

## Community Facilities & Services Report

### *Introduction*

The Town of Goshen provides a range of services for its residents and property owners that include police and fire protection, road maintenance, municipal governance and administration, education, and social services. Many of these services require facilities either for operations or storage of equipment and records. This report summarizes existing facilities in the Town, public input regarding the quality of services, and reviews existing deficiencies and planned expansions based on input from Town representatives.

Generally, the size of a community dictates the level of services that the municipal government needs to provide. Community planning necessarily includes evaluating the capacity and capabilities of the facilities and services available and working to anticipate future demands and to manage existing facilities. At present, Goshen operates and maintains its facilities and services in a manner that adequately serves its land owners and residents. However, there is clear need for improvements to existing facilities and for the municipal government address future needs.

The following paragraphs summarize the existing conditions and functions of certain community buildings and facilities. These summaries include public opinion and comments regarding the respective facilities and input from Town representatives.

### *Community Attitudes*

In Spring 2009 the Planning Board conducted a community attitude survey addressing various topics including land use, sufficiency of services, and public opinions about desirable land uses and future development. The following figures summarize community opinions regarding municipal services, facilities, and equipment. These survey responses provide the Town with insight about community attitudes and possible acceptance of future plans and improvements. These responses should not be used as the sole basis for funding of community facilities, services, and equipment.

The following bullets are interpretations of the survey responses:

- Generally, community services receive a positive rating (combination of "Excellent", "Very Good", and "Good" assessments) from the majority of survey respondents (> 50%). The one exception was the Highway Maintenance.
- Both Fire Protection and Highway Maintenance received the highest response for services requiring additional funds (27%).
- Many of the services, facilities, and equipment listed were rated with a positive rating from the majority of respondents regardless of known and identified deficiencies by Town representatives. This, combined high numbers of "No Opinion" responses, indicates that public education will be a necessary part of any capital improvement project.
- Large blocks of respondents (at least 45% of respondents in 16 of 19 questions) chose to keep the funding services, facilities, or equipment the same. This indicates a strong popular desire to maintain level funding for town expenditures. Any

substantial budget increase for facility upgrades or new construction will require a clear and well-defined need and scope of work.

