



# **Long Range Public Facilities And Open Space Plan**

Developed By The  
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Manchester, Maine

With Assistance From  
**H. Dominie Consulting**  
Readfield, Maine 04355

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## PLAN SUMMARY

### *Introduction*

The Select Board directed the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) to develop this long range plan for Manchester's facilities and lands. The Committee has done so, with an emphasis on open space and conservation in response to public opinion and as stipulated in the town's 1991 Comprehensive Plan.

The plan establishes a vision, priorities, and action steps for keeping abreast of the town's needs. While the vision looks far into the future, plan actions are scheduled over the next several years.

The plan responds to an aging and slow growing population. It endeavors to ensure that the community's quality of life and rural character is sustained, even as well planned development occurs.

### *What People Want*

Surveys of households and kids and discussions with town boards and organizations reveal the following community priorities:

1. Permanently conserve and create trails on existing public land with high natural resource values.
2. Permanently conserve other high value lands.
3. Develop a town swimming area and increase access to Cobbosseecontee Lake.
4. Create trails, sidewalks, and bike paths in the village and between communities.
5. Make public space in the village and Route 202 corridor more appealing and functional for future generations.

### *Why This Plan Matters*

Research and the experience of other communities demonstrate that such a plan promises many benefits, including:

1. land conservation lowers or stabilizes property taxes;
2. open space sustains or increases property values;

3. well planned open space and public facilities make fiscal sense;
4. planning and conservation are good for business;
5. land conservation saves money by providing environmental and health benefits; and
6. open space improves health and fitness.

### *What We Have Already*

The town owns 274 acres, amounting to about 1.7% of the 15,775-acre land area of Manchester. Most of this, with the exception of public facilities in the town center, was acquired through unpaid taxes. None of it is permanently conserved.

State agencies own another 617.5 acres in Manchester, most notably two wildlife management areas at Tyler Pond and Jamies Pond.

Finally, private and non-profit entities have permanently conserved almost 6% of Manchester's area. This includes Lakeside Orchards and the Allen-Whitney Memorial Forest.

### *Recommendations*

Vision. The plan presents a vision of the kind of future that townspeople want for the town. It is future in which:

1. townspeople enjoy trails and informal facilities on town-owned conservation land that is permanently conserved;
2. landowners work cooperatively with the town and conservation organizations to conserve other high value natural and scenic resources;
3. everyone enjoys swimming and water access at a park or series of smaller parks on Cobbosseecontee Lake;
4. young and old alike walk or ride a bike around town to stay fit and have fun on a system of pathways that offers alternatives to auto travel; traffic on Routes 202 and 17 is calm and safe;
5. townspeople are proud of their town center and public facilities which are attractive and have ample space for the range of needs that must be met there.

Policies. This plan builds upon existing policies stipulated in the town's Comprehensive Plan, and includes new ones that provide more specific direction on public facility and open space matters.

Action Steps. Figure 17 on page 41 summarizes all of the action steps in this plan, and stipulates who will be responsible for accomplishing each and in what timeframe. These steps include:

**Goal 1: Conserve town land**

1. Draft Conservation Commission ordinance
2. Establish Conservation Account
3. Review town land prior to sale
4. Dedicate high value town land
5. Conduct Green-up Days
6. Continue forest management
7. Develop plan for Fairbanks Pond land
8. Create Bog Pond area linkage trails
10. Distribute Jamies Pond brochure
11. Meet periodically with Hallowell CC
12. Maintain Jamies Pond trails
13. Develop Meadowhill Road strategy
14. Establish CIP fund for dam
15. Install dam safety devices

**Goal 2: Conserve high value land**

1. Work with willing landowners to conserve
2. Draft conservation bond
3. Draft development project recommendations

**Goal 3: Develop lake access**

1. Explore options for swimming
2. Establish access to islands

**Goal 4: Create Trails, Sidewalks, & Bike Paths**

1. Distribute walking route map
2. Develop pathways implementation program
3. Develop regional bike lane plan
4. Periodically enforce traffic rules
5. Establish ROW's for neighborhood paths
6. Provide bike racks/ pathway monitors

**Goal 5: Improve public facilities**

1. Appoint liaisons to RTAC
2. Plan community building and green
3. Develop Route 202 corridor plan
4. Appoint a tree board or warden
5. Landscape school/town office campus

This plan provides general guidance. Townspeople will vote separately on any item that requires an appropriation or approval for spending federal or state

6. Recommend recycling strategy
7. Develop long range school/town office campus plan
8. Collaborate with YMCA
9. Expand recreation program and facilities
10. Conduct at least one annual community event

**Implementation Program**

Monitoring and coordination. The Long Range Planning Committee will be responsible for monitoring and coordinating implementation of this plan. The group will report on progress at last quarterly to the Select Board; and will convene a meeting for all action partners to discuss progress at least once a year. The chair will also report progress in the town's annual report and newsletters.

Plan Updates. The Committee will propose updates to the plan as needed, but no less frequently than once every five years.

**Public Involvement**

In addition to the surveys conducted and consulted as part of the planning process, meetings were held with town boards and the public to discuss issues and comments on the plan. Thirty five citizens and representatives of boards and organizations attended a public meeting on February 12, 2004, where they expressed strong support for the plan and requested no major changes. (See Appendix 3 for a summary of comments.)

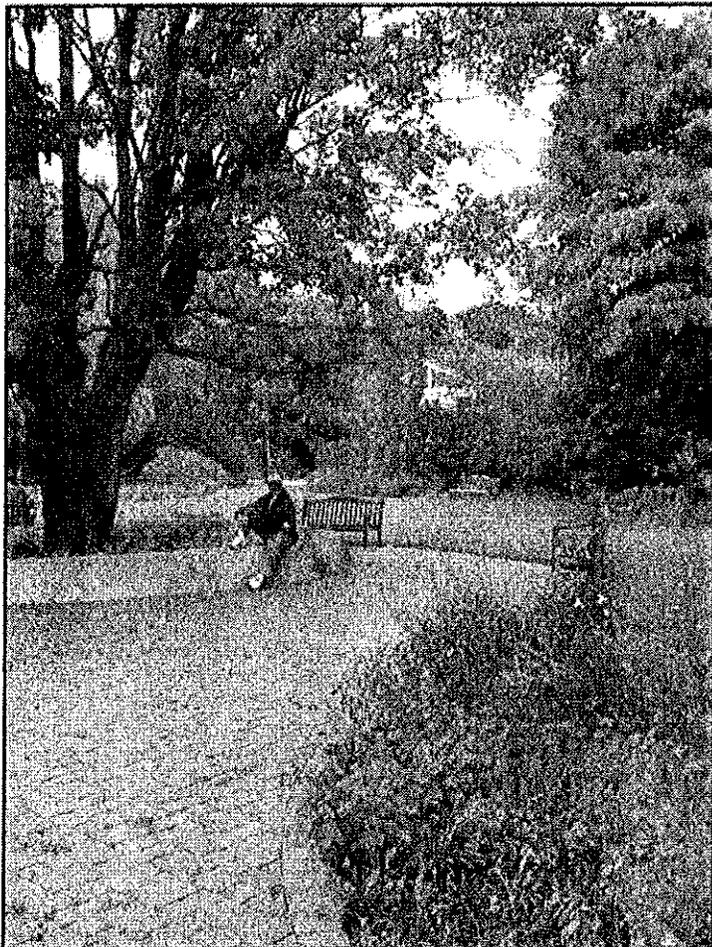
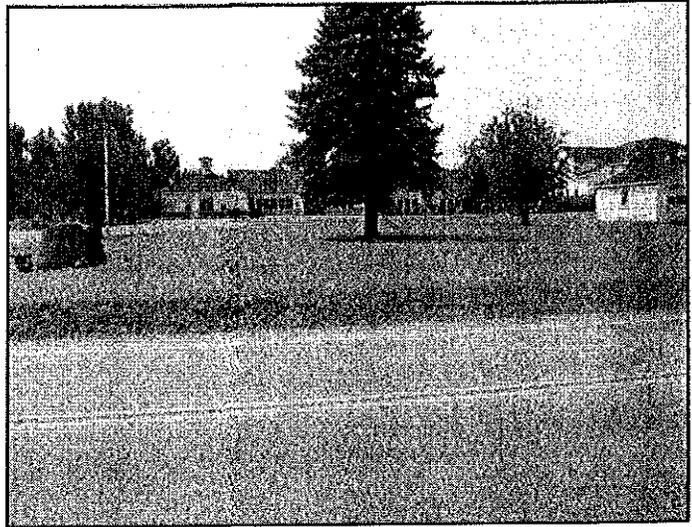
**Terms used in this plan. . .**

Open space means undeveloped land maintained in its natural state and used for such informal activities as walking, cross-country skiing, hunting, fishing, and snowmobiling (where appropriate).

Passive recreation means informal use of relatively undeveloped land for walking, cross-country skiing, hunting, dog walking, picnicking, nature study, and other non-motorized uses.

Riparian habitat means area used by wildlife in shorelands.

Imagine a  
“dead” space  
like this. . .



Becoming a beautiful  
and vibrant one like  
this small park!

## ONE: INTRODUCTION

### **Introduction**

Manchester residents care about the land. They want to conserve wildlife habitats, woodlands, and wetlands. Above all other recreation options, they want more pathways, on- and off-road, for walking and biking and they desire access to lakes and streams for swimming and boating.

Townpeople identified these priorities in opinion surveys conducted in 1989 and 2003. Accordingly, this public facilities and open space plan focuses foremost on using and acquiring public land for conservation and trails. But it also addresses other public facility needs, which organizations and students have identified.

The Long Range Planning Committee began developing this plan in January 2003. Its first task was to hire consultant Holly Dominie and then, with her help, the committee proceeded to:

- Listen to what other town boards and organizations believe are the community's most pressing needs for public facilities and open space;
- Find out through surveys what residents and students think;
- Visit and evaluate the potential of all existing town and state-owned land to meet the needs identified through the above; and
- Assess the potential for other lands to meet identified needs for conservation and public use.

This plan presents the major findings of this process, articulates a future vision for public facilities and open space in Manchester, and establishes priorities and steps for addressing identified needs.

### **The Long View Is Important**

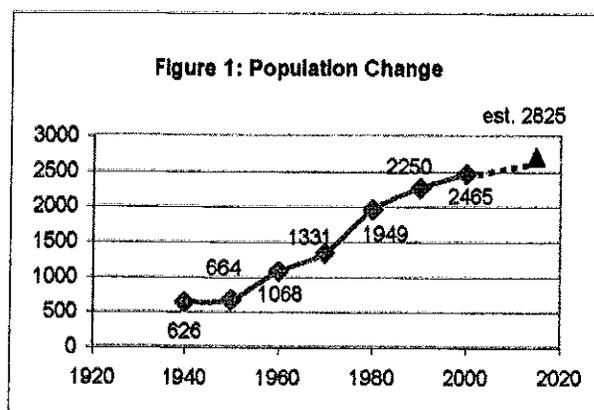
We can be reasonably sure, barring dramatic circumstances, how community demographics and land use will change over the next 5-10 years. And we can take steps to anticipate these changes. Accordingly, the goals, strategies, and tasks recommended in this plan address what the town can reasonably accomplish in this timeframe. It would be difficult to prescribe the steps that should be taken beyond.

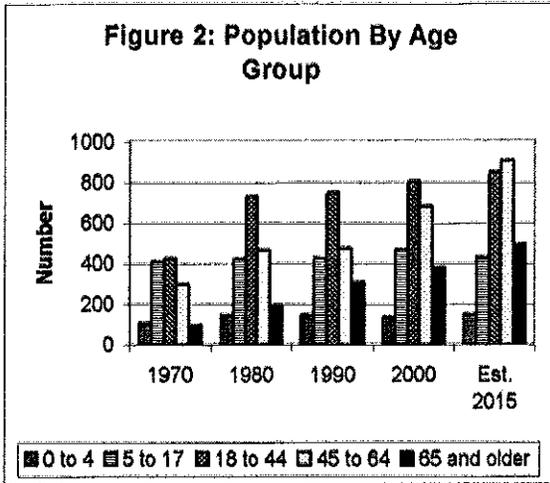
It is not difficult, however, and it is, indeed, critical that this plan embrace and take its direction from a vision of the kind of community that Manchester people want in the future. While we are unable to project what will occur over the long term, Manchester can certainly do everything in its power to take each step in the direction that citizens most desire.

### **What Demographics Tell Us**

#### **We can focus on unmet needs**

The town's population continues to grow, but about 60% slower over the last two decades than in the period between 1950 and 1980. By 2015, just over 350 more residents will call Manchester home, if State Planning Office projections hold. This relatively slow growth means that the town can focus on meeting the needs of its existing citizens rather than having to struggle to keep pace with a growing influx of newcomers.





**An aging population will have a strong influence**

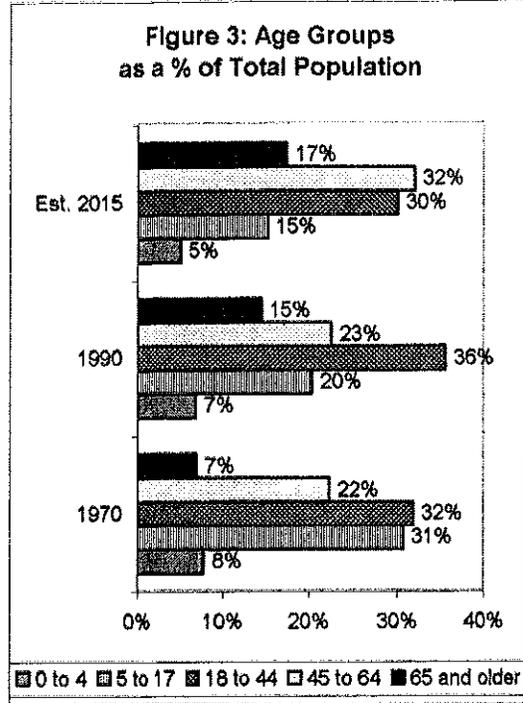
By 2015, almost half of the town’s population will be age 44 or older, compared with only 29% in 1970. While the number of older citizens is growing, the number of children is declining. Residents under 18 are expected to comprise only about 20% of the population by 2015, as opposed to almost 40% in 1970.

An aging population means that short-term demand for recreation opportunities such as trails and boat launches and adult recreation programs is likely to grow. At the same time, demand for facilities that children use, such as ball fields and playgrounds, will not substantially change, at least in number.

**Sprawl threatens cherished qualities and efficiency**

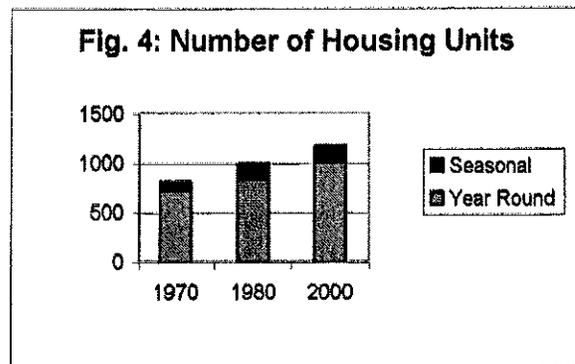
Single-family homes continue to dominate land use in Manchester. The number of year round homes reached 1013 in the year 2000 Census. The number of seasonal homes continues to grow, too, with 168 identified in the last census.

According to the town’s assessor<sup>1</sup>, most of the new homes in the last decade have been built on existing lots in subdivisions in the



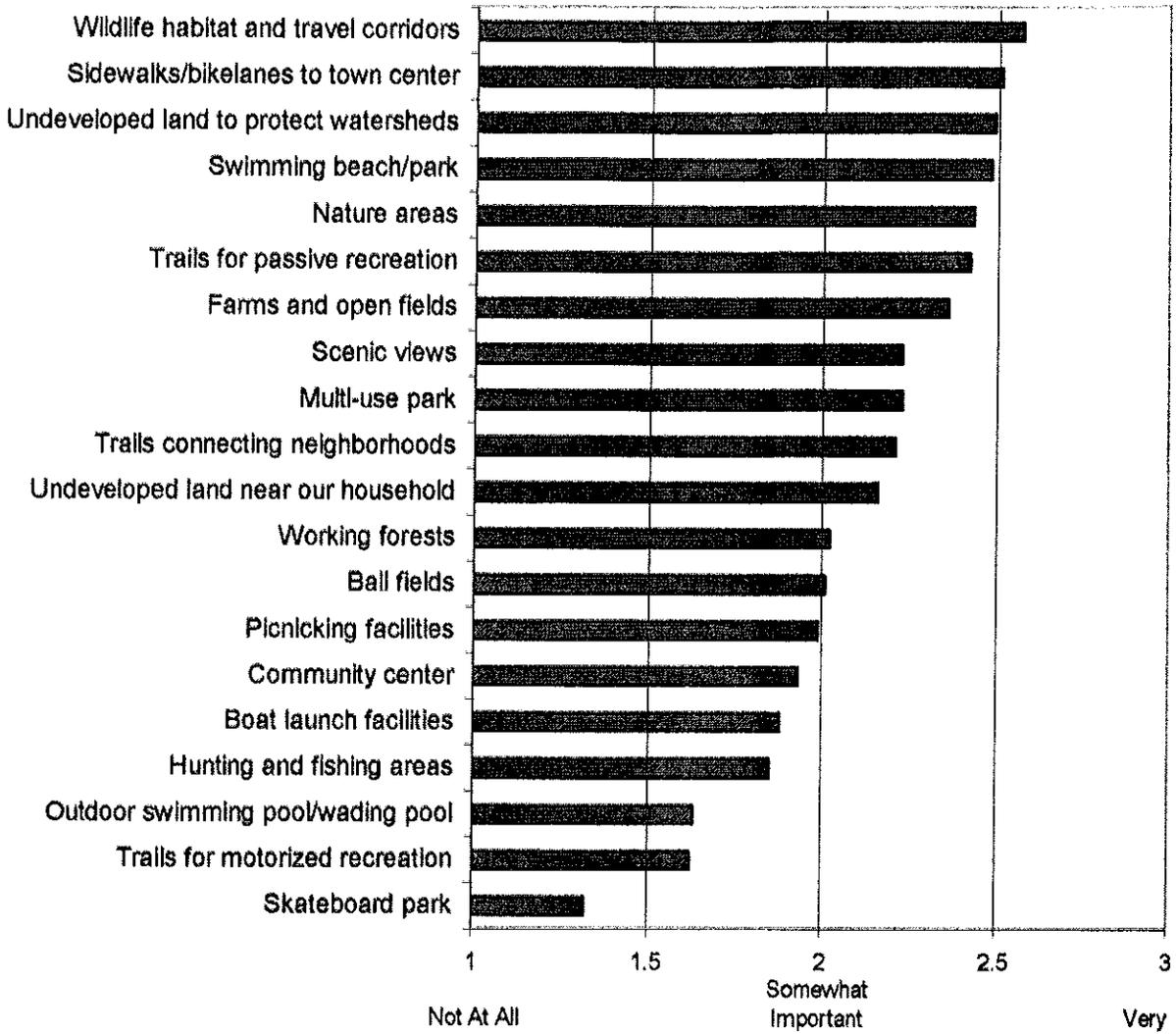
village area, as well as along the Pond Road and Belgrade Road (Route 135). With few undeveloped lots left in the village and no effective ordinances in place that truly channel growth to designated areas, future development is expected to continue spreading into rural areas.

Such sprawl will nibble away at the size and integrity of natural areas, continuing to destroy values that are important to townspeople (see Section 2). A dispersed population will also make the provision of services more difficult and expensive.



<sup>1</sup> Personal communication, Chuck Jordan, 3/03.

**Figure 5: Important Uses of Town Land (Household)- Q1**



## TWO: WHAT PEOPLE WANT

### Opinions Hold Over Time

The Long Range Planning Committee has relied upon several surveys to develop direction for this plan, and all are generally consistent. First, it consulted one conducted in 1990 during revision of the Comprehensive Plan. It also conducted a survey of 1,265 households, through the Community Advertiser, receiving 84 responses. In addition, it surveyed students in grades 3 through 12 in public schools, St. Mary's, and home-schools. In addition, the Committee held a meeting with representatives of 22 town boards and organizations.

The detailed results of all of the 2003 inquiries may be found in Appendix A. The 1990 survey is contained in Volume 2 of the 1991 Comprehensive Plan.

### Sprawl Threatens Resources

In the 1990 survey, a majority of residents expressed the belief that population growth was having a negative impact on the availability of open space, quality of natural environment, and quality of lakes and streams in Manchester. Only one other factor, traffic, was of greater concern.

In addition, a majority of 1990 respondents said

that Manchester's lakes, ponds, groundwater, wildlife habitat, woodlands, open space, and streamfront lands are very important.

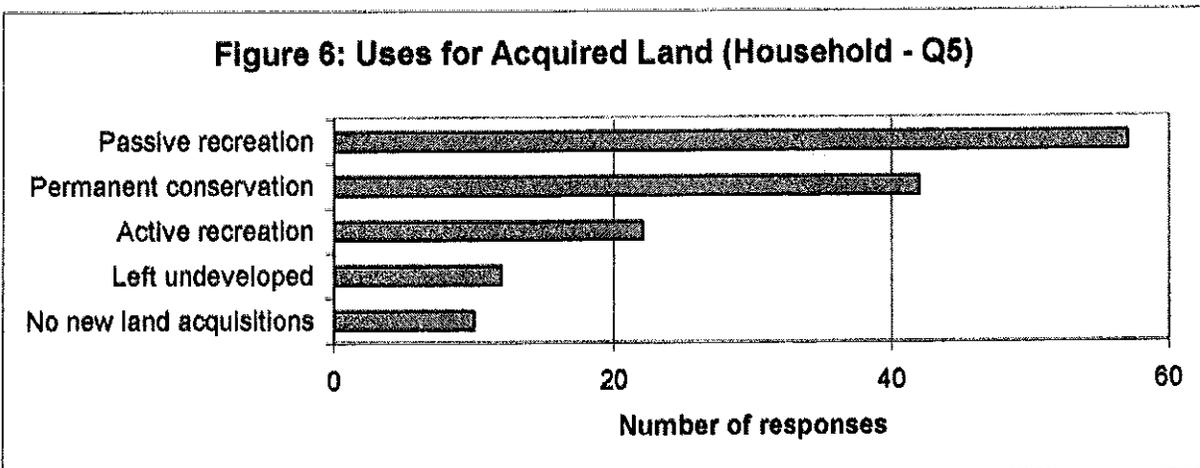
### Public Puts Conservation and Pathways First

Public interest in natural resource values carries over into how people want to use existing or future town-owned land. As shown in Figure 5 on the preceding page, respondents to the 2002 household survey believe that the protection of wildlife and watersheds are very important uses for town land, along with activities such as swimming and trails for non-motorized (passive) use. They are also interested in getting around town without automobiles, ranking sidewalks and bikelanes the second most important use of town land.

In fact, when asked which two options they would support the most, if the town has opportunities to acquire and develop additional land for parks, recreation and open space purposes, household respondents elevated passive recreation and permanent conservation handily over other choices as shown in Figure 6.

And, if additional funds are available, respondents would allocate money first to (Q6):

1. preserving wildlife habitat, woodlands, and wetlands;
2. creating trails; and
3. providing access to lakes and streams.



### **Town Groups Emphasize Some of the Same Things**

The highest priority suggestions of the representatives of boards and organizations include:

1. water access to Cobbosseecontee Lake
2. sidewalks and bikepaths to school/town center; and
3. multiple purpose building and green space.

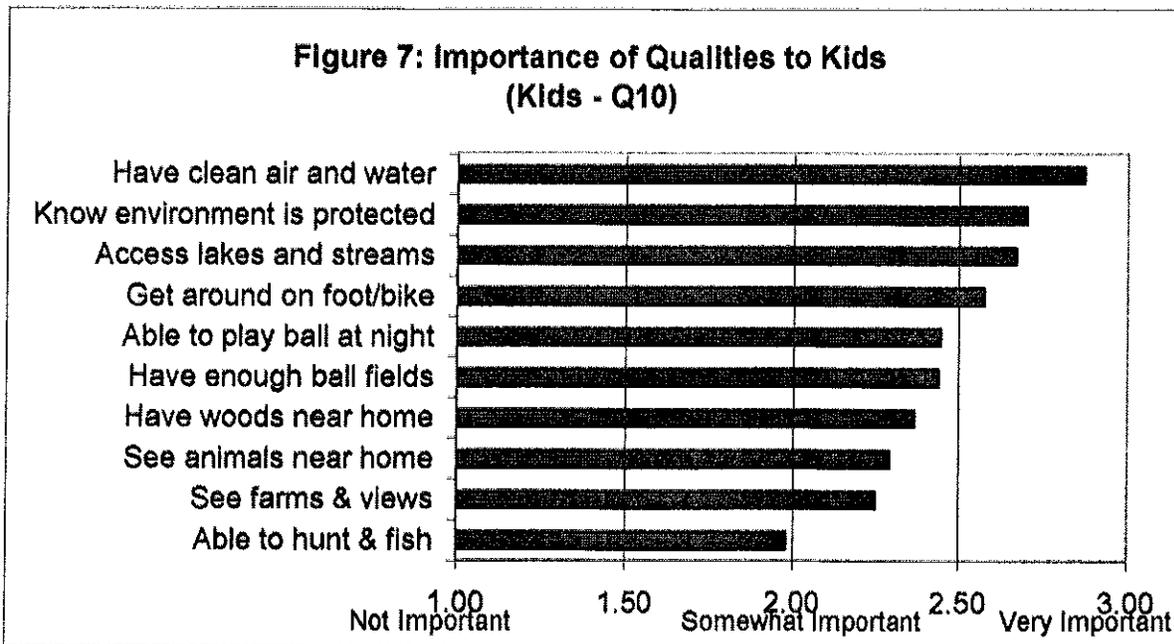
They considered important the multi purpose building and green space (“community center” in survey) and the medium priorities listed below, presumably because of their responsibility for local programs and intimate knowledge of the condition and availability of town facilities.

Their medium priority suggestions include:

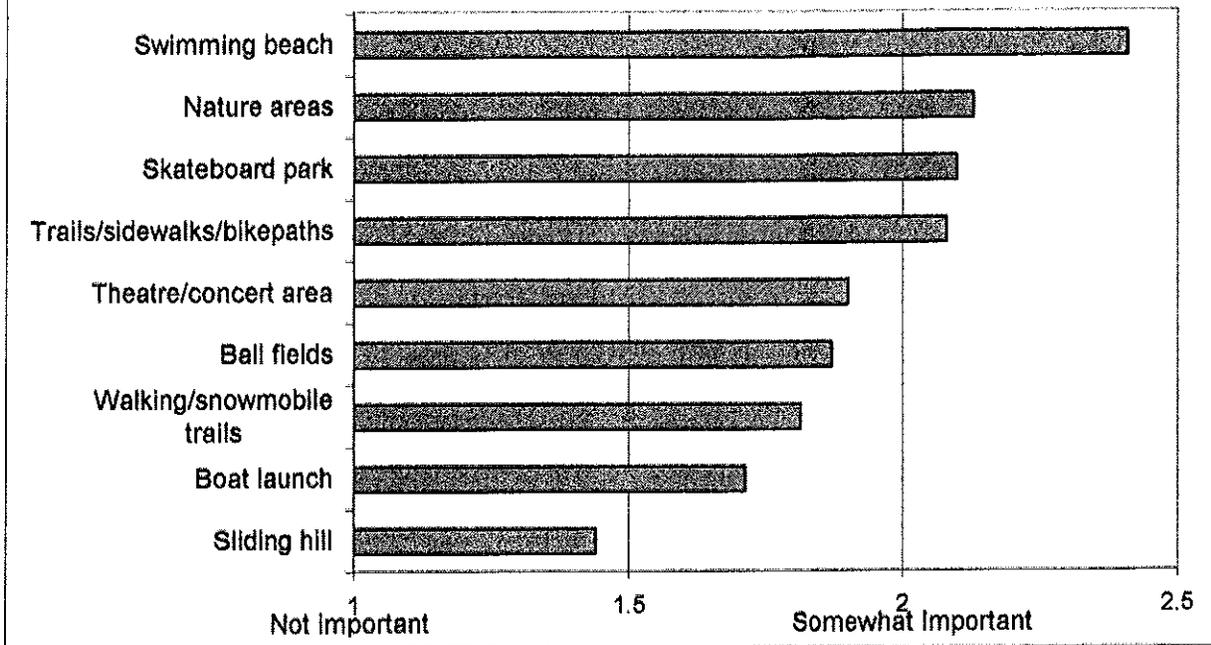
1. more and different sized ball fields to free up school grounds, provide more practice space, and meet regulation size requirements for organized sports;
2. hiking trails;
3. recreation programs for adults and teens; and
4. natural areas conservation.

