 125<sup>th</sup> among 153 districts tested. By grade 10, Farmington’s students ranked 64<sup>th</sup> out of 76 districts tested. As a result, Farmington’s schools are among those singled out as “Schools In Need of Special Improvement” by the NH Department of Education.

<b>Table 6-8 Farmington School District Test Results</b>		
<b>TESTING: 2003-04</b>		
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Out of</b>
Grade 3	101	153
Grade 6	142	144
Grade 10	76	76
<b>Reading Proficiency</b>		
Grade 3	125	153
Grade 6	141	144
Grade 10	64	76
<i>Source: NH Dept of Education</i>		

The table below contrasts the ranking of Farmington’s students with those of surrounding districts. In essentially all categories, Farmington ranked lower than these surrounding districts on standardized testing:

**Table 6-9 Comparison of Farmington and Surrounding School District Rankings**

	Reading Grade 3 (153 Districts)	Reading Grade 6 (144 Districts)	Reading Grade 10 (76 Districts)	Math Grade 3 (153 Districts)	Math Grade 6 (144 Districts)	Math Grade 10 (76 Districts)
Farmington District	101	141	64	101	142	76
Barrington	125	108	57	117	113	43
Governor Wentworth District	47	50	24	65	26	23
Rochester	106	132	51	93	128	43
Milton	119	100	51	129	122	72
Notes: Farmington District includes Middleton						
Barrington has an elementary school--High school students are tuitioned to the Dover Schools						
Governor Wentworth District includes Effingham, New Durham, Tuftonboro and Wolfeboro						
Source: NH Dept of Education						

Standardized testing has generated considerable debate among educators, particularly when schools exhibit sub-par performance, as is the case in Farmington. It is beyond the scope of this master plan to fully decipher precisely why Farmington’s students perform so low on standard testing, but there are some indicators (as noted below) that help explain this performance.



*Farmington Students*

<b>(Elementary)</b>				
	<b>Farmington</b>	<b>State Ave.</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>2002-2003</b>	6,973.68	7,961.42	-987.74	-12%
<b>2001-2002</b>	5,640.23	7,321.56	-1,681.33	-23%
<b>2000-2001</b>	5,266.40	6,705.19	-1,438.79	-21%
<b>1999-2000</b>	4,512.62	6,254.46	-1,741.84	-28%
<b>1998-1999</b>	4,281.37	5,793.18	-1,511.81	-26%
<b>(High School)</b>				
	<b>Farmington</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Difference</b>	
<b>2002-2003</b>	7,739.86	8,022.55	-282.69	-4%
<b>2001-2002</b>	6,416.86	7,502.14	-1,085.28	-14%
<b>2000-2001</b>	5,624.16	7,166.55	-1,542.39	-22%
<b>1999-2000</b>	5,589.08	6,863.14	-1,274.06	-19%
<b>1998-1999</b>	5,149.24	6,628.91	-1,479.67	-22%
<b>(k-12)</b>				
	<b>Farmington</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Difference</b>	
<b>2002-2003</b>	7,217.50	7,809.49	-591.99	-8%
<b>2001-2002</b>	5,880.11	7,233.49	-1,353.38	-19%
<b>2000-2001</b>	5,373.05	6,738.36	-1,365.31	-20%
<b>1999-2000</b>	4,826.37	6,357.26	-1,530.89	-24%
<b>1998-1999</b>	4,528.09	6,009.31	-1,481.22	-25%
<i>Source: NH Dept of Education</i>				

Farmington spends less per pupil than the state average.<sup>3</sup> (Table 6-10) It is worthy to note that Farmington’s spending per student has been improving and the gap between Farmington and the State average has been narrowing. Because Farmington is not an affluent community, it receives significant state aid for education. An additional factor that contributes to test performance is the socio-economic composition of the students. Figure 6-11 reveals that Farmington has a disproportionate burden in the form of special education and economically disadvantaged students.

