

IX. CULTURAL, HISTORIC, & RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

It is almost a given that Grantham's residents place high value on one or more of the cultural, historic, and recreational resources offered within the town and in the broader Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region. This conclusion is clear throughout the responses found in the Community Survey.

There is consistently strong interest in cultural offerings at the Grantham Village School, the Dunbar Free Library, and the Center at Eastman.

The Grantham Historical Society has an active program to identify and conserve our historical resources. The group has successfully engaged the community in commemorating several key elements of Grantham's history.

Recreation is integral to the lives of many if not most Grantham residents. Its importance can not be overemphasized. Because of this, recreation and associated facilities often receive great attention of the townspeople, and substantial effort—both volunteer and compensated—goes into continuing and expanding the available opportunities for recreation in Grantham.

The 1985 Grantham Master Plan contained an extensive inventory and compilation of information on cultural, historic, and recreational resources, and should continue to be a useful resource document for the future. The updated 1993 Grantham Master Plan combined natural and cultural resources, and recommended including the 1985 Master Plan's inventory as an appendix. These portions of the 1985 and 1993 Master Plans are included here by reference.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Grantham's geographic location provides multiple cultural opportunities available within less than a one hour drive. The Center at Eastman offers events of cultural significance to the area. The completion of the new Grantham Municipal Complex (providing new space for the Town Office, Police Department, and Grantham School District/SAU #75 Office) will provide a new opportunity to preserve both the cultural and historic heritage of Grantham. The soon-to-be-vacated Town Office and Police Department building, which is the former Grantham School, will be utilized as a venue for small cultural events and exhibitions, under the guidance of the Town Archivist and the Grantham Historical Society. It will serve as well as a museum and depository of items of historical significance including the town archives.

The continuing improvement, restoration, renovation, and future expansion of the Dunbar Free Library assures its importance as a significant cultural resource for the

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residents of Grantham. In addition, neighboring communities such as Croydon, which has no library at this time, benefit from the library in Grantham.

The recent creation of the Sculpture Garden at the Grantham Village School is representative of the cultural activities made available to the town's younger residents. The GVS students' recent project to interview local World War II veterans and compile their stories was another innovative cultural effort. Additionally, it provided the students some exposure to historical documentation, and it helped them increase their acquaintance with the older generation in a creative way.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Several important recommendations contained in the 1985 and 1993 Master Plans were implemented. The Grantham Historical Society was established as a result of these recommendations. This organization furthers the awareness and protection of Grantham's historic resources.

Also recommended in the earlier Master Plans was the creation of the position of Town Archivist. A room has been designated in the present Town Office for the collection of artifacts, historic documents, and papers. The holdings of this office include the complete set of aerial photographs upon which the current tax mapping of Grantham is based. Overall, this office is an important asset for the town itself, as well as for those seeking genealogical information on their families. Regular hours are scheduled for the public.

The Town Archivist and the Grantham Historical Society are both actively involved in the preservation of the town's historic resources. Members of the society and Town Archivist have become valuable resources for students and teachers at the Grantham Village School.

Dated plaques have been placed on several historic buildings and private homes in town. The society has been instrumental in preserving a State Militia of New Hampshire Flag of the Rifle Company of the 31st Regiment, which is currently on display in the Dunbar Free Library. A few years ago the society and community volunteers worked extensively with the Western Association of Leavitt Families, based in Utah, to facilitate the association's commemoration of the long tenure of Leavitt forebears on Leavitt Hill in North Grantham.

RECREATION

Well over half of those expressing an opinion in the Community Survey supported the concept of a community center in connection with the new Grantham Municipal Complex, to serve people of all ages and to provide a variety of activities. Among other purposes, several recreation needs could be addressed by such a facility.

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Overall, the survey respondents endorsed the idea of using some local tax revenues to acquire and maintain recreational facilities. In order of popularity, the activities of most interest were bicycle paths, hiking and cross-country ski trails, multipurpose recreation areas or fields, and softball and baseball diamonds. Parking at existing trailheads was also identified as a need. (On the other hand, some respondents expressed that no additional recreational facilities are needed in Grantham if supported by tax revenues.) More detailed study is needed to better assess and balance community desires.

The bulk of the existing recreational facilities in Grantham are located in the Eastman Community. Within Eastman is an 18 hole golf course, a 325 acre lake used for swimming, boating and fishing, 13 tennis courts, and 30 kilometers of trails for cross-country skiing as well as for walking and hiking. Except for Eastman Lake, access to these amenities for the residents of Grantham who are not Eastman property owners is somewhat limited, and may involve a daily or annual fee.

Youth sports are organized by the Grantham Recreation Department. The recreation department organizes the traditional sports of soccer, basketball, and baseball. It is under the direction of a part-time paid director, and relies on many volunteers for its success.

Grantham Indoor, a commercial enclosed arena facility, is available for a variety of activities. During the winter months this large space is capable of offering indoor soccer and lacrosse leagues.

In addition to the above, there are many acres of public and privately owned fields and forests that support fishing and hunting activities. Hiking trails are also abundant, many on discontinued or Class VI roads which, for all practical purposes, are closed to normal traffic. The trails also support mountain biking, ATV riding, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing. The Blue Mountain Snowdusters Outdoor Recreation Club puts in substantial effort in maintaining those trails that are used for snowmobiling. Maps are available that describe many of the town's existing trails.

GOALS

- Provide Grantham residents and visitors with an environment rich in cultural opportunities.
- Maintain awareness of Grantham's history as a part of the history of the nation, the state, and individual families.
- Continue to enrich the recreational choices available to residents and visitors, all of which are essential to the quality of life prized by so many in Grantham.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide ample public space and media notices for publicizing cultural events in Grantham and the broader area.
- Actively encourage participation in the Grantham Historical Society, and work to update the written history of Grantham.
- Actively promote the identification and conservation of Grantham's historic resources, and continue the collection and cataloging of historical artifacts and events.
- Seek nomination of the Dunbar Free Library, United Methodist Church, and Dunbar Hill Grantham School building to the New Hampshire and National Registers of Historic Places.
- Develop and preserve a permanent and changing display of historical resources available to the public for research and cultural education in the Grantham (Dunbar Hill) School Building, which is soon to become the "Old Town Office."
- Promote Grantham's historical and natural resources via a display at the northbound I-89 Rest Area in Springfield.
- Explore in depth the interest, needs, and ways to meet demands for providing a variety of recreational and cultural activities, including playing fields.
- Investigate the feasibility of creating recreational bicycle paths, hiking trails, and cross-country ski trails, not associated with roadways.
- Strengthen, coordinate, and add where absent, appropriate powers to the Planning Board, Zoning Board, Board of Selectmen, Code Administrator, and any other relevant board or official to control, restrict, or prohibit adverse impacts on historic resources in the course of considering development proposals.