**TOWN OF OTIS**

**1995 Comprehensive Plan**

**Draft: May, 1995**

 **for Submittal to the State of Comprehensive Planning**

**Prepared by the Town of Otis Comprehensive Planning Committee**

**with the assistance from Jim Haskell & Associates, Community Planners, Growth Management & Land Development Consultants**

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**OTIS 1995 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**TOWN OFFICIALS**

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**1995 OTIS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

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**SECTION I: INTRODUCTION**

**A. BACKGROUND**

This revised Comprehensive Plan is the result of hard work by the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. Board of Selectmen, and the Planning Board of the Town of Otis.

**B. STATUTORY BASIS**

This Comprehensive Plan was developed pursuant to the statutory requirements of the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act of 1988 (Title 30, Section 4961, of the Maine Revised Statutes).

**C. AUTHORIZATION**

The preparation of this Comprehensive Plan was authorized by the voters of Otis at the annual Town Meeting of 1990.

**D. FUNDING**

The preparation of this Comprehensive Plan was funded with $3,750.00 appropriated, as their local match, by the voters of Otis and a grant of $11,250.00 from the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of Comprehensive Planning.

**E. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to provide the factual basis and policy framework for future planning, regulatory, and community development decision making, in both the public and private sectors in the Town of Otis, Maine.

**F. SCOPE**

The Comprehensive Plan examines the available information regarding the following components of Otis’s land, government, and people in the following Inventory and Analysis Sections:

1. Population

2. Economy

3. Housing

4. Transportation

5. Public Facilities and Services

6. Recreation

7. Water Resources

8. Critical Natural Resources

9. Agricultural and Forest Resources

10. Historic and Archaeological Resources

11. Exiting Land Use

12. Fiscal Capacity

In addition, this Comprehensive Plan contains within it the following sub-plans:

1. An official Land Use Plan;

2. A Capital Investment Plan;

3. A Regional Coordination Plan; and

4. Implementation Strategies implementing identified Growth Management Policies.

Included as Appendix A of this plan a summary of the findings of the Growth Management Opinion Survey conducted in September of 1991.

**G. APPOACH**

Information regarding each of the above components was analyzed and synthesized, and is presented according to the following format:

1. *A discussion of existing conditions or existing situation*:
2. A discussion of inherent planning implications; and
3. Recommended policies and proposed actions considered necessary and/or desirable to implant these policies.

**H. LIMITATIONS**

This Comprehensive Plan has been assembled and compiled with the genuine intention that *all* of the data and information contained herein is reasonably accurate and correct. The information contained in this Plan was gathered from the sourced cited. Some of the sources were found to be more detailed and more recent than others. Where appropriate, future application of the information contained in this Plan should be preceded by a check of the sources to see if additional or revised information is available.

Most of the information contained in this Plan is considered current and of sufficient detail to support the conclusions and recommendations offered. **Note that while this information is suitable for general planning, it may not be appropriate for site specific decisions.**

**SECTION II: A; POPULATION**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

A basic concern of this Comprehensive Plan is the Town of Otis’s population and how the population may change in the future.

The purpose of this section is:

a. to profile the town’s and region’s population in terms of population and household characteristic most significant in describing the town’s character and in influencing future demands for housing, land, and community facilities and services:

b. to identify and understand important changed in those characteristic and how they might affect the characteristics of future populations;

c. to identify and understand how the town’s population characteristics and changes in population relate to those of the region; and

d. to identify and understand the size and characteristics of the town’s and the region’s population ten years into the future.

**2. YEAR-ROUND POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS**

Figures II.A and II.A.2 show the recent, current, and projected population levels of Otis and Hancock County, along with rates of change and projected rates of change. The population boom occurred in Otis in the 1970’s which did not occur in the County as a whole. Since then the growth rate has slowed and Otis’s growth rate for the next 10 years is projected as slower than the County as a whole.

In July 1989 the State estimated Otis’s population would be 365 but the actual census of 1990 counted a population of 355.

**3. AGE CHARACTERISTIC**

Figure II.A.2 show the recent, current, and projected population in Otis and Hancock County as a whole. Of particular note from these figures is that the Census showed the school age population in Otis decreased from 80 in 1980 to 76 in 1990, these figures is the do not include Mariaville students. Department of Human Services projections show the school age population shrinking substantially by the year 2000. These figures are compared with enrollment statistic in the Public Facilities section of this plan. The greatest growth in the 10 year planning period is projected in the 45-64 age group in Otis. This sector of the population does not generally make special demands of public facilities and typically individuals in this age group are at the peak of their earning potential. Hancock County statistic also project the greatest increase in the 45-64 year age group. By the year 2000, 16% of Hancock County’s population as a whole will be over 65 compared with only 9% of Otis’s population.

**4. HOUSEHOLD SIZE CHARACTERISTICS**

Figure II.A.4 shows the number of households in Otis and Hancock County from 1970 to 1990 with projections for the year 2000. Figure II.A.5 shows the median household sizes for Otis and Hancock County from 1970 to 2000. The number and size of households directly affects the demand for housing as discussed in Section II.C: Housing. An increase of 46 households during the planning period is about plus 5 households per year. This describes a period of moderate growth: greater than in the last 10 years, but less than in the previous 10, and still grater than the County as a whole. It is surprising that even with this increase the projected school age population is projected to decrease during this period. This follows the projected increase in the 45-64 age group. Committee members note recent trends in town:

 1. *an increasing number of young people are returning to Otis; and*

2. an increasing number of summer persons are making Otis their permanent residence. If this trend persists the projected school age population figures could easily be reversed.

During the planning period Otis’s household size is projected to decrease from 2.77 to 2.50 while the household size in Hancock County as a whole decreases from 2.47 to 2.23. This data makes sense given Otis’s relatively younger population.

**5. HOUSEHOLD INCOME CHARACTERISTICS**

Figure II.A.6 shows the income distribution of households in Otis and the entire County for 1979 and Hancock County for 1990 to 1995. The number of Otis households at particular income levels were slightly greater than the County’s for incomes less than the mean and the numbers falloff substantially from the County’s as the income level exceeds $25,000 per year. Given Otis’s younger population and larger household size the trend is not surprising and can be expected to continue. Committee members estimate that with the increase in two income households in town, the income figures for Otis are probably now closer to those for the county as a whole.

Household income levels are of concern to a community because they reflect citizens’ ability to pay for personal services and taxes. Income size is also an indicator of the economic vitality of an area, as discussed in Section II.B: Economy.

**6. PEAK SEASONAL POPULATION**

Very little hand data exists regarding the Town’s peak seasonal population. It is recommended that the Planning Board conduct a door to door census of seasonal units or through the use of the tax information construct an estimate of the Town’s seasonal residents.

**Sources: 1970 Census, 1980 Census, 1990 Census, Department of Human Services.**

**FIGURE II.A.1**

**POPULATION LEVELS: RECENT, CURRENT, AND PROJECTED**

**OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970-2000**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1970****census** | **1980****Census** | **1990****census** | **2000****census** |
| **Otis** | **123** | **307** | **355** | **395** |
| **Hancock Country** | **34,590** | **41,781** | **46,948** | **53,111** |

**FIGURE II.A.2**

**POPULATION CHANGE: RECENT AND PROJECTED**

**OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970-2000**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1970-80****Census no., percentage** | **1980-90****Census no.,****percentage** | **1990-2000****Projected number, percentage** |
| **Otis** | **+184, +150%** | **+48, +16%** | **+40, +11%** |
| **Hancock County**  | **+7,919, +21%** | **+5,167, +12%** | **+6,179, +13%** |

Sources: Derived from Figure II.A.2

**FIGURE II.A.3**

**AGE DISTRIBUTION: RECENT, CURRENT, AND PROJECTED**

**OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970-2000**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **1970****census no., percentage** | **1980****census no.,****percentage** | **1990****census no.,****percentage** | **2000****census no.,****percentage** |
| **Otis** | **0-4 years** | **12,****15%** | **28,****9%** | **26****7%** | **11,****3%** |
| **5-17 years** | **38,****31%** | **80,****26%** | **76,****21%** | **34,****9%** |
| **18-44 years** | **43,****35%** | **116,****38%** | **148,****42%** | **188,****48%** |
| **45-64 years** | **18,****15%** | **54,****18%** | **72,****20%** | **124,****31%** |
| **65 years & up** | **12,****14%** | **29,****9%** | **33,****9%** | **38,****9%** |
| **Totals** | **123,****100%** | **307,****100%** | **355,****100%** | **395,****100%** |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Hancock County** | **0-4 years** | **2,652,****7.7%** | **2,610,****6.2%** | **3,205,****7.0%** | **3,461,****6.5%** |
| **5-17 years** | **8,491,****24.5%** | **9,801,\*****23.5%** | **8,130,****17.0%** | **8,786,****16.5%** |
| **18-44 years** | **10,912,****31.5%** | **14,476, \*\*****34.6%** | **19,057,****41.0%** | **20,182,****38.0%** |
| **45-64 years** | **7,596,****22.0%** | **8,465,****20.3%** | **9,311,****20.0%** | **12,132,****22.8%** |
| **65 years & up** | **4,939,****14.3%** | **6,429,****15.4%** | **7,155,****15.0%** | **8,550,****16.2%** |
| **Totals** | **34,590,****100%** | **41,781,****100%** | **46,948,****100%** | **53,111,****100%** |

**Sources: 1970, 1980, 1990 Census, Department of Human Services**

**\* 5-19 years.**

**\*\* 20-44 years.**

**FIGURE II.A.5**

**MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD SIZE: OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970-2000**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1970****census** | **1980****census** | **1990****census** | **2000****census** |
| **Otis** | **3.32** | **3.34** | **2.77** | **2.50** |
| **Hancock County** | **2.96** | **2.62** | **2.47** | **2.23** |

**Source: 1970, 1980 & 1990 Census**

**Note: Projection used for 2000 derived by extrapolation 1970, 1980 & 1990 Data.**

**Sources: 1970, 1980 & 1990 Census**

**Note: Projection used for 2000 extrapolated from 1970, 1980 and 1990 data.**

**FIGURE II.A.4**

**NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS: RECENT, CURRENT, AND PROJECTED**

**OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970-2000**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1970****census** | **1980****census** | **1990****census** | **2000****census** |
| **Otis** | **37** | **92** | **128** | **174** |
| **Hancock County** | **11,334** | **15,442** | **18,342** | **21,846** |

**Source: National Planning Data Corporation**

**FIGURE II.A.6**

**HOUSEHOLD INCOMES DISTRIBUTION: OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1979-1995**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Otis** | Hancock County |
| **Income Level** | **1979****census no.,****percent** | **1979****census no.,****percent** | **1990****est. no.,****percent** | **1995****proj. no.,****percent** |
| **$ 0 - $7,499** | **27,****32%** | **4,285,****27.8%** | **1,922,****10.2%** | **1,126,****5.4%** |
| **$7,500-$9,999** | **12,****14%** | **1,882,****12.2%** | **1,083,****5.7%** | **1,074,****5.1%** |
| **$10,000-$14,999** | **18,****21%** | **3,204,****20.8%** | **2,259,****12%** | **1,885,****8.9%** |
| **$15,000-$19,999** | **16,****19%** | **2,460,****15.9%** | **2,255,****11.9%** | **1,839,****8.7%** |
| **$20,000-$24,999** | **8,****10%** | **1,629,****10.5%** | **2,125,****11.2%** | **1,967,****9.3%** |
| **$25,000-$29,999** | **0,****0%** | **756,****4.9%** | **1,721,****9.1%** | **1,789,****8.5%** |
| **$30,000-$34,999** | **3,****4%** | **537,****3.5%** | **1,572,****8.3%** | **1,725,****8.2%** |
| **$35,000-$39,999** | **0,****0%** | **291,****1.9%** | **1,290,****6.8%** | **1,263,****6%** |
| **$40,000-$49,999** | **0,****0%** | **226,****1.5%** | **1,976,****10.5%** | **2,631,****12.5%** |
| **$50,000-$74,999** | **0,****0%** | **143,****0.9%** | **1,958,****10.3%** | **3,484,****16.6%** |
| **$75,000-$99,999** | **0,****0%** | **21,****0.1%** | **517,****2.7%** | **1,518,****7.2%** |
| **$100,000-$149,999** | **0,****0%** | **7,****0%** | **202,****1.1%** | **600,****2.8%** |
| **$150,000 +** | **0,****0%** | **1,****0%** | **39,****0.2%** | **163,****0.8%** |
| **Totals** | **84** | **15,442** | **18,919** | **21,064** |
| **Mean Household Inc.** |  | **$14,445** | **$29,558** | **$38,804** |

**SECTION II.B: ECONOMY**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

This purpose of this section is:

 a. to profile the economy of Otis and Hancock County, particularly significant

employment characteristics and commercial and industrial activity:

b. to identify and understand important changes in those characteristics and how they might affect future economic conditions;

c. to identify and understand Otis’s relationship with the regional economy in terms of employment and economic vitality; and

d. to identify those business and sectors of the economy most important to the economic vitality of Otis, and to descried the outlook for their growth or decline over the next ten years.

**2. LABOR FORCE**

 **a. Labor force Size**

Figure II.B.1 shows the 1980 and 1989 labor force sizes for Otis and Hancock County. The labor force of Hancock County grew by nearly 50% from 1980 to 1989. Otis’s labor force grew by 39 people (39%) while its entire population grew by about 49 people. This labor force increase was due in part to an increase in population. The growth in Otis’s labor force may also reflect the increasing number of double-income households in Town.

**b. Occupation Types**

Figure II.B.2 compares occupation types in Otis and the County as a whole. Although similar in many areas, Otis had fewer people employed in industries bases in natural resources and more employed in Technical/Sales/Administration.

Figure II.B.3 shows the distribution of labor force by industry in Otis and Hancock County in 1980. This figure shows that Otis had a larger percent of its population employed in the construction and retail industries than the County as a whole and a smaller percentage employed in manufacturing and services.

The Census results may underestimate the number of the residents who are self employed, working as farmers, woodspeople, contractors, or in small cottage industries. It should be noted that these figures are more than ten years old.

**c. Distribution of Labor Force by Location of Employment**

The 1980 Census does not provide adequate information on the location of employment of Otis residents. Because there are only very small employers in the Town, nearly all workers in Otis are either self employed or travel to neighboring towns for employment. Figure II.B.4 shows that most Otis residents who travel to work commuted from 30 to 44 minutes. From Otis it takes about 15 minutes to reach downtown Ellsworth, 40 to 45 minutes to reach Bangor, 45 minutes to reach Bucksport and over 45 minutes to reach Bar Harbor or Blue Hill. This would suggest that many Otis residents are employed in the surrounding towns.

**d. Unemployment**

Figure II.B.5 shows the unemployment rates for Otis and Hancock County. The boom years of the 1980’s reversed Down East Maine traditionally high unemployment rates. The 1980 Census reported that 16.3% of Otis’s 116 member labor force was unemployed. The Maine Department of Labor records that only two people were unemployed in Otis in 1989, leading to an unemployment rate of less than 2%. With the recession of 1990, however, it is likely that the unemployment rate has grown.