<sup>3</sup> These figures reflect spending—including the amount contributed by State Adequate Education Grants

<b>Table 6-11 Comparative Socio-Economic School Data</b>						
<b>% of Students Receiving Reduced or Free Lunch</b>						
<b>Year</b>	<b>Farmington</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Farmington as a % of NH</b>	<b>Milton</b>	<b>Rochester</b>	
1997/98	36.8	15.2	242%	27.9	27.6	
1998/99	40.3	17.8	226%	30.4	26.1	
1999/00	35.5	16.5	215%	28.8	25.6	
2000/01	30.7	15.4	199%	29.2	21.5	
2001/02	31.4	15.7	200%	34.0	22.8	
2002/03	33.8	16.4	206%	31.2	25.4	
2003/04	33.8	17.3	195%	35.3	30.9	
<b>Special Education Costs as a % of Budget</b>						
<b>Year</b>	<b>Farmington</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Farmington as a % of NH</b>	<b>Milton</b>	<b>Rochester</b>	
1997/98	17.9	15.2	118%	18.9%	20.4	
1998/99	18.1	15.8	115%	19.40	22	
1999/00	22.0	16.0	138%	20.30	24.3	
2000/01	21.2	16.3	130%	20.70	23.7	
2001/02	21.3	16.8	127%	21.30	23.3	
2002/03	24.9	17.4	143%	21.30	24.2	
<b>Source: NH Department of Education</b>						
Note: New Durham is part of Gov. Wentworth School District therefore figures are reflective of entire district.						

Lastly, Table 6-12 sets forth data regarding class size and teacher qualifications/salaries for the 2001-02 school year. Farmington compares unfavorably in all of the categories depicted on this table:

- Student-teacher ratios were close to the state average (although Farmington’s has since deteriorated due to budget cuts in the 2003-04 school year, wherein Farmington’s student teacher ratio rose to 23:1);
- Farmington has fewer teachers with advanced degrees and
- Farmington’s teacher salaries are below average.

<b>Figure 6-11 Comparative Data, 2001-02 School Year</b>		
<b>COMPARATIVE DATA</b>	<b>Farmington</b>	<b>State</b>
<b>Average Class Size</b>		
Grades 1-2	19	18
Grades 3-4	20	20
Grades 5-8	23	21
<b>Students per:</b>		
Teacher	15.8	13.7
Educational Specialist	55.3	113.7
<b>Educational Attainment of Teachers</b>		
Percent Bachelor's	74.7	55.2
Percent Master's	23	42.4
Percent Degree beyond Master's	0	1.4
<b>Teacher Salaries</b>		
Average	\$ 30,730	\$ 40,002
Minimum for BA Degree	\$ 23,250	\$ 25,610
Maximum for BA Degree	\$ 39,350	\$ 40,054

Change this to Table 6-12

## 2.5 Schools: Conclusion

The reasons Farmington's students perform poorly are multi-faceted and probably include (among other possible reasons):

- Farmington tends to spend less per pupil than the typical school district
- Farmington's socio-economic composition is tilted toward students with special needs
- Farmington pays sub-par teacher salaries
- Farmington's has fewer teachers with advanced degrees than the state norm
- Farmington's average class size is larger than typical in the state
- Farmington's adult educational attainment rate is significantly lower than the state
- Farmington median household income is lower than the county and state, which impacts residents' ability to raise funds to support the schools.

Poor performance does attract the attention of homebuyers, particularly those in the middle and upper income brackets, who can afford homes that pay higher than average taxes. Farmington's

need to improve the value of housing stock is therefore hampered by poor school performance (see Economic Development Chapter).

Besides detracting from citizen's ability to invest in teachers and educational materials, Farmington's disproportionate investment in school buildings can hurt overall town planning. An example relates to controlling Farmington's ability to enact ordinances that would control the rate of new residential growth. State law indicates that if there is room for new students in the buildings, (and if other community facilities have capacity as well) regardless of the quality of the education delivered or the financial burden on taxpayers, Farmington cannot legally impose building permit caps or other growth-rate controls, which could help solve some of the town's persistent financial problems.

### 3.0 FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Farmington Fire Department is housed in its 1976 station on Main Street in downtown Farmington. The department is responsible for fire, rescue and ambulance services in the town. Staffing consists of a full time chief, 2 per diem EMTs to staff the ambulances from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, and 40 volunteers. There are two per diem time slots per day but more than 2 EMTs actually fill these slots. Check with fire chief (Ed Robinson) re: volunteer numbers. Would like to see the volunteer groups broken out regarding fire department, first responders, etc.