Figure 1-A: Public Rating of Municipal Services

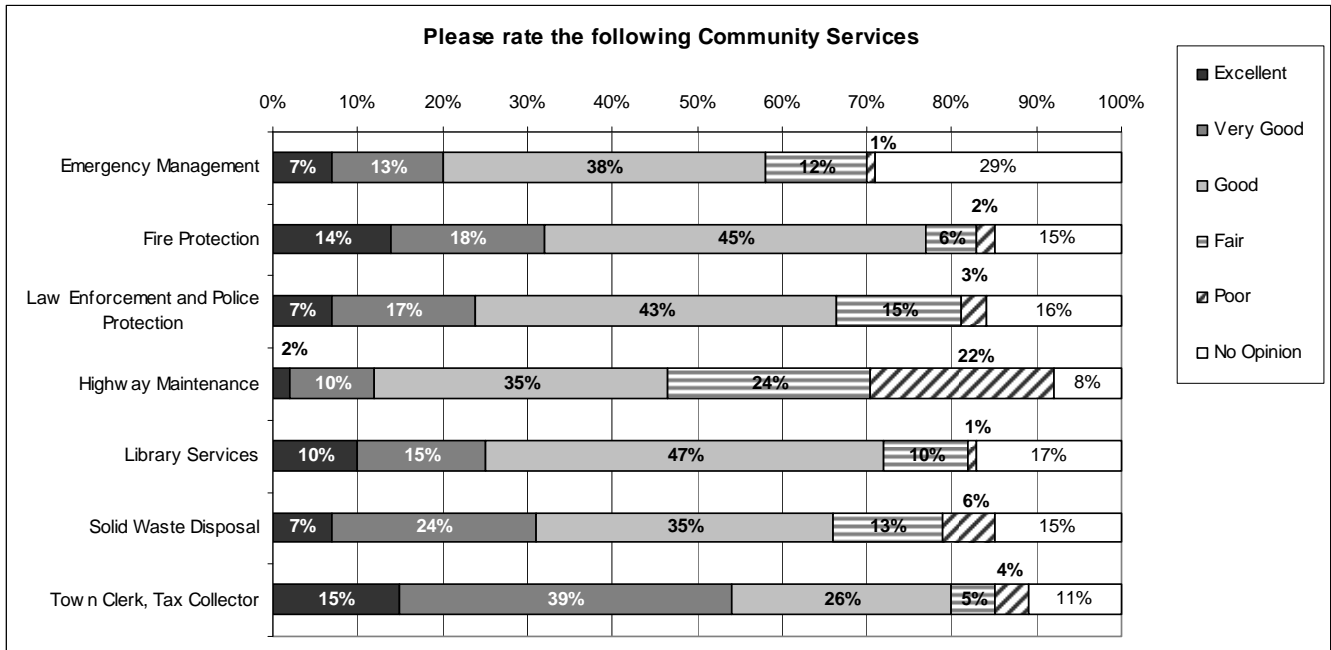


Figure 1-B: Public Rating of Town Spending for Rated Services

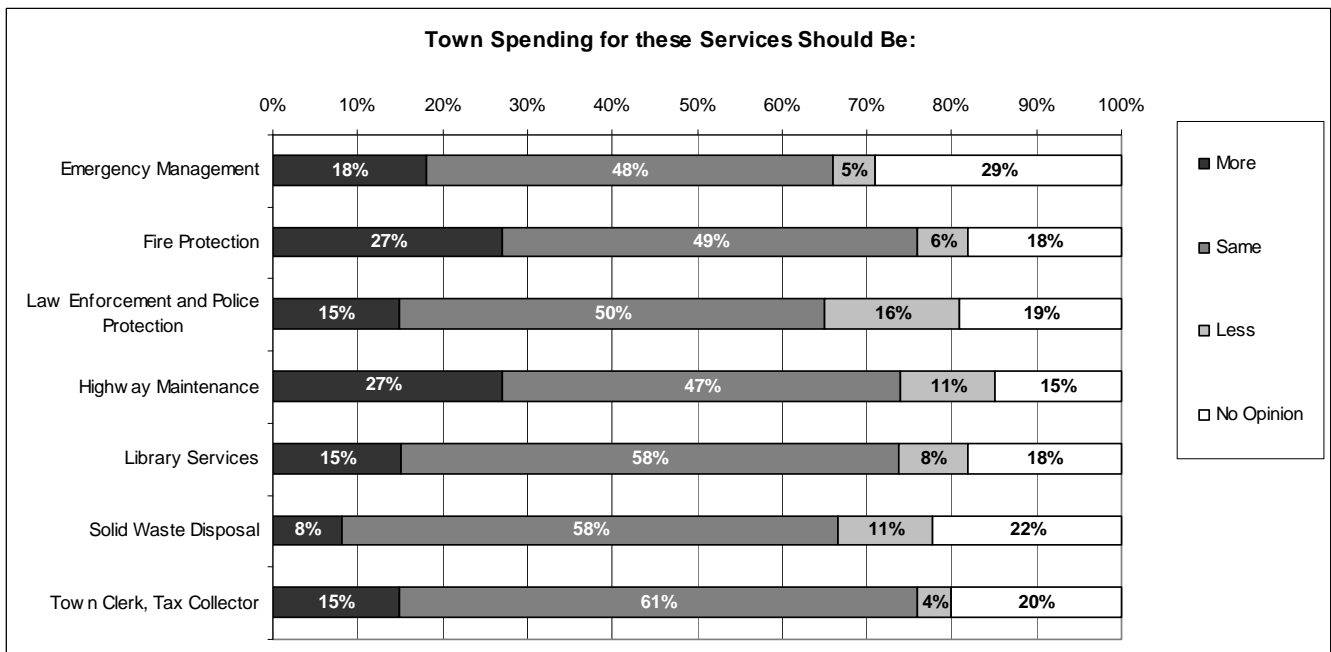