**3. MAJOR EMPLOYERS AND BUSINESS**

The Otis General Store is the center of retail activity in town. Besides the seasonal work in the woods and harvesting blueberries, the school, a garage, some contractors and several small home operated business employ some people in Otis. Three persons are employed by the school. As mentioned above, most Otis residents either commute or are self-employed.

 The major employers in the region are Champion Paper Company in Bucksport, the

Jackson Laboratory in Bar Harbor, and the many service and commercial establishments in Ellsworth and coastal communities. The economy of Hancock County is primarily based on tourism, services, agriculture, and forestry, all of which rend to have seasonal fluctuations in employment. Many Otis residents work as jobs in the Bangor area.

The Town of Otis could probably support one or two additional retail establishments but committee members are divided on whether this should be a goal of the Town or not. Some are concerned that increased traffic would detract from the town’s good qualities but some types of development, such as a nursing home or day care facility, would not have this negative impact on the town while providing jobs and broadening the town’s tax base.

**4. TAXABLE SALES**

Taxable sales report can often be used as a measure of economic activity in a town. Figure II.B.6 and II.B.7 show taxable consumer sales for Hancock County broken down by calendar quarter and retail sector for 1985-1989. Figure II.B.7 also shows sales for the “Ellsworth Economic Summary Area” which includes Ellsworth and surrounding towns. This information shows that nearly two-thirds of Hancock County’s economy is concentrated in the Ellsworth area. Hancock County has grown rapidly in the last five years, especially in the areas of building supply, restaurants and lodging. Retail stores have also done well. Hancock County’s economy changes significantly from quarter to quarter. While sales have increased at nearly the same rate for each quarter, nearly 40% of all sales are in the third (summer) quarter. The first quarter (post-Christmas) is a period of very little sales, with only 14.6% of the sales for the year being in that three month period.

**Source: 1980 Census, Maine Department of Labor**

**FIGURE II.B.1**

**SIZE OF LABOR FORCE: NUMBER OF EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED OVER AGE 16**

**OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY: 1980, 1989**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1980** | **1989** |
| **Otis** | **116** | **155** |
| **Hancock County** | **17,286** | **25,285** |

**FIGURE II.B.2**

**1980 OCCUPATION TYPES: EMPLOYED PERSONS 16 YEARS AND OVER**

**OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Occupation** | **Otis** | **Hancock County** |
| **numbers** | **percent** | **numbers**  | **percent** |
| **Managerial & Professional** | **16** | **18%** | **3,116** | **20%** |
| **Technical/Sales/Administration** | **29** | **33%** | **3,627** | **24%** |
| **Service** | **12** | **14%** | **2,414** | **16%** |
| **Farm/Forest/Fishing** | **2** | **2%** | **1,460** | **9%** |
| **Precision Production** | **17** | **20%** | **2,552** | **17%** |
| **Operators/Fabricators/Laborers** | **11** | **13%** | **2,217** | **14%** |
| **Totals** | **87** | **100%** | **15,386** | **100%** |

**Source: 1980 Census**

**Source: 1980 Census**

**FIGURE II.B.3**

**DISTRIBUTION OF LABOR FORCE BY INDUSTRY**

**HANCOCK COUNTY, 1980**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Industry Category** | **Otis** | **Hancock County** |
| **number** | **percent**  | **number** | **percent**  |
| **Agriculture** | **3** | **3%** | **239** | **2%** |
| **Forestry and Fishing** | **799** | **5%** |
| **Mining** | **16** | **0%** |
| **Construction** | **21** | **24%** | **1,468** | **10%** |
| **Manufacturing** | **5** | **6%** | **2,421** | **16%** |
| **Transportation, Communication & Public Utilities** | **2** | **2%** | **762** | **5%** |
| **Wholesale Trade** | **0** | **0%** | **455** | **3%** |
| **Retail Trade** | **28** | **32%** | **2,617** | **17%** |
| **Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate** | **6** | **7%** | **446** | **3%** |
| **Services** | **20** | **23%** | **5,357** | **35%** |
| **Public Administration** | **2** | **2%** | **806** | **5%** |
| **Total** | **87** | **100%** | **15,386** | **100%** |

**FIGURE II.B.6**

**ANNUAL TAXABLE SALES, CONSUMER GOODS BY QUARTER, IN THOUSANDS OF REAL DOLLARS**

**HANCOCK COUNTY, 1985-1989**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1985** | **1986** | **1987** | **1988** | **1989** | **1985-89****%****change** | **1989****% of****change** |
| **Hancock County** | **1st Quarter** | **31,159** | **35,318** | **37,626** | **45,328** | **47,612** | **52.8** | **14.6** |
| **2nd Quarter** | **49,406** | **57,468** | **65,421** | **72,808** | **78,115** | **58.1** | **24.0** |
| **3rd Quarter** | **85,529** | **101,793** | **111,449** | **126,428** | **127,703** | **49.3** | **39.3** |
| **4th Quarter** | **51,204** | **60,749** | **69,659** | **75,816** | **71,800** | **40.2** | **22.1** |
| **Annual** | **217,298** | **255,358** | **284,154** | **320,380** | **325,230** | **49.7** | **100.** |
| **Source: Maine Bureau of Taxation, Sales Tax Division** |

**FIGURE II.B.5**

**UNEMPLOYMENT RATES**

**OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1980-1989**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | **Otis** | **Hancock County** |
| **1980** | **16.3 %** | **11.0 %** |
| **1989** | **1.29 %** | **4.3 %** |
| **Source: 1980 Census, Maine Department of Labor** |

**FIGURE II.B.4**

**TRAVEL TIME TO WORK FOR WORKERS WHO DID NOT WORK AT HOME: OTIS, 1980**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Travel Time** | **number** | **percent** |
| **Less than 14 minutes** | **5** | **8%** |
| **15 to 29 minutes** | **16** | **24%** |
| **30 to 44 minutes** | **27** | **41%** |
| **45 or more minutes** | **18** | **27%** |
| **Totals** | **66** | **100%** |
| **Source: 1980 U.S. Census** |

**FIGURE II.B.7**

**TAXABLE SALES: CONSUMER GOODS BY RETAIL SECTOR, IN THOUSANDS OF REAL DOLLARS**

**ELLSWORTH ECONOMIC SUMMARY AREA AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1985-1989**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1985** | **1986** | **1987** | **1988** | **1989** | **85-89****%****change** | **1989****% of** **annual** |
| **Ellsworth Economic Summary Area** | **Building Supply** | **$ 19,405** | **$24,663** | **$ 30,098** | **$ 33,798** | **$ 36,240** | **+87%** | **19%** |
| **Food** | **$ 17,443** | **$ 17,785** | **$ 20,940** | **$ 22,596** | **$ 23,872** | **+37%** | **12%** |
| **General Merchandise** | **$ 28,822** | **$ 31,238** | **$ 36,229** | **$ 37,780** | **$ 37,804** | **+31%** | **19%** |
| **Other Retail** | **$ 12,268** | **$ 14,070** | **$ 15,747** | **$ 18,186** | **$ 17,858** | **+46%** | **9%** |
| **Autos & Transportation** | **$38,712** | **$ 48,599** | **$ 48,771** | **$ 58,404** | **$ 53,321** | **+38%** | **27%** |
| **Restaurant & Lodging** | **$ 16,216** | **$ 18,972** | **$ 22,865** | **$ 25,933** | **$ 27,372** | **+69%** | **14%** |
| **Annual Total, all sectors** | **$ 132,866** | **$ 155,327** | **$ 174,650** | **$ 196,697** | **$ 196,467** | **+48%** | **100%** |
| **Hancock County** | **Building Supply** | **$32,373** | **$ 41,029** | **$ 48,830** | **$ 53,151** | **$ 56,323** | **+74%** | **17%** |
| **Food** | **$ 30,690** | **$ 31,471** | **$ 35,690** | **$ 38,336** | **$ 40,723** | **+33%** | **13%** |
| **General Merchandise** | **$34,017** | **$ 35,754** | **$ 41,166** | **$ 43,362** | **$ 43,489** | **+28%** | **13%** |
| **Other Retail** | **$24,000** | **$ 27,727** | **$ 30,951** | **$ 35,434** | **$ 36,800** | **+53%** | **11%** |
| **Auto & Transportation** | **$50,035** | **$ 61,721** | **$ 63,039** | **$ 75,036** | **$ 69,665** | **+39%** | **21%** |
| **Restaurant & Lodging** | **$46,182** | **$ 57,626** | **$ 64,477** | **$ 75,060** | **$ 78,230** | **+69%** | **24%** |
| **Annual Total, all sectors** | **$217,298** | **$ 265,328** | **$ 284.154** | **$ 320,379** | **$325,230** | **+50%** | **100%** |
| **Source: Maine Bureau of Taxation, Sales Tax Division** |
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**SECTION II.C: HOUSING**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this section is:

a. to profile the housing stocks of Otis and Hancock County in terms of size and composition;

b. to describe the affordability of the housing stock of Otis for very low income, low income, and moderate income households;

c. to identify and understand how Otis’s housing stock relates to the region’s housing stock and housing demands; and

d. to predict the size, characteristics, and affordability of new and rehabilitated housing needed to meet the housing demands of the projected future population, and whether the local housing market will meet the predicted housing needs.

 **2. YEAR-ROUND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS**

 **a. Number of Housing Units**

Figure II.C.1 shows the total number of year-round housing units in Otis and

Hancock County as a whole for 1970, 1980 and 1990. The Census recorded an increase of 36 year-round units in the last 10 years, a jump of 36%. This figure, together with the recorded increase of 106% between 1970 and 1980 yields a projected increase of 44 units by the year 2000. Based on State data and Committee member input, it is estimated that many of the 44 units will be conversions of seasonal camps on Beech Hill Pond to year-round housing, while others will be due to off-spring moving back into town.

**b. Vacancy Rate For Year-Round Housing**

Figure II.C.2 shows vacancy rate for Otis and Hancock County as a whole for 1990. The census provided no rental vacancy statistic for Otis. The vacancy rate for homeowner units is lower than Hancock County as a whole. This may reflect the scarcity of homes built on speculation in Otis which are more prevalent closer to the coast in the County.

**c. Distribution of Housing Units By Structure Type**

Figure II.C.3 shows a distribution of structure types in Otis and Hancock County as a whole for 1970 through 1990. The information shows that all of the housing units in Otis are either mobile homes or single family houses. Although the Bureau of Taxation reported 5 new mobile homes were added to Otis’s housing stock between 1981 and 1989, the Census shows more. The figures showing an increase of 95 mobile homes in this time period is not supported by Committee members: there may be around 50 mobile homes in town now.

Note the difference between Figures II.C.1 and II.C.3. For 1970 II.C.1 shows a total of 49 year round housing units, II.C.3 shows 459 housing units. For 1980 II.C.1 shows a total of 101 year round housing units, II.C.3 shows 538 housing units. For 1990 II.C.1 shows a total of 137 year round housing units and II.C.3 shows 599 total units. This shows that 75% of the town housing stock is in seasonal units, down from 90% in 1970. Committee members estimate that seasonal units will constitute a steadily smaller percentage of the town’s housing stock as more camps are converted to year-round use. County-wide, seasonal units account for about one third of the housing stock.

**d. Distribution of Housing Units By Tenure**

The tenure of housing units is a term to describe whether people are more likely to own or rent their places of residence. Figure II.C.4 shows the tenure for both Otis and Hancock County for 1970, 1980 and 1990. During this period the percent of rental units in Otis increase slightly while that of the County decreased slightly.

**e. Distribution of Housing Units By Condition**

The condition of the housing stock is very important in terms of the welfare of a community. The 1980 Census of Housing provides no complete measure of housing condition, but does provide a few key indicators which can be used for comparative analysis. The number of people per room and the existence of complete plumbing facilities are two such indicators.

Figure II.C.5 shows that Otis’s housing stock had more units with less than one room per person and fewer units with plumbing amenities than the County as a whole in 1980. It should be noted that this information is over ten years old. The 1990 Census data gives no information on plumbing but lists 9 out of 128 occupied housing units with more than 1 person per room: down to 7% from 12% in 1980. Generally, the condition of Otis’s housing stock is good at this time.

Otis does not have a building code. The Town relies on the requirements of the state statues regulating plumbing, electrical, and lot size. The Town employs a code enforcement on an hourly basis. By January 1, 1993 it is required that all code enforcement officers be trained by the state. Increased effectiveness of code enforcement may upgrade housing in Otis.

**f. Distribution of Housing Units By Affordability**

The most direct factors affecting the affordability of housing are income levels and costs associated with housing. Housing costs include rent or mortgage payments, interest rates, utilities, and many other related expenses. Just as it is difficult to measure exactly how much these expenses are, it is also difficult to establish exactly what percent of income is spent on these items.

The State defines affordable housing as housing which does not cost more than 30% of a renting household’s income (including insurance and utilities), or 28% of an owner’s household income (including mortgage payments, property tax, insurance, maintenance costs and utilities).

Figure II.C.6 lists affordable rents and selling prices for the rural part of Hancock County for 1990, which includes income level grouping for very low, low, and moderate income levels based on Hancock County median incomes in the study area. The affordable gross monthly rent for very low income families (family income less than $13,250 annually) is up to $250 per month. The 1990 U.S. Census found no monthly rents in this bracket but found all of the 11 units surveyed renting at between $250 and $499, with a median price of $363. These units are considered affordable to low income families.

Figure II.C.7 gives average selling prices for homes in Otis and the County for 1987 and 1988. The State compiles a Real Estate Transfer Tax data base that indicates the selling prices for each year. These measures are important, but obviously only include the real estate which was sold in a given year. Real estate is a volatile market in many areas, and transfer of speculative, seasonal, or investment properties can inflate the estimated cost of housing in an area: most of the real estate prices which were above the County average were on Mount Desert Island.

Figure II.C.8 shows an affordability index for Hancock County developed by the U.S.M. Institute for Real Estate Research and Education. This index uses the definitions of affordable housing outlined above. This U.S.M. index for Hancock County for 1989 was 67.72, meaning that the median family made 67% of the money necessary for afford a medium priced home. In 1988 the index was 70.08. The change in the index is the result of housing sale prices rising faster than income and indicates that housing in Hancock County is not very affordable. Since housing is significantly less expensive in Otis than in other areas of the County, and since income levels are only moderately lower, it is fair to state that housing in Otis is more affordable than housing in other areas of the County.

By many measures, housing in Otis is affordable for low income residents. However, since there is very little turnover in the housing stock, it is difficult to get accurate information on the average cost. Committee members estimate that these selling prices may be a little low.