Equipment includes the following:

- Three pump trucks (1979, 1990, 1999)
- One ladder truck (1986)
- One rescue vehicle (1977)
- One forestry truck (rehabbed in 2004)
- Two ambulances (1989, 1991).



*Farmington Firefighters*

The department responded to 877 calls in 2003, including 373 fire calls and 504 medical emergencies. -Would like more details if available – break down fire calls between structure fires, car fires, brush fires, etc as well as mutual aid calls. If they have major categories for the medical emergencies- would like those too. -Also if possible would like 2004 numbers.

-Department has also written and received several grants – great to see these too.

Department priorities are to replace the 1989 ambulance in the immediate future and to replace the rescue vehicle soon thereafter. Other vehicle replacements are anticipated during the balance

of this decade, including the 1979 pump truck. A vehicle replacement fund has been established to even out the financial burden of equipment replacement.

Discussions have begun regarding a possible replacement for the fire station. The station was constructed with a high degree of community involvement based on the needs that existed in 1976. In the nearly thirty years since then emergency vehicles have become larger, cramping space within the current station and limiting the types of vehicles that can be deployed. These discussions remain preliminary, although the undersized station is seen as a burden by the department today. The Fire Chief expressed strong support for replacing the station in its current location, which is very accessible to both the volunteer staff and emergency calls.

The town also owns two antique fire trucks, which are housed by a local non-profit.

#### **4.0 WATER DEPARTMENT**

The water department supplies water to central Farmington and to the Route 11 corridor from two gravel packed well sites, one in central Farmington and one off Route 11 near the Rochester town line. The latter has a 50,000 gallon per day pumping system. The wells are interconnected and have a combined capacity of approximately 700,000 gallons per day, with average usage of 250,000-275,000 gallons per day. So far, water supply from these wells has proven adequate to serve the system's approximately 1000 customers. Pressure is adequate up to an elevation of about 350 feet. The system experiences an average of one water line failure per year—an acceptable level considering the extent of the system. The town has required that developments above 400' elevation install their own booster pump systems if they expect to connect to town water.

Water quality meets all current standards and Farmington's water sources are clean enough that no chlorination has been required. However, several wells in the town have been retired over the years, some due to water quality concerns--one near the town landfill, and another just off Main Street near the Pokomoonshine wetlands. It is unlikely that these wells can be restored to town use for several decades, due to ongoing water quality issues. No expansion of the service area and no new sources are anticipated in the near future. Farmington has only a lease on the site of the Route 11 well. If this well continues to be productive, the cost of renewing the lease, or purchasing the land will need to be addressed. The town should be planning for the purchase of this or other future well sites to ensure an ongoing supply of quality drinking water. One issue the department faces is that maintaining water lines in private roads are the responsibility of adjacent private homeowners. These responsibilities are not always carefully attended to.

#### **5.0 WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT**

Town sewer serves the central area of Farmington. The town's treatment plant, built in 1975, is permitted to discharge 350,000 gallons of clean effluent per day into the Cochecho River. The average flow experienced is 225,000 gallons per day. During the spring, when the water table rises, sump pumps in homes and businesses begin to operate and usage peaks at 500,000 gallons per day. The entire system is gravity fed, with no pumping stations

The town is anticipating the need to meet new US Environmental Protection Agency discharge standards, possibly as early as the fall of 2005. Significant capital costs will likely be incurred to bring the plant into compliance. The upgrade of the plant will be a possible burden on the system's 750 customers. Unlike in 1975 when the plant was built, there are relatively few grants available to offset costs. The town has commissioned a study to evaluate alternatives to upgrade the plant.

No service area expansions are planned. Developers can extend service to new areas at their expense.

## 6.0 SOLID WASTE

The town landfill site has been in operation for approximately 30 years. The site, on Cocheco road, has the physical capacity to accommodate 50 years of disposal at the town's current rate of utilization. The town, however, has been negotiating with the NH Department of Environmental Services to close the landfill. Current negotiations indicate a possible closure in about 8-15 years. The town has instituted a pay per bag program, under which trash must be placed in a bag purchased from the town for \$1.25 each. Funds are then set aside for the eventual closure of the landfill. There is currently approximately one million in this fund. CMA Engineering is currently studying the closing plan and costs on behalf of the town. Options for alternative's to dispose of solid waste in the future will be presented to the Board of Selectman for consideration. The completion of clean up and capping of the Collins-Aikman disposal site (Cardinal Landfill) is a key factor in the final plans.