### **Kids Champion the Environment and Want Swimming and Skateboard Facilities**

Kids also value qualities that center on the environment, as shown in Figure 7 (Q10). A swimming beach tops the list of facilities that they think are important for the town to have, followed by nature areas, a skateboard park, and trails/sidewalks/bikepaths connected to the town center (see Figure 8).



**Figure 8: Importance of Having Outdoor Facilities (Kids - Q6)**



**Interest Exists, But Less So, In A Multi-use Park and Sports Fields**

Townpeople are less certain about the need for active recreation facilities. Households ranked developing a community center fourth on a list of possible options for allocating any available funds for parks, recreation, and open space (Q6). However, it was well down on the list of uses they would like to make of town land (Q1). Greater interest was shown in sidewalks, bikepaths, a multi-use park, and ball fields.

When members of town boards and organizations discussed the idea of creating a better space for social gatherings, they considered the possibility of finding an alternative site to the current town center complex, with ample room and buffering from Route 202. They also noted the need for a safe place for teens to hang out.

When asked what kind of facilities they desire in a community center/town park, household respondents collectively placed green space in

the very important category. They also showed some interest primarily in the following (Q3):

1. green space/open space;
2. teen area;
3. library; and
4. multipurpose space.

In a survey conducted in 2002 regarding the future disposition of the “Drum Property,” 52% of the 287 respondents strongly approved using the building for a library.

**Town Center Facilities Adequate For Short Term**

At a group meeting, the school board, select board, and fire department representatives reported that the school, town office, and fire station facilities are big enough for the next 10-15 years, but may need to be expanded in the long-term. The group noted that relocating the fire station would create a more attractive entryway for the school and town office. Other key physical needs discussed include:

1. removing the temporary fence around the baseball field behind the school and relocating at least one ball field so that

the school can make better use of the outdoor area and youth teams can have regulation-sized fields;

2. improving institutional arrangements for maintaining and supporting ball fields and storage facilities at the school (and elsewhere);
3. providing outdoor basketball courts, perhaps in conjunction with the YMCA; and
4. creating a central recycling center.

The group also discussed in general the need to create a more appealing and functional public center, which they believe will require more than a series of remedial short-term steps. The entire complex accommodating the school, town office, fire station, and Drum Property needs to be considered as a whole, perhaps augmented with additional property in the village, and planned with long range (e.g. 30-50 years) needs in mind.

### **Summing It Up**

So what direction emerges from all of the above opinions? The Long Range Planning Committee suggests the following priorities:

#### **Trails Among Most Desirable Amenities . . .**

Buyers shopping for homes place top value on community design that delivers low traffic; quiet, natural, open space; and walking and biking paths. According to an American Lives Survey reported by the Washington Post, consumers are putting an increasingly high premium on interaction with their environment through wooded tracts, nature paths, and the setting aside of substantial acreage to preserve the fauna and flora that existed prior to the building of a subdivision.

#### **Highest Priority**

1. Permanently conserve and create trails on existing public land with high natural resource values.
2. Permanently conserve other high value lands.
3. Develop a town swimming area and increase access to Cobbosseecontee Lake.
4. Create trails, sidewalks, and bike paths in the village and between communities.

#### **Moderate Priority**

5. Make public space in the village and Route 202 corridor more appealing and functional for future generations.



## THREE: WHY THIS PLAN MATTERS

### ***Introduction***

Planning ahead for community facilities and infrastructure, including open space, is no longer a luxury – it is an economic necessity.

More and more studies are showing that a community's economy, tax base, affordability, and quality of life depend upon wise public investment in open space conservation. Open space conservation improves a community's tax base and vitality.

### ***Open space requires fewer services so is less burdensome on property taxes***

An initial, slight reduction in tax base from land conservation is offset by property values and cost of municipal services. Conservation allows the tax base to increase without the addition of further services or infrastructure. In a nationwide survey of Cost of Community Service studies in 83 communities, it was found that open space cost an average of \$0.36 in services per dollar of revenue raised while residential development cost \$1.15 for each dollar raised.<sup>2</sup>

The net effect can be lower taxes. A study of all 234 incorporated townships in New Hampshire found that on average, the towns with the most open space have the lowest tax bills.<sup>3</sup> A 1998 study in Massachusetts also demonstrated that, on average, the residential property tax rate is lower in places where there are more acres of open land per capita.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cost of Community Services Studies: Making the Case for Conservation. 2002. American Farmland Trust.

<sup>3</sup> Building a Healthy Squam Lakes Economy. 1995. Ad Hoc Associates, Salisbury, VT, for the Squam Lakes Association

<sup>4</sup> "Community Choices, Thinking Through Land Conservation, Development and Property Taxes in

While conservation should not be used as an excuse to exclude new development, it clearly needs to be viewed as a complement to sustaining a viable community.

This plan identifies Manchester's highest value natural areas and provides funds and an approach for working with willing landowners to conserve them.

### ***Open space sustains community character and property values***

Open space makes a community more attractive to homebuyers and helps keep moderate and upper income homeowners from moving away. Research shows that property values are more stable or increase for properties adjacent to open space and trails.

Communities that are smart about growth and conserve open space and natural resource values remain vital.<sup>5</sup> Development pressure will only increase in Manchester. Well planned development will enhance the town's rural character and make the community more appealing for residential development and business.

This plan focuses on making sure that village neighborhoods have the amenities that people want. It proposes "greenways" linking each to key natural areas and pathways (sidewalks, bike lanes, trails) connecting them with the town center, other towns, and with one another.

### ***Well planned open space and public facilities make fiscal sense***

Taxpayers want cost-efficient town government.

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Massachusetts," prepared for the Trust for Public Land, January 1998.

<sup>5</sup> W. Lucy and D. Phillips, in the Journal of Planning, June 1995.

Planning open space holistically, that is as a system of open space blocks linked with one another, offers communities a way to bundle a variety of local goals, such as protecting water quality and curbing sprawl, into a unified approach that saves money. Furthermore, by conserving open space in areas of highest natural and recreational value, communities can encourage development to locate where investments in public services are more efficient and economical to provide.

Well planned open space and public facilities also lead to greater fiscal solvency. "Community improvements – parks, libraries, education – means an attractive community where people will want to live, and that means a community better able to meet its debts," according to Hy Grossman, managing director of Standard and Poor's public finance department.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to planning for open space and pathways, this plan proposes a process for making sure that enough space exists in the town center for expansion of public facilities in the long term. It also proposes that Manchester develop a place where youth and adults can recreate and hold social gatherings indoors and out; establish library services; and improve the visual appeal of public space in the town center.

### ***Planning and conservation are good for business***

Business leaders recognize the link between open space and quality of life for their employees. They take the availability of recreation, parks, and open space into account when planning to expand or relocate. In fact, small companies ranked such "green infrastructure" the highest priority in choosing a new location, while corporations cited them as the third most important factor, only after access to domestic and skilled labor.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in City of Burlington, Vt, "Open Space Protection Plan," 2000.

<sup>7</sup> John L. Crompton, Lisa L. Love, and Thomas A. More, "An Empirical Study of the Role of Recreation, Parks, and Open Space in Companies' Location Decisions," *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 15:1 (Champaign, IL: American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, 1997), 37-58.

Furthermore, beyond open space, if Manchester can create more a village atmosphere, it will slow traffic down, and benefit businesses along the corridor.

In addition to improving the function and attractiveness of public space in the village, this plan proposes a process for making sure that "smart" growth, traffic calming, and green infrastructure (street trees) occur along the Route 202 corridor.

### ***Land conservation saves money by providing environmental and health benefits***

Open space has been shown essential for sustaining functions important to health that would otherwise have to be provided at great cost through technological solutions. The most noteworthy include:

- breaking down organic wastes;
- filtering pollutants from soil and water;
- buffering air pollutants;
- moderating climate change;
- conserving soil and water;
- preserving genetic diversity;
- pollinating food crops and other plants; and
- abating noise.

Open space maintained as an interconnected natural system supplies multiple environmental benefits. Green infrastructure helps protect the quality of surface water by buffering pollution originating from storm water runoff and other sources. Open spaces help store stormwater reducing the risk of flood damage. Trees cool in summer, and help filter air pollution and buffer noise. Linked open spaces provide food and shelter for many forms of wildlife.

A tree belt 100 feet wide and 45 feet high can cut highway noise in half.
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This plan takes identifies high value natural areas, and stresses the importance of protecting lake water quality, one of Manchester's most precious resources.

### ***Open space improves fitness and health***

Mainers face a health crisis. We do not exercise enough, and we eat unhealthy foods, and make other unfavorable lifestyle choices. These choices are costing our lives as well as our pocketbooks.

This plan proposes fitness routes, walking trails, sidewalks, and bike paths convenient to neighborhoods that encourage Manchester residents, young and old, to get fit and stay healthy. It also proposes expanding recreation programs to serve middle schoolers and adults, especially seniors.

### **Lack of physical exercise in Maine youth and adults costs everyone . . .**

Almost two thirds (57%) of Maine adults are overweight – that is they weigh more than 10% of their normal body weight. According to state epidemiologist Dr. Dora Anne Mills, the number of overweight Mainers has increased 20% in the last 10 years. Maine now has the highest rate of overweight and obese (over 20% of normal body weight) adults of any state in New England.

Children are a large part of the growing epidemic. According to a Maine Department of Education study, 10% of adolescents and 15.5% of children were overweight or obese in 2001. This rate is double what it was in 1980, twice the rate of increase for adults.

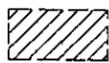
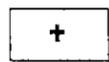
Physical inactivity and poor nutrition are root causes for obesity, from which four deaths occur in Maine each day. Together with tobacco addiction, these conditions contribute to leading chronic illnesses, including cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, and diabetes. These diseases cost Maine \$1,700 per day in health care and lost productivity.

As a society we don't move on our own much anymore. Only 15% of US adults do a minimum of physical activity needed for a strong body and long life – defined as exercising for 30 minutes a day, three to four days a week. Disturbingly, people age 18 to 44 don't get any more exercise than those over age 64. And many children and adolescents are sedentary as well, preferring such activities as watching TV and playing video games to actively playing outdoors.

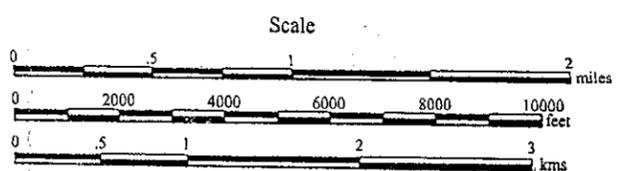
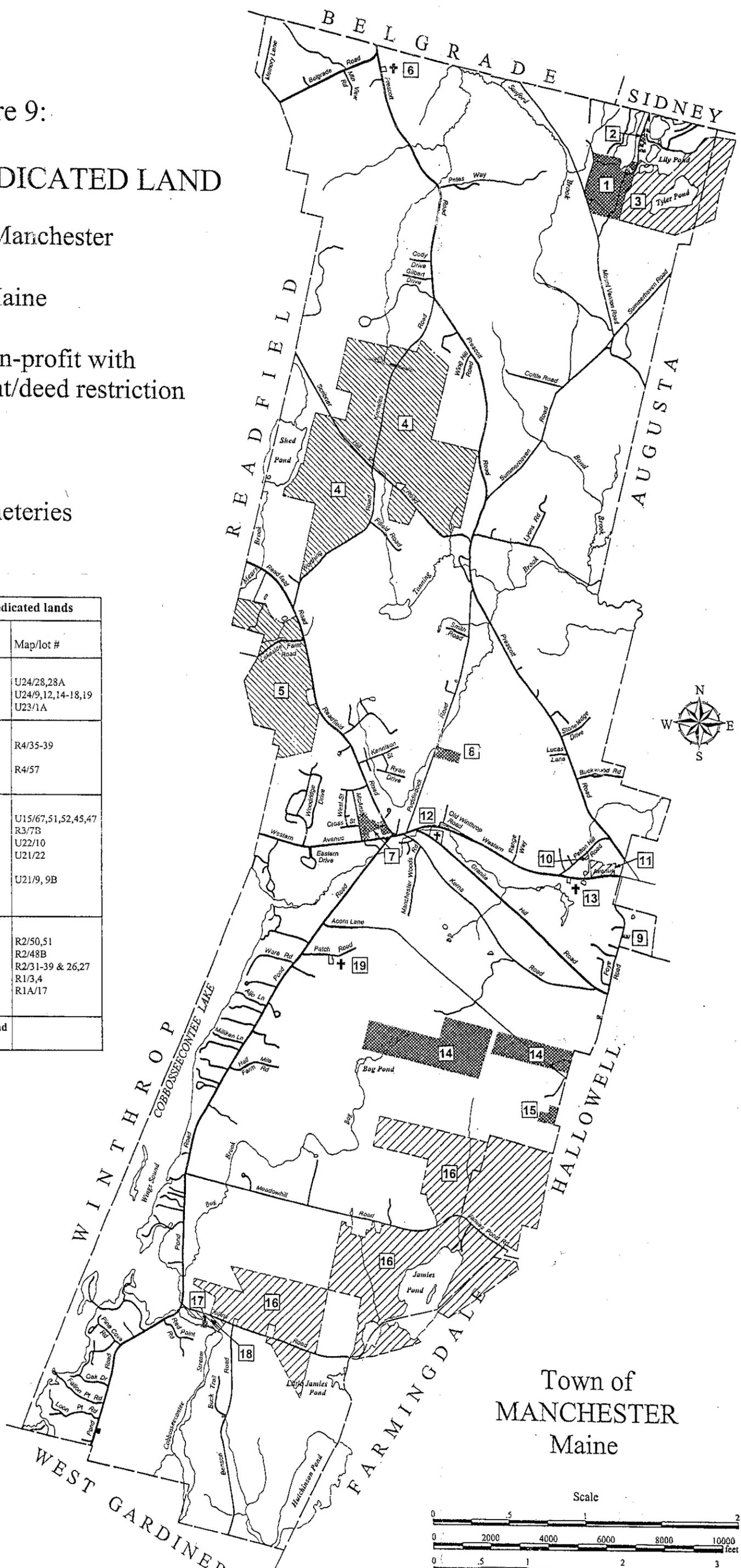
Fortunately, this is one problem that we as a community can do something about. For starters, we can create facilities and a social climate that encourage young and old alike to walk or bike.

Figure 9:

**PUBLIC / DEDICATED LAND**

-  Town of Manchester
-  State of Maine
-  Private/non-profit with easement/deed restriction
-  Town cemeteries

Publicly-owned and dedicated lands		
No.	Area Property	Map/lot #
1.	<b>Summerhaven Lakes</b>	
	Fairbanks Pond	U24/28,28A
2.	Scenic Drive	U24/9,12,14-18,19
3.	MDOC: Tyler Pond	U23/1A
4.	<b>Rural North Manchester</b>	
	New England Forestry Foundation	R4/35-39
5.	Lakeside Orchards	R4/57
6.	Annie Hill Cemetery	
7.	<b>Town Center/Route 202</b>	
	Town Center	U15/67,51,52,45,47
8.	Sand & salt storage	R3/7B
9.	Foye Road	U22/10
10.	MDOT - former salt and sand storage	U21/22
11.	MDOT - vacant	U21/9, 9B
12.	Manchester Forks Cemetery	
13.	Cummings Cemetery	
14.	<b>Rural South Manchester</b>	
	NE of Bog Pond	R2/50,51
15.	E of Bog Pond	R2/48B
16.	DIFW: Jamies Pond WMA	R2/31-39 & 26,27
17.	Cobbossee Dam	R1/3,4
18.	Arrowhead Landing Subdivision	R1A/17
19.	<b>Cobbossee Lake/Pond Road</b>	
	Friends Cemetery	



## FOUR: WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY

### Overview

So what is the best way to achieve what townspeople want for their community? A good place to start is with an evaluation of the land and facilities that the town already has or has access to, as well as those that private or non-profit interests have conserved to retain farm and forest values.

This section describes the characteristics and potential of existing public lands owned by the town and state. It also identifies private lands that have been dedicated permanently for conservation by easements and deed restrictions. Figure 9 and Figure 10 show the extent of these properties.

The Long Range Planning Committee conducted a field trip to the most significant public lands. It also acquired the latest maps showing important natural areas and habitat/species analysis in the town through a multi-agency/organization program called "Beginning With Habitat." In addition, the group consulted the 1991 Comprehensive Plan. Much of this information is assembled in notebooks and maps available for inspection in the Town Office.

The town owns 274 acres, amounting to about 1.7% of the 15,775-acre land area of Manchester. Most of this, with the exception of public facilities in the town center, was acquired through unpaid taxes. None of it is permanently conserved.

State agencies own another 617.5 acres in Manchester, including two wildlife management areas and two relatively small parcels nearing the Route 202 area.

Finally, private and non-profit entities have permanently conserved almost 6% of Manchester's area.

These holdings are described below:

### Town Center/Route 202 Area

#### Town Land

##### Town Center Complex

Map U15, Lots 45, 47, 51-52, 67

Public facilities are concentrated in the town center on five contiguous town properties that total about 10 acres. The Manchester Elementary School building and driveway encompass about two thirds of the land. The area behind the school, now used for ball fields and playground, and the adjacent tennis courts, are managed by the Recreation Committee.

The town office and three-bay fire station are located on small lots bordering Route 17. The former "Drum Property," located at the corner of Route 202 and McArdle Street, was purchased in 1998 to provide off-street parking for the ball fields and playground. A 74-space paved parking lot was built in 2003, and the rest of the connecting walkway and a playing area will be paved in 2004. The walkway actually crosses Manchester Grange land, the town having been granted an easement for such purpose.

##### Opportunities and Constraints:

1. There is little to no opportunity for physical expansion within this area because the town has used up its allocation for the amount of phosphorus which can be allowed to run off-site and into surface waters. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection has classified the Cobbosseecontee Lake Watershed as a "Waterbody Most at Risk From Development."<sup>8</sup> This makes creating any more impervious surface (building and pavement footprint) impossible

<sup>8</sup> DEP. Atlas of Waterbodies Most at Risk From Development." 1997.

**Figure 10: Publicly-Owned and Dedicated Lands**

Area	Property	Map/Lot No.	Acres			Dedicated In Perpetuity
			Town	State	Other	
Summerhaven Lakes	Fairbanks Pond	U24/28, 28A	64.9			
	Scenic Drive	U24/9,12,14-18,19	1.8			
	MDOC: Tyler Pond	U23/1A		107*		
Rural North Manchester	New England Forestry Found.	R4/35-39			708	Conservation Easement
	Lakeside Orch.	R4/57			188	Development Rights
	Annie Hill Cem.					
Town Center/Route 202	School	U15/67	6.73			
	Town Office	U15/51	0.6			
	Fire Station	U15/52	0.43			
	Tennis Courts	U15/45	0.98			
	Former "Drum" property	U15/47	1.41			
	Sand & Salt Storage	R3/7B	3.8			
	Foye Rd	U22/10	0.3			
	MDOT former S&S Storage	U21/22		.9		
	MDOT Vacant	U21/9 U21/9B		8.7 .9		
	Manchester Forks Cemetery		2.75 acres			
Rural South Manchester	NE of Bog Pond	R2/50, 51	184			
	E of Bog Pond	R2/48B	8.3			
	DIFW: Jamies Pond Wildlife Management Area	R2/31-39 & 26,27**		510*		
	Cobbossee Dam	R1/3,4	0.6			
	Arrowhead Landing Sub.	R1A: 17			5.95	Conservation deed restriction
Cobbosseecontee Lake/Pond Rd.	Friends Cemetery					
<b>Total Acres (15,775 town wide)</b>			<b>274</b>	<b>617.5*</b>	<b>902</b>	
<b>Percent of Land Area</b>			<b>1.7</b>	<b>4+/-</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>11.3%</b>

\*The state also owns land in adjacent communities.

\*\*12 additional acres of these parcels will be deeded to Support Solutions, a non-profit organization.

without some engineering and payment of a compensation fee. Over-crowding is currently a problem behind the school and in the entryways to the school, fire station, and town office;

2. The long-range disposition of the Drum Property has not been determined. While town officials had hoped that the building could be put to some good use, investigation has revealed that bringing it up to code, especially making it handicap accessible and strengthening its load-bearing capacity, would not be cost-effective. Its close proximity to Route 202 also compromises its capacity for use as a functional outdoor area; and
3. The town center complex is not visually cohesive and attractive, accentuating the absence of a well-defined and functional village center. It especially lacks a well-defined and attractive outdoor green space, free from the noise, visual bustle, contaminated air, and other impacts from traffic on Routes 202 and 17. The field and playground area, the primary "open space," cannot accommodate other uses while school or sports teams are in progress. And their edges cannot be thickly landscaped because of the need to maintain visual transparency for monitoring children during school recess.

#### Sand and Salt Storage Shed

Map R3, Lot 7B

The town owns about 4 acres on the Puddledock Road where the town sand and salt storage shed is located. The nature of the existing use and wet soils constrain the use of this property.

#### Tax Acquired land on Foye Road

Map U22, Lot 10

The town acquired this one-third acre parcel some time ago. While this plan was being

written, the town sold the property because of its small size..

#### Manchester Forks and Cummings Cemeteries

Manchester Forks Cemetery is located off the Granite Hill Road and is the town's primary "active" cemetery. It was expanded through land purchases from Albert and Mildred Cummings in 1964 and Charles Hippler in 2001. Fortunately, many people have already purchased lots in the old section so the size of the cemetery will most probably be adequate for some time.<sup>9</sup>

The Cummings Cemetery, located on Route 202, has not had any recent burials. Because it is old, stones were not put in to mark each grave. Accordingly, the town does not know where graves are located and if additional space is available.

## State Land

#### MDOT land on Pelton Hill

Map 21, Lot 9

The Maine Department of Transportation acquired this property to discourage unsafe access onto Route 202 owing to poor sight distance and to facilitate highway widening, which is currently under design. It is undeveloped but contains an old foundation built by a former owner who was unable to obtain an access permit.

The visual character and quality of this parcel are very important because, as Manchester's "gateway," it controls people's first impressions of our town and separates us from Augusta.

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<sup>9</sup> Personal communication, Audrey Irish, Town Sexton, 6/2003.

## South Manchester

### Town Land

#### Land-locked Parcels Near Bog Pond

Map R2, Lots 50,51, 48B

The Town owns three landlocked parcels in this area, two just to the northeast of Bog Pond, the other on the Hallowell line. All were tax-acquired.

#### Opportunities and Constraints:

1. No easy and legal access exists to the properties. Access to all is gained across other properties in Manchester, including off the Patch and Meadowhill Roads, or through Hallowell. Fortunately, abutting landowners on the Acorn Drive Road are cooperative and allow forest harvesting equipment to pass across their land.
2. Much of this land is good for timber harvesting. The town currently harvests timber on the two largest and contiguous properties, Lots 50 and 51. Together, their combined acreage is 184 acres. The third parcel, 48B, located due east of Bog Pond, is only about eight acres.

Timber harvesting has been conducted since 1992, following the development of a timber management plan by Stephen Elliot who serves as the town's Surveyor of Lumber. Management goals stated in the forestry plan include soil and water quality protection, recreation, as well as tree growth.

Planned cuts were conducted in 1992 and 1993 based upon the plan, but additional tree removal has since been necessary because of ice storm, hurricane, and beaver damage.

Since the first cut on these properties and town land on Fairbanks Pond (see below), the town has earned almost \$40,000. Following a cutting cycle of 10 to 15 years, another major cut is planned in the next few years.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Revenues</u>	<u>Reason</u>
1992	\$3,712	Planned
1993	9,366	Planned
1998	2,796	Hurricane/beaver
1999	2,438	Hurricane/beaver
2000	13,845	Ice storm
2001	<u>6,360</u>	Ice storm
	\$38,517	

3. These properties also have considerable conservation values. They are largely wooded with areas of wetland, and according to the comprehensive plan, possibly encompassing areas of highly erodible soils (48B). According to the Beginning With Habitat Maps, they encompass:
  - a. high value forest habitat identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (50 and 51 only);
  - b. habitat of State Significance (deer wintering areas) designated by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife; and
  - c. riparian habitat (i.e., land adjacent to streams and wetlands).
4. These parcels also have recreation values, particularly for winter use and hunting. Manchester Country Riders Snowmobile Club now maintains snowmobile trails through them. Cross-country skiers use the area as well, particularly those coming from adjacent public land owned by the town of Hallowell or from the Jamies Pond Wildlife Management Area to the south. Snowmobilers are hopeful that the

community will continue to allow snowmobile trail access. Skiers and summer walkers are interested in linkage between the Hallowell town land and Jamies Pond.

### Cobbossee Outlet Dam

#### Map R1, Lots 3 and 4

The town owns and maintains the dam at the outlet to Cobbosseecontee Lake. Cobbossee Watershed District advises the town's Dam Keeper when the gates need to be adjusted to maintain water levels appropriate for water quality and recreation. The 191-foot long dam was built in 1906, with a 170-foot spillway and five mechanical gates.<sup>10</sup> The last major repair was in 1986. The dam now has six gates. It is registered with DEP as File #092.

The town owns small parcels on either side of the dam, which are reached by way of easements over private land. On the Collins Road side, the easement is through Lot 17 in the Arrowhead Landing Subdivision, a parcel that is deed restricted for conservation.

#### Opportunities and Constraints:

1. Owing to their small size and easement restrictions, these parcels cannot support intense use. The town has only the right to use the easements for "dam maintenance and repair and for any other purpose for which rights may now exist."<sup>11</sup> The only right that now exists appears to be for dam maintenance. The landowners, however, allow informal public access for fishing and canoe/kayak launching. They do so under Maine's Landowner

Liability Law (see sidebar).<sup>12</sup> People sometimes abuse landowner courtesy and party in the area. They also have been known to vandalize the structure.

2. Safety is a major issue in regard to this property. The town recently completed an emergency plan to guide actions should the dam fail. The town also posts no trespassing signs on the dam to avoid liability problems, but people still use the area. In fact, the biggest safety threat was created when a hole was breached more than 20 years ago in the "catchall" structure upstream. Now someone swimming or boating toward the dam from upstream can get in trouble, especially when the lake is high and the current is at full strength. Indeed, someone died swimming in this manner not long ago. For this reason, the dam keeper has placed danger signs that are visible from the bridge upstream.

The dam keeper, under contract, maintains the dam, doing "a little bit" each year. He built the walkway across the dam 15 years ago.

3. Natural and cultural resource values are high in the vicinity of these parcels. Not only are the shore and stream good for wildlife and fishing access, they are visually attractive. The shoreland has archaeological values, too, and its relatively undeveloped character helps protect the water quality of Cobbosseecontee Stream and Pleasant Pond. The town's small acreage plays only a small role in protecting these qualities.

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<sup>10</sup> Some say the dam was built in 1929. Personal communication, David Dodge, Dam Keeper, 6/03.

<sup>11</sup> Kennebec County Registry of Deeds, Book 527, page 259.

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<sup>12</sup> The information for the sidebar is from a pamphlet by the Androscoggin Land Trust, entitled *Maine Landowner Liability Explained*, 9/96.

The major resource constraint is shoreland soils, which are highly erodible. This constraint is mapped in the town's Comprehensive Plan, and one can readily see where people launching canoes and kayaks have worn away bank soils.

### **Good news. . .**

Landowners who allow informal access and use of their land for recreation and harvesting are protected under Maine Law.

Title 14, M.R.S.A. Section 159-A stipulates that if someone uses private land or passes through it for outdoor recreation or harvesting (e.g., forestry or fiddleheads), the landowner assumes no responsibility and incurs no liability for injuries to that person or that person's property. The law applies whether the land is posted or not.