Figure 2-A: Public Rating of Municipal Facilities

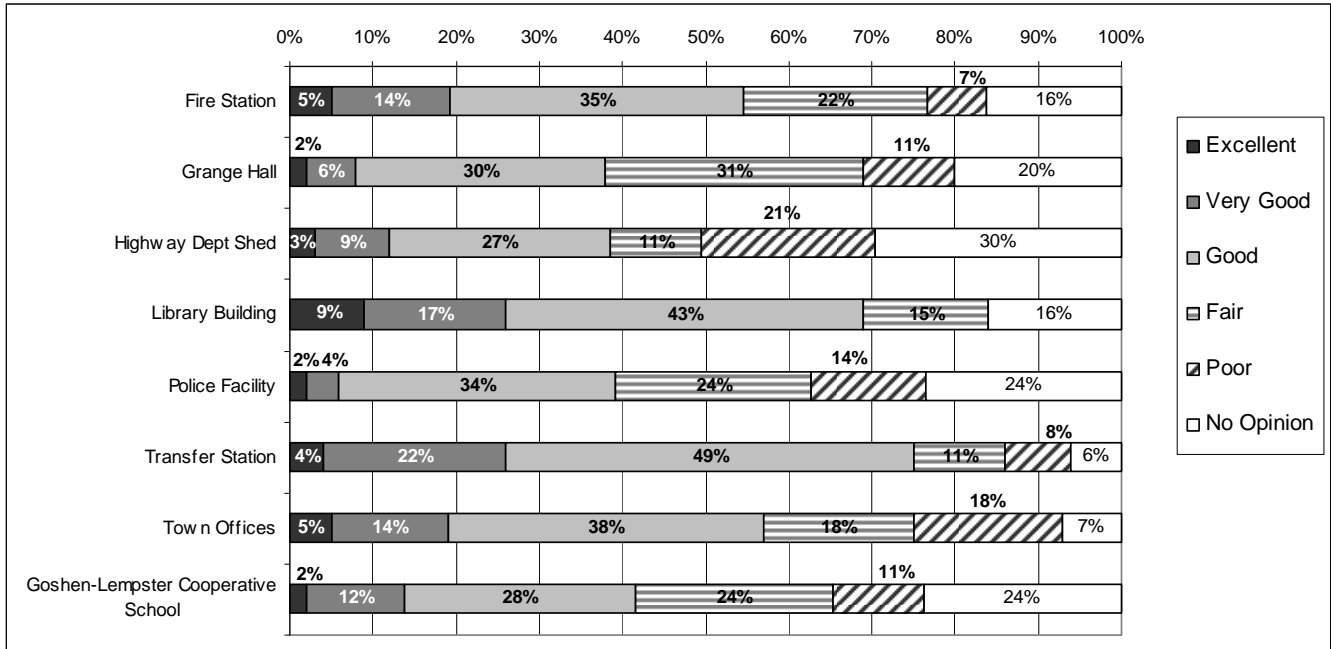
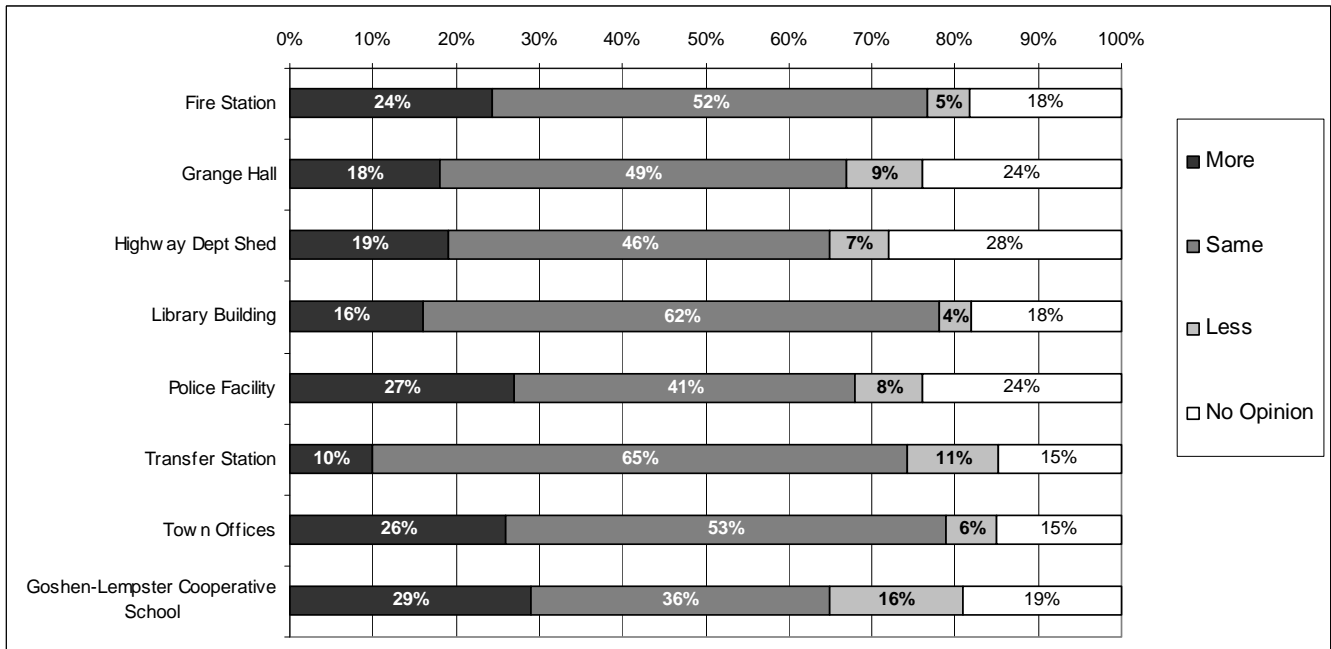
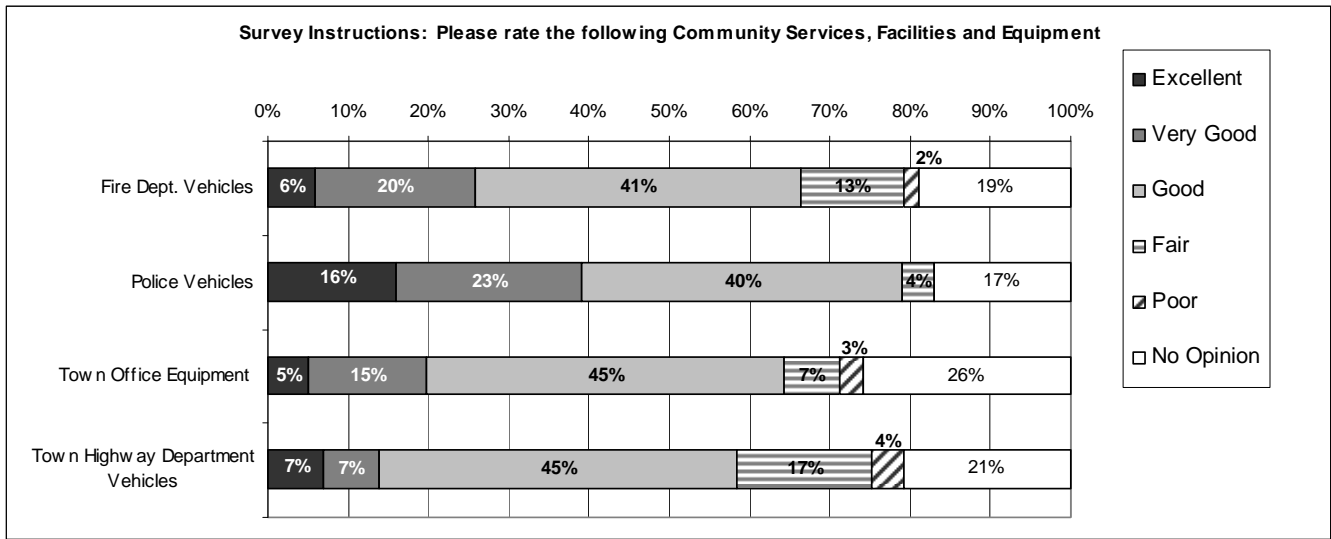