## 7.0 TOWN OFFICES

Town offices are located in the former historic Main Street School at 365 Main Street. The school was originally built in the 1890s. The town occupies the first floor and the School Administrative Union occupies the second floor. The building was renovated in 2002 at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars to accommodate the town and SAU functions and to adapt the building for handicapped access

The building is generally suitable for town uses, but not ideally so. The addition of a full time planner has cramped space use and it is difficult to schedule some activities, such as confidential meetings. Nonetheless, given the town's financial constraints the building is generally perceived as adequate for the immediate future. Should town space needs continue to



grow, the most likely solution would be a relocation of the SAU offices and expanding town use to the second floor.

The town also owns several other buildings in downtown Farmington including the Court House and former town office building. A growing list of groups using these facilities is creating scheduling conflicts. As these conflicts intensify it would be prudent to commission a space use study of all municipal buildings and meeting spaces. A focus on preserving the historic elements of these properties is important to the town and its character.

## 8.0 POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The police department is housed at the back of the Old Town Hall on Main Street. The department has a total of 12 officers, four or five of which can be on duty at one time. The existing facility is inadequate in terms of both space requirements and functions. The department needs secure spaces for items such as ammunition and evidence. These secure spaces do not exist in the current facility and the facility is undersized.

A new public safety building is tentatively planned to be built in 2010. Toward that end, the town is contributing **\$100,000?** per year to a capital reserve fund. The fund may not fully pay for a new public safety building, but will certainly help soften the financial impact when a new facility is approved by voters for construction.



*Farmington Police Chief*

## 9.0 GOODWIN LIBRARY

In 1927, George Goodwin of Milton donated the funds to build what is now the Goodwin Library. Sixty years later in 1987, local bank owner and philanthropist James Thayer donated money for a wing that doubled the main floor area and added an open space downstairs that will become a new Children's Room in spring of 2005.

In addition to the library collection on the main floor, the Library is also home to a unique and eclectic collection of Farmington artifacts, papers, pictures, and personal and town histories. The basement area under the original building that houses the Farmington Historical Museum is also utilized as the meeting space for the Farmington Historical Society. The top floor of the Library is the home of the Farmington Women's Club, a civic organization whose members engage in year-round fundraising to provide an annual scholarship as well as financial support to a number of community non-profit organizations.

The Goodwin Library holds almost 17,000 volumes and provides services to almost 2300 registered patrons. In 2004, the library added approximately 1800 new items to its holdings and circulated over 21,000 volumes. As an active participant in the New Hampshire State Library

Union Catalog system, the Library is able to provide materials and reciprocal borrowing privileges with over 300 other New Hampshire Libraries.

The Library provides extensive children's programming including Story-times from 12 months to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, a Summer Reading Program, Cartoon Club, Junior Book Discussion, and numerous outreach activities in co-operation with the Farmington Day Care Center, Strafford County Head Start, and the Farmington School District. The Library also has an Adult Book Discussion Group and Adult Writer's Project. Additional special programming includes the annual Poet's Tea; participation in the community's annual Hay Day, and the highly anticipated annual Patron Appreciation Celebration in December; as well as numerous special performers. In 2004 over 1300 children participated in our programs and over 440 community members participated in our adult and family programming.

In 2003 the Goodwin Library was the proud recipient of the Gates Foundation "*Computers in the Library*" grant. This grant provided four state-of-the-art public access computers as well as many educational databases. Local cable provider Metrocast generously donated high-speed cable Internet access, and local ISP provider Worldpath graciously hosts the Library's web page and e-mail addresses. . DVDs of Selectmen, School Board, Budget Committee, Planning Board and other Public Meetings are now available for review in the Library. The Library currently provides public access to almost 300 patrons each month as well as offering computer classes through the newly formed Explore Collaborative that is providing adult education and enrichment for Farmington and three other local communities. In 2005 the Library will begin to offer free basic computer classes to the community in addition to those offered by Explore.

In response to a number of growing needs including space issues and accessibility, the Farmington Public Library Association undertook the construction of a handicap entrance in May of 2004. With the completion of the entrance, work began on the Children's Room, currently on target for a March 2005 opening.