While one can be sued in spite of the law, it is very unlikely for two reasons. First, a person who brings suit and loses must pay the landowners legal fees and court costs. Second, the law is so clear that there is little opportunity for the injured person to win.

For more information, contact the landowner relations coordinator in the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife at 287-8091.

## **State Land**

### Jamies Pond Wildlife Management Area

Map R2, Lots 31-39, portions of 26 & 27

This quiet pond and 550 acres of surrounding woodlands were purchased in 1991 from the Hallowell Water District with funds from the Land For Maines Future, the City of Hallowell, and an anonymous donor. In 1991, the Land For Maine's Future Board acquired another 85 acres, the Norton Parcel in Manchester, from the Kennebec Land Trust. In 2001 the town of Manchester subsequently donated two tax-acquired properties totaling 8.1 acres to the wildlife management area. This year, the area has again been expanded with the addition of about 175 acres from the UMA Collins property. The area now encompasses close to 800 acres straddling Manchester and Hallowell.

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife manages the area primarily for wildlife, with traditional pursuits such as hunting, fishing, and trapping a secondary goal. Other activities, such as hiking trails, are allowed to the extent that they do not interfere with the first two goals. Swimming is not allowed on land owned by the department.

#### Opportunities and Constraints:

1. The Hallowell Conservation Commission has developed an extensive system of walking trails in the wildlife management area, with the help of the Manchester Conservation Committee and volunteers. Not many Manchester residents know about or use the trails. The opportunity exists to work with Hallowell to maintain and publicize the trails.

## **Cobbosseecontee Lake and Pond Road Area**

### **Town Land**

#### Friends Cemetery

This small burying ground is located off the Patch Road. It is an "active" cemetery, with two burials in recent years.

## **Summerhaven Lakes Area**

### **Town Land**

#### Fairbanks Pond

Map U24, Lots 28 & 28A

These two tree-covered parcels total 65 acres and are tax-acquired. They have 778 feet of frontage on Fairbanks Pond, which is a lovely "kettle hole" pond, surrounded by steep-sided sand eskers. The surrounding area, known as Summerhaven, contains many such ponds and eskers, which are high narrow ridges of sand and gravel formed by ancient glaciers. The shoreland of the pond is the site of a former, but derelict and collapsed, camp and associated debris. A few years ago, Eagle Scouts created a small picnic area here, but it was not maintained.

The primary use of the property is currently for tree harvesting and recreational vehicles. The State's ATV trail, along with club snowmobile trails, traverse the southeast corner, and some equestrian use may also occur. The Maine Department of Conservation owns the adjacent land surrounding Tyler Pond and has an agreement with the town to allow ATV use on the designated trail, which makes a 6-mile circuit. (See "State Land" below.)

#### Opportunities and Constraints:

1. Access to the property is problematic. The town has not documented all property access rights so it is difficult to determine the best route for establishing public

access to the property. There is a right of way associated with parcel 28A via the Bog Road, an offshoot of the Mount Vernon Road from Sidney, but the Bog Road has been discontinued and is impassable. The town does use the Mount Vernon Road off the Old Belgrade Road for access for tree harvesting, but this former county road has also been discontinued so landowner permission is required. Landowners along the road, including the state, keep it gated to discourage dumping and other inappropriate uses. One can also get close to the property from the Fairbanks Road and Baxter Drive/Scenic Drive beginning in Sidney, but the nature and extent of any right of access is unclear. Furthermore, Scenic Drive is in very poor repair.

2. Safety and policing are significant issues in the Summerhaven area. Extensive gravel mining, the remote character, and the myriad of roads and trails have long contributed to a reputation of illegal activity. Illegal dumping is also rampant, and people drive their vehicles on trails designated for off-road ATV use. Related problems on town property occur primarily in the Mount Vernon Road vicinity. Small fires have occurred without damage to timber.
3. The timber resource is good, with potentially veneer-quality products. As mentioned under the town's properties in the Jamies Pond and Bog Bond Area, the town has harvested timber here since 1992, and another major cutting is due in about five years. A copy of the forest management plan for the property is on file in the town office. Harvesting is by selective cutting, but more intensive cutting has occurred on adjacent private lands,

which use the old jeep road on the town property for access for their skidders.

4. Natural resource and recreation values are high. Fairbanks Pond is a state-designated significant habitat for waterfowl and wading birds. Its shoreland is also good for wildlife species that rely upon riparian areas. Beaver, for instance, are active in the area. The area is also a state-designated significant sand and gravel aquifer, and is located in the town's aquifer overlay zone.<sup>13</sup> The water level in ponds here has not rebounded as it usually does seasonally so there is some concern about whether gravel mining operations are affecting the water table.

Fairbanks, a deep, clear pond, though small, is good for swimming. Any leeches apparently disappeared with the illegal introduction of bass a few years ago. The town's shore frontage is generally steep and without a beach, but at least one area is favorable for low intensity access for swimming. Existing trails, used for timber harvesting, are suitable for walking.

#### Scenic Drive

Map U24, Lots, 9, 12, 14-18

These parcels, all less than a half-acre, were tax acquired. One has frontage on Lower Silver Lake, and another on Spring Lake. The rest are unbuildable parcels on the slope of an esker.

#### **State Land**

##### Tyler Pond Wildlife Management Area

One hundred seven acres of this 128-acre wildlife area is located in Manchester. A

small kettle pond is the centerpiece of the property which the Maine Department of Conservation (DOC) purchased in the 1970s with federal Land and Water Conservation Funds to be "forever dedicated as recreation land to be available for public use and enjoyment."

Because the department's plans to develop the property as a state park failed to materialize, it entered into an agreement with the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (DIFW) in 1992 to manage the area as a wildlife management area. The agreement between the two agencies states that "the DIFW shall not deny the public reasonable access to the property (including Tyler Pond and Lily Pond) for the purposes of fishing, swimming, and recreational boating."

DIFW primarily manages the pond for cold water fishing, and maintains a boat access site on the north end. In addition, DOC coordinates the use of the property with that of surrounding landowners, including the town of Manchester, for an ATV trail network. The pond has leeches and glass.

DIFW also maintains an easement between Lower Silver Lake and Spring Lake for stocking fish and providing fishing access.

#### **North Manchester**

##### **Town Land**

##### Annie Hill Cemetery

This cemetery is located on the Prescott Road. Like the Cummings Cemetery, it is old, and the location and number of graves, as well as potentially available space, are unknown. It is inactive as a result.

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<sup>13</sup> See Open File No. 99-33, 1999.

## Non-Profit/Private Land

### Allen-Whitney Memorial Forest

Map R4, Lots 35-39

A. Whitney donated this 700-acre tract of land to the New England Forestry Foundation in 1955. The Allen family settled on a portion of the land during colonial times. Now the area is one of the organization's 125 demonstration forests in New England where land is managed to teach woodlot owners about sustainable forestry. An internal road system, built in the 1960s, provides access to all portions of the property for forest management and public access to the forest and Shed Pond.

### Lakeside Apple Orchards

The Land For Maine's Future Board purchased the development rights to 188-acre Lakeside Orchards in 2002 using state and federal (Farmland Protection Program) money. This allowed the current private owner to purchase the orchard and continue to farm it. The land is thus protected from further residential subdivision and the farmland will be available for farming in perpetuity. No public access is granted under the agricultural conservation easement, which is held by the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Resources.



## FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS

Plan recommendations focus on the five goals identified in *Section Two: What People Want*.

### **Terms Used in This Section**

Each goal section is organized according to the headings below:

#### *Vision*

The vision describes the kind of place that citizens wish the town to be like in the future. The vision statements for each goal express the quality of life people seek. Some of these qualities are present now; others are attainable within five to ten years. Some may take longer to achieve. In total, they are the legacy people wish to leave for future generations.

#### *Current Status*

This analysis provides information about the issues associated with each goal that have not been described in previous sections of the plan.

#### *Policies*

The town's Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1991, directed town boards to develop an open space and public access plan. It also included many policies related to open space, public facilities, and transportation. The recommendations herein build upon those earlier policies, and articulate others that provide greater detail about the principles that will guide the community's actions related to the five goals of this open space and public facilities plan.

#### *Action Steps*

These encompass the "to do" list for the next five to ten years that will guide town boards and community partners in making progress toward each goal. Responsibility for undertaking each action is assigned and a timetable specified. A

summary of these steps is contained in Figure 17 in *Section Five: Implementation Plan*.

#### *Measures of Success*

How will we know when we are making true progress in attaining the goals specified in this plan? This plan specifies indicators that can be measured quantitatively on the ground or through public opinion surveys. Such measures offer citizens a way to hold public officials accountable so that this plan does not become yet another document "on the shelf."

### **Plan Goals**

#### **Goal 1: Permanently conserve and passively use existing public land with high natural resource values**

#### **Current Status**

As mentioned earlier, the Town owns property well suited to conservation and trails at:

- ❖ Fairbanks Pond; and
- ❖ landlocked parcels in the vicinity of Bog Pond.

There is opportunity to cooperate with state agencies and the city of Hallowell, which owns land adjacent to or near the above town lands, namely at the:

- Jamies Pond Wildlife Management Area; and
- Tyler Pond Wildlife Management Area.

None of these parcels, town or state, has been dedicated in perpetuity for conservation, and only the state properties are currently actively managed for public use.

Town property at Cobbossee Dam is also suited for long term conservation but is not appropriate for the promotion of public use because of the small size of the parcels which flank the dam, hazards associated with the dam, and limitations on access over private lands.

## Vision

Citizens want Manchester to be a place where, generations from now, . . .

- The Fairbanks Pond and Jamies Pond/Bog Pond areas are major centers, conserved in perpetuity, for passive enjoyment and public use of the natural landscape for walking, fishing, and other uses compatible with natural resource conservation; and where people feel safe and healthy in these quiet and beautiful settings;
- Walking and cross-country ski trails link town properties in the Bog Pond area with city land in Hallowell and with the state-owned Jamies Pond Wildlife Management Area;
- Citizens enjoy parking their cars and walking into the Fairbanks Pond property along the forest trails and stopping to swim, fish, or picnic on the pond;
- Cobbossee Outlet Dam and adjacent town-owned lands are maintained in a safe condition, primarily for the purposes of water level management and resource protection rather than recreational use;
- Public open space is planned and managed so well that it is safe and free from trash, and sustains a high level of environmental quality;
- A variety of trail settings and types allow residents of all ages to enjoy the outdoors throughout the seasons;
- Citizens demonstrate a high level of stewardship for public and private land, helping to care for it and build and maintain trails; and
- The town actively cooperates and coordinates with adjacent communities and state agencies to provide safe and enjoyable trails and other informal recreation opportunities in these and other areas planned for public use.

## Policies

### Existing (from 1991 Comprehensive Plan)

1. Encourage the preservation of private and public open space to enhance public access to important natural resources and enhance open space preservation and the aesthetic quality of the community (page 8 of the "comp plan").
2. Maximize productivity and multi-use of agricultural and forest resources while minimizing degradation of wildlife habitats and water quality (pages 11 and 30).
3. Encourage a wide range of recreational activities for all residents of Manchester (page 32).

### Additional Policies

4. Retain existing and acquired town land that has high value for conservation, recreation, and timber harvesting.
5. Earmark funds from timber harvesting on town land for the conservation and maintenance of open space.
6. Collaborate to the fullest extent possible with neighboring communities and state agencies to offer and maintain trails on existing public lands, and develop linkages between them.
7. Maintain town lands in a manner that maintains and improves resource qualities and ecosystem functioning, and avoids adverse impacts on neighboring properties.
8. Locate trails and public use areas in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts on sensitive natural resources and avoids conflicts among users and with abutters.
9. Clearly identify places that are available for public use and promote appropriate behaviors for using public and private property.
10. Provide incentives to encourage landowners to make their properties available for public use.
11. Collaborate with neighboring communities to link trail systems wherever appropriate.
12. Open land to public use only after developing a management plan and allocating responsibility for its maintenance.
13. Encourage neighborhood groups, civic organizations, and businesses to adopt trails

and public use areas and take responsibility for their oversight and maintenance.

6. The town Surveyor of Lumber will continue to advise the town and oversee forest management activities on town land.

Schedule: Annually

## Action Recommendations

### General

#### Action Steps:

1. The Conservation Committee, in conjunction with the open space subcommittee of the Long Range Planning Committee, will draft an ordinance to create a conservation commission to exercise authority granted to it under Maine law. The ordinance will specify a process for identifying and pursuing conservation projects.

Schedule: as soon as possible

2. The Long Range Planning Committee and Select Board will ask Town Meeting to establish a Conservation Account to be capitalized through such sources as revenues from the sale of timber, bonds, donations, and grants. Timber sales will provide the initial funds. The Conservation Committee/Commission will make recommendations to the Select Board for disbursement of funds from the account.

Schedule: June 2004

3. The Select Board will request the Long Range Planning Committee to (a) review the potential of any town-owned lands prior to their sale and (b) recommend any which should be retained for public purposes and/or dedicated for conservation use.

Schedule: As needed

4. The Select Board, in consultation with the Conservation Committee/Commission, will draft a warrant article for consideration at Town Meeting authorizing the establishment of declarations of trust, conservation easements, or other vehicle for the permanent conservation of town land for the Bog Pond, Fairbanks Pond, and Cobbossee Dam properties.

Schedule: March to September 2004

5. The Conservation Committee/Commission will organize and conduct an annual townwide "Green-up Day".

Schedule: Annually

#### **A Conservation Commission Would Bring Benefits. . .**

Municipalities have the option under Maine Law, Title 30-A Section 3261, to establish a formal conservation commission, and many on Manchester's border have done so.

Manchester's current Conservation Committee was created initially for beautification projects. The Select Board appoints the members each year. More recently, the group has lent support to Hallowell's Conservation Commission in its efforts to maintain trails at Jamies Pond.

Creating a conservation commission would reflect the importance that Manchester citizens now place on land conservation. Doing so would also provide better continuity of membership and purpose. The enabling statute specifies that a community may appoint a commission composed of 3 to 7 members, with staggered terms. Duties include:

- Reporting annually to the town;
- Conducting research on land areas;
- Coordinating with similar organizations;
- Developing an open space inventory and plan; and
- Serving as the point for state agencies that may conduct planning operations for open areas in town.

The statute also specifies powers such as acquiring land in the municipality's name with town meeting approval; caring and supervising for town parks, in the absence of a parks commission, and receiving gifts related to land conservation.

A local ordinance is not necessary to establish a conservation commission, but would help clarify Manchester's expectations for one.

## Fairbanks Pond

### Management Goal:

Manage as a major center for informal walking, cross-country skiing, picnicking, and swimming, and continue to allow other uses to the extent they do not adversely impact natural values and non-motorized uses.

### Action Steps:

1. The Select Board will establish a committee, to work under the oversight of the Long Range Planning Committee, to develop, with public involvement, a management plan for safe access and use of the property, including a site plan, management policies, and implementation schedule and budget, and considering, among other issues, the following:
  - a) the identification of deed restrictions and rights of way;
  - b) security and policing to create a safe environment;
  - c) ways to avoid conflicts between timber harvesting and passive uses;
  - d) opportunities for education; and
  - e) a system for monitoring impacts from ATV and other vehicular use and prohibiting such use as necessary.Schedule: July 2004 to June 2005

## Bog Pond Area Parcels

### Management Goal:

Manage primarily for timber harvesting, conservation, and trails for cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

### Action Steps:

1. The Conservation Committee/Commission will work with the Hallowell Conservation Commission, Department of Inland Fisheries, and Kennebec Land Trust and willing landowners to establish easements for trails for passive use to link public properties in the area.  
Schedule: 2005 to 2006

## Jamies Pond Wildlife Management Area

### Management Goal:

Town has no jurisdiction.

### Action Steps:

1. The Conservation Committee/Commission will work with the Hallowell Conservation Commission to jointly fund and distribute a brochure and trail map.  
Schedule: July 2004 to January 2005
3. The Conservation Committee/Commission will meet twice yearly with the Hallowell Conservation Commission and Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife biologist responsible for Jamies Pond to discuss issues of mutual interest.  
Schedule: Biannually
4. The Conservation Committee/Commission will work with the Hallowell Conservation Commission on trail maintenance and promotion as needed, and use funds to do so from the Conservation Account; and will promote citizen participation in annual trails maintenance.  
Schedule: as needed
5. The Town Manager and Road Committee will work with the Town of Hallowell, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and Department of Environmental Protection to determine the impact of erosion and sedimentation on the water quality of the pond and, if significant, develop a strategy and cost estimate for repairing the problem.  
Schedule: July to December 2004

## Cobbosseecontee Dam

### Management Goal:

Maintain the dam and adjacent town parcels for water management purposes.

### Action Recommendations:

1. The Select Board will request Town Meeting and communities that benefit from the dam to establish a capital improvement fund to anticipate the major repairs that will be required in about ten years. Please note that routine maintenance may also cost more

than the current \$2200 appropriated each year when the current dam keeper retires.

Schedule: November 2004 to June 2005

2. The Dam Keeper will erect (a) a cable on the upstream side of the dam that will keep people from falling in but will allow manipulation of the gates and/or (b) a set of buoys upstream for warning and keeping boaters and swimmers out of harms way.

Schedule: July to November 2005

### Measures of Success

- 900 acres of publicly owned land are protected by 2013.

- Citizens express high satisfaction with the quantity and quality of town-owned conservation areas. Many visit them regularly but do not feel that trails and facilities are overused or congested.

- Neighboring landowners express satisfaction with the respectful way that people stay on public lands or designated trails passing through private property. Most if not all are happy that their land is located adjacent to public property or trails because of the increased amenity and value accrued to their property.

### A Conservation Account Would Provide A Start

**Lack of flexibility to negotiate with landowners is a daunting obstacle . . .** facing public and non-profit conservation organizations. Because many communities do not have land acquisition accounts, they lack the capacity to move rapidly to secure options from landowners who are impatient to sell their land. Opportunity – being able to move on important properties as they appear on the market – is key to success in shaping the future land use pattern of a community and ensuring there is enough open space for this and future generations.

Maine communities are taking steps to create such flexibility and commitment to open space. Falmouth voters authorized their Town Council to bond up to \$1 million for land conservation and Freeport bonded \$500,000. With its funds, Freeport has already leveraged \$200,000 from the Land for Maine's Future fund, and several thousands more from the Davis Foundation, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other entities for several projects to implement its open space plan.

Manchester's plan calls for the establishment of a Conservation Account to be capitalized by the proceeds from timber harvesting on town land, and a bond issue, if townspeople are willing.

## **Goal 2: Permanently conserve other high value lands**

### **Current Status**

#### **Extent of Resources**

The town and several agencies have identified on the following maps Manchester's highest value resources, including:

#### **Beginning With Habitat Program**

- High value plant and animal habitats
- Water resources and riparian habitats
- Wetlands characterization
- Valuable habitat for U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (U.S.F.W.S) priority trust species
- Undeveloped habitat blocks

#### **Town of Manchester**

- Scenic views
- Working farms
- Comprehensive Plan
  - Steep slopes
  - Significant Sand and Gravel Aquifers
  - Highly erodible soils

All of these maps may be viewed at the town office and some, namely significant sand and gravel aquifers, steep slopes, and erodible soils, are included in the town's 1991 Comprehensive Plan.

#### **Beginning With Habitat Program Maps**

These were compiled by several agencies to consolidate information about biological resources into one set of maps.

The *High Value Plant and Animal Habitat Map* shows information for species or types of habitat that have some level of legal status in state or federal law. It includes field-verified natural resources of state significance:

- Maine Natural Area Program rare or exemplary natural communities, rare plant locations;
- Essential Wildlife Habitats protected under Maine's Endangered Species Act;
- Significant Wildlife Habitats mapped under Maine's Natural Resources Protection Act;

- Other rare wildlife data; and
- High Value Habitat for U.S.F.W.S. Priority Trust Species (federally endangered or threatened species, migratory birds and fish that are in decline nationally or listed by two or more states in the Gulf of Maine watershed).

The *Water Resources and Riparian Habitats Map* shows wetlands greater than ten acres mapped by the U.S.F.W.S., and the shoreland areas of ponds, lakes, streams, and wetlands. According to the Beginning With Habitat Program, if towns do a good job of administering and enforcing existing shoreland zoning regulations, up to 80% of Maine's terrestrial vertebrate animals that use riparian areas for a part of their life cycle will benefit. Healthy riparian areas are also essential for protecting water quality.

The *Wetlands Characterization Map* shows the functional value of wetlands in protecting freshwater fish habitat, controlling floods, providing wildlife habitat, retaining soils, and providing cultural values such as scenic views.

The *Valuable Habitat for Priority Trust Species* shows the range of values of such habitat in Manchester. This includes forested, grassland, and wetland areas over five acres in size.

The *Undeveloped Habitat Block Map* shows the relative size of the remaining undeveloped blocks of land in town. If Manchester wants to maintain habitat that will support moose, fisher, wood thrush, and other animals that need large home ranges or are sensitive to human disturbance, then we need to conserve larger blocks of forest or grassland, or wetland habitat (see Figure 11).

Large blocks of forest and grassland are important to ensure biological diversity and a healthy, functional, natural environment. They sustain hunting, recreation, and enjoyment of nature; are essential for protecting lake water quality and water supplies; and lessen air and noise pollution.

Figure 11: Minimum Habitat Block Size Requirements for Maine Wildlife

<u>1-19 Acres</u>	<u>20-99 Acres</u>	<u>100-499 Acres</u>	<u>500-2500 Acres</u>	<u>&gt; 2500 Acres</u>
Raccoon Most small rodents Cottontail Squirrel Muskrat Red fox Many songbirds Skunk Most reptiles Most amphibians	Hare Porcupine Beaver Weasel Woodchuck Garter snake	Mink Deer Sharpshinned hawk Cooper's hawk Harrier Broad-winged hawk Kestrel Horned owl Barred owl Osprey Turkey vulture Wood frog	Moose Bald eagle Goshawk Red-tail hawk Raven	Coyote Bobcat Black bear Fisher

**Town of Manchester**

Undeveloped blocks are also important from a visual resource and traditional farming perspective. Figure 12, *Working Farms and Scenic Views*, shows the three remaining working farms in Manchester, as well as the scenic views that were identified in the town's 1992 *Visual Resource Inventory and Evaluation*. If Manchester wants to retain important vestiges of its traditional rural character, working with landowners to conserve these values is essential.

The town's Comprehensive Plan contains additional information important to open space planning. The *Highly Erodible Soils and Steep Slopes Maps* show places where sedimentation and erosion, and the resulting adverse effects on water quality, can occur from development and other land use activities. The Plan also shows *Significant Sand and Gravel Aquifers* mapped by the Maine Geological Survey.

**Assemblages of High Values**

Figure 13 shows a rough approximation of places with multiple high natural and scenic resource values that have not been conserved. This list is not exhaustive, but represents those deemed to be of highest priority, especially the first four listed, because of their significance and high risk of development. The *Water Resources and Riparian Areas Map* shows additional areas that merit strong protection because of their significance to water quality. This can be done

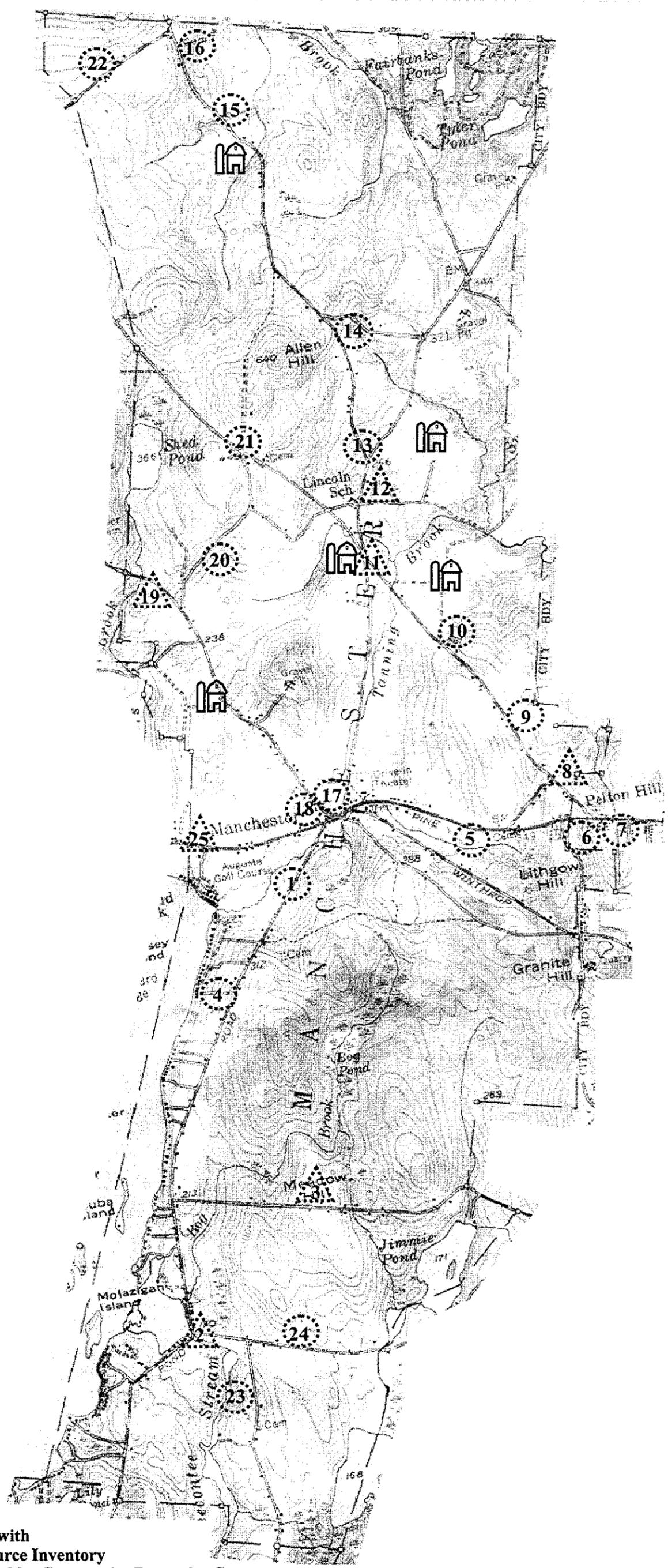
either through effective administration and enforcement of local and state shoreland and stormwater regulations or land conservation.

High value natural resources are also identified and protected through the town's open space subdivision provisions. For most subdivisions with 5 or more lots on 10 acres or more 30% (in Village Zone) to 60% (in Rural Residential Zone) of the overall parcel must be protected as open space. Constraints to development including steep slopes, wetlands, wet soils, and some aquifers must be identified and preserved. Significant features such as open fields, scenic views into or out of the property, natural drainageways, and moderate to high value wildlife habitat must also be noted and conserved.