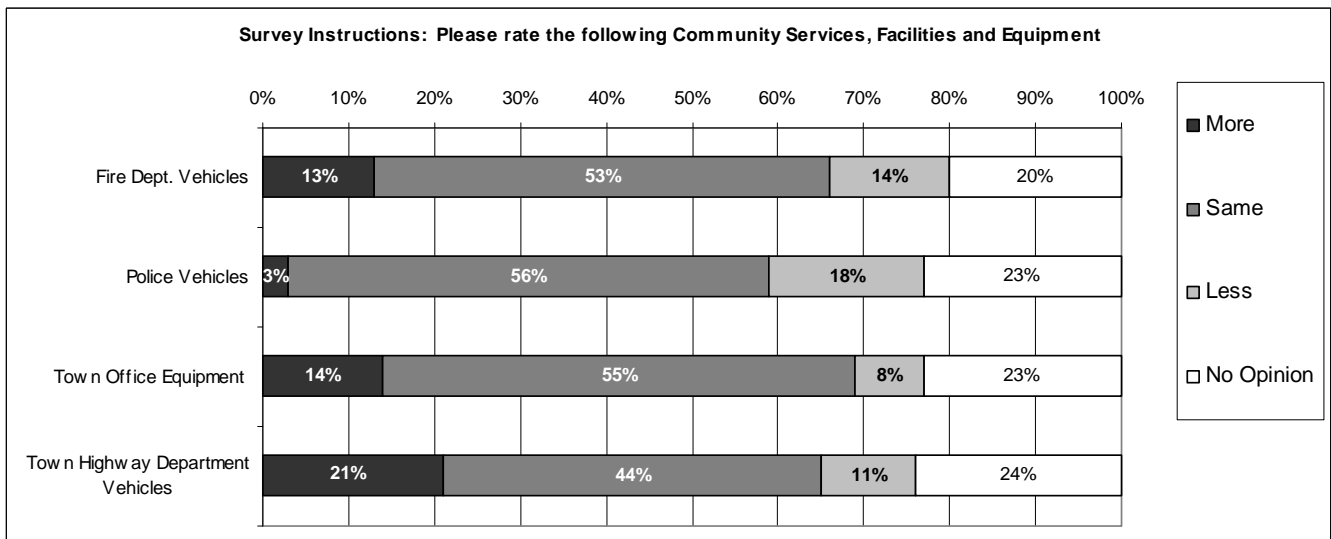
Figure 2-B: Public Rating of Town Spending for Facilities