**b. Planning Implications**

If Otis’s projected population increase proves correct and household size increases slightly as projected, the need for additional housing units will continue. There are now around 20 subdivision lots in town which have not been built on. The town must recognize the anticipated increase in the number of year-round units as part of its land use strategy.

Because manufactured lousing id generally the most affordable housing type available, the availability of affordable housing in Otis is largely a question of availability of affordable lots. Although some of the shorefront lots in Otis are relatively expensive, there are numerous affordable house lots elsewhere in town for sale.

Vacancy is not an important issue in Otis and with the anticipated increase in population this will probably continue to be the case.

The Land Use Plan details the number of housing units which will be demanded by the year 2000. Based on past trends, it is projected that most of these units will be single family and that an increasing percentage will be manufactured housing.

 **4. SUBSIDIZED HOUSING UNITS**

There are no subsidized housing units in Otis. Otis residents are to obtain partial subsidies through housing loans or vouchers for purchase or rental of existing units. It is impractical for a Town of Otis’s size to provide subsidized housing. In Hancock County as a whole there are 571 elderly and 391 family federally assisted housing units.

**5. SEASONAL HOUSING UNITS**

The 1990 U.S. Census found 462 seasonal housing units in Otis, up from 437 in 1980 and 410 in 1970. The majority of the housing units built in the last ten years were seasonal. Seasonal houses and seasonal population have a strong influence on the town’s taxes, recreation, transportation, and natural resources.

**FIGURE II.C.1**

**TOTAL NUMBER OF YEAR-ROUND HOUSING UNITS**

**OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970-1990**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1970** | **1980** | **1990** |
| **Otis** | **49** | **101** | **137** |
| **Hancock County** | **14,378** | **17,057** | **20,260** |
| **Source: 1970, 1980 & 1990 U.S. Census** |

**FIGURE II.C.2**

**VACANCY RATES, OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1990**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Otis** | **Hancock County** |
| **Rental Vacancy Rate** | **--** | **8.5%** |
| **Homeowner Vacancy Rate** | **.9%** | **2.1%** |
| **Source: 1990 Census** |

**FIGURE II.C.3**

**DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING UNITS BY STRUCTURE TYPE**

**OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970, 1980 & 1990**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Type of Building** | **1970** | **1980** | **1990** |
|  |  | **number** | **percent** | **number** | **percent** | **number** | **percent** |
| **Otis** | **1 family** | **46** | **98%** | **92** | **91%** | **495** | **83%** |
| **2-4 family** | **0** | **--** | **0** | **--** | **0** | **--** |
| **5+ family** | **0** | **--** | **0** | **--** | **0** | **--** |
| **Mobile home** | **1** | **2%** | **9** | **9%** | **104** | **17%** |
| **Total units** | **459** | **100%** | **538** | **100%** | **599** | **100%** |
| **Hancock County** | **1 family** | **12,395** | **86.2** | **13,137** | **77.0** | **23,412** | **77%** |
| **2-4 family** | **1,081** | **7.5** | **1,489** | **8.7** | **1,574** | **5%** |
| **5+ family** | **234** | **1.6** | **828** | **4.8** | **1,147** | **4%** |
| **Mobile home** | **668** | **4.7** | **1,620** | **9.5** | **4,263** | **14%** |
| **Total units** | **14,378** | **100%** | **17,074** | **100%** | **30,396** | **100%** |
| **Source: 1970, 1980, 1990 U.S. Census** |

**FIGURE II.C.4**

**DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUIPIED YEAR-ROUND HOUSING UNITS BY TENURE**

**OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1970, 1980 & 1990**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1970** | **1980** | **1990** |
|  | **Number** | **Percent** | **Number** | **Percent** | **Number** | **Percent** |
| **Otis** | **Owners** | **31** | **84%** | **83** | **90%** | **110** | **86%** |
| **Renters** | **6** | **16%** | **9** | **10%** | **18** | **14%** |
| **Hancock County** | **Owners** | **9,065** | **80%** | **12,037** | **78%** | **13,876** | **76%** |
| **Renters** | **2,269** | **20.9%** | **3,405** | **22%** | **4,466** | **24%** |
| **Source: 1970, 1980, 1990 U.S. Census** |

**FIGURE II.C.5**

**CONDITION OF YEAR-ROUND OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS**

**OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY, 1980**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Otis** | **Hancock County** |
| **number** | **percent** | **number** | **percent** |
| **Lacking Complete Plumbing for Exclusive Use** | **16** | **16%** | **1,421** | **8%** |
| **Having more than one person per room** | **12** | **12%** | **504** | **3%** |
| **Total Year-Round Occupied** | **101** | **100%** | **17,057** | **100%** |
| **Source: 1980 Census of Housing** |

**FIGURE II.C.7**

**REAL ESTATE TRANSFER TAX DATA: 1987, 1988**

**OTIS AND HANCOCK COUNTY**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Otis** | **Hancock County** |
| **1987** | **1988** | **1987** | **1988** |
| **Number of Sales** | **4** | **18** | **672** | **769** |
| **Average Price** | **$36,500** | **$39,472** | **$73,514** | **$93,104** |
| **Source: Maine State Housing Authority** |

**FIGURE II.C.6**

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING RENTS AND SELLING PRICES, 1990**

**HANCOCK COUNTY**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Annual Family Income** | **Percent of Total Families** | **Affordable Gross Monthly Rent** | **Affordable Selling Price** |
| **Very Low Income** **$0 to $13,250** | **26%** | **Up to $250** | **Up to $23,500** |
| **Low Income****$14,200 to $22,700** | **20%** | **Up to $460** | **Up to $42,800** |
| **Moderate Income****$22,700 to $39,000** | **33%** | **Up to $890** | **Up to $83,900** |
| **Median Family Income $26,500** |
| **Source: Office of Comprehensive Planning, Maine D.E.C.D.** |

**FIGURE II.C.8**

**AFFORDABLE INDEX**

**HANCOCK COUNTY, 1988-1989**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1988** | **1989** |
| **Index** | **70.08** | **67.72** |
| **Median Family Income** | **$24,000** | **$26,000** |
| **Income Necessary to Afford Median Price Home** | **$32,246** | **$39,390** |
| **Median Purchase Price (from Multiple Listing Service)** | **$73,375** | **$85,000** |
| **Source: U.S.M. Institute for Real Estate Research and Education** |

**SECTION II.D: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION**

**1. INTRODUTIION**

The purpose of this section is:

a. to identify and profile the Town’s public facilities and service systems in term of this extent, capability, and use;

b. to asses the adequacy of those systems in handling current use demands;

c. to predict whether public facility or service improvement will be needed to adequately accommodate the use demands of the projected population and development within the town and region;

d. to assess the general costs of providing the needed public facility and service system improvement;

e. to describe Otis’s parking situation and assess whether improvement will be needed to accommodate adequately the needs of projected population and economy.

**2. PUBLIC WORKS**

 **a. Water Supply**

Home and businesses in Otis obtain water from a number of sources which include private wells, springs and ponds. Floods Pond is used as a water source for the Bangor Water District which does not serve Otis residents. This is discussed in the Water Resources Section.

**b. Stormwater and Public Sewage Collection and Treatment**

Otis has no public stormwater or sewage system. Stormwater runs off roads in ditches and gullies and eventually into streams. All sewage disposal in through private subsurface septic systems or outhouses.

**c. Solid Waste Management**

The location of the Otis landfill is shown on the Public Facilities, Historic Sites and Recreation Map. White goods are taken to the dump and sold to white good collectors. The landfill has been capped and the Town has received its reimbursement from the State for their share. The Transfer Station has been completed and is open two days a week, Wednesday and Sunday 8-4 from June 1st through Oct. 1st., the rest of the year it is open Sunday 8-4. The Town has devised a recycling plan which has been submitted and accepted by the Maine Waste Management Agency.

**d. Maintenance of Municipal Buildings and Public Areas**

The Otis Civic Center is also on Route 180, across from the Beech Hill School and was built in 1949. It has 2 large rooms and I small room on the first floor and one medium sized floor upstairs, 2 bathrooms and a large parking lot. The Beech Hill School is leasing the 2 front rooms of the Otis Civic Center for 6-8th grades. An addition for the Beach Hill School will be voted on June 1st, 1995 and an anticipated date for completion is scheduled for December of 1996. The Town could make good use of this building as a meeting and collection place for the historical society, and a town library by expanding the existing town office. The two front rooms would provide for a town office and public meeting place, while the existing town office could be utilized for storage and an executive session meeting place for the Board of Selectmen or additional meeting place for planning board and/or historical society. This arrangement would allow the Town to make use of the upstairs as a library and collection place for the historical society. The facility could be accessed during town office hours and books could be checked out at the town office.

The Town also owns a recreation building on the West Shore Road which was built in the 1950s. This wooden camp has a large living room, kitchen, bathroom, closed-in porch and 2 bedrooms. The Town sometimes rents this building to overnight parties. The Town authorized the Selectmen to sell the recreation building at the annual town meeting held May 22, 1993. The Selectman have advertised the camp for sale by bid, June 20,1995 6:00 P.M. The recreation camp was appraised at $70,000.00 and the right-of-way for the Inhabitants of the Town of Otis was surveyed and documented. The survey will be an integral part of the deed.

The cemeteries are maintained with town funds: $600 was spent on this in 1990.

**e. Planning Implications**

Because all water and septic services are individual, it is important that the town assure that development occur on land suitable for septic systems and that the town protect its aquifiers and subsurface water supplies, as discussed in Section II.F: Water Resources, and Section VI: Land Use Plan of this report.

The Hancock County Planning Commission should be completing various assessments of regional waste and recycling needs within a year. Assessments of existing disposal rates, and recycling options may change on a monthly basis. The Town should consider its options and formulate a waste management plan which includes recycling a portion of the town’s waste as soon as possible, preferably in conjunction with other towns.

The Town may need to construct a sand and salt storage shed within the next 10 years to cover the 1000 cubic foot sand and salt storage site owned by Gordon Fellis. The funding for this project would be shared by the State and they have listed it as a low priority because it has no measurable effect on public water supplies.

**3. ROADS**

The location of Otis’s roads and bridges is shown on the Transportation Map. Most of this information was obtained from the Comprehensive Planning Committee. There are a total of 12 miles of public roads in the Town of Otis, 7.9 miles of which are State roads.

**a. Profile of Public Roads**

**1) Route 180**: the main road through town which links Otis with neighboring Ellsworth, and Clifton. It is currently maintained by the State. This road is paved and in good condition. 7.8 miles of Route 180 is in Otis.

**2) Route 181**: The main road for Mariaville which meets Route 180 at the southern end of Otis. Only .1 miles of Route 181 is in Otis. This road is maintained by the State, is paved, and is in good condition.

**3) Beech Hill Pond/ Point Road**: leads from Route 180 west and south 2.4 miles to a north shore of Beech Hill Pond. This road is paved and maintained with State aid. The condition of the road is fare.

**4) Pyle(Rock Nibble Nancy) Road:** A town-maintained with state aid, paved road is fare condition. This leads from Route 180 for .9 miles in Otis and leads to Route 181 Mariaville.

**5) Hopkins Hill/ Gary Moore/ Old Ellsworth Road**: Is .5 miles long in Otis, paved and in fair condition. It is maintained by the town with state aid. This road extends south from Route 180 at the foot of Beech Hill Pond and into Ellsworth.

**6) Olive Carr/Warren Road**: This is a local road between Otis and Mariaville at the south end of town is a gravel town road in fair condition. Also .1 mile of Sandy Beach Lane (between Route 180 and School House Cove) is town maintained.

**b. Bridges**

There are several small bridges along Route 180 along Tanner Brook, Roberts Brook and Beech Hill Brook. These are maintained by State and are in good condition. The other stream crossings in town are culverts and are also not in need of repair at this time.

**c. Maintenance and Plowing**

The town contracts with a snow plow contractor on the order of $22,400 for snow removal. Annual road sand costs $3,700.00. Road maintenance expenses are shared by the State and locally cost around $26,600.00, of which $3,000 is for pot holes repair. The town owns one old grader and contracts out of most maintenance. The roads are posted in the spring to minimize damage from heavy loads. Only forty-eight percent (48%) of the respondents to the Opinion Survey felt that the snow removal and sanding was adequate or better, while forty-eight percent (48%) felt road maintenance was inadequate.

**d. Usage and Safety of Roads**

The roads in Otis are used below their capacity. Even with summer traffic, there are few congestions or safety problems. The D.O.T. counted traffic on Route 180 north of Route 181 in both 1979 and 1988. The annual average daily traffic in 1979 was 280, and this figure jumped to 700 in 1988. The speed zone is posted but traffic is often till too fast through this area.

The D.O.T. recorded nine accidents in the years 1987, ’88, and ’89. Of these seven involved property damage and two involved non-incapacitating injury.

**e. Planning Implications: Roads**

The road needs of Otis are primarily residential, with some hauling of lumber and gravel on and through traffic on Route 180. With the exception of Route 180, the roads in Otis are not of significant quality or size to attract commercial traffic or support heavy industry. The town puts in funds to help maintain the Beech Hill Pond road up to the boat launch, but this road is often still in need of repairs. The private individuals also contribute to maintaining this road.

**4. OTHER TRANSPORTATION AND FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

**a. Public Transportation**

There are no taxi services in Otis. Greyhound buslines’ closest terminal is in Bangor. Down East Transportation runs bus service to Otis and other area communities once a week.

The Washington/Hancock Community Agency provides door to door on demand transportation from Otis to Ellsworth or Bangor for clients referred to them from the Department of Human Services. These clients must be income-eligible and are typically children in state custody, welfare clients, or handicap residents. Most longer trips are for medical reasons.

Otis residents rely primarily on personal autos for their transportation.

Intrastate bus or real service through Otis is unlikely in the near future. A bus route to Otis would not be profitable and is unlikely that the State or local government would opt to subsidize a route. Any future endeavors in public transportation are sure to be most effective if coordinated regionally. Otis might benefit from creating a commuter lot if the existing employment trends leading to work in Bangor and Ellsworth continue. Otherwise, public and private transportation services are currently adequate for the town, given the rural nature of the community.

**b. Public Parking Facilities**

The public parking facilities in Otis are around the Town Office, at the Otis Civic Center and at the boat launch. The parking area at the Civic Center is not now used but would be adequate for the possible uses described in this section. On summer weekends many vehicles parked along both sides of the narrow camp road make emergency access very dangerous. Recently the town erected no parking signs along one side of the road.

**c. Sidewalks and Footpaths**

Otis has no sidewalks or footpaths. Pedestrian traffic is minor.

**d. Railway and Airport Facilities and Services**

Otis is served by Bangor International Airport 25 miles away. The closest active rail lines and freight facilities are also in Bangor. Otis has little reason to be concerned with the construction or maintenance of rail facilities or airports in the area, except as part of general regional economic concerns as they are planned through the Hancock County Regional Planning Commission.