- The Prescott and Puddledock Road area is an important area that looks much like it did long ago because of the remaining working farms and open fields. Aside from its scenic value, it contains high value grassland habitat and is in the Bond Brook watershed, one of the only remaining salmon spawning tributaries on the Kennebec River.
- The Old Trolley Line Area is the gateway to the community and contains the route of the trolley line that once connected Augusta with outlying

**Figure 12:**  
**Scenic Views**  
**& Working**  
**Farms**

- ▲ Most Scenic
- Other Scenic
- 🏠 Working Farms



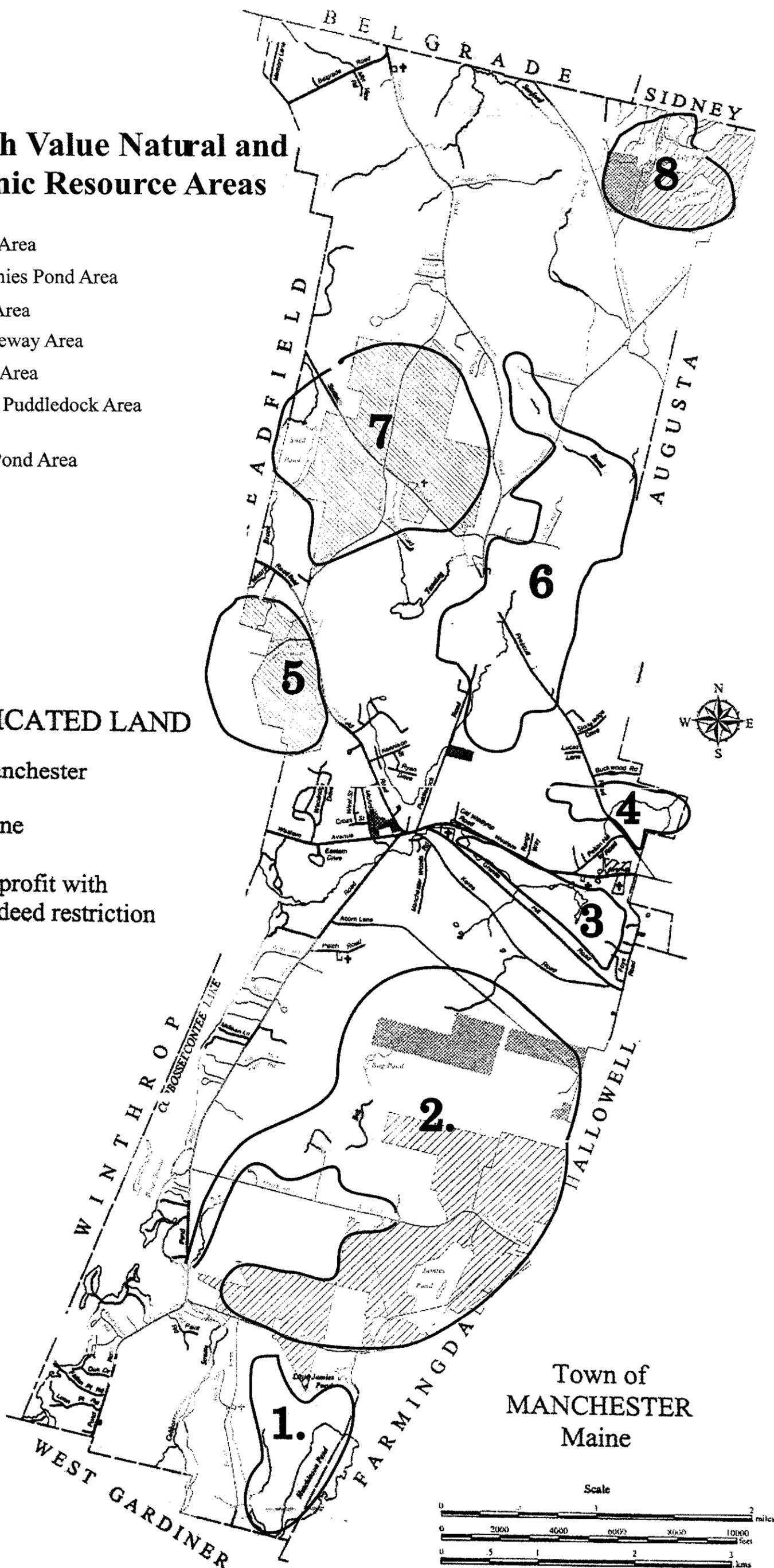
Scenic View Numbers correspond with  
 "Town of Manchester Visual Resource Inventory  
 and Evaluation" 10/9/1992 prepared by Community Dynamics Corp.

**Figure 13: High Value Natural and Scenic Resource Areas**

1. Hutchinson Pond Area
2. Bog Pond and Jamies Pond Area
3. Old Trolley Line Area
4. Prescott Road Gateway Area
5. Lakeside Orchard Area
6. Prescott Road and Puddledock Area
7. Shed Pond Area
8. Summer Haven Pond Area

**PUBLIC / DEDICATED LAND**

-  Town of Manchester
-  State of Maine
-  Private/non-profit with easement/deed restriction



communities. It also contains valuable wetlands, waterfowl habitat, steep and erodible soils, a view of Mt Washington, Westin Brook, and sensitive stream shorelands.

- The Bog Brook and Jamies Pond area contains valuable wetlands, riparian habitat, waterfowl habitat, deer wintering areas, and steep and erodible soils.
- The Prescott Road Gateway area offers scenic views of fields through mature sugar maples that line the road. It encompasses the historic old farm, highly erodible soils, steep slopes, and a portion of the headwaters of the Bond Brook watershed.
- The Summerhaven Ponds area is noteworthy as a rare or exemplary natural community, waterfowl and wading bird habitat, and significant sand and gravel aquifer. The geological features carved out by the glaciers, e.g. kettlehole ponds and eskers, make this area ideal for school field trips and nature study. A portion of this area is publicly owned, including town-owned Fairbanks Pond property and state-owned Tyler Pond Wildlife Management Area.
- The Shed Pond area contains high value forest and wetland. The upland area of the Pond is part of the already conserved Allen-Whitney Forest, owned by the New England Forestry Foundation.
- The Hutchinson Pond and Cobbosseecontec Stream area also contains high value riparian, wetland, and forest areas. These water bodies sit downstream in a chain, from the Jamies Pond Wildlife Management Area.
- The Lakeside Orchards area is already conserved on the Manchester side. The Land For Maine's Future Board purchased the development rights to the

farm to keep it in production and because of its valuable open and forested habitat. Downhill on the Winthrop side of the line, deer wintering, wetland, rare animal, and wading bird habitat values are also found.

## Vision

Citizens want Manchester to be a place where, generations from now, . . .

- Abundant and healthy forests sustain clean, clear lakes and air; control stormwater; support natural diversity; and provide a peaceful and enjoyable setting for recreation;
- Over half of the land in the town remains undeveloped, with large forested areas physically remaining connected with one another and with smaller woods and fields in every part of town so that the pattern of open space reinforces traditional settlement patterns and community appearance;
- Wildlife and plant communities thrive and coexist with people and development because they have sufficient space and environmental qualities to meet their needs;
- Shorelands, wetlands, and islands retain their natural character, scenic quality, and ecological functions;
- Working farms and forests thrive in rural parts of the town;
- Views of working farms, pastures, and unbroken stretches of forested roadside, and other features that are important to Manchester's heritage still give the community a rural feel;
- People and organizations who own land with high natural resource and conservation values conserve it and, where appropriate, allow informal public use;

- Key natural areas, connected by greenways and wildlife travel corridors, serve as focal points for the open space system;
- Trails, sited through greenways wherever possible, connect key natural areas with one another and with village neighborhoods. They provide opportunities for a variety of pursuits and form an integrated, 4-season system, to the extent that landowners are willing and wherever such uses are compatible with one another and with natural resource values; and
- The overall property tax burden is restrained by protected open space.<sup>20</sup>

## **Policies**

### Existing (from 1991 Comprehensive Plan)

1. Encourage the preservation of private and public open space to enhance public access to important natural resources and enhance open space preservation and the aesthetic quality of the community (page 8 of the comp plan).
2. Maximize productivity and multi-use of agricultural and forest resources while minimizing degradation of wildlife habitats and water quality (pages 11 and 30).
3. Work with the surrounding towns to protect the quantity and quality of groundwater (page 30).
4. Encourage the conservation of prime farmlands (page 30).
5. Preserve scenic vistas through the Site Plan Review process and other appropriate measures (page 30).
6. Encourage increased public access for the recreational use of town lakes, ponds, and streams including: swimming, boating, and fishing (page 32).

### Additional Policies

7. Give priority to working with willing landowners to:
  - a. conserve key areas with multiple and high open space values;
  - b. expand and connect key natural areas;

- c. protect key areas most at risk from development; and
  - d. provide opportunities for trails.
8. Protect streams, ponds, shorelands, wetlands and their buffers, forests, working farms, and wildlife habitats on a holistic basis that sustains the integrity and function of natural systems and populations.
9. Actively promote and support the creation of a system of interconnected open spaces that maintains plant and animal populations, and community appearance and character, and is well distributed throughout the town.
10. Take advantage of state and federal financial incentives, e.g. grants, provided to encourage open space conservation and trails.
11. Use the Conservation Account (see page 29) to conserve and maintain conservation land.
12. Establish a public involvement process and financing mechanism that allows the town to move quickly when conservation opportunities arise.
13. Make it as financially viable as possible for farmers to continue working their land.
14. Integrate the conservation of key natural areas into development plans under open space provisions in the subdivision ordinance when possible.
15. Encourage landowners who request reduced taxation on encumbered lands to participate in the state's Tree Growth, Farmland, or Open Space Taxation Programs.

## **Action Recommendations**

1. The Conservation Committee/Commission, in collaboration with the open space subcommittee of the Long Range Planning Committee, will work with willing landowners, the Kennebec Land Trust, and other organizations to conserve priority lands through easements, donations, purchase, and creative development.  
Schedule: ongoing
2. The Select Board will request Town Meeting to consider an article authorizing a bond issue to capitalize the Conservation Account (see page 29) as an essential component in implementing this plan.

Except for the purchase of options on property, this money will only be spent on specific conservation projects (e.g. easements, development rights, fee purchase) approved at Town Meeting; and to capitalize a revolving loan fund that farmers who establish conservation easements on their land may use to pay for farm-related projects. It should be used to the extent possible to leverage state and federal grants and private donations.

Schedule: Spring 2005

3. The Conservation Committee/Commission will work with the Planning Board to develop recommendations to conserve valuable natural resources in development projects.

Schedule: July 2004 through June 2005

### Measures of Success

- Retain all working farms.
- Connect all key natural areas by greenways by 2013;
- Provide every major village neighborhood with at least one connector to the greenway system by 2013.
- Permanently protect at least 1800 acres of private land in key natural areas to create contiguous blocks of at least 500 acres where possible and connecting trails by 2013.

### Give Taxpayers A Break!

**Can communities give landowners property tax breaks in exchange for conserving open space?**

**The answer is yes, but. . .**

only if a property has a permanent, enforceable development encumbrance which results in a measurable loss in market value, or if the property qualifies under one of the state's three property taxation programs, of which only the last was designed specifically to conserve open space:

\* Tree Growth   \* Farmland   \* Open Space

This is because the state holds all authority to tax in Maine. The state specifically delegates responsibility for administering property tax laws to municipal assessors (not communities in general) who statutorily answer to the state tax assessor and have no discretion to offer local exemptions.

Local assessors encourage land conservation also by assessing "excess acreage" in properties over a certain size at a lesser amount than the first acre, or whatever size "trip points" he or she establishes.

### **Goal 3: Develop a town swimming area and increase access to Cobbosseecontee Lake**

#### **Current Status**

Prior to a court case in the early 1980s, townspeople were able to use the Augusta Country Club beach on Cobbosseecontee Lake in East Winthrop. In exchange for beach privileges, the town contributed to the upkeep of the access road, most of which is located in Manchester. When the club asked for an increase in funds for the road, Manchester selectpeople elected to discontinue town support.

Soon thereafter, the club decided to close the beach to town residents, except for the summer recreation program, and the town sued in the hope that it could prove the public's right to use the beach following the legal principles of adverse possession or prescriptive use. The Maine Supreme Court ruled, however, in favor of the country club, which demonstrated that the beach and road were privately-owned and the town had no legal right in either.<sup>21</sup>

In the late 1980s, the Select Board appointed a Beach Committee and charged it with identifying a location for a town beach. The citizen panel looked at state-owned Tyler Pond in the Summerhaven area, a property that the Maine Department of Conservation had purchased, but never developed, for a regional park. The committee ruled this property out because of policing and leech infestation problems.

In addition, the Committee discussed the possibility of reactivating public use of the Country Club beach with Augusta Golf Company representatives, the legal holders of the real estate. The club, however, was not interested.

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<sup>21</sup> Personal communication: Attorney Lee Bragg, July 2003.

The Committee then visited several waterfront properties for sale, but only one came close to meeting its selection criteria. That property was located in West Gardiner, and aside from its out-of-town location, it was not ideal because the cove was shallow and bordered by wetland. The committee held a day for the public to view the property, but with a faltering economy and limited interest, the committee abandoned the pursuit of this site.

Today, the town still lays no claim to a public swimming area, or local access to Cobbosee Lake, for that matter. A few residents who joined the Readfield Beach many years ago still enjoy the privilege of belonging. The Country Club allows the summer recreation program to use the beach two mornings a week and provide swimming lessons for kindergarteners through 5th graders. Unfortunately, this program does not serve middle schoolers, who need summer activities because they are too young to drive or have summer jobs. The year-to-year nature of the contract with the club is not ideal either.

People do informally swim off the old bridge at the outlet into Cobbosseecontee Stream, at Fairbanks and Tyler Ponds, and at the quarries off Granite Hill Road. None of these options is safe or well suited to young children. Some residents belong to the Country Club or the Cobbossee Sailing Club on Molizegan Island where they store sailboats and canoes and swim. Space and parking at the Sailing Club are limited.

The Kennebec Land Trust and Kennebec Valley YMCA each own several properties on the islands off Molizegan Island (see Figure 14). One can camp on some of the land trust property but only picnic at YMCA sites. Motorized boaters can reach the islands from the East Winthrop and Monmouth boat launching facilities, but these facilities are rather distant from the islands for canoeists and kayakers. One can launch a hand carried boat at the old bridge on Cobbosseecontee Stream but there is no designated overnight parking. Consequently, few Manchester residents make much use of the islands.

**Figure 14:**

**Cobbossee Islands in Non-Profit Ownership**

**Kennebec Land Trust**

(Winthrop Property Map # 6)

Lot # 76 Sheep Island

Lot # 86 Hodgdon Island

(Winthrop Property Map # 3)

Lot # 11-8 Horseshoe Island

Lot # 15 Horseshoe Island

Lot # 16 Horseshoe Island

**Kennebec Valley YMCA**

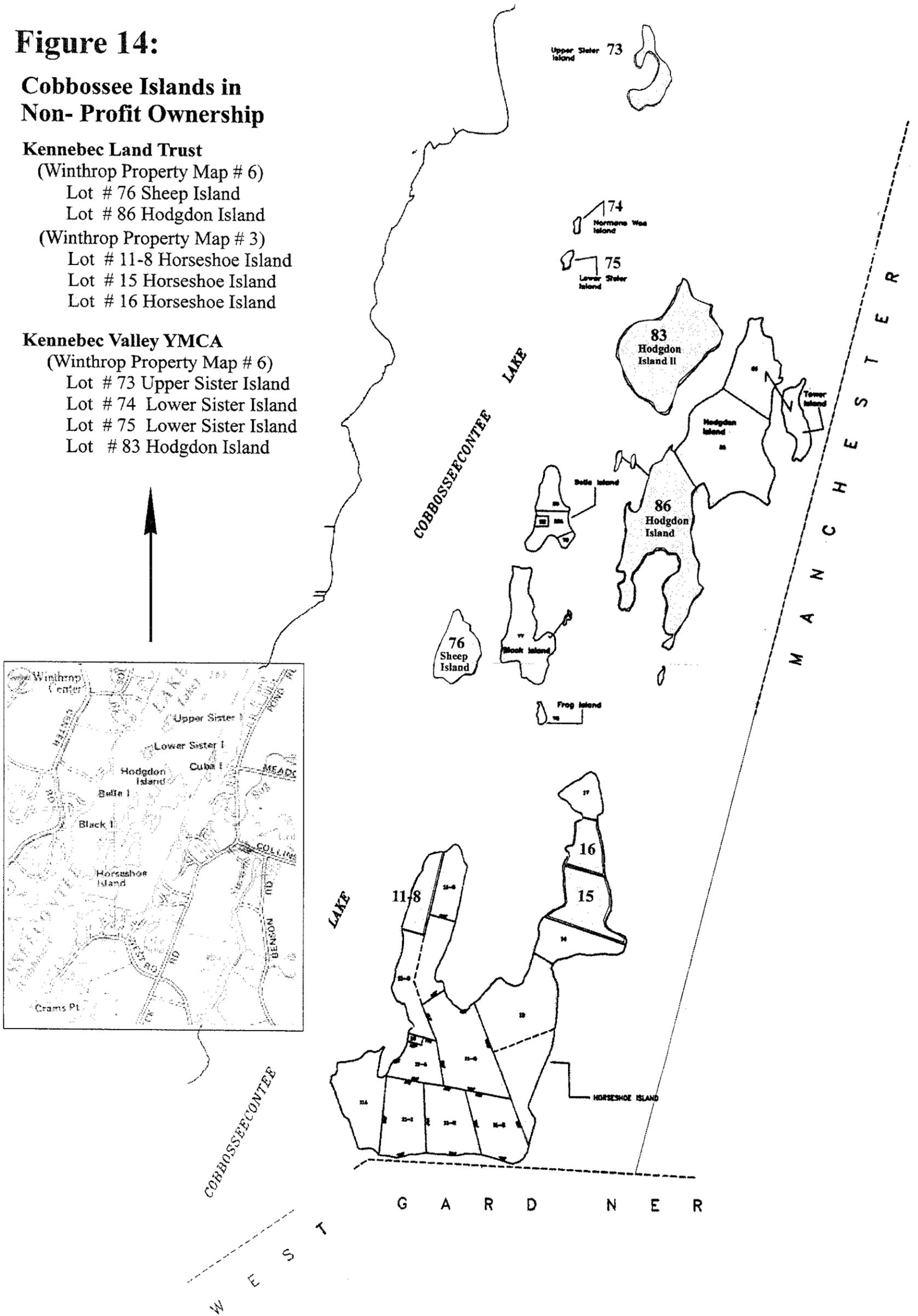
(Winthrop Property Map # 6)

Lot # 73 Upper Sister Island

Lot # 74 Lower Sister Island

Lot # 75 Lower Sister Island

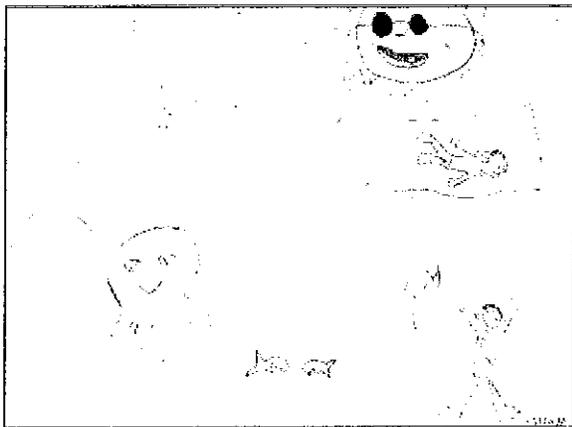
Lot # 83 Hodgdon Island



## Vision

Citizens want Manchester to be a place where, generations from now, . . .

- Residents, young and old, enjoy going to one or more town swimming areas to swim or learn to swim, picnic, launch a canoe, or otherwise enjoy the water and shore. Beach facilities are clean and free from congestion and vandalism, and designed in such a way as to conserve or restore natural shoreland qualities. A simple but attractive structure provides shelter from inclement weather and space for community gatherings.



- Landowners whose property abuts public swimming and access facilities don't mind sharing the shore because the town is a good neighbor, providing ample buffering to stifle noise and screen activity, and reliable policing to deter vandalism and inappropriate use after hours.
- Townspeople enjoy camping and picnicking on the island properties owned by the Kennebec Land Trust in Cobbosseecontee Lake, which they access from a conveniently located public carry-in boat launch in Manchester or existing motorized boat launches in East Winthrop and Monmouth.
- Kids of all ages enjoy the water activities sponsored by the town's supervised summer recreation program or possibly in conjunction with neighboring towns.

## Policies

### Existing (from 1991 Comprehensive Plan)

1. Encourage increased public access for the recreational use of town lakes, ponds, and streams including: swimming, boating, and fishing (page 32 of the comp plan).

### Additional Policies

2. Develop several small swimming areas on Cobbosseecontee Lake if no large site (or group of parcels that can be cobbled together) is available to reduce impacts on neighboring properties and disperse use.

## Action Recommendations

1. The Long Range Planning Committee will organize a Beach Subcommittee to explore options for developing a facility on the lake or a quarry, with another community, or as an outdoor swimming pool, perhaps associated with the YMCA.

Schedule: as soon as possible

2. The Conservation Committee/Commission will work with the Kennebec Land Trust (KLT) and other organizations to acquire land or use existing land to develop a carry-in boat launch facility; or will encourage residents to belong to the Cobbossee Yacht Club on Molizegan Island for access to KLT land on the islands (members must have sailboats or other hand-carry boats).

Schedule: 2006-07

## Measures of Success

- Residents have access to a public swimming area by July 2006.
- No beach siting committee is needed ever again!
- Townspeople picnic and camp on the islands.

## **Goal 4: Create trails, sidewalks, and bike paths in the village area and between communities for fitness, safety, and a better environment**

### **Current Status**

Kids, households, and local organizations agree that sidewalks, bikeways, and pathways connecting neighborhoods with the town center are very important.

Currently, there are no such designated alternatives to cars and school buses. People sometimes use informal pathways across private land to get from one neighborhood to another, but these cannot be counted upon indefinitely as landowners sometimes shut them off. Many people walk for fitness on village neighborhood streets. While this is a great use of local streets, people who walk dogs cannot be counted upon to clean up after them.

Some kids walk or bike to the elementary school instead of taking the bus. Their parents must first sign liability waivers to hold the school harmless against problems that could occur on their way from school.

Manchester residents are not the only ones who believe the time has come to be more assertive in expecting communities and the Maine Department of Transportation to provide places for people to walk and bike. Healthy Futures, the western cluster of Southern Kennebec Healthy Communities, a program funded by state tobacco settlement money, is actively encouraging citizens from this region to get involved in identifying and promoting existing pathways for fitness, and galvanizing their communities to create new ones.<sup>22</sup>

A few Manchester residents are already involved in the program and their ideas have been incorporated in the following recommendations.

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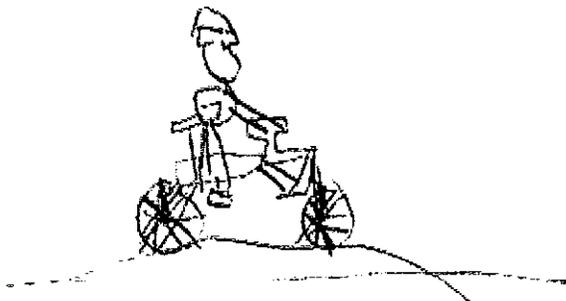
<sup>22</sup> The other communities in the cluster include Readfield, Wayne, Winthrop, and Monmouth.

In addition, federal funds exist for such purpose for which Manchester and other communities may apply.

### **Vision**

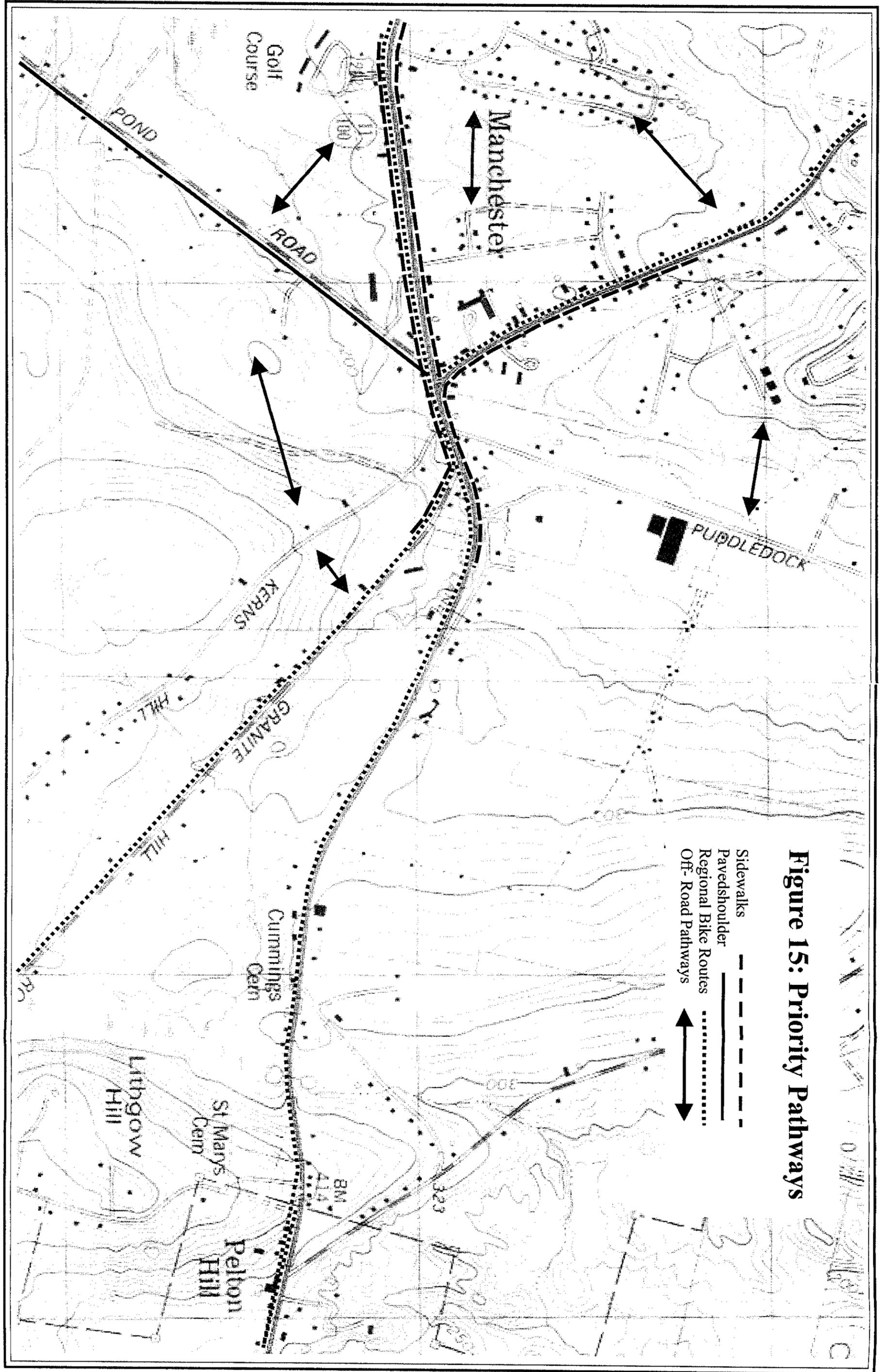
Citizens want Manchester to be a place where, generations from now . . .

- Pathways, creatively sited some distance from the road, facilitate pedestrian and bicycle movement along Routes 202 and Route 17 in the densest part of the town center; a paved shoulder flanks the Pond Road; designated bikeways connect Manchester with other communities along major roads or routes such as the old trolley line; hardened pathways provide off-road connections among village neighborhoods and the town center; and clearly marked crosswalks (as well as attractive “half-way” islands on Route 202) in strategic locations on major roads connect off-road pathways. All are well maintained. See Figure 15.
- Village pathways connect with longer distance off-road pathways for cross-country skiing, running, biking, and hiking, and where appropriate, snowmobiling.
- Residents of Manchester of all ages routinely choose to walk or ride their bikes for fitness or enjoyment; to go to school, public offices and shops in the town center; or visit friends in other village neighborhoods. In winter, they walk indoors at the school, YMCA, or other locations.



**Figure 15: Priority Pathways**

- Sidewalks ———
- Pavedshoulder ———
- Regional Bike Routes ———
- Off-Road Pathways ———



- People know the distances of loops around neighborhood streets and connections among neighborhoods, and walk or run them often for fitness and to socialize with friends. They know exactly where to go because maps are readily available for orientation. They clean up after their dogs.
- Kids feel a sense of freedom in their mobility, but are watched over by designated volunteer guards when they go to, and from, school along off-road pathways. Kids in the village make the choice and are proud to be “walkers” or “bikers.” The school provides bike racks.
- People feel safe using on- and off-road pathways. They smile at newcomers and friends, and take pride and responsibility in the upkeep of these valuable resources. They are healthier as a population than they have ever been. They feel good about reducing “vehicle miles traveled” and air contaminants that contribute to asthma and other unhealthy conditions. Traffic is calm and motorists obey traffic signs and speed limits. People want to stay or locate in Manchester’s village neighborhoods, rather than our rural areas, because of this increased quality of life – thus sprawl is less a problem.