A Friends of the Goodwin Library Group was established in 2004. This non-profit organization is dedicated to helping the library continue to meet its goals by providing financial support, establishing a core of volunteers and promoting library programs and services in the community.

In 2004 the library was recognized as National Library of the Month on *WebJunction*, the Gates Foundation web-based journal for libraries. In December the New Hampshire State Library in a joint effort with the national Public Libraries Association, recognized the Goodwin Library for its innovative model of literacy based/mentoring Story-Time format. Library staff will be providing mentoring services to other New Hampshire libraries initiating these new goals of Story-Time service within their own communities.

Goals include expanding both the access and availability of local histories, expansion of high-demand materials such as large-print materials, audio books and classic films, completing the process of updating the facilities and completing an ongoing automation project. Additionally the Library will continue to provide exceptional programming, the latest in best-selling fiction and non-fiction, up-to-date medical, business and scientific information, and access to top-notch technology and databases.

## **10.0 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

The Department of Public Works facility is located on Baldwin Road. The garage is used to store and repair town vehicles and equipment. The facility is of older vintage. It has three bays and is too small for current town needs, resulting in some equipment being stored outside.

The need for a new garage was identified in the year 2000. The town has been setting aside funds in the capital reserve account to build a new three bay garage on the same Baldwin Road site. The existing garage will be also be retained. Construction on the new garage is expected to begin in approximately two years.

## **11.0 LOCAL ACCESS CABLE**

Metrocast Cable provides cable television service to Farmington. Under the terms of the franchise agreement, Metrocast provides a channel for local public programming. Funding for this local access channel comes in the form of a 2.5% tariff imposed on local cable customers. The funds are used to purchase equipment and part-time staffing. Currently about \$32,000 per year is raised. There is a current need for improved equipment (cameras, recording, editing equipment).

## **12.0 SYNOPSIS OF TOWN BUILDINGS**

In addition to the above discussion a synopsis of the adequacy of principal town buildings, as measured against various municipalities and national standards, was compiled as part of this master plan, as shown below:

Synopsis of Principal Town Buildings						
	Location	Year Built	Square Feet	Land Area (Acres)	Square Feet per 1000 Population	Comments
Fire Station	381 Main Street, Map U06, Lot 25	1976	4,250	1.3	625	2 Floors, 4,250 sf each. First floor: 6 Bays; second floor: open hall with kitchen. Not well planned for contemporary equipment needs
Garage	381 Main Street, Map U06, Lot 25	1900	3,128		460	On Fire Station Site
Town and School Offices	356 Main Street, Map U06, Lot 105	1876	11,324	0.67	1,665	Former Elementary School renovated to office use for town on first floor, school district on second
Goodwin Library	422 Main Street, Map U05 Lot 212	1928	4,632	0.17	681	No on-site parking. Elevator and handicapped access provided in 2004
Old Courthouse	527 Main Street, Map U05, Lot 2-1	1880	1,008	0.35	148	Attractive, historic building adjacent to community center
Police Station, Recreation Center	531 Main Street, Map U05, Lot 1	1890	6,176	0.33	908	Former Town office Building. Police station is on lower level, rear. Police occupy approximately 2,000 square feet.
<i>Source: Town Assessment Records</i>						

. This synopsis was abstracted from town assessment records. Several points are worthy of note:

- All of the buildings are in downtown Farmington, which contributes to the vitality of downtown and allows for more convenient interaction among town employees.
- With the exception of the fire station, all of the buildings are of historic significance. Except for the fire station, all are at least 75 years old.
- The buildings are on small lots (with the exception of the fire station), providing limited on-site parking. This limitation is offset by on-street parking and use of the municipal lot at the fire station.

### Adequacy of Town Buildings

In prior decades size standards for public buildings were incorporated into master plan studies. One such set of standards that are widely recognized are offered by the Urban Land Institute for communities with under 10,000 population:

	<b>Standard: Square Feet per 1,000 Population</b>	<b>Farmington Current</b>
Library	700-800	681
Police	200	294
Fire	250	625

*Source: Urban Land Institute, Development Impact Assessment Handbook, 1994, Pages 91-94*

Measured by these standards, Farmington’s police and fire facilities are adequately sized, but its library is too small.