**5. POLICE, FIRE, AND EMERGENCY SERVICES**

The town of Otis now has 911 emergency telephone service for both sheriff and ambulance service. The 911 service also handles calls for the fire department, police, and ambulance calls go through the Hancock County Sheriff’s Department and relay is made available through Mariaville Volunteer Fire Department.

**a. Hancock County Ambulance Service**

Through direct contributions and town taxes ($927 in 1989-1990) the town of Otis receives ambulance service through the Hancock County Ambulance Service. The service is staffed by full and part time employees. The quality of service is policed both internationally and by the state. Forty-three percent (43%) of the respondents in the Opinion Survey indicates that they thought they County Ambulance Service to be adequate or better.

**b. Hancock County Sheriff’s Office and Maine State Police**

Through county and state assessment and taxes, the town of Otis received police and protective services through the County Sheriff and police state on call. During the 32 month period from January 1989 through August 1991 the Hancock County Sheriff’s Department responded to 146 incidents in Otis, or about 5 per month with a slight decline during this period. The response were too many different situations including theft, vandalism, and motor vehicle accidents. The Hancock County Sheriff’s Department works well with the state police who also service Otis. The troopers head quarters are headed in Machias and the Sheriff’s work out of Ellsworth. The traveling time from Ellsworth is 20-25 minutes, but the Sheriff’s communicate before dispatching someone in case there happens to be a trooper in the vicinity of the call.

Only thirty percent (30%) of the respondents to the Opinion Survey indicate that police protection was adequate in town.

**c. Fire Department**

Otis contracts with the town of Mariaville to be serviced by the Mariaville Volunteer Fire Department. The M.V.F.D. is staffed by 13 volunteers who elect officers in January of each year. The staff is trained in house by fire officers, and county and state instructors. Staff pay for their own uniform and trainings.

The V.F.D.’s operation and capital improvements are funded through contributions from Mariaville and Otis and fundraising events. The town of Otis pays about $8,400 annually to the department. It has four fire hydrants, one of which is located in Otis, and also can use water from area lakes, ponds, farm ponds, and brooks. The department’s building is located near the center of Mariaville.

Only thirty percent (30%) of the respondents to the Opinion Survey felt that fire protection in Town was adequate.

Fire fighters are concerned that many locations on the Town’s dirt roads are inaccessible during mud season and they would also like to see a local building code, a stricter enforcement of state electrical, plumbing, and heating codes.

**d. Planning Implications**

It is recommended that further growth be encouraged to occur on well maintained roads to facilitate service by the fire department and that standards be adopted for the construction and maintenance of the existing town roads.

**6. EDUCATION**

The Towns of Otis, Mariaville, Waltham, Eastbrook, Hancock, Lamoine, Trenton, and Surry are members of School Union #92. Otis and Mariaville jointly administer the Beech Hill School in Otis from grades K-8TH. Otis and Mariaville each elect 3 residents to the school board at the town meetings. The votes are weighted depending on the number of students from each town; until 1991 Otis had a larger student population. The town pays tuition for high school students to attend any accredited high school, but most students attend the Ellsworth high school. Bussing is provided to Ellsworth and to the Beech Hill School.

A good range of adult education classes are available at the Ellsworth High School and at the Boggy Brook Vocational School in Ellsworth. Husson College and the University of Maine do offer ATV courses at Boggy Brook and Ellsworth High School.

**a. Facilities and Programs**

The Beech Hill School was built in 1988 and has a planned capacity of 100. It cost approximately $1.2 billion at the time. It has 5 classrooms, a gym with lunch, kitchen and stage, an office area, a teacher’s room and an open library area. The school is staffed by 7 full time teachers and 6 special-purpose part-time staff and in September 1991 had an enrollment of 101 students. Due to overcrowding the library was used as a classroom. The school is used for adult volleyball and basketball, little league and public meetings.

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| **FIGURE II.D.1: STUDENT ENROLLMENT FIGURES: OTIS** |
| Grade | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 |
| Kindergarten | 3 | 7 | 3 |  | 9 | 6 |
| First Grade | 5 | 3 | 5 |  | 4 | 6 |
| Second Grade | 8 | 4 | 6 |  | 3 | 4 |
| Third Grade | 2 | 9 | 7 |  | 5 | 3 |
| Fourth Grade | 3 | 3 | 11 |  | 7 | 6 |
| Fifth Grade | 2 | 4 | 5 |  | 6 | 5 |
| Sixth Grade | 2 | 2 | 4 |  | 12 | 5 |
| Seventh Grade | 4 | 2 | 6 |  | 4 | 10 |
| Eighth Grade | 6 | 6 | 3 |  | 5 | 4 |
| Elementary School Total | 35 | 40 | 50 | 51 | 55 | 49 |
| Secondary School Total | 21 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 21 | 16 |
| Total Enrollment | 56 | 61 | 71 | 73 | 76 | 65 |
| Source: October 1st State enrollment reports, Town Reports |

b. **Student Enrollment**

Figure II.D.1 shows student enrollment totals for Otis by grade and by year. The number of Otis residents enrolled has increased from ???? students in 1980 to ???? students in 1991. The Superintendent’s report to the Otis School Department lists the town’s education expenses rising from $249,110 in 1989-90 to $277,766 in 1991-92: an increase of 11% in this two year period. During this same period Otis’s enrollment rose ???%.

c. **Finance and Expenditures**

The education budget has been rising steadily, both in terms of per pupil costs and total expenditure. The Beech Hill School is financed in part by direct contributions by Otis and Mariaville and in part through State subsidy. The local contribution component of the budget is divided between the towns based on enrollment. Otis and Mariaville are paying off the construction loan to build the Beech Hill School. This should be completed in the 1997-98 fiscal year.

d. **Planning Implications**

The greatest concern about education in Otis is the capacity of the Beech Hill School. The Town still has 6 years to pay off the construction loan to build the new facility and there is concern that the school will exceed capacity in the 1992-93 school year. If enrollment figures continue to increase there will be need for a portable classroom next year and if enrollment remains high there may be need for a permanent addition to the facility.

Also, there is no representation from Otis on the Ellsworth board to direct the course of the Ellsworth High School

**7. HEALTH CARE**

The hospital needs in Otis are currently met by Maine Coast Memorial Hospital in Ellsworth and Eastern Maine Medical Center and St. Joseph’s Hospital in Bangor. The Town also uses the Med-Now Clinic in Ellsworth. E.M.M.C. is a private full service hospital offering in-patient and out-patient care in the fields of cardiac care, cancer treatment, physical therapy, x-ray services and intensive care. The hospital employs 2000 people and has 400 beds. E.M.M.C. is now completing the construction of a Megnetic Resolution Imaging unit: state of the art equipment which provides comprehensive visual information on individuals’ physical condition. St. Joseph’s is a full service private hospital with 100 beds and is in the process of expanding.

There are adequate elderly health care facilities in Ellsworth (Colliers, Courtland Center), Brewer and Bangor and Community Health and Counseling in Ellsworth for special health care and human services. There are no clinics, health centers or other medical facilities in town but these out of town services are currently adequate for the Town’s needs. In 1990-91 the town supported the Washington-Hancock Community Agency ($190) which offers counseling services. The Town supports the Eastern Agency on Aging.

**8. CULTURAL FACILITIES**

The Grand Theater in Ellsworth offers films, musicals, children’s programs, variety shows and music concerts. In Orono the University of Maine offers a wide variety of entertainment and educational opportunities. In Town the Garden Club, Historical Society, Extension Club, 4-H Club and Otis General Store are cultural resources which range from historic and educational to purely social.

**9. OTHER MUNICIPAL FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

Otis has a Town Meeting form of government and holds its annual meeting in the spring of each year at the Beech Hill School.

The Town of Otis provides basic municipal services and administration. The following officers are elected by popular vote at Town Meeting: Selectperson/Assessors (3), School Board (3), Board of Appeals (2), and Road Commissioner. Also serving the town are the Administrative Assistant/Town Clerk/Tax Collector/Treasurer/Welfare Officer/Dog Warden, Code Enforcement Officer, Town Constable and Plumbing Inspector.

**SECTION II.E: RECREATION**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this section is:

a. to identify and profile Otis’s major open space areas, major public and private recreational facilities, and public access points to surface waters in term of their characteristic and use;

b. to assess the adequacy of those open space areas, public access points in handling current use demands;

c. to predict whether additional open space areas, public access points, or recreational facility improvements will be needed to accommodate adequately the use demands of the projected population;

d. to predict whether the availability of major private open space areas for public recreation use will be threatened by the impacts of growth and development; and

e. to estimate the general costs of providing the needed recreational facility improvements.

2. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The following recreational assets are mapped on the Public Facilities, Historic Sites and Recreation Map or the Regional Map:

a. Downeast Y.M.C.A

The Downeast Y.M.C.A, located in Ellsworth, offers programs to area residents of all ages on a fee basis. The facility includes a large lap pool, gymnasium and weight room. The Town donated $700 in 1989, $600 in 1990, and $200 in 1992. The Downeast Y.M.C.A has a sliding fee scale based on the ability to pay. They hold teen dances for children 13-18 years of age and is open on Fridays to residents of portions of Towns.

b. Public Boat Launch

The public boat landing site is located 1.5 miles down West Shore Road and is owned by the Town. The parking area can accommodate 20 cars per the State. The Town raised $2,000 for the West Shore Boat Launch Road account in 1991 following $25 in 1990. In 1983 the State funded the development of this site with $30,000.

c. Public Beach

The public beach parking area is located .5 miles down West Shore Road and the beach is one quarter mile from the parking area along a foot path. In 1991 the Town posted some signs stating the carry in carry out policy at the beach. Another issue concerning the use of this site is the availability of parking. There is space for about 8-10 cars in the lot and there are often cars parked along both sides of West Shore Road on warm summer weekends. The town posted no parking signs along one side of the road this summer to try to remedy this situation, but were shot up by people with guns. This beach is open to all tax payers in town but is also heavily used by people from out of town. There is room for about 50 crowded people on this beach. The Selectmen occasionally patrol the beach but the use of the area would be improved if the Town had a Constable responsible for monitoring activity on the beach more regularly. The Town owns the beach but not any land behind it.

d. Beech Hill School

The Little League practices at the playing field at the Beech Hill School. The Towns that participate in this program are Otis and Mariaville. The Team is called Beech Hill Little League. There is also a school owned playground at the school with swings and basketball hoops which is used by area residents.

e. Snowmobile Club

The snowmobile club maintains trails in town which are shown on the Public Facilities, Historic Sites and Recreation Map. The town donated $400 to the club in 1990.

F. Grand Auditorium

The Grand Auditorium in Ellsworth schedules movies, live music and theater events throughout the year. The town has donated $100 to the Grand annually.

G. 4-H Club

The members participate in many community oriented activities such as building blue bird houses for area residents and maintaining the landscaping at the Beech Hill School.

H. Historical Society

This is a new club formed in September 1990. It meets once a month at the Beech Hill School and its purpose to collect memorabilia for display.

I. Garden Club

The Garden Club does community oriented activities like planting flowers at the Beech Hill School and the Town Office.

J. Cotes Basketball Court

This is a privately owned facility which is used by local residents.

K. Otis Extension Group

The Extension Group meets the 3rd Thursday of every month. They hold educational meetings for the non-residents and residents of Otis.

3. RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Both in Otis and to the north, east and west of town there are many forests and lakes, both developed and wild. Beech Hill Pond, Floods Pond, Graham Lake, the West and Middle Branches of the Union River and many other areas are used by Otis residents for recreational purposes. The Union River supports several well established canoe trips on both the Middle and West branches. In addition to the YMCA in Ellsworth, both Ellsworth and Bangor have important recreational resources such as health clubs, sports areas and exercise centers available to town residents.

Recreation issues such as access to surface water, open spaces, and picnic areas cannot be analyzed adequately for Otis without also considering the assets of the surrounding area. The 1988 Maine State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) includes an assessment of regional recreational needs and recommended State standards for provision of recreational facilities for communities of different sizes. For a community smaller than 1,000 people the plan recommends the town offer:

a. Recreation and Park Board or Committee

b. Swimming Instructors

c. Swimming Instruction Program

d. Community-wide special events

e. A developed Community Recreation Area

f. softball and /or Little league diamond

g. basketball court

h. ice skating

i. playgrounds

j. picnic area with tables and grills

k. school facilities available for public use

l. gymnasium or large multipurpose room

m. auditorium or assembly hall

n. public library

The Town holds an annual Halloween Party at the Beech Hill School which is well attended. At this event there are many activity booths, food and costumes. The school also holds science fairs, talent shows, Easter egg hunts, Christmas craft fairs, and bake/yard sales which generally are attended by the town residents as well as out of town residents.

S.C.O.R.P gives some information about the Ellsworth Urban Area. Because of the proximity of Acadia National Park, the Ellsworth area ranks high in terms of picnic areas and trails. However, it ranks 11th, just above the mean, for provision of freshwater swimming. The other identified recreational need for the Downeast/Acadia Region is camping. Three privately owned primitive campsites are mapped in Amherst and one in Dedham.

4. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

It is very important that any residential area have adequate recreation opportunities, either within the municipality, or on a broader regional scale. Open spaces, public parks and recreation programs serve as a vital function in a community; they ensure that the people have somewhere to go to enjoy the outdoors. Parks give children safe areas to play, provide areas for local functions, and are open spaces which provide an aesthetically pleasing atmosphere. Public access to ponds and streams is also important because surface waters has been guaranteed by the State Legislature which reserves the right of people to cross unimproved land to get to a great pond. This does not give people the right to engage in activities on the shore without the permission of the land owner.

Otis must work on two levels to assure recreational opportunities: regional and local. Regional efforts coordinated by state or county agencies should be supported by the Town. On a local level, the Town should continue to work to improve both public and private recreational opportunities.

Otis residents currently have access to surface water at the Town boat landing and four other hand carried boat access sites in town. Residents also have access to the Town beach on Beech Hill Pond.

SECTION II.F WATER RESOURCES

1. OTIS’S WATER RESOURCES

a. Watersheds

Otis contains parts of the watersheds of twelve ponds. They are:

1. Beech Hill Pond

2. Graham Lake

3. Floods Pond

4. Green Lake

5. Morrison Pond

6. Lower Springy Pond

7. Youngs Pond

8. Burnt Pond

9. Little Burnt Pond

10. Muddy Pond

11. Rocky Pond

12. Wormwood Pond

13. Burnt Pond

The boundaries of these watersheds are shown on the Water Resource Map. Graham Lake, Green Lake and Wormwood Pond are not located in Otis. All of Beech Hill, Floods, Morrison, Youngs, Muddy and Rocky Ponds are in Otis. Parts of Lower Springy and Little Burnt Ponds are in Otis.

b. Major Streams

Otis contains parts of fourteen named streams and their tributaries. They are:

1. Mosquito Brook

2. Dumb Brook

3. Little Dumb Brook

4. Tannery Brook

5. Roberts Brook

6. Schoolhouse Brook

7. Harvey Brook

8. Turtle Brook

9. Mountainy Pond Brook

10. Great Brook

11. Muddy Pond Brook

12. Beech Hill Stream

c. Freshwater Wetlands

There are many small wetlands in Town, the largest being at the outlet of Rocky Pond and along the stream running toward Mountainy Pond in Dedham.