**Figure 3-A: Public Rating of Municipal Equipment**



**Figure 3-B: Public Rating of Town Spending for Equipment**



**Municipal Facilities**

Information for the following paragraphs was collected through review of existing Town planning documents and Town Reports, input from the Goshen Planning Board, public input during a community workshop, and comments from the following individuals:

- Officer J. Downing, Goshen Police Department;
- Chief R. Shepard, Goshen Fire Department;
- Jesse Johnson, Goshen Road Agent;
- Ed Andersen, Goshen Transfer Station;
- Lars Nelson & Arthur Jillette, Goshen Cemetery Commission;
- Cynthia Phillips, Librarian, Olive G. Pettis Library;

Michele Munson, PhD, Superintendent, Goshen-Lempster School District, and;  
Bea Jillette, Goshen Conservation Commission and Friends of Goshen Grange Hall.

### **Goshen Town Hall**

The Town Hall is part of a core collection of historically significant municipal buildings along NH Route 10 in the Goshen Village area. This building currently houses offices for the Town Clerk, Tax Assessor, Selectmen, and Police Department and serves as the primary municipal meeting space. The following bullets summarize identified issues:

- There is an immediate need for more space to accommodate these uses as well as demand for other municipal boards and functions.
- Areas within the building do not meet current life safety or ADA access code requirements (specifically, the downstairs office area). Further, there is an interest in increasing personal safety and security for downstairs office.
- The Town Office area is too small to meet current needs.
- Public records are stored in areas throughout the building, including the public meeting area. Improved, secure storage is needed.
- The building can accommodate most meetings. There is a need to increase capacity for municipal meetings beyond the adjacent Town Library space.
- There are no dedicated office spaces for the volunteer boards (e.g.: Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Conservation Commission, etc.).
- In the summer of 2010 the Police Department invited the Administrator for the Selectmen's Office to share space upstairs because of limited space in the downstairs office currently occupied by the Town Clerk and Tax Assessor. This arrangement has worked well so far.
- The Police Department facilities currently meet its needs. There is no need for secured holding facilities on-site. Police Department facility needs will likely change as the population in Goshen grows.

### **Olive G. Pettis Library**

The Olive G. Pettis Library is located in the Goshen Village adjacent to the Town Hall, Fire Station, and Grange Hall. The Library recently completed a number of necessary building improvements to maintain the use of the building including improved storage, a handicap entrance, plumbing installation, and completion of a computer workspace. The Library building also serves as a small community meeting and activity space. There is one part-time librarian managing the library supported by a volunteer Board of Trustees and community volunteers.

The Library maintains a collection of books, audio books, periodicals, and videos, and provides computers with satellite internet access for public use. The library is a prominent activity center for the community by offering activities and programs for all ages. Such programs range from youth reading and activity groups to instructional classes (e.g.:

computer and internet use), and cultural events. The building has also become a popular after-school venue for grade school students.

The Library budget for capital improvements, maintenance and acquisition of books and other media, equipment, and public programs receives funding from a variety of sources. Town appropriations provide a substantial portion of funding, trust income, subsidies, grants, private donations, and fund-raising events supplement the budget. At present the Library manages a basic level of operation to keep within its annual budget. Library Staff continue to seek new funding opportunities and sources.

The following bullets summarize identified issues:

- As with other historic buildings in the village the Library building will require regularly scheduled maintenance. Substantial capital improvements will be necessary in the near future including replacing the heating system and roof, as well as a possible energy efficiency retrofit to tighten the building envelope.
- Site issues for the library include maintaining the front and side building accesses and improving all-season parking options for patrons. Specific issues are crowding and icing of the side entrance parking area and poor maintenance of the parking along Route 10.
- The building has limited capacity for public gatherings due to life safety requirements, which limits the scale and scope of public events it can offer.

### **Goshen Grange Hall**

Goshen owns the Grange Hall and land across NH 10 from the Town Hall and adjacent to the Fire Station in the Goshen Village. This building, which is on the NH State Register of Historic Places (listed as Sunapee Mountain Grange #144 on April 28, 2003), has recently undergone substantial restoration due to the efforts of The Friends of the Goshen Grange Hall, a non-profit organization formed for that purpose. At the time of this report The Friends of the Goshen Grange Hall seeks to complete its mission to restore the building and make it available for municipal use. The following bullets summarize identified issues:

- The Grange Hall requires some further work to enable use of the downstairs including installation of a chemical toilet, heat units, and other limited internal renovations. The Friends of the Goshen Grange Hall seek to complete as much as they can with the remaining funds at their disposal.
- Building code, handicap access, and life safety issues need to be addressed to ensure the building can meet current standards for public-access or public assembly buildings.
- Planned uses for this building should be assessed based on its proximity to the Town Hall, Library, and Fire Department and its location in the Goshen Village. This cluster of buildings may present an opportunity for the Town to identify cost-effective solutions to meet municipal facility needs including office and meeting space, and secure records storage.

