

Section VI

Utilities & Public Services

Introduction

With the advent of high-speed communications over the last 15-20 years, Sunapee finds itself ever closer to the rest of the world. Similar to the rapid advancement of transportation 40 years ago, the telecommunications boom is transforming the town. As communication systems improve, Sunapee is becoming better linked to the urban areas. This presents both opportunities for economic growth and challenges to the preservation of the Town's rural character.

The Town of Sunapee provides municipal water and sewer services to a portion of its residents and also runs a hydroelectric plant on the Sugar River. Public Service Company of New Hampshire (PSNH) and New Hampshire Electric Co-op provide electric service to Sunapee residents.

The explosion of telecommunications in the last decade has brought internet, wireless phone, satellite, and expanded cable television service to Sunapee. Verizon Communications has constructed two cell phone towers within the town in the past few years. Internet service is provided by FairPoint and Comcast, with WiFi access available at the Library and Riverway properties. Currently Comcast provides cable television service to 1,100 users which is approximately one-half of the town.

Municipal Utilities

Municipal Sewer System

The municipal sewer system is comprised of 28 miles of sewer mains, 13 pump stations and a treatment plant located off Route 11 near the Sugar River. The service area includes the villages of Georges Mills, Sunapee, Wendell, and three-quarters of the northerly shoreline of Lake Sunapee. There are currently 1,310 units connected to the public sewer which represents 61% of all living units.

The treatment plant is owned by the Town of Sunapee but its capacity is shared with the Town of New London. Currently the plant has a capacity to handle up to 640,000 gallons per day of sewage with Sunapee's allotment at 35% or 224,000 gallons per day. According to the Water and Sewer Department, the Town of Sunapee is currently only using 44% of its allotment at the treatment plant. An upgrade to the operation of facility, which will have little or no impact on capacity, is in the design phase.

Municipal Water System

The municipal water system has two separate source and distribution systems. One serves Sunapee Village, the other Georges Mills. These systems were both upgraded in the mid 1990s to satisfy the requirements of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

The system serving Sunapee Village has Lake Sunapee as its water source. The water is pumped from an intake in Sunapee Harbor through a 12" line to a treatment facility on Burkehaven Hill. The water is stored in two tanks (700,000 gallon and 300,000 gallon) before being fed by gravity to the distribution system throughout the village. There are currently 506 service connections on the Sunapee Village system.

In Georges Mills, the source of the water system is bedrock wells. These wells are located southwest of the village. The water is treated at a small treatment plant before being pumped to a reservoir on Prospect Hill Road. From there the water is distributed to approximately 195 homes in the village.

Hydroelectric Plant

The hydroelectric plant is owned by the Town of Sunapee and has been providing electricity to the regional grid since 1985. The original 15-year bond has been paid off. The Town continues to be responsible for maintenance of the plant. During the period from 2006-2008, the plant generated \$177,000 in average annual gross revenues, offset by average annual expenditures of approximately \$40,000.

The plant is located at the west end of Coffin Park on Route 103B and is fed by two 42-inch ductile iron pipes. The water comes from the Sugar River whose flow is dictated by the water level at the dam in Sunapee Harbor. The plant has the capacity to draw 120 cubic feet per second of water from the River.

Commercial Services & Utilities

Electric System

All of the developed areas of town have electric service. Residents receive their electric service from Public Service Company of New Hampshire or New Hampshire Electric Co-op. Both of these companies have transmission lines which traverse the town.

Telephone

Since early 2009, telephone service has been provided by FairPoint Communications. In addition to the long-standing 763 and 863 exchanges, the phone company has added the 414, 454, 829, and 873 exchanges to handle the ongoing explosion in demand for communications.

Wireless Communications

Two cell towers are in operation in Sunapee. One tower has been installed on Blaisdell Hill just south of Sunapee Village and is in operation. A second tower has been installed on Muzzey Hill just south of Georges Mills Village. Both of these towers are owned by Verizon Wireless Communications. Provisions have been made to allow other companies to co-locate on each of these towers.

Municipal Services

Police Department

The Police Department currently has a staff of 5 full-time and 4 part-time officers. The department shares the Safety Services Building with the Fire Department.

The department handles over 4,000 calls per year. Even with an increase in the number of traffic stops, the department has been able to handle this load without increasing officers, due to improvements in technology. This technology includes in-car computers which allow for immediate processing of licenses and registrations.

Fire Department/EMS

The Fire Department/EMS is operated by 38 volunteers. The main station is located at the Safety Services Building in Sunapee Village. There is also a smaller station on Route 11 in Georges Mills.

The department responded to 393 emergency calls in 2009, of which only 11 were actual fires. Other emergencies included motor vehicle accidents, health-related issues, and assists to other municipalities. In addition to emergencies, the department works to educate many groups, from children to senior citizens, on fire safety.

Although the current department is run by volunteers, there is a belief that the demand on services will require paid EMS employees in the near future. In addition, it may be necessary to have a full-time fire chief by 2020.

Cemeteries

Sunapee has the two active and four inactive cemeteries listed below:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Size</u>
New Eastman *	North Road	5.0 Acres
South Sunapee *	Harding Hill Road	0.5 Acre
Old Eastman	North Road	1.5 Acres
Georges Mills	Main Street	0.4 Acres
Lower Village	Lower Main Street	0.5 Acres
Cooper	Stagecoach Road	0.5 Acres

* Active

Recommendations

1. Extend sewer to Perkins Pond

The proposed extension of the sewer main from the treatment plant northward to Perkins Pond will help address serious water quality issues at the pond. Most of the homes/camps abutting the pond are on undersized lots and have inadequate septic systems. Review existing land use controls need to determine whether additional controls will need to be introduced in the area of the proposed sewer line to ensure that rapid growth does not occur, as so often happens once sewer is available.

2. Expand water quality protections

Further water quality protections are essential to maintain both surface and ground water quality. It is important that the Water and Sewer Department continues to deliver water that meets ever tighter federal standards. The recommendations found elsewhere in this document (especially the Natural Resources Section where it is a prime goal) should be followed as outlined in the implementation plan.