Freshwater wetlands are of interest to both the Maine department of Environmental Protection (D.E.P) and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (I.F. &W) Otis has 17 freshwater wetlands mapped by the DEP which are regulated under the Natural Resources Protection Act. The Water Resources Map shows the locations of freshwater and wetland areas. The I.F& W. recently (June 1991) mapped significant waterfowl and wading bird habitat in Otis including nesting and feeding areas. They found 6 such areas all of which they classified as moderate value except the Lower Dumb Brook which they classified as high value. The available information from the I.F&W is summarized in Figure II.F.1.

Some of the town’s wetlands may already have been damaged by development and erosion due to timber harvesting and the construction of seasonal and year round homes nearby. Additionally, wetlands may be negatively affected by runoff from development upstream.

d. Lakes and Ponds

Otis contains all or part of eleven lakes and ponds. They are:

1. Beech Hill Pond

2. Floods Pond

3. Burnt Pond

4. Buggy Pond

5. Lower Springy Pond

6. Morrison Pond

7. Youngs Pond

8. Rile Pond

9. Rocky Pond

10. Muddy Pond

11. Lilly Pond

The locations of these lakes and ponds are shown on the Water Resources Map and information on their water quality category, area and drainage area are shown on Figure II.F.4.

1. Beech Hill Pond

Beech Hill Pond has a surface area of 1,351 acres, all of which is in Otis. Otis contains 100% of the Pond’s direct drainage area: 4,974 acres. The Pond’s maximum depth is 104 feet and the mean depth is 44 feet.

The water quality information available from the DEP about Beech Hill Pond is for 1974 through 1989. The following are the mean Secchi Disk readings for the years 1974 through 1989: 8.5m, 8.7m, 8.9m, 7.4m, 8.7m,7.1m, 9.3m, 8.7m, 8.5m, 9.5m, 7.2m. A mean secchi disk reading of from 4 to 5 meters is average but shallow lakes have generally lower secchi readings. A secchi disk transparency of less than two meters usually indicates an algae bloom. Given this information, Beech Hill Pond’s water transparency is good. The dissolved oxygen profile data available for Beech Hill Pond is shown in Figure II.F.2. A lake with a dissolved oxygen content of less than 5 ppm is usually an indication of oxygen depletion, but shallow lakes usually have a lower content than deeper ones. Beech Hill Pond’s oxygen levels have remained relatively high. Dissolved oxygen profiles provide an earlier indication of potential environmental hazards than secchi disk transparency data. (One meter equals 3.28 feet.)

The water quality of Beech Hill Pond with respect to phosphorus is considered good. To preserve the current water quality of the Pond, the DEP recommends that the Town of Otis contribute less than 100 pounds of phosphorus per year from the 4,974 acres of the pond’s direct drainage area within the Town. The pond only flushes .2 times per year and once every five (5) years.

This pond has populations of salmon, brook trout, lake trout, white perch, pickerel, smelts, eel, suckers, and sun fish.

2. Flood’s Pond

All of Floods Pond is located within Otis. This 654 acre pond is situated near the northern border of Town. It has a mean depth of 41 feet and a maximum depth of 147 feet. Floods Pond is also the drinking water supply by the City of Bangor and surrounding communities. The Bangor Water District controls Floods Pond and its watershed. Inland Fisheries and Wildlife closed the Pond to fishing and it is anticipated that the restriction will remain in force. In Maine, State Statute prevents access to land owned and controlled by water districts.

The Pond’s water quality category with respect to phosphorus is good. The D.E.P calculates that the water quality of the pond will be maintained if less than 42 pounds of phosphorus enter it from the 2,036 acres of direct drainage area which lie in Otis. The following are the mean Secchi Disk transparency readings for the years 1974, 1975, and 1975: 7.4m, 8.8m, 7.3m. A mean secchi disk reading of 4 to 5 meters is average and water transparency of less than two meters indicates an algae bloom. Floods Pond has good transparency readings. The dissolved oxygen profile data available for Floods Pond is shown in Figure II.F.3. A lake with a dissolved oxygen content of less than 5 ppm is usually an indication of oxygen depletion. Floods Pond has good oxygen content. Dissolved oxygen profiles provide an earlier indication of potential environmental hazards than secchi disk transparency data. (One meter equals 3.28 feet.) This pond flushes .37 times per year or about once every three (3) years.

This pond supports populations of salmon, brook trout, Sunapee trout, eel, sucker fish and sun fish.

e. Phosphorus Water Quality Data

Figure II.F.4 lists phosphorus loading vulnerability information (phosphorus coefficient) for all ponds in Otis as well as those lakes and ponds whose watersheds are partly contained in Otis. For many lakes, phosphorus is the limiting nutrient for algal blooms. If the phosphorus level in the lake is high, among other factors, the lake may be in danger of algal blooms, which in turn, may deplete oxygen levels and harm fish. The phosphorus coefficient is not a measure of water quality, but rather is an indicator of the pond’s capacity to accept phosphorus. This coefficient can be used as a planning guide for limiting development in the watershed. The D.E.P’s water quality rating is based on the pond’s vulnerability to phosphorus levels. This rating is derived from many variables such as flushing, growth and development rates.

f. Flood Hazard Areas

Otis elected to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program in April 1975. Participation in the N.F.I.P involves the adoption by the town of a Flood Insurance Resolution. Under this Resolution, the town agrees to enact Land Use controls to prevent unsafe development from occurring in designated flood hazard zones. Flood Insurance Maps for Otis were revised in 1977. The locations of the Flood Hazard Areas are shown on Water Resources Maps. Regulations should designate acceptable activities for 100-year flood areas, both for limiting potential propert damage but also for the safety of the public at large.

g. Ground Water

Ground water in Otis occurs both in surficial deposits or sand and graved aquifers and in factured or porus bedrock in bedrock aquifers. Otis has one large sand and gravel water aquifer, which is shown on the Water Resources Map. Aquifer #15 follows Route 180 from the east border of town up to Lower Springy Pond and into Clifton. It is composed of sand and gravel and has potential yields of 10-50 gallons per minute and in excess of 50 gallons per minute in a few areas. There are 5 gravel quarries mapped by the U.S.G.S on this aquifer.

There is no public water supply in Otis. Since all residents and businesses in Otis rely on private wells groundwater quality throughout the town should be protected.

2. Existing and Potential Water Quality Problems

a. Identified and Potential Point Source Pollution

Point source discharges are known sites where a pollutant is being discharged directly into an identified body of water. There are no known point sources of pollution in Otis however the D.E.P has identified 2 underground oil storage tanks in Town. There is 1 owned by the Otis-Mariaville Union (school), and I owned by Robert Cote. The D.E.P lists the tanks at the old School and the one owned by Robert Cote as sensitive.

b. Identified and Potential Non-Point Source Discharges

Non-point source pollution is contamination which does not arise from a single identifiable source, but rather as runoff or leaching from an area. The D.E.P has identified one potential non-point source of pollution in Otis: a 1,000 cubic yard sand and salt pile owned by Gordon Fellis which the Town uses for treating its roads in the winter. This sand and salt pile is listed as a low priority because it has no measurable effect on the source of public water. The Town land fill scores 10 points (105 is worse) on the basis of hazard posed to the environment and public health: it is a very low hazard.

In addition to the town land fill, there are numerous other potential sources of non-point pollution. These include roads, failed septic systems, farms, and lawn fertilizers. Route 180 runs along the town’s large aquifer. There is no information available on whether runoff from the winter application of salt is a problem in Otis.

Although there is no data available on the condition of septic systems in Otis, there are two reasons to suspect that they might be a problem in some areas. First, the soils in most of Otis are not suited for septic systems so the systems are likely to be failing in many areas. Second, there are numerous old seasonal dwellings in the shoreland areas. It is probable that, over time, these systems have deteriorated: their proximity to surface water makes them a particular threat to water quality. Septic systems should be pumped out every 2-3 years and 4-5 years, if used seasonally.

There are very few farms in Otis. They probably are not a major source of pollution.

4. EXISTING WATER QUALITY PROTECTION PROGRAMS

a. Ground Water Protection Program

In recognition of the critical nature of ground water resources to the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of Maine, the Legislature has declared that an adequate supply of safe drinking water is a matter of highest priority. Therefore, it will protect, conserve, and maintain the State’s ground water resources by eliminating sources of pollution such as the leachate from landfills, hazardous waste sites and underground sewerage disposal; and by identifying potential sources of ground water pollution.

b. Protection of Natural Resources Act

In order to protect Maine’s rivers, streams, great ponds, and freshwater wetlands, this Act requires permits through D.E.P for any construction adjacent to identified water resources.

c. Maine State Water Classification Program

The purpose of this program is to classify the water resources of Maine by level of quality in order to eliminate discharge of pollutants into State waters where appropriate, and to protect the quality of the State’s waters.

d. Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act

This Act requires towns to adopt Shoreland Zoning Ordinances which control development within 250’ of the shore of great ponds, rivers and streams and sets a minimum setback for development of 100’ from the shores of great ponds, and 75’ from rivers and wetlands. The Town adopted a Shoreland Zoning Ordinance and the State development of principal and accessory structure of minimum standards in May 1992.

e. Maine State Plumbing Code

The Code sets minimum standards for the siting and construction of wastewater disposal systems. These standards prohibit new septic systems in steep areas and poor soils.

f. Otis Ordinances and Codes

The State Minimum Shoreland Zoning Ordinance is designed specifically to protect/water resources. Otis’s water quality is further protected through enforcement of the State Plumbing Code by the local Plumbing Inspector.

5. ANALYSIS

a. Analysis of Existing Water Resource Problems

There is proof that septic systems in Otis are affecting surface water quality. The Town shold consider testing shorefront septic systems, especially when the use of a camp changes from seasonal to year-round, and recommending the replacement of failed or failing systems. The Town can apply to the D.E.P.’s Small Communities Program, which helps individuals finance the replacement of failed septic systems, if this program is still available.

b. Potential Water Resource Problems From Future Growth

New development will cause increased runoff from roads, lawns and construction sites. This runoff could decrease the quality of Otis’s wetlands, streams and ponds. Of particular concern is increased phosphorus loading. Especially in a pond such as Beech Hill Pond, in which the water quality is rated as moderate/sensitive, increased phosphorus could cause an algal bloom. In order to protect Otis’s ponds, the town may need to adopt Watershed Management Programs which limit the amount of phosphorus, among other pollutants, which flows in the ponds as a result of increased development.

c. Aquifer Contamination or Destruction

There is no evidence that the town’s sand and gravel aquifer has been contaminated; however, there are several gravel pits on the aquifer. Additional development near the aquifer could contaminate the water, possibly to the detriment of Otis’s water supplies. Further research about the recharge area, potential and use of the aquifer is needed to determine the importance of the aquifer;s protection. In the mean time, the Town should consider protecting the surrounding area from dense development of further destruction.

d. Flood Damage

Since flood damage can be quite severe and since flood hazard zones are often environmentally sensitive, the Town should consider banning all future development in Flood Hazard Zones.

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| **FIGURE II.F.1****INLAND FISHERIES & WILDLIFE NOTES ON VALUE OF WETLANDS IN OTIS** |
| **I.F.& W.#** | **LOCATION** | **COMMENTS** |
| 050015 | Inlet to Burnt Pond | Significant Wildlife Habitat, rated as moderate |
| 050016 | Inlet to Rocky Pond | Same |
| 050017 | Muddy Pond | Same |
| 050018 | Dumb Brook | Same |
| 050019 | Lower Dumb Brook  | Significant Wildlife Habitat, rated as high |
| 050020 | Tributary to Beech Hill Pond Marsh | Significant Wildlife Habitat, moderate |
| Source: Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife |

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| **FIGURE II.F.2****BEECH HILL POND: Late Summer Temperature and Dissolved Oxygen Profile** |
| Depth in meters | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 | 12 |
| 9/13/79: deg. C PPM | 18.89.4 | 18.39.4 | 18.09.4 | 17.89.3 | 17.79.1 | 17.48.8 | 13.07.6 |
| 9/26/80: deg. C PPM | 16.59.6 | 16.59.8 | 16.510.2 | 16.510.0 | 16.510.0 | 16.510.0 | 16.09.4 |
| 8/24/83: deg. C PPM | 21.08.6 | 21.08.5 | 21.08.6 | 21.08.7 | 21.08.7 | 15.39.7 | 12.09.5 |
| 8/31/88: deg. C PPM | 21.59.1 | 21.59.2 | 21.59.1 | 21.59.2 | 21.59.1 | 16.59.5 | 12.59.4 |
| Source: D.E.P. |

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| **FIGURE II.F.3****FLOODS POND: Late Summer Temperature and Dissolved Oxygen Profiles** |
| Depth in meters | 0 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 12 | 14 | 16 |
| 8/12/74: deg. C PPM | 24.09.7 | 22.810.0 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9/24/75: deg. C PPM | 16.29.9 | 16.19.6 | 16.19.6 | 16.19.5 | 14.99.1 | 7.69.6 | 6.99.5 | 6.59.3 |
| 9/13/76: deg. C PPM | 17.59.1 | 17.19.4 | 17.09.6 | 17.09.7 | 16.59.3 | 10.38.8 | 9.18.8 | 8.98.9 |

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| **FIGURE II.F.4****OTIS: LAKE WATER QUALITY INFORMATION FOR PHOSPHOROUS CONTROL** |
| **Lake** | **Location of Direct Drainage Area** | **Direct drainage Area in Otis** **(in acres)** | **Percent of Drainage Area** **in Otis** | **Phosphorus Coefficient in kg** | **Water Quality Category (phosphorus content only)** |
| **Beech Hill Pond** | **Otis** | **4,974** | **100%** | **100** | **Good** |
| **Burnt Pond** | **Clifton** **Dedham****Otis** | **116** | **9%** | **2** | **Good** |
| **Floods Pond** | **Clifton****Dedham****Otis** | **2,036** | **74%** | **42** | **Good** |
| **Green Lake** | **Dedham****Ellsworth****Otis** | **958** | **7%** | **18** | **Good** |
| **Lower Springy Pond** | **Clifton****Otis** | **261** | **18%** | **3** | **Moderate/****Sensitive** |
| **Morrison Pond** | **Otis** | **111** | **100%** | **1** | **Moderate/****Sensitive** |
| **Mountainy Pond \*** | **Dedham****Eddington****Otis** | **4** | **.2%** | **.1** | **Outstanding** |
| **Muddy Pond** | **Otis** | **326** | **100%** | **2** | **Moderate/****Sensitive** |
| **Rocky Pond** | **Dedham****Otis** | **1,042** | **80%** | **17** | **Moderate/****Sensitive** |
| **Wormwood Pond \*** | **Ellsworth****Otis** | **758** | **56%** | **5** | **Moderate/****Sensitive** |
| **Youngs Pond** | **Otis** | **234** | **100%** | **2** | **Moderate/****Sensitive** |
| **Graham Lake \*** | **Otis, Clifton, Ellsworth, T8SD, Waltham, and Mariaville** | **4,455** | **15%** | **64** | **Moderate/****Sensitive** |
| **\*Not located within Otis****Source: Depertment of Environmental Protection, Lake Division** |

**SECTION II.G: CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this section is to:

a. identify and profile the town’s significant critical natural resources particularly their extent, characteristics, and significance;

b. predict whether the existence, physical integrity, or quality of identified significant critical natural resources will be threatened by the affects of future growth and development; and

c. assess the effectiveness of existing measures to protect and preserve significant critical natural resources.