## **Goshen Fire Department Building and Emergency Services**

The Goshen Fire Department Building is the fourth municipal building that forms the core collection of historically significant municipal buildings the Goshen Village. The Goshen Volunteer Fire Department building and property houses facilities, equipment, and records for the Fire Department, Forest Fire Department, Emergency Medical Service, and the Town Emergency Management Director. The facility also serves as a meeting and training space and is the center for operations in the event of a community emergency.

The Fire Department, Forest Fire Department, and Emergency Medical Service personnel are principally based on community volunteers and one paid position, Office of the Fire Chief, which is appointed by the Selectboard and receives an annual stipend. At present there are 15 volunteers that fill the various duties and roles required by each of the above emergency services depending on the purpose and prevailing authority assigned to respond to a given call. For example, volunteers use the Fire Department equipment and practice the Fire Department hierarchy for a structure fire, switch to Forest Fire Department equipment and hierarchy for brush or forest fires. Fundamentally, these emergency services seek to utilize individual volunteer skills and vocations to complement needs in the respective organizations. The Fire Chief will be able to provide more detail on the different functions and funding programs for each upon request.

The following bullets summarize identified issues for the facility:

- The Fire Station is located adjacent to the Sugar River. While it is not in the floodplain, the station is exposed to the hazards of flooding and erosion along the river. The Fire Department is currently developing a grant proposal to fund a stream bank stabilization project to protect the building and land underneath it from further erosion.
- The land upon which the Fire Station is located may have a restrictive deed that limits use of the land to only a Fire Station.
- The Fire Station does not have sufficient storage for department equipment and documents (some of which need to be kept confidential). The Fire Department maintains a free-standing storage building in addition to the Fire Station for excess equipment suitable for cold weather storage.
- The overall structure, which is approximately 45 years old, requires extensive maintenance and does not meet current National Fire Protection Association guidelines for facility operations. The preferred alternative is replacing it with a new building at the same site. If full replacement is not feasible, then a renovation of the building will require, at a minimum, replacement of the roof and interior improvements to increase operational effectiveness.
- The age and condition of the building makes ongoing operations and maintenance expensive. The building needs to be kept at approximately 50° Fahrenheit to keep equipment operational for emergency calls (including preventing water in the Fire Engine from freezing). Heating is a significant cost for this facility.

- Funding for much of the recently acquired equipment has been made available through state and federal grants.
- Fire Department and Forest Fire Department vehicles range in age from 1967 to 2008. The older vehicles impede the safe and efficient operations of the Fire Department because they are outdated and maintenance for older vehicles is increasingly difficult. Replacement of the older vehicles is a priority for the Fire Department.
- Future population growth in the community will exacerbate existing conditions at the Fire Department. Expanded capacity will be necessary to serve the growing community and its needs.

### **Town Transfer Station**

Goshen maintains the community transfer station and Highway Department garage on town-owned property along Brook Road. The transfer station serves as a collection point for waste disposal using a "pay-as-you-throw" system and free recycling of paper, glass, tin and aluminum cans, and mixed paper. The structures include a small warming hut and enclosures to help all-weather drop-off of waste and recyclables. The Transfer Station accepts a range of waste types including household waste, construction waste and debris, clean wood and yard waste for a community burn pile, car batteries and waste oil. The Town contracts with a regional disposal service to relocate most of the waste to regional dumps. Scrap metal and batteries are sold to nearby scrap facilities. Transfer Station staff participate in regional workshops and training sessions to keep up to date on current and developing practices.

Overall, the facility operates well and there are currently no needs to expand existing facilities. Given the limited schedule of operations for the facility, an option to accommodate increased demand would be increasing the hours of operation and number of pick-ups by the disposal service.

### **Town Highway Garage**

The Goshen Highway Department garage is located on the same property as the transfer station. The Highway Garage serves as a storage and maintenance facility for the Highway Department equipment and materials. The garage is a steel structure constructed approximately 60 years ago. The Highway Department employs two full-time staff and one part-time staff. The equipment includes two 6-wheel trucks, one one-ton pick-up truck, a grader and backhoe.

The following bullets summarize identified issues for the facility:

- The garage structure is in poor condition and leaks are common.
- Storage is tight for current operations. By necessity the garage is used for storage of the larger trucks and road sand to prevent freezing. All other equipment is stored outside and it would be preferable to store all equipment under cover.
- Heating the building is a major cost (approximately \$12,000 annually). There is missing and failing insulation on the interior of the structure.



- The best option would be to replace the structure rather than renovating it. The new structure could better meet current and anticipated future operational needs.
- The Highway Department can accommodate the needs of the Town and its existing road network. Significant construction of new roads or restoring Class VI roads to Class V roads will impact Highway Department maintenance capacity.