## **Policies**

### Existing (from 1991 Comprehensive Plan)

1. Work with surrounding communities and DOT on an on-going basis to reduce the negative impacts of thru-traffic from commuters and/or other regional development activities (page 26 of comp plan).
2. Develop local ordinances and incentive programs to mitigate traffic flow problems on Route 202 (page 26).

### Additional Policies

3. Foster and maintain a strong relationship and lines of communication with MDOT and the Region 4 Regional Transportation Advisory Committee to incorporate traffic calming measures and plans for sidewalks

and bike lanes into state road reconstruction projects.

4. Work with neighboring communities, and organizations such as the YMCA, “Healthy Futures,” and “Getting Healthy” to provide sidewalks, bike lanes and bike paths, appropriate signage, and attractive linkages between and among communities.
5. Encourage citizens to stay fit and healthy and choose mobility modes that reduce environmental damage, congestion, and transportation costs; and acquaint them with opportunities to do so at every opportunity.

## **Action Recommendations**

1. Manchester representatives of Getting Healthy and Healthy Futures (parts of Southern Kennebec Healthy Communities) will produce and make available for distribution at the town office and other locations a map showing existing village walking routes (Ballard Acres, Kennison Heights, and Gardencrest) and their mileages.

Schedule: Summer 2003

2. The Biking and Walking Subcommittee of the Long Range Planning Committee, with assistance from the town manager and MDOT, will estimate the local cost for planned sidewalks, bike lanes/bike paths, and signage and make recommendations for how such facilities should be phased, funded, and maintained.

Schedule: January to July 2004

3. The Biking and Walking Subcommittee will work with local Healthy Futures committees in neighboring communities, MDOT, the Biking Coalition of Maine, and other organizations to develop a regional bike lane and bike path plan and implementation program.

Schedule: July 2004 to June 2005

4. The Select Board and town manager will request the county sheriff and state police to periodically enforce speed limits within village neighborhoods to set a tone of intolerance for speeding. They will also monitor and replace speed limit, children playing, and other signs as needed.

Schedule: ongoing

5. The Biking and Walking Subcommittee, in collaboration with the Conservation Commission/Committee and the Kennebec Land Trust or town lawyer as appropriate, will work with willing landowners to establish rights of way and off-road pathways connecting neighborhoods and the town center.

Schedule: 2005

6. Manchester Elementary School will provide bike racks and encourage parent volunteers to monitor off-road pathways when children are going to and from school.

Schedule: as soon as pathways are complete

### Measures of Success

- Reduce the accident rate on Routes 202 and 17 involving motorized vehicles and pedestrians or cyclists.
- At least 25% by 2005 and 50% by 2007 of elementary children living near the town center will walk or bike to school.
- People report feeling healthier, fitter, and safer from, and taking community pride in, walking, biking, and using other non-motorized ways of getting around town.

### Pathways vary in cost. . .

Depending upon the surface treatment, terrain, width, and length. The following rough estimates of per linear foot costs for different kinds of pathways give a sense of this variation, if only in a general sense:<sup>23</sup>

Paved sidewalks	\$5
Paved sidewalks w/ granite curb	\$37
Informal trail	\$25-35
Rail trail	\$55

What is missing from this list is the cost to create a green separator between a sidewalk and a road. It is important to consider that not all "sidewalks" have to parallel roads and require costly curbs and surface treatments, in fact the original ones in the United Kingdom did not, according to a member of the Friends of the Kennebec Rail Trail.<sup>24</sup> Such a pathway can take a different route from a road -- through woods or between rows of houses, for instance, -- and wind up in the same place.

<sup>23</sup> Personal communication, Lionel Cayer, Augusta, ME, 9/03.

<sup>24</sup> Personal communication, Tom Reeves, Gardiner, ME, 10/03.

**Goal 5: Make public space in the village and Route 202 corridor more appealing and functional for future generations.**

**Current Status**

Routes 202 and 17

One cannot address public space in the village area without first considering the setting in which it is located. Manchester's image is driven, literally, by traffic on the major state routes that bisect the community. Five lanes run through the center, and expansion is planned on the Augusta end of Route 202 in the next few years, thus offering the opportunity to work with the Maine Department of Transportation to create a safer environment.

The first order of business is traffic calming and safety. Considerable traffic funnels through town at high speed. Until the summer of 2003, there were no visibly marked crosswalks and there are now no islands offering safe haven for pedestrians who cross and must pause between east and west traveling vehicles. If one can't move quickly, one doesn't dare cross.

These public corridors also establish people's impressions of our town. With little attention paid to street trees or landscaping in the public space, five lanes of traffic, and pressure for business expansion, Route 202 is the more problematic of the two routes. Route 17 courses primarily through residential areas with attractive lawns and trees. Some businesses along Route 202 break up the expanse of pavement with attractive landscaping, and have begun to set a more positive image for the community. The town's new "gateway" signs that greet travelers entering Manchester on Route 202 are also an improvement.

Town Center

The town office, fire station, school, and recreation properties also need better planning. There is too little land and too many competing uses, and no ideal green space for outdoor

gatherings and public use in this small area. The town office, fire station, and school are adequate for the next few decades, but if the town grows, larger facilities will be needed. The recreation facilities located behind the school are already overcrowded. The temporary fence separating the two ball fields, which is needed for safety purposes, makes it difficult for school children to play in the same space.

Expansion is constrained by the town having met or exceeded the amount of phosphorus that can be exported off this site into Cobbosseecontee Lake, a resource that needs strong protection. The town bought the Drum property, which has allowed the construction of a stormwater retention area serving the site.

Steps have been taken to improve vehicular and pedestrian circulation on the site. The town built a lighted parking lot and walkway behind the school that will allow volunteers and parents to park and drop off kids. School administrators have redesigned the access drive. They will also complete the walkway into the school and to the playground for handicap access.

Finally, no overall tree planting and landscaping strategy exists that will create a stronger and more attractive image. Some efforts lead in this direction. The school has created some wonderful gardens, and volunteers have provided flowerpots and window boxes at the fire station and post office, and landscaped the triangular island at the Route 17/202 intersection. Plans are also in the works for landscaping the new gateway signs.

Recreation Program

Manchester offers a six-week, half-day summer recreation program for K-5th grade, but does not currently serve older children, a population

"Kids crossing the road with recreation program supervisors to participate in karate this summer have shown us that we don't have to be afraid of Route 202."

Member of the Town Recreation Committee

## Traffic calming can help. . .

Many strategies and design features exist for reducing traffic speeds and making drivers more aware of their surroundings, pedestrians, and bikers. For instance:

**Curb extensions, planters, or centerline islands** that narrow traffic lanes to control traffic and reduce pedestrian crossing distances. Chicanes are curb bulges or planters (usually 3) on alternating sides that force motorists to slow down.

**Speed tables and raised crosswalks** signal drivers to slow down. A speed table is a ramped surface above the roadway, 7-10 centimeters high, 3-6 meters long.

**Special pavement textures** (cobble, bricks, etc, and markings designate special areas).

**Street trees** create a sense of enclosure and improve the pedestrian environment.

**Road diets** reduce the number and width of traffic lanes.

Source: [www.pedbikemages.org](http://www.pedbikemages.org)

greatly in need of fun and healthy activities. The program also sponsors no activities for adults, especially seniors, another group that could benefit from more recreational opportunities.

## Vision

Citizens want Manchester to be a place where, generations from now, . . .

- The town takes pride in its attractive, functional, and well maintained facilities for conducting public business, holding outdoor gatherings, and pursuing recreation activities in the village area. Public space in the village and along Routes 202 and 17 creates a strong and positive image;

- Traffic is calm in the center of town. Pedestrians, young and old alike, cross Routes 202 and 17, using well-marked crosswalks and center islands (Route 202 only).
- Young and old routinely socialize at a community park and building located somewhere in the village area with a lot of green space where outdoor and indoor events are held. Kids, especially adolescents, participate in fun and healthy activities that deter crime and inappropriate behaviors, and, if site space allows, take advantage of the center's skateboard park. Youth and adult leagues enjoy playing ball on fields associated with this facility and have sufficient practice and regulation-sized fields;



- Big trees and attractive landscaping grace and green up Routes 202 and 17 and the town center; and
- Kids and families enjoy using the multi-purpose area behind the school for kite flying, picnicking, and other spontaneous and organized activities. They may also one day enjoy a skating rink or other activity when the former Drum residence is removed.

## Policies

### Existing (from 1991 Comprehensive Plan)

1. Work with surrounding communities and MDOT on an on-going basis to reduce the negative impacts of thru-traffic from commuters and/or other regional

- development activities (page 26 of comp plan).
2. Develop local ordinances and incentive programs to mitigate traffic flow problems on Route 202 (page 26).

Additional Policies

3. Foster and maintain a strong relationship and lines of communication with MDOT and the Region 4 Regional Transportation Advisory Committee to incorporate traffic calming, access management, and pedestrian-friendly measures into state road reconstruction projects.
4. Acquire and retain enough land in the village area to meet long term needs for expanding or replacing educational, fire, and other town facilities.
5. Continue to rent out the former "Drum" property in the short term but remove the building, landscape the site attractively, and explore its best public use in the long term.
6. Install landscaping materials that need little or no maintenance in most areas and maintain trees and flowering plants well.
7. Encourage businesses and organizations to take responsibility for helping to create and maintain landscaped areas, street trees, and road ditches and verges.

**Action Recommendations**

1. The Select Board will request MDOT to appoint a member of the Long Range Planning Committee to the Region 4 Regional Transportation Advisory Committee.

Schedule: as soon as possible

2. The Select Board will appoint a Community Center Committee to identify a location and develop a preliminary plan and fund raising strategy for a community center, including a building and outdoor activity/gathering/green space) in consultation with the public, Recreation Committee, and other organizations. This initiative should consider the best approach for library services, through a reading room, lending library, or reciprocal agreements with other communities.

Schedule: July 2005 to June 2006

3. The Long Range Planning Committee, in consultation with the Planning Board, Road Committee, MDOT, and Cobbossee Watershed District, will develop a plan to guide future development along Route 202 and in the village area, taking into consideration economic needs, beautification and other amenities, non-motorized transportation needs, lake protection, and smart growth.

Schedule: July 2004 to June 2005

4. The Select Board will establish and appoint a tree board or warden with responsibility for developing a plan and seeking grant funds, as available, for the planting, retention, and maintenance of trees in the town center and along Routes 202 and 17, giving priority to tree planting shown in Figure 16.

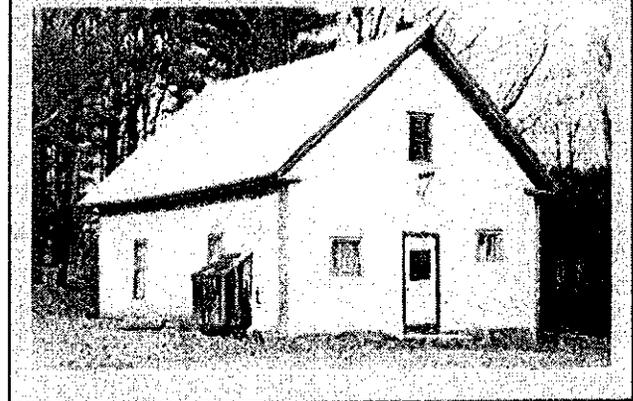
Schedule: as soon as possible

**Can you imagine?**

One of Manchester's old school houses relocated to the former "Drum" property site?

The photograph below shows Lincoln School, one of seven school houses in Manchester named after famous people, and serving for a time as the town's high school.

A building such as this could be relocated to the town center to serve as a home for the Manchester Historical Society and artifacts that record town history. School children could visit, sit on desks, and hear the same bell that called their great, great grandparent's generation to school.



5. The Beautification Subcommittee of the Long Range Planning Committee will work with the school, Recreation Committee, town manager, Tree Board, volunteers and organizations to implement the landscaping/tree planting plan shown in Figure 16, and to share costs for a full-time maintenance person and responsibility for regular inspections for public trees and landscaping at the school/town office campus.

Schedule: ongoing

6. The Conservation Committee/Commission, in consultation with neighboring communities, will explore options for a local or shared recycling center and report its recommendations to Town Meeting.

Schedule: by Spring 2005

7. The Long Range Planning Committee, in consultation with the public, School Board, Recreation Committee, and other town officials, will develop a conceptual plan for long term use and expansion of the school/town office campus, developing agreements with willing abutters as appropriate.

Schedule: July 2006 to June 2007

8. The Recreation Committee will explore possibilities for collaboration with the YMCA in regard to youth (e.g. outdoor basketball courts) and adult programs.

Schedule: January to July 2004

9. The Recreation Committee will develop recommendations for expanding the recreation program to meet the needs of all age groups; and will explore the possibility of creating a skateboard park and/or outdoor ice skating rink.

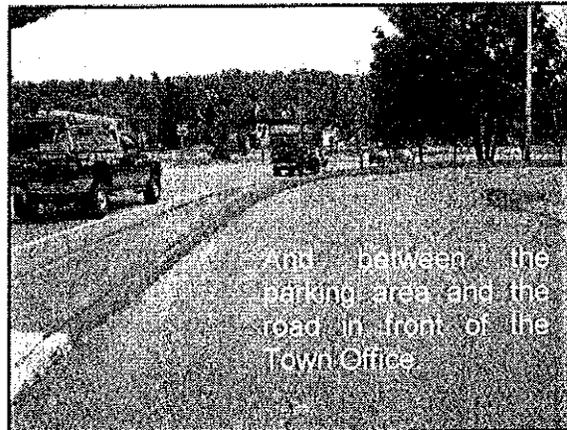
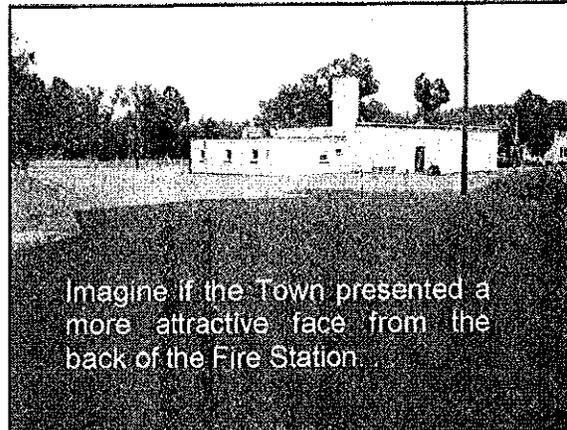
Schedule: beginning in 2005

10. The Long Range Planning Committee will undertake at least one event annually to bring the community together.

Schedule: ongoing

## Measures of Success

- At least 50% of Manchester's solid waste is recycled by 2008.
- The town regularly holds outdoor events such as an annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony or heritage days.
- People express increased community spirit and pride!



## **SIX: IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

### ***How does it all fit together?***

Figure 17 summarizes all of the actions recommended in this plan. From this figure, one can see which town board, committee, or local official is responsible for implementing each task, and in what time frame.

### ***Who is responsible for accomplishing plan actions?***

The Long Range Planning Committee and four subcommittees will accomplish much of the work, in conjunction with other town groups.

The plan directs the Conservation Committee to play a major role as well, and calls for the town to formalize the group by creating a Conservation Commission. This will establish continuity in the commission's membership because the appointments will be for staggered, three-year terms rather than one-year as is now the case. This change will also allow the town to clarify the responsibilities of the group through the adoption of an ordinance governing its role and activities.

It also directs the Select Board to appoint another permanent entity, a Tree Board; and two committees with short-term mandates. These latter include a committee to develop a plan for the Fairbanks Pond property and another to develop a plan and funding strategy to establish a community center.

The plan also invites other organizations such as the Kennebec Land Trust and Kennebec Valley YMCA to join the town in accomplishing certain tasks, to the extent that they are willing and able.

### ***How can we make sure that those responsible actually accomplish their missions?***

The Long Range Planning Committee will be responsible for monitoring and coordinating

implementation of the plan. The group will report at least quarterly on progress to the Select Board; and will convene a meeting for all the boards and organizations that have a role in implementing the plan to discuss progress at least once a year. The chair will also report progress in the town's annual report and newsletters.

### ***When will plan updates occur?***

The Committee will propose updates to the plan as needed, but no less frequently than once every five years.

### ***What are the top priorities?***

Thirty five citizens and representatives of organizations attended a public meeting on February 12, 2004, where they expressed strong support for the plan and requested no major changes. Highlights of the discussion may be found in Appendix 3.

Attendees were each given asked to place 6 sticky dots next to their top six priorities for implementing the plan (all six could be placed on the same action, if desired). The group's top priorities, in rank order, are as follows:

1. Draft conservation commission ordinance
2. Landscape school/town office complex
3. Explore options for swimming ♦  
Distribute walking route map
4. Work with willing landowners to conserve high value lands
5. Collaborate with YMCA
6. Recommend recycling strategy
7. Develop regional bike land plan ♦ Develop Route 202 Corridor Plan ♦ Expand recreation program and facilities

Figure 17: Implementation Program	Long Range Planning					Other Boards & Officials								New Committees			Non-Town Partners					Fiscal Year Schedule										
	Full Committee	Open Space Sub.	Beautification Sub.	Walking & Biking	Beach Sub.	Select Board	Conservation C.	Planning B.	Recreation C.	Road C.	Town Manager	Dam Keeper	Elementary School	Manch. Getting Healthy	Tree Board	Fairbanks Pond	Community Center	Hallowell CC	KLT	CWD	KVYMCA	MDIFW	MDOT	Police/Sheriff	Ongoing or Periodic	2004	2004-05	2005-06	2-006-07	2007-08		
<b>Goal 1: Conserve town land</b>																																
1. Draft Conservation Commission ordinance		X				X																				X						
2. Establish Conservation Account	X					X																				X						
3. Review town land prior to sale	X					X																			X							
4. Dedicate high value town land						X	X																		X							
5. Conduct Green-up Days						X																			X							
6. Continue forest management										X															X							
7. Develop plan for Fairbanks Pond land															X												X					
8. Create Bog Pond area linkage trails						X											X	X			X							X				
9. Distribute Jamies Pond brochure						X											X											X				
10. Meet periodically with Hallowell CC						X											X								X							
11. Maintain Jamies Pond trails						X											X								X							
12. Develop Meadowhill Road strategy									X	X							X				X				X							
13. Establish CIP fund for dam						X																						X				
14. Install dam safety devices											X																	X				
<b>Goal 2: Conserve high value land</b>																																
1. Work with landowners to conserve		X				X												X							X							
2. Draft conservation bond		X				X	X																					X				
3. Draft development project recommendations						X	X																					X				
<b>Goal 3: Develop lake access</b>																																
1. Explore options for swimming					X																					X						
2. Establish access to islands						X																								X		
<b>Goal 4:</b>																																
1. Distribute walking route map			X											X												X						
2. Develop pathways implementation program			X							X													X			X						
3. Develop regional bike lane plan			X																				X					X				
4. Periodically enforce traffic rules			X																				X	X								
5. Establish ROW's for neighborhood paths			X														X									X						
6. Provide bike racks/ pathway monitors											X																				X	
<b>Goal 5: Improve public facilities</b>																																
1. Appoint liaisons to RTAC	X					X																				X						
2. Plan community building and green						X	X									X												X				
3. Develop Route 202 corridor plan	X						X	X											X	X							X					
4. Appoint a tree board or warden						X																				X						
5. Landscape school/town office campus			X					X	X														X		X							
6. Recommend recycling strategy						X																					X					
7. Develop long range school/town office campus plan	X							X			X																			X		
8. Collaborate with YMCA								X																		X						
9. Expand recreation program and facilities								X																			X		X			
10. Sponsor annual community event	X																								X							

Abbreviations: C = Committee; Sub. = Subcommittee; CC = conservation commission; KLT = Kennebec Land Trust; CWD = Cobboossee Watershed District; KVYMCA = Kennebec Valley Young Men's Christian Association; MDIFW = Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife; MDOT = Maine Department of Transportation.

Long Range Public Facilities  
& Open Space Plan

# Figure 16:

## Town Center Landscaping & Long Term Changes

-  Existing Trees
-  New or Replacement Trees
-  War Memorial
-  Existing Landscaping
-  Proposed Landscaping
-  Relocate Long Term
-  Public Property Line

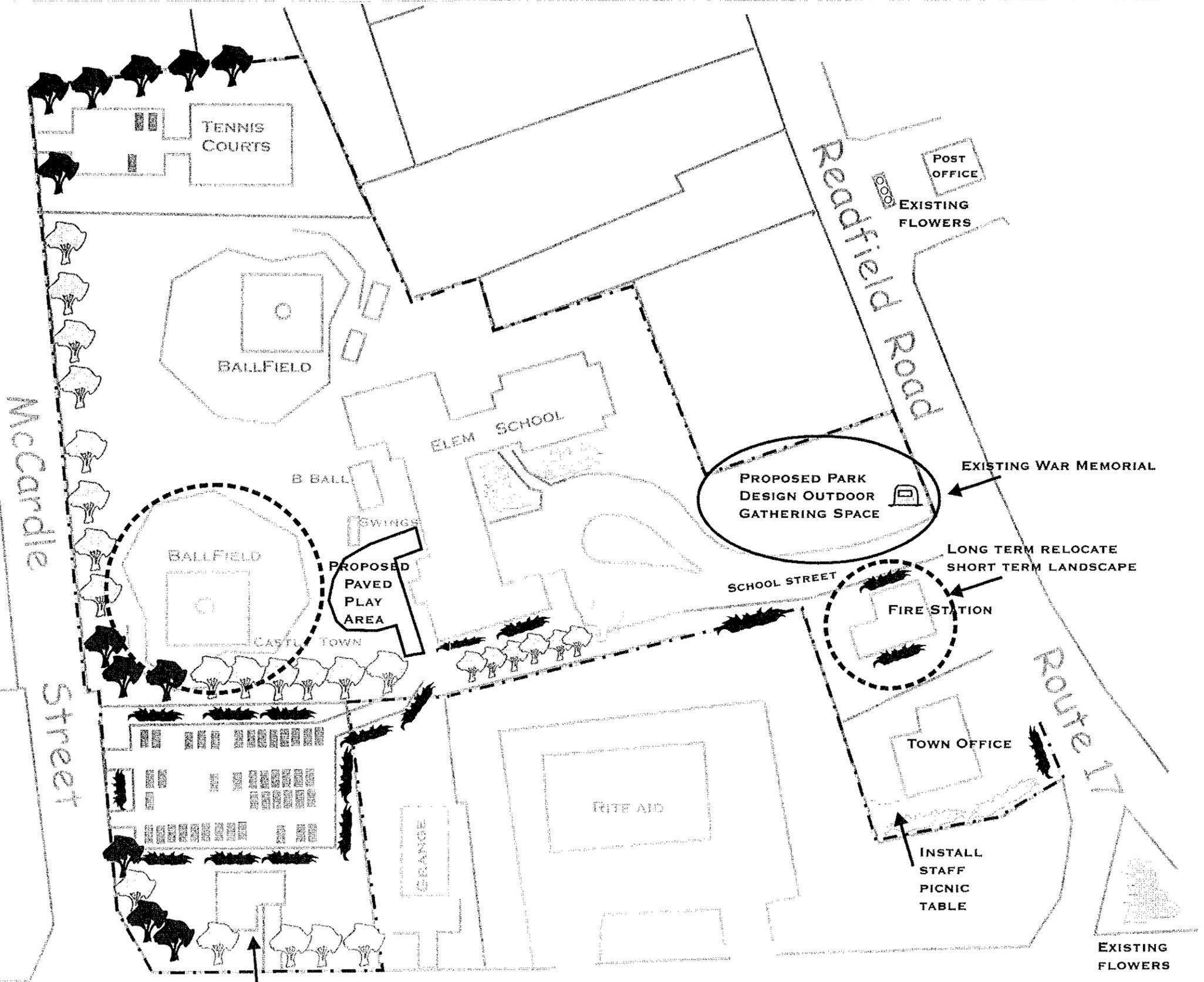
Cross Street

McCandie Street

Redfield Road

Route 17

Route 202



SEEK APPROVAL TO REMOVE THE DRUM HOUSE AND CREATE GREEN SPACE

POST OFFICE  
EXISTING FLOWERS

EXISTING WAR MEMORIAL

LONG TERM RELOCATE  
SHORT TERM LANDSCAPE

FIRE STATION

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DESIGN OUTDOOR  
GATHERING SPACE

PROPOSED  
PAVED  
PLAY  
AREA

TENNIS  
COURTS

BALLFIELD

ELEM SCHOOL

B BALL

SWINGS

BALLFIELD

CASTLE TOWN

RITE AID

TOWN OFFICE

INSTALL  
STAFF  
PICNIC  
TABLE

EXISTING  
FLOWERS

PROPOSED PARK  
DESIGN OUTDOOR  
GATHERING SPACE

PROPOSED  
PAVED  
PLAY  
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TENNIS  
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INSTALL  
STAFF  
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TABLE

EXISTING  
FLOWERS

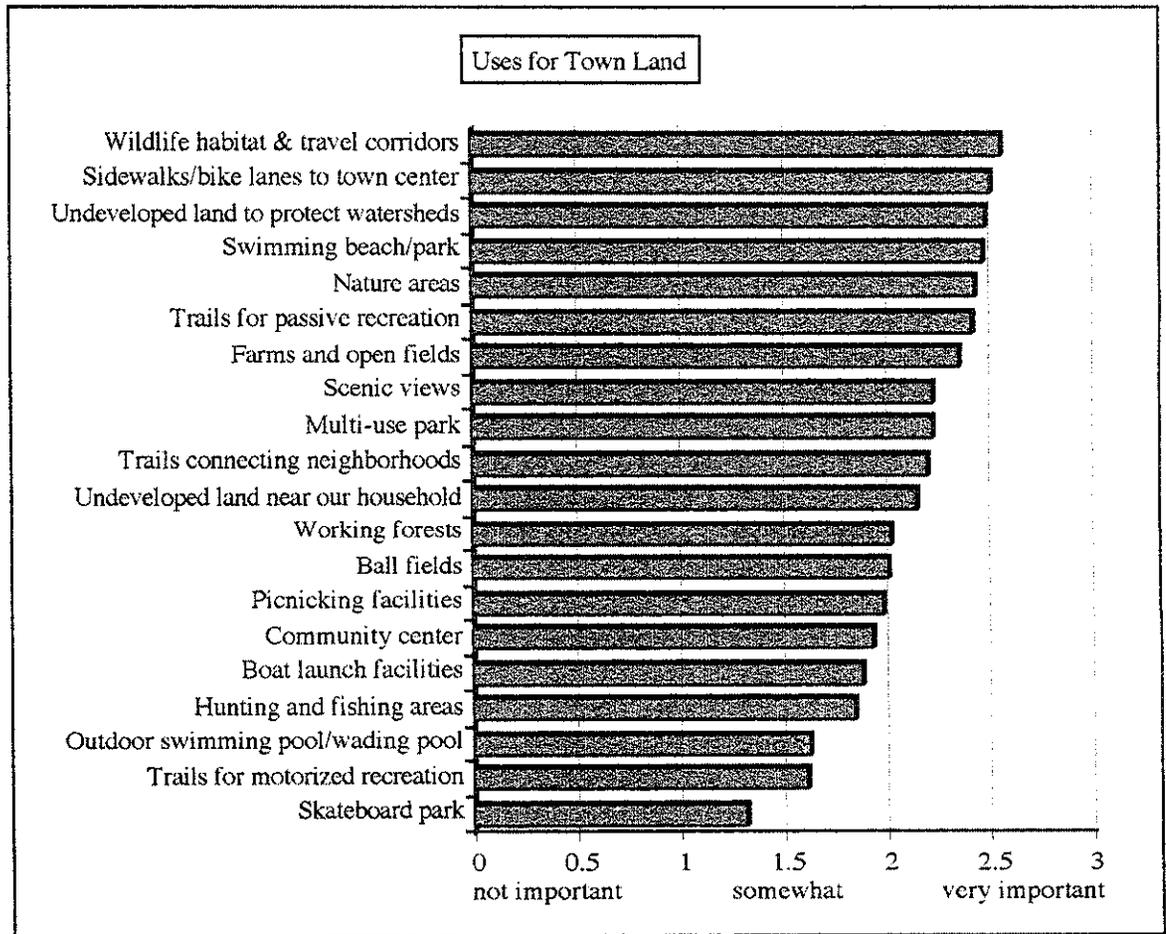
PROPOSED PARK  
DESIGN OUTDOOR  
GATHERING SPACE

**APPENDIX 1: PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY RESULTS**

# Town of Manchester Results of the Public Facilities & Open Space Needs Household Survey

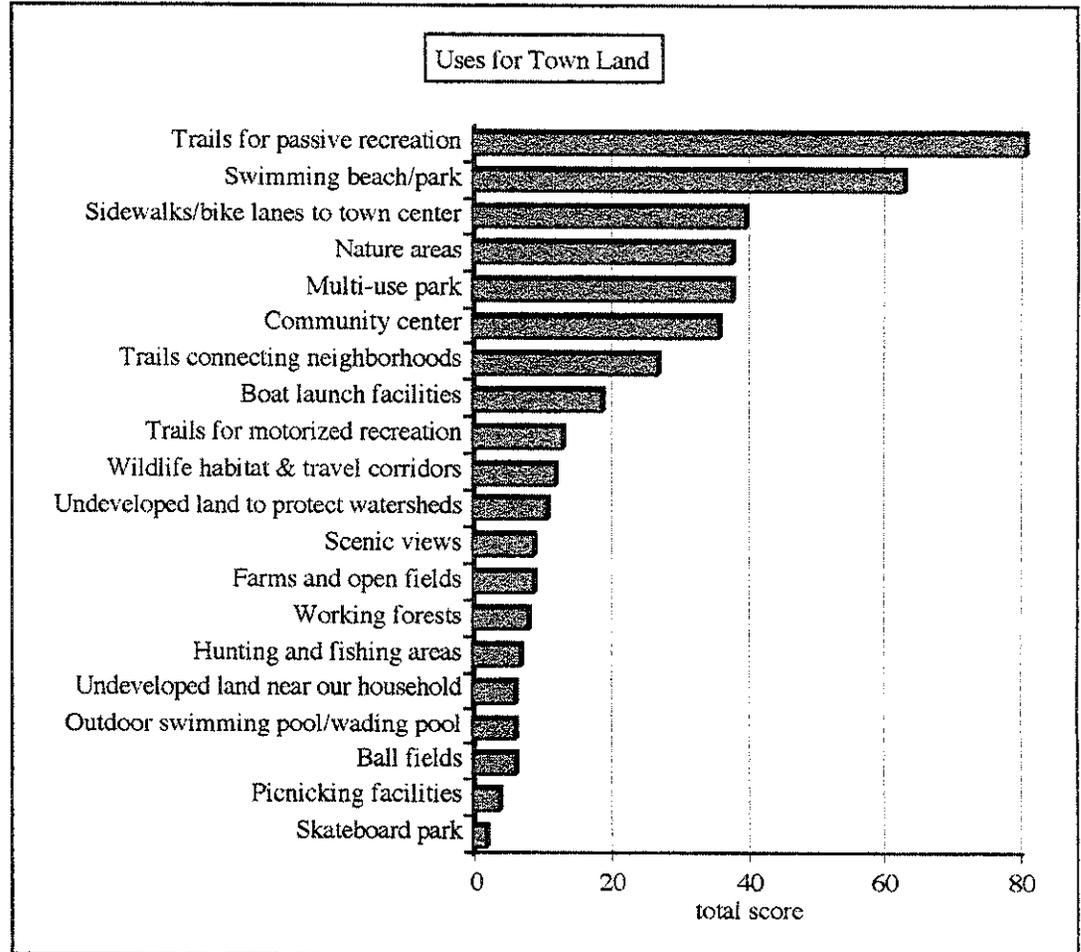
1. Manchester owns several properties and could acquire others for recreational and conservation use. Using a three-point scale where “3” means “very important” and “1” means “not important at all,” please indicate which types of uses you would like to see the Town provide by circling the corresponding numbers. [Note: The original survey question had a three-point scale where “1” meant “very important, etc. In the interest of clarity and consistency, these numbers have been reversed here. A higher score means greater importance.]