2. IDENTIFIED CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES

a. Areas Identified By the State Critical Areas Program

The Maine Critical Areas Program (Title 5 M.R.S.A 312) was created by the 106th Legislature, in 1974. Critical areas are defined as naturally occurring phenomenon of statewide significance which because of their uniqueness, rarity or other critical factors are deemed important enough to warrant special planning and management consideration. These areas include those places where changes in use would jeopardize resources or natural, educational, historic, archaeological, scientific, recreational, or scenic significance.

To meet the requirements of this program, areas must be identified, catalogued and submitted to the Critical Areas Advisory Board for review. Landowners of affected land have an opportunity to respond to the registration. The status of the proposed areas is then decided based on the following criteria:

1) The provisions of the statute;

2) Values and qualities represented by the area;

3) Probable effects of uncontrolled use;

4) Present and probable future use;

5) Level of significance; and

6) Probable effects of registration both positive and negative

There are no areas in town which are qualified but have not been registered with the Program.

Currently, the only area in Otis registered with the State Critical Areas program is Floods Pond. This pond is well known in the area for its naturally self sustaining Sunapee charr (silver trout) population: the only one of its kind in the State. The water quality and temperature of the lake in very good. The Bangor Water District acquired the land surrounding the pond on order to use the pond as a water source for the City of Bangor in the late 1950’s. Given this use State law prohibits swimming, wading, and fishing in most of the pond in order to protect the purity of the water. The outlet cove is the only area of Floods Pond which is legally open to angling. The Town of Otis owns a right-of-way on this cove. Before the Water District built a dam on the outlet there was a naturally occurring atlantic salmon population in the pond. Without a fishway this population will die out. Although this is a loss, the dam will assist in keeping underisable fish species from possibly migrating up Tannery Brook into the pond and displacing the rare charr population. In order to enhance the spawning habitat for the Sunapee charr the Bangor Water District, working with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, constructed four 10’x60’ artificial spawning beds around Kimball Point in the pond. This is meant to mitigate the detrimental affects of pumping water from the pond and changing the water levels in the pond following summer water use in Bangor, Hampden, Orono, Veazie, Eddington and Clifton.

**b. Areas Recognized as National Landmarks**

National landmarks of significant state and federal importance are to be preserved for the future enjoyment by other citizens and to protect their environmentally unique characteristics. There are no National Natural Landmarks in Otis.

**c. Areas Identified by the Maine Heritage Program**

Sites listed with the Maine Natural Heritage Program are selected for their contribution to the natural diversity in Maine. The State Natural Heritage Program lists no sites in Otis but does list the Sunapee charr which only occurs in Floods Pond.

**d. Scenic Areas and Views**

Scenic areas and views are important to a community both for their aesthetic qualities and their recreational value. These areas provide a place for citizens to enjoy the beauty of the outdoors and increase the quality of life in the Town. The Committee identified Burnt Pond, Beech Hill Pond, Springy Pond, Floods Pond and the walk along Beech Hill Brook as a scenic areas. (Salisbury Beach on The Point Rd) The Committee also identified scenic vistas from Mercy Whitmore’s lot looking down east on Graham Lake, from Grotto Hill looking northeast to Beech Hill Pond, from Florence Salisbury’s home on the Point Road looking east to the ledges, from Phillip’s blueberry field and from the Carr Road in all directions, in the winter view of Beech Hill Pond from the dump, Lilly Bog south of Rebel Hill in Clifton, and the freshwater wetland off Schoolhouse Cove. These resources may be threatened by conventional camp and shorefront development patterns and clearcutting practices. The town’s shoreland zoning ordenance now requires Planning Board review of any activity within 250 feet of any river, stream, lake or pond.

**e. Significant Fish and Wildlife Habitat**

In Otis, the principal species of large game are deer and bear, but deer are by far the more important. Moose are thinly scattered in groups of two or three and usually range near isolated marshes and bogs. Small fame includes ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare and woodcock. Teal and black duck are hunted along streams and lakes. Other ducks and the Canada goose are hunted as they migrate south. The economic value of furbearers, particularly beaver and mink; fluctuates greatly. Trapping was once important but is no longer of much significance. Some trapping of beaver and mink; as well as muskrat, otter and fisher is still done. Fisher have recently reinhabitated the area.

Winter has long been considered a bottleneck for survival of white-tailed deer in the Northeast. During winter, deer in northern climates often subsist on limited quantities of low quality foods, while simultaneously coping with low temperatures, chilling winds, and higher energy requirements. The primary behavioral mechanism for deer to conserve energy during winter is to move to traditional wintering areas or yards. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife identified one deer wintering area in Otis near Muddy Pond. They have not yet rated its importance.

Inland fisheries are freshwater habitats such as streams, rivers, lakes and ponds with existing or potential value to fish. Aquatic habitats are also some of the most sensitive and vulnerable. Land use activities that directly affect water quality can significantly alter or destroy the value of these areas for fish. Land clearing or development in the adjacent upland habitat, or riparian zone, can also degrade a fisheries. Riparian habitats protect water quality and fisheries values by filtering out excessive nutrients, sediments, or other pollutants leaching in from upland areas, maintaining water temperatures suitable for aquatic life, and contributing vegetation and invertebrates to the food base. Riparian habitat is also important as cover for the many species of wildlife attracted to aquatic systems, and serves as a protective travel corridor for movement between undeveloped tracts of land. Important fish species in Otis include the Sunapee char (silver trout), and the Atlantic salmon. Some fish species now found in Otis’ ponds and streams are in Beech Hill Pond: brook and lake trout, white perch, pickerel, smelt, eel, sucker sunfish as well as salmon, in Tannery Brook: salmon, brook trout, chubs and suckers, in Floods Pond: salmon, brook trout, Sunapee trout, eel, salmon, sucker and sunfish, in Lilly Pond: brook trout and chub, in Dumb Brook: brook trout, chub, suckers, in Mosquito Brook: brook trout and chub, in Burnt Pond: yellow perch and pickerel, in Rocky Pond: yellow perch and pickerel, in Muddy Pond: yellow perch and pickerel, in Morrison Pond: pickerel, yellow perch and sunfish, in Lower Springy Pond: salmon, perch, pickerel and sunfish, and in Youngs Pond: brook trout.

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife located no bald eagle nesting sites in Otis as of June 1991. State regulations now protect areas within one quarter mile of the nesting site from development and the Towns are responsible for enforcing these regulations. The I.F & W did locate six sites which are significant waterfowl and wading bird habitat in town which supplement the National Wetlands Inventory sites under the jurisdiction of the D.E.P. These areas are located on the National Resources Map.

3. CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION

a. Identified and Potential Threats to Critical Natural Areas

The potential threats to critical natural areas in Otis at this time are camp and shoreland development. This is a subject which is of great importance and is addressed in the Proposed Land Use Section of this Plan.

b. Existing Measures to Protect Critical Natural Resources

1. The State Critical Areas Program: as described above this program is designed to preserve, through identification and increased public awareness, unique natural areas of statewide significance.

2. The Town of Otis has a Resource Protection District defined in its Shoreland Zoning Ordinance which is shown on the Existing Zoning Map.

c. Planning Implications

Critical areas maintain biological diversity by providing necessary habitat for a wide range of plant and animal species. They provide undisturbed natural systems for research, educational opportunities for teaching natural systems, and provide benchmarks in the changing environments modified by humans.

In consideration of the importance of Critical Areas to the understanding of the environment and to the history of Otis, proper management of these exemplary areas if necessary in order that they may be preserved for future use.

SECTION II. II: AGRICULTURAL AND FOREST RESOURCES

1. COMMERCIAL FARMLANDS

a. Farm and Open Space Law Taxation Program Parcels

Otis has one parcel registered under the Farm and Open Space Tax Program although the 1989 State Municipal Valuation Land Classification does not list any farmland or open space land (for the purposes of taxation) in the Town of Otis. The land registered under this program in 30 acres belonging to D. & A. Allen. This land is used primarily for the production of blueberries.

b. Commercial Farmlands

The farmlands in Otis are primarily blueberry fields. Some farmlands are used for or used to be used for hay. Other lands are used for fruits and vegetables for personal consumption. Most farming in Otis is for personal consumption: the only exception is blueberry land.

c. Agriculture Dependent Production Facilities

There are no agriculture dependent production facilities in Otis. Blueberries grown in Otis are taken to processing centers in nearby towns (usually Ellsworth).

d. Planning Implications

Farming within Otis is not very important to the economy of Otis. However, small-scale farming and gardening does contribute to the food supply of many residents. In addition, the open blueberry grounds and hayfields contribute to the rural character of Otis.

30% of respondents to the Growth Management Opinion Survey indicated that they believed that existing measures to protect agricultural land in Town are adequate, 11% felt that they are inadequately protected, and 59% had no opinion or no response. It is unlikely that the Town would support specific measures to discourage alternate development on land currently used for blueberries or other agricultural products.

2. COMMERCIAL FORESTLANDS

a. Tree Growth Tax Law Program Parcels

There were10,918 acres registered under the Tree Growth Tax Law in the Town of Otis in 1991. This accounts for more than half of the Town’s total area. These parcels are shown on the Existing Land Use Map. The Tree Growth program is described in more detail below. This acreage is distributed between 9 owners and consists of about 1.064 acres of soft wood, 4,363 acres of hardwood. As of 1989 the State Municipal Valuation valued the Town’s land registered under Tree Growth program at 46 dollars per acre.

b. Commercial Forestland

Commercial forestlands are those owned by major land management, paper, or lumber companies. In the case of Otis, all commercial forestland are also Tree Growth parcels. This primary commercial owner is Diamond Occidental Forest, Inc. which owns 8,674 acres. In addition to commercial forestland, many residents of Otis cut wood or sell stumpage from their own smaller lots. During the past 18 months Diamond Occidental Forest has been divesting a major part of their land holding within Otis. It is not known at this time how much of Diamond’s land will remain in tree growth or the impact the transfer of this land will have upon the town.

c. Forestland-Dependent Land Uses and Facilities

There are no forest dependent production facilities in the Town of Otis at this time. All wood cut n Town is transported to facilities in the region such as pulp and saw mills and the wood chip burning electricity plant in Deblois. There are a number of Otis residents who own logging equipment and work as private contractors.

d. Planning Implications

Forestlands play an important role in the economy and natural environment of Otis. The use of Otis’s forestlands is highly dependent on the availability of labor, markets, and production facilities in neighboring towns. It is important that the Town consider policies which will encourage proper forestry techniques, encourage the maintenance of forests for recreational, scenic, and environmental reasons, and recognize the economic importance of the forests. 30% of respondents to the Growth Management Opinion Survey felt that existing protection of forest resources is adequate and 16% felt it was inadequate.

4. FARMLAND AND FORESTLAND PROTECTION

a. Identified and Potential Threats to farm and Forestlands

The primary threat to farm and forestlands in Otis is residential development. Because of the amount of new development in the Town compared to the many acres of forest, this threat is not a major concern except for the west side of Beech Hill Pond. The development of that area would significantly affect the water quality of the pond, the condition of the west shore road, and school enrollment. The development of blueberry land for residential lots has occurred but is not likely to be a major problem due to the availability of other lands.

 b. Existing Protection Measures

1) Tree Growth Tax Law: The Maine Legislature has declared, in the Tree Growth Tax Law (Title 36, M.R.S.A. 571,etseq.) that”…the public interest would be best served by encouraging forest landowners to retain and improve their holdings of forest lands upon the tax roles of the state and to promote better forest management by appropriate tax measures in order to protect this unique economic and recreational resource.” The Tree Growth Tax Law applies to all parcels of forestland over 10 acres in size at the discretion and application of the owners. It taxes forestland on the basis of its potential for annual wood production. The committee feels that many landowners in Otis are not aware of the Tree Growth Tax Law and should be notified about it. Those thinking of putting their land under the Tree Growth Tax Law Program should consider the future carefully, as there are tax penalties for withdrawing such lands for other uses.

2) Farm and Open Space Tax Law: The Maine Legislature has declared in the Farm and Open Space Tax Law (Title 36, M.R.S.A, Section 1101, et.seq.), that “…it is in the public interest to encourage the preservation of farm land and open space land in order to maintain a readily available source of food and farm products close to the metropolitan areas of the state..” and “… to prevent the forced conversion of farmland and open space land to more intensive uses as a result of economic pressures caused by the assessment thereof…” Farmland is eligible for this program if that farm consists of at least 5 contiguous acres in a single town, and has shown gross earnings from agricultural production of at least $2,000 during one of the last two years, or three of the last five years. The benefits of this program are that it enables farmers to continue their way of life without having to worry about excessive property taxes which can be brought about by run-away land valuations, in turn forcing them out of business. The farmland is not taxed based on its market value, but rather at a significantly lower rate.

Along with this program is the Farmland Registration Program. While the eligibility requirements are similar to the Farm and Open Space Tax Law, the purpose is different. This act is designed to protect a farmer’s right to farm. Principally, upon resignation, the farmer is guaranteed a 100 foot buffer zone between productive fields and new incompatible development, such as a residential development, or a commercial dining establishment. This program also lets new and potential abutters know that a working farm is next door.

No farmers in Otis have registered land in these programs. This may be due to the limits they place on future options for development. It is also possible that farmers are not fully aware of these programs and public education by the Town would increase participation. Alternately, in Otis, as in most eastern Maine communities, the current tax levels may be lower than those of the Farm and Open Space Program.

3)Local Ordinances: The existing ordinances of the Town of Otis limit some forestry and agricultural practices through the Resource Protection and Shoreland Residential Districts. These ordinances are intended to protect natural resources, rather than to maintain or protect forest and agricultural land. Agricultural and forestry practice restrictions for Resource Protection and Shoreland areas are the minimum under the State Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act of 1990 which pertains to land within 250 feet of great ponds, rivers and wetlands and within 75 feet of streams as defined.

c. Planning Implications

The extent to which forest and agricultural practices affect the environment is discussed in other Sections of this Plan including Water Resources and Critical Natural Resources. The Town should consider more restrictions on forestry practices. The Town currently has little protection and few mechanisms in place to encourage the preservation of its agricultural lands. The Town should continue to support the Tree Growth Farm and Open Space programs that assist local farmers and foresters.