### **Goshen-Lempster Cooperative School District**

Goshen and its neighboring Community of Lempster have sought to meet the educational needs through formation of the Goshen-Lempster Cooperative School District, SAU #71. By sharing resources the two communities are able to provide education to grades K - 8. The Goshen-Lempster School building and SAU office (in a separate building) are located on the same property in Lempster. The main school building was constructed in the 1950's and then expanded in the mid 1980's. The building and mechanical systems are aging requiring ongoing maintenance with potential high-cost repairs and replacement projects that require public vote for funding. Challenges for the site include the presence of asbestos tile, roof repairs, needed maintenance of the building envelope to improve energy efficiency, and no plumbing service to the SAU office.

Efforts have been made to accommodate the evolving academic needs in the school building including reassigning use of rooms or dividing larger spaces to create smaller, dedicated work spaces. The School District emphasizes safety and code compliance, but the ongoing maintenance and requirements to accommodate educational needs indicates a facilities plan is necessary to assess the current, short-term, and long-term facility needs. There is no indication at this time that regular, moderate population increases in Goshen and Lempster will require an expansion to the existing facility.

Current student enrollment at the Goshen-Lempster School is approximately 160 students (grades K-8) with 80 high school students attending high school in nearby communities. The School District pays flat rate tuition for each student's high school education to another school district in New Hampshire. If the receiving school tuition is more than the SAU #71 tuition payment, then the student's family or guardian is responsible to pay the difference. The student also bears the additional cost of transportation to the high school. Nearby school districts that have received tuition payments for high school students include Newport, Sunapee, Kearsarge, Keene, Fall Mountain, and Claremont.

### **Cemeteries**

The Goshen Cemetery Commission manages three cemeteries: Mill Village Cemetery, Four Corners Cemetery, and North Goshen Cemetery. The Cemetery Commission, currently comprised of 3 elected commissioners, conducts ongoing projects to maintain and enhance these community facilities. There are very few private cemeteries in Town due to the community's historic reliance on the Town cemeteries.

The cemeteries are at varying degrees of occupancy: near capacity at North Goshen Cemetery, approximately 30 available plots at the Four Corners Cemetery, and to up to 400 available plots at the Mill Village Cemetery. The Village Cemetery has an entire section of

land to accommodate new plots. At this time, this section has not been laid-out and a survey of the section would develop a precise layout of plots for future sale and occupancy.

The following bullets summarize identified issues for cemeteries:

- Capital improvements focus on maintenance of existing facilities like grading and/or repaving access roads, tree maintenance, or similar activities. Capital improvements and maintenance of the cemeteries constitute the majority of expenditures for the Commission using appropriations from the Town budget and from sales of plots, which currently sell for \$100 each (burial costs are additional).
- The Cemetery Commission commits volunteer time and funds for part-time staff to complete two projects: repair of broken or degraded grave markers and developing a photographic and digital database of the grave markers.

### **Open Space and Recreation Areas**

Approximately 97% of Goshen is undeveloped (including water bodies and wetlands) and approximately 42% of land has been conserved under a number of conservation and open space easements. The Goshen Conservation Commission manages a limited number of properties for public conservation and recreation benefits. The three primary properties managed or overseen by the Conservation Commission are Memorial Park, the Rand Pond public beach, and Williamson Park at Gunnison Lake.

The following bullets summarize the condition of these properties:

- Memorial Park is approximately 60 acres and is under a private conservation easement. This parcel is maintained as undisturbed open space for wildlife habitat.
- The Rand Pond property is approximately 0.8 acres and is available for public use, except access to the property is difficult. A public access to Rand Pond adjacent to the town-owned parcel is managed by the NH Fish and Game Department. There are no short-term plans to improve access to the Town property.
- Williamson Park is land owned by the NH Water Resource Board and leased by the Town. The park consists of a picnic area, non-motorized boat access to Gunnison Lake, and a three-mile trail around the lake. The Conservation Commission maintains this recreation area year-round.
- There are a number of parcels the Conservation Commission has identified as priority areas for future conservation. The Conservation Commission encourages private land conservation practices and does not see municipal land acquisition as a priority for Goshen.

### ***Utilities***

#### **Electrical Infrastructure**

The Town of Goshen is served by two non-overlapping electrical utilities: Public Service of New Hampshire and the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative. The Town may wish to take advantage of municipal energy efficiency programs to reduce maintenance and operating

costs of Town facilities. There are a number of public interest groups and agencies that can offer energy efficiency advice or financial incentives.

### **Communications Infrastructure**

Goshen is served by FairPoint Communications for its landline telephone infrastructure, but does not have cable television or any public hard-wired form of high-speed internet access. Cell phone reception is available in Goshen, but areas of poor reception that unfortunately exist in our rural community.