Uses for Town Land	Average Score
Wildlife habitat & travel corridors	2.57
Sidewalks/bike lanes to town center	2.51
Undeveloped land to protect watersheds	2.49
Swimming beach/park	2.48
Nature areas	2.43
Trails for passive recreation	2.42
Farms and open fields	2.36
Scenic views	2.23
Multi-use park	2.23
Trails connecting neighborhoods	2.21
Undeveloped land near our household	2.16
Working forests	2.02
Ball fields	2.01
Picnicking facilities	1.99
Community center	1.93
Boat launch facilities	1.88
Hunting and fishing areas	1.85
Outdoor swimming pool/wading pool	1.63
Trails for motorized recreation	1.62
Skateboard park	1.32



2. Which THREE uses from the list above [in question 1] would you and members of your household most likely use? Write in the letters below for your 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice using the letters from the list in question #1 above. [Note: Three points were given for a first choice, two for a second choice, and three for a third choice. Therefore higher scores indicate a higher likelihood of use.]

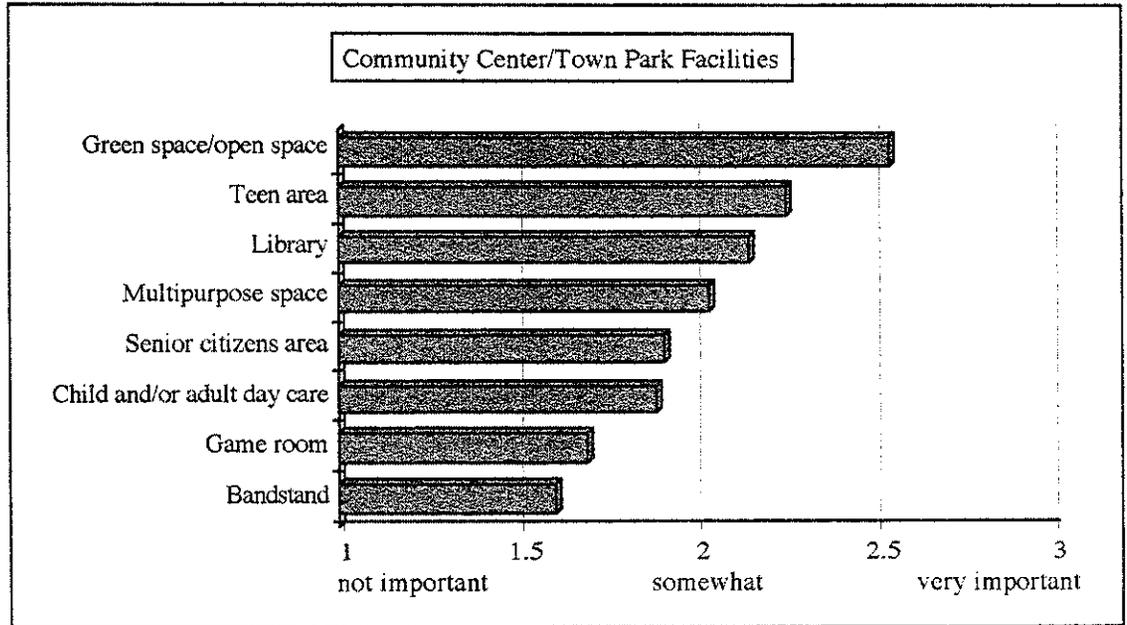
Uses for Town Land	Total Score
Trails for passive recreation	81
Swimming beach/park	63
Sidewalks/bike lanes to town center	40
Nature areas	38
Multi-use park	38
Community center	36
Trails connecting neighborhoods	27
Boat launch facilities	19
Trails for motorized recreation	13
Wildlife habitat & travel corridors	12
Undeveloped land to protect watersheds	11
Scenic views	9
Farms and open fields	9
Working forests	8
Hunting and fishing areas	7
Undeveloped land near our household	6
Outdoor swimming pool/wading pool	6
Ball fields	6
Picnicking facilities	4
Skateboard park	2



3. If the town were to develop a community center/town park, please indicate whether you think it is “very important [3],” “somewhat important [2],” or “not important at all [1]” to provide the following facilities in the building and grounds by circling the corresponding number.

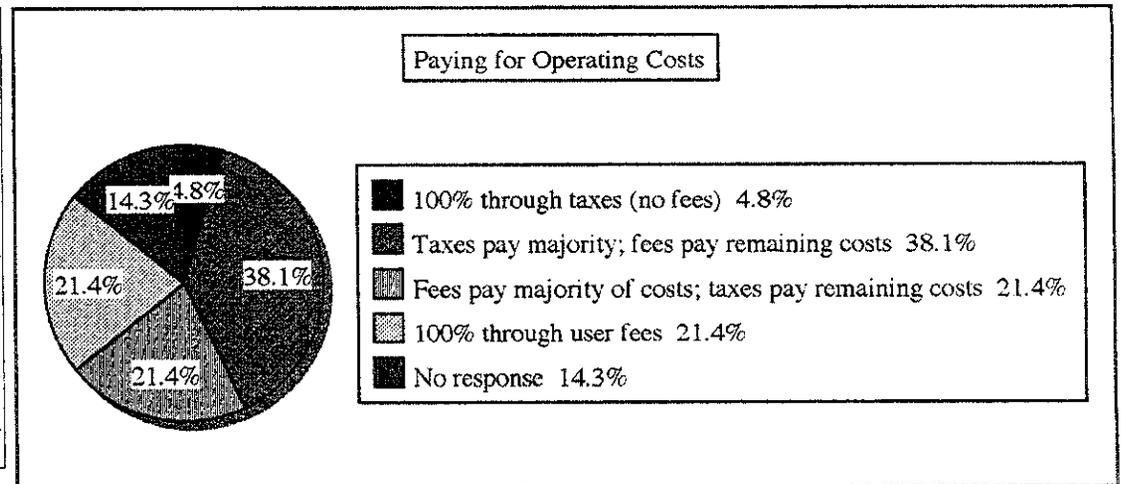
[Note: The original survey question had a three-point scale where “1” meant “very important, etc. In the interest of clarity and consistency, these numbers have been reversed here. A higher score means greater importance.]

Community Center/Town Park Facilities	Average Rank
Green space/open space	2.54
Teen area	2.25
Library	2.15
Multipurpose space for classes/meetings	2.04
Senior citizens area	1.91
Child and/or adult day care	1.89
Game room	1.7
Bandstand	1.61



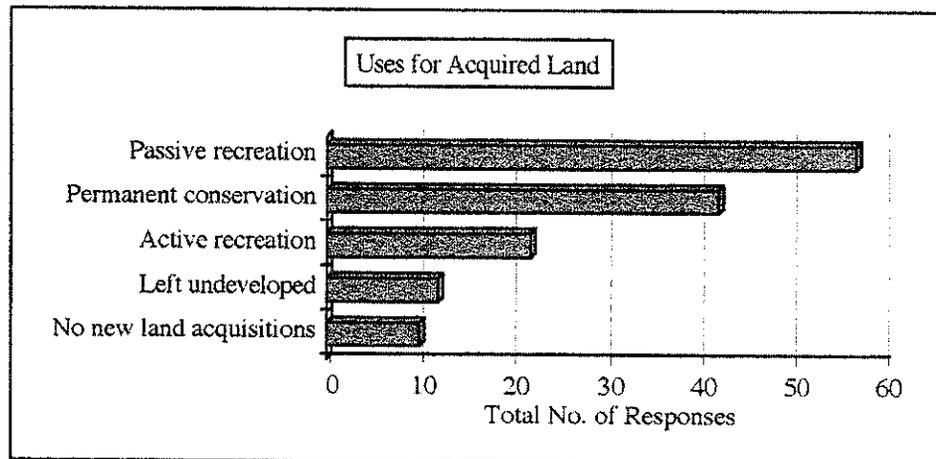
4. The following are various ways that the costs of operation of a community center could be funded. Please check the ONE statement that best represents how you feel the costs of operation of a new community facility should be funded.

Paying for Operating Costs	Total Responses	% of Responses
100% through taxes (no fees)	4	4.8
Taxes should pay majority of costs; fees from users should pay remaining costs	32	38.1
Fees from users should pay majority of costs; taxes should pay remaining costs	18	21.4
100% through user fees	18	21.4
No Response	12	14.3



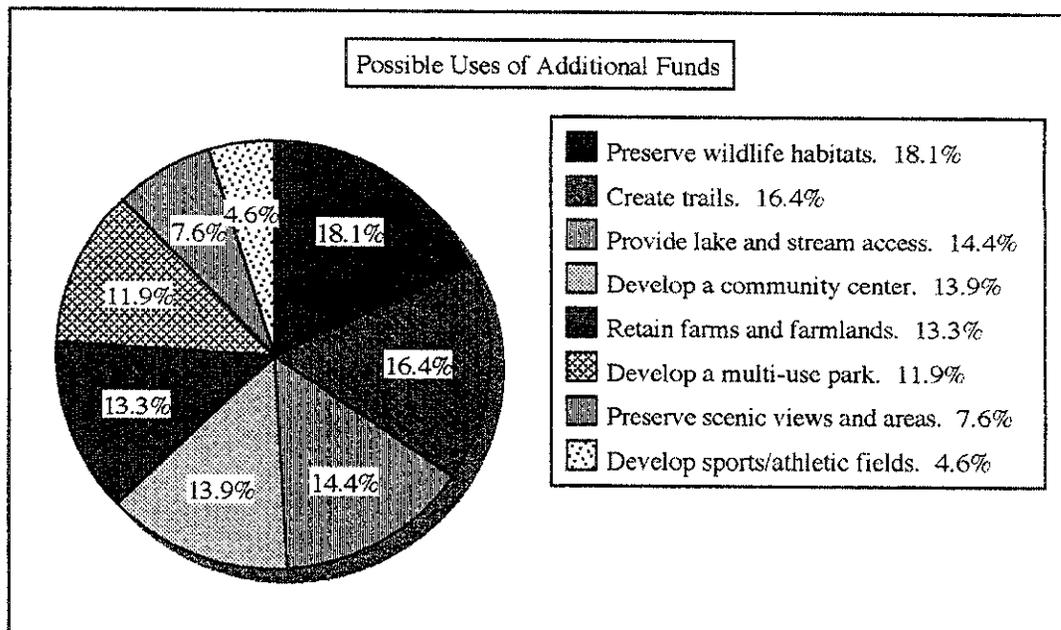
5. The Town of Manchester may have opportunities to acquire and develop additional land for parks, recreation, and open space purposes. From the following list, **check TWO options** that you and members of your family support **THE MOST**.

Uses for Acquired Land	Total No. of Responses
Land should be acquired and developed for passive recreational use, i.e., trails, picnicking,	57
Land should be acquired and dedicated for permanent conservation purposes such as	42
Land should be acquired and developed for active recreational use, i.e., baseball, soccer, etc.	22
Land should be acquired and left undeveloped for future generations to decide best use.	12
No additional land should be acquired.	10



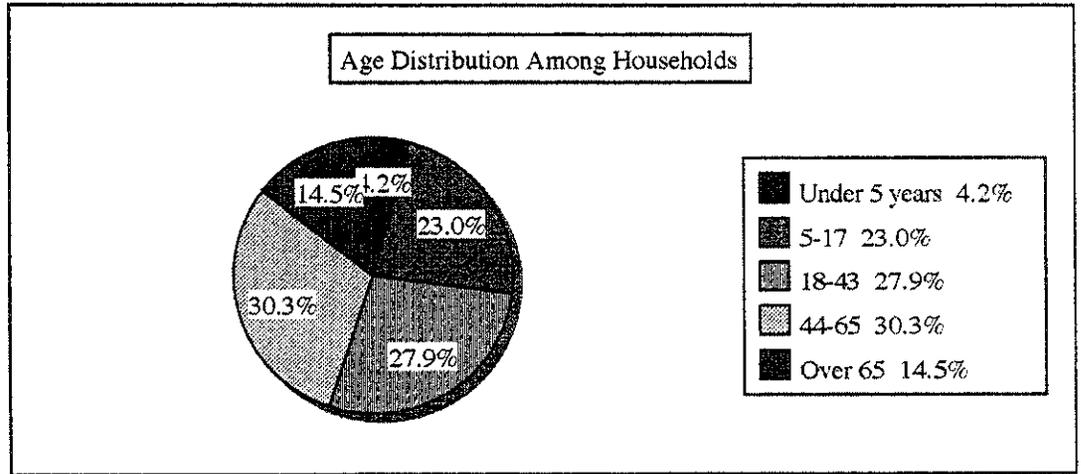
6. If additional funds were available to Town of Manchester parks, recreation, and open space, what percentage would you allocate to the categories listed below (**please be sure your total adds up to 100%**): [Note: Surveys were not checked to make sure each response added up to 100%.]

Possible Uses of Additional Funds	Average % Allocated
Preserve wildlife habitats, woodlands, and wetlands.	18.1
Create trails for walking, biking, and linking neighborhoods and recreation areas.	16.4
Provide lake and stream access.	14.4
Develop a community center for indoor recreation and cultural activities.	13.9
Retain farms and farmlands.	13.3
Develop a multi-use park for active and passive recreation.	11.9
Preserve scenic views and areas.	7.6
Develop additional sports/athletic fields.	4.6



7. How many people in your household, counting yourself, are?

Age Group	Total No. of Individuals in Each Age Group	No. of Households with Each Age Group	% of Households with Each Age Group
Under 5 years	11	6	7
5-17	53	32	38
18-43	64	39	46
44-65	71	42	50
Over 65	31	20	24

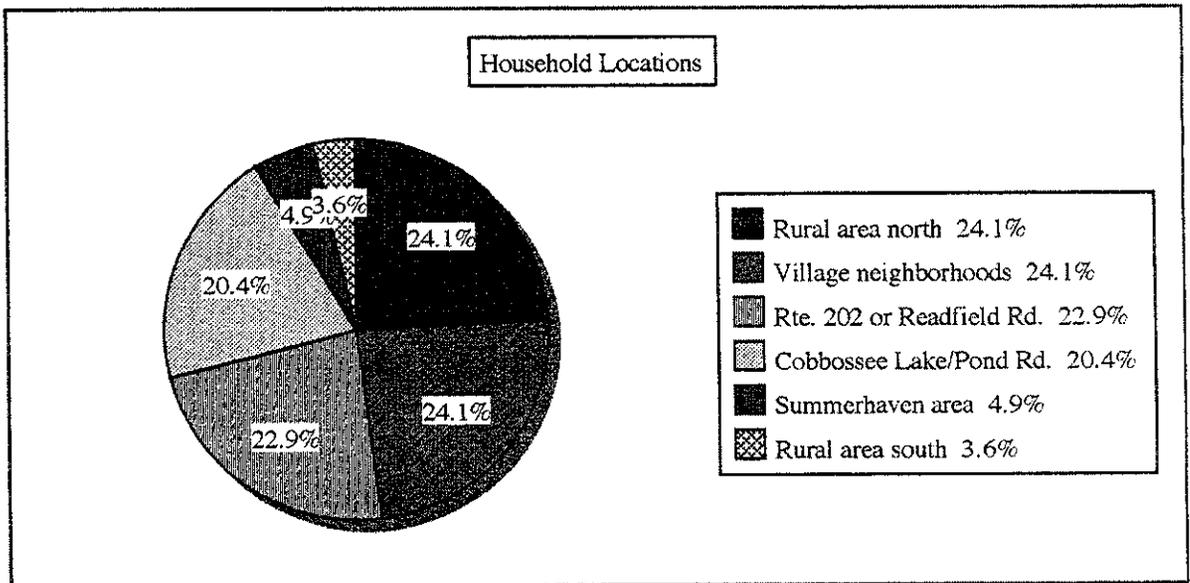


8. What is your age?

The average age of all respondents was 50.

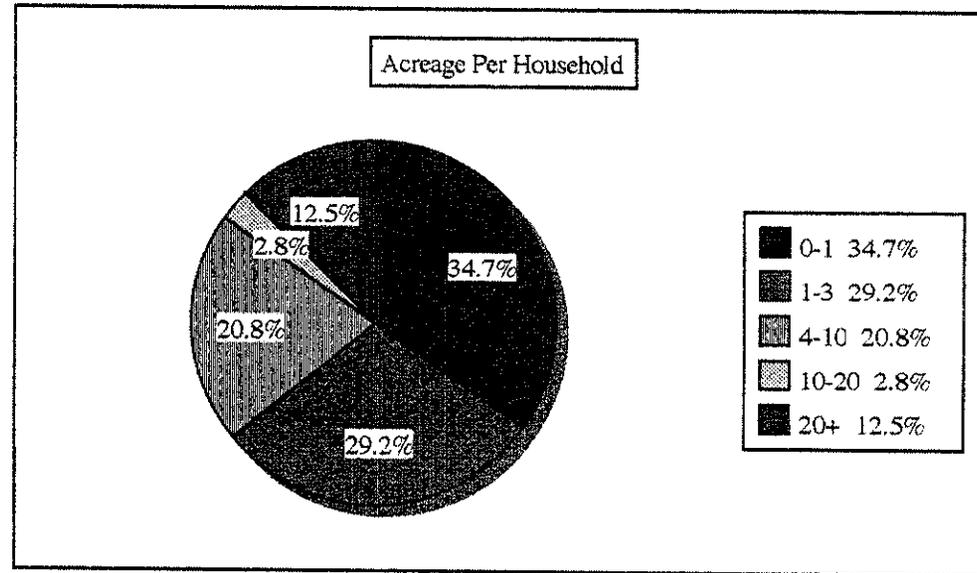
9. Please check the ONE description that best represents the location of your residence.

Household Locations	Total # of Households	% of Households
Rural area north of village	20	23.8
Village neighborhoods (Gardencrest, Myrtle St., etc.)	20	23.8
Rte. 202 or Readfield Rd. (Rte. 17) corridors	19	22.6
Cobbossee Lake/Pond Rd.	17	20.2
Summerhaven area	4	4.8
Rural area south of village	3	3.6



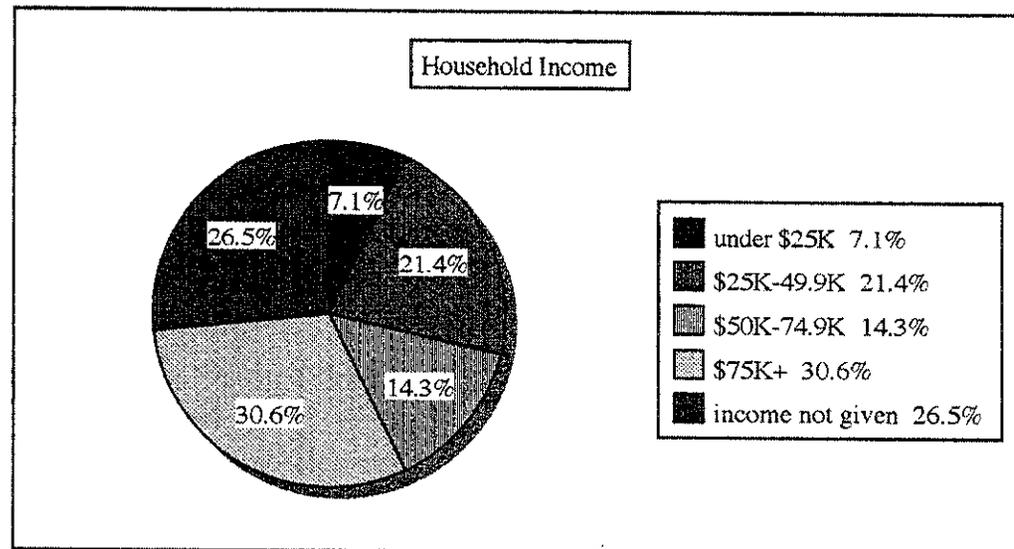
10. How many acres of land do you own in town?

Acres	Total # of Households	% of Households
0-1	25	34.7
1-3	21	29.2
4-10	15	20.8
10-20	2	2.8
20+	9	12.5



11. What is your total household income?

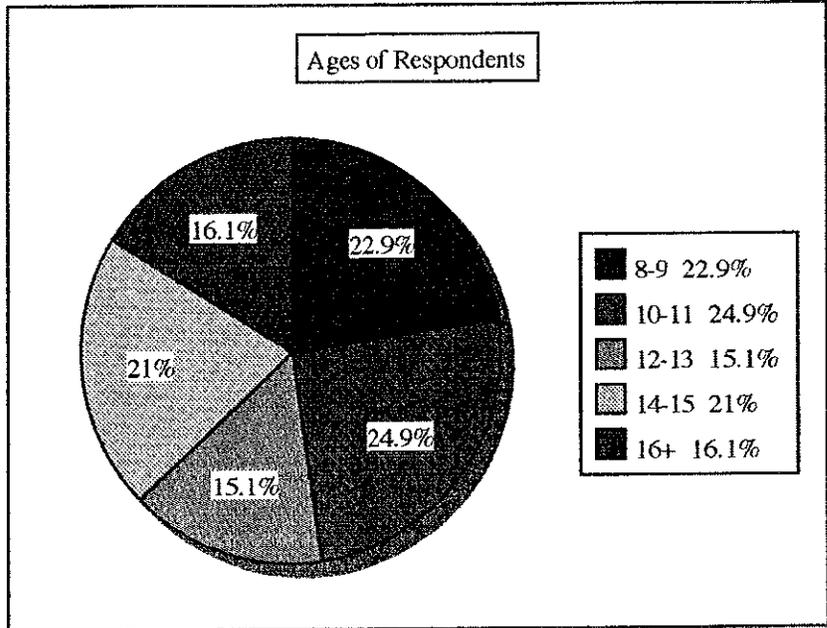
Income	Total # of Households	% of Households
under \$25K	6	7.1
\$25K-49.9K	18	21.4
\$50K-74.9K	12	14.3
\$75K+	25	30.6
income not given	22	26.5



# Town of Manchester Results of the Recreation & Open Space Needs Student Survey

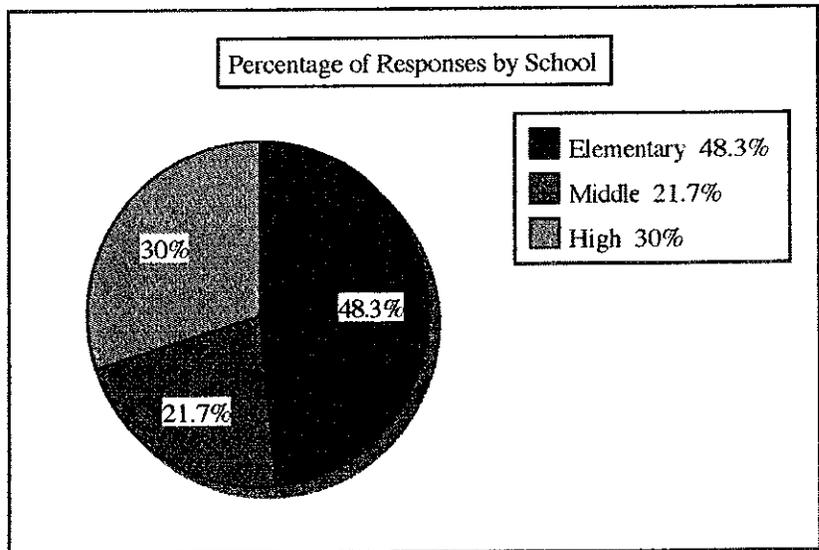
1. How old are you?

Age Group	Total	%
8-9	47	22.9
10-11	51	24.9
12-13	31	15.1
14-15	43	21
16+	33	16.1



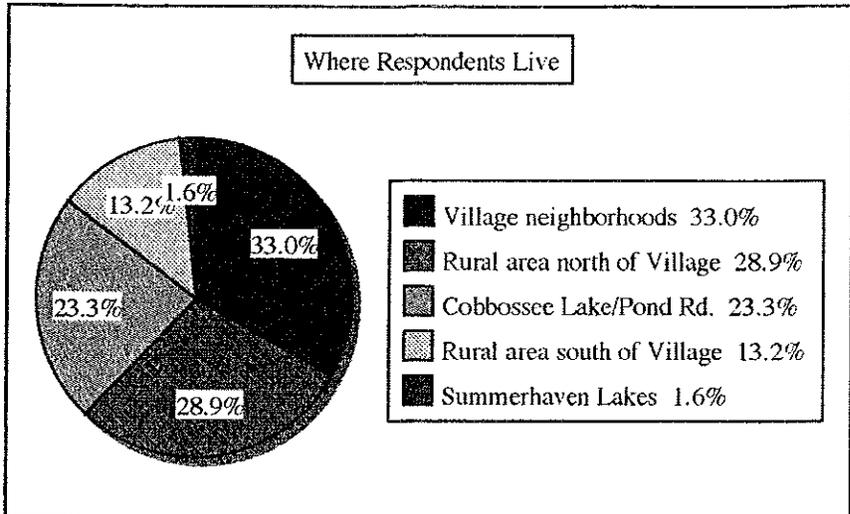
2. Where do you go to school?