SECTION II.I: HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

1. INTRODUCTIONS

The purpose of this section is:

a. to outline the history of Otis;

b. to identify Otis’s significant historic and archaeological resources in terms of their type and significance; and to predict whether the existence and physical viability of Otis’s historic and archaeological resources will be threatened by the impacts of future growth and development; and

d. to assess the effectiveness of existing measures to protect and preserve significant historic and archaeological resources.

2. IDENTIFIED HISTORIC AND ARCHEAOLOGICAL RESOURCES

a. Historic Events and Settlement Patterns Important to the Character of the Town

From 1677 until 1820 Maine was part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Settlement of Maine and especially its eastern section came slowly in comparison with the rest of New England. When settlement did occur, it was along the coast rather than inland. Shortly after the Revolutionary War two land speculations developed that resulted in the further settlement of Eastern Maine including Otis. The first speculation was in 1786 when Massachusetts enacted the Land Lottery Act to raise funds for debts incurred during the Revolutionary War. The sale of public lands in the District of Maine appeared to be a solution for reducing the debt and increasing the public funds. The land between the Penobscot and the St. Croix Rivers, excluding the already settled coastal towns, was chosen for the lottery. The region was divided into fifty townships each six miles square. Within each township there was a further division of lots ranging in size from 160 to 1,280 acres, and these parcels became the majority of the lottery lots. When the drawing was held in October 1787, only 437 tickets out of a total of 2,720 had been sold. The Committee of 1783, which originally devised the lottery, now decided to sell outright large tracts of land. In 1791 Henry Knox and William Duer, who both served important posts in Washington’s administration, entered into contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the purchase of two tracts of land each containing one million acres. One tract was on the Kennebec River, and the other was the unsuccessful lottery land between the Penobscot and the St. Croix. Neither Duer nor Know was financially capable of fulfilling the contract with Massachusetts. Duer soon landed in debtor’s prison. Knox then convinced wealthy William Bingham of Philadelphia to buy Duer’s share of the contract. Later Knox conveyed his half to Bingham in return for one-third of any residuary profits in the sale of land. Unfortunately Knox forfeited this arrangement for a cash settlement in order to pay debts. Thus the two tracts have become known as the Bingham Purchase.

Bingham took an active interest in his eastern land purchase and felt he could make a profit from it. He had the land surveyed, hired a land agent, and within two years found a partner: Alexander Baring. Bingham’s first land agent for the eastern territory was General David Cobb. Convinced that the region was suitable for farming Cobb concentrated his efforts on attracting farmers. He promoted land sales through flyers advertising cheap land with easy payment terms. He worked first at settling Northern Hancock County along the Union River. From 1800 to 1804 settlements were made in Otis, Mariaville, Amherst, and Waltham. Settlement of the “up river” country was slow due to events outside the region including the death of Bingham in 1804 and the passage of the Embargo Act of 1807 which prohibited trade with foreign countries. The latter caused economic harm to Maine which in turn hindered growth. Finally during the War of 1812 the coast of Eastern Maine was virtually under English control.

In 1805 the area was first settled by lumbering interest. On March 19, 1835 the Town of Otis was incorporated as the 327th town.

In 1805 John Black succeeded General Cobb as land agent of the Bingham estate. Black did not share the viewpoint of Cobb or Bingham that the region should solely become an agricultural center. At this time eastern cities were beginning to expand with the coming of the Industrial Revolution. This expansion was creating a demand for lumber, and Black was determined to supply that demand with the white pine of Eastern Maine.

Thus began the second stage of Otis’s settlement. New settlers came to Otis primarily to lumber and secondarily to farm.

After 1860 the long lumber business diminished since most of the virgin pine had been cut and many who went to fight in the Civil War chose not to return. Second and third generation residents sought their livelihoods elsewhere, often on the west coast. Statewide, populations dropped during this period.

The Otis Baptist Church was started in 1917 by a group of women who called themselves the Sunshine Sewing Circle. They started the church fund by sewing aprons, pillowcases, tablecloths, quilts and even dresses for other people. Before the Church was built church services were held in the school house. The building was completed in 1925. Over the next 60 years the church was just used in the summer. In the spring of 1984 some laymen from the Columbia Street Baptist Church in Bangor made plans to reopen the church on a year-round basis. The church re-opened on May 20, 1984 and is still being used today.

A group of citizens met on November 28, 1948 and decided to build a school and community house. The first officers of this group were Erma Salisbury, president Kay Pollard, vice president; Pauline Braley, secretary and Ida Tate, treasurer. The name “Otis Civic Center” was voted on January 5, 1949. This building was built in 1949. Funds were raised by holding card parties, raffles, suppers, bean-o, talent shows, turkey shoots and by selling old photographs. They also had a special day in the 1950s called “Old Home Day”.

b. Registered Historic and Archaeological Resources

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (M.H.P.C) is the central repository in the State for all archaeological and historic resources survey information in three topical areas: Prehistoric archeology, historic archeology and architectural history. The M.H.P.C’s Maine Historic Resources Inventory includes no sites in the Town of Otis.

c. Nonregistered Historic and Archaeological Resources

While not registered by M.H.P.C or the National Register of Historic Places, the following places and buildings are considered to be of historic importance in Otis:

1) Otis Cemeteries.

2) Otis Baptist Church, built in 1925.

3) Otis Civic Center, built in 1949.

d. Planning Implications

Because historic resources are important in preserving knowledge of the town’s history and maintaining the character of the town, it is important to identify all historic sites which are important to the community.

3. PROTECTION OF HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

a. Identified and Potential Threats

The primary threat to any archaeological resources which may exist are vandalism to, and developments on top of these sites. Development may include the construction of new housing or the building of new roads.

b. Existing Protection Measures

1) Maine Historic Preservation Commission

M.H.P.C maintains an inventory of sites yet has no jurisdiction over those sites.

2) National Register of Historic Places

M.H.P.C coordinates this national registry. Sites registered by the owner with the National Register are protected through federal legislation, but only against any intervention or development by a federal agency. Eligible sites include those with local significance or value.

3) Town Ordinances

 Town ordinances can protect historic areas or zones from harmful impact and regulate their development. The Town of Otis has no such ordinances at this time.

4) Easements and Initiatives

Individual landowners, historic societies or non-profit agencies may apply a number of development restrictions to their properties on a voluntary basis. These restrictions may be strengthened by deed constraints of easements. There are no known easements or deed restrictions for the purpose of historic preservation at this time.

With the exception of the regular maintenance of the town cemeteries and the Otis Civic Center no funds have been spent by the Town on historic preservation purposes.

c. Planning Implications

Once sites have been comprehensively identified, the Town or the owners of the sites may decide to have them protected to varying degrees. Resource protection zoning, the process of delineating those resources the town would like to protect, is one way that a town can institute such protection. Individual landowners may also be asked to allow the nomination of any significant historic or archaeological sites on their property to be listed with the National Register of Historic Places or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and additionally grant preservation easements if they so desire.

SECTION II.J: EXISTING LAND USE

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is:

a. to identify and understand the uses of land throughout the town in terms of amounts and locations of land generally devoted to various land uses;

b. to identify and understand the changes in the town’s land use patterns and how they might reflect future land use patterns; and

c. to predict the amount of undeveloped land area needed to accommodate the predicted future growth or needs in housing, commercial and industrial development, transportation systems, public facility and services, open space areas and recreational facilities.

2. EXISTING LAND USES

The total area of Otis is 18,852 acres or about 29 and half square miles. The existing land uses in Otis are shown on the Maps preceding this Section. Previous sections of this plan, including Housing, Agricultural and Forest Resources, Critical Natural Resources, Water Resources and Recreation also address specific issues of land use.

a. Open Space

There is a large amount of open space, forest and farmland throughout Otis which has remained undeveloped. Much of this land (10,918 acres” 60% of the town’s total area) has been protected to a degree by registration under the Tree Growth Tax Law Program. There are many acres of woods not registered under this program in town. The State lists the town as having 30 acres of farmland registered under the Farm and Open Space Tax Law Program.

b. Residential/Commercial

Residential and commercial areas in Otis are primarily located on Route 180 and around Beech Hill Pond. Most commercial land uses are located on Route 180. Residential uses are the predominant uses in the community and these areas are spread throughout Otis with greater development corresponding with the major routes, camp roads and ponds.

c. Lakes and Ponds

These areas unsuitable for development themselves, although some of the shores of the Town’s water bodies are very developed. About 2,468 acres of Otis is surface water. This includes Beech Hill Pond, Floods Pond, Buggy Pond, Morrison Pond, Youngs Pond, Rile Pond, Rocky Pond, Muddy Pond, and Lilly Pond and parts of Lower Springy Pond and Burnt Pond. Open water areas account for 13% of the Town’s total area. There are 768 acres of the Town’s 16,384 acres of land which are classified as either bog or swamp. Some of this land is probably also classified as forestland or agricultural.

d. Planning Implications

The existing land use pattern in Otis is characterized by the mixture of extensive tracts of undeveloped land and open spaces intermixed with residential areas and small commercial uses. Thus far this has worked very well and has posed no threat to the rural character of the town.

4. FARMLAND AND FORESTLAND PROTECTION

a. Identified and Potential Threats to Farm and Forestlands

The primary threat to farm and forestland in Otis is residential development. Because of the amount of new development in the Town compared to the many acres of forest, this threat is not a major concern except for the west side of Beech Hill Pond. The development of that area would significantly affect the water quality of the pond, the condition of the west shore road, and school enrollment. The development of blueberry land for residential lots has occurred but is not likely to be a major problem due to the availability of other lands.

b. Existing Protection Measures

1) Tree Growth Tax Law: The Maine Legislature has declared, in the Tree Growth Tax Law (Title 36, M.R.S.A. 571, et seq.), that” …the public interest would be best served by encouraging forest landowners to retain and improve their holding of forest lands upon the tax roles of the state and to promote better forest management by appropriate tax measures in order to protect this unique economic and recreational resource.” The Tree Growth Tax Lax applies to all parcels of forestland over 10 acres in size at the discretion and application of the owners. It taxes forestland on the basis of its potential for annual wood production. The committee feels that many landowners in Otis are not aware of the Tree Growth Tax Lax and should be notified about it. Those thinking of putting their land under the Tree Growth Tax Law Program should consider the future carefully, as there are tax penalties for withdrawing such lands for other uses.

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c. Planning Implications

The extent to which forest and agricultural practices affect the environment is discussed in order Sections of this Plan including Water resources and Critical Natural Resources. The Town should consider more restrictions on forestry practices. The Town currently has little protection and few mechanisms in place to encourage the preservation of its agricultural lands. The Town should continue to support the Tree Growth, Farm and Open Space programs that assist local farmers and foresters.

SECTION II.I: HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOUCER

1. INTRODUCTION

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a. to outline the history of Otis;

b. to identify Otis significant historic and archaeological resources in terms of their type and significance; and

c. to predict whether the existence and physical viability of Otis’s historic and archaeological resources will be threatened by the impacts of future growth and development; and

d. to assess the effectiveness of existing measures to protect and preserve significant historic and archaeological resources.

2. IDENTIFIED HISTORIC AND ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

a. Historic Events and settlement Patterns Important to the Character of the Town

From 1677 until 1820 Maine was part of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Settlement of Maine and especially its eastern section came slowly in comparison with the rest of New England. When settlement did occur, it was along the coast rather then inland. Shortly after the Revolutionary War two land speculations developed that resulted in the further settlement of Eastern Maine including Otis. The first speculation was in 1786 when Massachusetts enacted the Land Lottery Act to raise funds for debts incurred during the Revolutionary War. The sale of public lands in the District of Maine appeared to be a solution for reducing the debt and increasing the public funds. The land between the Penobscot and the St. Croix Rivers, excluding the already settled coastal towns, was chosen for the lottery. The region was divided into fifty townships each six miles square. Within each township there was a further division of lots ranging in size from 160 to 1,280 acres, and these parcels became the majority of the lottery lots. When the drawing was held in October 1787, only 437 tickets out of a total 2,720 had been sold. The Committee of 1783, which originally devised the lottery, now decided to sell outright large tracts of land. In 1791 Henry Knox and William Duer, who both served important posts in Washington’s administration, entered into contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the purchase of two tracts of land each containing one million acres. One tract was the Kennebec River, and the other was the unsuccessful lottery land between the Penobscot and the St. Crox. Neither Duer nor Know was financially capable of fulfilling the contract with Massachusetts. Duer soon landed in debtors’ prison. Knox then convinced wealthy William Bingham of Philadelphia to buy Duer’s share of the contract. Later Knox conveyed his half to Bingham in return for one-third of any residuary profits in the sale of land. Unfortunately Knox forfeited this arrangement for a cash settlement in order to pay debts. Thus the two tracts have become known as the Bingham Purchase.

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In 1805 the area was first settled by lumbering interest. On March 19, 1835 the Town of Otis was incorporated as the 327th town.

In 1820 John Black succeeded General Cobb as land agent of the Bingham estate. Black did not share the viewpoint of Cobb or Bingham that the region should solely become an agricultural center. At this time eastern cities were beginning to expand with the coming of the Industrial Revolution. This expansion was creating a demand for lumber, and Black was determined to supply that demand with the white pine of Eastern Maine. Thus began the second stage of Otis’s settlement. New settlers came to Otis primarily to lumber and secondarily to farm.

After 1860 the long lumber business diminished since most of the virgin pine had been cut and many who went to fight in the Civil War chose not to return. Second and third generation resident sought their livelihoods elsewhere, often on the west coast. Statewide, populations dropped during this period.

The Otis Baptist Church was started in 1917 by a group of women who called themselves the Sunshine Sewing Circle. They started the church fund by sewing aprons, pillowcases, tablecloths, quilts and even dresses for other people. Before the Church was built church services were held in the school house. The building was completed in 1925. Over the next 60 years the church was used in the summer. In the spring of 1984 some laymen from the Columbia Street Baptist Church in Bangor made plans to reopen the church on a year-round basis. The church reopened on May 20, 1984 and still being used today.

A group of citizens met on November 28, 1948 and decided to build a school and community house. The first officers of this group were Erma Salisbury, president; Kay Pollard, vice president; Pauline Braley, secretary and Ida Tate, treasurer. The name “Otis Civic Center” was voted on January 5, 1949. This building was built in 1949. Funds were raised by holding card parties, raffles, suppers, bean-o, talent shows, turkey shoots and by selling old photographs. They also had a special day in the 1950s called “Old Home Day”.

b. Registered Historic and Archaeological Resources

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) is the central repository in the State for all archaeological and historic resources survey information in three topical areas: Prehistoric archaeology, historic archaeology, and architectural history. The MHPC’s Maine Historic Resources Inventory includes no sites in the Town of Otis.

c. Nonregistered Historic and Archaeological Resources

While not registered by MHPC or the National Register of Historic Places, the following places and buildings are considered to be of historic importance in Otis:

1) Otis Cemeteries.