Standards such as these, however, have been abandoned in more recent master plans, because the needs of one community cannot easily be pigeon-holed into a simple standard, such as “Square feet per Thousand Population”. For example, the recently completed master plan for Rindge, New Hampshire recommends police and fire facilities with over 1,000 square feet per capita for each facility—well in excess of the Urban Land Institute standards.

Communities elect to offer various service levels—one community might have a volunteer fire department, while another community might have a fully staffed fire function. This has an obvious impact on the appropriate size of a fire station. A new building is likely to be more efficiently designed than an older structure adapted to town use. The latter is the case in Farmington, wherein a former elementary school has been adapted to accommodate town and school district offices. Also, facility needs change over time—as is the case with libraries whose requirements have changed dramatically as technology has made more services available in the same amount of space.

Given the unique aspects of town buildings and how they are used, this Master Plan has examined the current facilities from the standpoint of their adequacy in providing adequate space for *Farmington’s* needs.

## **13.0 LAND USE IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY ACTIONS**

### **13.1 Land Use Implications**

Farmington’s community facilities and services meet the needs of area residents and contribute to the quality of life in Farmington. Here are a few items to consider related to the community facilities and services in Farmington.

- 1) Schools are fundamentally linked to the economic health of the community and can support learning for all residents.

- 2) Should Middleton decide to build a school or send their students to another district, Farmington would achieve significant capacity in its school system, but at an increased cost to Farmington residents.
- 3) The school systems reputation has an effect on the type of development that will be attracted to invest in Farmington in the future.
- 4) The Fire Department building was built in 1976 and is in need of updating and expansion, but is well positioned in the downtown area.
- 5) The water system in Farmington has a total capacity of approximately 700,000 gallons per day, with an average usage of only 250,000-275,000 gallons per day.
- 6) The town requires developments above 400 foot elevations to install their own booster pump systems if they will connect to the town water system.
- 7) Water lines in private road areas are the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. This raises an issue that must be dealt with because these responsibilities are not always carefully attended to.
- 8) The town has commissioned a study to evaluate alternatives for the upgrading of the wastewater treatment plant which must be brought into compliance with new US Environmental Protection Agency discharge standards.
- 9) The town landfill promotes recycling rather than disposal to extend the life of the existing facility.
- 10) There is a growing need for additional municipal office space, and a growing list of groups are using other town owned buildings in the downtown which is creating scheduling problems.
- 11) The Police Department has critically outgrown its present location and should be relocated.
- 12) The library continues to offer a range of programs for residents of all ages that draw people downtown.
- 13) The local access cable channel helps disseminate town information to the general public, and builds the knowledge base of interested citizens on local issues.

## **13.2 Potential Actions**

There are an array of possible actions the Town may want to consider pursuing as it evaluates and improves the existing community facilities and services in Farmington. This section will be used to identify the specific actions for Farmington to take upon completion of the master plan.

- 1) Address the space issues at the high school with an understanding that enrollment is subject to change, and that the school may continue to be used to promote lifelong learning opportunities.
- 2) Work to improve the quality of education being offered through the school system.
- 3) Consider updating or replacing the Fire Station on the same site or elsewhere in the downtown area. A location that meets the needs of the Department, and reinforces the Town's commitment to keeping municipal facilities as part of the mix of uses in the downtown area, would be ideal.
- 4) The site of the Route 11 well is currently leased. The town should plan for an extension of this lease or the purchase of this or other future well sites to ensure an ongoing supply of quality drinking water.
- 5) Decide how large an issue water lines in private roads really is, and how to best cope with problems that arise in these locations.
- 6) Formulate a plan for the upgrading of the sewage treatment facility, and for coping with the significant capital costs that will likely be incurred.
- 7) Commercial and Industrial operations should be encouraged to recycle. Their material increases the volume of materials being recycled by the town and helps make the operation more cost effective.
- 8) Expand the categories of materials accepted for recycling at the landfill as new materials become marketable.
- 9) The town should commission a space use study of all municipal buildings and meeting spaces in the downtown prior to moving or expanding municipal or SAU office space.
- 10) Develop a plan for the renovation and expansion of the existing Police Department facility, or consider relocation of the Police Department. A location that meets the needs of the Department, and reinforces the Town's commitment to keeping municipal facilities as part of the mix of uses in the downtown area, would be ideal.