School	Total	%
Elementary	98	48.3
Middle	44	21.7
High	61	30



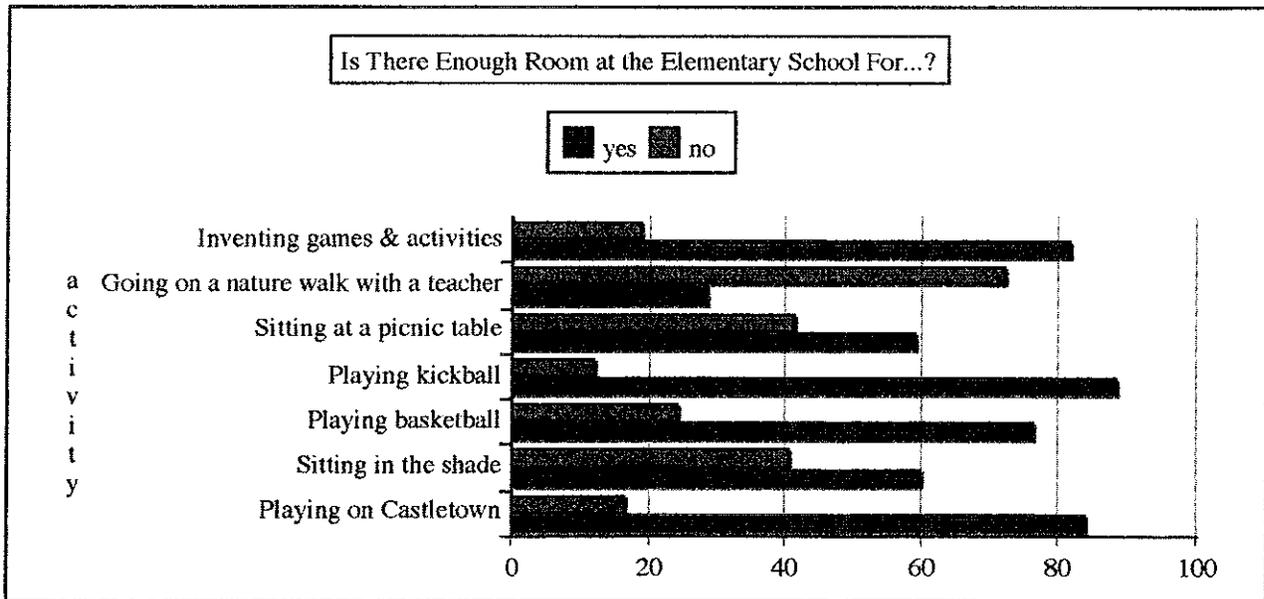
3. Where do you live?

Area	Total	%
Village neighborhoods	65	33.7
Rural area north of Village	57	29.5
Cobbossee Lake/Pond Rd.	46	23.8
Rural area south of Village	26	13.5
Summerhaven Lakes	3	1.6



4. During the school day, is there enough space outdoors at the Elementary School for:

Activity	Yes	%	No	%
Playing on Castletown	160	83.8	31	16.2
Sitting in the shade	114	59.7	77	40.3
Playing basketball	146	76	46	24
Playing kickball	168	88.4	22	11.6
Sitting at a picnic table	112	58.9	78	41.1
Going on a nature walk with a teacher	53	28	136	72
Inventing games & activities	151	81.2	35	18.8

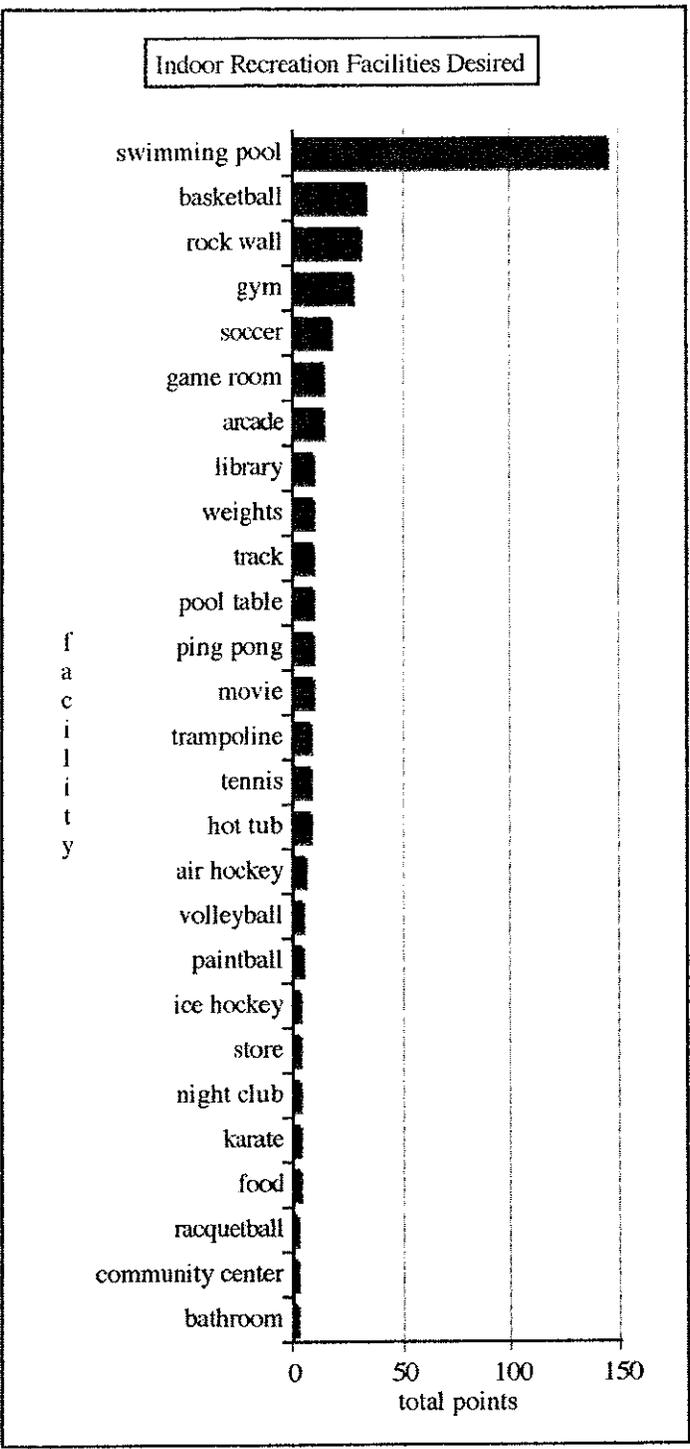


Note: Question 4 also asked: "Which other **outdoor** activities would you like to be able to do during school that you cannot do now?" It was apparent that many respondents didn't notice that the question specifically asked about outdoor activities during school. In addition, many respondents listed activities that they are not currently allowed to do, though the space, etc., are available to them. Very few respondents named the same activity, suggesting no real consensus on the issue, either. In the end the responses to questions 6 and 7 seemed to cover the issue of which outdoor activities respondents enjoy and which ones they can't currently do. As a result, this part of question 4 was omitted from the results.

5. If Manchester had an **indoor** recreation/community center, what kinds of facilities would you want it to have?

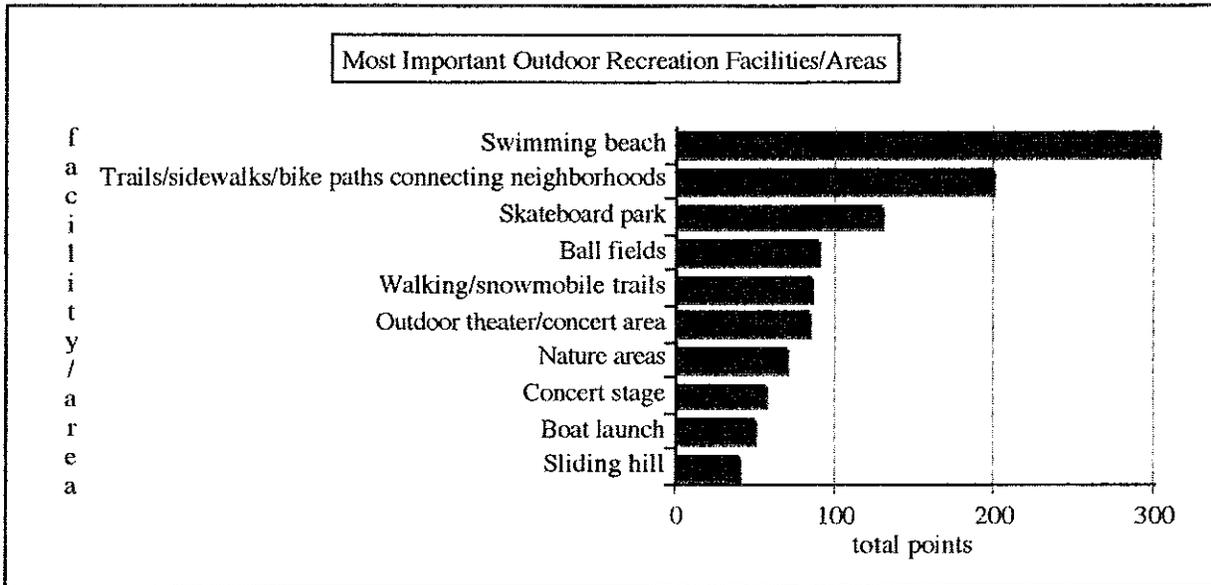
Facility	First Choice	Second Choice	Total	Points
swimming pool	58	28	86	144
basketball	11	10	21	32
rock wall	10	10	20	30
gym	9	8	17	26
soccer	7	3	10	17
arcade	3	7	10	13
game room	5	3	8	13
library	3	3	6	9
track	1	6	7	8
movie	2	4	6	8
ping pong	2	4	6	8
pool table	1	6	7	8
tennis	2	3	5	7
hot tub	0	7	7	7
weights	3	2	5	8
air hockey	1	3	4	5
trampoline	1	5	6	7
volleyball	1	2	3	4
paintball	2	0	2	4
food	0	2	2	2
night club	1	0	1	2
karate	1	0	1	2
store	1	0	1	2
ice hockey	1	1	2	3
racquetball	0	1	1	1
community ctr.	0	1	1	1
bathroom	0	1	1	1

Note: Three points were assigned a first choice, two points for a second choice, and one point for a third choice. Therefore the item with the highest number of points is the most important to the respondents.



6. Which of the following **outdoor** recreation facilities/areas are most important to have in Manchester?

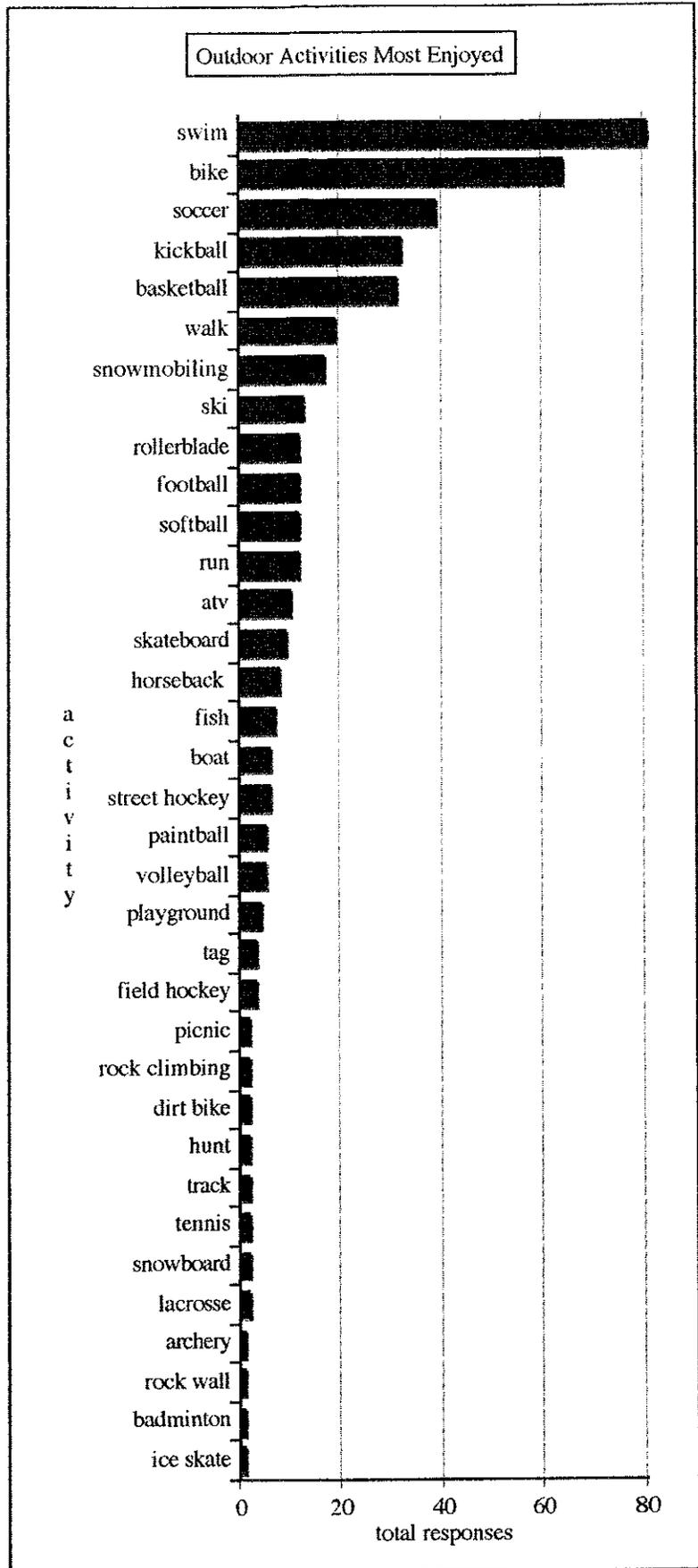
Facility/Area	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	Total Points
Swimming beach	74	30	22	304
Trails/sidewalks/bike paths connecting neighborhoods	31	40	25	198
Skateboard park	24	19	18	128
Ball fields	14	14	19	89
Walking/snowmobile trails	8	22	17	85
Outdoor theater/concert area	13	13	18	83
Nature areas	11	14	7	68
Concert stage	7	12	10	55
Boat launch	3	14	11	48
Sliding hill	2	8	17	39



Note: Three points were assigned a first choice, two points for a second choice, and one point for a third choice. Therefore the item with the highest number of points is the most important to the respondents.

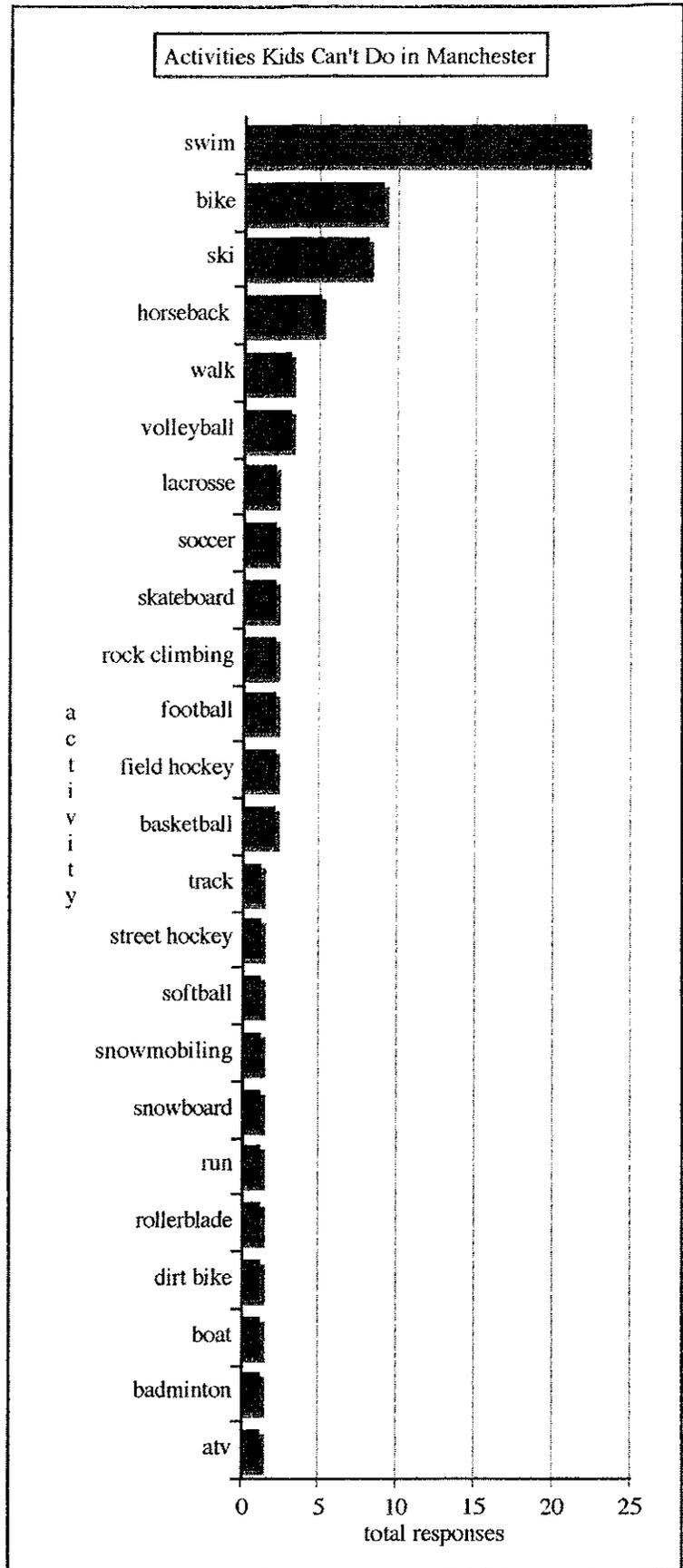
7. (Part One) Name the 3 **outdoor** activities that you most enjoy doing.

Activity Most Enjoyed	Total
swim	81
bike	64
soccer	39
kickball	32
basketball	31
walk	19
snowmobiling	17
rollerblade	12
football	12
ski	13
softball	12
atv	10
run	12
skateboard	9
horseback	8
fish	7
boat	6
street hockey	6
paintball	5
volleyball	5
playground	4
tag	3
picnic	2
rock climbing	2
dirt bike	2
hunt	2
field hockey	3
track	2
tennis	2
snowboard	2
archery	1
rock wall	1
badminton	1
lacrosse	2
ice skate	1



7. (Part Two) Which of these [named in Part One above] can't you now do in Manchester?

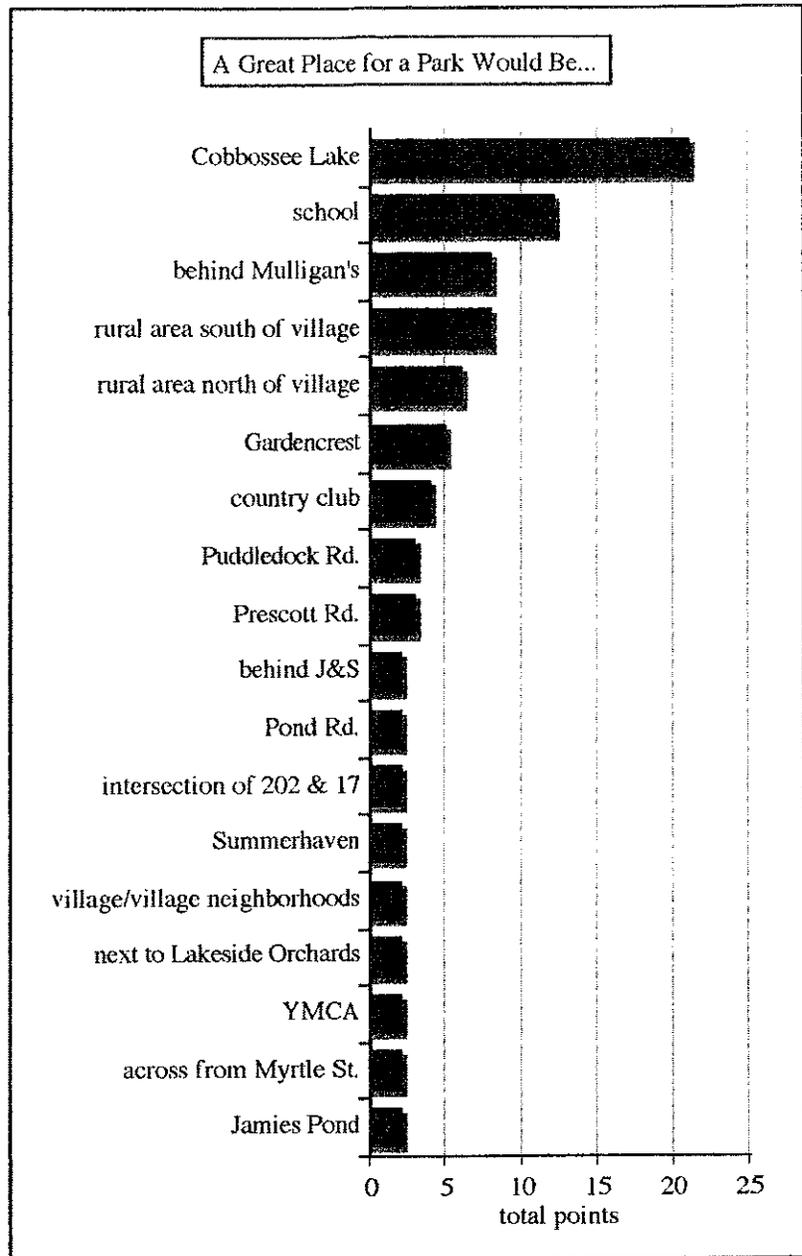
Activity Most Enjoyed	"Can't Do in Town" Total
swim	22
bike	9
ski	8
horseback	5
volleyball	3
walk	3
basketball	2
field hockey	2
football	2
rock climbing	2
skateboard	2
soccer	2
atv	1
badminton	1
boat	1
dirt bike	1
lacrosse	2
rollerblade	1
run	1
snowboard	1
snowmobiling	1
softball	1
street hockey	1
track	1



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8. Name an area in town that you think would be a great place for a park where people could walk, picnic, and otherwise enjoy nature.

Area	Total
Cobbossee Lake	21
school	12
rural area south of village	8
behind Mulligan's	8
rural area north of village	6
Jamie's Pond	5
Gardencrest	5
country club	4
Prescott Rd.	3
Puddledock Rd.	3
woods	2
across from Myrtle St.	2
YMCA	2
next to Lakeside Orchards	2
village/village neighborhoods	2
Summerhaven	2
intersection of 202 & 17	2
Pond Rd.	2
behind J&S	2
Rite Aid	1
Scribner Hill Rd.	1
across from Worthing Rd.	1
across from Irving	1
playground	1
Granite Hill Rd.	1
Benson Rd.	1
202	1
T's Golf	1
post office	1
next to Darling's	1
Great Meadows	1

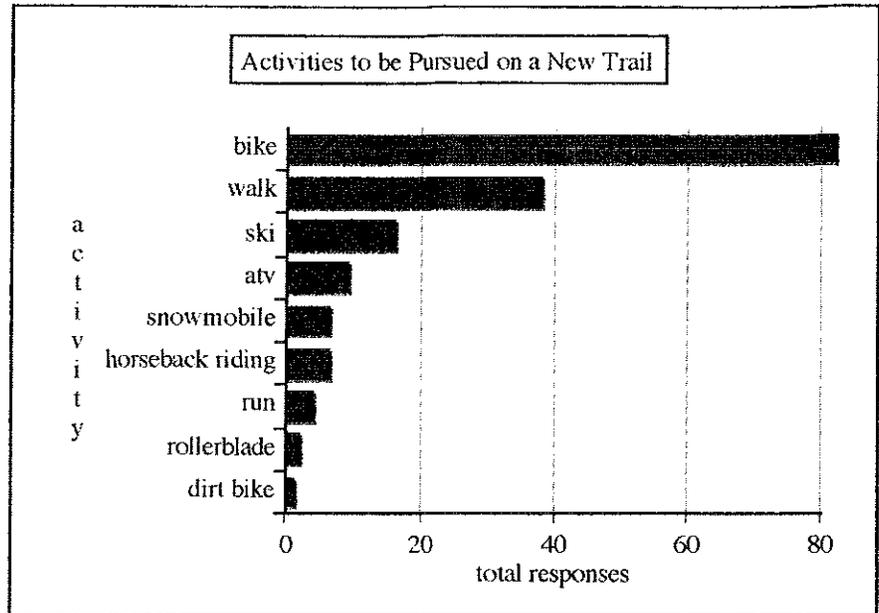


Note: Only those locations receiving more than one response are listed in the chart.

9. If you could have a new trail in your neighborhood or in the town, what would you do on it?

Activity	Total
bike	88
walk	38
ski	16
atv	9
horseback riding	6
snowmobile	6
run	4
rollerblade	2
dirt bike	1

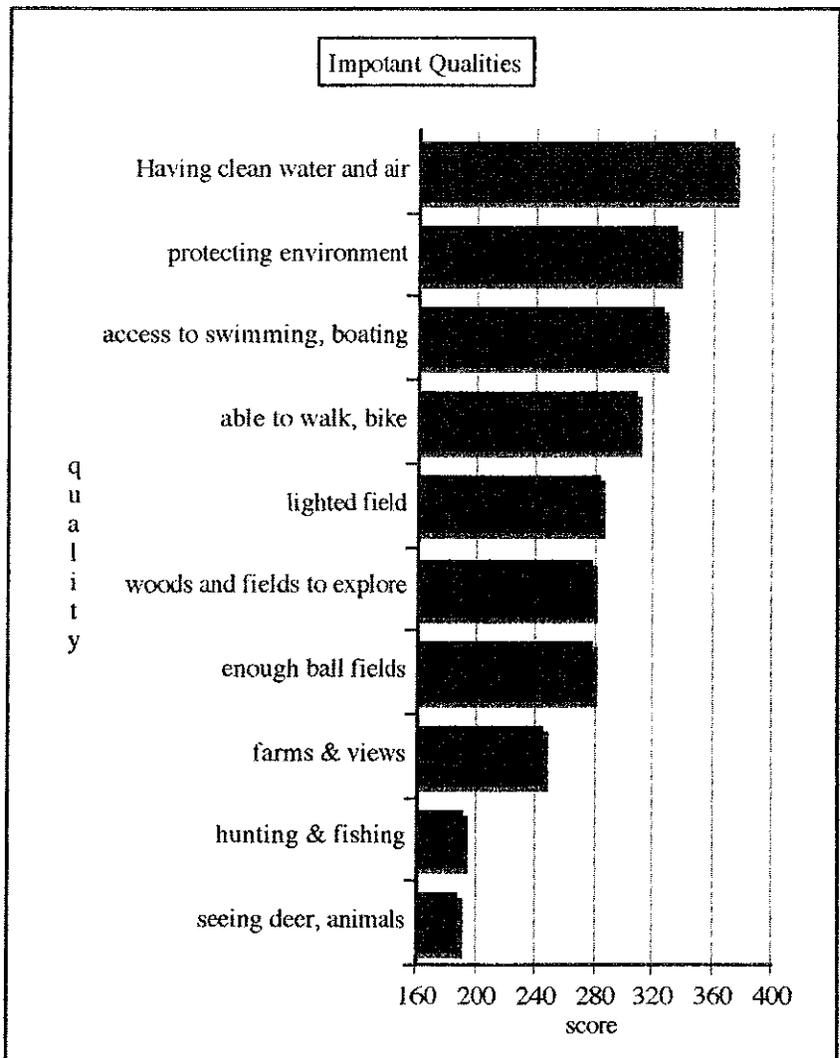
Note: Judging from the responses, some respondents imagined a paved or other hard surface trail. Two respondents suggested a paved trail.