2) Otis Baptist Church, built in 1925.

3) Otis Civic Center, built in 1949.

d. Planning Implications

Because historic resources are important in preserving knowledge of the town’s history and maintaining the character of the town, it is important to identify all historic sites which are important to the community.

3. PROTECTION OF HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

a. Identified and Potential Threats

The primary threat to any archaeological resources which may exist are vandalism to, and development on top of these sites. Development may include the construction of new housing or the building of new roads.

b. Existing Protection Measures

1) Maine Historic Preservation Commission

MHPC maintains an inventory of sites yet had no jurisdiction over those sites.

2) National Register of Historic Places

MHPC coordinates this national registry. Sites registered by the owner with the National Register are protected through federal legislation, but only against any intervention or development by a federal agency. Eligible sites include those with local significance or value.

3) Town ordinances can protect historic areas or zones from harmful impact and regulate their development. The Town of Otis has no such ordinances at this time.

4) Easements and Initiatives

Individuals and landowners, historic societies or non-profit agencies may apply a number of development restrictions to their properties on a voluntary basis. These restrictions may be strengthened by deed constraints or easements. There are no known easements or deed restrictions for the purpose of historic preservation at this time.

With the exception of the regular maintenance of the town cemeteries and the Otis Civic Center no funds have been spent by the Town on historic preservation purposes.

c. Planning Implications

Once sites have been comprehensively identified, the Town or the owners of the sites may decide to have them protected to varying degrees. Resource protection zoning, the process of delineating those resources the town would like to protect, is one way that a town can institute such protection. Individual landowners may also be asked to allow the nomination of any significant historic or archaeological sites on their property to be listed with the National Register of Historic Places or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and additionally grant preservation easements if they so desire.

SECTION II.J: EXISTING LAND USE

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is:

a. To identify and understand the uses of land throughout the town in terms of amounts and locations of land generally devoted to various land uses;

b. to identify and understand the changes in the town’s land use patterns and how they might reflect future land use patterns: and

c. to predict the amount of undeveloped land area needed to accommodate the predicted future growth or needs in housing, commercial and industrial development, transportation systems, public facility and services, open space areas and recreational facilities.

2. EXISTING LAND USES

The total area of Otis is 18,852 acres or about 29 and a half square miles. The existing land uses in Otis are shown on the Maps preceding this Section. Previous sections of this plan, including Housing, Agricultural and Forest Resources, Critical Natural Resources, Water Resources and Recreation also address specific issues of land use.

a. Open Space

There is a large amount of open space, forest and farmland throughout Otis which has remained undeveloped. Much of this land (10,918 acres: 60% of the town’s total area) has been protected to a degree by registration under the Tree Growth Tax Law Program. There are many acres of woods not registered under the Farm and Open Space Tax Law Program.

b. Residential/Commercial

Residential and commercial areas in Otis are primarily located on Route 180 and around Beech Hill Pond. Most commercial land uses are located on Route 180. Residential uses are the predominant uses in the community and these areas are spread throughout Otis with greater development corresponding with the major routes, camp roads and ponds.

c. Lake and Ponds

These areas unsuitable for development themselves, although some of the shores of the Town’s water bodies are very developed. About 2,468 acres of Otis is surface water. This includes Beech Hill Pond, Floods Pond, Buggy Pond, Morrison Pond, Youngs Pond, Pile Road, Rocky Pond, Muddy Pond, and Lilly Pond and parts of the Lower Springy Pond and Burnt Pond. Open water areas account for 13% of the Town’s total area. There are 768 acres of the Town’s 16,384 acres of land which are classified as either bog or swamp. Some of this land is probably also classified as forestland or agricultural.

d. Planning Implications

The existing land use pattern in Otis characterized by the mixture of extensive tracts of undeveloped land and open spaces intermixed with residential areas and small commercial uses. Thus far this has worked very well and has posed no threat to the rural character of the town. As Otis continues to grow and there will be more demand for land for both residential and commercial uses. The currently undeveloped land may come under pressure from development. To avoid the proliferation of incompatible land uses in various areas of town, proper planning will be necessary to preserve the rural nature and character of Otis.

3. CHANGES IN LAND USE OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS

During the last decade, Otis has experienced little change in the amount of land being used for residential purposes. 61 housing units were added to the town’s housing stock in the last 10 years. During this period 36 year-round units were added and 25 seasonal units were added. Although construction of seasonal homes has continued in town, the increase in these types of units has decreased as more people are converting their seasonal camps to year-round homes. This trend is expected to continue in the 10 year planning period.

4. NATURAL AREAS POSING A HAZARD TO DEVELOPMENT

These are several types of areas which occur naturally which are either threatened environmentally by development, or pose a threat to development itself due to their natural instability. Previous sections of this plan have discussed critical natural areas, flood plains, shorelands, and wetlands all of which are areas where the interaction between the environment and development are important.

In addition to these areas already discussed, the primary environmental limitation to development is topography most specifically the slope or gradient of land. In general most land use activities encounter serious problems and significant additional construction and maintenance costs when located on slopes greater than 15%. The Town’s existing Shoreland Zoning Ordinance includes land with a sustained slope in excess of 20% in the Resource Protection District. Areas with slopes greater than 20% have been indicated on the Geologically Restricted Land Map. This map also synthesizes all other natural areas such as flood plains and soils which could threaten, or be threatened by, development.

Since slopes from 8 to 25% are considered difficult and expensive to build on, future growth and development should continue to be carefully regulated when proposed on these gradients, with careful attention given to accelerated surface water runoff and erosion. Slopes greater than 20% are considered as unbuildable gradients and future growth and development on such slopes should be tightly regulated, including any alteration of the natural vegetative cover.

Other natural areas, as discussed elsewhere in this section should also be regulated to protect both the environment and the development itself.

5. EXISTING LAND USE CONTROLS

a. Otis Shoreland Zoning Ordinance

Otis adopted the State Minimum Shoreland Zoning Ordinance in 1992. The ordinance was designed to protect the quality of wetlands and surface water and to prevent incompatible land uses adjacent to these resources. The ordinance applies to all land areas within 250 feet of the normal high water mark of the town’s many ponds and to land within 75 feet of streams and brooks.

b. Planning Implications

The existence of effective land use controls is necessary in maintaining orderly growth in a town. These ordinances are designed to promote orderly and environmentally sound growth while still enjoying the benefits offered by a growing community, but at this time they only apply to shoreland areas and steep slopes.

SECTION II.K: FISCAL CAPACITY

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section is:

a. to identify and understand Otis’s financial condition;

b. to identify and understand recent changes in Otis’s fiscal condition and how these changes may affect Otis’s future fiscal conditions: and

c. to predict the town’s revenues, expenditures, and debts for the next 10 years.

2. TOWN FINANCIAL RECORDS

The majority of the financial information in this section was derived from town reports. The town reports are careful to record all information accurately and in proper accounting format. It is the purpose of this section to summarize that information rather than to duplicate it. For the sake of readability and simplicity many figures have been grouped together. Some figures have been rounded off and are expressed in real dollars with no adjustment for inflation. The following is an inventory and analysis of general trends for the purpose of planning. More precise information is available from the original sources.

3. MUNICIPAL TAX BASE

a. Valuations

The primary method of generating revenue within the town is through property taxes. These taxes are assessed on local property owners according to the value of their real estate and personal property. This assessment is known as the town valuation and is determined by the town tax assessor. Figure II.K.1 shows the valuation of all property in Otis broken down by category for the years 1986 through 1990 along with the percentage change in each category. The greatest increase was between the years 1987 and 1988 when real estate prices throughout Maine were expanding as a result of speculation. Overall, the town’s valuation increased 8% during this period.

b. Mill Rate

After valuation, each tax payer is assessed his share of the tax burden through an assessment ratio. This assessment is determined by dividing the total tax commitment (the amount voted on at the annual town meeting) into the total tax valuation of the town. This assessment is usually expressed in mills or dollars per thousand dollars valuation, or in decimal form. For example, if the town voted to raise one million dollars in taxes, and the total tax valuation of the town was 100 million dollars, the tax rate could be expressed as “10 mills”, $10.00 per thousand”, or “0.010”. This would mean that a person who owned property valued at $100,000 would be assessed $1,000 in taxes. Figures II.K.2 shows the changes in the mill rate from 1986 to 1990. The mill rate increased more rapidly than the valuation during this period: up 50%

The mill rate may fluctuate with both the total valuation and the total tax commitment. A comparison of Figures II.K. 1 and II.K.2 shows that while the town valuation has increased slowly the mill rate has jumped quite substantially. The increase in assessed value has not matched the increase in funds needed to operate the town and school. Thusly, the mill rate should be used as an indicator to alert officials of increasing financial responsibility, so further investigation can be made to determine the cause.

c. Planning Implications

When planning for any large capital improvements the town assessments and mill rate should be taken into account to avoid raising taxes beyond owners’ ability to pay them. While Otis’s total valuation has increased slowly since 1986, the mill rate has risen sharply, increasing the burden on tax payers by 63% in this 5 year period.

4. MUNICIPAL REVENUE

Figure II.K.3 shows major sources of municipal revenues for the last five years. Most of the Town’s revenue is generated by property taxes, including Tree Growth Tax Refund. For any town the education subsidy is also a substantial figure. In the 1987-88 fiscal year Otis raised $735,000 through the sale of bonds to help finance the construction of the Beech Hill School. This sum is not included in the column for that year as it was a one-time revenue source. In that year 70% of the town’s revenue was raised in this manner. While revenues have been increasing as a whole, state budget adjustments may soon affect the share of funds flowing back to towns.

Municipal revenue projections for the next ten years are likely to be stable, barring large shifts in population which should change both valuation and state and federal appropriations. In a town as small as Otis, one or two lakefront subdivisions could significantly broaden the town’s tax base (and school enrollment). The projected revenue stability could also be altered by changes in State budgets and priorities. Such matters are beyond the control of the Town and cannot be directly planned for. The municipality should be prepared for shifts in funding sources and the next several years presents nothing out of the ordinary.

Exacting fees on developers of subdivisions and mobile home parks is one tool often used as a source of revenue. Fees exacted on developers may be used for improvements to town infrastructure directly abutting their subdivisions or developments. This is one way for small towns to cope with one aspect of increased demand on public services created by new developments.

5. ANNUAL RECURRING MUNICIPAL EXPENDITURES

Figures II.K.4 and II.K.5 show the amounts of money appropriated for each department and the actual amounts spent by each department for the years 1986-1990.

In this five year period, the U.S Department of Commerce’s Gross National Product Implicit Price Deflator for State and Local Government Expenditures has been +23% Municipal expenditures in Otis have been increasing much faster than inflation in a number of areas. The figure for General Government in 1989-90 reflects the hiring of a full time administrative assistant. Education expenses can be directly linked to population size so if Otis’s population increases, so will this area of the budget. Most other municipal expenses are not affected by small population shifts. County taxes have increased steadily. These taxes cover necessary services such as county courts and sheriffs. The appropriations for health and sanitation have jumped due to the costs of solid waste disposal. This portion of the town budget should stabilize with new waste disposal arrangements in place. This figure could be reduced in the future by recycling a portion of the town’s waste.

It is difficult to predict municipal expenditures for the next ten years because demands for services, country assessments, valuation, population, and many other factors all enter into the process. Capital expenditures, improvements and debt service can be anticipated to some extent. To eliminate annual increases and sharp declines in such expenditures, the town should develop a Capital Improvement Program to predict what capital expenses may be needed to be funded through its existing Capital Project Fund, and to establish a plan to finance them.

Figure II.K.6 compares the total expenditures from the preceding three figures to give an indication of Otis’s revenues and budgeted expenditures in comparison with the actual expenditures.

6. LONG TERM MUNICIPAL DEBT

Otis’s long term municipal debt is for the construction of the Beech Hill School. It was $585,000 in 1990, down from $660,000 in 1989. This should be paid off in the 1997-98 fiscal year. The State’s debt service allocation cover these payments. The State imposes a debt limit of 15% of a town’s total valuation. Otis might need to secure other bonds in the future to make some of the capital improvements outlined in this plan. Unexpected municipal expenditures can cause drastic shifts in a town’s mill rate. A capital improvement program can help minimize such shifts.

(still need to put charts in here)

SECTION III: GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

This section includes policies derived from the Inventory and Analysis Section and identifies specific actions Otis may take to ensure that these policies are adequately implemented. The policies are organized consistently with the State Growth Management Goals outlined in MRSA Title 30-A, Section 4331 and taken together represent a coordinated framework for local public policy and implementation strategies which address the problems, strengths and needs identified in this Plan.

A. POPULATION

Given the interaction of year-round population characteristics with every aspect of the Town of Otis, concern for this issue will be integrated in the planning of all aspects of the Town, as discussed in other sections of this report. Of specific concern are the interactions between population and the economy, housing, education, recreation and the use of municipal services. Specific issues that deal with these areas will be dealt with in more depth in the appropriate sections.

“It is the policy of the Town of Otis to monitor actively the size and dsitrubtions of its year-round and seasonal populations and to integrate this information with all relevant decisions made by the municipality, including, but not limited to, periodic revision of the Comprehensive Plan.”

To implement the Population Policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Otis:

1. Revise the demographic information contained within this Plan in five years in preparation of the next Comprehensive Plan.

Responsibility: Selectman

Timing: Every five years (between Jan. and May)

Estimated Cost: Item 1, above: $1,000 every five years to cover salary of Town Clerk

B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Given the concern for adequate employment opportunities in Otis, yet recognizing the rural residential nature of the Town,

“It is the policy of the Town of Otis to promote economic development through local and regional economic development efforts which are consistent with the rural character of the town.”

To implement the Economic Development Policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Otis:

1. Participate in regional economic development efforts which benefit the town’s economy, yet do no negatively affect its environment and rural character.

2. Provide opportunity for economic growth land use ordinances such as a Site Plan Review Ordinance which allows commercial growth which is compatible with the rural lifestyle of Otis.

Responsible Party: Selectmen/Planning Board

Time Frame: Ongoing

Estimated Cost: Item 1, above: unkown/insignificant

 Item 2, above: included in III. J

C. HOUSING

Given the housing needs of current and future residents and of low to moderate income residents in particular, it is recommended that the Town of Otis adopt the following Growth Management Policies:

Given the concern for decent housing opportunities for all current and future citizens of Otis,

“It is the policy of the town of Otis to encourage and promote affordable, appropriate, and adequate housing for its residents.”

To implement the Housing Policy stated above, it is recommended that the Town of Otis:

1. Encourage Mobile Home Parks in designated areas; and

2. Treat manufactured housing units the same as site built units.

Responsibility: Selectmen/ Planning Board

Timing: 1998

Estimated Cost: Item 1, above: included in III.J

 Item 2, above: included in III.J

D. PUBLIC FACILITIES/TRANSPORTATION