Currently, residents, businesses, and municipal offices can gain access to the Internet via dial-up or satellite service. Satellite service is available for public use at the Olive G. Pettis Library. The Town Office building also has satellite internet service. The UVLSRPC is currently conducting a study of broadband internet availability in the region.

High-speed internet access is becoming an increasingly important component to a community's communications infrastructure. The New Hampshire Broadband Mapping Program is currently underway to evaluate the extent and quality of broadband internet service. Among the many goals of the Program is the development of broadband availability maps to guide future broadband investments. Further information on this project is available at the following web site: <http://iwantbroadbandnh.org/>.

### **Municipal Water and Sewer Services**

There are presently no municipally managed water supply or sewer collection systems in Goshen. Public water supply or sewer collection systems enable higher-density development in rural areas and can serve as a means to manage and direct where new development occurs in a geographic area. A community water supply and/or sewer system, combined with appropriate amendments to local land use regulations, zoning and broad community support, can encourage development of village area.

There are two candidate areas in Goshen that may benefit from public water and/or sewer systems: the Goshen Village along Route 10 and the Rand Pond area. The Goshen Village provides an opportunity for a carefully planned and executed village district for moderate density, possibly mixed-use, development. Rand Pond is a popular recreational area with a mix of seasonal and permanent residential activity. Future growth around Rand Pond may make such systems necessary to benefit public health and maintaining the pond as a natural resource. Assessing the benefits and costs of such systems in the community is recommended.

### ***Analysis Summary***

- It is important to understand the state of community facilities and services and the potential future demands the community will have on those facilities and services.
- Large blocks of respondents to the 2009 Community Attitude Survey (at least 45% of respondents in 16 of 19 questions) chose to keep the funding services, facilities, or equipment the same. This indicates a strong popular desire to maintain level funding for town expenditures. Any substantial budget increase for facility upgrades or new construction will require a clear and well-defined need and scope of work.

- The Goshen Town Hall does not have sufficient office space, storage, or access and egress facilities for a public building.
- The Library staff and volunteers seek to maintain and possibly expand the Library's status as a center of community activities.
- For the most part, Town structures are being maintained without substantial planning to anticipate future needs, renovations or replacement.
- The cluster of municipal buildings in the Goshen Village reinforce the residents' sense of community. To the extent possible, facility planning should consider how the Town Hall, Grange Hall, Fire Station, and Library properties can be integrated with complimentary facilities and uses.
- Both the Fire and Highway Department buildings require significant maintenance or replacement. Facility deficiencies affect equipment and operations. The Town should make an effort to assess and develop plans to improve conditions for these two departments.
- The Goshen Police Department, Fire Department, and related emergency services can provide for present community needs and there should be no problem accommodating moderate population growth in the near-term. Planning is necessary to evaluate long-term needs and the potential impact of a major development on Town services.
- The Town of Goshen should develop a Capital Improvement Program to assess, understand and plan for near-term and long-term capital expenditures. The CIP can provide a basis for assessing whether managing capital reserves or bonds would be the most cost-effective for a particular project. This process will likely include substantial educational efforts.
- Vehicles become outdated and increasingly specialized maintenance as parts and available services diminish over time. Maintaining a regular equipment replacement schedule will benefit operational effectiveness and minimize maintenance costs. Major equipment upgrades or lease programs can be integrated as part of a CIP.
- The Goshen Planning Board is encouraged to tour all Town facilities with Town Staff that operate the facility to understand the particular facility needs. This will inform the development of the Master Plan and CIP.
- It is important to incorporate the Hazard Mitigation Plan as part of any future Master Plan updates.
- The Goshen-Lempster School District requires facility planning to help accommodate current needs for capital improvements and accommodate the evolving needs of the educational facility. The capacity to accommodate students is less of an issue than maintaining and improving an aging facility.
- The three Town cemeteries are managed by a Cemetery Commission, which oversees capital improvements and maintenance.
- The Conservation Commission manages few properties in Goshen. The majority of conserved land in the Town is privately owned or managed. The Conservation Commission advocates public and private land conservation practices when possible.

- A statewide program is under way to evaluate internet access for each municipality. The resultant mapping and reporting will inform future communications infrastructure initiatives.
- There are two areas in Goshen that may benefit from municipal water and/or sewer services: Goshen Village and lands around Rand Pond. These areas may provide the Town with opportunities to direct moderate density and possibly mixed-use development. Planning and regulatory controls will be necessary to ensure such facilities will meet the Town's Vision for land use and growth.
- This report did not address whether it would be cost-effective to discontinue any services or cease use of any of the facilities. An option in future facility planning is discontinuance of local services and developing agreements for inter-municipal police and fire protection services with neighboring towns.