10. How important are the following qualities to you?

Quality	Score
Having clean water and air	372
Knowing the environment is protected	334
Having public access to lakes and streams for swimming and boating	324
Being able to get around town on foot or bike	307
Being able to play ball at night on a lighted field	283
Having enough ball fields to play pick-up and practice	277
Having woods and fields to explore near my home	277
Seeing farms and other beautiful views	244
Being able to hunt and fish in town	190
Being able to see deer and other animals near my home	186

Note: The score was calculated by giving two points for a response of "very important," one point for a response of "somewhat important," and no points for a response of "not important."



Highlights of Town Boards Meeting  
March 13, 2003

Twenty seven representatives of 22 Town boards and organizations in Manchester with responsibility for public facilities and recreation programs met with the Long Range Planning Committee on March 13, 2003, to assess existing and future needs and priorities. Each group reported on questions provided in advance by the Long Range Planning Committee. The responses are summarized in the accompanying table.

Meeting participants were surprised and pleased by the high degree of common purpose and agreement on major issues. At the end of the meeting, everyone was asked to identify their top three personal choices of all of the ideas presented during the evening. The following highlights summarize these priorities and other ideas discussed at the meeting. These results will be compared with the public opinions presently being gathered from household and student surveys.

1. **Highest priority facility needs include:**

- a. Develop water access to Cobbossee Lake. (Note: Jodi Federle of the Kennebec Land Trust noted after the meeting that such access would facilitate Manchester residents boating to islands owned by the land trust that are available for picnicking and camping.)
- b. Install sidewalks and bikepaths connecting village neighborhoods with the school/town center; and
- c. Develop a multi-purpose building and green space for recreation and cultural activities. Participants felt that such a building need be no fancier than the Lions Club, and that an outdoor gathering space is especially important so that teenagers can hang out safely.

2. **Medium priority facility needs include:**

- a. Create more and different sized fields for soccer, baseball, and softball. In particular, this will allow the fence at the school to be removed so that the space can better meet other educational and community needs; it will also provide more adequate space for practice and pick-up games; and provide regulation-size game fields. Participants agreed that game

fields should continue to be the responsibility of all towns in the youth leagues; and that a 4-town game complex should be considered;

- b. Expand hiking trails adjacent to lakes and ponds and in other natural areas of the community. Town property at Fairbanks Pond and state property off the Collins Road were cited as potential opportunities for new trails. Participants also agreed that the Town should take more responsibility for promoting and helping to maintain trails in the Jamies Pond area, which Hallowell Conservation Commission, up until now, has taken the lead in developing and maintaining (finding after meeting: trails have already been developed at Collins property);
- c. Provide recreation and cultural programs for adults and teens; and
- d. Conserve natural areas such as the bog east of Pond Road.

3. **Town Center Improvements:**

- a. "Big fix" needed. The group strongly recognized that the creation of a more vibrant town center will require more than a series of remedial short-term steps. The entire complex accommodating the school, town office, fire station, and Drum Property needs to be considered as a whole, and with long range (e.g. 30-50 years) needs in mind. Some proposed that an alternative site should be considered, with ample room and buffering from Route 202.
- b. Building capacities. The school, town office, and fire station are adequate for the next 10-15 years, but may need to be expanded in the long-term. In addition, the fire station is an obstacle to creating a more attractive entrance to the school/town office area; and its relocation should be considered.
- c. Vehicular circulation. School officials are considering changes to entryway circulation in conjunction with paving the new parking lot behind the school because of safety problems related to private vehicle and bus loading.

4. **Other needs include:**

a. Active recreation facilities:

1. Provide financial support to the Lions Club for upkeep of the organization's ball field.
2. Improve maintenance of school fields; share maintenance of storage facility; and create a better institutional arrangement for maintaining and programming school recreation facilities.
3. Provide more financial support for ice time for local youth hockey team(s).
4. Coordinate with YMCA on provision of outdoor basketball courts; and/or provide of a town-sponsored, lighted outdoor court(s).
5. Develop a skateboard park.

b. Passive recreation:

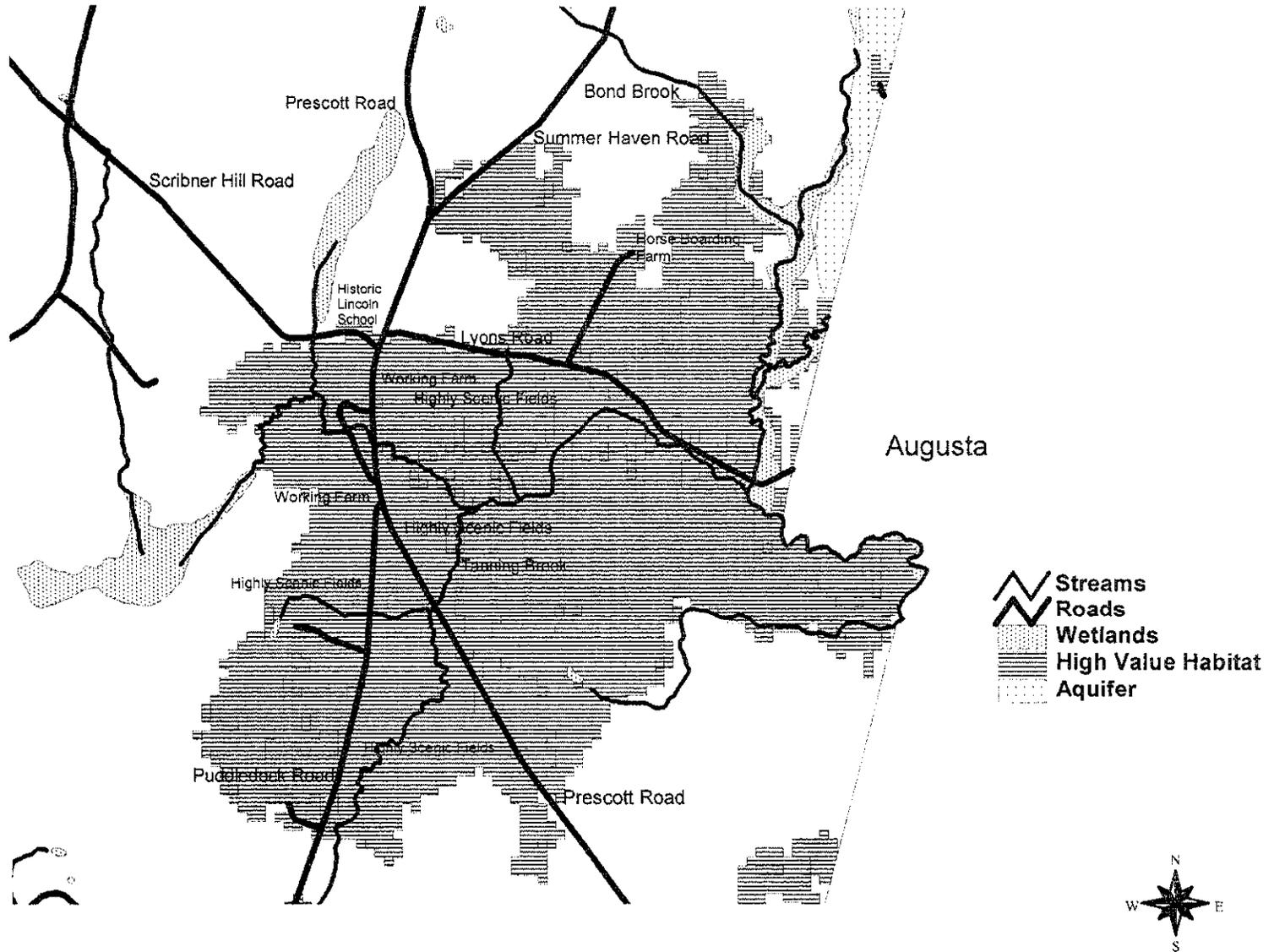
1. Develop an open space plan
2. Make better use of town woodlots to east of Pond Road and in Summerhaven area.

c. Non-recreation facilities:

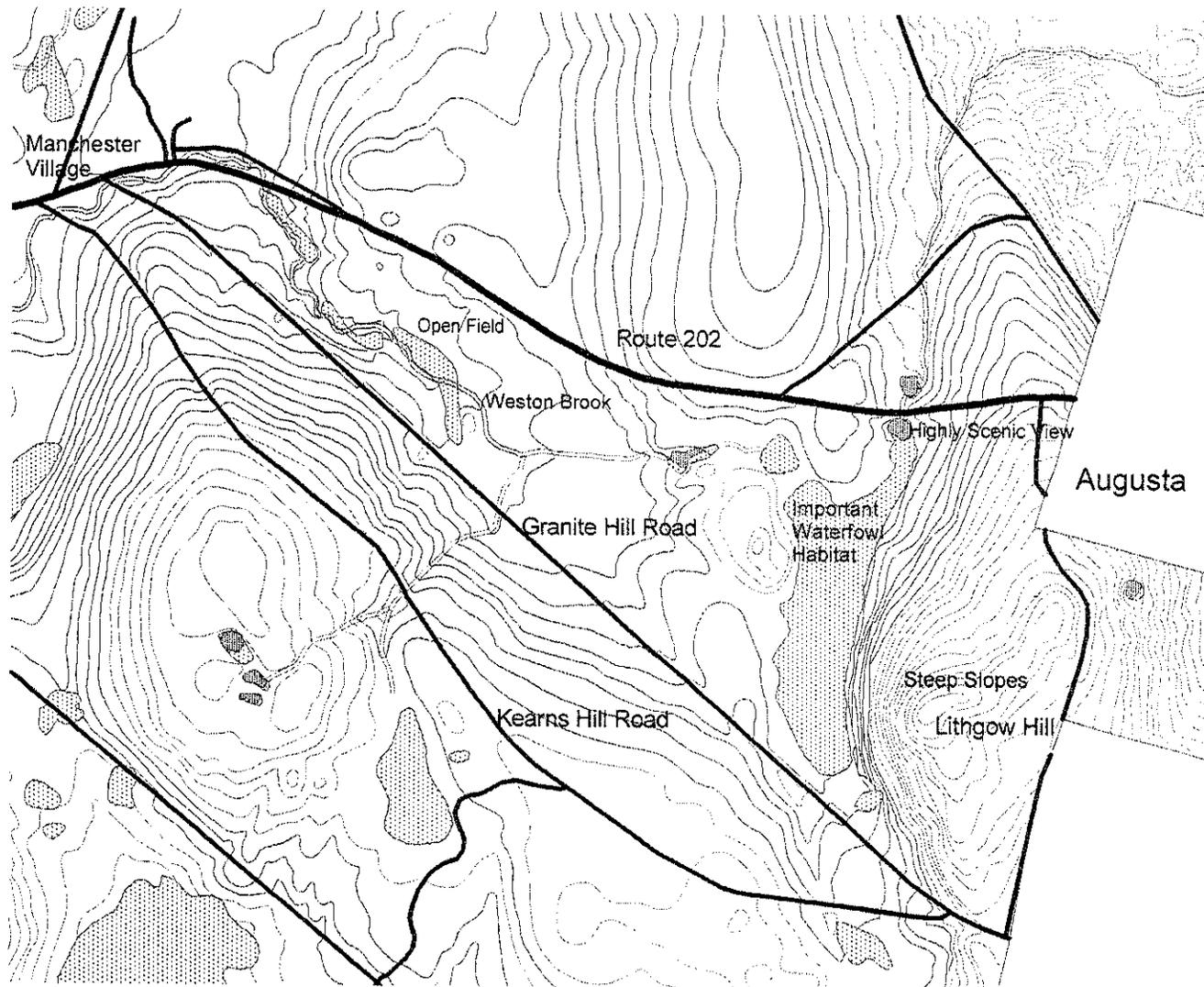
1. Provide a central recycling center.
2. Regionalize Sanitary District now that debt is paid off.
3. Institute a shorter time-span road maintenance/improvement rotation schedule (7 years), along with an up-to-date inventory, to reduce costs.

**APPENDIX 2: SELECTED MAPS**

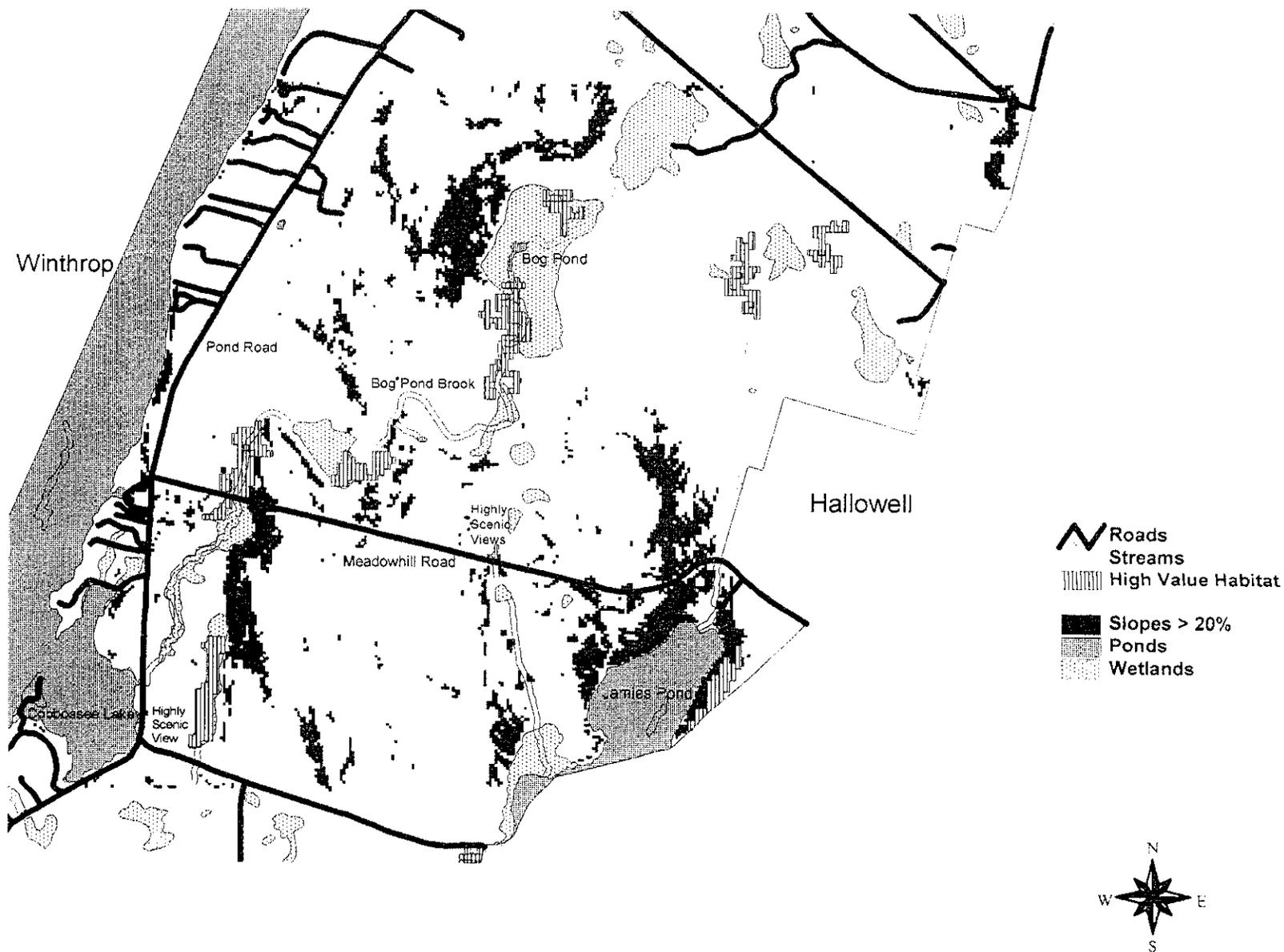
# Prescott Road and Puddledock Road Area Manchester, Maine



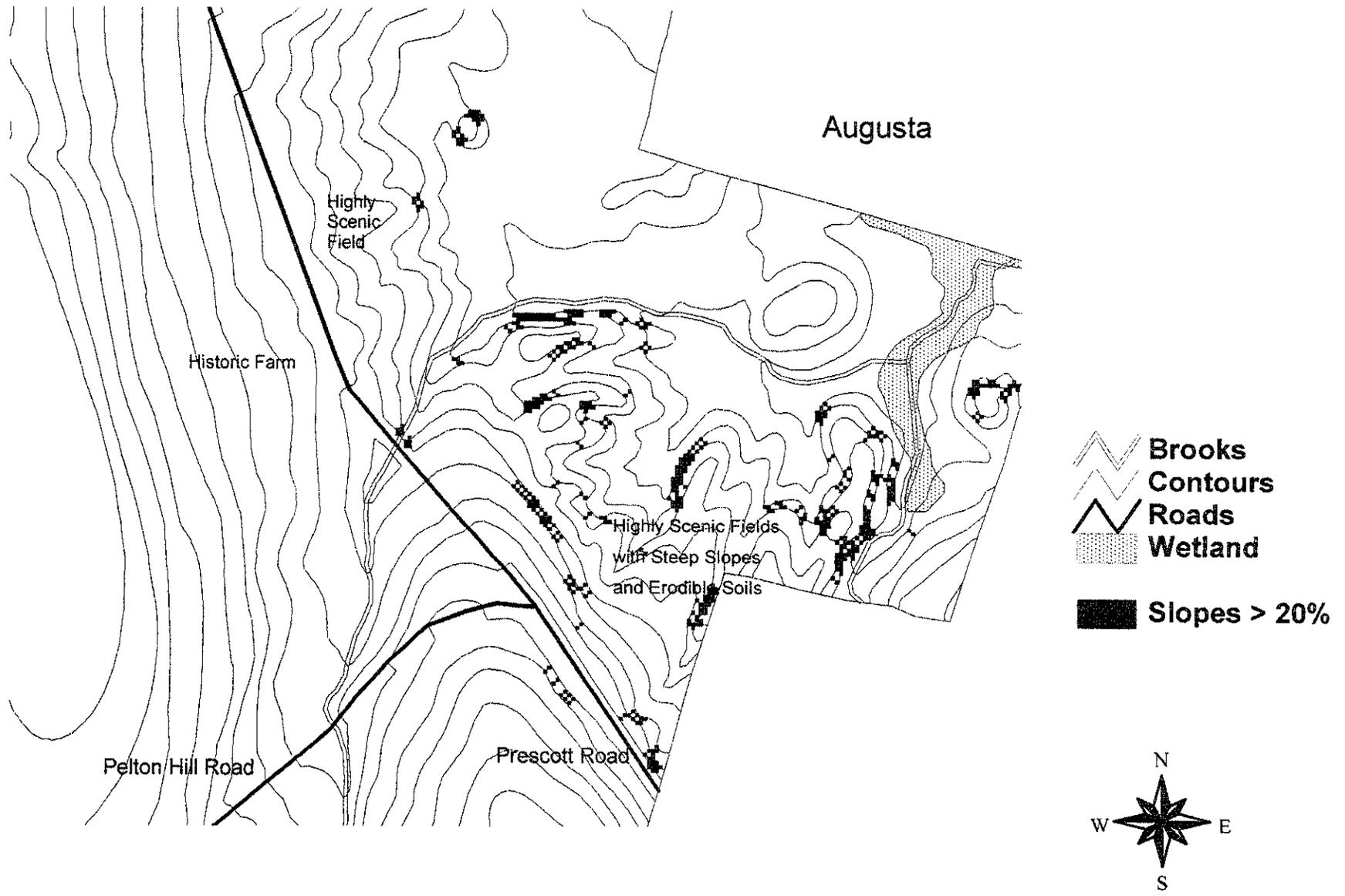
# Old Trolley Line Area Manchester, Maine



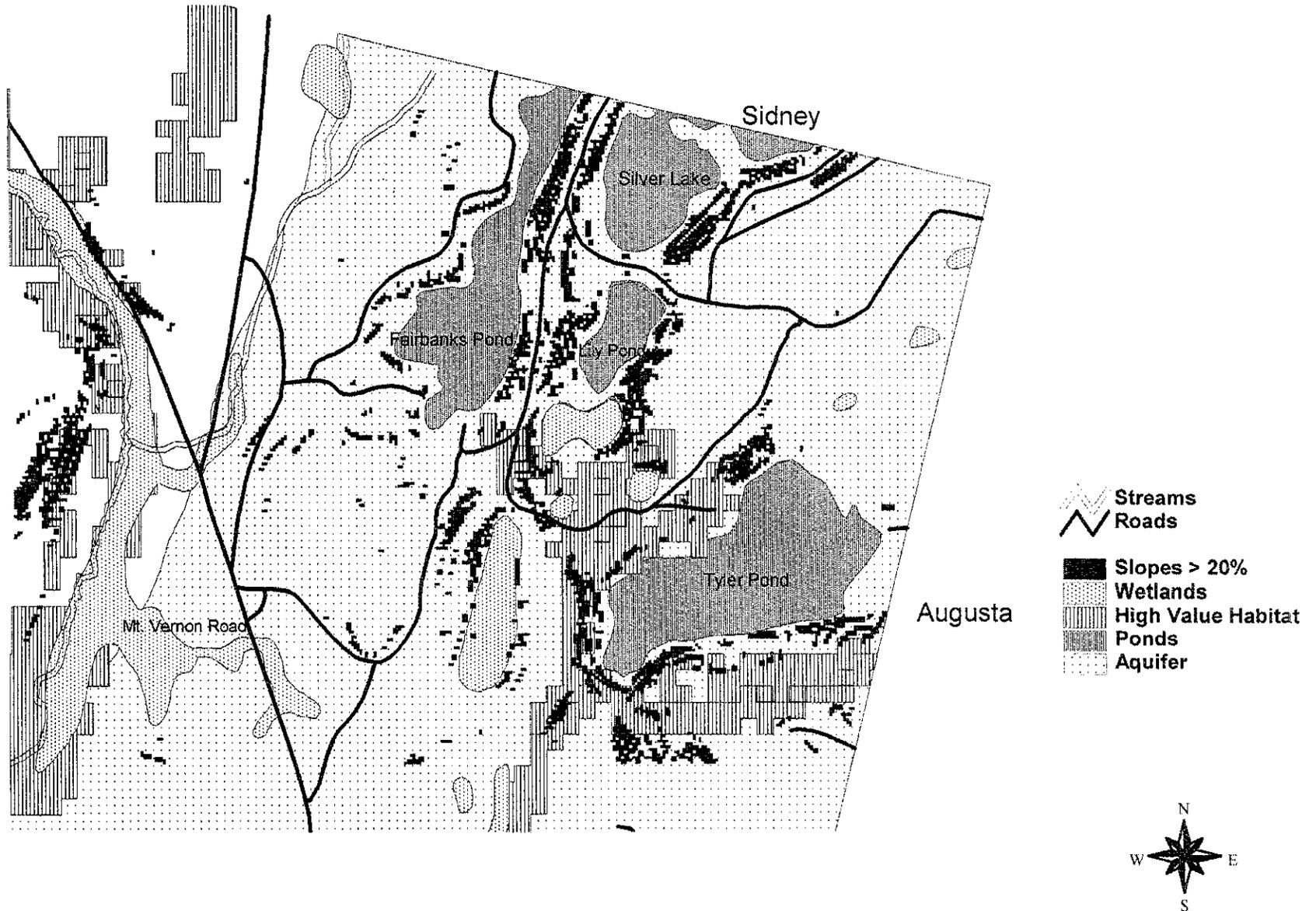
# Bog Pond and Jamies Pond Area Manchester, Maine



# Prescott Road Gateway Area Manchester, Maine



# Summer Haven Ponds Area Manchester, Maine



## APPENDIX 3: PUBLIC COMMENTS ON PLAN

The Long Range Planning Committee held a public meeting on February 12, 2004, to solicit public comments on the draft open space and public facilities plan. Thirty five citizens and representatives of local boards and organizations attended. The issues raised include the following:

### **Goal 1: Conserve Existing Public Land**

Attendees strongly agreed that creating a permanent Conservation Commission is a good idea. A CC will provide order and consistency in the town's conservation initiatives, but townspeople will need to understand better about how easements will be placed on town land; and the extent of the formal entity's powers and responsibilities and relationship to the Kennebec Land Trust. Strong support was expressed for asking June Town Meeting to vote on the plan as well as a conservation commission ordinance to maintain progress on these issues. At least one attendee, however, felt the two issues should be taken up separately.

#### Response:

The LRPC will ask the Select Board to include an article to establish the Conservation Commission on the same town warrant as the vote on this plan, at the annual Town Meeting in June. The plan has been revised to include a sidebar explaining the powers of a conservation commission as delegated in state law, and why a local ordinance is also a good idea.

### **Goal 2: Conserve High Value Lands**

If landowners misunderstand what is being proposed, they will be scared to death. Need a public relations campaign that emphasizes that the town will work only with willing landowners; and that access is not always required, though it is preferred, for easements, e.g. a scenic views sometimes can be only visual rather than physical access. Need to work with KLT to clarify conditions under which they prefer that access be included in an easement, if they are to be the third party holder of the easement. For properties within the shoreland zone, does the town have the authority to create access opportunities to the water for swimming or boating, given town and DEP regulations?

#### Response:

The plan has been changed to emphasize the fact that the town intends to work with willing landowners to effect conservation projects. See Additional Policies, number 7, and Action Recommendation 1 on page 28. The Conservation Committee/Commission will work with the Kennebec Land Trust to understand that organization's policies on easements and public access, and promote visual access as an important goal. The Town must abide by its own shoreland zoning regulations, as well as the state Natural Resource Protection Act, in creating access to the water; these regulations do not preclude access, but stipulate how it must be developed.

### **Goal 3: Water Access**

No issues were raised. Townspeople desire water access but generally understand the difficulty in finding appropriate sites, especially in regard to abutters.

### **Goal 4: Pathways**

Some felt that sidewalks on Route 202 are too dangerous because of the intensity and speed of traffic. Sidewalks don't have to parallel or be right adjacent to the road. Much of the conversation focused on MDOT's plans to expand Route 202, which appear to be delayed until 2006. The State recently sent the town manager a letter asking about the town's plans for development along the corridor. Participants also wondered why MDOT had dropped sidewalks from its plans for Route 17 when it reconstructed the road a few years ago.

#### Response:

The first vision statement on page 32 has been changed to reflect the committee's intent to creatively site pathways along Routes 202 and 17, by offsetting them from the road some distance, whenever possible.

### **Goal 5: Town Center**

Route 202 is so unsafe that one participant urged that the town not put any more people or kids as pedestrians or cyclists on the road. People liked the idea of collaborating with the YMCA whenever the town can to provide recreation opportunities and facilities. They wanted to know how the plan will be funded, and whether the fire station will be landscaped or moved. People generally agreed that the fire station location should be moved when the current building becomes obsolete and the town should begin planning

and budgeting for that eventuality; the grounds should be landscaped in short term, however.

### **Overall Impressions**

Participants agreed that the plan is overall a good one. One participant wondered if support and the ideas expressed in the surveys upon which the plan is based are indeed representative, or just the ideas of higher income residents. The Committee explained its reasons for believing support to be representative of the town as a whole. Another participant expressed his belief that the town needs to share regional services to the extent possible, and wondered how regionalism might tie in with the plan. Committee members mentioned ongoing conversations with Readfield and other communities on shared recreation and other programs.

### **Priorities**

Attendees were each given 6 sticky dots and asked to place them next to their top six priorities for the town to move on first in implementing the plan (all six could be placed on the same action, if desired). Their top priorities, in rank order, are as follows:

1. Draft conservation commission ordinance
2. Landscape school/town office complex
3. Explore options for swimming ♦ Distribute walking route map
4. Work with willing landowners to conserve high value lands
5. Collaborate with YMCA
6. Recommend recycling strategy
7. Develop regional bike land plan ♦ Develop Route 202 Corridor Plan ♦ Expand recreation program and facilities